

WRITINGS OF THOMAS BROOKS

by Thomas Brooks

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Thomas Brooks, compiled for study and devotional reading.

56 Chapters

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01.00. THE COMPLETE WORKS OF THOMAS BROOKS

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THOMAS BROOKS Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART
liverpool

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(552 Pages) containing:

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices Apples of Gold for Young Men and Women The Mute
Christian Under the Smarting Rod A String of Pearls

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Indices, etc.

01.01. Volume 1

THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART liverpool

VOL. I. containing: precious remedies against satan's devices—apples of gold for young men and women—the mute christian under the smarting rod—a string of pearls EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL london: james nisbet and co. dublin: g. herbert m.dccc.lxvi.

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PREFACE

IT may surely be regarded as a favourable sign of the times, that so many reprints of the works of the thinkers of former days—laic and cleric—have been called for during the last ten years. It argues that while there may be many whose tastes incline them to ‘milk for babes,’ there are those who have appetites to relish, and stomachs to digest, ‘stronger meat.’ We have reference more immediately to the numerous and widely circulated republications of the elder Theologians of all shades of opinion on lesser matters: as well the acknowledged and famous, as the less known and hitherto uncollected and inedited. Of the former, suffice it to name Eden’s ‘Jeremy Taylor,’ Napier’s ‘Isaac Barrow,’ Wynter’s ‘Joseph Hall,’ ‘Thomas Goodwin’ of this series; of the latter, our own ‘Richard Sibbes,’ and now ‘Thomas Brooks,’ with others in hand, together with the fine series of Commentaries being issued by our Publisher, and including such ripe and rare books as Airay on ‘Philippians,’ King on ‘Jonah,’ Stock and Torshell on ‘Malachi,’ Rainolds on ‘Obadiah and Haggai,’ Bernard and Fuller on ‘Ruth,’ Marbury on ‘Obadiah and Habakkuk,’ Hardy on ‘1st Epistle of St John,’ Bayne on ‘Ephesians,’ and that magnum opus, Dr William Gouge on ‘Hebrews.’ It seems impossible that such intellectual and spiritual seed-corn as is treasured up in these early worthies can be sown thus broadcast, and yield an unboundeous harvest. Granted that, as with the sown grain, there is not a little of what is chaff, or,—speaking unmetaphorically,—that is tedious

and attenuated, over-worded, effete, musty: yet the 'ingenuous' and thinking reader, like the kindly earth under supernal influences, assimilates the good and fruitful: and toward all the venerable writers, has a tender patience and charity and forgivingness, such as one feels for the garrulous 'whitehead' that in other days wearied us in the chimney-corner, but, being gone, is remembered sacredly, pathetically, and with wet eyes.

We add Thomas Brooks to the 'Divines' of the 'Puritan Period' with no fear of contradiction when we claim for him a foremost place among the greatest of the later Puritans; meaning thereby those who were included, and, as Thomas Fuller would have said, excluded also, by the 'Ejection' of 1662. With the exception of John Bunyan, and perhaps, in separate minor works, of Richard Baxter, no writer of the 17th century has been so permanently and widely and variously represented in the living Literature of the 18th and 19th as the author of 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' 'The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod,' 'Apples of Gold,' and 'Heaven on Earth:' but, unfortunately, he has been mainly represented and known by these four treatises, whereas his other and numerous writings have the same merits—if the word be not chill and poor—with these; all passed through frequent editions in the outset, and have popularly gone out of sight, not as less weighty and vital, but capriciously and arbitrarily and mistakenly.

One immense advantage of Brooks over Sibbes is, that the whole of his many volumes, lesser and larger, were published by himself. He left nothing behind him to be thrust on the world as 'Remains' or posthumous—a healthy self-restraint and wisdom which it had been well if others, even of our most illustrious Divines, ancient and modern, had exercised. In submitting this first collective edition of the 'Complete Works' of Brooks to the public, I beg attention to these six things:—

(α.) Our text, in every separate treatise and tractate, is based upon the last 'revised and corrected' impression thereof that passed under the eye of the author: an explanatory 'Note' being prefixed to each, giving all needful information on the different editions. It may be mentioned that his collection of the original and early editions has cost the Editor fully £35, whereas the reprint will be furnished to the public for 25s.

(β.) The whole is incorrupt, unmutated, unchanged. Of this, John Foster the 'Essayist' may be allowed to speak. Writing to a friend for the works of Howe, and preferring the old edition, he characteristically observes: 'In the new one, I recollect the Editor engaged, as a favour to the readers, to make—and I suppose he did make—some little tinkering of the long, involved, and grotesquely constructed sentences: a thing sufficiently wanted, I allow, for it is quite wonderful that such a man as Howe should have bungled so sadly in the manner of sentence-making. But, nevertheless, I should prefer having his paragraphs just as he had made them, to any Editor's rectification of them: a preference, however, which cannot be supposed to be felt by any gentleman of the literary form of Burder and Hughes, the Editors and Correctors of Henry's Exposition.' We offer no 'tinkerings,' no 'rectifications,' no 'corrections,' no 'improvements.' Even in bringing the old arbitrary orthography into accord with modern usage, we have duly noted all peculiar or transitive forms of words. So that Thomas Brooks is here given genuinely, as he himself published his writings. His style as a whole, however, is accurate, and compact, and modern-like, save in occasional quaintnesses and outspokenness.

(γ.) The whole of the Bible-texts and references have been carefully verified. Only those who have consulted the original editions are able to appreciate the toil involved in this: eighty percent. at least being inaccurate. The important classical and patristic citations and allusions have similarly been verified and supplemented. This does not apply to the well-nigh innumerable anonymous 'anecdotes,' 'sayings,' 'readings;' though, even of those, a large proportion will be found to be traced and confirmed in our footnotes. Trite classical and other facts and names we have left as they occur.

(δ.) In response to the appeal of the lamented Herbert Coleridge and the 'Philological Society,' we have marked all Shakespearian and other noticeable words and phrases. As in Sibbes, a Glossary will furnish a Reference-Index thereto.

(ε.) For all foot-notes bearing my own initial, G., I am responsible: the rest belong to Brooks himself; and I take this opportunity of calling special attention to them. They consist, for the larger part, of the margin-notes of the original and early editions, and will always repay perusal. Very often it will be found that, by his multifarious reading, he gives point to some argument or appeal, or illustration, by a racy saying of Luther, or a felicitous bit from a Father, or some apt anecdote, or quaint, however unreal, opinion of old science, or a flash of wit or play upon a word. So that he will be a loser who passes by these notes, which are as the dust-of-gold of a rich and brilliant mind. Brooks himself attached no little importance to them. Thus, in his 'Word to the Reader,' prefixed to 'Precious Remedies,' he observes: 'If in thy reading thou wilt cast a serious eye upon the margin, thou wilt find many sweet and precious notes that will oftentimes give light to the things thou readest, and pay thee for thy pains with much comfort and profit.' (Our reprint, page 9.)

It only remains that I notice the one representative of an 'edition' of the Works of Brooks, and shew, by a recent reprint of a single book, how unworthily he has hitherto been edited.

(1.) The Rev. Charles Bradley, M.A., of Glasbury, Brecon, in 1824, issued two volumes (cr. 8vo.) containing, (1.) 'The Unsearchable Riches of Christ;' (2.) 'Remedies against Satan's Devices' [the golden Bible-word 'precious' left out!]; (3.) 'A Treatise on Assurance' [i. e. Heaven on Earth]; (4.) 'The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod;' (5.) 'Apples of Gold.' This has long been out of print, so that we do no prejudice to existing interests when we characterise it as worthless, by its modernizations, and errors of omission and commission, beyond reckoning. A comparison of any single page with our text will reveal such tampering with what Brooks wrote as is most discreditable and vitiatory. It is sadly-amusing to observe the thin things that are deemed 'improvements' on our robust, outspoken Puritan.

(2.) The 'Cabinet of Jewels' was reprinted in a fair-looking volume, which bears the imprint, 'Huntly: published by Duncan Matheson. 1860.' If we err not, this is the earnest Revivalist and Missionary of Crimean celebrity. All honour to him as such, and all honour to his motives in re-issuing the precious book. But it swarms, as does Bradley, with blunders and 'corrections' (!) e. g., the very Errata carefully prefixed by the author—not to specify others—are left unchanged; and so (to give a few specimens) we read 'fleshly joys' for Brooks's 'flashy joys' (page 22, line 4); saintly John Murcot of Dublin is transmogrified into 'John Marcol' (page 35, line 22); 'Assur's oppression' is spoken of instead of 'Asa's' (page 53, line 37); Rachel is made to cry out, 'Give me water' for 'Give me children' (page 75, line 2); and so throughout. The same remarks, with but slight modification, are applicable to the many reprints of the 'Religious Tract Society' and other

Publishers, who 'improve' and 'polish' into conformity with ideas of 'elegance' such as would have roused the rebuke of the fearless old preachers, who said what they meant, and meant to the letter, what they said.

I have, as in the case of Sibbes, very gratefully to record the kind help and sympathetic interest in our work shown by many correspondents, sought and voluntary. I must specially name my excellent friend Joshua Wilson, Esq. of Nevil Park, Tunbridge Wells; John Bruce, Esq., London, the accomplished editor and biographer of the new Aldine 'Cowper,' and many other historico-biographic works; the Rev. R. Brook Aspland, M.A., London; the Rectors of St Thomas Apostles, and other of the London city churches; the Rectors and Curates of Newbury and other Churches in different Counties; the Rev. T. W. Davids, Colchester; the authorities of the British Museum; Williams' Library; Guildhall Library; the Bodleian, Oxford; the University Library, and various College Libraries, Cambridge; the Rev. J. E. B. Mayor, M.A., Cambridge, and the late Charles H. Cooper, Esq., Town Clerk, Cambridge,—together with very many to whom I am indebted for letters in answer to (I fear) troublesomely minute inquiries. I owe thanks also to 'Notes and Queries,' and other Literary Journals.

'For a conclusion of all by way of prefix'—here in part appropriating the words of Cawdrey and Palmer in the Epistle to their Sabbatum Redivivum (1645. Pt. I.)—I 'have but one word or two more to say, and that by way of earnest entreaty.' These 'Works,' reader! are full as the honey-comb of 'exceeding great and precious' Truth: no mere stately scholarliness, curious questioning, nice casuistry, windy phrases. Therefore, I pray 'That thou wilt do the Truth that right as to yield to and practise what thou art convinced of.' 'Consider' what I say, 'and the Lord give thee and me understanding and grace in all things through Jesus Christ. So prays, Thine in Him,'

Alexander B. Grosart.

308 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, May 1866.

MEMOIR OF THOMAS BROOKS

IT is long since one said in his own quaintly-pensive way, 'Who knows whether the best men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of Time?' Our endeavours towards elucidating the Lives of the Worthies embraced in these series of reprints, as well as the like experience of all who have sought to trace the footprints of shy, sequestered goodness, as distinguished from noisy and noised 'greatness,' so-called—satisfy us, that Sir Thomas Browne never wrote truer words. Light—that shoots its silver arrows unbrokenly across the abysses between the sun and our earth, and yet ruffles not tiniest feather of bird's wing, or drop of dew in flower-cup—is a more potent thing than lightning; but, lacking the thunder-roar after it, in vulgar account is the weaker, albeit the thunder comes from no higher than the clouds. Similarly, the 'hidden ones'—who are really the 'best men'—have been in by far too many cases outblazoned by your creature of circumstance. It needs a wider and intenser sky than ours to show some stars; and not until the 'new heavens' dome the 'new earth' will the truly 'great' names shine excellingly. Richard Sibbes, with rare fineness of thought and felicitousness of wording, has 'weighed' the two fames—and his 'counsel' may fittingly come in here. 'Let us commit the fame and credit,' says he, 'of what we are or do to God. He will take care of that: let us take care to be and to do as we should, and then for noise and report, let it be good

or ill as God will send it.... If we seek to be in the mouths of men, to dwell in the talk and speech of men, God will abhor us.... Therefore let us labour to be good in secret. Christians should be as minerals, rich in the depth of the earth. That which is least seen is his (the Christian's) riches. We should have our treasure deep; for the discovery of it, we should be ready when we are called to it; and for all other accidental things, let it fall out as God in his wisdom sees good.... God will be careful enough to get us applause.... As much reputation as is fit for a man will follow him, in being and doing what he should. God will look to that. Therefore we should not set up sails to our own meditations, that unless we be carried with the wind of applause, to be becalmed, and not go a whit forward; but we should be carried with the Spirit of God, and with a holy desire to serve God and our brethren, and to do all the good we can, and never care for the speeches of the world.... We shall have glory enough, and be known enough to devils, to angels, and men, ere long. Therefore, as Christ lived a hidden life—that is, He was not known what He was, that so He might work our salvation, so let us be content to be hidden ones.... There will be a resurrection of credits, as well as of bodies. We'll have glory enough by-and-by.' In the cases of Sibbes himself, and Airay, and King, and Stock, and Torshell, and Bernard, and Marbury, and indeed nearly all, I have had to deplore the paucity of materials for anything like adequate Memoirs. But more than ever have I to do so in relation to Thomas Brooks. If a pun, that he himself would have relished, may be allowed, his memory has passed away like the 'summer brooks'. This is all the more regrettable, in that his books are vital and influential as at first—his name still a venerable and loved one to myriads. Only the other day we chanced upon a mission-volume that tells of strength and comfort gained from his words, away on the other side of that India which in his days was as dream-land, as wonder-land. I may as well give the pathetic little bit. Mrs Mason among the Karens writes: 'Two days passed when they came again, saying the money was all gone. At first I felt disposed to rebuke them, but turned to my closet for an hour, giving the time to prayer, and to my dear little help-book "Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices." In that time God taught me what to do, and strength was given for the day.' Verily 'he, being dead, yet speaketh.'

Various explanations suggest themselves as to the absence of memorial of Brooks's outward-life.

(1.) It so happens that the 'Registers' of his University are singularly defective at the period of his attendance; so much so that even the sweet-natured Historian was moved to these severe censures: 'Hitherto we have given in the list of the yearly Commencers, but now must break off. Let Thomas Smith, University-Register, bear the blame, who, about this year, entering into his office, was so negligent that, as one saith, Cum fuit Academiæ a memoriâ, omnia tradidit oblivioni. I can hardly in-hold from inveighing on his memory, carelessness being dishonesty in public persons so entrusted.'

(2.) He was excluded from the 'Worthies' of Fuller by his rule, that 'the living' were 'omitted.' How often the reader sighs over like dismissal of other names as still 'surviving.'

(3.) The 'Fire' of London destroyed the MSS. of Ashe, and various fellow-labourers who had collected for the Lives of the elder and later Puritans, including 'The Ejected' of 1662. Beyond all question Thomas Brooks held an honoured place therein. Then again the same 'Fire,' destroying the different Churches in which Brooks officiated, destroyed with them all their Registers and Records. So that New-court and other authorities are blank in respect of dates, and almost everything else. Add to all this, his own singularly reticent and modest 'hiding' of self—his absolute

indifference to fame, other than the love of those who might 'profit' by his writings: and he yearned for that, as the close of his 'Epistles Dedicatory' shew. As it is, after having expended fully the maximum of labour and 'painfulness'—as the old Divines say,—in seeking to illumine the memory of this 'dead Saint,' I can only offer a minimum of result: and yet our little is relatively large to what has hitherto been known.

It is not ascertained in what city, town, or village Thomas Brooks was born: not even in what county. The very nativeness of his name has multiplied the difficulties of determining it. In 'this fair England' 'brooks' flash by meadow and woodland everywhere; and as familiar and frequent is his name. Certain turns of expression, certain apparently local words, occurring in his volumes, have made us feel assured that in this County or in that we should discover his family: but lo! the phrase and word proved to be common to many: and our toil went for nothing, save morsels of fact about others, unexpectedly turning up. From his 'Will'—which we have discovered, and print for the first time—we fondly hoped to trace him to Berkshire: but again were disappointed, spite of complete and carefully preserved 'Registers,' and all courtesy and helpfulness from their custodiers. From a 'Memorial' again, of Lancashire 'Worthies,' by the saintly Oliver Heywood—unpublished—which notices his death, in a little record that is useful, we half-anticipated to be able to claim him for it; but all inquiries leave us in uncertainty. Besides, the orthography of the name confuses: for just as there were among Divines a John Howes as well as a John Howe, a John Owens as well as a John Owen, a Thomas Adam as well as a Thomas Adams, even a John Milton as well as the John Milton, so our Thomas Brooks is sometimes met with—even early—as now Thomas Brooke, and now Thomas Brookes and Brook—the penultimate being his own spelling on the title-page of 'Precious Remedies' [2d ed. 1653] and 'Unsearchable Riches' [1657, 1st ed.], though in the 'Epistles' he adheres to Brooks. Little do your arm-chair-easy critics know of the honest work spent in furnishing such 'Memoirs'—slight and unsatisfying though they be—as they magisterially discuss and dismiss with penurious thanks! Personally we have no plaint, much less complaint, to make: for our labours have been more than duly appreciated: but we feel constrained to remind those who may be tempted to regard a given 'Life' as insufficient, that in ninety-nine cases of a hundred what appears is as the one to the ninety-nine of anxious though fruitless inquiries. The Manuscript 'entry' of Oliver Hey wood referred to a short way back—and which will appear in its own place—gives his age at death as '72,' but by a clerical blunder probably, writes 1678 for 1680, the actual year of his decease. If 1680 was intended, then his birth-year must have been 1608—John Milton's also; if calculated from 1678, two years sooner, 1606. It seems likely that the former is the accurate date.

We are shut out from all insight into ancestry, parentage, and childhood, and 'boy' surroundings of our Worthy—whether he were of 'blue blood' descent, or of a 'godly' or worldly fatherhood and motherhood, whether 'in populous city pent,' or blown upon by the freshening influences of rural life. We do not know his 'School,' 'Schoolmasters,' or 'Schoolmates.' The whole 'make' of the man—as it is expressed in his Writings—warrants us in assuming that his 'home' was a 'church in the house,' and his training the grave, serious, yet not morose but blithesome one, of the Puritans. By his '17th' year—at latest—the one University 'date' that survives through the heedlessness of that scion of the immortal Smiths rebuked by Fuller—he was at College, at 'Emmanuel', Cambridge. This was the Puritan College par excellence: the illustrious Founder of it—Sir Walter Mildmay—having been flouted by Elizabeth for his 'Puritan foundation.' So that we can scarcely

err in finding in this choice confirmation of Puritan-parentage. The entry is as follows:

'Thomas Brooks: matriculated as pensioner of Emanuel, July 7th 1625.'

'Pensioner' must not be misunderstood as indicating narrow circumstances, much less poverty. John Milton was entered as 'pensioner,' only a few months previously, at a sister-college. There were four grades, the 'greater pensioner,' the 'lesser pensioner,' 'sizars,' and 'scholars.' These distinctions designate differing rank. All the first three lived as now we are accustomed to say on the Continent, *en pension*, *id est*, paid for their board and education, and in this respect were distinct from the scholars properly so called, who belonged to the foundation. The 'greater pensioners' or 'fellow commoners' paid most. They were (as they still are) the sons of noble or 'gentle' families, and had the privilege of dining at the upper table in the common hall along with the fellows. The 'sizars,' on the other hand, were poorer students; they paid least; and, though receiving the same education with the others, held a lower rank and had inferior accommodation. Intermediate between the 'greater pensioners' and the 'sizars' were the 'lower pensioners;' and it was (as it is still) to this class that the bulk of the students in all the colleges at Cambridge belonged. By 'pensioner' after Brooks's name we are no doubt to understand 'lesser pensioner;' so that, as with the scrivener-father of the bard of 'Paradise Lost,' his parents were in good circumstances. When we know that Jeremy Taylor entered as pauper scholaris, and Sibbes as a 'sizar,' it had needed no vindication had Master Thomas Brooks taken his position in either class; but the matter-of-fact is as stated, and it is but right to state it. He must have been well born, and born as a 'gentleman.'

Brooks, in 'entering' Emanuel College on July 7th 1625, as above, had for Master that one of all the heads of Colleges, 'whose presence,' to quote the words of an unchallengeable authority—Professor David Masson—'was the most impressive.' 'He was,' says Fuller—whose Churchism never for a moment hindered his generous recognition of worth and wit in whomsoever found—'the greatest pupil-monger in England in man's memory, having sixteen fellow-commoners, most heirs to fair estates, admitted in one year at Queen's College. As William the Popular of Nassau was said to have won a subject from the King of Spain to his own party every time he put off his hat, so was it commonly said in the College, that every time when Master Preston plucked off his hat to Dr Davenant, the College master, he gained a chamber or study for one of his pupils.'² He was pre-eminently a Puritan in its grandest and—at the time—reproached sense. Chosen 'Master' of Emanuel in 1622, he carried most of his pupils with him from Queen's thither; and as its Head, kept up the reputation of that House as the most Puritanical in the University. His 'Life' belongs to History: it yet remains unwritten, as, shame to Cambridge, his priceless Works remain to this day uncollected and inedited. It was no common advantage to our student to have been placed under such a 'Master'; and his margin-references to 'Dr Preston,' and the same to 'Dr Sibbes,' together with occasional 'sayings' of the latter not met with elsewhere, assure us that he sat reverently at their feet.⁴ His fellow-students at 'Emanuel'—assuming that he 'proceeded' through the ordinary curriculum of study—included Thomas Shepard, and John Cotton, and Thomas Hooker—afterwards the famous trio of New England 'Divines,' and spiritually the founders and fathers of Massachusetts. To the same College, earlier and later, belonged the holy Bedell, the many-sided Joseph Hall, the large-thoughted Ralph Cudworth, and these still lustrous Puritan 'Worthies'—Samuel Croke, John Yates, John Stoughton, Ezekiel Culverwell, Stephen Marshall, Samuel Hudson, Nathanael Ward. Elsewhere we have sketched his

contemporaries in the University. Beginning with that name which overshadows all the rest—John Milton—the roll ends with Waller and Randolph.⁶ From the reasons assigned, it is our hap and mishap not to be able to trace the ‘progress’ of Brooks. In all likelihood, he ‘proceeded’ from degree to degree, although in common with other of the Puritans, he places none on his title-pages, preferring the nobler designation, ‘Preacher of the Gospel,’ or ‘Preacher of the Word.’ Of his entire University course we have an incidental notice in one of those rare snatches of autobiography which occur in his writings. It occurs in a tractate, of which more anon, and runs thus: ‘For a close of this branch.... I shall only say this: being compelled thereunto by some—that I do believe that I have spent more money at the University, and in helps to learning, than several of these petitioners are worth, though haply I have not been such a proficient as those that have spent less.’ He adds: ‘I am a lover of the tongues, and do by daily experience find, that knowledge in the original tongues is no small help for the understanding of Scripture,’ &c. When Brooks left the University we cannot tell. The periods of residence and attendance varied; some being shorter and others longer. If he remained, as Sibbes and Gouge his contemporaries did, from nine to twelve years, adding the former to 1625, we are advanced to 1634; by the latter to 1637. He must have been ‘licensed’ or ‘ordained’ as a ‘Preacher of the Gospel’ by 1640 at latest. For in the tractate already quoted [‘Cases Considered and Resolved’], which is dated 1653, he says, ‘I am compelled to tell you that I have, by the gracious assistance of God, preached publicly, the Gospel, above these thirteen years; and the greatest part of those years I have spent in preaching the word in London, where God hath given me many precious seals of my ministry, which are now my comfort, and in the day of Christ will be my crown.’ At this time, too, he must have been involved in many labours; for in his ‘Epistle’ to ‘the conscientious reader,’ he thus appeals in regard to ‘errata.’ ‘I desire that thou wouldst cast a mantle of love over the mistakes of the Printer, I having no opportunity to wait on the press, by reason of my many engagements other ways.’ How one wishes that the good man had had a little more communicative egotism, and confided to us when and where, before coming to London, and in London, he had ‘preached the Word!’ By 1648 he was Preacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles, London: such being his designation in the title-page of his first publication, viz., his Sermon, entitled ‘The Glorious Day of the Saints’ Appearance, calling for a glorious conversation from all Believers,’ which was ‘delivered.... at the interment of the corpse of that renowned Commander, Colonel Thomas Rainsborough, who was treacherously murdered at Doncaster, October 29. 1648, and honourably interred the 14th of November following, in the Chapel at Wapping, near London.’ This ‘Sermon’ is on various accounts important and interesting biographically. It furnishes certain facts which must be brought together. First of all, he must by this time have won a commanding position, to have been appointed the ‘Preacher’ on so public and sorrowful an occasion. The honour came most unexpectedly, as was the giving of the Sermon to the public unintended by himself. On these two points in his ‘Epistle’ he thus speaks: ‘When I preached upon the subject of the saints’ glorious appearance at the last, He that knows all hearts and thoughts, knows that I had not the least thought to put it to press. And that, partly, because the meditations following were not the meditations of a week, no, nor of two days, but of some few hours: I having but short warning to provide; and other things falling in within the compass of that short time that did divert my thoughts some other ways. But mainly because of that little, little worth that is in it.’ Then he continues: ‘And yet, Right Honourable, the intentions of some to put it to the press in case I would not consent to have it printed—by which means truth and myself might have been co-partners in suffering—and

the strong importunity of many precious souls, hath borne me down and subdued me to them.’ Again: It is dedicated to the ‘Right Honourable Thomas, Lord Fairfax, Lord General of all the Parliament’s Forces in England,’ as to a friend and familiar, to whom it is his pride to ‘testify,’ not only to himself, ‘but to all the world,’ his ‘thankful remembrance and due acknowledgment’ of his Lordship’s ‘undeserved respect’ towards him.’² In an age of venal flattery, the ‘Epistles Dedicatory’ of Brooks are throughout simple, plain-spoken, searching, direct as an old Hebrew prophet’s ‘burden:’ hence this language certainly meant what it said. But specially one allusion is at once a key to other personal references scattered up and down his writings, and an explanation of how the years preceding 1640, as above, were occupied. Near the close of the Sermon,—and it is characteristic of the man, that only about a single page is devoted to Rainsborough himself,—he reveals ‘service’ with the lamented Commander. ‘As for this thrice-honoured champion now in the dust: for his enjoyment of God, from my own experience, being with him both at sea and land, I have abundance of sweetness and satisfaction in my own spirit, which to me exceedingly sweetens so great a loss.’ I have said that this ‘testimony’ furnishes a key to other references. I allude to incidental intimations of his having been abroad. Thus, in the ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ to his ‘Precious Remedies,’ as one of the reasons for its publication he gives this: ‘I have many precious friends in several countries, who are not a little desirous that my pen may reach them, now my voice cannot. I have formerly been, by the help of the mighty God of Jacob, a weak instrument of good to them, and cannot but hope and believe that the Lord will also bless those labours to them: they being in part the fruit of their desires and prayers, &c. Again: In his ‘Unsearchable Riches,’ he thus bars one of his many fearless rebukes: ‘If you do not give them [ministers of the Gospel] honourable countenance, Jews and Turks, Papists and Pagans, will in the great day of account rise up against you and condemn you. I could say much of what I have observed in other nations and countries concerning this thing; but I forbear. Should I speak what I have seen, many professors [professing Christians] might well blush.’ Once more: ‘In the ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ to his ‘Heaven on Earth,’ there occur these personal reminiscences, tantalizing by their very suggestiveness: ‘I have observed in some terrible storms I have been in, that the mariners’ and the passengers’ want of assurance, and of those other pearls of price that in this Treatise are presented to public view, hath caused their countenance to change,’ &c. Then the ‘Epistle’ itself is addressed to ‘The Right Honourable the Generals of the Fleets of the Commonwealth of England, and to those gallant Worthies (my much honoured friends), who, with the noble generals, have deeply jeopardized their lives unto many deaths, out of love to their country’s good, and out of respect to the interest of Christ and the faithful people of this Commonwealth;’ and of these,—besides the parenthesis italicized in the foregoing,—he assigns as one reason for so ‘tendering’ his volume to them. ‘Because you are my friends, and that cordial love and friendship which I have found from you hath stamped in my affections a very high valuation of you.’ Once more: a little further on, he says, ‘I have been some years at Sea, and through grace I can say that I would not exchange my Sea experiences for England’s riches. I am not altogether ignorant of the troubles, trials, temptations, dangers, and deaths, that do attend you.’ In a margin-note at the close he adds, ‘Had I a purse suitable to my heart, not a poor, godly soldier or sailor in England, who carries his life in one hand, but should have one of these books in the other.’ Further: In his ‘London’s Lamentations,’ speaking of the wind, he observes: ‘In some places of the world—where I have been—the motions of the wind are steady and constant, which mariners call their trade-wind.’⁴ Besides these notices in his writings, by his ‘Will,’ which will be found in its own

place, he leaves a 'legacy' to 'Vice-Admiral Goodson's eldest daughter's son, that she had by her husband Captain Magger.'

Combining these various personal allusions,—which have hitherto been utterly overlooked,—it is plain that Brooks for 'some years' was 'at sea.' The question is, in what capacity? A consideration of the facts in the career of the two 'Commanders' named, viz., Colonel Rainsborough and Vice-admiral Goodson, with, by implication, a Captain Magger, lead me to the conclusion that he must have acted as 'chaplain,' both 'at Sea,' and 'on Land,' that is, in the Fleet and with the Army—alternating as the Commanders were then wont to do with the one and the other. My reasons are these, in brief: Colonel Rainsborough, with whom Brooks informs us he was 'at Sea and on Land,' is traceable on both by help of the 'State Papers.' He was the son of that William Rainsborough of the Navy, who was 'Captain' of the 'Marhonour' in 1635: of the 'Triumph' in the Fleet of the Earl of Nortumberland in 1636: 'admiral' of the Parliamentary Fleet which revolted in 1648, when the sailors seized their admiral and quietly put him ashore: and who survived the Restoration, and was imprisoned by Charles II. In all probability his son the 'Colonel' served under his father in the Navy; and the years 1635, and 1636 on to 1639–40, thus correspond with the unaccounted for period of Brooks's life. Then with reference to Brooks having also been 'with him on the Land,' our 'Colonel' is found on shore at the siege of Bristol, the surrender of Woodstock, the capture of Berkeley Castle, and elsewhere throughout the Civil War, until his 'death,' of which below. Of Vice-admiral Goodson, very little remains; but as Captain William Goodson, he was commander and vice-admiral at Jamaica from 1655 to 1657, and received on 9th January 1658 an order for £500 from the Council of State, as a gratuity for his extraordinary services and expenses.² During these years, 1655–1658, Brooks could not be with Goodson; but he may have been in earlier years. It is a pity we have not fuller memoirs of those gallant sailor-soldiers and soldier-sailors, who emulated the brave deeds of Blake, and whose services on Sea and Land bear equally the impress of genius and devotion. I am not without hope that in the progress of the 'Calendars' of the Papers in our National Archives, light may yet be shed on this altogether unrecognised portion of our Worthy's story. The dates and facts alike of the Rainsborough heroes accord with his allusions to what he had seen. By 1648, Brooks—as we have found—was 'Preacher of the Gospel' at 'Thomas Apostles,' London. In the same year, '26th December,' and on the title-page of his second publication, viz., his first Sermon before the House of Commons, entitled, 'God's Delight in the Progress of the Upright, especially in Magistrates' Uprightness and constancy in ways of justice and righteousness in these Apostatizing Times, notwithstanding all discouragements, oppositions,' &c., he is still designated 'Preacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles;' so also, but in wording that reminds us of Richard Baxter's and other old title-pages, in his second sermon, of '8th October 1650,' viz., his 'Hypocrites Discovered,' in celebration of Cromwell's 'crowning victory' at Dunbar. He is therein described as 'Thomas Brooks, a weak and unworthy Teacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles, London.' Of this first known 'benefice' or Church of Brooks, much curious antiquarian lore will be found in Newcourt's 'Repertorium Ecclesiasticum Parochiale Londinense' (2 vols. folio, 1708); and thither our readers are referred. But 'the Fire' of 1666 destroyed the whole Registers, and no trace of our Puritan Rector remains, save that by the courtesy of the present Incumbent of the united Parish, within whose bounds it stood, I learn a 'Mr Brooks' resided in one of the 'houses which belonged to the Church.'² As there was a 'parsonage-house' before the Fire, this was probably our Brooks.

We cannot be far amiss in concluding that it was most probably to the impression made by his sermon for Rainsborough that Brooks owed his appointment to 'preach' before Parliament. The former sermon was delivered on 'November 14. 1648,' the latter in the succeeding month, 'December 26th.' By 1652–53 Brooks had been transferred from 'Thomas Apostles' to 'Margaret's, Fish-street hill.' In his 'Precious Remedies' and in his 'Cases Considered and Resolved,' the title-pages (of 1652–53) designate him 'a willing Servant unto God, and the faith of his people, in the glorious Gospel of Christ at Margaret's, Fish-street hill,' and so through all his Writings up to 1662. It was not without opposition that our Worthy passed into this higher and wider sphere. The whole trying story is given by Brooks himself in the pamphlet already more than once quoted. It is printed in extenso in our Appendix to this our Memoir. To it, therefore, all are referred. It is an invaluable contribution to his Biography and has many characteristic touches. It lies on the surface that the gist of the entire opposition lay in the Puritan-Rector's refusal—stern and fearless as that of Ambrose and John Calvin—to administer 'Baptism' and the 'Lord's Supper' to those palpably 'unworthy,'—a controversy which has a singular literature of its own from Brooks's treatise to the folio of William Morice, Esq., of Devon (1660), and the well-nigh innumerable polemics of Collinges, and Blake, and Drake, and Humphrey, and Saunders, and 'Tilenus before the Triers,' until in the next century it culminated in the 'dismissal' of Jonathan Edwards of America. Brooks's 'Cases Considered' did its work, and he kept his position. The 'Parish' of 'St Margaret's, Fish-street-hill,' was a populous and a 'burdensome' one. Full details will be found in Newcourt, but no memorial of Brooks. The Church is memorable, as having been the spot 'where that fatal Fire first began that turned London into a ruinous heap.'²

What kind of 'preaching' the Parishioners got from their Pastor, his books attest. From 1652 onward these followed each other in rapid succession and with unflagging success. There was his 'Precious Remedies' in 1652; his 'Epistles' or 'Approbations' to Everard's 'Gospel-Treasury Opened,' and to the 'Works' of Dr Thomas Taylor, 1653; 'Heaven on Earth' in 1654; his 'Unsearchable Riches,' 'Apples of Gold,' and 'String of Pearls,' in 1657; his 'Epistle' to John Durant's 'Altum Silentium,' in 1659; his 'Mute Christian' and 'Believer's Last Day his best Day,' 1660. In the last year—1660—his name stands beside that of Thomas Goodwin in the 'Renunciation and Declaration of the Ministers of Congregational Churches, and Public Preachers, of the same judgment, living in and about the city of London: against the late horrid insurrection and rebellion acted in the said City' (1661, 4to). In the same year also—1660—he preached the 'Sermons' that compose his 'Ark for all God's Noahs,' in the Church of St Olave's, Bread-street—Milton's street—where, as from the Epistle we learn, 'God blessed them then to those Christians that attended on his ministry.' Newcourt makes no mention of a St Olave's in 'Bread-street,' but probably it is intended by 'St Olave's, Hart-street.' Daniel Mills was the 'Rector,' who would cordially welcome Brooks as a 'Lecturer' to his Church. When, in 1662, he published his 'Ark for all God's Noahs in a gloomy stormy day,' he had to describe himself on its title-page as 'late Preacher of the Gospel at Margaret's near Fish-street, and still Preacher of the Word in London, and Pastor of a Congregation there.' The little word 'late,' and the other 'still,' mark two events: the former, the 'Ejectment' of 1662; the latter, that while, with the illustrious 'two thousand' he had resigned 'St Margaret's' for 'conscience' sake, he nevertheless did not and could not lay down his commission as a 'minister of the Gospel' and Servant of Christ. It needeth not that I tell the pathetic and heroic story of 'Black' St Bartholomew's Day. It is as imperishable as is the fame of 'this England.' I simply say, that of the many noble and true men who all over the land stood

faithful to their convictions, none was nobler, none worthier than the 'ejected' Rector of 'St Margaret's.' The closing portion of his 'Farewell Sermon,' and it has not a single bitter or controversial word, appears in all the 'Collections' of the 'Ejected' 'Farewell Sermons.' We give it in the Appendix to this our Memoir. The 'Epistles' or 'Approbations' also, which appeared previous to 1662, follow the 'Farewell Sermon' there.³ They may be compared with those of Sibbes. They pay worthy tribute to the worthy.

He had not himself alone to consider when he went out from 'St Margaret's.' He had married, probably many years before—though the date is not known—a daughter of the excellent John Burgess. It does not appear whether he had any family; but his wife—whose name was Martha—was indeed a 'help-meet,'—a woman of high-toned yet meekly tender principle, and all hut the idol of her husband. She died in 1676, and her Funeral Sermon was preached by (probably) Dr John Collinges, of Norwich. Some extracts are added in our Appendix, from 'notes' which were no doubt furnished by Brooks himself.

Thus self-placed, because conscience-placed, among the 'Ejected' of 1662, Brooks nevertheless remaining a Christ-anointed 'Preacher of the Gospel,' quietly continued his ministry within his Parish. Evidently, multitudes clave to their beloved and honoured Pastor, for to the praise of the laity be it said, the very life-blood of the different 'Churches' vacated by the 'two thousand' flowed into the humbler 'chapels' and 'conventicles' of the enforced Nonconformists. Brooks's 'chapel' occupied a site near his old Church in Fish-street, called the 'Pavement,' Moorfields. The only memorial that remains of it is preserved in certain MSS. in the custody of the Williams Library, London—drawn up by a Rev. Josiah Thompson—but it consists of a mere blundering transcript of Calamy's blunders. He gives Brooks as the founder of the congregation, but dates it from 1660 or the Restoration, which is disproved by his preaching his 'Farewell Sermon' in St Margaret's in 1662.³ Here our 'Confessor,' now growing old, continued his pristine unmistakeable, intense, powerful, and 'savoury' exhibition of Christ and 'The Gospel;' and as in brighter days, he issued volume upon volume, which bore the same characteristics and met with the same welcome as 'of old.' For proof, in his address to the 'Reader' prefixed to his 'Privy Key of Heaven' (1665), he was able to say gratefully, as one of the reasons for again publishing, 'That favour, that good acceptance and fair quarter, that my other poor labours have found, not only in this Nation but in other countries also, hath put me upon putting pen to paper once more.' Even in the year of sore trial—1662—he could say, 'My former poor labours and endeavours have been acceptable to some of all ranks and degrees, and they have been blest to some of all ranks and degrees; and I have been encouraged, whetted, and stirred up by some on all hands, once more to cast in my net, and now I have done it.' Thus was it unto the end: for in 1675, in the 'Epistle Dedicatory' to the 'Golden Key,' he uses much the same language: 'I must confess that that general acceptance that my former labours have found, both in the Nation and in foreign parts; and that singular blessing that has attended them from on high, hath been none of the least encouragements to me once more to cast in my mite into the common treasury.'² His 'Crown and Glory of Christianity,' a large massive quarto, appeared also in 1662; his 'Privy Key of Heaven,' and 'A Heavenly Cordial for the Plague,' in 1665; his 'Cabinet of Jewels,' in 1669; his 'London's Lamentations,' in 1670; and his 'Golden Key' and his 'Paradise Opened,' in 1676. He was ever 'about his Father's business;' his life a consecrated and burning, almost flaming one. Little casual references in 'Epistles Dedicatory' and otherwise, intimate engagements elsewhere, and 'absences' from 'the press' so as to be

unable to correct errata. And so the Christ-like man went 'in and out,' a 'workman' needing not 'to be ashamed.' Through all the terrible 'Plague' year, which Defoe has made immortal he was at his post, winning thereby a golden word in the Reliquiæ Baxterianæ. After the equally appalling 'Fire,' he stood forth like another Ezekiel in his terrors, and yet soft as Jeremiah in his expostulations with the still careless, rejecting, neglecting. As he grew old he mellowed tenderly and winningly. He had 'troops of friends.' The 'Epistles Dedicatory' and incidental notices inform us of intimate fellowship with the foremost names of the period for worth and benevolence. Many made him their Almoner of 'monies,' especially during the dread '1662' and '1666.' His own circumstances placed him in comfort and ease. Our Story of this venerable Puritan is well-nigh told. Behind the activities of his more public life there was a second marriage, as it would appear, about 1677–78. In his 'Will' he lovingly speaks of her as his 'dear and honoured wife whom God hath made all relations to meet in one.' Her name was Cartwright. Theirs was a brief union; she spring-young, he winter-old. He drew up his 'Last Testament' on March 20., 1680. It is a very characteristic document, repeating before-published quaint words. It will be found in our Appendix. He died a little afterwards, viz. on September 27., aged 72. John Reeve, his particular acquaintance and companion in sufferings, for conscience' sake, preached his 'Funeral Sermon.' It was published; and thus he sums up the character of the fine old man and 'faithful minister' of Jesus Christ:—

'Now, to close up, in commemoration of our dear friend deceased, who lived so desired, and died so lamented, I shall modestly and truly offer some remarks about his personal and ministerial endowments to your view.

'First, For his personal endowments, he was certainly,

'1. A person of a very sweet nature and temper: so affable, and courteous, and cheerful, that he gained upon all that conversed with him; and if any taxed him with any pride or moroseness, or distantialness in his carriage, it must be only such as did not know him. He had so winning a way with him, he might bid himself welcome into whatsoever house he entered. Pride and moroseness are bad qualities for a man of his employ, and make men afraid of the ways of God, for fear they should never enjoy a good day after.

'2. A person of a very great gravity: and could carry a majesty in his face when there was occasion, and make the least guilt tremble in his presence with his very countenance. I never knew a man better loved, nor more dreaded. God had given him such a spirit with power, that his very frowns were darts, and his reproofs sharper than swords. He would not condemn familiarity, but hated that familiarity that bred contempt.

'3. A person of a very large charity. He had large bowels, and a large heart; a great dexterity in the opening of the bowels of others, as well as his own, to works of mercy, that I think I may say there is not a Church in England that hath more often and more liberal contributions for poor ministers and other poor Christians than this is, according to the proportion of their abilities.

'4. A person of a wonderful patience. Notwithstanding the many weaknesses and infirmities, which for a long time have been continually, without ceasing as it were, trying their skill to pull down his frail body to the dust, and at last effected it, yet I never heard an impatient word drop from him. When I came to visit him, and asked him, 'How do you, Sir?' he answered, 'Pretty well: I bless God I am well, I am contented with the will of my Father: my Father's will and mine is but one will.' It

made me often think of that Isa 33:24, 'The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.' Sense of pardon took away sense of sickness.

'5. A person of a very strong faith in the promises of both worlds: and he could not be otherwise, being such a continual student in the Covenant. He feared nothing of himself or others, knowing the promise and oath of God would stand firm, and the Head of the Church would see to the safety of all his members, here and hereafter. Secondly, For his ministerial endowments, he was

'1. An experienced minister. From the heart to the heart; from the conscience to the conscience. He had a body of Divinity in his head, and the power of it upon his heart.

'2. A laborious minister: as his works in press and pulpit are undeniable witness of. To preach so often, and print so much, and yet not satisfied till he could imprint also his works upon the hearts of his people; which is the best way of printing that I know, and the greatest task of a minister of Christ.

'3. He was a minister who delighted in his work. It was his meat and drink to labour in that great work, insomuch that under his weakness he would be often preaching of little sermons—as he called them—to those that came to visit him, even when by reason of his distemper they were very hardly able to understand them.

'4. He was a successful minister: the instrument in the hand of God for the conversion of many souls about this City and elsewhere.

'5. And now he is at rest. And though he is gone, he is not lost; he is yet useful to the Church of God, and being dead he yet speaks by his example and writings, which were very profitable and spiritual.' This modest, unexaggerated, heart-full portraiture is worthy of the man as the man was, with emphasis, worthy of it. It were to blur the sharp, nice lines to add of our own fainter and distant words. We deem them fitting close to our Memoir. A single other sentence. There is no accredited portrait of Brooks. Granger mentions one as being on the title-page of his 'Unsearchable Riches,' but we have the whole of the editions, and there is no portrait whatever. Doubtless the Historian mis-remembered and was thinking of the small unsatisfactory miniature prefixed, along with numerous others, to some of the collections of the 'Farewell Sermons.' And so we introduce our Worthy and his Books: one who, while living, as 'ever under the great Task-master's eye,' wore in all simpleness and truth, 'The grand old name of gentleman, Defamed by every charlatan, And soiled with all ignoble use.'—[In Memoriam, c. x.] Alexander B. Grosart.

Liverpool.

APPENDIX TO MEMOIR A.—Controversy on Appointment to St Margaret's, Fish Street: See ante, pages xxxi, xxxiv, et alibi.

CASES CONSIDERED and RESOLVED. wherein

All the tender godly conscientious Ministers in England (Whether for a Congregationall, or a Presbyteriall way) are concerned. or Pills to Purge Malignants. And all prophane, ignorant, and scandalous persons. (But more particularly Calculated for the Meridian of Margarets Fishstreet-hill) from those gross conceits that they have of their Children's right to Baptisme; and of their owne right to the Supper of the Lord, &c. also Good Councell to bad men. Or friendly

advise (in severall particulars) to unfriendly Neighbours. By Thomas Brooks, a willing Servant unto God, and the Faith of his People, in the glorious Gospel of Christ, at Margarets Fishstreet-hill.

Mallem ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare. Luther.

Si veritas est causa discordiæ mori possum tacere non possum. Jerome.

LONDON:

Printed by M. Simmons, for John Hancock and are to be sold at the first Shop in Popes-Head-Alley, next to Cornhill 1653. To the Conscientious Reader The world is full of books; and of how many may it be said, that they do but proclaim the vanity of the writer, and procure weariness, if not vexation, to the reader, in this knowing and censorious age! What I have written is out of faithfulness to Christ, and love to souls. If my pains shall prove advantageous for the internal and eternal good of any poor souls, I shall count it reward enough. I doubt not but those that are spiritual will find something of the Spirit in what follows, and for that cause will relish and love it, though others may therefore stand at the greater distance from it. Surely, where truth comes, the children of truth will entertain it, and ask nobody leave. In these days, they that have least right to ordinances do make the greatest noise in crying out for ordinances. God's ordinances are choice pearls, and yet too often cast before swine, which, doubtless, hath provoked the Lord to shed the blood of many among us who have unworthily drunk the blood of his Son, and trampled it under their feet as an unholy thing, Heb 10:29. Though my candle be but little, yet I must not hide it under a bushel. Though I have but one talent, yet I must not hide it in a napkin. I hope thou hast that anointing of the Spirit that will teach thee not to reject the fruit for the tree's sake; nor so much to mind the man as the matter. But, lest I should hold thee too long in the porch, I will briefly acquaint thee with the reasons that have induced me to present to the world what follows; and so draw to a close. The reasons are these:

First, That the honour, truth, and ways of Christ, which I hope are dearer to me than my life, and which are struck at through my sides, may be vindicated, 1Sa 2:30.

Secondly, That the mouth of iniquity, or, which is all one, that the foul mouths of profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons, may be effectually stopped, Psa 107:42; Tit 1:11; Psa 63:11.

Thirdly, That the honest, just, and righteous proceedings of the Honourable Committee may be manifested, and not smothered by the false reports of any profane, malignant spirits that were present, who are apt and ready enough to call good evil, and evil good, light darkness, and darkness light, &c., Isa 5:20.

Fourthly, That the importunate desires of several ministers and Christians may be satisfied, especially those to whom I preach, &c.

Fifthly, That my ministry and good name, which should be dearer to me than my life, may be vindicated, 2Co 10:16. 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold,' Pro 22:1. 'A good name is better than precious ointment,' saith Solomon, Ecc 7:1. The initial letter (■) of the Hebrew word (■■■■, tob) that in this text is rendered good, is bigger than ordinary, to shew the more than ordinary excellency of a good name amongst men. The moralists say of fame, or of a man's good name, Omnia si perdas, famam servare memento; qua semel amissa postea nullus eris, i. e. Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet

to preserve that jewel of a good name. But if any shall delight to blot and blur my name, that their own may shine the brighter, I shall desire them frequently to remember a sweet saying of Austin: *Quis-quis volens detrahit famæ meæ, nolens addit mercedi meæ*, He that willingly takes from my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward, Mat 5:11-12. The remembrance of this, and the bird in the bosom—conscience—singing, makes a heaven of joy in my heart, in the midst of all the trials that do attend me, 2Co 1:12.

Sixthly, That others may be undeceived, who are apt enough to judge that there are other things, and worse things, charged upon me than indeed there is. And indeed, some say already that there were eighteen things, others that there were six-and-twenty things, charged against me; and all this to render my person and my doctrine contemptible in the world, &c., Jer 20:10-11; Psa 35:11.

Seventhly, That the malignant and profane petitioners, and others of their stamp, may be either satisfied, convinced, and reformed, or that they may be found speechless, and without excuse in the day of Christ.

Eighthly, Because my case is a general case, and reaches all the godly, conscientious ministers in England, be they of one judgment or another. And clearly if, upon the following charge against me, the profane, ignorant, and malignant party should out and rout the godly ministers in the nations, I wonder where there would be found a conscientious minister that should not upon these grounds be outed and routed!

Reader, I desire that thou wouldst cast a mantle of love over the mistakes of the printer, I having no opportunity to wait upon the press, by reason of my many engagements other ways. I will not by any prolepsis detain thee at the door, but desire that the God of all consolations would bless thee with all external, internal, and eternal blessings, that thy actions may be prosperous, thy troubles few, thy comforts many, thy life holy, thy death happy, and thy soul lodged for ever in the bosom of Christ. So I remain Thine, so far as thou art Christ's,

Thomas Brooks. A Short Preamble That I intended to make before the Honourable Committee for Plundered Ministers, that Truth and myself might be the better vindicated and cleared.

Gentlemen,—It was a divine saying of Seneca, *Qui boni viri famam perdidit ne conscientiam perderet*, no man sets a better rate upon virtue than he that loseth a good name to keep a good conscience. He that hath a good conscience sits, Noah-like, quiet and still in the greatest combustions and distractions. *Conscientia pura semper segura*, a good conscience hath sure confidence; it makes a man as bold as a lion, Pro 28:1.

I remember Calvin, writing to the French king, saith that opposition is *evangelii genius*, the black angel that dogs the gospel at the heels. And certainly, where Christ is like to gain most, and Satan like to lose most, there Satan in his instruments will stir and rage most; yet, if every opposer of the gospel and the saints were turned into a devil, that old saying would be found true, *Veritas stat in aperto campo*, truth stands in the open fields, yea, and it will make those stand in whom it lives; yea, it will make them stand cheerfully, resolutely, and unmoveably, in the face of the greatest, highest, and hottest oppositions.

Concerning these profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous petitioners, I shall say, as Lactantius saith of Lucian, *Nec diis nec hominibus pepercit*, he spared neither God nor man. Such

are these petitioners. It is said of Catiline, that he was *monstrum ex variis diversisque, inter se pugnantibus naturis conflatum*, a compound and bundle of warring lusts and vices. Such are these petitioners. Historians say that tigers rage and are mad when they smell the fragrant of spices. Such are these petitioners, when they smell the fragrant of the graces of God's Spirit in the principles and practices, in the lives and religious exercises, of the people of God.

Gentlemen, I am compelled to tell you that I have, by the gracious assistance of God, preached publicly the gospel above these thirteen years; and the greatest part of those years I have spent in preaching the word in London, where God hath given me many precious seals of my ministry, which are now my comfort, and in the day of Christ will be my crown. They are my 'living epistles,' they are my walking certificates, they are my letters testimonial, as Paul speaks, 2Co 3:1-2. And yet, in all this time, none have shewed themselves so malicious, impudent, and ignorant, as to petition against me, as these that stand now before you; yet am I confident that this act of theirs shall work for my external, internal, and eternal good, Rom 8:28 : and out of this eater, God will bring forth meat and sweetness to others also, Jdg 14:14.

Gentlemen, I shall now trouble your patience no further, but come now to answer to the things that these profane, malignant petitioners have charged against me in their petition to this Honourable Committee. To the Honourable Committee for Plundered Ministers The Humble Petition of the Parishioners of Margaret, New Fishstreet, London, whose Names are hereunto Subscribed;

Shewing,—That one Mr Thomas Brooks was, by order of your honours, dated the twenty-third of March 1651, appointed to preach for a month, next ensuing, as probationer, to the end that, upon the parishioners' and the said Mr Brooks's mutual trial of each other, the said Mr Brooks might continue, or your petitioners have some other to officiate amongst them. Your petitioners are humbly bold to offer to your honours' consideration that they have had trial of the said Mr Brooks ever since your honours' order, but cannot find that comfort to their souls they hoped; nor indeed is the said Mr Brooks so qualified to your petitioners' understandings as to remain any longer with them. And further, your petitioners say that the said Mr Brooks refuseth to afford your petitioners the use of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, nor will he bury their dead. The petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honours will be pleased to revoke your order, and give liberty to your petitioners for six months, to present a fit person to your honours to be their minister; and, in the mean time, that sequestrators may be appointed to provide for the service of the cure out of such money as shall arise for tithes out of the said parish. And, &c.

Queries upon the Malignants' Petition

Gentlemen,—In their petition they say, that I was to 'preach a month as probationer, and after a mutual trial of each other, I might continue, or the petitioners have some other to officiate amongst them.' To this I say,

(1.) That I never had any such thing by one or other propounded to me, to preach amongst them as probationer. It was only thus propounded to me: That at a full meeting, I was chosen by the honest and well-affected of the parish to come and preach amongst them. And I did more than twice or thrice declare to them before I came, that if they did expect anything else of me, I would not come; only I did declare my willingness to receive any among them into fellowship with us that the Lord had taken into fellowship with himself, and that were willing to walk in gospel order.

(2.) I say, that had they propounded the business to me as it is presented in their petition, I would never have come upon such terms, and that upon several reasons, which here I shall omit.

(3.) I say, that they had a trial of me all the winter; I preached above twenty sermons on the lecture nights before this order was granted or desired. Therefore I know not to what purpose I should preach among them upon trial, when they had beforehand so large a trial of me.

(4.) I say, that these profane, malignant petitioners had neither a hand in choosing of me, nor yet hearts to make any trial of my ministry, so far as I can understand. And therefore they may well have a black brand put upon them, as men void of common honesty and ingenuity, in abusing the honourable committee, and petitioning against me; whenas they were neither the major part of the parish by far, nor yet was the order of the committee granted to them; nor did the order of the committee give any power or liberty to these profane, malignant petitioners to choose some other to officiate, as they pretend. What greater dishonour and contempt can they cast upon the committee, than to declare to the world that they have given to them, that are so notoriously known for their profaneness and malignancy, an order to choose one to officiate amongst them! In their petition they further say, 'That they have had trial of me ever since your honours' order.' This is as far from truth as the petitioners are from being real friends to the present authority of the nation; for it is notoriously known, that they use not to hear me but others, whose malignant principles and practices are most suitable to their own.

Further, they say, 'They cannot find that comfort to their souls they hoped.' Here give me leave to query: [1.] How they could have any comfort from my ministry that did not attend it? [2.] But grant they did, I query, Whether their want of comfort did not spring rather from their want of faith to close with the word, and to feed upon the word, and to apply the word to their own souls, than from any defect in my preaching? 'The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it,' Heb 4:2. Faith and the word meeting make a happy mixture, a precious confection. When faith and the word is mingled together, then the word will be a word of power and life; then it will be a healing word, a quickening word, a comforting word, a saving word. Faith makes the soul fruitful; faith hath Rachel's eye and Leah's womb. Where faith is wanting, men's souls will be like the cypress; the more it is watered, the more it is withered. However, that tree that is not for fruit, is for the fire, Heb 6:8. Some say of king Midas—not true, but fabulous—that he had obtained of the gods, that whatsoever he touched should be turned into gold. I may truly say, in a spiritual sense, whatever faith touches it turns it into gold, into our good. A bee can suck honey out of a flower; so cannot a fly do. Faith will extract abundance of comfort out of the word, and gather one contrary out of another; honey out of the rock, Deu 32:36. [3.] I query whether their not finding comfort by my ministry did not rather spring from a judicial act of God rather than from anything in my ministry. God many times punishes men's neglect of the means, and their despising the means, and their barrenness under the means, &c., by giving them up to a spirit of slumber, by shutting their eyes, and closing up their hearts, as you may see in that Isa 6:9-10, 'And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.' A fat heart is a fearful plague. A fat heart is a most brutish and blockish heart, a heart fitted and prepared for wrath, Psa 119:70. These four keys, say the Rabbins, God keeps under his own girdle: (1.) the key of the womb, (2.) the key of the grave, (3.) the key of the rain, (4.) the key

of the heart. 'He openeth, and no man shutteth; and he shutteth, and no man openeth.' [4.] I query whether their not finding of comfort did not spring from the wickedness and baseness of their own hearts, Isa 29:13-14; Eze 33:30-33; Mat 15:4-10. When men bring pride, and prejudice, and resolvedness to walk after the ways of their own hearts, let the minister say what he will (as they in Jer 44:15, et seq., which I desire you will turn to and read), it is no wonder that they can find no comfort in the word. This is just as if the patient should cry out of the physician, Oh, he can find no comfort in anything he prescribes him, when he is resolved beforehand that he will rather die than follow his prescriptions. May not every one of these men's hearts say to him, as the heart of Apollodorus in the kettle, ἡ γὰρ σοὶ τὸ πᾶν, it is I have been the cause of this? I judge they may; and if they will not now acknowledge it to their humiliation, they will at last be forced to acknowledge it to their confusion and destruction in that day wherein the great Searcher of hearts shall judge the souls of men. [5.] I query whether all the godly conscientious ministers of one judgment or another in all England would not be outed and routed if this plea of profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons, that they cannot find no profit nor no comfort by their ministry, be admitted as a thing that has worth or weight in it, 1Ki 22:8-29. Without doubt, if this would carry the day against a godly ministry, we should hear a cry from all parts of the nation where such men are, 2Ch 36:16, Oh! what shall we do with such preachers as these be? We can find no comfort, nor no profit by their ministry. We shall have none of these, but we will have such as will preach pleasing things, Lam 2:14. We will have common-prayer-book men, and such that will administer sacraments to us, as in former good days, wherein there was no such difference put between men and men, but all that would bring their twopences might come and be as welcome to the parson, if not more, as any Puritan or Roundhead of them all, Isa 30:8-11. [6.] I query whether your not finding of comfort and profit by the word did not spring from Satan's blinding your eyes, and from his catching away the good seed out of your hearts. 'If our gospel be hid,' saith the apostle, 'it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,' 2Co 4:3-4. Is it any wonder that profane, ignorant, scandalous persons can find no comfort by the word, whenas the devil hath shut their eyes with his black hand? when he hath put a covering upon their eyes that they can't see any beauty, excellency, or glory in it? Gospel droppings have richly fallen among many, and yet, like Gideon's fleece, they are dry, because Satan hath blinded them, and caught away the good seed that was sown upon them: 'When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart' (or rather upon his heart); 'this is he which received seed by the wayside,' Mat 13:19. [7.] I query whether your want of profit and comfort by the word did not spring from your want of interest in gospel consolations. Oh! it is not the hearing of gospel consolations that comforts, but the knowledge of a man's interest in them that cheers up the heart. Ah! where is that word to be found in all the book of God that does evidence comfort,—which is children's bread,—to be of right belonging to profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons, as you can't but know yourselves to be, if conscience be in the least measure awakened. God hath all along in the Scripture made a separation between sin and comfort; and how then, can you expect comfort, who hold on in sinful ways, though love and wrath, life and death, heaven and hell, be often set before you? God is not prodigal of gospel consolations. They are the best and strongest wines in God's cellar, and reserved only for his best and dearest friends: Isa 40:1-2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak ye comfortably to

Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,' &c. The Hebrew word that is here rendered comfort signifies first to repent, and then to comfort. And certainly the sweetest joy is from the sourest tears. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. When Hannah had wept, she went away, and was no more sad. The bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water. The purest, the strongest, and most excellent joy is made of the waters of repentance. Ah! lay your hands upon your hearts, and tell me whether you can look God in the face and say, Lord! we are thine; first, by purchase; secondly, we are thine by choice; thirdly, we are thine by conquest; fourthly, we are thine by covenant; fifthly, we are thine by marriage. Ah! if you are not the Lord's in these respects, what minister on earth hath commission to comfort you? Their commission is to read other lectures to profane, ignorant, scandalous persons, &c., than those of comfort and joy, as you may see in these scriptures, if you will but take the pains to read them: Psa 7:11, Psa 9:17, Psa 11:5-6, Psa 37:10-20, compared with Psa 75:8, Psa 145:20; Job 21:30? Pro 11:5, Pro 11:21, Pro 11:31, compared; Pro 12:2, Pro 14:9, Pro 15:29, Pro 21:18, Pro 21:27; Ecc 8:13; Isa 11:4, Isa 13:11; Jer 25:31; Eze 1:1-19; Nah 1:3; Mal 4:3; Deu 28:15, et seq.; Lev 26:14, et seq. Ah! did you but wisely consider the excellency of gospel-comforts above all other comforts in the world, you would not wonder at ministers giving them forth so sparingly to profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons; for, first, gospel comforts are unutterable comforts, 1Pe 1:8, Php 4:4. Secondly, they are real, John 14:27; all others are but seeming comforts, but painted comforts. Thirdly, they are holy comforts, Isa 64:5, Psa 138:5; they flow from a Holy Spirit, and nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy. Fourthly, they are the greatest and strongest comforts, Eph 6:17. Few heads and hearts are able to bear them, as few heads are able to bear strong wines. Fifthly, they reach to the inward man, to the soul, 2Th 2:17, the noble part of man. 'My soul rejoiceth in God my Saviour.' Our other comforts only reach the face; they sink not so deep as the heart. Sixthly, they are the most soul-filling and soul-satisfying comforts, Psa 16:11, Song of Solomon 2:3. Other comforts cannot reach the soul; and therefore they cannot fill nor satisfy the soul. Seventhly, they comfort in saddest distresses, in the darkest night, and in the most stormy day, Psa 94:19, Hab 3:17-18. Eighthly, they are everlasting, 2Th 2:16. The joy of the wicked is but as a glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking; but the joy of the saints is lasting. *Æterna erit exultatio, quæ bono lætatur æterno*, their joy lasts for ever, whose object remains for ever. [8.] I query whether you, and men of your stamp, remaining under the power of your lusts, will ever say that you can find any comfort at all in any man's ministry, that is not a common-prayer-book man, or one that will give you and yours the sacraments, and lash at the power of godliness, and at the State in preaching and praying, &c. Doubtless under such a man's ministry, were he never so ignorant, scandalous, or profane, you would plead that you found much comfort to your souls, and that he was a man indeed for your money, &c. Well! if you have found no comfort under my ministry, yet my comfort is, that my reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God. My comfort is, that there are many hundreds in this city that have, and that do find comfort by the blessing and breathings of God upon my weak endeavours.

Further, In their petition they say that 'I am not so qualified to their understandings as to remain any longer with them.' To this I say, First, It is my joy and crown, that I am not so qualified as to please and content ignorant, profane, malignant, scandalous persons in their formality and impiety; remembering that he is the best preacher, *non qui aures tetigerit, sed qui cor pupugerit*, not that tickles the ear, but that breaks the heart. It is a comfort to me that I am no nearer that woe,

Luk 6:26, 'Woe be to you when all men speak well of you.' When one told Aristides that he had every man's good word, saith he, What evil have I done, that I should have every man's good word? Male de me loquuntur, sed mali, saith Seneca. It is sometimes more a shame than an honour to have the good word of profane, ignorant, scandalous persons. Latimer, in his last sermon before king Edward, saith, 'That he was glad when any objected indiscretion against him in his sermons; for by that he knew the matter was good, else they would soon have condemned that.' It was a notable saying of Salvian, Mirum esset si hominibus loquentia de Deo verba non placeant, quibus ipse forsitan Deus non placet: it were very strange, saith he, if I should please a world of men, when God himself doth not give every man content. Luther, writing to his friend, hath this passage, 'My greatest fear is the praises of men, but my joy is in their reproaches and evil speeches.' It is certain that the praises of men, to many, are the basilisks that kill, the poison that destroys their immortal souls.

2. I say, if the understandings of ignorant, malignant, profane, and scandalous persons, should be the rule or standard by which the abilities or qualifications of such ministers, that are ministers, 'not of the letter, but of the spirit,' as the apostle speaks, 2Co 3:6, should be measured and tried; doubtless he that is no witch may easily conclude that there are no ministers in England qualified to their understandings, but such as are malignant, ignorant, profane, and scandalous as themselves; and such, without doubt, would be the only qualified men, to their understandings; as might be confirmed by a cloud of witnesses, Jer 5:30-31.

3. Though I am not qualified, as to their understandings, yet, through grace, I am qualified as to the understandings of those that are eminent both for piety and parts, and who have made trial of what is in me, and what the Lord hath done for me. And though I am not so qualified as to gratify your lusts, yet it is joy and honour enough to me that the Lord hath so qualified me with gifts and graces as to make me instrumental to bring in souls to Christ, and to build up souls in Christ. In the day of account it will be made manifest that they have been the best, the wisest, and ablest preachers, who have brought most souls to Christ, and provoked most souls to walk with Christ, and cleave to Christ, and lift up Christ in this world, Pro 11:30. Through grace, I can say, with blessed Cooper, 'My witness is in heaven, that I have no such joy and pleasure as in doing the work of Christ, and in being serviceable to the honour of Christ, the interest of Christ, and the people of Christ.'

4. If this plea of profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons should be admitted as authentic, doubtless all the godly, tender, conscientious ministers in the nation, that can't do as they would have them, would quickly be ejected. All the profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous persons in the nation would soon cry out, as one man, Our ministers are not so qualified, to our understandings, as to remain any longer with us, ergo—

5. It is to be remembered that, when the petitioners were several times pressed by the Committee to shew wherein I was not qualified for the work of the ministry, they all seemed to be dumb, and at very great loss, as not knowing what to answer; but at last their malignant champion, after much pumping, gave this answer to the committee, That I was not so qualified, to their understandings, as to remain any longer among them, because I would not give them the sacraments, nor bury their dead; which put some rather upon smiling than upon answering. But at last a worthy member of that Committee made this answer, 'That they had both heard me and seen me in print, and so

were best able to make a judgment of my abilities and fitness for the work of the ministry,' &c.⁵ For a close of this branch of the petition, I shall only say this, being compelled thereunto by some, that I do believe that I have spent more money at the University, and in helps to learning, than several of these petitioners are worth, though, haply, I have not been so good a proficient as those that have spent less. I am a lover of the tongues, and do, by daily experience, find that knowledge in the original tongues is no small help for the understanding of Scripture, &c. Yet am I not kin to them that advance and lift up acquired gifts above the sweet sanctifying gifts and graces of the Spirit of Christ in the souls of his saints, as many have and do to this day. But certainly Christ will more and more cloud those that labour to cloud the shinings forth of his Spirit in the souls of his servants. Nor yet am I kin to Licinius, who held learning to be the commonwealth's rat's-bane. Neither am I kin to those that labour might and main the overthrow of learning, in order to their lifting up Jack Straw. It is sad when men are not so ingenuous as to favour that in others which they can't find in themselves.

Further, The petitioners say that I refuse to baptize their children, &c.

Ans. 1. This gives me leave to premise by the way that it is my judgment, upon many grounds moving me to it, that baptism is to be administered to the children of believing parents, who walk in the order of the gospel; and my practice herein doth answer to my judgment, as is well known to many.

2. But, in the second place, I confess I have refused, and shall refuse, to baptize the children of profane, ignorant, malignant, and scandalous persons; and that upon these following grounds:

[1.] Because I cannot find any warrant in my commission from Christ so to do. I do seriously profess that I have made a diligent search and strict inquiry into that commission that I have received from the Lord for the dispensing of holy things, and I cannot find anything in my commission that will bear me out in the baptizing the children of those parents that are profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous, &c., and therefore I cannot do it, lest I should hear Christ and conscience sounding that sad word in my ears, 'Who hath required this at your hand?' Isa 1:12.

[2.] Because such persons that are profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous, &c., if they were now to be baptized themselves, ought not to be baptized, they having no right to baptism, as these scriptures in the margin do evidence; therefore, such parents cannot justly, upon any Scripture account, challenge baptism for their children, who have no right to it themselves. All that know anything are not ignorant of this, that it is the parents' interest in the covenant that gives the child right to baptism. Now, how profane, ignorant, scandalous parents can give their children right to baptism, when they have no right to it themselves, is a thing that I am no ways able to reach, and a thing, I judge, too hard for any to prove, Hos 2:2-3.

[3.] Because the children of parents, whereof neither can be judged to be a believer, ought not to be baptized till the child grow up to manifest his own faith, as these scriptures, among many others that might be produced, prove, Gen 17:7-9; Acts 2:39-41; 1Co 7:14, &c.

[4.] Because profane, ignorant, scandalous persons, &c., are visibly in covenant with Satan; and therefore to administer baptism, the seal of the covenant, to their children, upon their accounts who are visibly in covenant with Satan, cannot but be a notorious profaning of the ordinances; therefore I dare not do it. Now, that such persons are visibly in covenant with Satan is clear: Isa

28:15, 'Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' Isa 28:18, 'And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.' Not that they had formally made a covenant with Satan, but their ways and courses were such as did proclaim to the world that they had, as it were, formally made a covenant with hell and death. Therefore, to apply this blessed ordinance to their children, who are thus invisibly in covenant with Satan, and who are not capable thereof through want of divine warrant, cannot, doubtless, but be esteemed a high profaning of it.

[5.] Because I may not yield blind obedience, nor do anything doubtingly; both which I should do should I baptize their children, who are profane, ignorant, scandalous, mockers and scoffers at God and godliness, &c.

[6.] Because, by administering that holy ordinance to the children of profane, ignorant, scandalous persons, I shall make myself guilty of nourishing and cherishing in such wicked persons such vain opinions and conceits that cannot but be very prejudicial to their souls; as that they have a right to that precious ordinance, when they have none; that God hath taken their children into covenant, as well as the children of the best believers in the world, when he hath not; that God is more favourable and loving to them than indeed he is; and that their case is not so bad as some would make it, &c. All which opinions and conceits, with many more of the same stamp that might be named, cannot but prove many ways prejudicial to mens' immortal souls.

I shall forbear the laying down any more reasons why I have not, nor shall not, baptize their children who are profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous, mockers and scoffers at God and godliness; judging that these may be sufficient to satisfy all intelligent men.

Further, these petitioners say, that 'I will not give them the Lord's supper.'

Ans. Though I do give the Lord's supper to those to whom of right it belongs, yet I cannot, I dare not, give it to profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous persons. I had, with Calvin, rather die, than that this hand of mine should give the things of God to the condemners of God. And with Chrysostom, I had rather give my life to a murderer, than Christ's body to an unworthy receiver; and had rather to suffer my own blood to be poured out like water, than to tender Christ's blessed blood to any base liver; and that upon these following grounds:

[1.] Because such persons are excluded by the word of God from communion with believers in that glorious ordinance, as the Scriptures in the margin do evidence.

[2.] Not only the Scriptures, but the very episcopal Rubric, for the administration of the communion, do exclude and shut out such persons from the supper of the Lord, in these words: 'They that intended to partake of the holy communion should signify their names afore to the curate; and if any of those be an open and notorious evil liver, so that the congregation is offended, or have done any wrong to his neighbour by word or deed, the curate having knowledge, shall call him and advertise him in any wise not to presume to the Lord's table until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented, and amended his former naughty life, that the congregation may thereby be satisfied,' &c. As for the presbyterial way, you all know, that by their Directory and laws annexed,

they must not receive any to the communion that are ignorant, scandalous, or profane in their conversation. So that the sum of what hath been said is this, that by the laws of God, and by the laws of episcopacy, and by the laws of presbytery, profane, ignorant, and scandalous persons are to be excluded from the supper of the Lord. Ergo—

[3.] Because the admitting of such as are profane, ignorant, scandalous, or that are scoffers and mockers of all goodness, &c., to the supper of the Lord, is the ready way to turn the house of God into a den of thieves, and to bring a dreadful doom both upon consenters and presumers, as the Scriptures in the margin will make good. Not only the lack of the word and sacraments, saith Bilson, but the abuse of either, greatly hazards the weal of the whole church, Mat 7:6. If profane ones be allowed to defile the mysteries and assemblies of the faithful, and holy things be cast to dogs, it will procure a dreadful doom, as well to consentaries as presumers. Ergo—

[4.] Because there are many horrid sins in their coming to the supper of the Lord.

(1.) There is horrid pride, else no man in his wickedness would presume to taste of the tree of life. Yet pride cannot climb so high, but justice will sit above her.

(2.) There is rebellion and treason against the crown and dignity of Christ. Their hands and lips adore him, as Judas his did; but their hearts and lives abhor him.

(3.) There is theft and sacrilege. If the taking away of the communion cup or cloth, &c., be such horrible theft and sacrilege, surely it is far greater theft and sacrilege to take that bread and wine that is set apart, and sanctified by the Lord himself, for a holy use.

(4.) There is murder in the cruellest manner that can be; for they kill two at once—Christ, and their own souls, 1Co 11:27, 1Co 11:29, compared.

It was wickedness in Julian to throw his blood in the face of Christ; but for a wicked communicant to take Christ's own blood, as it were from his heart, and throw it into the face of Christ, is most abominable and damnable.

[5.] They want those qualifications that should fit them for this glorious ordinance. As, (1.) Experimental knowledge.

(2.) Faith, without which they cannot see Christ, nor receive Christ, nor feed upon Christ, nor apply Christ, nor seal to Christ.

(3.) Repentance from dead works.

(4.) New obedience.

(5.) Love to Christ and his children.

(6.) Holy thankfulness.

(7.) A spiritual appetite. All which are absolutely necessary to fit souls for the Lord's supper. Ergo—

[6.] Because such as are profane, scandalous, scoffers and mockers, &c., are not fit for civil society, how much less fit are they then for religious societies? Men that love but their names and

credits in the world, will shun the society of such vain persons; how much more, then, should men that love their Christ, and that love their precious souls, shun such society? Look, as shelves and sands do endanger the seaman, and as weeds endanger the corn, and bad humours the blood, and an infected house the neighbourhood, so does the society of evil men endanger good men. One said, 'As oft as I have been among wicked men, I returned home less a man than I was before.' Men that keep ill company are like those that walk in the sun, tanned insensibly. Eusebius reports of John the evangelist, that he would not suffer Cerinthus the heretic in the same bath with him, lest some judgment should abide them both. You may easily apply it to the point in hand. [Euseb., lib. iii. c. 25.]

[7.] Because such persons as are profane, scandalous, and wicked, &c., if they were in the church, they are by the word of God to be excommunicated, and cut off from visible union and communion with Christ and his church; therefore they are not to be admitted to the privileges of the church. That wickedness that is a sufficient ground for the casting them out if they were in, is a sufficient ground to keep them out from polluting the glorious ordinance of the Lord, 1Co 5:1-13; 1Ti 1:19-20; Mat 18:15-18; 2Th 3:6; 1Ti 6:3-5.

[8.] Because the supper of the Lord is a feast instituted by Christ only for his friends and children, for those that have received spiritual life from him, and that have union and communion with him, Mat 26:27-29; 1Co 10:16-17, &c.; Mat 3:12. But profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous persons, are chaff which the fan flings out of the floor. They be as dirt and dust which the besom sweeps out of the house, Luk 15:8. They be as leaven, which, if let alone, sours the whole lump; and therefore must be purged out, 1Co 5:6-7. They be as thorns and briers, which must not stand in the midst of the corn, Heb 6:8, but must be stubbed up and burned. They be as open sepulchres, out of which proceeds nothing but noisome savours, Rom 3:13; Mat 3:7. They be as vipers, which must be shook off, as Paul shook off the viper that fastened upon his hand, Acts 28:3-5. They be as ravenous wolves, which every careful, watchful shepherd must keep out of his fold, John 10:12. They be as swine, that will trample the choicest pearls under their feet, if they should be cast before them, Mat 7:6; therefore ministers must not hang gospel pearls in such swine's snouts, nor cast them under such swine's feet. The fouler the chest is, the more unfit it is to have a fair and precious garment put therein; and the filthier the soul is, the unfitter it is to receive in this holy sacrament. I have read of a jewel, that being put into a dead man's mouth, loseth all its virtue. Such a jewel is the supper of the Lord; it loseth its virtue when it is put in profane, ignorant, scandalous persons mouths; who are dead God-wards, and dead heaven-wards, and dead holiness-wards, and dead Christwards.

Lastly, these petitioners say, 'That I will not bury their dead.' To this I shall give this short answer, that if they mean that I would bury their dead after the old fashion, I confess it; and shall only say, that it is most proper for the dead to bury the dead, as Christ speaks, Mat 8:22; my proper work being to preach the gospel. But if by burying their dead they mean that I will not accompany their corpse to the grave, being the last office of love that can be performed to the deceased person, it is notoriously false. All that know anything of the Scripture can't but know that there is nothing in all the book of God that will bear a minister out to bury the dead, as profane, ignorant, scandalous persons would have them buried; and therefore I don't, and I hope I shall never be so far left of God, as to conform to the superstitious desires and customs of vain men.

Reader, for a close, thou mayest take notice, that though I was ready to give in the fore-named arguments, in answer to the objections made by the profane malignants in their petition against me, yet the Committee, in their wisdoms it seems, did not judge it meet so much as to ask me a reason why I did not baptize their children, give them the Lord's supper, and bury their dead; they well knowing that there is nothing more ordinary than for those to be bawling and crying out for ordinances that have no right to them; and that, if upon the non-giving of the ordinances to such profane persons, they should eject ministers out of their places, they should quickly eject all those in the nation that are most tender of the honour of Christ, and that have been some of their best friends in the worst times.

Before I give the counsel intended to the petitioners, I judge it useful, in several respects, to batter down that which most profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous persons do count their stronghold, or their greatest argument to prove it lawful for them to receive the supper of the Lord, notwithstanding their profaneness and wickedness, and that is, 'That Judas was admitted to the Lord's supper, and that they are not worse than Judas, no, nor yet so bad.' Ergo—

Now for the casting down of this their imagined stronghold, for the despatching this their first-born, this their Goliath, consider with me these following things:

[1.] The Holy Ghost, by the evangelist John, doth punctually and expressly tell us, that Judas went out immediately after the sop. That this sop was no part of the sacramental supper, both fathers and schoolmen do agree; and many others in our own time, who are men of great piety and parts. Ergo— Did I know anything of weight that could be objected against this argument, I would be so faithful as to give an answer to it, as the Lord should enable me to do, but I know nothing that has that strength in it as to weaken the truth asserted.

[2.] Those to whom Christ gave the sacrament, he saith, without exception, 'This is my body which is given for you: this is the cup of the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you; and I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' Now I would willingly know how this can in the least measure stand with the wisdom, holiness, justice, righteousness, innocency, and integrity of Christ, to say this and promise this to Judas, whom he knew to be an hypocrite, reprobate, a devil, as himself calls him, John 6:70-71, John 13:10-11. If this be not to make Christ a false witness, a liar, a deceiver, &c., I know not anything.

[3.] It is as clear as the sun, from Luk 22:28-30, that those to whom Christ gave the sacrament, were such as did continue with him in his temptations, and such as Christ did appoint to them a kingdom, and such as should sit upon thrones, &c., Mat 26:24, Mark 14:21, John 6:70, Acts 1:25, 1Co 6:2-3. Now, are there any so vain and foolish as to say that Judas did continue with him in his temptations? or that Christ did appoint to him any other kingdom than a kingdom of darkness? or that he shall sit on a throne to judge others, who shall at last be judged as a devil?

[4.] Judas was no ways capable of any of those noble ends and glorious uses for which the Lord Jesus appointed this sacrament, he having no real love to Christ, no experimental knowledge of Christ, no faith to discern Christ, to apply Christ, to feed upon Christ, to seal to Christ, &c. How could this ordinance strengthen grace in his heart, who was wholly void of grace? How could this ordinance confirm him in the love of God, who was at that very time under the greatest wrath of

God? How could this ordinance seal up to him the pardon of his sins, who, notwithstanding all the hell-fire that Christ cast in his face, yet would hold on in his sins, and rather betray Christ into the hands of his enemies, and his own soul into the hand of Satan, than cease from doing wickedly, &c. 2 That little wisdom that is in man will work him to forbear his work and suspend his act where he sees his end will fail; and will not those treasures of wisdom that be in the Lord Jesus, Col 2:3, much more work him to suspend his work, where he sees plainly and clearly that his end will fail him, as in the case of Judas? Surely it will.

[5.] Consider seriously whether it be in any degree probable that Jesus Christ would give his blood to Judas, and yet not so much as lift up a prayer for Judas, John 17:9; that Christ would do the greater thing for Judas, and yet not do the lesser; that he should give his blood to Judas, and yet not spend a little of his breath to save Judas from wallowing in his blood for ever. Among men it would argue the greatest weakness that could be, to deny the least favour where they have shewed the greatest favour, &c.

Well! but if, for argument's sake, we should grant that Judas did receive the Lord's supper, it will not from thence follow that it is lawful for those that are openly profane, wicked, scandalous, and malignant to receive it, and that upon these following grounds:

Reason 1. For that Judas was a close hypocrite, and carried his sin so secretly that nothing appeared openly against him for Christ yet to refuse him. Hypocrisy is spun of a fine thread, and not easily discerned: Mat 26:21-22, And as they did eat, he said, 'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?' Sincere hearts are more jealous of themselves than of others, and will rather judge a thousand hypocrites to be saints, than one saint to be an hypocrite.

Reason 2. Because Judas was a member of the church, and had done nothing openly that could cast him out; and by virtue of his membership he might justly claim it as his due, he being called into fellowship by Christ himself. Now, what advantage is this to such open profane wicked persons as de jure ought and de facto are excluded from the Lord's supper; as I have before clearly and fully proved?

Reason 3. Because in respect of wickedness and all profaneness they go beyond Judas. Judas was no drunkard, swearer, mocker, scoffer; he did not sin openly, and glory in his sin. He did not by any open way of wickedness sad and quench Christ's, his Spirit or disciples; he was so far from giving any scandal or offence to his fellow-disciples, that when Christ told them, 'One of you shall betray me,' they were all jealous of themselves, none of them were jealous of Judas: 'And they began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?' Judas betrayed Christ for thirty pieces of silver, but open, profane, wicked persons they betray Christ, his word, his people, and their own souls, for a thing of nought. They will transgress for a morsel of bread, as Solomon speaks, for a trifle, Isa 50:1-2, Pro 28:24. They will sell the greatest and the choicest things dog-cheap, even at the poorest and the lowest rate that the world, or the god of this world, shall bid. Judas betrayed Christ once; and open, profane, wicked persons, by their open treasons and transgressions, do oftentimes in a day betray the crown, sceptre, and dignity of King Jesus. Judas plotted treason against Christ when he was in a low, afflicted, and despised condition; but such as are openly profane and wicked, they plot and act treason against Christ now he is exalted, crowned, and set down at the right hand of God in that glory and majesty that can neither be conceived nor

expressed by any mortal creature. Judas betrays Christ, and is struck with dreadful horror and terror; but such as are openly wicked, they betray Christ, and yet joy in their transgressions, which are so many treasons against Christ. Judas betrays Christ, and yet justifies the innocency of Christ; he repents, and confesseth his sin; but such as are openly wicked, proceed from evil to evil, and yet, with the harlot, they wipe their mouths, and say, What evil have we done?2

Reason 4. Because Christ gave the blessed sacrament ministerially as he was man, leaving them a pattern to walk by that should come after him; and such was the carriage of Christ toward Judas all along. Christ did not act toward Judas as he was an all-seeing God, nor as he was the heart-maker, the heart-searcher, the heart-observer, the heart-discoverer, but he acted towards him ministerially. Neither do I see how it could stand with the holiness, justice, faithfulness, and wisdom of Christ to give that holy ordinance to Judas, whom he knew as he was God, to be such a dog, a devil; considering how he had bound all his servants from casting pearls before swine. To affirm that Christ gave the sacrament to Judas, as he was God; what is this but to make Christ's practice fight against his own precepts, which for any to do is doubtless blasphemy in the highest degree. And now I appeal to the consciences of all profane, wicked, malignant persons, whether they were not better a thousand times to be shut out from this glorious ordinance of the Lord's supper, till the Lord shall in mercy, if it be his good pleasure, fit them for it, than to think to get in at this door by making Judas the porter.

I shall now address myself to give some good counsel to the petitioners; and so conclude.

Good Counsel to Bad Men; or, Friendly Advice to Unfriendly Neighbours and their Abettors Your petitioning against me to all understanding men was a compounded evil; an evil made up of pride, envy, malice, discontent, ignorance, &c. My counsel to you is to break off your sins by repentance, that it may go well with you for ever. If you will not, justice will be above you, and in the close you must lie down in sorrow. Tell me, can you dwell with the devouring fire? can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Dan 4:27, Isa 50:11, Isa 33:14. It was a good saying of Chrysostom, speaking of hell, *Ne quæramus ubi sit, sed quomodo illam fugiamus*, let us not seek where it is, but how we shall escape it. Grievous is the torment of the damned for the bitterness of the punishments, but it is more grievous for the diversity of the punishments, but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments. Ah! consider before it be too late, what a sad thing it is for souls at last to have the gate of mercy, the gate of indulgence, the gate of hope, the gate of glory, shut upon them, Mat 25:10. When a sinner is in hell, shall another Christ be found to die for him? or will the same Christ be crucified again? Oh, no! Oh that you were so wise and merciful to your own souls as to dwell upon these scriptures: John 3:3, 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Except men be first unmade, and then made up again by the Spirit and word, except the whole frame of their old conversation be dissolved and a better erected, there is no heaven to be had. Heaven is too holy and too hot to hold drunkards, revilers, mockers, and such like, as you may plainly see by comparing these scriptures together, 1Co 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21, Jude 1:14-15, Rev 21:8, and Rev 22:15. He that is truth itself, and cannot lie, hath said, 'Without holiness no man shall see God,' Heb 12:14. This I am sure of, that all man's happiness here is his holiness, and his holiness shall hereafter be his happiness. You must in this life be holy, or in the life to come you shall never be happy. Seneca, a heathen man, saw so much excellency that morality put upon a man that he saith that *ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*, the very looks of a good man delights one. Oh! then,

what a beauty and glory doth real sanctity put upon a man; 'it makes him more excellent than his neighbour,' as Solomon speaks, Pro 12:26. When Agesilaus heard the king of Persia styled the great king, saith he, 'I acknowledge none more excellent than myself, unless more righteous; none greater, unless better.' Psa 16:3. But to hasten towards a close, you may be very confident of these few things, which I desire, as you tender your own good, you would seriously consider.

[1.] That those ways of the flesh wherein now you walk will be bitterness in the latter end: Pro 14:12, 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death. Though sin doth come sometimes clothed with a show of reason and religion, yet the end of it will be death. Sin at last will betray your souls into the hands of Satan, as Delilah did Samson into the hands of the Philistines.² Sin makes the soul black with filth and red with guilt; and then vengeance follows. The Rabbins were wont to tell scholars, to scare them from sin, that every sin made God's head ache; but without sound repentance you will at last find that every sin will make your hearts ache. Oh! then, when you are tempted to sin, you would say, as Demosthenes, the orator, did of the beautiful Lais, when he was asked an excessive sum of money to behold her: I will not, said he, buy repentance so dear. I am not so ill a merchant as to sell the eternal for the temporal.

[2.] You may be confident that all your oppositions one way or other against the ways of God, and against the people of God, is a fighting against God, who will be too hard for you when you have done your worst; and what you get you may put in your eyes, and weep it out again, Acts 5:38--39, Acts 9:4-5. Those that strive for mastery with God, God will over-master with a witness: Isa 27:4, 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I will burn them together.' God can nod a soul to hell; he can speak a soul miserable in a moment. Who ever stood out against him, and prospered? There is such a near union between God and his people, between God and his ways, that you cannot possibly oppose them but you oppose God himself, who can presently cause the greatest arm of human power to shrink up, as you may see in his dealing with Pharaoh, Haman, Belshazzar, and others, &c. Is a dry reed able to stand against a consuming fire? Is a worm able to overcome a lion? Is weakness able to overcome strength: 'Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance;' 'Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing,' as the prophet Isaiah speaks, Isa 40:15. And what, then, is the poor creature, that he should fight against an almighty Creator? Cæsar told Metellus he could as easily destroy him as bid it be done. So can God. Who dares then engage against him?

[3.] You may be confident, that though I hate your sins, yet I don't hate your persons. I am willing to live in love and peace with all men, so far as I may without sin; but I abhor compliancy with any man, to the dishonour of Christ, to the wounding of my conscience, to the profaning of holy things, or to the prejudice and disadvantage of the truth. It is below humanity to hate a man, whose nature and similitude he may behold in the humanity of Christ. Deum odit qui hominem odit, he hateth God that hateth man. I must love men, but hate their vice. It is said of Ephesus, that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans; their errors, not their persons. So Jacob cursed the wrath of his sons, but blessed their persons. So Paul, 1Co 4:15, and so do I, through free mercy.

[4.] You may be confident that I don't refuse the baptizing of your children, and the giving you the sacrament, &c., out of pride or envy, or upon any carnal account in the world, but only upon the

grounds that I have before laid down. I take the Searcher of all hearts to witness, that I should much rejoice and bless the Lord if he would be pleased to work such a thorough work of grace upon all your hearts as that I might without sin dispense all the precious things of Christ to you. Ah! it is not a joy, but a real grief to my soul, that others have not that right, and can't come to those ordinances which God hath made so sweet and advantageous to me, and many others of the sons of Zion.

Oh! how willing should I be, and those that walk with me, to give you the right hand of fellowship, if we could but see that the Lord has taken you into fellowship with his blessed self, that so the ordinance might be a cordial, and not poison to you.

I do profess before the Lord, that I do from my soul forgive you the wrong and injuries that you have done me, or attempted to do. God has been good to me, notwithstanding my failing towards him and my sins against him; and the sense of his love and rich goodness makes my bowels to yearn towards you.

Oh! it is a mercy more worth than a world to me that God hath given me such a frame of spirit as that I can pray for your souls, and weep over your sins, and that I am ready to serve you in all those ways wherein I may further the eternal welfare of your souls, &c. Make use of me in anything wherein I may serve you without sin; and see whether I shall not be willing to act for your good, notwithstanding all provocations to the contrary.

[5.] For a close,—because I would not be over-tedious, I shall draw many things within a narrow compass,—you may be confident that my end in writing is your due conviction and satisfaction, that you may weigh my arguments, and clearly see that it is not will, nor humour, &c., but conscience, reason, and religion that acts me. If, notwithstanding what I have said, you shall continue in your malice, envy, hatred, &c., I shall have comfort in this, that I have in all faithfulness freed myself from being guilty of the blood of your souls; and in that I have declared to all the world my willingness to serve the interest of your souls in all things wherein I may without sin. And most confident I am, that if what I have written do not better you, it will be a witness against you when you and I shall meet before Christ's judgment-seat. And confident I am, that God will bring much good to me out of all the plots, designs, and actings that have been, or that shall be, by vain men against me. And confident I am, that the more you stir in any way of baseness or wickedness, the more the Lord will make you to stink, and the more contempt he will pour upon you, and the more bright he will cause my innocency to shine, and the more weighty shall be my crown in the day of Christ. My desires for you before the Lord are these, that you may have such a sight of your sins as may work you to 'kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish when his wrath is kindled but a little;' and that you may not trifle away the day of grace, and 'the things that belong to your eternal peace,' 'lest God should swear in his wrath that you shall never enter into his rest.' Oh! that in the light of the Spirit you may see Christ to be the greatest good, the most desirable good, the most necessary good, the most suitable good, to be a total good, an only good, and an eternal good; that so your souls may in good earnest fall in love with Christ, and may cry out with that martyr, 'None but Christ, none but Christ.' Oh! none but Christ to save us, and none but Christ to rule us! none but Christ to justify us, and none but Christ to command us! Oh! that you may cease from doing evil, and learn to do well; that so you may be happy in life, blessed in death, and glorious in the morning of the resurrection, Isa 1:16-17.

B.—Close of Farewell Sermon; see page ante xxxi. From the Collection of 1662 (4to). The text is not given, nor the body of the Sermon, but only what follows:—

All that I shall do shall be to answer two or three queries, and then I shall leave a few legacies with you, that may speak when I am not advantaged to speak to you. The first query is this, What should be the reason that men make such opposition against the gospel, against the plain, powerful, conscientious preaching of it? This is not the principal thing that I intend, and therefore I shall only touch upon the reason of it.

1. Men's hatred and opposition ariseth against the gospel because it doth discover their hidden works of darkness: John 3:1-36, 'They hate the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.' The gospel brings their deeds of darkness to light, and this stirs up a spirit of hatred and opposition against the gospel.

2. Ground is this: because sinners under the gospel, cannot sin at so cheap a rate as otherwise they might do; the drunkard cannot be drunk at so cheap a rate; nor can the opposer and persecutor oppose and persecute at so cheap a rate as they might do where the gospel doth not shine in power and glory.

3. Because the gospel puts persons upon very hard service, upon very difficult work, pulling out a right eye, cutting off a right hand, offering up an Isaac, throwing overboard a Jonas, parting with bosom lusts and darling sins. Herod heard John Baptist gladly, till he came to touch his Herodias, and then off goes his head. As they say, John 6:1-71, 'This is a hard saying, and who can abide it?' and from that time they walked no more with him. This is a hard gospel indeed, and at this their blood riseth.

4. Because of the differing and distinguishing work that the gospel makes among the sons of men; it softens one, and hardens another that sits next to him; enlightens one, and strikes the other blind; it wins one and enrages the other. The same sun hath different effects on the objects on which it shineth. The gospel puts a difference between the precious and the vile; and this the vile cannot bear. It was never good days, say they, since such and such must be saints, and none else; we have as good hearts as any, and this enrageth them.

Lastly, It is from Satan. Satan knows that the very tendency of the gospel is to shake his kingdom about his ears. Satan and antichrist know that their kingdom must down by the power and light of the gospel; and therefore Satan and men of an antichristian spirit do all they can to oppose and shew their hatred against the everlasting gospel; and this makes them to be in such a rage against the gospel.

Query 2. When the gospel goes from a people, what goes? I shall give but a touch here.

1. When the gospel goes, peace, plenty, and trading go. 2Ch 15:3, 2Ch 15:5-6, compared. Now for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest. Why? They had priests; but they were Jeroboam's priests, as you may see, 1Ch 13:9, 'Have you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. A little business will buy a priesthood; and so they are said to be without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without

law. Mark what follows: 'And in those times, there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the country, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity.'

2. Safety and security goes when the gospel goes; so in the text but now cited. The ark was taken away, and when that was taken away, their strength and safety was gone. When the Jews rejected the gospel, the Romans came and took away both their place and nation: John 11:48, 'If we let him thus alone, the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.' About forty years after, Titus and Vespasian took away their city; they cried, 'If we let this man alone, the Romans will take away our nations.' And this was the ready way to bring the Romans upon them.

3. When the gospel goes, civil liberty goes. When the Jews slighted the gospel, and turned their backs upon it, they quickly became bond-slaves to the Romans.

4. When the gospel goes, the honour and glory, splendour and beauty of a nation goes. It is the gospel that is the honour and glory of a nation, and when that goes, all the glory goes. As old Eli said, when the ark was taken away, 'The glory is departed from Israel,' 1Sa 4:22. Jer 2:11-13, 'Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit,' that is, the worship of God into the traditions of men. What is it that lifts up one nation above another but the gospel? Above all nations of the earth, England hath been lifted up to heaven.

5. When the gospel goes, all soul-happiness and blessedness goes. The gospel, you know, is the means appointed by God to bring souls to an acquaintance with Christ, to an acceptance of Christ, to an interest in Christ, to an assurance that he is theirs, and they are his. Now, when this goes, all soul-happiness and blessedness goes.

Lastly, When the gospel goes, the special presence of God goes, for that still goes with the gospel. There is a general presence of God, as the psalmist speaks, Psa 139:1-24, 'Where shall I go from thy Spirit? whither shall I fly from thy presence?' This presence of God reacheth from heaven to hell; in that sense, God is included in no place, not excluded out of any place. But, alas! what is this general presence? When the gospel goes, the special presence of God goes. This leads me by the hand to the third query.

Query 3. And that is this, Whether God will remove the gospel from England or no?

It is the fears of many; but I humbly suppose no. Whatsoever darkness may be upon it, yet that God will not remove it; and, if you please, I will offer a few things that signify something, as to my own satisfaction, and it may be so to you.

1. The rooting that it hath got in the hearts of sinners and saints, in the judgments, affections, and consciences, both of sinners and saints. Certainly it hath got so deep a root in the hearts of many thousands of saints and sinners, that it shall not be in the power of hell to raze it out.

2. The glorious anointings that are to be found upon many thousands of God's servants in this nation to preach the everlasting gospel, and who would be glad to preach upon the hardest terms, keeping God and a good conscience, to preach it freely, as the apostles of old did. And certainly God hath not laid in this treasure that it should be turned into a heap of confusion, but that it should serve to the end for which he laid it in.

3. The ineffectualness of all former attempts and designs to destroy the gospel. You know what endeavours of old there hath been to darken this sun, to put out the light of heaven, in the Marian days, and in other days since then; and yet it hath not been in prisons, racks, flames, pillories, nor anything else to extinguish the glory of it. And then,

4. All designs and attempts to extinguish the everlasting gospel have turned to the advancement, flourishing, and spreading of the gospel.

5. God never takes away the gospel from a people till the body of that people have thrust the everlasting gospel from them; when, indeed, they have been so bold as to thrust away the everlasting gospel, God hath been severe unto them; but till the body of a people have thrust away the everlasting gospel, God hath not taken it away from them. 2Ch 36:15-23, God sent his messengers early and late; they abused, and slighted, and scorned them, till there was no remedy. So in Jer 35:1-12; it is a famous text for this. So in Acts 13:45-47, 'Because you have thought yourselves unworthy of salvation; lo, we turn to the Gentiles.' Till the Jews came to thrust away the everlasting gospel, the Lord continued it to them.

6. The spreading of the everlasting gospel is the special means appointed by God for the destruction of antichrist. First, He is to be consumed by the spirit of his mouth, then destroyed by the brightness of his coming; the spirit of faith and prayer in them that would be willing to lay down anything rather than part with the gospel. God will not put his blessed church to the blush; he will not make them ashamed of their confidence.

7. Are there not multitudes of the children of believers that fall under many promises? And will not God make good his engagements to them? 'I will circumcise your hearts, and the hearts of your seed; and the seed of the upright shall be blessed, &c.

8. The strange and wonderful affections and tenderness that God hath wrought in his children to the gospel; what meltings and mournings, and what a spirit of prayer hath God put upon his people!

9. There are many young tender plants and buds of grace, such in whom the Spirit of God hath stirred an hungering, thirsting, and longing after the great concerns of eternity. I would, upon these grounds, with others of the like import, hope and believe that the Lord will not remove his everlasting gospel, however he may correct his people for their trifling with and slighting the glorious gospel. I have several times thought what a day of darkness was upon the world, in respect of sin and superstition. When Christ brought the everlasting gospel, what a day of darkness and superstition was on the whole earth! But you know what the apostle speaks, 2Co 1:21, 'For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.' When it is nearest day, then it is darkest. There may be an hour of darkness that may be upon the gospel, as to its liberty, purity, and glory; and yet there may be a sunshining day ready to tread on the heels of it. And so much for the resolution of those queries.

I shall proceed, as I said, and leave some legacies with you, which may, by the finger of the Spirit, be made advantageous to you, whom we are not advantaged to speak unto you.

Legacy 1. The first legacy I would leave with you, shall be this: Secure your interest in Christ; make it your great business, your work, your heaven, to secure your interest in Christ. This is not an age, an hour, for a man to be between fears and hopes, between doubting and believing.

Take not up in a name to live, when you are dead God-ward and Christ-ward; take not up in an outward form, and outward privilege. They cried out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' that had no interest in, or love to, the Lord of the temple. Follow God, leave no means unattempted whereby your blessed interest may be cleared up.

Leg. 2. Make Christ and Scripture the only foundation for your souls and faith to build on: as the apostle saith, 1Co 3:11, 'Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.' Isa 28:6, 'Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a corner stone, a precious stone, a sure foundation,' Eph 2:10. Since it is a very dangerous thing, as much as your souls and eternity is worth, for you to build on anything beside Jesus Christ, many will say, Come, build on this authority and that, on this saying and that; but take heed.

Leg. 3. In all places and company, be sure to carry your soul preservative with you: go into no place or company, except you carry your soul preservations with you, that is, a holy care and wisdom. You know, in infectious times, men will carry outward preservatives with them; you had need to carry your preservatives about you, else you will be in danger of being infected with the ill customs and vanities of the times wherein you live, and that is a third.

Leg. 4. I would leave with you is this: Look that all within you rises higher and higher, by oppositions, threatenings and sufferings, that is, that your faith, your love, your courage, your zeal, your resolutions, and magnanimity rises higher by opposition and a spirit of prayer. Thus it did, Acts 4:18-21, Acts 4:29-31 compared; all their sufferings did but raise up a more noble spirit in them, they did but raise up their faith and courage. So Acts 5:40-42, they looked on it as a grace to be disgraced for Christ, and as an honour to be dishonoured for him. They say, as David, 'If this be to be vile, I will be more vile.' If to be found in the way of my God, to act for my God, to be vile, I will be more vile.

Leg. 5. Take more pains, and make more conscience of keeping yourselves from sin than suffering; from the pollutions and defilements of the day, than from the sufferings of the day. This legacy I would beg that you would consider; take more pains, and make more conscience of keeping yourselves from the evil of sin than the evil of punishment, from the pollutions and corruptions of the times than the sufferings of the times: Acts 2:40, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' Php 2:15, 'The children of God must be harmless and blameless, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.' Heb 11:1-40 speaks full to the point in hand. Rev 3:4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.' White was the habit of nobles, which imports the honour that God will put on those that keep their garments pure in a defiling day. Rev 18:4, 'And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.' If you will be tasting and sipping at Babylon's cup, you must resolve to receive more or less of Babylon's plagues.

Leg. 6. I would leave with you is this: Be always doing or receiving good. Our Lord and Master went up and down in this world doing good; he was still doing good to body and soul; he was acted

by an untired power. Be still doing or receiving good. This will make your lives comfortable, your deaths happy, and your account glorious, in the great day of our Lord. Oh! how useless are many men in their generation! Oh! that our lips might be as so many honey-combs, that we might, scatter knowledge!

Leg. 7. I would leave with you is this: Set the highest examples and patterns before your face of grace and godliness for your imitation. In the business of faith, set an Abraham before your eyes; in the business of courage, set a Joshua; in the business of uprightness, set a Job; of meekness, a Moses, &c. There is a disadvantage that redounds to Christians by looking more backwards than forwards. Men look on whom they excel, not on those they fall short of. Of all examples, set them before you that are most eminent for grace and holiness, for communion with God, and acting for God. Next to Christ, set the pattern of the choicest saints before you.

Leg. 8. Hold fast your integrity, and rather let all go than let that go. A man had better let liberty, estate, relations, and life go, than let his integrity go. Yea, let ordinances themselves go, when they cannot be held with the hand of integrity: Job 27:5-6, 'God forbid that I should justify you till I die. I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Look, as the drowning man holds fast that which is cast forth for to save him, as the soldier holds fast his sword and buckler on which his life depends, so, saith Job, 'I will hold fast my integrity; my heart shall not reproach me. I had rather all the world should reproach me, and my heart justify me, than that my heart should reproach me, and all the world justify me.' That man will make but a sad exchange that shall exchange his integrity for any worldly concernment. Integrity maintained in the soul will be a feast of fat things in the worst of days; but let a man lose his integrity, and it is not in the power of all the world to make a feast of fat things in that soul.

Leg. 9. That I would leave with you is this: Let not a day pass over your head without calling the whole man to an exact account. Well, where have you been acting to-day? Hands, what have you done for God to-day? Tongue, what have you spoke for God to-day. This will be an advantage many ways unto you, but I can only touch on these legacies.

Leg. 10. Labour mightily for a healing spirit. This legacy I would leave with you as matter of great concernment. Labour mightily for a healing spirit. Away with all discriminating names whatever that may hinder the applying of balm to heal your wounds. Labour for a healing spirit. Discord and division become no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs, is no wonder; but for one lamb to worry another, this is unnatural and monstrous. God hath made his wrath to smoke against us for the divisions and heart-burnings that have been amongst us. Labour for a oneness in love and affection with every one that is one with Christ. Let their forms be what they will, that which wins most upon Christ's heart, should win most upon ours, and that is his own grace and holiness. The question should be, What of the Father, what of the Son, what of the Spirit shines in this or that person? and accordingly let your love and your affections run out. That is the tenth legacy.

Leg. 11. Be most in the spiritual exercises of religion. Improve this legacy, for much of the life and comfort, joy and peace of your souls is wrapped up in it. I say, be most in the spiritual exercises of religion. There are external exercises, as hearing, preaching, praying, and conference; and there are the more spiritual exercises of religion, exercise of grace, meditation, self-judging, self-trial, and examination. Bodily exercise will profit nothing if abstracted from those more spiritual. The

glory that God hath, and the comfort and advantage that will redound to your souls is mostly from the spiritual exercises of religion. How rare is it to find men in the work of meditation, of trial and examination, and of bringing home of truths to their own souls?

Leg. 12. Take no truths upon trust, but all upon trial, 1Th 5:21, so 1Jn 4:1, Acts 17:11. It was the glory of that church, that they would not trust Paul himself; Paul, that had the advantage above all for external qualifications; no, not Paul himself. Take no truth upon trust; bring them to the balance of the sanctuary. If they will not hold weight there, reject them.

Leg. 13. The lesser and fewer opportunities and advantages you have in public to better and enrich your souls, the more abundantly address your souls to God in private: Mal 3:16-17, 'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another,' &c.

Leg. 14. Walk in those ways that are directly cross and contrary to the vain, sinful, and superstitious ways that men of a formal, carnal, lukewarm spirit walk in; this is the great concernment of Christians. But more of that by and by.

Leg. 15. Look upon all the things of this world as you will look upon them when you come to die. At what a poor rate do men look on the things of this world when they come to die! What a low value do men set upon the pomp and glory of it, when there is but a step between them and eternity! Men may now put a mask upon them, but then they will appear in their own colours. Men would not venture the loss of such great things for them did they but look on them now, as they will do at the last day.

Leg. 16. Never put off your conscience with any plea or with any argument that you dare not stand by in the great day of your account. It is dreadful to consider how many in these days put off their consciences. We did this and that for our families, they would have else perished. I have complied thus, and wronged my conscience thus, for this and that concernment. Will a man stand by this argument when he comes before Jesus Christ at the last day? Because of the souls of men, many plead this or that. Christ doth not stand in need of indirect ways to save souls; he hath ways enough to bring in souls to himself.

Leg. 17. Eye more, mind more, and lay to heart more, the spiritual and eternal workings of God in your souls, than the external providences of God in the world. Beloved, God looks that we should consider the operations of his hand; and the despising the works of his hands is so provoking to him that he threatens them to lead them into captivity for not considering of them. But above all look to the work that God is carrying on in your souls. Not a soul but he is carrying on some work or other in it, either blinding or enlightening, bettering or worstening; and therefore look to what God is doing in thy soul. All the motions of God within you are steps to eternity, and every soul shall be blessed or cursed, saved or lost to all eternity, not according to outward dispensations, but according to the inward operations of God in your souls. Observe what humbling work, reforming work, sanctifying work, he is about in thy spirit; what he is doing in that little world within thee. If God should carry on never so glorious a work in the world, as a conquest of the nations to Christ, what would it advantage thee if sin, Satan, and the world should triumph in thy soul, and carry the day there.

Leg. 18. Look as well on the bright side as on the dark side of the cloud; on the bright side of providence as well as on the dark side of providence. Beloved, there is a great weakness amongst

Christians; they do so pore on the dark side of the providence as that they have no heart to consider of the bright side. If you look on the dark side of the providence of God to Joseph, how terrible and amazing was it! but if you look on the bright side, his fourscore years' reign, how glorious was it! If you look on the dark side of the providence of God to David, in his five years' banishment, much will arise to startle you; but if you turn to the bright side, his forty years' reign in glory, how amiable was it! Look on the dark side of the providence of God to Job, oh, how terrible was it in the first of Job! but compare this with the last of Job, where you have the bright side of the cloud, and there God doubles all his mercies to him. Consider the patience of Job, and the end that the Lord made with him. Do not remember the beginning only, for that was the dark side; but turn to the end of him, and there was his bright side. Many sins, many temptations, and much affliction would be prevented by Christians looking on the bright side of providence as well as on the dark.

Leg. 19. Keep up precious thoughts of God under the sourest, sharpest, and severest dispensations of God to you: Psa 22:1-3, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.' There was the psalmist under smart dispensations, but what precious thoughts had he of God after all: 'But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel: though I am thus and thus afflicted, yet thou art holy;' Psa 65:5, 'By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation.'

Leg. 20. Hold on and hold out in the ways of well-doing, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. It is nothing to hold out when we meet with nothing but encouragements; but to hold out in the face of all discouragements is a Christian duty: Psa 44:1-26, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet have we not dealt falsely in thy covenant: our heart is not turned back, neither have we declined from thy ways.' It is perseverance that crowns all: 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life,' Rev 2:10; 'And he that endureth to the end shall be saved,' Mat 24:1-51. It is perseverance in well-doing that crowns all our actions. If you have begun in the Spirit, don't end in the flesh; do not go away from the Captain of your salvation; follow the Lamb, though others follow the beast and the false prophets.

Leg. 21. In all your natural, civil, and religious actions, let divine glory still rest on your souls, Rom 14:7-8, 1Co 10:31. In all your bearings, in all your prayings, let the glory of Christ carry it; in all your closet duties, let the glory of Christ lie nearest your hearts.

Leg. 22. Record all special favours, mercies, providences, and experiences. It is true, a man should do nothing else, should he record all the favours and experiences of God towards him; and therefore my legacy is, record all special favours, peculiar experiences. Little do you know the advantage that will redound to your soul upon this account by recording all the experiences of the shinings of his face, of the leadings of his Spirit. Many a Christian loseth much by neglecting this duty.

Leg. 23. Never enter upon the trial of your estate, but when your hearts are at the best, and in the fittest temper. It is a great design of Satan, when the soul is deserted and strangely afflicted, to put the soul on trying work. Come, see what thou art worth for another world, what thou hast to shew for a better state, for an interest in Christ, a title for heaven. This is not a time to be about this

work. Thy work is now to get off from this temptation, and therefore to pray and believe, and wait upon God, and to be found in all those ways whereby you may get off the temptation.

Leg. 24. Always make the Scripture, and not yourselves, nor your carnal reason, nor your bare opinion, the judges of your spiritual state and condition. I cannot see my condition to be good. I cannot perceive it. What! must your sense and your carnal reason be the judge of your spiritual state? Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light, no morning in them;' John 12:48, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day.' The Scripture is that which must determine the case in the great day, whether you have grace or no, or whether it be true or no.

Leg. 25. Make much conscience of making good the terms on which you closed with Christ. You know the terms, how that you would deny yourselves, take up his cross, and follow the Lamb wheresoever he should go. Now you are put to take up the cross, to deny yourselves, to follow the Lamb over hedge and ditch, through thick and thin. Do not turn your backs on Christ; the worst of Christ is better than the best of the world. Make conscience of making good your terms, to deny yourself, your natural self, your sinful self, your religious self, to follow him; and if you do so, oh! what an honour will it be to Christ, and advantage to your souls, and a joy to the upright!

Leg. 26. Walk by no rule but such as you dare die by and stand by in the great day of Jesus Christ. You may have many ways prescribed to worship by; but walk by none but such as you dare die by, and stand by, before Jesus Christ. Walk not by a multitude, for who dare stand by that rule when he comes to die?

Make not the example of great men a rule to go by, for who dare die by and stand by this in the great day of account. Do not make any authority that stands in opposition to the authority of Christ a rule to walk by, for who dare stand by this before Jesus Christ? Ah! sirs, walk by no rule but what you dare die by, and stand by at the great day.

Leg. 27. And lastly, sit down and rejoice with fear: Psa 2:1-12, 'Let the righteous rejoice, but let them rejoice with fear.' Rejoice, that God hath done your souls good by the everlasting gospel; that he did not leave you till he brought you to an acceptance of, to a closing with, and a resignation of, your souls to Christ, and the clearing up of your interest in him. Rejoice, that you have had the everlasting gospel in so much light, purity, power, and glory, as you have had for many years together. Rejoice in the riches of grace that hath carried it in such a way towards you. And weep, that you have provoked God to take away the gospel, that you have no more improved it; that you have so neglected the seasons and opportunities of enriching your souls. When you should have come to church-fellowship, anything would turn you out of the way. Oh! sit down and tremble under your barrenness, under all your leanness. Notwithstanding all the cost and charge that God hath been at, that you have grown no more into communion with God, and conformity to God, and into the lively hope of the everlasting fruition of God. Here are your legacies, and the Lord make them to work in your souls, and then they will be of singular use to you, to preserve you so that you may give up your account before the great and glorious God with joy. Labour to make conscience of putting these legacies into practice, of sucking at these breasts, which will be of use to us, till we shall be gathered up into the fruition of God, where we shall need no more ordinances, no more preaching or praying.

C.—Introductory ‘Epistles.’ See ante page xxxiii.

I. ‘The Gospel Treasury Opened, or the holiest of all unveiling; discovering yet more the riches of grace and glory to the vessels of mercy. Unto whom only it is given to know the mysteries of that kingdom and the excellency of Spirit, Power, Truth, above Letters, Forms, Shadows. In several Sermons, preached at Kensington and elsewhere,’ by John Everard, D.D., deceased. 1679. (2d edition, ‘very much enlarged’). 12mo. The following Epistle, entitled ‘An Approbation,’ is by Brooks, though good Matthew Barker adds his name also.

‘The Publisher of this book is desirous that it might pass with some testimonial into the world; but it needs not testimony from man; for I find it impressed with such a divine image, and bearing such clear lineaments of heaven-born truths as testify it to be of God; and therefore strongly bespeaks us to receive it, as into our houses, so chiefly into our hearts. I dare assure thee, Reader, if thou hast received a spiritual relish, thou shalt taste much sweetness in it; and if thou canst rejoice to be “laid low,” and made nothing, that God may be exalted and made “all in all,” then shalt thou find here that which will help thy joy. And let me entreat thee, that as thou readest the book, to read also thine own heart; and by this thou mayest come to find thine heart in the book, and the book in thine heart, and [this] will make thee fall upon thy face with that idiot, and worship God and report, “God is in this word of a truth,” 1Co 14:25. Some are casting off the letter of the Scriptures, others resting in it; some are despising ordinances, others are overvaluing them. I find the author walking warily betwixt both; giving due honour to the letter and to the form, while he is exalting the power and the Spirit incomparably above both; and thou shalt find him laying the axe of truth and the edge of the Spirit close to that cursed root of self-approbation in man, which is daily bringing forth such bitter fruits in his heart, in his life, and in the world; and yet remains unseen and untouched in the hearts of many that would be thought to be arrived at the brink of perfection, while they scarce understand wherein the great imperfection of the natural man doth lie.

Some expressions in thy reading may seem harsh or obscure to thee, as they did to me; but read it over and over with prayer, strongly desirous to be taught of God; and in reading be not weary, but blow and take breath, and at it again: and thou, comparing one place with another, wilt clearly see what the author means, and shalt find his whole discourse to have a sacred tendency to lay man low, and so to put him into a rich capacity of coming in to the nearest fellowship with God. So that while some seek to build up themselves upon the deceitful foundation of corrupted nature, and struggle, though in vain, in the light and power of it, to advance towards perfection; he is planting his spiritual artillery against it, to throw it into the dust, so that man may come to be surely rooted and bottomed upon the righteousness, power, and wisdom of Jesus Christ; which is the only foundation that God hath laid, and the gospel revealed. And in some things thou must give him a latitude to his judgment, as thou desirest by thine own in others. If thou findest some truths delivered and enforced with re-iterated expressions, consider they were delivered for the most part in several congregations; so that in some particulars the same things may be reinforced, but yet with more lustre, to make truth more clear. Thou hast them as they were preached and pressed in sermons to the capacity and conscience of his auditors, and taken from his mouth by a Notary; yet afterwards owned and approved by himself, he desiring to peruse them, they lying with him three or four months, and compared with his own notes. Read, consider, and try ‘and hold fast that which is good.’ Tho. Brooks.

March 26, 1653. M. Barker.

II. 'Altum Silentium, or Silence the Duty of Saints. By John Durant, 12mo. 1659. To the Reader.—Christian Friend,—The book of Job (saith Augustine) is the afflicted man's Scripture; and I may say this little book is the afflicted man's duty. A little pearl may be of great price; and such is this little treatise that now is put into thy hand. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven; and the higher the waters rose, the nearer the ark was lifted up to heaven: sometimes such an operation afflictions have upon Noahs, upon preachers of righteousness; and if they have not had the same operation upon the author of the ensuing discourse, I am much mistaken. Afflictions to some are like the prick at the nightingale's breast, that awakes her, and puts her upon her sweet and delightful notes; and whether they have not had such an operation upon the worthy author, I will leave the reader to judge. The more precious odours and the purest spices are beaten and bruised, the sweeter scent and savour they send abroad. Had not God bruised to death one of the choicest and sweetest flowers in the author's garden, he had not sent abroad this sweet and savoury sermon.

We try metal by knocking it; if it sound well, then we like it well. That is a tried Christian, a thorough Christian indeed, that gives a pleasant sound when under the knocking hand of God. If thou layest thine ear, thy heart, close to the following tract, thou wilt hear such a sound as will be sweeter to thee than the honey or the honey-comb. That Christian is worth a world who, under the sorest and sharpest afflictions, is like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire nor sinketh in the water; whose silence and patience is invincible and impregnable. None are such an honour to God, such a glory to the gospel, such a shame to Satan, and such a wonder to the world as these; who can lay their hands upon their mouths when God's rod lays heavy upon their backs. That this is every Christian's duty and glory is fully and sweetly evinced in the following discourse.

Happy are we when God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements. And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, (παίδεσις, παιδεα), [margin, Isa 36:9; Psa 94:12; Pro 3:12-13; Pro 6:23], because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding. That this happiness the reader may attain to, is the thing endeavoured by the author.

Reader, thou hast much wrapped up in a little; it is more to be admired than to have Homer's Iliads compressed in a nutshell; it is a mourning sermon, and mourning should be plain. The reverend author knew right well, that it was better to present truth in her native plainness than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls. He knew that the king of Nineveh was a king as well in his sackcloth, as in his royal robes. The author is known to be a master-workman, and one that could easily shoot his arrows over his hearers' heads [margin, See his precious works in print, and then judge], but he had rather shoot them into his hearers' hearts. He dares not affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, which are but mysterious nothings. He dares not do as many, who make plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard; and so darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2. If thou wilt but taste and try, thou wilt find this little treatise to be a heavenly honey-hive to thy soul.

If thou shalt say, Oh! it is sweet, it is seasonable, it is suitable to my condition, and to God's dispensations abroad in the world; but why have we no more of this sweet wine, no more of this water of life, no more of these clusters of Canaan? I must tell thee, that the honoured author

buried his dear and hopeful daughter on the Friday, and preached this sermon on the Sabbath day following; and therefore there has been more cause to bless the Lord, and admire the Lord for his goodness, assistance, and presence with the author, that has enabled him to bring forth a truth of so great weight and concernment to us, even then, when he was under such sore and sharp rebukes of God. It is not every one's happiness to have such a presence of God with them, when the rod of God is heavy upon them.

Reader, the point insisted on is a point of special use to Christians; especially to such as are under the afflicting hand of God, whether in spirituals or temporals; and if storms should fall upon us from abroad or at home, it will be found (in the use of it) more worth than gold. I have read of the stone Garamantides, that had drops of gold in it: many a golden drop wilt thou find in the following lines. As Moses laid up the manna in the golden pot, and as Alexander kept Homer's Iliad in a cabinet embroidered with gold, so do thou lay up this sermon in the golden cabinet of thy heart. If troubles at present are not upon thee, yet thou must remember that thou art born to them, as the sparks fly upwards [margin, Job 5:7; John 16:1-33 ult. 14; Acts 21:22]. God had but one Son without sin, he hath no son without sorrow; he had but one without corruption, he hath none without correction; he scourges every son whom he receives; he can quickly turn thy summer day into winter night, and then this sermon may be to thee a suitable and invaluable mercy. I shall only take leave to hint a few things to the author, my reverend brother, and to my dear sister, his virtuous yoke-fellow, who are above all others concerned in this sharp and sweet dispensation, and so conclude.

First, That well-grounded hope, confidence, and assurance, that you and others had of the buddings and blossomings of grace in her, in her tender age, and of her being now at rest in the bosom of the Father, should not only quiet and silence you, but also joy and rejoice you [margin, Heb 11:4]. Why may you not think that you hear her, though dead, yet speaking thus unto you? Where God has stamp'd his image upon a mite, 'Tis meet that God should have his right:

After a few years past, a wearied breath I have exchanged for a happy death.

Short was my life, the longer is my rest;

God takes them soonest whom he loveth best.

She that is born to-day, and dies to-morrow, Loses some hours of joy, but years of sorrow;

Other diseases often come to grieve us, Death strikes but once, and that stroke relieves us:

Therefore (my parents dear), take heed of weeping cross, And mind my happiness more than your own great loss. This is all I'll say to make the reckoning even, Your dearest mercy is not too good for heaven.

Hasten to me, where now I am possess'd With joys eternal, in Christ my only rest.

Secondly, The designs of God in all the sharp afflictions he exercises his children with, as (1.) the purging away of their sins, Isa 1:25; (2.) the making of them more partakers of his holiness, Heb 12:10; (3.) the trial of their graces, Job 23:10; (4.) the communication of more of himself and of his love to their souls, Hos 10:11; (5.) the multiplying of their spiritual experiences, 2Co 1:4-5; (6.) the crucifying of their hearts to the world, and the world to their hearts, Gal 6:14 [margin, Nam finis dat amabilitatem et facilitatem mediis]; (7.) to draw them to look and fix their souls upon the great

concernment of another world, John 14:1-3; (8.) that heaven may be the more sweet and precious to them at last, 2Co 4:16-18, Rom 8:17-18; how sweet is a calm after a storm, and summer days after long winter nights; (9.) to make them more and more conformable to Christ their head, Rom 8:17; (10.) that sinners may at the last be found dumb and speechless, 1Pe 4:17-18. Now, is there not enough in these glorious ends and designs of God to make his people sit mute under the sharpest trials? Surely there is. Why then don't they sit silent before the Lord?

Thirdly, All the mercies you enjoy, were first the Lord's before they were yours, and always the Lord's more than they were yours, 1Ch 29:14. 'All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' The sweet of mercy is yours, but the sovereign right to dispose of your mercies is the Lord's. Quicquid es debes creanti; quicquid potes, debes redimenti (Bern), whatsoever thou art, thou owest to him that made thee; and whatsoever thou hast, thou owest to him that redeemed thee. Say, as Jerome adviseth a friend of his (in the like case), Thou hast taken away whom thou hast given me: I grieve not that thou hast taken them, but praise the Lord that was pleased to give them. You think it but just and reasonable that men should deal with their own as they please; and is it not much more just and reasonable that God should do with his own as he pleases?

Fourthly, That God that has taken one, might have taken all; there are several left, though one be taken. Job, you know, was a nonsuch in his generation, and yet the sentence of death was passed upon all his children at a clap; and under this said clap Job does not blaspheme, but bless; he does not murmur, but worships; he accuses not God, but clears God of injustice under saddest and severest strokes of justice, Job 1:1-22. Geographers write that the city of Syracuse in Sicily is so curiously situated, that the sun is never out of sight: though one mercy be gone, yet you have several that remain, and this should make you mute.

Themistocles invited many philosophers to supper; the owner sends for one half of those necessities that he was using. Can you endure this disgrace? said the philosophers. Yes, said he, very well, for he might have sent justly for them all. The application is easy. Oh! let not nature do more than grace.

Fifthly and lastly, Under sharp afflictions, we ought carefully to look that natural afflictions don't hinder the exercise of gracious dispositions. Though we may weep, yet we may not weep out either the eye of faith, or the eye of hope [margin, 1Th 4:13]: though you may water your flowers, yet you may not drown your flowers. They that wept, yea, that wept much, yet said, The will of the Lord be done [margin, Acts 21:13-14]. Jacob doated too much upon his Joseph, and his affections were too strong for his judgment, when, upon the sight of the bloody coat, he refused to be comforted, and said, I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning [margin, Gen 37:33-35]. And David was too fond of his son Absalom, when, like a puny baby, he wept and said, O my son Absalom! my son! my son! Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! my son! [margin, 2Sa 18:32-33]. The Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days, but Joseph (though he had more cause) mourned but seven days; because he had more grace, and better hopes of Jacob's eternal welfare, than the infidels had. In the midst of all your tears, keep up the exercise of grace, and then you shall not mourn that you have mourned. That your own is no sooner in your hand, is only from the remissness and dilatoriness of him into whose hands you had ordered the copy. To conclude: that you and I, and all others (into whose hands this sermon may fall) may live up, and live out, the following discourse, under all the changes that has or shall pass upon us, is

the earnest desire and hearty prayer of him who is your entire friend and servant in our dearest Lord.

Tho. Brooks.

III. The 'Epistle' prefixed to the 'Works' of Dr Thomas Taylor, of 'Aldermanbury, London,' (folio, 1653), bears the name of Brooks, only in common with Gouge and Calamy, Jackson, Ashe, Caryl, Manton, Greenhill, Strong, Griffith, Venning, and Jemmat. The first signature is that of Dr William Gouge; and probably the 'Epistle' was drawn up by him, and simply signed by the others. Yet does there seem touches from the hand of Brooks.

IV. 'Gospel Fear; or the Heart trembling at the Word of God evidenceth a blessed frame of spirit. Delivered in several Sermons from Isa 66:2, and 2Ki 22:14. By Jeremiah Burroughes. "His mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation," Luk 1:50. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," Php 2:12. London: Printed by J. D. for B. Aylmer at the three Pigeons in Cornhill. 1674.' 12mo. To The Reader.—Christian Reader,—These following sermons are the labours of that prince of preachers, Mr Jer. Burroughs, who is now a shining sun in that upper world. But they that are taken out of this valley of Baca, and carried up by troops of glorious angels into the highest heaven, stand in no need of the praises of men, having the fruition of the eternal God. And therefore I shall wheel about to these choice sermons that are here presented to thine eyes. In the three first thou wilt find this great and glorious truth, viz., that a heart trembling at God's word is very precious in God's eyes,—Heb 6:10; Isa 62:6; Eze 36:37,—clearly opened, fully proved, and sweetly and faithfully improved, so as that, by a blessing from on high, it may contribute greatly to the internal and eternal welfare of thy precious and immortal soul. Concerning the Word, premise this with me, viz. that in these six following acceptations the word is taken in the blessed Scriptures, (1.) By the Word is sometimes meant the whole Scriptures, Old and New Testament. (2.) By the Word is meant our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the spirit, life, and soul of the word, John 1:1-51. (3.) By the Word is sometimes meant the commands of the word, Heb 1:1-14. (4.) By the Word is sometimes meant the threatenings of God. (5.) By the Word is sometimes meant the precious promises: Psa 119:49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.' God is not unrighteous to forget, yet we must, as his remembrancers, put his promises in suit. (6.) By the Word is sometimes meant those holy prophecies which are scattered up and down in the Scriptures, Jude 1:14. The word thus considered occasioned one Baldusgar, a famous minister in Germany, to say, Veniat, veniat verbum Domini et submittemus illi sexcenta, si nobis essent, colla, let the word of the Lord come, let it come, saith he; we will submit to it if we had many hundred necks to put under it. The design of the worthy author in this little piece is, to win and work the reader to submit to the Word, to be guided by the Word, to prize the Word, to lay up the Word, and to live out the Word in a conversation becoming the gospel. The Jewish Rabbins were wont to say, that upon every letter of the law there hangs mountains of profitable matter. I am sure in the following discourse thou wilt find even mountains of heavenly matter hanging upon all the main particulars that this blessed author offers to thy serious consideration in this small treatise. Here you have Homer's Iliads in a nutshell; much choice matter in a little room. It is said of Cæsar, Major fuit cura Casari libellorum quam purpuræ, he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters, but lost his robes. But what are Cæsar's books to God's books? or to this little book that is now put into thy hand? Surely the word of the Lord is

very sweet to all those gracious souls who make conscience of trembling at it, Psa 19:10; Psa 119:103; Job 23:12; Song of Solomon 2:3. Luther said he could not live in paradise, if he might, without the Word, at cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere, but with the Word he could live in hell itself. The philosopher gave thanks that he was born in the time of true philosophy. Ah! how happy are we that are born in such a time wherein the Lord doth effundere Spiritum, pour forth his Spirit, not by drops, as in the time of the Law, but showers down of his gifts and graces, as was most evident in the author of this following piece. Not only the day-star, but the Sun of righteousness was risen upon that people that had once the happiness to sit under the author's ministry; neither is it a small part of this world's happiness that they are blessed with his most excellent labours to this very day. One cannot say of any divine thing, that it is his own properly till in his heart. I can say of a bird, or of this or that, it is my own when in my hand; but I cannot say God is mine till in my heart, or that Christ is mine till in my heart, or that the Spirit is mine till in my heart, or that grace is mine till in my heart, or that the word is mine till in my heart. 'I have kept thy word in my heart, that I may not sin against thee,' saith David, Psa 119:11; and therefore, reader, it highly concerns thee to get that word into thy heart that is here presented to thine eye. Ah! Christians, your hearts are never in so good a frame, so safe a frame, so sweet a frame, so happy a frame, so gospel a frame, as when they are in a trembling frame; and therefore make this little piece your delightful companion till your hearts are brought into such a blessed frame, &c.

Obj. But may not reprobates and devils tremble at the word? did not Belshazzar tremble at the handwriting? did not Felix tremble at the word preached by Paul? and is it not said that the devils believe and tremble? Dan 5:5-6; Acts 24:24-25; Jas 2:19.

Ans. 1. Wicked men and devils may tremble at the judgments denounced in the word, but they tremble not at the offence committed against the holy commandments of God, as sincere Christians do: Ezr 10:3, Shechaniah said, 'We have trespassed against our God; let us make a covenant with our God according to the counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the commandments of God.' The commandments discovering their sin, they tremble who before, were hardened in their practice of marrying with the Canaanites; but we hear nothing, we find nothing of this in Belshazzar, or Felix, or the devils. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, I answer, the wicked tremble, but never mend their ways. Pharaoh trembles, but never mends. Saul trembles, but never mends. Belshazzar trembles, but never mends. Felix trembles, but never mends; and devils tremble, but never mend. But Paul trembles, and cries out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' And the jailor trembles, and cries out, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' Acts 9:4-6; Acts 16:29-30. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, The trembling of the wicked drives them further and further off from God, and off from duty; as you see in Saul, who, under his tremblings, runs to a witch; but gracious tremblings draw the soul nearer and nearer to God, as you see in Jehoshaphat, who feared and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah, 2Ch 23:3. The saints, under all their holy tremblings, they follow after God as the people followed after Saul's tremblings, 1Sa 13:7. But,

Ans. 4. Fourthly, The godly tremble, and mourn and tremble. Their trembling hearts are broken hearts, and their broken hearts are trembling hearts; they look upon sin and tremble, and they look upon sin and mourn, Isa 66:2; Jer 9:1-2; Psa 119:136; Jer 25:13, Jer 25:17, 'But if ye will not hear

it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eyes shall weep sore and run down with tears,' &c. The wicked tremble, but, under all their tremblings, their hearts are as dry and hard as rocks, yea, harder than the very rocks: Jer 5:3, 'They made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return,' Eze 3:7-9; Jer 7:26. Pharaoh trembled, but yet was hardened; the devils tremble, but yet are hardened. If one penitent tear could purchase heaven, hell could not afford that one tear. Repenting tears are precious; they are, saith Gregory, 'the fat of the sacrifice;' and, as Basil saith, 'the medicine of the soul;' and, as Bernard, 'the wine of angels.' But these are only to be found among those choice souls who make conscience of trembling at God's word, and who enjoy that choice tenderness of heart that is in this little treatise drawn to the life. Verily we cannot meet on this side hell with a worse temper of spirit than that which inclines a sinner to drop counterfeit tears, and to despise the forbearance of God, and to kick against the bowels of his goodness, Rom 2:4, as that profane Arian did who was executed at Harwich, concerning whom Mr Greenham acquainteth us with this strange and prodigious narration. This hellish heretic, saith he—for so were the deniers of Christ's divinity accounted of in those days, whatever thoughts men have of them now—a little before he was executed, afforded a few whorish tears, asking whether he might be saved by Christ or no? when one told him that if he truly repented, he should surely not perish, he breaks out into this speech, Nay, if your Christ be so easy to be entreated indeed as you say, then I defy him, and care not for him. Oh horrible blasphemy, and desperate wickedness! for a man to draw himself back from repentance by that very cord of love whereby he should have been drawn to it. But,

Ans. 5. Fifthly and lastly, The hearts of wicked men and devils only tremble upon the account of punishment and the judgment to come, Acts 24:25; Mat 8:28-29. As a malefactor trembleth before the judge, and under the sense of his doom; but a child of God trembles under the sense of God's goodness and kindness to him: Hos 3:5, 'And shall fear the Lord and his goodness;' or, as some sense it, 'they shall fear the Lord because of his goodness.' The Hebrew is, 'they shall fear to the Lord pavebunt ad Dominum, that is, trembling they shall make haste to him as frightened doves do to their columbaries. See Hos 11:11. Look! as holy tremblings and gladness are consistent together, Psa 2:11; and as a holy fear and joy are consistent together, as you see in those good women who went from Christ's sepulchre with fear and great joy, Mat 28:8, a strange composition of two contrary passions, but frequently found in the best hearts; so a holy love and trembling are consistent together. A child whose heart is full of love to his father, when he looks upon him as offended or grieved, he trembles, like that poor woman, Mark 5:33, who, fearing that she had offended Christ in her approaching to him, came trembling, but yet with a heart full of love to Christ. So here, when a child of God fixes one eye upon the holiness and justice of God, he trembles; and when, at the same time, he fixes his other eye upon the patience, the goodness, the graciousness, and readiness of God to forgive as a father, he loves and joys; but now all the tremblings of the wicked are from apprehensions of wrath to come, and from a hankering of hell in their consciences on this side hell. These five things I thought to hint at, that the reader may be the better able to grapple with the same objection when he meets with it in this little piece. The dew of heaven hath richly fallen among many, and yet, like Gideon's fleece, they are dry when all the regions about them are wet, Jdg 6:37-40; and is it not so with many in these days, who sit under gospel droppings, and who have the labours of many famous men put every day into their hands? and yet how are their souls like the mountains of Gilboa, upon which there fell neither dew nor rain! This is and this must be for a lamentation, 2Sa 1:21. If the books of the law chance to fall

upon the ground, the Jews' custom is presently to proclaim a fast. Ah, friends! what cause have we to fast and mourn, when we see the word preached, printed, offered, to fall upon the ground, and to be trampled upon, as it is this day by atheists, papists, Socinians, and other vain persons! &c. The Jews have a law which enjoins them to take up any paper which they see lying on the ground; and the reason is, lest haply the word of God be written in the paper and ignorantly trodden under foot. Though Christians ought to be free from such superstitious curiosities, yet they ought to be very careful that the least tittle of the word, the least truth revealed in the word, be not trodden under foot either by themselves or others; considering its excellency and usefulness as a guide, a light, to lead us through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan: Pro 6:22, 'When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.' That is, according to the gloss of the Rabbinical interpreters, when thou goest, it shall lead thee, viz. in thy passage through this world; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee, viz. when thou liest down in the grave; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee, viz. when thou art awakened at the glorious resurrection. But, that I may not make the porch too large, I shall hasten to a close. There are three sorts of persons, above all others, that I would seriously recommend this treatise to.

(1.) First, Those that do tremble at the word, and those that have soft and tender hearts; for these will find choice comforts, special encouragements, and singular supports to cheer and bear up their hearts in their greatest trials, inward or outward, or in the worst of times.

(2.) Secondly, Those that are bold sinners, secure sinners, stupid sinners, insensible sinners; for these will find variety of arguments to awaken them, to startle them, to soften them, and to work them into a trembling frame and a tender frame, with singular directions and counsel how to obtain those spiritual frames which are infinitely more worth than all those crowns and kingdoms that men are this day contending for in blood.

(3.) Thirdly, Those that are under many fears, and doubts, and disputes in their own hearts, whether they do tremble at this word or no, and whether they have a tender heart or no; for I dare venture to say that such persons will find in this treatise those blessed truths that will, by a blessing from on high, scatter their fears, resolve their doubts, and put a happy issue to all their disputes.

Reader, When thou hast once seriously read over this little treatise, I cannot but judge that thou wilt readily conclude with me, viz. That the two special points here handled, viz. our trembling at God's word, and a tender heart, are, (1.) Two great and weighty points. (2.) Two very noble and necessary points, which all should labour to know and understand who would be blessed here and happy hereafter. (3.) Two seasonable and suitable points to the days and times wherein we live, which abound with all sorts of sins, and which are attended with the sorest of spiritual judgments, such as blindness, hardness, insensibleness. (4.) Two important points that have singular other points wrapped up in the womb of them, and that are dependent upon them. (5.) Two points that are not every day handled in the pulpit, nor sent unto the press.

Reader, The importunity of a worthy friend hath prevailed with me to give thee the trouble of reading this epistle. And now I shall conclude with a few words of counsel: (1.) Let him that casts his eye on this book not borrow it, but buy it; (2.) seriously read it; (3.) highly prize it; (4.) earnestly pray over it; (5.) endeavour to have his heart and life made conformable to the matter contained in

it; (6.) to lay it up among his choicest treasures; and (7.) when he is in the mount, to remember him who unfeignedly and earnestly desires that this little piece may be highly blessed to the writer, reader, and hearer: and so I shall take leave and rest, Thy real friend and soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks.

D.—Mrs Brooks. (See ante, p. xxxiv). The following is the title-page of the Funeral Sermon of the first Mrs Brooks:—

STRENGTH in

Weakness. a

SERMON Preached at the FUNERAL of Mrs. MARTHA BROOKS,

Late WIFE to Mr. THO. BROOKS Minister of the Gospel in London; Who Departed this Life June 20. 1676. To which are Added Some EXPERIENCES of the Grace and Dealings of GOD, Observed and Gathered by a near Relation of the said Mrs. Brooks. By J.C. a Friend of the Deceased, and her Surviving Husband.

2Co 12:10.

—■ταν γ■ς ■σθεν■, τ■τι δυνατ■ς ε■μι.

Heb 11:34.

■νεδυναμ■θησαν ■π■ ■σθενε■ας.—

LONDON, Printed for John Hancock at the Three Bibles in Popes-Head Alley, Cornhill. 1676. [4to.] We give the 'Notes' that were furnished by, no doubt, Brooks. A short account of some of the choice experiences, blessed discoveries, and gracious evidences, of Mrs Martha Brooks, who fell asleep in Jesus, June 20. 1676. Drawn up by a near relation, that best understood her spiritual estate and condition.

It is long since that the Lord made it the day of his power—Psa 110:3—upon her soul. Many years ago, the great and glorious God, by his Spirit and power, by his word and rod, brought her from under the power, use, and dominion of sin and Satan, 1Th 1:5; Pro 29:15, and brought her off from restings or stayings upon her own righteousness—which she daily looked upon to be but filthy rags, and as a menstruous cloth—and brought her into fellowship and communion with himself, his Son, and his blessed Spirit, &c., Rom 6:14; Acts 26:18; Isa 64:6; John 1:3-4; 2Co 13:14. To make a full narration of these great things, would make this little piece to swell beyond its due proportion; and though it might please some, yet it might dissatisfy others; and therefore I shall do little more than hint at things, that so I may bring all I intend to say into a narrow compass. Should I say all I could,

First, About her knowledge and acquaintance with Christ, when and where should I make an end? Only this I may say: 1, her knowledge was inward; 2, it was affectionate; 3, experimental; 4, humbling; 5, growing; 6, communicative; 7, practical, Job 22:21; John 17:3, John 7:17, John 13:1.

Secondly, Should I say all I could about her high approbation of Christ,—Acts 4:12; 1Ti 1:15; Col 1:19, Col 1:2-3; Acts 5:31; Col 2:6; Rom 7:12; Psa 119:72; Rev 3:19; Dan 9:14; Neh 9:33—when

and where should I make an end? Only this I may hint: 1, that she highly approved of the person of Christ as the most suitable good in heaven or earth to her soul; 2, she highly approved of the personal excellencies of Christ as the most transcendent excellencies; 3, she highly approved of Christ in all his offices, both kingly, prophetic, and priestly; 4, she highly approved of all the precious things of Christ, as his day, his laws, his worship, his ordinances, his ways, his saints; 5, she highly approved of the rebukes, of the severe rebukes, of Christ, knowing that they were the fruits of his love, and that he was holy and wise, just and righteous, in all his rebukes, &c.

Thirdly, About her choice and election of Christ to be her Head and Husband, Song of Solomon 2:16; Deu 26:17, her Sovereign and Saviour; upon choice she would have none but Christ to save her, nor none but Christ to rule her.

Fourthly, About her reception of Christ, Job 1:12; Psa 24:7-10 : 1, in all his offices; 2, into every room of her soul; 3, once for all; 4, upon his own gospel terms, Mat 16:24.

Fifthly, About her high, her very high, estimation of Christ, 1Pe 2:7, she prized above all her duties, above all her privileges, above all her graces, above all her outward contentments, and above all her spiritual enjoyments; he was to her the chiefest of ten thousand, Song of Solomon 5:10; Psa 45:2; Mat 13:26; Pro 8:11; Php 3:8; he was fairer than the children of men; he was the pearl of price in her eye; he was more precious than rubies to her soul. She looked upon all things as nothing in comparison of Christ; she had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds.

Sixthly, About her marriage union and communion with Christ, of which freely and frequently she discoursed both with ministers and Christians throughout her sickness. Her marriage union with Christ was breasts of consolation and wells of salvation to her, Song of Solomon 3:11; Hos 2:18-20; 2Co 11:2; Psa 66:11, Psa 12:3. Throughout her nine months' sickness by these she did live, and in these things were the life of her spirit, Isa 38:16.

Seventhly, About her trustings and cleavings to Christ as the ivy cleaves to the oak, the child to the mother, or as the wife cleaves to the husband. In all her ups and downs, she would be still hanging upon Christ, and cleaving to Christ, John 13:15; Acts 11:23; Ruth 1:14; Gen 2:24.

Eighthly, About her thirstings, breathings, and longings, after higher, clearer, and fuller enjoyments of Christ, she could never have enough of Christ, Psa 42:1-2, Psa 63:1-11; Mal 1:2-3; Psa 84:1-12, Psa 27:4, Psa 27:8, nor enough of his presence, nor enough of his Spirit, nor enough of his grace, nor enough of his manifestations, nor enough of his consolations; the constant cry of her soul was, More of Christ! more of Christ! O more of Christ!

Ninthly, About her sad lamenting and bewailing the withdrawals of Christ, Song of Solomon 5:6; Isa 8:17, Isa 8:7; Mic 7:8-9, Mic 7:2. There were no days so sad, so dark, so gloomy, so grievous, so afflictive to her, as those days wherein he that should comfort her soul stood afar off, Lam 1:16. The shinings of Christ's face made a heaven in her heart; and the hidings of his face was her only hell. Let whoso would frown, if Christ did but smile, all was well.

Tenthly, About her sympathising with Christ in all the dishonours that were done to his name, his person, his day, his offices, his ordinances, his ways, his saints; and it was a grief to her to see others grieving of Christ, Psa 119:53, Psa 119:136; Jer 9:1-2; Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6; 1Pe 2:4, 1Pe 2:7-8. Other men's sins were matter of her sorrow; the sins of others hath cost her many a prayer,

many a sigh, many a tear, and many a groan. Now, should I say all I could upon these particulars, when should I make an end? and therefore I must satisfy myself and the reader with a-hinting at things. Her whole life (human frailties excepted) since God made it the day of his power upon her soul, was a daily walking with God; and all the days that ever passed over her head, there was none for delight, pleasure, profit, comfort, content, boldness, and satisfaction, to those wherein she walked most evenly, most closely, and most exactly with God, Gen 5:22, Gen 6:9, Gen 17:1; Psa 119:112, Psa 119:144-145; Acts 24:16; Heb 13:18.

Concerning Sin. 1. Sin of all burdens was her greatest, Psa 38:4, Psa 40:12. 2. Her hatred and indignation against sin was universal, Psa 119:104, Psa 119:128; Isa 2:20, Isa 30:22; Hos 14:8; Psa 119:176. 3. Her whole life was a daily conflicting with sin, Rom 7:23-24; Psa 17:4. She had rather be rid of all her sins, than be rid of all her troubles, sorrows, trials, bodily ailments, Job 7:20-21, Job 34:31-32; Hos 14:2. Others are all for the removing of the judgments and afflictions they are under, Exo 8:8; Num 21:6-7; Jer 30:15. 5. She durst not allow herself in any known sin, much less in a course or way of sin, Psa 119:1, Psa 119:3; Rom 7:15; 1Jn 3:9; Pro 16:17. 6. Her greatest conflict was with heart sins, secret sins, spiritual sins, invisible sins; sins that lie most hid and remote from the eyes of the world, Psa 19:12, Psa 119:113. 'I hate vain thoughts:' secret self-love, secret pride, secret unbelief, secret hypocrisy, secret murmurings, secret carnal confidence, &c., 2Ch 32:25; 2Co 7:1, did sit saddest upon her spirit. 7. There was an irreconcilable opposition in her soul against sin; she could not, she would not, she durst not upon any terms in the world, admit of any truce or reconciliation with sin, 1Ki 14:30; Rom 7:23; Gal 5:17; Rom 6:6; Psa 51:2, Psa 51:7-8. Her daily slips and falls did daily produce more soul-loathings, soul-humiliation, self-judging, self-abasement, self-aborrancy, Eze 16:61, Eze 16:63; 2Co 7:11; Psa 18:9. Her constant desires and earnest endeavours were to avoid and shun all known appearances of sin, Gen 39:12; 2Co 8:20-21; 1Co 9:11-15; 1Th 5:22; Jude 1:23; Exo 23:7; Deu 12:30; Pro 5:8. 10. And, lastly, she set herself, her soul, her greatest strength against her bosom sins, her constitution sins, her most powerful and most prevalent sins; she set herself most against right-eye sins, and right-hand sins.

Concerning closet-prayer. I never knew any woman spend more time in her closet, nor keep more private days to God than she did. The duties of her closet were her meat and drink, and she was always best when she was most with God in a corner. She has many a whole day been pouring out her soul before God in her closet, for the nation, for Sion, and the great concerns of her own soul, when them about her did judge it more expedient that she had been in her bed, by reason of some bodily infirmity that did hang upon her; but the divine pleasures that she took in her closet did drown the sense of pain. Secret enjoyments of God makes heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, Isa 33:24, 2Co 4:16-18. She found by frequent experience that closet-duties were mighty enriching, soul-fattening, soul-strengthening, soul-nourishing; and this endeared her to her closet.

Concerning ordinances. All that did thoroughly know her did know, 1, that she greatly loved the ordinances in the power and purity; 2, that she highly prized them; 3, that she made improvements of them, &c., endeavouring, according to her measure received, so to live as that she might reflect honour and glory upon the ordinances; 4, she made conscience of one ordinance as well as another, Luk 1:5-6; she did not as some, cry up some ordinances and cry down others, nor keep close to some, and live in the neglect of others; 5, she ran all hazards in times of dangers to enjoy

the ordinances, and chose rather with Moses to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which were but for a season, Heb 11:24-27. 6. I never knew any Christian under such a load of weaknesses strive and labour to enjoy the ordinances as she did the three last years before her death.

Concerning her love to the saints. First, It was sincere for the image of God, of Christ, of grace, and holiness, 1Jn 3:14, 1Jn 3:18; 1Jn 5:1. The image of God was the loadstone that drew out her love to the saints.

2. It was universal, to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any, to poor Lazarus as well as rich Abraham, to an afflicted and despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Jacob as well as to a raised Joseph, Neh 3:15; Col 1:4; Php 4:21; 1Pe 2:17.

3. It was an extensive love; it extended to those that were remote in respect of place, as well as to those that were near, to those saints whose faces she never saw, as well as to those whose faces she daily beheld; and all upon the serious reports of the grace of God that has been sparkling and shining in them, Rom 5:15.

4. It was a fervent love, an active love, a love that put her upon doing, upon acting for them, and distributing to them according to her ability and their necessity, 1Pe 1:22; Acts 11:28-30; 1Pe 4:11. Her love was not a cold, idle, lazy love, like theirs in Jas 2:14-17.

5. It was a constant love, a permanent love, 1Co 13:8, Heb 13:1 : 'Let brotherly love continue,' 1Jn 4:16, Pro 17:17. It was a love like that of Christ, who loved his to the end, John 13:1, John 15:12. Look, as our love must be sincere without hypocrisy, so it must be constant without deficiency. That love was never true that is not constant. True love, like the pulse, will still be beating, it will still be working, and turning out to the person beloved.

6. She loved, honoured, and prized them most and best in whom the spiritual and supernatural causes of love did most shine and sparkle, Psa 15:4, Psa 16:3, Psa 45:13, Psa 119:119. Such saints as were magnificent in grace, noble in grace, glorious in grace, wonderful in grace, had most of her heart, and were most honoured and prized by her; she loved them best that were best.

Concerning the signal and blessed presence of God with her throughout her nine months' sickness. This divine presence with his sick and weak handmaid did manifest itself several ways; at first by preserving her eminently from sinning under her sufferings, as she would often say, Though I groan, yet I bless God I do not grumble. I remember what Job, Jeremiah, and Jonah said and did in the days of their sore sufferings; but God stood by his poor handmaid, and greatly armed her against those particular sins that an afflicted state lays the afflicted open to. Secondly, this glorious presence of God was manifested by keeping up in her daily exercise of those particular graces that was to be acted in an afflicted condition, as faith, hope, patience, self-denial, contentation and submission. Thirdly, this gracious presence of God did manifest itself by enabling his weak and sick handmaid in all her continued weakness to be still a-justifying of God, and crying out, The Lord is righteous, the Lord is righteous; he is holy and just, he can do me no wrong, he will do me no wrong. Though the cup be bitter to the flesh, yet it is a cup that my Father hath put into my hand, and therefore I will drink it, and lay my hand upon my mouth, and be silent at my Father's foot, Lam 1:18; Psa 119:75; Gen 18:25; John 18:11; Lam 3:26-28; Rev 20:2.

Fourthly, This gracious presence of God was signally manifested in the chaining up of Satan; for the greatest part of her sickness, her body being very low, her spirits low, and her strength low, and by reason of her great and many weaknesses, she was cast unavoidably under great indispositions, both as to civil and sacred things; the greater was the mercy in God's chaining up of Satan; and if now and then Satan began to be busy, the Lord quickly rebuked him, and laid a law of restraint upon him. Fifthly, this gracious presence of God was signally manifested in keeping down and in keeping off the fears and terrors of death. She could all along cast the gauntlet to death, and say with the apostle, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' &c., 1Co 15:55-57. Death is the king of terrors, as Job speaks, Job 18:14, Heb 2:14-15, and the terror of kings, as the philosopher speaks; and yet the great and blessed God took away the dread and terror of death from her. If you ask those that lie under the fears and terrors of death, they will tell you that deliverance from those fears and terrors would be a heaven on this side heaven unto them. I could greatly enlarge, but that both the press and the bookseller calls aloud upon me to conclude. The design of these few hints is to comfort and encourage relations and friends to write after this blessed copy and example of that dear servant of Christ who hath now exchanged earth for heaven, a wilderness for a paradise, a sick-bed for a royal throne, pains, strong and long pains, for everlasting pleasures, and the presence of poor, frail, sinful mortals for the presence of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, Psa 16:11, Heb 12:22-23.

E.—Will. See ante page xxxv.

Extracted from the Principal Registry of Her Majesty's Court of Probate.

(In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.)

Death is a fall that came in by a Fall: that statute Law of Heaven 'Dust thou art and to dust thou shalt returne' will first or last take hold of all mortalls; the core of that apple that Adam eat in Paradise will choke us all round one by one; there is not one man living that shall not see death; though all men shall not meete in Heaven, nor in Hell, yet all men shall meete in the grave whether wee and all a[re] going. To prevent ill consequences and the mischiefes that follow without making a Will and to sett my house in order I doo make this short following Will. First I bequeath unto my loveing Couson Mistress Elenor Crith, fifty pounds which I will that my Executrix pay within a twelve moneths after my death. I give to Vice Admirall Goodsons eldest daughters sonne that shee had by her husband, Captain Magger twenty five pounds but in ease of his Mortallity to what child shee pleaseth. I will and bequeath unto her sister Maryes eldest child twenty five pounds both of which summes my Executrix is to pay within a yeare after my death. Item I give my studdy of bookes to be sold by my Couson Ford and my cousin Henry Goodman and Master Crouch; and the money thence ariseing to be equally divided into foure proportions, one for my cousin Martha Wright, another for Mary Wright, the other two for Roger Timborland's two children which he had by my cousin Joan, as soon as the sale is made² my Will is that my Executrix pay it into my cousin Martha and Mary Wright, and to Master Collins of Newbury I give for the use of the other two; And should it soo happen that either of the Girls should dye before age or marriage, that then the surviving sister should have her sisters loss, and in case of both their Mortallities before age or Marriage that then Master Collins gives the money to Ministers and Ministers Widows that hee and Master Woodbridge the minister is acquainted with Item that one hundred pounds that I have upon Master John Juxon and that is now in the hand of Master Shepheard be delivered into the hands

of my honoured Father Master Thomas Cartwright And that the money upon that Bond to paye in as he is able into the hands of my Father Master Thomas Cartwright And my Will is that this Money so paid in be by my Father Cartwright and my Couson Ford and my Couson Henry Goodman distributed amongst such ministers and ministers Widows as they think meete Item I give to my deare and honoured Mother Mistress Patience Cartwright my Sedan: And all the rest my real and personal Estate I give unto my deare and honoured Wife [in] whom God hath made all relations to meet in one.² I doo ordaine my said Wife to be sole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament and my honoured Father Master Thomas Cartwright the only Overseer and Assistant to my Executrix In witnesses hereof I putt my hand and seale the day and year under written—Thomas Brooks—March the twenty seventh one thousand six hundred and Eighty—Witness Edward Wylde—Henry Chandler—Tho. Cartwright.—

Probatum apud London fuit hujusmodi Testamentum coram Venerabili viro Domino Thoma Lyton Milite, Legum Doctore, Surrogato Venerabilis et egregij viri Domini Leolini Jenkins Militis, Legum etiam Doctoris, Curiae Prærogativæ Cantuariensis Magistri Custodis sive Commissary legitime constituti, decimo quinto die mensis Octobris Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo Octogesimo; Juramento Patenciæ Brooks Relictæ dicti defuncti et Executricis in hujusmodi Testamento nominat; Cui commissa fuit Administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum, jurium et creditorum dicti defuncti, de bene et fideliter Administrando eadem ad sancta Dei Evangelia in debita Juris forma Jurat.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES

NOTE The editions of 'Precious Remedies,' from its original publication in 1652, have been very numerous. The '2d' was issued in 1653, 'corrected and enlarged.' For many years reprints followed in rapid succession, more numerous indeed than at first sight appears, e. g. those of 1661 and 1669, though distinct impressions, being without designation as new editions. The '7th' appeared in 1671, the '8th' in 1676, and the '9th' in 1682. Our text is that of the '8th,' collated with the 1st and 2d. The '8th' was chosen, as having been the last during the author's own lifetime: but the collation was found necessary, inasmuch as Brooks, after a '2d' and usually 'corrected' and 'enlarged' edition, seems to have allowed his books to be reprinted without further oversight. Thus in our text (page 11) for 'Dan's adder' it misprints 'Pan's adder,' and so on in a multitude of like cases in all the after-editions of all his writings. Hence the later editions prove much more incorrect than the earlier, especially in the textual and marginal references, &c., and a recurrence to the original or early 'corrected' edition often enables us to see the source of the error. The title-page of the '8th' edition is given below.

G. precious

REMEDIES against Satan's Devices: or,

SALVE for

{

Believers and Unbelievers

}

SORES.

Being a Companion for those that are in Christ, or out of Christ; that slight or neglect Ordinances, under a pretence of living above them; that are growing (in Spirituals) or decaying; that are Tempted, or Deserted; Afflicted or opposed; that have Assurance, or that want Assurance, &c. By Thomas Brooks, formerly a willing Servant unto God, and the Faith of his People, in the glorious Gospel of Christ at St. Margarets Fishstreet-hill. The Eighth Edition.

Eph 6:11.

Put on the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

LONDON

Printed for John Hancock, and are to be sold at the three Bibles, the first shop in Popes-head Alley, next to Cornhill. 1676. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his most dear and precious ones, the sons and daughters of the Most High God, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made him a Watchman.

Beloved in our dearest Lord, Christ, the Scripture, your own hearts, and Satan's devices, are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a Watchman, to do my best to discover the fulness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver; which I have endeavoured to do, in the following Discourse, according to that measure of grace which I have received from the Lord. God once accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice [Lev 2:2, Lev 5:12], and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation; and I know that you have not so 'learned the Father,' as to despise 'the day of small things' [Zec 4:10].

Beloved, Satan being fallen from light to darkness, from felicity to misery, from heaven to hell, from an angel to a devil, is so full of malice and envy that he will leave no means unattempted, whereby he may make all others eternally miserable with himself; he being shut out of heaven, and shut up 'under the chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day' [Jude 1:6], makes use of all his power and skill to bring all the sons of men into the same condition and condemnation, with himself. Satan hath cast such sinful seed into our souls, that now he can no sooner tempt, but we are ready to assent; he can no sooner have a plot upon us, but he makes a conquest of us. If he doth but shew men a little of the beauty and bravery of the world, how ready are they to fall down and worship him!

Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward. If David be proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them, that he may be yet prouder, 2Sa 24:1-25.

If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying of Christ, to save his own skin, Mat 16:22, Mat 26:69-75. If Ahab's prophets be given to flatter, the devil will straightway become a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them, and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin, 1Ki 22:1-53. If Judas will be a traitor, Satan will quickly enter into his heart, and make him sell his master for money, which some heathens would never have done, John 13:2. If Ananias will lie for advantage, Satan will fill his heart that he may lie, with a witness, to the Holy Ghost, Acts 5:3. Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations. If they be in prosperity, he will tempt them to deny God, Pro 30:9; if they be in adversity, he will

tempt them to distrust God; if their knowledge be weak, he will tempt them to have low thoughts of God; if their conscience be tender, he will tempt to scrupulosity; if large, to carnal security; if bold-spirited, he will tempt to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if stiff, to impenitency, &c. From the power, malice, and skill of Satan, doth proceed all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems, and machinations, that be in the world. Several devices he hath to draw souls to sin, and several plots he hath to keep souls from all holy and heavenly services, and several stratagems he hath to keep souls in a mourning, staggering, doubting, and questioning condition.

He hath several devices to destroy the great and honourable, the wise and learned, the blind and ignorant, the rich and the poor, the real and the nominal saints.

One while he will restrain from tempting, that we may think ourselves secure, and neglect our watch; another while he will seem to fly, that he may make us proud of the victory; one while he will fix men's eyes more on others' sins than their own, that he may puff them up; another while he may fix their eyes more on others' graces than their own, that he may overwhelm them, &c. A man may as well tell the stars, and number the sands of the sea, as reckon up all the Devices of Satan; yet those which are most considerable, and by which he doth most mischief to the precious souls of men, are in the following Treatise discovered, and the Remedies against them prescribed.

Beloved, I think it necessary to give you and the world a faithful account of the reasons moving me to appear in print, in these days, wherein we may say, there was never more writing and yet never less practising, and they are these that follow, &c.

Reason 1. First, Because Satan hath a greater influence upon men, and higher advantages over them (having the wind and the hill, as it were), than they think he hath, and the knowledge of his high advantage, is the highway to disappoint him, and to render the soul strong in resisting, and happy in conquering, &c.

Reason 2. Your importunity, and the importunity of many other 'precious sons of Sion,' Lam 4:2, hath after much striving with God, my own heart, and others, made a conquest of me, and forced me to do that at last, which at first was not a little contrary to my inclination and resolution, &c.

Reason 3. The strange opposition that I met with from Satan, in the study of this following discourse, hath put an edge upon my spirit, knowing that Satan strives mightily to keep those things from seeing the light, that tend eminently to shake and break his kingdom of darkness, and to lift up the kingdom and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the souls and lives of the children of men, &c.

Reason 4. Its exceeding usefulness to all sorts, ranks, and conditions of men in the world. Here you have salve for every sore, and a plaster for every wound, and a remedy against every disease, especially against those that tend most to the undoing of souls, and the ruin of the State, &c.

Reason 5. I know not of any one or other that have writ of this subject; all that ever I have seen have only touched upon this string which hath been no small provocation to me, to attempt to do something this way, that others, that have better heads and hearts, may be the more stirred to improve their talents in a further discovery of Satan's Devices, and in making known of such

choice Remedies, as may enable the souls of men to triumph over all his plots and stratagems, &c.

Reason 6. I have many precious friends in several countries, who are not a little desirous that my pen may reach them, now my voice cannot. I have formerly been, by the help of the mighty God of Jacob, a weak instrument of good to them, and cannot but hope and believe that the Lord will also bless these labours to them; they being, in part, the fruit of their desires and prayers, &c.

Reason 7. Lastly, Not knowing how soon my glass may be out, and how soon I may be cut off by a hand of death, from all opportunities of doing further service for Christ or your souls in this world, I was willing to sow a little handful of spiritual seed among you; that so, when I put off this earthly tabernacle, my love to you, and that dear remembrance of you, which I have in my soul, may strongly engage your minds and spirits to make this book your companion, and under all external or internal changes, to make use of this heavenly salve, which I hope will, by the blessing of the Lord, be as effectual for the healing of all your wounds, as their looking up to the brazen serpent was effectual to heal theirs that were bit and stung with fiery serpents. I shall leave this book with you as a legacy of my dearest love, desiring the Lord to make it a far greater and sweeter legacy than all those carnal legacies are that are left by the high and mighty ones of the earth to their nearest and dearest relations, &c.

Beloved, I would not have affection carry my pen too much beyond my intention. Therefore, only give me leave to signify my desires for you, and my desires to you, and I shall draw to a close. My desires for you are, 'That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God,' Eph 3:16-19; and 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increased in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness,' Col 1:10-11; 'That ye do no evil,' 2Co 13:7; 'That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment;' 'That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ,' Php 1:27, Php 4:1; and that 'our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power;' 'That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ,' 2Th 1:11-12. And that you may be eminent in sanctity, sanctity being Zion's glory, Psa 93:5; that your hearts may be kept upright, your judgments sound, and your lives unblameable. That as ye are now 'my joy,' so in the day of Christ you may be 'my crown;' that I may see my labours in your lives; that your conversation may not be earthly, when the things you hear are heavenly; but that it may be 'as becomes the gospel,' Php 1:9-10. That as the fishes which live in the salt sea yet are fresh, so you, though you live in an uncharitable world, may yet be charitable and loving; That ye may, like the bee, suck honey out of every flower; that ye may shine in a sea of troubles, as the pearl shines in the sky, though it grows in the sea; that in all your trials you may be like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire nor sinketh in the water; That ye may be like the heavens, excellent in substance and beautiful in appearance; that so you may meet me with joy in that day wherein Christ shall say to his Father, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' Isa

8:18. My desires to you are, That you would make it your business to study Christ, his word, your own hearts, Satan's plots, and eternity, more than ever; That ye would endeavour more to be inwardly sincere than outwardly glorious; to live, than to have a name to live; That ye would labour with all your might to be thankful under mercies, and faithful in your places, and humble under divine appearances, and fruitful under precious ordinances; That as your means and mercies are greater than others', so your account before God may not prove a worse than others'; That ye would pray for me, who am not worthy to be named among the saints, that I may be a precious instrument in the hand of Christ to bring in many souls unto him, and to build up those that are brought in in their most holy faith; and 'that utterance may be given to me, that I may make known all the will of God,' Eph 6:19; That I may be sincere, faithful, frequent, fervent, and constant in the work of the Lord, and that my labour be not in vain in the Lord; that my labours may be accepted in the Lord and his saints, and I may daily see the travail of my soul, &c.

But, above all, pray for me, that I may more and more find the power and sweet of those things upon my own heart, that I give out to you and others; that my soul be so visited with strength from on high, that I may live up fully and constantly to those truths that I hold forth to the world; and that I may be both in life and doctrine 'a burning and a shining light,' that so, when the Lord Jesus shall appear, 'I may receive a crown of glory which he shall give to me in that day, and not only to me, but to all that love his appearance,' &c., John 5:35 and 2Ti 1:8. For a close, remember this, that your life is short, your duties many, your assistance great, and your reward sure; therefore faint not, hold on and hold up, in ways of well-doing, and heaven shall make amends for all.

I shall now take leave of you, when my heart hath by my hand subscribed, that I am, Your loving pastor under Christ, according to all pastoral affections and engagements in our dearest Lord,

Thomas Brooks. A WORD TO THE READER

Dear Friend!—Solomon bids us buy the truth (Pro 23:23), but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. We must love it both shining and scorching. Every parcel of truth is precious, as the filings of gold; we must either live with it, or die for it. As Ruth said to Naomi, 'Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me,' Ruth 1:16-17; so must gracious spirits say, Where truth goes I will go, and where truth lodges I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part me and truth. A man may lawfully sell his house, land, and jewels, but truth is a jewel that exceeds all price, and must not be sold; it is our heritage: 'Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever,' Psa 119:111. It is a legacy that our forefathers have bought with their bloods, which should make us willing to lay down anything, and to lay out anything, that we may, with the wise merchant in the Gospel (Mat 13:45), purchase this precious pearl, which is more worth than heaven and earth, and which will make a man live happily, die comfortably, and reign eternally. And now, if thou pleasest, read the work, and receive this counsel from me.

First, Thou must know that every man cannot be excellent, that yet may be useful. An iron key may unlock the door of a golden treasure, yea (ferrum potest quod aurum non potest), iron can do some things that gold cannot, &c.

Secondly, Remember, it is not hasty reading, but serious meditating upon holy and heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching of the

flower that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most, that will prove the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian, &c.

Thirdly, Know that it is not the knowing, nor the talking, nor the reading man, but the doing man, that at last will be found the happiest man. "If you know these things, blessed and happy are you if you do them." "Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father that is in heaven," John 16:14, Mat 7:21. Judas called Christ Lord, Lord, and yet betrayed him, and is gone to his place. Ah! how many Judases have we in these days, that kiss Christ, and yet betray Christ; that in their words profess him, but in their works deny him; that bow their knee to him, and yet in their hearts despise him; that call him Jesus, and yet will not obey him for their Lord.

Reader, If it be not strong upon thy heart to practise what thou readeest, to what end dost thou read? To increase thy own condemnation? If thy light and knowledge be not turned into practice, the more knowing man thou art, the more miserable man thou wilt be in the day of recompense; thy light and knowledge will more torment thee than all the devils in hell. Thy knowledge will be that rod that will eternally lash thee, and that scorpion that will for ever bite thee, and that worm that will everlastingly gnaw thee; therefore read, and labour to know, that thou mayest do, or else thou art undone for ever.³ When Demosthenes was asked, what was the first part of an orator, what the second, what the third? he answered, Action; the same may I say. If any should ask me, what is the first, the second, the third part of a Christian? I must answer, Action; as that man that reads that he may know, and that labours to know that he may do, will have two heavens—a heaven of joy, peace, and comfort on earth, and a heaven of glory and happiness after death.

Fourthly and lastly, If in thy reading thou wilt cast a serious eye upon the margent, thou wilt find many sweet and precious notes, that will oftentimes give light to the things thou readeest, and pay thee for thy pains with much comfort and profit. So desiring that thou mayest find as much sweetness and advantage in reading this Treatise as I have found, by the over-shadowings of heaven, in the studying and writing of it, I recommend thee 'to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build thee up, and to give thee an inheritance among them which are sanctified,' Acts 20:32. And rest, reader, Thy soul's servant in every office of the gospel,

Thomas Brooks.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.—2Co 2:11 In this fifth verse, the apostle shews, that the incestuous person had by his incest sadded those precious souls that God would not have sadded. Souls that walk sinfully are Hazael's to the godly, 2Ki 8:12, et seq., and draw many sighs and tears from them. Jeremiah weeps in secret for Judah's sins, Jer 9:1; and Paul cannot speak of the belly-gods with dry eyes, Php 3:18-19. And Lot's righteous soul was burdened, vexed, and racked by the filthy Sodomites, 2Pe 2:7-8. Every sinful Sodomite was a Hazael to his eyes, a Hadadrimmon to his heart, Zec 12:11. Gracious souls use to mourn for other men's sins as well as their own, and for their souls and sins who make a mock of sin, and a jest of damning their own souls. Guilt or grief is all that gracious souls get by communion with vain souls, Psa 119:136, Psa 119:158. In 2Co 2:6, he shews that the punishment that was inflicted upon the incestuous person was sufficient, and therefore they should not refuse to receive him who had repented and

sorrowed for his former faults and follies. It is not for the honour of Christ, the credit of the gospel, nor the good of souls, for professors to be like those bloody wretches, that burnt some that recanted at the stake, saying, 'That they would send them into another world whiles they were in a good mind.' In 2Co 2:7-10, the apostle stirs up the church to forgive him, to comfort him, and to confirm their love towards him, lest he should be 'swallowed up with over much sorrow,' Satan going about to mix the detestable darnel, Mat 13:25, of desperation with the godly sorrow of a pure penitent heart. It was a sweet saying of one, 'Let a man grieve for his sin, and then joy for his grief.' That sorrow for sin that keeps the soul from looking towards the mercy-seat, and that keeps Christ and the soul asunder, or that shall render the soul unfit for the communion of saints, is a sinful sorrow. In the 11th verse, he lays down another reason to work them to shew pity and mercy to the penitent sinner, that was mourning and groaning under his sin and misery; i. e. lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. A little for the opening of the words

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; lest Satan over-reach us. The Greek word *πλεονεχτηθμεν*, signifieth to have more than belongs to one. The comparison is taken from the greedy merchant, that seeketh and taketh all opportunities to beguile and deceive others. Satan is that wily merchant, that devoureth, not widows houses, but most men's souls.

'We are not ignorant of Satan's devices,' or plots, or machinations, or stratagems, *Νοματα*. He is but a titular Christian that hath not personal experience of Satan's stratagems, his set and composed machinations, his artificially moulded methods, his plots, darts, depths, whereby he outwitted our first parents, and fits us a pennyworth still, as he sees reason. The main observation that I shall draw from these words is this:

Doct. That Satan hath his several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men.

I shall, 1. Prove the point.

2. Shew you his several devices; and, 3. The remedies against his devices.

4. How it comes to pass that he hath so many several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men.

5. I shall lay down some propositions concerning Satan's devices.

I. For the proof of the point, take these few Scriptures: Eph 6:11, 'Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.' The Greek word that is here rendered 'wiles,' is a notable emphatical word.

(1.) It signifies such snares as are laid behind one, such treacheries as come upon one's back at unawares. It notes the methods or waylayings of that old subtle serpent, who, like Dan's adder 'in the path,' biteth the heels of passengers, and thereby transfuseth his venom to the head and heart. The word *Μεθοδεαζ* signifies an ambushment or stratagem of war, whereby the enemy sets upon a man ex insidiis, at unawares.

(2.) It signifies such snares as are set to catch one in one's road. A man walks in his road, and thinks not of it; on the sudden he is caught by thieves, or falls into a pit, &c.

(3.) It signifies such as are purposely, artificially, and craftily set for the taking the prey at the greatest advantage that can be. The Greek μεθοδεῖσας, being derived from μετ and δεισ, signifies properly a waylaying, circumvention, or going about, as they do which seek after their prey. Julian, by his craft, drew more from the faith than all his persecuting predecessors could do by their cruelty. So doth Satan more hurt in his sheep's skin than by roaring like a lion.

Take one scripture more for the proof of the point, and that is in 2Ti 2:26, 'And that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.' The Greek word that is here rendered recover themselves, νανηψουσιν, signifies to awaken themselves. The apostle alludeth to one that is asleep or drunk, who is to be awakened and restored to his senses; and the Greek word that is here rendered 'taken captive,' signifies to be taken alive, ζωνηξήμνοι. The word is properly a warlike word, and signifies to be taken alive, as soldiers are taken alive in the wars, or as birds are taken alive and ensnared in the fowler's net. Satan hath snares for the wise and snares for the simple; snares for hypocrites, and snares for the upright; snares for generous souls, and snares for timorous souls; snares for the rich, and snares for the poor; snares for the aged, and snares for youth, &c. Happy are those souls that are not taken and held in the snares that he hath laid!

Take one proof more, and then I will proceed to the opening of the point, and that is in Rev 2:24, 'But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you no other burden but to hold fast till I come.' Those poor souls called their opinions the depths of God, when indeed they were the depths of Satan. You call your opinions depths, and so they are, but they are such depths as Satan hath brought out of hell. They are the whisperings and hissings of that serpent, not the inspirations of God.

II. Now, the second thing that I am to shew you is, his several devices; and herein I shall first shew you the several devices that he hath to draw the soul to sin. I shall instance in these twelve, which may bespeak our most serious consideration. His first device to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (1). To present the bait and hide the hook; to present the golden cup, and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin, and by hiding from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin. By this device he took our first parents: Gen 3:4-5, 'And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods! Here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. Oh, but he hides the hook,—the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow!

There is an opening of the eyes of the mind to contemplation and joy, and there is an opening of the eyes of the body to shame and confusion. He promiseth them the former, but intends the latter, and so cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise, as he deals by thousands now-a-days. Satan with ease puts fallacies upon us by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honour, pleasure, profit, &c., but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be. By a golden bait he laboured to catch Christ, Mat 4:8-9. He shews him the beauty and the bravery of a bewitching world, which doubtless would have taken many a carnal heart; but here the devil's fire fell upon wet tinder, and

therefore took not. These tempting objects did not at all win upon his affections, nor dazzle his eyes, though many have eternally died of the wound of the eye, and fallen for ever by this vile strumpet the world, who, by laying forth her two fair breasts of profit and pleasure, hath wounded their souls, and cast them down into utter perdition. She hath, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions; as the serpent Scytale, which, when she cannot overtake the fleeing passengers, doth, with her beautiful colours, astonish and amaze them, so that they have no power to pass away till she have stung them to death. Adversity hath slain her thousand, but prosperity her ten thousand.² Now, the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

Remedy (1). First, Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait that Satan holds forth to catch you; for this you have Rom 12:9, 'Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.' When we meet with anything extremely evil and contrary to us, nature abhors it, and retires as far as it can from it. The Greek word that is there rendered 'abhor,' is very significant; it signifies to hate it as hell itself, to hate it with horror.

Anselm used to say, 'That if he should see the shame of sin on the one hand, and the pains of hell on the other, and must of necessity choose one, he would rather be thrust into hell without sin, than to go into heaven with sin,' so great was his hatred and detestation of sin. It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the farthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot, but to fly from all appearance of evil, Pro 5:8, 1Th 5:22. The best course to prevent falling into the pit, is to keep at the greatest distance; he that will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit, may find by woful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit. Joseph keeps at a distance from sin, and from playing with Satan's golden baits, and stands. David draws near, and plays with the bait, and falls, and swallows bait and hook with a witness. David comes near the snare, and is taken in it, to the breaking of his bones, the wounding of his conscience, and the loss of his God.

Sin is a plague, yea, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it! 1Co 5:6, 'Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' As soon as one sin had seized upon Adam's heart, all sin entered into his soul and overspread it. How hath Adam's one sin spread over all mankind! Rom 5:12, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Ah, how doth the father's sin infect the child, the husband's infect the wife, the master's the servant! The sin that is in one man's heart is able to infect a whole world, it is of such a spreading and infectious nature. The story of the Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him, and so at once murdered both body and soul, declares the perfect malignity of sin; and oh! that what hath been spoken upon this head may prevail with you, to stand at a distance from sin! The second remedy is,

Remedy (2). To consider, That sin is but a bitter sweet. That seeming sweet that is in sin will quickly vanish, and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof: Job 20:12-14, 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.' Forbidden profits and pleasures are most pleasing to vain men, who count madness mirth, &c. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not, but rent and consume the belly, the soul, that receives them. Many eat that on earth

that they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those that devour them. Adam's apple was a bitter sweet; Esau's mess was a bitter sweet; the Israelites' quails a bitter sweet; Jonathan's honey a bitter sweet; and Adonijah's dainties a bitter sweet. After the meal is ended, then comes the reckoning. Men must not think to dance and dine with the devil, and then to sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; to feed upon the poison of asps, and yet that the viper's tongue should not slay them. When the asp stings a man, it doth first tickle him so as it makes him laugh, till the poison, by little and little, gets to the heart, and then it pains him more than ever it delighted him. So doth sin; it may please a little at first, but it will pain the soul with a witness at last; yea, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly be tormented with their sin. The third remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (3). Solemnly to consider, That sin will usher in the greatest and the saddest losses that can be upon our souls. It will usher in the loss of that divine favour that is better than life, and the loss of that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and the loss of that peace that passeth understanding, and the loss of those divine influences by which the soul hath been refreshed, quickened, raised, strengthened, and gladdened, and the loss of many outward desirable mercies, which otherwise the soul might have enjoyed.

It was a sound and savoury reply of an English captain at the loss of Calais, when a proud Frenchman scornfully demanded, When will you fetch Calais again, replied, When your sins shall weigh down ours. Ah, England! my constant prayer for thee is, that thou mayest not sin away thy mercies into their hands that cannot call mercy mercy, and that would joy in nothing more than to see thy sorrow and misery, and to see that hand to make thee naked, that hath clothed thee with much mercy and glory. The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (4). Seriously to consider, That sin is of a very deceitful and bewitching nature. Sin is from the greatest deceiver, it is a child of his own begetting, it is the ground of all the deceit in the world, and it is in its own nature exceeding deceitful. Heb 3:13, 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.' It will kiss the soul, and pretend fair to the soul, and yet betray the soul for ever. It will with Delilah smile upon us, that it may betray us into the hands of the devil, as she did Samson into the hands of the Philistines. Sin gives Satan a power over us, and an advantage to accuse us and to lay claim to us, as those that wear his badge; it is of a very bewitching nature, it bewitches the soul, where it is upon the throne, that the soul cannot leave it, though it perish eternally by it. Sin so bewitches the soul, that it makes the soul call evil good, and good evil; bitter sweet and sweet bitter, light darkness and darkness light; and a soul thus bewitched with sin will stand it out to the death, at the sword's point with God; let God strike and wound, and cut to the very bone, yet the bewitched soul cares not, fears no but will still hold on in a course of wickedness, as you may see in Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas. Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill when it is not killed, that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally, yet the bewitched soul cannot, nor will not, cease from sin. When the physicians told Theotimus that except he did abstain from drunkenness and uncleanness, &c., he would lose his eyes, his heart was so bewitched to his sins, that he answers, 'Then farewell sweet light;' he had rather lose his eyes than leave his sin. So a man bewitched with sin had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul than part with his sin. Oh, therefore, for ever take heed of playing or nibbling at Satan's golden baits. The second device of Satan to

draw the soul to sin is,

Device (2). By painting sin with virtue's colours. Satan knows that if he should present sin in its own nature and dress, the soul would rather fly from it than yield to it; and therefore he presents it unto us, not in its own proper colours, but painted and gilded over with the name and show of virtue, that we may the more easily be overcome by it, and take the more pleasure in committing of it. Pride, he presents to the soul under the name and notion of neatness and cleanliness, and covetousness (which the apostle condemns for idolatry) to be but good husbandry; and drunkenness to be good fellowship, and riotousness under the name and notion of liberality, and wantonness as a trick of youth, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device of Satan are these,

Remedy (1). First, consider, That sin is never a whit the less filthy, vile, and abominable, by its being coloured and painted with virtue's colours. A poisonous pill is never a whit the less poisonous because it is gilded over with gold; nor a wolf is never a whit the less a wolf because he hath put on a sheep's skin; nor the devil is never a whit the less a devil because he appears sometimes like an angel of light. So neither is sin any whit the less filthy and abominable by its being painted over with virtue's colours. The second remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (2). That the more sin is painted forth under the colour of virtue, the more dangerous it is to the souls of men. This we see evident in these days, by those very many souls that are turned out of the way that is holy—and in which their souls have had sweet and glorious communion with God—into ways of highest vanity and folly, by Satan's neat colouring over of sin, and painting forth vice under the name and colour of virtue. This is so notoriously known that I need but name it. The most dangerous vermin is too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers, and the fairest glove is often drawn upon the foulest hand, and the richest robes are often put upon the filthiest bodies. So are the fairest and sweetest names upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that be in the world. Ah! that we had not too many sad proofs of this amongst us.⁴ The third remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (3). To look on sin with that eye [with] which within a few hours we shall see it. Ah, souls! when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat, sin shall be unmasked, and its dress and robes shall then be taken off, and then it shall appear more vile, filthy, and terrible than hell itself; then, that which formerly appeared most sweet will appear most bitter, and that which appeared most beautiful will appear most ugly, and that which appeared most delightful will then appear most dreadful to the soul. Ah, the shame, the pain, the gall, the bitterness, the horror, the hell that the sight of sin, when its dress is taken off, will raise in poor souls! Sin will surely prove evil and bitter to the soul when its robes are taken off. A man may have the stone who feels no fit of it. Conscience will work at last, though for the present one may feel no fit of accusation. Laban shewed himself at parting. Sin will be bitterness in the latter end, when it shall appear to the soul in its own filthy nature. The devil deals with men as the panther doth with beasts; he hides his deformed head till his sweet scent hath drawn them into his danger. Till we have sinned, Satan is a parasite; when we have sinned, he is a tyrant.² O souls! the day is at hand when the devil will pull off the paint and garnish that he hath put upon sin, and present that monster, sin, in such a monstrous shape to your souls, that will cause your thoughts to be troubled, your countenance to be changed, the joints of your loins to be loosed, and your knees to

be dashed one against another, and your hearts to be so terrified, that you will be ready, with Ahithophel and Judas, to strangle and hang your bodies on earth, and your souls in hell, if the Lord hath not more mercy on you than he had on them. Oh! therefore, look upon sin now as you must look upon it to all eternity, and as God, conscience, and Satan will present it to you another day! The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (4.) Seriously to consider, That even those very sins that Satan paints, and puts new names and colours upon, cost the best blood, the noblest blood, the life-blood, the heart-blood of the Lord Jesus. That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father to a region of sorrow and death; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature; that he that was clothed with glory should be wrapped with rags of flesh; he that filled heaven and earth with his glory should be cradled in a manger; that the power of God should fly from weak man, the God of Israel into Egypt; that the God of the law should be subject to the law, the God of the circumcision circumcised, the God that made the heavens working at Joseph's homely trade; that he that binds the devils in chains should be tempted; that he, whose is the world, and the fulness thereof, should hunger and thirst; that the God of strength should be weary, the Judge of all flesh condemned, the God of life put to death; that he that is one with his Father should cry out of misery, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46; that he that had the keys of hell and death at his girdle should lie imprisoned in the sepulchre of another, having in his lifetime nowhere to lay his head, nor after death to lay his body; that that head, before which the angels do cast down their crowns, should be crowned with thorns, and those eyes, purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death; those ears, which hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, to hear the blasphemies of the multitude; that face, that was fairer than the sons of men, to be spit on by those beastly wretched Jews; that mouth and tongue, that spake as never man spake, accused for blasphemy; those hands, that freely swayed the sceptre of heaven, nailed to the cross; those feet, 'like unto fine brass,' nailed to the cross for man's sins; each sense annoyed: his feeling or touching, with a spear and nails; his smell, with stinking flavour, being crucified about Golgotha, the place of skulls; his taste, with vinegar and gall; his hearing, with reproaches, and sight of his mother and disciples bemoaning him; his soul, comfortless and forsaken; and all, this for those very sins that Satan paints and puts fine colours upon! Oh! how should the consideration of this stir up the soul against it, and work the soul to fly from it, and to use all holy means whereby sin may be subdued and destroyed!

After Julius Cæsar was murdered, Antonius brought forth his coat, all bloody and cut, and laid it before the people, saying, 'Look, here you have the emperor's coat thus bloody and torn:' whereupon the people were presently in an uproar, and cried out to slay those murderers; and they took their tables and stools that were in the place, and set them on fire, and run to the houses of them that had slain Cæsar, and burnt them. So that when we consider that sin hath slain our Lord Jesus, ah, how should it provoke our hearts to be revenged on sin, that hath murdered the Lord of glory, and hath done that mischief that all the devils in hell could never have done?

It was good counsel one gave, 'Never let go out of your minds the thoughts of a crucified Christ.' Let these be meat and drink unto you; let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your life, death, and resurrection. The third device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (3). By extenuating and lessening of sin. Ah! saith Satan, it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness, &c. As Lot said of Zoar, 'It is but a little one, and my soul shall live' Gen 19:20. Alas! saith Satan, it is but a very little sin that you stick so at. You may commit it without any danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these:

Remedy (1). First, Solemnly consider, That those sins which we are apt to account small, have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God, as the eating of an apple, gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day, and touching of the ark. Oh! the dreadful wrath that these sins brought down upon the heads and hearts of men! The least sin is contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore it is often punished severely by God; and do not we see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, states, families, and souls of men, for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely if we are not utterly left of God, and blinded by Satan, we cannot but see it. Oh! therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one, do thou say, Oh! but those sins that thou callest little, are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners as he did upon the Sodomites. The second remedy against this device of Satan is,

Remedy (2). Seriously to consider, That the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater. He that, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. If we commit one sin to avoid another, it is just we should avoid neither, we having not law nor power in our own hands to keep off sin as we please; and we, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, till it hath the soul to the very height of sin. David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. Jacob and Peter, and other saints, have found this true by woful experience, that the yielding to a lesser sin hath been the ushering in of a greater. The little thief will open the door, and make way for the greater, and the little wedge knocked in will make way for the greater. Satan will first draw thee to sit with the drunkard, and then to sip with the drunkard, and then at last to be drunk with the drunkard. He will first draw thee to be unclean in thy thoughts, and then to be unclean in thy looks, and then to be unclean in thy words, and at last to be unclean in thy practices. He will first draw thee to look upon the golden wedge, and then to like the golden wedge, and then to handle the golden wedge, and then at last by wicked ways to gain the golden wedge, though thou runnest the hazard of losing God and thy soul for ever; as you may see in Gehazi, Achan, and Judas, and many in these our days. Sin is never at a stand: Psa 1:1, first ungodly, then sinners, then scorners. Here they go on from sin to sin, till they come to the top of sin, viz. to sit in the seat of scorners, or as it is in the Septuagint—τὸν λοιμὸν—to affect the honour of the chair of pestilence.

Austin, writing upon John, tells a story of a certain man, that was of an opinion that the devil did make the fly, and not God. Saith one to him, If the devil made flies, then the devil made worms, and God did not make them, for they are living creatures as well as flies. True, said he, the devil did make worms. But, said the other, if the devil did make worms, then he made birds, beasts, and man. He granted all. Thus, saith Austin, by denying God in the fly, became to deny God in man,

and to deny the whole creation. By all this we see, that the yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the committing of greater. Ah! how many in these days have fallen, first to have low thoughts of Scripture and ordinances, and then to slight Scripture and ordinances, and then to make a nose of wax of Scripture and ordinances, and then to cast off Scripture and ordinances, and then at last to advance and lift up themselves, and their Christ-dishonouring and soul-damning opinions, above Scripture and ordinances. Sin gains upon man's soul by insensible degrees: Ecc 10:13, 'The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talking is mischievous madness.' Corruption in the heart, when it breaks forth, is like a breach in the sea, which begins in a narrow passage, till it eat through, and cast down all before it. The debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended, and that may be done in a moment that may undo a man for ever. When a man hath begun to sin, he knows not where, or when, or how he shall make a stop of sin. Usually the soul goes on from evil to evil, from folly to folly, till it be ripe for eternal misery. Men usually grow from being naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught, and then God sets them at naught for ever.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this third device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin, is solemnly to consider, That it is sad to stand with God for a trifle. Dives would not give a crumb, therefore he should not receive a drop, Luk 16:21. It is the greatest folly in the world to adventure the going to hell for a small matter. 'I tasted but a little honey,' said Jonathan, 'and I must die,' 1Sa 14:29. It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to break with God for a little. Little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin, and then a man shews most viciousness and unkindness, when he sins on a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without a temptation; it is little less than devilish to sin on a little occasion. The less the temptation is to sin, the greater is that sin. Saul's sin in not staying for Samuel, was not so much in the matter, but it was much in the malice of it; for though Samuel had not come at all, yet Saul should not have offered sacrifice; but this cost him dear, his soul and kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be shewed to a friend, to adventure the complaining, bleeding, and grieving of his soul upon a light and a slight occasion. So it is the greatest unkindness that can be shewed to God, Christ, and the Spirit, for a soul to put God upon complaining, Christ upon bleeding, and the Spirit upon grieving, by yielding to little sins. Therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one, do thou answer, that often times there is the greatest unkindness shewed to God's glorious majesty, in the acting of the least folly, and therefore thou wilt not displease thy best and greatest friend, by yielding to his greatest enemy.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That there is great danger, yea, many times most danger, in the smallest sins. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,' 1Co 5:6. If the serpent wind in his head, he will draw in his whole body after. Greater sins do sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and undiscernibly in the soul, till they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul. There is oftentimes greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for removing of them, till they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. So there is most danger often in the least sins. We are apt to take no notice of them, and to neglect those heavenly helps whereby they should be weakened and destroyed, till they are grown to that strength, that we are ready to cry out, the

medicine is too weak for the disease; I would pray, and I would hear, but I am afraid that sin is grown up by degrees to such a head, that I shall never be able to prevail over it; but as I have begun to fall, so I shall utterly fall before it, and at last perish in it, unless the power and free grace of Christ doth act gloriously, beyond my present apprehension and expectation. The viper is killed by the little young ones that are nourished and cherished in her belly: so are many men eternally killed and betrayed by the little sins, as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms.

I know not, saith one, whether the maintenance of the least sin be not worse than the commission of the greatest: for this may be of frailty, that argues obstinacy. A little hole in the ship sinks it; a small breach in a sea-bank carries away all before it; a little stab at the heart kills a man; and a little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan, is solemnly to consider, That other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments, rather than they would commit the least sin, i. e. such as the world accounts. So as you may see in Daniel and his companions, that would rather choose to burn, and be cast to the lions, than they would bow to the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this pecchaddillo, in the world's account, and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, that they must either fall into sin, or be cast into the fiery furnace, such was their tenderness of the honour and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin; they knew that it was far better to burn for their not sinning, than that God and conscience should raise a hell, a fire in their bosoms for sin.⁴

I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who in Constantine's time had been the cause of overthrowing an idol's temple; afterwards, when Julian came to be emperor, he would force the people of that place to build it up again. They were ready to do it, but he refused; whereupon those that were his own people, to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and abused his naked body, and gave it up to the children, to lance it with their pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and anointed his naked body with honey, and set him in the sun, to be stung with wasps. And all this cruelty they shewed, because he would not do anything towards the building up of this idol temple; nay, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a halfpenny to it, they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a halfpenny might have saved his live; and in doing this, he did but live up to that principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess, but few come up to, viz., that we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict, than to commit the least sin, whereby God should be dishonoured, our consciences wounded, religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin, when God shall set it home upon the soul. The least sin will press and sink the stoutest sinner as low as hell, when God shall open the eyes of a sinner, and make him see the horrid filthiness and abominable vileness that is in sin. What so little, base, and vile creatures as lice or gnats, and yet by these little poor creatures, God so plagued stout-hearted Pharaoh, and all Egypt, that, fainting under it, they were forced to cry out, 'This is the finger of God,' Exo 8:16, Exo 10:19. When little creatures, yea, the least creatures, shall be armed with a power from God, they shall press and sink down the greatest, proudest, and

stoutest tyrants that breathe. So when God shall cast a sword into the hand of a little sin, and arm it against the soul, the soul will faint and fall under it. Some, who have but projected adultery, without any actual acting it; and others, having found a trifle, and made no conscience to restore it, knowing, by the light of natural conscience, that they did not do as they would be done by; and others, that have had some unworthy thought of God, have been so frightened, amazed, and terrified for those sins, which are small in men's account, that they have wished they had never been; that they could take no delight in any earthly comfort, that they have been put to their wits' end, ready to make away themselves, wishing themselves annihilated.²

Mr Perkins mentions a good man, but very poor, who, being ready to starve, stole a lamb, and being about to eat it with his poor children, and as his manner was afore meat, to crave a blessing, durst not do it, but fell into a great perplexity of conscience, and acknowledged his fault to the owner, promising payment if ever he should be able.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device is, solemnly to consider, That there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction; and this appears as clear as the sun, by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who let all the vials of his fiercest wrath upon him, and that for the least sin as well as for the greatest.

'The wages of sin is death,' Rom 6:23; of sin indefinitely, whether great or small. Oh! how should this make us tremble, as much at the least spark of lust as at hell itself; considering that God the Father would not spare his bosom Son, no, not for the least sin, but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath! And so much for the remedies that may fence and preserve our souls from being drawn to sin by this third device of Satan. The fourth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (4). By presenting to the soul the best men's sins, and by hiding from the soul their virtues; by shewing the soul their sins, and by hiding from the soul their sorrows and repentance: as by setting before the soul the adultery of David, the pride of Hezekiah, the impatience of Job, the drunkenness of Noah, the blasphemy of Peter, &c., and by hiding from the soul the tears, the sighs, the groans, the meltings, the humblings, and repentings of these precious souls.

Now, the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the Spirit of the Lord hath been as careful to note the saints' rising by repentance out of sin, as he hath to note their falling into sins. David falls fearfully, but by repentance he rises sweetly: 'Blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin; for I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow; deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation.' It is true, Hezekiah's heart was lifted up under the abundance of mercy that God had cast in upon him; and it is as true that Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon him, nor upon Jerusalem, in the days of Hezekiah. It is true, Job curses the day of his birth, and it is as true that he rises by repentance: 'Behold, I am vile,' saith he; 'what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no further. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,' Job

40:4-5; Job 42:5-6. Peter falls dreadfully, but rises by repentance sweetly; a look of love from Christ melts him into tears. He knew that repentance was the key to the kingdom of grace. As once his faith was so great that he leapt, as it were, into a sea of waters to come to Christ; so now his repentance was so great that he leapt, as it were, into a sea of tears, for that he had gone from Christ. Some say that, after his sad fall, he was ever and anon weeping, and that his face was even furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner took in poison but he vomited it up again, ere it got to the vitals; he had no sooner handled this serpent but he turned it into a rod to scourge his soul with remorse for sinning against such clear light, and strong love, and sweet discoveries of the heart of Christ to him.²

Clement notes that Peter so repented, that all his life after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees, and, weeping bitterly, would beg pardon of his sin. Ah, souls, you can easily sin as the saints, but can you repent with the saints! Many can sin with David and Peter, that cannot repent with David and Peter, and so must perish for ever.

Theodosius the emperor, pressing that he might receive the Lord's supper, excuses his own foul fact by David's doing the like; to which Ambrose replies, Thou hast followed David transgressing, follow David repenting, and then think thou of the table of the Lord.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That these saints did not make a trade of sin. They fell once or twice, and rose by repentance, that they might keep the closer to Christ for ever. They fell accidentally, occasionally, and with much reluctancy; and thou sinnest presumptuously, obstinately, readily, delightfully, and customarily. Thou hast, by thy making a trade of sin, contracted upon thy soul a kind of cursed necessity of sinning, that thou canst as well cease to be, or cease to live, as thou canst cease to sin. Sin is, by custom, become as another nature to thee, which thou canst not, which thou wilt not lay aside, though thou knowest that if thou dost not lay sin aside, God will lay thy soul aside for ever; though thou knowest that if sin and thy soul do not part, Christ and thy soul can never meet. If thou wilt make a trade of sin, and cry out, Did not David sin thus, and Noah sin thus, and Peter sin thus? &c. No; their hearts turned aside to folly one day, but thy heart turns aside to folly every day, 2Pe 2:14, Pro 4:16; and when they were fallen, they rise by repentance, and by the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ; but thou fallest, and hast no strength nor will to rise, but wallowest in sin, and wilt eternally die in thy sins, unless the Lord be the more merciful to thy soul. Dost thou think, O soul! this is good reasoning? Such a one tasted poison but once, and yet narrowly escaped; but I do daily drink poison, yet I shall escape. Yet such is the mad reasoning of vain souls. David and Peter, &c., sinned once foully and fearfully; they tasted poison but once, and were sick to death; but I taste it daily, and yet shall not taste of eternal death. Remember, O souls! that the day is at hand when self-flatterers will be found self-deceivers, yea, self-murderers.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That though God doth not, nor never will, disinherit his people for their sins, yet he hath severely punished his people for their sins. David sins, and God breaks his bones for his sin: 'Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice,' Psa 51:8. 'And because thou hast done this, the sword shall never depart from thy house, to the day of thy death,' 2Sa 12:10. Though God will not utterly take from them his loving-kindness, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, yet will he 'visit their

transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes,' Psa 89:30, Psa 89:35. The Scripture abounds with instances of this kind. This is so known a truth among all that know anything of truth, that to cite more scriptures to prove it would be to light a candle to see the sun at noon. The Jews have a proverb, 'That there is no punishment comes upon Israel in which there is not one ounce of the golden calf;' meaning that that was so great a sin, as that in every plague God remembered it; that it had an influence into every trouble that befell them. Every man's heart may say to him in his sufferings, as the heart of Apollodorus in the kettle, 'I have been the cause of this.' God is most angry when he shews no anger. God keep me from this mercy; this kind of mercy is worse than all other kind of misery.

One writing to a dead friend hath this expression: 'I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable.' It is mercy that our affliction is not execution, but a correction.⁴ He that hath deserved hanging, may be glad if he scape with a whipping. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our school masters, his chastisements our advertisements; and to note this, both the Hebrews and the Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word (Musal, Paideia⁶), because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Whence Luther fitly calls affliction 'The Christian man's divinity.' So saith Job (Job 33:14-19), 'God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.' When Satan shall tell thee of other men's sins to draw thee to sin, do thou then think of the same men's sufferings to keep thee from sin. Lay thy hand upon thy heart, and say, O my soul! if thou sinnest with David, thou must suffer with David, &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there are but two main ends of God's recording of the falls of his saints. And the one is, to keep those from fainting, sinking, and despair, under the burden of their sins, who fall through weakness and infirmity. And the other is, that their falls may be as landmarks to warn others that stand, to take heed lest they fall. It never entered into the heart of God to record his children's sins, that others might be encouraged to sin, but that others might look to their standings, and to hang the faster upon the skirts of Christ, and avoid all occasions and temptations that may occasion the soul to fall, as others have fallen, when they have been left by Christ. The Lord hath made their sins as landmarks, to warn his people to take heed how they come near those sands and rocks, those snares and baits, that have been fatal to the choicest treasures, to wit, the joy, peace, comfort, and glorious enjoyments of the bravest spirits and noblest souls that ever sailed through the ocean of this sinful troublesome world; as you may see in David, Job, Peter, &c. There is nothing in the world that can so notoriously cross the grand end of God's recording of the sins of his saints, than for any from thence to take encouragement to sin; and wherever you find such a soul, you may write him Christless, graceless, a soul cast off by God, a soul that Satan hath by the hand, and the eternal God knows whither he will lead him. The fifth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (5). To present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy. Oh! saith Satan, you need not make such a matter of sin, you need not be so fearful of sin, not so unwilling to sin; for God is a

God of mercy, a God full of mercy, a God that delights in mercy, a God that is ready to shew mercy, a God that is never weary of shewing mercy, a God more prone to pardon his people than to punish his people; and therefore he will not take advantage against the soul; and why then, saith Satan, should you make such a matter of sin?

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, seriously to consider, That it is the sorest judgment in the world to be left to sin upon any pretence whatsoever. O unhappy man! when God leaveth thee to thyself, and doth not resist thee in thy sins. Woe, woe to him at whose sins God doth wink. When God lets the way to hell be a smooth and pleasant way, that is hell on this side hell, and a dreadful sign of God's indignation against a man; a token of his rejection, and that God doth not intend good unto him. That is a sad word, 'Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone,' Hos 4:17; he will be uncounsellable and incorrigible; he hath made a match with mischief, he shall have his bellyful of it; he falls with open eyes, let him fall at his own peril. And that is a terrible saying, 'So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels,' Psa 81:12. A soul given up to sin, is a soul ripe for hell, a soul posting to destruction. Ah Lord! this mercy I humbly beg, that whatever thou givest me up to, thou wilt not give me up to the ways of my own heart; if thou wilt give me up to be afflicted, or tempted, or reproached, &c., I will patiently sit down, and say, It is the Lord; let him do with me what seems good in his own eyes. Do anything with me, lay what burden thou wilt upon me, so thou dost not give me up to the ways of my own heart.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That God is as just as he is merciful. As the Scriptures speak him out to be a very merciful God, so they speak him out to be a very just God. Witness his casting the angels out of heaven, 2Pe 2:4-6, and his binding them in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day; and witness his turning Adam out of paradise, his drowning of the old world, and his raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom; and witness all the crosses, losses, sicknesses, and diseases, that be in the world; and witness Tophet, that was prepared of old; witness his 'treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, unto the revelation of the just judgments of God; but above all, witness the pouring forth of all his wrath upon his bosom Son, when he did bear the sins of his people, and cried out³, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That sins against mercy will bring the greatest and sorest judgments upon men's heads and hearts. Mercy is Alpha, Justice is Omega. David, speaking of these attributes, placeth mercy in the foreward, and justice in the rearward, saying, 'My song shall be of mercy and judgment,' Psa 101:1. When mercy is despised, then justice takes the throne. God is like a prince, that sends not his army against rebels before he hath sent his pardon, and proclaimed it by a herald of arms: he first hangs out the white flag of mercy; if this wins men in, they are happy for ever; but if they stand out, then God will put forth his red flag of justice and judgment; if the one is despised, the other shall be felt with a witness.⁵

See this in the Israelites. He loved them and chose them when they were in their blood, and most unlovely. He multiplied them, not by means, but by miracle; from seventy souls they grew in few years to six hundred thousand; the more they were oppressed, the more they prospered. Like camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it; or to a palm-tree, the more it is pressed,

the further it spreadeth; or to fire, the more it is raked, the more it burneth. Their mercies came in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of the other: He put off their sackcloth, and girded them with gladness, and 'compassed them about with songs of deliverance;' he 'carried them on the wings of eagles;' he kept them 'as the apple of his eye' &c. But they, abusing his mercy, became the greatest objects of his wrath. As I know not the man that can reckon up their mercies, so I know not the man that can sum up the miseries that are come upon them for their sins. For as our Saviour prophesied concerning Jerusalem, 'that a stone should not be left upon a stone,' so it was fulfilled forty years after his ascension, by Vespasian the emperor and his son Titus, who, having besieged Jerusalem, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, old leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died, partly of the sword and partly of the famine, eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort; two thousand in one night were embowelled; six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple; the whole city was sacked and burned, and laid level to the ground; and ninety-seven thousand taken captives, and applied to base and miserable service, as Eusebius and Josephus saith. And to this day, in all parts of the world, are they not the off-scouring of the world? None less beloved, and none more abhorred, than they.² And so Capernaum, that was lifted up to heaven, was threatened to be thrown down to hell. No souls fall so low into hell, if they fall, as those souls that by a hand of mercy are lifted up nearest to heaven. You slight souls that are so apt to abuse mercy, consider this, that in the gospel days, the plagues that God inflicts upon the despisers and abusers of mercy are usually spiritual plagues; as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, benumbedness of conscience, which are ten thousand times worse than the worst of outward plagues that can befall you. And therefore, though you may escape temporal judgments, yet you shall not escape spiritual judgments: 'How shall we escape, if neglect so great salvation?' Heb 2:3, saith the apostle. Oh! therefore, whenever Satan shall present God to the soul as one made up all of mercy, that he may draw thee to do wickedly, say unto him, that sins against mercy will bring upon the soul the greatest misery; and therefore whatever becomes of thee, thou wilt not sin against mercy, &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That though God's general mercy be over all his works, yet his special mercy is confined to those that are divinely qualified. So in Exo 34:6-7, 'And the Lord passed by before me, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.' Exo 20:6, 'And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.' Psa 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies.' Psa 32:10, 'Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.' Psa 33:18, 'Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.' Psa 103:11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.' Psa 103:17, 'But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.' When Satan attempts to draw thee to sin by presenting God as a God all made up of mercy, oh then reply, that though God's general mercy extend to all the works of his hand, yet his special mercy is confined to them that are divinely qualified, to them that love him and keep his commandments, to them that trust in him, that by hope hang upon him, and that fear him; and that thou must be such a one here, or else thou canst never be happy hereafter; thou must partake of his special mercy, or else eternally perish in everlasting misery, notwithstanding God's general mercy.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That those that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, did look upon the mercy of God as the most powerful argument to preserve them from sin, and to fence their souls against sin, and not as an encouragement to sin. Psa 26:3-6, 'For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth; I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked.' So Joseph strengthens himself against sin from the remembrance of mercy: 'How then can I,' saith he, 'do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Gen 39:9. He had fixed his eye upon mercy, and therefore sin could not enter, though the irons entered into his soul; his soul being taken with mercy, was not moved with his mistress's impudence. Satan knocked oft at the door, but the sight of mercy would not suffer him to answer or open. Joseph, like a pearl in a puddle, keeps his virtue still. So Paul, 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Rom 6:1-2. There is nothing in the world that renders a man more unlike to a saint, and more like to Satan, than to argue from mercy to sinful liberty; from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is the devil's logic, and in whomsoever you find it, you may write, 'This soul is lost.' A man may as truly say, the sea burns, or fire cools, as that free grace and mercy should make a soul truly gracious to do wickedly. So the same apostle, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,' Rom 12:1. So John, 'These things I write unto you, that ye sin not,' 1Jn 2:1-2. What was it that he wrote? He wrote, 'That we might have fellowship with the Father and his Son; and that the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin, and that if we confess our sin, he is just and faithful to forgive us our sins; and that if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' These choice favours and mercies the apostle holds forth as the choicest means to preserve the soul from sin, and to keep at the greatest distance from sin; and if this won't do it, you may write the man void of Christ and grace, and undone for ever. The sixth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (6). By persuading the soul that the work of repentance is an easy work, and that therefore the soul need not make such a matter of sin. Why! Suppose you do sin, saith Satan, it is no such difficult thing to return, and confess, and be sorrowful, and beg pardon, and cry, 'Lord, have mercy upon me;' and if you do but this, God will cut the score, and pardon your sins, and save your souls, &c. By this device Satan draws many a soul to sin, and makes many millions of souls servants or rather slaves to sin, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow:

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, seriously to consider, That repentance is a mighty work, a difficult work, a work that is above our power. There is no power below that power that raised Christ from the dead, and that made the world, that can break the heart of a sinner or turn the heart of a sinner. Thou art as well able to melt adamant, as to melt thine own heart; to turn a flint into flesh, as to turn thine own heart to the Lord; to raise the dead and to make a world, as to repent. Repentance is a flower that grows not in nature's garden. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,' Jer 13:23. Repentance is a gift that comes down from above. Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths: 3 Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.'

So in 2Ti 2:25, 'In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.' It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure. Some ignorant deluded souls vainly conceit that these five words, 'Lord! have mercy upon me,' are efficacious to send them to heaven; but as many are undone by buying a counterfeit jewel, so many are in hell by mistake of their repentance. Many rest in their repentance, though it be but the shadow of repentance, which caused one to say, 'Repentance damneth more than sin.'

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider of the nature of true repentance. Repentance is some other thing than what vain men conceive.

Repentance is sometimes taken, in a more strict and narrow sense, for godly sorrow; sometimes repentance is taken, in a large sense, for amendment of life. Repentance hath in it three things, viz.: The act, subject, terms.

(1.) The formal act of repentance is a changing and converting. It is often set forth in Scripture by turning. 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned,' saith Ephraim; 'after that I was turned, I repented,' saith he, Jer 31:18. It is a turning from darkness to light.

(2.) The subject changed and converted, is the whole man; it is both the sinner's heart and life: first his heart, then his life: first his person, then his practice and conversation. 'Wash ye, make you clean,' there is the change of their persons; 'Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well,' Isa 1:16; there is the change of their practices. So 'Cast away,' saith Ezekiel, 'all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed;' there is the change of the life; 'and make you a new heart and a new spirit,' Eze 18:30; there is the change of the heart.

(3.) The terms of this change and conversion, from which and to which both heart and life must be changed; from sin to God. The heart must be changed from the state and power of sin, the life from the acts of sin, but both unto God; the heart to be under his power in a state of grace, the life to be under his rule in all new obedience; as the apostle speaks, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,' Acts 26:18. So the prophet Isaiah saith, 'Let the wicked forsake their ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,' Isa 55:7.

Thus much of the nature of evangelical repentance. Now, souls, tell me whether it be such an easy thing to repent, as Satan doth suggest. Besides what hath been spoken, I desire that you will take notice, that repentance doth include turning from the most darling sin. Ephraim shall say, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' Hos 14:8. Yea, it is a turning from all sin to God: Eze 18:30, 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one of you according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Herod turned from many, but turned not from his Herodias, which was his ruin. Judas turned from all visible wickedness, yet he would not cast out that golden devil covetousness, and therefore was cast into the hottest place in hell. He that turns not from every sin, turns not aright from any one sin. Every sin strikes at the honour of God, the being of God, the glory of God, the heart of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, and the peace of a man's conscience; and therefore a soul truly penitent strikes at all, hates all, conflicts with all, and will labour to draw strength from a crucified Christ to

crucify all. A true penitent knows neither father nor mother, neither right eye nor right hand, but will pluck out the one and cut off the other. Saul spared but one Agag, and that cost him his soul and his kingdom, 1Sa 15:9. Besides, repentance is not only a turning from all sin, but also a turning to all good; to a love of all good, to a prizing of all good, and to a following after all good: Eze 18:21, 'But if the wicked will turn, from all the sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die;' that is, only negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness nor holiness. David fulfilled all the will of God, and had respect unto all his commandments, and so had Zacharias and Elizabeth. It is not enough that the tree bears not ill fruit; but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be 'cut down and cast into the fire,' Luk 13:7. So it is not enough that you are not thus and thus wicked, but you must be thus and thus gracious and good, else divine justice will put the axe of divine vengeance to the root of your souls, and cut you off for ever. 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewed down and cast into the fire,' Mat 3:10. Besides, repentance doth include a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness, how opposite and contrary it is to the blessed God. God is light, sin is darkness; God is life, sin is death; God is heaven, sin is hell; God is beauty, sin is deformity.

Also true repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's mischievousness; how it cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how it laid the first corner stone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries, that be in the world; and how it makes men liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal wrath; how it hath made men Godless, Christless, hopeless, and heavenless.

Further, true repentance doth include sorrow for sin, contrition of heart. It breaks the heart with sighs, and sobs, and groans, for that a loving God and Father is by sin offended, a blessed Saviour afresh crucified, and the sweet comforter, the Spirit, grieved and vexed.

Again, repentance doth include, not only a loathing of sin, but also a loathing of ourselves for sin. As a man doth not only loathe poison, but he loathes the very dish or vessel that hath the smell of the poison; so a true penitent doth not only loathe his sin, but he loathes himself, the vessel that smells of it; so Eze 20:43, 'And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins, but also to loathe yourselves.

Again, true repentance doth not only work a man to loathe himself for his sins, but it makes him ashamed of his sin also: 'What fruit have ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' saith the apostle, Rom 6:21. So Ezekiel, 'And thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God,' Eze 36:32. When a penitential soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, the divine justice satisfied, then he sits down and blushes, as the Hebrew hath it, as one ashamed. Yea, true repentance doth work a man to cross his sinful self, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in Paul, the jailor, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shews in 2Co 7:10-11 : 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance never to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold the self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge.' Now, souls, sum up all these things together, and tell me whether it be such an easy

thing to repent as Satan would make the soul to believe, and I am confident your heart will answer that it is as hard a thing to repent as it is to make a world, or raise the dead.

I shall conclude this second remedy with a worthy saying of a precious holy man: 'Repentance,' saith he, 'strips us stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as a shirt behind.' In this rotten building it leaves not a stone upon a stone. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most profitable sins.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider, That repentance is a continued act. The word repent implies the continuation of it. True repentance inclines a man's heart to perform God's statutes always, even unto the end. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength; he must never stand still nor turn back. Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing: 'My sins are ever before me,' Psa 51:3. A true penitent is often casting his eyes back to the days of his former vanity, and this makes him morning and evening to 'water his couch with his tears.' 'Remember not against me the sins of my youth,' saith one blessed penitent; and 'I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,' saith another penitent. Repentance is a continued act of turning, a repentance never to be repented of, a turning never to turn again to folly. A true penitent hath ever something within him to turn from; he can never get near enough to God; no, not so near him as once he was; and therefore he is still turning and turning that he may get nearer and nearer to him, that is his chiefest good and his only happiness, optimum maximum, the best and the greatest. They are every day a-crying out, 'O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death!' Rom 7:24. They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing of themselves for sin. Repentance is no transient act, but a continued act of the soul. And tell me, O tempted soul, whether it be such an easy thing as Satan would make thee believe, to be every day a-turning more and more from sin, and a-turning nearer and nearer to God, thy choicest blessedness. A true penitent can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or one act of love, as he can content himself with one act of repentance. A Jewish Rabbi, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, exhorting them to be sure to repent the day before they died, one of them replied, that the day of any man's death was very uncertain. 'Repent, therefore, every day,' said the Rabbi, 'and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die.' You are wise, and know how to apply it to your own advantage.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, That if the work of repentance were such an easy work as Satan would make it to be, then certainly so many would not lie roaring and crying out of wrath and eternal ruin under the horrors and terrors of conscience, for not repenting; yea, doubtless, so many millions would not go to hell for not repenting, if it were such an easy thing to repent. Ah, do not poor souls under horror of conscience cry out and say, Were all this world a lump of gold, and in our hand to dispose of, we would give it for the least drachm of true repentance! and wilt thou say it is an easy thing to repent? When a poor sinner, whose conscience is awakened, shall judge the exchange of all the world for the least drachm of repentance to be the happiest exchange that ever sinner made, tell me, O soul, is it good going to hell? Is it good dwelling with the devouring fire, with everlasting burnings? Is it good to be for ever separated from the blessed and glorious presence of God, angels, and saints, and to

be for ever shut out from those good things of eternal life, which are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they exceed all estimation? We know it is the greatest misery that can befall the sons of men; and would they not prevent this by repentance, if it were such an easy thing to repent as Satan would have it? Well, then, do not run the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, and thy soul for ever, by hearkening to this device of Satan, viz., that it is an easy thing to repent, &c. If it be so easy, why, then, do wicked men's hearts so rise against them that press the doctrine of repentance in the sweetest way, and by the strongest and the choicest arguments that the Scripture doth afford? And why do they kill two at once: the faithful labourer's name and their own souls, by their wicked words and actings, because they are put upon repenting, which Satan tells them is so easy a thing? Surely, were repentance so easy, wicked men would not be so much enraged when that doctrine is, by evangelical considerations, pressed upon them.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is seriously to consider, That to repent of sin is as great a work of grace as not to sin. By our sinful falls the powers of the soul are weakened, the strength of grace is decayed, our evidences for heaven are blotted, fears and doubts in the soul are raised (will God once more pardon this scarlet sin, and shew mercy to this wretched soul?), and corruptions in the heart are more advantaged and confirmed; and the conscience of a man after falls is the more enraged or the more benumbed. Now for a soul, notwithstanding all this, to repent of his falls, this shews that it is as great a work of grace to repent of sin as it is not to sin. Repentance is the vomit of the soul; and of all physic, none so difficult and hard as it is to vomit. The same means that tends to preserve the soul from sin, the same means works the soul to rise by repentance when it is fallen into sin. We know the mercy and loving-kindness of God is one special means to keep the soul from sin; as David spake, 'Thy loving-kindness is always before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth, and I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked,' Psa 26:3-5. So by the same means the soul is raised by repentance out of sin, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, who loved much, and wept much, because much was forgiven her, Luk 7:37-39, &c. So those in Hosea, 'Come, let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight, or before his face,' Hos 6:1-2; as the Hebrew [חַסְדִּים] hath it, i.e. in his favour. Confidence in God's mercy and love, that he would heal them, and bind up their wounds, and revive their dejected spirits, and cause them to live in his favour, was that which did work their hearts to repent and return unto him.

I might further shew you this truth in many other particulars, but this may suffice: only remember this in the general, that there is as much of the power of God, and love of God, and faith in God, and fear of God, and care to please God, zeal for the glory of God, 2Co 7:11, requisite to work a man to repent of sin, as there is to keep a man from sin; by which you may easily judge, that to repent of sin is as great a work as not to sin. And now tell me, O soul, is it an easy thing not to sin? We know then certainly it is not an easy thing to repent of sin.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That he that now tempts thee to sin upon this account, that repentance is easy, will, ere long, to work thee to despair, and for ever to break the neck of thy soul, present repentance as the difficultest and hardest work in the world; and to this purpose he will set thy sins in order before thee, and make

them to say, 'We are thine, and we must follow thee.' Now, Satan will help to work the soul to look up, and see God angry; and to look inward, and to see conscience accusing and condemning; and to look downwards, and see hell's mouth open to receive the impenitent soul: and all this to render the work of repentance impossible to the soul. What, saith Satan, dost thou think that that is easy which the whole power of grace cannot conquer while we are in this world? Is it easy, saith Satan, to turn from some outward act of sin to which thou hast been addicted? Dost thou not remember that thou hast often complained against such and such particular sins, and resolved to leave them? and yet, to this hour, thou hast not, thou canst not? What will it then be to turn from every sin? Yea, to mortify and cut off those sins, those darling lusts, that are as joints and members, that be as right hands and right eyes? Hast thou not loved thy sins above thy Saviour? Hast thou not preferred earth before heaven? Hast thou not all along neglected the means of grace? and despised the offers of grace? and vexed the Spirit of grace? There would be no end, if I should set before thee the infinite evils that thou hast committed, and the innumerable good services that thou hast omitted, and the frequent checks of thy own conscience that thou hast contemned; and therefore thou mayest well conclude that thou canst never repent, that thou shalt never repent. Now, saith Satan, do but a little consider thy numberless sins, and the greatness of thy sins, the foulness of thy sins, the heinousness of thy sins, the circumstances of thy sins, and thou shalt easily see that those sins that thou thoughtest to be but motes, are indeed mountains; and is it not now in vain to repent of them? Surely, saith Satan, if thou shouldst seek repentance and grace with tears, as Esau, thou shalt not find it; thy glass is out, thy sun is set, the door of mercy is shut, the golden sceptre is taken in, and now thou that hast despised mercy, shalt be for ever destroyed by justice. For such a wretch as thou art to attempt repentance, is to attempt a thing impossible. It is impossible that thou, that in all thy life couldst never conquer one sin, shouldst master such a numberless number of sins; which are so near, so dear, so necessary, and so profitable to thee, that have so long bedded and boarded with thee, that have been old acquaintance and companions with thee. Hast thou not often purposed, promised, vowed, and resolved to enter upon the practice of repentance, but to this day couldst never attain it? Surely it is in vain to strive against the stream, where it is so impossible to overcome; thou art lost and cast for ever; to hell thou must, to hell thou shalt. Ah, souls! he that now tempts you to sin, by suggesting to you the easiness of repentance, will at last work you to despair, and present repentance as the hardest work in all the world, and a work as far above man as heaven is above hell, as light is above darkness. Oh that you were wise, to break off your sins by timely repentance.

Now the seventh device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (7). By making the soul bold to venture upon the occasions of sin. Saith Satan, You may walk by the harlot's door, though you won't go into the harlot's bed; you may sit and sup with the drunkard, though you won't be drunk with the drunkard; you may look upon Jezebel's beauty, and you may play and toy with Delilah, though you do not commit wickedness with the one or the other; you may with Achan handle the golden wedge, though you do not steal the golden wedge, &c.

Now the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, solemnly to dwell upon those scriptures that do expressly command us to avoid the occasions of sin, and the least appearance of evil: 1Th 5:22, 'Abstain

from all appearance of evil.' Whatsoever is heterodox, unsound, and unsavoury, shun it, as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your meat.

Theodosius tare the Arian's arguments presented to him in writing, because he found them repugnant to the Scriptures; and Austin retracted even ironies only, because they had the appearance of lying. When God had commanded the Jews to abstain from swine's flesh, they would not so much as name it, but in their common talk would call a sow another thing. To abstain from all appearance of evil, is to do nothing wherein sin appears, or which hath a shadow of sin. Bernard glosseth finely, 'Whatever is of evil show, or of ill report, that he may neither wound conscience nor credit.' We must shun and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin, if either we tender our credit abroad, or our comfort at home.

It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus: 'It behoveth thee not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so,' &c.: so Jude 1:23, 'And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.' It is a phrase taken from legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, the garments, of unclean persons. Under the law, men might not touch a menstruous cloth, nor God would not accept of a spotted peace-offering. So we must not only hate and avoid gross sins, but everything that may carry a savour or suspicion of sin; we must abhor the very signs and tokens of sin. So in Pro 5:8, 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.' He that would not be burnt, must dread the fire; he that would not hear the bell, must not meddle with the rope. To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is all one as to thrust thy finger into the fire, and then to pray that it might not be burnt. So, in Pro 14:14-15, you have I another command: 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men: avoid it, and pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' This triple gradation of Solomon sheweth with a great emphasis, how necessary it is for men to flee from all appearance of sin, as the seaman shuns sands and shelves, and as men shun those that have the plague-sores running upon them. As weeds do I endanger the corn, as bad humours do endanger the blood, or as an infected house doth endanger the neighbourhood; so doth the company of the bad endanger those that are good. Entireness with wicked consorts is one of the strongest chains of hell, and binds us to a participation of both sin and punishment.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That ordinarily there is no conquest over sin, without the soul turns from the occasion of sin. It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin, that plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation, except you turn from the occasion. It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit, that will adventure to dance upon the brink of the pit, and that he should be a slave to sin, that will not flee from the occasions of sin. As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure. He that hath gunpowder about him had need keep far enough off from sparkles. To rush upon the occasions of sin, is both to tempt ourselves, and to tempt Satan to tempt our souls. It is very rare that any soul plays with the occasions of sin, but that soul is ensnared by sin. It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, that will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He that adventures upon the occasions of sin is as he that would quench the fire with oil, which is a fuel to maintain it, and increase it. Ah, souls, often remember how frequently you have been overcome by sin, when you have boldly gone upon the occasions of sin; look back, souls, to the day of your vanity, wherein you have been

as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted, when you have played with the occasions of sin. As you would for the future be kept from the acting of sin, and be made victorious over sin, oh! flee from the occasions of sin.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That other precious saints, that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have turned from the occasion of sin, as hell itself; as you may see in Joseph, Gen 39:10, 'And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.' Joseph was famous for all the four cardinal virtues, if ever any were. In this one temptation you may see his fortitude, justice, temperance, and prudence, in that he shuns the occasion: for he would not so much as be with her. And that a man is indeed, that he is in a temptation, which is but a tap to give vent to corruption. The Nazarite might not only not drink wine, but not taste a grape, or the husk of a grape. The leper was to shave his hair, and pare his nails. The devil counts a fit occasion half a conquest, for he knows that corrupt nature hath a seed-plot for all sin, which being drawn forth and watered by some sinful occasion, is soon set a-work to the producing of death and destruction. God will not remove the temptation, till we remove the occasion. A bird whiles aloft is safe, but she comes not near the snare without danger. The shunning the occasions of sin renders a man most like the best of men. A soul eminently gracious, dares not come near the train, though he be far off the blow. So Job 31:1, 'I have made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?' I set a watch at the entrance of my senses, that my soul might not by them be infected or endangered. The eye is the window of the soul, and if that should be always open, the soul might smart for it. A man may not look intently upon that, that he may not love entirely. The disciples were set a-gog, by beholding the beauty of the temple. It is best and safest to have the eye always fixed upon the highest and noblest objects: as the mariner's eye is fixed upon the star, when their hand is on the stern. So David, when he was himself, he shuns the occasion of sin: Psa 26:4-5, 'I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers; I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked.'

Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies, that went before them. The highest and choicest examples are to some, and should be to all, very quickening and provoking; and oh that the examples of those worthy saints, David, Joseph, and Job, might prevail with all your souls to shun and avoid the occasions of sin! Every one should strive to be like to them in grace, that they desire to be equal with in glory. He that shooteth at the sun, though he be far short, will shoot higher than he that aimeth at a shrub. It is best, and it speaks out much of Christ within, to eye the highest and the worthiest examples.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the avoiding the occasions of sin, is an evidence of grace, and that which lifts up a man above most other men in the world. That a man is indeed, which he is in temptation; and when sinful occasions do present themselves before the soul, this speaks out both the truth and the strength of grace; when with Lot, a man can be chaste in Sodom, and with Timothy can live temperate in Asia, among the luxurious Ephesians; and with Job can walk uprightly in the land of Uz, where the people were profane in their lives, and superstitious in their worship; and with Daniel be holy in Babylon; and with Abraham righteous in Chaldea; and with Nehemiah, zealous in Damasco, &c. Many a wicked man is big and full of corruption, but shews it not for want of occasion; but that man is surely good, who in his course will not be bad, though tempted by occasions. A Christless soul

is so far from refusing occasions when they come in his way, that he looks and longs after them, and rather than he will go without them he will buy them, not only with love or money, but also with the loss of his soul. Nothing but grace can fence a man against the occasions of sin, when he is strongly tempted thereunto. Therefore, as you would cherish a precious evidence in your own bosoms of the truth and strength of your graces, shun all sinful occasions. The eighth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin, is,

Device (8). By representing to the soul the outward mercies that vain men enjoy, and the outward miseries that they are freed from, whilst they have walked in the ways of sin. Saith Satan, Dost thou see, O soul, the many mercies that such and such enjoy, that walk in those very ways that thy soul startles to think of, and the many crosses that they are delivered from, even such as makes other men, that say they dare not walk in such ways, to spend their days in sighing, weeping, groaning, and mourning? and therefore, saith Satan, if ever thou wouldst be freed from the dark night of adversity, and enjoy the sunshine of prosperity, thou must walk in their ways. By this stratagem the devil took those in Jer 44:16-18, 'As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth of our mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.' This is just the language of a world of ignorant, profane, and superstitious souls in London, and England, that would have made them a captain to return to bondage, yea, to that bondage that was worse than that the Israelites groaned under. Oh, say they, since such and such persons have been put down, and left off, we have had nothing but plundering and taxing, and butchering of men, &c.; and therefore we will do as we, and our kings, and nobles, and fathers have formerly done, for then had we plenty at home, and peace abroad, &c., and there was none to make us afraid.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow:

Remedy (1). The first remedy is, solemnly to consider, That no man knows how the heart of God stands by his hand. His hand of mercy may be towards a man, when his heart may be against that man, as you may see in Saul and others; and the hand of God may be set against a man, when the heart of God is dearly set upon a man, as you may see in Job and Ephraim. The hand of God was sorely set against them, and yet the heart and bowels of God were strongly working towards them. No man knoweth either love or hatred by outward mercy or misery; for all things come alike to all, to the righteous and to the unrighteous, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean, &c. The sun of prosperity shines as well upon brambles of the wilderness as fruit-trees of the orchard; the snow and hail of adversity lights upon the best garden as well as the stinking dunghill or the wild waste. Ahab's and Josiah's ends concur in the very circumstances. Saul and Jonathan, though different in their natures, deserts, and deportments, yet in their deaths they were not divided. Health, wealth, honours, &c., crosses, sicknesses, losses, &c., are cast upon good men and bad men promiscuously. 'The whole Turkish empire is nothing else but a crust, cast by heaven's great housekeeper to his dogs.'³ Moses dies in the wilderness as well as those that murmured. Nabal is rich, as well as Abraham; Ahithophel wise, as well as Solomon; and Doeg honoured by Saul, as well as Joseph was by Pharaoh. Usually the worst of men have most of

these outward things; and the best of men have least of earth, though most of heaven.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That there is nothing in the world that doth so provoke God to be wroth and angry, as men's taking encouragement from God's goodness and mercy to do wickedly. This you may see by that wrath that fell upon the old world, and by God's raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. This is clear in Jer 44:20-28. The words are worthy of your best meditation. Oh that they were engraven in all your hearts, and constant in all your thoughts! Though they are too large for me to transcribe them, yet they are not too large for me to remember them. To argue from mercy to sinful liberty, is the devil's logic, and such logicians do ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up. No such soul can ever avert or avoid the wrath of God. This is wickedness at the height, for a man to be very bad, because God is very good. A worse spirit than this is not in hell. Ah, Lord, doth not wrath, yea, the greatest wrath, lie at this man's door? Are not the strongest chains of darkness prepared for such a soul? To sin against mercy is to sin against humanity. It is bestial; nay, it is worse. To render good for evil is divine, to render good for good is human, to render evil for evil is brutish; but to render evil for good is devilish; and from this evil deliver my soul, O God.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there is no greater misery in this life, than not to be in misery; no greater affliction, than not to be afflicted. Woe, woe to that soul that God will not spend a rod upon! This is the saddest stroke of all, when God refuses to strike at all: Hos 4:17, 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone.' 'Why should you be smitten any more? you will revolt more and more,' Isa 1:5. When the physician gives over the patient, you say, 'Ring out his knell, the man is dead.' So when God gives over a soul to sin without control, you may truly say, 'This soul is lost,' you may ring out his knell, for he is twice dead, and plucked up by the roots. Freedom from punishment is the mother of security, the step-mother of virtue, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness, and the introducer of wickedness. 'Nothing,' said one, 'seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity hath happened.' Outward mercies oftentimes prove a snare to our souls. 'I will lay a stumbling-block,' Eze 3:20. Vatablus his note there is, 'I will prosper him in all things, and not by affliction restrain him from sin.' Prosperity hath been a stumbling-block, at which millions have stumbled and fallen, and broke the neck of their souls for ever.³

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the wants of wicked men, under all their outward mercy and freedom from adversity, is far greater than all their outward enjoyments. They have many mercies, yet they want more than they enjoy; the mercies which they enjoy are nothing to the mercies they want. It is true, they have honours and riches, and pleasures and friends, and are mighty in power; their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes: 'Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them;' 'They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ;' 'They spend their days in wealth, their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish: and they have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm; they are not in trouble as other men,' as David and Job speak. Yet all this is nothing to what they want.² They want interest in God, Christ, the Spirit, the promises, the covenant of grace, and everlasting glory; they want acceptation and reconciliation with God; they want righteousness, justification, sanctification, adoption, and redemption; they

want the pardon of sin, and power against sin, and freedom from the dominion of sin; they want that favour that is better than life, and that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and that peace that passes understanding, and that grace, the least spark of which is more worth than heaven and earth; they want a house that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; they want those riches that perish not, the glory that fades not, that kingdom that shakes not. Wicked men are the most needy men in the world, yea, they want those two things that should render their mercies sweet, viz., the blessing of God, and content with their condition, and without which their heaven is but hell on this side hell. When their hearts are lifted up and grown big upon the thoughts of their abundance, if conscience does but put in a word and say, It is true, here is this and that outward mercy. Oh, but where is an interest in Christ? Where is the favour of God? Where are the comforts of the Holy Ghost? Where are the evidences for heaven? &c. This word from conscience makes the man's countenance to change, his thoughts to be troubled, his heart to be amazed, and all his mercies on the right hand and left to be as dead and withered. Ah, were but the eyes of wicked men open to see their wants under their abundance, they would cry out and say, as Absalom did, 'What are all these to me so long as I cannot see the king's face?' 2Sa 14:24, 2Sa 14:33. What is honour, and riches, and the favour of creatures, so long as I want the favour of God, the pardon of my sins, an interest in Christ, and the hopes of glory! O Lord, give me these, or I die; give me these, or else I shall eternally die.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That outward things are not as they seem, and, are esteemed. They have, indeed, a glorious outside, but if you view their insides, you will easily find that they fill the head full of cares, and the heart full of fears. What if the fire should consume one part of my estate, and the sea should be a grave to swallow up another part of my estate! what if my servants should be unfaithful abroad, and my children should be deceitful at home! Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that doth daily, yea hourly, attend those men's souls whose hands are full of worldly goods!

It was a good speech of an emperor, 'You,' said he, 'gaze on my purple robe and golden crown, but did you know what cares are under it, you would not take it up from the ground to have it.' It was a true saying of Augustine on the 26th Psalm, 'Many are miserable by loving hurtful things, but they are more miserable by having them.' It is not what men enjoy, but the principle from whence it comes, that makes men happy. Much of these outward things do usually cause great distraction, great vexation, and great condemnation at last, to the possessors of them. If God gives them in his wrath, and do not sanctify them in his love, they will at last be witnesses against a man, and millstones for ever to sink a man in that day when God shall call men to an account, not for the use, but for the abuse of mercy.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider the end and the design of God in heaping up mercy upon the heads of the wicked, and in giving them a quietus est, rest and quiet from those sorrows and sufferings that others sigh under. David, in Psa 73:17-20, shews the end and design of God in this. Saith he, 'When I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end: surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment: they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream, when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.' So in Psa 92:7, 'When the wicked spring as grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.' God's setting them up, is but in

order to his casting them down; his raising them high, is but in order to his bringing them low: Exo 9:16, 'And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.' I have constituted and set thee up as a butt-mark, that I may let fly at thee, and follow thee close with plague upon plague, till I have beaten the very breath out of thy body, and got myself a name, by setting my feet upon the neck of all thy pride, power, pomp, and glory. Ah, souls, what man in his wits would be lifted up that he might be cast down; would be set higher than others, when it is but in order to his being brought down lower than others? There is not a wicked man in the world that is set up with Lucifer, as high as heaven, but shall with Lucifer be brought down as low as hell. Canst thou think seriously of this, O soul, and not say, O Lord, I humbly crave that thou wilt let me be little in this world, that I may be great in another world; and low here, that I may be high for ever hereafter. Let me be low, and feed low, and live low, so I may live with thee for ever; let me now be clothed with rags, so thou wilt clothe me at last with thy robes; let me now be set upon a dunghill, so I may at last be advanced to sit with thee upon thy throne. Lord, make me rather gracious than great, inwardly holy than outwardly happy, and rather turn me into my first nothing, yea, make me worse than nothing, rather than set me up for a time, that thou mayest bring me low for ever.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, That God doth often most plague and punish those whom others think he doth most spare and love; that is, God doth plague and punish them most with spiritual judgments—which are the greatest, the sorest, and the heaviest—whom he least punishes with temporal punishments. There are no men on earth so internally plagued as those that meet with least external plagues. Oh the blindness of mind, the hardness of heart, the searedness of conscience, that those souls are given up to, who, in the eye of the world, are reputed the most happy men, because they are not outwardly afflicted and plagued as other men. Ah, souls, it were better that all the temporal plagues that ever befell the children of men since the fall of Adam should at once meet upon your souls, than that you should be given up to the least spiritual plague, to the least measure of spiritual blindness or spiritual hardness of heart, &c. Nothing will better that man, nor move that man, that is given up to spiritual judgments. Let God smile or frown, stroke or strike, cut or kill, he minds it not, he regards it not; let life or death, heaven or hell, be set before him, it stirs him not; he is mad upon his sin, and God is fully set to do justice upon his soul. This man's preservation is but a reservation unto a greater condemnation; this man can set no bounds to himself; he is become a brat of fathomless perdition; he hath guilt in his bosom and vengeance at his back wherever he goes. Neither ministry nor misery, neither miracle nor mercy, can mollify his heart, and if this soul be not in hell, on this side hell, who is?

Remedy (8). The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell more upon that strict account that vain men must make for all that good that they do enjoy. Ah! did men dwell more upon that account that they must ere long give for all the mercies that they have enjoyed, and for all the favours that they have abused, and for all the sins they have committed, it would make their hearts to tremble and their lips to quiver, and rottenness to enter into their bones; it would cause their souls to cry out, and say, Oh that our mercies had been fewer and lesser, that our account might have been easier, and our torment and misery, for our abuse of so great mercy, not greater than we are able to bear. Oh cursed be the day wherein the crown of honour was set upon our heads, and the treasures of this world were cast into our laps; oh cursed be the day wherein the

sun of prosperity shined so strong upon us, and this flattering world smiled so much upon us, as to occasion us to forget God, to slight Jesus Christ, to neglect our souls, and to put far from us the day of our account!

Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professed, 'That he would rather lose his kingdom than offend God willingly;' yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of his account he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words brake from him: 'Oh! would to God I had never reigned. Oh that those years that I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a solitary life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely should I now have died! How much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What doth all my glory profit me, but that I have so much the more torment in my death?' God keeps an exact account of every penny that is laid out upon him and his, and that is laid out against him and his; and this in the day of account men shall know and feel, though now they wink and will not understand. The sleeping of vengeance causeth the overflowing of sin, and the overflowing of sin causeth the awakening of vengeance. Abused mercy will certainly turn into fury. God's forbearance is no quittance. The day is at hand when he will pay wicked men for the abuse of old and new mercies. If he seem to be slow, yet he is sure. He hath leaden heels, but iron hands. The farther he stretcheth his bow, or draweth his arrow, the deeper he will wound in the day of vengeance. Men's actions are all in print in heaven, and God will, in the day of account, read them aloud in the ears of all the world, that they may all say Amen to that righteous sentence that he shall pass upon all despisers and abusers of mercy. The ninth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (9). By presenting to the soul the crosses, losses, reproaches, sorrows, and sufferings that do daily attend those that walk in the ways of holiness. Saith Satan, Do not you see that there are none in the world that are so vexed, afflicted, and tossed, as those that walk more circumspectly and holily than their neighbours? They are a byword at home, and a reproach abroad; their miseries come in upon them like Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another, and there is no end of their sorrows and troubles. Therefore, saith Satan, you were better walk in ways that are less troublesome, and less afflicted, though they be more sinful; for who but a madman would spend his days in sorrow, vexation, and affliction, when it may be prevented by walking in the ways that I set before him?

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That all the afflictions that do attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to the profit and glorious advantage of the people of God. They shall discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, that yet the soul hath never seen.

It was a speech of a German divine in his sickness, 'In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is; I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin meant, till now.' Afflictions are a crystal glass, wherein the soul hath the clearest sight of the ugly face of sin. In this glass the soul comes to see sin to be but a bitter-sweet; yea, in this glass the soul comes to see sin not only to be an evil, but to be the greatest evil in the world, to be an evil far worse than hell itself.

Again, They shall contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins, Isa 1:15, and Isa 27:8-9. Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses his people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine; it is a potion to carry away ill humours, better than all the benedictum medicamentum, as physicians call them. Aloes kill worms; colds and frosts do destroy vermin; so do afflictions the corruptions that are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, it is observed, there have been no idols found amongst them.

Again, Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin, which is a greater evil than hell itself. As Job spake, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. Once have I spoken foolishly, yea, twice, I will do so no more,' Job 34:31-32. The burnt child dreads the fire. Ah! saith the soul under the rod, sin is but a bitter-sweet; and for the future I intend, by the strength of Christ, that I will not buy repentance at so dear a rate. The Rabbins, to scare their scholars from sin, were wont to tell them, 'That sin made God's head ache;' and saints under the rod have found by woful experience, that sin makes not only their heads, but their hearts ache also.

Augustine, by wandering out of his way, escaped one that lay in wait to mischief him. If afflictions did not put us out of our way, we should many times meet with some sin or other that would mischief our precious souls.

Again, They will work the saints to be more fruitful in holiness: Heb 12:10-11, 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better for bleeding; the walnut-tree is most fruitful when most beaten. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some 'the mother of virtue.' Manasseh his chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some Scriptures till he was in affliction. The Christ-cross is no letter, and yet that taught him more than all the letters in the row. God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that came about Stephen's ears did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven; and the higher the waters grew, the more near the ark was lifted up to heaven. Afflictions do lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God:3 Hos 2:14, 'Behold, I will allure her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her'; (or rather, as the Hebrew hath it); 'I will earnestly or vehemently speak to her heart.' God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of his blessed self. When was it that Stephen saw the heavens open, and Christ standing at the right hand of God, but when the stones were about his ears, and there was but a short step betwixt him and eternity? And when did God appear in his glory to Jacob, but in the day of his troubles, when the stones were his pillows, and the ground his bed, and the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy? Then he saw the angels of God ascending and descending in their glistening robes. The plant in Nazianzen grows with cutting; being cut, it flourisheth; it contends with the axe, it lives by dying, and by cutting it grows.⁵ So do saints by their afflictions that do befall them; they gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening of them, to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

I have read of a fountain, that at noonday is cold, and at midnight it grows warm; so many a precious soul is cold God-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the day of prosperity; that grow warm God-wards and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, in the midnight of adversity.

Again, Afflictions serve to keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender: Lam 3:19-20, 'Remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me,' or bowed down in me, as the original hath it. So David, when he was under the rod, could say, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it,' Psa 39:4.

I have read of one [Gregory Nazianzen], who, when anything fell out prosperously, would read over the Lamentation of Jeremiah, and that kept his heart tender, humbled, and low. Prosperity doth not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity doth to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown.

Again, They serve to bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God. 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.' 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.' 'I will be to Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear and go away: I will take away, and none shall rescue him.' 'I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.' And so they did. 'Come,' say they, 'and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.' So when God had hedged up their way with thorns, then they say, 'I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it with me better than now,' Hos 2:6-7. Ah the joy, the peace, the comfort, the delight, and content that did attend us, when we kept close communion with God, doth bespeak our return to God. 'We will return to our first husband; for then was it with us better than now.' When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, he drew out his sword, and defended himself; but when they told him that they came to carry him to the king, he willingly yielded. So, though a saint may at first stand a little out, yet when he remembers that afflictions are to carry nearer to God, he yields, and kisses the rod. Afflictions are like the prick at the nightingale's breast, that awakes her, and puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing.

Again, Afflictions they serve to revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love that is cold, and they quicken that faith that is decaying, and they put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. Musk, saith one, when it hath lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink amongst filth it recovers it. So do afflictions recover and revive decayed graces. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abases the loveliness of the world that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, that might incite us to folly and vanity; and it abets the spirit in his quarrel to the two former, which tends much to the reviving and recovering of decayed graces. Now, suppose afflictions and troubles attend the ways of holiness, yet seeing that they all work for the great profit and singular advantage of the saints, let no soul be so mad as to leave an afflicted way of holiness, to walk in a smooth path of wickedness.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, that all the afflictions that do befall the saints, do only reach their worser part; they reach not, they hurt not, their noble part, their best part. All the arrows stick in the target, they reach not the conscience: 1Pe 3:13, 'And who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good,' saith the apostle. That is, none shall harm you. They may thus and thus afflict you, but they shall never harm you.

It was the speech of an heathen, whenas by the tyrant he was commanded to be put into a mortar, and to be beaten to pieces with an iron pestle, he cries out to his persecutors, 'You do but beat the vessel, the case, the husk of Anaxarchus, you do not beat me.' His body was to him but as a case, a husk; he counted his soul himself, which they could not reach. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Socrates said of his enemies, 'They may kill me, but they cannot hurt me.' So afflictions may kill us, but they cannot hurt us; they may take away my life, but they cannot take away my God, my Christ, my crown.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the afflictions that do attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night, but joy comes in the morning,' Psa 30:5. This short storm will end in an everlasting calm, this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown, between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. Fourteen thousand years to the Lord is but as one day. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a post, a span, a dream? &c. Yea, so small a while doth the hand of the Lord rest upon us, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it, for he calls it a very little cross that we bear, το μικρον μικρον. The prophet in Isa 26:20, saith the indignation doth not (transire) pass, but (pertransire) overpass. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of it is set forth by the travail of a woman, John 16:21. And that is a sweet scripture, 'For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.' 'For yet a little while, he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb 10:36-37. Tantillum tantillum adhuc pusillum. A little, little, little while. When Athanasius's friends came to bewail him, because of his misery and banishment, he said, 'It is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone.' It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts, &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That the afflictions that do befall the saints are such as proceed from God's dearest love. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,' Rev 3:19. Saints, saith God, think not that I hate you, because I thus chide you. He that escapes reprehension may suspect his adoption. God had one Son without corruption, but no son without correction. A gracious soul may look through the darkest cloud, and see a God smiling on him. We must look through the anger of his correction to the sweetness of his countenance; and as by the rainbow we see the beautiful image of the sun's light in the midst of a dark and waterish cloud. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, 'These are God's gems and jewels, wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious

than all the gold and silver in the world.' A soul at first conversion is but rough cast; but God by afflictions doth square and fit, and fashion it for that glory above, which doth speak them out to flow from precious love; therefore the afflictions that do attend the people of God should be no bar to holiness, nor no motive to draw the soul to ways of wickedness.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That it is our duty and glory not to measure afflictions by the smart but by the end. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with gold and ear-rings, Exo 11:3; so the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon with gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezr 1:7-11. Look more at the latter end of a Christian than the beginning of his affliction. Consider the patience of Job, and what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives's door, but lying in Abraham's bosom. Look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream, that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could see neither sun, moon, nor stars; but behold him at last made ruler over Egypt. Look not upon David, as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by some, and slighted and despised by others; but behold him seated in his royal throne, and dying in his bed of honour, and his son Solomon and all his glistening nobles about him. Afflictions, they are but as a dark entry into your Father's house; they are but as a dirty lane to a royal palace. Now tell me, souls, whether it be not very great madness to shun the ways of holiness, and to walk in the ways of wickedness, because of those afflictions that do attend the ways of holiness.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the design of God in all the afflictions that do befall them, is only to try them; it is not to wrong them, nor to ruin them, as ignorant souls are apt to think. 'He knoweth the way that I take: and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold,' saith patient Job 23:10. So in Deu 8:2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.' God afflicted them thus, that he might make known to themselves and others what was in their hearts. When fire is put to green wood, there comes out abundance of watery stuff that before appeared not; when the pond is empty, the mud, filth, and toads come to light. The snow covers many a dunghill, so doth prosperity many a rotten heart. It is easy to wade in a warm bath, and every bird can sing in a sunshine day, &c. Hard weather tries what health we have; afflictions try what sap we have, what grace we have. Withered leaves soon fall off in windy weather, rotten boughs quickly break with heavy weights, &c. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Afflictions are like pinching frosts, that will search us; where we are most unsound, we shall soonest complain, and where most corruptions lie, we shall most shrink. We try metal by knocking; if it sound well, then we like it. So God tries his by knocking, and if under knocks they yield a pleasant sound, God will turn their night into day, and their bitter into sweet, and their cross into a crown; and they shall hear that voice, 'Arise, and shine; for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, and the favours of the Lord are flowing in on thee,' Isa 60:1.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the afflictions, wrath, and misery that do attend the ways of wickedness, are far greater and heavier than those are that do attend the ways of holiness. Oh, the galling, girding, lashing, and gnawing

of conscience, that do attend souls in a way of wickedness! 'The wicked,' saith Isaiah, 'are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.' 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.' There are snares in all their mercies, and curses and crosses do attend all their comforts, both at home and abroad. What is a fine suit of clothes with the plague in it? and what is a golden cup when there is poison at the bottom? or what is a silken stocking with a broken leg in it? The curse of God, the wrath of God, the hatred of God, and the fierce indignation of God, do always attend sinners walking in a way of wickedness. Turn to Deu 28:15-68, and turn to Lev 26:14-46, and then you shall see how the curse of God haunts the wicked, as it were a fury, in all his ways. In the city it attends him, in the country hovers over him; coming in, it accompanies him; going forth, it follows him, and in travel it is his comrade. It fills his store with strife, and mingles the wrath of God with his sweetest morsels. It is a moth in his wardrobe, murrain among his cattle, mildew in the field, rot among sheep, and oftentimes makes the fruit of his loins his greatest vexation and confusion. There is no solid joy, nor lasting peace, nor pure comfort, that attends sinners in their sinful ways. There is a sword of vengeance that doth every moment hang over their heads by a small thread;³ and what joy and content can attend such souls, if the eye of conscience be but so far open as to see the sword? Ah! the horrors and terrors, the tremblings and shakings, that attend their souls! The tenth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (10). By working them to be frequent in comparing themselves and their ways with those that are reputed or reported to be worse than themselves. By this device the devil drew the proud pharisee to bless himself in a cursed condition, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, &c., Luk 18:11. Why, saith Satan, you swear but pretty oaths, as 'by your faith and troth,' &c., but such and such swear by wounds and blood; you are now and then a little wanton, but such and such do daily defile and pollute themselves by actual uncleanness and filthiness; you deceive and overreach your neighbours in things that are but as toys and trifles, but such and such deceive and overreach others in things of greatest concernment, even to their ruin and undoings; you do but sit, and chat, and sip with the drunkard, but such and such sit and drink and are drunk with the drunkard; you are only a little proud in heart and habit, in looks and words, &c.

Now the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider this, That there is not a greater nor a clearer argument to prove a man a hypocrite, than to be quick-sighted abroad and blind at home, than to see 'a mote in another man's eye, and not a beam in his own eye,' Mat 7:3-4; than to use spectacles to behold other men's sins rather than looking-glasses to behold his own; rather to be always holding his finger upon other men's sores, and to be amplifying and aggravating other men's sins than mitigating of his own, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To spend more time in comparing of your internal and external actions with the Rule, with the Word, by which you must be judged at last, than in comparing of yourselves with those that are worse than yourselves. That man that, comparing his self with others that are worse than himself, may seem, to himself and others, to be an angel; yet, comparing himself with the word, may see himself to be like the devil, yea, a very devil. 'Have not I chosen twelve, and one of you is a devil?' John 6:70. Such men are like him, as if they were spit out of his mouth.

Satan is called 'the god of this world,' 2Co 4:4, because, as God at first did but speak the word, and it was done, so, if the devil doth but hold up his finger, give the least hint, they will do his will, though they undo their souls for ever. Ah, what monsters would these men appear to be, did they but compare themselves with a righteous rule, and not with the most unrighteous men; they would appear to be as black as hell itself.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That though thy sins be not as great as others, yet without sound repentance on thy side and pardoning mercy on God's, thou wilt be as certainly damned as others, though not equally tormented with others. What though hell shall not be so hot to thee as others, yet thou must as certainly to hell as others, unless the glorious grace of God shines forth upon thee in the face of Christ. God will suit men's punishments to their sins; the greatest sins shall be attended with the greatest punishments, and lesser sins with lesser punishments. Alas, what a poor comfort will this be to thee when thou comest to die, to consider that thou shalt not be equally tormented with others, yet must be for ever shut out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels, and saints, and from those good things of eternal life, that are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they exceed estimation! Sure it is, that the tears of heaven⁴ are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven; the worm of grief gnaws as painful as the fire burns. If those souls, Acts 20:37, wept because they should see Paul's face no more, how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beatifical vision! But this is not all: thou shalt not be only shut out of heaven, but shut up in hell for ever; not only shut out from the presence of God and angels, &c., but shut up with devils and damned spirits for ever; not only shut out from those sweet, surpassing, unexpressible, and everlasting pleasures that be at God's right hand, but shut up for ever under those torments that are ceaseless, remediless, and endless. Ah, souls, were it not ten thousand times better for you to break off your sins by repentance, than to go on in your sins till you feel the truth of what now you hear? The God of Israel is very merciful. Ah, that you would repent and return, that your souls might live for ever! Remember this, grievous is the torment of the damned, for the bitterness of the punishments, but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments. For to be tormented without end, this is that which goes beyond the bounds of all desperation. Ah, how do the thoughts of this make the damned to roar and cry out for unquietness of heart, and tear their hair, and gnash their teeth, and rage for madness, that they must dwell in 'everlasting burnings' for ever! The eleventh device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (11). By polluting and defiling the souls and judgments of men with such dangerous errors, that do in their proper tendency tend to carry the souls of men to all looseness and wickedness, as woful experience doth abundantly evidence. Ah, how many are there filled with these and such like Christ-dishonouring and soul-undoing opinions, viz., that ordinances are poor, low, carnal things, and not only to be lived above, but without also; that the Scriptures are full of fallacies and uncertainties, and no further to be heeded than they agree with that spirit that is in them; that it is a poor, low thing, if not idolatry too, to worship God in a Mediator; that the resurrection is already past; that there was never any such man or person as Jesus Christ, but that all is an allegory, and it signifies nothing but light and love, and such good frames born in men; that there is no God nor devil, heaven nor hell, but what is within us; that there is no sin in the saints, they are under no law but that of the Spirit, which is all freedom; that sin and grace are equally good, and agreeth to his will,—with a hundred other horrid opinions, which hath caused wickedness to break in as a flood

among us, &c.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are those that follow:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That an erroneous, vain mind is as odious to God as a vicious life. He that had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean, Lev 13:44. Gross errors make the heart foolish, and render the life loose, and the soul light in the eye of God. Error spreads and frets like a gangrene, and renders the soul a leper in the sight of God.

It was God's heavy and dreadful plague upon the Gentiles, to be given up to a mind void of judgment, or an injudicious mind, or a mind rejected, disallowed, abhorred of God, or a mind that none have cause to glory in, but rather to be ashamed of, Rom 1:28. I think that in these days God punisheth many men's former wickednesses by giving them up to soul-ruining errors. Ah, Lord, this mercy I humbly beg, that thou wouldst rather take me into thine own hand, and do anything with me, than give me up to those sad errors to which thousands have married their souls, and are in a way of perishing for ever.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To receive the truth affectionately, and let it dwell in your souls plenteously. When men stand out against the truth, when truth would enter, and men bar the door of their souls against the truth, God in justice gives up such souls to be deluded and deceived by error, to their eternal undoing: 2Th 2:10-12, 'Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusions (or, as the Greek hath it, "the efficacy of error," ■νεξῆ■αν πλαν■ς), that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.' Ah, sirs, as you love your souls, do not tempt God, do not provoke God, by your withstanding truth and out-facing truth, to give you up to believe a lie, that you may be damned. There are no men on earth so fenced against error as those are that receive the truth in the love of it. Such souls are not 'easily tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, wherein they lie in wait to deceive,' Eph 4:14. It is not he that receives most of the truth into his head, but he that receives most of the truth affectionately into his heart, that shall enjoy the happiness of having his judgment sound and clear, when others shall be deluded and deceived by them, who make it their business to infect the judgments and to undo the souls of men.

Ah, souls, as you would not have your judgments polluted and defiled with error, 'Let the word of the Lord,' that is more precious than gold, yea than fine gold, 'dwell plenteously in you,' Col 3:16. It is not the hearing of truth, nor the knowing of truth, nor the commending of truth, nor the talking of truth, but the indwelling of truth in your souls, that will keep your judgments chaste and sound, in the midst of all those glittering errors that betray many souls into his hands, that can easily 'transform himself into an angel of light,' 2Co 11:14, that he may draw others to lie in chains of darkness with him for ever. Oh, let not the word be a stranger, but make it your choicest familiar! Then will you be able to stand in the day wherein many shall fall on your right hand, and on your left, by the subtlety of those that shall say, 'Lo, here is Christ, or lo, there is Christ.'

There was more wit than grace in his speech that counselled his friends, 'Not to come too nigh unto truth, lest his teeth should be beaten out with its heels.' Ah, souls, if truth dwell plenteously in

you, you are happy; if not, you are unhappy under all your greatest felicity.

'It is with truth,' saith Melancthon, 'as it is with holy water, every one praised it, and thought it had some rare virtue in it; but offer to sprinkle them with it, and they will shut their eyes, and turn away their faces from it.'

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That error makes the owner to suffer loss. All the pains and labour that men take to defend and maintain their errors, to spread abroad and infect the world with their errors, shall bring no profit, nor no comfort to them in that day, wherein 'every man's work shall be made manifest, and the fire shall try it of what sort it is,' as the apostle shews in that remarkable scripture, 1Co 3:11-15. Ah, that all those that rise early and go to bed late, that spend their time, their strength, their spirits, their all, to advance and spread abroad God-dishonouring and soul-undoing opinions, would seriously consider of this, that they shall lose all the pains, cost, and charge that they have been, or shall be at, for the propagating of error; and if they are ever saved, it shall be by fire, as the apostle there shews. Ah, sirs, Is it nothing to lay out your money for that which is not bread? and your strength for that which will not, which cannot, profit you in the day that you must make up your account, and all your works must be tried by fire? Ah, that such souls would now at last 'buy the truth, and sell it not,' Pro 23:23. Remember you can never over-buy it, whatsoever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you should have all the world in exchange for it.

It is said of Cæsar, that 'he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes,' for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters, but lost his robes. Ah, what are Cæsar's books to God's books? Well, remember this, that one day, yea, one hour spent in the study of truth, or spreading abroad of truth, will yield the soul more comfort and profit, than many thousand years spent in the study and spreading abroad of corrupt and vain opinions, that have their rise from hell, and not from heaven, from the god of this world and not from that God that shall at last judge this world, and all the corrupt opinions of men.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, To hate, reject, and abominate all those doctrines and opinions that are contrary to godliness, and that open a door to profaneness, and all such doctrines and opinions that require men to hold forth a strictness above what the Scripture requireth; and all such doctrines and opinions that do advance and lift up corrupted nature to the doing of supernatural things, which none can do but by that supernatural power that raised Christ from the grave; and such opinions that do lift our own righteousness in the room of Christ's righteousness, that place good works in the throne of Christ, and makes them co-partners with Christ, &c. And all those opinions and doctrines that do so set up and cry up Christ and his righteousness, as to cry down all duties of holiness and righteousness, and all those doctrines and opinions that do make the glorious and blessed privileges of believers in the days of the gospel to be lesser, fewer, and weaker, than they were in the time of the law. Ah, did your souls arise with a holy hatred, and a strong indignation against such doctrines and opinions, you would stand when others fall, and you would shine as the sun in his glory, when many that were once as shining stars may go forth as stinking snuffs.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, To hold fast the truth. As men take no hold on the arm of flesh till they let go the arm of God, Jer 17:5, so men take no hold on error till they have let go their hold of truth; therefore hold fast the truth, 2Ti 1:13, and Tit 1:9. Truth is thy

crown, hold fast thy crown, and let no man take thy crown from thee. Hath not God made truth sweet to thy soul, yea, sweeter than honey, or the honeycomb? and wilt not thou go on to heaven, feeding upon truth, that heavenly honeycomb, as Samson did of his honeycomb. Ah, souls, have you not found truth sweetening your spirits, and cheering your spirits, and warming your spirits, and raising your spirits, and corroborating your spirits? Have not you found truth a guide to lead you, a staff to uphold you, a cordial to strengthen you, and a plaster to heal you? And will not you hold fast the truth? Hath not truth been your best friend in your worst days? Hath not truth stood by you when friends have forsaken you? Hath not truth done more for you than all the world could do against you, and will you not hold fast the truth? Is not truth your right eye, without which you cannot see for Christ? And your right hand, without which you cannot do for Christ? And your right foot, without which you cannot walk with Christ? And will you not hold fast truth? Oh! hold fast the truth in your judgments and understandings, in your wills and affections, in your profession and conversation.

Truth is more precious than gold or rubies, 'and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her,' Pro 3:15. Truth is that heavenly glass wherein we may see the lustre and glory of divine wisdom, power, greatness, love, and mercifulness. In this glass you may see the face of Christ, the favour of Christ, the riches of Christ, and the heart of Christ, beating and working sweetly towards your souls. Oh! let your souls cleave to truth, as Ruth did to Naomi, Ruth 1:15-16, and say, 'I will not leave truth, nor return from following after truth; but where truth goes I will go, and where truth lodgeth I will lodge; and nothing but death shall part truth and my soul.' What John said to the church of Philadelphia I may say to you, 'Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown,' Rev 3:11. The crown is the top of royalties: such a thing is truth: 'Let no man take thy crown.' 'Hold fast the faithful word,' as Titus speaks, Tit 1:9. You were better let go anything than truth; you were better let go your honours and riches, your friends and pleasures, and the world's favours; yea, your nearest and dearest relations, ay, your very lives, than to let go truth. Oh, keep the truth, and truth will make you safe and happy for ever. Blessed are those souls that are kept by truth.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, To keep humble. Humility will keep the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and erroneous snares of his spreading. As low trees and shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind which shake and rend the taller trees, so humble souls are free from those gusts and blasts of error that rend and tear proud, lofty souls. Satan and the world have least power to fasten errors upon humble souls. The God of light and truth delights to dwell with the humble; and the more light and truth dwells in the soul, the further off darkness and error will stand from the soul. The God of grace pours in grace into humble souls, as men pour liquor into empty vessels; and the more grace is poured into the soul, the less error shall be able to overpower the soul, or to infect the soul. That is a sweet word in Psa 25:9, 'The meek' (or the humble) 'will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' And certainly souls guided by God, and taught by God, are not easily drawn aside into ways of error. Oh, take heed of spiritual pride! Pride fills our fancies, and weakens our graces, and makes room in our hearts for error. There are no men on earth so soon entangled, and so easily conquered by error, as proud souls. Oh, it is dangerous to love to be wise above what is written, to be curious and unsober in your desire of knowledge, and to trust to your own capacities and abilities to undertake to pry into all secrets, and to be puffed up with a carnal mind. Souls that are

thus a-soaring up above the bounds and limits of humility, usually fall into the very worst of errors, as experience doth daily evidence.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, The great evils that errors have produced. Error is a fruitful mother, and hath brought forth such monstrous children as hath set towns, cities, and nations on fire. Error is that whorish woman that hath cast down many, wounded many, yea, slain many strong men, many great men, and many learned men, and many professing men in former times and in our time, as is too evident to all that are not much left of God, destitute of the truth, and blinded by Satan. Oh, the graces that error hath weakened, and the sweet joys and comforts that error hath clouded, if not buried! Oh, the hands that error hath weakened, the eyes that error hath blinded, the judgments of men that error hath perverted, the minds that error hath darkened, the hearts that error hath hardened, the affections that error hath cooled, the consciences that error hath seared, and the lives of men that error hath polluted! Ah, souls! can you solemnly consider of this, and not tremble more at error than at hell itself? &c. The twelfth device that Satan hath to draw the soul to sin is,

Device (12). To affect wicked company, to keep wicked society. And oh! the horrid impieties and wickedness that Satan hath drawn men to sin, by working them to sit and associate themselves with vain persons.

Now, the remedies against this device of the devil are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell, till your hearts be affected, upon those commands of God that do expressly require us to shun the, society of the wicked: Eph 5:11, 'And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;' Pro 4:14-16, 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.' 1Co 5:9-11, 2Th 3:6, Pro 1:10-15. Turn to these Scriptures, and let your souls dwell upon them, till a holy indignation be raised in your souls against fellowship with vain men. 'God will not take the wicked by the hand,' as Job speaks, Job 34:20, Job 30:24. Why then should you? God's commands are not like those that are easily reversed, but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed. If these commands be not now observed by thee, they will at last be witnesses against thee, and millstones to sink thee, in that day that Christ shall judge thee.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That their company is very infectious and dangerous, as is clear from the scripture above mentioned. Ah, how many have lost their names, and lost their estates, and strength, and God, and heaven, and souls, by society with wicked men! As ye shun a stinking carcase, as the seaman shuns sands and rocks, and shelves, as ye shun those that have the plague-sores running upon them, so should you shun the society of wicked men. As weeds endanger the corn, as bad humours endanger the blood, or as an infected house the neighbourhood, so doth wicked company the soul, Pro 13:20.

Bias, a heathen man, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked men in the ship, called upon the gods: 'Oh, saith he, forbear prayer, hold your tongues; I would not have the gods take notice that you are here; they sure will drown us all if they should.' Ah, sirs, could a heathen see so much danger in the society of wicked men, and can you see none?

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, To look always upon wicked men, under those names and notions that the Scripture doth set them out under. The Scripture calls them lions for their fierceness, and bears for their cruelty, and dragons for their hideousness, and dogs for their filthiness, and wolves for their subtleness. The Scripture styles them scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum, as you may see in the margin. It is not safe to look upon wicked men under those names and notions that they set out themselves by, or that flatterers set them out by; this may delude the soul, but the looking upon them under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out by, may preserve the soul from frequenting their company and delighting in their society. Do not tell me what this man calls them, or how such and such count them; but tell me how doth the Scripture call them, how doth the Scripture count them? As Nabal's name was, so was his nature, 1Sa 25:25, and as wicked men's names are, so are their natures. You may know well enough what is within them, by the apt names that the Holy Ghost hath given them.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is, solemnly to consider, That the society and company of wicked men have been a great grief and burden to those precious souls that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven: Psa 120:5-6, 'Woe is me, that I dwell in Meshech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar! My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.' So Jeremiah, 'Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men,' Jer 9:2. So they 'vexed Lot's righteous soul by their filthy conversation,' 2Pe 2:7; they made his life a burden, they made death more desirable to him than life, yea, they made his life a lingering death. Guilt or grief is all the good gracious souls get by conversing with wicked men.⁵ The second thing to be shewed is, The several devices that Satan hath, as to draw souls to sin, so to keep souls from holy duties, to hinder souls in holy services, and to keep them off from religious performances.

'And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him,' Zec 3:1. The truth of this I shall shew you in the following particulars: The first device that Satan hath to draw souls from holy duties, and to keep them off from religious services, is,

Device (1). By presenting the world in such a dress, and in such a garb to the soul, as to ensnare the soul, and to win upon the affections of the soul. He represents the world to them in its beauty and bravery, which proves a bewitching sight to a world of men.² (It is true, this took not Christ, because Satan could find no matter in him for his temptation to work upon.) So that he can no sooner cast out his golden bait, but we are ready to play with it, and to nibble at it; he can no sooner throw out his golden ball, but men are apt to run after it, though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit. Ah! how many professors in these days have for a time followed hard after God, Christ, and ordinances, till the devil hath set before them the world in all its beauty and bravery, which hath so bewitched their souls that they have grown to have low thoughts of holy things, and then to be cold in their affections to holy things, and then to slight them, and at last, with the young man in the Gospel, to turn their backs upon them. Ah! the time, the thoughts, the spirits, the hearts, the souls, the duties, the services, that the inordinate love of this wicked world doth cat up and destroy, and hath ate up and destroyed. Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns, ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles. The world, siren-like, it sings

us and sinks us; it kisses us, and betrays us, like Judas; it kisses us and smites us under the fifth rib, like Joab. The honours, splendour, and all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, that will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have surfeited of these sweet baits and died for ever.

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these,

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon the impotency and weakness of all these things here below. They are not able to secure you from the least evil, they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout, nor the jewel about the neck cannot take away the pain of the teeth. The frogs of Egypt entered into the rich men's houses of Egypt, as well as the poor. Our daily experience doth evidence this, that all the honours, riches, &c., that men enjoy, cannot free them from the cholic, the fever, or lesser diseases. Nay, that which may seem most strange is, that a great deal of wealth cannot keep men from falling into extreme poverty: Jdg 1:6, you shall find seventy kings, with their fingers and toes cut off, glad, like whelps, to lick up crumbs under another king's table; and shortly after, the same king that brought them to this penury, is reduced to the same poverty and misery. Why then should that be a bar to keep thee out of heaven, that cannot give thee the least ease on earth?

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon the vanity of them as well as upon the impotency of all worldly good. This is the sum of Solomon's sermon, 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.' This our first parents found, and therefore named their second son Abel, or vanity. Solomon, that had tried these things, and could best tell the vanity of them, he preacheth this sermon over again and again, 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.' It is sad to think how many thousands there be that can say with the preacher, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' nay, swear it, and yet follow after these things as if there were no other glory, nor felicity, but what is to be found in these things they call vanity. Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifle, that call these things vanity, but do not cordially believe them to be vanity, but set their hearts upon them as if they were their crown, the top of all their royalty and glory. Oh let your souls dwell upon the vanity of all things here below, till your hearts be so thoroughly convinced and persuaded of the vanity of them, as to trample upon them, and make them a footstool for Christ to get up, and ride in a holy triumph in your hearts.³

Chrysostom said once, 'That if he were the fittest in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for his pulpit, from whence he might have a prospect of all the world in his view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpets of the archangel, that all the world might hear him, he would choose to preach upon no other text than that in the Psalms,' O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing? Psa 4:2.

Tell me, you that say all things under the sun are vanity, if you do really believe what you say, why do you spend more thoughts and time on the world, than you do on Christ, heaven, and your immortal souls? Why do you then neglect your duty towards God, to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world, and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ, and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in, and smiles upon you; and so much dejected, and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with

Jonah's gourd withers before you?

Remedy (3). The third remedy against the device of Satan is, To dwell much upon the uncertainty, the mutability, and inconstancy of all things under the sun. Man himself is but the dream of a dream, but the generation of a fancy, but an empty vanity, but the curious picture of nothing, a poor, feeble, dying flash. All temporals are as transitory as a hasty headlong current, a shadow, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post that passeth by. 'Why shouldst thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?' saith Solomon, Pro 23:5. And saith the apostle, 'The fashion of this world passeth away,' 1Co 7:31. Heaven only hath a foundation, earth hath none, 'but is hanged upon nothing,' as Job speaks, Job 26:7. The apostle willed Timothy to 'charge rich men that they be not high-minded, nor put their trust in uncertain riches,' 1Ti 6:17. They are like bad servants, whose shoes are made of running leather, and will never tarry long with one master.³ As a bird hoppeth from tree to tree, so do the honours and riches of this world from man to man, Let Job and Nebuchadnezzar testify this truth, who fell from great wealth to great want. No man can promise himself to be wealthy till night; one storm at sea, one coal of fire, one false friend, one unadvised word, one false witness, may make thee a beggar and a prisoner all at once. All the riches and glory of this world is but as smoke and chaff that vanisheth; 'As a dream and vision in the night, that tarrieth not,' Job 20:8. 'As if a hungry man dreameth, and thinketh that he eateth, and when he awaketh his soul is empty; and like a thirsty man which thinketh he drinketh, and behold when he is awaked, his soul is faint,' as the prophet Isaiah saith, Isa 29:8. Where is the glory of Solomon? the sumptuous buildings of Nebuchadnezzar? the nine hundred chariots of Sisera? the power of Alexander? the authority of Augustus, that commanded the whole world to be taxed? Those that have been the most glorious, in what men generally account glorious and excellent, have had inglorious ends; as Samson for strength, Absalom for favour, Ahithophel for policy, Haman for favour, Asahel for swiftness, Alexander for great conquest, and yet after twelve years poisoned. The same you may see in the four mighty kingdoms, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman: how soon were they gone and forgotten! Now rich, now poor, now full, now empty, now in favour, anon out of favour, now honourable, now despised, now health, now sickness, now strength, now weakness. Oh, let not these uncertain things keep thee from those holy services and heavenly employments, that may make thee happy for ever, and render thy soul eternally blessed and at ease, when all these transitory things shall bid thy soul an everlasting farewell.²

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the great things of this world are very hurtful and dangerous to the outward and inward man, through the corruptions that be in the hearts of men. Oh, the rest, the peace, the comfort, the content that the things of this world do strip many men of! Oh, the fears, the cares, the envy, the malice, the dangers, the mischiefs, that they subject men to! They oftentimes make men carnally confident.⁴ The rich man's riches are a strong tower in his imagination. 'I said in my prosperity I should never be moved,' Psa 30:6. They often swell the heart with pride, and make men forget God, and neglect God, and despise the rock of their salvation. When Jeshurun 'waxed fat, and was grown thick, and covered with fatness, then he forgot God, and forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation,' as Moses spake, Deu 32:15. Ah, the time, the thoughts, the spirits, that the things of the world consume and spend! Oh, how do they hinder the actings of faith upon God! how do they interrupt our sweet communion with God! how do they abate our love to the people of God! and cool our love to the things of God! and work us to act like those that are most unlike to

God! Oh, the deadness, the barrenness that doth attend men under great outward mercies! Oh, the riches of the world chokes the word; that men live under the most soul-searching, and soul-enriching means with lean souls. Though they have full purses, though their chests are full of silver, yet their hearts are empty of grace. In Gen 13:2, it is said, that 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.' According to the Hebrew (Chabbedgh) it is 'Abraham was very weary;' to shew that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to heaven, and happiness.

King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun, which had lately happened; No, said the duke, I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven. Ah, that this were not true of most professors in these days. It is very sad to think, how their hearts and time is so much taken up with earthly things, that they have scarce any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace.

Riches, though well got, yet are but like to manna; those that gathered less had no want, and those that gathered more, it was but a trouble and annoyance to them. The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved; what would it be if it were peaceable? You embrace it, though it be filthy; what would you do if it were beautiful? You cannot keep your hands from the thorns; how earnest would you be then in gathering the flowers? The world may be fitly likened to the serpent Scytale, whereof it is reported, that when she cannot overtake the flying passengers, she doth with her beautiful colours so astonish and amaze them, that they have no power to pass away, till she hath stung them.² Ah, how many thousands are there now on earth, that have found this true by experience, that have spun a fair thread to strangle themselves, both temporally and eternally, by being bewitched by the beauty and bravery of this world.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That all the felicity of this world is mixed. Our light is mixed with darkness, our joy with sorrow, our pleasures with pain, our honour with dishonour, our riches with wants. If our lights be spiritual, clear, and quick, we may see in the felicity of this world our wine mixed with water, our honey with gall, our sugar with wormwood, and our roses with prickles. Sorrow attends worldly joy, danger attends worldly safety, loss attends worldly labours, tears attend worldly purposes. As to these things, men's hopes are vain, their sorrow certain and joy feigned. The apostle calls this world 'a sea of glass,' a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it.⁵ The honours, profits, pleasures, and delights of the world are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briers.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, To get better acquaintance and better assurance of more blessed and glorious things. That which raised up their spirits, Heb 10:1-39 and Heb 11:1-40, to trample upon all the beauty, bravery, and glory of the world, was the acquaintance with, 'and assurance of better and more durable things.' 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and a more durable substance.' 'They looked for a house that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God.' 'And they looked for another country, even an heavenly.' 'They saw him that was invisible, and had an eye to the recompence of reward.' And this made them count all the glory and bravery of this world to be too poor and contemptible for them to set their hearts upon. The main reason why men doat upon the world, and damn their souls to get the world, is, because they are not acquainted

with a greater glory. Men ate acorns, till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. Ah, were men more acquainted with what union and communion with God means, what it is to have 'a new name, and a new stone, that none knows but he that hath it,' Rev 2:17; did they but taste more of heaven, and live more in heaven, and had more glorious hopes of going to heaven, ah, how easily would they have the moon under their feet.

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavyer, emperor of Germany, 'Such goods are worth getting and owning, as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us.' It is recorded of Lazarus, that after his resurrection from the dead, he was never seen to laugh, his thoughts and affections were so fixed in heaven, though his body was on earth, and therefore he could not but slight temporal things, his heart being so bent and set upon eternals. There are goods for the throne of grace, as God, Christ, the Spirit, adoption, justification, remission of sin, peace with God, and peace with conscience; and there are goods of the footstool, as honours, riches, the favour of creatures, and other comforts and accommodations of this life. Now he that hath acquaintance with, and assurance of the goods of the throne, will easily trample upon the goods of the footstool. Ah that you would make it your business, your work, to mind more, and make sure more to your own souls, the great things of eternity, that will yield you joy in life and peace in death, and a crown of righteousness in the day of Christ's appearing, and that will lift up your souls above all the beauty and bravery of this bewitching world, that will raise your feet above other men's heads. When a man comes to be assured of a crown, a sceptre, the royal robes, &c., he then begins to have low, mean, and contemptible thoughts of those things that before he highly prized. So will assurance of more great and glorious things breed in the soul a holy scorn and contempt of all these poor, mean things, which the soul before did value above God, Christ, and heaven, &c.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That true happiness and satisfaction is not to be had in the enjoyment of worldly good. True happiness is too big and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below that God that is a Christian's summum bonum, chiefest good. The blessed angels, those glistening courtiers, have all felicities and blessedness, and yet have they neither gold, nor silver, nor jewels, nor none of the beauty and bravery of this world. Certainly if happiness was to be found in these things, the Lord Jesus, who is the right and royal heir of all things, would have exchanged his cradle for a crown; his birth chamber, a stable, for a royal palace; his poverty for plenty; his despised followers for shining courtiers; and his mean provisions for the choicest delicacies, &c. Certainly happiness lies not in those things that a man may enjoy, and yet be miserable for ever. Now a man may be great and graceless with Pharaoh, honourable and damnable with Saul, rich and miserable with Dives, &c.: therefore happiness lies not in these things. Certainly happiness lies not in those things that cannot comfort a man upon a dying bed. Is it honours, riches, or friends, &c., that can comfort thee when thou comest to die? Or is it not rather faith in the blood of Christ, the witness of the Spirit of Christ, the sense and feeling of the love and favour of Christ, and the hopes of eternally reigning with Christ? Can happiness lie in those things that cannot give us health, or strength, or ease, or a good night's rest, or an hour's sleep, or a good stomach? Why, all the honours, riches, and delights of this world cannot give these poor things to us, therefore certainly happiness lies not in the enjoyment of them, &c.2 And surely happiness is not to be found in those things that cannot satisfy the souls of men. Now none of these things can satisfy the soul of man. 'He that loveth

silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity,' said the wise man, Ecc 5:10. The barren womb, the horse leech's daughter, the grave and hell, will as soon be satisfied, as the soul of man will by the enjoyment of any worldly good. Some one thing or other will be for ever wanting to that soul that hath none but outward good to live upon. You may as soon fill a bag with wisdom, a chest with virtue, or a circle with a triangle, as the heart of man with anything here below. A man may have enough of the world to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him, &c.

Remedy (8). The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, Of the dignity of the soul. Oh, the soul of man is more worth than a thousand worlds! It is the greatest abasing of it that can be to let it doat upon a little shining earth, upon a little painted beauty and fading glory, when it is capable of union with Christ, of communion with God, and of enjoying the eternal vision of God.

Seneca could say, 'I am too great, and born to greater things, than that I should be a slave to my body.' Oh! do you say my soul is too great, and born to greater things, than that I should confine it to a heap of white and yellow earth.

I have been the longer upon the remedies that may help us against this dangerous device of Satan, because he doth usually more hurt to the souls of men by this device than he doth by all other devices. For a close, I wish, as once Chrysostom did, that that sentence, Ecc 2:11, 'Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do, and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun,' were engraven on the door-posts into which you enter, on the tables where you sit, on the dishes out of which you eat, on the cups out of which you drink, on the bed-steads where you lie, on the walls of the house where you dwell, on the garments which you wear, on the heads of the horses on which you ride, and on the foreheads of all them whom you meet, that your souls may not, by the beauty and bravery of the world, be kept off from those holy and heavenly services that may render you blessed while you live, and happy when you die; that you may breathe out your last into his bosom who lives for ever, and who will make them happy for ever that prefer Christ's spirituals and eternals above all temporal transitory things.

Device (2). The second device that Satan hath to draw the soul from holy duties, and to keep them off from religious services, is, By presenting to them the danger, the losses, and the sufferings that do attend the performance of such and such religious services. By this device Satan kept close those that believed on Christ from confessing of Christ: in John 12:42, 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.' I would walk in all the ways of God, I would give up myself to the strictest way of holiness, but I am afraid dangers will attend me on the one hand, and losses, and happily such and such sufferings on the other hand, saith many a man. Oh, how should we help ourselves against this temptation and device of Satan!

Now the remedies against this device of Satan are these that follow.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is to consider, That all the troubles and afflictions that you meet with in a way of righteousness shall never hurt you, they shall never harm you. 'And who is he that shall harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?' saith the

apostle, i. e. none shall harm you, 1Pe 3:13. Natural conscience cannot but do homage to the image of God stamped upon the natures, words, works, and life of the godly; as we may see in the carriage of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius towards Daniel. All afflictions and troubles that do attend men in a way of righteousness can never rob them of their treasure, of their jewels. They may rob them of some light slight things, as the sword that is by their side, or the stick in their hand, or of the flowers or ribbons that be in their hats. The treasures of a saint are the presence of God, the favour of God, union and communion with God, the pardon of sin, the joy of the Spirit, the peace of conscience, which are jewels that none can give but Christ, nor none can take away but Christ. Now why should a gracious soul keep off from a way of holiness because of afflictions, when no afflictions can strip a man of his heavenly jewels, which are his ornaments and his safety here, and will be his happiness and glory hereafter? Why should that man be afraid, or troubled for storms at sea, whose treasures are sure in a friend's hand upon land? Why, a believer's treasure is always safe in the hands of Christ; his life is safe, his soul is safe, his grace is safe, his comfort is safe, and his crown is safe in the hand of Christ.² 'I know him in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him until that day,' saith the apostle, 2Ti 1:12. The child's most precious things are most secure in his father's hands; so are our souls, our graces, and our comforts in the hand of Christ.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is to consider, That other precious saints that were shining lights on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have held on in religious services, notwithstanding all the troubles and dangers that have surrounded them. Nehemiah and Ezra were surrounded with dangers on the left hand and on the right, and yet, in the face of all, they hold on building the temple and the wall of Jerusalem. So Daniel, and those precious worthies, Psa 44:19-20, under the want of outward encouragements, and in the face of a world of very great discouragements, their souls clave to God and his ways. 'Though they were sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, yea, though they were all the day long counted as sheep for the slaughter, yet their hearts were not turned back, neither did their steps decline from his ways.' Though bonds and imprisonments did attend Paul and the rest of the apostles in every place, yet they held on in the work and service of the Lord; and why, then, should you degenerate from their worthy examples, which is your duty and your glory to follow? 2Co 6:5, Heb 11:36.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That all the troubles and dangers that do attend the performance of all holy duties and heavenly services are but temporal and momentary, but the neglect of them may lay thee open to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers. 'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?' Heb 2:3. He saith not, if we reject or renounce so great salvation. No; but if we neglect, or shift off so great salvation, how shall we escape? That is, we cannot by any way, or means, or device in the world, escape. Divine justice will be above us, in spite of our very souls. The doing of such and such heavenly services may lay you open to the frowns of men, but the neglect of them will lay you open to the frowns of God; the doing of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of men, but the neglect of them may render you contemptible in the eyes of God; the doing of them may be the loss of thy estate, but the neglect of them may be the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and thy soul for ever; the doing of them may shut thee out from some outward temporal contents, the neglect of them may shut thee out from that excellent matchless glory 'that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither

hath it entered into the heart of men,' Isa 64:4. Remember this, there is no man that breathes but shall suffer more by neglecting those holy and heavenly services that God commands, commends, and rewards, than possibly he can suffer by doing of them.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles, from afflictions by afflictions, from dangers by dangers. God, by lesser troubles and afflictions, doth oftentimes deliver his people from greater, so that they shall say, We had perished, if we had not perished; we had been undone; if we had not been undone; we had been in danger, if we had not been in danger. God will so order the afflictions that befall you in the way of righteousness, that your souls shall say, We would not for all the world but that we had met with such and such troubles and afflictions; for surely, had not these befallen us, it would have been worse and worse with us. Oh the carnal security, pride, formality, dead-heartedness, lukewarmness, censoriousness, and earthliness that God hath cured us of, by the trouble and dangers that we have met with in the ways and services of the Lord!

I remember a story of a godly man, that as he was going to take shipping for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased Providence so to order it, that the ship that he should have gone in, at that very instant was cast away, and not a man saved; so by breaking a bone, his life was saved. So the Lord many times breaks our bones, but it is in order to the saving of our lives and our souls for ever. He gives us a portion that makes us heart-sick, but it is in order to the making us perfectly well, and to the purging of us from those ill humours that have made our heads ache, and God's heart ache, and our souls sick, and heavy to the death, &c. Oh therefore let no danger or misery hinder thee from thy duty.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That you shall gain more in the service of God, and by walking in righteous and holy ways, though troubles and afflictions should attend you, than you can possibly suffer, or lose, by your being found in the service of God. 'Godliness is great gain,' 1Ti 6:6. Oh, the joy, the peace, the comfort, the rest, that saints meet with in the ways and service of God! They find that religious services are not empty things, but things in which God is pleased to discover his beauty and glory to their souls. 'My soul thirsts for God,' saith David, 'that I might see thy beauty and thy glory, as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary,' Psa 63:2. Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet joggings, the sweet influences, the sweet love-letters, that gracious souls have from heaven, when they wait upon God in holy and heavenly services, the least of which will darken and outweigh all the bravery and glory of this world, and richly recompense the soul for all the troubles, afflictions, and dangers that have attended it in the service of God. Oh, the saints can say under all their troubles and afflictions, that they have meat to eat, and drink to drink, that the world knows not of; that they have such incomes, such refreshments, such warmings, &c., that they would not exchange for all the honours, riches, and dainties of this world. Ah, let but a Christian compare his external losses with his spiritual, internal, and external gain, and he shall find, that for every penny that he loses in the service of God, he gains a pound; and for every pound that he loses, he gains a hundred; for every hundred lost, he gains a thousand. We lose pins in his service, and find pearls; we lose the favour of the creature, and peace with the creature, and haply the comforts and contents of the creature, and we gain the favour of God, peace with conscience, and the comforts and contents of a better life. Ah, did the men of this world know the sweet that saints enjoy in afflictions, they would rather choose Manasseh's iron chain than his golden crown; they would rather be Paul a prisoner,

than Paul rapt up in the third heaven. For 'light afflictions,' they shall have 'a weight of glory;' for a few afflictions, they shall have these joys, pleasures, and contents, that are as the stars of heaven, or as the sands of the sea that cannot be numbered; for momentary afflictions, they shall have an eternal crown of glory.³ 'It is but winking, and thou shalt be in heaven presently,' said the martyr. Oh, therefore, let not afflictions or troubles work thee to shun the ways of God, or to quit that service that should be dearer to thee than a world, yea, than thy very life, &c. The third device that Satan hath to hinder souls from holy and heavenly services, and from religious performances, is,

Device (3). By presenting to the soul the difficulty of performing them. Saith Satan, it is so hard and difficult a thing to pray as thou shouldst, and to wait on God as thou shouldst, and to walk with God as thou shouldst, and to be lively, warm, and active in the communion of saints, as thou shouldst, that you were better ten thousand times to neglect them, than to meddle with them; and doubtless by this device Satan hath and doth keep off thousands from waiting on God, and from giving to him that service that is due to his name.

Now, the remedies against this device of Satan are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell more upon the necessity of the service and duty, than on the difficulty that doth attend the duty. You should reason thus with your souls: O our souls, though such and such services be hard and difficult, yet are they not exceeding necessary for the honour of God, and the keeping up his name in the world, and the keeping under of sin, and the strengthening of weak graces, and so the reviving of languishing comforts, and for the keeping clear and bright your blessed evidences, and for the scattering of your fears, and for the raising of your hopes, and for the gladdening the hearts of the righteous, and stopping the mouths of unrighteous souls, who are ready to take all advantages to blaspheme the name of God, and throw dirt and contempt upon his people and ways. Oh, never leave thinking on the necessity of this and that duty, till your souls be lifted up far above all the difficulties that do attend religious duties.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the Lord Jesus will make his services easy to you, by the sweet discovery of himself to your souls, whilst you are in his service. 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways,' as the prophet Isaiah saith, Isa 64:5. If meeting with God, who is goodness itself, beauty itself, strength itself, glory itself, will not sweeten his service to thy soul, nothing in heaven or earth will.

Jacob's meeting with Rachel, and enjoying of Rachel, made his hard service to be easy and delightful to him; and will not the soul's enjoying of God, and meeting with God, render his service to be much more easy and delightful? Doubtless it will. The Lord will give that sweet assistance by his Spirit and grace, as shall make his service joyous and not grievous, a delight and not a burden, a heaven and not a hell, to believing souls. The confidence of this divine assistance raised up Nehemiah's spirit far above all those difficulties and discouragements that did attend him in the work and service of the Lord, as you may see in Neh 2:19-20, 'But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king? Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but you have no right, nor portion, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.'

Ah, souls, while you are in the very service of the Lord, you shall find by experience, that the God of heaven will prosper you, and support you, and encourage and strengthen you, and carry you through the hardest service, with the greatest sweetness and cheerfulness that can be. Remember this, that God will suit your strength to your work, and in the hardest service you shall have the choicest assistance.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon the hard and difficult things that the Lord Jesus hath passed through for your temporal, spiritual, and eternal good. Ah, what a sea of blood, a sea of wrath, of sin, of sorrow and misery, did the Lord Jesus wade through for your internal and eternal good! Christ did not plead, This cross is too heavy for me to bear; this wrath is too great for me to lie under; this cup, which hath in it all the ingredients of divine displeasure, is too bitter for me to sup off,³ how much more to drink the very dregs of it? No, Christ stands not upon this; he pleads not the difficulty of the service, but resolutely and bravely wades through all, as the prophet Isaiah shews: 'The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting,' chap. 50:6. Christ makes nothing of his Father's wrath, the burden of your sins, the malice of Satan, and the rage of the world, but sweetly and triumphantly passes through all. Ah, souls! if this consideration will not raise up your spirits above all the discouragements that you meet with, to own Christ and his service, and to stick and cleave to Christ and his service, I am afraid nothing will. A soul not stirred by this, not raised and lifted up by this, to be resolute and brave in the service of God, notwithstanding all dangers and difficulties, is a soul left of God to much blindness and hardness.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is to consider, That religious duties, holy and heavenly exercises, are only difficult to the worse, to the ignoble, part of a saint. They are not to the noble and better part of a saint, to the noble part, the soul, and the renewed affections of a saint. Holy exercises are a heavenly pleasure and recreation, as the apostle speaks: 'I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: with my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin,' Rom 7:22. To the noble part of a saint, Christ's 'yoke is easy, and his burden is light,' Mat 11:30. All the commands and ways of Christ (even those that tend to the pulling out of right eyes and cutting off of right hands) are joyous, and not grievous, to the noble part of a saint.² All the ways and services of Christ are pleasantness, in the abstract, to the better part of a saint. A saint, so far as he is renewed, is always best when he sees most of God, when he tastes most of God, when he is highest in his enjoyments of God, and most warm and lively in the service of God. Oh, saith the noble part of a saint, that it might be always thus! Oh that my strength were the strength of stones, and my flesh as brass, that my worser part might be more serviceable to my noble part, that I might act by an untired power in that service, that is a pleasure, a paradise, to me.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That great reward and glorious recompense that doth attend those that cleave to the service of the Lord in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. Though the work be hard, yet the wages is great. Heaven will make amends for all. Ay, one hour's being in heaven will abundantly recompense you for cleaving to the Lord and his ways in the face of all difficulties. This carried the apostle through the greatest difficulties. He had an eye 'to the recompense of reward;' he looked for 'a house that had foundations, whose builder and maker was God,' and for 'a heavenly country.' Yea, this bore

up the spirit of Christ in the face of all difficulties and discouragements: 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God,' Heb 12:2.

Christians that would hold on in the service of the Lord, must look more upon the crown than upon the cross, more upon their future glory than their present misery, more upon their encouragements than upon their discouragements. God's very service is wages; his ways are strewed with roses, and paved 'with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and with 'peace that passeth understanding.' Some degree of comfort follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, as beams and influences issue from the sun: 'Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward,' Psa 19:11. Not only for keeping, but in keeping of them, there is great reward. The joy, the rest, the refreshing, the comforts, the contents, the smiles, the incomes² that saints now enjoy in the ways of God, are so precious and glorious in their eyes, that they would not exchange them for ten thousand worlds. Ah! if the vails be thus sweet and glorious before pay-day comes, what will be that glory that Christ will crown his saints with for cleaving to his service in the face of all difficulties; when he shall say to his Father, 'Lo, here am I, and the children which thou hast given me,' Isa 8:18. If there be so much to be had in a wilderness, what then shall be had in paradise? &c. The fourth device that Satan hath to keep souls off from holy exercises, from religious services, is,

Device (4). By working them to make false inferences from those blessed and glorious things that Christ hath done. As that Jesus Christ hath done all for us, therefore there is nothing for us to do but to joy and rejoice. He hath perfectly justified us, and fulfilled the law, and satisfied divine justice, and pacified his Father's wrath, and is gone to heaven to prepare a place for us, and in the mean time to intercede for us; and therefore away with praying, and mourning, and hearing, &c. Ah! what a world of professors hath Satan drawn in these days from religious services, by working them to make such sad, wild, and strange inferences from the sweet and excellent things that the Lord Jesus hath done for his beloved ones.

Now, the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell as much on those scriptures that shew you the duties and services that Christ requires of you, as upon those scriptures that declare to you the precious and glorious things that Christ hath done for you. It is a sad and dangerous thing to have two eyes to behold our dignity and privileges, and not one to see our duties and services. I should look with one eye upon the choice and excellent things that Christ hath done for me, to raise up my heart to love Christ with the purest love, and to joy in Christ with the strongest joy, and to lift up Christ above all, who hath made himself to be my all; and I should look with the other eye upon those services and duties that the Scriptures require of those for whom Christ hath done such blessed things, as upon that of the apostle: 'What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God? and ye are not your own: for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's,' 1Co 6:19-20. And that: 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' 1Co 15:58. And that: 'And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not,' Gal 6:9. And that of the apostle: 'Rejoice always,' 1Th 5:16, and 'Pray without

ceasing,' 1Th 5:17. And that in the Philippians, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,' Php 2:12; and that, 'This do till I come,' 1Ti 4:13; and that, 'Let us consider one another, to provoke one another to love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching,' Heb 10:24-25. Now, a soul that would not be drawn away by this device of Satan, he must not look with a squint eye upon these blessed scriptures, and abundance more of like import, but he must dwell upon them; he must make these scriptures to be his chiefest and his choicest companions, and this will be a happy means to keep him close to Christ and his service in these times, wherein many turn their backs upon Christ, under pretence of being interested in the great glorious things that have been acted by Christ, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ hath done, and is a-doing for us, should be so far from taking us off from religious services and pious performances, that they should be the greatest motives and encouragements to the performance of them that may be, as the Scriptures do abundantly evidence. I will only instance in some, as that, 'That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives,' 1Pe 2:9, Luk 1:74-75. Christ hath freed you from all your enemies, from the curse of the law, the predominant damnatory power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, and the torments of hell; but what is the end and design of Christ in doing these great and marvellous things for his people? It is not that we should throw off duties of righteousness and holiness, but that their hearts may be the more free and sweet in all holy duties and heavenly services. So the apostle, 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people:' 'And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' Mark what follows: 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord,' 2Co 6:17-18, 2Co 7:1 compared. And again: 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' Tit 2:12-14. Ah, souls! I know no such arguments to work you to a lively and constant performance of all heavenly services, like those that are drawn from the consideration of the great and glorious things that Christ hath done for you; and if such arguments will not take you and win upon you, I do think the throwing of hell fire in your faces will never do it.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That those precious souls which Jesus Christ hath done and suffered as much for as he hath for you, have been exceeding active and lively in all religious services and heavenly performances. He did as much and suffered as much for David as for you, and yet who more in praying and praising God than David? 'Seven times a day will I praise the Lord,' Psa 119:174. Who more in the studying and meditating on the word than David? 'The law is my meditation day and night,' Psa 119:97. The same truth you may run and read in. Jacob, Moses, Job, Daniel, and in the rest of the holy prophets and apostles, for whom Christ hath done as much for as for you. Ah, how have all those worthies abounded in works of righteousness and holiness, to the praise of free grace? Certainly Satan hath got the upper hand of those souls that do argue thus. Christ hath done such and such

glorious things for us, therefore we need not make any care and conscience of doing such and such religious services as men say the word calls for. If this logic be not from hell, what is? Ah, were the holy prophets and apostles alive to hear such logic come out of the mouths of such as profess themselves to be interested in the great and glorious things that Jesus Christ hath done for his chosen ones, how would they blush to look upon such souls! and how would their hearts grieve and break within them to hear the language and to observe the actings of such souls.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider this, That those that do not walk in the ways of righteousness and holiness, that do not wait upon God in the several duties and services that are commanded by him, cannot have that evidence to their own souls of their righteousness before God, of their fellowship and communion with God, of their blessedness here, and their happiness hereafter, as those souls have, that love and delight in the ways of the Lord, that are always best when they are most in the works and service of the Lord. 'Little children,' saith the apostle, 'let no man deceive you: he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous,' 1Jn 3:7. 'In this,' saith the same apostle, 'the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother,' 1Jn 3:10. 'If ye know that he is righteous,' saith the same apostle, 'ye know that every one that doth righteousness, is born of him. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.' 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin,' saith the same apostle, 1Jn 2:4-6, and 1Jn 1:6-7. So Jas 2:14, Jas 2:20, 'What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have no works; can faith save him?' i. e. it cannot. 'For as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' To look after holy and heavenly works, is the best way to preserve the soul from being deceived and deluded by Satan's delusions, and by sudden flashes of joy and comfort; holy works being a more sensible and constant pledge of the precious Spirit, begetting and maintaining in the soul more solid, pure, clear, strong, and lasting joy. Ah souls! As you would have in yourselves a constant and a blessed evidence of your fellowship with the Father and the Son, and of the truth of grace, and of your future happiness, look that you cleave close to holy services; and that you turn not your backs upon religious duties.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there are other choice and glorious ends for the saint's performance of religious duties, than for the justifying of their persons before God, or for their satisfying of the law or justice of God, or for the purchasing of the pardon of sin, &c. viz., to testify their justification. 'A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruits' Mat 7:17, to testify their love to God, and their sincere obedience to the commands of God; to testify their deliverance from spiritual bondage, to evidence the indwellings of the Spirit, to stop the mouths of the worst of men, and to glad those righteous souls that God would not have sadded. These, and abundance of other choice ends there be, why those that have an interest in the glorious doings of Christ, should, notwithstanding that, keep close to the holy duties and religious services that are commanded by Christ. And if these considerations will not prevail with you, to wait upon God in holy and heavenly duties. I am afraid if one should rise from the dead, his

arguments would not win upon you, but you would hold on in your sins, and neglect his service, though you lost your souls for ever, &c. The fifth device Satan hath to draw souls off from religious services, and to keep souls off from holy duties, is,

Device (5). By presenting to them the paucity and poverty of those that walk in the ways of God, that hold on in religious practices. Saith Satan, Do not you see that those that walk in such and such religious ways are the poorest, the meanest, and the most despicable persons in the world? This took with them in John 7:47-49, 'Then answered the pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.'

Now the remedies against this device are these that follow:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That though they are outwardly poor, yet they are inwardly rich. Though they are poor in temporals, yet they are rich in spirituals. The worth and riches of the saints is inward. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within,' Psa 45:13. 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' saith Jas 2:5. 'I know thy poverty, but thou art rich,' saith John to the church of Smyrna,' Rev 2:4. What though they have little in possession, yet they have a glorious kingdom in reversion. 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom,' Luk 12:32. Though saints have little in hand, yet they have much in hope. You count those happy, in a worldly sense, that have much in reversion, though they have little in possession; and will you count the saints miserable because they have little in hand, little in possession, though they have a glorious kingdom in reversion of this? I am sure the poorest saint that breathes will not exchange, were it in his power, that which he hath in hope and in reversion, for the possession of as many worlds as there be stars in heaven, or sands in the sea, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That in all ages God hath had some that have been great, rich, wise, and honourable, that have chosen his ways, and cleaved to his service in the face of all difficulties. Though not many wise men, yet some wise men; and though not many mighty, yet some mighty have; and though not many noble, yet some noble have. Witness Abraham, and Jacob, and Job, and several kings, and others that the Scriptures speak of. And ah! how many have we among ourselves, whose souls have cleaved to the Lord, and who have swum to his service through the blood of the slain, and who have not counted their lives dear unto them, that they and others might enjoy the holy things of Christ, according to the mind and heart of Christ, &c.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the spiritual riches of the poorest saints do infinitely transcend the temporal riches of all the wicked men in the world; their spiritual riches do satisfy them; they can sit down satisfied with the riches of grace that be in Christ, without honours, and without riches, &c. 'He that drinks of that water that I shall give him, shall thirst no more,' John 4:13. The riches of poor saints are durable; they will bed and board with them; they will go to the prison, to a sickbed, to a grave, yea, to heaven with them. The spiritual riches of poor saints are as wine to cheer them, and as bread to strengthen them, and as cloth to warm them, and as armour to protect them. Now, all you that know anything, do know that the riches of this world cannot satisfy the souls of men, and they are as fading as a

flower, or as the owners of them are, &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device is, seriously to consider, That though the saints, considered comparatively, are few; though they be 'a little, little flock' 'a remnant,' 'a garden enclosed,' 'a spring shut up, a fountain sealed;' though they are as 'the summer gleanings;' though they are 'one of a city, and two of a tribe;' though they be but a handful to a houseful, a spark to a flame, a drop to the ocean, yet consider them simply in themselves, and so they are an innumerable number that cannot be numbered. As John speaketh: 'After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,' Rev 7:9. So Matthew speaks: 'And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,' Mat 8:11. So Paul: 'But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb 12:22.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That it will be but as a day before these poor despised saints shall shine brighter than the sun in his glory. It will not be long before you will wish, Oh! that we were now among the poor, mean despised ones in the day that God comes to make up his jewels! It will not be long before these poor few saints shall be lifted up upon their thrones to judge the multitude, the world, as the apostle speaks: 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' 1Co 6:2. And in that day, oh! how will the great and the rich, the learned and the noble, wish that they had lived and spent their days with these few poor contemptible creatures in the service of the Lord! Oh! how will this wicked world curse the day that ever they had such base thoughts of the poor mean saints, and that their poverty became a stumbling-block to keep them off from the ways of sanctity.

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves, who, making a stately feast, appointed his nobles, at that time pagans, to sit in the hall below, and commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, to eat and drink of his kingly cheer; at which many wondering, he said, 'He accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament to his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest peers unconverted to the Christian faith; for when these might be thrust down to hell, those might be his consorts and fellow-princes in heaven.' You know how to apply it. Although you see the stars sometimes by their reflections in a puddle, or in the bottom of a well, ay, in a stinking ditch, yet the stars have their situation in heaven. So, though you see a godly man in a poor, miserable, low, despised condition for the things of this world, yet he is fixed in heaven, in the region of heaven: 'Who hath raised us up,' saith the apostle, 'and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Oh! therefore, say to your own souls, when they begin to decline the ways of Sion because of the poverty and paucity of those that walk in them, The day is at hand when those few, poor, despised saints shall shine in glory, when they shall judge this world, and when all the wicked of this world will wish that they were in their condition, and would give ten thousand worlds, were it in their power, that they might but have the honour and happiness to wait upon those whom for their poverty and paucity they have neglected and despised in this world.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there will come a time, even in this life, in this world, when the reproach and contempt that is now cast upon the ways of God, by reason of the poverty and paucity of those that walk in those ways, shall be quite taken away, by his making them the head that have days without number been the tail, and by his raising them up to much outward riches, prosperity, and glory, who have been as the outcast because of their poverty and paucity. John, speaking of the glory of the church, the new Jerusalem that came down from heaven, Rev 21:24, tells us, 'That the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it.' So the prophet Isaiah, 'They shall bring their sons from far, and their silver and their gold with them. For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron,' Isa 60:17. And so the prophet Zechariah speaks: Zec 14:14, 'And the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance.' The Lord hath promised that 'the meek shall inherit the earth,' Mat 5:5; and 'heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or one tittle of his word shall pass unfulfilled,' Mat 5:18. Ah, poor saints! now some thrust sore at you, others look a-squint upon you, others shut the door against you, others turn their backs upon you, and most of men (except it be a few that live much in God, and are filled with the riches of Christ) do either neglect you or despise you because of your poverty; but the day is coming when you shall be lifted up above the dunghill, when you shall change poverty for riches, your rags for robes, your reproach for a crown of honour, your infamy for glory, even in this world. And this is not all, but God will also mightily increase the number of his chosen ones, multitudes shall be converted to him: 'Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Sion travailed, she brought forth children. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord; as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord,' Isa 66:8, Isa 66:19-20. Doth not the Scripture say, that 'the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of our Lord'? Rev 11:15. Hath not God given to Christ 'the heathen, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession'? Psa 2:8. Hath not the Lord said, that in 'the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be lifted up above the hills, and shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it,' Isa 2:2 and Isa 54:14 and Isa 61:9. Pray, read, and meditate upon Isa 60:1-22 and Isa 66:1-24 and Isa 2:1-5, and there you shall find the multitudes that shall be converted to Christ. And oh! that you would be mighty in believing; and, in wrestling with God, that he would hasten the day of his glory, that the reproach that is now upon his people and ways may cease! The sixth device that Satan hath to keep souls off from religious services is,

Device (6). By presenting before them the examples of the greatest part of the world, that walk in the ways of their own hearts, and that make light and slight of the ways of the Lord. Why, saith Satan, do not you see that the great and the rich, the noble and the honourable, the learned and the wise, even the greatest number of men, never trouble themselves about such and such ways, and why then should you be singular and nice? You were far better do as the most do, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider Of those scriptures that make directly against following the sinful examples of men. As that in Exodus,

'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment,' Exo 23:2. The multitude generally are ignorant, and know not the way of the Lord, therefore they speak evil of that they know not. They are envious and maliciously bent against the service and way of God, and therefore they cannot speak well of the ways of God: 'This way is everywhere spoken against,' saith they, Acts 28:22. So in Num 16:21, 'Separate from them, and come out from among them.' So the apostle, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' Eph 5:11. So Solomon, 'Enter not into the way of the wicked; forsake the foolish, and live,' Pro 4:14 and Pro 9:6. They that walk with the most shall perish with the most. They that do as the most shall ere long suffer with the most. They that live as the most, must die with the most, and to hell with the most.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That if you will sin with the multitude, all the angels in heaven and men on earth cannot keep you from suffering with the multitude. If you will be wicked with them, you must unavoidably be miserable with them. Say to thy soul, O my soul! if thou wilt sin with the multitude, thou must be shut out of heaven with the multitude, thou must be cast down to hell with the multitude: 'And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,' Rev 18:4. Come out in affection, in action, and in habitation, for else the infection of sin will bring upon you the infliction of punishment. So saith the wise man, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'shall be broken in pieces,' Pro 13:20. Multitudes may help thee into sin, yea, one may draw thee into sin, but it is not multitudes that can help thee to escape punishments; as you may see in Moses and Aaron, that were provoked to sin by the multitude, but were shut out of the pleasant land, and fell by a hand of justice as well as others.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, The worth and excellency of thy immortal soul. Thy soul is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth. The loss of thy soul is incomparable, irreparable, and irrecoverable; if that be lost, all is lost, and thou art undone for ever. Is it madness and folly in a man to kill himself for company, and is it not greater madness or folly to break the neck of thy soul, and to damn it for company? Suspect that way wherein thou seest multitudes to walk; the multitude being a stream that thou must row hard against, or thou wilt be carried into that gulf out of which angels cannot deliver thee. Is it not better to walk in a straight way alone, than to wander into crooked ways with company? Sure it is better to go to heaven alone than to hell with company.

I might add other things, but these may suffice for the present; and I am afraid, if these arguments do not stir you, other arguments will work but little upon you. The seventh device that Satan hath to keep souls off from holy exercises, from religious services, is,

Device (7). By casting in a multitude of vain thoughts, whilst the soul is in seeking of God, or in waiting on God; and by this device he hath cooled some men's spirits in heavenly services, and taken off, at least for a time, many precious souls from religious performances. I have no heart to hear, nor no heart to pray, nor no delight in reading, nor in the society of the saints, &c. Satan doth so dog and follow my soul, and is still a-casting in such a multitude of vain thoughts concerning God, the world, and my own soul, &c., that I even tremble to think of waiting upon God in any religious service. Oh! the vain thoughts that Satan casts in do so distaste my soul, and so grieve,

vex, perplex, and distract my soul, that they even make me weary of holy duties, yea, of my very life. Oh! I cannot be so raised and ravished, so heated and melted, so quickened and enlarged, so comforted and refreshed, as I should be, as I might be, and as I would be in religious services, by reason of that multitude of vain thoughts, that Satan is injecting or casting into my soul, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device of Satan are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To have your hearts strongly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, and glory of that God before whom you stand, and with whom your souls do converse in religious services. Oh! let your souls be greatly affected with the presence, purity, and majesty of that God before whom thou standest. A man would be afraid of playing with a feather, when he is speaking with a king. Ah! when men have poor, low, light, slight, &c., thoughts of God, in their drawing near to God, they tempt the devil to bestir himself, and to cast in a multitude of vain thoughts to disturb and distract the soul in its waiting on God. There is nothing that will contribute so much to the keeping out of vain thoughts, as to look upon God as an omniscient God, an omnipresent God, an omnipotent God, a God full of all glorious perfections, a God whose majesty, purity, and glory will not suffer him to behold the least iniquity. The reason why the blessed saints and glorious angels in heaven have not so much as one vain thought is, because they are greatly affected with the greatness, holiness, majesty, purity, and glory of God.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To be peremptory in religious services, notwithstanding all those wandering thoughts the soul is troubled with. This will be a sweet help against them: for the soul to be resolute in waiting on God, whether it be troubled with vain thoughts or not; to say, Well I will pray still, and hear still, and meditate still, and keep fellowship with the saints still. Many precious souls can say from experience, that when their souls have been peremptory in their waiting on God, that Satan hath left them, and hath not been so busy in vexing their souls with vain thoughts. When Satan perceives that all those trifling vain thoughts that he casts into the soul do but vex the soul into greater diligence, carefulness, watchfulness, and peremptoriness in holy and heavenly services, and that the soul loses nothing of his zeal, piety, and devotion, but doubles his care, diligence, and earnestness, he often ceases to interpose his trifles and vain thoughts, as he ceased to tempt Christ, when Christ was peremptory in resisting his temptations.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider this, That those vain and trifling thoughts that are cast into our souls, when we are waiting upon God in this or that religious service, if they be not cherished and indulged, but abhorred, resisted, and disclaimed, they are not sins upon our souls, though they may be troubles to our minds; they shall not be put upon our accounts, nor keep mercies and blessings from being enjoyed by us. When a soul in uprightness can look God in the face, and say, Lord, when I approach near unto thee, there be a world of vain thoughts crowd in upon me, that do disturb my soul, and weaken my faith, and lessen my comfort and spiritual strength. Oh, these are my clog, my burden, my torment, my hell! Oh, do justice upon these, free me from these, that I may serve thee with more freeness, singleness, spiritualness, and sweetness of spirit. These thoughts may vex that soul, but they shall not harm that soul, nor keep a blessing from that soul. If vain thoughts resisted and lamented could stop the current of mercy, and render a soul unhappy, there would be none on earth that should ever taste of mercy, or be everlastingly happy.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That watching against sinful thoughts, resisting of sinful thoughts, lamenting and weeping over sinful thoughts, carries with it the sweetest and strongest evidence of the truth and power of grace, and of the sincerity of your hearts, and is the readiest and the surest way to be rid of them, Psa 139:23. Many low and carnal considerations may work men to watch their words, their lives, their actions; as hope of gain, or to please friends, or to get a name in the world, and many other such like considerations. Oh! but to watch our thoughts, to weep and lament over them, &c., this must needs be from some noble, spiritual, and internal principle, as love to God, a holy fear of God, a holy care and delight to please the Lord, &c. The schools do well observe, that outward sins are of greater infamy, majoris infamiae; but inward heart sins are of greater guilt, majoris reatus; as we see in the devil's. There is nothing that so speaks out a man to be thoroughly and kindly wrought upon, as his having his thoughts to be 'brought into obedience,' as the apostle speaks, 2Co 10:4-5. Grace is grown up to a very great height in that soul where it prevails, to the subduing of those vain thoughts that walk up and down in the soul. Well! though you cannot be rid of them, yet make resistance and opposition against the first risings of them. When sinful thoughts arise, then think thus, The Lord takes notice of these thoughts; 'he knows them afar off,' as the Psalmist speaks, Psa 38:6. He knew Herod's bloody thoughts, and Judas his betraying thoughts, and the Pharisees' cruel and blasphemous thoughts afar off. Oh! think thus: All these sinful thoughts, they defile and pollute the soul, they deface and spoil much of the inward beauty and glory of the soul. If I commit this or that sin, to which my thoughts incline me, then either I must repent or not repent; if I repent, it will cost me more grief, sorrow, shame, heart-breaking, and soul-bleeding, before my conscience will be quieted, divine justice pacified, my comfort and joy restored, my evidences cleared, and my pardon in the court of conscience sealed, than the imagined profit or seeming sensual pleasure can be worth: 'What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed,' Rom 6:21.

If I never repent, oh! then my sinful thoughts will be scorpions that will eternally vex me, the rods that will eternally lash me, the thorns that will everlastingly prick me, the dagger that will be eternally a-stabbing me, the worm that will be for ever a-gnawing me! Oh! therefore, watch against them, be constant in resisting them, and in lamenting and weeping over them, and then they shall not hurt thee, though they may for a time trouble thee. And remember this, he that doth this doth more than the most glistening and blustering hypocrite in the world doth.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, To labour more and more to be filled with the fulness of God, and to be enriched with all spiritual and heavenly things. What is the reason that the angels in heaven have not so much as an idle thought? It is because they are filled with the fulness of God, Eph 3:19. Take it for an experienced truth, the more the soul is filled with the fulness of God and enriched with spiritual and heavenly things, the less room there is in that soul for vain thoughts. The fuller the vessel is of wine, the less room there is for water. Oh, then, lay up much of God, of Christ, of precious promises, and choice experiences in your hearts, and then you will be less troubled with vain thoughts. 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things,' Mat 12:35.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, To keep up holy and spiritual affections; for such as your affections are, such will be your thoughts. 'Oh how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day,' Psa 119:97. What we love most, we most muse upon. 'When I awake, I

am still with thee,' Psa 139:1-24, &c. That which we much like, we shall much mind. They that are frequent in their love to God and his law, will be frequent in thinking of God and his law: a child will not forget his mother.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, To avoid multiplicity of worldly business. Oh let not the world take up your hearts and thoughts at other times. Souls that are torn in pieces with the cares of the world will be always vexed and tormented with vain thoughts in all their approaches to God. Vain thoughts will be still crowding in upon him that lives in a crowd of business. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with business are commonly nearest to God. The eighth device that Satan hath to hinder souls from religious services, from holy performances, is,

Device (8). By working them to rest in their performances; to rest in prayer, and to rest in hearing, reading, and the communion of saints, &c. And when Satan hath drawn the soul to rest upon the service done, then he will help the soul to reason thus: Why, thou wert as good never pray, as to pray and rest in prayer; as good never hear, as to hear and rest in hearing; as good never be in the communion of saints, as to rest in the communion of saints. And by this device he stops many souls in their heavenly race, and takes off poor souls from those services that should be their joy and crown, Isa 58:1-3, Zec 7:4-6, Mat 6:2, Rom 1:7.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell much upon the imperfections and weaknesses that do attend your choicest services. Oh the spots, the blots, the blemishes that are to be seen on the face of our fairest duties! When thou hast done all thou canst, thou hast need to close up all with this, 'Oh enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord,' Psa 143:2, for the weaknesses that cleave to my best services. We may all say with the church, 'All our righteousnesses are as a menstruous cloth.' Isa 64:6. If God should be strict to mark what is done amiss in our best actions, we are undone. Oh the water that is mingled with our wine, the dross that cleaves unto our gold!

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider The impotence and inability of any of your best services, divinely to comfort, refresh, and bear your souls up from fainting, and sinking in the days of trouble, when darkness is round about you, when God shall say to you, as he did once to the Israelites, 'Go and cry unto the gods that you have chosen; let them save you in the time of your tribulation,' Jdg 10:14. So, when God shall say in the day of your troubles, Go to your prayers, to your hearing, and to your fasting, &c., and see if they can help you, if they can support you, if they can deliver you. If God in that day doth but withhold the influence of his grace, thy former services will be but poor cordials to comfort thee; and then thou must and will cry out, Oh, 'none but Christ, none but Christ.' Oh my prayers are not Christ, my hearing is not Christ, my fasting is not Christ, &c. Oh! one smile of Christ, one glimpse of Christ, one good word from Christ, one nod of love from Christ in the day of trouble and darkness, will more revive and refresh the soul than all your former services, in which your souls rested, as if they were the bosom of Christ, which should be the only centre of our souls. Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That good things rested upon will as certainly undo us, and everlastingly destroy us, as the greatest enormities that can be committed by us. Those souls that after they have done all, do not look up so high as Christ, and rest, and centre alone in Christ, laying down their services at the footstool of Christ, must lie down in sorrow; their bread is prepared for them in hell. 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, compass yourselves with the sparks: and walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks ye have kindled. This shall ye have at mine hands; ye shall lie down in sorrow,' Isa 50:11. Is it good dwelling with everlasting burnings, with a devouring fire? If it be, why then rest in your duties still; if otherwise, then see that you centre only in the bosom of Christ.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell much upon the necessity and excellency of that resting-place that God hath provided for you. Above all other resting-places himself is your resting-place; his free mercy and love is your resting-place; the pure, glorious, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ is your resting-place. Ah! it is sad to think, that most men have forgotten their resting-place, as the Lord complains: 'My people have been as lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains: they are gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting-place,' Jer 50:6. So poor souls that see not the excellency of that resting-place that God hath appointed for their souls to lie down in, they wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest and there they will rest; but souls that see the excellency of that resting-place that God hath provided for them, they will say, Farewell prayer, farewell hearing, farewell fasting, &c., I will rest no more in you, but now I will rest only in the bosom of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness of Christ.

III. The third thing to be shewed is, The several devices that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, questioning, and uncomfortable condition.

Though he can never rob a believer of his crown, yet such is his malice and envy, that he will leave no stone unturned, no means un-attempted, to rob them of their comfort and peace, to make their life a burden and a hell unto them, to cause them to spend their days in sorrow and mourning, in sighing and complaining, in doubting and questioning. Surely we have no interest in Christ; our graces are not true, our hopes are the hopes of hypocrites; our confidence is our presumption, our enjoyments are our delusions, &c.

I shall shew you this in some particulars, &c.

Device 1. The first device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, and so making their life a hell, is, By causing them to be still poring and musing upon sin, to mind their sins more than their Saviour; yea, so to mind their sins as to forget, yea, to neglect their Saviour; that, as the Psalmist speaks, 'The Lord is not in all their thoughts,' Ps 10:4. Their eyes are so fixed upon their disease, that they cannot see the remedy, though it be near; and they do so muse upon their debts, that they have neither mind nor heart to think of their Surety, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these.

Remedy (1). The first remedy is for weak believers to consider, That though Jesus Christ hath not freed them from the presence of sin, yet he hath freed them from the damnable power of sin. It is

most true that sin and grace were never born together, neither shall sin and grace die together; yet while a believer breathes in this world, they must live together, they must keep house together. Christ in this life will not free any believer from the presence of any one sin, though he doth free every believer from the damning power of every sin. 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,' Rom 8:1. The law cannot condemn a believer, for Christ hath fulfilled it for him; divine justice cannot condemn him, for that Christ hath satisfied; his sins cannot condemn him, for they in the blood of Christ are pardoned; and his own conscience, upon righteous grounds, cannot condemn him, because Christ, that is greater than his conscience, hath acquitted him.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That though Jesus Christ hath not freed you from, the molesting and vexing power of sin, yet he hath freed you from the reign and dominion of sin. Thou sayest that sin doth so molest and vex thee, that thou canst not think of God, nor go to God, nor speak with God. Oh! but remember it is one thing for sin to molest and vex thee, and another thing for sin to reign and have dominion over thee. 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom 6:14. Sin may rebel, but it shall never reign in a saint. It fareth with sin in the regenerate as with those beasts that Daniel speaks of, 'that had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time,' Dan 7:12.

Now sin reigns in the soul when the soul willingly and readily obeys it, and subjects to its commands, as subjects do actively obey and embrace the commands of their prince. The commands of a king are readily embraced and obeyed by his subjects, but the commands of a tyrant are embraced and obeyed unwillingly. All the service that is done to a tyrant is out of violence, and not out of obedience. A free and willing subjection to the commands of sin speaks out the soul to be under the reign and dominion of sin; but from this plague, this hell, Christ frees all believers. Sin cannot say of a believer as the centurion said of his servants, 'I bid one Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to another, Do this, and he doth it,' Mat 8:9. No! the heart of a saint riseth against the commands of sin; and when sin would carry his soul to the devil, he haies his sin before the Lord, and cries out for justice. Lord! saith the believing soul, sin plays the tyrant, the devil in me; it would have me to do that which makes against thy holiness as well as against my happiness; against thy honour and glory, as my comfort and peace; therefore do me justice, thou righteous Judge of heaven and earth, and let this tyrant sin die for it, &c.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, Constantly to keep one eye upon the promises of remission of sin, as well as the other eye upon the inward operations of sin. This is the most certain truth, that God would graciously pardon those sins to his people that he will not in this life fully subdue in his people. Paul prays thrice, i.e. often, to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh. All he can get is, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' 2Co 12:9; I will graciously pardon that to thee that I will not conquer in thee, saith God. 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and whereby they have transgressed against me. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,' Jer 33:8, Isa 43:25. Ah! you lamenting souls, that spend your days in sighing and groaning under the sense and burden of your sins, why do you deal so unkindly with God, and so injuriously with your own souls, as not to cast an eye upon those precious promises of remission of sin which may bear

up and refresh your spirits in the darkest night, and under the heaviest burden of sin?

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, To look upon all your sins as charged upon the account of Christ, as debts which the Lord Jesus hath fully satisfied; and indeed, were there but one farthing of that debt unpaid that Christ was engaged to satisfy, it would not have stood with the unspotted justice of God to have let him come into heaven and sit down at his own right hand. But all our debts, by his death, being discharged, we are freed, and he is exalted to sit down at the right hand of his Father, which is the top of his glory, and the greatest pledge of our felicity: 'For he hath made him to be sin for us that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' saith the apostle, 2Co 5:21. All our sins were made to meet upon Christ, as that evangelical prophet hath it: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'He hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in him,' Isa 53:5-6. In law, we know that all the debts of the wife are charged upon the husband. Saith the wife to one and to another, If I owe you anything, go to my husband. So may a believer say to the law, and to the justice of God, If I owe you anything, go to my Christ, who hath undertaken for me. I must not sit down discouraged, under the apprehension of those debts, that Christ, to the utmost farthing, hath fully satisfied. Would it not argue much weakness, I had almost said much madness, for a debtor to sit down discouraged upon his looking over those debts that his surety hath readily, freely, and fully satisfied? The sense of his great love should engage a man for ever to love and honour his surety, and to bless that hand that hath paid the debt, and crossed the books, &c. But to sit down discouraged when the debt is satisfied, is a sin that bespeaks repentance.

Christ hath cleared all reckoning betwixt God and us. You remember the scapegoat. Upon his head all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, were confessed and put, and the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities, &c., Lev 16:21. Why! the Lord Jesus is that blessed scapegoat, upon whom all our sins were laid, and who alone hath carried 'our sins away into the land of forgetfulness, where they shall never be remembered more.' A believer, under the guilt of his sin, may look the Lord in the face, and sweetly plead thus with him: It is true, Lord, I owed thee much, but thy Son was my ransom, my redemption. His blood was the price; he was my surety and undertook to answer for my sins; I know thou must be satisfied, and Christ hath satisfied thee to the utmost farthing: not for himself, for what sins had he of his own? but for me; they were my debts that he satisfied for; be pleased to look over the book, and thou shalt find that it is crossed by thy own hand upon this very account, that Christ hath suffered and satisfied for them.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, Of the reasons why the Lord is pleased to have his people exercised, troubled, and vexed with the operations of sinful corruptions; and they are these: partly to keep them humble and low in their own eyes; and partly to put them upon the use of all divine helps, whereby sin may be subdued and mortified; and partly, that they may live upon Christ for the perfecting the work of sanctification; and partly, to wean them from things below, and to make them heart-sick of their absence from Christ, and to maintain in them bowels of compassion towards others that are subject to the same infirmities with them; and that they may distinguish between a state of grace and a state of glory, and that heaven

may be more sweet to them in the close. Now doth the Lord upon these weighty reasons suffer his people to be exercised and molested with the operations of sinful corruptions? Oh then, let no believer speak, write, or conclude bitter things against his own soul and comforts, because that sin troubles and vexes his righteous soul, &c.; but lay his hand upon his mouth and be silent, because the Lord will have it so, upon such weighty grounds as the soul is not able to withstand.³

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That believers must repent for their being discouraged by their sins. Their being discouraged by their sins will cost them many a prayer, many a tear, and many a groan; and that because their discouragements under sin flow from ignorance and unbelief. It springs from their ignorance of the richness, freeness, fulness, and everlastingness of God's love; and from their ignorance of the power, glory, sufficiency, and efficacy of the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ; and from their ignorance of the worth, glory, fulness, largeness, and completeness of the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and from their ignorance of that real, close, spiritual, glorious, and inseparable union that is between Christ and their precious souls. Ah! did precious souls know and believe the truth of these things as they should, they would not sit down dejected and overwhelmed under the sense and operation of sin, &c. The second device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is,

Device (2). By working them to make false definitions of their graces. Satan knows, that as false definitions of sin wrong the soul one way, so false definitions of grace wrong the soul another way.

I will instance only in faith: Oh how doth Satan labour might and main to work men to make false definitions of faith! Some he works to define faith too high, as that it is a full assurance of the love of God to a man's soul in particular, or a full persuasion of the pardon and remission of a man's own sins in particular. Saith Satan, What dost thou talk of faith? Faith is an assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of sin; and this thou hast not; thou knowest thou art far off from this; therefore thou hast no faith. And by drawing men to make such a false definition of faith, he keeps them in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, and makes them spend their days in sorrow and sighing, so that tears are their drink; and sorrow is their meat, and sighing is their work all the day long, &c. The philosophers say there are eight degrees of heat; we discern three. Now, if a man should define heat only by the highest degree, then all other degrees will be cast out from being heat. So if men shall define faith only by the highest degrees, by assurance of the love of God, and of the pardon of his sins in particular, what will become of Lesser degrees of faith?

I If a man should define a man to be a living man, only by the highest and strongest demonstrations of life, as laughing, leaping, running, working, walking, &c., would not many thousands that groan under internal and external weaknesses, and that cannot laugh, nor leap, nor run, nor work, nor walk, be found dead men by such a definition, that yet we know to be alive? It is so here, and you know how to apply it, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there may be true faith, yea, great measures of faith, where there is no assurance. The Canaanite woman in the Gospel had strong faith, yet no assurance that we read of. 'These things have I written unto you,' saith John, 'that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have

eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God,' 1Jn 5:13. In these words you see that they did believe, and had eternal life, in respect of the purpose and promise of God, and in respect of the seeds and beginnings of it in their souls, and in respect of Christ their head, who sits in heaven as a public person, representing all his chosen ones, 'Who hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,' Eph 2:6; and yet they did not know that they had eternal life. It is one thing to have a right to heaven, and another thing to know it; it is one thing to be beloved, and another thing for a man to know that he is beloved. It is one thing for God to write a man's name in the book of life, and another thing for God to tell a man that his name is written in the book of life; and to say to him, Luk 10:20, 'Rejoice, because thy name is written in heaven.' So Paul, 'In whom ye also trusted, after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph 1:13. So Micah: 'Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: for when I shall fall, I shall rise; when I shall sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned,' &c., or, 'the sad countenance of God,' as the Hebrew hath it, Mic 7:8-9. This soul had no assurance, for he sits in darkness, and was under the sad countenance of God; and yet had strong faith, as appears in those words, 'When I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. And let this suffice for the first answer.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That God in the Scripture doth define faith otherwise. God defines faith to be a receiving of Christ—'As many as received him, to them he gave this privilege, to be the sons of God,' John 1:12. 'To as many as believed on his name,' Acts 11:23—to be a cleaving of the soul unto God, though no joy, but afflictions, attend the soul. Yea, the Lord defines faith to be a coming to God in Christ, and often to a resting and staying, rolling of the soul upon Christ. It is safest and sweetest to define as God defines, both vices and graces. This is the only way to settle the soul, and to secure it against the wiles of men and devils, who labour, by false definitions of grace, to keep precious souls in a doubting, staggering, and languishing condition, and so make their lives a burden, a hell, unto them.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider this, That there may be true faith where there is much doubtings. Witness those frequent sayings of Christ to his disciples, 'Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith?' Persons may be truly believing who nevertheless are sometimes doubting. In the same persons that the fore-mentioned scriptures speak of, you may see their faith commended and their doubts condemned, which doth necessarily suppose a presence of both.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That assurance is an effect of faith; therefore it cannot be faith. The cause cannot be the effect, nor the root the fruit. As the effect flows from the cause, the fruit from the root, the stream from the fountain, so doth assurance flow from faith. This truth I shall make good thus: The assurance of our salvation and pardon of sin doth primarily arise from the witness of the Spirit of God that we are the children of God, Eph 1:13; and the Spirit never witnesseth this till we are believers: 'For we are sons by faith in Christ Jesus,' Gal 4:6. Therefore assurance is not faith, but follows it, as the effect follows the cause.

Again, no man can be assured and persuaded of his salvation till he be united to Christ, till he be ingrafted into Christ; and a man cannot be ingrafted into Christ till he hath faith. He must first be ingrafted into Christ by faith before he can have assurance of his salvation; which doth clearly evidence, that assurance is not faith, but an effect and fruit of faith, &c.

Again, faith cannot be lost, but assurance may; therefore assurance is not faith. Though assurance be a precious flower in the garden of a saint, and is more infinitely sweet and delightful to the soul than all outward comforts and contents; yet it is but a flower that is subject to fade, and to lose its freshness and beauty, as saints by sad experience find, &c.

Again, a man must first have faith before he can have assurance, therefore assurance is not faith. And that a man must first have faith before he can have assurance, is clear by this, a man must first be saved before he can be assured of his salvation; for he cannot be assured of that which is not. And a man must first have a saving faith before he can be saved by faith, for he cannot be saved by that which he hath not; therefore a man must first have faith before he can have assurance, and so it roundly follows that assurance is not faith, &c. The third device that Satan hath to keep the soul in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is,

Device (3). By working the soul to make false inferences from the cross actings of Providence. Saith Satan, Dost thou not see how Providence crosses thy prayers, and crosses thy desires, thy tears, thy hopes, thy endeavours? Surely if his love were towards thee, if his soul did delight and take pleasure in thee, he would not deal thus with thee, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That many things may be cross to our desires that are not cross to our good. Abraham, Jacob, David, Job, Moses, Jeremiah, Jonah, Paul, &c., met with many things that were contrary to their desires and endeavours, that were not contrary to their good; as all know that have wisely compared their desires and endeavours and God's actings together. Physic often works contrary to the patients' desires, when it doth not work contrary to their good.

I remember a story of a godly man, who had a great desire to go to France, and as he was going to take shipping he broke his leg; and it pleased Providence so to order it, that the ship that he should have gone in at that very same time was cast away, and not a man saved; and so by breaking a bone his life was saved. Though Providence did work cross to his desire, yet it did not work cross to his good, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the hand of God may be against a man, when the love and heart of God is much set upon a man. No man can conclude how the heart of God stands by his hand. The hand of God was against Ephraim, and yet his love, his heart, was dearly set upon Ephraim: 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely, after that I was returned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Ephraim is my dear Son, he is a pleasant child; for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord,'

Jer 31:18-20.

God can look sourly, and chide bitterly, and strike heavily, even where and when he loves dearly. The hand of God was very much against Job, and yet his love, his heart, was very much set upon Job, as you may see by comparing Job 1:1-22 and Job 2:1-13 with Job 41:1-34 and Job 42:1-17. The hand of God was sore against David and Jonah, when his heart was much set upon them. He that shall conclude that the heart of God is against those that his hand is against, will condemn the generation of the just, whom God unjustly would not have condemned.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan, is, to consider, That all the cross providences that befall the saints are but in order to some noble good that God doth intend to prefer upon them. Providence wrought cross to David's desire, in taking away the child sinfully begotten, but yet not cross to more noble good; for was it not far better for David to have such a legitimate heir as Solomon was, than that a bastard should wear the crown, and sway the sceptre?

Joseph, you know, was sold into a far country by the envy and malice of his brethren, and afterwards imprisoned' because he would not be a prisoner to his mistress's lusts; yet all these providences did wonderfully conduce to his advancement, and the preservation of his father's family, which was then the visible church of Christ. It was so handled by a noble hand of providence; that what they sought to decline, they did promote. Joseph was therefore sold by his brethren that he might not be worshipped, and yet he was therefore worshipped because he was sold.⁴

David was designed to a kingdom, but oh! the straits, troubles, and deaths that he runs through before he feels the weight of the crown; and all this was but in order to the sweetening of his crown, and to the settling of it more firmly and gloriously upon his head. God did so contrive it that Jonah's offence, and those cross actings of his that did attend it, should advantage that end which they seemed most directly to oppose. Jonah he flies to Tarshish, then cast into the sea, then saved by a miracle. Then the mariners, as it is very probable, who cast Jonah into the sea, declared to the Ninevites what had happened; therefore he must be a man sent of God, and that his threatenings must be believed and hearkened to, and therefore they must repent and humble themselves, that the wrath threatened might not be executed, &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That all the strange, dark, deep, and changeable, providences that believers meet with, shall further them in their way to heaven, in their journey to happiness. Divine wisdom and love will so order all things here below, that they shall work for the real, internal, and eternal good of them that love him. All the rugged providences that David met with, did contribute to the bringing of him to the throne; and all the rugged providences that Daniel and the 'three children' met with, did contribute to their great advancement. So all the rugged providences that believers meet with, they shall all contribute to the lifting up of their souls above all things, below God. As the waters lifted up Noah's ark nearer heaven, and as all the stones that were about Stephen's ears did but knock him the closer to Christ, the corner-stone, so all the strange rugged providences that we meet with, they shall raise us nearer heaven, and knock us nearer to Christ, that precious corner-stone. The fourth device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is,

Device (4). By suggesting to them that their graces are not true, but counterfeit. Saith Satan, All is not gold that glitters, all is not free grace that you count grace, that you call grace. That which you call faith is but a fancy, and that which you call zeal, is but a natural heat and passion; and that light you have, it is but common, it is short, to what many have attained to that are now in hell, &c. Satan doth not labour more mightily to persuade hypocrites that their graces are true when they are counterfeit, than he doth to persuade precious souls that their graces are counterfeit, when indeed they are true, and such as will abide the touchstone of Christ, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That grace is taken two ways.

[1.] It is taken for the gracious good-will and favour of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to accept of some in Christ for his own. This, some call the first grace, because it is the fountain of all other graces, and the spring from whence they flow, and it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious with God, but this is only in God.

[2.] Grace is taken for the gifts of grace, and they are of two sorts, common or special.

Some are common to believers and hypocrites, as a gift of knowledge, a gift of prayer, &c.

Some are special graces, and they are proper and peculiar to the saints, as faith, humility, meekness, love, patience, &c., Gal 5:22-23.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, The differences betwixt renewing grace and restraining grace, betwixt sanctifying grace and temporary grace; and this I will shew you in these ten particulars.

[1.] True grace makes all glorious within and without: 'The King's daughter is all glorious within; her raiment is of wrought gold,' Psa 45:13. True grace makes the understanding glorious, the affections glorious. It casts a general glory upon all the noble parts of the soul: 'The King's daughter is all glorious within.' And as it makes the inside glorious, so it makes the outside glorious: 'Her clothing is of wrought gold.' It makes men look gloriously, and speak gloriously, and walk and act gloriously, so that vain souls shall be forced to say that these are they that have seen Jesus. As grace is a fire to burn up and consume the dross and filth of the soul, so it is an ornament to beautify and adorn the soul. True grace makes all new, the inside new and the outside new: 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,' 2Co 5:17, but temporary grace doth not this. True grace changes the very nature of a man. Moral virtue doth only restrain or chain up the outward man, it doth not change the whole man. A lion in a grate is a lion still; he is restrained, but not changed, for he retains his lion-like nature still. So temporary graces restrain many men from this and that wickedness, but it doth not change and turn their hearts from wickedness. But now true grace, that turns a lion into a lamb, as you may see in Paul, Acts 9:1-43, and a notorious strumpet into a blessed and glorious penitent, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, &c., &c., Luk 7:1-50.

[2.] The objects of true grace are supernatural. True grace is conversant about the choicest and the highest objects, about the most soul-ennobling and soul-greatening objects, as God, Christ, precious promises that are more worth than a world, and a kingdom that shakes not, a crown of

glory that withers not, and heavenly treasures that rust not. The objects of temporary grace are low and poor, and always within the compass of reason's reach.

[3.] True grace enables a Christian, when he is himself, to do spiritual actions with real pleasure and delight, To souls truly gracious, Christ's yoke 'is easy, and his burden is light;' 'his commandments are not grievous, but joyous.' 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man,' saith Paul. The blessed man is described by this, that he 'delights in the law of the Lord,' Psa 1:2. 'It is joy to the just to do judgment,' saith Solomon, Pro 21:15. To a gracious soul, 'All the ways of the Lord are pleasantness, and his paths are peace, Pro 3:17; but to souls that have but temporary grace, but moral virtues, religious services are a toil, not a pleasure; a burden, and not a delight. 'Wherefore have we fasted,' say they, 'and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' Isa 58:3, &c. 'Ye have said,' say those in Malachi, 'It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?' Mal 3:14. 'When will the new moon be gone,' say those in Amos, 'that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit,' Amo 8:5.

[4.] True grace makes a man most careful, and most fearful of his own heart. It makes him most studious about his own heart, informing that, examining that, and watching over that; but temporary grace, moral virtues, make men more mindful and careful of others, to instruct them and counsel them, and stir up them, and watch over them, &c. Which doth with open mouth demonstrate that their graces are not saving and peculiar to saints, but that they are temporary, and no more than Judas, Demas, and the pharisees had, &c.

[5.] Grace will work a man's heart to love and cleave to the strictest and holiest ways and things of God, for their purity and sanctity, in the face of all dangers and hardships. 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it,' Psa 119:140. Others love it, and like it, and follow it, for the credit, the honour, the advantage that they get by it; but I love it for the spiritual beauty and purity of it. So the psalmist, 'All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way: though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadows of death,' Psa 44:17-19. But temporary grace, that will not bear up the soul against all oppositions and discouragements in the ways of God, as is clear by their apostasy in John 6:60, John 6:66, and by the stony grounds falling away, &c., Mat 13:20-21.

[6.] True grace will enable a man to step over the world's crown, to take up Christ's cross; to prefer the cross of Christ above the glory of this world. It enabled Abraham, and Moses, and Daniel, with those other worthies in Heb 11:1-40, to do so.

Godfrey of Bullen [Bouillon], first king of Jerusalem, refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying, 'That it became not a Christian there to wear a crown of gold, where Christ had worn a crown of thorns.' Oh! but temporary grace cannot work the soul to prefer Christ's cross above the world's crown; but when these two meet, a temporary Christian steps over Christ's cross to take up, and keep up, the world's crown. 'Demas hath forsaken us to embrace this present world,' 2Ti 4:10. So the young man in the Gospel had many good things in him; he bid fair for heaven, and came near to heaven; but when Christ set his cross before him, he steps over that to enjoy the world's crown, Mat 19:19-22. When Christ bid him, 'go and sell all that he had, and give to the

poor,' &c., 'he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' If heaven be to be had upon no other terms, Christ may keep his heaven to himself, he will have none, &c.

[7.] Sanctifying grace, renewing grace, puts the soul upon spiritual duties, from spiritual and intrinsecal motives, as from the sense of divine love, that doth constrain the soul to wait on God, and to act for God; and the sense of the excellency and sweetness of communion with God, and the choice and precious discoveries that the soul hath formerly had of the beauty and glory to [sic] God, whilst it hath been in the service of God. The good looks, the good words, the blessed love-letters, the glorious kisses, and the sweet embraces that gracious souls have had from Christ in his service, do provoke and move them to wait upon him in holy duties. Ah! but restraining grace, temporary grace, that puts men upon religious duties only from external motives, as the care of the creature, the eye of the creature, the rewards of the creature, and the keeping up of a name among the creatures, and a thousand such like considerations, as you may see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Demas, and the scribes and pharisees, &c. The abbot in Melancthon lived strictly, and walked demurely, and looked humbly, so long as he was but a monk, but when, by his seeming extraordinary sanctity, he got to be abbot, he grew intolerable proud and insolent; and being asked the reason of it, confessed, 'That his former lowly look was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey.' Such poor, low, vain motives work temporary souls to all the service they do perform, &c.

[8.] Saving grace, renewing grace, will cause a man to follow the Lord fully in the desertion of all sin, and in the observation of all God's precepts. Joshua and Caleb followed the Lord fully, Num 14:24; Zacharias and Elizabeth were righteous before God, and walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luk 1:5-6. The saints in the Revelation are described by this, that 'they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes,' Rev 14:4; but restraining grace, temporary grace, cannot enable a man to follow the Lord fully. All that temporary grace can enable a man to do, is to follow the Lord partially, unevenly, and haltingly, as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, and the scribes and pharisees, who paid tithe of 'mint, and anise, and cummin, but omitted the weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,' &c., Mat 23:23.

True grace works the heart to the hatred of all sin, and to the love of all truth; it works a man to the hatred of those sins that for his blood he cannot conquer, and to loathe those sins that he would give all the world to overcome, Psa 119:104, Psa 119:128. So that a soul truly gracious can say, Though there be no one sin mortified and subdued in me, as it should, and as I would, yet every sin is hated and loathed by me. So a soul truly gracious can say, Though I do not obey any one command as I should, and as I would, yet every word is sweet, every command of God is precious, Psa 119:6, Psa 119:119, Psa 119:127, Psa 119:167. I dearly prize and greatly love those commands that I cannot obey; though there be many commands that I cannot in a strict sense fulfil, yet there is no command I would not fulfil, that I do not exceedingly love. 'I love thy commandments above gold, above fine gold:' 'My soul hath kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly,' Psa 119:117, and Psa 99:7.

[9.] True grace leads the soul to rest in Christ, as in his summum bonum, chiefest good. It works the soul to centre in Christ, as in his highest and ultimate end. 'Whither should we go? thou hast the words of eternal life,' John 6:68. 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand; I found him whom my soul loved, I held him and would not let him go,' Song of Solomon 5:10, Song

of Solomon 3:4. That wisdom a believer hath from Christ, it leads him to centre in the wisdom of Christ, 1Co 1:30; and that love the soul hath from Christ, it leads the soul to centre in the love of Christ; and that righteousness the soul hath from Christ, it leads the soul to rest and centre in the righteousness of Christ, Php 3:9. True grace is a beam of Christ, and where it is, it will naturally lead the soul to rest in Christ. The stream doth not more naturally lead to the fountain, nor the effect to the cause, than true grace leads the soul to Christ. But restraining grace, temporary grace, works the soul to centre and rest in things below Christ. Sometimes it works the soul to centre in the praises of the creature; sometimes to rest in the rewards of the creature: 'Verily they have their reward,' saith Christ, Mat 6:1-2; and so in an hundred other things. &c., Zec 7:5-6.

[10.] True grace will enable a soul to sit down satisfied and contented with the naked enjoyments of Christ. The enjoyment of Christ without honour will satisfy the soul; the enjoyment of Christ without riches, the enjoyment of Christ without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures, will content and satisfy the soul. 'It is enough; I Joseph is alive,' Gen 45:28. So saith a gracious soul, though honour is not, and riches are not, and health is not, and friends are not, &c., it is enough that Christ is, that he reigns, conquers, and triumphs. Christ is the pot of manna, the cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comfort, content, and satisfaction. He that hath him wants nothing; he that wants him enjoys nothing. 'Having nothing,' saith Paul, 'and yet possessing all things,' 2Co 6:10. Oh! but a man that hath but temporary grace, that hath but restraining grace, cannot sit down satisfied and contented, under the want of outward comforts. Christ is good with honours, saith such a soul; and Christ is good with riches, and Christ is good with pleasures, and he is good with such and such outward contents. I must have Christ and the world, or else with the young man in the Gospel, in spite of my soul, I shall forsake Christ to follow the world. Ah! how many shining professors be there in the world, that cannot sit down satisfied and contented, under the want of this or that outward comfort and content, but are like bedlams, fretting and vexing, raging and madding, as if there were no God, no heaven, no hell, nor no Christ to make up all such outward wants to souls. That a soul truly gracious can say, in having nothing I have all things, because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward. Such a soul can say, Nothing is sweet to me without the enjoyment of Christ in it; honours, nor riches, nor the smiles of creatures, are not sweet to me no farther than I see Christ, and taste Christ in them.² The confluence of all outward good cannot make a heaven of glory in my soul, if Christ, who is the top of my glory, be absent; as Absalom said, 'What is all this to me so long as I cannot see the king's face?' 2Sa 14:32. So saith the soul, why do you tell me of this and that outward comfort, when I cannot see his face whom my soul loves? Why, my honour is not my Christ, nor riches is not Christ, nor the favour of the creature is not Christ; let me have him, and let the men of this world take the world, and divide it amongst themselves; I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world; his presence will make up the absence of all other comforts, and his absence will darken and embitter all my comforts; so that my comforts will neither taste like comforts, nor look like comforts, nor warm like comforts, when he that should comfort my soul stands afar off, &c., Lam 1:16. Christ is all and in all to souls truly gracious, Col 3:11. We have all things in Christ, and Christ is all things to a Christian. If we be sick, he is a physician; if we thirst, he is a fountain; if our sins trouble us, he is righteousness; if we stand in need of help, he is mighty to save; if we fear death, he is life; if we be in darkness, he is light; if we be weak, he is strength; if we be in poverty, he is plenty; if we desire heaven, he is the way. The soul cannot say, this I would have, and that I would have; but saith Christ, it is in me, it is

in me eminently, perfectly, eternally. The fifth device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition is,

Device (5). By suggesting to them, That that conflict that is in them, is not a conflict that is only in saints, but such a conflict that is to be found in hypocrites and profane souls; when the truth is, there is as much difference betwixt the conflict that is in them, and that which is in wicked men, as there is betwixt light and darkness, betwixt heaven and hell. And the truth of this I shall evidence to you in the following particulars:

[1.] The whole frame of a believer's soul is against sin. Understanding, will, and affection, all the powers and faculties of the soul are in arms against sin. A covetous man may condemn covetousness, and yet the frame and bent of his heart may be to it; a proud person may condemn pride, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it; and the drunkard may condemn drunkenness, and yet the frame of his spirit may be to it; a man may condemn stealing and lying, and yet the frame of his heart may be to it. 'Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?' Rom 2:21-23. But a saint's will is against it. 'The evil that I would not do, that I do;' and his affections are against it, 'What I hate, I do,' Rom 7:19-20.

[2.] A saint conflicts against sin universally, the least as well as the greatest; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those that are less pleasing and profitable. He will combat with all, though he cannot conquer one as he should, and as he would. He knows that all sin strikes at God's holiness, as well as his own happiness; at God's glory, as well as at his soul's comfort and peace.

He knows that all sin is hateful to God, and that all sinners are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that that threw down Noah, the most righteous man in the world, and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that cast down Abraham, the greatest believer in the world, and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that threw down David, the best king in the world, and he looks upon another sin, and sees that that cast down Paul, the greatest apostle in the world. He sees that one sin threw down Samson, the strongest man in the world; another cast down Solomon, the wisest man in the world; and another Moses, the meekest man in the world; and another sin cast down Job, the patientest man in the world; and this raiseth a holy indignation against all, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul but a destruction of all those lusts and vermin that vex and rack his righteous soul. It will not suffice a gracious soul to see justice done upon one sin, but he cries out for justice upon all. He would not have some crucified and others spared, but cries out, Lord, crucify them all, crucify them all. Oh! but now the conflict that is in wicked men is partial; they frown upon one sin and smile upon another; they strike at some sins yet stroke others; they thrust some out of doors but keep others close in their bosoms; as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, Simon Magus, and Demas. Wicked men strike at gross sins, such as are not only against the law of God, but against the laws of nature and nations, but make nothing of less sins; as vain thoughts, idle words, sinful motions, petty oaths, &c. They fight against those sins that fight against their honour, profits, pleasures, &c., but make truce with those that are as right hand and as right eyes to them, &c.

[3.] The conflict that is in a saint, against sin, is maintained by several arguments: by arguments drawn from the love of God, the honour of God, the sweetness and communion with God, and from the spiritual and heavenly blessings and privileges that are conferred upon them by God, and from arguments drawn from the blood of Christ, the glory of Christ, the eye of Christ, the kisses of Christ, and the intercession of Christ, and from arguments drawn from the earnest of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit. Oh! but the conflict that is in wicked men is from low, carnal, and legal arguments, drawn from the eye, ear, or hand of the creature, or drawn from shame, hell, curses of the law, &c., 2Co 12:7-9.

[4.] The conflict that is in saints is a constant conflict. Though sin and grace were not born in the heart of a saint together, and though they shall not die together, yet. whilst a believer lives, they must conflict together. Paul had been fourteen years converted, when he cried out, 'I have a law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin,' Rom 7:2-3.

Pietro Candiano, one of the dukes of Venice, died fighting against the Nauratines with the weapons in his hands. So a saint lives fighting and dies fighting, he stands fighting and falls fighting, with his spiritual weapons in his hands. But the conflict that is in wicked men is inconstant: now they fall out with sin, and anon they fall in with sin; now it is bitter, anon it is sweet; now the sinner turns from his sin, and anon he turns to the wallowing in sin, as the swine doth to the wallowing in the mire, 2Pe 2:19-20. One hour you shall have him praying against sin, as if he feared it more than hell, and the next hour you shall have him pursuing after sin, as if there were no God to punish him, no justice to damn him, no hell to torment him.

[5.] The conflict that is in the saints, is in the same faculties; there is the judgment against the judgment, the mind against the mind, the will against the will, the affections against the affections, that is, the regenerate part against the unregenerate part, in all the parts of the soul; but now, in wicked men, the conflict is not in the same faculties, but between the conscience and the will. The will of a sinner is bent strongly to such and such sins, but conscience puts in and tells the sinner, God hath made me his deputy, he hath given me a power to hang and draw, to examine, scourge, judge and condemn, and if thou dost such and such wickedness, I shall be thy jailor and tormenter. I do not bear the rod nor the sword in vain, saith conscience; if thou sinnest, I shall do my office, and then thy life will be a hell: and this raises a tumult in the soul.

[6.] The conflict that is in the saints, is a more blessed, successful, and prevailing conflict. A saint, by his conflict with sin, gains ground upon his sin: 'They that are Christ's,' saith the apostle, 'have crucified the world with the affections and lusts,' Gal 5:24. Christ puts to his hand and helps them to lead captivity captive, and to set their feet upon the necks of those lusts that have formerly trampled upon their souls and their comforts. As the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, and the house of David stronger and stronger, so the Lord, by the discoveries of his love, and by the influences of his Spirit, he causeth grace, the nobler part of a saint, to grow stronger and stronger, and corruption, like the house of Saul, to grow weaker and weaker. But sin in a wicked heart gets ground, and grows stronger and stronger, notwithstanding all his conflicts. His heart is more encouraged, emboldened, and hardened in a way of sin, as you may see in the Israelites, Pharaoh, Jehu, and Judas, who doubtless found many strange conflicts, tumults, and mutinies in their souls, when God spake such bitter things against them, and did such justice upon them, 2Ti

3:13. But remember this by way of caution: Though Christ hath given sin its death-wound, by his power, Spirit, death, and resurrection, yet it will die but a lingering death. As a man that is mortally wounded dies by little and little, so doth sin in the heart of a saint. The death of Christ on the cross was a lingering death, so the death of sin in the soul is a lingering death; now it dies a little, and anon it dies a little, &c., as the psalmist speaks, 'Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield,' Psa 59:11. He would not have them utterly destroyed, but some relies preserved as a memorial. So God dealeth in respect of sin; it is wounded and brought down, but not wholly slain; something is still left as a monument of divine grace, and to keep us humble, wakeful, and watchful, and that our armour may be still kept on, and our weapons always in our hands. The best men's souls in this life hang between the flesh and the spirit, as it were like Mahomet's tomb at Mecca, between two loadstones; like Erasmus, as the papists paint him, betwixt heaven and hell; like the tribe of Manasseh, half on this side of Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, and half on that side, in the Holy Land; yet, in the issue, they shall overcome the flesh, and trample upon the necks of their spiritual enemies. The sixth device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, questioning condition is,

Device (6). By suggesting to the soul, that surely his estate is not good, because he cannot joy and rejoice in Christ as once he could; because he hath lost that comfort and joy that once was in his spirit. Saith Satan, Thou knowest the time was when thy heart was much carried out to joying and rejoicing in Christ; thou dost not forget the time when thy heart used to be full of joy and comfort; but now, how art thou fallen in thy joys and comforts! Therefore, thy estate is not good; thou dost but deceive thyself to think that ever it was good, for surely if it had, thy joy and comfort would have continued. And hereupon the soul is apt to take part with Satan, and say, It is even so; I see all is naught, and I have but deceived my own soul, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That the loss of comfort is a separable adjunct from grace. The soul may be full of holy affections when it is empty of divine consolations. There may be, and often is, true grace, yea, much grace, where there is not a drop of comfort, nor dram of joy. Comfort is not of the being, but of the well-being, of a Christian. God hath not so linked these two choice lovers together, but that they may be put asunder. That wisdom that is from above will never work a man to reason thus: I have no comfort, therefore I have no grace; I have lost that joy that once I had, therefore my condition is not good, was never good, &c. But it will enable a man to reason thus: Though my comfort is gone, yet the God of my comfort abides; though my joy is lost, yet the seeds of grace remain. The best men's joys are as glass, bright and brittle, and evermore in danger of breaking.²

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the precious things that thou still enjoyest are far better than the joys and comforts that thou hast lost. Thy union with Christ, thy communion with Christ, thy sonship, thy saintship, thy heirship, thou still enjoyest by Christ, are far better than the comforts thou hast lost by sin. What though thy comforts be gone, yet thy union and communion with Christ remains, Jer 31:18-20. Though thy comforts be gone, yet thou art a son, though a comfortless son; an heir, though a comfortless heir; a saint, though a comfortless saint. Though the bag of silver, thy comforts, be lost, yet the box of jewels, thy union with Christ, thy communion with Christ, thy sonship, thy saintship, thy heirship, which

thou still enjoyest, is far better than the bag of silver thou hast lost; yea, the least of those precious jewels is more worth than all the comforts in the world. Well! let this be a cordial to comfort thee, a star to lead thee, and a staff to support thee, that thy box of jewels are safe, though thy bag of silver be lost.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That thy condition is no other than what hath been the condition of those precious souls whose names were written upon the heart of Christ, and who are now at rest in the bosom of Christ. One day you shall have them praising and rejoicing, the next day a-mourning and weeping. One day you shall have them a-singing, 'The Lord is our portion;' the next day a-sighing and expostulating with themselves, 'Why are ye cast down, O our souls?' 'Why is our harp turned to mourning? and our organ into the voice of them that weep?' &c.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the causes of joy and comfort are not always the same. Happily, thy former joy and comfort did spring from the witness of the Spirit, he bearing witness to thy soul, that thy nature was changed, thy sins pardoned, thy soul reconciled, &c. Now, the Spirit may, upon some special occasion, bear witness to the soul, that the heart of God is dearly set upon him, that he loves him with an everlasting love, &c., and yet the soul may never enjoy such a testimony all the days of his life again. Though the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit, it is not his office every day to witness to believers their interest in God, Christ, heaven, &c.

Or, happily, thy former joy and comfort did spring from the newness and suddenness of the change of thy condition. For a man in one hour to have his night turned into day, his darkness turned into light, his bitter into sweet, God's frowns into smiles, his hatred into love, his hell into a heaven, must greatly joy and comfort him. It cannot but make his heart to leap and dance in him, who, in one hour, shall see Satan accusing him, his own heart condemning him, the eternal God frowning upon him, the gates of heaven barred against him, all the creation standing armed, at the least beck of God, to execute vengeance on him, and the mouth of the infernal pit open to receive him. Now, in this hour, for Christ to come to the amazed soul, and to say to it, I have trod the wine-press of my Father's wrath for thee; I have laid down my life a ransom for thee; by my blood I have satisfied my Father's justice, and pacified his anger, and procured his love for thee; by my blood I have purchased the pardon of thy sins, thy freedom from hell, and thy right to heaven; oh! how wonderfully will this cause the soul to leap for joy!

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That God will restore and make up the comforts of his people. Though thy candle be put out, yet God will light it again, and make it burn more light than ever. Though thy sun for the present be clouded, yet he that rides upon the clouds shall scatter those clouds, and cause the sun to shine and warm thy heart as in former days, as the psalmist speaks: 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side,' Psa 71:20-21. God takes away a little comfort, that he may make room in the soul for a greater degree of comfort. This the prophet Isaiah sweetly shews: 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners,' Isa 57:18. Bear up sweetly, O precious soul! thy storm shall end in a calm, and thy dark night in a sunshine day; thy mourning shall be turned into rejoicing, and the waters of

consolation shall be sweeter and higher in thy soul than ever; the mercy is surely thine, but the time of giving it is the Lord's. Wait but a little, and thou shalt find the Lord comforting thee on every side. The seventh device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questioning condition, is,

Device (7). By suggesting to the soul his often relapses into the same sin which formerly he hath pursued with particular sorrow, grief, shame, and tears, and prayed, complained, and resolved against. Saith Satan, Thy heart, is not right with God; surely thy estate is not good; thou dost but flatter thyself to think that ever God will eternally own and embrace such a one as thou art, who complainest against sin, and yet relapest into the same sin; who with tears and groans confessest thy sin, and yet ever and anon art fallen into the same sin.

I confess this is a very sad condition for a soul after he hath obtained mercy and pity from the Lord, after God hath spoken peace and pardon to him, and wiped the tears from his eyes, and set him upon his legs, to return to folly. Ah! how do relapses lay men open to the greatest afflictions and worst temptations! How do they make the wound to bleed afresh! How do they darken and cloud former assurances and evidences for heaven! How do they put a sword into the hand of conscience to cut and slash the soul! They raise such fears, terrors, horrors, and doubts in the soul, that the soul cannot be so frequent in duty as formerly, nor so fervent in duty as formerly, nor so confident in duty as formerly, nor so bold, familiar, and delightful with God in duty as formerly, nor so constant in duty as formerly. They give Satan an advantage to triumph over Christ; they make the work of repentance more difficult; they make a man's life a burden, and they render death to be very terrible unto the soul, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That there are many scriptures that do clearly evidence a possibility of the saints falling into the same sins whereof they have formerly repented. 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from them,' saith the Lord by the prophet Hosea, Hos 14:4. So the prophet Jeremiah speaks: 'Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger for ever. Turn, O backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion,' Jer 3:12, Jer 3:14. So the psalmist: 'They turned back, and dealt unfaithfully with their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.' And no wonder, for though their repentance be never so sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification imperfect in this life. Though by grace they are freed from the dominion of sin, and from the damnable power of every sin, and from the love of all sin, yet grace doth not free them from the seed of any one sin; and therefore it is possible for a soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire be not wholly put out, who would think it impossible that it should catch and burn again and again?

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That God hath nowhere engaged himself by any particular promise, that souls converted and united to Christ shall not fall again and again into the same sin after conversion. I cannot find in the whole book of God where he hath promised any such strength or power against this or that particular sin, as that the soul should be for ever, in this life, put out of a possibility of falling again and again into the

same sins; and where God hath not a mouth to speak, I must not have a heart to believe. God will graciously pardon those sins to his people that he will not in this life effectually subdue in his people. I would go far to speak with that soul that can shew me a promise, that when our sorrow and grief hath been so great, or so much, for this or that sin, that then God will preserve us from ever falling into the same sin. The sight of such a promise would be as life from the dead to many a precious soul, who desires nothing more than to keep close to Christ, and fears nothing more than backsliding from Christ.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the most renowned and now crowned saints have, in the days of their being on earth, relapsed into one and the same sin. Lot was twice overcome with wine; John twice worshipped the angel; Abraham did often dissemble, and lay his wife open to adultery to save his own life, which some heathens would not have done: 'And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, as he is my brother,' Gen 20:13. David in his wrath was resolved, if ever man was, that he would be the death of Nabal, and all his innocent family; and after this he fell into the foul murder of Uriah. Though Christ told his disciples that his 'kingdom was not of this world,' yet again, and again, and again, three several times they would needs be on horseback; they would fain be high, great, and glorious in this world. Their pride and ambitious humour put them, that were but as so many beggars, upon striving for pre-eminence and greatness in the world, when their Lord and Master told them three several times of his sufferings in the world, and of his going out of the world. Jehoshaphat, though a godly man, yet joins affinity with Ahab, 2Ch 18:1-3, 2Ch 18:30-31; and though he was saved by a miracle, yet soon after he falls into the same sin, and 'joins himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly,' 2Ch 20:35-37. Samson is by the Spirit of the Lord numbered among the faithful worthies, yet he fell often into one gross sin, as is evident, Heb 11:32. Peter, you know, relapsed often, and so did Jonah; and this comes to pass that they may see their own inability to stand, to resist or overcome any temptation or corruptions, Jude 1:14-16. And that they may be taken off from all false confidences, and rest wholly upon God, and only upon God, and always upon God; and for the praise and honour of the power, wisdom, skill, mercy, and goodness of the physician of our souls, that can heal, help, and cure when the disease is most dangerous, when the soul is relapsed, and grows worse and worse, and when others say, 'There is no help for him in his God,' and when his own heart and hopes are dying.²

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there are relapses into enormities, and there are relapses into infirmities. Now it is not usual with God to leave his people frequently to relapse into enormities; for by his Spirit and grace, by his smiles and frowns, by his word and rod, he doth usually preserve his people from a frequent relapsing into enormities; yet he doth leave his choicest ones frequently to relapse into infirmities (and of his grace he pardons them in course), as idle words, passion, vain thoughts, &c. Though gracious souls strive against these, and complain of these, and weep over these, yet the Lord, to keep them humble, leaves them frequently to relapse into these; and these frequent relapses into infirmities shall never be their bane, because they be their burden.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there are involuntary relapses, and there are voluntary relapses. Involuntary relapses are, when the

resolution and full bent of the heart is against sin, when the soul strives with all its might against sin, by sighs and groans, by prayers and tears, and yet out of weakness is forced to fall back into sin, because there is not spiritual strength enough to overcome. Now, though involuntary relapses must humble us, yet they must never discourage nor defect us; for God will freely and readily pardon those, in course. Voluntary relapses are, when the soul longs and loves to 'return to the flesh-pots of Egypt,' Exo 16:3; when it is a pleasure and a pastime to a man to return to his old courses, such voluntary relapses speak out the man blinded, hardened, and ripened for ruin, &c.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there is no such power, or infinite virtue, in the greatest horror or sorrow the soul can be under for sin, nor in the sweetest or choicest discoveries of God's grace and love to the soul, as for ever to fence and secure the soul from relapsing into the same sin. Grace is but a created habit, that may be prevailed against by the secret, subtle, and strong workings of sin in our hearts; and those discoveries that God makes of his love, beauty, and glory to the soul, do not always abide in their freshness and power upon the heart; but by degrees they fade and wear off, and then the soul may return again to folly, as we see in Peter, who, after he had a glorious testimony from Christ's own mouth of his blessedness and happiness, labours to prevent Christ from going up to Jerusalem to suffer, out of bare slavish fears that he and his fellows could not be secure, if his Master should be brought to suffer, Mat 16:15-19, and Mat 16:22-24. And again, after this, Christ had him up into the mount, and there shewed him his beauty and his glory, to strengthen him against the hour of temptation that was coming upon him; and yet, soon after he had the honour and happiness of seeing the glory of the Lord (which most of his disciples had not), he basely and most shamefully denies the Lord of glory, thinking by that means to provide for his own safety; and yet again, after Christ had broke his heart with a look of love for his most unlovely dealings, and bade them that were first acquainted with his resurrection to 'go and tell Peter that he was risen,' Mark 16:7; I say, after all this, slavish fears prevail upon him, and he basely dissembles, and plays the Jew with the Jews, and the Gentile with the Gentiles, to the seducing of Barnabas, &c., Gal 2:11-13.

Yet, by way of caution, know, it is very rare that God doth leave his beloved ones frequently to relapse into one and the same gross sin; for the law of nature is in arms against gross sins, as well as the law of grace, so that a gracious soul cannot, dares not, will not, frequently return to gross folly. And God hath made even his dearest ones dearly smart for their relapses, as may be seen by his dealings with Samson, Jehoshaphat, and Peter. Ah, Lord! what a hard heart hath that man, that can see thee stripping and whipping thy dearest ones for their relapses, and yet make nothing of returning to folly, &c. The eighth device that Satan hath to keep souls in a sad, doubting, and questionable condition, is,

Device (8). By persuading them that their estate is not good, their hearts are not upright, their graces are not sound, because they are so followed, vexed, and tormented with temptations. It is his method, first to weary and vex thy soul with temptations, and then to tempt the soul, that surely it is not beloved, because it is so much tempted. And by this stratagem he keeps many precious souls in a sad, doubting, and mourning temper many years, as many of the precious sons of Sion have found by woful experience, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That those that have been best and most beloved, have been most tempted by Satan. Though Satan can never rob a Christian of his crown, yet such is his malice, that he will therefore tempt, that he may spoil them of their comforts. Such is his enmity to the Father, that the nearer and dearer any child is to him, the more will Satan trouble him, and vex him with temptations. Christ himself was most near and most dear, most innocent and most excellent, and yet none so much tempted as Christ. David was dearly beloved, and yet by Satan tempted to number the people. Job was highly praised by God himself, and yet much tempted; witness those sad things that fell from his mouth, when he was wet to the skin. Peter was much prized by Christ; witness that choice testimony that Christ gave of his faith and happiness, and his shewing him his glory in the mount, and that eye of pity that he cast upon him after his fearful fall, &c., and yet tempted by Satan. 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail thee not,' &c., Luk 22:31-32.

Paul had the honour of being exalted as high as heaven, and of seeing that glory that could not be expressed; and yet he was no sooner stepped out of heaven, but he is buffeted by Satan, 'lest he should be exalted above measure,' 2Co 12:2, 2Co 12:7. If these, that were so really, so gloriously, so eminently beloved of God, if these, that have lived in heaven, and set their feet upon the stars, have been tempted, let no saints judge themselves not to be beloved, because they are tempted. It is as natural for saints to be tempted, that are dearly beloved, as it is for the sun to shine, or a bird to sing. The eagle complains not of her wings, nor the peacock of his train, nor the nightingale of her voice, because these are natural to them; no more should saints of their temptations, because they are natural to them. 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,' Eph 6:12.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That all the temptations that befall the saints shall be sanctified to them by a hand of love. Ah! the choice experiences that the saints get of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them (so to handle their spiritual weapons, their graces, as not only to resist, but to overcome), of the mercy and goodness of the Lord pardoning and succouring of them. And therefore, saith Paul, 'I received the messenger of Satan for to buffet me, lest I should be exalted, lest I should be exalted above measure,' 2Co 12:7. Twice in that verse; he begins with it, and ends with it. If he had not been buffeted, who knows how his heart would have swelled; he might have been carried higher in conceit, than before he was in his ecstasy. Temptation is God's school, wherein he gives his people the clearest and sweetest discoveries of his love; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more frequent and fervent in duty. When Paul was buffeted, then he prayed thrice, i. e. frequently and fervently; a school wherein God teaches his people to be more tender, meek, and compassionate to other poor, tempted souls than ever; a school wherein God teaches his people to see a greater evil in sin than ever, and a greater emptiness in the creature than ever, and a greater need of Christ and free grace than ever; a school wherein God will teach his people that all temptations are but his goldsmiths, by which he will try and refine, and make his people more bright and glorious. The issue of all temptations shall be to the good of the saints, as you may see by the temptations that Adam and Eve, and Christ and David, and Job and Peter and Paul met with. Those hands of power and love, that bring light out of darkness, good out of evil,

sweet out of bitter, life out of death, heaven out of hell, will bring much sweet and good to his people, out of all the temptations that come upon them.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, That no temptations do hurt or harm the saints, so long as they are resisted by them, and prove the greatest afflictions that can befall them. It is not Satan's tempting, but your assenting; not his enticing, but your yielding, that makes temptations hurtful to your soul. If the soul when it is tempted resists temptation, and saith with Christ, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat 16:23; and with that young convert, 'I am not the man I was,'—ego non sum ego—or as Luther counsels all men to answer all temptations with these words—Christianus sum—I am a Christian. If a man's temptation be his greatest affliction, then is the temptation no sin upon his soul, though it be a trouble upon his mind. When a soul can look the Lord in the face, and say, Ah, Lord! I have many outward troubles upon me, I have lost such and such a near mercy, and such and such desirable mercies; and yet thou that knowest the heart, thou knowest that all my crosses and losses do not make so many wounds in my soul, nor fetch so many sighs from my heart, tears from my eyes, as those temptations do that Satan follows my soul with! When it is thus with the soul, then temptations are only the soul's trouble, they are not the soul's sin.

Satan is a malicious and envious enemy. As his names are, so is he; his names are all names of enmity; the accuser, the tempter, the destroyer, the devourer, the envious man; and this malice and envy of his he shews sometimes by tempting men to such sins as are quite contrary to the temperature of their bodies, as he did Vespasian and Julian, men of sweet and excellent natures, to be most bloody murderers. And sometimes he shews his malice by tempting men to such things as will bring them no honour nor profit, &c. 'Fall down and worship me.' Mat 4:9, to blasphemy, and atheism, &c., the thoughts and first motions whereof cause the heart and flesh to tremble. And sometimes he shews his malice by tempting them to those sins which they have not found their natures prone to, and which they abhor in others. Now, if the soul resists these, and complains of these, and groans and mourns under these, and looks up to the Lord Jesus to be delivered from these, then shall they not be put down to the soul's account, but to Satan's, who shall be so much the more tormented, by how much the more the saints have been by him maliciously tempted, &c.

Make present and peremptory resistance against Satan's temptations, bid defiance to the temptation at first sight. It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve lost herself and her posterity by falling into lists of dispute, when she should have resisted, and stood upon terms of defiance with Satan. He that would stand in the hour of temptation must plead with Christ, 'It is written.' He that would triumph over temptations must plead still, 'It is written.'² Satan is bold and impudent, and if you are not peremptory in your resistance, he will give you fresh onsets. It is your greatest honour, and your highest wisdom, peremptorily to withstand the beginnings of a temptation, for an after-remedy comes often too late.

Mrs Catherine Bretterge once, after a great conflict with Satan, said, 'Reason not with me, I am but a weak woman; if thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; he is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall plead for me.'

Men must not seek to resist Satan's craft with craft, sed per apertum Martem, but by open defiance. He shoots with Satan in his own bow, who thinks by disputing and reasoning to put him off. As soon as a temptation shews its face, say to the temptation, as Ephraim to his idols, 'Get you

hence, what have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8. Oh! say to the temptation, as David said to the sons of Zeruiah, 'What have I to do with you?' 2Sa 16:10. You will be too hard for me. He that doth thus resist temptations, shall never be undone by temptations, &c.

Make strong and constant resistance against Satan's temptations. Make resistance against temptations by arguments drawn from the honour of God, the love of God, your union and communion with God; and from the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the kindness of Christ, the intercession of Christ, and the glory of Christ; and from the voice of the Spirit, the counsel of the Spirit, the comforts of the Spirit, the presence of the Spirit, the seal of the Spirit, the whisperings of the Spirit, the commands of the Spirit, the assistance of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit; and from the glory of heaven, the excellency of grace, the beauty of holiness, the worth of the soul, and the vileness or bitterness and evil of sin—the least sin being a greater evil than the greatest temptation in the world. And look that you make constant resistance, as well as strong resistance; be constant in arms. Satan will come on with new temptations when old ones are too weak. In a calm prepare for a storm. The tempter is restless, impudent, and subtle; he will suit his temptations to your constitutions and inclinations. Satan loves to sail with the wind. If your knowledge be weak, he will tempt you to error; if your conscience be tender, he will tempt you to scrupulosity and too much preciseness, as to do nothing but hear, pray, read, &c.; if your consciences be wide and large, he will tempt you to carnal security; if you are bold-spirited, he will tempt you to presumption; if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if proud and stiff, to gross folly; therefore still fit for fresh assaults, make one victory a step to another. When you have overcome a temptation, take heed of unbending your bow, and look well to it, that your bow be always bent, and that it remains in strength. When you have overcome one temptation, you must be ready to enter the list² with another. As distrust in some sense is the mother of safety, so security is the gate of danger. A man had need to fear this most of all, that he fears not at all. If Satan be always roaring, we should be always a-watching and resisting of him. And certainly he that makes strong and constant resistance of Satan's temptations, shall in the end get above his temptations, and for the present is secure enough from being ruined by his temptations, &c. For a close of this, remember, that it is dangerous to yield to the least sin to be rid of the greatest temptation. To take this course were as if a man should think to wash himself clean in ink, or as if a man should exchange a light cross, made of paper, for an iron cross, which is heavy, toilsome, and bloody. The least sin set home upon the conscience, will more wound, vex, and oppress the soul, than all the temptations in the world can; therefore never yield to the least sin to be rid of the greatest temptation. Sidonius Apollinarius relateth how a certain man named Maximus, arriving at the top of honour by indirect means, was the first day very much wearied, and fetching a deep sigh, said, 'Oh, Damocles! how happy do I esteem of thee, for having been a king but the space of a dinner! I have been one whole day, and can bear it no longer.'⁴ I will leave you to make the application.

IV. The fourth thing to be shewed is, The several ways and devices that Satan hath to destroy and ensnare all sorts and ranks of men in the world.

I shall begin with the honourable and the great, and shew you the devices that Satan hath to destroy them. I will only instance in those that are most considerable.

Device (1). His first device to destroy the great and honourable of the earth is, By working them to make it their business to seek themselves, to seek how to greaten themselves, to raise

themselves, to enrich themselves, to secure themselves, &c., as you may see in Pharaoh, Ahab, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Absalom, Joab, Haman, &c. But were the Scripture silent, our own experiences do abundantly evidence this way and method of Satan to destroy the great and the honourable; to bury their names in the dust, and their souls in hell, by drawing them wholly to mind themselves, and only to mind themselves, and in all things to mind themselves, and always to mind themselves. 'All,' saith the apostle, 'mind themselves,' Php 2:21. All comparatively, in respect of the paucity of others, that let fall their private interests, and drown all self-respects in the glory of God and the public good, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these,

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That self-seeking is a sin that will put men upon a world of sins, upon sins not only against the law of God, the rules of the gospel, but that are against the very laws of nature, that are so much darkened by the fall of man. It puts the Pharisees upon opposing Christ, and Judas upon betraying Christ, and Pilate upon condemning Christ. It puts Gehazi upon lying, and Balaam upon cursing, and Saul and Absalom upon plotting David's ruin. It put Pharaoh and Haman upon contriving ways to destroy those Jews that God did purpose to save by his mighty arm. It puts men upon using wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights. It puts men upon ways of oppression, and 'selling the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes,' &c., Amo 2:6. I know not any sin in the world but this sin of self-seeking will put men upon it, though it be their eternal loss.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That self-seeking doth exceedingly abase a man. It strips him of all his royalty and glory. Of a lord it makes a man become a servant to the creature, ay, often to the worst of creatures; yea, a slave to slaves, as you may see in Judas, Demas, Balaam, and the Scribes and Pharisees. Self-seekers bow down to the creatures, as Gideon's many thousands bowed down to the waters. Self-seeking will make a man say anything, do anything, and be anything, to please the lusts of others, and to get advantages upon others. Self-seeking transforms a man into all shapes and forms; now it makes a man appear as an angel of light, anon as an angel of darkness.⁴ Now self-seekers are seemingly for God, anon they are openly against God; now you shall have them crying, 'Hosanna in the highest,' and anon, 'Crucify him, crucify him;' now you shall have them build with the saints, and anon you shall have them plotting the overthrow of the saints, as those self-seekers did in Ezra and Nehemiah's time. Self-seekers are the basest of all persons. There is no service so base, so poor, so low, but they will bow to it. They cannot look neither above, nor beyond their own lusts, and the enjoyment of the creature, Rom 1:25. These are the prime and ultimate objects of their intendments.

It is said of Tiberius, 'that whilst Augustus ruled, he was no way tainted in his reputation, and that while Drusus and Germanicus were alive, he feigned those virtues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people; but after he had got himself out of the reach of contradiction and controlment, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessory.' My prayer shall be, that Tiberius his spirit may not be found in any of our rulers, lest it prove their ruin, as it did his; and that wherever it is, it may be detected, loathed, and ejected, that so neither the state nor souls may be ruined by it, &c.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly To dwell upon those dreadful curses and woes that are from heaven denounced against self-seekers. 'Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth,' Isa 5:8. So Habakkuk, Hab 2:6, Hab 2:9-12, 'Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his, and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay!' 'Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!' The materials of the house built up by oppression shall come as joint witnesses. The stones of the wall shall cry, 'Lord, we were built up by blood and violence; and the beam shall answer, True, Lord, even so it is.' The stones shall cry, Vengeance, Lord! upon these self-seekers! and the beam shall answer, Woe to him, because he built his house with blood! So Isaiah, 'Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless,' Isa 10:1-2. So Amos, 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came; that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the middle of the stall; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph,' Amo 6:1, Amo 6:3-6. So Micah, 'Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence, and houses, and take them away. So they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage,' Mic 2:1-2. By these scriptures, you see that self-seekers labour like a woman in travail, but their birth proves their death, their pleasure their pain, their comforts their torment, their glory their shame, their exaltation their desolation. Loss, disgrace, trouble and shame, vexation and confusion, will be the certain portion of self-seekers. When the Tartarians had taken in battle the Duke of Muscovia, they made a cup of his skull, with this inscription, 'All covet, all lose.'

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That self-seekers are self-losers and self-destroyers. Absalom and Judas seek themselves, and hang themselves. Saul seeks himself, and kills himself. Ahab seeks himself, and loses himself, his crown and kingdom. Pharaoh seeks himself, and overthrows himself and his mighty army in the Red Sea. Cain sought himself, and slew two at once, his brother and his own soul. Gehazi sought change of raiment, but God changed his raiment into a leprous skin. Haman sought himself, and lost himself. The princes and presidents sought themselves, in the ruin of Daniel, but ruined themselves, their wives and children. That which self-seekers think should be a staff to support them, becomes by the hand of justice an iron rod to break them; that which they would have as springs to refresh them, becomes a gulf utterly to consume them. The crosses of self-seekers shall always exceed their mercies: their pain their pleasure; their torments their comforts. Every self-seeker is a self-tormentor, a self-destroyer; he carries a hell, an executioner, in his own bosom, &c.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell much upon the famous examples of those worthy saints that have denied themselves and preferred the public good before their own particular advantage. As Moses, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Let me alone, that I may destroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they,' Deu 9:14. Oh! but this offer would not take with Moses, he being a man of a brave public spirit. It is hot in his desires and prayers that the people might be spared and pardoned; saith he, 'Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word,' Deu 9:26, et seq. Ah! should God make such an offer to many that write themselves Moses, and are called by many, Moses, I am afraid they would prefer their own advantage above the public good; they would not care what become of the people, so they and theirs might be made great and glorious in the world; they would not care so they might have a Babel built for them, though it was upon the ashes and ruin of the people. Baser spirits than these are not in hell; no, not in hell; and I am sure there are no such spirits in heaven. Such men's hearts and principles must be changed, or they will be undone for ever. Nehemiah was a choice soul, a man of a brave public spirit, a man that spent his time, his strength, and his estate, for the good and ease of his people. 'Moreover,' saith he, 'from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall: and all my servants were gathered hither unto the work. Moreover, there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us. Now, that which was prepared for me daily was one ox, and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required I not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people. Think upon me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people,' Neh 5:14-19. So Daniel was a man of a brave public spirit: 'Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God,' Dan 6:4-5.

Christ had a public spirit, he laid out himself, and laid down himself for a public good. Oh! never leave looking and meditating upon these precious and sweet examples till your souls are quickened and raised up, to act for the public good, more than for your own particular advantage. Many heathens have been excellent at this.

Macrobius writes of Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, that he carried such an entire and fatherly affection to the commonwealth, that he called it *filiam suam*, his own daughter; and therefore refused to be called *Dominus*, the lord or master of his country, and would only be called *Pater patriæ*, father of his country, because he governed it not by fear, *per timorem*, sed *per amorem*, but by love; the senate and the people of Rome jointly saluting him by the name of *Pater patriæ*, father of his country. The people very much lamented his death, using that speech, 'Would he had never been born, or never died.' So Marcus Regulus, to save his country from ruin, exposed himself to the greatest sufferings that the malice and rage of his enemies could inflict. So Titus and Aristides, and many others, have been famous for their preferring the public good above

their own advantage. My prayer is, and shall be, that all our rulers may be so spirited by God, that they may be willing to be anything, to be nothing, to deny themselves, and to trample their sinful selves under feet, in order to the honour of God, and a public good; that so neither saints nor heathens may be witnesses against them in that day, wherein the hearts and practices of all the rulers in the world shall be open and bare before him that judges the world in righteousness and judgment.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That self is a great let to divine things; therefore the prophets and apostles were usually carried out of themselves, when they had the clearest, choicest, highest, and most glorious visions. Self-seeking blinds the soul that it cannot see a beauty in Christ, nor an excellency in holiness; it distempers the palate that a man cannot taste sweetness in the word of God, nor in the ways of God, nor in the society of the people of God. It shuts the hand against all the soul-enriching offers of Christ; it hardens the heart against all the knocks and entreaties of Christ; it makes the soul as an empty vine, and as a barren wilderness: 'Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit to himself,' Hos 10:1. There is nothing that speaks a man to be more empty and void of God, Christ, and grace, than self-seeking. The Pharisees were great self-seekers, and great undervalues of Christ, his word and Spirit. There is not a greater hindrance to all the duties of piety than self-seeking. Oh! this is that that keeps many a soul from looking after God and the precious things of eternity. They cannot wait on God, nor act for God, nor abide in those ways wherein they might meet with God, by reason of self. Self-seeking is that which puts many a man upon neglecting and slighting the things of his peace. Self-seekers will neither go into heaven themselves, nor suffer others to enter, that are ready to take the kingdom by violence, as you may see in the Scribes and Pharisees. Oh! but a gracious spirit is acted quite other ways, as you may see in that sweet scripture, Song of Solomon 7:13, 'At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O beloved.' All the church hath and is, is only for him. Let others bear fruit to themselves, and lay up for themselves, gracious spirits will hide for Christ and lay up for Christ. All the divine endeavours and productions of saints fall into God's bosom, and empty themselves into his lap. As Christ lays up his merits for them, his graces for them, his comforts for them, his crown for them, so they lay up all their fruits, and all their loves, all their graces, and all their experiences, and all their services, only for him who is the soul of their comforts, and the crown and top of all their royalty and glory, &c. The second device that Satan hath to ensnare and destroy the great and honourable of the earth is,

Device (2). By engaging them against the people of the Most High, against those that are his jewels, his pleasant portion, the delight of his eye and the joy of his heart. Thus he drew Pharaoh to engage against the children of Israel, and that was his overthrow, Exo 14:1-31. So he engaged Haman against the Jews, and so brought him to hang upon that gallows that he had made for Mordecai, Est 7:1-10. So he engaged those princes and presidents against Daniel, which was the utter ruin of them and their relations, Dan 6:1-28. So in Rev 20:7-9, 'And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And he shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. And they went up upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from heaven and consumed them.'

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That none have engaged against the saints, but have been ruined by the God of saints. Divine justice hath been too hard for all that have opposed and engaged against the saints, as is evident in Saul, Pharaoh, Haman, &c: 'He reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, nor do my prophets no harm,' Psa 105:15. When men of Balaam spirits and principles have been engaged against the saints, how hath the angel of the Lord met them in the way, and justled their bones against the wall! how hath he broke their backs and necks, and by his drawn sword cut them off in the prime of their days, and in the height of their sins! Ah! what a harvest hath hell had in our days, of those who have engaged against the Lamb, and those that are called chosen and faithful! Ah! how hath divine justice poured out their blood as water upon the ground! how hath he laid their honour and glory in the dust, who, in the pride and madness of their hearts, said, as Pharaoh, 'We will pursue we will overtake, we will divide the spoil, our lusts shall be satisfied upon them. We will draw our sword, our hand shall destroy them,' Exo 15:9. In the things wherein they have spoken and done proudly, justice hath been above them. History abounds in nothing more than in instances of this kind, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell some time every morning upon the following scriptures, wherein God hath engaged himself to stand by his people and for his people, and to make them victorious over the greatest and wisest of their enemies. Associate yourselves, saith the Lord by the prophet, 'O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.' 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the holy One of Israel.' 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.' 'Now also many nations are gathered together against thee that say, Let us be defiled, and let our eye look upon Sion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel; for he shall gather them as sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Sion: I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoof brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people, and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.' 'Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege, both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.'

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That you cannot engage against the saints, but you must engage against God himself, by reason of that near and blessed union that is between God and them. You cannot be fighters against the saints, but you will be found in the casting up of the account to be fighters against God himself. And what greater madness than for weakness itself to engage against an almighty strength! The near union that is

between the Lord and believers, is set forth by that near union that is betwixt a husband and his wife. 'They two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church; we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,' saith the apostle, Eph 5:32. This near union is set forth by that union that is between the head and the members, which make up one body, and by that union that is betwixt the graff and the stock, which are made one by insition. The union between the Lord and a believer is so near, that you cannot strike a believer, but the Lord is sensible of it, and takes it as done to himself. 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts 9:4; and 'in all their afflictions he was afflicted,' &c., Isa 63:9. Ah, souls! who ever engaged against God and prospered? who ever took up the sword against him but perished by it? God can speak you to hell and nod you to hell at pleasure. It is your greatest concernment to lay down your weapons at his feet, and to 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the midway,' Psa 2:12.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That you are much engaged to the saints, as instruments for the mercies that you do enjoy, and for the preventing and removing of many a judgment that otherwise might have been your ruin before this day. Were it not for the saints' sake, God would quickly make the heavens to be as brass and the earth as iron; God would quickly strip thee of thy robes and glory, and set thee upon the dunghill with Job. They are the props that bear the world from falling about thy ears, and that keep the iron rod from breaking of thy bones. 'Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them,' Psa 106:23.

Ah! had not the saints many a time cast themselves into the breach betwixt God's wrath and you, you had been cut off from the land of the living, and had had your portion with those whose names are written in the dust. Many a nation, many a city, and many a family, is surrounded with blessings for the Josephs' sakes that live therein, and are preserved from many calamities and miseries for the Moseses', the Daniels', the Noahs', and the Jobs' sakes, that dwell amongst them. That is a sweet word, Pro 10:25, 'As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation, or is the foundation of the world.' The righteous is the foundation of the world, which but for their sakes would soon shatter and fall to ruin. So the psalmist: Psa 75:3, 'The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.' The emperor Marcus Antoninus being in Almany with his army, was enclosed in a dry country by his enemies, who so stopped all the passages that he and his army were like to perish for want of water. The emperor's lieutenant seeing him so distressed, told him that he had heard that the Christians could obtain any thing of their God by their prayers, whereupon the emperor, having a legion of Christians in his army, desired them to pray to their God for his and the army's delivery out of that danger, which they presently did, and presently a great thunder fell amongst the enemies, and abundance of water upon the Romans, whereby their thirst was quenched, and the enemies overthrown without any fight.⁴ I shall close up this last remedy with those sweet words of the psalmist: 'In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah,' Psa 76:1-3.

Secondly, Satan hath his devices to ensnare and destroy the learned and the wise, and that sometimes by working them, to pride themselves in their parts and abilities; and sometimes by

drawing them to rest upon their parts and abilities; and sometimes by causing them to make light and slight of those that want their parts and abilities, though they excel them in grace and holiness; and sometimes by drawing them to engage their parts and abilities in those ways and things that make against the honour of Christ, the joy of the Spirit, the advancement of the gospel, and the liberty of the saints, &c. 7 Now the remedies against this device are these.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That you have nothing but what you have received, Christ being as well the fountain of common gifts as of saving grace. 'What hast thou,' saith the apostle, 'that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it?' 1Co 4:7. There are those that would hammer out their own happiness, like the spider climbing up by the thread of her own weaving. Of all the parts and abilities that be in you, you may well say as the young man did of his hatchet, 'Alas, master! it was but borrowed,' 2Ki 6:5. Alas, Lord! all I have is but borrowed from that fountain that fills all the vessels in heaven and on earth, and it overflows. My gifts are not so much mine as thine: 'Of thine own have we offered unto thee,' said that princely prophet, &c., 1Ch 29:14.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That men's leaning and trusting to their own wits, parts, and abilities, have been their utter overthrow and ruin; as you may see in Ahithophel, and those presidents and princes that engaged against Daniel, and in the Scribes and Pharisees. God loves to confute men in their confidences. He that stands upon his parts and abilities, doth but stand upon a quicksand that will certainly fail him. There is nothing in the world that provokes God more to withdraw from the soul than this; and how can the soul stand, when his strength is departed from him? Everything that a man leans upon but God, will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. Ah! how many in these days have lost their estates, their friends, their lives, their souls, by leaning upon their admired parts and abilities! The saints are described by their leaning upon their beloved, the Lord Jesus, Song of Solomon 8:5. He that leans only upon the bosom of Christ, lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life. Miseries always lie at that man's door that leans upon anything below the precious bosom of Christ; such a man is most in danger, and this is none of his least plagues, that he thinks himself secure. It is the greatest wisdom in the world to take the wise man's counsel: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding,' Pro 3:5.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That you do not transcend others more in parts and abilities, than they do you in grace and holiness. There may be, and often is, great parts and abilities, where there is but little grace, yea, no grace; and there may be, and often is, a great deal of grace, where there is but weak parts and abilities. You may be higher than others in gifts of knowledge, utterance, learning, &c., and those very souls may be higher than you in their communion with God, in their delighting in God, in their dependence upon God, in their affections to God, and in their humble, holy, and unblameable walking before God.⁴ Is it folly and madness in a man, to make light and slight of another, because he is not so rich in lead or iron as he, when he is a thousand thousand times richer in silver and gold, in jewels and in pearls, than he? And is it not madness and folly with a witness, in those that have greater parts and abilities than others, to slight them upon that account, when that those very persons that they make light and slight of have a thousand times more grace than they? And yet, ah! how doth this evil spirit prevail in the world!

It was the sad complaint of Austin in his time: 'The unlearned,' saith he, 'rise up and take heaven by violence, and we with all our learning are thrust down to hell.' It is sad to see how many of the rabbis of these times do make an idol of their parts and abilities, and with what an eye of pride, scorn, and contempt do they look upon those that want their parts, and that do not worship the idol that they have set up in their own hearts. Paul, who was the great doctor of the Gentiles, did wonderfully transcend in all parts and abilities the doctors and rabbis of our times, and yet, ah! how humbly, how tenderly, how sweetly, doth he carry himself towards the meanest and the weakest! 'To the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some,' 1Co 9:22. 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,' 1Co 8:13. But, ah! how little of this sweet spirit is to be found in the doctors of our age, who look sourly and speak bitterly against those that do not see as they see, nor cannot speak as they speak. Sirs! the Spirit of the Lord, even in despised saints, will be too hard for you, and his appearance in them, in these latter days, will be so full of spiritual beauty and glory, as that they will darken that, that you are too apt to count and call your glory. The Spirit of the Lord will not suffer his choicest jewel grace to be always buried under the straw and stubble of parts and gifts, Isa 60:13-17.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That there is no such way for men to have their gifts and parts blasted and withered, as to pride themselves in them, as to rest upon them, as to make light and slight of those that want them, as to engage them against those persons, ways, and things, that Jesus Christ hath set his heart upon. Ah! how hath God blasted and withered the parts and abilities of many among us, that have once been famous shining lights! How is their sun darkened, and their glory clouded! 'How is the sword of the Lord upon their arm, and upon their right eye! how is their arm clean dried up, and their light eye utterly darkened!' as the prophet speaks, Zec 11:17. This is matter of humiliation and lamentation. Many precious discerning saints do see this, and in secret mourn for it; and oh! that they were kindly sensible of God's withdrawing from them, that they may repent, keep humble, and carry it sweetly towards God's jewels, and lean only upon the Lord, and not upon their parts and understanding, that so the Lord may delight to visit them with his grace at such a rate as that their faces may shine more gloriously than ever, and that they may be more serviceable to the honour of Christ, and the faith of the saints, than formerly they have been, &c.

Thirdly, Satan hath his devices to destroy the saints; and one great device that he hath to destroy the saints is, By working them first to be strange, and then to divide, and then to be bitter and jealous, and then 'to bite and devour one another,' Gal 5:15. Our own woful experience is too great a proof of this. The Israelites in Egypt did not more vex one another than Christians in these days have done, which occasioned a deadly consumption to fall upon some.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell more upon one another's graces than upon one another's weaknesses and infirmities. It is sad to consider that saints should have many eyes to behold one another's infirmities, and not one eye to see each other's graces, that they should use spectacles to behold one another's weaknesses, rather than looking-glasses to behold one another's graces.

Erasmus tells of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homer's works, but passed over all that was excellent. Ah! that this were not the practice of many that shall at last meet in heaven, that they were not careful and skilful to collect all the weaknesses of others, and to pass over all those things that are excellent in them. The Corinthians did eye more the incestuous person's sin than his sorrow, which was like to have drowned him in sorrow.

Tell me, saints, is it not a more sweet, comfortable, and delightful thing to look more upon one another's graces than upon one another's infirmities? Tell me what pleasure, what delight, what comfort is there in looking upon the enemies, the wounds, the sores, the sickness, the diseases, the nakedness of our friends? Now sin, you know, is the soul's enemy, the soul's wound, the soul's sores, the soul's sickness, the soul's disease, the soul's nakedness; and ah! what a heart hath that man that loves thus to look! Grace is the choicest flower in all a Christian's garden; it is the richest jewel in all his crown; it is his princely robes; it is the top of royalty; and therefore must needs be the most pleasing, sweet, and delightful object for a gracious eye to be fixed upon. Sin is darkness, grace is light; sin is hell, grace is heaven; and what madness is it to look more at darkness than at light, more at hell than at heaven!

Tell me, saints, doth not God look more upon his people's graces than upon their weaknesses? Surely he doth. He looks more at David's and Asaph's uprightness than upon their infirmities, though they were great and many. He eyes more Job's patience than his passion. 'Remember the patience of Job,' not a word of his impatience, Jas 5:11. He that drew Alexander whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. God puts his fingers upon his people's sears, that no blemish may appear. Ah! saints, that you would make it the top of your glory in this, to be like your heavenly Father. By so doing, much sin would be prevented, the designs of wicked men frustrated, Satan outwitted, many wounds healed, many sad hearts cheered, and God more abundantly honoured, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That love and union makes most for your own safety and security. We shall be insuperables if we be inseparables, invincible if we be inseparable. The world may frown upon you, and plot against you, but they cannot hurt you. Unity is the best bond of safety in every church and commonwealth. And this did that Scythian king in Plutarch represent lively to his eighty sons, who, being ready to die, he commanded a bundle of arrows fast bound together to be given to his sons to break; they all tried to break them, but, being bound fast together, they could not; then he caused the band to be cut, and then they broke them with ease. He applied it thus: 'My sons, so long as you keep together, you will be invincible; but if the band of union be broke betwixt you, you will easily be broken in pieces.'

Pliny writes of a stone in the island of Scyros, that if it be whole, though a large and heavy one, it swims above water, but being broken, it sinks. So long as saints keep whole, nothing shall sink them; but if they break, they are in danger of sinking and drowning, &c.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon those commands of God that do require you to love one another. Oh! when your hearts begin to rise against each other, charge the commands of God upon your hearts, and say to your souls, O our souls! hath not the eternal God commanded you to love them that love the Lord? And is it not life to obey, and death to rebel? Therefore look that you fulfil the commands of the Lord, for his commands are not

like those that are easily reversed; but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed. Oh! be much in pondering upon these commands of God. 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another,' John 13:34. It is called a new commandment, because it is renewed in the gospel, and set home by Christ's example, and because it is rare, choice, special, and remarkable above all others. 'This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.' 'These things I command you, that ye love one another.' 'Owe no man any thing, but love one another: for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law.' 'Let brotherly love continue.' 'Love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.' 'See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' 'Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' 'For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.' 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.' 'Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another.' Oh! dwell much upon these precious commands, that your love may be inflamed one to another. In the primitive times, it was much taken notice of by the heathens, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians, otherwise strangers, stuck one to another, whose love of religion proved firmer than that of nature. Ah! that there were more of that spirit among the saints in these days. The world was once destroyed with water for the heat of lusts, and it is thought it will be again destroyed with fire for the coldness of love.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell more upon these choice and sweet things wherein you agree, than upon those things wherein you differ. Ah! did you but thus, how would sinful heats be abated, and your love raised, and your spirits sweetened one to another. You agree in most, you differ but in a few; you agree in the greatest and weightiest, as concerning God, Christ, the Spirit, the Scripture, &c. You differ only in those points that have been long disputable amongst men of greatest piety and parts. You agree to own the Scripture, to hold to Christ the head, and to walk according to the law of the new creature. Shall Herod and Pilate agree? Shall Turks and pagans agree? Shall bears and lions, tigers and wolves, yea, shall a legion of devils, agree in one body? And shall not saints agree, who differ only in such things as have least of the heart of God in them, and that shall never hinder your meeting in heaven? &c.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That God delights to be styled Deus pacis, the God of peace; and Christ to be styled Princeps pacis, the Prince of peace, and King of Salem, that is, King of peace; and the Spirit is a Spirit of peace. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,' Gal 5:22. Oh! why then should not the saints be children of peace? Certainly, men of froward, unquiet, fiery spirits, cannot have that sweet evidence of their interest in the God of peace, and in the Prince of peace, and in the Spirit of peace, as those precious souls have that follow after the things that make for love and peace. The very name of peace is sweet and comfortable; the fruit and effect thereof pleasant and profitable, more to be desired than innumerable triumphs; it is a blessing that ushers in a multitude of other blessings, 2Co 13:11; Isa 9:6. The ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand. Ah! peace and love among the saints, is that which will secure them and their mercies at home; yea, it will multiply their mercies; it will engage the God of mercy to crown them with the choicest mercies; and it is that that will render them most terrible, invincible, and

successful abroad. Love and peace among the saints is that which puts the counsels of their enemies to a stand, and renders all their enterprises abortive; it is that which doth most weaken their hands, wound their hopes, and kill their hearts, &c.

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, To make more care and conscience of keeping up your peace with God. Ah! Christians, I am afraid that your remissness herein is that which hath occasioned much of that sourness, bitterness, and divisions that be among you. Ah! you have not, as you should, kept up your peace with God, and therefore it is that you do so dreadfully break the peace among yourselves. The Lord hath promised, 'That when a man's ways please him, he will make his enemies to be at peace with him,' Pro 16:7. Ah! how much more then would God make the children of peace to keep the peace among themselves, if their ways do but please him! All creatures are at his beck and check. Laban followed Jacob with one troop. Esau met him with another, both with hostile intentions; but Jacob's ways pleasing the Lord, God by his mighty power so works that Laban leaves him with a kiss, and Esau met him with a kiss; he hath an oath of one, tears of the other, peace with both. If we make it our business to keep up our league with God, God will make it his work and his glory to maintain our peace with men; but if men make light of keeping up their peace with God, it is just with God to leave them to a spirit of pride, envy, passion, contention, division, and confusion, to leave them 'to bite and devour one another, till they be consumed one of another,' &c.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell much upon that near relation and union that is between you. This consideration had a sweet influence upon Abraham's heart: 'And Abraham said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren,' Gen 13:8. That is a sweet word in the psalmist, 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to live together in unity,' Psa 133:1. It is not good and not pleasant, or pleasant and not good, but good and pleasant. There be some things that be bona sed non jucunda, good and not pleasant, as patience and discipline; and there be some things that are pleasant but not good, as carnal pleasures, voluptuousness, &c. And there are some things that are neither good nor pleasant, as malice, envy, worldly sorrow, &c.; and there are some things that are both good and pleasant, as piety, charity, peace, and union among brethren; and oh! that we could see more of this among those that shall one day meet in their Father's kingdom and never part. And as they are brethren, so they are all fellow-members: 'Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular,' 1Co 12:27. And again: 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,' Eph 5:30. Shall the members of the natural body be serviceable and useful to one another, and shall the members of this spiritual body cut and destroy one another? Is it against the law of nature for the natural members to cut and slash one another? And is it not much more against the law of nature and of grace for the members of Christ's glorious body to do so? And as you are all fellow-members, so you are fellow-soldiers under the same Captain of salvation, the Lord Jesus, fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. And as you are all fellow-soldiers, so you are all fellow-sufferers under the same enemies, the devil and the world. And as you are all fellow-sufferers, so are you fellow-travellers towards the land of Canaan, 'the new Jerusalem that is above.' 'Here we have no abiding city, but we look for one to come.' The heirs of heaven are strangers on earth. And as you are all fellow-travellers, so are you all fellow-heirs of the same crown and inheritance.²

Remedy (8). The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, To dwell upon the miseries of discord. Dissolution is the daughter of dissension. Ah! how doth the name of Christ, and the way of Christ, suffer by the discord of saints! How are many that are entering upon the ways of God hindered and sadded, and the mouths of the wicked opened, and their hearts hardened against God and his ways, by the discord of his people! Remember this, the disagreement of Christians is the devil's triumph; and what a sad thing is this, that Christians should give Satan cause to triumph!

It was a notable saying of one, 'Take away strife, and call back peace, lest thou lose a man, thy friend; and the devil, an enemy, joy over you both,' &c.

Remedy (9). The ninth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That it is no disparagement to you to be first in seeking peace and reconciliation, but rather an honour to you, that you have begun to seek peace. Abraham was the elder, and more worthy than Lot, both in respect of grace and nature also, for he was uncle unto Lot, and yet he first seeks peace of his inferior, which God hath recorded as his honour. Ah! how doth the God of peace, by his Spirit and messengers, pursue after peace with poor creatures. God first makes offer of peace to us: 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,' 2Co 5:20. God's grace first kneels to us, and who can turn their backs upon such blessed and bleeding embracements, but souls in whom Satan the god of this world kings it? God is the party wronged, and yet he sues for peace with us at first: 'I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name,' Isa 65:1. Ah! how doth the sweetness, the freeness, and the riches of his grace break forth and shine upon poor souls. When a man goes from the sun, yet the sunbeams follow him; so when we go from the Sun of righteousness, yet then the beams of his love and mercy follow us. Christ first sent to Peter that had denied him, and the rest that had forsaken him: 'Go your ways, and tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you,' Mark 16:7. Ah! souls, it is not a base, low thing, but a God-like thing, though we are wronged by others, yet to be the first in seeking after peace. Such actings will speak out much of God with a man's spirit, &c.

Christians, it is not matter of liberty whether you will or you will not pursue after peace, but it is matter of duty that lies upon you; you are bound by express precept to follow after peace; and though it may seem to fly from you, yet you must pursue after it: 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man can see the Lord,' Heb 12:14. Peace and holiness are to be pursued after with the greatest eagerness that can be imagined. So the psalmist: 'Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it,' Psa 34:14. The Hebrew word that is here rendered seek, is in Piel, and it signifies to seek earnestly, vehemently, affectionately, studiously, industriously. 'And pursue it.' That Hebrew word signifies earnestly to pursue, being a metaphor taken from the eagerness of wild beasts or ravenous fowls, which will run or fly both fast and far rather than be disappointed of their prey. So the apostle presses the same duty upon the Romans: 'Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherein one may edify another,' Rom 14:19. Ah! you froward, sour, dogged Christians, can you look upon these commands of God without tears and blushing?

I have read a remarkable story of Aristippus, though but a heathen, who went of his own accord to Æschines his enemy, and said, 'Shall we never be reconciled till we become a table-talk to all the country?' and when Æschines answered he would most gladly be at peace with him, 'Remember, then, said Aristippus, that though I were the elder and better man, yet I sought first unto thee.' Thou art indeed, said Æschines, a far better man than I, for I began the quarrel, but thou the reconciliation. My prayer shall be that this heathen may not rise in judgment against the flourishing professors of our times: 'Who whet their tongues like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words,' Psa 64:3.

Remedy (10). The tenth remedy against this device of Satan is, For saints to join together and walk together in the ways of grace and holiness so far as they do agree, making the word their only touchstone and judge of their actions. That is sweet advice that the apostle gives: 'I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,' Php 3:14-16. 'Let us therefore, as many as be perfect,—comparatively or conceitedly so,—be thus minded. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.' Ah! Christians, God loses much, and you lose much, and Satan gains much by this, that you do not, that you will not, walk lovingly together so far as your ways lie together. It is your sin and shame that you do not, that you will not, pray together, and hear together, and confer together, and mourn together, &c., because that in some far lesser things you are not agreed together. What folly and madness is it in those whose way of a hundred miles lies fourscore and nineteen together, yet will not walk so far together, because that they cannot go the other mile together; yet such is the folly and madness of many Christians in these days, who will not do many things they may do, because they cannot do everything they should do.² I fear God will whip them into a better temper before he hath done with them. He will break their bones, and pierce their hearts, but he will cure them of this malady, &c. And be sure you make the word the only touchstone and judge of all persons and actions: 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa 8:20. It is best and safest to make that to be the judge of all men and things now that all shall be judged by in the latter day: 'The word, saith Christ, that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day,' John 12:48. Make not your dim light, your notions, your fancies, your opinions, the judge of men's action, but still judge by rule, and plead, 'It is written.' When a vain importunate soul cried out in contest with a holy man, 'Hear me, hear me,' the holy man answered, 'Neither hear me, nor I thee, but let us both hear the apostle.'

Constantine, in all the disputes before him with the Arians, would still call for the word of God as the only way, if not to convert, yet to stop their mouths, &c.

Remedy (11). The eleventh remedy against this device of Satan is, To be much in self-judging: 'Judge yourselves, and you shall not be judged of the Lord,' 1Co 11:31. Ah! were Christians' hearts more taken up in judging themselves and condemning themselves, they would not be so apt to judge and censure others, and to carry it sourly and bitterly towards others that differ from them. There are no souls in the world that are so fearful to judge others as those that do most judge themselves, nor so careful to make a righteous judgment of men or things as those that are most careful to judge themselves. There are none in the world that tremble to think evil of others, to speak evil of others, or to do evil to others, as those that make it their business to judge themselves. There are none that make such sweet constructions and charitable interpretations of

men and things, as those that are best and most in judging themselves.² One request I have to you that are much in judging others and little in judging yourselves, to you that are so apt and prone to judge rashly, falsely, and unrighteously, and that is, that you will every morning dwell a little upon these scriptures:

'Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,' Mat 7:1-2. 'Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment,' John 7:24. 'Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him. Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?' Rom 14:3, Rom 14:10, Rom 14:13. 'We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. Let us not judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.' 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God,' 1Co 4:5. 'Speak not evil one of another, brethren: he that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy,' Jas 4:11-12. 'Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand,' Rom 14:4.

One Delphidius accusing another before Julian about that which he could not prove, the party denying the fact, Delphidius answers, If it be sufficient to deny what is laid to one's charge, who shall be found guilty? Julian answers, And if it be sufficient to be accused, who can be innocent? You are wise, and know how to apply it.

Remedy (12). The twelfth remedy against this device of Satan is this, above all, Labour to be clothed with humility. Humility makes a man peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking, 1Pe 5:5. Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the meanest saint, John 13:5. Humility can feed upon the meanest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him that curses him, and pray for those that persecute him. An humble heart is an habitation for God, a scholar for Christ, a companion of angels, a preserver of grace, and a fitter for glory. Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties. Humility cannot find three things on this side heaven: it cannot find fulness in the creature, nor sweetness in sin, nor life in an ordinance without Christ. An humble soul always finds three things on this side heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the meanest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition, 1Th 1:2-3. Humility honours those that are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak in grace, Eph 3:8. Humility makes a man richer than other men, and it makes a man judge himself the poorest among men. Humility will see much good abroad, when it can see but little at home. Ah, Christian! though faith be the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is the beautifier of grace; it casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah! did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, froward, and sour, and they would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility

will make a man have high thoughts of others and low thoughts of a man's self; it will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in a man's self; it will make a man see others rich, and himself poor; others strong, and himself weak; others wise, and himself foolish. Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, and at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces; it makes a man joy in every light that outshines his own, and every wind that blows others good. Humility is better at believing than it is at questioning other men's happiness. I judge, saith an humble soul, it is well with these Christians now, but it will be far better with them hereafter. They are now upon the borders of the New Jerusalem, and it will be but as a day before they slide into Jerusalem. An humble soul is willing to say, Heaven is that man's, than mine; and Christ is that Christian's, than mine; and God is their God in covenant, than mine. Ah! were Christians more humble, there would be less fire and more love among them than now is, &c.

Fourthly, As Satan hath his device to destroy gracious souls, so he hath his devices to destroy poor ignorant souls, and that sometimes, By drawing them to affect ignorance, and to neglect, slight, and despise the means of knowledge. Ignorance is the mother of mistake, the cause of trouble, error, and of terror; it is the highway to hell, and it makes a man both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once. Ignorance unmans a man; it makes a man a beast, yea, makes him more miserable than the beast that perisheth.⁴ There are none so easily nor so frequently taken in Satan's snares as ignorant souls. They are easily drawn to dance with the devil all day, and to dream of supping with Christ at night, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That an ignorant heart is an evil heart. 'Without knowledge the mind is not good,' Pro 19:2. As an ignorant heart is a naughty heart, it is a heart in the dark; and no good can come into a dark heart, but it must pass through the understanding: 'And if the eye be dark, all the body is dark,' Mat 6:22. A leprous head and a leprous heart are inseparable companions. Ignorant hearts are so evil that they let fly on all hands, and spare not to spit their venom in the very face of God, as Pharaoh did when thick darkness was upon him.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That ignorance is the deformity of the soul. As blindness is the deformity of the face, so is ignorance the deformity of the soul. As the want of fleshly eyes spoils the beauty of the face, so the want of spiritual eyes spoils the beauty of the soul. A man without knowledge is as a workman without his hands, as a painter without his eyes, as a traveller without his legs, or as a ship without sails, or a bird without wings, or like a body without a soul.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That ignorance makes men the objects of God's hatred and wrath. 'It is a people that do err in their hearts, and have not known my ways. Wherefore I swear in my wrath, they should never enter into my rest,' Heb 3:10-11. 'My people are a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will have no mercy on them,' Isa 27:11. Christ hath said, 'That he will come in flaming fire, to render vengeance on them that know not God,' 2Th 1:8. Ignorance will end in vengeance. When you see a poor blind man here, you do not loathe him, nor hate him, but you pity him. Oh! but soul-blindness makes you abominable in the sight of God. God hath sworn that ignorant persons

shall never come into heaven. Heaven itself would be a hell to ignorant souls.

'My people are destroyed for want of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee,' Hos 4:6; [■■■■■■■■, cut off].

Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what God had done, answered, 'He exalted humble men, and suppressed proud ignorant fools.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That ignorance is a sin that leads to all sins. All sins are seminally in ignorance. 'You do err, not knowing the Scriptures,' Mat 22:29. It puts men upon hating and persecuting the saints. 'They shall hate you, and put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me,' John 16:2-3. Paul thanks his ignorance for all his cruelties to Christians. 'I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly,' 1Ti 1:13. It was ignorance that put the Jews upon crucifying Christ: 'Father, forgive them,' saith Christ of his murderers, 'for they know not what they do,' Luk 23:34: 'for if the princes of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,' 1Co 2:8. Sin at first was the cause of ignorance, but now ignorance is the cause of all sin. 'Swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and whoring abound,' saith the prophet, 'because there is no knowledge of God in the land.' There are none so frequent, and so impudent in the ways of sin, as ignorant souls; they care not, nor mind not what they do, nor what they say against God, Christ, heaven, holiness, and their own souls. 'Our tongues are our own, who shall control us? They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord?' 3 AN APPENDIX TOUCHING FIVE MORE OF SATAN'S DEVICES

Whereby he keepeth poor souls from believing in Christ, from receiving of Christ, from embracing of Christ, from resting, leaning, or relying upon Christ, for everlasting happiness and blessedness, according to the gospel; and remedies against these devices. His first device to keep the soul from believing in Christ is,

Device (1). By suggesting to the soul the greatness and vileness of his sins. What! saith Satan, dost thou think that thou shalt ever obtain mercy by Christ, that hast sinned with so high a hand against Christ? that hast slighted the tenders of grace? that hast grieved the Spirit of grace? that hast despised the word of grace? that hast trampled under feet the blood of the covenant, by which thou mightest have been pardoned, purged, justified, and saved? that hast spoken and done all the evil that thou couldest? No! no! saith Satan, he hath mercy for others, but not for thee; pardon for others, but not for thee; righteousness for others, but not for thee, &c., therefore it is in vain for thee to think of believing in Christ, or resting and leaning thy guilty soul upon Christ, Jer 3:5.

Now the remedies against this device are these:—

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That the greater your sins are, the more you stand in need of a Saviour. The greater your burden is, the more you stand in need of one to help to bear it. The deeper the wound is, the more need there is of the

chirurgion; the more dangerous the disease is, the more need there is of the physician. Who but madmen will argue thus: My burden is great, therefore I will not call out for help; my wound is deep, therefore I will not call out for balm; my disease is dangerous, therefore I will not go to the physician. Ah! it is spiritual madness, it is the devil's logic to argue thus: My sins are great, therefore I will not go to Christ, I dare not rest nor lean on Christ, &c.; whereas the soul should reason thus: The greater my sins are, the more I stand in need of mercy, of pardon, and therefore I will go to Christ, who delights in mercy, who pardons sin for his own name's sake, who is as able and as willing to forgive pounds as pence, thousands as hundreds, Mic 7:18, Isa 43:25.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the promise of grace and mercy is to returning souls. And, therefore, though thou art never so wicked, yet if thou wilt return, God will be thine, and mercy shall be thine, and pardon shall be thine: 2Ch 30:9, 'For if you turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord our God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.' So Jer 3:12, 'Go and proclaim these words towards the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.' So Joe 2:13, 'And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.' So Isa 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,' or, as the Hebrew reads it, 'He will multiply pardon:' so Eze 18:1-32.

Ah! sinner, it is not thy great transgressions that shall exclude thee from mercy, if thou wilt break off thy sins by repentance and return to the fountain of mercy. Christ's heart, Christ's arms, are wide open to embrace the returning prodigal. It is not simply the greatest of thy sins, but thy peremptory persisting in sin, that will be thy eternal overthrow.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That the greatest sinners have obtained mercy, and therefore all the angels in heaven, all the men on earth, and all the devils in hell cannot tell to the contrary, but that thou mayest obtain mercy. Manasseh was a notorious sinner; he erected altars for Baal, he worshipped and served all the host of heaven; he caused his sons to pass through the fire; he gave himself to witchcraft and sorcery; he made Judah to sin more wickedly than the heathen did, whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel; he caused the streets of Jerusalem to run down with innocent blood, 2Ki 21:1-26. Ah! what a devil incarnate was he in his actings! Yet when he humbled himself, and sought the Lord, the Lord was entreated of him and heard his supplication, and brought him to Jerusalem, and made himself known unto him, and crowned him with mercy and loving-kindness, as you may see in 2Ch 33:1-25. So Paul was once a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, yet he obtained mercy, 1Ti 1:13. So Mary Magdalene was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, out of whom Christ cast seven devils, yet she is pardoned by Christ, and dearly beloved of Christ, Luk 7:37-38. So Mark 16:9, 'Now, when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.'

Jansenius on the place saith, it is very observable that our Saviour after his resurrection first appeared to Mary Magdalene and Peter, that had been grievous sinners; that even the worst of sinners may be comforted and encouraged to come to Christ, to believe in Christ, to rest and stay their souls upon Christ, for mercy here and glory hereafter. That is a very precious word for the worst of sinners to hang upon, Psa 68:18. The psalmist speaking of Christ saith, 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord might dwell amongst them.'

What though thou art a rebellious child, or a rebellious servant! What though thou art a rebellious swearer, a rebellious drunkard, a rebellious Sabbath breaker! Yet Christ hath received gifts for thee, 'even for the rebellious also.' He hath received the gift of pardon, the gift of righteousness, yea, all the gifts of the Spirit for thee, that thy heart may be made a delightful house for God to dwell in.

Bodin hath a story concerning a great rebel that had made a strong party against a Roman emperor. The emperor makes proclamation, that whoever could bring the rebel dead or alive, he should have such a great sum of money. The rebel hearing of this, comes and presents himself before the emperor, and demands the sum of money. Now, saith the emperor, if I should put him to death, the world would say I did it to save my money. And so he pardons the rebel, and gives him the money.

Ah, sinners! Shall a heathen do this, that had but a drop of mercy and compassion in him: and will not Christ do much more, that hath all fulness of grace, mercy, and glory in himself? Surely his bowels do yearn towards the worst of rebels. Ah! if you still but come in, you will find him ready to pardon, yea, one made up of pardoning mercy. Oh! the readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ to receive to favour the greatest rebels! The father of mercies did meet, embrace, and kiss that prodigal mouth which came from feeding with swine and kissing of harlots, Col 1:19, Col 2:3-4.

Ephraim had committed idolatry, and was backslidden from God; he was guilty of lukewarmness and unbelief, &c., yet saith God, 'Ephraim is my dear son, he is a pleasant child, my bowels are troubled for him, I will have mercy,' or rather as it is in the original, 'I will have mercy, mercy upon him, saith the Lord,'

Well! saith God, though Ephraim be guilty of crimson sins, yet he is a son, a dear son, a precious son, a pleasant child; though he be black with filth, and red with guilt, yet my bowels are troubled for him; I will have mercy, mercy upon him. Ah sinners, if these bowels of mercy do not melt, win, and draw you, justice will be a swift witness against you, and make you lie down in eternal misery for kicking against the bowels of mercy.

Christ hangs out still, as once that warlike Scythian did, a white flag of grace and mercy to returning sinners that humble themselves at his feet for favour; but if sinners stand out, Christ will put forth his red flag, his bloody flag, and they shall die for ever by a hand of justice. Sinners! there is no way to avoid perishing by Christ's iron rod, but by kissing his golden sceptre.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That Jesus Christ hath nowhere in all the Scripture excepted against the worst of sinners that are willing to receive him, to believe in him, to rest upon him for happiness and blessedness. Ah! sinners, why should you be more cruel and unmerciful to your own souls than Christ is? Christ hath not excluded you from

mercy, why should you exclude your own souls from mercy? Oh that you would dwell often upon that choice Scripture, John 6:37, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,' or as the original hath it, 'I will not not cast out.' Well! saith Christ, if any man will come, or is coming to me, let him be more sinful or less; more unworthy or less; let him be never so guilty, never so filthy, never so rebellious, never so leprous, &c., yet if he will but come, I will not not cast him off. So much is held forth in 1Co 6:9-11, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.'

Ah! sinners, do not think that he that hath received such notorious sinners to mercy will reject you. 'He is yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb 13:8. Christ was born in an inn, to shew that he receives all comers; his garments were divided into four parts, to shew that out of what part of the world soever we come, we shall be received. If we be naked, Christ hath robes to clothe us; if we be harbourless, Christ hath room to lodge us. That is a choice scripture, Acts 10:34-35, 'Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.' The three tongues that were written upon the cross, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, John 19:19-20, to witness Christ to be the king of the Jews, do each of them in their several idiom avouch this singular axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour; and 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' The apostle puts this out of doubt: Heb 7:25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Now, he were not an all-sufficient Saviour if he were not able to save the greatest, as [well as] the least of sinners. Ah! sinners, tell Jesus Christ that he hath not excluded you from mercy, and therefore you are resolved that you will sit, wait, weep, and knock at the door of mercy, till he shall say, Souls, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven, your persons are justified, and your souls shall be saved.

Remedy (5). The fifth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That the greater sinner thou art, the dearer thou wilt be to Christ, when he shall behold thee as the travail of his soul: Isa 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' The dearer we pay for anything, the dearer that thing is to us. Christ hath paid most, and prayed most, and sighed most, and wept most, and bled most for the greatest sinners, and therefore they are dearer to Christ than others that are less sinful. Rachel was dearer to Jacob than Leah, because she cost him more; he obeyed, endured, and suffered more by day and night for her than for Leah. Ah! sinners, the greatness of your sins does but set off the freeness and riches of Christ's grace, and the freeness of his love. This maketh heaven and earth to ring of his praise, that he loves those that are most unlovely, that he shews most favour to them that have sinned most highly against him, as might be shewed by several instances in Scripture, as Paul, Mary Magdalene, and others. Who sinned more against Christ than these? And who had sweeter and choicer manifestations of divine love and favour than these?

Remedy (6). The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the longer you keep off from Christ, the greater and stronger your sins will grow. All divine power and strength against sin flows from the soul's union and communion with Christ, Rom 8:10, 1Jn 1:6-7.

While you keep off from Christ, you keep off from that strength and power which is only able to make you trample down strength, lead captivity captive, and slay the Goliaths that bid defiance to Christ. It is only faith in Christ that makes a man triumph over sin, Satan, hell, and the world, 1Jn 5:4. It is only faith in Christ that binds the strong man's hand and foot, that stops the issue of blood, that makes a man strong in resisting, and happy in conquering, Mat 5:15-35. Sin always dies most where faith lives most. The most believing soul is the most mortified soul. Ah! sinner, remember this, there is no way on earth effectually to be rid of the guilt, filth, and power of sin, but by believing in a Saviour. It is not resolving, it is not complaining, it is not mourning, but believing, that will make thee divinely victorious over that body of sin that to this day is too strong for thee, and that will certainly be thy ruin, if it be not ruined by a hand of faith.

Remedy (7). The seventh remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, That as there is nothing in Christ to discourage the greatest sinners from believing in him, so there is everything in Christ that may encourage the greatest sinners to believe on him, to rest and lean upon him for all happiness and blessedness, Song of Solomon 1:3. If you look upon his nature, his disposition, his names, his titles, his offices as king, priest, and prophet, you will find nothing to discourage the greatest sinners from believing in him, but many things to encourage the greatest sinners to receive him, to believe on him. Christ is the greatest good, the choicest good, the chiefest good, the most suitable good, the most necessary good. He is a pure good, a real good, a total good, an eternal good, and a soul-satisfying good, Rev 3:17-18. Sinners, are you poor? Christ hath gold to enrich you. Are you naked? Christ hath royal robes, he hath white raiment to clothe you. Are you blind? Christ hath eye-salve to enlighten you. Are you hungry? Christ will be manna to feed you. Are you thirsty? He will be a well of living water to refresh you. Are you wounded? He hath a balm under his wings to heal you. Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you. Are you prisoners? He hath laid down a ransom for you. Ah, sinners! tell me, tell me, is there anything in Christ to keep you off from believing? No. Is there not everything in Christ that may encourage you to believe in him? Yes. Oh, then, believe in him, and then, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isa 1:18. Nay, then, your iniquities shall be forgotten as well as forgiven, they shall be remembered no more. God will cast them behind his back, he will throw them into the bottom of the sea, Isa 43:25, Isa 38:17, Mic 7:19.

Remedy (8). The eighth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, The absolute necessity of believing in Christ. Heaven is too holy and too hot to hold unbelievers; their lodging is prepared in hell: Rev 21:8, 'But the fearful and unbelieving. &c., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.' 'If ye believe not that I am he,' saith Christ, 'you shall die in your sins,' John 8:24. And he that dies in his sins must to judgment and to hell in his sins. Every unbeliever is a condemned man: 'He that believeth not,' saith John, 'is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,' John 3:18, John 3:36. Ah, sinners! the law, the gospel, and your own consciences, have passed the sentence of condemnation upon you, and there is no way to reverse the sentence but by believing in Christ. And therefore my counsel is this, Stir up yourselves to lay hold on the Lord Jesus, and look up to him, and wait on him, from whom every good and perfect gift comes, and give him no rest till he hath given thee that jewel faith, that is more worth than heaven and earth, and that will make thee happy in life, joyful in death, and glorious in the day of Christ, Isa 64:7, Jas 1:17, Isa

62:7. And thus much for the remedies against this first device of Satan, whereby he keeps off thousands from believing in Christ. The second device that Satan hath to keep poor sinners from believing, from closing with a Saviour, is,

Device (2). By suggesting to them their unworthiness. Ah! saith Satan, as thou art worthy of the greatest misery, so thou art unworthy of the least crumb of mercy. What! dost thou think, saith Satan, that ever Christ will own, receive, or embrace such an unworthy wretch as thou art? No, no; if there were any worthiness in thee, then, indeed, Christ might be willing to be entertained by thee. Thou art unworthy to entertain Christ into thy house, how much more unworthy art thou to entertain Christ into thy heart, &c.

Now the remedies against this device are these.

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That God hath nowhere in the Scripture required any worthiness in the creature before believing in Christ. If you make a diligent search through all the scripture, you shall not find, from the first line in Genesis to the last line in the Revelations, one word that speaks out God's requiring any worthiness in the creature before the soul's believing in Christ, before the soul's leaning and resting upon Christ for happiness and blessedness; and why, then, should that be a bar and hindrance to thy faith, which God doth nowhere require of thee before thou comest to Christ, that thou mayest have life? Mat 19:8, John 5:29. Ah, sinners! remember Satan objects your unworthiness against you only out of a design to keep Christ and your souls asunder for ever; and therefore, in the face of all your unworthiness, rest upon Christ, come to Christ, believe in Christ, and you are happy for ever, John 6:40, John 6:47.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, wisely to consider, That none ever received Christ, embraced Christ, and obtained mercy and pardon from Christ, but unworthy souls. Pray, what worthiness was in Matthew, Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene, Manasseh, Paul, and Lydia, before their coming to Christ, before their faith in Christ? Surely none. Ah, sinners! you should reason thus: Christ hath bestowed the choicest mercies, the greatest favours, the highest dignities, the sweetest privileges, upon unworthy sinners, and therefore, O our souls, do not you faint, do not you despair, but patiently and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Who can tell but that free grace and mercy may shine forth upon us, though we are unworthy, and give us a portion among those worthies that are now triumphing in heaven.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, That if the soul will keep off from Christ till it be worthy, it will never close with Christ, it will never embrace Christ. It will never be one with Christ, it must lie down in everlasting sorrow, Isa 50:11. God hath laid up all worthiness in Christ, that the creature may know where to find it, and may make out after it. There is no way on earth to make unworthy souls worthy, but by believing in Christ, Jas 2:23. Believing in Christ, of slaves, it will make you worthy sons; of enemies, it will make you worthy friends. God will count none worthy, nor call none worthy, nor carry it towards none as worthy, but believers, who are made worthy by the worthiness of Christ's person, righteousness, satisfaction, and intercession, &c., Rev 3:4.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is solemnly to consider, That if you make a diligent search into your own hearts, you shall find that it is the pride and folly of your own

hearts that puts you upon bringing of a worthiness to Christ. Oh! you would fain bring something to Christ that might render you acceptable to him; you are loath to come empty-handed. The Lord cries out, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money upon that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Isa 55:1-2. Here the Lord calls upon moneyless, upon penniless souls, upon unworthy souls, to come and partake of his precious favours freely. But sinners are proud and foolish, and because they have no money, no worthiness to bring, they will not come, though he sweetly invites them. Ah, sinners! what is more just than that you should perish for ever, that prefer husks among swine before the milk and wine, the sweet and precious things of the gospel, that are freely and sweetly offered to you, &c. Well, sinners! remember this, it is not so much the sense of your unworthiness, as your pride, that keeps you off from a blessed closing with the Lord Jesus. The third device that Satan hath to keep poor sinners from believing, from closing with a Saviour, is,

Device (3). By suggesting to them the want of such and such preparations and qualifications. Saith Satan, Thou art not prepared to entertain Christ; thou art not thus and thus humbled and justified; thou art not heart-sick of sin; thou hast not been under horrors and terrors as such and such; thou must stay till thou art prepared and qualified to receive the Lord Jesus, &c.

Now, the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly to consider, That such as have not been so and so prepared and qualified as Satan suggests, have received Christ, believed in Christ, and been saved by Christ. Matthew was called, sitting at the receipt of custom, and there was such power went along with Christ's call, that made him to follow him, Mat 9:9. We read not of any horrors or terrors, &c., that he was under before his being called by Christ. Pray, what preparations and qualifications were found in Zaccheus, Paul, the jailor, and Lydia, before their conversion, Luk 19:9, Acts 16:14, seq. God brings in some by the sweet and still voice of the gospel, and usually such that are thus brought into Christ are the sweetest, humblest, choicest, and fruitfulest Christians. God is a free agent to work by law or gospel, by smiles or frowns, by presenting hell or heaven to sinners' souls. God thunders from mount Sinai upon some souls, and conquers them by thundering. God speaks to others in a still voice, and by that conquers them. You that are brought to Christ by the law, do not you judge and condemn them that are brought to Christ by the gospel; and you that are brought to Christ by the gospel, do not you despise those that are brought to Christ by the law. Some are brought to Christ by fire, storms, and tempests, others by more easy and gentle gales of the Spirit. The Spirit is free in the works of conversion, and, as the wind, it blows when, where, and how it pleases, John 3:8. Thrice happy are those souls that are brought to Christ, whether it be in a winter's night or in a summer's day.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, solemnly To dwell upon these following scriptures, which do clearly evidence that poor sinners which are not so and so prepared and qualified to meet with Christ, to receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ, may, notwithstanding that, believe in Christ; and rest and lean upon him for happiness and blessedness, according to the gospel. Read Pro 1:20-33, and Pro 8:1-11, and Pro 9:1-6; Eze 16:1-14; John 3:14-18, John 3:36; Rev 3:15-20. Here the Lord Jesus Christ stands knocking at the Laodiceans' door; he would fain have them to sup with him, and that he might sup with them; that is, that they

might have intimate communion and fellowship one with another.

Now, pray tell me, what preparations or qualifications had these Laodiceans to entertain Christ? Surely none; for they were lukewarm, they were 'neither hot nor cold,' they were 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' and yet Christ, to shew his free grace and his condescending love, invites the very worst of sinners to open to him, though they were no ways so and so prepared or qualified to entertain him.

Remedy (3). The third remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the Lord does not in all the Scripture require such and such preparations and qualifications before men come to Christ, before they believe in Christ, or entertain, or embrace the Lord Jesus. Believing in Christ is the great thing that God presses upon sinners throughout the Scripture, as all know that know anything of Scripture.

Obj. But does not Christ say, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'? Mat 9:28. To this I shall give these three answers:

(1.) That though the invitation be to such that 'labour and are heavy laden,' yet the promise of giving rest, it is made over to 'coming,' to 'believing.'

(2.) I answer, that all this scripture proves and shews is, that such as labour under sin as under a heavy burden, and that are laden with the guilt of sin and sense of God's displeasure, ought to come to Christ for rest; but it doth not prove that only such must come to Christ, nor that all men must be thus burdened and laden with the sense of their sins and the wrath of God, before they come to Christ.

Poor sinners, when they are under the sense of sin and wrath of God, they are prone to run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, to find rest; and if they could find it in any thing or creature, Christ should never hear of them; but here the Lord sweetly invites them: and to encourage them, he engages himself to give them rest: 'Come,' saith Christ, 'and I will give you rest.' I will not shew you rest, nor barely tell you of rest, but 'I will give you rest.' I am faithfulness itself, and cannot lie, 'I will give you rest' I that have the greatest power to give it, the greatest will to give it, the greatest right to give it, 'Come, laden sinners, and I will give you rest' Rest is the most desirable good, the most suitable good, and to you the greatest good. 'Come,' saith Christ, that is, 'believe in me, and I will give you rest;' I will give you peace with God, and peace with conscience; I will turn your storm into an everlasting calm; I will give you such rest, that the world can neither give to you nor take from you.

(3.) I answer, No one scripture speaks out the whole mind of God; therefore do but compare this one scripture with those several scriptures that are laid down in the second remedy last mentioned, and it will clearly appear, that though men are thus and thus burdened and laden with their sins and filled with horror and terror, if they may come to Christ, they may receive and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remedy (4). The fourth remedy against this device of Satan is, to consider, That all that trouble for sin, all that sorrow, shame, and mourning which is acceptable to God, and delightful to God, and prevalent with God, flows from faith in Christ, as the stream doth from the fountain, as the branch doth from the root, as the effect doth from, the cause. Zec 12:10, 'They shall look on him whom

they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.' All gospel mourning flows from believing; they shall first look, and then mourn. All that know anything know this, that 'whatever is not of faith is sin,' Rom 14:23. Till men have faith in Christ, their best services are but glorious sins. The fourth device that Satan hath to keep poor sinners from believing, from closing with a Saviour, is,

Device (4). By suggesting to a sinner Christ's unwillingness to save. It is true, saith Satan, Christ is able to save thee, but is he willing? Surely, though he is able, yet he is not willing to save such a wretch as thou art, that has trampled his blood under thy feet, and that has been in open rebellion against him all thy days, &c. The remedy against this device of Satan is, briefly to consider these few things.

Remedy (1). First, The great journey that he hath taken, from heaven to earth, on purpose to save sinners, doth strongly demonstrate his willingness to save them. Mat 9:13, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' 1Ti 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

Secondly, His divesting himself of his glory in order to sinners' salvation, speaks out his willingness to save them. He leaves his Father's bosom, he puts off his glorious robes, and lays aside his glorious crown, and bids adieu to his glistening courtiers the angels; and all this he doth, that he may accomplish sinners' salvation.

Thirdly, That sea of sin, that sea of wrath, that sea of trouble, that sea of blood that Jesus Christ waded through, that sinners might be pardoned, justified, reconciled, and saved, doth strongly evidence his willingness to save sinners, 1 Cor. 5:19, 20.

Fourthly, His sending his ambassadors, early and late, to woo and entreat sinners to be reconciled to him, doth with open mouth shew his readiness and willingness to save sinners.

Fifthly, His complaints against such as refuse him, and that turn their backs upon him, and that will not be saved by him, doth strongly declare his willingness to save them: John 1:11, 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.' So in John 5:40, 'But ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.'

Sixthly, The joy and delight that he takes at the conversion of sinners, doth demonstrate his willingness that they should be saved: Luk 15:7, 'I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.' God the Father rejoiceth at the return of his prodigal son; Christ rejoices to see the travail of his soul; the Spirit rejoices that he hath another temple to dwell in; and the angels rejoice that they have another brother to delight in, &c., Isa 53:11. The fifth device that Satan hath to keep poor sinners from believing, from closing with a Saviour, is,

Device (5). By working a sinner to mind more the secret decrees and counsels of God, than his own duty. What needest thou to busy thyself about receiving, embracing, and entertaining of Christ? saith Satan; if thou art elected, thou shalt be saved; if not, all that thou canst do will do thee no good. Nay, he will work the soul not only to doubt of its election, but to conclude that he is not elected, and therefore let him do what he can, he shall never be saved.

Now the remedies against this device are these:

Remedy (1). The first remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That all the angels in heaven, nor all the men on earth, nor all the devils in hell, cannot tell to the contrary, but that thou mayest be an elect person, a chosen vessel. Thou mayest be confident of this, that God never made Satan one of his privy council, God never acquainted him with the names or persons of such that he hath set his love upon to eternity, &c.

Remedy (2). The second remedy against this device of Satan is, To meddle with that which thou hast to do. 'Secret things belong to the Lord, but revealed things belong to thee,' Deu 29:29. Thy work, sinner, is, to be peremptory in believing, and in returning to the Lord; thy work is to cast thyself upon Christ, lie at his feet, to wait on him in his ways, and to give him no rest till he shall say, Sinner, I am thy portion, I am thy salvation, and nothing shall separate between thee and me.

Here followeth seven characters of false teachers, which let me add for a close, viz.:— That Satan labours might and main, by false teachers, which are his messengers and ambassadors, to deceive, delude, and for ever undo the precious souls of men: Jer 23:13, 'I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err;' Mic 3:5, 'The prophets make my people to err.' They seduce them, and carry them out of the right way into by-paths and blind thickets of error, blasphemy, and wickedness, where they are lost for ever. 'Beware of false prophets, for they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves,' Mat 7:15. These lick and suck the blood of souls: Php 3:2, 'Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.' These kiss and kill; these cry, Peace, peace, till souls fall into everlasting flames, &c., Pro 7:1-27.

Now, the best way to deliver poor souls from being deluded and destroyed by these messengers of Satan is, to discover them in their colours, that so, being known, poor souls may shun them, and fly from them as from hell itself.

Now you may know them by these characters following:

[1.] The first character. False teachers, are men-pleasers. They preach more to please the ear than to profit the heart: Isa 30:10, 'Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things: speak to us smooth things; prophecy deceits.' Jer 5:30-31, 'A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so. And what will you do in the end thereof?' They handle holy things rather with wit and dalliance than with fear and reverence. False teachers are soul-undoers. They are like evil surgeons, that skin over the wound, but never heal it. Flattery undid Ahab and Herod, Nero and Alexander. False teachers are hell's greatest enrichers. Non acerba, sed blanda, Not bitter, but flattering words do all the mischief, said Valerian, the Roman emperor. Such smooth teachers are sweet soul-poisoners, &c., Jer 23:16-17.

[2.] The second character. False teachers are notable in casting dirt, scorn, and reproach upon the persons, names, and credits of Christ's most faithful ambassadors. Thus Korah, Dathan, and Abiram charged Moses and Aaron that they took too much upon them, seeing all the congregation was holy, Num 16:3. You take too much state, too much power, too much honour, too much holiness upon you; for what are you more than others, that you take so much upon you? And so Ahab's false prophets fell foul on good Micaiah, paying of him with blows for want of better reasons, 1Ki 22:10-26. Yea, Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles, had his ministry undermined

and his reputation blasted by false teachers: 'For his letters,' say they, 'are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak and contemptible,' 2Co 10:10. They rather condemn him than admire him; they look upon him as a dunce rather than a doctor. And the same hard measure had our Lord Jesus from the Scribes and Pharisees, who laboured as for life to build their own credit upon the ruins of his reputation. And never did the devil drive a more full trade this way than he does in these days, Mat 27:63. Oh! the dirt, the filth, the scorn that is thrown upon those of whom the world is not worthy. I suppose false teachers mind not that saying of Austin, *Quisquis volens detrahit famæ, nolens addit mercedi meæ*, He that willingly takes from my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward.

[3.] The third character. False teachers are venters of the devices and visions of their own heads and hearts. Jer 14:14, 'Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart;' Jer 23:16, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.' Are there not multitudes in this nation whose visions are but golden delusions, lying vanities, brain-sick phantasies? These are Satan's great benefactors, and such as divine justice will hang up in hell as the greatest malefactors, if the physician of souls do not prevent it, &c.

[4.] The fourth character. False teachers easily pass over the great and weighty things both of law and gospel, and stand most upon those things that are of the least moment and concernment to the souls of men. 1Ti 1:5-7, 'Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, and understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm.' Mat 23:2-3, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' False teachers are nice in the lesser things of the law, and as negligent in the greater. 1Ti 6:3-5, 'If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.' If such teachers are not hypocrites in grain, I know nothing, Rom 2:22. The earth groans to bear them, and hell is fitted for them, Mat 24:32.

[5.] The fifth character. False teachers cover and colour their dangerous principles and soul-impostures with very fair speeches and plausible pretences, with high notions and golden expressions. Many in these days are bewitched and deceived by the magnificent words, lofty strains, and stately terms of deceivers, viz. illumination, revelation, deification, fiery triplicity, &c. As strumpets paint their faces, and deck and perfume their beds, the better to allure and deceive simple souls, so false teachers will put a great deal of paint and garnish upon their most dangerous principles and blasphemies, that they may the better deceive and delude poor ignorant souls. They know sugared poison goes down sweetly; they wrap up their pernicious, soul-killing pills in gold. Weigh the scriptures in the margin.² In the days of Hadrian the emperor, there was one Ben-Cosbi gathered a multitude of Jews together, and called himself Ben-cocuba, the son of a

star, applying that promise to himself, Num 24:17; but he proved Bar-chosaba, the son of a lie. And so will all false teachers, for all their flourishes prove at the last the sons of lies.

[6.] The sixth character. False teachers strive more to win over men to their opinions, than to better them in their conversations. Mat 24:17, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.' They busy themselves most about men's heads. Their work is not to better men's hearts, and mend their lives; and in this they are very much like their father the devil, who will spare no pains to gain proselytes.

[7]. The seventh character. False teachers make merchandise of their followers: 2Pe 2:1-3, 'But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.' They eye your goods more than your good; and mind more the serving of themselves, than the saving of your souls. So they may have your substance, they care not though Satan has your souls, Rev 18:11-13. That they may the better pick your purse, they will hold forth such principles as are very indulgent to the flesh. False teachers are the great worshippers of the golden calf, Jer 6:13.

Now, by these characters you may know them, and so shun them, and deliver your souls out of their dangerous snares; which that you may, my prayers shall meet yours at the throne of grace. And now, to prevent objections, I shall lay down some propositions or conclusions concerning Satan and his devices, and then give you the reasons of the point, and so come to make some use and application of the whole to ourselves.

Propositions concerning Satan and his devices:

Proposition (1). The first proposition is this, That though Satan hath his devices to draw souls to sin, yet we must be careful that we do not lay all our temptations upon Satan, that we do not wrong the devil, and father that upon him that is to be fathered upon our own base hearts. I think that oftentimes men charge that upon the devil that is to be charged upon their own hearts. 'And the Lord said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat,' Gen 3:13. Sin and shifting came into the world together. This is no small baseness of our hearts, that they will be naught, ay, very naught, and yet will father that naughtiness upon Satan. Man hath an evil root within him; that were there no devil to tempt him, nor no wicked men in the world to entice him, yet that root of bitterness, that cursed sinful nature that is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand that 'the wages of sin is eternal death,' Rom 6:23 'For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies,' Mat 15:19. The whole frame of man is out of frame. The understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory slippery, the affections crooked, the conscience corrupted, the tongue poisoned, and the heart wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil. Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice the sons of men to vanity or folly, yet they would not, yet they could not but sin against him, by reason of that cursed nature that is in them, that will still be a-provoking them to those sins that will provoke and stir up the anger of God

against them, Jude 1:15-16. Satan hath only a persuading sleight, not an enforcing might. He may tempt us, but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us, but without ourselves he cannot hurt us. Our hearts carry the greatest stroke in every sin. Satan can never undo a man without himself; but a man may easily undo himself without Satan. Satan can only present the golden cup, but he hath no power to force us to drink the poison that is in the cup; he can only present to us the glory of the world, he cannot force us to fall down and worship him, to enjoy the world; he can only spread his snares, he hath no power to force us to walk in the midst of his snares. Therefore do the devil so much right, as not to excuse yourselves, by your accusing him, and laying the load upon him, that you should lay upon your own hearts.

Prop. (2). The second proposition is, That Satan hath a great hand and stroke in most sins. It was Satan that tempted our first parents to rebellion; it was Satan that provoked David to number the people; it was Satan that put Peter upon rebuking Christ; therefore saith Christ, 'Get thee behind me, Satan;' it was Satan that put Cain upon murdering of righteous Abel, therefore it is that he is called 'a murderer from the beginning;' it was Satan that put treason into the heart of Judas against Christ, 'And supper being ended, the devil having put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;' it was Satan that put Ananias upon lying, Peter said, 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?' As the hand of Joab was in the tale of the woman of Tekoah, so Satan's hand is usually in all the sins that men commit. Such is Satan's malice against God, and his envy against man, that he will have a hand one way or other in all the sins, though he knows that all the sins he provokes others to shall be charged upon him to his greater woe, and eternal torment.³

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ and challenging Judas as his own: 'He is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks wine with thee, and sells thy blood to me.' Such is his malice against Christ, and his wrath and rage against man, that he will take all advantages to draw men to that, that may give him advantage to triumph over Christ and men's souls for ever.

Prop. (3). The third proposition is, That Satan must have a double leave before he can do anything against us. He must have leave from God, and leave from ourselves, before he can act anything against our happiness. He must have his commission from God, as you may see in the example of Job, Job 1:11-12, Job 2:3-5. Though the devil had malice enough to destroy him, yet he had not so much as power to touch him, till God gave him a commission.

They could not so much as enter into the swine without leave from Christ, Luk 8:32. Satan would fain have combated with Peter, but this he could not do without leave. 'Satan hath desired to have you, to winnow you,' Luk 22:31. So Satan could never have overthrown Ahab and Saul, but by a commission from God, 1Ki 22:1-53. Ah! what a cordial, what a comfort should this be to the saints, that their greatest, subtlest, and watchfullest enemy cannot hurt nor harm them, without leave from him who is their sweetest Saviour, their dearest husband, and their choicest friend. And as Satan must have leave from God, so he must have leave of us. When he tempts, we must assent; when he makes offers, we must hearken; when he commands, we must obey, or else all his labour and temptations will be frustrate, and the evil that he tempts us to shall be put down only to his account. That is a remarkable passage in Acts 5:3, 'Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the

Holy Ghost?’ He doth not expostulate the matter with Satan; he doth not say, Satan, ‘Why hast thou filled Ananias’s heart to make him lie to the Holy Ghost?’ but he expostulates the case with Ananias; Peter said, ‘Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?’ Why hast thou given him an advantage to fill thy heart with infidelity, hypocrisy, and obstinate audacity, to lie to the Holy Ghost? As if he had said, Satan could never have done this in thee, which will now for ever undo thee, unless thou hadst given him leave. If, when a temptation comes, a man cries out, and saith, Ah, Lord! here is a temptation that would force me, that would deflower my soul, and I have no strength to withstand it; oh! help! help! for thy honour’s sake, for thy Son’s sake, for thy promise’ sake; it is a sign that Satan hath not gained your consent, but committed a rape upon your souls, which he shall dearly pay for.

Prop. (4). The fourth proposition is, That no weapons but spiritual weapons will be useful and serviceable to the soul in fighting and combating with the devil. This the apostle shews: ‘Wherefore take unto you,’ saith he, ‘the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand,’ Eph 6:13. So the same apostle tells you, ‘That the weapons of your warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the casting down of strongholds,’ 2Co 10:4. You have not to do with a weak, but with a mighty enemy, and therefore you had need to look to it, that your weapons are mighty, and that they cannot be, unless they are spiritual. Carnal weapons have no might nor spirit in them towards the making of a conquest upon Satan. It was not David’s sling nor stone that gave him the honour and advantage of setting his feet upon Goliath, but his faith in the name of the Lord of hosts. ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a shield, but I am come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied,’ 1Sa 17:45. He that fights against Satan, in the strength of his own resolutions, constitution or education, will certainly fly and fall before him. Satan will be too hard for such a soul, and lead him captive at his pleasure. The only way to stand, conquer, and triumph, is still to plead, ‘It is written,’ as Christ did, Mat 4:10. There is no sword but the two-edged sword of the Spirit, that will be found to be metal of proof when a soul comes to engage against Satan; therefore, when you are tempted to uncleanness, plead, ‘It is written, be ye holy, as I am holy,’ 1Pe 1:16; and, ‘Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord,’ 2Co 7:1. If he tempts you to distrust God’s providence and fatherly care of you, plead, ‘It is written,’ ‘They that fear the Lord shall want nothing that is good,’ Psal 34:9.

It is written, ‘The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that purely live,’ Psal 84:11. If he tempt you to fear, that you shall faint, and fall, and never be able to run to the end of the race that is set before you, plead, It is written, ‘The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger,’ Job 17:9.

It is written, ‘I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me,’ Jer 32:40.

It is written, ‘They that wait upon the Lord, they shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint,’ Isa 40:31. If Satan tempt you to think that because your sun for the present is set in a cloud, that therefore it will rise no more, and that the face of God will shine no more upon you; that your best days are now at an end, and that you must spend all your time in sorrow and sighing; plead, It is written, ‘He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, and cast all our sins into the depth of the sea,’

Mic 7:19.

It is written, 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer,' Isa 54:7-8, Isa 54:10.

It is written, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.'

It is written, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me,' Isa 49:15-16.

If ever you would be too hard for Satan, and after all your assaults, have your bow abide in strength, then take to you the word of God, which is 'the two-edged sword of the Spirit, and the shield of faith, whereby you shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil,' Eph 6:17. It is not spitting at Satan's name, nor crossing yourselves, nor leaning to your own resolutions, that will get you the victory.

Luther reports of Staupitius, a German minister, that he acknowledged himself, that before he came to understand aright the free and powerful grace of God, that he vowed and resolved an hundred times against some particular sin, and never could get power over it. At last he saw the reason to be his trusting to his own resolution. Therefore be skilful in the word of righteousness, and in the actings of faith upon Christ and his victory, and that crown of glory that is set before you, and Satan will certainly fly from you, &c., Jas 4:7.

Prop. (5). The fifth proposition is, That we may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the divers names and epithets that are given him in the Scripture. Sometimes he is called Behemoth, which is Bruta, whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil is figured, Job 40:15. Those evil spirits are sometimes called Διχβολοι, accusers, for their calumnies and slanders; and πονηροι, evil ones, for their malice. Satan is Adversarius, an adversary, that troubleth and molesteth, 1Pe 5:8. Abaddon is a destroyer. They are tempters, for their suggestion; lions, for their devouring; dragons, for their cruelty; and serpents, for their subtilty, &c. As his names are, so is he; as face answers to face, so do Satan's names answer to his nature. He hath the worst names and the worst nature of all created creatures, &c.

Prop. (6). The sixth proposition is, That God will shortly tread down Satan under the saints' feet. Christ, our champion, hath already won the field, and will shortly set our feet upon the necks of our spiritual enemies. Satan is a foiled adversary. Christ hath led him captive, and triumphed over him upon the cross. Christ hath already overcome him, and put weapons into your hands, that you may overcome him also, and set your feet upon his neck. Though Satan be a roaring lion, yet Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, will make Satan fly and fall before you. Let Satan do his worst, yet you shall have the honour and the happiness to triumph over him. Cheer up, you precious sons of Sion, for the certainty and sweetness of victory will abundantly recompense you for all the pains you have taken in making resistance against Satan's temptations. The broken horns of Satan shall be trumpets of our triumph and the cornets of our joy, &c.

Now I shall come to the reasons of the point, and so draw to a close, &c.

Reason (1). The first reason is, That their hearts may be kept in an humble, praying, watching frame. Oh! hath Satan so many devices to ensnare and undo the souls of men? How should this awaken dull, drowsy souls, and make them stand upon their watch! A saint should be like a seraphim, beset all over with eyes and lights, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in the hour of temptation. The Lord hath in the Scripture discovered the several snares, plots, and devices that the devil hath to undo the souls of men, that so, being forewarned, they may be forearmed; that they may be always upon their watch-tower, and hold their weapons in their hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

Reason (2). The second reason is, From that malice, envy, and enmity that is in Satan against the souls of men. Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, fancies, and callings of men, that so he may make them as miserable as himself. The Russians are so malicious, that you shall have a man hide some of his own goods in the house of him whom he hateth, and then accuse him for the stealth of them. So doth Satan, out of malice to the souls of men, hide his goods, his wares, as I may say, in the souls of men, and then go and accuse them before the Lord; and a thousand, thousand other ways Satan's malice, envy, and enmity puts him upon, eternally to undo the precious souls of men, &c.

Reason (3). The third reason is drawn from that long experience that Satan hath had. He is a spirit of mighty abilities; and his abilities to lay snares before us are mightily increased by that long standing of his. He is a spirit of above five thousand years' standing. He hath had time enough to study all those ways and methods which tend most to ensnare and undo the souls of men. And as he hath time enough, so he hath made it his whole study, his only study, his constant study, to find out snares, depths, and stratagems, to entangle and overthrow the souls of men. When he was but a young serpent, he did easily deceive and outwit our first parents, Gen 3:1-24; but now he is grown that 'old serpent,' as John speaks, Rev 12:9, he is as old as the world, and is grown very cunning by experience.

Reason (4). The fourth reason is, In judgment to the men of the world, that they may stumble and fall, and be ensnared for ever. Wicked men that withstand the offers of mercy, and despise the Spirit of grace, that will not open, though God knocks never so hard by his word and rod, by his Spirit and conscience, are given up by a hand of justice, to be hardened, deceived, and ensnared by Satan, to their everlasting ruin, 1Ki 22:23. And what can be more just than that they should be taken and charmed with Satan's wiles, who have frequently refused to be charmed by the Spirit of grace, though he hath charmed never so wisely, and never so sweetly, &c.?

Reason (5). The fifth reason is, That the excellency and power of God's grace may be more illustrated and manifested, by making men able to grapple with this mighty adversary, and that notwithstanding all the plots, devices, and stratagems of Satan, yet he will make them victorious here, and crown them with glory hereafter. The greater and the subtler the enemies of the children of Israel were, the more did divine power, wisdom, and goodness, sparkle and shine; and that, notwithstanding all their power, plots, and stratagems, &c., yet to Canaan he would bring them at last. When Paul had weighed this, he sits down and glories in his infirmities and distresses and Satan's buffetings, that the power of Christ might rest upon him, 2Co 12:7-9. The use of the point.

If Satan hath such a world of devices and stratagems to ensnare and undo the souls of men, then, instead of wondering that so few are saved, sit down and wonder that any are saved, that any escape the snares of this cunning fowler, who spreads his nets and casts forth his baits in all places, in all cases and companies. But this is not the main thing that I intend to speak to; my main business shall be, to set before you some special rules and helps against all his devices. The first help. If you would not be taken by any of Satan's devices, then walk by rule. He that walks by rule, walks most safely; he that walks by rule, walks most honourably; he that walks by rule, walks most sweetly. When men throw off the word, then God throws off them and then Satan takes them by the hand, and leads them into snares at his pleasure. He that thinks himself too good to be ruled by the word, will be found too bad to be owned by God; and if God do not, or will not own him, Satan will by his stratagems overthrow him. Them that keep to the rule, they shall be kept in the hour of temptation. 'Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth,' Rev 3:10. The second help. As you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, take heed of vexing and grieving the Holy Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ that is best able to discover Satan's snares against us; it is only he that can point out all his plots, and discover all his methods, and enable men to escape those pits that he hath digged for their precious souls. Ah! if you set that sweet and blessed Spirit a-mourning, that alone can secure you from Satan's depths, by whom will you be secured? Man is a weak creature, and no way able to discover Satan's snares, nor to avoid them, unless the Spirit of the Lord gives skill and power; therefore, whoever be grieved, be sure the Spirit be not grieved by your enormities, nor by your refusing the cordials and comforts that he sets before you, nor by slighting and despising his gracious actings in others, nor by calling sincerity hypocrisy, faith fancy, &c., nor by fathering those things upon the Spirit, that are the brats and fruits of your own hearts.³ The Spirit of the Lord is your counsellor, your comforter, your upholder, your strengthener. It is only the Spirit that makes a man too great for Satan to conquer. 'Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world,' 1Jn 4:4. The third help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labour for more heavenly wisdom. Ah, souls! you are much in the dark, you have but a little to that others have, and to that you might have had, had you not been wanting to yourselves. There are many knowing souls, but there are but a few wise souls. There is oftentimes a great deal of knowledge, where there is but a little wisdom to improve that knowledge. Knowledge without wisdom is like mettles in a blind horse, which often is an occasion of the rider's fall, and of his bones being jostled against the walls.⁵ It is not the most knowing Christian, but the most wise Christian, that sees, avoids, and escapes Satan's snares. 'The way of life is above to the wise,' saith Solomon, 'that he may depart from hell beneath,' Pro 15:24. Heavenly wisdom makes a man delight to fly high; and the higher any man flies, the more he is out of the reach of Satan's snares. Ah, souls! you had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom, to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices, and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts, that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one hath laid for your precious souls. The fourth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then make present resistance against Satan's first motions. It is safe to resist, it is dangerous to dispute. Eve disputes, and falls in paradise, Gen 3:1-24; Job resists, and conquers upon the dunghill. He that will play with Satan's bait, will quickly be taken with Satan's hook. The promise of conquest is made over to resisting, not to disputing: 'Resist the devil, and he will fly from you,' Jas

4:7. Ah, souls! were you better at resisting than at disputing, though happily you were not very expert at either, your temptations would be fewer, and your strength to stand would be greater than now it is, &c. The fifth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's devices, then labour to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord is a Spirit of light and power; and what can a soul do without light and power 'against spiritual wickedness in high places'? Eph 6:12. It is not enough that you have the Spirit, but you must be filled with the Spirit, or else Satan, that evil spirit, will be too hard for you, and his plots will prosper against you. That is a sweet word of the apostle, 'Be filled with the Spirit, Eph 5:18; i.e. labour for abundance of the Spirit. He that thinks he hath enough of the Holy Spirit, will quickly find himself vanquished by the evil spirit. Satan hath his snares to take you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company, when you come on to spiritual duties and when you come off from spiritual duties, and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently take you in his snares, and make a prey of you in spite of your souls. Therefore labour more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit than to have your heads filled with notions, your shops with wares, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold; so shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots, &c. The sixth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep humble. An humble heart will rather lie in the dust than rise by wickedness, and sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading; as the low shrubs are free from many violent gusts and blasts of wind, which shake and rend the taller trees. The devil hath least power to fasten a temptation on him that is most humble. He that hath a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's proffers nor terrified with his threatenings. I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of the devil spread upon the earth, he sat down, and mourned, and said in himself, *Quis pertransiet ista?* who shall pass through these? whereunto he heard a voice answering, *Humilitas pertransiet*, humility shall. God hath said, that 'he will teach the humble,' and that 'he will dwell with the humble,' and that 'he will fill and satisfy the humble.' And if the teachings of God, the indwellings of God, if the pourings in of God, will not keep the soul from falling into Satan's snares, I do not know what will. And therefore as you would be happy in resisting Satan, and blessed in triumphing over Satan and all his snares, keep humble; I say again, keep humble, &c. The seventh help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then keep a strong, close, and constant watch, 1Th 5:6. A secure soul is already an ensnared soul. That soul that will not watch against temptations, will certainly fall before the power of temptations. Satan works most strongly on the fancy when the soul is drowsy. The soul's security is Satan's opportunity to fall upon the soul and to spoil the soul, as Joshua did the men of Ai. The best way to be safe and secure from all Satan's assaults is, with Nehemiah and the Jews, to watch and pray, and pray and watch. By this means they became too hard for their enemies, and the work of the Lord did prosper sweetly in their hands. Remember how Christ chid his sluggish disciples, 'What! could you not watch with me one hour?' what, cannot you watch with me? how will you then die with me? if you cannot endure words, how will you endure wounds? &c. Satan always keeps a crafty and malicious watch, 'seeking whom he may devour (*χάταπ*), or whom he may drink or sip up, as the apostle speaks in that 1Pe 5:8. Satan is very envious at our condition, that we should enjoy that paradise out of which he is cast, and out of which he shall be for ever kept. Shall Satan keep a crafty watch, and shall not Christians keep a holy spiritual watch? Our whole life is beset with temptations. Satan watches all opportunities to break our peace, to

wound our consciences, to lessen our comforts, to impair our graces, to slur our evidences, and to damp our assurances, &c. Oh! what need then have we to be always upon our watch-tower, lest we be surprised by this subtle serpent Watchfulness includes a waking, a rousing up of the soul. It is a continual, careful observing of our hearts and ways, in all the turnings of our lives, that we still keep close to God and his word.

Watchfulness is nothing else but the soul running up and down, to and fro, busy everywhere; it is the heart busied and employed with diligent observation of quid inde, what comes from within us, and of quid inde, what comes from without us and into us. Ah, souls! you are no longer safe and secure than when you are upon your watch. While Antipater kept the watch, Alexander was safe; and while we keep a strict watch, we are safe. A watchful soul is a soul upon the wing, a soul out of gun-shot, a soul upon a rock, a soul in a castle, a soul above the clouds, a soul held fast in everlasting arms.

I shall conclude this seventh head with this advice, Remember the dragon is subtle, and bites the elephant's ear, and then sucks his blood, because he knows that to be the only place which the elephant cannot reach with his trunk to defend; so our enemies are so subtle, that they will bite us, and strike us where they may most mischief us, and therefore it doth very much concern us to stand always upon our guard. The eighth help. If you would not be taken with any of Satan's snares and devices, then keep up your communion with God. Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul high in communion with God may be tempted, but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnisheth the soul with the greatest and the choicest arguments to withstand Satan's temptations. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly coming down into the soul, and the soul, by divine influences, sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with Christ is very inflaming, raising and strengthening. While Samson kept up his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, but he goes on conquering and to conquer; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, he quickly falls before the plots of his enemies. It will be so with your souls. So long as your communion with God is kept up, you will be too hard for 'spiritual wickedness in high places;' but if you fall from your communion with God, you will fall, as others, before the face of every temptation.² David, so long as he kept up his communion with God, he stands, and triumphs over all his enemies; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, then he falls before the enemies that were in his own bosom, and flies before those that pursued after his life. It will be so with your souls, if you do not keep up your communion with God. Job keeps up his communion with God, and conquers Satan upon the dunghill; Adam loses his communion with God, and is conquered by Satan in paradise. Communion with God is a shield upon land, as well as an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, as well as a staff to support you; therefore keep up your communion. The ninth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then engage not against Satan in your own strength, but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from, the Lord Jesus. Certainly that soul that engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high, will fall before the power of the temptation. You may see this in Peter; he rested upon some old received strength—'Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I,' Mat 26:35—and therefore he falls sadly before a new temptation. He curses and swears, and denies him thrice, that had thrice

appeared gloriously to him. Ah, souls! when the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, who is lifted up in the gospel, as the brazen serpent was in the wilderness, and say to him, Dear Lord! here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from thy blessed bosom, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh! give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace, that so I may escape the snares. Ah, souls! remember this, that your strength to stand and overcome must not be expected from graces received, but from the fresh and renewed influences of heaven. You must lean more upon Christ than upon your duties; you must lean more upon Christ than upon spiritual tastes and discoveries; you must lean more upon Christ than upon your graces, or else Satan will lead you into captivity, &c. The tenth help. If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then be much in prayer. Prayer is a shelter to the soul; a sacrifice to God and a scourge to the devil. David's heart was oft more out of tune than his harp. He prays, and then, in spite of the devil, cries, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul.' Prayer is porta coeli, clavis paradisi, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders plots fruitless like prayer; therefore saith Christ, 'Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation,' Mat 26:41. You must watch and pray, and pray and watch, if you would not enter into temptation. When Sennacherib and Haman had laid plots and snares to have destroyed the Jews, they prayed, and their souls were delivered, and Sennacherib and Haman destroyed. David had many snares laid for him, and this puts him upon prayer. 'Keep me,' saith he, 'from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.' 'Let the wicked fall, into their own nets, whilst that I escape,' Psa 141:9-10. 'The proud,' saith he, 'have hid a snare for me, and cords: they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. I said unto the Lord, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplication, O Lord!' Psa 140:5-6. Saul and many others had laid snares for David, and this puts him upon prayer, and so the snares are broken and he is delivered. Ah, souls! take words to yourselves, and tell God that Satan hath spread his snares in all places and in all companies; tell God that he digs deep, and that he hath plot upon plot, and device upon device, and all to undo you; tell God that you have neither skill nor power to escape his snares; tell God that it is a work too high and too hard for any created creature to work your deliverance, unless he put under his own everlasting arms; tell God how his honour is engaged to stand by you, and to bring you off, that you be not ruined by his plots; tell God how the wicked would triumph, if you should fall into Satan's snares; tell God of the love of Christ, of the blood of Christ, and of the intercession of Christ for you, that a way may be found for your escape; tell God if he will make it his honour to save you from falling into Satan's snares, you will make it your glory to speak of his goodness and to live out his kindness. Christians must do as Dædalus, that when he could not escape by a way upon earth, went by a way of heaven, and that is, the way of prayer, which is the only way left to escape Satan's snares, &c.

Use. The next use is a use of thankfulness to those that escape Satan's snares, that are not taken by him at his will. Ah! Christians, it stands upon you with that princely prophet David, to call upon your souls, and say, 'Bless the Lord, O our souls; and all that is within us, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits!' Psa 103:1-2; who hath not given us to be a prey to Satan, and to be ensnared by those snares that he hath laid for our souls. The sense of this great favour did work up David's heart to praises: 'Blessed be the Lord,' saith he, 'who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snares of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped,' Psa 124:7. Ah! Christians, remember that the greatest part of the world, yea, the greatest part of professors, are taken in Satan's snares. Can you think

seriously of this, and not blush to be unthankful? What are you better than others? and what have ye deserved of God, or done for God more than others, that you should by the help of a divine hand escape the snares, when others are taken and held in the snares of the devil to their eternal overthrow? &c. Will you be thankful for the escaping the snares that men spread for your lives or estates, &c., and will you not be much more thankful for escaping those snares that Satan hath laid for your precious souls? Psa 71:14.

Remember this, that deliverance from Satan's snares doth carry with it the clearest and the greatest evidence of the soul and heart of God to be towards, us. Many a man by a common hand of providence escapes many a snare that man hath laid for him, but yet escapes not the snares that Satan hath laid for him. Saul, and Judas, and Demas. doubtless escaped many snares that men had laid for them, but none of them escaped the snares that the devil had laid for them. Many men are lifted up above the snares of men by a common hand of providence, that are left to fall into the snares of the devil by a hand of justice; your deliverance from Satan's snares is a fruit of special love. Can you thus look upon it and not be thankful, O precious soul? I judge not.

Use. The last use of this point is, To bespeak Christians to long to be at home. Oh! long to be in the bosom of Christ! long to be in the land of Canaan! for this world, this wilderness, is full of snares, and all employments are full of snares, and all enjoyments are full of snares. In civil things, Satan hath his snares to entrap us; and in all spiritual things, Satan hath his snares to catch us. All places are full of snares, city and country, shop and closet, sea and land; and all our mercies are surrounded with snares. There are snares about our tables and snares about our beds, &c.; yea, Satan is so powerful and subtle that he will oftentimes make our greatest, nearest, and dearest mercies to become our greatest snares. Sometimes he will make the wife that lies in the bosom to be a snare to a man, as Samson's was, and as Job's was. Sometimes he will make the child to be a snare, as Absalom was and Eli's sons were; and sometimes he will make the servant to be a snare, as Joseph was to his mistress. Ah! souls, Satan is so cunning and artificial that he can turn your cups into snares, and your clothes into snares, and your houses into snares, and your gardens into snares, and all your recreations into snares, &c. And oh! how should the consideration of these things work all your souls to say with the church, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountain of spices,' and to love, and look, and long for the coming of Christ, Song of Solomon 8:14. Shall the espoused maid long for the marriage day? the servant for his freedom? the captive for his ransom? the traveller for his inn? and the mariner for his harbour? and shall not the people of the Lord long much more to be in the bosom of Christ? there being nothing below the bosom of Christ that is not surrounded with Satan's snares, Php 1:23, and 2Co 5:2, 2Co 5:4.

What Paul once spake of bonds and afflictions, that they attended him in every place, Acts 20:23, that may all the saints say of Satan's snares, that they attend them in every place, which should cause them to cry out, Migremus hinc, migremus hinc, let us go hence, let us go hence; and to say with Monica, Austin's mother, What do we here? why depart we not hence? why fly we no swifter? Ah! souls, till you are taken up into the bosom of Christ, your comforts will not be full, pure, and constant; till then, Satan will still be thumping of you, and spreading snares to entangle you; therefore you should always be crying out with the church, 'Come, Lord Jesus!' Rev 22:20. Is not Christ the star of Jacob, that 'giveth light to them that are in darkness?' that Prince of peace who brings the olive branch to souls that are perplexed? Is not the greatest worth and wealth in him? Is

not the petty excellencies and perfections of all created creatures epitomized in him? Is not he the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heavens? Oh then, be still a-longing after a full, clear, and constant enjoyment of Christ in heaven; for till then, Satan will still have plots and designs upon you. He acts by an united power, and will never let you rest till you are taken up to an everlasting rest in the bosom of Christ.⁵ THE STATIONER TO THE READER

Christian Reader,—I thought good to present to thy view this letter following, which came to my hands, being sent from one in Devonshire to his brother in London, returning him much thanks for this book, and declaring the great benefit he received by it, and the comfortable effects it wrought upon him,—and I may say, not upon him only, for I have heard of several others that have reaped much profit and comfort from it and the other works of this author's lately published,—through the Lord's blessing, to whom be ascribed all the glory. I was induced to publish it, that so others may be encouraged to a more serious perusal of this and other solid practical divinity books, which may tend to their eternal welfare. For as there are good and bad men in the world, so there are many good and bad books, and our time is a precious thing. Therefore we ought to 'redeem it,' Eph 5:15-16, and improve it to our best advantage. I deny not but there are many moral historical books extant of very good use, yet it is too apparent that there are divers vain, idle, amorous romances, lascivious and vicious poetry, and profane playbooks, which chiefly tend to the corruption of youth, the mis-spending their precious time, and undoing their immortal souls. As I have known some foolish, ignorant people that have made earnest inquiry for merry books to pass away the time, Honest Reader, let me advise thee, next to the Bible, let it be thy chief care, as thou art curious and careful for wholesome food, for the health and preservation of thy body, so be no less careful to make sound and solid divinity books thy chiefest study and delight; which will be most for thy profit and edification, especially if thou readest them not for notion-sake, only to know, but to practise; then, as in this following young man's example, thou mayest have cause to bless God, and to be thankful to the author or instrument of thy good. Vale, J. H. A TRUE COPY OF THE LETTER ABOVE MENTIONED

Brother!—I thank you most kindly for that book of Mr Brooks's 'Precious Remedies'—you sent me; and I think I can never recompense you in a better manner than to acquaint you with what benefit I have received by it; for it was a great awaking of me, to see in what a lost condition I was without Christ, and how many ways Satan hath deceived me, in making me delay my careful providing for eternity. Brother! I was made within these few weeks so sensible of my condition, that for a week's space I was almost ready to despair of God's mercy; I was sore troubled that I had sinned so much against the mercy of the Lord, who had afforded me so much means of grace, and followed me with convictions, wooing and entreating me by his messengers for many years, which made me think that my day of grace was past. But since, 'praised be the Lord, who hath comforted me,' and now I see that there is yet a door of hope open for me, which hath brought me to such a great change in the very thoughts of my heart, that I would not exchange for the whole world. Brother! let your prayers and the prayers of God's people be, that the Lord would increase and strengthen his grace in me, for I am as a new-born babe, 'desiring the sincere milk of the word, that I may grow thereby,' 1Pe 2:2. And I would gladly have more acquaintance with the Lord's people. Brother! my prayer shall be to the Lord for you, that you may grow more and more in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and so I rest, yours in all brotherly love and affections till death,

W. L.

Tiverton, March 1655.

APPLES OF GOLD

NOTE

'Apples of Gold' was originally preached as a 'funeral sermon,' and published in 1657. See Appendix to our reprint, where will be found, (1.) Copy of the first title-page, as it states the circumstances; (2.) The original 'Epistle Dedicatory,' afterwards withdrawn and another substituted; but reprinted thus as being very characteristic and pungent. Our text is taken from the 'third edition, corrected.' Its title-page will be found below.* The '17th' edition appeared in 1693, and 'Apples of Gold' has always ranked with 'Precious Remedies' and the 'Mute Christian,' in acceptance.—G.

APPLES OF GOLD for Young Men and Women, and, A CROWN of GLORY for Old Men and Women. or, The Happiness of being Good betimes. And the honour of being an Old Disciple.

Clearly and fully discovered, and closely and faithfully applied. also, The Young Mans Objections answered. And the Old Mans Doubts resolved. By THOMAS BROOKS Preacher of the Gospel Margarets New Fishstrcel-hill. The Third Edition corrected. But I thy Servant fear the Lord from my youth, 1Ki 18:12. The hoary head is a Crown of Glory, if it bee found in a way of Righteousness, Pro 16:31.

London, Printed by R. I. for John Hancock, to be sold at the first Shop in Popes-head-Alley, next to Corn-hill, near the Exchange. 1660. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY TO ALL YOUNG PERSONS THROUGHOUT THE NATIONS, especially those, of both sexes, who begin to turn their faces towards Zion.

Dear Hearts,—'A word spoken in due season, how good is it!' Pro 15:23. 'It is' often 'like apples of gold in pictures of silver,' Pro 25:11. Many times such a word is sweet, precious, pleasing, delectable, and strong in its operation. A company of near friends dining together one Sabbath day, one that was at table, to prevent impertinent discourse, said 'that it was a question whether they should all go to heaven or no,' which struck them all into a dump, and caused every one to enter into a serious consideration with themselves. One thought, if any of this company go to hell, it must be I; and so thought another and another, and indeed so thought almost every one then present, as well servants that waited as those that sat at table, as it was afterwards acknowledged; and through the mercy and blessing of God this speech so wrought upon the spirits of most of them, that it proved the first instrumental means of their conversion.

I have my hopes, through grace, that this treatise, though it be sown in weakness, yet by the blessing of the Most High upon it, it may rise in power, and be an instrumental means of the winning of souls to Christ, which is my highest ambition in this world; and therefore I have broke through all difficulties and carnal reasonings that might otherwise have stifled this babe in the womb, and kept it from ever seeing of the light.

I have read of an emperor that delighted in no undertakings so much as those which in the esteem of his counsellors and captains were deemed most difficult and impossible. If they said such or

such an enterprise would never be accomplished, it was argument enough to him to make the adventure; and he usually prospered, he seldom miscarried.

I have never found greater and choicer blessings to attend any of my poor weak labours than those that have been brought forth into the world through the greatest straits and difficulties.

Valerius Maximus reports, that one telling a soldier going to war against the Persians, that they would hide the sun with their arrows, he answered, We shall fight best in the shade. Nothing should discourage nor dishearten a soldier of Christ, 2Ti 2:3-4 Christ saith to all his soldiers (as the Black Prince his father said to him, fighting as it were in blood to the knees, and in great distress), Either vanquish or die. Men of no resolution, or of weak resolution, will be but little serviceable to the good of souls. Such watchmen as will be free from the blood of souls, and be serviceable to the interest of Christ in turning sinners from darkness to light, must be men of spirit and resolution.

I remember Austin beginneth one of his sermons thus: Ad vos mihi aerno, O juvenes flos ætatis, periculum mentis, To you is my speech, O young men, the flower of age, the danger of the mind. So say I, To you, O young men! do I dedicate the ensuing treatise, and that, first, Because the matter contained therein doth primarily and eminently concern you. And secondly, Because of an earnest desire that I have of your internal and eternal welfare. And thirdly, Because of some late impulses that have been upon my spirit to leave this treatise in your hands as a legacy of my love, and as a testimony and witness of my great ambition to help forward your everlasting salvation. And fourthly, Because there is most hope of doing good amongst you, as I evidence more at large in the following treatise. And fifthly, To countermine the great underminer of your souls, whose great design is to poison you, and to possess you, in the morning of your days.

Sixthly, To provoke others that are more able and worthy to be more serviceable to you in declaring themselves fully on this very subject, which none yet have done that I know of, though it be a point of as great concernment to young persons especially, as any I know in all the Scriptures, Eph 4:14.

Seventhly, and lastly, Because there are very many that do lie in wait to deceive, corrupt, and poison your persons with God-dishonouring, Christ-denying, conscience-wasting, and soul-damning opinions, principles, and blasphemies.

I have read of one who boasted and gloried in this, that he had spent thirty years in corrupting and poisoning of youth. Doubtless, many wretches, many monsters there be among us, who make it their business, their glory, their all, to delude and draw young persons to those dangerous errors and blasphemies that lead to destruction. Error and folly, saith one very well, be the knots of Satan wherewith he ties children to the stake to be burned in hell.

There is a truth in what the tragedian [Terence?] said long since, 'Venenum, in auro bibitur,' poison is commonly drunk out of a cup of gold. So is an error or by-notion soonest taken into the judgment and conscience from persons of the fairest carriage and smoothest conversations. Error is so foul an hag, that if it should come in its own shape, a man would loathe it, and fly from it as from hell.

If Jezebel had not painted her face, she had not gotten so many young doating adulterers to have followed her to their own ruin.

Ah! young men, young men, the blessing of the Lord upon your serious and diligent perusal of this treatise may be a happy means to preserve you from being ensnared and deluded by those monsters 'who compass sea and land to make proselytes for hell,' Mat 23:15. And thus I have given you the reasons of my dedicating this treatise to the service of your souls. I would willingly presume that it will be as kindly taken as it is cordially tendered. I hope none of you into whose hands it may fall, will say as one Antipater, king of Macedonia, did; when one presented him with a book treating of happiness, his answer was, *Ou σχολ■ζω*, I have no leisure.

Ah! Young men and women, young men and virgins, as you tender the everlasting welfare of your souls; as you would escape hell and come to heaven; as you would have an interest in Christ, a pardon in your bosoms; as you would be blessed here and glorious hereafter; find time, find leisure, to read over and over the following treatise, which is purposely calculated for your eternal good. But before I go further, I think it needful, in some respects, to give the world some further account of other reasons or motives that hath prevailed with me to appear once more in print; and they are these:

First, Having preached a sermon occasionally upon these words, on which this following discourse is built, I was earnestly importuned to print the sermon by some worthy friends. I did as long as in modesty I could, withstand their desires, judging it not worthy of them; but being at last overcome, and setting about the work, the breathings and comings in of God were such as hath occasioned that one sermon to multiply into many. Luther tells us, that when he first began to turn his back upon popery, he intended no more but to withstand popish pardons and selling indulgences; yet neither would God or his enemies let him alone till he resolved with Moses not to leave a hoof of popery unopposed, Exo 10:26, &c. God many times in the things of the gospel carries forth his servants beyond their intentions, beyond their resolutions. But,

Secondly, The kind acceptance and good quarter that my other pieces have found in the world, and those signal and multiplied blessings that have followed them, to the winning of many over to Christ, and to the building up of others in Christ, hath encouraged me to present this treatise to the world, hoping that the Lord hath a blessing in store for this also. Gracious experiences are beyond notions and impressions; they are very quickening and encouraging.

Thirdly, That I might in some measure make up other neglects, whose age, whose parts, whose experiences, whose graces hath long called upon them to do something considerable in this way, and that they may be provoked by my weak assay to do better, and to make up what is wanting through my invincible infirmities and spiritual wants and weaknesses, which are so many as may well make a sufficient apology for all the defects and weaknesses that in this treatise shall appear to a serious judicious eye. But,

Fourthly, The love of Christ and souls hath constrained me to it. As there is an attractive, so there is a compulsive, virtue in divine love. Love to Christ and souls will make a man willing to spend and be spent. He that prays himself to death, that preaches himself to death, that studies himself to death, that sweats himself to death, for the honour of Christ and good of souls, shall be no loser in the end. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand that he shall never be faint or weary.³ Divine love is very operative; *si non operatur, non est*, if it do not work, it is an argument it is not at all. Divine love, like fire, is not idle, but active. He that loves cannot be barren. Love will make the soul constant and abundant in well-doing. God

admits none to heaven, saith Justin Martyr, but such as can persuade him by their works that they love him. The very heathen Seneca hath observed, that God doth not love his children with a weak, womanish affection, but with a strong, masculine love; and certainly, they that love the Lord strongly, that love him with a masculine love, they cannot but lay out their little all for him and his glory. But,

Fifthly, I observe that Satan and his instruments are exceeding busy and unwearied in their designs, attempts, and endeavours in these days to corrupt and poison, to defile and destroy the young, the tender, the most hopeful, and most flourishing plants among us.

Latimer told the clergy in his time, that if they would not learn diligence and vigilance of the prophets and apostles, they should learn it of the devil, who goes up and down his dioceses, and acts by an untired power, seeking whom he may destroy. When the wolves are abroad, the shepherd should not sleep, but watch; yea, double his watch, remembering that he were better have all the blood of all the men in the world upon him than the blood of one soul upon him by his negligence, or otherwise.

Satan is a lion, not a lamb; a roaring lion, not a sleepy lion; not a lion standing still, but a lion going up and down. As not being contented with the prey, the many millions of souls he hath got, 'he seeks whom he may sip up at a draught,' as that word, χαταπι■, in the 1Pe 5:8 imports; his greatest design is to fill hell with souls; which should awaken every one to be active, and to do all that may be done to prevent his design, and to help forward the salvation of souls.

Chrysostom compares good pastors to fountains that ever send forth waters, or conduits that are always running, though no pail be put under. But,

Sixthly and lastly, I know the whole life of man is but an hour to work in; and the more work any man doth for Christ on earth, the better pay he shall have when he comes to heaven. Every man shall at last 'reap as he sows.' Opportunities of doing service for Christ, and souls, are more worth than a world; therefore I was willing to take hold on this, not knowing how soon 'I may put off this earthly tabernacle;' and remembering, that as there is no believing nor repenting in the grave, so there is no praying, preaching, writing, nor printing in the grave; we had need to be up and doing, to put both hands to it, and to do all we do with all our might, knowing that 'the night draws on upon us, wherein no man can work.' A Christian's dying day is the Lord's pay-day; that is, a time to receive wages, not to do work. And thus I have given the world a true account of the reasons that moved me to print the following discourse. Before I close up, I desire to speak a word to young persons, and another to aged persons, and then I shall take leave of both. My request to you who are in the primrose of your days is this, If ever the Lord shall be pleased so to own and crown, so to bless and follow this following discourse, as to make it an effectual means of turning you to the Lord, of winning you to Christ, of changing your natures, and converting your souls—for such a thing as that I pray, hope, and believe—that then you would do two things for me.

First, That you would never cease bearing of me upon your hearts when you are in the mount, that I may be very much under the pourings out of the Spirit, that I may be clear, high, and full in my communion with God, and that I may be always close, holy, humble, harmless, and blameless in my walkings with God, and that his work may more and more prosper in my hand.

Secondly, That you would by word of mouth, letter, or some other way, acquaint me with what the Lord hath done for your souls, if he shall make me a spiritual father to you. Do not hide his grace from me, but acquaint me how he hath made the seed that was sown in weakness to rise in power upon you, and that

(First) That I may do what I can to help on that work begun upon you; that your penny may become a pound, your mite a million, your drop an ocean.

(Secondly) That I may the better English some impressions that have been upon my own spirit since I began this work.

(Thirdly), That my joy and thankfulness may be increased, and my soul more abundantly engaged to that God, who hath blessed the day of small things to you, 1Th 2:19-20; 2Co 9:2. Ponder these scriptures—2Co 7:3-4, 2Co 7:13; Php 2:2; Php 4:1; Phm 1:7; 2Jn 1:3-4—and then be ashamed to declare what the Lord hath done for you, if you can.

(Fourthly) It is better to convert one, than to civilise a thousand; and will turn more at last to a minister's account in that day, wherein he shall say, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' Isa 8:18. Such a man, with his spiritual children about him, shall look on God with more comfort and boldness, than those that are only able to say, 'Lo, here am I, and the many benefices;' 'Here am I, and the many ecclesiastical dignities and glories;' 'Here am I, and the many hundreds a year that man had given, and I have gotten.' But,

(Fifthly and lastly) The conversion of others is a secondary and more remote evidence of a man's own renovation and conversion. Paul was converted himself before God made him instrumental for others' conversion. God's usual method is, to convert by them who are converted.

I do not remember any one instance in all the Scripture of God's converting any by such who have not been converted first themselves; yet I know his grace is free, and the wind blows where it lists, when it lists, and as it lists. To aged persons I have a word, and then I have done.

First, To grey-headed saints. Ah, friends! ah, fathers! would you see your honour, your happiness, your blessedness? Then look into this treatise, and there you will find what an unspeakable honour it is to be an old disciple, what a glory it is to be good betimes, and to continue so to old age.

Secondly, To white-headed sinners whose spring is past, whose summer is overpast, and who are arrived at the fall of the leaf, and yet have a hell to escape, a Christ to believe in, sins to pardon, hearts to change, souls to save, and heaven to make sure; would such be encouraged from Scripture grounds to repent, believe, and hope, that yet there is mercy for such, let them seriously peruse this treatise, especially the latter part of it, and there they may find enough to keep them from despairing, and to encourage them to adventure their souls upon him that is mighty to save.

There are many things in this treatise that are of use to all, and several things of moment, that are not every day preached nor read. I have made it as pleasurable as time would permit, that so it might be the more profitable to the reader, and that I might the better take the young man by a holy craft; which is a high point of heavenly wisdom, there being no wisdom to that of winning of souls, 2Co 12:16; Pro 11:13. I shall now follow this poor piece with my weak prayers, that it may be so blest from heaven, as that it may bring in some, and build up others, and do good to all. And so rest, Your friend and servant in the Gospel of Christ,

Thomas Brooks. THE YOUNG MAN'S DUTY AND EXCELLENCY And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.'—1Ki 14:13.

I shall only stand upon the latter part of this verse, because that affords me matter most suitable to my design.

'Because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.'

These words are a commendation of Abijah's life, 'in him was found some good thing toward the Lord,' &c. When Abijah was a child, 1Ki 14:3, 1Ki 14:12, when he was in his young and tender years, he had the seeds of grace in him, he had the image of God upon him, he could discern between good and evil, and he did that which pleased the Lord. The Hebrew word [Nagnar] translated child, 1Ki 14:3, is very often applied to such as we call youth, or young men; Exo 24:5; Num 11:28; 1Sa 2:17, &c. Of such age and prudence was Abijah, as that he could choose good and refuse evil. He was a Lot in Sodom, he was good among the bad. The bent and frame of his heart was towards that which was good, when the heart both of his father and mother was set upon evil. Abijah began to be good betimes. He crossed that pestilent proverb, 'a young saint and an old devil.' It is the glory and goodness of God that he will take notice of the least good that is in any of his. There was but one good word in Sarah's speech to Abraham, and that was this, she called him Lord; and this God mentions for her honour and commendation, 'She called him lord,' 1Pe 3:6. God looks more upon one grain of wheat, than upon a heap of chaff, upon one shining pearl than upon a heap of rubbish. God finds a pearl in Abijah, and he puts it into his crown, to his eternal commendation, 'There was found in him some good thing toward the Lord,' &c. For the words, 'There was found in him,' the Hebrew word Matsa, sometimes signifies finding without seeking: Isa 65:1, 'I am found of them that sought me not;' so Psa 116:3, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow.' I found trouble which I looked not for; I was not searching after sorrow, but I found it. There is an elegancy in the original; 'The pains of hell gat hold upon me,' so we read, but the Hebrew is, 'The pains of hell found me.' One word signifies both. They found me, I did not find them. 'There was found in Abijah some good thing towards the Lord,' i. e. there was found in him, without searching or seeking, some good thing towards the Lord. It was plain and visible enough. Men might see and observe it without inquiring or seeking. They might run and read some good thing in him towards the Lord.

Secondly, The word sometimes signifies finding by seeking or inquiry: Isa 55:6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,' &c. So upon search and inquiry there was found in Abijah, though young, 'some good thing toward the Lord.'

Thirdly, Sometimes the word notes the obtaining of that which is sufficient: Jos 17:16; Num 11:22; Jdg 21:14. In Abijah there was that good in him towards the Lord that was sufficient to evidence the work of grace upon him, sufficient to satisfy himself and others of the goodness and happiness of his condition, though he died in the prime and flower of his days, &c.

'And in him was found some good thing.' The Hebrew word Tob, that is here rendered good, signifies, First, That which is right and just: 2Sa 15:3, 'See thy matters are good and right,' i. e. just and right.

Secondly, That which is profitable: Deu 6:11, 'Houses full of all good things,' i. e. houses full of all profitable things.

Thirdly, That which is pleasing: 2Sa 19:27, 'Do what is good in thine eyes,' i. e. do what is pleasing in thine eyes.

Fourthly, That which is full and complete: Gen 15:15, 'Thou shalt be buried in a good old age,' i. e. thou shalt be buried when thine age is full and complete.

Fifthly, That which is joyful and delightful: 1Sa 25:8, 'We come in a good day,' i. e. we come in a joyful and delightful day.

Now put all together, and you may see that there was found in Abijah, when he was young, that which was right and just, that which was pleasing and profitable, and that which was matter of joy and delight. In the words you have two things that are most considerable.

First, That this young man's goodness was towards the Lord God of Israel. Many there are that are good, nay, very good towards men, who yet are bad, yea, very bad towards God. Some there are who are very kind to the creature, and yet very unkind to their Creator. Many men's goodness towards the creature is like the rising sun, but their goodness towards the Lord is like a morning cloud, or as the early dew, which is soon dried up by the sunbeams, Hos 6:4; but Abijah's goodness was towards the Lord, his goodness faced the Lord, it looked towards the glory of God. Two things makes a good Christian, good actions and good aims; and though a good aim doth not make a bad action good, as in Uzzah, yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, as in Jehu, whose justice was approved, but his policy punished, the first chapter of Hosea, and the fourth verse. Doubtless Abijah's actions were good, and his aims good, and this was indeed his glory, that his goodness was 'towards the Lord.'

It is recorded of the Catanenses, that they made a stately monument, of kingly magnificence, in remembrance of two sons, who took their aged parents upon their backs, and carried them through the fire, when their father's house was all in a flame. These young men were good towards their parents; but what is this to Abijah's goodness 'towards the Lord'? &c. A man cannot be good towards the Lord but he will be good towards others; but a man may be good towards others, that is not good towards the Lord. Oh that men's practices did not give too loud a testimony every day to this assertion! &c.³

Secondly, He was good among the bad. He was good 'in the house of Jeroboam.' It is in fashion to seem at least to be good among the good; but to be really good among those that are bad, that are eminently bad, argues not only a truth of goodness, but a great degree of goodness. This young man was good 'in the house of Jeroboam, who made all Israel to sin; who was naught, who was very naught, who was stark naught; and yet Abijah, as the fishes which live in the salt sea are fresh, so though he lived in a sink, a sea, of wickedness, yet he retained his 'goodness towards the Lord.'

They say roses grow the sweeter when they are planted by garlic. They are sweet and rare Christians indeed who hold their goodness, and grow in goodness, where wickedness sits on the throne; and such a one the young man in the text was. To be wheat among tares, corn among chaff, pearls among cockles, and roses among thorns, is excellent. To be a Jonathan in Saul's

court, to be an Obadiah in Ahab's court, to be an Ebed-melech in Zedekiah's court, and to be an Abijah in Jeroboam's court, is a wonder, a miracle. To be a Lot in Sodom, to be an Abraham in Chaldea, to be a Daniel in Babylon, to be a Nehemiah in Damascus, and to be a Job in the land of Husse, is to be a saint among devils; and such a one the young man in the text was. The poets affirm that Venus never appeared so beauteous as when she sat by black Vulcan's side. Gracious souls shine most clear when they be set by black-conditioned persons. Stephen's face never shined so angelically, so gloriously, in the church where all were virtuous, as before the council where all were vicious and malicious. So Abijah was a bright star, a shining sun, in Jeroboam's court, which for profaneness and wickedness was a very hell. The words that I have chosen to insist upon will afford us several observations, but I shall only name one, which I intend to prosecute at this time, and that is this, viz.:

CHAPTER I Doct. That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes.

Other scriptures speak out this to be a truth, besides what you have in the text to confirm it; as that of 2Ch 34:1-3, 'Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left; for in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.' It was Obadiah's honour that he feared the Lord from his youth, 1Ki 18:3; and Timothy's crown that he knew the Scripture from a child, 2Ti 1:1, 2Ti 1:5, 2Ti 1:15; and John's joy that he found children walking in the truth, 2Jn 1:4-5; this revived his good old heart, and made it dance for joy in his bosom. To spend further time in the proving of this truth, would be but to light candles to see the sun at noon. The grounds and reasons of this point, viz.: That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes, are these that follow:

Reason 1. First, Because the Lord commands it; and divine commands are not to be disputed, but obeyed. In Ecc 12:1, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' Remember now; I say, now. Now is an atom; it will puzzle the wisdom of a philosopher, the skill of an angel, to divide. Now is a monosyllable in all learned languages: 'Remember now thy Creator.' Remember him presently, instantly, for thou dost not know what a day, what an hour, may bring forth; thou canst not tell what deadly sin, what deadly temptation, what deadly judgment, may overtake thee, if thou dost not now, even now, 'remember thy Creator.'

'Remember now thy Creator.' Remember to know him, remember to love him, remember to desire him, remember to delight in him, remember to depend upon him, remember to get an interest in him, remember to live to him, and remember to walk with him. 'Remember now thy Creator;' the Hebrew is Creators, Father, Son, and Spirit. To the making of man, a council was called in heaven, in Gen 1:26. 'Remember thy Creators:' Remember the Father, so as to know him, so as to be inwardly acquainted with him. Remember the Son, so as to believe in him, so as to rest upon him, so as to embrace him, and so as to make a complete resignation of thyself to him. Remember the Spirit, so as to hear his voice, so as to obey his voice, so as to feel his presence, and so as to

experience his influence, &c.

'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' He doth not say in the time of thy youth, but 'in the days of thy youth,' to note, that our life is but as a few days. It is but as a vapour, a span, a flower, a shadow, a dream; and therefore Seneca saith well, that 'though death be before the old man's face, yet he may be as near the young man's back,' &c.

Man's life is the shadow of smoke, the dream of a shadow. One doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death.

Ah! young men, God commands you to be good betimes. Remember, young men, that it is a dangerous thing to neglect any of his commands, who by another is able to command you into nothing, or into hell. To act or run cross to God's command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:24, &c.

Let young men put all their carnal reasons, though never so many and weighty, into one scale, and God's absolute command in the other, and then write Tekel upon all their reasons, they are 'weighed in the balance and found too light.'

Ah, sirs! what God commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying or delaying, or disputing the difficulties that attend it. Most young men in these days do as the heathens: when their gods called for a man, they offered a candle; or, as Hercules, offered up a painted man instead of a living. When God calls upon young men to serve him with the primrose of their youth, they usually put him off till they are overtaken with trembling joints, dazzled eyes, fainting hearts, failing hands, and feeble knees; but this will be bitterness in the end, &c.

Reason (2). Because they have means and opportunities of being good betimes.

Never had men better means and greater opportunities of being good, of doing good, and of receiving good, than now. Ah, Lord! how knowing, how believing, how holy, how heavenly, how humble, might young men be, were they not wanting to their own souls. Young men might be good, very good, yea, eminently good, would they but improve the means of grace, the tenders of mercy, and the knockings of Christ, by his word, works, and Spirit. The ancients painted opportunity with a hairy forehead, but bald behind, to signify, that while a man hath opportunity before him, he may lay hold on it, but if he suffer it to slip away, he cannot pull it back again.

How many young men are now in everlasting chains, who would give ten thousand worlds, had they so many in their hands to give, to enjoy but an opportunity to hear one sermon more, to make one prayer more, to keep one Sabbath more, but cannot! This is their hell, their torment; this is the scorpion that is still biting, this is the worm that is always gnawing. Woe! woe! to us, that we have neglected and trifled away those golden opportunities that once we had to get our sins pardoned, our natures changed, our hearts bettered, our consciences purged, and our souls saved, &c. I have read of a king, who having no issue to succeed him, espying one day a well-favoured youth, took him to court, and committed him to tutors to instruct him, providing by his will, that if he proved fit for government, he should be crowned king; if not, he should be bound in chains and made a galley-slave. Now when he grew to years, the king's executors, perceiving that he had sadly neglected those means and opportunities, whereby he might have been fit for state-government, called him before them, and declared the king's will and pleasure concerning him, which was

accordingly performed, for they caused him to be fettered, and committed to the galleys. Now what tongue can express how much he was affected and afflicted, with his sad and miserable state, especially when he considered with himself, that now he is chained, who might have walked at liberty; now he is a slave, who might have been a king; now he is overruled by Turks, who might once have ruled over Christians. The application is easy.

Ah! young men! young men! shall Satan take all opportunities to tempt you? shall the world take all opportunities to allure you? shall wicked men take all opportunities to ensnare you, and to undo you? and shall Christian friends take all opportunities to better you? and shall God's faithful messengers take all opportunities to save you? and will you, will you 'neglect so great salvation'? Heb 2:3. Plutarch writes of Hannibal, that when he could have taken Rome he would not, and when he would have taken Rome he could not. Many, in their youthful days, when they might have mercy, Christ, pardon, heaven, they will not; and in old age, when they would have Christ, pardon, peace, heaven, they cannot, they may not. God seems to say, as Theseus said once, Go, says he, and tell Creon, Theseus offers thee a gracious offer. Yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit; this is my first message; but if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in arms.

Reason (3). Because, when they have fewer and lesser sins to answer for and repent of, multitudes of sins and sorrows are prevented by being good betimes. The more we number our days, the fewer sins we shall have to number. As a copy is then safest from blotting when dust is put upon it, so are we from sinning when, in the time of our youth, we remember that we are but dust. The tears of young penitents do more scorch the devils than all the flames of hell; for hereby all their hopes are blasted, and the great underminer countermined and blown up. Mane is the devil's verb; he bids tarry, time enough to repent; but mane is God's adverb; he bids repent early, in the morning of thy youth, for then thy sins will be fewer and lesser. Well! young men, remember this: he that will not at the first-hand buy good counsel cheap, shall at the second-hand buy repentance over dear.

Ah! young men! young men! if you do not begin to be good betimes, those sins that are now as jewels sparkling in your eyes, will at last be millstones about your necks, to sink you for ever. Among many things that Beza, in his last will and testament, gave God thanks for, this was the first and chief, that he, at the age of sixteen years, had called him to the knowledge of the truth, and so prevented many sins and sorrows that otherwise would have overtaken him, and have made his life less happy and more miserable. Young saints often prove old angels, but old sinners seldom prove good saints, &c.2

Reason 4. Because time is a precious talent, that young men must be countable for. The sooner they begin to be good, the more easy will be their accounts, especially as to that great talent of time. Cato and other heathens held that account must be given, not only of our labour, but also of our leisure. At the great day, it will appear that they that have spent their time in mourning have done better than they that have spent their time in dancing; and they that have spent many days in humiliation, than they that have spent many days in idle recreations.

I have read of a devout man who, when he heard a clock strike, he would say, Here is one hour more past that I have to answer for. Ah! young men, as time is very precious, so it is very short. Time is very swift; it is suddenly gone. In Job 9:25, 'My days are swifter than a post, they flee away, they see no good.' The Hebrew word (kalal) translated 'swifter than a post,' signifies

anything that is light, because light things are quick in motion. The ancients emblemed time with wings, as it were, not running, but flying. Time is like the sun, that never stands still, but is still a-running his race. The sun did once stand still, yea, went back, but so did never time. Time is still running and flying. It is a bubble, a shadow, a dream. Can you seriously consider of this, young men, and not begin to be good betimes? Surely you cannot. Sirs! if the whole earth whereupon we tread were turned into a lump of gold, it were not able to purchase one minute of time. Oh! the regrettings of the damned for misspending precious time!⁴ Oh! what would they not give to be free, and to enjoy the means of grace one hour! Ah! with what attention, with what intention, with what trembling and melting of heart, with what hungering and thirsting, would they hear the word! Time, saith Bernard, were a good commodity in hell, and the traffic of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds, if he had them. Young men, can you in good earnest believe this, and not begin to be good betimes?

Ah! young men and women, as you love your precious immortal souls, as you would escape hell, and come to heaven, as you would be happy in life, and blessed in death, and glorious after death, don't spend any more of your precious time in drinking and drabbing, in carding, dicing, and dancing; don't trifle away your time, don't swear away your time, don't whore away your time, do not lie away your time, but begin to be good betimes, because time is a talent that God will reckon with you for.² Ah! young men and women, you may reckon upon years, many years yet to come, when possibly you have not so many hours to make ready your accounts. It may be this night you may have a summons, and then, if your time be done, and your work to be begun, in what a sad case will you be. Will you not wish that you had never been born?

Seneca was wont to jeer the Jews for their ill husbandry, in that they lost one day in seven, meaning their Sabbath. Oh that it were not too true of the most of professors, both young and old, that they lose not only one day in seven but several days in seven.

Sirs! Time let sliy cannot be recalled. The foolish virgins found it so, and Saul found it so, and Herod found it so, and Nerd found it so. The Israelites found it so; yea, and Jacob, and Josiah, and David, though good men, yet they found it so to their cost. The Egyptians draw the picture of time with three heads: the first of a greedy wolf, gaping, for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured the memory of so many things past recalling; the second of a crowned lion, roaring, for time present, because it hath the principality of all actions, for which it calls loud; the third of a deceitful dog, fawning, for time to come, because it feeds some men with many flattering hopes to their eternal undoing. Ah! young men and women, as you would give up your accounts at last with joy, concerning this talent of time, with which God hath trusted you, begin to be good betimes, &c.

Reason (5). Because they will have the greater comfort and joy when they come to be old. The Psa 71:5, Psa 71:17-18, compared, 'Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come.'

Polycarpus could say, when old, 'Thus many years have I served my Master Christ, and hitherto hath he dealt well with me.' If early converts live to be old, no joy to their joy. Their joy will be the greatest joy, a joy like to the joy of harvest, a joy like to their joy that divide the spoil. Their joy will be soundest joy, the weightiest joy, the holiest joy, the purest joy, the strongest joy, and the most

lasting joy,' Isa 9:3. The carnal joy of the wicked, the glistening golden joy of the worldling, and the flashing joy of the hypocrite, is but as the crackling of thorns under a pot, to the joy and comfort of such, who, when old, can say with good Obadiah, that they 'feared the Lord from their youth.' If, when you are young, your eyes shall be full of tears for sin, when you are old, your heart shall be full of joys. Such shall have the best wine at last.

Oh! that young men would begin to be good betimes, that so they may have the greater harvest of joy when they come to be old, &c. It is sad to be sowing your seed when you should be reaping your harvest; it is best to gather in the summer of youth against the winter of old age.

Reason 6. Because an eternity of felicity and glory hangs upon those few moments that are allotted to them.

It was a good question the young man proposed, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Luk 10:25. I know I shall be eternally happy or eternally miserable, eternally blessed or eternally cursed, eternally saved or eternally damned, &c.

'Oh! what shall I do to inherit eternal life!' My cares, my fears, my troubles are all about eternity! No time can reach eternity, no age can extend to eternity, no tongue can express eternity. Eternity is that unum perpetuum hodie, one perpetual day which shall never have end; what shall I do, what shall I not do, that I may be happy to all eternity?

I am now young, and in the flower of my days; but who knows what a day may bring forth? The greatest weight hangs upon the smallest wires, an eternity depends upon those few hours I am to breathe in this world. Oh! what cause have I therefore to be good betimes, to know God betimes, to believe betimes, to repent betimes, to get my peace made and my pardon sealed betimes, to get my nature changed, my conscience purged, and my interest in Christ cleared betimes, before eternity overtakes me, before my glass be out, my sun set, my race run, lest the dark night of eternity should overtake me, and I made miserable for ever.

I have read of one Myrogenes, who, when great gifts were sent unto him, he sent them all back again, saying, I only desire this one thing at your master's hand: to pray for me that I may be saved for eternity. Oh! that all young men and women, who make earth their heaven, pleasures their paradise, that eat the fat and drink the sweet, that clothe themselves richly, and crown their heads with rose-buds, that they would seriously consider of eternity, so as to hear as for eternity, and pray as for eternity, and live as for eternity, and provide as for eternity! Luk 15:12-20. That they might say with that famous painter Zeuxis, *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity. We do all for eternity, we believe for eternity, we repent for eternity, we obey for eternity, &c.

Oh! that you would not make those things eternal for punishment that cannot be eternal for use.

Ah! young men and women, God calls, and the blood of Jesus Christ calls, and the Spirit of Christ in the gospel calls, and the rage of Satan calls, and your sad state and condition calls, and the happiness and blessedness of glorified saints calls; these all call aloud upon you to make sure a glorious eternity, before you fall out into that dreadful ocean. All your eternal good depends upon the short and uncertain moments of your lives; and if the thread of your lives should be cut before a happy eternity is made sure, woe to you that ever you were born! Do not say, O young man, that thou art young, and hereafter will be time enough to provide for eternity, for eternity may be at the

door, ready to carry thee away for ever. Every day's experience speaks out eternity to be as near the young man's back as it is before the old man's face.

Oh grasp to-day the diadem of a blessed eternity, lest thou art cut off before the morning comes! Though there is but one way to come into this world, yet there is a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of this world. Well! young men and women, remember this, as the motions of the soul are quick, so are the motions of divine justice quick also; and if you will not hear the voice of God to-day, if you will not provide for eternity to-day, God may swear to-morrow that you shall never enter into his rest, Heb 3:7-8, Heb 3:15-16, Heb 3:18-19. It is a very sad and dangerous thing to trifle and dally with God, his word, his offers, our own souls, and eternity. Therefore, let all young people labour to be good betimes, and not to let him that is goodness itself alone till he hath made them good, till he hath given them those hopes of eternity that will both make them good and keep them good; that will make them happy, and keep them happy, and that for ever. If all this will not do, then know that ere long those fears of eternity, of misery, that beget that monster Despair, which, like Medusa's head, astonisheth with its very aspect, and strangles hope, which is the breath of the soul, will certainly overtake you; as it is said, Dum Spiro, Spero, so it may be inverted Dum, Spero, Spiro; other miseries may wound the spirit, but despair kills it dead. My prayer shall be, that none of you may ever experience this sad truth, but that you may all be good in good earnest, betimes, which will yield you two heavens, a heaven on earth, and a heaven after death.

Reason 7. Because they do not begin to live till they begin to be really good.

Till they begin to be good, they are dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards. Till a man begins to be really good, he is really dead, and that first in respect of working; his works are called dead works, Heb 9:14. The most glistering services of unregenerate persons are but dead works, because they proceed not from a principle of life, and they lead to death, Rom 6:23, and leave a sentence of death upon the soul, till it be washed off by the blood of the Lamb. Secondly, he is dead in respect of honour; he is dead to all privileges, he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who will set the crown of life upon a dead man? The crown of life is only for living Christians, Rev 2:10. The young prodigal was dead till he begun to be good, till he begun to remember his father's house, and to resolve to return home: 'My son was dead, but is alive,' Luk 15:24; and the widow that 'liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1Ti 5:6. When Joshaphat asked Barlaam how old he was, he answered, Five and forty years old; to whom Joshaphat replied, Thou seemest to be seventy. True, saith he, if you reckon ever since I was born; but I count not those years which were spent in vanity.

Ah, sirs! you never begin to live till you begin to be good, in good earnest. There is the life of vegetation, and that is the life of plants; secondly, there is the life of sense, and that is the life of beasts; thirdly, there is the life of reason, and that is the life of man; fourthly, there is the life of grace, and that is the life of saints; and this life you do not begin to live till you begin to be good. If 'a living dog is better than a dead lion,' as the wise man speaks, Ecc 9:4, and if a fly is more excellent than the heavens, because the fly hath life, which the heavens have not, as the philosopher saith, what a sad, dead, poor nothing is that person that is a stranger to the life of grace and goodness, that is dead even whilst he is alive!

Most men will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, ay, limbs, yea, and many a better thing, viz., the honour of God and a good conscience, to preserve their natural lives;

as he cries out, Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life; and yet how few, how very few, are to be found who make it their work, their business, to attain to a life of goodness, or to begin to be good betimes, or to be dead to the world and alive to God, rather than to be dead to God and alive to the world. This is for a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that natural life is so highly prized, and spiritual life so little regarded, &c.

Reason 8. Because the promise of finding God, of enjoying God, is made over to an early seeking of God.

Pro 8:17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, they that 'seek me in the morning shall find me.' By the benefit of the morning light we come to find the things we seek. Shahhar [שחר] signifies to seek inquisitively, to seek diligently, to seek timely in the morning. As the Israelites went early in the morning to seek for manna, Exo 16:21, and as students rise early in the morning and sit close to it to get knowledge, so saith wisdom, they that 'seek me in the spring and morning of their youth, shall find me.'

Now, to seek the Lord early is to seek the Lord firstly. God hath in himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he hath all glories, all dignities, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all comforts, all delights, all joys, all beatitudes. God is that one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures, and therefore he is firstly to be sought. Abstracts do better express him than concretes and adjectives; he is being, bonity, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, goodness, and love itself, and therefore worthy to be sought before all other things. Seek ye first the good things of the mind, saith philosophy, and doth not divinity say as much?

Again, To seek early is to seek opportunely, to seek while the opportunity does present: Jdg 9:33, 'Thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city,' that is, thou shalt opportunely set upon the city.

Such there have been who, by having a glass of water opportunely, have obtained a kingdom, as you may see in the story of Thaumastus and king Agrippa.

Ah! young men and women, you do not know but that by an early, by an opportune, seeking of God, you may obtain a kingdom that shakes not, and glory that passeth not away, Heb 12:28.

There is a season wherein God may be found: 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near,' Isa 55:6; and if you slip this season, you may seek him and miss him: 'Though they cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them; 'When ye make many prayers, I will not hear;' 'Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear;' 'Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me.' This was Saul's misery: 'The Philistines are upon me, and God will not answer me,' 1Sa 28:15. It is justice that they should seek and not find at last, who might have found had they but sought seasonably and opportunely, &c.

Again, To seek early is to seek earnestly, affectionately: 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early,' Isa 26:9. The Hebrew word signifies both an earnest and an early seeking. In the morning the spirits are up, and men are earnest, lively, and affectionate.

Ah! such a seeking shall certainly be crowned with finding: 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! in the morning will I direct [Heb. marshal] my prayer unto thee, and will look up'

[Hebrew, look out like a watchman]. 'Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy; because thou defendest them' [Hebrew, 'thou coverest over, or protectest them']. 'Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee: for thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him [Hebrew, 'crown him'] as with a shield.' None have ever thus sought the Lord, but they have, or certainly shall find him: 'Seek and ye shall find,' Mat 7:7; 'your hearts shall live that seek God,' Psa 69:32; 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' Jas 5:16, or, as the Greek hath it, 'The working prayer of a righteous man availeth much.' That prayer that sets the whole man a-work will work wonders in heaven, in the heart, and in the earth. Earnest prayer, like Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, never returns empty.

One speaking of Luther, who was a man very earnest in prayer, said, *Hic homo potuit apud Deum quod voluit*, this man could have what he would of God, &c.

Again, to seek early is to seek chiefly, primarily, after this or that thing. What we first seek, we seek as chief. Now, to seek the Lord early is to seek him primarily, chiefly; in the 63d psalm, and the 1st verse, 'Thou art my God, early will I seek thee,' that is, I will seek thee as my choicest and my chiefest good. God is Alpha, the fountain from whence all grace springs, and Omega, the sea to which all glory runs, and therefore early and primarily to be sought. God is a perfect good, a solid good, *Id bonum perfectum dicitur, cui nil accedere, solidum, cui nil decedere potest* (Lactantius), That is a perfect good, to which nothing can be added; that a solid, from which nothing can be spared. Such a good God is, and therefore early and chiefly to be sought. God is a pure and simple good; he is a light in whom there is no darkness, a good in whom there is no evil, 1Jn 1:5. The goodness of the creature is mixed, yea, that little goodness that is in the creature is mixed with much evil; but God is an unmixed good; he is good, he is pure good, he is all over good, he is nothing but good. God is an all-sufficient good: 'Walk before me, and be upright: I am God all-sufficient,' in the 17th of Genesis and the first verse. *Habet omnia, qui habet habentem omnia*, (Augustine), He hath all that hath the haver of all. God hath in himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, and all happiness to crown you. God is a satisfying good, a good that fills the heart and quiets the soul, Song of Solomon 2:3. In Gen 33:11, 'I have enough,' saith good Jacob; 'I have all,' saith Jacob, for so the Hebrew hath it (Cholli), I have all, I have all comforts, all delights, all contents, &c. In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, 'I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward,' saith one. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the creatures are to be found in God, yea, all the whole volume of perfections, which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in him. No good below him that is the greatest good, can satisfy the soul. A good wife, a good child, a good name, a good estate, a good friend, cannot satisfy the soul. These may please, but they cannot satisfy. 'All abundance, if it be not my God, is to me nothing but poverty and want,' said one.

Ah! that young men and women would but in the morning of their youth seek, yea, seek early, seek earnestly, seek affectionately, seek diligently, seek primarily, and seek unweariedly this God, who is the greatest good, the best good, the most desirable good; who is a suitable good, a pure good, a satisfying good, a total good, and an eternal good.

Reason 9. Because the time of youth is the choicest and fittest time for service.

Now your parts are lively, senses fresh, memory strong, and nature vigorous. The days of your youth are the spring and morning of your time, they are the first-born of your strength; therefore God requires your non-age, as well as your dotage, the wine of your times as well as the lees, as you may see typified to you in the first-fruits, which were dedicated to the Lord, and the first-born, Exo 23:16, Num 3:13. The time of youth is the time of salvation, it is the acceptable time; it is thy summer, thy harvest-time. O young man! therefore do not sleep, but up and be doing; awaken thy heart, rouse up thy soul, and improve all thou hast; put out thy reason, thy strength, thy all, to the treasuring up of heavenly graces, precious promises, divine experiences, and spiritual comforts, against the winter of old age; and then old age will not be to thee an evil age, but as it was to Abraham, 'a good old age,' Gen 15:15; do not put off God with fair promises, and large pretences, till your last sands are running, and the days of dotage have overtaken you. That is a sad word of the prophet, 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and yet offereth to the Lord a corrupt thing,' Mal 1:14.

Ah! young men and women, who are like the almond tree; you have many males in the flock, your strength is a male in your flock, your time is a male in the flock, your reason is a male in the flock, your parts are a male in the flock, and your gifts are a male in the flock. Now, if he be cursed that hath but one male in his flock, and shall offer to God a corrupt thing, a thing of no worth, of no value, how will you be cursed, and cursed, cursed at home, and cursed abroad, cursed temporally, cursed spiritually, and cursed eternally, who have many males in your flock, and yet deal so unworthily, so fraudulently, and false-heartedly with God, as to put him off with the dregs of your time and strength, while you spend the primrose of your youth in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Mat 21:20. The fig-tree in the Gospel, that did not bring forth fruit timely and seasonably, was cursed to admiration. The time of youth is the time and season for bringing forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness, and if these fruits be not brought forth in their season, you may justly fear, that the curses of heaven will secretly and insensibly soak and sink into your souls, and then woe! woe! to you that ever you were born. The best way to prevent this hell of hells, is to give God the cream and flower of your youth, your strength, your time, your talents. Vessels that are betimes seasoned with the savour of life never lose it, Pro 22:6.

Reason 10. Because death may suddenly and unexpectedly seize upon you; you have no lease of your lives.

Youth is as fickle as old age. The young man may find graves enough of his length in burial places. As green wood and old logs meet in one fire, so young sinners and old sinners meet in one hell and burn together. When the young man is in his spring and prime, then he is cut off and dies; 'One dying in his full strength (or in the strength of his perfection, as the Hebrew hath it) being wholly at ease and quiet, his breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow,' Job 21:23-24. David's children die when young, so did Job's and Jeroboam's, &c. Every day's experience tells us, that the young man's life is as much a vapour as the old man's is.

I have read of an Italian poet, who brings in a proper young man, rich and potent, discoursing with death in the habit of a mower, with his scythe in his hand, cutting down the life of man, 'For all flesh is grass,' Isa 40:6. And wilt thou not spare any man's person, saith the young man? I spare none, saith death; man's life is but a day, a short day, a winter's day. Ofttimes the sun goes down upon a man before it be well up. Your day is short, your work is great, your journey long, and

therefore you should rise early, and set forward towards heaven betimes, as that man doth that hath a long journey to go in a winter's day. The life of man is absolutely short: 'Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand's-breadth,' Psa 39:5. The life of man is comparatively short, and that if you compare man's life now to what he might have reached had he continued in innocency. Sin brought in death; death is a fall, that came in by a fall. Or if you compare man's life now to what they did reach to before the flood: then several lived six, seven, eight, nine hundred years, Gen 1:9; or if you compare men's days with the days of God, 'Mine age is as nothing before thee,' Psa 39:5; or if you compare the days of man to the days of eternity.

Ah! young men, young men! can you seriously consider of the brevity of man's life, and trifle away your time, the offers of grace, your precious souls, and eternity? &c. Surely you cannot, surely you dare not, if you do but in good earnest ponder upon the shortness of man's life. It is recorded of Philip, king of Macedon, that he gave a pension to one to come to him every day at dinner, and to cry to him, *Memento te esse mortalem*, Remember thou art but mortal.

Ah! young men and old had need be often put in mind of their mortality; they are too apt to forget that day, yea, to put far from them the thoughts of that day. I have read of three that could not endure to hear that bitter word death mentioned in their ears; and surely this age is full of such monsters. And as the life of man is very short, so it is very uncertain: now well, now sick; alive this hour, and dead the next. Death doth not always give warning beforehand; sometimes he gives the mortal blow suddenly; he comes behind with his dart, and strikes a man at the heart, before he saith, 'Have I found thee, O mine enemy?' 1Ki 21:20. Eutychus fell down dead suddenly, Acts 20:9; death suddenly arrested David's sons and Job's sons; Augustus died in a compliment, Galba with a sentence, Vespasian with a jest;⁶ Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman which he drew with his own hand; Sophocles was choked with the stone in a grape; Diodorus the logician died for shame that he could not answer a jocular question propounded at the table by Stilpo; Joannes Measius, preaching upon the raising of the woman of Nain's son from the dead, within three hours after died himself.

Ah! young men and women, have you not cause, great cause, to be good betimes? for death is sudden in his approaches. Nothing more sure than death, and nothing more uncertain than life. Therefore know the Lord betimes, turn from your sins betimes; lay hold on the Lord, and make peace with him betimes, that you may never say, as Cæsar Borgias said when he was sick to death, 'When I lived,' said he, 'I provided for everything but death; now I must die, and am unprovided to die,' &c.

Reason 11. Because it is ten to one, nay, a hundred to ten, if ever they are converted, if they are not converted when they are young.

God usually begins with such betimes that he hath had thoughts of love and mercy towards them from everlasting. The instances cited to prove the doctrine confirms this argument; and if you look abroad in the world, you shall hardly find one saint among a thousand but dates his conversion from the time of his youth. It was the young ones that got through the wilderness into Canaan, Num 26:1-65. If the tree do not bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit in the spring, it is commonly dead all the year after. If, in the spring and morning of your days, you do not bring forth fruit to God, it is an hundred to one that ever you bring forth fruit to him when the evil days of old age shall 'overtake you, wherein you shall say you have no pleasure,' Ecc 12:1. For, as the son of Sirach

observes, if thou hast gathered nothing in thy youth, what canst thou find in thy age? It is rare, very rare, that God sows and reaps in old age. Usually God sows the seed of grace in youth, that yields the harvest of joy in age.

Though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Millions are now in hell, who have pleased themselves with the thoughts of after-repentance. The Lord hath made a promise to late repentance, but where hath he made a promise of late repentance? Yea, what can be more just and equal, that such should seek and not find, who might have found but would not seek; and that he should shut his ears against their late prayers, who have stopped their ears against his early calls? Pro 1:24-32. The ancient warriors would not accept an old man into their army, as being unfit for service; and dost thou think that God will accept of thy dry bones, when Satan hath sucked out all the marrow? What lord, what master, will take such into their service, who have all their days served their enemies? and will God? will God? The Circassians, a kind of mongrel Christians, are said to divide their life betwixt sin and devotion, dedicating their youth to rapine, and their old age to repentance. If this be thy case, I would not be in thy case for ten thousand worlds.

I have read of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered, that he would not repent yet, for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him; but growing sicker and sicker, his friends pressed him again to repent, but then he told them that it was too late, *Quia jam judicatus sum, et condemnatus*, for now, said he, I am judged and condemned.

CHAPTER II Reason 12. Because else they will never attain to the honour of being old disciples.

It is a very great honour to be an old disciple.

Now this honour none reach to, but such as are converted betimes, but such as turn to the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth. It is no honour for an old man to be in coats, nor for an old man to be a babe in grace. An A B C old man is a sad and shameful sight. Oh! but it is a mighty honour to be a man, when he is old, that he can date his conversion from the morning of his youth. Now that it is an honour to be an old disciple, I shall prove by an induction of particulars. As,

Particular 1. All men will honour an old disciple: Pro 16:31, 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' God requires that the aged should be honoured: Lev 19:32, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man' (the old man here is by some expounded the wise man), 'and fear thy God, I am the Lord.' Hoariness is only honourable when found in a way of righteousness. A white head, accompanied with a holy heart, makes a man truly honourable. There are two glorious sights in the world: the one is, a young man walking in his uprightness; and the other is, an old man walking in ways of righteousness. It was Abraham's honour that he went to his grave in a good old age, or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, with a good grey head, Gen 25:8. Many there be that go to their graves with a grey head, but this was Abraham's crown, that he went to his grave with a good grey head. Had Abraham's head been never so grey, if it had not been good, it would have been no honour to him. A hoary head, when coupled with an unsanctified heart, is rather a curse than a blessing. When the head is as white as snow, and the soul as black as hell, God usually gives up such to the greatest scorn and contempt. 'Princes are hanged up by their hands, the faces of elders were not honoured,' Lam

5:12, and this God had threatened long before. 'The Lord shall bring against thee a nation from far, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young,' Deu 28:49-5.

I have read of Cleanthes, who was wont sometimes to chide himself. Ariston wondering thereat, asked him, Whom chidest thou? Cleanthes laughed, and answered, I chide an old fellow, Qui canos quidem habet, sed mentem non habet, who hath grey hairs indeed, but wants understanding, and prudence worthy of them. The application I will leave to the grey heads and grey beards of our time, who have little else to commend them to the world but their hoary heads and snowy beards.

Particular 2. God usually reveals himself most to old disciples, to old saints: Job 12:12, 'With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.' God usually manifests most of himself to aged saints. They usually pray most and pay most, they labour most and long most after the choicest manifestations of himself and of his grace; and therefore he opens his bosom most to them, and makes them of his cabinet council. Gen 18:17-19, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; for I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' Abraham was an old friend, and therefore God makes him both of his court and council. We usually open our hearts most freely, fully, and familiarly, to old friends. So doth God to his ancient friends. Ah, what a blessed sight and enjoyment of Christ had old Simeon, that made his very heart to dance in him! 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' &c., Luk 2:25-28. I have seen him, who is my light, my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my heaven, my all; therefore now 'Let thy servant depart in peace,' Luk 2:36-38. So Anna, when she was fourscore and four years old, was so filled with the discoveries and enjoyments of Christ, that she could not but declare what she had tasted, felt, seen, heard, and received from the Lord. She was ripe and ready to discover the fulness, sweetness, goodness, excellency, and glory of that Christ whom she had long loved, feared, and served. So Paul lived in the light, sight, and sweet enjoyments of Christ, when he was aged in years and in grace, Php 4:5, Php 4:7, Php 4:9. So, when had John that glorious vision of Christ among the golden candlesticks, and those discoveries and manifestations of the ruin of Rome, the fall of antichrist, the casting the beast and false prophet into a lake of fire, the conquest of the kingdoms of the world by Christ's bow and sword, the binding up of Satan, and the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, Rev 1:7, seq., but when he was old, when he was aged in years and in grace? The Lord speaks many a secret in the ears of saints, of old Christians, which young Christians are not acquainted with, as that phrase imports, 2Sa 7:27, 'Thou, O Lord God of hosts, hast revealed to thy servant;' so you read it in your books, but in the Hebrew it is, 'Lord, thou hast revealed this to the ear of thy servant.' Some wonder how that word 'to the ear' comes to be left out in your books, in which indeed the emphasis lies. We will tell many things in an old friend's ear, which we will not acquaint young ones with. So doth God many times whisper an old disciple in the ear, and acquaints him with such things that he hides from those that are of younger years. And by this you may see what an honour it is to be an old disciple.

Particular 3. An old disciple, an old Christian, he hath got the art of serving God, the art of religion; got the art of hearing, the art of praying, the art of meditating, the art of repenting, the art of

believing, the art of denying his natural self, his sinful self, his religious self.

All trades have their mystery and difficulty, so hath the trade of Christianity. Young Christians usually bungle in religious works, but old Christians acquit themselves like workmen that 'need not be ashamed.' A young carpenter gives more blows and makes more chips, but an old artist doth the most and best work. A young Christian may make most noise in religious duties, but an old Christian makes the best work. A young musician may play more quick and nimble upon an instrument than an old, but an old musician hath more skill and judgment than a young. The application is easy, and by this you may also see what an honour it is to be an old Christian, &c.

Particular 4. An old disciple, an old Christian, is rich in spiritual experiences. Oh! the experiences that he hath of the ways of God, of the workings of God, of the word of God, of the love of God! 1Jn 2:1. Oh! the divine stories that old Christians can tell of the power of the word, of the sweetness of the word, of the usefulness of the word! Psa 119:49-50, as a light to lead the soul, as a staff to support the soul, as a spur to quicken the soul, as an anchor to stay the soul, and as a cordial to comfort and strengthen the soul! Oh! the stories that he can tell you concerning the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the offices of Christ, the merits of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the graces of Christ, and the influence of Christ! Oh! the stories that an old disciple can tell you of the indwellings of the Spirit, of the operations of the Spirit, of the teachings of the Spirit, of the leadings of the Spirit, of the sealings of the Spirit, of the witnessings of the Spirit, and of the comforts and joys of the Spirit! Oh! the stories that an old Christian can tell you of the evil of sin, the bitterness of sin, the deceitfulness of sin, the prevalency of sin, and the happiness of conquest over sin! Oh! the stories that he can tell you of the snares of Satan, the devices of Satan, the temptations of Satan, the rage of Satan, the malice of Satan, the watchfulness of Satan, and the ways of triumphing over Satan! As an old soldier can tell you of many battles, many scars, many wounds, many losses, and many victories, even to admiration;³ so an old saint is able to tell you many divine stories even to admiration.

Pliny writes of the crocodile, that she grows to her last day, Hos 14:5-7. So aged saints, they grow rich in spiritual experiences to the last. An old Christian being once asked if he grew in goodness, answered, Yea, doubtless I do; for God hath said, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,' Psa 92:12-14, (now the palm tree never loseth his leaf or fruit, saith Pliny); 'he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' A fellow to this promise Isaiah mentions, Isa 46:3-4, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.'

There is nothing more commendable in fulness of age than fulness of knowledge and experience, nor nothing more honourable than to see ancient Christians very much acquainted with the Ancient of days, Dan 7:9, Dan 7:13-22.

It is a brave sight to see ancient Christians like the almond tree. Now the almond tree doth flourish and is full of blossoms in the winter of old age; for as Pliny tells us, the almond tree doth blossom in the month of January. Experiments in religion are beyond notions and impressions. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. No man so rich, so honourable, so happy as the old disciple,

that is rich in spiritual experiences; and yet there is no Christian so rich in his experiences but he would be richer. As Julianus said, that when he had one foot in the grave, he would have the other in the school; so, though an old disciple hath one foot in the grave, yet he will have the other in Christ's school, that he may still be treasuring up more and more divine experiments. And by this also you see what an honour it is to be an old disciple, &c.

Particular 5. An old disciple is very stout, courageous, firm, and fixed in his resolution. An old Christian is like a pillar, a rock; nothing can move him, nothing can shake him, Psa 44:9, Psa 44:26. What is sucked in in youth will abide in old age. Old soldiers are stout and courageous; nothing can daunt nor discourage them. When Joshua was an hundred and ten years old, oh how courageous and resolute was he! Jos 24:15, Jos 24:29, 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve: whether the gods that your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood; or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.'

[Q.] Considius, a senator of Rome, told Cæsar boldly that the senators durst not come to council for fear of his soldiers. He replied, Why then dost thou go to the senate? He answered, Because my age takes away my fear.

Ah! none so courageous, none so divinely fearless, none so careless in evil days, as ancient Christians. An old Christian knows that that good will do him no good which is not made good by perseverance; his resolution is like that of Gonsalvo, who protested to his soldiers, shewing them Naples, that he had rather die one foot forwards, than to have his life secured for long by one foot of retreat. Shall such a man as I am flee? said undaunted Nehemiah, Neh 6:11. He will courageously venture life and limb rather than by one foot of retreat discredit profession with the reproach of fearfulness. It was a brave, magnanimous speech of Luther, when dangers from opposers did threaten him and his associates, Come, saith he, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm, and then let them do their worst. When Polycarpus was fourscore and six years old, he suffered martyrdom courageously, resolutely, and undauntedly. When one of the ancient martyrs was very much threatened by his persecutors, he replied, There is nothing of things visible, nothing of things invisible, that I fear. I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,' Jude 1:3, come on it what will.

Old disciples, old soldiers of Christ, that have the heart and courage of Shammah, one of David's worthies, who stood and defended the field when all the rest fled, 2Sa 23:11-12. The Hebrews call a young man Nagnar, which springs from a root that signifies to shake off, or to be tossed to and fro, to note how fickle and how constant in inconstancy young men are, Mat 19:20-22. They usually are persons either of no resolution for good, or of weak resolution; they are too often won with a nut, and lost with an apple. But now, aged Christians in all earthquakes they stand fast, 'like mount Sion, that cannot be removed.' And by this also you may see what an honour it is to be an old disciple, an old Christian.

Particular 6. An old disciple, an old Christian, is prepared for death; he hath been long a-dying to sin, to the world, to friends, to self, to relations, to all, and no man so prepared to die as he that thus daily dies. An old disciple hath lived sincerely to Christ, he hath lived eminently to Christ, he hath lived in all conditions, and under all changes, to Christ; he hath lived exemplarily to Christ, he

hath lived long to Christ, and therefore the more prepared to die and be with Christ. An old disciple hath a crown in his eye, a pardon in his bosom, and a Christ in his arms, and therefore may sweetly sing it out with old Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' Luk 2:29. As Hilary said to his soul, Soul, thou hast served Christ this seventy years, and art thou afraid of death? Go out, soul, go out.

'Many a day,' said old Cowper, 'have I sought death with tears, not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it.' Nazianzen calls upon the king of terrors, Devour me, devour me. And Austin, when old, could say, Shall I die ever? yes, or shall I die at all? yes. Why, then, Lord, if ever, why not now? So when Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten.

I cannot say as he, said old Mr Stephen Martial a little before his death. I have not so lived that I should now² be afraid to die; but this I can say, I have so learned Christ that I am not afraid to die. Old Christians have made no more to die than to dine. It is nothing to die when the Comforter stands by, Isa 57:1-2. Old disciples know that to die is but to lie down in their beds; they know that their dying day is better than their birthday; and this made Solomon to prefer his coffin before his crown, the day of his dissolution before the day of his coronation, Ecc 7:1. The ancients were wont to call the days of their death Natalia, not dying days, but birthdays. The Jews to this day stick not to call their Golgothas Batte Caiim, the houses or places of the living. Old Christians know that death is but an entrance into life; it is but a passover, a jubilee; it is but the Lord's gentleman-usher to conduct them to heaven; and this prepares them to die, and makes death more desirable than life; and by this you may see that it is an honour to be an old disciple.

Particular 7. An old disciple, an old Christian, shall have a great reward in heaven.

Old Christians have done much and suffered much for Christ; and the more any man doth or suffers for Christ here, the more glory he shall have hereafter. It was the saying of an old disciple upon his dying bed, 'He is come, he is come'—meaning the Lord—'with a great reward for a little work.' Agrippa having suffered imprisonment for wishing Caius emperor, the first thing Caius did when he came to the empire, was to prefer Agrippa to a kingdom; he gave him also a chain of gold, as heavy as the chain of iron that was upon him in prison. And will not Christ richly reward all his suffering saints? Surely he will. Christ will at last pay a Christian for every prayer he hath made, for every sermon he hath heard, for every tear he hath shed, for every morsel he hath given, for every burden he hath borne, for every battle he hath fought, for every enemy he hath slain, and for every temptation that he hath overcome.

Cyrus, in a great expedition against his enemies, the better to encourage his soldiers to fight, in an oration that he made at the head of his army, promised upon the victory, to make every foot-soldier an horseman, and every horseman a commander, and that no officer that did valiantly should be unrewarded; but what are Cyrus his rewards to the rewards that Christ our general promises to his? Rev 3:21, 'To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' As there is no lord to Christ, so there is no rewards to Christ's. His rewards are the greatest rewards. He gives kingdoms, crowns, thrones; he gives grace and glory, Psa 48:11.

It is said of Araunah, that noble Jebusite, renowned for his bounty, that he had but a subject's purse, but a king's heart; but Jesus Christ hath a king's purse as well as a king's heart, and accordingly he gives. And as Christ's rewards are the greatest rewards, so his rewards are the surest rewards: 'He is faithful that hath promised,' 1Th 5:24 :

Antiochus promised often but seldom gave, upon which he was called, in way of derision, a great promiser; but Jesus Christ never made any promise, but he hath or will perform it, 2Co 1:20, nay, he is often better than his word, 1Co 2:9, he gives many times more than we ask. The sick man of the palsy asked but health, and Christ gave him health and a pardon to boot, Mat 9:2. Solomon desired but wisdom, and the Lord gave him wisdom, and honour, and riches, and the favour of creatures, as paper and pack-thread into the bargain, 2Ch 1:10-15. Jacob asked him but clothes to wear, and bread to eat, and the Lord gave him these things, and riches, and other mercies into the bargain.

Christ doth not measure his gifts by our petitions, but by his own riches and mercies. Gracious souls many times receive many gifts and favours from God that they never dreamt of, nor durst presume to beg, which others extremely strive after and go without.

Archelaus being much importuned by a covetous courtier for a cup of gold wherein he drank, gave it unto Euripides that stood by, saying, Thou art worthy to ask, and be denied, but Euripides is worthy of gifts, although he ask not. The prodigal craves no more but the place of a hired servant, but he is entertained as a son, he is clad with the best robe, and fed with the fatted calf, he hath a ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, rich supplies more than he deserved, Luk 15:19-25. Jacob's sons, in a time of famine, desired only corn, and they return with corn and money in their sacks, and with good news too—Joseph is alive, and governor of all Egypt, Gen 42:1-38. And as his rewards are greater and surer than other rewards, so they are more durable and lasting than other rewards. The kingdom that he gives is a kingdom that shakes not; the treasures that he gives are treasures that corrupt not; and the glory that he gives is glory that fadeth not away; but the rewards that men give are like themselves, fickle and unconstant, they are withering and fading.

Xerxes crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day. And Andronicus, the Greek emperor, crowned his admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon.

Rossensis had a cardinal's hat sent him, but his head was cut off before it came to him. Most may say of their crowns as that king said of his, O crown! more noble than happy. It was a just complaint which long ago was made against the heathen gods, O fuciles dare summa deos, eademque tueri difficiles, they could give their favourites great gifts, but they could not maintain them in the possession of them. The world may give you great things, but the world cannot maintain you in the possession of them; but the great things, the great rewards that Christ gives his, he will for ever maintain them in the possession of them, otherwise heaven would not be heaven, glory would not be glory. Now by all these things you see that it is a very great honour to be an old disciple, an old Christian; and this honour you will never attain to, except you begin to be really good betimes, except in the morning of your youth you return to the Lord, and get an interest in him.

I shall now come to make some use and application of this weighty truth to ourselves.

You see, beloved, that it is the great duty and concernment of young men to be really good betimes. If this be so, then,

Use 1. First, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon such young men that are only seemingly good, that make some shows of goodness, but are not right towards God at the root. As Joash, when he was young, he seemed to have good things in him towards the Lord, whilst good Jehoiada lived; but when Jehoiada was dead, Joash his goodness was buried with him, 2Ch 24:1-6, 2Ch 24:13-16.

Ah! how many in these days, that have been seemingly good, have turned to be naught, very naught, yea, stark naught!

It is said of Tiberius, that whilst Augustus ruled, he was no ways tainted in his reputation; and that, whilst Drusus and Germanicus were alive, he feigned those virtues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people; but after he had got himself out of the reach of contradiction and controlment, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessory.

Oh! that this were not applicable to many young persons in these days, who have made great shows and taken upon them a great name, who have begun to outshine the stars, but are now gone out like so many snuffs, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of the gospel, the grief of others, and the hazard of their own souls.

It was a custom of old, when any was baptized, the minister delivered a white garment to be put on, saying, Take thou this white vestment, and see thou bring it forth without spot at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; whereupon one Maritta baptizing one Elpidophorus, who, when he was grown up, proved a profane wretch, he brings forth the white garment, and holding it up, shakes it against him, saying, This linen garment, Elpidophorus, shall accuse thee at the coming of Christ, which I have kept by me as a witness of thy apostasy.

Ah! young men and women, your former professions will be a sad witness against you in the great day of our Lord Jesus, except you repent and return in good earnest to the Lord, Pro 14:14.

Oh! it had been better that you had never made profession, that you had never set your faces towards heaven, that you had never pretended to God and Christ, that you had never known the way of righteousness, than, after you have known it, to turn from the holy commandment.

Cyprian, in his sermon de lapsis, reporteth of divers who, forsaking the faith, were given over to evil spirits and died fearfully.

Oh! the delusions and the Christ-dethroning, conscience-wasting, and soul-undoing opinions and principles that many young ones, who once were hopeful ones, are given up to! That dreadful scripture seems to be made good in power upon them: 'All you that forsake the Lord shall come to be ashamed, and they that depart from him shall be written upon the dust,' Jer 17:13. To begin well and not to proceed, is but to aspire to a higher pitch, that the fall may be the more desperate. Backsliding is a wounding sin, Hos 4:14. You read of no arms for the back, though you do for the breast, Eph 6:11-18. He that is but seemingly good will prove at last exceeding bad: 2Ti 3:13,

'They wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.' The wolf, though he often dissembles and closely hides his nature, yet he will one time or other shew himself to be a wolf. In the days of Hadrian the emperor, there was one Ben-cosbi, who, gathering a multitude of Jews together, called himself Ben-cocuba, the son of a star, applying that prophecy to himself, Num 23:17; but his mask was taken off, his hypocrisy discovered, and he found to be Bar-chosaba, the son of a lie. 2 This age hath afforded many such monsters, but their folly is discovered, and their practices abhorred. This was the young man's commendation in the text, 'That there was found in him some real good towards the Lord.'

Use 2. This truth looks sourly and sadly upon such young men who are so far from having good things in them towards the Lord, that they give themselves up to those youthful lusts and vanities that are dishonouring, provoking, and displeasing to the Lord, who roar and revel, and gad, and game, and dice, and drink, and drab, and what not. These make work with a witness for repentance, or hell, or the physician of souls.

I shall but touch upon the evils of youth, and then come to that which is mostly intended.

CHAPTER III The first evil that most properly attends youth is pride.

Evil 1. Pride of heart, pride of apparel, pride of parts, 1Ti 3:6. Young men are apt to be proud of health, strength, friends, relations, wit, wealth, wisdom. Two things are very rare: the one is, to see a young man humble and watchful; and the other is, to see an old man contented and cheerful.

Bernard saith, that pride is the rich man's cozen, and experience every day speaks out pride to be the young man's cozen. God, said one, had three sons, Lucifer, Adam, and Christ; the first aspired to be like God in power, and was therefore thrown down from heaven; the second to be like him in knowledge, and was therefore deservedly driven out of Eden when young; the third did altogether imitate and follow Him in his goodness, mercy, and humility, and by so doing obtained everlasting inheritance.

Remember this, young men, and as you would get a paradise, and keep a paradise, get humble, and keep humble. Pride is an evil that puts men upon all manner of evil. Accius the poet, though he were a dwarf, yet would be pictured tall of stature.

Psaphon, a proud Lybian, would needs be a god, and having caught some birds, he taught them to speak and prattle: the great god Psaphon.

Menecrates, a proud physician, wrote thus to king Philip: Menecrates a god, to Philip a king.

Proud Simon in Lucian, having got a little wealth, changed his name from Simon to Simonides, for that there were so many beggars of his kin; and set the house on fire wherein he was born, because nobody should point at it.

What sad evils Pharaoh's pride, and Haman's pride, and Herod's pride, and Belshazzar's pride, put them upon, I shall not now mention.

Ah! young men, young men, had others a window to look into your breasts, or did your hearts stand where your faces do, you would even be afraid of yourselves, you would loathe and abhor yourselves.

Ah! young men, young men, as you would have God to keep house with you, as you would have his mind and secrets made known to you, as you would have Christ to delight in you, and the Spirit to dwell in you, as you would be honoured among saints, and attended and guarded by angels, get humble, and keep humble.

Tertullian's counsel to the young gallants of those times was excellent: 'Clothe yourselves,' said he, 'with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, and with the purple of modesty; so shall you have God himself to be your suitor.'

Evil 2. The second evil that youth is subject to is, sensual pleasures and delights. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes,' Ecc 11:9. The wise man, by an ironical concession, bids him rejoice, &c., sin, &c. Thou art wilful, and resolved upon taking thy pleasure; go on, take thy course. This he speaks by way of mockage and bitter scoff, &c.; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. So Samson 'made a feast; for so used the young men to do,' Jdg 14:10. The hearts of young men usually are much given up to pleasure. I have read of a young man, who was very much given up to pleasures; he standing by St Ambrose, and seeing his excellent death, turned to other young men by him, and said, 'Oh, that I might live with you, and die with him.'

Sensual pleasures are like to those locusts, Rev 9:7, the crowns upon whose heads are said to be only as it were such, or such in appearance, and like gold; but verse 10, it is said there were—not as it were, but—stings in their tails.

Sensual pleasures are but seeming and appearing pleasures, but the pains that attend them are true and real. He that delights in sensual pleasures, shall find his greatest pleasures become his bitterest pains. The heathens looked upon the back parts of pleasure, and saw it going away from them, and leaving a sting behind.

Pleasures pass away as soon as they have wearied out the body, and leave it as a bunch of grapes whose juice has been pressed out; which made one to say, *Nulla major voluptas, quam voluptatis fastidium*, I see no greater pleasure in this world than the contempt of pleasure.

Julian, though an apostate, yet professed that the pleasures of the body were far below a great spirit; and Tully saith, he is not worthy of the name of man, *qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate*, that would entirely spend one whole day in pleasures. It is better not to desire pleasures, than to enjoy them. 'I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, What dost thou?' Ecc 2:2. The interrogation bids a challenge to all the masters of mirth, to produce any one satisfactory fruit which it affordeth, if they could.

Xerxes, being weary of all pleasures, promised rewards to the inventors of new pleasures, which being invented, he nevertheless remained unsatisfied. As a bee flieth from flower to flower and is not satisfied, and as a sick man removes from one bed to another, from one seat to another, from one chamber to another for ease, and finds none; so men given up to sensual pleasures go from one pleasure to another, but can find no content, no satisfaction in their pleasures: 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing,' Ecc 1:8. There is a curse of unsatisfiability lies upon the creature. Honours cannot satisfy the ambitious man, nor riches the covetous man, nor pleasures the voluptuous man. Man cannot take off the weariness of one pleasure by another,

for after a few evaporated minutes are spent in pleasures, the body presently fails the mind, and the mind the desire, and the desire the satisfaction, and all the man.

Pleasures are Junos in the pursuit, and but clouds in the enjoyment. Pleasure is a beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot, whose four wheels are pride, gluttony, lust, and idleness. The two horses are prosperity and abundance, the two drivers are idleness and security, her attendants and followers are guilt, grief, late repentance, if any, and oft death and ruin. Many great men, and many strong men, and many rich men, and many hopeful men, and many young men, have come to their ends by her; but never any enjoyed full satisfaction and content in her.

Ah! young men, young men, avoid this harlot, and come not near the door of her house. And as for lawful pleasures, let me only say this, it is your wisdom only to touch them, to taste them, and to use them, as Mithridates used poison, to fortify yourselves against casual extremities and maladies. When Mr Roger Ascham asked the Lady Jane Grey how she could lose such pastime, her father with the duchess being a-hunting in the park, smilingly answered, All the sport in the park is but a shadow of that pleasure I find in this book,—having a good book in her hand.

Augustine, before his conversion, could not tell how to live without those pleasures which he delighted much in, but when his nature was changed, and his heart graciously turned to the Lord, Oh! how sweet, saith he, is it to be without those sweet delights.

Ah! young men, when once you come to experience the goodness and sweetness that is in the Lord, and in his word and ways, you will then sit down and grieve that you have spent more wine in the cup than oil in the lamp.

There are no pleasures so delighting, so satisfying, so ravishing, so engaging, and so abiding as those that spring from union and communion with God, as those that flow from a sense of interest in God, and from an humble and holy walking with God.

Evil 3. The third sin of youth is rashness.

They many times know little and fear less, and so are apt rashly to run on, and run out often to their hurt, but more often to their hazard. 'Exhort young men to be sober-minded or discreet,' Tit 2:6. They are apt to be rash, to be Hotspurs. As you may see in Rehoboam's young counsellors, who counselled him to tell the people, 1Ki 12:8-11, that groaned under their burdens, that 'his little finger should be thicker than his father's loins, and that he would add to their yoke; and that whereas his father had chastised them with whips, he would chastise them with scorpions.' This rash counsel proved Rehoboam's ruin; yea, David himself, though a good man, yet being in his warm blood and young, how sadly was he overtaken with rashness! 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth,' saith he, 'except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by to-morrow light, any that pisseth against the wall,' 1Sa 25:34-35. And this he binds with an oath. Because the master was foolishly wilful, the innocent servants must all be woful; and because Nabal had been niggardly of his bread, David would be prodigal of his blood.

Ah! how unlike a Christian, yea, how below a man doth David carry it when his blood is up, and he is a captive to rashness and passion! Rashness will admit of nought for reason, but what unreasonable self shall dictate for reason. As sloth seldom bringeth actions to good birth, so rashness makes them always abortive ere well formed. A rash spirit is an ungodlike spirit; a rash

spirit is a weak spirit, it is an effeminate spirit. 'A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit,' or as the Hebrew will bear, is of a cool spirit, not rash and hot, ready at every turn to put out his soul in wrath, Pro 17:27. Rashness unmans a man, it will put a man upon things below manhood. Erostratus, a hotspur, an obscure base fellow, did in one night by fire destroy the temple of Diana at Ephesus, which was two hundred and twenty years in building, of all Asia, at the cost of so many princes, and beautified with the labours and cunning of so many excellent workmen. The truth is, there would be no end were I to discover the many sad and great evils that are ushered into the world by that one evil, rashness, which usually attends youth, &c.; and therefore, young men, decline it, and arm yourselves against it, &c.

Evil 4. The fourth sin that ordinarily attends on youth is, Mocking and scoffing at religious men and religious things.

They were young ones that scoffingly and scornfully said to the prophet, 'Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head,' 2Ki 2:23-24. And the young men derided and mocked Job: 'But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction,' &c., Job 30:1, Job 30:12-15. And oh! that this age did not afford many such monsters, who are notable, who are infamous in this black art of scoffing and deriding the people of God, and the ways of God! The Athenians once scoffed at Sylla's [Sulla] wife, and it had well nigh cost the razing of their city, he was so provoked with the indignity; and will you think it safe to scoff at the people of God, who are the spouse of Christ, who are as the apple of his eye, who are the signet on his right hand, his portion, his pleasant portion, his inheritance, his jewels, his royal diadem? Ah! young men, young men! will you seriously consider how sadly and sorely he hath punished other scoffers and mockers, and by his judgments on them, be warned never to scoff at the people of God or his ways more? Julian the emperor was a great scoffer of Christians; but at last he was struck with an arrow from heaven, that made him cry out, Vicisti, Galilæe, thou Galilean—meaning our Saviour Christ—hast overcome me. Felix, for one malicious scoff, did nothing day and night but vomit blood, till his unhappy soul was separated from his wretched body. Pherecydes was consumed by worms alive, for giving religion but a nickname. Lucian, for barking against religion like a dog was, by the just judgment of God, devoured of dogs.⁴ Remember these dreadful judgments of God on scoffers, and if you like them, then mock on, scoff on; but know, that justice will at last be even with you, nay, above you.

Evil 5. The fifth and last evil that I shall mention that attends and waits on youth is, lustfulness and wantonness. Which occasioned aged Paul to caution his young Timothy to 'flee youthful lusts,' 2Ti 2:22. Timothy was a chaste and chastened piece; he was much sanctified and mortified; his graces were high, and corruptions low; he walked up and down this world with dying thoughts, and with a weak, distempered, declining, dying body; his heart was in heaven, and his foot in the grave; and yet youth is such a slippery age, that Paul commands him to flee, to post from, youthful lusts. Though Timothy was a good man, a weak, sickly man, a marvellous temperate man, drinking water rather than wine, yet he was but a man, yea, a young man; and therefore Paul's counsel and command is, that he 'flee youthful lusts.' And Solomon, who had sadly experienced the slipperiness of youth, gives this counsel: 'Put away the evils of thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity,' Ecc 11:10. He was a young man that followed the harlot to her house; he was young in years, and young in knowledge, Pro 7:7-11, &c. Salazar upon the words saith: That was

a happy age that afforded but one simple young man among many, whereas late times afford greater store. Ah! too many of the youths of this age, instead of flying from youthful lusts, they post and pursue after youthful lusts.

Chrysostom, speaking of youth, saith, it is *difficilem*, *jactabilem*, *fallibilem*, *vehementissimisque* *egentem* *frœnis*, hard to be ruled, easy to be drawn away, apt to be deceived, and standing in need of very violent reins. The ancients did picture youth like a young man naked, with a veil over his face; his right hand bound behind him, his left hand loose, and Time behind him pulling one thread out of his veil every day; intimating that young men are void of knowledge, and blind, unfit to do good, ready to do evil; till time, by little and little, make them wiser. Well! young man, remember this, that the least sparklings and kindlings of lusts will, first or last, cost thee groans and griefs, tears and terrors enough.

These five are the sins that usually are waiting and attending on youth; but from these the young man in the text was by grace preserved and secured, which is more than I dare affirm of all into whose hand this treatise shall fall. But though these five are the sins of youth, yet they are not all the sins of youth; for youth is capable of and subject to all other sins whatsoever; but these are the special sins that most usually wait and attend on young men when they are in the spring and morning of their youth.

CHAPTER IV I shall now hasten to the main use that I intend to stand upon, and that is an use of exhortation to all young persons.

Ah, sirs! as you tender the glory of God, the good of your bodies, the joy of your Christian friends, and the salvation of your own souls, be exhorted and persuaded to be really good betimes. It was the praise and honour of Abijah, that 'there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord' in the primrose of his childhood.⁴

Oh! that it might be your honour and happiness to be really good betimes, that it might be to you a praise and a name, that in the morning of your youth you have begun to seek the Lord, and to know and love the Lord, and to get an interest and propriety in the Lord. Now that this exhortation may stick and take, I beseech you seriously to weigh and ponder these following motives or considerations:

Motive (1). First consider, It is an honour to be good betimes. A young saint is like the morning star; he is like a pearl in a gold ring. It is mentioned as a singular honour to the believing Jews, that they first trusted in Christ; 'that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ,' Eph 1:12. This was their praise, their crown, that they were first converted and turned to Christ and Christianity. So Paul, mentioning Andronicus and Junia, doth not omit this circumstance of praise and honour, that they were in Christ 'before him,' Rom 16:7. 'Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.' And so it was the honour of the house of Stephanas, that they were the first-fruits of Achaia, 1Co 16:15. It was their glory that they were the first that received and welcomed the gospel in Achaia. It is a greater honour for a young man to outwrestle sin, Satan, temptation, the world, and lust, than ever Alexander the Great could attain unto. It was Judah his praise and honour, that they were first in fetching home David their king, 2Sa 19:15.

Ah, young men and women! it will be your eternal praise and honour if you shall be before others, if you shall be the first among many, who shall know the Lord and seek the Lord; who shall receive the Lord, and embrace him; who shall cleave to the Lord, and serve him; who shall honour the Lord, and obey him; who shall delight in the Lord, and walk with him. The Romans built Virtue's and Honour's temple close together, to shew that the way to honour was by virtue; and, indeed, there is no crown to that which goodness sets upon a man's head: all other honour is fading and withering. Adoni-bezek, a mighty prince, is suddenly made fellow-commoner with the dogs, Jdg 1:7; and Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen, Dan 4:28; and Herod, reduced from a conceited god to be the most loathsome of men, living carrion, arrested by the vilest of creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator, Acts 12:23; and Haman, feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next, Est 7:10. I might tell you of Bajazet and Belisarius, two of the greatest commanders in the world, and many others, who have suddenly fallen from the top of worldly honour and felicity, into the greatest contempt and misery, but I shall not at this time. But that honour that arises from men's being gracious betimes, is such honour that the world can neither give nor take; it is honour, it is a crown that will still be green and flourishing; it is honour that will bed and board with a man, that will abide with a man under all trials and changes, that will to the grave, that will to heaven with a man.

Ah, sirs! it is no small honour to you, who are in the spring and morning of your days, that the Lord hath left upon record several instances of his love and delight in young men. He chose David, a younger brother, and passes by his elder brothers, 1Sa 16:11-13; he frowns upon Esau, and passes by his door, and sets his love and delight upon Jacob the younger brother, Rom 9:12-13; he kindly and lovingly accepts of Abel's person and sacrifice, and rejects both Cain's person and sacrifice, though he was the elder brother, Gen 4:3-6. Among all the disciples, John was the youngest and the most and best beloved, John 13:23. There was but one 'young man' that came to Christ, and he came not aright, Mark 10:19-21; and all the good that was in him was but some moral good, and yet Christ loved him with a love of pity and compassion. The Greek word (ἐλαφρῶς) signifies, to speak friendly and deal gently with one; and so did Christ with him, all which should exceedingly encourage young men to be good betimes, to be gracious in the morning of their youth. No way to true honour like this, but,

Motive (2). Secondly, consider, Christ loved poor sinners and gave himself for them, when he was in the prime of his age (being supposed to be about thirty and three), and will you put him off with the worst of your time?

Ah! young men, young men, Christ gave himself up to death, he made himself an offering for your sins, for your sakes, when he was in the prime and flower of his age; and why then should you put off Christ to an old age? Did he die for sin in the prime of his age? and will not you die to sin in the prime of your age? Did he offer himself for you in the spring and morning of his years? and will not you offer up yourselves to him in the spring and morning of your years? Rom 12:1-2. Oh give not Christ cause to say, I died for you betimes, but you have not lived to me betimes; I was early in my suffering for you, but you have not been early in your returning to me; I made haste to complete your redemption, but you have made no haste to make sure your vocation and election, 2Pe 1:10; I stayed not, I lingered not, but soon suffered what I was to suffer, and quickly did what was to be done for your eternal welfare; but you have stayed and lingered, like Lot in Sodom, Gen 19:16, and have not done what you might have done in order to your everlasting good. In the primrose of

my days, I sweat for you, I wept for you, I bled for you, I hung on the cross for you, I bore the wrath of my Father for you; but you have not in the primrose of your days sweat under the sense of divine displeasure, nor wept over your sins, nor mourned over me, whom you have so often grieved and pierced, Zec 12:10. I could not be quiet nor satisfied till I had put you into a capacity, into a possibility of salvation, and yet you are well enough quieted and satisfied, though you do not know whether ever you shall be saved.

Ah, sirs! how sad would it be with you, if Jesus Christ should secretly thus expostulate with your consciences in this your day.

Oh! how terrible would it be with you, if Christ should thus visibly plead against you in his great day. Ah! young men, young men and women, who but souls much left of God, blinded by Satan, and hardened in sin, 2Co 3:1-18, 2Co 4:1-18, can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus to them: I suffered for sinners betimes, I laid down a ransom for souls betimes, I pacified my Father's wrath betimes, I satisfied my Father's justice betimes, I merited grace and mercy for sinners betimes, I brought in an everlasting righteousness upon the world betimes, &c.; I say, who can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus, and his heart not fall in love and league with Christ, and his soul not unite to Christ and resign to Christ, and cleave to Christ, and for ever be one with Christ, except it be such that are for ever left by Christ? Well, remember this, Quanto pro nobis vilior, tanto nobis charior, the more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be unto us.

Ah! young men, remember this, when Christ was young, he was tempted and tried; when he was in the morning of his days, his wounds were deep, his burden weighty, his cup bitter, his sweat painful, his agony and torment above conception, beyond expression; when he was young, that blessed head of his was crowned with thorns; and those eyes of his, that were purer than the sun, were put out by the darkness of death; and those ears of his which now hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, were filled with the blasphemies of the multitude; and that blessed beautiful face of his, which was fairer than the sons of men, was spit on by beastly filthy wretches; and that gracious mouth and tongue, that spake as never man spake, was slandered and accused of blasphemy; and those hands of his, which healed the sick, which gave out pardons, which swayed a sceptre in heaven and another on earth, were nailed to the cross; and those feet, that were beautiful upon the mountains, that brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation into the world, and that were like unto fine brass, were also nailed to the cross: all these great and sad things did Jesus Christ suffer for you in the prime and flower of his days, and oh! what an unspeakable provocation² should this be to all young ones, to give up themselves betimes to Christ, to serve, love, honour, and obey him betimes, even in the spring and morning of their youth.

Let the thoughts of a crucified Christ, saith one, be never out of your mind, let them be meat and drink unto you, let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your life, death, and resurrection.

Motive (3). The third motive or consideration to provoke you to begin to be good betimes, is this, viz., That it is the best and choicest way in the world, to be rich in gracious experiences betimes, which are the best riches in all the world. As he that sets up for himself betimes is in the most hopeful way to be rich betimes, so he that is good in good earnest betimes, he is in the ready way, the highway of being rich in grace and rich in goodness. They usually prove men of great

observation and great experience. God loves to shew these his 'beauty and his glory in his sanctuary.'⁴ He delights to cause 'his glory and his goodness to pass before' such. These shall find all his 'paths drop marrow and fatness.' For these 'the Lord of hosts will make a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' These shall have all manner of 'pleasant fruits' laid up 'at their gates for their well-beloved.' None have so many choice pledges of Christ's love, nor so many sweet kisses of Christ's mouth, nor so many embraces in Christ's arms, as those souls that are good betimes. Oh the grace, the goodness, the sweetness, the fatness that Christ is still a-dropping into their hearts! Christ will make their hearts his largest treasury, he will lay up most of his heavenly treasure in their souls. There he will store up mercies new and old; there he will treasure up all plenty, rarity, and variety; there he will lay up all that heart can wish or need require. Oh the many drops of myrrh that falls from Christ's fingers upon their hearts! Oh the many secrets that Christ reveals in their ears! Oh the many love-letters that Christ sends to these! Oh the many visits that he gives to these! Oh the turns, the walks, that he hath in paradise with these! There are none in the world for experience and intelligence to these. Ah! young men, young men, as you would be rich in the best riches, begin to be good betimes; as there is no riches to spiritual riches, so there is no way to be rich in these riches, but by beginning to be good, in good earnest, betimes. As for worldly riches, philosophers have contemned them, and preferred a contemplative life above them, and shall not Christians much more? The prophet calls them 'thick clay,' which will sooner break the back than lighten the heart; they cannot better the soul, they cannot enrich the soul, Hab 2:6. Ah! how many threadbare souls are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns! How often are worldly riches like hangmen, they hide men's faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them. And if they do not hang you, they will shortly leave you, they 'make themselves wings and fly away,' Pro 23:5. When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants, I do not love that wealth, said a heathen, that hangs upon ropes; if they break, the ship miscarrieth, and all is lost. He is rich enough, saith Jerome, that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity that is not forced to serve.

'This world's wealth, that men so much desire, May well be likened to a burning fire, Whereof a little can do little harm, But profit much our bodies well to warm; But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn; So too much wealth to too much woe does turn.'

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bauyer, emperor of Germany, *Hujusmodi comparandæ sunt opes quæ cum naufragio simul enatent*, such goods are worth getting and owning as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us. We see such are the spiritual riches that will attend those who, in the spring and morning of their youth, shall know the Lord and serve the Lord, and get an interest in the Lord; and thus much for the third motive.

Motive (4). The fourth motive to provoke young ones to be really good betimes is, to consider that The present time, the present day, is the only season that you are sure of.

Time past cannot be recalled, and time to come cannot be ascertained: 'To-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts,' Heb 3:15; 'Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation,' 2Co 6:2. Some there be that trifle away their time, and fool away their souls and their salvation. To prevent this, the apostle beats upon the $\tau \blacksquare v \blacksquare v$, the present opportunity, because if that be once past, there is no recovering of it. Therefore, as the mariner takes the first fair wind to

sail, and as the merchant takes his first opportunity of buying and selling, and as the husbandman takes the first opportunity of sowing and reaping, so should young men take the present season, the present day, which is their day, to be good towards the Lord, to seek him and serve him, and not to post off the present season, for they know not what another day, another hour, another moment, may bring forth. That door of grace that is open to-day may be shut to-morrow; that golden sceptre of mercy that is held forth in the gospel this day may be taken in the next day: hat love that this hour is upon the bare knee entreating and beseeching young men to break off their sins by repentance, 'to return to the Lord, to lay hold on his strength, and be at peace with him,' may the next hour be turned into wrath, Isa 27:4-5.

Ah! the noble motions that have been lost, the good purposes that have withered, the immortal souls that have miscarried, by putting off the present season, the present day. Paul discoursing before Felix of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, Acts 24:25, and in this discourse striking at two special vices that Felix was particularly guilty of, he falls a-trembling, and being upon the rack to hear such doctrine, he bids Paul 'depart for that time, and he would call for him at a convenient season.' Here Felix neglects his present season, and we never read that ever after this he found a convenient time or season to hear Paul make an end of the subject he had begun. So Christ made a very fair offer to the young man in the Gospel, 'Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' Mat 19:21-24. Here Christ offers heavenly treasures for earthly treasures, unmixed treasures for mixed treasures, perfect treasures for imperfect treasures, satisfying treasures for unsatisfying treasures, lasting treasures for fading treasures; but the young man slips his opportunity, his season, and goes away sorrowful, and we never read more of him.

Ah! young men, young men, do not put off the present season, do not neglect the present day. There is no time yours but the present time, no day yours but the present day; and therefore do not please yourselves and feed yourselves with hopes of time to come, and that you will repent, but not yet, and lay hold on mercy, but not yet, and give up yourselves to the Lord next week, next month, or next year, for that God that hath promised you mercy and favour upon the day of your return, he hath not promised to prolong your lives till that day comes. When a soldier was brought before Lamacus,³ a commander, for a misbehaviour, and pleaded he would do so no more, Lamacus answered, Non licet in bello bis peccare, no man must offend twice in war; so God, especially in these gospel days, wherein the motions of divine justice are more smart and quick than in former days, happily will not suffer men twice to neglect the day of grace, and let slip the season of mercy, Heb 3:2.

Ah! young men, young men, you say you will be good towards the Lord before you die, but if you are not good towards the Lord to-day, you may die to-morrow, nay, justice may leave him to be his own executioner to-morrow, who will not repent, nor seek the Lord to-day. I have read of a certain young man, who, being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and pressed to leave his wickedness by the consideration of death, judgment, and eternity that was a-coming, he answered, What do you tell me of these things? I will do well enough; for when death comes, I will speak but three words, and will help all; and so still he went on in his sinful ways, but in the end, coming to a bridge on horseback, to go over a deep water, the horse stumbling, and he labouring to recover his horse, but could not; at last, he let go the bridle, and gave up himself and horse to the waters, and was heard to say these three words, Devil take all, Diabolus capiat omnia! Here

was three dreadful words indeed, and an example, with a witness, for all young men to beware who think to repent with a three-word repentance at last.

Otho, the emperor, slew himself with his own hands, but slept so soundly the night before, that the grooms of his chamber heard him snort. 2

Young men, I will suppose you to be good accountants; now if you please to count the number and mark the age of the sacrifices in the Old Testament, you shall find more kids and lambs offered than goats and old sheep. You have no lease of your lives, you are not sure that you shall live to Isaac's age, to live till your eyes wax dim, Gen 27:1; you are not sure that you shall live to Jacob's years, and die leaning upon the top of a staff, Heb 11:21. You read of them who 'die in their youth, and whose lives are among the unclean,' Job 36:14. Slip not the present season, neglect not this day of grace, let not Satan keep your souls and Christ any longer asunder, by telling of you that you are too young, that hereafter will be time enough. Austin tells us, that by this very temptation the devil kept him off from receiving of Christ, from closing with Christ seven years together; he could no sooner think of inquiring after Christ, of getting an interest in Christ, of leaving off his sinful courses, &c., but Satan would be still a-suggesting, Thou art too young to leave thy drunkenness, thou art too young to leave thy Delilahs, to leave thy harlots; till at last he cried out, How long shall I say it is too soon? why may I not repent to-day? and lay hold on Jesus Christ to-day? &c. Ah! young men, this is your day, this is your season; if you will not now hearken and obey, you may perish for ever. Cæsar had a letter given him by Artemidorus that morning he went to the senate, wherein notice was given him of all the conspiracy of his murderers, so that with ease he might have prevented his death, but neglecting the rending of it, was slain; he slipped his season, and dies for it. Ah! how many for slipping gracious seasons and opportunities, have died for ever! Soul-opportunities are more worth than a thousand worlds; mercy is in them, grace and glory is in them, heaven and eternity is in them.

Motive (5). Fifthly, To provoke you to be good betimes, consider, How just it is with God to reserve the dregs of his wrath for them who reserve the dregs of their days for him.

How can a husband embrace that wife in her old age, who hath spent all the time of her youth in following after strangers? Will any man receive such into his service, who hath all their days served his enemies, and received such wounds, blows, and bruises, that renders them unfit for his service?

Ah! young men, young men, do not thus 'foolishly and unwisely requite the Lord,' Deu 32:6, for all his patient waiting, his gracious wooing, and his merciful dealing with you. Ah! do not put off God to old age; for old, lame, and sick sacrifices rarely reach as high as heaven. Is not old age very unteachable? in old age are not men very unapt to take in, and as unapt to give out? In old age, oftentimes, men are men, and no men; they have eyes, but see not, ears, but hear not, tongues, but speak not, feet, but walk not. An aged man is but a moving anatomy, or a living mortuary. Now how unlovely, how uncomely, how unworthy, nay, how incensing, how provoking a thing must this needs be, when men will dally with God, and put him off till their doating days have overtaken them, till their spring is past, their summer overpast, and they arrived at the fall of the leaf, yea, till winter colours have stained their heads with gray and hoary hairs! How provoking this is, you may see in those sad words of Jeremiah: Jer 22:21-22, 'I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear: this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice.'

But will God put up this at their hands? No. Therefore it follows in the next verse, 'Surely thou shalt be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.'

Oh! that young men would let this scripture lie warm every morning upon their hearts, that so they may not dare to put off God and provoke him to their own commission. Though you are young and in your strength, yet are you stronger than God, can you make your party good with him? If you will needs be a-provoking, provoke them that are your matches, and do not contend with him that is mightier than you, that can command you into nothing, or into hell at pleasure.

Motive (6). Sixthly, consider, That the sooner you are good on earth, the greater will be your reward in heaven. The sooner you are gracious, the more at last you will be glorious. You read in the Scripture of a reward, of a great reward, and of a full reward. Now those that are good betimes, that know, seek, serve, and love the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, they are in the fairest way of gaining the greatest and the fullest reward. And this I shall make clear by that which follows.

(1.) First, The sooner any man begins to be really good, the more good he will do in this world. Now, the more good any man doth on earth, the more glory he shall have in heaven. Therefore, my beloved brethren, 'Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' 1Co 15:58.

Man's wages, man's reward, shall be according to his works. He that doth most work here shall have most reward hereafter. God will at last proportion the one to the other, the reward to the work: 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully,' 2Co 9:6. Though no man shall be rewarded for his works, yet God will at last measure out happiness and blessedness to his people according to their service, faithfulness, diligence, and work in this world, Rom 2:5-7. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; glory is nothing else but a bright constellation of graces; happiness nothing but the quintessence of holiness. Grace and glory differ non specie, sed gradu, in degree, not kind, as the learned speak. Grace and glory differ very little; the one is the seed, the other is the flower; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; and a man may as well plead for equal degrees of grace in this world, as he may plead for equal degrees of glory in the other world. Surely the more grace here, the more glory hereafter; and the more work Christians do on earth, the more glory they shall have in heaven; and the sooner men begin to be good, the more good they will do in this world; and the more they do here, the more they shall have hereafter. Philosophers seem to weigh our virtues with our vices, and according to the preponderation of either, denominate us good or bad, and so deliver us up to reward or punishment. No man can commend good works magnificently enough, saith Luther, for one work of a Christian is more precious than heaven and earth; and therefore all the world cannot sufficiently reward one good work. And in another place, saith the same author, 'If I might have my desire, I would rather choose the meanest work of a country Christian or poor maid, than all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great, and of Julius Cæsar.'

And, again, whatsoever the saints do, though never so small and mean, it is great and glorious; because they do all in faith and by the word, saith the same author. To prevent mistakes, you must remember, that the works that Jesus Christ will reward at last are supernatural works: they are, 1, works of God; 2, wrought from God; 3, for God; 4, in God; 5, according to God. They are works that flow from supernatural principles, and they are directed to supernatural ends, and performed

in a supernatural way. Now the sooner a man begins to be good, the more he will abound in these good works; and the more doubtless any man abounds in such good works on earth, the greater reward he shall have in heaven. Yet it must not be forgotten that the best actions, the best works of hypocrites, and all men out of Christ, are but splendida peccata, fair and shining sins, beautiful abominations. And as the phoenix in Arabia gathers sweet odoriferous sticks together, and then blows them with her wings, and burns herself with them, so many a carnal professor burns himself with his own good works, that is, by his expecting and trusting to receive that by his works that is only to be received and expected from Jesus Christ. Though all that man can do towards the meriting of heaven is no more than the lifting up of a festr² towards the meriting of a kingdom, yet such a proud piece man is, that he is ready enough to say with proud Vega, *Coelum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven of free cost. A proud heart would fain have that of debt which is merely of grace, and desires that to be of purchase which God hath intended to be of free mercy; which made one to say, that he would swim through a sea of brimstone, that he might come to heaven at last; but he that swims not thither through the sea of Christ's blood, shall never come there. Man must swim thither, not through brimstone, but through blood, or he miscarries for ever.

(2.) Again, the sooner a man begins to be good, the more serviceable he will be to others, and the more he will provoke others to good. Now, all the good that you provoke others to by counsel or carriage, shall be put down to your account, as all the sins that men provoke others to is put down to their accounts. David did but send a letter concerning the death of Uriah, and the charge cometh, 'Thou hast slain Uriah with the sword,' 2Sa 12:8-9. The more I stir up others to sow, the more at last I shall reap, Isa 38:3, Neh 13:14. The sooner a man begins to be good, the more good he will do, the more serviceable he will be in the town or city where he dwells, in the family where he lives, among his relations, wife, children, kindred, servants, &c., with whom he converses. The sooner a man begins to be gracious, the sooner and the more useful will his arts, his parts, his gifts, his graces, his mercies, his experiences, his life, his labours, his prayers, his counsels, his examples, be to all that are with him, to all that are about him.

Lilmod Ielammed, we therefore learn that we may teach, is a proverb among the Rabbins. And I do therefore lay in and lay up, saith the heathen, that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.

Ah! young men, young men! as you would be useful and serviceable to many, begin to be good betimes, and to lay in and lay up and lay out betimes, for the profit and advantage of others. Augustine accounted nothing his own that he did not communicate to others. The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit. It is a base and unworthy spirit for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say that a man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him. And indeed the best way to do ourselves good is to be a-doing good to others; the best way to gather is to scatter. Memorable is that story of Pyrrhias, a merchant of Ithaca, who at sea espying an aged man, a captive in a pirate's ship, took compassion of him, and redeemed him, and bought his commodities which the pirate had taken from him, which were certain barrels of pitch. The old man perceiving that not for any good service he could do him, nor for the gain of that commodity, but merely out of charity and pity he had done this, discovered a great mass of treasure hidden in the pitch, whereby the merchant in a very short time became very rich; at which very time God made that word good, 'He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally,' 2Co 9:6; and that word, 'The liberal soul shall be made

fat,' Pro 11:25; and that word, 'The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand,' Isa 32:8. It is fabled of Midas, that whatever he touched he turned it into gold. It is certain that a liberal hand, a liberal heart, turns all into gold, into gain, as Scripture and experience do abundantly evidence. Now, if you put all these things together, nothing is more evident than that those that begin to be good betimes are in the ready way, the high way, to be high in heaven when they shall cease from breathing on earth. And therefore, young men, as you would be high in heaven, as you would have a great reward, a full reward, a massy, weighty crown, oh labour to be good betimes; labour to get acquainted with the Lord, and an interest in the Lord, in the spring and morning of your days!

Motive (7). The seventh motive or consideration to provoke and incite you to be good betimes, is to consider, That the Lord is very much affected and taken with your seeking of him, and following after him, in the spring and morning of your youth.

Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown,' Jer 2:2.

Ah! how kindly, how sweetly did the Lord take this at their hands, that they followed him in their youth, while their 'bones were full of marrow,' while they were strong and fit for service, while nature was fresh, lively, and vigorous. In the law, God called for the first of all things; he required not only the first-fruits, but the very first of the first: 'The first of the first fruits of thy land, thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God,' Exo 23:19. God is the first being, the first good, and therefore deserves the first of the first, and the best of the best; the first and the best is not too good for him, who is goodness itself. God, in that of Lev 2:14, is so passionately set upon having the first of the first, that he will not stay till the green ears of corn be ripe, but will have the green ears of corn dried in the fire, lest he should lose his longing. As many young women and sickly children cannot stay till the fruit be ripe, but must have it while it is green; even so, saith God, my heart, my desires, are so vehemently set upon the first-fruits, the first things, that I cannot stay, I cannot satisfy myself without them; and what would God teach us by all this, but to serve him with the first-fruits of our age, the primrose of our childhood, the morning of your youth. God hath given you of the best, do not put him off with the worst, with the worst of your time, the worst of your days, the worst of your strength, lest he swear in his wrath that 'you shall never enter into his rest,' Heb 3:18.

Motive (8). The eighth motive or consideration to provoke you to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, is to consider, that This may be a special means to prevent many black temptations, and an encouragement to withstand all temptations that you may meet with from a tempting devil and a tempting world. An early turning to the Lord will prevent many temptations to despair, many temptations to neglect the means openly, to despise the means secretly; many temptations about the being of God, the goodness, faithfulness, truth and justice of God; temptations to despair, temptations to lay violent hands on a man's self. Temptations to question all that God hath said, and that Christ hath suffered, arises many times from men's delaying and putting off of God to the last; all which, with many others, are prevented by a man's seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of his youth. It is reported of the harts of Scythia, that they teach their young ones to leap from bank to bank, from rock to rock,

from one turf to another, by leaping before them, by which means, when they are hunted, no beast of prey can ever take them; so when persons exercise themselves in godliness when they are young, when they leap from one measure of holiness to another, when they are in the morning of their days, Satan, that mighty hunter after souls, may pursue them with his temptations, but he shall not overtake them, he shall not prevail over them. As you see in Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and the three children, these knew the Lord, and gave up themselves to the Lord in the prime and primrose of their youth, and these were all temptation-proof, Heb 11:1-40, Gen 39:1-23, Dan 3:1-30. Satan and the world pursued them, but could not overtake them. When the devil and the world had done their worst, the young men's bows abode in strength, and their hands to resist were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, Gen 49:23-24. Ego non sum ego, said that young convert when tempted, I am not the man that I was.

Luther tells of a young virgin that used to resist all temptations with this, Christianus sum, I am a Christian. Early converts may say, when tempted, as he, Tell me not, Satan, what I have been, but what I am and will be; or as he in the like case, Whatsoever I was, I am now in Christ a new creature, and that is it which troubleth thee; or as he, The more desperate my disease was, the more I admire the physician. Yea, thou mayest yet strain it a peg higher, and say, The greater my sins were, the greater is my honour, as the devils which once Mary Magdalene had, are mentioned for her glory. When Pyrrhus tempted Fabricius the first day with an elephant, so huge and monstrous a beast, as before he had not seen, the next day with money and promises of honour, he answered, I fear not thy force, I am too wise for thy fraud.

Ah! young men, young men, as you would be free from the saddest and darkest temptations, and as you would be armed against all temptations, oh labour as for life to be good betimes! seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth. No way like this for the preventing earthquakes, heartquakes, stormy days, and winter nights, &c.

Motive (9). The ninth motive or consideration to stir up young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, is, To consider the worth and excellency of souls. A soul is a spiritual, immortal substance, it is capable of the knowledge of God, it is capable of union with God, of communion with God, and of a blessed and happy fruition of God, Mat 19:28; Acts 7:59-60; Php 1:23.

Christ left his Father's bosom for the good of souls; he assumed man's nature for the salvation of man's soul. Christ prayed for souls, he sweat for souls, he wept for souls, he bled for souls, he hung on the cross for souls, he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls, he died for souls, he rose again from death for souls, he ascended for souls, he intercedes for souls, and all the glorious preparations that he hath been a-making in heaven these sixteen hundred years is for souls, Heb 2:13-16; Isa 63:3; John 14:1-3.

Ah! young men, young men, do not play the courtier with your precious souls. The courtier doth all things late; he rises late, dines late, sups late, goes to bed late, repents late.

Ah! sirs, the good of your souls is before all, and above all other things in the world; to be first regarded and provided for, and that partly because it is the best and more noble part of man, and partly because therein mostly and properly is the image of God stamped, and partly because it is the first converted, and partly because it shall be the first and most glorified.

Ah! young men, young men, if they be worse than infidels, that make no provision for their families, 1Ti 5:8; what monsters are they that make not provision for their own souls! This will be bitterness in the end.

Cæsar Borgias being sick to death, lamentably said, 'When I lived, I provided for everything but death; now I must die, and am unprovided to die.' This was a dart at his heart, and it will at last be a dagger at yours, who feast your bodies, but starve your souls; who make liberal provision for your ignoble part, but no provision for your more noble part.

If they deserve a hanging, who feast their slaves, and starve their wives; that make provision for their enemies, but none for their friend; how will you escape hanging in hell, who make provision for everything, yea, for your very lusts, but make no provision for your immortal souls? Jas 4:2-3; Hos 7:13-14. We hate the Turks for selling Christians for slaves, and what shall we think then of those who sell themselves, their precious souls, for toys and trifles that cannot profit? who practically say, what once a profane nobleman of Naples verbally said, viz., that he had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it.

Ah! young men, young men, do not pawn your souls, do not sell your souls, do not exchange away your souls, do not trifle and fool away your precious souls; they are jewels, more worth than a thousand worlds, yea, than heaven and earth. If they are safe, all is safe; but if they are lost, all is lost: God lost, and Christ lost, and the society of glorious angels and blessed saints lost, and heaven lost, and that for ever. Granetensis tells of a woman that was so affected with souls' miscarryings, that she besought God to stop up the passage into hell with her soul and body, that none might have entrance.

Ah! that all young persons were so affected with the worth and excellency of their souls, and so alarmed with the hazard and danger of losing their souls, as that they may in the spring and morning of their days inquire after the Lord, and seek him, and serve him with all their might, that so their precious and immortal souls may be safe and happy for ever. But if all this will not do, then in the last place,

Motive (10). Tenthly, Consider, young men, That God will at last bring you to a reckoning. He will at last bring you to judgment. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee unto judgment,' Ecc 11:9. In these words you have two things: (1.) An ironical concession; he bids him rejoice, &c.; he yields him what he would have, by an irony, by way of mockage and bitter scoff. Now thou art young and strong, lively and lusty, and thy bones are full of marrow; thou art resolved to be proud and scornful, to indulge the flesh, and to follow thy delights and pleasures. Well! take thy course if thou darest, or if thou hast a mind to it, if thy heart be so set upon it. 'Rejoice in thy youth,' &c. (2.) The second is a commination, or a sad and severe premonition: 'But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment. 'Will bring thee;' these words import two things: first, the unwillingness of youth to come to judgment; secondly, the unavoidableness that youth must come to judgment; but how soon you shall be brought to judgment, is only known to God.

Augustine confesses in one of his books, that as long as his conscience was gnawed with the guilt of some youthful lust he was once ensnared with, the very hearing of a day of judgment, was even

a hell to him.

Histories tell us of a young man, who being for some capital offence condemned to die, grew grey in one night's space, and was therefore pitied and spared.

Ah! young men, young men, that the serious thoughts of this great day, may put you upon breaking off the sins, of your youth; and the dedicating of yourselves to the knowledge, love, and service of the Lord, in the spring and flower of your days. Ah! young men, consider the errors of your lives, the wickedness of your hearts, the sinfulness of your ways, and that strict account that ere long you must be brought to before the judge of all the world. The heathens themselves had some kind of dread and expectation of such a day; and therefore, when Paul spake of judgment to come, Felix trembled, though a heathen, Acts 24:25. The bringing into judgment is a thing which is known by reason, and is clear by the light of nature; wherefore, in Austria, one of the nobles dying, who had lived fourscore and thirteen years, and had spent all his life in pleasures and delights, never being troubled with any infirmity, and this being told to Frederick the emperor, From hence, saith he, we may conclude the soul's immortality; for if there be a God that ruleth this world, as divines and philosophers do teach, and that he is just no one denieth, surely there are other places to which souls after death do go, and do receive for their deeds either reward or punishment, for here we see that neither rewards are given to the good, nor punishments to the evil.²

Ah, young men! 'knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,' 2Co 5:9-11, and the terror of this day, oh! that you would be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come, to cast away the idols of your souls, to repent and be converted in the primrose of your youth, that your sins may be blotted out when 'the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' Acts 3:19, or else woe! woe! to you that ever you were born! I have read a story of one who, being risen from the dead, and being asked in what condition he was, he made answer, No man doth believe, no man doth believe, no man doth believe. And being further asked what he meant by that repetition, he answered, No man doth believe how exactly God examineth, how strictly God judgeth, how severely he punisheth. Oh that the ways of most young persons did not declare to all the world that they do not, and that they will not believe the dread and terror of that day that will admit of no plea, nor place for apology or appeal! The highest and last tribunal can never be appealed from, or repealed.

Now if, for all that hath been said, you are resolved to spend the flower of your days, and the prime of your strength, in the service of sin and the world, then know that no tongue can express, no heart can conceive that trouble of mind, that terror of soul, that horror of conscience, that fear and amazement, that weeping and wailing, that crying and roaring, that sighing and groaning, that cursing and banning, that stamping and tearing, that wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, that shall certainly attend you, when God shall bring you into judgment for all your looseness and lightness, for all your wickedness and wantonness, for all your profaneness and baseness, for all your neglect of God, your grieving the Comforter, your trampling under foot the blood of a Saviour, for your despising of the means, for your prizing earth above heaven, and the pleasures of this world above the pleasures that be at God's right hand.

Oh! how will you wish in that day when your sins shall be charged on you, when justice shall be armed against you, when conscience shall be gnawing within you, when the world shall be a flaming fire about you, when the gates of heaven shall be shut against you, and the flame of hell

ready to take hold of you, when angels and saints shall sit in judgment upon you, and for ever turn their faces from you, when evil spirits shall be terrifying of you, and Jesus Christ for ever disowning of you; how will you, I say, wish in that day that you had never been born, or that you might now be unborn, or that your mothers' wombs had proved your tombs! Oh, how will you then wish to be turned into a bird, a beast, a stock, a stone, a toad, a tree! Oh that our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we were nothing! Oh that we were anything but what we are!

I have read a remarkable story of a king that was heavy and sad, and wept, which, when his brother saw, he asked him why he was so pensive? Because, saith he, I have judged others, and now I must be judged myself. And why, saith his brother, do you so take on for this? it will, happily, be a long time ere that day come, and besides that, it is but a slight matter. The king said little to it for the present. Now, it was a custom in that country, when any had committed treason, there was a trumpet sounded at his door in the night time, and he was next day brought out to be executed. Now, the king commanded a trumpet to be sounded at his brother's door in the nighttime, who, awakening out of his sleep, when he heard it, arose, and came quaking and trembling to the king. How now? saith the king; what's the matter you are so affrighted? I am, saith he, attached of treason, and next morning I shall be executed. Why, saith the king to him again, are you so troubled at that, knowing that you shall be judged by your brother, and for a matter that your conscience tells you you are clear of? How much more, therefore, may I be afraid, seeing that God shall judge me, and not in a matter that my conscience frees me of, but of that whereof I am guilty? And beside this, if the worst come, it is but a temporary² death you shall die, but I am liable to death eternal, both of body and soul. I will leave the application to those young persons that put this day afar off, and whom no arguments will move to be good betimes, and to acquaint themselves with the Lord in the morning of their youth. But now to those young men and women who begin to seek, serve, and love the Lord in the primrose of their days, the day of judgment will be to them melodia in aure, jubilum in corde, like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. This day will be to them 'a day of refreshing,' a day of redemption,' a day of vindication, a day of coronation, a day of consolation, a day of salvation; it will be to them a marriage-day, a harvest-day, a pay-day. Now the Lord will pay them for all the prayers they have made, for all the sermons they have heard, for all the tears they have shed. In this great day Christ will remember all the individual offices of love and friendship shewed to any of his. Now he will mention many things for their honour and comfort that they never minded, now the least and lowest acts of love and pity towards him shall be interpreted as a special kindness shewed to himself. Now the crown shall be set upon their heads, and the royal robes put upon their backs; now all the world shall see that they have not served the Lord for nought. Now Christ will pass over all their weaknesses, and make honourable mention of all the services they have performed, of all the mercies they have improved, and of all the great things that for his name and glory they have suffered.

CHAPTER V

Quest. But here an apt question may be moved, viz., Whether at this great day, the sins of the saints shall be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery, or no? Whether the Lord will in this day publicly manifest, proclaim, and make mention of the sins of his people, or no?

I humbly judge, according to my present light, that he will not; and my reasons for it are these, viz.:

1. The first is drawn from Christ's judicial proceedings in the last day, set down largely and clearly in the 25th of Matthew, where he enumerateth only the good works they had done, but takes no notice of the spots and blots, of the stains and blemishes, of the infirmities and enormities, of the weaknesses and wickednesses of his people, Deu 32:4-6. My,

2. Second reason is taken from Christ's vehement protestations that they shall not come into judgment: John 5:24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Those words, 'shall not come into condemnation,' are not rightly translated; the original is, οὐκ ἔσται ἐν κριμῇ, shall not come into judgment, not into damnation, as you read it in all your English books. I will not say what should put men upon this exposition rather than a true translation of the original word. Further, it is very observable, that no evangelist useth this double asseveration but John, and he never useth it but in matters of the greatest weight and importance, and to shew the earnestness of his spirit, and to stir us up to better attention, and to put the thing asserted out of all question, and beyond all contradiction;³ as when we would put a thing for ever out of all question, we do it by a double asseveration, Verily, verily, it is so, &c.

3. Thirdly, Because his not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with many precious expressions that we find scattered, as so many shining, sparkling pearls, up and down in Scripture, as, First, (1.) With those of God's blotting out the sins of his people: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins,' Isa 43:25, Isa 44:22. Who is this that blots out transgressions? He that hath the keys of heaven and hell at his girdle, that opens and no man shuts, that shuts and no man opens; he that hath the power of life and death, of condemning and absolving, of killing and making alive, he it is that blots out transgressions. If an under-officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps might do a man no good, a man might for all that be at last cast by the judge; but when the judge or king shall blot out the indictment with, their own hand, then the indictment cannot return. Now this is every believer's case and happiness. (2.) Secondly, To those glorious expressions of God's not remembering of their sins any more: Isa 43:25, 'And I will not remember thy sins.' 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,' Jer 31:34. So the apostle, 'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb 8:12. And again the same apostle saith, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb 10:17. The meaning is, their iniquities shall quite be forgiven, I will never mention them more, I will never take notice of them more, they shall never hear more of them from me. Though God hath an iron memory to remember the sins of the wicked, yet he hath no memory to remember the sins of the righteous. (3.) Thirdly, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with those blessed expressions of his casting their sins into the depth of the sea, and of his casting them behind his back: 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,' Mic 7:19. Where sin is once pardoned, the remission stands never to be repealed. Pardoned sins shall never come in account against the pardoned man before God any more, for so much doth this borrowed speech

import. If a thing were cast into a river, it might be brought up again; or if it were cast upon the sea, it might be discerned and taken up again; but when it is cast into the depths, the bottom of the sea, it can never be buoyed up again. By the metaphor in the text, the Lord would have us to know the sins pardoned shall rise no more, they shall never be seen more, they shall never come on the account more; he will so drown their sins, that they shall never come up before him the second time. And so much that other scripture imports: 'Behold, for peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back,' Isa 38:17. These last words are a borrowed speech, taken from the manner of men, who are wont to cast behind their backs such things as they have no mind to see, regard, or remember. A gracious soul hath always his sins before his face: 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me;' and therefore no wonder if the Lord cast them behind his back. The father soon forgets and casts behind his back those faults that the child remembers and hath always in his eyes; so doth the Father of spirits. (4.) Fourthly, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth best agree with that sweet and choice expression of God's pardoning the sins of his people: 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me,' Jer 33:8. So Micah: 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passes by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage (as though he would not see it, but wink at it), he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy,' Mic 7:18, The Hebrew word nose, from nasa, that is here rendered pardoneth, signifies a taking away. When God pardons sin, he takes it sheer away: that it should be sought for, yet it could not be found, as the prophet speaks: 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve,' Jer 50:20; and those words, 'and passeth by,' in the afore-cited 7th of Micah, and the 18th, according to the Hebrew Vegnober Gnal, is, and 'passeth over;' God passeth over the transgression of his heritage, that is, he takes no notice of it As a man in a deep muse, or as one that hath haste of business, seeth not things before him, his mind being busied about other matters, he neglects all to mind his business; as David, when he saw in Mephibosheth the feature of his friend Jonathan, took no notice of his lameness, or any other defect or deformity; so God, beholding in his people the glorious image of his Son, winks at all their faults and deformities, which made Luther say, 'Do with me what thou wilt, since thou hast pardoned my sin;' and what is it to pardon sin but not to mention sin? Isa 40:1-2. (5.) Fifthly, In his not bringing their sins into the judgment of discussion and discovery, doth best agree to those expressions of forgiving and covering: 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,' Psal 32:1. In the original it is in the plural, blessednesses. So here is a plurality of blessings, a chain of pearls. The like expression you have in Psal 85:2 : 'Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.' For the understanding of these scriptures aright, take notice that to 'cover' is a metaphorical expression. Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure. To be covered is to be so hid and closed as not to appear. Some make the metaphor from filthy, loathsome objects, which are covered from our eyes, as dead carcasses are buried under the ground; some from garments, that are put upon us to cover our nakedness; others from the Egyptians, that were drowned in the Red Sea, and so covered with water; others from a great gulf in the earth, that is filled up and covered with earth injected into it; and others make it in the last place an allusive expression to the mercy-seat, over which was a covering. Now, all these

metaphors in the general tend to shew this, that the Lord will not look, he will not see, he will not take notice of the sins he hath pardoned, to call them any more to a judicial account. As when a prince reads over many treasons and rebellions, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, he passeth by, he takes no notice of them: the pardoned person shall never hear more of them, he will never call him to account for those sins more; so here, &c. When Cæsar was painted, he put his finger upon his scar, his wart. God puts his fingers upon all his people's scars and warts, upon all their weaknesses and infirmities, that nothing can be seen but what is fair and lovely: 'Thou art all fair, my love; and there is no spot in thee,' Song of Solomon 4:7. (6.) Sixthly, It best agrees to that expression of not imputing of sin: 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Psa 32:2. So the apostle in that Rom 4:6-8. Now, not to impute iniquity is not to charge iniquity, not to set iniquity upon his score, who is blessed and pardoned, &c. (7.) Seventhly and lastly, It best agrees with that expression that you have in Psa 103:11-12 : 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' What a vast distance is there betwixt the east and the west! Of all visible latitudes, this is the greatest; and thus much for the third argument. The

4. Fourth argument that prevails with me, to judge that Jesus Christ will not bring the sins of the saints into the judgment of discussion and discovery in the great day, is because it seems unsuitable to three considerable things, for Jesus Christ to proclaim the infirmities and miscarriages of his people to all the world.

(1.) First, It seems to be unsuitable to the glory and solemnity of that day, which to the saints will be a day of refreshing, a day of restitution, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, as hath been already proved. Now how suitable to this great day of solemnity the proclamation of the saints' sins will be, I leave the reader to judge.

(2.) Secondly, It seems unsuitable to all those near and dear relations that Jesus Christ stands in towards his. He stands in the relation of a father, a brother, a head, a husband, a friend, an advocate. Now are not all these, by the law of relations, bound rather to hide and keep secret, at least from the world, the weaknesses and infirmities of their near and dear relations? and is not Christ? Is not Christ much more? By how much he is more a father, a brother, a head, a husband, &c., in a spiritual way, than any others can be in a natural way, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, It seems very unsuitable to what the Lord Jesus requires of his in this world. The Lord requires that his people should cast a mantle of love, of wisdom, of silence, and secrecy over one another's weaknesses and infirmities.

Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins, Pro 10:12, 1Pe 4:8. Love's mantle is very large; love will find a hand, a plaster to clap upon every sore. Flavius Vespasianus, the emperor, was very ready to conceal his friends' vices, and as ready to reveal their virtues. So is divine love in the hearts of the saints: 'If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,' Mat 18:15. As the pills of reprehension are to be gilded and sugared over with much gentleness and softness, so they are to be given in secret; tell him between him and thee alone. Tale-bearers and tale-hearers are alike abominable, heaven is too hot and too holy a place for them, Psa 15:3. Now will Jesus Christ have us carry it thus towards offending Christians, and will he himself act otherwise? Nay, is it an evil in

us to lay open the weaknesses and infirmities of the saints to the world? and will it be an excellency, a glory, a virtue in Christ to do it in the great day? &c. A fifth argument is this: It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression: 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger: and it is his glory to pass over a transgression,' Pro 19:11, or to pass by it, as we do by persons or things we know not, or would take no notice of. Now 'is it the glory of a man to pass over a transgression,' and will it not much more be the glory of Christ, silently to pass over the transgressions of his people in that great day? The greater the treasons and rebellions are that a prince passes over and takes no notice of, the more is it his honour and glory; and so, doubtless, it will be Christ's in that great day, to pass over all the treasons and rebellions of his people, to take no notice of them, to forget them, as well as to forgive them. The heathens have long since observed, that in nothing man came nearer to the glory and perfection of God himself, than in goodness and clemency. Surely if it be such an honour to man, 'to pass over a transgression,' it cannot be a dishonour to Christ to pass over the transgressions of his people, he having already buried them in the sea of his blood. Again, saith Solomon, 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,' Pro 25:2. And why it should not make for the glory of divine love to conceal the sins of the saints in that great day, I know not; and whether the concealing the sins of the saints in that great day will not make most for their joy, and wicked men's sorrow, for their comfort and wicked men's terror and torment, I will leave you to judge, and time and experience to decide. And thus much for the resolution of that great question. Having done with the motives that may encourage and provoke young men to be good betimes, to know, love, seek, and serve the Lord, in the spring and morning of their days.

CHAPTER VI

I shall now come to those directions and helps that must, by assistance from heaven, be put in practice, if ever you would be good betimes, and serve the Lord in the primrose of your days. Now all that I shall say will fall under these two heads.

First, Some things you must carefully and warily decline, and arm yourselves against; and

Secondly, There are other things that you must prosecute and follow. 1st, There are some things that you must warily decline, and they are these.

Direction (1). First, If ever you would be good betimes, if you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, oh! then, take heed of putting the day of death far from you, Amo 6:3.

Young men are very prone to look upon death afar off, to put it at a great distance from them. They are apt to say to death as Pharaoh said to Moses, 'Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more,' Exo 10:28. If old men discourse to them of death, they are ready to answer, as the high priest did Judas in a different case, Mat 27:4, 'What is that to us? look you unto it.' We know sickness will come, and death is a debt that we must all pay, but surely these guests are a great way from us; for doth not David say, 'The days of a man are threescore years and ten'? Psa 90:10. We have calculated our nativities, and we cannot abate a day, a minute, a moment, of 'threescore and ten;' and therefore it is even a death to think of death; there being so great a distance between our birth-day and our dying day, as we have cast up the account.

Ah! young men, it is sad, it is very sad, when you are so wittily wicked as to say with those in Ezekiel, 'Behold they of the house of Israel say, the vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are afar off,' Eze 12:27.

Ah! young men, young men, by putting far away this day you gratify Satan, you strengthen sin, you provoke the Lord, you make the work of faith and repentance more hard and difficult, you lay a sad foundation for the greatest fears and doubts.

Ah! how soon may that sad word be fulfilled upon you, 'The Lord of that servant (that saith his Lord delayeth his coming) shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder (or cut him off), and appoint him his portion with hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Mat 24:48-51. When Sodom, when Pharaoh, when Agag, when Amalek, when Haman, when Herod, when Nebuchadnezzar, when Belshazzar, when Dives, when the fool in the Gospel, were all in their prime, their pride, when they were all in a flourishing state, and upon the very top of their glory, how strangely, how suddenly, how sadly, how fearfully, how wonderfully, were they brought down to the grave, to hell!

Ah! young man, who art thou? and what is thy name or fame? what is thy power or place? what is thy dignity or glory? that thou darest promise thyself an exemption from sharing in as sad a portion as ever justice gave to those who were once very high, who were seated among the stars, but are now brought down to the sides of the pit, Isa 13:10-17. I have read a story of one that gave a young prodigal a ring with a death's head, on this condition, that he should one hour daily, for seven days together, look and think upon it; which bred a great change in his life.

Ah! young men, the serious thoughts of death may do that for you that neither friends, counsel, examples, prayers, sermons, tears, have not done to this very day. Well! remember this; to labour not to die is labour in vain, and to put this day far from you, and to live without fear of death, is to die living. Death seizeth on old men, and lays wait for the youngest. Death is oftentimes as near to the young man's back as it is to the old man's face.

It is storied of Charles the Fourth, king of France, that being one time affected with the sense of his many and great sins, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his wife, By the help of God I will now so carry myself all my life long, that I will never offend him more; which words he had no sooner uttered, but he fell down dead and died. Do not, young men, put this day far from you, lest you are suddenly surprised, and then you cry out, when too late, 'A kingdom for a Christ, a kingdom for a Christ; as once crooked-backed Richard the Third in his distress, 'A kingdom for a horse, a kingdom for a horse.'

Ah! young men, did you never hear of a young man that cried out, 'Oh! I am so sick, that I cannot live, and yet, woful wretch that I am! so sinful, that I dare not die. Oh that I might live! oh that I might die! oh that I might do neither!' Well! young men, remember this, the frequent, the serious thoughts of death will prevent many a sin, it will arm you against many temptations, it will secure you from many afflictions, it will keep you from doating on the world, it will make you do much in a little time, it will make death easy when it comes, and it will make you look out betimes for a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, and for glory that fadeth not away. Therefore do not, Oh do not put the day of death far from you. Take heed of crying Cras, cras, to-morrow, to-morrow, saith Luther; for a man lives forty years before he knows himself to be a fool, and by that time he sees his folly his life is finished. So men die before they begin to live.

Direction (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then take heed of leaning to your own understanding. This counsel wise Solomon gives to his son (or the young men in his time): 'My

son, forget not my law; but let thy heart keep my commandments. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not to thy own understanding,' Pro 3:1, Pro 3:5.

Youth is the age of folly, of vain hopes, and overgrown confidence. Ah! how wise might many have been, had they not been too early wise in their own opinion.

Rehoboam's young counsellors proved the overthrow of his kingdom. It is brave for youth at all times to be discreet and sober-minded. Three virtues, they say, are prime ornaments of youth, modesty, silence, and obedience.

Ah! young men, keep close in every action to this one principle, viz., in every action resolve to be discreet and wise, rather than affectionate and singular.

I remember that a young gentleman of Athens, being to answer for his life, hired an orator to make his defence, and it pleased him well at his first reading; but when the young man by often reading it, that he might recite it publicly by heart, begun to grow weary and displeased with it, the orator bid him consider that the judges and the people were to hear it but once: and then it was likely that they at the first instant might be as well pleased as he.

Ah! young men, your leaning upon yourselves, or upon others, will in the end be bitterness and vexation of spirit. Young men are very apt to lean on their own wit, wisdom, arts, parts, as old men are to lean on a staff to support them (as the Hebrew word [שָׁנָן, shagnan] signifies, that is rendered lean, in that of Pro 3:5). This hath been the bane of many a choice wit, the loss of many a brave head, the ruin of many a subtle pate.

Ajax thought it was only for cowards and weaklings to lean upon the Lord for succour, not for him when he was foiled; lean not to great parts, lean not to natural or acquired accomplishments, lest you lose them and yourselves too. Leaning to natural or moral excellencies, is the ready way to be stripped of all. Babylon, that bore herself bold upon her high towers, thick walls, and twenty years' provision laid in for a siege, was surprised by Cyrus.

It was said of Cæsar, that he received not his wounds from the swords of enemies, but from the hands of friends; that is, from trusting in them.

Ah! how many young men have been wounded, yea slain, by trusting to their own understandings, their own abilities!

It was an excellent saying of Austin, In te stas, et non stas, he that stands upon his own strength shall never stand. A creature is like a single drop left to itself, it spends and wastes itself presently, but if like a drop in the fountain and ocean of being, it hath abundance of security.

Ah! young men, young men, if you will needs be leaning, then lean upon precious promises, 2Pe 1:4, Psa 27:1; lean upon the rock that is higher than yourselves, lean upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as John did, who was the youngest of all the disciples, and the most beloved of all the disciples, John 21:20, John 13:23. John leaned much, and Christ loved him much. Oh lean upon Christ's wisdom for direction, lean upon his power for protection, lean upon his purse, his fulness, for provision, Song of Solomon 8:5; lean upon his eye for approbation, lean upon his righteousness for justification, lean upon his blood for remission, lean upon his merits for salvation. As the young vine, without her wall to support her, will fall and sink, so will you, young men, without Christ puts

under his everlasting arms to support you, and uphold you; therefore, above all leanings, lean upon him. By leaning on him, you will engage him; by leaning on him, you will gain more honour than you can give; by leaning on him, you may even command him, and make him eternally yours, &c.

Direction (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then take heed of flatterers and flattery. Ah! how many young men might have been very good, who are now exceeding bad, by hearkening to flatterers, and affecting flattery! Flattery undid young Rehoboam, Ahab, Herod, Nero, Alexander, &c. Flatterers are soul-murderers; they are soul-undoers; they are like evil chirurgeons, that skin over the wound, but never heal it.

Anastasius the emperor's motto was, *mellitum venenum blanda oratio*, smooth talk proves often sweet poison. Flattery is the very spring and mother of all impiety; it blows the trumpet, and draws poor souls into rebellion against God, as Sheba drew Israel to rebel against David. It put our first parents upon tasting the forbidden fruit; it put Absalom upon dethroning of his father; it put Haman upon plotting the ruin of the Jews; it put Korah, Dathan, and Abiram upon rebelling against Moses; it makes men call evil good and good evil, darkness light and light darkness, &c.; it puts persons upon neglecting the means of grace, upon undervaluing the means of grace, and upon contemning the means of grace; it puts men upon abasing God, slighting Christ, and vexing the Spirit; it unmans a man; it makes him call black white and white black; it makes a man change pearls for pebbles, and gold for counters; it makes a man judge himself wise when he is foolish; knowing, when he is ignorant; holy, when he is profane; free, when he is a prisoner; rich, when he is poor: high, when he is low; full, when he is empty; happy, when he is miserable, Rev 3:17-18. Ah! young men, young men, take heed of flatterers; they are the very worst of sinners; they are left of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and ripened for hell. God declares sadly against them, and that in his word and in his works: in his word, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together, Deu 29:18-20; Psa 78:36, Psa 36:1, Psa 36:3; Job 17:5; Eze 12:24; Dan 11:21, Dan 11:32, Dan 11:34. Psa 12:2-3. 'They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.' And as God declares sadly against them in his word, so he hath declared terribly against them in his works, as you may run and read in his judgments executed upon Ahab's flattering prophets, and upon Haman, and upon Daniel's princely false accusers, &c. And why, then, will not you stop your ears against those wretches, that the hand and heart of God is so much against?

Again, as God declares against them, so good men detest them and declare against them, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together, Psa 5:8-10; Pro 2:16, Pro 7:21, Pro 28:23; Job 32:21-22; 1Th 2:5, 1Th 2:10. Pro 20:19, 'Meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.' Why so? Why! Because a man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet, Pro 29:5. The Hebrew word *Mahhalik*, from *hhalak*, that is here rendered flatterer, signifies a smooth-boots, a soft butter-spoken man, because flatterers use smooth, soft speeches. Also the word signifies 'to divide,' because a flatterer's tongue is divided from his heart. Flatterers have their nets, and those that give ear to them will be taken to their ruin. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, 'and a flattering mouth worketh ruin,' Pro 26:28. A flattering mouth ruins name, fame, estate, body, soul, life.

Valerian, the Roman emperor, used to say, *Non acerba, sed blanda*, not bitter, but flattering words do all the mischief. When Alexander the Great was hit with an arrow in the siege of an Indian city, which would not heal, he said to his parasites, You say that I am Jupiter's son, but this wound cries that I am but a man.

Now shall good men detest them and abhor them, as they are the pest of pests, the plague of plagues, and will you own them, will you take pleasure in them, to your ruin here and hereafter? The Lord forbid! Oh say to all flatterers, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I more to do with you?' Hos 14:8.

Nay, once more consider, that not only the good, but the bad, not only the best, but some of the worst of men, have manifested their detestation of flatterers and flattery.

Leo the emperor used to say, *Occulti inimici pessimi*, a close enemy is far worse than an open. When a court parasite praised Sigismund the emperor above measure, the emperor gave him a sound box on the ear. When Aristobulus the historian presented to Alexander, the great book that he had written of his glorious acts, wherein he had flatteringly made him greater than he was, Alexander, after he had read the book, threw it into the river Hydaspes, and said to the author, It were a good deed to throw thee after it. When the flatterers flattered Antigonus, he cried out, *Mentiris, mentiris in gutture, hæc virtutes non latent in me*, thou liest, thou liest in thy throat; these virtues that thou speakest of I have not in me, but I am like a leopard, that have ten black spots to one white.

Augustus Cæsar and Tiberius Cæsar were deadly enemies to flatterers, insomuch that they would not be called lords by their own children. A good symbol is attributed to Trebonianus Gallus, viz. *Nemo amicus idem et adulator*, no flatterer can be a true friend.

Aristippus, the philosopher, seeing Diogenes washing of herbs for his dinner, said, If Diogenes knew how to make use of kings, he need not live upon raw herbs, as he doth; to which Diogenes replied, that if Aristippus could content himself with herbs, he need not to turn spaniel, or to flatter king Dionysius for a meal's meat.

Ah! young men, young men, shall God, shall good men, shall bad men, detest and declare against flatterers and flattery, and will not you turn a deaf ear upon them, yea, fly from them as from a serpent, and shun them as you would shun hell itself? If you do not, the very heathens but now cited will rise in judgment against you.

Flatterers are the very worst of sinners. The flatterers told Cæsar, that his freckles in his face were like the stars in the firmament; they bought and sold Aurelius the emperor at pleasure. And Augustus complained, when Varrus was dead, that he had none now left that would deal plainly and faithfully with him. So men may gain by flattery; they will be like Harpalus, who said, *Quod regi placet, mihi placet*, that which pleaseth the king pleaseth me, when Astyages set his own son before him to feed upon him.

Oh! but let every young man say, into whose hands this treatise shall fall, *Quod Deo placet, mihi placet*, that which pleaseth God pleaseth me.

I have been the longer upon this, out of love to young men's souls, who are so apt to be ensnared in the flatterer's net. If ever you would be good in good earnest, you must abhor flatterers as the

first-born of the devil, and as such as are most pernicious to men's happiness both here and hereafter.

It is reported of one Oramazes, that he had an enchanted egg, in which, as he boasted himself, he had enclosed all the happiness of the world; but being broken, nothing was found in it but wind. Flatterers are the greatest cheaters, the greatest deceivers in the world.

They say of the crocodile, that when he hath killed a man, he will weep over him, as if he were sorry, and did repent for what he had done; the application is easy.

Direction (4). Fourthly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then take heed of engaged affections to the things of the world. The young man in the Gospel took many a step towards heaven: 'All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?' Mat 19:16-24. Christ makes a very fair offer to him in the next words: 'Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.' Thou shalt have heaven for earth, a sea for a drop, a treasure for a mite, a crown for a crumb. Ay, but the young man's affections were strongly engaged to the things of the world; and therefore he turns his back upon Christ, and goes away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. Oh the madness, the folly of this young man, who, to enjoy a little temporal felicity, hath bid an everlasting farewell to Christ and glory! In that Gen 13:2, it is said, that Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; the Hebrew word cabedh, that is here rendered rich, signifies heavy; it signifies a burden, to shew us that riches are a heavy burden and an hindrance many times to heaven and happiness; and this young man in the Gospel found it so to his eternal undoing. Though the loadstone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is in presence, yet earthly possessions did draw this young man's soul away when Christ the pearl of price was present. The world is a silken net, and this young man found it so; the world is like golden fetters, and this young man found it so; the world is like sweet poison, and this young man found it so; for he had drunk so large a draught of it, that there was no room in his soul for Christ or heaven, for grace or glory. Some say, that when the serpent Scytale cannot overtake the flying passenger, she doth with her beautiful colours so astonish and amaze them, that they have no power to pass away till she have stung them; such a serpent the world proved to the young man in the Gospel; it did so affect him and take him, so amaze him and amuse him, that he could not stir till it stung him to death. When the moon is fullest, it is furthest from the sun; so the more men have of the world, the further commonly they are from God; and this the young man in the Gospel made good.

Many have ventured life and limb, and many a better thing, to gain the things of this world; and yet, after all, they have got nothing at all. Achan's golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his garment a garment to shroud him. The whole world is circular, the heart of a man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle; yea, if it be not filled with the three persons in Trinity, it will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world may be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in effect and operation.

Ah! young men, young men, have none of you found it so? The world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is to say, displeasing or dirty, 1Ki 9:13; the world will afford nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briers. Oh the

vanity, the uncertainty, the imperfection of all things below! If a man should weigh his pay and his pains together, his miseries and his pleasures together, his joys and his sorrows together, his mercies and his crosses together, his good days and his bad days together, will he not conclude, Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity?

It was a wise and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the Duke of Venice, who, when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious memento, *Hœc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die. It was a good saying of one to a great lord, upon his shewing him his stately house and pleasant gardens, Sir, you had need make sure of heaven, or else when you die you will be a very great loser.

Ah! young men, young men, it is only heaven that is above all winds, storms, and tempests; nor hath God cast man out of paradise for him to think to find out another paradise in this world. The main reason why many young men doat upon the world is, because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. The woman had the moon under her feet when she was clothed with the sun, and had a crown of twelve stars upon her head, Rev 12:1.

Ah! young men, were you but clothed with the Sun of righteousness, and had you a crown set upon your heads by the hand of faith, you would have all the things of this world which are as low, bespotted, and mutable as the moon, under your feet, Heb 11:24-27, Heb 11:35, Heb 10:34. Well! young men, as ever you would be good betimes, sit loose from the things of this world, be no longer worshippers of this golden calf, and never let the world, that shall be but your servant, become your Lord. Oh! let not the devil and the world have more service for an ounce of gold, than Christ shall have for the kingdom of heaven!

Ah, young men! the world and you must part, or Christ and you will never meet, 'you cannot serve God and mammon,' Mat 6:24. The two poles shall sooner meet, than the love of Christ and the love of the world.

Direction (5). Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, if you would know, seek, and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your youth, then take heed betimes of carnal reason, take heed of consulting with flesh and blood, Gal 1:15-16.

Many a hopeful young man hath been undone temporally and undone eternally, by hearkening to those evil counsellors.

Carnal reason is an enemy, yea, an utter enemy, nay, it is not only an utter enemy, but it is enmity, yea, enmities, Rom 8:7. An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity can never be reconciled. Carnal reason is not only averse, but it is utterly averse to all goodness; it builds strongholds and syllogisms against the most glorious gospel truths, and accounts the precious things of Christ as a strange thing. Carnal reason will make God and gospel do homage to it. When carnal reason is in the throne, Christ and his truths must all bow or be judged before its bar.

Ah! young men, young men, as ever you would be good betimes, stop your ears against all carnal reasonings within you. Carnal reason judges the choicest things of the gospel to be mere foolishness, 1Co 1:23. It is purblind, and cannot see how to make a right judgment of Christ, his

word, his ways, and yet will control all.

If you are resolved to be still scholars to this master, then you must resolve to be unhappy here and miserable hereafter. But it is safer and better for you to imitate those young men, who in the morning of their days have graciously, wisely, and resolutely withstood those evil counsellors, carnal reason, flesh and blood; Joseph and Moses, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, all these in the primrose of their youth were good at turning the deaf ear to carnal counsel and carnal counsellors, Gen 39:7-11, &c; Heb 11:24-26; Dan 1:1-21.

Cassianus reports of a young man that had given himself up to a Christian life, and his parents misliking that way, they wrote letters to him to persuade him from it; and when he knew there were letters come from them, he would not open them, but threw them into the fire. This example is worth a following.

Another famous example you have in the story of King Edward the Sixth, when Cranmer and Ridley came to him, and were very earnest to have him give way to his sister the Lady Mary to have mass. He stood out and pleaded the case with them, that it was a sin against God, and provoking to the eyes of his glory, &c., but they still continued to use many carnal arguments to persuade the king, who was but a child about fifteen years of age, but he withstood them a great while; but at length when he saw he could not prevail with all his pleading against those brave men, but that they still continued their suit, he burst out into bitter weeping and sobbing, desiring them to desist. The motioners seeing his zeal and constancy, went as fast as he, and being overcome, they went away and told one that the king had more divinity in his little finger, than they had in all their bodies.

Ah! young men, it will be your safety and your glory to write after this princely copy, when you are surrounded with carnal reason and carnal counsellors, &c.

Direction (6). Sixthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then take heed of comparing yourselves with those that are worse than yourselves.

Young men are very apt to compare themselves with those that are worse than themselves, and this proves a snare unto them, yea, often times their bane, their ruin, John 9:39-40, as it did the young pharisee in the Gospel, who pleaded his negative righteousness; he was not as other men are, 'extortioners, unjust, adulterers,' and stood on his comparative goodness, 'nor as this publican;' he stands not only upon his comparisons, but upon his disparisons, being blind at home, and too quick-sighted abroad; he contemneth and condemneth this poor publican, who was better than himself, Luk 18:11-14, making good that saying of Seneca, 'The nature of man,' saith he, 'is very apt, utimur perspicillis magis quam speculis, to use spectacles to behold other men's faults, rather than looking-glasses to behold our own.' Such pharisees do justly incur the censure which that sour philosopher passed upon grammarians, that they were better acquainted with the evil of Ulysses than with their own.

Ah! young man, young man, you know, he that drinks poison, though he drinks not so much as another, and be that commits treason, though not so great, so high treason as another, shall yet as certainly be poisoned, and hanged, as he that hath drunk a greater quantity of poison, and committed higher acts of treason.

Sirs! do not delude and befool your own souls; if you are not as wicked as others, you shall not be as much tormented as others, but yet you shall be as certainly damned as others; you shall as certain to hell as others; you shall as sure be shut out for ever from God, Christ, saints, angels, and all the treasures, pleasures, and glories of heaven, as others, except it be prevented by timely repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on God's. Wilt thou count it madness, O young man! in him that is sick, to reason thus? I am not so sick as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the physician; and in the wounded man to say, I am not so desperately wounded as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the surgeon; and in the traitor to say, I am not guilty of so many foul and heinous treasons as such and such, and therefore I will not look after a pardon; and in the necessitous man to say, I am not so hard put to it as such and such, and therefore I will not welcome a hand of charity? And wilt thou not count it the greatest madness in the world for thee to put off thy repentance, and thy returning to the Lord in the spring and morning of thy youth, because that thou art not as sinful, as wicked as such and such. If to have a softer bed, a milder punishment in hell than others, will satisfy thee, then go on; but if thou art afraid of the worm that never dies, and of the fire that never goes out, being like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled could not be quenched, oh, then, begin to be good betimes! Oh seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days! To think often of hell, is the way to be preserved from falling into hell. Ah! young men, young men, that you would often consider of the bitterness of the damned's torments, and of the pitilessness of their torments, and of the diversity of their torments, and of the easelessness of their torments, and of the remedilessness of their torments. *Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat*, The sinner's delight here is momentary, that which torments hereafter is perpetual. When a sinner is in hell, dost thou think, O young man! that another Christ shall be found to die for him, or that the same Christ will be crucified again for him, or that another gospel should be preached to him? Surely no.

Ah! why then wilt thou not betimes return and seek out after the things that belong to thy everlasting peace? I have read of Pope Clement the Fifth, that when a young nephew of his died, he sent his chaplain to a necromancer, to know of him how it fared with him in the other world; the conjuror shewed him to the chaplain, lying in a fiery bed in hell, which, when the pope understood, he never joyed more, &c.

Ah! young man, that these occasional hints of hell may be a means to preserve thee from lying in those everlasting flames.

Bellarmino tells us of a certain advocate of the court of Rome, that being at the point of death, was stirred up by them that stood by, to repent and call upon God for mercy; he, with a constant countenance, and without sign of fear, turned his speech to God, and said, Lord! I have a desire to speak unto thee, not for myself, but for my wife and children, for I am hastening to hell, neither is there anything that thou shouldst do for me; and this he spake, saith Bellarmine, who was present, and heard it, as if he had spoken of a journey to some village or town, and was no more affrighted.

Sir Francis Bacon also, in his History of Henry the Seventh, relates how it was a common byword of the Lord Cordes, that he would be content to live seven years in hell, so he might win Calice [Calais] from the English; but if thou, O young man, art given up to such desperate atheism, and carnal apprehensions of hell, I am afraid God will confute thee one day by fire and brimstone; but I would willingly hope better things of all those young persons, into whose hands this treatise shall

fall; and thus you see what things must be declined and avoided, if ever you would be good betimes, if ever you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days.

CHAPTER VII But in the second place, as those things must be declined, so other things must carefully and diligently be practised, if ever you would be good betimes. I shall instance only in those that are most considerable and weighty; as, First, If ever you would be good betimes, &c., then you must labour to be acquainted with four things betimes.

Duty (1). First, You must labour to acquaint yourselves with the Scripture betimes. You must study the word betimes. David studied the word in the morning of his days, in the primrose of his youth; and this made him wiser than his enemies, yea, than his teachers; this made him as much excel the ancients, as the sun excels the moon, or as the moon excels the twinkling stars, Psa 119:97-103. Timothy was good betimes; and no wonder, for in the primrose of his days he was acquainted with the Scripture; he was inured to the word from his childhood, yea, from his infancy, as the word properly signifies. So in that Psa 119:9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word.' There is no way to a holy heart and a clean life but by acquainting yourselves with the word betimes. One hath long since observed, that God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings, that all excuse may be taken away, and that young men may be encouraged to study the Scripture betimes.² Ah, young men! no histories are comparable to the histories of the Scriptures: 1, for antiquity; 2, rarity; 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity. All other books cannot equal God's, either in age or authority, in dignity or excellency, in sufficiency or glory.

Moses is found more ancient and more honourable than all those whom the Grecians make most ancient and honourable; as Homer, Hesiod, and Jupiter himself, whom the Greeks have seated in the top of their divinity. The whole Scripture is but one entire love-letter, despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse; and who then but would still be a reading in this love-letter? Like Cæcilia, a Roman maiden of noble parentage, who carried always about her the New Testament, that she might still be a-reading in Christ's love-letter, and behold the sweet workings of his love and heart towards his dear and precious ones.

Luther found so much sweetness in the word, in Christ's love-letter, that made him say he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word; at cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere, but with the word he could live in hell itself. The word is like the stone garamantides, that hath drops of gold in itself, enriching of the believing soul. This the martyrs found, which made them willing to give a load of hay for a few leaves of the Bible in English.

Augustine professeth that the sacred Scriptures were his whole delight. And Jerome tells us of one Nepotianus, who, by long and assiduous meditation on the holy Scriptures, had made his breasts the library of Jesus Christ. And Rabbi Chiia, in the Jerusalem Talmud, saith that in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law. That which a papist reports lyingly of their sacrament of the mass, viz. that there are as many mysteries in it as there be drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, &c., may be truly asserted of the Holy Scriptures.

Oh! the mysteries, the excellencies, the glories that are in the word! Ah! no book to this book; none so useful, none so needful, none so delightful, none so necessary to make you happy and to keep

you happy as this. It is said of Cæsar, *major fuit cura Cæsari libellorum, quam purpuræ*, that he had a greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters, but lost his robe. Now, what are Caesar's books to God's books?

Ah! young men, young men! the word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counsellor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you. The word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, and a crown to crown you. It is bread to strengthen you, and wine to cheer you, and a honey comb to feast you, and music to delight you, and a paradise to entertain you.

Oh! therefore, before all and above all, search the Scripture, study the Scripture, dwell on the Scripture, delight in the Scripture, treasure up the Scripture; no wisdom to Scripture wisdom, no knowledge to Scripture knowledge, no experience to Scripture experience, no comforts to Scripture comforts, no delights to Scripture delights, no convictions to Scripture convictions, nor no conversion to Scripture conversion.

Augustine hearing a voice from heaven, that bade him take and read, *tolle et lege*, whereupon, turning open the New Testament, he fell upon that place, 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,' Rom 13:13-14. This scripture so sunk into his heart, as that it proved the means of his conversion, as himself reports. This Augustine, as he was once preaching, his memory failing of him, contrary to his purpose, he fell upon reproving the Manicheans, and by a scripture or two, not before thought of, to confute their heresies, he converted Firmus, a Manichean, as he after acknowledged to Augustine, blessing God for that sermon.

It is reported of one Adrianus, who seeing the martyrs suffer such grievous things in the cause of God, he asked what was that which caused them to suffer such things? and one of them named that text, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1Co 2:9. And this text was set home with such a power upon him, as that it converted him and made him to profess religion, and not only to profess it, but to die a martyr for it.

Cyprian was converted by reading the prophecy of Jonah. Junius was converted by reading the first chapter of John the evangelist.

I have read of a scandalous minister that was struck at the heart, and converted, in reading that scripture: 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' &c., Rom 2:21.

We read that Paphnutius converted Thais and Ephron, two famous strumpets, from uncleanness, only with this scripture argument, 'That God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, the curtains drawn,' Heb 4:13.

I have read of a poor man who persuaded a young scholar to leave reading of poetry, &c., and fall upon reading of the Scripture, which accordingly he did; and it pleased the Lord, before he had read out Genesis, to change his heart and to turn him to the Lord in the primrose of his days, he being then but twenty years of age.

I have read of a young lady, called Potamia, of a very illustrious family, who endured very much in her martyrdom, by the extreme cruelty of Basilides her executioner, yet, after her death, he bethinking himself of the holy words and scripture-expressions that were uttered by her, during her cruel torments, became a Christian, and within few days after was himself likewise crowned with martyrdom.

James Andreas, a godly minister, hearing of a Jew that for theft was hanged by the heels, with his head downward, having not seen that kind of punishment, he went to the place where he was hanging between two dogs that were always snatching at him to eat his flesh; the poor wretch repeated in Hebrew some verses of the Psalms, wherein he cried to God for mercy, whereupon Andreas went near to him and instructed him in the principles of Christian religion, about Christ the Messiah, &c., exhorting him to believe in him, and it pleased God so to bless his Scripture exhortations to him, that the dogs gave over tearing of his flesh, and the poor Jew desired him to procure that he might be taken down and baptized, and hung by the neck for the quicker despatch, which was done accordingly.

I might produce other instances, but let these suffice to provoke all young persons to a speedy, serious, diligent, and constant study of the Scripture. Ah! sirs, you do not know how soon your blind minds may be enlightened, your hard hearts softened, your proud spirits humbled, your sinful natures changed, your defiled consciences purged, your distempered affections regulated, and your poor souls saved, by searching into the Scriptures, by reading the Scripture, and by pondering upon the Scripture. You should lay up the manna of God's word in your hearts, as Moses laid up the manna in the golden pot, Heb 9:4. And as Tamar did with the staff and signet that she received from Judah, she laid them up till she came to save her life, and did save her life by it, as you may see in holy story, Gen 38:18-30. The laying up of the word now, may be the saving of your souls another day.

I have read of little bees, that when they go out in stormy weather, they will carry a little of their comb or gravel with them, that they may be balanced and not carried away with the wind.

Ah! young men, young men, you had need to have your thoughts and hearts balanced with the precious Word, that you may not be carried away with 'every wind of doctrine,' as many have been in these days, to their destruction and confusion.

Narcissus, a beautiful youth, though he would not love them that loved him, yet afterwards fell in love with his own shadow. Ah, how many young men in these days, who were once lovely and hopeful, are now fallen in love with their own and others' shadows, with high, empty, airy notions, and with strange monstrous speculations to their own damnation! 2Th 2:10-12.

Holy Melancthon, being newly converted, thought it impossible for his hearers to withstand the evidence of the gospel, but soon after he complained that old Adam was too hard for young Melancthon.

Ah! young men, young men, if you do not in good earnest give up yourselves to the reading, to the studying, to the pondering, to the believing, to the affecting, to the applying, and to the living up to the Scripture, Satan will be too hard for you, the world will be too hard for you, your lusts will be too hard for you, temptations will be too hard for you, and deceivers will be too hard for you, and in the end you will be miserable; and thus much for the first thing, &c.

Duty (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint yourselves with yourselves betimes.

If you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your days, then you must see betimes how bad you are, how vile, how sinful, how wretched you are. No man begins to be good till he sees himself to be bad. The young prodigal never began to mend, he never thought of returning to his father, till he came to himself, till he began to return into his own soul, and saw himself in an undone condition, Luk 15:12-22.

Ah! young men, young men, You must see yourselves to be children of wrath, to be enemies, to be strangers, to be afar off from God, from Christ, from the covenant, from heaven, to be sin's servants, and Satan's bond-slaves. The ready way to be found, is to see yourselves lost; the first step to mercy, is to see your misery; the first step towards heaven is to see yourselves near to hell. You won't look after the physician of souls, you won't prize the physician of souls, you won't desire the physician of souls, you won't match with the physician of souls, you won't fall in love, in league with the physician of souls, you won't resign up yourselves to the physician of souls, till you come to see your wounds, till you come to feel your diseases, till you see the tokens, the plague-sores of divine wrath and displeasure upon you. As the whole do not need the physician, so they do not desire, they do not care for the physician.⁴

Ah! young men, as you would be good betimes, begin to acquaint yourselves with your sinful selves betimes, begin to acquaint yourselves betimes with your natural and undone condition.

There is a threefold self.

(1.) There is a natural self; as a man's parts, wit, reason, will, affections, and inclinations, &c.

(2.) A religious self; and so a man's duties, graces, obedience, righteousness, holiness, are called one's self.

(3.) There is a sinful self; and so a man's corruptions, lusts, sinful nature, and dispositions, are called one's self. Now, if ever you would be good betimes, you must acquaint yourselves with your sinful selves betimes.

Demonieus being asked at what time he began to be a philosopher, answered, When I began to know myself. So a man never begins to be a Christian till he begins to know himself. And indeed, for a man to know himself, to acquaint himself with himself, is one of the hardest works in all the world. For as the eye can see all things but itself, so most can discern all faults but their own. Henry the Fourth, emperor of Germany, his usual speech was *Multi multa sciunt, se autem nemo*, many know much, but few know themselves. The very heathens did admire that saying as an oracle, *nosce teipsum*, know and be acquainted with thy own self. The main exhortation of Chilo, one of the seven sages, was 'Know thyself.' And Plato recordeth that this saying of Chilo, 'Know thyself,' was written in letters of gold upon the portal of Apollo's temple.

Juvenal saith that this saying, 'Know thyself,' came from heaven. Macrobius saith that the oracle of Apollo, being demanded what course should be taken for attaining to felicity, answered, only teach a man to 'know himself.'

Thus you see that both divinity and philosophy doth agree in this, that the best and surest way to true felicity is, to know ourselves, to acquaint ourselves with ourselves. This duty the apostle charges upon the Ephesians, 'Remember that you, being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time you were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,' Eph 2:11-12.

Here are five withouts: without Christ, without the church, without the promise, without hope, and without God in the world.

Man in his natural state is afar off; he is without, three manner of ways:

(1.) In point of opinion and apprehension.

(2.) In point of fellowship and communion.

(3.) In point of grace and conversion. As you would be good betimes, dwell much upon your corrupt nature betimes. Ah! such is the corruption of our nature, that propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet wood with hissing; propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr, that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which the naturalists say sucks and snatches the fire to it, with which it is consumed. Till you come to be sensible of this, you will never begin to be good; you will never look to have your hearts changed, and your souls saved. The Ethiopians paint angels black, and devils white, in favour of their own complexion; and they say that if the brute creatures could draw a picture of the divine nature, they would make their shape the copy, and thus they flatter and delude themselves. Take heed, young men, take heed that you do not put the like cheats upon your own souls; take heed that you be not like those limners who, so as they can make a man's picture gay and gaudy, care not to draw it so as to resemble him. It is safest and best, O young man! to know the worst of thyself, and to know thyself as thou art in thyself, and not as thy own flattering heart, or as other flatterers, may represent thee to thyself.

Duty (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint yourselves with Jesus Christ betimes.

You must know him betimes. A man never begins to be good till he begins to know him that is the fountain of all goodness: 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,' John 17:3. The knowledge of Christ is the beginning of eternal life; it is the way to eternal life, it is a taste of eternal life, it is a sure pledge and pawn to the soul of eternal life. The Spaniards say of Aquinas, that he that knows not him knows not anything, but he that knows him knows all things. He that knows Jesus Christ not notionally only, but practically, not apprehensively only, but affectively, he knows all things that may make him happy; but he that knows not Jesus Christ knows nothing that will stand him in stead, when he shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment seat.

Justin Martyr relates that when, in his discourse with Trypho, he mentioned the knowledge of Christ as conducing to our happiness and perfection, Trypho's friends laughed at it; but I hope better things of all those into whose hands this treatise shall fall.

Sirs! the sun is not more necessary to the world, the eye to the body, the pilot to the ship, the general to the army, &c., than the knowledge of Christ betimes is necessary for all those that

would be good betimes.

Dear hearts, as ever you would be good betimes, you must labour, even as for life, to know and be thoroughly acquainted with these six things concerning Jesus Christ betimes.

(1.) First, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes that there is everything in Christ that may encourage you to seek him and serve him, to love him and obey him, to believe on him and to marry with him.

If you look upon his names, his natures, his offices, his graces, his dignities, his excellencies, his royalties, his glories, his fulnesses, they all speak out as much. Are you poor? Why, Christ hath tried gold to enrich you, Rev 3:18. Are you naked? Christ hath white raiment to clothe you. Are you spiritually blind? Christ hath eye-salve to enlighten you. Are you in straits? He hath wisdom to counsel you. Are you unrighteous? He will be righteousness to you? Are you unholy? He will be holiness and sanctification to you, 1Co 1:30. Are you hungry? He is bread to feed you. Are you thirsty? He is wine and milk to satisfy you. Are you weary? He is a bed, a seat, to rest you. Are you sick? Why, he is a physician to cure you, &c. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, All good is in the chiefest good. The creatures have their particular goodness, health hath its particular goodness, and wealth hath its particular goodness, and learning hath its, and the favour of the creature hath its, &c., but now Jesus Christ he is an universal good. All the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the creatures are united to Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in him. *Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia*—[Augustine], One Christ will be to thee instead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found. Abraham's servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, to win Rebekah's heart to Isaac; so should you, O young men! be often in presenting to your own view all those amiable and excellent things that be in Christ, to win your hearts over to Christ betimes.

Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.

'He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto him, that believe in him, and that cast themselves upon him.' The Lord hath laid help upon one that is mighty. Christ saves perfectly, thoroughly, perpetually, them that come unto him. The three tongues that were written upon the cross, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, to witness Christ to be the king of the Jews, do each of them, in their several idioms, avouch this axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour; and 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' They say it is true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the [in]auguration of their kings of France, yet it never wasteth. Christ is that pot of manna, that cruse of oil, that bottomless ocean, that never fails his people. There is in Christ an all-sufficiency for all creatures at all times, in all places. The great Cham is said to have a tree full of pearls hanging by clusters; but what is the great Cham's tree to Christ, our tree of life, who hath all variety and plenty of fruit upon him. The happinesses that come to believers by Christ are so many, that they cannot be numbered; so great, that they cannot be measured; so copious, that they cannot be denned; so precious, that they cannot be valued; all which speaks out the fulness and all-sufficiency of Christ.

There is in Christ plenitudo abundantiae, and plenitudo redundantiae, a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundancy, as well as a fulness of sufficiency.

There is in Christ, 1. The fulness of the Spirit.

2. The fulness of grace.

3. The fulness of the image of God.

4. The fulness of the Godhead.

5. The fulness of glory. But I must not now open nor dilate on these things, lest I should tire both myself and the reader.

Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had. She answered her again, All my riches and jewels is my husband Phocion. So may a penitent sinner say of his blessed Saviour, Christ is all my jewels, my riches, my treasures, my pleasures, &c.; his sufficiency is all these, and more than these, to me. The Spanish ambassador, coming to see the treasury of St Mark in Venice, which is cried up throughout the world, fell a-groping to find whether it had any bottom, and being asked why, answered, In this amongst other things, my great Master's treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom, as I find yours to have,—alluding to the mines in Mexico and Potosi. But what are the Spaniard's treasures to Christ's treasures? A man may, without much groping, find the bottom of all earthly treasures, but who can find the bottom of Christ's treasures? Should all created excellencies meet in one glorified breast, yet they could not enable that glorious God-like creature to sound the bottom of those riches and treasures which are in Christ, Eph 3:8; all which speaks out Christ's all-sufficiency; and thus much for the second thing.

(3.) Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, That there is a marvellous willingness and readiness in Christ to embrace, to entertain, to welcome returning sinners, and to shew mercy and favour to them. The young prodigal did but think of returning to his father, and he ran and met him, and instead of kicking or killing him, he kissed him and embraced him, his bowels rolled within him, and his compassions flowed out freely to him, Luk 15:20-22. 'Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,' Isa 55:1. Nazianzen improveth this place thus: 'Oh, this easy way of contract, he giveth more willingly than others sell; if thou wilt but accept, that is all the price; though you have no merits, though you have nothing in yourselves to encourage you, yet will you accept? If you will, all is freely yours; the waters shall be yours to cleanse you, and the milk yours to nourish you, and the bread yours to strengthen you, and the wine yours to comfort you. Here poor sinners are called three times to come: Come, saith Christ, come, come, to shew how marvellous ready and willing he is that poor sinners should taste of gospel delicacies.³ So in that John 7:37, 'Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink;' so in that Rev 22:17, 'Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely'; so in that Rev 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;' and so in that Luk 14:21, 'The master of the house said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.' Here is no man of quality, of dignity, of worldly pomp or glory, or of any self-sufficiency, that is invited to

the feast, but a company of poor, ragged, deformed, slighted, neglected, impoverished, wounded sinners; these are invited to feast with Christ.

Concerning this willingness of Christ, I shall speak more when I come to deal with old sinners in the close of this discourse, and to that I refer you for further and fuller satisfaction concerning the great readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ to entertain returning sinners.

(4.) Fourthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, That Jesus Christ is designed, sealed, and appointed by the Father to the office of a Mediator.

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.' God the Father hath made Christ's commission authentical, as men do theirs by their seal. It is a metaphor, a simile taken from them who give commissions under hand and seal. God the Father hath given it under his hand and seal, that Jesus Christ is the only person that he hath appointed and sealed, allowed and confirmed, to the office of our redemption. If Jesus Christ were never so able to save, and never so willing and ready to save poor sinners, yet if he were not appointed, designed, and sealed, for that work, the awakened sinner would never look out after him, nor desire union with him, nor interest in him; and therefore it is of very great consequence to know that God the Father hath sent and sealed Christ to be a Saviour to his people: 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' Sealed by way of destination and sealed by way of qualification, sealed by his doctrine, sealed by his miracles, sealed by his baptism, sealed by his resurrection, but above all, sealed by his glorious unction. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified,' Isa 61:1-3, Luk 4:18. Neither saints nor angels are sealed and anointed to the great work of redemption, but the Lord Jesus is. You should always look upon the Lord Jesus as sealed and anointed to the office of a Mediator, and accordingly plead with him.

Ah, Lord! it is thy office, as thou art a sealed and an anointed Saviour and Redeemer, to subdue my sins, to change my nature, to sanctify my heart, to reform my life, and to save my soul; and therefore do it for thy name's sake, oh do it for thy office' sake, do it for thy glory's sake!

'Thou art anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,' Psalms 45:8, Acts 4:27. Thou hast a larger effusion of the Spirit upon thee than others; thou art anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power after an extraordinary measure and manner; thou art endued with all heroical gifts and excellencies, plentifully, abundantly, transcendently; thou art sealed and predestinated; thou art invested into this office of Mediatorship under the Father's hand and seal: and therefore whither should I go for salvation, for remission, for redemption, for grace, for glory, but to thee?

(5.) Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, that there is no way to salvation but by Jesus Christ.

'Neither is there salvation in any other' (speaking of Christ), 'for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved,' Acts 4:12. If ever you are saved, you

must be saved by him, and him only; you must not look for another saviour, nor you must not look for a co-saviour; you must be saved wholly by Christ and only by Christ, or you shall never be saved; you must cry out, as Lambert did when he was in the fire, and lifted up his hands, and fingers' ends flaming, 'None but Christ, none but Christ'! When Augustus Cæsar desired the senate to join two consuls with him for the better government of the state, the senate answered, that they held it as a diminution of his dignity, and a disparagement of their own judgment, to join any with so incomparable a man as Augustus.⁴

Ah! friends, it is a diminution of Christ's dignity, sufficiency, and glory, in the business of your salvation, to join anything with the Lord Jesus; and it is the greatest disparagement in the world to your own judgments, knowledge, prudence, and wisdom, to yoke any with Christ in the work of redemption, in the business of salvation.

Augustine saith, that Marcellina hung Christ's picture and the picture of Pythagoras together; many there are, not only in Rome, but in England (yea, I am afraid in London), who join Christ and their works together, Christ and their prayers together, Christ and their teachers together, Christ and their mournings together, Christ and their hearings together, Christ and their alms together.

Ah, what a poor, what a weak, what an impotent, what an insufficient Saviour doth these men make Jesus Christ to be! Except these men come off from these things, and come up only to Jesus Christ, in the great business of salvation, they will as certainly and as eternally perish, notwithstanding their hearing, knowing, and talking much of Christ, as those that never heard of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, God commands them not to wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together, 'neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee,' Deu 22:11. This law was figurative, and shews us that in the case of our justification, acceptation, and salvation, we are not to join our works, our services, with the righteousness of Christ. God abhors a linsey-woolsey righteousness. And as by the letter of this law, in the 'Hebrews' account, one thread of wool in a linen garment, or one linen thread in a woollen garment, made it unlawful, so the least manner of mixture in the business of justification makes all null and void. 'And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.'² He that shall mix his righteousness with Christ's, he that shall mix his puddle with Christ's purple blood, his rags with Christ's royal robes, his copper with Christ's gold, his water with Christ's wine, &c., is in the ready way to perish for ever. On earth kings love no consorts; power is impatient of participation. Christ will be Alexander or Nemo, nobody; he will be all in all in the business of justification, or he will be nothing at all. We must say of Christ, as it was once said of Cæsar, *Socium habet neminem*, He may have a companion, &c., but he must not have a competitor, 1Co 1:30, Rom 5:19-20.

Let us say of Christ, as the heathen once said of his petty gods, *Contemno minutulos istos deos, modo Jovem propitium habeam*, so long as he had his Jupiter to friend, he regarded them not. So, so long as we have our Jesus to friend, and his righteousness and blood to friend, we shall condemn all other things, and abhor the bringing of any thing into competition with him. A real Christian cares not for any thing that hath not aliquid Christi, something of Christ in it. He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ, *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte*, saith Gregory Nazianzen. (Eph 3:9-10, Psalms 71:15-16, Psalm 71:19, compared.)

There is no other name, no other nature, no other blood, no other merits, no other person to be justified and saved by, but Jesus Christ. You may run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and when you have wearied and tired out yourselves in seeking ease and rest, satisfaction and remission, justification and salvation, in one way and another, you will be forced after all to come to Christ, and to cry out, Ah! none but Christ, none but Christ! Isa 55:2, Rom 10:3. Ah! none to Christ, none to Christ; no works to Christ; no duties, no services to Christ; no prayers, no tears to Christ; no righteousness, no holiness to Christ. Well! friends, remember this, that all the tears in the world cannot wipe off meritoriously one sin, nor all the grace and holiness that is in angels and men buy out the pardon of the least transgression. All remission is only by the blood of Christ.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, that the heart of Jesus Christ is as much set upon sinners now he is in heaven, as ever it was when he was upon earth.

Christ is no less loving, less mindful, less desirous of sinners' eternal welfare now he is heaven in a far country, than he was when he lived on earth. Witness his continuing the ministry of reconciliation among poor sinners in all ages; witness the constant treaties, that by his ambassadors and Spirit he still hath with poor sinners, about the things of their peace, the things of eternity; witness his continual knockings, his continual callings upon poor sinners by his word, rod, Spirit, to open, to repent, to lay hold on mercy, and to be at peace with him; witness his continual wooing of poor sinners in the face of all neglects and put-offs, in the face of all delays and denials, in the face of all harsh entertainment and churlish answers, in the face of all gainsayings and carnal reasonings, in the face of all the scorn and contempt that wretched sinners put upon him, and witness that plain word, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Heb 13:8. Christ is the same afore time, in time, and after time, he is unchangeable in his essence, in his promises, and in his affections: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come,' Rev 1:8, Rev 1:11, Rev 21:6, Rev 22:13. The phrase is taken from the Greek letters, whereof Alpha is the first and Omega is the last. The first and last letter of the Greek alphabet is a description of me, saith Christ, who am before all and after all, who am above all and in all, who am unchangeable in myself, and in my thoughts and good will to poor sinners. Therefore do not, poor souls, entertain any hard thoughts concerning Jesus Christ, as if he was less mindful, less pitiful, and less merciful to poor souls now he is in heaven, than he was when his abode was in this world. And thus I have gone over those six things that you must know concerning Christ betimes, if ever you be good betimes. When Pope Leo lay upon his death-bed, Cardinal Bembo citing a text of Scripture to comfort him, he replied, 'A page has nugas de Christo, away with these baubles concerning Christ!' But I hope better things of you, and do desire that you will say of all things below this knowledge of Christ that I have opened to you, as that devout pilgrim, who, travelling to Jerusalem, and by the way visiting many brave cities, with their rare monuments, and meeting with many friendly entertainments, would often say, I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem. Ah! so do you, young men and women, in the midst of all your worldly delights and contents, cry out, Oh! we must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem, this is not that knowledge of Christ that I must have, if ever I am happy here and blessed hereafter.

Duty (4). Fourthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint yourselves with those that are good betimes.

Direction (1). First, If you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, then you must begin betimes to be much in with them who are much in with Christ, who lie near his heart and know much of his mind. 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, shall be broken in pieces, as when an army is broken and routed by an enemy. Holech from Halech, walking with the wise, he shall be wise, for so the original hath it. It is not talking with the wise, but walking with the wise, that will make you wise; it is not your commending and praising of the wise, but your walking with the wise, that will make you wise; it is not your taking a few turns with the wise that will make you wise, but your walking with the wise that will make you wise. There is no getting much good by them that are good, but by making them your ordinary and constant companions.

Ah, friends! you should do as Joseph in Egypt, of whom the Scripture saith, Psa 105:22 (according to the Hebrew phrase), that he tied the princes of Pharaoh's court about his heart.

If ever you would gain by the saints, you must bind them upon your souls, you must labour to have very near, close, and intimate communion with them. The Jews have a proverb, that two dry sticks put to a green one will kindle it. The best way to be in a flame God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, and holiness-ward, is to be among the dry sticks, the kindle-coals, the saints; for as live coals kindle those that are dead, so lively Christians will heat and enliven those that are dead God-wards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards. 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend,' Pro 27:17.

Men's wits, parts, and gifts, and industry, commonly grow more strong, vigorous, and quick, by friendly conference and communion. And as he that comes where sweet spices and ointments are stirring, carries away a sweet savour with him, so he that converseth with those that are good shall carry away that goodness and sweetness with him that shall render him sweet, desirable, and delectable to others. Polemon, that Augustine speaks of, who was all for wine and play, &c., became a brave man when he came acquainted with the philosopher's school. So many young men, that have been all for wine and women, for playing and toying, for vanity and folly, have become brave men, precious men, by the company, counsel, and example of those who were gracious. Doctor Taylor, the martyr, rejoiced that ever he came into prison, because he came thither to have acquaintance with that angel of God John Bradford, as he calls him: so, doubtless, many young persons there be that have much cause to rejoice, and for ever to bless the Lord, that ever they came acquainted with such and such who fear the Lord, and who walk in his ways, for the good that they have received by them.

Algerius, an Italian martyr, said he had rather be in prison with Cato, than with Cæsar in the senate house. 5

Ah! young men, young men, you were better be with the people of God, when they are in the lowest and most contemptible condition, than with the great wicked ones of the world, when they are in all their royalty and glory. In the day of account you will find that they have made the best market, who have rather chosen to keep company with Lazarus, though in his rags, than they would with others keep company with Dives, though in his purple robes.

Well! young men, remember this, clothes and company do oftentimes tell tales, in a mute but significant language.

Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou art, saith the Spanish proverb. Cicero, though a heathen, had rather to have no companion, than a bad one. The Lord grant that this heathen, and others among them, that were of the same mind with him, may never rise up in judgment against any of you, into whose hands this treatise may fall. And thus I have despatched those four things that you must be acquainted with betimes, viz., the Scripture, your own hearts and conditions, the Lord Jesus Christ, and those that fear him, if ever you would be good betimes.

Direction (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, Then you must shun the occasions of sin betimes. A man will never begin to be good, till he begin to decline those occasions that have made him bad: 1Th 5:22, 'Abstain from all appearances of evil.'

You must shun and be shy of the very appearance of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin. The word εἰδος, which is ordinarily rendered appearance, signifies kind, or sort; and so the meaning of the apostle seems to be this, 'Abstain from all sort, or the whole kind of evil;' from all that is truly so, be it never so small. The least sin is dangerous. Cæsar was stabbed with bodkins, and many have been eaten up of mice and lice. The least spark may consume the greatest house, the least leak may sink the greatest ship, the least sin is enough to undo thy soul; and therefore shun all the occasions that lead unto it.

Job made a covenant with his eyes, Job 31:1; Joseph would not be in the room where his mistress was, Gen 39:10; and David, when himself, would not sit with vain persons, Psa 26:3-7. As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure; he that hath gunpowder about him, bad need keep far enough off from sparkles; he that is either tender of his credit abroad, or comfort at home, had need shun, and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin; he that would neither wound conscience nor credit, God nor gospel, had need hate 'the garment spotted with the flesh,' Jude 1:23. In the law, God commanded his people, not only that they should worship no idol, but that they should demolish all the monuments of them, and that they should make no covenant nor affinity with those who worshipped them, and all lest they should be drawn by those occasions to commit idolatry with them. He that would not taste of the forbidden fruit, must not so much as gaze on it; and he that would not be bit by the serpent, must not so much as parley with the serpent.

It is very observable, that in the law, the Nazarite was not only commanded to abstain from wine and strong drink, but also he might not eat grapes, whether moist or dry, or anything that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. But why not these small things, in which there could be no danger of drunkenness? Surely, lest by the contentment of these, he might be drawn to desire the wine, and so be brought on to sin, to break his vow, and so make work for hell, or for the physician of souls. God hereby forbidding the most remote occasions, shews how wary and exactly careful men should be to shun and avoid all occasions, provocations, and appearances of evil; and indeed we had need to keep off from slippery places who can hardly stand fast on dry ground; he that ventures upon the occasion of sin and then prays, 'Lord, lead me not into temptation,' is like him that thrusts his finger into the fire, and then prays that it may not be burnt; or like him that is resolved to quench the fire with oil, which, instead of quenching it, is as fuel to

feed it and increase it. It was a notable saying of one, *Majus est miraculum inter vehementes occasiones non cadere, quam mortuos suscitare*. It is a greater miracle not to fall, being among strong occasions, than it is to raise up the dead; he that would not be defiled, must not touch pitch; he that would not be burnt, must not carry fire in his bosom; he that would not eat the meat, must not meddle with the broth; he that would not fall into the pit, must not dance upon the brink; he that would not feel the blow, must keep off from the train:² 'Keep thee far from a false matter,' *Exo 23:7*. He that will not fly from the occasions and allurements of sin, though they may seem never so pleasant to the eye, or sweet to the taste, shall find them in the end more sharp than vinegar, more bitter than wormwood, more deadly than poison.

There is a great truth in that saying of the son of Sirach, 'He that loveth danger, shall perish therein; he that will not decline danger, shall not be able to decline destruction,' *Sir 3:26-27*.

Socrates speaks of two young men that flung away their belts when, being in an idol temple, the lustrating water fell upon them, detesting, saith the historian, 'the garment spotted by the flesh;' and will you, O young men, play and toy with the occasions of sin? The Lord forbid.

There are stories of several heathens that have shunned and avoided the occasions of sin, and will you dare to venture upon the occasions of sin?

Alexander would not see the woman after whom he might have lusted.

Scipio Africanus, warring in Spain, took New Carthage by storm, at which time a beautiful and noble virgin fled to him for succour to preserve her chastity. He being but four and twenty years old, and so in the heat of youth, hearing of it, would not suffer her to come into his sight for fear of temptation, but caused her to be restored in safety to her father.

Livia counselled her husband Augustus, not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so, &c.

Cæsar would not search Pompey's cabinet, lest he should find new matters of revenge.

Plato mounted upon his horse, and judging himself a little moved with pride, did presently light from his horse, lest he should be overtaken with loftiness in riding.

Theseus is said to cut off his golden locks, lest his enemies should take advantage by taking hold of them.

Ah! young men, young men, shall the very heathens thus shun and fly from the occasion of sin, and will not you? will not you who sit under the sunshine of the gospel? These will in the great day of account be sad and sore witnesses against those that dally and play with the occasions of sin. To prevent carnal carefulness, Christ sends his disciples to school, to the irrational creatures (*Mat 6:26-32*). And to prevent your closing with the occasions of sin, let me send you to school to the like creatures, that you may learn by them to shun and avoid the occasions of sin. The Sepiœ, a certain kind of fish, perceiving themselves in danger of taking, by an instinct which they have, they do darken the water, and so many times escape the net which is laid for them.

Geese, they say, when they fly over Taurus they keep stones in their mouths, lest by gagging they should discover themselves to the eagles, which are amongst the mountains waiting for them.² Now, if all these considerations put together will not work you to decline the occasions of sin, I

know not what will. There is a truth in that old saying—

He that will no evil do, Must do nothing belongs thereto. The Israelites must have no leaven in their houses till the Passover be done, lest they should be tempted to eat of it, Exo 13:1-22.

Direction (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must remember the eye of God betimes.

If you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then you must study God's omnipresence betimes. 'Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?' 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves,' Psalms 139:2-14; Job 31:4, Job 31:21-22.

I have read that Paphnutius converted two famous young strumpets, Thais and Ephron, from uncleanness only with this argument, that God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn. By this very argument Solomon labours to take off his young men from carnal and sinful courses: 'And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger! For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings,' Proverbs 5:20-21. Thou mayest deceive all the world, like that counterfeit Alexander in Josephus his story, but Augustus will not be deceived; he hath quicker and sharper eyes.

Ah! young men, young men, you may deceive this man and that, and as easily deceive yourselves, but you cannot deceive him, who is πανοφθαλμος, totus oculus, all-eye. As the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened upon thee which way soever thou turnest, so are the eyes of the Lord. I have read of one who, being tempted to adultery, said they could not be private enough, and being carried from room to room, answered, We are not yet private enough, God is here.

Ah, friends! His eyes, which are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, compasseth thy words, thy ways, thy works, thy thoughts, thy bed, thy board, thy bench. The Egyptian hieroglyphic for God was an eye on a sceptre, shewing that he sees and rules all things, Jer 13:27, Jer 29:23.

Ah, friends! All thoughts, words, hopes, and hearts, are naked, opened, dissected and quartered before that God with whom you have to do. God is very curious and exact in marking and observing what is done by men, that he may render to every man according to his works.

Augustine speaks of an old comedian, when having no other spectators, went usually into the theatre, and acted before the statues of the gods.

Ah! young men and women, the eye of God should be more to you than all the world besides. Oh that the Scripture might be written with the pen of a diamond upon your hearts. 'Hear ye not me,' saith the Lord, 'and will you not tremble at my presence?' Jer 5:21-22. There is a great truth in that saying of his, Magna nobis ex hoc indita est probitatis necessitas, quia omnia ante oculos judicis facimus cuncta cernentis. A great necessity of goodness is from hence put into us, because we do all things before the eyes of a judge that sees all things.

Direction (4). Fourthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must hearken to the voice of conscience betimes, 2Ti 1:3. A man will never begin to be good till he begins to hearken to what

conscience speaks. So long as a man turns a deaf ear to conscience, he is a safe prisoner to Satan, and a sure enemy to good, Psa 58:4, John 3:20-21.

Ah! how good might many have been had they but begun betimes to hearken to conscience!

Ah! young men, do not dally with conscience, do not play, do not trifle with conscience, do not stop your ears against conscience. He that will not in his youth give conscience audience, shall at last be forced to hear such lectures from conscience, as shall make his life a very hell. A sleepy conscience is like a sleepy lion, when he awakes, he roars and tears; so will conscience, Mark 9:22. Conscience is mille testes, a thousand witnesses for or against a man. He that hath long turned the deaf ear to conscience, shall at last find his conscience like Prometheus's vulture, that lies ever a-gnawing. Judas found it so, and Spira found it so, and Blair, a great councillor of Scotland, found it so.

I have read of one John Hofmeister, that fell sick in his inn, as he was travelling towards Auspurg in Germany, and grew to that horror of conscience, that they were fain to bind him in his bed with chains, where he cried out, that he was for ever cast off by God, and that the promises that were set before him would do him no good, and all because he had wounded his conscience, and turned a deaf ear to conscience.

Well! young men, if you will not betimes hearken to conscience, you shall at last hear conscience saying to you, as the probationer disciple said to Christ, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' Mat 8:19; so saith conscience, Sinner, I have called upon thee many a thousand times, and told thee, that I must by commission be thy best friend, or thy worst enemy, but thou wouldst not hear; and therefore now I will follow thee whither ever thou goest; fast, and I will follow thee, and fill thee with horrors and terrors; feast, and I will follow thee, and shew thee such a handwriting upon the wall, as shall cause thy countenance to change, thy thoughts to be troubled, the joints of thy loins to be loosed, and thy knees dashed one against another, Dan 5:5-6; stay at home, and I will follow thee from bed to board; go abroad, and I will follow thee into all places and companies, and thou shalt know that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou hast so often and so long neglected my calls, and disobeyed my voice, and walked contrary to me; how thou shalt find a truth in that saying of Luther, una guttula malæ conscientie totum mare, &c., one drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.

Well! young men, there is a day coming wherein a good conscience will be better than a good purse, for then the Judge will not be put off with a suit of compliments or fair words, nor drawn aside with hope of reward; and therefore, as you would be able to hold up your heads in that day, make conscience of hearkening to the voice of conscience in this your day.

Direction (5). Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes wherein true happiness lies. For a man will never begin to be good till he begins to understand wherein his happiness consists. The philosophers, speaking of happiness, were divided into two hundred and eighty-eight opinions, every one intending something, and yet resolving nothing. Therefore the man in Plutarch, hearing them wrangle about man's summum bonum, chiefest good, one placing it in this, and another in that, he went to the market and bought up all that was good, hoping, among all, he should not miss of it, but he did. Many look for happiness in sin, others look for it in the creatures, but they must all say, It is not in us, Isa 56:12, Job 28:14 : Nil dat quod non habet,

nothing can give what it hath not. If the conduit pipe hath no water, it can give no water; if a man hath no money, he can give no money; if the creatures have no happiness, they can give no happiness. Now this jewel, this pearl, happiness, is not to be found in the breast, in the bosom of creatures. In a word, because I must hasten to a close, man's happiness lies,

First, In his communion with God, as experience and Scripture demonstrates. 'Happy is that people that is in such a case (but give me that word again), yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord,' Psa 144:15. A man whose soul is in communion with God shall find more pleasure in a desert, in a dungeon, in a den, yea, in death, than in the palace of a prince, than in all worldly delights and contents, &c.

Secondly, In pardon of sin. 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered: blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Psa 32:1-2. It is not, blessed is the honourable man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the rich man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the learned man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the politic man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the victorious man, but blessed is the pardoned man. Do with me what thou wilt, since thou hast pardoned my sins, saith Luther.

Thirdly, In a complete fruition and enjoyment of God, when we shall be here no more. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Mat 5:8; 'Now they see him but darkly, but in heaven they shall see him face to face; they shall know as they are known,' 1Co 13:12. But of these things I have spoken largely elsewhere, and therefore shall satisfy myself with these hints.

Direction (6). Lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must break your covenant with sin betimes.

You must fall out with your lusts betimes; you must arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, Isa 28:15-18. A man never begins to fall in with Christ till he begins to fall out with his sins. Till sin and the soul be two, Christ and the soul cannot be one. Now, to work your hearts to this, you should always look upon sin under these notions:

Notion (1). First, If you would have the league dissolved betwixt sin and your souls betimes, then look upon sin under the notion of an enemy betimes.

'Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,' 1Pe 2:11. As the viper is killed by the young ones in her belly, so are poor sinners betrayed and killed by their own lusts, that are nourished in their bosoms.

Pittacus, a philosopher, challenged Phylon the Athenian captain, in their wars against them, to single combat, carried a net privily, and so caught him, and overcame him; so doth sin with poor sinners, the dangerous, pernicious, malignant nature of sin. You may see in the story of the Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him to the heart, and so at once murdered both body and soul. Sin betrays us into the hand of the devil, as Delilah did Samson into the hands of the Philistines.

Sugared poisons go down pleasantly. Oh! but when they are down, they gall and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder; it is so with sin. Ah! souls, have not you often found it so? When Phocas the murderer thought to secure himself by building high walls, he heard a voice from

heaven telling him, that though he built his bulwarks never so high, yet sin within would soon undermine all.

Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that having a disease upon his body, the physician told him, that except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, he would lose his eyes; his heart was so desperately set upon his sins, that he cries out, then, Vale lumen amicum, farewell, sweet light. Ah, how did his lusts war both against body and soul! The 'old man' is like a treacherous friend, and a friendly traitor. Though it be a harder thing to fight with a man's lusts, than it is to fight with the cross, yet you must fight or die; if you are not the death of your sins, they will prove the death of your souls. The oracle told the Cyrrheans, noctesque diesque belligerandum, they could not be happy, unless they waged war night and day; no more can we, except we live and die fighting against our lusts.

Ah! young men, can you look upon sin under the notion of an enemy, and not break with it, and not arm against it?

Well! remember this, the pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in sin; and as victory over sin is the sweetest victory, so it is the greatest victory. There is no conquest to that which is gotten over a man's own corruptions. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,' Pro 16:32.

It is noble to overcome an enemy without, but it is more noble to overcome an enemy within; it is honourable to overcome fiery flames, but it is far more honourable to overcome fiery lusts. When Valentinian the emperor was upon his dying-bed, among all his victories only one comforted him, and that was victory over his worst enemy, viz., his own naughty heart.

Ah! young men, young men, your worst enemies are within you, and all their plots, designs, and assaults are upon your souls, your most noble part. They know if that fort-royal be won, all is their own, and you are undone, and shall be their slaves for ever; and therefore it stands upon you to arm yourselves against these inbred enemies; and if you engage Christ in the quarrel, you will carry the day; and when you shall lie upon your dying-beds, you will then find that there is no comfort to that which ariseth from the conquests of your own hearts, your own lusts.

Notion (2). Secondly, If you would break covenant with sin, if you would arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, then look upon sin as the soul's bonds, Gal 3:10, John 8:34. For as bonds tie things together, so doth sin tie the sinner and the curse together. It binds the sinner and wrath together, it links the sinner and hell together: 'I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' Acts 8:23. Iniquity is a chain, a bond. Now, bonds and chains gall the body, and so doth sin the soul; and as poor captives are held fast in their chains, so are sinners in their sins; they cannot redeem themselves by price, nor by power, 2Ti 2:26.

Ah! young men, young men! no bondage to soul bondage, no slavery to soul slavery. The Israelites' bondage under Pharaoh, and the Christians' bondage under the Turks, is but the bondage of the body, of the baser and ignoble part of man; but yours is soul bondage, and soul slavery, which is the saddest and greatest of all.

Ah, friends! you should never look upon your sins but you should look upon them as your bonds; yea, as the worst bonds that ever were. All other chains are golden chains, chains of pearl, compared to those chains of iron and brass, those chains of lust, with which you are bound. Ah! who can thus look upon his chains, his sins, and not loathe them, and not labour for freedom from them? Justinus the emperor's motto was *Libertas res inestimabilis*, liberty is invaluable. If civil liberty be, surely spiritual liberty is much more. If you ask souls that were once in a state of bondage, but are now Christ's free men, they will tell you so.

It was a good observation of Chrysostom, that Joseph was the free man and his mistress was the servant, when she was at the beck of her own lusts, when she tempted and he refused. Such as live most above sin and temptation, are the greatest freemen; others, that live under the power of their lusts, are but slaves, and in bonds, though they dream and talk of freedom, Tit 3:3.

Notion (3). Thirdly, If you would break league with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against it, then look always upon sin under the notion of fire.

'And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,' Jude 1:23. Oh, snatch them out of their sins, as you would snatch a child, a friend, out of the fire, or as the angel snatched Lot out of Sodom, hastily, and with a holy violence. Natural fire may burn the house, the goods, the treasure, the servant, the child, the wife, the body; but this fire burns the soul, it destroys and consumes that noble part which is more worth than all the treasures of a thousand worlds. Every man hath a hand and a heart to quench the fire which burns his neighbour's house, but few men have either hands or hearts to quench the fire that burns their neighbour's souls; this is, and this shall be, for a lamentation.

I have read of one who, upon the violence of any temptation to sin, would lay his hand upon burning coals, and being not able to abide it, would say to himself, Oh, how unable shall I be to endure the pains of hell! and this restrained him from evil. But what is the fire of hell to the fire of sin? Now, to provoke you to look upon sin under the notion of fire, consider with me the sundry resemblances between material and immaterial fire, between corporeal common fire and between this spiritual fire, sin. As,

[1.] First, Fire is terrible and dreadful. A ship on fire, an house on fire, oh how dreadful is it! So sin set home upon the conscience is exceeding terrible and dreadful. 'Mine iniquity,' so the Hebrew, 'is greater than I can bear.' Sin or iniquity is often put for the punishment of sin, by a metonymy of the efficient for the effect; for sin is the natural parent of punishment. 'Mine iniquity,' saith Cain, 'is so great, and lies so heavy, so terrible and dreadful upon my conscience, that it cannot be forgiven,' Gen 4:13, and thus, by his diffidence, he stabs two at once, the mercy of God, and his own soul. So Judas, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood; and he went and hanged himself,' Mat 27:3-5. As there is no fighting with a mighty fire, so there is no bearing up when God sets home sin upon the conscience; a man will then choose strangling or hanging, rather than living under such wounds and lashes of conscience. Histories abound with instances of this nature; but I must hasten to a close.

[2.] Secondly, Fire is most dangerous and pernicious when it breaks forth of the chimney, or of the house; so it is with sin. Sin is bad in the eye, worse in the tongue, worser in the heart, but worst of all in the life. Fire, when out of its proper place, may do much hurt in the house, but when it flames

abroad, then it doth most mischief to others, 2Sa 12:9-15.

Sin in the heart may undo a man, but sin in the life may undo others as well as a man's self. Set a guard upon the eye, a greater upon thy heart, but the greatest of all upon thy life, Job 31:1, Pro 4:23, Eph 5:15.

Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach. 'Where,' said they, 'is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostles' writings, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives. But the lives of other Christians have been so holy, that the very heathens observing them, have said, Surely this is a good God, whose servants are so good.

It is brave when the life of a Christian is a commentary upon Christ's life.

One speaking of the Scripture, saith [Augustine], *verba vivenda, non legenda*, they are words to be lived, and practised, not read only. A heathen [Plutarch] adviseth us to demean ourselves so circumspectly, as if our enemies did always behold us. And said another [Epictetus], For shame, either live as Stoics, or leave off the name of Stoics; sirs, live as Christians, or lay down the name of Christians.

[3.] Thirdly, Fire hardens, it makes the weak and limber clay to become stiff and strong for the potter's use. So sin hardens: it hardens the heart against the commands of God, the calls of Christ, and the wrestlings of the Spirit. And as you see in Pharaoh, the Jews, and most that are under the sound of the gospel, Jer 5:3, Jer 19:15; Isa 9:13.

Ah! how many hath this fire—sin—hardened in these days, by working them to slight soul-softening means, and by drawing them to entertain hardening thoughts of God, and to fall in with soul-hardening company, and soul-hardening principles, and soul-hardening examples of hardened and unsensible sinners, Jer 2:25, Jer 18:12. One long since thus complained, that they did, *patientius ferre Christi jacturam, quam suam*, more calmly pass by the injuries done to Christ, than those which are done unto themselves. This age is full of such hardened unsensible souls.

[4.] Fourthly, Fire is a lively active element, so is sin.

Ah! how lively and active was this fire in Abraham, David, Job, Peter, Paul, and other saints! Though Christ by his death hath given it its mortal wound, yet it lives, and is and will be active in the dearest saints. Though sin and grace were not born together, neither shall they die together; yet while believers live in this world, they must live together. There is a history that speaks of a fig-tree that grew in a stone-wall, and all means was used to kill it. They cut off the branches and it grew again, they cut down the body and it grew again, they cut it up by the root and still it lived and grew, until they pulled down the stone-wall; till death shall pull down our stone-walls, sin will live, this fire will burn.

We may say of sin as some say of cats, that they have many lives; kill them and they will live again, kill them again and they will live again; so kill sin once and it will live again, kill it again and it will live again, &c. Sin oftentimes is like that monster Hydra, cut off one head and many will rise up in its room.

[5.] Fifthly, Fire is of a penetrating nature, it pierceth and windeth itself into every corner and chink, and so doth sin wind itself into our thoughts, words, and works. It will wind itself into our understandings to darken them, and into our judgments to pervert them, and into our wills to poison them, and into our affections to disorder them, and into our consciences to corrupt them, and into our carriages to debase them. Sin will wind itself into every duty and every mercy, it will wind itself into every one of our enjoyments and concernments.

Hannibal having overcome the Romans, put on their armour on his soldiers, and so by that policy, they being taken for Romans, won a city; but what are Hannibal's wiles to sin's wiles or Satan's wiles? If you have a mind to be acquainted with their wiles, look over my treatise, called, 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices.'

[6.] Sixth and lastly, Fire is a devouring, a consuming element, Psa 21:9. It turns all fuel into ashes. It is a wolf that eats up all. So sin is a fire that devours and consumes all; it turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes; it hath destroyed the Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian kingdoms, and will at last destroy the Roman kingdom also. This wolf ate up Samson's strength, Absalom's beauty, Ahithophel's policy, and Herod's glory, &c. It hath drowned one world already, and will at last burn another, even this. Oh the hopes, the hearts, the happiness, the joys, the comforts, the souls that this fire, sin, hath consumed and destroyed! &c.

Peter Camois, a bishop of Berry in France, in his Draught of Eternity, tells us, that some devout personages caused those words of the prophet Isaiah to be written in letters of gold upon their chimney-pieces: 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' Isa 33:14.

Ah! young men, young men, I desire that you may always look upon sin under the notion of fire, yea, as such fire as lays the foundation for everlasting fire, for everlasting burnings; and this may work when other things will not.

I have read of a grave and chaste matron, who being moved to commit folly with a lewd Russian, after some discourse, she called for a pan of burning coals, requesting him for her sake to hold his finger in them but one hour; he answered, it is an unkind request; to whom she replied, that seeing he would not do so much as to put one finger upon the coals for one hour, she could not yield to do that for which she should be tormented, both body and soul, in hell-fire for ever. The application is easy, &c.

Notion (4). Fourthly, If you would break with sin betimes, if you would arm against sin in the spring and morning of your days, then you should look upon sin under the notion of a thief.

And, indeed, sin is the greatest thief, the greatest robber in the world. It robbed the angels of all their glory, 2Pe 2:4; it robbed Adam of his paradise and felicity, Gen 3:1-24, and it hath robbed all the sons of Adam of five precious jewels, the least of which was more worth than heaven and earth.

(1.) It hath robbed them of the holy and glorious image of God, which would have been fairly engraven upon them, had Adam stood, &c.

(2.) It hath robbed them of their sonship; and of sons hath made them slaves.

(3.) It hath robbed them of their friendship, and made them enemies.

(4.) It hath robbed them of their communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit, and made them strangers and aliens.

(5.) It hath robbed them of their glory, and made them vile and miserable. It hath robbed many a nation of the gospel, and many a parish of many a happy guide, and many a Christian of the favour of God, the joys of the Spirit, and the peace of conscience.

Oh! the health, the wealth, the honour, the friends, the relations that sin hath robbed thousands of.

Nay, It hath robbed many of their gifts, their arts, their parts, their memory, their judgment, yea, their very reason, as you may see in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Ahithophel, Haman, Herod, and those Babylonish princes that accused Daniel. And so in Menippus of Phœnicia, who, having lost his goods, strangled himself. And so Dinarcus Phidon, at a certain loss, cut his own throat to save the charge of a cord. And so Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the relation of an overthrow from Varus, that for certain months together, he let the hair of his head and beard grow still, and wore it long; yea, and other whiles would run his head against the doors, crying out, Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again; by all which it is most apparent that sin is the greatest thief in all the world.

Oh! then, who would not break league and covenant with it, and be still in pressing of God to do justice upon it! &c.

Notion (5). Fifthly, If you would break with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, then you must look upon sin under the notion of a burden betimes. And indeed, sin of all burdens is the heaviest burden in all the world: 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me,' Psa 40:12. And again, 'Mine iniquities are gone over my head,' saith the same person; 'as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me to bear,' Psa 38:4. Sin is a 'weight that easily besets,' Heb 12:1, poor souls; it is a burden that so troubles them and puzzles them, that so curbs them and girds them, that so presses and oppresses them, as that it wrings many bitter tears from their eyes, and many sad and grievous sighs and groans from their hearts, Rom 7:13.

Again, as sin is a burden to Christians, so it is a burden to heaven. It made heaven weary to bear the angels that fell; no sooner had they sinned but heaven groans to be eased of them, and it never left groaning till justice had turned them a-groaning to hell, Jude 1:6.

Again, as sin is a burden to heaven, so it is a burden to the earth. Witness her swallowing up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their wives, children, goods, servants, &c., Num 16:26-35. Ah, sinners! your sins makes the very earth to groan, they make the earth weary of bearing you. Oh, how doth the earth groan and long to swallow up those earthly wretches, whose hopes, whose hearts, are buried in the earth! These shall have little of heaven, but enough of earth when they come to die.

Cornelius à Lapide tells a story, that he heard of a famous preacher, who, shewing the bondage of the creature, Rom 8:19-23, brings in the creature complaining thus: Oh, that we could serve such as are godly; oh, that our substance and our flesh might be incorporated into godly people, that so

we might rise into glory with them; oh, that our flesh might not be incorporated into the flesh of sinners, for if it be, we shall go to hell, and would any creatures go to hell? oh, we are weary of bearing sinners! we are weary of serving of sinners! Thus the creatures groan, thus the creatures complain, the sinner's sins forcing them to it, &c.

Again, sin is a burden to God: 'Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves,' Amo 2:13. By this plain, pithy, country comparison, God shews how sadly he is pressed and oppressed, how sorely he is wearied and tired with those people's sins. Divine patience is even worn out. Justice hath lift up her hand, and will bear with them no longer. God seems to groan under the pressure of their sins, as a cart seems to do under a heavy load. Of this God complains by the prophet Isaiah: 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,' Isa 43:24. I am as weary of your sins as a travailing woman is weary of her pains, saith God. Sin was such a burden to God, that he sweeps it off with a sweeping flood, Gen 7:1-24, &c.

Again, sin is a burden to Christ: It made him sweat as never man sweat; it made him sweat great drops of clotted or congealed blood, Luk 22:44. Sin put Christ's whole body into a bloody sweat; it made him groan piteously, when he bare our sins in his body on the tree. Sin made his soul heavy even to the death, and had he not been one that was mighty, yea, that was Almighty, he had fainted and failed under his burden, 1Pe 2:24, Isa 9:6. And thus you see what a burden sin is to man, to the creatures, to heaven, to earth, to God, to Christ; and therefore, as you would break with sin betimes, look always upon it as a burden, yea, as the greatest and heaviest burden in all the world, &c.

Notion (6). Sixthly and lastly, If you would break covenant with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against it betimes, then you must look upon it betimes under the notion of a tyrant. And indeed, sin is the worst and greatest tyrant in the world, Tit 3:3. Other tyrants can but tyrannize over our bodies, but sin is a tyrant that tyrannizes over both body and soul, as you may see in the sixth and seventh of the Romans. Sin is a tyrant that hath a kind of jurisdiction in most men's hearts; it sets up the law of pride, the law of passion, the law of oppression, the law of formality, the law of hypocrisy, the law of carnality, the law of self-love, the law of carnal reason, the law of unbelief, and strictly commands subjection to them, and proclaims fire and sword to all that stand out. This saints and sinners, good men and bad, do sufficiently experience.

Sin is a tyrant of many thousand years' standing, and though it hath had many a wound, and many a foil, and received much opposition, yet still it plays the tyrant all the world over! Oh, the hearts that this tyrant makes to ache! the souls that this tyrant makes to bleed!

Pharaoh's tyranny was nothing to sin's tyranny. This tyrant will not so much as suffer his slaves to sleep. They sleep not, except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall, Pro 4:16. 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa 57:20-21.

Other tyrants have been brought down and brought under by a human power, but this cannot but by a divine. The power of man hath brought down many of the tyrants of this world, but it is only the power of Christ that can bring down this tyrant, that can cast down his strongholds, 2Co 10:3-6, &c. Therefore, engage Christ in the conflict, draw him into the battle, and in the end the

conquest will be yours.

Vitellius, who had been emperor of all the world, yet was driven through the streets of Rome stark naked, and thrown into the river Tiber, &c.

Andronicus the emperor, for his cruelty towards his people, was by them at last shamefully deposed, and, after many contumelies, hanged up by his heels.

Ptolemy was put on a cross; Bajazet in an iron cage; Phocas broken on the wheel; Lycaon cast to the dogs, as well as Jezebel; Attalus thrust into a forge; King Gath into a beer barrel, &c. But none of these that have tamed these tyrants, that have brought down these mighty Nimrods, have been able to tame, to bring under the tyrants, the sins, the lusts, that have been in their own bosoms. Many a man hath had a hand in bringing down of worldly tyrants, who, notwithstanding, have died for ever by the hand of a tyrant within, &c.

CHAPTER VIII And thus much for the directions that young men must follow, if they would be good betimes, if they would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their days. I shall now give some brief answers to the young man's objections and the old man's scruples, and so close up this discourse.

Obj. 1. But some young men may object, and say, You would have us to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the primrose of our days. But it may be time enough hereafter to follow this counsel; we are young, and it may be time enough for us to mind these things hereafter, when we have satisfied the flesh so and so, or when we have got enough of the world, and laid up something that will stand us in stead, and that may oil our joints when we are old. Now, To this objection I answer,

1. First, That it is the greatest folly and madness in the world to put off God and the great things of eternity with may-bes. What tradesman, what merchant, what mariner, so mad, so foolish, so blockish, as to put off a present season, a present opportunity of profit and advantage, upon the account of a may-be? It may be I have as good a season, it may be I shall have as golden an opportunity to get, and to enrich myself as this is; and therefore farewell to this. No men that are in their right minds will argue thus; and why then should you, especially in the things that are of an everlasting concernment to you?

I have read of one monarch, a frantic Italian, who thought that all the kings of the earth were his vassals; and as frantic are they who wilfully neglect present seasons of grace, upon the account of a future may-be, &c.

2. Secondly, I answer, It may be if thou neglectest this present season and opportunity of grace, thou mayest never have another. It may be mercy may never knock more, if thou dost not open; it may be Christ shall never be offered to thee more, if now thou dost not close with him, and accept of him; it may be the Spirit will never strive more with thee, if now thou dost resist him and withstand him; it may be a pardon shall never be offered to thee more, if now thou wilt not take it; it may be the gospel shall never sound more in thy ears, if now thou wilt not hear it. Now set one may-be against another maybe, set God's may-be against thine own may-be; but,

3. Thirdly, Doubtless there are many thousand thousands now in hell, who have pleased themselves and put off God and the seasons of grace with a may-be, hereafter may be time

enough. It may be when I have gratified such a lust, and when I have treasured so much of the world, I will return, and seek, and serve the Lord; but before ever this season or opportunity came, justice hath cut the thread of their lives, and they are now miserable for ever; and now they are still cursing themselves, because they have slipped their golden opportunities upon the account of a may-be, &c. But,

4. Fourthly, and lastly, This putting off God and the present seasons of grace with a may-be, is very provoking to God, as you may see, if you will but read Pro 1:20-33. Nothing stirs and provokes a master more than his servants putting off his service or his commands with a may-be; it may be I will, it may be I may do this and that; nothing puts a master sooner into a heat, a flame, than this; nor nothing puts God more into a flame than this, as you may see by comparing Psa 95:6-11, with Heb 3:7-11; Heb 3:15-19. Read the words, and tremble at the thoughts of a may-be, at the thoughts of putting off of God and the seasons of grace.

I have read of two who cut off their right hand one for another, and then made it an excuse, a put off, they were lame, and so could not serve in the galleys of Francis the First, King of France; but this practice of theirs did so provoke the king that he sent them both to the gallows. I suppose the reader is not so young but knows how to apply it.

Object 2. If I should begin to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of my days, I should lose my friends, I should lose their favours; for they are carnal and worldly, and had rather I should seek after gold than God, the creature than Christ, earth than heaven. &c.

Now to this I answer, Surely you are out, for

1. First, This is the highway, the ready way, to gain the best, the surest, and the soundest friends. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,' Pro 16:7. When a man falls in with God, God will work the creatures to fall in with him, Job 41:33-34. Joseph found it so, and Jacob found it so, and Job found it so, the three children found it so, and Daniel found it so, as you all know that have but read the Scripture. And many in this age, as bad as it is, have found, that the best way to make friends is, first to make God our friend. Ah! young men, young men, you shall not lose your friends by seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, but only exchange bad ones for good ones, the worst for the best. He that gives up himself betimes to the Lord shall have God for his friend, and Christ for his friend, and the angels for his friends, and the saints for his friends. Christ will be to such, first, an omnipotent friend; secondly, an omniscient friend; thirdly, an omnipresent friend; fourthly, an indeficient friend; fifthly, an independent friend; sixthly, an immutable friend; seventhly, a watchful friend; eighthly, a loving friend; ninthly, a faithful friend; tenthly, a compassionate friend; eleventhly, a close friend, 'There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother,' Pro 18:24. Such a friend is Christ, and such a friend is as one's own soul, a rare happiness, hardly to be matched. Twelfthly, an universal friend; a friend in all cases and a friend in all places. Christ is so a friend to every one of his, as if he were a friend to none besides. Hence it is that they say, not only our Lord, our God, but my Lord, and my God. Christ is such an universal friend, as that he supplies the place, and acts the part of every friend, Thirteenthly, 'He is our first friend,' Psa 90:1; before we had a friend in all the world he was our friend, Pro 8:21. Lastly, he is a constant friend: 'Whom he loves, he loves to the end,' John 13:1. 2

Augustus Cæsar would not suddenly entertain a league of friendship with any, but was a constant friend to those he loved, *Amare nec cito desisto, nec temere incipio*, late ere I love, as long ere I leave. Where Christ begins to love, he always loves, Jer 31:3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' Now who would not venture the loss of all friends in the world to gain such a friend as this is?

Ah! young men and women, let me say to you what Seneca said to his friend Polibius, *Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri, salvo Cæsare*, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as Cæsar is thy friend. So say I; never complain of your loss of friends so long as by losing of them you gain Christ to be your friend.

2. Secondly, Thou wert better be without their friendship and favour than to enjoy it upon any sinful and unworthy accounts. Thou wert better run the hazard of losing thy friends and their favour by seeking and serving the Lord in the primrose of thy days, than to run the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, eternity, and thy soul for ever by neglecting the things of thy peace, Mat 16:26, Mark 8:36.

It was a gallant return which the noble Rutilius made his friend, requesting of him an unlawful favour in such language as this: I had as good be without such a friend as with him who will not let me speed in what I ask; to whom he replied, I can want such a friend as you, if for your sake I must do that which is not honest. The application is easy.

Well! young men, remember this, the torments of a thousand hells, were there so many, comes far short of this one voice, to be turned out of God's presence with a *Non novi vos*, I know you not, Mat 7:23.

Ah, young man, young man! thou wert better ten thousand thousand times to be cast out of the thoughts and hearts of thy carnal friends and relations, than to be cast out of God's presence with cursed Cain, Gen 4:1-26, for ever, than to be excommunicated out of 'the general assembly of the saints, and congregation of the first-born which are written in heaven,' Heb 12:23; and therefore away with this objection. But,

3. Thirdly, The favour and friendship of such carnal persons is very fickle and inconstant; it is very fading and withering. Now they stroke, and anon they strike; now they lift up, and anon they cast down; now they smile, and anon they frown; now they kiss, and anon they kill; now they cry, 'Hosannah! hosannah!' and anon they cry, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Haman is one day feasted with the king, and the next day made a feast for crows, Est 7:1-10. The princes of Babylon were highly in king Darius his favour one day, and cast into the lion's den the next, Dan 6:1-28. The scribes and pharisees that cried up Judas one day, did in effect bid him go and hang himself the next day, Mat 27:3-5.

Such men's favour and friendship are as Venice glasses, quickly broken, and therefore not much to be prized or minded. Histories abound with instances of this nature. But I must hasten: only remember this, that every day's experience tells us that wicked men can soon turn tables, and cross their books; their favour and friendship is usually like to a morning cloud, or like to Jonah's gourd: one hour flourishing and the next hour withering; and why then shouldst thou set thy heart upon that which is more changeable than the moon? But,

4. Fourthly and lastly, Who but a bad man would adventure the loss of the king's favour to gain the favour of his page? Who but a stark Bedlam would run the hazard of losing the judge's favour upon the bench, to purchase the good will of the prisoner at the bar?

Socrates preferred the king's countenance before his coin; and so must you prefer the favour of God, the countenance of Christ, Psa 4:6-7, and the things of eternity, above all the favour and friendship of all the men in the world. When your nearest friends and dearest relations stands in competition with Christ, or the things above, you must shake them off, you must turn your backs upon them, and welcome Christ and the things of your peace. He that forsakes all relations for Christ, shall certainly find all relations in Christ; he will be father, friend, husband, child; he will be everything to thee, who takest him for thy great all.

Object. 3. Aye, but I shall meet with many reproaches from one and other, if I should labour to be good betimes, if I should seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of my youth. Now, to this I answer,

1. First, What are reproaches to the great things that others have suffered for Christ his gospel, and the maintaining of a good conscience? What is a prick of a pin to a stab at the heart? what is a chiding to a hanging, a whipping to a burning? No more are all the reproaches thou canst meet with, to the great things that others have suffered for Christ's sake.

Ah, young men! you should be like the Scythian that went naked in the snow, and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, answered, I am not ashamed, for I am all forehead. So should you in the cause and way of Christ; you should not be ashamed, you should be all forehead, you should be stout and bold.

Colonus, the Dutch martyr, under all his reproaches, called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and then asked him, Whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's? All the reproaches in the world should not so much as make a Christian's heart beat; they should not in the least trouble him nor disturb him. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That all the reproaches thou meetest with in the way of Christ, and for the sake of Christ, they do but add pearls to thy crown; they are all additions to thy happiness and blessedness. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified, 1Pe 4:14. The more you are reproached for Christ's sake on earth, the greater shall be your reward in heaven; they that are most loaded with reproaches here, shall be most laden with glory hereafter, Mat 5:11-12. Christ hath written their names in golden letters in his book of life, that are written in black letters of reproach for his sake on earth. It was a good saying of one [Chrysostom]: A reproacher, saith he, is beneath a man, but the reproached that bear it well, are equal to angels; of all crowns, the reproached man's crown will weigh heaviest in heaven. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, the best men have been mostly reproached. David was, Psa 69:7, Psa 89:50, Psa 119:22, Psa 31:11, Psa 109:25; and Job was, Job 19:13, Job 20:3, Job 16:10; and Jeremiah was, Jer 20:7, Jer 20:10. Yea, this hath been the common portion of the people of God in all ages of the world, In Nehemiah's time it was so: Neh 1:3, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity, are in great affliction and reproach.' In David's time it was so, Psa 79:4, and Psa 44:13-14; and in Jeremiah's time it was so: Lam 5:1, 'Remember, O Lord, what is come upon

us: consider, and behold our reproach.' And in Daniel's time it was so: Dan 9:16, 'Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us;' and it was so in the apostle's time: Rom 3:8, 'And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come; whoso damnation is just;' 2Co 6:8, 'By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers and yet true;' so in that, 1Ti 4:10, 'For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God,' &c. And it was so in the primitive times, for when the Christians met together before sun[rise] to pray, the heathens reported of them that they worshipped the sun, and aspired after monarchy, and committed adulteries and unnatural uncleannesses. Now, who is troubled, who complains of that which is a common lot, as cold, winter, sickness, death? &c. No more should any complain of reproaches, it being the common lot of the people of God in all ages; yea, Christ himself was sadly reproached, falsely accused, and strangely traduced, disgraced, and scandalized. He was called a glutton, a drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners, and judged to use the black art, casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils, Mat 9:34, Mat 12:24. Christ hath suffered the greatest and the worst reproaches; why then should you be afraid to wear that crown of thorns that Christ hath worn before you? There is a great truth in what he said, Non potest qui pati timet, ejus esse qui passus est, he that is afraid to suffer cannot be his disciple, who suffered so much. If the master hath been marked with a black coal, let not the servant think to go free. I am heartily angry, saith Luther, with those that speak of my sufferings, which, if compared with that which Christ suffered for me, are not once to be mentioned in the same day. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, That all reproachers shall at last be arraigned at the highest bar of justice, for all the reproaches that they have cast upon the people of God.

They think it strange, for they think it a new world, that you 'run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead,' 1Pe 4:4.

I am in ecstasy, saith Picus Mirandula, to think how profane men rail upon those now, whom one day they will wish they had imitated. It was excellent counsel that the heathen orator gave his hearers, ita vivamus, ut rationem nobis reddendam arbitremur, let us live as those that must give an account of all at last.

Chrysostom brings in Christ comforting his disciples against reproaches, speaking thus unto them, What! is the wrong grievous to you that they now call you seducers and conjurors? It will not be long before they shall openly call you the saviours and blessings of the whole world; that time that shall declare all things that are now hid, shall rebuke them for their lying words against you, and shall kindle the splendour of your virtue; so they shall be found liars, evil speakers, false accusers of others; but you shall be more clear and illustrious than the sun, and you shall have all men witnesses of your glory. Such as wisely and humbly bear reproaches now, shall judge reproachers at last. But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That God doth many times, even in this life, bear sad witness and testimony against the reproachers of his people. 'I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee,' Gen 12:3, and 2Sa 16:11-13. God will even in this life curse them with a witness, who curse them that he blesseth. Pharaoh found it so, and Saul found it so, and Jezebel found it so, and Haman found it so, and the princes of Babylon found it so, and the Jews find it so to this very

day. And oh the dreadful judgments and curses that God hath poured out upon the reproachers of his name, of his Son, of his Spirit, of his word, of his ordinances, and of his people, in these days wherein we live! I might give you many sad instances of such in our days, whose feet justice hath taken in the snare, men of abstracted conceits and sublime speculations; and indeed such usually prove the great wise fools, who, like the lark, soareth higher and higher, peering and peering, till at length they fall into the net of the fowler; and no wonder, for such persons usually are as censorious as they are curious.

6. Sixthly, I answer, Paul rejoiceth more in his suffering reproaches for Christ's sake, than he did in his being rapt up in the third heaven: 2Co 12:10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong.' And therefore you have him often a-singing this song, 'I Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ;' not I Paul, rapt up in the third heaven. He looked upon all his sufferings as God's love-tokens; he looked upon all reproaches as pledges and badges of his sonship; and therefore joys and glories under all. Christ shewed his glory to him in rapping him up in the third heaven, and he shewed his love to Christ, in his joyful bearing of reproaches for his sake. Paul rattles his chain, which he bears for the gospel, and was proud of it, as a woman of her ornaments, saith Chrysostom.

Now why should that be matter of trouble and discouragement to you, that was matter of joy and rejoicing to him? Shall he look upon reproaches as a crown of honour, and will you look upon reproaches as a crown of thorns?

Oh! look upon reproach as a royal diadem, look upon it as Christ's livery, and count it your highest ambition in this world to wear this livery for his sake, who once wore a crown of thorns for your sakes. When Babylas was to die, he required this favour, to have his chains buried with him as the ensigns of his honour. But,

7. Seventhly, I answer, That by a wise and gracious behaviour under the reproaches thou meetest with for Christ's sake, thou mayest be instrumental to win others to Christ.

It was a noble saying of Luther, *Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione*, the church converted the whole world by blood and prayer.

Divers have been won to Christ by beholding the gracious carriages of Christians under their sufferings and reproaches for Christ.

We read of Cecilia, a poor virgin, who, by her gracious behaviour under all her sufferings and reproaches for Christ, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ.

Adrianus, beholding the gracious, cheerful carriages of the martyrs under all their sufferings and reproaches, was converted to Christ, and afterwards suffered martyrdom for Christ.

Justin Martyr was also converted by observing the holy and cheerful behaviour of the saints under all their sufferings and reproaches for Christ. During the cruel persecutions of the heathen emperors, the Christian faith was spread through all places of the empire,³ because the oftener they were mown down, saith Tertullian, the more they grew. And Austin observed, that though there were many thousands put to death for professing Christ, yet they were never the fewer for being slain.

Ah! young men, you may, by a wise and gracious bearing of reproaches for Christ, be instrumental to win others to Christ; and therefore never plead there is a lion in the way. But I must hasten; and therefore,

8. In the eighth and last place, consider, How bravely several of the very heathens have bore reproaches; and let that provoke you, in the face of all reproaches, to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, &c. When Demosthenes was reproached by one, I will not, saith he, strive with thee in this kind of fight, in which he that is overcome is the better man. When one came and reproached Xenophon, says he, You have learned how to reproach, and I have learned how to bear reproach. And Aristippus, the philosopher, said, You are fit to cast reproaches, and I am fit to bear reproaches.

Demochares an Athenian orator, was sent to king Philip as ambassador. Philip asked him how he might please the Athenians? Forsooth, said he, if you will hang yourself. The prince patiently sent him home again, and bid him ask, Whether were more noble, the patient hearer or venter of such unseemly language? When one wondered at the patience of Socrates towards one who reviled and reproached him, If we should meet one, saith he, whose body were more unsound than ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather pity him? Why, then, should we not do the like to him whose soul is more diseased than ours?

Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, bid Catullus the railing poet to supper, to shew that he had forgiven him.

It is a notable example that we find of one Pericles, who, as he was sitting with others in a great meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow bitterly reproached him, and railed all the day long upon him; and at night, when it was dark, and the meeting up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him even to his door, and he took no notice of him; but when he came at home, this is all he said, Friend, it is dark, I pray let my man light you home.

Josephus reports of that Herod that is made mention of in Acts 12:23, that when one Simon, a lawyer, had grievously reproached and scandalised him before the people, he sent for him, and caused him to sit down next to him, and in a kind manner he spake thus to him: Tell me, I pray thee, what thing thou seest fault-worthy or contrary to the law in me. Simon not having anything to answer, besought him to pardon him, which the king did, and was friends with him, and dismissed him, bestowing gifts on him.

Ah! young men, young men, shall the very heathen make nothing of reproaches? shall they bear up so prudently and bravely under the greatest loads of reproaches, and will not you? Will not you, who in your light, in your mercies, and in all gospel engagements, are so highly advanced above them? Oh! that none of them may be called to the bar in the great day to witness against any of you into whose hands this treatise shall fall. And so much by way of answer to the third objection. But,

Objection 4. Fourthly, The young man objects, and says, You press us to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of our days; but we observe that most men mind not these things, but rather give liberty to themselves to walk in ways that are most pleasing to the flesh; and why, then, should we be singular and nice? We were better do as the most do, &c. Now to this I answer,

1. That though bad examples are dangerous to all, yet usually they prove most dangerous and pernicious to young persons, who are more easily drawn to follow examples than precepts, especially those examples that tend most to undo them: 2Ki 15:9, it is said of Zachariah, the king of Israel, that 'he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam;' he would be as his father was, and do as his father did, whatever came on it. So the Samaritans, of whom it is said, 2Ki 17:41, 'These nations feared the Lord' (that is, they made some kind of profession of the true religion, as the ten tribes had done), 'and served their graven images (too); both their children and their children's children (did thus); as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.' By evil examples they were both drawn to idolatry, and rooted and confirmed in it. So the main reason why the kingdom and church of Judah were so settled in their idolatry, that there was no hope of reclaiming them, was this, that their children remembered their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills, Jer 17:1-2. Tinder is not apter to take fire, nor wax the impression of the seal, nor paper the ink, than youth is to follow ill examples.

You may see in Radbad, king of Phrisia, who coming to the font to be baptized, asked what was become of his ancestors? answer was made, that they died in a fearful state unbaptized; he replied that he would rather perish with the multitude than go to heaven with a few.

I remember the heathen brings in a young man who, hearing of the adulteries and wickednesses of the gods, said, What! do they so? and shall I stick at it? No, I will not. Sinful examples are very drawing and very encouraging; many have found it so to their eternal undoing. Those that have no ears to hear what you say, have many eyes to see what you do. Bad princes make bad subjects; bad masters make bad servants; bad parents make bad children; and bad husbands make bad wives. It is easier for the bad to corrupt the good, than for the good to convert the bad; it is easier to run down the hill with company, than to run up the hill alone.

I would desire all young men often to remember that saying of Lactantius, Qui malum imitatur, bonus esse non potest, he who imitates the bad cannot be good. Young men, in these professing times, stand between good and bad examples, as Hercules in his dream stood between virtue and vice. Solicited by both, choose you must who to follow. Oh that you were all so wise as to follow the best; as a woman that hath many suitors is very careful to take the best, so should you. Life, heaven, happiness, eternity, hangs upon it. But before I come to the second answer, let me leave this note or notion with those who make no conscience of undoing others by their examples, viz., That a more grievous punishment is reserved for them who cause others to offend, than for them which sin by their occasion or example.

Thus the serpent was punished more than Eve, and Eve more than Adam. So Jezebel felt a greater and sorer judgment than Ahab. To sin, saith one, hath not so much perdition in it as to cause others to sin. Friends, you have sins enough of your own to make you for ever miserable; why should you, by giving bad examples to others, make yourselves far more miserable? The lowest, the darkest, the hottest place in hell, will be for them that have drawn others thither by their example, Mat 23:15. Dives knew that if his brethren were damned, he should be double damned, because he had largely contributed to the bringing of them to hell by his wicked example; and therefore he desires that they might be kept out of hell, not out of any love or good will to them, but because their coming thither would have made his hell more hot, his torments more insufferable, Luk 16:28. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, If you sin with others, you shall suffer with others; if you will partake of other men's sins, you shall also partake of other men's plagues, Rev 18:4. They that have been, like Simeon and Levi, brethren in iniquity, they shall be brethren in misery; they that have sinned together impenitently shall be sent to hell jointly, they shall perish together eternally. If you will needs be companions with others in their sins, you shall be sure to be companions with them in their sorrows. The old world sin together and are drowned together, Gen 6:1-22; the Sodomites, burning in lusts together, were burnt with fire and brimstone together, Gen 19:1-38. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, they sin together, they murmur and provoke the Lord together, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows them up together, Num 16:26-34. Pharaoh and his hosts pursue Israel together, and they are drowned in the sea together, Exo 14:1-31. Zimri and Cosbi commit folly, uncleanness together, and Phinehas stabs them both together, Num 25:1-18. The Hebrew doctors have a very pretty parable to this purpose:—A man planted an orchard, and, going from home, was careful to leave such watchmen as might both keep it from strangers and not deceive him themselves; therefore he appointed one blind, but strong of his limbs, and the other seeing, but a cripple. These two, in their master's absence, conspired together, and the blind took the lame on his shoulders, and so gathered the fruit; their master returning and finding out their subtilty, punished them both together. So will justice deal with you at last, who sin with others; therefore take heed, young men, of doing as others do. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, You must not live by examples, but by precepts. You are not to look so much at what others do, as at what God requires you to do: Exo 23:2, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment;' Rom 12:2, 'Fashion not yourselves like unto this world;' that is, do not fashion and conform yourselves to the corrupt customs and courses of wretched worldlings, who have made gold their god, and gain their glory. The running cross to a divine command cost the young prophet his life, though he did it under pretence of revelation from God, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:1-34, &c., Non parentum, aut majorum autoritas, sed Dei docentis imperium, the command of God must outweigh all authority and example of men [Jerome]. And we must be as careful in the keeping of a light commandment as an heavy commandment. Saith a Rabbi, Divine commands must be obeyed against all contrary reasonings, wranglings, and examples. Austin brings in some excusing their compliance with the sinful customs and examples of those times in drinking healths thus: Great personages urged it, and it was at the king's banquet, where they judged of loyalty by luxury, and put us upon this election, drink or die. The not drinking of a health had been our death. He gives this answer, that God who sees that for love to him and his commands thou wouldst not conform to their drunken customs, will give thee favour in their eyes, who thus threatened thee to drink.

Ah! young men, you that doat so much upon examples now, will find that a stinging terrifying question, when put home by God or conscience, Who hath required those things at your hands? Isa 1:12. But, 4. Fourthly, I answer, Company and allurements to sin will be found no sufficient excuse for sin.

If Eve lay her fault on the serpent, and Adam lay his on Eve, Gen 3:1-24, God will take it off, and lay the curse on both. Saul's provocation by his people, and by Samuel's long stay to offer sacrifice, would not bear him out; but for his disobedience he must lose both his crown and life, 1Sa 15:14-15, 1Sa 15:26-27. The young man in the Proverbs, though tempted and solicited by the

harlot, yet hath a dart struck through his heart, Pro 7:14-15, Pro 7:21. Though Jonah did plead God's gracious inclinations to shew mercy, and his fear of being disproved; yea, and though he might have pleaded his fear of cruel and savage usage from the Ninevites, whose hearts were desperately set upon wickedness, and his despair of ever doing good upon a people so blinded and hardened, and that they were Gentiles and he a Jew; and why should he then be sent with so strange, so terrible a message to such a people, nothing being more hateful and distasteful to a Jewish palate? But all these pleas and excuses will not bear off the blow. Jonah must into the sea for all this; yea, he must to 'the bottom of hell,' as himself phrases it. It is in vain for the bird to complain, that it saw the corn but not the pitfall; or for the fish to plead, it saw the bait but not the hook. So it will be in vain for sinners at last, when they are taken in an infernal pitfall, to plead company and allurements by which they have been enticed to undo their soul for ever.

Dionysius, the Sicilian king, to excuse himself from the present delivery of the golden garment he took from his god Apollo, answered, that such a robe as that was could not be at any season of the year useful to his god, for it would not keep him warm in the winter, and it was too heavy for the summer, and so put off his idol god. But the God of spirits, the God of all flesh, will not be put off with any excuses or pretences, when he shall try and judge the children of men. But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, I answer, That it is a very great judgment to be given up to follow evil examples, Mat 18:7. A man given up to evil examples is a man sadly left of God, wofully blinded by Satan, and desperately hardened in sin. It speaks a man ripe for wrath, for ruin, for hell: Jer 6:21, 'Behold, I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.' Oh! it is a dreadful thing when God shall make the sinful examples of others to be stumbling-blocks to a people, at which they shall stumble, and fall, and perish for ever; good had it been for such persons that they had never been born, as Christ once spake concerning Judas, Mat 26:24. The Rhodians and Lydians enacted several laws, that those sons which followed not their fathers in their virtues. but followed vicious examples, should be disinherited, and their lands given to the most virtuous of that race, not admitting any impious heir whatsoever to inherit; and do you think that God will not disinherit all those of heaven and happiness who follow vicious examples? Doubtless he will, 1Co 10:5-12.

Objection (5). The fifth and last objection I shall mention is this, God is a God of mercy; in him are bowels of mercy, yea, a sea, an ocean of mercy; he loves mercy, he delights in mercy, and he is ready to shew mercy to poor sinners, when they are even at the last cast, when there is but a short stride between them and the grave, between them and eternity; as we see in his extending mercy to the thief, and in his giving a pardon into his hand, and the assurance of paradise into his bosom, when he was ready to be turned off the ladder of life; and therefore I may spend the primrose of my days in following sin, and the delights, profits, vanities, and contents of this world, and at last cast I may have mercy as well as the thief. God is a God made up of mercy, and surely he will not deny some crumbs of mercy to a poor sinner in misery, &c.

Now to this objection I shall give these following answers.

1. First, God is as just as he is merciful; witness his casting the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; witness all the threatenings, the curses, the woes, that the Bible is filled with, from one end to the other; witness the hell, the horror, the terror and amazement that he raises in the consciences of sinners; witness the devastations that he hath made of the most stately and

flourishing towns, cities, countries, and kingdoms, that have been in all the world; witness the variety of diseases, calamities, miseries, dangers, deaths, and hells, that always attend the inhabitants of the world; but above all, witness Christ's treading the wine-press of his Father's wrath; witness his hiding his face from him, and the pouring out of all his displeasure and vengeance upon him.

Zekeus, the Locrenian lawgiver, thrust out one of his own son's eyes, for his transgressing of a wholesome law which he had enacted, but God the Father thrust out both Christ's eyes for our transgressing of his royal law. Oh! the justice and severity of God. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That there is not a greater evidence of blindness, profaneness, hard-heartedness, spiritual madness, and hellish desperateness in all the world, than to make that an argument, an encouragement to sin, viz. the mercy of God, which should be the greatest argument under heaven to keep a man from sin: as all know that have but read the Scripture; neither are there any sinners in the world that God delights to rain hell out of heaven upon, as upon such, who by their abuse of mercy, turn the God of mercy into a God of clouts,' and go on out-daring justice itself:4 Deu 29:19-20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace (God is a God of mercy), though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' In these words you may observe, that God is absolute in his threatening, to shew that he will be resolute in punishing: Psa 11:5-6, 'The wicked, and him that loveth iniquity, doth his soul hate. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.'

Ah! that all poor sinners would make these two scriptures their companions, their constant bed-fellows, till they are got above that sad temptation of turning the mercy of God into an encouragement to sin.

Whilst Milo Crotoniates was tearing asunder the stock of an oak, his strength failing him,—the cleft suddenly closing,—was held so fast by the hands, that he became a prey to the beasts of the field. All the abusers of mercy will certainly and suddenly become a prey to the justice of God, that will rend and tear them in pieces, as the Psalmist speaks: Psa 50:22, 'Woe, woe, to that soul that fights against God with his own mercies;' that will be bad, because he is good; that will be sinful, because he is merciful; that will turn all the kindness of God, that should be as so many silver cords, to tie him to love and obedience, into arrows, and to shoot them back into the heart of God. Abused mercy will at last turn into a lion, a fierce lion; and then woe to the abusers and despisers of it! But,

3. Thirdly, In answer to that part of the objection concerning the thief on the cross, I offer these things briefly to your thoughts.

(1.) First, That as one was saved to teach sinners not to despair, so another was damned to teach, them not to presume. A pardon is sometimes given to one upon the gallows, but whoso trusts to that, the rope may be his hire. It is not good, saith one, to put it upon the psalm of miserere, and the neck-verse, for sometimes he proves no clerk, and so hangs for it.

(2.) Secondly, It is an example without a promise. Here is an example of late repentance, but where is there a promise of late repentance?

Oh! let not his late and sudden conversion be to thee a temptation, till thou hast found a promise for late and sudden conversion. It is not examples, but promises, that are foundations for faith to rest on, He that walks by an example of mercy without a precept to guide him, and a promise to support him, walks but by a dark lanthorn, that will deceive him. Well! young man, remember this, examples of mercy increase wrath, when the heart is not bettered by them. But,

(3). Thirdly, This was a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honour the ignominy of his cross, and therefore we may as well look for another crucifying of Christ as look for a sinner's conversion, when he hath scarce time enough to reckon up all those particular duties which make up the integrity of its constitution. But,

(4). Fourthly, I answer, This thief knew not Christ before; he had not refused, neglected, nor slighted Christ before. The sermon on the cross was the first sermon that ever he heard Christ preach, and Christ's prayer on the cross was the first prayer that ever he heard Christ make. He knew not Christ till he met him on the cross, which proved to him a happy meeting. His case was as if a Turk or a heathen should now be converted to the faith; and therefore thou hast little reason, O young man, to plead this example to keep Christ and thy soul asunder, who art every day under the call, the entreaties, and wooings of Christ. But,

(5). Fifthly, and lastly, I answer, The circumstances of time and place are rightly to be considered. Now when Christ was triumphing on the cross over sin, Satan, and the world; when he had made the devils a public spectacle of scorn and derision; when he was taking his leave of the world and entering into his glory; now he puts a pardon into the thief's hand, and crowds other favours and kindnesses upon him. As in the Roman triumphs, the victor being ascended up to the capitol in a chariot of state, used to cast certain pieces of coin among the people for them to pick up, which he used not to do at other times; so our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of his triumph and solemn inauguration into his heavenly kingdom, scatters some heavenly jewels that this thief might pick up, which he doth not, nor will not do every day. Or, as in these days it is usual with princes to save some notorious malefactors at their coronations when they enter upon their kingdoms in triumph, which they do not use to do afterwards, so did Jesus Christ carry it toward this thief. But this is not his ordinary way of saving and bringing souls to glory; and therefore do not, O young man! let not the thief's late conversion prove a temptation or an occasion of thy delaying thy repentance, and trifling away the primrose of thy days in vanity and folly. And this much may suffice to have spoken by way of answer to the young man's objections. I shall now speak a few words to old men, and so close up. Now,

CHAPTER IX Is it so commendable, so desirable, and so necessary for young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, as has been sufficiently demonstrated in this treatise? Oh, then, that I could so woo aged persons as to win them who yet have put off this great work to seek and serve the Lord before their glass be out, their sun set, and their souls lost for ever!

Oh, that that counsel of the prophet might take hold upon your hearts! 'Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble,' Jer 13:16, through age 'upon the

dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.'

Ay, but aged sinners may reply, Is there any hope, any help for us? Is there any probability, is there any possibility, that ever such as we are should return and find mercy and favour with the Lord? We who have lived so long without him! we that have sinned so much against him! we that to this day are strangers to him, yea, in arms against him! Is there any hope that we white-headed sinners, who have withstood so many thousand offers of grace, and so many thousand motions of the the Spirit, and so many thousand checks of conscience, and so many thousand tenders of Christ and heaven, that ever we should obtain mercy, that ever we should have our old hearts turned, our millions of sins pardoned, our vile natures changed, and poor souls saved, &c.

I answer, That there is hope even for such as you are. All the angels in heaven and all the men on earth cannot tell, but that you, even you, may obtain mercy and favour, that your souls die not. With the Lord nothing is impossible, and for the grace of the gospel nothing is too hard. Now this I shall make evident by an induction of particulars. Thus,

(1.) First, All were not called nor sent to work in the vineyard at the first hour; some were called at the third hour, others at the sixth, others at the ninth, and some at the eleventh. God hath his several times of calling souls to himself. The eleventh hour was about five in the afternoon, an hour before sunset; when it was even time to leave work; and yet at this hour some were called, employed, and rewarded with the rest.

Some of the fathers, by the several hours mentioned in this parable, do understand the several ages of man, viz., childhood, youth, middle age, and old age, wherein poor souls are called and converted to Christ. The scope of the parable is to signify the free grace of God in the calling of some in the spring and morning of their days, and in the calling of others in their old age, in the evening of their days. But,

(2.) Secondly, Abraham in the Old Testament, and Nicodemus in the New, were called and converted in their old age, when there were but a few steps between them and the grave, between them and eternity.

I have read of one Caius Marius Victorius, who was an old man, three hundred years after the apostles' time, and had been a pagan all his days, and in his old age he inquired and hearkened after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. Simplicianus hearing him say so, would not believe him, but when the church saw a work of grace indeed upon him, there was shouting and dancing for gladness, and psalms were sung in every church, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian. And this was written for a wonder, that he in his old age, and in his grey hairs, should become a gracious Christian.

Aretius also speaks of a certain man in his time. It is no feigned story, saith he, for I saw the man with my own eyes: he was one that had been a most vile and desperate sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, a wanton, a gamester, and so he continued to his grey hairs; but at last it pleased God to set his sins in order before him, and the man was so troubled in conscience that he threw himself down upon the ground, calling unto Satan to take him away, provoking Satan to take him away: Devil, take thy own; devil, take thy own; I am thy own, take thy own: whereupon, saith Aretius, prayer was made for him; Christians prayed, they fasted and prayed, they prayed night and day;

and it pleased God at last that this poor aged sinner revived, converted to God, lived a godly life afterwards, and died comfortably.

Therefore, let not the grey-headed sinner despair, though his spring be past, his summer overpast, and he arrived at the fall of the leaf. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Divine promises shall be made good to returning souls, to repenting souls, to believing souls, be they young or old. 2Ch 30:9, 'The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if you return unto him.' Joe 2:13, 'And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.' Isa 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon:' or he will multiply to pardon. More of this you may see by reading of the scriptures in the margin. All sorts of sin shall be pardoned to all sorts of believing and repenting sinners. The New Jerusalem hath twelve gates, to shew that there is every way access for all sorts and ranks of sinners to come to Christ. He was born in an inn, to shew that he receives all comers, young and old, poor and rich, &c. But,

(4.) Fourthly, The Lord hath declared by oath a greater delight in the conversion and salvation of poor sinners, whether they are young or old, than in the destruction and damnation of such. Eze 33:11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O ye house of Israel?' Two things make a thing more credible.

[1.] The quality or dignity of the person speaking.

[2.] The manner of the speech. Now here you have the great God, not only speaking, promising, but solemnly swearing that he had rather poor sinners should live than die, be happy than miserable; therefore, despair not, O aged sinner! but return unto the Lord, and thou shalt be happy for ever. But,

(5.) Fifthly, There is virtue enough in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, to wash and cleanse away all sin; not only to cleanse away the young man's sins, but also to cleanse away the old man's sins; not only to cleanse a sinner of twenty years, but to cleanse a sinner of fifty, sixty, yea, a hundred years old: 1Jn 1:7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;' not simply from sin, but from all sin. There is such a power and efficacy in the blood of Christ, as is sufficient to cleanse all sorts of sinners from all sorts of sins. There is a virtue in the blood of the Lamb to wash out all the spots that are in the oldest sinners' hearts; and therefore let not old sinners despair, let them not say there is no hope, there is no help, as long as this fountain, the blood of Jesus Christ, is open for all sorts of sinners to wash in. But,

(6.) Sixthly, The call and invitation of Christ in the gospel are general and indefinite, excluding no sort of sinners. Rev 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man' (mark the indefiniteness of personal admittance) 'hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Let the sinner be old or young, a green head, or a grey head, if he will but open the door, Christ will come in and have communion and fellowship with him. So in that Mat 11:28. Turn to these scriptures, Isa 55:1, John 7:37, Rev 22:17, and dwell upon them; they all clearly evidence the call and gracious invitations of Christ to be to all sinners, to

every sinner; he excepts not a man, no, though never so old. Nothing shall hinder the sinner, any sinner, the worst and most aged sinner, from obtaining mercy, if he be willing to open to Christ, and to receive him as his Lord and king, John 6:37. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Christ's patheticall lamentation over all sorts and ranks of sinners, declares his willingness to shew mercy to them. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,' saith Christ, weeping over it, 'that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace,' &c., Luk 19:41-42. 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me!' Psa 81:13. Christ weeps over Jerusalem; so did Titus, and so did Marcellus over Syracuse, and so did Scipio over Carthage; but they shed tears for them whose blood they were to shed; but Christ weeps over the necks of those young and old sinners who were to shed his blood. As a tender-hearted father weeps over his rebellious children, when neither smiles nor frowns, neither counsels nor entreaties, will win them, or turn them from their evil ways, so doth Jesus Christ over these rebellious Jews, upon whom nothing would work. But,

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, Though aged sinners have given Christ many thousand denials, yet he hath not taken them, but after all, and in the face of all denials, he still re-enforces his suit, and continues to beseech them by his Spirit, by his word, by his wounds, by his blood, by his messengers, and by his rebukes, to turn home to him, to embrace him, to believe in him, and to watch with him, that they may be saved eternally by him. All which bespeaks grey-headed sinners not to despair, nor to dispute, but to repent, return, and believe, that it may go well with them for ever. Consider seriously what hath been spoken, and the Lord make you wise for eternity!

APPENDIX Agreeably to Note prefixed to 'Apples of Gold,' there is here added, 1. The title-page of the original edition.

2. The original 'Epistle Dedicatory.'—G.

APPLES OF GOLD for Young Men, and A Crown of Honour for Old Men: or, The Young Mans Work, and the Old Mans Reward. discovered In a, Sermon (with enlargements since) Preached at Clapham at the interrment of the Corps of Mr. John Wood, Mercer; and Citizen of London, the 13. of Novemb. 1656. By THOMAS BROOKS, Preacher of the Gospel at Margarets Fishstreet-hill. But I thy Servant fear the Lord from my Youth. 1Ki 18:12. The hoary head is a crown of Glory, if it bee found in a way of righteousness, Pro 16:31.

LONDON,

Printed by R. I. for John Hancock, to be sold at the first Shop in Popeshead-Alley next to Corn-hill neer the Exchange. 1657.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his honoured and worthily esteemed friends, Mrs Susan Wood (disconsolate widow to the late pious Mr John Wood, deceased), and Mr John Arthur (minister of the gospel at Clapham), and Mrs Dorothy, his wife; and to Mr John Wood, Esq. and Mrs Margaret, his wife (parents to the late deceased gentleman); and to Mr John Humfreys, Esq., and Mrs Elizabeth, his wife: all grace and peace, all consolation and supportation from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Honoured and beloved in our dearest Lord,

It was your earnest desires and serious importunity that midwived this little treatise into the world. If it do not in all things answer expectation, you know who to thank. I look upon the following discourse as a comment upon his life and death, who is now entered upon a blessed state of eternity. I confess your loss is very very great; yet to prevent the breaking in of an irresistible torrent of sorrow and sadness upon your drooping spirits, be pleased to consider these four things:

1. Though your loss be great, yet there are six greater losses than yours.

(1.) First, The loss of the soul is a greater loss than the loss of a husband, a child, a kinsman, &c. The loss of the soul is an incomparable loss, it is an irreparable loss, it is an eternal loss. Francis Xaverius, counselled John the Third, King of Portugal, to meditate every day a quarter of an hour upon that text, What shall it profit a man to gain the world, and lose his soul? Mat 16:26. Of the sadness and greatness of this loss, you may read more in the following discourse.

(2.) Secondly, The loss of Christ is a loss infinitely beyond the loss of the nearest and dearest relations. This made Luther say, that he had rather live in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. He is the greatest good, and therefore the loss of him must needs be the greatest evil, *qui te non habet Domine Deus, totum perdidit* [Bernard]. He that hath not thee, and thy Christ, he hath lost all; for Christ is all in all, Col 3:11. John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, that if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire, before he would lose his Christ.

(3.) Thirdly, The loss of the gospel is a greater loss than all worldly comforts. Eli bore up sweetly till the ark was taken, and that news broke both his heart and neck.

Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible; nay, a gracious heart that hath experienced the sweetness of the word, will not take all the world for one line of the Bible. The tabernacle was covered over with red,—and the purple-feathers tell us, they take that habit for the same intent,—to note that we must defend the truth even to the effusion of blood, and rather lose our lives than lose the truth. We must say, as the Spartan mother said to her son, either live in religion, or die for religion. When the gospel is lost, the glory of a nation is lost; yea, the glory of souls is lost.

(4.) Fourthly, The loss of God's favour is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If his loving-kindness be better than life, yea, than lives, as the Hebrew hath it, then the loss of it is worse than death, yea, than deaths. Augustine, upon that answer of God to Moses, Thou canst not see my face and live, Exo 33:20, makes this quick and sweet reply. 'Then, Lord! let me die, that I may see thy face.' It is divine favour that makes heaven to be heaven, and it is the want of that which makes hell to be hell. A Christian that hath been under the shinings of God's face, had rather suffer death, yea, any death, yea, all deaths, than to have the face of God clouded and covered.

(5.) Fifthly, The loss of peace of conscience is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If you ask souls that have experienced the sweetness of peace of conscience, but are now under terrors and horrors, what is the greatest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience. If you ask them again what is the saddest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience: no loss to this loss. *Una guttula malæ conscientiæ totum mare, mundum, gaudii absorbet* (Luther), One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, The loss of eternity is a greater loss than any, than all worldly losses. No worldly loss is to be mentioned in the day wherein the loss of eternity is named. The loss of eternity compriseth all varieties of privative miseries, the loss of whatever we have enjoyed, and the loss of whatever we might have enjoyed; as God, Christ, the Comforter, the society of saints, angels, the treasures and pleasures that be at his right hand. It was a notable saying of Ambrose, *Cur ea quæ ad usum diuturna esse non possunt, ad supplicium diuturna deposces*, Why will you make that which cannot be eternal for use be eternal for punishment? The loss of eternity is a comprehensive loss, a loss that takes in all losses; and therefore no loss to the loss of a happy eternity. And thus you see, beloved, that though your loss be very great, yet there be far greater losses than yours; and this should bear up your spirits from fainting and sinking under this sad dispensation. Though I have a will, yet I have not skill to express your loss and your sorrows to the life. Sorrows for near and dear relations are oftentimes so great, that they cannot be expressed.

Psammeticus, king of Egypt, being prisoner to Cambyses, king of Persia, seeing his own daughter passing before him in base array, being sent to draw water, at which sight his friends about him wept, but himself wept not; presently after his son was carried to execution before his face, neither did this move him to shew any passion; but afterwards, when a friend of his was to suffer, then he wept, and tare his hair, and shewed great sorrow. Being demanded the reason of this his carriage, he answered that the loss of a friend might be expressed, but not the grief for the loss of a child.

I have read of a certain painter, who being to express the sorrow of a weeping father, and having spent his skill before in setting forth of the passions and affections of his children, he thought it best to present him upon his table to the beholders' view with his face covered, that so he might have that grief to be imagined by them which he found himself unable to set out to the full. I know I am not able to paint out your grief and sorrow for your sad loss, yet having proved that this your loss is no loss compared with the fore-mentioned sad losses, I cannot but hope that you will labour to bear up like those whose hopes, whose hearts, whose treasures are in heaven, &c.

2. Consider all outward losses may be made up; nay, God doth usually one way or another make up to his people all their outward losses. He did so to David, to Job, and many others; nay, they were great gainers by their losses. And so were the disciples, who, for the loss of Christ's personal presence, had abundance of the Spirit's influence. If he takes away a husband, and fills up that relation, is not the loss made up? Will not the light and heat of the sun make up the loss of the light and heat of a twinkling star? If he take away a son, and give out more of himself, will you not say he is better than ten thousand sons? 1Sa 1:8. If he take away your only son, and give out to you more of his only Son, will you not say, that though your loss be very great, yet the great God hath made it up, by giving out more of the light, life, love, and glory of his only Son unto you? If, in the room of an only son, God shall give you a name that is better than sons and daughters, Isa 56:5, will you not say, your loss is made up with advantage? *Hujusmodi lucri dulcis odor*, the smell of this gain is sweet to many. It was an apt saying of Tertullian, *Negotiatio est aliquid amittere ut majora lucreris*, that is right and good merchandise, when something is parted with to gain more. He applies it to the martyrs' sufferings, wherein though the flesh lost something, yet the spirit got much more. Ah! dear friends, if your fleshly losses shall be made up in spiritual advantages, have you any cause to say, No loss to our loss, no sorrow to our sorrow? Surely no. When that noble Zedislaus had lost his hand in the wars of the King of Poland, the king sent him a golden hand for it.

Ah, friends! if God give you silver for brass, and gold for iron; if he give you spirituals for temporals, have you not more cause of rejoicing than of mourning? When Paulinus Nolanus his city, was taken by the barbarians, he prayed thus to God: Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c., for thou art all, and much more than all, these unto me. There is nothing beyond remedy but the tears of the damned. Those that are in the way to paradise should not place themselves in the condition of a little hell; and they that may or can hope for that great all, ought not to be dejected for any thing.

3. Thirdly, Consider that though your loss be great, yet his gain is greater: 'for him to live was Christ, and to die was gain,' Php 1:21. He hath exchanged mortality for immortality, the society of men for the society of angels, the sight of friends for the sight of God, a house made with hands for one eternal in the heavens, the streams for the fountain, an earthly father for a heavenly Father; a careful, loving, sweet, suitable, tender-hearted, wise, yokefellow for to lie in the arms, the bosom, of a loving, gracious, tender-hearted Saviour. If you would but eye more his crown than your own cross, his gain than your own loss, you would divinely quench the burning flame of your passionate affections. It was a good saying of Francisco Soyit to his adversaries: You deprive me of this life, said he, and promote me to a better, which is as if you should rob me of counters, and furnish me with gold. Your deceased relation hath exchanged his counters for gold, his imperfection for perfection, and his earthly possession for a heavenly possession.

4. Fourthly and lastly, Consider how sweetly, how wisely, how bravely others have carried it, when the Lord hath passed the sentence of death upon their nearest and dearest relations; read the proofs in the margin, and then never leave pressing those golden examples upon your own hearts, till they are brought over sweetly and quietly to lie down in the will of God, and to say amen to God's amen. When it was told Anaxagoras that both his sons, which was all he had, were dead, he being nothing terrified therewith, answered, Sciebam me genuisse mortales, I knew I begat mortal creatures.

Ah, friends! shall a heathen bear it out thus bravely, and shall not you much more? Pulvillus, another heathen [Pet. Mart.], when he was about to consecrate a temple to Jupiter, and news was brought to him of the death of his son, desisted not from his enterprise; but with a composed mind gave order for decent burial. Shall nature do this, and shall not grace do as much, nay, more? What a shame is it, saith Jerome, that faith should not be able to do that which infidelity hath done! What! not better fruit in the vineyard, in the garden of the Lord, than in the wilderness? What! not better fruit grown upon the tree of life than upon the root of nature?

Dear friends! since I yielded to your desires, and set about this work, I begun to consider that I had never heard nor read of any that had treated on this subject; also I seriously considered of the usefulness of it, especially in these times, wherein so many young persons have their faces towards Sion; which considerations, with the breaking in of God upon me beyond my expectation, has occasioned that sermon you heard to swell into a little treatise, which in all love I present unto you. The very same things that sounded in your ears I here present to your eyes, with enlargements and additions to what I first intended. The pains hath been mine; the profit that will redound to you and others, into whose hands it may fall, I hope will be such as will turn to all our accounts in the day of Christ.

I have read of an emperor's son who used to say, The longer the cooks are preparing the meat, the better will be the cheer; his meaning was, the longer he stayed for the empire, the greater it would be. The longer you have waited for this discourse, the better I desire it may prove. It had been in your hands long before this, if others that should have made more haste had not been more to blame than myself; yet I know it is not a child so late born that I need question your fathering of it. And now I commend you all to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, Acts 20:32. Your servant in the work of Christ,

Thomas Brooks. THE MUTE CHRISTIAN

NOTE The 'Mute Christian' was originally published in 1659. A '2d' edition—though not so designated—was immediately called for, and appeared in 1660. Thereafter few books were more in demand, being next to the 'Precious Remedies.' The earlier portion of the title (as in above two editions) was 'The Silent Soul with Sovereign Antidotes,' &c. Our text is taken from 'the eighth edition, corrected,' collated with the original and subsequent intervening editions. Its title-page is given below.*G. the

MUTE CHRISTIAN under the

SMARTING ROD: with sovereign antidotes

Against the Most Miserable Crigents: or, A Christian with an Olibe—Leat in his mouth, when he is under the greatest afflictions, the sharpest and sorest tryals and troubles, the saddest and darkest Providences and Changes, with Answers to divers Questions and Objections that are of greatest importance; all tending to win and work Souls to be still, quiet, calm and silent under all changes that have, or may pass upon them in this World, &c. The Eighth Edition, Corrected. By THOMAS BROOKS, late Preacher of the Word at St. Margaret New-Fish-Street, London. The Lord is in his Holy Temple: Let all the Earth keep silence before him, Hab 2:20.

LONDON, Printed for John Hancock, and are to be sold at the Three Bibles, over against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill. 1684. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To all afflicted and distressed, dissatisfied, disquieted, and discomposed Christians throughout the world.

Dear Hearts,—The choicest saints are 'born to troubles as the sparks fly upwards,' Job 5:7. 'Many are the troubles of the righteous;' if they were many, and not troubles, then, as it is in the proverb, the more the merrier; or if they were troubles and not many, then the fewer the better cheer. But God, who is infinite in wisdom and matchless in goodness, hath ordered troubles, yea, many troubles to come trooping in upon us on every side. As our mercies, so our crosses seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another; they are like April showers, no sooner is one over but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not a damnation. The higher the waters rise, the nearer Noah's ark was lifted up to heaven; the more thy afflictions are increased, the more thy heart shall be raised heavenward.

Because I would not hold you too long in the porch, I shall only endeavour two things: first, to give you the reasons of my appearing once more in print; and secondly, a little counsel and direction that the following tract may turn to your soul's advantage, which is the white that I have in my eye.

The true reasons of my sending this piece into the world, such as it is, are these:

I. First, The afflicting hand of God hath been hard upon myself, and upon my dearest relations in this world, and upon many of my precious Christian friends, whom I much love and honour in the Lord, which put me upon studying of the mind of God in that scripture that I have made the subject-matter of this following discourse. Luther could not understand some Psalms till he was afflicted; the Christ-cross is no letter in the book, and yet, saith he, it hath taught me more than all the letters in the book. Afflictions are a golden key by which the Lord opens the rich treasure of his word to his people's souls; and this in some measure, through grace, my soul hath experienced. When Samson had found honey, he gave some to his father and mother to eat, Jdg 14:9-10; some honey I have found in my following text; and therefore I may not, I cannot be such a churl as not to give them some of my honey to taste, who have drunk deep of my gall and wormwood. Austin observes on that, Psa 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' 'He doth not call them,' saith he, 'to acquaint them with speculations, how wide the earth is, how far the heavens are stretched out, what the number of the stars is, or what is the course of the sun; but come and I will tell you the wonders of his grace, the faithfulness of his promises, the riches of his mercy to my soul.' Gracious experiences are to be communicated. Lilmod lelammed, we therefore learn that we may teach, is a proverb among the Rabbins. And I do therefore 'lay in and lay up,' saith the heathen, that I may draw forth again and lay out for the good of many. When God hath dealt bountifully with us, others should reap some noble good by us. The family, the town, the city, the country, where a man lives, should fare the better for his faring well. Our mercies and experiences should be as a running spring at our doors, which is not only for our own use, but also for our neighbours', yea, and for strangers too.

Secondly, What is written is permanent; *littera scripta manet*, and spreads itself further by far, for time, place, and persons, than the voice can reach. The pen is an artificial tongue; it speaks as well to absent as to present friends; it speaks to them afar off as well as those that are near; it speaks to many thousands at once; it speaks not only to the present age but also to succeeding ages. The pen is a kind of image of eternity; it will make a man live when he is dead, Heb 11:4. Though 'the prophets do not live for ever,' yet their labours may, Zec 1:6. A man's writings may preach when he cannot, when he may not, and when, by reason of bodily distempers, he dares not; yea, and that which is more, when he is not.

Thirdly, Few men, if any, have iron memories. How soon is a sermon preached forgotten, when a sermon written remains! Augustine writing to Volusian, saith, 'That which is written is always at hand to be read, when the reader is at leisure.' Men do not easily forget their own names, nor their father's house, nor the wives of their bosoms, nor the fruit of their loins, nor to eat their daily bread; and yet, ah! how easily do they forget that word of grace, that should be dearer to them than all! Most men's memories, especially in the great concernments of their souls, are like a sieve or boulder,⁴ where the good corn and fine flour goes through, but the light chaff and coarse bran remain behind; or like a strainer, where the sweet liquor is strained out, but the dregs left behind; or like a grate that lets the pure water run away, but if there be any straws, sticks, mud, or filth, that it holds, as it were, with iron hands. Most men's memories are very treacherous, especially in good things; few men's memories are a holy ark, a heavenly storehouse or magazine for their souls, and therefore they stand in the more need of a written word. But,

Fourthly, Its marvellous suitableness and usefulness under these great turns and changes that have passed upon us. As every wise husbandman observes the fittest seasons to sow his seed—some he sows in the autumn and fall of the leaf, some in the spring of the year, some in a dry season and some in a wet, some in a moist clay and some in a sandy dry ground, Isa 28:25,—so every spiritual husbandman must observe the fittest times to sow his spiritual seed in. He hath heavenly seed by him for all occasions and seasons, for spring and fall; for all grounds, heads, and hearts. Now whether the seed sown in the following treatise be not suitable to the times and seasons wherein we are cast, is left to the judgment of the prudent reader to determine; if the author had thought otherwise, this babe had been stifled in the womb.

Fifthly, The good acceptance that my other weak labours have found. God hath blessed them, not only to the conviction, the edification, confirmation, and consolation of many, but also to the conversion of many, Rom 15:21. God is a free agent to work by what hand he pleases; and sometimes he takes pleasure to do great things by weak means, that 'no flesh may glory in his presence.' God will not 'despise the day of small things;' and who or what art thou, that darest despise that day? The Spirit breathes upon whose preaching and writing he pleases, and all prospers according as that wind blows, John 3:8.

Sixthly, That all afflicted and distressed Christians may have a proper salve for every sore, a proper remedy against every disease, at hand. As every good man, so every good book is not fit to be the afflicted man's companion; but this is. Here he may see his face, his head, his hand, his heart, his ways, his works; here he may see all his diseases discovered, and proper remedies proposed and applied; here he may find arguments to silence him, and means to quiet him, when it is at worst with him; in every storm here he may find a tree to shelter him; and in every danger, here he may find a city of refuge to secure him, and in every difficulty, here he may have a light to guide him; and in every peril, here he may find a buckler to defend him; and in every distress, here he may find a cordial to strengthen him; and in every trouble, here he may find a staff to support him.

Seventhly, To satisfy some bosom friends, some faithful friends. Man is made to be a friend, and apt for friendly offices. He that is not friendly is not worthy to have a friend, and he that hath a friend, and doth not shew himself friendly, is not worthy to be accounted a man. Friendship is a kind of life, without which there is no comfort of a man's life. Christian friendship ties such a knot that great Alexander cannot cut. Summer friends I value not, but winter friends are worth their weight in gold; and who can deny such anything, especially in these days, wherein real, faithful, constant friends are so rare to be found? 1Sa 22:1-3. The friendship of most men in these days is like Jonah's gourd, now very promising and flourishing, and anon fading and withering; it is like some plants in the water, which have broad leaves on the surface of the water, but scarce any root at all; their friendship is like melons, cold within, hot without; their expressions are high, but their affections are low; they speak much, but do little. As drums, and trumpets, and ensigns in a battle make a great noise and a fine show, but act nothing, so these counterfeit friends will compliment highly, bow handsomely, speak plausibly, and promise lustily, and yet have neither a hand nor heart to act anything cordially or faithfully. From such friends it is a mercy to be delivered, and therefore king Antigonus was wont to pray to God that he would protect him from his friends; and when one of his council asked him why he prayed so, he returned this answer, Every man will shun and defend himself against his professed enemies, but from our professed or pretended

friends, of whom few are faithful, none can safe-guard himself, but hath need of protection from heaven. But for all this, there are some that are real friends, faithful friends, active friends, winter friends, bosom friends, fast friends; and for their sakes, especially those among them that have been long, very long, under the smarting rod, and in the fiery furnace, and that have been often poured from vessel to vessel, have I once more appeared in print to the world.

Eighthly and lastly, There hath not any authors or author come to my hand, that hath handled this subject as I have done; and therefore I do not know but it may be the more grateful and acceptable to the world; and if by this essay others that are more able shall be provoked to do more worthily upon this subject, I shall therein rejoice, 2Th 1:7-8, 1Co 9:1-2. I shall only add, that though much of the following matter was preached upon the Lord's visitation of my dear yoke-fellow, myself, and some other friends, yet there are many things of special concernment in the following tract, that yet I have not upon any accounts communicated to the world. And thus I have given you a true and faithful account of the reasons that have prevailed with me to publish this treatise to the world, and to dedicate it to yourselves.

II. Secondly, The second thing promised was, the giving of you a little good counsel, that you may so read the following discourse, as that it may turn much to your soul's advantage; for, as many fish and catch nothing, Luk 5:5, so many read good books and get nothing, because they read them over cursorily, slightly, superficially; but he that would read to profit, must then,

First, Read and look up for a blessing: 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water,' but all will be to no purpose, except 'the Lord give the increase,' 1Co 3:6-7. God must do the deed, when all is done, or else all that is done will do you no good. If you would have this work successful and effectual, you must look off from man and look up to God, who alone can make it a blessing to you. As without a blessing from heaven, thy clothes cannot warm thee, nor thy food nourish thee, nor physic cure thee, nor friends comfort thee, Mic 6:14; so without a blessing from heaven, without the precious breathings and influences of the Spirit, what here is done will do you no good, it will not turn to your account in the day of Christ; and therefore cast an eye heavenwards, Hag 1:6. It is Seneca's observation, that the husbandmen in Egypt never look up to heaven for rain in the time of drought, but look after the overflowing of the banks of Nilus, as the only cause of their plenty. Ah, how many are there in these days, who, when they go to read a book, never look up, never look after the rain of God's blessing, but only look to the river Nilus; they only look to the wit, the learning, the arts, the parts, the eloquence, &c., of the author, they never look so high as heaven; and hence it comes to pass, that though these read much, yet they profit little.

Secondly, He that would read to profit must read and meditate. Meditation is the food of your souls, it is the very stomach and natural heat whereby spiritual truths are digested. A man shall as soon live without his heart, as he shall be able to get good by what he reads, without meditation. Prayer, saith Bernard, without meditation, is dry and formal, and reading without meditation is useless and unprofitable. He that would be a wise, a prudent, and an able experienced statesman, must not hastily ramble and run over many cities, countries, customs, laws, and manners of people, without serious musing and pondering upon such things as may make him an expert statesman; so he that would get good by reading, that would complete his knowledge, and perfect his experience in spiritual things, must not slightly and hastily ramble and run over this book or that, but ponder upon what he reads, as Mary pondered the saying of the angel in her heart. Lord!

saith Austin, the more I meditate on thee, the sweeter thou art to me; so the more you shall meditate on the following matter, the sweeter it will be to you. They usually thrive best who meditate most. Meditation is a soul-fattening duty; it is a grace-strengthening duty, it is a duty-crowning duty. Gerson calls meditation the nurse of prayer; Jerome calls it his paradise; Basil calls it the treasury where all the graces are locked up; Theophylact calls it the very gate and portal by which we enter into glory; and Aristotle, though a heathen, placeth felicity in the contemplation of the mind. You may read much and hear much, yet without meditation you will never be excellent, you will never be eminent Christians.

Thirdly, Read, and try what thou readest; take nothing upon trust, but all upon trial, as those 'noble Bereans' did, Acts 17:10-11. You will try and tell and weigh gold, though it be handed to you by your fathers; and so should you all those heavenly truths that are handed to you by your spiritual fathers. I hope upon trial you will find nothing but what will hold weight in the balance of the sanctuary; and though all be not gold that glisters, yet I judge that you will find nothing here to glister, that will not be found upon trial to be true gold.

Fourthly, Read and do, read and practise what you read, or else all your reading will do you no good. He that hath a good book in his hand, but not a lesson of it in his heart or life, is like that ass that carrieth burdens, and feeds upon thistles. In divine account, a man knows no more than he doth. Profession without practice will but make a man twice told a child of darkness; to speak well is to sound like a cymbal, but to do well is to act like an angel [Isidore]. He that practiseth what he reads and understands, God will help him to understand what he understands not. There is no fear of knowing too much, though there is much fear in practising too little; the most doing man shall be the most knowing man; the mightiest man in practice will in the end prove the mightiest man in Scripture, John 17:16-17, Psa 119:98-100. Theory is the guide of practice, and practice is the life of theory. Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach. 'Where,' said they, 'is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy gospel, and yet are unclean; they read the apostles' writings, and yet live in drunkenness; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives.' Ah! how may many preachers take up sad complaints against many readers in these days! They read our works, and yet in their lives they deny our works; they praise our works, and yet in their conversations they reproach our works; they cry up our labours in their discourses, and yet they cry them down in their practices: yet I hope better things of you into whose hands this treatise shall fall.² The Samaritan woman did not fill her pitcher with water, that she might talk of it, but that she might use it, John 4:7; and Rachel did not desire the mandrakes to hold in her hand, but that she might thereby be the more apt to bring forth, Gen 30:15. The application is easy. But,

Fifthly, Read and apply. Reading is but the drawing of the bow, application is the hitting of the white. The choicest truths will no further profit you than they are applied by you; you were as good not to read, as not to apply what you read.⁴ No man attains to health by reading of Galen, or knowing Hippocrates, his aphorisms, but by the practical application of them; all the reading in the world will never make for the health of your souls except you apply what you read. The true reason why many read so much and profit so little is, because they do not apply and bring home what they read to their own souls. But,

Sixthly, and lastly, Read and pray. He that makes not conscience of praying over what he reads, will find little sweetness or profit in his reading. No man makes such earnings of his reading, as he that prays over what he reads. Luther professeth that he profited more in the knowledge of the Scriptures by prayer, in a short space, than by study in a longer. As John by weeping got the sealed book open, so certainly men would gain much more than they do by reading good men's works, if they would but pray more over what they read. Ah, Christians! pray before you read, and pray after you read, that all may be blessed and sanctified to you; when you have done reading, usually close up thus:— So let me live, so let me die, That I may live eternally. And when you are in the mount for yourselves, bear him upon your hearts, who is willing to 'spend and be spent' for your sakes, for your souls, 2Co 12:15. Oh! pray for me, that I may more and more be under the rich influences and glorious pourings out of the Spirit; that I may 'be an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit,' 2Co 3:6; that I may always find an everlasting spring and an overflowing fountain within me, which may alway make me faithful, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord; and that I may live daily under those inward teachings of the Spirit, that may enable me to speak from the heart to the heart, from the conscience to the conscience, and from experience to experience; that I may be a 'burning and a shining light.' that everlasting arms may be still under me; that whilst I live, I may be serviceable to his glory and his people's good; that no discouragements may discourage me in my work; and that when my work is done, I may give up my account with joy and not with grief. I shall follow these poor labours with my weak prayers, that they may contribute much to your internal and eternal welfare, and so rest, Your soul's servant in our dearest Lord,

Thomas Brooks. THE MUTE CHRISTIAN UNDER THE SMARTING ROD I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.—Psa 39:9 Not to trouble you with a tedious preface, wherein usually is a flood of words, and but a drop of matter, This psalm consists of two parts, the first exegetical or narrative, the second eutical or precative.² 1. Narration and prayer take up the whole. In the former, you have the prophet's disease discovered; and in the latter, the remedy applied. My text falls in the latter part, where you have the way of David's cure, or the means by which his soul was reduced to a still and quiet temper. I shall give a little light into the words, and then come to the point that I intend to stand upon.

'I was dumb.' The Hebrew word מִתְּכַחֵם from כָּחַם signifies to be mute, tongue-tied, or dumb. The Hebrew word signifies also to bind, as well as to be mute and dumb, because they that are dumb are as it were tongue-tied; they have their lips stitched and bound up. Ah! the sight of God's hand in the afflictions that was upon him, makes him lay a law of silence upon his heart and tongue.

'I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.' He looks through all secondary causes to the first cause, and is silent: he sees a hand of God in all, and so sits mute and quiet. The sight of God in an affliction is of an irresistible efficacy to silence the heart, and to stop the mouth of a gracious man. In the words you may observe three things:

1. The person speaking, and that is, David; David a king, David a saint, David 'a man after God's own heart,' David a Christian; and here we are to look upon David, not as a king, but as a Christian, as a man whose heart was right with God.

2. The action and carriage of David under the hand of God, in these words, 'I was dumb, and opened not my mouth.'

3. The reason of this humble and sweet carriage of his, in these words, 'because thou didst it.' The proposition is this:

Doct. That it is the great duty and concernment of gracious souls to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world. For the opening and clearing up of this great and useful truth, I shall inquire, First, What this silence is that is here pointed at in the proposition.

Secondly, What a gracious, a holy, silence doth include.

Thirdly, What this holy silence doth not include.

Fourthly, The reasons of the point; and then bring home all by way of application to our own souls.

I. For the first, What is the silence here meant? I answer, There is a sevenfold silence.

First, There is a stoical silence. The stoics of old thought it altogether below a man that hath reason or understanding either to rejoice in any good, or to mourn for any evil; but this stoical silence is such a sinful insensibleness as is very provoking to a holy God, Isa 26:10-11. God will make the most insensible sinner sensible either of his hand here, or of his wrath in hell. It is a heathenish and a horrid sin to be without natural affections, Rom 1:31. And of this sin Quintus Fabius Maximus seems to be foully guilty, who, when he heard that his mother and wife, whom he dearly loved, were slain by the fall of an house, and that his younger son, a brave, hopeful young man, died at the same time in Umbria, he never changed his countenance, but went on with the affairs of the commonwealth as if no such calamity had befallen him. This carriage of his spoke out more stupidity than patience, Job 36:13. And so Harpalus was not at all appalled when he saw two of his sons laid ready dressed in a charger, when Astyages had bid him to supper. This was a sottish insensibleness. Certainly if the loss of a child in the house be no more to thee than the loss of a chick in the yard, thy heart is base and sordid, and thou mayest well expect some sore awakening judgment. This age is full of such monsters, who think it below the greatness and magnanimity of their spirits to be moved, affected, or afflicted with any afflictions that befall them. I know none so ripe and ready for hell as these.

Aristotle speaks of fishes, that though they have spears thrust into their sides, yet they awake not. God thrusts many a sharp spear through many a sinner's heart, and yet he feels nothing, he complains of nothing. These men's souls will bleed to death. Seneca, Epist. x., reports of Senecio Cornelius, who minded his body more than his soul, and his money more than heaven; when he had all the day long waited on his dying friend, and his friend was dead, he returns to his house, sups merrily, comforts himself quickly, goes to bed cheerfully. His sorrows were ended, and the time of his mourning expired before his deceased friend was interred. Such stupidity is a curse that many a man lies under. But this stoical silence, which is but a sinful sullenness, is not the silence here meant.

Secondly, There is a politic silence. Many are silent out of policy. Should they not be silent, they should lay themselves more open either to the rage and fury of men, or else to the plots and designs of men: to prevent which they are silent, and will lay their hands upon their mouths, that

others might not lay their hands upon their estates, lives, or liberties: 'And Saul also went home to Gibeah, and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents; but he held his peace,' or was as though he had been deaf, 1Sa 10:26-27. This new king being but newly entered upon his kingly government, and observing his condition to be but mean and low, his friends but few, and his enemies many and potent, sons of Belial, i. e. men without yoke, as the word signifies, men that were desperately wicked, that were marked out for hell, that were even incarnate devils, who would neither submit to reason nor religion, nor be governed by the laws of nature nor of nations, nor yet by the laws of God: now this young prince, to prevent sedition and rebellion, blood and destruction, prudently and politicly chooses rather to lay his hand upon his mouth than to take a wolf by the ear or a lion by the beard; wanted neither wit nor will to be mute; he turns a deaf ear to all they say, his unsettled condition requiring silence.

Henry the Sixth, emperor of Germany, used to say, Qui nescit tacere, nescit loqui, He that knows not how to be silent, knows not how to speak. Saul knew this was a time for silence; he knew his work was rather to be an auditor than an orator. But this is not the silence the proposition speaks of.

Thirdly, There is a foolish silence. Some fools there be that can neither do well nor speak well, and because they cannot word it neither as they would nor as they should, they are so wise as to be mute: Pro 17:28, 'Even a fool, when he holds his peace, is counted wise, and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.' As he cannot be wise that speaks much, so he cannot be known for a fool that says nothing. There are many wise fools in the world; there are many silly fools, who, by holding their tongues, gain the credit and honour of being discreet men. He that doth not discover his want of wisdom by foolish babbling, is accounted wise, though he may be otherwise. Silence is so rare a virtue, where wisdom doth regulate it, that it is accounted a virtue where folly doth impose it. Silence was so highly honoured among the old Romans, that they erected altars to it. That man shall pass for a man of understanding, who so far understands himself as to hold his tongue. For though it be a great misery to be a fool, yet it is a greater that a man cannot be a fool but he must needs shew it. But this foolish silence is not the silence here meant.

Fourthly, There is a sullen silence. Many, to gratify an humour, a lust, are sullenly silent; these are troubled with a dumb devil, which was the worst devil of all the devils you read of in the Scripture, Mark 9:17-28. Pliny, in his Natural History, maketh mention of a certain people in the Indies, upon the river Ganges, called Astomy, that have no mouth, but do only feed upon the smell of herbs and flowers. Certainly there is a generation amongst us, who, when they are under the afflicting hand of God, have no mouths to plead with God, no lips to praise God, nor no tongues to justify God. These are possessed with a dumb devil; and this dumb devil had possessed Ahab for a time: 1Ki 21:4, 'And Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased, and laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.' Ahab's ambitious humour, his covetous humour, being crossed, he is resolved to starve himself, and to die of the sullens. A sullen silence is both a sin and a punishment. No devil frets and vexes, wears and wastes the spirits of a man, like this dumb devil, like this sullen silence.

Some write of a certain devil, whom they call Hudgin, who will not, they say, hurt anybody, except he be wronged. I cannot speak so favourably of a sullen silence, for that wrongs many at once, God and Christ, bodies and soul. But this is not the silence here meant.

Fifthly, There is a forced silence. Many are silent per force. He that is under the power of his enemy, though he suffer many hard things, yet he is silent under his sufferings, because he knows he is liable to worse; he that hath taken away his liberty, may take away his life; he that hath taken away his money, may take off his head; he that hath let him blood in the foot may let him blood in the throat if he will not be still and quiet: and this works silence per force. So, when many are under the afflicting hand of God, conscience tells them that now they are under the hand of an enemy, and the power of that God whom they have dishonoured, whose Son they have crucified, whose Spirit they have grieved, whose righteous laws they have transgressed, whose ordinances they have despised, and whose people they have abused and opposed; and that he that hath taken away one child, may take away every child; and he that hath taken away the wife, might have taken away the husband; and he that hath taken away some part of the estate, might have taken away all the estate; and that he who hath inflicted some distempers upon the body, might have cast both body and soul into hell-fire for ever; and he that hath shut him up in his chamber, may shut him out of heaven at pleasure. The thoughts and sense of these things makes many a sinner silent under the hand of God; but this is but a forced silence. And such was the silence of Philip the Second, king of Spain, who, when his invincible Armada, that had been three years a-fitting, was lost, he gave command that all over Spain they should give thanks to God and the saints that it was no more grievous. As the cudgel forces the dog to be quiet and still, and the rod forces the child to be silent and mute, so the apprehensions of what God hath done, and of what God may do, forces many a soul to be silent, Jer 3:10, 1Ki 14:5-18. But this is not the silence here meant: a forced silence is no silence in the eye of God.

Sixthly, There is a despairing silence. A despairing soul is Magormissabib, a terror to himself; he hath a hell in his heart, and horror in his conscience. He looks upwards, and there he beholds God frowning, and Christ bleeding; he looks inwards, and there he finds conscience accusing and condemning of him; he looks on the one side of him, and there he hears all his sins crying out, We are thine, and we will follow thee; we will to the grave with thee, we will to judgment with thee, and from judgment we will to hell with thee; he looks on the other side of him, and there he sees infernal fiends in fearful shapes, amazing and terrifying of him, and waiting to receive his despairing soul as soon as she shall take her leave of his wretched body; he looks above him, and there he sees the gates of heaven shut against him; he looks beneath him, and there he sees hell gaping for him; and under these sad sights, he is full of secret conclusions against his own soul. There is mercy for others, saith the despairing soul, but none for me; grace and favour for others, but none for me; pardon and peace for others, but none for me; blessedness and happiness for others, but none for me: there is no help, there is no help, no, Jer 2:25, Jer 28:12. This seems to be his case who died with this desperate saying in his mouth, Spes et fortuna valete, farewell, life and hope together. Now, under these dismal apprehensions and sad conclusions about its present and future condition, the despairing soul sits silent, being filled with amazement and astonishment: Psa 77:4, 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak.' But this is not the silence here meant. But,

Seventhly and lastly, There is a prudent silence, a holy, a gracious silence; a silence that springs from prudent principles, from holy principles, and from gracious causes and considerations; and

this is the silence here meant. And this I shall fully discover in my answers to the second question, which is this:

II. Quest. 2. What doth a prudent, a gracious, a holy silence include?

Ans. 2. It includes and takes in these eight things:

First, It includes a sight of God, and an acknowledgment of God as the author of all the afflictions that come upon us. And this you have plain in the text: 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.' The psalmist looks through secondary causes to the first cause, and so sits mute before the Lord. There is no sickness so little, but God hath a finger in it, though it be but the aching of the little finger. As the scribe is more eyed and properly said to write, than the pen; and he that maketh and keepeth the clock, is more properly said to make it go and strike, than the wheels and weights that hang upon it; and as every workman is more eyed and properly said to effect his works, rather than the tools which he useth as his instruments. So the Lord, who is the chief agent and mover in all actions, and who hath the greatest hand in all our afflictions, is more to be eyed and owned than any inferior or subordinate causes whatsoever; so Job, he beheld God in all: Job 1:21, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.' Had he not seen God in the affliction, he would have cried out: Oh these wretched Chaldeans, they have plundered and spoiled me; these wicked Sabeans, they have robbed and wronged me! Job discerns God's commission in the Chaldeans' and the Sabeans' hands, and then lays his own hand upon his mouth. So Aaron, beholding the hand of God in the untimely death of his two sons, holds his peace, Lev 10:3. The sight of God in this sad stroke is a bridle both to his mind and mouth, he neither mutters nor murmurs. So Joseph saw the hand of God in his brethren's selling of him into Egypt, Gen 45:8, and that silences him.

Men that see not God in an affliction, are easily cast into a feverish fit, they will quickly be in a flame, and when their passions are up, and their hearts on fire, they will begin to be saucy, and make no bones of telling God to his teeth, that they do well to be angry, Jon 4:8-9. Such as will not acknowledge God to be the author of all their afflictions, will be ready enough to fall in with that mad principle of the Manichees, who maintained the devil to be the author of all calamities; as if there could be any evil of affliction in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it, Amo 3:6. Such as can see the ordering hand of God in all their afflictions, will, with David, lay their hands upon their mouths, when the rod of God is upon their backs, 2Sa 16:11-12. If God's hand be not seen in the affliction, the heart will do nothing but fret and rage under affliction.

Secondly, It includes and takes in some holy, gracious apprehensions of the majesty, sovereignty, dignity, authority, and presence of that God under whose afflicting hand we are: Hab 2:20, 'But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth be silent,' or as the Hebrew reads it, 'Be silent, all the earth, before his face.' When God would have all the people of the earth to be bushed, quiet, and silent before him, he would have them to behold him in his temple, where he sits in state, in majesty, and glory: Zep 1:1-18. 'Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God.' Chat not, murmur not, repine not, quarrel not; whist, stand mute, be silent, lay thy hand on thy mouth, when his hand is upon thy back, who is totus oculus, all eye to see, as well as all hand to punish. As the eyes of a well-drawn picture are fastened on thee which way soever thou turnest, so are the eyes of the Lord; and therefore thou hast cause to stand mute before him.

Thus Aaron had an eye to the sovereignty of God, and that silences him. And Job had an eye upon the majesty of God, and that stills him. And Eli had an eye upon the authority and presence of God, and that quiets him. A man never comes to humble himself, nor to be silent under the hand of God, until he comes to see the hand of God to be a mighty hand: 1Pe 5:6, 'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God.' When men look upon the hand of God as a weak hand, a feeble hand, a low hand, a mean hand, their hearts rise against his hand. 'Who is the Lord,' saith Pharaoh, 'that I should obey his voice?' Exo 5:2. And until Pharaoh came to see the hand of God, as a mighty hand, and to feel it as a mighty hand, he would not let Israel go. When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, at first he drew out his sword and defended himself; but when they charged him in the king's name, and informed him that they came from the king, and were commanded to bring him to the king, he yielded willingly. So when afflictions arrest us, we shall murmur and grumble, and struggle, and strive even to the death, before we shall yield to that God that strikes, until we come to see his majesty and authority, until we come to see him as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, Isa 26:11-12. It is such a sight of God as this, that makes the heart to stoop under his almighty hand, Rev 1:5. The Thracians being ignorant of the dignity and majesty of God; when it thundered and lightened, used to express their madness and folly in shooting their arrows against heaven threatening-wise. As a sight of his grace cheers the soul, so a sight of his greatness and glory silences the soul.² But,

Thirdly, A gracious, a prudent silence, takes in a holy quietness and calmness of mind and spirit, under the afflicting hand of God. A gracious silence shuts out all inward heats, murmurings, frettings, quarrelings, wranglings, and boilings of heart: Psa 62:1, 'Truly my soul keepeth silence unto God, or is silent or still;' that is, my soul is quiet and submissive to God; all murmurings and repinings, passions and turbulent affections, being allayed, tamed, and subdued. This also is clear in the text; and in the former instances of Aaron, Eli, and Job. They saw that it was a Father that put those bitter cups in their hands, and love that laid those heavy crosses upon their shoulders, and grace that put those yokes about their necks; and this caused much quietness and calmness in their spirits. Marius bit in his pain when the surgeon cut off his leg. Some men, when God cuts off this mercy and that mercy from them, they bite in their pain, they hide and conceal their grief and trouble; but could you but look into their hearts, you will find all in an uproar, all out of order, all in a flame; and however they may seem to be cold without, yet they are all in a hot burning fever within. Such a feverish fit David was once in, Psa 39:3. But certainly a holy silence allays all tumults in the mind, and makes a man 'in patience to possess his own soul,' which, next to his possession of God, is the choicest and sweetest possession in all the world, Luk 21:19. The law of silence is as well upon that man's heart and mind, as it is upon his tongue, who is truly and divinely silent under the rebuking hand of God. As tongue-service abstracted from heart-service is no service in the account of God; so tongue-silence abstracted from heart-silence is no silence in the esteem of God. A man is then graciously silent when all is quiet within and without, Isa 29:13, Mat 15:8-9.

Terpander, a harper and a poet, was one that, by the sweetness of his verse and music, could allay the tumultuous motions of men's minds, as David by his harp did Saul's. When God's people are under the rod, he makes by his Spirit and word such sweet music in their souls, as allays all tumultuous motions, passions, and perturbations, Psa 94:17-19, Psa 119:49-50, so that they sit, Noah-like, quiet and still; and in peace possess their own souls.

Fourthly, A prudent, a holy silence, takes in an humble, justifying, clearing and acquitting of God of all blame, rigour and injustice, in all the afflictions he brings upon us; Psa 51:4, 'That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest,' that is, when thou correctest. God's judging his people is God's correcting or chastening of his people: 1Co 11:32, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.' David's great care, when he was under the afflicting hand of God, was to clear the Lord of injustice. Ah! Lord, saith he, there is not the least show, spot, stain, blemish, or mixture of injustice, in all the afflictions thou hast brought upon me; I desire to take shame to myself, and to set to my seal, that the Lord is righteous, and that there is no injustice, no cruelty, nor no extremity in all that the Lord hath brought upon me.' And so in that Psa 119:75, Psa 119:137, he sweetly and readily subscribes unto the righteousness of God in those sharp and smart afflictions that God exercised him with. 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Righteous art thou, O Lord, and righteous are thy judgments.' God's judgments are always just; he never afflicts but in faithfulness. His will is the rule of justice; and therefore a gracious soul dares not cavil nor question his proceedings. The afflicted soul knows that a righteous God can do nothing but that which is righteous; it knows that God is incontrollable, and therefore the afflicted man puts his mouth in the dust, and keeps silence before him. Who dare say, 'Wherefore hast thou done so?' 2Sa 16:10. The Turks, when they are cruelly lashed, are compelled to return to the judge that commanded it, to kiss his hand, give him thanks, and pay the officer that whipped them, and so clear the judge and officer of injustice. Silently to kiss the rod, and the hand that whips with it, is the noblest way of clearing the Lord of all injustice. The Babylonish captivity was the sorest, the heaviest affliction that ever God inflicted upon any people under heaven; witness that 1Sa 12:1-25, and Dan 9:12, &c. Yet under those smart afflictions, wisdom is justified of her children: Neh 9:33, 'Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;' Lam 1:18, 'The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against him.' A holy silence shines in nothing more than in an humble justifying and clearing of God from all that which a corrupt heart is apt enough to charge God with in the day of affliction. God, in that he is good, can give nothing, nor do nothing, but that which is good; others do frequently, he cannot possibly, saith Luther, on Psa 120:1-7.

Fifthly, A holy silence takes in gracious, blessed, soul-quieting conclusions about the issue and event of those afflictions that are upon us, Lam 3:27-34. In this choice scripture you may observe these five soul-stilling conclusions.

(1.) First, and that more generally, That they shall work for their good: Lam 3:27, 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.' A gracious soul secretly concludes, as stars shine brightest in the night, so God will make my soul shine and glister like gold, whilst I am in this furnace, and when I come out of the furnace of affliction: Job 23:10, 'He knoweth the way that I take; and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.'

Surely, as the tasting of honey did open Jonathan's eyes, so this cross, this affliction, shall open mine eyes; by this stroke I shall come to have a clearer sight of my sins and of myself, and a fuller sight of my God, Job 33:27-28; Job 40:4-5; Job 42:1-7.

Surely this affliction shall issue in the purging away of my dross, Isa 1:25.

Surely as ploughing of the ground killeth the weeds, and harrowing breaketh hard clods, so these afflictions shall kill my sins, and soften my heart, Hos 5:15, Jos 6:1-3.

Surely as the plaster draws out the core, so the afflictions that are upon me shall draw out the core of pride, the core of self-love, the core of envy, the core of earthliness, the core of formality, the core of hypocrisy, Psa 119:67, Psa 119:71.

Surely by these the Lord will crucify my heart more and more to the world, and the world to my heart, Gal 6:14; Psa 131:1-3.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will hide pride from my soul, Job 33:14-21.

Surely these afflictions are but the Lord's pruning-knives, by which he will bleed my sins, and prune my heart, and make it more fertile and fruitful; they are but the Lord's portion, by which he will clear me, and rid me of those spiritual diseases and maladies, which are most deadly and dangerous to my soul.

Affliction is such a potion, as will carry away all ill humours, better than all the benedicta medicamenta, as physicians call them, Zec 13:8-9.

Surely these shall increase my spiritual experiences, Rom 5:3-4.

Surely by these I shall be made more partaker of God's holiness, Heb 12:10. As black soap makes white clothes, so doth sharp afflictions make holy hearts.

Surely by these God will communicate more of himself unto me, Hos 2:14.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will draw out my heart more and more to seek him, Isa 26:16. Tatianus told the heathen Greeks, that when they were sick, then they would send for their gods to be with them, as Agamemnon did at the siege of Troy, send for his ten councillors. Hos 5:15, 'In their afflictions they will seek me early,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'they will morning me;' in times of affliction, Christians will industriously, speedily, early seek unto the Lord.

Surely by these trials and troubles the Lord will fix my soul more than ever upon the great concerns of another world, John 14:1-3; Rom 8:17-18; 2Co 4:16-18.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will work in me more tenderness and compassion towards those that are afflicted, Heb 10:34, Heb 13:3. As that Tyrian queen said, Evils have taught me to bemoan, All that afflictions make to groan. The Romans punished one that was seen looking out at his window with a crown of roses on his head, in a time of public calamity. Bishop Bonner was full of guts, but empty of bowels; I am afraid this age is full of such Bonners.

Surely these are but God's love-tokens: Rev 3:19, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.' Seneca persuaded his friend Polybius to bear his affliction quietly, because he was the emperor's favourite, telling him, that it was not lawful for him to complain whilst Cæsar was his friend. So saith the holy Christian, O my soul! be quiet, be still; all is in love, all is a fruit of divine favour. I see honey upon the top of every twig, I see the rod is but a rosemary branch, I have sugar with my gall, and wine with my worm wood; therefore be silent, O my soul! and this general conclusion, that all should be for good, had this blessed effect upon the church: Lam 3:28, 'He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.'

Afflictions abase the loveliness of the world without, that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which might else ensnare us! and it abates the spirit in its quarrel against the flesh

and the world; by all which it proves a mighty advantage unto us.

(2.) Secondly, They shall keep them humble and low: Lam 3:29, 'He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope.' Some say, that these words are an allusion to the manner of those that, having been conquered and subdued, lay their necks down at the conqueror's feet to be trampled upon, and so lick up the dust that is under the conqueror's feet. Others of the learned looked upon the words as an allusion to poor petitioners, who cast themselves down at princes' feet, that they may draw forth their pity and compassion towards them. As I have read of Aristippus, who fell on the ground before Dionysius, and kissed his feet, when he presented a petition to him; and being asked the reason, answered, *Aures habet in pedibus*, he hath his ears in his feet. Take it which way you will, it holds forth this to us, That holy hearts will be humble under the afflicting hand of God. When God's rod is upon their backs, their mouths shall be in the dust. A good heart will lie lowest, when the hand of God is lifted highest, Job 42:1-7; Acts 9:1-8.

(3.) Thirdly, The third soul-quieting conclusion you have in Lam 3:31, 'For the Lord will not cast off for ever;' the rod shall not always lie upon the back of the righteous. 'At even-tide, lo there is trouble, but afore morning it is gone,' Isa 17:13. As Athanasius said to his friends, when they came to bewail his misery and banishment, *Nubecula est, citò transibit*; it is but a little cloud, said he, and it will quickly be gone. There are none of God's afflicted ones, that have not their *lucida intervalla*, their intermissions, respites, breathing-whiles; yea, so small a while doth the hand of the Lord rest upon his people, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it; for he calls it a very little little cross that we bear: Isa 26:20, 'Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment (or for a little space, a little while), until the indignation be overpast.' The indignation doth not transire, but pertransire, pass, but over-pass. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of the saints' afflictions, is set forth by the travail of a woman, John 16:21, which is sharp, short, and sudden.

(4.) Fourthly, The fourth soul-silencing conclusion you have in Lam 3:32. 'But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies.' 'In wrath God remembers mercy,' Hab 3:2. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning,' Psa 30:5. Their mourning shall last but till morning. God will turn their winter's night into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise. The life of a Christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honour, crosses and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and sorrows, mirth and mourning; all honey would harm us, all wormwood would undo us; a composition of both is the best way in the world to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best and most for the health of the soul that the south wind of mercy, and the north wind of adversity, do both blow upon it; and though every wind that blows shall blow good to the saints, yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, cherishing south wind of mercy and prosperity.

(5.) Fifthly, The fifth soul-quieting conclusion you have in Lam 3:33, 'For he doth not afflict willingly (or as the Hebrew hath it, 'from his heart'), 'nor grieve the children of men.' The church concludes, that God's heart was not in their afflictions, though his hand was. He takes no delight to afflict his children; it goes against the hair and the heart; it is a grief to him to be grievous to them, a pain to

him to be punishing of them, a death to him to be striking of them; he hath no will, no motion, no inclination, no disposition, to that work of afflicting of his people; and therefore he calls it his 'work, his strange work,' Isa 28:21. Mercy and punishment, they flow from God, as the honey and the sting from the bee. The bee yieldeth honey of her own nature, but she doth not sting but when she is provoked. He takes delight in shewing of mercy, Mic 7:18; he takes no pleasure in giving his people up to adversity, Hos 11:8. Mercy and kindness floweth from him freely, naturally; he is never severe, never harsh; he never stings, he never terrifies us, but when he is sadly provoked by us. God's hand sometimes may lie very hard upon his people, when his heart, his bowels, at those very times may be yearning towards his people, Jer 31:18-20. No man can tell how the heart of God stands by his hand; his hand of mercy may be open to those against whom his heart is set, as you see in the rich poor fool, and Dives, in the Gospel; and his hand of severity may lie hard upon those on whom he hath set his heart, as you may see in Job and Lazarus. And thus you see those gracious, blessed, soul-quieting conclusions about the issue and event of afflictions, that a holy, a prudent silence doth include.

Sixthly, A holy, a prudent silence includes and takes in a strict charge, a solemn command, that conscience lays upon the soul to be quiet and still. Psa 37:7, 'Rest in the Lord' (or as the Hebrew hath it, 'be silent to the Lord'), 'and wait patiently for him.' I charge thee, O my soul, not to mutter, nor to murmur; I command thee, O my soul, to be dumb and silent under the afflicting hand of God. As Christ laid a charge, a command, upon the boisterous winds and the roaring raging seas,—Mat 8:26, 'Be still; and there was a great calm,'—so conscience lays a charge upon the soul to be quiet and still: Psa 27:14, 'Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.' Peace, O my soul! be still, leave your muttering, leave your murmuring, leave your complaining, leave your chafing and vexing, and lay your hand upon your mouth, and be silent. Conscience allays and stills all the tumults and uproars that be in the soul, by such like reasonings as the clerk of Ephesus stilled that uproar: Acts 19:40, 'For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.' O my soul! be quiet, be silent, else thou wilt one day be called in question for all those inward mutterings, uproars, and passions that are in thee, seeing no sufficient cause can be produced why you should murmur, quarrel, or wrangle, under the righteous hand of God.

Seventhly, A holy, a prudent silence includes a surrendering, a resigning up of ourselves to God, whilst we are under his afflicting hand. The silent soul gives himself up to God. The secret language of the soul is this: 'Lord, here am I; do with me what thou pleasest, write upon me as thou pleasest: I give up myself to be at thy dispose.'

There was a good woman, who, when she was sick, being asked whether she were willing to live or die, answered, 'Which God pleaseth.' But, said one that stood by, 'If God should refer it to you, which should you choose?' 'Truly,' said she, 'if God should refer it to me, I would even refer it to him again.' This was a soul worth gold. Well! saith a gracious soul, the ambitious man giveth himself up to his honours, but I give up myself unto thee; the voluptuous man gives himself up to his pleasures, but I give up myself to thee; the covetous man gives himself up to his bags, but I give up myself to thee; the wanton gives himself up to his minion, but I give up myself to thee; the drunkard gives himself up to his cups, but I give up myself to thee; the papist gives up himself to his idols, but I give myself to thee; the Turk gives up himself to his Mahomet, but I give up myself to thee; the heretic gives up himself to his heretical opinions, but I give up myself to thee. Lord! lay

what burden thou wilt upon me, only let thy everlasting arms be under me [Luther]. Strike, Lord, strike, and spare not, for I am lain down in thy will, I have learned to say amen to thy amen; thou hast a greater interest in me than I have in myself, and therefore I give up myself unto thee, and am willing to be at thy dispose, and am ready to receive what impression thou shalt stamp upon me. O blessed Lord! hast thou not again and again said unto me, as once the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1Ki 20:4. I am thine, O soul! to save thee; my mercy is thine to pardon thee; my blood is thine to cleanse thee; my merits are thine to justify thee; my righteousness is thine to clothe thee; my Spirit is thine to lead thee; my grace is thine to enrich thee; and my glory is thine to reward thee; and therefore, saith a gracious soul, I cannot but make a resignation of myself unto thee. 'Lord! here I am, do with me as seemeth good in thine own eyes.' I know the best way to have my own will, is to resign up myself to thy will, and to say amen to thy amen.

I have read of a gentleman, who, meeting with a shepherd in a misty morning, asked him what weather it would be? It will be, saith the shepherd, what weather pleaseth me; and being courteously requested to express his meaning, Sir, saith he, it shall be what weather pleaseth God, and what weather pleaseth God pleaseth me. When a Christian's will is moulded into the will of God, he is sure to have his will. But,

Eighthly and lastly, A holy, a prudent silence, takes in a patient waiting upon the Lord under our afflictions until deliverance comes: Psa 40:1-3; Psa 62:5, 'My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him;' Lam 3:26, 'It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly (or as the Hebrew hath it, silently) wait for the salvation of the Lord.' The husbandman patiently waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, the mariner patiently waiteth for wind and tide, and so doth the watchman for the dawning of the day; and so doth the silent soul in the night of adversity, patiently wait for the dawning of the day of mercy, Jas 5:7-8. The mercies of God are not styled the swift, but the sure mercies of David, and therefore a gracious soul waits patiently for them. And thus you see what a gracious, a prudent silence doth include.

III. The third thing is, to discover what a holy, a prudent silence under affliction doth not exclude. Now there are eight things that a holy patience doth not exclude.

1. First, A holy, a prudent silence under affliction doth not exclude and shut out a sense and feeling of our afflictions. Psa 39:9, though he 'was dumb, and laid his hand upon his mouth,' yet he was very sensible of his affliction: Psa 39:10-11, 'Remove thy stroke away from me, I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.' He is sensible of his pain as well as of his sin; and having prayed off his sin in the former verses, he labours here to pray off his pain. Diseases, aches, sicknesses, pains, they are all the daughters of sin, and he that is not sensible of them as the births and products of sin, doth but add to his sin and provoke the Lord to add to his sufferings, Isa 26:9-11. No man shall ever be charged by God for feeling his burden, if he neither fret nor faint under it. Grace doth not destroy nature, but rather perfect it. Grace is of a noble offspring; it neither turneth men into stocks nor to stoics. The more grace, the more sensible of the tokens, frowns, blows, and lashes of a displeased Father. Though Calvin, under his greatest pains, was never heard to mutter nor murmur, yet he was heard often to say, 'How long, Lord, how long?' A religious commander being shot in battle, when the wound was

searched, and the bullet cut out, some standing by, pitying his pain, he replied, Though I groan, yet I bless God I do not grumble. God allows his people to groan, though not to grumble. It is a God-provoking sin to be stupid and senseless under the afflicting hand of God. God will heat that man's furnace of affliction sevenfold hotter, who is in the furnace but feels it not: Isa 42:24-25, 'Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and he hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.' Stupidity lays a man open to the greatest fury and severity. The physician, when he findeth that the potion which he hath given his patient will not work, he seconds it with one more violent; and if that will not work, he gives another yet more violent. If a gentle plaster will not serve, then the surgeon applies that which is more corroding; and if that will not do, then he makes use of his cauterizing knife. So when the Lord afflicts, and men feel it not; when he strikes, and they grieve not; when he wounds them, and they awake not: then the furnace is made hotter than ever; then his fury burns, then he lays on irons upon irons, bolt upon bolt, and chain upon chain, until he hath made their lives a hell. Afflictions are the saints' diet-drink; and where do you read in all the Scripture that ever any of the saints drunk of this diet-drink, and were not sensible of it.

2. Secondly, A holy, a prudent, silence doth not shut out prayer for deliverance out of our afflictions. Though the psalmist lays his hand upon his mouth in the text, yet he prays for deliverance: Psa 39:10, 'Remove thy stroke away from me;' and Psa 39:11-12, 'Hear my prayer, O Lord! and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Oh spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more;' Jas 5:13, 'Is any among you afflicted? let him pray;' Psa 50:15, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' Times of affliction, by God's own injunction, are special times of supplication. David's heart was more often out of tune than his harp; but then he prays and presently cries, 'Return to thy rest, O my soul.' Jonah prays in the whale's belly, and Daniel prays when among the lions, and Job prays when on the dunghill, and Jeremiah prays when in the dungeon, &c.; yea, the heathen mariners, as stout as they were, when in a storm, they cry every man to his god, Jon 1:5-6. To call upon God, especially in times of distress and trouble, is a lesson that the very light and law of nature teaches. The Persian messenger, though an heathen, as Æschylus observeth, saith thus: 'When the Grecian forces hotly pursued our host, and we must needs venture over the great water Strymon, frozen then, but beginning to thaw, when a hundred to one we had all died for it, with mine eyes I saw, saith he, many of those gallants whom I had heard before so boldly maintain there was no God, every one upon his knees, and devoutly praying that the ice might hold till they got over.' And shall blind nature do more than grace? If the time of affliction be not a time of supplication, I know not what is. As there are two kinds of antidotes against poison, viz. hot and cold, so there are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles and afflictions of this life, viz. prayer and patience: the one hot, the other cold: the one quenching, the other quickening. Chrysostom understood this well enough when he cried out: Oh! saith he, it is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer; and thereupon observes that Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life than to lose his prayer. Well! this is the second thing. A holy silence doth not exclude prayer; but,

3. Thirdly, A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude men's being kindly affected and afflicted with their sins as the meritorious cause of all their sorrows and sufferings. Lam 3:39-40, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord;' Job 40:4-5, 'Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I proceed no further;' Mic 7:9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned.' In all our sorrows we should read our sins; and when God's hand is upon our backs, our hands should be upon our sins.

It was a good saying of one, 'I hide not my sins, but I shew them; I wipe them not away, but I sprinkle them; I do not excuse them, but accuse them. The beginning of my salvation is the knowledge of my transgression.' When some told Prince Henry,³ that *deliciæ generis humani*, that darling of mankind, that the sins of the people brought that affliction on him, Oh no! said he, I have sins enough of my own to cause that. 'I have sinned, saith David, but what have these poor sheep done?' 2Sa 24:17. When a Christian is under the afflicting hand of God, he may well say, I may thank this proud heart of mine, this worldly heart, this froward heart, this formal heart, this dull heart, this backsliding heart, this self-seeking heart of mine; for that this cup is so bitter, this pain so grievous, this loss so great, this disease so desperate, this wound so incurable; it is mine own self, mine own sin, that hath caused these floods of sorrows to break in upon me. But,

4. Fourthly, A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude the teaching and instructing of others when we are afflicted. The words of the afflicted stick close; they many times work strongly, powerfully, strangely, savingly, upon the souls and consciences of others. Many of Paul's epistles were written to the churches when he was in bonds, viz., Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon; he begot Onesimus in his bonds, Phm 1:10. And many of the brethren in the Lord waxed bold and confident by his bonds, and were confirmed, and made partakers of grace by his ministry, when he was in bonds, Php 1:7, Php 1:13-14. As the words of dying persons do many times stick and work gloriously, so many times do the words of afflicted persons work very nobly and efficaciously. I have read of one Adrianus, who, seeing the martyrs suffer such grievous things for the cause of Christ, he asked what that was which enabled them to suffer such things? and one of them named that 1Co 2:9, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' This word was like apples of gold in pictures of silver, Pro 25:11, for it made him not only a convert, but a martyr too. And this was the means of Justin Martyr's conversion, as himself confesseth). Doubtless, many have been made happy by the words of the afflicted. The tongue of the afflicted hath been to many as choice silver. The words of the afflicted many times are both pleasing and profitable; they tickle the ear and they win upon the heart; they slide insensibly into the hearers' souls, and work efficaciously upon the hearers' hearts: Ecc 10:12, 'The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,' or grace, as the Hebrew hath it; and so Jerome reads it, *Verba oris sapientis gratia*, the words of the mouth of a wise man are grace. They minister grace to others, and they win grace and favour from others. Gracious lips make gracious hearts; gracious words are a grace, an ornament to the speaker, and they are a comfort, a delight, and an advantage to the hearer.

Now, the words of a wise man's mouth are never more gracious than when he is most afflicted and distressed. Now, you shall find most worth and weight in his words; now his lips, like the spouse's, are like a thread of scarlet; they are red with talking much of a crucified Christ, and they are thin

like a thread, not swelled with vain and unprofitable discourses. Now his mouth speaketh of wisdom, and his tongue talketh judgment, for the law of the Lord is in his heart, Psa 37:30; now his lips drop as honey-combs, Song of Solomon 4:11; now his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinable, Pro 12:18. As the silver trumpets sounded most joy to the Jews in the day of their gladness, so the mouth of a wise man, like a silver trumpet, sounds most joy and advantage to others in the days of his sadness, Num 10:10. The heathen man could say, Quando sapiens loquitur, aulea animi aperit, when a wise man speaketh, he openeth the rich treasure and wardrobe of his mind; so may I say, when an afflicted saint speaks, Oh the pearl, the treasures that he scatters! But,

5. Fifthly, A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude moderate mourning or weeping under the afflicting hand of God. Isa 38:3, 'And Hezekiah wept sore,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'wept with great weeping. But was not the Lord displeased with him for his great weeping? No; ver. 5, 'I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.' God had as well a bottle for his tears, as a bag for his sins, Psa 56:8. There is no water so sweet as the saints' tears, when they do not overflow the banks of moderation. Tears are not mutes; they have a voice, and their oratory is of great prevalency with the almighty God. And therefore the weeping prophet calleth out for tears: Lam 2:18, 'Their heart crieth unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'let not the daughters of thine eye be silent.' That which we call the ball or apple of the eye, the Hebrews call the daughter of the eye, because it is as dear and tender to a man as an only daughter; and because therein appears the likeness of a little daughter. Upon which words, saith Bellarmine, Clames assidue ad Deum, non lingua, sed oculis, non verbis sed lachrymis, ista enim est oratio, quæm pacare solet: cry aloud, not with thy tongue, but with thine eyes; not with thy words, but with thy tears; for that is the prayer that maketh the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven. When God strikes, he looks that we should tremble; when his hand is lifted high, he looks that our hearts should stoop low; when he hath the rod in his hand, he looks that we should have tears in our eyes, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Psa 55:2, Psa 38:6, Job 30:26-31. Good men weep easily, saith the Greek poet; and the better any are, are more inclining to weeping, especially under affliction: as you may see in David, whose tears, instead of gems, were the common ornaments of his bed, Jonathan, Job, Ezra, Daniel, &c. How, saith one, shall God wipe away my tears in heaven, if I shed none on earth? And how shall I reap in joy, if I sow not in tears? I was born with tears, and I shall die with tears; and why then should I live without them in this valley of tears?

There is as well a time to weep, as there is a time to laugh; and a time to mourn, as well as a time to dance, Ecc 3:4. The mourning garment among the Jews was the black garment, and the black garment was the mourning garment: Psa 43:2, 'Why go ye mourning?' The Hebrew word Kedur signifies black. Why go ye in black? Sometimes Christians must put off their gay ornaments, and put on their black, their mourning garments, Exo 33:3-6. But,

6. Sixthly, A gracious, a prudent silence doth not exclude sighing, groaning, or roaring under afflictions. A man may sigh, and groan, and roar under the hand of God, and yet be silent. It is not sighing, but muttering; it is not groaning, but grumbling; it is not roaring, but murmuring, that is opposite to a holy silence: Exo 2:23, 'And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage.' Job 3:24, 'For my sighing cometh before I eat,' (or, as the Hebrew hath it) 'before my meat;' his

sighing, like bad weather, came unsent for and unsought: so Psa 38:9, 'Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.' Psa 102:5, 'By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin.' Job 3:24, 'And my roarings are poured out like the waters.' Psa 38:8, 'I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.' Psa 22:1, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, from the words of my roaring?' Psa 32:3, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roarings all the day long.' He roars, but doth not rage; he roars, but doth not repine. When a man is in extremity, nature prompts him to roar, and the law of grace is not against it; and though sighing, roaring, groaning, cannot deliver a man out of his misery, yet they do give some ease to a man under his misery. When Solon wept for his son's death, one said to him, Weeping will not help. He answered, Alas! therefore do I weep, because weeping will not help. So a Christian many times sighs, because sighing will not help; and he groans, because groaning will not help; and he roars, because roaring will not help. Sometimes the sorrows of the saints are so great, that all tears are dried up, and they can get no ease by weeping; and therefore for a little ease they fall a-sighing and groaning; and this may be done, and yet the heart may be quiet and silent before the Lord. Peter wept and sobbed, and yet was silent. Sometimes the sighs and groans of a saint do in some sort tell that which his tongue can in no sort utter. But,

7. Seventhly, A holy, a prudent silence, doth not exclude nor shut out the use of any just or lawful means, whereby persons may be delivered out of their afflictions. God would not have his people so in love with their afflictions, as not to use such righteous means as may deliver them out of their afflictions: Mat 10:23, 'But when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another;' Acts 12:5, When Peter was in prison, the saints thronged together to pray, as the original hath it, Acts 12:12; and they were so instant and earnest with God in prayer, they did so beseech and besiege the Lord, they did so beg and bounce at heaven-gate, ver. 5, that God could have no rest, till, by many miracles of power and mercy, he had returned Peter as a bosom-favour to them: Acts 9:23-25, 'And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: but their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.' The blood of the saints is precious in God's eye, and it should not be vile in their own eyes. When providence opens a door of escape there is no reason why the saints should set themselves as marks and butts for their enemies to shoot at: 2Th 3:1-2, the apostles desire the brethren 'to pray for them, that they may be delivered from unreasonable (■τοποι, absurd) and wicked (πονηξ■ι, villainous) men; for all men have not faith.' It is a mercy worth a seeking, to be delivered out of the hands of absurd, villainous, and troublesome men.

Afflictions are evil in themselves, and we may desire and endeavour to be delivered from them, Jas 5:14-15, Isa 38:18-21; both inward and outward means are to be used for our own preservation. Had not Noah built an ark, he had been swept away with the flood, though he had been with Nimrod and his crew on the tower of Babel, which was raised to the height of one thousand five hundred forty-six paces, as Heylin reports. Though we may not trust in means, yet we may and ought to use the means; in the use of them, eye that God that can only bless them, and you do your work. As the pilot that guides the ship hath his hand upon the rudder, and his eye on the star that directs him at the same time; so when your hand is upon the means, let your eye be upon your God, and deliverance will come. We may neglect God as well by neglecting of

means as by trusting in means; it is best to use them, and in the use of them, to live above them. Augustine tells of a man, that being fallen into a pit, one passing by falls a-questioning of him, what he made there, and how he came in? Oh! said the poor man, ask me not how I came in, but help me and tell me how I may come out. The application is easy. But,

8. Eighthly, and lastly, A holy, a prudent silence, doth not exclude a just and sober complaining against the authors, contrivers, abettors, or instruments of our afflictions: 2Ti 4:14, 'Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works.' This Alexander is conceived by some to be that Alexander that is mentioned, Acts 19:33, who stood so close to Paul at Ephesus, that he run the hazard of losing his life by appearing on his side; yet if glorious professors come to be furious persecutors, Christians may complain: 2Co 11:24, 'Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one.' They inflict, saith Maimonides, no more than forty stripes, though he be as strong as Samson, but if he be weak, they abate of that number. They scourged Paul with the greatest severity, in making him suffer so oft the utmost extremity of the Jewish law, whenas they that were weak had their punishment mitigated: 1Co 11:25, 'Thrice was I beaten with rods,' that is, by the Romans, whose custom it was to beat the guilty with rods.

If Pharaoh make Israel groan, Israel may make his complaint against Pharaoh to the Keeper of Israel, Exo 2:1-25; if the proud and blasphemous king of Assyria shall come with his mighty army to destroy the people of the Lord, Hezekiah may spread his letter of blasphemy before the Lord, Isa 37:14-21.

It was the saying of Socrates, that every man in this life had need of a faithful friend and a bitter enemy; the one to advise him, and the other to make him look about him; and this Hezekiah found by experience.

Though Joseph's bow abode in strength, and the arm of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, yet Joseph may say, that the archers, or the arrow-masters, as the Hebrew hath it, have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him, Gen 49:23-24. And so David sadly complained of Doeg, Psa 109:1, Psa 109:21; yea, Christ himself, who was the most perfect pattern for dumbness and silence under sorest trials, complains against Judas, Pilate, and the rest of his persecutors, Psa 69:20, Psa 69:30, &c.; yea, though God will make his people's enemies to be the workmen that shall fit them and square them for his building, to be goldsmiths to add pearls to their crown, to be rods to beat off their dust, scullions to scour off their rust, fire to purge away their dross, and water to cleanse away their filthiness, fleshliness, and earthliness, yet may they point at them, and pour out their complaints to God against them, Psa 132:2-18. This truth I might make good by above a hundred texts of Scripture; but it is time to come to the reasons of the point.

IV. Why must Christians be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world? I answer,

Reason 1. That they may the better hear and understand the voice of the rod. As the word hath a voice, the Spirit a voice, and conscience a voice, so the rod hath a voice. Afflictions are the rod of God's anger, the rod of his displeasure, and his rod of revenge; he gives a commission to his rod, to awaken his people, to reform his people, or else to revenge the quarrel of his covenant upon them, if they will not bear the rod, and kiss the rod, and sit mute and silent under the rod: Mic 6:9,

'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' God's rods are not mutes, they are all vocal, they are all speaking as well as smiting; every twig hath a voice. Ah! soul, saith one twig, thou sayest it smarts; well! tell me, is it good provoking of a jealous God? Jer 4:18. Ah! soul, saith another twig, thou sayest it is bitter, it reacheth to thy heart, but hath not thine own doings procured these things? Rom 6:20-21. Ah! soul, saith another twig, where is the profit, the pleasure, the sweet that you have found in wandering from God? Hos 2:7. Ah! soul, saith another twig, was it not best with you, when you were high in your communion with God, and when you were humble and close in your walking with God? Mic 6:8. Ah! Christian, saith another twig, wilt thou search thy heart, and try thy ways, and turn to the Lord thy God? Lam 3:40. Ah! soul, saith another twig, wilt thou die to sin more than ever, and to the world more than ever, and to relations more than ever, and to thyself more than ever? Rom 14:6-8; Gal 6:18. Ah! soul, saith another twig, wilt thou live more to Christ than ever, and cleave closer to Christ than ever, and prize Christ more than ever, and venture further for Christ than ever? Ah! soul, saith another twig, wilt thou love Christ with a more inflamed love, and hope in Christ with a more raised hope, and depend upon Christ with a greater confidence, and wait upon Christ with more invincible patience, &c.? Now, if the soul be not mute and silent under the rod, how is it possible that it should ever hear the voice of the rod, or that it should ever hearken to the voice of every twig of the rod? The rod hath a voice that is in the hands of earthly fathers, but children hear it not, they understand it not, till they are hushed and quiet, and brought to kiss it, and sit silently under it; no more shall we hear or understand the voice of the rod that is in our heavenly Father's hand, till we come to kiss it, and sit silently under it. But,

Reason 2. Gracious souls should be mute and silent under their greatest afflictions and sharpest trials, that they may difference and distinguish themselves from the men of the world, who usually fret and fling, mutter or murmur, curse and swagger, when they are under the afflicting hand of God: Isa 8:21-22, 'And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king, and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.' Ah! how fretful and froward, how disturbed and distracted, how mad and forlorn, are these poor wretches under the rebukes of God! They look upward and downward, this way and that way, on this side and on that, and finding no help, no succour, no support, no deliverance, like Bedlams, yea, like incarnate devils, they fall upon cursing of God, and their king: Isa 59:11, 'We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us.' They express their inward vexation and indignation by roaring like bears. When bears are robbed of their whelps, or taken in a pit, oh how dreadfully will they roar, rage, tear, and tumble! So when wicked persons are fallen into the pit of affliction, oh how will they roar, rage, tear, and cry out! not of their sins, but of their punishments; as Cain, 'My punishment is greater than I am able to bear,' Gen 4:13; Isa 51:20, 'Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.' When the huntsman hath taken the wild bull in his toil, and so entangled him, that he is not able to wind himself out, oh, how fierce and furious will he be! how will he spend himself in struggling to get out! Such wild bulls are wicked men, when they are taken in the net of affliction.

It is said of Marcellus the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *nec victor, nec victus*, neither conquered nor conqueror! It is so with wicked men; they cannot be quiet, neither full nor fasting, neither sick nor well, neither in wealth nor want, neither in bonds nor at liberty, neither in prosperity nor in adversity: Jer 51:37-38, 'And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions: and they shall yell as lions' whelps.' When the lion roars, all the beasts of the field tremble, Amo 3:8. When the lion roars, many creatures that could outrun him are so amazed and astonished at the terror of his roar, that they are not able to stir from the place. Such roaring lions are wicked men, when they are under the smarting rod: Rev 16:9-12, 'They gnaw their tongues for pain, and they blaspheme the God of heaven, because of those sores, pains, and plagues that are poured upon them; and they repented not of their deeds, to give him glory.' And therefore gracious souls have cause to be silent under their sorest trials, that they may difference and distinguish themselves from wicked men, who are 'like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,' Isa 57:20. The verb ■■■■, signifies to make a stir, to be exceeding busy, unquiet, or troublesome. Ah! what a stir do wicked men make, when they are under the afflicting hand of God! Ah! the sea is restless and unquiet when there is no storm; it cannot stand still, but hath his flux and reflux; so it is much more restless, when by tempest upon tempest it is made to roar and rage, to foam and cast up mire and dirt. The raging sea is a fit emblem of a wicked man that is under God's afflicting hand.

Reason 3. A third reason why gracious souls should be silent and mute under their sharpest trials is, that they may be conformable to Christ their fiend, who was dumb and silent under his sorest trials: Isa 53:7, 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' Christ was tongue-tied under all his sorrows and sufferings: 1Pe 2:21-23, 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Christ upon the cross did not only read us a lecture of patience and silence, but he hath also set us ■πογραμμ■ a copy or pattern of both, to be transcribed and imitated by us when we are under the smarting rod. It will be our sin and shame if we do not bear up with patience and silence under all our sufferings, considering what an admirable copy Christ hath set before us. It is said of Antiochus, that being to fight with Judas, captain of the host of the Jews, he shewed unto his elephants the blood of the grapes and mulberries, to provoke them the better to fight. So the Holy Ghost hath set before us the injuries and contumelies, the sorrows and sufferings, the pains and torments, the sweat and blood of our dearest Lord, and his invincible patience, and admirable silence under all, to provoke us and encourage us to imitate the Captain of our salvation, in patience and silence under all our sufferings.

Jerome having read the life and death of Hilarion,—one that lived graciously and died comfortably,—folded up the book, saying, Well! Hilarion shall be the champion that I will follow; his good life shall be my example, and his good death my precedent. Oh! how much more should we all say, We have read how Christ hath been afflicted, oppressed, distressed, despised, persecuted, &c.; and we have read how dumb, how tongue-tied, how patient, and how silent he hath been under all; oh! he shall be the copy which we shall write after, the pattern which we will

walk by, the champion which we will follow. But, alas! alas! how rare is it to find a man that may be applauded with the eulogy of Salvian, *Singularis domini preclarus imitator*, an excellent disciple of a singular master. The heathens had this notion amongst them, as Lactantius reports, that the way to honour their gods was to be like them; and therefore some would be wicked, counting it a dishonour to their gods to be unlike to them. I am sure the way to honour our Christ, is in patience and silence to be like to Christ, especially when a smarting rod is upon our backs, and a bitter cup put into our hands.

Reason 4. The fourth reason why the people of God should be mute and silent under their afflictions, is this, because it is ten thousand times a greater judgment and affliction, to be given up to a fretful spirit, a froward spirit, a muttering or murmuring spirit under an affliction, than it is to be afflicted. This is both the devil's sin, and the devil's punishment. God is still afflicting, crossing and vexing of him, and he is still a-fretting, repining, vexing, and rising up against God. No sin to the devil's sin, no punishment to the devil's punishment. A man were better to have all the afflictions of all the afflicted throughout the world at once upon him, than to be given up to a froward spirit, to a muttering, murmuring heart under the least affliction. When thou seest a soul fretting, vexing, and stamping under the mighty hand of God, thou seest one of Satan's first-born, one that resembles him to the life. No child can be so much like the father, as this froward soul is like to the father of lies; though he hath been in chains almost this six thousand years, yet he hath never lain still one day, nor one night, no nor one hour in all this time, but is still a-fretting, vexing, tossing and tumbling in his chains, like a princely bedlam. He is a lion, not a lamb; a roaring lion, not a sleepy lion; not a lion standing still, but a lion going up and down; he is not satisfied with the prey he hath got, but is restless in his designs to fill hell with souls, 1Pe 5:8. He never wants an apple for an Eve, nor a grape for a Noah, nor a change of raiment for a Gehazi, nor a wedge of gold for an Achan, nor a crown for an Absalom, nor a bag for a Judas, nor a world for a Demas. If you look into one company, there you shall find Satan a-dishing out his meat to every palate; if you look into another company, there you shall find him fitting a last to every shoe; if you look into a third company, there you shall find him suiting a garment to every back. He is under wrath, and cannot but be restless. Here, with Jael, he allures poor souls in with milk, and murders them with a nail; there, with Joab, he embraces with one hand, and stabs with another. Here with Judas, he kisses and betrays; and there, with the whore of Babylon, he presents a golden cup with poison in it. He cannot be quiet, though his bolts be always on; and the more unquiet any are under the rebukes of God, the more such resemble Satan to the life, whose whole life is filled up with vexing and fretting against the Lord. Let not any think, saith Luther, that the devil is now dead, nor yet asleep, for as he that keepeth Israel, so he that hateth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. But in the next place,

Reason 5. A fifth reason why gracious souls should be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions and sharpest trials that do befall them is this, because a holy, a prudent silence under afflictions, under miseries, doth best capacitate and fit the afflicted for the receipt of miseries. When the rolling bottle lies still, you may pour into it your sweetest or your strongest waters; when the rolling, tumbling soul lies still, then God can best pour into it the sweet waters of mercy, and the strong waters of divine consolation. You read of the 'peaceable fruits of righteousness': Heb 12:11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised

thereby;' Jas 3:18, 'And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.' The still and quiet soul is like a ship that lies still and quiet in the harbour; you may take in what goods, what commodities you please, whilst the ship lies quiet and still: so when the soul is quiet and still under the hand of God, it is most fitted and advantaged to take in much of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the promises, of ordinances, and of the love of God, the smiles of God, the communications of God, and the counsel of God; but when souls are unquiet, they are like a ship in a storm, they can take in nothing.

Luther, speaking of God, saith, God doth not dwell in Babylon, but in Salem. Babylon signifies confusion, and Salem signifies peace. Now God dwells not in spirits that are unquiet and in confusion, but he dwells in peaceable and quiet spirits. Unquiet spirits can take in neither counsel nor comfort, grace nor peace, &c.: Psa 77:2, 'My soul refused to be comforted.' The impatient patient will take down no cordials; he hath no eye to see, nor hand to take, nor palate to relish, nor stomach to digest anything that makes for his health and welfare. When the man is sick and froward, nothing will down; the sweetest music will make no melody in his ears: Exo 6:6-9, 'Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm and with great judgment. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you for a heritage; I am the Lord.' The choicest cordials and comforts that heaven or earth could afford are here held forth to them, but they have no hand to receive them. Here Moses his lips drops honey-combs, but they can taste no sweetness in them. Here the best of earth and the best of heaven is set before them, but their souls are shut up, and nothing will down. Here is such ravishing music of paradise as might abundantly delight their hearts and please their ears, but they cannot hear. Here are soul-enlivening, soul-supporting, soul-strengthening, soul-comforting, soul-raising, and soul-refreshing words, but they cannot hearken to them: Exo 6:9, 'And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.' They were under their anguish feverish fits, and so could neither hear nor see, taste nor take in, anything that might be a mercy or a comfort to them.² They were sick of impatency and discontent: and these humours being grown strong, nothing would take with them, nothing would agree with them. When persons are under strong pangs of passion, they have no ears neither for reason nor religion.

Reason 6. A sixth reason why gracious souls should be silent under the smarting rod, is this, viz., because it is fruitless, it is bootless to strive, to contest or contend with God. No man hath ever got anything by muttering or murmuring under the hand of God, except it hath been more frowns, blows, and wounds. Such as will not lie quiet and still, when mercy hath tied them with silken cords, justice will put them in iron chains; if golden fetters will not hold you, iron shall. If Jonah will vex and fret and fling, justice will fling him overboard, to cool him, and quell him, and keep him prisoner in the whale's belly, till his stomach be brought down, and his spirit be made quiet before the Lord. What you get by struggling and grumbling, you may put in your eye, and weep it out when you have done: Jer 7:19, 'Do they provoke me to anger, saith the Lord? Do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?' By provoking of me, they do but provoke

themselves; by angering of me, they do but anger themselves; by vexing of me, they do but fret and vex themselves: 1Co 10:22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?'

Zanchy observes these two things from these words:

1. That it is ill provoking God to wrath, because he is stronger than we.
2. That though God be stronger than we, yet there are those who provoke him to wrath; and certainly there are none that do more provoke him than those who fume and fret when his hand is upon them. Though the cup be bitter, yet it is put into your hand by your Father; though the cross be heavy, yet he that hath laid it on your shoulders will bear the heaviest end of it himself; and why, then, should you mutter? Shall bears and lions take blows and knocks from their keepers, and wilt thou not take a few blows and knocks from the keeper of Israel? Why should the clay contend with the potter, or the creature with his creator, or the servant with his lord, or weakness with strength, or a poor nothing creature with an omnipotent God? Can stubble stand before the fire? Can chaff abide before the whirlwind? or can a worm ward off the blow of the Almighty? A froward and impatient spirit under the hand of God will but add chain to chain, cross to cross, yoke to yoke, and burden to burden. The more men tumble and toss in their feverish fits, the more they strengthen the distemper, and the longer it will be before the cure be effected. The easiest and the surest way of cure is to lie still and quiet till the poison of the distemper be sweat out. Where patience hath its perfect work, there the cure will be certain and easy. When a man hath his broken leg set, he lies still and quiet, and so his cure is easily and speedily wrought; but when a horse's leg is set, he frets and flings, he flounces and flies out, unjointing it again and again, and so his cure is the more difficult and tedious. Such Christians that under the hand of God are like the horse or mule, fretting and flinging, will but add to their own sorrows and sufferings, and put the day of their deliverance further off.

Reason 7. A seventh reason why Christians should be mute and silent under their afflictions is, because hereby they shall cross and frustrate Satan's great design and expectation. In all the afflictions he brought upon Job, his design was not so much to make Job a beggar as it was to make him a blasphemer; it was not so much to make Job outwardly miserable, as it was to make Job inwardly miserable, by occasioning him to mutter and murmur against the righteous hand of God, that so he might have had some matter of accusation against him to the Lord. He is the unwearied accuser of the brethren: Rev 12:10, 'The accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night.' Satan is the great make-bait between God and his children. He hath a mint constantly going in hell, where, as an untired mint-master, he is still a-coining and hammering out of accusations against the saints. First, he tempts and allures souls to sin, and then accuses them of those very sins he hath tempted them to, that so he may disgrace them before God, and bring them, if it were possible, out of favour with God; and though he knows beforehand that God and his people are, by the bond of the covenant, and by the blood of the Redeemer, so closely united that they can never be severed, yet such is his rage and wrath, envy and malice, that he will endeavour that which he knows he shall never effect. Could he but have made Job froward or fretful under the rod, he would have quickly carried the tidings to heaven, and have been so bold as to have asked God whether this was a carriage becoming such a person, of whom himself had given so glorious a character. Satan knows that there is more evil in the least sin, than there is in all the afflictions that can be inflicted upon a person; and if he could but have

made a breach upon Job's patience, ah, how would he have insulted over God himself! could he but have made Job a mutineer, he would quickly have pleaded for martial law to have been executed upon him; but Job, by remaining mute and silent under all his trials, puts Satan to a blush, and spoils all his projects at once. The best way to outwit the devil, is to be silent under the hand of God; he that mutters is foiled by him, but he that is mute overcomes him, and to conquer a devil is more than to conquer a world.

Reason 8. The eighth and last reason why Christians should be silent and mute under their sorest trials, is this, that they may be conformable to those noble patterns that are set before them by other saints, who have been patient and silent under the smarting rod. As Aaron, Lev 10:3; so Eli, 1Sa 3:18; so David, 2Sa 16:7-13; so Job, Job 1:21-22; so Eliakim, Shebnah, and Joab, Isa 36:11-12. So those saints in that Acts 21:12-15; and that cloud of witnesses, pointed at in Heb 12:1. Gracious examples are more awakening, more convincing, more quickening, more provoking, and more encouraging than precepts, because in them we see that the exercise of grace and godliness is possible, though it be difficult. When we see Christians, that are subject to like infirmities with ourselves, mute and silent under the afflicting hand of God, we see that it is possible that we may attain to the same noble temper of being tongue-tied under a smarting rod. Certainly it is our greatest honour and glory, in this world, to be eyeing and imitating the highest and worthiest examples. What Plutarch said of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them, may be said of many in these days. Oh! they are very forward and excellent at praising the patience of Job, but not at imitating it; at praising the silence of Aaron, but not at imitating it; at praising David's dumbness, but not at imitating it; at praising Eli's muteness, but not at imitating it. It was the height of Cæsar's glory to walk in the steps of Alexander, and of Selymus, a Turkish emperor, to walk in Cæsar's steps, and of Themistoeles to walk in Miltiades's steps. Oh! how much more should we account it our highest glory to imitate the worthy examples of those worthies, of whom this world is not worthy! It speaks out much of God within, when men are striving to write after the fairest copies. And thus much for the reasons of the point. I come now to the application.

V. You see, beloved, by what hath been said, that it is the greatest duty and concernment of Christians to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and the sharpest trials that they meet with in this world. If this be so, then this truth looks sourly and wistly upon several sorts of persons. As,

1. First, This looks sourly and sadly upon murmurers, upon such as do nothing but mutter and murmur under the afflicting hand of God. This was Israel's sin of old, and this is England's sin this day. Ah! what murmuring is there against God, what murmuring against instruments, and what murmuring against providences, is to be found amongst us! Some murmur at what they have lost, others murmur at what they fear they shall lose; some murmur that they are no higher, others murmur because they are so low; some murmur because such a party rules, and others mutter because themselves are not in the saddle; some murmur because their mercies are not so great as others' are; some murmur because their mercies are not so many as others' are; some murmur because they are afflicted, and others murmur because such and such are not afflicted as well as they. Ah, England, England! hadst thou no more sins upon thee, thy murmuring were enough to undo thee, did not God exercise much pity and compassion towards thee. But more of this hereafter, and therefore let this touch for the present suffice.

2. Secondly, This truth looks sourly upon those that fret, chafe, and vex, when they are under the afflicting hand of God. Many when they feel the rod to smart, ah, how they do fret and fume! Isa 8:21, 'When they were hardly bestead and hungry, they fret themselves, and curse their king and their God;' Pro 19:3, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' The heart may be fretful and froward when the tongue doth not blaspheme. Folly brings man into misery, and misery makes man to fret; man in misery is more apt to fret and chafe against the Lord, than to fret and chafe against his sin that hath brought him into sufferings, 2Ki 6:33, Psa 37:1, Psa 37:7-8. A fretful soul dares let fly at God himself. When Pharaoh is troubled with the frets, he dare spit in the very face of God himself: 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' Exo 5:2. And when Jonah is in a fretting humour, he dares tell God to his face, 'that he doth well to be angry,' Jon 4:8. Jonah had done well if he had been angry with his sin, but he did very ill to be angry with his God. God will vex every vein in that man's heart, before he hath done with him, who fumes and frets, because he cannot snap in sunder the cords with which he is bound, Eze 16:43. Sometimes good men are sick of the frets, but when they are, it costs them dear, as Job and Jonah found by experience. No man hath ever got anything by his fretting and flinging, except it hath been harder blows or heavier chains; therefore fret not when God strikes.

3. Thirdly, This truth looks sourly upon those who charge God foolishly in the day of their adversity. Lam 3:39, 'Why doth a living man complain?' He that hath deserved a hanging hath no reason to charge the judge with cruelty if he escape with a whipping; and we that have deserved a damning have no reason to charge God for being too severe, if we escape with a fatherly lashing. Rather than a man will take the blame, and quietly bear the shame of his own folly, he will put it off upon God himself, Gen 3:12. It is a very evil thing, when we shall go to accuse God, that we may excuse ourselves, and unblame ourselves, that we may blame our God, and lay the fault anywhere rather than upon our own hearts and ways. Job was a man of a more noble spirit: Job 1:22, 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' When God charges many men home, then they presently charge God foolishly; they put him to bear the brunt and lame of all; but this will be bitterness in the end. When thou art under affliction, thou mayest humbly tell God that thou feelest his hand heavy; but thou must not blame him because his hand is heavy. No man hath ever yet been able to make good a charge against God; and wilt thou be able? Surely no. By charging God foolishly in the day of thy calamity, thou dost but provoke the Lord to charge thee through and through, more fiercely and furiously, with his most deadly darts of renewed misery. It is thy greatest wisdom to blame thy sins, and lay thy hand upon thy mouth; for why should folly charge innocence? That man is far enough off from being mute and silent under the hand of God, who dares charge God himself for laying his hand upon him. But,

4. Fourthly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon such as will not be silent nor satisfied under the afflicting hand of God, except the Lord will give them the particular reasons why he lays his hand upon them. Good men sometimes dash their feet against this stumbling stone: Jer 15:18, 'Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable?' &c. Though God hath always reason for what he doth, yet he is not bound to shew us the reasons of his doings. Jeremiah's passion was up, his blood was hot; and now nothing will silence nor satisfy him but the reasons why his pain was perpetual, and his wound incurable. So Job, Job 7:20, 'Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?' It is an evil and a dangerous thing to cavil at or to question his proceedings, who is the chief Lord of all, and who may do with his own what he pleaseth, Rom

9:20, Dan 4:3, Dan 4:36. He is unaccountable and uncontrollable; and therefore who shall say, What doest thou? As no man may question his right to afflict him, nor his righteousness in afflicting of him, so no man may question the reasons why he afflicts him. As no man can compel him to give a reason of his doings, so no man may dare to ask him the particular reasons of his doings. Kings think themselves are not bound to give their subjects a reason of their doings; and shall we bind God to give us a reason of his doings, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and whose will is the true reason and only rule of justice? Ecc 8:4, Rev 1:5. The general grounds and reasons that God hath laid down in his word why he afflicts his people, as, viz., for their profit, Heb 12:10; for the purging away of their sins, Isa 1:25; for the reforming of their lives, Psa 119:67, Psa 119:71; and for the saving of their souls, 1Co 11:32,—should work them to be silent and satisfied under all their afflictions, though God should never satisfy their curiosity in giving them an account of some more hidden causes which may lie secret in the abysses of his eternal knowledge and infallible will. Curiosity is the spiritual drunkenness of the soul; and look, as the drunkard will never be satisfied, be the cup never so deep, unless he see the bottom of it, so some curious Christians, whose souls are overspread with the leprosy of curiosity, will never be satisfied till they come to see the bottom and the most secret reasons of all God's dealings towards them; but they are fools in folio, who affect to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's curiosity render him and his posterity fools in folio? And what pleasure can we take to see ourselves every day fools in print? As a man by gazing and prying into the body of the sun may grow dark and dim, and see less than otherwise he might, so many, by a curious prying into the secret reasons of God's dealings with them, come to grow so dark and dim, that they cannot see those plain reasons that God hath laid down in his word why he afflicts and tries the children of men.

I have read of one Sir William Champney, in the reign of King Henry the Third, once living in Tower Street, London, who was the first man that ever built a turret on the top of his house, that he might the better overlook all his neighbours, but so it fell out, that not long after he was struck blind; so that he that could not be satisfied to see as others did see, but would needs see more than others, saw just nothing at all, through the just judgment of God upon him. And so it is a just and righteous thing with God to strike such with spiritual blindness, who will not be satisfied with seeing the reasons laid down in the word why he afflicts them, but they must be curiously prying and searching into the hidden and more secret reasons of his severity towards them. Ah, Christian! it is your wisdom and duty to sit silent and mute under the afflicting hand of God upon the account of revealed reasons, without making any curious inquiry into those more secret reasons that are locked up in the golden cabinet of God's own breast, Deu 29:29.

5. Fifthly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those who, instead of being silent and mute under their afflictions, use all sinful shifts and ways to shift themselves out of their troubles; who care not though they break with God, and break with men, and break with their own consciences, so they may but break off the chains that are upon them; who care not by what means the prison door is opened, so they may but escape; nor by what hands their bolts are knocked off, so they may be at liberty. Job 36:21, 'Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.' He makes but an ill choice, who chooses sin rather than suffering; and yet such an ill choice good men have sometimes made, as you may see by the proofs in the margin, when troubles have compassed them round about. Though no lion roars like that in a man's own bosom,—conscience,—yet some, to deliver themselves from troubles without, have set that lion

a-roaring within. Some, to deliver themselves from outward tortures, have put themselves under inward torments. He purchases his freedom from affliction at too dear a rate, who buys it with the loss of a good name or a good conscience.

Now, because there is even in good men sometimes too great an aptness and proneness to sin and shift themselves out of afflictions, when they should rather be mute and silent under them, give me leave to lay down these six considerations to prevent it.

(1.) First Consider, that there is infinitely more evil in the least sin than there is in the greatest miseries and afflictions that can possibly come upon you; yea, there is more evil in the least sin than there is in all the troubles that ever come upon the world, yea, than there is in all the miseries and torments of hell. The least sin is an offence, to the great God, it is a wrong to the immortal soul, it is a breach of a righteous law; it cannot be washed away but by the blood of Jesus; it can shut the soul out of heaven, and shut the soul up a close prisoner in hell for ever and ever. The least sin is rather to be avoided and prevented than the greatest sufferings; if this cockatrice be not crushed in the egg, it will soon become a serpent; the very thought of sin, if but thought on, will break out into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are lost irrecoverably to all eternity. The least sin is very dangerous. Cæsar was stabbed with bodkins; Herod was eaten up of lice; Pope Adrian was choked with a gnat; a mouse is but little, yet killeth an elephant if he gets up into his trunk; a scorpion is little, yet able to sting a lion to death; though the leopard be great, yet he is poisoned with a head of garlic; the least spark may consume the greatest house, and the least leak sink the greatest ship; a whole arm hath been impostumated with the prick of a little finger; a little postern opened may betray the greatest city; a dram of poison diffuseth itself to all parts, till it strangle the vital spirits, and turn out the soul from the body. If the serpent can but wriggle in his tail by an evil thought, he will soon make a surprisal of the soul, as you see in that great instance of Adam and Eve. The trees of the forest, saith one in a parable, held a solemn parliament, wherein they consulted of the innumerable wrongs which the axe had done them, therefore made an act, that no tree should hereafter lend the axe an helve, on pain of being cut down. The axe travels up and down the forest, begs wood of the cedar, oak, ash, elm, even of the poplar; not one would lend him a chip. At last he desired so much as would serve him to cut down the briars and bushes, alleging, that such shrubs as they did but suck away the juice of the ground, and hinder the growth, and obscure the glory of the fair and goodly trees; hereupon they were all content to afford him so much: he pretends a thorough reformation, but behold a sad deformation, for when he had got his helve, down went both cedar, oak, ash, elm, and all that stood in his way.² Such are the subtle reaches of sin; it will promise to remove the briars, and business of afflictions and troubles, that hinder the soul of that juice, sweetness, comfort, delight, and content that otherwise it might enjoy. Oh! do but now yield a little to it, and instead of removing your troubles, it will cut down your peace, your hopes, your comforts, yea, it will cut down your precious soul. What is the breathing of a vein to the being let blood in the throat, or the scratch on the hand to a stab at the heart? No more are the greatest afflictions to the least sins; and therefore, Christians, never use sinful shifts to shift yourselves out of troubles, but rather be mute and silent under them, till the Lord shall work out your deliverance from them. But,

(2.) Secondly, Consider it is an impossible thing for any to sin themselves out of their troubles. Abraham, Job, and Jonah attempted it, but could not effect it. The devils have experienced this near this six thousand years; they had not been now in chains, could they but have sinned

themselves out of their chains. Could the damned sin themselves out of everlasting burning, there would have been none now a-roaring in that devouring unquenchable fire, Isa 33:14. Hell would have no inhabitants, could they but sin themselves out of it. Ah! Christians, devils and damned spirits shall as soon sin themselves out of hell, as you shall be able to sin yourselves out of your afflictions. Christians! you shall as soon stop the sun from running her course, contract the sea in a nut-shell, compass the earth with a span, and raise the dead at your pleasure, as ever you shall be able to sin yourselves out of your sufferings; and therefore it is better to be silent and quiet under them, than to attempt that which is impossible to accomplish. This second consideration will receive further confirmation by the next particular;—

(3.) Thirdly, As it is an impossible thing, so it is a very prejudicial, a very dangerous thing, to attempt to sin yourselves out of your troubles; for by attempting to sin yourselves out of your trouble, you will sin yourselves into many troubles, as Jonah and Jacob did; and by labouring to sin yourselves out of less troubles, you will sin yourselves into greater troubles, as Saul did; and by endeavouring to sin yourselves from under outward troubles, you will sin yourselves under inward troubles and distresses, which are the sorest and saddest of all troubles; thus did Spira, Jerome of Prague, Bilney, and others. Some there have been, who, by labouring to sin themselves out of their present sufferings, have sinned themselves under such horrors and terrors of conscience, that they could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, but have been ready to lay violent hands upon themselves. And Cyprian, in his sermon de lapsis, speaks of divers who, forsaking the faith to avoid sufferings, were given over to be possessed of evil spirits, and died fearfully. O man! thou doest not know what deadly sin, what deadly temptation, what deadly judgment, what deadly stroke, thou mayest fall under, who attempts to sin thyself out of troubles. What is it to take Venice, and to be hanged at the gates thereof? It is better to be silent and mute under thy afflictions, than by using sinful shifts to sin thyself under greater afflictions.

(4.) Fourthly, Consider it is a very ignoble and unworthy thing to go to sin yourselves out of your troubles and straits. It argues a poor, a low, a weak, a dastardly, and an effeminate spirit, to use base shifts to shuffle yourselves out of your troubles. Men of noble, courageous, and magnanimous spirits will disdain and scorn it, Dan 3:8, Dan 3:6, Heb 11:24. As you may see in the three children, David, and those worthies, in that 11th of the Hebrews, of whom 'this world was not worthy.' Jerome writes of a brave woman, who, being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved to die rather than lie. And the prince of Conde, being taken prisoner by Charles the Ninth, king of France, and put to his choice whether he would go to mass or be put to death, or suffer perpetual imprisonment, his noble answer was, that by God's help he would never choose the first, and for either of the latter, he left to the king's pleasure and God's providence. A soul truly noble will sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Thus blessed Hooper desired rather to be discharged of his bishopric than yield to certain ceremonies.

I have read of Marcus Arethusus, an eminent servant of the Lord in gospel-work, who, in the time of Constantine, had been the cause of overthrowing an idol temple; but Julian, coming to be emperor, commanded the people of that place to build it up again. All were ready so to do, only he refused it; whereupon his own people, to whom he had preached, fell upon him, stripped off all his clothes, then abused his naked body, and gave it up to children and school-boys to be lanced³ with their penknives; but when all this would not do, they caused him to be set in the sun, having his naked body anointed all over with honey, that so he might be bitten and stung to death by flies

and wasps; and all this cruelty they exercised upon him, because he would not do anything towards the rebuilding of that idol temple; nay, they came so far, that if he would but give one halfpenny towards the charge, they would release him, but he refused it with a noble Christian disdain, though the advancing of an halfpenny might have saved his life. And in so doing, he did but live up to that noble principle that most commend, but few practise, viz., that Christians must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments, than commit the least of sins, whereby God should be dishonoured, his name blasphemed, religion reproached, profession scorned, weak saints discouraged, and men's consciences wounded and their souls endangered. Now tell me, Christians, is it not better to be silent and mute under your sorest trials and troubles, than to labour to sin, and shift yourselves out of them, and so proclaim to all the world, that you are persons of very low, poor, and ignoble spirits? But,

(5.) Fifthly, Consider, sinful shifts and means God hath always cursed and blasted. Achan's golden wedge was but a wedge to cleave him, and his garments a shroud to shroud him. Ahab purchases a vineyard with the blood of the owner, but presently it was watered with his own blood, according to the word of the Lord. Gehazi must needs have a talent of silver and two changes of raiment, and that with a lie, I say with a lie; well! he hath them, and he hath with them a leprosy that cleaved to him and his seed for ever, 2Ki 5:22-27. With those very hands that Judas took money to betray his master, with those very hands he fitted a halter to hang himself. The rich and wretched glutton fared delicately, and went bravely every day, but the next news you hear of him, is of his being in hell, crying out for a drop, who, when he was on earth, would not give a crumb. The coal that the eagle carried from the altar to her nest, set all on fire.

Crassus did not long enjoy the fruit of his covetousness, for the Parthians taking of him, poured melted gold down his throat.

Dionysius did not long enjoy the fruit of his sacrilege and tyranny, for he was glad to change his sceptre into a ferule, and turn schoolmaster for his maintenance. Ah! Christians, Christians, is it not far better to sit quiet and silent under your afflictions, than to use such sinful shifts and means which God will certainly blast and curse? But

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, Consider this, that your very attempting to sin and shift yourselves out of troubles and afflictions, will cost you dear. It will cost you many prayers and tears, many sighs, many groans, many gripes, many terrors, and many horrors. Peter, by attempting to sin himself out of trouble, sins himself into a sea of sorrows: Mat 26:75, 'He went forth and wept bitterly.'

Clement observes, That every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees and weep bitterly; others say, that his face was furrowed with continual tears. Were Abraham, David, Jacob, and Jonah now alive, they would tell you, that they have found this to be a truth in their own experience. Ah! Christians, it is far better to be quiet and silent under your sufferings, than to pay so dear for attempting to sin and shift yourselves out of your sufferings. A man will not buy gold too dear, and why then should he buy himself out of troubles at too dear a rate? But now I shall come to that use that I intend to stand most upon, and that is, an use of exhortation. Seeing it is the great duty and concernment of Christians to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world: oh that I could prevail with you, Christians, to mind this great duty, and to live up and live out this necessary truth; which that I may, give me leave to propound some considerations, to engage your souls to be

mute and silent under your greatest troubles and your saddest trials. To that purpose,

1. Consider first, the greatness, sovereignty, majesty, and dignity of God, and let that move thee to silence, Jer 10:7; Jer 5:22: Psa 46:8-10, 'Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathens, I will be exalted in the earth.' Who can cast his eye upon the greatness of God, the majesty of God, and not sit still before him? Zep 1:7, 'Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God.' Oh, chat not, murmur not, fret not, but stand mute before him! Shall the child be hushed before his father, the servant before the master, the subject before his prince, and the guilty person before the judge, when he majestically rises off his judgment seat, and composes his countenance into an aspect of terror and severity, that his sentence may fall upon the offender with the greater dread? and shall not a Christian be quiet before that God that can bathe his sword in heaven, and burn the chariots on earth? Nay, shall the sheep be hushed before the wolf, birds before the hawk, and all the beasts of the field before the lion? and shall not we be hushed and quiet before him, who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Rev 5:5. God is mighty in power, and mighty in counsel, and mighty in working, and mighty in punishing; and therefore be silent before him. It appears that God is a mighty God, by the epithet that is added unto El, which is Gibbon, importing that he is a God of prevailing might; in Daniel he is called El Elim. the mighty of mighties. Moses magnifying of his might, saith, 'Who is like unto thee among the gods?' Now certainly this epithet should be a mighty motive to work souls to that which Habakkuk persuaded to: Hab 2:20, 'The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.' Upon this very consideration Moses commands Israel to hold their peace, Exo 14:13-14.

It is reported of Augustus the emperor, and likewise of Tamerlane that warlike Scythian, that in their eyes sat such a rare majesty, that many in talking with them, and often beholding of them, have become dumb. O my brethren, shall not the brightness and splendour of the majesty of the great God, whose sparkling glory and majesty dazzles the eyes of angels, and makes those princes of glory stand mute before him, move you much more to silence, to hold your peace, and lay your hands upon your mouths. Surely yes. But,

2. Secondly, Consider, That all your afflictions, troubles, and trials shall work for your good: Rom 8:28, 'And we know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God.' Why then should you fret, fling, fume, seeing God designs you good in all? The bee sucks sweet honey out of the bitterest herbs; so God will by afflictions teach his children to suck sweet knowledge, sweet obedience, and sweet experiences, &c., out of all the bitter afflictions and trials he exercises them with. That scouring and rubbing, which frets others, shall make them shine the brighter; and that weight which crushes and keeps others under, shall but make them, like the palm tree, grow better and higher; and that hammer which knocks others all in pieces, shall but knock them the nearer to Christ, the corner stone. Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches give the best light when beaten; grapes yield most wine when most pressed; spices smell sweetest when pounded; vines are the better for bleeding; gold looks the brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; chamomile, the more you tread it the more you spread it; the salamander lives best in the fire; the Jews were best, when most afflicted; the Athenians would never mend, till they were in mourning; the Christ's cross, saith Luther, is no letter in the book, and yet, saith he, it hath taught me more than all the letters in the book. Afflictions are the saints' best benefactors to heavenly affections;

where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest. And grace that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out. Grace shines the brighter for scouring, and is most glorious when it is most clouded.

Pliny in his Natural History writeth of certain trees growing in the Red Sea, which being beat upon by the waves, stand like a rock, immoveable, and that they are battered by the roughness of the waters. In the sea of afflictions, God will make his people stand like a rock; they shall be immoveable and invincible, and the more the waves of afflictions beat upon them, the better they shall be, the more they shall thrive in grace and godliness. Now how should this engage Christians to be mute and silent under all their troubles and trials in this world, considering that they shall all work for their good! God chastises our carcasses to heal our consciences; he afflicts our bodies to save our souls; he gives us gall and wormwood here, that the pleasures that be at his right hand may be more sweet hereafter; here he lays us upon a bed of thorns, that we may look and long more for that easy bed of down,—his bosom in heaven. As there is a curse wrapped up in the best things he gives the wicked, so there is a blessing wrapped up in the worst things he brings upon his own, Psa 25:10, Deu 26:16. As there is a curse wrapped up in a wicked man's health, so there is a blessing wrapped up in a godly man's sickness; as there is a curse wrapped up in a wicked man's strength, so there is a blessing wrapped up in a godly man's weakness; as there is a curse wrapped up in a wicked man's wealth, so there is a blessing wrapped up in a godly man's wants; as there is a curse wrapped up in a wicked man's honour, so there is a blessing wrapped up in a godly man's reproach; as there is a curse wrapped up in all a wicked man's mercies, so there is a blessing wrapped up in all a godly man's crosses, losses, and changes: and why then should he not sit mute and silent before the Lord? But,

3. Thirdly, Consider, That a holy silence is that excellent precious grace, that lends a hand of support to every grace, Rom 15:4. Silence is custos, the keeper, of all other virtues; it lends a hand to faith, a hand to hope, a hand to love, a hand to humility, a hand to self-denial, &c. A holy silence hath its influences upon all other graces that be in the soul; it causes the rosebuds of grace to blossom and bud forth. Silence is *virtus versata circa adversa*, a grace that keeps a man gracious in all conditions. In every condition silence is a Christian's right hand; in prosperity, it bears the soul up under all the envy, hatred, malice, and censures of the world; in adversity, it bears the soul up under all the neglect, scorn, and contempt that a Christian meets with in the world. It makes every bitter sweet, every burden light, and every yoke easy. And this the very heathen seemed to intimate in placing the image of Angeronia with the mouth bound, upon the altar of Volupia, to shew that silence under sufferings was the ready way to attain true comfort, and make every bitter sweet. No man honours God, nor no man justifies God at so high a rate, as he who lays his hand upon his mouth, when the rod of God is upon his back. But,

4. Fourthly, To move you to silence under your sorest and your sharpest trials, consider, That you have, deserved greater and heavier afflictions than those you are under, Lam 3:39; Mic 7:7-9. Hath God taken away one mercy? Thou hast deserved to be stripped of all. Hath he taken away the delight of thine eyes? He might have taken away the delight of thy soul. Art thou under outward wants? Thou hast deserved to be under outward and inward together. Art thou cast upon a sick bed? Thou hast deserved a bed in hell. Art thou under that ache and that pain? Thou hast deserved to be under all aches and pains at once. Hath God chastised thee with whips? Thou hast deserved to be chastised with scorpions, 1Ki 12:14. Art thou fallen from the highest pinnacle of

honour to be the scorn and contempt of men? Thou hast deserved to be scorned and contemned by God and angels. Art thou under a severe whipping? Thou hast deserved an utter damning. Ah Christian! let but your eyes be fixed upon your demerits, and your hands will be quickly upon your mouths; whatever is less than a final separation from God, whatever is less than hell, is mercy; and therefore you have cause to be silent under the smartest dealings of God with you. But,

5. Fifthly, Consider, a quiet silent spirit is of great esteem with God. God sets the greatest value upon persons of a quiet spirit: 1Pe 3:4. 'But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' A quiet spirit is a spark of the divine nature, it is a ray, a beam of glory; it is a heaven-born spirit. No man is born with a holy silence in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. This is a flower of paradise; it is a precious gem that God makes very great reckoning of. A quiet spirit speaks a man most like to God; it capacitates a man for communion with God; it renders a man most serviceable to God; and it obliges a man to most accurate walking with God. A meek and quiet spirit is an incorruptible ornament, much more valuable than gold.

(1.) First, There is a mutual quietness, which proceeds from a good temper and constitution of body.

(2.) Secondly, There is a moral quietness, which proceeds from good education and breeding, which flows from good injunctions, instructions, and examples.

(3.) Thirdly, There is an artificial quietness; some have an art to imprison their passions, and to lay a law of restraint upon their anger and wrath, when they are all in a flame within: as you may see in Cain, Esau, Absalom, and Joab, who for a time cast a close cloak over their malice, when their hearts were set on fire of hell. So Domitian would seem to love them best, whom he willed least should live.

(4.) Fourthly, There is a gracious quietness, which is of the Spirit's infusion, Gal 5:22-25. Now this quietness of spirit, this spiritual frame of heart, is of great price in the sight of God. God values it above the world, and therefore who would not covet it more than the world, yea, more than life itself? Certainly the great God sets a great price upon nothing but that which is of an invaluable price; what stretching, struggling, and striving is there for those things that the great ones of the earth do highly prize! Ah! what stretching of wits, interests, and consciences is there this day, to gain and hold up that which justice will cast down! how much better would it be, if all persons would in good earnest struggle and strive, even as for life, after a quiet and silent spirit, which the great and glorious God sets so great a price upon! This is a pearl of greatest price, and happy is he that purchases it, though it were with the loss of all. But,

6. Sixthly, Consider, That if you sit not silent and quiet under your greatest troubles and your sorest trials, you will be found fighters against your own prayers. How often have you prayed that the will of God may be done, yea, that it may be done on the earth, as the angels, those glistening courtiers, those princes of glory, do it now in heaven! Mat 6:10. When troubles and afflictions come upon you, the will of God is done, his will is accomplished; why then should you fret, fling, and fume, and not rather quietly lie down in his will, whose will is a perfect will, a just and righteous will, a wise will, an overruling will, an infinite will, a sovereign will, a holy will, an immutable will, an uncontrollable will, an omnipotent will, and an eternal will? Certainly you will but add affliction to

affliction, by fighting against your own prayers, and by vexing and fretting yourselves when the will of God is done. It is sad to see a man to fight against his friends, it is sadder to see him fight against his relations, it is saddest of all to see him fight against his prayers; and yet this every Christian doth, who murmurs and mutters when the rod of God is upon him. Some there be that pray against their prayers, as Augustine, who prayed for continency with a proviso, Lord! give me continency, but not yet; and some there be who fight against their prayers, as those who pray that the will of God may be done, and yet when his will is done upon them, they are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, they are still fretting against the Lord. Ah, Christians! have you not sins to fight against, and temptations to fight against, and a devil to fight against, yea, a whole world to fight against? Why then should you be found fighting against your own prayers? But,

7. Seventhly, Consider, A holy silence under the heaviest burdens, the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences and changes, will make all tolerable and easy to a Christian. The silent soul can bear a burden without a burden. Those burdens and troubles that will break a froward man's back, will not so much as break a silent man's sleep; those afflictions that lie as heavy weights upon a murmurer, will lie as light as a feather upon a mute Christian, Mic 7:7-10, Psa 92:1, Psa 92:6; that bed of sorrow, which is as a bed of thorns to a fretful soul, will be as a bed of down to a silent soul. A holy silence unstings every affliction, it takes off the weight of every burden, it adds sweet to every bitter, it changes dark nights into sunshiny days, and terrible storms into desirable calms. The smallest sufferings will easily vanquish an unquiet spirit, but a quiet spirit will as easily triumph over the greatest sufferings. As little mercies are great mercies, so great sufferings are but little sufferings, in the eye of a silent soul. The silent soul never complains that his affliction is too great, his burden too heavy, his cross too weighty, his sufferings too many; silence makes him victorious over all. And therefore, as ever you would have heavy afflictions light, and be able to bear a burden without a burden, labour as for life after this holy silence.

8. Eighthly, Consider that a holy silence under afflictions will be your best armour of proof against those temptations that afflictions may expose you to. Times of afflictions often prove times of great temptations, and therefore afflictions are called temptations: Jas 1:12, 'Blessed is the man which endureth temptations, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life,' &c. The Greek word πειρασμ^v, is to be understood of temptations of probation, of afflicting temptations, and not of temptations of suggestion, of seduction; for they are not to be endured, but resisted and abhorred, Jas 4:7, 1Pe 5:9. Now, affliction is called temptation, (1.) Because, as temptation tries what metal a Christian is made of, so do afflictions.

(2.) Because, as Satan usually hath a great hand in all the temptations that come upon us, so he hath a great hand in all the afflictions that befall us; as you see in that great instance of Job.

(3.) Because, as temptations drive men to God, 2Co 12:7-8, so do afflictions, Isa 26:16, Hos 5:15; but mainly because Satan chooses times of afflictions as the fittest seasons for his temptations. When Job was sorely afflicted in his estate, children, wife, life, then Satan lets fly, and makes his fiercest assaults upon him. Now, Satan tempts him to entertain hard thoughts of God; to distrust, to impatency, to murmuring and muttering. As when Israel was feeble, faint, and weary, Amalek assaulted them, and smote the hindmost of them, Deu 25:17-18; so when Christians are most afflicted, then usually they are most tempted.

Luther found this by experience when he said, I am without set upon by all the world, and within by the devil and all his angels. Satan is a coward, and loves to strike us and trample upon us when afflictions have cast us down. When besieged towns, cities, and castles are in greatest straits and troubles, then the besiegers make their fiercest assaults; so when Christians are under the greatest straits and trials, then Satan assaults them most, like a roaring lion. Now, silence under afflictions is the best antidote and preservative against all those temptations that afflictions lay us open to. Silence in afflictions is a Christian's armour of proof; it is that shield that no spear or dart of temptation can pierce. Whilst a Christian lies under the rod, he is safe. Satan may tempt him, but he will not conquer him; he may assault him, but he cannot vanquish him. Satan may entice him to use sinful shifts to shift himself out of trouble; but he will choose rather to lie, yea, die, in trouble, than get out upon Satan's terms. But,

9. Ninthly, Consider, That holy silence under afflictions and trials will give a man a quiet and peaceable possession of his own soul: 'In patience possess your souls,' Luk 21:19. Now, next to the possession of God, the possession of a man's own soul is the greatest mercy in this world. A man may possess honours, and riches, and dear relations, and the favour and assistance of friends under his trials, but he will never come to a possession of his own soul under his troubles till he comes to be mute, and to lay his hand upon his mouth. Now what are all earthly possessions to the possession of a man's own soul? He that possesseth himself possesseth all; he that possesseth not himself possesses nothing at all. He possesses not the use, the sweet, the comfort, the good, the blessing of anything he enjoys, who enjoys not himself. That man that is not master of himself, he is a master of nothing. Holy silence gives a man the greatest mastery over his own spirit; and mastery over a man's own spirit is the greatest mastery in the world, Pro 16:32. The Egyptian goddess they paint upon a rock standing in the sea, where the waves come roaring and dashing upon her, with this motto, *Semper eadem*, Storms shall not move me. A holy silence will give a man such a quiet possession of his own soul, that all the storms of afflictions shall not move him; it will make him stand like a rock in a sea of troubles. Let a man but quietly possess himself, and troubles will never trouble him. But,

10. Tenthly, Consider the commands and instructions that God in his word hath laid upon you to be silent, to be mute and quiet, under all the troubles, trials, and changes that have or may pass upon you: Zec 2:13, 'Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation;' Isa 41:1, 'Keep silence before me, O islands;' Hab 2:20, 'The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him;' Amo 5:13, 'Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time;' Psa 46:10, 'Be still, and know that I am God;' Psa 4:4, 'Commune with your heart, and be still;' Exo 14:13, 'Stand still, and see the salvation of God;' 2Ch 20:17, 'Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord, with you, O Judah, and Jerusalem;' Job 37:14, 'Hearken unto this, O Job; stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.' It is a dangerous thing for us to neglect one of his commands, who by another is able to command us into nothing, or into hell at pleasure. To act or run cross to God's express command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:24, &c. Divine commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying or delaying, without debating or disputing the difficulties that may attend our subjection to them. God's commands are spiritual, holy, just, and good; and therefore to be obeyed without muttering or murmurings. Divine commands are backed with the strongest reason, and attended with the

highest encouragements. Shall the servant readily obey the commands of his master, the subject the commands of his prince, the soldier the commands of his general, the child the commands of his father, the wife the commands of her husband, and shall not a Christian as readily obey the commands of his Christ? Nay, shall vain men readily and willingly obey the sinful and senseless commands of men, and shall not we be willing to obey the commands of God? 2Sa 13:28-29, 'Now Absalom had commanded his servant, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon: then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded.' They made no bones of obeying the bloody commands of Absalom, against all law, reason, and religion.

I have read of one Johannes Abbas who willingly fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together, to pour upon a dry stick, upon the bare command of his confessor.

I have also read of the old kings of Peru, that they were wont to use a tassel or fringe made of red wool, which they wore upon their heads, and when they sent any governor to rule as viceroy in any part of their country, they delivered unto him one of the threads of the tassel, and for one of those simple threads he was as much obeyed as if he had been the king himself. Now, shall one single thread be more forcible to draw infidels to obedience, than all those golden commands, last cited, shall be of force to draw you to be quiet and silent under the troubles and changes you meet with in this world? The Lord forbid! Shall carnal and wicked persons be so ready and willing to comply with the bloody, and senseless, and superstitious commands of their superiors? And shall not Christians be more ready and willing to comply with the commands of the great God, whose commands are all just and equal, and whose will is the perfect rule of righteousness. *Prior est autoritas imperantis, quam utilitas servientis* [Tertullian]. The chief reason of obedience is the authority of the Lord, not the utility of the servant. Ah, Christians! when your hearts begin to fret and fume under the smarting rod, charge one of those commands last cited upon your hearts; and if they shall mutter, charge another of those commands upon your hearts; and if after this, they shall vex and murmur, charge another of those commands upon your hearts; and never leave charging and rubbing those commands one after another upon your hearts, till you are brought to lay your hands upon your mouths, and to sit silent before the Lord under your greatest straits and your sorest trials.

11. Eleventhly, Consider, That mercy is nearest, deliverance and salvation is at hand, when a Christian stands still, when he sits quiet and silent under his greatest troubles and his sorest trials. Exo 14:1-31, they were in very great straits. Pharaoh with a mighty army was behind them, the Red Sea before them, mountains on each hand of them, and no visible means to deliver them. But now they stand still to see the salvation of the Lord, Exo 14:13, and within a few hours their enemies are destroyed, and they are gloriously delivered, Exo 14:24, et seq. Psal 39:9, David is dumb, he sits mute under his smart afflictions; but if you look to the second and third verses of the fortieth Psalm, you shall find mercy draw near to him and work salvation for him. 'He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.' And so when Absalom had made a great conspiracy against him, and his subjects fell off from him, and he was forced to flee for his life, his spirit was quiet and calm. 2Sa 15:25-26, 'And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God

into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' And the same calmness and quietness of spirit was upon him when Shimei bitterly cursed him, and railed upon him, 2Sa 16:5-14; and within a few days, as you may see in the two following chapters, the conspirators are destroyed, and David's throne more firmly established. Mercy is always nearest when a man can in quietness possess his own soul. Salvation is at hand when a Christian comes to lay his hand upon his mouth. Mercy will be upon the wing, loving-kindness will ride post to put a period to that man's troubles who sits silent in the day of his sorrows and sufferings. Ah, Christians! as you would have mercy near, as you would see to the end of your afflictions, as you would have deliverance come flying upon the wings of the wind, sit mute and silent under all your troubles. As wine was then nearest when the water-pots were filled with water, even to the brim; so when the heart is fullest of quietness and calmness, then is the wine of mercy, the wine of deliverance, nearest.

12. The twelfth and last motive to work you to silence under your greatest trials is this, seriously consider the heinous and dangerous nature of murmuring. Now that you may, let me propose these following particulars to your most sober consideration.

(1.) First, Consider that murmuring speaks out many a root of bitterness to be strong in thy soul, Heb 3:12. Murmuring speaks out sin in its power, corruption upon its throne, Heb 12:1. As holy silence argues true grace, much grace, yea, grace in its strength and in its lively vigour, so murmuring, muttering under the hand of God, argues much sin, yea, a heart full of sin; it speaks out a heart full of self-love, Exo 15:24; Exo 16:7-8; and full of slavish fears, Num 13:32-33; Num 14:1-3; and full of ignorance, John 6:41-42; and full of pride and unbelief, Psa 106:24-25; 'yea, they despised the pleasant land,' or the land of desire, Psa 77:19-20: there is their pride; 'they believed not in his word': there is their unbelief; what follows? They murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of God. They were sick of the sullens, and preferred Egypt before Canaan, a wilderness before a paradise. As in the first chaos there were the seeds of all creatures, so in the murmurer's heart there is not only the seeds of all sin, but a lively operation of all sin. Sin is become mighty in the hearts of murmurers, and none but an almighty God can root it out. Those roots of bitterness have so spread and strengthened themselves in the hearts of murmurers, that everlasting strength must put in, or they will be undone for ever, Isa 26:4. But,

(2.) Secondly, consider, That the Holy Ghost hath set a brand of infamy upon murmurers. He hath stigmatised them for ungodly persons: Jude 1:15-16, 'To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.' But who are these ungodly sinners? 'They are mumurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts,' &c., ver. 16. When Christ comes to execute judgment upon ungodly ones, murmurers shall be set in the front, they shall experience the fierceness of his wrath and the greatness of his wrath. The front, you know, is first assaulted, and most strongly assaulted. Christ will bend all his power and strength against murmurers; his little finger shall be heavier upon them, than his loins shall be upon others, 1Ki 12:11, 1Ki 12:14; other sinners shall be chastised with whips, but ungodly murmurers shall be chastised with scorpions. If you can joy in that black character of ungodly sinners, be murmurers still; if not, cease from murmurings. Where murmuring is in its reign, in its dominion, there you may speak and write that person ungodly. Let murmurers make what

profession they will of godliness, yet if murmuring keeps the throne in their hearts, Christ will deal with them at last as ungodly sinners. A man may be denominated ungodly, as well from his murmuring, if he lives under the dominion of it, as from his drunkenness, swearing, whoring, lying, stealing, &c. A murmurer is an ungodly man, he is an ungodlike man; no man on earth more unlike to God than the murmurer; and therefore no wonder if when Christ comes to execute judgment, he deals so severely and terribly with him. In the wars of Tamberlain, one having found a great pot of gold, that was hid in the earth, he brought it to Tamberlain, who asked whether it had his father's stamp upon it? But when he saw that it had not his father's stamp, but the Roman stamp upon it, he would not own it, but cast it away. The Lord Jesus, when he shall come with all his saints to execute judgment, Oh! he will not own murmurers; nay, he will cast them away for ever, because they have not his Father's stamp upon them. Ah, souls! souls! as you would not go up and down this world with a badge of ungodliness upon you, take heed of murmuring.

(3). Thirdly, Consider that murmuring is the mother-sin; it is the mother of harlots, the mother of all abominations; a sin that breeds many other sins, viz., disobedience, contempt, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, rebellion, cursing, carnality; yea, it charges God with folly, yea, with blasphemy, Num 16:41, Num 17:10, Jdg 17:2. The language of a murmuring, a muttering soul is this, Surely God might have done this sooner, and that wiser, and the other thing better, &c. As the river Nilus bringeth forth many crocodiles, and the scorpion many serpents at one birth, so murmuring is a sin that breeds and brings forth many sins at once. Murmuring is like the monster hydra; cut off one head, and many will rise up in its room. Oh! therefore, bend all thy strength against this mother-sin. As the king of Syria said to his captains, 'Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel,' 1Ki 22:31, so say I, Fight not so much against this sin or that, but fight against your murmuring, which is a mother-sin. Make use of all your Christian armour, make use of all the ammunition of heaven, to destroy the mother, and in destroying of her, you will destroy the daughters, Eph 6:10-11. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled. When a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are easily and quickly routed and destroyed. So, destroy but murmuring, and you will quickly destroy disobedience, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, &c. Oh! kill this mother-sin, that this may never kill thy soul. I have read of Sennacherib, that after his army was destroyed by an angel, Isa 37:1-38, and he returned home to his own country, he inquired of one about him, what he thought the reason might be why God so favoured the Jews? He answered that there was one Abraham, their father, that was willing to sacrifice his son to death at the command of God, and that ever since that time God favoured that people. Well! said Sennacherib, if that be so, I have two sons, and I will sacrifice them both to death, if that will procure their God to favour me; which, when his two sons heard, they, as the story goeth, slew their father, Isa 37:38, choosing rather to kill than to be killed. So do thou choose rather to kill this mother-sin than to be killed by it, or by any of those vipers that are brought forth by it, Psa 137:8-9.

(4.) Fourthly, Consider that murmuring is a God-provoking sin; it is a sin that provokes God not only to afflict, but also to destroy a people: Num 14:27-29, 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me? I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as you have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you. Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me.' 1Co 10:10, 'Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured,

and were destroyed of the destroyer.' All our murmurings do but provoke the Lord to strike us and destroy us.

I have read of Cæsar, that, having prepared a great feast for his nobles and friends, it so fell out that the day appointed was extreme foul, that nothing could be done to the honour of their meeting; where upon he was so displeased and enraged, that he commanded all them that had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter, their chief god, as in defiance of him for that rainy weather; which, when they did, their arrows fell short of heaven, and fell upon their own heads, so that many of them were very sorely wounded. So all our mutterings and murmurings, which are as so many arrows shot at God himself, they will return upon our pates, hearts; they reach not him, but they will hit us; they hurt not him, but they will wound us: therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to provoke a consuming fire, Heb 12:29.

(5.) Fifthly, Consider, That murmuring is the devil's image, sin and punishment. Satan is still a-murmuring; he murmurs at every mercy that God bestows, at every dram of grace he gives, Job 1:8-9; he murmurs at every sin he pardons, and at every soul he saves. A soul cannot have a good look from heaven, nor hear a good word from heaven, nor receive a love-letter from heaven, but Satan murmurs at it; he murmurs and mutters at every act of pitying grace, and at every act of preventing grace, and at every act of supporting grace, and at every act of strengthening grace, and at every act of comforting grace that God exercises towards poor souls; he murmurs at every sip, at every drop, at every crumb of mercy that God bestows. Cyprian, Aquinas, and others conceive that the cause of Satan's banishment from heaven was his grieving and murmuring at the dignity of man, whom he beheld made after God's own image, insomuch that he would relinquish his own glory, to divest so noble a creature of perfection, and rather be in hell himself, than see Adam placed in paradise. But certainly, after his fall, murmuring and envy at man's innocency and felicity put him upon attempting to plunge man into the bottomless gulf of sin and misery; he knowing himself to be damned, and lost for ever, would needs try all ways how to make happy man eternally unhappy, Mr Howell tells it as a strange thing, that a serpent was found in the heart of an Englishman when he was dead;² but, alas! this old serpent was by sad experience found to have too much power in the heart of Adam whilst alive, and whilst in the height of all his glory and excellency. Murmuring is the first-born of the devil; and nothing renders a man more like to him than murmuring. Constantine's sons did not more resemble their father, nor Aristotle's scholars their master, nor Alexander's soldiers their general, than murmurers do resemble Satan. And as murmuring is Satan's sin, so it is his punishment. God hath given him up to a murmuring spirit; nothing pleases him; all things go against him; he is perpetually a-muttering and murmuring at persons or things. Now, oh what a dreadful thing is it to bear Satan's image upon us, and to be given up to be the devil's punishment! It were better not to be, than thus to be given up; and therefore cease from murmuring, and sit mute under your sorest trials. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Consider, That murmuring is a mercy-embittering sin, a mercy-souring sin; as put the sweetest things into a sour vessel, it sours them, or put them into a bitter vessel, and it embitters them. Murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. As holy silence gives a sweet taste, a delightful relish, to all a man's mercies, so murmuring embitters all. The murmurer can taste no sweetness in his sweetest morsels; every mercy, every morsel, tastes like the white of an egg to him, Job 6:6. This mercy, saith the murmurer, is not toothsome, nor that mercy is not wholesome; here is a mercy wants salt, and there is a mercy

wants sauce. A murmurer can taste no sweet, can feel no comfort; he can take no delight in any mercy he enjoys. The murmurer writes marah, that is, bitterness, upon all his mercies, and he reads and tastes bitterness in all his mercies. All the murmurer's grapes are grapes of gall, and all their clusters are bitter, Deu 32:23. As to 'the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet,' Pro 27:7, so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter. The mute Christian can suck sweetness from every breast of mercy, but the murmurer cries out, Oh it is bitter! Oh these breasts of mercy are dry!

(7.) Seventhly, Consider, That murmuring is a mercy-destroying sin, a mercy-murdering sin. Murmuring cuts the throat of mercy; it stabs all our mercies at the heart; it sets all a man's mercies a-bleeding about him at once: Num 14:30, 'Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.' God promises them that they should possess the holy land upon the condition of their obedience. This condition they brake; and therefore God was not foresworn though he cut them off in the wilderness, and kept them out of Canaan, Deu 31:16-17. But what is the sin that provokes the Lord to bar them out of the land of promise, and to cut them off from all those mercies that they enjoyed which entered into the holy land? Why, it was their murmuring; as you may see in Num 14:1-3, Num 14:26-29. As you love your mercies, as you would have the sweet of your mercies, and as you would enjoy the life of your mercies, take heed of murmuring. Murmuring will bring a consumption upon your mercies; it is a worm that will make all your mercies to wither. As there be some that love their mercies into the grave, and others that plot their mercies into the grave, so there be some that murmur their mercies into the grave. As you would have your mercies always fresh and green, smiling and thriving, as you would have your mercies to bed and board with you, to rise up and lie down with you, and in all conditions to attend you, murmur not, murmur not. The mute Christian's mercies are most sweet and most long-lived; the murmurer's mercies, like Jonah's gourd, will quickly wither. Murmuring hath cut the throat of national mercies, of domestical mercies, and of personal mercies; and therefore, oh how should men fly from it as from a serpent! as from the avenger of blood! yea, as from hell itself!

(8.) Eighthly, Consider, That murmuring unfits the soul for duty, Exo 6:7-10. A murmurer can neither hear to profit, nor pray to profit, nor read to profit, nor meditate to profit. The murmurer is neither fit to do good, nor receive good. Murmuring unfits the soul for doings of duties; it unfits the soul for delighting in duties; it unfits the soul for communion with God in duties. Murmuring fills the soul with cares, fears, distractions, vexations; all which unfits a man for duty, 1Co 7:33-35. As a holy quietness and calmness of spirit prompts a man to duty, as it makes every duty easy and pleasant to the soul, Pro 3:17; so it is murmuring that unhinges the soul, and indisposes the soul, so that it takes off the chariot wheels of the soul, that the soul cannot look up to God, nor do for God, nor receive from God, nor wait on God, nor walk with God, nor act faith upon God, &c., Psa 40:12. Oh! therefore, as ever you would be in a blessed preparedness, and a blessed fittedness for duty, take heed of murmuring, and sit mute and silent under the afflicting hand of God, Isa 26:9-11.

(9.) Ninthly, Consider, That murmuring unmans a man; it strips him of his reason and understanding; it makes him call evil good, and good evil; it puts light for darkness and darkness for light, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; it calls saviours destroyers, and deliverers murderers, Isa 5:18-20; as you see in the murmuring Israelites, Exo 14:1-31; Exo 15:1-27; Exo 16:1-36.

Murmuring uncrowns a man. The murmurer may say, 'My crown is fallen from my head,' Lam 5:16. Murmuring strips a man of all his glory; it spoils all his excellency; it destroys the nobility of man; it speaks him out to be a base ignoble creature. Murmuring clouds a man's understanding; it perverts the judgment, it puts out the eye of reason, stupefies his conscience; it sours the heart, disorders the will, and distempers the affections; it be-beasts a man, yea, it sets him below the beasts that perish; for he were better be a beast, than be like a beast. The murmurer is the hieroglyphic of folly; he is a comprehensive vanity; he is a man and no man; he is sottish and senseless; he neither understands God nor himself nor anything as he should; he is the man that must be sent to school, to learn of the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the earth, how to cease from murmuring, and how to be mute, Isa 3:8, Jer 7:6. Ah! sirs, as you would have the name, the honour, the reputation of being men, I say men, Take heed of murmuring, and sit silent before the Lord.

(10.) Tenthly, Murmuring is a time-destroying sin. Ah! the precious time that is buried in the grave of murmuring? When the murmurer should be a-praying, he is a-murmuring against the Lord; when he should be a-hearing, he is a-murmuring against the divine providences; when he should be a-reading, he is a-murmuring against instruments. The murmurer spends much precious time in musing; in musing how to get out of such a trouble, how to get off such a yoke, how to be rid of such a burden, how to revenge himself for such a wrong, how to supplant such a person, how to reproach those that are above him, and how to affront those that are below him; and a thousand other ways murmurers have to expend that precious time that some would redeem with a world; as Queen Elizabeth on her deathbed cried out, 'Time, time, a world of wealth for an inch of time.' The murmurer lavishly and profusely trifles away that precious time, that is his greatest interest in this world to redeem, Eph 5:16. Every day, every hour in the day, is a talent of time, and God expects the improvement of it, and will charge the non-improvement of it upon you at last, Rev 2:21, Rev 2:25; 1Pe 4:2. Cæsar observing some ladies in Rome to spend much of their time in making much of little dogs and monkeys, asked them, Whether the women in that country had no children to make much of? Ah! murmurers, murmurers, you who by your murmuring, trifle away so many godly hours and seasons of mercy, have you no God to honour? have you no Christ to believe in? have you no hearts to change, no sins to be pardoned, no souls to save, no hell to escape, no heaven to seek after? Oh! if you have, why do you spend so much of your precious time in murmuring against God, against men, against this or that thing? Eternity rides upon the back of time. Hoc est momentum, this is the moment: if it be well improved, you are made for ever; if not, you are undone for ever. Aut malè, aut nihil, aut aliud agendo.

I have read of Archias a Lacedæmonian [Plutarch], that whilst he was rioting and quaffing in the midst of his cups, one delivers him a letter, purposely to signify that there were some that lay in wait to take away his life, and withal desires him to read it presently, because it was a serious business and matter of high concernment to him. Oh, said he, seria cras, I will think of serious things to-morrow; but that night he was slain. Ah! murmurer, cease from murmuring to-day, or else thou mayest be for ever undone by murmuring to-morrow. The old saying, Nunc aut nunquam, now or never; so say I, Now or never, now or never give over murmuring, and let it swallow up no more of your precious time. What would not many a murmurer give for one of those days, yea, for one of those hours which he hath trifled away in murmuring, when it is a day too late! The Rabbins glory in this conceit, that a man hath so many bones as there be letters in the decalogue, and just

so many joints and members as there be days in the year; to shew that all our strength and time should be expended in God's service. Ah, murmurers! you will gain more by one day's faithful serving of God, than ever you have gained by murmuring against God. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, Consider this, Christians, that of all men in the world, you have least cause, yea, no cause, to be murmuring and muttering under any dispensation that you meet with in this world. Is not God thy portion? Chrysostom propounds this question, Was Job miserable when he had lost all that God had given him? and gives this answer, No, he had still that God that gave him all. Is not Christ thy treasurer? is not heaven thine inheritance? and wilt thou murmur? Hast thou not much in hand, and more in hope? Hast thou not much in possession, but much more in reversion; and wilt thou murmur? Hath not God given thee a changed heart, a renewed nature, and a sanctified soul; and wilt thou murmur? Hath he not given thee himself to satisfy thee,² his Son to save thee, his Spirit to lead thee, his grace to adorn thee, his covenant to assure thee, his mercy to pardon thee, his righteousness to clothe thee; and wilt thou murmur? Hath he not made thee a friend, a son, a brother, a bride, an heir; and wilt thou murmur? Hath not God often turned thy water into wine, thy brass into silver, and thy silver into gold; and wilt thou murmur? When thou wast dead, did not he quicken thee; and when thou wast lost, did not he seek thee; and when thou wast wounded, did not he heal thee; and when thou wert falling, did not he support thee; and when thou wert down, did not he raise thee; and when thou wert staggering, did not he establish thee; and when thou wert erring, did not he reduce thee; and when thou wert tempted, did not he succour thee; and when thou wert in dangers, did not he deliver thee; and wilt thou murmur? What! thou that art so highly advanced and exalted above many thousands in the world? Murmuring is a black garment, and it becomes none so ill as saints.

(12.) Twelfthly, and lastly, Consider that murmuring makes the life of man invisibly miserable. Every murmurer is his own executioner. Murmuring vexes the heart; it wears and tears the heart, it enrages and inflames the heart, it wounds and stabs the heart. Every murmurer is his own martyr, every murmurer is a murderer; he kills many at once, viz. his joy, his comfort, his peace, his rest, his soul. No man so inwardly miserable as the murmurer; no man hath such inward gripes and griefs as he, such inward bitterness and heaviness as he, such inward contentions and combustions as he. Every murmurer is his own tormentor. Murmuring is a fire within that will burn up all, it is an earthquake within that will overturn all, it is a disease within that will infect all, it is a poison within that will prey upon all. And thus I have done with those motives that may persuade us not to murmur nor mutter, but to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences and sharpest trials that we meet with in this world.

I shall now address myself to answer those objections, and to remove those impediments which hinder poor souls from being silent and mute under the afflicting hand of God, &c.

Obj. 1. Sir! did I but know that I were afflicted in love, I would hold my peace under my affliction, I would sit mute before the Lord; but oh! how shall I come to understand that these strokes are the strokes of love, that these wounds are the wounds of a friend? I answer:

1. First, If thy heart be drawn more out to the Lord by thy afflictions, then the afflictions are in love. If they are so sanctified as that they draw out thy soul to love the Lord more, and to fear the Lord more, and to please the Lord more, and to cleave to the Lord more, and to wait on the Lord more, and to walk with the Lord more, then they are in love. Oh, then they are the wounds of a friend

indeed! It is reported of the lioness, that she leaves her young whelps till they have almost killed themselves with roaring and yelling, and then at the last gasp, when they have almost spent themselves, she relieves them, and by this means they become more courageous; and so if the afflictions that are upon us do increase our courage, strengthen our patience, raise our faith, inflame our love, and enliven our hopes, certainly they are in love, and all our wounds are the wounds of a friend. But,

2. Secondly, If you are more careful and studious how to glorify God in the affliction, and how to be kept from sinning under the affliction, than how to get out of the affliction, then certainly your affliction is in love, Dan 3:1-30 and Dan 5:16-17, Heb 11:1-40. Where God smites in love, there the soul makes it his study how to glorify God, and how to lift up God, and how to be a name and an honour to God. The daily language of such a soul under the rod is this: Lord! stand by me that I sin not, uphold me that I sin not, strengthen me that I sin not, John 7:7-10. He that will not sin to repair and make up his losses, though he knew assuredly that the committing of such a sin would make up all again, he may conclude that his affliction is in love.

I have read of a nobleman whose son and heir was supposed to be bewitched, and being advised to go to some wizard or cunning man, as they are called, to have some help for his son, that he might be un-witched again, he answered, Oh, by no means, I had rather the witch should have my son than the devil. His son should suffer rather than he would sin him out of his sufferings. He that will not break the hedge of a fair command to avoid the foul way of some heavy affliction, may well conclude that his affliction is in love. Christians! what say you, when you are in the mount; do you thus bespeak the Lord? Lord! take care of thy glory, and let me rather sink in my affliction than sin under my affliction. If this be the bent and frame of thy heart, it is certain the affliction that is upon thee is in love. The primitive times afforded many such brave spirits, though this age affords but few.

3. Thirdly, If you enjoy the special presence of God with your spirits in your affliction, then your affliction is in love, Psa 23:4-6. Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.' Hast thou a special presence of God with thy spirit, strengthening of that, quieting of that, stilling of that, satisfying of that, cheering and comforting of that? Psa 94:19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts,'—that is, of my troubled, intricate, ensnared, intertwined and perplexed thoughts, as the branches of a tree by some strong wind are twisted one within another, as the Hebrew word properly signifies,—'thy comforts delight my soul.' Here is a presence of God with his soul, here is comforts and delights that reach the soul, here is a cordial to strengthen the spirit. When all things went cross with Andronicus, the old emperor of Constantinople, he took a psalter into his hand, and opening the same, he lighted upon Psa 68:14, 'When the Almighty scattered kings, they shall be white as snow in Salmon;' which scripture was a mighty comfort and refreshment to his spirit. Now you are to remember that Salmon signifies shady and dark; so was this mount, by the reason of many lofty fair-spread trees that were near it, but made lightsome by snow that covered it. So that to be white as snow in Salmon, is to have joy in affliction, light in darkness, mercy in misery, &c. And thus God was to the psalmist as snow in Salmon in the midst of his greatest afflictions. When Paul would wish his dear son Timothy the best mercy in all the world, the greatest mercy in all the world, the most comprehensive mercy in all the world, a mercy that carries the virtue, value, and sweetness of all mercies in it, he wishes

the presence of God with his spirit: 2Ti 4:22, 'The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit,' in point of honour, in point of profit and pleasure, in point of safety and security, and in point of comfort and joy; it is the greatest blessing and happiness in this world to have the presence of God with our spirits, especially in times of trials: 2Co 4:16, 'For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.' By the 'outward man,' you are to understand not merely our bodies, but our persons, estates, and outward condition in this world; and by the 'inward man,' you are to understand our souls, our persons considered according to our spiritual estate. Now, when the inward man gains new strength by every new trouble, when as troubles, pressures, afflictions, and tribulations are increased, a Christian's inward strength is increased also, then his afflictions are in love. When the presence of God is with our inward man, cheering, comforting, encouraging, strengthening, and renewing of that, we may safely conclude that all these trials, though they are never so sharp and smart, yet they are in love.

I have read of a company of poor Christians that were banished into some remote parts, and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said that it was a very sad condition those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go. The presence of God with the spirits of his people, is a breast of comfort that can never be drawn dry; it is an everlasting spring that will never fail, Heb 13:5-6. Well! Christian, thou art under many great troubles, many sore trials: but tell me, doth God give unto thy soul such cordials, such supports, such comforts, and such refreshments, that the world knows not of? Oh! then, certainly thy affliction is in love.

4. Fourthly, If by your affliction you are made more conformable to Christ in his virtues, then certainly your afflictions are in love. Many are conformable to Christ in their sufferings, that are not made conformable to Christ in his virtues by their sufferings; many are in poverty, neglect, shame, contempt, reproach, &c., like to Christ, who yet by these are not made more like to Christ in his meekness, humbleness, heavenliness, holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, fruitfulness, goodness, contentedness, patience, submission, subjection. Oh! but if in these things you are made more like to Christ, without all peradventure your afflictions are in love. If by afflictions the soul be led to shew forth, or to preach forth, the virtues of Christ, as that word imports in that 1Pe 2:9, then certainly those afflictions are in love; for they never have such an operation but where they are set on by a hand of love. When God strikes as an enemy, then all those strokes do but make a man more an enemy to God, as you see in Pharaoh and others; but when the strokes of God are the strokes of love, oh! then they do but bring the soul nearer Christ, and transform the soul more and more into the likeness of Christ, Isa 26:8-10, Jer 6:3, Amo 6:1. If by thy afflictions thou art made more holy, humble, heavenly, &c., they are in love. Every afflicted Christian should strive to be honoured with that eulogy of Salvian, *Singularis domini præclarus imitator*, an excellent disciple of a singular master. But,

5. Fifthly, If by outward afflictions thy soul be brought more under the inward teachings of God, doubtless thy afflictions are in love, Job 34:31-32: Psa 94:12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' All the chastening in the world, without divine teaching, will never make a man blessed; that man that finds correction attended with instruction, and lashing with lessoning, is a happy man. If God, by the affliction that is upon thee, shall teach

thee how to loathe sin more, how to trample upon the world more, and how to walk with God more, thy afflictions are in love. If God shall teach thee by afflictions how to die to sin more, and how to die to thy relations more, and how to die to thy self-interest more, thy afflictions are in love. If God shall teach thee by afflictions how to live to Christ more, how to lift up Christ more, and how to long for Christ more, thy afflictions are in love. If God shall teach thee by afflictions to get assurance of a better life, and to be still in a gracious readiness and preparedness for the day of thy death, thy afflictions are in love. If God shall teach thee by afflictions how to mind heaven more, how to live in heaven more, and how to fit for heaven more, thy afflictions are in love. If God by afflictions shall teach thy proud heart how to lie more low, and thy hard heart how to grow more humble, and thy censorious heart how to grow more charitable, and thy carnal heart how to grow more spiritual, and thy froward heart how to grow more quiet, &c., thy afflictions are in love. When God teaches thy reins as well as thy brains, thy heart as well as thy head, these lessons, or any of these lessons, thy afflictions are in love. Pambo, an illiterate dunce, as the historian terms him, was a-learning that one lesson, 'I said I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue,' nineteen years, and yet had not learned it. Ah! it is to be feared that there are many who have been in the school of affliction above this nineteen years, and yet have not learned any saving lesson all this while. Surely their afflictions are not in love, but in wrath. Where God loves, he afflicts in love, and wherever God afflicts in love, there he will, first or last, teach such souls such lessons as shall do them good to all eternity. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If God suit your burdens to your backs, your trials to your strength, according to that golden promise, 1Co 10:13, your afflictions are in love. 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' When God's strokes and a Christian's strength are suited one to another, all is in love, Isa 27:8, Jer 30:11, Jer 46:28. Let the load be never so heavy that God lays on, if he put under his everlasting arms, all is in love, Gen 49:23-24. As Egypt had many venomous creatures, so it had many antidotes against them. When God shall lay antidotes into the soul against all the afflictions that befall a Christian, then they are all in love. It is no matter how heavy the burden is, if God gives a shoulder to bear it: all is in love; it is no matter how bitter the cup is, if God give courage to drink it off; it is no matter how hot the furnace is, if God gives power to walk in the midst of it: all is in love.

(7.) Seventhly, If thou art willing to lie in the furnace till thy dross be consumed; if thou art willing that the plaster should lie on, though it smart, till the cure be wrought; if thou art willing that the physic should work, though it makes thee sick, till the humours be expelled; all is in love, Job 23:10, Mic 7:9. Cain, and Saul, and Pharaoh, were all for the removing away of the stroke, the affliction; they cry not out, 'Our sins are greater than we are able to bear,' but they cry out, 'Our punishment is greater than we are able to bear;' they cry not out, 'Lord, take away our sins,' but 'Lord, remove the stroke of thy hand.' Oh! but when an affliction comes in love upon a soul, the language of that soul is this: Lord, remove the cause rather than the effect, the sin rather than the punishment, my corruption rather than my affliction. Lord! what will it avail me to have the sore skinned over, if the corrupt matter still remain in? there is no evil, Lord, to the evil of sin; and therefore deliver me rather from the evil of sin than the evil of suffering. I know, Lord, that affliction cannot be so displeasing to me as sin is dishonourable and displeasing to thee; and therefore,

Lord, let me see an end of my sin, though in this world I should never see an end of my sorrows; oh, let me see an end of my corruptions, though I should never see an end of my corrections; Lord, I had rather have a cure for my heart than a cure for my head, I had rather be made whole and sound within than without, I had rather have a healthy soul than a healthy body, a pure inside than a beautiful outside. If this be the settled frame and temper of thy spirit, certainly thy afflictions are in love.

There was one who, being under marvellous great pains and torments in his body, occasioned by many sore diseases that were upon him, cried out, Had I all the world I would give it for ease, and yet for all the world I would not have ease till the cure be wrought. Sure his afflictions were in love. The first request, the great request, and the last request of a soul afflicted in love, is, A cure, Lord! a cure, Lord! of this wretched heart, and this sinful life, and all will be well, all will be well.

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, If you live a life of faith in your afflictions, then your afflictions are in love. Now, what is it to live by faith in affliction, but to live in the exercising of faith upon those precious promises that are made over to an afflicted condition? God hath promised to be with his people in their afflictions, Isa 43:2-3; he hath promised to support them under their affliction, Isa 41:10; he hath promised to deliver his people out of their afflictions, Psa 50:15; he hath promised to purge away his people's sins by affliction, Isa 1:25; he hath promised to make his people more partakers of his holiness by affliction, Heb 12:10; he hath promised to make affliction an inlet to a more full and sweet enjoyment of himself, Hos 2:14; he hath promised that he will never leave nor forsake his people in their afflictions, Heb 13:5-6; he hath promised that all their afflictions shall work for their good, Zec 13:9, Rom 8:28. Now if thy faith be drawn forth to feed upon these promises, if these be heavenly manna to thy faith, and thy soul lives upon them, and sucks strength and sweetness from them, under all the trials and troubles that are upon thee, thy afflictions are in love. A bee can suck honey out of a flower, which a fly cannot. If thy faith can extract comfort and sweetness in thy saddest distresses, out of the breasts of precious promises, and gather one contrary out of another, honey out of the rock, Deu 32:13, thy afflictions are in love. The promises are full breasts, and God delights that faith should draw them; they are pabulum fidei, et anima fidei, the food of faith, and the very soul of faith; they are an everlasting spring that can never be drawn dry; they are an inexhaustible treasure that can never be exhausted; they are the garden of paradise, and full of such choice flowers that will never fade, but be always fresh, sweet, green, and flourishing; and if, in the day of affliction, they prove thus to thy soul, thy afflictions are in love. Sertorius paid what he promised with fair words, but so doth not God. Men many times eat their words, but God will never eat his; all his promises in Christ are yea and in him amen, 1Co 1:20. Hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? If in all thy troubles thy heart be drawn forth to act faith upon the promises, thy troubles are from love. And thus much by way of answer to the first objection.

Obj. 2. Oh, but, sir! the Lord hath smitten me in my nearest and dearest comforts and contentments, and how then can I hold my peace? God hath taken away a husband, a wife, a child, an only child, a bosom-friend, and how then can I be silent? &c.

Ans. To this I answer,

(1.) First, If God did not strike thee in that mercy which was near and dear unto thee, it would not amount to an affliction. That is not worthy the name of an affliction that does not strike at some bosom mercy; that trouble is no trouble that doth not touch some choice contentment; that storm is no storm that only blows off the leaves, but never hurts the fruit; that thrust is no thrust that only touches the clothes, but never reaches the skin; that cut is no cut that only cuts the hat, but never touches the head; neither is that affliction any affliction that only reaches some remote enjoyment, but never reaches a Joseph, a Benjamin, &c.

(2.) Secondly, The best mercy is not too good for the best God. The best of the best is not good enough for him who is goodness itself; the best child, the best yoke-fellow, the best friend, the best jewel in all thy crown must be readily resigned to thy best God. There is no mercy, no enjoyment, no contentment worthy of God, but the best. The milk of mercy is for others, the cream of mercy is due to God. The choicest, the fairest, and the sweetest flowers, are fittest for the bosom of God; if he will take the best flower in all the garden, and plant it in a better soil, hast thou any cause to murmur? Wilt thou not hold thy peace? Mal 1:13-14.

(3.) Thirdly, Your near and dear mercies were first the Lord's before they were yours, and always the Lord's more than they were yours. When God gives a mercy, he doth not relinquish his own right in that mercy: 1Ch 29:14, 'All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.' The sweet of mercy is yours, but the sovereign right to dispose of your mercies is the Lord's. Quicquid es, debes creanti; quicquid potes, debes redimenti [Bernard], whatsoever thou art, thou owest to him that made thee; and whatsoever thou hast, thou owest to him that redeemed thee. You say it is but just and reasonable that men should do with their own as they please, and is it not just and reasonable that God, who is Lord paramount, should do with his own as he pleases? Dost thou believe that the great God may do in heaven what he pleases? and on the seas what he pleases? and in the nations and kingdoms of the world what he pleases? and in thy heart what he pleases? And dost thou not believe that God may do in thy house what he pleases, and do with thy mercies what he pleases? Job 9:12, 'Behold, he taketh away,' or he snatcheth away, it may be a husband, a wife, a child, an estate, 'who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what doest thou?' Who dares cavil against God? Who dares question that God that is unquestionable, that chief Lord that is uncontrollable, and who may do with his own what he pleaseth? Dan 4:35, 'And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' Where is the prince, the peasant, the master, the servant, the husband, the wife, the father, the child, that dares say to God, What doest thou? Isa 45:9. In matters of arithmetical accounts, set one against ten, ten against a hundred, a hundred against a thousand, a thousand against ten thousand, although there be great odds, yet there is some comparison; but if a man could set down an infinite number, then there could be no comparison at all, because the one is infinite, the other finite; so set all the princes and powers of the earth in opposition to God, they shall never be able to withstand him. It was once the saying of Pompey, that with one stamp of his foot he could raise all Italy in arms; but let the great God but stamp with his foot, and he can raise all the world in arms, to own him, to contend for him, or to revenge any affronts that by any are put upon him, and therefore who shall say unto him, What doest thou? Water is stronger than earth, fire stronger than water, angels stronger than men, and God stronger than them all; and therefore who shall say unto God, What doest thou; when he takes their nearest and their dearest

mercies from them? But,

(4.) Fourthly, It may be thou hast not made a happy improvement of thy near and dear mercies whilst thou enjoyedst them. Thou hast been taken with thy mercies, but thy heart hath not been taken up in the improvement of them. There are many who are very much taken with their mercies, who make no conscience of improving their mercies. Have thy near and dear mercies been a star to lead thee to Christ? Have they been a cloud by day, and a pillar of light by night, to lead thee towards the heavenly Canaan? Have they been a Jacob's ladder to thy soul? Hast thou by them been provoked to give up thyself to God as a living sacrifice? Rom 12:1. Hast thou improved thy near and dear mercies to the inflaming of thy love to God, to the strengthening of thy confidence in God, to the raising of thy communion with God, and to the engaging of thy heart to a more close and circumspect walking before God? &c. If thou hast not thus improved them, thou hast more cause to be mute than to murmur, to be silent than to be impatient, to fall out with thyself than to fall out with thy God. Children and fools are taken with many things, but improve nothing. Such children and fools are most men; they are much taken with their mercies, but they make no improvement of their mercies; and therefore no wonder if God strip them of their mercies. The candle of mercy is set up not to play by, but to work by.

Pliny speaks of one Cressinus, who improved a little piece of ground to a far greater advantage than his neighbours could a greater quantity of land. Thereupon he was accused of witchcraft; but he, to defend himself, brought into the court his servants and their working tools, and said, *Veneficia mea, Quirites, hæc sunt*, these are my witchcrafts, O ye Romans; these servants, and these working tools, are all the witchcraft that I know of. When the people heard this plea, with one consent they acquitted him, and declared him not guilty; and so his little piece of ground was secured to him. There is no way to secure your mercies but by improving of them; there is nothing that provokes God to strip you of your mercies like the non-improvement of them: Mat 25:28-31, 'Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.' By some stroke or other God will take away the mercy that is not improved. If thy slothfulness hath put God upon passing a sentence of death upon the dearest mercy, thank thyself, and hold thy peace.

(5.) Fifthly, If in this case God had made thee a precedent to others, thou must have held thy peace; how much more, then, shouldst thou be mute when God hath made many others precedents to thee! Did not God smite Aaron in his dear and near enjoyments, Lev 10:1-2, and doth he not hold his peace? Did not God smite David in his Absalom, and Abraham in his Sarah, and Job in his sons, daughters, estate, and body, and Jonah in his gourd? Art thou more beloved than these? No. Hast thou more grace than these? No. Hast thou done more for divine glory than these? No. Art thou richer in spiritual experiences than these? No. Hast thou attained to higher enjoyments than these? No. Hast thou been more serviceable in thy generation than these? No. Hast thou been more exemplary in thy life and conversation than these? &c. No. Then why shouldst thou murmur and fret at that which hath been the common lot of the dearest saints?

Though God hath smitten thee in this or that near and dear enjoyment, it is thy wisdom to hold thy peace, for that God that hath taken away one, might have taken away all. Justice writes a sentence of death upon all Job's mercies at once, and yet he holds his peace, Job 1:1-22; and wilt not thou hold thine, though God hath cropped the fairest flower in all thy garden?

Anytus, a young spark of Athens, came revelling into Alcibiades's house; and as he sat at supper with some strangers, he arose on a sudden, and took away one half of his place.² Thereupon the guests stormed, and took on at it. He bade them be quiet, and told them that he had dealt kindly with him, since that he had left the one half, whereas he might have taken all. So when our hearts begin to storm and take on when God smites us in this near mercy and in that dear enjoyment, oh let us lay the law of silence upon our hearts! let us charge our souls to be quiet! for that God that hath taken away one child, might have took away every child; and he that hath taken away one friend, might have taken away every friend; and he that hath taken away a part of thy estate, might have taken away thy whole estate: therefore hold thy peace; let who will murmur, yet be thou mute.

(6.) Sixthly, It may be thy sins have been much about thy near and dear enjoyments. It may be thou hast over-loved them, and over-prized them, and over-much delighted thyself in them; it may be they have often had thy heart, when they should have had but thy hand; it may be that care, that fear, that confidence, that joy that should have been expended upon more noble objects, hath been expended upon them. Thy heart, O Christian! is Christ's bed of spices, and it may be thou hast bedded thy mercies with thee, when Christ hath been put to lie in an outhouse, Luk 2:7; thou hast had room for them, when thou hast had none for him; they have had the best, when the worst have been counted good enough for Christ. It is said of Reuben, that he went up to his father's bed, Gen 49:4. Ah! how often hath one creature comfort and sometimes another put in between Christ and your souls! how often have your dear enjoyments gone up to Christ's bed! It is said of the Babylonians, that they came in to Aholah and Aholibah's bed of love, Eze 23:17; may it not be said of your near and dear mercies, that they have come into Christ's bed of love, your hearts; they being that bed wherein Christ delights to rest and repose himself? Song of Solomon 3:7. Now, if a husband, a child, a friend shall take up that room in thy soul that is proper and peculiar to God, God will either embitter it, remove it, or be the death of it. If once the love of a wife runs out more to a servant than to her husband, the master will turn him out of doors, though otherwise he were a servant worth gold. The sweetest comforts of this life, they are but like treasures of snow; now do but take a handful of snow, and crush it in your hands, and it will melt away presently; but if you let it lie upon the ground, it will continue for some time. And so it is with the contentments of this world; if you grasp them in your hands and lay them too near your hearts, they will quickly melt and vanish away; but if you will not hold them too fast in your hands, nor lay them too close to your hearts, they will abide the longer with you. There are those that love their mercies into their graves, that hug their mercies to death, that kiss them till they kill them. Many a man hath slain his mercies, by setting too great a value upon them; many a man hath sunk his ship of mercy, by taking up in it; over-loved mercies are seldom long lived: Eze 24:21, 'When I take from them the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters.' The way to lose your mercies is to indulge them; the way to destroy them is to fix your minds and hearts upon them. Thou mayest write bitterness and death upon that mercy first that hath first taken away thy heart from God. Now, if God hath stripped thee of that very mercy with which thou hast often committed spiritual adultery and idolatry, hast thou any cause to murmur? Hast thou not rather cause to hold thy peace, and to be mute before the Lord? Christians, your hearts are Christ's royal throne, and in this throne Christ will be chief, as Pharaoh said to Joseph, Gen 41:40; he will endure no competitor. If you shall attempt to throne the creature, be it never so near and dear unto you, Christ will dethrone it, he will destroy it; he will

quickly lay them in a bed of dust who shall aspire to his royal throne. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Thou hast no cause to murmur because of the loss of such near and dear enjoyments, considering those more noble and spiritual mercies and favours that thou still enjoyest. Grant that Joseph is not, and Benjamin is not, Gen 42:36, yet Jesus is; he is yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever, Heb 13:8; thy union and communion with Christ remains still; the immortal seed abides in thee still, 1Jn 3:9; the Sun of righteousness shines upon thee still; thou art in favour with God still, and thou art under the anointings of the Spirit still, and under the influences of heaven still, &c.; and why then shouldst thou mutter, and not rather hold thy peace? I have read of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, once asked him, whether he was not sore troubled and afflicted for want of his sight? Oh yes! said Didymus, it is a great affliction and grief unto me. Then Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given you the excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice and brute beasts have? So say I. Ah, Christians! hath God blessed you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places? Eph 1:3-4. Hath the Lord given you himself for a portion? Hath he given you his Son for your redemption, and his Spirit for your instruction; and will you murmur? Hath he given his grace to adorn you, his promises to comfort you, his ordinances to better you, and the hopes of heaven to encourage you; and will you mutter? Paulinus Nolanus, when his city was taken from him, prayed thus: Lord! said he, let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c., for thou art all, and much more than all, these unto me. In the want of all your sweetest enjoyments, Christ will be all in all unto you, Col 3:11. My jewels are my husband, said Phocion's wife; my ornaments are my two sons, said the mother of the Gracchi; my treasures are my friends, said Constantius; and so may a Christian under his greatest losses say, Christ is my richest jewels, my chiefest treasures, my best ornaments, my sweetest delights. Look what all these things are to a carnal heart, a worldly heart, that and more is Christ to me.

(8.) Eighthly, If God, by smiting thee in thy nearest and dearest enjoyments, shall put thee upon a more thorough smiting and mortifying of thy dearest sins, thou hast no cause to murmur. God cures David of adultery by killing his endeared child. There is some Delilah, some darling, some beloved sin or other, that a Christian's calling, condition, constitution, or temptations leads him to play withal, and to hug in his own bosom, rather than some other, Psa 18:23, Heb 12:1. As in a ground that lieth untilld, amongst the great variety of weeds there is usually some master-weed that is rifer and ranker than all the rest; and as it is in the body of man, that although in some degree or other, more or less, there be a mixture of all the four elements, not any of them wholly, wanting, yet there is some one of them predominant that gives the denomination, in which regard some are said to be of a sanguine, some of a phlegmatic, some of a choleric, and some of a melancholic constitution; so it is also in the souls of men: though there be a general mixture and medley of all evil and corrupt qualities, yet there is some one usually that is paramount, which, like the prince of devils, is most powerful and prevalent, that swayeth and sheweth forth itself more eminently and evidently than any other of them do. And as in every man's body there is a seed and principle of death, yet in some there is a proneness to one kind of disease more than other that may hasten death; so, though the root of sin and bitterness hath spread itself over all, yet every man hath his inclination to one kind of sin rather than another, and this may be called a man's proper sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin. Now, it is one of the hardest works in this world to subdue and bring under this bosom sin. Oh! the prayers, the tears, the sighs, the sobs, the groans,

the gripes that it will cost a Christian before he brings under this darling sin!

Look upon a rabbit's skin, how well it comes off till it comes to the head, but then what hauling and pulling is there before it stirs! So it is in the mortifying, in the crucifying of sin; a man may easily subdue and mortify such and such sins, but when it comes to the head-sin, to the master-sin, to the bosom-sin, oh! what tugging and pulling is there! what striving and struggling is there to get off that sin, to get down that sin! Now, if the Lord, by smiting thee in some near and dear enjoyment, shall draw out thy heart to fall upon smiting of thy master-sin, and shall so sanctify the affliction, as to make it issue in the mortification of thy bosom corruption, what eminent cause wilt thou have rather to bless him, than to sit down and murmur against him! And doubtless if thou art dear to God, God will, by striking thy dearest mercy, put thee upon striking at thy darling sin; and therefore hold thy peace, even then when God touches the apple of thine eye.

(9.) Ninthly, consider That the Lord hath many ways to make up the loss of a near and dear mercy to thee; he can make up thy loss in something else that may be better for thee, and he will certainly make up thy loss, either in kind or in worth, Mat 19:27-30. He took from David an Absalom, and he gave him a Solomon; he took from him a Michal, and gave him a wise Abigail; he took from Job seven sons and three daughters, and" afterwards he gives him seven sons and three daughters; he took from Job a fair estate, and at last doubled it to him; he removed the bodily presence of Christ from his disciples, but gave them more abundantly of his spiritual presence, which was far the greater and the sweeter mercy. If Moses be taken away, Joshua shall be raised in his room; if David be gathered to his fathers, a Solomon shall succeed him in his throne; if John be cast into prison, rather than the pulpit shall stand empty, a greater than John, even Christ himself, will begin to preach. He that lives upon God in the loss of creature comforts, shall find all made up in the God of comforts; he shall be able to say, Though my child is not, my friend is not, my yoke-fellow is not, yet my God liveth, and 'blessed be my rock,' Psa 89:26. Though this mercy is not, and that mercy is not, yet covenant-mercies, yet 'the sure mercies of David' continue, 2Sa 23:5; these bed and board with me, these will to the grave and to glory with me. I have read of a godly man, who, living near a philosopher, did often persuade him to become a Christian. Oh! but, said the philosopher, I must, or may, lose all for Christ; to which the good man replied, if you lose anything for Christ, he will be sure to repay it a hundredfold. Ay, but, said the philosopher, will you be bound for Christ, that if he doth not pay me, you will? Yes, that I will, said the good man. So the philosopher became a Christian, and the good man entered into bond for performance of covenants. Some time after it happened that the philosopher fell sick on his deathbed, and, holding the bond in his hand, sent for the party engaged, to whom he gave up the bond, and said, Christ hath paid all, there is nothing for you to pay, take your bond, and cancel it. Christ will suffer none of his children to go by the loss; he hath all, and he will make up all to them. In the close, Christ will pay the reckoning. No man shall ever have cause to say that he hath been a loser by Christ. And, therefore, thou hast much cause to be mute, thou hast no cause to murmur, though God hath snatched the fairest and the sweetest flower out of thy bosom.

(10.) Tenthly, How canst thou tell but that which thou callest a near and dear mercy, if it had been continued longer to thee, might have proved the greatest cross, the greatest calamity and misery that ever thou didst meet with in this world? Our mercies, like choice wines, many times turn into vinegar; our fairest hopes are often blasted; and that very mercy which we sometimes have said should be a staff to support us, hath proved a sword to pierce us. How often have our most

flourishing mercies withered in our hands, and our bosom contentments been turned into gall and wormwood! If God had continued the life of David's child to him, it would have been but a living monument of his sin and shame; and all that knew the child would have pointed at him, Yonder goes David's bastard; and so have kept David's wound still a-bleeding, 2Sa 12:16, Many parents who have sought the lives of their children with tears, have lived afterwards to see them take such courses and come to such dismal ends as have brought their grey head with sorrow to their graves. It had been ten thousand times a greater mercy to many parents to have buried their children so soon as ever they had been born, than to see them come to such unhappy ends as they often do. Well! Christian, it may be the Lord hath taken from thee such a hopeful son, or such a dear daughter, and thou sayest, How can I hold my peace? but hark, Christian, hark, canst thou tell me how long thou must have travailed in birth with them again before they had been twice born? Would not every sin that they had committed against thy gracious God caused a new throe in thy soul? Would not every temptation that they had fallen before been as a dagger at thy heart? Would not every affliction that should have befallen them been as a knife at thy throat? What are those pains, and pangs, and throes of child-birth to those after pains, pangs, and throes that might have been brought upon thee by the sins and sufferings of thy children? Well! Christians, hold your peace, for you do not know what thorns in your eyes, what goads in your sides, nor what spears in your hearts, such near and dear mercies might have proved had they been longer continued.

(11.) Eleventhly, Thou canst not tell how bad thy heart might have proved under the enjoyment of those near and dear mercies that now thou hast lost. Israel were very bad whilst they were in the wilderness, but they were much worse when they came to possess Canaan, that land of desires. Man's blood is apt to rise with the outward good. In the winter, men gird their clothes close about them, but in the summer they let them hang loose. In the winter of adversity, many a Christian girds his heart close to God, to Christ, to gospel, to godliness, to ordinances, to duties, &c., who in the summer of mercy hangs loose from all.

I have read of the pine tree, that, if the bark be pulled off, it will last a long time; but if it continue long on, it rots the tree. Ah! how bad, how rotten, how base, would many have proved, had God not pulled off their bark of health, wealth, friendship! &c. Near and dear relations, they stick as close to us as the bark of a tree sticks to the tree, and if God should not pull off this bark, how apt should we be to rot and corrupt ourselves; therefore God is fain to bark us, and peel us, and strip us naked and bare of our dearest enjoyments and sweetest contentments, that so our souls, like the pine tree, may prosper and thrive the better. Who can seriously consider of this, and not hold his peace, even then when God takes a jewel out of his bosom? Heap all the sweetest contentments and most desirable enjoyments of this world upon a man, they will not make him a Christian; heap them upon a Christian, they will not make him a better Christian. Many a Christian hath been made worse by the good things of this world; but where is the Christian that hath been bettered by them? Therefore be quiet when God strips thee of them.

(12.) Twelfthly, and lastly, Get thy heart more affected with spiritual losses, and then thy soul will be less afflicted with those temporal losses that thou mournest under. Hast thou lost nothing of that presence of God that once thou hadst with thy spirit? Hast thou lost none of those warnings, meltings, quickenings, and cheerings that once thou hadst? Hast thou lost nothing of thy communion with God, nor of the joys of the Spirit, nor of that peace of conscience that once thou enjoyedst? Hast thou lost none of that ground that once thou hadst got upon sin, Satan, and the

world? Hast thou lost nothing of that holy vigour and heavenly heat that once thou hadst in thy heart? If thou hast not, which would be a miracle, a wonder; why dost thou complain of this or that temporal loss? For what is this but to complain of the loss of thy purse, when thy God² is safe? If thou art a loser in spirituals, why dost thou not rather complain that thou hast lost thy God than that thou hast lost thy gold; and that thou hast lost thy Christ than that thou hast lost thy husband; and that thou hast lost thy child, and that thou art damnified in spirituals than that thou art damnified in temporals? Dost thou mourn over the body the soul hath left? mourn rather over the soul that God hath forsaken, as Samuel did for Saul, saith one. 1Sa 15:14, seq.

I have read of Honorius, a Roman emperor, who was simple and childish enough; when one told him Rome was lost, he was exceedingly grieved, and cried out, Alas! alas! for he supposed that it was his hen that was called Rome, which hen he exceedingly loved; but when it was told him it was his imperial city of Rome, that was besieged by Alaricus, and taken, and all the citizens rifled, and made a prey to the rude enraged soldiers, then his spirits were revived that his loss was not so great as he imagined. Now, what is the loss of a husband, a wife, a child, a friend, to the loss of God, Christ, the Spirit, or the least measure of grace or communion with God? &c. I say. What are all such losses, but the loss of a hen to the loss of Rome? And yet so simple and childish are many Christians, that they are more affected and afflicted with the loss of this and that poor temporal enjoyment than they are with the loss of their most spiritual attainments. Ah, Christians! be but more affected with spiritual losses, and you will be more quiet and silent under temporal losses. Let the loss of Rome trouble you more, and then the loss of your hen will not trouble you at all. Let these things suffice for answer to the second objection.

Obj. 3. Oh, but my afflictions, my troubles have been long upon me! and how then can I hold my peace? Were they but of yesterday, I would be quiet; but they are of a long continuance; and therefore how can I be silent, &c.? To this I answer,

(1.) First, Thou canst not date thy affliction from the first day of thy pollution. Thou hast been polluted from the womb, but thou hast not been afflicted from the womb, Psa 51:5; many have been the days, the years, since thou wast born in sin; few have been the days, the years, that thou hast experienced sorrow. Thou canst not easily number the days of thy sinning, thou canst easily number the days of thy sufferings; thou canst not number thy days of mercy, thou canst easily number thy days of calamity; thou canst not number thy days of health, but thou canst easily tell over thy days of sickness.

(2.) Secondly, Thy afflictions are not so long as the afflictions of other saints. Compare thy winter nights and other saints' winter nights together; thy storms and troubles and other saints' storms and troubles together; thy losses and other saints' losses together; thy miseries and other saints' miseries together; witness the proofs in the margin. Thy afflictions are but as a moment, they are but as yesterday compared with the afflictions of other saints, whose whole lives have been made up of sorrows and sufferings, as the life of Christ was. Many a man's life hath been nothing but a lingering death: Job 21:25, 'And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.' There are those that have never a good day all their days, who have not a day of rest among all their days of trouble, nor a day of health among all their days of sickness, nor a day of gladness among all their days of sadness, nor a day of strength among all their days of weakness, nor a day of honour among all their days of reproach; whose whole life is one continued winter's

night, who every day drink gall and wormwood, who lie down sighing, who rise groaning, and who spend their days in complaining, 'No sorrow to our sorrows, no sufferings to our sufferings!' Some there be who have always tears in their eyes, sorrows in their hearts, rods on their backs, and crosses in their hands: but it is not so with thee; therefore be silent.

(3.) Thirdly, The longer thy affliction hath been, the sweeter will heaven be to thee at last; the longer the Israelites had been in the wilderness, the sweeter was Canaan to them at last; the longer the storm, the sweeter the calm; the longer the winter nights, the sweeter the summer days. Long afflictions will much set off the glory of heaven. The harbour is most sweet and desirable to them that have been long tossed upon the seas; so will heaven be to those who have been long in a sea of trouble. The new wine of Christ's kingdom is most sweet to those that have been long a-drinking of gall and vinegar, Luk 22:18; the crown of glory will be most delightful to them who have been long in combating with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The longer our journey is, the sweeter will be our end, and the longer our passage is, the sweeter will our haven be. The higher the mountain, the gladder we shall be when we are got to the top of it; the longer the heir is kept from his inheritance, the more delight he will have when he comes to possess it.

(4.) Fourthly, They are not long, but short, if compared to that eternity of glory that is reserved for the saints, 2Co 4:16-18. If you turn to the words, you shall find for affliction, glory; for light afflictions, a weight of glory; and for short momentary afflictions, eternal glory. There will quickly be an end of thy sadness, but there will never be an end of thy happiness; there will soon be an end of thy calamity and misery, there will never be an end of thy felicity and glory.³ The kingdoms of this world are not lasting, much less are they everlasting; they have all their climacterical years, but the kingdom of heaven is an everlasting kingdom; of that there is no end. There are seven sorts of crowns that were in use among the Roman victors, but they were all fading and perishing; but the crown of glory that at last God will set upon the heads of his saints, shall continue as long as God himself continues. Who can look upon those eternal mansions that are above, and those everlasting pleasures that be at God's right hand, and say, that his affliction is long? Well! Christian, let thy affliction be never so long, yet one hour's being in the bosom of Christ will make thee forget both the length and strength of all thy afflictions.

(5.) Fifthly, The longer you have been afflicted, the more in spiritual experiences you have been enriched: 2Co 1:5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' The lower the ebb the higher the tide, the more pain the more gain, the more afflicted the more comforted, the lower we are cast the higher we shall be raised. Of all Christians, none so rich in spiritual experiences, as those that have been long in the school of affliction. Oh! the blessed stories that such can tell of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the favour of God comforting them, of the presence of God assisting them. Oh! the love-tokens, the love-letters, the bracelets, the jewels that they are able to produce since they have been in the furnace of affliction. Oh! the sin that long afflictions have discovered and mortified. Oh! the temptations that long afflictions have prevented and vanquished. You shall as soon number the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea, as you shall number up the heavenly experiences of such Christians that have been long under afflictions. The afflicted Christian's heart is fullest of spiritual treasure. Though he may be poor in the world, yet he is rich in faith and holy experiences, Jas 2:5; and what are all the riches of this world to spiritual experiences? One spiritual experience is more worth than a world, and upon a dying bed and before a judgment-seat,

every man will be of this opinion. The men of this world will with much quietness and calmness of spirit bear much, and suffer much, and suffer long, when they find their sufferings to add to their revenues; and shall nature do more than grace? It is the common voice of nature, 'Who will shew us any good?' Psa 4:6; how shall we come to be great, and high, and rich in the world? We care not what we suffer, nor how long we suffer, so we may but add house to house, heap to heap, bag to bag, and land to land, Isa 5:8. Oh how much more then should Christians be quiet and calm under all their afflictions, though they are never so long, considering that they do but add jewels to a Christian's crown; they do but add to his spiritual experiences. The long afflicted Christian hath the fullest and the greatest trade; and in the day of account, will be found the richest man.

(6.) Sixthly, Long afflictions sometimes are but preparatives to long-lived mercies. Joseph's thirteen years' imprisonment was but a preparative to fourscore years' reigning like a king; David's seven years' banishment was but a preparative to forty years' reigning in much honour and glory; Job's long afflictions were but preparatives to more long-lived mercies, as you may see in that last of Job; and those sad and sore trials that the Jews have been under for above these sixteen hundred years, are to prepare them for those matchless mercies, and those endless glories, in some sense, that God in the latter days will crown them with: Isa 54:11-14, 'O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundation with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.' Though they have been long afflicted and tossed, yet they shall at last upon glorious foundations be established; God will not only raise them out of their distressed estate wherein now they are, but he will advance them to a most eminent and glorious condition in this world; they shall be very glorious, and outshine all the world in spiritual excellencies and outward dignities: Isa 60:14-15, 'The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet: and they shall call thee, the city; of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.' Ah, Christians! do not mutter nor murmur under your long afflictions, for you do not know but that by these long afflictions God may prepare and fit you for such favours and blessings that may never have end. By long afflictions God many times prepares his people for temporal, spiritual, and eternal mercies. If God by long afflictions makes more room in thy soul for himself, his Son, his Spirit, his word; if by long afflictions he shall crucify thy heart more to the world and to thy relations, and frame and fashion thy soul more for celestial enjoyments; hast thou any cause to murmur? Surely no. But,

(7.) Seventhly, The longer a saint is afflicted on earth, the more glorious he shall shine in heaven; the more affliction here, the more glory hereafter. This truth may be thus made out:

[1.] First, The more gracious souls are afflicted, the more their graces are exercised and increased, Heb 12:10, Rom 5:3-5. Now, the more grace here, the more glory hereafter; the higher in grace, the higher in glory. Grace differs nothing from glory but in name: grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full. Glory is nothing but the perfection of grace; happiness is nothing but the perfection of holiness. Grace is glory in the seed, and glory is grace in the flower; grace is glory

militant, and glory is grace triumphant. Grace and glory differ non specie sed gradu, in degree, not kind, as the learned speak. Now, it is most certain that the more gracious souls are afflicted, the more their graces are exercised; and the more grace is exercised, the more it is increased, as I have sufficiently demonstrated in this treatise already. But,

[2.] Secondly, The longer a gracious soul is afflicted, the more his religious duties will be multiplied. Psa 109:4, 'For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer;' or as the Hebrew reads it, 'But I am prayer,' or 'a man of prayer.' In times of afflictions a Christian is all prayer; he is never so much a man of prayer, a man given up to prayer, as in times of affliction. A Christian is never so frequent, so fervent, so abundant in the work of the Lord, as when he is afflicted: Isa 26:16, 'Lord! in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.' Now, they do not only pray, but they pour out a prayer; they were freely, largely, and abundantly in prayer when the rod was upon them. Look! as men plentifully pour out water for the quenching of a fire, so did they plentifully pour out their prayers before the Lord; and as affliction puts a man upon being much in prayer, so it puts him upon other duties of religion answerably. Now, this is most certain, that though God will reward no man for his works, yet he will reward every man according to his works: 1Co 15:58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' 2Co 9:6, 'But this I say, he which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully;' or he which soweth in benedictions or blessings shall reap in benedictions, as it runs in the original.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin upon God's rewarding the Rechabites' obedience, Jer 35:19; God, saith he, oft recompenseth the shadows and seeming-appearance of virtue, to shew what complacency he takes in the ample rewards he hath reserved for true and sincere piety. Now, if the longer a Christian is afflicted, the more his religious services will be multiplied, and the more they are multiplied, the more his glory at last will be increased, then the longer a saint is afflicted on earth, the more glory he shall have when he comes to heaven. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The longer any saint is afflicted, the more into the image and likeness of Christ he will be transformed. It is one of God's great designs and ends in afflicting of his people, to make them more conformable to his Son; and God will not lose his end. Men often lose theirs, but God never hath nor will lose his; and experience tells us that God doth every day, by afflictions, accomplish his end upon his people. The longer they are afflicted, the more they are made conformable to Christ in meekness, lowliness, spiritualness, heavenliness, in faith, love, self-denial, pity, compassion, &c. Now certainly, the more like to Christ, the more beloved of Christ. The more a Christian is like to Christ, the more he is the delight of Christ; and the more like to Christ on earth, the nearer the soul shall sit to Christ in heaven. Nothing makes a man more conformable to Christ than afflictions. Justin Martyr, in his second Apology for the Christians, hath observed, that there is scarce any prediction or prophecy concerning our Saviour, Christ the Son of God, to be made man, but the heathen writers, who were all after Moses, did from thence invent some fable, and feign it to have been acted by some one or other of Jupiter's sons; only the prophecies about the cross of Christ they have taken for the ground of no fable. They have not, among all their fictions, told us of any one of Jupiter's sons that was crucified, that acted his part upon the cross.² Many would wear the crown with Christ, that do not care for bearing the cross with Christ. But,

(8.) Eighthly, The longer they have been, the greater cause thou hast to be silent and, patient, for impatience will but lengthen out the day of thy sorrows. Every impatient act adds one link more to the chain; every act of frowardness adds one lash more to those that have already been laid out; every act of muttering will but add stroke to stroke, and sting to sting; every act of murmuring will but add burden to burden, and storm to storm. The most compendious way to lengthen out thy long afflictions is to fret, and vex, and murmur under them. As thou wouldst see a speedy issue of thy long afflictions, sit mute and silent under them.

(9.) Ninthly, God's time is the best time; mercy is never nearer Salvation is at hand, deliverance is at the door, when a man's heart is brought into such a frame as to be freely willing that God should time his mercy and time his deliverance for him, Acts 27:13-44. The physician's time is the best time for the patient to have ease. The impatient patient cries out to his physician, Oh! sir, a little ease, a little refreshment! Oh the pains, the tortures, that I am under! Oh, sir, I think every hour two, and every two ten, till comfort comes, till refreshment comes! But the prudent physician hath turned the hour-glass, and is resolved that this physic shall work so long, though his patient frets, flings, roars, tears. So, when we are under afflictions, we are apt to cry out, How long, Lord, shall it be before ease comes, before deliverance comes? Oh the tortures, oh the torments, that we are under! Lord, a little refreshment! Oh how long are these nights! oh how tedious are these days! But God hath turned our glass, and he will not hearken to our cry till our glass be out. After all our fretting and flinging, we must stay his time, who knows best when to deliver us, and how to deliver us, out of all our troubles, and who will not stay a moment when the glass is out that he hath turned. But,

(10.) Tenthly, and lastly, They shall last no longer than there is need, and then they shall work for thy good. It is with souls as it is with bodies; some bodies are more easily and more suddenly cured than others are, and so are some souls. God will not suffer the plaster to lie one day, no, not one hour, no, not a moment, longer than there is need. Some flesh heals quickly; proud flesh is long a-healing. By affliction God quickly heals some, but others are long a-healing: 1Pe 1:6, 'If need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations,' or through various afflictions. The burden shall lie no longer upon thee than needs must; thy pain shall endure no longer than needs must; thy physic shall make thee no longer sick than needs must, &c. Thy heavenly Father is a physician as wise as he is loving. When thy heart begins to grow high, he sees there is need of some heavy affliction to bring it low; when thy heart grows cold, he sees there is need of some fiery affliction to heat it and warm it; when thy heart grows dull and dead, he sees there is need of some smart affliction to enliven and quicken it. And as thy afflictions shall continue no longer than there is need, so they shall last no longer than they shall work for thy good. If all along they shall work for thy good, thou hast no cause to complain that thy afflictions are long. That they shall thus work, I have fully proved in the former part of this book. And thus much for answer to the third objection.

Obj. 4. I would be mute and silent under my afflictions, but my afflictions daily multiply and increase upon me; like the waves of the sea, they come rolling over the neck of one another, &c.; and how then can I hold my peace? How can I lay my hand upon my mouth, when the sorrows of my heart are daily increased? To this I answer thus:

(1.) First, Thy afflictions are not so many as thy sins, Psa 40:12. Thy sins are as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea, that cannot be numbered. There are three things that no Christian can number: 1, his sins; 2, divine favours; 3, the joys and pleasures that be at Christ's right hand; but there is no Christian so poor an accountant, but that he may quickly sum up the number of his troubles and afflictions in this world. Thy sins, O Christian, are like the Syrians that filled the country, but thy afflictions are like the two little flocks of kids that pitched before them, 1Ki 20:27; therefore hold thy peace.

(2.) Secondly, If such should not be mute and silent under their afflictions, whose afflictions are increased and multiplied upon them, then there are none in the world who will be found mute and silent under their afflictions: for certainly there are none who do not find the waters of affliction to grow daily upon them. If this be not so, what means the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen? 1Sa 15:14. What means the daily sighs, groans, and complaints of Christians, if their troubles, like the waters in Ezekiel's sanctuary, be not still increasing upon them? Eze 47:1, Eze 47:20. Every day brings us tidings of new straits, new troubles, new crosses, new losses, new trials, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, They are not so many as God might have exercised thee with. God could as easily exercise thee with ten as with two, and with a hundred as with ten, and with a thousand as with a hundred. Let thy afflictions be never so many, yet they are not so many as they might have been, had God either consulted with thy sins, with thy deserts, or with his own justice. There is no comparison between those afflictions that God hath inflicted upon thee, and those that he might have inflicted. Thou hast not one burden of a thousand that God could have laid on, but he would not; therefore hold thy peace.

(4.) Fourthly, Thy afflictions are not so many as thy mercies, nay, they are not to be named in the day wherein thy mercies are spoken of. What are thy crosses to thy comforts, thy miseries to thy mercies, thy days of sickness to thy days of health, thy days of weakness to thy days of strength, thy days of scarcity to thy days of plenty? And this is that the wise man would have us seriously to consider: Ecc 7:14, 'In the day of adversity consider,'—but what must we consider?—'that God hath set the one over against the other.' As God hath set winter and summer, night and day, fair weather and foul, one over against another, so let us set our present mercies over against our present troubles, and we shall presently find that our mercies exceed our trouble, that they mightily over-balance our present afflictions; therefore let us be silent, let us lay our hands upon our mouths.

(5.) Fifthly, If you cast up a just and righteous account, you will find that they are not so many as the afflictions that have befallen other saints. Have you reckoned up the affliction that befell Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Asaph, Haman, the prophets and apostles? If you have, you will say that your afflictions are no afflictions to those that have befallen them; their lives were filled up with sorrows and sufferings, but so are not yours; therefore kiss the rod and be silent. It may be, if thou lookest upon thy relations, thy friends, thy neighbours, thou mayest find many whose afflictions for number and weight do much outweigh thine; therefore be silent, murmur not, hold thy peace.

(6.) Sixthly, Not so many as attended our Lord Jesus; whose whole life, from the cradle to the cross, was nothing but a life of sufferings. Osorius, writing of the sufferings of Christ, saith, That

the crown of thorns bored his head with seventy-two wounds. Many seventy-two afflictions did Christ meet with whilst he was in this world. None can be ignorant of this who have but read the New Testament. He is called 'a man of sorrows;' his whole life was filled up with sorrows. When he was but a little past thirty years of age, sorrows, pains, troubles, oppositions, persecutions, had so worn him, that the Jews judged him towards fifty, John 8:57. A man were as good compare the number of his bosom friends with the stars of heaven, as compare his afflictions and the afflictions of Christ together.

(7.) Seventhly, Muttering and murmuring will but add to the number. When the child is under the rod, his crying and fretting doth but add lash to lash, blow to blow; but of this enough before.

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, Though they are many, yet they are not so many as the joys, the pleasures, the delights that be at Christ's right hand. As the pleasures of heaven are matchless and endless, so they are numberless. Augustine, speaking concerning what we can say of heaven, saith,² that it is but a little drop of the sea, and a little spark of the great furnace; those good things of eternal life are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation. Nec Christus, nec cœlum patitur hyperbolem, neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolised; for every affliction many thousand joys and delights will attend the saints in a glorified estate. What will that life be, or rather what will not that life be, saith one, speaking of heaven, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life; light which place cannot comprehend; voices and music which time cannot ravish away; odours which are never dissipated; a feast which is never consumed; a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end. And let this suffice for answer to this fourth objection.

Obj. 5. My afflictions are very great, how then can I hold my peace? Though they were many, yet if they were not great, I would be mute, but alas! they are very great. Oh! how can I be silent under them? How can I now lay my hand upon my mouth?

Ans. (1.) To this I answer, Though they are great, yet they are not so great as thy sins, thyself being judge; therefore hold thy peace: Ezr 9:13, 'And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.' They that were under the sense and guilt of great sins, have cause to be silent under their greatest sufferings. Never complain that thy afflictions are great, till thou canst say that thy sins are not great. It is but justice that great afflictions should attend great sins; therefore be quiet. Thy sins are like great rocks and mighty mountains, but so are not thy afflictions; therefore lay thy hand upon thy mouth. The remembrance of great sins should cool and calm a man's spirit under his greatest troubles; and if the sense of thy great sins will not stop thy mouth and silence thy heart, I know not what will.

(2.) Secondly, It may be they are not great, if you look upon them with Scripture spectacles, 1Pe 5:10. Flesh and blood many times looks upon molehills as mountains, and scratches upon the hand as stabs at the heart; we make elephants of flies, and of little pigmies we frame giants. Carnal reason often looks upon troubles through false glasses. As there are some glasses that will make great things seem little, so there are others that will make little things seem great, and it may be that thou lookest upon thy afflictions through one of them, Isa 54:7-8. Look upon thy afflictions in the glass of the word; look upon them in a Scripture dress, and then they will be found to be but little. He that shall look into a gospel glass, shall be able to say, heavy afflictions are light, long

afflictions are short, bitter afflictions are sweet, and great afflictions are little, 2Co 4:16-18. It is good to make a judgment of your afflictions by a gospel light and by a gospel rule.

Artemon, an engineer, was afraid of his own shadow. Men that look not upon their afflictions in a Scripture dress, will be afraid even of the shadow of trouble, they will cry out, No affliction to our affliction, no burden to our burden, no cross to our cross, no loss to our loss; but one look into a gospel glass would make them change their note. The lion is not always so great nor so terrible as he is painted; neither are our troubles always so great as we fancy them to be. When Hagar's bottle of water was spent, she sat down and fell a-weeping, as if she had been utterly undone, Gen 21:17-19; her provision and her patience, her bottle and her hope were both out together; but her affliction was not so great as she imagined, for there was a well of water near, though for a time she saw it not. So many Christians, they eye the empty bottle, the cross, the burden that is at present upon them, and then they fall a-weeping, a-whining, a-complaining, a-repining, a-murmuring, as if they were utterly undone; and yet a well of water, a well of comfort, a well of refreshment, a well of deliverance is near, and their case is no way so sad, nor so bad as they imagine it to be.

(3.) Thirdly, The greater thy afflictions are, the nearer is deliverance to thee. When these waters rise high, then salvation comes upon the wings; when thy troubles are very great, then mercy will ride post. to deliver thee: Deu 32:36, 'For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power (or hand) is gone, and there is none shut up, and left.' Israel of old, and England of late years, hath often experienced this truth. Wine was nearest, when the water-pots were filled with water up to the brim, John 2:1-11; so oftentimes mercy is nearest, deliverance is nearest, when our afflictions are at the highest. When a Christian is brim-full of troubles, then the wine of consolation is at hand; therefore hold thy peace, murmur not, but sit silent before the Lord.

(4.) Fourthly, They are not great, if compared to the glory that shall be revealed, 2Co 4:16-18: Rom 8:18, 'For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, or upon us.' The apostle, upon casting up of his accounts, concludes that all the pains, chains, troubles, trials, and torments that they meet with in this world, was not to be put in the balance with the glory of heaven. As the globe of the earth, which after the mathematicians' account is many thousands of miles in compass, yet being compared unto the greatness of the starry sky's circumference, is but a centre, or a little prick; so the troubles, afflictions, and sorrows of this life, in respect of eternal happiness and blessedness, are to be reputed as nothing; they are but as the prick of a pin to the starry heavens. They that have heard most of the glory of heaven, have not heard one quarter of that which the saints shall find there; that glory is unconceivable and unexpressible. Augustine in one of his epistles hath this relation: that the very same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper, to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome, and suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and a sweet smell that came unto him, and this voice he thought he heard: O Augustine! what doest thou? Dost thou think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shalt thou be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except you come to feel it as now I do. Nicephorus speaks of one Agbarus, a great man, that hearing so much of Christ's fame, by reason of the miracles he wrought, sent a painter to take his picture, and that the painter when he came was not able to do it, because of that

radiancy and divine splendour which sat on Christ's face.² Such is the splendour, the brightness, the glory, the happiness, and blessedness that is reserved for the saints in heaven, that had I all the tongues of men on earth, and all the excellencies of the angels in heaven, yet should I not be able to conceive, nor to express that vision of glory to you. It is best hastening thither, that we may feel and enjoy that which we shall never be able to declare.

(5.) Fifthly, They are not great, if compared with the afflictions and torments of such of the damned, who when they were in this world, never sinned at so high a rate as thou hast done. Doubtless there are many now in hell, who never sinned against such clear light as thou hast done, nor against such special love as thou hast done, nor against such choice means as thou hast done, nor against such precious mercies as thou hast done, nor against such singular remedies as thou hast done.⁴ Certainly there are many now a-roaring in everlasting burnings, who never sinned against such deep convictions of conscience as thou hast done, nor against such close and strong reasonings of the Spirit as thou hast done, nor against such free offers of mercy and rich tenders of grace as thou hast done, nor against such sweet wooings and multiplied entreaties of a bleeding dying Saviour as thou hast done; there fore hold thy peace. What are thy afflictions, thy torments, to the torments of the damned, whose torments are numberless, easeless, remediless, and endless; whose pains are without intermission or mitigation; who have weeping served in for the first course, and gnashing of teeth for the second, and the gnawing worm for the third, and intolerable pain for the fourth,—yet the pain of the body is but the body of pain, the very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's sorrow and pain,—and an everlasting alienation and separation from God for the fifth? Ah, Christian! how canst thou seriously think on these things, and not lay thy hand upon thy mouth, when thou art under the greatest sufferings? Thy sins have been far greater than many of theirs, and thy great afflictions are but a flea-bite to theirs; therefore be silent before the Lord.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, If thy afflictions are so great; then what madness and folly will it be for thee to make them greater by murmuring! Every act of murmuring will but add load unto load, and burden to burden. The Israelites under great afflictions fell a-murmuring, and their murmuring proved their utter ruin, as you may see in that Num 14:1-45. Murmuring will but put God upon heating the furnace seven times hotter; therefore hold thy peace, 1Co 10:11. But of this I have spoken sufficiently already.

Object. 6. Oh! but my afflictions are greater than other men's afflictions are; and how then can I be silent? Oh! there is no affliction to my affliction; how can I hold my peace? I answer,

(1.) First, It may be thy sins are greater than other men's sins, Jer 3:6-12. If thou hast sinned against more light, more love, more mercies, more experiences, more promises than others, no wonder if thy afflictions are greater than others'. If this be thy case, thou hast more cause to be mute than to murmur; and certainly, if thou dost but seriously look into the black book of thy conscience, thou wilt find greater sins there than any thou canst charge upon any person or persons on earth. If thou shouldst not, I think thou wouldst justly incur the censure which that sour philosopher passed upon grammarians, viz., that they were better acquainted with the evils of Ulysses than with their own. Never complain that thy afflictions are greater than others', except thou canst evidence that thy sins are lesser than others'.

(2.) Secondly, It may be thou art under some present distemper, that disenables thee to make a right judgment of the different dealings of God with thyself and others. When the mind is distempered, and the brain troubled, many things seem to be that are not; and then little things seem very great. Oh! the strange passions, the strange imaginations, the strange conclusions, that attend a distempered judgment.

I have read of a foolish emperor, who, to shew the greatness of his city, made show of many spiders. When the mind is disturbed, men many times say they know not what, and do they know not what. It may be, when these clouds are blown over, and thy mind cleared, and thy judgment settled, thou wilt be of another opinion. The supplicant woman appealed from drunken king Philip to sober king Philip. It is good to appeal from a distempered mind to a clear composed mind, for that is the way to make a righteous judgment of all the righteous dispensations of God, both towards ourselves and towards others.

(3.) Thirdly, It may be that the Lord sees that it is very needful that thy afflictions should be greater than others'. It may be thy heart is harder than other men's hearts, and prouder and stouter than other men's hearts; it may be thy heart is more impure than others, and more carnal than others, or else more passionate and more worldly than others, or else more deceitful and more hypocritical than others, or else more cold and careless than others, or else more secure than others, or more formal and lukewarm than others. Now, if this be thy case, certainly God sees it very necessary, for the breaking of thy hard heart, and the humbling of thy proud heart, and the cleansing of thy foul heart, and the spiritualising of thy carnal heart, &c., that thy afflictions should be greater than others; and therefore hold thy peace. Where the disease is strong, the physic must be strong, else the cure will never be wrought. God is a wise physician, and he would never give strong physic if weaker could effect the cure, Jer 30:11, and Jer 46:28; Isa 27:8. The more rusty the iron is, the oftener we put it into the fire to purify it; and the more crooked it is, the more blows and the harder blows we give to straighten it. Thou hast been long a-gathering rust; and therefore, if God deal thus with thee, thou hast no cause to complain.

(4.) Fourthly, Though thy afflictions are greater than this and that particular man's afflictions, yet doubtless there are many thousands in the world whose afflictions are greater than thine. Canst thou seriously consider the sore calamities and miseries that the devouring sword hath brought upon many thousand Christians in foreign parts, and say that thy afflictions are greater than theirs? Surely no. Pliny, in his Natural History, writeth that the nature of the basilisk is to kill all trees and shrubs it breathes upon, and to scorch and burn all herbs and grass it passeth over. Such are the dismal effects of war.² The sword knows no difference between Catholics and Lutherans, as once the duke of Medina Sidonia said, betwixt the innocent and the guilty, betwixt young and old, betwixt bond and free, betwixt male and female, betwixt the precious and the vile, the godly and the profane, betwixt the prince and the subject, betwixt the nobleman and the beggar. The sword eats the flesh and drinks the blood of all sorts and sexes, without putting any difference betwixt one or the other. The poor protestants under the Duke of Savoy, and those in Poland, Denmark, Germany, and several other parts, have found it so; many of their wounds are not healed to this day. Who can retain in his fresh and bleeding memory the dreadful work that the sword of war hath made in this nation, and not say, Surely many thousands have been greater sufferers than myself; they have resisted unto blood, but so have not I, Heb 12:4. But,

(5.) Fifthly, As thy afflictions are greater than other men's, so it may be thy mercies are greater than other men's mercies; and if so, thou hast no cause but to hold thy peace. As Job's afflictions were greater than other men's, so his mercies were greater than other men's, and Job wisely sets one against another, and then lays his hand upon his mouth, Job 1:21-22. It may be thou hast had more health than others, and more strength than others, and more prosperity than others, and more smiling providences than others, and more good days than others, and more sweet and comfortable relations than others; and if this be thy case, thou hast much cause to be mute, thou hast no cause to murmur. If now thy winter nights be longer than others, remember thy summer days have formerly been longer than others; and therefore hold thy peace. But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, By great afflictions the Lord may greaten thy graces, and greaten thy name and fame in the world, Jas 5:10-11. By Job's great afflictions, God did greaten his faith, and greaten his patience, and greaten his integrity, and greaten his wisdom and knowledge, and greaten his experience, and greaten his name and fame in the world, as you all know that have but read his book. Bonds and afflictions waited on Paul in every city, Acts 20:23, 2Co 11:1-33; his afflictions and sufferings were very great, but by them the Lord greatened his spirit, his zeal, his courage, his confidence, his resolution, and his name and fame, both among sinners and saints. Certainly, if thou art dear to Christ, he will greaten thee in spirituals, by all the great afflictions that are upon thee; he will raise thy faith, and inflame thy love, and quicken thy hope, and brighten thy zeal, and perfect thy patience, and perfume thy name, and make it like a precious ointment, 'like a precious ointment poured forth,' Pro 22:1, Ecc 7:1; so that good men shall say, and bad men shall say, Lo, here is a Christian indeed, here is a man more worth than the gold of Ophir; therefore, hold thy peace, though thy afflictions are greater than others.

Object. 7. I would be silent, but my outward affliction is attended with sore temptations; God hath not only outwardly afflicted me, but Satan is let loose to buffet me; and therefore how can I be silent? how can I hold my peace, now I am fallen under manifold temptations? To this I answer:

(1.) First, No man is the less beloved because he is tempted; nay, those that God loves best are usually tempted most, Eph 6:12. Witness David, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, yea, Christ himself, Mat 4:1-25, who, as he was beloved above all others, so he was tempted above all others; he was tempted to question his Sonship; he was tempted to the worst idolatry, even to worship the devil himself; to the greatest infidelity, to distrust his Father's providence, and to use unlawful means for necessary supplies; and to self-murder, 'Cast thyself down,' &c. Those that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have been sorely tempted and assaulted. It is as natural and common for the choicest saints to be tempted, as it is for the sun to shine, the bird to fly, the fire to burn. The eagle complains not of her wings, nor the peacock of his train, nor the nightingale of her voice, because these are natural to them; no more should saints of their temptations, because they are natural to them. Our whole life, saith Austin, is nothing but a tentation; the best men have been worst tempted; therefore, hold thy peace.

(2.) Secondly, Temptation resisted and bewailed, will never hurt you, nor harm you. Distasted temptations seldom or never prevail. So long as the soul distastes them and the will remains firmly averse against them, they can do no hurt; so long as the language of the soul is, 'Get thee behind me, Satan,' Mat 16:23, the soul is safe. It is not Satan tempting but my assenting, it is not his enticing but my yielding, that mischiefs me. Temptations may be troubles to my mind, but they are

not sins upon my soul whilst I am in arms against them. If thy heart trembles and thy flesh quakes when Satan tempts, thy condition is good enough; if Satan's temptations be thy greatest afflictions, his temptations shall never worst thee nor harm thee; and therefore, if this be thy case, hold thy peace.

(3.) Thirdly, Temptations are rather hopeful evidences that thy estate is good, that thou art dear to God, and that it shall go well with thee for ever, than otherwise. God had but one Son without corruption, but he had none without temptation, Heb 2:17-18. Pirates make the fiercest assaults upon those vessels that are most richly laden; so doth Satan upon those souls that are most richly laden with the treasures of grace, with the riches of glory. Pirates let empty vessels pass and repass, without assaulting them; so doth Satan let souls that are empty of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of grace, pass and repass without tempting or assaulting of them. When nothing will satisfy the soul, but a full departure out of Egypt, from the bondage and slavery of sin, and that the soul is firmly resolved upon a march for Canaan, then Satan, Pharaoh-like, will furiously pursue after the soul with horses and chariots, that is, with a whole army of temptations, Exo 14:9. Well! a tempted soul, when it is worst with him, may safely argue thus: If God were not my friend, Satan would not be so much my enemy; if there were not something of God within me, Satan would never make such attempts to storm me; if the love of God were not set upon me, Satan would never shoot so many fiery darts to wound me; if the heart of God were not towards me, the hand of Satan would not be so strong against me. When Beza was tempted, he made this answer, Whatsoever I was, Satan, I am now 'in Christ a new creature,' and that is it which troubles thee; I might have so continued long enough ere thou wouldst have vexed at it, but now I see thou dost envy me the grace of my Saviour. Satan's malice to tempt is no sufficient ground for a Christian to dispute God's love upon; if it were, there is no saint on earth that should quietly possess divine favour a week, a day, an hour. The jailor is quiet, when his prisoner is in bolts. but if he be escaped, then he pursues him with hue and cry; you know how to apply it. Men hate not the picture of a toad, the wolf flies not upon a painted sheep; no more doth Satan upon those he hath in chains; therefore hold thy peace, though thou art inwardly tempted, as well as outwardly afflicted.

(4.) Fourthly, Whilst Satan is tempting of thee, Christ in the court of glory is interceding for thee: Luk 22:31-32, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Satan would fain have been shaking of him up and down, as wheat is shaken in a fan; but Christ's intercession frustrates Satan's designed temptations. Whenever Satan stands at our elbow to tempt us, Christ stands at his Father's to intercede for us: Heb 7:25, 'He ever lives to make intercession.' some of the learned think, that Christ intercedes only by virtue of his merits; others think that it is done only with his mouth; probably it may be done both ways, the rather because he hath a tongue, as also a whole glorified body in heaven; and is it likely, that that mouth which pleaded so much for us on earth, John 17:1-26 should be altogether silent for us in heaven? Christ is a person of highest honour; he is the greatest favourite in the court of heaven; he always stands between us and danger. If there be any evil plotted or designed against us by Satan, the great accuser of the brethren, he foresees it, and by his intercession prevents it. When Satan puts in his pleas and commences suit upon suit against us, Christ still undertakes our cause; he answers all his pleas, and non-suits Satan at every turn, and in despite of hell he keeps us up in divine favour. When Satan pleads, Lord! here are such and such sins that thy children have committed! and here are

such and such duties that they have committed! and here are such and such mercies that they have not improved! and here are such and such ordinances that they have slighted! and here are such and such motions of the Spirit which they have quenched! divine justice answers, All this is true, but Christ hath appeared on their behalf; he hath pleaded their cause; he hath fully and fairly answered whatever hath been objected and given complete satisfaction to the utmost farthing; so that here is no accusation nor condemnation that can stand in force against them; upon which account the apostle triumphs in that Rom 8:34, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Christ's intercession should be the soul's anchor-hold in time of temptation. In the day of thy temptation thou needest not be disturbed nor disquieted, but in peace and patience possess thine own soul, considering what a friend thou hast in the court of glory, and how he is most active for thee, when Satan is most busy in tempting of thee.

(5.) Fifthly and lastly, All temptations that the saints meet with, shall work much for their good; they shall be much for their gain. The profit and advantage that will redound to tempted souls by all their temptations is very great, Rom 8:28, Lam 1:12. Now this will appear to be a most certain truth by an induction of particulars thus:

[1.] First, By temptations God multiplies and increases his children's spiritual experiences, the increase of which is better than the increase of gold. In the school of temptation, God gives his children the greatest experience of his power supporting them, of his word comforting of them, of his mercy warming of them, of his wisdom counselling of them, of his faithfulness joying of them, and of his grace strengthening of them: 2Co 12:9, 'My grace shall be sufficient for thee.' Paul never experienced so deeply what almighty power was, what the everlasting arms of mercy were, and what infinite grace and goodness was, as when he was under the buffetings of Satan.

[2.] Secondly, All their temptations shall be physical; their temptations shall be happy preventions of great abominations: 2Co 12:7, 'Lest I should be exalted, lest I should be exalted.' It is twice in that one verse; he begins with it, and he ends with it. If he had not been buffeted, he might have been more highly exalted in his own conceit than he was before in his ecstasy. Ah, tempted souls! you say you are naught, very naught, but had it not been for the school of temptation, you might have been stark naught before this time. You say you are sick, you are even sick to death. Why, your sickness had before this time killed you, had not temptations been physical to you. You are bad under temptations; but doubtless you would have been much worse had not God made temptation a diet-drink to you.²

[3.] Thirdly, Temptation shall much promote the exercise of grace. As the spring in the watch sets all the wheels agoing, and as Solomon's virtuous woman set all her maidens to work, so temptation sets faith on work, and love on work, and repentance on work, and hope on work, and holy fear on work, and godly sorrow on work, Pro 30:10-33; 1Pe 1:6. As the wind sets the mill at work, so the wind of temptations sets the graces of the saints agoing. Now faith runs to Christ, now it hugs a promise, now it pleads the blood of Christ, now it looks to the recompence of reward, now it takes the sword of the Spirit, &c.; now love cleaves to Christ, now love hangs upon Christ, now love will fight it out to the death for Christ; now hope flies to the horns of the sanctuary, now hope puts on her helmet, now hope casts her anchor upon that within the veil, &c. Grace is never more acted than when a Christian is most tempted. Satan made a bow of Job's wife; of his rib, as

Chrysostom speaks, and shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have shot him to the heart: 'Curse God, and die;' but the activity of Job's graces was a breastplate that made him temptation-proof. The devil, tempting Bonaventure, told him he was a reprobate, and therefore persuaded him to drink in the present pleasures of this life; for, said he, thou art excluded from the future joys with God in heaven. Bonaventure's graces being active, he answered, No; not so, Satan: if I must not enjoy God after this life, let me enjoy him as much as I can in this life.

[4.] Fourthly, By temptations the Lord will make you the more serviceable and useful to others. None so fit and able to relieve tempted souls, to sympathise with tempted souls, to succour tempted souls, to counsel tempted souls, to pity tempted souls, to support tempted souls, to bear with tempted souls, and to comfort tempted souls, as those who have been in the school of temptations: 2Co 1:3-4, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' By temptations God trains up his servants, and fits and capacitates them to succour and shelter their fellow-brethren. One tempted Christian, saith Luther, is more profitable and useful to other Christians than a hundred, I may add, than a thousand, that have not known the depths of Satan, that have not been in the school of temptation. He that is master of arts in the school of temptation hath learned an art to comfort, to succour, and gently to handle tempted and distressed souls, infinitely beyond what all human arts can reach unto. No doctor to him that hath been a doctor in the school of temptation; all other doctors are but illiterate dunces to him.

[5.] Fifthly, It is an honour to the saints to be tempted, and in the issue to have an honourable conquest over the tempter. It was a great honour to David that he should be put to fight hand to hand with Goliath, and in the issue to overcome him, 1Sa 17:1-58; but it was far greater honour to Job and Paul, that they should be put to combat in the open field with Satan himself, and in the close to gain a famous conquest over him, as they did, Job 1:1-22; 2Co 12:7-10. It was a very great honour to David's three mighty men, that in jeopardy of their lives they brake through the host of the Philistines, to bring water to David out of the well of Bethlehem, and did effect it in spite of all the strength and power of their enemies, though it were to the extremest hazard of their blood and lives, 2Sa 23:13-18; but it is a far greater honour to the saints to be furnished with a spirit of strength, courage, and valour, to break through an army of temptations, and in the close to triumph over them, Rom 8:15-28; and yet this honour have all the saints: 1Co 10:13, 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it;' Rom 16:20, 'And the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly;' 1Jn 2:13-14, 'I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.' 1Jn 5:18, 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not,' that is, 'that sin that is unto death,' 1Jn 5:16; nor he sinneth not as other men do, delightfully, greedily, customarily, resolvedly, impenitently, &c. 'But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.' The glorious victory that the people of God had over Pharaoh and his great host, Exo 14:1-31, was a figure of the glorious victory that the saints shall obtain over Satan and

his instruments, which is clear from that Rev 15:3, where we have the song of Moses and of the Lamb. But why the song of Moses and of the Lamb, but to hint this to us, that the overthrow of Pharaoh was a figure of the overthrow of Satan? and the triumphal song of Moses was a figure of that song which the saints shall sing for their overthrow of Satan. As certainly as Israel overcame Pharaoh, so certainly shall every true Israelite overcome Satan. The Romans were worsted in many fights, but never were overcome in a set war; at the long run they overcame all their enemies. Though a Christian may be worsted by Satan in some particular skirmishes, yet at the long run he is sure of an honourable conquest. God puts a great deal of honour upon a poor soul when he brings him into the open field to fight it out with Satan. By fighting he overcomes, he gains the victory, he triumphs over Satan, and leads captivity captive. Augustine gives this reason why God permitted Adam at first to be tempted, viz. That he might have had the more glory in resisting and withstanding Satan's temptation. It is the glory of a Christian to be made strong to resist, and to have his resistance crowned with a happy conquest.

[6.] Sixthly, By temptations the Lord will make his people more frequent and more abundant in the work of prayer. Every temptation proves a strong alarm to prayer. When Paul was in the school of temptation, he prayed thrice, that is, often, 1Co 12:8-9. Days of temptation are days of great supplication; Christians usually pray most when they are tempted most. They are most busy with God when Satan is most busy with them. A Christian is most upon his knees when Satan stands most at his elbow.

Augustine was a man much tempted, and a man much in prayer. Holy prayer, saith he, is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil.

Luther was a man under manifold temptations, and a man much in prayer. He is said to have spent three hours every day in prayer. He used to say that prayer was the best book in his study.

Chrysostom was much in the school of temptation, and delighted much in prayer. Oh! saith he, it is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer, and hereupon, as he observes, Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life than to lose his prayer. But,

[7.] Seventhly, By temptations the Lord will make his people more and more conformable to the image of his Son. Christ was much tempted, he was often in the school of temptation; and the more a Christian is tempted, the more into the likeness of Christ he will be transformed. Of all men in the world, tempted souls do most resemble Christ to the life, in meekness, lowliness, holiness, heavenliness, &c. The image of Christ is most fairly stamped upon tempted souls. Tempted souls are much in looking up to Jesus, and every gracious look upon Christ changes the soul more and more into the image of Christ. Tempted souls experience much of the succourings of Christ, and the more they experience the sweet of the succourings of Christ, the more they grow up into the likeness of Christ. Temptations are the tools by which the Father of spirits doth more and more carve, form, and fashion his precious saints into the similitude and likeness of his dearest Son,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, take many things in one; God by temptations makes sin more hateful, and the world less delightful, and relations less hurtful. By temptations God discovers to us our own weakness and the creature's insufficiency in the hour of temptation to help us or succour us. By temptations, God will brighten our Christian armour, and make us stand more upon our Christian watch, and keep us closer to a succouring Christ. By temptations, the Lord will make his

ordinances to be more highly prized, and heaven to be more earnestly desired. Now seeing that temptations shall work so eminently for the saints' good, why should not Christians be mute and silent? why should they not hold their peace, and lay their hands upon their mouths, though their afflictions are attended with great temptations?

Obj. 8. Oh! but God hath deserted me! he hath forsaken me! and 'he that should comfort my soul stands afar off!' how can I be silent? The Lord hath hid his face from me; clouds are gathered about me; God hath turned his back upon me; how can I hold my peace?

Supposing that the desertion is real, and not in appearance only, as sometimes it falls out: I answer,

(1.) First, It hath been the common lot, portion, and condition of the choicest saints in this world, to be deserted and forsaken of God, Psa 30:6-7; Psa 77:6, and Psa 88:6; Job 23:8-9; Song of Solomon 3:1-4, Song of Solomon 5:6-7; Isa 8:17; Mic 7:7-9. If God deals no worse with thee than he hath dealt with his most bosom friends, with his choicest jewels, thou hast no reason to complain. But,

(2.) Secondly, God's forsaking of thee is only partial, it is not total, Psa 9:4; Gen 49:23-24. God may forsake his people in part, but he never wholly forsakes them; he may forsake them in respect of his quickening presence, and in respect of his comforting presence, but he never forsakes them in respect of his supporting presence; 2Co 12:9, 'My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness;' Psa 37:23-24, 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' God's supporting hand of grace is still under his people: Psa 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.' Christ hath always one hand to uphold his people, and another hand to embrace them, Song of Solomon 2:16. The everlasting arms of God are always underneath his people, Deu 33:27. And this the saints have always found; witness David, Heman, Asaph, Job, &c.

Geographers write that the city of Syracuse, in Sicily, is so curiously situated that the sun is never out of sight. Though the children of God sometimes are under some clouds of afflictions, yet the Sun of mercy, the Sun of righteousness, is never quite out of sight. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Though God hath forsaken thee, yet his love abides and continues constant to thee; he loves thee with an everlasting love: Jer 31:3, 'Where he loves, he loves to the end;' John 13:1; Isa 49:14-16, 'But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.' But was not Zion mistaken? yes, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.' Look! as persons engrave the mark, name, or picture of those whom they dearly love and entirely affect, upon some stone that they wear at their breasts, or upon some ring that they wear on their finger. so hath God engraven Zion upon the palms of his hands; she was still in his eye, and always dear to his heart, though she thought not so. As Joseph's heart was full of love to his brethren, Gen 42:1-38 and Gen 43:1-34, even then when he spake roughly to them, and withdrew himself from them, for he was fain to go aside and ease his heart by weeping; so the heart of God is full of love to his people, even then when he seems to be most displeased with them, and to turn his back

upon them. Though God's dispensations may be changeable towards his people, yet his gracious disposition is unchangeable towards them, Mal 3:6. When God puts the blackest veil of all upon his face, yet then his heart is full of love to his people, then his bowels are yearning towards them: Jer 31:18-20, 'Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' The mother's bowels cannot more yearn after the tender babe than God doth after his distressed ones. As Moses his mother, when she had put him into the ark of bulrushes, Exo 2:1-25, wept to see the babe weep, and when she was turned from him, she could not but cast a weeping eye of love towards him; so when God turns aside from his people, yet he cannot but cast an eye of love towards them: Hos 11:1, 'How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim!' &c. Here are four several 'hows' in the text, the like not to be found in the whole book of God. I am even at a stand, justice calls for vengeance, but mercy interposeth; my bowels yearn, my heart melts, oh, how shall I give thee up! oh, I cannot give thee up! I will not give thee up! God's love is always like himself, unchangeable; his love is everlasting; it is a love that never decays nor waxes cold; it is like the stone albestos, of which Solinus² writes, that being once hot, it can never be cooled again.

(4.) Fourthly, Though the Lord hath hid his face from thee, yet certainly thou hast his secret presence with thee. God is present when he is seemingly absent: 'The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not,' saith Jacob, Gen 28:16. The sun many times shines when we do not see it, and the husband is many times in the house when the wife doth not know it. God [is] in thy house, he is in thy heart, though thou seest him not, thou feelest him not, though thou hearest him not: Heb 13:5, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;' or, as it may be rendered according to the Greek, 'I will not leave thee, neither will I not forsake thee.' Art thou not now drawn out to prize God and Christ, and his love above all the world? Yes. Art thou not now drawn out to give the Lord many a secret visit, in a corner, behind the door, Song of Solomon 2:14, in some dark hole where none can see thee nor hear thee but the Lord? Psa 42:1-3, Psa 63:1-3. Yes. Are there not strong breathings, pantings, and longings after a clearer vision of God, and after a fuller fruition of God? Yes. Art thou not more affected and afflicted with the withdrawals of Christ than thou art with the greatest afflictions that ever befell thee? Song of Solomon 5:6. Yes. Austin, upon that answer of God to Moses, 'Thou canst not see my face and live,' Exo 33:20, makes this quick and sweet reply, 'Then, Lord! let me die, that I may see thy face.' Dost thou not often tell God that there is no punishment to the punishment of loss, and no hell to that of being forsaken of God? Psa 30:6-7. Yes. Dost thou not find a secret power in thy soul, drawing thee forth to struggle with God, to lay hold on God, and patiently to wait on God, till he shall return unto thee, and lift up the light of his countenance upon thee? Yes. Well, then, thou mayest be confident that thou hast a secret and blessed presence of God with thee, though God, in regard of his comfortable presence, may be departed from thee. Nothing below a secret presence of God with a man's spirit will keep him waiting and working till the Sun of righteousness shines upon him, Mal 4:2. If any vain persons should put that deriding question to thee, Where is thy God? thou mayest safely and boldly answer them, 'My God is here; he is nigh me, he is round about me, yea, he is in the midst of me: Zep 3:17, 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.' The bush, which was a type of the church, consumed not all the while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst of it. It is no argument that Christ is not in the ship, because tempests and storms arise.

(5.) Fifthly, Though God be gone, yet he will return again. Though your sun be now set in a cloud, yet it will rise again; though sorrow may abide for a night, yet joy comes in the morning. A Christian's mourning shall last but till morning: Mic 7:19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us;' Song of Solomon 3:4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and I would not let him go,' &c.; Psa 94:19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul;' Isa 54:7-8, Isa 54:10, 'For a moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer; for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.' God will not suffer his whole displeasure to rise upon his people, neither will he forsake them totally or finally. The saints shall taste but some sips of the cup of God's wrath, sinners shall drink the dregs; their storm shall end in a calm, and their winter night shall be turned into a summer day. There was a woman who was thirteen years under desertion, which was so vehement, that for the most part of her time she was fain to keep her bed through weakness. A godly minister, who was affected with her condition, went to comfort her, and to pray with her; but when he came and offered to do it, she shrieked out, utterly refusing and forbidding him to pray with her, for, said she, I have too many abused mercies to answer for already. Yet he would not be put off, but prayed by her, and so prevailed with God on her behalf, that the next morning she was delivered from all her fears, and had such exceeding joy, that the like hath rarely been heard of. The Lord, that had been long withdrawn from her, returned at length in a way-of singular mercy to her. There was another precious woman who was several years deserted, and hearing a precious godly minister preach, she of a sudden fell down, overwhelmed with joy, crying out, Oh! he is come whom my soul loveth! and for divers days after she was filled with such exceeding joys, and had such gracious and singular ravishing expressions so fluently coming from her, that many came to hear the rare manifestations of God's grace in her. The lowest of her pious expressions did exceed the highest that ever the minister had read in the book of martyrs. But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, God's deserting, God's forsaking of his people, shall many ways work for their good. As,

[1.] First, God by withdrawing from his people, will prepare and fit them for greater refreshings, manifestations, and consolations: Psa 71:11, Psa 71:20-21, 'Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.' But shall this forlorn condition work for his good? Yes, 'Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' When Joseph's brethren were in their greatest distress, then Joseph makes known himself most fully to them, Gen 45:2-4; so doth Christ, our spiritual Joseph, to his people. Hudson the martyr, deserted at the stake, went from under his chain, and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.

[2.] By God's withdrawing from his people, he prevents his people's withdrawing from him; and so by an affliction he prevents sin. For God to withdraw from me is but my affliction, but for me to withdraw from God, that is my sin, Heb 10:38-39; and therefore it were better for me that God should withdraw a thousand times from me, than that I should once withdraw from God. God therefore forsakes us, that we may not forsake our God. God sometimes hides himself that we

may cleave the closer to him, and hang the faster upon him; as the mother hides herself from the child for a time, that the child may cleave the closer and hang the faster upon her all the day long. God sometimes hid himself from David: Psa 30:7, 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' I was all amorph. Well! and is that all? No; ver. 8, 'I cried to thee, O Lord, and unto the Lord I made my supplication.' Now he cries louder, and cleaves closer to God than ever; so in that Psa 63:1-2, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary.' Well! and how do those withdrawals of God work? Why! this you may see in ver. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee,' or as the Hebrew reads it, 'My soul cleaveth after thee.' Look! as the husband cleaves to his wife, so doth my soul cleave to the Lord. The psalmist now follows God even hard at heels, as we say. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The Lord, by withdrawing from his people, will enhance and raise the price, and commend the worth, excellency, sweetness, and usefulness of several precious promises, which otherwise would be but as dry breasts, and as useless weapons to the soul, 2Pe 1:4. As that Mic 7:18-19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us,' &c.; and that Isa 54:7-8, but now opened; and that Heb 13:5-6; and that Heb 2:3; and that Psa 5:12, 'For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour thou wilt compass him,' or crown him, 'as with a shield.' The Lord will compass the righteous about with his favour, as the crown compasses about the head, as the Hebrew imports; and that Psa 112:4, 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.' And that Jer 31:37, 'Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord.' As sure as heaven cannot be measured, nor the foundations of the earth searched by the skill or power of any mortal man, so sure and certain it is, that God will not utterly cast off his people, no, not for all the evil that they have done. Now at what a rate doth a deserted soul value these precious promises? Well! saith he, these promises are sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb; they are more precious than gold, than fine gold, than much gold, than all the gold in the world; I prefer them before my food, before my delightful food, yea, before my necessary food, before my appointed portion.² As Alexander laid up Homer's Iliad in a cabinet embroidered with gold and pearls; so deserted souls will lay up these precious promises in the cabinet of their hearts, as the choicest treasure the world affords. Dolphins, they say, love music, so do deserted souls the music of the promises. That promise, 1Ti 1:15, was music to Bilney the martyr; and that promise, John 10:29, was music to Ursinus; and that promise, Isa 57:15, was music to another; and that promise, Isa 26:3, was music to another; and that to another, Mat 11:28, &c. Promises that are suited to a deserted man's condition, make the sweetest music in his ear, and are the most sovereign cordials to bear up the spirits that God can give, or heaven afford, or the soul desire: Deu 32:13, 'He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the fruits of the field; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.' Ah! the honey, the oil that deserted souls suck of such promises that speak home and close to their conditions!

[4.] Fourthly, By God's hiding his face and withdrawing himself from thee, thou wilt be enabled more feelingly, and more experimentally to sympathise with others, and to have compassion on others that are or may be in the dark and forsaken of God, as now thou art, Heb 5:2. Heb 13:2, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being

yourselves also in the body.' It is observed of the bees, that when one is sick they all mourn; and of the sheep, that if one of them be faint, the rest of the flock will stand betwixt it and the sun until it be revived. In the natural body, if one member grieve and is in pain, all suffer with it. When a thorn is got into the foot, how doth the back bow, and the eyes pry, and the hands go to pluck the thorn out! None so compassionate towards deserted souls as those who have been deserted and forsaken of God themselves. Oh! they know what an evil and a bitter thing it is to be left and forsaken of God, and therefore their bowels, their compassions run out much to such, yea, most to such. They know that there is no affliction, no misery, no hell, to that of being forsaken of God.

Anaxagoras, seeing himself old and forsaken of the world, laid himself down, and covered his head close, determining to starve himself to death with hunger [Plutarch]. But, alas! what is it to be forsaken of the world, to a man's being forsaken of God? Were there as many worlds as there be men in the world, a man were better be forsaken by them all than to be forsaken of God. There is a great truth in that saying of Chrysostom, viz., That the torments of a thousand hells, if there were so many, come far short of this one, to wit, to be turned out of God's presence with a *Non novi vos*, I know you not, Mat 7:23. The schools have long since concluded, that *pœna sensus*, the pain of sense, is far greater than *pœna damni*, the pain of loss. What a grief was it to Absalom to see the king's face clouded; and how sadly was Eli and his daughter affected with the loss of the ark, which was but a testimony of God's presence! but oh! how much more is a Christian affected and afflicted with the loss of the face and favour of God, the remembrance of which makes his heart to melt and his bowels to yearn towards those whose sun is set in a cloud?

[5.] Fifthly, Hereby the Lord will teach his people to set a higher price upon his face and favour when they come to enjoy it. Song of Solomon 3:4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and I would not let him go,' &c. No man sets so high a price upon Christ, as he that hath lost him and found him again. Jesus in the China tongue signifies the rising sun, and so he is, Mal 4:2, especially to souls that have been long clouded. The poor northern nations of Strabo, who want the light of the sun for some months together, when the term of his return approaches, they climb up into the highest mountains to spy it, and he that spies it first was accounted the best and most beloved of God, and usually they did choose him king; at such a rate did they prize the return of the sun. Ah! so it is with a poor soul, that for some months, years, hath been deserted; oh, how highly doth he prize and value the Sun of righteousness his returning to him, and shining upon him! Psa 63:3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life,' or, 'better than lives,' as the Hebrew hath it [Chaiim]. Divine favour is better than life; it is better than life with all its revenues, with all its appurtenances, as honours, riches, pleasures, applause, &c., yea, it is better than many lives put together. Now you know at what a high rate men value their lives; they will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, to preserve their lives. As he cried out. Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life. Now, though life be so dear and precious to a man, yet a deserted soul prizes the returnings of divine favour upon him above life, yea, above many lives. Many men have been weary of their lives, as is evident in Scripture and history; but no man was ever yet found that was weary of the love and favour of God. No man sets so high a price upon the sun as he that hath laid long in a dark dungeon, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Hereby the Lord will train up his servants in that precious life of faith, which is the most honourable and the most happy life in all the world: 2Co 5:7, 'For we walk by faith, and not by

sight.' The life of sense, the life of reason, is a low life, a mean life; the life of faith is a noble life, a blessed life. When Elisha demanded of the Shunamite what he should do for her, whether he should speak for her to the king or the captain of the host, she answered, 'I dwell among my people,' 2Ki 4:13; that is, I dwell nobly and happily among my people; I have no need to make any suit to king or captain; and this she accounts her great happiness, and indeed it is the greatest happiness in this world to live much in the exercise of faith. No man lives so free a life, so holy a life, so heavenly a life, so happy a life, as he that lives a life of faith. By divine withdrawals the soul is put upon hanging upon a naked God, a naked Christ, a naked promise, Isa 50:10; Isa 63:15-16. Now the soul is put upon the highest and the purest acts of faith, viz., to cleave to God, to hang upon God, and to carry it sweetly and obediently towards God, though he frowns, though he chides, though he strikes, yea, though he kills, Job 13:15. Those are the most excellent and heroic acts of faith that are most abstracted from sense and reason; he that suffers his reason to usurp upon his faith, will never be an excellent Christian. He that goes to school to his own reason, hath a fool to his schoolmaster; and he that suffers his faith to be overruled by his reason, shall never want woe. Where reason is strongest, faith usually is weakest. But now the Lord, by forsaking of his people for a time, he makes them skilful in the life of faith, which is the choicest and the sweetest life in this world. But,

[7.] Seventhly, By divine withdrawals, you are made more conformable to Christ your head and husband, who was under spiritual desertion as well as you: Mat 27:46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Psa 2:1-2. There is an hidden emphasis in the Hebrew word: El signifies a strong God; Eli, Eli, My strong God, my strong God. The unity of Christ's person was never dissolved, nor his graces were never diminished. In the midst of this terrible storm, his faith fortifieth and strengtheneth itself upon the strength of God, My God, my God; yet in respect of divine protection and divine solace, he was for some time forsaken of his Father. And if this be thy case, thou art herein but made conformable to thy Lord and master; nay, thou dost but sip of that bitter cup of which Christ drank deep; thy cloud is no cloud to that which Christ was under. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, By these transient and partial forsakings, the Lord will exceedingly sweeten the clear, full, constant, and uninterrupted enjoyments of himself in heaven to all his people, Psa 71:10, Psa 71:21. Ah! how sweet and precious was the face and favour of the king to Absalom, after he had for a time been banished, and at length restored to his royal favour again! Onesimus departed from Philemon for a season, that he might receive him for ever. So the Lord departs from his people for a time, that they may receive him for ever; he hides himself for a season, that his constant presence amongst his children in glory may be the more sweet and delightful to them, &c.

Object. 9. Oh! but I am falsely accused and sadly, reproached, and my good name, which should be as dear or dearer to me than my life, is defamed and fly-blown, and things are laid to my charge that I never did, that I never knew, &c.; and how then can I be silent? how can I hold my peace? I cannot forget the proverb, *Oculus et fama non patiuntur jocos*, a man's eye and his good name can bear no jests; and how then can I be mute to see men make jests upon my good name? and every day to see men lade it with all the scorn and contempt imaginable, that they may utterly blast it? &c. To this I say.

(1.) First, That it must be granted that a good name is one of the choicest jewels in a Christian's crown. Though a great name many times is little worth, yet a good name is rather to be chosen

than great riches. It is better to have a good name abroad, than silver or gold laid up in a chest at home. 'A good name is better than precious ointment,' Ecc 7:1. Precious ointments were greatly in use and highly esteemed of amongst the Israelites in those eastern parts; they were laid up amongst the most precious things even in the king's treasury, Isa 39:2. Sweet ointments can but affect the smell, and comfort the brain, and delight the outward man; they reach not the best part, the noble part, viz., the soul, the conscience of a Christian; but a good name doth both. What is the perfume of the nostrils to the perfume of the heart?

I have read that in some countries they have a certain art of drawing of pigeons to their dove-houses in those countries, by anointing the wings of one of them with sweet ointment, and that pigeon being sent abroad, doth, by the fragrantcy of that ointment, decoy, invite, and allure others to that house, where itself is a domestic. Such is the fragrantcy of a good name, that it draws other men after the savour thereof. Among all sorts and ranks of men in the world, a good name hath an attractive faculty; it is a precious ointment that draws hearers to attend good preachers, patients to attend physicians, clients to attend lawyers, scholars to attend schoolmasters, and customers to attend shopkeepers, who, with Demetrius, hath a good report of all good men, 3Jn 1:12. Let a man's good name be but up, and he cannot easily want anything that men or money can help him to. A good name will bring a man into favour, and keep a man in favour with all that are good; therefore, say the moralists:

Omnia si perdas. famam servare memento, Qua semel amissa, postea nullus eris.

Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that jewel of a good name. A Christian should be most chary of his good name, for a good name answers to all things, as Solomon spake of money. *Ergo si bonam famam servasso, sat dives ero*, If I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough, said the heathen [Plautus]. A Christian should rather forego gold than let go a good name; and he that robs a Christian of his good name is a worse thief than he that robs him of his purse, and better deserves a hanging than he, &c. But,

(2.) Secondly, It must be granted, that a good name once lost, is very hardly recovered again. A man may more easily recover a lost friend, a lost estate, than a lost name. A good name is like a princely structure, quickly ruined, but long a-rearing. The father of the prodigal could say of his lost son, 'This my son was lost, but is found; he was dead, but is alive,' Luk 15:32; but how few Christians can say, This my good name was lost, but is found; it was dead, but now it lives. As when Orpah once left Naomi, she returned no more to her, Ruth 1:14; so when once a good name leaves a man, it hardly returns to him again. A cracked credit will hardly be sodered anew; new wine is rarely put into old bottles. A man should stand upon nothing more than the credit of his conscience and the credit of his name. In Japan, the very children are so zealous of their reputation, that in case you lose a trifle, and say to one of them, Sirrah, I believe you have stolen it, without any pause, the boy will immediately cut off a joint from one of his fingers, and say, Sir, if you say true, I wish my finger may never heal again. Three things a Christian should stiffly labour to maintain: 1, the honour of God; 2, the honour of the gospel; 3, the honour of his own name. If once a Christian's good name sets in a cloud, it will be long before it rises again.

(3.) Thirdly, Though all this be true, yet it hath been the portion of God's dearest saints and servants to be slandered, reproached, vilified, and falsely accused: Psa 31:18, 'Let the lying lips be put to silence, which speak grievous things, proudly, and contemptuously against the righteous.'

How sadly and falsely was Joseph accused by his wanton mistress; David by Doeg and Shimei; Job of hypocrisy, impiety, inhumanity, cruelty, partiality, pride, and irreligion! Was not Naboth accused of speaking blasphemy against God and the king? Did not Haman present the Jews to the king as refractories and rebels? Est 3:1-15. Was not Elias accused to be the troubler of Israel, and Jeremiah the trumpet of rebellion; the Baptist a stirrer up of sedition, and Paul a pestilent incendiary? Were not the apostles generally accounted deceivers and deluders of the people, and the offscouring of the world? &c. Athanasius and Eustathius were falsely accused of adultery. Heresy and treason were charged upon Cranmer, parricide upon Philpot, sedition upon Latimer. As the primitive persecutors usually put Christians into bears' skins and dogs' skins, and then baited them; so they usually loaded their names and persons with all the reproach, scorn, contempt, and false reports imaginable, and then baited them, and then acted all their malice and cruelty upon them. I think there is no Christian, but sooner or later, first or last, will have cause to say with David, Psa 35:11, 'False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not;' they charged me with such things whereof I was both innocent and ignorant. It was the saying of one [Hippias], that there was nothing so intolerable as accusation, because there was no punishment ordained by law for accusers, as there was for thieves, although they stole friendship from men, which is the goodliest riches men can have. Well! Christians, seeing it hath been the lot of the dearest saints to be falsely accused, and to have their names and reputes in the world reproached and fly-blown, do you hold your peace, seeing it is no worse with you than it was with them, 'of whom this world was not worthy.' The Rabbins say [Kimchi], that the world cannot subsist without patient bearing of reproaches. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ was sadly reproached and falsely accused. His precious name, that deserves to be always writ in characters of gold, as the Persians usually writ their king's, was often eclipsed before the sun was eclipsed at his death. His sweet name, that was sweeter than all sweets, was often crucified before his body. Oh, the stones of reproach that were frequently rolled upon that name by which we must be saved, if ever we are saved! Oh, the jeers, the scoffs, the scorns that were cast upon that name that can only bless us! The name of Jesus, saith Chrysostom, hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it. The name of a Saviour, saith Bernard, is honey in the mouth, and music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart; and yet where is the heart that can conceive, or the tongue that can express, how much dung and filth hath been cast upon Christ's name; and how many sharp arrows of reproach and scorn hath been, and daily, yea, hourly, are, shot by the world at Christ's name and honour? Such ignominious reproaches were cast upon Christ and his name in the time of his life and at his death, that the sun did blush, and masked himself with a cloud, that he might no longer behold them. Mat 11:19, 'The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' But was he such an one? No: 'Wisdom is justified of her children.' Wisdom's children will stand up and justify her before all the world. Mat 27:63, 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days, I will rise again.' But was he a deceiver of the people? No, he was the faithful and true witness, Rev 1:5, Rev 3:14. John 7:20, 'The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil; who goeth about to kill thee?' John 8:48, 'Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?' John 10:20, 'And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?' It was a wonder of wonders that the earth did not open and swallow up these monsters, and that God did not rain hell out of heaven upon these horrid blasphemers; but their blasphemous assertions were

denied and disproved by some of wisdom's children: John 10:21, 'Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?' The devil hath no such power, nor any such goodness, as to create eyes to him that was born blind. Will you yet see more scorn, dirt, and contempt cast upon the Lord of glory? Why, then, cast your eyes upon that: Luk 16:14, 'And the pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him;' or as the Greek reads it, 'They blew their noses at him in scorn and derision.' The pharisees did not only laugh, flee, and jeer at Christ, but they have also external signs of scorn and derision in their countenance and gestures; they blew their noses at him, they contemned him as a thing of nought. And in Luk 24:35, both people and rulers blew their noses at him; for the original word is the same with that in the fore-mentioned chapter. John 19:12, he is accused for being an enemy to Cæsar. Now, who can seriously consider of the scorn, reproach, and contempt that hath been cast upon the name and honour of our Lord Jesus, and not sit silent and mute under all the scorn and contempt that hath been cast upon his name or person in this world?

(5.) Fifthly, To be well spoken of by them that are ill spoken of by God, to be in favour with them who are out of favour with God, is rather a reproach than an honour to a man. Our Saviour himself testifieth that in the church and nation of the Jews, they that had the most general approbation and applause, they who were most admired and cried up, were the worst, not the best, men; they were the false, not the true, prophets: Luk 6:26, 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.' Austin feared the praises of good men, and detested the praises of evil men. I would not, saith Luther, have the glory and fame of Erasmus; my greatest fear is the praises of men. Phocion had not suspected his speech had not the common people applauded it. Antisthenes mistrusted some ill in himself for the vulgar commendations. Socrates ever suspected that which passed with the most general commendations. To be praised of evil men, said Bion, is to be praised for evil doing; for the better they speak of a man the worse, and the worse the better. The Lacedæmonians would not have a good saying sullied with a wicked mouth. A wicked tongue soils all the good that drops into it. It is a mercy to be delivered from the praises of wicked men; wicked men's applauses oftentimes become the saints' reproaches. The heathen [Socrates] could say, Quid mali feci? what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me. There is a truth in that saying of Seneca, Recti argumentum est, pessimis displicere, the worst men are commonly most displeased with that which is best. Who can seriously dwell on these things, and not be mute and silent under all the reproaches and scorn that is cast upon his name and credit in this world?

(6.) Sixthly, There will come a day when the Lord will wipe off all the dust and filth that wicked men have cast upon the good names of his people. There shall be a resurrection of names as well as of bodies; their names that are now buried in the open sepulchres of evil throats shall surely rise again. 'Their innocency shall shine forth as the light, and their righteousness as the noon-day,' Psa 37:6. Though the clouds may for a time obscure the shining forth of the sun, yet the sun will shine forth again as bright and glorious as ever: 'The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance,' Psa 112:6. Though the malicious slanders and false accusations of wicked men may for a time cloud the names of the saints, yet those clouds shall vanish, and their names shall appear transparent and glorious. God will take that care of his people's good name, that the infamy, calumnies, and contumelies that are cast upon it shall not long stick. The Jews rolled a stone upon Christ to keep him down, that he might not rise again, but an angel quickly rolls away

the stone, and in despite of his keepers, he rises in a glorious triumphant manner, Mat 28:2. So though the world may roll this stone and that of reproach and contempt upon the saints' good names, yet God will roll away all those stones; and their names shall have a glorious resurrection in despite of men and devils. That God that hath always one hand to wipe away his children's tears from their eyes, that God hath always another hand to wipe off the dust that lies upon his children's names. Wronged innocency shall not long lie under a cloud. Dirt will not stick long upon marble nor statues of gold. Well! Christians, remember this, the slanders and reproaches that are cast upon you, they are but badges of your innocency and glory: Job 31:35-36, 'If mine adversary should write a book against me: surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.' All reproaches are pearls added to a Christian's crown. Hence Austin, *Quisquis volens detrahit famœ meœ, nolens addit mercedi meœ*, he that willingly takes from me my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward; and this Moses knew well enough, which made him prefer Christ's reproach before Pharaoh's crown, Heb 11:25-26. That God that knows all his children by name will not suffer their names to be long buried under the ashes of reproach and scorn; and therefore hold thy peace. The more the foot of pride and scorn tramples upon thy name for the present, the more splendid and radiant it will be, as the more men trample upon a figure graven in gold, the more lustrous they make it. Therefore lay thy hand upon thy mouth. But,

(7.) Seventhly, The Lord hath been a swift and a terrible witness against such that have falsely accused his children, and that have laded their names with scorn, reproach, and contempt, Isa 41:2; Jude 1:15. Ahab and Jezebel, that suborned false witness against Naboth, had their bloods licked up by dogs, 1Ki 22:21-22; 2Ki 9:30. Amaziah, who falsely accused the prophet Amos to the king, met with this message from the Lord: 'Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; thou shalt die in a polluted land,' Amo 7:17. Haman, who falsely accused the Jews, was one day feasted with the king, and the next day made a feast for crows, Est 7:10, Est 9:10. The envious courtiers, who falsely accused Daniel, were devoured of lions, Dan 6:24. Let me give you a taste of the judgments of God upon such persons out of histories.

Caiaphas the high-priest, who gathered the council and suborned false witnesses against the Lord Jesus, was shortly after put out of office, and one Jonathan substituted in his room, whereupon he killed himself. John Cooper, a godly man, being falsely accused in Queen Mary's days, by one Grimwood, shortly after the said Grimwood, being in perfect health, his bowels suddenly fell out of his body, and so he died miserably.

Narcissus, a godly bishop of Jerusalem, was falsely accused by three men of many foul matters, who sealed up with oaths and imprecations their false testimonies; but shortly after that, one of them, with his whole family and substance, was burnt with fire; another of them was stricken with a grievous disease, such as in his imprecation he had wished to himself; the third, terrified with the sight of God's judgment upon the former, became very penitent, and poured out the grief of his heart in such abundance of tears, that thereby he became blind. A wicked wretch [Nicephorus], under Commodus the emperor, accused Apollonius, a godly Christian, to the judges for certain grievous crimes, which, when he could not prove, he was adjudged to have his legs broken, according to an ancient law of the Romans.

Gregory Bradway falsely accused one Brook; but shortly after, through terrors of conscience, he sought to cut his own throat, but being prevented, he fell mad.

I have read of Socrates's two false accusers, how that the one was trodden to death by the multitude, and the other was forced to avoid the like by a voluntary banishment. I might produce a multitude of other instances, but let these suffice, to evidence how swift and terrible a witness God hath been against those that have been false accusers of his people, and that have laded their precious names with scorn and reproach, the serious consideration of which should make the accused and reproached Christian to sit dumb and silent before the Lord.

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, God himself is daily reproached. Men tremble not to cast scorn and contempt upon God himself. Sometimes they charge the Lord that his ways are not equal, that it is a wrong way he goeth in, Eze 18:25, Jer 2:5-6; sometimes they charge God with cruelty, 'My punishment is greater than I am able to bear,' Gen 4:13; sometimes they charge God with partiality and respect of persons, because here he strokes, and there he strikes; here he lifts up, and there he casts down; here he smiles, and there he frowns; here he gives much, and there he gives nothing; here he loves, and there he hates; here he prospers one, and there he blasts another: Mal 2:17, 'Where is the God of judgment?' i. e. nowhere; either there is no God of judgment, or at least not a God of exact, precise, and impartial judgment, &c. Sometimes they charge God with unbountifulness; that he is a God that will set his people too hard work, too much work, but will pay them no wages, nor give them no reward: Mal 3:14, 'Ye have said, it is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?' Sometimes they charge God that he is a hard master, and that he reaps where he hath not sown, and gathers where he hath not strewed, Mat 25:24, &c. Oh! the infinite reproach and scorn that is every day, that is every hour in the day, cast upon the Lord, his name, his truth, his ways, his ordinances, his glory! Alas! all the scorn and contempt that is cast upon all the saints all the world over, is nothing to that which is cast upon the great God every hour; and yet he is patient. Ah! how hardly do most men think of God, and how hardly do they speak of God, and how unhandsomely do they carry it towards God; and yet he bears. They that will not spare God himself, his name, his truth, his honour; shall we think it much that they spare not us or our names? &c. Surely no. Why should we look that those should give us good words that cannot afford God a good word from one week's end to another? yea, from one year's end to another? Why should we look that they should cry out 'Hosanna, hosanna!' to us, whenas every day they cry out of Christ, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Mat 10:25, 'It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord; if they have called the master of the house Beelzebub' (or a master-fly, or a dunghill god, or the chief devil), 'how much more shall they call them of his household!' It is preferment enough for the servant to be as his Lord; and if they make no bones of staining and blaspheming the name of the Lord, never wonder if they fly-blow thy name. And let this suffice to quiet and silence your hearts, Christians, under all that scorn and contempt that is cast upon your names and reputations in this world. The tenth and last objection is this,

Obj. 10. Sir, In this my affliction I have sought to the Lord for this and that mercy, and still God delays me, and puts me off; I have several times thought that mercy had been near, that deliverance had been at the door, but now I see it is afar off; how can I then hold my peace? How can I be silent under such delays and disappointments? To this objection, I shall give you these answers.

(1.) First, The Lord doth not always time his answers to the swiftness of his people's expectations. He that is the God of our mercies, is the Lord of our times. God hath delayed long his dearest saints, times belonging to him, as well as issue: Hab 1:2, 'O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee for violence, and thou wilt not help!' Job 19:7, 'Behold, I cry out of violence, but I have no answer; I cry, but there is no judgment.' Psa 69:3, 'I am weary of crying, my throat is dry, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.' Psa 40:17, 'Make no tarrying, O my God.' Though God had promised him a crown, a kingdom, yet he puts him off from day to day, and for all his haste he must stay for it till the set time is come. Paul was delayed so long, till he even despaired of life, and had the sentence of death in himself, 2Co 1:8-9. And Joseph was delayed so long, till the irons entered into his soul, Psa 105:17-19. So he delayed long the giving in of comfort to Mr Glover, though he had sought him frequently, earnestly, and denied himself to the death for Christ. Augustine being under convictions, a shower of tears came from him, and casting himself on the ground under a fig tree, he cries out, 'O Lord, how long?' How long shall I say, To-morrow, to-morrow? why not to-day, Lord, why not to-day? Though Abigail made haste to prevent David's fury, and Rahab made haste to hang out her scarlet thread; yet God doth not always make haste to hear and save his dearest children. And therefore hold thy peace. He deals no worse with thee than he hath done by his dearest jewels.

(2.) Secondly, Though the Lord doth defer and delay you for a time, yet he will come, and mercy and deliverance shall certainly come. He will not always forget the cry of the poor: Heb 10:37, 'For yet a little, little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' Hab 2:3, 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it.' God will come and mercy will come; though for the present thy sun be set, and thy God seems to neglect thee, yet thy sun will rise again, and thy God will answer all thy prayers, and supply all thy necessities: Psa 71:20-21, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' Three martyrs being brought to the stake, and all bound, one of them slips from under his chain, to admiration, and falls down upon the ground, and wrestled earnestly with God for the sense of his love, and God gave it in to him then, and so he came and embraced the stake, and died cheerfully a glorious martyr. God delays him till he was at the stake, and till he was bound, and then sweetly lets out himself to him.

(3.) Thirdly, Though God do delay thee, yet he doth not forget thee. He remembers thee still; thou art still in his eye, Isa 49:14-16, and always upon his heart, Jer 31:20. He can as soon forget himself, as forget his people, Psa 77:9-10. The bride shall sooner forget her ornaments, and the mother shall sooner forget her sucking child, Isa 54:7-10, and the wife shall sooner forget her husband, Isa 62:3-5, than the Lord shall forget his people. Though Sabinus in Seneca could never in all his life-time remember those three names of Homer, Ulysses, and Achilles, yet God always knows and remembers his people by name, Gen 8:1; Gen 19:29-31; 1Sa 1:9; Jon 4:9-11, &c. Therefore be silent, hold thy peace; thy God hath not forgotten thee, though for the present he hath delayed thee.

(4.) Fourthly, God's time is always the best time: God always takes the best and fittest seasons to do us good. Isa 49:8, 'Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.' I could have heard thee before, and have helped thee before, but I have taken the most acceptable time to do both. To set God his time is to limit him, Psa 78:41; it is

to exalt ourselves above him, as if we were wiser than God. Though we are not wise enough to improve the times and seasons which God hath set us, to serve and honour him in, yet we are apt to think that we are wise enough to set God his time, when to hear, and when to save, and when to deliver. To circumscribe God to our time, and to make ourselves lords of time; what is this but to divest God of his royalty and sovereignty of appointing times? Acts 1:7, Acts 17:26. It is but just and equal, that that God that hath made time, and that hath the sole power to appoint and dispose of time, that he should take his own time to do his people good. We are many times humorous, preposterous, and hasty, and now we must have mercy or we die, deliverance or we are undone; but our impatience will never help us to a mercy, one hour, one moment, before the time that God hath set. The best God will always take the best time to hand out mercies to his people. There is no mercy so fair, so ripe, so lovely, so beautiful, as that which God gives out in his own time. Therefore hold thy peace; though God delays thee, yet be silent, for there is no possibility of wringing a mercy out of God's hand, till the mercy be ripe for us, and we ripe for the mercy, Ecc 3:11.

[5.] Fifthly, The Lord in this life will certainly recompense, and make his children amends for all the delays and put-offs that he exercises them with in this world, as he did Abraham in giving him such a son as Isaac was, and Hannah in giving her a Samuel. He delayed Joseph long, but at length he changes his iron fetters into chains of gold, his rags into royal robes, his stocks into a chariot, his prison into a palace, his bed of thorns into a bed of down, his reproach into honour, and his thirty years of suffering into eighty years reigning in much grandeur and glory. So God delayed David long, but when his suffering hours were out, he is anointed, and the crown of Israel is set upon his head, and he is made very victorious, very famous and glorious for forty years together, 2Sa 1:1-27. Well! Christians, God will certainly pay you interest upon interest for all the delays that you meet with; and therefore hold your peace. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, The Lord never delays the giving in of this mercy, or that deliverance, or the other favour, but upon great and weighty reason; and therefore hold thy peace.

Quest. But what are the reasons that God doth so delay and put off his people from time to time, as we see he doth?

Ans [1.] First, for the trial of his people, and for the differencing and distinguishing of them from others. As the furnace tries gold, so delays will try what metal a Christian is made of. Delays will try both the truth and the strength of a Christian's graces. Delays are a Christian touchstone, a lapis Lydius, that will try what metal men are made of, whether they be gold or dross, silver or tin, whether they be sincere or unsound, whether they be real or rotten Christians. As a father, by crossing and delaying his children, tries their dispositions, and makes a full discovery of them, so that he can say, that child is of a muttering and grumbling disposition, and that it is of an humorous and wayward disposition, but the rest are of a meek, sweet, humble, and gentle disposition: so the Lord, by the delaying and crossing of his children, discovers their different dispositions. The manner of the Psylli, which are a kind of people of that temper and constitution that no venom will hurt them, is, that if they suspect any child to be none of their own, they set an adder upon it to sting it, and if it cry, and the flesh swell, they cast it away as a spurious issue, but if it do not cry, if it do not so much as quatch, nor do not grow the worse for it, then they account it for their own, and make very much of it;² so the Lord by delays, which are as the stinging of the adder, tries his

children; if they patiently, quietly, and sweetly can bear them, then the Lord will own them, and make much of them, as those that are near and dear unto him; but if under delays they fall a-crying, roaring, storming, vexing, and fretting, the Lord will not own them, but reckon them as bastards, and no sons, Heb 12:8

[2.] Secondly, That they may have the greater experience of his power, grace, love, and mercy in the close. Christ loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus, yet he defers his coming for several days, and Lazarus must die, be put in the grave, and lie there till he stinks. And why so, but that they might have the greater experience of his power, grace, and love towards them? John 11:3, John 11:6-7, John 11:17.

[3.] Thirdly, To sharpen his children's appetite, and to put a greater edge upon their desires; to make them cry out as a woman in travail, or as a man that is in danger of drowning, Song of Solomon 3:1-4; Isa 26:8-9, Isa 26:16. God delays, that his people may set upon him with greater strength and importunity; he puts them off, that they may put on with more life and vigour; God seems to be cold, that he may make us the more hot; he seems to be slack that he may make us the more earnest; he seems to be backward, that he may make us the more forward in pressing upon him. The father delays the child, that he may make him the more eager, and so doth God his, that he may make them the more divinely violent. When Balaam had once put off Balak, 'he sent again,' saith the text, 'certain princes more, and more honourable than they,' Num 22:15. Balaam's put-offs did but make Balak the more importunate, it did but increase and whet his desires. This is that that God aims at by all his put-offs, to make his children more earnest, to whet up their spirits, and that they may send up more and yet more honourable prayers after him, that they may cry more earnestly, strive more mightily, and wrestle more importunately with God, and that they may take heaven with a more sacred violence. Anglers draw back the hook, that the fish may be the more forward to bite; and God sometimes seems to draw back, but it is only that we may press the more on. And therefore, as anglers, when they have long waited, and perceive that the fish do not so much as nibble at the bait, yet do they not impatiently throw away the rod, or break the hook and line, but pull up, and look upon the bait and mend it, and so throw it in again, and then the fish bites: so when a Christian prays, and prays, and yet catches nothing, God seems to be silent, and heaven seems to be shut against him; yet let him not cast off prayer, but mend his prayer; pray more believingly, pray more affectionately, and pray more fervently, and then the fish will bite, then mercy will come, and comfort will come, and deliverance will come. But,

[4.] Fourthly, God delays and puts off his people many times, that lie may make a fuller discovery of themselves to themselves. Few Christians see themselves and understand themselves. By delays God discovers much of a man's sinful self to his religious self; much of his worser part to his better part, of his ignoble part to his most noble part. When the fire is put under the pot, then the scum appears; so when God delays a poor soul, Oh! how doth the scum of pride, the scum of murmuring, the scum of quarrelling, the scum of distrust, the scum of impatience, the scum of despair, discover itself in the heart of a poor creature? Eze 24:6. I have read of a fool, who being left in a chamber, and the door locked when he was asleep; after he awakes, and finds the door fast and all the people gone, he cries out at the window, O myself, myself, O myself! So when God shuts the door upon his people, when he delays them, and puts them off, Ah! what cause have they to cry out of themselves, to cry out of proud self, and worldly self, and carnal self, and foolish self, and froward self, &c.? We are very apt, saith Seneca, utimur perspicillis magis quam speculis,

to use spectacles to behold other men's faults, rather than looking-glasses to behold our own; but now God's delays are as a looking-glass, in which God gives his people to see their own faults, Psa 73:11-12. Oh! that baseness, that vileness, that wretchedness, that sink of filthiness, that gulf of wickedness, that God by delays discovers to be in the hearts of men! But,

[5.] Fifthly, God delays and puts off his people to enhance, to raise the price of mercy, the price of deliverance. We usually set the highest price, the greatest esteem upon such things that we obtain with greatest difficulty. What we dearly buy, that we highly prize, Acts 21:8, Song of Solomon 3:4. The more sighs, tears, weepings, waitings, watchings, strivings, and earnest longings, this mercy and that deliverance, and the other favour costs us, the more highly we shall value them. When a delayed mercy comes, it tastes more like a mercy, it sticks more like a mercy, it warms more like a mercy, works more like a mercy, and it endears the heart to God more like a mercy than any other mercy that a man enjoys. This is the child, said Hannah,—after God had long delayed her,—for which I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him, 1Sa 1:27. Delayed mercy is the cream of mercy; no mercy so sweet, so dear, so precious to a man, as that which a man hath gained after many put-offs. Mr Glover, the martyr, sought the Lord earnestly and frequently for some special mercies, and the Lord delayed him long; but when he was even at the stake, then the Lord gave in the mercies to him; and then, as a man overjoyed, he cries out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come' But,

[6] Sixthly, The Lord delays his people, that he may pay them home in his own coin. God sometimes loves to retaliate, Pro 1:23, Pro 1:33. The spouse puts off Christ: Song of Solomon 5:3, 'I have put off my coat, how can I put it on?' &c.; and Christ puts her off, Song of Solomon 5:5-8. Thou hast put off God from day to day, from month to month, yea, from year to year; and therefore, if God put thee off from day to day, or from year to year, hast thou any cause to complain? Surely no. Thou hast often and long put off the motions of his Spirit, the directions of his word, the offers of his grace, the entreaties of his Son; and therefore what can be more just than that God should delay thee for a time, and put thee off for a season, who hast delayed him, and put off him days without number? If God serves thee as thou hast often served him, thou hast no reason to complain. But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, The Lord delays his people, that heaven may be the more sweet to them at last. Here they meet with many delays and with many put-offs; but in heaven they shall never meet with one put-off, with one delay; here many times they call and cry, and can get no answer; here they knock and bounce, and yet the door of grace and mercy opens not to them; but in heaven they shall have mercy at the first word, at the first knock. There, whatever heart can wish shall without delay be enjoined.² Here God seems to say sometimes, Souls! you have mistaken the door, or I am not at leisure, or others must be served before you, or come some other time, &c. But in heaven God is always at leisure, and all the sweetness and blessedness and happiness of that state presents itself every hour to the soul there. God hath never, God will never, say to any of his saints in heaven, Come to-morrow. Such language the saints sometimes hear here, but such language is noway suitable to a glorified condition; and therefore, seeing that the Lord never delays his people, but upon great and weighty accounts, let his people be silent before him, let them not mutter nor murmur, but be mute. And so I have done with the objections.

I shall come now in the last place to propound some helps and directions that may contribute to the silencing and stilling of your souls under the greatest afflictions, the sharpest trials, and the saddest providences that you meet with in this world; and so close up this discourse.

(1.) First, All the afflictions that come upon the saints, they are the fruits of divine love. Rev 3:19, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent;' Heb 12:6, 'For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;' Job 5:17, 'Behold! happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty;' Job 7:17-18, 'What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?' Isa 48:10, 'Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.' When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, These are God's gems and jewels wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. A gentleman highly prizes his hawk, he feeds her with his own hand, he carries her upon his fist, he takes a great deal of delight and pleasure in her; and therefore he puts vervels upon her legs, and a hood upon her head; he hoodwinks her, and fetters her, because he loves her, and takes delight in her; so the Lord by afflictions hoodwinks and fetters his children, but all is because he loves them, and takes delight and pleasure in them. There cannot be a greater evidence of God's hatred and wrath, than his refusing to correct men for their sinful courses and vanities. 'Why should you be smitten any more? you will revolt more and more,' Isa 1:5. Where God refuses to correct, there God resolves to destroy; there is no man so near the axe, so near the flames, so near hell, as he whom God will not so much as spend a rod upon. God is most angry where he shews no anger. Jerome, writing to a sick friend, hath this expression, I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable. Nothing, saith another [Demetrius], seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity hath happened. God afflicts thee, O Christian, in love; and therefore Luther cries out, Strike, Lord; strike, Lord, and spare not. Who can seriously muse upon this, and not hold his peace, and not be silent under the most smarting rod?

(2.) Secondly, Consider, that the trials and troubles, the calamities and miseries, the crosses and losses that you meet with in this world, is all the hell that ever you shall have. Here you have your hell; hereafter you shall have your heaven. This is the worst of your condition, the best is to come. Lazarus had his hell first, his heaven last; but Dives had his heaven first, and his hell at last, Luk 16:24-31. Thou hast all thy pangs, and pains, and throes here that ever thou shalt have; thy ease, and rest, and pleasure is to come. Here you have all your bitter, your sweet is to come; here you have your sorrows, your joys are to come; here you have all your winter nights, your summer days are to come; here you have your passion-week, your ascension-day is to come; here you have your evil things, your good things are to come. Death will put a period to all thy sins, and to all thy sufferings; and it will be an inlet to those joys, delights, and contents that shall never have end; and therefore hold thy peace, and be silent before the Lord.

(3.) Thirdly, Get an assurance that Christ is yours, and pardon of sin yours, and divine favour yours, and heaven yours; and, the sense of this will exceedingly quiet and silence the soul under the sorest and sharpest trials a Christian can meet with in this world. He that is assured that God is his portion, will never mutter nor murmur under his greatest burden; he that can groundedly say,

'Nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Christ,' he will be able to triumph in the midst of the greatest tribulations, Rom 8:33-39; he that with the spouse can say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Song of Solomon 2:16, will bear up quietly and sweetly under the heaviest afflictions. In the time of the Marian persecution there was a gracious woman, who being convened before bloody Bonner, then bishop of London, upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her. Saith she, Christ is my husband. I will take away thy child. Christ, saith she, is better to me than ten sons. I will strip thee, saith he, of all thy outward comforts. Yea, but Christ is mine, saith she, and you cannot strip me of him. Oh! the assurance that Christ was hers bore up her heart, and quieted her spirit under all. You may take away my life, saith Basil, but you cannot take away my comfort; my head, but not my crown. Yea, quoth he, had I a thousand lives, I would lay them all down for my Saviour's sake, who hath done abundantly more for me. John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, and how ill he could endure it, that if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire before he would lose his Christ. Assurance will keep a man from muttering and murmuring under the sorest afflictions. Henry and John, two Augustine monks, being the first that were burnt in Germany, and Mr Rogers, the first that was burnt in Queen Mary's days, did all sing in the flame. A soul that lives in the assurance of divine favour, and in its title to glory, cannot but bear up patiently and quietly under the greatest sufferings that possibly can befall it in this world. That scripture is worth its weight in gold, 'The inhabitants of Sion shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity,' Isa 33:24. He doth not say they were not sick. No. But though they were sick, yet they should not say they were sick. But why should they forget their sorrows, and not remember their pains, nor be sensible of their sickness? Why! the reason is, because the Lord had forgiven them their iniquities. The sense of pardon took away the sense of pain; the sense of forgiveness took away the sense of sickness. Assurance of pardon will take away the pain, the sting, the trouble of every trouble and affliction that a Christian meets with. No affliction will daunt, startle, or stagger an assured Christian. An assured Christian will be patient and silent under all, Psa 23:1, Psa 23:4-6. Melancthon makes mention of a godly woman, who, having upon her deathbed been in much conflict, and afterward much comforted, brake out into these words: Now, and not till now, I understand the meaning of these words, 'Thy sins are forgiven;' the sense of which did mightily cheer and quiet her. He that hath got this jewel of assurance in his bosom, will be far enough off from vexing or fretting under the saddest dispensations that he meets with in this world.

(4.) Fourthly, If you would be quiet and silent under your present troubles and trials, then dwell much upon the benefit, the profit, the advantage that hath redounded to your souls by former troubles and afflictions that have been upon you. Ecc 7:14, 'In the day of adversity consider.' Oh! now consider, how by former afflictions the Lord hath discovered sin, prevented sin, and mortified sin: consider how the Lord by former afflictions hath discovered to thee the impotency, the mutability, the insufficiency, and the vanity of the world, and all worldly concerns: consider how the Lord by former afflictions hath melted thy heart, and broken thy heart, and humbled thy heart, and prepared thy heart for clearer, fuller, and sweeter enjoyments of himself: consider what pity, what compassion, what bowels, what tenderness, and what sweetness former afflictions have wrought in thee towards others in misery: consider what room former afflictions have made in thy soul for God, for his word, for good counsel, and for divine comfort: consider how by former afflictions the Lord hath made thee more partaker of his Christ, his Spirit, his holiness, his

goodness, &c.: consider how by former afflictions the Lord hath made thee to look towards heaven more, to mind heaven more, to prize heaven more, and to long for heaven more, &c. Now, who can seriously consider of all that good that he hath got by former afflictions, and not be silent under present afflictions? Who can remember those choice, those great, and those precious earnings that his soul hath made of former afflictions, and not reason himself into a holy silence under present afflictions thus: O my soul! hath not God done thee much good, great good, special good, by former afflictions? Yes. O my soul! hath not God done that for thee by former afflictions, that thou wouldst not have to do for ten thousand worlds? Yes. And is not God, O my soul! as powerful as ever, as faithful as ever, as gracious as ever, and as ready and willing as ever to do thee good by present afflictions, as he hath been to do thee good by former afflictions? Yes, yes. Why, why then dost thou not sit silent and mute before him under thy present troubles? O my soul! It was the saying of one, that an excellent memory was needful for three sorts of men: First, for tradesmen; for they, having many businesses to do, many reckonings to make up, many irons in the fire, had need of a good memory. Secondly, great talkers; for they, being full of words, had need to have a good storehouse in their heads to feed their tongues. Thirdly, for liars; for they telling many untruths, had need of a good memory, lest they should be taken in their lying contradictions: and I may add for a fourth, viz., those that are afflicted, that they may remember the great good that they have gained by former afflictions, that so they may be the more silent and quiet under present troubles.

(5.) Fifthly, To quiet and silence your souls under the sorest afflictions and sharpest trials, consider, that your choicest, your chiefest treasure is safe; your God is safe, your Christ is safe, your portion is safe, your crown is safe, your inheritance is safe, your royal palace is safe, and your jewels, your graces are safe; therefore hold your peace, 2Ti 1:12; 2Ti 4:8.

I have read a story of a man that had a suit, and when his cause was to be heard, he applied himself to three friends, to see what they could do for him: one answered, he would bring him as far on his journey as he could; the second promised him that he would go with him to his journey's end; the third engaged himself to go with him before the judge, and to speak for him, and not to leave him till his cause was heard and determined. These three are a man's riches, his friends, and his graces. His riches will help him to comfortable accommodations while they stay with him, but they often take leave of a man before his soul takes leave of his body. His friends will go with him to his grave, and then leave him; but his graces will accompany him before God, they will not leave him nor forsake him; they will go to the grave, to glory, with him, 1Ti 6:18-19. In that famous battle at Leuctrum, where the Thebans got a signal victory, but their captain, Epaminondas, a little before his death, demanded whether his buckler were taken by the enemy, and when he understood that it was safe, and that they had not so much as laid their hands on it, he died most willingly, cheerfully, and quietly. Well! Christians, your shield of faith is safe, your portion is safe, your royal robe is safe, your kingdom is safe, your heaven is safe, your happiness and blessedness is safe; and therefore under all your afflictions and troubles, in patience possess your own souls. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If you would be silent and quiet under your sorest troubles and trials, then set yourselves in good earnest upon the mortification of your lusts. It is unmortified lust which is the sting of every trouble, and which makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter more bitter. Sin unmortified adds weight to every burden, it puts gall to our wormwood, it adds chain to chain: it

makes the bed uneasy, the chamber a prison, relaxations troublesome, and everything vexatious to the soul. Jas 4:1, 'From whence come wars and fightings amongst you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?' So say I, from whence comes all this muttering, murmuring, fretting, and vexing, &c., come they not hence, even from your unmortified lusts? Come they not from your unmortified pride, and unmortified self-love, and unmortified unbelief, and unmortified passion, &c.? Surely they do. Oh, therefore, as ever you would be silent under the afflicting hand of God, labour for more and more of the grace of the Spirit, by which you may mortify the lusts of the flesh, Rom 8:13. It is not your strongest resolutions or purposes, without the grace of the Spirit, that can overmaster a lust. A soul-sore, till it be indeed healed, will run, though we resolve and say it shall not be. It was the blood of the sacrifice, and the oil, that cleansed the leper in the law; and that by them was meant the blood of Christ and the grace of his Spirit, is agreed on all hands, Lev 14:14-16. It was a touch of Christ's garment that cured the woman of her bloody issue, Mark 5:25, et seq. Philosophy, saith Lactantius, may hide a sin, but it cannot quench it; it may cover a sin, but it cannot cut off a sin. Like a black patch instead of a plaster, it may cover some deformities in nature, but it cures them not; neither is it the papists' purgatories, watchings, whippings, &c., nor St Francis his kissing or licking of lepers' sores, which will cleanse the fretting leprosy of sin. In the strength of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit, set roundly upon the mortifying of every lust. Oh, hug none, indulge none, but resolvedly set upon the ruin of all! One leak in a ship will sink it; one wound strikes Goliath dead as well as three-and-twenty did Cæsar; one Delilah may do Samson as much spite and mischief as all the Philistines; one broken wheel spoils all the whole clock; one vein bleeding will let out all the vitals as well as more; one fly will spoil a whole box of ointment; one bitter herb all the pottage. By eating one apple Adam lost paradise, one lick of honey endangered Jonathan's life, one Achan was a trouble to all Israel, one Jonah raises a storm and becomes lading too heavy for a whole ship; so one unmortified lust will be able to raise very strange and strong storms and tempests in the soul in the days of affliction. And therefore, as you would have a blessed calm and quietness in your own spirits under your sharpest trials, set thoroughly upon the work of mortification. Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet that bastard destroyed all his seventy sons, Jdg 8:30-31, Jdg 9:1-2. Ah, Christian! dost thou not know what a world of mischief one unmortified lust may do? and therefore let nothing satisfy thee but the blood of all thy lusts.

(7.) Seventhly, If you would be silent under your greatest afflictions, your sharpest trials, then make this consideration your daily companion, viz., That all the afflictions that come upon you, come upon you by and through that covenant of grace that God hath made with you. In the covenant of grace, God hath engaged himself to keep you from the evils, snares, and temptations of the world; in the covenant of grace, God hath engaged himself to purge away your sins, to brighten and increase your graces, to crucify your hearts to the world, and to prepare you and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom; and by afflictions he effects all this, and that according to his covenant too: Psa 89:30-34, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my commandments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments.' In these words you have a supposition that the saints may both fall into sins of commission and sins of omission; in the following words you have God's gracious promise: 'Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes.' God engages himself by promise and covenant, not only to chide and check, but also to correct his people for their sins: 'Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' Afflictions are fruits of God's

faithfulness, to which the covenant binds him. God would be unfaithful, if first or last, more or less, he did not afflict his people. Afflictions are part of that gracious covenant which God hath made with his people; afflictions are mercies, yea, covenant mercies, Psa 119:75. Hence it is that God is called the terrible God, keeping covenant and mercy, Neh 1:5; because, by his covenant of mercy, he is bound to afflict and chastise his people. God by covenant is bound to preserve his people, and not to suffer them to perish; and happy are they that are preserved, whether in salt and vinegar, or in wine and sugar. All the afflictions that come upon a wicked man come upon him by virtue of a covenant of works, and so are cursed unto him; but all the afflictions that come upon a gracious man, they come upon him by virtue of a covenant of grace, and so they are blessed unto him; and therefore he hath eminent cause to hold his peace, to lay his hand upon his mouth.

(8.) Eighthly, If you would be silent and quiet under afflictions, then dwell much upon this, viz., That all your afflictions do but reach the worser, the baser, and the ignobler part of a Christian, viz., his body, his outward man: 'Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day,' 2Co 4:16. As Aristarchus the heathen said, when he was beaten by the tyrants: Beaten; it is not Aristarchus you beat, it is only his shell. Timothy had a very healthful soul in a crazy body, 1Ti 5:23; and Gaius had a very prosperous soul in a weak distempered body, 3 Ep. of John 2:1. Epictetus and many of the more refined heathens, have long since concluded that the body was the organ or vessel, the soul was the man and merchandise. Now, all the troubles and afflictions that a Christian meets with, they do not reach his soul, they touch not his conscience, they make no breach upon his noble part; and therefore he hath cause to hold his peace, and to lay his hand upon his mouth. The soul is the breath of God, Heb 12:9, Zec 12:1, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils; it is a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring; it is an immortal spirit. Souls are of an angelic nature; a man is an angel clothed in clay; the soul is a greater miracle in man than all the miracles wrought amongst men; the soul is a demi-semi-God dwelling in a house of clay. Now it is not in the power of any outward troubles and afflictions that a Christian meets with to reach his soul; and therefore he may well sit mute under the smarting rod.

(9.) Ninthly, If thou wouldst be silent and quiet under the saddest providences and sorest trials, then keep up faith in continual exercise. Now faith, in the exercise of it, will quiet and silence the soul, thus, [1.] By bringing the soul to sit down satisfied in the naked enjoyments of God, John 14:8, Psa 17:15.

[2.] By drying up the springs of pride, self-love, impatience, murmuring, unbelief, and the carnal delights of this world.

[3.] By presenting to the soul greater, sweeter, and better things in Christ, than any this world doth afford, Heb 11:3, Php 3:7-8.

[4.] By lessening the soul's esteem of all outward vanities. Do but keep up the exercise of faith, and thou wilt keep silent before the Lord. No man so mute, as he whose faith is still busy about invisible objects.

(10.) Tenthly, If you would keep silent, then keep humble before the Lord. Oh! labour every day to be more humble and more low and little in your own eyes. Who am I, saith the humble soul, but that God should cross me in this mercy, and take away that mercy, and pass a sentence of death upon every mercy? I am not worthy of the least mercy, I deserve not a crumb of mercy, I have

forfeited every mercy, I have improved never a mercy. Only by pride comes contention. It is only pride that puts men upon contending with God and men; an humble soul will lie quiet at the foot of God, it will be contented with bare commons, Pro 13:16. As you see sheep can live upon the bare commons, which a fat ox cannot. A dinner of green herbs relisheth well with the humble man's palate, whereas a stalled ox is but a coarse dish to a proud man's stomach. An humble heart thinks none less than himself, nor none worse than himself; an humble heart looks upon small mercies as great mercies, and great afflictions as small afflictions, and small afflictions as no afflictions; and therefore sits mute and quiet under all. Do but keep humble, and you will keep silent before the Lord. Pride kicks, and flings, and frets, but an humble man hath still his hand upon his mouth. Every thing on this side hell is mercy, much mercy, rich mercy to an humble soul; and therefore he holds his peace.

(11.) Eleventhly, If you would keep silence under the afflicting hand of God, then keep close, hold fast these soul-silencing and soul-quieting maxims or principles. As,

[1.] First, That the worst that God doth to his people in this world, is in order to the making of them a heaven on earth. He brings them into a wilderness, but it is, that he may speak comfortably to them, Hos 2:14; he casts them into the fiery furnace, but it is, that they may have more of his company; do the stones come thick and threefold about Stephen's ears, it is but to knock him the nearer to Christ, the corner-stone, &c., Acts 7:1-60.

[2.] Secondly, If you would be silent, then hold fast this principle, viz. That what God wills is best, Heb 12:10. When he wills sickness, sickness is better than health; when he wills weakness, weakness is better than strength; when he wills want, want is better than wealth; when he wills reproach, reproach is better than honour; when he wills death, death is better than life. As God is wisdom itself, and so knows that which is best, so he is goodness itself, and therefore cannot do anything but that which is best: therefore hold thy peace.

[3.] Thirdly, If thou wouldst be silent under thy greatest afflictions, then hold fast to this principle, viz. That the Lord will bear thee company in all thy afflictions, Isa 41:10; Isa 43:2; Psa 23:4; Psa 90:15; Dan 3:25; Gen 39:20-21; 2Ti 4:16-17. These scriptures are breasts full of divine consolation, these wells of salvation are full; will you turn to them and draw out, that your souls may be satisfied and quieted?

[4.] Fourthly, If you would be silent under your afflictions, then hold fast this principle, That the Lord hath more high, more noble, and more blessed ends in the afflicting of you than he hath in the afflicting of the men of the world. The stalk and the ear of corn fall upon the threshing floor, under one and the same flail, but the one is shattered in pieces, the other is preserved; from one and the same olive, and from under one and the same press is crushed out both oil and dregs; but the one is turned up for use, the other thrown out as unserviceable; and by one and the same breath the fields are perfumed with sweetness, and annoyed with unpleasant savours: so, though afflictions do befall good and bad alike, as the Scripture speaks, Ecc 9:2, yet the Lord will effect more glorious ends by those afflictions that befall his people, than he will effect by those that befall wicked men; and therefore the Lord puts his people into the furnace for their trial, but the wicked for their ruin: the one is bettered by affliction, the other is made worse; the one is made soft and tender by afflictions, the other is more hard and obdurate; the one is drawn nearer to God by afflictions, the other is driven further from God, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, If you would be silent under your afflictions, then you must hold fast this principle, viz. That the best way in this world to have thine own will, is to lie down in the will of God, and quietly to resign up thyself to the good will and pleasure of God, Mat 15:21, Mat 15:29. Luther was a man that could have anything of God, and why? Why! because he submitted his will to the will of God; he lost his will in the will of God. O soul! it shall be even as thou wilt, if thy will be swallowed up in the will of God.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, If thou wouldst be silent under the afflicting hand of God, then thou must hold fast to this principle, viz. That God will make times of afflictions to be times of special manifestations of divine love and favour to thee. Tiburtius saw a paradise when he walked upon hot burning coals. I could affirm this by a cloud of witnesses, but that I am upon a close. Ah, Christians! as ever you would be quiet and silent under the smarting rod, hold fast to these principles; and keep them as your lives. But,

(12.) Twelfthly and lastly, To silence and quiet your soul under the afflicting hand of God, dwell much upon the brevity or shortness of man's life. This present life is not vita, sed via ad vitam, life, but a motion, a journey towards life. Man's life, saith one, is the shadow of smoke, yea, the dream of a shadow: saith another, man's life is so short, that Austin doubted whether to call it a dying life or a living death. Thou hast but a day to live, and perhaps thou mayest be now in the twelfth hour of that day; therefore hold out faith and patience. Thy troubles and thy life shall shortly end together; therefore hold thy peace. Thy grave is going to be made; thy sun is near setting; death begins to call thee off the stage of this world; death stands at thy back; thou must shortly sail forth upon the ocean of eternity; though thou hast a great deal of work to do, a God to honour, a Christ to close with, a soul to save, a race to run, a crown to win, a hell to escape, a pardon to beg, a heaven to make sure, yet thou hast but a little time to do it in; thou hast one foot in the grave, thou art even going ashore on eternity, and wilt thou now cry out of thy affliction? Wilt thou now mutter and murmur when thou art entering upon an unchangeable condition? What extreme folly and madness is it for a man to mutter and murmur when he is just a-going out of prison, and his bolts and chains are just a-knocking off! Why, Christian, this is just thy case; therefore hold thy peace. Thy life is but short, therefore thy troubles cannot be long; hold up and hold out quietly and patiently a little longer, and heaven-shall make amends for all, Rom 8:18.

A STRING OF PEARLS

NOTE The 'String of Pearls' was first published in 1657, in a particularly pretty volume. The title supplied by the bookseller for this edition, intended for the back, was, 'Mr Brooks His Chain of Pearls.' Our text is taken from the 'second edition, corrected.' Its title-page is given below.* Though originally a private 'funeral sermon,' it was immediately equally popular with its author's other writings, having rapidly passed through numerous editions. The '14th' bears the date of 1703. Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. i. pages 341, 350. G. A STRING OF PEARLS: or, The best things reserved till last.

Discovered in a SERMON Preached in London, June 8. 1657. at The Funeral of (that Triumphant Saint) Mrs. Mary Blake, late Wife to (his Worthy Friend) Mr. Nicholas Blake, Merchant, with an Elegy on her Death. By Thomas Brooks (her much endeared Friend, Spiritual Father, Pastor and Brother, in the Fellowship of the Gospel, and) Preacher of the Word at Margarets New-Fish street. The Second Edition corrected. The Righteous shall bee had in everlasting remembrance, Psa

112:6.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints, Psa 116:15.

London, Printed by R. I. for John Hancock, at the first shop in Popes-head-Alley, neer the Exchange. 1660. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his honoured and worthily-esteemed friends, Mr Nicholas Blake, merchant, husband to the late virtuous Mrs Mary Blake, deceased; and Mr Thomas Matthewes, merchant, and Mrs Martha Matthewes his wife, parents to the late deceased gentlewoman; and to the rest of his and her relations.

All grace and peace, all consolation and supportation from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear Friends,—This little piece had been sooner in your hands, but that my being in the country, and some other important business that hath lain hard upon my hands, hath prevented it till now.

I have read of a certain painter, who, being to express the sorrow of a weeping father, and having spent his skill before in setting forth of the passions and affections of his children, he thought it best to present him upon his table to the beholders' view, with his face covered, that so he might have that grief to be imagined by them, which he found himself unable to set out to the full. I know I am not able to paint out your great grief and sorrow for the loss of such a wife, of such a child, of such a sister, &c., and I could wish that this piece, which is brought forth to satisfy your importunity, may not make the wound to bleed afresh. However, if it doth, thank yourselves, blame not me.

I could heartily wish that you and all others concerned in this sad loss, were more taken up in minding the happy exchange that she hath made, than with your present loss. She hath exchanged earth for heaven, a wilderness for a paradise, a prison for a palace, a house made with hands for one eternal in the heavens, 2Co 5:1-2. She hath exchanged imperfection for perfection, sighing for singing, mourning for rejoicing, prayers for praises, the society of sinful mortals for the company of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb 12:22-24; an imperfect transient enjoyment of God for a more clear, full, perfect, and permanent enjoyment of God. She hath exchanged pain for ease, sickness for health, a bed of weakness for a bed of spices, a complete blessedness. She hath exchanged her brass for silver, her counters for gold, and her earthly contentments for heavenly enjoyments. And as I desire that one of your eyes may be fixed upon her happiness, so I desire that the other of your eyes may be fixed upon Christ's fulness. Though your brook be dried up, yet Christ the fountain of light, life, love, grace, glory, comfort, joy, goodness, sweetness, and satisfaction is still at hand, and always full and flowing, yea, overflowing, John 1:16, Col 1:19, Col 2:3. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is contracted in one piece of gold, so all the sweetness, all the goodness, all the excellencies that are in husbands, wives, children, friends, &c., are contracted in Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in Christ; Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia, saith Augustine, one Christ will be to thee instead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found.

Dear friends! what wisdom, what knowledge, what love, what tenderness, what sweetness, what goodness did you observe and find in this deceased and now glorified saint, that is not eminently, that is not perfectly, to be enjoyed in Christ? and if so, why do not you bear up sweetly and

cheerfully, and let the world know, and let friends see, that though you have lost her corporally, yet you enjoy her spiritually in Jesus? The apostle Paul was so much taken with Christ, that he was ever in his thoughts, always near his heart, and ever upon his tongue; he names him sixteen or seventeen times in one chapter, 1Co 1:1-31. Now, oh that your hearts and thoughts were thus busied about Christ, and taken up with Christ, and with those treasures of wisdom, knowledge, grace, goodness, sweetness, &c., that is in him; this would very much allay your grief and sorrow, and keep your hearts quiet and silent before the Lord; this would be like that tree which made the bitter waters of Marah sweet, Exo 15:23-25.

Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had; she answered her again, All my riches and jewels is my husband Phocion. So should Christians say, Christ is our riches, our jewels, our treasure, our heaven, our crown, our glory, our all. He is all comforts to us, and all contents to us, and all delights to us, and all relations to us. He is husband, wife, child, father, mother, brother, sister. He is all these; yea, he is more than all these to us, 2Co 6:10, Eph 3:8, Song of Solomon 5:10.

I have read of one [St Martin], who, walking in the fields by himself, of a sudden fell into loud cries and weeping, and being asked by one that passed by and overheard him, the cause of that his lamentation, I weep, saith he, to think that the Lord Jesus should do so much for us men, and yet not one man of a thousand so much as minds him, or thinks of him. But I hope better things of you; yea, I hope and desire that this present counsel will take hold of your hearts, and work as counsel works, when it is set home by a hand of heaven.

Again, friends, it is your wisdom and your glory to mind more your present work, your present duty, than your loss, than your present calamity. David's passion was got above his wisdom, his discretion, when he said, 'O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' 2Sa 18:33. Your present work is not to cry, O my dear wife! O my precious child! O my loving sister! but, O my soul, submit to God! justify God, lie down in the will of God; say amen to God's amen. O my soul! think well of God, and speak well of God, and carry it well towards God, &c. This is your present work; make it but your work, and then, though 'sorrow may abide for a night, yet joy will come in the morning,' Psal 30:5.

Again, Observe how other saints have carried it under such a dispensation as you are under, and do you likewise. To that purpose read and compare these scriptures together: Gen 23:1-4, Gen 23:8; Eze 24:16-18; 2Sa 12:17-22; 1Sa 3:17-19; 2Sa 15:25-27; Job 1:13-22. It is a more excellent, a more blessed thing to be good at imitating the pious examples of others, than to be good at praising of them. Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The best and highest examples should be very quickening and provoking. Pious examples usually are more wakening than precepts; and they are more convincing and more encouraging; and the reason is, because we see in them, that the exercise of the most difficult points of godliness is yet possible. Other saints' pious examples should be looking-glasses for us to dress ourselves by; and happy are those that make such an improvement of them. Oh, happy husband! oh, happy parents! oh, happy brethren and sisters! if you write after that blessed copy, that this glorified saint, wife, child, sister, hath set before you; which that you may, I desire you seriously to dwell upon the following narrative.

One hint more, and then I have done. Augustine, in one of his epistles, hath this relation, that the very same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper, to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome. Suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and a sweet smell that came unto him, and this voice he thought he heard, O Augustine! what dost thou? Dost think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shalt thou be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except thou come to feel it, as I now do. A little before this glorified saint's translation from earth to heaven, I had thoughts and resolutions to write to her about this blessed state to which she was hastening, but was prevented; however, in the following sermon you will find something of that glorious state glimpsed out unto you, which now she is in possession of. Now, dear friends, above all gettings, get an interest in that glory that she is filled with, and keep, up the sense of that interest in your own souls and consciences; and then you will be happy in life, and blessed in death, and assuredly meet her and know her, and for ever enjoy her in perfect happiness and blessedness; which, that you may, is and shall be the constant desires and earnest prayers of Your soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks.

A STRING OF PEARLS;

OR, THE BEST THINGS RESERVED TILL LAST

Before I name my text, give me leave to speak a few words upon another text, viz., the glorified saint deceased, at whose funeral we are here met.

She was one of those dear spiritual children that the Lord had given me, Isa 8:18; she was a precious seal of my ministry, she was my living epistle, 2Co 3:1-2; my walking certificate, my letter testimonial, Php 4:1-2. In life she was my joy, and in the day of Christ she will be my crown, as Paul speaks, 1Th 2:19-20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.' Her application of those words of the apostle to me hath been often a very great refreshing and comfort to my soul: 'For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel,' 1Co 4:15. The work of grace upon her heart was clear, powerful, and thorough, as all know that knew her inwardly. I should tire both myself and you, and frustrate the end of your meeting, which is to hear a sermon, should I give you an exact and particular account thereof: I shall therefore mention only a few things among many for your imitation, satisfaction, and supportation under this sad dispensation.

She was a knowing woman in the things of Christ; and her knowledge was inward, experimental, growing, humbling, transforming, and practical, Pro 3:18; she knew Christ in the mystery as well as in the history; in the spirit as well as in the letter; feelingly, as well as notionally; she did not only eat of the tree of knowledge, but also tasted of the tree of life.

She was as sincere and plain a hearted Christian, I think, as any lives out of heaven; for plain-heartedness she was, a Jacob; for uprightness she was a Job. Sincerity is the shine, the lustre, the beauty, the glory of all a Christian's graces, and in this she did excel. A sincere soul is like a crystal glass with a light in the midst of it, which gives light every way; and such a one was she. A sincere soul is like the violet, which grows low, and hides itself and its own sweetness, as

much as may be, with its own leaves; and such a one was she. She had as many choice, visible characters of sincerity and uprightness upon her, as ever I read upon any Christian that I have had the happiness to be acquainted with. But I must not dwell on these things; I shall only say she was not like the actor in the comedy, who cried with his mouth, O cœlum, O heaven! but pointed with his finger to the earth. Such professors there be, but she was none of them.

She was as rich in spiritual experiences as most that I have been acquainted with. Ah! how often hath she warmed, gladdened, and quickened my spirit, by acquainting me with what the Lord hath done for her precious soul. Experiments in religion are beyond notions and impressions. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue; and she found it so. Oh! the stories that she was able to tell of the love of God, the presence of Christ, the breathings of the Spirit, the exercise of grace, the sweetness of the word, the deceitfulness of sin, and the devices and methods of Satan, &c. And though she made use of her experiences, as crutches to lean on, yet she only made use of the promises as a foundation to build on. As the star led the wise men to Christ, so her experiences led her to a higher and sweeter living upon Christ; her experiences were her sauce, but Christ was still her food.

She did drive a very great private trade towards heaven. She was much in secret duties, in closet communion with God, and this did very much enrich her and advance her in spiritual experiences, when she had once found the sweetness of enjoying Christ behind the door, Song of Solomon 2:14, Mat 6:5-6. Oh, how inflamedly, how abundantly was her soul carried forth in secret duties! She knew that Peter went up upon the house-top to pray, and that Christ was oft alone, Acts 10:9. As secret meals make a fat body, so she found secret duties made a fat soul; and this made her much in that work. It was a witty and divine speech of Bernard, That Christ, the soul's spouse, is bashful, neither willingly cometh to his bride in the presence of a multitude; and is it not so with the bride in her actings towards her bridegroom, Christ?

She was many times in the school of temptation, which God made to her the school of instruction. The Lord did usually so help her to handle the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, that she commonly triumphed over Satan's temptations, and led captivity captive. Though that arrow-master, Satan, hath shot often at her, yet her 'bow still abode in strength, her hands and heart being made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.' Augustine gave thanks to God that the heart and the temptation did not meet together, and so hath she many a time. She was good at withstanding the beginnings of a temptation, knowing that after-remedies often come too late. She was a Christian all over.³ She was a Christian in profession, and a Christian in practice; a Christian in lip, and a Christian in life; a Christian in word, and a Christian in work; a Christian in show, and a Christian in power and spirit. She was not only for the general duties of Christianity, as hearing, praying, &c., but also for the relative duties of religion, as to be a good wife, a good mother, a good child, a good sister, a good mistress, &c. Most sincerity and holy ingenuity shines in the relative duties of religion; and in those she was excellent. She was also very conscientious and constant, yea, abundant in the general duties of religion, as hearing, praying, &c. She did duties, but durst not for a world trust to her duties, but to her Jesus, as the dove made use of her wings to fly to the ark, but trusted not in her wings, but in the ark. In duty, she had learned the holy art of living above duty; in the business of acceptation with God, and justification before God, and reconciliation to God, and salvation by God, she knew no duty but Jesus. She was as happy in denying religious self as she was resolute in denying of sinful self.

She was, for patience and cheerfulness under her long lingering weakness, as exemplary as any that ever I was acquainted with, Jas 1:2-4; Jas 5:10-11. If at any time she groaned, yet she blessed God, as she used to say, that she did not grumble. Oh how quiet, how like a lamb was she under all her trials! Oh how well would she speak of God! Oh how sweetly did she carry it towards God! Oh how much was she taken up in justifying of God throughout her pining, wasting sicknesses!

Time and strength would fail me should I but tell you what I could concerning her faith, her love to God, to Christ, to his ways, to his people, whether poor or rich, weak or strong; and of her humility, lowliness, meekness, wherein she hath left few fellows behind her. She was very high in spiritual worth, and as low in heart; she was clothed with humility as with a royal robe, and with 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price,' 1Pe 5:5, 1Pe 3:4. But I must hasten to my text, for I see time slides away.

If Ezekiel can commend Daniel, and match him with Noah and Job for his power in prayer, and Peter highly praise Paul, and if the ancient church had her diptychs or public tables, wherein the persons most noted for piety were recorded; nay, if Plato called Aristotle the intelligent reader, and Aristotle set up an altar in honour of Plato, then I hope you will not impute it to me as a transgression that I have presented to you the shining virtues of this glorified saint for your imitation.

What eyes thou read'st with, reader, know I wot, Mine were not dry when I this story wrote. AN ELEGY Upon the death of the virtuous, his dear and never-to-be-forgotten friend, Mrs Mary Blake.

If that affection could but make a poet, Could grief and sorrow help, sure I should do it;

Mary is dead, a woman whom truth and fame, With virtue, ever shall embalm her name; A Mary for love, a Mary for weeping, A Mary for choice, a Mary for seeking. With Mary she had chosen the better part; With Mary she did lay Christ near'st her heart.

Such were her parts, her piety, Her youth it was a full maturity.

Grave although young; who in her heart did prize Grace, truth, and Christ her only sacrifice;

Gracious, religious, and sincere was she, Courteous, without all court-hypocrisy.

Christ was her study, his glory wag her aim;

It was her heaven for to advance the same.

Within the holy treasury of her mind Were the choice virtues of all womankind; A knowing woman, and an humble too, Which joyed all Christians who had with her to do. A praying woman and believing too, Which did the praises of other saints renew: A holy woman, and a harmless too. In saying this, I give her but her due. A lively Christian and thriving in grace;

Few towards heaven did ever hold her pace. The word and ways of God were her delight, And in the same she had a great insight. A fixed woman, when others staggering were, Which was the fruit of holy pains and care; A tried Christian, whose trials were not small, Yet faith and patience overcame them all;

She lived the sermons which on earth she heard, And now receives the crown which was for her prepared; A woman which had more than common worth;

I want a tongue, enough to set it forth. Her latest precious breathings had respect To nothing more than divine dialect; Which she committed to her mourning friends, In exhortations to their better ends. Could prayers tears, and sighs have kept her here.

She had not died, you need it not to fear;

She lives, though dead, in th' memory of those, Who knew her life, and saw its holy close. No golden letters half so long as we, Shall keep her precious worth in memory; No costly marble need on her be spent, Her deathless worth is her own monument.

Now, shall I let you know what you have lost?

She was a temple of the Holy Ghost. This we'll apply, that though we lose her here, Her soul doth shine in a celestial sphere.

Mary is to the celestial Canaan gone, Where as a star she shines in perfection.

Mary hath chosen sure the better part, Mary with angels sure doth now partake. But stay, needs she encomiums? Reader, know, She joys above, while we here wail below. But now, dear friends, let's mourn in hope and weep, Believing this blest saint in Christ doth sleep.

Hark, don't you hear her sweet delightful voice?

Saying, Friends, weep not, but see that ye rejoice For me, for now I am perfectly free, From sorrow, sin, death, and mortality;

Surely yon cannot doubt my happiness, Who have beheld my faith and stedfastness;

Oh then from sorrow See that now ye cease, To interrupt my joy and your own peace;

Surely our loss to her was greatest gain, For crowned in heaven she ever shall remain: No sighs, no groans, now from her do come, But everlasting joys are in their room.

She now without control, no question, sings Eternal praises to the King of kings;

She now enjoys that ever blessed face, In hopes whereof she run a happy race:

She now hath chang'd her crosses for a crown, Her Bed of weakness for a royal throne.

Farewell! blessed saint, farewell! to thee we'll haste, For till we meet in heaven we cannot rest.

Thomas Brooks, Of Margaret's, New-Fish-street. A Word to the Reader Now, Reader, if you please to cast a look, Or spend some spare-time on this little book, And in it anything that's good do view, Then challenge it, for it belongs to you;

What's weak or worthless in it, that decline And pass it by, I challenge that for mine. THE BEST THINGS RESERVED TILL LAST To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.—1Pe 1:4 Beloved,—I have chosen this text upon a double ground.

1. To make a diversion of immoderate sorrow and grief from my own spirit and yours, who are most nearly concerned in this sad loss. And,

2. Because it will afford us matter most suitable to the blessed state and condition of this glorified saint, at whose funeral we are here met. In the inscription, 1Pe 1:1-2, you have first a holy salutation, shewing first by whom this epistle was written, viz. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ; secondly, to whom it was written. Now they are described two ways: first, by their outward condition, 'strangers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.' There are divers opinions about these strangers, but the most common and received opinion among the learned is, that Peter wrote this epistle to the converted Jews, scattered through the provinces in Asia, who met with much opposition and affliction for the gospel's sake. Secondly, they are described by their spiritual and inward condition, which is set forth, (1.) By the fundamental cause of it, to wit, election of God.

(2.) By the final cause, to wit, sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience.

(3.) By the subservient cause, to wit, reconciliation, conferred in obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. In the third verse you have, (1.) A very stately proem, and such as can hardly be matched again, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (2.) You have regeneration or effectual calling described, and that [1.] First, By the principal efficient cause thereof, which is, 'God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

[2.] By the impulsive cause thereof, the mercy of God, which is described by the quantity of it, 'abundant.'

[3.] By the immediate effect thereof, a 'lively hope,' the singular cause whereof is shewed to be the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1Jn 3:2-3. Now hope is called a lively hope, [1.] Because it makes a man lively and active for God and goodness.

[2.] Because it cheers, comforts, and revives the soul. It brings, it breeds, it feeds, it preserves spiritual life in the soul. This lively hope is like Myrtilus his shield, which after the use he had of it in the field, having it with him at sea, and suffering shipwreck, it served him for a boat to waff him to shore, and so preserved his life.³ This lively hope is a shield ashore, and an anchor at sea.

[3.] It is called a lively hope, in opposition to the fading, withering, dying hopes of hypocrites, and profane persons, 'Whose hope is as a spider's web,' 'the crackling of thorns under a pot,' and 'the giving up of the ghost.' A Christian's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul farewell; no, it is like the morning light: the least beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine; it is *aurora gaudii*, and it shall shine forth brighter and brighter till perfect day; but the hypocrite's hope, the presumptuous sinner's hope is like a cloud, or the morning dew.

Now, in my text you have the object about which this 'lively hope' is exercised; and that is, 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away' [What these words import I shall shew you when I open that doctrine which I intend to stand upon at this time], 'reserved in heaven for you.'

There are three heavens: the first is *cœlum aërium*, the airy heaven, where the fowls of heaven do fly; the second is *cœlum astriferum*, where the stars of heaven are; the third is *cœlum beatorum*, the heaven of the blessed, where God appears in eminency, and where Christ shines in glory; and

this is the heaven the text speaks of. The text will afford several points, but I shall only name one, which I intend to stand on at this time, and that is this, Doct. That God reserves the best and greatest favours and blessings for believers till they come to heaven.

Now, I shall prove this proposition by an induction of particulars; and then give you the reasons of it. I will begin with the inheritance spoken of in the text.

I. The best inheritance is reserved for believers till they come to heaven. This is clear and fair in the text, yet I shall make this further out to you thus:

(1.) First, The inheritance reserved for believers till they come to heaven, is a pure, undefiled, and incorruptible inheritance. It is an inheritance that cannot be defiled nor blemished with abuse one way or another. Other inheritances may, and often are, with oaths, cruelty, blood, deceit, &c. The Greek word **■μ■αντος** signifies a precious stone, which, though it be never so much soiled, yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled; yea, the oftener you cast it into the fire, and take it out, the more clear, bright, and shining it is. All earthly inheritances are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars, thorns, and thistles, Gen 3:18, Isa 23:9. Oh the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives that have been defiled, stained, and polluted with earthly inheritances! Oh the impure love, the carnal conscience, the vain boastings, the sensual joys, that earthly inheritances have filled and defiled poor souls with! All earthly inheritances, they are no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, 1Ki 9:13, that is to say, displeasing or dirty. The world doth but dirt and dust us. But,

(2.) Secondly, It is a sure, a secure, inheritance: 'To an inheritance reserved in heaven for you.' See the text. The Greek word that is here rendered 'reserved,' is from **τηρ■ω**, tereo, which signifies to keep solicitously, to keep as with watch and ward. This inheritance is kept and secured to us by promise, by power, by blood, by oath; and therefore must needs be sure. It is neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world that can put a Christian by his inheritance. Christ hath already taken possession of it in their names and in their rooms; and so it is secure to them. If weakness can overcome strength, impotency omnipotency. then may a Christian be kept out of his inheritance, but not till then. But earthly inheritances they are not sure, they are not secure. How often doth might overcome right, and the weakest go to the wall! How many are kept out, and how many are cast out, of their inheritances, by power, policy, craft, cruelty. It was a complaint of old, our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens, Jas 5:2.

(3.) Thirdly, It is a permanent, a lasting, inheritance: 'To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' The Greek word **■μ■ραντος** is the proper name of a flower, which is still fresh and green after it hath a long time hung up in the house. It is an inheritance that shall continue as long as God himself continues. Of this inheritance there shall be no end. Though other inheritances may be lasting, yet they are not everlasting; though sometimes it be long before they have an end, yet they have an end. Where is the glory of the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms? Sic transit gloria mundi; but the glory of believers shall never fade nor wither; it shall never grow old nor rusty: 1Pe 5:4, 'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.' A believer's inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness, shall be as fresh and flourishing after he hath been many thousand thousands of years in heaven as it was at his first entrance into it. Earthly inheritances are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wore out, 1Ti 6:17. The creature

is all shadow and vanity; it is filia noctis, like Jonah's gourd. Man can sit under its shadow but a little, little while; it soon decays and dies; it quickly fades and withers. There is a worm at the root of all earthly inheritances, that will consume them in time. All earthly comforts and contents are but like a fair picture that is drawn upon the ice, which continueth not; or like the morning cloud, that soon passeth away; but a believer's inheritance endureth for ever. When this world shall be no more, when time shall be no more, the inheritance of the saints shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing. Nescio quid erit, quod ista vita non erit, ubi lucet, quod non capiat locus, ubi sonat, quod non rapit tempus, ubi olet, quod non spargit flatus, ubi sapit, quod non minuit edacitas, ubi hæret, quod non divellit cœternitas, said Augustine; what will that life be, or rather what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? Light, which place cannot comprehend; voices and music, which time cannot ravish away; odours, which are never dissipated; a feast, which is never consumed; a blessing, which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end. So this, all this, is the heritage of all God's Jacobs.

(4.) Fourthly, It is the freest inheritance. It is an inheritance that is free from all vexation and molestation. There shall be no sin to molest the soul, nor no devil to vex the soul. 'There shall be no pricking brier nor grieving thorn unto the house of Israel,' Eze 28:24; there shall be no Jebusites to be 'as pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides,' Num 33:55. There shall be no crying, Oh my bones! oh my bowels! oh the deceit of this man! oh the oppression of that man! &c. No; they shall have a crown without thorns, a rose without prickles, and an inheritance without the least encumbrance. This inheritance flows from free love, and is freely offered, though the soul hath neither money nor money-worth. There is nothing, there is not the least thing about this inheritance that is purchased or paid for by us, Isa 55:1-2. It is all frank, it is all free, it is all of grace. Here is such an inheritance that no eye ever saw, that no mortal ever possessed; and that for nothing. It is freely offered, and it is freely given: Acts 20:32, 'And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.' All is mercy, all is of free mercy, that God alone may have the glory. Other inheritances they have their encumbrances. Oh the vexations, the molestations that do attend them! Oh the debates, the disputes, the law-suits that are about earthly inheritances, such as have made many a man to go with a heavy heart, an empty purse, and a thread-bare coat; which made Themistocles profess, that if two ways were shewed him, one to hell, and the other to the bar, he would decline that which did lead to the bar, and choose that which went to hell.

(5.) Fifthly, It is an inheritance that is universally communicable; to Jews, to Gentiles; to bond, to free; to rich, to poor; to high, to low; to male, to female: Gal 3:28-29, 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus;' 'And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise,' Rom 8:17. Among men, all sons and daughters be not heirs, yet all God's children, be they sons, be they daughters, be they bond or free, &c., they are all heirs, without exception. Jehoshaphat gave his younger sons 'great gifts of silver and gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities, but the kingdoms gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born,' 2Ch 21:3. And Abraham gave gifts to the rest of his sons, but Isaac only had the inheritance, Gen 25:5-6. In some countries all children be not heirs, but sons only; and in other countries not all sons, but the eldest son alone. Usually men divide their earthly inheritances. If all the sons be heirs, some inherit one place, others others; but here the whole inheritance is enjoyed by every child; here every child is an heir

to all, and hath right to all. In earthly inheritances, the more you divide, the less is every one's part; but this inheritance is not diminished by the multitude of possessors, nor impaired by the number of co-heirs; it is as much to many as to a few, and as great to one as to all. Not a room, not a mansion, not a walk, not a flower, not a jewel, not a box of myrrh, but what is common to all; not a smile, not a good word, not a sweet look, not a robe, not a dish, not a delicate, not a pleasure, not a delight, but is universally communicable, and universally fit for all the thousands millions of thousands that are heirs of this inheritance. If there be a thousand together, every one sees as much of the sun, hears as much of the sound, smells as much of the sweet, as he should do if there were no more than himself alone; so here.

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, It is a soul-satisfying inheritance. He that hath it shall sit down and say, I have enough, I have all. As one master satisfies the servant, and as one father satisfies the child, and as one husband satisfies the wife, so one God, one Christ, one inheritance, satisfies the believing soul: Psa 16:5-6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in a pleasant place; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' Will an inheritance of glory satisfy them? Why! this they shall have, 1Jn 3:3, Col 3:4. Will an inheritance of power and dominion satisfy them? Why, this they shall have, 1Co 3:21, 'All things are yours,' &c. Mat 19:28, 1Co 6:2-3, &c. Will Abraham's bosom satisfy you? Why! this you shall have, Luk 16:22. The bosom is the place where love lodges all her children; the bosom is the place of delight and satisfaction, and this you shall have; nay, you shall have a better, a choicer, a sweeter bosom to solace your souls in than Abraham's, to wit, the bosom of Jesus Christ, which will be a paradise of pleasure and delight to you. Will Christ's best robe, will his own signet put upon you, satisfy you? Why! this you shall have. Will it satisfy you to be where Christ is, and to fare as Christ fares, and wear as Christ wears, and enjoy as Christ enjoys? Why! this you shall have: John 12:26, 'Where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' If all these things will satisfy souls, then surely the inheritance reserved in heaven for them will satisfy them; for that inheritance takes in these things, and many more. The good things that this inheritance is made up of are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation; and therefore it must needs be a soul-satisfying inheritance. But now all other inheritances they cannot satisfy the heart of man:2 Ecc 5:10, 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: this is also vanity.' If you please, you may read the words nearer the original thus: 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; and he that loveth it, in the multitude of it, shall not have fruit.' It is the love of silver that is the mischief of it; it is the love of silver that makes men unsatisfied with silver. Such a man will still be adding house to house, land to land, bag to bag, and heap to heap, and yet after all be still unsatisfied. Bernard compareth such a man to one that, being very hungry, gapeth continually for wind, with which he may be puffed, but cannot be filled and satisfied; and so the same author elsewhere saith well, *Anima rationalis cœteris omnibus occupari potest, impleri non potest*, the reasonable soul may be busied about other things, but it cannot be filled with them; they can no more fill up the soul than a drop of water can fill up the huge ocean; they can no more satisfy the desires of the soul than a few drops of water can the thirst of a man inflamed with a violent fever; nay, as oil increases the flame of the fire, so the more a man hath of the world, the more his heart is inflamed after it. When Alexander had conquered the known part of the world, say some, he sat down and wished for another world to conquer. Charles the Fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out

with detestation to all his honours, pleasures, trophies, riches, Abite hinc, abite longe; get you hence, let me hear no more of you. They could not satisfy him, they could not quiet him. Such things that a fancy, a conceit, an ungrounded fear will rob a man of the comfort of, can never satisfy him; but such are all worldly enjoyments, 2Ki 7:6-7. One man will not live because his Delilah will not love; another with Ahab will be sick, and die because he cannot get his neighbour's inheritance, 1Ki 21:1-29; another wishes himself dead because his commodities lie dead on his hands; another with Haman can find no sweetness in all his enjoyments, because Mordecai sits at the king's gate, Est 5:9-14; as those things which delude a man can never satisfy him. But the world deludes a man, and puts cheats upon him; it promises a man pleasure, and pays him with pain; it promises profit—'all this will I give thee'—and pays him with loss; loss of God, of Christ, of peace of conscience, of comfort, of heaven, of happiness, of all; it promises contentment, and fills him with torment;—and therefore can never satisfy the soul of man, &c. But the inheritance reserved in heaven, that will satisfy; it will afford nothing that may offend the soul, it will yield everything that may delight the soul, that may quiet and satisfy the soul; by all which it is most evident, that the best inheritance is reserved for the saints till they come to heaven. But,

II. Secondly, As the best inheritance, so the best is reserved for believers till they come to heaven. This life is full of trials, full of troubles, and full of changes. Sin within, and Satan and the world without, will keep a Christian from rest, till he comes to rest in the bosom of Christ. The life of a Christian is a race; and what rest have they that are still a-running their race? The life of a Christian is a warfare; and what rest have they that are still engaged in a constant warfare? The life of a Christian is the life of a pilgrim; and what rest hath a pilgrim, who is still a-travelling from place to place? A pilgrim is like Noah's dove, that could find no rest for the sole of her foot. The fears, the snares, the cares, the changes, &c., that attends believers in this world, are such that will keep them from taking up their rest here. A Christian hears that word always sounding in his ears, 'Arise, for this is not thy resting-place,' Mic 2:10. A man may as well expect to find heaven in hell, as expect to find rest in this world. It was the complaint of Ambrose, *Quid in hac vita non experimur adversi? Quas non procellas tempestatesque perpetimur? Quibus non exagitamur incommodis? Cujus parcuritur meritis?* What misery do we not undergo in this life? What storms and tempests do we not endure? with what troubles are we not tossed? whose worth is spared? Man's sorrows begin when his days begin, and his sorrows are multiplied as his days are multiplied; his whole life is but one continued grief; labour wears him, care tears him, fears toss him, losses vex him, dangers trouble him, crosses disquiet him, nothing pleases him; in the day he wishes, Would God it were night, and in the night, Would God it were day; before he rises he sighs; before he washes he weeps; before he feeds he fears; under all his abundance he is in wants, and 'in the midst of his sufficiency he is in straits,' Job 20:22; his heart, as Gregory Nyssene speaks, *Non tantum gaudet in iis quæ habet, quantum tristatur ob ea quæ desunt*, is not so much quieted in those things which it hath, as it is tormented for those things which it hath not. In a word, all the rest we have in this world, is but a very short nap, to that glorious rest that is reserved in heaven for us: Heb 4:9-10, 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.' There remains a rest to the people of God, or as the Greek hath it, a sabbatism, a celestial rest, an eternal rest, a Sabbath that shall never have end. When God had made man, we read that the next day he rested; and why is this set down, saith Anselm, *Nisi per hoc vellet innuere, quod illum post cujus creationem requievit, ad requiem fecit?* but that the Spirit of God would shew unto us, that God

made him for rest, after the making of whom God is said to have rested? Rest is a jewel very desirable on earth, but we shall not wear it in our bosoms till we come to heaven. Ambrose well observes,⁶ *sex diebus mundus est factus, septimo requietum est die; ultra mundum ergo est quies, ultra mundum etiam fructus quietis*, in six days the world was made, on the seventh day there was rest; it is beyond this world, therefore, that rest is, and it is beyond this world that the fruit of rest is to be had.

I shall shew you, observing brevity, the excellency of that rest that is reserved for believers in heaven. As,

(1.) First, It is a superlative rest; a rest that infinitely exceeds all earthly rest. All other rest is not to be named in the day wherein this rest is spoken of. Some have purchased rest, for a time, with silver and gold, but this is a rest that all the gold and silver in the world can never purchase. Over this rest is written, not the price of gold, but the price of blood, yea, the price of the best and noblest blood that ever run in veins. That rest we have here must needs be a poor, low-priced rest, *ubi multa cautela custoditur salus corporis, custodita etiam amittitur, amissa cum gravi labore reparatur, et tamen reparata in dubio semper est*, where the health of the body is preserved with much watchfulness, being preserved, is also lost; being lost, is recovered with much labour; and yet being recovered, is always in danger and doubtfulness, what will become of it. Our estate in this world is not a fixed estate; what then is our rest? Our very living is but a passing away; our lives are full of troubles, and they fill our souls full of unquietness. After the Trojans had been tossing and wandering in the Mediterranean Sea, as soon as they espied Italy, they cried out with exulting joy, 'Italy! Italy!' and so when saints, after all their tossings and restlessness in this world, shall come to heaven, then, and not till then, they will cry out, Rest, rest, no rest to this rest. But,

(2.) Secondly, The rest reserved in heaven for believers, it is an universal rest, Rev 14:13, a rest from all sin and a rest from all sorrow; a rest from all afflictions and a rest from all temptations; a rest from all oppression and a rest from all vexations; a rest from all labour and pains, from all trouble and travail, from all aches, weaknesses, and diseases. There is no crying out, O my bones! O my back! O my bowels! O my sides! O my head! O my heart! Our rest here is only in part and imperfect; here we have rest in one part and pain in another, quiet in one part and torment in another. Sometimes when the head is well, the heart is sick; and sometimes when there is peace in the conscience, there is pain in the bones. Here many return us hatred for our love, and this hinders our rest; here we are apt to create cares and fears to ourselves, rather than we will want them, and this hinders our rest; here we are very apt to give offence, and as apt to take offence, though none be given, and this hinders our rest, 1Co 10:32. Sometimes we have rest abroad and none at home; sometimes rest at home and none abroad, Job 7:13-16. Our rest here is imperfect and incomplete, but our rest in heaven shall be most perfect and complete; there the inward and the outward man shall be both at rest, &c. But,

(3.) Thirdly, It is an uninterrupted rest; it is a rest that none can interrupt. Here sometimes sin interrupts our rest, sometimes temptations interrupts our rest, sometimes divine withdrawals interrupts our rest, sometimes the sudden changes and alterations that God makes in our conditions interrupts our rest; sometimes the power, and sometimes the policy, and sometimes the cruelty of wicked men interrupts our rest, sometimes the crossness of friends, sometimes the deceitfulness of friends, sometimes the loss of friends, and sometimes the death of friends

interrupts our rest; one thing or another is still interrupting our rest. Oh! but in heaven there shall be no sin, no devil, no sinner, no false friends; there shall be nothing, there shall not be the least thing that may interrupt a saint's rest; indeed, heaven could not be heaven, did it admit of anything that might interrupt a saint's rest. Heaven is above all winds and weather, storms and tempests, earthquakes and heartquakes. There is only that which is amiable and desirable; there is nothing to cloud a Christian's joy, or to interrupt a Christian's rest. When once a soul is asleep in the bosom of Abraham, none can awake him, none can molest or disturb him. Here is joy without sorrow, blessedness without misery, health without sickness, light without darkness, abundance without want, beauty without deformity, honour without disgrace, ease without labour, and peace without interruption or perturbation. Here shall be eyes without tears, hearts without fears, and souls without sin. Here shall be no evil to molest the soul; here shall be all good to cheer the soul, and all happiness to satisfy the soul; and what then can possibly interrupt the rest of the soul? But,

(4.) Fourthly, As it is an uninterrupted rest, so it is a peculiar rest; it is a rest peculiar to sons, to saints, to heirs, to beloved ones: Psa 127:2, 'So he gives his beloved rest,' or as the Hebrew hath it, dearling, or dear beloved, quiet rest, without care or sorrow. The Hebrew word ■■■■, Shena, is written with ■, a quiet dumb letter, which is not usual, to denote the more quietness and rest. This rest is a crown that God sets only upon the head of saints; it is a gold chain that he only puts about his children's necks; it is a jewel that he only hangs between his beloveds' breasts; it is a flower that he only sticks in his darlings' bosoms. This rest is a tree of life that is proper and peculiar to the inhabitants of that heavenly country; it is children's bread, and shall never be given to dogs. Here wicked men have their good things; their peace, their rest, their quiet, &c., their heaven, whilst the people of God are troubled and disquieted on every side; but the day is a-coming wherein the saints shall have rest, and sinners shall never have a good day more, never have an hour's rest more; their torments shall be endless and ceaseless. The old world had their resting-time, but at last patience and justice, tired and abused, put a period to their rest, by washing and sweeping them to hell with a flood; and then Noah, and those righteous souls that were with him, had their time of rest and peace; and so shall it be with sinners and saints at last, &c. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The rest reserved for the saints in heaven, as it is a peculiar rest, so it is a rest that is universally communicable to all the sons and daughters of God. 'And to you who are troubled, rest with us,' saith the apostle Paul; 'rest with us,' with us apostles, with us saints, and with all the family of heaven together, 2Th 1:6-7. Here some saints are at liberty, when others are in prison; here some sit under their own vines and drink the blood of the grape, whilst others have their blood poured out as water upon the ground, &c.; but in heaven they shall all have rest together, the believing husband and the believing wife shall rest together, and believing parents and believing children shall rest together. Here one relation hath rest, when the other hath not, but there they shall all rest together. There the painful preacher and the diligent hearer shall rest together; there the gracious master and the pious servant shall rest together, &c.: Isa 57:2, 'He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness; they shall rest in their beds,' or as some read it, they shall rest in their bee-hives, expressing the Hebrew by the Latin; cubile signifies a bee-hive, as well as a couch or bed. Look, as the poor wearied bees do rest all together in their bee-hives, in their honey-houses, so all the saints shall rest together in heaven, which is their bee-hive, their honey-house; and oh what a happy rest will that be, when all

the saints shall rest together! But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, It is a permanent, a constant rest. Of this rest there shall be no end. It is a rest that shall last as long as heaven lasts; yea, as long as God himself shall continue. Time shall be no more, and this world shall be no more, but this rest shall remain for ever, Rev 10:6, 2Pe 3:10, et seq. The rest of the people of God in this world is transient, it is inconstant. Now they have rest, and anon they have none; now a calm, presently a storm; now all is in quiet, anon all is in an uproar. Their rest in this world is like a morning cloud and the early dew, which is soon dried up by the beams of the sun, Hos 6:4. Since God hath cast man out of paradise, out of his first rest, he can find but little rest in this world; sometimes the unfitness of the creature troubles him, sometimes the fickleness of the creature vexes him, sometimes the treachery of the creature enrages him, and sometimes the want of the creature distracts him. When in his heart he saith, Now I shall have rest, now I shall be quiet, then troubles and changes come, so that his whole life is rather a dreaming of rest than an enjoying of rest. Oh! but in heaven the rest of the saints shall have no end; there shall be nothing that can put a period to their rest, there shall be everything that may conduce to the perpetuating of their rest. Heaven would be but a poor low thing, did it not afford a perpetual rest.

III. Thirdly, As the best rest, so the best sight and knowledge of God is reserved for believers till they come to heaven. I readily grant that even in this world the saints do know the Lord, inwardly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, experimentally, transformingly, practically; but yet, notwithstanding all this, the best knowledge of God is reserved for heaven, which I shall evidence by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) First, They shall have the clearest knowledge and revelation of God in heaven. Here our visions of God are not clear; and this makes many a child of light to sit and sigh in darkness, Lam 3:44. God veils himself, he covers himself with a cloud. Man, when he is silent concerning God, seemeth to be something, but when he begins to speak of God, it plainly appears that he is nothing.

Simonides being asked by Hiero, the tyrant, what God was, craved a day for to deliberate about an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; therefore, the next day after being questioned, he asked two days, the third day he craved four, and so from that time forth doubled the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that the more he studied, the less he was able to define what he was, so incomprehensible is his nature. Our visions of God here are dark and obscure. Augustine, asking the question, what God is? gives in this answer, *Certe hic est, de quo et quum dicitur, non potest dici; quum æstimatur, non potest æstimari; quum comparatur, non potest comparari; quum definitur, ipse sua definitione crescit*: surely it is he, who when he is spoken of cannot be spoken of, who when he is considered of cannot be considered of, who when he is compared to any thing cannot be compared, and when he is defined, groweth greater by defining of him. It is observable, that it was not the Lord which the prophet Ezekiel saw, it was only a vision, Eze 1:28. In the vision it was not the glory of the Lord which he saw, but the likeness of it; nay, it was not the likeness of it, but the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord, that made him to fall on his face, as not being able to behold it. Sin hath so weakened, dazzled, and darkened the eye of our souls, that we cannot bear the sight of the glory of the Lord, nor the likeness of it, no! nor the appearance of the likeness of it.

In the Psalms the Lord is said to ride upon a cherub, Psa 18:10; upon which words one saith thus, Cherub quippe plenitudo scientiæ dicitur, proinde super plenitudinem scientiæ ascendisse perhibetur, quia majestatis ejus plenitudinem scientia nulla comprehendit, a cherub is so called, as being a fulness of knowledge; and therefore is God said to ascend above the fulness of knowledge, because no knowledge comprehendeth the fulness of his majesty. But when believers come to heaven, then they shall have a more clear vision and sight of God: 1Co 13:12, 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' Now we see him obscurely, as in a glass, but then we shall see him distinctly, clearly, immediately; we shall then apprehend him clearly, though, even then, we cannot comprehend him fully.⁵ Some sense those words, I shall know even as I am known, thus: Look, as God knoweth me after a manner agreeable to his infinite excellency, so shall I know God according to my capacity, not obscurely, but perfectly, as it were, face to face; and this is the greatest height of blessedness and happiness. Now all veils shall be taken off, and we shall have a clear prospect of God's excellency and glory, of his blessedness and fulness, of his loveliness and sweetness. Now all masks, clouds, and curtains, shall be drawn for ever, that saints may clearly see the breadth, length, depth, and height of divine love, and that they may clearly see into the mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, the mystery of man's redemption, the mystery of providences, the mystery of prophecies; and all those mysteries that relate to the nature, substances, offices, orders, and excellencies of the angels, those princes of glory, who still keep their standings in the court of heaven; and all those mysteries that concern the nature, original, immortality, spirituality, excellency, and activity of our own souls, beside a world of other mysteries that respect the decrees and counsels of God, the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, and the fall of angels. Now the most knowing men in the world are much in the dark about these things; but when we come to heaven, we shall have a close and a clear sight and knowledge of them. Now we shall know, as we are known; now we shall see God face to face. O beata visio, videre Regem angelorum, sanctum sanctorum, Deum cœli, Rectorem terræ, patrem viventium! Oh blessed sight! to behold the King of angels, the holy of holies, the God of heaven, the Ruler of the earth, the Father of the living! O beata visio, videre Deum in seipso, videre in nobis, et nos in eo. Oh blessed vision and contemplation, wherein we shall see God in himself, God in us, and ourselves in God! But,

(2.) Secondly, As in heaven they shall have the clearest knowledge of God, so in heaven they shall have the fullest knowledge of God. Here our knowledge of God is weak, as well as dark, but in heaven it shall be full and complete. 'Here we know but in part; but there we shall know as we are known,' 1Co 13:12. As the apostle speaks, here we are able to take in but little of God, either sin or Satan, or else fears, doubts, and scruples, or else the pleasures or profits, the comforts or contents of this world doth so defile the soul, and so fill the soul, that it is able to take in but very little of God. 'How little a portion,' saith Job, 'is heard of him!' Job 26:14. It is but a portion, a little portion, that we can conceive of him. The Hebrew is שֵׁמֶט, shemets, particulam, a little bit, nay, it is said, שֵׁמֶט דָּבָר, shemets dabar, particulam, verbi, a little piece of a word, or particulam alicujus, a little piece of something, that we do hear of him. 'I have many things to say unto you,' saith Christ, 'but ye cannot bear them now,' John 16:12. Man is a poor, low, weak creature, and is not able to bear any great or full discoveries of God. As weak shoulders cannot bear heavy burdens, nor weak stomachs digest strong meats; no more were they able to bear the revelation of many high, spiritual, precious, and glorious truths, that Christ was willing to discover to them.

Those that have weak eyes, or that have a blemish in their eyes, cannot discern things aright. Now we have all weak eyes, we have all one blemish or another in our eye, which hinders us from a full sight and knowledge of God, and of his excellency and glory. Oh! but now in heaven, we shall have a full and perfect knowledge of God; there shall be no sore eyes, no clouds, no mists to hinder us from a full sight of the Sun of righteousness.⁴ Here our understandings shall be full of the knowledge of God, our minds full of the wisdom of God, our wills full of the righteousness and holiness of God, and our affections full of the love and delights of God. Here we have but weak and shallow apprehensions of God, but there, as Bernard speaks sweetly, *Deus implebit animam rationalem sapientia, concupiscibilem justitia, irascibilem perfecta tranquillitate*, God will fill the soul with light of wisdom, the concupiscible faculty with righteousness, the irascible with perfect tranquillity.

If a man did dwell within the body of the sun, surely he would be full of light; if a man did dwell in the midst of a fountain, surely he would be filled with that fountain; so when the saints come to heaven, they shall dwell as it were in the body of the Sun of righteousness; and therefore they cannot be but full of light; they shall dwell in the midst of the fountain of life; and therefore they shall sure be full of the fountain. But,

(3.) Thirdly, The sight and knowledge that we shall have of God in heaven, will be immediate, 1Co 13:12. Here our knowledge of God is mediate; here we see him, but it is either through the glass of his word, or the glass of his works. Sometimes through the glass of his word God shews himself; sometimes through the glass of prayer God gives some representation of himself to his people; sometimes through the glass of the Lord's supper he discovers some rays and beams of his glory. All the sight and knowledge that we have of God in this world is through some glass or other. Now there is a vast difference between seeing an object directly, immediately, and in its own proper colours, and beholding it through a glass. The sight of an object through a glass is very weak and unsatisfying. One direct view of the Lord, one immediate sight of God, will infinitely transcend all those sights and views that we have had in this world, either through the glass of his word, or the glass of his works, either through the glass of ordinances, or the glass of the promises, or the glass of providences, Mat 5:8. One real direct sight of a friend or relation, doth more cheer, quiet, and satisfy us, than a thousand representations of them in glasses, or by their pictures. In heaven we shall see God face to face, without the interposition of men or means; and this direct and immediate sight of God, is that which makes heaven to be heaven to the saints. All the glory of heaven would be but a poor low thing in the eye of a saint, had he not a direct and immediate sight of God there. In heaven all mediums shall be removed, all glasses shall be broken, and the glorified saint shall behold God with open face; all curtains being for ever withdrawn from between God and the soul. Good souls in heaven are like good angels, who are still beholding the face of God, Mat 18:10. As God is still a-looking upon them as the jewels of his crown, so they are still crying and looking upon God as their heaven, yea, as their great all, and that by a direct and immediate act of their souls. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, The sight and knowledge that they shall have of God in heaven, shall be permanent and constant. Now saints have a happy sight of God, and anon they have lost it; this hour they have a precious sight of God in the mount, and the next hour they have lost this sight. 'Behold, he that should comfort my soul stands afar off,' Lam 1:16; and 'he hath covered himself with a cloud, that our prayers cannot pass through,' Lam 3:44. Our visions of God here are

transient and vanishing. The visions, the glimpses of majesty and glory which Moses and Peter saw in the mount, were not permanent but transient; their sun was quickly clouded, and both of them soon after were found walking in the dark; and therefore well saith Augustine, *Beatitudo hic parari potest, possideri non potest*, happiness may be obtained here, but here we cannot have the plenary and take possession thereof. Oh but in heaven, our sight of God, our knowledge of God shall be permanent, it shall be lasting; there shall be no sin, no cloud, no mist, no curtain, to hinder us from a constant sight and vision of God; there we shall see God clearly, fully, eternally. The spouse's question, 'Did you see him whom my soul loves?' Song of Solomon 3:3, shall never be heard in heaven, because God shall be always in their eye, and still upon their hearts; nor Job's complaint, 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,' Job 23:8-9., Heaven would not be heaven, were it not always day with the soul; did not the soul live in a constant sight and apprehension of God, all the glory of heaven could not make a heaven to a glorified soul. But,

IV. Fourthly, As the best sight and knowledge of God is reserved till last, so the best and choicest presence of God and Christ is reserved till last; and this I shall thus make good.

(1.) First, In heaven saints shall have the greatest and the fullest presence of God. No man in this world hath so complete and full a presence of God but he may have a fuller; but in heaven the presence of God shall be so full and complete, as that nothing can be added to it to make it more complete. Sometimes sin, sometimes Satan, sometimes the world, sometimes resting in duties, sometimes the weakness of our graces, hinder us from enjoying a full presence of God here; but in heaven there shall be nothing to interpose between God and us; there shall be nothing to hinder us from enjoying a full and complete presence of God. It is this full presence of God that is the heaven of heaven, the glory of all our glory. An imperfect and incomplete presence of God in heaven would darken all the glory of that state. It is the full and perfect presence of God in heaven that is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory; and this you shall have. But,

(2.) Secondly, They shall have a soul-satisfying presence of God in heaven. They shall be so satisfied with the presence of God in heaven, that they shall say, We have enough, we have all, because we enjoy that presence that is virtually all, that is eminently all, that is all light, all life, all love, all heaven, all happiness, all comforts, all contents, &c: *Psa 17:15*, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' Though the spiritual and gracious presence of God with the saints in this world doth much cheer and comfort them, yet it doth not satisfy them. They are still crying but, More of this blessed presence! oh more of this presence! Lord, less money will serve, so we may but have more of thy presence! less of the creature will serve, so we may have but more of thy presence! *Psa 42:1-2*, *Psa 37:1-3*. As the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' *Gen 14:21*, so say gracious souls, Give us more and more of the presence of God, and let the men of the world take the world and divide it amongst themselves. Divine presence is very inflaming; a soul that hath but tasted the sweetness of it cannot but long for more of it; as those that had tasted of the grapes of Canaan longed to be in Canaan, and as the Gauls, who, when they had tasted of the sweet wine that was made of the grapes that grew in Italy, they were very eager after Italy, crying out, 'O Italy! Italy!' so precious souls that have experienced the sweetness of divine presence, they cannot be satisfied with a little of it, but in every prayer this is the language of their souls, Lord!

more of thy presence! and in every sermon they hear, Lord! let us have more of thy presence! and in every sacrament they receive, Lord! vouchsafe to us more of thy presence!

Nay, this gracious presence of God that they enjoy here makes them very earnest in their desires and longings after a celestial, a glorious presence of God and Christ in heaven, which presence alone can satisfy their souls. Look, as the espoused maid longs for the marriage day, the apprentice for his freedom, the captive for his ransom, the traveller for his inn, and the mariner for his haven, so do souls that are under the power and sweet of God's gracious presence long for to enjoy his glorious presence in heaven, which alone can fill and satisfy their immortal souls. As Monica, Austin's mother, a precious godly woman, who enjoyed much of the gracious presence of Christ, with her spirit she cried out. *Quid hic faciemus? cur non ocyus migramus? cur non hinc avolamus?* What do we here? why depart we not swifter? why fly we not hence? So saith another [Bernard], As what I have, if offered to thee, pleaseth not thee without myself, so, O Lord! the good things we have from thee, though they refresh us, yet they satisfy us not without thyself. Lord! I am willing to die, to have a further discovery of thyself. And so saith another [Augustine], Thou hast made us, O Lord, for thyself, and our hearts are unquiet till they come unto thee. And so when Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten. And saith another [Augustine], Let all the devils in hell beset me round, let fasting macerate my body, let sorrows oppress my mind, let pains consume my flesh, let watchings dry me, or heat scorch me, or cold freeze me; let all these, and what can come more, happen unto me, so I may enjoy my Saviour.

Austin wishing that he might have seen three things, Rome flourishing, Paul preaching, and Christ conversing with men upon the earth. Bede comes after, and correcting this last wish, saith, Yea, but let me see the King in his beauty, Christ in his heavenly kingdom; by all which you see that it is not a spiritual presence, but the glorious presence of God and Christ in heaven, that can satisfy the souls of the saints. It was a great mercy for Christ to be with Paul on earth, but it was a greater mercy, and a more satisfying mercy, for Paul to be with Christ in heaven, Php 1:23. They enjoy much who enjoy the presence of God on earth, but they enjoy more who enjoy the presence of God in heaven; and no presence below this presence can satisfy a believing soul. But,

(3.) Thirdly, As they shall enjoy a satisfying presence of God in heaven, so they shall enjoy a constant, a permanent presence of God in heaven. Here God comes and goes, he is often a removing court, but in heaven the King of glory will be always present: 1Th 4:7, 1Th 4:18, 'Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.' It is the constant presence of God in heaven, that makes a heaven of comfort to blessed souls. Should this sun ever set, should this presence ever fail, heaven would be as dark as hell, yea, heaven would be another hell. Here Jonah complains that he was cast out of God's presence, and the church complains, that he that should comfort her soul, stands afar off. No saint enjoys the gracious presence of God at all times alike. They that enjoy most of this presence may say of it, as Jacob spake of Laban's countenance, I see, said he, your Father's countenance is not towards me as before, Gen 31:5; so may they say, Oh we see, Oh we feel, that the presence of God is not with us as before! Oh what a warming, what a cheering, what a quickening, what an enlivening, what a comforting, what a melting, what an encouraging, what an assisting presence of God had we once!

Oh but it is not so now with us! we that used always to be upon Christ's knee, or in his arms, are now at a distance from him; he that used to lie day and night as a bundle of myrrh betwixt our breasts, hath now covered himself with a cloud, Song of Solomon 1:13. Oh we cannot see his face, we cannot hear his voice, as in the days of old! &c. But now in heaven saints shall enjoy a constant presence of God; there shall not be one moment to all eternity, wherein they shall not enjoy the glorious presence of God; and, indeed, it is this constant presence of God in heaven, that puts a glory upon all the saints' glory. Heaven, without this constant presence of God, would be but as a court without a king, or as the firmament without the sun. And thus you see that the best and choicest presence of God and Christ is reserved for heaven. But,

V. Fifthly, The perfection of grace is reserved for glory. Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; they are like the moon, which when it shineth brightest, hath a dark spot: 1Co 13:9-10, 'For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.' Here 'we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' Isa 64:6. Oh the stains, the spots, the blots, the blemishes that attend our choicest graces and services! Our best personal righteousness is stained with much unrighteousness, perfection of grace and holiness is reserved for heaven, Eph 5:25-27; Jude 1:24; Eph 4:13. In the work of conversion, God lays the foundation of grace in the souls of his people, but the putting on the top-stone is reserved for heaven. Grace here is but a king in the cradle, but in heaven it will be a king upon its throne. For the making this truth more fully out, I will only instance in the joy of the saints, and that thus:

[1.] First, The joy of the saints in heaven shall be pure joy. Here our joy is mixed with sorrow, our rejoicing with trembling, Psa 2:11: Mat 28:8, 'The women departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy.' This composition of two contrary passions is frequently found in the best hearts. Here the best have sorrow with their joy, water with their wine, vinegar with their oil, pain with their ease, winter with their summer, and autumn with their spring, &c. But in heaven, Rev 7:17, they shall have joy without sorrow, light without darkness, sweetness without bitterness, summer without winter, health without sickness, honour without disgrace, glory without shame, and life without death: Rev 21:4, 'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.' But,

[2.] Secondly, As they shall have in heaven pure joy, so they shall have in heaven plenitudinem gaudii, fulness of joy. Here all joy is at an ebb, but there is the flood of joy, there is fulness of joy: Psa 16:11, 'In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore.' Here shall be gaudium super gaudium, joy above joy, joy surmounting all joy. Here shall be such great joys, as no geometrician can measure; so many joys, as no arithmetician can number; and so wonderful, as no rhetorician can utter, had he the tongue of men and angels. Here shall be joy within thee, and joy without thee, and joy above thee, and joy beneath thee, and joy about thee. Joy shall spread itself over all the members of your bodies, and over all the faculties of your souls. In heaven, your knowledge shall be full, your love full, your visions of God full, your communion with God full, your fruition of God full, and your conformity to God full, and from thence will arise fulness of joy. If all the earth were paper, and all the plants of the earth were pens, and all the sea were ink, and if every man, woman, and child, had the pen of a ready writer, yet were they not able to express the thousandth part of those joys that saints shall have in heaven.² All the joy we have

here in this world, is but pensiveness to that we shall have in heaven; all pleasure here to that but heaviness, all sweetness here to that but bitterness. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The joy of the saints in heaven shall be a lasting joy, an uninterrupted joy. Here their joy is quickly turned into sorrow, their singing into sighing, their dancing into mourning. Our joy here is like the husbandman's joy in harvest, which is soon over, and then we must sow again in tears, before we can reap in joy. David's joy was soon interrupted: 'In my prosperity I said, I should never be removed; but thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Psa 30:6-7. Now David had the oil of joy and gladness, and by and by the spirit of heaviness and sadness: 'Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,' Psa 51:12. Jacob had much joy at the return of his sons with corn from Egypt; but this joy was soon interrupted by his parting with his dear Benjamin.

I might shew you this truth in other instances, as in Abraham, Job, and other saints; but surely there is no believer but finds that sometimes sin interrupts his joy, and sometimes Satan disturbs his joy, and sometimes afflictions and sometimes desertions eclipse his joy; sometimes the cares of the world, and sometimes the snares of the world, and sometimes the fears of the world, mars our joy; sometimes great crosses, sometimes near losses, and sometimes unexpected changes, turns a Christian's harping into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep.

Some say of Rhodes, that there is not one day in the year in which the sun shines not clearly on them. Surely there is hardly one day in the year, yea, I had almost said one hour in the day, wherein something or other doth not fall in to interrupt a Christian's joy. But now in heaven the joy of the saints shall be constant; there shall nothing fall in to disturb or to interrupt their joy: Psa 16:11, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand is pleasures for ever more.' Mark, for quality, there are pleasures; for quantity, fulness; for dignity, at God's right hand; for eternity, for evermore. And millions of years multiplied by millions, make not up one minute to this eternity of joy that the saints shall have in heaven. In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor no devil to take away your joy, nor no man to take away your joy: John 16:22, 'Your joy no man taketh from you.' The joy of the saints in heaven is never ebbing, but always flowing to all contentment. The joys of heaven never fade, never wither, never die, nor never are lessened nor interrupted. The joy of the saints in heaven is a constant joy, an everlasting joy, in the root and in the cause, and in the matter of it and in the objects of it. *Æterna erit exultatio, quæ bono lætatur æterno*, their joy lasts for ever whose objects remains for ever. Isa 35:10, 'And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joys upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.' In this world not only the joy of hypocrites and the joy of profane persons, but also the joy of the upright, is oftentimes 'as the crackling of thorns under a pot,' or as the blaze of a brush faggot, now all on a flame, and as suddenly out again; or as the beast ephemeron, that dieth on the day it is born; but the joy of believers in heaven shall be like the fire on the altar, that never went out. When Cæsar was sad, he used to say to himself, *Cogitate Cæsaremesse*, think thou art Cæsar; so when your hearts are sad and sorrowful, oh! then think of these everlasting joys that you shall have in heaven. But I must hasten; and therefore in the

VI. Sixth place, As the best joys, so the best society, the best company, is reserved till last. It is reserved till believers come to heaven: Heb 12:22-24, 'But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to

the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' Here erimus cives cœli, socii angelorum, cohæredes Christi, we shall be citizens of heaven, fellows of angels, co-heirs with Christ, citizens with saints, and of the household of God. O beata visio, videre Regem angelorum, sanctum sanctorum, Deum cœli, Rectorem terræ, Patrem viventium! Oh blessed sight, to behold the King of angels, the holy of holies, the God of heaven, the Ruler of the earth, the Father of the living! Woe to me, saith one, which am not where the holy saints be; for their life is out of all gun-shot and danger of death, their knowledge without error, their love without offence, and their joy without any annoy. The dignity and diversity of the inhabitants of heaven doth much set forth the glory of heaven. This earth, this world, is full of sinners, but heaven is full of saints; this world is full of men, but heaven is full of angels; this world is full of friends and enemies, but in heaven there shall be only friends and sons. Here the nobility and majesty of the guest casts a great deal of honour and splendour upon the royal palace where they meet. No company so noble, so sweet, so desirable, so delightful, so comfortable, so suitable as this.

[1.] First, Here all shall be of one mind, of one judgment. In heaven there shall be no discord, no wrangling, no quarrelling, no dividing. Here all shall think the same things, and speak the same things, and do the same things. Now, Turks and pagans can agree, and bears and lions, wolves and tigers, can agree; nay, a legion of devils can better agree in one body, than a handful of saints can agree in one city, in one nation, &c. There was a temple of Concord among the heathen; and yet how rare is it to find a temple of concord among them that are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Whilst there was a contest among the birds about a rose found in the way, a mischievous owl came in the night and carried the flower away; you know how to apply it. But now in heaven there shall be no heats, no contests, no debates, no disputes, but as the curtains of the tabernacle were all looped together, so all the saints in heaven shall be all looped together in one mind, in one judgment, and in one way.

[2.] Secondly, All the saints in heaven shall be of a sweet golden disposition. Here the different dispositions of saints doth much hinder that sweetness of communion which otherwise would be amongst them. Here some are of a sour disposition, and of a cross and rugged temper, but in heaven all saints shall be of a sweet, a soft, a silken disposition, which will exceedingly sweeten that royal communion. Here grace in a man of an untoward crooked disposition is like a brass ring upon a leprous finger; and grace in a man of a sweet disposition is like a gold ring upon an alabaster hand. Now in heaven all the saints shall be of a golden disposition, yea, of a God-like disposition, which is the sweetest, the noblest, the choicest. But,

[3.] Thirdly, In heaven the saints shall have a constant enjoyment of one another. As they shall ever be with the Lord, so they shall ever be one with another. Here they meet and part, but in heaven they shall meet and never part. Now it is their life to meet and their death to part; now it is their heaven to meet, and their hell to part; but in heaven they shall be always in one another's eye, in one another's arms, or upon one another's knees, 1Th 4:17-18.

Themistocles, having a piece of ground to sell, appointed the crier to proclaim, that whosoever would buy it, should have a good neighbour; the saints in heaven shall be always sure of good neighbourhood, they shall never want good company. In this world Abraham and Lot must live

asunder, but there they shall always live together. The cynic [Diogenes] of old was fain to look for an honest man with a candle, because of the scarcity of them; but heaven shall be always full of such saints, as shall shine as so many stars, yea, as so many suns in glory.

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, The saints shall have a real, a personal, a particular knowledge of one another in heaven. Here we know but a few saints, but in heaven we shall know all; in *cœlo nullus erit alienus*, there shall be no stranger in heaven. Now this truth I shall make good by some arguments brought to hand, and by the addition of others. Take them thus:—

(1.) First, Adam, when he was in his innocency, knew Eve to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, as soon as he saw her, though he had never seen her before, Gen 2:23. Now certainly our knowledge in heaven shall be more ample, full, and perfect, than ever Adam's was in innocency. Therefore without all peradventure, the saints shall know one another in heaven. Luther, the night before he died, discoursing with his Christian friends, the question was put, Whether the saints should know one another in heaven? Luther held the affirmative, and this was one of the reasons he gave to prove it, that Adam knew Eve as soon as ever he saw her, and that not by discourse, but by divine revelation, and so shall all the saints know one another in heaven. But,

(2.) Secondly, The disciples, Peter, James, and John, being in the mount at Christ's transfiguration, though they had but a taste, a glimpse of the glory of heaven, yet they knew Moses and Elias, though they were dead many hundred years before, Mat 17:1-4. Now if the disciples, in an unglorified condition, knew Moses and Elias, then certainly when saints shall be in a full glorified condition, they shall know them and all the rest of that royal family. Here they knew Moses from Elias, and Elias from Moses, whom they never saw before, and both from Christ; and therefore we need not doubt but in that state of blessedness, wherein God shall be all in all, and wherein we shall know as we are known, we shall have a particular and personal knowledge of one another. Chrysostom saith, that in heaven we shall point out the saints, and say, Lo, yonder is Peter, and that is Paul; lo, yonder is Abraham, the great believer, and yonder is Jacob, who as a prince prevailed with God; lo, yonder is Moses, who was the meekest man in all the world, and there is Job, that was the patientest man in all the world; lo, there is Joshua and Caleb, that followed the Lord fully, and there is Jeremiah, that was once in the dungeon; lo, there is Jonah, that was once in the whale's belly, and there is Daniel, that was once in the lions' den; lo, yonder is John the beloved disciple, that used to lie in the bosom of Christ; and there is Mary that hath chosen the better part. But,

(3.) Thirdly, The saints shall rise with the same bodies that now they lay down in the grave; and if so, then doubtless they shall know one another in heaven: the husband the wife, the wife the husband; the father the child, and the child the father; the pastor his people, and the people their pastor; the master his servant, and the servant his master. Now that the saints shall rise with the very same individual body is clear: Job 19:25-26, 'For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.' In these words we see that Job useth the word my, and my eyes shall behold;' as it were pointing to it with his finger, adding not only positively, but exclusively, this and no other. Job did fully believe that the same numerical body, at which he pointed, should rise again; and Paul saith, not a mortal, a corruptible body at large, but hoc, 'This

corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,' 1Co 15:53. The apostle did, as it were, lay his hand upon his own body; and then saith he, this corruptible body, and not another, this mortal, and not another, shall be raised when the trumpet sounds. It cannot stand with the unspotted justice and holiness of God, that one body should sow, and another body should reap that never sowed; that one body should labour, toil, sweat, suffer, and another body that hath done none of this should carry the reward. Tertullian saith, that he will pray that the same body may rise again, for the resurrection is not of another body, but of the same that falleth; not a new creation, but a raising up; the self-same body shall certainly rise again, else were it a raising up of a new, Rather than a raising again of the old. It cannot stand with equity and right, that one body should sin and another body should suffer. No righteous judge will suffer a victorious person to die, and another that never struck stroke to have the crown of his deservings. It is but justice that those very eyes that have dropped many a tear before God, should be wiped by God; I say those very eyes, and not another pair of new-made eyes; it is but justice that that very tongue that hath blessed God, should be blessed by God; it is but justice that those very hands that have been much in doing for Christ, and those very lips that have been much in praising of Christ, and those very backs that have been laded with many heavy burdens for Christ, and those very feet that have been in the stocks for Christ, and that have run in the ways of Christ, should at last be raised and crowned by Christ. And this truth you may see clear in the glorious resurrection of Christ from the dead; that very same body that was wounded, crucified, and slain, that very same body did rise again. Christ could very easily, if he had pleased, in three days, nay, in three hours, ay, in three moments, have cured his wounds, but he would not; to confirm his disciples, and to shew that he had the very same body which was wounded and crucified for their sins, for their sakes; and therefore he bids Thomas to reach his finger, and behold his hands, and to reach his hand to thrust it into his side, John 20:27; Luk 24:36-47; whereby Christ made it evident, that that very same body of his which was wounded, crucified, and buried, was raised, and not another; and therefore as in the head the same body which died rose again, so shall it be with all his members in the great day of the resurrection. Now seeing that we shall rise again with the very same individual or numerical bodies that we lay down in the grave, we need not question but that we shall know one another in heaven. But,

(4.) Fourthly, That knowledge which may most increase the joy and comfort of the saints, shall certainly be in heaven, but that is a perfect personal knowledge of each other; therefore there shall be a particular personal knowledge of one another in heaven; the husband shall know the wife, the wife the husband, the father the child, and the child the father, &c.

I have read a story of Austin, how that a widow grieving for the loss of her husband, to comfort her, he told her that it was but a short time that they were parted, and that of all persons she should enjoy her husband most in heaven; nay, saith he, thou shalt not only know thy husband, but all the elect shall know thee, and thou shalt know all them. The personal knowledge of the saints on earth, doth exceedingly increase our joy and comfort; it makes this wilderness to be a paradise. 'They that fear thee will be glad when they see me,' saith the Psalmist, Psa 119:74; yea Seneca, the heathen, saw so much excellency that morality put upon a man, that he saith, that ipse aspectus boni viri delectat, the very looks of a good man delight one. Ah! how often are the saints delighted, warmed, and gladdened by hearing well of other saints, whose faces they have never seen! and when God gives them the honour to see their faces, and to enjoy their persons, their

presence, oh how doth this advance their joy, and increase their comfort. What a heaven doth this make on this side heaven to their souls! Oh, then, what tongue can express, what heart can conceive, what pen can describe, the unspeakable joy and comfort that will be raised in the hearts of the saints, upon that perfect, particular, personal knowledge that the saints shall have one of another in heaven? Heaven would be but an uncomfortable place, if the saints there should be strangers one to another. The faces, the words, the ways, the works of strangers, are very little pleasing and delightful to us here; what would they then be in heaven? But,

(5.) Fifthly, The saints, in the great day of account, shall know the persons of wicked men, who shall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, and judged by Jesus Christ, and all his saints about him. This great day will be a declaration of the just judgment of God. In this great day, every wicked work, and every wicked worker, shall be brought to light; and indeed it would be but in vain to bring evil works to light, if the evil worker be not also brought to the light. In this great day the saints shall see and know Cain in his person, they shall be able to point at him, and say, Yonder stands that bloody Cain who slew his brother Abel, because he was more righteous than he. And there stands Pharaoh, the great oppressor of God's Israel, and he that stood it out against heaven itself; and look, there stands bloody Saul, who lost his crown, his kingdom, his soul, his all, by disobedience; and there is Haman, who was feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next; lo, there stands Pilate, that condemned Christ, and there is Judas that betrayed Christ. In this great day that word shall be made good, every man shall appear to account for the works that he hath done in his body, 2Co 5:10; so that both wicked works and wicked workers shall plainly appear before our Lord Jesus and all his saints, who with him shall judge the world. Now certainly, if the saints shall know the wicked in that great day, they shall then much more know one another; when they shall all sit as fellow-justices round about Jesus Christ the righteous judge, to pass a righteous sentence upon all unrighteous souls. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Christ tells the Jews that they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God. All the saints shall have communion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; they shall have communion with them, not only as godly men, but as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The phrase of seeing Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, doth doubtless import thus much, that they shall be known personally and distinctly from all other persons in the kingdom of heaven. Saints in heaven shall be able to point at Abraham, and say There is Abraham, that was the great pattern for believing; and there is Isaac, that was a sweet pattern for meditating; and there is Jacob, who had the honour and happiness of prevailing with God.³ The saints' happiness in heaven shall be greatly increased by mutual communion, and by their personal knowledge of one another in that blessed state. But,

(7.) Seventhly, and lastly, In heaven the saints shall know as they are known, 1Co 13:12, Exo 33:12. Now God knows all the saints, personally, particularly, corporally, yea, he knows them all by name; and so doubtless all the saints in heaven shall know one another personally, and by name, else how shall they know as they are known? Here in this world we know one another many times only by report, or by writing, or by face, but in heaven we shall know one another by name. So God knows us now, and so we shall know one another in heaven; and this is none of the least parts of glory, that we shall know one another in glory; yea, that we shall know one another personally, and by name; the serious consideration of which may much support us, and comfort us under the sad losses of our friends and relations in the Lord. But in the,

VII. Seventh and last place, As the best society is reserved till last, so the glorifying of our bodies is reserved till last. I shall a little hint unto you the glory and blessedness of the bodies of the saints when they shall all meet in heaven. I shall not stand upon the privative blessedness of glorified bodies, which consists in their freedom from all defects, deformities, diseases, and distempers which here they are subject to. Here our bodies stand in need of clothes to cover them, food to feed them, sleep to refresh them, physic to ease them, air to breath them, and houses to shelter them, from all which glorified bodies shall be free, Rev 7:16-17. But I shall only speak of the positive prerogatives and heavenly endowments that glorified bodies shall be invested with. As,

(1.) First, They shall be like the glorious body of Christ. Php 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according unto the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' Our bodies shall be as lovely and comely, as bright and glorious, as the body of Christ is. Chrysostom saith, that the bodies of the saints shall be septies clariora sole, seven times brighter than the sun. Certainly saints shall be as handsome-bodied and as comely-featured as Christ is. Though their bodies be sown in dishonour, yet they shall be raised in glory, 1Co 15:43. If Stephen's face did shine as if it had been the face of an angel, that is, bright and glorious, Acts 6:15; and if there were such a lustre and glory upon Moses his face, that the children of Israel were afraid to come near him, and he forced to put a veil upon it till he had done speaking with them, Exo 34:29-35; I say, if there were such a glory upon the face of these two mortals, Oh then! how will the faces and bodies of the saints glitter and shine when their bodies shall be made conformable to the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Mat 13:43. Certainly, as the light and glory of the sun doth far exceed the light of the least twinkling star, so much and more shall the glory of the saint's bodies excel that glory and splendour that was upon the faces of Moses and Stephen. The bodies of the saints in heaven shall be surpassingly comely, well-favoured, beautiful, and amiable. Plutarch, in the life of Demetrius, saith, That he was so passing fair of face and countenance, as no painter was able to draw him. I am sure I am no ways able to paint out the beauty and glory that shall be upon the bodies of the saints in that day of glory, wherein the saints shall shine as so many suns. But,

(2.) Secondly, Their bodies shall in a kind be spiritual: 1Co 15:44, 'It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' Their bodies shall be spiritual, non substantiæ, sed qualitatum respectu, not in regard of substance, but state and condition. Spiritual in the text is not opposed to visible, but to natural; for their bodies, though in a sense they are spiritual, yet they shall be as visible as the glorious body of Christ. When I say their bodies shall be spiritual, you must not think that I mean that their bodies shall be turned into spirits. Oh no! for they shall keep their bodily dimensions, and be true bodies still. Look, as in change of old and broken vessels, the matter is the same, only the colour is fresher and brighter, and the fashion newer and better, so in the day of glory, our bodies shall be the same for substance that now they are; they shall retain the same flesh, blood, and bones, and the same figure and members, that now is, only they shall be overlaid or clothed with spiritual and heavenly qualities and prerogatives; their bodies shall be glorious, of a due and comely proportion, of an exquisite feature and stature, of a lively colour, of cheerful aspect, and full of beauty and glory, splendour and favour. Now the bodies of the saints shall be spiritual, first, in respect of their full, perfect, and perpetual freedom from all heats, colds, hungerings, thirstings, sickness, weakness, wants. Here one cries out, Oh my back, my back! another, Oh my belly, my belly! with the prophet, Hab 3:16;

another, Oh my head, my head! with the Shunamite's son, 2Ki 4:19; another, Oh my son, my son! as David for Absalom, 2Sa 18:33; another, Oh my father, my father! with Elisha, 2Ki 2:12. Every one here hath some ailment or other, some want or other, some grief or other, which fills his eyes with tears and his heart with sorrow; but when these natural bodies, these animal or souly bodies, shall be made glorious, then they shall be fully and perpetually freed from all manner of miseries and calamities; they shall be as the angels, not subject to any sickness, weakness, or wants: Rev 7:16-17, 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' Rev 21:4, 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away;' and in this respect their bodies may be said to be spiritual. But, secondly, they may be said to be spiritual in respect of their spiritual agility and nimbleness. Now, our bodies are gross, dull, and heavy in their motion: and by this the soul is many times hindered in its lively operations; for when the soul would mount up on high, and busy herself about eternal objects, the body, like a lump of lead, keeps it down; but now, in this glorious state, the body shall put off all grossness, dulness, and heaviness, and be exceeding agile, light, and apt to motion, far beyond the swiftest bird that flies, Isa 40:31; 1Th 4:17.

I know not by what to set forth the agility of glorified bodies; a post, a bird, a torrent, are too short to set forth their agility.

Luther saith, that a glorified body shall move up and down like a thought. And Austin saith, The body will presently be here and there, where the soul would have it. Certainly the speed and motion of glorified bodies will be extraordinary and incredible. A glorified saint desiring to be in such or such a place a thousand miles off or more, he will be there in such an incredible short time, that one calls it imperceptible, hardly to be discerned: in which respect their bodies may be said to be spiritual. But, thirdly and lastly, they may be said to be spiritual, because of that perfect, full, absolute, and complete subjection that they shall delightfully and perpetually yield to the Spirit of God. Now they often vex and grieve, affront and fight against the Spirit of God. The members of our bodies, as well as the faculties of our souls, do often make war upon the Spirit of grace, as the apostle fully shews in that Rom 6:1-23. 'The spirit often lusts against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit,' Gal 5:17. Now the body says to the soul, 'Be not righteous over-much; neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?' Ecc 7:16. Cyprian readeth this verse thus, *Noli esse multum Justus, et noli argumentari plus quam oportet*, be not just over-much, and do not argue and dispute more than is meet. The body is often apt to say to the soul, Thou art just over-much, O soul; and thou dost argue and dispute against this sin and that way, and this comfort and that enjoyment, more than is meet; and the soul seems to answer, Ecc 7:17, 'Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?' But now in heaven the bodies of the saints shall be fully, perfectly, and delightfully, under the command, conduct, and guidance of the spirit; and therefore may truly be said to be spiritual. As the spirit serving the flesh may not unfitly be called carnal, saith one, so the body obedient to the soul may rightly be termed spiritual. Glorified bodies are spiritual, not in their essence, but in condition and quality, as being fully and perpetually under the government of the Spirit. Now the tongue grieves the Spirit, and now the deaf ear is turned to the voice of the Spirit, and now the eye is rolling, when

it should be reading the things of the Spirit; and now the feet are wandering when they should be walking in the ways of the Spirit; and now the hand is idle that should be diligent in the work of the Spirit, Eph 4:29-31, Isa 63:10. Oh! but now in heaven, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hands, the feet, shall be all brought into an angelical, willing, and delightful obedience to the Spirit; upon which account glorified bodies may truly be termed spiritual. But,

(3.) Thirdly, and lastly, As their bodies shall be spiritual, so they shall be immortal, they shall be incorruptible, 1Co 15:42, 1Co 15:54. Here these elementary bodies of ours, by reason of their earthly and dreggish composition, are subject to mortality and corruption; and indeed man is so poor a piece, that he no sooner begins to live, but he begins to die; his whole life is but a lingering death. Death every hour lies at the door; this sergeant constantly attends all men, in all places, companies, changes, and conditions. Petrarch telleth of one, who being invited to dinner the next day, answered, *Ego a multis annis crastinum non habui*, I have not had a morrow for this many years. Many dangers, many deaths, every hour surround these lives of ours. Here, saith one, *accedimus*, we enter into the world; *succeedimus*, we succeed one another in the world; *decedimus*, we depart all out of the world. Oh! but in heaven we shall have immortal bodies! Luk 20:36, 'Neither can they die any more, and are equal to the angels.' By the power, presence, and goodness of God, their bodies shall be so perfumed and embalmed, that they shall never corrupt, nor be subject to mortality. Manna, by a divine power, was kept many hundred years in the golden pot without putrefying or corrupting, and so shall the glorified bodies of the saints be preserved and kept pure and immortal. The immortality of glorified bodies shall far excel that of Adam's in paradise, for they shall be free from all possibility of dying; for they shall be perfectly and perpetually freed from all corruptible and corrupting elements. Glorified bodies shall have no seeds of corruption in them, nor any corruptive, harmful, malignant, or afflictive passion attending them. Adam in his noble estate was in a possibility of dying, but the saints in their glorified condition are above all possibility of dying. This is a happiness that Adam could not reach to in his state of integrity; the greater obligation lies upon all that shall come to glory.

It is reported of the Duke of Bullone [Bouillon] and his company, that when they went to Jerusalem, as soon as they saw the high turrets they gave a mighty shout, that even made the earth ring, crying out, 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem! so when the saints shall all meet in the heavenly Jerusalem, oh how will they make even heaven to ring again, crying out, Immortality! immortality! immortality! And thus, I suppose, I have clearly and fully made good that great truth, to wit, that the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven. I shall now give you a brief account of the reasons of this point; and then come to the application and bringing home of this precious truth to our own souls. Now the reasons of the point are these.

Reason 1. First, Because it is his good will and pleasure to reserve the best things for his people till last: Luk 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock' (there are two diminutives in the Greek), 'for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' As it is God's good pleasure to give you a kingdom, so it is his good pleasure not to give you the kingdom till last, 2Ti 4:7-8. Edward the Sixth could not give his kingdom away; if he could, it had not come as it did to Queen Mary; but our heavenly Father doth now give a kingdom of grace, and will at last also give a kingdom of glory, to them that walk uprightly, Psal 84:11. But,

Reason 2. Secondly, That he may keep the hearts of his people in a longing and in a waiting frame, for the enjoyment of those great and glorious things that he hath reserved for them till last: Heb 13:14, 'Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' The greater and better the things are that are laid up for us, the more we should long and wait for the happy enjoyment of them. Abraham waited long for a son, and Hannah waited long for a child, and Joseph waited long for his advancement, and David waited long for the crown, the kingdom; and they had all a most happy issue. The longer we wait, the better we shall speed; as that emperor's son said, the longer the cooks are preparing the meat, the better will be the cheer; meaning, the longer he stayed for the empire, the greater it would be. The, longer we wait for happiness, the more at last we shall have of happiness. The great things of eternity are worth nothing, if they are not worth a longing and a waiting for. But,

Reason 3. Thirdly, God hath reserved the best and greatest things for his people till last, and that because else they were above all men in the world the most miserable: 1Co 15:19, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' No men usually out of hell are so much afflicted, tempted, oppressed, scorned, despised, and neglected as they are. Here they have their hell, they had need of a heaven to come; here they are clothed with shame, they had need hereafter to be crowned with honour, or else they would be the unhappiest men in all the world; here the life of a believer is filled multis et multiplicibus miseriis, with many and multiplied miseries; with miseries of body, with miseries of mind. Multiplied miseries attend him, at bed and board, at home and abroad. Every condition is full, and every relation is full, of miseries and calamities; and therefore one saith well, Quomodo potest amari hæc vita, tantas habens amaritudines? Quomodo etiam dicitur vita, tot generans mortes? How can this life be loved, which is so full of loathsome bitterness? Yea, how can it be called a life, which bringeth forth so many deaths? Yet he is a fool, saith one,³ that looketh upon a godly man under trouble and sorrow, and thinketh him to be unhappy, because, as a fool, attendit quid patitur, et non attendit quid illi servetur, he attendeth what he suffereth, and doth not attend what is reserved for him. If the best things were not reserved for believers till last, they should have the saddest portion of all men, viz., a hell here, and a hell hereafter; and so sinners should have but one hell, and saints two, which would be blasphemy to affirm. But,

Reason 4. Fourthly, God reserves the best things for his people till last, for the greater terror and horror, conviction and confusion of wicked and ungodly persons, who now revile them, and judge them to be the unhappiest men in all the world. Oh! but when the Lord shall in the sight of all the world gloriously own them, and put royal robes upon their backs, and golden crowns upon their heads, then, Oh! what a shame, what covering of the face, what terror, what trembling, with Haman, will possess the hearts of wicked men. The great honour and glory that God will put upon his people at last, will be to wicked men what the handwriting upon the wall was to Belshazzar, Dan 5:1-8. Oh! it will make their countenance to change, their thoughts to be troubled, the joints of their loins to be loosed, and their knees dashed one against another. Now that word shall be eminently made good: 'He setteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock. The righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth,' Psa 107:41-42. Oh! what trouble of mind, what horror of conscience, what distraction and vexation, what terror and torment, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, what dashing of knees, what gnashing of teeth, will there be among the wicked, when they

shall see the saints in all their splendour, dignity, and glory! 'When they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and themselves shut out for ever,' Luk 13:28. Now shall the wicked lamentingly say, Lo! these are the men that we counted fools, mad men, and miserable. Oh but now we see that we were deceived and deluded! Oh that we had never despised them! Oh that we had never reproached them! Oh that we had never trampled upon them! Oh that we had been one with them! Oh that we had imitated them! Oh that we had walked as they, and done as they, that so we might now have been as happy as they! Oh but this cannot be! Oh this may not be! Oh this shall never be! therefore Oh that we had never been born! Oh that now we might be unborn! Oh that we might be turned into a bird, a beast, a toad, a stone! Oh that we were anything but what we are! or, Oh that we were nothing! Oh that now our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we might so die, that we may not eternally die! but it is now too late. Oh we see that there is a reward for the righteous! and we shall suddenly feel, that by all the contempt that we have cast upon these glorious shining saints, whose splendour and glory doth now darken the very glory of the sun, Dan 12:3; we have but treasured up wrath against the day of wrath, Rom 2:4-7; we have but added fuel to those burning coals, to those everlasting flames, in which we must now lie for ever, Psa 140:10. But,

Reason 5. Fifthly, The Lord hath reserved the best things for his people till they come to heaven, that so he may save his honour and secure his glory. Would it make for the honour and glory of God, to put his children, his servants, upon doing hard things, and upon suffering great things, and at last to put them off with nothing? Surely it would not; and therefore the Lord, to save the honour of his great name, hath reserved the best wine till last, the best and choicest favours for his people till they come to heaven, John 2:10. The sweetest honey lies at the bottom. I cannot see how God should save his glory, if he should put his children always upon sowing, and never suffer them to reap, 2Co 9:6-7; that they should still be sowing in tears, if at last they should not reap in joy, Psa 126:4-6. Men that love but their names and honour in the world, will not be served for nought, and will God? Will God, who is infinitely more tender of his name and honour, than any created being can be of theirs? Isa 42:8, Isa 48:11.

I have read of Alphonsus, a king of Spain, who when a knight falling into want and being arrested for debt, there was a petition to the king to succour him, Ay, said the King, if he had spent his estate in mine, or in the commonwealth's service, it were reason he should be provided for by me, or the commonwealth. Men of honour will provide for them that spend themselves in their service; and will not God? Will not God do as much, yea more, for them that spend themselves in his service? Surely he will, Heb 11:16. 'But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.' As if he had said, Had not God prepared for them a city, had he not made some blessed provision for them, who left so much for him, who did so much for him, and who. suffered such great and bitter things for him, they might well have complained that they had but a bad bargain of it, and that God was a hard master; and so God should have been ashamed. Had not God made such happy and blessed provision for them who had run through so many dangers and deaths for his sake, had he not provided and laid up for them, according to his promise, and suitable to his greatness and goodness, his dignity and glory, it would have put God to the blush, to speak after the manner of men. I have read concerning Dionysius of Sicily, that being extremely delighted with a minstrel that sung well, he promised to give—him a great reward, and that raised the fancy of the man, and

made him play better; but when the music was done, and the man waited for his reward, the king dismissed him empty, telling him that he should carry away as much of the promised reward as himself did of the music, and that he had paid him sufficiently with the pleasure of the promise for the pleasure of his song. But it will not stand with the honour of the King of kings to put off his servants so poorly, whose prayers, praises, and tears, have been most sweet and delightful music to him; no, he will do like himself at last, and that his children know. It troubled a martyr at the stake, that he was going to a place where he should ever be a-receiving wages, and do no more work. But,

Reason 6. Sixthly, That he may make his children temptation-proof, he hath reserved for them the best things till they come to heaven. The great things that God hath reserved for believers in heaven, was that which made those worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, temptation-proof; as you may see in that Heb 10:33-35, and throughout Heb 11:1-40. The pleasures, the treasures, the dignities and glories that are reserved for believers in heaven, make them bravely and nobly to resist all those temptations that they meet with from a tempting world or a tempting devil.

Austin blessed God, that his heart and the temptation did not meet together. By the precious things that are reserved for believers in heaven, God keeps their hearts and temptations asunder. When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, saith he, *Pecuniam, da quæ permaneat ac continuo duret, gloriam, quæ semper floreat*, give me money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish. Satan made a bow of Job's wife, of his rib, as Chrysostom speaks, and shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have shot him to the heart, 'Curse God and die;' but Job's sincerity and integrity, and his hopes of immortality and glory, was a breastplate that made him temptation-proof. Ah Christians! do not you daily find, that the glorious things reserved for you in heaven, do mightily arm you against all the temptations that you meet with on earth? I know you do. But,

Reason 7. Seventhly, God hath reserved the best things for his people, till they come to heaven, because they are not in this mortal and frail condition able to bear, they are not able to take in the glory that is reserved for them, 2Co 4:17. Glory is such a great, such an exceeding, such an excessive, such an eternal weight, that no mortal is able to bear it. We must have better and larger hearts, and we must have stronger and broader backs, before we shall be capable of bearing that excellent, exceeding, and excelling weight of glory that is reserved in heaven for us. Nay, glory is such a weight, that when the saints shall enter into it, if then the Lord should not put under his everlasting arms and bear them up by his almighty power, it were impossible they should be able to bear it. In this our frail mortal state, we are not able to bear the appearance, the presence, the glory of one angel.

Ah! how much less then are we able to bear the weight of all that glory that is reserved for us, and of which I have given you some glimpses in what I have already said. But,

Reason 8. Eighthly and lastly, The Lord hath reserved the best things for his people till they come to heaven, because while they are in this world they are under age. They are not come to full age. Here saints are in their non-age, but when they come to heaven, then they come to their full age, and then they shall have the inheritance by the Father of mercies freely and fully settled upon them. Children in their non-age are under tutors and governors, but when they come to age, then

is the inheritance settled upon them: so here, it is not for us in our non-age, to mount into the clouds, to pierce this fulness of light, to break into this bottomless depth of glory, or to dwell in that unapproachable brightness.³ This is reserved till we come to full age. And thus I have given you the reasons why God hath reserved the best and greatest things for his people till they come to heaven. We shall now come to the use and application of this point to our own souls, remembering that close application is the very life and soul of teaching. And as a man doth not attain to health by reading of Galen, or knowing Hippocrates his aphorisms, but by the practical application of them to remove the disease; so no man will attain to true happiness by hearing, reading, or commending what I have spoke or writ, but by a close application and bringing home of all to his own soul. The opening of a point is the drawing of the bow; but the application of the point is the hitting of the mark, the white; and therefore,

(1.) First, If God hath reserved the best things for believers till last, then by the rule of contraries the worst things are reserved for unbelievers till last. Here wicked men have their heaven, hereafter they shall have their hell. The time of this life is the day of their joy and triumph; and when this short day is ended, everlasting lamentations, mournings, and woes follow. Luk 16:22-25, 'The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

Ah sinners! sinners! that day is hastening upon you, wherein you shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, pain without pleasure, and torments without end: Psa 11:6, 'Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.' Psa 140:10, 'Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.'

Chrysologus, upon that passage in the Gospel, that the angels carried away poor Lazarus into Abraham's bosom, and hell swallowed up the rich glutton, saith: Ecce fratres, mors pauperis totam vitam divitis vicit, et elatio sola pauperis totam divitis pompam transcendit et ghriam. Behold! brethren, the very death of the poor man excelleth the whole life of the wicked, and the carrying away only of the poor man transcendeth all the pomp and glory of the rich man.

Charon, in Lucian, requesting Mercurius to shew him Jupiter's palace above, How! says Mercurius, that such a caitiff as thou, whose conversation hath been altogether with black shades and impure ghosts, shouldst set thy foot in that pure place of light? What a dishonour and derogation were that to the place!

Ah, sinners! sinners! what a dishonour would it be to God, to Christ, to angels, to saints, to heaven, if such wretches as you are should be admitted into that royal palace, that heavenly paradise, above.

Ah! your portion is below, and you are already adjudged to those torments that are endless, easeless, and remediless, where the worm never dies, and the fire never goes out, Rev 14:11. The day is coming upon you, sinners, when all your sweet shall be turned into bitter; all your glory

into shame; all your plenty into scarcity; all your joys into sorrows; all your recreations into vexations; and all your momentary comforts into everlasting torments.

Now you reign as kings, you look big, you speak proudly, you carry it highly; you walk contemptuously; but there is an after-reckoning a-coming that will appal you, and torture you for ever. The time of this life is your summer; but there is a winter a-coming upon you that shall never have end. God could not be just if your worst were not yet to come; neither could he be just if the saints' best were not yet to come. The time of this life is the saints' hell, and the sinners' heaven; but the next life will be the saints' heaven, and the sinners' hell. But,

(2.) Secondly, Then patiently wait for the enjoyment of those great things that are reserved for you in heaven. Men will wait, and wait long, for some outward good; and will not you for the best and greatest good? Are there not many things that speak out the greatness of that glory that is reserved for you? as the price that Christ hath paid for it, and the great and glorious things by which it is shadowed out to us? as Canaan, Jerusalem, paradise; and the dignity of the inhabitants, there being none admitted under the degree of a king; and the great and glorious earnest of the Spirit; and the great care, cost, and charge that God hath been at to prepare and fit souls for the enjoyment of it. What do all these things speak out, but that the glory that is reserved for believers is great glory; and is it not then worth a waiting for? Let not Satan's slaves wait more patiently for a few ounces of gold, than you do for the kingdom of heaven.

Again, as the things reserved for you in heaven are great, and therefore wait, so they are certain and sure; and therefore wait, oh patiently wait for the enjoyment of them! Heb 6:16-19. When the beggar at the door is sure of speeding, he will wait patiently, he will wait unweariedly. The glorious things reserved in heaven for you, they are made sure and certain to you by word, by covenant, by oath, by blood, by the earnest, by the first-fruits, and by Christ's taking possession of them in your rooms, in your steads, Eph 2:6, John 14:1-4; therefore patiently wait for the enjoyment of them. O Christians! it is but a very short time that God hath proposed to be between grace and glory, between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown; between our right to the heavenly inheritance, and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. Ah, Christians! bear up bravely, bear up sweetly, bear up patiently, for it will be but a little, little, little while, before he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb 10:35-37, ■τι γ[■]ζ μικξ[■]ν ■σον ■σον; and when he doth come, he will not come vacuis manibus, empty-handed; no, when he comes, he brings his reward with him, Rev 22:12; when he comes, he will reward thee for every prayer that thou hast made, and for every sermon that thou hast heard, and for every tear that thou hast shed, and for every hour that thou hast patiently waited; and therefore wait patiently till the promised crown be set upon thy head. But,

(3.) Thirdly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, oh then, let no believer envy nor be troubled at the outward prosperity and felicity of the men of the world. What is darkness to light, chaff to wheat, dross to gold, gall to honey, pebbles to pearls, earth to heaven? No more is all the glory and felicity that wicked men have in possession to those great and glorious things that saints have in reversion; and therefore, O believer, let not wicked men's prosperity be thy calamity!

There is a truth in that saying of Chrysostom, *præstat serpentem provolutum in visceribus habere, quam invidium*, a man were better have a serpent tumbling in his bowels than envy; for if a serpent

have food given it, it will not feed upon a man; but the more food is given to envy, the more it gnaweth him in whose bowels it is. It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious. Envy, it tortures the affections, it vexes the mind, it inflames the blood, it corrupts the heart, it wastes the spirits; and so it becomes man's tormentor and man's executioner at once. Take heed, Christians, take heed of an envious eye, for that usually looks upon other men's enjoyments through a multiplying glass, and so makes them appear greater and bigger than they are; and this increases torment, this often makes a hell.

It is reported of Panormitanus, that a question being asked before king Frederick, what was good for the eye-sight, and the physicians answering some one thing, some another, Sannizarius answered, that envy was very good; at which the company smiling, he gave this reason for it, because that envy makes all things appear bigger than they are. Ah, Christians! envy is a serpent, a devil, that should be abhorred and shunned more than hell itself. O Christian! with what heart canst thou envy wicked men's prosperity and worldly felicity, if thou dost but look up to thine own glory, and seriously consider of their sad reckoning and future calamity? Dives was one day rustling in his purple robes, riches, and worldly glory, and the next day he was rolling and roaring in the flames of hellish misery; and how soon this may be the portion of those thou enviest, who can tell? and therefore rather pity them than envy them. None need more prayer and pity than those that want hearts, than those that have neither skill nor will to pity themselves, to pray for themselves; and such are wicked men under their outward prosperity and worldly glory, Job 21:7-20. But,

(4.) Fourthly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, oh then let all believers be contented, though they have but short commons in this world! He that is an heir to a great estate, though in his non-age he be kept short, yet this comforts and contents him, that though things are now short with him, it will be but a little while before the inheritance is settled upon him, and this makes him bear up sweetly and contentedly under all his wants and straits, Php 4:12-14, 1Ti 6:6-8. Ah, Christians! Christians! though for the present your wants may be many, and God may cut you short in many desirable enjoyments, yet it will not be long before the crown, the inheritance, be fully settled upon you, and then you shall never know what want means more, what short commons means more; therefore be content with your present condition, with your present portion, though it be never so little, never so mean: Heb 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have' (or as the Greek hath it, τοις παζοντιν, the things that are present). At this time the Hebrews had been plundered of all their goods, and goodly things, chap. 10:34, and so had nothing, or that which is as good as nothing, left, yet they must be content with present things. When they had changed their raiment for rags, their silver for brass, their plenty for scarcity, their houses for holes and caves, and dens, yet then they must be contented with present things. When men cannot bring their means to their minds, then they must bring their minds to their means, and, when this is done, then a little will serve the turn. A very little will serve to carry a man through his pilgrimage, and to bear his charges till he comes to his home, till he comes to heaven; a little will serve nature, less will serve grace, though nothing will serve a man's lusts. I have read of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, being with him, asked him whether he was not much troubled and afflicted for want of his sight? Oh yes! said Didymus, the want of my sight is a very great grief and affliction to me; whereupon Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given thee the excellency of

an angel, of an apostle, and art thou troubled for the want of that which rats, and mice, and brute beasts have? And so Augustine, upon the 12th Psalm, brings in God rebuking a discontented Christian thus: What is thy faith? have I promised thee these things? what! wert thou made a Christian that thou shouldst flourish here in this world? So may I say to Christians that are discontented, disquieted, and disturbed about the want of this or that worldly comfort: Why are you troubled about the want of this or that worldly enjoyment? you that have an interest in God, an interest in the covenant, a right to Christ, a title to heaven; you that have so much in hand and more in hope; you that have so much in expectation and so much in reversion; why do you sit sighing for the want of this outward comfort, and complaining for the want of that outward contentment, considering what great and glorious things are reserved in heaven for you? It was said of the great Duke of Guise, that though he was poor, as to his present possessions, yet he was the richest man in France in bills, bonds, and obligations; because he had engaged all the noblemen in France unto himself by advancing of them. A Christian, though a Lazarus at Dives's door; yet, in respect of his propriety² in God and his interest in the covenant, he is the richest and the happiest man in all the world; and why then should he not be content. Well! remember, Christian, that the shortest cut to riches and all worldly contentments is by their contempt. It is great riches, it is the best riches not to desire riches; and God usually gives him most that covets least. When two monks came to king William Rufus to buy an abbot's place, and endeavoured to outbid each other, a third monk that came to wait on them was asked what he would give, he answered, Not a penny; I came to wait on him that shall have the place; upon which the king gave the waiter the place. Just so doth God often carry it towards his people in this world; they that seek it least shall have most. Solomon begs a wise heart, and God gives him that, and abundance of gold and silver and honour, and what not, into the bargain. The best way to have much, is to be contented with a little.

I have read of Dionysius [Plutarch], how he took away from one of his nobles almost his whole estate, and seeing him nevertheless continue as cheerful and well contented as ever, he gave him that again, and as much more. This is a common thing with God, as Job and many thousands can witness; the best way to have a pound is to be contented with a penny, the best way to have hundreds is to be contented with pounds, and the best way to have thousands is to be contented with hundreds. Ah! thou unquiet and discontented Christian, canst thou read over that saying of Cato, a heathen, and not blush? Si quid est quo utar, utor: si non, scio quis sum; mihi vitio vertunt, quia multis egeo; et ego illis, quia nequeunt egere. I have neither house, nor plate, nor garments of price in my hands; what I have, I can use; if not, I can want it; some blame me, because I want many things, and I blame them, because they cannot want. How many thousand Christians in these knowing and professing days might this heathen put to the blush! O Christians! Christians! let the remembrance of the crown, the kingdom, the treasures, pleasures, and glories that are reserved in heaven for you, make you bear up sweetly and contentedly under all your outward wants in this world. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then make not a judgment of the saints' condition by their present state. If you do, you will 'condemn the generation of the just.' What though they are now in rags, it will not be long before they are clothed in their royal robes; what though they are now abased, it will not be long before they shall in the sight of all the world be highly advanced; what though they are now under many wants, it will not

be long before they shall be filled with all fulness; what though they are now under many trials and afflictions, yet it will not be long before all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, and their sighing turned into singing, 'and everlasting joys shall be upon their heads;' and therefore do not judge of their condition by their present state. If you will needs be judging, then look that you judge righteous judgment, John 7:24; then look more at the latter end of a Christian than the beginning. Remember the patience of Job, Jas 5:11, and consider what end the Lord made with him. Look not upon Lazarus lying at Dives's door, but lying in Abraham's bosom; look not to the beginning of Joseph, who was so far from his dream, that the sun and moon should reverence him, that for two years he was cast where he could neither see sun nor moon; but behold him at last made ruler over all Egypt, and reigning fourscore years like a king, Gen 37:9, Gen 41:40-46. Look not upon David, as there was but a step between him and death, nor as he was envied by Saul, and hated by his courtiers; but behold him seated in his royal throne, where he reigned forty years gloriously, and died in his bed of honour, and his son Solomon, and his nobles about him. When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, it was with gold and ear-rings, Exo 11:1-10; and when the Jews were dismissed out of Babylon, it was with great gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezr 1:1-11. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace,' Psa 37:37. Whatever the wants, the straits, the troubles, the trials of the saints are in this world, yet their end shall be peace, their end shall be glorious; the best things are reserved for them till last; and therefore do not, oh do not judge of their condition by their present state, but rather judge of them by their future condition, by that glory that is reserved for them in heaven. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If the greatest and choicest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, why, then, let believers keep up in their own souls a lively, hopeful expectation of enjoying these great and glorious things that are laid up for them. The keeping up of those hopes will be the keeping up of your hearts; the keeping up of these hopes will be the bettering of your hearts; the keeping up of these hopes will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; the keeping up of these hopes will make you bear much for God, and do much for God. When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, *Spem majorum et meliorum*, the hope of greater and better things.

Ah! Christians, there is no work so high and noble, there is no work so hard and difficult, there is no work so low and contemptible, but the hopes of the great things reserved in heaven for you will put you upon it.

Galen speaks of a fish called *uranoscopus*, which hath but one eye, and that is so placed that it is always looking upwards towards heaven; and so should a Christian's eye of hope be always fixed on God, on promises, on heaven, on the inheritance of the saints in light, and on all those precious and glorious things that are laid up for them in that royal palace where Christ is all in all. A devout pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, and by the way visiting many brave cities, with their rare monuments, and meeting with many friendly entertainments, would often say, I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem, this is not Jerusalem; so saith a Christian in the midst of all his worldly delights, comforts, and contents, oh these are not the delights, the comforts, the contents that my soul looks for, that my soul expects and hopes to enjoy. I look and hope for choicer delights, for sweeter comforts, for more satisfying contents, and for more durable riches.

Ah, saints! ah, souls! Shall the great heirs of this world live upon their hopes, and keep up their hopes, that their inheritances shall in time be settled respectively upon them? and will not you, will not you live upon your hopes, and keep up your hopes of enjoying all the treasures, pleasures, and glories that are reserved in heaven for you? A Christian's motto always is, or always should be, *Spero meliora*, I hope for better things; I hope for better things than any the world can give to me, or than any that Satan can take from me. A Christian is always rich in hope, though he hath not always a penny in hand. But,

(7.) Seventhly, If there be such great and glorious things reserved for you in heaven, then do nothing unworthy of your dignity, nor of that glory that is laid up for you. Your calling is high, your honour is great, your happiness is matchless; you have so much in promises, so much in expectation, and so much in reversion, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be expressed; therefore, do not you stoop to sin, nor bow down to Satan, nor comply with the world. When Alexander was moved to run with some persons of inferior rank, he refused, saying, It was not fit for Alexander to run in a race with any but princes and nobles.

Ah, Christians! are you not more nobly born? are you not better bred? have you not more royal hopes than to stoop to lust, or to do as the men of the world do?

Antigonus, being invited to dinner where a notable harlot was to be present, asked counsel of Menedemus, his tutor, what he should do, and how he should carry himself? His tutor bade him remember that he was a prince, that he was the son of a king, and this would preserve him.

Ah! Christians! nothing will preserve you from being base, like the remembrance of your present dignity, and of that future glory that is laid up for you.

Ah, Christians! you are kings elected, you are heirs-apparent of a crown, of a glorious crown, of a weighty crown, of an incorruptible crown, of an everlasting crown of glory! Oh why then should you be crowning yourselves with rosebuds? why then should you take up in the low enjoyments and poor contentments of this world?

It was a generous speech of that heathen Themistocles, who, coming by a thing that seemed to be a pearl in the dark, scorned to stoop for it, but bade another stoop, saying, Stoop thou for this pearl, for thou art not Themistocles. Oh let the men of the world stoop and take up the world, oh let them whose practice speaks them out to be of the world, and to be worshippers of that golden calf, the world, let these dance about it, bow down to it, and take up in it; but let the heirs of heaven divinely scorn to bow down to earth, or to take up in it, or to be much taken with it. It was a good saying of Seneca, *Major sum, et ad majora natus, quam ut mancipium sim corporis mei*, I am too great, and born to greater things than that I should be as a slave to my body.

Ah, Christians! you are too great, and born to greater things, than that you should be slaves to your bodies, or slaves to your lusts, or slaves to the world; can you seriously consider of the great things that are reserved in heaven for you, and not set your feet upon those things that the men of the world set their hearts upon? Can you look up to your future glory, and not blush to be taken with the glory of this world?

What Alexander the Great said to one of his captains that was called Alexander, *Recordare nominis Alexandri*, remember the name of Alexander, and see, said he, that you do nothing

unworthy of the name of Alexander. So say I, Remember, O Christian thy name; remember thy dignity and glory, and see that thou dost nothing unworthy of the one or the other. But,

(8.) Eighthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for the saints till they come to heaven, then let them desire and long to be possessed of those blessed things that are reserved in heaven for them. Oh, how do the heirs of this world long to have their estates in their own hands! how do they long to have their inheritances settled upon them! some of them wishing their relations dead that stand between them and their inheritances; and others, of a little better nature, wishing them in the bosom of Abraham, that they might come to inherit, and that they might suck the sweet, and take up their rest, in their worldly inheritances. And shall not the saints desire and long to be in a full and happy possession of that crown, of that inheritance, of those jewels that are reserved in heaven for them? O Christians! how is it, why is it, that your heavenly Jerusalem, your mansions above, your glorious treasures, suffer not an holy violence, in respect of your earnest wishes and burning desires after them? The primitive Christians did so hunger and thirst, look and long, wish and desire after this heavenly kingdom, this glorious inheritance, that the Roman State had a jealousy of them, as if they had affected their kingdom and their worldly glory. But where is that spirit now to be found? Most men live now as if there were no heaven, or else as if heaven were not worth a seeking, worth a desiring; as if heaven were a poor, low, contemptible thing. But ah, Christians! you have learned better; and therefore be you much in desiring and longing to get into that glorious city, where streets, walls, and gates are all gold, yea, where pearl is but as mire and dirt, and where are all pleasures, all treasures, all delights, all comforts, all contents; and that for ever. This word 'for ever' is a bottomless depth, a conception without end; it is a word that sweetens all the glory above, and that indeed makes heaven to be heaven. I can hardly call him a Christian that doth not long more after spirituals, and after the great things that are reserved in heaven for the saints, than Ulysses did for the smoke of his house after ten years' absence. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for the saints till they come to heaven, then, Oh let not the men of the world envy the saints, whilst they are here in this wilderness.

Ah! sinners, sinners, the people of God have but little in hand; though they have much in hope; they have but little in the bag whatever they may have in the bank; they have but little in the cistern whatever they may have in the fountain; they have but little in possession whatever they may have in reversion; and therefore do not envy them, Jas 2:5. Who but monsters will envy the child in his cradle, or in the arms, or in his non-age, though he be an heir to a great estate, inasmuch as it is out of his hand, and he is not in the possession of it? and yet such monsters this world affords, who are filled with envy against Christ's precious ones, though their estates are out of their hands. Old Jacob speaking of his son Joseph, saith, that 'the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him,' Gen 49:23; and Jerome, expounding the words, noteth, Hic invidiam cum arcu et sagittis introduci ad sagittandum quod immaculatum est, that here envy is brought in with bow and arrows shooting at that which is immaculate, and where there is no spot to be a mark for it! or else, as an archer doth set up some white thing to be the mark at which he shoots, so it is the whiteness of some good thing or other, against which envy shoots. Such is the wrath, the rage, the hatred, the envy of wicked men against the saints, that they will still be envying of them upon one score or another. Such was Saul's envy to David, that David chooses rather to live under king Achish, an enemy, than to live under Saul's envy; nay, such was Saul's envy against David, that when David played on his harp, to cure him of the evil spirit that haunted him, that he threw his

spear at him to destroy him, malens a malo spiritu torqueri, quam Davidem vivere, choosing rather to be tormented with an evil spirit, than that David should live. And such was Cain's envy to Abel, that though he had but one brother, nay, though there was but one brother in all the world, yet enraged envy will wash her hands in that brother's blood.

Chrysologus noteth of the rich glutton, who would have Lazarus to be sent to him, that being still cruel and envious towards Lazarus, he would have him to be sent Ad infernum de gremio, de solio sublimi ad profundissimum chaos, ad tormentorum stridorem, de sancta quiete beatorum, to hell from the bosom of Abraham, to the bottomless gulf from the highest throne of glory, to the gnashing and grinding of torments from the holy rest of the blessed. The truth is, envy sticks so close to the heart of wicked men, that courtesies provoke it; offices of love and respect swell it, and an eminency in gifts and graces enrages it; no man of worth hath ever escaped it. Neither mine accusers, nor my crimes, saith Socrates, can kill me, but envy only, which hath, and doth, and will destroy the worthiest that ever were; and therefore, the same person wishes that envious men had more eyes and more ears than others, that so they might be tormented more than others, by beholding others' happiness. Well! sinners, if, notwithstanding all that hath been said, you will still be envious against those gracious souls that have but little in hand, though they have much in hope; if you will be envious against those who stand between you and wrath, between you and hell; if you will be envious against those to whom, as instruments, you are beholding for all the mercies, comforts, and contents, that you enjoy in this world, then know, that your envy will torture you,² your envy will slay you, your envy will prepare the hottest, darkest, and lowest place in hell for you. But,

(10.) Tenthly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then let not any outward losses trouble you, nor deject you. What is thy loss of a house made with hands to one eternal in the heavens? what is thy loss of rags to the royal robes above? what is thy loss of earth to the gain of heaven? what is thy loss of husband, wife, child, friends, to the enjoyment of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect? 2Co 5:1; Rev 6:11, Rev 7:9, Rev 7:13-14. When Paulinus Nolanus his city was taken from him by the barbarians, he prayed thus to God: Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c.; for thou art all, and much more than all, these unto me. When Demetrius asked Stilpo what loss he had sustained when his wife, his children, and country were all burned, he answered, that he had lost nothing, counting that only his own which none could take from him, to wit, his virtues. What an unlovely, what an uncomely, thing would it be to see a rich heir, upon the loss of a ribbon out of his hat, or upon the loss of a glove from his hand, &c., to stand sighing and grieving, vexing and lamenting; or to see a prince, upon the burning up of his stables and outhouses, to stand wringing his hands and beating his breasts, and to cry out, Undone, undone! when his royal palace is safe, his crown safe, his treasures safe! As unlovely, yea, a more unlovely and uncomely, thing it is to see a saint upon the account of losing wife, child, friend, &c., to cry out, Undone, undone! no sorrow to my sorrow! no loss to my loss! when his great all is safe; when his crown, his heaven, his happiness, his blessedness, is safe. Basil, bringing in Job comforting his wife under all their sad losses and calamities, makes him speak thus: Semper prospere agere solius est Dei; bibisti liquidum vitæ laticem et turbidum jam toleranter bibe, it belongeth to God only always to enjoy contentment. Thou hast drunk of the clear waters of this life; now drink of them patiently when they are troubled. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then let believers live cheerfully and walk comfortably up and down in this world. Ah! how cheerfully and merrily do many great heirs live! Though for the present things goes hard with them, the hopes of a good inheritance makes them sing care and sorrow away. It is not for the honour of Christ, nor for the glory of the gospel, to see the heirs of heaven look so sadly and walk so mournfully and dejectedly, as if there were no heaven, or as if there was nothing laid up for them in heaven. It becomes not the sons of glory, with Rachel, to give so much way to weeping as to refuse to be comforted, Neh 8:10. Dost thou not remember, O Christian, that the joy of the Lord is thy strength, thy doing strength, thy bearing strength, thy prevailing strength. What! hast thou forgotten that 'the joy of the Lord is thy strength' to live, and thy strength to die? If not, why with Cain dost thou walk up and down with a dejected countenance, with a cast-down countenance? A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceedingly beautiful; it puts a new lustre upon beauty; so doth joy put a lustre and a beauty upon a Christian; and upon all his words, his ways, his works. It was this that made the faces of several martyrs to shine as if they had been the faces of angels. One observes of Chispina, that she was cheerful when she was apprehended, and joyful when she was led to the judge, and merry when she was sent into prison; so when she was bound, when she was brought forth, when she was lifted up in a cage, when she was heard, when she was condemned. In all these things she rejoiced; so that they who were miserable thought her to be miserable, who indeed was happy under a spirit of joy. When Cæsar was sad, he used to say to himself, Cogita te Cæsarem esse, think thou art Cæsar. Ah, Christians! when you are sad and dejected, think of your dignity and glory; think of all those precious and glorious things that are reserved in heaven for you.

It becomes not Christians, who have so much in reversion, to be like Angelastus, grandfather to Crassus, who never laughed in all his life save once, and that was when he saw a mare eating of thistles; nor like Anaxagoras [of] Clazomenæ, who was never seen to laugh or smile from the day of his birth to the day of his death. Christians, I desire to leave that serious and sad word upon your hearts: Deu 28:47-48, 'Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he hath destroyed thee.' Sad souls! it will be your wisdom to make this scripture your daily companion, and to ponder it seriously in your hearts, as Mary did the saying of the angel. God takes it so unkindly at his people's hands that they should be sad, and sighing, lamenting, and mourning, when they should be a-rejoicing and delighting themselves in the Lord for the abundance of his mercies, that he threatens to pursue them with all sorts of miseries and calamities to the very death. A sad, dejected spirit opens many foul mouths that God would have stopped, and sads many precious souls that God would have gladdened, and discourages many weak Christians and young beginners whom God would have encouraged and animated; and therefore we need not wonder if God should deal so sadly and severely with such sad souls, who make little of sadding many at once, viz., God, Christ, the Spirit, and many precious ones, 'of whom this world is not worthy.' Surely there is infinitely more in the great and glorious things that are reserved for believers in heaven, to joy and rejoice them, than there can be in all the troubles and trials, afflictions and temptations, that they meet with in this world, to sad, grieve, and deject them. Ah, Christians! the great and glorious things that are

reserved in heaven for you, will afford you such an exuberancy of joy, as no good can match, as no evil can overmatch. Witness the joy of the martyrs, both ancient and modern. Oh how my heart leapeth for joy, saith one, that I am so near the apprehension of eternal bliss! But,

(12.) Twelfthly, If the best and greatest things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, why then let not believers be unwilling to die; yea, let them rather court it, and when it comes, sweetly welcome it, 1Co 5:1-2, 1Co 5:7, Php 1:21, There is no way to paradise but by this flaming sword; there is no way to those heavenly treasures, but through this dark entry; there is no way to life, immortality, and glory, but by dying; there is no coming to a clear, full, and constant fruition of God, but by dying. Augustine upon those words, Exo 33:20-21, 'Thou canst not see my face and live,' makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' 'Shall I die ever?' saith one. 'Yes; or shall I die at all? yea, why then, Lord, if ever, why not now, why not now!' So St Andrew, saluting the cross on which he was crucified, cried out, 'Take me from men, and restore me to my Master.' So Lawrence Sanders, when he was come to the stake at which he was to be burnt, kissed it, saying, 'Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life.'³

Ah, Christians! can you read over those instances, and not blush, and not be troubled that these worthies should be so ready and so willing to die, that they might come to a happy fruition of those glorious things that were reserved in heaven for them, whilst you are unwilling to die; whilst your desires are rather, with Peter, to build tabernacles here, than to be in a full fruition of God, and in a happy possession of your heavenly mansions, Mat 17:4, John 14:2-3. Cyprian tells of a bishop, who, being near his death, and unwilling to die, and praying to God for a longer life, an angel appeared unto him, and, with an angry countenance in reproving him, said, *Pati timetis, exire de vita non vultis, quid faciam vobis?* Ye fear to suffer, ye will not go out of this life, what shall I do unto you? Ah, Christians, Christians! how justly may that father be angry with his child that is unwilling to come home, and that husband with his wife who is unwilling to ride to him in a rainy day, or to cross the seas to enjoy him? And is not this your case? is not this your case? I know it is. Well, Christians! let me a little expostulate the case with you, that if it be possible I may work your hearts into a willingness to die, yea, to desire death, to long for death, that so you may come to a full fruition of whatever is reserved in heaven for you: and that I may, I beseech you, Christians, tell me,

[1.] First, Can death dissolve that glorious union that is between you and Christ? No; Rom 8:35-39. Why, why then are you unwilling to die, as long as in death your union with Christ holds good? As in death Saul and Jonathan were not parted, 2Sa 1:23, so in death a believer and Christ is not parted, but more closely and firmly united. That is not death, but life, that joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life, but death, that separates the living man from Christ. As it is impossible for the leaven that is in the dough to be separated from the dough after it is once mixed, for it turneth the nature of the dough into itself; so it is impossible, either in life or death, for the saints ever to be separated from Christ; for Christ, in respect of union, is in the saints as nearly as the leaven in the very dough, so incorporated one into another as if Christ and they were one lump, John 17:20-21; John 15:1-6. But,

[2.] Secondly, For I shall but touch upon things, tell me, O Christian, who art unwilling to die, Whether death can dissolve or untie that marriage-knot that by the Spirit on Christ's side, and by faith on thine, is knit between Christ and thy soul? No. Death cannot untie that knot, Hos 2:19-20.

Why, why then, O Christian, art thou unwilling to die, as long as the marriage-knot holds fast between Christ and thy soul? Mat 25:1-2; Rom 7:1-4. I readily grant that death dissolves that marriage-knot that is knit between man and wife; but death nor devil can never dissolve the marriage-knot that is knit between Christ and the believing soul. Sin cannot dissolve that marriage-knot that is knit between Christ and a believer; and if sin cannot, then certainly death, that came in by sin, cannot. Though sin can do more than death, yet sin cannot make null and void that glorious marriage that is between Christ and the soul; therefore a Christian should not be unwilling to die: Jer 3:1-5, Jer 3:12-14, compared. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Can death, O Christian, dissolve that glorious covenant that God hath taken thee into? No; Death can never dissolve that covenant: Jer 32:40, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Though Abraham be dead, yet God is Abraham's God still, Mat 22:30-32. By covenant, and by virtue of this everlasting covenant, Abraham shall be raised and glorified. Oh! then, why shouldst thou be afraid of death? why shouldst thou be unwilling to die? When David was upon his dying bed, he drew his strongest consolation out of this well of salvation,—the covenant: 2Sa 23:5, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' Dear hearts! the covenant remains firm and good between you and the Lord, both in life and in death; and therefore there is no reason why you should be unwilling to die. There are three things that are impossible for God to do, viz. to die, to lie, or deny himself, or that gracious covenant that he hath made with his people; and therefore death should be more desirable than terrible to gracious souls. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Tell me, O Christian, can death dissolve that love that is between the Lord and thy soul? Psa 116:15; Deu 7:7-8. No, death cannot; for his love is not founded upon any worth or excellency in me, nor upon any work or service done by me, but his love is free; he loves because he will love. All motives to love are taken out of that bosom that is love and sweetness itself. His love is everlasting, it is like himself: Jer 31:3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee;' John 13:1, 'Whom he loved, he loved to the end;' Isa 54:8-10, 'In a little wrath I bid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' The love of Jesus Christ was to Lazarus when dead (John 11:11), 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.' By all which it is most evident that death cannot dissolve that precious love that is between the Lord and his children. Oh! why then are they afraid to die? Why then do not they long to die, that they may be in the everlasting arms of divine love? The love of the Lord is everlasting; it is a love that never dies, that never decays, nor waxes cold. It is like the stone albestos, of which Solinus writes, that being once hot, it can never be cooled again. Death is nothing but a bringing of a loving Christ and loving souls together. Why, then, should not the saints rather desire it, than fear it or be dismayed at it? But,

[5.] Fifthly, Can death, O thou believing soul, dissolve those gracious grants, or those grants of grace that the Lord hath vouchsafed to thee? as the grant of reconciliation, the grant of

acceptation, the grant of justification, the grant of adoption, the grant of remission, &c., 2Co 5:18-19. No; death cannot dissolve any of these gracious grants Rom 11:29, 'for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' Why then, O Christian, art thou unwilling to die? Indeed, were it in the power of death to make void any of those noble and gracious grants that God hath vouchsafed to thee, thou mightest be afraid and unwilling to die; but that being a work too great, and too hard for death to accomplish, why shouldst thou not, in a holy triumphing way, say with the apostle, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ,' 1Co 15:55-57. A Christian, upon the account of what is laid up for him, may and ought divinely to out-brave death, as this precious saint did. A little before she breathed out her last into the bosom of Christ, she called for a candle; Come, saith she, and see death; and this she spake smilingly, out-braving death in a holy sense. Being free both from the pains of death, and from the fear of death, she knew him in whom she had believed, 2Ti 1:12. She knew right well that death could not dissolve those gracious grants that God had vouchsafed to her; and therefore when she came to it, she made no more of it to die than we do to dine. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Tell me, Christians, did not Christ come to deliver you from the fear of death? Yes; he did come into the world, and did take our nature upon him, that he might deliver us from the fear of death, Heb 2:14-15. Why, then, should you be unwilling to die? Tell me, hath not Christ disarmed death of all its hurting power, and taken away its sting, that it cannot harm you? Yes, he hath, 1Co 15:55-57. Why then should you be unwilling to die? Tell me, souls, will not Christ be with you in that hour? will he not stand by you, though others should desert you? Yes; we have it under his own hand that he will be present with us, and that he will neither, living nor dying, leave us, nor forsake us, Psa 23:4, Heb 13:5-6. Why then should you be unwilling to die? Tell me, O trembling Christians, shall death be any more to you than a change? a change of place, a change of company, a change of employment, a change of enjoyment? No, certainly! Death to us will be but a change; yea, the happiest change that ever we met with, Job 14:14, John 11:26, 1Th 4:14; why then should you be unwilling to die, seeing that to die is nothing but to change earth for heaven, rags for robes, crosses for crowns, and prisons for thrones, &c.? But tell me once more, Christians, hath not Jesus Christ, by his lying in the grave, sanctified the grave, and perfumed and sweetened the grave? Hath he not, by his blood and death, purchased for you a soft and easy bed in the grave? Yes; we believe he hath done all this for us. Oh why then should you be unwilling to die? Once more, tell me, Christians, will not Jesus Christ raise you out of the grave after you have taken a short nap? Will he not cause you to hear his voice? Will he not call you out of that withdrawing room, the grave, and bring you to immortality and glory? Yes; we believe he will, John 6:39-40, 1Co 1:5, 1Th 4:14-18. Oh why then should you be unwilling to die? Oh why should you not, upon all these accounts, long for it, and whenever it comes, readily and willingly, cheerfully and sweetly, embrace it? O Christians, Christians! let but your hopes and your hearts be more fixed upon the things that are reserved in heaven for you, and then you will neither fear death, nor feel it when it comes. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Death will perfectly cure you of all corporal and spiritual diseases at once: as the aching head and the unbelieving heart; the ulcerous body and the polluted soul. Now your bodies are full of ails, full of aches, full of diseases, full of distempers, so that your wisest physicians know not what to say to you, nor what to do with you, nor how to cure you. It is often with your bodies as

it was with the civil and ecclesiastical body of the Jews, which from 'the sole of the feet, even to the crown of the head, was full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores,' Isa 1:6. But now death will perfectly cure you of all; death will do that for you that you could not do for yourselves; death will do that for you that all your friends could not do for you; death will do that for you that the ablest and wisest physicians could not do for you. It will cure you of every ache, of every ail, &c. At Stratford-Bow, in Queen Mary's days, there was burnt a lame man and a blind man at one stake. The lame man, after he was chained, casting away his crutch, bade the blind man be of good comfort, for death, said he, will cure us both: thee of thy blindness, and I of my lameness.

Ah, Christians! death will cure you of all your infirmities, of all your distempers; and why, then, should you be unwilling to die? Mæcenus in Seneca had rather live in many diseases than die; but I hope better things of you, for whom Christ hath died. And as death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will cure all your soul-distempers also. Death is not mors hominis, but mors peccati, not the death of the man, but the death of his sin; peccatum erat obstetrix mortis, et mors sepulchrum peccati, sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sin. Death shall do that for a Christian that all his duties could never do. that all his graces could never do, that all his experiences could never do, that all ordinances could never do. It shall at once free him fully, perfectly, and perpetually from all sin, yea, from all possibility of ever sinning more. The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day as that will the day of death be to their sins who are interested in a Saviour. When Samson died, the Philistines also died together with him; so when a believer dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goeth out by death. As the worm kills the worm that bred it, so death kills sin that bred it, Heb 12:23, Rom 6:7, 1Co 15:26. And why, then, should Christians be afraid of death, or unwilling to die, seeing death gives them a writ of ease from infirmities and weaknesses, from all aches and pains, griefs and gripings, distemper and diseases, both of body and soul?

Homer reports of his Achilles, that he had rather be a servant to a poor country clown here in this world, than to be a king to all the souls departed; and the truth is, the most famous heathens have preferred the meanest life on earth above all the hopes they had of a better life; but I hope better things of you, Christians; and that upon this very ground, that death will certainly and perfectly cure you of all bodily and soul distempers at once. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Is not your dying day an inevitable day? Why, yes, yes. Why, then, should you be afraid to die? Why should you be unwilling to die, seeing that your dying day is a day that cannot be put off? The daily spectacles of mortality which we see before our eyes clearly evince this truth, that all must die. It is a statute-law in heaven that all must die. All men and women are made up of dust, and by the law of heaven they must return to dust. All have sinned, and therefore all must die. The core of that apple which Adam ate sticks in the throats of all his children, and will at length choke them all one by one.³

Masius, out of Jacob Ediscenus Syrus, saith that when Noah went into the ark, he took the bones of Adam with him, and that when he came out of the ark, he divided them among his sons, giving the head, as the chiefest part, unto his first-born, and therein as it were saying unto them, Let not this delivery from the flood make you secure; behold your first parent, and the beginning of mankind; you must all, and all that come from you, go unto the dust to him. What day is there that

passes over our heads wherein the Lord doth not, by others' mortality, preach many sermons of mortality to us? and therefore why should we be unwilling to pay that debt that all owe, and that all must pay, and that so many daily pay before our eyes? But,

[9.] Ninthly, A believer's dying day is his best day, and why then should he be unwilling to die? Ecc 7:1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.' In respect of profit, pleasure, peace, safety, company, glory, a believer's last day is his best day; and when then should a believer be unwilling to die? In a printed sermon on this very text, I have proved this truth at large, and to that I refer you, who desire further satisfaction about this truth. But,

[10.] Tenthly, A believer's dying day is his resting day; it is his resting day from sin, from sorrow, from affliction, from temptation, from desertion, from dissension, from vexation, from persecution, and from all bodily labour. And therefore why should a believer be unwilling to die, seeing that for him to die is no more but to rest? But of this rest I have spoken largely before; and therefore a touch may be enough in this place. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, The saints' dying day is their reaping day. Now they shall reap the fruit of all the prayers that ever they have made, and of all the sermons that ever they have heard, and of all the tears that ever they have shed, and of all the sighs and groans that ever they have fetched, and of all the good words that ever they have spoke, and of all the good works that ever they have done, and of all the great things that ever they have suffered; yea, now they shall reap the fruit of many good services, which themselves had forgot, 2Co 9:6; Gal 6:7-9. 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink; or naked, and clothed thee; or sick, or in prison, and visited thee?' Mat 25:34-41. They had done many good works and forgot them, but Christ records them, remembers them, and rewards them. Sabinus in Seneca could never in all his lifetime remember those three names of Homer, Ulysses, and Achilles; and as bad memories have many Christians in spirituals. But our Lord Jesus, as he hath a soft and tender heart, so he hath an iron memory; he remembers not only the best and greatest services, but also the least and lowest services that have been done by his people, and he remembers them to reward them. A bit of bread, a cup of cold water, shall not pass without a reward. Therefore it is good counsel one gives, *Nunquam quum veniat Dominus, inxeniat imparatos, sed semper vultus suspensos expansosque sinus habentes, ad largam Domini benedictionem*, Let the Lord when he cometh never find us unready, but always with our faces looking up towards him, always having our bosoms open, our laps spread abroad, as looking to receive a large blessing from him. Christians, however Christ may seem to forget your labour of love, and to take no notice, or but little, of many good services that you have done for him, his name, his gospel, his people, yet when you die, when you come to heaven, you shall then reap a plentiful, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, that for a time hath seemed to be buried and lost, Pro 11:25; Psa 126:5-6. When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then find that bread which long before was cast upon the waters, Ecc 11:1-6. Therefore be not, O Christian, afraid to die! be not, O Christian, unwilling to die! for thy dying day will be thy reaping day. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, Thy dying-day, O believer! will be thy triumphing day, John 11:26. Now thou shalt gloriously triumph over sin, Satan, the world, thy own base heart, yea, and over death itself. I readily grant, that if you consider believers in Christ, as he was a public person, they have then

already triumphed over principalities and powers; what Christ did in his greatest transaction, he did as a public person, representing all his chosen ones; he suffered as a public person, representing all his elect; he died as a public person, representing all his precious ones; he rose, he ascended, and now he sits in heaven as a public person, representing all his children: Eph 2:6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Christ hath taken up his children's rooms in heaven aforehand; Christ hath already taken possession of heaven in their names, in their steads, they do now sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And so when Jesus Christ spoiled 'principalities and powers, and triumphed openly over them on the cross,' he did this as a public person, representing all his children who triumphed in his triumph over all the powers of darkness; and therefore, in this sense, believers have already triumphed; yea, and I readily grant, that believers, even in this life, by virtue of their union and communion with Christ, and by virtue of his gracious presence, influence, and assistance, they do always triumph, as the apostle speaks: 2Co 2:14, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' Believers now are more than conquerors, they are triumphers over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Christ so routed Satan upon the cross, saith Ignatius, that he never since either hears or sees the cross, but he falls a-shaking and trembling. Believers, by holding forth to Satan the cross of Christ in the arms of faith, and by their laying hold on his cross and pleading his cross, they do easily, they do frequently overcome him and triumph over him. But notwithstanding all this, ah! how often doth the best of saints find the world, the flesh, and the devil triumphing sadly over them? Now a Christian triumphs over Satan, Rom 7:14-25; by and by Christ withdraws, and then Satan triumphs over him. Now the believer leads captivity captive; anon the believer is led captive; this day a saint gets the wind and the hill of Satan, and beats him quite out of the field; the next day Satan draws forth and falls on with new forces, with new arguments, with fresh strength, and then puts a Christian to a retreat, ay, too often to a rout. In many a battle a Christian is worsted, and much ado he hath to come off with his life. Oh but now death, that brings a Christian to a full, perfect, complete, absolute, and perpetual triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now a Christian shall for ever have the necks of these enemies under his feet; now these enemies shall be for ever disarmed, so that they shall never be able to make resistance more, they shall never strike stroke more, they shall never affront a believer more, they shall never lead a believer captive more, &c. Oh why then should believers be afraid to die, be unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is their triumphing day? But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, As a believer's dying-day is his triumphing-day, so a believer's dying-day is his marriage-day, Hos 2:19-20. In this life we are only betrothed to Christ; in the life to come we shall be married to Christ. Here Christ and the believer is near, but death will bring Christ and the believer nearer; here Christ and the believer is asked, and all things are agreed on between them, only the marriage-knot must be tied in heaven, the marriage-supper must be kept in heaven, Rev 19:5-10. And, therefore, several of the martyrs on their suffering-days, on their dying-days, they have invited several to their marriage, as they have phrased it, knowing right well, that their dying-days would be their marriage-days to Christ; the very thoughts of which hath so raised and cheered, so warmed and inflamed their hearts, that they have made nothing of death, that they have outbraved death, that they have, to the great joy of their friends, and to the amazement and astonishment of their enemies, more resolutely, friendly, and sweetly embraced death, than they have their nearest and dearest relations. But in the

(14.) Fourteenth place, A Christian's dying day is his transplanting-day. Death transplants a believer from earth to heaven, from misery to glory, Job 14:14. Death to a saint is nothing but the taking of a sweet flower out of this wilderness, and planting of it in the garden of paradise; it is nothing but a taking of a lily from among thorns, and planting of it among those sweet roses of heaven which God delights to wear always in his bosom. Death is nothing but the taking off of a believer fully from the stock of the first Adam, and the planting of him perfectly and perpetually into that glorious stock, the second Adam, the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for ever. Death is nothing but the taking off the believer from a more barren soil, and planting of him in a more fruitful soil. Here some Christians bring forth thirty, others sixty, and others a hundred-fold, Mat 13:8, Mat 13:23; but heaven is so fruitful a soil, that there are none there but such as abound in the fruits of righteousness and holiness, but such as bring forth a thousand-fold, yea, many thousand-fold. Here our hearts are like the isle of Patmos, which brings forth but little fruit; but when they shall by death be transplanted to heaven, they shall be like the tree in Alcinous's garden, that had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another. In the island of St Thomas, on the back side of Africa, in the midst of it is a hill, and over that a continual cloud, wherewith the whole island is watered and made fruitful. Such a cloud will Jesus Christ be to all those precious souls that shall be transplanted from earth to heaven.

Oh! why, then, should believers be unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is but a transplanting day of their souls from earth to heaven, from a wilderness to a paradise? But in the

[15.] Fifteenth place, As a believer's dying day is the day of his transplantation, so his dying day is the day of his coronation. Here believers are kings elected, but when they die, they are kings crowned; now they have a crown in reversion, but then they have a crown in possession; now they have a crown in hope, but then they shall have a crown in hand, Jas 1:12, Rev 2:10. Death will at last bring the soul to a crown without thorns, to a crown without mixture, to a righteous crown, to a glorious crown, to an everlasting crown. Though a crown be the top of royalty, and though beyond it the thoughts and wishes of mortal men extend not, yet most may say of their earthly crowns as that king said of his: O crown! more noble than happy! But death will set such a crown upon a believer's head as shall always flourish, and as shall make him happy to all eternity. Here the believer, as his Saviour before him, is crowned with thorns, but death will turn that crown of thorns into a crown of pure gold, Psa 132:18, Psa 21:3.

Upon a triumph, all the Emperor Severus his soldiers, for the greater pomp, were to put on crowns of bays on their heads, but there was one Christian among them that wore this crown on his arm; and it being demanded why he did so, he answered, Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari, it becomes not a Christian to wear his crown in this life. The truth is, a Christian's crown never sits so fast, nor never so well becomes him, as when it is put on by a hand of death. Here most princes' crowns are the fruits of unrighteousness, but death will at last put upon the believer a crown of righteousness, or a righteous crown, 2Ti 4:7-8; and so it is called, not only because it is purchased by the righteousness of Christ, but also to difference it from those unrighteous crowns, or crowns of unrighteousness, that the princes of this world put upon their own heads. Earthly crowns are corruptible, but death will put on the heads of believers an incorruptible crown, 1Co 9:25.

Worldly crowns are fading and withering. Though King William the Conqueror was crowned three times every year, during his reign, at three several places, viz., Gloucester, Winchester, and Westminster, yet how soon did his crown fade and wither? But death will put such a crown upon the believer's head as shall never fade nor wither, 1Pe 5:4. Worldly crowns are tottering and shaking; most princes' crowns hang but on one side of their heads, and all their interest, power, and policy cannot make them sit fast on both sides. But death will put upon the heads of believers an immortal crown, an unmoveable crown, an everlasting crown, an eternal crown, a crown that none can shake, that none can take, that none can conquer or overcome, 2Co 4:14-18, Rev 2:10.

Oh, why then should Christians be afraid to die, or unwilling to die, seeing that their dying day is but their coronation day? Who would be unwilling to ride to a crown through a dirty lane or a rainy day? But in the

[16.] Sixteenth place, A gracious soul shall never die till his work be finished, and he prepared to die: and why then should he be unwilling to die when his work is done, and he prepared to go home? When God hath no more work for you to do in this world, why then should you be unwilling to die, to go home? Now, till your work be finished that God hath cut out for you in this world, no power nor policy shall ever be able to cut off the thread of your lives; in despite of all the world, and all the powers of hell, you shall do that work, be it more or less, that God hath appointed you to do in this world. The life of Christ was very often in danger, both among pretended friends and professed foes, but yet he still escapes all the snares that they had laid for him, and all the pits that they have digged for him, and that upon this very ground, 'That his time was not yet come, his hour was not yet come:' John 7:30, 'Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come;' John 8:19-20, 'Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.' God can and will secure his people from the rage and malice of their enemies by a secret and invisible hand of providence, till they have finished the work that he hath set them about in this world. David was surrounded with enemies on all hands, but yet, in spite of them all, he keeps up till his work was done: Acts 13:36, 'For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.' Though many thrust sore at him, yet he did not fall asleep, he did not die till he had served his generation. Bonds and afflictions waited on Paul in every city, Acts 20:23; so in that 2Co 11:23-28, 'In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often. Of the Jews, five times received I forty stripes save one' (the Lord commanded that the number of strokes should not exceed forty, Deu 25:3, and therefore the Jews, that they might not transgress that law, gave one less); 'thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep, in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,' Acts 16:23, Acts 14:17. And yet notwithstanding all these hazards, hardships, dangers, deaths, Paul lives, and bravely bears up till his work was done, his course finished: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;' and so in that Rev 11:7, The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, and that made war against the two witnesses, could not overcome them, nor kill

them, till they had finished their testimony. Christians shall live to finish their testimony, and to do all that work that God hath cut out for them to do, in spite of all the beasts in the world, in spite of hell or antichrist.

It was so with Ambrose; a certain witch sent her spirits to kill him, but they returned answer, that God had hedged him in, as he did Job, so that they could not touch him. Another came with a sword to his bedside to have killed him; but he could not stir his hand, till repenting, he was by the prayer of Ambrose restored to the use of his hands again. No means, no attempts, could cut him off till his work was done. So for Luther, a poor friar, to stand so stoutly against the pope, this was a great miracle; but that he should prevail against the pope as he did, this was a greater; and that after all he should die in his bed, notwithstanding all the enemies he had, and the several designs they had to have destroyed him, this was the greatest of all; and yet for all that the pope or the devil his father could do, Luther, when he had finished his testimony, dies in his bed. Oh! why then should any Christian be unwilling to die, seeing he shall not die till his work be done, till his testimony be finished? And as a believer shall not die till his work be done, so he shall not die till he be prepared to die. A believer is always habitually prepared to die; ay, even then when he is not actually prepared; yet then he is habitually prepared to die, for he hath not his ark to build, nor his lamp to trim, nor his oil to buy, nor his pardon to seal, nor his peace to make, nor his graces to get, nor his interest in Christ to seek, nor divine favour to secure, nor a righteousness to look after, &c. That promise is full of honey and sweetness that you have in Job 5:26, 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.' The husbandman brings not his corn into his barn till it be full ripe, no more will God take his children out of this world till they are fit for another world; he will not transplant them from earth till they are fit, till they are prepared for heaven. It is with Christians as it is with the fruits of the earth; some are ripe sooner, some later; but as we, so God will gather none till they are ripe for glory. Some souls, like some fruits, are ripe betimes; other Christians, like other fruit, are a longer time of ripening; and so God gathers his fruit in as they ripen, some sooner, some later, but none till they are in a measure ripe for heaven. And why, then, should Christians be unwilling to die, seeing they shall not die till they are prepared to die? I do not say they shall not die till they think they are fit to die, or till they say they are prepared to die; for they may be graciously prepared and sweetly fitted to die, and yet may judge otherwise, by reason of Satan's sleights, or some spiritual distemper that may hang upon them, or from a natural fear of death, and some great unwillingness to die; but they shall not die till they are either actually or habitually prepared to die, till they are ripe for glory; and therefore be not, oh be not, Christians, unwilling to die. But in the

[17.] Seventeenth place, When a righteous man dies, he shall leave a sweet savour behind him, his name shall live when he is dead, Heb 11:1-40. Are not the names of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and other saints, a sweet savour to this very day? We know there is no sweet savour to that they have left behind them: Psa 112:6, 'The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.' Pro 10:7, 'The memory of the just is blessed:' the Septuagint thus translates it, 'The memory of the just is with praises.' Many are the praises that wait on the name of the just when their bodies are in the dust; no scent so sweet as that which the just man leaves behind him: Ecc 7:1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment.' He doth not say a great name, a name arising from outward greatness, but a good name, a name arising from inward goodness, and manifested by outward holiness; that is the name that is better than precious ointment. Ointment

only reaches the nostrils, but a good name reaches to the cheering and the warming of the heart. The Chaldee reads this verse thus: *Melius est nomen bonum quod comparabunt iusti in hoc sæculo, quam unguentum unctionis, quod fuerit inunctum super capita regum et sacerdotum*: better is the good name which the just shall obtain in this world, than the ointment of anointing which was poured upon the heads of the kings and priests. Though a believer may not leave great sums of money behind him, nor yet thousands nor hundreds a-year behind him, yet he shall leave a good name behind him, which answers to all, nay, which outweighs all the riches, gallantry, and glory of this world. That heathen [Plautus] hit right who said, *Ego si bonam famam servasso, sat dives ero*. If I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough. It is a greater mercy to leave a good name behind us than to leave the riches of a kingdom, yea, of a world, behind us. But in the,

[18.] Eighteenth place, Death is nothing but the believer's inlet into glory. Death is the gate of life, it is the gate of paradise; it is the midwife to bring eternity to bed. When Jacob saw the chariots that were to bring him to Joseph, his spirit revived, Gen 45:27. Ah, Christian! death is that chariot that will bring thee not only to a sight of Jacob and Joseph, but also to a blessed sight of God, Christ, angels and 'the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb 12:23-24. Here we meet with many inlets to sin, to sorrow, to affliction, to temptation; but death, of all inlets, is the most happy inlet; it lets the soul into a full fruition of God, to the perfection of grace, and to the heights of glory; and why, then, should a gracious soul be unwilling to die? But I must hasten to a close; therefore in the,

[19.] Nineteenth place, Was Jesus Christ so willing to leave heaven, his Father's bosom, his crown, his dignity, his glory, his royal attendance, to come into this world to suffer the saddest and the heaviest things that ever was thought of, that ever was heard of, for thy sins, for thy sake? and wilt thou be unwilling to die, and to go to him who hath suffered so much, who hath paid so much, who hath prepared so much for thee? Ah, Christian, Christian! why dost thou not rather reason thus with thy own soul: Did Christ die for me, that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love, and shall I be unwilling to die, that I may see him whom my soul loves? Oh, I will not! oh, I dare not! oh, I may not! Others venture through many dangers and many deaths to see their friends and relations, and why then shouldst not thou, O Christian! be willing to venture through death to the Lord of life, to him that is thy crown, thy comfort, thy head, thy husband, thy heaven, thy all? &c. But, in the

[20.] Twentieth and last place, Consider, O believer! that thou always standest before God in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who is called the Lord our righteousness, and who, of God, is made unto thee wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, Jer 23:6; 1Co 1:30. Whilst thou livest thou standest before God, not in the righteousness of thy duties, nor in thy gracious dispositions, which are but weak and imperfect, but in the pure, perfect, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ. And when thou diest thou appearest before God in the same glorious righteousness, so that thou mayest appear before God's unspotted justice and holiness with the greatest boldness and comfort that is imaginable, upon the account of that righteousness with which thou art clothed: Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within' (there is her inward glory; grace makes the soul glorious within); 'her clothing is of wrought gold.' Some read it purled work, or closures of gold, enamelled with gold; such as precious stones were set in, which were exceeding splendid and glorious, and which shadowed forth the glorious righteousness of our Lord Jesus, Exo 28:11, Exo 28:14; Exo 39:1-5, &c. This clothing of wrought gold is the glorious righteousness of our Lord Jesus. Now, in life and in death, the believer stands before God in the

glorious golden robes of Christ's righteousness; and hence it is that believers are said to be all fair and without spot, and to be without spot or wrinkle, and to be complete in Christ, and to be without fault before the throne of God; and why then should a believer be unwilling to die and appear before God? By reason of this clothing of wrought gold, you stand spotless, blameless, and faultless before God. This golden clothing, this glorious righteousness of Christ, is as truly and really the believer's, and as fully and completely the believer's, as if it were his very own. Ah! no clothing to this. The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for a hundred talents, was indeed a mean and beggarly rag to this embroidered mantle that Christ puts upon all believers. And therefore a Christian, both living and dying, should say with the psalmist, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thy righteousness only,' Psa 71:15-16, Psa 71:19. Let them be afraid to die, let them be unwilling to die, who must appear before God in their sins, and in their own righteousness, which at best is but as filthy rags, Isa 64:6. But as for thee, O Christian, who shalt always appear before God in clothing of wrought gold, be not thou afraid of death, be not thou unwilling to die, but rather desire it, rather long for it, 1Co 15:55-57, because thou art clothed with such righteousness as will bear thee up sweetly in it, as will carry thee bravely through it, and as will make thee triumph over it. Christ's righteousness is a Christian's white raiment, in which he stands pure before God, Rev 3:18, and Rev 19:7-8, 'Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the linen is the righteousness of saints.' By the fine, clean, white linen which is here called the righteousness, or, as the Greek hath it, the righteousnesses of saints, most understand the glorious righteousness of Christ. Righteousness is an Hebraism, noting that most perfect absolute righteousness which we have in Christ; white is a natural colour, it is a colour of purity, ornament, and honour. It was the habit in times past of nobles, saith Drusius, and others. Now in this pure, clean, white linen all the saints are clothed, and so presented to God by Jesus Christ; and why then should they be unwilling to die? Here is not a speck, not a spot, to be found upon this white linen, which is the righteousness of saints, which should make saints rather to pursue after death, than to fly from it, or to be unwilling to welcome it when it comes.

I am not ignorant that this unwillingness to die most usually springs from those low and dark apprehensions men have of God, and from weakness of faith, and from coldness of love, and from laying the features too near our hearts, and from our little communion with God, and our rare taking of turns in paradise, and from our not treasuring up a stock of promises, and a stock of experiences, &c. I have also considered what a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a scandal to religion, a blot to profession, a mischief to sinners, and a wrong to saints, it is, for Christians to be unwilling to die, or to be afraid of death, which hath occasioned me to muster up these twenty considerations to work you to be willing to die; and if these will not prevail with you, I profess I do not know what will.

Obj. I would be willing to die, if I had but assurance: but that is the jewel I want; and therefore I am unwilling to die.

(1.) First, I answer, It may be thou, hast assurance, though not such a measure of assurance, such a plerophory or full assurance, as thou desirest. A perfect, complete, absolute, and full assurance is very desirable on earth, but I think few attain to it till they come to heaven. This sparkling diamond God hangs in few saints' bosoms till they come to glory. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, The least grace, if true, is sufficient to salvation, Mat 5:3, Mat 5:10; and therefore the sense of the least grace, or of the least measure of grace, should be sufficient to assurance of salvation. But,

(3.) Thirdly, The time of death is one of the most usual seasons wherein God gives his children the sweetest and fullest assurance of his love, of their interest in him, and of their right to glory. When there was but a step, a stride, between Stephen and death, then he saw heaven open, and Christ standing at the right hand of his Father, Acts 7:55-60.

Mr Glover, though he had been long under clouds and much darkness, yet when he came near the fire, he cried out to his friend, O Austin, Austin, he is come, he is come! meaning the Lord, in the sweet and glorious discoveries of his love and favour to him; and so he died, with a heart full of joy and assurance.

Mr Frogmorton, a precious godly minister, lived thirty-seven years without assurance, after the Lord had wrought savingly upon him, and then died at Master Dod's, having assurance but an hour before he died.

I could here give you divers examples, of a later date, of many precious Christians who have lived close with God many years, and have been much in seeking of assurance, and the Lord hath held them off till a few years before their death, and then he hath filled their souls so full of the sense of his love, and the assurance of their everlasting welfare, that they have died under the power of their joys. Assurance is a free gift of God, and God loves to give his gifts to his children when they may most cheer them, and be of greatest use and service to them; and when is that, but at the day of death? And therefore Christians should not be unwilling to die for want of assurance, because that is a special season wherein God usually gives assurance to his children. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, Thou mayest die and go to heaven without assurance. This truth, with several others of the like import, that may further satisfy such as are unwilling to die, I have made good in that treatise of mine called 'Heaven on Earth,' and to that I refer the reader for further satisfaction, if what is said do not satisfy. The next inference, then, that I shall make, and so hasten to a close, is this:

If the best things are reserved for believers, then let not Christians mourn immoderately, 1Th 4:13-14. Oh! be not over-much afflicted and grieved for the death of husband, wife, child, sister, friend, who dies in the Lord; for they are but gone to take possession of those great and glorious things that are reserved in heaven for them. This deceased saint is now gone to her home, to her heaven, to her God that hath loved her, to her Christ that hath died for her, and to her crown that was prepared for her. Abraham mourned moderately for his dear deceased Sarah, Gen 23:2, as is imported by a small caph in that Hebrew word that signifies to weep; and that not because she was old and over-worn, as some Rabbins say, but because death to her was but an inlet into glory: death did but bring her to a happy fruition of all those glorious things that God hath laid up for them that love him. Death, that seems to dispossess a Christian of all, puts him into a possession of all; of all joys, of all comforts, of all delights, of all contents, of all happiness, of all blessedness; and why then should our sorrow, our tears overflow the banks of moderation? Sorrow is good for nothing but for sin. Now that the child is dead, wherefore should I fast and weep? said David. Grief preceding evil, if it be used for a remedy, cannot be too much; but that which follows an evil past,

cannot be too little. When Ezekiel lost his wife, the delight of his eyes, he must not weep, Eze 24:15-17. When Mary the mother of Jesus stood by the cross of her only dear Son, she wept not, as Ambrose saith, John 19:25-27. We may say of our deceased friend, as the Jews of their father Jacob, *Non est mortuus*, he is not dead; or as our Saviour of Lazarus, 'He is not dead, but sleepeth,' John 11:11; and the maid, 'Why trouble you yourselves? they are not dead, but sleep.' To die, in the prophet Isaiah's phrase, is but to lie down in our beds, Isa 43:17; Isa 57:1-2. So Asa the king's coffin is called a bed, 2Ch 16:14. And when 'thy days shall be fulfilled,' saith Nathan to David, 'and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;' or, as the original hath it, 'and thou shalt lie down with thy fathers,' 2Sa 7:12. Death is nothing but a sleeping with our fathers, or a lying down in the bed with our fathers and friends, who have lain down before us. And, therefore, when a friend, a wife, a child dies, and leaves this world, we are to bid them but good night, as the primitive Christians used to do, in sure and certain hope to meet them in the morning of the resurrection. The ancients were wont to call the days of their death *natalia*, not dying days but birth-days. It hath been the custom, saith Haymo, when a child of God departed this life, to call it not the day of his death, but the day of his nativity. The Jews to this day stick not to call their Golgothas *Batte Cajim*, the houses or places of the living. The Jews' ancient custom was, by the way as they went with their corpse, to pluck up every one the grass, as who should say, they were not sorry for the death of their friends and relations, as men without hope, for they were but so cropped off, and should spring up again in due season. Ah, friends! if you will needs mourn, then mourn for yourselves, mourn for your sins, mourn for the barrenness and baseness of your own hearts; but do not mourn, at least excessively, for the death of any Christian friend or relation, seeing that death gives them a quiet and full possession of all that glory and happiness that is reserved in heaven for them. The next use is cause of comfort and consolation to all the people of God. If it be so that the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then this may serve to comfort the people of God, and that,

(1.) First, against their poor, low, and mean condition in this world. Ah! poor Christians, what though you have little in hand, yet you have much in hope; though you have little in possession, yet you have much in reversion. He that hath but little in present possession, yet if he hath a fair estate in reversion, he comforts himself, and solaces his spirit in the thoughts of it, that there will come a day when he shall live like a man, when he shall live bravely and sweetly; and this makes him sing care and sorrow away. Why! Christians, do you do so: you have a fine, a fair estate in reversion, though you have but little in possession; and therefore bear up bravely and live comfortably, Jas 2:5; 2Ti 4:7-8. Psal 16:6.

Christ, who was the heir of all, yet he lived poor and died poor, Mat 8:20. As he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. When Christ died he made no will; he had no crown lands; only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them. If thy outward condition be conformable to his, there is no reason why thou shouldst be discouraged, for thou hast a rich and royal revenue that will shortly come into thy hand, and then thou shalt never know what poverty and penury means more: and for thy comfort, know, that though men may for thy poverty despise thee, yet the Lord doth highly prize thee. It was a good saying of Basil, *Placet sibi Deus abstrusam in despecto corpore margaritam conspicatus*. God pleaseth himself, beholding a hidden pearl in a despised and disrespected body. The truth is, Christians, if there were any real happiness in the things of this life, you should have them, but it is not in all the

wealth and glory of this world to make up a happiness to you; and therefore, as the enjoyment of them should not swell the rich, so the want of them should not trouble the poor. The angels and saints departed in heaven are happy, and yet they have neither silver nor gold; they are blessed and yet they have none of the gay things of this life, they have none of the gallantry and glory of this world. You have now your worst, your best days are to come; it will not be long before you shall have your portion in hand; therefore live sweetly and walk comfortably up and down this world. But,

(2.) Secondly, If the best things are reserved for believers till they come to heaven, then this may serve to comfort them against all outward abasements from the malignant world. What though you are counted as the scum, the dirt, the filth, the scraping, the offscouring of the world, by men that know not, that see not, that believe not what great and glorious things are reserved in heaven for you? Yet at last you shall be advanced to that dignity, and be made partakers of that felicity and glory, which shall work amazement and astonishment in those that now despise you and vilify you. Those that now count you the troublers of their Israel, shall be troubled with a witness, when they shall see you with crowns upon your heads and the royal robes of glory upon your backs, and two-edged swords in your hands, to execute the vengeance written, Psa 149:4-9. Men that know their future greatness, are not troubled at reproaches; they think themselves above reproaches; they can divinely scorn scorns and condemn contempts. Ah, Christians! how can you seriously consider of your future greatness, happiness, and glory, and not bear up sweetly and comfortably against all the contempt that you may meet with in this world? And thus I have done with this subject, which of one sermon is multiplied into several, by a good hand of heaven upon me. I shall follow this poor piece with my weak prayers, that it may be a mercy to hearers, readers, and writer.

AN ELEGY Upon the Death of Mrs Mary Blake, the Wife of Mr Nicholas Blake, of London, Merchant. Where virtue, seated in the heart, Shining forth in suiting acts of life, Oh! what delight doth it impart To pious minds! Experience rife Of thee we have, as otherwise, So in this godly woman's guise. Her sweet endowments, pregnant wit, And holy graces from above, How made they her an object fit No less for wonder than for love!

Such precious fruit, so ripe, though green In so few years, is seldom seen.

They who enjoyed the Sight and sense Of her dear converse, to her close, Oh! what contentment did from thence To them arise! chiefly to those Who nearest to her did relate, In blood, in grace, or married state.

Parents'dear comfort, husband's glory, Kindred's honour, friendship's praise, To after-times a fair writ story For a pattern to their way:

All these in her did meet, as one That suited all and failed none.

Thus, while we her enjoyed, she was A precious cordial to us all; But now, being taken hence, alas! From joys unto laments we fall.

Thus sith her loss to all extends, Sorrow doth seize on all her friends.

It doth indeed; nor do we find That God Almighty doth dislike Good nature's working in this kind, When us in ours he thus doth strike. Their deathbeds, while in this sad trim, We may besprink, but not make swim.

Tears from our eyes like precious dew, As from a lymbeck may drop out, Not flow, as usually we view, Like common water from a spout.

Why should they? sith to our relief We have cause no less of joy than grief? This friend of ours for whom we weep Is safely come unto the shore;

She is not dead, but fall'n asleep, And only gone to bed before. And we, when ended is our pain, Shall sleep with her, and wake again.

Mean season, as for her, we know Where, and with whom, and how she dwells, In heaven with Christ, and myriads mo, Whose presence all delight excels; And there she sings with high desire Her hallelujahs in full choir.

All this she studied here, but never Could fully tell what it should be, Till God did soul from body sever, And took it up these joys to see:

There let her rest, until we meet Each other in that place to greet.

Mart. Blacke.

01.02. Volume 2

THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART, liverpool

VOL. II containing: an ark for all god's noahs—the privy-key of heaven—heaven on earth; or, well-grounded assurance EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL london: james nisbet and co. dublin: g. herbert m.dccc.lxvi.

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AN ARK FOR ALL GOD'S NOAHS note The 'Ark for All God's Noahs' was originally published in 1662, and the next edition—from which our text is taken—appeared in 1666, but is not designed 'second' or otherwise. In this, as in other cases, the Publisher seems to have kept the types standing, and to have issued rapidly large impressions without ever changing the date. The title-page is given below.* A quaint and beautiful little edition of this book bears the imprint Glasgow College, Printed by Alex. Millar, and are to be sold in his shop opposite to the Well, in the Salt Mercat, 1738." 12mo.G. an

ARKE for all

GODS NOAHS In a gloomy stormy day; or, The best Wine reserved till last. or, The transcendent Excellency of a believers portion above all earthly Portions whatsoever:

Discovered in several SERMONS, which may be of singular use at all times, but especially in these Breaking times, wherein many have, and many daily do break for more than their all, and wherein many thousands are turned out of all, &c. By THOMAS BROOKS, late Preacher of the Gospel at Margarets New Fishstreet, and still Preacher of the Word in London, and Pastor of a Congregation there.

I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul, I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living, Psa 142:4-5.

London, Printed by M. S. for Henry Cripps, at the first entrance into Popes head Alley, next to Lombard-street, 1666.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To all the merchants and tradesmen of England, especially these of the city of London, with all other sorts and ranks of persons that either have or would have God for their portion, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

Gentlemen,—The wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne hath told us, that 'a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'a word spoken, ■■■■■■■■■■, upon his wheels,' that is, rightly ordered, placed, and circumstantiated. Such a word is, of all words, the most excellent, the most prevalent, and the most pleasant word that can be spoken; such a word is, indeed, a word that is like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' Of all words such a word is most precious, most sweet, most desirable, and most delectable. O sirs! to time a word, to set a word upon the wheels, to speak a word to purpose, is the project of this book. Though all truths are glorious, yet there is a double glory upon seasonable truths; and, therefore, I have made it my great business in this treatise to hold forth as seasonable a truth, and as weighty a truth, and as comfortable and encouraging a truth, as any I know in all the book of God. The mother of King Cyrus willed, that the words of those that spoke unto her son should be in silk, but certainly seasonable words are always better than silken words.

Every prudent husbandman observes his fittest season to sow his seeds, and therefore some he sows in the autumn and fall of the leaf, and some in the spring and renewing of the year; some he

sows in a dry season, and some he sows in a wet; some he sows in a moist clay, and some he sows in a sandy dry ground, as the Holy Ghost speaks, 'He soweth the fitches and the cumin, and casteth in wheat by measure,' Isa 28:25. And so all spiritual husbandmen must wisely observe their fittest seasons for the sowing of that immortal seed that God hath put into their hands; and such a thing as this is I have had in my eye, but whether I have hit the mark or missed it, let the Christian reader judge.

One speaking of the glory of heaven saith, 'That the good things of eternal life are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation,' &c. The same may I say concerning the saint's portion, for certainly the good things that are in their portion, in their God, are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation. The same author in one of his epistles hath this remarkable relation, viz., That the same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome, and suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and smelt also a very sweet smell, and this voice he thought he heard: 'O Augustine, what doest thou? dost think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shalt thou be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except you come to feel it as I now do.' Certainly, the glory of heaven is beyond all conception and all expression, and so is that portion that is a little hinted at in the following discourse. And, indeed, a full description of that God, that is the believer's portion, is a work too high for an Aaron when standing upon mount Hor; or for a Moses, when standing on the top of Nebo after a Pisgah prospect; yea, it is a work too high and too hard for all those blessed seraphims that are still a-crying before the throne of God, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.'² No finite being, though never so glorious, can ever be able fully to comprehend an infinite being. In the second verse of the sixth of Isaiah, we read that each seraphim had six wings, and that with twain he covered the face of God, with twain his feet, and with twain he did fly, intimating, as one well observes upon the place, that with twain they covered his face, the face of God, not their own face, and with twain they covered his feet, not their own feet. They covered his face, his beginning being unknown; they covered his feet, his end being incomprehensible; only the middle are to be seen, the things which are, whereby there may be some glimmering knowledge made out what God is. The wise man hit it, when he said, 'That which is afar off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?' Ecc 7:24. Who can find out what God is? The knowledge of him a priori is so far off, that he whose arm is able to break even a bow of steel is not able to reach it; so far off, that he who is able to make his nest with the eagle is not able to fly unto it; and so exceeding deep, that he who could follow the leviathan could not fathom it; that he who could set out the centre of the earth, is not able to find it out; and who then is able to reach it? In a word, so far off and so deep too, that 'the depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me.' It is such a deep to men and angels as far exceeds the capacity of both. Augustine speaking to that question, What God is? gives this answer: 'Surely such a one as he, who, when he is spoken of, cannot be spoken of; who, when he is considered, cannot be considered of; who, when he is compared to anything, cannot be compared; and when he is defined, groweth greater by defining of him. If that great apostle, that learned his divinity among the angels, yea, to whom the Holy Ghost was an immediate tutor, did know but 'in part,' then certainly those that are most acute and judicious in divine knowledge may very well conclude, that they know but part of that part that was known to him.' As for my own part, I dare pretend but to a spark of that knowledge that others

have attained to, and yet who can tell but that God may turn this spark into such a flame as may warm the hearts of many of his dear and precious ones. Much is done many times by a spark.

O sirs! catch not at the present profits, pleasures, preferments, and honours of this world, but 'lay up a good foundation for the time to come,' provide for eternity, make sure your interest and propriety in God. It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavyer [Bavaria?], emperor of Germany: 'Such goods,' said he, 'are worth getting and owning, as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen.' How many of you have lost your all by shipwrecks! and how hath divine providence by your multiplied crosses and losses taught you that, that the good things and the great things of this world cannot be made sure! How many of you have had rich inheritances left you by your fathers, besides the great portions that you have had with your wives, and the vast estates that you have gained by trading; but what is become of all? Is not all buried in the deep, or in the grave of oblivion? Oh the unconstancy and the grand imposture of this world! Oh the flux and reflux of riches, greatness, honours, and preferments! How many men have we seen shining in their worldly pomp and glory like stars in the firmament, who are now vanished into smoke or comets! How hath the moon of many great men's riches and honours been eclipsed at the full, and the sun of their pomp gone down at noon!

'It was,' saith the historian [Justinian], 'a wonderful precedent of vanity and variety of human condition to see mighty Xerxes to float and fly away in a small vessel, who but a little before wanted sea-room for his navy.' The Dutch, to express the world's vanity and uncertainty, have very wittily pictured a man with a full blown bladder on his shoulders, and another standing by pricking the bladder with a pin, with this motto, Quam subito, How soon is all blown down! I am not willing to make the porch too wide, else I might have given you famous instances of the vanity and uncertainty of all worldly wealth, pomp, and glory, from the Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms, whose glory now lies all in the dust. By all this it is most evident that earthly portions cannot be made sure, they 'make themselves wings, and they fly away,' Pro 23:5.

Oh! but now God is a portion that may be made sure. In the time of the Marian persecution, there was a woman, who, being convened before bloody Bonner, then bishop of London, upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her: saith she, Christ is my husband. I will take away thy child; Christ, saith she, is better to me than ten sons. I will strip thee, saith he, of all thy outward comforts; but Christ is mine, saith she, and you cannot strip me of him. A Christian may be stripped of anything but his God; he may be stripped of his estate, his friends, his relations, his liberty, his life, but he can never be stripped of his God. As God is a portion that none can give to a Christian but himself, so God is a portion that none can take from a Christian but himself; and, therefore, as ever you would have a sure portion, an abiding portion, a lasting portion, yea, an everlasting portion, make sure of God for your portion.

O Sirs! that you would judge that only worth much now, which will be found of much worth at last, when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat. Oh that men would prize and value all earthly portions now, as they will value them when they come to die, and when their souls shall sit upon their trembling lips, and when there shall be but a short step between them and eternity. Oh, at what a poor rate, at what a low rate do men value their earthly portions! then, certainly, it will be their very great wisdom to value their earthly portions now as they would value them then. And oh that men would value this glorious, this matchless portion that is held forth in

this treatise now, as they will value it and prize it when they come to die, and when they come to launch out into the ocean of eternity! I have read of a stationer, who, being at a fair, hung out several pictures of men famous in their kinds, among which he had also the picture of Christ, upon which divers men bought according to their several fancies: the soldier buys his Cæsar, the lawyer his Justinian, the physician his Galen, the philosopher his Aristotle, the poet his Virgil, the orator his Cicero, and the divine his Augustine; but all this while the picture of Christ hung by as a thing of no value, till a poor chapman, that had no more money than would purchase that, bought it, saying, Now every man hath taken away his god, let me have mine too. O Sirs! it would make any gracious, any serious, any ingenious, any conscientious heart to bleed, to see at what a high rate all sorts and ranks of men do value earthly portions, which at best are but counterfeit pictures, whenas this glorious portion that is here treated on hangs by as a thing of no value, of no price. Most men are mad upon the world, and so they may have much of that for their portion, they care not whether ever they have God for their portion or no. Give them but a palace in Paris, and then with that French duke [the Duke of Burbone (Bourbon)] they care not for a place in paradise; give them but a mess of pottage, and let who will take the birthright; give them but manna in a wilderness, and let who will take the land of Canaan; give them but ground which is pleasant and rich, and then with the Reubenites they will gladly take up their rest on this side the Holy Land; give them but their bags full, and their barns full, and then with the rich fool in the Gospel they can think of nothing but of taking their ease, and of eating and drinking, and making merry, Luk 12:16-22. So brutish and foolish are they in their understandings, as if their precious and immortal souls were good for nothing but as salt to keep their bodies from rotting and stinking.

Oh that these men would seriously consider, that as a cup of pleasant wine, offered to a condemned man in the way to his execution, and as the feast of him who sat under a naked sword, hanging perpendicularly over his head by a slender thread, and as Adam's forbidden fruit, seconded by a flaming sword, and as Belshazzar's dainties, overlooked by an handwriting against the wall; such and only such are all earthly portions to those that have not God for their portion.

Well, gentlemen, remember this, there is no true happiness to be found in any earthly portions. Solomon, having made a critical inquiry after the excellency of all creature comforts, gives this in as the ultimate extraction from them all, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' If you should go to all the creatures round, they will tell you that happiness is not in them. If you should go to the earth, the earth will tell you that happiness grows not in the furrows of the field. If you go to the sea, the sea will tell you that happiness is not in the treasures of the deep. If you go to the beasts of the field, or to the birds of the air, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found on their backs, nor in their bowels. If you go to your bags, or heaps of gold and silver, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found in them. If you go to crowns and sceptres, they will tell you that happiness is too precious and too glorious a gem to be found in them. As it is not the great cage that makes the bird sing, so it is not the great estate that makes the happy life, nor the great portion that makes the happy soul. There is no true comfort nor no true happiness to be drawn out of the standing pools of outward sufficiencies. All true comfort and happiness is only to be found in having of an all-sufficient God for your portion: Psa 144:15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' And therefore, as ever you would be happy in both worlds, it very highly concerns you to get an interest in God, and to be restless in your own souls till you come to enjoy God for your portion. A man that hath God for his portion is a non-such; he is the rarest and the

happiest man in the world; he is like the morning star in the midst of the clouds; he is like the moon when it is at full; he is like the flower of the roses in the spring of the year; he is like the lilies by the springs of waters; he is like the branches of frankincense in the time of summer; he is like a vessel of massy gold that is set about with all manner of precious stones.

Nothing can make that man miserable that hath God for his portion, nor nothing can make that man happy that wants God for his portion: the more rich, the more wretched; the more great, the more graceless; the more honourable, the more miserable that man will be that hath not God for his portion. The Sodomites were very wealthy, and who more wanton and wicked than they? The Egyptians and Babylonians were very rich, great, and potent in the world, and what greater oppressors and persecutors of the people of God than these? Oh the slavery, the captivity, and the woful misery of the people of God under those cruel tyrants! Have not the Nimrods, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Belshazzars, the Alexanders, and the Cæsars, &c., been commonly the lords of the world, and who so abominably wicked as these? No men for wickedness have been able to match them or come near them.

It hath been long since observed to my hand, that Daniel sets forth the several monarchies of the world by sundry sorts of cruel beasts, to shew that as they were gotten by beastly subtilty and cruelty, so they were supported and maintained by brutish sensuality, craft, and tyranny

I have read of a Lacedæmonian that said, that they well deserved death that did not quench tyranny, they should quite have consumed it with fire. But whether he hit the mark or missed it, let the reader judge. Well, Sirs! you may be the lords of this world, and yet you will certainly be miserable in another world, except you get God for your portion. The top of man's happiness in this world lies in his having of God for his portion. He that hath God for his portion enjoys all; and he that wants an interest and propriety in God enjoys nothing at all.

Gentlemen, I have read of an heathen who, seeing a sudden shipwreck of all his wealth, said, Well, fortune, I see now that thou wouldst have me to be a philosopher. Oh that you would say under all your heavy losses and crosses, Well! we now see that God would have us 'lay up treasure in heaven,' Mat 6:19-20; we now see that God would have us look after a better portion than any this world affords; we now see that it highly concerns us to secure our interest and propriety in God; we now see that to enjoy God for our portion is the one thing necessary. Have not many of you said, nay sworn, that if you might but see and enjoy the delight of your eyes, that then you should have a sweeping trade, and abound in all plenty and prosperity, and grow rich and great and glorious in the world, and be eased of everything that did but look like a burden, &c. If it be indeed thus with you, why do you so complain, murmur, and repine? and why do many of you walk up and down the Exchange and streets with tears in your eyes, and with heaviness in your hearts, and with cracked credits, and threadbare coats, and empty purses? and why are so many of you broke, and so many prisoners, and so many hid, and so many fled? But if it be otherwise, and that you are sensible that you have put a cheat upon yourselves, I say not upon others, and that as you have been self-flatterers, so you have been self-deceivers, the more highly it concerns you to do yourselves, your souls that right, as to make sure [of] God for your portion. For what else can make up those woful disappointments under which you are fallen?

It is a sad sight to see all the arrows that men shoot to fall upon their own heads, or to see them twist a cord to hang themselves, or to see men dig a pit for others and to fall into it themselves;

and it is but justice that men should bake as they brew, and that they which brew mischief should have the first and largest draught of it themselves.

Now the best way to prevent so sad a sight and so great a mischief, is to get God for your portion: for when once God comes to be a man's portion, then 'all things shall work together for his good,' Rom 8:28, and then God will preserve him from such hurtful and mischievous actings. The whole world is a great bedlam, and multitudes there are that think madly, and that design madly, and that talk madly, and that act madly, and that walk madly. Now as you would not be found in the number of those bedlams, it highly concerns you to get God for your portion, that so you may be filled with that wisdom that may preserve you from the folly and madness of this mad world.

Gentlemen, the following sermons I preached in the year 1660, at Olave's, Bread Street, and God blessed them then to those Christians that attended on my ministry, and I hope he will bless them also to the internal and eternal welfare of your souls, to whom they are now dedicated. They are much enlarged; the profit will be yours, the labour hath been mine. I judge them very seasonable and suitable to present dispensations, else they had not seen the light at this time. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul; curiosity is that green-sickness of the soul, whereby it longs for novelties, and loathes sound and wholesome truths; it is the epidemical distemper of this age and hour. And therefore, if any of you are troubled with this itch of curiosity, and love to be wise above what is written, and delight to scan the choice mysteries of religion by carnal reason, and affect elegant expressions and seraphical notions, and the flowers of rhetoric, more than sound and wholesome truths, then you may ease yourselves, if you please, of the trouble of reading this following treatise; only remember this, that the prudent husbandman looks more and delights more in the ripeness and soundness and goodness of the corn that is in his field, than he doth at the beauty of the cockle; and remember, that no man can live more miserably than he that lives altogether upon sauces; and he that looks more at the handsomeness than he doth at the wholesomeness of the dishes of meat that are set before him, may well pass for a fool.

Well, gentlemen, for a close, remember this, that as Noah was drunk with his own wine, and as Goliath was beheaded by his own sword, and as the rose is destroyed by the canker that it breeds in itself, and as Agrippina was killed by Nero, to whom she gave breath; so if ever you are eternally destroyed, you will be destroyed by yourselves; if ever you are undone, you will be undone by yourselves; if ever you are scourged to death, it will be by rods of your own making; and if ever the bitter cup of damnation be put into your hands, it will be found to be of your own preparing, mingling, and embittering.

Behold, I have set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, before you in this treatise; and therefore, if you will needs choose death rather than life, hell rather than heaven, misery rather than glory, what can be more just than that you should perish to all eternity? If you will not have God for your portion, you shall be sure to have wrath for your portion, and hell for your portion, &c.

Well, sirs! remember this at last: every man shall only thank his own folly for his own bane, his own sin for his own everlasting shame, his own iniquity for his own endless misery.

I have now no more to do but to improve all the interest that I have in heaven, that this treatise may be blessed to all your souls, and that you all experience what it is to have God for your

portion; for that will be my joy as well as yours, and my crown as well as yours, and my glorying as well as yours, in the great day of our Lord Jesus; and so 'I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified,' Acts 20:32; and rest, gentlemen, your souls' servant,

Thomas Brooks. A MATCHLESS PORTION The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.—Lam 3:24.

Certainly if Ennius could pick out gold out of a dunghill, I may, by divine assistance, much better pick out golden matter out of such a golden mine as my text is, to enrich the souls of men withal. The best of painters [Apelles], to draw an exquisite Venus, had set before him an hundred choice and selected beauties, to take from one an eye, another a lip, a third a smile, a fourth an hand, and from each of them that special lineament in which the most excelled; but I have no need of any other scripture to be set before me to draw forth the excellency of the saints' portion than that which I have now pitched upon; for the beauty, excellency, and glory of an hundred choice scriptures are epitomized in this one. The Jewish doctors and other writers differ about the time of Jeremiah's penning this book of the Lamentations; but to be ignorant of the circumstance of time when this book was made, is such a crime as I suppose will not be charged upon any man's account in the great day of our Lord Jesus.

Doubtless this book of the Lamentations was composed by Jeremiah in the time of the Babylonian captivity. In this book the prophet sadly laments and bewails the grievous calamities and miseries that had befallen the Jews, viz. the ruin of their state, the devastation of their land, the destruction of their glorious city and temple, which was the great wonder of the world, the profanation of all his holy things, the contemptible and deplorable condition of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men; and then he complains of their sins as the procuring causes of all those calamities that God in his righteousness had inflicted upon them. He exhorts them also to patience under the mighty hand of God, and stirs them up to repent and reform, as they would have their sins pardoned, judgments removed, divine wrath pacified, their insulting enemies suppressed, and former acts and grants of favour and grace restored to them. But to come to the words of my text, The Lord Jehovah, from Havah, he was. This name Jehovah is the most proper name of God, and it is never attributed to any but to God.

1. First, Jehovah sets out God's eternity, in that it containeth all times, future, present, and past.
2. Secondly, It sets out also God's self-existency, coming from havah, to be.
3. Thirdly, When either some special mercy is promised, or some extraordinary judgment is threatened, then the name of Jehovah is commonly annexed; to shew that that God whose being is from himself, and who gives a being to all his creatures both on heaven and on earth, will certainly give a being to his promises and threatenings, and not fail to accomplish the words that are gone out of his mouth.
4. Fourthly, This name Jehovah consists only of quiescent letters, i. e. letters of rest, as the Hebrews call them, to shew that there is no rest till we come to Jehovah, and that in him we may safely and securely rest, as the dove did in Noah's ark.

'Is my portion.' Chelki, from חֶלְקִי, chalak; the Hebrew word signifies to divide. He alludes, as I take it, to the dividing of the land of Canaan amongst the Israelites by lot. 'The Lord,' saith he, 'is my portion,' my part, my lot; and with this portion I rest fully satisfied, as the Israelites were to do with their parts and portions in that pleasant land. It is true, saith Jeremiah, in the name of the church, I am thus and thus afflicted, and sorely distressed on all hands; but yet 'the Lord is my portion,' and that supports and bears up my spirits from fainting and sinking in this evil day.

'Saith my soul.' Naphshi, from נַפְשִׁי, nephesh; the Hebrew word hath nine several senses or significations in the Scripture. But let this suffice, that by soul here in the text we are to understand the heart, the mind, the spirit, and the understanding of a man. Well, saith the prophet, though I am in a sea of sorrow, and in a gulf of misery, yet my heart tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' my mind tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' my spirit tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' and my understanding tells me that 'the Lord is my portion;' and therefore I will bear up bravely in the face of all calamities and miseries.

'Therefore will I hope in him.' The Hebrew word יִשְׁכַּח, that is here rendered hope, is from יָכַח, Jachal, that signifies both hoping, expecting, and trusting; also it signifies a patient waiting upon the Lord. The prophet Jeremiah had not only a witness above him, but also a witness within him, that the Lord was his portion; and therefore he resolves firmly to hope in the Lord, and sweetly to trust on the Lord, and quietly and patiently to wait upon the Lord, till God should turn his storm into a calm, and his sad winter into a blessed summer. In my text there are three things observable:

First, An assertion or proposition in those words, 'The Lord is my portion.'

Secondly, A proof of it in those words, 'saith my soul.'

Thirdly, The use or inference from the premises in those words, 'Therefore will I hope in him.' The words being thus opened, the proposition that I intend to insist upon is this, viz.:

Doct. That the Lord is the saints' portion, the Lord is the believers' portion.

I shall call in a few scriptures to witness to the truth of this proposition, and then I shall further open it to you: Psa 16:5, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot;' Psa 73:26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;' Psa 119:57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words;' Jer 10:16, 'The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts is his name.'

Now for the further opening and clearing up of this great and glorious, this sweet and blessed truth, I shall endeavour to shew you, First, What a portion the Lord is to his saints, to his gracious ones; and, Secondly, The reasons or grounds whereupon the saints have laid claim to God as their portion.

I. For the first, What a portion God is. Now the excellency of this portion I shall shew you by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) First, God is a present portion. He is a portion in hand, he is a portion in possession. All the scriptures that are cited to prove the doctrine, evidence this to be a truth, Psa 48:14, Isa 25:9. And so doth that Psa 46:1, 'God is a very present help in trouble.' The Hebrew word betsaroth is in the

plural number troubles, that is, God is a present help in many troubles, in great troubles, and in continued troubles. Betsaroth is from צָרָה, tsor, that signifies to straiten, and closely to besiege. It notes the extremity of affliction and trouble. When the people of God are in their greatest extremity, then God will be a present help, a present portion to them: Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' God will be a present help, a present relief, a present support, a present comfort, a present portion to his people, in all those great and various trials that they may be exercised under: Psa 142:5, 'I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.' God is a portion in present possession, and not a portion in reversion. The psalmist doth not say, Thou mayest be my portion in another world, but 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living;' nor he doth not say, Thou wilt be my portion in another world, but 'Thou art my portion in the land of the living.' Look, as Elkanah gave Hannah a worthy portion in hand, 1Sa 1:5, so God gives himself to his saints as a worthy portion in hand. Many men wait, and wait long, for their earthly portions before they enjoy them; yea, their patience is oftentimes wore so threadbare in waiting, that they wish their parents in Abraham's bosom; ay, and sometimes in a worser place, that so they may inherit their honours, lordships, lands, treasures, &c. Look, as a bird in the hand is worth two, ay, ten, in the bush, so a portion in possession is worth two, ay, ten, in reversion. Now, God is a portion in present possession, and that speaks out the excellency of the saints' portion. As he in Plutarch said of the Scythians, that although they had no music nor vines among them, yet, as a better thing, they had gods, so I may say, though the saints have not this, nor that, nor the other earthly portion among them, yet, as a better thing, they have God for their present portion; and what can they desire more? But,

(2.) Secondly, As God is a present portion, so God is an immense portion, he is a vast large portion, he is the greatest portion of all portions: 1Ti 6:15, 'Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.' These words are a stately and lofty description of the greatness of God. The apostle heapeth up many words together, to shew that in greatness God excels all: Isa 40:15-17, 'Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.' Not only one nation, but many nations; yea, not only many nations, but all nations, in comparison of God, are but as the drop of a bucket; and what is lesser than a drop? and as the small dust of a balance; and what is of lighter weight and lesser worth than the small dust or powder of the balance that hangs on the scale, and yet never alters the weight? yea, they are nothing, they are less than nothing. And though Lebanon was a very great spacious forest, and had abundance of beasts in it, yet God was a God of that infinite greatness, that though all the beasts harbouring in that stately forest should be slain, and all the wood growing on it cut down to burn them with it, all would not make up a sacrifice any ways answerable or proportionable to his greatness with whom they had to do. And so in that Psa 147:5, 'Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'of his understanding there is no number.' Such is his greatness, that he knows not only all kinds and sorts of things, but even all particulars, though they exceed all number: Psa 145:3, 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'of his greatness there is no search.' God is infinitely

above all names, all notions, all conceptions, all expressions, and all parallels: Psa 150:2, 'Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness,' or greatness of greatness, or abundance of greatness, or according to the multitude of his greatness, as the Hebrew and Greek carries it; and so in that Deu 10:17, 'For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.' God is the original cause of all greatness. All that greatness that is in any created beings, whether they are angels or men, is from God; all their greatness is but a beam of his sun, a drop out of his sea, a mite out of his treasury. God is a God of that infinite greatness, that he fills heaven and earth with his presence; he is everywhere, and yet circumscribed to no place; he is in all things, and without all things, and above all things, and this speaks out his immensity, Psa 139:1-24. Job had a very large portion, before God made a breach upon him: 'He had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household,' Job 1:3; but at last God gives him twice as much as he had at first, 'for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses,' Job 42:12. Cattle are only instanced in, because the wealth of that country consisted especially in cattle; but yet, doubtless, Job had a great many other good things, as goods, lands, possessions, and stately habitations; but what is all this to a saint's portion? Certainly, had not Job had God for his portion, he had been but a rich fool, a golden beast, notwithstanding all the great things that God had heaped upon him. And so Ahasuerus had a very large portion, 'he reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces,' Est 1:1-2; but what were all his provinces but as so many handfuls of dust, in comparison of the saints' portion? The whole Turkish empire, saith Luther, is but a crust that God throws to a dog. Had a man all the world for his portion, it would be but a poor pittance. Nebuchadnezzar had a very great portion: Dan 5:18-19. 'O thou king, the most high God gave thy father Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, and whom he would he set up, and whom he would he put down.' And so in that Jer 27:5-8, 'I have made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power, and by my outstretched arm; and I have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come; and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.' The portion that here God gives to Nebuchadnezzar is a wonderful large portion; and yet all these nations that God gave to him were but as so many molehills, or as so many birds' nests, compared with a saint's portion. All nations are but as a drop of a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger, in comparison of God, nay, they are all nothing; but that word is too high, for they are less than nothing. Had a man as many worlds at his command as there be men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms to a saint's portion. When Alcibiades was proudly boasting of his lands that lay together, Socrates wittily rebukes his pride by bringing him a map of the world, and wishing him to shew him where

his lands did lie; his lands would hardly amount to more than the prick of a pin. England, Scotland, and Ireland are but three little spots to the vast continents that be in other parts of the world; and what then is thy palace, thy lordships, thy manors, thy farm, thy house, thy cottage, but a little minum, but a prick of a pin to God, who is so great, so vast a portion! Oh, sirs! had you the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint's portion. Can you tell the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or raise the dead, or make a new world? Then, and not till then, will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the great things that God hath laid up in the gospel' (for so that 1Co 2:9 is to be understood), oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God hath laid up for his people in another world! But,

(3.) Thirdly, As God is an immense portion, a large portion, so God is an all-sufficient portion: Gen 17:1, 'And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect. I am God Almighty,' or as some carry the words, 'I am God all-sufficient, or self-sufficient.' God hath self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency in himself. Some derive the word Shaddai, that is here rendered almighty or all-sufficient, from Shad, a dug, because God feeds his children with sufficiency of all good things, as the tender mother doth the sucking child: Gen 15:1, 'After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward;' I will be thy buckler to defend thee from all kind of mischief and miseries, and I will be thy exceeding great reward to supply thee with all necessary and desirable mercies; and what can a saint desire more? Psa 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' The sun, which among all inanimate creatures is the most excellent, notes all manner of excellency, provision, and prosperity; and the shield, which among all artificial creatures is the chiefest, notes all manner of protection whatsoever. Under the name of grace, all spiritual good is wrapped up; and under the name of glory, all eternal good is wrapped up; and under the last clause, 'no good thing will he withhold,' is wrapped up all temporal good: all put together speaks out God to be an all-sufficient portion. Before the world was made, before angels or men had a being, God was as blessed and as glorious in himself as now he is. God is such an all-sufficient and such an excellent being, that nothing can be added to him to make him more excellent. Man in his best estate is so great a piece of vanity, Psa 39:5, that he stands in need of a thousand thousand things; he needs the air to breathe in, the earth to bear him, and fire to warm him, and clothes to cover him, and an house to shelter him, and food to nourish him, and a bed to ease him, and friends to comfort him, &c. But this is the excellency of God, that he hath all excellencies in himself, and stands in need of nothing. Were there as many worlds as there are men in the world, and were all those worlds full of blessed saints, yea, were there as many heavens as there are stars in heaven, and were all those heavens full of glorious angels, yet all these saints and angels together could not add the least to God; for what can drops taken out of the sea add unto the sea? what can finite creatures add to an infinite being? Though all the men in the world should praise the sun, and say, The sun is a glorious creature, yet all this would add nothing to the light and glory of the sun; so, though all the saints and angels shall be blessing, and praising, and admiring, and worshipping of God to all eternity, yet they shall never be able to add anything to God, who is blessed for ever. O Christians!

God is an all-sufficient portion: his power is all-sufficient to protect you; his wisdom is all-sufficient to direct you; his mercy is all-sufficient to pardon you; his goodness is all-sufficient to provide for you; his word is all-sufficient to support you and strengthen you; and his graces all-sufficient to adorn you and enrich you; and his Spirit is all-sufficient to lead you and comfort you; and what can you desire more? O sirs! God hath within himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he hath all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all delights, all comforts, all contents, all joys, all beatitudes in himself. All the scattered excellencies and perfections that be in the creatures are eminently, transcendently, and perfectly in him. Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver are contracted in one piece of gold, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth are epitomised in God, according to that old saying, *Omne bonum in summo bono*, all good is in the chiefest good. God is one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. All the good, the excellency, the beauty and glory, that is in all created beings, are but parts of that whole that is in God; and all the good that is in them is borrowed and derived from God, who is the first cause, and the universal cause, of all that good that is in angels or men. God is a sufficient portion to secure your souls, and to supply all your wants, and to satisfy all your desires, and to answer all your expectations, and to suppress all your enemies, and, after all, to bring you to glory; and what can you desire more? But now all earthly portions are insufficient portions; they can neither prevent afflictions, nor support the soul under afflictions, nor mitigate afflictions, nor yet deliver a man from afflictions; they can neither arm the soul against temptations, nor comfort the soul under temptations, nor lead the soul out of temptations. All the creatures in the world are but as so many cyphers without God; when God frowns, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to cheer the soul; when God withdraws, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to sustain the soul; when God clouds his face, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to make it day with the soul, &c. There is not enough in the whole creation to content, quiet, or satisfy one immortal soul. He that hath most of the world would have more, and he that hath least of the world hath enough, if his soul can but groundedly say, 'The Lord is my portion.' But,

(4.) Fourthly, As the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, so the Lord is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. The want of an earthly portion may trouble me, but the want of God for my portion will damn me. It is not absolutely necessary that I should have a portion in gold, or silver, or jewels, or goods, or lands; but it is absolutely necessary that I should have God for my portion. I may have union and communion with God, though, with the apostles, I have neither gold nor silver in my purse, Acts 3:6; I may be holy and happy, though with Lazarus, Luk 16:20-21, I have never a rag to hang on my back, nor never a dry crust to put into my belly; I may to heaven at last, and I may be glorious in another world, though, with Job, I should be stripped of all my worldly glory, and set upon a dunghill in this world, Job 1:1-22, &c.; but I can never be happy here, nor blessed hereafter, except God be my portion. Though I could truly say that all the world were mine, yet if I could not truly say that the Lord is my portion, I should be but miserable under all my worldly enjoyments. To have God for my portion is absolutely necessary, for without it I am for ever and ever undone, Eph 2:12. In this verse you have several withouts, and it is very observable that they that were without God in the world, they were without Christ, without the church, without the covenant, without the promise, and without hope in the world; and therefore, such persons must needs be in a most sad and deplorable condition, &c.

[1.] First, In relation to the soul, and in relation to salvation, God is the most absolute necessary portion. If God be not my portion, my soul can never enjoy communion with him in this world; if God be not my portion, my soul can never be saved by him in the other world. But,

[2.] Secondly, When sinners are under terrors and horrors of conscience, when their consciences are awakened and convinced of the vileness of their natures, of the unspeakable evil that is in sin, yea, in the least sin, and of their lost, undone, and miserable estate out of Christ, Oh then! what would they not give to have God for their portion? Oh, then they would give all the gold and silver they have in the world to have God for their portion; oh, then they would give, Mic 6:6-7, 'thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yea, they would give their first-born, they would give the very fruit of their bodies, that they might have God to be the portion of their souls; oh, then they would say, as Mephibosheth said unto the king, 'Let Ziba take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house,' 2Sa 19:29-30. Under distress of conscience, poor sinners will cry out, Oh! let who will take all our honours, and all our manors, and all our treasures, and all our stores, and all our lands, and all our lordships, and all our bags, so we may have God for our portion. Oh! let us but have God for our portion, and we care not a straw who takes all. Now, what doth this speak out, but that, of all portions, God is the most absolute necessary portion? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Upon a dying bed, an awakened sinner sets the highest price, value, and esteem upon such as have God for their portion. Now he esteems a saint in rags that hath God for his portion above a wicked emperor in his royal robes, who hath only the world for his portion. What though wicked men, when they are in the height of their worldly prosperity, felicity, and glory, do slight the saints, and revile and scorn the saints, and contemn and undervalue the saints, Lam 2:14-15; Zep 2:8-10, &c.; yet, when death knocks at their doors, and when their consciences are startled, and when hell fire flashes in their faces, and when the worm within begins to gnaw, oh now, if all the world were a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of, they would give it all, so they might have that honour and happiness to change conditions with those who have God for their portion: Num 23:10, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.' Though men who have their portion in this life do not love to live the life of the righteous, yet, when they come to die, they are often desirous that they might die the death of the righteous. And this many hundred ministers and Christians can witness from their own experience. Lazarus having God for his portion, when he died he went to heaven without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse; whereas Dives, who had not God for his portion when he died, went tumbling down to hell in all his riches, bravery, and glory. Oh! it is infinitely better to go to heaven a beggar than to go to hell an emperor; and this the sinner understands when his conscience comes to be enlightened upon a dying bed, and therefore he cries out, Oh send for such a minister, and send for such and such a Christian, and let them pray with me, and counsel me, and, if it be possible, give out some drops of comfort to me. Oh that I had never derided nor reviled them! Oh that I had never opposed and persecuted them! Oh that I had lived at such a rate of holiness and exactness as they have done! Oh that I had walked with God as they have walked! Oh that I had laid out my time, my strength, my treasure, my parts, my all for God, as they have done! Oh that my estate was as good, as safe, and as happy as theirs is! Oh that I could as truly say that the Lord is my portion, as they can say that the Lord is their portion! And what doth all this speak out, but that high esteem and value that they set upon those that have God for their portion? So that upon this threefold account, we may

safely conclude that God is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. But,

(5.) Fifthly, As the Lord is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion, so the Lord is a pure and unmixed portion. God is an unmixed good, he hath nothing in him but goodness; he is an ocean of sweetness, without one drop of bitterness; he is a perfect beauty, without the least spot or shadow of deformity, Deu 32:4, Hab 1:13. All other portions are a bitter sweet; but God is a rose without prickles; he is a good, in which there is not the least evil: 1Jn 1:5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright, shining light, yea, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is all light and all love, all sweetness and all goodness, all kindness and all graciousness, and there is no un-comeliness, no unloveliness, no bitterness, nor no darkness at all in God. The moon when it shines brightest hath her dark spots and specks; but God is a light that shines most gloriously without the least spot or speck; God is a most pure, clear, splendid light. It is very observable, that the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, 'in him is no darkness at all;' that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck of vanity or folly, can cleave to him. God is a pure, a most pure act, without the least potentiality, defectibility, or mutability, and therefore in the highest sense he 'is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' By this metaphorical description of God the apostle would not have us think that the nature of God is changed into the nature of light; but by this similitude the apostle would represent something of the purity and excellency of God to us. The sun is light, the moon is light, and the stars are light; but it would be blasphemy for us to imagine that the essence of God is the same with this of the creatures; but this, sirs! you must remember, that there are many excellent properties of light, for which God is often in the Scripture resembled to light. As

[1.] First, Light is pure, and so is God: Hab 1:13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' There are four things that God cannot do:

(1.) He cannot lie.

(2.) He cannot die.

(3.) He cannot deny himself, nor

(4.) He cannot look with a favourable eye upon iniquity. He is a God of that infinite purity, that he cannot look upon iniquity but with an hateful eye, an angry eye, a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye.

[2] Secondly, All things are conspicuous to the light, and so they are to God: Heb 4:13, 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' The Greek word τετραχελισμ■να, is a metaphor, say some, that is taken from the priests, under the law, who when they killed the beasts for sacrifice, all things that were within the beasts were laid naked and bare before the priest that so he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Others say, the apostle alludes to the anatomising of such creatures, wherein men are very cautious and curious to find out every little vein or muscle, though they lie never so close. Others say, that it is a metaphor taken from those that lie with their faces upwards, that all passengers may see who they are. All agree in this, that all men's insides and outsides are anatomised, dissected, quartered, and laid naked to the eye of God: Job 34:21-22, 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no

darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun,' saith Ambrose. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Without light nothing can be seen; so without the beams of heavenly light no heavenly things can be seen. A man cannot see God, but in that light that comes down from above; a man cannot see Christ without he be first enlightened by Christ; a man cannot see heaven, but in that light that comes from heaven, Jas 1:17, 1Co 2:10, 1Co 2:12, 1Co 2:14-16. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all the torches that could be lighted, yea, notwithstanding all the light of the moon and stars; so it would be perpetual night with poor souls, notwithstanding all the torchlight of natural parts, and creature comforts, and notwithstanding all the star-light of civil honesty and common gifts, and notwithstanding all the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, did not the Sun of righteousness arise and shine upon them. But,

[4.] Fourthly, There is nothing more pleasant than the light: Ecc 11:7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and it is a very pleasant thing to behold the sun.' A philosopher being asked whether it were not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? answered, that that was a blind man's question, because life without light is but a lifeless life. Now, as there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the eye than light, so there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the soul than God. The poor northern nations, in Strabo, that want the light of the sun for some months together, when the term of his return approaches, they climb up into the highest mountains to spy it; and he that spies it first was accounted the best and most beloved of God, they chose him king almost, as the Tyrians did Strato. Now the return of the sun is not more pleasant and delightful to those poor northern nations, than God is pleasant and delightful to all gracious souls. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The light shines and scatters its rays over all the world, over east, west, north, and south, and so doth the presence and goodness of God, Psa 139:1-24. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The light is a creature of a most resplendent beauty, lustre, and glory; it dazzles the eyes of the beholders; and so God is a God of that transcendent beauty, majesty, and glory, that the very eyes of the angels are dazzled, as not being able to behold the brightness of his glory: Isa 6:2, 'God dwells in that light which no man can approach unto.' But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, The light of all bodies is the most incompound light; it will never mix with darkness; no more will God: 2Co 6:14, 'What communion hath light with darkness?' The nature of God is void of all composition. Light expels darkness, it never mixes nor mingles with it. By what has been said, you see that God is a pure and an unmixed light, and that in him there is no darkness at all. But now all worldly portions are mixed with many troubles, sorrows, cares, fears, hazards, dangers, vexations, oppositions, crosses, losses, and oftentimes with many gripes of conscience too. All earthly portions are mixed portions; the goodness of all creatures is a mixed goodness; our wine is mixed with water, our silver with tin, our gold with dross, our wheat with chaff, and our honey with gall, &c. Every bee hath his sting, and every rose hath his prickles; and this mixture speaks out all earthly portions to be 'vanity and vexation of spirit,' Ecc 1:13. That great prince Xerxes was wont to say, You look upon my crown and my purple robes, but did you know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up. And who is there in this our English Israel that cannot with both hands subscribe to this? The emblem of King Henry the Seventh, in all his buildings, in the windows, was still a crown in a bush of thorns;² wherefore, or

with what historical allusion he did so, is uncertain; but surely it was to imply thus much, that great places are not free from great cares, that no man knows the weight of a sceptre but he that sways it. This made Saul to hide himself amongst the stuff, when he should have been made king. Many a sleepless night, many a restless day, many a sad temptation, and many a busy shift, will their ambition cost them, that affect such places of eminency. Besides, high places are commonly very slippery; he that stands in them may suddenly fall, and wound his conscience, or easily fall and break his neck. But,

(6.) Sixthly, As God is a pure and unmixed portion, so he is a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion, Psa 16:5-6. He is so in himself, and he makes them so too who enjoy him for their portion: Psa 33:12, 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.' All the happiness and blessedness of the people of God stands in this, that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they are his inheritance. The Hebrew word *ashrei*, that is here rendered blessed, is, Oh the blessedness! or Oh the heaped up happiness of those whose God is the Lord! The happiness of such is so great and so glorious, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be uttered. The words are a joyful acclamation for their felicity that have God for their portion: Psa 144:15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' David having prayed for many temporal blessings in the behalf of the people, from ver. 12 to ver. 15, at last concludes, 'Blessed are the people that are in such a case;' but presently he checks and corrects himself, and eats, as it were, his own words, but rather, 'happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' The Syriac rendereth it question-wise, 'Is not the people [happy] that is in such a case?' The answer is, 'No,' except they have God to boot, Psa 146:5. Nothing can make that man truly miserable that hath God for his portion, nor nothing can make that man truly happy that wants God for his portion. God is the author of all true happiness; he is the donor of all true happiness; he is the maintainer of all true happiness, and he is the centre of all true happiness and blessedness; and, therefore, he that hath him for his God, for his portion, is the only happy man in the world. But now all earthly portions cannot make a man truly happy and blessed. A crown, a kingdom cannot; for Saul and other princes have found it so. Honours cannot; for Haman and others have found it so. A high and noble birth cannot; for Absalom, Amnon, and others have found it so; Riches cannot; for the rich fool in the Gospel, and many thousand others, have found it so. Large dominions and great commands cannot; for Ahasuerus, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others, have found it so. Policy cannot; for Ahithophel and other great counsellors have found it so. Glorious apparel and delicate fare cannot; for Dives and others have found it so. Applause and credit among the people cannot; for Herod and others have found it so. Learning and great gifts cannot; for the scribes and pharisees, and many others, have found it so. No earthly thing, nor earthly creature, can give happiness nor blessedness to man. *Non dat quod non habet*, nothing can give what it hath not. If the conduit hath no water, it can give no water; if the sun hath no light, it can give no light; if the physician hath no remedy, he can give no remedy, &c. But now it is a very true observation, though it be a very sad observation, viz., That every wicked man's portion is cursed unto him. Do but compare the scriptures in the margin together, and then let conscience judge. All a wicked man's relations are cursed to him, and all a wicked man's contentments and enjoyments are cursed to him, and all his mercies within doors are cursed to him, &c. What though a man should match with one that hath many thousand bags of gold for her portion, yet if the plague should be in every bag, would you count him happy in this match? Surely no. Verily this is the case of every man that hath not God for his portion. But

(7.) Seventhly, As God is a glorious portion, so he is a peculiar portion, he is a portion peculiar to his people, Psa 142:5-6; Jer 10:16. This is evident in the text, and in all the scriptures cited to prove the point, Psa 16:5, and so in that Psa 67:6, 'Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us:' and so Psa 68:20, 'He that is our God is the God of salvation,' or 'God of salvations,' as it is in the Hebrew. God is a God of all manner of salvations; he hath all sorts and ways of salvations; he is not only powerful, but also skilful, to save his people from ten thousand deaths and dangers. Faith is an appropriating grace, it is much in appropriating of God to itself: 'My Lord and my God,' and my Redeemer and my Saviour and my portion; Psa 73:26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.' In Gideon's camp every soldier had his own pitcher, Jdg 7:16; amongst Solomon's men of valour, every man wore his own sword, 1Ch 26:30; and the five wise virgins had every one oil in her own lamp, Mat 25:4. Luther was wont to say, that there lay a great deal of divinity couched up in pronouns, as in meum, tuum, suum, mine, thine, his: and so faith's appropriating of God to the soul, as its own portion, is all in all. God is a portion peculiar to the saints; he is the hidden manna, the new name, the white stone, the bread to eat that others know not of. There is never a hardened Pharaoh in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a murdering Saul in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a painted bloody Jezebel in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a cunning Ahithophel in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a proud Haman in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a tyrannical Nebuchadnezzar in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a crafty Herod in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a rich Dives in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a treacherous Judas in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never an hypocritical Simon Magus in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never an apostatizing Demas in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion;' nor there is never a persecuting scribe or pharisee in the world that can truly say, 'The Lord is my portion.' It is only the saint that can truly say, 'The Lord is his portion,' for God is peculiarly his, he is only his. But now all earthly portions are common portions; they are all common to good and bad, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not, to him that sweareth and to him that feareth an oath, Ecc 9:1-3. Was Abraham rich? so was Dives too; was David a king? so was Saul too; was Daniel a great favourite at court? so was Haman too, &c. And indeed usually the basest and the worst of men have the largest share in earthly portions; which made Luther say, that the whole Turkish empire was but a crust that God cast to a dog. Abraham gave unto his sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away, but unto Isaac he gave all that he had, Gen 25:5-6. So all earthly portions, which are giftless gifts, God gives them to the worst and vilest of men; Dan 4:17, 'This matter is by decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men;' and so in that Dan 11:31, 'And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom, but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.' Interpreters do generally agree, that by this vile person in the text is meant Antiochus Epiphanes, that was so great and mighty a prince, that when the Samaritans did write to him, they write, Antiocho magno deo, to Antiochus the great god. And indeed his very name speaks him out

to be some great and glorious person, for Antiochus Epiphanes is Antiochus the illustrious, the famous; and yet you see that the Holy Ghost, speaking of him, calls him a vile person Ah! how vile in the eyes of God are the greatest men in the world who have not God for their portion! Augustus in his solemn feasts gave trifles to some, but gold to others. God gives the trifling portions of this world to the vilest and worst of men, but his gold, his Christ, himself, he gives only to his saints: Gal 2:20, 'And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' Haws, that are for hogs, grow upon every hedge; but roses, that are for men, they only grow in pleasant gardens; you know how to apply it. Though many have counterfeit jewels, yet there are but a few that have the true diamond; though many have their earthly portions, yet there are but a few that have God for their portion. But,

(8.) Eighthly, As God is a peculiar portion, so he is a universal portion. He is a portion that includes all other portions. God hath himself the good, the sweet, the profit, the pleasure, the delight, the comfort, &c., of all portions. There is no good in wife, child, father, friend, husband, health, wealth, wit, wisdom, learning, honour, &c., but is all found in God: Rev 21:7, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son;' or as the Greek hath it, ο νικων, he that is overcoming, though he hath not yet overcome, yet if he be striving for the conquest, and will rather die than he will give up the bucklers, 'he shall inherit all things;' that is, he shall inherit God in all and all in God: Gen 33:9, 'And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself;' as the Hebrew hath it, *Li Rab*, 'I have much, my brother.' And indeed it was very much that an Esau should say he had much; it is more than many of the Esaus of these times will say. But Jacob speaks at a far higher rate in Gen 33:11 : 'Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough;' or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, *Li chol*, I have all. Esau had much, but Jacob had all, because he had all in God, and God in all. *Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*, he hath all that hath the haver of all: 2Co 6:10, 'As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' There is in God an immense fulness, an ocean of goodness, and an overplus of all that graciousness, sweetness, and kindness that is to be found in all other things or creatures. As Noah had a copy of every kind of creature in that famous library of the ark, out of which all were reprinted to the world, so he that hath God for his portion hath the original copy of all blessings, out of which all may easily be renewed. All the good-linesses and all the glories of all the creatures are eminently and perfectly to be enjoyed in God. God is an universal excellency. All the particular excellencies that are scattered up and down among angels, men, and all other creatures, are virtually and transcendently in him, he hath them all in his own being, Eph 1:3. All creatures in heaven and earth have but their particular excellencies; but God hath in himself the very quintessence of all excellencies. The creatures have but drops of that sea, that ocean, that is in God, they have but their parts of that power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, loveliness, desirableness, sweetness, graciousness, beauty, and glory that is in God. One hath this part, and another hath that; one hath this particular excellency, and another hath that; but the whole of all these parts and excellencies are to be found only in God. There is none but that God, that is an universal good, that can truly say, All power, all wisdom, all strength, all knowledge, all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, all glory, all excellency, &c., dwells in me. He that can truly say this, is a god, and he that cannot is no god. There is no angel in heaven, nor saint on earth, that hath the whole of any one of those excellencies that are in God; nay, all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, have not among them the whole of any one of those glorious excellencies and

perfections that be in God. All the excellencies that are scattered up and down in the creatures, are united into one excellency in God; but there is not one excellency in God that is fully scattered up and down among all the creatures. There is a glorious union of all excellencies in God, and only in God.

Now this God, that is such an universal good, and that hath all excellencies dwelling in himself, he says to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Assyria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1Ki 20:4. Our propriety reacheth to all that God is, and to all that God hath, Jer 32:38, Jer 32:42 God is not parted, nor divided, nor distributed among his people, as earthly portions are divided among children in the family; so as one believer hath one part of God, and another believer hath another part of God, and a third another part of God; oh no, but every believer hath whole God wholly, he hath all of God for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense, but in an absolute sense. God himself is theirs, he is wholly theirs, he is only theirs, he is always theirs. As Christ looks upon the Father, and saith, 'All thine is mine, and mine is thine,' 1Co 3:23, John 17:10, that may a saint say, looking upon God as his portion. He may truly say, O Lord, thou art mine, and all that thou hast; and I am thine, and all that I have. A saint may look upon God and say, O Lord, not only thy gifts but thy graces are mine, to adorn me and enrich me; and not only thy mercies and thy good things are mine to comfort me, and encourage me, but also thou thyself art mine; and this is my joy and crown of rejoicing. To be able to say that God is mine, is more than if I were able to say that ten thousand worlds, yea, and as many heavens, are mine; for it is God alone that is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. Heaven would be but a low thing without God, saith Augustine; and Bernard had rather enjoy Christ in a chimney-corner, than to be in heaven without him; and Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. It is God alone that makes heaven to be heaven.

Now God is so every particular believer's portion, as that he is every believer's portion: 1Co 1:1-2 'Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours.' As the sun is every man's sun to see by, to walk by, to work by; and as the sea is every man's sea to trade by, &c.; so God is every believer's portion. He is a poor saint's portion as well as a rich saint's portion; he is the despised believer's portion, as well as the exalted believer's portion; he is the weak believer's portion, as well as the strong believer's portion; he was as much his portion who miscalled his faith, and who in the behalf of his son cried out with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief,' Mark 11:24, as he was Abraham's portion, who, in the strength of his faith, offered up his onlyson, Gen 22:1-24; he was as much Job's portion sitting on a dunghill, as he was David's portion sitting on a royal throne; he was as much Lazarus his portion, that had never a penny in his purse, as he was Solomon's portion, who made gold and silver as plenteous in Jerusalem as the stones of the streets, 2Ch 1:15. God is not my portion alone, but he is every saint's portion in heaven, and he is every saint's portion on earth. The father is every child's portion, and though they may wrangle and quarrel, and fall out one with another, yet he is all their portions; and so it is here; and oh what a spring of joy and comfort should this be to all the saints. Riches are not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; honour and preferment in the world is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; liberty and freedom is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; credit and applause in the world

is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion; prosperity and success is not every believer's portion, but God is every believer's portion, &c.

God is a universal portion, all things receive their being, essence, and existence from him, for the fulness of all things is in him, really and eminently. The heathen philosophers of old called God $\tau\pi\alpha\nu$, i. e. all or everything, and in that oracle 'great Pan is dead,' of which Plutarch makes mention. Christ is called the greater Pan, because, say some, he is the Lord of all, and containeth all things in himself: Exo 33:19, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee,' to wit, because in God are all good things, God is all things, God is everything. The cream, the good, the sweet, the beauty, and the glory of every creature, and of every thing, centres in God. But,

(9.) Ninthly, As God is an universal portion, so God is a safe portion, a secure portion. He is a portion that none can rob or wrong you of; he is a portion that none can touch or take from you: he is a portion that none can cheat or spoil you of. God is such a portion, that no friend, no foe, no man, no enemy, no devil can ever rob a Christian of. O Christians, God is so yours in Christ, and so yours by covenant, and so yours by promise, and so yours by purchase, and so yours by conquest, and so yours by donation, and so yours by marriage union and communion, and so yours by the earnest of the Spirit, and so yours by the feelings and witnessings of the Spirit, that no power or policy on earth can ever finger your portion, or cheat, or rob you of your portion: Psa 48:14, 'For this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death.' He is not only our God for the present, nor he will not be only our God for a short time longer; oh no, but he will be our God for ever and ever. If God be once thy portion, he will be for ever thy portion. It must be a power that must over-match the power of God, and a strength that must be above the strength of God, that must rob or spoil a Christian of his portion; but who is there that is stronger than God? Is the clay stronger than the potter, or the stubble than the flame, or weakness than strength? yea, is not the very weakness of God stronger than man? and who then shall ever be able to take away a Christian's portion from him? Rom 9:1-33, 1Co 1:25, and 1Co 10:22. But now a man may be easily deprived of his earthly portion. How many have been deprived of their earthly portions by storms at sea, and others by force and violence, and others by fraud and deceit, and others by hideous lying and hellish swearing? Many have lost their earthly portions by treachery, knavery, perjury, subtilty, robbery, &c. Some play away their earthly portions, and others with Esau fool away their earthly portions, and not a few, with the prodigal, sin away their earthly portions. Ahab's fingers itched to be a-fingering of Naboth's vineyard. 1Ki 21:1-5. A man can no sooner come to enjoy an earthly portion, but other men's fingers itch to be a-fingering of his portion, as daily experience doth sufficiently evidence. But God is a portion that the fire cannot burn, nor the floods cannot drown, nor the thief cannot steal, nor the enemy cannot sequester, nor the soldier cannot plunder a Christian of. A man may take away my gold from me, but he cannot take away my God from me. The Chaldeans and the Sabeans could take away Job's estate from him, but they could not take away Job's God from him, Job 1:1-22. And the Amalekites burnt Ziklag, and robbed David of his substance, and of his wives, but they could not rob him of his God, 1Sa 30:1-31. And those persecutors in the 10th and 11th chapters of the Hebrews plundered the saints of their goods, but they could not plunder them of their God. Till weakness can make a breach upon strength, impotency upon omnipotency, the pitcher upon the potter, and the crawling worm upon the Lord of hosts, a saint's portion is safe and secure. It is true, sickness and disease may take away my health and my strength from me, and death may take away my friends and my

relations from me, and enemies may take away my estate, my liberty, my life from me; but none of all these can take away my God from me. I have read of the men of Tyrus, how that they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that so they might be sure of him, supposing that all their safety lay in the enjoyment of him. Certainly God is so chained, and so linked, and so nailed to his people by his everlasting love, and by his everlasting covenant, and by the blood of his Son, and by his oath, and by that law of relation that is between him and them, that no created power shall ever be able to deprive them of him. But,

(10.) Tenthly, As God is a safe portion, a secure portion, so he is a suitable portion, Psa 4:6-7. No object is so suitable and adequate to the heart as he is. He is a portion that punctually, exactly, and directly suits the condition of the soul, that suits the desires of the soul, the necessities of the soul, the wants of the soul, the longings of the soul, and the prayers of the soul. The soul can crave nothing, nor wish for nothing, but what is to be found in this portion. Here is light to enlighten the soul, and wisdom to counsel the soul, and power to support the soul, and goodness to supply the soul, and mercy to pardon the soul, and beauty to delight the soul, and glory to ravish the soul, and fulness to fill the soul, &c. Health is not more suitable to the sick man, nor wealth to the poor man, nor bread to the hungry man, nor drink to the thirsty man, nor clothes to the naked man, nor balm to the wounded man, nor ease to the tormented man, nor health to the diseased man, nor a pardon to the condemned man, nor a guide to the blind man, &c. than this portion is suitable to all the necessities of man; and this speaks out the excellency of this portion above all other portions. Now there is no earthly portion that can suit an immortal soul; he is a fool upon record that said, 'Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years, take ease, eat, drink, and be merry,' Luk 12:18-20. If the man, saith Ambrose upon the words, had the soul of a swine, what could he have said more? for those things were more suitable to swine than they were to an immortal soul. Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, it is capable of union and communion with God; it is capable of a choice enjoyment of God here, and of an eternal fruition of God hereafter. A great shoe will not fit a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger; no more will any earthly portion suit an immortal soul. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature; it is an heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. So that nothing can suit the soul below God, nor nothing can satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that all the riches of the east and west Indies, nor rocks of diamonds, nor mountains of gold, can fill it, or satisfy it, or suit it. When a man is in prison, and condemned to die, if one should come to him, and tell him, that there is such a friend or such a relation that hath left him a very fair estate, a brave seat, &c., yet all this would not please him, nor joy him, because it doth not suit his present condition; oh, but now let a man bring him his pardon, sealed under his prince's hand, oh how will this delight him and joy him! And so tell a man that is ready to starve, that such and such loves him, and that such and such intends well towards him, &c., yet all this doth not take him, it doth not satisfy him, and all because it doth not suit him; oh but now do but bring him food to eat, and this will joy him and delight him, and all because it suits him. That is the highest good, that is the most suitable good to the soul, and such a good is God; that is the most excellent portion, that is the most suitable portion to the soul, and such a portion is God. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, As God is a suitable portion, so he is an incomprehensible portion. No created understanding can comprehend what a portion God is, Psa 147:5, Job 26:14. It is true God is not

incomprehensible, in regard of his own understanding, for he perfectly understands himself, else he could not be God; but God is incomprehensible in regard of us, and the angels, who are no ways able to comprehend infiniteness: 1Ki 8:27, 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded!' God is an infinite being, and therefore he cannot be contained in any place, nor comprehended by any created being. Such multiplied phrases and Hebraisms as are here, as heaven, and the heaven of heavens, do very emphatically set out the immensity and incomprehensibleness of God: Job 37:23, 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.' We are as well able to comprehend the sea in a cockle-shell, as we are able to comprehend God. God is above all name, all notion, and all comprehension. God is so incomprehensible, that you shall as soon tell the stars of heaven, and number the sand of the sea, and stop the sun in his course, and raise the dead, and make a world, as you shall be able to comprehend the infiniteness of God's essence: Psa 145:3, 'His greatness is unsearchable.' The most perfect knowledge that we can have of God is, that we cannot perfectly know him, because we do know him to be infinitely and incomprehensibly perfect: Rom 11:33, 'Oh the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! When men and angels do search farthest into God's perfection, they do then most of all discover their own imperfection; for it is utterly impossible for angels or men, by their most accurate disquisition, to find out the Almighty to perfection, 1Ti 6:16, 'who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see.' Here is a denial both of the fact and the possibility. It is a good observation of Chrysostom on the words, *Diligentiæ Pauli attente, non dicit lucem incomprehensibilem, &c.* Observe the diligence of Paul, he doth not say a light incomprehensible, but a light inaccessible, which is much more; for that which, being sought and searched for, cannot be comprehended, we say is incomprehensible; but that which suffereth not by any means the labour of searching after, and which no one can come near, that is inaccessible. There is infinitely more in God than the tongues of men or angels can express. There is much in God beyond the apprehension and comprehension of all created beings. The sum of all that philosophers and schoolmen have attained to concerning this great principle, amounts to no more than this, viz., that men and angels can never comprehend that perfection which dwells in God; for the perfection of God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. God, saith Dionysius, is a super-substantial substance, an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken. When one was asked what God was, he answered, that he must be God himself, before he could know God fully. When the tyrant Hiero asked the poet Simonides what God was, he craved a day to study an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; the next day, after being questioned, he asked two days, and the third time he craved four, and so went on, doubling the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that the more he studied the nature of God, the less he was able to define what God was. He being so incomprehensible in his nature, the more this poor heathen inquired, the more he admired, and the less he understood.

It was a notable observation of Chrysostom, who being very busy and studious in searching into the nature of God, saith, I am like a man digging in a deep spring; I stand here, and the water riseth upon me; and I stand there, and still the water riseth upon me. Indeed, this is a knowledge that passeth knowledge, Eph 3:19. The Turks build their mosques or churches without any roof, because they hold as we do, that God is incomprehensible. God is a circle whose centre is

everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere, all which speaks out his infiniteness and incomprehensibleness. But now all earthly portions are easily apprehended and comprehended. A portion in money, or plate, or goods, or lands, or jewels, is easily cast up, and so many hundreds or thousands a year are quickly told. There are few, except it be children or fools, but can readily give an account of all earthly portions. The child's portion, and the wife's portion, and the servant's portion, and the soldier's portion, and the poor man's portion, and the rich man's portion, are talked on all the city over, and all the town over, and all the country over; but God is such an incomprehensible portion, that there is not a man in town, city, or country that is able to comprehend him, Pro 3:15. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, As God is an incomprehensible portion, so God is an inexhaustible portion; a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted; a fountain that still overflows; a rich mine that hath no bottom; a spring that can never be drawn dry, but continues always full, without augmentation or diminution: John 4:14, 'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.' If grace in the soul be such a perpetual flowing fountain, that it shall never be exhausted till grace be swallowed up in glory, then certainly the God of grace is much more an inexhaustible fountain that can never be drawn dry. Angels, saints, and sinners have lived upon this portion almost this six thousand years, and it is not in the least diminished, Col 1:16-17. God hath his city-house, and his country-house, where millions have been kept at his table, and lived upon his purse, his charge, even days without number, and yet God is not one penny the poorer for all this. This portion is like the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, which never failed: 1Ki 17:14-16, 'For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Elijah.' God is such a portion as cannot be wasted nor diminished; he is such a portion as can never fail. Should all Christians now live to the age of the patriarchs, who lived many hundred years, and should they all live freely, and keep open house every day in the year, yet at the end, not a dram, not a penny, no not a farthing of this portion will be expended or diminished.

Though men have never so great a stock, yet if they still spend upon it they will certainly consume it; oh, but God is such a stock as can never be spent, as can never be consumed. If a sparrow should but fetch a drop of water out of the sea once a day, yea, once in a thousand years, yet in time it would be exhausted; oh but God is such a sea, such an ocean, that if every angel in heaven, and every saint and sinner on earth, should drink whole rivers at a draught, yet not one drop could be diminished. If a child should take but a cockle-shell of water out of the sea every day, the sea would be really the less, though not visibly the less, and in time it would be exhausted, and drawn dry; but let all created beings be every day a-drawing from God, yet they shall never lessen him, they shall never draw him dry. The mother's breasts are often drawn dry, but the more you draw at the breasts of God, the more milk of grace and comfort will flow in upon you: Isa 66:10, 11, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be ye glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for thy joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that you may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.' God keeps open house for all comers and goers, for all created creatures both in heaven and earth; and though they are perpetually sucking at his breasts, yet the more they draw, the more the

heavenly milk of divine joy, content, and satisfaction flows in abundantly upon them, Psa 104:24. All creatures, both high and low, rich and poor, honourable and base, noble and ignoble, bond and free, Jews and Gentiles, are all maintained upon God's own cost and charge; they are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse; and yet God is not a pin the poorer for all this. It would break and beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of that innumerable company that God feeds, and clothes, and cherishes, and maintains every day upon the account of his own revenue, which is never the poorer for all the vast expenses that he is daily at. There is still in God a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundance, notwithstanding the vast sums that he hath, and doth daily expend. It were blasphemy to think that God should be a penny the poorer by all that he hath laid out for the maintenance of those millions of angels and men, that have had their dependence upon him, from their first creation to this very day. Look, as the sun hath never the less light for filling the stars with light, and as the fountain hath never the less water for filling the lesser vessels with water that are about it; so though God fills all the vessels, both of grace and glory, with his own fulness, yet he is never the less full himself; there is still in God plenitudo fontis, the fulness of a fountain. Look, as the overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet after all it remains full; so though the Lord be such an overflowing fountain as that he fills all, yet still he retains all fulness in himself.

I have read of a Spanish ambassador, that, coming to see the treasury of Saint Mark in Venice, that is so much cried up in the world, he fell a-groping at the bottom of the chests and trunks, to see whether they had any bottom; and being asked the reason why he did so, answered in this among other things, My master's treasure differs from yours, and excels yours, in that his hath no bottom as yours have, alluding to the mines in Mexico, Peru, and other parts of the western India. All men's mints, bags, purses, and coffers may be quickly exhausted and drawn dry, but God is such an inexhaustible portion, that he can never be drawn dry; all God's treasures are bottomless, and all his mints are bottomless, and all his bags are bottomless. Millions of thousands in heaven and earth feed every day upon him, and yet he feels it not; he is still a-giving, and yet his purse is never empty; he is still a-filling all the court of heaven, and all the creatures on earth, and yet he is a fountain that still overflows. There be them that say, that it is most certainly true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never wastes; but whatever truth is in this story, of this I am most sure, that though all the creatures in both worlds live and spend continually on Christ's stock, yet it never wasteth. But now all earthly portions are frequently exhausted and drawn dry. The prodigal quickly spent his patrimony upon his harlots, Luk 15:1-32; and how many drunkards, and gluttons, and wantons, and gamesters, and roysters, &c., do daily bring a noble to ninepence! Pro 23:20-21. 'Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?' saith God to Job, Job 38:22, &c. Now, saith Gregory, the treasures of the snow are worldly riches, which men rake together, even as children do snow, which the next shower washeth away, and leaves nothing in the room of it but dirt. And ah! how many merchants, and shopkeepers, and others in these breaking times, have found all their riches and earthly portions to melt away as snow before the sun! how many of late have been very rich one week, and stripped of all the next, and set with Job upon the dunghill! All earthly portions are like water in a cistern, that may easily and quickly be drawn dry; but God is an inexhaustible portion, that can never be drawn dry; and this discovers the excellency of this portion above all other portions. But

(13.) Thirteenthly, As God is an inexhaustible portion, so God is a soul-satisfying portion, Psa 17:15. He is a portion that gives the soul full satisfaction and content: Psa 16:5-6, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' It was well with him as his heart could wish. And so in that Psa 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;' or as some render it, 'I would I were in heaven with thee'; or as others read the words, 'I have sought none in heaven or earth besides thee;' or as others, 'I desire none in heaven or earth besides thee,' or 'I affect none in heaven, nor none on earth like thee; I love none in heaven, nor none on earth, in comparison of thee; I esteem thee instead of all other treasure, and above all other treasures that are in heaven, or that are on earth.' The holy prophet had spiritual and sweet communion with Christ to comfort and strengthen him; he had a guard of glorious angels to protect him and secure him, and he had assurance of heaven in his bosom to joy and rejoice him; and yet it was none of these, nay, it was not all these together, that could satisfy him, it was only an infinite good, an infinite God, that could satisfy him. He very well knew that the substantials of all true happiness and blessedness did lie in God, and his enjoyment of God, It was not his high dignities nor honours that could satisfy him; it was not the strength, riches, security, prosperity, and outward glory of his kingdom that could satisfy him; it was not his delightful music, nor his noble attendance, nor his well furnished tables, nor his great victories, nor his stately palaces, nor his pleasant gardens, nor his beautiful wife, nor his lovely children, that could satisfy him; all these without God could never satisfy him; but God without all these was enough to quiet him, and satisfy him: John 14:8, 'Philip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' A sight of God will satisfy a gracious soul more than all worldly contentments and enjoyments, yea, one sight of God will satisfy a saint more than all the glory of heaven will do. God is the glory of heaven. Heaven alone is not sufficient to content a gracious soul, but God alone is sufficient to content and satisfy a gracious soul. God only is that satisfying good, that is able to fill, quiet, content, and satisfy an immortal soul. Certainly, if there be enough in God to satisfy the spirits of just men made perfect, whose capacities are far greater than ours, Heb 12:23-25; and if there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, whose capacities are far above theirs; if there be enough in God to satisfy Jesus Christ, whose capacity is unconceivable and unexpressible; yea, if there be enough in God to satisfy himself, then certainly there must needs be in God enough to satisfy the souls of his people. If all fulness, and all goodness and infiniteness will satisfy the soul, then God will. There is nothing beyond God imaginable, nor nothing beyond God desirable, nor nothing beyond God delectable; and therefore the soul that enjoys him, cannot but be satisfied with him. God is a portion beyond all imagination, all expectation, all apprehension, and all comparison; and therefore he that hath him cannot but sit down and say, I have enough, Gen 33:11: Psa 63:5-6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.' Marrow and fatness cannot so satisfy the appetite, as God can satisfy a gracious soul; yea, one smile from God, one glance of his countenance, one good word from heaven, one report of love and grace, will infinitely more satisfy an immortal soul, than all the fat, and all the marrow, and all the dainties and delicacies of this world can satisfy the appetite of any mortal man. 'My soul shall be satisfied with fatness and fatness'; so the Hebrew hath it; that is, my soul shall be topful of comfort, it shall be filled up to the brim with pleasure and delight, in the remembrance and enjoyment of God upon my bed, or upon my beds, in the plural, as the Hebrew hath it. David had many a hard bed and

many a hard lodging, whilst he was in his wilderness condition. It oftentimes so fell out that he had nothing but the bare ground for his bed, and the stones for his pillows, and the hedges for his curtains, and the heavens for his canopy; yet in this condition God was sweeter than marrow and fatness to him; though his bed was never so hard, yet in God he had full satisfaction and content: Jer 31:14, 'My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord; and 'my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus,' Php 4:19, saith Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles. The Greek word πληρῶσαι signifies to fill up, even as he did the widow's vessels, 2Ki 4:4, till they did overflow. God will fill up all, he will make up all, he will supply all the wants and necessities of his people. That water that can fill the sea, can much more fill a cup; and that sun which can fill the world with light, can much more fill my house with light. So that God that fills heaven and earth with his glory, can much more fill my soul with his glory. To shew what a satisfying portion God is, he is set forth by all those things that may satisfy the heart of man, as by bread, water, wine, milk, honours, riches, raiment, houses, lands, friends, father, mother, sister, brother, health, wealth, light, life, &c. And if these things will not satisfy, what will? It is enough, says old Jacob, that Joseph is alive, Gen 45:28; so says a gracious soul, It is enough that God is my portion. A pardon cannot more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread an hungry man, nor drink a thirsty man, nor clothes a naked man, nor health a sick man, &c., than God doth satisfy a gracious man. But,

Now worldly portions can never satisfy the souls of men, Ecc 5:10. 'He that loveth silver shall never be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.' All the world cannot fill the soul, nor all the creatures in the world cannot stock the soul with complete satisfaction. As nothing can be the perfection of the soul but he that made it, so nothing can be the satisfaction of the soul but he that made it. If a man be hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him; if wounded, it cannot heal him; if weak, it cannot strengthen him; if fallen, it cannot raise him; if wandering, it cannot reduce him; oh how much less able is it then to satisfy him! He that, out of love to silver, seeketh after silver, shall love still to seek it, but shall never be satisfied with it. A man shall as soon satisfy the grave, and satisfy hell, and satisfy the stomach with wind, as he shall be able to satisfy his soul with any earthly portion. All earthly portions are dissatisfying portions, they do but vex and fret, gall and grieve, tear and torment, the souls of men. The world is a circle, and the heart of man is a triangle, and no triangle can fill a circle.² Some good or other will be always wanting to that man that hath only outward good to live upon. Absalom's beauty could not satisfy him, nor Haman's honour could not satisfy him, nor Ahab's kingdom could not satisfy him, nor Balaam's gold could not satisfy him, nor Ahithophel's policy could not satisfy him, nor the scribes and pharisees' learning could not satisfy them, nor Dives's riches could not satisfy him, nor Alexander's conquests could not satisfy him; for when, as he thought, he had conquered one world, he sits down and wishes for another world to conquer; and Cyrus the Persian king was wont to say, did men but know the cares which he sustained under his imperial crown, he thought no man would stoop to take it up. Gilimex, king of the Vandals, when he was led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, 'Vanity of vanity, all is vanity.' Charles the fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out with detestation to all his honours, riches, pleasures, trophies, Abite hinc, abite longe, get you hence, let me hear no more of you. And it hath been long since said of our King Henry the second, 'He whom, alive, the world could scarce suffice, When dead, in eight-foot earth contented lies.' By all these instances, it is most evident that no earthly portions

can satisfy the souls of men. Can a man fill up his chest with air? or can he fill up the huge ocean with a drop of water? or can a few drops of beer quench the thirst of a man in a burning fever? or can the smell of meat, or the reeking fume of a ladle, or dreaming of a banquet, satisfy an hungry stomach? No! no more can any earthly portions fill or satisfy the heart of man. If emptiness can fill the soul, if vanity can satisfy the soul, or if vexation can give content to the soul, then may earthly portions satisfy the soul, but not till then. When a man can gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, and turn day into night, and winter into summer, then shall he find satisfaction in the creatures; but not before. All earthly portions are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and they are found to be lighter than the dust of the balance; and this will rather inflame the thirst than quench it. A man that hath only the world for his portion, is like to Noah's dove out of the ark, that was in continual motion, but could find no resting place; but a man that hath God for his portion is like the dove, returning and resting in the ark, The soul can never be at rest, till it comes to rest and centre in God. God himself is the soul's only home, no good but the chiefest good can suffice an immortal soul. Look, as God never rested till he had made man, so man can never rest till he comes to enjoy God; the soul of man is of a very vast capacity, and nothing can fill it to the brim but he that is fulness itself. It is the breast, and not the baby² nor the rattle, that will satisfy the hungry child; and it is God, and not this or that creature, that can satisfy the soul of man. But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, As God is a soul-satisfying portion, so God is a permanent portion, an indefinite portion, a never failing portion, a lasting, yea, an everlasting portion: Psa 73:26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength, or the rock, of my heart, and my portion for ever.' God is a fountain which the hottest summer dries not, a bottomless treasure that can never be expended. God ever was, and ever will be. He cannot borrow his being from anything, who gives being and well-being to all things. 'God is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, he is yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever,' Rev 1:8. God is the Almighty, which is, and which was, and which is to come. All the differences of time are united by some to connote the eternity of God, in that Exo 3:14, 'And God said unto Moses, I am that I am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I am hath sent me unto you.' Some translate this text, according to the full scope of the future amongst the Hebrews, 'I am that I am, that I was, and that I will be;' for the future amongst the Hebrews points at all differences of time, past, present, and to come; but others, observing the strict and proper signification of the future, translate it thus, 'I will be that I will be.' This name of God imports two of God's incommunicable attributes, First, His eternity, when he saith, 'I will be.'

Secondly, His immutability, when he saith, 'That I will be.' The Rabbins, upon this text, express themselves after this manner: 'The blessed God said unto Moses, Say unto them, I that have been, and I the same now, and I the same for time to come,' &c.; but others, more agreeable to the Chaldee paraphrase, express themselves thus: 'I, he that is, and was, and hereafter will be, hath sent me unto you.' But it is observable, that the angel of the waters unites all differences of time in that great and glorious acknowledgment, Rev 16:5, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.' God is a God of that infinite excellency and glory, that it is utterly impossible for him to be better, or other than he is. If God should in the least be alterable or mutable, he would presently cease to be God. God is a God of that transcendent excellency, that there can be nothing added to him, nor nothing subtracted from him. If you add anything to him, you deny him to be God; and if you take anything from him, you destroy his being,

Jas 1:17; Psa 90:2, 'From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.' 'And Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall never be taken from her,' Luk 10:42. God is eternal, as neither being capable of a beginning nor ending; and therefore the Egyptians used to signify God by a circle, and the Persians thought that they honoured God most, when, going up to the top of the highest tower, they called him the circle of heaven. Now you know a circle hath no end. And it was a custom among the Turks to go up every morning to a high tower, and to cry out, God always was, and always will be, and so salute their Mahomet. Some things have a beginning, but no ending, as angels and the souls of men; and some things have no beginning, and yet have an end, as the decrees of God in their final accomplishment; and some things have both a beginning and an ending, as all sublunary things; but God hath neither beginning nor ending. All creatures have a lasting, angels have an outlasting, but God hath an everlasting being: 1Ti 1:17, 'Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.' God is without beginning and end, first and last, past and to come: Psa 102:25-27, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.' Were there no other scripture to prove the eternity and immutability of God, this were enough. Whatever changes may pass upon the heavens and the earth, yet God will always remain unchangeable and unalterable. By what hath been said, it is most evident that God is an everlasting portion, that he is a never-failing portion. But now all earthly portions are very uncertain; now they are, and anon they are not: Pro 23:5, 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.' Though the foolish world call riches substance, yet they have no solid subsistence. All earthly portions are as transitory as a shadow, a ship, a bubble, a bird, a dream, an arrow, a post that passeth swiftly away. Riches were never true to any that have trusted in them. In this text, riches are said not to be, because they do not continue to be; they will not abide by a man, they will not long continue with a man, and therefore they are as if they were not. All earthly things are vain and transitory, they are rather shows and shadows than real things themselves: 1Co 7:31, 'For the fashion of this world passeth away.' The Greek word σχῆμα signifies a mathematical figure, which is a mere notion, and nothing in substance. All the glory of this world is rather a matter of fashion than of substance, it is a body without a soul, it is a golden shell without a kernel, it is a show without a substance. There is no firmness, there is no solidness, there is no consistency, there is no constancy in any of the creatures. All the pomp, and state, and glory of the world is but a mere piece of pageantry, a mask, a comedy, a fantasy: Acts 25:23, 'And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp.' The original words, μετὰ πολλὰς φαντασίας, signifies great fantasy, or vain show. The greatest glory and pomp of this world, in the eye of God, in the account of God, is but as a fantasy or a shadow. It was a custom in Rome, that when the emperor went by upon some great day in all his imperial pomp, there was an officer appointed to burn flax before him, and to cry out, Sic transit gloria mundi, so the glory of this world passeth away; and this was purposely done to put him in mind that all his honour, pomp, glory, and grandeur should soon pass and vanish away, as the flax did that he saw burnt before his eyes. That great conqueror of the world, Alexander, caused a sword in the compass of a wheel to be painted upon a table, to shew that what he had gotten by the sword was subject to be turned about by the wheel of fortune;² and many great conquerors, besides him, have found it so, and many now alive have seen it so.

Look, as the rainbow shews itself in all its dainty colours, and then vanisheth away; so doth all worldly honours, riches, and preferments shew themselves and then vanish away; and how many in our days have found it so! When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants; I do not love that wealth, said an heathen, which hangs upon ropes, for if they break, the ship and all her wealth miscarries. Certainly within these few months the miscarrying of several ships hath caused several merchants sadly to miscarry. A storm at sea, a spark of fire, an unfaithful servant, a false oath, or a treacherous friend, may quickly bring a man to sit with Job upon a dunghill. Look, as the bird flies from tree to tree, and as the beggar goes from door to door, and as the pilgrim travels from place to place, and as the physician walks from patient to patient; so all the riches, honours, and glory of this world do either fly from man to man, or else walk from man to man. Who knows not, that many times one is made honourable by another's disgrace? another is made full by another man's emptiness? and a third is made rich by another's poverty? How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed, if the prince doth but frown upon him! and how soon doth the prince become a peasant, if God doth but frown upon him? Now one is exalted, and anon he is debased; now one is full, and anon he is hungry; now one is clothed gloriously, and anon he is clothed with rags; now one is at liberty, and anon he is under restraint; now a man hath many friends, and anon he hath never a friend. There is nothing but vanity and uncertainty in all earthly portions. But,

(15.) Fifteenthly, and lastly, As God is a permanent and never failing portion, so God is an incomparable portion; and this follows clearly and roundly upon what hath been said; for, (1.) If God be a present portion, a portion in hand, a portion in possession; and, (2.) If God be an immense portion, if he be the vastest, the largest, and the greatest portion; and, (3.) If God be an all-sufficient portion; and, (4.) If God be the most absolute, needful, and necessary portion; and (5.) If God be a pure and unmixed portion; and, (6.) If God be a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion; and, (7.) If God be a peculiar portion; and, (8.) If God be a universal portion; and, (9.) If God be a safe portion, a secure portion, a portion that none can rob or wrong us of; and, (10.) If God be a suitable portion; and, (11.) If God be an incomprehensible portion; and,

(12.) If God be an inexhaustible portion, a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted or drawn dry; and, (13.) If God be a soul-satisfying portion; and,

(14.) If God be a permanent and an everlasting portion: then it must very necessarily follow, that God is an incomparable portion. But such a portion God is, as I have proved at large; and, therefore, beyond all dispute, God must needs be an incomparable portion: Pro 3:13-15, 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,' (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ), 'and the man that getteth understanding: for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her.' All the gold of Ophir, and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth, are nothing, yea, less than nothing, compared with God. God is a portion more precious than all those things which are esteemed most precious. A man may desire, what not? he may desire that all the mountains in the world may be turned into mountains of gold for his use; he may desire that all the rocks in the world may be turned into the richest pearls for his use; he may desire that all the treasure that is buried in the sea may be brought into his treasures; he may desire that all the crowns and sceptres of all the princes and emperors of the world, may be piled up at his gate, as they were once said to be at Alexander's; yet all these things are not comparable to a saint's portion, yea, they are not to be named in that day, wherein the

excellency of a saint's portion is set forth. Horace writes of a precious stone that was more worth than twenty thousand shekels, and Pliny valued the two precious pearls of Cleopatra at twelve hundred thousand shekels.² But what were these, and what were all other precious stones in the world, but dung and dross, in comparison of a saint's portion? Php 3:7, Php 3:9. I have read a story of a man, whom Chrysostom did feign to be in prison. Oh, saith he, if I had but liberty, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, if I had but for necessity, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I for a little variety, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I any office, were it the meanest, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, had I but a magistracy, though over one town only, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I a prince, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but a king, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but an emperor, I would desire no more! He had it. Oh then, were I but emperor of the whole world, I would then desire no more! He had it; and yet then he sits down with Alexander, and weeps that there are no more worlds for him to possess. Now did any man enjoy what he is said to desire, it would be but a very mean portion compared with God. We may truly say of all the honours, riches, greatness, grandeur, and glory of this world, compared with God, as Gideon sometimes said of the vintage of Abiezer, 'The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer,' Jdg 8:2; so the very gleanings, yea, the smallest gatherings of God, are far better, and more excellent and transcendent, they are more satisfying, more delighting, more ravishing, more quieting, and more contenting than all earthly portions are or can be. What comparison is there between a drop of a bucket and the vast ocean? between a weak drop, which recollecting all its force, yet hath not strength enough to fall, and the mighty waters? Or what comparison is there between the dust of the balance and the whole earth? Why, you will say, there is no comparison between these things; and I will say, there is less between all finite portions, and such an infinite portion as God is. For this is most certain, that there must needs be always an infinite distance between what is finite and what is infinite; and such a portion God is. By all that hath been said, it is most evident that God is an incomparable portion. But now all earthly portions are comparable portions. You may easily and safely compare one earthly portion with another, one prince's revenues may be comparable to another's, and one great man's lordships may be comparable to another's, and one merchant's estate may be comparable to another's, and one gentlemen's lands may be comparable to another's, and one wife's portion may be comparable to another's, and one child's portion may be comparable to another's, &c., but God is an incomparable portion. There is no comparison to be made between God and other portions. And thus I have in these fifteen particulars fully discovered the excellency of the saints' portion above all other portions.

And, therefore, I shall now come to the second thing, and that is, to shew you,

II. Upon what grounds their title unto God as their portion is founded and bottomed; and they are these that follow:—

(1.) First, The free favour and love of God, the good will and pleasure of God, is the true ground and bottom of God's bestowing of himself as a portion upon his people, Deu 7:6-8; Eze 16:1-15. There was no loveliness nor comeliness in them that should move him to bestow himself upon them. They had neither portion nor proportion, and therefore there was no cause in them why God should bestow himself as a portion upon them. God, for the glory of his own free grace and love, hath bestowed himself as a portion upon those who have deserved to have their portion amongst devils and damned spirits, in those torments that are endless, ceaseless, and remediless. The

Ethnics feign, that their gods and goddesses loved some certain trees, for some lovely good that was in them; for Jupiter loved the oak for durance, and Neptune the cedar for stature, and Apollo the laurel for greenness, and Venus the poplar for whiteness, and Pallas the vine for fruitfulness; but what should move the God of gods to love us, who were so unworthy, so filthy, so empty, so beggarly, that were trees indeed, but such as Jude mentions, 'corrupt, fruitless, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots'? Jude 1:12. The question may be resolved in three words, Amat quia amat, he loves us because he loves us. The root of all divine love to us lieth only in the bosom of God. But,

(2.) Secondly, Their title to God as their portion is founded upon God's free and voluntary donation of himself to them in the covenant of grace, Eze 11:19; Heb 8:10-13. In the covenant of grace, God hath freely bestowed himself upon his people: Jer 32:38, Jer 32:40, 'And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' The covenant of grace is the great charter, it is the Magna Charta of all a saint's spiritual privileges and immunities. Now in this great charter, the Lord hath proclaimed himself to be his people's God: Jer 10:16, 'The portion of Jacob is the former of all things; the Lord of hosts is his name.' He that is the former of all things, even the Lord of hosts, is the portion of Jacob; and he is Jacob's portion, by virtue of that covenant of grace, which is a free, a full, a rich, and an everlasting covenant: a covenant that he will never break, nor alter, nor falsify; a covenant that he hath sworn to make good, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. That covenant of grace, whereby God gives himself to be his people's God and portion, he is bound to make good by his oath; and, therefore, certainly whoever is forsworn, God will never be forsworn. The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear 'By the life of the king,' and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no gold was to redeem his life, as Paulus Fagius observeth in his comment on Genesis.² To think that God will not make good that covenant that he hath bound himself by oath to make good, is blasphemy, yea, it is to debase him below the very heathens. All laws, both divine and human, have left no such bond of assurance to tie and fasten one to another, as that of an oath or covenant; which, as they are to be taken in sincerity, so they are to be kept inviolably. Certainly, the covenant and oath of the great God, is not like a gipsy's knot, that is fast or loose at pleasure. Whoever breaks with him, yet he will be sure, faithfully and inviolably to keep his covenant and his oath with his. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Their title to God as their God and portion, is founded and bottomed upon that marriage union that is between God and his people, Jer 3:13-14. Hos 2:19-20, Hos 2:23, 'And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies: I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that are not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' This threefold repetition, 'I will betroth thee,' 'I will betroth thee,' 'I will betroth thee,' notes three things, [1.] First, the certainty of their marriage union and communion with God.

[2.] Secondly, The excellency and dignity of their marriage union and communion with God. And,

[3.] Thirdly, The difficulty of believing their marriage union and communion with God. There is nothing that Satan doth so much envy and oppose, as he doth the soul's marriage union and communion with God; and therefore God fetches it over again and again and again, 'I will betroth thee unto me,' &c. And so in that Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' And so, Isa 62:5, 'For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' I have read of five sisters, of the same birth, pedigree, and race, whereof one was married to a knight, another to an earl, a third to a gentleman, a fourth to a mean man, and the fifth to a filthy beggar. Though they were all alike by birth and descent, yet their difference did lie in their marriage. We are all alike by creation, by the fall, by nature, and by the first birth; it is only our marriage union and communion with God that differences us from others, and that exalts and lifts us up above others. Look, as the husband is the wife's by marriage union and communion, so God is the believer's God and portion, by virtue of that marriage union and communion that is between God and the believer. And let thus much suffice for the second thing.

III. I shall come now to the third thing, and that is, to make some improvement of this blessed and glorious truth to ourselves; and, therefore, Is it so, that God is the saint's portion, and that he is such an excellent, and such a transcendent portion above all other portions, as hath been fully evidenced? Then,

[1.] First, Let not the saints that have God for their portion fret and vex themselves, because of those earthly portions that God commonly bestows upon the worst of men. There is a great aptness in the best of men to envy those earthly portions that God often bestows upon the worst of men. The lights of the sanctuary have burnt dim, stars of no small magnitude have twinkled, men of eminent parts, famous in their generations for religion and piety, have staggered in their judgments, to see the flourishing estate of the wicked. It made Job to complain, Job 21:7-16, and Job 24:12, and Jeremiah to expostulate with God, Jer 12:1-2, and David even to faint and sink, Psa 73:1-28. To see the prosperity of the ungodly, to see the wicked in wealth and the saints in want, the wicked in their robes and the saints in their rags, the wicked honoured and the saints despised, the wicked exalted and the saints debased, the wicked upon thrones and saints upon dunghills, is a sight that hath sadly put the best of men sometimes to it. But this is a temper of spirit that doth noways become those that have God for their portion; and therefore the psalmist, in Psa 37:1-40, cautions the saints against it no less than three several times, as you may see in Psa 37:1, Psa 37:7-8. There is nothing that doth so ill become a saint that hath God for his portion, as to be sick of the frets; and to prevent this mischief, this sickness, the precept is doubled, and redoubled, 'fret not, fret not, fret not.' Though they that have sore eyes are offended at bright clear lights, yet they that have God for their portion should never fret or fume, storm or rage, because some are greater than they, or richer than they, or higher than they, or more honourable than they, because all their prosperity is nothing but an unhappy happiness; it is nothing but a banquet, like Haman's, before execution; and what man is there, that is in his wits, that would envy a malefactor who meets with honourable entertainment as he is going along to execution? All a wicked man's delicate meats, his fine bits, and his murdering morsels, are sauced, and all his pleasant and delightful drinks are spiced, with the wrath and displeasure of an angry God; and why then should

you fret and vex at their prosperity? What madness and folly would it be in a man that is heir to many thousands per annum, to envy a stage player that is clothed in the habit of a king, but yet not heir to one foot of land, no, nor worth one penny in all the world, and who at night must put off his royal apparel, and the next day put on his beggarly habit? Oh, sirs! it will be but a little little while before the great God will disrobe the wicked of all their prosperity, felicity, and worldly glory, and clothe them with the rags of shame, scorn, and contempt for ever; and therefore, oh what folly and madness would it be for those that are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of all the glory of heaven, to envy the prosperity of the wicked, Rom 8:17. The prosperity of the wicked lays them open to the worst and greatest sins.

[1.] First, It lays them open to all uncleanness and filthiness, Jer 5:7-8.

[2.] Secondly, It lays them open to pride and contempt of God, Psa 73:3-13, Deu 32:15.

[3.] Thirdly, It lays them open to vex, oppress, tyrannize, persecute, insult, and triumph over the poor people of God, as you may see in Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Jezebel, Haman, and the scribes and pharisees.

[4.] Fourthly, It lays them open to a neglect and slighting of the ways of God, and of the ordinances of God, Job 21:5-16; Mal 3:13-15; Jer 22:21. When the protestants in France were in their prosperity, they slighted powerful preachings, &c., and began to affect a vain frothy way of preaching and living, which ushered in the massacre upon them. Moulin hit it, when, speaking of the French protestants, he said, when the papists hurt us and persecute us for reading the scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs.

[5.] Fifthly, It lays them open to a stupidity, unmindfulness, and forgetfulness of the afflictions of the people of God, Amo 6:1-8. Pharaoh's chief butler was no sooner set down in the seat of prosperity, but quite contrary to his promise, he easily forgets Joseph in misery.

[6.] Sixthly, It layeth them open to dreadful apostasy from the ways and worship of God, Deu 32:15-18. No sooner was Israel possessed of the good land that flowed with milk and honey, &c., but they forsook the true worship of God, and fell to the worshipping of idols, for which at last the good land spewed them out as a generation cursed and abhorred by God.

[7.] Seventhly, It lays them open to all carnal security, as you may see in the old world: their prosperity cast them into a bed of security, and their security ushered in a flood of sin, and that flood of sin ushered in a flood of wrath, Mat 24:37-39.

[8.] Eighthly, It lays them open to idolatry, which is a God-provoking and a land-destroying sin, Hos 2:6-8, and Hos 6:6-7, &c. Ah, sirs! who can seriously consider of the dreadful sins that the prosperity of the wicked lays them open to, and yet fret and vex at their prosperity?

Again, as their prosperity lays them open to the greatest sins, so their prosperity lays them open to the greatest temptations. Witness their tempting of themselves, and their own lusts, and witness their temptings of others to the worst of wickedness and villanies, and witness their frequent tempting and provoking of the great God to his own face, and witness their daily, yea, their hourly tempting of Satan to tempt their own souls. O sirs! as there is no condition that lays persons open to such great transgressions as prosperity doth, so there is no condition that lays persons open to

such horrid temptations as prosperity doth; and why then should God's holy ones envy wicked men's prosperity, and worldly glory, &c.

Again, Their prosperity, and worldly felicity and glory, is all the portion, and all the heaven and happiness that ever they are like to have: Psa 17:14, 'From men of the world, which have their portion in this life.' Certainly, men whose hearts are worldly, whose minds are worldly, whose spirits are worldly, whose desires are worldly, whose hopes are worldly, and whose main ends are worldly, have only the world for their portion; and what a pitiful perishing portion is that! Men that choose the world as their portion, and that delight in the world as their portion, and that trust to the world as their portion, and that in straits run to the world as their portion, and that take content and satisfaction in the world as their portion; doubtless these have never known what it is to have God for their portion. That is a very heart-cutting and soul-killing word that you have in that Mat 6:2, 'Verily I say unto you, that they have their reward.' The scribes and pharisees proposed to themselves, the eyes of men, the praise of men, and the applause of men, for a reward of their alms, &c., and Christ tells them, that they have their reward; not God's reward, but theirs; that is, that reward that they had propounded to themselves, as the prime and ultimate end of their actions; and doubtless that word was a thunderbolt to Dives, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus his evil,' &c., Luk 16:25. Wicked men have their best here, their worst is to come; they have their comforts here, their torments are to come; they have their joys here, their sorrows are to come; they have their heaven here, their hell is to come. Gregory being advanced to great preferment, professed that there was no scripture that struck so much terror and trembling into his heart, as that scripture did, 'Here you have your reward.' Had wicked men but their eyes in their heads, and a little understanding in their hearts, and life in their consciences, they would quickly conclude that it is hell on this side hell, for a man to have his portion in this world; and why then should you envy the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, All their prosperity is cursed unto them; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. All their comforts are cursed without doors, and all their comforts are cursed within doors; there are snares on all their tables, and poison in all their cups, and the plague in all their brave clothes, &c. Dionysius the tyrant, to shew Damocles, one of his flatterers, the felicity, or rather the infelicity, of a king, attired him as a king, and set him at the table, served as a king; and whilst he was in his imperial robes, he caused a naked sword, with the point downward, to be hung just over his head by a horse hair, which made Damocles to tremble, and to forbear both meat and mirth.² Though the feast was a royal feast, and the attendance royal attendance, and the music royal music, yet Damocles, for his life, could not taste of any of those varieties that were before him, nor take any comfort or contentment in any other part of his royal entertainment, because of the sword, the sword, that hung but by a single hair over his head. O sirs! a sword, a sharp sword, a two-edged sword, a sword of displeasure, a sword of wrath, a sword of vengeance, hangs over the head of every wicked person when he is in his most prosperous and flourishing condition; and had sinners but eyes to see this sword, it would be as the handwriting upon the wall; it would cause their thoughts to be troubled, and their countenances to be changed, and their joints to be loosed, and their knees to be dashed one against another; and why, then, should Christians fret and vex at the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, When wicked men are at the highest, then are they nearest their fall; as you may see in that Psa 37:1-40, and that Psa 73:1-28, and in those great instances of Pharaoh, Adoni-bezek,

Benhadad, Ahab, Sennacherib, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod, &c. Look, as the ship is soonest cast away when she is top and top-gallant, so when wicked men are top and top-gallant, when they are at the height of all their pomp, bravery, and worldly glory, then God usually tumbles them down into the very gulf of misery. The great ones of the world have suddenly fallen from their highest honours and dignities, and have been sorely and sadly exercised with the greatest scorns and calamities. Let me give you this in a few remarkable instances.

Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, the king of Persia, as often as he took horse.

Valens the emperor, a furious Arian, being wounded in a fight with the Goths, in his flight he betook himself to a poor cottage, wherein he was burnt by the Goths.

Aurelianus, the Roman emperor, brought Tetricus his opposite, and the noble queen Zenobia of Palmyra,³ in triumph to Rome in golden chains.

Bajazet, a proud emperor of the Turks, being taken prisoner by Tamerlane, a Tartarian emperor, he bound him in chains of gold, and used him for a footstool when he took horse; and when he ate meat, he made him gather crumbs under his table and eat them for his food.

Cæsar, having bathed his sword in the blood of the senate and his own countrymen, is, after a while, miserably murdered in the senate by his own friends, Cassius and Brutus, to shew that they are but the scourges and rods of the Almighty, which he will cast into the fire as soon as he hath done with them. The victorious emperor, Henry the Fourth, who in sixty-two pitched battles for the most part became victorious, fell to that poverty and misery before he died, that he was forced to petition to be a prebend in the church of Spire to maintain him in his old age, which the bishop of that place denied him; whereupon he brake forth into that speech of Job, 'Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me,' Job 19:21. He died of grief and want. And Procopius reports of king Guidimer, who was sometimes a potent king of the Vandals, that he was brought so low as to entreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and an harp: a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace himself in his misery.

Dionysius, king of Sicily, was such a cruel tyrant that his people banished him. After his banishment he went to Corinth, where he lived a base and contemptible life. At last he became a schoolmaster, that so, when he could no longer tyrannize over men, he might over boys.

Great Pompey, that used to boast that he could raise all Italy in arms with a stamp of his foot, had not so much as room to be buried in. And William the Conqueror's corpse lay three days unburied, his interment being hindered by one that claimed the ground to be his. And Pythias pined to death for want of bread, who once was able to entertain and maintain Xerxes's mighty army. And Philip de Comines reports of a Duke of Exeter, who though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet he saw him in the low countries begging barefoot. And so Belisarius, a most famous general, and the only man living in his time for glorious victories, riches, and renown, yet in his old age he had his eyes put out by the empress Theodora; and being led at last in a string, he was forced to cry out, *Date panem Belisario, &c.*, Give a crust to old blind Belisarius, whom virtue advanced, but envy hath brought into this great misery. By all these royal instances, you see the truth of that which once a royal slave hinted to Sesostris. The story runs thus:—

Sesostris having taken many of his neighbour kings prisoners, he made them to draw his chariot by turns. Now, it so happened that one of these royal slaves, as he was drawing in the chariot, had his eye almost continually fixed on the wheels, which Sesostris observing, asked him why he looked so seriously upon the wheels. He answered, that the falling of that spoke lowest which was even now highest, put him in mind of the instability of fortune. Sesostris, duly weighing the parable, would never after be drawn by his royal slaves any more. By what hath been said, it is more evident that when wicked men are highest they are nearest their fall; and that none fall so certainly and so suddenly, and under such dreadful calamities and miseries, as those that have been the most highly advanced in all worldly dignities and glories. And why, then, should any fret or vex at their outward prosperity or worldly felicity?

Again, God will bring them to an account for all those talents of power, of honour, of riches, of trust, of time, of interest that God hath given them in the world; and the more they have employed the liberality and bounty of God against God or his glory, or interest, or people, the shorter shall be their felicity, and the more endless shall be their misery, Mat 25:14-31. The greatest account and the greatest damnation commonly attends the great ones of the world. I have read of Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professing that he would rather lose all his kingdoms than offend God willingly; yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of that account he was to give to God, fear struck him, and these words brake from him, 'Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh that those years I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a private life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God, how much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What doth all my glory profit me now, but that I have so much the more torment in my death, and the greater account to give up to God!' I have read of a soldier, who, being to die for taking a bunch of grapes contrary to his general's command, as he was going along to execution, he went eating of his grapes, whereupon one of his fellow-soldiers rebuked him, saying, What! are you eating your grapes now you are going to execution? The poor fellow replied, Prithee, friend, do not envy me my grapes; for I shall pay a dear price for them, I shall lose my life for them; and so accordingly he did. So I say, Oh you that have God for your portion, do not envy, do not fret and vex, at the prosperity of the wicked; for what though they have more than their heart can wish, what though they live in pleasure and wallow in all carnal and sensual delights, &c., yet they have a sad account to give up to God, and they shall pay dear at last for all their worldly enjoyments. For without sound repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on God's, they shall not only lose their lives, but they shall also for ever lose their immortal souls; and therefore never fret at their prosperity.

O sirs, do not you remember that Lazarus did not fret nor fume because Dives had robes for his rags, and delicates for his scraps? &c. for he very well knew that though he was sine domo, yet not sine Domino. He had a guard of glorious angels to transport his holy, precious, heaven-born soul into Abraham's bosom. He knew that it was better to beg on earth, than to beg in hell. O sirs, what is darkness to light, earth to heaven, chaff to wheat, tin to silver, dross to gold, or pebbles to pearls? No more are all earthly portions to that God who is the saints' portion; and, therefore, let not the saints, that have such a matchless portion, envy the prosperity and felicity of wicked men. It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious; and, therefore, shun it as you would poison in your meat, or a serpent in the way. A man were better have a serpent tumbling up and down in his bowels, than to have envy a-gnawing in his soul. Envy is as pernicious a wickedness, as it is a

foolish and a groundless wickedness. Envy is a scourge to scourge the soul; it is a serpent to sting the soul; it is a poison to swell the soul; it is a saw to saw the soul; it is a moth that corrupts the soul, and it is a canker that eats up the soul; and therefore fly from it, as you would fly from the most cruel and destroying adversary. O sirs, to be angry, because God is bountiful to others; to frown, because God smiles upon others; to be bitter, because God is sweet in his dealings with others; and to sigh, because God multiplies favours and blessings upon others; what is this but to turn others' good into our own hurt, others' glory and mercy into our own punishment and torment? And if this be not to create a hell in our own hearts, I am much mistaken. I shall conclude this first inference with the counsel of the prophet in that Psa 49:16-17, 'Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him.' When the bodies of the wicked are rotting in their graves, and their souls are roaring in hell, none of their worldly greatness, pomp, state, glory, gallantry, riches, rents, or revenues, shall descend after them to administer one drop of comfort to them; and therefore never envy their outward prosperity or worldly glory, &c. But,

(2) Secondly, If the saints have such an excellent, such a transcendent, and such a matchless portion, oh then, let them be content with their present condition, let them sit down satisfied and contented, though they have but a handful of meal in their barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, 1Ki 17:12. O sirs, in having of God you have much, in having of God you have enough, in having of God you have all; and why then should you not sit down quiet with your present allowance? Certainly, if much will not satisfy you, if enough will not satisfy you, if all will not satisfy you, nothing will satisfy you: Heb 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness (or love of silver, as the Greek word signifies); and be content with such things as you have (or as the Greek hath it, ἡμμενοι τοις παροουσιν, be content with present things): for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' There are five negatives in the Greek, 'I will not, not, not, not, not leave thee nor forsake thee;' fully to assure and fully to satisfy the people of God that he will never forsake them, and that he will everlastingly stick close to them. What doth this unparalleled gemination, 'I will never, never, never, never, never,' import but this, 'I will ever, ever, ever, yea and for ever and ever take care of thee, and look after thee, and be mindful of thee.' Though they had changed their glory for contempt, Heb 11:36-38, their fine raiment for sheep-skins and goat-skins, their silver for brass, their plenty for scarcity, their fulness for emptiness, their stately houses for holes and caves, and dens of the earth, yet they are to be contented and satisfied with present things, upon this very ground, that God will always cleave to them, and that he will never turn his back upon them. The Hebrews had been stripped and plundered of all their goods that were good for any thing, and yet they must be contented, they must sit down satisfied, with their hands upon their mouths, though all were gone, Heb 10:34. Though men cannot bring their means to their minds, yet they must bring their minds to their means, and then they will sit down in silence, though they have but a rag on their backs, a penny in their purse, and a crust in their cupboards, &c. O sirs! a little will serve nature, less will serve grace, though nothing will serve men's lusts; and why then should not Christians be contented with a little? O friends! you have but a short journey to go, you have but a little way home, and a little will serve to bear your charges till you come to heaven, and therefore be contented with a little. To have more than will serve to bring a man to his journey's end is but a burden. One staff is helpful to a man in his journey, but a bundle is hurtful; and this, doubtless, Jacob well understood when he made that proposal in Gen 28:20-21, 'If God will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.'

Jacob doth not say, If God will give me delicacies and junkets to eat, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me but bread to eat, though it be never so coarse, and never so black, and never so dry, he shall be my God. He doth not say, If God will give me so many hundreds, or so many thousands a year, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat, he shall be my God. Nor he doth not say, If God will give me so many hundred pounds in my purse, a comfortable habitation, and a thriving trade, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat, he shall be my God. Nor he doth not say, If God will give me costly apparel, or rich and royal raiment to put on, he shall be my God! Oh no! But if God will give me raiment to put on, though it be never so mean and poor, he shall be my God. If Jacob may but have a little bread to feed him, and a few clothes to cover him, it is as much as he looks for. Look, as a wicked man in the fulness of his sufficiency is in straits, as Job speaks, Job 20:22, so a holy man, in the fulness of his straits, enjoys an all-sufficiency in God, as you may see in Jacob. O Christians! though you have but little, yet you have the highest and the noblest title that can be to that little that you do enjoy; for you hold all in capite, as the apostle sheweth in that large charter of a Christian, 1Co 3:21-23, which the wicked do not. Now, a hundred a year upon a good title is a better estate than a thousand a year upon a cracked, crazy title. Saints have the best title under heaven for all they enjoy, be it little or be it much. But all the titles that sinners have to their earthly enjoyments are but crazy titles, yea, in comparison of the saints' titles, they are no titles.

Again, That little that a saint hath, he hath it from the special love and favour of God; he hath it from a reconciled God, Pro 15:17. Now, a little from special love is better than a great deal from a general providence. A penny from a reconciled God is better than a pound from a bountiful God; a shilling from God as a father is a better estate than an hundred from God as a creator. The kiss that a king gave to one in the story, was a greater gift than the golden cup that he gave to another; a little, with the kisses of God's mouth, is better than all the gold of Ophir, Song of Solomon 1:2. A drop of mercy from special love is better than a sea of mercy from common bounty. Look, as one draught of clear, sweet spring water is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to the palate than a sea of brackish salt water, so one draught out of the fountain of special grace is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to a gracious soul than a whole sea of mercy from a spring of common grace: and therefore do not wonder when you see a Christian sit down contented with a little.

Again, That little that a Christian hath shall be certainly blessed and sanctified to him, 1Ti 4:3-5; Tit 1:15; Jer 32:41, &c. Though thy mercies, O Christian, are never so few, and never so mean, yet they shall assuredly be blessed unto thee. The Lord hath not only promised that he will bless thy blessings to thee, but he hath also sworn by himself that in blessing he will bless thee; and how darest thou then, O Christian, to think that the great and faithful God will be guilty of a lie, or that which is worse, of perjury? Gen 22:16-17. Now, a little blessed is better than a great deal cursed; a little blessed is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blessed is better than a thousand cursed; a black crust blessed is better than a feast cursed; the gleanings blessed are better than the whole harvest cursed; a drop of mercy blessed is better than a sea of mercy cursed; Lazarus's crumbs blessed was better than Dives his delicacies cursed; Jacob's little blessed unto him was better than Esau's great estate that was cursed unto him. It is always better to have scraps with a blessing than to have manna and quails with a curse; a thin table with a blessing is always better than a full table with a snare, Psalms 78:18, Psalms 78:32; a thread-bare coat with a blessing is better than a purple robe cursed; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney-corner, with a blessing, is better than stately

palaces with a curse; a woollen cap blessed is better than a golden crown cursed; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears, If you knew the cares that are under this crown, you would never stoop to take it up. And, therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blessed unto him? Isaac tills the ground, and sows his seed, and God blesses him with an hundred fold, Gen 26:12; and Cain tills the ground, and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him, and commanded not to yield to him his strength, Gen 4:12. Oh, therefore, never let a Christian murmur because he hath but a little, but rather let him be still a-blessing of that God that hath blessed his little, and that doth bless his little, and that will bless his little to him.

Again, That little estate that a righteous man hath is most commonly a more lasting, a more abiding, a more permanent, and a more enduring estate than the great and large estates of the wicked are, Pro 15:16, and Pro 16:8. Psa 37:16, 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' One old piece of gold is worth more than a thousand new counters, and one box of pearls is more worth than many loads of pebbles, and one hundred pounds a year for ever is better than many hundreds in hand. It is very observable the psalmist doth not simply say, the estate, but the rich estate; the riches not of one, or a few, but of many wicked, are not comparable to that little that a righteous man hath. The Hebrew word **הון**, Hamon, that is here rendered riches, signifies also a multitude, or an abundance, or store of riches. A little that a righteous man hath is better than the multitude of riches, or the abundance of riches, or the store of riches that many wicked men have; and he gives you the reason of this in the Psa 37:17 : 'For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but he upholdeth (or under-props) the righteous.' By 'the arms of the wicked,' you are to understand their strength, their valour, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones, so that they shall never want, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them.

O Sirs! there are so many moths, and so many dangers, and so many crosses, and so many losses, and so many curses that daily attends the great estates of wicked men, that they are very rarely long-lived. Ah! how many in this great city are there that have built their nests on high, and that have thought that they had laid up riches for many years, and that have said in their hearts, that their lands, and stocks, and trades, and houses, and pompous estates should abide for ever, who are now broken in pieces like a potter's vessel. Ah! how often doth the pride, the oppression, the lying, the cheating, the over-reaching, the swearing, the cursing, the whoring, the covetousness, the drunkenness, and the wantonness of the wicked, cut the throat of all their mercies! These are the wickednesses that as a fire burns up all their outward enjoyments, and that turns their earthly paradise into a real hell. It is the wickedness of the wicked that causeth their prosperity to wither, and that provokes God to turn their plenty into scarcity, their glory into contempt, and their honour into shame. It is very observable, that in the holy Scriptures the prosperous estates of the wicked are frequently compared to things of an abrupt existence, to a shadow which soon passeth away; to chaff, which a puff, a blast of wind easily disperseth and scattereth; to grass, which quickly withereth before the sun; to tops of corn, which in an instant are cut off; to the unripe grape, which on a sudden drops down; yea, to a dream in the night; and what

is a dream, but a quick fancy, and a momentary vanity? All the riches that the wicked gain, either by their trades, or by their friends, or by their great places, or by their high offices, or by their subtle contrivances, or by their sinful compliances; and all the honour they gain in the court, or in the camp, or in the school, is but light and inconstant; it is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot. They are fading vanities, that commonly die before those that enjoy them are laid in the dust.

Oh, therefore, let all Christians be contented with their little, seeing that their little shall outlast the large estates of wicked and ungodly men. A man that hath God for his portion can truly say that which no wicked man in the world can say, viz., 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' Psa 23:6. The psalmist doth not say that goodness and mercy should follow him a day, or a few days, or many days, but that 'goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life.' The Hebrew word *radaph*, that is here rendered to follow, signifies to persecute; saith the psalmist, 'Goodness and mercy shall follow me, as the persecutor follows him he persecutes;' that is, it shall follow me frequently, it shall follow me constantly, it shall follow me swiftly, it shall follow me earnestly, it shall follow me unweariedly. The word signifies a studious, anxious, careful, diligent following; it is a metaphor that is taken from beasts and birds of prey, that follow and fly after their prey with the greatest eagerness, closeness, and unweariedness imaginable. Why thus should mercy and loving-kindness follow David all the days of his life; and if in a temptation, he should prove so weak and so foolish as to run from goodness and mercy, yet goodness and mercy should follow him, like as the sun going down followeth the passenger that goeth eastward with his warm beams.

O, but now the mercies of the wicked are short-lived. Though the wicked flourish and spread themselves like a green bay tree one day, yet they are cut down the next, and there is neither root nor branch to be found, tale nor tidings to be heard of them; for in a moment, they, with all their greatness, state, pomp, and glory, are utterly vanished and banished out of the world, Psa 37:35-37. And so, Psa 34:10, 'The young lions do lack and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' Young lions are lusty, strong, fierce, and active to seek their prey, and have it they will if it be to be had: and yet for all that they shall lack and suffer hunger. By young lions, the learned understand,

[1.] First, All wicked rulers; men that are in the highest places and authority, as the lion is the king of beasts, Pro 28:15, Eze 32:2.

[2.] Secondly, By lions they understand all cruel oppressors, that are still oppressing and grinding of the faces of the poor: Pro 30:30; 'rich cormorants,' as the Septuagint renders it, 'who live on the spoil of the poor, and are never satisfied.'

[3.] Thirdly, By lions, they understand the tyrants and the mighty Nimrods of the world, which are sometimes called lions, Jer 2:15, 1Ch 11:22, Nah 2:13.

[4.] And lastly, By lions, they understand all the crafty and subtle politicians of the earth: Eze 38:13, 'The lion lurks very craftily and secretly for his prey.' The sum of all is this, That wicked men that are in the highest authority, and that great oppressors, cruel tyrants, and crafty politicians shall be impoverished, and brought to penury, beggary, and misery. And this we have often seen verified before our eyes.

O Christian! what though thou hast but a little of this world, yet the God of all mercies, and all the mercies of God, the God of all comforts, and all the comforts of God, are thine; and what wouldst thou have more? In God is fulness, all fulness, infinite fulness; and if this, with a little of the world, will not satisfy thee, I know not what will. If a God for thy portion will not content thee, all the world will never content thee. Shall Diogenes, a heathen, be more content with his tub to shelter him, and with his dish to drink in, than Alexander was with all his conquests? And shall not a Christian sit down contented and satisfied in the enjoyment of God for his portion, though he hath but a tub to shelter him, bread to feed him, and a dish of water to refresh him? I shall conclude this head with a weighty saying of Cato's, *Si quid est quo utar utor, si non scio quis sum; mihi vitio vertunt, quia multis egeo, et ego illis, quia nequeunt egere*. I have neither house, nor plate, nor garments of any price in my hands; what I have I can use; if not, I can want it: some blame me because I want many things, and I blame them because they cannot want. Oh let not nature do more than grace! Oh let not this heathen put Christians to a blush! But,

(3.) Thirdly, If God be the saint's portion, the sinners are much mistaken, that judge the saints to be the most unhappy men in the world. There are no men under heaven in such a blessed and happy estate as the saints are, Baalam himself being judge, Num 33:5-11. A man that hath God for his portion, is honourable even in rags, Psa 16:3. He hath some beams, some rays, of the majesty and glory of God stamped upon his soul, and shining upon his face, and glittering in his life; and he that is so blind as not to behold this, is worse than Balaam the witch. Though the blind Jews could see no form, nor comeliness, nor beauty in Christ that they should desire him, Isa 53:2; yet the wise men that came from the east could see his divinity sparkling in the midst of the straw; they could see an heavenly majesty and glory upon him when he lay among the beasts, when he lay in a manger, Luk 2:7. Witness their tedious journey to find him, and witness their worshipping of him, and witness those rich and royal presents that they brought unto him, Mat 2:11. So though the blind sots of the world can see no loveliness nor comeliness, no beauty nor glory, in the saints, or upon the saints, that should render them amiable and desirable in their eyes, yet God, and Christ, and angels, and those that are wise in heart and wise to salvation, can see a great deal of divine beauty, majesty, and glory upon all those that have God for their portion. There is no happiness to that of having God for a man's portion: Psa 144:15, 'Happy is that people that is in such a case' (but give me that word again), 'yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' He that hath not God for his portion can never be happy, and he that enjoys God for his portion can never be miserable. Augustine, speaking of one who, passing by a stately house which had fair lands about it, and asking another whom he met to whom that house and lands belonged, he answered, to such an one. Oh, says he, that is a happy man indeed. No, says the other, not so happy as you think; for it is no such happiness to have that house and land, but he is happy indeed that hath the Lord for his God, for that is a privilege that exceeds all things whatsoever. For, saith he, he that hath honour and riches may go to hell for all them, but he that hath God to be his God, is sure to be everlastingly happy. According as a man's portion is, so is he. Now, if God be a man's portion, who is the spring, the fountain, the top of all excellency and glory, then certainly that man must needs be an excellent man that hath God for his portion; and upon this score it is that the righteous man is more excellent than his neighbour. Let the righteous man's neighbour be never so great, and never so rich, and never so mighty, and never so noble, yet if he hath not God for his portion, the righteous man is more excellent than he. And the reason is evident, because he hath that God for his portion that is most eminent and excellent. O sirs! if God be most excellent, if God

be alone excellent, then they must needs be most excellent that have God for their portion. It is very observable that, according to the excellency of God, the excellency of the saints is in some proportion hinted at in Scripture; as in that Deu 33:26, Deu 33:29, 'There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun;' and presently it follows, 'Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee?' or, Oh the happinesses of thee, O Israel! Oh the multiplied happiness, the heaped-up happiness, that attends Israel! The saints that have God for their portion are the world's paragons; they are worthies 'of whom this world is not worthy;' they are such great, such noble, such, worthy worthies, that this world is not worthy to think on them, to look on them, to wait on them, or to enjoy their company. One saint that hath God for his portion, is more worth than all the millions of sinners in the world that have not God for their portion. God delights to reflect his glory upon his saints; for as there are none like to God, so there are none like to the people of God. Look, as God is a nonsuch, so his people are a nonsuch; and so in that 2Sa 7:22-23, 'Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God; for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears; and what one nation in the earth is like thy people?' Look, as the excellency of God rises, so in a proportion the excellency of the saints rises; and look, as there are no gods in all the world that are so excellent as God is, so there are no people in all the world that are so excellent as the people of God are. Every one that hath God for his portion resembles the child of a king, as Zeba and Zalmunna said to Gideon of his brethren, Jdg 8:18. If you look upon their divine and heavenly origin, you shall find that they are born of the blood-royal, and that they are his sons who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords; yea, all the saints that have God for their portion are kings: Rev 1:6, 'And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' They have the power, sovereignty, and authority of kings, they are privileged as kings, they are guarded as kings, they are adorned as kings, they are entertained as kings, they feed as kings, they feed high, they live upon God and Christ, and all the glory of heaven; and they are clothed as kings, they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, and with the garments of joy and gladness. Kings have great alliance, and so have the saints that have God for their portion. Kings have a very great influence, and so have they that have God for their portion. A man in rags that hath God for his portion is a more honourable person than the greatest monarch on earth that hath only the world for his portion. I have read of Alexander the Great, and of Pompey the Great, and of Charles the Great, and of Abner the Great, and of Herod the Great; but what were all these great men but grasshoppers to the saints that have God for their portion? Men that have had God for their portion have been very famous, illustrious, and glorious, when they have been friendless, and houseless, and penniless; yea, when they have been under the swords, and saws, and harrows of persecution.² When Maximian, the tyrant, had plucked out one of Paphnutius the Confessor's eyes, that good emperor Constantine saw such a lustre, beauty, and glory upon Paphnutius, that he fell upon him and kissed him; and he kissed that very hole most wherein one of the Confessor's eyes had been, as being most ravished and delighted with that hole. His name that hath God for his portion shall live, when the name of the wicked shall rot, Pro 10:7, Psa 112:9. His name shall be written in golden characters upon marble, when the name of the wicked shall be written in the dust. The blind besotted world are sadly out, who are ready to set the crown of honour and happiness upon any heads, rather than upon theirs that have God for their portion. Look, as Samuel, beholding the beauty and stature of Eliab, would needs have him anointed, and the crown set upon his head, when the crown was designed for David at the sheep-fold, 1Sa 16:6, 1Sa 16:12, so vain men are very apt to set the crown of happiness upon their heads who have the greatest share in this world,

whenas the crown of happiness and blessedness is only to be set on their heads that have God for their portion. What the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,' 1Ki 10:8, is here very applicable to the saints: 'Happy, happy, yea, thrice happy are those precious sons and daughters of Sion that have God for their portion.' A man that hath God for his portion shall live happily and die happily, and after death he shall remain happy to all eternity; and therefore we may well cry out, 'Oh, the happiness and blessedness of that man that hath God for his portion!' But,

(4.) Fourthly, If the saints have such an excellent, such a matchless, portion, oh, then, let them never set their hearts and affections upon any earthly portions, Pro 23:5. It is true, O Christian, thou mayest lay thy hand upon an earthly portion, but thou must never set thy heart upon an earthly portion: Psa 62:10, 'If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them.' The Hebrews put the heart for the thoughts, affections, love, desire, joy, hope, confidence, &c. If riches increase, oh, set not thy thoughts upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not thy affections upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not thy love upon them, set not thy desires upon them, set not thy joy and delight upon them, nor never place thy hope or confidence in them. Oh! what a shame and dishonour would it be to see men of great estates to rake in dunghills, and to sweep channels, and to carry tankards of water, and to cry trifles up and down the streets! And is it not a greater shame, a greater dishonour, to see those that have the great God for their portion, to set their hearts and affections upon a little white and yellow clay? It was a generous speech of that heathen, Themistocles, who, seeing something glister like a pearl in the dark, scorned to stoop for it himself, but bid another stoop, saying, Stoop thou, for thou art not Themistocles. Oh! it is below a generous Christian, a gracious Christian, a noble Christian, that hath God for his portion, to stoop to the things of this world. A true-bred Christian will set his feet upon those very things that the men of the world set their hearts: Rev 12:1, 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' The church is compared to a woman for her weakness, for her lovingness, for her comeliness, and for her fruitfulness; and being clothed with the Sun of righteousness, she hath the moon, that is, the world, under her feet. The church treads under her feet all temporary and transitory things, which are as changeable as the moon. She treads upon all worldly and carnal enjoyments and contentments, as things below her, as things not worthy of her. What vanity is it for a great man to set his heart on bird's nests, and paper kites that boys make fly in the air? And as great, yea, a greater vanity it is for the saints that have God for their portion, to set their hearts upon the poor little low things of this world. It is not for you to be a-fishing for gudgeons, but for towns, forts, and castles, said Cleopatra to Mark Antony. So say I, it is not for you that have God for your portion, to be a-fishing for the honours, riches, and preferments of the world; but for more grace, more holiness, more communion with God, more power against corruptions, more strength to withstand temptations, more abilities to bear afflictions, more sense of divine love, and more assurance of interest in Christ, and in all that glory and happiness that comes by Christ. When Alexander heard of the riches of India, he regarded not the kingdom of Macedonia, but gave away his gold; and when he was asked, what he kept for himself? he answered, Spem majorum et meliorum, the hope of better and greater things. O sirs! when you look upon those riches of grace, those riches of glory, those riches of justification, those riches of sanctification, and those riches of consolation that are in that God that is your portion, how should you disregard, how should you despise, how

should you scorn the great things, and the gay things of the world! It was a notable speech of Erasmus, if his wit were not too quick for his conscience.³ I desire, said he, neither wealth nor honour, no more than a feeble horse doth an heavy cloak-bag. O Christians! you have many thousand excellencies in God to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in Christ to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the Spirit to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the covenant to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the gospel to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the ordinances to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in promises to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in prophecies to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in rare providences to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the saints to set your affections upon; and therefore, for shame, set not your affections upon things below, set not your hearts upon things that perish, Col 3:1. A man can never come to set his heart upon any earthly portion, but that God will either embitter it, or lessen it, or cloud it, or wholly strip him of it; and therefore sit loose, I say again, sit loose in your affections to all worldly enjoyments. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If the saints have such a glorious, such an incomparable portion; then let them be cheerful and comfortable under all worldly crosses, losses, and troubles, Acts 5:17-42, Rom 5:2-4. With what a Roman spirit do many vain men of great estates bear up under great losses and crosses; and shall not grace do more than nature? Shall not the Spirit of God do more than a Roman spirit? O sirs, how can you look upon God as your portion, and not bear up bravely under any worldly loss? Heb 10:34. 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better, and an enduring substance.' They had God for their portion, and the joy of the Lord was their strength, and therefore they could rejoice in whatever damage came upon them by the hand of violence. And so David could comfort himself in his God, and encourage himself in his God, when Ziklag was burned, his wives and children carried captive, and the people in a readiness to stone him, 1Sa 30:6. Now all was gone, he looks up to God as his portion, and so he bears up bravely and cheerfully in the midst of all extremity of misery. And so Habakkuk was a man of the same noble temper, as you may see in that Hab 3:17-18: 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord as long as there is fruit in the vines; ay, but saith he, 'Though there be no fruit in the vines, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the labour of the olive doth not fail; ay, but saith he, 'Though the labour of the olive shall fail, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the fields do yield their meat; ay, but saith he, 'Though the fields shall yield no meat, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord, so long as the flock is not cut off from the fold; ay, but saith he, 'Though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, yet I will rejoice in the Lord.' Ay, but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord, so long as there be herds in the stalls; aye, but saith he, 'Though there be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' Habakkuk could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in that God that was his portion, not only when all delightful comforts and contentments should fail, but also when all

necessary comforts and contentments should fail. Habakkuk was a man of raised spirit, he knew that he had that God for his portion that did contain in himself all comforts and contentments, and that could easily make up the want of any comfort or contentment, and that would certainly lie himself in the room of every comfort and contentment, that either his children should need or desire; and in the power of this faith he rejoices and triumphs in a day of thick darkness and gloominess: 1Sa 1:5, 1Sa 1:18, 'But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved Hannah, and her countenance was no more sad.' O my brethren, it doth no ways become those that have God for their portion to walk up and down the world with clouded countenances, with sadded countenances, or with dejected countenances, &c., and therefore, under all your crosses and losses, wipe your eyes, and walk up and down with pleasant countenances, with cheerful countenances, and with smiling countenances, and this will be an honour to God, and an honour to religion, and an honour to profession, and an honour to that saintship that is too much slighted and scorned in the world.

Indeed, when wicked men are exercised with crosses and losses, it is no wonder to see them take on like madmen, and see them take on bitterly, like Micah, when he cried out, 'They have taken away my gods, and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Wicked men's bags and goods are their gods; they are their portion, they are their all; and when these are gone, all is gone with them; when these are taken away, all is taken away with them; and therefore it is no wonder to hear them cry out, 'Undone, undone!' and to see them sit down and weep, as if they were resolved to drown themselves in their own tears. But you that have God for your portion, you have such a portion that shall never be taken from you. As Christ told Mary, 'Thou hast chosen the better part that shall never be taken from thee,' Luk 10:42; and therefore it highly concerns you to bear up bravely, as well when you have but little, as when you have much; and as well when you have nothing, as when you have everything. You shall be sure to enjoy all in God, and God in all; and what would you have more? Seneca once told a courtier that had lost his son, that he had no cause to mourn either for that or aught else, because Cæsar was his friend! O then, what little cause have the saints to mourn for this or that loss, considering that God is their friend; yea, which is more, that God is their portion. I have read of a company of poor Christians, who, being banished to some remote parts, and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field; True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they could not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will follow them with the comforts of his grace wheresoever they go. Would it not make a man either sigh or laugh to see a man lament and take on bitterly for the loss of his shoe-strings, when his purse is safe; or for the loss of a little lumber, when all his goods are safe; or for the burning of a pig-stye, when his dwelling-house is safe; or for the loss of his scabbard, when his life is safe? And why, then, should a Christian lament and take on for the loss of this or that, so long as his God is safe, and his portion is safe? But,

(6.) Sixthly, If the saints have such an excellent and such a transcendent portion, as hath been discovered, then away with all sinful shifts, ways, courses, and compliances to gain an earthly portion. Was it not horrid, yea, hellish baseness in Ahab, who had a whole kingdom at his devotion, to possess himself of poor Naboth's vineyard, by false swearing, hypocrisy, treachery, cruelty, and blood? 1Ki 21:1-29. But, certainly, it is a far greater baseness and wickedness in

those that have God for their portion, or at least pretend to have God for their portion, to be a-sharking, and a-shifting, and a-complying with the lusts of men, and with the abominations of the times; and all to hold what they have, or else to raise themselves, and greaten themselves, and enrich themselves, by others' ruin. These men might do well to make that Jer 17:11 their daily companion: 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' The crafty fox in the fable hugged himself to think how he had cozened the crow of his breakfast; but when he had eaten it, and found himself poisoned with it, he wished that he had never meddled with it. O sirs! there is a day a-coming, wherein men shall wish that they had never laboured to sin themselves into honours, riches, preferments, high offices, and high places, when God shall let some scalding drops of his wrath to fall upon their spirits, who have sold all Christ's and Christians' concernments, and their own consciences, to gain riches and high offices! How will they curse the day wherein they were born, and be ready, by the knife or the halter, to put an end to their most wretched days! Oh what a sad and lamentable thing would it be to see men worth many thousands a-year a-purloining from others! But it is a far more sad and lamentable thing to see men who pretend to have God for their portion, to act all this, and more than this, and all to lay up an earthly portion for themselves and others. How many be there in these days who pretend very high towards God, and yet 'sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes,' Amo 2:6; yea, that pollute the name of God, the worship of God; and that slay the souls of men for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread; and that will say anything, or swear anything, or bow, or crouch to anything, for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, or to be put into one of the priest's offices, Eze 13:19, 1Sa 2:36. O Christian, thou hast all honours and riches and preferments in that God that is thy portion; and why then shouldst thou go about to sin thyself into the enjoyment of those things which thou hast already in thy God? Hast thou forgot that Solomon got more hurt by his wealth, than ever he got good by his wisdom? and that David was best in a wilderness, and that our stomachs are usually worse in summer, and that the moon is furthest from the sun when it is fullest of light; and that all that a man gets by breaking with God and his conscience, he may put in his eye; and that the coal that the eagle carried from the sacrifice to her nest, set all on fire. Have you forgotten what is said of Abraham in that Gen 13:2, viz., 'That he was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold?' The Hebrew word cabbedh, that is here rendered rich, signifies heavy, to shew that riches are a very heavy burden, and oftentimes an hindrance in the way to heaven. Oh! how vain, how uncertain, how vexing, and how dividing are the great things of the world! How unfit do they make many men to live, and how unwilling do they make many men to die! Oh what is gold in the purse, when there is guilt upon the conscience! What are full bags, when sin and wrath are at the bottom of them! O sirs! you have an infinite fulness in that God that is your portion, and that fills all in all; and why then should you break the hedge to gain the world? But,

(7.) Seventhly. If the saints have such an excellent, glorious, and incomparable portion, 1Co 1:31, oh then let them glory in their portion, let them, rejoice and delight themselves in their portion. Man is a creature very apt and prone to glory in earthly portions, when he should be a-glorying in the Lord: Jer 9:23-24, 'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord;'

, 'Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel;' and Isa 45:25, 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.' Oh how should the saints, that have God for their portion, make their boast of their God, and rejoice in their God, and glory in their God! Shall the men of the world glory in an earthly portion, and shall not a saint glory in his heavenly portion? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in hope, and shall not a Christian glory in that portion that he hath already in hand? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in reversion, and shall not a saint glory in that portion that he hath in present possession? Shall they glory in their hundreds and thousands a year, and shall not a Christian glory in that God that fills heaven and earth with his glory? In all the scriptures there is no one duty more pressed than this, of rejoicing in God; and indeed, if you consider God as a saint's portion, there is everything in God that may encourage the soul to rejoice in him, and there is nothing in God that may in the least discourage the soul from rejoicing and glorying in him. O Christians, the 'joy of the Lord is your strength,' Neh 8:10; it is your doing strength, and your bearing strength, and your suffering strength, and your prevailing strength; it is your strength to work for God, and it is your strength to wait on God, and it is your strength to exalt and lift up God, and it is your strength to walk with God; it is your strength to live, and your strength to die, and therefore be sure to keep up your joy in God. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world to see a man that hath God for his portion, with Cain to walk up and down this world with a dejected countenance. It was holy joy and cheerfulness that made the faces of several martyrs to shine as if they had been the faces of angels. One observes of Crispina, that she was cheerful when she was apprehended, and joyful when she was led to the judge, and merry when she was sent to prison, and so she was when bound, and when lift up in a cage, and when examined, and when condemned. O Christians! how can you number up the several souls that you deject, the foul mouths that you open, and the bad reports that you bring upon the Lord and his ways by your sad, dejected, and uncomfortable walking! It is very observable that the Lord takes it so very unkindly at his people's hands when they go sighing, lamenting, and mourning up and down, whenas they should be a-rejoicing and a-delighting of themselves in him and his goodness, that he threatens to pursue them to the death with all manner of calamities and miseries upon that very score: Deu 28:47-48, 'Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee.' But,

(8.) Eighthly. If the saints have such a great, such a large, and such an all-sufficient portion as hath been shewed they have, then certainly they shall never want anything that is good for them. David tells you that his cup run over, Psa 23:5-6. The words are an allusion to the Hebrew feasts. David's table was richly and nobly spread, both in sight and spite of all his enemies. In one God is every good; and what can he want that enjoys that God? God is a bundle of all goodness and sweetness. And look, as God is the best God, so he is the greatest and the fullest good. He can as easily fill the most capacious souls up to the very brim with all inward and outward excellencies and mercies, as Christ did once fill those water-pots of Galilee up to the very brim with wine, John 2:1-11. If God hath enough in himself for himself, then certainly he hath enough in himself for us; that water that can fill the sea can much more easily fill my cup or my pot: 'My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord,' Jer 31:14; 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, yea, I will rejoice over them to do them

good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul,' Jer 32:40-41; 'My God shall supply all your need,' Php 4:19, or, 'My God shall (πληρωσει) fill up all your need,' as he did the widow's vessels in that 2Ki 4:3-6. Godliness hath the promise both of this life and that which is to come, 1Ti 4:8. He that hath God for his portion shall have all other things cast into his store, as paper and packthread is cast into the bargain, or as an handful of corn is cast into the corn you buy, or as hucksters cast in an overcast among the fruit you buy, or as an inch of measure is given into an ell of cloth, Mat 6:25, Mat 6:31-33. O sirs, how can that man be poor, how can that man want, that hath the Lord of heaven and earth for his portion? Surely he cannot want light that enjoys the sun, nor he cannot want bread that hath all sorts of grain in his barns, nor he cannot want water that hath the fountain at his door; no more can he want anything that hath God for his portion, who is everything, and who will be everything to every gracious soul. O sirs! the thought, the tongue, the desire, the wish, the conception, all fall short of God, and of that great goodness that he hath laid up for them that fear him, Psa 31:19; and why then should they be afraid of wants? Psa 104:10-31. How doth that pretty bird the robin-redbreast cheerfully sit and sing in the chamber window, and yet knows not where he shall make the next meal, and at night must take up his lodging in a bush. Oh what a shame is it that men that have God for their portion should act below this little bird. I have read of famous Mr Dod, who is doubtless now high in heaven, who intended to marry, was much troubled with fears and cares how he should live in that condition, his incomes being so small that they would but maintain him in a single condition; and looking out at a window, and seeing a hen scraping for food for her numerous brood about her, thought thus with himself: This hen did but live before it had these chickens, and now she lives with all her little ones; upon which he added this thought also, I see the fowls of the air neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet my heavenly Father feeds them, Mat 6:25; and thus he overcame his fears of wanting. O Christians! you have such a Father for your portion, as will as soon cease to be, as he will cease to supply you with all things necessary for your good. It was a good saying of one, I would desire neither more nor less than enough; for I may as well die of a surfeit as of hunger, and he is rich enough that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity that is not forced to serve. Plutarch's reasoning is good, τα τῶν φίλων παντα κοινα, friends have all things in common; but God is our friend, ergo we cannot want; a rare speech from an heathen. Rather than Israel should want, did not God feed them with manna in the wilderness? and rather than Elijah and the widow should not have their wants supplied, did not God work a miracle, by causing the handful of meal in the barrel, and the little oil in the cruse, to last and hold out till he supplied them in another way? Rather than Elijah shall want, God will feed him with a raven, and by that miraculous operation save him from a perishing condition. O sirs! all the attributes of God are so engaged for you that you cannot want, and all the promises of God are so engaged to you that you cannot want, and all the affections of God are so set upon you that you cannot want; and why then should you fear wants? O sirs! hath God given you his Son, his Spirit, his grace, his glory, yea, himself, and will he deny you lesser things, Rom 8:32. Hath he given you those things that are more worth than ten thousand worlds, and will he not give you bread to eat, and raiment to put on? Hath he given you those spiritual riches that infinitely exceed and excel all the riches, rubies, and pearls in the world; and will he deny you a little money in your purses to bear your charges till you come to heaven? Hath he given you a crown, and will he deny you a crust? Hath he given you his royal robes, and will he deny you a few rags? Hath he given you a royal palace, and will he deny you a poor cottage to shelter you from the stormy winter and from the scorching

summer? yea, doth he feed his enemies, and clothe his enemies, and protect his enemies, and provide for his enemies, which are the generation of his wrath and curse, and will he not do as much for you, O ye of little faith? Will he do so much for them that hate him, and will he not do as much for you that love him? Doubtless he will. Will he feed the ravens, and provide for the ox and the ass, and clothe the grass of the field; and will he suffer you, who are his love, his joy, his delight, to starve at his feet, for want of necessities? Surely no. But suppose you were under many real wants, yet certainly this very consideration, that the Lord is your portion, should quiet your hearts, and bear up your spirits bravely under them all. Jerome tells us of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, coming to see him, asked him, whether he was not sorely troubled and afflicted for want of his sight. Oh yes, said Dydimus, it is a very great affliction and grief to me. Whereupon Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given you the excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice, and brute beasts enjoy? O sirs! if God hath given you himself for a portion, then certainly it is a sinful thing, a shameful thing, an unworthy thing for you to be so troubled, afflicted, and grieved, because you want this and that worldly contentment and enjoyment, which God bestows upon such whose wickedness hath debased them below the ox and the ass, I mean, men of beastly spirits, and beastly principles, and beastly practices, Isa 1:2-3. Look, as Benjamin's mess was five times greater than his brethren's, Gen 43:34; so those that have God for their portion have five thousand times a greater portion than the wicked of the world, whose portion only lies in perishing trifles, and in tried vanities; and therefore there is no just reason, no Scripture reason, why they should be afraid of wants. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If the saints have such a great, such a large, such an all-sufficient, such an infinite, and such an incomparable portion, as hath been made evident they have, oh then away with all inordinate cares for the things of this life. Oh say to all vexing, wasting, distracting, and disturbing cares, as Ephraim once said to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8. Christ's counsel should lie warm upon every man's heart that hath God for his portion, 'Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?' Mat 6:31, and so should the apostle's, 'Cast all your care on him; for he careth for you,' 1Pe 5:7, and so should the psalmist's also, 'Cast thy burden (or as the Greek well turns it, thy care) upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved,' Psa 55:22. Some write, that lions sleep with their eyes open and shining; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the keeper of Israel, never slumbers nor sleeps; his eyes are always open upon the upright; he still stands sentinel for his people's good, and therefore why should inordinate cares eat up the hearts of Christians? O Christians! of all burdens the burden of carking cares will sit the heaviest upon your spirits. There is no burden that will bow you and break you like this. Inordinate cares vex the heart, they divide the heart, they scratch and tear the heart, they pierce and wound the heart through and through with many sorrows, 1Ti 6:10. Inordinate cares will either crowd out duties, as in Martha, Luk 10:40, or else they will crowd into duties and spoil duties, as in that Luk 8:14, 'the cares of the world choke the word.' Look, as Pharaoh's ill-favoured lean kine ate up the fat, Gen 41:4, so all inordinate ill-favoured cares will eat up all those fat and noble cares for God, for his glory, for heaven, for holiness, for grace, for glory, for power against corruptions, for strength to resist temptations, and for support and comfort under afflictions, &c., with which the soul should be filled and delighted. Oh that you would for ever remember these few things, to prevent all inordinate, distrustful, and distracting cares.

[1.] First, That they are a dishonour and a reproach to the all-sufficiency of God; as if he were not able to supply all your wants, and to answer all your desires, and to succour you in all your distresses, and to deliver you out of all your calamities and miseries, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the omniscency of God. As if your wants were not as well known to him as his own works, and as if he had not a fixed eye upon all the straits and trials that lies upon you, and as if he did not know every burden that makes you to groan, and did not behold every affliction that makes you to sigh, and did not observe every tear that drops from your eyes, &c.; whereas his eye is still upon you: Deu 11:11-12, 'But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, unto the end of the year.' And do you think that he will not have as great a care, and as tender a regard of you who are his jewels, his treasure, his joy, yea, who are the delight of his soul, and the price of his Son's blood?

[3.] Thirdly, Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the authority of God. As if the earth were not the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and as if all creatures were not at his command and at his dispose, whenas he is the great proprietary, and all is his by primitive right, and all the creatures are at his service, and are ready at a word of command to serve where he pleaseth, and when he pleaseth, and as he pleaseth, and whom he pleaseth, Psa 24:1; Psa 50:10.

[4.] Fourthly, Inordinate cares are a dishonour and a reproach to the mercy, bounty, and liberality of God. They proclaim God to be a hard master, and not to be of so free, so noble, and so generous a spirit, as Scripture and the experiences of many thousands speaks him to be. I have read of a duke of Milan, that marrying his daughter to a son of England, he made a dinner of thirty courses, and at every course he gave so many gifts to every guest at the table, as there were dishes in the course. Here was a rich and royal entertainment, here was noble bounty indeed; but this bounty is not to be named in the day wherein the bounty and liberality of God to his people is spoken of. Princes' treasures have been often exhausted and drawn dry, but the treasures of God's bounty and liberality were never, nor never shall be, exhausted or drawn dry. O sirs! you are as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, as you are able to number up the mercies and favours of God that attends his people in one day, yea, that attends them in one hour of the day, or in one minute of an hour; such is his liberality and bounty towards them. God is always best, when he is most in the exercise of his bounty and liberality towards his people. His favours and mercies seldom come single. There is a series, a concatenation of them, and every former draws on a future; yea, such is the bounty and liberality of God, that he never takes away one mercy, but he hath another ready to lay in the room of it; as Joshua began to shine before Moses his candle was put out; and before Joshua went to bed, Othniel the son of Kenaz was risen up to judge. Eli was not gathered to his fathers, before Samuel appeared hopeful; nor Sarah was not taken away till Rebekah was ready to come in her stead. The Jews have a saying, that never doth there die any illustrious man, but there is another born as bright on the same day.

[5.] Fifthly, Inordinate cares are a reproach and a dishonour to the fidelity of God. As if he were not the faithful witness, the faithful God, that hath bound himself by promise, by covenant, and by oath, to take care of his people, and to provide for his people, and to look after the welfare of his

people. God is that ocean and fountain from whence all that faithfulness that is in angels and men do issue and flow, and his faithfulness is the rule and measure of all that faithfulness that is in all created beings, and his faithfulness is unchangeable and perfect. Though the angels fell from their faithfulness, and Adam fell from his, yet it is impossible that ever God should fall from his. God's faithfulness is a foundation-faithfulness; it is that foundation upon which all our faith, hope, prayers, praises, and obedience stands; and therefore, whoever is unfaithful, God will be sure to shew himself a faithful God, in making good all that he hath spoken concerning them that fear him. I had rather, said Plutarch, that men should say there was never any such person in the world as Plutarch, rather than say that Plutarch is unfaithful. Men were better say that there is no God, than to say that God is an unfaithful God; and yet this is the constant language of inordinate cares. O sirs! God's goodness inclines him to make good promises, precious promises; and his faithfulness engages him to make those promises good, 2Pe 1:4. If the word be once gone out of his mouth, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot of that word shall fail, Mat 5:18. Men say and unsay what they have said; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoke them; but so will not God. This faithfulness of God Joshua stoutly asserts to the height; he throws down the gauntlet, and doth, as it were, challenge all Israel to shew but that one thing that God had failed them in of all the good things that he had promised, Jos 23:14-15. If God in very faithfulness afflicts his people to make good his threatenings, oh, how much more in faithfulness will he preserve and provide for his people, to make good his promises! Psa 119:75. God hath never broke his word nor cracked his credit by deceiving, or by compounding for one penny less in the pound than what he hath promised to make good. God stands upon nothing more than his faithfulness, and glories in nothing more than his faithfulness; and yet all inordinate cares leaves a blot upon his faithfulness. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Inordinate cares are a reproach to the pity and compassion of God, Mat 6:32. They speak out God to be a God of no pity, of no bowels, of no tenderness; whereas God is all pities, all bowels, all compassions, all tendernesses: Psa 103:13, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' There is an ocean of love and pity in a father's heart to his children, Gen 33:13-14; and there is much more in God's to his. Hence he is called the Father by way of eminency; and indeed, originally and properly, there is no Father to him, there is no Father like him, there is no Father besides him; and he is called the Father of all mercies, because all the mercies, all the pities, all the bowels, all the compassions that are in all the fathers on earth, are but a drop of his ocean, a spark of his flame, a mite out of his treasury. That father that sees his child in want, and pities him not, and pitying, if able, relieves him not, forfeits the very name of father, and may better write himself monster than man. I have read of a young man who, being at sea in a mighty storm, was very merry when all the passengers, were at their wit's end for fear, &c.; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, that the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew that such was his father's pity and compassion, that he would have a care of him. O sirs! whatever storms the people of God may be in, yet such is his pity and compassion towards them, that he will be sure to have a care of them. The Lord is all that to his people, and will be all that to his people, yea, and infinitely more than that which Isis Mammusa was to the Egyptians, a god full of dugs; and whilst he hath a breast, there is no reason why his children should fear the want of milk. That golden promise, Heb 13:5, were there no more, hath enough in it to steel and arm the soul against all inordinate cares. The Greek hath five negatives, and may thus be rendered: 'I will not, not leave thee, neither will I not, not forsake thee.' Five

times, as one well observes, is this precious promise renewed, that we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of its consolations, that we may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its glory. O sirs! shall the word, the promise, the protest of a king, arm us and cheer us up against all inordinate cares, and shall not the word, the promise, the protest of the King of kings, so often repeated, much more arm us against all base, distrustful, and distracting cares? O Christians! the remembrance of this blessed truth, that God is your portion, should make you sing care away, as that famous martyr said, 'My soul is turned to her rest; I have taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap; and therefore I will now sing away care, and will be careless, according to my name.' If the sense of God's being a man's portion will not burn up all those inordinate cares that commonly fills his head, and that disturbs, and distracts, and racks his heart, I profess I cannot tell what will. It was a strange speech of Socrates, a heathen: Since God is so careful for you, saith he, what need you be careful for anything yourselves? But,

(10.) Tenthly, If God be the saints' portion, then all is theirs. As he said, *Christus meus et omnia*, Christ is mine, and all is mine; so may a Christian say, *Deus meus et omnia mea*, God is mine, and all is mine. If God be thy portion, then heaven and earth are thine; then all the good and all the glory of both worlds are thine; then all the upper and the nether springs are thine: 1Co 3:21, 'All things are yours;' 1Co 3:22, 'whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.' The scope of the apostle is not to shew that such as are saints, and have God for their portion, have a civil and common interest in all men's earthly possessions; but it is to shew that all things are prepared, ordered, and ordained by God to serve the interest of his people, to work for the good of his people, and to help on the happiness and blessedness of his people. All the gifts, and all the graces, and all the experiences, and all the excellencies, and all the mercies of the ministers of the gospel, whether they are ordinary or extraordinary, are all for the information, edification, confirmation, consolation, and salvation of the church; and all the good and all the sweet of the creatures are to be let out for the good of the people of God, and for the comfort of the people of God, and for the encouragement of the people of God; all changes, all conditions, all occurrences, shall be sure 'to work together for their good,' Rom 8:28, that have God for their portion. Whatever the present posture of things are, or whatever the future state of things shall be, yet they shall all issue in their good, in their profit, in their advantage, that have God for their portion. Look, as the wife communicates in her husband's honour and wealth, and as the branches partake of the fatness and sweetness of the root, and as the members derive sense and motion from the head; so the saints communicate in all that good which in God is communicable to them. God is communicative, as the fig-tree, the vine, and the olive is. O sirs! if God be your portion, then every promise in the book of God is yours, and every attribute in the book of God is yours, and every privilege in the book of God is yours, and every comfort in the book of God is yours, and every blessing in the book of God is yours, and every treasury in the book of God is yours, and every mercy in the book of God is yours, and every ordinance in the book of God is yours, and every sweet in the book of God is yours; if God be yours, all is yours. When Alexander asked king Porus, who was then his prisoner, how he would be used? he answered in one word, βασιλικός, like a king. Alexander again replying, Do you desire nothing else? No, saith he, all things are in βασιλικός, in this one word, like a king; so all things are in this one word, 'The Lord is my portion.' He that hath God for his portion, hath all things, because God is all things; he is a good that contains all good in himself. All the good that is to be found in honours, in riches, in pleasures, in preferments, in husband, in wife, in children, in

friends, &c., is to be found only and eminently in God. You have all in that great God that is the saints' great all, Col 3:11. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, If God be the saint's portion, and such a portion as I have at large discovered him to be, then certainly God is no injurious portion, no mischievous portion, no hurtful portion, no prejudicial portion. Surely there can be no danger, no hazard, no hurt in having God for a man's portion. Oh! but oftentimes earthly portions do a great deal of hurt, a great deal of mischief; they ruin men's bodies, they blast and blot men's names, and they lay men open to such sins, and snares, and temptations, that for ever undoes their immortal souls. Oh what a trappan are worldly portions to most men! yea, what fuel are they to corruption! and how often do they lay persons open to destruction! Ecc 5:13, 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Though riches in themselves are God's blessings, yet through the corruptions that are in men's hearts, they prove weapons of wickedness and engines to evil. 'There is a sore evil,' the Septuagint reads it, *infirmetas pessima*, a sore disease; Pagnin and Arias Montanus reads it *mala infirmitas*, an evil disease; others read it *languor pessimus*, a sore weakness. The Hebrew word, *cholah*, signifies such a sore evil as sticks close and is not easily removed; they are kept a thousand thousand ways for their hurt. Latimer, in a sermon before king Edward the Sixth, tells a story of a rich man, that when he lay upon his sick bed, some told him that came to visit him, that by all they were able to discern he was a dead man; he was no man for this world. As soon as ever he heard these words, saith Latimer, What, must I die? said the sick man: send for a physician; wounds, sides, heart, must I die, and leave these riches behind me? wounds, sides, heart, must I die, and leave these things behind me? and nothing else could be got from him but wounds, heart, sides, must I die, and leave these riches behind me? Do you think, sirs, that riches were not kept for this man's hurt? Without a peradventure in this man's heart was writ 'the god of this present world.' And the same father Latimer elsewhere saith, that if he had an enemy to whom it was lawful to wish evil, he would chiefly wish him great store of riches, for then he should never enjoy any quiet. As I have read of one Pheraulas, a poor man, on whom king Cyrus bestowed so much that he knew not what to do with his riches; being wearied out with care in keeping of them, he desired to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent; therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might relieve his necessities, and give him a quiet possession of himself.

Queen Mary said, when she was dying, that if they should open her when she was dead, they should find Calice lying at the bottom of her heart, implying that the loss of it broke her heart. The historian observes that the riches of Cyprus invited the Romans to hazard many dangerous fights for the conquering of it. When the Indians had taken some of the Spaniards, who made gold their god, they filled their mouths with it, and so choked them; they melted their gold, and poured it down their throats, resolving that they should have their fill of gold, who preferred gold before the lives and souls of men. How many millions of bodies and souls have the Spaniards destroyed, to possess themselves of the riches of the West Indies! But let me a little further shew you how hurtful, how dangerous and pernicious earthly riches, earthly portions, are oftentimes to their owners; and this I shall do by a brief induction of these particulars.

[1.] First, Riches encourage and advantage persons to make the strongest and the stoutest opposition against anything that is good. Rich persons usually are the greatest opposers both of

religion and of religious persons: Jas 2:6-7, 'But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called?' And this you may see also in the rich citizens of Jerusalem, and in king Herod; and the very same spirit you may run and read in the scribes and pharisees, who were the rich and the great men of the times, and the very same opposing spirit lives and works strongly in the hearts of many great ones this day. But,

[2.] Secondly, Earthly portions do estrange the heart from God; as you see in the prodigal, Luk 1:5, and in those wealthy monsters that say unto God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways: what is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?' Job 21:13-15. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As earthly portions do estrange the soul from God; so they do often swell the soul, and puff up the soul, Psa 10:1-7, &c. Salvian counts pride the rich man's inheritance. Men's minds ebb and flow with their means, their blood commonly rises with their outward good. Pride, saith Bernard, is the rich man's cousin, it blows him up like a bladder with a quill, it makes him grow secure, and so prepares him for sudden ruin: so that he may well sing his part with those sad souls, 'What hath pride profited us? or what profit hath the pomp of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like as a shadow, and as a post that passeth by,' Wis 5:8-9. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Earthly riches commonly cast men into a deep sleep of security. Thus they served David in that Psa 30:6-7, and thus they served the fool in the Gospel, Luk 12:16-22, and thus they served the old world; and so they did Sodom and Gomorrah afterwards, and so they did the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and their hosts, Jdg 8:11-12, and so did the people of Laish, in that Jdg 18:6-28; and so the peace, plenty, and prosperity of the Bohemians cast them into so great a security, that they began to grow very loose and base in their lives, and very cold and careless in the things of God, and in all their soul-concernments; insomuch that many of their most pious and prudent men did presage, that certainly some horrible storm would suddenly arise, and that some dreadful tempest without all peradventure would beat upon them; and accordingly it came to pass. Alexander slew him whom he found asleep on the watch; and God finding the Bohemians in a deep sleep of sin and security, he brought the devouring sword upon them. Mercury could not kill Argus, till he had cast him into a sleep, and with an enchanted rod closed his eyes. No more can the devil or the world hurt any man, till by dandling of him on the knee of prosperity, they come to lull him asleep in the bed of security. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Earthly riches do frequently divert the souls of men from embracing and closing with the golden seasons and opportunities of grace. Riches are the thorns that choke the word, and that make men barren and unfruitful under the word, Mat 13:22. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, and made him happy in both worlds, Acts 24:24-27; and the rich fool in the Gospel was so taken up in pulling down his barns, and in building of them greater, and in bestowing of his fruits and his goods, that he had no time to prevent the ruin of his soul, Luk 12:15-22; and Dives was so taken up with his riches, pomp, state, and with his royal apparel, royal attendance, and royal fare, that he never minded heaven, nor never dreaded hell, till he did awake with everlasting flames about his ears, Luk 16:19-31. Sicily is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there: and so what do all the sweet profits, pleasures, and preferments of this world, but make men lose the scent of grace, the scent of glory,

the scent of holiness, and the scent of happiness.² It is true, rich men will have their eating times, and their drinking times, and their trading times, and their sporting times, and their sleeping times, and that which is worse, their sinning times, &c. But ah, how rare is it to see rich men covet after hearing times and praying times, and reading times, and meditating times, and mourning times, and repenting times, and reforming times. Rich men will have time for everything, but to honour God, exalt Christ, obey the Spirit, love the saints, attend ordinances, and save their own immortal souls. Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits that rich men spend and consume upon their riches, whilst their precious souls lie a-bleeding to death, and an eternity of misery is posting upon them. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Earthly riches commonly load the soul with a multitude of cares, fears, griefs, and vexations, which do mightily disturb the soul, distract the soul, yea, often rack, torture, and torment the soul. What if such a friend should be unfaithful to his trust? what if such a ship should miscarry? what if such an one should break, that owes me so much? what if my title to such a lordship should not prove good? what if flaws be found in my evidences for such and such lands? what if fire should consume my habitation? what if thieves should rob me of my treasure? &c., and what do all these whats tend to, but to break a man's heart in a thousand pieces? But,

[7.] Seventhly, Earthly riches are many times fuel for the greatest and the grossest sins; as pride, oppression, revenge, cruelty, tyranny, gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, and all manner of uncleanness and filthiness. Riches are a bawd to those very sins that require the largest stock to maintain them. Vices are more costly than virtues. Virtue observes a mean, but vice knows none; vice is all for extremes; witness the prodigious wickedness of these times. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Earthly riches are many times reserved as witnesses against the rich in the great day of their account. Jas 5:1-3, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.' The rust of the rich man's cankered gold and his moth-eaten apparel shall be brought in as dreadful witnesses against him in the great day. The poet feigned Pluto to be the god of riches and of hell too, as if they were inseparable. By all these particulars you see how hurtful, how prejudicial earthly portions often prove to their owners.

Oh, but now God is a portion that will never hurt a man, that will never harm a man, that will never in the least prejudice a man. Among all 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb 12:22-23, there is not one to be found that will give in his witness against this sweet and blessed truth that I have asserted; and among all the saints on earth you shall not find one, but will with both hands readily subscribe to this glorious maxim, viz., That God is such a portion, that hath never hurt them, that hath never harmed them, yea, that he is such a portion that hath done them good all their days, and one upon whom they have lived, and by whom they have been maintained ever since they 'hung upon the breasts,' Ps. 12:9. Holy Polycarp hit it, when he said, 'This sixty-eight years have I served the Lord, and he never did me any hurt; and shall I now forsake him? Surely no. But now earthly riches, for the most part, do a world of mischief and hurt to their owners. Oh the souls that earthly riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds that earthly riches have blinded! Oh the hearts that earthly riches have hardened! Oh the consciences that earthly riches have benumbed! Oh the wills that earthly riches have perverted! Oh the affections

that earthly riches have disordered! Oh the lives that earthly riches have corrupted! And Oh the souls that earthly riches have destroyed! But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, Earthly riches, for the most part, make men unwilling to die. Oh how terrible is the king of terrors to the rich and the great ones of the world, 1Sa 28:20, Dan 5:1-7. And so Henry Beaufort, that rich and wretched cardinal, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, perceiving death at hand, spoke thus: Wherefore should I die, being so rich? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it; fie, quoth he, will not death be hired? will money do nothing? It is reported that Queen Elizabeth could not endure so much as to hear death named; and Sigismund the emperor, and Louis the Eleventh, king of France, straitly charged all their servants, that when they saw them sick, they should never dare to name that bitter word death in their ears. Vitellius, an emperor of Rome—a notorious glutton, as you may easily judge, by his having at one supper two thousand fishes, and seven thousand birds—when he could not fly death, he made himself drunk that he might not be sensible of the pangs of death.² It was a very prudent and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the duke of Venice, who when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, he only returned him this grave and serious memento, *Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die, &c. And by daily experience we find that of all men wealthy men are most unwilling to die. Oh, but now God is such a portion as fits and disposes the soul to die, yea, as makes the soul look and long for death, and that makes death more desirable than life itself. A man that hath God for his portion, that hath God in his arms, may well sing it out with old Simeon, 'Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes hath seen thy salvation,' Luk 2:25, Luk 2:29-30; and with Paul, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23; and with the church, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountain of spices,' Song of Solomon 8:14; and, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev 22:20. Did Christ die for me that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love, and shall I be unwilling to die that I may see him whom my soul loves? Surely no. Augustine longed to die that he might see that head that was once crowned with thorns. The dying words of my young Lord Harrington were these: 'O my God, when shall I be with thee?' Cyprian could receive the cruellest sentence of death with a *Deo gratias*; and holy Andrew saluted the cross on which he was to be crucified, saying, 'Take me from men, and restore me to my master.' And so Laurence Saunders, when he was come to the stake at which he was to be burnt, he kissed it, saying, 'Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, If God be the saints' portion, oh then let the saints still think of God, and look upon God under this notion. A man that hath God for his portion should always have very high, noble, sweet, and precious thoughts of God. It becomes not those that have God for their portion to be always looking upon God as an angry God, or as a displeased Father, or as an incensed judge, or as an enraged enemy, or as a bitter friend. When God would make known his name, his nature, his glory to Moses, he proclaims himself to be, 'The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercies for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,' Exo 34:6-7. And certainly to keep up such precious thoughts and notions as these are of God, is that work of works that lies upon every man's hand that hath God for his portion. O sirs! there is a very great aptness and proneness, even in those that have God

for their portion, to have black, dark, hard, dismal, and dreadful thoughts and apprehensions of God, as you may see in Asaph, Heman, Job, David, &c. By nature we are as full of hard thoughts of God, as hell is full of sin; and when the heart is not mightily over-awed by the Spirit of God and overpowered by the grace of God, there all manner of dark and dismal apprehensions of God abounds. Besides, Satan knows very well that our corrupt natures are made up of sad and hard thoughts of God; and therefore he will use all his power and craft to blow up every spark, every hard thought of God, into a flame, especially when outward troubles and inward distresses are upon us. What says Satan? Dost thou think that God loves thee? O Christian, when he deals thus sharply and severely with thee, doth he pretend kindness to thee, and yet hide his face from thee, and set thee up as a mark to shoot at? How can he be thy friend, who hath cast thee down at thine enemies' feet, and given thee up into their paws and jaws? How canst thou think that he hath any pity and compassion towards thee, who makes no better provision for thee? What vanity is it to believe that he will give thee a crown, that denies thee a crust? And that he will give thee an house not made with hands, and yet suffer thee to be turned out of house and home? And that he will do so much for thee in another world, who doth so little for thee in this world? &c. And thus Satan takes his opportunities to provoke corrupt nature and to kill the soul with hard thoughts of God. And certainly that Christian is a very great stranger to his own heart, that is not able to say from experience that it is one of the highest and hardest works in this world to keep up good and gracious thoughts of God, to keep up honourable and noble thoughts of God, in a suffering condition or under dark and dismal dispensations. Oh, but now those that have God for their portion, they should abandon and abhor all hard thoughts of God, yea, how severe soever the dealings of God are towards them, yet it is their duty and their glory to keep up very sweet and precious thoughts of God, Psa 73:1. O sirs! the more choice and honourable thoughts you keep up of God in your own souls, the more you will love the Lord, and the more you will delight in the Lord, and the more content and satisfaction you will take in the Lord. Such Christians that take a pleasure to be still a-representing of God to themselves in the most hideous, terrible, and amazing shapes, they kill their love and their joy, and they create a hell of torments in their own souls. Well, Christians! let me put a cluster of the grapes of Canaan into your hands at once, and that by telling of you, that the more glorious and blessed thoughts you keep up in your souls of God, the more spiritual, the more frequent, the more fervent, the more abundant, the more constant, and the more unwearied you will be in the work of the Lord, and the more all your graces will be acted, exercised, strengthened, and increased, yea, and the more your evidences for heaven will be cleared, your gracious experiences multiplied, your communion with God raised, your way to glory facilitated, and all your sufferings sweetened; and therefore never let noble and precious thoughts of God die in your souls. Though he frown upon thee, O Christian, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he chides thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he corrects thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he deserts thee and carries it strangely towards thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he snatches many a mercy from thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he multiplies thy burdens upon thee, yet say, he is thy portion; and though he writes bitter things against thee, yet say, he is thy portion; yea, though he should pass a sentence of death upon thee, yet still say, he is thy portion. O Christians, this would still raise an heaven in your hearts, if under all dispensations you would still look upon God as your portion, and live upon God as your portion. But,

(13.) Thirteenthly, If God be a believer's portion, then never let a believer be afraid to die or unwilling to die. Let them be afraid to die that have only the world for their portion here, and hell for their portion hereafter; but let not a saint be afraid of death, that hath for his portion the Lord of life. A man that hath God for his portion should rather court death than tremble at it; he should rather sweetly welcome it than turn his back upon it; for death to such an one is but the way to paradise, the way to all heavenly delights, the way to those everlasting springs of pleasure that are at God's right hand, the way to life, immortality, and glory, and the way to a clear, full, constant, and eternal fruition of God, Psa 16:11. Augustine upon those words, Exo 33:20-21, 'Thou canst not see my face and live,' makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' Death is a bridge that leads to the paradise of God. All the hurt that it can do is to bring a believer to a full enjoyment of his portion. When Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten. Old Alderman Jordan used to say that death would be the best friend he had in the world, and that he would willingly go forth to meet it; or rather say with holy Paul, 'O death, where is thy sting?' triumphing over it. What is a drop of vinegar put into an ocean of wine? what is it for one to have a rainy day, who is going to take possession of a kingdom? A Dutch martyr feeling the flame to come to his beard, 'Ah, said he, what a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come!'³ Lactantius boasts of the braveness of that spirit that was upon the martyrs in his time. Our children and women, not to speak of men, saith he, do in silence overcome their tormentors, and the fire cannot so much as fetch a sigh from them. John Noyes took up a faggot at the fire and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be the time that ever I was born, to come to this preferment.' Never did neckerchief become me so well as this chain, said Alice Driver, when they fastened her to the stake to be burnt. Mr Bradford put off his cap, and thanked God, when the keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burnt on the morrow.² Mr Taylor fetched a frisk when he was come near the place where he was to suffer. Henry and John, two Augustine monks, being the first that were burnt in Germany, and Mr Rogers, the first that was burnt in Queen Mary's days, did all sing in the flames;⁴ and be of good cheer, said the woman-martyr to her husband that was to suffer with her, for though we have but an ill dinner on earth, we shall sup with Christ in heaven. And what said Justin Martyr to his murderers, in behalf of himself and his fellow-martyrs? 'You may kill us, but you can never hurt us.' Ah, Christians! how can you read over these choice instances and not blush, and not be ashamed to consider what a readiness, what a forwardness, and what a noble willingness there was in these brave worthies to die and go to heaven, and to be fully possessed of their God, of their portion, whilst you shrug at the very thoughts of death, and frequently put that day far from you, and had rather, with Peter, fall upon 'building of tabernacles,' Mat 17:4, than, with Paul, 'desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23. O Christians! how justly may that father be angry with his child that is unwilling to come home! and how justly may that husband be displeased with his wife who is unwilling to ride to him in a rainy day, or to cross the sea to enjoy his company! And is not this your case? is not this just your case, who have God for your portion, and yet are unwilling to die, that you may come to a full enjoyment of your portion? But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, and lastly, If God be the saint's portion, then let all the saints give all diligence to make this clearly and fully out to their own souls, that God is their portion, 2Pe 1:5-8. Next to a man's having God for his portion, it is the greatest mercy in this world for a man to know that God

is his portion, and to be able groundedly to say with the church, 'The Lord is my portion,' saith my soul. Now this is a work that may be done. I suppose there is never a believer on earth but may attain unto this personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that God is his portion. Express promises speaks out such a thing as this is: Zec 13:9, 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, It is my God;' so Eze 34:30, 'Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord;' Psa 9:18, 'For the patient abiding of the meek shall not be forgotten for ever.' God will as soon put the faith of reliance and the faith of assurance to a blush, as he will put the faith of expectance to a blush: Psa 22:26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied, they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever.' First or last, such as seek him shall have such an answer of their prayers as shall turn their prayers into praises, and their petitions into thanksgivings: Psa 84:11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' God will be an universal, all-sufficient, and satisfactory good to them that walk uprightly. The Lord is as full of goodness as the sun is full of light, and he will as freely, and as fully, and as impartially communicate his goodness to them that walk uprightly, as the sun doth her light both to the just and the unjust, Mat 5:45. As under the name of no good thing will he withhold, all temporal good things are to be understood, so under the name of grace all spiritual good things are to be understood, and under the name of glory all eternal good things are to be understood. And now, if God will give all spiritual and all eternal good things to his people, how can he then but sooner or later give a clear and satisfactory evidence into his people's bosoms that he is their portion? And not only express promises, but also the graces of the Spirit and the testimony of the Spirit confirms the same thing. The language of every saving grace is this: The Lord is thy portion, O thou believing soul; and the language and testimony of the Spirit is the same: Rom 8:15, 'Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' Rom 8:16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.' Shall an instinct in nature teach young ones to know their dams, and shall not the Spirit of God, by a divine instinct, teach the saints to know God to be their God, and to be their portion also? Surely yes. Though this or that particular Christian may go to his grave without a satisfactory evidence in his own bosom that God is his portion, yet in an ordinary course, at first or last, God doth give his people some assurance that he is their portion, yea, rather than they shall always live or die without assurance of their salvation, and that he is their portion, he will work a miracle to assure them of his love.

I have both heard and read of a rare story of Mrs Honeywood, a famous professor of the gospel, and one that for many years together lay under the burden of a wounded spirit, and was much troubled in mind for want of assurance that God was her portion, and that she should be saved from wrath to come. At length there came a godly minister to her, who endeavoured to settle her faith and hope in Christ; and pressing many gospel promises upon her, she took it with a kind of indignation and anger that he should offer to present any promises to her, to whom, as she thought, they did not belong; and having a Venice-glass in her hand, she held it up, and said, Speak no more to me of salvation, for I shall as surely be damned as this poor brittle glass shall be broke against the wall, throwing it with all her force to break it. But it so pleased God that, by a miraculous providence, the glass was preserved whole. The minister, beholding the miracle, took up the glass, and said unto her, 'Behold, God must work a miracle before you, before you will believe.' And for ever after that day she had very strong assurance of her salvation, and that God

was her portion; and so lived and died in a sweet and comfortable sense of the love and favour of God.

Now, to provoke you to labour with all your might to attain to a clear, personal, satisfactory evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, do but seriously consider and lay to heart the rare and singular advantages that will redound to your souls by this means. I shall only touch upon some, by which yourselves may guess at others.

[1.] First, By this means your hearts will come to be fixed, settled, and established. A man's soul never comes to be fixed and settled by knowing in the general that God is the saint's portion, but by a personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that he is his particular portion. Whilst a man's particular propriety is unsettled, all is unsettled in his soul; but when a man's particular propriety is settled, when he can say, This God is my God, and the Lord is my portion, then all is settled, then all is at peace in the soul, Psa 57:7, Psa 108:1, Psa 112:7. A man that hath God for his portion, if he do not know it, will still be like a ship at sea in the midst of a storm, tossed here and there, and now rolling on one side and then on the other, and never quiet, never lying still; but a man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, he is like a ship in a good harbour, that lies quiet and still; yea, he is like mount Zion, that cannot be removed. But,

[2.] Secondly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will rid his soul of all sinful doubts. O Christians! now your hearts are as full of doubts as hell is full of darkness. One day you doubt whether your graces are true, and another day you doubt whether your comforts are true. Now, you doubt of your saintship, and anon of your sonship, and then of your heirship. Sometimes you doubt of your communion with God, sometimes you doubt of your acquaintance with God, and sometimes you doubt of your acceptance with God. One hour you doubt of the favour of God, and the next hour you doubt of your access to God. And as it is thus with you, so it will be thus with you till you come to have some clear satisfaction in your own spirits that God is your portion. O Christians! had you but once a personal evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, all those doubts that are bred and fed by ignorance and unbelief, and that rob the soul of all joy, comfort, and content, and that render men babes in Christianity, and that cast reproach upon God, Christ, and the promises, &c., and that do most gratify and advantage Satan to tempt and try your souls, would vanish and disperse as the clouds do before the sun when it shines in its brightness. Till a Christian's eyes be opened to see God to be his portion, his heart will be full of doubts and perplexities. Though Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ, yet she stands sighing, mourning, and complaining, that 'they had stolen away her Lord,' John 20:13-16. A Christian may have God for his portion, yet till he comes to see God to be his portion, he will spend his days in sighing, mourning, and complaining. O Christians! till you come to see God to be your portion, your doubts will lie down with you and rise with you, they will talk with you and walk with you, till they make your lives a very hell. It was an excellent speech of Luther, 'The whole Scripture,' saith he, 'doth principally aim at this thing, that we should not doubt, but that we should hope, trust, and believe that God is a merciful, bountiful, and gracious God to his people.' And what will bring a man's heart over to answer to this blessed aim of the Scripture? Certainly nothing below an assurance that God is his portion. It was a noble resolution of blessed Bradford, who, in one of his epistles, saith thus: 'O Lord, sometimes methinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference between my heart and the hearts of the wicked. My mind is as blind as theirs, and my will as stout, stubborn, and rebellious as theirs; and my affections are as much disordered as theirs, and my conscience

as much benumbed and stupefied as theirs, and my heart as hard and flinty as theirs, &c.; shall I therefore conclude that thou art not my Father? Nay, I will reason otherwise,' saith he; 'I do believe thou art my Father; I will come unto thee, that thou mayest enlighten this blind mind of mine, and bend and bow this stout and stubborn will of mine; and that thou mayest put order into these disordered affections of mine, and that thou mayest put life and quickness into this stupefied and benumbed conscience of mine, and that thou mayest put softness and tenderness into this hard and flinty heart of mine.' And thus he nobly reasoned himself, and believed himself, out of all his fears and doubts. There is no such way for a man to be rid of all his fears and doubts, as to live in the sight and faith of this truth, that God is his portion.

Plutarch reports of one, who would not be resolved of his doubts, because he would not lose the pleasure in seeking for resolution, like to him that would not have his physician to quench the thirst he felt in his ague, because he would not lose the pleasure of drinking; and like those that would not be freed from their sins, because they would not lose the pleasure of sinning. But I hope better things of all those that have God for their portion, than to find them in love with their doubts, or to be unwilling to be rid of their doubts. Next to a man's going to hell, it is one of the greatest afflictions in the world for a man always to live in doubts about his going to heaven. Next to damnation, it is one of the greatest troubles that can attend a Christian, to be always exercised and perplexed with doubts about his salvation. Next to being damned, it is the hell of hells to live in continual fears of damnation. Now the only way to prevent all this, is to know that God is your portion. But,

[3.] Thirdly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will exceedingly sweeten all the crosses, losses, and changes that shall attend him in this world. Habakkuk knew that God was the God of his salvation; and that he was his portion; and therefore he rejoices: 'Though the fig-tree did not blossom, and though there were no fruit in the vines; and though the labour of the olive did fail, and the fields did yield no meat, and the flocks were cut off from the fold, and there were no herd in the stalls,' Hab 3:17-18. And the same noble temper was upon those worthies in Heb 10:34, 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' They took joyfully the spoiling of their earthly portions, being well assured in their own souls that they should enjoy an heavenly portion, an everlasting portion. And so the apostles knew that they had 'an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' 2Co 5:1; and this carried them bravely through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, and through all weaknesses, sicknesses, distresses, wants, dangers, and death; and this made their heavy afflictions light, and their long afflictions short, and their bitter afflictions sweet, 2Co 4:16-18. This was that tree which, being cast in the waters of Marah, made them sweet, Exo 15:23-25; and this was that that did unsting all their crosses, losses, and reproaches, and that made them rejoice and sing under those very burdens and trials that would have broke the necks, backs, and hearts of others, Acts 5:1-42 and Acts 16:1-40. When a man hath a clear personal evidence that God is his portion, then no outward changes will make any considerable change in him. Though Laban had changed Jacob's wages ten times, yet Jacob was Jacob still, Gen 31:7. Let times change, and men change, and powers change, and nations change, yet a man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, will never change his countenance, nor change his Master, nor change his service, nor change his works, nor change his ways. Under all changes he will still be semper idem, always the same. Many great and dreadful changes

passed upon Joseph, but yet under all Joseph's bow 'abode in strength,' Gen 49:23-24. When a man knows that God is his portion, whatever changes may pass upon him, yet his bow will still abide in strength. Marcellus the pope would not change his name, according to the custom of other popes, to shew his immutability, and that he was no changeling; but how many are there in these days, who were looked upon as better men, who have changed their names, their notes, their coats, their principles, their practices, and all for worldly advantages. These changelings, that change from better to worse, and from naught to be very naught, yea, stark naught, are the worst and the naughtiest of men, and deserve to be hanged in chains; and certainly, when the wrath of God breaks forth, these changelings shall be as stubble before it, Mal 4:1, Heb 10:38. God abhors none as he doth those who run from him to serve other lords, and who gad about to change their way: Jer 2:36-37, 'Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head; for the Lord hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them.' There is nothing that will keep a man from apostasy, and from making a defection from God, his ways, his worship, his glory, &c., like a blessed persuasion that God is his portion, 2Pe 1:5-11. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will exceedingly raise and advance the comfort and joy of a man's heart. It is not merely my having of God for my portion, but it is my seeing, it is my knowing, it is my fruition of God as my portion, that is the true spring of all delight, comfort, and consolation. When a man's interest in God is clear, then all the precious promises will be full wells of salvation, and full breasts of consolation to him, but till then they will be but as dry breasts, as barren heaths, as a fruitful wilderness, and as empty wells. Whilst a man is doubtful whether God be his God, it is certain that the spring of joy and comfort will run low in his soul; whilst a man lives in fear that his title and interest is not good, how can he rejoice? When a man's interest in God is clear, then his heaven of joy begins. A man that hath God for his portion, and knows it, cannot but live in a paradise of joy, and walk in a paradise of joy, and work in a paradise of joy, and eat in a paradise of joy, and recreate himself in a paradise of joy, and rest in a paradise of joy; he cannot but have an heaven of joy within him, and an heaven of joy about him, and an heaven of joy over him. All his looks will speak out joy within, and all his words will speak out joy within, and all his works will speak out joy within, and all his ways will speak out joy within. I remember a notable saying of one, How sweet was it to me of a sudden to be without those sweet vanities! and those things which I was afraid to lose, with joy I let go; for thou, who art the true and only sweetness, didst cast out those from me, and instead of them didst enter in thyself, who art more delightful than all pleasure, and more clear than all light. When a man's interest in God is clear, his joy will be full, John 16:24; when a man is happy, and knows it, he cannot but rejoice; when a man hath God for his portion, and knows it, all the world cannot hinder the strong consolations of God from rising high in his soul. Why have the saints in heaven more joy and delight than the saints on earth, but because they have a clearer and a fuller knowledge of their interest and propriety in God than the others have? The knowledge of a man's propriety in God is the comfort of comforts. Propriety makes every comfort a pleasurable comfort, a delightful comfort. When a man walks in a fair meadow, and can write mine upon it, and into a pleasant garden, and can write mine upon it, and into a fruitful corn-field, and can write mine upon it, and into a stately habitation, and can write mine upon it, and into a rich mine, and can write mine upon it, oh how doth it please him! how doth it delight him! how doth it joy and rejoice him! Of all words this word

meum is the sweetest and the comfortablest. Ah! when a man can look upon God, and write meum; when he can look upon God, and say, This God is my God for ever and ever; when he can look upon God, and say, This God is my portion; when he can look upon God, and say with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John 20:28, how will all the springs of joy rise in his soul! Oh who can but joy to be owner of that God that fills heaven and earth with his fulness? who can but rejoice to have him for his portion, in having of whom he hath all things, in having of whom he can want nothing? The serious thoughts of our propriety in God will add much sweet to all our sweets, yea, it will make every bitter sweet. When a man seriously thinks, It is my God that cheers me with his presence, it is my God that supports me with his power, it is my God that guides me by his counsel, it is my God that supplies me with his goodness, and it is my God that blesses all my blessings to me; it is my God that afflicts me in love, it is my God that hath broken me in my estate and in my credit, it is my God that hath sorely visited such a child, it is my God that hath passed a sentence of death upon such a friend, it is my God that hath thus straitened me in my liberty, and it is my God that hath thus cast me down at my enemies' feet, &c., how doth these thoughts cheer up the spirit of a man, and make every bitter sweet, and every burden light unto him. A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful; it puts a lustre upon beauty. And so doth holy joy put a divine beauty and lustre upon all the ways of God, and upon all the people of God. And therefore, it highly concerns all Christians, as they would have an heavenly beauty, lustre, and glory upon them, to rejoice; and that they may rejoice, it doth as highly concern them to know their interest and propriety in God. But,

[5.] Fifthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will very much raise him in his communion with God, and exceedingly sweeten his fellowship with God. There are no Christians on earth that have such high, such choice, such free, such full, such sweet, and such uninterrupted communion with God, as those that have a clear sight of their interest and propriety in God. The spouse, in that book of Solomon's Song, again, and again, and again sings and sounds out her propriety and interest in Christ: Song of Solomon 2:16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' Song of Solomon 6:3, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.' Song of Solomon 7:10, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.' Now, mark, how doth the sense of this her propriety in Christ work? Why, it works very highly, very strongly, very inflamingly, very affectionately: Song of Solomon 1:2-4, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine: because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth, and therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.' Song of Solomon 1:13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' Song of Solomon 2:3-6, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.' And Song of Solomon 7:5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' The spouse had a clear sight and a deep sense of her interest and propriety in Christ; and oh, how high, how close, how full, how sweet, is she in her communion and fellowship with Christ! It is the sight and sense of propriety and interest that heightens and sweetens that

communion that is between husband and wife, father and child, brother and sister, and friend and friend; so it is the sight and sense of a man's propriety and interest in God that heightens and sweetens his communion and fellowship with God. A clear sight of a man's interest and propriety in God will exceedingly sweeten every thought of God, and every appearance of God, and every taste of God, and every smile of God, and every communication of God, and every ordinance of God, and every work of God, and every way of God; yea, it will sweeten every rod that is in the hand of God, and every wrinkle that is in face of God, Psa 139:17-18. A man that sees his interest in God, will hang upon him, and trust in him, though he should write never such bitter things against him, and though he should deal never so severely with him, yea, though he should slay him, as you may see in Job 13:15. He hit it who said, A man whose soul is conversant with God shall find more pleasure in the desert and in death, than in the palace of a prince. Urbanus Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, said, It was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life. But if one day's communion with Luther was so sweet, oh how sweet must one day's communion with God be. And therefore, as ever you would have high, and full, and sweet communion with God, keep up a clear sight, a blessed sense of your interest and propriety in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, is a man's all in all. O sirs! this is the life of your lives, and the life of your prayers, and the life of your praises, and the life of your confidences, and the life of your mercies, and the life of your comforts, and the life of your hopes, &c. A clear sight of your propriety in God is the very life of promises, the life of ordinances, the life of providences, the life of experiences, and the life of your gracious evidences. It is a pearl of price; it is your paradise; it is manna in a wilderness, it is water out of a rock, it is a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; it is Jacob's ladder; it is a salve for every sore, it is physic for every disease, it is a remedy against every malady; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield on shore; it is a star to guide you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a pavilion to hide you, a fire to warm you, a banquet to refresh you, a city of refuge to secure you, and a cordial to cheer you; and what would you have more? But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will exceedingly sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the approaches of death, and all the warnings and forerunners of death unto him. It will make a man look upon his last day as his best day, Ecc 7:1; it will make a man look upon the king of terrors as the king of desires, Job 18:14; it will make a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the sounding of the trumpet, at the confused noise of the battle, at garments rolled in blood, at the sighs and groans of the wounded, and at the heaps of the slain. It was the martyrs' clear sight of their interest and propriety in God that made them compliment with lions, and dare their persecutors, and to kiss the stake, and to sing and clap their hands in the midst of the flames, and to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses, and divinely to triumph over their tormentors. It was this that made the primitive Christians ambitious of martyrdom, and that made them willingly and cheerfully lay down their lives, that they might, Elijah-like, mount to heaven in fiery chariots. A man that sees his propriety in God, knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins, sorrows, afflictions, temptations, desertions, oppositions, vexations, oppressions, and persecutions; and he knows that death shall be the resurrection of his hopes, joys, delights, comforts, and contentments, and that it shall bring him to a more clear, full, perfect, and constant enjoyment of God: and this makes him sweetly and triumphantly to sing it

out, O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?' 1Co 15:35-37. And oh that these seven considerations might prevail with all your souls to be restless, till you have in your own bosoms clear and full satisfaction that God is your portion. Now this last inference leads me by the hand to an use of trial and examination. O sirs! if God be the saint's portion, the believer's portion, how highly doth it concern every one that looks upon himself as a saint or as a believer, to search, try, and examine whether God be his portion or no?

Quest. But you will say, How shall we know whether God be our portion or no? Oh! were all the world a lump of gold, and in our hands to dispose of, we would give it to know that God is our portion! Oh! the knowledge of this would be as life from the dead; it would create an heaven in our hearts on this side heaven; it would presently put us into a paradise of pleasure and delight; but still the question is, How shall we know it? It is an easy thing to say that God is our portion; but how shall we come infallibly to know that God is our portion?

Now, to give clear and full satisfaction to this great and weighty question, I shall give in these following answers, by which you may certainly and undoubtedly know, whether God be your portion or no:

[1.] First, If God be thy portion, then thou hast very sweet, precious, high, and honourable thoughts of God; then thy thoughts will still be running out after God, and thy meditations of him will be sweet. A man that hath God for his portion, is always best when his thoughts and meditations are running out most after God: Psa 104:34, 'My meditations of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord;' Psa 63:5-6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed (or beds, as the Hebrew hath it; David never bedded at home nor abroad, here nor there, but still his thoughts were running out to God), and meditate on thee in the night watches;' Psa 139:17-18, 'How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.' The psalmist had very frequent, high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God; he valued nothing at so high a rate as sweet and noble thoughts of God, and of his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and graciousness, &c. David had such precious thoughts of God, and such great and glorious thoughts of God, and such infinite and innumerable thoughts of God, that he was as well able to number the sands of the sea, as he was able to number them up: 'And when I awake I was still with thee.' He was still a-contemplating upon God; he did fall asleep with precious thoughts of God, and he did awake with precious thoughts of God; he did rise up with precious thoughts of God, and he did lie down with precious thoughts of God; he did go forth with precious thoughts of God, and he did return home with precious thoughts of God. Take a Christian when he is himself, when he is neither under sad deserts, nor black temptations, nor great afflictions, and he can as soon forget his own and his father's house, the wife of his bosom, the fruit of his loins, yea, he can as soon forget to eat his bread, as he can forget his God. When Alexander the Great had overthrown Darius, king of Persia, he took among the spoils a most rich cabinet, full of the choicest jewels that were in all the world; upon which there rose a dispute before him, to what use he should put the cabinet; and every one having spent his judgment according to his fancy, the king himself concluded, that he would keep that cabinet, to be a treasury to lay up the books of Homer in, which were his greatest joy and delight. A sanctified memory is a rich cabinet full of the choicest thoughts of God;² it is that rich treasury wherein a Christian is still a-laying up more and more precious thoughts of God, and more

and more high and holy thoughts of God, and more and more honourable and noble thoughts of God, and more and more awful and reverent thoughts of God, and more and more sweet and comfortable thoughts of God, and more and more tender and compassionate thoughts of God, &c. Take a Christian in his ordinary course, and you shall find that wherever he is, his thoughts are running out after God; and about whatever he is, his thoughts are still a-running out after God; and into what company soever he is cast, whether they are good or bad, yet still his thoughts are running out after God, &c.

Look, as an earthly-minded man hath his thoughts and meditations still exercised and taken up with the world, as you may see in Haman, whose heart and thoughts were taken up with his honours, perfections, riches, wife, children, and friends, &c.: Est 5:10-12, 'Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.' And the same spirit you may see working in those that had made gold their god, in that Psa 49:10-11, 'For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling-places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.' The Hebrew runneth thus: 'Their inwards are their houses for ever,' as if their houses were got within them. Not only the thoughts, but the very inmost thoughts, the most retired thoughts and recesses of worldlings' souls, are taken up about earthly things; and though they care not whether their names are written in heaven or no, yet they do all they can to propagate and immortalise their names on earth. And the rich fool was one in spirit with these the psalmist speaks of, as you may see in that Luk 12:16, Luk 12:22, 'And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself (the Greek word *διελογίζετο* is a marvellous proper word for the purpose; it signifies to talk with a man's self, or to reason with a man's self. This foolish worldling was much in talking to himself, and in reasoning with himself about his goods and barns, &c., as the usual manner of men is that are of a worldly spirit), saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Among all his worldly thoughts, there is not one thought of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of holiness, of eternity, to be found. His thoughts were so taken up with his bags, and his barns, and his buildings, and his ease, and his belly, that he had no time to think of providing for another world; and therefore God quickly despatches him out of this world, and throws him down from the highest pinnacle of prosperity and worldly glory into the greatest gulf of wrath and misery, Luk 12:20. And this foolish worldling puts me in mind of another, who, being offered an horse by his fellow upon condition that he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God, which proffer being accepted, he began: 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' But I must have the bridle too, said he. No, nor the horse neither, said the other; for thou hast lost both already. When worldlings should most think of God, and be most struck with the dread and majesty of God, and be most afflicted and taken up with the glory of God, yet then their thoughts and hearts will be a-gadding and a-running after the world, as you

may see in Ezekiel's hearers; Eze 33:30-32, and in Paul's, Php 3:18-19. When queen Mary was dying, she said that if they did but open her when she was dead, they should find Calais lying at her heart. Ah! howoften doth stinking lusts and rotten towns, and moth-eaten bags, and other trifling vanities, lie near those hearts where God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace, and ordinances, and saints, and heaven should lie! Look, as the thoughts of the men of the world do mainly run out after the world, after their earthly portions, so the thoughts of those that have God for their portion do mainly run out after God, and they are never so well as when they are most a-thinking and a-musing on God. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God be thy portion, then in all thy straits, trials, troubles, and wants, thou wilt run to thy God, thou wilt fly to the Lord, as to thy only city of refuge: 1Sa 30:6, 'And David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved (or bitter) every man for his sons, and for his daughters; but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' When a shower of stones were coming about David's ears, he runs and shelters himself under the wings of his God. Though David was an exile in an heathenish country, though Ziklag, the place of his habitation, was burnt, though he had neither house nor home to flee to, though his wives were in his enemies' hands, and though his friends and followers were desperately incensed, enraged, exasperated, and provoked against him, and took counsel together about stoning of him, looking upon him as the author of all their crosses, losses, calamities, and miseries; yet now he comforts and encourages himself in the Lord his God: Psa 142:4, 'I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; but no man cared for my soul.' But what doth the psalmist do in this case? Doth he despair or despond? No. Doth he cast away his hope and confidence in God? No. Why, what doth he do then? Why, when all outward comforts fail him, he runs to God as to his last refuge: Psa 142:5-6, 'I cried unto thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.' He doth not run in his straits from God to the creatures, for that had been to run from the fountain, of living waters to broken cisterns, Jer 2:12-13, John 6:68, Isa 33:16, from the light of the sun to the light of a farthing candle, and from the Rock of ages to a leaf driven about with the wind, and from paradise into an howling wilderness, &c. But whither doth he run then? Why, he runs to God; he knew that God was his light, his life, his love, his peace, his joy, his strength, his shelter, his safety, his security, his crown, his glory, and therefore he runs to his God. And, indeed, in times of danger, whither should the child run to shelter himself but to his father? and whither should the wife run but to her husband? and the servant but to his master? and the soldier but to his stronghold? and a Christian but to his God? Pro 18:10, 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' Sometimes by the name of the Lord we are to understand God himself, but most commonly God's attributes are called his name, because by them he is known, as a man is by his name; and here by the name of the Lord we are to understand the power of the Lord, for by that God is known, as men are known by their names. Now God himself is a strong tower, and the power of God is a strong tower, yea, it is a tower as high as heaven, and as strong as strength itself; it is a tower so deep no pioneer can undermine it, so thick no cannon can pierce it, so high no ladder can scale it, so strong that no enemy can assault it or ever be able to stand before it, and so well furnished and provided for all purposes and intents, that all the powers of darkness can never distress it, or in the least straiten it. Now to this impregnable and inexpugnable tower the righteous in all their distresses and dangers run. All creatures run to their

refuges when they are hunted and pursued, and so do righteous souls to theirs. But what doth the righteous man gain by running to his strong tower? Why, he gains safety; he is safe, saith the text, or rather according to the Hebrew **שָׁמַיָּה**, exaltatur, he is exalted, he is set aloft, he is a soul out of gunshot, he is a soul out of all hazard and danger, he is safe in everlasting arms, he is safe in his strong tower of defence, he can easily overlook all hazards, yea, he can look upon the greatest dangers with an holy neglect. And when the burning fiery furnace was heated seven times hotter than at first, whither doth Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego run? Why, they run to God: Dan 3:16-18, 'Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' And so Moses in that Psa 90:1, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations;' or as the Hebrew hath it, thou hast been our refuge-place in generation and generation. By this Hebraism, generation and generation, the prophet sets forth all generations, to shew that there hath been no generation wherein God hath not been the refuge of his people. God was a refuge to his people before the flood, and he hath been a refuge since the flood, and he will be a refuge to his people, whilst he hath a people in the world. All the time that Moses and the people of Israel were a-travelling up and down in that terrible howling wilderness, wherein they were compassed about with dreadful dangers on all hands, God was a refuge and a dwelling-place unto them. In all their troubles and travels for four hundred years together, God was a shelter, a refuge, and an house of defence unto them. Every man's house is his strong castle, and thither he retreats when dangers come; and thus did the people of God in the text. When dangers threatened them, they still run to their God, they still made their retreat to the Holy One of Israel. A man that hath God for his portion, when he is at worst can never be houseless nor harbourless. As long as God lives, he can never want an house, a mansion-house to hide his head in. All the powers on earth and all the powers of hell can never unhouse, nor never unharbour, nor never unshelter that man that hath God for his portion. It was a witty saying of that learned man Pious Mirandula, 'God created the earth for beasts to inhabit, the sea for fishes, the air for fowls, and heaven for angels and stars, so that man hath no place to dwell and abide in but God alone.' And certainly he that by faith dwells in God, dwells in the best, the noblest, the safest, and the strongest house that ever was dwelt in. And so Psa 91:1-2, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.' In this whole psalm the safety of a saint is set forth to the life; to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, notes the defence and protection of God. Those words, 'shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty,' are a metaphor taken from a bird or an hen, that hides her young ones under her wings, and so secures them from the kite, or any other birds of prey. God never wants a wing to hide his children under; and look, as little chickens run under the wings of the hen when danger is near, so the people of God do commonly run under the wings of God when danger is near. And certainly, that Christian may well bid defiance to all dangers, and easily and sweetly sing away all cares and fears, who can by faith shelter himself and lodge himself under the shadow of Shaddai.

Look, as the worldling in all his straits, troubles, trials, dangers, and wants, still runs to his bags, to his earthly portion for succour, for comfort, for support, for relief, for shelter, for protection, Pro 18:11; Mat 19:24; 1Ti 6:17. So a Christian in all his troubles, trials, and distresses, still runs to his

God for shelter, comfort, and support: Psa 31:1-3, 'In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress: therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me, and guide me.' Psa 61:2-3, 'From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.' Psa 94:21-22, 'They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent. But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.' Psa 57:2, 'I will cry unto God most High; unto God that performeth all things for me.' Isa 25:9, 'And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' Mic 7:7, 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear.' Thus you see that the saints in all their straits and trials do still run to God. They know that that God that is their portion is an all-sufficient God, and that he is a sun and a shield to them that walk uprightly; and therefore they delight to be still a running under his shadow. A man that hath God for his portion, may truly say in his greatest distresses and troubles, Well, though I have no riches to fly to, nor no friends to shelter me, nor no relations to stand by me, nor no visible power on earth to protect me, yet I have a God for my portion that is always willing to supply me, and able to secure me: Psa 18:1-2, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'I will dearly love the Lord,' or 'I will love him with inmost bowels of affections,' as a tender-hearted mother loves her dearest babe with the inmost bowels of affections. 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.' In this verse you have nine several expressions to discover what an all-sufficient refuge God is to his people in their greatest distresses. When a Christian is at worst, yet he hath bread celestial, bread to eat that the world knows not of. The grand policy of a Christian to secure himself against all dangers is to run to God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If God be thy portion, then thou wilt hold fast thy portion, and rather part with anything than part with thy portion. Naboth would not upon any terms part with his inheritance; he would rather let all go, yea, his very life go, than let his inheritance go, his portion go: 1Ki 21:3, 'And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, This be abomination to me from the Lord; that is, The Lord keep me from this as from an abominable thing. To alter or alienate the property of inheritances was expressly forbidden by God in his law, Lev 25:23; Num 36:7; Eze 46:18; and therefore Naboth looks upon Ahab's offer and motion as a detestable and an abominable thing, and resolves to hold fast his inheritance, whatever it cost him. So a Christian will hold fast his God, whatever comes on it; he will let anything go, rather than let his God go or his Christ go: Song of Solomon 3:4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered held is from achaz, which signifies to hold, as a man would hold his possession, his inheritance. The word signifies to hold with both hands, to hold with all one's might and with all one's strength; and thus the spouse held the Lord Jesus; she held him with both hands; she held him with all her might and with all her strength; she held him with a holy violence, with an holy force; she held him as a man would hold his prisoner that had a mind to escape, or as a man would hold his sword or buckler when his life is in danger. So Jacob,

Gen 32:26, 'And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and upon one leg, and when his joints were out of joint, and he very much over-matched, yet then he holds God fast, he wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles, he tugs and sweats, and sweats and tugs, and will not let go his hold, till, like a prince, he had prevailed with God, Hos 12:4. Ruth, you know, was so glued to her mother Naomi, that no arguments could prevail with her to leave her mother. She was fully resolved in this, that whither her mother went she would go, and where her mother lodged she would lodge, and that her mother's people should be her people, and her mother's God her God, and that where her mother died there she would die, and there would she be buried, Ruth 1:14-19. So a man that hath God for his portion is so glued to his God, that nothing can take him off from following of God and from cleaving to God. When David was in his wilderness condition, yet then his soul followed hard after God, then his soul stuck close to God: Psa 63:1-2, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' Ver. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee;' or, as the words may be read, 'My soul cleaveth after thee.' David's enemies did not follow harder after him than he followed hard after God. The wife in a man's bosom could not cleave so close to him as David's soul did cleave close to God when he was in a wilderness estate, when he was in an afflicted condition. It is nothing to follow God in a paradise, but it is rare to follow God in a wilderness; it is nothing to follow God when the way is strewn with rose-buds, but it is the glory of a Christian to follow God when the way is strewn with thorns and briars; it is nothing to follow God in a crowd, or with the crowd, but it is the excellency of a Christian to follow God in a wilderness, where few or none follows after him; it is nothing to follow God in the midst of all encouragements, but it is wonderful to follow God in the midst of all discouragements. Oh the integrity! oh the ingenuity! oh the strong intention! oh the deep affection! oh the noble resolution, of that Christian that hangs upon God in a wilderness, and that cleaves to God in a wilderness, and that follows hard after God in a wilderness! Look, as Shechem's soul did cleave to Dinah, and as Jacob's soul did cleave to Rachel, and as Jonathan's soul did cleave to David in the very face of all hazards, dangers, difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses, so the very soul of a man that hath God for his portion will cleave to God in the very face of all hazards, dangers, difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses that he meets withal, Psa 44:8-23. It is neither the frowns of men, nor the reproaches of men, nor the scorns of men, nor the contempts of men, nor the oppositions of men, nor the treacheries of men, nor the combinations of men, that will work him to let go his hold of God. A man that hath God for his portion knows that, whilst he holds his God, he holds his life; and that, whilst he holds his God, he holds his comfort, his crown, his heaven, his all; and therefore he will rather let all go, than let his God go. And so much the several leave nots that are scattered up and down in the blessed Scripture doth clearly evidence; as that in 1Ki 8:57, 'The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us;' and that Psa 27:9, 'Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger; thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.' And so Psa 119:121, 'I have done judgment and justice; leave me not to mine oppressors.' And so Psa 141:8, 'But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute,' or leave not my soul naked, as the Hebrew word signifies. And so in that Jer 14:9, 'Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.' Now in these five scriptures you have five leave us nots, and what do they

import? Certainly nothing less than a marvellous unwillingness in the people of God to part with God, or to let go their hold of God.

I have read of Cynægirus, an Athenian captain, who, in the Persian wars, pursuing his enemy's ship, which was laden with the rich spoils of his country, and ready to set sail, how he first held it with his right hand till that was cut off, and then with his left hand till that was cut off, and then with his stumps till his arms were cut off, and then he held it with his teeth till his head was cut off; as long as he had any life or strength left in him, he would not let go his hold. So a man that hath God for his portion will rather die at the foot of God than he will let go his hold of God: Job 13:15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God be thy portion, then thou livest upon God as upon thy portion. Look, as the men of the world do live upon their earthly portions, so a man that hath God for his portion lives upon his God, as you may plainly see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Look, how the poor man lives upon his labours, the covetous man upon his bags, the ambitious man upon his honours, the voluptuous man upon his pleasures, &c., so doth a Christian live upon his God. In all his duties he lives upon God, and in all his mercies he lives upon God, and in all his wants he lives upon God, and in all his straits and trials he lives upon God, and in all his contentments and enjoyments he still lives upon God for his justification: Rom 8:33, 'It is God that justifieth,' and he still lives upon God for the perfecting of his sanctification; Php 1:6, 'Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;' and he lives upon God for the maintaining and increasing of his consolation, 2Co 1:3-5. When he is under the frowns of the world, then he lives upon the smiles of God; when he is under the hatred of the world, then he lives upon the loves of God; and when he is under the reproaches of the world, then he lives upon his credit with God; when he is under the threatenings of the world, then he lives upon the protection of God; and when he is under the designs and plottings of the world, then he lives upon the wisdom and counsel of God; when he is under the slights and neglects of the world, then he lives upon the care of God; and when he is under the crosses and losses of the world, then he lives upon the fulness and goodness of God, &c. Alexander told his soldiers, I wake that ye may sleep. Most sure I am, that he that is the saint's portion never slumbers nor sleeps, Psa 121:3-4. God is always watchful and wakeful to do his people good; he never wants skill or will to help them, he never wants a purse, a hand, or a heart to supply them, &c.

O sirs! Every man singles out something to live upon. Some single out one thing, some another. Saith the wife, I must live upon my husband; says the child, I must live upon my father; says the servant, I must live upon my master; says the old, We must live upon the labours of the young; says the poor, We must live upon the charity of the rich; and why then shall not a Christian live upon his God? A Christian that hath God for his portion may say, when he is at worst, Well, though I have not this nor that nor the other outward comfort to live upon, yet I have the power of a God to live on, and I have the providence of a God to live on, and I have the promise of a God to live on, and I have the oath of a God to live on, and I have the love of a God to live on, and I have the bounty of a God to live on, and I have the fulness of a God to live on, and I have the care of a God to live on; and what can I desire more? John of Alexandria, surnamed the Almoner, did use yearly to make even his revenues, and when he had distributed all to the poor, he thanked God that he had now nothing left him to live upon but his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. When all is gone, yet a

Christian hath his God to live upon as his portion, and that is enough to answer to all other things, and to make up the want of all other things. Look, as he hath nothing that hath not God for his portion, so he wants nothing that hath God for his portion. It was a weighty saying of one [Cajetan], 'The spiritual good of a man consists in this, that a man hath friendship with God, and consequently that he lives for him, to him, with him, in him; that he lives for him by consent, to him by conversation, with him by cohabitation, and in him by contentation. Old godly Similes said, that he had been in the world sixty years, but had lived but seven, counting his life not from his first birth, but from his new birth. A man lives no longer than he lives upon God as his portion: when a man begins to live upon God as his portion, then he begins to live indeed, and not till then. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If God be thy portion, then he carries thy heart from all other things, Ps. 42:12. The portion always carries the heart with it. Mat 6:20-21, 'But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also.' Psa 63:1, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee' (or, I will diligently seek thee, as merchants do precious stones that are of greatest value), 'my soul thirsteth for thee.' He doth not say, my soul thirsteth for water, but my soul thirsteth for thee; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for the blood of my enemies, but my soul thirsteth for thee; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for deliverance out of this dry and barren wilderness, but my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; nor he doth not say, my soul thirsteth for a crown, a kingdom, but my soul thirsteth for thee, 'my flesh longeth for thee.' These words are a notable metaphor, taken from women with child, to note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God. And so Psa 84:2, 'My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The word that is here rendered crieth, is from *Ranan*, that signifies to shout, shrill, or cry out, as soldiers do at the beginning of a battle, when they cry out, Fall on, fall on, fall on, or when they cry out after a victory, Victory, victory, victory! The Hebrew word notes a strong cry, or to cry as a child cries when it is sadly hungry, for now every whit of the child cries, hands cry, and face cries, and feet cries; and so Psa 119:20, 'My soul breaketh for the longings it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Look, as the stone will still be rolling towards its centre, its place, though it break itself into a thousand pieces; so a soul that hath God for his portion cannot rest till he comes to God, till he comes to his centre. It is very observable, that when the God of glory appeared to Abraham, he made nothing of leaving his father's house, his kindred, and his country, Acts 7:1-5, Gen 12:1. A glimpse of that glory works him to give up all easily, readily, and quietly. A man that can look upon the God of glory to be his portion, he cannot but look upon the greatest, the nearest, and the dearest enjoyments of the world, as nothing; he cannot but look upon honour as a bubble, and worldly pomp as a fancy, and great men as a lie, and poor men as vanity. He cannot but look upon his nearest and his dearest relations, his highest and his noblest friends, his choicest and his sweetest comforts, but as a dream and a shadow that soon vanisheth away.

It is observable in the courts of kings and princes, that children and the ruder sort of people are much taken with pictures and rich shows, and feed their fancies with the sight of rich hangings and fine gay things; whereas such as are great favourites at court, pass by all those things as things that are below them, and as things that are not worthy of their notice, who have business with the king, and who have the eye, the ear, the hand, and the heart of the king to take pleasure and delight in; so most men admire the poor low things of the world, and are much taken with them as

things that have a great deal of worth and excellency in them; but a man that hath God for his portion, the King of kings for his portion, and all that he hath, he passeth by all the gay and gallant things of the world, as things below him, as things not worthy of him. His business is with his God, and his thoughts, his heart, and affections are taken up with his God.

Naturalists tell us that the loadstone will not draw in the presence of the diamond. O sirs! whilst a man can eye God as his portion, all the pride, pomp, bravery, glory, and gallantry in the world will never be able to draw him from God, Heb 11:24-27, Heb 11:35. It is reported that when the tyrant Trajan commanded Ignatius to be ripped up and unbowelled, they found Jesus Christ written upon his heart in characters of gold. Here was an heart worth gold indeed; Christ carried away his heart from all other things. So if God be thy portion, he will certainly carry thy heart away from all earthly things. Look, as earthly portions carry away worldly hearts from God, Eze 33:31-32; Luk 12:16-21; so when God once comes to be a man's portion, he carries his heart away from the world, the flesh, and the devil. All the world cannot keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. If a man make sin his interest, all the world cannot keep sin and his heart asunder. If a man make the world his interest, all the power on earth cannot keep the world and his heart asunder. And so if a man make God his interest, all the world cannot keep God and his heart asunder: no sword, no prison, no racks, no flames can keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. A man's heart will be working towards his interest, even through the very fire, as you may see in the three children, Dan 3:17-18. Look, as the needle's point in the seaman's compass never stands still, but quivers and shakes till it come right against the north pole; and as the wise men of the east never stood still till they were right against the star which appeared to them; and as the star itself never stood still till it came right against that other star, which shined more brightly in the manger than the sun did in the firmament; and as Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot all the while she was fluttering over the flood, till she returned to the ark with an olive branch in her mouth: so the heart of a Christian that hath God for his portion can never rest, can never be at quiet, but in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If God be thy portion, then thou wilt own thy God, and stand up courageously and resolutely for thy God. Every man will own his portion, and stand up stoutly and resolutely for his portion, and so will every Christian do for his God: Psa 119:46, 'I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed.' David was resolved upon a noble and resolute owning of God and his testimonies before the greatest and the highest of men; and this he would do and not blush, this he would do and not be ashamed, this he would do and not be daunted. It was neither the majesty or authority of princes, it was neither the power or dread of princes, that could hinder David from giving in his testimony on God's side, or on truth's side. Jos 24:18, 'We will serve the Lord, for he is our God.' Jos 24:21-22, 'And the people said unto Joshua, Nay, but we will serve the Lord; and Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve him; and they said, We are witnesses.' Jos 24:24, 'And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.' They had chosen God to be their God, as God had chosen them to be his peculiar people above all the nations of the earth; and therefore, notwithstanding all that Joshua had objected, they were fully resolved to own the Lord, and to cleave to the Lord, and to obey the Lord, and wholly to devote themselves to the service of the Lord, Having taken the Lord to be their God, they were firmly resolved to own the Lord really, and to own him fully, and to own him primarily, and to own him only, and to own him everlastingly. And so Deu 26:17, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk

in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.' They had avouched God to be their God, and therefore they were resolved upon all those holy ways and means whereby they might evidence to the world their owning of God to be their God. And so in that 2Ch 30:8, 'They yield themselves unto the Lord,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'They give the hand unto the Lord.' You know when men make covenants or agreements to own one another, or to stand by one another, they commonly strike hands, or take one another by the hand. Certainly all those that have the Lord for their portion, have given their hands to the Lord, that they will own him, and stand by him, and cleave to him, as Jonathan did to David, or as Ruth did to Naomi. How stoutly and courageously did the three children own the Lord, and stand by the Lord in the face of the fiery furnace, Dan 3:17-18; and Daniel will, upon choice, be rather cast into the den of lions than that the honour of God should in the least be clouded, or his glory darkened by any neglects or omissions of his, Dan 6:1-28. And so did all those worthies, 'of whom this world was not worthy,' Heb 11:34. Oh, how did they own God, and stand up for God, notwithstanding the edge of the sword, the violence of fire, the cruel mockings and scourgings, the bonds and imprisonments, the stoning and sawing; asunder, the temptings and wanderings about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, and all other trials and torments that did attend them. Basil affirms that the primitive Christians did so courageously and resolutely own God, and stand up for God in the face of the most dreadful sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, courage, magnanimity, and constancy, turned Christians. Domitian raised the second persecution against the Christians because they would not give the title of Lord to any but Christ, nor worship any but God alone. Among the many thousand instances that might be given, let me only give you a few of a later date, whereby you may see how courageously and resolutely the saints have stood up for God, and owned God, in the face of the greatest dangers that hath attended them.

Luther owned God and stood up resolutely for God against the world. And when the emperor sent for him to Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, as sometimes Paul's did him, Go, said he, I will surely go since I am sent for in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me as there be tiles to cover the houses, yet I would go: and when he and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech, 'Come, let us sing the six-and-fortieth Psalm, and then let them do their worst.' And indeed it was a brave courageous speech of the same author, who, when one demanded where he would be when the emperor should, with all his forces, fall upon the elector of Saxony, who was the chief protector of the Protestants, answered, Aut in cœlo aut sub cœlo, either in heaven or under heaven.

William Flower, the martyr, said that the heavens should as soon fall as he would forsake his profession, or budge in the least degree from it.

Apollonius, as Philostratus reports, being asked, if he did not tremble at the sight of the tyrant, made this answer, God, which hath given him a terrible countenance, hath given also unto me an undaunted heart. When the persecutors by their dreadful threatenings did labour to terrify one of the martyrs, he replied, that there was nothing of things visible, nor nothing of things invisible, that he was afraid of. I will, saith he, stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' When Bishop Gardiner asked Rowland Taylor if he did not know him, &c., he answered, Yea, I know you, and all your greatness, yet you are but a mortal man; and if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear you not God, the Lord of us all?

The executioner kindling the fire behind Jerome of Prague, he bade him kindle it before his face, for, said he, if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities offered me to escape it; and at the giving up of the ghost, he said, This soul of mine in flames of fire, O Christ, I offer thee. The German knight, in his apologetical letter for Luther against the pontifical clergy, saith, I will go through what I have undertaken against you, and will stir up men to seek their freedom; I neither care nor fear what may befall me, being prepared for either event, either to ruin you, to the great benefit of my country, or else to fall with a good conscience. When Dionysius was given up to the executioner to be beheaded, he remained resolute, courageous, and constant, saying, 'Come life, come death, I will worship none but the God of heaven and earth.' Thus you see by these instances that men that have God for their portion will courageously own God, and bravely and resolutely stand up for God, whatever comes on it. The blood that hath been shed in most nations under heaven doth clearly evidence this, that men will own their earthly portions, and that they will stand up stoutly, resolutely, and courageously in the defence of them; and so certainly will all those own God, and stand up in the defence of God, his glory, and truth, who have God for their portion. Take a true bred Christian, when he is himself, take a Christian in his ordinary course, and he cannot but own his God, and stand up stoutly and courageously for his God in the face of all difficulties and dangers. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If God be thy portion, then thou wilt look upon all things below thy God as poor, low, mean, and contemptible things, Psa 73:24-25. A worldly man looks upon all things below his earthly portion as contemptible; and so doth a Christian look upon all things below his God as contemptible: Php 3:7-8, 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung' (The Greek word σκ■βαλα properly signifies such sordid, coarse, and contemptible things, which are either cast forth by dogs, or cast before dogs), 'that I may win Christ.' And it is very observable, that after this great apostle had been in the third heaven, and had been blessed with a glorious sight of God, he looked upon the world as a poor, mean, low, contemptible thing, 2Co 12:1-3: Gal 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Paul scorned, despised, and rejected the world, and the world scorned, despised, and rejected him. Paul cast off the world, and the world cast off him; he disregarded the world, and the world disregarded him; he was dead to the world, and the world was dead to him. The world and Paul were well agreed; the world cared not a pin for Paul, and Paul cared not a straw for the world. And so when Moses had seen him that was invisible, when he had taken a full prospect of that other world, and when he had beheld God as his portion, oh, how doth he slight, scorn, and trample upon all the honours, preferments; profits, pleasures, delights, and contentments of Egypt, as things below him, and as things that in no respects were worthy of him, Heb 11:24-27. It is a Rabbinical conceit, that Moses being a child had Pharaoh's crown given him to play withal, and he made no better than a foot-ball of it, and cast it down to the ground, and kicked it about, as if it were a sign of his future vilifying and contemning of temporal things. I shall not much trouble my head about what Moses did when he was a child; but of this I am sure, having the word of God for it, 'That when he was come to years,' Heb 11:24, or as the Greek hath it, μ■γας γεν■μενος, being grown big, or being grown a great one, and so sufficiently understood himself, and knew very well what he did, he did little less than make a foot-ball of Pharaoh's crown. Witness his refusing with an holy scorn and disdain to be called the son of Pharaoh's

daughter, and so to succeed Pharaoh in the throne. And so in that Rev 12:1-2, 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' The church here is compared to a woman for her weakness, fruitfulness, and loveliness; and it is observable, that she is clothed with the sun, that is, with Christ's own comeliness and righteousness, which resembles the sun in its several properties and effects, not now to be insisted on. Now this woman, the church, is said to have the moon under her feet. By the moon we are to understand all temporary and transitory things. Now the church treads upon all these things as trash and trumpery that were much below her, and despised by her. Look, as the great men of the world do commonly look upon all portions that are below their own with an eye of scorn, disdain, and contempt, as Haman did, Est 5:9-14; and as those bold daring sinners did, Psa 73:4-14. So do those that have God for their portion look upon all things below their God with an eye of scorn and disdain. I have read of Lazarus, that after his resurrection from the dead he was never seen to laugh; his thoughts, his heart, his affections were so fixed upon God, and so taken up with God, with his portion, that he was as a dead man to all the gay and gallant things of the world, he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. And so when once Galeacius, that famous Italian marquis, came to understand that God was his portion, in the face of the highest offers imaginable, of honour, favour, profit, and preferment, he cried out, Cursed be he that prefers all the glory of the world to one day's communion with God. The old Grecians, who had altogether fed on acorns before, when bread came in among them, they made no reckoning of their mast, but reserved it only for their swine. And the Lacedæmonians despised their iron and leathern money, when gold and silver came in use among them.² So when a man comes once to experience God to be his portion, ah, at what a low rate will he value the swelling honours, the deceitful riches, and the vanishing pleasures of this beggarly world, John 4:14. Christians are compared to eagles, Mat 24:28. Now the eagle is a kingly, a princely bird; it is a bird of a sharp piercing sight, and of a swift and lofty flight; it flies high and sets light by things below, except it be when necessity compels her: and so it is with those that have God for their portion; they fly high and they live high, in God, and therefore they cannot but set light by the toys and trifles of the world. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If God be thy portion, then thy God is most precious to thee, then thou settest the highest price and value imaginable upon thy God. Every man sets the highest price upon his portion. Though a man may set a good price upon his delightful gardens, his pleasant walks, his delicate fish-ponds, his fruitful trees, his sweet flowers, &c., yet it is no price to that which he sets upon his portion. Well, says a man, though here be an hundred things to delight my eye, and to please my fancy, and to satiate my appetite, yet I infinitely value my portion above them all. And who but a fool in folio will value a thousand a year above a few accommodations that are only for pleasure and delight? So though a Christian may set a considerable value upon all his outward comforts and contentments, yet it is no value to that he sets upon his God, upon his portion. This and that is precious to me, saith a Christian, but my God is infinitely more precious than all, Psa 23:2-5, Psa 4:6-7. A Christian sets up God above his goods, Heb 10:34; and above his lusts, Gal 5:24; and above his relations, 1Sa 30:1-7; yea, and above his very life: Rev 12:11, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death: Psa 63:3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' The Hebrew is chaim, lives. Put many lives together, yet there is more excellency and glory in the least beam, in the least discovery of divine love, than there is in them all. A man may be weary of life, but never of divine

love. Histories tell us of many that have been weary of their lives, but no histories can furnish us with an instance of any one that was ever weary of divine love. Look, as the people prized David above themselves, saying, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2Sa 18:3, so they that have indeed God for their portion, oh how do they prize God above themselves, and above everything below themselves! and doubtless they that in a course do not lift up God above all, they have no interest in God at all. Whatever a man eyes as his greatest interest, that he sets up above all, and before all other things in the world. Now if a man eyes God as his greatest interest, he cannot but set God a-top of all. I have not faith enough to believe that ever such did truly love God who love anything more than God, or who set up anything above God, Luk 14:26. Look, as Darius set up Daniel over all, and as Pharaoh set up Joseph above all, so a man that hath God for his portion, he sets up God over all, and he sets up God above all. One [Augustine] set so high a price upon Christ, that he hath long since told us that he would willingly go through hell to Christ; and saith another [Bernard], I had rather be in my chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him. When one of the martyrs was offered riches and honours if he would recant, he made this excellent answer, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you. And I have read of another, that set so high a price upon the Lord Jesus, that whensoever he did but mention the name of Jesus, his eyes dropped tears. Were every star in the firmament a sun, yet a man that hath God for his portion would prize him above them all. Do you ask me where be my jewels? My jewels are my husband, said Phocion's wife. Do you ask me where be my ornaments? My ornaments are my two sons, brought up in virtue and learning, said the mother of the Gracchi.³ Do you ask me where be my treasures? My treasures are my friends, said Constantius, the father of Constantine. So if you ask a Christian that hath God for his portion where his jewels, his ornaments, his treasures, his comforts, and the delights of his soul are, he will answer you that they are all in God, he will tell you that God is his portion, and that God is his great all, and that he enjoys all in God, and God in all, and therefore he cannot but prize God above all. But to prevent mistakes in this weighty case, let me give you a few brief hints; as,

[1.] First, If God be truly precious to thee, then all of God is precious to thee; his name is precious to thee, his honour is precious to thee, his ordinances are precious to thee, his Sabbaths are precious to thee, his promises are precious to thee, his precepts are precious to thee, his threatenings are precious to thee, his rebukes are precious to thee, his people are precious to thee, and all his concernments are precious to thee. Look, as every sparkling stone that is set round about a rich diamond is precious in the eyes of the jeweller, so is every sparkling excellency in God precious in his eyes that sets an high value upon God. Look, as all of the new-born babe is precious in the eyes of the tender mother, as head, face, hands, arms, body, feet, &c., so all of God is very precious in his eyes that hath any tender regard of God; and look, as all of an husband is precious in the eyes of a loving wife, viz., his person, name, credit, honour, estate, liberty, life, &c., so all of God is very precious in his eyes that loves God with a real love, with a superlative love. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God be most precious to thee, then all the dishonours that are done to God, his truth, his worship, his ways, his ordinances, his institutions, his government, his people, are most grievous and burdensome to thee. 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me,' Psa 69:9; 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word,' Psa 119:158. The word that is here translated grieved is from *katat*, that signifies to loathe, abhor, and

contend: I beheld the transgressors, and I loathed them; I beheld the transgressors, and I abhorred them; I beheld the transgressors, and I contended with them; but not so much because they were mine enemies, as because they were thine. It is just between God and all those that have a precious esteem of him, as it is between two lute-strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck but the other trembles. A saint cannot see God struck but his heart will tremble, Jer 9:1-4. A father, lying upon his death-bed, called three children to him which he kept, and told them that one only of them was his natural son, and that the other two were only brought up by him; therefore unto him only he gave all his goods; but which of those three was his own son he would not in any wise declare. When he was dead, every one pleaded his birthright, and the matter being brought to trial, the judge, for the making, if possible, a true discovery, took this course. He caused the dead corpse of the father to be set up against a tree, and commanded the three sons to take bows and arrows to shoot at their father, to see who could come nearest to his heart. The first and second did shoot and hit him, but the third was very much angry and displeased with them both, and through the natural affection of a child to a father, threw away his bow and arrows, and would not shoot at all. This being done, the judge gave this sentence, viz., that the two first that shot at their supposed father's heart were no sons, but that the third son, that would not shoot at all, and that was very much displeased with those that did shoot, was the true son, and that he should have the goods. O sirs! every bitter word is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every bloody oath is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every heavy curse is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every superstitious custom is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every snare that is laid for the righteous is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every yoke that is laid upon the people of God is an arrow shot at the heart of God, and every affront that by debauched persons is given to God is an arrow shot at the heart of God, &c. And what true bred sons, what ingenuous sons, can see such arrows every hour in the day shot at the heart of God, and hear of such arrows that are shot a thousand thousand times in a day at the heart of God, and not grieve and mourn, and not be afflicted, troubled, displeased, and astonished to see men and to hear of men that were once made in the image of God to be turned into such incarnate devils, as thus to deal with God, yea, with such a God as can speak them into hell at his pleasure. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If God be most precious to you, then you will part with anything for God, then you will let go anything, that you may hold your God, and enjoy your God, Php 3:7-8, Mat 13:46; then your Isaac shall be made a sacrifice, if God will have it so, Gen 22:1-24, and your Benjamin shall be sent into Egypt, if God will have it so, Gen 43:1-34; then your Jonah shall be cast overboard, if God will have it so, Jon 1:1-17; then out goes the right eye, and off goes the right hand, upon a divine command; then you will never cry out, Oh! this mercy is too near to me to part with for God, and that comfort is too dear to me to part with for God, &c. Oh no; but then you will say, as the king of Sodom said to Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' Gen 14:21. So you will say, 'Give us God, oh give us God, and let who will take the goods, let who will take the honours, and the profits, and the pleasures of this world; it is enough that Joseph is alive; it is enough if we may but enjoy our God. A prince will part with anything rather than he will part with his crown-jewels; and so will a Christian rather part with anything, than, upon choice, to part with his God, whom he values above all the crown-jewels in the world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God be most precious to thee, then thou canst never have enough of God; thou canst never have enough of communion with God; thou canst never have enough of the presence of God; thou canst never have enough of the Spirit of God; thou canst never have enough of the discoveries of God; thou canst never have enough of the assistance of God; thou canst never have enough of the secret influences and incomes of God; thou canst never have enough of the comforts and strong consolations of God, &c. The grave, the barren womb, the mammonist, the pope, the Turk, the devil, and hell, will be as soon satisfied as thou canst be satisfied without clearer, further, and fuller enjoyments of God. 'No man,' saith God to Moses, 'can see my face, and live,' Exo 33:20; upon which words Austin makes this short but sweet reply, 'Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face.' It is impossible that ever a man's heart should rest satisfied till he comes to a full and perfect enjoyment of that which he hath set up as his grand interest, as his great all. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, If God be most precious to thee, then thou wilt give up thyself wholly to God without any reservation. Whatever a man sets up as his great interest, to that he devotes himself, to the service of that he wholly gives up himself; so when a man eyes God as his most precious interest, and sets up God as his most precious interest, he cannot but devote himself wholly to God, he cannot but give up himself wholly to God: Psa 119:94, 'I am thine, save me.' I am not my own, nor sin's, nor Satan's, nor the world's, nor friends', nor relations', but 'I am thine,' I am really thine, I am wholly thine, I am only thine, I am always thine, I am thine to be sanctified, and I am thine to be saved; I am thine to be commanded, and I am thine to be ruled. Lord, I am thine own, and therefore do with thine own as thou pleasest, and dispose of thine own as thou pleasest. I am at thy foot, willing in some measure to be anything or nothing, as shall seem best in thine own eyes. When the keys of the whole house, and of every room in the house, are given up to the king to be at his dispose, at his service, then he is entertained as a king, and honoured as a king, and valued and prized as a king; and so when all the keys of the soul, and every room in the soul, and every faculty of the soul, are given up to God to be at his dispose, at his service, then God is entertained as a God, and honoured as a God, and valued and prized as a God, but not till then. And by these five hints, if you will not put a cheat upon your own souls, you may know whether God sits in the uppermost room of your hearts or no, and whether God be set up in your hearts above all, and whether he be indeed your great all, or your all in all. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If God be thy portion, then there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon thee as the loss of thy God. There is no loss under heaven that doth so affect and afflict a man that hath God for his portion as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss, but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favour of God: Psa 30:6-7, 'In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' The Hebrew word bahal signifies to be greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1Sa 28:21, 'And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled.' Here is the same Hebrew word bahal. Saul was so terrified, affrighted, and disanimated with that dreadful news that the devil in Samuel's likeness told him, that his very vital spirits so failed him that he fell into a deadly swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost all its sap, life, and vigour, when God had wrapped up himself in a cloud. The life of some creatures lieth in the light and warmth of the sun; and so doth the life of the

saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And as in an eclipse of the sun there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many insensible creatures, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips, others by bowing and inclining the head, as the solsequy² and mallow-flowers are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun be gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves, or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them; and just thus it was with David when God had hid his face in a cloud. And it is very observable that Job did bear up very sweetly, bravely, patiently, and nobly under all his great losses of children, estate, &c.; but when the arrows of the Almighty were got within him, then he complains that his grief was heavier than the sands of the sea, Job 6:1-5; and when the face of God was hidden from him, how sadly doth he lament and bewail the withdrawals of God: 'Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, but I cannot see him,' Job 23:8-9. You know there is no pain more grievous and tormenting than that of breaking the bones. Now David again and again pitches upon this, to hint unto you that dreadful smart and pain that his soul was under when he had lost his communion with God, and when his God was withdrawn from him, and had hid his face from him, Psa 38:8, Psa 51:8. And so the church sadly laments the loss of her beloved in that Song of Solomon 5:6, 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. My soul failed when he spake,' or, 'he was gone, he was gone.' Now this passionate duplication speaks out her very great grief and trouble. Like a sad widow, she sits down and wrings her hands, and cries out, 'He is gone, he is gone;' 'My soul failed me;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, Naphshi jatsa, 'my soul went out of me.' I was even as an astonished creature, I was even as a dead creature, to note how greatly and how deeply she was troubled and perplexed upon the account of his withdrawing from her. Oh! the fear, the terror, the horror, the dread, the grief, the sorrow that fell upon the spouse's heart when her beloved had turned his back upon her. And so it was with Mary: John 20:11-13, 'But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' Of all losses, Mary was least able to bear the loss of her Lord. The loss was so great, and so heavy the loss, that she was not able to stand under it with dry eyes. Mary's mourning for the loss of her Lord was like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, Zec 12:11. There is no loss that comes so near to a Christian's heart as the loss of his Lord. A Christian can a thousand times better bear the loss of his name, which next to his soul and his grace is the best jewel that he hath in all the world, the loss of his estate, the loss of his liberty, the loss of his nearest and dearest relations, yea, the very loss of his life, than he can bear the loss of his God.

You see how sadly Micah takes on for the loss of his wooden gods, in that Jdg 18:23-24, 'And they cried unto the children of Dan: and they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company? And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more? and what is that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?' Now if Micah was so affected and afflicted upon the loss of his idol gods, his wooden gods, what cause then have Christians to be deeply affected and afflicted when they

come to lose their God, which is the true God, the living God, the only God, and the God of gods! You know that when Samson's locks were cut off, his strength was gone, Jdg 16:19-21; and therefore, though he thought to go out, and do as great things as he had formerly done, yet he found by woful experience that he could not; for now he was become as another man. And it is just so with the choicest saints: when their God is gone, their locks are cut, and their strength is gone, their doing strength, and their suffering strength, and their bearing strength, and their wrestling strength, and their prevailing strength, &c., is gone when their God is gone; yea, when God goes, all goes. When the king removes, all his train follows; when God goes, comforts go; when God goes, joys go; when God goes, peace goes; when God goes, prosperity goes; when God goes, friends go; when God goes, all content and satisfaction goes; and therefore it is no wonder to see a Christian better bear any loss than the loss of his God, for in losing of him he loses all at a clap. A Christian counts it his only happiness to enjoy his God, and his only unhappiness to be deprived of him. The constant language of a Christian is, 'None but God, none but God;' as it was once the language of the martyr, 'None but Christ, none but Christ.'²

Outward losses to some men have been unsufferably afflictive. One being turned out of his estate runs out of his wits, another hangs himself with the same hands with which he had formerly told his portion. Menippus of Phœnicia having lost his goods, strangled himself. Dinarcus Phidon, at a certain great loss, cut his own throat, to save the charge of a cord.⁴ When Henry the Second heard that his city Mentz was taken, he let fall this blasphemous speech: I shall never, said he, love God any more, that hath suffered a city so dear to me to be taken away from me. And Augustus Cæsar [Suetonius], in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the loss and overthrow that Varus gave him, that for certain months together he let the hair of his head and beard grow without cutting, and sometimes he would run his head against the very doors, and cry out, Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again; Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again, &c. I might give you many sad instances nearer home, but that I love not to harp upon so sad a string. But certainly no outward losses can lie so heavy upon the spirit of a worldling, as the loss of God lies upon the spirit of a saint.⁶ I have read of a religious woman, that having brought forth nine children, professed that she had rather endure all the pains of those nine travails at once than endure the misery of the loss of God's presence. A man can better bear any loss than the loss of his box of jewels, and than the loss of his writings and evidences that he hath to shew for his estate; and therefore, when his house is on fire, he doth not cry out, Oh save that bed, or that chest, or that dish, or that stool, &c.; but he cries out, Oh save my box of jewels! oh save my writings! I care not though all be consumed, so my box of jewels and my evidences be but saved. Now God is a Christian's box of jewels, he is a Christian's grand evidence that he hath to shew for another world; and therefore his greatest fear is of losing his God, and his greatest care is of keeping his God. If his box of jewels be safe, then all is safe but; if they are lost, all is lost; and how then is it possible for a Christian to bear up bravely under the loss of all? A man may bear up bravely under the loss of his lumber, and under the loss of his household goods, so long as his jewels are safe and his writings are safe; but if his box of jewels should be lost, and his writings should be burnt, why, then, he wrings his hands, and cries out, Oh, I am undone! I am undone! I am undone! So a Christian can bear up bravely under this worldly loss, and that worldly loss, and the other worldly loss, so long as he enjoys his God; but when he hath lost his God, oh then, he cannot but wring his hands, and cry out, I am undone! I am undone! I am undone! I have lost my God, and in losing of him, I have lost my life, I have lost my love, I have lost my joy, I have lost my

crown, I have lost my heaven, I have lost my happiness, I have lost my all. O Christians! if God be your portion, it will be thus with you upon the loss of your God. But,

(10.) Tenthly, If God be thy portion, then thou wilt set the highest price, value, and esteem upon those that have God for their portion, Psa 16:3, Pro 12:26, and Pro 28:6. A man that hath God for his portion, never values men for their arts, parts, gifts, gay clothes, gold chains; no, nor by their birth, breeding, high offices, or great places; no, nor by their outward dignities, honours, or riches, &c., but by their interest and propriety in God. A man that hath God for his portion, prizes a poor ragged Lazarus that hath God for his portion, before a rich Dives that hath only gold for his portion. If thou hast God for thy portion, then there is no man in court, city, or country, to that man that hath God for his portion; then there is no man in a parish, a country, a kingdom, to him that hath God for his portion. A man that hath God for his portion, hath an higher esteem and a greater respect for a Job, though stripped of all, and sitting upon a dunghill, than he hath for a wicked Ahab, though sitting on his royal throne. Paul set a higher price upon Onesimus, though but a servant, a slave, because he had God for his portion, than he did upon Nero, though he was a great and mighty emperor, Phm 1:10, Phm 1:12, Phm 1:17; 2Ti 4:17. And king Ingo valued poor ragged Christians that had God for their portion, above all his glittering pagan nobles that had only the world for their portion, saying, that when all his pagan nobles should, in all their pomp and glory, be turned into hell, those poor Christians, that had God for their portion, should be his consorts and fellow-princes in heaven. Look, as men that have their portion in this world do value men according to their worldly portions, so that they that have most gold and silver, and they that have most lordships and lands, they are the best men, the happiest men, the only men in their eyes; so a Christian that hath God for his portion, he sets the highest value upon those that have God for their portion, and there are no men in all the world that are so high in his books as they are. A man that hath an interest in God loves none, nor likes none, nor honours none, nor delights in none, nor exalts none, nor values none, to those that have God for their portion. Though the men, the great men of this world may sit in the uppermost seats at his table, yet they that have God for their portion, sit in the uppermost rooms of his heart. The Jews say, that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. And I may say, that one soul that hath God for his portion, is more worth than all the souls in the world that have only the world for their portion. A man that hath God for his portion, cannot but set a very high value upon all those that have God for their portion, though in disputable things they may differ from him. A man that hath God for his portion, had rather live with those that have God for their portion in a prison, in a dungeon, than live with those that have only the world for their portion in a royal palace; as Algerius, an Italian martyr, was wont to say, that he had rather live in prison with Cato than with Cæsar in the senate house. And Doctor Taylor, the martyr, rejoiced exceedingly that ever he came into prison, because he came there to have acquaintance with that angel of God, John Bradford, as he calls him.² When Joseph was in Egypt, the Scripture saith, according to the Hebrew phrase, that 'he tied the princes of Pharaoh's court about his heart,' Psa 105:22; so a man that hath God for his portion, he doth as it were tie those that have God for their portion about his heart. Oh, he is always best when they are most in his eye, and nearest to his heart. It is his happiness on this side happiness to enjoy communion with them, and it is the greatest unhappiness in this world to be separated from them, Psa 120:5-7. A man that hath God for his portion, values the company of such that have God for their portion above all other company in the world, and he values the favour of such above all other men's favour in the world, and he values

the prayers of such above all other men's prayers in the world, and he values the counsels of such above all other men's counsel in the world, and he values the experiences of such above all other men's experiences in the world, and he values the interest of such above all other men's interest in the world, and he values the hopes and expectations of such above all other men's hopes and expectations in the world, and he values the examples of such above the examples of all other men in the world, and he values the displeasure and anger of such above all other men's displeasure and anger in the world. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, If God be your portion, then you are his portion. If you have an interest in God, then God hath an interest in you; if you have a propriety in God, then God hath a propriety in you; if God be truly yours, then you are really his: Song of Solomon 2:16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' Psa 119:94, 'I am thine, save me;' I am not mine own, I am not sin's, I am not Satan's, I am not the world's, I am not friends', I am not relations', but I am thine, save me; I am really thine, I am totally thine, I am solely thine, I am everlastingly thine, save me: Eze 16:8, 'I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine;' Deu 32:9, 'For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' Though God's people are despised of the world, yet they are dear to God, for they are his portion. In these words, 'Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,' he alludes to the division of the land of Canaan, as if the sons of Jacob had fallen to him by lot. The Lord's people are as dear to God, and as near to God, and in as great account with God, as earthly portions and inheritances are or can be among the sons of men: Jer 12:10, 'Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion (or as the Hebrew hath it, my portion of desire or of delight) a desolate wilderness.' God's people are not only his portion, but they are his pleasant portion, yea, they are his desirable portion, his delightful portion. If the Lord be your portion, then you are his inheritance, Isa 19:25; and his peculiar treasure, Exo 19:5; and his glory, Isa 46:13; and his ornament, Eze 7:20; and his throne, Jer 17:12; and his diadem, Isa 62:3; and his jewels, Mal 3:17. These scriptures speak out plainly and clearly that great propriety and interest that God hath in all those that have a propriety and interest in him. O sirs! look, that as in all God hath you have an interest, so in all that you have God hath an interest; and look, as what God is, he is for you, so what you are, you are for God; and look, as God is sincerely for you, so you are sincerely for God; and as God is wholly for you, so you are wholly for God; and as God is only for you, so you are only for God; and as God is in all things for you, so you are in all things for God; and as God is at all times for you, so you are at all times for God. O sirs! There are none under heaven that have that interest in you as God hath, if indeed he be your portion. Look what interest the head hath in the members, the husband in the wife, the father in the child, the lord in his servant, the general in his soldier, and the prince in his subject, that, all that, and more than that, hath God in all those that have an interest in him. There is no man in the world that hath such an interest in himself, as God hath in him, if indeed God be his portion. Sin cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor Satan cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor the world cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine; nor the creature cannot say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine. It is only God that can say to such a man, Thou art mine. As in marriage, none can say, This woman is mine, but the husband; so none can say to a man that hath God for his portion, Thou art mine, but God alone. Look, as no man can truly say, that God is my Lord, and my God, and my father, and my friend, and my wisdom, and my counsel, and my righteousness, and my consolation, and my salvation, and my portion, and my light, and my life, and my love, and

my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, and my strength, and my buckler, and my high tower, and my help, and my happiness, and my blessedness, and my all in all, but he that hath God for his portion; so none but God can look upon a gracious person, and say, This gracious person is mine; he is my bride, my child, my friend, my favourite, my beloved, my darling, my joy, my crown; his heart is set upon me, and his love is inflamed towards me, and his trust and confidence is fixed on me, and his desires and longings are running out after me, and all his joys and delights are terminated in me. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, If God be your portion, then certainly the least of God is very dear and precious to you. Oh then the least truth of God will be very precious to you, and the least command of God will be very precious to you, and the least child of God will be very precious to you, and the least concernment of God will be very precious to you. Look, as the least beam of light is precious, and as the least drop of honey is precious, and as the least dust of gold is precious, and as the least degree of health and strength is precious, and as the least measure of liberty is precious; so the very least of God is very precious to that man that hath God for his portion. Look, as every little piece and parcel of a worldly man's portion is very dear and precious to him, so every little piece and parcel of God, if I may so speak, is very dear and precious to him that hath God for his portion. The least glimpse and manifestations of the love and favour of God, the least taste of the mercies of God, the least anointings of the Spirit of God, the least communications of the grace of God, and the least drops of the consolations of God, are exceedingly sweet and precious to him that hath God for his portion. The least good look that a man hath from God, and the least good word that a man hears from God, and the least love letter and love token that a man receives from God, is exceedingly precious to that man that hath God for his portion, 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,' Psa 84:10. He doth not say, One year in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere; nor doth he not say, One quarter of a year in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;' nor he doth not say, One month in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, but 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;' to shew that the very least of God is exceeding precious to a gracious soul that hath God for his portion.

Now by these twelve particulars you may all know whether God be your portion or no, except you are resolved beforehand to put a cheat upon your own immortal souls, and so to make yourselves miserable in both worlds. And let thus much suffice for this use of trial and examination.

Now if, upon trial and examination, any of you shall come to some comfortable satisfaction in your own spirits, that God is your portion, and that you have an undoubted interest and propriety in God, oh then I would upon the knee of my soul entreat and beseech you, I might say, charge and command you, to evidence and declare to all the world your interest and propriety in God. But you will say, How should we evidence and declare to the world our interest and propriety in God? we are willing to do it, if we did but know how we should do it. Why then, thus:

[1.] First, Evidence and declare your interest and propriety in God, by your labouring and endeavouring with all your might to draw on others to get an interest and propriety in God. O sirs! have you been convinced of the necessity and excellency of interest and propriety in God? have you experienced the profit, the sweet, the comfort, and the happiness of propriety and interest in

God? and how then can you but strive, as for life, to persuade others to look after their interest and propriety in Christ, as the one thing necessary? When Samson had tasted honey, he gave his father and mother some with him, Jdg 14:8-9. O my brethren, propriety and interest in God is so sweet a morsel, that I cannot see how it is possible for a man to taste of it and not to commend it to others. They that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot but cry out with the psalmist, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good,' Psa 34:8. Propriety and interest in God will never make a man a churl, it will never work a man to make a monopoly of so rare a jewel as that is. Oh the fervent prayers! Oh the burning desires! Oh the vehement wishes! Oh the strong endeavours of such that have an interest and propriety in God, to draw on others to seek after an interest and propriety in God! All true propriety and interest in God is of a diffusive nature; it is like light, that will spread itself over all; it is like leaven, that will run through all; it is like Mary's box of sweet ointment, that filled all the house with the sweet scent thereof. If thou art a minister, evidence thy propriety in God in doing all thou canst to provoke those that are under thy charge to secure their propriety in God; other things cannot be secured, but propriety in God may be secured, Acts 26:29. If thou art a magistrate that hast a propriety in God, evidence it by doing all thou canst, by thy commands, and by thy counsel, and by thy example, and by thy prayers, to persuade and win others over to be restless till they have secured their interest and propriety in God, Jos 24:15. If thou art a father that hast interest and propriety in God, oh, then, let thy soul be still in travail for thy children, till Christ be formed in them, till they are new born, and till they have experienced the power and sweet of propriety and interest in God. But,

[2.] Secondly, Evidence your propriety and interest in God, by keeping far off from all such sinful courses, practices, and compliances, that may any ways put yourselves or others to question the truth of your propriety and interest in God. Thus did those worthies, 'of whom this world was not worthy,' in that Heb 11:1-40. It is very observable that when the holy things belonging to the sanctuary were to be removed, God commanded Aaron and his sons that there should be a special care had to cover them all over, lest in journeying dust should any ways soil them, Num 4:5-13. O beloved! it highly concerns you that have an interest and propriety in God, to look narrowly to your hearts, words, works, and ways, and to see that there be such a covering of grace and holiness, such a covering of care, fear, wisdom, watchfulness, and circumspection over your whole man, that no scandalous sins, pollutions, or defilements be found upon you; according to that exhortation of the apostle, in that Php 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine (or shine ye) as lights in the world.' Rev 14:3-5, Rev 3:4. I have read of the dove, that there is such a native dread of the hawk implanted in her, that she is afraid of every feather that hath grown upon a hawk, and that she so detests and abhors the very sight of any such feather that she will fly from it, and keep at the greatest distance imaginable from it. And shall not that divine fear, O Christians! that is planted by the hand of the Spirit in your hearts, be of as great force and prevalency to keep your souls from all those enormities and wicked compliances that may in the least occasion you or others to question your propriety and interest? Remember Francis Spira, and tremble! You know a scrivener may by one great blot at last spoil all that he hath done for many days before upon a large patent or lease; so a man may by one foul blot, by one enormous crime, by one wretched act of compliance, dash and obliterate the fairest copy of a virtuous life, and raze out all the visible golden characters of divine graces that once seemed to be printed upon the soul. Look, as one drop of ink coloureth a whole glass of water, so one gross sin, one shameful

action, one hour's compliance with anything of antichrist, will colour and stain all the great things that ever you have suffered, and all the good things that ever you have performed; it will stain and colour all the good prayers that ever you have made, and all the good sermons that ever you have heard, and all the good books that ever you have read, and all the good words that ever you have spoke, and all the good works that ever you have done. And therefore, whatever you do, keep off from sin, and keep off from all sinful compliances, as you would keep off from hell itself. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Declare and evidence your propriety and interest in God, by maintaining and keeping up the sense of your interest and propriety in God, in opposition to all other interest whatsoever. Maintain your interest in God in opposition to sin's interest, and in opposition to Satan's interest, and in opposition to the world's interest, and in opposition to antichrist's interest, and in opposition to all carnal and superstitious interests, Psa 63:1, Rev 14:1-4: as Moses did, and as Joshua and Caleb did, and as Mordecai and Nehemiah did, and as Daniel and the three children did, and as the apostles and the primitive Christians did. Certainly the heart of a gracious man cannot but rise, and his anger and indignation cannot but swell, against every thing and every interest that threatens to make a breach upon his interest and propriety in God, Psa 69:9. A man that hath an interest and propriety in God, in the midst of all oppositions, is like a man made up all of fire, walking in stubble and straw: he overcomes and consumes all oppositions, and all difficulties are but whetstones to his fortitude. He encourages his soul in the face of all oppositions and dangers, as Hezekiah once did his soldiers in that 2Ch 32:7-8, 'Be strong and courageous, be not dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.' He is a fool, we say, that will be laughed out of his coat; but certainly he is a fool in folio that will be laughed out of his skin, nay, out of his soul, out of his profession, out of his eternal salvation; but doubtless such fools as these have never experienced the sweet of propriety and interest in God. Without all peradventure, there were many broad jests and many bitter scoffs broken upon Noah, whilst he was a-building of his ark. The people laughed at him, and derided him, and thought the poor old man doated and dreamed, not, as we say, of a dry summer, but of a wet winter; but yet Noah's propriety and interest in God being clear, Noah begins his work, and goes on his work, and never ceases till he had finished that work that God had set him about.

Alciat observes in one of his Emblems, that a dog then barketh most when the moon is at fullest; but whether it be by some special influence that it then worketh on the dog, or whether it be occasioned by the spots in the moon represented unto him in the form and shape of another dog, I shall not conclude; but yet let the dog bark never so much, the moon will run her course. She will walk her station securely through the heavens, though all the dogs in the town bark never so fiercely at her; so a man that hath an interest and propriety in God, and knows it, he is like the moon, he will hold on his course heavenwards and holinesswards, though all the lewd and debauched wicked wretches in city and country should bark at him, and deride him, and oppose him, and speak all manner of evil against him. Propriety and interest in God will make a man set light by all such paper-shot, yea, it will carry him through the pikes, not only of evil tongues, but it will also carry him through the most fierce and eager opposition that either Satan himself, or any of his instruments, can possibly raise against him. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Declare and evidence your propriety and interest in God, by your sweet and noble carriage and deportment towards those that have an interest and propriety in God. Look, as a child carries it in a different way to his father to what he doth to others, so you must carry it in a different way towards those that have an interest and propriety in God, to what you do towards those that have no interest nor propriety at all in God. Though a wife be very kind and courteous to all comers and goers, yet she carries it in a very different way to her husband from what she doth to all others; she carries it with a great deal more kindness, and sweetness, and tenderness, and familiarness, and nobleness, &c., towards her husband, than she doth towards others, whether they be friends or strangers; and just thus should you carry it towards those that have a propriety and interest in God. I have not faith enough to believe that such men have any interest and propriety in God, who carry it very strangely, and proudly, and churlishly, and scornfully, and deridingly, and tyrannically, and disdainfully, and enviously, and maliciously, and rigorously, and sourly, and bitterly, &c., towards those that have an interest and propriety in God, and yet carry it at the same time very fairly, and sweetly, and courteously, &c., towards such wretches that have no interest or propriety in God at all, yea, to such that blaspheme his name, and that profane his Sabbaths, and that pollute his ordinances, and that trample upon his mercies, and that despise his warnings, and that are given up to their own hearts' lusts, and that live as if there were neither God, nor heaven, nor hell. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Evidence your interest and propriety in God, by doing such things for God, which such as have no interest in God cannot do, nor will not do, nor have no heart nor mind to do. Evidence your interest in God, by doing singular things for God, Mat 5:44-48; by doing such things for God that are above their reach that have no interest nor propriety in God at all; as by denying yourselves, your sinful selves, your natural selves, and your religious selves; and by keeping a singular guard upon your own hearts, words, and ways; and by stepping over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross, as Moses did, Heb 11:24; and by lessening yourselves to greater Christ, as John did, John 3:30-32; and by lifting up of Christ above your lusts, above yourselves, above the world, above outward privileges, above your performances, above your arts, parts, and gifts, as Paul did, Php 3:7-9; and by blessing a taking God as well as a giving God, as Job did, Job 1:1-22; and by rejoicing and glorying in all the afflictions and sufferings that befall you for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake, as the apostles and primitive Christians did; and by choosing to suffer rather than to sin, as those worthies did 'of whom this world was not worthy;' and by keeping of yourselves from the defilements, pollutions, and abominations of the times, as some in Sardis did, Rev 3:4; and by following of the Lamb wheresoever he goes, as those hundred, forty and four thousand did, who had their Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev 14:1-5. O sirs! it is infinitely better not to challenge any interest or propriety in God at all, than to pretend high as to interest and propriety in God, and yet to do no more for God, nay, it may be not so much, than they that have no interest nor propriety in God at all. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Evidence your interest and propriety in God, by falling roundly in with the interest of God, in opposition to all carnal interests in the world. O sirs! the interest of God will by degrees eat out and swallow up all other interests in the world. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat, Gen 41:4, and as Aaron's rod swallowed up the Egyptians' rods, Exo 7:11-12, so the interest of God will in time eat up and swallow up all that superstitious carnal worldly antichristian and Satanical interest that men labour now to uphold, with all their might, Isa 8:9-10. Dan 2:35,

'Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.' Dan 2:44, 'And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' And so Dan 7:27, 'And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.' Rev 17:12-14, 'And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' If these scriptures do not clearly evidence, that the interest of Christ shall swallow up all other interests, I understand nothing. Now mark, the people of God are the interest of God, and the gospel of God is the interest of God, and the ordinances of God are the interest of God, and the institutions and pure worship of God are the interest of God, &c. And therefore, all you that have an interest and propriety in God, evidence it by your ready and resolute falling in with the interest of God. Believe it, they that fall in with the interest of God, shall fall in with the strongest side, and will be sure to carry it against ten thousand worlds. What is the stubble, to the flames? what is weakness to strength? what is impotency to omnipotency? what is folly to wisdom? what is emptiness to fulness? No more are all the carnal interests in the world to the interest of God; and therefore thrice happy is that man that falls timely and cordially in with the interest of God. But now, if upon trial and examination any of you shall find that yet the Lord is not your portion, and this I believe will be the case of many of you, I would exhort all such persons to labour with all their might, yea, to labour as for life, to get the Lord to be their portion. O sirs! this is the one thing necessary, this is the sun among the stars, this is the work of works that lies upon your hands; when this is done, all is done; till this be done, there is nothing done that will do you good in another world. O sirs! your lives lie upon it, your souls lie upon it, eternity lies upon it, your all lies upon it; and therefore you had need be restless till you have gained the Lord to be your portion.

Now, that I may the more effectually provoke you, and stir you up to this great and glorious, this necessary and weighty work, give me leave to propose these following considerations.

[1.] First, Consider that thy present portion, thy present condition, is but miserable and cursed, Lev 26:14-39, Deu 28:15-68. All the earth was cursed upon man's fall, and till fallen man comes to be interested in God, all his earthly enjoyments are cursed unto him; his honours are cursed, and his riches are cursed, and his preferments are cursed, and his pleasures are cursed; the whole portion of his cup is nothing but a little cursed vanity: Job 20:23-29, 'When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glistening sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.' And so Job 24:18, 'He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.'

Pro 3:33, 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.' Mal 2:2, 'If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.' There is a real curse and a secret curse, an invisible curse and an insensible curse, that lies upon all their souls that have not God for their portion: Gal 3:10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' And as there is a curse upon all their souls, so there is a curse upon all their comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, that enjoy not God for their portion. Till a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, all his earthly portions are cursed unto him; but when a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, then all his earthly portions are blessed unto him. O sirs! there is no mitigating of the curse, there is no reversing of the curse, there is no altering of the curse, nor there is no taking of the curse from off your souls, nor from off your earthly portions, but by gaining God to be your portion. O sirs! you will live accursed, and you will die accursed, and you will appear before God accursed, and you will be judged and sentenced by God accursed, and you will be sent to hell accursed, and you will remain to all eternity accursed, if God be not your portion: and therefore oh how should this consideration awaken every sinner to give God no rest till he hath given himself as a portion to him. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, that there is yet a possibility of attaining God to be thy portion, Luk 18:27. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, do not know to the contrary but that God may be thy portion, even thine. If thou art but heartily willing to be divorced from that wicked trinity, the world, the flesh, and the devil, there is no doubt but that God will be thy portion. O sirs! why hath God laid open so clearly and so fully the nature and incomparable excellency of this portion above all other portions before you, but to persuade your hearts, and to draw out your souls to look after this portion, and to make sure this portion, as that wherein all your happiness and blessedness lies? Oh that you were wise to consider that now a prize, an opportunity, is put into your hands, that may make you for ever! You have all the ways, and all the means, and all the helps, and all the advantages imaginable for the obtaining of God to be your portion; so that, if God be not your portion, I shall be so bold to tell you that your destruction is from yourselves, Hos 13:9. O sirs! though God be a golden mine, yet he is such a mine that may be come at if you will but dig, and sweat, and take pains to purpose, Pro 2:2-7; though he be a pearl of infinite price, yet Christ can purchase this pearl for you; though he be a matchless and incomparable portion, yet he is such a portion as may be yours, as will be yours, if you are not wanting to your own souls. Why hath God sent his ambassadors early and late? 2Co 5:18-20; and why hath he, even to a miracle, continued them amongst you to this very day, but that they should acquaint you with his wonderful readiness and willingness to bestow himself as a portion upon you? O sirs! God is said to be a God of great mercy, and to be rich and plenteous in mercy, and to be abundant in mercy, and to be transcendent and incomparable in mercy; yea, all the mercies of God are sure mercies, they are royal mercies, they are innumerable mercies, they are bottomless mercies, they are unchangeable mercies, and they are everlasting mercies; and therefore there is no reason for any man to despair of obtaining of God for his portion. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that God is a portion-sweetening portion. God is such a portion as will sweeten all other portions; he is a portion that will make every pleasant portion more pleasant, and that will make every bitter portion sweet. Poverty is one man's portion, and sorrow is another man's portion, and crosses and losses are a third man's portion, and reproaches and sufferings

are a fourth man's portion, and sickness and diseases are a fifth man's portion, &c. But now God is a portion that will sweeten all these portions. You know the tree that Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah made them sweet, Exo 15:23-25. Now this tree was a type of Christ, who will certainly sweeten all our bitterest potions. The church complained in that Lam 3:15, 'that God had filled her with bitterness' (or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'with bitteresses'), 'and that he had made her drunken with wormwood:' and yet this very consideration, that 'the Lord was her portion,' Lam 3:24, sweetened all. If God be thy portion, there is no condition that can make thee miserable; if God be not thy portion, there is no condition that can make thee happy. If God be not thy portion, in the midst of thy sufficiency thou wilt be in straits; if God be thy portion, in the midst of all thy straits thou shalt enjoy an all-sufficiency in an all-sufficient God, Job 20:22. Till God be thy portion, O sinner, thou wilt never taste anything but death and bitterness in all thy comforts, and in all thy contentments, and in all thy enjoyments. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that all earthly portions are not of that infinite consequence and concernment to you as this portion is. All earthly portions are but the meat that perisheth, John 6:27; they are but moth-eaten and canker-eaten treasures, Mat 6:19, Jas 5:3; they are full of uncertainty, yea, they are all over vanity, Ecc 1:2; they reach not beyond the line of this mortal life; they can neither suit the soul, nor fill the soul, nor satisfy the soul, nor save the soul; they can neither change the heart, nor reform the heart, nor in the least better the heart; they can neither arm a man against temptations, nor lead a man out of temptations, nor make a man victorious over temptations; they can neither direct the conscience when it is in straits, nor relieve the conscience when it is under distress, nor support the conscience when it is under guilt, nor heal the conscience when it is under wounds; they can neither make our peace with God, nor keep our peace with God, nor augment our peace with God; they can neither bring us to Christ, nor unite us to Christ, nor keep us with Christ, nor transform us into the similitude or likeness of Christ; they can neither bring us to heaven, nor fit us for heaven, nor assure us of heaven. In a word, no earthly portion can free us from death, nor in the least avail us in the day of wrath. By all which it is most evident that all earthly portions are of very little consequence and concernment to the sons of men, to the souls of men. Oh, but now God is a portion of infinite consequence and concernment to all the sons and souls of men. No man can hear as he should, nor pray as he should, nor live as he should, nor die as he should, till God be his portion; no man is secure from temporal, spiritual, or eternal judgments, till God be his portion. No man can be happy in this world, or blessed in another world, till God be his portion. O sirs! it is not absolutely necessary that you should have this or that earthly portion, but it is absolutely necessary that you should have God for your portion; for if God be not your portion, all the angels in heaven, nor all the men on earth, cannot prevent your being miserable to all eternity.

[5.] Fifthly, Consider, that till a man comes to have God for his portion, he never comes to be temptation-proof. A man that hath God for his portion is temptation-proof; he will say when tempted, as Themistocles did, Give those bracelets to slaves; and as Basil did, who, when he was offered temporary honour, glory, and wealth, &c., answered, Give me glory which abides for ever, and give me riches, which will endure for ever; and as he did, who, being tempted with offers of money to desert his religion, gave this excellent answer, Let not any think that he will embrace other men's goods to forsake Christ, who hath forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ; and as that martyr did, who, when he had riches and honours offered him, if he would recant,

answered, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you; and as Hormisdas, a nobleman in the king of Persia's court, did, who, because he would not deny Christ, he was put into ragged clothes, deprived of his honours, and set to keep the camels; after a long time, the king seeing him in that base condition, and remembering his former fortunes, he pitied him, and caused him to be brought into the palace, and to be clothed again like a nobleman, and then persuades and tempts him afresh to deny Christ, whereupon this noble spirit presently rended his silken clothes, saying, If for these you think to have me deny my faith, take them again; and so he was cast out with scorn a second time. And what was that that made the apostles temptation-proof, and that made those worthies temptation-proof, Heb 11:1-40, and that made the primitive Christians temptation-proof, and that made the martyrs in queen Mary's days temptation-proof? Certainly, nothing more than this very consideration, that God was their portion. Ah! sinners, sinners, you will certainly fall, you will readily fall, you will easily fall, you will frequently fall, you will dreadfully fall before temptations, till you come to enjoy God for your portion. Every blast and every wind of temptation will upset and overturn that man that hath not God for his portion. Such a man may pray a thousand times over and over, 'Lord, lead me not into temptation,' and yet every day fall before the least temptation, as common experience doth abundantly evidence; whereas a man that hath God for his portion will stand fast like a rock in all storms, yea, in the face of all temptations he will be like mount Zion, that cannot be removed. Luther counsels every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, 'Christianus sum,' I am a Christian; and I would counsel every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, 'The Lord is my portion.' O Christian, when Satan or the world shall tempt thee with honours, answer, 'The Lord is my portion'; when they shall tempt thee with riches, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; when they shall tempt thee with preferments, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; and when they shall tempt thee with the favours of great ones, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; yea, and when this persecuting world shall threaten thee with the loss of thy estate, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of thy liberty, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of friends, answer, 'The Lord is my portion;'; and when they shall threaten thee with the loss of life, answer, 'The Lord is my portion.' O sirs! if Satan should come to you with an apple, as once he did to Eve, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;'; or with a grape, as once he did to Noah, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;'; or with a change of raiment, as once he did to Gehazi, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;'; or with a wedge of gold, as once he did to Achan, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;'; or with a bag of money, as once he did to Judas, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion;'; or with a crown, a kingdom, as once he did to Moses, tell him that 'The Lord is your portion.' But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, If God be not your portion, you will be miserable to all eternity. If God be not your portion, wrath must be your portion, hell must be your portion, everlasting burnings must be your portion, a devouring fire must be your portion, and a separation for ever from the glorious presence of God, Christ, angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' must be your portion; as you may clearly see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. If God be not your portion in this life, you shall never have him for your portion in another life; if God be not your portion here, he will never be your portion hereafter. O sirs! if death should surprise you before God is your portion, you will as certainly go to hell, as God is in heaven; and therefore it infinitely concerns you to get God for your portion. There is no way in the world to make the king of terrors to be a king of desires to thy soul, O man, but by gaining God for thy portion. Of all terribles, death

will be most terrible and formidable to that man that hath not God for his portion. If thou shouldst live and die, O man, without having God for thy portion, it had been good for thee that thou hadst never been born; and if the day of thy birth had been the day of thy death, thy hell would not have been so hot as now thou wilt certainly find it. But now, methinks, I hear some crying out, O sirs! what shall we do that we may have God for our portion? Oh, had we as many worlds at our dispose as there be stars in heaven, we would give them all that we might have God for our portion. Oh we now see that we can never be happy except God be our portion, yea, we now see that we shall be miserable to all eternity, except God be our portion; and therefore what shall we do that we may have God for our portion?

Well then, if you would indeed have God for your portion, let me thus advise you;—

[1.] First, Labour to be very sensible, that by nature you are without God, yea, at enmity with God, and alienated from the life and love of God, and that by nature you are children of wrath and disobedience, and in actual arms and rebellion against the great God. O sirs, never talk of having of God for your portion, till you come to see yourselves without God, and till you come to judge yourselves unworthy of God. Every man in his natural estate is afar off from God three manner of ways, Acts 2:39.

First, In point of opinion and apprehension.

Secondly, In point of fellowship and communion.

Thirdly, In point of grace and conversion. And till a man comes to be sensible of this, he will never desire God to be his portion. But,

[2.] Secondly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must trample upon all other portions in comparison of God. Luther protested that God should not put him off with the poor things of this world. Oh, go to God, and say, Lord, thou hast given me a portion in money, but this money is not thyself; thou hast given me a portion in lands, but these lands are not thyself; thou hast given me a portion in goods, but these goods are not thyself; thou hast given me a portion in jewels, but these jewels are not thyself; and therefore give me thyself, and I shall say I have enough. Lord, had I all the world for my portion, yet I should be miserable for ever in that other world, except thou bestowest thyself as a portion upon my soul. O Lord, give me but thyself, and take away what thou pleasest. Oh give me but thyself, and take away all, strip me of all, and I shall with Job sit down and bless a taking God as well as a giving God. Oh go to God, and tell him, with an humble boldness, that though he hath given thee many good things, yet all those good things will do thee no good except he bestow himself upon thee as the only good. Oh tell him that he is the first good; tell him that he is the original of all good; tell him that he is the greatest good, the noblest good; tell him that he is a superlative good; tell him that he is an universal good; tell him that he is an unchangeable good; tell him that he is an eternal good; and tell him that he is the most soul-suitable and soul-satisfying good. And therefore tell him that thou canst not tell how to live one day without him; yea, that thou knowest not how to be happy one hour without him. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If you would have God for your portion, then of all precious promises, of all golden promises, plead that most, Zec 13:9, 'They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' O sirs! as ever you would have the great and glorious God for your portion, plead out this noble promise cordially with God; plead it

out affectionately, plead it out fervently, plead it out frequently, plead it out believingly, plead it out resolutely, plead it out incessantly. O sirs! this choice promise is an hive full of heavenly honey, it is a paradise full of sweet flowers, it is a breast that is full of the milk of consolation; and therefore be still a-sucking at this breast, be still a-pleading of this promise; follow God with this promise early and late, follow him with this promise day and night, follow him with this promise as the importunate widow followed the unjust judge, Luk 18:1, and give him no rest till he hath made it good to your souls that he is your God, and that he is your portion, and that he is your salvation, and that he is your all in all. Oh tell him that above all things in this world your hearts are set on this, to have God to be your God, to have God to be your portion. Oh tell him that you cannot, tell him that you dare not, tell him that you may not, and tell him that you shall not, be satisfied with anything without God, with anything below God, with anything on this side God, with anything but God; and therefore humbly entreat him, and earnestly beseech him, to be your God, and to be your portion. But,

[4] Fourthly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must be willing to be his portion. God is resolved upon this, that he will be no man's portion that is not willing to be his. You must make a resignation of yourselves to God, if ever you would enjoy an interest in God; you must be as willing to be his people, as you are willing to have him to be your God; you must be as much at God's dispose as earthly portions are at your dispose, or else there will be no enjoying of God to be your God. God will engage himself to none that are not willing to engage themselves to him. He that will not give his hand and his heart to God, shall never have any part or portion in God. O sirs! as ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to give up yourselves to God with highest estimations, and with most vigorous affections, and with utmost endeavours, according to that precious promise, Isa 44:5, 'One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' God stands upon nothing so much as the giving up of yourselves to him, nor is he taken with nothing so much as the giving up of yourselves to him. I have read of Æschines, who, seeing his fellow-scholars give great gifts, viz. gold, silver, and jewels, to his master Socrates, and he being poor, and having nothing else to bestow, he gave himself, which the philosopher most kindly accepted, esteeming this present above all those rich and costly presents that his scholars had presented to him, and accordingly in love and sweetness he carried it toward him. So there is nothing that God accepts, loves, likes, and esteems, like the giving up of a man's self unto him. This is a present that God prefers above all the gold, silver, and sparkling jewels in the world. Well, sirs, remember this, such as are not as willing to say, Lord, we are thine, as they are to say, Lord, thou art ours, such shall never have God for their portion. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If you would have God for your portions, then you must take up Christ in your arms, and treat with God upon the credit of Christ. There is no acquaintance with God, there is no reconciliation to God, there is no union nor communion with God, there is no readmission into the presence and favour of God, without a mediator. God out of Christ is incomprehensible, God out of Christ is exceeding terrible, an absolute God is a consuming fire, Heb 12:9; and therefore says Luther, *Nolo Deum absolutum*, let me have nothing to do with God himself. The blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, is that, and only that, that can cement, reunite, and knit God and man together. Themistocles, understanding that king Admetus was highly displeased with him, took up his young son into his arms, and treated with the father, holding that his darling in his bosom, and

thereby appeased the king's wrath. O sirs! the King of kings is offended with you, and upon the account of your sins he hath a very great controversy with you. Now, there is no way under heaven to pacify his wrath, and turn away his displeasure from you, but by taking up Christ in your arms, and by presenting all your suits in his name. There is no angel in heaven, nor no saint on earth, that can, or that dares, to interpose between an angry God and poor sinners. It is only Christ, the prince of peace, that can make up a sinner's peace with God, Isa 9:6. John 14:6, 'Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' There is no way to the Father but by the meritorious blood of the Son; there are none that can stand between everlasting burnings and us but Christ, Isa 33:14. 'You shall not see my face except you bring your brother Benjamin with you,' said Joseph to his brethren, Gen 43:3, Gen 43:5. So says God, Sinners, sinners, you shall not see my face except you bring Jesus with you, except you bring Christ in your arms; you shall never see my face with joy, you shall never see my face and live. There is a writ of vengeance that is issued out of the court of heaven against poor sinners, and except Christ steps in, they will certainly fall under an eternal arrest, and be thrown into everlasting perdition and destruction. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must break your league with sin. You must fall out with sin, if ever you fall in with God. Sin and you must be two, or God and you can never be one. There is no propriety to be had in God, except your hearts rise against that which first disunited and disjointed you from God. Sin and you must part, or God and you can never meet. You shall as soon make an accommodation between light and darkness, heaven and hell, noon and midnight, 2Co 6:14-18, as ever you shall be able to make an accommodation between God and sin. So long as sin remains ours, God will be none of ours. No prince will be one with that subject that lives in the practice of treason and rebellion against him. No prince will be one with him that hath killed his only son and heir, and that daringly continues to hold up those bloody weapons in his hands wherewith he hath committed that horrid fact. There is no adulteress that can be so shamelessly impudent, or so vainly confident, as to desire pardon of her jealous husband, or to expect an oneness and a sweetness with him, whilst she continues to hold her wanton lovers still in her arms, and is fully, resolved to hold on in her wanton dalliances as in times past. O sirs! God is that prince that will never admit of peace or union with you till you cease practising of treason against him, and till you come to lay down your weapons of rebellion at his feet; he is that jealous husband that will never take you into an oneness, into a nearness and dearness with himself, till you come to abandon all your wanton lovers, and thoroughly to resolve against all wanton dalliances for time to come. If ever you would have God for your portion, you must say to all your wanton lovers, and to all those idols of jealousy that you have set up in your souls, as Ephraim once said to his, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must wait upon him in the use of all holy means. In the use of holy means, God makes the clearest, the fullest, and the choicest discoveries of himself; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to be acquainted with the excellency of God, and with the necessity of having God for their portion; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to understand the fulness of God, the goodness of God, the graciousness of God, the sweetness of God, and the wonderful freeness, readiness, and willingness of God to give himself as a portion to all such as see their need of him, and that are

heartily willing to receive him as their God and portion; and in the use of holy means God works in poor sinners a readiness, a forwardness, and a blessed willingness to choose God for their portion, to close with God for their portion, to embrace God for their portion, to accept of God for their portion, and to own God for their portion. If this question should be put to all the saints in heaven, viz., How God came to be their portion? they would all answer, By waiting upon him in the use of all those holy ways and means that he had appointed for that purpose; and if the same question were put to all the saints on earth that have God for their portion, they would all give the same answer. O sirs! as ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to wait patiently upon him in the use of all holy means. He that is in the use of holy means is in the way of obtaining God for his portion. But he that casts off the use of the means, he says in effect, I will not have God for my portion, I care not to have God for my portion; let me but have the world for my portion, and let who will take God for their portion. To prevent mistakes, before I close up this direction, remember that by the use of holy means, I only mean such means that God himself hath appointed, commanded, instituted, and ordained. As for those means that are of men's inventing, devising, prescribing, commanding, and ordaining, a man may wait till doomsday in the use of them, before ever he will gain God for his portion; and therefore they are rather to be declined, yea, detested and abhorred, than any way to be owned, minded, or used by any that would have God for their portion. Look, as all the worshippers of Baal got nothing by all their wailing and crying out from morning to night, 'O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!' 1Ki 18:1-46, so they that wait upon God in invented and devised, worship will never get anything by all their waiting; no, though they should wait from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, and cut and lance themselves till the blood gush out, as those foolish worshippers of Baal did. And therefore, as ever you would have God for your portion, be sure that you wait upon him only in his own ways, and in the use of his own means. And thus I have done with the use and application of the point. So that I have now nothing to do but these two things:

First, To answer a few objections that poor sinners are apt to make against their own souls, and against their enjoying of God for their portion; and,

Secondly, To lay down a few positions that may be of singular use to all such that have God for their portion. I shall begin with the objections.

Obj. 1. Methinks I hear some poor sinners ready to object and say, O sir! you have pressed us by many motives to get God for our portion, and we stand convinced in some measure by what you have said, that God is a most excellent, transcendent, glorious portion; but we very much question whether ever God will bestow himself as a portion upon such great, such grievous, such notorious, and such infamous sinners as we are.

Now to this objection, I shall return these answers.

[1.] First, God is a free agent, and therefore he may give himself as a portion to whom he pleases. Men may do with their own as they please, and so may God do with himself as he pleases. Look, as men may give earthly portions to whom they please, so God may give himself as a portion to what sinners he pleases. God is as free to bestow himself upon the greatest of sinners, as he is to bestow himself upon the least of sinners. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, That the Lord hath bestowed himself as a portion upon as great and as grievous sinners as you are, Psa 68:18. Adam, you know, fell from the highest pinnacle of glory into the greatest gulf of misery, and yet God bestowed himself as a portion upon him, Gen 3:15. And Manasseh was a sinner of the greatest magnitude, 2Ki 21:1-26, his sins were of a scarlet dye, they reached as high as heaven, and they made his soul as black as hell; for witchcraft, sorcery, cruelty, idolatry, and blood, he was a nonsuch, 2Ch 33:1-25; he sold himself to work all manner of wickedness with greediness; he did more wickedly than the very heathen, whom the Lord abhorred; in all his actings he seemed to be the first-born of Satan's strength; and yet the Lord freely bestowed himself as a portion upon him: and so, Eze 16:6, Eze 16:8, 'When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine.' And so, Isa 46:12-13, 'Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.' Solomon, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Zaccheus, the jailor, and the murderers of Christ, were all very great and grievous sinners, and yet the Lord bestowed himself as a portion upon them; and so God bestowed himself as a portion upon those monstrous and prodigious sinners that are mentioned in 1Co 6:9-11, whose souls were red with guilt, and as black as hell with filth. God hath been very good to those that have been very bad; and therefore do not despair, O sinner, though thy sins are very great.

I have read a story concerning a great rebel, that had made a great party against one of the Roman emperors, and proclamation being sent abroad, that whosoever could bring in the rebel, dead or alive, he should have a great sum of money for his reward; the rebel hearing of it, comes, and presenting himself before the emperor, demands the sum of money proposed: the emperor, bethinking himself, concludes, that if he should put him to death, all the world would be ready to say that he did it to save his money; and so he freely pardoned the rebel, and gave him the money. Here now was light in a dark lantern, here was rare mercy and pity in a very heathen. And shall an heathen do thus, and shall not the great God, who is made up of all loves, of all mercies, of all compassions, of all goodnesses, and of all sweetnesses, do much more? Certainly he will. If the greatest rebels, if the greatest sinners will but come in whilst the white flag of grace and mercy is held forth, they shall find a marvellous readiness and forwardness in God, not only to pardon them, but also to bestow, not only money, but himself as a portion upon them. The greatest sinners should do well to make that great Scripture their greatest companion: Psa 68:18, 'Thou hast ascended on high,' speaking of Christ, 'thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also.' But to what purpose hath Christ received gifts, spiritual gifts, gracious gifts, glorious gifts for men, for the rebellious? Why, it is 'that the Lord God may dwell amongst them.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That God hath given out an express promise, that he will make such to be his people which were not his people. Hos 2:23, 'I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' In this precious promise God hath engaged himself to have a most sweet harmony, and a most intimate conjunction and communion with such a people as were not his

people. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, That God gains the greatest glory by bestowing of himself as a portion upon the greatest sinners. There is nothing that makes so much for the glory of free grace, and for the exaltation of rich mercy, and for the praise of divine goodness, and for the honour of infinite fulness, as God's bestowing himself upon the greatest of sinners. O sirs! grace appears never so rich, nor never so excellent, nor never so glorious, as when it triumphs over the greatest sins, and when it falls upon the greatest sinners. Grace never shines, nor never sparkles, nor never becomes so exceeding glorious, as it doth when it lights upon the hearts of the greatest sinners. The greatest sins do most and best set off the freeness and the riches of God's grace. There is nothing that makes heaven and earth to ring and to sound out his praises, so much as the fixing of his love upon those that are most unlovely and uncomely, and as the bestowing of himself upon them that have given away themselves from him. And it is further observable, that the greatest sinners, when once they are converted, do commonly prove the choicest saints, and the rarest instruments of promoting the honour and glory of God in the world. The Canaanites were a wicked and a cursed generation; they were of the race of cursed Ham; they were given over to all whoredom, witchcraft, and cruelty; they offered their sons and daughters to devils; they were the very worst of sinners; they were without God and without the covenant, and counted dogs among the Israelites; and such an one was the Canaanite woman, that you read of in that Mat 15:21-29, till the Lord made it the day of his power upon her soul; but when the Lord had brought her in to himself, ah, what a rare Christian did she prove, for wisdom, zeal, humility, self-denial, love, courage, patience, faith, &c. And so Mary Magdalene was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, among all the harlots none to Mary Magdalene, and she was one out of whom Christ cast seven devils, Mark 16:9; and yet when she was changed and converted, oh, with what an inflamed love did she love the Lord Jesus Christ! and with what a burning zeal did she follow after the Lord Jesus! and how abundant was she in her lamenting and mourning after the Lord Jesus Christ! Some report, that after our Saviour's resurrection, she spent thirty years in weeping for her sins in Galba. And Paul, you know, was a very grievous sinner, but after his conversion, oh what a rare, what an eminent, what a glorious instrument was he in bringing of souls to Christ, and of building up of souls in Christ! Oh what a noble drudge was he for Christ! Oh how frequent! Oh how fervent! Oh how abundant was he in the work of the Lord, &c. And indeed, in all ages, the greatest sinners, when once they have been converted, they have commonly proved the choicest saints, and the rarest instruments in the hand of God for the advancement of his glory, and the carrying on of his work in the world. I might instance in Luther, and divers others, but that I hasten to a close. And therefore,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, that of all sinners the greatest sinners do undoubtedly stand in the greatest need of having of God for their portion.

Look, as they that are most wounded stand in most need of a surgeon, and as they that are most sick stand in most need of a physician, and as they that are in most danger of robbing stand in most need of assistance, and as they that are in most peril of drowning stand in most need of a boat, and as they that are most impoverished stand in most need of relief, so they that are the greatest sinners stand in most need of having God for their portion; for no tongue can express, nor no heart can conceive the greatness of that wrath, of that indignation, of that desolation, of that destruction, and of that damnation that attends and waits upon those great sinners that have not

God for their portion, 2Th 2:7-9; and therefore the greater sinner thou art, the greater obligation lies upon thee to get God to be thy God and portion; for till that be done, all thy sins, in their full number, weight, guilt, and aggravating circumstances, will abide upon thy soul. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, I answer, that God is a great God, and he loves to do like himself. Now, there are no works, no actions that are so suitable to God, and so pleasing to God, and so delightful to God, as those that are great; and what greater work, what greater action can the great God do, than to bestow himself as a portion upon the greatest of sinners? It was a great work for God to create the world, and it is a great work for God to govern the world, and it will be a great work for God to dissolve the world, and to raise the dead; and yet doubtless it is a greater work for the great God freely to bestow himself upon the greatest sinners. The love of God is a great love, and the mercies of God are great mercies, and the compassions of God are great compassions, and accordingly God loves to act; and therefore there is ground for the greatest sinners to hope that the Lord may bestow himself as a portion upon them. But,

Obj. 2. Secondly, Others may object and say, Hereafter we will look after this portion; for the present we are for living in the world, we are for a portion in hand, we are for laying up portions for ourselves, and providing portions for our posterity. We are first for laying up of earthly treasures, and when we have done that work to purpose, then we will do what we can to obtain this excellent and glorious portion that you have been so long a-discoursing on, &c. Now, to this objection I shall thus answer,

[1.] First, Thus to act is to run counter-cross to Christ's express commands: Mat 6:33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you'; and so Mat 6:19-20, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.' And so in that John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat which endureth for everlasting life.' O sirs! to act or run cross to God's express commands, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:24. O sirs! it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his commands, who by another is able to command your bodies into the grave, and your souls into hell at his pleasure. Shall the wife make conscience of obeying the commands of her husband? and shall a child make conscience of obeying the commands of his father? and shall the servant make conscience of obeying the commands of his Lord? and shall the soldier make conscience of obeying the commands of his general? and shall the subject make conscience of obeying the commands of his prince, though he be none of his council? and will not you make conscience of obeying his commands that is the prince of the kings of the earth? Rev 1:5. But,

[2.] Secondly, Who but children, madmen, and fools in folio, will pitch upon a less good, when a greater good is offered to them? What madness and folly is it for men to pitch upon bags of counters, when bags of gold are laid before them! or for men to choose an hundred pounds per annum for life, when rich inheritances and great lordships are freely offered to be made over to them for ever? What were this but, Esau-like, to prefer a mess of pottage before the birthright? and yet this is the present case of these objectors. God is that rich, that great, that glorious, and that matchless portion that is held out, and freely offered and tendered in the gospel to poor sinners,

and they neglect, slight, and reject this blessed offer, and fix their choice, their love, their hearts, their affections, upon the perishing vanities of this world Oh the folly of such, that at a feast feed upon kickshaws, and never taste of those substantial dishes that are for nourishment! Oh the madness of such that prefer the flesh-pots of Egypt before the dainties of Canaan! Would not such a merchant, such a tradesman be pointed at, as he goes along the streets, for a fool or a madman, that should neglect such a season, such an opportunity, such an advantage, wherein he may be made for ever, as to the world, and all because he is resolved first to secure such a bargain of rags, or such a bargain of old shoes, which will turn out but little to his advantage when he hath bought them? Surely yes. Now this is the very case of the objectors, for they neglect the present seasons, the present opportunities of grace and mercy, and of being made happy for ever, by enjoying of God for their portion, and all because they are resolved first to secure the treasures, the rags of this world. Certainly, in the great day of account, these will be found the greatest fools that have fooled away such golden opportunities, that were more worth than all the world, and all to secure the rags of the world. But,

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, How many thousands are now in hell! How many thousands have now their part and their portion in that burning lake, which burns with fire and brimstone for ever and ever! Who thought when they were on earth, that after they had laid up goods for many years with the fool in the Gospel, that then they would look after heavenly treasures, and secure God for their portion; but before they could find time or hearts to set about so noble a work, divine vengeance hath overtaken them, and justice hath cut the thread of their lives, and given them their portion among hypocrites, Mat 7:22, Mat 7:26-27, Rev 21:8. Ah! how many be there that have died in the time of their earthly projects and designs, before ever they have set about that great work of securing God for their portion, Luk 12:15, Luk 12:22; and how many thousands be there, that God in his just judgment hath given up to insatiable desires of earthly things, Php 3:18-19, and to a cursed endless covetousness all their days! Some write of the crocodile, that it always grows, that it hath never done growing; and just so it is with the desires of worldly men, they always grow, they have never done growing. Now they are for one thousand, then for ten, then for twenty, then for forty, then for an hundred thousand; now they are for this lordship, and then they are for that; now they are for this good bargain, and then they are for that; their hearts grow every day fuller and fuller with new desires of further and greater measures of earthly things; they please themselves with golden dreams, till they awake with everlasting flames about their ears, and then they fall a-cursing themselves that they have made gold their confidence, and that they have neglected those golden seasons and opportunities wherein they might have secured God for their portion. But,

Obj. 3. Thirdly, Others may object and say, We would fain have God for our portion, and we would willingly apply ourselves to all those ways and means whereby we might obtain the Lord to be our portion; but we are poor unworthy wretches. Surely the Lord will never bestow himself as a portion upon such miserable unworthy ones as we are! We are worthy of death, we are worthy of wrath, we are worthy of hell, we are worthy of damnation, but we are no ways worthy of having God for our portion. Did ever the Lord cast an eye of love upon such unlovely and such unworthy sinners, lepers as we are? &c.

Now to this objection I shall return these answers:

[1.] First, Though you have no merits, yet God is rich and abundant in mercy. Your sins, your unworthiness can but reach as high as heaven, but the mercies of God reach above the heavens: Psa 103:11, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.' Psa 108:4, 'For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.' The highest comparisons which the world will afford are not sufficient to express the greatness of God's mercy to poor sinners. Though the heavens are exceeding high above the earth, yet the mercies of God to his poor people are above the heavens. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, that the Lord hath never bestowed himself as a portion upon any yet but unworthy ones. David was as unworthy as Saul, and Job as Joab, and Peter as Judas, and Paul as Simon Magus; and the publicans and harlots that entered into the kingdom of heaven were as unworthy as the publicans and harlots that were shut out of the kingdom of heaven, Mat 21:31-32; and the thief that went to paradise was as unworthy as the thief that went to hell. All the saints in heaven, and all the saints on earth, are ready with one joint consent to declare that they were as unworthy as the most unworthiest, when God first bestowed himself as a portion upon them. This objection, I am unworthy, is a very unworthy objection, and therefore away with it. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That God hath nowhere in all the Scripture required any personal worthiness to be in the creature, before he will bestow himself upon the creature. O sirs! it never came into the thoughts of God, it never entered into the heart of God, to require of men that they should be first worthy of his love before they should enjoy his love, and that they should be first worthy of his mercy before they should taste of his mercy, and that they should be first worthy of his goodness before they should be partakers of his goodness, and that they should be first worthy of himself, before he would bestow himself as a portion upon them. If we should never enjoy God for our portion till we are worthy to enjoy him for our portion, we should never enjoy him. If a man had as many eyes as Argus to search into the Scripture, and as many hands as Briareus to turn over the leaves of Scripture, yet he would never be able to find out one text, one line, yea, one word, wherein God requires a personal worthiness in the creature before he gives away himself to the creature. Should God stand upon a personal worthiness to be in the creature before he would look upon the creature, or before he would let out his love to the creature, or before he would extend mercy or pity to the creature, or before he would, in a covenant of free grace, give himself to the creature, no sinner could be saved; man would be for ever undone, and it had been good for him that he had never been born. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, it is not men's unworthiness, but men's unwillingness, that hinders them from having God to be their portion. Though most men pretend their unworthiness, yet there is in them a secret unwillingness to have God for their God. When they look upon God as a gracious God, then they are willing to have him to be their God; but when they look upon God as an holy God, then their hearts fly back. When they look upon God as a merciful God, and as a bountiful God, oh then they wish that he were their God; but when they look upon God as a commanding God, and as a ruling and an overruling God, oh then their hearts do secretly rise against God. There is a real unwillingness in the hearts of sinners in all respects to close with God, and to have God to be their God: 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' Isa 53:1; 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts. A people that provoke me to anger continually to my face,' Isa 65:2-3; 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in

scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh,' &c. Pro 1:22-26; 'For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength, and ye would not,' Isa 30:15. O sirs! men shall be damned at last, not for cannots, but for will nots, Mat 23:37. No man shall be damned because he could not do better, but because he would not do better, Luk 13:34. If there were no will, there would be no hell. At last sinners will find this to be their greatest hell, that they have wilfully destroyed themselves. This is that which will damn with a witness, and this will be that never-dying worm: I might have had Christ and grace, but I would not; I might have been sanctified and saved, but I would not; I might have been holy and happy, but I would not; life and death hath been often set before me, and I have chosen death rather than life, Deu 30:15, Deu 30:19; heaven and hell hath been often set before me, and I have chosen hell rather than heaven; glory and misery hath been often set before me, and I have chosen misery rather than glory; and therefore it is but just that I should be miserable to all eternity. No man, no devil, can undo thee, O sinner, without thyself; no man can be undone in both worlds but by himself; no man shall be damned for his unworthiness, but for his unwillingness; and therefore never plead this objection more. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, that if you will not seek after the Lord to be your portion till you are worthy to enjoy him as your portion, then you will never seek after him, then you will never enjoy him for your God and portion. Personal worthiness is no flower that grows in nature's garden. No man is born with a worthiness in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. It is not the full, but the empty; it is not the rich, but the poor in spirit; it is not the righteous, but the sinner; it is not the worthy, but the unworthy soul, that is the proper object of mercy and pity. The poor publican that cried out, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner,' Luk 18:10-15; went home justified, when the thank-God pharisee returned as proud as he came. The centurion, when he came to Christ, sped well, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness, Mat 8:5-13. And the prodigal son sped well when he returned to his father, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness; for he was readily accepted, greatly pitied, sweetly embraced, courteously received, and very joyfully and nobly entertained. Witness the best robe that was put upon his back, and the gold ring that was put on his finger, and the shoes that were put on his feet, and the fatted calf that was killed to make the company merry, Luk 15:11-32. O sirs! if in the face of all your unworthiness you will go to God, and tell him that you are sinners, that you are vile sinners, that you are wretched sinners, that you are very great sinners, yea, that you are the greatest of sinners, and that you have deserved a thousand deaths, a thousand hells, a thousand destructions, and a thousand damnations, and earnestly beseech him to look upon you, and to bestow himself upon you, though not for your worthiness's sake, yet for his name's sake, for his mercy's sake, for his promise's sake, for his covenant's sake, for his oath's sake, and for his Son's sake. Certainly if you shall thus plead with God, all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary, but that you may speed as well as ever the centurion or the prodigal did. I have taken the more pains to answer this objection, that so it may never have a resurrection more in any of your hearts into whose hands this treatise may fall.

I know other objections might be raised, but because I have spoken largely so much in my former writings, I shall pass on to the last thing proposed, and that is, to lay down some positions that may, by the blessing of God, be of singular use to the Christian reader.

First Position. As, first, That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and it is another thing for a man to have an assurance in his own soul that God is his portion. There are many that have God for their portion who yet are full of fears and doubts that God is not their portion. Thus it was with Asaph in that Psa 77:1-20, and thus it was with Heman in that Psa 88:1-18, and thus it is with very many Christians in these days. Sometimes God exercises his children with such changeable and such terrible dispensations, as raises many fears and doubts in them about their interest and propriety in God. And sometimes their secret indulging of some bosom idol, their entertainment of some predominant lust, raises strange fears and jealousies in their souls about their interest in God. And sometimes their not closing with the Lord so closely, so fully, so faithfully, so universally, and so sincerely as they should, without any secret reservation, raises many doubts and questions in them whether God be their portion or no. The graces of many Christians are so weak, and their corruptions are so strong, and Satan is so busy with them, and their duties and performances are so weak, so flat, so dull, so sapless, so lifeless, so fruitless, and so inconstant, that they are ready at every turn to say, If God be our God, why is it thus with us? If God be our portion, why are our hearts in no better a frame? why have our duties no more spirit, life, and fire in them? Look, as the sun may shine, and yet I not see it; and as the husband may be in the house, and yet the wife not know it; and as the child may have a very great portion, a very fair estate settled upon him, and yet he not understand it; so a Christian may have God for his portion, and yet for the present he may not see it, nor know it, nor understand it: 1Jn 5:13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.' These precious souls had God and Christ for their portion, and they did believe, and they had eternal life in the seeds and beginnings of it, and in the promise, and in Christ their head, who, as a public person, had taken possession of it in their steads, and yet they had not the assurance of these things in their own souls, Eph 2:6. Look, as the babe that hath passed the pangs of the first birth doth not presently cry out, My father, my father, so the babe of grace, the new-born Christian, doth not presently cry out, My God, my God. It is one mercy for God to be my God, and it is another mercy for God to tell me that he is my God; it is one act of grace for God to be my portion, and it is another act of grace for God to tell me that he is my portion. Look, as fire may be hid under ashes for a time, and as bits of gold may be hid in an heap of dust for a time, and as stars may be hid in a dark night for a time, and as a pearl may be hid in a puddle for a time, so God may be a man's portion, and yet this may be hid from him for a time.

Second Position. The second position is this, That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and another thing for a man clearly and convincingly to make it out to himself or others, that God is his portion. Doubtless there are many thousands that have God for their portion, who yet, if you would give them a thousand worlds, are not able to make it out to their own or others' satisfaction, that God is their portion. Most Christians attain to but small measures of grace. Now small things, little things are hardly discerned, they are hardly made out. A little faith is next to no faith, and a little love is next to no love, and a little repentance is next to no repentance, and a little zeal is, next to no zeal, and a little hope is next to no hope, and a little holiness is next to no

holiness, and a little communion with God is next to no communion with God, and a little conformity to God is next to no conformity to God. Now where there is but a little grace, there it is very difficult for a man to make out the truth of his grace, and so by consequence to make out the truth of his interest and propriety in the God of grace. It is not grace in truth, but grace in strength that will enable a man to make it out to himself, and to make it out to others, that God is his portion. It is not grace in its sincerity, but grace in its sublimity, in its high and eminent actings, that will enable a man to make it out to himself and others, that God is indeed his God. Besides, many precious hearts have such weak heads, and such bad logic, and such shallow natural parts, that they are not able rationally nor divinely to argue the case with their own souls, nor to make an improvement of those rules, helps, ways, and means, whereby they might be enabled to make it out to themselves and others, that God is their portion. Look, as many persons have often a good title to such and such lands, and to such and such estates and inheritances, though they are not able for the present to clear up their title either to themselves or others; so many of the dear children of God have a good title to God, and a real interest and propriety in God, and yet for the present they are not able to clear up their title to God, nor to clear up their interest and propriety in God, either to themselves or others. And this is so great a truth, that all the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ that deal with poor souls, and that are conversant about souls, are ready from their daily experience to avouch it before all the world. He that shall say, that such have not God for their portion, will certainly condemn the generation of the just.

Third Position. The third position is this, That where there is an hearty willingness in any man to accept of God to be his God, to own God for his God, and to close with God as his God, there God is certainly that man's God, Isa 55:1-2, John 7:37-38. If there be a cordial willingness in you to take God to be your God, then without all peradventure God is your God. A sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God is accepted of God, and is sufficient to enter into a gracious covenant with God. O sirs! a sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God, flows from nothing below the good will and pleasure of God. No power below that glorious power that made the world, and that raised Christ from the grave, is able to raise a sincere, an hearty willingness in man to accept of God to be his God, and to take God for his God: Psa 110:3, 'Thy people shall be willing,' or willingnesses, in the abstract and in the plural number, 'in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.' There is no power below the power of the Lord of hosts, that can raise up a willingness in the hearts of sinners. It is not in the power of all the angels in heaven, nor of all the men on earth, to beget a sincere willingness in the heart of man to accept of God to be his God. This is work that can only be effected by an omnipotent hand. Though an emperor may force a woman to marry him that is his slave, because she is his purchase, yet he cannot by all his power force her will; he may force her body to the action, but he cannot force her will to the action. The will is always free, and cannot be forced. But God is that great emperor that hath not only a power to marry the soul, which he hath redeemed from being Satan's bond-slave, but also a power to make the soul that is unready ready, and that is unwilling willing, to marry him, and to bestow itself freely upon him. If there be in thee, O man, O woman, a sincere willingness to take God upon his own terms to be thy God, that is, to take him as an holy God, and as a ruling God, and as a commanding God, in one thing as well as another, then he is certainly thy God: Rev 22:17, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Fourth Position. The fourth position is this, That it may so fall out, that such a Christian that hath God for his portion, that hath an interest and a propriety in God, may lose the sight, the sense, the feeling and the evidence of his interest and propriety in God; and this is evident by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Doubtless it is very rare to find a Christian that hath had the knowledge, and experience, and evidence of his interest and propriety in God, but that Christian also hath experienced what it is to have his interest and propriety in God clouded and darkened. Such Christians that have experienced what the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness means, have likewise experienced what it is to have their sun set in a cloud; and this truth I might make good, by producing of a cloud of witnesses, both from among the martyrs and from among the saints of all ages. But what do I talk of a cloud of witnesses, when the tears that daily drop from many of your eyes, and the sad complaints, and sighs, and groans of many of your souls, do sufficiently evidence this sad truth. And therefore let no man conclude that God is not his God, because he hath lost the sight and sense of his interest and propriety in God; let no man say, that God is not his portion, because he hath lost those evidences, at the present, by which he hath formerly proved God to be his portion. Though a man should lose his writings and evidences that he hath to shew for such or such an estate, yet his writings and evidences being enrolled in a court of record, his estate remains good, and his title is still good in law; and therefore there is no reason why such a man should sit down, and wring his hands, and cry out, I am undone, I am undone; so though a Christian should lose his writings, his evidences that once he had to shew, that once he had to prove God to be his God and portion, and that he had a real interest and propriety in God, yet his writings, his evidences being enrolled in the court of heaven, his title to God, his interest in God remains good; and therefore there is no reason why such a person should sit down dejected, and wring his hands, and cry out, Oh I am undone, I am for ever undone.

Fifth Position. The fifth position is this, That such that have not, for the present, God for their portion, ought not peremptorily to conclude that they shall never have God for their portion. Such a person that cannot yet truly say that the Lord is his portion, ought not to despair of ever having of God for his portion. The time of a man's life is but a day, and God may bestow himself as a portion upon man in what hour of that day he pleases. In the parable, he bestowed himself as a portion upon some at the first hour, upon others at the third hour, upon others at the sixth hour, upon others at the ninth hour, and upon others at the eleventh hour, Mat 20:1-17. God is a free agent, and may bestow himself upon whom he pleases, and as he pleases, and when he pleases. There is no sinner, no, not the greatest sinner living under the gospel, that can infallibly determine that God will never be his God. No sinner can conclude that God hath peremptorily and absolutely excluded him from mercy, and shut him out among those that he is resolved never to bestow himself upon. For, 1. God never made any sinner one of his privy council.

2. In the gospel of grace God hath revealed no such thing.

3. Secret things belong only to the Lord, Deu 29:29.

4. God hath bestowed himself as a portion upon as great sinners as any they are that yet have not God for their portion.

5. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary, but that God may have thoughts of mercy towards thee, and that thy lot may fall within the purpose of his grace, and that he may bestow himself as a portion upon thee before thou art cut off from the land of the

living. Although a sinner may certainly know at the present that God is not his God, that God is not his portion, yet he doth not certainly know that God will never be his God, that God will never be his portion; and therefore no sinner may peremptorily conclude that God will never be his God, because for the present he cannot, he dares not say he is his God.

God gave himself as a portion to Abraham when he was old, when he was a white-headed sinner, Gen 12:4. And Manasseh was old when he was converted and changed, and when God bestowed himself upon him, 2Ch 33:1, 2Ch 33:12-14. And Zaccheus and Nicodemus were called and converted in their old age. When there were but a few steps between them and the grave, between them and eternity, between them and everlasting burnings, then the Lord graciously revealed himself, and bestowed himself as a portion upon them. And if we believe Tertullian, Paul wanted not a prediction of the Holy Ghost in that prophetic blessing of dying Jacob to his youngest son: Gen 49:27, 'Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.' Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, in the morning, the fore part of his age, worrying and devouring the flock of Christ, persecuting of the church; and in the evening, the declension of his life, dividing the word, a doctor of the nations. And Dionysius tells us that Mary Magdalene, that was so loose and dissolute in her youth, being converted in her old age, she sequestered herself from all worldly pleasures, and lived a most solitary life in the mountains of Gallia, where she spent full thirty years in meditation, fasting, and prayer. And old godly Similes said that he had been in the world sixty years, but had lived but seven, counting his life, not from his first birth, but from his new birth. And Augustine repented that he had begun to seek, serve, and love God no sooner.³ By all these instances it is most evident that God may bestow himself as a portion upon sinners, upon very great sinners, yea, upon the greatest of sinners, and that at last cast, when they are stricken in years, and when they are even ready to go out of this world; and therefore let no man despair of having of God for his portion, though for the present his soul cannot say, The Lord is my portion.

O sirs! despair is a sin, a very heinous sin, yea, it is that sin that damns with a witness. Despairing Judas perished and was damned, whenas the very murderers of Christ, believing on Christ, were saved. Acts 2:1-47. Despair thrusts God from his mercy-seat; it throws disgrace upon the throne of grace; it gives the lie to all the precious promises; it casts reproach upon the nature of God; it tramples under feet the blood of the covenant; it cuts the throat of faith, hope, and repentance; it renders all the means of grace useless and fruitless; it embitters all a man's comforts; it gives a sting to all a man's troubles; it proclaims Satan a conqueror; it raises a hell in the conscience; it makes a man a Magor-missabib, a terror to himself and an astonishment to others. In that seventh of Daniel there is mention made of four beasts: the first a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard, but the fourth, without distinction either of kind, or sex, or name, is said to be very fearful, and terrible, and strong; and such a thing as this fourth beast was is desperation, as all have found that ever have been under it. Desperation is a complicated sin; it is a mother sin; it is a breeding sin; it is the complement of all sins; and therefore above all take heed of this sin. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy to all eternity, do not despair, nor do not be peremptory in your conclusions, that God will never be your portion, because for the present he is not your portion. Remember the gracious invitations of God, and remember the glorious riches of mercy, and remember the overflowings of infinite grace, and then despond and despair if thou canst.

Sixth Position. The sixth and last position is this, That such is the love, care, goodness, and kindness of God to his people, that few or none of them die without some assurance that God is their portion, and that they have an interest and propriety in him. That here and there a particular Christian, in cases not ordinary, may die doubting, and ascend to heaven in a cloud, as Christ did, Acts 1:9, will, I suppose, be readily granted; and that the generality of Christians shall, first or last, more or less, mediately or immediately, have some comfortable assurance, that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him, may I suppose be thus evinced.

[1.] First, Several precious promises that are scattered up and down the Scripture seems to speak out such a thing as this is. Take these for a taste: Psa 9:18, 'For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.' Psa 22:26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.' Psa 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory: and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Hos 2:23, 'And I will have mercy upon her that hath not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.' Psa 5:12, 'For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.' John 14:21, John 14:23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

[2.] Secondly, The common experiences of the saints, both in the Old and New Testaments, doth evidence as much. Song of Solomon 2:16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his;' Song of Solomon 6:3, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;' and Song of Solomon 7:10, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me.' Isa 63:16, 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.' Isa 64:8-9, 'But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.' Jer 3:22-23, 'Behold, we come unto thee: for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.' Isa 25:9, 'And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us.' I might produce a cloud of witnesses from among the patriarchs and prophets, further to evince this truth; but enough is as good as a feast. And as the church of God in the Old Testament, so the church of God in the New Testament attained to the same assurance. The believers in Corinth were sealed, and had the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts: 2Co 1:22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' And 2Co 5:1, 2Co 5:5, 'For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit.' And so the believing Ephesians had the like: Eph 1:13, 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.' And so Eph 4:30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' And the believing Thessalonians had the same: 1Th 1:4-5, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' I might give you many particular instances out of the New Testament to confirm this truth, but these general instances are more convincing and

satisfying.

[3.] Thirdly, If God should not, first or last, sooner or later, mediately or immediately, give his people some comfortable assurance that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him, the spirits, the souls of his people would certainly faint and fail; but this God will never suffer, this God by promise hath engaged himself to prevent, as you may see in that Isa 57:16, Isa 57:18-19, 'For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord, and I will heal him.' Now, seeing that God hath so graciously undertaken for his people, that their spirits shall not faint nor fail, there is no doubt but that, sooner or later, more or less, God will assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and propriety in him.

[4.] Fourthly, The Lord's supper is a sealing ordinance, and was ordained, instituted, and appointed for that very purpose and to that very end, viz., to seal up the believer's propriety in God, and to assure him of his interest in God, in Christ, in the everlasting covenant, and in all the benefits of Christ's death, to wit, the favour of God, reconciliation, redemption, and the remission of sins. Now, how can it possibly be imagined, that so glorious an ordinance should be instituted to so great and so glorious an end as to assure believers of their interest and propriety in God, and yet this end should never be effected in them all their days, for whose sake the ordinance was instituted and appointed? Certainly God never appointed any ordinance to accomplish any end, but first or last that ordinance did accomplish that end for which it was appointed and instituted, Isa 55:10-11, and Isa 45:23. Cyprian shews how the martyrs in the primitive church, when they were to appear before the cruel persecuting tyrants, were wont to receive the Lord's supper, and thereby they were so assured of their interest and propriety in God, and so fired with zeal and fervour, and filled with faith and fortitude, &c., that they made nothing of the greatest torments that those bloody tyrants could inflict upon them. And saith Chrysostom, by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are so armed against Satan's temptations, that he fleeth from us, as if we were so many lions that spat fire. The Jews in the celebration of the passover did sing Psa 113:1-9, with the five following Psalms, which they called the great Hallelujah, and it was always after that cup of wine, which they called the cup of praise; and thus it should be with the saints. At all times, upon all occasions, in all places, they should sing Hallelujahs to God. Oh, but when they are at the Lord's supper, then they should sing the great Hallelujah; but how they will be ever able to sing this great Hallelujah, except first or last, more or less, God gives them some assurance of their interest and propriety in himself, I cannot for my life discern. But, [5.] Fifthly, There is in all believers the choice and precious springs of assurance, as

(1.) Union and communion with the Father and Son: 1Jn 1:3, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also, may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Now, that union that is between the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the subject and the prince, the body and the soul, is nothing so near an union as that which is between a believer and God. Besides, that union that a Christian hath with God is an honourable union, and it is an inseparable union, it is an invincible union, and it is an everlasting union, 1Co 6:16-17. Now, how is it possible for a man to have such a near and such a glorious union and fellowship

with God from the day of his conversion to the day of his dissolution, and yet never come to any assurance of his interest and propriety in God, is a thing not easily imaginable.

(2.) Precious faith is another spring of assurance: 1Pe 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Now, this spring is in all the saints, 2Pe 1:1. The faith of expectance will in time rise up into a faith of reliance, and the faith of reliance will in time advance itself into a faith of assurance.

(3.) Hope is another spring of assurance: Col 1:27, 'Christ in you, the hope of glory;' Heb 6:19, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.'

(4) A good conscience is another spring of assurance, 2Co 1:12.

(5.) Real love to the saints is another spring of assurance, 1Jn 3:14.

(6.) And lastly, the Spirit of God is another spring of assurance, Rom 8:1-39. Now, that a Christian should have all these choice springs of assurance in his soul, from his new birth to the day of his death, and yet in all that time never come to assurance of his interest and propriety in God, is a thing, I had almost said, beyond all belief. But,

[6.] Sixthly, There is nothing in all the world that the hearts of the saints are more frequently, more fervently, and more abundantly carried out after, in all their prayers and supplications, than this, that God would tell them that he is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and propriety in himself, Psa 4:6-7. The constant language of their souls is this: Lord, do but tell us that thou art our portion, and then bestow earthly portions upon whom thou plearest; do but clear up our interest and propriety in thyself, and then we shall say, 'Our lot is fallen in a pleasant place, and verily we have a goodly heritage,' Psa 16:5-6. Believers know that assurance that God is their portion, and that they have an interest and propriety in him, will ease them of all their sinful cares, fears, terrors, horrors, jealousies, suspicions, and sad apprehensions, which makes their lives a very hell. They know that assurance of their interest and propriety in God will make ever bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; it will turn a wilderness into a paradise, an Egypt into a Canaan. They know that assurance that God is theirs will raise the truest comforts, the purest comforts, the greatest comforts, the surest comforts, the strongest comforts, the rarest comforts, the sweetest comforts, and the most lasting comforts in their souls, Isa 40:1-2. They know that assurance of their interest in God will fit them for the highest duties in Christianity, and for the hardest duties in Christianity, and for the costliest duties in Christianity, and for the most neglected, scorned, and despised duties in Christianity. They know that assurance of their propriety in God will most quicken their graces, and act their graces, and raise their graces, and strengthen their graces, and brighten their graces, and put a lustre and a beauty upon their graces. They know that assurance of their interest in God will wonderfully weaken sin, and effectually crucify their hearts to the world, and sweetly moderate their affections to their nearest and dearest relations, and powerfully arm them both against the world's oppositions and Satan's temptations. To conclude; they know that assurance of their propriety in God will make death more desirable than terrible, yea, it will make the thoughts of death sweet, and the approaches of death easy, and all the warnings of death pleasant to their souls, and therefore they follow God hard day and night, with strong cries, prayers, tears, sighs, and groans, that he would make it evident to them that he

is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and propriety in him. Now, how can any man that is in his wits imagine that God should always turn a deaf ear to the prayers of his people in this thing especially, considering that their prayers, cries, tears, sighs, and groans are but the products of his own Spirit in them, Rom 8:26-27; and considering likewise the several promises, whereby he hath engaged himself to answer to the prayers of his people? I might tire both you and myself in turning to those particular promises, but that I am resolved against, and therefore take that for all: John 16:23-24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' This double asseveration, 'Verily, verily,' is never used but in matters of greatest weight and importance; and this gemination, 'Verily, verily,' is a vehement confirmation of the truth of what Christ speaks. Now, from this gracious promise I may safely and clearly infer, that if God the Father will give to believers whatsoever they ask in the name of Christ, then certainly, at first or last, sooner or later, he will give them assurance that he is their portion, and that they have an undoubted interest and propriety in him; for this is one of the great requests that they are still a-putting up in the name of Christ, and upon the grant of this request depends the fulness of a Christian's joy. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, If God should not sooner or later, more or less, assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have an interest and a propriety in him; then he would be a very great loser, if I may so speak; he would lose many praises, and many thanksgivings; he would lose much of that love, of that honour, and of that delight, and of that admiration, which otherwise he might have from among his children. And it is very observable, that of all the duties of religion there are none that are pressed so closely, so frequently, and so strongly upon Christians, as those of praising of God, and rejoicing in God, &c., as all know that know anything of the Scriptures. Now, how it will stand with the holiness of God, and with the wisdom of God, and with the care of God, to be so great a loser in the very things which he hath so roundly and earnestly pressed upon his people, whenas by one sweet word of his mouth he might so easily and so happily prevent it, I cannot easily discern. All believers know that there is no such ready, no such effectual way under heaven to draw out their love, their joy, their delight, their praises, and their thanksgiving to God, as God's assuring of them that he is their portion, and that they have an unquestionable interest and propriety in him. Certainly that God that loves the praises of his people, and that delights in the rejoicings of his people, and that is so infinitely pleased with the thanksgivings of his people, that God will not always hide himself from his people, that God will sooner or later so manifest himself to his people, that they shall be able to see their interest and propriety in God, and rejoicing to say, 'The Lord is our portion.'

Now, oh you that are the people of the Lord, and that to this very day do lie under many fears and doubts about your interest and propriety in God, be not discouraged, do not hang down the head, do not despond, do not despair, for certainly sooner or later God will assure you that he is your portion, and that you have an interest and a propriety in him.

THE PRIVY KEY OF HEAVEN note The 'Privy Key of Heaven,' published during the awful Plague of London in '1665,' seems to have been less known than any of Brooks's writings. I have not been able to trace a reprint until a modern date. The original title-page is given below.*—G. the

PRIVIE KEY of

HEAVEN; or, Twenty Arguments for

CLOSET-PRAYER: in A Select Discourse on that Subject: With the resolution of several considerable Questions; the main Objections also against Closet-Prayer, are here answered; Cautions propounded, and the Point improved; with several other things of no small importance, in respect of the internal and external welfare of the Christian Reader. with

Twenty special Lessons (in the Epistle Dedicatory to some afflicted Friends) that we are to learn by that severe rod, the pestilence, that now rageth in the midst of us. By Thomas Brooks, Minister of the Gospel.

O my Dove that art in the clefts of the Rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is lovely, Song of Solomon 2:14.

LONDON, Printed for, and are to be sold by John Hancock, at the first shop in Popes-head Alley, next to Cornhil. 1665.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To my worthy and esteemed friends, Mrs Elizabeth Drinkwater, Mrs Susan Bell, Mrs Hannah Bourne, Mrs Mary Taylor, Mrs Anne White, Mrs Elizabeth Juxon, Mrs Rebecca Juxon, Mrs Mary Baxter, Mrs Deborah Shepherd, Mrs Anne Clemens, Mrs Mary Stonior, Mrs Anne Snell, Mrs Anne Ellis, Mrs Margaret Cutler, Mrs Patience Cartwright, Mrs Mary Shaw, Mrs Philip Garret, Mrs Margaret Winfield, Mrs Hannah Pippet, Mrs Mary Chanlor, Mrs Mary Scot, Mrs Katherine Usher, with their husbands, &c., all happiness both here and hereafter.

Honoured and Beloved in our dear Lord Jesus,

I have crowded your names together in one epistle, not from any want of respect unto you, for I owe to each of you more than an epistle, nor because you are in one particular fellowship, for so you are not; but partly because the Lord hath made you one with himself, in the Son of his love; and partly because the Lord at several times, and in several ways, hath exercised you all in the furnace of affliction; and partly because this epistle may reach you all, and speak to you all, when I cannot, or when I may not, or which is more, when I am not.

Dear friends, many and great have been the breaches that the Lord hath made upon your persons, upon your near and dear relations, and upon your sweetest comforts and contentments. There is not one of you but may truly say with Job, 'He breaketh me with breach upon breach,' Job 16:14. God hath chastised you all round with various rods; and oh that the Lord would help you all to 'hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it,' Mic 6:9.

Now that you may give me leave a little to open and apply to your particulars, that

Mic 4:9, 'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.' The matter that I shall offer to your consideration from this scripture, will be not only of special concernment to yourselves, but also of high concernment to all sorts and ranks of men and women, in this sad day, when the sword devours on the one hand, and the pestilence rageth on the other hand.

'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city.' Tremellius turns it thus, 'The voice of the Lord doth preach unto this city, for what the matter is, thy name seeth: hear ye the rod,' &c. This city, viz., Jerusalem, and so consequently to all the Israelites; for in this city all offices and duties of

godliness and humanity were more religiously performed, or to be performed, than in any other place, because of the presence and majesty of God that was amongst them. 'But thy Majesty seeth what wickedness is practised amongst them,' as is evident in the verses following.

'Crieth.' The word is from kara, which signifies,

First, 'To cry aloud,' or 'to make a noise,' Isa 58:1; 'cry aloud' there is kara. The word signifies, to cry so loud as that all may hear that have ears to hear.

Secondly, The word signifies, 'openly to proclaim, preach, or publish a thing.' Exo 33:19, 'I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee.' Here is the word kara.

Thirdly, The word signifies, 'to cry out.' Gen 39:15, 'I lifted up my voice and cried.' Here is kara. The Hebrew word קָרָא hath nine other significations in Scripture, but because they are not pertinent to what is in my eye, I shall pass them by at this time.

'And the man of wisdom shall see thy name.' Vethushiia properly signifies essence; and, therefore, according to the Hebrew, the words should be read thus, 'And the man of essence shall see thy name,' &c., that is, he that is a man indeed, he that is not a sot, a stock, a stone. Most men are men of folly, and so not worthy of the name of men; but as for such as are truly wise, they 'shall see thy name.' There is a great measure of spiritual art, of holy and heavenly wisdom required, both to enable a man to hear the voice of the rod and to understand the language of the rod. This wisdom is too high for a fool, Pro 24:7.

'Shall see thy name.' Now the Hebrew word here used שָׁרָא, may be better derived from jare, which signifies to fear, than from raah, that signifies to see, and so the words will run smoothly thus, 'The man of wisdom, or of essence, shall fear thy name,' considering that, it is majesty itself that crieth, and that he is immediately to deal with God himself, and not with a poor, weak, mortal worm.

'Hear ye the rod.' The word hear is from שָׁמַע shamang, which signifies,

First, 'To mark, observe, and attend to what is said.' Gen 29:33, 'The Lord hath heard that I was hated;' that is, 'he hath marked it, he hath observed it.' So here, Oh mark the rod! Oh observe the rod! Oh attend to what is spoken by the rod!

Secondly, The word signifies, 'to understand what is spoken;' so Gen 42:23, 'They knew not that Joseph understood them.' In the Hebrew it is, 'that Joseph heard them.' Now to hear the rod, is to understand what is spoken to us by the rod.

Thirdly, The word signifies, 'to believe a thing reported to be true;' so Exo 6:9, 'They hearkened not unto Moses,' that is, 'they did not believe the report that Moses made.' 'Hear the rod,' that is, 'believe the report the rod makes.' The rod reports, that of all evils sin is the greatest evil; and that of all bitters, sin is the greatest bitter. Oh believe the report of the rod! The rod reports, that God is angry, that God is displeased. Oh believe its report! The rod reports the creatures to be mere vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh believe its report! The rod reports our nearest and dearest comforts, contentments, and enjoyments to be mixed, mutable, and momentary. Oh believe its report! The rod reports sin to be vile, and the world to be vain, and heaven to be glorious, and Christ to be most precious. Oh believe its report! The Hebrew word hath three other significations,

but being that they are not proper to our purpose, I shall pass them by.

'The rod.' The Hebrew word *matte*, that is here rendered rod, hath three significations:

First, It denotes 'power and strength:' Psa 2:9, 'a rod of iron.'

Secondly, It denotes 'rigid and harsh government:' Isa 14:5, 'The Lord hath broken the staff,' or rod, 'of the wicked;' that is, 'their rigorous and cruel government.' Nebuchadnezzar had sorely afflicted the children of Judah; he was a rod, that brake them in pieces, and ruled over them with much rigour in Babylon.

Thirdly, It denotes 'sore afflictions and heavy judgments:' Psa 89:32, 'I will visit your transgressions with a rod.' And thus you are to understand the word rod in the text.

'And him that hath appointed it.' It is God that appoints the rod, and ordains it for the revenge of the quarrel of his covenant. The Hebrew word *Jegnadah* signifies properly 'to appoint' or 'constitute.' It is God who appoints the rod, and who constitutes it to do what service he pleaseth. It is God that hath not only a permissive, but also an active, hand, in all the afflictions that come upon his people. And let thus much suffice for the opening of the words.

Now, though this choice garden affords many sweet flowers, yet I shall only present you with one, which is this, viz. That all the afflictions, troubles, trials, &c., that God lays upon his people, are his rod; and that it is their highest and greatest concernment to hear the voice of the rod, and to take out those lessons that God would have them learn by the rod. For the opening and clearing up of this important point, I shall endeavour these two things:

First, To shew you in what respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

Secondly, To shew you what those special lessons are that you are to learn by the rod.

I. For the first, in what respects are afflictions like unto a rod?

I answer, In these seven respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

(1.) First, The rod is never made use of but when no fair means will prevail with the child. It is so here; God never takes up the rod, he never afflicts his people, till he hath tried all fair ways and means to humble them and reform them, 2Ch 36:15, seq., Mat 23:37-38. And when none of the offers of grace, the tenders of mercy, the wooings of Christ, the strivings of the Spirit, nor the smart debates of conscience, will awaken them, nor work upon them, then God takes up the rod, and sometimes whips them till the blood comes. But,

(2.) Secondly, Parents choose what rods they please to correct their children with. The child shall not choose what rod he pleaseth to be corrected with. Oh, no! It is the prerogative of the father to choose the rod. The father may choose and use either a great rod or a little rod, a long rod or a short rod, a rod made of rosemary branches or a rod made up of a green birch. It is so here; God chooseth what rod, what affliction he pleaseth, to exercise his people with, Lev 26:1-46, Deu 28:1-68, Song of Solomon 3:9-11. You read in the Scriptures of very many rods, but they are all of God's choosing: Amo 3:6, 'Is there any evil in the city, and hath not the Lord done it?' Though there be many rods to be found in the city, yet there is not one of them but is of God's choosing: Ruth 1:13, 'It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.'

Ruth 1:21, 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?' Isa 45:7, 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things.' Mic 1:12, 'For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the Lord unto the gates of Jerusalem.' David was whipped with many rods, but they were all of God's own choosing, Psa 39:9; and Job was whipped with many rods, but they were all of God's own choosing, Job 1:1-22. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Parents take no pleasure, they take no delight, to use the rod. Every lash the father gives the child, fetches blood from his own heart. The father corrects the child, and sighs over the child; he whips the child, and at the same time weeps over the child. Nothing goes more against the parents' heart, nor against their hair, than the bringing of their children under the rod of correction. It is so here, Lam 3:33, 'For he doth not afflict willingly,' or, as the Hebrew runs, 'he doth not afflict,' millibbo, 'from his heart, nor grieve the children of men.' You often read that he delights in mercy, Mic 7:15; but where do you once read that he delights in severity, or in dealing roughly with his people? God very rarely takes up the rod but when our sins have put a force upon him, 2Ch 36:16, Jer 5:19. It is grievous to God to be a-grieving his people; it is a pain unto him to be a-punishing of them: Hos 11:8, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.' My justice, saith God, calls upon me to rain hell out of heaven upon thee, as once I did upon Sodom and Gomorrah; but then mercy interposeth her four several hows: how? how? how? how? how shall I give thee up? God puts these four pathetical interrogations to himself, because none else in heaven or earth could answer them. The prophet brings in God speaking after the manner of men, who, being provoked a thousand thousand ways by the vanities and follies of their children, think to give them up to take their own courses, and to look no more after them; but then their bowels begin to work, and their hearts begin to melt, and they begin to interrogate themselves thus: 'How shall we give up these children? for though they be disobedient children, yet they are children; how can we turn them out of doors? how can we disown them? how can we disinherit them? for though they are rebellious children, yet they are children, &c. Afflictions are called God's work, yea, his 'strange work;' his act, yea, 'his strange act;' as if God were out of his element when he is afflicting or chastising his people, Isa 28:21. But,

(4.) Fourthly, The rod is smarting, grievous, and troublesome; and so are afflictions to our natures: Heb 12:11, 'Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.' Flesh and blood startles and is troubled at the least trouble. Affliction is a sort of physic that makes most sick. Some write that tigers will grow mad, and tear their own flesh, and rend themselves in pieces, if they do but hear drums or tabors sound about them. Were not Job and Jeremiah such tigers, who, in the day of their afflictions, did more than curse the day of their birth? Job 3:1-26, Jer 20:1-18. Oh what a bitter cup, what a heavy burden was affliction to them! Job 10:1, 'My soul is weary of my life.' Job 7:15, 'My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.' Psa 6:6, 'I am weary with my groaning.' Psa 69:1-3, 'Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.' Doubtless many good men have sat under Elijah his juniper, 1Ki 19:4, wishing themselves out of the world, if

it might stand with divine pleasure, that they might rest from their sins and sorrows, and be rid of their many burdens and bondages, looking upon life [as] little better than a hell, were it not for the hopes of a heaven hereafter. But,

(5.) Fifthly, When parents take up the rod into their hands, they will not lay it down till they have subdued the spirits of their children, and brought them to submit and to kiss the rod, and to sit still and quiet before them. It is so here: when God takes up the rod, he will not lay it down till he hath brought us to lie quietly at his feet: Lev 26:40-42, 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary to me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.' When God takes up the rod, his children must either bow or break; they must say, the Lord is righteous; they must kiss the rod of correction, or else destruction will come like a whirlwind upon them, Isa 5:3, Isa 5:6.

It is reported of the lion, that he spares those creatures that fall down before him, and submit unto him; but as for those that endeavour to run from him, or to contend with him, those he tears in pieces. It is just so with the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as you may see in that Hos 5:14-15.

King Edward riding furiously after a servant of his that had highly displeased him, with a drawn sword in his hand as purposing to kill him, seeing him submit, and on bended knee sueing for his life, did not only put up his sword, but also spared him, and received him into his favour. The King of kings will never put up his sword when once he hath drawn it, till his people fall on their knees, and submit unto him. God never left chastising of Ephraim till he had brought him to his bow, till he had made him submit, and kiss the rod, Jer 31:18-20. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Afflictions are called a rod, in respect of the hand that lays them on. Though affliction be a rod, it is a rod in a Father's hand. The sword is in the judge's hand, John 18:11, and the cudgel is in the master's hand; but the rod is in the father's hand, Heb 12:6-9. When Balaam's ass offended him, he wished for a sword to slay him, Num 22:29; but so doth not God. When we do most highly provoke him, he doth not take up a sword to slay us, but only a rod to scourge us and chastise us, as indulgent fathers do their dearest children. But,

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, Afflictions are called a rod, in regard of the ends to which they serve. A rod is not to kill, but to cure; it is not for destruction, but for correction. When David gave a full commission to his soldiers against Absalom, it was not to slay him, but to restrain him; it was not to ruin him, but to reduce him to his former obedience. The application is easy. We can as well live without our daily bread as without our daily rod. Now, the end of taking up the rod are these:

[1.] First and more generally, It is for the good of the child, and not for his hurt. It is so here. God takes up the rod, but it is for the good of his people: Gen 50:20, 'But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.' Divine goodness did so over-master the plotted malignity of Joseph's brethren as that it made a blessed medicine of a most deadly poison: Jer 24:5, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah,

whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.' When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, Exo 40:1-38, it was with gold and ear-rings; and when Judah was dismissed out of Babylon, it was with great gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezr 1:1-11. So Rom 8:28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' This text, like Moses's tree cast into the bitter waters of affliction, may make them sweet and wholesome to drink of. But,

[2.] Secondly, and more particularly, The rod is to make the child sensible of his folly and vanity: Pro 10:13, 'In the lips of him that hath understanding, wisdom is found; but the rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding.' So it is here: God takes up the rod, but it is to make his people sensible of their folly and vanity; it is to make them look up to him, and to look into conscience, and to look out to their conversations. Schola crucis is schola lucis. God's house of correction is his school of instruction. His lashers are our lessons, his scourges are our schoolmasters, and his chastisements are our advertisements. Hence both the Hebrews and Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, *musar*, *paideia*, because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Afflictions are a Christian's looking-glass,² by which he may see how to dress his own soul, and to mend whatsoever is amiss. They are pills made up by a heavenly hand on purpose to clear our eyesight: 1Ki 17:18, 'And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God?' Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' If God had not taken away her son, her sin had not been brought to remembrance. It was the speech of an holy man in his sickness: 'In this disease,' said he, 'I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is. I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin was before.' The cross opens men's eyes, as the tasting of honey did Jonathan's. 'Here,' as that martyr phrased it, 'we are still a-learning our A, B, C, and our lesson is never past Christ's cross, and our walking is still home by weeping-cross.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, The rod is used to prevent further folly, mischief, and misery: Pro 23:13-14, 'Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' It is said of the ape, that she huggeth her young ones to death; so many fond parents, by not correcting their children, they come to slay their children. The best way to prevent their being scourged with scorpions in hell, is to chastise them with the rod here. So God takes up the rod; he afflicts and chastiseth his dearest children, but it is to prevent soul-mischief and misery; it is to prevent pride, self-love, worldliness, &c. Paul was one of the holiest men that ever lived on earth; he was called by some an earthly angel, and yet he needed the rod, he needed a thorn in the flesh, to prevent pride; witness the doubling of those words in one verse, 'lest I should be exalted above measure, lest I should be exalted above measure,' 2Co 12:7-9. If Paul had not been buffeted, who knows how highly he might have been exalted in his own conceit? Prudent physicians do often give their patients physic, to prevent diseases; and so doth the physician of souls by his dearest servants, Job 40:4-5, Hos 2:6-7: Job 33:17, Job 33:19, 'He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.' Afflictions are the Lord's drawing-plasters, by which he draws out the core of pride, earthliness, self-love, covetousness, &c. Pride was one of man's first sins, and is still the root and source of all other sins. Now, to prevent it, God many times chastens man with pain, yea, with strong pain, upon his

bed: Job 34:31-32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' The burnt child dreads the fire. Sin is but a bitter sweet; it is an evil worse than hell itself. Look, as salt brine preserves things from putrefying, and as salt marshes keep the sheep from rotting, so sanctified rods, sanctified afflictions, preserves and keeps the people of God from sinning. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The rod is to purge out that vanity and folly that is bound up in the heart of the child: Pro 22:15, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' The rod is an ordinance, as well as the word; and such parents that use it as an ordinance, praying and weeping over it, shall find it effectual for the chasing away of evil out of their children's heart. Eli and David were two very choice men, and yet, by their fondness on one hand, and neglect of this ordinance on the other hand, they ruined their sons; and whether they did not undo their souls, I shall not at this time stand to inquire. When Moses cast away his rod, it became a serpent, Exo 4:3; and so, when parents cast away the rod of correction, it is ten to one but that their children become the brood of the serpent: Pro 13:24, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.' Not only the care, but also the cure of the child, so far as the rod will reach, lies upon the hands of the parent.

Now afflictions are like a rod in this respect also, for, as they are sanctified, they cleanse and purge away the dross, the filth, and the scum of the daughter of Zion: Isa 1:25, 'And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin;' Isa 27:9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin;' Dan 11:35, 'And some of them of understanding shall fall' (that is, 'into great afflictions'), 'to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end.' All the harm the fire did the three children, or rather the three champions, was to burn off their cords, Dan 3:23-24. Our lusts are cords of vanity, but the fire of affliction shall burn them up: Zec 13:9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' Sharp afflictions are a fire to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine; they are a potion, to carry away ill humours; they are cold frosts, to destroy the vermin; they are a tempestuous sea, to purge the wine from its lees; they are like the north wind, that drieth up the vapours, that purgeth the blood, and quickens the spirits; they are a sharp corrosive, to eat out the dead flesh. Afflictions are compared to baptizing and washing, that takes away the filth of the soul, as water doth the filth of the body, Mat 10:38-39. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots that be in his people's hearts.

[5.] Fifthly, The rod serves to improve that good that is in the child: Pro 29:15, 'The rod and reproof giveth wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.' So afflictions they serve to improve our graces: Heb 12:10, 'For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness'; that is, that we might more and more be partakers of his holiness. Heb 12:11, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.' Hence it is that the saints glory in tribulation: Rom 5:3-4, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' Grace always thrives most when saints are under the rod. When Christians are under the rod, then their graces do not only bud, but

blossom and bring forth fruit, as Aaron's rod did, Num 17:8. The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God beats and bruises his links, to make them burn the brighter; he bruises his spices, to make them send forth the greater aromatical savour.

Bernard compares afflictions to the tease, which, though it be sharp and scratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. The Jews were always best when they were in an afflicted condition. Well waters arising from deep springs are hotter in the winter than they are in the summer. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights. Vines grow the better for bleeding, and gold looks the better for scouring. Juniper smells sweetest when in the fire; camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. O sirs! this is a real and a rare truth, but seldom thought on, viz. that God will sometimes more carry on the growth and improvement of grace by a cross, by an affliction, than by an ordinance, Jas 1:3-4, Jas 4:8-9. Afflictions ripen the saint's graces, 2Co 1:5. First or last, God will make every rod, yea, every twig in every rod, to be an ordinance to every afflicted saint. By afflictions, God many times revives, quickens, and recovers the decayed graces of his people. By afflictions, God many times inflames that love that is cold, and he strengthens that faith that is failing, and he puts life into those hopes that are languishing, and new spirits into those joys and comforts that are withering and dying. Musk, say some, when it hath lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink amongst filth, it recovers its sweetness again. So doth smart afflictions recover and revive our decayed graces.

I have read a story of a sexton, that went into the church at night to rob a woman who had been buried the day before with a gold ring upon her finger, according to her desire. Now, when he had opened the grave and coffin, and loosed the sheet, he fell a-rubbing and chafing her finger to get off the gold ring; and with rubbing and chafing of it, her spirits returned, she having been but in a swoon before, and she revived, and lived many years after. Smart afflictions are but the rubbing and chafing of our graces. The smarting rod abaseth the loveliness of the world, that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, that might incite us to vanity and folly; and it abets the spirit in his quarrel to the two former: all which tend much to the recovering and reviving of decayed graces. But,

[6.] The sixth end to which the rod serves, and that is, To try the child, to make a discovery of the spirit of the child. Some parents never see so much of the badness of the spirits of their children as they do when they bring them under the rod; and other parents never see so much of the goodness of the spirits of their children as they do when they chastise them with the rod. It is so here. When God afflicts some, oh the pride! the stoutness! the crossness! the hardness! the peevishness and stubbornness of spirit, that they discover! Isa 1:5; Jer 5:3; Exo 5:2; Jer 44:15-19. When he afflicts others, oh the murmuring! the roaring! the complaining! the howling! the fretting! the vexing! and the quarrelling spirit that they discover! Amo 4:6-13; Num 14:27, Num 14:29, Num 14:36; Deu 1:27; Isa 58:3-4, Isa 59:11; Hos 7:14-15; Jon 4:1-5, John 4:8-9. Sometimes when God afflicts his dearest people, oh what a spirit of faith! what a spirit of prayer! what a spirit of love! what a spirit of patience! what a spirit of meekness! what a spirit of humbleness! what a spirit of submissiveness do they discover! Job 13:15; 2 Chron. 1-6, 12; Isa 26:16-17; Hos 5:14-15; Job 1:20-22; Lev 10:1-3; 1Sa 3:18; 2Ki 20:16-19. And at other times, when God afflicts his poor people, oh what a spirit of unbelief! what a spirit of slavish fear! what a spirit of impatience! what a spirit of displeasedness, &c., do they discover! Gen 15:2-3; Gen 12:13, Gen 12:19; Gen 20:2, Gen 20:5; Gen 26:7-11; Psalms 31:22; Psalm 116:11; 1Sa 21:10-15; Job 3:3-13; Jer 20:14-18. By smart

afflictions, God tries the graces of his people, and discovers what is in the spirits of his people, Deu 8:2; Psa 66:10-11; Rev 3:18; 1Pe 1:6-7. The fire tries the gold as well as the touchstone. Diseases try the art of the physician, and tempests try the skill of the pilot. Every smarting rod is a touchstone, both to try our graces and to discover our spirits. Prudent fathers will sometimes cross their children, to try to discover the dispositions of their children, Heb 12:5-21. And so doth the Father of spirits deal sometimes with his children. The manner of the Psylli, which are a kind of people of that temper and constitution that no venom will hurt them, is this, if they suspect any child to be none of their own, they set an adder upon it to sting it; and if it cry, and the flesh swell, they cast it away as a spurious issue; but if it do not quatch² nor cry, nor is never the worse for it, then they account it for their own, and make very much of it. The application is easy. But,

[7.] The seventh and last end of the rod, Is to prepare and fit the chastised for greater services, favours, and mercies. Many a child and many a servant had never been so fit for eminent services as they are, had they not been under a smarting rod. It is very usual with God to cast them into very great afflictions, and to lay them under grievous smarting rods, that so he may prepare and fit them for some high and eminent services in this world. Joseph had never been so fit to be governor of Egypt, and to preserve the visible church of God alive in the world, if he had not been sold into Egypt, Gen 41:40-44; if his feet had not been hurt in the stocks, and if the irons had not entered into his soul, Gen 45:7-8. Nor Moses had never been so fit to be a leader and a deliverer of Israel as he was, if he had not been banished forty years in the wilderness before, Exo 2:15. Nor David's crown had never sat so well, nor so close, nor so long on his head as it did, had he not for some years before been hunted as a partridge in the wilderness, 1Sa 26:20. Nor the three children, or rather the three champions, would never have been fit for so high a rule, had they not been first cast into the fiery furnace, Dan 3:29-30. Nor Daniel, for that exceeding high honour, and glory, and greatness to which he was exalted, had he not been first cast among the lions, Dan 6:25, et seq. And so had Esther never been a poor captive maid, she had never been a queen, and so had never been instrumental in the preservation of the church of God in her day. Heman was one of the best and wisest men in the world in his day, 1Ki 4:31; and this God brought him to by training of him up in the school of affliction, as you may evidently see in that Psa 88:1-18. That of the apostle in 2Co 1:4, deserves to be written in letters of gold, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' Mark that word able. Oh, it is one of the hardest and noblest works in all Christianity to be able divinely to comfort others that are in troubles; and yet by sufferings God fits and prepares his people for this noble and difficult service.

Luther was of opinion that to comfort a distressed conscience was a greater work than to raise the dead to life. And yet by inward and outward sufferings, God fits his people for this great work. And thus you see in what respects afflictions are compared to a rod.

II. The second thing I am to do is to shew you those special lessons that you are to learn by the rod, or if you please, by the raging pestilence.

Now they are these

(1.) The first lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, to know what the particular message or errand is which the rod hath to deliver to you in the day of your distress and trouble. Your first work is to do as David did, in that 2Sa 21:1. He humbly inquires of the Lord

to know the particular reason why he sent a famine amongst them. You must do as Job doth: Job 10:2, 'Shew me, O Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me.' Job would fain know the reason of the controversy between God and him. One well observes on the text, 'that Job was very desirous to know whether God did afflict him for sin or for trial, not to satisfy his curiosity, but his conscience.' Elihu's counsel to Job must here take place: Job 34:31-32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' Job it seems was yet in the dark as to the particular cause or reason why the Lord had so grievously afflicted him; and therefore he is very importunate with God that he would graciously point out the sin for which he had so sorely smitten him. Thy proceedings, saith Job, to my understanding seem to be very strange and severe. I am more afflicted than others, and yet I do not know wherein I have sinned more than others; why I should be condemned and cast without a trial; why thou art so hot against me, and why thou hast multiplied so many unheard of miseries against me; and why thou hast so greatly subjected me to the saddest and sourest censures of others, as if I were the worst of sinners and the basest of hypocrites, I know not; and therefore, O Lord! I humbly desire that thou wouldst not deal with me according to thy absolute power, but let me know the true grounds and causes of all my heavy sorrows and miseries. And so he is at it again, in that Job 13:23, 'How many are mine iniquities and sins! make me to know my transgression and my sin.' My plagues, O Lord! are unparalleled; if my sins are such, let me know it, saith Job. My calamities transcend the calamities of all others; if my sins do so, let them not be hid from mine eyes, O Lord! My load, O Lord! is heavier than others; and therefore if my sins are greater than others, let me see them, let me understand them. Infirmities and weaknesses, I confess, do hang upon me; they are inherent in me, and they do too often issue and flow from me; but as for enormities or wickednesses, neither my censorious friends, nor yet my worst enemies, no, nor yet my own conscience, will ever be able to make any just or clear proof against me. O Lord! I have many spots upon me, but if there be any upon me that are not the spots of thy people, let me see them, let me know them, that I may abhor myself, and justify thee, and that I may say my friends are righteous in their censures, and I have done wickedly before the Lord. Sometimes afflictions are sent only for trial and instruction, and not at all for sin. This is evident in the case of Job, and in the case of the blind man, whose afflictions, though they were very great and grievous, yet were they not for sin but for trial, John 9:1, et seq.

Now, though this be true, yet it must be granted that commonly sin is the meritorious cause, the procuring cause, of all afflictions, Mic 1:5-10, Amo 2:4-6. Sin ordinarily is the original foundation of all our troubles and chastisements: Psa 89:30-32, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes;' Jer 2:19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts;' Amo 3:2, 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.'

Quest. But what course must we take? what means must we use, to find out that particular sin, for which God corrects us, or which hath brought the rod upon us?

Ans. 1. Observe what that sin is, that thy conscience doth most upbraid thee with, and check thee for. Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom, Gen 42:21, Gen 50:15-17. Now, observe what

that particular sin is, that conscience doth most smartly and roundly correct and chastise thee for; for it is ten to one but that is the sin that hath brought the rod upon thee. The voice of conscience, and the voice of the rod, do usually echo one to another. It is very rare to find a difference between the language of conscience and the language of the rod. Conscience is God's deputy, God's spy, God's notary, God's viceroy; and therefore do not despise the voice of conscience, do not turn off conscience, as Felix turned off Paul, Acts 24:25. If the secret cry of conscience be, Oh, this is for thy pride, or this is for thy passion, or this is for thy self-love, or this is for thy earthliness, or this is for thy carnalness, or this is for thy hypocrisy, or this is for thy formality, &c., it will be thy wisdom to subscribe to the secret cry of conscience. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, Seriously observe what that sin is that thy soul would have spared above all, that thy soul is most unwilling to leave, and bid an everlasting farewell to. Observe what thy right hand sin, thy bosom sin, thy constitution sin, thy complexion sin, is, for it is a hundred to one but that God hath sent the rod for the subduing of that very sin, Mic 6:6-7, Est 5:13. Commonly by the rod God points at the mortifying of that particular sin to which the heart stands most strongly inclined. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, Observe what that sin is, that doth most maim and mar thy confidence and boldness in all thy addresses and approaches to God, 1Jn 3:20-21; for doubtless that is the sin that God would subdue and bring under by the rod. But,

Ans. 4. Fourthly, Observe what the affliction, what the pain, what the disease, what the punishment is, that you are under, for sometimes a person may run and read his sin in his very punishment: Jdg 1:7, 'Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me.' Now shall Adonibezek, a heathen prince, run and read his sin in his punishment; and shall not a Christian much more? Shall not grace do as much as blind nature? Look, as a man may sometimes guess at the disease of the patient by the prudent observing of the physician's bill; so may he sometimes guess at the particular sin that God would have destroyed by the punishment that is inflicted. God usually, first or last, meets with men, and pays them home in their own coin. Is the judgment shame? Then the sin was pride, Hos 2:8-9. Is the judgment want, famine? Then the sin was abuse of abundance. Is the judgment oppression? Then the sin was unmercifulness. Is the judgment loss of children? Then the sin was inordinate love to them. Eli and David were too indulgent to their children; and therefore they were punished in them and by them. Is the judgment sickness or want of health? Then the sin was either the abuse of health, or the non-improvement of health. Is the judgment a famine of the word? Then the sin was slighting and loathing of the word. Is the judgment war? Then the sin was abuse of peace. Is the judgment a blind, carnal, profane, formal, drunken, superstitious clergy? Then the sin hath been slighting, neglecting, undervaluing, and despising an able, knowing, zealous, spiritual, and powerful ministry. Is the judgment a worshipping of God in a lazy, dry, dull, dead, formal, customary way, according to the inventions and traditions of the elders? Then the sin hath been men's not worshipping of God in spirit and in truth, and with that zeal, spirit, life, warmth, and fervency as he requires, John 4:23-24, Rom 12:11. Is the judgment the breaking of the communion of God's people, and scattering of them into holes and corners, as it was in Ahab's, and Jezebel's, and Gideon's days? Jdg 6:1-5. Then doubtless the sin hath been a slighting, undervaluing, neglecting, or forsaking of Christian communion, or else a non-improvement of Christian communion. But,

Ans. 5. Fifthly, Observe whether you have not been very faulty towards others in the very things you now suffer yourselves. Do others wrong you in your names, estates, relations, callings, dealings, &c.? Lay your hands upon your hearts, and ask them whether you have never wronged others as others now wrong you, Isa 33:1, Rev 13:10, Jas 2:10, Gen 50:15-17. Do others rashly judge you, and bitterly censure you, and falsely accuse you, and unjustly condemn you? If they do, reflect upon your former carriages towards others; and if you must plead guilty, throw the first stone at yourselves, and say with Adonibezek, 'As I have done, so God hath requited me.' Let every lash of God upon you put you in mind of your deportment towards others, when God hath given them gall and wormwood to drink, Mat 7:1-2. But,

Ans. 6. Sixthly, Observe what that sin is that thou canst not endure should be touched, or reproved, or spoken against, Pro 1:25, Pro 1:30, Pro 12:1, Pro 17:10, Pro 9:8, Pro 15:12. Ah! how proud, how impatient, how passionate, how mad are many, when you come to touch their right-eye sin. When you come to touch them in the tender part, oh! then they fume, and swell, and rage, and take on like men and women out of their wits, as you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who were so angry and mad with Christ that they sought his death; and all because he was still a-pointing at the toads in their bosoms, viz. pride, vain-glory, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. Oh! they could not endure that the sharp razor of reproof should come near their sorest part. Certainly that Christian must be under a very high distemper, that cannot but smite a righteous man with reproach for smiting him with a reproof. Though gracious reproofs are choice physic, yet few stomachs can tell how to bear them. Most Christians are for lenitives, few are for corrosives. David was glad of a healing reproof, but there are but few Davids alive, Psa 141:5. Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion? And yet, ah! how angry are many Christians when they come to fall under holy reproofs, especially if there be any of that sharpness and cuttingness in them that the apostle exhorts to in that Tit 1:13. Now, doubtless, the voice of the rod is this, Soul! take heed of that sin that thou canst not endure should be touched. Labour mightily with God to get that particular sin mortified that thou canst not endure should be reproved. But,

Ans. 7. Seventhly, Observe what sin that is that doth most hinder thee from closing with the precious promises, and from living upon precious promises, and from improving of precious promises, and from treasuring up of precious promises, and from, appropriating of precious promises to thine own soul, Psa 50:16-7. And it is very probable that, for the subduing of that sin, the Lord hath visited thee with his fatherly rod. But,

Ans. 8. Eighthly, Observe what sin that is that did most sting and terrify thee in an evil day, as when thou hast been under some loathsome disease or tormenting pain, Gen 42:21; be it stone, gout, or burning fever, or when thou hast been in some imminent danger, or when thou hast had a sentence of death upon thee, and there hath been but a short step between thee and eternity. Doubtless that sin, which hath lain as a heavy load upon thy conscience in the days of thy former distress, that is the sin that God would have conquered and brought under by his present rod. But,

Ans. 9. Ninthly, Observe what particular sin that is that doth most hinder thee in holy duties and services, and that doth most interrupt thee in thy communion with God. Inquire what particular sin that is that thy heart is most apt to run after when thou art on the mount of holy duties, Eze 33:31. Whilst the disciples were healing diseases and casting devils out of other men's bodies, the proud white devil was stirring in their own souls, as is evident by that gentle rebuke that our Saviour

gives them in Luk 10:20, 'In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' There is no duty that a Christian performs but one white devil or another, one lust or another, will be still dogging and following of him to that duty. There is no public duty, there is no family duty, there is no private duty that a Christian performs, but either that white devil pride, or that white devil hypocrisy, or that white devil vainglory, or else some one or another white devil will follow the soul, hard at heel to it. Now, mark what that particular sin is that most haunts thy soul when thou art in religious duties and services; and it may be that is the very sin that God would have subdued by the rod. But,

Ans. 10. Tenthly, Observe what sin that is that the rest of your corruptions are most serviceable to, and that they most attend upon. Mark what sin that is that all other sins do most bow the knee to. Mark that sin that hath a commanding power over all other sins, that saith to one Go and he goeth, and to another Come and he cometh. Mark what sin that is that is still uppermost, and that all other sins do most minister to. You know when a man hath a great wound in his body, all the ill humours will run thither. Observe what sin that is that all the ill humours of the soul do most run after; for it is very likely that that is the very sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Ans. 11. Eleventhly, Observe what that sin is that your hearts are most apt to hide and cloak, and cover over with the most specious and fair pretences. Saul had a covetous desire, and he covers it over with fair pretences, as that the people would have it so, and that what was spared was for sacrifice, 1Sa 15:20-21. Cæsar's favour was the great darling in Pilate's eyes, but he covers all over with washing his hands, Mat 27:24. The scribes and pharisees were exceeding covetous, but their long prayers, as a cloak, must cover all, Mat 23:1-39. Judas also was a man of the same mind and mettle with them: 'What need this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein,' Mat 26:8-9; John 12:5-6. Judas, as Tertullian thinks, was pretty honest till he carried the bag; but no sooner was he in office, but he puts conscience out of office, but all must be covered over with a cloak of charity. Observe what sin that is that you are most apt to cast the silk or the satin mantle over; and it is ten to one but that is the sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Ans. 12. Twelfthly and lastly, Observe what that sin is that thou art most easily overcome by. Delilah could easily overcome Samson, when all the world besides could make no conquest upon him. The apostle bids us 'lay aside the sin that doth so easily beset us,' Heb 12:1. There are some sins that find more easy approaches to us, and more easy acceptance with us, and accordingly they do more easily captivate us. Observe what that sin is that you do most readily and easily open the door to; and doubtless that is the sin that God would have mortified and subdued by the rod.

(2.) The second lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, deeply to judge yourselves and greatly to humble your souls, for that sin or sins that hath brought the rod upon you. Thus David did in that 2Sa 24:10, 2Sa 24:17. When you have found out the Achan that hath brought the rod upon you, stone him to death; and lie humble and low under the rod, and then the Almighty will be graciously pacified and sweetly reconciled unto you.

(3.) The third lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, to view the rod on every side. If there be briars on one side of the rod, there is rosemary on the other side of the

rod; if there be wormwood and gall at one end of the rod, there is sweet honey at the other end of the rod, as there was at the top of Jonathan's rod, 1Sa 14:43.

If we should come into a painter's or a limner's shop, and see a picture half drawn, it might trouble us and startle us, if it did not fright us and amaze us; but yet, when the picture is perfected, completed, and finished, it may prove a very beauteous, lovely, taking piece. The application is easy. Look, as every judgment, every affliction, every rod, hath its black, dark side, so every judgment, every affliction, hath its bright side too. Now, it is the wisdom of a Christian to look on the bright side of the rod, the cloud, as well as it is his work to look on the dark side of the rod, the cloud. When a Christian looks upon the dark side of the cloud, he should be humbled and abased; but when he looks upon the bright side of the cloud, he should be comforted and cheered, Jas 5:11. He that is still a-looking on the briary side of the rod, will be very apt to fret and faint under the rod; but he that looks on the rosemary side of the rod, as well as the briary side of the rod, he will bear up patiently, gallantly, and cheerfully under the rod. The voice of the rod is, Look on both sides, look on both sides. But,

(4.) The fourth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, to look on the rod, not abstractly from the hand that holds it, but conjunctively with the hand that holds it. Thus Hezekiah did, 2Ki 20:16-19; thus Aaron did, Lev 10:1-3; thus Eli did, 1Sa 3:11-19; thus David did, Psa 39:9; thus Job did, Job 1:20-22; yea, and thus Jesus did, John 18:11, 'Shall I not drink the cup that my Father hath given me to drink?' Though the cup was a bitter cup, a bloody cup, yet seeing it was put into his hand by his Father, he drinks it off, with a 'Father, I thank thee.' The rod in itself sounds nothing but smart and blood to the child; but the rod in the hand of a Father sounds nothing but love, kindness, and sweetness: Rev 3:19, 'Whom he loves, he chastens.' You should never look upon the rod but as it is in the hand of your heavenly Father, and then you will rather kiss it than murmur under it. But,

(5.) The fifth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is to cleave and cling close to God under the rod. Oh how doth the child cling and hang upon his father when he takes up the rod. Let such a child-like spirit be found in you, when the Father of spirits takes up the rod. When the rod was upon David's back, oh how doth he cleave to God, even as the wife cleaves to her husband; for so much the Hebrew word dabak in that Psa 63:8 imports. So when Job was under the rod, oh how doth he cling about God! Job 13:15, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' Job will hang upon a killing God; so the church in that Psa 80:15-18, &c.; so those hundred forty and four thousand that had their fathers' names written in their foreheads, Rev 14:1-6. O friends! you never shew so much child-like love, nor so much child-like ingenuity, nor so much child-like integrity, as you do shew when, under the smarting rod, you are found clinging about the Lord, and hanging upon the Lord by an exercise of grace. When Antisthenes held up his staff, as if he intended to beat one of his scholars out of his school, the scholar told him 'that he might strike him if he pleased, but he should never find a staff of so hard wood as should ever be able to beat him from him.'² When no staff, no rod, no affliction, can drive us from Christ, it is a sure argument that we have profited much in the school of Christ. But,

(6.) The sixth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to prepare to meet the Lord whilst the rod is in his hand: Amo 4:12, 'Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.' Now there is a twofold

preparation.

[1.] The first is a negative preparation: and this lies in taking heed of sinning against light and conscience; for those sins that are against a clear light and an awakened conscience are most wounding, wasting, terrifying, and damning.

[2.] Secondly, There is a positive preparation: and that consists in repentance and returning to the Lord, and in abasing and humbling yourselves before the Almighty, 2Ch 7:14. As there is no running from God, so there is no contending with God; for what is the chaff to the whirlwind, or the stubble to a consuming fire? and therefore the voice of the rod is, Prepare to meet the Lord in a way of faith and repentance; prepare to meet the Lord in an exercise of grace; prepare to meet the Lord with prayers, and tears, and strong cries. But,

(7.) The seventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to acknowledge God's sovereign power and authority over the rod, to bow it, or break it, or burn it, or take it off, or lay it more or less on as he pleaseth, Mic 6:13, Deu 28:58-61. All diseases and sicknesses are under the command of God; they are all his sergeants, his servants, to execute his pleasure. That Mat 8:5 is an observable text. Christ tells the centurion that he would come and heal his servant; the centurion tells him that he was not worthy that he should come under his roof; only, if he would but speak the word, his servant should be healed: 'For,' saith he, Mat 8:9, 'I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it. Now when Jesus heard this, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,' ver. 10. But wherein did the greatness of the centurion's faith appear? Why, in this very acknowledgment, that all diseases were to Christ as servants, and that they were as much under the command of Jesus Christ, as any servant under heaven is under the command of his master. When Christ bids them go and afflict such a man, they go; and torment such a man, they go; and kill such a man, they go; and so, when he calls them off, they come off at his call. Dear friends, it is a very great point of faith to believe these five things.

[1.] First, That God is the author of all the diseases, maladies, and sicknesses that be in the world, and that he sets them on and calls them off at his own good will and pleasure: Amo 3:6, 'Is there any evil in the city, and hath not the Lord done?' He speaks of the evil of punishment, and not of the evil of sin. It was a mad principle among the Manichees, who referred all calamities to the devil for their author, as if there could be evil in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it.

[2.] Secondly, It is a great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God in respect of places. God sent diseases of all sorts into Egypt, but he forbade them Goshen, Exo 8:20-23, Exo 9:23-26. Ponder seriously upon these scriptures. God's shooting his arrows into one town and not into another, into one city and not into another, into one kingdom and not into another, into one family and not into another, doth sufficiently evidence that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by the Holy One of Israel in respect of places.

[3.] Thirdly, It is a very great point of faith to believe that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of persons. That they are so, is evident in that Psa 91:3-8, Isa 65:12. But who lives in the faith of this truth? Sometimes in the same house one is infected, and the other is not; sometimes in the same bed the one is smitten, and the other is not; sometimes at the same table

the one is taken away, and the other is left, &c.; and this doth roundly evidence and witness that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of persons as well as in respect of places. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is a great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God in respect of the degrees to which they shall arise. That God that sets bounds to the raging sea, and that saith unto it, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther,' that God sets bounds to all raging diseases and sicknesses, and saith unto them, Thus far you shall go, and no farther. He sets bounds to the fever; he saith to it, Go and scorch and burn up such a body so much, and no more; and to the dropsy, Go and drown such a body so much, and no more; and to the raging pestilence, Go and weaken such a body so much, and no more; and to the stone, Go and torment such a body so much, and no more. But,

[5.] Fifthly, It is a very great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God as to their continuance. God saith to one disease, Go, hang upon such a man so many years; to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few years; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a year; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few months; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few weeks; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few days; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few hours, &c.; and accordingly it cometh to pass. But,

(8.) The eighth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence, is, to get more weaned and more mortified affections to all worldly comforts, contentments, and enjoyments. A man never comes to experience so much of the emptiness, the nothingness, the uselessness, the vanity, the mutability, the impotency, the insufficiency, and the uncertainty of all worldly comforts and enjoyments, as when he comes to fall under the rod. The constant cry of the rod is, Be dead to the profits, pleasures, honours, and applauses of the world; be dead to relations, be dead to friends, be dead to everything below a living Jesus. But,

(9.) The ninth lesson that you are to learn by the rod or by the raging pestilence is, to get assurance of greater and better things than any this world doth afford, Heb 10:33-34. That saying is as true as it is old, viz., that the assurance of an eternal life is the life of this temporal life. But having spoke so much of this particular in my treatise on assurance, which is now in your hands, I shall satisfy myself with this hint at present. But,

(10.) The tenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, not to despise the rod: Heb 12:5, 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.' The Greek word **■**λιγώρει that is translated despise, signifies the littling of a thing. Oh! do not little the rod, do not lessen it, do not slight it, do not make a tush at it, do not set light by it, do not say, I will not regard it. He that doth, shews himself rather to be a Roman than a Christian. Now, because there is such a desperate aptness and proneness in many to make light of the rod, it will be your wisdom seriously to lay to heart these four particulars:

[1.] First, That it is an immediate hand of God, Amo 3:6, Deu 28:58-61, and therefore not to be despised. It is a sad and sinful thing to despise the mediate hand of God; but it is more sad and sinful to despise the immediate hand of God. But,

[2.] Secondly, It is a mighty hand of God: 1Pe 5:6, 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' Certainly that heart must be mightily wicked that dares despise the mighty hand of God, Amo 4:10, Ezr 7:27-28.

[3.] Thirdly, It is an angry hand of God, and therefore do not despise it: Psa 90:7, 'For we are consumed by thy anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled;' Psa 90:11, 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.' Shall devils tremble under his angry hand? yea, shall they roar as the sea under his wrathful hand, as that Greek word φροσσοῦσι in that Jas 2:19, and will you presume to despise his angry hand? The Lord forbid, Num 16:46, Ezr 8:22-23, Deu 29:22-25. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Consider that it is a holy hand, it is a just and righteous hand, it is a faithful hand of God; and therefore do not despise it; Jer 29:17-19, Lev 26:25, Jer 14:12-16: Psa 119:75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, or righteousness, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' Psa 119:137, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments.' Certainly none but unholy persons will be so impudent as to despise God's holy hand. Well,

(11.) The eleventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, not to be discouraged under the rod, Jer 27:13, 2Sa 24:10, 2Sa 24:17: Heb 12:5, 'Nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.'

First, It is a rod in a Father's hand; and therefore do not faint under it.

Secondly, God will do much good by the rod, and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Thirdly, You could not have been without the rod; and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Fourthly, The rod that is now upon [you] is not according to the greatness of God's anger, nor according to the greatness of his power, nor according to the strictness of his justice, nor according to the demerits of your sins, nor according to the malicious desires of Satan, nor according to the designs, plots, and contrivances of wicked and unreasonable men, nor according to the extensiveness of your fears,—for you have feared worse things than you feel,—nor according to that rod that hath been upon the primitive saints, nor according to that rod that many thousands of the precious sons and daughters of Sion are under in other parts of the world; and therefore do not faint under the rod, do not be discouraged under the rod.

Fifthly, by fainting under the rod, you will gratify Satan, reproach religion, render yourselves unserviceable, and make work for future repentance; and therefore do not faint under the rod. But,

(12.) The twelfth lesson that you are to learn under the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, humbly to kiss the rod, and patiently and quietly to lie under the rod, till the Lord shall either give you a gracious or a glorious deliverance from it. What is the rod, and what is the raging pestilence, to the horrors of conscience, and to the flames of hell, or to an everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? 2Th 1:8-9. And therefore put your mouths in the dust, and be silent before the Lord. He that hath deserved a hanging, if he escape with a whipping, hath no cause to murmur or complain; and we that have deserved a damning, have little cause to murmur or complain of a whipping, yea, though it should be with a pestilential rod. But,

(13.) The thirteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, highly, fully, freely, and signally to justify the Lord, and to think well of the Lord, and to speak well of the Lord under the rod. To that purpose, consult these scriptures, Psa 119:75, Psa 119:137; Neh 9:33; Eze 9:13; Lam 1:3, Lam 1:5, Lam 1:7-8, Lam 1:10; Lam 4:15, Lam 4:18; Dan 9:12, Dan 9:14; 2Ki 20:16-19; Jer 12:1-2; Psa 119:17-22; Psa 22:1-3; Psa 97:2. But,

(14.) The fourteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, personal reformation. When the rod smarts, and the pestilence rageth, God expects that every man should smite upon his thigh, and turn from the evil of his doings: 2Ch 7:13-14, 'If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land;' that is, 'I will remove the judgments that are upon the land, and I will confer upon my reforming people all those favours and blessings that they stand in need of.' Consult these scriptures, Eze 10:14, Eze 10:19; 2Ch 30:8-9; and 2Ch 29:8, 2Ch 29:10, 2Ch 29:15-16. But,

(15.) The fifteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to make God your habitation, your shelter, your refuge. Ponder seriously upon those scriptures, Psa 91:2, Psa 91:9-10; Psa 90:1; Psa 71:3; Psa 57:1. They dwell most safely, most securely, most nobly, who dwell in God, who live under the shadow of the Almighty, and who every day lodge their souls in the bosom of eternal loves. But,

(16.) The sixteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or the raging pestilence, is, to set up God as the great object of your fear: Psa 119:119-120; Isa 8:7-8, Isa 8:13-14, compared. When the judgments of God are either threatened or executed, feared or felt, it highly concerns us to lift up God as the main object of our fear. We should fear the hand that lays on the rod, more than the rod itself, Job 13:11, Jer 36:24. When God takes up the rod, when he draws his sword, and when he shoots his pestilential arrows amongst us, oh how highly doth it concern us to fear before him with a child-like fear, with a reverential fear, with a fear that fortifies the heart against sin, and with a fear that fits the soul for duty, and that draws, yea, drives the soul to duty. But,

(17.) The seventeenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to expect God's singular presence with you, and his admirable protection over you. Consult these scriptures, Isa 43:2; Dan 3:24-25; Gen 39:22-23; Psa 23:4-5; Psa 81:1-16; Isa 63:9; Isa 26:20-21; Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6. God is above his people and beneath them, Deu 33:25-27. He is under them and over them, Song of Solomon 2:6. He is before them and behind them, Isa 52:12, and Isa 58:8. He is on the right hand of his people, and he is on the left hand of his people, Psa 16:8, Psa 121:5, Psa 118:15-16; Exo 14:22, Exo 14:29. God is round about his people, Psa 34:7, Psa 125:2. And God is in the midst of his people, Zec 2:5; Psa 46:5, Psa 12:6. Oh! the safety, the security of the poor people of God! for God is above his people and beneath them, he is under them and over them, he is before them and behind them, he is in the front and in the rear, and he is round about them and in the midst of them. But,

(18.) The eighteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to live every day in a fresh, choice, and frequent exercise of grace. Consult these scriptures, Psa 91:2-4; Jer 39:17-18; Mic 7:7-9; Psa 40:1-2; Hab 2:1-4; Jer 30:21. That man that lives daily in an exercise

of grace, that man lives every day in heaven on this side heaven, whatever affliction or judgment he is under.

(19.) The nineteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to quicken up your hearts to seek the Lord by extraordinary ways and means, viz., by fasting and prayer. Consult these scriptures, Num 16:46, seq.; Psa 106:23, Psa 106:29-30; Isa 22:2-5, Isa 22:12-13; Jon 3:5, seq.; 2Ch 12:2-7; 1Ki 21:21, seq.; Joe 2:12-17. But,

(20.) The twentieth, and so the last, lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to prepare for death; it is to be in actual readiness to die. Ah, friends! every ache, every pain, every disease, is one of death's warning pieces. There is not a headache, not a toothache, not a gripe, not a grief, not a fall, not a wrench, not a plague-sore, but is a divine warning to man to prepare to die. It is a solemn work to die; and therefore we had need prepare to die. It is a work that is to be done but once; and therefore we had need prepare to do that work well that is to be done but once. In this world we hear often, and pray often, and read often, and meditate often, and eat often, and drink often, and that which is worst, we sin often; but we must die but once, Job 14:14, Heb 9:27. Death will try all our graces, and all our experiences, and all our evidences, and all our comforts, and all our attainments, and all our enjoyments; and therefore we had need to prepare to die. Though there is nothing more certain than death, yet there is nothing more uncertain than, (1.) the time when we shall die; (2.) the place where we shall die; and, (3.) the manner how we shall die: as whether we shall die a sudden death, or a lingering death, or a violent death; or whether we shall fall by the sword abroad, or by famine or pestilence at home, or whether we shall fall by this disease or that; and therefore we had need be always in an actual readiness to die. No man shall die the sooner, but much the easier and the better, for preparing to die; and therefore let us always have our loins girt and our lamps burning. As death leaves us, so judgment will find us; and therefore we have very great cause to secure our interest in Christ, a changed nature, and a pardon in our bosoms, that so we might have nothing to do but to die. Except we prepare to die, all other preparations will do us no good. In a word, death is a change, a great change; it is the last change till the resurrection; it is lasting, yea, an everlasting change; for it puts a man into an eternal condition of happiness or misery; it is an universal change; all persons must pass under this flaming sword. That statute law, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,' will sooner or later take hold on all mortals, Gen 3:18; and therefore it highly concerns us to prepare for death. And thus I have shewn you these lessons that you are to learn by the rod. The Lord grant that your souls may fall under those fresh, those choice, those full, and those constant influences and communications of his Holy Spirit, as may enable you to take out those twenty lessons that I have laid open before you. I confess the epistle is large, but do but consider your own conditions, and the present dispensations under which we are cast, and then I suppose you will not call it by the name of a tedious epistle.

Dear friends, the following discourse on closet prayer I heartily recommend to your serious perusal. I have many reasons to hope, that when you have once read it over, you will be more in love with closet prayer than ever, and that you will set a higher price upon closet prayer than ever, and that you will make a better and fuller improvement of closet prayer than ever yet you have done. Consider what I say in my epistle to the reader, and labour so to manage this little treatise, that now I put into your hands, that God may be glorified, your own souls edified, comforted, and encouraged in the ways of the Lord, and that you may be 'my crown and joy, in the great day of

our Lord Jesus,' 1Th 2:19-20. So wishing that 'the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush' may abide upon you and yours for ever, I take leave and rest, dear friend, your soul's servant in our dear Lord Jesus,

Thomas Brooks. TO THE READER

Christian Reader,—The epistle dedicatory being occasionally so large, I shall do little more than give thee the grounds and reasons of sending forth this little piece into the world, especially in such a day as this is. Now, my reasons are these:

1. First, Because God by his present dispensations calls more loudly for closet prayer now, than he hath done in those last twenty years that are now passed over our heads. See more of this in the 16th argument for closet prayer.

2. Secondly, Because I have several reasons to fear that many Christians do not clearly nor fully understand the necessity, excellency, and usefulness of this subject, and that many, oh that I could not say any, live in too great a neglect of this indispensable duty, and that more than a few, for want of light, err in the very practice of it.

3. Thirdly, For the refreshing, support, and encouragement of all those churches of Christ that walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, &c., especially that particular church to whom I stand related.

4. Fourthly, To preserve and keep up the power of religion and godliness both in men's houses, hearts, and lives. The power of religion and godliness lives, thrives, or dies, as closet prayer lives, thrives, or dies. Godliness never rises to a higher pitch than when men keep closest to their closets, &c.

5. Fifthly, Because closet prayer is a most sovereign remedy, a most precious antidote of God's own prescribing, against the plague that now rageth in the midst of us, 1Ki 8:37-39, &c.

6. Sixthly, Because every man is that really which he is secretly. Never tell me, how handsomely, how neatly, how bravely, this or that man acts his part before others; but tell me, if thou canst, how he acts his part before God in his closet; for the man is that certainly, that he is secretly. There are many that sweat upon the stage that are key-cold³ in their closets.

7. Seventhly, Though many worthies have done worthily upon all other parts of prayer, yet there are none either of a former or later date, that have fallen under my eye, that have written any treatise on this subject. I have not a little wondered that so many eminent writers should pass over this great and princely duty of closet-prayer, either with a few brief touches, or else in a very great silence. If several Bodies of Divinity are consulted, you will find that all they say clearly and distinctly as to closet-prayer, may be brought into a very narrow compass, if not into a nut-shell. I have also inquired of several old disciples, whether among all the thousand sermons that they have heard in their days, that ever they have heard one sermon on closet-prayer? and they have answered, No. I have also inquired of them, whether ever they had read any treatise on that subject? and they have answered, No. And truly this hath been no small encouragement to me, to make an offer of my mite; and if this small attempt of mine shall be so blessed, as to provoke others that have better heads, and hearts, and hands, than any I have, to do Christ and his people more service, in the handling of this choice point in a more copious way than what I have been

able to reach unto, I shall therein rejoice.

8. Eighthly, and lastly, That favour, that good acceptance and fair quarter that my other poor labours have found, not only in this nation, but in other countries also, hath put me upon putting pen to paper once more; and I hope that the good will of him that 'dwelt in the bush,' will rest upon this, as it hath to the glory of free grace rested upon my former endeavours. I could add other reasons, but let these suffice.

Good reader, when thou art in thy closet, pray hard for a poor, weak, worthless worm, that I may be found faithful and fruitful to the death, that so at last I may receive a crown of life. So wishing thee all happiness both in this lower and in that upper world, I rest, Thine in our dear Lord Jesus,

Thomas Brooks. THE PRIVY KEY OF HEAVEN; or, a discourse of closet prayer But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.—Mat 6:6.

These words of our Saviour are plain, and to be taken literally, and not allegorically, for he speaketh of shutting the door of the chamber. In this chapter there is a manifest opposition between the Pharisees praying in the synagogues and corners of the streets, and others praying in secret. In the text you have a positive precept for every Christian to pray alone: 'But thou, when thou prayest.' He saith not, when you pray, but thou, 'when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,' &c., as speaking not so much of a joint duty of many praying together, as of a duty which each person is to do alone. The command in the text sends us as well to the closet as to the church; and he is a hypocrite in grain that chooses the one and neglects the other; for thereby he tells the world he cares for neither, he makes conscience of neither. He that puts on a religious habit abroad to gain himself a great name among men, and at the same time lives like an atheist at home, shall at the last be uncased by God, and presented before all the world for a most egregious hypocrite.

Bellarmino and some others turn the text into an allegory. They say that in these words there are two allegories. First, the chamber door is the sense, 'shut the door,' that is, say they, thy sense, lest vain imaginations and worldly thoughts distract thy mind in praying. Secondly, the door, say they, is our mouth, 'shut thy door,' that is, thy lips, say they, and let thy prayer be like the prayer of Hannah, conceived in thy mind, but not uttered with thy mouth. It is usual with papists and other monkish men that lie in wait to deceive, to turn the blessed Scriptures into a nose of wax, under pretence of allegories and mysteries. Origen was a great admirer of allegories.² By the strength of his parts and wanton wit, he turned most of the Scriptures into allegories; and by the just judgment of God upon him, he foolishly understood and absurdly applied that Mat 19:12 literally, 'Some have made themselves chaste for the kingdom of heaven,' and sogelded himself. And indeed he might as well have plucked out one of his eyes upon the same account, because Christ saith, 'It is better to go to heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire,' Mat 18:9. In all ages heretics have commonly defended their heresies by translating of scriptures into allegories. The apostle speaks of such as, denying the resurrection of the body, turn all the testimonies of the resurrection into an allegory, meaning thereby only the spiritual resurrection of the soul from sin, of which sort was Hymeneus and Philetus, who destroyed the faith of some, saying 'the resurrection was past already,' 2Ti 2:17-18. And are there not many among us that turn the whole history of the Bible into an allegory, and that turn Christ, and sin, and death, and the soul, and hell, and heaven, and all into an allegory? Many have and many do miserably pervert the Scriptures by turning them

into vain and groundless allegories. Some wanton wits have expounded paradise to be the soul, man to be the mind, the woman to be the sense, the serpent to be delight, the tree of knowledge of good and evil to be wisdom, and the rest of the trees to be the virtues and endowments of the mind. O friends! it is dangerous to bring in allegories where the Scripture doth not clearly and plainly warrant them, and to take those words figuratively which should be taken properly. The word ταμιε^{ιον} that is in the text rendered closet, hath only three most usual significations amongst Greek authors. First, it may be taken for a secret chamber, or close and locked parlour; secondly, for a safe or cupboard to lay victuals in; thirdly, for a locked chest or cupboard wherein treasure usually is reserved. The best and most judicious interpreters that I have cast mine eye upon, both of a former and later date, do all expound my text of private prayer in retired places; and with them I close; and so the main doctrine that I shall gather from the words is this:

Doct. That closet prayer or private prayer is an indispensable duty, that Christ himself hath laid upon all that are not willing to lie under the woful brand of being hypocrites.

I beseech you seriously to lay to heart these five things:

1. First, If any prayer be a duty, then secret prayer must needs be a duty; for secret prayer is as much prayer as any other prayer is prayer; and secret prayer prepares and fits the soul for family prayer, and for public prayer. Secret prayer sweetly inclines and strongly disposes a Christian to all other religious duties and services. ergo,—But,
2. Secondly, If secret prayer be not an indispensable duty that lies upon thee, by what authority doth conscience so upbraid thee, and so accuse thee, and so condemn thee, and so terrify thee, as it often doth for the neglect of this duty? But,
3. Thirdly, Was it ever the way or method of God to promise again and again a reward, an open reward for that work or service which himself never commanded? Surely no. Now, to this duty of secret prayer, the Lord hath again and again promised an open reward, Mat 6:6, Mat 6:18. And therefore without all peradventure this is a duty incumbent upon all Christians.
4. Fourthly, Our Saviour in the text takes it for granted that every child of God will be frequent in praying to his heavenly Father; and therefore he encourages them so much the more in the work of secret prayer. 'When you pray;' as if he had said, I know you can as well hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet, as you are able to live without prayer. And therefore when you go to wait on God, or to give your heavenly Father a visit, 'Enter into your closet, and shut your doors,' &c.
5. Fifthly, If closet prayer be not an indispensable duty that Christ hath laid upon all his people, why doth Satan so much oppose it? why doth he so industriously and so unweariedly labour to discourage Christians in it, and to take off Christians from it? Certainly, Satan would never make such a fierce and constant war as he doth upon private prayer, were it not a necessary duty, a real duty, and a soul-enriching duty. But more of this you will find in the following discourse; and therefore let this touch suffice for the present, &c.

Now, these five things do very clearly and evidently demonstrate that secretly and solitarily to hold intercourse with God is the undoubted duty of every Christian. But for a more full opening and confirmation of this great and important point, I shall lay down these twenty arguments or

considerations, &c.

[1.] First, The most eminent saints, both in the Old and New Testament, have applied themselves to private prayer. Moses was alone in the mount with God forty days and forty nights, Exo 34:28. So Abraham fills his mouth with arguments, and reasons the case out alone with God in prayer, to prevent Sodom's desolation and destruction, and never leaves off pleading and praying till he had brought God down from fifty to ten, Gen 18:22-32; and in Gen 21:33, you have Abraham again at his private prayers: 'And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God.' Why did Abraham plant a grove, but that he might have a most private place to pray and pour out his soul before the Lord in? So Isaac: Gen 24:63, 'And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at even-tide.' The Hebrew word *lasuach*, that is here rendered meditate, signifies to pray as well as to meditate, and so it is often used. It is a comprehensive word, that takes in both prayer and meditation. So you shall find Jacob at his private prayer: Gen 32:24-28, 'And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.' When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and when his joints were out of joint, he so wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles in private prayer, that as a prince at last he prevails with God, Hos 12:3-4. So David, Psa 55:16-17, 'As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice.' So Daniel was three times a-day in private prayer: Dan 6:10, 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' Daniel had accustomed himself to private prayer; he went to his closet before he went to his public employment and state affairs; and at his return to dinner, he turned first into his chamber to serve his God and refresh his soul before he sat down to feast his body; and at the end of the day, when he had despatched his business with men, he made it his business to wait upon God in his chamber. So Jonah keeps up private prayer when he was in the fish's belly, yea, when he was in the belly of hell, Jon 2:1-2, &c. So we have Elijah at prayer under the juniper tree, 1Ki 19:4; so Hannah, 1Sa 1:13. Now, Hannah she speaks in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, as Hannah did, 1Sa 1:15. Neither was Rebekah a stranger to this duty, who, upon the babe's struggling in her womb, went to inquire of the Lord, Gen 25:22; that is, she went to some secret place to pray, saith Calvin, Musculus, Mercerus, and others. So Saul is no sooner converted, but presently he falls upon private prayer: Acts 9:11, 'And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.' Though he was a strict Pharisee, yet he never prayed to purpose before, nor never prayed in private before. The Pharisees used to pray in the corners of the streets, and not in the corners of their houses. And after his conversion he was frequently in private prayer, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Rom 1:9; Eph 1:15-16; Php 1:3-4; 2Ti 1:3. So Epaphras was a warm man in closet prayer, Php 4:12-13 so Cornelius had devoted himself to private prayer, Acts 10:2, Acts 10:4; and so Peter gets up to the house-top to pray: Acts 10:9, 'On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the house top to pray, about the sixth hour.' Peter got up upon the leads, not only to avoid distraction, but that he might be the more secret in his private devotion. Eusebius tells us of James called Justus, that his knees were grown hard and brawny with kneeling so much in private prayer. And Nazianzen reports of his sister Gorgonia, that her knees seemed to cleave to the earth

by her often praying in private. And Gregory saith of his aunt Trucilla, that her elbows was as hard as horn by often leaning upon her desk at private prayer. I have read of a devout person, who, when the set time for his private devotion was come, whatever company he was in, he would break from them with this neat and handsome come off, 'I have a friend that stays for me; farewell.' And there was once a great lady of this land, who would frequently withdraw from the company of lords and ladies of great quality, who came to visit her, rather than she would lose her set times of waiting upon God in her closet; she would, as they called it, rudely take her leave of them, that so she might in private attend the Lord of lords. She would spare what time she could to express her favours, civilities, and courtesies among her relations and friends; but she would never suffer them to rob God of his time, nor her soul of that comfort and communion which she used to enjoy when she was with God in her closet.² And indeed, one hour's communion with God in one's closet, is to be preferred before the greatest and best company in the world. And there was a child of a Christian gentlewoman, that was so given to prayer from its infancy, that before it could well speak, it would use to get alone and go to prayer; and as it grew, it was more frequent in prayer and retiring of itself from company; and he would ask his mother very strange questions, far above the capacity of one of his years; but at last, when this child was but five years old, and whipping of his top, on a sudden he flung away his scourge-stick and top, and ran to his mother, and with great joy said unto her, 'Mother, I must go to God; will you go with me?' She answered, 'My dear child, how dost thou know thou shalt go to God?' He answered, 'God hath told me so, for I love God, and God loves me.' She answered, 'Dear child, I must go when God pleaseth. But why wilt thou not stay with me?' The child answered, 'I will not stay; I must go to God.' And the child did not live above a month after, but never cared for play more; but falling sick, he would always be saying that he must go to God, he must go to God; and thus sometimes 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise,' Mat 21:16. Certainly such persons will be ripe for heaven betimes who begin betimes to seek God in a closet, in a corner. And Eusebius reports of Constantine the emperor, that every day he used to shut up himself in some secret place in his palace, and there, on bended knees, did make his devout prayers and soliloquies to God. 'My God and I are good company,' said famous Dr Sibbes. A man whoso soul is conversant with God in a closet, in a hole, behind the door, or in a desert, a den, a dungeon, shall find more real pleasure, more choice delight, and more full content, than in the palace of a prince. By all these famous instances, you see that the people of God in all ages have addicted themselves to private prayer. O friends! these pious examples should be very awakening, very convincing, and very encouraging to you. Certainly it is as much your duty as it is your glory to follow these pious patterns that are now set before you. Witness these following scriptures: Pro 2:20, 'That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous;' 1Co 11:1, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;' Php 3:17, 'Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample'; Php 4:9, 'Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you'; 1Th 1:6, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction;' Heb 6:12, 'That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.' So 2Ti 3:10-12, 2Ti 3:14, Tit 2:7. It was an excellent law that the Ephesians made, viz., that men should propound to themselves the best patterns, and ever bear in mind some eminent man. Bad men are wonderful in love with bad examples, Jer 44:16-17. The Indian, hearing that his ancestors were gone to hell, said that then he would go thither too. Some men

have a mind to go to hell for company's sake. Oh that we were as much in love with the examples of good men as others are in love with the examples of bad men; and then we should be oftener in our closets than now we are! Oh that our eyes were more fixed on the pious examples of all that have in them aliquid Christi, anything of Christ, as Bucer spake! Shall we love to look upon the pictures of our friends; and shall we not love to look upon the pious examples of those that are the lively and lovely picture of Christ? The pious examples of others should be the looking-glasses by which we should dress ourselves. He is the best and wisest Christian that writes after the fairest Scripture copy, that imitates those Christians that are most eminent in grace, and that have been most exercised in closet prayer, and in the most secret duties of religion.

Jerome having read the life and death of Hilarion, one that lived most Christianly, and died most comfortably, folded up the book, saying, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion that I will follow; his good life shall be my example, and his godly death my president. It is brave to live and die by the examples of the most eminent saints. But,

[2.] Secondly. Consider, when Christ was on earth, he did much exercise himself in secret prayer; he was often with God alone, as you may see in these famous scriptures: Mat 14:23, 'And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone.' Christ's choosing solitudes for private prayer, doth not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer, but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayers. Our own fickleness and Satan's restlessness calls upon us to get into such corners, where we may most freely pour out our souls into the bosom of God: Mark 1:35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' As the morning time is the fittest time for prayer, so solitary places are the fittest places for prayer: Mark 6:46, 'And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.' He that would pray to purpose, had need be quiet when he is alone: Luk 5:16, 'And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed.' (Greek, He was departing and praying) to give us to understand that he did thus often. When Christ was neither exercised in teaching nor in working of miracles, he was then very intent on private prayer: Luk 6:12, 'And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' Did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer to save our souls; and shall we think it much to spend an hour or two in the day for the furtherance of the internal and eternal welfare of our souls? Luk 21:37, 'And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.' Christ frequently joins praying and preaching together, and those whom Christ hath joined together, let no man presume to put asunder: Luk 22:39, Luk 22:41, Luk 22:44-45, 'And he came out, and went as he was wont to the mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood' (clotted or congealed blood) 'falling down to the ground' (never was garden watered before or since with blood as this was). 'And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.' Ah! what sad pieces of vanity are the best of men in an hour of trial and temptation! These very men, that a little before did stoutly profess and promise that they would never leave him nor forsake him, and that they would to prison for Christ, and die for Christ, yet when the day of trial came, they could not so much as watch with him one hour; they had neither eyes to see nor hands

to wipe off Christ's bloody sweat; so John 6:15-17. Thus you see, by all these famous instances, that Christ was frequent in private prayer. Oh that we would daily propound to ourselves this noble pattern for our imitation, and make it our business, our work, our heaven, to write after this blessed copy that Christ hath set us, viz., to be much with God alone. Certainly Christianity is nothing else but an imitation of the divine nature, a reducing of a man's self to the image of God, in which he was created 'in righteousness and true holiness.' A Christian's whole life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ. The heathens had this notion amongst them, as Lactantius reports, that the way to honour their gods was to be like them. Sure I am that the highest way of honouring Christ is to be like to Christ: 1Jn 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' Oh that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts. Christ is the sun, and all the watches of our lives should be set by the dial of his motion. Christ is a pattern of patterns; his example should be to us instead of a thousand examples. It is not only our liberty, but our duty and glory, to follow Christ in all his moral virtues absolutely. Other patterns be imperfect and defective, but Christ is a perfect pattern; and of all his children, they are the happiest that come nearest to this perfect pattern.

Heliogabalus loved his children the better for resembling him in sin. But Christ loves his children the more for resembling him in sanctity. I have read of some springs that change the colour of the cattle that drink of them into the colour of their own waters, as Du Bartas sings:

'Cerona, Xanth, and Cephisus do make The thirsty flocks, that of their waters take, Black, red, and white; and near the crimson deep, The Arabian fountain maketh crimson sheep.'

Certainly, Jesus Christ is such a fountain, in which whosoever bathes, and of which whosoever drinks, shall be changed into the same likeness, 2Co 3:18.

Quest. But why was our Lord Jesus so much in private prayer? Why was he so often with God alone?

Ans. 1. First, It was to put a very high honour and value upon private prayer; it was to enhance and raise the price of this duty. Men naturally are very apt and prone to have low and undervaluing thoughts of secret prayer. But Christ, by exercising himself so frequently in it, hath put an everlasting honour and an inestimable value upon it. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, He was much in private prayer, he was often with God alone, that he might not be seen of men, and that he might avoid all shows and appearances of ostentation and popular applause. He that hath commanded us to abstain from all appearances of evil, 1Th 5:22, would not himself, when he was in this world, venture upon the least appearance of evil. Christ was very shy of every thing that did but look like sin; he was very shy of the very show and shadow of pride or vain-glory.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, To avoid interruptions in the duty. Secresy is no small advantage to the serious and lively carrying on of a private duty. Interruptions and disturbances from without are oftentimes quench-coals to private prayer. The best Christians do but bungle when they meet with interruptions in their private devotions.

Ans. 4. Fourthly, To set us such a blessed pattern and gracious example, that we should never please nor content ourselves with public prayers only, nor with family prayers only, but that we

should also apply ourselves to secret prayer, to closet prayer. Christ was not always in public, nor always in his family, but he was often in private with God alone, that by his own example he might encourage us to be often with God in secret; and happy are they that tread in his steps, and that write after his copy.

Ans. 5. Fifthly, That he might approve himself to our understandings and consciences to be a most just and faithful High Priest, Heb 2:17, John 17:1-26. Christ was wonderful faithful and careful in both parts of his priestly office, viz., satisfaction and intercession; he was his people's only spokesman. Ah! how earnest, how frequent was he in pouring out prayers, and tears, and sighs, and groans for his people in secret, when he was in this world, Heb 5:7. And now he is in heaven, he is still a-making intercession for them, Heb 7:25.

Ans. 6. Sixthly, To convince us that his Father hears and observes our private prayers, and bottles up all our secret tears, and that he is not a stranger to our closet desires, wrestlings, breathings, hungerings, and thirstings.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that the ordinary exercising of yourselves in secret prayer, is that which will distinguish you from hypocrites, who do all they do to be seen of men: Mat 6:1-2, 'Take heed that you do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Self is the only oil that makes the chariot-wheels of the hypocrite move in all religious concernments. Mat 6:5, 'And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to stand praying in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Mat 6:16, 'Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.' Thus you see that these hypocrites look more at men than at God in all their duties. When they give alms, the trumpet must sound; when they pray, it must be in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets; and when they fasted, they disfigured their faces that they might appear unto men to fast. Hypocrites live upon the praises and applauses of men. Naturalists report of the Chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue no longer than it is enclosed in gold. So hypocrites will keep up their duties no longer than they are fed, and encouraged, and enclosed with the golden praises and applauses of men. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapours, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapours dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear.

Closet duty speaks out most sincerity. He prays with a witness that prays without a witness. The more sincere the soul is, the more in closet duty the soul will be, Job 31:33. Where do you read in all the Scripture, that Pharaoh, or Saul, or Judas, or Demas, or Simon Magus, or the scribes and pharisees, did ever use to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret? Secret prayer is not the hypocrite's ordinary walk, his ordinary work or trade. There is great cause to fear that his heart was never right with God, whose whole devotion is spent among men, or among many; or else our Saviour, in drawing the hypocrite's picture, would never have made this to be the very cast of his countenance, as he doth in Mat 6:5. It is very observable, that Christ commands his disciples, that they should not be as the hypocrites. It is one thing to be hypocrites, and it is another thing to be

as the hypocrites. Christ would not have his people to look like hypocrites, nor to be like to hypocrites. It is only sincerity that will enable a man to make a trade of private prayer. In praying with many, there are many things that may bribe and provoke a carnal heart, as pride, vain-glory, love of applause, or to get a name. An hypocrite, in all his duties, trades more for a good name than for a good life, for a good report than for a good conscience; like fiddlers, that are more careful in tuning their instruments, than in composing their lives. But in private prayer there is no such trade to be driven. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that in secret we may more freely, and fully, and safely unbosom our souls to God than we can in the presence of many or a few. Hence the husband is to mourn apart, and the wife apart, Zec 12:12-14, not only to shew the soundness of their sorrow, but also to shew their sincerity by their secresy. They must mourn apart, that their sins may not be disclosed nor discovered one to another. Here they are severed to shew that they wept not for company's sake, but for their own particular sins, by which they had pierced and crucified the Lord of glory. In secret, a Christian may descend into such particulars, as in public or before others he will not, he may not, he ought not, to mention. Ah! how many Christians are there who would blush and be ashamed to walk in the streets, and to converse with sinners or saints, should but those infirmities, enormities, and wickednesses be written in their foreheads, or known to others, which they freely and fully lay open to God in secret. There are many sins which many men have fallen into before conversion and since conversion, which, should they be known to the world, would make themselves to stink, and religion to stink, and their profession to stink in the nostrils of all that know them. Yea, should those weaknesses and wickednesses be published upon the house-tops, which many are guilty of before grace received, or since grace received, how would weak Christians be staggered, young comers on in the ways of God discouraged, and many mouths of blasphemy opened, and many sinners' hearts hardened against the Lord, his ways, reproofs, and the things of their own peace; yea, how would Satan's banner be displayed, and his kingdom strengthened, and himself infinitely pleased and delighted! It is an infinite mercy and condescension in God to lay a law of restraint upon Satan, who else would be the greatest blab in all the world. It would be mirth and music to him to be still a-laying open the follies and weaknesses of the saints.

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own. 'He is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine: his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, and sells thy blood to me.' There is not a sin that a saint commits, but Satan would trumpet it out to all the world, if God would but give him leave. No man that is in his right wits, will lay open to every one his bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, &c., but to some near relation, or bosom friend, or able physician. So no man that is in his right wits will lay open to every one his soul-infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, &c., but to the Lord, or to some particular person that is wise, faithful, and able to contribute something to his soul's relief. Should a Christian but lay open or rip up all his follies and vanities to the world, how sadly would some deride him and scorn him! and how severely and bitterly would others censure him and judge him! &c. When David was alone in the cave, then he poured out his complaint to God, and shewed before him his trouble, Psa 142:2. And when Job was all alone, then his eyes poured out tears to God, Job 16:20. There is no hazard, no danger, in ripping up of all before God in a corner, but there may be a great deal of hazard and danger in ripping up of all before men.

[5.] Fifthly, Secret duties shall have open rewards. Mat 6:6, 'And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' So, Mat 6:18, God will reward his people here in part, and hereafter in all perfection. He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him in a corner. They that sow in tears secretly, shall reap in joy openly. Private prayer shall be rewarded before men and angels publicly. How openly did God reward Daniel for his secret prayer! Dan 6:10, Dan 6:23-28. Mordecai privately discovered a plot of treason against the person of king Ahasuerus, and he is rewarded openly, Est 2:21-23, with Est 6:1-14. Darius, before he came to the kingdom, received privately a garment for a gift of one Syloson; and when he came to be a king, he rewarded him openly with the command of his country Samus. God, in the great day, will recompense his people before all the world, for every secret prayer, and secret tear, and secret sigh, and secret groan that hath come from his people. God, in the great day, will declare to men and angels, how often his people have been in pouring out their souls before him in such and such holes, corners, and secret places; and accordingly he will reward them.

Ah, Christians! did you really believe this, and seriously dwell on this, you would, (1.) Walk more thankfully.

(2.) Work more cheerfully.

(3.) Suffer more patiently.

(4.) Fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, more courageously.

(5.) Lay out yourselves for God, his interest and glory, more freely.

(6.) Live with what providence hath cut out for your portion, more quietly and contentedly. And, (7.) You would be in private prayer more frequently, more abundantly.

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that God hath usually let out himself most to his people when they have been in secret, when they have been alone at the throne of grace. Oh the sweet meltings, the heavenly warmings, the blessed cheerings, the glorious manifestations, and the choice communion with God, that Christians have found when they have been alone with God in a corner, in a closet, behind the door! When had Daniel that vision and comfortable message, that blessed news, by the angel, that he was 'greatly beloved,' but when he was all alone at prayer? Dan 9:20-23, 'And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel; and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation; and he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.' Whilst Daniel was at private prayer, God, by the angel Gabriel, reveals to him the secret of his counsel, concerning the restoration of Jerusalem, and the duration thereof, even to the Messiah; and whilst Daniel was at private prayer, the Lord appears to him, and in an extraordinary way assures him that he was 'a man greatly beloved,' or as the Hebrew chumudoth hath it, 'a man of desires,' that is, a man whom God's desires are towards, a man singularly beloved of God, and highly in favour with God, a man that art very pleasing and delightful to God. God loves to lade the wings of private prayer with the sweetest, choicest, and chiefest blessings.

Ah! how often hath God kissed a poor Christian at the beginning of private prayer, and spoke peace to him in the midst of private prayer, and filled him with light and joy and assurance upon the close of private prayer? And so Cornelius is highly commended and graciously rewarded upon the account of his private prayer: Acts 10:1-4, 'There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always: he saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? and he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.' Acts 10:30-31, 'And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour' (that is, until three o'clock in the afternoon, Acts 10:3), 'and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.' Mark, as he was praying in his house, namely, by himself alone, a man in bright clothing—that was an angel in man's shape, Acts 10:3—appeared to him, and said, 'Cornelius, thy prayer is heard.' He doth not mean only that prayer which he made when he fasted and humbled himself before the Lord, Acts 10:30-31; but, as Acts 10:2-4 shew, his prayers, his prayers which he made alone. For it seems none else were with him then, for he only saw that man in bright clothing; and to him alone the angel addressed his present speech, saying, 'Cornelius, Thy prayers are heard, Acts 4:31. Here you see that Cornelius his private prayers are not only heard, but kindly remembered, and graciously accepted, and gloriously rewarded. Praying Cornelius is not only remembered by God, but he is also visited, sensibly and evidently, by an angel, and assured that his private prayers and good deeds are an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God. And so when had Peter his vision but when he was praying alone on the house-top? Acts 10:9-13, 'On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew near unto the city, Peter went up unto the house-top to pray, about the sixth hour. And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.' When Peter was upon the house-top at prayer alone, then he fell into a trance, and he saw heaven opened; and then he had his spirit raised, his mind elevated, and all the faculties of his soul filled with a divine revelation. And so when Paul was at prayer alone, Acts 9:12, he saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Paul had not been long at private prayer before it was revealed to him that he was a chosen vessel, and before he was filled with the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Ghost. And when John was alone in the isle of Patmos, 'for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ'—whither he was banished by Domitian, a most cruel emperor—then he had a glorious sight of the Son of man, and then the Lord discovered to him most deep and profound mysteries, both concerning the present and future state of the church, to the end of the world. And when John was weeping, in private prayer doubtless, then the sealed book was opened to him. So when Daniel was at private prayer, God despatches a heavenly messenger to him, and his errand was to open more clearly and fully the blessed Scripture to him. Some comfortable and encouraging knowledge this holy man of God had attained unto before by his frequent and constant study in the word, and this eggs him on to private prayer, and private prayer posts an

angel from heaven to give him a clearer and fuller light. Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the word unto us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths are but the returns of private prayer. The word most dwells richly in their hearts who are most in pouring out their hearts before God in their closets. When Bonaventura, that seraphical doctor, as some call him, was asked by Aquinas from what books and helps he derived such holy and divine expressions and contemplations, he pointed to a crucifix, and said, 'Iste est liber, &c., Prostrate in prayer at the feet of this image, my soul receiveth greater light from heaven than from all study and disputation.' Though this be a monkish tradition and superstitious fiction, yet some improvement may be made of it. Certainly that Christian or that minister that in private prayer lies most at the feet of Jesus Christ, he shall understand most of the mind of Christ in the gospel, and he shall have most of heaven and the things of his own peace brought down into his heart.

There is no service wherein Christians have such a near, familiar, and friendly intercourse with God as in this of private prayer; neither is there any service wherein God doth more delight to make known his truth and faithfulness, his grace and goodness, his mercy and bounty, his beauty and glory to poor souls, than this of private prayer. Luther professeth, 'That he profited more in the knowledge of the Scripture by private prayer in a short space, than he did by study in a longer space,' as John by weeping in a corner got the sealed book opened. Private prayer crowns God with the honour and glory that is due to his name; and God crowns private prayer with a discovery of those blessed weighty truths to his servants, that are a sealed book to others. Certainly the soul usually enjoys most communion with God in secret. When a Christian is in a wilderness, which is a very solitary place, then God delights to speak friendly and comfortably to him: Hos 2:14, 'Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak friendly or comfortably to her,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'I will speak to her heart.' When I have her alone, saith God, in a solitary wilderness, I will speak such things to her heart, as shall exceedingly cheer her, and comfort her, and even make her heart leap and dance within her. A husband imparts his mind most freely and fully to his wife when she is alone; and so doth Christ to the believing soul. Oh the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret cheerings, the secret sealings, the secret discoveries, &c., that God gives to his people when alone, when in a hole, when under the stairs, when behind the door, when in a dungeon! When Jeremiah was calling upon God alone in his dark dungeon, he had great and wonderful things shewed him that he knew not of, Jer 33:1-3.

Ambrose was wont to say, 'I am never less alone, than when I am alone; for then I can enjoy the presence of my God most freely, fully, and sweetly, without interruption.' And it was a most sweet and divine saying of Bernard, 'O saint, knowest thou not,' saith he, 'that thy husband Christ is bashful, and will not be familiar in company? Retire thyself therefore by prayer and meditation into thy closet or the fields, and there thou shalt have Christ's embraces.' A gentlewoman being at private prayer and meditation in her parlour, had such sweet, choice, and full enjoyments of God, that she cried out, 'Oh that I might ever enjoy this sweet communion with God!' &c.

Christ loves to embrace his spouse, not so much in the open street, as in a closet; and certainly the gracious soul hath never sweeter views of glory, than when it is most out of the view of the world. Wise men give their best, their choicest, and their richest gifts in secret; and so doth Christ give his the best of the best, when they are in a corner, when they are all alone. But as for such as cannot spare time to seek God in a closet, to serve him in secret, they sufficiently manifest that

they have little fellowship or friendship with God, whom they so seldom come at.

[7.] Seventhly, Consider the time of this life is the only time for private prayer. Heaven will admit of no secret prayer. In heaven there will be no secret sins to trouble us, nor no secret wants to pinch us, nor no secret temptations to betray us, nor no secret snares to entangle us, nor no secret enemies to supplant us. We had need live much in the practice of that duty here on earth, that we shall never be exercised in after death. Some duties that are incumbent upon us now, as praising of God, admiring of God, exalting and lifting up of God, joying and delighting in God, &c., will be for ever incumbent upon us in heaven; but this duty of private prayer, we must take our leaves of when we come to lay our heads in the dust.

[8.] Eighthly, Consider the great prevalency of secret prayer. Private prayer is porta cœli, clavis paradisi, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. Oh the great things that private prayer hath done with God! Psa 31:22. Oh the great mercies that have been obtained by private prayer! Psa 38:8-9. And oh the great threatenings that have been diverted by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been removed by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been prevented by private prayer! I have read of a malicious woman who gave herself to the devil, provided that he would do a mischief to such a neighbour, whom she mortally hated: the devil went again and again to do his errand, but at last he returns and tells her, that he could do no hurt to that man, for whenever he came, he found him either reading the Scriptures, or at private prayer. Private prayers pierces the heavens, and are commonly blessed and loaded with gracious and glorious returns from thence. Whilst Hezekiah was praying and weeping in private, God sent the prophet Isaiah to him, to assure him that his prayer was heard, and that his tears were seen, and that he would add unto his days fifteen years, Isa 38:5. So when Isaac was all alone meditating and praying, and treating with God for a good wife in the fields, he meets Rebekah, Gen 24:63-64. So Jacob: Gen 32:24-28, 'And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with Aim until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? and he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.' In this scripture we have an elegant description of a duel fought between the Almighty and Jacob; and in it there are these things most observable:

(1.) First, We have the combatants or duellists, Jacob and God, who appeared in the shape or appearance of a man. He that is here said to be a man was the Son of God in human shape, as it appeareth by the whole narration, and by Hos 12:3-5. Now, that this man that wrestled with Jacob was indeed God, and not really man, is most evident, by these reasons:

[1.] First, Jacob desires a blessing from him, Gen 32:26. Now, it is God's prerogative-royal to bless, and not angels' nor men's. ergo,—

[2.] Secondly, He calls him by the name of God; 'thou hast power with God,' Gen 32:28. And saith Jacob, 'I have seen God face to face,' Gen 32:30. Not that he saw the majesty and essence of God: for no man can see the essential glory of God and live, Exo 33:20, Exo 33:23; but he saw God more apparently, more manifestly, more gloriously than ever he had done before. Some created shape, some glimpse of glory, Jacob saw, whereby God was pleased for the present to

testify his more immediate presence, but not himself.

[3.] Thirdly, The same person that here Jacob wrestles with is he whom Jacob remembereth in his benediction as his deliverer from all evil, Gen 48:16. It was that God that appeared to him at Bethel when he fled from the face of his brother, Gen 35:7. ergo,—

[4.] Fourthly, Jacob is reproved for his curious inquiring or asking after the angel's name, Gen 35:28, which is a clear argument or demonstration of his majesty and glory, God being above all notion and name. God is a super-substantial substance, an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken. One being asked what God was, answered, 'That he must be God himself, before he could know God fully.' We are as well able to comprehend the sea in a cockle-shell, as we are able to comprehend the Almighty, or that nomen Majestativum, as Tertullian phraseth it. 'In searching after God,' saith Chrysostom, 'I am like a man digging in a deep spring: I stand here, and the water riseth upon me; and I stand there, and still the water riseth upon me.' In this conflict you have not one man wrestling with another, nor one man wrestling with a created angel, but a poor, weak, mortal man wrestling with an immortal God; weakness wrestling with strength, and a finite being with an infinite being. Though Jacob had no second, though he was all alone, though he was wonderfully over-matched, yet he wrestles and keeps his hold, and all in the strength of him he wrestles with.

(2.) Secondly, You have the place where they combated, and that was beside the ford Jabbok, ver. 22. This is the name of a brook or river springing by Rabba, the metropolis of the Ammonites, and issuing into Jordan beneath the Sea of Galilee, Num 21:24; Deu 2:37; Jdg 11:13, Jdg 11:15; Deu 3:16. Jacob did never enjoy so much of the presence of God as when he had left the company of men. Oh! the sweet communion that Jacob had with God when he was retired from his family, and was all alone with his God by the ford Jabbok! Certainly Jacob was never less alone than at this time, when he was so alone. Saints often meet with the best wine and with the strongest cordials when they are all alone with God.

(3.) Thirdly, You have the time of the combat, and that was the night. At what time of the night this wrestling, this duel began, we nowhere read; but it lasted till break of day, it lasted till Jacob had the better of the angel. How many hours of the night this conflict lasted, no mortal man can tell. God's design was that none should be spectators nor witnesses of this combat but Jacob only; and therefore Jacob must be wrestling when others were sleeping.

(4.) Fourthly, You have the ground of the quarrel, and that was Jacob's fear of Esau, and his importunate desire for a blessing. Jacob flies to God, that he might not fall before man; he flies to God, that he might not fly before men. In a storm, there is no shelter like to the wing of God. He is safest, and happiest, and wisest, that lays himself under divine protection. This Jacob knew, and therefore he runs to God, as to his only city of refuge. In this conflict God would have given out: 'Let me go, for the day breaketh,' ver. 26; but Jacob keeps his hold, and tells him boldly to his very face that he would not let him go unless he would bless him. Oh the power of private prayer! It hath a kind of omnipotency in it; it takes God captive; it holds him as a prisoner; it binds the hands of the Almighty; yea, it will wring a mercy, a blessing, out of the hand of heaven itself. Oh the power of that prayer that makes a man victorious over the greatest, the highest power! Jacob, though a man, a single man, a travelling man, a tired man, yea, though a worm, that is easily crushed and trodden under foot, and no man, Isa 41:14, yet in private prayer he is so potent, that

he overcomes the omnipotent God; he is so mighty, that he overcomes the Almighty.

(5.) Fifthly, You have the nature or manner of the combat, and that was both outward and inward, both corporal and spiritual. It was by might and flight; it was as well by the strength of his body as it was by the force of his faith. He wrestled not only with spiritual strugglings, tears, and prayers, Hos 12:4, but with corporal also, wherein God assailed him with one hand, and upheld him with the other. In this conflict, Jacob and the angel of the covenant did really lay arm on arm, and set shoulder to shoulder, and put foot to foot, and used all other sleights and ways as men do that wrestle one with another. The Hebrew word אָבַק, from אָבַק, that is here rendered wrestled, signifies the raising of the dust; because those which did wrestle of old did not only wrestle naked, as the manner then was, but did also use to cast dust one upon another, that so they might take more sure hold one of another. Some, from this word abak, do conclude that Jacob and the angel did tug, and strive, and turn each other, till they sweat again; for so much the word imports. Jacob and the angel did not wrestle in jest, but in good earnest; they wrestled with their might, as it were, for the garland; they strove for victory as for life. But as this wrestling was corporal, so it was spiritual also. Jacob's soul takes hold of God, and Jacob's faith takes hold of God, and Jacob's prayers takes hold of God, and Jacob's tears takes hold of God, Hos 12:4-5. Certainly Jacob's weapons in this warfare were mainly spiritual, and so 'mighty through God.' There is no overcoming of God but in his own strength. Jacob did more by his royal faith than he did by his noble hands, and more by weeping than he did by sweating, and more by praying than he did by all his bodily strivings.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, You have the issue of the combat, and that is, victory over the angel, ver. 28. Jacob wrestles in the angel's arms and armour, and so overcomes him. As a prince, he overpowers the angel by that very power he had from the angel. The angel was as freely and fully willing to be conquered by Jacob, as Jacob was willing to be conqueror. When lovers wrestle, the strongest is willing enough to take a fall of the weakest; and so it was here. The father, in wrestling with his child, is willing enough, for his child's comfort and encouragement, to take a fall now and then; and so it was between the angel and Jacob in the present case. Now in this blessed story, as in a crystal glass, you may see the great power and prevalency of private prayer; it conquers the great conqueror; it is so omnipotent that it overcomes an omnipotent God.

Now this you may see more fully and sweetly cleared up in Hos 12:3-4, 'He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us.' When Jacob was all alone and in a dark night, and but on one leg, yet then he played the prince with God, as the Hebrew hath it. Jacob by prayers and tears did so prince it with God as that he carried the blessing. Jacob's wrestling was by weeping, and his prevailing by praying. Prayers and tears are not only very pleasing to God, but also very prevalent with God. And thus you see that this great instance of Jacob speaks out aloud the prevalency of private prayer.

See another instance of this in David: Psa 66:8-9, 'I am weary with my groanings: all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my tears.' These are all excessive figurative speeches, to set forth the greatness of his sorrow, and the multitude of his tears. David in his retirement makes the place of his sin, viz. his bed, to be the place of his repentance. David sins

privately upon his bed, and David mourns privately upon his bed. Every place which we have polluted by sin, we should sanctify and water with our tears: Psa 66:8, 'Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' As blood hath a voice, and as the rod hath a voice, so tears have a voice. Tears have tongues, and tears can speak. There is no noise to that that tears in secret make in the ears of God. A prudent and indulgent father can better pick out the wants and necessities of his children by their secret tears than by their loud complaints, by their weeping than by their words; and do you think that God can't do as much? Tears are not always mutes: Lam 2:18, 'Cry aloud,' saith one, 'not with thy tongue, but with thy eyes; not with thy words, but with thy tears; for that is the prayer that maketh the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven.' Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors that never return from the throne of grace without a gracious answer. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which, though they say nothing, yet they obtain pardon; and though they plead not a man's cause, yet they obtain mercy at the hands of God. As you see in that great instance of Peter, who, though he said nothing that we read of, yet weeping bitterly, he obtained mercy, Mat 26:75. I have read of Augustine, who, coming as a visitant to the house of a sick man, he saw the room full of friends and kindred, who were all silent, yet all weeping: the wife sobbing, the children sighing, the kinsfolk lamenting, all mourning; whereupon Augustine uttered this short ejaculatory prayer, 'Lord, what prayer dost thou hear, if not these?' Ver. 9, 'The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.' God sometimes answers his people before they pray: Isa 65:24, 'And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer.' And sometimes while they are praying; so it follows in the same verse, 'And while they are yet speaking I will hear.' So Isa 30:19, 'He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.' And sometimes after they have prayed, as the experiences of all Christians can testify. Sometimes God neither hears nor receives a prayer; and this is the common case and lot of the wicked, Pro 1:28, Job 27:9, Isa 1:15. Sometimes God hears the prayers of his people, but doth not presently answer them, as in that case of Paul, 2Co 12:7-9; and sometimes God both hears and receives the prayers of his people, as here he did David's. Now in this instance of David, as in a glass, you may run and read the prevalency of private prayer and of secret tears.

You may take another instance of this in Jonah: Jon 2:1-3, Jon 2:5, Jon 2:7, Jon 2:10, 'Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, into the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into thy holy temple. And the Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.' When Jonah was all alone, and in the midst of many dangers and deaths, when he was in the whale's belly, yea, in the belly of hell,—so called because horrid and hideous, deep and dismal,—yet then private prayer fetches him from thence. Let a man's dangers be never so many, nor never so great, yet secret prayer hath a certain omnipotency in it that will deliver him out of them all. In multiplied afflictions, private prayer is most prevalent with God. In the very midst of drowning, secret prayer will keep both head and heart above water. Upon Jonah's private prayer, God sends forth his mandamus, and the fish serves Jonah for a ship to sail safe to shore. When the case is even desperate, yet then private prayer can do much with God. Private prayer is of that power that it can open the doors of

leviathan, as you see in this great instance, which yet is reckoned as a thing not feasible, Job 41:14.

Another instance of the prevalency of private prayer you have in that 2Ki 4:32-35, 'And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.' Privacy is a good help to fervency in prayer. 'And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.' Oh the power, the prevalency, the omnipotency of private prayer, that raises the dead to life! And the same effect had the private prayer of Elijah in raising the widow's son of Zarephath to life, 1Ki 17:18, et seq. The great prevalency of Moses his private prayers you may read in the following scriptures: Num 12:1-2, 'And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it: and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched.' Moses by private prayer rules and overrules with God; he was so potent with God in private prayer that he could have what he would of God. So Num 21:7-9; Psa 106:23; Exo 32:9-14; Exo 14:15-17. The same you may see in Nehemiah, Neh 1:11, compared with Neh 2:4-8. So Luther, perceiving the cause of God and the work of reformation to be greatly strained and in danger, he went into his closet, and never left wrestling with God till he had received a gracious answer from heaven; upon which he comes out of his closet to his friends leaping and triumphing with Vicimus, vicimus, we have overcome, we have overcome, in his mouth. At which time it is observed that there came out a proclamation from Charles the Fifth, that none should be further molested for the profession of the gospel. At another time, Luther being in private prayer for a sick friend of his, who was very comfortable and useful to him, had a particular answer for his recovery; whereupon he was so confident, that he sent word to his friend that he should certainly recover; and so it fell out accordingly. And so Latimer prayed with great zeal for three things:

- (1.) That Queen Elizabeth might come to the crown;
- (2.) That he might seal the truth with his heart blood; and
- (3.) That the gospel might be restored once again, once again, which he expressed with great vehemency of spirit: all which three God heard him in.

Constantine commanded that his effigies should be engraven, not as other emperors in their armour leaning, but as in a posture of prayer, kneeling, to manifest to the world that he won more by secret prayer than by open battles.

Mr Dod reports, that when many good people had often sought the Lord in the behalf of a woman that was possessed with the devil, and yet could not prevail, at last they appointed a day for fasting and prayer; at which time there came a poor woman to the chamber door where the exercise was begun and craved entrance, but she being poor they would not admit her in; upon that the poor woman kneeled down behind the door and sought God by prayer. But she had not prayed long before the evil spirit raged, roared, and cried out in the possessed woman, 'Take

away the old woman behind the door, for I must be gone; take away the old woman behind the door, for I must be gone.' And so by the old woman's prayers behind the door he was cast out. Oh the prevalency of prayer behind the door! And thus you see by all these great instances the great prevalency of private prayer.

Private prayer, like Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, when duly qualified as to the person and act, never returns empty; it hits the mark, it carries the day with God; it pierceth the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, made of brass and iron, Isa 45:2. Oh, who can express the powerful oratory of private prayer! &c.

[9.] Ninthly, Consider, that secret duties are the most soul-enriching duties. Look, as secret meals make fat bodies, so secret duties make fat souls; and as secret trades brings in great earthly riches, so secret prayers makes many rich in spiritual blessings and in heavenly riches. Private prayer is that privy key of heaven that unlocks all the treasures of glory to the soul. The best riches and the sweetest mercies God usually gives to his people when they are in their closets upon their knees. Look, as the warmth the chickens find by close sitting under the hen's wings cherisheth them, so are the graces of the saints enlivened, and cherished, and strengthened by the sweet secret influences which their souls fall under when they are in their closet-communion with God. Private prayer conscientiously performed is the privy key of heaven, that hath unlocked such treasures and such secrets as hath passed the skill of the cunningest devil to find out. Private prayer midwives the choicest mercies and the chiefest riches in upon us. Certainly there are none so rich in gracious experiences as those that are most exercised in closet duties: Psa 34:6, 'This poor man cried,' saith David, 'and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles.' David, pointing to himself, tells us that he 'cried,' that is, silently and secretly, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia; 'and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles,' Exo 14:15; Neh 1:11, and Neh 2:4. And, oh, what additions were these deliverances to his experiences! O my friends, look, as the tender dew that falls in the silent night makes the grass and herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain that fall in the day, so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public, and visible duties of religion, which too, too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

Beloved! you know that many times a favourite at court gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to his prince, than a tradesman or a merchant gets in twenty years' labour and pains, &c. So a Christian many times gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to the King of kings, than many others do by trading long in the more public duties of religion. O sirs! remember that in private prayer we have a far greater advantage as to the exercise of our own gifts and graces and parts, than we have in public; for in public we only hear others exercise their parts and gifts, &c.; in public duties we are more passive, but in private duties we are more active. Now, the more our gifts and parts and graces are exercised, the more they are strengthened and increased. All acts strengthen habits. The more sin is acted, the more it is strengthened. And so it is with our gifts and graces; the more they are acted, the more they are strengthened. But,

[10.] Tenthly, Take many things together. All Christians have their secret sins. Psa 19:12, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.' Secret not only to other men, but himself; even such secret sins as grew from errors which he understood not. It is incident to every

man to err, and then to be ignorant of his errors. Many sins I see in myself, saith he, and more there are which I cannot espy, which I cannot find out; nay, I think, saith he, that every man's sins do arise beyond his accounts. There is not the best, the wisest, nor the holiest man in the world, that can give a full and entire list of his sins. 'Who can understand his errors?' This interrogation hath the force of an affirmation: 'Who can?' No man! no, not the most perfect and innocent man in the world. O friends! who can reckon up the secret sinful imaginations, the secret sinful inclinations, or the secret pride, the secret blasphemies, the secret hypocrisies, the secret atheistical risings, the secret murmurings, the secret repinings, the secret discontents, the secret insolencies, the secret filthinesses, the secret unbelievings, &c., that God might every day charge upon his soul? Should the best and holiest man on earth have but his secret sins every day written in his forehead, it would not only put him to a crimson blush, but it would make him pull his hat over his eyes, or cover his face with a double scarf. So 1Ki 8:38, 'What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart,' &c. Sin is the greatest plague in the world, but never more dangerous than when it reaches the heart. Now, secret sins commonly lie nearest the heart, the fountain from whence they take a quick, immediate, and continual supply. Secret sins are as near to original sin as the first droppings are to the spring head. And as every secret sin lies nearest the heart, so every secret sin is the plague of the heart. Now, as secret diseases are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the prudent physician, so our secret sins, which are the secret plagues, the secret diseases of our souls, are not to be laid open to every one, but only to the physician of souls, that is only able both to cure them and pardon them. And as all Christians have their secret sins, so all Christians have their secret temptations, 2Co 12:8-9. And as they have their secret temptations, so they have their secret wants; yea, many times they have such particular and personal wants that there is not one in the congregation, nor one in the family, that hath the like. And as they have their secret wants, so they have their secret fears, and secret snares, and secret straits, and secret troubles, and secret doubts, and secret jealousies, &c. And how do all these things call aloud upon every Christian to be frequent and constant in secret prayer!

[11.] Eleventhly, Consider, Christ is very much affected and delighted in the secret prayers of his people. Song of Solomon 2:14, 'O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' Christ observes his spouse when she is in the clefts of the rock; when she is gotten into a corner a-praying, he looks upon her with singular delight, and with special intimations of his love. Nothing is more sweet, delightful, and welcome to Christ than the secret services of his people. Their secret breathings are like lovely songs to him, Mal 3:4; their secret prayers in the clefts of the rock, or under the stairs, are as sweet incense to Jesus. The spouse retires to the secret places of the stairs not only for security, but also for secrecy, that so she might the more freely, without suspicion of hypocrisy, pour out her soul into the bosom of her beloved. The great delight that parents take in the secret lisplings and whisperings of their children, is no delight to that which Christ takes in the secret prayers of his people. And therefore, as you would be friends and furtherers of Christ's delight, be much in secret prayer.

[12.] Twelfthly, Consider you are the only persons in all the world that God hath made choice of to reveal his secrets to. John 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have

made known unto you.' Everything that God the Father had communicated to Christ as mediator to be revealed to his servants, he did make known to his disciples as to his bosom-friends. Christ loves his people as friends, and he uses them as friends, and he opens his heart to them as friends. There is nothing in the heart of Christ that concerns the internal and eternal welfare of his friends, but he reveals it to them: he reveals himself, his love, his eternal good will, the mysteries of faith, and the secrets of his covenant, to his friends. Christ loves not to entertain his friends with things that are commonly and vulgarly known. Christ will reveal the secrets of his mind, the secrets of his love, the secrets of his thoughts, the secrets of his heart, and the secrets of his purposes, to all his bosom-friends. Samson could not hide his mind, his secrets, from Delilah, though it cost him his life, Jdg 16:15-17; and do you think that Christ can hide his mind, his secrets, from them for whom he hath laid down his life? Surely no. O sirs! Christ is, (1.) A universal friend.

(2.) An omnipotent friend, an almighty friend. He is no less than thirty times called Almighty in that book of Job; he can do above all expressions and beyond all apprehensions.

(3.) He is an omniscient friend.

(4.) He is an omnipresent friend.

(5.) He is an indeficient friend.

(6.) He is an independent friend.

(7.) He is an unchangeable friend.

(8.) He is a watchful friend.

(9.) He is a tender and compassionate friend.

(10.) He is a close and faithful friend; and therefore he cannot but open and unbosom himself to all his bosom friends. To be reserved and close is against the very law of friendship. Faithful friends are very free in imparting their thoughts, their minds, their secrets, one to another. A real friend accounts nothing worth knowing unless he makes it known to his friends. He rips up his greatest and most inward secrets to his friends. Job calls his friends 'inward friends,' or the men of his secrets, Job 19:19. All Christ's friends are inward friends; they are the men of his secrets: Pro 3:32, 'His secrets are with the righteous,' that is, his covenant and fatherly affection, which is hid and secret from the world. He that is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man, to whom God will communicate his closest secrets, as to his dearest bosom-friend. It is only a bosom-friend to whom we will unbosom ourselves. So Psa 25:14, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.'

Now, there are three sorts of divine secrets:

(1.) First, There are secrets of providence, and these he reveals to the righteous, and to them that fear him, Psa 107:43, Hos 14:9. The prophet Amos speaks of these secrets of providence: Amo 3:7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants and prophets.' Micah knew the secret of the Lord touching Ahab, which neither Zedekiah nor any other of the false prophets knew. So Gen 18:17, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?' The destruction of Sodom was a secret that lay in the bosom of God; but Abraham

being a bosom-friend, God communicates this secret to him, Gen 18:19-21. Abraham was a friend, a faithful friend, a friend by a specialty, Jas 2:23; and therefore God makes him both of his court and counsel. Oh how greatly doth God condescend to his people. He speaks to them as a man would speak to his friend; and there is no secrets of providence, which may be for their advantage, but he will reveal them to his faithful servants. As all faithful friends have the same friends and the same enemies, so they are mutual in the communication of their secrets one to another; and so it was between God and Abraham.

(2.) Secondly, There are the secrets of his kingdom; and these he reveals to his people: Mat 13:11, 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given.' So Mat 11:25, 'At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' 'Let us not think,' saith Jerome, 'that the gospel is in the words of Scripture, but in the sense; not in the outside, but in the marrow; not in the leaves of words, but in the root of reason.' Augustine humbly begged of God, that if it were his pleasure, he would send Moses to him to interpret some more abstruse and intricate passages in his book of Genesis.² There are many choice, secret, hidden, and mysterious truths and doctrines in the gospel, which Christ reveals to his people, that this poor, blind, ignorant world are strangers to. There are many secrets wrapped up in the plainest truths and doctrines of the gospel, which none can effectually open and reveal but the Spirit of the Lord, that searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. There are many secrets and mysteries in the gospel, that all the learning and labour in the world can never give a man insight into. There are many that know the doctrine of the gospel, the history of the gospel, that are mere strangers to the secrets of the gospel. There is a secret power, a secret authority, a secret efficacy, a secret prevalency, a secret goodness, a secret sweetness in the gospel, that none experience but those to whom the Lord is pleased to impart gospel secrets to: Isa 29:11-12, 'Seal my law among my disciples.' The law of God to wicked men is a sealed book that they cannot understand, Dan 12:9-10. It is as blotted paper that they cannot read. Look, as a private letter to a friend contains secret matter that no man else may read because it is sealed; so the law of grace is sealed up under the privy-seal of heaven, so that no man can open it or read it, but Christ's faithful friends to whom it is sent. The whole Scripture, saith Gregory, is but one entire letter despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse on earth. The Rabbins say that there are four keys that God hath under his girdle: 1, the key of the clouds; 2, the key of the womb; 3, the key of the grave; 4, the key of food; and I may add a fifth key that is under his girdle, and that is the key of the word, the key of the Scripture; which key none can turn but he that 'hath the key of David, that opens, and no man shuts; and that shuts, and no man opens,' Rev 3:7. O sirs! God reveals himself, and his mind, and will, and truth, to his people, in a more friendly and familiar way than he doth to others: Mark 4:11, 'And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:' Luk 8:10, 'And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.' Though great doctors, and profound clerks, and deep-studied but unsanctified divines may know much of the doctrines of the gospel, and commend much the doctrines of the gospel, and dispute much for the doctrines of the gospel, and glory much in the doctrines of the gospel, and take a great deal of pains to dress and trim up the doctrines of the gospel, with the flowers of rhetoric or eloquence; though it be much better to present truth in her native plainness, than to

hang her ears with counterfeit pearls.... The word, without human adornments, is like the stone garmantides, that hath drops of gold in itself, sufficient to enrich the believing soul.... Yet the special, spiritual, powerful, and saving knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, is a secret, a mystery, yea, a hidden mystery to them, Rom 16:25, 1Co 2:7.

Chrysostom compares the mysteries of Christ, in regard of the wicked, to a written book, that the ignorant can neither read nor spell; he sees the cover, the leaves, and the letters, but he understands not the meaning of what he sees. He compares the mystery of grace to an indited epistle, which an unskilful idiot viewing, he cannot read it, he cannot understand it; he knoweth it is paper and ink, but the sense, the matter, he knows not, he understands not. So unsanctified persons, though they are never so learned, and though they may perceive the bark of the mystery of Christ, yet they perceive not, they understand not, the mystery of grace, the inward sense of the Spirit, in the blessed Scriptures. Though the devil be the greatest scholar in the world, and though he have more learning than all the men in the world have, yet there are many thousand secrets and mysteries in the gospel of grace, that he knows not really, spiritually, feelingly, efficaciously, powerfully, thoroughly, savingly, &c.

Oh, but now Christ makes known himself, his mind, his grace, his truth, to his people, in a more clear, full, familiar, and friendly way: 2Sa 7:27, 'For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant;' so you read it in your books; but in the Hebrew it is thus: 'Lord, thou hast revealed this to the ear of thy servant.' Now, the emphasis lieth in that word, to the ear, which is left out in your books. When God makes known himself to his people, he revealeth things to their ears, as we use to do to a friend who is intimate with us: we speak a thing to his ear. There is many a secret which Jesus Christ speaks in the ears of his servants, which others never come to be acquainted with: 2Co 4:6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' The six several gradations that are in this scripture are worthy of our most serious consideration. Here is, First, Knowledge; and, Secondly, The knowledge of the glory of God; and, Thirdly, The light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and, Fourthly, Shining; and, Fifthly, Shining into our hearts; and, Sixthly, Shining into our hearts in the face of Jesus Christ. And thus you see that the Lord reveals the secrets of himself, his kingdom, his truth, his grace, his glory, to the saints. But,

(3.) Thirdly, There are the secrets of his favour, the secrets of his special love, that he bears to them; the secret purposes of his heart to save them; and these are those great secrets, those 'deep things of God.' which none can reveal 'but the Spirit of God.' Now these great secrets, these deep things of God, God doth reveal to his people by his Spirit: 1Co 2:10-12, 'But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Now what are the things that are freely given to us of God, but our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification? And why hath God given us his Spirit, but that we should know 'the things that are freely given to us of God.' Some by secret in Psa 25:1-22, do understand a particular assurance of God's favours, whereby happiness is secured to us, both for the present and for the future. They understand by secret, the sealing of the Spirit, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name in it, 'which none knoweth but he that hath it.' And so

much those words, 'He will shew them his covenant,' seems to import: for what greater secret can God impart to his people, than that of opening the covenant of grace to them in its freeness, fulness, sureness, sweetness, suitableness, everlastingness, and in sealing up his good pleasure, and all the spiritual and eternal blessings of the covenant to them? Such as love and serve the Lord shall be of his cabinet-council, they shall know his soul-secrets, and be admitted into a very gracious familiarity and friendship with himself: John 14:21-23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord! how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' God and Christ will keep house with them, and manifest the secrets of their love to them that are observant of their commands. And thus you see that the saints are the only persons to whom God will reveal the secrets of his providence, the secrets of his kingdom, and the secrets of his love unto. Christ came out of the bosom of his Father, and he opens all the secrets of his Father only to his bosom-friends. Now what an exceeding high honour is it for God to open the secrets of his love, the secrets of his promises, the secrets of his providences, the secrets of his counsels, and the secrets of his covenant, to his people!

Tiberius Cæsar thought no man fit to know his secrets. And among the Persians none but noblemen, lords, and dukes, might be made partakers of state secrets; they esteeming secrecy a godhead, a divine thing, as Ammianus Marcellinus affirms. But now such honour God hath put upon all his saints, as to make them lords and nobles, and the only privy statesmen in the court of heaven. The highest honour and glory that earthly princes can put upon their subjects is to communicate to them their greatest secrets. Now this high honour and glory the King of kings hath put upon his people; 'For his secrets are with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.' It was a high honour to Elisha, 2Ki 6:12, that he could tell the secrets that were spoken in the king's bed-chamber. Oh! what an honour must it then be for the saints to know the secrets that are spoken in the presence-chamber of the King of kings!

Now I appeal to the very consciences of all that fear the Lord, whether it be not a just, equal, righteous, and necessary thing, that the people of God should freely and fully lay open all the secrets of their hearts before the Lord, who hath thus highly honoured them, as to reveal the secrets of his providence, kingdom, and favour to them? Yea, I appeal to all serious and ingenuous Christians, whether it be not against the light and law of nature, and against the law of love, and law of friendship, to be reserved and close, yea, to hide our secrets from him who reveals his greatest and our choicest secrets to us? And if it be, why then do not you in secret lay open all your secret sins, and secret wants, and secret desires, secret fears, &c., to him that seeth in secret? You know all secrets are to be communicated only in secret. None but fools in folio will communicate secrets upon a stage, or before many. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, Consider, that in times of great straits and trials, in times of great afflictions and persecutions, private prayer is the Christian's meat and drink; it is his chief city of refuge; it is his shelter and hiding-place in a stormy day. When the saints have been driven by violent persecutions into holes, and caves, and dens, and deserts, and howling wildernesses, private prayer hath been their meat and drink, and under Christ their only refuge. When Esau came forth with hostile intentions against Jacob, secret prayer was Jacob's refuge: Gen 32:6-9, Gen 32:11,

'And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him:' all cut-throats. 'Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.' When all is at stake, it is Christian prudence to save what we can, though we cannot save what we would. 'And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.' Promises in private must be prayed over. God loves to be sued upon his own bond, when he and his people are alone. 'Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children;' or upon the children, meaning he will put all to death. Some look upon the words to be a metaphor taken from fowlers, who kill and take away the young and the dams together, contrary to that old law, Deu 22:6. Others say it is a phrase that doth most lively represent the tenderness of a mother, who, seeing her children in distress, spares not her own body nor life, to hazard the same for her children's preservation, by interposing herself, even to be massacred together with and upon them, Hos 10:14. When Jacob, and all that was near and dear unto him, were in eminent danger of being cut off by Esau, and those men of blood that were with him, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge against the rage and malice of the mighty. And so when Jeremiah was in a solitary and loathsome dungeon, private prayer was his meat and drink, it was his only city of refuge: Jer 33:1-3, 'Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the maker thereof, the Lord that formed it, to establish it; The Lord is his name: call unto me, and I will answer thee, and I will shew thee great and mighty,' or hidden 'things, which thou knowest not.' When Jeremiah was in a lonesome, loathsome prison, God encourages him by private prayer, to seek for further discoveries and revelations of those choice and singular favours, which in future times he purposed to confer upon his people: so 2Ch 33:11-13, 'Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters,' or chains, 'and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.' When Manasseh was in fetters in his enemy's country, when he was stripped of all his princely glory, and led captive into Babylon, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge; and by this means he prevails with God for his restoration to his crown and kingdom. Private prayer is a city of refuge that no power nor policy, no craft nor cruelty, no violence nor force, is ever able to surprise. Though the joint prayers of the people of God together were often obstructed and hindered in the times of the ten persecutions, yet they were never able to obstruct or hinder secret prayer, private prayer. When men and devils have done their worst, every Christian will be able to maintain his private trade with heaven. Private prayer will shelter a Christian against all the national, domestical, and personal storms and tempests that may threaten him. When a man is lying upon a sick-bed alone, or when a man is in prison alone, or when a man is with Job left upon the dunghill alone, or when a man is with John banished for the testimony of Jesus into this or that island alone, oh then private prayer will be his meat and drink, his shelter, his hiding-place, his heaven. When all other trades fail, this trade of private prayer will hold good.

But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, Consider that God is omnipresent. We cannot get into any blind hole, or dark corner, or secret place, but the Lord hath an eye there, the Lord will keep us company there: Mat 6:6, 'And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' So ver. 18. There is not the darkest, dirtiest hole in the world into which a saint creeps, but God hath a favourable eye there. God never wants an eye to see our secret tears, nor an ear to hear our secret cries and groans, nor a heart to grant our secret requests, and therefore we ought to pour out our souls to him in secret: Psa 38:9, 'Lord! all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.' Though our private desires are never so confused, though our private requests are never so broken, and though our private groanings are never so much hidden from men, yet God eyes them all, God records them all, and God puts them all upon the file of heaven, and will one day crown them with glorious answers and returns. We cannot sigh out a prayer in secret, but he sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to him at midnight, but he observes us. The eye that God hath upon his people when they are in secret, is such a special tender eye of love, as opens his ear, his heart, and his hand, for their good: 1Pe 3:12, 'For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers;' or, as the Greek hath it, 'his ears are unto their prayers.' If their prayers are so faint, that they cannot reach up as high as heaven, then God will bow the heavens and come down to their prayers. God's eye is upon every secret sigh, and every secret groan, and every secret tear, and every secret desire, and every secret pant of love, and every secret breathing of soul, and every secret melting and working of heart; all which should encourage us to be much in secret duties, in closet services. As a Christian is never out of the reach of God's hand, so he is never out of the view of God's eye. If a Christian cannot hide himself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide himself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun? In every private duty, a Christian is still under the eye of God's omniscieny. When we are in the darkest hole, God hath windows into our breasts, and observes all the secret actings of our inward man, 1Ti 2:8. The eye of God is not confined to this place or that, to this company or that; God hath an eye upon his people as well when they are alone, as when they are among a multitude; as well when they are in a corner, as when they are in a crowd. Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together. But God is present both in paradise and in the wilderness, both in the family and in the closet, both in public and in private at the same time. God is an omnipresent God; he is everywhere. Non est ubi, ubi non est Deus. As he is included in no place, so he is excluded from no place: Jer 23:24, 'Can any man hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord?' Pro 15:3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' or, 'contemplating the evil and the good,' as the Hebrew may be read. Now, to contemplate, is more than simply to behold; for contemplation addeth to a simple apprehension a deeper degree of knowledge, entering into the very inside of a matter; and so indeed doth God discern the very inward intentions of the heart, and the most secret motions of the spirit. God is an infinite and immense being, whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. Now, if our God be omnipresent, then wheresoever we are, our God is present with us: if we are in prison alone with Joseph, our God is present with us there; or if we are in exile alone with David, our God is present with us there; or if we are alone in our closets, our God is present with us there. God seeth us in secret; and therefore let us seek his face in secret. Though heaven be God's palace, yet it is not his prison. But,

[15.] Fifteenthly, He that willingly neglects private prayer shall certainly be neglected in his public prayer; he that will not call upon God in secret shall find by sad experience that God will neither hear him nor regard him in public. Want of private duties is the great reason why the hearts of many are so dead and dull, so formal and carnal, so barren and unfruitful under public ordinances. Oh that Christians would seriously lay this to heart! Certainly, that man or woman's heart is best in public who is most frequent in private. They make most yearnings in public ordinances that are most conscientiously exercised in closet duties. No man's graces rises so high, nor no man's experiences rises so high, nor no man's communion with God rises so high, nor no man's divine enjoyments rises so high, nor no man's springs of comfort rises so high, nor no man's hopes rises so high, nor no man's parts and gifts rises so high, &c., as theirs do, who conscientiously wait upon God in their closets before they wait upon him in the assembly of his people; and who when they return from public ordinances retire into their closets and look up to heaven for a blessing upon the public means. It is certain that private duties fit the soul for public ordinances. He that makes conscience to wait upon God in private, shall find by experience that God will wonderfully bless public ordinances to him, Mic 2:7. My design is not to set up one ordinance of God above another, nor to cause one ordinance of God to clash with another,—the public with the private, or the private with the public,—but that every ordinance may have its proper place and right, the desires of my soul being to prize every ordinance, and to praise every ordinance, and to practise every ordinance, and to improve every ordinance, and to bless the Lord for every ordinance. But as ever you would see the beauty and glory of God in his sanctuary, as ever you would have public ordinances to be lovely and lively to your souls, as ever you would have your drooping spirits revived, and your languishing souls refreshed, and your weak graces strengthened, and your strong corruptions weakened under public ordinances, be more careful and conscientious in the performance of closet duties, Psa 63:1-3. Oh how strong in grace! Oh how victorious over sin! Oh how dead to the world! Oh how alive to Christ! Oh how fit to live! Oh how prepared to die! might many a Christian have been, had they been but more frequent, serious, and conscientious in the discharge of closet-duties. Not but that I think there is a truth in that saying of Bede—the word church being rightly understood—viz., That he that comes not willingly to church shall one day go unwillingly to hell. But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, Consider, the times wherein we live call aloud for secret prayer. Hell seems to be broke loose, and men turned into incarnate devils: land-destroying and soul-damning wickednesses walk up and down the streets with a whore's forehead, without the least check or control: Jer 3:3, 'Thou hast a whore's forehead, thou refusest to be ashamed;' Jer 6:15, 'Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.' They had sinned away shame, instead of being ashamed of sin. Custom in sin had quite banished all sense of sin and all shame for sin, so that they would not suffer nature to draw her veil of blushing before their great abominations. They were like to Caligula, a wicked emperor, who used to say of himself, that he loved nothing better in himself than that he could not be ashamed. The same words are repeated in Jer 8:12. How applicable these scriptures are to the present time I will leave the prudent reader to judge. But what doth the prophet do now they were as bold in sin and as shameless as so many harlots? That you may see in Jer 13:17 : 'But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places,' or secresies, 'for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore' (Hebrew, weeping weep, or shedding tears shed tears; the doubling of the verb notes the bitter and grievous lamentation that he should make for them), 'and run down with tears.' Now

they were grown up to that height of sin and wickedness, that they were above all shame and blushing; now they were grown so proud, so hardened, so obstinate, so rebellious, so mad upon mischief, that no mercies could melt them or allure them, nor no threatenings nor judgments could any ways terrify them or stop them. The prophet goes into a corner, he retires himself into the most secret places, and there he weeps bitterly, there he weeps as if he were resolved to drown himself in his own tears. When the springs of sorrow rise high, a Christian turns his back upon company, and retires himself into places of greatest privacy, that so he may the more freely and the more fully vent his sorrow and grief before the Lord. Ah, England, England! what pride, luxury, lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, drunkenness, cruelties, injustice, oppressions, fornications, adulteries, falsehoods, hypocrisy, bribery, atheism, horrid blasphemies, and hellish impieties, are now to be found rampant in the midst of thee! Ah, England! England! how are the Lord's Sabbaths profaned, pure ordinances despised, Scriptures rejected, the Spirit resisted and derided, the righteous reviled, wickedness countenanced, and Christ many thousand times in a day by these cursed practices afresh crucified! Ah, England! England! were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of thee! How is our forefathers' hospitality converted into riot and luxury, their frugality into pride and prodigality, their simplicity into subtilty, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their charity into cruelty, their chastity into chambering and wantonness, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into dissembling, their works of compassion into works of oppression, and their love to the people of God into an utter enmity against the people of God! &c. And what is the voice of all these crying abominations, but every Christian to his closet, every Christian to his closet, and there weep, with weeping Jeremiah, bitterly, for all these great abominations whereby God is dishonoured openly. Oh weep in secret for their sins who openly glory in their sins, which should be their greatest shame. Oh blush in secret for them that are past all blushing for their sins; for who knows but that the whole land may fare the better for the sakes of a few that are mourners in secret? But however it goes with the nation, such as mourn in secret for the abominations of the times, may be confident that when sweeping judgments shall come upon the land, the Lord will hide them in the secret chambers of his providence, he will set a secret mark of deliverance upon their foreheads that mourn in secret for the crying sins of the present day, as he did upon theirs in Eze 9:4-6.

[17.] Seventeenthly, Consider that the near and dear relations that you stand in to the Lord calls aloud for secret prayer, John 15:14-15. You are his friends. Now, a true friend loves to visit his friend when he may find him alone, and enjoy privacy with him. A true friend loves to pour out his heart into the bosom of his friend when he hath him in a corner, or in the field, or under a hedge. You are his favourites; and what favourite is there that hides his secret from his prince? Do not all favourites open their hearts to their princes when they are alone? You are his children; and what ingenuous child is there that doth not delight to be much with his father when he is alone, when nobody is by? Oh, how free and open are children when they have their parents alone, beyond what they are when company is present. You are the spouse of Christ; and what spouse, what wife is there that doth not love to be much with her husband when he is alone? True lovers are always best when they are most alone: Song of Solomon 7:10-12, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.' The spouse of Christ is very desirous to enjoy his company in the fields, that so, having her beloved alone, she might the

more freely and the more secretly open her heart to him. As wives, when they are walking alone with their husbands in the fields, are more free to open their minds and the secrets of their hearts, than they are when in their houses with their children and servants about them, so it was with the spouse. Without all peradventure, they have very great cause to question whether they are Christ's real friends, favourites, children, spouse, who seldom or never converse with Christ in their closets, who are shy of Christ when they are alone, who never accustom themselves to give Christ secret visits. What Delilah said to Samson, Jdg 16:15, 'How canst thou say, I love thee, when thou hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth' (the discovery of which secret at last cost him his life), that, Christ may say to very many in our days: How can you say you love me, when you never acquaint me with your secrets? How can you say you love me, when you never bestow any private visits upon me? How can you say that you are my friends, my faithful friends, my bosom-friends, when you never in private unbosom yourselves to me? How can you say that you are my favourites, when you can spend one month after another, and one quarter of a year after another, and yet not let me know one of all your secrets, when every day you might have my ear in secret if you pleased? How can you say that you are my children, and yet be so close and reserved as you are? How can you say you are my spouse, and that you lie in my bosom, and yet never take any delight to open your hearts, your secrets, to me when I am alone? What Alexander said to one that was of his name, but a coward, 'Either lay down the name of Alexander, or fight like Alexander,' that I say to you, Either be frequent in closet duties, as becomes a Christian, or else lay down the name of a Christian; either unbosom yourselves in secret to Christ, as friends, favourites, children, spouses, or else lay down these names, &c. But,

[18.] Eighteenthly, Consider that God hath set a special mark of favour, honour, and observation, upon those that have prayed in secret. As you may see in Moses, Exo 34:28; and in Abraham, Gen 21:33; and in Isaac, Gen 24:63; and in Jacob, Gen 32:24-29; and in David, Psa 55:16-17 and in Daniel, Dan 6:10; and in Paul, Acts 9:11; and in Cornelius, Acts 10:2, Acts 10:4; and in Peter, Acts 10:9-12; and in Manasseh, 2Ch 33:18-19. God hath put all these worthies that have exercised themselves in secret prayer upon record, to their everlasting fame and honour. The Persians seldom write their king's name but in characters of gold. God hath writ, as I may say, their names in characters of gold who have made conscience of exercising themselves in secret prayer. The precious names of those that have addicted themselves to closet-duties are as statues of gold, which the polluted breath of men can no ways stain; they are like so many shining suns that no clouds can darken; they are like so many sparkling diamonds that shine brightest in the darkest night. A Christian can never get into a hole, a corner, a closet, to pour out his soul before the Lord, but the Lord makes an honourable observation of him, and sets a secret mark of favour upon him, Eze 9:4-6. And how should this provoke all Christians to be much with God alone! The Romans were very ambitious of obtaining a great name, a great report, in this world; and why should not Christians be as divinely ambitious of obtaining a good name, a good report, in the other world? Heb 11:39. A good name is always better than a great name, and a name in heaven is infinitely better than a thousand names on earth; and the way to both these is to be much with God in secret. But,

[19.] Nineteenthly, Consider that Satan is a very great enemy to secret prayer. Secret prayer is a scourge, a hell to Satan. Every secret prayer adds to the devil's torment, and every secret sigh adds to his torment, and every secret groan adds to his torment, and every secret tear adds to his

torment. When a child of God is on his knees in his secret addresses to God, oh the strange thoughts, the earthly thoughts, the wandering thoughts, the distracted thoughts, the hideous thoughts, the blasphemous thoughts, that Satan often injects into his soul! and all to wean him from secret prayer. Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is in vain to seek God in secret; and at other times he tells the soul it is too late to seek God in secret; for the door of mercy is shut, and there is no hope, no help for the soul. Sometimes he tells the soul that it is enough to seek God in public; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is but a precise trick to seek the Lord in private. Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is not elected, and therefore all his secret prayers shall be rejected; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is sealed up unto the day of wrath, and therefore a secret prayer can never reverse that seal; and all this to dishearten and discourage a poor Christian in his secret retirements. Sometimes Satan will object to a poor Christian the greatness of his sins; and at other times he will object against a Christian the greatness of his unworthiness. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his want of grace; and at other times he will object against a Christian his want of gifts to manage such a duty as it should be managed. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his former straitenedness in secret prayer; and at other times he will object against a Christian the small yearnings that he makes of secret prayer; and all to work the soul out of love with secret prayer, yea, to work the soul to loathe secret prayer; so deadly an enemy is Satan to secret prayer. Oh, the strange fears, fancies, and conceits, that Satan often raises in the spirits of Christians, when they are alone with God in a corner; and all to work them to cast off private prayer. It is none of Satan's least designs to interrupt a Christian in his private trade with God. Satan watches all a Christian's motions; so that he cannot turn into his closet, nor creep into any hole to converse privately with his God, but he follows him hard at heels, and will be still injecting one thing or another into the soul, or else objecting one thing or another against the soul. A Christian is as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, as he is able to number up the several devices and sleights that Satan uses to obstruct the soul's private addresses to God. Now from that great opposition that Satan makes against private prayer, a Christian may safely conclude these five things:

(1.) First, The excellency of private prayer. Certainly if it were not an excellent thing for a man to be in secret with God, Satan would never make such head against it.

(2.) Secondly, The necessity of this duty. The more necessary any duty is to the internal and eternal welfare of a Christian, the more Satan will bestir himself to blunt a Christian's spirit in that duty.

(3.) Thirdly, The utility or profit that attends a conscientious discharge of this duty. Where we are like to gain most, there Satan loves to oppose most.

(4.) Fourthly, The prevalency of private prayer. If there were not a kind of omnipotency in it, if it were not able to do wonders in heaven, and wonders on earth, and wonders in the hearts and lives and ways of men, Satan would never have such an aching tooth against it as he hath.

(5.) Fifthly, That God is highly honoured by this duty, or else Satan would never be so greatly enraged against it. This is certain. The more glory God hath from any service we do, the more Satan will strive by all his wiles and sleights to take us, either off from that service, or so to interrupt us in that service, that God may have no honour, nor we no good, nor himself no hurt, by our private retirements. But, in the

[20.] Twentieth and last place, Consider, that you are only the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore if you do not apply yourselves to private prayer, and to your secret retirements, that you may enjoy God in a corner, none will. It is only God's hidden ones, his secret ones, that are spirited, principled, and prepared to wait on God in secret: Exo 19:5, 'Then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.' The Hebrew word segullah signifieth God's special jewels, God's proper ones, or God's secret ones, that he keeps in store for himself, and for his own special service and use. Princes lock up with their own hands in secret their most precious and costly jewels; and so doth God his: Psa 135:4, 'For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure,' or for his secret gem: Psa 83:3, 'They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones,' or thy secret ones; so called partly because God hides them in the secret of his tabernacle, Psa 31:20, and partly because God sets as high a value upon them as men do upon their hidden treasure, their secret treasure; yea, he makes more reckoning of them than he doth of all the world besides. And so the world shall know when God shall arise to revenge the wrongs and injuries that hath been done to his secret ones. Neither are there any on earth that knows so much of the secrets of his love, of the secrets of his counsels, of the secrets of his purposes, of the secrets of his heart, as his secret ones do. Neither are there any in all the world that are under those secret influences, those secret assistances, those secret incomes, those secret anointings of the Spirit, as his secret ones are under. And therefore, no wonder if God calls them again, and again, and again, his secret ones. Now, what can be more comely or more desirable than to see their natures and their practices to answer to their names? They are the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore how highly doth it concern them to be much with God in secret, and to hide themselves with God in a corner! Shall Nabal's nature and practice answer to his name? 1Sa 25:25, 'Let not my Lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.' Nabal signifies a fool, a sot, a churl; it notes one that is void of wisdom and goodness; it signifieth one whose mind, reason, judgment, and understanding is withered and decayed. Now, if you look into the story, you shall find that as face answers to face, so Nabal's nature and practice did echo and answer to his name. And why then, should not our natures and practices answer to our names also? We are called the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and how highly therefore doth it concern us to be much with God in secret! Why should there be any jarring or discord between our names and our practices? It is observable that the practice and carriage of other saints have been answerable to their names. Isaac signifies laughter, and Isaac was a gracious son, a dutiful son, a son that kept clear of those abominations with which many of the patriarchs had defiled themselves, a son that proved matter of laughter to his father and mother all their days. So Josiah signifies 'the fire of the Lord;' and his practice did answer to his name. Witness the pulling down of Jeroboam's altar, and his burning of the vessels that were made for Baal, and his pulling down the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had set up, and his burning the grove at the brook Kedron, and his stamping it to powder, and his breaking down the houses of the Sodomites, and his defiling of the high places where the priests had burnt incense, and his breaking in pieces the images, and cutting down the groves, and filling their places with the bones of men, &c., 1Ki 13:2, 2Ki 23:4-21. So Joshua signifies 'a saviour;' and his practice was answerable to his name. Though he could not save his people from their sins, yet he often saved them from their sufferings. Great and many were the deliverances, the salvations, that were instrumentally brought about by Joshua, as all know that have read the book of Joshua. So John

signifies 'gracious,' and his practice was answerable to his name. He was so gracious in his teachings and in his walkings that he gained favour in the very eyes of his enemies. By all these instances, and by many more that might be given, you see that other saints' practices have answered to their names; and, therefore, let every one of us look that our practices do also answer to our names, that as we are called the Lord's secret ones, so we may be much with God in secret, that so there may be a blessed harmony between our names and our practices, and we may never repent another day that we have been called God's secret ones, his 'hidden ones,' but yet never made conscience of maintaining secret communion with God in our closets. And thus you see that there are no less than twenty arguments to persuade you to closet prayer, and to maintain private communion with God in a corner. The use and application of all follows. Is it so that closet prayer or private prayer is such an indispensable duty, that Christ himself hath laid upon all that are not willing to lie under the woful brand of being hypocrites? Then this truth looks very sourly and sadly upon these five sorts of persons.

(1.) First, It looks sourly and sadly upon all those that put off secret prayer, private prayer, till they are moved to it by the Spirit; for by this sad delusion many have been kept from secret prayer many weeks, many months; oh that I might not say, many years! Though it be a very fit season to pray when the Spirit moves us to pray, yet it is not the only season to pray, Isa 62:1, Psa 123:1-2, Gal 4:6. He that makes religion his business, will pray as daily for daily grace as he doth pray daily for daily bread: Luk 18:1, 'And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' 1Th 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing;' Eph 6:18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints;' Rom 12:12, 'Continuing instant in prayer.' The Greek is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, that never give over the game till they have got their prey. A Christian must not only pray, but hold on in prayer, till he hath got the heavenly prize. We are wanting always; and therefore we had need be praying always. The world is always alluring; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; Satan is always a-tempting; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are always a-sinning; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are in dangers always; and therefore we had need be praying always; and we are dying always, 1Co 15:31; and therefore we had need be praying always. Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live, but he begins to die. When one was asked why he prayed six times a day, he only gave this answer, 'I must die, I must die, I must die.' Dying Christians had need be praying Christians, and they that are always a-dying had need be always a-praying. Certainly prayerless families are graceless families, and prayerless persons are graceless persons, Jer 10:25. It were better ten thousand times that we had never been born into the world, than that we should go still-born out of the world. But,

(2.) Secondly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those that pray not at all, neither in their families nor in their closets. Among all God's children, there is not one possessed with a dumb devil. Prayerless persons are forsaken of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and every breath they draw liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments. Prayer is that part of natural worship due to God, which, none will deny but stark atheists, Psa 14:1.

It is observable that amongst the worst of men, Turks, and the worst of Turks, the Moors, it is a just exception against any witness, by their law, that he hath not prayed six times in every natural day, it being usual with them to pray six times a day.

- (1.) Before the daybreak they pray for day.
- (2.) When it is day, they give thanks for day.
- (3.) At noon, they thank God for half the day past.
- (4.) After that, they pray for a good sunset.
- (5.) And after that, they thank God for the day past. And then, sixthly and lastly, they pray for a good night after their day.

Certainly these very Moors will one day rise in judgment against them who cast off prayer, who live in a total neglect of prayer, who suffer so many suns and moons to rise and set upon their heads without any solemn calling upon God. I have read of a man who, being sick, and afraid of death, fell to his prayers; and, to move God to hear him, told him 'that he was no common beggar, and that he had never troubled him with his prayers before; and if he would but hear him at that time, he would never trouble him again.' This world is full of such profane, blasphemous, atheistical wretches. But,

(3.) Thirdly, This truth looks very sourly and sadly upon such who are all for public prayer, but never regard private prayer; who are all for going up to the temple, but never care for going into their closets. This is most palpable hypocrisy, for a man to be very zealous for public prayer, but very cold and careless as to private prayer. He that pretends conscience in the one, and makes no conscience of the other, is an hypocrite in grain, Mat 23:5, and Mat 6:1-2, Mat 6:5; and the devil knows well enough how to make his markets of all such hypocrites that are all for the prayers of the church, but perfect Gallios as to private prayer, Acts 18:17. Such as perform all their private devotion in the church, but not in the chamber, do put too great a slight upon the authority of Christ, who saith, 'When thou prayest, enter into thy chamber:' he doth not say, 'When thou prayest, go to the church,' but, 'When thou prayest, go into thy chamber.' But,

(4.) Fourthly, This truth looks sadly and sourly upon such who in their closets pray with a loud clamorous voice. A Christian should shut both the door of his closet and the door of his lips so close, that none should hear without what he saith within. 'Enter into thy closet,' saith Christ, 'and when thou hast shut thy door, pray.' But what need a man shut his closet door, if he may pray with a clamorous voice, if he make such a noise as all in the street or all in the house may hear him? The hen, when she lays her eggs, gets into a hole, a corner; but then she makes such a noise with her cackling, that she tells all in the house where she is, and about what she is. Such Christians that in their closets do imitate the hen, do rather pray to be seen, heard, and observed by men, than out of any noble design to glorify God, or to pour out their souls before him that seeth in secret. Sometimes children, when they are vexed, or afraid of the rod, will run behind the door, or get into a dark hole, and there they will lie crying, and sighing, and sobbing, that all the house may know where they are. Oh it is a childish thing so to cry, and sigh, and sob in our closets, as to tell all in the house where we are, and about what work we are. Well! Christians, for an effectual redress of this evil, frequently and seriously consider of these five things.

[1.] First, That God seeth in secret.

[2.] Secondly, That God hath a quick ear, and is taken more with the voice of the heart, than he is with the clamour of the mouth. God can easily hear the most secret breathings of thy soul. God is

more curious in observing the messages delivered by the heart, than he is those that are only delivered by the mouth. He that prays aloud in private, seems to tell others, that God doth not understand the secret desires, and thoughts, and workings of his people's hearts.

[3.] Thirdly, It is not meet, it is not convenient nor expedient, that any should be acquainted with our secret prayers, but God and our own souls. Now it is as much our duty to look to what is expedient, as it is to look to what is lawful, 2Co 8:10; 1Co 6:12, 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.' So 1Co 10:23, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.' Now it is so far from being expedient, that it is very high folly for men to lay open their secret infirmities unto others, that will rather deride them, than lift up a prayer for them.

[4.] Fourthly, Loud prayers may be a hindrance and disturbance to others, that may be busied near us, in some religious or civil exercises.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Hannah prayed and yet spoke never a word. Her heart was full, but her voice was not heard, 1Sa 1:11. Moses prays and cries, and yet lets fall never a word: Exo 14:15, 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherfore criest thou unto me?' Moses did not cry with any audible voice, but with inward sighs, and secret breathings, and wrestlings of soul; and these inward and secret cries, which made no noise, carried the day with God; for Moses is heard and answered, and his people are delivered. Oh the prevalency of those prayers that make no noise in the ears of others!

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those that do all they can to hinder and discourage others from this duty of duties, private prayer; and that either by deriding or vilifying of the duty, or else by denying of it to be a duty, or else by their daily neglect of this duty, or else by denying them that are under them, time and opportunity for the discharge of this duty. In Mat 23:13, you have a woe pronounced against those that will neither go to heaven themselves, nor suffer others to go that are willing to enter into an everlasting rest. And so I say, Woe to those parents, and woe to those husbands, and woe to those masters and mistresses, that will neither pray in their closets themselves, nor suffer their children, nor their wives, nor their servants, to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner. O sirs! how will you answer this to your consciences, when you shall lie upon a dying bed! and how will you answer it to the Judge of all the world, when you shall stand before a judgment seat? Certainly all their sins, and all their neglects, and all their spiritual losses, that might have been prevented by their secret prayers, by their closet communion with God, will one day be charged upon your accounts. And oh that you were all so wise as to lay these things so to heart, that you may never hinder any that are under your care or charge, from private prayer any more! But,

2. Secondly, This may serve to exhort us, to keep close to our closets, to be frequent and constant in private prayer, to be often with God in a corner. The twenty considerations already laid down may serve as so many motives to provoke your hearts to this noble and necessary duty.

Objection. But many will be ready to object and say, We have much business upon our hands, and we cannot spare time for private prayer; we have so much to do in our shops, and in our warehouses, and abroad with others, that we cannot spare time to wait upon the Lord in our closets.

Now to this objection I shall give these eight answers, that this objection may never have a resurrection more in any of your hearts.

(1.) First, What are all those businesses that are upon your hands, to those businesses and weighty affairs, that did lie upon the hands of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Elias, Nehemiah, Peter, Cornelius? and yet you find all these worthies exercising themselves in private prayers. And the king is commanded every day to read some part of God's word, notwithstanding all his great and weighty employments, Deu 17:18-20. Now certainly, sirs, your great businesses are little more than ciphers compared with theirs. And if there were any on earth that might have pleaded an exemption from private prayer, upon the account of business, of much business, of great business, these might have done it; but they were more honest and more noble than to neglect so choice a duty, upon the account of much business. These brave hearts made all their public employments stoop to private prayer; they would never suffer their public employments to tread private prayer under foot. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, No men's outward affairs did ever more prosper than theirs did, who devoted themselves to private prayer, notwithstanding their many and great worldly employments. Witness the prosperity and outward flourishing estates of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Nehemiah, David, Daniel, and Cornelius. These were much with God in their closets, and God blessed their blessings to them, Gen 22:17. How did their cups overflow! What signal favours did God heap upon them and theirs! No families have been so prospered, protected, and graced, as theirs who have maintained secret communion with God in a corner, 1Ch 11:9. Private prayer doth best expedite our temporal affairs. He that prays well in his closet, shall be sure to speed well in his shop, or at his plough, or whatever else he turns his hand unto, 1Ti 4:8. It is true, Abimelech was rich as well as Abraham, and so was Laban rich as well as Jacob, and Saul was a king as well as David, and Julian was an emperor as well as Constantine; but it was only Abraham, Jacob, David, and Constantine, who had their blessings blessed unto them, all the rest had their blessings cursed unto them, Pro 3:33, Mal 2:2. They had many good things, but they had not 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush' with what they had; and therefore all their mercies were but bitter-sweets unto them. Though all the sons of Jacob returned laden from Egypt with corn and money in their sacks, yet Benjamin only had the silver cup in the mouth of his sack. So though the men of the world have their corn and their money, &c., yet it is only God's Benjamins that have the silver cup, the grace cup, the cup of blessing, as the apostle calls it, for their portion, 1Co 10:16. O sirs! as ever you would prosper and flourish in the world; as ever you would have your water turned into wine, your temporal mercies into spiritual benefits, be much with God in your closets. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, It is ten to one but that the objector every day fools away, or trifles away, or idles away, or sins away, one hour in a day, and why then should he object the want of time? There are none that toil and moil and busy themselves most in their worldly employments, but do spend an hour or more in a day to little or no purpose, either in gazing about, or in dallying, or toying, or courting, or in telling of stories, or in busying themselves in other men's matters, or in idle visits, or in smoking the pipe, &c. And why then should not these men redeem an hour's time in a day for private prayer, out of that time which they usually spend so vainly and idly? Can you, notwithstanding all your great worldly employments, find an hour in the day to catch flies in, as Domitian the emperor did? and to play the fool in? and cannot you find an hour in the day to wait

on God in your closets?

There were three special faults whereof Cato professed himself to have seriously repented: one was, passing by water when he might have gone by land; another was, trusting a secret in a woman's bosom; but the main was, spending an hour unprofitably. This heathen will one day rise up in judgment against them who, notwithstanding their great employments, spend many hours in a week unprofitably, and yet cry out with the Duke of Alva, that they have so much to do on earth, that they have no time to look up to heaven. It was a base and sordid spirit in that King Sardanapalus, who spent much of his time amongst women in spinning and carding, which should have been spent in ruling and governing his kingdom. So it is a base sordid spirit in any, to spend any of their time in toying and trifling, and then to cry out, that they have so much business to do in the world, that they have no time for closet-prayer, they have no time to serve God, nor to save their own precious and immortal souls. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, No man dares plead this objection before the Lord Jesus in the great day of account, Ecc 11:9; Rom 14:10; 2Co 5:10. And why then should any man be so childish and foolish, so ignorant and impudent to plead that before men, which is not pleadable before the judgment-seat of Christ. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy for ever, never put off your own consciences nor others' with any pleas, arguments, or objections now, that you dare not own and stand by, when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and when you shall appear before the whole court of heaven, &c. In the great day of account, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, and God shall call men to a reckoning before angels, men, and devils, for the neglect of private prayer, all guilty persons will be found speechless: there will not be a man or woman found, that shall dare to stand up and say, 'Lord, I would have waited upon thee in my closet, but that I had so much business to do in the world, that I had no time to enjoy secret communion with thee in a corner.' It is the greatest wisdom in the world, to plead nothing by way of excuse in this our day, that we dare not plead in the great day. But,

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, That it is our duty to redeem, time from all our secular businesses for private prayer. All sorts of Christians, whether bond or free, rich or poor, high or low, superiors or inferiors, are expressly charged by God to redeem time for prayer, for private prayer, as well as for other holy exercises: Col 4:2-3, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.' But here some may object and say, We have so much business to do in the world that we have no time for prayer. The apostle answers this objection in Col 4:5, 'Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time.' So Eph 5:16, 'Redeeming the time, because the days are evil;' ἡξαγοραζόμενοι τὴν καιρὸν; or buying out, or gaining the time. The words are a metaphor taken from merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be gained, before their pleasures or delights, closely following their business whilst the markets are at best. A merchant when he comes to a mart or fair, takes the first season and opportunity of buying his commodities; he puts it not off to the hazard of an evening, or to the next morning, in hopes to have a better bargain, but he improves the present season, and buys before the market is over.

Others carry the words thus: 'Purchase at any rate all occasions and opportunities of doing good, that so ye may thereby, in some sort, redeem that precious jewel of time which you have formerly

lost.' As travellers that have loitered by the way, or stayed long at their inn, when they find night coming upon them, they mend their pace, and go as many miles in an hour as they did before in many. Though time let slip is physically irrecoverable, yet in a moral consideration, it is accounted as regained, when men double their care, diligence, and endeavours to redeem it. The best Christian is he that is the greatest monopoliser of time for private prayer. No Christian to him that redeems time from his worldly occasions and his lawful comforts and recreations, to be with God in his closet. David having tasted of the sweetness, goodness, and graciousness of God, cannot keep his bed, but will borrow some time from his sleep, that he might take some turns in paradise, and pour out his soul in prayer and praises, when no eye was open to see him, nor no ear open to hear him, but all were asleep round about him, Psa 63:6. Psa 119:62, 'At midnight will I arise to give thanks unto thee.' Psa 119:147, 'I have prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried.' David was up and at private prayer before daybreak. David was no sluggish Christian, no slothful Christian, no lazy Christian: he used to be in his closet when others were sleeping in their beds. So Psa 119:148, 'Mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate in thy word.' So Psa 130:6, 'My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Look, as the weary sentinel in a dark, cold, wet night, waits and peeps, and peeps and waits for the appearance of the morning; so David did wait and peep, and peep and wait for the first and fittest season to pour out his soul before God in a corner. David would never suffer his worldly business to jostle out holy exercises; he would often borrow time from the world for private prayer, but he would never borrow time from private prayer to bestow it upon the world.

Mr Bradford, the martyr, counted that hour lost wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, tongue, or purse.

Ignatius, when he heard a clock strike, would use to say, 'Now I have one hour more to answer for.' So the primitive Christians would redeem some time from their sleep, that they might be with God in their closets, as Clemens observes. And I have read of Theodosius [Nicephorus] the emperor, that after the variety of worldly employments relating to his civil affairs in the day time were over, how he was wont to consecrate the greatest part of the night to the studying of the Scriptures and private prayer; to which purpose he had a lamp so artificially made, that it supplied itself with oil, that so he might no way be interrupted in his private retirements. That time ought to be redeemed, is a lesson that hath been taught by the very heathens themselves. It was the saying of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, 'Know time, lose not a minute.' And so Theophrastus used to say, that 'Time is of precious cost.' And so Seneca: 'Time is the only thing,' saith he, 'that we can innocently be covetous of; and yet there is nothing of which many are more lavishly and profusely prodigal.' And Chrestus, a sophister of Byzantium in the time of Hadrianus the emperor, he was much given to wine; yet he always counted time so precious, that when he had misspent his time all the day, he would redeem it at night. When Titus Vespasian, who revenged Christ's blood on Jerusalem, returned victor to Rome, remembering one night as he sat at supper with his friends, that he had done no good that day, he uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, *Amici, diem perdidi*, 'My friends, I have lost a day.'

Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, 'To use and employ a man's time well.'

Cato held, that an account must be given, not only of our labour, but also of our leisure. And Ælian gives this testimony of the Lacedæmonians, 'that they were hugely covetous of their time, spending it all about necessary things, and suffering no citizen either to be idle or play.' And, saith another, 'We trifle with that which is most precious, and throw away that which is our greatest interest to redeem.'

Certainly, these heathens will rise in judgment, not only against Domitian the Roman emperor, who spent much of his time in killing of flies; nor only against Archimedes, who spent his time in drawing lines on the ground when Syracuse was taken; nor against Artaxerxes, who spent his time in making hafts for knives; nor only against Solyman the great Turk, who spent his time in making notches of horn for bows; nor only against Eropas, a Macedonian king, who spent his time in making of lanthorns; nor only against Hyrcanus the king of Parthia who spent his time in catching of moles; but also against many professors who, instead of redeeming of precious time, do trifle and fool away much of their precious time at the glass, the comb, the lute, the viol, the pipe, or at vain sports, and foolish pastimes, or by idle jestings, immoderate sleeping, and superfluous feasting, &c. O sirs! good hours, and blessed opportunities for closet prayer, are merchandise of the highest rate and price; and therefore, whosoever hath a mind to be rich in grace, and to be high in glory, should buy up that merchandise,—they should be still a-redeeming precious time. O sirs! we should redeem time for private prayer out of our eating time, our drinking time, our sleeping time, our buying time, our selling time, our sinning time, our sporting time, rather than neglect our closet communion with God, &c. But,

(6.) Sixthly, I answer, Closet prayer is either a duty or it is no duty. Now that it is a duty, I have so strongly proved, I suppose, that no man nor devil can fairly or honestly deny it to be a duty. And therefore, why do men cry out of their great business? Alas! duty must be done whatever business is left undone; duty must be done, or the man that neglects it will be undone for ever. It is a vain thing to object business, when a required duty is to be performed; and, indeed, if the bare objecting of business, of much business, were enough to excuse men from duty, I am afraid that there are but few duties of the gospel, but men would endeavour to evade under a pretence of business, of much business. He that pretends business to evade private prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade family prayer; and he that pretends business to evade family prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade public prayer. Well, sirs! remember what became of those that excused themselves out of heaven, by their carnal apologies, and secular businesses: Luk 14:16-24. 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee, have me excused,' saith one. 'I have bought,' saith another, 'five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee, have me excused.' And, 'I have married a wife,' saith another, 'and therefore I cannot come.' The true reason why they would not come to the supper that the King of kings had invited them to, was not because they had bought farms and oxen, but because their farms and oxen had bought them. The things of the world and their carnal relations had taken up so much room in their hearts and affections, that they had no stomach to heaven's dainties; and therefore it is observable what Christ adds at the end of the parable, 'He that hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also,' much more his farm and oxen, 'he cannot be my disciple,' verse 26. By these words, it is evident, that it was not simply the farm nor the oxen, nor the wife, but a foolish, inordinate, carnal love and esteem of these things, above better and greater blessings, that made them refuse the gracious invitation of Christ. They refused

the grace and mercy of God offering in the gospel, under a pretence of worldly business; and God peremptorily concludes, that not a man of them should taste of his supper. And indeed what can be more just and righteous, than that they should never so much as taste of spiritual and eternal blessings, who prefer their earthly business before heaven's dainties; who, with the Reubenites, prefer a country commodious for the feeding of their cattle, before an interest in the land of promise. Private prayer is a work of absolute necessity, both to the bringing of the heart into a good frame, and to the keeping of the heart in a good frame. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of sin, and for the preventing of sin, and for the embittering of sin, and for the weakening of sin, and for the purging away of sin. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of grace, and for a full exercise of grace, and for an eminent increase of grace. It is of absolute necessity to arm us, both against inward and outward temptations, afflictions, and sufferings. It is of absolute necessity to fit us for all other duties and services, &c. For a man to glorify God, to save his own soul, and to further his own everlasting happiness, is a work of the greatest necessity. Now private prayer is such a work; and therefore why should any man plead business, great business, when a work of such absolute necessity is before him? If a man's child or wife were dangerously sick, or wounded, or near to death, he would never plead, 'I have business, I have a great deal of business to do, and therefore I cannot stay with my child, my wife; and I have no time to go or send to the physician,' &c. Oh no! but he would rather argue thus: 'It is absolutely necessary that I should look after the preservation of the life of my child, my wife, and this I will attend whatever becomes of my business.' O sirs! your souls are of greater concernment to you than the lives of all the wives and children in the world; and therefore these must be attended, these must be saved, whatever business is neglected. But,

(7.) Seventhly, I answer, That God did never appoint or design any man's ordinary, particular calling to thrust private prayer out of door. That it is a great sin for any professor to neglect his particular calling under any religious pretence, is evident enough by these scriptures: Exo 20:9, 'Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work;' 1Co 7:20, 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;' 2Th 3:10-12, 'For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread;' 1Th 4:11-12, 'And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing;' Eph 4:28, 'But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;' 1Ti 5:8, 'But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' Yea, our Lord Jesus Christ was a plain downright carpenter, and was laborious in that particular calling till he entered upon the public ministry, as all the ancients do agree, Mark 6:3; Mat 13:55-56. And we read also that all the patriarchs had their particular callings. Abel was a keeper of sheep, Gen 4:2; Noah was a husbandman, Gen 5:29; the sons of Jacob were shepherds and keepers of cattle, Gen 46:34, &c.; and all the apostles, before they were called to the work of the ministry, had their particular callings. By the law of Mahomet, the great Turk himself is bound to exercise some manual trade or occupation.

Solon made a law, that the son should not be bound to relieve his father when old, unless he had set himself in his youth to some occupation. And at Athens, every man gave a yearly account to the magistrate by what trade or course of life he maintained himself, which, if he could not do, he was banished. And it is by all writers condemned as a very great vanity in Dionysius, that would needs be the best poet; and Caligula, that would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, that would needs be the best fiddler; and so became the three worst princes, by minding more other men's business than their own particular calling. But for a man to evade or neglect private prayer under pretence of his particular calling, is agreeable to no scripture, yea, it is contrary to very many scriptures, as is evident by the many arguments formerly cited. Certainly no man's calling is a calling away from God or godliness. It never entered into the heart of God that our particular callings should ever drive out of doors our general calling of Christianity. Look, as our general calling must not eat up our particular calling, so our particular calling must not eat up our general calling. Certainly our particular calling must give place to our general calling. Did not the woman of Samaria leave her water-pot, and ran into the city, and say, 'Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' John 4:28-29. Did not the shepherds leave their flocks in the field, and go to Bethlehem, and declare the good tidings of great joy that they had heard of the angel, viz. 'That there was born that day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which was Christ the Lord'? Luk 2:8-21. And did not Christ commend Mary for that holy neglect of her particular calling, when she sat at his feet, and heard his word? Luk 10:38, et seq. And what do all these instances shew, but that our particular callings must give the right hand to the general calling of Christianity? Certainly the works of our general calling are far more great and glorious, more eminent and excellent, more high and noble, than the works of our particular callings are; and therefore it is much more tolerable for our general calling to borrow time of our particular calling, than it is for our particular calling to borrow time of our general calling. Certainly those men are very ignorant or very profane, that either think themselves so closely tied up to follow their particular callings six days in the week, as that they must not intermeddle with any religious services, or that think their particular callings to be a gulf or a grave designed by God to swallow up private prayer in. God, who is the Lord of time, hath reserved some part of our time to himself every day. Though the Jews were commanded to labour six days of the week, yet they were commanded also to offer up morning and evening sacrifice daily, Deu 6:6-8; Exo 29:38-39; Num 28:3. The Jews divided the day into three parts: The first, to prayer; The second, for the reading of the law; And the third, for the works of their lawful callings. As bad as the Jews were, yet they every day set a part of the day apart for religious exercises. Certainly they are worse than Jews that spend all their time about their particular callings, and shut closet-prayer quite out of doors. Certainly that man's soul is in a very ill case, who is so entangled with the incumbrances of the world, that he can spare no time for private prayer. If God be the Lord of thy mercies, the Lord of thy time, and the Lord of thy soul, how canst thou, with any equity or honour, put off his service under a pretence of much business? That man is lost, that man is cursed, who can find time for anything, but none to meet with God in his closet. That man is doubtless upon the brink of ruin, whose worldly business eats up all thoughts of God, of Christ, of heaven, of eternity, of his soul, and of his soul concerns. But,

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, I answer, The more worldly business lies upon thy hand, the more need hast thou to keep close to thy closet. Much business lays a man open to many sins, and to many snares, and to many temptations. Now, the more sins, snares, and temptations a man's business lays him open to, the more need that man hath to be much in private prayer, that his soul may be

kept pure from sin, and that his foot may not be taken in the devil's trap, and that he may stand fast in the hour of temptation. Private prayer is so far from being a hindrance to a man's business, that it is the way of ways to bring down a blessing from heaven upon a man's business, Psa 1:2-3; Psa 127:1-2; Psa 128:1-2; as the first-fruits that God's people gave to him brought down a blessing from heaven upon all the rest, Deu 26:10-11. Whet is no let; prayer and provender never hinders a journey. Private prayer is like to Jacob, that brought down a blessing from heaven upon all that Laban had, Gen 30:27, Gen 30:30. Private prayer gives a man a sanctified use, both of all his earthly comforts, and of all his earthly business; and this David and Daniel found by experience: and therefore it was not their great public employments that could take them off from their private duties. Time spent in heavenly employments, is no time lost from worldly business, Deu 28:1-8. Private prayer makes all we take in hand successful. Closet-prayer hath made many rich, but it never made any man poor or beggarly in this world. No man on earth knows what may be the emergencies, or the occurrences of a day: Pro 27:1, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' Every day is as it were a great-bellied day; every day is as it were with child of something, but what it will bring forth, whether a cross or a comfort, no man can tell; as whilst a woman is with child, no man can tell what kind of birth it will be. No man knows what mercies a day may bring forth, no man knows what miseries a day may bring forth; no man knows what good a day may bring forth, no man knows what evil a day may bring forth; no man knows what afflictions a day may bring forth, no man knows what temptations a day may bring forth; no man knows what liberty a day may bring forth, no man knows what bonds a day may bring forth; no man knows what good success a day may bring forth, no man knows what bad success a day may bring forth; and therefore, a man had need be every day in his closet with God, that he may be prepared and fitted to entertain and improve all the occurrences, successes, and emergencies that may attend him in the course of his life. And let thus much suffice for answer to this first objection. But,

Obj. 2. Secondly, Others may object and say, Sir, we grant that private prayer is an indispensable duty that lies upon the people of God; but we are servants, and we have no time that we can call our own, and our master's business is such as will not allow us any time for private prayer, and therefore we hope we may be excused.

Solution (1.) First, The text is indefinite, and not limited to any sort or rank of persons, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, servant or master. 'But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.' Here are three thous, thou, thou, thou, which are to be understood indefinitely: thou servant as well as thou master, thou bondman as well as thou freeman, thou poor man as well as thou rich man, thou maid as well as thou mistress, thou child as well as thou father, thou wife as well as thou husband. Private prayer is an indispensable duty that lies upon all sorts and ranks of persons. A man may as well say that that pronoun tu, thou, that runs through the ten commandments,—Exo 20:3-18, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Six days shalt thou labour. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's,' &c.,—relates to the rich, and

not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to the free and not to them that are in bonds, &c., as he may say, that the three thous in the text relates to the rich and not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to those that are free but not to those that are bound; but certainly there is no man in his wits that will say so, that will affirm such a thing. Doubtless this pronoun thou reacheth every man, of what rank or quality soever he be in this world. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That the first, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth answers that are given to the first objection, are here very applicable; and oh that all masters and servants were so wise, so serious, and so ingenuous, as to lay all those answers warm on their own hearts! It might be a means to prevent much sin, and to be speak masters and mistresses to give their pious servants a little more time to lift up their hearts to Christ in a corner. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, If thou art a servant that hast liberty to choose a new master, thou wert better remove thy station than live under such a master's roof, who is such an enemy to God, to Christ, to religion, to himself, and to the eternal welfare of thy poor soul, as that he will not give thee half an hour's time in a day to spend in thy chamber, thy closet, though the glory of God, the good of his own family, and the everlasting happiness of thine own soul, is concerned in it, Psa 84:10, Psa 120:5. It is better for thee to shift thy master, than to neglect thy duty: 1Co 7:21, 'Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.' We lost our liberty by sin, and we affect nothing more than liberty by nature. The Rabbins say of liberty, that 'if the heavens were parchment, the sea ink, and every pile of grass a pen, the praises of it could not be comprised nor expressed.' Laban's house was full of idols. Great houses are often so. Jacob's tent was little, but the true worship of God was in it. It is infinitely better to live in Jacob's tent, than in Laban's house. It is best being with such masters where we may have least of sin, and most of God; where we may have the most helps, the best examples, and the choicest encouragements to be holy and happy. The religious servant should be as careful in the choice of his master, as the religious master is careful in the choice of his servant. Gracious servants are great blessings to the families where they live; and that master may well be called the unhappy master, who will rather part with a gracious servant, than spare him a little time in a day to pour out his soul before the Lord in a corner. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, If thou art a gracious servant, then thou art spirited and principled by God, to this very purpose, that thou mayest cry, Abba, Father, when thou art alone, when thou art in a corner, and no eye seeth thee, but his who seeth in secret, Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; 1Co 6:19; 2Ti 1:14. If thou art a gracious servant, then thou hast received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, 1Co 2:12. Now, he that hath this tree of life, he hath also the fruit that grows upon this tree: Gal 5:22-23, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, &c. Now, grace is called, not the works of the Spirit, but the fruits of the Spirit.

(1.) Because all grace is derived from the Spirit as the fruit is derived from the root. And,

(2.) To note the pleasantness and delightfulness of grace, for what is more pleasant and delightful than sweet and wholesome fruits? Song of Solomon 4:16, Song of Solomon 6:2.

(3.) To note the profit and advantage that doth redound to them that have the Spirit; for as many grow rich by the fruits of their gardens and orchards, so many grow rich in grace, in holiness, in comfort, in spiritual experiences, by the fruits of the Spirit. Now why hath God given thee his Spirit, and why hath he laid into thy soul a stock of supernatural graces, but that thou mayest be every way qualified, disposed, and fitted for private prayer, and to maintain secret communion with God in a corner?

Certainly God never gave any poor servant a talent of gifts, or a talent of grace, but in order to his driving of a secret trade heaven-ward.

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, Though king Darius had made a decree that none should ask any petition of any god or man, for thirty days, upon the penalty of being cast into the den of lions, yet Daniel, who was both a subject and a servant to king Darius, and one upon whose hands the chiefest and greatest affairs of the kingdom did lie, did keep up his private devotions. In the first and second verses of that sixth of Daniel, you will find that Daniel had abundance of great and weighty employments upon his hands; he was set over the whole affairs of the whole empire of Persia, and he with two other presidents, of whom himself was chief, were to receive the accounts of the whole kingdom from all those hundred and twenty princes, which in the Persian monarchy were employed in all public businesses. And yet, notwithstanding such a multiplicity of business as lay upon his hands, and notwithstanding his servile condition, yet he was very careful to redeem time for private prayer; yea, it is very observable that the heart of Daniel, in the midst of all his mighty businesses, was so much set upon private prayer, upon his secret retirements for religious exercises, that he runs the hazard of losing all his honours, profits, pleasures, yea, and life itself, rather than he would be deprived of convenient time and opportunities to wait upon God in his chamber. Certainly Daniel will one day rise in judgment against all those subjects and servants who think to evade private prayer by their pleas of much business, and of their being servants, &c. But,

(6.) Sixthly, I answer, If you who are gracious servants, notwithstanding your masters' businesses, cannot redeem a little time to wrestle with God in a corner, what singular thing do you? What do you more than others? Do you hear? So do others. Do you read? So do others. Do you follow your masters to public prayers? So do others. Do you join with your masters in family prayers? So do others. Oh! but now gracious servants should go beyond all other servants in the world, they should do singular things for God: Mat 5:47, 'What do you more than others?' τὰ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα? What extraordinary thing do you? What more ordinary than to find servants follow their masters to public prayers and to family prayers? Oh! but now to find poor servants to redeem a little time from their masters' business to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner, this is not ordinary, yea, this is extraordinary, and this doth wonderfully well become gracious servants. Oh! that all men's servants, who are servants to the most high God, would seriously consider,

[1.] How singularly they are privileged by God above all other servants in the world. They are called, adopted, reconciled, pardoned, justified before the throne of God, which other servants are not, &c., 1Co 3:22-23. And why then should not such servants be singular in their services, who are so singular in their privileges?

[2] Secondly, Gracious servants are made partakers of a more excellent nature than other servants are. 2Pe 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by

these you might be made partakers of the divine nature.' The apostle in this expression doth not aim at any essential change and conversion of our substance into the nature of God and Christ, but only at the elevation and dignifying of our nature by Christ. Though that real, that near, that dear, that choice, that mysterious, that peculiar, that singular, union that Christians have with Christ, doth raise them up to a higher similitude and likeness of God and Christ than ever they had attained to in their primitive perfection; yet it doth not introduce any real transmutation, either of our bodies or souls, into the divine nature. It is certain that our union and conjunction with Christ doth neither mingle persons nor unite substances, but it doth enjoin our affections, and brings our wills into a league of amity with Christ. To be made partaker of the divine nature notes two things, say some.

First, A fellowship with God in his holiness;

Secondly, A fellowship with God in his blessedness, viz., in the beatifical vision and brightness of glory. To be made 'partakers of the divine nature,' say others, is to be made partakers of those holy graces, those divine qualities, which sometimes are called, 'the image of God, the likeness of God, the life of God,' &c., Eph 4:24, Col 3:10, whereby we resemble God, not only as a picture doth a man in outward lineaments, but as a child doth his father in countenance and conditions. Now, take the words which way you will, how highly doth it concern those servants, that are made partakers of the divine nature, to do singular things for God, to do such things for God, that other servants, that are not partakers of the divine nature, have no mind, no heart, no spirit to do! yea, that they refuse and scorn to do!

[3.] Thirdly, Gracious servants are worthily descended; they have the most illustrious extraction and honourable original, 1Jn 5:19; John 3:8; Jas 2:5.

[4.] Fourthly, Gracious servants are worthily attended, they are nobly guarded; Psa 34:15; Heb 1:14; Deu 33:26-27; Zec 2:5.

[5.] Fifthly, Gracious servants are worthily dignified; they are dignified with the highest and most honourable titles, 1Pe 1:2, 1Pe 1:9; Rev 1:5-6; Rev 5:10.

[6.] Sixthly, Take many things in one: gracious servants have more excellent graces, experiences, comforts, communions, promises, assurances, discoveries, hopes, helps, principles, diet, raiment, portion, than all other servants in the world have; and therefore God may well expect better and greater things from them than from all other servants in the world. God may very well expect that they should do singular things for his glory, who hath done such singular things for their good. Certainly God expects that gracious servants should be a-blessing of him, when other servants are a-blaspheming of him; that they should be a-magnifying of him, when other servants are a-debasing of him; that they should be a-redeeming of precious time, when other servants are a-trifling, fooling, playing or sinning away of precious time; that they should be a-weeping in a corner, when other servants are a-sporting and making themselves merry among their jovial companions; that they should be a-mourning in secret, when other servants are a-sinning in secret; and that they should be at their private devotion, when other servants are sleeping and snorting, &c.

Solomon, that was the wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne, and who was guided by an infallible Spirit, hath delivered it for a standing maxim above two thousand years ago, 'that the

righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Pro 12:26. When Solomon dropped this aphorism from his royal pen, there was not a man in the world that was legally righteous; Adam and all his posterity being fallen from all their honour, glory, dignity, and excellency, into a most woful gulf of sin and misery; and therefore Solomon must be understood of him that is evangelically righteous, Psa 14:1-3; Rom 3:9-12; Lam 5:16. He that is evangelically righteous, be he master or servant, rich or poor, bond or free, high or low, is more excellent than his neighbour. And oh that all masters would seriously consider of this, that they may carry it no more so proudly, so loftily, so scornfully, so forwardly, so strangely, so sourly, so bitterly, so rigorously, towards their pious servants, as not to afford them a little time to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner!

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves and Veneds, who, making a stately feast, appointed all his pagan nobles to sit in the hall below; and at the same time commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, that they might eat of his kingly cheer; at which many wondering, he told them, that he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament at his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest nobles that were not converted to the Christian faith; for saith he, when these pagan nobles shall be thrust down to hell, these poor Christians shall be my consorts and fellow-princes in heaven.³ Certainly, this noble prince will one day rise in judgment against all sour, churlish Labans, who carry it so harshly and so severely towards their gracious servants, as that they will not allow them a little time to wait upon God in a hole, Eph 6:9. Why should not gracious masters give their gracious servants a little time for closet prayer now, considering that they are sharers with them in all the fundamental good that comes by Christ in this world; and considering that they shall be partakers with them in all the glory of another world? The poorest servant in a family hath a soul more precious than heaven and earth; and the greatest work that lies upon his hand in this world, is to look to the eternal safety and security of that: for if that be safe, all is safe; if that be well, all is well; but if that be lost, all is lost. Every gracious servant, though he be never so poor and mean, yet hath he the image of God, the image of the King of kings stamped upon him; and woe to him that shall wrong, or despise, or trample upon that image! Certainly, God himself is wronged by the injury that is done to his image. The contempt and despite that is done to the image or coin of a king, is done to the king himself; and accordingly he will revenge it.

If it was a capital crime in Tiberius his days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin into any sordid place, as Suetonius saith it was; what crime must it be in those masters who despise, revile, reproach, scorn, abuse, and tread under foot, such servants as have the image of the great God stamped upon their souls, and all because they look God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, holiness-ward, duty-ward? Masters should never twit their servants in the teeth with their inferiority, penury, poverty, misery, mean parentage, or servile condition; but remember that these things are more the Creator's pleasure than the servant's fault, and that that God that hath made the master rich and the servant poor, can as quickly make the master poor and the servant rich, Pro 22:2, Pro 17:5. God many times puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of low degree, Luk 1:52. Certainly, no master nor mistress should dare to insult or triumph over such servants as have souls as noble as their own; but they should seriously and frequently consider of Solomon's aphorism, 'The righteous, though a servant,' though the meanest among all the servants, 'is more excellent than his neighbour,' and accordingly give them a little time and liberty

to converse with God in-secret. And oh that all gracious servants would discover themselves to be more excellent than their neighbours, by making more conscience of private prayer than their neighbours do, and by being more in their closets than their neighbours are, and by delighting themselves in their secret retirements more than their neighbours will, and by redeeming some time for God, for their souls, and for eternity, more than their neighbours do. But,

(7.) Seventhly, I answer, That God is only the Lord of time. Time is more the Lord's than it is thy master's; and therefore it is no neglecting of thy master's business, to take a little time daily for private prayer. Times do belong to providence as well as issues; and as God is the God of our mercies, so he is the Lord of our times: 'My times are in thy hands,' saith David, Psa 31:15. Not only the times of his sorrows, but also the times of his comforts; not only the times of his miseries, but also the times of his mercies; not only the times of his dangers, but also the times of his duties, were in the hands of God.

It is observable the Psalmist doth not say time, but times, in the plural, to shew that every point and period of time depends upon the hand of God.

One, complaining of those who say, Come, let us talk together, to pass away the time, with grief of spirit cries out, O donec prætereat hora, &c., 'Oh until the hour be gone, oh until time be past, which the mercy of thy Maker hath bestowed upon thee to perform repentance, to procure pardon, to gain grace, and to obtain glory.' That servant that borrows a little time every day to seek the face of God in a corner, borrows it rather of God than of his master; and therefore why should his master swell, or rage, or complain, considering that God never made him Lord of time? But,

(8.) Eighthly, I answer, That servants should rather redeem time from their sleep, their recreations, their daily meals, than neglect closet-duty a day. And certainly those servants that, out of conscience towards God, and out of a due regard to the internal and eternal welfare of their own souls, shall every day redeem an hour's time from their sleep, or sports, or feedings, to spend with God in secret, they shall find by experience that the Lord will make a few hours' sleep sweeter and better than many hours' sleep to them; and their outward sports shall be made up with inward delights; and for their common bread, God will feed them with that bread that came down from heaven. Sirs, was not Christ his Father's servant? Isa 42:1. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect' (or choice one), 'in whom my soul delighteth' (or is well pleased)! 'I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' And did not he redeem time from his natural rest, rather than he would omit private prayer? Mark 1:35, 'And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' Christ spent the day in preaching, in healing the sick, in working of miracles; and rather than these noble works should shut out private prayer, he rises a great while before day, that he might have some time to wrestle with his Father in secret. So Luk 6:12, 'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.' O sirs! did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer for the salvation of your souls; and will you think it much to redeem an hour's time from your natural rest to seek and to serve him in a corner, and to make sure the things of your everlasting peace? The redeeming of time for private prayer is the redeeming of a precious treasure, which, if once lost, can never fully be recovered again. If riches should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to Job; or if credit, and honour, and worldly greatness and renown, should fly away, they may return again, as they did to

Nebuchadnezzar; if success, and famous victories and conquests, should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to many of the Roman conquerors and others; but if time, whom the poets paint with wings, to shew the volubility and swiftness of it, fly from us, it will never more return unto us. A great lady [Queen Elizabeth] of this land, on her dying bed cried out, 'Call time again, call time again; a world of wealth for an inch of time!' but time past was never, nor could never be recalled. The Egyptians drew the picture of time with three heads. The first was of a greedy wolf gaping for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured even the memory of so many things past recalling. The second of a crowned lion roaring for time present, because it hath the principality of all action, for which it calls aloud. And the third was of a deceitful dog, fawning for time to come, because it feeds fond men with many flattering hopes, to their eternal undoing. Oh that all this might prevail with servants to redeem time for private prayer! And if my counsel might take place, I should rather advise servants to redeem some time for private prayer from their sleep or lawful recreations, or set meals, &c., than to spend in private prayer that time which their masters call their time, especially if their masters be unconverted, and in 'the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;' and that for these five reasons.

[1.] First, Because this may be a means to prevent much sin on the master's side. Masters that are in their unregenerate estate are very apt to storm, and take on, and let fly against God, and Christ, and religion, and profession, &c., when they see their servants spend that time in private prayer, or in any other religious exercise, which, according to their understanding, is their time, and ought to be wholly spent in following their businesses. Now gracious servants should have that honourable respect, and that tender affection, and that Christian compassion to their masters' souls, as to do to the utmost all that lies in them to prevent their masters from contracting guilt upon their souls, or from making work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician of souls, Jude 1:22-23. The Persians, the Turks, and many Indians are so compassionate, that they erect hospitals not only for lame and diseased men, but also for birds, beasts, and dogs that are either aged, starved, or hurt. Oh then, what tender compassions should gracious servants exercise towards their masters' souls, which are jewels more worth than heaven and earth! But,

[2.] Secondly, Because this may be a means to convince the judgments and consciences of their masters, that there is some worth, some excellency, some sweetness. &c., to be found in private prayer, and in other closet-duties; for when masters shall observe their servants to redeem time for closet duties, from their very sleep, recreations, dinners, suppers, they will be ready to conclude, that certainly there is more worth, more goodness, more sweetness, more excellency, more glory, more gain in closet duties, than ever they have understood, felt, or experienced, &c., and that their very poor servants are better and more righteous than themselves. Sozomen reports, that the devout life of a poor captive Christian woman, made a king and all his family embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. Good works convince more than miracles themselves.

I have read of one Pachomius, a soldier under Constantine the emperor, how that his army being almost starved for want of necessary provision, he came to a city of Christians, and they of their own charity relieved them speedily and freely; he wondering at their free and noble charity, inquired what kind of people they were whom he saw so bountiful? It was answered that they were Christians, whose profession it is to hurt no man, and do good to every man. Hereupon Pachomius, convinced of the excellency of this religion, threw away his arms, and became a Christian, a saint. Look as husbands sometimes are won by the conversation of their wives without

the word, 1Pe 3:1-2; so masters may sometimes be won by the gracious carriage and conversation of their servants, without the word. The servant's redeeming of time for private duties, upon the hardest and severest terms, may be so blessed to the master, that it may issue in his conviction, conversion, and salvation. There is a may-be for it; and a very may-be should be a sufficient encouragement for every gracious servant to do all he can to save the soul of his master from going down into the infernal pit. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Because the servant's redeeming of time from his sleep, recreations, meals, for private prayer, will most clearly and abundantly evidence the singular love, the great delight, and the high esteem that he hath of private prayer. We say those children love their books well, and delight much in learning, who will be at their books when others are gone to their beds, and who will be at their books before others can get out of their beds. Certainly they love private prayer well, and they delight much in closet communion with God, who will be a-praying when others are a-sleeping, and who will be a-dressing their souls before God in a corner, before their mistress is a-dressing of herself at the glass, or their fellow-servants a-dressing themselves in the shop. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer, from his sleep, set meals, recreations, &c., may be of most use to other fellow-servants, both to awaken them, and to convince them that the things of religion are of the greatest and highest importance, and that there is no trade, or pleasure, or profit, to that private trade that is driven between God and a man's own soul; and also to keep them from trifling, or fooling away of that time, which is truly and properly their masters' time, and by the royal law of heaven ought to be spent solely and wholly in their service and business. For what ingenuous servant is there in the world but will argue thus? I see that such and such of my fellow-servants will redeem time for private prayer, and for other closet-services, from their very sleep, meals, recreations, &c.; rather than they will borrow, or make bold with that time which my master saith is his, &c.; and why then should I be so foolish, so brutish, so mad, to trifle, or idle, or play, or toy away that time which should be spent in my master's service, and for my master's advantage? But,

[5.] Fifthly, and lastly, Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer from his sleep, his meals, his recreations, &c., cannot but be infinitely pleasing to God; and that which will afford him most comfort when he comes to die. The more any poor heart acts contrary to flesh and blood, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart denies himself, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart acts against the stream of sinful examples, the more he pleases God; the more difficulties and discouragements a poor heart meets with in the discharge of his duty, the more love he shews to God; and the more love a poor heart shews to God, the more he pleases God: Jer 2:2-3, 'Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.' God was very highly pleased and greatly delighted with the singular love and choice affections of his people towards him, when they followed after him, and kept close to him, in that tedious and uncouth passage through the waste, howling wilderness. How all these things do comport with that poor pious servant that redeems time for private prayer upon the hardest terms imaginable, I shall leave the ingenuous reader to judge. And certainly, upon a dying bed, no tongue can express, nor heart conceive but he that feels it, the unspeakable comfort that closet-duties will afford to him that

hath been exercised in them, upon those hard terms that are under present consideration. But,

(9.) Ninthly, I answer, If thou art a gracious servant, then the near and dear relations that is between God and thee, and the choice privileges that thou art interested in, calls aloud for private prayer, John 8:32-33, John 8:36. As thou art thy Master's servant, so thou art the Lord's free-man: 1Co 7:22-23, 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free-man; likewise, also he that is called being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye servants of men,'—either when they command you things forbidden by Christ, or forbid you things commanded by Christ; or when they would exercise a dominion over your faith, or a lordship over your consciences. Suffer not yourselves in spiritual things to be brought into such bondage by any men or masters in the world, as not to use that freedom and liberty that Christ hath purchased for you with his dearest blood, Gal 5:1, Col 2:20, Gal 2:4. No servants are to serve their masters in opposition to Christ; nor no servants are to serve their masters as spiritual masters; nor no servants are to serve their masters as supreme masters, but as subordinate masters, Eph 6:5-7. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's free-man, so every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, Isa 41:8, Jas 2:23, John 15:13-15. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, so every gracious servant is the Lord's son, Gal 4:5-6, Rom 8:16. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's son, so every gracious servant is the Lord's spouse, Hos 2:19-20, 2Co 11:2. And now I appeal to the consciences of all that have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whether the near and dear relations that is between the Lord and pious servants doth not call aloud upon them to take all opportunities and advantages that possibly they can to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret, and to acquaint him in a corner with all their secret wants, and weaknesses, and wishes, &c. And as gracious servants are thus nearly and dearly related to God, so gracious servants are very highly privileged by God. Gracious servants are as much freed from the reign of sin, the dominion of sin, and the damnable power of sin, as gracious masters are, Rom 6:14. Gracious servants are as much freed from hell, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God, as their gracious masters are, Rom 8:1. Gracious servants are as much adopted, as much reconciled, as much pardoned, as much justified, and as much redeemed, as their gracious masters are, Gal 3:13. Gracious servants are as much heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, as their gracious masters are. Gracious servants are as much a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into his marvellous light, as their gracious masters are. And therefore they being all alike interested in all these great and glorious privileges which belong to saints as saints, they are, without all peradventure, alike obliged and engaged to all those duties which lies upon saints as saints, among which private prayer is one; and therefore they are to buckle to this duty against all carnal reasons and objections whatsoever. But,

(10.) Tenthly, and lastly, I answer, that the promised reward in the text lies as fair and as open to the servant as to the master, to the bond as to the free, to the peasant as to the prince. Whosoever prays to his heavenly Father in secret, be he high or low, rich or poor, honourable or base, servant or master, he shall receive an open reward. The reward in the text is not to be confined or limited to this or that sort or rank of men, but it is to be extended to all ranks and sorts of men that make conscience of private prayer, of closet duties. So Eph 6:5-8, 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of

God from the heart: with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.' Col 3:22-24, 'Servants obey, in all things, your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Jesus Christ.' Such servants as serve their masters faithfully, cordially, and in singleness of spirit, shall receive the reward of grace and the reward of the inheritance. The meanest servant that is faithful in the service of his master, shall for a recompence receive the eternal inheritance, Rom 8:15-17. The recompence of reward in the scripture last cited is not of merit, but of mere grace, because the inheritance belongs only to children upon the account of their birth or adoption. Faithful servants shall of servants be made sons, and so enjoy the heavenly inheritance. Christ is so noble a master, that he will not suffer any service that hath been performed to men out of conscience to his command to pass unrewarded. Oh how much more will he recompense pious servants for those spiritual services that they perform for his sake, for his glory! God is so liberal a paymaster, that no man shall so much as shut the door, or kindle a fire upon his altar, or give a cup of cold water—one of the least, readiest, and meanest refreshments that be—but he shall be rewarded, Mal 1:10, Mat 10:42.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin, upon God's rewarding of the Rechabites' obedience, Jer 35:19, 'God,' saith he, 'often recompenseth the shadows and seeming appearances of virtue, to shew that complacency he takes in the ample rewards that he hath reserved for true and sincere piety.' Nebuchadnezzar, though a tyrant, yet being engaged in God's service against Tyre, he shall have Egypt as his pay, for his pains at Tyre, Eze 29:18-20. It is an ancient slur and slander that hath been cast upon God, as if he were an austere master, an illiberal Lord, and as if there were nothing to be got in his service but knocks, blows, wounds, crosses, losses, &c., whereas he is a rewarder, not only of them that diligently seek him, but even of the very worst of men that do any service for him, Heb 11:6. I have read of Herod Agrippa, the same that was smitten by the angel and eaten up of worms, because he gave not glory to God, Acts 12:23, that, being bound in chains, and sent to prison by Tiberius for wishing Caius in the empire, one Thaumastus, a servant of Caius, carrying a pitcher of water, met him, and Agrippa being very thirsty, desired him to give him some of his water to drink, which he willingly did: whereupon Agrippa said, 'This service thou hast done in giving me drink, shall do thee good another day.' And he was as big and as good as his word; for afterwards, when Caius was emperor, and Agrippa made king of Judea, he first got his liberty, then made him chief officer of his household, and after his decease took order that he should continue in the same office with his son. Now how much more then will the King of kings reward all those poor pious servants of his, that do not only give to him in his members cups of cold water, but do also redeem time from their very rest, meals, and recreations, that they may have some time to seek the face of God in a corner. Certainly, there shall not be a sigh, a groan, a prayer, a tear let fall by a poor servant in a corner, that shall not be at last regarded and rewarded by the great God. Lyra saith, that Mordecai waited six years, before his good service was rewarded by king Ahasuerus. It may be God may reward thee sooner for all thy closet services; but if he do not reward thee sooner, he will certainly reward thee better, he will reward thee with higher honours, with greater dignities, with more glorious robes, and with a more royal crown, even an incorruptible crown, a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, a crown of glory, 1Co 15:53; 2Ti 4:8; Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4. And therefore hold on and hold out in your secret retirements.

Though some may deride you, and others revile you, and your carnal masters discourage you, yet God is faithful and will certainly reward you; yea, he will openly reward you for all the secret pourings out of your souls in his bosom. But,

Obj. 3. Some may further object and say, Oh but we cannot pray alone; we want those gifts and endowments which others have; we are shut up and know not how to pour out our souls before God in a corner; we would willingly pray, but we want ability to pour out our souls before the Lord in secret, &c.

Solution 1. God's dearest children may sometimes be shut up; they may with Zacharias, for a time, be struck dumb, and not able to speak, Luk 1:20; Psa 77:4. 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak,' Psa 38:9. 'Lord, all my desire is before thee: and my groaning is not hid from thee.' God's dearest children have sometimes been so shut up, that they have been able to say nothing, nor to do nothing but groan. A child of God may sometimes meet with such a blow from God, from conscience, from Scripture, from Satan, from the world, that may for a time so astonish him, that he may not be able to speak to God, nor speak to others, nor speak to his own heart. Look, as the Holy Spirit is not always a teaching Spirit, nor always a leading Spirit, nor always a comforting Spirit, nor always a sealing Spirit, nor always a witnessing Spirit, nor always an assuring Spirit to any of the saints; so he is not always a supplicating Spirit in any of the saints. When he is grieved, vexed, quenched, provoked, he may suspend his gracious influences, and deny the soul his assistance; and what can a Christian then say or do? But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, Thou canst not pray; but canst thou not sigh, nor groan neither? There may be the Spirit of adoption in sighs and groans, as well as in vocal prayer, Rom 8:26. The force, the virtue, the efficacy, the excellency of prayer doth not consist in the number and flourish of words, but in the supernatural motions of the Spirit, in sighs, and groans, and pangs, and strong affections of heart, that are unspeakable and unutterable. Certainly, the very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul before the Lord, though it be but in sighs, groans, and tears, 1Sa 1:13-19. One sigh and groan from a broken heart, is better pleasing to God, than all human eloquence. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, Beg of God to teach thee to pray. Oh beg the Holy Spirit, that is a Spirit of prayer. God hath promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, Luk 11:13. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!' Eze 36:26-27. 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,' Eze 11:19. 'And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh,' Zec 12:10. 'I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication.' Now gracious promises are God's bonds, and he loves to see his people put them in suit. God expects that we should be his remembrancers, and that we should pray over his promises, Isa 62:6-7; Isa 42:24-25. When he had promised great things to his people concerning justification, sanctification, and preservation, he subjoins, 'Yet, I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it,' Eze 36:37. God looks that we should spread his gracious promises before him, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, Isa 37:14. God is never better pleased

than when his people importune him in his own words, and urge him with arguments taken from his own promises. Though God be a very affectionate father, and a very liberal father, yet he is not a prodigal father, for he will never throw away his mercies on such as will not stoutly and humbly plead out his promises with him. God loves to take state upon him, and will be sought unto, both for his giving in of mercies, and for his making good of precious promises. Thou sayest thou canst not pray; why! canst thou not go into a corner, and spread the promises last cited before the Lord, and tell him how much it concerns his honour and glory, as well as thy own internal and eternal good, to make good those gracious promises that he hath made concerning his giving of his Spirit to them that ask him, and his putting his Spirit within them, and his pouring out a Spirit of grace and supplication upon them?

We read of Tamar, Gen 38:18, Gen 38:25, that when Judah her father-in-law lay with her, she took as a pledge his signet, bracelets, and staff; and afterwards, when she was in great distress, and ready to be burnt as an harlot, she then brought out her staff, and signet, and bracelets, and said, 'By the man whose these are, am I with child,' and thereby she saved her life. The promises are as so many rich mines, they are as so many choice flowers of paradise, they are the food, life, and strength of the soul. They are as a staff to support the soul, and they are as a signet and bracelets to adorn the soul, and to enrich the soul; and therefore poor sinners should bring them forth, and lay them before the Lord, and urge God with them, there being no way on earth to save a man's soul, and to prevent a burning in hell like this. Concerning precious promises, let me give you these eight hints.

[1.] First, That they are truly propounded and stated by God, Mark 10:30.

[2.] Secondly, That they shall certainly be performed, 2Co 1:20, they being all made in and through Christ. They are made first to Christ, and then to all that have union and communion with him.

Sirtorius, saith Plutarch, paid what he promised with fair words; but so doth not God. Men many times say and unsay; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; but God will never eat the words that are gone out of his mouth: Isa 46:10-11, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure; yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it.'

[3.] Thirdly, That they all issue from free grace, from special love, from divine goodness, Hos 14:4.

[4.] Fourthly, That they are all as unchangeable as he is that made them, Jer 31:3.

[5.] Fifthly, That they are all bottomed and founded upon the truth, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency of God, Mal 3:6.

[6.] Sixthly, That they are pledges and pawns of great things that God will do for his people in time, Heb 13:5.

[7.] Seventhly, That they are most sure and certain evidences of divine favour, and a declaration of the heart and good-will of God to his poor people, Heb 6:12, Num 23:19.

[8.] Eighthly, That they are the price of Christ's blood.

Now how should all these things encourage poor souls to be still a-pressing of God with his promises. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You say you cannot pray, &c. Oh that you would leave off objecting, and fall upon praying. If you cannot pray as you would, nor as you should, pray as well as you can. Joseph's brethren stood so long dallying, and delaying, and trifling out the time, that, having a journey to go to buy corn, they might have bought and returned twice before they went and bought once. When Elijah called Elizens, he goes about the bush, and he must needs go bid his father and mother farewell before he could follow the prophet, 1Ki 19:20. O friends! take heed of dallying, delaying, trifling, and going about the bush, when you should be a-falling upon the work of prayer. What though with Hannah thou canst but weep out a prayer, or with Moses stammer out a prayer, or with Hezekiah chatter out a prayer, yet do as well as thou canst, and thou shalt find acceptance with God: 2Co 8:12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' The publican's prayer had not much rhetoric or eloquence in it, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luk 18:13, and yet God accepted it. He prayed much, though he spake little, and God did not turn a deaf ear upon him. That God that once accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation, and the poor widow's two mites, as if they had been two millions, will certainly accept of what thou art able to do, though thou dost fall short, yea, much short, of what thou oughtest to do, Lev 2:1-2, and Lev 6:15, Luk 21:3. 'Lord,' saith Luther, 'thou commandest me to pray. I cannot pray as I would, yet I will obey; for though my prayer be not acceptable, yet thine own commandment is acceptable to thee.' If weak Christians would but put forth, in prayer that little strength they have, God would quickly renew their spiritual strength; he would certainly carry them on from strength to strength; he would still, by secret assistances and secret influences, help them on in their heavenly trade, Isa 49:20-22, Psa 84:7. As a loving indulgent father will take his little child in his arms, and carry him on in his way homeward, when his strength begins to fail him, and he can walk no further, and the way proves dirty, slippery, or uneven, so doth God by his: Hos 11:3, 'I taught Ephraim also to go' (as a nurse doth the infant), 'taking them by their arm.' When God's poor children come to a foul way, or a rough place, he takes them up in his own arms, and helps them over the quagmire of crosses, and the difficulties of duties, and over all that straitness, and narrowness, and weakness of spirit that doth attend them in their closet performances.

It is observable, that when the king of Israel was to shoot the arrow, he did put his hand upon the bow, and Elisha did put his hand upon the king's hand, 2Ki 13:16. So when we go into our closets, we are to put up our hand, and then the Spirit of God likewise will put his hand upon our hand, he will put his strength to our strength, or rather to our weakness: Rom 8:26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities,' lifts with us, or helpeth together. The Greek word συναντιλαμβάνεται doth properly signify such a help, as when another man of strength and ability steppeth in to sustain the burden that lieth upon our shoulders, be it a log, or a piece of timber, setting his shoulders under it, to lift up, and bear part of it with us, or to help us as the nurse helpeth her little child, upholding it by the sleeve. When a poor Christian sets himself to closet prayer, or to mourn, or to believe, or to obey, &c., then the Spirit comes in with new help, and new influences, and new assistances, and so carries him on in all these noble services. That child that doth but stammer at first, in time will speak plainly and fluently. Oh how many Christians are there that now can pray with much freedom, liberty, and fluency, who at first could only sigh out a prayer, or stammer out a prayer, or

weep out a prayer! Thou sayest thou cannot pray, but didst thou but stir up thyself to obey that command, Mat 6:6, as well as thou canst, thou dost not know but that a power may go forth with the command, that may enable thee to act suitable to the command. In Mat 9:1-9, Christ bid the palsy man rise and walk: 'Take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.' The palsy man might have objected, 'Alas! I am carried by four, I am not able to stir a limb, much less to rise, but least of all to take up my bed and walk, &c. Oh but he rouseth up himself as well as he could, and a power went forth with the command, that enabled him to do what was commanded. So Mat 12:10-14, there was a poor man that had a withered hand, and Christ commands him to stretch forth his hand; he might have replied, 'My hand is withered, and if I might have as many worlds as there be men in the world, to stretch it forth, I could not stretch it forth; yea, if my very life, if my very salvation did lie upon stretching forth my withered arm, I could not stretch it forth.' Oh! but he throws by all such pleas, and complies with Christ's command as well as he could, and a power went forth and healed his hand. O sirs! if you would but pray in your closets as well as you can, you do not know but that such a power and virtue might flow from Christ into your hearts, as might carry you on in your closet-duties, beyond expectation, even to admiration; others have found it so, and why not you, why not you? Well! remember, that God is no curious nor critical observer of the incongruous expressions that falls from his poor children when they are in their closet-duties; he is such a Father as is very well pleased with the broken expressions and divine stammerings of his people when they are in a corner. It is not a flood of words, nor studied notions, nor seraphical expressions, nor elegant phrases in prayer, that takes the ear, or that delights the heart of God, or that opens the gates of glory, or that brings down the best of blessings upon the soul; but uprightness, holiness, heavenliness, spiritualness, and brokenness of heart: these are the things that make a conquest upon God, and that turns most to the soul's account. But,

(5.) Fifthly Thou sayest thou canst not pray, but if thou art a child of God, thou hast the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God is a Spirit of prayer and supplication. That all the children of God have the Spirit of God is most evident in the blessed Scriptures. Take these for a taste: Zec 12:10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication;' Psa 51:11, 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;' Rom 8:15, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;' 1Co 2:12, 'We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' 1Th 4:8, 'Who hath given unto us his Holy Spirit;' 1Jn 3:4, 'Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us;' 1Jn 4:13, 'Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' That all the children of God have the Spirit of God, may be further made evident by an induction of these seven particulars.

[1.] First, They are all sanctified by the Spirit: 1Co 6:11, 'Ye are sanctified by the Spirit of our God.' I do not say, that they are all equally sanctified by the Spirit, but I say they are all really sanctified by the Spirit. Though all the servants of Christ have their talents, yet all have not their ten talents, nor all have not their five talents, nor all have not their two talents; some have only their one talent, Mat 25:15. Though Benjamin's mess was five times as much as his brethren's mess, yet every one of his brethren had their mess, Gen 43:32-34, so though some Christians have five times more measures of the Spirit, and more measures of light, of love, of holiness, of heavenly-mindedness, &c., than others have, yet every Christian hath some measures of the Spirit, and some measures of grace and holiness, &c. Though some are babes in Christ, and

others are children in Christ, though some are young men in Christ, and others old men in Christ, yet every one of them is born of the Spirit of Christ, 1Pe 2:2; 1Jn 2:12-14; John 3:8. Though none of the people of God in this life, have the Spirit in perfection, yet every one of them have so much of the Spirit as will bring him to salvation. Every Christian hath so much of the Spirit as will bring Christ and his soul together; and therefore without all peradventure, every Christian hath so much of the Spirit, as will at last bring heaven and his soul together.

[2.] Secondly, They are all led by the Spirit: Rom 8:14, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' Every child of God hath a twofold guide: the word without, and the Spirit within, Isa 30:20-21. How the Spirit leads by the rule of the word, and how he leads to God, and leads to Christ, and leads to truth, and leads to righteousness, and leads to holiness, and leads to happiness, I shall not now undertake to shew, Pro 6:22, Eph 5:9.

[3.] Thirdly, They are all upheld and strengthened by the Spirit: Psa 51:12, 'Uphold me with thy free Spirit;' or underprop me or sustain me, as the Hebrew hath it, with thy free, voluntary Spirit; or, as the Greek turns it, with thy noble, princely Spirit. So Eph 3:16, 'To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' By the inner man, some understand the regenerate part of man; others, by the inner man, do understand the soul with all its noble faculties and motions. Take the words which way you will, it is certain that all the spiritual might and strength that a Christian hath, he hath it from the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit strengthens every Christian in the inner man, yet I do not say that the Spirit strengthens every Christian alike in the inward man. Some have stronger corruptions to subdue than others, and more violent temptations to withstand than others, and greater difficulties to wrestle with than others, and choicer mercies to improve than others, and higher and harder duties of religion to manage than others, and accordingly they are more strengthened in the inner man than others.

[4.] Fourthly, They are all partakers of the first-fruits of the Spirit: Rom 8:23, 'Ourselves have the first-fruits of the Spirit,' which are but as a handful of corn in respect of the whole crop. All the grace and all the holiness which we have from the regenerating Spirit at first conversion is but a drop to that sea, a mite to those talents, which we shall receive in the life to come, 2Co 1:22.

[5.] Fifthly, They are all taught by the Spirit, John 14:26. 'The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things,' Isa 59:21. This promise primarily belongs to the apostles;

Secondarily, to all believers.

Though these words were spoken at first to the apostles only, yet they were not spoken of the apostles only: Isa 54:13, 'And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.' In these words there are three things promised to the apostles:

First, Immediate illumination by the Spirit of God.

Secondly, A full knowledge of all those truths belonging to their apostolical office, and that were necessary for them at that juncture of time.

Thirdly, Absolute infallibility as to matter of doctrine.

There are also three things promised to all believers:

First, Mediate illumination, teaching truths by the Spirit of truth, in the use of the means of grace.

Secondly, Knowledge of all truth necessary to salvation.

Thirdly, Infallibility too, so far forth as they adhere and keep close to the Spirit's teaching in the word.

Philo saith that the primitive Christians were called tillers, because, as husbandmen till their fields and manure their grounds, so did they teach their families and nurture their children and servants with good instructions. Oh, what choice teachings of the Spirit were these primitive Christians under, who made it so much their business, their work, to teach those that were under their charge, 1Th 4:9, 2Co 3:8. So 1Jn 2:27, 'But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth.' Not that we know all things simply, or that we need not a ministry to teach and instruct us; but he speaks comparatively: you shall not be so helped by any instructions without the Spirit, as with the Spirit. The Spirit shall declare the truth as it is in Jesus more clearly, more freely, more particularly, more certainly, more universally, more effectually, than any other is able to do. The Spirit, this holy unction, shall teach the saints all things; not all things knowable, for that is impossible for finite creatures to attain unto. Who knows the motions of the heavens, the influences of the stars, the nature of the creatures, or how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child? Who knows the reason why the river Nilus should overflow in the summer, when waters are at the lowest; or why the loadstone should draw iron to it, or incline to the pole star?

Pliny tells us of one that spent eight and fifty years in learning out the nature of the bee, and yet had not fully attained to it. How is it possible, then, for the wisest naturalist to enter into the deep things of God?

Paul, that learned his divinity among the angels, and that had the Holy Ghost for his immediate teacher, tells us plainly that 'he knew but in part,' 1Co 13:9-11; and oh then, how little a part of that part do we know! But the Spirit teacheth the saints all things; that is,

First, He teacheth them all things needful for the salvation of their souls, all things necessary to bring them to heaven, John 17:3.

Secondly, All things needful to life and godliness, 2Pe 1:3.

Thirdly, All things needful to their places, callings, sexes, ages, and conditions.

Fourthly, All things needful for you to know to preserve you in the truth, and to preserve you from being deluded and seduced by those false teachers of whom he speaks, 1Jn 2:10, 1Jn 2:19, 1Jn 2:22-23, 1Jn 2:26. And certainly this is the main thing that John hints at in that expression. The 'all things' spoken of in 1Jn 2:27, according to the ordinary Scripture style, must necessarily be interpreted only of all those things which are there spoken of. But,

[6.] Sixthly, They are all comforted by the Spirit: Acts 9:31, 'They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;' Rom 14:17, 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' 1Th 1:6, 'And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' Not that all Christians have always actual comfort, actual joy. Oh no! For as the air is sometimes clear

and sometimes cloudy, and as the sea is sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing; so the comforts and joys of the people of God are sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing, sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy.

Hudson the martyr being deserted at the stake, went from under his chain; and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly. So Mr Glover the martyr was deserted in prison, but as he was going to the stake he looked back, and cried out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come,' meaning the Comforter, and so he laid down his life with joy.

Rachel wept, and would not be comforted; she gave so much way to weeping, that she would not give the least way to comfort; and so it is many times with the choicest saints, 'My soul refused to be comforted,' Psa 77:2. It is not my purpose at present to insist on the several ways whereby the people of God refuse comfort, and fall short of those strong consolations which God is willing that they should receive. The sun may operate where it doth not shine, and a man may be in a state of salvation, and yet want consolation; a man may fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, and yet walk in darkness and see no light, Isa 50:10. There is no Christian but may sometimes have trouble in his conscience, and grief in his heart, and tears in his eyes, and fears and questionings in his soul, whether God be his Father, and whether Christ be his redeemer, and whether mercy belongs to him, yea, whether any promise in the book of God belongs to him? &c. Joy and comfort are those dainties, those sweetmeats of heaven, that God doth not every day feast his people with, Psa 30:6-7; every day is not a wedding day, nor every day is not a harvest day, nor every day is not a summer's day. The fatted calf is not killed every day, nor the robe and the ring is not every day put on; every day is not a festival day nor a dancing day, Luk 15:22-23; Ecc 3:4; Rom 12:15. As there is a time to sing, so there is a time to sigh; as there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep; and as there is a time to dance, so there is a time to mourn. All tears will never be clear wiped from our eyes till all sin be quite taken out of our hearts. But notwithstanding all this, yet gracious souls have always sure and choice grounds of consolation; they have the promises, they have the 'first-fruits of the Spirit,' they have union with Christ, and they have right to eternal life, though they have not always sensible comforts. The children of God have always cause to exercise faith and hope on God in their darkest condition, though they have not always actual joy and consolation, Job 13:15, Psa 42:5. The Comforter always abides with the saints, though he doth not always actually comfort the saints, John 1:16. The Spirit many times carries on his sanctifying work in the soul when he doth not carry on his comforting work in the soul; the Spirit many times acts in a way of humiliation when he doth not act in a way of consolation; the Spirit many times fills the soul with godly sorrow when he doth not fill the soul with holy joy. The actings of the Spirit, as to his comforting work, are all of his own sovereign will and pleasure; and therefore he may abide in the soul when he doth not actually comfort the soul. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The people of God, first or last, are sealed by the Spirit: Eph 1:13, 'In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.' The nature of sealing consists in the imparting of the image or character of the seal to the thing sealed. To seal a thing is to stamp the character of the seal on it. Now, the Spirit of God doth really and effectually communicate the image of God to us, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness. Then are we truly sealed by the Spirit of God when the Holy Ghost stamps the image of grace and holiness so obviously, so evidently upon the soul, as that the soul sees it, feels it, and can run and read it; then the soul is sealed by the Holy Spirit. So Eph 4:30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby

ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.' The person of the Holy Ghost is here set forth in the Greek with a very great energy, such as our tongue is not able fully to express.

Here are three words, that have three articles, every word his several article by itself, τὸ πνεῦμα, τὸ ἅγιον, τὸ θεοῦ, the Spirit, not a Spirit; and not holy, but the holy; nor of God, but of that God: 2Co 1:22, 'Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.' In these scriptures you see that the Spirit is a seal. Now, a seal among men is, First, For secrecy.

Secondly, For distinction.

Thirdly, For authority.

Fourthly, For certainty. A writing sealed is authentic; and for ensuring. In the three texts last cited, if you compare them together, you may observe these six things:

First, The person sealing, and that is, the Father.

Secondly, In whom, in Christ.

Thirdly, With what seal, the Spirit of promise. Where are all the persons in the Trinity making us sure of our inheritance.

Fourthly, When, after ye believed.

Fifthly, The end, which is twofold:

(1.) Subordinate, and that is the certainty of our salvation;

(2.) Ultimate, and that is, the praise of his glory.

Sixthly, The time, how long this seal and earnest shall assure us, and that is, 'till we have the complete possession of what it is an earnest.' To prevent mistakes and disputes about the sealings of the Spirit on the one hand, and to support, comfort, and encourage the poor people of God on the other hand, let me briefly hint at the Spirit's special sealing times.

[1.] First, Conversion times are often the Spirit's sealing times, Luk 15:22-23. Upon the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, and the best robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put upon his hand, and shoes on his feet. Some by the robe understand the royalty of Adam, others, the righteousness of Christ. And by the ring, some understand the pledges of God's love, rings being given as pledges of love; and by the ring others understand the seal of God's Holy Spirit, men using the seal with their rings. Among the Romans the ring was an ensign of virtue, honour, and nobility, whereby they that wore them were distinguished from the common people. I think the main thing intended by the robe and the ring is, to shew us, that God sometimes upon the sinner's conversion and returning to him, is graciously pleased to give him some choice manifestations of his gracious pleasure and good-will, and to seal up to him his everlasting love and favour. And hence it comes to pass that some that are but babes in Christ, 1Pe 2:2-3; 1Jn 2:12-14, are so diligent and active in religious duties, and so conscientious and dexterous in the exercise of their graces. At first conversion, God helps some of his people to read their own names written in legible letters in the book of life, Acts 9:3-6. No sooner are some converted, but the Spirit stamps his seal upon them.

[2.] Secondly, Believing times are sealing times, Eph 1:13. When they were in the very exercise of their faith, when they were acting of their faith,—for so much the original imports,—the Spirit came and sealed them up to the day of redemption, Rom 15:13; 1Pe 1:8. He that honours Christ by frequent actings of faith on him, him will Christ honour, by setting his seal and mark upon him.

[3.] Thirdly, Humbling times, mourning times, are sealing times. When a holy man was asked, which were the joyfulest days, the comfortablest days, that ever he enjoyed, he answered, his mourning days. His mourning days were his joyfulest days; and therefore he cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days, give me my mourning days; for they were my joyfulest days.' Those were days wherein God sealed up his everlasting love to his soul, Job 22:29; Isa 29:19. When the prodigal had greatly humbled himself before his father, then the best robe and ring were put upon him, Luk 15:17-24. There are none that long for the sealings of the Spirit like humble souls; nor none set so high a price upon the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls; nor none make so choice an improvement of the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls. And therefore when men's hearts are humble and low, the Spirit comes and sets the privy-seal of heaven upon them.

[4.] Fourthly, Sin-killing, sin-mortifying, sin-subduing times, are the Spirit's sealing times; Rev 2:17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows saving he that receiveth it.'

God will give to the victorious Christian a secret love-token, whereby his soul may rest assured of the unspeakable love of God, and of its freedom from condemnation. White stones were of very great use among the Romans, and among the Athenians, and served to acquit the accused in courts of justice. When malefactors were accused, arraigned, and condemned in their courts, they gave them a black stone in token of condemnation; but when they were acquitted, they gave them white stones, in token of absolution; and to this practice the Holy Ghost seems to allude. He that is victorious over his lusts shall have a new name, 'that is better than the names of sons and daughters,' Isa 56:5; and he shall have the pardon of his sins writ in fair letters upon the white stone, so that he may run and read his absolution. The victorious Christian shall have assurance of the full discharge of all his sins, he shall have a clear evidence of his justification, and a blessed assurance of his eternal election; all which are hidden and mysterious things to all but those that have experienced and tasted what these sweet meats of heaven mean, 1Jn 1:7.

Among the Romans there were solemn feasts held in honour of those that were victorious in their sacred games. Now those that were to be admitted to those feasts were wont to have their names written on white shells, and white stones, and by these tickets they were admitted. Now some think the Holy Ghost alludes to this practice, and so would hint to us a privy mark whereby victorious Christians may be known, and admitted as bidden guests to the heavenly banquet of the hidden manna, according to Rev 19:9. O sirs! when predominate lusts are brought under, when bosom-sins lie slain in the soul, then the Spirit comes and seals up love, and life, and glory to the soul.

[5.] Fifthly, Suffering times are sealing times; Acts 7:55-56, Acts 7:59-60; Rev 1:9-10; 2Co 4:15-17. The primitive Christians found them so, and the suffering saints in the Marian days found them so. When the furnace is seven times hotter than ordinary, the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals up a man's pardon in his bosom, and his peace with God, and his title to heaven. When the world frowns most, then God smiles most; when the world puts their iron chains upon the saints' legs,

then God puts his golden chains about the saints' necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into one hand, then the Lord puts a cup of consolation into the other hand; when the world cries out, 'Crucify them, crucify them!' then commonly they hear that sweet voice from heaven, 'These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased.'

Blessed Bradford looked upon his sufferings as an evidence to him that he was in the right way to heaven. And saith Ignatius, 'It is better for me to be a martyr than to be a monarch.'

[6.] Sixthly, Self-denying times are the Spirit's sealing times, Mat 19:27-29.

First, There is sinful self, which takes in a man's lusts.

Secondly, There is natural self, which takes in a man's arts, parts, gifts, with reason.

Thirdly, There is religious self, which takes in all a man's religious duties and services, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

Fourthly, There is moral self, which includes a freedom from gross, heinous, enormous wickednesses, and a fair, sweet, harmless behaviour towards men.

Fifthly, There is relative self, which takes in our nearest and dearest relations in the flesh; as wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters, &c., Psa 45:7-11. Now when a man comes thus universally to deny himself for Christ's sake, and the gospel's sake, and religion's sake, then the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals him up unto the day of redemption. This is a truth confirmed by the experiences of many martyrs now in heaven, and by the testimony of many Christians still alive.

[7.] Seventhly, Sacrament times are sealing times. In that 'feast of fat things,' God by his Spirit seals up his love to his people, and his covenant to his people, and pardon of sin to his people, and heaven and happiness to his people. There are many precious souls that have found Christ in this ordinance, and when they could not find him in other ordinances, though they have sought him sorrowingly. In this ordinance many a distressed soul hath been strengthened, comforted and sealed.

I might give you many instances. Take one for all. There was a gracious woman, who, after God had filled her soul with comfort, and sealed up his everlasting love to her, fell under former fears and trouble of spirit, and being at the Lord's supper, a little before the bread was administered to her, Satan seemed to appear to her, and told her that she should not presume to eat; but at that very nick of time, the Lord was pleased to bring into her mind that passage in the Canticles, 'Eat, O my friend,' Song of Solomon 5:1. But notwithstanding this, Satan still continued terrifying of her, and when she had eaten, he told her that she should not drink; but then the Lord brought that second clause of the verse to her remembrance, 'Drink, yea drink abundantly' (or, 'be drunk,' as the Hebrew hath it) 'my beloved' (or, 'my loves,' as the Hebrew hath it;—all faithful souls are Christ's loves), and so she drank also, and presently was filled with such unspeakable joys, that she hardly knew how she got home; which soul-ravishing joys continued for a fortnight after, and filled her mouth with songs of praise, so that she could neither sleep nor eat, more than she forced herself to do out of conscience of duty. At the fortnight's end, when God was pleased to abate her measure of joy, she came to a settled peace of conscience, and assurance of the love of God; so that for twenty years after she had not so much as a cloud upon her spirit, or the least questioning

of her interest in Christ. But,

[8.] Eighthly, When God calls his people to some great and noble work, when he puts them upon some high services, some difficult duties, some holy and eminent employments, then his Spirit comes and sets his seal upon them: Jer 1:5, 'Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee: and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee to be a prophet unto the nations.' The Lord sending the prophet Jeremiah to denounce most dreadful judgments against a rebellious people, an impudent brazen-faced nation, he assures him of his eternal election, and of his choice presence, and singular assistance in that work that he set him about, Jer 1:8, Jer 1:17-19. Thus the Lord dealt with Peter, James, and John, Mat 17:1-6, and thus he dealt with Paul, Acts 9:1-23.

[9.] Ninthly, When they are taken up into more than ordinary communion with God, then is the Spirit's sealing time. When was it that the spouse cried out, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his!' but when Christ brought her to his banqueting house, and his banner over her was love? Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 2:3-6, compared, &c.

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, When Christians give themselves up to private prayer, when Christians are more than ordinarily exercised in secret prayer, in closet duties, then the Spirit comes and seals up the covenant and the love of the Father to them. When Daniel had been wrestling and weeping, and weeping and wrestling all day long with God in his closet, then the angel tells him, 'that he was a man greatly beloved of God,' or a man of great desires, as the original hath it, Dan 9:20-23. There was a gracious woman who, after much frequenting of sermons, and walking in the ways of the Lord, fell into great desersions; but being in secret prayer, God came in with abundance of light and comfort, sealing up to her soul that part of his covenant, viz., 'I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,' Eze 11:19-20. And thus I have given you a brief account of the Spirit's special sealing times. Now mark, this seal God sets upon all his wares, upon all his adopted children; for sooner or later there are none of his but are sealed with this seal. God sets his seal of regeneration, he stamps his image of holiness upon all his people, to difference and distinguish them from all profane, [im]moral, and hypocritical persons in the world, John 3:3; 2Th 2:13; Heb 12:14. Doubtless the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, imprinting the draughts and lineaments of God's image of righteousness and holiness upon man, as a seal or signet doth leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed, is the seal of the Spirit spoken of in Scripture: 2Ti 2:19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' But to prevent mistakes, you must remember, that though the Spirit of the Lord, first or last, will set his seal upon every real saint, yet the impression of that seal is not alike visible in all; for some bear this impression as babes, others as men grown up to some maturity. All God's adopted children bear this impression truly, but none of them bear it perfectly in this life. Sometimes this seal of regeneration, this seal of holiness is so plain and obvious that a man may run and read it in himself and others; and at other times it is so obscure and dark, that he can hardly discern it, either in himself or others. This seal is so lively stamped on some of God's people, that it discovers itself very visibly, eminently, gloriously; but on others it is not alike visible. And thus I have made it evident by these seven particulars, that all the children of God have the Spirit of God.

Now mark, the Spirit of God that is in all the saints, is a Spirit of prayer and supplication: Rom 8:15, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' While the child is in the womb it cannot cry, but as soon as it is born it cries. Whilst Paul did lie in the womb of his natural estate, he could not pray; but no sooner was he born of the Spirit, but the next news is, 'Behold he prayeth!' Acts 9:11. Prayer is nothing but the turning of a man's inside outward before the Lord. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul into the bosom of God. Prayer is nothing but the breathing that out before the Lord that was first breathed into us by the Spirit of the Lord. Prayer is nothing but a choice, a free, a sweet, and familiar intercourse of the soul with God. Certainly, it is a great work of the Spirit to help the saints to pray: Gal 4:6, 'Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' God hath no still-born children. The gemination, 'Abba, Father,' notes fiducial, filial, and vehement affection. The first is an Hebrew or Syriac word, the second a Greek, whereby is signified the union of the Hebrews and Grecians, or the Jews and Gentiles, in one church, 'Abba, Father.' What is Abba? say others in Hebrew, Father; and it is added, because in Christ the corner-stone both peoples are joined, alike becoming sons, whencesoever they come: circumcision from one place, whereupon Abba; uncircumcision from another, whereupon Father is named: the concord of the walls being the glory of the corner-stone. The word Abba, say others, signifies father in the Syriac tongue, which the apostle here retaineth, because it is a word full of affection, which young children retain almost in all languages, when they begin to speak. And he adds the word father, not only to expound the same, but also the better to express the eager movings and the earnest and vehement desires and singular affections of believers, in their crying unto God; even as Christ himself redoubled the word Father, Mark 14:36, to the same purpose, when he was in his greatest distress. This little word Father, saith Luther, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all other so famed orators in the world. It is certain that the Spirit of God helps the saints in all their communions with God, viz., in their meditations of God, in their reading and hearing of the word of God, in the communions one with another, and in all their solemn addresses to God. And as to this the apostle gives us a most special instance in that Rom 8:26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' When we are to pray, there is in us sometimes an infirmity of ignorance, so that we know not what to pray for, either in regard of the matter or the manner. And there is in us at other times an infirmity of pride and conceitedness, so that we cannot pray with that humility and lowliness of spirit as we should, spiritual pride having fly-blown our prayers. Sometimes there is in us an infirmity of deadness, dulness, drowsiness, &c., so that we cannot pray with that warmth, heat, life, spirit, and fervency, as we should, or as we would; and at other times there is in us an infirmity of unbelief and slavish fears, so that we cannot pray with that faith and holy boldness, as becomes children that draw near to a throne of grace, to a throne of mercy, &c. But now the Spirit helps these infirmities by way of instruction, prompting and teaching us what to pray for, and how we should spell our lesson; and by telling us as it were within, what we should say, and how we should sigh and groan; and by rousing and quickening, and stirring of us up to prayer, and by his singular influence and choice assistance opening and enlarging our hearts in prayer; and by his tuning the strings of our affections, he prepares us and fits us for the work of supplication; and therefore every one that derides the spirit of prayer in the saints, saying These are the men and the women that pray by the Spirit! blaspheme against the Holy Spirit; it being a main work of the

Spirit to teach the saints to pray and to help them in prayer. Now, all the saints having the Spirit, and the Spirit being a Spirit of prayer and supplication, there is no reason in the world why a saint should say, I would pray in secret, but I cannot pray, I cannot pour out my soul nor my complaint before the Lord in a corner.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, Thou sayest thou canst not pray, thou hast not the gifts and parts which others have. But thou canst manage thy callings, thy worldly business as well as others; and why then canst thou not pray as well as others? Ah, friends! did you but love private prayer as well as you love the world, and delight in private prayer as much as you delight in the world, and were your hearts as much set upon closet-prayer as they are set upon the world, you would never say you could not pray, yea, you would as quickly pray as well as others. It is not so much from want of ability to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret, as it is from want of a will, a heart to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret. Jacob's love to Rachel, and Shechem's love to Dinah, carried them through the greatest difficulties, Gen 29:1-35 and Gen 34:1-31. Were men's affections but strongly set upon private prayer, they would quickly find abilities to pray. He that sets his affections upon a virgin, though he be not learned nor eloquent, will find words enough to let her know how his heart is taken with her. The application is easy. He in Seneca complained of a thorn in his foot, when his lungs was rotten. So many complain of want of ability to pray in their closets, when their hearts are rotten. Sirs! do but get better hearts, and then you will never say you can't pray. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world, to see men strongly parted and gifted for all worldly businesses, to cry out that they can't pray, that they have no ability to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret. You have sufficient parts and gifts to tell men of your sins, your wants, your dangers, your difficulties, your mercies, your deliverances, your duties, your crosses, your losses, your enjoyments, your friends, your foes; and why then are you not ashamed to complain of your want of parts and gifts, to tell those very things to God in a corner, which you can tell to men even upon the housetops? &c. But,

Obj. 4. Fourthly, Some may further object and say, God is very well acquainted with all our wants, necessities, straits, trials; and there is no moving of him to bestow any favours upon us, which he doth not intend to bestow upon us, whether we pray in our closets or no; and therefore to what purpose do you press secret prayer so hard upon us? &c. To this objection I shall give these answers.

(1.) First, That this objection lies as strong against family prayer and public prayer as it doth against private prayer. God knows all thy wants and necessities, all thy straits and trials, &c., and therefore what needest thou pray in thy family, what needest thou attend public prayers in the communion of saints? There is no wringing of any mercy out of the hands of heaven, which God doth not intend to bestow. This objection faces all kind of prayer, and fights against all kinds of prayer. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That private prayer is that piece of divine worship and adoration, it is apart of that homage which we owe to God upon the account of a divine command, as I have already proved. Now, all objections must bow before the face of divine commands; as Joseph's brethren bowed before him, Gen 42:6; or as king Ahasuerus his servants bowed before Haman, Est 3:2. Indeed, every objection that is formed up against a divine command, should fall before it, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David. He that casts off private prayer under any

pretence whatsoever, he casts off the dominion of God, the authority of God, and this may be as much as a man's life and soul is worth. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, Though prayer be not the ground, the cause of obtaining favours and mercies from God, yet it is the means, it is the silver channel, it is the golden pipe, through which the Lord is pleased to convey to his people all temporal, spiritual, and eternal favours, Eze 36:1-37 God promises to give them the cream, the choicest, the sweetest of all spiritual, eternal, and temporal blessings; but mark, Eze 36:37, 'I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' Though God be very prompt and ready to bestow upon his people the best and the greatest of blessings, yet he will by prayer be sought unto for the actual enjoyment of them. He that hath no heart to pray for a mercy he needs, he hath no ground to believe that ever God will give him the mercy he needs. There is no receiving without asking, no finding without seeking, no opening without knocking. The threefold promise annexed to the threefold precept in Mat 7:7, should encourage all Christians to be instant, fervent, and constant in prayer. The proud beggar gets nothing of men, and the dumb sinner gets nothing of God. As there is no mercy too great for God to give, so there is no mercy too little for us to crave. Certainly that man hath little worth in him that thinks any mercy not worth a seeking. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, I answer, Every Christian should labour to enjoy his mercies in mercy; he should labour to have his blessings blessed unto him; he should labour to have 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,' with all he hath, Gen 22:17. Now this is an everlasting truth, a maxim to live and die with, that whatsoever mercy comes not in upon the wing of prayer is not given in mercy. Oh, how sweet is that mercy that comes flying in upon the wing of prayer! How sweet was that water to Samson which streamed to him in the channel of private prayer, Jdg 15:19; he called the name of it En-hakkore, the well of him that prayed. Samson prayed as for life, and that water that was handed to him was as sweet as life. Every mercy that is gathered by the hand of prayer is as sweet as the rose of Sharon, Song of Solomon 2:1. But that mercy that comes not in at the door of prayer, comes not in at the right door; and that mercy that comes not in at the right door will do a man no good: such mercies will make themselves wings and fly from us, Pro 23:5. Every Christian should narrowly look that all his mercies are sanctified mercies. Now, every mercy is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1Ti 4:4-5. Prayer prepares and fits us for mercy, and mercy for us. It is prayer that gives us a right and holy use of all our mercies. Such mercies are but great miseries that come not in upon the wing of prayer. Prayerless men's mercies are all given in wrath; yea, their blessings are cursed unto them, Pro 3:33, Mal 2:2. Look, as every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt, so every mercy is to be sanctified by prayer. Look, as gold sometimes is laid not only upon cloth and silks, but also upon silver itself, so prayer is that golden duty that must be laid not only upon all our natural and civil actions, as eating, drinking, buying, selling, &c., but also upon all our silver duties, upon all our most religious and spiritual performances, as hearing, reading, meditating, conference, church-fellowship, breaking of bread, &c.

Certainly prayer is very necessary to make every providence, and every ordinance, and every mercy to be a blessing to us. Every mercy that comes in upon the wing of private prayer is a double mercy; it is a great-bellied mercy; it is a mercy that hath many mercies in the womb of it. Happy is that Christian that can lay his hand upon every mercy that he enjoys, and say of them all as once Hannah said of her Samuel: 1Sa 1:27, 'For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.' But,

Objection 5. Fifthly, Some may further object and say, I would drive a private trade with God, I would exercise myself in secret prayer, but I want a convenient place to retire into; I want a private corner to unbosom my soul to my Father in, &c. To this objection I shall give these three short answers:

(1.) First, I suppose this objection concerns but a few Christians in our days. That God that hath given a Christ to believers doth commonly give them a convenient corner to enjoy private communion with himself in, Rom 8:32. Most Christians, I am afraid, do rather want a heart for private prayer, than a convenient place for private prayer. What men set their hearts upon, they will find time and place to effect it, whether it be good or whether it be evil, whether it concerns temporals or spirituals, whether it concerns this world or another world, this life or a better life. If most men would but get better hearts, they would quickly find or make convenient places for private prayer. He who hath an inflamed love to God will certainly find out a corner to enjoy secret communion with God. True lovers will find out corners to enjoy one another in. How many men are there that can easily find out private places for their dogs to lie in, and their swine to sleep in, and their horses to stand in, and their oxen to feed in, &c., who can't find out a private place to seek the face of God in! But did these men but love their God, or their souls, or private prayer, or eternity, as well or better than their beasts, they would not be such brutes but that they would quickly find out a hole, a corner, to wait upon the Lord in. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, If a Christian be on the top of a house with Peter, he may pray there; or if he be walking in the field with Isaac, he may pray there; or if be on the mountain with Christ, he may pray there; or if he be behind the door with Paul, he may pray there; or if he be waiting at table with Nehemiah, he may secretly pray there; or if he be in a wood, he may pray there, as the 'primitive Christians in times of persecution did; or if he be behind a tree, he may pray there; or if he be by the sea side, Joe may pray there, as the apostles did. It was a choice saying of Austin, 'Every saint is God's temple,' saith he, 'and he that carries his temple about him, may go to prayer when he pleaseth.' Some saints have never had so much of heaven brought down into their hearts, as when they have been with God in a corner. Oh the secret manifestations of divine love, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret influences, the secret communion with God, that many a precious Christian hath had in the most solitary places: it may be behind the door, or behind the wall, or behind the hedge, or behind the harbour, or behind the tree, or behind the rock, or behind the bush, &c. But,

(3.) Thirdly, and lastly, Didst thou never in thy unregenerate estate make use of all thy wits, and parts, and utmost endeavours, to find out convenient seasons, and secret corners, and solitary places to sin in, and to dishonour thy God in, and to undo thine own and others' souls in? Yes! I remember with shame and blushing, that it was so with me when I was dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the course of this world, Eph 2:1-3. Oh, how much then doth it concern thee in thy renewed, sanctified, and raised estate, to make use, of all thy wits, and parts, and utmost endeavours, to find out the fittest seasons, and the most secret corners, and solitary places thou canst, to honour thy God in, and to seek the welfare of thine own and others' souls in! Oh that men were but as serious, studious, and industrious, to find out convenient seasons, secret places to please and serve and glorify the Lord in, as they have been serious, studious, and industrious to find out convenient seasons, and secret places to displease and grieve the Spirit of the Lord in. But,

Obj. 6. Sixthly, and lastly, others may further object and say, We would be often in private with God, we would give ourselves up to closet-prayer, but that we can no sooner shut our closet doors, but a multitude of infirmities, weaknesses, and vanities do face us, and rise up against us. Our hearts being full of distempers and follies, and our bodies, say some, are under great indispositions; and our souls, say others, are under present indispositions; and how then can we seek the face of God in a corner? how can we wrestle with God in our closets? &c.

Now, to this objection I shall give these six answers.

(1.) If these kinds of reasonings or arguings were sufficient to shut private prayer out of doors, where lives that man or woman, that husband or wife, that father or child, that master or servant, that would ever be found in the practice of that duty? Where is there a person under heaven whose heart is not full of infirmities, weaknesses, follies, and vanities; and whose body and soul is not too often indisposed to closet duties? 1Ki 8:46, 'If they sin against thee, for there is no man that sinneth not, &c.;' Ecc 7:20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not;' Pro 20:9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' Job 9:30-31, 'If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shall thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.' Job 9:20, 'If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.' Psa 143:2, 'And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.' Jas 3:2, 'For in many things we offend all.' 1Jn 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' Such that affirm that men may be fully perfect in this life, or without sin in this life, they do affirm that which is expressly contrary to the Scriptures last cited, and to the universal experience of all saints, who daily feel and lament over that body of sin and death that they bear about with them; yea, they do affirm that which is quite contrary to the very state or constitution of all the saints in this life. In every saint, 'the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would.' Gal 5:17. In every good man there are two men, the old man and the new; the one must be daily put on, and the other daily put off, Eph 4:22-24. All saints have a law in their members rebelling against the law of their minds; so that the good that they would do, they do not; and the evil that they would not do, that they do, Rom 7:23, Rom 7:25, comp. They have two contrary principles in them, from whence proceeds two manner of actions, motions, and inclinations, continually opposite one to another; hence it is that there is a continual combat in them, like the struggling of the twins in Rebekah's womb. An absolute perfection is peculiar to the triumphant state of God's elect in heaven: heaven is the only privileged place, where no unclean thing can enter in, Rev 21:27; that is the only place where neither sin nor Satan shall ever get footing. Such as dream of an absolute perfection in this life, do confound and jumble heaven and earth together; the state of the church militant, with the state of the church triumphant, which are certainly distinct both in time and place, and in order, measure, and concomitants, Heb 12:22-23. This dangerous opinion of absolute perfection in this life, shakes the very foundation of religion, and overthrows the gospel of grace; it renders the satisfaction of Christ, and all his great transactions, null and void; it tells the world that there is no need of faith, of repentance, of ordinances, of watchfulness. They that say they have no sin, say they have no need of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin, 1Jn 1:7. Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of faith to rest upon Christ for imputed righteousness to justify their persons.

Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of Christ as king to subdue their lusts; nor as priest, to expiate offences; nor as prophet, to teach and instruct them; nor as a Saviour, to save them from their sins, or from wrath to come, Mat 1:21; 1Th 1:10. They that have a perfect righteousness of their own, need not be beholden to Christ for his pure, perfect, spotless, matchless righteousness. Such as are without sin have no cause to repent of sin, nor yet to watch against sin. Such as are perfect cannot say, We are unprofitable servants. But are they indeed just? Then they must live by faith, Heb 2:4. Are they men, and not angels? Then they must repent, Acts 17:30, 'For now he commands men everywhere to repent.' Surely the best of men are but men at the best. Oh how bad those men must be, who make God himself a liar, 1Jn 1:10. But if these men are absolutely perfect, how comes it to pass that they are afflicted and diseased as other men? How comes it to pass that they eat, and drink, and sleep, and buy, and sell, and die as other men? Are these things consistent with an absolute perfection? Surely no. An absolute perfection is not a step short of heaven; it is heaven on this side heaven; and they that would obtain it must step to heaven before they have it. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That this objection lies as strong against family-prayer, and against all other kind of prayer, as it doth against closet-prayer. He that shall upon any grounds make this objection a great bug-bear to scare his soul from closet-prayer; he may upon the same ground make it a great bug-bear to scare his soul not only from all other kind of prayer, but from all other duties of religion also, whether private or public. The spirit of this objection fights against all religion at once; and therefore you should say to it, as Christ said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' But.

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, It is not the infirmities and weaknesses of a Christian which are seen, lamented, bewailed, and resisted, that can obstruct or hinder the efficacy and success of his prayers. Let me clear up this in a few instances. Jonah, you know, was a man full of sinful passions, and other weaknesses, &c., and yet his prayer was very prevalent with God: Jon 2:1-2, Jon 2:7, Jon 2:10, compared. So Elias his prayers were exceeding prevalent with God; he could open and shut heaven at his pleasure; and yet subject to like passions as we are, Jas 3:17. Elias was a man of extraordinary sanctity and holiness, a man that lived in heaven whilst he dwelt on earth; Enoch-like, he walked with God, and yet subject to like passions as we are, 1Ki 19:8; Rom 11:2-3. God did in an eminent way communicate to him his counsel and secrets; he lay in the bosom of the Father; and yet was a man subject to like passions as we are. He was a very powerful and prevalent prophet; his very name imports as much; Eli-jah signifies my strong God. In that 1Ki 17:1, it is Eli-jahu, that is, the Lord he is my strong God; and yet subject to like passions as we are. He was a man much in fasting and prayer; he was an inferior mediator between God and his people; and yet subject to like passions as we are. Now because some from hence might object and say, No wonder if such a man as he was, could by his prayers open and shut heaven at his pleasure; but I am a poor, weak, low, sinful, and unworthy creature; I am full of infirmities, weaknesses, and passions; and shall my prayers ever find access to God, and acceptance with God, or gracious answers and returns from God? Now to obviate this objection, and to remove this discouragement out of the thoughts and hearts of poor sinners, the Holy Ghost addeth this clause, that he was not a god, nor an angel, but a man, and such a man as was not exempted from common infirmities; for he had his passions, frailties, and weaknesses as well as other saints; intimating to us, that infirmities in the meanest saints should no more prejudice the acceptance

and success of their prayers with God, than they did in Elias himself. The word passion sometimes signifies, first, a motion of the sensual appetite, arising from the imagination of good or ill, with some commotion of the body; secondly, sometimes passions signify sinful infirmities, sinful perturbations of the mind; and thirdly, sometimes passion is taken more strictly for the especial affection of sinful anger and wrath, which Chrysostom calls brevis dæmon, a short devil. It makes a man speak he knows not what, as you may see in Jonah; and to do he knows not what, as you may see in Saul. Now in these two last senses Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and yet a man so potent with God, that by private prayer he could do even what he listed in the court of heaven. In 1Sa 21:1-15, you may read of David's round lies, and of his other failings, infirmities, and unseemly carriages before Achish, king of Gath, and for which he was turned out of the king's presence, under the notion of a madman; and yet at that very time he prays, and prevails with God for favour, mercy, and deliverance: Psa 34:4, 'I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fear.' But when was this? Read the title of the psalm, and you shall find it: 'A psalm of David, who changed his behaviour before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.' In that Num 20:10-12, Moses his infirmities are pointed out. First, You have there his immoderate anger. (2.) His speaking to the people, when he should have spoke to the rock, ver. 8. (3.) His smiting of it, when he should only have spoken to it with the rod in his hand; and smiting it twice, as in a pang of passion and impatency. (4.) His distrusting of the Lord's word, ver. 12. (5.) His reviling of the people, when he should have convinced them, 'Hear, ye rebels.' (6.) He seems to be so offended at his commission, that he can hardly forbear murmuring: 'Must we bring water out of the rock?' Mark that word, 'must we.' Oh how is the meekest man in all the world transported into passion, and anger, and unbelief, and hurried into sad indecencies! Num 12:3; and yet there was not a man on earth whose prayers were so powerful and prevalent with God as Moses his were, Psa 106:23, Exo 32:9-15, Exo 33:11-17, Exo 14:13-16, &c. So king Asa was a man full of infirmities and weaknesses; he relies on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord, 2Ch 16:7-13; he is very impatient, and under a great rage upon the seer's reproof. He imprisons the seer; he oppressed some of the people; or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'he crushed,' or he trampled upon some of the people at the same time; and being greatly diseased in his feet, he sought to the physicians and not to the Lord; and yet this man's prayer was wonderful prevalent with God, 2Ch 14:11-15. The saints' infirmities can never make void those gracious promises by which God stands engaged to hearken to the prayers of his people, Psa 50:15, Isa 30:19, and Isa 65:24. God's hearing of our prayers doth not depend upon sanctification, but upon Christ's intercession; not upon what we are in ourselves, but upon what we are in the Lord Jesus; both our persons and our prayers are acceptable in the beloved, Eph 1:6, 1Pe 2:5. When God hears our prayers, it is neither for our own sakes nor yet for our prayers' sake, but it is for his own sake, and his Son's sake, and his glory's sake, and his promise's sake, &c.

Certainly God will never cast off his people for their infirmities.

First, It is the glory of a man to pass by infirmities, Pro 19:11. Oh how much more, then, must it be the glory of God to pass by the infirmities of his people!

Secondly, Saints are children; and what father will cast off his children for their infirmities and weaknesses? Psa 103:13-14, 1Co 12:27.

Thirdly, Saints are members of Christ's body; and what man will cut off a member because of a scab or wart that is upon it? 'What man will cut off his nose,' saith Luther, 'because there is some filth in it?'

Fourthly, Saints are Christ's purchase; they are his possession, his inheritance. Now what man is there that will cast away, or cast off his purchase, his possession, his inheritance, because of thorns, bushes, or briars that grow upon it?

Fifthly, Saints are in a marriage-covenant with God, Hos 2:19-20. Now what husband is there that will cast off his wife for her failings and infirmities? So long as a man is in covenant with God, his infirmities can't cut him off from God's mercy and grace. Now it is certain a man may have very many infirmities upon him, and yet not break his covenant with God, for no sin breaks a man's covenant with God but such as unties the marriage knot. As in other marriages, every offence or infirmity doth not disannul the marriage union; it is only the breach of the marriage vow, viz. adultery, that unties the marriage knot; so here it is only those sins which breaks the covenant which unties the marriage knot between God and the soul: (1.) When men freely subject to any lust as a new master; or, (2.) When men take another husband; and this men do, when they enter into a league with sin or the world, when they make a new covenant with hell and death, Isa 28:15, Isa 28:18. Now from these mischiefs God secures his chosen ones. In a word, if God should cast off his people for their infirmities, then none of the sons or daughters of Adam could be saved: 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good and sinneth not,' Ecc 7:20. Now if God will not cast off his people for their infirmities, then certainly he will not cast off the prayers of his people because of those invincible infirmities that hang upon them; and therefore our infirmities should not discourage us, or take us off from closet prayer, or from any other duties of religion. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, The more infirmities and weaknesses hang upon us, the more cause have we to keep close and constant to our closet-duties. If grace be weak, the omission of private prayer will make it weaker. Look, as he that will not eat will certainly grow weaker and weaker, so he that will not pray in his closet will certainly grow weaker and weaker. If corruptions be strong, the neglect of private prayer will make them stronger. The more the remedy is neglected, the more the disease is strengthened. Whatsoever the distempers of a man's heart be, they will never be abated, but augmented, by the omission of private prayer. The more bodily infirmities hang upon us, the more need we have of the physician; and so the more sinful infirmities hang upon our souls, the more need we have of private prayer. All sinful omissions will make work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician of souls. Sinful omissions lead to sinful commissions, as you may see in the angels that fell from heaven to hell, and in Adam's fall in paradise.

Origen going to comfort and encourage a martyr that was to be tormented, was himself apprehended by the officers, and constrained either to offer to the idols, or to have his body abused by a blackamore that was ready for that purpose; of which hard choice, to save his life, he bowed unto the idol; but afterwards, making a sad confession of his foul fact, he said, 'That he went forth that morning before he had been with God in his closet;' and so peremptorily concludes, 'that his neglect of prayer was the cause of his falling into that great sin.' The neglect of one day, of one duty, of one hour, would undo us for ever, if we had not an advocate with the Father, 1Jn 2:1-2. Those years, those months, those weeks, those days, those hours that are not filled up with

God, with Christ, with grace, with duty, will certainly be filled up with vanity and folly. All omissions of duty, will more and more unfit the soul for duty. A key thrown by, gathers rust; a pump not used, will be hardly got to go; and armour not used, will be hardly made bright, &c. Look, as sinful commissions will stab the soul; so sinful omissions will starve the soul. Such as live in the neglect of private prayer may well cry out, Isa 24:16, Job 16:8, 'Our leanness, our leanness!' And therefore away with all these pleas and reasonings about infirmities, and weaknesses, and indispositions, and address yourselves to closet prayer. But,

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, It may be thy distemper and indisposition of body is not so great, but that thou canst buy, and sell, and get gain. Notwithstanding thy aching head, and thy shooting back, and thy pained sides, and thy feeble knees, yet thou canst, with Martha, cumber thyself about thy worldly affairs. In that Song of Solomon 5:3, Christ calls upon his spouse to open the door, and let him in. But sin and shifting coming into the world together, see how poorly and unworthily she labours to shift Christ off: 'I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?' Rather than she will make no excuse for herself, she will make a silly excuse, a worthless excuse. She was past a child; and what a great business had it been for her to have risen to have let in such a guest, that brings everything with him that heart can wish or need require, Rev 3:17-18. She was not grown so decrepid with old age, but that she was able to make herself ready; at least, she might easily have slipped on her morning-coat and stepped to the door without any danger of taking cold, or of being wet to the skin, and so have let him in, who never comes empty-handed, Rev 22:12; yea, who was now come full of the dew of divine blessings to enrich her; for so some sense those words, 'Mine head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' Oh, the frivolous pretences, and idle excuses that even gracious persons are apt sometimes to take up to over-colour their neglect of duty! But some may say, It may be the spouse of Christ was asleep. Oh no! for she saith, verse 2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' She slept with open eyes, as the lion doth; she slept but half-sleep; though her outward man was drowsy, yet her inward man was wakeful; though the flesh took a nap, yet her spirit did not nod.

Oh! but it may be Christ made no noise, he gave no notice that he was at the door! O yes! he knocked, he knocked and bounced by the hammer of his word, and the hand of his Spirit; he knocked by outward corrections and inward admonitions; he knocked by providences, and he knocked by mercies. His importunity and vehemency for admission was very great.

Oh! but it may be he did but only knock, he should have called as well as knocked; for none but madmen would open their doors in the night, except they knew the voice of him that knocketh. Oh yes! he did not only knock, but called also.

Oh! but it may be she did not know his voice, and therefore she would not open. No chaste wife will at unseasonable hours arise and open her doors unto a stranger, especially in her husband's absence. Oh yes, she knew his voice: verse 2, 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh.' She was not so fast asleep, but that she knew the voice of her beloved from all other voices, and could tell every tittle that he said.' The calls of Christ were so strong, so loud, and his pulsations so mighty, that she could not but know and confess, that it was the voice of her beloved, though she was not so respectful and dutiful as to obey that voice.

Oh! but it may be Christ knocked and called, like a friend in his journey, only to inquire how it was with her, or to speak to her at the window. Oh no! he speaks plainly, he speaks with authority,

‘Open to me.’

Oh! but it may be she had no power to open the door. Oh yes; for when he commands his people to open, he lends them a key to open the door, that he may enter in, Php 1:6, Php 1:13; 1Co 15:10. Infused grace is a living principle that will enable the soul to open to Christ. If a man be not a free agent to work and act by the helps of grace received, to what purpose are counsels, commands, exhortations and directions, given to perform this, and that, and the other work? And certainly it is our greatest honour and happiness in this world to co-operate with God in those things which concern his own glory, and our own internal and eternal good.

Oh! but it may be Christ had given his spouse some distaste, or it may be he had let fall some hard words, or some unkind speeches, which made her a little froward and pettish. Oh no! for he owns her as his beloved, and courts her highly, with the most winning and amicable terms of love: ‘My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, or my perfect one.’ He calls her so for her dovelike simplicity, purity, and integrity. All these endearing and honouring titles, are the rhetoric of divine love; and should have been as so many sacred engagements upon her, to open to her beloved.

Oh! but it may be Christ was too quick for her, it may be he gave but a knock and a call, and was gone before she could rise and open the door. O no! Christ stayed till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night; which most passionate expression notes the tender goodness, patience, and gentleness of our Lord Jesus, who endures far greater and harder things for his spouse’s sake, than ever Jacob did for his Rachel’s sake. After Christ had suffered much for her sake, and waited her leisure a long while, she very unkindly, and very unmannerly, and unworthily turns her back upon all his sweet and comfortable compellations, and blessed and bleeding embracements, and turns him off to look [for] his lodging in some other place; so that he might well have said, Is this thy kindness to thy friend, thy husband, thy Lord, to suffer him to stand bareheaded, and that in foul weather, yea, in the night time, wooing, entreating, and beseeching admittance; and yet to turn him off as one in whom thy soul could take no pleasure?

Now, if you will but seriously weigh all these circumstances in the balance of the sanctuary, you may run and read the fault and folly, the weakness and madness, the slightness and laziness of the spouse; and by her you may make a judgment of those sad and sinful distempers that may seize upon the best of saints, and see how ready the flesh is to frame excuses; and all to keep the soul off from duty, and the doors fast bolted against the Lord Jesus.

It is sad when men are well enough to sit, and chat, and trade in their shops, but are not well enough to pray in their closets. Certainly, that man’s heart is not right with God, at least at this time, who, under all his bodily distempers, can maintain and keep up his public trade with men, but is not well enough to maintain his private trade with heaven. Our bodies are but dirt, handsomely tempered, and artificially formed; we derive our pedigree from the dirt, and are akin to clay. One calls the body ‘the blot of nature;’ another calls it the ‘the soul’s beast,’ ‘a sack of dung,’ ‘worms’ meat;’ another calls it ‘a prison,’ ‘a sepulchre;’ and Paul calls it ‘a body of vileness.’ Now for a man to make so much ado about the distempers of his body to excuse the neglects of his soul, is an evil made up of many evils. But really, sir, I am so ill, and my body is so distempered and indisposed, that I am not able to mind or meddle with the least things of the world! Well! if this be so, then know that God hath on purpose knocked thee off from the things of this world, that thou mayest look the more effectually after the things of another world. The design of God in all the

distempers that are upon thy body, is to wind thee more off from thy worldly trade, and to work thee to follow thine heavenly trade more close. Many a man had never found the way to his closet, if God by bodily distempers had not turned him out of his shop, his trade, his business, his all, &c.

Well, Christians! remember this once for all, if your indisposition to closet prayer doth really arise from bodily distempers, then you may be confident that the Lord will pity you much, and bear with you much, and kindly accept of a little. You know how affectionately parents and ingenuous masters do carry it towards their children and servants, when they are under bodily distempers and indisposition; and you may be confident that God will never carry it worse towards you than they do towards them. Ponder often upon that Eze 34:4, Eze 34:16, Eze 34:21-22. But, (6.) Sixthly, and lastly, I shall answer this objection by way of distinction, thus:

First, There is a contracted indisposition to private prayer, and there is an involuntary indisposition to private prayer. There is a contracted indisposition, and that is when a man, by his wilful sinning against light, knowledge, conviction, &c., contracts that guilt that lies as a load upon his conscience. Now guilt makes the soul shy of God; and the greater the guilt is, the more shy the soul is of drawing near to God in a corner. The child that is sensibly under guilt hides himself, as Adam did, in the day from his father's eye, and at night he slips to bed, to avoid either a chiding or a whipping from his father, Gen 3:7-8. Guilt makes a man fly from God, and fly from prayer. It is a hard thing to look God in the face, when guilt stares a man in the face, Job 11:14-15. Guilt makes a man a terror to himself, Jer 20:3-4; now when a man is a terror to himself, he is neither fit to live, nor fit to die, nor fit to pray. When poison gets into the body, it works upon the spirits, and it weakens the spirits, and it endangers life, and unfits and indisposes a man to all natural actions. It is so here; when guilt lies heavy upon the conscience, it works upon the soul, it weakens the soul, it endangers the soul, and it doth wonderfully unfit and indispose the soul to all holy actions. Guilt fights against our souls, our consciences, our comforts, our duties, yea, and our very graces also, 1Pe 2:11. There is nothing that wounds and lames our graces like guilt; there is nothing that weakens and wastes our graces like guilt; there is nothing that hinders the activity of our graces like guilt; nor there is nothing that clouds our evidences of grace like guilt. Look, what water is to the fire, that our sinnings are to our graces, evidences, and duties. Guilt is like Prometheus's vulture, that ever lies gnawing. It is better with Evagrius to lie on a bed of straw with a good conscience, than to lie on a bed of down with a guilty conscience. What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour,—Mat 8:19, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,'—that a guilty conscience saith to the sinner, 'Whithersoever thou goest I will follow thee.' If thou goest to a fast, I will follow thee, and fill thy mind with black and dismal apprehensions of God; if thou goest to a feast, I will follow thee, and shew thee the handwriting on the wall, Dan 5:5; if thou goest abroad, I will follow thee, and make thee afraid of every leaf that wags; thou shalt look upon every bush as an armed man, and upon every man as a devil; if thou stayest at home, I will follow thee from room to room, and fill thee with horror and terror; if thou liest down to rest, I will follow thee with fearful dreams and tormenting apparitions; if thou goest into thy closet, I will follow thee, and make thy very closet a hell to hold thee.

It is storied of king Richard the Third, that after he had murdered his two nephews in the Tower, guilt lay so hard upon his conscience, that his sleeps were very unquiet; for he would often leap out of his bed in the dark, and catching his sword in his hand, which hung by his bed side, he would go distractedly about his chamber seeking for the traitor. So Charles the Ninth of France,

after he had made the streets of Paris run down with the blood of the Protestants, he could seldom take any sound sleep, nor could he endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music.

Judge Morgan, that passed the sentence of condemnation upon Jane Grey, a virtuous lady, shortly after fell mad, and in his raving cried out continually, 'Take away the Lady Jane from me, take away the Lady Jane from me,' and in that horror ended his wretched life.

James Abyes, going to execution for Christ's sake, as he went along, he gave his money and his clothes to one and another, till he had given all away to his shirt, whereupon one of the sheriff's men fell a-scoffing and deriding of him, and told him that he was a madman and an heretic, and not to be believed; but as soon as the good man was executed, this wretch was struck mad, and threw away his clothes, and cried out that 'James Abyes was a good man, and gone to heaven, but he was a wicked man, and was damned,' and thus he continued crying out till his death. Certainly he that derides or smites a man for walking according to the word of the Lord, the Lord will, first or last, so smite and wound that man's conscience, that all the physicians in the world shall not heal it.

Now if thy indisposition to private prayer springs from contracting guilt upon thy conscience, then thy best way is speedily to renew thy repentance, and greatly to judge and humble thine own soul, and so to act faith afresh upon the blood of Christ, both for pardoning mercy and for purging grace. When a man is stung with guilt, it is his highest wisdom in the world to look up to the brazen serpent, and not to spend his time or create torments to his own soul by perpetual poring upon his guilt. When guilt upon the conscience works a man to water the earth with tears, and to make heaven ring with his groans, then it works kindly. When the sense of guilt drives a man to God, to duty, to the throne of grace, then it will not be long night with that man. He that thinks to shift off private prayer under the pretence of guilt, doth but in that increase his own guilt. Neglect of duty will never get guilt off the conscience. But then there is an involuntary indisposition to private prayer; as in a sick man, who would work and walk, but cannot, being hindered by his disease; or as it is with a man that hath a great chain on his leg, he would very fain walk or get away, but his chain hinders him. Now if your indisposition to private prayer be an involuntary indisposition, then God will in mercy, in course, both pardon it and remove it.

Secondly, There is a total indisposition to private prayer, and there is a partial indisposition to private prayer. A total indisposition to private prayer is, when a man hath no mind at all to private prayer, nor no will at all to private prayer, nor no love at all to private prayer, nor no delight, nor no heart at all to private prayer, Jer 4:22, and Jer 44:17-19. Now where this frame of heart is, there all is naught, very naught, stark naught. A partial indisposition to private prayer is, when a man hath some will to private prayer, though not such a will as once he had; and some mind to private prayer, though not such a mind as once he had; and some affections to private prayer, though not such warm and burning affections as once he had. Now if your indisposition to private prayer be total, then you must wait upon the Lord in all his appointments for a changed nature, and for union with Christ; but if your indisposition to private prayer be only partial, then the Lord will certainly pardon it, and in the very use of holy means in time remove it. But,

Thirdly, and lastly, There is a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to private prayer; and there is a customary, a constant, or permanent indisposition to private prayer. Now a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to that which is good may be found upon

the best of saints, as you may see in Moses, Exo 4:10-14; and in Jeremiah, Jer 1:5-8, Jer 1:17-19, and Jer 20:9; and in Jon 1:1-17; and in David, Psa 39:2-3. Now if this be the indisposition that thou art under, then thou mayest be confident that it will certainly work off by degrees, as theirs did that I have last cited, Isa 65:2. But then there is a customary, a constant or permanent indisposition to private prayer, and to all other holy duties of religion. Now if this be the indisposition that thou art under, then I may safely conclude that thou art in the very gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, Acts 8:21-23, and thy work lies not in complaining of thy indisposition, but in repenting and believing, and in labouring for a change of thy heart and state; for till thy heart, thy state be changed, thou wilt remain for ever indisposed both to closet prayer and to all other duties of religion and godliness. To see a sinner sailing hell-ward with wind and tide on his side, to alter his course, and tack about for heaven, to see the earthly man become heavenly, the carnal man become spiritual, the proud man become humble, the vain man become serious, to see a sinner move contrary to himself in the ways of Christ and holiness, is as strange as to see the earth fly upward, or the bowl run contrary to its own bias; and yet a divine power of God upon the soul can effect it; and this must be effected before the sinner will be graciously inclined and sincerely disposed to closet prayer. And let thus much suffice by way of answer to this objection also.

Now, for the better management of this great duty, viz., closet prayer, I beseech you take my advice and counsel in these eleven following particulars.

(1.) First, Be frequent in closet prayer, and not now and then only. He will never make any yearnings of closet prayer, that is not frequent in closet prayer. Now, that this counsel may stick, consider,

[1.] First, Other eminent servants of the Lord have been frequent in, this blessed work: Neh 1:6, 'Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee, day and night.' So Daniel, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before-time, Dan 6:10. So David, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, and in the evening will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up,' Psa 5:3. So. Psa 88:13, 'But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.' So. Psa 119:147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried unto the Lord.' So Psa 55:17, 'Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud.' Yea, he was *vir orationis* for his frequency in it. Psa 109:4, 'For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer;' or, as the Hebrew may be read, 'But I am a man of prayer.' Of Carolus Magnus it was said, *Carolus plus cum Deo quam hominibus loquitur*, that he spake more with God than with men.

[2.] Secondly, Consider the blessed Scripture doth not only enjoin this duty, but it requires frequency in it also, Luk 18:1; 1Th 5:17; Col 4:2. In the former part of this discourse, I have given light into these scriptures; and therefore the bare citing of them must now suffice.

[3.] Thirdly, Christ was frequent in private prayer, as you may easily see by comparing of these scriptures together, Mark 1:35; Mat 14:23; Luk 22:39; John 18:2. In my second argument for private prayer you may see these scriptures opened and amplified. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that you have the examples of the very worst of men in this case. Papists are frequent in their private devotions. And the Mahomedans, what occasion soever they have,

either by profit or pleasure, to divert them, will yet pray five times every day. Yea, the very heathens sacrificed to Hercules morning and evening upon the great altar at Rome. Now, shall blind nature do more than grace? But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider you cannot have too frequent communion with God, you cannot have too frequent intercourse with Jesus, you cannot have your hearts too frequently filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and with that peace that passes understanding, you cannot have heaven too frequently brought down into your hearts, nor you cannot have your hearts too frequently carried up to heaven; and therefore you cannot be too frequent in closet prayer. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that you are under frequent wants, and frequent sins, and frequent snares, and frequent temptations, and frequent allurements, and frequent trials, and frequent cares, and frequent fears, and frequent favours, 1Pe 5:8, Job 1:7; and therefore you had need be frequent with God in your closets. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Consider you are the favourites of heaven, you are greatly beloved, you are highly honoured, you are exceedingly esteemed and valued in the court of the Most High; and remember, that the petitions of many weak Christians, and of many benighted Christians, and of many tempted Christians, and of many clouded Christians, and of many staggering Christians, and of many doubting Christians, and of many bewildered Christians, and of many fainting Christians, &c., are put into your hands, for a quick and speedy despatch to the throne of grace; so that you had need be frequent in your closets, and improve your interest in heaven, or else many of these poor hearts may be wronged, betrayed, and prejudiced by your neglect. Such as are favourites in princes' courts, if they are active, diligent, careful, and watchful, they may do much good for others, they may come as often as they please into their prince's presence, and with Queen Esther have for asking what they please, both for themselves and others, Est 1:1-10. Oh what a world of good may such do for others that are God's favourites, if they would be but frequent with God in their closets!

O sirs! if you have not that love, that regard, that pity, that compassion to your own souls, as you should have, yet, oh let not others suffer by your neglect of private prayer! Oh, let not Zion suffer! Oh, let not any particular saint suffer by your being found seldom in your closets.

Certainly, it might have gone better with the churches of Christ, and with the concernments of Christ, and with many of the poor people of Christ, if most Christians had been more frequent with God in their closets. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Consider that this liberty to approach nigh to God in your closets, cost Christ his dearest blood, Eph 2:13, Heb 10:20. Now, he that is not frequent with God in his closet, tells all about him, that he sets no great value upon that liberty that Christ hath purchased with his blood. The incomparable, the unparalleled price which Christ hath paid down upon the nail, above sixteen hundred years ago, that we might have liberty and free access to his Father in our closets, argues very strongly, yea, irrefragably, the superlative excellency of that liberty, 1Pe 1:19. Oh therefore let us improve to purpose this blessed purchase of our Lord Jesus, by being frequent with God in our closets. It is disputed by some whether one drop of Christ's blood was sufficient for the pardon of our sins and redemption of our souls. My intention is not to dispute, but to offer a few things to your consideration.

First, It must be granted, that by reason of the hypostatical union, a drop of Christ's blood was of an inestimable worth and excellency; and the value of his passion is to be measured by the dignity of his person. But,

Secondly, A proportion was to be observed betwixt the punishment due to men, and that which was suffered for man; that his sufferings might be satisfactory, two things were necessary, *Pœnæ gravitas*, as well as *personæ dignitas*. That the least drop of Christ's blood was not sufficient for the redemption of our souls may thus appear:

First, If it were, then the circumcision of Christ was enough, for there was a drop, if not many drops of blood shed.

Secondly, Then his being crowned with a crown of thorns, was sufficient; for it is most probable that they drew blood from him.

Thirdly, Then all Christ's sufferings besides were superfluous and vain.

Fourthly, Then God was unjust and unrighteous to take more than was due to his justice. But for any man to affirm that God hath taken beyond what was his just due, is high blasphemy.

Fifthly, Then Christ was weak and imprudent to pay more than he needed; for what need was there of his dearest heart blood, if a drop from his hand would have saved our souls? Let schoolmen fancy what they please, it is certain, that not one dram of that bitter cup that Christ drunk off could be abated, in order to his Father's full satisfaction, and man's eternal redemption. Christ hath given under his own hand that it was necessary that he should suffer many things, Luk 24:26. O sirs! shall Christ shed not only a few drops of blood, but his very heart blood, to purchase you a freedom and liberty to be as often in your closets with his Father as you please; and will you only now and then give God a visit in private? The Lord forbid.

(2.) My second advice and counsel is this, Take the fittest seasons and opportunities that possibly you can for closet prayer. Many take unfit seasons for private prayer, which do more obstruct the importunity of the soul in prayer, than all the suggestions and instigations of Satan. As,

First, When the body is drowsy and sleepy; this is a very unfit season for closet prayer, Song of Solomon 3:1. Take heed of laying cushions of sloth under your knees, or pillows of idleness under your elbows, or of mixing nods with your petitions, or of being drowsily devoted when you draw near to God in your closets.

Secondly, When a man's head and heart is filled with worldly cares and distractions; this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer, 1Co 7:35, Eze 33:31. When Dinah must needs be gadding abroad to see fashions, Shechem, prince of that country, meets with her, and forces her virginity. So when our hearts, Dinah-like, must needs be a-roving and gadding abroad after the things of the world, then Satan, the prince of the air, usually seizes upon us, commits a rape upon our souls, and either leads us off from prayer, or else he doth so distract us from prayer, that it were better not to have prayed at all, than to have offered the sacrifice of foolish and distracted prayer.

I have read a story, how that one offered to give his horse to his fellow, upon condition he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God; the proffer was accepted, and he began, 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.' But I must have the bridle too,

said he. 'No, nor the horse neither,' said the other, for thou hast lost both already. The application is easy.

Certainly, the most free and lively season for closet-prayer is the mornings, before a man's spirit be blunted or cooled, deadened, damped, or flatted by worldly businesses. A man should speak with God in his closet, before he speaks with his worldly affairs and occasions. A man should say to all his worldly business, as Abraham said unto his young men, when he went to offer up his only Isaac, 'Abide you here, and I will go yonder and worship, and then return to you again.' He that will attend closet prayer without distraction or disturbance, must not, first, slip out of the world into his closet, but he must first slip into his closet before he be compassed about with a crowd of worldly employments.

It was a precept of Pythagoras, that when we enter into the temple to worship God, we must not so much as speak or think of any worldly business, lest we make God's service an idle, perfunctory, and lazy recreation. The same I may say of closet-prayer.

Jerome complains very much of his distractions, dulness, and indisposedness to prayer, and chides himself thus, 'What! dost thou think, that Jonah prayed thus when he was in the whale's belly; or Daniel when he was among the lions; or the thief when he was upon the cross?'

Thirdly, When men or women are under rash and passionate distempers, 1Ti 2:8; for when passions are up, holy affections are down, and this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer; for such prayers will never reach God's ear which do not first warm our own hearts. In the Muscovy churches, if the minister mistake in reading, or stammer in pronouncing his words, or speak any word that is not well heard, the hearers do very much blame him, and are ready to take the book from him, as unworthy to read therein. And certainly God is no less offended with the giddy, rash, passionate, precipitate, and inconsiderate prayers of those who, without a deliberate understanding, do send their petitions to heaven in post-haste. Solomon's advice is worthy of all commendation and acceptance: 'Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty, to utter any thing before God,' Ecc 5:2.; or as the Hebrew may be read, 'Let not thy heart through haste be so troubled or disturbed, as to tumble over, and throw out words without wisdom or premeditation.' Good men are apt many times to be too hasty, rash, and unadvised in their prayers, complaints, and deprecations. Witness David, Job, Jeremiah, Jonah, and the disciples. No Christian to him that doth wisely and seriously weigh over his prayers and praises before he pours out his soul before the Lord. He never repents of his requests, who first duly deliberates what to request; but he that blurts out whatsoever lies uppermost, and that brings into the presence of God his rash, raw, tumultuary, and indigested petitions, confessions, complaints, &c., he doth but provoke God, he doth but brawl with God, instead of praying to him or wrestling with him. Suitors at court observe their fittest times and seasons of begging; they commonly take that very nick of time, when they have the king in a good mood, and so seldom or never come off but with good success.

Sometimes God strongly inclines the heart to closet-prayer; sometimes he brings the heart beforehand into a praying frame; sometimes both body and soul are more enlivened, quickened, raised, and divinely inflamed than at other times; sometimes conscience is more stirring, working, and tender, &c. Oh now strike while the iron is hot! Oh now lay hold on all such blessed opportunities, by applying of thyself to private prayer. O sirs! can you take your fittest times, seasons, and opportunities for ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and buying and selling, and

eating, and drinking, and marrying, &c. And cannot you as well take your fittest times and seasons to seek the Lord in your closets? Must the best God be put off with the least and worst of your time? The Lord forbid. Neglect not the seasons of grace, slip not your opportunities for closet-prayer; thousands have lost their seasons and their souls together.

(3.) My third advice and counsel is this, Be marvellous careful that you do not perform closet duties merely to still your consciences. You must perform them out of conscience, but you must not perform them only to quiet conscience. Some have such a light set up in their understandings, that they cannot omit closet-prayer, but conscience is upon their backs, conscience is still upbraiding and disquieting of them, and therefore they are afraid to neglect closet-prayer, lest conscience should question, arraign, and condemn them for their neglects. Sometimes when men have greatly sinned against the Lord, conscience becomes impatient, and is still accusing, condemning, and terrifying of them; and now in these agonies they will run to their closets, and cry, and pray, and mourn, and confess, and bitterly bewail their transgressions, but all this is only to quiet their consciences; and sometimes they find upon their performance of closet-duties, that their consciences are a little allayed and quieted; and for this very end and purpose do they take up closet-prayer as a charm to allay their consciences; and when the storm is over, and their consciences quieted, then they lay aside closet-prayer,—as the monk did the net when the fish was caught,—and are ready to transgress again. O sirs! take heed of this, for this is but plain hypocrisy, and will be bitterness in the end. He that performs closet-prayer only to bribe his conscience that it may not be clamorous, or to stop the mouth of conscience that it may not accuse him for sin, he will at length venture upon such a trade, such a course of sinning against conscience, as will certainly turn his troubled conscience into a seared conscience, 2Ti 4:2; and a seared conscience is like a sleepy lion, when he awakes he roars, and tears his prey in pieces; and so will a seared conscience, when it is awakened, roar and tear the secure sinner in pieces. When Dionysius's conscience was awakened, he was so troubled with fear and horror of conscience that, not daring to trust his best friends with a razor, he used to singe his beard with burning coals, as Cicero reports. All the mercy that a seared, a benumbed conscience doth afford the sinner, when it doth most befriend him, when it deals most seemingly kind with him, is this, that it will not cut, that it may kill; it will not convince, that it may confound; it will not accuse, that it may condemn; it will spare the sinner a while, that it may torment him for ever; it will spare him here, that it may gnaw him hereafter; it will not strike till it be too late for the sinner to ward off the blow. Oh cruel mercy, to observe the sin, and let alone the sinner till the gates of mercy be shut upon him, and hell stands gaping to devour him: Gen 4:7, 'Sin lieth at the door.' The Hebrew word robets signifies to lie down, or couch, like some wild beast at the mouth of his cave, as if he were asleep, but indeed watcheth and waketh, and is ready to fly at all that come near it. O sirs! sin is rather couchant than dormant; it sleeps dog's sleep, that it may take the sinner at the greater advantage, and fly the more furiously in his face. But,

(4.) My fourth advice and counsel is this, Take heed of resting upon closet-duties, take heed of trusting in closet-duties. Noah's dove made use of her wings, but she did not trust in her wings, but in the ark; so you must make use of closet-duties, but you must not trust in your closet-duties, but in Jesus, of whom the ark was but a type. There are many that go a round of duties, as mill horses go their round in a mill, and rest upon them when they have done, using the means as mediators, and so fall short of Christ and heaven at once. Closet-duties rested in, will as eternally undo a man

as the greatest and foulest enormities; open wickedness slays her thousands, but a secret resting upon duties slays her ten thousands. Multitudes bleed inwardly of this disease, and die for ever. Open profaneness is the broad dirty way that leads to hell, but closet-duties rested in is a sure way, though a cleaner way, to hell. Profane persons and formal professors shall meet at last in one hell. Ah, Christians! do not make closet-duties your money, lest you and your money perish together. The phoenix gathers sweet odoriferous sticks in Arabia together, and then blows them with her wings and burns herself with them; so do many shining professors burn themselves by resting in their duties and services. You know, in Noah's flood all that were not in the ark, though they climbed up the tallest trees, and the highest mountains and hills, yet were really drowned; so let men climb up to this duty and that, yet, if they don't get into Christ, they will be really damned. It is not thy closet, but thy Christ, that must save thee. If a man be not interested in Christ, he may perish with 'Our Father' in his mouth. It is as natural to a man to rest in his duties as it is for him to rest in his bed. This was Bernard's temptation, who, being a little assisted in duty, could stroke his own head with *bene fecisti Bernarde*, O Bernard, this was gallantly done, now cheer up thyself. Ah, how apt is man, when he hath been a little assisted, heated, melted, enlarged, &c., in a way of duty, to go away and stroke himself, and bless himself, and hug himself, and warm himself with the sparks, with the fire of his own kindling, Isa 50:11.

Adam was to win life and wear it; he was to be saved by his doings: 'Do this and live,' Gen 2:2. Hence it is that all his posterity are so prone to seek for salvation by doing: Acts 2:37, Acts 16:30, 'What shall we do to be saved?' and 'good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' Mark 10:17, Mark 10:20. Like father, like son. But if our own duties or doings were sufficient to save us, to what purpose did Christ leave his Father's bosom, and lay down his dearest life? &c. Closet-duties rested in may pacify conscience for a time, but this will not always hold. 'When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb; yet could they not heal him, nor cure him of his wound,' Hos 5:13. If we rest on closet-duties, or on anything else on this side Christ, we shall find them as weak as the Assyrian, or as Jareb; we shall find to our cost that they cannot help us nor heal us; they cannot comfort us nor cure us of our wounds. As creatures, so duties, were never true to any that have trusted in them. When the Israelites were in great distress, the Lord bids them go and cry unto the gods which they had chosen, and let them deliver you, saith God, in the time of your tribulation, Jdg 10:14. O sirs! if, when you are under distress of conscience, or lying upon a dying bed, God should say to you, Go to your closet prayers and performances, that you have made and rested in, go to your closet tears that you have shed and rested in, and let them save you and deliver you; oh, what miserable saviours and comforters would they be unto you! Look, what the ark of God was to the Philistines, 1 Sam. chap. 5, that closet-duties are to Satan; he trembles every time he sees a poor sinner go into his closet and come out of his closet, resting and glorying in Jesus, and not in his duties; but when he sees a poor creature confide in his closet-duties, and rest upon his closet-duties, then he rejoiceth, then he claps his hands and sings, Aha! so would I have it. Oh, rest not on anything on this side Jesus Christ; say to your graces, say to your duties, say to your holiness, You are not my saviour, you are not my mediator; and therefore you are not to be trusted to, you are not to be rested in. It is my duty to perform closet-duties, but it is my sin to rely upon them, or to put confidence in them; do them I must, but glory in them I must not. He that rests in his closet-duties, he makes a saviour of his closet-duties. Let all your closet-duties lead you to Jesus, and leave you more in communion with him, and in dependence upon him; and then thrice

happy will you be, Heb 7:25. Let all thy closet prayers and tears, thy closet fastings and meltings, be a star to guide thee to Jesus, a Jacob's ladder by which thou mayest ascend into the bosom of eternal loves; and then thou art safe for ever.

Ah! it is sad to think, how most men have forgotten their resting-place, as the Lord complains: Jer 50:6, 'My people have been like lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting-place.' Ah! how many poor souls are there, that wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest, and there they will rest, and all on this side their resting-place! O sirs! it is God himself that is your resting-place; it is his free grace, it is his singular mercy, it is his infinite love that is your resting-place; it is the bosom of Christ, the favour of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the pure, perfect, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness of Christ, that is your resting-place; and therefore say to all your closet duties and performances, Farewell; prayer, farewell; reading, farewell; fasting, farewell; tears, farewell; sighs and groans, farewell; meltings and humblings, I will never trust more to you, I will never rest more on you; but I will now return to my resting-place, I will now rest only in God and Christ, I will now rest wholly in God and Christ, I will now rest for ever in God and Christ.

It was the saying of a precious saint, that 'he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins; for the one made him often proud, the other made him always humble.' But,

(5.) My fifth advice and counsel is this, Labour to bring your hearts into all your closet-prayers and performances. Look that your tongues and your hearts keep time and tune. Psa 17:1, 'Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'without lips of deceit.' Heart and tongue must go together; word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice, must echo one to another, or else thy prayers and thy soul will be lost together. The labour of the lips and the travail of the heart must go together. The Egyptians of all fruits made choice of the peach to consecrate to their goddess, and for no other cause, but that the fruit thereof is like to one's heart, and the leaf to one's tongue. These very heathens in the worship of their gods, thought it necessary that men's hearts and tongues should go together. Ah, Christians! when in your closet duties your hearts and your tongues go together, then you make that sweet and delightful melody that is most taking and pleasing to the King of kings. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, 1Sa 1:15. Psa 42:4, 'When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me.' So the Israelites poured out their souls like water before the Lord. So the church: 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early,' Isa 26:8-9. So Lam 3:41, 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' So Heb 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart,' &c. So Rom 1:9, 'For God is my witness, whom I serve in the spirit.' 1Co 14:15, 'I will pray with the spirit, and sing with the spirit.' Php 3:3, 'We are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit.' Under the law the inward parts were only to be offered to God in sacrifice; the skin belonged to the priests. Whence we may easily gather, that truth in the inward parts, is that which is most pleasing in a sacrifice. When the Athenians would know of the oracle the cause of their often unprosperous success in battle against the Lacedæmonians, seeing they offered the choicest things they could get, in sacrifice to the gods, which their enemies did not, the oracle gave them this answer, that 'the gods were better pleased with their inward supplication without ambition, than with all their outward pomp in costly sacrifices.' Ah, sirs! the reason why so many are so

unsuccessful in their closet-duties and services is because there is no more of their hearts in them. No man can make sure work or happy work in prayer but he that makes heart-work on it. When a man's heart is in his prayers, then great and sweet will be his returns from heaven. That is no prayer in which the heart of the person bears no part. When the soul is separated from the body the man is dead; and so when the heart is separated from the lip in prayer, the prayer is dead. The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, Tophillah belo cavannah ceguph belo neshamah; that is, a prayer without the heart, or without the intention of the affection, is like a body without a soul. In the law of Moses the priest was commanded to wash the inwards and the feet of the sacrifices in water; and this was done, saith Philo, 'not without a mystery, to teach us to keep our hearts and affections clean when we draw nigh to God.' In all your closet-duties God looks first and most to your hearts: 'My son, give me thy heart,' Pro 23:26. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, that will satisfy the Maker of the heart; the heart is a treasure, a bed of spices, a royal throne wherein he delights. God looks not at the elegancy of your prayers, to see how neat they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart, Psa 51:17, Jas 1:8. God neither loves halting nor halving; he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, 'Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.' Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was naught, the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those services and sacrifices, wherein the heart is not, as you may see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. Prayer without the heart is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, nor an affected tone, nor studied motions, nor seraphical expressions, but the stirrings of the heart, that God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks. If the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer takes with God, but that which is the travail of the heart. The same day Julius Cæsar came to the imperial dignity, sitting in his golden chair, he offered a beast in sacrifice to the gods; but when the beast was opened, it was without a heart, which the soothsayers looked upon as an ill omen. It is a sad omen, that thou wilt rather provoke the Lord than prevail with him, who art habitually heartless in thy closet duties. Of the heart, God seemeth to say to us, as Joseph did to his brethren, concerning Benjamin, 'Ye shall not see my face without it.'

It was the speech of blessed Bradford, that 'he would never leave a duty, till he had brought his heart into the frame of the duty; he would not leave confession of sin, till his heart was broken for sin; he would not leave petitioning for grace, till his heart was quickened and enlivened in a hopeful expectation of more grace; he would not leave gratulation, till his heart was enlarged with the sense of the mercies he enjoyed, and quickened in the return of praise.'

(6.) My sixth advice and counsel is this, Be fervent, be warm, be importunate with God in all your closet duties and performances. Jas 5:16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth

much;' or, as the Greek hath it [■νεργο■μενη], 'The working prayer;' that is, such working prayer as sets the whole man on work, as sets all the faculties of the soul, and all the graces in the soul, at work. The word signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be. Certainly, all those usual phrases of crying, wrestling, and striving with God, which are scattered up and down in Scripture, do strongly argue that holy importunity and sacred violence that the saints of old have expressed in their addresses to God. Fervency feathers the wings of prayer, and makes them fly the swifter to heaven. An arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, flies not far; but if it be drawn up to the head, it will fly far, and pierce deeply: so fervent prayer flies as high as heaven, and will certainly bring down blessings from thence. Cold prayers bespeak a denial, but fervent prayers offer a sacred violence both to heaven and earth. Look, as in a painted fire there is no heat; so in a cold prayer there is no heat, no warmth, no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are like arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings; they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Such prayers as have no heavenly fire in them, do always freeze before they reach as high as heaven. But fervent prayer is very prevalent with God: Acts 12:5, 'Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing.' The Greek word ■χτεν■ς signifies instant prayer, earnest prayer, stretched out prayer; prayer stretched out upon the tenters, as it were. These gracious souls did in prayer strain and stretch themselves, as men do that are running in a race; they prayed with all the strength of their souls, and with all the fervency of their spirits; and accordingly they carried the day with God, as you may see in the following verses. So Acts 26:7, 'Unto which promise, our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,' or rather as the Greek hath it, ■ν ■κτενε■, 'in a stretched out manner, serving God day and night.' These twelve tribes, or the godly Jews of the twelve tribes of Israel, stretched out their hearts, their affections, their graces, to the utmost in prayer. In all your private retirements, do as the twelve tribes did. Rom 12:11, 'Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' The Greek word ζ■οντες, signifies seething hot. God loves to see his people zealous and warm in his service. Without fervency of-spirit, no service finds acceptance in heaven. God is a pure act, and he loves that his people should be lively and active in his service; Rom 12:12, 'Continuing instant in prayer;' προσκαρτερο■ντες, 'continuing with all your might in prayer.' It is a metaphor from hunting dogs, that will never give over the game till they have got it. Rom 15:30, 'That ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me;' συναγων■σασθαι, strive mightily, strive as champions strive, even to an agony, as the word imports. It is a military word, and notes such fervent wrestling or striving, as is for life and death. Col 4:12, 'Always labouring fervently for you in prayer.' The Greek word ■γωνιζομενος, that is here used, signifies to strive or wrestle, as those do that strive for mastery; it notes the vehemency and fervour of Epaphras his prayers for the Colossians. Look, as the wrestlers do bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of their bodies, that they may be victorious; so Epaphras did bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of his soul,—if I may so speak,—that he might be victorious with God upon the Colossians' account. So, when Jacob was with God alone, ah how earnest and fervent was he in his wrestlings with God, Gen 32:24-27, Hos 12:4-5. He wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles; he tugs hard with God, he holds his hold, and he will not let God go, till as a prince he had prevailed with him. Fervent prayer is the soul's contention, the soul struggling with God; it is a sweating work, it is the sweat and blood of the soul, it is a laying out to the uttermost all the strength and powers of the soul. He that would gain victory over God in private prayer, must strain every string of his heart; he must, in beseeching God, besiege him, and so get the better of him; he must be like importunate beggars,

that will not be put off with frowns, or silence, or sad answers. Those that would be masters of their requests, must, like the importunate widow, press God so far as to put him to an holy blush, as I may say with reverence: they must with an holy impudence, as Basil speaks, make God ashamed to look them in the face, if he should deny the importunity of their souls. Had Abraham had a little more of this impudence, saith one, when, he made suit for Sodom, it might have done well. Abraham brought down the price to ten righteous, and there his modesty stayed him; had he gone lower, God only knows what might have been done, for 'God went not away, saith the text, 'till he had left communing with Abraham,' that is, till Abraham had no more to say to God. Abraham left over asking, before God left over granting; he left over praying, before God left over bating; and so Sodom was lost.

Oh the heavenly fire, the holy fervency that was in Daniel's closet prayer! 'O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do, defer not for thine own sake,' Dan 9:19. Look, as there be two kinds of antidotes against poison, viz., hot and cold, so there are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles of this life, viz., fervent prayers and holy patience: the one hot, the other cold; the one quickening, and the other quenching, and holy Daniel made use of them both. Fervency to prayer, is as the fire was to the spices in the censer, or as wings to the bird, or as oil to the wheels; and this Daniel found by experience. God looks not for any James with horny knees, through assiduity of prayer; nor for any Bartholomew with a century of prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening; but for fervency of spirit in prayer, which alone carries all with God. Feeble prayers, like weak pangs, go over, and never brings a mercy to the birth. Cold prayers are still-born children, in whom the Father of spirits can take no pleasure. Look, as a painted man is no man, and as painted fire is no fire; so a cold prayer is no prayer. Such prayers never win upon the heart of God that do not first warm our own hearts. As a body without a soul, much wood without a fire, a bullet in a gun without powder; so are all prayers without fervency of spirit.

Luther terms prayer bombardia Christianorum, the gun or cannon of Christians, or the Christian's gun-shot. The hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions. Cold prayers make a smoke, a smother in the eyes of God. Lazy prayers never procure noble answers; lazy beggars may starve for all their begging, Isa 1:15, and Isa 65:5.

Such as have a male in their flock, and offer to the Lord a female; such as offer to the Lord the torn, and the lame, and the sick; such as turn off God with their cold, lazy, sleepy, and formal devotions, are condemned, cast, and cursed by God, Mal 1:13-14. David compares his prayers to incense, and no incense was offered without fire, Psa 141:2; it was that that made the smoke of it to ascend. It is only fervent prayer that hits the mark, and that pierces the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, Isa 45:2, made of brass and iron. While the child only whimpers and whines in the cradle, the mother lets it alone; but when once it sets up its note, and cries outright, then she runs and takes it up. So it is with a Christian: Psa 34:6, 'This poor man cried.' There is his fervency, he cried; but it was silently and secretly, in the presence of King Achish, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia. 'And the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles;' here is his prevalency. So Latimer plied the throne of grace with great fervency, crying out, 'Once again, Lord, once again restore the gospel to England,' and God heard him.

Hudson the martyr, deserted at the stake, went from under his chain, and having prayed fervently, lie was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.

I have read of one Giles of Bruxels, a Dutch martyr, who was so fervent in his prayer, kneeling by himself in some secret place of the prison where he was, that he seemed to forget himself; and being called to his meat, he neither heard nor saw who stood by him, till he was lifted up by the arms, and then he would speak gently to them, as one awaked out of a trance. So Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of his sister Gorgonia, saith, that, in the vehemency of her prayer, she came to a religious impudency with God, so as to threaten heaven, and tell God that she would never depart from his altar till she had her petition granted.

Let us make it our business to follow these noble examples, as ever we would so prince it in prayer as to prevail with God. An importunate soul in prayer is like the poor beggar, that prays and knocks, that prays and waits, that prays and works, that knocks and knits, that begs and patches, and will not stir from the door till he hath an alms. Well, friends, remember this, God respects no more lukewarm prayers than he doth lukewarm persons, and they are such that he hath threatened to spue out of his mouth. Those prayers that are but lip-labour are lost labour; and therefore, in all your closet prayers, look to the fervency of your spirits.

(7.) My seventh advice and counsel is this, Be constant, as well as fervent, in closet-prayer. Look that you hold on and hold out, and that you persevere to the end in private prayer: 1Th 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing.' A man must always pray habitually, though not actually; he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all estates and conditions. Though closet-prayer may have an intermission, yet it must never have a cessation: Luk 18:1, 'And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint,' or, as the Greek hath it, ■κκκκε■v, not to shrink back, as sluggards in work, or cowards in war. Closet-prayer is a fire like that on the altar, that was never to go out, day nor night: 1Th 3:10, 'Night and day praying exceedingly.' Paul speaks like a man made up all of prayer, like a man that minded nothing so much as prayer: so Eph 6:18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance.' Calvin makes this difference between 'praying always' in the beginning of this verse, and 'praying with perseverance' in the end of this verse: 'By praying always,' saith he, 'he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as in adversity, and not to quit the duty of prayer in a prosperous estate, because we are not driven to it by outward pressing necessities and miseries; and by praying with perseverance, he admonisheth us that we be not weary of the work, but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for.' So that 'praying always' is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its proper times and seasons, and 'praying with perseverance' is opposed to a fainting in our spirits, in respect of this or that particular suit or request that we put up to God. When God turns a deaf ear to our prayers, we must not fret nor faint, we must not be dismayed nor discouraged, but we must hold up and hold on in the duty of prayer with invincible patience, courage, and constancy, as the church did: Lam 3:8, Lam 3:44, Lam 3:55-57, compared; Col 4:2, 'Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.' We must be constant and instant in closet prayer; we must wait upon it, and lay all aside for it. He that is only in his closet by fits and starts, will neither glorify God nor advantage his own soul. If we do not make a trade of closet-prayer, we shall never make any yearnings of closet-prayer. Look, as they that get money by their iron mills do keep a continual fire in their iron mills, so they that will get any soul-good by closet duties, they must keep close and constant to

closet duties. The hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy; he is only in his closet by fits and starts. Now and then, when he is in a good mood, you shall find him step into his closet, but he never holds it: Job 27:10, 'Will he always call upon God,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'Will he in every time call upon God?' When they are under the smarting rod, or when they are upon the tormenting rack, or when they are under grievous wants, or when they are struck with panic-fears, &c., then you shall have them run to their closets, as Joab ran to the horns of the altar, when he was in danger of death; but they never persevere, they never hold out to the end; and therefore in the end they lose both their closet prayers and their souls together, Isa 26:16, Psa 78:34, Zec 7:5.

It was a most profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, that told God 'that he was no common beggar, and that he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would but hear him that time, he would never trouble him again.'

Closet-prayer is a hard work; and a man must tug hard at it, and stick close to it, as Jacob did, if ever he intends to make any internal or eternal advantages by it, Gen 32:1-32. Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to give over praying in his chamber, Dan 6:1-28. It is not he that begins in the spirit and ends in the flesh, Gal 3:3; it is not he that puts his hand to the plough and looks back, Luk 9:62; but he that perseveres to the end in prayer, that shall be saved and crowned, Mat 24:13. It is he that perseveres in well doing that shall eat of the hidden manna, and that shall have the white stone, 'and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows saving him that receiveth it,' Rev 2:17. Those precious, praying, mourning souls in that Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6, that were marked to be preserved in Jerusalem, were distinguished, say some of the learned, by the character ט, tau, which is the last of all the Hebrew letters, to teach them that they must hold out and hold on to the end in well doing. It is constancy in closet-duty that crowns the Christian and commends the duty. But would God have his people to cast off their callings, and to cast off all care of their relations, and shut themselves up in their closets, and there spend their whole time in secret prayer? Oh, no! Every duty must have its time and place; and as one friend must not shut out another, so one duty must not shut out another, Ecc 3:1. The duties of my particular calling as I am a man must not shut out the duties of my general calling as I am a Christian, nor the duties of my general calling as I am a Christian must not shut out the duties of my particular calling as I am a man. But that you may be fully satisfied in this case, you must remember that a man may be said to pray always,

[1.] First, When his heart is always in a praying frame. Look, as a man may be truly said to give always whose heart is always in a giving frame, and to suffer always whose heart is always in a suffering frame—'For thy sake are we killed all the day long,' Psa 44:22—and to sin always whose heart is always in a sinning frame, 2Pe 2:14, Jer 9:3, so a man may be as truly said to pray always whose heart is always in a praying frame.

[2.] Secondly, A man prays always when he takes hold on every fit season and opportunity for the pouring out of his soul before the Lord in his closet. To pray always is παντοτε καὶ πανταχοῦ, to pray in every opportunity; but of this before.

It is observed by some of Proteus, that he was wont to give certain oracles, but it was hard to make him speak and deliver them, but he would turn himself into several shapes and forms; yet if they would hold our, and press him hard without fear, into whatsoever form or shape he appeared, they were sure to have satisfactory oracles. So if we continue constant in our closet-wrestlings

(8.) My eighth advice and counsel is this, In all your closet-prayers, thirst and long after communion with God. In all your private retirements, take up in nothing below fellowship with God, in nothing below a sweet and spiritual enjoyment of God, Song of Solomon 3:1-3, Psa 73:28; Psa 27:4, 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' The temple of the Lord, without communion with the Lord of the temple, will not satisfy David's soul: Psa 42:1-2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?' The hart, as Aristotle and others observe, is of all creatures most hot and dry of itself; but especially when it is chased and hunted, then it is extreme thirsty. The female is here meant, as the Greek article, **ἡ** **λῆψος**, doth manifest. Now, in the females the passions of thirst are more strong, as the naturalists observe. By this David discovers what a vehement and inflamed thirst there was in his soul after communion with God; and as nothing could satisfy the hunted hart but the water brooks, so nothing could satisfy his soul but the enjoyments of God: Psa 43:4, 'Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy.' The altar of God is here put for the worship of God. Now, it is not barely the worship of God, but communion with God in his worship, that was David's exceeding, joy: Psa 63:1-2, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, wherein no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' David's soul did not thirst after a crown, a kingdom, or any worldly greatness or glory, but after a choice and sweet enjoyment of God in his wilderness estate. Never did any woman with child long more after this or that, than David's soul did long to enjoy sensible communion with God in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings: Psa 84:2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' By the 'courts of the Lord,' we are to understand the ordinances. Now, these without communion with God would never have satisfied David's soul.

Whenever you go into your closets, press hard after real and sensible communion with God, that so you may come out of your closets with some shines of God upon your spirits, as Moses came down from the mount with his face shining, Exo 34:29-35. Oh do not take up in your closet prayers, or tears, or joys, or enlargements; but labour and long to enjoy that inward and close

fellowship with God in your closets, as may leave such a choice and sweet savour of God, both upon your hearts and lives, as others may be forced to say, Surely these have been with Jesus, Acts 4:13. It is sad when Christians return from their closets to their shops, their trades, their families, their commerce, &c., without the least visible rays of divine glory upon them.

O sirs! closet-prayer will be found to be but a dry, sapless, lifeless, heartless, comfortless thing, if you do not enjoy communion with God in it. Communion with God is the very life, soul, and crown of all your closet duties; and therefore press after it as for life. When you go into your closets, let every thing go that may hinder your fruition of Christ, and let everything be embraced, that makes way for your enjoyment of Christ. Oh let closet-prayer be a golden bridge, a wherry, a chariot to convey your souls over to God, and to bring you into a more intimate communion with God. Let no closet duty satisfy you or content you, wherein you have not conversed with God, as a child converseth with his father, or as a wife converseth with her husband, or as a friend converseth with his friend, even face to face. Nothing speaks out more unsoundness, falseness, and baseness of heart than this, when men make duty the end of duty; prayer the end of prayer; than when men can begin a duty, and go on in a duty, and close up a duty, and bless and stroke themselves after a duty, and yet never enjoy the least communion with God in the duty.

Quest. But how shall a man know when he hath a real communion with God in a duty or no? This is a very noble and necessary question, and accordingly it calls for a clear and satisfactory answer; and therefore thus:

Sol. [1.] First, A man may have communion with God in sorrow and tears, when he hath not communion with God in joy, delight, Psa 51:17. A man may have communion with God in a heart-humbling, a heart-melting, and a heart-abasing way, when he hath not communion with God in a heart-reviving, a heart-cheering, and a heart-comforting way. It is a very great mistake among many tender-spirited Christians, to think that they have no communion with God in their closets, except they meet with God embracing and kissing, Song of Solomon 2:4-6, cheering and comforting up their souls. When they find God raising the springs of joy and comfort in their souls; when they find God a-speaking peace unto them; when they find the singular sensible presence of God cheering, refreshing, and enlarging of them in their closets, oh then they are willing to grant that they have had sweet communion with God in their closets. But if God meets with them in their closets, and only breaks their hearts for sin, and from sin, if he meets with them and only makes his power and his presence manifest, in debasing and casting down of their souls, upon the sight and sense of their strong corruptions and many imperfections, how unwilling are they to believe that they have had any communion with God! Well, friends, remember this once for all, viz., that a Christian may have as real communion with God in a heart-humbling way, as he can have in a heart-comforting way. A Christian may have as choice communion with God when his eyes are full of tears, as he can have when his heart is full of joy, John 20:11-19. Sometimes God meets with a poor Christian in his closet, and exceedingly breaks him and humbles him, and at other times he meets with the same Christian in his closet, and mightily cheers him, and comforts him; sometimes God meets with a poor soul in his closet, and there he sweetly quiets him and stills him, and at other times he meets with the same soul in his closet, and then he greatly revives him and quickens him. God doth not always come upon the soul one way, he doth not always come in at one and the same door, John 3:8. We sometimes look for a friend to come in at the fore-door, and then he comes in at the back-door; and at other times, when we look for him at the back-door, then

he comes in at the fore-door; and just so it is with God's coming into his people's souls. Sometimes they go into their closets, and look that God will come in at the fore-door of joy and comfort, and then God comes in at the back-door of sorrow and grief; and at other times, when they look that God should come in at the back-door of humiliation, breaking, and melting their hearts, then God comes in at the fore-door of joy and consolation, cheering and rejoicing their souls. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, That all Christians do not enjoy a like communion with God in their closets. Some enjoy much communion with God in their closets, and others enjoy but little communion with God in their closets. Moses had a more clear, glorious, and constant communion with God in his days, than any others had in those times wherein he lived, Exo 33:11; Deu 5:4; Num 12:7-8. God spake to none 'face to face,' as he did to Moses. And Abraham, Gen 18:1-33, in his time, had a more close, friendly, and intimate communion with God, than holy Lot, or any others had in that day. And though all the disciples, Judas excepted, had sweet communion with Christ in the days of his flesh, yet Peter, James, and John had a more clear, choice, and full communion with him than the rest had, Mat 17:1-4. Among all the disciples John had most bosom-communion with Christ, he was the greatest favourite in Christ's court, he leaned on Christ's bosom, he could say anything to Christ, and he could know anything of Christ, and he could have anything of Christ, John 13:23, John 20:2, and John 21:20. Now that all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, may be thus made evident;—

First, All Christians do not prepare alike to enjoy closet-communion with God; and therefore all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, Ecc 5:1; Psa 10:17. Commonly he that prepares and fits himself most for closet-communion with God, he is the man that enjoys most closet-communion with God, 2Ch 30:17-20.

Secondly, All Christians do not alike prize communion with God in their closets. Some prize communion with God in their closets before all and above all other things; as that noble marquis said, 'Cursed be he that prefers all the world to one hour's communion with God.' They look upon it as that pearl of price, for the enjoyment of which they are ready to sell all and part with all; others prize it at a lower rate, and so enjoy less of it than those that set a higher price and value upon it, Job 23:12; Psa 119:127; Mat 13:45-46.

Thirdly, All Christians do not alike press after communion with God in their closets. Some press after communion with God in their closets, as a condemned man presses after a pardon, or as a close prisoner presses after enlargement, or as a poor beggar presses after an alms, Psa 73:8, Isa 26:8-9. Now, you know these press on with the greatest earnestness, the greatest fervency, and the greatest importunity imaginable. But others press after communion with God in their closets more coldly, more carelessly, more slightly, more lazily: 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Song of Solomon 5:3. Now, they that press hardest after communion with God in their closets, they are usually blessed with the highest degrees of closet-communion with God.

Fourthly, All Christians don't alike improve their communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians don't enjoy communion with God alike in their closets. Some Christians do make a more wise, a more humble, a more holy, a more faithful, a more fruitful, and a more constant improvement of their closet-communion with God than others do; and therefore they are

blessed with higher degrees of communion with God than others are. Some Christians do more improve their closet-communion with God against the world, the flesh, and the devil, than others do; and therefore no wonder if they do enjoy more communion with God in their closets than others do.

Fifthly, All Christians do not alike need communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians have not a like communion with God in their closets. All Christians have not a like place in the mystical body of Christ, 1Co 12:14, seq.; some rule, and others are ruled. Now, every man stands in more or less need of communion with God, according to the place that he bears in the body of Christ. Again, all Christians have not alike burdens to bear, nor alike difficulties to encounter with, nor alike dangers to escape, nor alike temptations to wrestle with, nor alike passions and corruptions to mortify, nor alike mercies and experiences to improve, &c.; and therefore all Christians don't need alike communion with God in their closets. Now, commonly God lets himself out more or less in ways of communion, according as the various necessities and conditions of his people doth require.

Sixthly and lastly, All Christians do not alike meet with outward interruptions, nor inward interruptions; and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets. Some Christians meet with a world of outward and inward interruptions more than others do; some Christians' outward callings, relations, conditions, and stations, &c., do afford more plentiful matter and occasions, to interrupt them in their closet-communion with God, than other Christians' callings, relations, conditions, and stations do, &c. Besides, Satan is more busy with some Christians than he is with other Christians; and corruptions work more strongly and violently in some Christians than they do in other Christians, &c.; and let me add this to all the rest, that the very natural tempers of some Christians are more averse to closet-duties than the natural tempers of other Christians are; and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets, but some have more and some have less, according as God in his infinite wisdom sees best.

Now, let no Christian say, that he hath no communion with God in closet-prayer, because he hath not such a full, such a choice, such a sweet, such a sensible, and such a constant communion with God in closet-prayer, as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have; for all saints do not alike enjoy communion with God in their closets: some have more, some have less; some have a higher degree, others a lower; some are rapt up in the third heaven, when others are but rapt up in the clouds. What man is there so childish and babyish as to argue thus, that he hath no wisdom, because he hath not the wisdom of Solomon; or, that he hath no strength, because he hath not the strength of Samson; or, that he hath no life, because he hath not the swiftness of Ahimaaz; or, that he hath no estate, because he hath not the riches of Dives? And yet so childish and babyish many weak Christians are, as to argue thus: viz., that they have no communion with God in their closets, because they have not such high, such comfortable, and such constant communion with God in their closets, as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have; whereas they should seriously consider, that though some saints have a great communion with God, yet other saints have but a small communion with God; and though some Christians have a strong communion with God, yet other Christians have but a weak communion with God; and though some of the people of God have a very close and near communion with God, yet others of the people of God have but a more remote communion with

God; and though some of God's servants have a daily, constant, and uninterrupted communion with God, yet others of his servants have but a more transient and inconstant communion with God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, When a man acts grace in closet-duties, then certainly he hath communion with God in closet-duties, 2Ti 1:17, 1Ti 2:8. When a man in closet duties acts faith on God, or faith on the promises, or faith on the blood of Christ; or when a man in private duties acts repentance for sin, or love to Jesus Christ, or sets up God as the object of his fear, or as the object of his joy, &c., then he hath communion with God, then he hath fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, 1Jn 1:3. An unregenerate man may act gifts and parts in a duty, but he cannot act grace in a duty; for no man can act grace in a duty, but he that hath grace in his soul; and hence it comes to pass that unsanctified persons under the highest activity of their arts, parts, and gifts in religious duties, enjoy no communion with God at all; witness the scribes and pharisees, Demas, Judas, Simon Magus, &c., Isa 1:11-13. As ever you would have an evidence of your communion with God in closet-duties, carefully look to the activity of your graces, carefully stir up the grace of God which is in you, 2Ti 1:6. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, When a man hath communion with God in his closet, then he gives God the glory of all his actings and activities, Psa 115:1. Communion with God always helps a man to set the crown of praise and honour upon the head of God. Witness that gracious and grateful doxology of David and his people, in that 1Ch 29:13, 'Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.' Men that enjoy no communion with God in religious duties, are still a-sacrificing unto their own net, and a-burning incense unto their own drag, Hab 1:16; they are still a-blessing themselves, and a-stroking of themselves, and applauding themselves; they think the garland of praise, the crown of honour, becomes no head but their own, Luk 17:11-12. But now, men that enjoy communion with God in religious duties, they will uncrown themselves to crown God, they will uncrown their duties to crown the God of their duties, they will uncrown their arts, parts, gifts, and enlargements, to set the crown of praise upon the head of God alone, Acts 3:11-13, Acts 3:16; Rev 4:10-11; Rev 5:11-12. Thou thinkest that thou hast communion with God in closet-duties, yea, thou sayest that thou hast communion with God in closet-duties; but on whose head dost thou put the garland of praise? Psa 148:13. If on God's head, thou hast communion with God; if on thine own head, thou hast no communion with God. As all the rivers run into the sea, and all the lines meet in the centre, so, when all our closet-duties terminate and centre in the advance of God's glory, then have we communion with God in them.

Constantine did use to write the name of Christ over his door. When a man hath communion with Christ in a duty, then he will write the name of Christ, the honour of Christ, upon his duty. Some say that the name of Jesus was engraven upon the heart of Ignatius; sure I am, when a man hath communion with God in a duty, then you shall find the honour and glory of Jesus engraven upon that duty. But,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, When the performance of closet-duties leaves the soul in a better frame, then a man hath communion with God in them. When a man comes off from closet-duties in a more holy frame, or in a more humble frame, or in a more spiritual frame, or in a more watchful frame, or in a more heavenly frame, or in a more broken frame, or in a more quickened and enlivened frame, &c., then certainly he hath had communion with God in those duties. When a man comes

out of his closet, and finds the frame of his heart to be more strongly set against sin than ever, and to be more highly resolved to walk with God than ever, and to be more eminently crucified to the world than ever, and to be more divinely fixed against temptations than ever, then without all peradventure he hath had communion with God in his closet.

[6.] Sixthly, I answer, When closet-duties fit a man for those other duties that lie next his hand, then doubtless he hath had communion with God in them. When private duties fit a man for public duties, or when private duties fit a man for the duties of his place, calling, and condition, wherein God hath set him, then certainly he hath had fellowship with God in them, Ecc 9:10. When a man in closet duties finds more spiritual strength and power to perform the duties that are next incumbent upon him, then assuredly he hath met with God; when private prayer fits me more for family prayer, or public prayer, then I may safely conclude that God hath drawn near to my soul in private prayer; or when one closet duty fits me for another closet duty, as when praying fits me for reading, or reading for praying; or when the more external duties in my closet, viz., reading or praying, fits me for those more spiritual and internal duties, viz., self-examination, holy meditation, soul-humiliation, &c., then I may rest satisfied that there hath been some choice intercourse between God and my soul. When the more I pray in my closet, the more fit I am to pray in my closet; and the more I read in my closet, the more fit I am to read in my closet; and the more I meditate in my closet, the more fit I am to meditate in my closet; and the more I search and examine my heart in my closet, the more fit I am to search and examine my heart in my closet; and the more I humble and abase my soul in my closet, the more fit I am to humble and abase my soul in my closet: then I may be confident that I have had communion with God in my closet.

[7.] Seventhly, I answer, That all private communion with God is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing. Abraham was a man that had much private communion with God, and a man that was very vile and low in his own eyes: Gen 18:27, 'And Abraham answered and said, Behold, now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.' In respect of my original, saith Abraham, 'I am but base dust and ashes;' and in respect of my deserts, I deserve to be burnt to ashes. There are none so humble as they that have nearest communion with God, Gen 28:10-18. Jacob was a man that had much private communion with God, and a man that was very little in his own eyes: Gen 22:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'I am less than all thy mercies.' When Jacob had to deal with Laban, he pleads his merit; but when he hath to do with God, he debaseth himself below the least of his mercies, Gen 31:38-41. Moses was a man that had much private communion with God, as I have formerly evidenced, and a man that was the meekest and humblest person in all the world: Num 12:3, 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.'

Josephus, writing of Moses, saith, if he may be believed, 'that he was so free from passions, that he knew no such thing in his own soul; he only knew passions by their names, and saw them in others, but felt them not in himself.' And so, when the glory of God appeared to him, he falls upon his face, Num 16:22, in token of humility and self-abasing. David was a man that had much private communion with God, as is granted on all hands; and how greatly doth he debase himself and vilify himself! 1Sa 26:20, 'The king of Israel is come out to seek a flea;' and what more weak and contemptible than a flea? So 1Sa 24:14, 'After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?' As if David had said, 'It is not worth the while, the

labour; it is below the dignity and honour of the king of Israel to take such pains and to pursue so violently after such a poor nothing as I am, who hath no more strength nor power to bite or hurt than a dead dog or a poor flea hath.' So Psa 22:6, 'But I am a worm, and no man.' Now, what is more weak, what less regarded, what more despicable, what more trampled under foot than a poor worm? The Hebrew word *tolagnath*, that is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, such as breed in scarlet, which are so little that a man can scarcely see them, or perceive them. Thus you see that holy David debaseth himself below a worm, yea, below the least of worms. No man sets so low a value upon himself as he doth who hath most private communion with God. The four-and-twenty elders cast down their crowns at the feet of Jesus Christ, Rev 4:10-11. Their crowns note all their inward and outward dignities, excellencies, and glories; and the casting down of their crowns notes their great humility and self-debasement. When Christians, in their closets and out of their closets, can cast down their crowns, their duties, their services, their graces, their enlargements, their enjoyments, &c., at the feet of Jesus Christ, and sit down debasing and lessening of themselves then certainly they have had a very near and sweet communion with God.

Chrysostom hath a remarkable saying of humility: 'Suppose,' saith he, 'that a man were defiled with all manner of sin and enormity, yet humble, and another man enriched with gifts, graces, and duties, yet proud, the humble sinner were in a safer condition than this proud saint.' When a man can come off from closet-duties, and say, as Ignatius once said of himself, *Non sum dignus dici minimus*, I am not worthy to be called the least, then certainly he hath had fellowship with God in them. All the communion that the creature hath with God in his closet is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing. In all a man's communion with God, some beams, some rays of the glory and majesty of God, will shine forth upon his soul. Now all divine manifestations are very humbling and abasing, as you may clearly see in those two great instances of Job and Isaiah: Job 42:5-6 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Isa 6:1, Isa 6:5, 'In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' What sweet communion had Elijah with God in the low cave!

There was a gentlewoman, of no ordinary quality or breeding, who, being much troubled in mind, and sadly deserted by God, could not be drawn by her husband, or any other Christian friends, either to hear or read anything that might work for her spiritual advantage; at last her husband, by much importunity, prevailed so far with her, that she was willing he should read one chapter in the Bible to her; so he read Isa 57:1-21, and when he came to Isa 57:15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' Oh, says she, is it so, that God dwells with a contrite and humble spirit? Then I am sure he dwells with me, for my heart is broken into a thousand pieces. Oh happy text and happy time, that ever I should hear such comfort! and she was thereupon recovered. The more communion any man hath with God, the more humble and broken his heart will be.

Holy Bradford was a man that had much private communion with God, and he would many times subscribe himself in his letters, 'John the hypocrite, and a very painted sepulchre.' Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on the earth in his days, and he condemned himself for being more

brutish than any man, and not having the understanding of a man, Pro 30:2. How sweet is the smell of the lowly violet, that hides his head, above all the gaudy tulips that be in your garden. The lowly Christian is the most amiable and the most lovely Christian. When a man can come out of his closet, and cry out with Augustine, 'I hate that which I am, and love and desire that which I am not. O wretched man that I am, in whom the cross of Christ hath not yet eaten out the poisonous and the bitter taste of the first tree.' Or, as another saith, 'Lord, I see, and yet am blind; I will, and yet rebel; I hate, and yet I love; I follow, and yet I fall; I press forward, yet I faint; I wrestle, yet I halt;' then he may be confident that he hath had communion with God in his closet. He that comes off from closet-duties in a self-debasing way, and in laying of himself low at the foot of God, he certainly hath had communion with God; but when men come out of their closets with their hearts swelled and lifted up, as the hearts of the pharisees were, Luk 18:11-12, it is evident that they have had no communion with God. God hath not been near to their souls, who say, stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou, Isa 65:5. But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, When a man finds such a secret virtue and power running through his closet-duties, as wounds and weakens his beloved corruption, as breaks the strength and the power of his special sin, as sets his heart more fully, resolutely, and constantly against his darling lust, as stirs up a greater rage, and a more bitter hatred, and a more fierce indignation against the toad in the bosom, then certainly he hath had communion with God in his closet-duties. Consult these scriptures: Isa 2:20, 'In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they have made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' In the day wherein God should take these poor hearts into communion with himself, their hearts should be filled with such rage and indignation against their most delectable and desirable idols, that they should take not only those made of trees and stones, but even their most precious and costly idols, those that were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats, to note their horrible hatred and indignation against them. Idolatry was the darling-sin of the Jews; their hearts were so exceedingly affected and delighted with their idols, that they did not care what they spent upon them: Isa 46:6, 'They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship.' The word here used for lavish, in the Hebrew, signifies properly to waste, or spend riotously; they set so light by their treasure, that they cared not what they spent upon their idols. God gave them gold and silver as pledges of his favour and bounty, and they lavish it out upon their idols, as if God had hired them to be wicked. Oh, but when God should come and take these poor wretches into a close and near communion with himself, then you shall find their wrath and rage to rise against their idols, as you may see in that Isa 30:19-21. Their communion with God is more than hinted; but mark, Isa 30:22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' None defile, deface, detest, and disgrace their idols like those that are taken into communion with God. Fellowship with God will make a man cast away, as a menstruous cloth, those very idols, in which he hath most delighted, and with which he hath been most pleased and enamoured. Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin. Hos 4:17, 'Ephraim is joined,' or glued, as the Hebrew hath it, 'to idols; let him alone.' Oh! but when you find Ephraim taken into close communion with God, as you do in that Hos 14:4-7, then you shall find another spirit upon him: Hos 14:8, 'Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols?' I have had too much to do with them already, I will never have to do with them any more. Oh! how doth my soul detest and

abhor them, and rise up against them. Oh! how do I now more loathe and abominate them, than ever I have formerly loved them, or delighted in them. After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols, that in the time of the Romans they chose rather to die, than suffer the eagle, which was the imperial arms, to be set up in their temple.

Though closet-duties are weak in themselves, yet when a man hath communion with God in them, then they prove exceeding powerful to the casting down of strongholds, and vain imaginations, and every high thing and thought, that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2Co 10:4-5. When a man comes out of his closet with a heart more fully and stedfastly set against every known sin, but especially against his bosom-sin, his darling-sin, his Delilah that he played and sported himself most with, and that he hath hugged with pleasure and delight in his bosom, then certainly he hath had private communion with God.

After Moses had enjoyed forty days' private communion with God in the mount, how did his heart rise, and his anger wax hot against the molten calf that his people had made! Exo 32:19-20, 'And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing; and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount: and he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.' Moses had never more intimate fellowship with God than now, and he never discovered so much holy zeal, anger, and indignation against sin as now. When a man comes off from the mount of closet-duties with a greater hatred, anger, wrath, and indignation against bosom-sins, darling-sins, complexion-sins, that were once as dear to him as right hands or right eyes, or as Delilah was to Samson, or Herodias to Herod, or Isaac to Abraham, or Joseph to Jacob, then certainly he hath had communion with God in those duties. When a man finds his beloved sins, his Delilahs, which, like the prince of devils, command all other sins, to fall before his closet-duties, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David, then assuredly he hath had fellowship with God in them. Pliny writes of some families that had privy marks on their bodies, peculiar to those of that line. Certainly, there are no families, no persons, but have some sin or sins, some privy marks on their souls, that may in a peculiar way be called theirs. Now when in private duties they find the bent of their hearts, and the purposes, resolutions, and inclinations of their souls more raised, inflamed, and set against these, they may safely and comfortably conclude, that they have had communion with God in them. O sirs! there is no no bosom-sin so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for; and therefore, in all your private duties and services, labour after that communion with God in them, that may break the neck and heart of your most bosom-sins. When Darius fled before Alexander, that he might run the faster out of danger, he threw away his massy crown from his head. As ever you would be safe from eternal danger, throw away your golden and your silver idols, throw away your bosom-sins, your darling lusts. And thus I have done with the answers to that noble and necessary question, that was last proposed.

(9.) My ninth advice and counsel is this, In all your closet-duties look that your ends be right, look that the glory of God be your ultimate end, the mark, the white, that you have in your eye. There is a great truth in that old saying, *Quod non actibus, sed finibus pensantur officia*, that duties are esteemed, not by their acts, but by their ends. Look, as the shining sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God must consume all other ends. There may be *malum opus in bona materia*, as in Jehu's zeal. Two things make a good Christian, good actions and good aims. And though a

good aim doth not make a bad action good, as in Uzzah, yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, as in Jehu, whose justice was approved, but his policy punished. God writes a nothing upon all those services, wherein men's ends are not right: Jer 32:23, 'They obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law, they have done nothing of all that thou hast commanded them to do.' So Dan 9:13, 'All this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God.' The Jews were very much in religious duties and services; witness Isa 1:11-15; Isa 58:1-3; Zec 7:5-6. I might produce a hundred more witnesses to confirm it, were it necessary; but because they did not aim at the glory of God in what they did, therefore the Lord writes a nothing upon all their duties and services. It was Ephraim's folly, that he brought forth fruit unto himself, Hos 10:1. And it was the Pharisees' hypocrisy, that in all their duties and services they looked at the praise of men. Mat 6:1-5, 'Verily,' saith Christ, 'you have your reward.' A poor, a pitiful reward indeed! Such men shall be sure to fall short of divine acceptance, and of a glorious recompence, that are not able to look above the praises of men. Woe to that man that, with Augustus, is ambitious to go off the stage of duty with a plaudit. Peter was not himself when he denied his Lord, and cursed himself to get credit amongst a cursed crew. As ever you would ask and have, speak and speed, seek and find, look that the glory of the Lord be engraven upon all your closet-duties. He shall be sure to speed best, whose heart is set most upon glorifying of God in all his secret retirements. When God crowns us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us; and when we give God the glory of all we do, we do but give him the glory that is due unto his name; for it is he, and he alone, that works all our works in us and for us. All closet-duties are good or bad, as the mark is at which the soul aims. He that makes God the object of closet-prayer, but not the end of closet-prayer, doth but lose his prayer, and take pains to undo himself. God will be Alexander or Nemo; he will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all. Such prayers never reach the ear of God, nor delight the heart of God, nor shall ever be lodged in the bosom of God, that are not directed to the glory of God. The end must be as noble as the means, or else a man may be undone after all his doings. A man's most glorious actions will at last be found to be but glorious sins, if he hath made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions.

(10.) My tenth advice and counsel is this, Be sure that you offer all your closet-prayers in Christ's name, and in his alone; John 14:13-14, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' John 15:16, 'That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.' John 16:23-24, John 16:26, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.' O sirs! this is your privilege as well as your comfort, that you never deal with God but by a mediator. When you appear before God, Jesus Christ appears with you, and he appears for you; when you do invocare, then he doth advocare; when you put up your petitions, then he doth make intercession for you. Christ gives you a commission to put his name upon all your requests; and whatsoever prayer comes up with this name upon it, he will procure it an answer. In the state of innocency, man might worship God without a mediator; but since sin hath made so wide a breach between God and man, God will accept of no worship from man, but what is offered up by the hand of a mediator. Now this mediator is Christ alone; 1Ti 2:5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' One mediator, not of redemption only, as the papists grant, but of intercession also, which they deny. The papists make saints and angels

co-mediators with Christ; but in this, as in other things, they fight against clear Scripture light. The apostle plainly tells us, that the office of intercession pertaineth unto Christ, as part of his mediation, Heb 7:25 : and it is certain, that we need no other master of requests in heaven, but the man Christ Jesus; who being so near to the Father, and so dear to the Father, and so much in with the Father, can doubtless carry any thing with the Father, that makes for his glory and our good. This was typified in the law. The high-priest alone did enter into the sanctuary, and carry the names of the children of Israel before the Lord, whilst the people stood all without; this pointed out Christ's mediation, Exo 28:2, Exo 28:9. In that Lev 16:13-14, you read of two things: first, of the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat; secondly, of the blood of the bullock, that was sprinkled before the mercy-seat. Now that blood typified Christ's satisfaction, and the cloud of incense his intercession.

Some of the learned think, that Christ intercedes only by virtue of his merits; others, that it is done only with his mouth. I conjecture it may be done both ways, the rather because Christ hath a tongue, as also a whole body, but glorified, in heaven; and is it likely, that that mouth which pleaded so much for us on earth, should be altogether silent for us in heaven?

There is no coming to the Father, but by the Son, John 14:6. Christ is the true Jacob's ladder, by which we must ascend to heaven. Joseph, you know, commanded his brethren, that as ever they looked for any good from him, or to see his face with joy, that they should be sure to bring their brother Benjamin along with them. O sirs! as ever you would be prevalent with God, as ever you would have sweet, choice, and comfortable returns from heaven to all your closet-prayers, be sure that you bring your elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the arms of your faith, be sure that you treat and trade with God only in the name of the Lord Jesus.

It is a notable speech that Luther hath upon Psa 130:1-8, 'Often and willingly,' saith he, 'do I inculcate this, that you should shut your eyes, and your ears, and say, you know no God out of Christ, none but he that was in the lap of Mary, and sucked her breasts,' Dulce nomen Christi. He means none out of him. When you go to closet-prayer, look that you pray not in your own names, but in the name of Christ; and that you believe and hope not in your own names, but in the name of Christ; and that you look not to speed in your own names, but in the name of Christ: Col 3:17, 'And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Whatsoever we do, we are to do it by the authority of Christ, and through the assistance of Christ, and in the name of Christ, and for the sake and glory of Christ. Christ's name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request at his hands. Jesus, in the China tongue, signifies the rising sun. When a man writes the name of Jesus upon his closet-prayers, then he shall be sure to speed. Though God will not give a man a drop, a sip, a crumb, a crust, for his own sake, yet for Jesus' sake he will give the best, the choicest, and the greatest blessings that heaven affords; that name is still mighty and powerful, prevalent and precious before the Lord. The prayers that were offered up with the incense upon the altar were pleasing, Rev 8:3; and came up with acceptance, Rev 8:4. Joseph's brethren were kindly used for Benjamin's sake. O sirs! all our duties and services are accepted of the Father, not for their own sakes, nor for our sakes, but for Christ's sake. There are no prayers that are either heard, owned, accepted, regarded, or rewarded, but such as Christ puts his hand to. If Christ doth not mingle his blood with our sacrifices, our services, they will be lost, and never ascend as incense before the Lord. No coin is current that hath not Cæsar's stamp upon it; nor no prayers go current in heaven, that have not the

stamp of Christ upon them. There is nothing more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than to use the mediation of his Son. Such shall be sure to find most favour, and to speed best in the court of heaven, who still present themselves before the Father with Christ in their arms. But,

(11.) My eleventh and last advice and counsel is this, When you come out of your closets, narrowly watch what becomes of your private prayers. Look at what door, in what way, and by what hand the Lord shall please to give you an answer to the secret desires of your souls in a corner. It hath been the custom of the people of God, to look after their prayers, to see what success they have had, to observe what entertainment they have found in heaven: Psa 5:3, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.' In the words you may observe two things: first, David's posture in prayer; secondly, his practice after prayer. First, His posture in prayer, 'I will direct my prayer unto thee.' Secondly, His practice after prayer, 'And I will look up.' The prophet, in these words, makes use of two military words. First, he would not only pray, but marshal up his prayers, he would put them in battle-array; so much the Hebrew word gnarach imports. Secondly, when he had done this, then he would be as a spy upon his watch-tower, to see whether he prevailed, whether he got the day or no; and so much the Hebrew word tsaphah imports. When David had set his prayers, his petitions, in rank and file, in good array, then he was resolved he would look abroad, he would look about him, to see at what door God would send in an answer of prayer. He is either a fool or a madman, he is either very weak or very wicked, that prays and prays, but never looks after his prayers; that shoots many an arrow towards heaven, but never minds where his arrows alight: Psa 85:8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints.' If David would have God to hearken to his prayers, he must then hearken to what God will speak; and upon this point it seems he was fully resolved. The prophet's prayer you have in the seven first verses of this psalm, and his gracious resolution you have in the eighth verse, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak.' As if he had said, 'Certainly it will not be long before the Lord will give me a gracious answer, a seasonable and a suitable return to my present prayers:' Psa 130:1-2, Psa 130:5-6, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Those that watch abroad in dangerous times and tedious weather look frequently after peep of day. How doth the weary sentinel, that is wet with the rain of heaven or with the dew of the night, wait and watch, look and long, for the morning light. Now this was the frame and temper of David's spirit when he came off from praying; he falls a-waiting for a gracious answer. Shall the husbandman wait for the precious fruits of the earth, and shall the merchantman wait for the return of his ships, and shall the wife wait for the return of her husband, that is gone a long journey? Jas 5:7-8, and shall not a Christian wait for the return of his prayers? Noah patiently waited for the return of the dove to the ark with an olive-branch in his mouth, so must you patiently wait for the return of your prayers. When children shoot their arrows, they never mind where they fall; but when prudent archers shoot their arrows up into the air, they stand and watch where they fall. You must deal by your prayers as prudent archers do by their arrows: Hab 2:1, 'I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me.' The prophet, in the former chapter, having been very earnest in his expostulations, and very fervent in his supplications, he gets now upon his watch-tower, to see what becomes of his prayers. He stands as a sentinel, and watches as vigilantly and as carefully

as a spy, a scout, earnestly longing to hear and see the event, the issue, and success of his prayers. That Christian that in prayer hath one eye upon a divine precept, and another upon a gracious promise, that Christian will be sure to look after his prayers. He that prays and waits, and waits and prays, shall be sure to speed; he shall never fail of rich returns, Psa 40:1-4. He that can want as well as wait, and he that can be contented that God is glorified, though he be not gratified; he that dares not antedate God's promises, but patiently wait for the accomplishment of them, he may be confident that he shall have seasonable and suitable answers to all those prayers that he hath posted away to heaven. Though God seldom comes at our time, yet he never fails to come at his own time: 'He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,' Heb 10:37. The mercies of God are not styled the swift, but the 'sure mercies of David.' He that makes as much conscience to look after his prayers as to pray, he shall shortly clap his hands for joy, and cry out with that blessed martyr, 'He is come, Austin, he is come, he is come.' Certainly there is little worth in that man's heart, or in that man's prayers, who keeps up a trade of prayer, but never looks what becomes of his prayers. When you are in your closets, marshal your prayers; see that every prayer keeps his place and ground; and when you come out of your closets, then look up for an answer; only take heed that you be not too hasty and hot with God. Though mercy in the promise be yours, yet the time of giving it out is the Lord's; and therefore you must wait as well as pray. And thus much by way of counsel and advice, for the better carrying on of closet prayer.

I have now but one thing more to do before I shut up this discourse, and that is, to lay down some means, rules, or directions that may be of use to help you on in a faithful and conscientious discharge of this great duty, viz. closet-prayer. And therefore thus,

(1.) First, As ever you would give up yourselves to private prayer, Take heed of an idle and slothful spirit. If Adam, in the state of innocency, must work and dress the garden, and if, after his fall, when he was monarch of all the world, he must yet labour, why should any be idle or slothful? Idleness is a sin against the law of creation. God creating man to labour, the idle person violates this law of creation; for by his idleness he casts off the authority of his Creator, who made him for labour. Idleness is a contradiction to the principles of our creation. Man in innocency should have been freed from weariness, but not from employment; he was to dress the garden by divine appointment: 'And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it,' Gen 2:15. All weariness in labour, and all vexing, tiring, and tormenting labour, came in by the fall: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,' Gen 3:19. The bread of idleness is neither sweet nor sure: 'An idle person shall suffer hunger,' saith Solomon, Pro 19:15. An idle life and an holy heart are far enough asunder. By doing nothing, saith the heathen man, men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life; yea, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle. The Cyclops thought man's happiness did consist in nihil agendo, in doing nothing; but no excellent thing can be the child of idleness. Idleness is a mother-sin, a breeding-sin; it is pulvinar diaboli, the devil's cushion, on which he sits, and the devil's anvil, on which he frames very great and very many sins, Eph 4:28, 2Th 3:10, 2Th 3:12. Look, as toads and serpents breed most in standing waters, so sin thrives most in idle persons. Idleness is that which provokes the Lord to forsake men's bodies, and the devil to possess their souls. No man hath less means to preserve his body, and more temptations to infect his soul, than an idle person. Oh shake off sloth! The sluggish Christian will be sleeping, or idling, or trifling, when he should be in his closet a-praying. Sloth is the green-sickness of the soul; get it

cured, or it will be your eternal bane. Of all devils, it is the idle devil that keeps men most out of their closets. There is nothing that gives the devil so much advantage against us as idleness. It was good counsel that Jerome gave to his friend, *Facito aliquid operis, ut te semper diabolus inveniat occupatum*, that when the devil comes with a temptation, you may answer him you are not at leisure.

It was the speech of Mr Greenham, sometimes a famous and painful preacher of this nation, that when the devil tempted a poor soul, she came to him for advice how she might resist the temptation, and he gave her this answer: 'Never be idle, but be always well employed, for in my own experience I have found it. When the devil came to tempt me, I told him that I was not at leisure to hearken to his temptations, and by this means I resisted all his assaults.' Idleness is the hour of temptation, and an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.

'He that labours,' said the old hermit, 'is tempted but by one devil, but he that is idle is assaulted by all.' Cupid complained that he could never fasten upon the Muses, because he could never find them idle. The fowler bends his bow and spreads his net for birds when they are set, not when they are upon the wing. So Satan shoots his most fiery darts at men, when they are most idle and slothful. And this the Sodomites found by woful experience, Eze 16:49, when God rained hell out of heaven upon them, both for their idleness, and for those other sins of theirs, which their idleness did expose them to.

It was said of Rome, that during the time of their wars with Carthage and other enemies in Africa, they knew not what vice meant; but no sooner had they got the conquest, but through idleness they came to ruin. Idleness is a sin, not only against the law of grace, but also against the light of nature. You cannot look any way but every creature checks and upbraids your idleness and sloth; if you look up to the heavens, there you shall find all their glorious lights constant in their motions, 'The sun rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,' Psa 19:5, Psa 104:23; the winds blow, the waters run, the earth brings forth her pleasant and delightful fruits, all the fish in the sea, fowls in the air, and beasts in the fields and on the mountains, have their motions and operations, all which call aloud upon man not to be idle, but active. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant to learn industry, Pro 6:6. The ant is a very little creature, but exceeding laborious. Nature hath put an instinct into her to be very busy and active all the summer; she is early and late at it, and will not lose an hour unless the weather hinder. And the prophet Jeremiah sends the Jews to school to learn to wait, and observe of the stork, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, Jer 8:7. And our Saviour sends us to the sparrows and lilies, to learn attendance upon providence, Mat 6:26, Mat 6:28. And let me send you to the busy bee, to learn activity and industry; though the bee be little in bulk, yet it is great in service; she flies far, examines the fields, hedges, trees, orchards, gardens, and loads herself with honey and wax, and then returns to her hive. Now how should the activity of these creatures put the idle person to a blush. O sirs! man is the most noble creature, into whom God hath put principles of the greatest activity, as capable of the greatest and highest enjoyments; and therefore idleness is a forgetting man's dignity, and a forsaking of that rank that God hath set him in, and a debasing of himself below the least and meanest creatures, who constantly in their order obedientially serve the law of their creation. Nay, if you look up to the blessed angels above you, you shall still find them active and serviceable; 'are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Heb 1:14. And if you look down to the angels of darkness below you, oh how laborious and industrious are they to destroy and damn your precious

and immortal souls! 1Pe 5:8. For a close, remember that idleness is so great an evil, that it hath been condemned and severely punished by the very worst of men. Among the Egyptians, idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans, he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. By Solon's law, idle persons were to suffer death; and Seneca had rather be sick than idle. The Lacedæmonians called men to an account for their idle hours. Among the Corinthians, idle persons were delivered to the Carnifex. Antoninus Pius, being emperor, caused the roofs and coverings of all such houses to be taken away, as were known to receive in idle people, affirming that nothing was more uncomely, or absurd to be suffered, than such idle caterpillars and slow-worms to have their food and nourishment from that commonwealth, in the maintenance of which there was no supply from their industry and labour. All which should steel us and arm us against sloth and idleness. I have the longer insisted on this, because there is not a greater hindrance to closet prayer than sloth and idleness. Slothful and idle persons commonly lie so long a-bed, and spend so much precious time between the comb and the glass, and in eating, drinking sporting, and trifling, &c., that they can find no time for private prayer. Certainly such as had rather go sleeping to hell, than sweating to heaven, will never care much for closet-prayer. And therefore shun sloth and idleness, as you would shun a lion in the way, or poison in your meat, or coals in your bosom, or else you will never find time to wait upon God in your closets.

(2.) Secondly, Take heed of spending too much of your precious time about circumstantialia, about the little things of religion, as 'mint, anise, and cummin,' Mat 23:23, or in searching into the circumstances of worship, or in standing stoutly for this or that ceremony, and in the mean while neglect the studying of the covenant of grace, or about inquiring what fruit that was that Adam ate in paradise, or in inquiring after the authors of such and such books, whose names God in his infinite wisdom hath concealed, or in inquiring what God did before the world was made. When one asked Austin that question, he answered, 'that he was preparing hell for such busy questionists as he was.' It was a saying of Luther, 'From a vainglorious doctor, from a contentious pastor, and from unprofitable questions, the good Lord deliver his church.' It is one of Satan's great designs to hinder men in the great and weighty duties of religion, by busying them most about the lowest and least matters of religion. Satan is never better pleased, than when he sees Christians puzzled and perplexed about those things in religion that, are of no great moment or importance, Col 2:21. Such as negotiate and trade in religion more for a good name than a good life, for a good report than a good conscience, for to humour others than to honour God, &c., such will take no pleasure in closet-duties. Such as are more busied about ceremonies than substances, about the form of godliness than the power, 2Ti 3:5, such will never make it their business to be much with God in their closets, as is evident in the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat 6:1-6. Such as are more taken up with the outward dress and garb of religion, than they are with the spirit, power, and life of religion: such will never affect to drive a secret trade heavenwards, Luk 11:34-40. There cannot be a surer nor a greater character of an hypocrite, than to make a great deal of stir about little things in religion, and in the mean while neglect the great and main things in religion. Such as these have all along in the Scripture discovered a strangeness, and a perfect carelessness as to closet duties. I never knew any man hot and zealous about circumstantialia, about the little things of religion, that was ever famous for closet prayer. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Take heed of curiosity, and of spending too much of your precious time in searching into those dark, abstruse, mysterious, and hidden truths and things of God and religion, that lie

most remote from the understanding of the best and wisest of men. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curiosity is a spiritual drunkenness; for look, as the drunkard is never satisfied unless he see the bottom of the cup, be it never so deep, so those that are troubled with the itch of curiosity, will say they can never be satisfied till they come to the bottom of the most deep and profound things of God; they love to pry into God's secrets, and to scan the mysteries of religion, by their weak, shallow reason, and to be wise above what is written. Curious searchers into the deep mysterious things of God will make all God's depths to be shallows, rather than they will be thought not able to fathom them by the short line of their own reason. Oh that men would once learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have them knowing! Oh that men were once so humble, as to account it no disparagement to them, to acknowledge some depths in God, and in the blessed Scripture, which their shallow reason cannot fathom! They are only a company of fools in folio, that affect to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's tree of knowledge make him and his posterity mere fools? He that goes to school to his own reason, hath a fool for his schoolmaster. The ready way to grow stark blind is to be still prying and gazing upon the body of the sun: so the ready way to spiritual blindness is to be still prying into the most secret and hidden things of God, Deu 29:29. Are there not many who, by prying long into the secrets of nature, are become arch-enemies to the grace of God? Rom 9:20. Oh that we were wise to admire those deep mysteries which we cannot understand, and to adore those depths and counsels which we cannot reach, Rom 11:33. Oh let us check our curiosity in the things of God, and sit down satisfied and contented to resolve many of God's actions into some hidden causes which lie secret in the abyss of his eternal knowledge and infallible will. Christ, when he was on earth, very frequently, severely, and sharply condemned curious inquirers, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin; and the great reason why our Saviour did so frequently check this humour of curiosity, was because the great indulgers of it were too frequent neglecters of the more great, necessary, and important points of religion. Curiosity is one of Satan's most dangerous engines, by which he keeps many souls out of their closets, yea, out of heaven. When many a poor soul begins in good earnest to look towards heaven, and to apply himself to closet duties, then Satan begins to bestir himself, and to labour with all his might, so to busy the poor soul with vain inquiries, and curious speculations, and unprofitable curiosities, that the soul hath no time for closet prayer. Ah! how well might it have been with many a man, had he but spent one quarter of that time in closet prayer, that he hath spent in curious inquiries after things that have not been fundamental to his happiness. The heathenish priests affected curiosity, they had their mythologies, and strange canting expressions of their imaginary inaccessible deities, to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers, and thereby to hold up their popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. Oh that there were none of this heathenish spirit among many in these days, who have their faces toward heaven! Ah! how many are there that busy themselves more in searching after the reasons of the irrecoverableness of man's fall, than they do to recover themselves out of their fallen estate! Ah, how many are there that busy themselves more about the apostasy of the angels, than they do about securing their interest in Christ! And what a deal of precious time have some spent in discovering the natures, distinctions, properties, and orders of angels. That high-soaring, counterfeit Dionysius describes the hierachy of angels as exactly as if he had dwelt among them. He saith there are nine orders of them, which be grounds upon nine words, which are found partly in the Old Testament, and partly in the New; as seraphims, cherubims, thrones, powers, hosts, dominions, principalities, archangels, and angels; and at large he describes their

several natures, distinctions, and properties, as that the first three orders are for immediate attendance on the Almighty, and the next three orders for the general government of the creatures, and the last three orders for the particular good of God's elect; that the archangel surpasses the beauty of angels ten times, principalities surpass the archangels twenty times, and that powers surpass the principalities forty times, &c. How he came by this learning is not known, and yet this hierarchy in these nine several orders hath passed for current through many ages of the church. The Platonics were the first that divided the angels into three orders, as, some above heaven, called supercœlestes; others in heaven, called cœlestes; and others under heaven, called subcœlestes, and accordingly they assign them several offices. As,

First, They above heaven, I mean this visible heaven, continually stand before God, as they say, praising, and lauding, and magnifying of his name.

Secondly, They in heaven are there seated to move, and rule, and govern the stars.

Thirdly, They under heaven are, some to rule kingdoms, others provinces, others cities, others particular men.

Several Christian writers, that have written on the hierarchy of angels, follow these opinions. Now, if we should take these surmises for real truths, then it will follow, that the highest angels do not minister to the saints, but only and immediately to God himself, which is expressly contrary to several scriptures, as you may see by them in the margin among others. When I was upon the ministration of the blessed angels, I did then prove in several exercises, as some of you may remember, 'that all the angels in heaven were commanded and commissioned by God to be serviceable and useful to the heirs of salvation. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' The devil knows he is no loser, and the curious soul but a very little gainer, if he can but persuade him to spend most of his precious time in studying and poring upon the most dark, mysterious, and hidden things of God. He that affects to read the Revelation of John more than his plain epistles, or Daniel's prophecies more than David's Psalms, and is more busy about reconciling difficult scriptures than he is about mortifying of unruly lusts, or that is set more upon vain speculations than upon things that make most for edification, he is not the man that is cut out for closet-prayer. Such as affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, and are men of abstracted conceits, are but a company of wise fools, that will never take any delight to be with God in a corner. Had many men spent but half that time in secret prayer, that they have spent in seeking after the philosopher's stone, how happy might they have been! Oh how holy, how happy, how heavenly, how humble, how wise, how knowing, might many men have been, had they spent but half that time in closet prayer, that they have spent in searching after those things that are hard to be understood! 2Pe 3:16. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Take heed of engaging yourselves in a crowd of worldly businesses. Many have so much to do on earth that they have no time to look up to heaven. As much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections. Look, as the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num 22:32; so much worldly business swallows up so much precious time, that many men have no leisure to be with God in their closets. This business is to be done, and that business cannot be omitted, and the other necessary occasion must be attended, so that I have no leisure to step out of my shop into my closet, saith the earthly-minded man, Php 3:19. Thus a crowd of worldly businesses crowds closet-prayer quite out of doors. Many drive so great a

trade in their shops, that their private trade to heaven is quite laid by. There is nothing that hath kept men more from Christ and closet-prayer, than the shop, the exchange, the farm, and the oxen, &c., Luk 14:16-22. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with worldly businesses are commonly nearest to God, to Christ, to heaven, and so the fitter for closet-prayer. It is sad when men grasp so much business, that they can have no leisure for communion with God in a corner. The noise is such in a mill, as hinders all private intercourse between man and man; and so a multitude of worldly businesses make such a noise, as that it hinders all private intercourse between God and the soul. If a man of much business should now and then slide into his closet, yet his head and his heart will be so filled and distracted with the thoughts of his employments, that God shall have little of him but his bodily presence, or, at most, but bodily exercise, which profits little, 1Ti 4:8. If Christ blamed Martha, Luk 10:40-42, for the multitude of her domestical employments, though they were undertaken for the immediate service and entertainment of himself, because they hindered her in her soul-concernments, oh how will he one day blame all those who, by running themselves into a crowd of worldly businesses, do cut themselves off from all opportunities of pouring out their souls before him in secret. But,

(5.) Fifthly, Take heed of secret sins. There is no greater hindrance to secret prayer in all the world than secret sins; and therefore stand upon your watch, and arm yourselves with all your might against them. There is an antipathy betwixt secret sinning and secret praying, partly from guilt, which makes the soul shy of coming under God's secret eye; and partly from those fears, doubts, disputes, and disorders, that secret sins raise in the heart. Light is not more opposite to darkness, Christ to Belial, nor heaven to hell, than secret prayer is to secret sins; and therefore, whatever you do, look that you keep clear of secret sins. To that purpose consider these four things:

[1.] First, That God is privy to our most secret sins. His eye is as much upon secret sins, as it is upon open sins: Psa 90:8, 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.' God hath an eye upon our inmost evils, he seeth all that is done in the dark: Jer 23:24, 'Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' Pro 15:3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' To say that God doth not see the most secret sins of the children of men, is not only derogatory to his omniscience, but also to his mercy; for how can God pardon those sins, which he doth not see to be sins? There is no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness, that can stand betwixt the eyes of God and the ways of men: Pro 5:21, 'The ways of men are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings.' In this scripture Solomon mainly speaks of the ways of the adulterer, which usually are plotted with the most cunning secrecy; yet God seeth all those ways. Look, as no boldness can exempt the adulterer from the justice of God, so no secrecy can hide him from the eye of God. Though men labour to hide their ways from others, and from themselves, yet it is but labour in vain to endeavour to hide them from God. Men that labour to hide God from themselves, can never hide themselves from God.

I have read that Paphnutius converted Thais and Ephron, two famous strumpets, from uncleanness, only with this argument, 'That God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn.' Heb 4:13, 'Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened (anatomised) even to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' It is an allusion to the priests under the law, who, when they killed a

beast, all things that were within the beast were laid open and naked before the priest, that he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Though evil be done out of the eye of all the world, yet it is naked and manifest in his sight with whom we have to do.

Those sins which lie closest and are most secretly lurking in the heart, are as obvious and odious to God as those that are most fairly written upon a man's forehead. God is πανφθαλμος, all eye; so that he sees all, the most secret turnings and windings of our hearts. Our most secret sins are as plainly seen by him, as any thing can be by us at noonday: Psa 139:11-12, 'If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.' It is not the thickest clouds that can bar out his observance, whose eyes fill heaven and earth. What is the curtain, or the darkest night, or the double lock, or the secret chamber, to him who clearly observes all things in a perfect nakedness. God hath an eye upon the most inward intentions of the heart, and the most subtle motions of the spirit. Those philosophers were out, that held the eye and ear of God descended no lower than the heavens. Certainly there is not a creature, not a thought, not a thing, but lies open to the all-seeing eye of God. The Lord knows our secret sinnings as exactly as our visible sinnings: Psa 44:21, 'He knoweth the secrets of our hearts.' Would not a malefactor speak truly at the bar, did he know, did he believe that the judge had windows that did look into his breast?

Athenodorus, a heathen, could say, that all men ought to be careful in the actions of their life, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done.

Zeno, a wise heathen, affirmed that God beheld even the thoughts.

It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.' Though a sinner may baffle his conscience, yet he cannot baffle the eye of God's omniscience. Oh! that poor souls would remember, that as they are never out of the reach of God's hand, so they are never from under the view of his eye. God is totus oculus, all eye. Jer 16:17, 'For mine eyes are upon all their ways; they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.' Job 34:21-22, 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' Jer 32:19, 'For thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and the fruit of his doings.' You know what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when coming in he found him cast upon the queen's bed, on which she sat, 'What,' saith he, 'will he force the queen before me in the house?' Est 7:8. There was the killing emphasis in the words before me; 'will he force the queen before me?' what, will he dare to commit such villany, and I stand and look on? O sirs! to sin in the sight of God, to do wickedly under the eye of God, is a thing that he looks upon as the greatest affront, and as the highest indignity that can possibly be done unto him. What, saith he, wilt thou be drunk before me? Wilt thou swear and blaspheme before me? Wilt thou be wanton and unclean before me? Wilt thou be unjust and unrighteous undermine eye? Wilt thou profane my Sabbaths, and pollute my ordinances before my face? Wilt thou despise and persecute my servants in my presence? &c. This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin, that it is done before the face of God, that it is committed in the royal presence of the King of kings; whereas the very consideration of God's

omnipresence should bravely arm us against sin and Satan; the consideration of his all-seeing eye should make us shun all occasions of sin, and make us shy of all appearances of sin. Shall the eye of the master keep the scholar from blotting his copy? Shall the eye of the judge keep the malefactor from picking and stealing? Shall the eye of the master keep the servant from idling and trifling? Shall the eye of the father keep the child from wandering and gadding? Shall the eye of the husband keep the wife from extravagancies and indecencies? Shall the sharp eye of wise Cato, or the quick eye of a near neighbour, or the severe eye of a bosom-friend, keep thee from many enormities and vanities? And shall not the strict, the pure, the jealous eye of an all-seeing God, keep thee from sinning in the secret chamber, when all curtains are drawn, doors bolted, and every one in the house a-bed or abroad but thee and thy Delilah? Oh! what dreadful atheism is bound up in that man's heart, who is more afraid of the eye of his father, his pastor, his child, his servant, than he is of the eye, the presence of the eternal God? Oh! that all whom this concerns, would take such serious notice of it, as to judge themselves severely for it, as to mourn bitterly over it, as to strive mightily in prayer with God both for the pardon of it, and for power against it. The apostle sadly complains of some in his time who wallowed in secret sins. Eph 5:12, 'For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.' He speaks of such as lived in secret fornications and uncleanness. There were many that had put on a form of godliness, who yet did allow themselves in the secret actings of abominable wickedness and filthiness, as if there were no God to behold them, nor conscience to accuse them, nor judgment-day to arraign them, nor justice to condemn them, nor hell to torment them. Oh! how infinitely odious must they be in the eyes of a holy God, who can highly court and compliment him in public, and yet are so bold as to provoke him to his face in private. These are like those whores, who pretend a great deal of affection and respect to their husbands abroad, and yet at home will play the harlots before their husbands' eyes.

Such as perform religious duties only to cloak and colour over their secret filthinesses, their secret wickednesses; such as pretend to pay their vows, and yet wait for the twilight, Pro 7:13-15, Job 24:15; such as commit wickedness in a corner, and yet with the harlot wipe their months, and say, What have we done? such shall at last find the chambers, the stones out of the wall, the beam out of the timber, the seats they sit on, and the beds they lie on, to witness against all their wanton dalliances, and lascivious carriages in secret, Hab 2:11. Heb 13:4, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' He will sentence them himself; and why? but because such sinners carry it so closely and craftily, that oftentimes none but God can find them out. Magistrates often neglect the punishing of such sinners, when their secret wickedness is made known; and therefore God himself will sit in judgment upon them. Though they may escape the eyes of men, yet they shall never escape the judgment of God. Heart iniquities fall not under any human sentence. Usually whoremongers and adulterers are marvellous close, and secret and subtle to conceal their abominable filthiness; therefore the harlot is said to be subtle of heart, Pro 7:10. The Hebrew by Rabbi Solomon is translated *munito corde*, and having her heart fenced; 'For,' saith he, 'as a city is environed with fortifications, so her heart is fortified round about with subtilty.' Or else it may be rendered *occlusa corde*, 'fast shut up in the heart, even as close as a besieged city,' that is, 'most secret in the subtilty of her heart, how open soever she be in the boldness of her outward carriage.' So the prophet Agur reckoneth the way of a man with a maid, and the way of an adulterous woman, among those things which neither himself nor any other man was possibly able to discover and find out, and compares it to the way of three things, which no wit nor industry of

man is able to descry; but yet God seeth all, and will bring them to the bar for all, Pro 30:19-20. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider that secret sins shall be revealed. The most hidden works of darkness shall be openly manifested; for though the actings of sin be in the dark, yet the judgments of sin shall be in the light; Luk 8:17, 'For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known, and come abroad.' The slanders of the Jews concerning the magical arts of Christ and his apostles, the horrible lies of the pagans concerning the incestuous copulations of the Christians, and their drinking man's blood, were in time discovered what they were: Ecc 12:14, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Mark, he doth not say some work, but every work; and not only works, but secrets; and not only secrets, but every secret; and not only secret good things but evil too; whether good works or ill works, whether secret or open, all must be brought to judgment. The books of God's omniscience, and man's conscience, shall then be opened, and then secret sins shall be as legible in thy forehead, as if they were written with the most glittering sun-beams upon a wall of crystal. All men's secret sins are printed in heaven, and God will at last read them aloud in the ears of all the world: 1Co 4:5, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.' Look, as there are a world of flies and motes in the air, which we never see till the sun shines; so there are many thousand thousands of proud thoughts, and unclean thoughts, and worldly thoughts, and malicious thoughts, and envious thoughts, and bloody thoughts, &c., which the world sees not, knows not; but in the great day, when the counsels of all hearts shall be manifest, then all shall out, then all shall appear, both to the upper and the lower world. In the great day all masks, vizards, and hoods shall be pulled off, and then all shall out; all that ever thou hast done in the secret chamber, in the dark corner, shall be made known to men and angels, yea, to the whole court of heaven, and to all the world beside. Rom 2:16, 'In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.' In this great day, God will judge not only our words but our works, not only our open works, but also our secret works and ways. When Jehoiakim was dead, there was found the characters, superstitious marks, and prints of his sorcery upon his body, 2Ch 36:8; which shews how deeply idolatry was rooted in his heart, seeing he bare the marks in his flesh during his life. He being a king bore it out bravely, and kept all close; but when he was dead, then all came out, then the marks of his abominable idolatry appeared upon his body. Though sinners, though the greatest of sinners, may hide and keep close their horrid abominations for a time, yet there will come a time when all shall out, when all their secret marks and secret abominations shall be obvious to all the world. But sinners may be ready to object and say, 'Let us but alone in our secret sins till that day, and then we shall do well enough.' And therefore in the,

[3.] Third place, consider, That God many times doth, even in this life, discover and make known to the world men's secret sins, Isa 41:21-23.

God loves to act suitable to his own names. Now, to be a revealer of secrets, is one of his names, Dan 2:47; and accordingly, even in this world, he often brings to light the most hidden things of darkness. Of all the glorious attributes of God, there is none that suffers so deeply by secret sins, as the attribute of his omniscience; and therefore in this world God often stands up to vindicate the honour of that attribute, by unmasking of sinners, and by bringing to the light all those secret paths and ways of wickedness, wherein they have long walked undiscovered. It was for the honour of

this blessed attribute of God, that the secret-plotted sin of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-12, was so openly discovered; 'And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.' Joseph's brethren for a long time hid their malice, their craft, their cruelty, their envy, their treachery, in selling their brother into Egypt; but at last by amazing and amusing providences, all was brought to light, Gen 42:21-22; Gen 50:15-22. Conscience, that for a time may seem to be asleep, yet will in time awake, and make the sinner know, that he is as faithful in recording, as he is fearful in accusing; and this Joseph's brethren found by sad experience. So Gehazi, he sins secretly, he lies fearfully, and after all he defends it stoutly; but at last all comes out, and instead of being clothed richly, he and his posterity was clothed with a leprosy for ever; and instead of two changes of garments, God hangs them up in chains, as a monument of his wrath to all generations, 2Ki 5:20, seq. So Achan secretly and sacrilegiously steals a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels' weight, and hides them in the earth in the midst of his tent, and by reason of this, Israel flies before their enemies; but at last Achan is taken, and all comes out, and his golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his Babylonish garment a garment to shroud him. Joshua makes a bonfire of all that he had secretly and sinfully stolen, and burns him, and his children, and all that he had, in it. Oh how openly, how severely doth God sometimes punish men for their most secret iniquity! The same you may see in that great instance of David; 2Sa 12:9-12, 'Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword' (this was done in a secret letter), 'and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thy eyes and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun. For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.' 2Sa 16:22. David was very studious and very industrious to hide his sin, and to save his credit; but the covering made of Uriah's blood was too short, and too narrow to hide his folly with Bathsheba, and therefore when he had done all he could, his sin was tossed like a ball, from man to man, through court, city, and country.

I have read of one Parthenius, an homicide, treasurer to Theodobert king of France, who, having traitorously slain an especial friend of his called Ausonius, with his wife Papienillæ, when no man suspected or accused him thereof, he detected and accused himself after this strange manner: as he slept in his bed, suddenly he roared out most pitifully, crying for help, or else he perished; and being demanded what he ailed, he, half asleep, answered, 'That his friend Ausonius and his wife, whom he had slain long ago, summoned him to judgment before God.' Upon which confession he was apprehended; and, after due examination, stoned to death. Thus the terrors and horrors of his own conscience discovers that secret wickedness which none could prove against him.

I have read how that Mahomet the great Turk had with great rewards procured two Turks to undertake to kill Scanderbeg. These traitors came to Scanderbeg, making such a show of the detestation both of Mahomet's tyrannical government and vain superstition, that they were both by Scanderbeg and others reputed to be indeed the men they desired to be accounted; and so after they had learned the principles of the Christian religion, they were both, by their own desire, baptized. Soon after, by a providence, it so fell out that these two traitors fell at variance betwixt themselves, by which means the plot came to be discovered; and after due examination and

confession of the fact, they were presently condemned and executed.

Conscience is God's spy in the bosom. Conscience, as a scribe, a register, sits in the closet of your hearts, with pen in hand, and makes a diurnal of all your secret ways and secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of men. Conscience sets down the time when, the place where, the manner how, and the persons with whom such and such secret wickednesses have been committed; and that so clear and evident, that, go where you will, and do what you can, the characters of them shall never be cancelled or razed out till God appear in judgment. Let a man sin in the closest retirement that human policy can contrive, let him take all the ways he can to hide his sins, to cloak and cover his sin, as Adam did, yet conscience will so play the judge, that it will bring in the evidence, produce the law, urge the penalty, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon him. There is many a man who makes a fair profession, and who hath a great name in the world, who yet is αυτοκατακριτος, self-condemned, for those secret sins which are not obvious to the eyes of man, nor punishable by the hands of men; yea, many times in this life God raiseth such a hell of horror and terror in many men's consciences, by reason of their secret sins, that they can have no rest nor quiet, neither at bed nor at board, neither lying down nor rising up. Fain would they conceal their sins, unwilling they are that the world should know how vile they have been in secret; but conscience being upon the rack, and still a-gnawing, accusing, and condemning of them, they can hold no longer. Now all must out; and now those sins that were most secret and concealed, come to be published upon the house-top.

Some that have been under anguish of conscience, others that have been smitten with a frenzy, and many in their very sleep, have been often the blazers and proclaimers of their own secret filthiness and wickedness. In those cases God hath made many a secret sinner cry out with the leper, 'Unclean, unclean,' Lev 13:45; and with Judas, before all present, 'I have sinned, I have sinned,' Mat 27:4. Many times in this life God doth very strangely and wonderfully discover those secret works of darkness in which persons have lived long undiscovered. A Pythagorean bought a pair of shoes upon trust; the shoemaker dies, he is glad, thinks them gained; but a while after his conscience flies upon him, and becomes a continual chider and tormentor of him. He hereupon repairs to the house of the dead, casts in his money with these words, 'There, take thy due; thou livest to me, though dead to all besides.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than open sins. Many a man bleeds to death inwardly, and no man perceives it. The more inward and secret the disease is, the more the man is in danger to lose his life. There are no fevers so dangerous as those that prey upon the spirits and inward parts; so there are no sins so dangerous and pernicious to the souls of men as those that are most inward and secret. Secret sins often reign in the souls of men most powerfully when least apparently.

First, Consider that he that sins secretly deprives himself of those helps and remedies which, by a divine blessing, might arm him against sin, yea, make him victorious over sin; to wit, the prayers, counsels, reproofs, examples, and encouragements of friends, relations, &c. A man's house may be on fire, but whilst it is all inward, help comes not in; but when the fire flames out, when it catcheth the outside of the house, then help runs in, then help on all hands is ready. He that sins in secret debars himself of all public remedy, and takes great pains to damn his soul in a corner, and to go to hell in the dark. But,

Secondly, Secret sins will make way for public sins. He that makes no conscience of sinning in the secret chamber, will ere long, with Absalom, be ready to spread a tent upon the top of the house, and to go in to his concubines in the sight of all Israel, 2Sa 12:11. Such as have made no conscience of stealing a few pins or pence or a few shillings in private, have in time come to be so bold as to take a purse on the road at high noon. The cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent. The very thought of sin, if not thought on, will break forth into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are irrecoverably lost to all eternity.

If Satan can but wound our heel, as the poets feign of Achilles, he will make a hard shift but he will send death from the heel to the heart. If this subtle serpent can but wriggle in his tail by an ill thought, he will soon get in his head by a worse action. Hence it is that Christ calls hatred murder, and a wanton eye adultery. Secret hatred often issues in open murder, and secret wanton glances of the eye do often issue in visible adultery. If Amnon be sick with the sinful conceptions of incestuous lust, how will his soul be in pain and travail till he hath brought forth! And how many are there that in secret have taken now and then but one cup more than enough, who now may be seen at high noon reeling against every post. Look, as secret diseases in the body, if not cured, will in time openly break forth, so secret sins in the soul, if not pardoned and purged, will in time be openly revealed. Covetousness was Judas his secret sin; and no sooner doth an occasion or a temptation present itself, but he is very ready and forward to betray and sell his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver before all the world: 'Lust having conceived, brings forth sin,' Jas 1:15; and that thus, first, sin hath its conception, and that is delight; and then its formation, and that is design; and then its birth, and that is action; and then its growth, and that is custom; and then its end, and that is damnation. But,

Thirdly, Secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men than upon God. Thou wilt be unjust in secret, and wanton in secret, and unclean in secret, and treacherous in secret, &c., and why, but because thou art afraid that such or such men should know it, or that such and such friends should know it, or that such and such relations should know it? Ah! poor wretch, art thou afraid of the eye of a man, of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass? Isa 51:12, and yet not tremble under his eye, 'whose eyes are as a flame of fire, sharp and terrible, such as pierce into the inward parts?' Rev 1:14, Heb 4:13. Ah! how full of atheism is that man's heart, that tacitly saith, 'If my sins be but hid from the eyes of the world, I do not care though the Lord knows them, though the Lord strictly observes them, though the Lord sets a mark, a memorandum upon them.' What is this, O man, but to brave it out with God, and to tempt him, and provoke him to his very face, 'who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all?' 1Jn 1:5-6. Ah! sinner, sinner, can man damn thee? can man disinherit thee? can man fill thy conscience with horrors and terrors? can man make thy life a very hell? can man bar the gates of glory against thee? can man speak thee into the grave by a word of his mouth? and after all, can man cast thee into endless, easeless, and remediless torments? Oh no! Can God do all this? Oh yes! Why, then, doth not thy heart stand more in awe of the eye of the great God, than it doth of the eye of a poor, weak, mortal man?

I have insisted the longer on this particular, because there is not any one thing in all the world that doth more hinder secret communion with God and secret prayer, than secret sins. And oh that you would all make it your great business to watch against secret sins, and to pray against secret sins,

and to mourn over secret sins, and deeply to judge and condemn yourselves for secret sins, and carefully and conscientiously to shun and avoid all occasions and provocations that may be as fuel to secret sins.

Certainly there are no men or women that are so sincere and serious in closet-prayer, or that are so frequent, so fervent, so constant in closet-prayer, or that are so delightful, so resolute, so undaunted, or so unwearied in closet-prayer, as those that keep themselves most clear and free from secret sins. For a close, remember this,—that though secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than other sins are, yet in three respects they are not so bad nor so dangerous as other sins are.

First, In that they do not so scandalise religion as open sins do.

Secondly, In that they do not shame, grieve, and wound the hearts of the saints as open sins do.

Thirdly, In that they are not so infectious to others, nor such provocations to others to sin against the Lord as open sins are. And thus you may see what those things are that you must carefully take heed of, as ever you would addict yourselves to closet-prayer. And as you must take heed of these five things, so there are several other things that you must carefully and conscientiously apply yourselves to, as ever you would be found faithful and constant in this great duty, viz. closet-prayer.

Now they are these:

[1.] First, Lament greatly and mourn bitterly over the neglect of this choice duty. He that doth not make conscience of mourning over the neglect of this duty, will never make conscience of performing this duty. Oh that your heads were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears, that you might weep day and night for the great neglect of closet-prayer, Jer 9:1. He that mourns most for the neglect of this duty, will be found most in the practice of this duty. He that makes most conscience to accuse, arraign, and condemn himself for neglecting closet-prayer, he will make most conscience of giving himself up to closet-prayer. It is said of Adam that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart bitterly lamented his great fall. Oh that you would turn your faces towards your closets, and bitterly lament your rare going into them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Habituate yourselves, accustom yourselves, to closet-prayer. Make private prayer your constant trade. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence. We can go freely and boldly into that friend's house whom we often visit. What we are habituated to we do with ease and delight. A man that is habituated or accustomed to write, to read, to ride, to run, or to play on this or that musical instrument, &c., he doth it all with delight and ease; and so a man that doth habituate himself to closet-prayer, he will manage it with delight and ease. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Keep a diary of all your closet-experiences, Deu 7:18-19; Psa 66:12. Oh carefully record and book down all your closet mercies! oh be often in reading over your closet experiences, and be often in meditating and in pondering upon your closet experiences! There is no way like this, to inflame your love to closet-prayer, and to engage your hearts in this secret trade of private prayer.

Oh remember that at such a time you went into your closets with hard hearts, and dry eyes; but before you came out of your closets, ah, how sweetly, how evangelically, how powerfully were you

melted, and humbled before the Lord! Psa 6:6, Psa 39:12, Psa 56:8. Oh remember how that at another time you went into your closets clouded and benighted, but came out of your closets with as glorious a shine of God upon your souls, as Moses had upon his face, when he came down from the mount from communing with God! Exo 34:28-29. Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets with cold, frozen spirits, but before you came out of your closets what a fire hath God kindled in your souls, what a spirit of burning have you found in your hearts! Luk 24:31-32, Isa 4:4. Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets straitened and shut up, but before you have come out, how have your souls been like the chariots of Aminadab! Song of Solomon 6:12. Oh remember what power God hath given you against corruptions in your closets, and what strength God hath given you against temptations in your closets! Oh remember the sweet discoveries of divine love that you have had when in your closets! Oh remember the secret visits, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret whispers, the secret love-tokens that Christ hath given you in your closets! Oh seriously ponder upon these things, and then closet duties will be sweet unto you!

It was a sweet saying of Bernard, 'O saint, knowest thou not that thy husband Christ is bashful, and will not be familiar in company; retire thyself by meditation into thy closet, or into the fields, and there thou shalt have Christ's embraces,' Song of Solomon 8:11-12. *Meditatio nutrix orationis*, meditation is the nurse of prayer. Oh the more any man meditates upon his closet-experiences, the more he shall find his heart engaged to closet duties; the more you ponder upon closet experiences, the sweeter will closet-experiences be to your souls; and the sweeter closet-experiences are to your souls, the more your souls will delight to be with God in your closets.

Pliny tells us of one Messala Corvinus, whose memory was so bad, that he forgot his own name. And I am afraid that many of your memories are so bad, that you forget your closet-mercies, your closet-experiences.

I have read of such a pestilential disease once at Athens, as took away the memories of those that were infected with it, so that they forgot their own names. Oh that I had not cause to fear that some pestilential disease or other, hath so taken away the memories of many, that they have quite forgot their closet-experiences. Well, friends, remember this, though stony hearts are bad, yet iron memories are good; and oh that you would all labour after iron memories, that so you may remember and ponder upon your closet-experiences. I have read of the heathens, how they made use of white and black stones, for these two ends: first, they gave them to persons at their arraignment before the judges; if they were condemned to death, they gave him a black stone, but if absolved and set free, a white stone. To which custom the Holy Ghost seems to allude in that Rev 2:17, 'To him that overcometh will I give a white stone.' A second use of those stones was this, that by them they might keep an account of all the good days or evil days they had met withal in their lives. Hence Giacompo Senzaro having been long in love, and much crossed about his match, he filled a pot full of black stones, putting only one white stone among them, and being asked the reason, answered, 'There will come one white day,' meaning his marriage day, 'which will make amends for all my black days.'

Ah, friends! how often hath God given you the white stone in your closets! Certainly you have had more white stones than black stones: your closet mercies and experiences have been more than

your public crosses and miseries. O sirs! did you but reckon your good days according to the white stones you have had in your closets, it would make you more in love with closet-prayer than ever. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Be sure that you do not spend so much of your precious time in public duties and ordinances, as that you can spare none for private duties, for secret services. Though Pharaoh's kine ate up one another, yet our duties must not eat up one another, Gen 41:4. Public duties must not eat up family duties, nor family duties must not eat up public duties, nor neither of them must not eat up closet duties. The wisdom of a Christian doth most eminently sparkle and shine, in giving every duty its proper time and place; I was going to say, that either he was no Christian, or at least no excellent Christian, that is all eye to read, or all ear to hear, or all tongue to speak, or all knee to bow, to kneel, to pray, Ecc 8:5. Ah! how many are there that spend so much time in hearing of this man and that, and in running up and down from meeting to meeting, that they have no time to meet with God in their closets. O sirs! your duties are never so amiable and lovely, they are never so orient and beautiful, as when they are seasonably and orderly performed.

Oh how wise are the men of this world, so to order all their civil affairs, that no one business shall interfere with another. They set apart for each business a convenient proportion of time; they allot an hour for one business, two for another, three for another, &c. Oh that we were as wise for our souls, as wise for eternity, as they are for this world. Oh that our hearts would so consult with our heads, that we may never want a convenient time to seek God in a corner! That devil that loves to set one man against another, and one nation against another, and one Christian against another, that devil loves to set one ordinance against another, and one duty against another. Hence it is that on the one hand he works some to cry up public prayers, in opposition to secret prayer; and on the other hand he works others to cry up private duties in opposition to all public duties; whereas all Christians stand obliged by God, so to manage one sort of duties, as not to shut out another sort of duties. Every Christian must find time and room for every duty incumbent upon him. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Love Christ with a more inflamed love. Oh strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-duties. Lovers love much to be alone, to be in a corner together, Song of Solomon 7:10-12. Certainly the more any man loves the Lord Jesus, the more he will delight to be with Christ in a corner. There was a great deal of love between Jonathan and David,—1Sa 18:19-20 compared,—and according to their love, so was their private converse, their secret communion one with another; they were always best when in the field together, or when in a corner together, or when behind the door together, or when locked up together; and just so would it be with you, did you but love the Lord Jesus Christ with a more raised and a more inflamed love; you would be always best when you were most with Christ in a corner.

Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand so lively and cheerful, that he never faints or grows weary. Ah! friends, did you but love the Lord Jesus with a more strong, with a more raised love, you would never faint in closet-duties, nor you would never grow weary of closet-duties. Look, as the Israelites removed their tents from Mithcah to Hashmonah, from sweetness to swiftness,—as the words import, Num 33:29,—so the sweetness of divine love will make a man move swiftly on in a way of closet-duties. Divine love will make all closet-duties more easy to the soul, and more pleasant and delightful to the soul; and

therefore do all you can to strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-work.

It was observed among the primitive Christians, that they were so full of love one to another, that they could be acquainted one with another as well in half an hour as in half a year. O sirs! if your hearts were but more full of love to Christ, and closet-duties, you would quickly be better acquainted with them, you would quickly know what secret communion with Christ behind the door means. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Be highly, thoroughly, and fixedly resolved, in the strength of Christ, to keep close to closet-duties, in the face of all difficulties and discouragements that you may meet withal, Psa 44:17-20. A man of no resolution, or of weak resolution, will be won with a nut, and lost with an apple. Satan, and the world, and carnal relations, and your own hearts, will cast in many things to discourage you, and take you off from closet prayer; but be ye nobly and firmly resolved to keep close to your closets, let the world, the flesh, and the devil, do and say what they can. Daniel was a man of an invincible resolution; rather than he would omit praying in his chamber, he would be cast into the den of lions. Of all the duties of religion, Satan is the most deadly enemy to this of secret prayer; partly because secret prayer spoils him in his most secret designs, plots, and contrivances against the soul, and partly because secret prayer is so musical and delightful to God, and partly because secret prayer is of such rare use and advantage to the soul, and partly because it lays not the soul so open to pride, vain glory, and worldly applause, as prayer in the synagogue doth; and therefore he had rather that a man should pray a thousand times in the synagogues, or in the corner of the streets, or behind a pillar, than that he should pray once in his closet; and therefore you had need to steel your hearts with holy courage and resolution, that whatever suggestions, temptations, oppositions, or objections you may encounter with, that yet you will keep close to closet prayer.

There is not any better bulwark in the day of battle, than an heroic resolution of heart before the day of battle. Sanctified resolutions do exceedingly weaken and discourage Satan in his assaults, they do greatly daunt and dishearten him in all his undertakings against the soul. That man will never long be quiet in his closet, who is not stedfastly resolved to seek the Lord in a corner, though all the powers of darkness should make head against him. O sirs! divine fortitude, holy resolutions, will make you like a wall of brass, that no arrows can pierce; they will make you like armour of proof, that no shot can hurt; they will make you like that angel that rolled away the stone from before the door of the sepulchre, Mat 28:2; they will either enable you to remove the greatest mountains of oppositions that lie between you and closet-prayer, or else they will enable you to step over them.

Luther was a man of great resolution, and a man that spent much time in closet-prayer. And such another was Nehemiah, who met with so much opposition, that had he not been steeled by a strong and obstinate resolution, he could never have rebuilt the temple, but would have sunk in the midst of his works. Now, he was a man for private prayer, as I have shewn in the beginning of this treatise. Who more resolute than David? and who more for secret prayer than David? The same I might say of Paul, Basil, and many others, who have been famous in their generations.

O sirs! sanctified resolutions for closet prayer, will chain you faster to closet prayer, than ever Ulysses his resolutions did chain him to the mast of the ship. It was a noble resolution that kept Ruth close to her mother, when her sister Orpah only compliments her, kisses her, and takes her

leave of her, Ruth 1:10-20. Be but nobly resolved for closet-prayer, and then you will keep close to it, when others only court it, and take their leave of it. In the Salentine country, there is mention made of a lake, that is still brimful: if you put in never so much, it never runs over; if you draw out never so much, it is still full. The resolution of every Christian for closet-prayer, should be like this lake, still brimful. Tide life tide death, come honour or reproach, come loss or gain, come liberty or bonds, come what can come, the true-bred Christian must be fully and constantly resolved to keep close to his closet. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Labour for a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit; for the greater measure any man hath of the Spirit of God, the more that man will delight to be with God in secret: Zec 12:10, 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications;' Zec 12:12-14, 'And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.' Joe 2:28-29, Isa 44:3; mark, in the last of the last days, when men shall be generally under a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit than ever, then they shall be more given up to secret prayer than ever. There will never be such praying apart, and such mourning apart, as there will be when the Lord shall pour out most richly, gloriously, abundantly, of his Spirit upon his poor people. Now, every one shall pour out his tears and his soul before God in a corner, to shew the soundness of their sorrow, and to shew their sincerity by their secresy; for ille dolet vere, qui sine teste dolet, he grieves with a witness, that grieves without a witness.

Certainly, the more any man is now under the blessed pouring out of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man gives himself up to secret communion with Christ. Every man is more or less with Christ in his closet, as he is more or less under the anointings of the Spirit of Christ. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more he loves Christ, and the more any man loves Christ, the more he delights to be with Christ alone. Lovers love to be alone. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more his heart will be set to please Christ. Now, nothing pleaseth Christ more than the secret prayers of his people: Song of Solomon 2:14, 'O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' And therefore such a one will be much in secret prayer. The more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more his heart will be set upon glorifying and exalting Christ. Now, nothing glorifies Christ more, nor exalts him more, than secret prayer; and therefore the more any man hath of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man will be found in secret prayer.

There are many persons who say, they would be more in their closets than they are, but that they meet with many hindrances, many occasions, many diversions, many temptations, many oppositions, many difficulties, many discouragements, which prevent them. Ah, friends! had you a greater measure of the Holy Spirit upon you, none of these things should ever be able to hinder your secret trade heaven-ward. Had you a more rich anointing of the Spirit upon you, you would never plead, there is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets, Pro 26:13; but were there a thousand lions between you and your closets, you would either step over them, or make your way through them, that so you might enjoy communion with Christ in your closets. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, As ever you would keep close to private prayer, Be frequent in the serious consideration of eternity. Oh see eternity standing at the end of every closet-prayer, and this will make you pray to purpose in your closets.

O sirs! every work you do, is a step to a blessed or to a cursed eternity. Every motion, every action in this life, is a step toward eternity. As every step that a traveller takes brings him forward to his journey's end, so every step that a man takes in the secret ways of righteousness and holiness, such as closet duties are, they bring him nearer to his journey's end, they bring him nearer to a blessed eternity. Look, as every step the sinner takes in a way of wickedness, brings him nearer to hell; so every step that a saint takes in a way of holiness, brings him nearer to heaven. Look, as every step that a wicked man takes in the ways of unrighteousness brings him nearer to a cursed eternity, so every step that a godly man takes in a way of righteousness, brings him nearer to a blessed eternity.

Zeuxis, the famous painter, was so exceeding careful and cautious in drawing all his lines, that he would let no piece of his go abroad into the world to be seen of men, till he had turned it over and over, and viewed it on this side and that side, again and again, to see if he could spy any fault in it; and being asked the reason why he was so curious, and so long in drawing his lines, answered, *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity. O sirs! we all pray for eternity, we fast for eternity, we read for eternity, we hear for eternity, we wait for eternity, we weep for eternity; and therefore oh how curiously, how exactly, how wisely, how faithfully, how carefully, how diligently, how unweariedly, should we be in all our closet duties and services; seeing that all we do is in order to eternity! Friends! you must all ere long be eternally blessed, or eternally cursed; eternally happy, or eternally miserable; eternally saved, or eternally damned; eternally accepted, or eternally rejected. And therefore what infinite cause have you frequently to shut to your closet-doors, and to plead mightily with God in a corner, for the lives of your poor, precious, and immortal souls, that they may be eternally saved in the great day of our Lord Jesus. O sirs! when any hindrances to closet-prayer present themselves to you, seriously remember eternity, and that will remove them.

It is related of one Pachomius, that whensoever he felt any unlawful desires to arise in his mind, he was wont to drive them away with the remembrance of eternity. The same author relates a story out of Benedictus Rhexanus, of an ungodly fellow, who on a certain night could not sleep, who, upon the serious consideration of death and eternity, and the damned lying in hell, could not be at rest, but eternity did still run in his mind; fain would he have shaken off the thoughts thereof, as gnawing worms; therefore he followed sports, and pastimes, and merry-meetings, and sought out companions like himself, and sat oftentimes so long at his cups, that he laid his conscience asleep, and so seemed to take some rest; but when he was awakened, his conscience flew in his face, and would still be a-suggesting sad thoughts of eternity to him. Of all things in the world he could not bear it, to be kept awake in the night; but so it happened that being sick, he was kept awake one night, and could not sleep at all, whereupon these thoughts rise in him: 'What, is it so tedious then to be kept from sleep one night, and to lie a few hours in the dark? Oh what is it then to be kept in torments and everlasting darkness! I am here in my own house upon a soft bed in the dark, kept from sleep but one night; but to lie in flames and endless misery, how dreadful must that needs be!' These and such like meditations were the happy means of this young man's conversion.

I have read a notable story of one Theodorus, a Christian young man in Egypt, who, when there was a great deal of feasting, mirth, and music in his father's house, withdrew himself from all the company, and being got alone, he thus thought with himself, 'Here is content and delight enough for the flesh, I may have what I desire, but how long will this last? this will not hold out long; then falling down upon his knees before the Lord in secret, he said, O Lord, my heart is open unto thee, I indeed know not what to ask, but only this: Lord, let me not die eternally; O Lord, thou knowest I love thee, O let me live eternally to praise thee.'

If there be any way or means on earth to bring us upon our knees before God in secret, it is the serious and solemn thoughts of eternity. Oh that the fear of eternity might fall upon all your souls! Oh that you would all seriously consider, that after a short time is expired, you must all enter upon an eternal estate! Oh consider that eternity is an infinite, endless, bottomless gulf, which no line can fathom, no time can reach, no age can extend to, no tongue can express. It is a duration always present, a being always in being; it is unum perpetuum hodie, one perpetual day, which shall never see light. O sirs! this is, and must be for a lamentation, viz., that eternity is a thing that most men never think of, or else very slenderly; a snatch and away, as dogs are said to lap and away at the river Nilus. But as ever you would have your hearts chained to your closets and to closet duties, as the men of Tyrus chained their god Apollo to a post, that they might be sure of him; then seriously and frequently ponder upon eternity, and with those forty valiant martyrs, be still a crying out a ■ α■δι■της, ■ α■δι■της, O eternity, eternity!

Mr Wood, after some holy discourse, fell a-musing, and cried out before all present, for near half a quarter of an hour together, 'For ever, for ever, for ever.' Austin's prayer was, 'Hack me, hew me, burn me here, but spare me hereafter, spare me hereafter.' Certainly, if Christians would but spare one quarter of an hour every day in the solemn thoughts of eternity, it would make them more in love with closet-prayer than ever, yea, it would make them more fearful of omitting closet-prayer than ever, and more careful and conscientious in the discharge of all closet-duties than ever. And thus, according to my weak measure, I have given out all that at present the Lord hath graciously given in to my poor soul, concerning this most necessary, most glorious, and most useful point of points, viz., closet-prayer. I shall, by assisting grace, follow this poor piece with my prayers, that it may be so blessed from on high, as that it may work mightily to the internal and eternal welfare, both of reader, hearer, and writer.

HEAVEN ON EARTH note

'Heaven on Earth,' originally published in 1654, passed into a 'second edition, corrected and enlarged,' in 1657. It is from the latter, collated with the former, our text is taken. The title-page will be found below.* Another bears the date of 1664; and ever since this has been one of the most prized of Brooks's books. The quaint 'Licence' by Caryl, for publication, is subjoined.†

HEAVEN on

EARTH. or A Serious Discourse touching a well-grounded

Assurance Of Men's Everlasting Happiness and Blessedness.

Discovering the Nature of Assurance, the possibility of Attaining it, the Causes, Springs, and Degrees of it; with the Resolution of severall weighty Questions. By Thomas Brooks, Preacher of

the Gospel at Margarets Fishstreet-Hill. The Second Edition Corrected and Enlarged. That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all Riches of the full Assurance of understanding, Col 2:2.

Qui fidei suæ sensum in corde habet, hic scit Christum Jesum in se esse. Ambros. 2 ad Corinth c. 13:5.

LONDON; Printed by M S. for John Hancock, and are to be sold at the first shop in Popes-head Alley, in Cornhill. 1657. The ninth of the first month, commonly called March, 1653.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Right Honourable the Generals of the Fleets of the Commonwealth of England, and to those gallant worthies, my much honoured friends, who with the noble generals have deeply jeopardded their lives unto many deaths upon the seas, out of love to their country's good, and out of respect to the interest of Christ, and the faithful people of this commonwealth, such honour and happiness as is promised to all that love and honour the Lord Jesus.

Renowned Sirs, The better anything is, the more communicative it will be; for bonum est sui communicativum. There are two sorts of goods; there are bona throni, and there are bona scabelli: goods of the throne, as God, Christ, grace, assurance, &c.; and goods of the footstool, as honour, riches, &c. A man may have enough of the goods of the footstool to sink him, but he can never have enough to satisfy him.² Man's happiness and blessedness, his felicity and glory, lies in his possessing the goods of the throne, which that you may, I humbly desire you seriously to view over the ensuing treatise.

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bayrer [Bavaria?] emperor of Germany, Hujusmodi comparandæ sunt opes, quæ cum naufragio simul enatent; Such goods are worth getting and owning, as will not sink nor wash away, if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us. Such are the goods that are here presented in this following discourse. In all storms, tempests, and shipwrecks, they will abide with the soul, they will walk and lie down with the soul, yea, they will go to the grave, to heaven, with the soul: they will in the greatest storms be an ark to the soul.

I have observed in some terrible storms that I have been in, that the mariners' and the passengers' want of assurance, and of those other pearls of price that in this treatise are presented to public view, hath caused their countenance to change, their hearts to melt; it hath made them to 'stagger and reel to and fro like drunken men, like men at their wits' ends,' vide Psa 76:5; whereas others that have had assurance' and their pardon in their bosoms, &c., have bore up bravely, and slept quietly, and walked cheerfully, and practically have said, as Alexander once did, when he was in a great danger, 'Now,' saith he, 'here is a danger fit for the spirit of Alexander to encounter withal.' So they now, here are storms and dangers fit for assured, pardoned souls to encounter withal, &c.

Gentlemen, This following discourse I do not present to you as a thing that needs your protection, for veritas stat in aperto campo, truth stands in the open fields, and it will make the lovers of it to stand, triumph, and overcome. Magna est veritas et prevalebit, great is truth, and shall prevail. But, upon these following grounds, I render it to you:

First, You have honoured the Almighty, by helping him against the high and mighty; and he hath honoured you, by owning of you, by standing by you, by acting for you, and by making of you

prosperous and victorious over a near enemy, a powerful enemy, an enraged enemy, a resolved enemy, a subtle enemy, a prepared enemy, a lofty enemy; and therefore I cannot but desire to honour you by dedicating the following treatise to the service of your souls, 1Sa 2:30.

Secondly, Because you are my friends, and that cordial love and friendship which I have found from you hath stamped in my affections a very high valuation of you. The ancients painted friendship a fair young man bare-headed, in a poor garment, at the bottom whereof was written life and death, in the upper part summer and winter; his bosom was open, so that his heart might be seen, whereupon was written longe, prope, a friend at hand and afar off. Verily, your undeserved love and respects have made me willing to open my bosom to you in this epistle, and in the following treatise, as to friends that I love and honour. When one came to Alexander, and desired him that he might see his treasure, he bid one of his servants take him, and shew him, not τὸ ἄργυρ^{ον} τοῦ λα^ντα, his money, but τοὺς φί^{λους}, his friends. It seems he put a higher value upon them than he did upon all the wealth which he had. Faithful friends are an invaluable treasure, and the rarity of them doth much enhance the price of them.

Thirdly, Because of its exceeding usefulness and suitableness to your conditions.

I have been some years at sea, and through grace I can say, that I would not exchange my sea-experiences for England's riches. I am not altogether ignorant of the troubles, trials, temptations, dangers, and deaths that do attend you. And therefore I have been the more stirred in my spirit to present the following discourse to you, wherein is discovered the nature of assurance, the possibility of attaining assurance, the causes, springs, degrees, excellencies, and properties of assurance; also the special seasons and times of God's giving assurance, with the resolutions of several weighty questions touching assurance. Further, in this treatise, as in a glass, you may see these ten special things clearly and fully opened and manifested.

1. What knowledge that is that accompanies salvation.
2. What faith that is that accompanies salvation.
3. What repentance that is that accompanies salvation.
4. What obedience that is that accompanies salvation.
5. What love that is that accompanies salvation.
6. What prayer that is that accompanies salvation.
7. What perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.
8. What hope that is that accompanies salvation.
9. The difference between true assurance, and that which is counterfeit.
10. The wide difference there is between the witness of the Spirit, and the hissing of the old serpent.

Gentlemen and Friends, You have your lives in your hands, there is but a short step between you and eternity. I would fain have you all happy for ever; to that purpose, I humbly beseech you, spare so much time, from your many great and weighty occasions, as to read this treatise, that in

all humility I lay at your feet, and follow this counsel that in all love and faithfulness I shall now give unto you. For my design in all is your happiness here, and your blessedness hereafter.

First, Get and keep communion with God. Your strength to stand, and your strength to withstand all assaults, is from your communion with God. Communion with God is that that will make you stand fast, and triumph over all enemies, difficulties, dangers, and deaths.

While Samson kept his communion with God, no enemy could stand before him, he goes on conquering and to conquer, he lays heaps upon heaps; but when he has fallen in his communion with God, he falls presently, easily, and sadly before his enemies. So long as David kept up his communion with God, no enemies could stand before him; but when he was fallen in his communion with God, he flies before the son of his bowels.

Job keeps up his communion with God, and conquers Satan upon the dunghill. Adam loses his communion with God, and falls before Satan in paradise. Communion is the result of union. Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly descending down into the soul, and the soul by divine influences sweetly ascending up to Christ. Communion with God is a shield upon land, and an anchor at sea; it is a sword to defend you, and a staff to support you; it is balm to heal you, and a cordial to strengthen you. High communion with Christ will yield you two heavens, a heaven upon earth, and a heaven after death. He enjoys nothing that wants communion with God; he wants nothing that enjoys communion with God; therefore above all gettings get communion with Christ, and above all keepings keep communion with Christ. All other losses are not comparable to the loss of communion with Christ. He that hath lost his communion, hath lost his comfort, his strength, his all, and it will not be long before the Philistines take him, and put out his eyes, and bind him with fetters of brass, and make him grind in a prison, as they did Samson, Jdg 16:20-21.

Secondly, Make a speedy and a thorough improvement of all opportunities of grace and mercy. Sleep not in harvest-time, trifle not away your market-hours, your golden seasons; you have much work to do in a short time; you have a God to honour, a Christ to rest on, a race to run, a crown to win, a hell to escape, a heaven to obtain.² You have weak graces to strengthen, strong corruptions to weaken; you have many temptations to withstand, and afflictions to bear; you have many mercies to improve, and many services to perform, &c. Therefore take hold on all opportunities and advantages, whereby you may be strengthened and bettered in your noble part. Take heed of crying *Cras, cras, To-morrow, to-morrow*, when God saith: 'To-day, if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts,' Heb 3:7-8. Manna must be gathered in the morning, and the orient pearl is generated of the morning dew. It is a very sad thing for a man to begin to die before he begins to live. He that neglects a golden opportunity, doth but create to himself a great deal of misery, as Saul, and many others, have found by sad experience. He that would to the purpose do a good action, must not neglect his season. The men of Issachar were famous in David's account for wisdom, because they acted seasonably and opportunely, 1Ch 12:32. God will repute and write that man a wise man, who knows and observes his seasons of doing. Such there have been, who by giving a glass of water opportunely, have obtained a kingdom, as you may see in the story of Thaumastus and king Agrippa.

Time, saith one, were a good commodity in hell, and the traffic of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them (Bernard).

One passing through the streets of Rome, and seeing many of the women playing and delighting themselves with monkeys and baboons, and such like things, asked 'whether they had no children to play and delight themselves with?' So when men trifle away their precious time, and golden opportunities, playing and toying with this vanity and that, we may ask whether these men have no God, no Christ, no Scripture, no promises, no blessed experiences, no hopes of heaven's glories to delight and entertain themselves with? Certainly, we should not reckon any time into the account of our lives, but that which we carefully pass, and well spend, seeing the heathen could say, *Diu fuit, non diu vixit*, He was long, he did not live long (Damascene).

I have read of one Barlaam, who, being asked how old he was, answered, Five-and-forty years old; to whom Josaphah replied, 'Thou seemest to be seventy.' 'Truth,' saith he, 'if you reckon ever since I was born; but I count not those years that were spent in vanity.'

Most men spend the greatest part of their time about things that are by the by, that are of little or no value; as Domitian, the Roman emperor, spent his time in stabbing of flies, and Artaxerxes spent his time in making hafts for knives, and Solymán the great Turk spent his time in making of notches of horn for bows, and Archimedes spent his time in drawing lines on the ground when that famous city Syracuse was taken, and Myrmecides spent more time to make a bee than some men do to build a house.

Sirs, I beseech you remember that it was Cato, a heathen, that said 'that account must be given not only of our labour, but also of our leisure.' And in affirming this, he affirms no more than what the Scripture speaks. But oh what a sad account, then, have some to make! Well, as Cleopatra said to Mark Antony, 'It is not for you to be fishing for gudgeons, but for towns, forts, and castles;' so say I, Right honourable and beloved, it is not for you to spend your time about poor, low, contemptible things, but about those high and noble things that make most for the interest of Christ and the good of your country.⁴

It was Titus, a pagan emperor, that uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, *Amici, diem peridi*, My friends, I have lost a day, when he had spent it in company, without doing good. The Egyptians drew the picture of time with three heads, to represent the three differences. The first of a greedy wolf, gaping for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured even the memory of so many things past recalling; the second of a crowned lion, roaring for time present, because it hath the principality of all action, for which it calls aloud. The third of a deceitful dog, fawning for time to come, because it feeds fond men with many flattering hopes, to their own undoing.

I have read of a man who upon his dying bed would have given a world for time, he still crying out day and night, 'Call time again, call time again.' So a great lady of this land on her death-bed cried out, 'Time, time, a world of wealth for an inch of time.'⁵

One Hermanus, a great courtier in the kingdom of Bohemia, being at point of death, did most lamentably cry out 'that he had spent more time in the palace than in the temple, and that he had added to the riotousness and vices of the court, which he should have sought to have reformed,' and so died, to the horror of those that were about him.

I have been the longer upon this, because I have been a sad spectator of men's misspending their time and trifling away golden opportunities, at sea as well as at land; and though I thus speak (knowing that this treatise will come into other hands beside your own), yet 'I hope better things of

you,' to whom I dedicate it, 'even such as do accompany salvation,' Heb 6:9.

Thirdly, Take no truths upon trust, but all upon trial: 1Jn 4:1, 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.' This age is very full of impostors; therefore try the spirits, as lapidaries do their stones, or as goldsmiths do their metals. A Bristol-stone may look as well as an Indian diamond, and many things glister besides gold.

It was the glorious commendations of the Bereans, 'that they searched the Scriptures daily,' whether those things that Paul and Silas had delivered 'were so;' and this act of theirs made them 'more noble than those of Thessalonica,' Acts 17:10-11. Christian nobility is the best and truest, where God himself is the top of the kin, and religion the root; in regard whereof all other things are but shadows and shapes of nobleness. A father that had three sons was desirous to try their discretions, which he did by giving to each of them an apple that had some part of it rotten. The first eats up his, rotten and all; the second throws all his away, because some part of it was rotten; the third picks out the rotten, and eats that which was good. The third was the wisest. Some in these days swallow down everything, rotten and sound together; others throw away all truth, because everything that is presented to them is not truth; but surely they are the wisest that know how to choose the good and refuse the evil, Isa 7:15.

You must not, with Pythagoras's scholars, magnify the ipse dixit of the greatest clerks, especially in those things that are of eternal concernment to your souls. You will try, and tell, and weigh gold after your fathers; deal so by the truth you hear, and let no man bind you to believe, with Anaxagoras, that snow is black. 'Truth,' saith Basil 'is hard to be taken by hunting, and must be found out by a narrow observing of her footsteps on every side.' Many are like those in Clemens, that thought truth to be cruelty.

Fourthly, Be exemplary to those among whom you walk, and over whom you command. Bonus dux, bonus comes, a good leader makes a good follower. Precepta docent, exempla movent, precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. Verily, gentlemen, your examples will have a very great influence upon those that are under you. It is natural to inferiors to mind more what their superiors do than what they say; therefore you had need be angelical in your walkings and actings. You are lights upon a hill, you are sea-marks, and therefore every eye will be upon you. Those that can find no ears to hear what you say, will find many eyes to see what you do. Scripture and experience do abundantly evidence that good men's examples have done a world of good in the world, and verily the evil examples of great men especially are very dangerous.

Charles the Fifth was wont to say, that as the eclipse of the sun is a token of great commotions, so the errors and evils of great men bring with them great perturbations and evils to the places and persons where they live. Oh therefore, be exemplary both in lip and life, in word and work, that others 'seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Mat 5:16. Oh look that your lives be as a commentary upon Christ's life. Tace lingua, loquere vita; talk not of a good life, but let thy life speak, said the philosopher.

Alexander willed that the Grecians and the Barbarians should no longer be distinguished by their garments, but by their manners; so should Christians be distinguished from all others, by their lives and by their examples; 2Sa 23:3, 'The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that

ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.' An excellent lord is always better than an excellent law. Let your laws be never so good, if the law-makers are bad, all will come to nothing. The people's eyes are much upon that Scripture, 'Have any of the rulers believed on him?' John 7:48, &c. Abraham was an example of righteousness in Chaldaea, Lot was just in Sodom, Daniel was an example of holiness in Babylon, Job was an example of uprightness in the land of Uz, which was a land of much profaneness and superstition, Nehemiah was an example of zeal in Damascus, and Moses was an example of meekness among the muttering and murmuring Israelites. Above all examples, Christ was exemplary in all piety and sanctity, in all righteousness and holiness, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. And why then should not you be exemplary among those poor creatures, those black angels,—I had almost said,—among whom you walk?

It was the saying of Trajanus, a Spaniard, the first stranger that reigned among the Italians, *qualis rex, talis grex*, subjects prove good, by a good king's example. So do soldiers, so do sailors, by the good examples of their superior commanders. Such commanders as are examples of righteousness and holiness to others, are certainly high in worth, and humble in heart; they are the glory of Christ, and the honour of religion.

Fifthly, As you are in public places, so lay out yourselves impartially for the common good of all that have interest in you, or dependence upon you. So did Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, but above all, Christ himself. You are more for the people's sake, than the people are for yours. Magistrates are rulers over the persons of the people, but they are servants to the good of the people; as it is the duty of all to serve them, so it is their office to serve all. It is no paradox to affirm, that rulers are the greatest servants. The ancients were wont to place their statues of their princes by their fountains, intimating that they were, or at least should be, fountains of the public good. The counsellor saith, 'That a man in public place should give his will to God, his love to his master, his heart to his country, his secrets to his friends, his time to business.' It is a base and unworthy spirit, for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say, 'A man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him.' The sun, that is the prince of lights, doth impartially serve all, the peasant as well as the prince, the poor as well as the rich, the weak as well as the strong; you must be like the sun. The Sun of righteousness was of a brave public spirit: he healed others, but was hurt himself; he filled others, but was hungry himself; he laid out himself, and he laid down himself for a public good. 'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.' It is really your praise among the saints, that you have ventured killing, burning, drowning, and all to save the ship of the common-wealth from sinking.

Sirs! Be not weary of public work. It is honour enough that God will make any use of you to carry on his design in the world. He is a faithful pay-master; heaven at last will make amends for all. 'You shall reap, if you faint not,' Gal 6:9. I do verily believe, God will make use of you to do greater things on the sea, than yet have been done. The Lord hath now begun to set a foot upon the sea; let his enemies tremble. God will not suffer his glory to be buried in the deeps. He is shaking the nations, and will not leave shaking them, till He that is the desire of all nations come. The Lord hath said, 'That he will overturn, overturn, overturn, until he comes, whose right it is to wear the crown, and the diadem, and he will give it him,' Eze 21:25-27. Till then, there will be little else, but plucking up and breaking down, Jer 45:4. Therefore be courageous, and follow the Lamb

wheresoever he goes. You need fear no enemies, that have Christ the conqueror on your sides.

Sixthly, and lastly, Make it more and more your chiefest work to make plentiful provisions for the eternal welfare of your souls. Your souls are more worth than ten thousand worlds. All is well, if thy soul be well; if that be safe, all is safe; if that be lost, all is lost, God, Christ, and glory is lost, if the soul be lost.

Worthy sirs, Though others play the courtiers with their souls, yet do not you. The courtier doth all things late: he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and repents late.

Sirs! Is it madness to feast the slave, and starve the wife? and is it not greater madness to feast the body and starve the soul? to make liberal provision for the body, and none for the soul? Do not they deserve double damnation, that prefer their bodies above their souls? Methinks our souls should be like to a ship, which is made little and narrow downwards, but more wide and broad upwards. Before all, and above all, look to your souls, watch your souls, make provision for your souls. When this is done, all is done; till this is done, there is nothing done that will yield a man comfort in life, joy in death, and boldness before a judgment-seat.

Callenuceus tells us of a nobleman of Naples, that was wont profanely to say, 'He had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it.' Verily, they will make but a bad bargain of it, that, to gain the world, shall sell their souls.

Dear sirs, I had much more to say, but I am afraid that I have already kept you too long from sucking of the honeycomb, from drinking at the fountain. I have held you too long in the porch; and therefore I shall only crave, that you will bear with my plainness, and overlook my weakness; remembering that other addresses would savour more of flattery than of sincerity, more of policy than of piety, and would be both unlovely in me, and displeasing to you.

Now the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and yours with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and make you yet more and more instrumental for his glory, and this nation's good, that your names may be for ever precious among his people, that they may bear you still upon their hearts before the Lord; which is, and shall be, the earnest and constant prayer of him who is, Right honourable and worthy Sirs, Yours in all Christian observance,

Thomas Brooks.

EPISTLE TO THE SAINTS To all saints that hold to Christ the head, and that walk according to the laws of the new creature, grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied from God the Father, though our Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved in our Dearest Lord,

You are those worthies 'of whom this world is not worthy,' Heb 11:38. You are the princes 'that prevail with God,' Gen 32:28. You are those 'excellent ones' in whom is all Christ's delight, Psa 16:3. You are his glory. You are his picked, culled, prime instruments which he will make use of to carry on his best and greatest work against his worst and greatest enemies in these latter days. You are 'a seal' upon Christ's heart, you are 'engraven on the palms of his hand;' your names are written upon his breasts, as the names of the children of Israel were upon Aaron's breastplate; you are the 'epistle of Christ;' you are the 'anointed' of Christ; you have 'the spirit of discerning;' you

have 'the mind of Christ.' You have the greatest advantages and the choicest privileges to enable you to try truth, to taste truth, to apply truth, to defend truth, to strengthen truth, to uphold truth, and to improve truth.² And therefore to whom should I dedicate this following discourse, but to yourselves? You have the next place to Christ in my heart; your good, your gain, your glory, your edification, your satisfaction, your confirmation, your consolation, your salvation, hath put me upon casting in my little, little mite into your treasure.

Beloved, you know that in the time of the law, God did as kindly accept of goats' hair and badgers' skins, of turtle-doves and young pigeons—they being the best things that some of his children had then to offer—as he did accept of gold, jewels, silk, and purple from others. I hope you will shew out the same God-like disposition towards me, in a kind accepting of what is offered in this treatise to your wise and serious consideration. I could wish it better for your sakes, yet such as it is I do in all love and humility present you with, desiring the Lord to make it an internal and eternal advantage to you.

I shall briefly acquaint you with the reasons that have moved poor me, unworthy I,—who am the least of all saints, who am not worthy to be reckoned among the saints,—to present this following discourse to public view; and they are these that follow:

First, To answer the desires, and gratify the earnest and pious requests of several precious souls, who long to have these things printed upon their hearts, by the hand of the Spirit, that are printed in this book. God speaks aloud through the serious and affectionate desires of the saints; and this hath made me willing to echo to their desires. If great men's desires are to be looked upon as commands, why should good men's desires be looked upon with a squint eye? Seneca, a heathen, could say that *ipse aspectus boni viri delectat*, the very looks of a good man delight one. How much more then should the desires of a good man overcome one?

Secondly, The good acceptance, the fair quarter that my labours of the like nature have found among those that fear the Lord, especially that treatise called 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' hath encouraged me to present this to public view, not doubting but that the Lord will bless it to the good of many, as I know he hath done the former. Which that he may, I shall not cease to pray, that my weak service may be accepted of the saints, and that their 'love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sense,' Php 1:9-11. That they may approve things that are excellent; that they may be sincere, and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Thirdly, It is exceeding useful to the saints at all times, but especially in changing times, in times wherein every one calls out, 'Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? and the watchman answereth, The morning cometh, and also the night,' Isa 21:11-12. Ah! Christians, the Lord is a-shaking heaven and earth; he is a-staining the pride of all glory; he is a-staining his garments with the blood of his enemies; he is rent and tearing, he is burning and breaking, he is pulling up and throwing down, Jer 45:4-5. Now in the midst of all these concussions and revolutions, thrice happy are those souls that have gained a well-grounded assurance of celestial things, Heb 10:34, Such souls will not faint, sink, nor shrink in an hour of temptation. Such souls will keep their garments pure and white, and will follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes, Rev 3:4, and Rev 14:4. Assurance is a believer's ark, where he sits, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all distractions and destructions, combustions and confusions. They are doubly miserable that

have neither heaven nor earth, temporals, nor eternals, made sure to them in changing times, Psa 23:3-4, Rev 6:12. The fourth ground of my presenting this treatise to public view, is, that little well-grounded assurance that is to be found among most Christians. Most Christians living between fears and hopes, and hanging, as it were, between heaven and hell, sometimes they hope that their state is good, at other times they fear that their state is bad: now they hope that all is well, and that it shall go well with them for ever; anon they fear that they shall perish by the hand of such or such a corruption, or by the prevalency of such or such a temptation; and so they are like a ship in a storm, tossed here and there, &c. Now that these weak souls may be strengthened, that these unstable souls may be established, that these disconsolate souls may be comforted, &c., I have presented this tract to the world, not doubting but that if the Lord shall draw out their spirits to a serious perusal of it, they shall find, through the blessing of Jehovah, that it will contribute very much to their attaining of a full assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness, as also to the keeping and maintaining of that full and blessed assurance; which that it may, I shall follow it with my prayers.

Fifthly, I have published this following discourse, remembering that my life is but a vanishing vapour, Jas 4:14, and that the time of my sojourn in this world will be but short, Psa 39:12. Man's life is so short, that Austin doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death. Man's life is but the shadow of smoke, the dream of a shadow. This present life is not *vita*, sed *via ad vitam*, life, but a motion, a journey towards life (Bernard.) The life of a Christian is rather *via* than *vita*, a step towards life, than life. Yet do I believe that that is not a death, but life, that joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life, but death, that separates the living man from Christ.

I know I shall not speak long to friends, saints, or sinners; therefore I was the more willing to take the opportunity of preaching to you when I am dead. As Abel by his faith, he being dead, yet speaketh, Heb 11:4, so this treatise may speak and live, when I shall return to my long home, and fall asleep in the bosom of Christ. Christ his prophets and apostles, though they are now in heaven, yet by their doctrines, examples, and writings, they still preach to the saints on earth.

Zisca desired his skin might serve the Bohemians in their wars, when his body could no more do it. Oh that poor I, that have been but a little serviceable to the saints in my life, might by this, and my former weak labours, be much serviceable to them after my death! Books may preach, when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dares, yea, and which is more, when the author is not.

Sixthly, To testify my cordial love and affection to all the true lovers of Christ, and to let them know that they are all, though under different forms, precious in my eyes, and very near and dear unto my heart. I bless God I am, and I desire more and more to be, one with every one that is one with Christ, Php 4:21; Col 1:4; 2Th 1:3. I would fain have as free, as large, and as sweet a heart towards saints, as Christ hath. For a wolf to worry a lamb is usual, but for a lamb to worry a lamb is unnatural; for Christ's lilies to be among thorns, is ordinary, but for these lilies to become thorns, to tear and fetch blood of one another, is monstrous and strange. Ah, Christians! can Turks and Pagans agree? can Herod and Pilate agree? can Moab and Ammon agree? can bears and lions, can wolves and tigers agree? yea, which is more, can a legion of devils agree in one body? and shall not the saints, whom heaven must hold at last, agree?

Pancirolus tells us, that the most precious pearl the Romans had, was called unio. Oh the union of saints is an unvaluable pearl! The heathen man, by the light of nature, could say, 'That the thickest wall of a city in peace, and the safest rampire³ in war, is unity. Verily all saints are one in Christ, all saints partake of the same spirit, promises, graces, and privileges. All saints are fellow-members, fellow-soldiers, fellow-travellers, fellow-heirs, fellow-sufferers, and fellow-citizens; and therefore I cannot, dare not but love them all, and prize them all; and to evidence it, I have dedicated this treatise to the service of their souls.

Seventhly and lastly, To fence and fortify the souls of real, serious Christians against those brain-sick notions, and those airy speculations, and imaginary revelations, and enthusiastical fancies, &c., with which many are sadly deluded and deceived, even to their eternal overthrow, I had almost said.

Thus have I given you a brief account of the reasons that have prevailed with me to publish this treatise to the world, and to dedicate it to yourselves. Let your hearts dwell on truth, as the bee doth upon the flower; every truth being a flower of paradise that is more worth than a world.

Now the God of all grace fill your hearts and souls with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, that you may attain unto a full assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness; which that you may is the sincere, earnest, and constant desire of him who is your soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks. THE PREFACE, touching the nature of assurance To be in a state of true grace, is to be miserable no more; it is to be happy for ever. A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God. It is a soul much beloved, and very highly valued of God. It is a soul housed in God. It is a soul safe in everlasting arms. It is a soul fully and eminently interested in all the highest and noblest privileges. The being in a state of grace makes a man's condition happy, safe, and sure; but the seeing, the knowing of himself to be in such a state, is that which renders his life sweet and comfortable. The being in a state of grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter; it will render him doubly blest, blest in heaven, and blest in his own conscience.²

Now assurance is a reflex act of a gracious soul, whereby he clearly and evidently sees himself in a gracious, blessed, and happy state; it is a sensible feeling, and an experimental discerning of a man's being in a state of grace, and of his having a right to a crown of glory; and this rises from the seeing in himself the special, peculiar, and distinguishing graces of Christ, in the light of the Spirit of Christ, or from the testimony and report of the Spirit of God, 'the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit, that he is a son, and an heir-apparent to glory', Rom 8:16-17.

It is one thing for me to have grace, it is another thing for me to see my grace; it is one thing for me to believe, and another thing for me to believe that I do believe; it is one thing for me to have faith, and another thing for me to know that I have faith. Now assurance flows from a clear, certain, evident knowledge that I have grace, and that I do believe, &c.

Now this assurance is the beauty and top of a Christian's glory in this life. It is usually attended with the strongest joy, with the sweetest comforts, and with the greatest peace. It is a pearl that most want, a crown that few wear. His state is safe and happy, whose soul is adorned with grace, though he sees it not, though he knows it not.

Assurance is not of the essence of a Christian. It is required to the bene esse, to the well-being, to the comfortable and joyful being of a Christian; but it is not required to the esse, to the being of a Christian. A man may be a true believer, and yet would give all the world, were it in his power, to know that he is a believer. To have grace, and to be sure that we have grace, is glory upon the throne, it is heaven on this side heaven. But more of these things you will find in the following discourse, to which I refer you. A SERIOUS DISCOURSE, TOUCHING A WELL-GROUNDED ASSURANCE

CHAPTER I

Shewing that believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness.

First, The ground on which the apostle Paul builds his assurance, is not any special revelation, but such a foundation as is common to all believers, as clearly appears from

Rom 8:32-34, He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

It is clear from these words, that this blessed apostle had not that glorious assurance that he speaks of in the two last verses of this chapter by immediate revelation, for he concludes it from such arguments as are general or common to all the godly; and therefore it roundly follows,

First, That believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. So Hezekiah's assurance did spring from a principle that is common to all believers, 2Ki 20:3. ergo,—

Secondly, It is the very scope and end of the Scripture to help believers to a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. 'These things,' saith John, 'have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life,' 1Jn 5:13. These precious souls did believe, and they had eternal life, in respect of the promise of eternal life, Tit 1:2, and in respect of Christ their head, who had taken up their rooms aforehand in heaven, and who as a public person doth represent all his people, Eph 2:6; and they had eternal life in respect of the beginnings of it; for what is grace but glory begun? and what is glory but grace perfected? Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full. Now, though they had eternal life in all these respects, yet they did not know it; though they did believe, yet they did not believe that they did believe; therefore the apostle, in those precious epistles of his, doth make it his business, by variety and plenty of arguments, to help all, but especially such as are weak in the faith, to a well-grounded assurance of their eternal welfare.

It is the very drift and design of the whole Scripture, to bring souls first to an acquaintance with Christ, and then to an acceptance of Christ, and then to build them up in a sweet assurance of their actual interest in Christ: which made Luther to say, 'That he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word, but with the word he could live in hell itself.' No histories are comparable to the histories of the Scripture for, 1, Antiquity; 2, rarity; 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity. The word evidences truth, it evinces falsehood; it fights against folly, it opens

the bowels of mercy, and it assures believing souls of eternal felicity. That is a precious word in Heb 6:18. God hath given us his word, his oath, his seal, that our consolation may be strong, and that our salvation may be sure. Now, what comfort can a believer have without assurance? It is the assurance of my interest in the land of Canaan, in gospel-cordials, in precious promises, and in a precious Christ, that comforts and delights my soul. It is not enough to raise strong consolation in my soul, barely to know that there are mines of gold, mountains of pearl, heaps of treasures, a land flowing with milk and honey, but it is the knowledge of my interest in these that raises joy in my soul. To know that there are such things, and that I have no interest in them, is rather a vexation than a consolation to me; to know that there is a feast of choicest delicacies, but not a taste for me; that there are pleasant fountains and streams, but I must perish for thirst in a wilderness; to know that there are royal robes for such and such, but I must die in my rags; to know that there is a pardon for such and such, but I must be turned off the ladder of life; to know that there is preferment for such and such, but I must still lie with Lazarus at Dives' door; such knowledge as this may well add to my vexation, but it will not add to my consolation.⁴

It was rather matter of sorrow than joy to the men of the old world, to know that there was an ark, when they were shut out; and to the Israelites, to know that there was a brazen serpent set up, whereby others were cured, when they died with the stinging of the fiery serpents. So how can it comfort me to know that there is peace in Christ, and pardon in Christ, and righteousness in Christ, and riches in Christ, and happiness in Christ, &c., for others, but none for me! Ah, this knowledge will rather be a hell to torment me than a ground of joy and comfort to me. But now God hath in the Scripture discovered who they are that shall be eternally happy, and how they may reach to an assurance of their felicity and glory; which made one [Luther] to say, 'That he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible.' The Bible is a Christian's magna charta, his chief evidence for heaven. Men highly prize, and carefully keep their charters, privileges, conveyances, and assurances of their lands; and shall not the saints much more highly prize, and carefully keep in the closet of their hearts, the precious word of God, which is to them instead of all assurances for their maintenance, deliverance, protection, confirmation, consolation, and eternal salvation.

Thirdly, Other believers have in an ordinary way attained to a sweet assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. 'We know,' saith the apostle, in the name of the saints, 'that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,' 2Co 5:1-2. Their assurance sets them in triumph upon the throne. We have a house, a house above, a house in heaven, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We have a house, a heavenly house, a house made by the greatest wisdom and the highest love; a house, that for honour, pleasures, riches, safety, stability, glory, and perpetuity, transcends all the royal palaces in the world. It is a house 'not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.' So the church: Song of Solomon 2:16, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' I know, says the spouse, that Jesus Christ is mine. I can with the greatest confidence and boldness affirm it: he is my head, my husband, my Lord, my Redeemer, my Justifier, my Saviour; 'and I am his. I am as sure that I am his, as I am sure that I live. I am his by purchase, and I am his by conquest; I am his by donation, and I am his by election; I am his by covenant, and I am his by marriage. I am wholly his; I am peculiarly his; I am universally his; I am eternally his. This I well know, and the knowledge thereof is my joy in life, and my strength and crown in death. So the

church: Isa 63:16, 'Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not. Thou, O Lord, art our Father, and our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting.' David could say, 'The Lord is my portion for ever,' Psa 73:25-26; and at another time he could sweetly sing it out, 'I am thine, save me!' Psa 119:94. Job could look through the darkest cloud, and see that his Redeemer lives, Job 19:25. Thomas cries out, 'My Lord, and my God!' John 20:28. And Paul trumpets it out, 'That nothing should separate him from the love of Christ,' Rom 8:38-39; and that he had 'fought a good fight, and finished his course; and that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:7-8. By what hath been said, it clearly appears that other believers have obtained assurance in an ordinary way, and therefore believers now may attain to a sweet assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. Certainly, God is as loving, and his bowels of compassion are as strong towards believers now, as ever they were to believers of old; and it makes as much for the honour of God, the lifting up of Christ, the stopping of the mouths of the wicked, and the rejoicing of the hearts of the righteous, for God to give assurance now, as it did for God to give it then.³

Fourthly, God hath by promise engaged himself to assure his people of their happiness and blessedness. 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,' Psa 84:11. If he will withhold no good thing, then certainly he will not always withhold assurance, which is the great good thing, the only thing, the chiefest thing, the peculiar thing that believers seek after. So Eze 34:30-31, 'Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.' So John 14:21, John 14:23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' 'If any man love me,' saith Christ, 'he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Now hath the Lord spoken it, and shall it not come to pass? Men say and unsay, they eat their words as soon as they have spoken them, but will God do so? Surely no, he is faithful that hath promised, 'All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen,' 2Co 1:20; that is, they are stable and firm, and shall really be made good. The promises are a precious book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy, therefore sit down and suck at these breasts, warm thyself at this fire. God hath been always as good as his word, yea, he hath sometimes been better than his word; he hath ever performed, and he hath over performed. He promised the children of Israel only the land of Canaan, but he gave them, besides the whole land of Canaan, two other kingdoms which he never promised, Ah! how often hath God prevented us with his blessings, and hath given us in such mercies as have been as far beyond our hopes as our deserts. How hath God, in these days of darkness and blood, gone beyond the prayers, desires, hopes, and confidences of his people in this land, and beyond what we could read in the book of the promises. Satan promises the best, but pays with the worst: he promises honour and pays with disgrace, he promises pleasure and pays with pain, he promises profit and pays with loss, he promises life and pays with death; but God pays as he promises, all his payments are made in pure gold; therefore take these promises wherein God hath engaged himself to assure thee of his love, and spread them before the Lord, and tell him that it makes as well for his honour as thy comfort, for his glory as for thy peace, that he should assure thee of thy everlasting happiness and blessedness.

Fifthly, There is in all the saints the springs of assurance, and therefore they may attain to assurance.

Precious faith is one spring of assurance, and this is in all the saints, though in different degrees, 2Pe 1:1. ‘Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.’ Faith in time will, of its own accord, raise and advance itself to assurance. Faith is an appropriating grace; it looks upon God, and saith with David, ‘This God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide unto the death,’ Psalms 48:14. It looks upon Christ, and saith with the spouse, ‘I am my beloved’s, and his desire is towards me,’ Song of Solomon 7:10. It looks upon an immortal crown, and saith with Paul, ‘Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory,’ 2Ti 4:8. It looks upon the righteousness of Christ, and saith, ‘This righteousness is mine to cover me.’ It looks upon the mercy of Christ, and saith, ‘This mercy is mine to pardon me.’ It looks upon the power of Christ, and saith, ‘This power is mine to support me.’ It looks upon the wisdom of Christ, and saith, ‘This wisdom is mine to direct me.’ It looks upon the blood of Christ, and says, ‘This blood is mine to save me,’ &c. As faith, so hope is another spring of assurance. Col 1:27, ‘Christ in you,’ saith Paul, ‘the hope of glory.’ So Heb 6:19, ‘Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.’ Hope taketh fast hold upon heaven itself, upon the sanctum sanctorum. A Christian’s hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul farewell, as the hope of hypocrites do; no, it is like the morning light, the least beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine; it shall shine brighter and brighter till perfect day. When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, Spem majorum et meliorum, the hope of greater and better things. So a Christian will part with anything rather than with his hope; he knows that hope will keep the heart both from aching and breaking, from fainting and sinking; he knows that hope is a beam of God, a spark of glory, and that nothing shall extinguish it till the soul be filled with glory. Souls that are big in hope, will not be long without sweet assurance. God loves not to see the hoping soul go always up and down sighing and mourning for want of a good word from heaven, for want of possessing what it hopes in time to enjoy. Hold out hope and patience ‘a little longer, and he that hath promised to come, will come, and will not tarry,’ Heb 10:37, μὴ χῆν ■σόν, ■σόν.

Again, A good conscience is another spring of assurance: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' So 1Jn 3:21, 'Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.' A good conscience hath sure confidence; he that hath it sits, Noah-like, in the midst of all combustions and distractions, [in] sincerity and serenity, uprightness and boldness. A good conscience and a good confidence go together.

What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour, Mat 8:19, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' that a good conscience says to the believing soul. I will follow thee from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance; I will stand by thee, I will strengthen thee, I will uphold thee, I will be a comfort to thee in life, and a friend to thee in death; 'though all should leave thee, yet I will never forsake thee,' Mat 26:35. A good conscience will look through the blackest clouds, and see a smiling God. Look, as an evil conscience is attended with the greatest fears and doubts,

so a good conscience is attended with the greatest clearness and sweetness. And as there is no hell in this world to an evil conscience, so there is no heaven in this world to a good conscience. He that hath a good conscience hath one of the choicest springs of assurance, and it will not be long before God will whisper such a man in the ear, and say unto him, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' Mat 9:2.

Again, real love to the saints is another spring of assurance, and this spring is a never-failing spring. This spring is in the weakest as well as in the strongest saints: 1Jn 3:14, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.' The apostle doth not say, We think, we hope, &c., that we are translated from death to life, but, 'we know' that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren. Love to the brethren is not the cause of our passing from death to life, that is, from a natural state to a spiritual state, from hell to heaven, but an evidence thereof. I confess it is very sad to consider how this precious stream of love is even dried up in many.

It was wont to be a proverb, Homo homini deus, one man is a god to another; but now it may be truly said, Homo homini dæmon, one man is a devil to another. He that wants love to his brethren, wants one of the sweetest springs from whence assurance flows. A greater hell I would not wish any man, than to live and not to love the beloved of God.

Now is it not as easy a thing as it is pleasant, for a man that hath several sweet springs in his garden, to sit down, draw water, and drink? John 4:14. O believing souls! there are springs, there are wells of living water not only near you, but in you; why, then, do you, with Hagar, sit down sorrowing and weeping, Gen 21:15-19, when you should be a-tasting or a drinking not only of the springs above you, but also of the springs within you? A man that hath fruit in his garden may both delight his eye and refresh his spirit with tasting of it, Gal 5:22-23. Certainly we may both eye and taste the fruits of the Spirit in us, they being the first-fruits of eternal life. I think none but mad souls will say that grace is that forbidden fruit that God would have us neither see nor taste. We ought not so to mind a Christ in heaven, as not to mind 'Christ in us the hope of glory,' Col 1:27. Christ would not have his spouse so to mind her own blackness, as to forget that she is all fair and glorious within, Song of Solomon 1:5, Song of Solomon 4:7, and Psa 45:11.

Sixthly, The Holy Ghost exhorts us 'to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2Pe 1:10, and presses us to look to the obtaining of a 'full assurance.' Therefore believers may attain unto an assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness: 'Wherefore the rather, brethren,' saith the apostle, 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall.' The Greek word translated 'give diligence' signifieth two things: (1.) All possible haste and speed; (2.) All manner of seriousness and intention in doing. Make it your main business, your chiefest study, your greatest care, to 'make your calling and election sure,' saith the apostle.⁴ When this is done, your all is done. Till this be done, there is nothing done. And to shew the necessity, utility, excellency, and possibility of it, the apostle puts a 'rather' upon it: 'Wherefore the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure;' or, as it is in the original, 'firm or stable.' It is the one thing necessary; it is of an internal and eternal concernment to make firm and sure work for your souls. Assurance is a jewel of that worth, a pearl of that price, that he that will have it must work, and sweat, and weep, and wait to obtain it. He must not only use diligence, but he must use all diligence: not only dig, but he must dig deep,

before he can come to this golden mine. Assurance is that 'white stone,' that 'new name,' that hidden manna, that none can obtain but such as labour for it as for life. Assurance is such precious gold, that a man must win it before he can wear it. Win gold, and wear gold, is the language both of heaven and earth. The riches, honours, languages, and favours of this world cannot be obtained without much trouble and travel, without rising early and going to bed late, and do you think that assurance, which is more worth than heaven and earth, can be obtained by cold, lazy, heartless services? If you do, you do but deceive your own souls. There are five things that God will never sell at a cheap rate,—Christ, truth, his honour, heaven, and assurance. He that will have these must pay a good price for them, or go for ever without them.² And as Peter exhorts you to 'give all diligence to make your calling and election sure,' so Paul presseth you to look to the obtaining of full assurance, which does clearly evidence that there is a possibility of attaining unto a full assurance of our happiness and blessedness in this life. And 'we desire,' saith the apostle, 'that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,' Heb 6:11-12. We must not only strive after assurance, but we must strive and shew all diligence to the attaining of that rich and full assurance which will scatter all fears and doubts, which will make a soul patient in waiting, courageous in doing, and cheerful in suffering, and which will make a heaven in a man's heart on this side heaven, and make him go singing into paradise, in despite of all calamities and miseries.⁴ And certainly it can never stand with the holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, and goodness of God, to put his people upon making their calling and election sure, and upon obtaining full assurance, if there were not a possibility of obtaining a full and well-grounded assurance of their happiness and blessedness in this life; and therefore it doth undeniably follow that they may attain unto a blessed assurance of their felicity and glory whilst they are in this vale of misery. The contrary opinion will make a man's life a hell here, though he should escape a hell hereafter.

Seventhly, The Lord hath, in much mercy and love, propounded in his word the ways and means whereby believers may obtain a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness; and therefore it may be obtained. Take three scriptures to evidence this. The first is in 2Pe 1:13. If you turn to the words, you shall find that the Lord does not only press them to 'give all diligence to make their calling and election sure;' but he shews them plainly the way and means whereby this may be done, namely, by adding 'to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' &c. The second scripture is that 1Co 11:28, 'But let a man examine himself; and so let eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' By examination the soul comes to see what right it hath to Christ and all the precious things of his house; and believingly to eat so of that bread of life, that heavenly manna, as that it may live for ever. The third scripture is that 2Co 13:5, 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?' or unapproved, or rejected. By a serious examination of a man's own estate, he may know whether he hath faith or not, whether he be Christ's spouse or the devil's strumpet, whether there be a work of grace upon his heart or not. And certainly it cannot stand with the glorious wisdom, unspotted righteousness, and transcendent holiness of God, to put men upon the use of such and such means in order to the obtaining of such and such an end, if that end could not be obtained by the use of the means prescribed, Exo 15:11. Man, that hath but a spark of that wisdom, righteousness, and holiness that is in God, will not put any upon the use of such or such means for the obtaining of health, wealth, or the like, unless there be a proper

tendency in the use of those means prescribed to reach such ends. And will God, who is wisdom, righteousness, and holiness in the abstract? Surely no. God is one infinite perfection in himself,³ which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures; and therefore it is impossible that God should act below the creature, which he should do if he should put the creature upon the use of those means that would not reach the ends for which the means were used.

Thus you see clearly by this seventh argument that believers may in this life attain to a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness.

Eighthly, It was the principal end of Christ's institution of the sacrament of the supper that he might assure them of his love, and that he might seal up to them the forgiveness of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, and the salvation of their souls, Mat 26:27-28. The nature of a seal is to make things sure and firm among men; so the supper of the Lord is Christ's broad seal, it is Christ's privy-seal, whereby he seals and assures his people that they are happy here, that they shall be more happy hereafter, that they are everlastingly beloved of God, that his heart is set upon them, that their names are written in the book of life, that there is laid up for them a crown of righteousness, and that nothing shall be able to separate them from him who is their light, their life, their crown, their all in all. In this sacrament Christ comes forth and shews his love, his heart, his bowels, his blood, that his children may no longer say, Doth the Lord Jesus love us? doth he delight in us? &c.; but that they may say with the spouse, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Song of Solomon 7:10. Many precious Christians there are that have lain long under fears and doubts, sighing and mourning; that have run from minister to minister, and from one duty to another, &c., and yet could never be persuaded of the love of Christ to their poor souls; but still their fears and doubts have followed them, till they have waited upon the Lord in this glorious ordinance, by which the Lord hath assured them of the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls. In this ordinance God hath given them manna to eat, and a white stone, and new name, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it, Rev 2:17. Tell me, ye precious, believing souls, whether you have not found God in this ordinance often whispering of you in the ear, saying, 'Sons and daughters, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you'? Mat 9:2. I know you have.

Those scriptures that do expressly require saints to be abundant and constant in rejoicing and in praising of God, to have always harps in their hands, and hallelujahs in their mouths, do clearly evidence that believers may attain to a well-grounded assurance in this life. How can they rejoice and glory in God, that do not know whether he will be an everlasting friend or an everlasting enemy to them, whether he will always breathe out love or wrath upon them? How can they but hang their harps on the willows, that do not know but that they may live in a strange land, Psa 137:2; yea, in a land of darkness all their days? How can they be cheerful or thankful, that do not know but that they may at last hear that heart-breaking, that conscience-wounding, that soul-slaying word, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat 25:41. Now, there is no duty in the whole book of God that is more frequently and abundantly pressed upon believers than this of joy and rejoicing, of praise and thanksgiving, as all know that know anything of the Scripture: 1Th 5:16, 'Rejoice evermore.' God would not have his children always a-putting finger in the eye. Ah, Christians! remember what Christ hath done for you, and what he is still a-doing for you in heaven, and what he will do for you to all eternity, and spend your days in whining and mourning if you can. Psa 32:11, 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice,

ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.' Psa 33:1, 'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright.' Christians, are not your mercies greater than your miseries? Yes. Are your greatest sufferings comparable to the least spark of grace or beam of glory revealed in you or to you? No. Will not one hour's being in the bosom of Christ recompense you for all your trouble and travail? Yes. Why, then, do you spend more time in sighing than in rejoicing; and why do you, by your not rejoicing, sadden those precious hearts that God would not have saddened, and gladden those graceless hearts that God would not have gladdened? A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful. It puts a lustre and glory upon beauty; so does joy in the face, heart, and life of a Christian, cast a general splendour and glory upon him, and the ways of God wherein he walks. The joy of the Lord is not only the strength, but also the beauty and glory of Christians, Neh 8:10.

Joy and rejoicing is a consequent and effect of assurance, as many believers by experience find; and therefore, without all peradventure, believers may attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness, else it is impossible that they should 'rejoice evermore;' so that by this argument, as by the former, it clearly appears that believers may in this life be assured of their eternal well-being.

Tenthly, The tenth and last argument, to prove that believers may in this life attain to a well-grounded assurance, is this, That God would never have made such a broad difference in the Scripture between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the righteous and the wicked, between saints and sinners, between sons and slaves, sheep and goats, between lions and lambs, between wheat and chaff, light and darkness, &c., if it were impossible for men to know which of these two estates they are in. Therefore they may know whether they are in a state of life or in a state of death, in a state of misery or in a state of felicity, in a state of wrath or in a state of love, Mat 13:1, seq. Oh! it is much below the grace of God, it is repugnant to the wisdom of God, to make such a wide difference between his own children and Satan's, John 8:44, if it were not possible for every child to know his own father. 'Thou shalt call me my father.' Isa 63:16, 'Doubtless thou art my Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father and Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.' The weakest saint can say, 'Abba, Father,' Rom 8:15; the Lord will not leave his children comfortless, or as orphans, and fatherless children, as it is in the Greek. Though the salvation of believers do not depend upon their knowledge of God to be their father, yet their consolation does; therefore the Lord will not be only a father to Israel, but he will make Israel know that he is his father: Jer 3:4, 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?' By these ten arguments it doth evidently appear, that believers may in this life attain unto a well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness. I shall apply this a little, and then close up this chapter.

Use. This precious truth thus proved, looks sourly and wishly upon all those that affirm that believers cannot in this life attain unto a certain well-grounded assurance of their everlasting happiness and blessedness,—as papists and Arminians: all know that know their writings and teachings, that they are in arms against this Christ-exalting, and soul-cheering doctrine of assurance. 'I know no such thing as assurance of heaven in this life,' saith Grevinchovius the Arminian. Assurance is a pearl that they trample under feet; it is a beam of heaven that hath so

much light, brightness, and shining glory in it, that their blear-eyes cannot behold it. Assurance is glory in the bud, it is the suburbs of paradise, it is a cluster of the land of promise, it is a spark of God, it is the joy and crown of a Christian; the greater is their impiety and folly that deny assurance, that cry down assurance under any names or notions whatsoever. They are rather tormenters than comforters that say, poor souls may know that there is a crown of righteousness, but they must not presume to know that they shall have the honour to wear that crown; and that makes God like King Xerxes, who crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day.²

Arminians are not ashamed to say, that God may crown a man one hour, and uncrown him in the next; they blush not to say that a man may be happy and miserable, under love and under wrath, an heir of heaven and a firebrand of hell, a child of light and a child of darkness, and all in an hour. Oh what miserable comforters are these? What is this but to torment the weary soul? to dispirit the wounded spirit, and to make them most sad whom God would have most glad? Ah! how sad is it for men to affirm, that wounded spirits may know 'that the Sun of righteousness hath healing in his wings,' Mal 4:2; but they cannot be assured that they shall be healed. The hungry soul may know that there is bread enough in his Father's house, but cannot know that he shall taste of that bread, Luk 15:17. The naked soul may know that Christ hath robes of righteousness to cover all spots, sores, defects, and deformities of it, but may not presume to know that Christ will put these royal robes upon it, Rev 3:18. The impoverished soul may know that there be unsearchable riches in Christ, but cannot be assured that ever it shall partake of those riches, Eph 3:8. All that these men allow poor souls, is guesses and conjectures that it may be well with them. They will not allow souls to say with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John 20:18; nor with Job to say, 'My Redeemer lives,' Job 19:25; nor with the church, 'I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Song of Solomon 7:10. And so they leave souls in a cloudy, questioning, doubting, hovering condition, hanging, like Mahomet's tomb at Mecca, between two loadstones; or like Erasmus, as the papists paint him, hanging betwixt heaven and hell.⁵ They make the poor soul a Magor-missabib, a terror to itself.

What more uncomfortable doctrine than this? What more soul-disquieting, and soul-unsettling doctrine than this? Thou art this moment in a state of life, thou mayest the next moment be in a state of death; thou art now gracious, thou mayest the next hour be graceless; thou art now in the promised land, yet thou mayest die in the wilderness; thou art to-day a habitation for God, thou mayest to-morrow be a synagogue of Satan; thou hast to-day received the white stone of absolution, thou mayest to-morrow receive the black stone of condemnation; thou art now in thy Saviour's arms, thou mayest to-morrow be in Satan's paws; thou art now Christ's freeman, thou mayest to-morrow be Satan's bondman; thou art now a vessel of honour, thou mayest suddenly become a vessel of wrath; thou art now greatly beloved, thou mayest soon be as greatly loathed; this day thy name is fairly written in the book of life, to-morrow the book may be crossed, and thy name blotted out for ever. This is the Arminians' doctrine, and if this be not to keep souls in a doubting and trembling, and shivering condition, what is it? Well, Christians, remember this is your happiness and blessedness, that 'none can pluck you out of your Father's hand,' John 10:29; that you are 'kept,' as in a garrison, or as with a guard, 'by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1Pe 1:5. 'That the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but the kindness of the Lord shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord

that hath mercy on you,' Isa 54:10. 'That Christ ever lives to make intercession for you,' Heb 7:25; and that men and devils are as able, and shall as soon, make a world, dethrone God, pluck the sun out of the firmament, and Christ out of the bosom of the Father, as they shall pluck a believer out of the everlasting arms of Christ, or rob him of one of his precious jewels, Deu 33:26-27. I shall close up this chapter with an excellent saying of Luther: 'The whole Scripture,' saith he, 'doth principally aim at this thing, that we should not doubt, but that we should hope, that we should trust, that we should believe, that God is a merciful, a bountiful, a gracious, and a patient God to his people.'

CHAPTER II Containing several weighty propositions concerning assurance. The first proposition that I shall lay down concerning assurance is this, That God denies assurance for a time to his dearest and choicest ones, and that upon many considerable grounds.

(1.) As, first, for the exercise of their grace. A gracious soul would always be upon mount Tabor, looking into Canaan; he would always be in his Father's arms, and under his Father's smiles; he would always be in the sunshine of divine favour; he would always have the heavens open, that he might always see his Christ and his crown; he would with Peter be always upon the mount; he is loath to walk through the valley of darkness, through the valley of Baca. As the king of Sodom said once to Abraham, 'Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself,' Gen 14:21; so gracious souls are apt to say, Give me joy, give me peace, give me assurance, and do you take trials, afflictions, and temptations to yourselves. But pray, what use would there be of the stars, if the sun did always shine? Why, none. Why, no more use would there be of your graces, if assurance should be always continued; therefore the Lord, for the exercise of his children's faith, hope, patience, &c., is pleased, at least for a time, to deny them assurance, though they seek it by earnest prayer, and with a flood of penitent tears.

(2.) The Lord denies assurance to his dearest ones, that he may keep them in the exercise of those religious duties that are most costly and contrary to flesh and blood, as to mourning, repenting, self-judging, self-loathing, self-abhorring, and self-searching; as Lam 1:16, 'For these things I weep: mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me'; Lam 3:2-3, 'He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, not into light. Surely against me he is turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day'; Lam 3:17, 'And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity.' Now, what this sad dealings of God puts the church upon you may see in Lam 3:40. 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.' And if you look throughout the book, you shall find the church much in self-examining, self-judging, self-loathing, &c., upon this ground, that God had hid his face, and drawn a curtain between him and them, and stood at a distance from them, and would not speak comfortably and friendly to them.

Now, if you ask me why God will put his children upon those duties of religion that are most costly and contrary to flesh and blood? I answer, 1. That his strength and power may appear in their weakness, 2Co 12:7-9.

2. To discover not only the truth, but also the strength of their graces. A little grace will put a man upon those religious duties that are easy and pleasing to flesh and blood, and not chargeable, but rather profitable and pleasurable; but it must be strength of grace that puts man upon those services that are costly and cross to the old man.

3. That they may be more fully and eminently conformable to Christ their head, who, from first to last, who, even from the cradle to the cross, was most exercised in those duties and services that were most costly and cross to flesh and blood, as is most evident to all that study the writings of the Holy Ghost more than the writings of men.

4. Because in the performance of such duties they do in a more singular way bear up the name and credit, the honour and glory of God, Christ, and the gospel in the world; the very world will cry out, Ah, these are Christians indeed!

5. Because the more they are in the exercise of such duties, the greater at last will be their reward, Heb 11:7.

6. That Satan's plots and designs may be the better prevented, and the wicked world more justly condemned, who do not only despise the hardest duties of religion, but also neglect the easiest, Mat 25:4-6.

(3.) The third reason why God denies assurance to his most precious ones, is that they may be the more clearly and fully convinced of that exceeding sinfulness and bitterness that is in sin, Jer 2:19. Ah, Lord, says the soul that [is] sighing and mourning under the want of assurance, I see now that sin is not only evil, but the greatest evil in the world, in that it keeps me from an assurance of my interest in thee, who art the greatest good in the world, and from an assurance of that favour of thine that is better than life, and from the light of thy sweet countenance, that is better than corn, and wine, and oil; and from those joys and comforts that can only make a paradise in my soul, Psa 4:7, Psa 63:3-4. Ah, Lord! now I find sin not only to be bitter, but to be the very quintessence of bitterness. Ah! no bitterness so bitter as sin, that keeps my soul from that sweet assurance, that is not only the top and crown of mercy, but also the sweetener of all mercy, misery, and glory. Oh what unspeakable evil do I now see in that evil that keeps me from the most desirable good! Oh what bitterness do I now find in that which Satan, the world, and my own deluded heart told me I should find sweetness in! Ah, now I find by experience, that to be true, which long since the faithful messengers of the Lord have told me; viz., that sin debaseth the soul of man, that it defiles and pollutes the soul of man, that it renders the soul most unlike to God, who is optimum maximum, the best and greatest, who is omnia super omnia, all, and above all, and renders it most like to Satan, who is a very sea and sink of sin. That it hath robbed the soul of the image of God, the holiness of God, the beauty of God, the glory of God, the righteousness of God, and that keeps the soul from wearing this golden chain of assurance.

(4.) A fourth reason why God denies assurance to his dearest ones, is, because they seek assurance more for themselves, than they do for his honour and glory; more that they may have joy without sorrow, comfort without torment, peace without trouble, sweet without bitter, light without darkness, and day without night, than that he may be exalted and admired, and his name alone made great and glorious in the world.

Many Christians are like the bee that flies into the field to seek honey to eat, but brings it not into the master's hive. So they seek for assurance, that they may feed upon that sweet honeycomb, more [than] to fill their Lord and master's hive with thanks and praise. That servant that minds his wages more than his work, must not wonder if his master be slack in paying; no more should he that minds comfort more than obedience, that minds assurance more than divine honour, wonder

that God delays the giving in of assurance, though it be sought with many prayers and tears. He that is most tender of God's honour, shall find by experience that God is most mindful of his comfort. God will not see that soul sit long in sackcloth and ashes, that makes it his business to set him up upon his throne. He that minds God's glory more than his own good, shall quickly find that God will even obscure his own glory to do him good. If we are not wanting to God's glory, he will not long be wanting to our joy.

(5.) A fifth reason why God denies assurance to his children, is, That when they have it, they may the more highly prize it, the more carefully keep it, the more wisely improve it, and the more affectionately and effectually bless God for it. None sets such a price upon light, as he that hath lain long in a dungeon of darkness; so none sets such a price upon assurance, as those children of light that have walked most in spiritual darkness. Ah! how sweet was the light to Jonah, that had been in the belly of hell, Jon 2:2; so is assurance to those that, through slavish fears and unbelief, 'have made their beds in hell,' as the psalmist speaks, Psa 139:8. Gold that is far fetched, and dearly bought, is most esteemed; so that assurance that costs the soul most pains and patience, most waiting and weeping, most striving and wrestling, is most highly valued, and most wisely improved. As, by the want of temporals, God teaches his people the better to prize them, and improve them when they enjoy them; so by the want of spirituals, God teaches his people the better to prize them, and improve them when they enjoy them. Ah! how sweet was Canaan to those that had been long in the wilderness! How precious was the gold and ear-rings to Israel, that had been long in Egypt, and the gifts and jewels to the Jews that had been long in Babylon! So is assurance to those precious souls that have been long without it, but at last come to enjoy it, Num 14:33-34; Exo 11:1-10; Ezr 1:1-11.

After the Trojans had been wandering a long time in the Mediterranean Sea, as soon as they espied land, they cried out with exulting joy, 'Italy, Italy;' so when poor souls shall come to enjoy assurance, who have been long tossed up and down in a sea of sorrow and trouble, how will they with joy cry out, Assurance, assurance, assurance!

(6.) The sixth reason why God denies assurance to his dearest ones, at least for a time, is, That they be kept humble and low in their own eyes; as the enjoyment of mercy glads us, so the want of mercy humbles us. David's heart was never more low, than when he had a crown only in hope, but not in hand. No sooner was the crown set upon his head, but his blood rises with his outward good, and in the pride of his heart he says, 'I shall never be removed,' Psa 30:6.

Hezekiah was a holy man, yet he swells big under mercy. No sooner doth God lift up his house higher than others, but he lifts up his heart in pride higher than others. When God had made him high in honours, riches, victories, ay, and in spiritual experiences, then his heart flies high, and he forgets God, and forgets himself, and forgets that all his mercies were from free mercy, that all his mercies were but borrowed mercies. Surely, it is better to want any mercy than an humble heart, it is better to have no mercy than want an humble heart.² A little, little mercy, with an humble heart, is far better than the greatest mercies with a proud heart. I had rather have Paul's coat with his humble heart, than Hezekiah's lifted-up heart with his treasures and royal robes. Well, Christians, remember this, God hath two strings to his bow; if your hearts will not lie humble and low under the sense of sin and misery, he will make them lie low under the want of some desired mercy. The want of assurance tends to bow and humble the soul, as the enjoyment of assurance doth to raise

and rejoice the soul; and therefore do not wonder why precious souls are so long without assurance, why Christ's chariot, assurance, is so long a-coming, Jdg 5:28.

(7.) The seventh and last reason why God denies assurance, for a time, even to his dearest ones, is, That they may live clearly and fully upon Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ may be seen to be all in all. It is natural to the soul to rest upon everything below Christ; to rest upon creatures, to rest upon graces, to rest upon duties, to rest upon divine manifestations, to rest upon celestial consolations, to rest upon gracious evidences, and to rest upon sweet assurances. Now the Lord, to cure his people of this weakness, and to bring them to live wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ, denies comfort, and denies assurance, &c., and for a time leaves his children of light to walk in darkness. Christians, this you are always to remember, that though the enjoyment of assurance makes most for your consolation, yet the living purely upon Christ in the want of assurance, makes most for his exaltation. No Christian to him that, in the want of visibles, can live upon an invisible God; that in thick darkness can live upon God as an everlasting light. He is happy that believes upon seeing, upon feeling, but thrice happy are those souls that believe when they do not see; that love when they do not know that they are beloved; and that in the want of all comfort and assurance, can live upon Christ as their only all.⁵ He that hath learned this holy art, cannot be miserable; he that is ignorant of this art cannot be happy. The second proposition is this, That the Scripture hath many sweet significant words to express that well-grounded assurance by, which believers may attain to in this life.

Sometimes it is called a persuasion. Rom 8:38, 'I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,' It is rendered a perspicuous and peculiar manifestation of Christ to the soul, John 14:21-24. It is often rendered, to know, as 1Jn 3:14, 1Jn 3:19, 1Jn 3:24, and 1Jn 5:13, 1Jn 5:19, &c. But the word that the Scripture doth most fully express this by, πληροφορία, full assurance, that is, when the soul, by the Spirit and word, is so fully persuaded of its eternal happiness and blessedness, that it is carried, like Noah's ark, above all waves, doubts, and fears, and, Noah-like, sits still and quiet, and can, with the apostle Paul, triumph over sin, hell, wrath, death, and devil. This is sometimes called 'full assurance of understanding;' sometimes it is called 'full assurance of hope;' and sometimes it is called 'full assurance of faith;' because these are the choice and pleasant springs from whence assurance flows, Col 2:2; Heb 6:11, Heb 6:18-19; Heb 10:22.

Now though this full assurance is earnestly desired, and highly prized, and the want of it much lamented, and the enjoyment of it much endeavoured after by all saints, yet it is only obtained by a few. Assurance is a mercy too good for most men's hearts, it is a crown too weighty for most men's heads. Assurance is optimum maximum, the best and greatest mercy; and therefore God will only give it to his best and dearest friends.

Augustus in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, but gold to others. Honours and riches, &c., are trifles that God gives to the worst of men; but assurance is that 'tried gold,' Rev 3:18, that God only gives to tried friends. Among those few that have a share or portion in the special love and favour of God, there are but a very few that have an assurance of his love.

It is one mercy for God to love the soul, and another mercy for God to assure the soul of his love. God writes many a man's name in the book of life, and yet will not let him know it till his hour of death, as the experience of many precious souls doth clearly evidence. Assurance is a flower of

paradise that God sticks but in a few men's bosoms. It is one thing to be an heir of heaven, and another thing for a man to know or see himself an heir of heaven. The child in the arms may be heir to a crown, a kingdom, and yet not understand it; so many a saint may be heir to a crown, a kingdom of glory, and yet not know it. As the babes that passes the pangs of the first-birth do not presently cry, 'Father, father;' so the new-born babes in Christ, that have passed the pangs of the second-birth, do not presently cry 'Abba, Father;' they do not presently cry out, Heaven, heaven is ours; glory, glory is ours Rom 8:16-17, 1Pe 2:2. The third proposition is this, That a man may have true grace, that hath not assurance of the love and favour of God, or of the remission of his sins and salvation of his soul. A man may be truly holy, and yet not have assurance that he shall be eternally happy. A man may be God's, and yet he not know it; his estate may be good, and yet he not see it; he may be in a safe condition, when he is not in a comfortable condition. All may be well with him in the court of glory, when he would give a thousand worlds that all were but well in the court of conscience. The Canaanite woman shewed much love, wisdom, zeal, humility, and faith, yea, such strength of faith as makes Christ admire her, and yield to her, grace her, and gratify her, and yet she had no assurance that we read of, Mat 15:22, Mat 15:29. So Paul, speaking of the believing Ephesians, saith, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph 1:13. First, they heard the word; and then secondly, they believed; and then thirdly, they were sealed; that is, fully assured of a heavenly inheritance, of a purchased possession.³ So 1Jn 5:13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the Son of God.' So Isa 50:10, 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.' So Mic 7:8-9, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' Asaph was a very holy man, a man eminent in grace, and yet without assurance, as may be seen at large, Psa 77:1-20. Heman, doubtless, was a very precious soul, and yet from his youth up, he was even distracted with terrors, Psa 88:1-18. There are thousands of Christians that are in a state of grace, and shall be saved, that want assurance and the proper effects of it, as high joy, pure comfort, glorious peace, and vehement longings after the coming of Christ.

Assurance is requisite to the well-being of a Christian, but not to the being; it is requisite to the consolation of a Christian, but not to the salvation of a Christian; it is requisite to the well-being of grace, but not to the mere being of grace. Though a man cannot be saved without faith, yet he may be saved without assurance. God hath in many places of the Scripture declared, that without faith there is no salvation, but God hath not in any one place of the Scripture declared, that without assurance there is no salvation. A man must first be saved before he can be assured of his salvation, for he cannot be assured of that which is not; and a man must have saving grace before he can be saved, for he cannot be saved by that which he hath not. Again, a man must be ingrafted into Christ, before he can be assured of remission or salvation, but this he cannot be before he hath faith, therefore there may be grace where there is no assurance. Christ went to heaven in a cloud, and the angel went up to heaven in the smoke and flame of the sacrifice; and so I doubt not but many precious souls do ascend to heaven in clouds and darkness, Acts 1:9; Jdg

13:20.

Now a man may have grace, and yet want assurance, and that may arise from these causes.

(1.) First, From his cavilling spirit, and from his siding with the old man against the new, with the flesh against the spirit, with corruption against grace, with the house of Saul against the house of David, with the work of Satan against the work of God. Sin is Satan's work; grace, holiness is God's; yet such is the weakness, yea, madness of many poor souls, that they will fall in and side with Satan's work, rather than with God's, against their own souls. Ah! Christians, will you condemn that judge for injustice and unrighteousness, that shall open his ears to the complaints of the plaintiff, but stops his ears against the answers of the defendant; and will you not condemn yourselves for that you do with both ears hear what sin and Satan hath to say against the soul, but have not one ear open to hear what the Spirit, what grace, what the new man, what the noble part of man, what the regenerate man, can say for the justification, satisfaction, and consolation of the soul.³ Let me tell thee, O thou cavilling soul! that it is thy wisdom and thy duty to remember that command of God, that doth prohibit thee from bearing false witness against thy neighbour. That same command doth enjoin thee not to bear false witness against the work of grace upon thy own heart, against the precious and glorious things that God hath done for thy soul. And thou shouldst make as much conscience of bearing false witness against anything the Lord hath wrought in thee, and for thee, as thou doest make conscience of bearing false witness against thy neighbour. It cannot but be sad with the soul, but be night with the soul, when it makes much conscience of the one, and no conscience of the other. Many heathens have been so loving and faithful one to another, that they would rather die, than they would bear false witness one against another. How dare you cavilling souls, then to bear false witness against your own souls, and the gracious work of the Lord upon them! If this be not the way to keep off assurance, and keep the soul in darkness, yea, in a hell, I know nothing.

(2.) Again, a man may have grace, and yet want assurance, and that may arise in the second place from the exceeding littleness and weakness of his grace. A little candle yields but a little light, and a little grace yields but a little evidence.² Great measures of grace carries with them great and clear evidences, but little measures carries with them but little evidence. Some stars are so small that they are scarce discernible; so some saints' graces are so small, that they can hardly see their graces to be graces. A little fire will yield but a little heat; a little grace will yield but a little comfort, a little evidence; a little grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter, but it is a great deal of grace that must yield us a heaven here; a little stock will bring in but a little profit; a little grace will bring in but a little peace; a little jewel yields but a little lustre, a little glory; no more doth a little grace, and therefore it is that Christians that have but a little grace, have but a little of the shine and lustre of assurance, they have but little joy and comfort in this world. Yet that the spirits of weak Christians may not utterly faint, let me give them this hint, viz., that the weakest Christian is as much justified, as much pardoned, as much adopted, and as much united to Christ as the strongest, and hath as much interest and propriety in Christ as the highest and noblest Christian that breathes, though he cannot make so much advantage and improvement of his interest and propriety as the strong Christian, who hath a greater degree of grace.

Hierom [Jerome] observes upon the beatitudes, that there are many of the promises made to weak grace: Mat 5:3-4, Mat 5:6, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are

they that hunger and thirst.' Weak saints, remember this: the promise is a ring of gold, and Christ is the precious tried stone in that ring; and upon that stone must you rest, as you would have grace to thrive, and your souls to be safe and happy. Weak souls, remember this: as Joseph sent chariots to bring his father and his brethren to him, Gen 45:1-28 so God would have your weak graces to be as chariots to bring you to himself, who is the cherisher, strengthener, and increaser of grace. He that makes his graces to be servants and handmaids to convey him to Christ, the fountain of grace, he shall find the greatest sweetness in grace, and the greatest increase of grace.

(3.) Thirdly, A man may have true grace, and yet want assurance, and this may arise from the resurrection of old sins. Ah! when those sins which were long since committed, and long since lamented, and long since loathed, and long since crucified; when those old sins, which hath cost a soul many prayers and many tears, and many sighs, and many groans, and many complaints, when those sins that have been long buried shall be again revived, and meet the soul, and stare upon the soul, and say to the soul, We are thine, and we will follow thee; we are thine, and we will haunt thee; ah, how will this cause a man's countenance to be changed, his thoughts to be troubled, his joints to be loosed, and his heart to be amazed. David and Job meeting with the sins of their youth, long after they were lamented and pardoned, makes their hearts startle and tremble, Psa 25:7, Job 13:26. Upon the new risings of old sins, the soul begins to question all, and thus to expostulate the case: Surely my estate is not good, my pardon is not sealed; if it be, how comes these sins to be revived, to be remembered? Hath not God engaged himself in the promises of grace, that those sins that are pardoned, shall never be remembered? Isa 43:25, Jer 31:34, and surely if these sins be not pardoned, I have reason to fear that others be not pardoned; and if my sins be not pardoned, how shall I escape being destroyed? Surely my repentance was not sound, my sorrow was not sincere, the blow, the wound I gave sin, was not mortal; if it had, how comes it to pass that it now meets me like an armed enemy? Thus, these new risings of old sins keeps many a man's soul and assurance asunder.

(4.) Fourthly, A man may have grace and yet want assurance, and this may arise from his falling short of that perfection that the word requires, and that other saints have attained to. Ah! says such a soul, surely I have no grace! Oh how short do I fall of such and such righteous rules, and of such and such precious Christians! Ah! how clear are they in their light! How strong are they in their love! How high are they in their attainments! How are their hearts filled with grace, and their lives with holiness! All their motions towards God, and towards man, speak out grace, grace; they pray indeed like saints, and live indeed like angels. Now many poor souls, comparing themselves with the perfect rule of righteousness, and with those that are in the highest forms in Christ's school, and that are the noblest and choicest patterns for purity and sanctity, and finding such a vast disproportion between their hearts and the rule, between their actions and lives, and the actions and lives of others, they are apt to sit down sadded and discouraged.³

Suetonius reports of Julius Cæsar, that seeing Alexander's statue, he fetched a deep sigh, because he at that age had done so little. So many precious souls sit down sighing and weeping, that they have lived so long, and done so little for God, and for their own internal and eternal good. This wounds and sinks their spirits, that they are so unlike to those in grace, that they desire to be like unto in glory; and that they are so far below such and such in spirituals, whom they are so far above in temporals.

(5.) Fifthly, A man may have true grace and yet want assurance, and this may arise from that smoke and clouds, those fears and doubts that corruption raises in the soul; so that the soul cannot see those excellent graces that otherwise might be discerned. Though there may be many precious gems and jewels in the house, yet the smoke may hinder a man from seeing them sparkle and shine. So though there may be many precious graces in the souls of saints, yet corruption may raise such a dust, such a smoke in the soul, that the soul is not able to see them in the beauty and glory. The well of water was near Hagar, but she saw it not till her eyes were opened by the Lord, Gen 21:19-20. So grace is near the soul, yea, in the soul sometimes, and yet the soul doth not see it, till God opens the eye and shews it. 'The Lord was in this place,' saith Jacob, 'and I knew it not,' Gen 28:16. So many a precious soul may say, grace was in my heart, and I knew it not, I saw it not.

Blessed Bradford in one of his epistles saith thus, 'O Lord, methinks I feel it so with me, sometimes as if there were no difference between my heart, and the heart of the wicked; my mind is as blind as theirs, my spirit as stout, stubborn, and rebellious as theirs, and my thoughts as confused as theirs, and my affections as disordered as theirs, and my services as formal as theirs,' &c. Ah, Christians! have not many of your souls found it so? Surely yes! No wonder then, that though you have grace, yet you have not seen it sparkling and shining in your souls; as some have thought that their fields have had no corn, because they have been so full of weeds; and that their heap hath no wheat, because nothing hath appeared but chaff; and that their pile hath no gold, because it hath been covered with much dross. So some have thought that their hearts have been void of grace, because they have been so full of fears and doubts. Peter at one time believes and walks, at another time he doubts and sinks, Mat 14:30. Abraham believes and offers up Isaac at one time, he fears and falls at another time. 'Say thou art my sister, lest they kill me,' Gen 20:2. So David and Job, they had their shufflings, tremblings, faintings, shakings, and questionings, Psa 116:11, Psa 31:22. It is not always high water with saints, sometimes they are reduced to a very low ebb. The best of saints are like the ark, tossed up and down with waves, with fears and doubts; and so it will be till they are quite in the bosom of Christ.

(6.) Lastly, A man may have grace, and yet not see it, yet not know it; and this may arise from his non-searching, his non-examining, his non-ransacking, of his own soul. There is gold in the mine, and men might find it, if they would but dig and search diligently after it. There is grace in the heart, and you might see it, if you would but take the candle of the Lord, and look narrowly after it. Look, as many a man upon a diligent search may find his temporal estate to be better than he apprehends it, so many choice souls upon a diligent search may find their spiritual estate to be far better than they conceived or judged it to be. Therefore souls, cease from complaining, cease from rash judging and dooming of yourselves to hell, and be diligent in inquiring what the Lord hath done, and what the Lord is a-doing, in you and for you. Compare the books together, compare his working upon you and others together. What! is there no light, no love, no longings, no hungerings, no thirstings after God? What! is there no sighing, no complaining, no mourning, under the sense of sin, and under the want of divine favour? Surely if you search, you will find some of these things; and if you do, prize them as jewels that are more worth than a world. God will not despise 'the day of small things,' and will you? Will you, dare you, say that that is little that is more worth than heaven? The least spark of grace shall at last be turned into a crown of glory. Well! remember this, that as the least grace, if true and sincere, is sufficient to salvation, so the sense of

the least grace should be sufficient to your consolation. The fourth proposition is this, viz., That God may deny assurance long, and yet give it in to his children at last, after patient waiting. God appears to David, and brings him out of 'an horrible pit' (or out of a 'pit of noise'), 'and sets his feet upon a rock, and puts a new song into his mouth,' Psa 40:1-4.

After the church in the Canticles had run through many hazards and hardships, many difficulties and dangers, she finds 'him whom her soul loved,' Song of Solomon 3:5. The prophet sits down and bewails his sad condition thus: Psa 69:3, Psa 69:20, 'I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait on my God. And I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.' Ay, but at last God appears, and then says he: 'I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving,' Psa 69:30.

Job sighs it out: 'Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,' Job 8:9. But after this sighing, he sings it out: 'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live,' Job 27:5-6.

Mr Frogmorton was as holy and as choice a preacher as most was in England in those days, and he lived seven and thirty years without assurance, and then died, having assurance but an hour before he died. He went to die at Mr Dod's, who is now with the Lord, and did die there in full assurance of the justification of his person, the remission of his sins, and the salvation of his soul. God denied assurance a great while to Mr Glover, though he sought it with many prayers and tears; and yet when he was in sight of the fire, the Lord shined forth in his favour so sweetly upon him, that he cries out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come!'² So Mrs Katherine Bretterge, after many bitter conflicts with Satan the day before she died, she had sweet assurance of that kingdom that shakes not, of those riches that corrupt not, and of that crown of righteousness that fades not away.

I have read of three martyrs that were bound and brought to the stake, and one of them gets from under his stake to admiration, and falls down upon the ground, and wrestles earnestly with God for the sense of his love, and God gave it him then at that instant, and so he came and embraced the stake, and died cheerfully and resolutely a glorious martyr. God delayed till he was bound, and then lets out himself sweetly and gloriously to him.

Now God doth delay the giving in of assurance to his dearest ones, and that partly to let them know that he will be waited on, and that assurance is a jewel worth waiting for. The least smile from God when our last glass is running, will make our souls amends for all their waiting. And partly that we may know that he is free in his workings, and that he is not tied to any preparations or qualifications in the creature, but is free to come when he will, and go when he will, and stay as long as he will, though the soul doth sigh it out, 'How long, Lord, how long will it be before my mourning be turned into rejoicing?'

Again, God delays the giving in of assurance, not because he delights to keep his children in fears and doubts, nor because he thinks that assurance is too rare, too great, too choice a jewel to bestow upon them; but it is either because he thinks their souls do not stand at a sufficient

distance from sin, or because their souls are so taken up and filled with creature enjoyments as that Christ is put to lodge in an out-house, or else it is because they pursue not after assurance with all their might; they give not all diligence to make their calling and election sure; or else it is because their hearts are not prepared, are not low enough, for so high a favour.

Now God's delaying assurance upon these weighty grounds should rather work us to admire him, to justify him, and quietly to wait for him, than to have any hard thoughts of him, or to carry it unkindly to him, or impatiently to say, 'Why is his chariot so long a-coming?' Jdg 5:28. The fifth proposition is this, That those choice souls that have assurance may lose it, they may forfeit it. The freshness and greenness, the beauty, lustre, and glory of assurance may be lost.

It is true, believers cannot lose the habits, the seeds, the root of grace; yet they may lose assurance, which is the beauty and fragrantcy, the crown and glory of grace, 1Jn 3:9, 1Pe 1:5. These two lovers, grace and assurance, are not by God so nearly joined together but that they may by sin on our side, and justice on God's, be put asunder. The keeping of these two lovers, grace and assurance, together, will yield the soul two heavens, a heaven of joy and peace here, and a heaven of happiness and blessedness hereafter; but the putting these two lovers asunder will put the soul into a hell here, though it escape a hell hereafter. This Chrysostom knew well, when he professed that the want of the enjoyment of God would be a far greater hell to him than the feeling of any punishment. As you would keep your Christ, as you would keep your comfort, as you would keep your crown, keep grace and assurance together, and neither by lip nor life, by word nor works, let these be put asunder. It is possible for the best of men so to blot and blur their evidences for felicity and glory, as that they may not be able to read them nor understand them. They may so vex and grieve the Spirit either by gross enormities, or by refusing his comforts and cordials, or by neglecting or slighting his gracious actings in themselves and others, or by misjudging his work, as calling faith fancy, or sincerity hypocrisy, &c., or by fathering those brats upon him that are the children of their own distempered hearts, as that he may refuse to witness their interest in him, though he be a witnessing Spirit, and refuse to comfort them, though he be the only Comforter. The best believer that breathes may have his summer-day turned into a winter-night, his rejoicing into sighing, his singing into weeping, his wedding-robcs into mourning weeds, his wine into water, his sweet into bitter, his manna, his angels' food, into husks, his pleasant grapes into the grapes of Sodom, his fruitful Canaan, his delightful paradise, into a barren and unlovely wilderness. Look, as faith is often attended with unbelief, and sincerity with hypocrisy, and humility with vainglory, so is assurance with fears and doubts.

Blessed Hooker lived near thirty years in close communion with God, without any considerable withdrawals of God all that while; and yet, upon his dying bed, he went away without any sense of assurance, or discoveries of the smiles of God, to the wonder and deceiving of the expectation of many precious souls, and without doubt in judgment to wicked men.

Look, as many a man loses the sight of the city when he comes near to it, so many a choice soul loses the sight of heaven, even then when he is nearest to heaven. Abraham, you know, had assurance in an extraordinary way concerning his protection from God; and yet says Abraham, 'Say thou art my sister; for otherwise they will kill me,' Gen 12:13, and Gen 20:2. Ah! how was the freshness, the greenness, the beauty and glory of his assurance wore off, that he should, out of slavish fears, expose his wife to other men's pleasure, and himself and his neighbour to God's

displeasure; that he should wound four at once, the honour of God, his wife's chastity, his own conscience, and Pharaoh's soul.

David, you know, sometimes sings it out sweetly: 'The Lord is my portion, and the lot of mine inheritance; he is my salvation: of whom shall I be afraid? He is my rock and fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, my trust, my buckler, and my high tower,' Psa 18:2. At other times you have him sighing it out: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted in me? why hast thou forgotten me?' Psa 42:5. 'O God, my rock! why go I mourning?' 'Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long,' Psa 38:2-6. 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled,' Psa 30:7. 'Restore to me the joy of my salvation, that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice,' Psa 51:12. His heart was more often out of tune than his harp. He begins many of his psalms sighing, and ends them singing; and others he begins in joy, and ends in sorrow; 'So that one would think,' saith one, 'that those psalms had been composed by two men of a contrary humour.' Yea, it is very observable, that though David had assurance in an extraordinary way that he should be king, being anointed by that great prophet Samuel, yet the lustre and glory of this assurance wears off; and he, overcome by slavish fears, cries out, that 'All men are liars,' (even Samuel as well as others), and that 'he shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.'³ It is true, says David, I have a crown, a kingdom in a promise; but I must swim to the crown through blood, I must win the crown before I wear it; and the truth is, I am like to die before I attain it. Yea, and after he was king, when king Jesus did but hide his face, he was sorely troubled; so that neither his glorious throne, nor his royal robes, nor his golden crown, nor his glistening courtiers, nor his large revenues, nor his cheerful temper, nor his former experiences, could quiet him or satisfy him when God had turned his back upon him. Look, as all lights cannot make up the want of the light of the sun, so all temporal comforts cannot make up the want of one spiritual comfort. So Job sometimes sings it out, 'My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high; and my Redeemer lives,' &c., Job 16:19, and Job 19:25. At other times you have him complaining, 'The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in me, and their poison drinketh up my spirit,' Job 6:4; 'The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' And Job 29:2-5, you have him sighing it out thus: 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me!' &c.

Now, by all these clear instances, and by many other saints' experiences, it is evident that the choicest saints may lose their assurance, and the lustre and glory of it may decay and wither. What the soul should do in such a case, and how it should be recovered out of this sad state, I shall shew you towards the close of this discourse. The sixth proposition is this, That the certainty and infallibility of a Christian's assurance cannot be made known to any but his own heart. He can say as the blind man once said, 'This I know, that once I was blind, but now I see,' John 9:25. Once I was a slave, but now I am a son; once I was dead, but now I am alive; once I was darkness, but now I am light in the Lord; once I was a child of wrath, an heir of hell, but now I am an heir of heaven; once I was Satan's bondman, but now I am God's freeman; once I was under the spirit of bondage, but now I am under the spirit of adoption, that seals up to me the remission

of my sins, the justification of my person, and the salvation of my soul. All this I know, says the assured saint; but I cannot make you know it certainly and infallibly if you would give me a thousand worlds.³ What I have found and felt, and what I do find and feel, is wonderfully beyond what I am able to express. I am as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sand of the sea, as I am able to declare to you the joy, the joy, the unconceivable joy, the assurance, the glorious assurance, that God hath given me.

Severinus, the Indian saint, under the power of assurance, was heard to say, O my God! do not for pity so over-joy me; if I must still live, and have such consolations, take me to heaven, &c. So say souls under the power of assurance: Lord! we are so filled with joy and comfort, with delight and content, that we are not able to express it here on earth; and therefore take us to heaven, that we may have that glory put upon us, that may enable us to declare and manifest those glorious things that thou hast wrought in us.

Parents do by experience feel such soundings, such meltings, such rollings, such sweet workings of their affections and bowels towards their children, that for their lives they cannot to the life describe to others what it is to be a father, to be a mother; what it is to have such rollings of bowels towards children. Assurance is that white stone that none knoweth but he that hath it: Rev 2:17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.' White stones were in great use among the Romans.

(1.) In white stones they used to write the names of such as were victorious and conquerors; so in that text, 'To him that overcometh, will I give a white stone.'

(2.) They used to acquit the innocent in courts of justice, by giving them a white stone; and so here the white stone points out absolution and remission.

(3.) They used to give a white stone to those that were chosen to any places of honour; so the white stone of assurance is an evidence of our election, of our being chosen to a kingdom that shakes not, to riches that corrupt not, and to a crown of glory that fades not. And thus much for this sixth proposition, viz., that the certainty and infallibility of a Christian's assurance cannot be made known to any but his own heart, Heb 12:28; Mat 6:20; 1Pe 1:4. The seventh proposition is this, That there are some special seasons and times, wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give to his children a sweet assurance of his favour and love, and they are these that follow.

I. First, Sometimes, I say not always, at first conversion, the Lord is pleased to make out sweet manifestations of his love to the penitent soul. When the soul hath been long under guilt and wrath, when the soul hath been long under the frowns and displeasure of God, and hath long seen the gates of heaven barred against him, and the mouth of hell open to receive him; when the soul hath said, Surely there is no hope, there is no help, surely I shall lose God, Christ and heaven for ever, then God comes in and speaks peace to the soul, then he says, 'I will blot out thy iniquities for my name's sake, and will remember thy sins no more,' Isa 43:25. Hark, soul, hark, says Christ, 'My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor my ways as your ways,' Isa 55:8-9. My thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace and thoughts of love. Hark, soul! here is mercy to pardon thee, and here is grace to adorn thee; here is righteousness to justify thee; here is eye-salve to enlighten thee, and gold to enrich thee, and raiment to clothe thee, and balm to heal thee, and

bread to nourish thee, and wine upon the lees to cheer thee, and happiness to crown thee, and myself to satisfy thee. Ah, souls! have not some of you found it so? surely you have.

God deals sometimes with rebellious sinners, as princes do with those that are in arms, that are in open rebellion against them. You know princes will put such hard to it: they shall fare hard, and lie hard; chains, and racks, and what not, shall attend them; and yet after the sentence is passed upon them, and they are upon the last step of the ladder of life, ready to be turned off, and all hope of escape is gone, then the prince's pardon is put into their hand. So the Lord brings many poor souls to the last steps of the ladder, to a hopeless condition, and then he puts their pardon into their bosoms; then he says, 'Be of good cheer, I have received you into favour, I have set my love upon you, I am reconciled to you, and will never be separated from you.'

You know how God dealt with Paul: after he had awakened and convinced him, after he had unhorsed him and overthrown him, after he had amazed and astonished him, then he shews himself graciously and favourably to him, then he takes him up into the third heaven, and makes such manifestations of his love and favour, of his beauty and glory, of his mercy and majesty, as he is not able to utter. So upon the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, and the best robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put on his hand, and shoes on his feet, Luk 15:22-23.

Some understand by the robe, the royalty of Adam, others, the righteousness of Christ; and by the ring, some understand the pledges of God's love, rings being given as pledges of love; some the seal of God's Spirit, men using to seal with their rings.

Among the Romans, the ring was an ensign of virtue, honour, and nobility, whereby they that wore them were distinguished from the common people. I think the main thing intended by all these passages, is to shew us, that God sometimes upon the sinner's first conversion and returning to him, is graciously pleased to give him some choice and signal manifestations of his love and favour, of his good-will and pleasure, and that upon these following grounds:

(1.) The first ground, That they may not be swallowed up of sorrow, nor give up the ghost under the pangs and throes of the new birth. Ah! did not the Lord let in some beams of love upon the soul, when it is Magor-missabib, a terror to itself; when the heart is a hell of horror, the conscience an Aceldama, a field of black blood; when the soul is neither quiet at home nor abroad, neither at bed nor board, neither in company nor out of company, neither in the use of ordinances nor in the neglect of ordinances; how would the soul faint, sink, and despair for ever! But now when it is thus night with the soul, the Lord sweetly comes in and tells the soul, that all is well, that he hath found a ransom for the soul, that the books are crossed, that all debts are discharged, and that his favour and love upon the soul is fixed, Job 33:24. And so God by his sweet and still voice, speaking thus to the soul, quiets and satisfies it, and keeps it from sinking and despairing.

(2.) The second ground. God gives in assurance sometimes at first conversion, that he may the more raise and inflame their love and affections to him. Ah! how does a pardon given in when a man is ready to be turned off, draw out his love, and raise his affections to that prince that shews bowels of mercy, when he is upon the brink of misery! So when a poor sinner is upon the last step of the ladder, upon the very brink of hell and misery, now for God to come in and speak peace and pardon to the soul, ah! how does it inflame the soul, and works the soul to a holy admiration of God, and to a spiritual delighting in God!

King Antigonus his pulling a sheep with his own hands out of a dirty ditch, as he was passing by, drew his subjects exceedingly to commend him and love him. So King Jesus pulling of poor souls out of their sins, and as it were out of hell, cannot but draw them to be much in the commendations of Christ, and strong in their love to Christ. Christ hath nothing more in his eye, nor upon his heart, than to act towards his people in such ways and at such seasons as may most win upon their affections. And therefore it is, that sometimes he gives the strongest consolation at first conversion.

(3.) The third ground. Christ sometimes at first conversion grants to his people the sweetest manifestations of his love, that they may be the more active, fervent, abundant, and constant in ways of grace and holiness. He knows that divine manifestations of love will most awaken, quicken, and engage the soul to ways of piety and sanctity.

Look what wings are to the bird, oil to the wheels, weights to the clock, a reward to the coward, and the loadstone to the needle, that are the smiles and discoveries of God to a poor soul at his conversion. The manifestations of divine love puts heat and life into the soul, it makes the soul very serious and studious how to act for God, and live to God, and walk with God. Ah! says a soul under the beams of divine love, it is my meat and drink, it is my joy and crown to do all I can for that God that hath done so much for me, as to know me in darkness, and to speak love to me when I was most unlovely; to turn my mourning into rejoicing, and my hell into a heaven.

(4.) The fourth ground. Christ sometimes at first conversion gives his people the sweetest manifestations of his love, to fence and fortify them against Satan's fiery temptations. Before Christ shall be led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, the Spirit of the Lord shall descend upon him like a dove, and he shall hear a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat 3:16-17, that so he may be strong in resisting, and glorious in triumphing over all the assaults and temptations of Satan, Eph 6:16. So many times at first conversion, the Lord makes out sweet manifestations of his love to the soul, that so the soul may stand fast, and not give ground, and in the sense of divine love may so manage the shield of faith, as to quench all the fiery darts of the devil. The Lord knows that when he sets upon the delivering of a poor soul from the kingdom of darkness, and translating it into the kingdom of his dear Son, that Satan will roar and rage, rend and tear, as he did him, Mark 9:25-26, 'When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee to come out of him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.' No sooner did Jesus Christ look with an eye of love, pity, and compassion upon the boy, but the devil in his rage and wrath falls a-renting and tearing of him, as mad dogs do things they fasten upon. This poor child had never so sore a fit as now he was nearest the cure. When rich mercy and glorious power is nearest the soul, then Satan most storms and rages against the soul, Col 1:13. The more the bowels of Christ do work towards a sinner, the more furious will Satan assault that sinner. Therefore divine wisdom and goodness does the more eminently shine in giving the poor soul some sight of Canaan, and some bunches and clusters of that land, upon its first coming out of the wilderness of sin and sorrow. But that no soul may mistake this last proposition, give me leave to premise these two cautions.

[1.] The first caution. That God does manifest his love only to some at their first conversion, not to all. Though he dearly loves every penitent soul, yet he does not manifest his love at first conversion to every penitent soul. God is a free agent, to work where he will, and when he will, and to reveal his love how he will, and when he will, and to whom he will. It is one thing for God to work a work of grace upon the soul, and another thing for God to shew the soul that work.

God oftentimes works grace in a silent and secret way, and takes sometimes five, sometimes ten, sometimes fifteen, sometimes twenty years; yea, sometimes more, before he will make a clear and satisfying report of his own work upon the soul. Though our graces be our best jewels, yet they are sometimes, at first conversion, so weak and imperfect, that we are not able to see their lustre. The being of grace makes our estates safe and sure, the seeing of grace makes our lives sweet and comfortable.

[2.] The second caution. A man may at first conversion have such a clear glorious manifestation of God's love to him, and of his interest in God, and his right to glory, that he may not have the like all his days after. The fatted calf is not every day slain, the robe of kings is not every day put on, every day must not be a festival day, a marriage day; the wife is not every day in the bosom, the child is not every day in the arms, the friend is not every day at the table, nor the soul every day under the manifestations of divine love; Jacob did not every day see the angels ascending and descending; Stephen did not every day see the heavens open, and Christ standing on the right hand of God; Paul was not every day caught up to heaven, nor John was not every day rapt up in the Spirit. No saint can every day cry out, I have my Christ, I have my comfort, I have my assurance, as the Persian king⁴ cried out in his dream, 'I have Themistocles, I have Themistocles.' Job had his harp turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep, Job 30:31. The best of saints are sometimes put to hang their harps upon the willows, and cry out, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and will he be favourable no more?' Psa 137:2, Psa 77:7-9.

II. The[re is a] second special season or time wherein the Lord is pleased to give to his children a sweet assurance of his favour and love, and that is, when he intends to put them upon some high and hard, some difficult and dangerous service. Oh then he gives them some sweet taste of heaven beforehand; now he smiles, now he kisses, now he embraces the soul, now he takes a saint by the hand, now he causes his goodness and glory to pass before the soul, now he opens his bosom to the soul, now the soul shall be of his court and counsel, now the clouds shall be scattered, now it shall be no longer night with the soul, now the soul shall sit no longer mourning in the valley of darkness, now Christ will carry the soul up into the mount, and there reveal his glory to it, that it may act high and brave, noble and glorious in the face of difficulties and discouragements. Christ did intend to put Peter, James, and John upon hard and difficult service, and therefore brings them up into an high mountain, and there gives them a vision of his beauty and glory; there they see him transfigured, metamorphosed, or transformed; there they see his face shining as the sun, and his raiment glistening, Mat 17:1-6. In the mount he shews them such beams of his deity, such sparkling glory, as did even amuse and amaze them, transport them, and astonish them; and all this grace and glory, this goodness and sweetness Christ shews them, to hearten and encourage them to own him and his truth, to stand by him and truth, to make him and his truth known to the world, though hatred, bonds, and contempt did attend them in so doing.

Thus God dealt with Paul before he put him upon that hard and dangerous service that he had cut out for him, Acts 9:1-23. He takes him up into heaven, and sheds abroad his love into his heart, and tells him that he is a chosen vessel; he appears to him in the way, and fills him with the Holy Ghost, that is, with the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Ghost, and straightway he falls upon preaching of Christ, upon exalting of Christ, to the amazing and astonishing of all that heard him. And as he had more clear, full, and glorious manifestations of God's love and favour than others, so he was more frequent, more abundant, and more constant in the work and service of Christ than others, 2Co 11:21-33. And this hath been the constant dealing of God with the patriarchs, as with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c., and with the prophets, as with Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c. When he hath put them upon weighty services, he hath shed abroad his love into their hearts, he hath set his seal upon their spirits, and made them to know that he hath set them as a seal upon his hand; he hath assured them of his countenance, and of his presence, and of his assistance; he hath told them, though others should desert them, yet he will stand by them, and strengthen them, and support them, and uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness; he hath told them that his power should be theirs to defend them, and his wisdom should be theirs to direct them, and his goodness should be theirs to supply them, and his grace should be theirs to heal them, and his mercy should be theirs to pardon them, and his joy should be theirs to strengthen them, and his promise should be theirs to cheer them, and his Spirit should be theirs to lead them; and this hath made them as bold as lions, this hath made them stedfast, and stand close to the work of God in the face of all dangers and difficulties; this hath made them, with stout Nehemiah, scorn to desist or fly from the work of the Lord; this hath made their bows to abide in strength, though the archers have shot sore at them. Now there are considerable reasons why God is pleased to give his children some sweet tastes of his love, some assurance of his favour, when he puts them upon some hard and difficult service, and they are these that follow.

(1.) The first reason, That they may not faint nor falter in his service, but go through it resolutely and bravely, in the face of all difficulties and oppositions. When God put Joshua upon that hard service of leading and governing his people Israel, he assures him of his love and of his presence: 'Fear not, be of good courage, I am with thee,' Jos 1:6. And this makes him hold on and hold out in the service of the Lord bravely and resolutely, in the face of all discouragements: 'Choose you whom you will serve, whether your fathers' gods or the gods of the Amorites; but as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord,' Jos 24:15. So when the Lord put Paul upon such service that occasioned bonds and afflictions to abide him in every city, Acts 20:23, he gives him a taste of heaven beforehand, and lifts up the light of his countenance upon him, and this makes him resolute and bold in the work of the Lord. Now Paul will not consult with flesh and blood, Gal 1:15-17; now it is not reproaches, nor stripes, nor prisons, nor whips, nor perils, nor deaths, that can make him look back, having put his hand to the Lord's plough. Oh! the beamings forth of divine love upon his soul filled him with that courage and resolution that, with Shammah, one of David's worthies, he stands and defends the field, when others fall, and fly, and quit the field, 2Ti 4:16-17.

(2.) The second reason: God gives his people some tastes of his love, some sense of his favour, when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, because else he should not only act below himself, as he is a wise God, a faithful God, a powerful God, a merciful God, a righteous God, &c., but also act below his poor weak creatures. For what husband will put his wife, what father will put

his child, what master will put his servant, what captain will put his soldier, what prince will put his ambassadors, upon hard and difficult services, but they will smile upon them, and speak kindly to them, and make large promises to honour their persons, and kindly to accept, and nobly to reward their services, &c. Surely none. And will God? Will God, who will not give his glory to those that have the most glorious beings, suffer his glory to be clouded and eclipsed by the prudent actings of weak worms? Surely no. Isa 42:8, and Isa 48:11.

(3.) The third reason: God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, that they may never repent of listing themselves in his service. Ah! did not the Lord warm the hearts of his people with the glorious beams of his love, when he puts them upon hard work, they would be ready, when they meet with oppositions and hazards, to throw up all, and to sit down lamenting and repenting that ever they were engaged in his service. They would be as peevish and froward as Jonah, and with him venture a drowning, to shift off God's service.² Ah! but now the Lord, by letting his goodness drop upon their hearts, and by putting an earnest-penny into their hands, he causes them to go cheerfully on in his work, without sighing or repenting. The kisses and embraces of God do put such life, such spirit, such mettle into their souls, as makes them bid defiance to the greatest dangers, and as crowns them conquerors of the greatest difficulties. Ah! says a soul that hath walked some turns in paradise, What is dross to gold! what is darkness to light! what is hell to heaven! No more are all difficulties and oppositions to me, who have found the sweetness of divine grace, and have had the happiness to lie in the bosom of God.

Diocletian, the worst and last persecutor in all the ten persecutions, observed, 'that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, the more it became legible; and to block up the way of Christ, the more it became passable; and whatever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper, and rose the higher in the hearts and lives of the saints, among whom he had scattered the beams of his love and the rich pearls of his grace.' Such souls as have once been in the arms of God, in the midst of all oppositions, they are as men made all of fire walking in stubble; they consume and overcome all oppositions; all difficulties are but as whetstones to their fortitude. The moon will run her course, though the dogs bark at it; so will all those choice souls that have found warmth under Christ's wings run their Christian race in spite of all difficulties and dangers. The horse neighs at the trumpet, the leviathan laughs at the spear; so does a saint, under the power of assurance, laugh at all hazards and dangers that he meets with in the Lord's service. The sense of God's love and goodness makes him to triumph over the greatest difficulties.

(4.) The fourth reason, and lastly: God gives his people some tastes of his love when he puts them upon hard and difficult services, that the mouths of the wicked may be stopped. Should God lay heavy burdens upon his people's shoulders, and not put under his fingers to give some ease; should God double their tale of brick, and yet deny them straw; should God engage them against a potent enemy, and then desert them; should God send them upon some weighty embassy, and not give proportionable encouragements to them, what would the world say? Exo 32:12, Num 14:12-16. Would they not say that he is a hard master, and that his ways are not equal? Would they not say, Verily they are liars that say he is glorious in power, and wonderful in counsel, and infinite in mercy, and admirable in goodness, and rich in grace, and unsearchable in his understanding? For surely were he, he could not, he would not, put his children upon such hard and dangerous services, but he would own them, and stand by them; he would assist them, and

smile upon them; he would be as careful to bring them bravely off, as he hath been ready to bring them freely on Oh! he could not see them in garments rolled in blood, but his bowels would yearn towards them, and he would arise, and have mercy on them.

III. Then, thirdly, Waiting times are times wherein God is pleased to give his people some secret tastes of his love, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon them: 'I waited patiently for the Lord,' saith David, 'and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit' (or out of a pit of noise), 'out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God,' Psa 40:1-3. After God had exercised David's patience in waiting, he sweetly breaks in upon him, and knocks off his bolts, and opens the prison doors, and takes him by the hand, and leads him out of the pit of noise and confusion, in which he was, and causes his love and goodness so to beam forth upon him as causes his heart to rejoice, and his tongue to sing. So after devout Simeon had waited for the consolation of Israel, that is, for Christ's coming, the Holy Ghost falls upon him, and leads him to a sight of Christ in the temple, and this makes the good old man sing, Nunc dimittis, Now, let thy servant depart in peace, Luk 2:25-33. Ah! says Simeon, I have lived long enough! now I have got Christ in my heart, and Christ in my arms, who is my light, my life, my love, my joy, my crown, let me depart, according to thy word. Ah! saints, I appeal to you, have not many of you found by experience the sweet breathings of Christ upon you, even whilst you have been waiting at the door of mercy? while you have been weeping and waiting, hath not the Lord Jesus come in and said, 'Peace be to you'; 'Waiting souls, be of good cheer, it is I; be of good cheer, your sins are pardoned'? Surely you have. Hath not God made that word good unto you, 'Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord'? Psa 27:14; yes. And hath he not made that good to you, 'They shall not be ashamed, that wait for me'? Isa 49:23; that is, they shall not be deceived, or disappointed of their hopes and expectations, that wait for me. Yes. And have you not found that word made sweet to your souls, 'Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious: blessed are all they that wait for him'? Yes. And hath not the Lord made that word good to you, 'The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him'? Lam 3:25. Yes. Waiting souls, remember this assurance is yours, but the time of giving it is the Lord's; the jewel is yours, but the season in which he will give it is in his own hand; the gold chain is yours, but he only knows the hour wherein he will put it about your necks. Well! wait patiently and quietly, wait expectingly, wait believingly, wait affectionately, and wait diligently, and you shall find that scripture made good in power upon your souls, 'Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry,' Heb 10:37, (μικρὸν ■■■ σὸν ■■■ σὸν), Hab 2:3. He will certainly come, he will seasonably come, he will suddenly come, as the prophet Malachi speaks: 'Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts,' Mal 3:1. Well! I will say but this, if assurance of God's love be not a jewel worth a waiting for, it is worth nothing.

IV. Fourthly, Suffering times are times wherein the Lord is pleased to give his people some sense of his favour. When they are in sufferings for righteousness' sake, for the gospel's sake, then usually God causes his face to shine upon them.² Now they shall hear best news from heaven when they hear worst from earth. God loves to smile most upon his people when the world frowns most. When the world puts their iron chains upon their legs, then God puts his golden chains about

their necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into their hands, then God drops some of his honey, some of his goodness and sweetness into it. When the world is ready to stone them, then God gives them the white stone; and when the world is a-tearing their good names, then he gives them a new name, that none knows but he that hath it, a name that is better than that of sons and daughters. When the world cries out, 'Crucify them, crucify them,' then they hear that sweet voice from heaven, 'These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased.' When the world clothes them with rags, then the Lord puts on his royal robes, and makes a secret proclamation to their spirits, 'Thus shall it be done to the men whom the King is pleased to honour.' When the world gives into one hand a cup of water, God gives into the other a cup of nectar, a cup of ambrosia. When the world gnasheth upon them, and presents all imaginary tortures before them, then the Lord opens paradise to them, as he did to Stephen. When Paul and Silas were in prison for the gospel's sake, then God fills them with such unspeakable joy, that they cannot but be singing when others were sleeping, Acts 16:23-24. God turns their prison into a palace, a paradise, and they turn his mercies into praises. Paul and Silas found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more sweet than bitter, more day than night, in the prison.

God will make some beams of his goodness and glory to break through stone walls, to warm and glad the hearts of his suffering ones. When John was banished into the isle of Patmos, 'for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus,' Rev 1:9-10, then he is filled with the Spirit, and hath the choicest manifestations, and the most glorious revelations that ever he had all his days. Now God makes him one of his court and counsel, and tells him what glorious and mighty things shall be in the latter days. Now he is in a spiritual rapture and ecstasy, and carried above himself, and above all outward things, to attend those glorious visions that God would make known to him.

It was God's lifting up the light of his countenance that made the martyrs to sing in the fire, to clap their hands in the flames, and to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses. This made one say, when he felt the flame come to his beard, 'What a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come? What is a drop of vinegar put into an ocean of wine? What is it for one to have a rainy day, that is going to take possession of a kingdom? The smiles of God made another to sing under dreadful sufferings, *Christianus sum, I am a Christian*; and this made the Christians to sing, in Tertullian's time, *Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory. This made a French martyr to say, when the rope was about his fellow's neck, 'Give me that golden chain, and dub me a knight of that noble order.' This made another to desire, when he was to die, the favour of having his chains buried with him, as the ensigns of his honour. This made Basil say, 'Fire, sword, prison, famine, are all a pleasure, a delight unto me.' This made Paul to rattle his iron chains, and to glory in it, more than worldly men glory in all their outward glory. This made Theodoret to complain, that his persecutors did him wrong, when they took him off the rack, and ceased tormenting of him; for, said he, 'All the while I was on the rack, I found methought there was a young man in white, an angel stood by me, which wiped off the sweat; and I found a great deal of sweetness in it, which now I have lost. To conclude, the smiles of God upon the prisoners of hope, is that which makes them more cheerful and delightful in their sufferings than Jesus Christ was in his. When Faninus, an Italian martyr, was asked by one, why he was so merry at his death, sith Christ himself was so sorrowful: 'Christ,' said he, 'sustained in his soul all the sorrows and conflicts with hell and death, due to us, by whose sufferings we are delivered from sorrow, and fear of them all; and therefore we have cause of rejoicing in the greatest sufferings.'

Now there are these special reasons to be given, why the Lord is pleased in suffering times to visit his people with his loving-kindness, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon them.

(1.) The first reason. That their patience and constancy under the cross may be invincible. God knows right well, that if his left hand in suffering times be not under his people, and his right hand over them, if he does not give them some sips of sweetness, some relishes of goodness, they would quickly grow impatient and inconstant. Oh, but now the smiles of God, the gracious discoveries of God, makes their patience and constancy invincible, as it did Vincentius, who by his patience and constancy maddened his tormentors; wherefore they stripped him stark naked, whipped his body all over to a gore blood, sprinkled salt and vinegar over all his wounds, set his feet on burning coals, then cast him naked into a loathsome dungeon, the pavement whereof was sharp shells, and his bed to lie on a bundle of thorns. All which this blessed martyr received, without so much as a groan, breathing out his spirit in these words, 'Vincentius is my name, and by the grace of God I will be still Vincentius, in spite of all your torments.' Persecution brings death in one hand and life in the other; for while it kills the body it crowns the soul.² The most cruel martyrdom is but a crafty trick to escape death, to pass from life to life, from the prison to paradise, from the cross to the crown.

Justin Martyr says, that when the Romans did immortalise their emperors, as they called it, they brought one to swear that he saw [saw?] him go to heaven out of the fire. But we may see, by an eye of faith, the blessed souls of suffering saints fly to heaven, like Elias in his fiery chariot, like the angel that appeared to Manoah in the flames, Jdg 13:20.

John Huss, martyr, had such choice discoveries of God, and such sweet incomes of the Spirit, as made his patience and constancy invincible. When he was brought forth to be burned, they put on his head a triple crown of paper, painted over with ugly devils; but when he saw it, he said, 'My Lord Jesus Christ, for my sake, did wear a crown of thorns; why should not I then for his sake wear this light crown, be it never so ignominious? Truly I will do it, and that willingly.' And as they tied his neck with a chain to the stake, smiling, he said, 'That he would willingly receive the same chain for Jesus Christ's sake, who he knew was bound with a far worse chain for his sake.' Well! remember this, their names that by a patient suffering are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, in the book of life.

(2.) The second reason. A second reason why the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in suffering times, and that is, for the confirmation of some, for the conversion of others, and for the greater conviction and confusion of their adversaries, who wonder, and are like men amazed, when they see the comfort and the courage of the saints in suffering times. Paul's choice carriage in his bonds was the confirmation of many. 'And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear,' Php 1:14 : vide Estius. And as the sufferings of the saints do contribute to the confirmation of some, so by the blessing of God they contribute to the conversion of others. 'I beseech thee,' says Paul, 'for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds,' Phm 1:10. It was a notable saying of Luther, *Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione*, The church converteth the whole world by blood and prayer. Basil affirms,² that the primitive saints shewed so much heroic zeal and constancy, that many of the heathens turned Christians; so that choice spirit that the saints have shewed in their sufferings, when Christ hath overshadowed them with his love, and 'stayed them

with flagons, and comforted them with apples,' Song of Solomon 2:5, hath madded, grieved, vexed, and extremely tormented their tormentors.

Lactantius boasts of the braveness of the martyrs in his time: 'Our children and women, not to speak of men, do in silence overcome their tormentors, and the fire cannot so much as fetch a sigh from them.'

Hegesippus reports an observation of Antoninus the emperor, viz., 'That the Christians were most courageous and confident always in earthquakes, whilst his own heathen soldiers were at such accidents most fearful and dissipated.' Certainly no earthquakes can make any heartquakes among the suffering saints, so long as the countenance of God shines upon their face, and his love lies warm upon their hearts. The suffering saint may be assaulted, but not vanquished; he may be troubled, but can never be conquered; he may lose his head, but he cannot lose his crown, which the righteous Lord hath prepared and laid up for him, 2Ti 4:7-8. The suffering saint shall still be master of the day; though they kill him, they cannot hurt him; he may suffer death, but never conquest. 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death,' Rev 12:11. They love not their lives that love Christ and his truth more than their lives; they that slight, contemn, and despise their lives, when they stand in competition with Christ, may be truly said not to love their lives. In these words you see that the saints by dying do overcome: 'They may kill me,' said Socrates of his enemies, 'but they cannot hurt me.' A saint may say this and more. The herb heliotropium doth turn about and open itself according to the motion of the sun; so do the saints in their sufferings, according to the internal motions of the Sun of righteousness upon them.

(3.) The third reason, A third reason why the Lord causes his goodness to pass before his people, and his face to shine upon his people in suffering times, and that is, for the praise of his own grace, and for the glory of his own name. God would lose much of his own glory, if he should not stand by his people, and comfort them and strengthen them, in the day of their sorrows. Ah the dirt, the scorn, the contempt, that vain men would cast upon God, Exo 32:12, Num 14:13. Look, as our greatest good comes through the sufferings of Christ, so God's greatest glory that he hath from his saints comes through their sufferings: 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified,' 1Pe 4:14 [vide Beza]. It makes much for the glory of God, that his people are cheered and comforted, quickened and raised, spiritualised and elevated in the day of their sufferings. Oh the sight of so noble a spirit in the saints, causes others to admire God, to lift up God, to fall in love with God, and to glorify God; for owning his people, and for being a light to them in darkness, a joy to them in sorrow, and a palace to them in prison. God is very sensible of the many praises and prayers that he should lose, did he not cause his love and his glory to rest upon his people in suffering times. There is nothing that God is so tender of, as he is of his glory, and that his heart is so much set upon as his glory; and therefore he will visit them in a prison, and feast them in a dungeon, and walk with them in a fiery furnace, and shew kindness to them in a lion's den, that every one may shout and cry, Grace, grace! God loves to act in such ways of grace towards his suffering ones, as may stop the mouths of their enemies, and cause the hearts of his friends to rejoice.

(4.) The fourth reason. Believing times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people. When his children are in the exercise of faith, then the Lord is pleased to make known his goodness, and to seal up to them everlasting happiness and blessedness: Eph 1:13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise;' or in whom believing ye were sealed, that is, as you were in the very exercise and actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of the Lord made sure, and sealed up to you your adoption, your reconciliation, your pardon, and everlasting inheritance.

Him that honours Christ by believing, by fresh and frequent acts of faith upon him, him will Christ certainly honour and secure by setting his seal and mark upon him, and by assuring of him of a kingdom that shakes not, of riches that corrupt not, and of glory that fades not. Ah Christians! you wrong two at once, Christ and your own souls, whilst you thus reason: Lord, give me first assurance, and then I will believe in thee and rest upon thee; whereas your great work is to believe, and to hold on believing and acting of faith on the Lord Jesus, till you come to be assured and sealed up to the day of redemption. This is the surest and shortest way to assurance. That is a remarkable passage of the apostle in Rom 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' 'The God of hope,' saith the apostle, 'shall fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' That is, whilst you are in the exercise and actings of faith, the God of hope shall fill you with that joy that is 'unspeakable and full of glory,' and with that 'peace that passes understanding.'

Faith is the key that unlocks paradise, and lets in a flood of joy into the soul. Faith is an appropriating grace, it appropriates all to itself; it looks upon God, and says with the psalmist, 'This God is my God for ever and ever,' Psa 63:1, and Psa 48:14. It looks upon Christ and says, 'My beloved is mine, and his desires are towards me,' Song of Solomon 7:10. It looks upon the precious promises and says, These 'precious promises' are mine, 2Pe 1:4. It looks upon heaven and says, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:8; and this fills the soul with joy and peace. Faith hath an influence upon other graces, it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl, it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues. It made Abraham to rejoice, and it made Noah sit still and quiet in the midst of a deluge; tantum possumus, quantum, credimus.

Faith is the first pin that moveth the soul; it is the spring in the watch that sets all the golden wheels of love, joy, comfort, and peace a-going. Faith is a root-grace, from whence springs all the sweet flowers of joy and peace. Faith is like the bee, it will suck sweetness out of every flower; it will extract light out of darkness, comforts out of distresses, mercies out of miseries, wine out of water, honey out of the rock, and meat out of the eater, Jdg 14:14. 1Pe 1:8, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' Upon the exercise of faith, their hearts are filled with joy, with unspeakable joy, with glorious joy. Faith sees in Christ plenitudo abundantiae and plenitudo redundantiae, a fulness of abundance and a fulness of redundancy; and this fills the heart with glorious joy.

Ah, Christians! believing, believing is the ready way, the safest way, the sweetest way, the shortest way, the only way to a well grounded assurance, and to that unspeakable joy and peace that flows from it, as the effect from the cause, the fruit from the root, the stream from the fountain.

There is such assurance, and such joy that springs from the fresh and frequent actings of faith, that cannot be expressed, that cannot be painted. No man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, the sweetness of a cluster of Canaan, the sweetness of paradise, the fragrancy of the rose of Sharon. As the being of things cannot be painted, and as the sweetness of things cannot be painted, no more can that assurance and joy that flows from believing be painted or expressed; it is too great and too glorious for weak man to paint or set forth. When Abraham believed in hope against hope, Rom 4:18, and when in the face of all dangers and difficulties, he put forth such noble and glorious acts of faith, as to conclude that 'the Lord would provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering,' Gen 22:8, and that 'in the mount he would be seen,' Gen 22:14; God is so taken with the actings of his faith and the effects of it, that he swears by himself, that 'in blessing he would bless him;' that is, I will certainly bless him, and will bless his blessing to him; 'and in multiplying, he would multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore,' Gen 22:17. Now the angel of the Lord, viz., the Lord Jesus, as his own words shew, Gen 22:12, Gen 22:15-16, calls unto Abraham, out of heaven, not once but twice; and now he shews his admirable love in countermanding of Abraham, and in providing a ram, even to a miracle, for a burnt offering. And thus you see that believing times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to reveal his love, and make known his favour to his people, and to look from heaven upon them, and to speak again and again in love and sweetness to them.

V. Fifthly, Hearing and receiving times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to cause his face to shine upon his people. When they are a-hearing the word of life and a-breaking the bread of life, then God comes in upon them, and declares to them that love that is better than life: Acts 10:44, 'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.' As Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost, that is, the graces of the Holy Ghost, viz., the joy, the comfort, the love, the peace, &c., of the Holy Ghost, fell upon them. So in Gal 3:2, 'This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?' By the Spirit here, Calvin and Bullinger and other expositors, do understand the joy, the peace, the assurance that is wrought in the heart by the hearing of faith, that is, by the doctrine of the gospel; for in these words of the apostle, hearing is put for the thing heard, and faith for the doctrine of the gospel, because the gospel is the ordinary means of working faith. 'Faith comes by hearing,' saith the apostle, Rom 10:17. So 1Th 1:5-6, 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.' In these words you have a divine power attending Paul's ministry, a power convincing, enlightening, humbling, raising, delighting, reforming, renewing, and transforming of them that heard him. Also you have the sweet and blessed testimony of the Spirit attending his ministry, and assuring those of their effectual calling and election, upon whom the word came in power, and raising up their spirits to joy in the midst of sorrow. Ah! you precious sons and daughters of Zion, that have sat waiting and trembling at Wisdom's door, tell me, tell me, hath not God rained down manna upon your souls whilst you have been hearing the word? Yes. Hath not God come in with power upon you, and by his Spirit sealed up to you your election, the remission of your sins, the justification of your persons, and the salvation of your souls? Yes, without controversy, many saints have found Christ's lips, in this ordinance, to drop honey and sweetness, marrow and fatness. And as Christ in hearing times, when his people are a-hearing the word of life, does lift up the light of his countenance upon them;

so when they are a-receiving the bread of life, he makes known his love to them, and their interest in him. In this feast of fat things, the master of the feast, the Lord Jesus, comes in the midst of his guests, saying, 'Peace be here.' Here the beams of his glory do so shine, as that they cause the hearts of children to burn within them, and as scatters all that thick darkness and cloud that are gathered about them. When saints are in this wine-cellar, Christ's banner over them is love; when they are in this Canaan, then he feeds them with milk and honey; when they are in this paradise, then they shall taste of angels' food; when they are at this gate of heaven, then they shall see Christ at the right of the Father; when they are before his mercy-seat, then they shall see the bowels of mercy rolling towards them. In this ordinance they see that, and taste that, and feel that of Christ, that they are not able to declare and manifest to others; in this ordinance saints shall see the truth of their graces, and feel the increase of their graces, and rejoice in the clearness of their evidences; in this ordinance Christ will seal up the promises, and seal up the covenant, and seal up his love, and seal up their pardon sensibly to their souls. Many precious souls there be that have found Christ in this ordinance, when they could not find him in other ordinances, though they have sought him sorrowingly.² Many a cold soul hath been warmed in this ordinance, and many a hungry soul hath been fed with manna in this ordinance, and many a thirsty soul hath been refreshed with wine upon the lees in this ordinance, and many a dull soul hath been quickened in this ordinance. I do not say that ever a dead soul hath been enlivened in this ordinance, this being an ordinance appointed by Christ, not to beget spiritual life where there was none, but to increase it where the Spirit hath formerly begun it.⁴ In this ordinance, weak hands and feeble knees have been strengthened, and fainting hearts have been comforted, and questioning souls have been resolved, and staggering souls have been settled, and falling souls have been supported. Ah, Christians! if you will but stand up and speak out, you must say, that in this ordinance, there hath been between Christ and you such mutual kisses, such mutual embraces, such mutual opening and shutting of hands, such mutual opening and closing of hearts, as hath made such a heaven in your hearts as cannot be expressed, as cannot be declared. Christ in this ordinance opens such boxes of precious ointment, as fill the saints with a spiritual savour; he gives them a cluster of the grapes of Canaan, that makes them earnestly look and long to be in Canaan. The Christians in the primitive times, upon their receiving the sacrament, were wont to be filled with that zeal and fervour, with that joy and comfort, with that faith, fortitude, and assurance, that made them to appear before the tyrants with transcendent boldness and cheerfulness, as many writers do testify. Now there are these reasons why God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, when they are a-hearing the word of life, and a-breaking the bread of life.

(1.) The first reason. That they may highly prize the ordinances, the choice discoveries that God makes to their souls in them, works them to set a very high price upon them. Oh! says our souls, we cannot but affect them for what of God we have enjoyed in them, Psa 84:10-11. Many there are that are like old Barzillai, that had lost his taste and hearing, and so cared not for David's feasts and music, 2Sa 19:32, seq. So many there are that can see nothing of God, nor taste nothing of God in ordinances: they care not for ordinances, they slight ordinances. Oh! but souls that have seen, and heard, and tasted of the goodness of the Lord in ordinances, they dearly love them, and highly prize them:³ 'I have esteemed thy word,' says Job, 'above my necessary food,' Job 23:12. And David sings it out: 'The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver' [Psa 119:72]. Luther prized the word at such a high rate that he saith he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word: At cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere, but with

the word he could live in hell itself, Psa 27:4.

(2.) The second reason. God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in ordinances, that he may keep them close to ordinances and constant in ordinances. The soul shall hear good news from heaven when it is waiting at wisdom's door, Pro 8:34-35. God will acquaint the soul with spiritual mysteries, and feed it with the droppings of the honeycomb, that the soul may cleave to them as Ruth did to Naomi, and say of them as she said of her: 'Where these go, I will go; where these lodge, I will lodge,' Ruth 1:15-17; and nothing but death shall make a separation between ordinances and my soul. After Joshua had had a choice presence of God with his spirit in the service he was put upon, he makes a proclamation, 'Choose you whom you will serve, I and my household will serve the Lord,' Jos 24:15. Let the issue be what it will, I will cleave to the service of my God; I will set my soul under God's spout, I will wait for him in his temple, Mal 3:1; I will look for him in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, Rev 2:1; I have found him a good master; I will live and die in his service; I have found his work to be better than wages; I have found a reward, not only for keeping, but also 'in keeping his commandments,' as the psalmist speaks, Psa 19:11. The good works, the sweet aspects, the choice hints, the heavenly intercourse that hath been between the Lord Jesus and my soul, in his service, hath put such great and glorious engagements upon my soul that I cannot but say with the servant in the law, 'I love my master, and I will not quit his service, because it is well with me; my ear is bored, and I will be his servant for ever,' Exo 21:5; Deu 15:16-17.

(3.) The third reason why the Lord causes the beams of his love, and the brightness of his glory to shine forth upon his people in ordinances is, To fence and strengthen their souls against all those temptations that they may meet with from Satan and his instruments, that lie in wait to deceive, and by their cunning craftiness endeavour with all their might to work men first to have low thoughts of ordinances, and then to neglect them, and then to despise them. Now the Lord by the sweet discoveries of himself, by the kisses and love-tokens that he gives to his people in ordinances, does so endear and engage their hearts to them, that they are able not only to withstand temptations, but also to triumph over temptations, through him that hath loved them, and in ordinances manifested his presence, and the riches of his grace and goodness, to them. The sweet converse, the blessed turns and walks that the saints have with God in ordinances, makes them strong in resisting, and happy in conquering of those temptations that tend to lead them from the ordinances; which are Christ's banqueting-house, where he sets before his people all the dainties and sweetmeats of heaven, and bids them eat and drink abundantly, there being no danger of surfeiting in eating or drinking of Christ's delicacies. Truly, many a soul hath surfeited of the world's dainties, and died for ever; but there is not a soul that hath had the honour and happiness to be brought into Christ's banqueting-house, and to eat and drink of his dainties, but they have lived for ever.

(4.) The fourth reason why the Lord is pleased to give his people some sense of his love, and some taste of heaven in ordinances, is, That he may fit and ripen them for heaven, and make them look and long more after a perfect, complete, and full enjoyment of God. Souls at first conversion are but rough-cast, but God, by visiting of them, and manifesting of himself to them in his ways, doth more and more fit those vessels of mercy for glory, Isa 64:5. Ah! Christians, tell me, do not those holy influences, those spiritual breathings, those divine in-comes, that you meet with in ordinances, make your souls cry out with David, 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so

panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God: When shall I come and appear before the presence of God? Psa 42:1-2. So in Psa 63:1-2, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.' In these words you have David's strong, earnest, and vehement desires; here you have desire upon desire; here you have the very flower and vigour of his spirit, the strength and sinews of his soul, the prime and top of his inflamed affections, all strongly working after a fuller enjoyment of God. Look, as the espoused maid longs for the marriage day, the apprentice for his freedom, the captive for his ransom, the condemned man for his pardon, the traveller for his inn, and the mariner for his haven; so doth a soul, that hath met with God in his ordinances, long to meet with God in heaven. It is not a drop, it is not a lap and away, a sip and away, that will suffice such a soul. No. This soul will never be quiet, till it sees God face to face, till it be quiet in the bosom of God. The more a saint tastes of God in an ordinance, the more are his desires raised and whetted, and the more are his teeth set on edge for more and more of God. Plutareh saith, that when 'once the Gauls had tasted of the sweet wine that was made of the grapes of Italy, nothing would satisfy them but Italy, Italy.² So a soul that hath tasted of the sweetness and goodness of God in ordinances, nothing will satisfy it, but more of that goodness and sweetness. A little mercy may save the soul, but it must be a great deal of mercy that must satisfy the soul. The least glimpse of God's countenance may be a staff to support the soul, and an ark to secure the soul, and a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide the soul; but it must be much, very much of God, that must be enough to satisfy the soul.

(5.) The fifth reason. The fifth and last reason why the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some sense of his love, and some assurance of his favour in ordinances, is, That they may have wherewithal to silence and stop the mouths of wicked and ungodly men, whose words are stout against the Lord; who say, it is in vain to serve God, and what profit is there in keeping his statutes and ordinances, and in walking mournfully before the Lord of hosts? Mal 3:13-14. Now the Lord causes his face to shine upon his people in ordinances, that they may stand up, and bear him witness before the wicked world, that he is no hard master, that he reaps not where he sows not. In ordinances he kisses them, and there he gives them his love, and makes known his goodness and glory, that his children may, from their own experiences, be able to confute all the lies and clamours of wicked men against God and his ways. And blessed be God, that hath not left himself without witness, but hath many thousands that can stand up before all the world and declare, that they have seen 'the beauty and glory of God in his sanctuary,' that they have met with those joys and comforts in the ways of God, that do as far surpass all other joys and comforts, as light does darkness, as heaven does hell, that they have met with such heart-meltings, such heart-humblings, such heart-revivings, such heart-cheerings, as they have never met with before, in all their days.

Ah! say these souls, 'One day in his courts, is better than a thousand' years elsewhere, Psa 84:10. Oh we had rather with Moses lose all, and be whipped and stripped of all, than lose the sweet enjoyments of God in ordinances. Oh in them, God hath been light and life, a joy and a crown to our souls. God is tender of his own glory, and of his children's comfort; and therefore he gives them such choice aspects, and such sweet visits in ordinances, that they may have arguments at hand to stop the mouths of sinners, and to declare from their own experience, that all the ways of

God are ways of pleasantness, and that all his paths drop fatness, Pro 3:17, Psa 65:11. And thus much for the reasons, why God lifts up the light of his countenance upon his people in ordinances. Before I pass to the next particular, it will be necessary that I lay down these cautions, to prevent weak saints from stumbling and doubting, who have not yet found the Lord giving out his favours, and making known his grace and love, in such a sensible way to their souls, in breaking the bread of life, as others have found.

(1.) The first caution. Now, the first caution I shall lay down is this, That even believers may sometimes come and go from this ordinance, without that comfort, that assurance, that joy, that refreshment that others have, and may meet with. And this may arise, partly from their unpreparedness and unfitness to meet with God in the ordinance, 2Ch 30:19-20, 1Co 11:20-34; and partly from their playing and dallying with some bosom sin; or else it may arise from their not stirring up themselves to lay hold on God, as the prophet Isaiah complains, 'There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee,' Isa 64:7; or else it may arise from the Spirit's standing at a distance from the soul. It may be, O soul, that thou hast set the Comforter, the Spirit a-mourning; and therefore it is, that he refuses to comfort thee, and to be a sealing and witnessing Spirit unto thee. Thou hast grieved him with thy sins, and he will now vex thee by his silence; thou hast thrown the cordials against the wall; thou hast trampled his manna under thy feet; and therefore it is that he hath veiled his face, and changed his countenance and carriage towards thee; thou hast been unkind to the Spirit; and therefore he carries it towards thee as an enemy, and not as a friend, Psa 77:2, Gen 31:5.

(2.) The second caution is this, That though God doth in this ordinance withhold comfort and assurance from thee, yet thou must hold on in the duty, thou must wait at hope's hospital. At this heavenly pool, thou must lie till the angel of the covenant, the Lord Jesus, comes and breathes upon thee; at these waters of the sanctuary thou must lie, till the Spirit moves upon thy soul; thou must not neglect thy work, though God delays thy comfort; thou must be as obedient in the want of assurance, as thou art thankful under the enjoyment of assurance. Laban often changed Jacob's wages, yet Jacob never changed nor neglected his work. Though God should change thy wages, thy comforts into discomforts, thy spring into an autumn, &c., yet thou must never change nor neglect thy work, which is obeying, believing, and waiting, till God, in his ordinances, shall lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and turn thy night into day, and thy mourning into rejoicing. God is the same, and the commands of the gospel are the same, and therefore thy work is the same, whether it be night or day with thy soul, whether thou art under frowns or smiles, in the arms or at the feet of God.

(3.) The third caution is this, Many of the precious sons and daughters of Sion have had and may have so much comfort and sweetness, so much life and heat, so much reviving and quickening, so much marrow and fatness in this ordinance, as may clearly evidence the special presence of God with their spirits, and as they would not exchange for all the world, and yet would give a world, were it in their power, for those strong comforts and full assurance, that others enjoy in this ordinance. In this ordinance, Christ looks upon one and kisses another; he gives a nod to one, and his hand to another. Some in this ordinance shall have but sips of mercy, others shall have large draughts of mercy; some in this ordinance shall see but the back-parts of Christ, others shall see him face to face, Lam 1:16; to one he gives silver, to another he gives gold; to one he gives but a glass of consolation, to another he gives flagons of consolation, Song of Solomon 2:5; some shall

have but drops, others shall swim in the ocean; some shall have a large harvest, others shall have but a few gleanings, and yet they, if rightly valued, are more worth than a world. The Sun of righteousness is a free agent, and he will work and shine forth as he pleases, and on whom he pleases; and who art thou that darest say to Christ, Why doest thou so? Ah! Christians, you may not, you must not say, We have not met with Christ in the sacrament, because we have not met with joy and assurance in the sacrament; for you may enjoy very much of Christ in that ordinance, and yet not so much as may boil up to full assurance, and make you go away singing, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Song of Solomon 2:16. We may enjoy the warmth and heat of the sun, when we cannot see the sun; so souls may enjoy much of Christ, by holy influences, in the sacrament, when they cannot see Christ in the sacrament.

VI. Sixthly, Times of personal afflictions are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to vouchsafe to his people sweet manifestations of his love and favour. When his hand is heavy on them, then he lifts up the light of his countenance upon them: Psa 71:20-21, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again; and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' So Psa 94:19, 'In the multitude of my careful troubled thoughts, thy comforts delight my soul.' Ah, Christians! hath not God by all afflictions lifted up your souls nearer heaven, as Noah's ark was lifted up nearer and nearer heaven by the rising of the waters higher and higher? The ball in the emblem says Percussa surgo, the harder you beat me down in afflictions, the higher I shall bound in affection towards heaven and heavenly things; so afflictions do but elevate and raise a saint's affections to heaven and heavenly things. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did and how he felt himself, he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, 'These are God's gems and jewels, wherewith he decketh his best friends; and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world.'

Afflictiones benedictiones, afflictions are blessings. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements. And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both do express chastening and teaching by one and the same word (μουσική παιδεία, musar, paideia), because the latter is the true end of the former. Ah, you afflicted sons and daughters of Zion, have you not had such sweet discoveries of God, such sensible demonstrations of his love, such bowels of affections working in him towards you? Have you not had such gracious visits, and such glorious visions, that you would not exchange for all the world? Yes. Have you not had the precious presence of God with you, quieting and stilling your souls, supporting and upholding your souls, cheering and refreshing your souls? Yes. And have you not had the Lord applying precious promises, and suitable remedies, to all your maladies? Have you not found God a-bringing in unexpected mercy in the day of your adversity, suitable to that promise, Hos 2:14, 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her' (or, I will speak earnestly to her heart, as the Hebrew reads it)? Yes. Have you not found that God hath so sweetened and sanctified afflictions to you, as to make them a means to discover many sins that lay hid, and to purge you from many sins that cleaved close unto you, and to prevent you from falling into many sins that would have been the breaking of your bones, and the loss of your comfort? Yes.⁴ Have you not found that you have been like the walnut tree, the better for beating; and like the vine, the better for bleeding; and like the ingenuous child, the better for whipping? Yes. Have you not found afflictions to revive, quicken, and recover your decayed

graces? Have they not inflamed that love that hath been cold, and put life into that faith that hath been dying, and quickened those hopes that have been withering, and put spirit into those joys and comforts that have been languishing? Yes. Oh, then, stand up and declare to all the world that times of affliction have been the times wherein you have seen the face of God, and heard the voice of God, and sucked sweetness from the breasts of God, and fed upon the delicacies of God, and drunk deep of the consolations of God, and have been most satisfied and delighted with the presence and in-comings of God. When Hezekiah in his greatest affliction lamentingly said, Isa 38:9-20, 'I shall go mourning to my grave, I shall not see the Lord in the land of the living. He will cut me off with pining sickness, he will break all my bones. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.' So now God comes in a way of mercy to him, and prints his love upon his heart: Isa 38:17, 'Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption;' or rather, as the Hebrew reads it, ■■■■ ■■■■, 'Thou hast loved my soul from the grave, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.' Ah, says Hezekiah, I have now found that in my afflictions thy affections have been most strongly carried towards me, as towards one whom thou art exceedingly taken with. Oh, now thou hast warmed me with thy love, and visited me with thy grace; thou hast made my darkness to be light, and turned my sighing into singing, and my mourning into rejoicing. So when Habakkuk's belly trembled, and his lips quivered, and rottenness entered into his bones, and all creature comforts failed, yet then had he such a sweet presence of God with his spirit, as makes him to rejoice in the midst of sorrows: 'Yet,' says he, 'I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation,' Hab 3:16-18. And thus you see it clear, that in times of affliction God makes sweet manifestations of his love and favour to his children's souls.

VII. Seventhly, Praying times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some sweet and comfortable assurance of his love and favour towards them. Prayer crowns God with honour and glory that is due to his name; and God crowns prayer with assurance and comfort. Usually the most praying souls are the most assured souls. There is no service wherein souls have such a near, familiar, and friendly intercourse with God, as in this of prayer; neither is there any service wherein God doth more delight to make known his grace and goodness, his mercy and bounty, his beauty and glory, to poor souls, than this of prayer. The best and the sweetest flowers of paradise, God gives to his people when they are upon their knees. Prayer is porta cœli, clavis paradisi, the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. When John was weeping, in prayer doubtless, the sealed book was open to him. Many Christians have found by experience, praying times to be sealing times, times wherein God hath sealed up to them the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls. They have found prayer to be a shelter to their souls, a sacrifice to God, a sweet savour to Christ, a scourge to Satan, and an inlet to assurance. God loves to lade the wings of prayer with the choicest and chiefest blessings. Ah! how often, Christians! hath God kissed you at the beginning of prayer, and spoke peace to you in the midst of prayer, and filled you with joy and assurance, upon the close of prayer! That ninth of Daniel, from the seventeenth to the four and twentieth verse, is full to the point in hand; I shall only cite the words of the four last verses: Dan 9:20-23, 'And whilst I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whilst I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I

am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.' In these words you see, whilst Daniel was in prayer, the Lord appears to him and gives him a divine touch, and tells him that he is 'a man greatly beloved,' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'a man of desires.'² So Acts 10:1-4. 'There was a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always; he saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.' Praying Cornelius, you see, is remembered by God, and visited sensibly and evidently by an angel, and assured that his prayers and good deeds are not only an odour, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God, but also that they shall be gloriously rewarded by God. So when Peter was praying, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and had his mind elevated, and all the faculties of his soul filled with a divine revelation, Acts 10:9-16; so when Paul was a-praying, he sees a vision, Acts 9:11-16, Ananias a-coming and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. Paul had not been long at prayer before it was revealed to him, that he was a chosen vessel, before he was filled with the voice and comforts of the Holy Ghost; so our Saviour was transfigured as he was praying, Mat 17:1-2. Thus you see, that praying times are times wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, and to cause his grace and favour, his goodness and kindness, to rest on them, as the spirit of Elijah did rest on Elisha, 2Ki 2:15.

Obj. But some may object and say, We have been at the door of mercy, early and late, for assurance, and yet we have not obtained it; we have prayed and waited, and we have waited and prayed, we have prayed and mourned, and we have mourned and prayed, and yet we cannot get a good word from God, a smile from God; he hath covered himself with a cloud, and after all that we have done, it is still night with our souls; God seems not to be at home, he seems not to value our prayers; we call, and cry and shout out for assurance, and yet he shutteth out our prayer; we are sure that we have not found praying times to be times of assurance to our souls, &c., Lam 3:8.

Ans. 1. Now to this objection I shall give these answers:

(1.) First, That it may be you have been more earnest and vehement for assurance, and the effects of it, viz., joy, comfort, and peace, than you have been for grace and holiness, for communion with God, and conformity to God. It may be your requests for assurance have been full of life and spirits, when your requests for grace and holiness, for communion with God, and conformity to God, have been lifeless and spiritless. If so, no wonder that assurance is denied you. Assurance makes most for your comfort, but holiness makes most for God's honour. Man's holiness is now his greatest happiness, and in heaven man's greatest happiness will be his perfect holiness. Assurance is the daughter of holiness; and he that shall more highly prize, and more earnestly press after the enjoyment of the daughter than the mother, it is not a wonder if God shuts the door upon him, and crosses him in the thing he most desires. The surest and the shortest way to assurance is to wrestle and contend with God for holiness, as the angel contended with the devil about the body of Moses, Jude 1:9. When the stream and cream of a man's spirit runs after holiness, it will not be long night with, that man; the Sun of righteousness will shine forth upon that

man, and turn his winter into summer, and crown him with the diadem of assurance, Mal 4:2. The more holy any person is, the more excellent he is. All corruptions are diminutions of excellency. The more mixed anything is, the more it is abased, as if gold and tin be mixed; and the more pure it is as mere gold, the more glorious it is. Now the more divinely excellent any man is, the more fit he is to enjoy the choicest and highest favours. Assurance is a jewel of that value, that lie will bestow it upon none but his excellent ones, Psa 16:3. Assurance is that tried gold, that none can wear but those that win it in a way of grace and holiness, Rev 3:18. It may be, if thou hadst minded, and endeavoured more after communion with God, and conformity to God, thou mightest before this time have looked upward, and seen God in Christ smiling upon thee, and have looked inward into thy own soul, and seen the Spirit of grace witnessing to thy spirit that thou wert a son, an heir, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, Rom 8:15-17. But thou hast minded more thy own comfort than Christ's honour; thou hast minded the blossoms and the fruit, assurance and peace, more than Christ the root; thou hast minded the springs of comfort, more than Christ, the fountain of life; thou hast minded the beams of the sun, more than the Sun of righteousness; and therefore it is but a righteous thing with God to leave thee to walk in a valley of darkness, to hide his face from thee, and to seem to be as an enemy to thee.

Ans. 2. But secondly, I answer, It may be thou art not yet fit for so choice a mercy, thou art not able to bear so great a favour. Many heads are not able to bear strong waters. Why, the very quintessence of all the strong consolations of God are wrung out into this golden cup of assurance; and can you drink of this cup, and not stammer nor stagger? Believe it, assurance is meat for strong men; few babes, if any, are able to bear it, and digest it. The apostle saith, Heb 5:12, Heb 5:14, that 'strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age' (or that are comparatively perfect, or full-grown), 'even those who, by reason of use' (Greek, by reason of habit, which is got by continual custom and long practice), 'have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.' The Greek word properly signifies such an exercise as wrestlers, or such as contend for victory, do use, which is with all their might and strength, being trained up unto it by long exercise. It may be, O complaining Christian, that thou art but a scrub,³ a babe in grace, 1Co 3:1-3; happily thou art not yet got beyond the breast, or, if thou art, yet thou art not past the spoon. Ah! Christian, if it be thus with thee, cease complaining of want of assurance, and be up and growing; be more aged in grace and holiness, and thou shalt find assurance growing upon thee. Divine wisdom sparkles much in this, in giving milk to babes that are more carnal than spiritual, and meat, i.e. assurance, to strong men, that have more skill and will, that have a greater ability and choicer faculty to prize and improve this jewel assurance than babes have. The Hebrew word *chabodh* signifies both weight and glory; and verily, glory is such a weight, that if the body were not upheld by that glorious power that raised Jesus Christ from the grave, if it were not bore up by everlasting arms, it were impossible it should bear it, Deu 33:27. Now assurance is the top of glory, it is the glory of glory. Then certainly they had need be very glorious within that shall be crowned with such a weight of glory as assurance is, Psa 45:13. Well! remember this, it is mercy to want mercy till we are fit for mercy, till we are able to bear the weight of mercy, and make a divine improvement of mercy.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, You must distinguish between delays and denials. God may delay us, when he does not deny us; he may defer the giving in of a mercy, and yet, at last, give the very mercy begged. Barren Hannah prays, year after year, for a mercy. God delays her long, but at last gives

her her desire; and the text says expressly, that her countenance was no more sad, 1Sa 1:18. After many prayers and tears, the Lord comes in, and assures her, that she should have the desire of her soul; and now she mourns no more, but sits down satisfied, comforted, and cheered. After much praying, waiting, and weeping, God usually comes with his hands and heart full of mercy to his people. He loves not to come vacuis manibus, empty-handed, to those that have sat long with wet eyes at mercy's door. Christ tries the faith, patience, and constancy of the Canaanite woman, Mat 15:21-29; he deferred and delayed her, he reproached and repulsed her; and yet at last is overcome by her, as not being able any longer to withstand her importunate requests. 'O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.' Christ puts her off at first, but closes with her at last; at first a good word, a good look is too good for her, but at last good words and good looks are too little for her: 'Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.' At first Christ carries himself to her as a churlish stranger, but at last as an amorous lover. Though at first he had not an ear to hear her, yet at last he had a heart to grant her, not only her desires, but even what else she would desire over and above what she had desired. God heard Daniel at the beginning of his supplications, and his bowels of love was working strongly towards him, but the angel Gabriel doth not inform Daniel of this till afterwards, Dan 9:15-25. Praying souls, you say that you have prayed long for assurance, and yet you have not obtained it. Well, pray still. Oh pray and wait, wait and pray; 'the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry,' Hab 2:3. God hath never, God will never, fail the praying soul; at the long run, thou shalt be sure to obtain that assurance that will richly recompense thee for all thy praying, waiting, and weeping; therefore hold up and hold on praying, though God doth delay thee, and my soul for thine, thou shalt reap in due season such a harvest of joy and comfort, as will sufficiently pay thee for all thy pains, Gal 6:9. Shall the husbandman wait patiently for the precious fruits of the earth, Jas 5:7; and wilt not thou wait patiently for assurance, which is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth? Praying souls, remember this. It is but weakness to think that men shall reap as soon as they sow, that they shall reap in the evening when they have but sowed in the morning. Titus Vespasian never dismissed any petitioner with a tear in his eye, or with a heavy heart; and shall we think that the God of compassions will always dismiss the petitioners of heaven with tears in their eyes? Surely no.³

VIII. Eighthly, Sometimes before the soul is deeply engaged in sore conflicts with Satan, the Lord is graciously pleased to visit his people with his loving-kindness, and to give them some sweet assurance, that though they are tempted, yet they shall not be worsted; though they are tried, yet they shall be crowned, 1Jn 4:18; though Satan doth roar as a lion upon the soul, yet he shall not make a prey of the soul; for the Lion of the tribe of Judah will hold it fast, and none shall pluck it out of his hand, Rev 5:5. God first fed Israel with manna from heaven, and gave them water to drink out of the rock, before their sore fight with Amalek, Exo 17:8, &c. Before Paul was buffeted by Satan, he was caught up into the third heaven, where he had very glorious visions and revelations of the Lord, even such as he was not able to utter, 2Co 12:1-8. Before Jesus Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan, to question and doubt of his Sonship, he heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat 3:17. The Spirit of the Lord did first descend upon him as a dove, before Satan fell upon him as a lion. God walks with his people some turns in paradise, and gives them some tastes of his right-hand pleasures, before Satan, by his tempting, shall do them a displeasure, Psa 16:11. But I must hasten to a close of this chapter; and therefore,

IX. Ninthly, and lastly, After some sharp conflicts with Satan, God is graciously pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon his people, and to warm and cheer their hearts with the beams of his love; Mat 4:11, 'Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.' When Christ had even spent himself in foiling and quelling, in resisting and scattering Satan's temptations, then the angels come and minister cordials and comforts unto him. So after Paul had been buffeted by Satan, he heard that sweet word from heaven, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,' 2Co 12:7-10, which filled his heart with joy and gladness. The hidden manna, the new name, and the white stone, is given to the conqueror, Rev 7:17; to him that hath fought 'with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places,' Eph 6:12, and is come off with his garments dipped in blood. After the Roman generals had gotten victory over their enemies, the senate did use not one way, but many ways, to express their loves to them. So after our faith hath gotten victory over Satan, God usually takes the soul in his arms, and courts it, and shews much kindness to it. Now the soul shall be carried in triumph, now the chariot of state attends the soul, now white raiment is put upon the soul, Rev 3:5, and Rev 7:9; now palms are put into the conqueror's hands, now the garland is set upon the conqueror's head, and now a royal feast is provided, where God will set the conqueror at the upper end of the table, and speak kindly, and carry it sweetly towards him, as one much affected and taken with his victory over the prince of darkness. Conflicts with Satan are usually the sharpest and the hottest; they spend and waste most the vital and noble spirits of the saints; and therefore the Lord, after such conflicts, doth ordinarily give his people his choicest and his strongest cordials. And thus, by divine assistance, we have shewed you the special times and seasons wherein the Lord is graciously pleased to give his people some tastes of his love, some sweet assurance, that they are his favourites, that all is well, and shall be for ever well between him and them; and that, though many things may trouble them, yet nothing shall separate them from their God, their Christ, their crown.

CHAPTER III

Containing the several hindrances and impediments that keep poor souls from assurance; with the means and helps to remove those impediments and hindrances.

(1.) The first impediment. Now the first impediment and hindrance to assurance that we shall instance in, is, Despairing thoughts of mercy. Oh! these imprison the soul, and make it always dark with the soul; these shut the windows of the soul, that no light can come in to cheer it. Despairing thoughts make a man fight against God with his own weapons; they make a man cast all the cordials of the Spirit against the wall, as things of no value; they make a man suck poison out of the sweetest promises; they make a man eminent in nothing unless it be in having hard thoughts of God, and in arguing against his own soul and happiness, and in turning his greatest advantages into disadvantages, his greatest helps into his greatest hindrances. Despairing thoughts of mercy make a man below the beast that perisheth. Pliny speaks of the scorpion, that there is not one minute wherein it doth not put forth the sting, as being unwilling to lose any opportunity of doing mischief.² Such scorpions are despairing souls, they are still a-putting out their stings, a-wrangling with God, or Christ, or the Scripture, or the saints, or ordinances, or their own souls. A despairing soul is Magor-missabib, a terror to himself; it cannot rest, but, like Noah's ark, is always tossed here and there; it is troubled on every side, it is full of fears and fightings. A despairing soul is a burden to others, but the greatest burden to itself. It is still a-vexing, terrifying, tormenting,

condemning, and perplexing itself. Despair makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter exceeding bitter; it puts gall and wormwood into the sweetest wine, and it puts a sting, a cross, into every cross.⁴ Now whilst the soul is under these despairing thoughts of mercy, how is it possible that it should attain to a well grounded assurance. Therefore for the helping of the soul out of this despairing condition, give me leave a little to expostulate with despairing souls. Tell me, O despairing souls, is not despair an exceeding vile and contemptible sin? Is it not a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, and a murderer of souls? Is it not a belying of God, a denying of Christ, and a crowning of Satan? It doth without doubt proclaim the devil a conqueror, and lifts him up above Christ himself. Despair is an evil that flows from the greatest evil in the world; it flows from unbelief, from ignorance, and misapprehensions of God and his grace, and from mistakes of Scripture, and from Satan, who, being for ever cast out of paradise, labours with all his art and might to work poor souls to despair of ever entering into paradise. O despairing souls, let the greatness of this sin effectually awaken you, and provoke you to labour as for life, to come out of this condition, which is as sinful as it is doleful, and as much to be hated as [to] be lamented.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls, hath not despairing Judas perished, whenas the murderers of Christ, believing on him, were saved? Did not Judas sin more heinously by despairing than by betraying of Christ? Despairing Spira is damned, when repenting Manasseh is saved. O despairing souls, the arms of mercy are open to receive a Manasseh, a monster, a devil incarnate; he caused that gospel prophet Isaiah to be sawed in the midst with a saw, as some rabbins say; he turned aside from the Lord to commit idolatry, and caused his sons to pass through the fire, and dealt with familiar spirits, and made the streets of Jerusalem to overflow with innocent blood, 2Ch 33:1-15. The soul of Mary Magdalene was full of devils; and yet Christ casts them out, and made her heart his house, his presence chamber, Luk 7:47. Why dost thou then say there is no hope for thee, O despairing soul? Paul was full of rage against Christ and his people, and full of blasphemy and impiety, and yet behold, Paul is a chosen vessel, Paul is caught up into the heaven, and he is filled with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, Acts 8:1-2; Acts 9:1; Acts 26:11; 1Ti 1:13, 1Ti 1:15-16. Why shouldst thou then say there is for thee no help, O despairing soul! Though the prodigal had run from his father, and spent and wasted all his estate in ways of baseness and wickedness, yet upon his resolution to return, his father meets him, and instead of killing him, he kisses; instead of kicking him, he embraces him; instead of shutting the door upon him, he makes sumptuous provision for him, Luk 15:13-23. And how then dost thou dare to say, O despairing soul, that God will never cast an eye of love upon thee, nor bestow a crumb of mercy on thee! The apostle tells you of some monstrous miscreants that were unrighteous, fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners; and yet these monsters of mankind, through the infinite goodness and free grace of God, are washed from the filth and guilt of their sins, and justified by the righteousness of Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and decked and adorned with the precious graces of Christ, 1Co 6:9-11. Therefore do not say, O despairing soul, that thou shalt die in thy sins, and lie down at last in everlasting sorrow. Did it make for the honour and glory of his free grace to pardon them, and will it be a reproach to his free grace to pardon thee? Could God be just in justifying such ungodly ones, and shall he be unjust in justifying of thee? Did not their unworthiness and unfitness for mercy turn the stream of mercy from them? No. Why then, O despairing soul, shouldst thou fear that thy unworthiness and unfitness for mercy will so stop and turn the stream of mercy, as that thou must perish eternally for want of one drop of special grace and mercy?

Again, tell me, O despairing soul, is not the grace of God free grace, is not man's salvation of free grace? 'By grace ye are saved,' Eph 2:8. Every link of this golden chain is grace. It is free grace that chose us, Rom 11:5. Even so then at this present time also there is 'a remnant according to the election of grace.' It is free grace that chooses some to be jewels from all eternity, that chooses some to life, when others are left in darkness. The Lord Jesus Christ is a gift of free grace. Christ is the greatest, the sweetest, the choicest, the chiefest gift that ever God gave; and yet this gift is given by a hand of love. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c., John 3:16; Isa 9:6; John 4:10. Here is a sic without a sicut, 'God so loved the world;' so freely, so vehemently, so fully, so admirably, so unconceivably, 'That he gave his only Son.' His Son, not his servant, his begotten Son, not his adopted Son, yea, his only begotten Son.

I have read of one that had four sons; and in a famine, sore oppressed with hunger, the parents resolved to sell one for relief; but then they considered with themselves which of the four they should sell. They said the eldest was the first of their strength, therefore loath were they to sell him. The second was the picture of their father, and therefore loath were they to part with him. The third was like the mother, and therefore they were not willing to part with him. The fourth, and youngest, was the child of their old age, their Benjamin, the dearly beloved of them both; and therefore they were resolved not to part with any of them, and so would rather suffer themselves to perish than to part with any of their children.

Oh! but God's heart is so strongly set upon sinners, that he freely gives Jesus Christ, who is his first-born, who is his very picture, who is his beloved Benjamin, who is his chiefest joy, who is his greatest delight. As Solomon speaks: Pro 8:30, 'Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight' (in the Hebrew ■■■■■■■■, 'his delights,' that is, his greatest delight), 'rejoicing always before him,' or sporting greatly before him, as little ones do before their parents. Why, then, O despairing soul! doest thou sit down sighing, and walk up and down mourning, and sadly concluding that there is no mercy for thee? Hold up thy head, O despairing soul! Jesus Christ himself is a gift of free grace. The consideration of his free, boundless, bottomless, and endless love, may afford thee much matter of admiration and consolation, but none of desperation. And as Jesus Christ is a gift of free grace, or a free-grace gift, so the precious covenant of grace is a gift of grace: Gen 17:2, 'I will make my covenant betwixt me and thee;' but in the original it is, 'I will give thee my covenant,' ■■■■■ ■■■■■. Here you see that the covenant of grace is a free gift of grace.

God gave the covenant of the priesthood unto Phinehas as a gift, Num 25:12; so God gives the covenant of grace as a gift of favour and grace to all that he takes unto covenant with himself. From first to last all is from free grace. God loves freely: 'I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely,' &c., Hos 14:4. So Moses: 'The Lord,' saith he, 'set his love upon you to take you into covenant with him: not because you were more in number than other people, but because he loved you, and chose your fathers,' Deu 7:7-8. The only ground of God's love is his love. The ground of God's love is only and wholly in himself. There is neither portion nor proportion in us to draw his love. There is no love nor loveliness in us that should cause a beam of his love to shine upon us. There is that enmity, that filthiness, that treacherousness, that unfaithfulness, to be found in every man's bosom, as might justly put God upon glorifying himself in their eternal ruin, and to write their names in his black book in characters of blood and wrath. And as God loves freely, so God justifies us freely: Rom 3:24, 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is

Verily, seeing all happiness and blessedness comes in a way of free grace, and not in a way of doing, not in a way of works, you should arise, O despairing souls! and cast off all despairing thoughts, and drink of the waters of life freely, Rev 21:6, Rev 22:18. What though thy heart be dead, and hard, and sad; what though thy sins be many, and thy fears great; yet behold here is glorious grace, rich grace, wondrous grace, matchless and incomparable riches of free grace spread before thee. Oh! let this fire warm thee, let these waters refresh thee, let these cordials strengthen thee, that it may be day and no longer night with thee, that thy mourning may be turned into rejoicing, and that thy beautiful garments may be put on, that so the rest of thy days may be days of gladness and sweetness, and free grace may be an everlasting shade, shelter, and rest unto thee, Isa 52:1.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls! have you seriously pondered upon Neh 9:16-17, 'But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, and refused to obey; neither were mindful of the wonders that thou didst among them, but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage. But thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not?' 'Thou art a God,' says he, 'ready to pardon,' or rather as it is in the original, 'And thou a God of pardons' [אֱלֹהֵי פָדוֹן]. There is a very great emphasis in this Hebraism, 'a God of pardons.' It shews us that mercy is essential unto God, and that he is incomparable in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Here Nehemiah sets him forth as one made up all of pardoning grace and mercy. As a circle begins everywhere, but ends nowhere, so do the mercies of God, Mic 7:18. When Alexander did sit down before a city, he did use to set up a light, to give those within notice that if they came forth to him whilst the light lasted, they might have quarter; if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. Oh! but such is the mercy and patience of God to sinners, that he sets up light after light, and waits year after year upon them. When they

have done their worst against him, yet then he comes with his heart full of love, and his hands full of pardons, and makes a proclamation of grace, that if now at last they will accept of mercy, they shall have it, Luk 13:7, Jer 3:1-15. Why, then, O despairing soul! dost thou make thy life a hell by having such low and mean thoughts of God's mercy, and by measuring of the mercies and bowels of God by the narrow scantling of thy weak and dark understanding?

Again, tell me, O despairing souls! have you seriously pondered upon those words in Isa 55:7-9 : 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man' (or rather as it is in the original, 'the man of iniquity') 'his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,' or as it is in the original, 'He will multiply to pardon.'³ 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts?' Turn, O despairing souls! to these scriptures: Num 14:19-20; Exo 34:6-7; Mic 7:18-19; Isa 30:18-19; Psa 78:34-40; Psa 103:8-13; Jer 3:1-12; Luk 15:20-24; 1Ti 1:13-17; and tell me whether you have seriously and frequently pondered upon them!

Oh! how can you look so much grace and so much love and favour, and such tender bowels of compassion, in the face, as appears in these scriptures, and yet rack and tear your precious souls with despairing thoughts!

Oh! there is so much grace and goodness, so much love and favour, so much mercy and glory, sparkling and shining through these scriptures, as may allay the strongest fears, and scatter the thickest darkness, and cheer up the saddest spirits, &c.

Again, tell me, O despairing souls, do you not do infinite wrong to the precious blood of the Lord Jesus? Three things are called precious in the Scripture: the blood of Christ is called 'precious blood,' 1Pe 1:19; and faith is called 'precious faith,' 2Pe 1:1; and the promises are called 'precious promises,' 2Pe 1:4. Now, what a reproach is it to this precious blood, 'that speaks better things than the blood of Abel,' Heb 12:24, for you to faint and sink under the power of despair; what doth this speak out? Oh! doth it not proclaim to all the world that there is no such worth and virtue, no such power and efficacy in the blood of Christ, as indeed there is? Oh! how will you answer this to Christ in that day wherein his blood shall speak and plead, not only with the profane that have trodden it under their feet, but also with despairing souls that have undervalued the power, virtue, and merit of it? Heb 10:29. Hath not the blood of Jesus Christ washed away the sins of a world of notorious sinners, and is it not of virtue to wash away the sins of one sinner? Hath it had that power in it as to bring many thousands to glory already, and is there not so much virtue left in it as to bring thy soul to glory? 1Jn 1:7-9. Hath it actually delivered such a multitude from wrath to come as cannot be numbered, and is the virtue of it so far spent as that it cannot reach to thy deliverance? Are there not yet millions of thousands that shall hereafter be actually saved and justified by this blood? Why, then, shouldst thou despair of being justified and saved from wrath to come by the virtue and power of this precious blood? There were five monks that were studying what was the best means to mortify sin. One said, to meditate on death; the second, to meditate on judgment; the third, to meditate on the joys of heaven; the fourth, to meditate on the torments of hell; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ: and certainly, the last is the choicest and strongest motive of all to the mortifying of sin. O despairing souls, despairing souls! if ever you would cast off your despairing thoughts and get out of your present hell, then dwell much,

use much, and apply much this precious blood to your own souls. So shall 'sorrow and mourning flee away, and everlasting joy shall rest upon you,' and the Lord shall give you 'an everlasting name,' and be 'everlasting light and glory to you,' and 'you shall be no more called Forsaken;' for 'the Lord will rejoice over you,'³ and be a well-spring of life unto you, and make his abode with you, and turn your sighing into singing, your trembling into rejoicing, and your prison into a paradise of pleasure; so that your souls shall be able to stand up and say, Oh, blessed be God for Jesus Christ; blessed be God for that precious blood that hath justified our persons, and quieted our consciences, and scattered our fears, and answered our doubts, and given us to triumph over sin, hell, and death. 'Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died,' Rom 8:33-38. The apostle, upon the account of Christ's death, of Christ's blood, cries out, Victory, victory; he looks upon all his enemies and sings it sweetly out, 'Over all these we are more than conquerors,' or 'above conquerors.'

O despairing souls, to all your former sins do not add this, of making light and slight of the blood of Christ. As there is no blood that saves souls like the blood of Christ, so there is no blood that sinks souls like the blood of Christ. A drop of this blood upon a man's head at last will make him miserable for ever; but a drop of it upon a man's heart at last will make him happy for ever. In the day of vengeance, the destroying angel will spare you if this blood be found upon the door-posts of your hearts, otherwise you are lost for ever, Exo 12:7.

Lastly, I can tell you, O despairing souls, that God hath brought some out of the very gulf of despair, out of the very belly of hell; and therefore thou mayest hope that thy sins, that are thy present burden, shall not be thy future ruin. Doth not Asaph resemble the despairing soul to the life? 'My soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.' 'Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? and will his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?' Psa 77:2-9. Now, out of this gulf God delivers him: ver. 10, 'And I said, This is my infirmity;' or 'this maketh me sick,' as it is in the original, ■■■■ ■■■■■■. Here Asaph checks himself for casting the cordials, the comforts of the Spirit against the wall, and for his having such hard, sad, and black thoughts of God. And in the thirteenth verse he speaks like one dropped out of heaven: 'Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?' Formerly, the thoughts of God troubled him and overwhelmed him; but now, at last, the thoughts of the greatness of God, and of his interest in God, is matter of admiration and consolation to him. So Haman sighs it out thus: 'My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.' 'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.' 'Lord, why casteth thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off,' Psa 88:3, Psa 88:6-7, Psa 88:14-16. And yet, for all this, Heman's state was good; his soul was safe and happy: he calls God in the same psalm 'the God of his salvation,' Psa 88:1. So Jonah, when he was in the belly of hell, concludes, 'that he was cast out of the sight of God,' Jon 2:4. The sense of his sin, and of God's anger and wrath, was so eminent and transcendent upon him, that it even distracts him, and makes him speak like a despairing soul: 'I am cast out from the presence of the Lord; I am expelled out of God's sight,' as Moses was expelled out of Egypt. God hath cast me out as

one in whom he can take no pleasure nor delight, as a husband doth a wife that hath been false and unfaithful to him; and yet God's heart and love is so set upon Jonah that he will save him by a miracle rather than he shall not be saved. Jonah was much in the heart of God, and God made his faith at last victorious. To these I shall add some other famous instances. In king James his time there was one Mistress Honiwood of Kent, an ancient and religious gentlewoman, who lived many years in much horror and terror of conscience, for want of assurance of the favour of God, and of her eternal well-being. She would very often cry out, 'She was damned, she was damned.' Several men of eminent piety and parts, left no means unattempted, whereby her doubts might be answered, her conscience pacified, and her soul satisfied and cheered; yet she being strongly under the power of despair, persisted in crying out, 'Oh! she was damned, she was damned.' When these gentlemen were about to depart, she called for a cup of wine for them, which being brought, she drank to one of them a glass of the wine, and as soon as she had done, in an extreme passion she threw the Venice glass against the ground, saying, 'As sure as this glass will break, so surely am I damned.' The glass rebounded from the ground without any harm, which one of the ministers suddenly caught in his hand, and said, 'Behold, a miracle from heaven to confute your unbelief, Oh! tempt God no more, tempt God no more.' Both the gentlewoman and all the company were mightily amazed at this strange accident, and all glorified God for what was done; and the gentlewoman, by the grace and mercy of God, was delivered out of her hell of despair, and was filled with much comfort and joy, and lived and died full of peace and assurance.

Take another instance. There lived lately at Tilbury, in Essex, a gentleman who was a long time under such an eminent degree of despair, that he rejected all comfort that was tendered to him by any hand, and would not suffer any to pray with him; nay, he sent to the ministers and Christians that lived near him, and desired them, that as they would not increase his torments in hell, they would cease praying for him. He would not suffer any religious service to be performed in his family, though formerly himself was much in the use of them; yet God gave him at last such inward refreshings, and by degrees filled him with such abundance of heavenly comforts, as he told all that came to him that it was impossible for any tongue to utter, or heart to imagine, that did not feel them. At last God gave him 'the new name, and the white stone, that none knows but he that hath it,' Rev 2:17. He lived about three quarters of a year, enjoying heaven upon earth, and then breathed out his last in the bosom of Christ.

Poor I, that am but of yesterday, have known some that have been so deeply plunged in the gulf of despair, that they would throw all the spiritual cordials that have been tendered to them against the walls. They were strong in reasoning against their own souls, and resolved against everything that might be a comfort and support unto them. They have been much set against all ordinances and religious services; they have cast off holy duties themselves, and peremptorily refused to join with others in them; yea, they have, out of a sense of sin and wrath, which hath lain hard upon them, refused the necessary comforts of this life, even to the overthrow of natural life. And yet out of this horrible pit, this hell upon earth, hath God delivered their souls, and given them such manifestations of his grace and favour, that they would not exchange them for a thousand worlds.

O despairing souls, despairing souls, you see that others, whose conditions have been as bad, if not worse than yours, have obtained mercy. God hath turned their hell into a heaven; he hath remembered them in their low estate; he hath pacified their raging consciences, and quieted their distracted souls; he hath wiped all tears from their eyes; and he hath been a well-spring of life unto

their hearts. Therefore be not discouraged, O despairing souls, but look up to the mercy-seat; remember who is your rest, and kick no more, by despair, against the bowels of divine love.

(2.) The second impediment to assurance is, men's entering into the lists of dispute with Satan about those things that are above their reach, as about the decrees and counsel of God. Oh by this Satan keeps many precious souls off from assurance. Since God hath cast him out of paradise, and bound him in chains of darkness, he will make use of all his skill, power, and experience to draw men into the same misery with himself; and if he cannot prevent their entering at last into paradise above, he will labour might and main to make their life a wilderness here below; and to this purpose he will busy their thoughts and hearts about the decrees of God, and about their particular elections; as, whether God hath decreed them to eternal happiness, or chosen them to everlasting blessedness, &c., that so by this means he may keep them from that desirable assurance that may yield believers two heavens, a heaven of joy and comfort here, and a heaven of felicity and glory hereafter.²

It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *nee victor, nec victus*, neither conquered, nor conqueror. Such a one is Satan: if he be conquered by faith, yet he will be essaying; if he conquers, yet he will be roaring and triumphing. Satan's great design is eternally to ruin souls; and where he cannot do that, there he will endeavour to discomfit souls by busying them about the secret decrees and counsels of God. If the soul break through his temptations, as David's worthies did break through the hosts of the Philistines, 1Sa 23:16, and snap his snares in sunder, as Samson did his cords, Jdg 15:13-14, then his next shift is to engage them in such debates and disputes that neither men nor angels can certainly and infallibly determine, that so he may spoil their comforts when he cannot take away their crown.

Now thy wisdom and thy work, O doubting soul, lieth not in disputing, but in believing, praying, and waiting on God. No way to heaven, no way to assurance, like this. Adam disputes with Satan, and falls, and loses paradise; Job believes, and resists Satan, and stands, and conquers upon the dunghill. When Satan, O trembling soul, would engage thee in disputes about this or that, say to him, 'Satan, revealed things belong to me,' but 'secret things belong to the Lord,' Deu 29:29. It is dangerous to be curious in prying into hidden matters, and careless and negligent in observing known laws; say to him, Satan, thou hast been 'a liar and a murderer from the beginning,' John 8:44; thou art a professed enemy to the saints' confidence and assurance, to their consolation and salvation. If thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; he is my comfort and crown, my joy and strength, my redeemer and intercessor, and he shall plead for me. Ah, Christians! if you would but leave disputing, and be much in believing and obeying, assurance would attend you; and you should 'lie down in peace, and take your rest, and none should make you afraid,' Job 11:13-20.

(3.) The third impediment that keeps poor souls from assurance, is, The want of a thorough search and examination of their own souls, and of what God hath done and is a-doing in them. Some there be that can read better in other men's books than in their own, and some there be that are more critical and curious in observing and studying other men's tempers, hearts, words, works, and ways, than their own. This is a sad evil, and causes many souls to sit down in darkness, even days without number. He that will not seriously and frequently observe the internal motions and actings of God, in and upon his noble part, his immortal soul, may talk of assurance, and complain of the want of assurance, but it will be long before he shall obtain assurance. O you staggering,

wavering souls, you tossed and disquieted souls, know for a certain, that you will never come to experience the sweetness of assurance, till your eyes be turned inward, till you live more at home than abroad, till you dig and search for the mines that be in your own hearts, till you come to discern between a work of nature and a work of grace, till you come to put a difference between the precious and the vile, between God's work and Satan's work. When this is done, you will find the clouds to scatter, and the Sun of righteousness to shine upon you, and the day-star of assurance to rise in you. Doubting, trembling souls, do not deceive yourselves; it is not a careless, slight, slender searching into your own hearts, that will enable you to see the deep, the secret, the curious, the mysterious work of God upon you. If you do not 'seek as for silver,' and search for Christ and grace 'as for hid treasures,' you will not find them, Pro 2:3-5. Your richest metals lie lowest, your choicest gems are in the bowels of the earth, and they that will have them, must search diligently, and dig deep, or else they must go without them. Doubting souls, you must search, and dig again and again, and you must work and sweat, and sweat and work, if ever you will find those spiritual treasures, those pearls of price that are hid under the ashes of corruption, that lie low in the very bowels of your souls.

Tell me, O doubting souls, hath that sweet word of the apostle been ever made to stick in power upon you: 2Co 13:5, 'Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith;' or, whether faith be in you, 'prove yourselves,' &c. The precept is here doubled, to shew the necessity, excellency, and difficulty of the work; to shew that it is not a superficial, but a thorough, serious, substantial examination that must enable a man to know whether he hath precious faith or no; whether he be Christ's spouse or the devil's strumpet. All is not gold that glisters; all is not faith that men call faith; therefore, he that would not prove a cheater to his own soul, must take some pains to search and examine how all is within. Climacus² reports, that the ancients used to keep in a little book a memorial of what they did in the day against their night reckoning. But ah! how few be there in those days that keeps a diary of God's mercies and their own infirmities, of spiritual experiences and the inward operations of heavenly graces! Seneca reports of a heathen man that every night asked himself these three questions: first, What evil hast thou healed this day? secondly, What vice hast thou stood against this day? thirdly, In what part art thou bettered this day? And shall not Christians take pains with their own hearts, and search day and night to find out what God hath done, and is a-doing there? God hath his doing hand, his working hand in everyman's heart; either he is a-working there in ways of mercy or of wrath; either he is building up or a-plucking down; either he is a-making all glorious within, or else he is a-turning all into a hell. Well! doubting souls, remember this, that the soundest joy, the strongest consolation, flow from a thorough examination of things within. This is the way to know how it is with you for the present, and how it is like to go with you for the future. This is the way to put an end to all the wranglings of your hearts, and to put you into a possession of heaven on this side heaven.

(4.) The fourth impediment that keeps many precious souls from assurance is, Their mistakes about the work of grace. Look, as many hypocrites do take a good nature for grace, and those common gifts and graces that may be in a Saul, a Jehu, a Judas, for a special distinguishing grace, &c., so the dear saints of God are very apt to take grace for a good nature, to take pearls of price for stones of no value, to take special grace for common grace. Many trembling souls are apt to call their faith unbelief, with the man in the Gospel, Mark 9:24, and their confidence presumption, and their zeal passion, &c.; and by this means many are kept off from assurance.

Now, the way to remove this impediment is, wisely and seriously to distinguish between renewing grace and restraining grace, betwixt common grace and special grace, betwixt temporary grace and sanctifying grace. Now, the difference betwixt the one and the other I have shewed in ten particulars in my treatise called 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices,' from page 217 to page 230; and to that I refer thee for full and complete satisfaction. If thou wilt cast thy eye upon the particulars, I doubt not but thou wilt find that profit and content that will recompense thee for thy pains. And this I thought more convenient to hint to thee, than to write over the same things that there thou wilt find to thy delight and settlement.

(5.) The fifth impediment to assurance is, Their grieving and vexing the Spirit of grace by not hearkening to his voice, by refusing his counsel, by stopping the ear, by throwing water upon that fire he kindles in their souls, and by attributing that to the Spirit that is to be attributed to men's own passions and distempers, and to the prince of darkness and his associates. By these and such like ways, they sad that precious Spirit that alone can glad them, they set him a-mourning that alone can set them a-rejoicing, they set him a-grieving that alone can set them a-singing; and therefore it is that they sigh it out with Jeremiah, Lam 1:16, 'Behold, he that should comfort our souls, stands afar off.' Ah, doubting souls! if ever you would have assurance, you must observe the motions of the Spirit, and give up yourselves to his guidance; you must live by his laws, and tread in his steps; you must live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; you must let him be chief in your souls. This is the way to have him to be a sealing Spirit, a witnessing Spirit to your hearts. Believe it, souls, if this be not done, you will be far off from quietness and settlement. The word that in 1Jn 3:19 is rendered 'assure,' signifies to persuade: to note to us that our hearts are forward and peevish, and apt to wrangle and raise objections against God, against Christ, against the Scripture, against our own and others' experiences, and against the sweet hints and joyings of the Spirit; and this they will do, especially when we omit what the Spirit persuades us to. Omissions raises fears and doubts, and makes work for hell, or for the Spirit and physician of souls. Or else, when we do that which the Spirit dissuades us from. If you be kind and obedient to the Spirit, it will not be long night with your souls; but if you rebel and vex him, he will make your life a hell, by withholding his ordinary influences, by denying to seal you to the day of redemption, and by giving you up to conflict with horrors and terrors, &c., Isa 63:10. Therefore, be at the Spirit's beck and check, and assurance and joy will ere long attend you.

(6.) The sixth impediment to assurance is, Doubting souls making their sense, reason, and feeling the judges of their spiritual conditions. Now so long as they take this course, they will never reach to assurance. Reason's arm is too short to reach this jewel assurance. This pearl of price is put in no hand but that hand of faith that reaches from earth to heaven. What tongue can express or heart conceive the fears, the doubts, the clouds, the darkness, the perplexities that will arise from the soul's reasoning thus:—I find not that the countenance of God is towards me as before, Gen 31:5; therefore, surely my condition is bad; I feel not those quickenings, those cheerings, those meltings as before; I am not sensible of those secret stirrings and actings of the Spirit and grace in my soul as before; I do not hear such good news from heaven as before; therefore certainly God is not my God, I am not beloved, I am not in the state of grace, I have but deceived myself and others; and therefore the issue will be that I shall die in my sins. To make sense and feeling the judges of our spiritual conditions, what is it but to make ourselves happy and miserable, righteous and unrighteous, saved and damned in one day, ay, in one hour, when sense and reason sit as

judges upon the bench? Hath God made sense and feeling the judges of your conditions? No. Why, then, will you? Is your reason Scripture? Is your sense Scripture? Is your feeling Scripture? No. Why, then, will you make them judges of your spiritual estate? Is not the word the judge, by which all men and their actions shall be judged at last? 'The word that I have spoken,' says Christ, 'shall judge you in the last day,' John 12:48. 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light, or no morning in them,' Isa 8:20 [■■■■ ■■■■■■]. Why, then, O doubting souls, will you make your sense and feeling the judge, not only of your condition, but of the truth itself? What is this but to dethrone God, and to make a god of your sense and feeling? What is this, but to limit and bind up the Holy One of Israel? What is this but to toss the soul to and fro, and to expose it to a labyrinth of fears and scruples? What is this but to cast a reproach upon Christ, to gratify Satan, and to keep yourselves upon the rack? Well! doubting souls, the counsel that I shall give you is this, be much in believing, and make only the Scripture the judge of your condition; maintain the judgment of the word against the judgment of sense and feeling; and if upon a serious, sincere, and impartial comparing of thy heart and the word together, of thy ways and the word together, the word speaks thee out to be sincere, to be a Nathanael, to be a new creature, to be born again, to have an immortal seed in thee, &c., cleave to the testimony of the word, joy in it, rest upon it, and give no more way to fears and doubts. Let thy countenance be no more sad; for nothing can speak or make that soul miserable, that the word speaks out to be happy, Psa 119:24, ■■■■ ■■■■

Constantine would have all differences and disputes in the Nicene Council ended by the Bible. O doubting souls, look cheerfully to this, that all differences and controversies that arise in your hearts be ended by the word. There is danger in looking beside the Scripture, or beyond the Scripture, or short of the Scripture, or upon sense and feeling, so much as upon the Scripture; therefore let the word be always the man of thy counsel: no way to assurance and joy, to settlement and establishment, like this. If you are resolved to make sense and feeling the judge of your conditions, you must resolve to live in fears, and lie down in tears.

(7.) The seventh impediment to assurance is, Men's remissness, carelessness, laziness, and overliness in religious services, and in the exercise of their graces. Ah, how active and lively are men in pursuing after the world! but how lifeless and unactive in the ways of grace and holiness! Ah, doubting Christians! remember this, that the promise of assurance and comfort is made over, not to lazy but laborious Christians; not to idle but to active Christians; not to negligent but to diligent Christians:3 John 14:21-23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' Now 'Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord! how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' So 2Pe 1:10-11, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A lazy Christian shall always want four things, viz., comfort, content, confidence, and assurance. God hath made a separation between joy and idleness, between assurance and laziness; and therefore it is impossible for thee to bring these together that God hath put so far asunder. Assurance and joy are choice donatives that Christ gives only to laborious Christians.

The lazy Christian hath his mouth full of complaints, when the active Christian hath his heart full of comforts. God would have the hearts of his children to be hot in religious services. 'Be fervent' (or seething hot, as it is in the original) 'in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom 12:11. That service that hath not heavenly heat, that hath not divine fire in it, is no service, it is lost service. A lazy spirit is always a losing spirit. Oh! remember, lazy Christians, that God is a pure act, therefore he loves activeness in religious services. Remember the angels, those princes of glory, are full of life and activity, and they always behold the Father's face in glory, Mat 18:10. Remember, he that will find rich minerals must dig deep, he that will be rich must sweat for it, he that will taste the kernel must crack the shell, he that will have the marrow must break the bone, he that will wear the garland must run the race, he that will ride in triumph must get the victory; so be that will get assurance must be active and lively in duty, Pro 2:4-6. It is only fervent prayer that is effectual prayer, it is only the working prayer that works wonders in heaven, and that brings down wonderful assurance into the heart. Cold prayers shall never have any warm answers; God will suit his returns to our requests; lifeless services shall have lifeless answers; when men are dull, God will be dumb. Elias prayed earnestly, or as it is in the Greek, 'He prayed in prayer,' and God answered him. Many there be that pray, but they do not pray in prayer, they are not lively and earnest with God in prayer; and therefore justice shuts out their prayers. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was, saith the history, presented to him in a dream, a pillar of fire with this motto, Talis est Basilus, Basil is such a one, all on a-light fire for God. Ah! lazy, doubting Christians, were you all on a-light fire, in hearing, in praying, &c.; it would not be long before the windows of heaven would be open, before God would rain down manna, before he would drop down assurance into your bosoms. My advice to yon, lazy Christians, is this, cease complaining of the want of assurance, and be no more formal, slight, and superficial in religious services, but stir up yourselves, and put out all your might and strength in holy actions, and you shall experimentally find that it will not be long before you shall have such good news from heaven, as will fill you with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

(8.) The eighth impediment to assurance is, Men's living in the neglect of some ordinance, or in the omission of some religious duties. They seek Christ in some of his ways, but not in all; they wait upon him in this and that ordinance, but not in every ordinance. Are there not many doubting souls that wait upon God, in hearing the word of life, and yet neglect, and make light of waiting upon Christ, in breaking the bread of life? Are there not many that are very careful daily to perform family duties, and yet are very rarely found in closet services? Some there be that are all ear, all for hearing; and others there be that are all tongue, all for speaking and praying; and others there be that are all eye, all for believing, all for searching, all for inquiring into this and that; and others there be that are all hand, all for receiving the Lord's supper, &c. And seriously, when I consider these things, I cease wondering that so many want assurance, and do rather wonder that any obtain assurance, considering how few there be that are conscientious and ingenuous in waiting upon God in every way and service wherein he is pleased to manifest his grace and favour to poor souls.

Well! doubting souls, remember this, God will give assurance in one ordinance, when he will deny it in another, that you may seek his face in all. God loves as well that you should wait on him as that you should wrestle with him. He that will not give God the honour of attending him in every duty, in every ordinance, may long enough complain of the want of assurance, before God will give

him the white stone and the new name, that none knows but he that hath it, Rev 2:17. Many of the precious sons of Zion have found God giving assurance in one ordinance, others have found him giving assurance in another ordinance. God speaks peace to some in such and such services, and comfort to others in such and such duties. Therefore, as you would have assurance, O doubting souls, seek the Lord in every way and service, wherein he is pleased to make known his glory and goodness. In hearing, Christ opens his box of ointments to some, and in praying and breaking of bread, he lets his sweet myrrh fall upon the hearts of others. Some have seen the glory of the Lord in the sanctuary, that have been clouded in their closets; others have heard a sweet still voice in their closets, that have sat long trembling in the sanctuary. Remember, doubting souls, Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation, for a mere omission, because they met not God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deu 23:3-4. And I verily believe, that God doth banish, as I may say, many from his favourable presence, as Absalom did David, for their sinful omissions, for their non-attendance upon him in all his ways. Therefore, if ever you would have assurance, seek the Lord, not only while he may be found, but also in every gracious dispensation where he may be found. 'Then shall the joy of the Lord be your strength,' and his 'glory shall rest upon you.' 'The days of your mourning shall be ended,' and 'you shall lie down in peace, and none shall make you afraid.'² I would earnestly desire you, O doubting souls, seriously to consider, that all the ways of Christ are ways of pleasantness; as Solomon speaks, Pro 3:17, not only this way or that way, but every way of Christ is a way of pleasantness; every way is strewn with roses, every way is paved with gold, every way is attended with comfort and refreshing. So the psalmist, 'Thy paths drop fatness,' Psa 65:11-12; not only this or that path, but all the paths of God drop fatness. Oh then, walk in every way, tread in every path of God, as you would have your souls filled with marrow and fatness, Psa 63:5; and never forget that choice saying of the prophet Isaiah, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways,' Isa 64:5. They that would have God to meet with them in a way of peace and reconciliation, in a way of grace and favour, must remember God in all his ways; not only in this or that particular way, but in every way wherein he is pleased to cause his glory to shine. Therefore, doubting souls, cease complaining, and be more conscientious and ingenuous in waiting upon God in all his appointments, and it will not be long night with you.

(9.) The ninth impediment that keeps Christians from assurance is An immoderate love of the world. Their thoughts and hearts are so busied about getting the world and keeping the world, that they neither seek assurance as they should, nor prize assurance as they should, nor lament the want of assurance as they should, nor study the worth and excellency of assurance as they should; and therefore it is no wonder, that such are without assurance. As it is very hard for a rich man to enter into heaven, Mat 19:23-24, so it is very hard for a worldly Christian to get assurance of heaven. The 'thick clay,' Hab 2:6, of this world doth so affect him, and take him, so satisfy him, and sink him, that he is not able to pursue after assurance, with that life and love, with that fervency and frequency, as those must do that will obtain it. It is said, Gen 13:2, 'That Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; according to the Hebrew ■■■■, Abraham was very heavy; to shew, saith one, that riches are a heavy burden, and a hindrance many times to a Christian's comfort and confidence, to his happiness and assurance. Solomon got more hurt by his wealth, than he got good by his wisdom.² Such a fire rose out of his worldly enjoyments, as did even consume and burn up his choicest spirits and his noblest virtues; under all his royal robes, he had but a thread-bare soul. Sicily, saith one, is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt

there, the scent of the sweet flowers diverteth their smell. And ah! what doth all the sweet delights and contents of this world, but make men lose the scent of heaven, but divert men from hunting after assurance, and from running after Christ, in the sweetness of his ointments.⁴ The creature is all shadow, and vanity of vanities. Vanity is the very quintessence of the creature, and all that can possibly be extracted out of it. It is filia noctis, like Jonah's gourd. A man may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon decays and dies. 'Why shouldst thou set thy heart upon that which is not?' Pro 23:5. Were ever riches true to them that trusted them? As the bird hops from twig to twig, so doth riches hop from man to man, &c. Worldly Christians, cease complaining of the want of assurance, and sincerely humble and abase your souls before the Lord; for that you have so eagerly pursued after lying vanities; for that you have in so great a measure forsaken the fountain of living water; for that with Martha you have been busied about many things, when Christ and assurance, the two things necessary, have been so much neglected and disregarded by you. Get this world, this moon, under your feet; take no rest till you have broken through this silken net, till you have got off these golden fetters. A heart that is full of the world, is a heart full of wants. Ah! the joy, the peace, the comfort, the confidence, the assurance, that such hearts wants. The stars which have least circuit, are nearest the pole; and men whose hearts are least entangled with the world, are always nearest to God, and to the assurance of his favour. Worldly Christians, remember this, you and the world must part, or else assurance and your souls will never meet. When a worldly Christian is saved, he is saved as by fire; and before ever he shall be assured of his salvation, he must cry out, Omnes humanæ consolationes, sunt desolationes, all human consolations are but desolations. God will not give the sweetmeats of heaven, to those that are gorged and surfeited with the delicacies of the earth. The cock upon the dunghill prefers a barley-corn above the choicest pearl; such dunghill Christians that prefer a little barley-corn above this pearl of price, assurance; that, with Esau, prefer a morsel of meat before this blessing of blessings; that prefer Paris above Paradise, God's coin above his countenance, may at last with Esau seek, and seek with tears, this heavenly jewel assurance, and yet, as he, be rejected and repulsed, Heb 12:16-17.

(10.) The tenth impediment that keeps Christians from assurance, is, The secret cherishing and running out of their hearts to some bosom, darling sin. It is dark night with the soul, when the soul will cast a propitious eye upon this or that bosom sin, and secretly say, 'Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' Gen 19:20, though God and conscience hath formerly checked and whipped the soul for so doing. Ah! how many be there that dally and play with sin, even after they have put up many prayers and complaints against sin, and after they have lamented and bitterly mourned over their sins. Many there be that complain of their deadness, barrenness, frowardness, conceitedness, censoriousness, and other baseness; and yet are ready at every turn to gratify, if not to justify, those very sins that they complain against. No wonder that such want assurance. After the Israelites had ate manna in the wilderness, and drunk 'water out of the rock,' after God had been to them a 'cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night,' after he had led them by the arms, and kept them as the apple of his eye, after he had made them spectators of his wonders, they hankered after 'the flesh-pots of Egypt;' so when, after God hath given a man a new name and a white stone, after he hath made a report of his love to the soul, after he hath taken a man up into paradise, after he hath set a man upon his knee, and carried him in his bosom, after he hath spoke peace and pardon to the soul, Psa 85:8, for the soul to return to folly, oh! this cannot but prove a woful hindrance to assurance, this will provoke God to change his countenance, and to carry it not

as a friend, but as an enemy. When love is abused, justice takes up the iron rod. God will strike hard and home, when men kick against the bowels of mercy. God hath made an everlasting separation betwixt sin and peace, betwixt sin and joy, and betwixt sin and assurance. God will be out with that man, that is in with his sin. If sin and the soul be one, God and the soul must needs be two. He that is resolved to dally with any sin, he must resolve to live in many fears. Never forget this; he that savoureth any one sin, though he foregoeth many, doth but as Benadab, recover of one disease, and die of another; yea, he takes pains to plunge himself into two hells, a hell here, and a hell hereafter. Therefore, as ever thou wouldst have assurance, offer up thy Isaac, part with thy Benjamin, pull out thy right eye, cut off thy right hand; otherwise assurance and joy will not be thy portion.

Now that I may remove this impediment, which is of such dangerous consequence to Christians' souls, and keep Christians for ever from smiling upon any bosom sin, I shall first lay down a few considerations to provoke them to dally and play no more with sin, but to put off that sin that does so easily beset them, that sticks so close unto them, Heb 12:1 (ἐπεστατον); and then in the second place, I shall propound some means that may contribute to the bringing under of bosom sins, that so it may be no longer night with the soul. The first motive to provoke you to put out all your strength and might against bosom sins, that you are so apt to play withal, is seriously to consider, that this will be a strong and choice demonstration and evidence of the sincerity and uprightness of your hearts: Psa 18:23, 'I was also upright with him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' I kept a strict and diligent watch upon that particular sin that I found myself most inclined unto. And this, says David, is a clear evidence to me of the uprightness of my heart with God. The truth is, there is no hypocrite in the world but doth dandle and dally with some bosom sin or other; and though at times, and upon carnal accounts, they seem to be very zealous against this and that sin, yet at the very same time their hearts stand strongly and affectionately engaged to some bosom sin, as might be shewed in Saul, Judas, and Herod, Job 20:12-13. Therefore, as ever you would have a sure argument of your uprightness, trample upon your Delilahs. This very evidence of thy uprightness may yield thee more comfort and refreshing in a day of trouble and darkness, than for the present thou dost apprehend, or hast faith to believe. Some there be that can tell thee, that the joy of the bridegroom, nor the joy of the harvest, is not to be compared to that joy that arises in the soul from the sense and evidence of a man's own uprightness, 2Co 1:12. Sincerity is the very queen of virtues; she holds the throne, and will be sure to keep it. Yea, the very sight of it in the soul makes a man sit cheerful and thankful, Noah-like, in the midst of all tempests and storms. Look, as the playing with a bosom sin speaks out hypocrisy, so the mortifying of a bosom sin speaks out sincerity. The second motive to provoke doubting souls to trample upon their bosom sins, is solemnly to consider, that the conquest of their darling sins will render the conquests of other sins easy. When Goliath was slain, the rest of the Philistines fled, 1Sa 17:51-52. When a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are easily routed and destroyed. Ah! complaining, doubting souls, did you but take the courage and resolution to fall with all your might and spiritual strength upon those particular sins that stick so close unto you, and that do so easily captivate you, you would find, that the great mountains that are before you would soon be made a plain, Zec 4:7. Other sins will not be long-lived, when justice is done upon your bosom sins. Thrust but a dart through the heart of Absalom, and a complete conquest will follow, 2Sa 18:4. The third motive to provoke you to crucify your bosom sins, be they what they will, is, seriously to consider the very great damage that your souls have already sustained by your bosom sins.

Saul, by casting an amorous eye upon Agag, lost his crown and kingdom; Samson, by dallying with his Delilah, lost his strength, sight, light, liberty, and life. But what are these losses to thy loss of spiritual strength, to thy loss of communion with God, to thy loss of the Spirit of light, life, liberty, and glory; to thy loss of joy unspeakable, and peace that passes all understanding; and to thy loss of those fresh and sparkling hopes of glory that were once sparkling in thy breast?

Mark Antony was so far bewitched with his Cleopatra, that in the heat of the battle of Actium, when the empire of the world, his life, and all lay at stake, that he fled from Augustus to pursue her, to the ruin and loss of all. So many there are bewitched to some Cleopatra, to some darling sin or other, that they pursue the enjoyment of them to the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and their souls for ever.

Ah! Christians, that the sense of what you have formerly lost, and of what you daily lose by your playing with sin, might provoke you to set upon some effectual course for the mortifying of them!

It was a blasphemous speech of Henry the Second, who said, when Mentz, his city, was taken, 'That he should never love God any more, who suffered a city so dear to him to be taken from him.' But it will be a blessed and happy thing for you, in uprightness to say, Oh, we will never love, we will never favour, we will never dally with our bosom sins more; for they have damnified us in our spiritual enjoyments, and in our spiritual returns from heaven. Shall the sense of outward losses by this and that instrument, work us out of love with them? And shall not the sense of our spiritual losses by bosom sins, work us much more out with them. Ah, Lord! of what iron mettle is that heart that can look upon those sad losses that hath attended playing with bosom sins, and yet still dally with those Delilahs? The fourth motive to provoke you to be the death of your darling sins, is, solemnly to consider, that the conquest and effectual mortifying of one bosom sin, will yield a Christian more glorious joy, comfort, and peace, than ever he hath found in the gratifying and committing of all other sins. The pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in the gratifying of sin. The joy that attends the subduing of sin is a noble joy, a pure joy, a peculiar joy, an increasing joy, and a lasting joy; but that joy that attends the committing of sin is an ignoble joy, a corrupt joy, a decreasing joy, a dying joy. The truth is, were there the least real joy in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly sin, and be most perfectly tormented with their sin.

Ah! doubting Christians, as ever you would have good days, as ever you would walk in the light, as ever you would, like the angels, have always harps in your hands, and hallelujahs in your mouths, be restless, till in the spirit and power of Jesus, you have brought under the sin that sticks so close unto you. Remember this, nothing below the conquest of bosom sins can make a jubilee in the heart. It is not a man's whining and complaining over sin, but his mortifying of sin, that will make his life a paradise of pleasure.

If, notwithstanding all that hath been said, you are still resolved to dally with sin, then you must resolve to live as a stranger to God, and as a stranger to assurance and peace; you must expect sad trials without, and sore troubles within; you must expect to find Satan playing his part both as a lion and as a serpent, both as a devil and as an angel of light. You must expect either no news from heaven, or but bad news from heaven; and you must expect that conscience will play the part both of a scolding wife and of a lion that wants his prey; and this shall be your just reward for playing with sin. If you like the reward, then take your course, and dally with sin still; if otherwise,

then sacrifice your Isaac.² The fifth motive to work you to trample upon your bosom sins is, wisely to consider, that it is your duty and glory to do that every day, that you would willingly do upon a dying day. Ah! how would you live and love upon a dying day? How would you admire God, rest upon God, delight in God, long for God, and walk with God upon a dying day? How would you hate, loathe, and abhor your bosom sins upon a dying day? How would you complain of your bosom sins, and pray against your bosom sins, and mourn over your bosom sins, and watch against your bosom sins, and fly from all occasions that should tend to draw you to close with your bosom sins upon a dying day?

Ah! doubting souls, would you not for all the world gratify your bosom sins upon a dying day, and will you gratify them on other days, which, for anything you know to the contrary, may prove your dying day? Thrice happy is that soul that labours with all his might to do that at first that he would fain do at last; that doth that on every day, that he would give a thousand worlds to do on a dying day. No way to assurance like this; no way to joy and comfort like this; no way to rest and peace like this; no way to the kingdom, to the crown, like this.

I earnestly beseech you, trembling souls, when you find your spirits running out to bosom sins, that you would lay your hands upon your hearts, and thus expostulate the case: O our souls, would you thus dally and play with sin upon a dying day? would you thus stroke and hug sin upon a dying day? would you not rather shew all the dislike and hatred that is imaginable against it? would you not tremble at sin more than at hell? and abhor the very occasions of sin more than the most venomous serpent in all the world? would you not rather suffer the worst and greatest punishments, than to smile upon a darling sin upon a dying day? Yes; oh would you fain do this upon a dying day? Why not then every day? Why not then every day, O our souls? The sixth motive to provoke you to fall with all your might upon bosom sins is, seriously to consider, that till this be done, fears and doubts will still haunt the soul; the soul will still be fearing that surely all is naught, and that that work that is wrought upon it is not a real but a counterfeit work; that it is not a peculiar and special work, but a common work, that a man may have and perish. Till this be done, the soul can never be able to see grace in his own native beauty and glory. The hugging of sin in a corner, will raise such a dust in the soul, that it cannot be able to see these pearls of glory sparkling and shining. Till this be done, doubting souls, you will be but babes, and shrubs,² and dwarfs in Christianity. The hankering of the soul after sin, is the casting of water upon the Spirit; it is the laming of grace, it is the clipping the wings of faith and prayer; so that the soul can neither be confident, nor fervent, frequent nor constant in religious services; so that it will unavoidably follow, such souls will be like Pharaoh's lean kine, poor and starveling. Look, as many men are kept low in their outward estates, by having a back door to some Herodians;⁴ so many doubting souls are kept low in spirituals, by their hankering after some particular sins.

Remember, Christians, sin is the soul's sickness, the soul's weakness. If the body be weak and diseased, it grows not. Sin is poison that turns all nourishment into corruption, and so hinders the growth of the soul in grace and holiness. Ah! Christians, as ever you would be rid of your fears and doubts, as ever you would see the beauty and glory of grace, as ever you would be eminent and excellent in grace and holiness, see that effectual justice be done upon that Achan, that Jonah, that darling sin, that hath occasioned storms within and tempests without.

It was a grievous vexation to King Lysimachus, that his staying to drink one draught of water lost him his kingdom. Ah! Christians, it will grievously vex you, when you come to yourselves, and when you come to taste of the admirable pleasure that attends the conquest of sin, to consider that your hankering after this or that particular sin, hath been the loss of that joy and comfort, that peace and assurance, that is infinitely more worth than all the kingdoms of the world.

Quest. But you may say to me, Oh we would fain have our bosom-sins subdued, we desire above all that they may be effectually mortified. These sons of Zeruiah we would have slain to choose; but what course must we take to bring under our darling sins, to get off our golden fetters, to get out of these silken snares? To this question I shall give these answers: The first means. If ever thou wouldst have mastery over this or that bosom sin, then engage all thy power and might against thy bosom sin, draw up thy spiritual forces, and engage them wholly against the sin that doth so easily beset thee. As the king of Syria said to his captains, 'Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel,' 2Ch 18:30; so say I, your wisdom and your work, O doubting souls, lieth not in skirmishing with this or that sin, but in coming up to a close sharp fight with the king of Israel, with that darling sin that hath a kingly interest in you, and a kingly power over you.

Constantine the Great his symbol was, Immedicabile vulnus ense rescindendum est, when there is no hope of curing, men must fall a-cutting. Believe it, souls, you must fall a-cutting your bosom sins in pieces by the sword of the Spirit, as Samuel cut Agag in pieces in Gilgal before the Lord, or else you will never obtain a perfect cure, 1Sa 15:33. Slight skirmishes will not do it; you must pursue your bosom sins to the death, or they will be the death of your souls. The second means to bring under a bosom sin, is, to labour to be most eminent and excellent in that particular grace that is most opposite to a man's bosom sin. As it is a Christian's glory to be eminent in every grace, so it is a Christian's special duty to excel in that particular grace that is most contrary to his darling sins. Is it pride, is it the world, is it hypocrisy, &c., that is thy bosom sin, that is the chief favourite in thy soul? Oh then, labour above all to be clothed with humility, to abound in heavenly-mindedness, to transcend in sincerity, &c., I know no surer, no choicer, no sweeter way, effectually to crucify a bosom sin, than this. He that comes up to this counsel, will not be long held in golden fetters, it will not be long before such a soul cries out, Victory, victory! The third means to help us to trample upon bosom sins, is, to look upon bosom sins now, as they will appear to us at last; to look upon them in the time of health, as they will appear to us in times of sickness; to look upon them in the time of our life, as they will appear to us in the day of our death. Ah! souls, of all unpardoned sins, your bosom sins will be presented by God, conscience, and Satan at last, as the most filthy and ugly, as the most terrible and dreadful. Your bosom sins at last will appear to be those monsters, those fiends of hell that have most provoked God against you, that have shut up Christ's bowels of love and compassion from you, that have armed conscience against you, that have barred the gates of glory against you, that have prepared the hottest place in hell for you, and that have given Satan the greatest advantage eternally to triumph over you. Ah! souls, at last your bosom sins will more press and oppress you, more sad and sink you, more terrify and amaze you, than all your other transgressions. Those sins that seem most sweet in life, will prove most bitter in death, Job 20:11-29. Those pleasant morsels will prove thy greatest hell, when there is but a short step between thy soul and eternity. Ah! Christians, never look upon bosom sins, but with that eye which within a few hours you must behold them; and this, you will find by experience, will be a singular

means to bring under your bosom sins. The fourth means to subdue bosom sins is, to apply yourselves to extraordinary means, as fasting and prayer, &c. Ordinary physic will not remove extraordinary distempers, nor ordinary duties will not remove bosom sins, who, by long and familiar acquaintance with the soul, are exceedingly strengthened and advantaged. You read of some devils in the Gospel that could not be cast out but by prayer and fasting, Mat 17:14-22. So bosom sins are those white devils that will not, that cannot be cast out but by fervent and constant prayer, joined with fasting and humiliation. Souls that are serious and conscientious in observing of this rule will find such a divine power to attend their endeavours as will give them to 'lead captivity captive,' Eph 4:8, and to triumph over those white devils within, as Christ triumphed over principalities and powers upon the cross, Col 2:14-15. The fifth means. As you would have victory over bosom sins, keep off from all those occasions that tend to lead thee to the gratifying of them. He that shuns not the occasions of sin, tempts two at once, Satan and his own heart; he tempts Satan to tempt him to taste of forbidden fruit, and he tempts his own heart to feed upon forbidden fruit. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' 1Th 5:22; 'hate the garment spotted by the flesh,' Jude 1:23. Whatever carries with it an ill show or shadow, favour or suspicion, that abstain from, that you may neither wound God nor the gospel, your own consciences nor others. If there be any fuel to feed thy bosom sin in thy house, remove it; or before thine eye, remove it; or in thy hand, remove it, put it far away. Thy soul cannot be safe, it cannot be secure, so long as the occasions of sin are thy companions. Wouldst thou have a clear evidence of the truth of thy grace, then shun the occasions of sin; wouldst thou imitate the choicest saints, then shun the occasions of sin; wouldst thou stand in shaking times, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep always peace with God, and peace with conscience, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou frustrate Satan's greatest designs, and countermine him in his deepest plots, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep thy bones from breaking, and thy heart from bleeding, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou keep down fears and doubts, and keep up faith and hope, then keep off from the occasions of sin; wouldst thou have assurance in life, and joy and peace in death, then keep off from the occasions of sin. Do this, and you do all; if you do not this, you do nothing at all. And thus I have done with the impediments that hinder souls from assurance, as also with the means to remove those impediments.

CHAPTER IV

Containing several motives to provoke Christians to be restless till they have obtained a well-grounded assurance of their eternal happiness and blessedness.

(1.) The first motive. Now, the first motive that I shall lay down to provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance, is, solemnly to consider, That many are now dropped into hell that have formerly presumed of their going to heaven: as those that came bouncing at heaven-gate, crying out, 'Lord, Lord, open to us, for we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works;' and yet that direful and dreadful sentence is passed upon them, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquities,' Mat 7:22, Mat 7:26-27. The foolish virgins were in a golden dream that they were as happy as the best, and yet, when they were awakened, they found the bridegroom entered into his glory, and the door of mercy shut against them, Mat 25:10-12. Men are naturally prone to flatter themselves that their sins are not sins, when indeed they be; and that they are but small sins, when they are great and grievous, Isa 40:27, Deu 29:19; and they are apt to flatter themselves that they have grace when they have

none; and that their grace is true, when it is but counterfeit; and that their condition is not so bad as others, when it is worse; and, with Agag, that the bitterness of death is past, when God hath his sword in his hand ready to execute the vengeance written.

I have read of a madman at Athens that laid claim to every rich ship that came into the harbour, whenas he was poor, and had no part in any. Ah! this age is full of such mad souls, that lay claim to God and Christ, and the promises and gospel privileges, and all the glory of another world, when they are poor, and blind, and miserable, and wretched, and naked, when they are Christless and graceless, &c. Ah, Christians! doth it not therefore stand you much upon to labour for a well-grounded assurance, that so you may not miscarry to all eternity, but may at last be found worthy to receive a crown of glory and to enter into your Master's joy, which is a joy too great and too glorious to enter into you, and therefore you must enter into it, Mat 25:21, Mat 25:23.

(2.) The second motive to provoke Christians to get a well-grounded assurance is this, consider, That there be a great many soul-flatterers, soul-deceivers, and soul-cheaters in the world. The devil hath put his angelical robes upon many of his chief factors, that they may the more easily and the more effectually deceive and delude the souls of men. This age affords many sad testimonies of this.⁵ Ah! what multitudes be there, that to some blear eyes appear as angels of light, and yet in their principles and practices are but servants to the prince of darkness, labouring with all their might to make proselytes for hell, Mat 23:15, and to draw men to those wild notions, opinions, and conceits that will leave them short of heaven, yea, bring them down to the hottest, darkest, and lowest place in hell, if God do not by a miracle prevent it. Therefore you had need look about you, and see that you get a well-grounded assurance, and suffer not Satan to put a cheat upon your immortal souls. Christ hath foretold us, 'That in the last days there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, that shall say, Lo, here is Christ, and lo, there is Christ,' Mat 24:23-24. And verily this scripture is this day fulfilled in your ears. Ah, how many blasphemous wretches have there been in these days, that have asserted themselves to be the very Christ! And it is to me no little miracle, that the very earth hath not opened her mouth and swallowed up such monsters, such firebrands of hell. The apostle tells you of some that 'lie in wait to deceive, by such sleights' as cheaters and false gamesters use at dice; he tells you of cunning crafty men that do diligently watch all advantages to work, draw, and win weak and unstable souls to those opinions, principles, and practices, that tend to drown them in everlasting perdition. Satan's disciples and agents are notable method-mongers [μεθοδεικ πλανης], they have a method of deceiving, they are doctors in all the arts of cozenage, and they will leave no means unattempted whereby they may draw men to build upon hay and stubble, upon this opinion and that notion, &c., that so men and their works may burn for ever together, 1Co 3:15.

It is reported of king Canutus, that he promised to make him the highest man in England, who should kill king Edmund Ironside, his co-rival; which, when one had performed, and expected his reward, he commanded him to be hung on the highest tower in London. So Satan and his factors, they promise poor souls that such and such opinions, and notions, &c., will thus and thus advantage them, and advance them; but in the close, poor souls shall find the promised crown turned into a halter, the promised comfort turned into a torment, the promised glory turned into ignominy, the promised exaltation turned into desolation, the promised heaven turned into a hell. This age is full of soul-flatterers, of soul-undoers, who, like evil surgeons, skin over the wound, but kill the patient. Flattery undid Ahab, and Herod, and Nero, and Alexander.

Those flatterers that told Dionysius, that his spittle was as sweet as honey, undid him; and those flatterers that told Cæsar, that his freckles in his face were like the stars in the firmament, ruined him. And ah! how many young and old in these days have been lost and undone by those soul-flatterers, that lie in wait to ensnare and deceive the souls of men. Oh that this very consideration might be set home by the hand of the Spirit, with that life and power upon your souls, as effectually to stir and provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness, that so you may stand fast, like the house built upon the rock, in the midst of all tempests and storms, that nothing may unsettle you, nor disquiet you, and that none may take away your crown, Mat 7:24-25, Rev 3:11.

(3.) The third motive to stir you up to get a well-grounded assurance is this, consider, That a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness will ease you, and free you of a threefold burden. It will free you, 1. From a burden of cares.

2. From a burden of fears.

3. From a burden of doubts.

Now the burden of cares, ah Christians! causes thee to sit down sighing and groaning; ah! how doth the cares of getting this and that, and the cares of keeping this and that worldly content, disturb and distract, vex and rack the souls of men that live under the power of carking cares, Mat 13:22. Oh, but now assurance of better things makes the soul sing care away, as that martyr said, 'My soul is turned to her rest; I have taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap, and therefore I will now sing away care, and will be careless according to my name.' Assurance of a kingdom, of a crown, is a fire that burns up all those cares that ordinarily fill the head and distract the heart. There is no way to get off the burden of cares but by getting assurance.

Again, assurance will free you from the burden of fears, as well as from the burden of cares. Now, your hearts are filled with fears of possessing the creature, with fears of wanting the creature, with fears of losing the creature, &c. And these fears make men turn, like the chameleon, into all colours, forms, and fashions, yea, they make their lives a hell. Oh, but now assurance will scatter all these fears, as the sun doth the clouds; it will extinguish these fears, as the sun doth the fire. Assurance made David divinely fearless, and divinely careless: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,' Psa 23:3. Ah! how full of fears and perplexities was Hagar, till the Lord opened her eyes to see the well of water that was near her, Gen 21:16. So the soul will be full of fears and perplexities till it comes to see assurance, to enjoy assurance. Christians, when all is said that can be, this will be found at last a most certain truth, that there is no way to be effectually rid of your fears, but by obtaining a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness.

Again, assurance will rid you of your burden of doubts. Now you are still a-doubting. Sometimes you doubt whether that you are a thorough Christian, and not an Agrippa, an almost Christian, an half Christian, as most professors are. Sometimes you doubt of your sonship, and that leads you to doubt of your heirship. Sometimes you doubt of your acquaintance with God, and that leads you to doubt of your access to God, and acceptance with God. Sometimes you doubt of your union with God, and those doubts lead you to doubt of the truth of your communion with God, &c. The truth is, your whole life is a life of doubting, and so it will be, till you reach to a well-grounded

assurance.

Though the two disciples had Christ for their companion, yet their hearts were full of fears and doubts, whilst their eyes were held that they should not know him, Luk 24:14-15, &c. Till a Christian's eyes be open to see his assurance, his heart will be full of doubts and perplexities. Though Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ, yet she stands sighing, mourning, and complaining that they had stolen away her Lord, because she did not see him, John 20:13-16. Christians! though you may be very near and dear to Christ, yet till you come to see your assurance, you will spend your days in doubting, mourning, and complaining. The sum of all is this, as you would be rid of your burden of cares, your burden of fears, and your burden of doubts, get a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness; but if you are in love with your burdens, then neglect but the making of your calling and election sure, and you shall certainly make sure your burdens; they shall rise with you, and walk with you, and lie down with you, till they make your lives a hell.

(4.) The fourth motive to provoke you to labour after a well-grounded assurance is, To consider that Satan will labour with all his art and craft, with all his power and might, to keep you from attaining a well-grounded assurance of your happiness and blessedness. Such is Satan's envy and enmity against a Christian's joy and comfort, that he cannot but act to the utmost of his line to keep poor souls in doubts and darkness. Satan knows that assurance is a pearl of that price that will make the soul happy for ever; he knows that assurance makes a Christian's wilderness to be a paradise; he knows that assurance begets in Christians the most noble and generous spirits; he knows that assurance is that which will make men strong to do exploits, to shake his tottering kingdom about his ears; and therefore he is very studious and industrious to keep souls off from assurance, as he was to cast Adam out of paradise.

It is no wonder that Satan, who envied the first seeds of grace that divine love sowed in thy soul, that he should envy the increase of thy grace, yea, thy assurance, which is the top and royalty of grace. When thou wast a babe, Satan cast water upon thy smoking flax, that it might not flame forth into assurance; and now thou art grown up to some more maturity, he is raised in his enmity, so that he cannot but put out his power and policy to keep thee from assurance of felicity and glory. Satan envies thy candle-light, thy torch-light, thy star-light, how much more that the sun should shine upon thee! Satan envies thy eating of the crumbs of mercy under the table, how much more that, as a child, thou shouldst sit at Wisdom's table, and eat and drink abundantly of Wisdom's delicacies! Satan envies thy feeding on husks among the swine, how much more that thou shouldst eat of the fatted calf! Satan envies thy sitting with Mordecai at the king's gate, how much more that thou shouldst wear the king's robes! Satan envies thy tasting of the least drop of comfort, how much more thy swimming in those pleasures that be at God's right hand for evermore! He envies thy sitting upon God's knee, how much more, then, thy lying in his bosom! He envies thy being admitted into his service, how much more that thou shouldst be of his court and council!

Some say of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. Assurance is that heavenly crystal that quickens souls, and that casts a beauty and a glory upon souls; and this makes the devil mad.

Satan knows that assurance is manna in a wilderness, it is water out of a rock, it is a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He knows that assurance is a salve for all sores, and physic for all diseases, and a remedy against every malady. He knows that assurance is a Christian's anchor at sea, and his shield upon land; and that it is a staff to support him, and a sword to defend him, and a pavilion to hide him, and a cordial to cheer him; and therefore it is that he labours, both as a lion and as a serpent, to keep poor souls from a well-grounded assurance. This son of the morning is fallen from the top of glory to the bottom of misery, and therefore he strives to make all as miserable and unhappy as himself.

Ah! Christians, have not you need to seek assurance with all your might, who have to do with so mighty an adversary, who cares not what torments he heaps upon himself, so he may prove your tormentor, by keeping your souls and assurance asunder? Oh that this very consideration might make you restless, till you have got this 'white stone' in your bosoms!

(5.) The fifth motive to provoke you to get a well grounded assurance is this, consider that a well grounded assurance is a jewel of that incomparable value, it is such a pearl of price as will abundantly recompense the soul for all the cost and charge it shall be at to enjoy it. Aye, the enjoyment of assurance in that hour, when the soul shall sit upon thy trembling lips, ready to take her leave of thee, and all the world, will richly recompense thee for all those prayers, tears, sighs and groans that thou hast breathed out in one place or another, in one service or another. Surely the gold in the mine will recompense the digger; the crown, in the end, will recompense the runner; the fruit in the vineyard will recompense the dresser; the corn in the barn will recompense the reaper; and the increase of the stock will recompense the shepherd; so assurance at last will abundantly recompense the soul for all its knocking, weeping, and waiting at mercy's door. God will never suffer 'the seed of Jacob to seek his face in vain,' Isa 45:19. There is a reward not only in keeping, but also for keeping of his commands, Psa 19:11. Joseph, for his thirteen years' imprisonment, had the honour to reign fourscore years like a king; David, for his seven years' banishment, had a glorious reign of forty years' continuance; Daniel, for his lying a few hours among the lions, is made chief president over a hundred and twenty princes; the three children, for taking a few turns in the fiery furnace, are advanced to great dignity and glory. Ah! doubting souls, pray hard, pull hard, work hard for assurance: the pay will answer the pains. Christ will, sooner or later, say to thee, as the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1Ki 20:4. I am thine, O doubting souls, says Christ, and assurance is thine, and joy is thine; my merit is thine, my Spirit is thine, and my glory is thine; all I am is thine, and all I have is thine. Oh this is alvearium divini mellis, an hive full of divine comfort; oh this will recompense thee for all thy wrestling and sweating to obtain assurance, Mat 25:34-41; Rev 3:11-12.

Augustine, in his Confessions, hath this notable expression, 'How sweet was it to me of a sudden to be without those sweet vanities; and those things which I was afraid to lose with joy I let go, for thou who art the true and only sweetness, didst cast out those from me, and instead of them didst enter in thyself, who art more delightful than all pleasure, and more clear than all light. Ah! Christians, do but hold up and hold on, and assurance and joy will come, and thou shalt, after thy working and waiting, sit down and sing it out with old Simeon, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;' my heart hath found the sweetness of assurance, and 'now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace,' Luk 2:30.

(6.) The sixth motive to provoke you to get assurance, is this, Consider what labour and pains worldlings take to make sure the things of this life to them and theirs. Ah! what riding, running, plotting, lying, swearing, stabbing, and poisoning is used by men of this world, to make sure the poor things of this world, that are but shadows and dreams, and mere nothings! How do many with Samson lay heap upon heap, to make their crowns and kingdoms sure, to make the tottering glory of this world sure to themselves! what bloody butchers do they prove! they will have the crown, though they swim to it through blood. Men will venture life and limb to make sure these things that hop from man to man, as the bird hops from twig to twig. Oh! how should this stir and provoke us to be up and doing, to labour as for life, to make sure spiritual and eternal things! Is earth better than heaven? Is the glory of this world greater than the glory of the world to come? Are these riches more durable than those that corrupt not, that 'are laid up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal?' Mat 6:19-20. No. Oh then be ashamed, Christians, that worldlings are more studious and industrious to make sure pebbles, than you are to make sure pearls; to make sure those things that at last will be their burden, their bane, their plague, their hell, than you are to make sure those things that would be your joy and crown in life, in death, and in the day of your account.

Pambus, in the ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God, as she had been to please a wanton lover. Ah, Christians! what great reason have you to sit down and weep bitterly, that worldlings take so much pains to make themselves miserable, and that you have taken no more pains to get assurance, to get a pardon in your bosoms, to get more of Christ into your hearts!

(7.) The seventh motive to provoke you to get assurance, is to consider, That assurance will enable you to bear a burden without a burden, as in Heb 10:34, 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an everlasting substance.' Here you see that assurance of heavenly things makes these worthies patiently and joyfully bear a burden without a burden. So the apostles, knowing that they had 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, went through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report,' 2Co 5:8, and 2Co 6:8-11. They went through many weaknesses, sicknesses, wants, and deaths; they had nothing, and yet possessed all things; they had burden upon burden cast upon them by the churches, by false apostles, and by an uncharitable world, and yet they cheerfully bore all burdens without a burden, through the power of a well-grounded assurance. Assurance makes heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, bitter afflictions sweet, 2Co 4:16-18. Where a man wants assurance, there the shadow of a burden frights him, and the weight of the least burden sinks him. Such a man is still a-crying out, No man's burden to my burden; my burden is greater than others, my burden is heavier than others. The want of assurance oftentimes makes men's very mercies a burden, their comforts a burden, their relations a burden, yea, their very lives a burden unto them. Ah! Christians, you will never bear burdens without a burden, till you come to attain an assurance of better things. This will enable you to leap under the weight of any cross, to rejoice under the weight of any mountain, Job 7:20. Assurance fits a man's heart to his condition, and when a man's heart is fitted to his condition, nothing proves a burden to him. Assurance of better things to come takes away the sting, the poison that attends these lower things; and the sting and the poison being taken away, the very

worst of these things are so far from being a burden to a man, that they become rather a pleasure and a delight unto him. When the sting is taken out of this or that venomous creature, a man may play with it and put it in his bosom. Ah! assurance pulls out the sting that is in every cross, loss, &c., and this makes the assured soul to sit down singing, when others under far less crosses and losses, sit down sighing, mourning, and complaining, Our burdens are greater than we are able to bear. If there were but more assurance of better things among Christians, there would be less complaints among them of this burden, and that mole-hills then would be no longer mountains. Christians, it is not new notions, new opinions, new nothings, as I may say, in your heads, but the gaining of a well-grounded assurance in your hearts, that will enable you to bear all kinds of burdens without a burden.

(8.) The eighth motive to provoke you to get assurance, is drawn from those particular commands of God, whereby he engages Christians to get assurance, as that in 2Pe 1:10, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' So 2Co 13:5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates or unapproved,' as the Greek imports. So Heb 6:11, 'And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.' Ah! you dull, doubting, drowsy Christians, you should take all these commands of God, and press them with all the power and authority you can upon your hearts, to awaken them and provoke them to get assurance of your eternal well-being. Take one command, and charge that upon the heart; if the heart be stout and will not yield, then take another command, and press it upon your heart; if that will not do, then take another, and lay that home upon the heart; and never leave this work till your souls be effectually stirred up to labour for assurance with all your might. Christians! you should tell your souls that the commands of God bind directly and immediately, that they bind absolutely and universally. You must obey God intuitu voluntatis, upon the bare sight of his will, and in one thing as well as another. Christians! if I am not much mistaken, you should make as much conscience of those commands of God that require you to get assurance of your future happiness, as you do of those commands that requires you to pray, to hear, &c. It is very sad to consider that many that complain much of the want of assurance, should make no more care and conscience of those commands of God that require them to get assurance than some of the heathens have done of the commands of their gods; who, when they have called for a man, have offered a candle; or as Hercules, who offered a painted man instead of a living. Verily, Christians! while you make light of any of God's commands, God will make as light of your comforts. Did you make more conscience to act answerable to the fore-mentioned commands, I am very apt to believe that the Sun of righteousness would certainly and speedily cause his love and glory to beam out upon you. Mind God's commands more than your own wants and complaints, and light will break in upon you. By obeying Christ's commands, you will gain more than you can give; by kissing the Son, you will even command him, and make him and assurance yours.

(9.) The ninth motive to provoke you to get assurance is this, You cannot gratify Satan more, nor injure yourselves more, than by living without assurance. By living without assurance, you lay yourselves open to all Satan's snares and temptations; yea, you do instigate and provoke Satan to tempt you to the worst of sins, to tempt you to the greatest neglects, to tempt you to the strangest shifts, and to reduce you to the saddest straits. Ah, Christians! in what, in what hath Satan so

gratified you, that you should thus gratify him? Hath he not robbed you of your glory in innocency? Hath he not kept your souls and your Saviour long asunder? When with Joshua you have been standing before the Lord, Zec 3:1-2, hath not he stood at your right hand as an adversary to resist you? Hath he not often set the glory of the world before you, that he might bewitch you and ensnare you? Mat 4:8. Hath he not often cast water upon those divine motions that have been kindled in you? Have you not often found him a lion and a serpent, a tempter and a deceiver, a liar and a murderer? 1Th 2:18. Yes. Oh, then, never gratify him any longer by living without assurance. He that lives without assurance, lives without a comfortable fruition of God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance, lives upon some creature enjoyment more than upon God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance, lives not like the beloved of God, and so gratifies Satan. He that lives without assurance is very apt to gratify Satan, sometimes by complying with him, sometimes by following after him, and sometimes by acting his part for him, &c. Verily, Christians! there is no way effectually to prevent this sore evil, but by getting a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness. Assurance will make a man stand upon terms of defiance with Satan, it will make the soul constant in resisting, and happy in overcoming, the evil one. An assured soul will fight it out to the death with Satan; an assured soul will not fly like a coward, but will stand and triumph like a David. And as you gratify Satan by living without assurance, so you wrong your own souls by living without assurance.

(1.) In the point of comfort and joy, you wrong your own souls.

(2.) In the point of peace and content, you wrong your own souls.

(3.) In the point of boldness and confidence, you wrong your own souls. A man that lives without assurance, lays his precious soul open to many blows and knocks, to many frowns and wounds, from God, from the world, from carnal friends, from hypocrites, and from Satan; therefore as you would not, Christians, gratify Satan, and wrong your own souls, and exercise over yourselves spiritual cruelty and tyranny, which is the very worst of all cruelty and tyranny, give God no rest till he hath made known to you the sweetness of his love, and the secrets of his bosom, till he hath gathered you up into himself, till he hath set you as 'a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm,' Song of Solomon 8:6.

(10.) The tenth motive, to provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance is this, Consider the sweet profit and glorious advantage that will redound to you by gaining assurance; and if the gain that will certainly redound to you by assurance will not provoke you to get assurance, I know not what will.

[1.] The first advantage. It will bring down heaven into your bosoms; it will give you a possession of heaven, on this side heaven, Heb 11:1. An assured soul lives in paradise, and walks in paradise, and works in paradise, and rests in paradise; he hath heaven within him, and heaven about him, and heaven over him; all his language is Heaven, heaven! Glory, glory!

[2.] The second advantage. Assurance will exceedingly sweeten all the changes of this life. This life is full of changes. Assurance will sweeten sickness and health, weakness and strength, wants and abundance, disgrace and honour, 2Co 4:16-18, &c. While a man lives in the sense of unchangeable loves, no outward changes can make any considerable change in his spirit. Let times change, let men change, let powers change, let nations change, yet a man under the power

of assurance will not change his countenance, nor change his master, nor change his work, nor change his hopes. Though others under changes turn, like the chameleon, into all colours to save their little all, yet the assured soul under all changes is semper idem, always the same.

Antistines, a philosopher, to make his life happy, desired only that he might have the spirit of Socrates, who was always in a quiet temper of spirit, whatever wrongs, injuries, crosses, losses, &c., befell him. Let the trials be what they would that did attend him, yet he continued one and the same. Ah, Christians! the want of assurance hath made many changelings in these days; but if ever you would be like Socrates, if ever you would be like the philosopher's good man, that is, τετραγωνος, Tetragonos, four square, that cast him where you will, like a die, he falls always sure and square, then get assurance of everlasting happiness.

Assurance will make your souls like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that alter not; it will sweeten the darkest day, and the longest night; under variety of changes, it will make a man sit down with Habakkuk, and rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, Hab 3:17-19.

[3.] The third advantage. Assurance will keep the heart from an inordinate running out after the world, and the glory thereof. Moses having an assurance of the recompence of reward, and of his love and favour that is invisible, could not be drawn by all the honours, pleasures, and treasures of Egypt. He slights all, and tramples upon all the glory of the world, as men trample upon things of no worth, Heb 11:24-27. So after Paul had been in the third heaven, and had assurance that nothing should separate him from the love of God in Christ, he looks upon the world as a crucified thing: 'The world is crucified to me,' saith he, 2Co 12:1-3, and Rom 8:38; 'and I am crucified unto the world,' Gal 6:14. The world is dead to me, and I am dead to it: the world and I am well agreed; the world cares not a pin for me, and I care not a pin for the world. The loadstone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is in presence; no more cannot the vanities of this world draw the soul after them, when assurance, that choice pearl of price, is in presence.

I have read of Lazarus, that after he was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile. The assurance that he had of more glorious things, did deaden his heart to the things of this world; he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, there would not be such tugging for the world, and such greedy hunting and pursuing after it, as is in these days, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of Christ, and the shame of the gospel. Get but more assurance, and less money will serve your turns; get but more assurance, and less places of honour and profit will serve your turns; get but assurance, and then you will neither transgress for a morsel of bread, nor yet violently pursue after the golden wedge, &c.

[4.] The fourth advantage. Assurance will exceedingly heighten you in your communion with God, and it will exceedingly sweeten your communion with God. Assurance of a man's propriety in God raises him high in his fellowship with God, 1Jn 3:2. There are none that have such choice and sweet communion with God as those that have the clearest assurance of their interest in God, as may be seen throughout the whole book of Solomon's Song. 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' saith the spouse, Song of Solomon 2:16. I am assured of my propriety in him, says she, and therefore he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts; and upon this account it is that she holds king Jesus in the galleries, that she is sick of love, that she is raised and ravished with his kisses and embraces: 'His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me,' Song of Solomon 1:13, Song of Solomon 7:5, Song of Solomon 2:6. None had more assurance of her

interest in Christ than she, and none higher and closer in communion with Christ than she. The wife's assurance of her interest in her husband, sweetens and heightens her communion with her husband. The child's assurance of his interest in his father, sweetens his commerce and fellowship with his father. So the believer's assurance of his interest in God, will exceedingly heighten and sweeten his communion and fellowship with God. Assurance of a man's interest in God sweetens every thought of God, and every sight of God, and every taste of God, and every good word of God. God is as sweet to the assured soul when he hath a sword in his hand as when he hath a sceptre; when he hath the rod of indignation as when he hath the cup of consolation; when his garments are rolled and dyed in blood as when he appears in his wedding robes; when he acts the part of a judge as when he acts the part of a father, &c.

[5.] The fifth advantage. Assurance will be a choice preservative to keep you from backsliding from, God and his ways. Ah! assurance will glue the soul to God and his ways, as Ruth was glued to her mother Naomi. It will make a man 'stand fast in the faith, and quit himself like a good soldier of Christ,' Gal 5:1, 2Ti 2:3. 2Pe 1:10-11, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' Stumble ye may, and he that does but stumble gets ground by his stumbling. Assurance will keep a man from falling foully and from falling utterly. Verily, the reason why there is so many apostates in these days is, because there are so few that have a well-grounded assurance in these days.

Pliny speaks of some fishes that swim backward. Ah! many professors in these days swim backward; they swim from God, and Christ, and conscience; yea, they swim from the very principles of morality and common honesty. Believe it, friends! it is not high notions in the brain, but sound assurance in the heart, that will keep a man close to Christ when others backslide from Christ. An assured Christian will not exchange his gold for copper; he knows that one old piece of gold is worth a thousand new counters; one old truth of Christ is worth a thousand new errors, though clothed with glistening robes; and therefore he will prize the truth, and own the truth, and keep close to the truth, when others that want a sound assurance make merchandise of Christ, precious truths, and of their own and others' immortal souls. Get assurance, and thou wilt stand when seeming cedars fall; want assurance, and thou canst not but fall, to the breaking of thy bones, if not to the utter loss of thy precious soul, 2Pe 2:3.

[6.] The sixth advantage. Assurance will very much embolden the soul with God. It will make a man divinely familiar with God; it will make a man knock boldly at the door of free grace; it will make a man come boldly before the mercy-seat; it will make a man enter boldly within the holy of holies. Heb 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Assurance makes the soul top and top-gallant; it makes the soul converse with God as a favourite with his prince, as a bride with her bridegroom, as a Joseph with a Jacob.

Luther, under the power of assurance, lets fall this transcendent rapture of a daring faith, *Fiat mea voluntas*, let my will be done; and then falls off sweetly, *Mea voluntas, Domine, quia tua*, my will, Lord, because thy will. It is the want of assurance that makes the countenance sad, the hands hang down, the knees feeble, and the heart full of fears and tremblings, Heb 12:12. Oh therefore get assurance, and that will scatter your fears, and raise your hopes, and cheer your spirits, and give wings to faith, and make you humbly bold with God. You will not then stand at the door of

mercy with a may I knock? with a may I go in? with a may I find audience and acceptance? but you will, with Esther, boldly adventure yourselves upon the mercy and goodness of God. 'Now verily, I think,' saith one, speaking of Christ, 'he cannot despise me, who is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; for if he neglect me as a brother, yet he will love me as a husband: that is my comfort.' Assurance will remove all strangeness from between Christ and the soul; of two, it will make Christ and the soul one.

[7.] The seventh advantage. Assurance will sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the aches, pains, weaknesses, sicknesses, and diseases, that are the fore-runners of it; yea, it will make a man look and long for that day. It will make a man sick of his absence from Christ. It makes a man smile upon the king of terrors; it makes a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the noise of the battle, at the garments of the warriors rolled in blood. It made the martyrs to compliment with lions, to dare and tire their persecutors, to kiss the stake, to sing and clap their hands in the flames, to tread upon hot burning coals, as upon beds of roses. The assured soul knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins and sorrows, of all afflictions and temptations, of all desertions and oppositions. He knows that death shall be the resurrection of his joys; he knows that death is both an outlet and an inlet; an outlet to sin, and an inlet to the soul's clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God; and this makes the assured soul to sing it sweetly out, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 'I desire to be dissolved.' 'Make haste, my beloved.' 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Now death is more desirable than life. Now says the soul, *Ejus est timere mortem, qui ad Christum nolit ire*, let him fear death that is loath to go to Christ. So I may be with Christ, though I go in a cloud, I care not, says the assured soul; so I may be with Christ, I care not though I go in a fiery chariot, says the assured soul. The Persians had a certain day in the year, in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures. The assured Christian knows, that the day of death will be such a day to him, and that makes death lovely and desirable. He knows that sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and that death shall be the grave to bury sin; and therefore death is not a terror, but a delight unto him. He fears it not as an enemy, but welcomes it as a friend; as crook-back Richard the Third in his distress cried, 'A kingdom for a horse, a kingdom for a horse!'⁴ So souls that want assurance, when they come to die, will cry out, A kingdom for assurance, a kingdom for assurance! and as Severus said, 'If I had a thousand worlds, I would now give them all for Christ.' So a soul that wants assurance, when he comes to enter upon a state of eternity, will cry out, Oh, had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for assurance, whereas the assured soul would not for a thousand worlds but die. When his glass is out, and his sun is set, he cries not out, as that lady did,⁶ 'A world, a world for an inch of time!' but rather, Why is it, why is it, Lord, that thy chariots be so long a-coming?

[8.] The eighth advantage. Assurance will very much sweeten that little oil that is in the cruse, and that handful of meal that is in the barrel,' 1Ki 17:12, &c. Assurance will be sauce to all meats, it will make all thy mercies to taste like mercies. It will make Daniel's pulse to be as sweet as princes' delicacies, Dan 1:8, Dan 1:12. It will make Lazarus's rags as pleasurable as Dives's robes, Luk 16:20. It will make Jacob's bed upon the stones, to be as soft as those beds of down and ivory, that sinful great ones stretch themselves upon, Gen 28:18; Amo 6:4.

Look, as the want of assurance embitters all a sinner's mercies, that he cannot taste the sweetness and goodness of them; so the enjoyment of assurance casts a general beauty and glory upon the believer's meanest mercy. And hence it is, that assured souls live so sweetly, and

walk so cheerfully, when their little all is upon their backs and in their hands; whereas the great men of the world, that have the world at will, but want this assurance, that is more worth than the world, live as slaves and servants to these mercies, Job 20:22. In the midst of all their abundance they are in straits and perplexities, full of fears and cares; nothing pleases them, nor is sweet unto them, because they want that assurance that sweetens to a believer the ground they stand on, the air he breathes, the seat he sits on, the bread he eats, the clothes he wears, &c. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, they would not count great mercies small mercies, and small mercies no mercies; no, no; then every mercy on this side hell would be a great mercy, then every mercy would be a sugared mercy, a perfumed mercy. Look, as the tree that Moses cast into the waters of Marah made those bitter waters sweet, Exo 15:23-25, so assurance is that tree of life that makes every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet.

(9.) The ninth advantage. Assurance will make a man very angelical. It will make him full of motion, full of action; it will make him imitate the angels, those princes of glory, that are always busy and active to advance the glory of Christ. They are still a-singing the song of the Lamb; they are still pitching their tents about them that fear the Lord, Psa 34:7; they are ministering spirits sent forth for the good of them that are heirs of salvation, Heb 1:14. Assurance will make a man fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord, as you may see in Paul. The assured Christian is more motion than notion, more work than word, more life than lip, more hand than tongue. When he hath done one work, he is a-calling out for another; What is the next, Lord, says the assured soul, what is the next? His head and his heart is set upon his work, and what he doth, he doth it with all his might, because there is no working in the grave. An assured Christian will put his hand to any work; he will put his shoulder to any burden; he will put his neck in any yoke for Christ; he never thinks that he hath done enough, he always thinks that he hath done too little; and when he hath done all he can, he sits down sighing it out, 'I am but an unprofitable servant.'⁴ In a word, assurance will have a powerful influence upon thy heart. In all the duties and services of religion, nothing will make a man love like this and live like this; nothing will make a man humble and thankful, contented and cheerful, like this. Nothing will make a man more serious in prayer, nor ingenuous in praises, than this; nothing will make a man more cheerful and joyful than this; nothing will make a man fit to live and more willing to die, than this.

Ah, Christians! if ever you would act as angels in this world, get an assurance of another world; then you shall be dumb no more, nor dull no more, but be active and lively, like those whose hopes and whose hearts are in heaven.

(10.) The tenth advantage. Assurance will sweeten Christ, and the precious things of Christ, to thy soul. Ah! how sweet is the person of Christ, the natures of Christ, the aims of Christ, the offices of Christ, the benefits of Christ, the blood of Christ, the word of Christ, the threatenings of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, the ordinances of Christ, the smiles of Christ, the kisses of Christ, to an assured soul. Now thy meditations on Christ will be no more a terror, nor a horror to thee; nay, now thy heart will be always best, when you are most in pondering upon the sweetness and goodness, the kindness and loveliness, of the Lord Jesus. Now all the institutions and administrations of Christ will be precious to thee. Upon everything where Christ hath set his name, there thou wilt set thy heart. Now thou wilt call things as Christ calls them, and count things as Christ counts them; that shall not be little in thy eye, that is great in the eye of Christ; nor that shall not be great in thy eye that is but little in the eye of Christ.²

Assurance will also exceedingly sweeten your carriage to all that bear the image of Christ. Nothing will make men bear with those weak saints whose light is not so clear as yours, whose parts are not so strong as yours, whose enjoyments are not so high as yours, whose judgments are not so well informed as yours, whose consciences are not so well satisfied as yours, and whose lives are not so amiable as yours.

Assurance makes men of a God-like disposition, easy to pardon, ready to forgive, abundant in goodness, admirable in patience. It makes men to study the good of others, and joy in all opportunities wherein they may strengthen the feeble, and comfort the dejected, and enrich the impoverished, and recover the seduced, and enlarge the straitened, and build up the wasted. Verily, the reason why men are so bitter and sour, and censorious, is because God hath not given into their bosoms this sweet flower of delight, assurance.

Ah! were their souls fully assured that God had loved them freely, and received them graciously, and justified them perfectly, and pardoned them absolutely, and would glorify them everlastingly, they could not but love where God loves, and own where God owns, and embrace where God embraces, and be one with every one that is one with Jesus. Were there more assurance among Christians, there would be more of David's and Jonathan's spirit among Christians, than there is this day. Were there more assurance among Christians, there would be more life and more love, more sweetness and more tenderness. Were there more assurance, there would be less noise, less contention, less division, less distraction, less biting, and less devouring among the saints.

Assurance will make the lion and the calf, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, the bear and the cow, lie down together, and feed together, Isa 11:6-8. Men that want assurance love their brethren as flies love the pot. So long as there is any meat in the pot, the flies love it; so those men will love as long as there is an external motive to draw love, but when that ceases, their love ceases.

Dionysius loved his bottles when they were full, but hurled them away when they were empty. So many that want assurance love the saints while their bags are full, and their houses full of the good things of this life; but when they are empty, then they throw them away, then they cast them off, as Job's friends did him.

Ah! but assurance will make a man love as God loves, and love as long as God loves. The assured Christian will not cease to love so long as the least buds and blossoms of grace appear. Lazarus in his rags is as lovely to an assured Christian as Solomon in his robes. Job is as delightful to him upon the dunghill as David is upon his throne. It is not the outward pomp and bravery, but the inward beauty and glory of saints that takes the assured Christian.

(11.) The eleventh motive to provoke you to get a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness is this, consider that as there is a great deal of counterfeit knowledge, counterfeit faith, counterfeit love, counterfeit repentance, &c. in the world, so there is a great deal of counterfeit assurance in the world. Many there be that talk high, and look big, and bear it out bravely that they are thus and thus, and that they have such and such glorious assurance, whereas, when their assurance comes to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it is found too light; and when it comes to withstand temptations, it is found too weak; and when it should put the soul upon divine action, it is found to be but a lazy presumption. Shall the counterfeit gold that is in the world make

men active and diligent to get that which is current, and that will abide the touchstone and the fire? and shall not that counterfeit assurance that is in the world provoke your hearts to be so much the more careful and active to get such a well-grounded assurance that God accounts as current, and that will abide his touchstone in the day of discovery, and that will keep a man from shame and blushing when the thrones shall be set and the books shall be opened?

I have been the longer upon these motives to provoke your souls to get a well-grounded assurance, because it is of an eternal concernment to you, and a work to which men's hearts are too backward.

Though assurance carries a reward in its own bosom, yet few look after it; though the pains of getting it be nothing to the profit that accompanies it, yet few will sweat to gain it.

If the inducements laid down will not awaken and provoke you to be restless till you have got the 'white stone' and 'new name,' till you have got the assurance of your pardon in your bosoms, I know not what will.

CHAPTER V Shewing the several ways and means of gaining a well-grounded assurance.

(1.) The first means. If ever you will attain to assurance, then be much in the exercise and actings of grace. As the believing Ephesians, Eph 1:13, were in the very exercise and actings of grace, the Spirit of the Lord 'sealed them up to the day of redemption.' Assurance flows in upon the actings of grace. Assurance is bred and fed, it is raised and maintained in the soul, by the actings of grace. Grace is most discernible when it is most in action, and grace is made more and more perfect by acting. Neglect of your graces is the ground of their decrease. Wells are the sweeter for drawing; you get nothing by dead and useless habits; talents hid in a napkin gather rust; the noblest faculties are embased when not improved; grace in the habit is no more discernible than fire under the ashes, than gold in the ore, than a dead man in the grave; but grace, in its lively actings and operations, is as a prince upon his throne, sparkling and shining.

Ah, Christians! were your grace more active, it would be more visible; and were your grace more visible, your assurance would be more clear and full. As St Paul once spake to Timothy, 'Stir up the gift of God that is in thee,' 2Ti 1:6, so say I to you, If ever you would have assurance, stir up the grace of God that is in you, blow up that heavenly fire, raise up those noble spirits, never cease believing nor repenting, till it be clearly given into your bosoms, that you are sure that you do believe, and that you do repent, as you are sure that you live, as you are sure that God rules in Jacob, and dwells in Zion.

Remember, Christians, all the honour that God hath from you in this life, is from the actings and exercise of your grace, and not from the habits of grace. Remember, Christians, that all your consolations flow, not from the habits, but from the acts of grace. Remember, Christians, that the want of the exercise of grace is the reason why you do not discern your grace, and why you have no more assurance of your future happiness. He that will be rich, must still be turning the penny; and he that will attain unto the riches of assurance, must still be acting his graces, Col 2:2. There are none but lively, active Christians, that know and feel those joys, comforts, and contents that attend the exercise of grace. If thou wouldst not be always a babe in grace, and a stranger to assurance, then see that thy lamp be always burning, see that thy golden wheels of grace be always going.

(2.) The second means. If you would, Christians, attain unto assurance, then you must mind your work more than your wages; you must be better at obeying than disputing; at doing, at walking, than at talking and wrangling. Assurance is heavenly wages that Christ gives, not to loiterers, but to holy labourers. Though no man merits assurance by his obedience, yet God usually crowns obedience with assurance. John 14:21-23, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' In these words you see, that doing Christians, working Christians, are the only Christians that shall have most of the love of the Father and the Son, and that shall have the choicest manifestations of grace and favour, and that shall have most of their presence and company. So in Psa 50:23, 'Unto him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I declare the salvation of God.' That is, I will declare myself to be his Saviour, I will shew him salvation, and I will shew him his interest in salvation; I will save him, and I will make him see that I have saved him. He shall see the worth of salvation, and test the sweetness of salvation. So Gal 6:16, 'And as many as walk according to this rule' (that is, the rule of the new creature); 'peace be on them, and mercy upon the Israel of God.' The Greek word that is here rendered 'walk,' signifies not simply to walk, but to walk by rule, in order, and measure, without treading aside, but making straight steps to our feet. Now those choice souls that thus walk according to the law of the new creature, shall have peace and mercy in them, and peace and mercy with them, and peace and mercy on them. 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be on them.' Assurance is a jewel of too high a price to be cast into any of their bosoms that walk contrary to the laws of the new creature. Such may talk of assurance, and make a stir and a noise about assurance, but it is the close walking Christian that shall be crowned with assurance. Assurance is a choice part of a believer's happiness, and therefore God will never give it out of a way of holiness. 'The Lord hath set apart for himself the man that is godly,' Psa 4:3. None are favourites in God's court, nor none are admitted to be of his counsel, but those who are all glorious within, and whose raiment is of embroidered gold. That is, such whose principles are full of spiritual glory, and whose practices are amiable and answerable in purity and sanctity. These are the persons that shall have the honour to have God's ear, and the happiness to know his heart.

(3.) The third means. To gain assurance, is to be kind to the Spirit, hear his voice, follow his counsel, live up to his laws. The Spirit is the great revealer of the Father's secrets, he lies in the bosom of the Father, he knows every name that is written in the book of life; he is best acquainted with the inward workings of the heart of God towards poor sinners; he is the great comforter, and the only sealer up of souls to the day of redemption. If you set him a-mourning by your wilful sinnings, that alone can glad you, by whom will you be gladdened? Verily, Christians, when you turn your back upon the Spirit, he will not turn his face upon your souls. Your vexing of the Spirit will be but the disquieting of yourselves, Isa 63:10. Look, as all lights cannot make up the want of the light of the sun, so all creatures cannot make up the want of the testimony of the Spirit. Let me speak to you, as God once spake to his people in Exo 23:20-23, 'Behold, says God, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in thy way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him,' &c. So say I, behold the Spirit of the Lord, that is your guide and guard, he also is only

able to make a soul-satisfying report of the love and favour to you; therefore, as ever you would have assurance, beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not; for if you do by wilful transgressions, he will neither comfort you nor counsel you; he will neither be a sealing nor a witnessing Spirit unto you; nay, he will raise storms and tempests in your souls; he will present to you the Father frowning, and your Saviour bleeding, and himself as grieving; and these sights will certainly rack and torture your doubting souls. The Spirit of the Lord is a delicate thing, a holy thing, a blessed guest, that makes every soul happy where he lodges. 'Therefore grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,'² Eph 4:30. You will not grieve your guests, your friends, but courteously and friendly entertain them; why then do you make so little conscience of grieving that Holy Spirit that alone can stamp the image of the Father upon you, and seal you up to life and glory?

Ah, Christians! the way to assurance is not to sit down sighing and complaining of the want of assurance, but it lies in your eyeing of the Spirit, in your complying with the Spirit, in your cleaving to the Spirit, in your following of the Spirit, in your welcoming of the Spirit, and in your honouring and obeying of the Spirit. As he said of the sword of Goliath, 'None like to that,' 1Sa 21:9; so say I, no means like to this, to gain a well-grounded assurance of a man's happiness and blessedness. And as he said, 'If there be any way to heaven on horseback, it is by prayer;' so say I, if there be any way in the world to assurance, it is by being fearful to offend, and careful to please the Spirit of the Lord, whose office it is to witness to poor souls the remission of their sins, and the salvation of their souls.

(4.) The fourth means. If you would obtain assurance, then be sincere, be diligent and constant in assuring ordinances. He that will meet the king, must wait on him in his walks, Isa 64:5. Christ's ordinances are Christ's walks; and he that would see the beauty of Christ, and taste of the sweetness of Christ, and be ravished with the love of Christ, must wait at wisdom's door, they must attend Christ in his own appointments and institutions, Rev 2:1; Pro 8:34-35. That comfort and assurance that flows not in through the golden pipes of the sanctuary, will not better the soul, nor long abide with the soul; it will be as the morning dew, and as the flowers of the field that soon fade away, Hos 6:4; 1Pe 1:24.

I have in the former discourse shewed at large how the Lord is graciously pleased to cause his love and glory to beam forth upon souls in ordinances; and therefore I shall say no more unto this particular at this time.

(5.) The fifth means to obtain assurance is, wisely and seriously to observe what gift of God there is in thee, that brings thee within the compass of the promises of eternal mercy. Now, let the gift be this or that, if it be a gift that brings thee within the compass of the promise of eternal mercy, that gift is an infallible evidence of thy salvation. For the better and further opening of this truth, premise with me these two things:

[1.] First, No man can have any sure evidence to himself of his happiness and blessedness from absolute promises. Absolute promises do not describe to whom salvation and all eternal blessings do belong. The promise of giving Christ, of giving the Spirit, of giving a new heart, and of pardoning and blotting out sin, are all absolute promises. Now God is free to make good these to whom he pleases; therefore he often steps over the rich and chooses the poor; the learned, and chooses the ignorant; the strong, and chooses the weak; the noble, and chooses the ignoble; the

sweet nature, and chooses the rugged nature, &c., that no flesh may glory, and that all may shout out Grace, grace! 1Co 1:25-29.

[2.] Secondly, Though no man can have any sure evidence of his happiness and blessedness from absolute promises, because absolute promises do not describe the persons to whom salvation and all eternal blessings do belong; yet absolute promises are of most choice and singular use.

(1.) In that they discover to us that our salvation is only from free grace, and not from anything in us or done by us.

(2.) They are a most sure and glorious foundation for the very worst of sinners to stay their filthy, guilty, wearied, burdened, perplexed souls upon. Seeing that God looks not for any penny or pennyworth, for any portion or proportion in the creature to draw his love, but he will justify, pardon, and save for his name's sake, Isa 55:1-2; seeing all the motives that move God to shew mercy are in his own bosom; seeing they are all within doors, there is no reason why the vilest of sinners should sit down and say, There is no hope, there is no help, Deu 7:7-8; Psa 68:18.

[3.] Thirdly, Absolute promises may, and doubtless often are, choice cordials to many precious souls, who happily have lost the sense and feeling of divine favour. Absolute promises are waters of life to many precious sons of Sion. They are a heavenly fire at which they can sit down and warm themselves when they cannot blow their own spark into a flame, and when all candle-light, torch-light, and star-light fails them. When all other comforts can yield a perplexed, distressed soul no comfort, yet then absolute promises will prove full breasts of consolation to the distressed soul.

These things being premised, see now what gift of God there is in thee that brings thee within the compass of the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness; and to help you a little in this, I shall put you in mind of these following particulars.

1. The first gift. Faith is a gift of God that brings the soul within the promise of everlasting blessedness, as the Scripture doth everywhere evidence: 'He that believes shall be saved;' 'he that believes shall not come into condemnation;' 'he shall not perish;' 'he shall have eternal life,' &c. Now believing is nothing else but the accepting of Christ for thy Lord and Saviour, as he is offered to thee in the gospel; and this accepting is principally, if not only, the act of thy will; so that if thou art sincerely and cordially willing to have Christ upon his own terms, upon gospel terms, that is, to save thee and rule thee, to redeem thee and to reign over thee, then thou art a believer. Thy sincere willingness to believe is thy faith; and this gift brings thee within the compass of the promise of eternal happiness and blessedness.

Christian reader, in the following discourse thou wilt find the nature, the properties, and the excellencies of a sound saving faith clearly and largely laid open before thee; and therefore I shall say no more to it in this place, but refer thee to what follows.

2. The second gift. Waiting patiently on God is a gift that brings thee within the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness. And he that hath but a waiting frame of heart, hath that that God will eternally own and crown: Isa 30:18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.' Verily it is no iniquity to pronounce them blessed that God pronounces blessed. It is no piety, but cruelty and inhumanity, for any not

to be as merciful to themselves as God is merciful to them; not to have as sweet and precious thoughts of their present condition as God hath. If God says the waiting soul is blessed, who dares judge, who dares say it is not blessed? 'Let God be true, and everyman a liar,' Rom 3:4; Isa 64:4, 'For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he [hath] prepared for him that waiteth for him'; Pro 8:34, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, and waiting at the posts of my doors'; Isa 49:23, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me'; that is, I will never fail the waiting soul; I will never put him to blushing by frustrating his patient waiting on me. The waiting soul shall bear the belt, and carry away the crown at last. Verily, glorious love and power is as much seen in keeping up a poor soul in a patient waiting on God, as it was in raising Christ from the grave, and as it is in bringing souls to glory. Nothing can make the waiting soul miserable. Hold out faith and patience but a little, 'and he that shall come will come, and bring his reward with him,' Rev 22:11-12.

3. The third gift. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is a gift that brings the soul within the compass of the promise of everlasting happiness and blessedness: Mat 5:6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled'; or as it runs in the Greek, 'Blessed are they that are hungering and thirsting,' πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες, intimating that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed, and may expect spiritual repletions.

Considerable to this purpose is that of Isa 44:2-5 : 'Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee: Fear not, O Jacob my servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.' Of the like consideration is that of Isa 35:6-7, 'Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break forth, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes.' To the like purpose is that in Psa 107:9, 'For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.' But that none may mistake nor miscarry in this business, that is of an eternal concernment to them, I shall desire them to premise with me these following things; for a better and fuller clearing of this particular truth that is under our present consideration.

First, Premise this with me: All real hungerings and thirstings after righteousness are earnest and vehement thirstings and longings. They are like Rachel's longing for children, and like Samson's longing for water: Psa 42:1-2, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brook, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Philosophers observe, that of all the beasts, the hart is most thirsty by nature, but most of all thirsty when she is hunted and pursued by dogs. Says David: As the hunted hart, as the wounded hart, yea, as the she-hart, in whom the passions of thirst are strongest, panteth after the water-brooks, so doth my soul pant after thee, O God. A gracious soul panteth and fainteth, it breatheth and breaketh, for the longing it hath at all times after the righteousness of Christ imputed

and infused, Psa 119:20. The Greeks derive their word for desire from a root that signifies to burn. Ah, Christians! real desires are burning desires; they set the soul all in a holy flame after God and Christ. If they are not vehement, if they do not put an edge upon thy affections, if they do not, make thee like a burning seraphim, Christ will take no pleasure in them; they shall return into thy own bosom without working any wonders in heaven, as those desires do that flow from the soul's being touched with a coal from the altar.

Secondly, Premise this with me, All real hungerings in the soul after righteousness, arise from spiritual and heavenly considerations; they spring in the soul from some convictions, some apprehensions, some persuasions that the soul hath, of a real worth, of a real beauty, glory, and excellency that is in Christ, and in his righteousness, imputed and imparted. Such desires after righteousness that flow from external considerations, are of no worth, weight, or continuance, but those desires after righteousness that flow from spiritual considerations, are full of spirit, life, and glory; they are such that God will not only observe but accept, not only record but reward, Psa 145:19.

Thirdly, Real hungerings and thirstings after Christ and his righteousness, &c., will put the soul upon lively endeavours. If they are true-born desires, they will not make the soul idle but active; not negligent but diligent, in the use of all holy means, whereby the soul may enjoy Christ and his righteousness: Isa 26:9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Real desires will make us earnest and early in seeking to obtain the thing desired, as the Hebrew word imports. A thirsty man will not only long for drink, but labour for it; the condemned man will not only desire his pardon, but he will write, and entreat, and weep, and set this friend and that to solicit for him; the covetous man doth not only wish for wealth, but will rise early and go to bed late, he will turn every stone, and make attempts upon all hopeful opportunities, whereby he may fill his bags and fill his barns. Even so, all holy desires will put souls upon the use of the means, whereby the mercy desired may be gained. And thus to run, is to attain; thus to will, is to work; thus to desire, is to do the will of our Father, who accepts of pence for pounds, of mites for millions. The Persian monarch was not so famous for accepting a little water from the hand of a loving subject, as our God is for accepting a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation; for accepting of that little we have, and for accounting our little much, Lev 2:2; Exo 35:6; 2Co 8:12.

Noah's sacrifice could not be great, and yet it was greatly accepted and highly accounted of by God. Such is God's condescending love to weak worms, that he looks more at their will than at their work; he minds more what they would do, than what they do do; he always prefers the willing mind before the worthiest work, and where desires and endeavours are sincere, there God judges such to be as good as they desire and endeavour to be.

Fourthly, Spiritual hungerings and thirstings are only satisfied with spiritual things. John 14:8, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' All things in the world cannot suffice us, but a sight of the Father, that will satisfy us: Psa 63:5-6, 'My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches.' Psa 65:4, 'We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.' It is only God, and the precious things of his house, that can satisfy a thirsty soul.

It was a sweet saying of one, 'As what I have, if offered to thee, pleaseth thee not, O Lord, without myself; so the good things we have from thee, though they may refresh us, yet they cannot satisfy us, without thyself.' The rattle without the breast will not satisfy the child, the house without the husband will not satisfy the wife, the cabinet without the jewel will not satisfy the virgin, nor the world without Christ will not satisfy the soul.

Luther, in a time of wants, receiving unexpectedly a good sum of money from the elector of Germany, at which being somewhat amazed, he turned himself to God and protested, that God should not put him off with such poor low things. The hungry soul will not be put off with any bread but with the bread of life; the thirsty soul will not be put off with any water but with the well-springs of life. As the king of Sodom said once, 'Take you the goods, give me the persons,' Gen 14:21; so says the hungry soul, Take you the goods, take your honours, and riches, and the favour of creatures, take you the corn, the oil, and the wine; give me Christ, give me the light of his countenance, give me the joy of his Spirit, &c. Oh the answering of spiritual breathings is very sweet to the soul: Pro 13:19, 'The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul'. Returns from heaven make a paradise in the soul.

I have read of Darius, that when he fled from his enemy, and being in great thirst, he met with a dirty puddle of water, with carriou lying in it, and he sucked in and drank very heartily of it, and professed, 'That it was the sweetest draught that ever he drunk in his life.' Ah, how sweet then are those waters of life that be at God's right hand! How sweet are the droppings of God's honeycomb upon the hungry soul! Water out of the rock, and manna in the wilderness, was not so sweet to the hungry, thirsty Israelites, as spiritual answers and spiritual returns are to those that hunger and thirst after spiritual things.

(6.) The sixth means to obtain a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness is, to be much, yea, to excel in those choice particular things that may clearly and fully difference and distinguish you, not only from the profane, but also from the highest and most glistening hypocrites in all the world. It is nothing to be much in those duties and performances wherein the worst of sinners may equalize, yea, go beyond the best of saints. Oh! but to excel in those things that the most refined hypocrites cannot reach to, this cannot but much help you on to assurance. He that hath those jewels in his bosom that God gives only to his choicest favourites, needs not question whether he be a favourite, &c. If he doth it, it is his sin, and will hereafter be his shame. But you may say to me, What are those choice particular things that may difference and distinguish Christ's true Nathanaels from all other persons in the world?

Now, to this question I shall give these following answers:

[1.] The first distinction. A true Nathanael, in his constant course, labours in all duties and services to be approved and accepted of God. He is most studious and industrious to approve his heart to God in all that he puts his hand to. So David, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,' Psa 139:23-24. So Peter approves his heart to Christ three several times together: 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John 21:15-17. Thou knowest the sincerity and reality of my love, and therefore to thee I do appeal. To the same purpose the apostle speaks: 2Co 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' The Greek word

[φιλοτιμο■μεθα] that is here rendered labour, is a very emphatical word; it signifies to labour and endeavour with all earnestness and might, to endeavour with a high and holy ambition to be accepted of God, judging it the greatest honour in the world to be owned and accepted of the Lord. Ambitious men are not more diligent, earnest, studious, and laborious to get honour among men, than we are, saith the apostle, to get acceptance with God. Ah! but your most refined hypocrites labour only to approve themselves to men in their praying, fasting, talking, hearing, giving, &c. Let them have but man's eye to see them, and man's ear to hear them, and man's tongue to commend them, and man's hand to reward them, and they will sit down and bless themselves, saying it is enough; aha! so would we have it.

They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her note; but when she conceives that she hath any auditors, or is near houses, then she composes herself more quaintly and elegantly. Verily, this is the frame and temper of the best of hypocrites. Oh! but a sincere Nathanael labours in all places, and in all cases and services, to approve himself to God; he labours as much to approve himself to God in a wood, where no eye sees him, as he doth when the eyes of thousands are fixed upon him. The sun would shine bright though all men were asleep at high noon, and no eyes open to see the glory of his beams: so a sincere heart will shine, he will labour to do good; though all the world should shut their eyes, yet he will eye his work, and eye his God. He knows that God is totus oculus, all eye, and therefore he cares not though others have never an eye to observe him, to applaud him. Let God but secretly whisper him in the ear, and say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant!' and it is enough to his soul, enough to satisfy him, enough to cheer him, and enough to encourage him in the ways and the work of his God.

[2.] The second distinction. He labours to get up to the very top of holiness; he labours to live up to his own principles. He cannot be satisfied with so much grace as will bring him to glory, but he labours to be high in grace, that he may be high in glory: Php 3:11, 'I desire if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead, that is, to that perfection that the dead shall attain to in the morning of the resurrection. Verily, that man is ripe for heaven who counts it his greatest happiness to be high in holiness; that man shall never be low in heaven, a door-keeper in heaven, that cannot be satisfied till he be got up to the very top of Jacob's ladder, till he hath attained to the highest perfection in grace and holiness. Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.' Her inward principles are all glorious, and her outward practice echoes to her inward principles: 'her clothing is of wrought gold.'

It was the honour and glory of Joshua and Caleb, that they followed the Lord fully, Num 14:24, that is, they lived up to their own principles. So those virgins in Rev 14:4-5, that were without spot before the throne of God, they followed the Lamb wheresoever he went, that is, they lived up to their profession; there was a sweet harmony betwixt their principles and practices. And thus the apostles lived: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' 1Th 2:10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Thus we see these worthies living up to their own principles. Blessed Bradford and Bucer lived so up to their principles, that their friends could not sufficiently praise them, nor their foes find anything justly to fasten on them.

Believers know,

(1.) That their living up to their own principles, doth best evidence Christ living in them, and their union with him, Gal 2:20.

(2.) They know that it is not their profession, but living up to their principles, that will effectually stop the mouths, and convince the consciences of vain men: 1Pe 2:15, 'For so is the will of God, that by well-doing,' that is, by living up to your own principles, 'you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' There is no such way in the world to still and silence wicked men, to make them dumb and speechless, to muzzle and tie up their mouths, as the Greek word notes, φημι, as by living up to your own principles. The lives of men convince more strongly than their words; the tongue persuades, but the life commands.

(3.) They know by living up to their principles, they cast a general glory upon Christ and his ways. This makes Christ and his ways to be well thought on and well spoke on, Mat 5:16; 1Pe 2:11-12; 2Pe 1:5-13.

(4.) They know that the ready way, the only way to get and keep assurance, joy, peace, &c., is to live up to their principles.

(5.) They know that by living below their own principles, or contrary to their own principles, they do but gratify Satan, and provoke wicked men to blaspheme that worthy name by which they are called, they know that by their not living up to their own principles they do but multiply their own fears and doubts, and put a sword into the hand of conscience, and make sad work for future repentance.

Now these and such like considerations do exceedingly stir and provoke believers to labour with all their might to live up to their own principles, to get to the very top of holiness, to be more and more a-pressing towards the mark, and to think that nothing is done till they have attained the highest perfections that are attainable in this life. It is true, many hypocrites may go up some rounds of Jacob's ladder, such as make for their profit, pleasure, applause, and yet tumble down at last to the bottom of hell, as Judas and others have done. Hypocrites do not look, nor like, nor love to come up to the-top of Jacob's ladder, Gen 28:12, to the top of holiness, as you may see in the Scribes and Pharisees, and all other hypocrites that the Scripture speaks of.

[3.] The third distinction. It is their greatest desire and endeavour that sin may be cured, rather than covered. Sin most afflicts a gracious soul. David cries out, not Perii, but Peccavi, not I am undone, but I have done foolishly, Psa 51:3. Daniel complains not, we are reproached and oppressed, but we have rebelled, Dan 9:5. Paul cries not out of his persecutors, but of the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, Rom 7:23. A gracious soul grieves more that God by his sin is grieved and dishonoured, than that for it he is afflicted and chastened. The hart feeling within her the operation of the serpent's poison, runs from the thorns and thickets, and runs over the green and pleasant pastures, that she may drink of the fountain and be cured. So gracious souls, being sensible of the poison and venom of sin, runs from the creatures, that are but as thorns and thickets, and runs over their own duties and righteousness, which are but as pleasant pastures, to come to Christ the fountain of life, that they may drink of those waters of consolation, of those wells of salvation that be in him, and cast up and cast out their spiritual poison, and be cured for ever. Believers know that their sins do most pierce and grieve the Lord,

they lie hardest and heaviest upon his heart, and are most obvious to his eye, Amo 2:13. The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, Jer 17:1; their sins are against beams of strongest light, they are against the bowels of tenderest mercy, they are against the manifestations of greatest love, they are against the nearest and dearest relations, they are against the choicest and highest expectations; and this makes believing souls cry out, Oh, a cure, Lord! a cure, Lord! Oh give me purging grace, give me purging grace; though I should never taste of pardoning mercy, yet give me purging grace.

It was a notable speech of Cosmus, duke of Florence, 'I have read,' saith he, 'that I must forgive my enemies, but never that I must forgive my friends.' The sins of God's friends, of God's people, provoke him most, and sad him most, and this makes them sigh and groan it out, 'Who shall deliver us from this body of death?' Rom 7:24. Oh! but now wicked men labour, not that sin may be cured, but only that sin might be covered, Hos 7:10-16; and that the consequents of sin, viz., affliction and the stinging of conscience, may be removed, as you may see in Cain, Saul, Judas, and divers others:' Hos 5:14-15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early,' saith God; they will then seek to be rid of their affliction, but not to be rid of their sins that hath brought down the affliction upon them. Like the patient that would fain be rid of his pain and torment, under which he groans, but cares not to be rid of those evil habits that have brought the pain and torment upon him. Psal 78:34-37, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not upright with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' In these words you see plainly, that these people are very early and earnest in seeking God, to take off his hand, to remove the judgments that were upon them, but not that God would cure them of those sins that provoked him to draw his sword, and to make it drunk with their blood; for, notwithstanding the sad slaughters that divine justice had made among them, they did but flatter and lie, and play the hypocrites with God; they would fain be rid of their sufferings, but did not care to be rid of their sins. Ah! but a gracious soul cries out, Lord, do but take away my sins, and it will satisfy me and cheer me, though thou shouldst never take off thy heavy hand. A true Nathanael sighs it out under his greatest affliction, as that good man did, A me, me salva domine, deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man myself. No burden to the burden of sin. Lord! says the believing soul; deliver me from my inward burden, and lay upon me what outward burden thou pleasest.

(4.) The fourth distinction. Are not your souls taken with Christ as chief? is he not in your eye the chiefest of ten thousand? is he not altogether lovely? Song of Solomon 5:10, Song of Solomon 5:16. Yes, have you any in heaven but he, and is there any on earth that you desire in comparison of him? Pro 3:15; Psal 73:25-26; Php 3:7-8. No. Do not you lift up Jesus Christ as high as God the Father lifts him? God the Father lifts up Christ above all principalities and powers, Eph 1:21, Php 2:9; he lifts up Christ above all your duties, above all your privileges, above all your mercies, above all your graces, above all your contentments, above all your enjoyments; do not you thus lift up Jesus Christ? Yes. As he is the Father's chiefest jewel, so he is your choicest jewel, is he not? Yes. Verily none can lift up Christ as chief, unless Christ have their hearts, and they dearly love him, and believe in him, for Christ is only precious to them that believe, 1Pe 2:7. Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him; is not that the frame of thy heart? Yes. Why then dost thou say thou hast no grace, thou hast no Christ. Surely none but those that have union with

Christ, and that shall eternally reign with Christ, can set such a high price upon the person of Christ. The true believer, amat Christum propter Christum, loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for his personal excellencies, Song of Solomon 5:10-16.

What Alexander said of his two friends, is applicable to many in our day; says he, 'Hæphestion loves me as I am Alexander, but Craterus loves me as I am King Alexander.' One loved him for his person, the other for the benefits he received by him. So some Nathanaels there be that love Christ for his person, for his personal excellency, for his personal beauty, for his personal glory; they see those perfections of grace and holiness in Christ, that would render him very lovely and desirable in their eyes, though they should never get a kingdom, a crown by it.⁴ But most of those that bear any love and good-will to Christ, do it only in respect of the benefits they receive by him.

It was Augustine's complaint of old, vix deligitur Jesus propter Jesum, that scarce any love Christ but for his rewards. Few follow him for love, but for loaves, John 6:26; few follow him for his inward excellencies, many follow him for their outward advantages; few follow him that they may be made good by him, but many follow him that they may be great by him. Certainly, you are the bosom friends of Christ, you are in the very heart of Christ, who prize Christ above all, who lift up Jesus Christ as high as God the Father lifts him, and that because of his rich anointings, and because all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, Psa 45:6-8. This is a work too high and too hard, too great and too noble, for all that are not new-born, that are not twice born, that are not of the blood-royal, that are not partakers of the divine nature.

[5.] The fifth distinction. Are not your greatest and your hottest conflicts against inward pollutions, against those secret sins that are only obvious to the eye of Cod and your own souls? The light of nature's education, and some common convictions of the Spirit, may put men upon combating with those sins that are obvious to every eye, but it must be a supernatural power and principle that puts men upon conflicting with the inward motions and secret operations of sin, Rom 7:23. The apostle complains of a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. The war was within doors, the fight was inward. The apostle was deeply engaged against a law within him, which made him sigh it out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' So David cries out, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,' Psa 19:12. So Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, or for the lifting up of his heart, as the Hebrew hath it, 2Ch 32:26 [■■■■ ■■■ ■■■]. His recovery from sickness, his victories over his enemies, and his rich treasures, lifted up his heart. Oh! but for those outward risings and vauntings of heart Hezekiah humbles himself, he abases and lays himself low before the Lord. A sincere heart weeps and laments bitterly over those secret and inward corruptions that others will scarce acknowledge to be sins. Many a man there is that bleeds inwardly, and dies for ever; many a soul is eternally slain by the inward workings of sin, and he sees it not, he knows it not, till it be too late.

Oh! but a true Nathanael mourns over the inward motions and first risings of sin in his soul, and so prevents an eternal danger. Upon every stirring of sin in the soul the believer cries out, O Lord, help; O Lord, undertake for me; oh dash these brats of Babylon in pieces; oh stifle the first motions of sin, that they may never conceive and bring forth, to the wounding of two at once, thy honour and my own conscience!

[6.] The sixth distinction. Are you not subject to Christ as a head? Yes; devils and wicked men are subject to Christ as a Lord, but those that are by faith united to him, and that have a spiritual

interest in him, are subject to him as a head.

I shall open this particular thus unto you.

First, The members are willingly and sweetly subject to the head; their subjection is voluntary, not compulsory. It is so with a believing soul: Psa 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' So Psa 110:3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness.' So Paul cries out, 'What wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9:6, and professes that he is willing not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of Christ, Acts 21:13. A gracious soul is in some measure naturalised to the work of Christ, and Christ's work is in some measure naturalised to the soul.

Secondly, The members are subject to the head universally, they do all the head enjoined; so the real members of Christ do in sincerity endeavour universally to subject to all that Christ their head requires, without any exception or reservation: Luk 1:5-6, 'Zacharias and Elizabeth walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' They walked without halting or halving of it with God; they fell in with every part and point of God's revealed will, without prejudice or partiality, without tilting the balance on one side or another: Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,' or rather 'all my wills,' as the Greek hath it [θεληματα], to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience.

Thirdly, The members are subject to the head constantly, unweariedly. The members are never weary of obeying the head; they obey in all places, cases, and times; so are the real members of Christ: Acts 24:16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' I use all diligence, skill, cunning, and conscience, to be sincere and inoffensive in all my motions and actions towards God and towards men. So David, Psa 119:112, 'I have inclined my heart' (or rather, as the Hebrew word signifies, 'I have stretched out my heart,' as a man would do a piece of parchment) 'to do thy statutes' (the Hebrew word signifies to do accurately, exactly, perfectly) 'always, even unto the end.' A gracious soul is not like a deceitful bow, nor like the morning dew, but he is like the sun, that rejoiceth to run his race; he is like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire nor sinketh in the water.³ Now tell me, pray tell me, O you doubting souls, whether you do not, (1.) Labour in all duties and services to approve your hearts to God?

(2.) Whether you do not endeavour to get up to the very top of holiness, and to live up to your own principles?

(3.) Whether it be not your greatest desire and endeavour that sin may be cured rather than covered?

(4.) Whether you are not taken with Christ as chief? whether you do not, in your judgments and affections, lift up Christ above all, as God the Father doth?

(5.) Whether your greatest and hottest conflicts and combats be not against inward pollutions, against those secret stirrings and operations. of sin, which are only obvious to the eye of God and your own souls?

(6.) Whether you do not, in respect of the general bent and frame of your hearts, subject to Christ as your head?

[1.] Freely and sweetly.

[2.] Universally, in one thing as well as another, without any exception or reservation.

[3.] Constantly and unwearily. Yes; we do these things; we should belie the grace of God if we should say otherwise. These things the Lord hath wrought in us and for us, Isa 26:12. Well, then, know,

First, That your estate is good; you have certainly a blessed interest in the Lord Jesus. None can do these things but souls that have union with Christ, that are interested in Christ, that are acted by the peculiar and special influences of Christ, and that are highly beloved of Christ. Verily, these are such flowers of paradise that cannot be gathered in nature's garden; they are pearls of that price that God bestows upon none but those that are the price of Christ's blood. All the men in the world cannot prove by the Scripture that these jewels can be found in any men's breasts but in theirs that have union and communion with Christ, and that shall reign for ever with Christ.

Secondly, Know that it is no iniquity, but rather your duty, for you to suck sweetness out of these honeycombs, and to look upon these things as infallible pledges and evidences of divine favour, and of your everlasting happiness and blessedness. Some there be that make the witness of the Spirit, of which I shall, towards the close of this discourse, speak at large, the only evidence of our interest in Christ, and deny all other evidences from the fruit of the Spirit; but this is to deny the fruit, growing upon the tree, to be an evidence that the tree is alive, whereas all know, that the fruit growing upon the tree is an infallible and undeniable evidence that there is life in the tree. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to rest upon our graces, or to put trust in our graces. When one argues from the beams of the sun, that there is a sun, one would think that the most cavilling spirit in the world should lie quiet and still.

(7.) The seventh means to get a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness is, to grow and increase more and more in grace. 2Pe 1:5-11, 'Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge, &c. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' By entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Christ, is not meant a local entrance into heaven; for heaven is nowhere called the kingdom of Christ, but the Father's kingdom. The opposition, 2Pe 1:9, sheweth clearly that it is meant of assurance. Now, the way to full assurance is by adding grace to grace. The Greek word that is here rendered 'add,' hath a greater emphasis; it signifies to link our graces together, as virgins in a dance do link their hands together. Oh! we must be still a-joining grace to grace, we must still be adding one grace to another, we must still be a-leading up the dance of graces. Great measures of grace carry with them great evidence of truth, little measures carry with them but little evidence; great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of the soul's union and communion with Christ; and the more evident your union and communion with Christ is, the more clear and full will your assurance be.⁴

Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest and clearest evidences of the glorious indwellings of the Spirit in you, and the more you are persuaded of the real indwellings of the Spirit in you, the higher will your assurance rise. Great measures of grace will be a fire that will consume and burn up the dross, the stubble, the fears and doubts that perplex the soul, and that cause darkness to surround the soul. Now, the more you are rid of your fears, doubts, and darkness, the

more easily, and the more effectually will your hearts be persuaded that the thoughts of God towards you are thoughts of love; that you are precious in his eyes, and that he will rejoice over you, to do you good for ever, Jer 32:41, &c.

(8.) The eighth means to gain a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness is, to take your hearts when they are in the best and most spiritual frame and temper God-wards, heavenwards, and holiness-wards. Times of temptation and desertion, &c., are praying times, hearing times, mourning times, and believing times; but they are not trying times, they are not seasonable times for doubting souls to set themselves about so great and so solemn a work as that is, of searching and examining how things stand, and are like to stand, between God and them for ever, 2Co 13:5. Be diligent and constant, be studious and conscientious in observing the frame and temper of your own hearts, and when you find them most plain, most melting, most yielding, most tender and humble, most sweetly raised, and most divinely composed, then, oh then, is the time to single out the most convenient place where thou mayest with greatest freedom open thy bosom to God, and plead with him as for thy life, that he would shew thee how things stand between him and thee, and how it must fare with thy soul for ever. And when thou hast thus set thyself before God, and opened thy bosom to God, then wisely observe what report God and thy own renewed conscience do make concerning thy eternal condition: 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak,' saith David; 'for he will speak peace unto his people, and they shall not return to folly,' so the Hebrew may be read.² Oh! so must thou 'stand still, when thou hast sincerely unbowelled thyself before the Lord, and listen and hearken what God will say unto thee. Surely he will speak peace unto thee, he will say, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee,' thy heart is upright with me; my soul is set upon thee; I have already blessed thee, and I will hereafter glorify thee.

I have read of one who was kept from destroying of himself,—being much tempted by Satan thereunto,—by remembering that there was a time when he solemnly set himself in prayer and self-examination before the Lord, and made a diligent inquiry into his spiritual condition; and in the close of that work, it was evidenced to him that his heart was upright with God, and this kept him from laying of violent hands upon himself. Oh! a wise and serious observing what that testimony is that God, conscience, and the word gives in upon solemn prayer and self-examination may beget strong consolation, and support the soul under the greatest affliction, and strengthen the soul against the most violent temptations, and make the soul look and long for the day of dissolution, as princes do for their day of coronation.

(9.) The ninth means to gain a well-grounded assurance is, to make a diligent inquiry whether thou hast those things that do accompany eternal salvation: Heb 6:9, 'But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation;' or as it is in the Greek, **■χ■μεν**, 'that have salvation,' as it were in the very bowels of them, that comprehend salvation and that touch upon salvation.

Oh! beloved, if you have those choice things that accompany salvation, that comprehend salvation, you may be abundantly assured of your salvation. But you may say to me, What are those things that accompany salvation? To this question I shall give this answer, viz., that there are seven special things that accompany salvation, and they are these:

1, Knowledge; 2, Faith; 3, Repentance; 4, Obedience; 5, Love; 6, Prayer; 7, Perseverance.

(1.) Knowledge is one of those special things that accompanies salvation: John 17:3, 'And this is life eternal, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.' Divine knowledge is the beginning of eternal life; it is a spark of glory, it works life in the soul, it is a taste and pledge of eternal life: 1Jn 5:20, 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God, and eternal life.' 2Pe 1:3, 'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.' What this knowledge is that accompanies salvation, I shall shew you anon.

(2.) Secondly, Faith is another of those special things that accompanies salvation: 2Th 2:13, 'But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' 1Pe 1:5, 'You who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Heb 10:39, 'But we are not of them who draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.' John 3:14-16, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' John 5:24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' John 6:40, 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' John 6:47, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.'

(3.) Thirdly, Repentance is another of those choice things that accompanies salvation: 2Co 7:10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.' Jer 4:14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Acts 11:18, 'When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' Mat 18:3, 'And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when, the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

(4.) Fourthly, Obedience is another of those precious things that accompanies salvation. Heb 5:9, 'And being made perfect,' speaking of Christ, 'he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' Psalms 50:23, 'Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I declare the salvation of God.'

(5.) Fifthly, Love is another of those singular things that accompanies salvation. 2Ti 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.' Jas 2:5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?' 1Co 2:9, 'It is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' Jas 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love

him.' Mat 19:28, 'And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' The whole is as if Christ had said, Whosoever shall shew love to me, this way or that, in one thing or another, out of respect to my name, to my honour, mercy shall be his portion here, and glory shall be his portion hereafter.

(6.) Sixthly, Prayer is another of those sweet things that accompanies salvation. Rom 10:10, Rom 10:13, 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Acts 2:21, 'And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' That is, saith one, he shall be certainly sealed up to salvation. Or as another saith, He that hath this grace of prayer, it is an evident sign and assurance to him, that he shall be saved. Therefore to have grace to pray, is a better and a greater mercy than to have gifts to prophesy, Mat 7:22. Praying souls shall find the gates of heaven open to them, when prophesying souls shall find them shut against them.

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, perseverance is another of those prime things that accompanies salvation. Mat 10:22, 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' Mat 24:12-13, 'And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold; but he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.' Rev 2:10, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Rev 3:5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'

Thus you see these seven choice things that accompany salvation. But for your further and fuller edification, satisfaction, confirmation, and consolation, it will be very necessary that I shew you, (1.) What knowledge that is that accompanies salvation, that borders, that touches upon salvation.

(2.) What faith that is that accompanies salvation.

(3.) What repentance that is that accompanies salvation.

(4.) What obedience that is that accompanies salvation.

(5.) What love that is that accompanies salvation.

(6.) What prayer that is that accompanies salvation.

(7.) What perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.

I hope when I have fully opened these precious things to you, that you will be able to sit down much satisfied and cheered in a holy confidence and blessed assurance of your everlasting well-being.

I shall begin with the first, and shew you what that knowledge is that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that touches upon salvation; and that I shall open in these following particulars:

(1.) The first property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is a working knowledge, an operative knowledge: 2Co 4:6, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Divine light reaches the heart as well as the head. The beams of divine light shining in upon the soul through the glorious face of Christ are very working; they warm the heart, they affect the heart, they new-mould the heart. Divine knowledge masters the heart, it guides the heart, it governs the heart, it sustains the heart, it relieves the heart: Rom 6:6, 'We know that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' Divine knowledge puts a man upon crucifying of sin; it keeps a man from being a servant, a slave to sin, which no other knowledge can do. Under all other knowledge, men remain servants to their lusts, and are taken prisoners by Satan at his will. No knowledge lifts a man up above his lusts but that which accompanies salvation. The wisest philosophers and the greatest doctors, as Socrates and others, under all their sublime notions and rare speculations, have been kept in bondage by their lusts. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is operative knowledge: 1Jn 2:3-4, 'And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' By keeping his commandments they did know that they did know him; that is, they were assured that they did know him. To know that we know, is to be assured that we know: So Jas 3:17, 'But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' Jas 3:13, 'Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works, with meekness of wisdom.' Divine knowledge fills a man full of spiritual activity; it will make a man work as if he would be saved by his works, and yet it will make a man believe that he is saved only upon the account of free grace, Eph 2:8. That knowledge that is not operative and working, will only serve to light souls to hell, and to double damn all that have it, Mat 23:14.

(2.) The second property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is transforming knowledge, it is metamorphosing knowledge. It is knowledge that transforms, that metamorphoses the soul: 2Co 3:18, 'But we with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' Divine light beating on the heart, warms it, and betters it; it transforms and changes it, it moulds and fashions it into the very likeness of Christ, μεταμορφοῦμεθα. The naturalists observe, that the pearl, by the often beating of the sunbeams upon it, becomes radiant; so the often beating and shining of the Sun of righteousness, with his divine beams, upon the saints, causes them to glister and shine in holiness, righteousness, heavenly-mindedness, humbleness, &c. Divine light casts a general beauty and glory upon the soul; it transforms a man more and more into the glorious image of Christ. Look, as the child receiveth from his parents member for member, limb for limb, or as the paper from the press receiveth letter for letter, the wax from the seal print for print, or as the face in the glass answers to the face of the man, or as indenture answers to indenture, so the beams of divine light and knowledge shining into the soul, stamp the lively image of Christ upon the soul, and make it put on the Lord Jesus, and resemble him to the life. Notional knowledge may make a man excellent at

praising the glorious and worthy acts and virtues of Christ; but that transforming knowledge that accompanies salvation, will work a man divinely to imitate the glorious acts and virtues of Christ: 1Pe 2:9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him' (τὰς ἀρετὰς, the virtues of him) 'who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' When God causes his divine light, his marvellous light, to shine in upon the soul, then a Christian will (ἐξαγγελλῇ) preach forth the virtues of Christ in an imitable practice, and till then a man, under all other knowledge, will remain an incarnate devil. When a beam of divine light shined from heaven upon Paul, ah, how did it change and metamorphose him! How did it alter and transform him! It made his rebellious soul obedient: Acts 9:6, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' God bids him arise and go into the city, and it should be told him what he should do; and he obeys the heavenly vision, Acts 26:19. Divine light makes this lion a lamb, this persecutor a preacher, this destroyer of the saints a builder up of the saints, this tormenter a comforter, this monster an angel, this notorious blasphemer a very great admirer of God, and the actings of his free grace, as you may see by comparing Acts 9:1-43 and Acts 26:1-32 together. So when a spark of this heavenly fire fell upon the heart of Mary Magdalene, Luk 7:3-37, oh what a change, what a turn doth it make in her! Now she loves much, and believes much, and repents much, and weeps much. Oh what a change did divine light make in Zaccheus, and in the jailor! Verily, if thy light, thy knowledge doth not better thee, if it doth not change and transform thee, if, under all thy light and knowledge thou remainest as vile and base as ever, thy light, thy knowledge, thy notions, thy speculations, will be like to fire, not on the hearth; but in the room, that will burn the house and the inhabitant too; it will be like mettle in a blind horse, that serves for nothing but to break the neck of the rider. That knowledge that is not a transforming knowledge, will torment a man at last more than all the devils in hell; it will be a sword to cut him, a rod to lash him, a serpent to bite him, a scorpion to sting him, and a vulture, a worm eternally gnawing him. When Tamberlain was in his wars, one having found and digged up a great pot of gold, brought it to him, Tamberlain asked whether it had his father's stamp upon it; but when he saw it had the Roman stamp, and not his father's, he would not own it. So God at last will own no knowledge, but that which leaves the stamp of Christ, the print of Christ, the image of Christ upon the heart, but that which changes and transforms the soul, that makes a man a new man, another man than what he was before divine light shined upon him.

(3.) The third property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is experimental knowledge. It is knowledge that springs from a spiritual sense and taste of holy and heavenly things. Song of Solomon 1:2, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine.' The spouse had experienced the sweetness of Christ's love; 'his loves,' says she, 'is better than wine,' though wine is an excellent creature, a useful creature, a comfortable and delightful creature, a reviving and restorative creature. And this draws out her heart, and makes her insatiable in longing, and very earnest in coveting, not a kiss, but kisses, not a little, but much of Christ. Her knowledge being experimental, she is impatient and restless, till she was drawn into the nearest and highest communion and fellowship with Christ. So in Song of Solomon 1:13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' Myrrh is marvellous sweet and savoury, 'so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse;' I have found Jesus Christ to be marvellous sweet and savoury to my soul. Myrrh is bitter to the taste, though it be sweet to the smell; so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse. I have found him to be bitter and bloody to the old man, to the ignoble and worser part of man; and I have found him to be sweet and lovely to

the new man, to the regenerate man, to the noble part of man. I have found him to be a bitter and a bloody enemy to my sins, and at the same time to be a sweet and precious friend unto my soul.³ Myrrh is of a preserving nature, it is hot and dry in the second degree, as the naturalists observe; so is my well-beloved unto me, says the spouse. Oh! I have found the Lord Jesus preserving my soul from closing with such and such temptations, and from falling under the power of such and such corruptions, and from fainting under such and such afflictions, &c. Considerable to the same purpose is that of Php 1:9, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.' The Greek word that is here rendered 'judgment,' properly signifies sense, not a corporal, but a spiritual sense and taste, an inward experimental knowledge of holy and heavenly things. The apostle well knew that all notional and speculative knowledge would leave men on this side heaven, and therefore he earnestly prays that their knowledge might be experimental, that being the knowledge that accompanies salvation, that will give a man at last a possession of salvation. Verily, that knowledge that is only notional, speculative, and general, that is gathered out of books, discourses, and other outward advantages, is such a knowledge that will make men sit down on this side salvation, as it did Judas, Demas, the scribes and pharisees, &c. Christ will at last shut the door of hope, of help, of consolation and salvation, upon all those that know much of him notionally, but nothing feelingly, as you may see in his shutting the door of happiness against the foolish virgins, Mat 25:11-12, and against those forward professors, preachers, and workers of miracles, Mat 7:22, who had much speculative knowledge, but no experimental knowledge; who had much outward general knowledge of Christ, but no spiritual inward acquaintance with Christ. A man that hath that experimental knowledge that accompanies salvation, will from his experience tell you, that sin is the greatest evil in the world, for he hath found it so, Rom 7:1-25; that Christ is the one thing necessary, for he hath found him so, Psa 27:4; that the favour of God is better than life, for he hath found it so, Psa 63:3; that pardoning mercy only makes a man happy, for he hath found it so, Psa 32:1-2; that a wounded spirit is such a burden that none can bear, for he hath found it so, Pro 18:14; that an humble and a broken heart is an acceptable sacrifice to God, for he hath found it so; Psa 51:17; that the promises are precious pearls, for he hath found them so, 2Pe 1:4; that the smiles of God will make up the want of any outward mercy, for he hath found it so, Psa 4:6-7; that communion with God can only make a heaven in a believer's heart, for he hath found it so, Psa 48:10; that if the Spirit be pleased and obeyed, he will be a comforter to the soul, for he hath found it so, John 16:7; but if his motions and laws be slighted and neglected, he will stand far off from the soul, he will vex and gall the soul, Lam 1:16, Isa 63:10-11. Well! souls, remember this, that knowledge that is not experimental will never turn to your account, it will only increase your guilt and torment, as it did the Scribes' and Pharisees'. What advantage had the men of the old world, by their knowing that there was an ark, or by their clambering about the ark, when they were shut out and drowned in the flood! What doth it profit a man to see heaps of jewels and pearls, and mountains of gold and silver, when he is moneyless and penniless? It is rather a torment than a comfort to know that there is a pardon for other malefactors, but none for me; that there is bread for such and such hungry souls, but none for me; that there is water and wine to cheer, comfort, and refresh such and such, but not a sip, a drop, for me; my bottle is empty, and I may die for thirst, whilst others are drinking at the fountain-head; that there is houses and clothes to shelter such and such from colds, storms, and tempests, whilst I lie naked with Lazarus at Dives's door, exposed to the misery of all weathers. This kind of knowledge doth rather torment men than comfort them, it does but add fuel to the fire,

and make their hell the hotter. The knowledge that devils and apostates have of God, Christ, and the Scriptures, &c., being only notional, is so far from being a comfort to them, that it is their greatest torment; it is a worm that is eternally gnawing them, it makes them ten thousand times more miserable than otherwise they would be. They are still a-crying out, Oh that our light, our light were put out! Oh that our knowledge, our knowledge were extinguished! Oh that we might but change rooms, change places with the heathens, with the barbarians, that never knew what we have known! Oh how happy would damned devils and apostates judge themselves in hell, if they should escape with those dreadful stripes that shall be eternally laid upon the backs of fools! Remember, reader, that a little heart-knowledge, a little experimental knowledge, is of greater efficacy and worth than the highest notions of the most acutest wits. He doth well that discourses of Christ, but he doth infinitely better that, by experimental knowledge, feeds and lives on Christ. It was not Adam's seeing, but his tasting, of forbidden fruit that made him miserable; and it is not your seeing of Christ, but your experimental tasting of Christ, that will make you truly happy. As no knowledge will save but what is experimental, so let no knowledge satisfy you but what is experimental, Psa 34:8.

(4.) The fourth property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is a heart-affecting knowledge. It affects the heart with Christ and all spiritual things. Oh, it doth wonderfully endear Christ and the things of Christ to the soul: Song of Solomon 2:5, 'Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.' Oh, saith the spouse, my heart is taken with Christ, it is raised and ravished with his love; my soul is burning, my soul is beating towards Christ. Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! I cannot live in myself, I cannot live in my duties, I cannot live in external privileges, I cannot live in outward mercies, I cannot live in common providences; I can live only in Christ, who is my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my all in all. Oh, the hearing of Christ affects me, the seeing of Christ affects me, the taste of Christ affects me, the glimmerings of Christ affects me; the more I come to know him in his natures, in his names, in his offices, in his discoveries, in his appearances, in his beauties, the more I find my heart and affections to prize Christ, to run after Christ, to be affected with Christ, and to be wonderfully endeared to Christ, Song of Solomon 5:10. 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand,' Psa 73:25-26. The knowledge that she had of Christ did so affect and endear her heart to Christ, that she cannot but make use of all her rhetoric to set forth Christ in the most lovely and lively colours. Gal 6:14, 'God forbid that I should glory in anything, save in Christ Jesus.' Oh, God forbid that my heart should be affected or taken with anything in comparison of Christ. The more I know him, the more I like him; the more I know him, the more I love him; the more I know him, the more I desire him; the more I know him, the more my heart is knit unto him. His beauty is taking, his love is ravishing, his goodness is drawing, his manifestations are enticing, and his person is enamouring. His lovely looks please me, his pleasant voice delights me, his precious Spirit comforts me, his holy word rules me; and these things make Christ to be a heaven unto me. Oh, but now all that notional knowledge, that speculative knowledge, that leaves a man on this side salvation, never affects the heart; it never draws it, it never endears the heart to Christ, or to the precious things of Christ. Hence it is that such men, under all their notions, under all their light and knowledge, have no affection to Christ, no delight in Christ, no workings of heart after Christ.

Well, reader! remember this, if thy knowledge doth not now affect thy heart, it will at last with a witness afflict thy heart; if it doth not now endear Christ to thee, it will at last the more provoke

Christ against thee; if it doth not make all the things of Christ to be very precious in thy eyes, it will at last make thee the more vile in Christ's eyes. A little knowledge that divinely affects the heart, is infinitely better than a world of that swimming knowledge that swims in the head, but never sinks down into the heart, to the bettering, to the warming, and to the affecting of it. Therefore strive not so much to know, as to have thy heart affected with what thou knowest; for heart-affecting knowledge is the only knowledge that accompanies salvation, that will possess thee of salvation.

(5.) The fifth property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation, is a world-despising, a world-crucifying, and a world-contemning knowledge. It makes a man have low, poor, mean thoughts of the world; it makes a man slight it, and trample upon it as a thing of no value. That divine light that accompanies salvation, makes a man to look upon the world as mixed, as mutable, as momentary; it makes a man look upon the world as a liar, as a deceiver, as a flatterer, as a murderer, and as a witch that hath bewitched the souls of thousands to their eternal overthrow, by her golden offers and proffers. Divine knowledge put Paul upon trampling upon all the bravery and glory of the world, Php 3:4-9. I shall only transcribe the seventh and eighth verses, and leave you to turn to the rest. 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung' (σκύβαλα, dog's dung or dog's meat, coarse and contemptible), 'that I may win Christ.' Divine knowledge raises his heart so high above the world, that he looks upon it with an eye of scorn and disdain, and makes him count it as an excrement, yea, as the very worst of excrements, as dogs' dung, as dogs' meat. Of the like import is that of Heb 10:34, 'For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Divine knowledge will make a man rejoice, when his enemies make a bonfire of his goods. This man hath bills of exchange under God's own hand, to receive a pound for every penny, a million for every mite, that he loses for him. And this makes him to rejoice, and to trample upon all the glory of this world, as one did upon the philosopher's crown, Mat 19:27-30.

It was heavenly knowledge that made Moses to disdain and scorn the pomp and pleasures, the bravery and glory, the riches and advantages of Egypt and Ethiopia too, as some writers observe, Heb 11:24-26. So when a beam of divine light had shined upon Zaccheus, Oh, how doth it work him to part with the world, to cast off the world, to slight it and trample upon it, as a thing of nought! 'And Zaccheus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord! the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is the son of Abraham,' Luk 19:2-10. Before the candle of the Lord was set up in Zaccheus's soul, he dearly loved the world, he highly prized the world, he eagerly pursued after the world; he would have it right or wrong, his heart was set upon it, he was resolved to gather riches, though it was out of others' ruins. Ay, but when once he was divinely enlightened, he throws off the world, he easily parts with it, he sets very light by it, he looks with an eye of disdain upon it. His knowledge lifts him up above the smiles of the world, and above the frowns of the world; the world is no longer a snare, a bait, a temptation to him. He knows that it is more to be a son of Abraham, that is, to be taken into covenant with Abraham, to tread in the steps of Abraham's faith, as children tread in the steps of their fathers, and to lie and rest in the bosom of Abraham, as sons do in their fathers' bosoms, than to be rich, great, and honourable in the world, Rom 4:12, Rom 4:16, and Rom 9:1.

And this made him shake hands with the world, and say to it, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I more to do with you?' Isa 30:22; Hos 14:8. Verily, that light, that knowledge, will never lead thee to heaven, it will never possess thee of salvation, that leaves thee under the power of the world, that leaves thee in league and friendship with the world, 1Jn 2:15; Jas 4:4. If thy knowledge doth not put the world under thy feet, it will never put a crown of glory upon thy head. The church hath the moon under her feet, Rev 12:1, that is clothed with the sun, and that hath a crown upon her head.

Ah, knowing souls, knowing souls! do not deceive yourselves! Verily, if you are clothed with the comeliness and righteousness of the sun, which is Jesus Christ, and have a crown of victory and glory upon your heads, you will have the moon under your feet, you will tread and trample upon the trash of this world; all the riches, glories, and braveries of the world will be under your feet, in respect of your non-subjection to it and your holy contempt of it. If thy knowledge doth not enable thee to set thy feet upon those things that most set their hearts on, thou art undone for ever; thy knowledge will be so far from lifting thee up to heaven, that it will cast thee the lower into hell. Therefore let no knowledge satisfy thee, but that which lifts thee above the world, but that which weans thee from the world, but that which makes the world a footstool. This knowledge, this light will at last lead thee into everlasting light.

(6.) The sixth property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is soul-abasing, soul-humbling knowledge. It makes a man very, very little and low in his own eyes, as you may see in the most knowing apostle: Eph 3:8, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' Paul's great light makes him very little. Though he was the greatest apostle, yet he looks upon himself as less than the least of all saints. Of all the evangelists, John was most sharp-sighted, most eagle-eyed. He had the clearest sight of Christ; he lay most in the bosom of Christ; he knew most of the mind of Christ; he had the fullest manifestations and revelations of Christ; and yet oh how little, how low is John in his own eyes! 3 John 1:26-27, 'John answered them saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you whom ye know not. He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.' In this phrase John alludes to the custom of the Hebrews. Those among them which were more noble than others, had boys who carried their shoes, and untied them when they laid them by. Oh! says John, I am a poor, weak, worthless creature; I am not worthy to be admitted to the meanest, to the lowest service under Christ; I am not worthy to carry his shoes, to unloose his shoes. After Peter had been in the mount, and instructed and enlightened by Christ, he cries out, 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man,' (Αν[θρωπος] ἁμαρτωλ[ος]): a man, a sinner, a very mixture and compound of dirt and sin, of vileness and baseness, as you may see in comparing Mat 17:1-5, Luk 5:8. Abraham, under all his light and knowledge, acknowledges himself to be but dust and ashes, Gen 18:27. Jacob, under all his knowledge, acknowledges himself to be less than the least of all mercies, Gen 32:10. David, under all his knowledge, acknowledges himself to be a worm, and no man, Psa 22:6; he acknowledges himself to be foolish and ignorant, and as a beast before the Lord, Psa 73:22. Job, under all his knowledge, acknowledges that he hath much reason to abhor himself in dust and ashes, Job 42:1-5. Agur was very good and his knowledge very great; and yet under all his knowledge, oh, how did he vilify, yea, nullify himself! 'Surely,' saith he, 'I am more brutish, than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy,'

Pro 30:1, Pro 30:4. The evangelical prophet Isaiah, under all his knowledge and visions, which were very great and glorious, acknowledges himself to be a man of unclean lips, and to dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips,' Isa 6:1-8. Divine and heavenly knowledge brings a man near to God; it gives a man the clearest and fullest sight of God; and the nearer any man comes to God, and the clearer visions he hath of God, the more low and humble will that man lie before God. None so humble as they that have nearest communion with God. The angels that are near unto him cover their faces with their wings, in token of humility. Divine knowledge makes a man look inwards; it anatomizes a man to himself; it is a glass that shews a man the spots of his own soul, and this makes him little and low in his own eyes. In the beams of this heavenly light, a Christian comes to see his own pride, ignorance, impatience, unworthiness, conceitedness, worthlessness, frowardness and nothingness. That knowledge that swells thee will undo thee; that knowledge that puffs thee will sink thee; that knowledge that makes thee delightful in thy own eyes will make thee despicable in God's and good men's eyes: 1Co 8:1-2, 'Knowledge puffeth up;' that is, notional knowledge, speculative knowledge, knowledge that ripens a man for destruction, that will leave him short of salvation. This knowledge puffs and swells a man, and makes him think himself something when he is nothing: 'And if any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know,' saith the apostle. Will not that philosopher rise in judgment against many of our high-flown professors, who swell, who look big, and talk big under their notional knowledge, which was very great: Hoc tantum scio, quod nihil scio, 'This only do I know, that I know nothing.' Well! if that knowledge thou hast be that knowledge that accompanies salvation, it is a soul-humbling and a soul-abasing knowledge. If it be otherwise, then will thy knowledge make thee both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once.

(7.) The seventh property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is an appropriating knowledge, a knowledge that appropriates and applies spiritual and heavenly benefits to a man's own particular soul. As you may see in Job, 'my Redeemer lives,' and 'my witness is in heaven,' and 'my record is on high,' Job 19:25, and Job 16:19; so David, 'the Lord is my portion,' Psa 16:5. In Psa 18:2, he useth this word of propriety eight times together, 'The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.' So the spouse, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Song of Solomon 2:16; so Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John 20:28; so Paul, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who hath loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal 2:20. Applicatory knowledge is the sweetest knowledge; it revives the heart, it cheers the spirits, it rejoices the soul, it makes a man go singing to duties, and go singing to his grave, and singing to heaven; whereas others, though gracious, that want this applicatory knowledge, have their hearts full of fears, and their lives full of sorrows, and so go sighing and mourning to heaven.⁶ But lest any precious soul should turn this truth into a sword to cut and wound himself, let me desire him to remember, that every believer that hath such knowledge that accompanies salvation, hath not this applicatory knowledge, that makes so much for the soul's consolation, and that doth accompany some men's salvation, I say not all men's salvation. If thou findest thy knowledge to be such a knowledge as is before described in the six former particulars, though thou hast not attained to this applicatory knowledge, yet hast thou attained to that knowledge that accompanies salvation, and that will, my soul for thine, give thee a possession of salvation. This applicatory knowledge that accompanies salvation is only to be found in such eminent saints that are high in their communion with God, and

that have attained some considerable assurance of their interest in God. Many men's salvation is accompanied with an applicatory knowledge, but all men's salvation is not accompanied with an applicatory knowledge of man's particular interest in Christ, and those blessed favours and benefits that comes by him. Thy soul may be safe, and thy salvation may be sure, though thou hast not attained unto this appropriating knowledge, but thy life cannot be comfortable without this appropriating knowledge; therefore, if thou hast it not, labour for it as for life. It is a pearl of price, and if thou findest it, it will make thy soul amends for all thy digging, seeking, working, sweating, weeping, &c.2 (8.) The eighth property. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is accompanied and attended with these things:

[1.] The first attendant. That knowledge that accompanies salvation is attended with holy endeavours, and with heavenly desires, thirstings, and pantings after a further knowledge of God, after clearer visions of God. Pro 15:14, 'The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered 'seeketh' [שָׁקַח], is in pihil, and signifies an earnest and diligent seeking; to seek as an hungry man seeks for meat, or as a covetous man for gold, the more he hath, the more he desires; or as a condemned man seeks for his pardon, or as the diseased man seeks for his cure. The word in the text is from a root [שָׁקַח] that signifies to seek studiously, laboriously, industriously; to seek by suing, praying, inquiring, and walking up and down, that we may find what we seek: so in that Pro 18:15, 'The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge' [שָׁקַח]. A man that divinely knows, will set his heart and his ear, his inward and outward man, to know more and more. Divine knowledge is marvellous sweet, pleasing, comforting, satisfying, refreshing, strengthening, and supporting; and souls that have found the sweetness and usefulness of it, cannot but look and long, breathe and pant after more and more of it. The new-born babe doth not more naturally and more earnestly long for the breasts, than a soul that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious doth long for further and further tastes of God, 1Pe 2:2-3. David, under all his knowledge, cries out, 'I am a stranger in the land, hide not thy commandments from me. Open mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,' Psa 119:18-19. Job, under all his knowledge, which was very great, cries out, 'That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more,' Job 34:32.

[2.] The second attendant. A second thing that attends and accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation, is holy endeavours to edify others, to instruct others, to enlighten and inform others in the knowledge of spiritual and heavenly things. Heavenly light cannot be hid under a bushel. You may as easily hinder the sun from shining, as you may hinder a gracious soul from diffusing and spreading abroad that knowledge and light that God hath given him. Divine light in the soul is like a light in a bright lantern, that shines forth every way, or like a light in a room, or on a beacon, that gives light to others. A Christian that divinely knows, is like the lamp in the story, that was always burning and shining, and never went out. So in Gen 18:17, Gen 18:19, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do; for I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' He that communicates his knowledge to others, shall be both of God's court and counsel; he shall lie in the bosom of God, he shall know the secrets of God. Pro 15:7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge, but the heart of the foolish doth not so.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered,

'disperse,' is a metaphor taken from seedsmen scattering abroad their seed in the furrows of the field. Heavenly knowledge is very spreading and diffusive; it is like the sun: the sun casteth his beams upward and downward, upon good and upon bad; so divine light in a gracious soul will break forth for the advantage and profit of friends and enemies, of those that be in a state of nature, and of those that be in a state of grace. Acts 4:18-20, 'And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard.' The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit; so a heavenly Christian sucks sweetness out of every mercy and every duty, out of every providence and out of every ordinance, out of every promise and out of every privilege, that he may give out the more sweetness to others. Lilmod lelammed, 'we therefore learn, that we may teach,' is a proverb among the Rabbins. 'And I do therefore lay in, and lay up,' saith the heathen, 'that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.' This heathen [Socrates, &c.] will rise in judgment against those that monopolise knowledge to themselves, that imprison their light within their own breasts, lest others should outshine and darken them.

Synesius speaks of some, who, having a treasure of rare abilities in themselves, would as soon part with their hearts as with their conceptions. Verily, such men are far off from that knowledge that accompanies salvation; for that knowledge will make a man willing to spend and be spent for the edification, consolation, and salvation of others, 2Co 6:10; Gal 4:19. Pro 10:21, 'The lips of the righteous feed many.'

[3.] The third attendant. A third thing that attends and accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation, is holy zeal, courage, and resolution for God. Divine knowledge makes a man as bold as a lion, Pro 28:1. Dan 11:32, 'And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.' So Pro 24:5, 'A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength,' or, 'He strengtheneth might,' as it is in the Hebrew. Divine light makes a man full of mettle for God; it makes the soul divinely fearless and careless. Jos 24:15, 'Choose ye whom you will serve, I and my household will serve the Lord.' Come what will of it, we will never change our Master, nor quit his service.

Those beams of light that shined in upon Chrysostom, did so heat and warm his heart, that he stoutly tells Eudoxia the empress, that for her covetousness she would be called a second Jezebel; whereupon she sent him a threatening message, to which he returned this answer, 'Go tell her,' nil nisi peccatum timeo, 'I fear nothing but sin.' A prophetic man, in the ecclesiastical history, went to the pillars a little before an earthquake, and bid them stand fast, for they should shortly be shaken. Ah, Christians! there is an earthquake a-coming, and therefore as you would stand fast, as you would not have any earthquakes to make your hearts quake, get this zeal and courage that attends divine knowledge, and then you shall in the midst of all earthquakes be as mount Zion that cannot be removed, Psalms 125:1-2.

They that write the story of the travels of the apostles, report that Simon Zelotes preached here in England. Ah, England, England! if ever thou needest some zealots, it is now. Oh how secure, how dull, how drowsy, how sleepy in the midst of dangers art thou! For this and other of thy

abominations, I desire my soul may weep in secret.

[4.] The fourth attendant. The fourth and last thing that attends or accompanies that knowledge that accompanies salvation is, faith and confidence in God. Psa 9:10, 'They that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forgotten them that seek thee.' 2Ti 1:12, 'For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.' I shall not enlarge upon this branch, because I shall speak at large concerning faith in the next particular. And thus I have shewed you from the Scriptures what that knowledge is that accompanies salvation.

Now, the second thing that I am to shew you is, what that faith is that accompanies salvation. I have formerly shewed you that faith doth accompany salvation, but now I will shew you what faith that is that doth accompany salvation; and that I shall do, by divine assistance, thus:

First, That faith that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that will possess a man of salvation, is known, (1.) By the objects about which it is exercised. And, (2.) By the properties of it.

First, By the objects about which it is exercised. Now the objects of faith are these.

(1.) The first object of faith. First, The person of Christ is the object of faith. It is Christ in the promises that faith deals with. The promise is but the shell, Christ is the kernel; the promise is but the casket, Christ is the jewel in it; the promise is but the field, Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field; the promise is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring; and upon this sparkling, shining pearl, faith delights most to look. Song of Solomon 3:4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him, and I would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.' So Song of Solomon 7:5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' Faith hath two hands, and with both she lays earnest and fast hold on King Jesus. Christ's beauty and glory is very taking and drawing; faith cannot see it, but it will lay hold on it. Christ is the principal object about which faith is exercised, for the obtaining of righteousness and everlasting happiness. Acts 16:30-31, 'And the jailor said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Christ is in a world of scriptures held forth to be the object about which faith is most conversant; and the more faith is exercised upon the person of Christ, the more it buds and blossoms, like Aaron's rod. Faith looks upon him as the express image and character of his Father; faith beholds him as the chiefest of ten thousand; faith sees him to be the most glorious object in all the world.

(2.) The second object of faith. Secondly, The second object that faith is exercised about is the righteousness of Jesus Christ: Php 3:9, 'I desire to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Paul would not be found in a legal righteousness, for he knew all his legal righteousness was but as 'filthy rags,' Isa 54:6. All his legal righteousness, sewed together, would but make up a coat of patches, a beggar's coat, that is good for nothing but to be cast away; therefore he desired to be found in the righteousness of Christ by faith. He knew that Christ's righteousness was a pure righteousness, a spotless righteousness, a matchless righteousness, a

complete righteousness, a perfect righteousness, an absolute righteousness, a glorious righteousness. Faith loves to fix her eye upon that rich and royal robe, that blameless and spotless righteousness of Christ, wherewith the soul stands gloriously clothed before God, as being all fair as being without spot or wrinkle in divine account. Oh, it is the actings of faith upon this blessed object, this glorious righteousness of Christ, that makes a man familiar and bold with God, that makes a man active and resolute for God, that strengthens a man against temptations, that supports a man under afflictions, that makes a man long for the day of his dissolution, that makes him prefer his coffin above a prince's crown, the day of his death above the day of his birth; that makes him triumph over sin and Satan, hell and wrath. Adam's righteousness was but the righteousness of a creature, but the righteousness about which faith is exercised is the righteousness of a God,² Rom 3:21, and Rom 10:3. Adam's righteousness was a mutable righteousness, a righteousness that might be sinned away; but the righteousness that a believer's faith is exercised about is an everlasting righteousness, a righteousness that cannot be sinned away, 2Co 5:21: Pro 8:18. vide Dan 9:24, 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy;' Psa 119:142, 'Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.' The righteousness of Adam was a righteousness subject to shaking, and we know that Satan did shake all his righteousness about his ears, as I may say. Oh but that glorious righteousness about which faith is conversant is an unshaken righteousness, a righteousness that cannot be shaken: Psa 36:6, 'Thy righteousness is like the great mountains,' or rather, as it is in the Hebrew, 'Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God. What more stable than a mountain! and what mountain so stable as the mountain of God! The mountains cannot be shaken, no more can that glorious righteousness of Christ, about which a believer's faith is exercised. Adam's righteousness was a low righteousness, a righteousness within his own reach, and a righteousness within Satan's reach; it was not so high, but Adam could lay his hand upon it, as I may say; it was not so high, but Satan could reach to the top of it, yea, to the over-topping of it, as we have all found by woful experience. Oh, but that righteousness that faith is conversant about, is a righteousness of such a height, as that neither Satan nor the world can reach to it: Psa 71:15-16, Psa 71:19, 'My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hath done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?' This glorious righteousness of Christ, about which faith is busied, is called the righteousness of faith, because faith apprehends it, and applies it, and feeds upon it, and delights in it, Rom 3:28. Rom 4:13, 'For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.' Chap. 9:30, 'What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.' The righteousness of Christ about which faith is employed, is called the righteousness of faith, because faith puts on this righteousness upon the soul. Faith wraps the soul up in this righteousness of Christ, and so justifieth it before God instrumentally. The actings of faith on this glorious righteousness doth most strengthen the soul: Isa 45:24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' The actings of faith on this blessed righteousness, doth most glad and rejoice the soul: Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God;

for he hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' The actings of faith upon this complete righteousness of Christ, renders souls just and righteous, pure and holy, in the account of God: Rom 10:4, 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.' Christ fulfils the law for believers, and they by believing do fulfil the law in him; and so Christ by doing, and they by believing in him that doth it, do fulfil the law, and so are reputed fair and spotless, complete and perfect, before the throne of God. Faith's putting this righteousness on the soul, brings down blessings upon the soul. When Jacob had put on his elder brother's garment, he carried the blessing away. The actings of faith upon this peerless righteousness of Christ, brings down the blessing of peace, and the blessing of joy, and the blessing of remission of sins; and, in a word, all other blessings that contributes to the making us blessed here and happy hereafter, &c.

(3.) The third object of faith. Thirdly, The third object that faith is exercised about is, the precious promises, which are a Christian's magna charta. As every precious stone hath an egregious² virtue in it, so hath every promise. The promises are a precious book, every leaf drops myrrh and mercy; and upon these precious promises, precious faith looks and lives. From these breasts faith sucks comfort and sweetness. Psa 119:49-50, 'Remember thy word (that is, thy promise) unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' So in Psa 27:13, 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living;' Heb 11:13, 'These all died in faith (or according to faith), not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them' (or, as the Greek hath it, saluted them by faith; they kissed the promises, and kissed Christ in the promises), 'and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' It would be an endless thing to shew you how the faith of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and other saints have been acted and exercised upon promises of sanctification, upon promises of justification, upon promises of salvation, upon promises of glorification, upon promises of protection, upon promises for direction, upon promises for supportation, &c. Look, as the lamp lives upon the oil, and the child upon the breasts, so doth faith upon the promises. For the further advantage and comfort of your souls in eyeing the promises, let me give you these two sweet hints:

First, In your looking upon the promises, mind most, eye most, spiritual promises, absolute promises, viz., those and such like that you see in the margin. These spiritual and absolute promises are of nearest and greatest concernment to you; these carry in them most of the heart of Christ, the love of Christ, the good-will of Christ; these are of greatest use to satisfy you, and to settle you when you are wavering; to support you when you are falling; to reduce you when you are wandering; to comfort you when you are fainting; to counsel you when you are staggering, &c. Therefore make these your choicest and your chiefest companions, especially when it is night within your souls, when you are sensible of much sin and but a little grace, of much corruption but of little consolation, of much deadness but of little quickness, of much hardness but of little tenderness, of many fears and but a little faith. The Jews under the law had more temporal promises than spiritual, but we under the gospel have far more spiritual promises than temporal; therefore sit down at this fire, and be warmed; drink of these springs, and be satisfied; taste of these delicacies, and be cheered. Let the eye of faith be cast upon all the promises, but fixed upon spiritual promises, upon absolute promises; they will have the greatest influence upon the heart to

holiness, and to prepare it for everlasting happiness.⁵

Look not only upon some of the riches, the jewels, the pearls, that be wrapped up in the promises, but enlarge and expatiate your understandings to an effectual contemplation of all those riches and treasures that God hath laid up in the promises. Cast not the eye of your faith only upon one beam of the sun, but endeavour to see all the beams of the sun; look not upon one branch of the tree of life, but upon every branch of that tree; look not upon one bunch of the grapes of Canaan, but look upon the whole land. As understanding heirs, when they come to read over their evidences and writings, they will see what they have in houses, what in goods, what in lands, what in money, what in jewels, what at home, what abroad; they will not sit down and say, Well! we find in our evidences, that such and such land is ours, and look no further; no, no, they will look all over, and take exact notice of everything; they will say, We have so much land, and so much money, &c. O beloved, there is much marrow and fatness, there is much honey and sweetness, much grace and glory wrapped up in the promises. Oh press them, and oppress² them till you have got forth all the riches and sweetness that is in them.

Ah, Christians! did you this, God would be more honoured, the promises more prized, your graces more strengthened, your fears more abated, your hearts more warmed and engaged, and your lives more regulated, and Satan more easily and frequently vanquished. And so much for this third object, about which faith is exercised.

(4.) Fourthly, The fourth object of faith. The fourth object and last that I shall mention that faith is set and fixed upon is, that glory, blessedness, and life, which God hath laid up for them, that love him. The things of eternity are the greatest things, they are the most excellent things. They are most excellent in their natures, in their causes, in their operations, in their effects, in their ends; and upon these faith looks and lives. Faith realiseth things; it makes absent things present. 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,' Heb 11:1. Faith makes absent glory present, absent riches present, absent pleasures present, absent favours present. Faith brings an invisible God, and sets him before the soul. Moses by faith saw him that was invisible. Faith brings down the recompence of reward, and sets it really though spiritually before the soul. Faith sets divine favour before the soul. It sets peace, it sets pardon of sin, it sets the righteousness of Christ, it sets the joy of heaven, it sets salvation, before the soul; it makes all these things very near and obvious to the soul: 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen.'⁵ Faith makes invisible things visible, absent things present, things that are afar off to be very near unto the soul, by convincing demonstrations, by arguments and reasons drawn from the word, as the Greek word signifies: 2Co 4:17-18, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.' Faith trades in invisible things, in eternal things. Its eye is always upwards, like the fish called by Galen uranoscopos, that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven.³ Faith enters within the veil, and fixes her eye upon those glorious things of eternity, that are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they are above all estimation. Says faith, The spangled firmament is but the footstool of my Father's house; and if the footstool, the outside, be so glorious, oh how glorious is his throne! Verily, in heaven there is that life that cannot be expressed, that light that cannot be comprehended, that joy that cannot be fathomed, that sweetness that cannot be dissipated, that

feast that cannot be consumed; and upon these pearls of glory I look and live, says faith. And thus I have shewed you the choice and precious objects about which that faith is exercised that accompanies salvation.

I shall now in the next place shew you the properties of that faith that accompanies salvation, and they are these that follow.

[1.] The first property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it puts forth itself into vital operation. It makes a man full of life and activity for God; it will make a man diligent and venturous in the work and ways of God. Faith is a most active quality in itself, and so it makes a Christian most active. It is a doing thing, and it makes the person doing. Faith will not suffer the soul to be idle. Faith is like the virtuous woman in the last of the Proverbs, who puts her hand to every work, who would suffer none of her handmaids to be idle. Faith puts the soul upon grieving for sin, upon combating with sin, upon weeping over sin, upon trembling at the occasions of sin, upon resisting temptations that lead to sin, upon fighting it out to the death with sin, Zec 12:10. Faith puts a man upon walking with God, upon waiting on God, upon working for God, upon wrestling with God, upon bearing for God, and upon parting with anything for God. Faith makes religious duties to be easy to the soul, to be delightful to the soul, to be profitable to the soul. Faith makes the soul to be serious and conscientious in doing, to be careful and faithful in doing, to be delightful and cheerful in doing, to be diligent and faithful in doing.⁶ That faith that is not a working faith is no faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a dead faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a deluding faith; that faith that is not a working faith is a worthless faith; that faith that is not a working faith will leave a man short of heaven and happiness in the latter day. Faith that accompanies salvation is better at doing than at thinking, at obeying than at disputing, at walking than at talking: Tit 3:8, 'This is a faithful saying; and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.' Faith will make a man endeavour to be good, yea, to be best, at everything he undertakes. It is not leaves but fruit, not words but works, that God expects; and if we cross his expectation, we frustrate our own salvation, we further our own condemnation. Faith makes the soul much in doing, abundant in working, and that partly by persuading the soul that all its works, all its duties and services, shall be owned and accepted of God, as in Isa 56:7, 'Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.' Faith assures the soul that every prayer, every sigh, every groan, every tear is accepted. And this makes the soul pray much, and sigh much, and mourn much.

Again, faith spreads the promises of divine assistance before the soul. Oh! says faith, here, O soul, is assistance suitable to the work required. And this makes a man work, as for life; it makes a man work and sweat, and sweat and work.

Again, faith sets the recompence, the reward, before the soul, Heb 11:25-26. Oh! says faith, look here, soul, here is a great reward for a little work; here is great wages for weak and imperfect services; here is an infinite reward for a finite work. Work, yea, work hard, says faith, O believing soul, for thy actions in passing pass not away; every good work is as a grain of seed for eternal life. There is a resurrection of works as well as of persons, and in that day wicked men shall see that it is not a vain thing to serve God; they shall see the most doing souls to be the most shining

souls, to be the most advanced and rewarded. Oh the sight of this crown, of this recompence, makes souls to abound in the work of the Lord, they knowing that their labour is not in vain in the Lord, 1Co 15:58.

Again, faith draws from Christ's fulness; it sucks virtue and strength from Christ's breasts. Faith looks upon Christ as a head, and so draws from him; it looks upon Christ as a husband, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a fountain, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a sea, as an ocean of goodness, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a father, Col 1:19, and so draws from him; it looks upon him as a friend, and so draws from him, John 1:16. And this divine power and strength sets the soul a-working hard for God; it makes the soul full of motion, full of action. In a word, faith is such a working grace as sets all other graces a-working. Faith bath an influence upon every grace; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl; it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues. Love touched by a hand of faith flames forth; hope fed at faith's table grows strong, and casts anchor within the veil, Acts 5:1-42 and Acts 16:1-40; Rom 15:13. Joy, courage, and zeal being smiled upon by faith, is made invincible and unconquerable, &c. Look, what oil is to the wheels, what weights are to the clock, what wings are to the bird, what sails are to the ship, that faith is to all religious duties and services, except it be winter with the soul. And thus you see, that that faith that accompanies salvation is a working faith, a lively faith, and not such a dead faith as most please and deceive themselves with for ever.

[2.] The second property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it is of a growing and increasing nature. It is like the waters of the sanctuary, that rise higher and higher, as Ezekiel speaks. It is like a tender plant, that naturally grows higher and higher; it is like a grain of mustard-seed, which though it be the least of all seeds, yet by a divine power it grows up beyond all human expectations, Mat 13:32. Faith is imperfect, as all other graces are, but yet it grows and increases gradually: Rom 1:17, 'For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just, shall live by faith.' As a gracious soul is still a-adding knowledge to knowledge, love to love, fear to fear, zeal to zeal, so he is a-adding faith to faith. A gracious soul knows, that if he be rich in faith he cannot be poor in other graces; he knows the growth of faith will be as 'the former and the latter rain' to all other graces; he knows that there is no way to outgrow his fears but by growing in faith; he knows that all the pleasant fruits of paradise, viz., joy, comfort, and peace, flourishes as faith flourishes; he knows that he hath much work upon his hands, that he hath many things to do, many temptations to withstand, many mercies to improve, many burdens to bear, many corruptions to conquer, many duties to perform. And this makes the believing soul thus to reason with God: Ah, Lord! whatever I am weak in, let me be strong in faith; whatever dies, let faith live; whatever decays, let faith flourish. Lord, let me be low in repute, low in parts, low in estate, so thou wilt make me high in faith. Lord! let me be poor in anything, poor in everything, so thou wilt make me rich in faith. Lord! let the eye of faith be more opened, let the eye of faith be more quick-sighted, let the eye of faith be the more raised, and it shall be enough to me, though Joseph be not, though Benjamin be not.

It was the glory of the Thessalonians, that 'their faith grew exceedingly,' 2Th 1:3. A growth in faith will render a man glorious in life, lovely in death, and twice blessed in the morning of the resurrection. So will not a growth in honours, a growth in riches, a growth in notions, a growth in opinions. That faith that accompanies salvation unites the soul to Christ, and keeps the soul up in communion with Christ. And from that union and communion that the soul hath with Christ, flows

such a divine power and virtue, that causes faith to grow.⁴ Yet that no weak believer may be stumbled, or sadded, let them remember,

(1.) That though that faith that accompanies salvation be a growing faith, yet there are some certain seasons and cases wherein a man may decay in his faith, and wherein he may not have the exercise and the actings of his faith. This blessed babe of grace may be cast into a deep slumber; this heavenly pearl may be so buried under the thick clay of this world, and under the ashes of corruption and temptation, as that for a time it may neither stir, nor grow, as might be shewn in Abraham, David, Solomon, Peter, and others.

(2.) Secondly, Remember this, that the strongest faith at times is subject to shakings, as the strongest men are to faintings, as the stoutest ships are to tossings as the wisest men are to doubtings, as the brightest stars are to twinklings, &c. Therefore, if at certain times thou shouldst not be sensible of the growth of thy faith, yet do not conclude that thou hast no faith. Faith may be in the habit when it is not in the act. There may be life in the root of the tree, when there is neither leaves, blossoms, nor fruit upon the tree; the life that is in the root will shew itself at the spring, and so will the habits of faith break forth into acts, when the Sun of righteousness shall shine forth, and make it a pleasant spring to thy soul. And thus much for this second particular.

[3.] The third property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it makes those things that are great and glorious in the world's account to be very little and low in the eyes of the believer. Faith makes a believer to live in the land of promise as in a strange country, Heb 11:9. It is nothing to live as a stranger in a strange land, but to live as a stranger in the land of promise, this is the excellency and glory of faith.

Faith will make a man set his feet where other men sets their hearts. Faith looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon the things of this world. What, says faith, are earthly treasures to the treasures of heaven? What are stones to silver, dross to gold, darkness to light, hell to heaven? Mat 6:19-20. No more, says faith, are all the treasures, pleasures, and delights of this world, to the light of thy countenance, to the joy of thy Spirit, to the influences of thy grace, Psa 4:6-7. I see nothing, says David, in this wide world, only 'thy commandments are exceeding broad.' Faith makes David account his crown nothing, his treasures nothing, his victories nothing, his attendants nothing, &c. Faith will make a man write nothing upon the best of worldly things; it will make a man trample upon the pearls of this world, as upon dross and dung, Heb 11:24-26. Faith deadens a man's heart to the things of this world: 'I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me,' says Paul, Php 3:8; Gal 6:14. This world, says faith, is not my house, my habitation, my home; I look for a better country, for a better city, for a better home, 2Co 5:1-2. He that is adopted heir to a crown, a kingdom, looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon everything below a kingdom, below a crown. Faith tells the soul that it hath a crown, a kingdom in reversion; and this makes the soul to set light by the things of this world, 2Ti 4:8. Faith raises and sets the soul high. 'And hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,' saith the apostle, Eph 2:6. Faith makes a man live high: 'Our conversation is in heaven,' Php 3:20; and the higher any man lives, the less, the lower will the things of this world be in his eye. The fancy of Lucian is very pleasant, who placeth Charon on the top of an high hill, viewing all the affairs of men, and looking, on their greatest, richest, and most glorious cities, as little birds' nests. Faith sets the soul upon the hill of God, the mountain of God, that is, a high mountain; and from thence, faith gives the

soul a sight, a prospect of all things here below. And, ah! how like birds' nests do all the riches, braveries, and glories of this world look, and appear to them, that faith hath set upon God's high hill. Faith having set Luther upon this high hill, he protests that God should not put him off with these poor low things. Faith set Hoses high, it set him among invisibles; and that made him look upon, all the treasures, pleasures, riches, and glories of Egypt, as little birds' nests, as mole-hills, as dross and dung, as things that were too little and too low for him to set his heart upon. Verily, when once faith hath given a man a sight, a prospect of heaven, all things on earth will be looked upon as little and low. And so much for this third property of faith.

[4.] The fourth property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it purifies the heart, it is a heart-purifying faith. 'Purifying their hearts by faith,' Acts 15:9. Faith hath two hands, one to lay hold on Christ, and another to sweep the heart, which is Christ's house. Faith knows that Christ is of a dove-like nature; he loves to lie clean and sweet. Faith hath a neat housewife's hand, as well as an eagle's eye. Faith is as good at purging out of sin, as it is at discovering of sin. There is a cleansing quality in faith, as well as a healing quality in faith. Sound faith will purge the soul from the love of sin, from a delight in sin, and from the reign and dominion of sin, Eze 16:1-63. 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom 6:14, Rom 6:21. Now faith purges and cleanseth the heart from sin, sometimes by pressing and putting God to make good the promises of sanctification. Faith takes that promise in Jer 33:8, 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me;' and that promise in Mic 7:19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the bottom of the sea;' and that promise in Psa 65:3, 'Iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away;' and that promise in Isa 1:25, 'And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin;' and spreads them before the Lord, and will never leave urging and pressing, seeking and suing, till God makes them good. Faith makes the soul divinely impudent, divinely shameless. Lord! says faith, are not these thine own words? Hast thou said it, and shall it not come to pass? Art thou not a faithful God? Is not thine honour engaged to make good the promises that thou hast made? Arise, O God, and let my sins be scattered; turn thy hand upon me, and let my sins be purged. And thus faith purifies the heart.

Again, sometimes faith purifies the heart from sin, by engaging against sin in Christ's strength, as David engaged against Goliath, 1Sa 17:47, not in his own strength, but in the strength and name of the Lord of hosts. Faith leads the soul directly to God, and engages God against sin, so as that the combat, by the wisdom of faith, is changed, and made now rather between God and sin than between sin and the soul; and so sin comes to fall before the power and glorious presence of God. That is a choice word, Psa 61:2, 'From the ends of the earth will I cry to thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' Look, as a child that is set upon by one that is stronger than he, cries out to his father to help him, to stand by him, and to engage for him against his enemy; so faith, being sensible of its own weakness and inability to get the victory over sin, cries out to Christ, and engages Christ, who is stronger than the strong man, and so Christ binds the strong man, and casts him out. Faith tells the soul, that all purposes, resolutions, and endeavours, without Christ be engaged, will never set the soul above its sins, they will never purify the heart from sin; therefore faith engages Christ, and casts the main of the work upon Christ, and so it purges the soul from sin. Luther reports of Staupicius, a German divine, that he

acknowledged, before he came to understand the free and powerful grace of Christ, that he vowed and resolved an hundred times against some particular sin, and could never get power over it; he could never get his heart purified from it, till he came to see that he trusted too much to his own resolutions, and too little to Jesus Christ; but when his faith had engaged Christ against his sin, he had the victory.

Again, faith purifies the heart from sin, by the application of Christ's blood. Faith makes a plaster of Christ's blessed blood, and lays it on upon the soul's sores, and so cures it. Faith makes a heavenly vomit of this blessed blood, and gives it to the soul, and so makes it cast up that poison that it hath drunk in. Faith tells the soul, that it is not all the tears in the world, nor all the water in the sea, that can wash away the uncleanness of the soul; it is only the blood of Christ that can make a blackmoor white; it is only the blood of Christ that can cure a leprous Naaman, that can cure a leprous soul. This fountain of blood, says faith, is the only fountain for Judah and Jerusalem to wash themselves, to wash their hearts from all uncleanness and filthiness of flesh and spirit, Zec 13:1. Those spots a Christian finds in his own heart, can only be washed out in the blood of the Lamb, by a hand of faith.

Again, faith purifieth the soul from sin, by putting the soul upon heart-purifying ordinances, and by mixing and mingling itself with ordinances: 'The word profited them not,' saith the apostle, 'because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it,' Heb 4:2. Faith is such an excellent ingredient, that it makes all potions work for the good of the soul, for the purifying of the soul, and for the bettering of the soul; and no potion, no means will profit the soul, if this heavenly ingredient be not mixed with it. Now, faith puts a man upon praying, upon hearing, upon the fellowship of the saints, upon public duties, upon family duties, and upon closet duties; and faith in these comes and joins with the soul, and mixes herself with these soul-purifying ordinances, and so makes them effectual for the purifying of the soul more and more from all filthiness and uncleanness. Faith puts out all her virtue and efficacy in ordinances, to the purging of souls from their dross and tin; not that faith in this life shall wholly purify the soul from the being of sin, or from the motions or operations of sin, no;² for then we should have our heaven in this world, and then we might bid ordinances adieu; but that faith that accompanies salvation doth naturally purify and cleanse the heart from the remainders of sin by degrees. Sound faith is still a-making the heart more and more neat and clean, that the king of glory may delight in his habitation, that he may not remove his court, but may abide with the soul for ever. And thus you see that that faith that accompanies salvation is a heart-purifying faith.

(5.) The fifth property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it is soul-softening, it is soul-mollifying. Oh nothing breaks the heart of a sinner like faith. Peter believes soundly, and weeps bitterly, Mat 26:75; Mary Magdalene believes much, and weeps much, Luk 7:44. Faith sets a wounded Christ, a bruised Christ, a despised Christ, a pierced Christ, a bleeding Christ before the soul, and this makes the soul sit down and weep bitterly: 'I will pour upon the house of David, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him' (all gospel-mourning flows from believing), 'as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,' Zec 12:10, &c. Oh! the sight of those wounds that their sins have made, will wound their hearts through and through; it will make them lament over Christ with a bitter lamentation. They say nothing will dissolve the adamant but the blood of a goat. Ah! nothing will kindly, sweetly, and effectually break

the hardened heart of a sinner, but faith's beholding the blood of Christ trickling down his sides. Pliny reports of a serpent, that when it stings, it fetches all the blood out of the body; but it was never heard that ever any sweat blood but Christ, and the very thoughts of this makes the believing soul to sit down sweating and weeping. That Christ should love man when he was most unlovely, that man's extreme misery should but inflame Christ's bowels of love and mercy, this melts the believing soul. That Christ should leave the eternal bosom of his Father; that he that was equal with God should come in the form of a servant; that he that was clothed with glory, and born a king, should be wrapped in rags; that he that the heaven of heavens could not contain should be cradled in a manger; that from his cradle to his cross, his whole life should be a life of sorrows and sufferings; that the judge of all flesh should be condemned; that the Lord of life should be put to death; that he that was his Father's joy should in anguish of spirit cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' that that head that was crowned with honour should be crowned with thorns; that those eyes that were as a flame of fire, that were clearer than the sun, should be closed up by the darkness of death; that those ears which were wont to hear nothing but hallelujahs should hear nothing but blasphemies; that that face that was white and ruddy should be spit upon by the beastly Jews; that that tongue that spake as never man spake, yea, as never angel spake, should be accused of blasphemy; that those hands which swayed both a golden sceptre and an iron rod, and those feet that were as fine brass, should be nailed to the cross; and all this for man's transgression, for man's rebellion: Oh! the sight of these things, the believing of these things, the acting of faith on these things, makes a gracious soul to break and bleed, to sigh and groan, to mourn and lament. That faith that accompanies salvation is more or less a heart-breaking, a heart-melting faith.

(6.) The sixth property of that faith that accompanies salvation is this: it is a world-conquering faith, it is a world-overcoming faith. 1Jn 5:4, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' Faith overcomes the frowning world, the fawning world, the tempting world, and the persecuting world, and that it doth thus:

(1.) Faith, by uniting the soul to Christ, doth interest the soul in all the victories and conquests of Christ, and so makes the soul a conqueror with Christ: John 16:33, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' We have to deal but with a conquered enemy; our Jesus hath given the world a mortal wound; we have nothing to do but to set our feet upon a subdued enemy, and to sing it out with the apostle, 'Over all these we are more than conquerors,' Rom 8:37.

(2.) Faith overcomes the world by out-bidding sights; faith out-bids the world, and so makes the soul victorious. The world set honours, pleasures, &c., before Moses, but his faith out-bid the world. It presents the recompence of reward, it brings down all the glory, pleasures, and treasures of heaven, of that other world, and sets them before the soul; and so it overtops and overcomes the world by out-bidding it. So Christ, 'for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame,' Heb 12:2.

(3.) Faith overcomes the world by telling the soul that all things are its own. Says faith, This God is thy God, this Christ is thy Christ, this righteousness is thy righteousness, this promise is thy promise, this crown is thy crown, this glory is thy glory, these treasures are thy treasures, these pleasures are thy pleasures. 'All things are yours,' saith the apostle, 'things present are yours, and

things to come are yours,' 1Co 3:22. Thus the faith of the martyrs acted, and so made them victorious over a tempting and a persecuting world, Heb 11:35.

(4.) Faith overcomes the world by valuing the things of this world as they are. Most men overvalue them, they put too great a price upon them, they make the world a god, and then they cry, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Oh but faith now turns the inside of all creatures outward, faith presents all worldly things as impotent, as mixed, as mutable, as momentary to the soul, and so makes the soul victorious. Faith makes a man to see the prickles that be in every rose, the thorns that be in every crown, the scabs that be under every gown, the poison that is in the golden cup, the snare that is in the delicate dish, the spot that is in the shining pearl, and so makes a Christian count and call all these things, as indeed they are, 'vanity of vanities,' and so the believing soul slights the world, and tramples upon it as dung and dross. And lastly,

(5.) Faith overcomes the world, by presenting Jesus Christ to the soul as a most excellent, glorious, and comprehensive good, as such a good that comprehends all good. Christ is that one good that comprehends all good, that one thing that comprehends all things. All the beauties, all the rarities, all the excellencies, all the riches, all the glories of all created creatures, are comprehended in Christ. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is connected in one piece of gold, or in one precious jewel, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in Christ; and the sight and sense of this makes the soul to triumph over the world. Faith presents more excellencies and better excellencies in Christ than can be lost for Christ, and so it makes the soul a conqueror.

I have been long upon these things, because they are of much weight and worth: I shall be the briefer in what follows. But before I leave this point, I shall give you these hints: In the first place, I shall give you some hints concerning strong faith. In the second place, I shall give you some hints concerning weak faith. My design in both is, to keep precious souls from mistaking and fainting. Concerning strong faith, I shall give you these short hints:

(1.) The first hint. Strong faith will make a soul resolute in resisting, and happy in conquering the strongest temptations, Heb 11:3, &c., Dan 6:10, &c.

(2.) The second hint. It will make a man own God, and cleave to God, and hang upon God, in the face of the greatest difficulties and dangers, Rom 4:18, &c., Psa 44:16-18. So Job will trust in God though he slay him, Job 13:15-16.

(3.) The third hint. It will enable men to prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown, to prefer tortures before deliverance, Heb 11:3, &c.

(4.) The fourth hint. Strong faith will make a soul divinely fearless, and divinely careless; it will make a man live as the child lives in the family, without fear or care, Psa 23:4. Dan 3:16, 'We are not careful to answer thee, O king; our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us,' &c. Mic 7:7-9.

(5.) The fifth hint. Strong faith will make a man cleave to the promise when providence runs cross to the promise, Num 10:29, 2Ch 20:9-11. Psa 60:6-7, 'God hath spoken in his holiness,' saith David; 'I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine,' &c. Though David was in his banishment, yet his faith accounts all his as if he

had all in possession, and that because God had spoken in his holiness. His faith hangs upon the promise, though present providences did run cross to the promise, &c.

(6.) The sixth hint. Strong faith will make men comply with those commands that do most cross them in their most desirable comforts, Heb 11:8-9, and Heb 10:34; Gen 22:1-24.

Now, O precious souls! you are not to argue against your own souls, that surely you have no faith, because that your faith doth not lead you forth to such and such noble things. Thou mayest have true faith, though thou hast not so great faith as others of the Lord's worthies have had. The philosophers say that there are eight degrees of heat: we discern three. Now, if a man should define heat only by the highest degree, then all other degrees will be cast out from being heat. So if a man should define faith only by the highest degrees and operations of it, then that will be denied from being faith that indeed is faith, as I shall presently shew. In the second place, I shall give you some hints concerning weak faith.

(1.) The first hint. A weak faith doth as much justify and as much unite a man to Christ as a strong faith. It gives a man as much propriety and interest in Christ as the strongest faith in the world. The babe hath as much interest in the father as he that is of grown years. A weak faith gives a man as good a title to Christ, and all the precious things of eternity, as the strongest faith in the world. A weak hand may receive a pearl as well as the strong hand of a giant. Faith is a receiving of Christ, John 1:12.

(2.) The second hint. The promises of eternal happiness and blessedness are not made over to the strength of faith, but to the truth of faith; not to the degrees of faith, but to the reality of faith. He that believes shall be saved, though he hath not such a strength of faith as to stop the mouth of lions, as to work miracles, as to remove mountains, as to subdue kingdoms, as to quench the violence of fire, as to resist strong temptations, as to rejoice under great persecutions, Heb 11:33-35. No man that is saved is saved upon the account of the strength of his faith, but upon the account of the truth of his faith. In the great day Christ will not bring balances to weigh men's graces, but a touch-stone to try their graces; he will not look so much at the strength as at the truth of their graces.

(3.) The third, hint. The weakest faith shall grow stronger and stronger. A weak believer shall go on from faith to faith. Christ is the finisher as well as the author of our faith, Rom 1:17, Heb 12:2. Christ will nurse up this blessed babe, and will not suffer it to be strangled in its infancy. He that hath begun a good work will perfect it, Php 1:6, 1Pe 1:5. Christ is as well bound to look after our graces as he is to look after our souls. Grace is Christ's work, therefore it must prosper in his hand; he is the great builder and repairer of our graces; he will turn thy spark into a flame, thy drop into an ocean, thy penny into a pound, thy mite into a million, Mat 12:20, and Mat 13:32. Therefore do not sit down discouraged because thy faith is weak. That which is sowed in weakness, shall rise in power. Thy weak faith shall have a glorious resurrection. Christ will not suffer such a pearl of price to be buried under a clod of earth.

(4.) The fourth hint. A little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire, a drop of water is water, a little star is a star, a little pearl is a pearl. Verily, thy little faith is a jewel that God doth highly prize and value; and thy little faith will make thee put a higher price upon Christ and grace than upon all the world, Mat 18:10, 1Pe 2:7. Well! remember this, that the least measure of true faith will bring thee to

salvation, and possess thee of salvation, as well as the greatest measure. A little faith accompanies salvation as well as a great faith, a weak faith as well as a strong. Therefore do not say, O precious soul, that thou hast not that faith that accompanies salvation, because thou hast not such a strong faith, or such and such degrees of faith. A great faith will yield a man a heaven here, a little faith will yield him a heaven hereafter. The third thing that I am to shew you is, what repentance that is that accompanies salvation. That repentance doth accompany salvation I have formerly shewed. Now, I shall manifest in the following particulars what repentance that is that doth accompany salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation.

(1.) The first property. First, That repentance that accompanies salvation, is a general, a universal change of the whole man; a change in every part, though it be but in part. That repentance that accompanies salvation changes both heart and life, word and work; it makes an Ethiopian an Israelite, a leper an angel. 'Wash ye, make you clean;' there is the change of your hearts. 'Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well,' Isa 1:16-18; there is the change of their practices. So the prophet Ezekiel, 'Cast away all your transgressions,' saith he, 'whereby you have transgressed;' there is the change of life: 'And make you a new heart, and a new spirit,' Eze 18:30-32; there is the change of the heart. That repentance that accompanies salvation works a change in the whole man; in all the qualities of the inward man, and in all the actions of the outward man. The understanding is turned from darkness to light; the will from a sinful servility to a holy liberty; the affections from disorder into order; the heart from hardness into softness. So in the outward man, the wanton eye is turned into an eye of chastity; the uncircumcised ear is turned into an obedient ear; the hands of bribery are turned into hands of liberality; and the wandering feet of vanity are turned into ways of purity. And verily, that repentance that changes a man in some part, but not in every part, that only makes a man a Herod, or an Agrippa, a half Christian, an almost Christian, that repentance will never bring down heaven into a man's bosom here, nor never bring a man up to heaven hereafter. That repentance that accompanies salvation makes a man all glorious within, and his raiment to be of embroidered gold, Psa 45:13; it stamps the image of God both upon the inward and the outward man; it makes the heart like the ark, all gold within; and it makes the life like the sun, all glorious without.

(2.) The second property. Secondly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is a total turning as well as an universal turning; a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. 'I hate and abhor every false way, but thy law do I love,' Psa 119:163. So in Eze 18:30, 'Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' So in Eze 33:11. As Noah's flood drowned his nearest and his dearest friends, so the flood of penitent tears drowns men's nearest and their dearest lusts. Be they Isaacs or Benjamins, be they right eyes or right hands, repentance that accompanies salvation puts all to the sword; it spares neither father nor mother, neither Agag nor Achan; it casts off all the rags of old Adam; it leaves not a horn nor a hoof behind; it throws down every stone of the old building; it scrapes off all leviathan's scales; it washeth away all leprous spots. Eze 14:6, 'Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.' Sin is a turning the back upon God, and the face towards hell; but repentance is a turning the back upon sin, and a setting the face towards God. He that looks upon Jerusalem and upon Babylon with a leering eye at the same time; he that looks upon God, and at the same time

looks upon any sin with a leering eye, hath not yet reached unto this repentance that accompanies salvation; his repentance and profession cannot secure him from double damnation. He that serves God in some things, and his lusts in other things, says to God as David said to Mephibosheth concerning his lands, 'Thou and Ziba divide the lands,' 2Sa 19:29; so thou and Satan divide my soul, my heart between you. Ah! doth not such a soul deserve a double hell? Christ takes every sin at a penitent man's hands, as Cæsar did his wounds from him of whom he merited better usage, with, καὶ σὺ μου τέκνον 'And thou, my son.' What, thou wound me! what, thou stab me! that shouldst venture thy own blood to save mine?

There are no wounds that are so grievous and terrible to Christ, as those that he receives in the house of his friends, and this sets the penitent man's heart and hand against everything that makes against Christ. A true penitent looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling, and polluting. Pliny saith that the very trees, with touching of it, would become barren. And his looking thus upon every sin, turns his heart against every sin, and makes him not only to refrain from sin, but to forsake it, and to loathe it more than hell.

(3.) The third property. Thirdly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is not only a turning from all sin, but it is also a turning unto God. It is not only a ceasing from doing evil, but it is also a learning to do well; it is not only a turning from darkness, but it is also a turning to light; as the apostle speaks, Acts 26:18, 'To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' So in Isa 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,' &c. It is not enough for the man of iniquity to forsake his evil way, but he must also return unto the Lord; he must subject his heart to the power of divine grace, and his life to the will and word of God. As negative goodness can never satisfy a gracious soul, so negative goodness can never save a sinful soul. It is not enough that thou art thus and thus bad, but thou must be thus and thus good, or thou art undone for ever: Eze 18:21, 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness, no holiness, in the account of God. It was not the pharisee's negative righteousness, nor his comparative goodness, that could prevent his being rejected of God, his being shut out of heaven, his burning in hell, Luk 18:5, Mat 20:13-14. It is not enough that the tree bears no ill fruit, but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be cut down and cast into the fire. That tree that is not for fruit is for the fire. 'Every tree that brings not forth good fruit,' says Christ, 'is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' Mat 7:19. Men that content themselves with negative righteousness, shall find at last heaven-gates bolted upon them with a double bolt. All that negative righteousness and holiness can do, is to help a man to one of the best chambers and easiest beds in hell. That repentance that accompanies salvation brings the heart and life not only off from sin, but on to God; it makes a man not only cease from walking in the ways of death, but it makes him walk in the ways of life: 'They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways,' Psa 119:3.

(4.) The fourth property. Fourthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, strikes most effectually and particularly against that sin or sins, that the sinner was most apt and prone to before his conversion. The hand of repentance is most against that sin, it is most upon that sin that the soul hath looked most with a leering eye upon. The chief and principal sins that Israel was guilty of, was idolatry and sinful compliance. Now, when God works kindly upon them, they put the

hand of repentance upon those particular sins, as you may see: Isa 27:9, 'By this, therefore, shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin: when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones, that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.' Here you see, when God appears and acts graciously for and towards his people, they put the hand of repentance upon their groves and images; these must down, these must no longer stand. The groves and the images shall not stand up, they shall be utterly abandoned and destroyed, demolished, and abolished. So in Isa 30:22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Here you see the hand of repentance is against their idols of silver and gold; and not only against their idols, but also against whatsoever had any relation to them. Now they shew nothing but a detestation of their idols, and a holy indignation against them: 'Get you hence.' The hand of repentance makes a divorce between them and their idols, between their souls and their especial sins. Now they are as much in hating, abhorring, abominating, and contemning their idols and images, as they were formerly in adoring, worshipping, and honouring of them. So Mary Magdalene, Luk 7:1-50, walks quite cross and contrary to her former self, her sinful self, she crosses the flesh in those very things wherein formerly she did gratify the flesh. So the penitent jailor, Acts 16:1-40, washes those very wounds that his own bloody hands had made. He acts in ways of mercy, quite contrary to his former cruelty. At first there was none so fierce, so furious, so cruel, so bloody, so inhuman in his carriage to the apostles; at last, none so gentle, so soft, so sweet, so courteous, so affectionate to them. The same you may see in Zaccheus, Luk 19:8, &c. In Paul, Acts 9:1-43, and in Manasseh, in 2Ch 33:6.

(5.) The fifth property. Fifthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, is very large and comprehensive. It comprehends and takes in these following particulars, besides those already named.

[1.] It takes in a sight and sense of sin. Men must first see their sins, they must be sensible of their sins, before they can repent of their sins. Ephraim had first a sight of his sin, and then he repents and turns from his sin. 'After I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh,' Jer 31:18-19. A man first sees himself out of the way, before he returns into the way. Till he sees that he is out of the way, he walks still on, but when he perceives that he is out of the way, then he begins to make inquiry after the right way. So when the sinner comes to see his way to be a way of death, then he cries out, 'Oh lead me in the way of life, lead me in the way everlasting,' Psa 139:24.

[2.] For I shall but touch upon these things. That repentance that accompanies salvation, doth include not only a sight and sense of sin, but also confession and acknowledgment of sin. Psa 51:1-19, and Psa 32:3-5, 'While I kept close my sin, my bones consumed; but I said, I will confess my sin, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin;' Job 33:21-27. The promise of remission is made to confession. 1Jn 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' So Pro 28:13, 'He that hideth his sin, shall not prosper, but he that confesseth and forsaketh it, shall find mercy.' If we confess our sins sincerely, seriously, humbly, cordially, pardon attends us. Homo agnoscit, deus ignoscit. Confession of sin must be joined with confusion of sin, or all is lost, God is lost, Christ is lost, heaven lost, and the soul lost for ever. The true penitent can say, with Vivaldus, 'I hide not my sins, but I shew them; I wipe them not away, but I sprinkle them; I do not excuse them, but I accuse them.' Peccata enim non nocent, si non placent, 'My sins hurt me not, if I like

them not;' the beginning of my salvation is the knowledge of my transgression.

[3.] That repentance that accompanies salvation doth include, not only confession of sin, but also contrition for sin; Psa 51:4, 1Sa 7:2, Zec 12:10-11, Eze 10:1-2, 2Co 7:11, &c. It breaks the heart with sighs, sobs, and groans, for that a loving Father is offended, a blessed Saviour crucified, and the sweet Comforter grieved. Penitent Mary Magdalene weeps much, as well as loves much. Tears, instead of gems, were the ornaments of penitent David's bed; and surely that sweet singer never sung more melodiously than when his heart was broken most penitentially. How shall God wipe away my tears in heaven, if I shed none on earth? And how shall I reap in joy, if I sow not in tears? I was born with tears, and shall die with tears; why should I then live without them in this valley of tears? saith the true penitent. The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears; penitent tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. When Hannah had wept, she went away and was no more sad, 1Sa 1:18. The bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water; the strongest, the purest, the truest, the most permanent, and the most excellent joy is made of the waters of repentance. If God be God, 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Psa 126:5. But that no mourner may drown himself in his own tears, let me give this caution, viz. that there is nothing beyond remedy but the tears of the damned. A man who may persist in the way to paradise, should not place himself in the condition of a little hell; and he that may or can hope for that great all, ought not to be dejected nor overwhelmed for anything.

[4.] That repentance that accompanies salvation doth include not only contrition for sin, but also a holy shame and blushing for sin: Eze 9:6, Jer 3:24-25, Jer 31:19; Eze 16:61, Eze 16:63, 'And thou shalt be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.' When the penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, and divine justice satisfied, then he sits down ashamed: so Rom 6:21, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?' Sin and shame are inseparable companions. A man cannot have the seeming sweet of sin but he shall have the real shame that accompanies sin. These two God hath joined together, and all the world cannot put them asunder.

It was an impenitent Caligula that said of himself 'that he loved nothing better in himself than that he could not be ashamed.'

Justinus's motto was, Quod pudet hoc pigeat, That should grieve most which is shameful in itself, and done against conscience. And doubtless those things are only shameful that are sinful. A soul that hath sinned away all shame is a soul ripe for hell, and given up to Satan. A greater plague cannot befall a man in this life than to sin and not to blush.

[5.] That repentance that accompanies salvation, comprehends loathing and abhorring of sin, and of ourselves for sin, as well as shame and blushing for sin, Job 42:6; Eze 16:61-63; Amo 5:15; Eze 20:41-43, 'And ye shall remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all the evils that you have committed.' The sincere penitent loathes his sins, and he loathes himself also because of his sins. He cries out, Oh these wanton eyes! oh these wicked hands! oh this deceitful tongue! oh this crooked will! oh this corrupt heart! oh how do I loathe my sins, how do I loathe myself, how do I loathe the sinful self, and how do I loathe my natural self, because of the sinful self! My sins are a burden to me, and they make me a burden to myself; my sins are an abhorring to me, and they make me abhor myself in dust

and ashes. A true penitent hath not only low thoughts of himself, but loathsome thoughts of himself. None can think or speak so vilely of him, as he doth and will think and speak of himself. Eze 6:9, 'And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart' (as the heart of a husband is at the adulterous carriage of his wife), 'which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols: and they shall loathe themselves for evils which they have committed in all their abominations.' If thy repentance do not work thee out with thy sins, and thy sins work thee out of love with thyself, thy repentance is not that repentance that accompanies salvation. And thus you see the particular things that that repentance that doth accompany salvation doth comprehend and include.

(6.) The sixth property. Sixthly, That repentance that accompanies salvation, hath these choice companions attending of it.

[1.] Faith. Zec 12:10-11, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn,' &c. Mourning and believing go together. So in Mat 4:17; Mark 1:14-15, 'Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'

[2.] Love to Christ doth always accompany that repentance that accompanies salvation, as you may see in Mary Magdalene, Luk 7:1-50.

[3.] A filial fear of offending God, and a holy care to honour God, doth always accompany that repentance that accompanies salvation: 2Co 7:10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: for, behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' Verily, repentance to life hath all these lively companions attending of it; they are born together and will live together, till the penitent soul changes earth for heaven, grace for glory.

(7.) The seventh property. Seventhly and lastly, That repentance that accompanies salvation is a continued act, a repentance never to be repented of, 2Co 7:10. Repentance is a continual spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. A sound penitent is still a-turning nearer and nearer to God; he is still a-turning further and further from sin. This makes the penitent soul to sigh and mourn that he can get no nearer to God, that he can get no further from sin, Rom 7:1-25. The work of repentance is not the work of an hour, a day, a year, but the work of this life. A sincere penitent makes as much conscience of repenting daily as he doth of believing daily; and he can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or love, or joy, as he can content himself with one act of repentance: 'My sins are ever before me,' says David, Psa 51:3. Next to my being kept from sin, I count it the greatest mercy in the world to be still a-mourning over sin, says the penitent soul. The penitent soul never ceases repenting till he ceases living. He goes to heaven with the joyful tears of repentance in his eyes. He knows that his whole life is but a day of sowing tears that he may at last reap everlasting joys. That repentance that accompanies salvation is a final forsaking of sin. It is a bidding sin an everlasting adieu; it is a taking an eternal farewell of sin; a never turning to folly more: 'What have I to do any more with idols?' says Ephraim, Hos 14:8. I have tasted of the bitterness that is in sin; I have tasted of the sweetness of divine mercy in pardoning of sin;

therefore, away, sin; I will never have to do with you more! You have robbed Christ of his service, and me of my comfort and crown. Away, away, sin! you shall never be courted nor countenanced by me more. That man that only puts off his sins in the day of adversity, as he doth his garments at night when he goes to bed, with an intent to put them on again in the morning of prosperity, never yet truly repented: he is a dog that returneth to the vomit again; he is a swine that returns to the wallowing in the mire. Such a dog was Judas; such a swine was Demas.

It is an extraordinary vanity in some men to lay aside their sins before solemn duties, but with a purpose to return to them again, as the serpent layeth aside his poison when he goeth to drink, and when he hath drunk, he returns to it again, as they fable it. It is sad when men say to their lusts, as Abraham said to his servants, 'Abide you here, and I will go and worship, and return again to you,' Gen 22:5. Verily such souls are far off from that repentance that accompanies salvation, for that makes a final and everlasting separation between sin and the soul. It makes such a divorce between sin and the soul, and puts them so far asunder, that all the world can never bring them to meet as two lovers together. The penitent soul looks upon sin and deals with sin, not as a friend, but as an enemy. It deals with sin as Amnon dealt with Tamar: 2Sa 13:15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, begone.' Just thus doth the penitent soul carry itself towards sin. And thus you see what repentance that is that accompanies salvation. The fourth thing I am to shew is, what obedience that is that doth accompany salvation. That obedience doth accompany salvation, I have formerly proved. Now what this obedience is that doth accompany or comprehend salvation, I shall shew you in these following particulars:

[1.] The first property. First, That obedience that accompanies salvation is cordial and hearty. The heart, the inward man, doth answer and echo to the word and will of God. The believer knows that no obedience but hearty obedience is acceptable to Christ. He knows that nothing takes Christ's heart but what comes from the heart. Christ was hearty in his obedience for me, says the believer; and shall not I be hearty in my obedience to him? Christ will lay his hand of love, his hand of acceptance, upon no obedience but what flows from the heart: Rom 6:17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.' So in Rom 7:25, 'So then with the mind, I myself serve the law of God.' My heart, says Paul, is in my obedience. So in Rom 1:9, 'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.' Many serve God with their bodies, but I serve him with my spirit; many serve him with the outward man, but I serve him with my inward man, Eze 36:6-27. God hath written his law in believers' hearts, and therefore they cannot but obey it from the heart: 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' How so? Why, 'thy law is within my heart,' or, in the midst of my bowels, as the Hebrew hath it, **לִבִּי מְלֵא**, Psa 40:8. The heart within echoes and answers to the commandments without, as a book written answers to his mind that write it; as face answers to face; as the impression on the wax answers to the character engraven on the seal. The scribes and Pharisees were much in the outward obedience of the law, but their hearts were not in their obedience; and therefore all they did signified nothing in the account of Christ, who is only taken with outward actions as they flow from the heart and affections. Their souls were not in their services, and therefore all their services were lost services. They were very glorious in their outward profession, but their hearts were as filthy sepulchres. Their outsides shined as the sun, but their insides were as black as hell, Mat 23:1-39. They were like the Egyptians' temples, beautiful without, but filthy within. Well! remember this: No action, no

service, goes for current in heaven, but that which is sealed up with integrity of heart. God will not be put off with the shell, when we give the devil the kernel.

(2.) The second property. Secondly, That obedience that accompanies salvation is universal as well as cordial. The soul falls in with every part and point of God's will, so far as he knows it, without prejudice or partiality, without tilting the balance on one side or another. A soul sincerely obedient, will not pick and choose what commands to obey and what to reject, as hypocrites do; he hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to obey the first table as well as the second, and the second table as well as the first; he doth not adhere to the first and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second and condemn the first, as profane men do; he obeys not out of humour but out of duty, he obeys not out of choice but out of conscience: Psa 119:6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' Look, as faith never singles out his object, but lays hold on every object God holds forth for it to close with, faith doth not choose this truth and reject that, it doth not close with one and reject another. Faith doth not say, I will trust God in this case but not in that, I will trust him for this mercy but not for that mercy, I will trust him in this way but not in that way. Faith doth not choose its object. Faith knows that he is powerful and faithful that hath promised, and therefore faith closes with one object as well as another. So a true obedient soul singles not out the commands of God, as to obey one and rebel against another; it dares not, it cannot say, I will serve God in this command but not in that. No; in an evangelical sense it obeys all: Luk 1:5-6, 'Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' They walked not only in commandments, but also in ordinances; not only in ordinances, but also in commandments. They were good souls, and good at both. A man sincerely obedient lays such a charge upon his whole man, as Mary, the mother of Christ, did upon all the servants at the feast: John 2:5, 'Whatever the Lord saith unto you do it.' Eyes, ears, hands, heart, lips, legs, body, and soul, do you all seriously and affectionately observe whatever Jesus Christ says unto you, and do it. So David doth: Psa 119:34, Psa 119:69, 'Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.' 'The proud have forged a lie against me; but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.' The whole heart includes all the faculties of the soul and all the members of the body. Says David, I will put hand and heart, body and soul, all within me and all without me, to the keeping and observing of thy precepts. Here is a soul thorough-paced in his obedience, he stands not halting nor halving of it, he knows the Lord loves to be served truly and totally, and therefore he obeys with an entire heart and a sincere spirit.

I have read of a very strange speech that dropped out of the mouth of Epictetus, a heathen: 'If it be thy will,' says he, 'O Lord, command me what thou wilt, send me whither thou wilt, I will not withdraw myself from anything that seems good to thee.' Ah! how will this heathen at last rise in judgment against all Sauls, Jehus, Judases, Demases, scribes, pharisees, temporaries,² who are partial in their obedience, who while they yield obedience to some commands, live in the habitual breach of other commands! Verily, he that lives in the habitual breach of one command, shall at last be reputed by God guilty of the breach of every command, Jas 2:10, and God accordingly will in a way of justice proceed against him, Eze 18:10-13. It was the glory of Caleb and Joshua, that they followed the Lord fully in one thing, as well as another, Num 14:24. So Cornelius: 'We are present before God, to hear whatsoever shall be commanded us of God,' Acts 10:33. He doth not pick and choose. So in Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own

heart, which shall fulfil all my will;' or rather as it is in the Greek, 'he shall fulfil all my wills.' to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. A sincere heart loves all commands of God, and prizes all commands of God, and sees a divine image stamped upon all the commands of God; and therefore the main bent and disposition of his soul, is to obey all, to subject to all. God commands universal obedience, Jos 1:8; Deu 5:29; Eze 18:1-32. The promise of reward is made over to universal obedience, Psa 19:11, Jos 1:8. Universal obedience is a jewel that all will wish for or rejoice in, at the day of death and the day of account; and the remembrance of these things, with others of the like nature, provokes all upright souls to be impartial, to be universal in their obedience.

[3.] The third property. Thirdly, That obedience that accompanies salvation springs from inward spiritual causes, and from holy and heavenly motives. It flows from faith. Hence it is called 'the obedience, of faith,' Rom 16:26. So in 1Ti 1:5, 'Now the end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.' Faith draws down that divine virtue and power into the soul that makes it lively and active, abundant and constant, in the work and way of the Lord. And as faith, so love, puts the soul forward in ways of obedience. John 14:21, John 14:23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my commandments.' So Psa 119:48, 'My hands also will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved.' Divine love is said to be the keeping the commandments, because it puts the soul upon keeping them. Divine love makes every weight light, every yoke easy, every command joyous. It knows no difficulties, it facilitates obedience, it divinely constrains the soul to obey, to walk, to run the ways of God's commands. And as sound obedience springs from faith and love, so it flows from a filial fear of God: Psa 119:161, 'Mine heart stands in awe of thy word.' So Heb 11:7, 'Noah, being warned of God touching things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.'

Ah! but hypocrites and temporaries are not carried forth in their obedience from such precious and glorious principles, and therefore it is that God casts all their services as dung in their faces, Isa 1:11. And as that obedience which accompanies salvation flows from inward spiritual principles, so it flows from holy and heavenly motives, as from the tastes of divine love, and the sweetness and excellency of communion with God, and the choice and precious discoveries that the soul in ways of obedience hath had of the beauty and glory of God, Isa 64:5. The sweet looks, the heavenly words, the glorious kisses, the holy embraces that the obedient soul hath had, makes it freely and fully obedient to the word and will of God. Ah! but all the motives that move hypocrites and carnal professors to obedience are only external and carnal, as the eye of the creature, the ear of the creature, the applause of the creature, the rewards of the creature; either the love of the loaves, or the gain of custom, or the desire of ambition, Hos 7:14. Sometimes they are moved to obedience from the fear of the creature, and sometimes from the want of the creature, and sometimes from the example of the creature, and sometimes from vows made to the creature. Sometimes the frowns of God, the displeasure of God, the rod of God, moves them to obedience, Hos 5:15, Psa 78:34. Sometimes the quieting and stilling of conscience, the stopping of the mouth of conscience, and the disarming of conscience of all her whipping, racking, wounding, condemning, terrifying, and torturing power, puts them upon some ways of obedience. Their obedience always flows from some low, base, carnal, corrupt consideration or other. Oh! but that obedience that accompanies salvation doth always flow, as you see, from inward and spiritual causes, and from holy and heavenly motives.

[4.] The fourth property. Fourthly, That obedience that accompanies salvation is a ready, free, willing, and cheerful obedience.

(1.) It is ready obedience. Psa 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek;' Psa 119:60, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments;' Psa 18:44, 'As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.'

I have read of one who readily fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together to pour upon a dry stick, upon the bare command of a superior, when no reason could be given for the thing. Oh how ready, then, doth grace make the soul to obey those divine commands that are backed with the highest, strongest, and choicest arguments.

(2.) As that obedience that accompanies salvation is ready obedience, so it is free and willing obedience. Acts 21:13, 'Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am willing not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' The beamings out of divine love and glory make gracious souls 'willing in the day of his power,' Psa 110:3. Those divine principles that be in them make them willingly obey, without co-action or compulsion. So 2Co 8:3. The Macedonians were willingly obedient, or, as the Greek hath it, **ἑθελον**, they were volunteers not only to their power, but beyond their power. All the motions and actings of Christ towards his people, for his people, and in his people, are free; he loves them freely, he pardons them freely, he intercedes for them freely, he acts them freely, and he saves them freely, and so they move and act towards Christ freely; they hear, they pray, they wait, they weep, they work, they watch freely and willingly. That Spirit of grace and holiness that is in them makes them volunteers in all religious duties and services.

It is reported of Socrates, that when the tyrant threatened death unto him, he answered, 'He was willing;' nay then, says the tyrant, you shall live against your will. He answered again, Nay, whatsoever you do with me, it shall be my will. Yet if nature, a little raised and refined, will enable a man to do this, will not grace, will not union and communion with Christ, enable a man to do as much, yea, infinitely more?

(3.) As that obedience that accompanies salvation is free and willing obedience, so it is cheerful and delightful obedience. It is a believer's meat and drink, it is his joy and crown, it is a pleasure, a paradise to his soul, to be still obeying his Father's will, to be still found about his Father's business: Psa 40:8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is in my heart.' As the sun rejoiceth to run his race, so do the saints rejoice to run the race of obedience. God's work is wages, yea, it is better than wages; therefore they cannot but delight in it. Not only for keeping, but also in keeping of his commands, there is great reward: Psa 112:1, 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments:' that is, in the studying and obeying of his commandments. Psa 119:16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word.' Psa 119:35, 'Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.' Psa 119:47, 'And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.' Psa 119:143, 'Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me, yet thy commandments are my delight.' Divine commands are not grievous to a lover of Christ; for nihil difficile amanti, nothing is difficult to him that loveth. The love of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the embraces of Christ, make a gracious soul studious and industrious to keep the commandments of Christ, in lip and life, in word and work, in

head and heart, in book and breast.

Thus you see that that obedience that accompanies salvation is ready, free, and cheerful obedience.

[5.] The fifth property. Fifthly, The obedience that accompanies salvation, is peremptory obedience. Jos 24:15, 'I and my household will serve the Lord.' He is fully resolved upon it, come what come can; in the face of all dangers, difficulties, impediments and discouragements, he will obey the Lord, he will follow the Lord. So those worthies, Heb 11:1-40 'of whom the world was not worthy,' obeyed divine commands peremptorily, resolvedly, in the face of all manner of deaths and miseries. So Paul was 'obedient to the heavenly vision,' though bonds did attend him in every place, Acts 20:23. He is better at obeying than at disputing; 'I conferred not, says he, with flesh and blood,' Gal 1:15-16. So Peter and John, and the rest of the apostles, in despite of all threatenings and beatings, they obey the Lord, they keep fast and close to their Master's work. 'Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken more unto you than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word. And when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' Acts 4:19-20, Acts 4:29, and Acts 5:40-42, compared.

Thus you see, no trials, no troubles, no terrors, no threats, no dangers, no deaths, could deter them from peremptory obedience to divine precepts. It is not the fiery furnace, nor the lions' den, nor the bloody sword, nor the torturing rack, that can fright gracious souls from their obedience to their dearest Lord: Psa 119:106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

[6.] The sixth property. Sixthly, The end of that obedience that accompanies salvation is, divine glory. The eye of the obedient soul, in prayer and praises, in talking and walking, in giving and receiving, in living and doing, is divine glory: Rom 14:7-8, 'For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.' In all actions, the obedient soul intends and attends most divine glory. If Satan, the world, or the old man do at any time propound other ends to the soul, this great end, divine glory, works out all those ends; for this is most certain, that which a man makes his greatest and his highest end, will work out all other ends. Look, as the light of the sun doth extinguish and put out the light of the fire, so when a man makes the glory of God his end, that end will extinguish and put out all carnal, low, base ends; that man that makes himself the end of his actions, that makes honour, riches, applause, &c. the end of his actions, he must at last lie down in eternal sorrow, he must dwell in everlasting burnings. The man is as his end is, and his work is as his end is; if that be naught, all is naught; if that be good, all is good, and the man is happy for ever, Isa 30:33, and Isa 33:14.

[7.] The seventh property. Seventhly, that obedience that accompanies salvation, that borders upon salvation, that comprehends salvation, is a constant obedience. Psa 119:112, 'I have inclined my heart to do thy statutes alway, even to the end.' The causes, springs, and motives of

holy obedience are lasting and permanent, and therefore the obedience of a sound Christian is not like the morning dew, or a deceitful bow: Psa 44:17-19, 'All this comes upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.' The love of Christ, the promises of Christ, the presence of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the example of Christ, and the recompence of reward held forth by Christ, makes a sound Christian hold on, and hold out, in ways of obedience, in the face of all dangers and deaths. Neither the hope of life, nor the fear of death, can make a sincere Christian either change his master or decline his work: Php 2:12, 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' This was the Philippians' glory, that they were constant in their obedience; whether Paul was present or absent, they constantly minded their work.

Ah! but hypocrites and temporaries are but passionate, transient, and inconstant in their obedience; they talk of obedience, they commend obedience, and now and then in a fit they step in the way of obedience, but they do not walk in a way of obedience, they are only constant in inconstancy: Job 27:10, 'Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?' Or, as the Hebrew hath it, ■■■■■■■, will he in every time call upon God? Will he call upon God in time of prosperity and in time of adversity? in time of health and in time of sickness? in time of strength and in time of weakness? in time of honour and in time of disgrace? in time of liberty and in time of durance? &c. The answer to be given in is, he will not always, he will not in every time call upon God. As a lame horse, when he is heated, will go well enough, but when he cools, he halts downright; even so an hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in a religious way, yet when he hath attained his ends, he will halt downright, and be able to go no further. The abbot in Melancthon lived strictly, and walked demurely, and looked humbly, so long as he was but a monk; but when, by his seeming extraordinary sanctity, he got to be made abbot, he grew intolerably proud and insolent, and being asked the reason of it, confessed that his former carriage and lowly looks was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey. Ah! many unsound hearts there be, that will put on the cloak of religion, and speak like angels, and look like saints, to find the keys of preferment, and when they have found them, none prove more proud, base, and vain than they. Ah! but that obedience that accompanies salvation is constant and durable. A Christian in his course goes straight on heavenwards. 'The two milch-kine,' 1Sa 6:12, 'took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.' So gracious souls goes straight³ along the highway to heaven, which is the way of obedience; though they go lowing and weeping, yet they still go on, and turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left. If by the violence of temptation or corruption they are thrust out of the way at any time, they quickly return into it again. They may sometimes step out of the way of obedience, but they cannot walk out of the way of obedience. The honest traveller may step out of his way, but he soon returns into it again, and so doth the honest soul, Psa 119:3-4.

(8.) The eighth property. Eighthly, and lastly, Passive obedience accompanies salvation as well as active. 'Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution,' 2Ti 3:12, 2Ti 2:12, from tongue or pen, from hand or heart. 'If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him,' Rom 8:17-18. There is no passing into paradise but under the flaming sword. 'Through many afflictions we must enter into the kingdom of heaven,' Acts 14:22. A sincere heart is [as] willing to obey

Christ passively as actively: Acts 21:13, 'I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' I am willing, says Paul, to lose my comforts for Christ, I am ready to endure any dolors for Christ, I am willing to lose the creature, and to leave the creature for Christ. Paul, Php 3:8, speaks of himself as having been like one in a sea-tempest, that had cast out all his precious wares and goods for Christ's sake; 'for whom,' says he, 'I have suffered the loss of all.' So must we, in stormy times, cast all overboard for Christ, and swim to an immortal crown, through sorrows, blood, and death. But because I have in this treatise spoke at large of the sufferings of the saints, I shall say no more of it in this place; and thus you see what that obedience is that accompanies salvation. The fifth thing that I am to shew you is, what love that is that accompanies salvation. That love doth accompany salvation I have formerly shewed you; but now I shall shew you what that love is that doth accompany salvation; and that I shall do in these following particulars. I shall not speak of the firstness, freeness, fulness, sweetness, and greatness of Christ's love to us, but of that love of ours that accompanies salvation, concerning which I shall say thus:

(1.) The first property. First, That love that accompanies salvation is a superlative love, a transcendent love. True love to Christ doth wonderfully transcend and surpass the love of all relations; the love of father, mother, wife, child, brother, sister, yea, life itself, Mat 10:37-38, Luk 14:26-27, Luk 14:34. Psa 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Christ will be Alexander or Nemo, he will be all or nothing at all. There are the greatest causes of love, there are the highest causes of love, there are all the causes of love, to be found in Christ. In angels and men there are only some particular causes of love; all causes of love are eminently and only to be found in Christ: Col 1:19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,' $\pi\lambda\epsilon\rho\omega\mu\alpha$. There is not only plenitudo abundantiae, but plenitudo redundantiae, an overflowing of fulness in Jesus Christ. All wisdom, all knowledge, all light, all life, all love, all goodness, all sweetness, all blessedness, all joys, all delights, all pleasures, all beauties, all beatitudes, all excellencies, all glories are in Christ, Col 2:9. The true lovers of Christ know that Christ loves as a head, as a king, as a father, as a husband, as a brother, as a kinsman, as a friend. The love of all relations meets in the love of Christ; and this raises up a believer to love Christ with a transcendent love. They know that Christ loves them more than they love themselves; yea, that he loves them above his very life, John 10:1, John 10:17-8. And magnes amoris amor, love is the loadstone of love. Christ is amiable and lovely; he is famous and conspicuous; he is spotless and matchless in his names, in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his gifts, in his discoveries, in his appearances, in his ordinances. He is full of gravity, majesty, mercy, and glory. 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' His mouth is $\sigma\omega\gamma\eta$, sweetness; yea, $\sigma\omega\gamma\eta$ $\sigma\omega\gamma\eta$, all of him is desires, or all of him is delights, Song of Solomon 5:10-16. Christ is wholly delectable; he is altogether desirable from top to toe; he is amiable and lovely, he is glorious and excellent. Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely. He is 'the express image of God;' he is 'the brightness of his Father's glory.' If the soul can but anatomise him, it shall find in him all high perfections and supereminent excellencies. And upon these and such like considerations the saints are led forth to love Jesus Christ with a most transcendent love.

(2.) The second property. Secondly, That love that accompanies salvation is obediential love, it is operative and working love. The love of Christ makes a man subject to the commands of Christ: 'If

any man love me, he will keep my commandments;' and again, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,' John 14:21. Divine love is very operative: Psa 116:1, 'I love the Lord,' says David. Well, but how doth this love work? Why, says he, 'I will walk in his ways, I will pay my vows, I will take the cup of salvation, I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the Lord as long as I live,' Psa 116:2, Psa 116:9, Psa 116:13-14, Psa 116:17. Divine love is not stinted nor limited to one sort of duty, but is free to all. He that loveth flieth, he that loveth runneth, he that loveth believeth, he that loveth rejoiceth, he that loveth mourneth, he that loveth giveth, he that loveth lendeth, he that loveth beareth, he that loveth waiteth, he that loveth hopeth, &c. Heb 6:10, 'For God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour of love.' Love makes the soul laborious. That love that accompanies salvation is very active and operative. It is like the virtuous woman in the Proverbs, that set all her maidens on work. It is never quiet, but in doing the will of God. It will not suffer any grace to sit idle in the soul. It will egg and put on all other graces to act and operate. Love sets faith upon drawing from Christ, and patience upon waiting on Christ, and humility upon submitting to Christ, and godly sorrow upon mourning over Christ, and self-denial upon forsaking of the nearest and dearest comforts for Christ, &c. As the sun makes the earth fertile, so doth divine love make the soul fruitful in works of righteousness and holiness. He that loves cannot be idle nor barren. Love makes the soul constant and abundant in well-doing: 2Co 5:14, 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' It doth urge us and put us forward; it carries us on as men possessed with a vehemency of spirit, or as a ship which is driven with strong winds towards the desired haven. Natural love makes the child, the servant, the wife, obedient; so doth divine love make the soul better at obeying than at disputing. A soul that loves Christ will never cease to obey till he ceases to be. That love that accompanies salvation is like the sun. The sun, you know, casteth his beams upward and downward, to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south; so the love of a saint ascends to God above, and descends to men on earth; to our friends on the right hand, to our enemies on the left hand; to them that are in a state of grace, and to them that are in a state of nature. Divine love will still be a-working one way or another.³

(3.) The third property. That love that accompanies salvation is a sincere and incorrupt love: Eph 6:24, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.' The true bred Christian amat Christum propter Christum, loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for that internal and eternal worth that is in him; he loves him for his incomparable excellency and beauty, for that transcendent sweetness, loveliness, holiness, and goodness that is in him; he is none of those that loves Christ for loaves, neither will he with Judas kiss Christ and betray him; nor yet will he with those in the Gospel cry out, 'Hosanna, Hosanna,' one day, and 'Crucify him, crucify him,' the next, Mat 21:9, Mat 21:15. They love Christ with a virgin love: Song of Solomon 1:3, 'The virgins love thee.' They love thee in much sincerity, purity, and integrity; they love thee for that fragrant savour, for that natural sweetness, for that incomparable goodness that is in thee. So Song of Solomon 1:4, 'The upright love thee,' or as it is in the Hebrew, 'Uprightnesses love thee,' ■■■■■■. Uprightnesses being put for upright ones, the abstract for the concrete; or, 'They love thee in uprightneses,' that is, most uprightly, most entirely, most sincerely, and not as hypocrites, who love thee for base, carnal respects; who love thee in compliment, but not in realities; who love thee in word and tongue, but despise thee in heart and life; who love the gift more than the giver. That love that accompanies salvation is real and cordial love, it is sincere and upright love, it makes the soul love Christ, the giver, more than the gift; it makes the soul love the gift for the giver's sake; it

will make the soul to love the giver without his gifts. And verily, they shall not be long without good gifts from Christ, that love Christ more than his gifts.

Vespasian commanded a liberal reward should be given to a woman that came and professed that she was in love with him; and when his steward asked him what item he should put to it in his book of accounts, the emperor answered, Vespasiano adamato, item to her that loved Vespasian. Ah, Christians, shall Vespasian, an heathen prince, reward her liberally that loved his person? and will not the Lord Jesus much more reward them with his choicest gifts, that love him more than his gifts? Surely Christ will not be worse than a heathen, he will not act below a heathen! He shall never be a loser that loves Christ for that spiritual sweetness and loveliness that is in Christ; Christ will not live long in that man's debts.

(4.) The fourth property. Fourthly, That love that accompanies salvation is a vehement love, an ardent love. It is a spark of heavenly fire, and it puts all the affections into a holy flame: Song of Solomon 1:7, 'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest?' &c. This amiable, amorous, pathetical compellation, 'O thou whom my soul loveth,' speaks the spouse's love to be hot and burning towards Christ, So in Isa 26:8-9, 'The desire of our souls is towards thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early.' This affectionate, this passionate form of speech, 'With my soul have I desired thee,' and that, 'with my spirit within me will I seek thee,' does elegantly set forth the vehement and ardent love of the church to Christ; so doth that pathetical exclamation of the church, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love,' Song of Solomon 2:5. The betrothed virgin cannot shew more strong and vehement love to her beloved, than by being sick and surprised with love-qualms, when she meets him, when she enjoys him. It was so here with the spouse of Christ. The love of Christ to believers, is a vehement love, an ardent love—witness his leaving his Father's bosom, his putting upon us his royal robes, his bleeding, his dying, &c. And it doth naturally beget vehement and ardent love in all the beloved of God. Where Christ loves, he always begets somewhat like himself, Amor semper habet, quid sui simile. That love that is flat, lukewarm, or cold, will leave a man to freeze a-this side heaven, it will fit him for the warmest place in hell. Dives's love was very cold, and he found the flames of hell to be very hot. That love that accompanies salvation is full of heat and fire.

(5.) The fifth property. Fifthly, That love that accompanies salvation is lasting love, it is permanent love. The objects of it are lasting, the springs and causes of it are lasting, the nature of it is lasting. The primitive Christians loved not their lives unto the death, Rev 12:11. Persecutors have taken away the martyrs' lives for Christ, but could never destroy their love to Christ: Eph 6:24, 'Grace be with all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,' or, 'in incorruption,' as the Greek word signifies; whereby the apostle gives us to understand, that true love to Christ is not liable to corruption, putrefaction, or decay, but is constant and permanent, lasting, yea, everlasting. That love that accompanies salvation is like to the oil in the cruse and the meal in the barrel, that wasted not; it is like the apple-tree of Persia, that buddeth, blossometh, and beareth fruit every month; it is like the lamp in the story, that never went out; it is like the stone in Thracia, that neither burneth in the fire, nor sinketh in the water: Song of Solomon 8:6-7, 'Love is stronger than death, many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods cannot drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be contemned.' Love will outlive all enemies, temptations, oppositions, afflictions, persecutions, dangers, and deaths. Love's motto is Nulli cedo, I yield to none. Love is like the sun;

the sun beginning to ascend in his circle, never goes back till he comes to the highest degree thereof.

True love abhors apostasy, it ascends to more perfection, and ceases not until, like Elijah's fiery chariot, it hath carried the soul to heaven.

Many men's love to Christ is like the morning dew; it is like Jonah's gourd, that came up in a night and vanished in a night. But that love that accompanies salvation is like Ruth's love, a lasting and an abiding love, Ruth 1:1-22. It is love that will bed and board with the soul, that will lie down and rise up with the soul, that will to the fire, to the prison, to the grave, to heaven with the soul.

(6.) The sixth property. Sixthly, that love that accompanies salvation, is an abounding love, an increasing love. Love in a saint, is like the waters in Noah's time, that rose higher and higher. The very nature of true love is to abound and rise higher and higher. Php 1:9, 'This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.' The longer a believer lives, the more eminent and excellent causes of love he sees in Christ. Christ discovers himself gradually to the soul. Now a believer's love to Christ rises answerable to the causes of love that he sees in Christ. The more light the more love. Knowledge and love, like the water and the ice, beget each other.

Man loves Christ by knowing, and knows Christ by loving. Man's love is answerable to his light. He cannot love much that knows but little; he cannot love little that knows much. As a man rises higher and higher in his apprehensions of Christ, so he cannot but rise higher and higher in his affections to Christ. Again, the daily mercies and experiences that they have of the love of Christ, of the care of Christ, of the bowels and compassions of Christ, working more and more towards them, cannot but raise their affections more and more to him. As fire is increased by adding of fuel unto it, so is our love to Christ, upon fresh and new manifestations of his great love toward us. As the husband abounds in his love to his wife, so the wife rises in her love to her husband. The more love the father manifests to the child, the more the ingenuous child rises in his affections to him. So the more love the Lord Jesus shews to us, the more he is beloved by us. Christ shewed much love to Mary Magdalene, and this raises in her much love to Christ. 'She loved much, for much was forgiven her,' Luk 7:47-48. As the Israelites, Num 33:29, removed their tents from Mithcah to Hashmonah, from sweetness to swiftness, as the words import, so the sweetness of divine love manifested to the soul makes the soul more sweet, swift, and high in the exercise and actings of love towards Christ. A soul under special manifestations of love, weeps that it can love Christ no more. Mr Welch, a Suffolk minister, weeping at table, and being asked the reason of it, answered, it was because he could love Christ no more. The true lovers of Christ can never rise high enough in their love to Christ; they count a little love to be no love; great love to be but little; strong love to be but weak; and the highest love to be infinitely below the worth of Christ, the beauty and glory of Christ, the fulness, sweetness, and goodness of Christ. The top of their misery in this life is, that they love so little, though they are so much beloved.

(7.) The seventh property. Seventhly and lastly, that love that accompanies salvation, is open love, it is manifest love, it is love that cannot be hid, that cannot be covered and buried. It is like the sun, it will shine forth, and shew itself to all the world. A man cannot love Christ, but he will shew it in these, and such like things as follow:

First, Divine love makes the soul even ready to break, in longing after a further, clearer, and fuller enjoyment of Christ. The voice of divine love is, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev 22:20. 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountain of spices,' Song of Solomon 8:14. 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which for me is best of all,' Php 1:23. It is a mercy, says Paul, for Christ to be with me, but it is a greater mercy for me to be with Christ. I desire to die, that I may see my Saviour; I refuse to live, that I may live with my Redeemer.

Love desires and endeavours for ever to be present, to converse with, to enjoy, to be closely and eternally united to its object, Christ. The longing of the espoused maid for the marriage day, of the traveller for his inn, of the mariner for his haven, of the captive for his ransom, &c., is not to be compared to the longings of the lovers of Christ, after a further and fuller enjoyment of Christ. The lovers of Christ do well know, that till they are taken up into glory, their chains will not fall off; till then their glorious robes shall not be put on; till then all sorrow and tears shall not be wiped from their eyes; till then their joy will not be full, their comforts pure, their peace lasting, their graces perfect; and this makes them look and long after the enjoyment of the person of Christ.

It was a notable saying of one, 'Let all the devils in hell,' saith he, 'beset me round; let fasting macerate my body; let sorrows oppress my mind; let pains consume my flesh; let watchings dry me, or heat scorch me, or cold freeze me, let all these, and what can come more, happen unto me, so I may enjoy my Saviour.'

Secondly, Love to Christ shews itself by working the soul to abase itself, that Christ may be exalted, to lessen itself to greaten Christ, to cloud itself that Christ alone may shine. Love cares not what it is, nor what it doth, so it may but advance the Lord Jesus; it makes the soul willing to be a footstool for Christ, to be anything, to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all.

Thirdly, That love that accompanies salvation, sometimes shews itself by working the soul to be cheerful and resolute, to be patient and constant in sufferings for Christ: 1Co 13:7, 'Love endureth all things.' Love will not complain, love will not say the burden is too great, the prison is too dark, the furnace is too hot, the chains are too heavy, the cup is too bitter, &c., Acts 21:13. A true lover of Christ can slight his life, out of love to Christ, as that blessed virgin in Basil, who, being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her, if she would worship idols, cried, 'Let money perish, and life vanish, Christ is better than all.' So Alice Driver said, 'I drove my father's plough often, yet I can die for Christ as soon as any of you all.' That love that accompanies salvation, makes a Christian free and forward in suffering anything that makes for the glory of Christ.

Fourthly, that love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working the soul to be pleased or displeased, as Christ is pleased or displeased. A soul that loves Christ hath his eye upon Christ, and that which makes Christ frown makes him frown, and what makes Christ smile makes him smile. Love is impatient of anything that may displease a beloved Christ.

Look what Harpalus once said, Quod regi placet, mihi placet, what pleaseth the king pleaseth me, that says a true lover of Christ, What pleaseth Christ, that pleaseth me. Holiness pleaseth Christ and holiness pleaseth me, says a lover of Christ. It pleaseth Christ to overcome evil with good, to overcome hatred with love, enmity with amity, pride with humility, passion with meekness, &c., and

the same pleaseth me, says a lover of Christ. 1Jn 4:17, 'As he is, so are we in this world.' Our love answers to Christ's love, and our hatred answers to Christ's hatred; he loves all righteousness and hates all wickedness; so do we, say the lovers of Christ, Psa 119:113, Psa 119:128, Psa 119:163.

It is said of Constantine's children, that they resembled their father to the life, that they put him wholly on. The true lovers of Christ resemble Christ to the life, and they put him wholly on. Hence it is that they are called Christ, 1Co 12:12.

Fifthly, True love to Christ shews itself sometimes by working the lovers of Christ to expose themselves to suffering, to save Christ from suffering in his glory; to adventure the loss of their own crowns, to keep Christ's crown upon his head; to adventure drowning, to save Christ's honour from sinking. Thus did the three children, Daniel, Moses, and other worthies, Heb 11:1-40.

I have read of a servant who dearly loved his master, and knowing that his master was looked for by his enemies, he put on his master's clothes, and was taken for his master, and suffered death for him.

Divine love will make a man do as much for Christ; it will make a man hang for Christ and burn for Christ: Rev 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' Christ and his truth was dearer to them than their lives. They slighted, contemned, yea, despised their very lives, when they stood in competition with Christ and his glory, and chose rather to suffer the greatest misery than that Christ should lose the least dram of his glory.

Sixthly, That love that accompanies salvation shews itself sometimes by working the lovers of Christ to be affected and afflicted with the dishonours that are done to Christ: Psa 119:136, 'Mine eyes run down with rivers of tears, because men keep not thy law,' Jer 9:1-2. So Lot's soul was vexed, racked, and tortured with the filthy conversation of the wicked Sodomites, 2Pe 2:7-8. The turning of his own flesh, his wife, into a pillar of salt did not vex him, but their sins did rack his righteous soul: Psa 69:9, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.' A woman is most wounded in her husband, so is a Christian in his Christ. Though Moses was as a dumb child in his own cause, yet when the Israelites, by making and dancing about their golden calf, had wounded the honour and glory of God, he shews himself to be much affected and afflicted for the dishonour done to God. The statue of Apollo is said to shed tears for the afflictions of the Grecians, though he could not help them; so a true lover of Christ will shed tears for those dishonours that are done to Christ, though he knows not how to prevent them. It is between Christ and his lovers as it is between two lute strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck, but the other trembles; so no sooner is Christ struck, but a Christian trembles, and no sooner is a Christian struck, but Christ trembles: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts 9:4.

Seventhly, That love that accompanies salvation doth shew itself by working the soul to observe with a curious critical eye Christ's countenance and carriage, and by causing the soul to be sad or cheerful, as Christ's carriage and countenance is towards the soul. When Christ looks sad, and carries it sadly, then to be sad, as Peter was: Christ cast a sad look upon him, and that made his heart sad; he went forth and wept bitterly. And when Christ looks sweetly, and speaks kindly, and carries it lovingly, then to be cheerful and joyful, as the church was in Song of Solomon 3:4, 'It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that

conceived me.' So the church in Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' A true lover of Christ hath still his eye upon Christ, and as his countenance stands, so is he glad or sad, cheerful or sorrowful. Tigranes in Xenophon coming to redeem his father and friends, with his wife, that were taken prisoners by King Cyrus, was asked among other questions this, viz., what ransom he would give for his wife? he answered he would redeem her liberty with his own life. But having prevailed for all their liberties, as they returned together, every one commended Cyrus for a goodly man, and Tigranes would needs know of his wife what she thought of him. 'Truly,' said she, 'I cannot tell, for I did not so much as look on him or see him.' 'Whom then,' said he, wondering, 'did you look upon?' 'Whom should I look upon,' said she, 'but him that would have redeemed my liberty with the loss of his own life.'⁴ So a Christian, a true lover of Christ, esteems nothing worth a looking upon but Christ, who hath redeemed him with his own blood.

Eighthly, That love that accompanies salvation, reaches forth a hand of kindness to those that bear the image of Christ. 1Jn 5:1-2, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

Now, because many mistake in their love to the saints, and the consequences that follow that mistake are very dangerous and pernicious to the souls of men, I shall therefore briefly hint to you the properties of that love to the saints that accompanies salvation. And,

(1.) The first property. The first is this, true love to the saints is spiritual; it is a love for the image of God that is stamped upon the soul. Col 1:8, 'Epaphras hath declared to us your love in the Spirit.' A soul that truly loves, loves the Father for his own sake, and the children for the Father's sake. Many there are that love Christians for their goods, not for their good; they love them for the money that is in their purse, but not for the grace that is in their hearts. Many, like the Bohemian cur, fawn upon a good suit. Love to the saints, for the image of God stamped upon them, is a flower that grows not in nature's garden. No man can love grace in another man's heart but he that hath grace in his own. Men doth not more naturally love their parents, and love their children, and love themselves, than they do naturally hate the image of God upon his people and ways. True love is for what of the divine nature, for what of Christ and grace shines in a man. It is one thing to love a godly man, and another thing to love him for godliness. Many love godly men as they are politicians, or potent, or learned, or of a sweet nature, but all this is but natural love; but to love them because they are spiritually lovely, because they are 'all glorious within, and their raiment is of embroidered gold,' Psal 45:13, is to love them as becometh saints; it is to love them at so high and noble a rate that no hypocrite in the world can reach to it. The wasps fly about the tradesman's shop, not out of love to him, but the honey and the fruit that is there. This age is full of such wasps.

(2.) The second property. Secondly, True love to the saints is universal to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any; to poor Lazarus as well as to rich Abraham, to a despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Joseph as well as to a raised Jacob, to a despised disciple as well as to an exalted apostle. Php 4:21, 'Salute every saint,' the meanest as well as the

richest, the weakest as well as the strongest, the lowest as well as the highest. They have all the same Spirit, the same Jesus, the same faith; they are all fellow-members, fellow-travellers, fellow-soldiers, fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs, and therefore must they all be loved with a sincere and cordial love. The apostle James doth roundly condemn that partial love that was among professors in his days, Jas 2:1-2. Not that the apostle doth absolutely prohibit a civil differencing of men in place from others, but when the rich man's wealth is more regarded than the poor man's godliness, and when men carry it so to the rich, as to cast scorn, contempt, disgrace, and discouragement upon the godly poor; this is a sin for which God will visit the sons of pride.

Pompey told his Cornelia, 'It is no praise for thee to have loved Pompeium Magnum, Pompey the Great, but if thou lovest Pompeium Miserum, Pompey the Miserable, thou shalt be a pattern for imitation to all posterity.' I will leave you to apply it.

Romanus the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favour him for his nobility: 'For it is not,' said he, 'the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian faith, that makes me noble.'

Verily, he that loves one saint for the grace that is in him, for that holiness, that image of God, that is upon him, he cannot but fall in love with every saint that bears the lovely image of the Father upon him; he cannot but love a saint in rags, as well as a saint in robes; a saint upon the dunghill, as well as a saint upon the throne. Usually the most ragged Christians are the richest Christians; they usually have most of heaven that have least of earth, Jas 2:5. The true diamond shines best in the dark.

(3.) The third property. Thirdly, Our love to the saints is right, when we love them and delight in them, answerable to the spiritual causes of love that shine in them, as the more holy and gracious they are, the more we love them: Psa 16:2-3, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' This is most certain, if godliness be the reason why we love any, then the more any excel others in the love, spirit, power, and practice of godliness, the more we should love them. There are those that seem to love such godly men as are weak in their judgments, low in their principles, and dull in their practices, and yet look with a squint eye upon those that are more sound in their judgments, more high in their principles, and more holy in their practices, which doubtless speaks out more hypocrisy than sincerity. Verily, he hath either no grace, or but a little grace, that doth not love most where the spiritual causes of love do most shine and appear. Surely those Christians are under a very great distemper of spirit, that envy those gifts and graces of God in others, that outshine their own. John's disciples muttered and murmured, because Christ had more followers and admirers than John; and John's disciples are not all dead, yea, they seem to have a new resurrection in these days. Well, as the fairest day hath its clouds, the finest linen its spots, the richest jewels their flaws, the sweetest fruits their worms, so when precious Christians are under temptations, they may, and too often do envy and repine at those excellent graces, abilities, and excellencies that cloud, darken, and outshine their own. The best of men are too full of pride and self-love, and that makes them sometimes cast dirt and disgrace upon that excellency that themselves want, as that great man that could not write his own name, and yet called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence. There is no greater argument that our grace is true, and that we do love others for grace's sake, than our loving them best that have most grace, though they have least of worldly

goods. A pearl is rich, if found on a dunghill, though it may glitter more when set in a ring of gold; so many a poor believer is rich and glorious in the eye of Christ, and should be so in ours, though, like Job, he sits upon a dunghill, though to the world he may seem to glisten most when adorned with riches, honour, and outward pomp, &c.

(4.) The fourth property. Fourthly, True love to saints is constant: 1Co 13:8, 'Love never faileth.' It continues for ever in heaven. That love was never true that is not constant. Heb 13:1, 'Let brotherly love continue.' True love is constant in prosperity and adversity, in storms and calms, in health and sickness, in presence and in absence. 'Thy own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.' 'A friend,' says the wise man, 'loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,' Pro 17:17. Prosperity makes friends, and adversity will try friends. A true friend is neither known in prosperity, nor hid in adversity.

True love is like to that of Ruth's to Naomi, and that of Jonathan's to David, permanent and constant. Many there be whose love to the saints is like Job's brooks, Job 6:15-16, which in winter when we have no need, overflows with tenders of service and shews of love; but when the season is hot and dry, and the poor thirsty traveller stands in most need of water to refresh him, then the brooks are quite dried up. They are like the swallow that will stay by you in the summer, but fly from you in the winter.

It is observed by Josephus of the Samaritans, that whenever the Jews' affairs prospered, they would be their friends, and profess much love to them; but if the Jews were in trouble, and wanted their assistance, then they would not own them, nor have anything to do with them. This age is full of such Samaritans, yet, such as truly love will always love. In the primitive times it was very much taken notice of by the very heathen, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians, otherwise strangers, stuck close to one another; their love of religion, and one of another, proved firmer than that of nature. 'They seem to take away the sun out of the world,' said the orator, 'who taketh away friendship from the life of men,' and we do not more need fire and water than constant friendship.

Ninthly, That love that accompanies salvation, doth manifest and shew itself by working the soul to be quiet and still under Christ's rebukes. Peter sits down quiet under a threefold reproof, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John 21:16-18. So Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his own eyes,' 1Sa 3:18. And Aaron 'held his peace,' when he saw the flames about his sons' ears, Lev 10:3. So David, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,' Psa 39:9. The lovers of Christ are like the Scythian, that went naked in the snow; and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, he answered, 'I am all forehead.' Oh the lovers of Christ are all forehead, to bear the rebukes of the Lord Jesus. The lovers of Christ know that all his rebukes are from love; 'whom he loves, he rebukes,' Rev 3:19; they can see smiles through Christ's frowns; they know, that to argue that Christ hates them because he rebukes them, is the devil's logic; they know, that all the rebukes of Christ are in order to their internal and eternal good, and that quiets them; they know that all the rebukes of Christ are but forerunners of some glorious manifestations of greater love to their souls. Psa 71:20-21, 'Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' They know that it is the sorest judgment in the world, to go on freely in a way of sin without rebukes. 'Ephraim is joined to

idols, let him alone,' Hos 4:17. And therefore they keep silence before the Lord, they lay one hand upon their mouths, and the other upon their hearts, and so sit mute before the holy one.

Tenthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working the heart to be affected and afflicted with the least dishonours that are done to Christ. Love is curious of little things; it is as much afflicted with an idle word or with an impure dream, as lovers of Christ are with adultery or blasphemy. David did but cut off the lap of Saul's garment, and his heart smote him, 1Sa 24:5; though he did it to convince Saul of his false jealousy, and his own innocency. Love will not allow of the least infirmity. Rom 7:15, 'That which I do, I allow not.' Love will make a man aim at angelical purity and perfect innocency; love will be getting up to the top of Jacob's ladder; love can rest in nothing below perfection; love makes a man look more at what he should be than at what he is; it makes a man strive as for life, to imitate the highest examples, and to write after the choicest copies. Love fears every image of offence, it trembles at the appearance of one, it doth not, it cannot allow itself to do anything that looks like sin; it hates 'the garment spotted with the flesh;' it shuns the occasions of sin as it shuns hell itself. This is the divine curiosity and glory of a Christian's love. Love says it is better to die with hunger than to eat that which is offered to idols.³

I have read of a holy man, who, out of his love to Christ and hatred of idolatry, would not give one halfpenny toward the building of an idol's temple, though he was provoked thereunto by intolerable torments. Love knows that the least evils are contrary to the greatest good;² they are contrary to the nature of Christ, the commands of Christ, the spirit of Christ, the grace of Christ, the glory of Christ, the blood of Christ. Love knows that little dishonours, if I may call any sin little, make way for greater, as little thieves unlock the door and make way for greater. Love knows that little sins multiplied become great. As love knows that there is nothing lesser than a grain of sand; so love knows that there is nothing heavier than the sand of the sea, when multiplied.

Eleventhly, That love that accompanies salvation, will shew itself by keeping the doors of the heart shut against those treacherous lovers that would draw the heart from Christ. Love is a golden key to let in Christ, and a strong lock to keep out others. Though many may knock at love's door, yet love will open to none but Christ: Song of Solomon 5:6, 'I opened to my beloved;' and 8:7, 'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned;' Boz Jabuzu, contemning it would be contemned. When the world would buy his love, he cries out with Peter, 'Thy money perish with thee,' Acts 8:20. Love makes a man look with a holy scorn and disdain upon all persons and things, that attempt either to force or flatter her out of her love and loyalty to her beloved. It is neither force nor fraud, it is neither promises nor threatenings, it is neither the cross nor the crown, the palace nor the prison, the rod nor the robe, the hempen⁴ halter nor the golden chain, that will make love embrace a stranger in the room of Christ. Go, says divine love, offer your gold and empty glories to others; your pleasures and your treasures to others; put on your lion's skin and fright others; as for my part, I scorn and condemn your golden offers, and I disdain and deride your rage and threats. Love makes a man too noble, too high, too gallant, and too faithful, to open to any lover but Christ, to let any lie between the breasts but Christ: Song of Solomon 1:13, 'A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.' When Basil was tempted with money and preferment, he answers, Pecuniam da quæ permaneat, ac continuo duret, gloriam quæ semper floreat: Give money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish. Love makes a man cry out when tempted, Let not any man think that he will embrace other men's goods

to forsake Christ, who hath forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ. Love makes a man cry out when tempted, as that worthy convert did, *Ego non sum ego*, I am not the man that I was; when my heart was void of divine love, I was as easily conquered as I was tempted. Oh but now he hath shed abroad his love in my soul, I am not the man that I was, I had rather die than fly, or fall before a temptation.

Twelfthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by secret visits, by secret expressions of love. A soul that truly loves Christ, loves to meet him in a corner, to meet him behind the door, Song of Solomon 2:14, to meet him in the clefts of the rock, where no eye sees, nor no ear hears, nor no heart observes, Mat 6:6. Feigned love is much in commending and kissing Christ upon the stage; but unfeigned love is much in embracing and weeping over Christ in a closet. The Pharisee loved to stand praying in the market-place and in the temple, Mat 6:2; but Nathanael was with Christ under the fig-tree, John 1:48; and Cornelius was at it in the corner of his house, Acts 10:1-48; and Peter was at it on the leads; and the spouse was at it in the villages, Song of Solomon 7:11. Souls that truly love Christ, are much in secret visits, in secret prayer, in secret sighing, in secret groaning, in secret mourning, &c. True love is good at bolting of the door, and is always best when it is most with Christ in a corner. The secret discoveries that Christ makes to souls, do much oblige them to closet services.

Arcesilaus in Plutarch, visiting his sick friend, and perceiving his necessity that he wanted, and yet his modesty that he was ashamed to ask, that he might satisfy the one and yet salve the other, secretly conveyed money under his pillow, which his friend finding after he was gone, was wont to say, 'Arcesilaus stole this.' So Christ steals secret kindnesses upon his people, and that draws them out to be much in secret, in closet services.

Thirteenthly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by breathing after more clear evidence and full assurance of Christ's love to the soul. Divine love would fain have her drop turned into an ocean, her spark into a flame, her penny into a pound, her mite into a million. A soul that truly loves, can never see enough, nor never taste enough, nor never feel enough, nor never enjoy enough of the love of Christ; when once they have found his love to be better than wine, then nothing will satisfy them but the kisses of his mouth: Song of Solomon 1:2, 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.' Not with a kiss, but with the kisses of his mouth. A soul once kissed by Christ, can never have enough of the kisses of Christ; his lips drop myrrh and mercy; no kisses to the kisses of Christ. The more any soul loves Christ, the more serious, studious, and industrious will that soul be to have the love of Christ discovered, confirmed, witnessed, and sealed to it. That is a sweet word of the spouse: Song of Solomon 8:6, 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm; for love is strong as death.' Set me as a seal upon thy heart; that is, let me be deeply engraven as a seal into thy heart and affections; let the love and remembrance of me make a deep impression in thee, and set me as a seal or signet on thy arm.

[1.] The seal, you know, is for ratifying, confirming, and making sure of things. Oh! says the spouse, establish and confirm me in thy love, and in the outward expressions and manifestations of it.

[2.] Seals among the Jews were used not as ornaments only, but as monuments of love that were continually in sight and remembrance. Oh! says the church, let me be still in thy sight and remembrance as a monument of thy love. In the old law, you know, the high priest did bear the

name of Israel engraven on stones upon his heart and shoulder for a memorial, Exo 28:11-12, Exo 28:21, Exo 28:29. Ah! says the church, let my name be deeply engraven upon thy heart, let me be always in thy eye, let me be always a memorial upon thy shoulder.

[3.] Great men have their signets upon their hands in precious esteem: Jer 22:24, 'As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.' Ah! says the spouse, Oh highly prize me, Lord Jesus! highly esteem of me; oh let me be as dear and precious unto thee as the signet that thou carriest about with thee, or as signets are to great men that wear them!

Lastly, That love that accompanies salvation, shews itself by working a true lover of Christ to commit his richest treasures, his choicest jewels, to the care and custody of Christ. Where we love we will trust, and as we love we will trust. Little trust speaks out little love, great trust speaks out great love. The lovers of Christ commend to Christ's care their pearls of greatest price, their names, their lives, their souls, their crowns, their innocence, their all. It was a notable saying of Luther, 'Let him that died for my soul see to the salvation of it.' Cæsar received not his wounds from the swords of enemies, but from the hands of friends, that is, from trusting in them. Oh, but the lovers of Christ shall never receive any wounds by trusting in Christ, by committing their choicest jewels to his care; for he hath a powerful hand and a wise and loving heart! Christ will hold fast whatever the Father or the saints put into his hand. And thus I have shewed you what that love is that doth accompany salvation.

I come now, in the sixth place, to shew you what prayer that is that doth accompany salvation. But I see that I must contract what remains into a narrow room, lest I should tire out both the reader and myself, which, that I may not, I shall endeavour by divine assistance to mind brevity in what remains.

Now, that prayer doth accompany salvation, I have formerly shewed. Now I am briefly to shew you what prayer that is that doth accompany salvation, and that I shall do in these following particulars.

(1.) The first property. First, Prayer is a divine worship wherein we speak to God in faith, humility, sincerity, and fervency of spirit, through the mediation of Christ, begging those good things that we and others want, deprecating that we and others fear, and giving thanks for that we and others have received. Prayer is a speaking to God face to face; it is Jacob's ladder by which the soul climbs up to heaven; it is Noah's dove that goes and returns not till it brings assurance of peace. But not to please you with notions, you must remember that that prayer that accompanies salvation is such prayer as hath in it all the requisites of prayer. Now there are four requisites in prayer.

[1.] The first requisite. First, The person must be righteous: Jas 5:16, 'The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' John 9:31, 'God heareth not sinners.' The Jews urge it as a proverb, An unclean person polluteth his own prayers. Good motions from a bad heart make no music in heaven; the sweet words that drop from a leper's lips are but lies in the account of God, Hos 11:12.

I have read of a jewel, that, being put in a dead man's mouth, loseth all its virtue. Prayer in the mouth of a wicked man that is dead God-wards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, is a jewel that loseth all its virtue: Psa 50:16-17, 'But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to

do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth? seeing that thou hatest instruction, and casteth my words behind thee.' Bias, an heathen, being at sea in a great storm, and perceiving many wicked wretches with him in the ship, calling upon the gods, 'Oh,' saith he, 'forbear prayer, hold your tongues; I would not have the gods take notice that you are here; they will sure drown us all, if they should.' You are wise, and know how to apply it.²

[2.] The second requisite. The second requisite in prayer is this, viz., The matter of your prayer must be good: 1Jn 5:14, 'And this is the confidence that we have in him, That if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.' The favourites of heaven have no further the ear of the King of kings in prayer, than the matter of their prayer is good, and 'agreeable to his will,' Rom 8:27. The matter of your prayer must fall under some particular or general precept or promise, or else God will never own it nor honour it with acceptance. You must not pray as Augustine prayed before his conversion; he prayed for continency, with a proviso: 'Lord, give me continency,' saith he, 'but not yet.' Such hypocrisy is double iniquity, and God will deal with such sinners accordingly.⁴

[3.] The third requisite. Thirdly, As the matter of your prayer must be good, so the manner of your prayer must be right. God regards not so much the matter as the manner of our prayer. God loves adverbs better than nouns; not to pray only, but to pray well. Non bonum, sed benè agere, not to do good, but to do it well.

Now for the better and further clearing of this truth, I shall shew you, by divine assistance, what it is to pray in the right manner, and that I shall do in the following particulars:

First, To pray in a right manner, is to pray understandingly, to pray knowingly: 1Co 14:15, 'I will pray with understanding.' He that doth not pray understandingly, doth not pray but prate; as that parrot in Rome that could distinctly say over the whole creed: John 4:22, 'Ye worship ye know not what,' says Christ. So many pray they know not what. 'Without knowledge the mind cannot be good,' Pro 19:2. And can the prayer be good when the mind is bad? A blind mind, a blind sacrifice, a blind priest, are abominable to God. It was a good saying of one, 'God heareth not the words of one that prayeth,' saith he, 'unless he that prayeth heareth them first himself.' And, verily, God will never understand that prayer that we do not understand ourselves.

Secondly, To pray in a right manner, is to pray believingly: Heb 11:6, 'He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is;' that is, that he is really as good, as gracious, as glorious, as excellent, as constant, &c., as his word reports him to be; and that he is 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:' Mark 11:24, 'Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' In the Greek it is λαμβανετε, in the present tense, 'ye do receive them,' to shew the certainty of receiving them. You shall as certainly receive the good things that believingly you ask in prayer, as if you had them already in your hand. God will never let the hand of faith go empty away in prayer. Faith is God's darling, and he never fails to give it a worthy portion, a Benjamin's portion, a Hannah's portion, a double portion: Jas 1:5-7, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.' He that prayeth doubtingly, shuts the gates of heaven against his own prayers.

It is reported in the life of Luther, that when he prayed it was tanta reverentia ut si Deo, et tanta fiducia ut si amico, with so much reverence, as if he were praying to God; and with so much boldness, as if he had been speaking to his friend. Faith in prayer makes a man divinely familiar and bold with God in prayer. That prayer that hath not the image and stamp of faith upon it, is no prayer in divine account. The sweetest flowers of paradise are only acceptable to God as they are tendered to him by the hand of faith.

Augustus, when a poor man came to present a petition to him with his hand shaking and trembling out of fear, the emperor was much displeased, and said, 'It is not fit that any should come with a petition to a king as if a man were giving meat to an elephant;' that is, afraid to be destroyed by him.

Verily Jehovah loves to see every one of his petitioners to come to him with a stedfast faith, and not with a trembling hand. Christ gets most glory, and the soul gets most good, by those prayers that are accompanied with the actings of faith.

Thirdly, To pray in a right manner, is to pray intensely, fervently, earnestly. So Jas 5:16, 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;' or, as the Greek hath it, 'the working prayer,' that is, such prayer as sets the whole man a-work. The word signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be. As physic kills the body if it work not, so doth prayer the soul, if it be not working-prayer. As a painted fire is no fire, a dead man no man, so a cold prayer is no prayer. In a painted fire there is no heat; in a dead man there is no life; so in a cold prayer there is no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. It is not cold but working prayer that can lock up heaven three years, and open heaven's gate at pleasure, and bring down the sweetest blessings upon our heads, and the choicest favours into our hearts. Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings: they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers do always freeze before they reach to heaven. So Jacob was earnest in his wrestling with God: 'Let me alone,' says God. 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me,' says Jacob, Gen 32:24-27. Jacob, though lamed and hard laid at, will not let the Lord go without a blessing. Jacob holds with his hands when his joints were out of joint, and so, as a prince, prevails with God. Jacob prays and weeps, and weeps and prays, and so prevails with God: Hos 12:4, 'Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him,' &c. It is not the labour of the lips, but the travail of the heart; it is not the pouring forth a flood of words, but the pouring out of the soul, that makes a man a prince, a prevailer with God. A man that would gain victory over God in prayer, must strain every string of his heart; he must, in beseeching God, besiege him, and so get the better of him; he must strive in prayer even to an agony; he must be like importunate beggars, that will not be put off with frowns, or silence, or sad answers. Those that would be masters of their requests, must with the importunate widow press God so far as to put him to the blush; they must with a holy impudence, as Basil speaks, make God ashamed to look them in the face, if he should deny the importunity of their souls.³ An importunate soul will never cease till he speed; he will devour all discouragements; yea, he will turn discouragements into encouragements, as the woman of Canaan did, till Christ says, 'Be unto thee, O soul, as thou wilt.' As a body without a soul, much wood without fire, a bullet in a gun without powder, so are words in prayer without fervency of spirit. The hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions.

I have read of one who, being sensible of his own dulness and coldness in prayer, chide himself thus: 'What! dost thou think that Jonah prayed thus when he was in the belly of hell? or Daniel, when he was in the lions' den? or the thief, when he was upon the cross?' and I may add, or the three children, when they were in the fiery furnace? or the apostles, when they were in bonds and prisons. Oh! that Christians would chide themselves out of their cold prayers, and chide themselves into a better and a warmer frame of spirit when they make their supplications before the Lord. An importunate soul in prayer is like the poor beggar that prays and knocks, that prays and waits, that prays and works, that knocks and knits, that begs and patches, and will not stir from the door till he hath an alms. And verily he that is good at this will not be long a beggar in grace. God will make his heart and his cup to overflow.

Fourthly, To pray in a right manner, is, to pray assiduously, constantly, as well as fervently. Luk 18:1, 'And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;' or as it is in the Greek, not to 'shrink back,' as sluggards in work or cowards in war.' Now men pray always, first, when their hearts are always prepared to pray, or in a praying frame; secondly, when they do not omit the duty, when it is to be performed, or when they take hold on every opportunity, to pour out their souls before the Lord. 1Th 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing.' A man must always pray habitually, though not actually; he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all estates and conditions, in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, in wealth and wants, in life and death. So in Eph 6:18, 'Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints. Our daily weaknesses, our daily wants, our daily fears, our daily dangers, our daily temptations, &c., bespeak our daily prayers. Rom 12:12, 'Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulations, continuing instant in prayer,' προσκαρτεροῦντες. It is a metaphor taken from dogs that hunt, that will not give over the game till they have got it. A dog, of all creatures, is best able to endure hunger; he will run from place to place, and never leave it till he hath got his prey. So a child of God in his hunting after God, Christ, grace, peace, mercy, glory, never gives over till he hath found his heavenly prey. Song of Solomon 3:4, 'At length I found him whom my soul loved; I held him, and would not let him go.' The spouse never left hunting after her beloved, till she had found him. Gracious souls reckon that they have nothing till they speed in the things they sue for; they pray as if they had never prayed, and think that they have done nothing till they have done the deed.⁵ It is observed by some of Proteus, that he was wont to give certain oracles; but it was hard to make him speak and deliver them, but he would turn himself into several shapes and forms; yet if they would hold out and press him hard without fear, into whatsoever form or shape he appeared, they were sure to have satisfactory oracles. So if we will continue constant in our wrestling with God for blessings, though God should appear unto us in the form or shape of a judge, an enemy, a stranger, &c., yet still to press him hard for mercy, verily mercy will come at the long run, and we shall say, that it is not in vain for men to hold on praying, though God for a time delays giving the particular favours they sue for. As that emperor said, Oportet imperatorem stantem mori, it behoves an emperor to die standing, so may I say, Oportet Christianum mori precantem, it behoves a Christian to die praying.

Fifthly, To pray in a right manner, is to pray sincerely: Psa 17:1, 'Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips'; or, as it is in the Hebrew, without 'lips of deceit.' Psa 145:18, 'The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him: to all that call upon him in truth.' Your heart and

tongue must go together; word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice must echo one to another, or all will be lost, heaven lost, and the soul lost for ever. It is not the greatness of the voice, nor the multitude of words, nor the sweetness of the tone, nor studied notions, nor eloquent expressions, that takes Jehovah, but truth in the inward parts, Psa 51:6. When the Athenians would know of the oracle, the cause of their often unprosperous successes in battle against the Lacedæmonians, seeing they offered the choicest things they could get, in sacrifice to the gods, which their enemies did not, the oracle gave them this answer, That the gods were better pleased with their inward supplication without ambition, than with all their outward pomp in costly sacrifices. Ah, souls! the reason why you are so unsuccessful in your religious duties and services is, because you are no more sincere and upright in them. Were there more singleness and sincerity of heart in your duties, you would have surer and sweeter returns from heaven.

One reports of Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, that he would often say, *Cibus et potus mihi erit oratio*, prayer is my meat and drink. Ah, Christians! the more sincere you are, the more will prayer be your meat and drink; and the more prayer is a delight and pleasure to you, the more will you be the pleasure and delight of God, who delights in those that delight in his service, and that count his work better than wages. It was more troublesome to Severus the emperor, to be asked nothing, than to give much; when any of his courtiers had not made bold with him, he would call him and say, *Quid est cur nihil petis?* &c., what meanest thou to ask me nothing? So says Christ to upright souls; 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,' John 16:24. Christ hath a full purse, a noble heart, and a liberal hand.

[4.] The fourth requisite in prayer is this, viz., your prayer must be *ad bonum*, to a good end; it must be to the glory of God, and to the internal and eternal advantage of your own and others' souls. The chiefest end, the white, the mark, at which the soul must aim in prayer, is God's glory: 'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' 1Co 10:31. When God crowns us, he doth but crown his own gifts in us; and when we give God the glory of all we do, we do but give him the glory that is due unto his name; for he works all our works in us and for us. God measures all men's actions by their ends: if their end be good, all is good; if the end be naught, all is naught. The end determineth the action. All actions of worship are good or bad, as the mark is at which the soul aims. He that makes God the object of prayer, but not the end of prayer, doth but lose his prayer, and take pains to undo himself. God will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all; he will be Alexander or Nemo; he will be both the object and the end of prayer, or else he will abhor your prayer. Those prayers never reach his ear, they are never lodged in his bosom, that are not directed to his glory. The end must always be as noble as the means, or else a Christian acts below himself, yea, below his very reason.

Ah, Christians! it is not a flood of words, nor high strains of wit, nor vehemency of affections in prayer, but holy and gracious ends, that will render prayer acceptable and honourable to God, comfortable and profitable to yourselves and others; yea, the directing of one prayer to divine glory doth more torture and torment Satan than all the prayers in the world that are directed to ends below divine glory. It is not simply prayer, but the soul's aiming at divine glory in prayer, that adds to Christ's crown and Satan's hell. And thus I have shewed you all the requisites of prayer, even of such prayer as accompanies salvation. I shall now proceed to some other particulars for the further and fuller opening of this truth.

(2.) The second property. Secondly, That prayer that accompanies salvation betters the whole man. By it faith is increased, hope strengthened, the spirit exhilarated, the heart pacified, the conscience purified, temptations vanquished, corruptions weakened, the affections inflamed, the will more renewed, and the whole man more advantaged. Prayer is a spiritual chair, wherein the soul sitteth down at the feet of the Lord, to receive the influences of his grace. Prayer is the regal gate by which the Lord entereth into the heart, comforting, quieting, strengthening, quickening, and raising of it. The Scripture affords us a cloud of witnesses to prove this truth, but I appeal to praying saints. Ah, tell me, tell me, praying souls, have not you, do not you find it so? I know you have and do, and that is it that makes prayer a pleasure, a paradise unto you.

(3.) The third property. Thirdly, You may judge what prayer that is that accompanies salvation by considering the difference that is betwixt the prayers of the godly and the wicked. Now the difference between the prayers of the one and the other I shall shew you in the following particulars. The first difference. First, Gracious souls do trade and deal with God in prayer, only upon the account and credit of Christ. They beg mercy to pardon them, and grace to purge them, and balm to heal them, and divine favour to comfort them, and power to support them, and wisdom to counsel them, and goodness to satisfy them, but all upon the account of Christ's blood, of Christ's righteousness, of Christ's satisfaction, and of Christ's intercession at the right hand of the Father, Rev 4:10-11. They seek the Father in the Son, they present their suits always in Christ's name, for so is the will of Christ: John 14:13-14, 'And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' John 15:16, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you.' John 16:23, 'Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.' ■τι ■σα ■ν ■τ■σητε. The Greek is pregnant, and may be read not only 'Whatsoever,' but also 'How many things soever ye shall ask or beg of the Father in my name, he will give them to you.' There is no admission into heaven, except we bring Christ in our arms: Eph 2:18, 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' The Greek word signifies 'a leading by the hand.' It is an allusion to the custom of princes, to whom there is no passage, unless we be brought in by one of the favourites.

Plutarch reports, 'That it was wont to be the way of some of the heathens, the Molossians, when they would seek the favour of their prince, they took up the king's son in their arms, and so went and kneeled before the king.'

Ah, Christians! Christ is near and dear unto the Father; the Father hath determined to give out all his loves and favours through his Son; if you bring Christ in the arms of your faith, you gain the Father's heart, and in gaining his heart you gain all. The father's mercies melt, his bowels roll, his heart turns, his compassions are kindled upon the sight of his Son's merits and mediation. As Joseph said to his brethren, 'Ye shall not see my face unless you bring your brother Benjamin,' so says God, you shall not see my face unless you bring the Lord Jesus with you.

Now gracious souls, in all their prayers, they present Jesus Christ before the Father, and upon his account they desire those things that make for their external, internal, and eternal good. Ah! but vain men treat and trade with God in prayer upon the account of their own worth, righteousness, worthiness, and services: Isa 58:2-3, 'Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the

ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to me: Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' Here you see they stand upon their own practices and services, and expostulate the case with God in an angry manner, because God did not answer their hypocritical performances. So the proud pharisee stands in prayer upon his own worthiness and righteousness: Luk 18:11-12, 'The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' So did those hypocrites in Mat 6:23 stand very much upon their outward services and performances, though they were but shining sins, but filthy rags. The second difference. Secondly, Souls truly gracious pray more to get off their sins than they do to get off their chains. Though bonds did attend Paul in every place, Acts 20:23, as himself speaks, yet he never cries out, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from my bonds, but, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from my sins, from this body of death?' Rom 7:23. David cries not Perii, but Peccavi; not I am undone, but I have done foolishly, Psa 51:4. But wicked men strive in prayer more to get off their chains than to get off their sins; more to be delivered from enemies without than lusts within; more to get out of the furnace than to be delivered from their spiritual bondage, as the scriptures in the margin do evidence. The third difference. Thirdly, The stream and cream of a gracious man's spirit runs most out in prayer after spiritual and heavenly things, as is abundantly evident by those prayers of the saints that are upon record throughout the Scripture, Psa 4:6-7, and Psa 27:4; but the stream and cream of vain men's spirits in prayer runs most out after poor, low, carnal things, as you may see in comparing the following scriptures together, Hos 7:14, Zec 7:5-7, Jas 4:3, &c. The fourth difference. Fourthly, A gracious soul looks and lives more upon God in prayer than upon his prayer. He knows, though prayer be his chariot, yet Christ is his food. Prayer may be a staff to support him, but Christ is that manna that must nourish him, and upon him he looks, and lives: Psa 5:3, 'In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee' (or marshal and set in order my prayer, as it is in the Hebrew), 'and will look up' (or 'look out,' as it is in the Hebrew) 'as a watchman looks out to discover the approaches of an enemy.' But vain men, they live and look more upon their prayers than they do upon God; nay, usually they never observe what returns they have from heaven. They are like those that shoot arrows, but do not mind where they fall. Wicked men think it is religion enough for them to pray; and to look after their prayers, to see how their prayers speed, is no article of their faith; but a gracious soul is of a more noble spirit; when he hath prayed he will stand upon his watch-tower, and observe what God will speak: Psa 85:8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not return to folly;' or, as the Hebrew may be read, 'And they shall not return to folly, Veal iashubu le chislah.' Wicked men would have God to be all ear to hear what they desire, when themselves have never an ear to hear what he speaks. But deaf ears shall always be attended with dumb answers. Justice always makes mercy dumb, when sin hath made the sinner deaf. The fifth difference. Fifthly, No discouragements can take gracious souls off from prayer, but the least discouragements will take off carnal hearts from prayer, as you may see in the following scriptures compared together: Psa 40:1-2, and Psa 44:10-23; Mat 15:21-29; Mat 3:14; Isa 58:1-3; Amo 8:3-5, &c. When one of the ancient martyrs was terrified with the threatenings of his persecutors, he replied, 'There is nothing,' saith he, 'of things visible, nothing of things invisible that I fear; I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, come on it what will.' It is neither the hope of life, nor the fear of death, that can take a

real Christian off from prayer. He is rather raised than dejected, he is rather quickened than discouraged by delays or denials; he will hold up and hold on in a way and course of prayer, though men should rage and lions roar, and the furnace be heat seven times hotter, &c. But it is not so with carnal hearts, Job 27:9-10. The sixth difference. Sixthly, When a gracious man prays, he hath his heart in his prayer; when he falls upon the work, he makes heart-work of it. So David, Psa 42:4, 'When I remember these things, I pour out my heart.' So Hannah, 1Sa 1:15, 'I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit,' said she, 'and have poured out my soul before the Lord.' So the Israelites in 1Sa 7:6, 'pour out their souls like water before the Lord.' So the church in Isa 26:8-9, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Gracious souls know that no prayer is acknowledged, accepted, and rewarded by God, but that wherein the heart is sincerely and wholly. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, that will satisfy the maker of the heart. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart. God neither loves halting nor halving, he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, 'Thou shalt love and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul,' Deu 10:12. Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was naught the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those sacrifices wherein the heart is not.

Now wicked men are heartless in all their services, in all their prayers, as you may see in comparing the following scriptures together; I shall not transcribe the words, because I must cut short the work: Isa 29:13; Mat 15:7-9; Eze 33:30-32; Zec 7:4-6; 2Ch 25:1-2. As the body without the soul is dead, so prayer, without the heart be in it, is but dead prayer in the eye and account of God. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, but the stirrings of the heart, that God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks; if the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer takes with God but that which is the travail of the heart. The seventh difference. Seventhly, Gracious souls usually come off from prayer, with hearts more disengaged from sin, and more vehemently set against it. The precious communion that they have with God in prayer, the sweet breathings of God into their hearts, whilst they are a-breathing out their requests in his ears, and the secret assistance, stirrings, and movings of the Spirit upon their souls in prayer, arm them more against sin, and makes them stand upon the highest terms of defiance with sin. How shall I do this or that wickedness against God? says the praying soul, Oh I cannot, I will not do anything unworthy of him that hath caused his glory to pass before me in prayer.

Ah! but wicked men come off from prayer with hearts more encouraged to sin, and more resolved to walk in ways of sin: Pro 7:14-24, 'I have peace-offerings with me,' saith the harlot; 'this day have I paid my vows: therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves.' So in Jer 7:9-10, 'Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?' Wicked men are like Lewis, king of France, that would swear and then kiss the cross, and then swear more bitterly and then kiss the cross. So they sin and pray, and pray and sin; and the more they pray,

the more easily, resolutely, impudently do they sin. They make use of prayer to charm their consciences, that so they may sin with more pleasure and less regret. Ah! what pains do such sinners take to go to hell, and to arm their consciences against themselves in that day, wherein they shall say, There is no help, there is no hope! The eighth difference. Eighthly and lastly, Gracious souls do more eye and observe how their own hearts are wrought upon in prayer, than how others' hearts are wrought upon. When they pray, they look with a curious eye upon their own spirits, they look with a narrow eye upon their own hearts, and observe how they are affected, melted, humbled, quickened, raised, spiritualized, and bettered by prayer. But vain men, as they pray to 'be seen of men,' so they eye most how others like their prayers, and are affected and taken with their prayers. They are most critical in observing what operations their prayers have upon others' hearts, but never mind, to any purpose, how they operate upon their own hearts; a worse plague cannot befall them.² And thus I have endeavoured to shew you what a wide difference there is betwixt the prayers of the godly and the ungodly; and by this, as by the former particulars laid down, you may see what prayer that is that accompanies salvation.

Now, in the seventh place, I shall shew you what perseverance that is that accompanies salvation, and that I shall do in these following particulars.

(1.) The first property. First, That perseverance that accompanies salvation, is Perseverance in a holy profession. Heb 4:14, 'Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession by a strong hand,' or by a hand of holy violence [κρατουμεν]. So in Heb 10:23, 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering' (or as it is in the Greek, 'without tilting, or tossing to one side or other'), 'for he is faithful that promised.' Therefore let no temptation, affliction, opposition, or persecution, take us off from our holy profession, but let us hold our profession with a forcible hand, yea, with both hands, in the face of all difficulties, dangers, and deaths, as Cynægirus, the Athenian captain, did the ship that was laden with the rich spoil of his country.⁴

(2.) The second property. Secondly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation, is a perseverance in holy and spiritual principles. It is an abiding in love, John 15:9-10; and an abiding in faith and hope, 1Co 13:13, &c. Perseverance is not a particular distinct grace of itself; but such a virtue as crowns all virtue; it is such a grace as casts a general glory and beauty upon every grace, it is a grace that leads every grace on to perfection. To persevere in holy and heavenly principles, is to persevere in believing, in repenting, in mourning, in hoping; it is to persevere in love, in fear, in humility, in patience, in self-denial, &c. Now it is this perseverance in holy and gracious principles that accompanies salvation, that leads to salvation. No grace, no, not the most sparkling and shining grace, can bring a man to heaven of itself, without perseverance; not faith, which is the champion of grace, if it faint and fail; not love, which is the nurse of grace, if it decline and wax cold; not humility, which is the adorning and beautifier of grace, if it continue not to the end; not obedience, not repentance, not patience, nor no other grace, except they have their perfect work. It is perseverance in grace that crowns every grace, and every gracious soul with a crown of glory at last. Rev 2:10, 'Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Such as only believe for a time, and repent for a time, and love for a time, and rejoice for a time, and hope for a time, as all hypocrites only do &c., but do not persevere and hold out, will be doubly miserable in the day of vengeance. Perseverance is the accomplishment of every grace; without it, he that fights cannot hope to overcome; and he that for the present doth overcome, cannot look for

the crown, unless he still perseveres and goes on conquering and to conquer, till he finds all his enemies slain before him.

(3.) The third property. Thirdly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation is an abiding or continuing in the word or doctrine of Christ. John 15:7, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.' 1Jn 2:14, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.' 1Jn 2:24, 'Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.' 2Jn 1:9, 'Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.' None shall receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, but those that hold fast the doctrine of faith, soundly, sincerely, and entirely to the end: John 8:31, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.' It is the end that crowns the action, as the evening crowns the day, as the last act commends the whole scene. It is not enough to begin well except we end well; the beginning of Christians is not so considerable as the end. Manasseh and Paul began ill, but ended well; Judas and Demas began well, but ended ill.³ It is not the knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, nor the commending of the word of Christ, but the abiding in Christ's word, the continuing in Christ's doctrine, that accompanies life and glory, and that will render a man happy at last. Such that, with Hymeneus and Alexander, put away, or make shipwreck of the doctrine of faith, of the word of faith, shall, by the Lord or his people, or by both, be delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme, 1Ti 1:19-20, 1Co 5:5. Usually the end of such is worse than the beginning. Double damnation attends those that begin in the spirit and end in the flesh, 2Pe 2:20-22; 2Ti 3:13.

(4.) The fourth property. Fourthly, and lastly, That perseverance that accompanies salvation is a perseverance in holy and gracious actions and motions; it is a continuing in pious duties and religious services, Php 3:10-14; Isa 40:31. The life of a Christian consists in motion, not in session. A Christian's emblem should be an house moving towards heaven; he must never stand still, he must always be a-going on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength.² When saints have done their work in this life, they shall sit upon thrones in a better life. Perseverance is a going on, a holding out in ways of piety and sanctity: Acts 1:14, 'These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. Acts 2:42, 'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.' Acts 2:44, 'And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.' 1Ti 5:5, 'Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.' Rom 12:12, 'Continuing instant in prayer.' Christians must work hard in a wilderness before they sit down in paradise. They must make a constant progress in holiness before they enter into happiness. It is the excellency of perseverance, that it keeps a Christian still in motion God-wards, heaven-wards, holiness-wards. It is a grace that quickens a man to motion, to action; it keeps a man still going, still doing. And motion is the excellency of the creature; and the more excellent any creature is, the more excellent is that creature in its motions, as you may see in the motions of the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars. Perseverance is a perpetual motion in ways of grace and holiness, Psa 44:16-20. Perseverance will make a man hold up and hold on in the work and ways of the Lord, in the face of all impediments, discouragements, temptations, tribulations, and persecutions. As the moon holds

on her motion though the dogs bark, so perseverance will make a Christian hold on in his holy and heavenly motions though vain men bark and bite, &c. And thus I have shewed you what perseverance that is that accompanies salvation.

Now in the eighth place I shall shew very briefly, (1.) That hope doth accompany salvation.

(2.) What that hope is that doth accompany salvation.

1. That hope doth accompany salvation, these scriptures speak it out: Rom 8:24, 'For we are saved by hope;' Gal 5:5, 'For we though the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;' Eph 1:18, 'The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;' 1Th 5:8, 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation;' Tit 3:7, 'That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;' Tit 1:2 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' By all these scriptures it doth fully appear, that hope doth accompany salvation, it doth border upon eternal life.

2. The second thing that I am to shew you is, what hope that is that doth accompany salvation, that comprehends salvation; and that I shall do with as much brevity and perspicuity as I can, in the following particulars:

First, That hope that accompanies salvation is a grace of God whereby we expect good to come, waiting patiently till it come.

(1.) I call it a grace of God, because he is the donor of it; and therefore he is called the God of hope: Rom 15:13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.' Now God is called the God of hope, because he is objectivè, the only object of our hope, and he is effectivè, the only author and worker of hope in the soul. Hope is no natural affection in men. Men are not born with hope in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. Hope is nobly descended, it is from above, it is a heavenly babe that is formed in the soul of man by the power of the Holy Ghost. And as hope is no natural affection, so hope is no moral virtue, which men may attain by their frequent actions; but hope is the theological virtue that none can give but God.

(2.) I say it is a grace of God, whereby we expect good to come; I say good, not evil, for evil is rather feared than hoped for by any. The object of this hope hath four conditions:

1. It must be bonum, good.
2. Futurum, future.
3. Possibile, possible.
4. Arduum, hard or difficult to obtain.

(3.) I say hope is a grace of God, whereby we expect good to come, patiently waiting till it come. Hope makes the soul quiet and patient till it comes to possess the good desired and hoped for: Rom 8:25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' The Hebrew word kavah, that is often translated hope, signifies a very vehement intention, both of body and mind, a stretching forth of the spirit or mind, in waiting for a desired good.

2. Secondly, That hope that accompanies salvation is always conversant about holy and heavenly objects, as about God and Christ: 1Ti 1:1, 'Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.' In these words, Christ is set forth as the chief object of our hope, because by his merits and mercy, we hope to obtain the remission of our sins, and the eternal salvation of our souls. Sometimes hope is exercised about the righteousness of Christ: Gal 5:5, 'For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.' Sometimes hope is exercised about God the Father: 1Pe 1:21, 'Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God;' Jer 14:8, 'Oh the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble;' Jer 17:13, 'O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed;' Jer 17:17, 'Thou art my hope in the day of evil.' Sometimes hope is exercised and busied about the word and promises: Psa 119:49, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope;' Psa 119:81, 'My soul fainteth for thy salvation; but I hope in thy word;' Psa 119:114, 'Thou art my hiding-place, and my shield: I hope in thy word;' Psa 130:5, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope;' Psa 119:74, 'They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word;' Psa 119:147, 'I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.' Hope in the promise will keep the head from aching, and the heart from breaking; it will keep both head and heart from sinking and drowning. Hope exercised upon the promise, brings heaven down to the heart. The promises are the ladder by which hope gets up to heaven. Hope in the promise will not only keep life and soul together, but will also keep the soul and glory together; hope in the promise will support distressed souls; hope in the promise will settle perplexed souls; hope in the promise will comfort dejected souls; hope in the promise will reduce wandering souls; hope in the promise will confirm staggering souls; hope in the promise will save undone souls.² The promise is the same to hope, that hope is to the soul; the promise is the anchor of hope, as hope is the anchor of the soul. Look, what the breasts are to the child, and oil is to the lamp, that are the promises to hope, Rom 8:24. Hope lives and thrives, as it feeds upon the promises, as it embraces the promises. The promises are the sweetmeats of heaven, upon which hope lives. And every degree of hope brings a degree of joy into the soul, which makes it cry out, Heaven, heaven, Heb 11:13; Psa 16:11; Tit 3:7.

Again, hope is exercised about the glory and felicity, the happiness and blessedness that is at God's right hand. Tit 2:13, 'Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Hope makes a man stretch out his neck and put forth his hand, and look as earnestly for the glorious appearing of Christ, as Sisera's mother did for the happy return of her son. The hoping soul is often a-sighing it out, Why are his chariot wheels so long a coming? Col 1:5, 'For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.' Hope in this place is taken by a metonymy, for the things hoped for, viz., all that glory and felicity, that blessedness and happiness, that is laid up for us in heaven. So in Heb 6:18, 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.' Hope here is put for the object of hope, viz., heaven and happiness. Hope lays such fast hold, as the Greek word here signifies, κρατῆσαι, upon heaven and happiness, that none shall ever be able to take those precious things out of hope's hand. So hope is put for the glorious things hoped for, Eph 1:18. And thus you see those precious and glorious objects, about which that hope that accompanies salvation is exercised.

3. Thirdly, That hope that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation, is grounded upon the firmest foundations, to wit, the promises of God, Pro 10:28, as hath been fully shewed before; and it is built upon the free grace of God, 1Pe 1:13. It is built upon the infinite and glorious power of God, Rom 4:21. It is built upon the truth and faithfulness of God, 2Ti 2:13. These precious and glorious foundations do bear up the hopes of the saints, as the three pillars bore up the hangings in the tabernacle. A believer's hope is founded upon the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the intercession of Christ, &c; but the hopes of hypocrites and wicked men, are always built upon weak, slender, and sandy foundations. Sometimes they build their hopes upon their outward profession, upon their lamps, though they are empty lamps, Mat 25:3; and sometimes upon their duties and services, as the Jews, scribes, and Pharisees did, Isa 58:1-3, Mat 6:1-2, &c; and sometimes upon their outward privileges, crying out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;' and sometimes they build their hopes upon others' good opinion of them, and sometimes upon flashes of joy, and sometimes upon enlargements in duties, and sometimes upon the heat and vigour of their spirits in religious services, &c. And all these are but sandy foundations, and they that build their hope upon them will certainly fall, and great will be their fall. The hopes of the saints are built upon the surest and the strongest foundations. It was a good saying of one of the ancients, 'I consider,' said he, 'three things in which all my hope consisteth, to wit, 1, God's love in my adoption; 2, the truth of his promise; and 3, his power of performance. Therefore, let my foolish cogitation murmur as long as it list, saying, Who art thou? or, What is that glory? or, By what merits dost thou hope to attain it? For I can answer with sure confidence, I know on whom I have believed, 2Ti 1:12. And I am certain, first, that in his love he adopted me; secondly, that he is true in his promise; and thirdly, that he is able to perform it. This is the threefold cord which is not easily broken.'

4. Fourthly, That hope that accompanies salvation, that borders upon salvation, that comprehends salvation, that brings salvation, may be known from all false hopes, by the excellent properties of it, and they are these that follow.

[1.] The first property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: it elevates and raises the heart to live above, where its treasure is. This hope is from above, and it makes the heart to live above: it is a spark of glory, and it leads the heart to live in glory. Divine hope carries a man to heaven, for life to quicken him, and for wisdom to direct him, and for power to uphold him, and for righteousness to justify him, and for holiness to sanctify him, and for mercy to forgive him, and for assurance to rejoice him, and for happiness to crown him. Divine hope takes in the pleasures of heaven beforehand; it lives in the joyful expectation of them; it fancies to itself, as I may say, the pleasures and joys of eternity; and lives in a sweet anticipation of what it possesseth by faith. Hope's richest treasures, and choicest friends, and chiefest delights, and sweetest contents, are in the country above; and therefore hope loves best to live there most.

[2.] The second property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: it will strengthen the soul against all afflictions, oppositions, and temptations: 1Th 5:8, 'But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.' Look, as the helmet defends and secures the head, so doth hope defend and secure the heart. Hope is a helmet that keeps off all darts that Satan or the world casts at the soul. The hopes of heavenly riches made those worthies in Heb 11:1-40 to despise the riches of this world. The hopes they had of a heavenly country made them willing to leave their own country, and to live in the very land of

promise as in a strange country. The hopes they had of possessing at last a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens, made them willingly and cheerfully to live in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth. The hopes they had of a glorious resurrection made them courageously to withstand the strongest temptations, &c., Rom 5:2-5. A saint's hope will outlive all fears and cares, all trials and troubles, all afflictions and temptations. Saints have much in hope, though little in hand; they have much in reversion, though but little in possession; they have much in promise, though but little in the purse. A saint can truly say, Spero meliora, my hopes are better than my possessions. Hope can see heaven through the thickest clouds; hope can see light through darkness, life through death, smiles through frowns, and glory through misery. Hope holds life and soul together; it holds Christ and the soul together; it holds the soul and the promises together; it holds the soul and heaven together; and so it makes a Christian to stand and triumph over all afflictions, oppositions, and temptations.

[3.] The third property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: it makes the soul lively and active: Psa 119:166, 'Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.' Hope puts the soul upon doing, upon obeying: 1Pe 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant (or much, πολλή) mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' It is called a lively hope, because it brings life and comfort into the soul; and it is called a lively hope in opposition to the withering and dying hopes of hypocrites and wicked men; and it is called a lively hope, because it flows from lively causes, viz. the Spirit of Christ, and the soul's union and communion with Christ; but mainly it is called a lively hope because it puts the soul upon lively endeavours. Hope will make a man pray as for life, hear as for life, and mourn as for life, and obey as for life, and work and walk as for life. Hope will not say this work is too hard, and that work is too hot; this work is too high, and the other work is too low. Hope will make a man put his hand to every work. Hope makes a man more motion than notion; it makes a man better at doing than at saying, &c. Hope gives life and strength to all religious duties and services: 1Co 9:10, 'He that plougheth should plough in hope; and he that thrasheth in hope shall be partaker of his hope.' Hope will put a Christian upon ploughing and thrashing, that is, upon the hardest and difficultest services for God and his glory. If fleshly hopes of gaining the honours, riches, and favours of this world made Absalom, Ahithophel, Jehu, Haman, and many heathens, full of life and activity, full of motion and action, verily holy and heavenly hopes will make men much more lively and active, by how much heavenly hopes are more excellent than earthly. A man full of hope will be full of action. A lively hope and a diligent hand are inseparable companions. Hope will make a man do though he dies for doing.

[4.] The fourth property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: It will make a man sit, Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all storms and tempests, in the midst of all combustions, concussions, and mutations. When others are at their wits' end, then hope will house the soul, and lodge it far and quiet in the bosom of God: Job 11:18, 'And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope: yea, thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered rest, is from a root that signifies to rest and sleep quietly, as in one's bed. Hope will bring the soul to bed safely and sweetly, in the darkest night, in the longest storm, and in the greatest tempest: Heb 6:19, 'Which hope we have as [an] anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.' Hope is that anchor of the soul, that keeps it quiet and still in all storms and tempests; it keeps the soul from dashing upon the rocks, and from

being swallowed up in the sands. Hope is an anchor that is fastened above, not below; in heaven, not in earth; within the veil, not without; therefore the ship, the soul of a believer, must needs be safe and secure. That ship will never be split upon the rocks, whose anchor is in heaven. Hope enters within the veil, and takes fast anchor-hold on God himself; and therefore blow high, blow low, rain or shine, the soul of a saint is safe. Divine hope settles the heart. He that cannot look for more than he hath, can never be settled nor satisfied. Our best and greatest estate lies in invisibles. Our perfect and complete estate here lies not in re, but in spe; it lies not in what we have in possession, but in what we have in expectation, in reversion.

[5.] The fifth property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: It will work the soul to a quiet and patient waiting upon God for mercy, though God should delay the giving in of mercy: Rom 8:25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' Psa 130:5-6, 'I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Hope will make a man wait, yea, wait long for a mercy, as it did Abraham, Rom 4:18-21. Though the vision stay, yet hope will wait for it, Hab 2:1-3; yet a little, little while, says hope, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb 10:36-37. The longer I wait for a mercy, the greater, better, and sweeter, at last, the mercy will prove, says hope. It is not mercy, if it be not worth a waiting for, says hope; and if it be a mercy, thou canst not wait too long for it, says hope. The men of Bethulia resolved to wait upon God but five days longer, but deliverance stayed seven days, and yet came at last. So says hope, though deliverance stay, though this and that mercy stays, as it were in the birth, yet it will come at last, therefore wait. Hope is not hasty in prefixing the time when God shall shew mercy, neither will it limit God to the way or manner of shewing mercy, but leave both the time and the manner to him that is wise and faithful. Says hope, Christ knows his own time, and his own time is best; though he stays long, yet he will certainly come, and he will not stay a moment beyond the time he hath prefixed; and therefore, says hope, be not weary, O soul, but still wait patiently upon the Lord: 1Th 1:3, 'Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope.' Hope is the mother of patience and the nurse of patience; hope breeds patience, and hope feeds patience. If it were not for hope, the heart would die; and if it were not for hope, patience would die. Look, as faith gives life and strength to hope, so doth hope give life and strength to patience, therefore patience is called patience of hope. Hope maintains patience, as the fuel maintains the fire.

[6.] The sixth property of that hope that accompanies salvation is this: It is soul-purifying hope; it puts a Christian upon purifying himself as Christ is pure: 1Jn 3:3, 'And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is. pure.' Divine hope runs out into holiness. He that hath the purest and strongest hopes of being saved, is most studious and laborious to be sanctified. The Greek word καθαριζειν, that is rendered purifieth, is a metaphor taken either from the ceremonial purifications in time of the Law, or else from goldsmiths purifying metals from their dross; and it notes thus much to us, that those that have hopes to reign with Christ in glory, that have set their hearts upon that pure and blissful state, that paradise, that holy and spiritual state of bliss that is made up of singleness and purity, they will purify both their insides and outsides, both body and soul, that they may answer to that excellent copy that Christ hath set before them, knowing that none shall enjoy everlasting glory but those that labour after perfect purity.

Now hope purifies the heart and life thus, by keeping the purest objects, as God, Christ, the word, and the soul together, and by making the soul serious and conscientious in the use of all soul-purifying ordinances, and by being a fire in the soul to burn up all those corruptions and principles of darkness that are contrary to that purity and glory that hope hath in her eye; and by working the soul to lean upon Christ, to live in Christ, and to draw purifying virtue from Christ, who is the spring and fountain of all purity and sanctity. And thus hope purifies those that expect to be like Christ in glory.

[7.] The seventh property of that hope that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, is this: it is permanent and lasting; it will never leave the soul till it hath lodged it in the bosom of Christ. Pro 14:32, 'The righteous hath hope in his death.' The righteous man's hope will bed and board with him; it will lie down with him, and rise up with him; it will to the grave, to heaven with him: his motto is, Cum expiro spero, my hope lasts beyond life. The Jews' ancient custom was, by the way as they went with their corpse, to pluck up every one the grass, as who should say, they were not sorry as men without hope, for their brother was but so cropped off, and should spring up again in the morning of the resurrection. And the Jews to this very day stick not to call their Golgothas (batte chiim) the houses or places of the living. That hope that accompanies salvation is a long-lived hope; it is a living hope. 1Pe 1:3, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope,' or a living hope: a hope that will not die, a hope that will not leave a man in life nor death. Psa 71:14, 'But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.' No trials, no troubles, no afflictions, no oppositions, shall keep down my hope, says David. I am peremptorily resolved, in the face of all dangers, difficulties, and deaths, to keep up my hopes; come what will come on it, I will rather let my life go than my hope go: I will hope continually. A hopeless condition is a very sad condition; it is the worst condition in the world; it makes a man's life a very hell. If 'hope deferred maketh the heart sick,' as the wise man speaks, Pro 13:12, then the loss of hope will make the soul languish, it will make it choose strangling rather than life; it will make a man's life a continual death. A soul without hope is like a ship without anchors. Lord, where will a soul stay that stays not upon thee by hope? A man were better part with anything than his hope. When Alexander went upon a hopeful expedition, he gave away his gold; and when he was asked what he kept for himself, he answered, Spem majorum et meliorum, the hope of greater and better things. A believer's hope is not like that of Pandora, which may fly out of the box, and bid the soul an everlasting farewell. No; it is like the morning light; the least beam of it shall commence into a complete sunshine. It is aurora gaudii, and it shall shine forth brighter and brighter till it hath fully possessed the believer of his Christ and crown. This will be the hypocrite's hell and horror when he comes to die, that his hope will be like the morning dew, like the spider's web, like the crackling of thorns under a pot, and like the giving up of the ghost, Job 8:13-14, and Job 11:20, and Job 27:8; Pro 14:32, and Pro 11:7. And this is now the upright man's joy, that whoever leaves him, yet his hope will not leave him, till he hath put on his crown and is set down in paradise. And thus you see what hope that is that doth accompany salvation. Before I close up this chapter, take these two cautions with you; they make for your comfort and settlement.

[1.] The first caution is this: that all saints have not these things that accompany salvation in the same degree. If thou hast but the least measure or degree of that knowledge that accompanies salvation, or of that faith that accompanies salvation, or of that repentance, or of that obedience, or

of that love, &c., that accompanies salvation, thou mayest be as assuredly confident of thy salvation, as if thou wast already in heaven. The least degree, O Christian, of those things that accompany salvation, will certainly yield thee a heaven hereafter, and why then should it not yield thee a heaven here? It will undoubtedly yield thee a crown at last; and why should it not yield thee comfort and assurance now? I judge it may, if thou art not an enemy to thine own soul, and to thy own peace and comfort.

[2.] The second caution is this: Though thou dost not find every one of those things in thee that do accompany salvation, yet if thou dost find some of those things, ay, though but a few of those things, yea, though but one of those things that accompanies salvation, that comprehends salvation, that borders upon salvation, thy estate is safe, and happiness will be thy portion at last. Thy sense and feeling of one of those precious things that accompanies salvation, should be of more power to work thee to conclude that thy estate is good, than any other thing should work thee to conclude that all is naught, and that thou shalt miscarry at last. Do not always side with sin and Satan against thine own precious soul.

Having thus discovered to you the way and means of attaining to a well-grounded assurance, I shall now hasten to a close.

CHAPTER VI Shewing the difference between a true and a counterfeit assurance, between sound assurance and presumption.

(1.) The first difference. A sound and well-grounded assurance is attended with a deep admiration of God's transcendent love and favour to the soul in the Lord Jesus. The assured soul is often a-breathing it out thus: Ah, Lord! who am I, what am I, that thou shouldst give into my bosom the white stone of absolution, when the world hath given into their bosoms only the black stone of condemnation? Rev 2:17. Lord! what mercy is this, that thou shouldst give me assurance, give me water out of the rock, and feed me with manna from heaven, when many of thy dearest ones spend their days in sighing, mourning and complaining for want of assurance. Lord! what manner of love is this, that thou shouldst set me upon thy knee, embrace me in thy arms, lodge me in thy bosom, and kiss me with the sweet kisses of thy blessed mouth, with those kisses that are 'better than wine,' Song of Solomon 1:2, yea, better than life, when many are even weary of their lives because they want what I enjoy? Psa 63:3. Ah, Lord! by what name shall I call this mercy, this assurance that thou hast given me? It being a mercy that fits me to do duties, to bear crosses, and to improve mercies; that fits me to speak sweetly, to judge righteously, to give liberally, to act seriously, to suffer cheerfully, and to walk humbly. I cannot, says the assured soul, but sing it out with Moses, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Exo 15:2. And with the apostle, 'Oh, the height, the depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,' Eph 3:18-19. If the queen of Sheba, says the assured soul, was so swallowed up in a deep admiration of Solomon's wisdom, greatness, goodness, excellency and glory, that she could not but admiringly breathe it thus out, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,' 1Ki 10:8, Oh then, how should that blessed assurance that I have of the love of God, of my interest in God, of my union and communion with God, of my blessedness here and my happiness hereafter, work me to a deep and serious, to a real and perpetual, admiration of God.

[2.] The second difference. Secondly, A well-grounded assurance doth always beget in the soul an earnest and an impatient longing after a further, a clearer, and fuller enjoyment of God and Christ. Psa 63:1, 'O God, thou art my God'—here is assurance; well, what follows?—'early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.' The assured soul cries out, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23; and, 'Make haste, my beloved,' Song of Solomon 8:14; and, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev 22:17. O Lord Jesus, says the assured soul, thou art my light, thou art my life, thou art my love, thou art my joy, thou art my crown, thou art my heaven, thou art my all. I cannot but long to see that beautiful face that was spit upon for my sins, and that glorious head that was crowned with thorns for my transgressions. I long to take some turns with thee in paradise, to see the glory of thy Jerusalem above, to drink of those rivers of pleasures that be at thy right hand, to taste of all the delicacies of thy kingdom, and to be acquainted with those secrets and mysteries that have been hid from all ages, and to be swallowed up in the full enjoyment of thy blessed self, Eph 3:5, Col 1:26.

[3.] The third difference. Thirdly, A well-grounded assurance is usually strongly assaulted by Satan on all sides. Satan is such a grand enemy to joy and peace, to the salvation and consolation, of the saints, that he cannot but make use of all his devices and stratagems to amaze and amuse, to disturb and disquiet, the peace and rest of their souls. No sooner had Jesus Christ heard that lovely voice from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat 3:17 and Mat 4:1-2, &c., but he is desperately assaulted by Satan in the wilderness. No sooner was Paul dropped out of heaven, after he had seen such visions of glory that was unutterable, but he was presently assaulted and buffeted by Satan, 2Co 2:12. Stand up, stand up, assured Christians, and tell me whether you have not found the blast of the terrible one to be as a storm against the wall, Isa 25:4. Since the Lord said unto you, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you, have not you found Satan to play the part both of the lion and the wolf, of the serpent and the fox? And all to weaken your assurance, and to work you to question the truth of your assurance, and to cast water upon your assurance, and to take off the freshness and sweetness, the beauty and glory, of your assurance; I know you have. His malice, envy, and enmity is such against God's honour and glory, and your comfort and felicity, that he cannot but be very studious and industrious to make use of all traps, snares, methods, and ways whereby he may shake the pillars of your faith, and weaken and overthrow your assurance. Pirates, you know, do most fiercely assault those ships and vessels that are most richly laden; so doth Satan those precious souls that have attained to the riches of full assurance.²

Assurance makes a paradise in believers' souls, and this makes Satan to roar and rage. Assurance fits a man to do God the greatest service and Satan the greatest dis-service, and this makes him mad against the soul. Assurance makes a saint to be too hard for Satan at all weapons, yea, to lead that 'son of the morning' captive, to spoil him of all his hurting power, to bind him in chains, and to triumph over him; and this makes his hell a great deal hotter, Rom 8:32-39. And therefore never wonder at Satan's assaulting your assurance, but expect it and look for it. The jailor is quiet when his prisoner is in bolts, but if he be escaped then he pursues him with hue and cry. So long as the soul is in bolts and bondage under Satan, Satan is quiet and is not so apt to molest and vex it; but when once a soul is made free, and assured of his freedom by Christ, John 8:36, then says Satan, as once Pharaoh did, 'I will arise, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide

the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them,' Exo 15:9. The experience of all assured saints doth abundantly confirm this. Israel going into Egypt had no enemies, no opposition, but travelling into Canaan they were never free.

[4.] The fourth difference. Fourthly, A well grounded-assurance makes a man as bold as a lion; it makes him valiant and gallant for Christ and his cause, in the face of all dangers and deaths. After the Holy Ghost was fallen upon the apostles, and had assured them of their internal and eternal happiness, oh! how bold, how undaunted, how resolute were they in the face of all oppositions, afflictions, and persecutions! as you may see from the second of the Acts of the Apostles to the end of the Acts. So assurance had this operation upon David's heart: Psa 23:4, Psa 23:6 compared, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' Well, David, but how doth this assurance of yours operate? Why, saith he 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' So Moses having an assurance of the 'recompence of reward,' he fears not the wrath of the king, 'for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible,' Heb 11:26-27. So in Heb 10:34, 'And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Oh, that knowledge, that assurance that they had in their own hearts of enjoying in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, made them bear cheerfully and gallantly the spoiling of their worldly goods. Though the archers—the world, the flesh, and the devil—do shoot sore at a soul under assurance, yet his bow will still abide in strength. Assurance will make a man to break a bow of steel, to trample down strength, and to triumph over all oppositions and afflictions.

Colonus the Dutch martyr called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and asked him whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's. Assurance will make a man do this, and much more for Christ and his cause.

[5.] The fifth difference. Fifthly, A well-grounded assurance of a man's own eternal happiness and blessedness will make him very studious and laborious to make others happy: Psa 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.' I will acquaint you with the soul blessings, with the soul favours, that God hath crowned me with. I was darkness, but he hath made me light; I was unrighteousness, but he hath made me righteous; I was deformed, but he hath made me complete; I was full of sores, and spots, and blemishes, but he hath washed me, and made me all fair, without spot or wrinkle. I have found the want of assurance, I now see the worth of assurance; I have long sought assurance, and now I find the sweetness of assurance. Ah! it is such a pearl of price, it is such a beam of God, it is such a spark of glory, that makes my soul a rich amends for all its waiting, weeping, and wrestling.

So, when it pleased God to call Paul by his grace, and to reveal Christ in him and to him, ah! how doth he labour, as for life, to bring others to an acquaintance with Christ, and to an acceptance of Christ, and to an assurance of everlasting happiness and blessedness by Christ! After Paul had been in paradise, he makes it his all to bring others to paradise, 2Co 12:1-21. So the spouse in the Canticles, having assurance of her interest in Christ, how doth she labour, by all holy and heavenly rhetoric and logic, by all the strains of love and sweetness, to draw the daughters of Jerusalem to a sight of Christ! Song of Solomon 5:10-16, and Song of Solomon 6:1, &c. When a beam of divine light and love had shined upon Andrew, he labours to draw his brother Simon to the fountain of all light and love, John 1:40-42. And when Philip had but a cast of Christ's countenance, his pulse

beats, and his heart calls upon Nathanael to come and share with him in that loving-kindness that was better than life, John 1:43-47. The constant cry of souls under the power of assurance is, 'Come, taste and see how good the Lord is,' Psa 34:8. Ah, sinners, sinners! 'his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Pro 3:17; his 'commands are not grievous,' 1Jn 5:3, but joyous; 'his yoke is easy, and his burden is light,' Mat 11:30; not only for keeping, but also 'in keeping of his commands there is great reward,' Psa 19:11. Assurance will strongly put men upon winning of others by counsel, by example, by prayer, and by communicating their spiritual experiences to them. Assurance will furnish a man with will, skill, and experience to confute all those false reports that vain men frequently cast upon the Lord and his ways. It will make a man proclaim to the world 'that one day in the Lord's courts is better than a thousand years elsewhere,' Psa 84:10; that there are more glorious joys, more pure comforts, more abiding peace, more royal contents, more celestial delights, in one day's walking with God, in one hour's communion with God, &c., than is to be found in all things below God. And by these and such like ways, souls under the power of a well-grounded assurance do endeavour to make others happy with themselves. A soul under assurance is unwilling to go to heaven without company. He is often a-crying out, Father, bless this soul too, and crown that soul too: let us to heaven together, let us be made happy together.

[6.] The sixth difference. Sixthly, A well-grounded assurance of God's love, and of a man's everlasting happiness and blessedness, will exceedingly arm and strengthen him against all wickedness and baseness, Eze 16:60-63. No man loathes sin, and himself for sin, as such a man; no man wars and watches against sin more than such a man; no man sighs and mourns, bleeds and complains, under the sense of sinful motions and sinful operations more than such a man, Luk 7:44, Luk 7:50. Every stirring of sin makes a man that is under the power of assurance to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7:22-25: Psa 85:8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: and let them not turn again to folly,' or, as the Hebrew will bear, 'And they shall not return to folly.' God's speaking peace to his people fences and fortifies them against folly and vanity. The assurance that Joseph had of his master's love armed him against the lascivious assaults of his lustful mistress; and will not divine love, that is stronger than death, do this and more? Song of Solomon 8:6-7. Assurance makes a man say to his sins, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with idols?' So says the assured soul, Away pride, away passion, away worldly-mindedness, away uncleanness, away uncharitableness, &c., for what have I any more to do with you? Assurance makes the soul speak to sin as David speaks to sinners: Psa 119:115, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; for I will keep the commandments of my God:' so says the assured soul, Depart from me, O my lusts, for I have tasted of the love of God, and I have given up myself wholly and only to God, and I cannot but keep the commandments of my God. The Jewish Rabbins report, that the same night that Israel departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down. So when Christ and assurance comes to be set up in the soul, all the idols of Satan and a man's own heart are cast down, and cast out as an abomination. Sound assurance puts a man upon 'purifying himself, even as Christ is pure,' 1Jn 3:2-3. The assured Christian knows, that it is dangerous to sin against light, that it is more dangerous to sin against love, that it is most dangerous to sin against love revealed and manifested. God may well say to such a Christian, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? To sin under assurance, is to sin against the bowels of mercy, it is to sin against the

highest hopes of glory; and this will certainly provoke God to be angry. 1Ki 11:9, 'And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, that had appeared to him twice.' To sin under assurance, is to sin in paradise; it is to sin under the flaming sword, it is to sin in the suburbs of heaven, it is to run the hazard of losing that favour 'that is better than life,' of that 'joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and of that 'peace that passes understanding.' To sin under assurance, is to cast reproach upon Christ, to grieve the Spirit, to wound conscience, to weaken your graces, to blur your evidences, to usher in calamities, to embitter your mercies, and to provoke the tempter to triumph over your Saviour. Verily, that assurance is but presumption that works men to play with sin, to be bold with sin, to make light of sin, to walk on in ways of sin. Such assurance will never bring a man to heaven, it will never keep him from dropping into hell, yea, it will double his damnation, and make him the most miserable among all damned, miserable, forlorn spirits. Ah, Lord! from such an assurance deliver my soul; and give me more and more of that divine assurance that makes sin to be more hateful than hell, and that makes the soul to be more careful to avoid the one, than it is fearful of falling into the other.²

[7.] The seventh difference. Seventhly, A well-grounded assurance is always attended with three fair handmaids, or with three sweet companions,

(1.) The first handmaid. The first is love. Oh! the assurance of divine favour doth mightily inflame a man's love to Christ. Mary Magdalene loved much; Christ's love to her drew out her love very much to Christ, Luk 7:1-50. Assurance makes the soul sing it out with that sweet singer of Israel, 'I will dearly love thee, O Lord, my strength,' Psa 18:2. Lovers know not how to keep silence; lovers of Christ are full of gracious expressions. *Magnes amoris est amor*; love is the attractive loadstone of love. It is impossible for a soul not to love Christ, that knows he is beloved of Christ. Christ's love constrains the soul to love, not by forcible but loving necessity. Praxiteles exquisitely drew love, taking the pattern from that passion which he felt in his own heart. A believer cannot find the heart of Christ to be beating towards him, but his heart will strongly beat towards Christ. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand, that he shall never be faint, weary of walking, or loving. Love alone overpowereth all power. Love is the diadem; none but the queen must wear it. Love is the wedding garment; none but the spouse can fit it. Love is a loadstone to draw, as well as a fire to warm. He that doth not love Christ, was never assured of the love of Christ.

(2.) The second handmaid, or companion that attends a well-grounded assurance, is humility. David, under assurance, cries out, 'I am a worm and no man,' Psa 22:6; Abraham, under assurance, cries out, that he is but 'dust and ashes;' Jacob, under assurance, cries out, that he was 'less than the least of all mercies;' Job, under assurance, 'abhors himself in dust and ashes;' Moses had the honour and the happiness to speak with God 'face to face;' he was very much in God's books, in God's favour; and yet a more humble soul the earth did never bear. The great apostle Paul, under all the revelations and glorious manifestations of God to him, counts himself 'less than the least of all saints,' Eph 3:8. That is presumption, that is a delusion of the devil, and no sound assurance, that puffs and swells the souls of men, that makes men prize themselves above the market, above the value that God hath put upon them.

(3.) The third handmaid or companion that attends assurance, is holy joy. Ah! this assurance causes the strong waters of consolation to overflow the soul. Assurance raises the strongest joy in

the soul: Luk 1:46-47, and Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' When a man comes to be assured that God is his Saviour, presently his spirit rejoices in God. This truth is held forth by three parables in that of Luk 15:1-32, so in that of 1Pe 1:8-9, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' Oh the joy, the joy, the inexpressible joy that attends a well-grounded assurance! Assurance raises a paradise of delight in the soul. In quibus operamur, in illis et gaudemus, saith Tertullian: in what things or persons we act, in those things we rejoice. A Christian, under the power of assurance, works all his works in Christ; in him, therefore, and in him alone, he rejoiceth.

[8.] The eighth difference. Eighthly, and lastly, A well-grounded assurance sometimes springs from the testimony and witness of the Spirit of God. The Spirit sometimes witnesses to a believer's spirit that he is born of God, that he is beloved of God, that he hath union and communion with God, and that he shall reign for ever with God: Rom 8:26, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God,' The Spirit itself witnesseth not only the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but the Spirit itself witnesseth together with our own spirit, that we are the children of God. Sometimes the saints have two witnesses joining their testimonies together to confirm and establish them in these blessed and glorious truths, that they are the sons of God and heirs of glory; and this is their honour as well as their comfort, that the blessed Spirit should bear witness at the bar of their consciences that they are the sons of God: 1Co 2:12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' that is, that we may know our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. A man may receive many things that are freely given of God, and yet not know them till the Spirit comes and makes them known to the soul.

Quest. But you may say to me, How shall we know the whispering of the Holy Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent? How shall we know the report, the witness, and testimony of the Spirit of Christ, from that report, witness, and testimony that the old serpent deludes and deceives many by, in these days wherein he mostly appears in his angelical robes?

Ans. I answer, you may know the whispering of the Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent, &c., by these following things, which I desire that you would seriously consider, as you tender the peace and settlement, the satisfaction, consolation, and salvation of your own souls.

(1.) The first difference. First, The Spirit of Christ doth not witness by any outward voice, as God did from heaven of Christ, Mat 3:17; nor by an angel, as to the Virgin Mary, Luk 1:30-34; but by an inward, secret, glorious, and unspeakable way he bids believers be of good cheer, their sins are forgiven them, as Christ said to the palsied man in the Gospel, Mat 9:2. And this truth is to be solemnly minded against those poor deceived and deluded souls in these days, that would make the world believe that they have had such and such glorious things made known by an outward, audible voice from heaven. It is much to be feared that they never found the inward, the sweet, the secret, the powerful testimony and report of the Spirit of Christ, that boast, and brag, and rest so much upon an outward testimony. In 1Ki 19:11-13, you read of 'a great strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks: but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind there was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire there was a still small voice,' and the Lord spake

to Elijah in that still small voice. Ah, Christians! the Spirit of the Lord makes not a noise, but he comes in a still small voice, as I may say, and makes a soft and secret report to the soul, that it is beloved, that it is pardoned, and that it shall be for ever glorified.

(2.) The second difference. Secondly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ is only gained and enjoyed in holy and heavenly ways, as you may clearly see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. The Spirit of the Lord is a Holy Spirit, and he cannot, he will not make any report of the 'love of the Father to the soul out of a way of holiness. Verily, all those glorious reports that many boast they have met with in sinful ways, in wretched and ungodly ways, are from the hissing of the old serpent, and not from the whisperings of the Spirit of grace. I think it is little less than blasphemy for any to affirm, that the blessed Spirit of Christ doth make reports of the love and favour of God to persons walking in ways of wickedness and baseness.

(3.) The third difference. Thirdly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ, is a clear, a full, a satisfying testimony and witness, John 14:17, 1Jn 3:24. The soul sits down under the home-reports of the Spirit, and saith, Lord, it is enough; the soul being full, sits down and sweetly sings it out: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his. I am my well-beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Song of Solomon 2:16, and Song of Solomon 7:10. 'The Lord is my portion and the lot of mine inheritance,' Psa 16:5. 'I have none in heaven but thee, neither is there any on earth that I desire in comparison of thee,' Psa 73:25. 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:8. 'Make haste, my beloved,' &c., Song of Solomon 8:14. Such power, majesty, and glory, attends the glorious testimony of the Spirit of Christ, as scatters all clouds, as resolves all doubts, as answers all objections, as silences the wrangling soul, &c. If the testimony of the Spirit of Christ were not a full, satisfying testimony, it could never fill the soul with such joy as is 'unspeakable and full of glory,' and with 'such peace as passes understanding;' if the testimony were not satisfactory, the soul would still be under fears and doubts, the heart would still be a-wrangling and quarrelling, I may perish, and I may be undone, I may have the door of mercy shut against me, &c. If you bring news to a condemned person that the king hath pardoned him, and that he will receive him to favour, and confer such and such dignity upon him, yet this doth not quiet him nor satisfy him, till he knows it is the king's act, till he is satisfied in that, he cannot say it is enough, he cannot be cheerful, he cannot be delightful, &c. But when he is satisfied that it is the king's act, that the king hath certainly done this and that for him, then he is satisfied, and then sighing and mourning flies away, and then he rejoices with joy unspeakable. So it is with a believing soul under the testimony and witness of the spirit of Christ.

(4.) The fourth difference. Fourthly, Though the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit, yet he doth not always witness to believers their adoption, their interest in Christ, &c. There is a mighty difference between the working of the Spirit and the witness of the Spirit. There are oftentimes many glorious and efficacious works of the Spirit, as faith, love, repentance, holiness, &c., where there is not the witness of the Spirit, Isa 50:10. David at that very time had the Spirit, and many sweet workings of the Spirit in him and upon him, when he had by sin lost the witness and testimony of the Spirit, Psa 51:10-12. Though the Spirit of the Lord be a witnessing and a sealing Spirit, yet he doth not alway witness and seal up the love and favour of the Father to believers' souls, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin, and as the experience of many precious Christians can abundantly evidence. All believers do not see alike need of this testimony, they do not all alike prize this testimony, they do not all alike observe it and improve it; and therefore, it is no wonder if the Spirit

be a witnessing Spirit to some and not to others. You do but gratify Satan and wrong your own souls, when you argue that certainly you have not the Spirit, because he is not a witnessing and a sealing Spirit to your souls. Though it be the office of the Spirit to witness, yet it is not his office always to witness to believers their happiness and blessedness. The Spirit may act one way and in one room of the soul, when he doth not act in another. Sometimes the Spirit works upon the understanding, sometimes upon the will, sometimes upon the affections, sometimes upon faith, sometimes upon fear, sometimes upon love, sometimes upon humility, &c. Our hearts are the Spirit's harps. If a man should always touch one string in an instrument, he should never play various tunes, he should never make pleasant music; no more would the Spirit, if he should be always a-doing one thing in the soul. Therefore he acts variously. Sometimes he will shew himself a quickening Spirit, sometimes an enlightening Spirit, sometimes a rejoicing Spirit, sometimes a sealing Spirit, and always a supporting Spirit, &c.

(5.) The fifth difference. Fifthly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit is a sure testimony, a sure witness. The Spirit is truth itself; he is the great searcher of the deep things of God. The Spirit of the Lord is the discoverer, the confuter, and destroyer of all false spirits. The Spirit is above all possibility of being deceived, he is omnipotent, he is omniscient, he is omnipresent, he is one of the cabinet-council of heaven; he lies and lives in the bosom of the Father, and can call them all by name upon whom the Father hath set his heart, and therefore his testimony must needs be true. It is a surer testimony than if a man should hear a voice from heaven pronouncing him to be happy and blessed. You may safely and securely lay the weight of your souls upon this testimony; it never hath, it never will deceive any that hath leaned upon it. This testimony will be a rock that will bear up a soul, when other false testimonies will be but 'a reed of Egypt,' that will deceive the soul, that will undo the soul; as I am afraid many in this deluding age have found by sad experience.

(6.) The sixth difference. Sixthly, The testimony of God's Spirit is always accompanied with the testimony of our own. These may be distinguished, but they can never be separated. When the Spirit of God gives in witness for a man, his own spirit doth not give in witness against him. Look, as face answers to face, so doth the witness of a believer's spirit answer to the witness of the Spirit of Christ. Rom 8:16, 'The Spirit witnesseth together with our spirits that we be the sons of God.' Now, if our own consciences do not testify first, that we are sons and heirs, the Spirit doth not testify; for the Spirit bears witness together with our spirits. St John is very express in 1Jn 3:21, 'But if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. But if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.' 1Jn 5:8-12, and 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.' The Spirit doth witness eminently and efficiently, but water and blood materially, and our spirits and reason instrumentally. By the Spirit we may understand the Holy Ghost, by whose strength we lay hold on Christ and all his benefits. By water we may understand our regeneration, our sanctification; and by blood we may understand the blood and righteousness of Christ, that is imputed and applied by faith to us. 'And these three agree in one,' that is, they do all three of one accord testify the same thing.

(7.) The seventh difference. Seventhly, The witness of the Spirit is ever according to the word. There is a sweet harmony between the inward and the outward testimony, between the Spirit of God and the word of God. The scriptures were all indited by the Spirit, 2Pe 1:20-21; and therefore the Spirit cannot contradict himself, which he should do, if he should give in any testimony contrary

to the testimony of the word. It is blasphemy to make the testimony of the Spirit to contradict the testimony of the word. The Spirit hath revealed his whole mind in the word, and he will not give a contrary testimony to what he hath given in the word. The word saith, They that are born again, that are new creatures, that believe and repent, shall be saved. But thou art born again, thou art a new creature, thou believest and repentest; therefore thou shalt be saved, saith the Spirit. The Spirit never looseth where the word bindeth, the Spirit never justifies where the word condemns, the Spirit never approves where the word disapproves, the Spirit never blesses where the word curses. In the Old Testament all revelations were to be examined by the word, Deu 13:1-4. Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or no morning) in them.' So in that of John 16:13, 'The Spirit shall lead you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but what he shall hear, that shall he speak.' Here the Holy Ghost is brought in as some messenger or ambassador who only relates things faithfully according to that he hath in charge. Such as look and lean upon the hissing of the old serpent, may have a testimony that they are happy, against the testimony of the word; but wherever the Spirit of Christ gives in his testimony, it is still according to the word. Look, as indenture answers to indenture, or as the counterpain exactly answers to the principal conveyance; there is article for article, clause for clause, covenant for covenant, word for word; so doth the testimony of the Spirit exactly answer to the testimony of the word.

(8.) The eighth difference Eighthly, It is a holy witness, a holy testimony. It is formally, it is originally holy, it is effectually holy. Nothing makes the heart more in the love, study, practice, and growth of holiness, than the glorious testimony of the Holy Spirit; and the more clear and full the testimony is, the more holy and gracious it will make the soul. Nothing puts such golden engagements upon the soul to holiness, as the Spirit sealing a man up to the day of redemption, as the Spirit speaking and sealing peace, love, and pardon to the soul, Psa 85:8; 1Co 15:31; 2Co 5:14. Nothing makes a man more careful to please Christ, more fearful to offend Christ, more studious to exalt Christ, and more circumspect to walk with Christ, than this testimony of the Spirit of Christ. Verily, that is not the blessed whispering of Christ's Spirit, but the hissing of the old serpent, that makes men bold with sin, that makes men dally with sin, that makes man a servant to sin, that breeds a contempt of ordinances, a neglect of holy duties, a carelessness in walking with God. And from those hissings of the old serpent, O Lord, deliver my soul, and the souls of all thy servants that put their trust in thee!

(9.) The ninth difference. Ninthly and lastly, Assurance is a jewel, a pearl of that price, that God only bestows it upon renewed hearts. The Spirit never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first printed his image upon. God gives to none the white stone, Rev 2:17, but to those from whom he hath taken the heart of stone; Eze 36:25-27 compared. Christ never tells a man that his name is written in the book of life, till he hath breathed into him spiritual life, Luk 10:20. Christ never says, Son, be of good cheer, thy sin is pardoned, till he hath first said, Be thou healed, be thou cleansed, Luk 5:18-20. Christ never gives a man a new name, that is better than the names of sons and daughters, till he hath made them new creatures, Isa 56:5; 2Co 5:17. Of slaves Christ first makes us sons, before we cry Abba, Father, Rom 8:15. Of enemies, he first makes us friends, before he will make us of his court or counsel, Eph 2:13-20. Christ will never hang a pearl in a swine's snout, nor put new wine into old bottles, nor his royal robes upon a leprous back, nor his golden chain about a dead man's neck, nor his glistening crown upon a traitor's head. The Spirit

never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first set as a seal upon his heart, Eph 1:13; Song of Solomon 8:6. The Spirit only bears witness to such as hate sin as Christ hates it, and that love righteousness as Christ loves it, that hate sin more than hell, and that love truth more than life, Psa 45:7. A soul sealed by the Spirit will pull out right eyes, and cut off right hands, for Christ; such souls will part with a Benjamin, and offer up an Isaac, for Christ. And this is to be seriously minded against those deceived and deluded souls, that remain yet in their blood, and that wallow in their sins, and yet boast and brag of the seal and of the witness and testimony of the Spirit. And thus I have shewed you the difference between the whisperings of the Spirit and the hissing of the old serpent, between a true testimony and a false.

CHAPTER VII Containing answers to several special questions about assurance.

[1.] The first question. But methinks I hear some precious souls saying, Sirs! we have, after much praying, weeping, and waiting, gained this pearl of price, assurance; but oh, how shall we do to strengthen it, how shall we do to keep it? Satan will labour to weaken our assurance, and to rob us of this jewel that is more worth than a world; what means must we use to strengthen our assurance and to secure it? &c.

Now to this question I shall give these following answers:

First, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then keep close to soul-strengthening ways, be serious and sincere, be diligent and constant in the use of those means and ways wherein you first gained assurance, as prayer, the word, breaking of bread, communion of saints,&c. A conscionable and cordial use of holy and heavenly means is blessed, not only with a preservation of assurance, but likewise with an addition and increase of it. The ways of God, and his goings in the sanctuary, have wrought wonders upon thee, when thou wast dead, how much more will they work upon thee and for thee, now thou art by grace made alive? He that will not apply himself to God's strengthening methods will quickly find his assurance weakened, if not wholly wasted. He that thinks himself too good for ordinances, will quickly grow weak in his assurance. The choicest prophets, and highest apostles, if I may so speak, that had attained to the fullest assurance, kept close to the ways and precious institutions of Christ.² Verily, those that pretend to live above ordinances, and yet live below them, never knew by experience what a mercy it was to have a well-grounded assurance, or else they have lost that blessed assurance that once they had, &c.

Secondly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then dwell much upon your spiritual and eternal privileges, viz., your adoption, justification, reconciliation, &c., 1Pe 2:9. This you shall find by experience will mightily tend to the strengthening and maintaining of your assurance. He that neglects this rule will quickly find his sun to set in a cloud, his harp to be turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of them that weep, Job 30:31.

Thirdly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then look that your hearts run more out to Christ than to assurance; to the sun than to the beams, to the fountain than to the stream, to the root than to the branch, to the cause than to the effect, Song of Solomon 1:13. Assurance is sweet, but Christ is more sweet. Assurance is lovely, but Christ is altogether lovely, Song of Solomon 5:16. Assurance is precious, but Christ is most precious, Pro 3:15. Though assurance be a flower that yields much comfort and delight, yet it is but a flower. Though assurance be a

precious box, yet it is but a box. Though assurance be a ring of gold, yet it is but a ring of gold. And what is the flower to the root, what is the box to the ointment, what is the ring to the pearl? No more is assurance to Christ. Therefore let thy eye and heart, first, most, and last, be fixed upon Christ, then will assurance bed and board with thee; otherwise thou wilt quickly find thy summer to be turned into winter.

Fourthly, If you would strengthen and maintain your assurance, then look that your hearts are more taken up with Christ than with your graces. Though grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature; therefore let grace have your eye, but be sure that Christ have your heart. Christ must have your heart. Christ will not allow your very graces to be corrivals with him. He that minds his graces more than Christ, or that sets his graces upon the throne with Christ, will quickly find what it is to lose the face and favour of Christ. Your graces are but Christ's servants and handmaids; you may look upon them, but you must not match with them. It is a reproach to Christ, that those who have married the master, should at the same time match with the servant. The queen may look upon her glistening courtiers, but she must live upon the king; the wife may take pleasure in her lovely babes, but she must live upon her husband, and be most observant of her husband. So gracious souls may look upon their graces, but they must live upon king Jesus; they may take pleasure in their graces, but they must live upon Christ, and be most observant of Christ. This is the way to keep Christ and assurance, and he that walks contrary to this rule will soon find the loss of both. Christ will be Aleaxander or Nemo; he will be all in all, or he will be nothing at all. Though his coat was once divided, yet he will never suffer his crown to be divided, John 19:23, Isa 42:8.

Fifthly, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then labour to improve it to the strengthening of you against temptations, to the fencing of you against corruptions, to the raising of your resolutions, to the inflaming of your affections, to the bettering of your conversations. Assurance is a pearl of price; he that will keep it must improve it. The ready way to maintain our natural strength, and to increase it, is to improve it. Assurance is one of the choicest and chiefest talents that ever God entrusted man with, and he that doth not improve it, and employ it, will quickly lose it, &c. God will not suffer so golden a talent to gather rust, Mat 25:28. Win gold and wear gold, improve gold and keep gold; win assurance and wear assurance, improve assurance and keep assurance. Dionysius the elder, being advised of one that had hidden great store of money, commands him upon pain of death to bring it to him, which he did, but not all; but with the remainder he went and dwelt in another country, where he bought an inheritance, and fell upon some employment, which, when Dionysius heard, he sent him his money again which he had taken from him, saying, Now thou knowest how to use riches, take that I had from thee. I shall leave you to make the application.

Sixthly, If you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, then walk humbly with your God, Mic 6:8. God makes the humble man's heart his house to dwell in: Isa 57:15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' The highest heavens and the lowest hearts are the habitations wherein the Holy One delights to dwell. Now this phrase, 'I will dwell with the humble,' takes in several things: 1. It includes God's overlooking² the humble. 2. It takes in God's assisting and strengthening of the humble. 3. It takes in God's protection; I will dwell with the humble, that is, I will protect him and secure him, Job 22:29. 4. It takes in God's sympathizing with the humble.

5. It takes in God's applying all suitable good to the humble, Isa 57:18, and Isa 63:9. 6. It takes in God's ruling and overruling the heart and the affections of the humble. 7. It takes in God's teaching and learning of the humble. But, 8, and lastly, It includes and takes in a clearer, a fuller, and a larger manifestation and communication of God to humble souls, Psa 10:17, and Psa 25:9. Ah! saith God, I will dwell with the humble; that is, I will more richly, more abundantly, and more gloriously manifest and make known my grace and glory, my goodness and sweetness, my loving-kindness and tenderness, to humble souls. Now tell me, humble souls, will not God's dwelling thus with you contribute very much to the strengthening and maintaining of your assurance? Jas 4:6, 'But he giveth more grace: wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud' (or as the Greek word emphatically signifies, **■ντιτ■σσεται**, he sets himself in battle array against the proud), 'but giveth grace to the humble.' Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive grace. God pours in grace into the humble souls, as men pour liquor into an empty vessel. And verily, the more grace you have, the more will your assurance be strengthened and maintained. Well! remember this, the humble man's mercies are the sweetest mercies, the greatest mercies, the most growing and thriving mercies, the most blessed and sanctified mercies, and the most lasting and abiding mercies. Therefore, as you would have your assurance strengthened and maintained, walk humbly with your God; I say again, walk humbly, walk humbly with your God, and you shall wear the crown of assurance to your grave.

Seventhly, If you would keep and maintain your assurance, then take heed and watch against those very particular sins by which other saints have lost their assurance. Take heed of carnal confidence and security. David lost his assurance by not guarding his heart against those evils, Psa 30:6-7. Again, take heed of a light, slight, careless, and negligent spirit in holy and spiritual things. The spouse in the Canticles lost her assurance, and her sweet communion with Christ, by her slowness of spirit, Song of Solomon 5:2-3, Song of Solomon 5:6, compared. Again, take heed of a stout and unyielding spirit under the afflicting hand of God; this made God hide his face from them, Isa 57:17. In a word, take heed of tasting of forbidden fruit, remembering what Adam lost by a taste.

Eighthly, If you would maintain and keep your assurance, then frequently and seriously consider of the wonderful difficulty of recovering assurance when it is lost. Oh! the sighs, the groans, the complaints, the prayers, the tears, the heart-renting, the soul-bleeding that the recovery of thy lost assurance will cost. The gaining of assurance at first cost thee dear, but the regaining of it, if thou shouldst be so unhappy as to lose it, will put thee to more pains and charge. Of the two, it is easier to keep assurance now thou hast it, than to recover it when thou hast lost it. It is easier to keep the house in reparations, than when it is fallen to build it up.

Ninthly, and lastly, Consider solemnly the sad and woful evils and inconveniences that will certainly follow upon the loss of your assurance. I will only touch upon a few.

(1.) None of the precious things of Christ will be so sweet to thee as formerly they have been.

(2.) You will neither be so fervent in duty, nor so frequent in duty, nor so abundant in duty, nor so spiritual in duty, nor so lively in duty, nor so cheerful in duty, as formerly you have been.

(3.) Afflictions will sooner sink you, temptations will sooner overcome you, oppositions will sooner discourage you.

(4.) Your mercies will be bitter, your life a burden, and death a terror to you; you will be weary of living, and yet afraid of dying, &c.

Now, the second question is this: Suppose souls have not been so careful to keep and maintain their assurance as they should have been, but upon one account or another have left that blessed assurance that once they had; how may such sad souls be supported and kept from fainting, sinking, and languishing under the loss of assurance? To this question I shall give these following answers:

First, Souls that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, may be supported and kept from fainting and sinking, by considering, that though they have lost their assurance, yet they have not lost their sonship; for once sons and always sons. You are sons, though dejected sons; you are sons, though comfortless sons; you are sons, though mourning sons, Rom 8:15-17. Once children, and always children; once heirs, and always heirs; once beloved, and always beloved; once happy, and always happy: 2Sa 23:5, 'Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desires, although he make it not to grow.' Well, says David, though neither myself, nor my house, have been so exact and perfect in our walkings before God as we should, but we have broken our covenants with him, and dealt unworthily by him, and turned our backs upon him, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, he hath engaged himself to an everlasting covenant, that he will be my Father, and that I shall be his son. And this is my salvation and everlasting ground of consolation and supportation to my soul. The second support is this, Consider, that though your comfort, joy, and peace, doth depend much upon your assurance, yet your eternal happiness and blessedness doth not depend upon your assurance. If it did, you might be happy and miserable in a day, ay, in an hour. Your happiness lies in your union with God, in your communion with God, in your interest in God, and not in your seeing and knowing your interest; your joy and comfort lies in your seeing and knowing your interest in God, but your everlasting happiness lies in your being interested in God. The welfare and happiness of the child lies in the interest that he hath in his father, but the joy and comfort of the child lies in his seeing, in his knowing of his interest in his father. It is so between the Lord and believers: Psa 144:15, 'Happy be the people that be in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.' Among the philosophers there were two hundred and eighty opinions concerning happiness, some affirming happiness to lie in one thing, some in another. Ah! but by the Spirit and word we are taught that happiness lies in our oneness with God, in our nearness and dearness to God, and in our conformity to God, &c. Mark, the Scripture pronounces him happy, whose hope is in God, though he want assurance: Psa 146:5, 'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.' Again, he is happy that trusteth in the Lord, though for the present he want assurance: Pro 16:20, 'And whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.' Again, he is happy that feareth the Lord, that hath set up God as the object of his fear, though he want assurance of the love of God: Pro 28:14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always;' that fears to offend, that fears to disobey, that fears to rebel, &c. Again, he is happy that believes in Christ, that rests and stays upon Christ, as the Scriptures everywhere testify, though he may want assurance.

Happiness lies not in any transient act of the Spirit, as assurance is, but in the more permanent and lasting acts of the Spirit. The philosopher could say, 'That he was never a happy man that might afterwards become miserable.' If a man's eternal happiness did lie in the assurance of his

happiness, then might a man be crowned with Xerxes's steersman in the morning, and beheaded with him in the evening of the same day. But this is the believer's blessedness, that his condition is always good, though he doth not always see it to be good; that his state is always safe, though it be not always comfortable. The third support to keep those precious souls from fainting and sinking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is to consider that though their loss be the greatest and saddest loss that could befall them, yet it is a recoverable loss, it is a loss that may be recovered, as the scriptures in the margin do clearly evidence. And doth not this age, as well as former, furnish us with many instances of this kind? Doubtless many there are among the precious sons and daughters of Zion that have lost this pearl of price, and after waiting, weeping, and wrestling, have found it again; therefore be not discouraged, O sighing, losing souls! In the loss of temporals, it is a great support to men's spirits that their loss may be made up, and why should it not be so in spirituals also? The fourth support to keep their hearts from sinking and breaking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is, seriously to consider that your loss is no greater, nor no sadder, than what the noblest and the choicest saints have sustained, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Those that were once the worthies of this world, and are now triumphing in that other world among the princes of glory, have lost that sweet assurance and sense of divine love and favour that once they enjoyed; therefore let not your spirits faint and fail. In temporal trials it is a comfort and a support to have companions with us; and why should it not much more be so in spirituals? Acts 16:1-40. The fifth support to bear up their spirits that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is for them to remember, and seriously mind, that though they have lost assurance, yet they have not lost the blessed breathings and sweet influences of the Spirit upon them. Witness their love to Christ, their longing after Christ, their fear of offending Christ, their care to please Christ, their high esteem of Christ, and their mourning for the dishonours that by themselves or others are done to Christ, &c. A man may enjoy the warmth, heat, and influence of the sun, when he hath lost the sight of the sun. David had lost his assurance, he had lost the sight of the sun; and yet he enjoyed the warmth and influences of it upon his heart, as is evident in Psa 51:1-19.

Though thy sun, O Christian, be set in a cloud, yet it will rise again, and in the interim thou hast and dost enjoy the warmth and influences of the sun; therefore sorrow not, mourn not, as one without hope. Those warm influences that the Sun of righteousness hath now upon thy heart, are infallible evidences that he will shine forth and smile upon thee as in the days of old; therefore let thy bow still abide in strength, Psa 42:5, Psa 42:7-8, Psa 42:11. The sixth support to keep their hearts from fainting and sinking that have lost that sweet assurance that once they had, is seriously to consider, that it will be but as a day, but as a short day, before the loss of thy assurance shall be made up with a more clear, full, perfect, and complete enjoyment of God. Ere long, O mourning soul, thy sun shall rise and never set, thy joy and comfort shall be always fresh and green; God shall comfort thee on every side, it shall be night with thee no more, thou shalt be always in the bosom of God, Isa 57:18-20. Psa 71:20-21, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depth of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' The day is at hand, O perplexed soul, when thou shalt have smiles without frowns, light without darkness, day without night, wine without water, sweet without bitter, and joy without sorrow. The year of jubilee is at hand. Thou now sowest in tears, thou shalt shortly reap in joy; yea, 'everlasting joy shall be upon thy head,' and 'sorrow and sighing shall flee away,' therefore faint not. The third question is this,

viz., What means must souls use to recover assurance when it is lost?

I shall give a few short answers to this question, and so draw to a close.

First, If thou wouldst recover assurance, then thou must labour diligently to find out that sin, that Achan, that hath robbed thee of thy wedge of gold, of thy assurance. Surely it is not for infirmities, but enormities, that God hath put out thy candle, and caused thy sun to set at noon. Surely thou hast been feeding, I say not tasting, of forbidden fruit, that God hath stripped thee of thy robes, and taken the crown from off thy head, and turned thee out of paradise. But this is not all.

Therefore, in the second place, weep much, mourn much, over the Achan, over those wickednesses that have turned thy day into night, thy rejoicing into sighing, &c. David doth thus in Psa 51:1-19, and God takes him up from his knees, and restores to him 'the joy of his salvation.' Though God be displeased with your sins, yet he is well-pleased with your tears. The promise is, that he will 'revive the spirit of the contrite,' Isa 57:15. It is said of Adam that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart lamented his fall. Ah! losing souls, turn your face towards heaven, and from your hearts lament your fall, lament your loss. Nothing puts God to it like penitent tears. No sooner doth Ephraim weep over his sins, but the bowels of God are stirring towards him, and God cannot hold but he must proclaim to the world that mourning Ephraim, bemoaning Ephraim, is his dear son, his pleasant child, and that he will 'surely have mercy on him; or, as the Hebrew hath it, Rahhem arahhamenu, 'I will have mercy, have mercy on him,' or, 'I will abundantly have mercy on him,' Jer 31:18-20. When our hearts are set to weep over our sins, God will so act in ways of love towards us, that it shall not be long night with our souls. God will never suffer them to be drowned in sorrow that are set upon drowning their sins in penitential tears. The Jews have a saying, that since the destruction of Jerusalem, the door of prayers hath been shut; but the door of tears was never shut, saith one. God hath by promise engaged himself that those that 'sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Psa 126:5. The tears of the saints have such a kind of omnipotency in them, that God himself cannot withstand them: 2Ki 20:5, 'I have seen thy tears, behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.'

Thirdly, If you would recover assurance, then sit not down discouraged, but be up and doing. Remember what a pearl of price thou hast lost, and 'repent and do thy first works,' Rev 2:4-5. Fall close to the good old work of believing, meditating, examining, praying, hearing, mourning, &c. Begin the world again, and set afresh upon those very ways by which at first thou didst get assurance; fall upon family duties, apply thyself to public ordinances, be much in closet services; stir up every gift that is in thee, stir up every grace that is in thee, stir up all the life that is in thee, and never leave blowing till thou hast blowed thy little spark into a flame; never leave turning thy penny, till thou hast turned thy penny into a pound; never leave improving thy mite, till thy mite be turned into a million. God will be found in the use of means, and he will restore our lost mercies in the use of means, Psa 22:26. But this is not all.

Therefore, in the fourth place, wait patiently upon the Lord. David did so, and at length the Lord brought him out of a horrible pit, or out of a pit of noise and confusion, and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings, and put a new song of praise into his mouth, Psa 40:1-3. God never hath, nor never will fail the waiting soul. Though God loves to try the patience of his children, yet he doth not love to tire out the patience of his children; therefore he will not contend for ever, neither will he be always wroth, lest the spirits of his people should fail, Isa 57:16-19. Assurance is

a jewel worth waiting for. It is a pearl that God gives to none but such as have waited long at mercy's door. It is a crown that every one must win by patient waiting before he can wear. God doth not think the greatest mercies too good for waiting souls, though he knows the least mercy is too good for impatient souls. The breasts of the promises lie fair and open to waiting souls, Isa 30:18, and Isa 64:4, and Isa 49:23. The waiting soul shall have anything of God, but the froward and impatient soul gets nothing of God but frowns, and blows, and wounds, and broken bones. Sad souls should do well to make that text their bosom companion, John 14:18, 'I will not leave you comfortless,' or orphans, ὁρφανούς, 'I will come to you.' And that Heb 10:36-37, 'For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while' (as it is in the Greek), 'and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.'

Fifthly and lastly, If you would recover assurance, then take heed of refusing comforts when God brings them to your door; take heed of throwing gospel cordials against the wall. This was Asaph's sin: 'My soul refused to be comforted.' God comes and offers love to the soul, and the soul refuses it; God comes and spreads the promises of consolation before the soul, and the soul refuses to look upon them; God comes and makes tenders of the riches of grace, and the soul refuses to accept of them. Sometimes the hand, the man that brings the cordial, is not liked, and therefore men refuse it. Well! remember this: when gold is offered, men care not how great or how base he is that offers it. Neither should we care by whom the cordials and consolations of the gospel are offered to us, whether they are offered by the hand of Isaiah, a prophet of the blood-royal, as some think, or by Amos, from amongst the herdsmen of Tekoa. If the sweetmeats of heaven are set before thee, it is thy wisdom and thy duty to taste of them, and to feed upon them, without stumbling at the hand that presents them.

Now for a close I shall make a few short uses of what hath been said, and so conclude.

[1.] The first use. You that have assurance, be thankful for it. It is a jewel more worth than heaven and earth; therefore be thankful. Assurance is a mercy nobly-descended; it is from above. Man is not born with it in his heart, as he is with a tongue in his mouth, Jas 1:17. Assurance is a peculiar mercy; it is a flower of paradise that God sticks only in his children's bosoms. Assurance is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it is a mercy that puts the garland upon all our mercies. Assurance makes every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet. He enjoys little that wants it, he wants nothing that enjoys it; therefore be you thankful that have and do find the sweetness of it.

If Philip rejoiced that Alexander was born in the days of Aristotle, how much more cause have you to rejoice, upon whose heads the Lord hath put the crown of assurance, a crown of more worth and weight than all princes' crowns in the world.

[2.] The second use. If God hath given you assurance, then do not envy the outward felicity and happiness of the men of the world, Psal 37:17-18; Pro 23:17. Alas! what are mountains of dust to mountains of gold? what are the stones of the street to rocks of pearl? what are crowns of thorns to crowns of gold, &c.? No more are all the treasures, honours, pleasures, and favours of this world to assurance. The envious man hath so many tortures as the envied hath praises.⁴ It is the justice of envy to kill and torment the envious. The men of the world are real objects of pity, but not of envy. Who envies the prisoner at the bar? Who envies the malefactor that is going to execution? Who envies the dead man that is going to his grave? God hath done more for thee by giving thee assurance than if he had given thee all the world, yea, ten thousand worlds. When the Spanish

ambassador boasted that his master was king of such a place, and of such a place, and of such a place, &c., the French ambassador answered, My master is king of France, king of France, king of France; signifying thereby that France was of as much worth or more worth, than all the kingdoms under the power of the king of Spain. Ah, Christians! when the men of the world shall cry out, Oh, their riches! oh, their honours! oh, their preferments! &c., you may well cry out, Oh, assurance, assurance, assurance! &c.; there being more real worth and glory in that than is to be found in all the wealth and glory of the world; therefore do not envy the outward prosperity and felicity of worldly men, &c.

[3.] The third use. If God hath given you assurance, then give no way to slavish fears. Fear not the scorn and reproaches of men, fear not wants. God will not deny him a crust to whom he hath given a Christ; he will not deny him a crumb upon whom he hath bestowed a crown; he will not deny him a less mercy upon whom he hath bestowed assurance, which is the prince of mercies. Fear not death, for why shouldst thou fear death, that hast assurance of a better life?

[4.] The fourth use. If God hath given you a well-grounded assurance of your everlasting happiness and blessedness, then question his love no more. God doth not love to have his love at every turn called in question by those that he hath once assured of his love; he doth expect, that as no sin of ours doth make any substantial alteration in his affections to us, so none, no, not his sharpest dispensations, should make any alteration in our thoughts and affections towards him, Psa 89:30-35; Jer 31:3; Ecc 9:8.

[5.] The fifth use. If God hath given you assurance, then live holily, live angelically, keep your garments pure and white, walk with an even foot, be shining lights, Rev 3:4; Mat 5:16. Your happiness here is your holiness, and in heaven your highest happiness will be your perfect holiness. Holiness differs nothing from happiness, but in name. Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. The more holy any man is, the more the Lord loves him, John 14:21-23.

Augustine doth excellently observe, in his tract on John 1:14, 'that God loved the humanity of Christ more than any man, because he was fuller of grace and truth than any man.' The philosopher could say, 'that God was but an empty name without virtue.' So are all our professions without holiness. Holiness is the very marrow and quintessence of all religion. Holiness is God stamped and printed upon the soul; it is Christ formed in the heart; it is our light, our life, our beauty, our glory, our joy, our crown, our heaven, our all. The holy soul is happy in life, and blessed in death, and shall be transcendently glorious in the morning of the resurrection, when Christ shall say, Lo, here am I, and my holy ones, who are my joy; Lo, here am I, and my holy ones, who are my crown; and therefore, upon the heads of these holy ones will I set an immortal crown. Even so, Amen! Lord Jesus.

01.03. Volume 3

THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART, liverpool

VOL. III. containing: THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST A CABINET OF JEWELS
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Chapter II.—Many choice, precious, and infallible evidences of true saving grace, upon which a Christian may safely and securely, comfortably and confidently, rest and adventure the weight of his precious and immortal soul, and by which he may certainly know that it shall go well with him for ever: and that he has a real saving interest in Christ, and shall be everlastingly happy, when he shall be here no more, &c.

Chapter III.—Sound, saving repentance, repentance unto life; that evangelical repentance that hath the precious promises of remission of sin and salvation running out unto it. So far as may speak it out to be evidential of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's spiritual and eternal condition

Chapter IV.—How far an hypocrite cannot go. What an hypocrite cannot do. What a hypocrite is not. The several rounds in Jacob's ladder that no hypocrite under heaven climb up to

Chapter V.—Some propositions and directions, that so you may see what a sober use and improvement Christians ought to make of their evidences for heaven; and how, in the use of gracious evidences, they ought to live above their gracious evidences, and how to exalt and lift up Christ above all their graces, evidences, and performances THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

NOTE The 'Unsearchable Riches of Christ' was originally published in 1655. A second edition followed in 1657; a third, 'corrected and amended,' in 1661; and a fourth in 1671—all 4to. Our text is the third edition, and its title-page is given below.*—G.

■νεξιχν■αστοι πλο■τοι το■ χριστο■ the Unsearchable Riches of

CHRIST or, MEAT for STRONG MEN, And

MILKE for BABES Held forth in Twenty-two

SERMONS from Ephesians III. VIII. By Thomas Brooks, Preacher of the word in London The Third Edition Corrected and Amended Ipse unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia, Aug It pleased the father, that in him should all fullness dwell. Col 1:19 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col 2:3.

LONDON: Printed by M.S. for John Hancock at the first Shop in Popes head-Alley, next to Cornhill.

1661.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To all true Israelites, in whom there is no guile, Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.

Dear Hearts, my design in appearing once more in print is not to please the captious critic, or the sullen cynic, but to heighten your 'fellowship with the Father and the Son,' 1Jn 1:3-4, and to further you in a closer walking with God, and to ripen you more and more for reigning with God when you shall be here no more.

'Beloved in our Lord,' there are two sad and great evils—oh that there were no more!—among the saints this day. The strong are very apt, yea, they make little of offending the weak; and the weak are as apt, and make as little of judging and condemning the strong, Rom 14:1-10. The serious and conscientious perusal of this treatise may, by the blessing of the Lord, contribute much to the preventing of those sad evils. You that are weak may, in this treatise, as in a glass, see your weakness, your mercies, your graces, your duties, your privileges, and your comforts. You that are weak in grace, may here find many questions answered and doubts resolved, that tend to the satisfying, quieting, settling, and establishing of your precious souls in peace, joy, and assurance. You that are weak in grace, may here find a staff to support you, a light to direct you, a sword to defend you, and a cordial to strengthen you, &c. And you that are strong in grace, may here see what is your way, what is your work, and what at last shall be your reward. Here you will find that which tends to the discovery of spirits, the sweetening of spirits, the uniting of spirits, the healing of spirits, and the making up of breaches, &c.

Here you will find 'meat for strong men,' and 'milk for babes.' Here you will find who is more motion than notion; more heart than head; more spirit than flesh; more inside than outside, &c.

Here you will find 'the unsearchable riches of Christ,'—which of all boxes of precious ointment is the most precious—opened; and oh how sweet must he be, that is the sweetest of sweets! In Christ are riches of justification; in Christ are riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, and riches of glorification. And this following treatise may serve as a key, I say not as a golden one, to open the door, that you may come where these treasures lie. Christ's riches are like the eternal springs of the earth, that cannot dry up, but are and shall be diffused by his Spirit and gospel, until his whole house be filled with them. The excellency and usefulness of the riches of Christ, and answers to many weighty queries about his unsearchable riches, is more than hinted at in this tract. In this tract much is spoken concerning the nature, properties, and excellencies of humility, which is both the beautifier and preserver of all other graces.

Here you may see that those that are lowest in their own esteem, are highest in God's esteem. Here you may see that humble souls are not so low and contemptible in the eyes of the world, as they are honourable in the eyes of God. And if ever there were an age since Christ was on earth, wherein it was needful to preach, press, and print this great doctrine of humility, of self, of soul abasement, this is the age wherein we live. Oh the pride, the stateliness of the professors of this age! But because this point is largely spoken to in this tract, I shall satisfy myself with this touch.

There are many other weighty things treated on, which for brevity's sake I shall omit, only give me leave to acquaint you with a few things about this ensuing tract, and then I shall draw to a close.

First, That it is the substance of twenty-two sermons, preached by me about three years ago, on the lecture nights at this place where now I preach.

Secondly, That there are in it several other things of no small concernment to your souls, that I did not then deliver, but have been given in since, from that fountain that fills all in all.

Thirdly, That though I have been much pressed to print these sermons, yet I should never have yielded, had I not been thoroughly convinced and persuaded in my judgment and conscience, that they may, by the blessing of the Lord upon them, prove many ways useful and serviceable to all those honest Nathanaels into whose hands they may fall, else they had been buried in the dark, and never come to public light.

I have only a few requests to make to you, and then I shall take my leave of you. And my first request is this, that you would meditate and dwell upon what you read; otherwise your pains (I say not your souls) and mine will be lost.

It is a law among the Parsees in India, to use premeditation in what they are to do, that if it be bad, to reject it; if good, to act it. The application is easy. The more any man is in the contemplation of truth, the more fairer and firmer impression is made upon his heart by truth. Christians must be like the clean beasts, that parted the hoof and chewed the cud; they must by heavenly meditation chew truths and concoct truths, or else they will never taste the sweetness that is in divine truths.

Mary 'pondered the sayings of the shepherds in her heart,' Luk 2:19. Not they that eat most, but they that digest most, are the most healthful. Not they that get most, but they that keep most, are richest. So not they that hear most, or read most, but they that meditate most, are most edified and enriched. My second request to you is this, that you will make conscience of living out those truths you read. To read much and practise nothing, is to hunt much and catch nothing.

Suetonius reports of Julius Cæsar, 'That seeing Alexander's statue, he fetched a deep sigh, because he at that age had done so little.

Ah! what cause have most to sigh, that they have heard so much, and read so much, and yet done so little! Surely it is more honourable to do great things, than to speak or read great things! It is the doer that will be most happy at last, John 13:17. *In vitæ libro scribuntur qui quod possunt faciunt, etsi quod debent, non possunt*, they are written in the book of life, that do what good they can, though they cannot do as they would [Bernard.]

I have read of a good man coming from a public lecture, and being asked by one whether the sermon was done, answered, with a sad sigh, 'Ah! it is said, but not done.' My third request is this, that you will pray over what you read.

Many read much, and pray little, and therefore get little by all they read.

Galen writes of a fish called Uranoscopos, that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven. When a Christian has one eye upon his book, the other should be looking up to heaven for a blessing upon what he reads. When one heard what admirable victories Scanderbeg's sword had wrought, he would needs see it; and when he saw it, says he, This is but an ordinary sword; alas! what can this do? Scanderbeg sent him word, I have sent thee my sword, but I have the arm that did all by it.

Alas! what can Christ's sword, Christ's word, do without his arm? Therefore look up to Christ's arm in prayer, that so his sword, his word, may do great things in your souls.

Luther professeth 'that he profited more by prayer in a short space than by study in a longer;' as John, by weeping, got the sealed book open. My fourth request to you is this, That if, by the

blessing of the Lord upon my weak endeavours, any leaf or line should drop myrrh or mercy, marrow or fatness, upon your spirits, that you will give all the glory to the God of heaven, for to him alone it does belong.

Through grace I know I am a poor worm; I am nothing, I have nothing but what I have received. The crown becomes no head but Christ's. Let him who is our all in all have the honour and the glory of all, and I have my end.

Pliny tells of some in the remote parts of India that have no mouths, and yet live on the smell of herbs and sweet flowers; but I hope better things of you, even such as accompany salvation. My fifth request to you is this, That you would let me lie near your hearts, when you are in the mount especially.

Oh pray, pray hard for me, that the Spirit of the Lord may be redoubled upon me; that his word may prosper in my mouth; that it may 'run, and be glorified;' and that I may be high in my communion with God, and holy and unblameable in my walkings with God; and that it may be still day with my soul; that I may live and die in the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost; and that when my sun is set, my glass out, my work done, my race run, I may rest in the everlasting arms of divine love, &c. My last and least request to you is this, That you will please to cast a mantle of love over the mistakes of the press, and do me that right, and yourselves the courtesy, as, before you read, to correct any material faults that you shall find pointed at in the errata.

God's easy passing over the many and daily erratas of your lives, cannot but make you so ingenuous as readily to pass over the erratas in this book.

You are choice jewels in my eye; you lie near unto my heart; I am willing to spend and be spent for your sakes. My earnest and humble desire is, that my service and labour of love may be accepted by you, Rom 15:31, and that it may work much for your internal and eternal welfare; and that 'an abundant entrance may be administered to you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,' 2Pe 1:11, and 2Pe 1:8; and that you may be filled 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' and with that 'peace that passes understanding.' This is, and by grace shall be, the prayer of him who desires to approve himself faithful to Christ, his truths, his interests, and his people, and who is your souls' servant in all gospel engagements.

Thomas Brooks. THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.—Eph 3:8.

'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.' The Greek is a comparative made of a superlative. 'Less than the least of all saints,' is a double diminutive, and signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility. Great Paul is least of saints, last of the apostles, and greatest of sinners.² The choicest buildings have the lowest foundations, the best balsam sinks to the bottom; those ears of corn and boughs of trees that are most filled and best laden, bow lowest. So do those souls that are most laden with the fruits of paradise. 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints.'

'Is this grace given.' In the Greek, or 'was this grace given.' The word that is here rendered grace, is taken in Scripture not only for the favour of God, but also for his gracious gifts; and so you are to

understand it in this place. Grace is taken for the gifts of grace; and they are twofold, common or special. Some are common to believers and hypocrites, as knowledge, tongues, a gift of prayer, &c.; some are special and peculiar to the saints, as fear, love, faith, &c. Now Paul had all these, the better to fit him for that high and noble service to which he was called.

'That I should preach.' That is, declare good news or glad tidings. The Greek word answers to the Hebrew word, which signifies good news, glad tidings, and a joyful message.

'That I should preach among the Gentiles.'

Sometimes this Greek word is generally used for all men, or for all nations. Sometimes the word is used more especially for the people of the Jews. Sometimes it is used for the Gentiles distinguished from the Jews. So it is used Mat 6:32, 'For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.' And so it is used here. Those that are 'without God in the world,' that stand in arms against God, that are ignorant of those riches of grace that are in Christ; this grace is given to me, that I should preach among the poor heathens, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

'That I might preach among the Gentiles.' What, myself? No, but 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' The Greek word signifies, not to be traced out. Here is rhetoric indeed! Here is riches, unsearchable riches, unsearchable riches of Christ. Riches always imply two things: 1, abundance; 2, abundance of such things as be of worth. Now in the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest riches, the best riches, the choicest riches; in Christ are riches of justification, Tit 2:14; in Christ are riches of sanctification, Php 4:12-13; in Christ are riches of consolation, 2Co 12:9; and in Christ are riches of glorification, 1Pe 1:2-3. But of these glorious unsearchable riches of Christ, we shall speak hereafter.

I shall begin at this time with the first words, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints.' There are these two observations that naturally flow from these words.

Obs. 1. That the most holy men are always the most humble men.

None so humble on earth, as those that live highest in heaven. Or if you will, take the observation thus: That those that are the most highly valued and esteemed of by God, are lowest and least in their own esteem.

'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints,' &c.

Obs. 2. The second observation is, That there are weak saints as well as strong; little saints as well as great. Or thus, All saints are not of an equal growth or stature.

I. I shall begin with the first observation, That the most holy men are always the most humble men. Souls that are the most highly esteemed and valued by God, do set the least and lowest esteem upon themselves. 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints,' &c. In the handling of this point, I shall do these three things:

I. I shall prove that the most holy souls are always the most humble souls.

II. I shall shew you the properties of souls truly humble.

III. I shall shew you the reasons why those that are the most highly prized and esteemed of God, do set so low a price upon themselves.

IV. And then the use.

I. For the first, That this is so, I shall give you most clear proofs, and open them to you.

See it in Job. No man ever received a fairer or a more valuable certificate under the hand of God, or the broad seal of heaven, for his being a soul famous in grace and holiness, than Job, as you may see, Job 1:8, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?' And yet no man could speak more undervaluingly of himself than Job did. Job 42:5-6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' This expression is the deepest act of abhorrency. Abhorrency strictly taken, is hatred wound up to the height. 'I abhor myself.' The word that is rendered abhor signifies to reject, to disdain, to contemn, and to cast off. Ah! says Job, I abhor myself, I reject myself, I disdain myself, I cast off myself, I have a vile esteem of myself.⁴ So our blessed apostle, who had been 'caught up into the third heavens, and had such glorious revelations as could not be uttered,' yet he accounted himself less than the least of all saints. Not that anything can be less than the least; the apostle's holy rhetoric doth not cross Aristotle's philosophy; but the original word being a double diminutive, his meaning is that he was as little as could be; therefore he put himself down so little as could not be, less than the least.

Another proof you have, Isa 6:1, Isa 6:5-6. As Paul among the apostles was the greatest, so Isaiah among the prophets was the clearest and choicest gospel preacher, and holds out more of Christ and of his kingdom and glory, than all the other prophets do. Isa 6:1, He sees the glory of the Lord in a vision, and this makes him cry out, verse 5, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts; I am undone.' The Hebrew is, 'I am cut off,' I am a forlorn man! Why? 'For I have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Here you have the highest and choicest among the prophets, as you had Paul before among the apostles, abasing and laying low himself. So Peter. Luk 5:8, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' When he saw that glorious miracle wrought by the Lord Jesus, he cries out as one very sensible of his own weakness and sinfulness. 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' Ah! I am not worthy to be near such majesty and glory, who am a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity.

Take another clear instance: Gen 18:27, 'And Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes.' Here you have the father of the faithful, the greatest believer in the world, accounting himself dust and ashes. Dust notes the baseness of his original, and ashes notes his deserving to be burnt to ashes, if God should deal with him in justice rather than in mercy. The nearer any soul draws to God, the more humble will that soul lie before God. None so near God as the angels, nor none so humble before God as the angels. So Jacob, Gen 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,' &c. Jacob, a man eminent in his prevailing with God, a prince that had the honour and the happiness to overcome the God of mercy, yet judges himself unworthy of the least mercy. Ah! how low is that soul in his own eyes, that is most honourable in God's eyes!

David, you know, was a man after God's own heart, 1Ki 15:5; a man highly honoured, much beloved, and dearly prized by the Lord; yet 1Sa 26:20, he counts himself a flea; and what is more contemptible than a flea? In Psa 22:6, 'I am a worm,' saith he, 'and no man.' The word that is there rendered worm, is a word that signifies a very little worm which breedeth in scarlet, a worm that is so little that a man can hardly see or perceive it. A worm is the most despicable creature in the world, trampled under foot by every one. Says he, I am a despicable worm in my own eyes, and in my enemies' eyes. And thus you see the point proved, that the most holy men have been always the most humble men.

II. The second thing that I am to do is, to shew you the properties of humble souls. I confess, when I look abroad in the world, and observe the carriage of all sorts of men, my heart is stirred to speak as fully and as home to this point as Christ shall help me. It is very very sad to consider, how few humble souls there be in these days. Ah! the damnable pride that reigns and rules in the hearts and lives of most men. I think it is far greater than hath been known in the generations before us. Ah, England! England! what folly, what damnable wickedness is this, that thou shouldst be a-lifting thyself up in pride, when God is a-staining the pride of all glory, and bringing into contempt the honourable of the earth, and a-setting his feet upon the neck of pride.

[1.] Now the first property that I shall lay down of an humble soul is this: An humble soul under the highest spiritual discoveries, and under the greatest outward mercies, forgets not his former sinfulness and his former outward meanness. Paul had been taken up into the third heavens, and had glorious revelations and manifestations of God, 2Co 12:1-4; he cries out, 'I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious,' 1Ti 1:13. Under the choicest discoveries, he remembers his former blasphemies. So Rom 7:23, 'I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.' He had been at this time about fourteen years converted, as some judge. He was a man that lived at as high a rate in God, as any we read of; a man that was filled with glorious discoveries and revelations, and yet under all discoveries and revelations, he remembers that body of sin and death that made him cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?, Who shall ease me of my burden, who shall knock off these chains that make my life a hell? I will by a few instances prove the other branch: Gen 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,' says Jacob, 'for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.' I remember, saith he, when I went over Jordan, I was as a footman that carried all his wealth with him. Under his outward greatness he forgets not his former meanness. An humble soul is good at looking back upon his former low estate, upon his threadbare coat that was his best and only robe. So David, 1Ch 17:16-17, 'And David the king came and sat before the Lord, and said, What am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the state of a man of high degree. Who am I, O Lord God, and what is mine house?' David remembered the meanness of his birth; he remembered his shepherd's crook, as Jacob did his travelling staff. Mercies make an humble soul glad, but not proud. An humble soul is lowest when his mercies are highest; he is least when he is greatest; he is lowest when he is highest; he is most poor when he is most rich. Nothing melts like mercy, nothing draws like mercy, nothing humbles like mercy. Mercy gives the humble soul such excellent counsel, as Plasilia the empress gave her husband Theodosius, 'Remember, O husband,' saith she, 'what lately you were, and

what now you are; so shall you govern well the empire, and give God his due praise for so great an advancement.'⁴ The voice of mercy is, Remember what lately thou wert, and what now thou art, and be humble. Now proud men that are lifted up from the dunghill, that abound in worldly wealth, ah! how does their blood rise with their outward good! The more mercies they have, the more proud they are; mercies do but puff and swell such souls. In a crowd of mercies, they cry out in the pride of their hearts: 'Depart from us, O God, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have, if we pray unto him?' *Psa 73:3-13; Job 21:7-16, Job 14:15.*

[2.] A second property of an humble soul is this, He overlooks his own righteousness, and lives upon the righteousness of another, to wit, the Lord Jesus. So the apostle, *Php 3:8-10*, overlooks his own righteousness, and lives wholly upon the righteousness of Christ: 'I desire to be found in him,' saith he, 'not having mine own righteousness.' Away with it, it is dross, it is dung, it is dog's meat! It is a rotten righteousness, an imperfect righteousness, a weak righteousness, 'which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,' that is a spotless righteousness, a pure righteousness, a complete righteousness, an incomparable righteousness; and, therefore, an humble soul overlooks his own righteousness, and lives upon Christ's righteousness. Remember this, all the sighing, mourning, sobbing, and complaining in the world, doth not so undeniably evidence a man to be humble, as his overlooking his own righteousness, and living really and purely upon the righteousness of Christ. This is the greatest demonstration of humility that can be shewn by man, *Mat 6:8*. Men may do much, hear much, pray much, fast much, and give much, &c., and yet be as proud as Lucifer, as you may see in the Scribes, Pharisees *Mat 23:1-39*, and those in *Isa 58:3*, who in the pride of their hearts made an idol of their own righteousness: 'Wherefore have we fasted,' say they, 'and thou seest it not? wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledge?' Oh! but for a man now to trample upon his own righteousness, and to live wholly upon the righteousness of another, this speaks out a man to be humble indeed. There is nothing that the heart of man stands more averse to than this, of coming off from his own righteousness. Man is a creature apt to warm himself with the sparks of his own fire, though he doth lie down for it in eternal sorrow, *Isa 50:11*. Man is naturally prone to go about to establish his own righteousness, that he might not subject to the righteousness of Christ; he will labour as for life, to lift up his own righteousness, and to make a saviour of it, *Rom 10:4*. Ay, but an humble soul disclaims his own righteousness: 'All our righteousness is as filthy rags.' 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,' *Psa 143:2*. So Job, 'Though I were righteous, yet I would not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge,' *Job 9:15*. Proud Pharisees bless themselves in their own righteousness: 'I thank God I am not as this publican; I fast twice in the week,' &c., *Luk 18:11-12*. Ay, but now a soul truly humbled blushes to see his own righteousness, and glories in this, that he has the righteousness of Christ to live upon. *Rev 4:10-11*, the twenty-four elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ. By their crowns you may understand their gifts, their excellencies, their righteousness; they throw down these before Christ's throne, to note to us, that they did not put confidence in them, and that Christ was the crown of crowns and the top of all their royalty and glory. An humble soul looks upon Christ's righteousness as his only crown.

[3.] Thirdly, The lowest and the meanest good work is not below an humble soul. An humble David will dance before the ark: he enjoyed so much of God in it, that it caused him to leap and dance

before it; but Michal his wife despised him for a fool, and counted him as a simple vain fellow, looking upon his carriage as vain and light, and not becoming the might, majesty, and glory of so glorious a prince. Well! says this humble soul, if this be to be vile, I will be more vile.

Great Paul, yet being humble and low in his own eyes, he can stoop to do service to the least and meanest saint. 1Co 9:19-21, 'For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To them that are without law, as without law, being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means gain some.' Here you have an humble soul bowing and stooping to the meanest saint, and the lowest services, that he might win souls. So the Lord Jesus himself was famous in this, John 13:4. Though he was the Lord of glory, and one that thought it no robbery to be equal with God, one that had all perfection and fulness in himself, yet the lowest work is not below this King of kings. Witness his washing his disciples' feet and wiping them with a towel, 1Co 2:8; Php 2:6; Col 1:19.

Bonaventure, though he was born of great parentage, and a great scholar, yet to keep his mind from swelling, he would often sweep rooms, wash vessels, and make beds. So that famous Italian marquess, when God was pleased by the ministry of his word to convert him, the lowest work was not below him. Though he might have lived like a king in his own country, yet having tasted of that life and sweet that was in Jesus, he was so humble that he would go to market, and carry home the meanest and the poorest things the market yielded. There was nothing below him, when God had changed him, and humbled him.³

It was recorded to the glory of some ancient generals, that they were able to call every common soldier by his own name, and were careful to provide money, not only for their captains and soldiers, but litter also for the meanest beast. There is not the lowest good that is below the humble soul. If the work be good, though never so low, humility will put a hand to it; so will not pride.

[4.] A fourth property of an humble heart is this, An humble heart will submit to every truth of God, that is made known to it; even to those divine truths that are most cross to flesh and blood. 1Sa 3:17, Eli would fain know what God had discovered to Samuel concerning him; Samuel tells him that he must break his neck, that the priesthood must be taken away from him, and his sons must be slain in the war; why 'it is the Lord,' saith he, 'let him do what seemeth him good.' So in Lev 10:3, the Lord by fire from heaven destroys Aaron's two sons. 'Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified; and Aaron held his peace.' If God miss of his honour one way, he will rain hell out of heaven, but he will have it another way. This Aaron knew, and therefore he held his peace, when God shewed himself to be 'a consuming fire.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered peace, signifies the quietness and silence of his mind. He did not hold his tongue only, for many a man may hold his tongue, and yet his mind and heart may kick and swell against God, but his very mind was quiet and still; there was a heavenly calm in his spirit; he was dumb and silent, because the Lord had done it. So in Acts 10:33, 'We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' We are not here to hear what may tickle our ears, or please our

fancies, or satisfy our lusts. No; but we are here to hear what God will say. Our hearts stand ready pressed to subject themselves to whatever God shall declare to be his will. We are willing to hear what we may do, that we may obey sincerely and universally the good pleasure of our God, knowing that it is as well our dignity as our duty so to do.

There are three things in an humble soul that do strongly incline it to duty. The first is divine love. The second is divine presence. The third is divine glory. The dove made use of her wings to fly to the ark; so doth an humble soul of his duties to fly to Christ. Though the dove did use her wings, yet she did not trust in her wings, but in the ark. So though an humble soul does use duties, yet he does not trust in his duties, but in his Jesus. But now proud hearts they hate the truth, they cry out, 'Who is the Lord, that we should obey him?' And what are his commandments, that we should submit to them? Ay, but an humble soul falls under the power of truth, and counts it his greatest glory to be obedient to all truth.

[5.] A fifth property of an humble soul is this: An humble soul lives not upon himself, nor upon his own actings, but upon the Lord Jesus, and his actings. Poor men, you know, they do not live upon themselves, they live upon others; they live upon the care of others, the love of others, the provision of others. Why! thus an humble soul lives upon the care of Christ, the love of Christ, the promise of Christ, the faithfulness of Christ, the discoveries of Christ. He lives upon Christ for his justification, Php 3:7-10; he lives upon Christ for his sanctification. Song of Solomon 4:16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;' and he lives upon Christ for his consolation: Song of Solomon 2:3, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste;' and he lives upon Christ for the performance of all holy actions: Php 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me;' Gal 2:20, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' An humble soul sees in Christ a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundancy, and here his soul lives and feeds. An humble soul sees that all his stock is in the hands of Christ. His stock of graces, his stock of comforts, his stock of experiences are in the hands of Jesus Christ, who is the great Lord keeper of all a believer's graces, and of all his comforts; and therefore, as children live upon them in whose hand their stock is, be it a brother or a friend, why, so an humble soul sees its stock is in the hand of the Lord Jesus, and therefore he lives upon Christ, upon his love, and his provision, and his undertakings, &c. But now proud hearts live not upon the Lord Jesus Christ; they live upon themselves, and upon their own duties, their own righteousness, their own actings, as the Scripture evidences. Christ dwells in that heart most eminently that hath emptied itself of itself. Christ is the humble man's manna, upon which he lives, and by which he thrives, Isa 58:2, Isa 58:7; Luk 7:47.

[6.] A sixth property of an humble soul is this, He judges himself to be below the wrath and judgments of God. An humble soul looks upon himself as one not worthy that God should spend a rod upon him, in order to his reformation, edification, or salvation. As I am unworthy, saith an humble soul, that God should smile upon me, so I am unworthy that he should spend a frown upon me. Job 13:25, 'Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?' Why, I am but a leaf, I am but a little dry stubble, I am below thy wrath; I am so very, very bad, that I wonder that thou shouldst so much as spend a rod upon me. What more weak, worthless, slight, and contemptible than a leaf, than dry stubble? Why, Lord, says Job, I am a poor, weak, and

worthless creature, I wonder that thou shouldst take any pains to do me good, I can't but count and call everything a mercy that is less than hell. So David, in 1Sa 24:14, 'After whom is the King of Israel come out? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, after a flea.' The language of an humble soul, when God begins to be angry, is this: Lord, I can bless thee that thou wilt take any pains with me; but I humbly acknowledge that I am below the least rod, I am not worthy that thou shouldst frown upon me, threaten me, strike me, or whip me, for my internal and eternal good. But proud hearts think themselves wronged when they are afflicted, they cry out with Cain, 'Our punishment is greater than we can bear,' Gen 4:13.

[7.] A seventh property of an humble soul is this, An humble soul doth highly prize the least of Christ. The least smile, the least good word, the least good look, the least truth, the least mercy, is highly valued by an humble soul. The Canaanitish woman in the fifteenth of Matthew sets a high price upon a crumb of mercy. Ah, Lord, says the humble soul, if I may not have a loaf of mercy, give me a piece of mercy; if not a piece of mercy, give me a crumb of mercy. If I may not have sun-light, let me have moon-light; if not moon-light, let me have star-light; if not star-light, let me have candle-light; and for that I will bless thee. In the time of the law, the meanest things that were consecrated were very highly prized, as leather or wood, that was in the tabernacle. An humble soul looks upon all the things of God as consecrated things. Every truth of God is a consecrated truth; it is consecrated to holy use, and this causes the soul highly to prize it; and so every smile of God, and every discovery of God, and every drop of mercy from God, is very highly prized by a soul that walks humbly with God. The name of Christ, the voice of Christ, the footsteps of Christ, the least touch of the garment of Christ, the least-regarded truth of Christ, the meanest and least-regarded among the flock of Christ, is highly prized by humble souls that are interested in Christ, Song of Solomon 1:3; John 10:4-5; Psa 27:4; Mat 9:20-21; Acts 24:14; 1Co 9:22. An humble soul cannot, an humble soul dares not, call anything little that has Christ in it; neither can an humble soul call or count anything great wherein he sees not Christ, wherein he enjoys not Christ. An humble soul highly prizes the least nod, the least love-token, the least courtesy from Christ; but proud hearts count great mercies small mercies, and small mercies no mercies; yea, pride does so unman them, that they often call mercy misery, &c.

[8.] The eighth property of an humble soul is this, It can never be good enough, it can never pray enough, nor hear enough, nor mourn enough, nor believe enough, nor love enough, nor fear enough, nor joy enough, nor repent enough, nor loathe sin enough, nor be humble enough, &c.

Humble Paul looks upon his great all as nothing at all; he forgets those things that are behind, and reaches forth to those things which are before, 'that if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,' Php 3:11-14; that is, that perfection of holiness which the dead shall attain unto in the morning of the resurrection, by a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct. No holiness below that matchless, peerless, spotless, perfect holiness that saints shall have in the glorious day of Christ's appearing, will satisfy the humble soul. An humble heart is an aspiring heart; he cannot be contented to get up some rounds in Jacob's ladder, but he must get to the very top of the ladder, to the very top of holiness. An humble heart cannot be satisfied with so much grace as will bring him to glory, with so much of heaven as will keep him from dropping into hell; he is still crying out, Give, Lord, give; give me more of thyself, more of thy Son, more of thy Spirit; give me more light, more life, more love, &c. Cæsar in warlike matters minded more what was to conquer than what was conquered; what was to gain than what was gained. So does an humble

soul mind more what he should be than what he is, what is to be done than what is done. Verily heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that sets up for his mark the perfection of holiness. Poor men are full of desires; they are often a-sighing it out, Oh that we had bread to strengthen us, drink to refresh us, clothes to cover us, friends to visit us, and houses to shelter us, &c.; so souls that are spiritually poor they are often a-sighing it out, Oh that we had more of Christ to strengthen us, more of Christ to refresh us, more of Christ to be a covering and shelter to us, &c. I had rather, says the humble soul, be a poor man and a rich Christian, than a rich man and a poor Christian. Lord, says the humble soul, I had rather do anything, I had rather bear anything, I had rather be anything, than to be a dwarf in grace, Rev 3:17, Isa 65:5, Luk 18:11-12. The light and glory of humble Christians rises by degrees: Song of Solomon 6:1, (1.) Looking forth as the morning, with a little light; (2.) Fair as the moon, more light; (3.) Clear as the sun, i.e. come up to a higher degree of spiritual light, life, and glory. Lord, says the humble soul, give me much grace, and then a little gold will serve my turn; give me much of heaven, and little of earth will content me; give me much of the springs above, and a little of the springs below will satisfy me, &c.

[9.] The ninth property of an humble soul is this, It will smite and strike for small sins as well as for great, for those the world count no sin, as well as for those that they count gross sins. When David had but cut off the lap of Saul's garment, his heart smote him as if he had cut off his head. The Hebrew word signifies to smite, wound, or chastise. Ah! his heart struck him, his heart chastised him, his heart wounded him for cutting off Saul's skirt, though he did it upon noble grounds, viz., to convince Saul of his false jealousies, and to evidence his own innocency and integrity: and so, at another time, his heart smote him for numbering the people, as if he had murdered the people: 2Sa 24:10, 'And David's heart smote him, after that he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.' An humble soul knows that little sins, if I may so call any, cost Christ his blood, and that they make way for greater; and that little sins multiplied become great, as a little sum multiplied is great; that they cloud the face of God, wound conscience, grieve the Spirit, rejoice Satan, and make work for repentance, &c. An humble soul knows that little sins, suppose them so, are very dangerous; a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump; a little staff may kill one; a little poison may poison one; a little leak in a ship sinks it; a little fly in the box of ointment spoils it; a little flaw in a good cause mars it; so a little sin may at once bar the door of heaven and open the gates of hell; and therefore an humble soul smites and strikes itself for the least as well as the greatest. Though a head of garlic be little, yet it will poison the leopard, though he be great. Though a mouse is but little, yet it will kill an elephant, if he gets up into his trunk. Though the scorpion be little, yet it will sting a lion to death; and so will the least sin, if not pardoned by the death of Christ. A proud heart counts great sins small, and small sins no sins, and so disarms conscience for a time of its whipping and wounding power; but at death, or in hell, conscience will take up an iron rod, with which it will lash the sinner for ever; and then, though too late, the sinner shall acknowledge his little sins to be very great, and his great sins to be exceeding grievous and odious, &c.

[10.] The tenth property of an humble soul is this, It will quietly bear burdens, and patiently take blows and knocks, and make no noise. An humble soul sees God through man; he sees God through all the actions and carriages of men: 'I was dumb,' saith the prophet, 'I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.' An humble soul looks through secondary causes, and sees the hand

of God, and then lays his own hand upon his mouth. An humble soul is a mute soul, a tongue-tied soul, when he looks through secondary causes to the supreme cause. So Aaron, when he saw his sons suddenly surprised by a dreadful and doleful death, he held his peace, he bridled his passions; he sits silent under a terrible stroke of divine justice, because the fire that devoured them went out from the Lord. So when Samuel had told Eli that God would judge his house for ever, and that he had sworn that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever, &c., 'It is the Lord,' says Eli, 'let him do what seemeth him good.' Eli humbly and patiently lays his neck upon the block; it is the Lord; let him strike, let him kill, &c., says Eli, 1Sa 3:11, 1Sa 3:13. So David, when Shimei manifested his desperate fury and folly, malice and madness, in raving and raging at him, in cursing and reproaching of him, says he, 'Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him,' 2Sa 16:5, 2Sa 16:14. God, says he, will, by his wise providence, turn his cursing into blessing. I see the justice of God in his cursing, therefore let him alone, let him curse, says David.

Cassianus reports, that when a certain Christian was held captive by the infidels, and tormented by divers pains and ignominious taunts, being demanded, by way of scorn and reproach, Tell us what Christ has done for you, answered, He hath done what you see, that I am not moved at all the cruelties and contumelies you cast upon me. So that blessed martyr, Gyles of Brussels, when the friars, sent to reduce him, did at any time miscall him, he ever held his peace, insomuch that those wretches would say abroad that he had a dumb devil in him. Full vessels will bear many a knock, many a stroke, and yet make no noise. So Christians that are full of Christ, that are full of the Spirit, will bear many a knock, many a stroke, and yet make no noise. An humble soul may groan under afflictions, but he will not grumble in calms. Proud hearts discourse of patience, but in storms humble hearts exercise patience. Philosophers have much commended it, but in the hour of darkness it is the humble soul that acts it. I am afflicted, says the humble soul, but it is mercy I am not destroyed. I am fallen into the pit; it is free grace I am not fallen into hell. God is too just to wrong me, and too gracious to harm me; and therefore I will be still and quiet, let him do what he will with me, says the humble soul. But proud souls resist when they are resisted, they strike when they are stricken, Isa 58:1-3: 'Who is the Lord,' says lofty Pharaoh, 'that I should obey him?' and Cain cries out, 'My punishment is greater than I am able to bear.' Well! remember this: though it be not easy in afflictions and tribulations to hold our peace, yet it is very advantageous; which the heathens seemed to imitate in placing the image of Angerona [goddess of silence], with the mouth bound upon the altar of Volupia [of pleasure], to shew that those that do prudently and humbly conceal their sorrows and anxieties by patience, shall attain comfort and refreshment.

[11.] The eleventh property of an humble soul is this: in all religious duties and services, he trades with God upon the credit of Christ. Lord, says the humble soul, I need power against such and such sins: give it me upon the credit of Christ's blood. I need strength to such and such services: give it me upon the credit of Christ's word. I need such and such mercies for the cheering, refreshing, quickening, and strengthening of me: give them into my bosom upon the credit of Christ's intercession. As a poor man lives and deals upon the credits of others, so does an humble soul live and deal with God for the strengthening of every grace, and for the supply of every mercy, upon the credit of the Lord Jesus. An humble soul knows that since he broke with God in innocency, God will trust him no more, he will take his word no more; and therefore when he goes to God for mercy, he brings his Benjamin, his Jesus, in his arms, and pleads for mercy upon the

account of Jesus.

Plutarch reports that it was wont to be the way of the Molossians, when they would seek the favour of their prince, they took up the king's son in their arms, and so went and kneeled before the king, and by this means overcame him. So do humble souls make a conquest upon God with Christ in their arms. The Father will not give that soul the repulse that brings Christ in his arms.² The humble soul knows that God out of Christ is incommunicable, that God out of Christ is incomprehensible, that God out of Christ is very terrible, and that God out of Christ is inaccessible; and therefore he still brings Christ with him, and presents all his requests in his name, and so prevails, &c. Oh! but proud souls deal with God upon the credit of their own worthiness, righteousness, services, prayers, tears, fastings, &c., as the proud Pharisees and those wrangling hypocrites in Isa 58:1-3.

It was a very proud saying of one, *Coelum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven but at a rate; and therefore well did the father call vain-glory a pleasant thief, and the sweet spoiler of spiritual excellencies.

[12.] The twelfth property of an humble soul is this: it endeavours more how to honour and glorify God in afflictions, than how to get out of afflictions. So Daniel, the three children, the apostles, and those worthies of whom this world was not worthy. They were not curious about getting out of affliction, but studious how to glorify God in their afflictions. They were willing to be anything, and to bear anything, that in everything God might be glorified. They made it their business to glorify God in the fire, in the prison, in the den, on the rack, and under the sword, &c. Lord, says the humble soul, do but keep down my sins, and keep up my heart in a way of honouring of thee under all my troubles, and then my troubles will be no troubles, my afflictions will be no afflictions. Though my burdens be doubled, and my troubles be multiplied, yet do but help me to honour thee by believing in thee, by waiting on thee, and by submitting to thee, and I shall sing care away, and shall say, It is enough.⁴ When Valens the emperor sent messengers to win Eusebius to heresy by fair words and large promises, he answered, Alas, sir! these speeches are fit to catch little children that look after such things, but we that are taught and nourished by the holy Scriptures are readier to suffer a thousand deaths than to suffer one syllable or tittle of the Scripture to be altered. And when the emperor threatened to confiscate his goods, to torment him, to banish him, or to kill him, he answered, He need not fear confiscation that hath nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torments, when his body will be dashed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty from sin and sorrow. Oh! but when a proud man is under troubles and afflictions, his head and heart are full of plots and projects how to get off his chains, and to get out of the furnace, &c. A proud heart will say anything, and do anything, and be anything, to free himself from the burdens that press him, as you see in Pharaoh, &c.; but an humble soul is willing to bear the cross as long as he can get strength from heaven to kiss the cross, to bless God for the cross, and to glorify God under the cross, &c., John 1:20-21.

[13.] The thirteenth property of an humble soul is this: it seeks not, it looks not, after great things. A little will satisfy nature, less will satisfy grace; but nothing will satisfy a proud man's lusts. Lord, says the humble soul, if thou wilt but give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, thou shalt be my God, Gen 28:20-22. Let the men of the world, says the humble soul, take the world in all its greatness and glory, and divide it among themselves. Let me have much of Christ and heaven in

my heart, and food convenient to support my natural life, and it shall be enough: Job 22:29, 'When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person;' or as the Hebrew hath it, ne shahh gneaim, him that hath low eyes, noting to us that an humble soul looks not after high things. So in Psa 131:1-2, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty.' But how do you know that, David? Why, says he, 'I do not exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high, or too wonderful for me. Heb. ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ Surely I behaved and quieted myself.' 'My soul is as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a weaned child.' As a great shoe fits not a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger, so a great estate fits not a humble soul.

It was a prudent speech of that Indian king Taxiles to the invading Alexander: What should we need, said he, to fight and make war one with another, if thou comest not to take away our water and our necessities by which we must live? As for other goods, if I be richer than thou, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have less, I will not think scorn to thank thee if thou wilt give me some of thine. Oh! but proud Absalom can't be content to be the king's son, unless he may have the crown presently from his father's head. Cæsar can abide no superior, nor Pompey an equal. A proud soul is content with nothing. A crown could not content Ahab, but he must have Naboth's vineyard, though he swim to it in blood. Diogenes had more content with his tub to shelter him from the injuries of the weather, and with his wooden dish to eat and drink in, than Alexander had with the conquest of half the world, and the fruition of all the treasures, pleasures, and glories of Asia. So an humble soul is more contented and satisfied with Daniel's pulse and John's coat than proud princes are with their glistening crowns and golden sceptres.

[14.] The fourteenth property of an humble soul is this: it can rejoice in the graces and gracious actings of others, as well as in its own. An humble Moses could say when Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp, 'Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them,' Num 11:26-30. So humble Paul in Acts 26:29, 'And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except those bonds.' I heartily wish and pray for thine own sake that not only in a low but in an eminent, degree, both thou and all that are here present, were as far Christians as I am; only I would not wish them imprisoned as I am. An humble soul is no churl. There is no envy in spiritual things; one may have as much of spirituals as another, and all alike. So in 1Th 1:2-3, 'We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father.' So in the 2Th 1:2-4, 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth: so that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.' Ezekiel can commend Daniel, his contemporary, matching him with Noah and Job, for his power in prayer; and Peter highly praises Paul's epistles, though he had been sharply reprov'd in one of them, Eze 14:14, 2Pe 3:1, &c. Oh! but proud souls will be still a-casting disgrace and contempt upon those excellencies in others that they want in themselves. A proud cardinal, in Luther's time, said, Indeed, a reformation is needful, and to be desired, but that Luther, a rascally friar, should be the man should do it, is intolerable. Pride is like certain flies, called cantharides, who light especially upon the fairest wheat

and the most blown roses.

Though Licinius, who was joined with Galerius in the empire, was so ignorant that he could not write his own name, yet as Eusebius reports, he called the liberal arts a public poison. This age is full of such monsters that envy every light that outshines their own, and that throw dirt upon the graces and excellencies of others, that themselves may only shine. Pride is notable both at subtraction and at multiplication. A proud heart always prizes himself above the market; he reckons his own pence for pounds, and others' pounds for pence; he looks upon his own counters as gold, and upon others' gold as counters. All pearls are counterfeit but what he wears.

[15.] The fifteenth property of an humble soul is, he will rather bear wrongs than revenge wrongs offered. The humble soul knows that vengeance is the Lord's, and that he will repay, &c., Psa 94:1. The humble soul loves not to take the sword in his own hand, Rom 12:19; he knows the day is a-coming, wherein the Lord will give his enemies two blows for one, and here he rests. An humble soul, when wrongs are offered, is like a man with a sword in one hand and a salve in the other; could wound but will heal: Psa 35:11-16, 'False witnesses did rise up: they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother,' &c. The Scripture abounds in instances of this nature.

Dionysius having not very well used Plato at the court, when he was gone, fearing lest he should write against him, he sent after him to bid him not to write against him. Says he, 'Tell Dionysius that I have not so much leisure as to think of him.' So humble wronged souls are not at leisure to think of the wrongs and injuries that others do them.

Mr Foxe, that wrote the Book of Martyrs, would be sure to do him a kindness that had done him an injury: so that it used to be a proverb, 'If a man would have Mr Foxe do him a kindness, let him do him an injury.' An humble soul is often in looking over the wrongs and injuries that he has done to God, and the sweet and tender carriage of God towards him notwithstanding those wrongs and injuries; and this wins him, and works him to be more willing and ready to bear wrongs, and forgive wrongs, than to revenge any offered wrongs.

[16.] The sixteenth property of an humble soul is this, An humble soul, though he be of never so rare abilities, yet he will not disdain to be taught what he knows not, by the meanest persons, Isa 11:6. A child shall lead the humble soul in the way that is good; he cares not how mean and contemptible the person is, if a guide or an instructor to him.

Apollos, 'an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scripture,' a master in Israel, and yet sits by an Aquila, a tent-maker, and Priscilla his wife, to be instructed by them, Acts 18:24-26. Sometimes the poorest and the meanest Christian may, for counsel and comfort, be a god to another, as Moses was to Aaron. As an humble soul knows that the stars have their situation in heaven, though sometimes he sees them by their reflection in a puddle, in the bottom of a well, or in a stinking ditch; so he knows that godly souls, though never so poor, low, and contemptible, as to the things of this world, are fixed in heaven, in the region above; and therefore their poverty and meanness is no bar to hinder him from learning of them, Eph 2:6.

Though John was poor in the world, yet many humble souls did not disdain, but rejoice in his ministry. Christ lived poor and died poor, Mat 8:20. As he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. Austin observes, when Christ died he made no will; he had no crown-lands, only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted among them; and yet those that were meek and lowly in heart counted it their heaven, their happiness, to be taught and instructed by him.

[17.] The seventeenth property of an humble soul is this: an humble soul will bless God, and be thankful to God, as well under misery as under mercy; as well when God frowns as when he smiles; as well when God takes as when he gives; as well under crosses and losses, as under blessings and mercies: Job 1:21, 'The Lord gives and the Lord takes, blessed be the name of the Lord.' He doth not cry out upon the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, but he looks through all secondary causes, and sees the hand of God; and then he lays his hand upon his own heart, and sweetly sings it out, 'The Lord gives, and the Lord takes, blessed be the name of the Lord.' An humble soul, in every condition, blesses God, as the apostle commands, in the 1Th 5:18, 'In every thing give thanks to God.' So 1Co 4:12, 'Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer.' The language of an humble soul is, If it be thy will, saith an humble soul, I should be in darkness, I will bless thee; and if it be thy will I should be again in light, I will bless thee; if thou wilt comfort me, I will bless thee; and if thou wilt afflict me, I will bless thee; if thou wilt make me poor, I will bless thee; if thou wilt make me rich, I will bless thee; if thou wilt give me the least mercy, I will bless thee; if thou wilt give me no mercy, I will bless thee. An humble soul is quick-sighted; he sees the rod in a Father's hand; he sees honey upon the top of every twig, and so can bless God; he sees sugar at the bottom of the bitterest cup that God doth put into his hand; he knows that God's house of correction is a school of instruction; and so he can sit down and bless when the rod is upon his back. An humble soul knows that the design of God in all is his instruction, his reformation, and his salvation.

It was a sweet saying of holy Bradford, If the queen will give me my life, I will thank her; if she will banish me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her; if she will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her. Ay, this is the temper of an humble heart. An humble soul knows, that to bless God in prosperity is the way to increase it; and to bless God in adversity is the way to remove it. An humble soul knows, that if he blesses God under mercies, he hath paid his debt; but if he blesses God under crosses, he hath made God a debtor. But oh the pride of men's hearts, when the rod is upon their backs! You have many professors that are seemingly humble, while the sun shines, while God gives, and smiles, and strokes; but when his smiles are turned into frowns, when he strikes and lays on, oh the murmurings! the disputings! the frettings! and wranglings of proud souls! they always kick when God strikes.

[18.] The last property of an humble soul is this: an humble soul will wisely and patiently bear reproof: Pro 25:12, 'As an ear ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear.' A seasonable reproof falling upon an humble soul hath a redoubled grace with it. It is an earring of gold, and as an ornament of fine gold, or as a diamond in a diadem. An humble David can say, 'Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head,' Psa 141:5. David compares the faithful reproof of the righteous, to the excellent oil that they used about their heads. Some translate it, 'Let it never cease from my head.' That is, let me never want it, and so the original will bear too, I

would never want reproofs, whatsoever I want: 'But yet my prayer shall be in their calamities.' I will requite their reproofs with my best prayers in the day of their calamity, saith David. Whereas a proud heart will neither pray for such nor with such as reprove them, but in their calamities will most insult over them.

Some translate it more emphatically: 'The more they do, the more I shall think myself bound unto them.' And this was Gerson's disposition, of whom it is recorded, that he rejoiced in nothing more than if he were freely and friendly reprov'd by any: Pro 9:8-9, 'Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee; give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser.' Pro 19:25, 'Reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge.' You know how sweetly David carries it towards Abigail, 1Sa 25:32-33; she wisely meets him, and puts him in mind of what he was going about, and he falls a-blessing of her presently: 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood.' I was resolved in my passion, and in the heat of my spirit, that I would not leave a man alive, but blessed be God, and blessed be thy counsel! An humble soul can sit down and bless God under reproofs. An humble soul is like the Scythian king, that went naked in the snow, and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, he answered, 'I am not ashamed, for I am all forehead.' An humble soul is all forehead, able to bear reproofs with much wisdom and patience. Oh! but a proud heart cannot bear reproofs, he scorns the reprover and his reproofs too.

Pro 15:12, 'A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him, neither will he go unto the wise.' Amo 5:10, 'They hate him that reproveth in the gate;' as Ahab did good Micaiah, and John Baptist did Herod, and our Saviour the Pharisees, Luk 16:13. Christ being to deal with the covetous Scribes and Pharisees, he lays the law home, and tells them plainly that they could not serve God and mammon. Here Christ strikes at their right eye; but how do they hear this? Mark in the 14th verse, 'The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.' The Pharisees did not simply laugh at Christ, but gave also external signs of scorn in their countenance and gestures. They blew their nose at him, for that is the meaning of the original word. By their gestures they demonstrated their horrid deriding of him; they fleared and jeered, when they should have feared and trembled at the wrath to come: Isa 28:10, 'For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.' One observes, that that was a scoff put upon the prophet, and is as if they should say, Here is nothing but precept upon precept, line upon line. And, indeed, the very sound of the words in the original carries a taunt, zau le zau, kau lakau, as scornful people, by the tone of their voice and rhyming words, scorn at such as they despise. Pride and passion, and other vices, in these days go armed; touch them never so gently, yet, like the nettle, they will sting you; and if you deal with them roundly, roughly, cuttingly, as the apostle speaks, they will swagger with you, as the Hebrew did with Moses: 'Who made thee a judge over us?' Exo 2:13-14. And thus much for the properties of an humble soul.

III. I come now to the next thing, and that is, to shew you the reasons why the best men are the most humble men.

[1.] First, Because they see themselves the greatest debtors to God for what they do enjoy.

There is no man on earth that sees himself such a debtor to God as the humble man. Every smile makes him a debtor to God, and every good word from heaven makes him a debtor to God. He looks upon all his temporals, as health, wealth, wife, child, friend, &c., and sees himself deeply indebted for all. He looks upon his spiritual mercies, and sees himself a great debtor to God for them; he looks upon his graces, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon his experiences, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon all his privileges, and sees himself a debtor for them; he looks upon his in-comes, and sees himself a debtor for them. The more mercy he hath received, the more he looks upon himself indebted and obliged to pay duty and tribute to God; as you may see in Psa 116:6-8, Psa 116:12-14 verses compared. In Psa 116:6-8 verses, he tells you of the mercies he had received from God, and in Psa 116:12-13 verses, says he, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' I see myself, saith he, wonderfully indebted; well, what then? why, 'I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, in the presence of all his people.' The same you have in the Psa 116:16-18. So David, Psa 103:1-4, casts his eyes upon his temporal and his spiritual mercies, and then calls upon his soul: 'O my soul, bless the Lord; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases,' &c. An humble soul knows, that it is a strange folly to be proud of being more in debt than another. It is true, saith he, I have this and that mercy in possession, and such and such mercies in reversion; but by all, I am the more a debtor to God.

Cæsar admired at that mad soldier, who was very much in debt and yet slept so quietly. So does an humble soul wonder and admire, to see men that are so much indebted to God for mercies, as many are, and yet sleep so quietly, and be so mindless and careless in blessing and praising of God. There is nothing, saith one, that endures so small a time, as the memory of mercies received; and the more great they are, the more commonly they are recompensed with ingratitude.

[2.] Secondly, It is because in this life they have but a taste of God. In the 1Pe 2:2-3, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' The best men on this side heaven have but a taste; he is but in a tasting, desiring, hungering, thirsting, and growing condition: Job 26:14, 'These are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him!' So in 1Co 13:9-10, 1Co 13:12, 'We know but in part, and we prophesy but in part; now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' The Lord gives out but little of himself here, we have but a taste of divine sweetness here, we see but the back-parts of God, the day is not far off when we shall see his face. The best of Christ is behind, as the sweetest honey lies in the bottom. Our greatest knowledge here is to know that we know nothing. The Rabbins in their comments upon Scripture, when they meet with hard knots that they cannot explicate, they salve all with this, *Elias cum venerit solvet omnia*, 'When Elias comes, he will resolve all things.' The best men are in the dark, and will be in the dark, till the Lord comes to shine forth upon them in more grace and glory. The best men on this side heaven are narrow vessels: they are able to receive and take in but little of God. The best men are so full of the world, and the vanities thereof, that they are able to take in but little of God. Here God gives his people some tastes, that they may not faint; and he gives them but a taste, that they may long to be at home, that they may keep humble, that they may sit loose from things below, that they may not break and despise bruised reeds, and that heaven may be the more sweet to them at last, &c.

[3.] A third reason why the best men are the most humble, and that is, because the best men dwell more upon their worser part, their ignoble part, than they do upon their noble part, their better part. In Isa 6:5, 'I am a man of unclean lips,' saith that humble soul. So humble Job cries out of the iniquity of his youth; and says he, 'Once have I spoken foolishly, yea, twice, but I will do so no more,' Job 13:26, Job 40:15. Humble David, Psa 51:3, sighs it out, 'My sin is ever before me.' So humble Paul, Rom 7:22-23, complains, that he 'hath a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and leading him captive to the law of sin;' and that, 'when he would do good, evil was present with him.' An humble soul sees that he can stay no more from sin than the heart can from panting, and the pulse from beating; he sees his heart and life to be fuller of sin, than the firmament is of stars; and this keeps him low. He sees that sin is so bred in the bone, that till his bones, as Joseph's, be carried out of the Egypt of this world, it will not out. He every day finds that these Jebusites and Canaanites be as thorns in his eyes, and as goads in his sides. He finds sin an ill inmate, that will not out, till the house fall on the head of it; as the fretting leprosy, in the walls of the house, would not out till the house itself was demolished.² Though sin and grace were never born together, and though they shall not die together; yet while the believer lives, these two must live together; and this keeps them humble. As the peacock, looking upon his black feet, lets fall his plumes, so the poor soul, when he looks upon his black feet, the vanity of his mind, the body of sin that is in him, his proud spirit falls low.

Epaminondas, an Athenian captain, being asked why he was so sad the day after a great victory, answered, 'Yesterday I was tickled with much vain-glory, therefore I correct myself for it to-day.' That is the temper of an humble soul. It is very observable, that the saints are pressed to take notice of their better part: Song of Solomon 1:15, 'Behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair.' And so, Song of Solomon 4:1, 'Behold thou art fair, behold thou art fair.' God hath much ado to get a gracious heart to mind his spiritual beauty; to take notice of the inward excellency that he hath wrought in it. Though 'the king's daughter be all glorious within,' yet God hath much ado to bring her to see and take notice of her inward beauty and glory. The humble soul is more set to eye and dwell upon its deformity, than it is upon that beauty and glory that God hath stamped upon it. And this makes the man little and low in his own eyes.

[4.] Fourthly, Because they have the clearest sight and vision of God, and have the nearest and highest communion with God. None on earth are so near to God, and so high in their communion with God, as humble souls. And as they have the clearest visions of God, so those actions of God give them the fullest sight and knowledge of their own sinfulness and nothingness. So in Job 42:5-6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye hath seen thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' Isa 6:1, Isa 61:5, In a vision the Lord discovers his glory to the prophet, then Isa 61:5, 'Woe is me!' saith he, 'for I am undone;' or 'I am cut off,' why? Because 'I am a man of unclean lips; and have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' Oh, the vision that I have had of the glory of God hath given me such a clear and full sight of my own vileness and baseness, that I cannot but loathe and abhor myself. When Abraham draws near to God, then he accounts himself but dust and ashes, Gen 18:26-27. The angels that are near God, that stand before him, they cover their faces with two wings, as with a double scarf, in Isa 6:2.

[5.] The fifth and last reason why those are most humble that are most holy is, because they maintain in themselves a holy fear of sinning. And the more this holy fear of falling is maintained, the more the soul is humbled. Pro 14:16, 'A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil;' and Pro

28:14, 'Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.' And this keeps the holy soul humble.

I have known a good old man, saith Bernard, who when he had heard of any that had committed some notorious offence, was wont to say with himself, Ille hodie, et ego cras, he fell to-day, so may I to-morrow. Now, the reason why humble souls do keep up in themselves a holy fear of falling, is because this is the best to keep them from falling. Job fears and conquers on the dunghill; Adam presumes, and falls in paradise; Nehemiah fears, and stands, Neh 5:15; Peter presumes, and falls, Mat 26:69, seq.; Mr Sanders the martyr, in Queen Mary's days, fears and stands; Dr Pendleton presumes, and falls from a professor to be a papist. When Agamemnon said, What should the conqueror fear? Casander presently answered, Quod nihil timet, He should fear this most of all, that he fears not at all. And so I have done with the reasons of the point. I shall now come to IV. The uses of it: and the first is this.

[1.] Is it so, that the most holy souls are the most humble souls? Then this shews you, that the number of holy souls is very few. Oh, how few be there that are low in their own eyes! The number of souls that are high in the esteem of God, and low in their own esteem, are very few. Oh, the pride of England! Oh, the pride of London! Pride in these days has got a whore's forehead; yet pride cannot climb so high but justice will sit above her.

Bernard saith, that pride is the rich man's cousin. I may add, and the poor man's cousin, and the profane man's cousin, and the civil man's cousin, and the formal man's cousin, and the hypocrite's cousin; yea, all men's cousin; and it will first or last cast down and cast out all the Lucifers and Adams in the world.

[2.] Secondly, As you would approve yourselves to be high in the account of God, as you would approve yourselves to be not only good, but eminently good, keep humble. Since England was England, since the gospel shined amongst us, there was never such reason to press this duty of humility, as in these days of pride wherein we live; and therefore I shall endeavour these two things:

First, To lay down some motives that may work you to be humble.

Secondly, To propound some directions that may further you in this work.

First, For the motives, Consider, (1.) First, How God singles out humble souls from all others, to pour out most of the oil of grace into their hearts. No vessels that God delights to fill, like broken vessels, like contrite spirits: Jas 4:6, 'He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble.' The Greek word signifies, to set himself in battle array. God takes the wind and hill of a proud soul, but he gives grace to the humble. The silver dew flows down from the mountains to the lowest valleys. Abraham was but dust and ashes in his own eyes; ay, but saith God, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I will do?' Gen 18:17. No; I will not. An humble soul shall be both of God's court and his counsel too. Humble Jacob, that was in his own eyes less than the least of all mercies, Gen 32:10, what a glorious vision had he of God, when the ground was his bed, and the stone his pillow, and the hedges his curtains, and the heavens his canopy; then he saw angels ascend and descend, Gen 28:1-22. An humble soul that lies low, oh what sights of God hath he! What glory doth he behold, when the proud soul sees nothing! God pours in grace to the humble, as men pour in liquor into an empty vessel. He does not drop in grace into an humble heart, but he pours it in.

The altar under the law was hollow, to receive the fire, the wood, and the sacrifice; so the hearts of men, under the gospel, must be humble, empty of all spiritual pride and self-conceitedness, that so they may receive the fire of the Spirit, and Jesus Christ, who offered himself for a sacrifice for our sins.

Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive grace. There is none that sees so much need of grace as humble souls. There is none prizes grace like humble souls. There is none improves grace like humble souls. Therefore God singles out the humble soul to fill him to the brim with grace, when the proud is sent empty away.

(2.) A second motive is, of all garments humility doth best become Christians, and most adorn their profession.

Faith is the champion of grace, and love the nurse, but humility the beauty of grace: 1Pe 5:5, 'Be clothed with humility.' The Greek word εγκομζωσασθε imports, that humility is the ribbon or string that ties together all those precious pearls, the rest of the graces. If this string break, they are all scattered. The Greek word that is rendered clothed, comes of another Greek word κμζος, that signifies to knit, and tie knots, as delicate and curious women used to do, of ribbons, to adorn their heads and bodies, as if humility were the knot of every virtue, the grace of every grace. Chrysostom calls humility the root, mother, nurse, foundation, and band of all virtue.' Basil calls it 'the storehouse and treasury of all good.' For what is the scandal and reproach of religion at this day? Nothing more than the pride of professors. Is not this the language of most? They are great professors, Oh but very proud! They are great hearers, they will run from sermon to sermon, and cry up this man, and cry up that man, Oh but proud! They are great talkers, Oh but as proud as the devil! &c. Oh that you would take the counsel of the apostle, 'Be clothed with humility'; and that Col 3:12, 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.' No robes to these.

(3.) The third motive is this, humility is a loadstone that draws both the heart of God and man to it. In Isa 57:15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.' The Lord singles out the humble soul of all others, to make him an habitation for himself. Here is a wonder! God is on high; and yet the higher a man lifts up himself, the farther he is from God; and the lower a man humbles himself, the nearer he is to God. Of all souls, God delights most to dwell with the humble, for they do most prize and best improve his precious presence. In Pro 29:23, 'A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Pro 22:4, 'By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour,' &c. The Hebrew is, 'The heel of humility.' Riches and honour follow humility at the very heels. One of the ancients used to say that humility is the first, second, and third grace of a Christian. Humility is a very drawing grace; it draws men to think well and speak well of Christ, the gospel, and the people of God; it makes the very world to say, Ay, these are Christians indeed; they are full of light, and yet full of lowliness; they are high in worth, and yet humble in heart. Oh, these are the crown and the glory of religion.³ An humble soul is like the violet, that by its fragrant smell draws the eye and the hearts of others to him. Mat 18:4, 'They are the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' He that is least in his own account is always greatest in God's, and in good men's account.

(4.) The fourth motive is this, consider all the world cannot keep him up, that doth not keep down his own spirit.

One asked a philosopher, what God was a-doing? He answered, 'That his whole work was to lift up the humble, and to cast down the proud.' That man cannot possibly be kept up, whose spirit is not kept down, as you may clearly see in Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, and Nebuchadnezzar; all the world could not keep them up, because their spirit was not kept down.

Pro 29:27, 'A man's pride shall bring him low;' for it sets God against him, and angels against him, and men against him; yea, even those that are as proud as himself. It is very observable, that whereas one drunkard loves another, one swearer loves another, and one thief loves another, and one unclean person loves another, &c., yet one proud person cannot endure another, but seeks to undermine him, that he alone may bear the bell, and carry the commendations, the praise, the promotion. It is storied of the Romans, that were the proudest people on the earth, that they reckoned it as a parcel of their praise, that they brought down the proud. All the world, sirs, will not keep up those persons that do not keep down their spirits.

Proud Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, king of Persia, as oft as he took horse.

Henry the Fourth, emperor, in sixty-two battles, had generally the better, and yet was deposed, and driven to that misery, that he desired only a clerkship in a house at Spira, that himself had built. And oh! that professors would think of this in these days in which we live. All the world shall not keep up those which do not keep down their own spirits. The very design of God is to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt the honourable of the earth. Therefore now if men in our days shall grow proud and high, under mercies and divine appearances, justice will be above them, and turn their glory into shame, and lay their honour in the dust. If your blood rises with your outward good, you will certainly fall, and great will be your fall.

(5.) The fifth consideration to provoke us to be humble is this: let us have always our eye fixed upon the example of Jesus Christ, and his humble and lowly carriage.

Christ by his example labours to provoke his disciples to keep humble, and to walk lowly: in John 13:4-5, John 13:12-15 verses compared. He rises and washes his disciples' feet, &c., and mark what he aims at in that carriage of his, John 13:12-14 : 'Know ye what I have done unto you,' saith he; 'Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; if I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.' I have given you an example, saith Christ, and I would have you to imitate my example. Example is the most powerful rhetoric; the highest and noblest example should be very quickening and provoking. Oh! here you have the greatest, the noblest example of humility, that was ever read or heard of. Upon consideration of this great and eminent example of Christ's humility, Guericus, a good man, cried out, Thou hast overcome me, O Lord! thou hast overcome my pride. This example of thine hath mastered me. Oh that we could say with this good man, Thou hast overcome, O Lord! thou hast overcome our proud hearts, by this example thou hast overmastered our lofty spirits. This example of Christ's humility you have further set forth, Php 2:6-8, 'Who being in the form of God,' that is, in the nature and essence of God, being very God, clothed with divine glory and majesty as God, 'thought it no robbery,' it being

his right by nature, 'to be equal with God.' The Greek words that are rendered, 'he thought it no robbery,' do import, he made it not a matter of triumph or ostentation to be equal with God, it being his right by nature, and therefore the challenging of it could be no usurpation of another's right, of taking to himself that which was not his own. 'He thought it no robbery to be equal with God.' The Greek is equals, that is, every way, equal, not a secondary and inferior God, as the Arians would have him. 'But made himself of no reputation,' verse 7. The Greek is 'emptied himself,' that is, he suspended and laid aside his glory and majesty, or dis-robed himself of his glory and dignity, and became a sinner, both by imputation and by reputation, for our sakes. And verse 8, 'he humbled himself.' This Sun of righteousness went ten degrees back in the dial of his Father, that he might come to us with healing under his wings. 'And became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' In these words there is a kind of gradation; for it is more to become obedient than to humble himself; and more to yield unto death than to become obedient; and yet more to be crucified than simply to die; for it was to submit himself to a most painful, ignominious, and cursed death. 'He became obedient.' That is, saith Beza, 'to his dying day,' his whole life being nothing but a continual death.

I have read of an earl called Eleazarus, that being given to immoderate anger, was cured of that disordered affection by studying of Christ and his patience; he still dwelt upon the meditation of Christ and his patience, till he found his heart transformed into the similitude of Jesus Christ. And oh! that you would never leave pondering upon that glorious example of Christ's humility, till your hearts be made humble, like the heart of Christ. Oh! that that sweet word of Christ, Mat 11:29, might stick upon all your hearts, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly, and you shall find rest to your souls.'

Bonaventure engraved this sweet saying of our Lord, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' in his study; and oh that this saying was engraven upon all your foreheads, upon all your hearts! Oh that it was engraven upon the dishes you eat in, the cups you drink in, the seats you sit on, the beds you lie on, &c.

Jerome having read the religious life and death of Hilarion, folding up the book, said, Well! Hilarion shall be the champion whom I will imitate. Oh! when you look upon this glorious example of Christ, say, The Lord Jesus his example shall be that that my soul shall imitate.

(6.) Sixthly, consider Humility will free a man from perturbations and distempers. When there are never such great storms without, humility will cause a calm within. There are a great many storms abroad, and there is nothing will put the soul into a quiet condition but humility. An humble soul saith, Who am I, that I may not be despised? Who am I, that I may not be reproached, abused, slighted, neglected? That which will break a proud man's heart, will not so much as break an humble man's sleep. In the midst of a storm, an humble soul is still in a calm. When proud hearts are at their wit's ends, stamping, swearing, and swaggering at God, and man, and providence, an humble soul is quiet and still, like a ship in a harbour. Shimei, 2Sa 16:6, 2Sa 16:13, comes railing and cursing of David, and calls him a bloody man, and a man of Belial, that is, a runnagado, one who being desperately wicked had shaken off the yoke of government, and would be under no law. So the Hebrew word Jagnat, signifies men without yoke, or lawless. Therefore the Septuagint commonly translate it $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma$, altogether irregular. It signifies most flagitious men, and notorious and desperately wicked, stigmatized villains, even incarnate devils; and yet David holds

his peace, though provoked by his mighty men to revenge himself. Oh! how would this cursing and railing have maddened and broken many a proud man's heart; and yet it stirs not David.

Fulgentius, after he was extremely persecuted, he had an advantage to seek revenge, but he would not; for, saith he, *plura pro Christo toleranda*, we must suffer more for Christ than so. What though I am thus and thus wronged? What though I have an opportunity for revenge? yet I must suffer more than so for Christ, says the humble soul. An humble soul, when wrongs are offered him, is like a man with a sword in one hand and salve in another; he could kill but will cure.

One wondering at the patience and humble carriage of Socrates, towards one that reviled him, Socrates said, If we should meet one whose body were more unsound than ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather pity him? Why then should we not do the like to him whose soul is more diseased than ours? An humble soul, when he meets with this and that wrong from men, he knows that their souls are diseased, and that rather moves him to pity than to revenge wrongs offered. A proud heart swells and grows big, when in the least wronged, and is ready to call for fire from heaven, and to take any opportunity for revenge of wrongs offered. No man so abused as I, no man thus styled as I, says the proud soul. Oh, but an humble soul in patience possesses himself in all trials and storms.

Gallasius observes upon Exo 22:28, the patience and humble carriage of those three emperors, Theodosius, Honorius, and Arcadius, towards those that spake evil of them; they would have them subject to no punishment; for they said, If it come from lightness of spirit, it is to be contemned; if from madness, it is worthy of pity; if from injury, it is to be forgiven; for injuries and wrongs are to be pardoned. And this is the true temper of an humble soul, and by this he enjoys peace and quiet in the midst of all earthquakes and heartquakes.

(7.) The seventh consideration is this, consider humility exalteth.

He that is most humble, is and shall be most exalted and most honoured. No way to be high, like this of being low. Moses was the meekest man on earth, and God made him the honourablest, calling of him up unto himself into the mount, making known his glory to him, and making of him the leader of his people Israel. Gideon was very little in his own eyes; he was the least of his father's house in his own apprehension, and God exalts him, making him the deliverer of his Israel.

It was a good saying of one, Wilt thou be great? begin from below. As the roots of the tree descend, so the branches ascend. The lower any man is in this sense, the higher shall that man be raised. Mat 23:12, 'And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' God, that is wisdom itself, hath said it, and he will make it good, though thou seest no ways how it should be made good. The lowest valleys have the blessing of fruitfulness, while the high mountains are barren; Pro 18:12, 'Before destruction, the heart of man is lofty, and before honour is humility.'

David came not to the kingdom till he could truly say, 'Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lifted up,' Psalms 131:1-2. Abigail was not made David's wife till she thought it honour enough to wash the feet of the meanest of David's servants, 1Sa 25:1-44. Moses must be forty years a stranger in Midian, before he became king in Jeshurun; he must be struck sick to death in the inn, before he goes to Pharaoh on that noble embassy.

It was a sweet observation of Luther, 'That for the most part when God set him upon any special service for the good of the church, he was brought low by some fit of sickness or other.' Surely, as the lower the ebb, the higher the tide; so the lower any descend in humility, the higher they shall ascend in honour and glory. The lower this foundation of humility is laid, the higher shall the roof of honour be overlaid. If you would turn spiritual purchasers of honour, or of whatsoever else is good, no way like this of humility. We live in times wherein men labour to purchase honour; some by their money, others by their friends; others by making themselves slaves to the lusts of men; others by being prodigal of their blood, and many by giving themselves up to all manner of baseness and wickedness, whereby their carnal ends may be attained, and themselves exalted; but these men and their honour will quickly be laid in the dust. Oh! but the readiest, the surest, the safest, the sweetest way to attain to true honour, is to be humble, to lie low. Humility makes a man precious in the eye of God. He that is little in his own account, is great in God's esteem.²

(8.) The eighth and last consideration that I shall propound is this, consider humility keeps the soul free from many darts of Satan's casting, and snares of his spreading. As you may see in the three children in Daniel, and in those worthies in the 11th of the Hebrews, 'of whom this world was not worthy.' As the lowest shrubs are freed from many violent gusts and blasts of wind, which shake and rend the tallest cedars; so the humble soul is free from a world of temptations, that proud and lofty souls are shaken and torn in pieces with. The devil hath least power to fasten a temptation upon an humble soul. He that hath a gracious measure of humility, is neither affected with Satan's proffers, nor terrified with Satan's threatenings. The golden chain does not allure him, nor the iron chain does not daunt him.

I have read of one who, seeing in a vision many snares of Satan spread upon the earth, he sat down and mourned, and said with himself, 'Who shall pass through these?' whereunto he heard a voice answering, 'Humility shall pass through them.' A proud heart is as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted. But the humble soul, when tempted, says with that worthy convert, 'I am not the man that I was.' There was a time when my heart was proud and lifted up, and then thou couldst no sooner knock but I opened; no sooner call but I answered; no sooner tempt but I did assent. Oh! but now the Lord taught me to be humble; I can resist, though I cannot dispute; I can fight, but not yield.

Mistress Katherine Bretterge, an humble precious soul, being once in a great conflict with Satan, said thus to him, 'Satan, reason not with me, I am but a weak woman; if thou hast anything to say, say it to my Christ; he is my advocate, my strength, and my redeemer, and he shall plead for me. An humble soul is good at turning Satan over to the Lord Jesus, and this increases Satan's hell. It is reported of Satan, that he should say thus of a learned man, Tu me semper vincis, thou dost always overcome me; when I would throw thee down, thou liftest up thyself in assurance of faith; and when I would exalt and promote thee, thou keepest thyself in humility; and so thou art too hard for me. The only way to avoid cannon-shot, as they say, is to fall down flat; no such way to be freed from temptations as to keep low. And so I have done with the first head; namely, the motives that should move and provoke us to keep humble, to be base, to be nothing in our own eyes.

I shall now come to some helps and directions that may be useful to keep us humble and low in our own eyes. And the first is this:

[1.] Dwell much upon the greatness of God's mercy and goodness to you.

Nothing humbles and breaks the heart of a sinner like mercy and love. Souls that converse much with sin and wrath may be much terrified; but souls that converse much with grace and mercy will be much humbled. Luk 7:1-50, the Lord Jesus shews mercy to that notorious sinner, and then she falls down at his feet, and loves much and weeps much, &c. In the 1Ch 17:1-27, it was in the heart of David to build God a house. God would not have him to do it, yet the messenger must tell David that God would build him a house, and establish his Son upon the throne for ever. Look into the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, and there you shall find that David lets fall such an humble speech, which he never did before that God had sent him that message of advancement. 'And David the king came, and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come,' &c., 2Sa 7:18-19. And this sweetly and kindly melts him, and humbles him, before the Lord. Oh, if ever you would have your souls kept low, dwell upon the free grace and love of God to you in Christ. Dwell upon the firstness of his love, dwell upon the freeness of his love, the greatness of his love, the fulness of his love, the unchangeableness of his love, the everlastingness of his love, and the activity of his love. If this do not humble thee, there is nothing on earth will do it. Dwell upon what God hath undertaken for you. Dwell upon the choice and worthy gifts that he has bestowed on you; and dwell upon that glory and happiness that he has prepared for you, and then be proud if you can.

[2.] Secondly, Keep faith in continual exercise, upon Christ as crucified, and upon Christ as glorified.

There are two special sights of Christ, that tend much to humble and abase a soul. The one is a sight of Christ in his misery, in Zec 12:10. And the other is a sight of Christ in his glory (Rev 1:7, Isa 6:1, Isa 6:3, Isa 6:5, compared). It is dangerous to be more notion than motion; to have faith in the head and none in the heart; to have an idle and not an active faith. It is not enough for you to have faith, but you must look to the acting of your faith, upon Christ as crucified, and upon Christ as glorified. Souls much in this will be very little and low in their own eyes. The great reason why the soul is no more humble is because faith is no more active.

[3.] Thirdly, Study your own natures more, and whatever evil you behold in other men's practices, labour to see the same in your own nature.

There is the seed of all sins, of the vilest and worst of sins, in the best of men. When thou seest another drunk, thou mayest see the seed of that sin in thy own nature. When thou seest another unclean, the seeds of uncleanness thou mayest see in thy own nature. And in that thou dost not act uncleanness as others, it arises not from the goodness of thy nature, but from the riches of God's grace. Remember this, there is not a worse nature in hell than that that is in thee, and it would discover itself accordingly; if the Lord did not restrain it, it would carry thee to those horrid acts that are against the very light of nature.⁴

There was one that was a long time tempted to three horrid sins: to be drunk, to lie with his mother, and to murder his father. Being a long time followed with these horrid temptations, at last he thought to get rid of them, by yielding to that he judged the least, and that was to be drunk; but when he was drunk, he did both lie with his mother and murder his father. Why, such a hellish nature is in every soul that breathes! and did God leave men to act according to their natures, men would be all incarnate devils, and this world a perfect hell. Such is the corruption of our nature, that

propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water; but propound any evil, and it is like fire to straw. It is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter, which the naturalists say that it sucks and snatches the fire to it with which it is consumed. There was a holy man that rarely heard of other men's crimson sins, but he usually bedewed the place with his tears, considering that the seeds of those very sins was in his own nature. In thy nature thou hast that that would lead thee with the pharisees to oppose Christ; and with Judas, to betray Christ; and with Pilate, to condemn Christ; and with the soldiers, to crucify Christ, &c. Oh, what a monster, what a devil wouldst thou prove, should God but leave thee to act suitable to that sinful and woful nature of thine!

[4.] Fourthly, Dwell much upon the imperfection that follows and cleaves to thy best actions.

Oh the wanderings! Oh the deadness, the dulness, the fruitlessness of thy spirit in religious duties! Man is a creature apt to hug himself in religious services, and to pride himself in holy duties; and to stroke himself after duties, and to warm himself by the sparks of his own fire, his own performances, though he does lie down in sorrow for it, Isa 50:11. Whenever thou comest off from holy services, sit down, and look over the spots, blots, and blemishes that cleave to your choicest services. The fairest day has its clouds, the richest jewels their flaws, the finest faces their spots, the fairest copies their blots, and so have our finest and fairest duties.

Plutarch tells of a private soldier of Julius Cæsar's, who fought so valiantly in Britain, that by his means he saved the captains, which otherwise were in great danger to be cast away, being driven into a bog, then marching with great pain through the mire and dirt: in the end he got to the other side, but left his shield behind him. Cæsar, wondering at his noble courage, ran to him with joy to embrace him; but the poor soldier, hanging down his head, the water standing in his eyes, fell down at Cæsar's feet, and besought him to pardon him, for that he had left his shield behind him. You know how to apply it. He had done gallantly, yet he falls down at Cæsar's feet, after his brave service, with tears in his eyes, upon the sense of his leaving his shield behind him. When we have done our best, we have cause to fall down at Jesus's feet, and with tears in our eyes sue out our pardon.

[5.] Fifthly, In the day of thy prosperity, forget not thy former poverty. In the day of thy present greatness, forget not thy former meanness. Humble Jacob, in the day of his prosperity, remembers his former poverty: 'With my staff I passed over Jordan, and now I am become two bands,' Gen 32:10. And so David, in his prosperity, remembered that his sheep-hook was changed into a sceptre, and his seat of turf into a royal throne, Psa 78:71, 1Ch 17:1-27. And when Joseph was a royal favourite, he remembered that he had been an imprisoned slave. And when Gideon was raised to be a saviour to Israel, he remembered how God took him from the threshing-floor, Jdg 6:11, and how God changed his threshing instrument of wood into one of iron, to thresh the mountains, as God himself phraseth it, Isa 41:15.

Primislaus, the first king of Bohemia, kept his country shoes always by him, to remember from whence he was raised.

Agathocles, by the furniture of his table, confessed that from a potter he was raised to be a king of Sicily.

We live in times wherein many a man hath been raised from the dunghill to sit with princes; and oh that such were wise to remember their former low and contemptible beings, and to walk humbly before the Lord! otherwise who can tell but that greater contempt shall be poured forth upon them, than that which they have poured upon princes.

[6.] Sixthly, Look upon all that you have received, and all that you shall hereafter receive, as the fruit of free grace.

Look upon thy adoption, and write this motto, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon thy justification, and write this motto, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon all thy graces, and write, These are the fruits of free grace. Look upon thy experiences, and write, These are the fruits of free grace. Look upon thy strength to withstand temptations, and write, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon divine power to conquer corruptions, and write, This is the fruit of free grace. Look upon the bread thou eatest, the beer thou drinkest, the clothes thou wearest, &c., and write, These are the fruits of free grace. 1Co 4:7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it? Who maketh thee to differ? Episcopius, a great insolent Arminian, answered, Ego me ipsum discerno, I make myself to differ, to wit, by the improvement of nature. This age is full of such proud monsters; but an humble soul sees free grace to be the spring and fountain of all his mercies and comforts; he writes free grace upon all his temporals, and upon all his spirituals, &c.

[7.] The seventh direction is, Meditate much upon these two things:

First, The great mischief that sin hath done in the world.

It cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise. It hath lain the first corner-stone in hell, and ushered in all the evils and miseries that be in the world. It hath threw down Abraham, the best believer in the world; and Noah, the most righteous man in the world; and Job, the uprightest man in the world; and Moses, the meekest man in the world; and Paul, the greatest apostle in the world. Oh, the diseases, the crosses, the losses, the miseries, the deaths, the hells, that sin hath brought upon the world!

Basil wept when he saw the rose, because it brought to his mind the first sin, from whence it had the prickles, which it had not while man continued in innocency, as he thought! Oh, when he saw the prickles his soul wept; so when we see, hear, or read of the blood, misery, wars, and ruins that sin has brought upon us, let us weep and lie humble before the Lord.

Secondly, Meditate much on this, that many wicked men take more pains to damn their souls and go to hell, than thou dost to save thy soul and to get to heaven, Mat 22:15.

Oh, what pains do wicked men take to damn their souls and go to hell! Lactantius saith of Lucian, that he spared neither God nor man. He took pains to make himself twice told a child of wrath.

It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, nec victor, nec victus, neither conquered nor conqueror. Such restless wretches are wicked men. The drunkard rises up in the morning, and continues till midnight, till wine inflame him, Isa 5:11. The unclean person wastes his time, and strength, and estate, and all to ruin his own soul.

Theotimus, being told by his physician, that if he did not leave his lewd courses, he would lose his sight, answered, Vale lumen amicum, then farewell, sweet light. What a deal of pains does the worldling take! He rises up early, and goes to bed late, and leaves no stone unturned, and all to make himself but the more miserable in the close.

Pambus, in the Ecclesiastical History, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God as she had been to please a wanton lover. Oh, sirs! what reason have you to spend your days in weeping? When you look abroad, see what pains most men take to damn their souls and go to hell, and then consider what little pains you take to escape hell, to save your souls, and go to heaven.

[8.] Eighthly, Get more internal and experimental knowledge and acquaintance with God.

If ever you would keep humble, no knowledges humbles and abases like that which is inward and experimental. We live in days wherein there is abundance of notional light. Many professors know much of God notionally, but know nothing of God experimentally; they know God in the history, but know nothing of God in the mystery. They know much of God in the letter, but little or nothing of God in the Spirit; and therefore it is that they are so proud and high in their own conceits, when as he that experimentally knows the Lord is a worm and no man in his own eyes. As the sun is necessary to the world, the eye to the body, the pilot to the ship, the general to the army, so is experimental knowledge to the humbling of a soul. Who more experimental in their knowledge than David, Job, Isaiah, and Paul? And who are more humble than these worthies?

Seneca observed of the philosophers, that when they grew more learned, they were less moral, so a growth in notions will bring a great decay in humility and zeal, as it is too evident in these days. Well, remember this, a drop of experimental knowledge will more humble a man than a sea of notional knowledge.

[9.] Ninthly, Look up to a crucified Christ for special power and strength against the pride of your hearts. It is sad in these knowing times to think how few there are that know the right way of bringing under the power of any sin. Most men scarce look so high as a crucified Christ for power against their powerful sins. One soul sits down and complains, Such a lust haunts me, I will pray it down; another saith, Such a sin follows me, and I will hear it down, or watch it down, or resolve it down: and so a crucified Christ is not in all their thoughts. Not but that you are to hear, pray, watch, and resolve against your sins; but above all, you should look to the acting of faith upon a crucified Christ. As he said of the sword of Goliath, 'None like to that,' so I say, None like to this for the bringing under the pride of men's hearts. The weaker the house of Saul grew, the stronger the house of David grew. The weakening of your pride will be the increase and strengthening of your humility, and therefore what the king of Syria said unto his fifty captains, 'Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel,' so say I, If you would keep humble, if you will lie low, draw forth your artillery, place your greatest strength against the pride of your souls. The death of pride will be the resurrection of humility. And that this may stick upon you, I shall lay down several propositions concerning pride; and I am so much the more willing to fall upon this work, and to make it the subject of our discourse at this time, because this horrid sin doth appear so boldly and impudently, and that not only among profane persons, but professors also. There are ten propositions that I shall lay down concerning pride.

[1.] And the first is this, Of all sins pride is most dangerous to the souls of men.

Pride is a sin that will put the soul upon the worst of sins. Pride is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague. It is the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts, the turner of medicines into maladies, and remedies into diseases. It is the original and root of most of those notorious vices that be to be found among the children of men. It was pride that put Herod upon seeking the blood of Christ. It was pride that put the Pharisees upon the persecuting of Christ. It was pride that made Athaliah destroy all the seed-royal of the house of Judah, that he might reign, 2Ch 21:10. It was pride that put Joab upon murdering perfidiously, under colour of friendship, Abner, 2Sa 3:27, and Amasa, 2Sa 20:9-10. Zimri, out of ambition to reign, murdered Elah his lord, 1Ki 16:8-10. Omri, out of pride and ambition to reign, rose up against Zimri, and enforced him to burn himself in the king's palace, 1Ki 16:18. It is pride that hath ushered in all the contentions that be in towns, cities, countries, families, and pulpits throughout the world. It was pride and ambition to reign that put Absalom upon pursuing his father's life, from whom he had received life.

It is very remarkable, that the pride and ambition of Nebuchadnezzar did usher in the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy; and the ambition and pride of Cyrus that did usher in the overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy; and the ambition and pride of Alexander was the cause of the annihilation of the Persian monarchy; and it was the pride and ambition of the Roman commanders that was the cause of the utter subversion of the Grecian monarchy. There is no tongue that can express, nor heart that can conceive, the horrid sins and miseries that pride hath ushered in among the children of men. All sin will down with a proud heart that is resolved to rise. Great sins are no sins with such a soul; he makes nothing of those very sins that would make the very heathen to blush.

[2.] The second proposition that I shall lay down concerning pride is this, Where pride hath possessed itself thoroughly of the soul, it turns the heart into steel, yea, into a rock. As you may see in Pharaoh. Pride turned his heart into steel, yea, into a very rock. God strikes again and again; he sends plague upon plague; and yet the more he is plagued, the more he is hardened. His pride turned his soul into a rock: he is no more sensible of the frowns of God, the threatenings of God, the plagues, the strokes of God, than a rock. Pride had hardened his heart; he stirs not, he yields not.

It was the pride of Saul that turned his heart into steel: 'I have sinned,' saith he, 'yet honour me before the people,' 1Sa 15:30. God gave him many a blow, many a knock, and many a check, and yet, after all, 'Honour me before the people.' Oh how desperately was his heart hardened in pride! In Dan 5:18, Nebuchadnezzar's mind, saith the text, 'was hardened in pride.' He saw the vengeance of the Almighty upon his predecessors, and God took him up, and lashed him till the blood came, and yet he made nothing of it, because his heart was hardened in pride. Pride sets a man in opposition against God. Other sins are aversions from God, but this sin is a coming against God. In other sins a man flies from God, but in this sin a man flies upon God: Jas 4:6, 'God resisteth the proud.' A man doth not resist another till he is set upon; the traveller doth not resist until such time as the thief sets upon him. Saith the text, 'God resisteth the proud.' It intimates thus much to us, that the proud heart sets upon God himself, and therefore God resists him. The Greek word is **■ντιτ■σεται**; he places himself in battle array against the proud. God brings forth his

battalia against the proud, and they bring forth their battalia against God. A proud heart resists, and is resisted; this is duro durum, flint to flint, fire to fire; yet in the day of God's wrath the proud shall be burnt up as stubble, both branch and root, Mal 4:1.

[3.] The third proposition concerning pride is this, Pride is a sin that shales forth and shews itself not one way, but many ways. For instance,

First, Sometimes it shews itself in the looks, Pro 6:17 : he tells you of seven things that the Lord hates, and one is a proud look. The Hebrew word there is, 'The haughty eye.' The haughty eye God hates. Men's hearts usually shew themselves in their eyes: Psa 131:1, 'Mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eye lofty.' There be such who shew pride in their very looks, but the Lord looks aloof at them, Psa 138:6.

Secondly, Sometimes pride shews itself in words: Dan 4:30, 'Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?' and in Dan 3:15, 'Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?' It was a very proud saying of one, *Cœlum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven but at a rate; and of another, 'We have not so lived and deserved of God that the enemy should vanquish us.' These were the proud ones, that spake loftily, and that set their mouths against the heavens, as the psalmist speaks, Psa 73:6, Psa 73:8-9, compared. And such a one was Henry the Second. Hearing that his city Mentz was taken, he used this proud blasphemous speech, 'I shall never love God any more, that suffered a city so dear to me to be taken away from me.' Such a proud wretch, both in words and actions, was Sennacherib, as you may see in Isa 37:8-18.

Thirdly, Sometimes pride shews itself in the habit of the body; so Herod's pride appeared: Acts 12:21, Herod was 'arrayed in royal apparel.' In cloth of silver, saith Josephus, which, being beaten upon by the sunbeams, dazzled the people's eyes, and drew from them that blasphemous acclamation, 'It is the voice of God, and not of man.' The people being most commonly like the Bohemian curs, that used to fawn upon a good suit; so the rich man, Luk 16:19, was clothed in purple, κα[■] β[■]σσον, and in silk. He was commonly so clothed; it was his everyday's wear, as the Greek word [■]νεδιδ[■]σκετο implieth.

Quest. But here a question may be asked, May not persons habit themselves according to their dignities, ranks, and places that God hath put them in in the world?

Ans. I answer, They may, and ought so to do. If God hath lifted them up in the world above others, they may wear better apparel than others, Gen 41:42, Est 6:8, Psa 45:13-14, 2Sa 13:18, Lam 4:5, Mat 11:8, Gen 27:15, Isa 52:1, Hos 2:13, Exo 28:40. I cite these scriptures so much the rather, because some, through weakness and peevishness, stumble and are not satisfied herein. There is nothing in the law of God or nature against it.

Quest. But you may say, May not persons sin in their apparel?

Ans. I answer, Yes, and that in four cases.

[1.] When it is not modest, but carries with it provocation to lust and wantonness: Pro 7:10, 'There met the young man a woman in the attire of an harlot.' The Hebrew word signifies a habit or ornament finely set and fitted to the body; and saith the text, 'She was subtle of heart,' or trussed up about the breasts, with her upper parts naked; so Levi-Ben-Gersom reads the words, 'She met

him with her naked breasts,' at this day too commonly used by such as would not be held harlots. Oh what a horrid shame and reproach is it to religion, the ways of God, and the people of God, that professors should go so! One saith 'that superfluous apparel is worse than whoredom, because whoredom only corrupts chastity, but this corrupts nature.' Another saith, 'If women adorn themselves so as to provoke men to lust after them, though no ill follow upon it, yet those women shall suffer eternal damnation, because they offered poison to others, though none should drink of it.'

[2.] Persons sin in their apparel when as they exceed their degree and rank in costly apparel, which is that which is condemned by the apostle, 1Ti 2:9, 1Pe 3:3. The apostle doth not simply condemn the wearing of gold, but he condemns it in those that go above their degree and rank. The words are rather an admonition than a prohibition.

[3.] It is sinful when it is so expensive as that it hinders works of mercy and charity. Oh how many proud souls be there in these days that lay so much upon their backs, that they can spare nothing to fill the poor's bellies. 'Silk doth quench the fire of the kitchen,' saith the French proverb. The meaning is, that it doth hinder works of charity and mercy. Surely those that put on such costly ornaments upon their backs as close up the hand of charity, will at last share with Dives in his misery.

[4.] When persons habit themselves in strange and foreign fashions, which is the sin, shame, and reproach of many among us in these days. Now that is strange apparel which is not peculiar to the nations where men live. The Lord threatens to punish such, Zep 1:8, that are clothed with strange apparel. There are too many women and men in our days that are like the Egyptian temples, very gypsies, painted without and spotted within; varnish without and vermin within.

Mercury being to make a garment for the moon, as one saith, could never fit her, but either the garment would be too big or too little, by reason she was always increasing or decreasing. May not this be applied to the vain curiosity of too too many professors in these days, whose curiosity about their clothes can never be satisfied?

I shall conclude this head with this counsel: Clothe yourselves with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, and with the purple of modesty, and God himself will be a suitor to you. Let not the ornaments upon your backs speak out the vanity of your hearts.

Fourthly, Sometimes pride shews itself by the gesture and carriage of the body. Isa 3:16, The daughters of Sion 'were haughty, and walked with stretched out necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a tinkling with their feet.' Oh earth! earth! dost thou not groan to bear such monsters as these?

Fifthly, And sometimes pride shews itself in contemptuous challenges of God; as Pharoah, 'Who is the God of the Hebrews, that I should obey him?'

Sixthly, Sometimes pride shews itself by bragging promises, 'I will arise, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, and my lusts shall be satisfied,' Exo 15:9.

[4.] The fourth proposition that I shall lay down is this:

Pride is a sin that of all sins makes a man or woman most like to Satan.

Pride is morbus Satanicus, Satan's disease. Pride is so base a disease, that God had rather see his dearest children to be buffeted by Satan, than that in pride they should be like to Satan. When Paul, 2Co 12:7, under the abundance of revelations, was in danger of being puffed up, the Lord, rather than he would have him proud like to Satan, suffers him to be buffeted by Satan. Humility makes a man like to angels, and pride makes an angel a devil. Pride is worse than the devil, for the devil cannot hurt thee till pride hath possessed thee. If thou would see the devil limned to the life, look upon a proud soul; for as face answers to face, so doth a proud soul answer to Satan. Proud souls are Satan's apes, and none imitate him to the life like these. And oh that they were sensible of it, before it be too late, before the door of darkness be shut upon them!

[5.] A fifth proposition is this:

Pride cannot climb so high, but justice will sit above her.

One asked a philosopher what God was a-doing? He answered, That his whole work was to exalt the humble and pull down the proud. It was pride that turned angels into devils; they would be above others in heaven, and therefore God cast them down to hell. Pride, saith Hugo, was born in heaven, but forgetting by what way she fell from thence, she could never find the way thither again. The first man would know as God, and the Babel-builders would dwell as God, but justice set above them all. This truth you see verified in the justice of God upon Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, Belshazzar, and Nebuchadnezzar; all these would be very high, but justice takes the right hand of them all, and brings them down to the dust. Yea, pride cannot climb so high in the hearts of saints, but divine justice will be above it. Uzziah his heart was lifted up, 2Ch 26:16, but justice smites him with a leprosy, and so he died, out of grief and sorrow, saith Josephus. David glories in his own greatness, 2Sa 24:1, seq., and for this seventy thousand fall by the hand of justice. Hezekiah's heart was lifted up, but wrath was upon him, and upon all Judah and Jerusalem for it, 2Ch 32:25, seq. Pride sets itself against the honour, being, and sovereignty of God, and therefore justice will in spite of all sit above her. Other sins strike at the word of God, the people of God, and the creatures of God, but pride strikes directly at the very being of God, and therefore justice will be above her.

Nebuchadnezzar was proud, and God smites his reason, and turns him into a beast. Oh! how many young professors are there in our days, who have been proud of their notions, and proud of their parts and gifts, and justice hath so smitten them, that they have lost that life, that sweetness, that spiritualness, that quickness that once they had, and are dried and shrivelled up by a hand of justice. They are like the apples of Sodom, glorious without, but rotten and worthless within. Some there are that have been very shining, yet by reason of pride have fallen from a seeming excellency to be naught, and from naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught. Isa 23:9, 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt' (or to make light) 'all the honourable of the earth.' The Hebrew word that is here rendered purposed, signifies to consult, or take counsel. It is consulted and agreed upon in counsel, that he will stain the pride of all glory, and bring into contempt the honourable of the earth; and the counsel of the Lord shall stand, Psa 33:11; Isa 2:11-12, 'The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low.'

Divine justice will take the right hand of all proud ones on the earth. God bears, as I may say, a special spleen against pride. His heart hates it, Pro 6:16-17; his mouth curses it, Psa 119:21; and his hand plagueth it, as you have seen in the former instances, and as you may see further in these following instances: The king of Egypt, that Jeremiah prophesied against, in his forty-fourth chapter, was so puffed up with pride, that he boasted his kingdom was so surely settled, that it could not be taken from him either by God or man; not long after he was taken in battle by Amasis, one of his own subjects, and hanged up.

Dionysius the tyrant said in the pride of his heart, that his kingdom was bound to him with chains of adamant; but time soon confuted him, for he was driven out, and forced to teach a school at Corinth for a poor living.

Cares, a soldier, being proud of his valour, because he had given Cyrus a great wound, shortly after he ran mad. In all ages there are notable instances to prove that pride has not got so high, but justice has set above her.

[6.] The sixth proposition is this, Of all sins spiritual pride is most dangerous, and must be most resisted.

Spiritual pride is the lifting up of the mind against God; it is a tumor and swelling in the mind, and lies in contemning and slighting of God, his word, promises, and ordinances, and in the lifting up of a man's self, by reason of birth, breeding, wealth, honour, place, relation, gifts or graces, and in despising of others. Of this spiritual pride Habakkuk speaks, Hab 2:4, 'His heart that is lifted up in him, is not upright.' Pro 16:5, 'Every one that is proud in heart, is an abomination to the Lord;' or, that 'lifts up his heart against God,' or his decrees; as Lewis the Eleventh did, in that proud speech of his, *Si salvabor, salvabor; si vero damnabor, damnabor*. 'If I shall be saved, I shall be saved; and if I shall be damned, I shall be damned; and there is all the care that I shall take.' Like to this, was that proud and wretched speech of one Rufus, who painted God on the one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, with this mad motto: 'If thou wilt not have me, here is one will.' Spiritual pride is a white devil, as one calls it, a gilded poison, by which God is robbed of his honour, a man's own soul of his comfort and peace, and others of that benefit and fruit which otherwise they might receive from us. Satan is subtle; he will make a man proud of his very graces; he will make him proud that he is not proud. Pride grows with the decrease of other sins, and thrives by their decay. Other sins are nourished by poisonous roots, as adultery is nourished by idleness, and gluttony and murder by malice and envy; but this white devil, spiritual pride, springs from good duties and good actions towards God and man. Spiritual pride is a very great enemy to the good and salvation of man. Pride is like a very great swelling, which unfits men for any service.

Again, spiritual pride is a very great enemy to the good and salvation of men. The Greek word signifies swelleth, for pride is like a great swelling in the body, which unfits it for any good service. John 5:40, 'You will not come to me, that you may have life;' and John 5:44, 'How can ye believe in me, which seek honour one of another?' Christ blesses his Father, Mat 11:25, that he had 'hid those things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes and sucklings.' It is the pride of men's hearts that makes them throw off ordinances, as poor and low things, when, alas! in their practices they live below the power, beauty, glory, and holiness of the least and lowest ordinance. There's more holiness, purity, and glory manifested in the lowest administrations of Christ, than is held forth by them, in their highest practices.

[7.] The seventh proposition is this, Pride un-mans a man; it makes him do acts that are below a man. As you may see in Pharaoh, Haman, Herod, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. It makes men bedlams, to say they know not what, and to do they care not what. It was pride that made Hildebrand to cause Henry the Fourth to stand three days at his gate, with his wife and his child, barefooted. It was pride that made Adonibezek cause three-score and ten kings, with their thumbs and great toes cut off, Jdg 1:5-7, to gather their meat under his table. Oh! what wretched unmanly acts hath the pride of many persons put them upon.

[8.] The eighth proposition is this, The poorest are oftentimes the proudest.

Pretty is the parable of Jotham: the best trees refused to be king, but the bramble affected it; and did sperare et aspirare, hope and aspire it, Jdg 9:15. So in 2Ki 14:9, 'The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife.' Hagar the kitchen-maid will be proud, and insult over her mistress Sarah, Gen 21:1-34. The poor sons of Zebedee would sit at Christ's right hand and left, Mat 20:20-21. And those that Job disdains to set with the dogs of his flock, yet condemn him in the day of his sorrow, Job 30:1. The foot strives to be equal with the head, the servant as the master, the cobbler as the councillor, and the peasant as the prince, &c.

[9.] The ninth proposition is this, Pride is a sure fore-runner of a fall.

'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty mind before a fall,' Pro 16:18, Pro 18:12. Herod fell from a throne of gold to a bed of dust. Nebuchadnezzar fell from the state of a mighty king, to be a beast. Adam fell from innocency to mortality. The angels fell from heaven to hell, from felicity to misery.

[10.] The tenth and last proposition is this:

God will by an invincible power carry the day against proud souls.

You that it escape, and ruffle it out, and carry it with a high hand, remember this, God will by an invisible power carry the day against you; when you think not of it, he will eat you like a moth. Isa 47:10-11, 'For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness, thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee. And thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt know not from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee, and thou shalt not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.' Impunity oftentimes causeth impudency, but quod differtur non aufertur, forbearance is no acquittance. The longer the hand is lifted up, the heavier will be the blow at last. Of all metals, lead is the coldest, but being melted, it becomes the hottest. Humble souls know how to apply this, and proud souls shall sooner or later experience this.

II. I shall now proceed to a second observation,

Namely, That all saints are not of an equal size and growth in grace and holiness.

Some are higher, and some are lower; some are stronger and some are weaker, in spiritual graces and heavenly excellencies. 'Unto me who am less than the least,' &c.

Among true believers, some may be found to be but weak believers. This point flows as natural from the words as the stream does from the fountain, and no point more clear in all the Scripture than this. In Rom 14:1, you read of some that are weak in the faith; 'Them that are weak in the faith receive,' saith the apostle. None are to be rejected in whom aliquid Christi, anything of Christ, is to be found. And so Mat 14:31, there is mention made of 'little faith.' 1Co 9:22, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.' You read of babes in grace: 1Pe 2:2-3, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' 1Jn 2:12-14, there is mention made of 'little children, of young men, and of fathers.' All are not fathers in grace, nor all are not young men in grace; there are some children in grace. A Christian in this life hath his degrees of growth; he is first a child in grace, and then a young man in grace, and then a father in grace. For the further opening of this point, I shall endeavour these four things.

I. I shall endeavour to decipher to you souls weak in grace.

II. I shall endeavour to lay down those things that may encourage, support, and comfort souls that are weak in grace.

III. I shall speak to the duties that lie upon those that are weak in grace.

IV. The duties that lie upon those that are strong in grace, towards those that are weak in grace. Of these four we shall speak, as the Lord shall assist.

I. I shall begin with the first, To decipher souls weak in grace. The first thing by which I shall decipher souls weak in grace is this:

[1.] Weak Christians are usually carried much out after the poor low things of this world.

They are much in carking and caring for them, and in pursuing and hunting greedily after them. That is a clear text for this: Mat 6:24, to the end. Christ labours by several weighty arguments to fence and fortify his disciples against those diffident, doubtful, carking cares, that divide, distract, distemper, torture, and tear the heart in a thousand pieces. And yet neither these arguments, nor yet the presence of him who was the great landlord of heaven and earth, and whose love and bowels were still yearning towards them, and whose special eye of providence was still over them, could, rid their heads and hearts of these worldly cares that do but vex and perplex the souls of men. And it is very observable, that after this smart lecture that Christ had read them, they did strive three several times who should be greatest and highest in worldly enjoyments. Their hearts should have been only in heaven, and yet they strive for earth, as if there were no heaven, or as if earth were better than heaven. All which does clearly evidence, that their graces were very weak, and their corruptions very strong. Men that have little of the upper springs within, are carried out much after the springs below. Baruch was good, but weak in grace; he had but some sips and tastes of the glory of that other world, and that made him, when God was a-pulling down all worldly glory, to seek for earth as if there were no heaven, Jer 45:1-5. Certainly there is but little of Christ and grace within, where the heart is so strongly carried out after these things without. Where there is such strong love and workings of heart after these poor things, it speaks our soul's enjoyment of God to be but poor and low. In the Old Testament, the Jews, being babes and infants in grace and holiness, had a world of temporal promises, and very few spiritual promises. But now in the days of the gospel, the Lord is pleased to double and treble his Spirit upon his people, and now you

meet with very few temporal promises in the gospel, but the gospel is filled with spiritual promises. The gospel drops nothing but marrow and fatness, love and sweetness; and therefore God looks in these days that men should grow up to a greater height of holiness, heavenliness, and spiritualness, than what they attained to in those dark days, wherein the sun shined but dimly. Men rich and strong in grace look upon the world with a holy scorn and disdain, as Themistocles, when he saw in the dark a thing like a pearl, he scorned to stoop for it himself, saying to another, 'Stoop thee, for thou art not Themistocles.' Abraham, a man strong in grace, looked with a holy scorn and with an eye of disdain upon these poor things. When Melchisedec from God had made him heir of all things, he refused the riches that the king of Sodom offered him, because God was his shield and his exceeding great reward, Gen 14:21, Gen 15:1. The greatest bargain that a soul rich in grace will make with God for himself is this, 'Give me but bread to eat and clothes to wear, and thou shalt be my God.' So it was with that brave soul, Gen 28:21, he desires but food and raiment. Mark, he asks food, not junkets; raiment, not ornaments. A little will serve a man that is strong in grace, much will not serve a man that is weak in grace, nothing will serve a man that is void of grace. Souls weak in grace, have their hearts much working after these poor low things; as you may see, Mat 18:1, 'Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' The question is stated by the disciples, that one would have thought should have had their hearts and thoughts in heaven; but they dreamed of an earthly kingdom, where honours and offices should be distributed, as in the days of David and Solomon. And it is observable in Mark 9:33-34, they are at it again: 'And he came to Capernaum; and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace' (they were ashamed to tell him); 'for by the way they had disputed among them selves who should be greatest. 'Saith one, I'll have this, and saith another, I'll have that, &c.; or as it is in the Greek, 'they disputed who was greatest;' so in Luk 9:46. Says one, I am greater than thou; No, says another, I am greatest: τῆς μεζων who was greatest. It is an argument of a childish disposition to be taken more with rattles and baubles than with jewels and pearls. That Christian hath little of the power of grace within him, whose heart is so strongly carried out to these vanities below. Men that are grown up to years of understanding prefer one piece of gold above a thousand new counters. A soul that is strong in grace, that is high in its spiritual enjoyments, prefers one good word from God, one good look from Christ, above all the glory of this world. 'Lord,' saith he, 'lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.' Warm my heart with the beams of thy love, and then a little of these things will suffice. You see Moses and all those worthies in the 11th of the Hebrews, who were men strong in grace, how bravely they trample upon all things below God. They left their families and their countries, where they lived like princes, to wander in a wilderness, upon the bare command of God. So Luther, a man strong in grace, when he had a gown and money given him by the elector, he turned himself about, and said, 'I protest God shall not put me off with these poor low things.' Souls that know by experience what the bosom of Christ is, what spiritual communion is, what the glory of heaven is, will not be put off by God nor man with things that are mixed, mutable, and momentary. And to shame many professors in these days, I might bring in a cloud of witnesses; even from among the very heathen, who never heard of a crucified Christ, and yet were more crucified to things below Christ than many of them that pretend much to Christ. But I shall forbear, only desiring that those that think and speak so scornfully and contemptuously of heathens may not at last be found worse than heathens; yea, be judged and condemned by heathens in the great and terrible day of the Lord.

Secondly, In order to a further deciphering of weak Christians, I shall lay down this:

[2.] That weak saints do usually overfear troubles before they come; yea, those future evils that, forty to one, may never fall out. The very empty thoughts and conceit of trouble is very terrible and perplexing to a weak saint. When it was told the house of David, saying, 'Syria is confederate with Ephraim,' his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind, Isa 7:2. Their heart quaked and quivered, as we say, like an aspen leaf. It is an elegant expression, shewing, in their extremity, the baseness of their fears, arguing no courage or spirit at all in them. The very news and conceit of trouble or calamities, oh how doth it perplex, and vex, and grieve, and overwhelm weak Christians! The very hearing of trouble at a distance makes them to stagger and reel, and ready to say, 'Will God now save? Will he now deliver?' It puts them into those shaking fits, that they know not what to do with themselves, nor how to perform the service they owe to God or man. Now tell me, can you call that a stout spirit, a strong spirit, that is daunted with the very report and thoughts of calamity? Or that does torment men with immoderate fear of a thousand things that happily shall never fall out; as fears of foreign invasions, or fears of home-bred confusions, fears of change of religion, or being surprised with such or such diseases, or being ruined in their outward estate by such and such devices or disadvantages, or by falling under the frowns of such a great man, or under the anger and revenge of such and such a man, and a thousand such like things. Now, this speaks out much weakness in grace. Souls strong in grace are carried above these fears; yea, with the leviathan in Job, they can laugh at the shaking of a spear, Isa 41:29. They can say with David, 'Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil; for thou art with us, thy rod and thy staff do comfort us,' Psal 23:4. But weak souls are afraid of their own shadow. The very shadow of trouble will exceedingly trouble such souls, and oftentimes make their lives a very hell.

[3.] Thirdly, Fainting in the day of adversity speaks of a soul to be but weak in grace.

Weak Christians are overcome with little crosses. The least cross doth not only startle them, but it sinks them, and makes them ready to sit down and to cry out with the church, 'Behold you that pass by, see whether there be any sorrow like my sorrow,' Lam 1:12. Before trouble comes, weak Christians are apt to think that they can bear much and endure much; but, alas! when the day of trial comes upon them, when they are put to it, they prove but men of poor and impotent spirits, and then they roar, and complain, and lie down in the dust, suffering crosses and losses to bind them hand and foot, and to spoil them of all their comforts. And now though they have many comforts for one cross, yet one cross doth so damp and daunt their hearts, that joy and comfort flies away from them, and they sit down overwhelmed. Certainly this speaks out little of Christ within. All Rachel's comforts were no comforts, because her children were not. This speaks out much weakness within.

Pro 24:10, 'If thou faintest in the day of adversity, thy strength is small;' if thou shrinkest, if thou abatest and slackest, in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. Man hath no trial of his strength till he be in trouble; faintness then discovers weakness. Afflictions try what sap we have, as hard weather tries what health we have. A weak Christian sinks under a little burden; every frown, every sour word, every puff of wind blows him down, and makes him sink under his burden. But now a soul strong in grace bears up bravely against all winds and weather. That is a brave text, and worthy to be written in letters of gold, that you have in Gen 49:23-24, 'Joseph's bow abode in strength, though the archers sorely grieved him, shot at him, and hated him. And the arms of his hands were made strong, by the mighty God of Jacob.' The archers that sorely grieved him were

his barbarous brethren that sold him; his adulterous mistress that, harlot-like, hunted for his precious life; his injurious master, that without any desert of his, imprisoned him; the tumultuating Egyptians, that were pined with hunger, perhaps spake of stoning him; and the envious courtiers and enchanters spake evilly of him before Pharaoh, to bring him out of favour. All these shot sorely at him. The word that is rendered archers in the Hebrew, **קִנְיָנִים**, is arrow-masters, which term implieth cunning and skilfulness in shooting. They were cunning and skilful to hit the mark, and they shot at him, as at a mark; but yet 'his bow abode in strength.' When God in the midst of weakness makes a soul strong, that soul will not only face enemies and difficulties, but triumph over them. Those that are strong in grace seldom want courage or counsel when they are at the worst. They always find their hope to be an anchor at sea, and their faith a shield upon land; and therefore they triumph in all storms and dangers. They stand firm when they are under the greatest pressures: 2Co 11:23, 'In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths often,' &c. And yet he triumphs in 2Co 1:12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in singleness and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' Strong Paul rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and therefore often sings it out: 'I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ;' not 'I Paul, rapt up in the third heaven.' He preferred his crown of thorns before a crown of gold, his prison rags above all royal robes.

[4.] Fourthly, A weak Christian thinks that little to be much that he suffers for Christ. In Mat 19:27, then 'answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?' 'Their worldly case in following Christ, was little worse than when they only traded in fishing; and yet, 'we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have?' This their all was not worth a speaking of, and yet, for this they look for some great worldly reward and recompence. 'We have forsaken all.' A great all sure! a few broken boats, and a few tattered and torn nets, and a little old household stuff, and Christ maintained them too, upon his own cost and charge; and yet say they, 'We have forsaken all, and followed thee.' Neither is it without an emphasis, that they begin with a Behold; 'Behold we have forsaken all,' as if Christ were greatly beholding to them. Let their wills be but crossed a little, by servants, children, friends, &c, or let them but suffer a little in their names or estates, &c., and presently you shall have them a-sighing it out, 'No sorrow like our sorrow,' no loss to our loss, no cross to our cross, &c. Whereas souls strong in grace suffer much, and yet count that much but little. A soul strong in grace can suffer much, and yet make nothing of it. I am heartily angry, saith Luther, who suffered very much, with those that speak of my sufferings, which if compared with that which Christ suffered for me, are not once to be mentioned in the same day, &c.3

[5.] Fifthly, Those that are weak in grace dwell more upon what may discourage them in the ways of grace and holiness, than they do upon what may encourage them.

They dwell more upon their sins than upon a Saviour; more upon their misery, than upon free grace and mercy; more upon that which may feed their fears, than upon that that may strengthen their faith; more upon the cross, than upon the crown; more upon those that are against them, than those that are for them: Isa 51:12-13, 'I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he

were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?' The same is intimated Rom 4:19-20, 'Abraham, being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body being dead, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.' Mark, 'being not weak in faith.' Souls weak in faith are very apt to dwell upon discouragements, but strong Christians look above all discouragements.

'He considered not.' The Greek is ο■ κ■ατεν■ησε he cared not for his own body, he did not mind that; but in Rom 4:20, 'he considered him that had promised.' Souls strong in grace dwell more upon their encouragements to holiness and believing, than upon their discouragements. 'He considered him that had promised.' He had an eye fixed upon the faithfulness of God, and the sufficiency and almightiness of God, and this bore up his heart above all discouragements. So in 2Co 4:16-18, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; while we look not (mark, they are not doating upon their discouragements) upon things that are seen, but upon things that are not seen: the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' An eye fixed upon encouragements makes heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet. Those blessed martyrs found it so, that were cast out all night, in a cold frosty night, naked, and were to be burnt the next day, who thus comforted themselves, The winter is sharp, but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all. Weak Christians have eyes to behold their discouragements, but none to see their encouragements; they look more upon their corruption than upon their sanctification; upon their disobedience than their obedience; upon their distrust than upon their faith; upon the old man than upon the new; and this keeps them low and weak in spirituals, it causes a leanness in their souls.

[6.] Sixthly, The zeal of weak Christians usually outstrips their wisdom and knowledge.

Weak Christians are very zealous, but not according to knowledge: Rom 10:2, 'For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' They were very zealous, but not true zealots, they are very peevish and pettish and censorious; but they want wisdom and knowledge to manage their zeal, to God's glory and their brethren's good. Such zeal had those two rabbins that set upon Charles the Fifth, to persuade him to turn Jew, as judging their religion to be the only religion in the world, and for which they were put to a cruel death, in the year 1530. A great zeal they had to the winning over of him to Judaism, but this zeal was their ruin. Zeal without knowledge is as wild-fire in a fool's hand; it is like the devil in the demoniac, that sometimes cast him into the fire, and sometimes into the water. So the disciples of Christ were weak in their light, and furious in their zeal: Luk 9:54, 'Let fire come down from heaven, and consume them,' say they. But mark what Christ saith, Luk 9:55 : 'Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of;' that is, ye know not what spirit acts you. You think that you are acted by such a spirit as Elijah of old was acted by, but you err, saith Christ; 'you have a zeal, but not according to knowledge,' therefore it is a human affection and not a divine motion. Zeal is like fire: in the chimney it is one of the best servants, but out of the chimney it is one of the worst masters. Zeal kept by knowledge and wisdom, in its proper place, is a choice servant to Christ and saints; but zeal not bounded by wisdom and knowledge, is the high way to undo all, and to make a hell for many at once.

Weak Christians are usually most zealous about circumstances and things that have least of God and Christ and the power of holiness in them; and most cold about substances, as woful experience doth evidence in these days. Zeal ordered by wisdom, feeds upon the faults of

offenders, not on their persons. It spends itself and its greatest heat principally upon those things that concern a man's self. It is most exercised about substantials: Tit 2:14, but that which is rash, is most exercised about circumstantials; Gal 1:14, Paul was, in the days of his ignorance, very zealous for the traditions of his fathers, &c.

[7.] Seventhly, Among all saints, the weakest saints act most like carnal sinners. No saint so like a sinner as a weak saint: 1Co 3:1-5, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For are ye not yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?' They were advanced but very little above the imperfections and passions and sins of mere men, of such which had nothing of the Spirit in them, &c. Do wicked men quarrel with their teachers, as shallow trivial teachers, when themselves are in fault, as being not capable of more mysterious matter? So did these babes here. Do wicked men impute their not profiting to the minister, as he that, having a thorn in his foot, complains of the roughness of the way as the cause of his limping, when as it was the thorn and not the roughness of the way that hurt him. Or as she, that, being struck with a sudden blindness, bid open the window, when as it was not the want of light, but want of sight, that troubled her. So did these babes in the text lay the fault of their non-proficiency upon their teachers, when the fault was wholly in themselves.

Now he calls them carnal, partly because the flesh was strong in them, and partly because they followed and relished the things of the flesh, and partly because they did in their actions resemble carnal men. Do carnal and wicked men cry up one good man, and cry down another? Do they lift up one, and abase another? So did they. Are wicked men full of envy, strife, and divisions? So were they. And these over-flowings of the gall and spleen, come from a fulness of bad humours, from that abundance of carnality that was in them. But now souls strong in grace are higher than carnal men, as Saul was higher than the people by head and shoulders. Souls strong in grace have their feet where carnal men's heads are: Pro 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Souls that are strong in grace, do act rather like angels than like carnal men; they do as much resemble the Father of spirits, as carnal men do the Father of lies.

[8.] Eighthly, Souls weak in grace are easily drawn aside out of the ways of holiness.

You know a man that hath but a little bodily strength, is easily thrust out of the way; so it is with souls weak in grace: 1Jn 3:7, 'Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.' Saith the apostle, 'Little children, let no man deceive you.' Many in these days, under pretences of high and glorious enjoyments of God, neglect and despise righteousness and holiness, crying up visions and manifestations, when their visions are only the visions of their own hearts and their manifestations are plain delusions. Ah! but says the apostle, 'Little children, let none of these deceive you.' I tell you he, and only he, that doth righteousness, is righteous, as God is righteous. Children, you know, may be easily cozened, and made to take counters for gold, because they are broader and brighter. Children in grace are soon deceived, hence is it that they are so cozened. 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols,' 1Jn 5:21. So in Heb 12:12-13, 'Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.' Some think that the apostle alludes to those combats of the heathens, wherein it was a token of yielding, when

a man hung down his hands. You are weak, saith the apostle, and by reason of trials you are apt to hang down your hands, and to give up all as lost; therefore, says he, lift up your hands to fight, and your feet to run, take heart and courage, faint not, give not over, turn not aside because of the sharpness of afflictions. But souls strong in grace will hold on in the ways of grace and holiness, in the face of all dangers and deaths, Psa 44:1-26.

[9.] Ninthly, Weak Christians are apt to make sense and feeling the judge of their spiritual estates and conditions.

And, therefore, upon every turn they are apt to judge themselves miserable, and to conclude that they have no grace, because they cannot feel it, nor discern it, nor believe it; and so making sense, feeling, and reason, the judge of their estates, they wrong, and perplex, and vex their precious souls, and make their lives a very hell: as if it were not one thing to be the Lord's, and another thing for a man to know that he is the Lord's; as if it were not one thing for a man to have grace, and another thing to know that he hath grace. The Canaanite woman had strong faith, but no assurance that we read of, Mat 15:22, seq. Gal 4:6, 'And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Mark, they are first the sons of God, and then the Spirit cries, Abba, Father. 1Jn 5:13, 'These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life.' Mark, they did believe, and they had eternal life, in respect of Christ their head, who, as a public person, was gone to heaven, to represent all his saints. And they had eternal life in respect of the promises, and they had eternal life in respect of the beginnings of it; and yet they did not know it, they did not believe it. Therefore 'these things write I unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God,' saith he, 'that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that this life is in his Son.' Ponder on Mic 7:7-9. Much of this you may read in my treatise called Heaven on Earth, or a well-grounded Assurance of Men's everlasting Happiness and Blessedness in this World, and to that I refer you. The word shall judge us at last, John 12:48; and therefore strong saints make only the word of God the judge of their spiritual condition now, as Constantine made it the judge and decider of all opinions.

[10.] Tenthly, Their thoughts and hearts are more taken with the love-tokens, and the good things they have by Christ, than with the person of Christ.

Oh their graces, their comforts, their enlargements, their meltings, and their warmings, &c., are the things that most take them. Their thoughts and hearts are so exercised and carried out about these, that the person of Christ is much neglected by them. The child is so taken with babies and rattles, &c., that the mother is not minded. And such is the carriage of weak Christians towards Christ. But now souls strong in grace are more taken with the person of Christ than they are with the love-tokens of Christ. They bless Christ indeed for every dram of grace, and for every good word from heaven, and for every good look from heaven; ay, but yet the person of Christ, that is more to them than all these.³ This is remarkable in the church, Song of Solomon 5:9-10, 'What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? &c. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand,' &c. She doth not say, My beloved is one that I have got so many thousands by, and heaven by, and pardon of sin by, and peace of conscience by. Oh no! but he is white and ruddy. Her soul was taken most with the person of Christ. Not but that every one is to mind the graces of Christ, and to be thankful for them; ay, but it is an argument of

weakness of grace, when the heart is more exercised about the bracelets, and the kisses, and the love-tokens of Christ, than it is about the person of Christ. But now saith one strong in grace, My bracelets are precious, but Christ is more precious; the streams of grace are sweet, but the fountain of grace is most sweet; the beams of the sun are glorious, but the sun itself is most glorious. A naked Christ, a despised Christ, a persecuted Christ, is more valued by a strong Christian, than heaven and earth is by a weak Christian.⁵

[11.] Eleventhly, Souls weak in grace are easily stopped and taken off from acting graciously and holily, when discouragements face them. This you may see in that remarkable instance concerning Peter, in Mat 26:69-75. A silly wench outfaces him; she daunts and dis-spirits this self-confident champion; she easily stops and turns him by saying, 'Thou wast with Jesus of Galilee,' Mat 26:70. 'But he denied it before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.' He makes as if he did neither understand her words or her meaning; and this false dissembling was a true denying of Christ. Now Mark saith, Mark 14:68, that upon the very first denial of Christ, the cock crew, and yet this fair warning could not secure him, but when another maid saw him, and said, 'This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth,' Mat 26:72, he denied it with an oath, saying, 'I do not know the man.' This was fearful and dreadful, and the worse because his Master, whom he forswore, was now upon his trial, and might say with wounded Cæsar, καὶ σὺ τέχνον What! and thou my son Brutus! Is this thy kindness to thy friend, to him that has loved thee, and saved thee, and owned thee? &c. Then Mat 26:73, 'Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.' And Mat 26:74. 'He began to curse and to swear, I know not the man. The Greek word that is rendered curse, imports a cursing and a damning of himself, an imprecation of God's wrath, and a separation from the presence and glory of God, if he knew the man. Some writers say, that he cursed Christ. 'I know not the man,' saith he. Though it were ten thousand times better to bear than to swear, and to die than to lie, yet when discouragement faces him, he is so amazed and daunted, that he tells the most incredible lie that almost could be uttered by the mouth of man. For there was scarce any Jew, saith Grotius, that knew not Christ by sight, being famous for those abundance of miracles that he wrought before their eyes. Neither could Peter allege any cause why he came thither, if he had not known Christ. But, Mat 26:75, 'He went out, and wept bitterly.' One sweet look of love breaks his heart in pieces, he melts under the beamings forth of divine favour upon him: Once he leapt into a sea of waters to come to Christ, and now he leaps into a sea of tears for that he had so shamefully denied Christ. Clement notes, that Peter so repented, that all his life-time after, every night when he heard the cock crow, he would fall upon his knees and weep bitterly, begging pardon for this dreadful sin.

Others say, that after his lying, cursing, and denying of Christ, he was ever and anon weeping, and that his face was furrowed with continual tears. He had no sooner taken in poison, but he vomits it up again, before it got to the vitals. He had no sooner handled a serpent, but he turns it into a rod to scourge his soul with remorse. This truth is further confirmed by the speech and carriage of the disciples: Luk 24:21, seq., 'We trusted,' say they, 'that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, but now we cannot tell what to say to it.' Here their hope hangs the wing extremely. Weak souls find it as hard to wait for God, as it is to bear evil. This weakness Christ checks, Luk 24:25, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,' &c. And John 16:5, the first news Christ tells them, is of their sufferings and of his leaving of them; and upon the thoughts hereof their hearts were so filled with sorrow, that they could not so much as

say, 'Master, whither goest thou?' ver. 6. But now, souls strong in grace will hold on in holy and gracious actings in the very face of the greatest discouragements, as those in Psa 44:19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.' And so the three children, they hold up in the face of all discouragements. And so those brave worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, Heb 11:1-40, their hearts were carried out exceedingly, notwithstanding all discouragements, to hold on in ways of holiness, and in their actings of faith upon God, in the face of all dangers and deaths that did attend them. When Henry the Eighth had spoken and written bitterly against Luther, saith Luther, Tell the Henries, the bishops, the Turks, and the devil himself, do what they can, we are children of the kingdom, worshipping of the true God, whom they, and such as they, spit upon and crucified. And of the same spirit and metal were many martyrs. Basil affirms of the primitive saints, that they had so much courage and confidence in their sufferings, that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal and constancy, turned Christians.

[12.] Twelfthly, Weak saints mind their wages and veils more than their work. Their wages, their veils, is joy, peace, comfort, and assurance, &c.; and their work is waiting on God, believing in God, walking with God, acting for God, &c. Now, weak saints' minds are more carried out, and taken up about their wages, about their veils, than they are about their work, as experience doth abundantly evidence.⁴ Ah! Christians, if you don't mind your wages more than your work, what means the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen? 1Sa 15:14. What means those earnest and vehement cryings out and wrestlings for joy, peace, comfort, and assurance, when the great work of believing, of waiting, and of walking with God, is so much neglected and disregarded? But now strong saints are more mindful of their work than they are of their wages. Lord! saith a strong saint, do but uphold me in a way of believing, in a way of working, in a way of holy walking, &c., and it shall be enough, though I should never have assurance, comfort, peace, or joy, till my dying day. If thou wilt carry me forth so as thou mayest have honour, though I have no comfort; so thou mayest have glory, though I have no peace, I will bless thee, Rom 4:18-20. I know, says such a soul, though a life of comfort be most pleasing to me, yet a life of believing, abstracted from comfort, is most honourable to thee, and therefore I will be silent before thee. Lord! do but help me in my work, and take thine own time to give me my wages, to give me comfort, joy, peace, assurance. They are none of the best servants that mind their wages more than their work, nor they are none of the best Christians that mind their comforts and their in-comes more than that homage and duty that they owe to God.

Before I come to the second thing premised, give me leave to give you this hint; viz., that there is no such way to joy, peace, and assurance, as this, to mind your work more than your wages. Ah I had many mourning, complaining Christians done thus, their mourning before this had been turned into rejoicing, and their complaining into singings. Christians, the high way to comfort is to mind comfort less, and duty more; it is to mind more what thou shouldst do, than what thou wouldst have, as you may see in Eph 1:13, 'In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of faith, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.' The original runs thus **■v ■ κα■ πιστε■σαντες**, in whom believing, ye were sealed. While faith is busied and exercised about Christ, and those varieties of glories and excellencies that are in him, the Lord comes, and by his Spirit seals up the life, and love, and glory of them.

Thus by divine assistance I have despatched the first thing, viz., the deciphering of weak Christians.

II. The second thing that I propounded for the further opening and clearing of this point was, to hold forth to you those things that tend to support, comfort, and uphold weak Christians. And truly I must needs say, that if ever there were a time wherein weak Christians had need of support, I verily believe this is the time wherein we live, for by the horrid profaneness of men on the one hand, and the abominable, loose, and rotten principles of others on the other hand, the hearts of many weak Christians especially are sadded, that God would not have sadded, and their spirits wounded and grieved, that God would have comforted and healed; and therefore I shall dwell the longer upon this second thing, And the first thing that I shall lay down by way of support is this.

Support 1. That the weakest Christians have as much interest and propriety in Christ, and all the fundamental good that comes by Christ, as the strongest saints in the world have.

Weak saints are as much united to Christ, as much justified by Christ, as much reconciled by Christ, and as much pardoned by Christ, as the strongest saints. It is true, weak Christians cannot make so much improvement and advantage of their interest in Christ, as strong saints can; they have not that power, that wisdom, that spiritual skill to make that advantage of their interest and propriety in Christ as strong saints have; yet have they as much interest and propriety in the Lord Jesus, and all the fundamental good that comes by him, as the strongest saint that breathes. The sucking child hath as much interest and propriety in the father, and in what is the father, as the child that is grown up to age, though the young child has not that skill, nor that power, nor wisdom to improve that interest to his advantage, as he that is grown up in years hath. It is just so here; a soul weak in grace hath as much interest in the Lord as the strongest saint hath, though he hath not that skill to improve that interest. And is not this a singular comfort and support? Verily, were there no more to bear up a poor weak saint from fainting under all their sins, and sorrows, and sufferings, yet this alone might do it, &c. The second support and comfort to weak saints is this:

Support 2. That God doth with an eye of love reflect upon the least good that is in them, or done by them. And is not this a glorious comfort and support, that the Lord looks with an eye of love upon the least good that is in you, or done by you? You cannot have a good thought, but God looks upon that thought with an eye of love: Psa 32:5, 'I said I would confess my sin, and thou forgavest mine iniquity.' I said it in my thoughts, that I would confess my sin, and thou presently meeting me with pardoning mercy, forgavest mine iniquity. So in Mal 3:16, 'And there was a book of remembrance written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' They had but some thoughts of God, and God reflects upon those thoughts with an eye of love: Isa 38:5, 'I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears.' Tears we look upon but as poor things, and yet God looks upon them as pearls, and therefore he puts them into his bottle, as the psalmist speaks. There is not a bit of bread, not a drop of drink thou givest, but God casts an eye of love upon it, Mat 25:35-36.

There is not a desire that arises in thy soul, but the Lord takes notice of it: Pro 10:17, 'Thou hast heard the desire of the humble.' Weak saints are full of desires, their whole life is a life of desires, they are still a-breathing out holy desires: Lord, pardon such a sin, and give me power against such a sin, and strength, Lord, to withstand such a temptation, and grace, Lord, to uphold me under such an affliction, &c.; and the Lord hears and answers such gracious breathings and

longings.

It was holy Jewel's desire, that he might die preaching; and God looked with an eye of love upon his desire, and he had it.

It was Latimer's desire, that he might shed his heart's blood for Christ; and God looked with an eye of love upon the breathings of his heart, and he had it. The Israelites did but groan, and God looked upon their groans with an eye of love; he comes down, he makes his arm bare, he tramples upon their proud enemies, and by miracles he saved them. O weak Christian! is not this a singular comfort, that the Lord reflects with an eye of love upon your thoughts, upon your desires, upon your tears, and upon your groanings, &c. What though others slight you! what though others take no notice of you! yet the Lord casts an eye of love upon you.

Some think it very strange that God should set down in Scripture the story of Jacob, a poor countryman, Gen 31:1-55, that he had a few ewes and lambs, streaked and spotted, and yet take no notice of the great emperors and kings of the earth, nor of their great actions and warlike designs in the world. But this is to shew that tender love and respect that God bears to his children, above what he does to the great ones of this world. God is more taken with Lazarus's patched coat than with Dives's silken robe, &c. A third thing that I shall propound for the support and comfort of weak saints is this:

Support 3. Consider, the Lord looks more upon your graces than he doth upon your weaknesses. Or thus, The Lord will not cast away weak saints, by reason of the weaknesses that cleaves to their persons or services. In 2Ch 30:18-20, there came a multitude of people to eat the passover, but they were not prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary; therefore Hezekiah puts up a prayer for them, and the text saith, that the 'Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.' The Lord looked upon their uprightness, and so passed over all their other weaknesses. He did not cast off Peter for his horrid sins, but rather looks upon him with an eye of love and pity: Mark 16:7, 'But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.' O admirable love! O matchless mercy! where sin abounds, grace does superabound. This is the glory of Christ, that he carries it sweetly towards his people, when they carry themselves unworthily towards him. Christ looks more upon Peter's sorrow than upon his sin, upon his tears than upon his oaths, &c. The Lord will not cast away weak saints for their great unbelief, because there is a little faith in them. He will not throw them away for that hypocrisy that is in them, because of that little sincerity that is in them. He will not cast away weak saints for that pride that is in them, because of those rays of humility that shine in them. He will not despise his people for their passions, because of those grains of meekness that are in them. We will not throw away a little gold because of a great deal of dross that cleaves to it, nor a little wheat because mixed with much chaff, and will God? will God?

We will not cast away our garments because of some spots, nor our books because of some blots, nor our jewels because of some flaws, and do we think that the Lord will cast away his dearest ones, because of their spots, and blots, and flaws? Surely no. God looks more upon the bright side of the cloud than the dark: Jas 5:11, 'Remember the patience of Job.' It is not, remember the murmuring of Job, the cursing of Job, the complainings of Job, the impatience of Job; but, 'Remember the patience of Job.' God looks upon the pearl, and not upon the spot that is in it. So in Heb 11:30-31, there is mention made of Rahab's faith, love, and peaceable behaviour towards the

spies, but no mention made of her lie. The Lord overlooks her weakness, and keeps his eye upon her virtues. Where God sees but a little grace, he doth as it were hide his eyes from those circumstances that might seem to deface the glory of it. So in 1Pe 3:6, 'Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Mark there was but one good word in Sarah's speech to Abraham, she called her husband lord; the speech otherwise was a speech of unbelief, yet the Holy Ghost speaking of her in reference to that speech, conceals all the evil in it, and mentions only the reverent title she gave to her husband, commending her for it.

He that drew Alexander, whilst he had a scar upon his face, drew him with his finger upon the scar. So when the Lord comes to look upon a poor soul, he lays his finger upon the scar, upon the infirmity, that he may see nothing but grace, which is the beauty and the glory of the soul. Ah! but weak Christians are more apt to look upon their infirmities than on their graces, and because their little gold is mixed with a great deal of dross, they are ready to throw away all as dross. Well, remember this, the Lord Jesus hath as great and as large an interest in the weakest saints, as he hath in the strongest. He hath the interest of a friend, and the interest of a father, and the interest of a head, and the interest of a husband; and, therefore, though saints be weak, yea, though they be very weak, yet having as great and as large an interest in them as in the strongest saints, he cannot but overlook their weakness, and keep a fixed eye upon their graces. A fourth support is this:

Support 4. That the Lord will graciously preserve and strengthen those weak graces that are in you.

Though your graces be as a spark of fire in the midst of an ocean of corruption, yet the Lord will preserve and blow up that spark of fire into a flame. It was the priest's office in the time of the law, to keep the fire in the sanctuary from going out; and it is the office of our Lord Jesus, as he is our high priest, our head, our husband, our mediator, for to blow up that heavenly fire that he hath kindled in any of our souls. His honour, his faithfulness, and his goodness is engaged in it, and therefore he cannot but do it, else he would lose much love and many prayers and praises, did he not cherish, preserve, and strengthen his own work in his own people. The faith of the disciples was generally weak, as I have formerly shewed you, and yet how sweetly doth the Lord Jesus carry it towards them! John 16:1-33, Acts 2:1-47. He was still a-breathing out light, life, and love upon them; he was still a-turning their water into wine, their bitter into sweet, and their discouragements into encouragements, and all to raise and keep up their spirits. His heart was much in this thing, therefore says he, 'It is necessary that I leave you, that I may send the Comforter to be a comfort and guide unto you.' I will pour out my Spirit upon you, that a little one may become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation, and that the feeble may be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord, Zec 12:8. That is a sweet text, Isa 65:8, 'Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the clusters, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do for my servants' sake,' &c. Oh, saith Christ to the Father, here are a company of weak saints that have some buddings of grace, oh do not destroy it, Father! there is a blessing in it, though it be but weak. The genuine sense of the similitude, I think, is this: when a vine being blasted or otherwise decayed is grown so bad and so barren, that scarce any good clusters of grapes can be discerned on it, whereby it may be deemed to have any life, or of ever becoming fruitful again, and the husbandman is about to grub it up or cut it down to the ground, one standing by sees here a cluster, and there a little cluster, and cries out, Oh do not grub up the

vine, do not cut down the vine, it hath a little life, and by good husbandry it may be made fruitful. We may look upon the Lord Jesus as thus pleading with his Father's justice: Father, I know thou seest that these souls are dry and barren, and that there is little or no good in them, and therefore thou mightest justly cut them down. But, O my Father! I see here a bunch and there a bunch, here a little grace and there a little grace, surely there is a blessing it. Oh spare it, let it not be stubbed up, let it not be destroyed.

Mat 12:27, 'A bruised reed shall he not break, nor smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.'

'A bruised reed shall he not break.' The Jewish commentators carry it thus: he shall not tyrannise over, but nourish and cherish the poor, weak, feeble ones, that are wont to be oppressed by great ones. But men more spiritual carry it thus: Christ will not carry it roughly and rigorously towards poor weak tender souls, whose graces are as a bruised reed and as smoking flax. A reed is a contemptible thing, a tender thing, it will break sometimes before a man is aware; a bruised reed is more tender, it will be broken with a touch, yet Christ will not break such a bruised reed, i.e. a soul weak in grace.

'Nor quench the smoking flax.' The wick of a candle is little worth, and yet less when it smokes, as yielding neither light nor heat, but rather smokes, and offends with an ill smell, which men cannot bear, but will tread it out. But the Lord Jesus Christ will not do so. Souls whose knowledge, love, faith, and zeal do as but smoke out, the Lord Jesus will not trample under foot; nay, he will cherish, nourish, and strengthen such to life eternal. Look, what tallow is to the wick, or oil is to the lamp, that will the Lord Jesus be to the graces of weak Christians.

'Till he shall bring forth judgment unto victory.' That is, until the sanctified frame of grace begun in their hearts be brought to that perfection that it prevaieth over all opposite corruption.

Thus you see how sweetly the Lord Jesus carries it to souls weak in grace; therefore let not those that bring forth a hundredfold despise those that bring forth but thirty, nor those that have five talents despise those that have but two. The fifth support is this:

Support 5. That weak saints may be very useful to the strong, and sometimes may do more than strong saints can. As you may see in 1Co 12:14-28. The apostle in this Scripture discovers the singular use of the weakest saint in the body of Christ by the usefulness of the weakest and meanest member in the natural body to the strongest: 1Co 12:21, 'The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the foot, I have no need of thee.' By the head and by the eye he means such saints as were eminent in gifts and graces, that were adorned more richly and that shined more gloriously in grace and gracious abilities than others. Oh these should not despise those that were not so eminent and excellent as themselves; for God hath so tempered the inequality of the members in the natural body, that the more excellent and beautiful members can in no wise lack the more abject and weak members; therefore slight not the weakest saints, for certainly, at first or last, the weakest will be serviceable to the strongest. A dwarf may be useful to a giant, a child to a man; sometimes a little finger shall do that that a limb in the body cannot do; it is so often in Christ's spiritual body. I will give you a very famous instance for this. At the council of Nice there was 318 bishops, and by the subtlety of a philosopher disputing against the marriage of ministers, they generally voted against it, that those that were single should not

marry. At length up starts Paphnutius, a plain Christian, and in the name of Christ, with the naked word of God, he pleaded against them all in that case; and God so wrought by his arguments, that he convinced the 318 bishops, and carried the cause against them; yea, and so convinced the philosopher of his error, that before all he freely confessed it: 'As long,' saith he, 'as men's words were only pressed, I could repel words with words; but what is weak man to withstand the word of God? I yield; I am conquered.'

Weak Christians may be of singular use to the strongest; those that know most may learn more even from the weakest saints.

Junius was converted by discoursing with a ploughman; and, Acts 18:24-27, Apollos, though he was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures as the text speaks, yet was he furthered and bettered in the knowledge of Christ's kingdom by Aquila and Priscilla. A poor tent-maker and his wife were instrumental to acquaint him with those things that he knew but weakly. He had not ascended above John's baptism, but they had, and so communicated their light and knowledge to him. The sixth support is this:

Support 6. Where there is but a little grace, there God expects less, and will accept of less, though it be accompanied with many failings.

Thou sayest, Oh! I have but a little grace, a little faith, a little love, a little zeal. Oh know, where there is but a little grace, there God expects less obedience, and will accept of less service: 2Co 8:12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, and not according to that which he hath not.' The two mites cast into the treasury, Luk 21:3, by the poor widow, her heart being in the action, were more acceptable than two talents cast in by others. Noah's sacrifice could not be great, and yet it was greatly accepted by God. In the time of the law, God accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a gripe of goat's hair for an oblation; and certainly God hath lost none of his affections to poor souls in the time of the gospel: Song of Solomon 2:14, 'Let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is lovely.' The Hebrew word *ethkolech* signifies any sound such as birds or brutes make. Their chattering is like lovely songs in the ear of God, their mite is a sweet oblation. Parents, that have but some drops of that love and tender affection that is in God to his people, yet accept of a very little service from their weak children; and will not God? In time of strength God looks for much, but in the time of weakness God will bear much, and overlook much, and accept of a little, yea, of a very little.

One, writing of the tree of knowledge, saith that 'it bears many leaves, but little fruit.' Though weak saints have a great many leaves, and but little fruit, little grace, yet that little the Lord will kindly accept of.

Artaxerxes, the Persian monarch, was famous for accepting of a little water from the hand of a loving subject; God makes himself famous, and his grace glorious, by his kind acceptance of the weakest endeavours of his people, &c. The seventh support is this:

Support 7. The least measure of grace is as true an earnest, and as good and sure a pledge of greater measures of grace that the soul shall have here, and of glory that the soul shall have hereafter, as the greatest measure of grace is.

'He that hath begun a good work, he will perfect it to the day of Christ,' Php 1:6. Christ is called not only the author, but also the finisher of our faith, Heb 12:2. In Mal 4:2-3, 'Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, and he shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.' And so in Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' Zec 12:8, 'In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.' So in Hos 14:5-7, I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his fruits as Lebanon: his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.' The tree in Alcinous's garden had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another. Such a tree will God make every Christian to be. 'The righteous,' though never so weak, 'shall flourish like the palm tree,' Psa 92:12-14. Now the palm tree never loseth his leaf or fruit, saith Pliny. An old man being asked if he grew in goodness, answered, Yea, doubtless I believe I do, because the Lord hath said, 'They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat, and flourishing;' or green, as the Hebrew hath it. In the island of St Thomas, on the back side of Africa, in the midst of it is a hill, and over that a continual cloud, wherewith the whole island is watered. Such a cloud is Christ to weak saints. Though our hearts naturally are like the isle of Patmos, which is so barren of any good as that nothing will grow but on earth that is brought from other places, yet Christ will make them like 'a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not,' Isa 58:11. The eighth support is this:

Support 8. That the least good that is done by the weakest saint shall not be despised by Christ, but highly esteemed and rewarded. As you may see in Mat 19:27, 'Behold we have forsaken all, and followed thee, and what shall we have?' A great all! a great catch indeed, as I have formerly shewed you; they left a few old boats and torn nets and poor household stuff, yet Christ carries it very sweetly and lovingly to them, and tells them in Mat 19:28, that they should 'sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Christ tells them they shall sit as ambassadors or chief councillors and presidents, which have the chief seats in the kingly assembly, yea, they shall sit as kings. They are here but obscure kings, but kings elected; but in that day they shall be kings crowned, kings glorified, kings acknowledged. Then they shall as far outshine the glory of the sun, as the sun now outshines a twinkling star. In that day they shall be 'higher than the kings of the earth,' Psa 89:27. So in Mat 10:42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward, for a cup of cold water.' Water, the common element, and cold water, which cost them not so much as fire to warm it; for that, there is a torrent and a very sea of all pleasures provided for thee to all eternity. God esteems men's deeds by their minds, and not their minds by their deeds. The least and cheapest courtesy that can be shewed shall be rewarded. There is an emphasis in that deep asseveration, 'Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Mercy is as sure a grain as vanity. God is not like to break, neither will he forget the least good done by the least saint. The butler may forget Joseph, and Joseph may forget his father's house, but the Lord will not forget the least good done by the weakest saint.⁴ The Duke of Burgundy, being a wise and loving man, did bountifully reward a poor gardener, for offering of him a rape-root, being the best present the poor man had; and will not our God, whose very nature is goodness, kindness, and sweetness, &c., do much more? Surely he will reward the least good done by the weakest saint.

Therefore be not discouraged, weak Christians, though you should meet with hard measure from the world, though they should reward your weak services with reproaches, &c., for the Lord will reward you; he 'will not despise the day of small things,' Heb 6:10. What though, O precious soul, thy language be clipped and broken? what though thou canst but chatter like a crane? what though thou canst not talk so fluently and eloquently for Christ as others? what though thy hand be weak, that thou canst not do so much for Christ as others? nor do so well for Christ as others? yet the Lord, seeing thy heart sincere, will reward thee. Thou shalt have an everlasting rest for a little labour, and a great reward for a little work. The ninth support is this:

Support 9. That as your graces are weaker than others, so your temptations shall be fewer, and your afflictions lighter than others.

God in much wisdom and love will suit your burdens to your backs, he will suit all your temptations and afflictions to your strength. Your burdens shall not be great, if your strength be but little, as you may see, 1Co 10:13, 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' The Lord, O weak Christian! will suit thy burden to thy back, and his strokes to thy strength. This is most evident in Scripture, that the strongest in grace have always been most tempted, afflicted, and distressed.

If Abraham excel others in faith, God will try the strength of Abraham's faith to the uttermost, and put him to that that he never put man to before, Gen 20:1-18. If Moses excel all others in meekness, the Lord will try the strength of that grace, and Moses shall have to do with as proud and as murmuring a generation, as ever man had to do with. If Job carry the day from all others, in point of patience, he shall be exercised with such strange and unheard of afflictions, as shall try not only the truth, but also the strength of his patience to the uttermost. If Paul have more glorious revelations than the rest of the apostles, Paul shall be more buffeted and exercised with temptations, than the rest of the apostles. And thus you see it clear by all these instances, that the best and choicest saints have always met with the worst and greatest temptations and afflictions. So when the disciples were in the lowest form, when they were weak in grace, the Lord Jesus exercises them but with light afflictions; but when they had a greater measure of the Spirit poured upon them, then their troubles were increased and multiplied, and their former troubles, in comparison of the latter, were but as scratches of pins to stabs at the heart, Acts 2:1-21. When the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon them, then they were afflicted, opposed, and persecuted with a witness; when they had a greater measure of the Spirit, to enable them to bear the hatred, frowns, strokes, and blows of the enraged world, then all of them had the honour to suffer a violent death for Christ, as histories do evidence. That is a very remarkable scripture, Luk 24:49, 'And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.' The Lord Jesus would not have them go from Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high. By 'the promise of the Father,' is meant the gifts and graces of the Spirit that is promised in Isa 44:3; Joe 2:28; John 14:16, and John 15:26. 'Tarry ye here,' says Christ, 'at Jerusalem, till ye be completely armed and fitted for all encounters, till ye be endued with power;' or, as the Greek carries it, 'till ye be clothed,' νδσθησε. They were as naked persons; they had but a little of the Spirit, so that they were not complete; they were not clothed with the Spirit, till after the ascension of Christ. Now saith Christ, 'Tarry until such time as ye are clothed with the Spirit.' The Lord Jesus knew well enough that they should meet with bitter

opposition, terrible afflictions, and dreadful persecution for his and the gospel's sake; therefore 'Tarry,' said he, 'until ye be clothed with the Holy Ghost,' that so nothing may daunt ye, nor sink ye. The tenth support is this:

Support 10. That your persons stand not before God in your own righteousness, but in the perfect, spotless, and matchless righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

Weak hearts are apt to sit down troubled and discouraged, when they look upon that body of sin that is in them, and those imperfections that attend their chiefest services; they are ready to say, We shall one day perish by the strength of our lusts, or by the defects of our services. Oh but weak souls should remember this, to strengthen them against all discouragements, that their persons stand before God, clothed with the righteousness of their Saviour, and so God owns them and looks upon them as persons wrapped up in his royal robe. Hence it is that he is called, Jer 23:6, 'Jehovah tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness.' And so in 1Co 1:30, 'He is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.'

Though weak saints have nothing of their own, yet in Christ they have all, for in him is all fulness, Col 1:19, both repletive and diffusive; both of abundance and of redundance; both of plenty and of bounty. He is made to weak saints wisdom, by his prophetic office; and he is made to weak saints righteousness and sanctification, by his priestly office; and he is made to weak saints redemption, by his kingly office. So in Col 2:10, 'And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.'

Varro reports of two hundred and eighty-eight several opinions that were among the philosophers, about the complete happiness of man; but they were out in them all, one judging his happiness lay in this and another in that. They caught at the shadow of happiness, but could not come at the tree of life, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is weak saints' complete happiness. Rev 14:5, 'And in their mouths was found no guile, for they were without fault before the throne of God.' Though men may accuse you, judge and condemn you, yet know for your support, that you are acquitted before the throne of God. However you may stand in the eyes of men, as full of nothing but faults, persons made up of nothing but sin, yet are you clear in the eyes of God. So in Song of Solomon 4:7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' There is none, such as are the spots of wicked men, nor no spot in mine account. God looks upon weak saints in the Son of his love, and sees them all lovely; they are as the tree of Paradise, Gen 3:6, 'fair to his eye, and pleasant to his taste.' Or as Absalom, in whom there was no blemish from head to foot. Ah, poor souls! you are apt to look upon your spots and blots, and to cry out with the leper not only 'Unclean, unclean!' but 'Undone, undone!' Well, for ever remember this, that your persons stand before God in the righteousness of Christ; upon which account you always appear, before the throne of God, without fault; you are all fair, and there is no spot in you. The eleventh support is this:

Support 11. Your sins shall never provoke Christ, nor prevail with Christ so far, as to give you a bill of divorce.

Oh there is much in it, if the Lord would set it home upon your hearts. Your sins shall never prevail so far with Christ, nor never so far provoke him, as to work him to give you a bill of divorce. Your sins may provoke Christ to frown upon you, they may provoke Christ to chide with you, they may provoke him greatly to correct you, but they shall never provoke Christ to give you a bill of divorce:

Psa 89:30-34, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' That is a great support to a weak saint, that his sin shall never separate him from God nor Christ. Thou art many times afraid that this deadness, this dulness, this earthliness, and these wandering thoughts, &c., that do attend thee, will provoke the Lord Jesus to sue a bill of divorce against thee. But remember this, thy sins shall never so far prevail with Christ, as to work him to give thee a bill of divorce. Mark, There is nothing can provoke Christ to give thee a bill of divorce but sin:

Now sin is slain; ergo, I shall open this to you in three things:

[1.] First, Sin is slain judicially; for it is condemned both by Christ and his people, and so it is dead according to law; which is and may be a singular comfort and support to weak saints, that their greatest and worst enemy, sin, is condemned to die, and shall not for ever vex and torment their precious souls. It is dead judicially, it is under the sentence of condemnation: 1Co 15:55-56, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin,' &c. The apostle here triumphs over it as a thief condemned to death. Sin is sentenced now; though not fully put to death, it is dead judicially. As when the sentence of death is passed upon a malefactor, you say he is a dead man; why? he is judicially dead; so is sin, sin is judicially dead. When a man that hath robbed and wounded another is taken, and sentenced judicially, we say he is a dead man; and it is often a great refreshing and satisfaction to a man that he is so. Sin, O weak soul! is sentenced and judicially slain; and therefore that can never work the Lord Jesus to give thee a bill of divorce. The thoughts of which should much refresh thee and support thee.

[2.] Secondly, Sin is dead or slain civilly, as well as judicially. It is civilly dead, because the power of it is much abated, and its dominion and tyranny overpowered. As when a king or tyrant is whipped and stripped of all power to domineer, reign, and play the tyrant, he is civilly dead, even while he lives; so is sin in this sense dead even while it lives, Rom 6:14. That text is suitable to our purpose: Hos 13:1, 'When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.'

What is the meaning of these words? The meaning is this: When the king of Ephraim spake, the people even trembled at his voice, such power once he had; but when he offended in Baal, by serving Baal, by giving himself up to idolatry, he died in respect of obedience not yielded to him as formerly. Time was that he was terrible, but when he fell to idolatry, his strength and glory came down, so that now he became even like a dead carcase.

Adam died civilly the same day that he sinned. The creatures that before lovingly obeyed him, as soon as he renounced obedience to his God, they renounced all obedience to him or his sovereignty, so that he civilly died the very same day that he sinned. That is a sweet word that you have, Rom 6:11, 'Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.' Therefore Christ will never divorce you for sin. Oh what a support may this be to a weak saint, that sin, that he fears above all other things in the world, is slain judicially and civilly. The Lord hath whipped and stripped it of all its ruling, reigning, domineering, tyrannizing power. Oh, therefore, Christians, look upon sin as dead, that is, as not to be obeyed, as not to be acknowledged, no more than a tyrant that is stripped of all his tyrannizing power. People that are wise, and understand their liberty, look

not upon such a one as fit to be obeyed and served, but as one fit to be renounced and destroyed. Do you so look upon your sins, and deal accordingly with them.

[3.] Thirdly, Sin is slain naturally, as well as civilly. Christ hath given it its death's wound by his death and resurrection. He hath given sin such a wound, that it cannot be long-lived, though it may linger awhile in a saint. As a tree that is cut at the root with a sore gash or two, must die within a year, perhaps a month, nay, it may be within a week; though for a time it may flourish, it may have leaves and fruit, yet it secretly dies, and will very shortly wither and perish. The Lord Jesus hath given sin such a mortal wound, by his death and Spirit, and by the communication of his favour and grace to the soul, that sin shall never recover its strength more, but die a lingering death in the souls of the saints. Christ did not die all at once upon the cross, but by little and little; to shew us, that his death should extend to the slaying of sin gradually in the souls of the saints. When our enemy hath a mortal wound, we say he is a dead man, his wound is mortal; so when Jesus Christ hath given sin such a deadly wound, such a mortal blow, that it shall never recover its strength and power more, we may truly say, it is dead, it is slain. Therefore cheer up, O weak souls, for certainly sin that is thus slain can never provoke Jesus Christ to give you a bill of divorce. Ah! that all weak Christians would, like the bee, abide upon these sweet flowers, and gather honey out of them, &c. To proceed. The twelfth support is this:

Support 12. Christ and you are sharers.

Know this, weak saints, for your support and comfort, 1. That Christ shares with you, and you share with Christ.

I shall open this sweet truth to you a little.

[1.] Christ shares with you in your natures. In Heb 2:16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. And by this he hath advanced fallen man above the very angels. This is the great mystery spoken of, 1Ti 3:16, 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh,' &c.

[2.] The Lord Jesus shares with you in your afflictions. In Isa 63:9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' It is between Christ and his church as between two lute strings, no sooner one is struck but the other trembles.

[3.] He shares with you in all sufferings and persecutions, as well as in all your afflictions.

Acts 9:4-5, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' There is such a near union between the Lord Jesus Christ and the weakest saints, that a man cannot strike a saint but he must strike through the very heart of Christ. Their sufferings are held his, Col 1:24; and their afflictions are his afflictions, and their reproaches are his reproaches, Heb 13:13; and their provocations are his provocations, Neh 4:4-5; God is provoked more than Nehemiah. So Isa 8:18, compared with Heb 2:13. 'Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and wonders in Israel.' This the apostle applies to Christ, Heb 2:13.

[4.] The Lord Jesus Christ shares with you in all your temptations, Heb 2:17-18, and Heb 4:15-16.

Christ was tempted, and he was afflicted as well as you, that he might be able so succour you that are tempted. As a poor man that hath been troubled with pain and grief, he will share with others that are troubled with pain or grief. Ah, friends! the Lord Jesus Christ hath lost none of his affections by going to heaven; he is still full of compassion, though free from personal passion. When he was on earth, oh! how did he sympathize with his poor servants in all their temptations. 'Satan,' says Christ to Peter, 'hath desired to winnow thee, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' Luk 22:32. Luther, in his preaching, met with every man's temptation, and being once asked how he could do so? answered, Mine own manifold temptations and experiences are the cause thereof. Oh! the manifold temptations that the Lord Jesus hath undergone, makes him sensible, as I may say, and willing to share with us in our temptations.

Secondly, As Christ shares with weak saints, so weak saints share with Christ. And this I shall shew you briefly in a few particulars.

[1.] Weak saints share with Christ in his divine nature. 2Pe 1:4, 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.' Not of the substance of the Godhead, as the Familists say, for that is incommunicable; but by the divine nature we are to understand those divine qualities, called elsewhere, 'the image of God,' 'the life of God,' that whereby we are made like to God in wisdom and holiness, wherein the image of God, after which man was at first created, consists, Eph 4:24, Col 3:10. Saints that do partake of this divine nature, that is, of those divine qualities before spoken of, they resemble God, not only as a picture doth a man, in outward lineaments, but as a child doth his father, in countenance and condition. And well may grace be called 'the divine nature,' for as God bringeth light out of darkness, comfort out of sorrow, riches out of poverty, and glory out of shame, so does grace bring day out of night, and sweet out of bitter, and plenty out of poverty, and glory out of shame. It turns counters into gold, pebbles into pearls, sickness into health, weakness into strength, and wants into abundance. 'Enjoying nothing, and yet possessing all things,' 2Co 6:10, &c.

[2.] Weak saints share with Christ in his Spirit and grace. In Psa 45:7, Christ is 'anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.' They have the anointings of the Spirit, as well as he, though not so richly as he. They have their measure, though not that measure and proportion of the Spirit as the Lord Jesus hath. So in John 1:16, 'Of his fulness have all we received, grace for grace.' There is in Christ not only a fulness of abundance, but also a fulness of redundancy. There is an overflowing fulness in Christ, as a fountain overflows, and yet still remains full. 'Grace for grace,' or, 'grace upon grace.' Abundance of grace, and the increases of graces, one by another.

'Grace for grace,' that is, as a child in generation receives member for member; or as the paper from the press receives letter for letter; or as the wax from the seal receives print for print; or as the glass from the image receives face for face, so does the weakest saint receive from Jesus Christ.

'Grace for grace,' that is, for every grace that is in Christ, there is the same grace in us, in some measure. There is not the weakest saint that breathes, but has in him some wisdom that answers to the wisdom of Christ, and some love that answers to the love of Christ, and some humility, meekness, and faith, that answers to the humility, meekness, and faith of the Lord Jesus, in truth and reality, though not in degree or quantity, &c.

[3.] Weak saints share with Christ, in the manifestations and discoveries of his Father. The Lord Jesus, that lies in the bosom of the Father, hath the clearest and the fullest manifestations of the Father that can be, and he comes and opens the love and heart of the Father, he unbosoms and unbowels God to the weakest saints, as in John 15:15, 'Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.' So in John 17:6-8.

[4.] Weak saints share with Christ in his honourable titles. In the title of sons, 1Jn 3:1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!' And in that of heirs, Rom 8:17. Yea, they are priests, and prophets, and kings, as well as he, as you may see by comparing Rev 1:5-6, with 1Pe 2:9, &c.

[5.] Weak saints share with Christ in his conquests. In 1Co 15:55-57, Rom 8:37, Christ hath triumphed over sword, famine, death, and devils, &c., and so have they through him also. Over all these we are more than conquerors, we are over and above conquerors. Oh what a blessed thing is this! that weak saints should share with Christ in his conquests. The poor weak soldier shares with his general in all his noble and honourable conquests; so does a poor weak Christian share with his Christ in all his noble and honourable conquests.

[6.] Lastly, They share with Christ in his honour and glory. And what would they have more? John 12:26, 'If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.' 1Pe 5:1, Eph 2:6, 'And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.' Believers are already risen in Christ their head, and they do at this instant sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Christ, as a public person, doth represent all believing souls, and they are set down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In Rom 8:17, 'If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.' And in John 14:2-3, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' So in Rev 3:21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' Now, what would you have more, weak souls? Christ shares with you, and you share with Christ. You are apt to be discouraged because you do not share with Christ in such measures of grace, comfort, and holiness, as such and such strong saints do. Oh! but remember in how many weighty things Christ and you are sharers; and be dejected if you can! Ah, Christians! what though you do not share in the honours, profits, pleasures, and advantages of the world; yet this should be your joy and crown, that Christ and your souls are sharers in those things that are most eminent and excellent, most precious and glorious; and the serious remembrance hereof should bear up your heads, hopes, and hearts, above all the troubles, temptations, and afflictions that come upon you in this world, &c.

III. The third thing propounded, was to shew you the duty of weak saints. Who these weak saints are, you have heard; and what their supports and comforts are, you have heard; and now I shall shew you their duty in the following particulars. And the first duty that I shall press upon weak saints is this:

1. To be thankful for that little grace they have.

Wilt thou be thankful, O Christian, for the least courtesy shewed thee by men? And wilt thou not be thankful for that little measure of grace that is bestowed upon thee by God? Dost thou remember, O weak Christian! that the least measure of grace is more worth than a thousand worlds? that it is more worth than heaven itself? Dost thou remember, O weak Christian! that the greatest number of men have not the least measure or dram of saving grace? Doth free grace knock at thy door, when it passes by the doors of thousands? And doth it cast a pearl of price into thy bosom, when others are left to wallow in their blood for ever? And wilt thou not be thankful? Oh do but consider, weak souls, how notoriously wicked you would have been if the Lord had not bestowed a little grace upon you! Thou lookest, O soul, one way, and there thou hearest some a-cursing, banning, and a-blaspheming God to his very face. Had not the Lord given thee a little grace, ten thousand to one but thou hadst been one in wickedness among these monsters of mankind. And thou lookest another way, and there thou seest persons dicing, carding, drabbing, and drunkenning, &c.; why, had not the Lord vouchsafed to thee some tastes and sips of grace, thou mightst have been as vile as the vilest among them. Ah, weak saints! you do not think what an awakened conscience would give for a little of that little grace that the Lord has given you. Were all the world a lump of gold, and in their hand to give, they would give it for the least spark of grace, for the least drop of mercy.

I have read of a man who, being in a burning fever, professed that if he had all the world at his dispose, he would give it all for one draught of beer. So would an awakened conscience for one dram of grace. Oh! saith such a soul, when I look up and see God frowning, when I look inward and feel conscience gnawing and accusing, when I look downward and see hell open to receive me, and when I look on my right and left hand, and see devils standing ready to accuse me, oh! had I a thousand worlds I would give them all for a little drop of that grace that such and such souls have, whom I have formerly slighted and despised. Oh! what would not a damned soul, that hath been but an hour in hell, give for a drop of that grace that thou hast in thy heart! Think seriously of this and be thankful.

Well! remember one thing more, and that is this, viz., that there is no such way to get much grace, as to be thankful for a little grace. He who opens his mouth wide in praises, shall have his heart filled with graces. Ingratitude stops the ear of God, and shuts the hand of God, and turns away the heart of the God of grace, and therefore you had need be thankful for a little grace. Unthankfulness is the greatest injustice that may be; it is a withholding from the great landlord of heaven and earth his due, his debt.

Philip branded his soldier that begged the land of one that had relieved him, and kindly entertained him, with ingratus hospes, the ungrateful guest. O weak saints! give not God an occasion by your ingratitude to brand you, and to write upon your foreheads, ungrateful children. Had it not been for unthankfulness, Adam had been in paradise, the lapsed angels in heaven, and the Jews in their own land of promise. The Jews have a saying, that the world stands upon three things, the law, holy worship, and retribution, and if these things fall the world will fall. You know how to apply it, Isa 1:3-4. But [that] I may in good earnest stir up your souls to thankfulness, will you take home with you these things, that haply have never or seldom been thought of by you?

[1.] First, Consider, that there is more need of praises than there is of prayers.

Two things do with open mouth proclaim this truth. And the first is this, our mercies do out-weigh our wants. This is true in temporals, but infinitely more in spirituals and eternals. Thou wantest this and that outward mercy, and what is thy want, O soul! of this and that single mercy, to the multitudes of mercies that thou dost enjoy? And as for spirituals, there is nothing more clear than this, that thy spiritual mercies do infinitely out-weigh thy spiritual wants. Thou wantest this and that spiritual mercy, but what are those wants to that God, that Christ, and all those spiritual blessings in heavenly places, with which thou art blest in Christ Jesus, Eph 1:4.

Secondly, Consider this, That all your wants and miseries are deserved and procured by your sins. Jer 4:18, 'Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee: this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thy heart.' And chap. 5:25, 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.' But now all your mercies are un-merited and undeserved; they all flow in upon you from the free love and favour of God; and therefore there is more need of praises than of prayers. And oh! that the high praises of God were more in your mouths, upon this very account! And oh that, with David, you would summon all the faculties of your souls to praise the Lord, who hath filled you, and followed you with the riches of mercy all your days, Psa 149:2, and Psa 103:1-5. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, Thankfulness is a surer and a better evidence of our sincerity, and spiritual ingenuity, than praying or hearing, or such like services, are.

Thanksgiving is a self-denying grace; it is an uncrowning ourselves and the creatures, to set the crown upon the head of our Creator; it is the making ourselves a footstool, that God may be lifted up upon his throne, and ride in a holy triumph over all; it is a grace that gives God the supremacy in all our hearts, thoughts, desires, words, and works. Self-love, flesh and blood, and many low and carnal considerations, may carry men to pray, and hear, and talk, &c. The whip may work a shame to beg, but thankfulness is the free-will offering of a child. There is nothing that so clearly and so fully speaks out your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, as thankfulness doth. Therefore, weak saints, if you would have a substantial evidence of your sincerity and spiritual ingenuity, be thankful for a little grace. The little birds do not sip one drop of water, but they look up, as if they meant to give thanks, to shew us what we should do for every drop of grace, &c.4 The third and last consideration to set this home is this:

[3.] A thankful soul holds consort with the music of heaven. By thankfulness thou holdest a correspondency with the angels, who are still a-singing hallelujahs to him that sits upon the throne, and is blessed for ever, Rev 4:6-9, and Rev 5:12-14. In heaven there is no prayers, but all praises. I am apt to think, that there cannot be a clearer nor a greater argument of a man's right to heaven, and ripeness for heaven, than this, being much in the work of heaven here on earth. There is no grace but love, nor no duty but thankfulness, that goes with us to heaven.

Ay, but weak saints may say, Sir! we judge that there is weight in what you say, to provoke us to thankfulness; but did we know that we had true grace, though it were never so little, though it were but as the grain of mustard seed, we would be thankful. But this is our condition, we live between fears and hopes; one day hoping we shall to heaven, and be happy for ever, another day we are fearing that we shall to hell, and miscarry for ever; and thus we are up and down, backward and forward. Sometimes we believe we have grace, and at other times we doubt we have none; sometimes we have a little light, and suddenly our sun is clouded; one day we are ready to say

with David, 'The Lord is our portion,' and the next day we are ready to complain with Jonah, that we are 'cast out' from the presence of the Lord.

Methinks I hear a weak saint saying thus to me, Sir, I would fain have an end put to this controversy that hath been so long in my soul, viz., whether I have grace or no, and if you please, I will tell you what I find, and so humbly desire your judgment and opinion upon the whole.

Well, speak on, poor soul, and let me hear what thou hast found in thine own soul.

Why, sir, then thus:

[1.] I find, first, a holy restlessness in my soul, till with old Simeon I have gotten Christ in my arms, yea, till I have gotten Christ in my heart, Luk 2:25-33. I go from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and yet I cannot rest, because 'I cannot find him whom my soul loves,' Song of Solomon 5:10. I am like Noah's dove, that could not rest until he had gotten into the ark. Oh I cannot be quiet till I know that I am housed in Christ. My soul is like a ship in a storm, that is tossed hither and thither, oh! where shall I find him? Oh! how shall I obtain him who is the chiefest of ten thousand? What Absalom said in another case, I can say in this, saith the poor soul; in his banishment he could say, 'What is all this to me, so long as I cannot see the king's face?' And truly the language of my soul is this, What is honour to me? and riches to me? and the favour of creatures to me? so long as I go mourning without my Christ, so long as I see not my interest in my Christ.

Well, have you anything else to say, O weak Christian?

Yes sir, I have one thing more to say.

What is that?

Why, it is this.

[2.] I can truly say, that the poorest, the most distressed and afflicted man in the world, is not fuller of desires, nor stronger in his desires than I am. The poor man desires bread to feed him, and the wounded man desires a plaster to heal him, and the sick man desires cordials to strengthen him, &c. But these are not fuller of desires after those things that are suitable to them, than I am of holy and heavenly desires. Oh that I had more of God! oh that I were filled with Christ! oh that I had his righteousness to cover me, his grace to pardon me, his power to support me, his wisdom to counsel me, his loving-kindness to refresh me, and his happiness to crown me, &c.

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir, I have one thing more to tell you.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[3.] Though I dare not say that Christ is mine, yet I can truly say, that Christ, his love, his works, his grace, his word, are the main objects of my contemplation and meditation. Oh I am always best, when I am most a-meditating and contemplating Christ, his love, his grace, &c. Psa 139:17, 'How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them!'

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir, I have one thing more to say.

What is that?

Why, it is this:

[4.] I can truly say, That the want of Christ's love is a greater grief and burden to my soul, than the want of any outward thing in this world. I am in a wanting condition, as to temporals; I want health, and strength, and trading, friends, and money, 'that answereth all things,' as Solomon speaks, Ecc 10:19. And yet all these wants do not so grieve me, and so afflict and trouble me, as the want of Christ, as the want of grace, as the want of the discoveries of that favour that is better than life, Psa 63:3-4.

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir, there is one thing more.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[5.] That I would not willingly nor resolvedly sin against Christ, for a world. It is true, I dare not say I have an interest in Christ, yet I dare say that I would not willingly and resolvedly sin against Christ for a world. I can say, through grace, were I this moment to die, that my greatest fear is of sinning against Christ, and my greatest care is of pleasing Christ. I know there was a time, when my greatest care was to please myself and the creature, and my greatest fear was to please myself and the creature. I can remember with sorrow and sadness of heart, how often I have displeased Christ to please myself, and displeased Christ to please the creature; but now it is quite otherwise with me, my greatest care is to please Christ, and my greatest fear is of offending Christ.

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir, I have one thing more.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[6.] Though I dare not say that Christ is mine, and that I have an interest in him, yet I can truly say, I dearly love the people of Christ, for the image of Christ that I see stamped upon them. It is true, I dare not say Christ is mine, and heaven is mine; I cannot say with such and such, 'The Lord is my portion;' yet I can say that I dearly love those that have the Lord for their portion. I can truly say, that the poorest and the most neglected, and the most despised saint in the world, is more precious in my eye, and more dear to my soul, than the greatest and the richest sinner in the world, Psa 16:3.

Well, is this all, O weak saint, that thou hast to say?

No, sir, I have one thing more.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[7.] Though I dare not say that I have any interest in Christ, or that I love Christ, yet I dare say, that my soul weeps and mourns in secret for the dishonour that is done to Christ, both by myself and by others also. I can look the Lord in the face, were I now to die, and say, Lord! thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know, that 'mine eyes run down with rivers of tears, because men keep not thy law,' Jer 9:1-3; Psa 119:136.

Well, is this all?

No, sir, I crave your patience to hear me in one thing more.

What is that, O weak Christian?

Why, that is this:

[8.] That I prize persons and things according to the spiritualness and holiness that is in them; and the more spiritual and holy any man or thing is, the more is that man and thing prized by my soul. I have often thought of that sweet word, Psa 119:104, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore doth thy servant love it.' Other men love it because of the profit they get by it, or because of a name, or this, or that; but I love it for the purity, for the holiness, and the cleanness of it. No preaching, saith the weak saint, nor no praying, nor no talking, nor no society that likes me and is sweet to me, but that that is most spiritual, most holy. It is not an exercise tricked and trimmed up with wit, learning, and eloquence; it is not the hanging of truth's ears with counterfeit pearls, that takes me; but the more plainness, spiritualness, and holiness, I see in an exercise, the more is my heart raised to prize it and love it. And therefore, saith the weak saint, because Christ is perfectly and infinitely holy above all other, I prize Christ above all. Ordinances are sweet, but Christ is more sweet to my soul. Saints are precious, but Christ is far more precious. Heaven is glorious, but Christ is infinitely more glorious. The first thing that I would ask, if I might have it, saith the weak saint, is Christ. And the next thing that I would ask, if I might have it, is more of Christ. And the last thing that I would ask, if I might have it, is that I might be satiated and filled with the fulness of Christ. Let the ambitious man take the honours of the world, so I may but have Christ. Let the voluptuous man swim in all the pleasures of the world, so I may have Christ. And let the covetous man tumble up and down in all the gold and silver of the world, so I may have Christ, and it shall be enough to my soul.³ Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir; I have one thing more to say,

What is that?

Why, it is this:

[9.] I find the same conflict in my soul that Paul found in his soul, after he was converted near upon fourteen years, after he was taken up into as clear and choice enjoyments of God, as any soul that ever I read of. The conflict that is mentioned, Rom 7:6, I find in my soul. The whole frame of my soul, understanding, will, and affections, are set against sin. I find that 'I hate the evil that I do, and I find that the good that I would do, I do not, and the evil that I would not do, that do I. I find a law in

my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading of me captive into the law of sin,' and this makes me often to cry out with Paul, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Therefore I sometime hope, that those sins that are now my burden, shall never hereafter be my bane.

Well, and is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir; I have one thing more to say.

What is that?

Why that is this:

[10.] I can truly say, when the Lord gives me any strength against sin, and any power to serve him, and walk close with him in his ways, it is a greater joy and comfort to my soul, than all the blessings of this life. Though I have not yet seen, he hath 'set me as a seal upon his heart, as a seal upon his arm;' though I have not yet the clear assurance of his love; though his spirit hath not yet set up such a light in my soul, whereby I might run and read my right and title to himself and heaven; yet when he doth give me but a little light through a crevice, when he does but begin to cause his love to dawn upon me, when he gives me but a little strength against sin, and a little power to walk close with himself, &c.; oh, this doth administer more abiding joy, and more sweet peace, and more solid comfort to my soul, than all the riches, honours, friends, and favours of this world.

Well, is this all, O weak saint?

No, sir; I have one thing more to say.

What is that?

Why, that is this:

[11.] Though my interest in Christ be not clear to me, yet I can truly say I would not change my condition with the men of this world, for a thousand worlds, Psa 101:3; Psa 139:21-22; Psa 120:6. It is true, I cannot say that I have 'the seal and witness of the Spirit,' that many talk and boast of, though I fear but a few enjoy; yet I can truly say, that I would not change my estate with men merely civil, nor with the profane men of this world, for ten thousand worlds, &c.

Well, is this all, O soul!

No, sir; I have but one thing more, and then I have done.

Well, what is that?

Why, that is this.

[12.] I find my soul carried forth to a secret resting, relying, leaning, staying, and hanging upon Christ for life and happiness. Though I know not how it shall go with me, yet I have thrown myself into his arms; I lean upon him; there I will hang, and there I will rest and stay: 'if I must perish, I will perish there,' Job 13:15; 2Ki 7:3-5; Est 4:16. And thus, sir, I have opened my state and condition to you; and now I do earnestly desire your judgment upon the whole.

Well, then, this I shall say, as 'I must answer it in the day of my appearing before God,' that had I as many souls as I have hairs on my head, or as there be stars in heaven, I could freely adventure the loss of them all, if these things do not undeniably speak out, not only the truth, but also the strength of grace, &c. Nay, let me tell you, that he that finds but any of these things really in his soul, though the Lord hath not given him a clear and full manifestation of his love and favour, &c., yet, while breath is in his body, he hath eminent cause to bless God, and to walk thankfully and humbly before him. The second duty is this, 2. Live up to that little grace you have.

Thou sayest, O weak Christian, thou hast but a little light, a little love, a little zeal, a little faith, &c. Well, grant it, but know that it is thy duty to live up to those measures of grace thou hast. And this is the second head that I shall press upon you, live up and live out that grace you have. And if ever there were a season to press this point home upon souls, this is the season in which we live. And considering that it is not a flood of words, but weight of argument, that carries it with ingenuous spirits, I shall therefore propound these following things to their serious consideration.

[1.] First, Consider this, living up to your graces carries with it the greatest evidence of the truth of grace. That man that lives not up to his grace, let him be strong or weak, wants one of the best and strongest demonstrations that can be to evidence the truth of his grace. If you would have a clear evidence that that little love, that little faith, that little zeal you have is true, then live up to that love, live up to that faith, live up to that zeal that you have, and this will evidence it beyond all contradiction, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, God and your own souls will be very great losers, if you live not up to those measures of grace you have.

God will lose many prayers and many praises; he will lose much honour, and glory, and service, which otherwise he might have; and you will lose much peace, much comfort, much rest, quietness, and content that otherwise your souls might enjoy, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider this, your not living up to that little light and grace you have, will open the mouths of graceless souls against your gracious God, and against his gracious ones, and against his gracious ways.

You think, because of the weakness of your grace, you must be borne with in this, and that, and what not. But remember, it is your duty to live up to the light and grace you have; and nothing below this will effectually stop the mouths of graceless wretches from barking against the ways of God, the truths of God, and the people of God. Vain men will be often a-reasoning thus: though such and such men and women have not such great knowledge, such clear light, such strong love, and such burning zeal as David, Paul, and other worthies, yet they have so much light and knowledge as tells them that they should not carry themselves thus and thus as they do. Their light and knowledge tells them that they should be just and righteous in their dealings, and in all their ways and designs, &c. Though they have not such great measures of spiritual enjoyments as such and such, yet that little grace they have should lead them by the hand to do things worthy of that Christ and the gospel they profess, &c.

Let me a little expostulate the point with you, weak saints; you know that you should not be stirred and heated by every straw that is in your way. Why do not you in this, then, live up to your light? You know that you should not 'be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,' Rom 12:21. And

why do not you in this live up to your light? You know that you should 'do good to those that do hurt to you,' Mat 5:44-48. Why do not you in this live up to your light? You know that you should do your duties to others, though they neglect their duties to you. It is not the neglect of a husband's duty that frees the wife from the discharge of hers, nor the neglect of a wife's duty that frees the husband from the discharge of his. You know this, don't you? Yes. Why don't you then live up to your light? Why do you by your contrary actings open the mouths of others against God and his ways? You know that you should be exemplary in your relations, in your generations, and in your conversations; you know that you should be examples of holiness, meekness, sweetness, patience, and contentedness, and why then don't you live up to your knowledge in these things? You know that you should do to others as you would have others to do to you; and why in this don't you live up to your knowledge? Ah! that you that are weak did not cause the mouths of wicked men to be opened against God, his truths and ways, by your living below that light and knowledge that God hath given you! I beseech you, as you tender the honour of God, and as you would stop the mouths of vain men, live up to those measures of grace that the Lord hath given you. No way to comfort like this, no way to the crown like this. He will not be long a babe in grace, who lives out that little grace he hath.

[4.] Fourthly, Living up to your light is the readiest and the only way to fetch up and to recover all that hath been lost by your living below your light. By your living below your light, God, your own souls, and the gospel have lost much, yea, and others also have lost much light, comfort, strength, and quickness, &c., that they might have had, had you but lived up to that little grace you had. Now, there is no way on earth to recover and to fetch up these losses, but by living up to that grace you have. Ah, Christians! it is not your running from sermon to sermon,—not that I speak against frequent hearing of the word,—nor your crying up this man and that man, or this notion and that, or this way or that, that will recover and fetch up the honour that God hath lost by your living below your graces. It is only your living up to your graces that will make up all the breaches that have been made upon his honour and the gospel, and upon the comfort and peace of your own souls and others'. Well, remember this, all the honour that God hath from you in this life, is from your living up to that light, knowledge, love, fear, and faith that he hath given you. There is nothing that will make up all losses but this; therefore I beg of you, upon the knees of my soul, that you would take this one thing home with you, and go into your closets, and lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, Well, the Lord hath lost much, and my own soul hath lost much, and others have lost much, by my living below that little grace I have; and therefore I will now make it my business, by assisting grace, to live up to those measures of grace that I have received, more than yet I have done all my days. I will, by the strength of Christ, make it more my duty and my work to live out what God hath given in than ever yet I have done, that so the Lord and the gospel may be no further losers but gainers by me.

[5.] The fifth and last motive is this, the readiest and the surest way to get more grace, is to live up to that little grace you have.

He that lives up to a little light shall have more light; he that lives up to a little knowledge shall have more knowledge; he that lives up to a little faith shall have more faith; and he that lives up to a little love shall have more love, &c. There is no such way to attain to greater measures of grace as for a man to live up to that little grace he hath. Verily, the main reason why many are such babes and shrubs in grace, is because they do not live up to their attainments. He that wont improve two

talents, shall never have the honour to be trusted with five; but he that improves a little, shall be trusted with much: 'The diligent hand maketh rich,' Pro 10:4. He that is active and agile, that works as well as wishes, that adds endeavours to his desires, will quickly be a cedar in grace. Ah, Christians! you have a God that is great, a God that is good, a God that is gracious, and a God that is rich, that loves not to see his children to be always weaklings and striplings in grace. The very babe, by drawing the breasts, gets strength and nourishment. Oh you babes in grace, put out that little strength you have, be you still a-drawing at the breasts of Christ, at the breasts of the promises, and strength will come, nourishment will follow, &c. The third duty that I would press upon weak saints is this:

3. Be sure that you always reflect upon your graces, and whatsoever good is in you, with cautions. This is a weighty point, and doth bespeak your most serious attention.

There are six rules or cautions that weak saints should always observe in their looking upon their graces. And the first is this:

[1.] Look upon all your graces as gifts of grace, as favours given you from above, as gifts dropped out of heaven into your hearts, as flowers that are given you out of the garden of paradise. A man should never look upon his grace, but he should look upon it as a flower of paradise, as a gift that God hath cast into his bosom from heaven. 1Co 4:7, 'Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou hast not received?' &c. 'Of thine own,' saith David, 'have we given thee,' 1Ch 29:14. Thou talkest of light, of love, of fear, of faith, &c., but what are all these but pearls of glory that are freely given thee by the hand of grace? 'Every good and perfect gift comes down from above.' As all light flows from the sun, and all water from the sea, so all good flows from heaven. The greatest excellencies in us do as much depend upon God, as the light doth upon the sun. When thou lookest upon thy wisdom, thou must say, Here is wisdom, ay, but it is from above; here is some weak love working towards Christ, but it is from above; here is joy, and comfort, and peace, but these are all the flowers of paradise; they never grew in nature's garden. When a soul looks thus upon all those costly diamonds with which his heart is decked, he keeps low, though his graces are high. Where this rule is neglected, the soul will be endangered of being swelled and puffed.

Mr Foxe was used to say, that 'as he got much good by his sins, so he got much hurt by his graces.' When you look upon the stream, remember the fountain; when you look upon the flower, remember the root; when you look upon the stars, remember the sun; and when you look upon your graces, remember the fountain of grace, else Satan will be too hard for you. Satan is so artificial, so subtle and critical, that he can make your very graces to serve him against your graces; conquering joy by joy, sorrow by sorrow, humility by humility, fear by fear, and love by love, if you do not look upon all your graces as streams flowing from the fountain above, and as fruits growing upon the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Therefore, when one eye is fixed upon your graces, let the other be always fixed upon the God of grace.

[2.] Secondly, At that time when your eye is upon inherent grace and righteousness, let your heart be fixed upon Christ, and his imputed righteousness.

Paul's eye was upon his grace: Rom 7:22, Rom 7:25, 'I delight in the law of God, after the inward man. And with my mind I serve the law of God.' And yet at that very same time, his heart was set

upon Christ, and taken up with Christ; Rom 7:25, 'I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So in Col 2:2-3, you have one eye fixed upon grace, and at the same time the heart fixed upon Christ. 'That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' His eye is upon grace, his heart is upon Christ. So in Php 3:8, the apostle hath his eye upon the excellent knowledge of Christ, but Php 3:9, his heart is set upon the righteousness of Christ. 'That I might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Here you have his eye upon grace, and his heart upon Christ, in the very presence of his grace. This is your glory, Christians, in the presence and sight of all your graces, to see the free grace of Christ, and his infinite, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness, to be your surest, sweetest, highest, and choicest comfort and refuge.

Peter was not well skilled in this lesson, and that was the very reason that he fell foulest, when his confidence was highest. Grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring; and he that looks more upon the ring than the pearl that is in it, in the hour of temptation will certainly fall. When the wife's eye is upon her rings or jewels, then her heart must be set upon her husband. When grace is in my eye, Christ must at that time be in my arms, yea, he must lie between my breasts: Song of Solomon 1:13, 'My beloved is as a bundle of myrrh, he shall lie all night between my breasts.' Christ, and not grace, must lie nearest to a Christian's heart.

[3.] A third thing is this, When you look upon your grace, you must look upon it as a beautiful creature, that is begotten in the soul by Christ, and that is strengthened, maintained, cherished, and upheld in your souls by nothing below the spiritual, internal, and glorious operations of Christ.

Though grace be a beautiful creature, yet grace is but a creature, and so your souls must look upon it. Grace is a heavenly offspring, it is the first-born of God, as I may say, and does most represent him to the life. Grace is a bud of glory; it is of the blood royal; it is nobly descended, Jas 1:17. So in Heb 12:2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginner and ender. In all other things and arts, the same man cannot begin and finish, but Christ doth both. Php 1:5, Our graces thrive and are upheld in life and power, in beauty and glory, by the internal operation of Christ in our souls. So in Col 1:27, 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' So Col 1:29, 'Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily.' So Php 4:13, 'I can do all things, through Christ that strengtheneth me; I can be high and low, poor and rich, honourable and base, something or nothing, &c., through Christ that strengthens me.' So in Song of Solomon 4:16, 'Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may send forth a fragrant smell.' We may puff and blow our hearts out, and yet no savoury smell will flow forth, if Christ does not blow. So in Psa 138:3, 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' Your graces, Christians, are heavenly plants of God's own setting and watering; and certainly the heavenly husbandman will never suffer such plants of renown to wither, for want of heavenly sap; he will look to the strengthening, supporting, and nourishing the work of his own hand. He will cause the desires of his people to bud, and their graces to blossom, and their souls to be like a watered garden, green and flourishing: Isa 58:11, compared with Isa 35:6-7.

[4.] Fourthly, When you look upon your graces, you must look upon them as an earnest of more glorious and unspeakable measures of grace and glory, that your souls shall be filled with at last. In Eph 1:13-14, 'After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.' That little light and knowledge thou hast, is an earnest to thy soul, that thou shalt at last know, even as thou art known. 1Co 13:12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as I am known.' Christians know but little of that they should know, they know but little of that they might know, they know but little of that others know, they know but little of that they desire to know, they know but little of that they shall know, when they shall come to know 'even as they are known.' And yet these weak and imperfect glimpses that they have of God and heaven here, are infallible pledges of that perfect knowledge and full prospect that they shall have of God and heaven hereafter. So that that little spark of joy thou hast, is an earnest of those everlasting joys that shall rest upon thy head, when all sorrow and mourning shall fly away, Isa 35:10, &c. And those sips of comfort thou hast now, are an earnest of thy swimming in those everlasting pleasures that be 'at God's right hand,' Psa 16:11. The least measures of grace are an earnest of greater measures. God will not lose his earnest, though men often lose theirs. God will not despise 'the day of small things;' he will make those that bring forth but thirty fold, to bring forth sixty fold; and those that bring forth sixty fold, to bring forth a hundred fold, &c. He, his Son and Spirit, are all eminently and fully engaged to carry on the work of grace in his children's souls. Therefore do not sit down and say, My light is but dim, and my love but weak, and my joy but a spark that will quickly go out, &c. But always remember, that those weak measures of grace thou hast, are a sure evidence of greater measures that God will confer upon thee in his own time and in his own ways, Isa 64:4-5.

[5.] Fifthly, When you look upon your graces, be sure that you look more at the truth of your graces, than at the measure of your graces.

You must rather bring your graces to the touchstone, to try their truth, than to the balance, to weigh their measures. Many weak Christians are weighing their graces, when they should be a-trying the truth of their graces, as if the quantity and measure of grace were more considerable than the essence and nature of grace. And this is that that keeps many weak saints in a dark, doubting, questioning, and despairing condition; yea, this makes their lives a very hell. Weak saints, if you will not observe this rule, this caution, when you look upon your graces, you will go sighing and mourning to your graves. Ah! poor hearts, you should not be more cruel to your own souls than God is. When God comes to a judgment of your spiritual estates, he doth not bring a pair of scales to weigh your graces, but a touchstone to try the truth of your graces; and so should you deal by your own souls. If you deal otherwise, you are more cruel to your souls than God would have you. And if you are resolved that in this you will not imitate the Lord, then I dare prophesy that joy and peace shall be none of your guests, and he that should comfort you will. 'stand afar off,' Lam 1:16. It is good to own and acknowledge a little grace, though it be mingled with very much corruptions; as that poor soul did, Mark 9:24, 'And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' He had but a little little faith, and this was mixed with abundance of unbelief, and yet notwithstanding he acknowledges that little faith he had, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' His faith was so weak, that he accounts it little better than unbelief; yet, says he, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' The least measure of

faith will make thee blessed here and happy hereafter. A doctor cried out upon his dying-bed, *Credo languida fide, sed tamen fidei*; much faith will yield unto us here our heaven, and any faith, if true, will yield us heaven hereafter. So the church in Song of Solomon 1:5, 'I am black, but comely.' She had nothing to say for her beauty, yet she acknowledgeth her comeliness. 'I am black, but comely.' Though she could not say she was clear, yet she could say she was comely. As she was free to confess her blackness, so she was ingenuous to acknowledge her comeliness. 'I am black, but comely.' Ah, Christians! will you deal worse with your own souls, than you deal with your children? When you go to make a judgment of your child's affections, you look more to the truth of their affections, than you do to the strength of their affections; and will you be less ingenuous and favourable to your poor souls? If he deserves to be branded, that feasts his child and starves his wife, what do you deserve, that can acknowledge the least natural good that is in a child, and yet will acknowledge none of that spiritual and heavenly good that is in your souls?

[6.] Sixthly, and lastly, When you look upon your graces, look that you do not renounce and reject your graces, seen in the light of the Spirit, as a weak and worthless evidence of your interest in Christ, and that happiness that comes by Christ.

I know in these days many cry up revelations and visions, yea, the visions of their own hearts, and make slight of the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people; yea, they look upon grace as a poor weak thing. Ah, Christians! take heed of this, else you will render null, in a very great measure, many precious scriptures,—especially the Epistles of John,—which were penned for the comfort and support of weak saints. But that this may stick and work, be pleased to carry home with you these three things.

(1.) First, Other precious saints that are now triumphing in heaven, have pleaded their interest in God's love, and hopes of a better life, from graces inherent.

I will only point at those scriptures that speak out this truth: 1Jn 3:14, 1Sa 2:3-4; Job 23:10-12; and Job 31:1-40; Psa 119:6; Isa 38:2-3; 2Co 1:12. All these scriptures, with many others that might be produced, do with open mouth proclaim this truth. And surely to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be an evidence that the tree is alive, is to me as unreasonable as it is absurd. Certainly, it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to trust in our graces, to make a saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference betwixt declaring and deserving; and if this be not granted, it will follow, that the apostle hath sent us aside to a covenant of works, when he exhorts us to 'use all diligence to make our calling and election sure,' 2Pe 1:5-10.

(2.) Secondly, Carry home this with you, If justification and sanctification be both of them benefits of the covenant of grace, then to evidence the one by the other, is no ways unlawful, nor no turning aside to a covenant of works: But our justification and sanctification are both of them benefits and blessings of the covenant of grace. Ergo.... In Jer 33:8, 'I will pardon all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me,' there is your justification; 'and I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, there is your sanctification. And therefore to evidence the one by the other can be no ways unlawful, nor no turning aside to a covenant of works.

(3.) Thirdly, Carry home this with you, Whatever gift of God in man brings him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy, that gift must be an infallible evidence of salvation and

happiness. But such are those gifts mentioned in those scriptures that prove the first head.

Therefore they are infallible evidences of our salvation and eternal happiness.

I confess a man may have many great gifts, and yet none of them bring him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy. But I say, whatever gift of God in man brings him within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy, that gift must be an infallible evidence of his happiness and blessedness. For the further clearing of this, I will instance in a gift of waiting. Where this gift is, it brings a man within the compass of God's promise of eternal mercy. And had a man, as in a deserted state it often falls out, nothing under heaven to shew for his happiness, but only a waiting frame, this ought to bear him up from fainting and sinking. When the soul saith, My sun is set, my day is turned into night, my light into darkness, and my rejoicing into mourning, &c., oh, I have lost the comforting presence of God! I have lost the quickening presence of God! I have lost the supporting presence of God! I have lost the encouraging presence of God! &c., and when I shall recover these sad losses, I know not. All that I can say is this, that God keeps me in a waiting frame, weeping and knocking at the door of mercy. Now, I say, this waiting temper brings the soul within the compass of the promise of eternal mercy. And certainly such a soul shall not miscarry. Take three promises for this. In Isa 40:31, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.' The mercy is the waiting man's, but the waiting man must give God leave to time his mercy for him. So in Isa 30:18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.' So in Isa 64:4, 'For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' So in Isa 49:23, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.' Men are often ashamed, that wait upon the mountains and hills. Men high and great often frustrate the expectation of waiting souls, and then they blush, and are ashamed and confounded that they have waited, and been deceived; but 'they shall not be ashamed that wait for me,' says God; I will not deceive their expectation, and after all their waiting turn them off, and say, I have no mercy for you.³ Now, I say, where this waiting temper is, which is all that many a poor soul hath to shew for everlasting happiness and blessedness, that soul shall never miscarry. That God that doth maintain and uphold the soul in this heavenly waiting frame, in the appointed season will speak life and love, mercy and glory, to the waiting soul. And so I have done with the third use, which was to stir you up to look upon your graces with cautions. The fourth duty is:

4. To persuade weak saints not to turn aside from the ways of God, nor from the service of God, because of any hardships or difficulties that they meet with in his ways or service.

There is a very great aptness in weak saints to take offence almost at everything, and to be discouraged by the least opposition, affliction, and temptation, and so to turn aside from the good old way. Now that no difficulties nor hardships may turn you out of the way that is called holy, consider seriously of these few things.

[1.] First, Consider this, the Lord will sweeten more and more his services to you.

He will make his work to be more and more easy to your souls; he will suit thy burden to thy back, and thy work to thy hand. O weak soul! thou shalt find that his grace will be sufficient to hold thee up and carry thee on, notwithstanding any difficulties or discouragements that be in the way. He will shed abroad that love that shall constrain thy soul, both to keep close to his service, and to delight in his service, 2Co 12:9; 2Co 5:14. He will make all his services to be easy to thee; he will vouchsafe to thee that assisting grace that shall keep up thy head and heart from fainting and sinking under discouragements, as you may see in Eze 36:25-28, 'And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.' So in Psa 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee,' (ay, but how comes this to pass?): 'Thy right hand upholds me.' I feel thy hand under me, drawing of my soul off after thee. Oh! were not thy gracious hand under me, I should never follow hard after thee. The Lord will put under his everlasting arms, O weak Christian! and therefore though thy feet be apt to slide, yet his everlasting arms shall bear thee up. Therefore be not discouraged, do not turn aside from those paths that drop marrow and fatness, though there be a lion in the way.

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, O weak saint! that there is less danger and hardship in the ways of Christ, than there is in the ways of sin, Satan, or the world. That soul doth but leap out of the frying-pan into the fire, that thinks to mend himself by turning out of the way that is called holy. Oh! the horrid drudgery that is in the ways of sin, Satan, or the world. Thy worst day in Christ's service is better than thy best days, if I may so speak, in sin or Satan's service, Pro 11:18-19 and Pro 21:21. Satan will pay the sinner home at last with the loss of God, Christ, heaven, and his soul for ever. 'But in the way of righteousness is life, joy, peace, honour, and in the pathway thereof there is no death,' Pro 12:28. 'His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Pro 3:17.

[3.] Thirdly, Remember, O weak saint! that all those hardships that thou meetest with, do only reach the outward man.

They only reach the ignoble, the baser part of man; they meddle not, they touch not, the noble part.' With my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin,' Rom 7:22. And verse 25, 'I delight in the law of God, after the inward man.' And indeed many of the heathen have encouraged themselves in this very consideration, against the troubles and dangers of this life. All the arrows that are shot at a Christian stick in his buckler, they never reach his conscience, his soul. The raging waves beat sorely against Noah's ark, but they touched not him. The soul is of too noble a nature to be touched by troubles. Jacob's hard service under Laban, and his being nipped by the frost in winter, and scorched by the sun in summer, did only reach his outward man; his soul had high communion, and sweet fellowship with God, under all his hardships, Gen 31:40. Ah, Christian! bear up bravely, for whatever hardships thou meetest with in the ways of God, shall only reach thy outward man; and under all these hardships thou mayest have as high and sweet communion with God, as if thou hadst never known what hardships meant, Hos 2:14.

[4.] Fourthly, Tell me, O weak saints! have not you formerly enjoyed such sweet refreshings while you have been in the very service of God, as hath out-weighed all the troubles and hardships that your souls have met with? I know you have and you know that you have often found that scripture made good upon your hearts, Psa 19:11, 'Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.' Mark, he doth not say, 'for keeping of them there is great

reward,' though that is a truth; but, 'in keeping of them there is great reward. While the soul is at work, God throws in the reward. Do not you remember, O weak Christians! when you have been in the service and way of God, how he hath cast in joy at one time and peace at another &c. Oh! the smiles, the kisses, the sweet discoveries that your souls have met with, whilst you have been in his ways. Ah, poor souls! do not you know that one hour's being in the bosom of Christ will make you forget all your hardships? Heaven at last will make amends for all; and the more hardships you find in the ways of God, the more sweet will heaven be to you when you come there. Oh, how sweet is a harbour after a long storm, and a sunshine day after a dark and tempestuous night, and a warm spring after a sharp winter! The miseries and difficulties that a man meets with in this world, will exceedingly sweeten the glory of that other world.

[5.] Lastly, consider, What hardships and difficulties the men of this world run through, to get the world, and undo their own souls.

They rise early, go to bed late; they go from one end of the world to another, and venture through all manner of dangers, deaths, and miseries, to gain those things that are vain, uncertain, vexing, and dangerous to their souls, Psa 127:2, Mat 16:16. And wilt not thou, as 'a good soldier of Christ,' 2Ti 2:3-4, endure a little hardship for the honour of thy Captain, and thine own internal and eternal good? Thou art listed under Christ's colours, and therefore thou must arm thyself against all difficulties and discouragements. The number of difficulties makes the Christian's conquest the more illustrious. A gracious man should be made up all of fire, overcoming and consuming all oppositions, as fire does the stubble. All difficulties should be but whetstones to his fortitude, as Chrysostom said of Peter. The fifth duty is this:

5. You that are weak saints should observe how Christ keeps your wills and affections. That man is kept indeed, whose will and affection is kept close to Christ; and that man is lost with a witness, whose will and affections are won from Christ. Weak saints are more apt to observe their own actions than their wills and affections, and this proves a snare unto them; therefore observe your affections, how they are kept; for if they are kept close to Christ, if they are kept faithful to Christ, though thy foot may slide from Christ, all is well. The apostle, Rom 7:17, seq., observed, that his will and affections were kept close to Christ even then, when he was tyrannically captivated and carried by the prevalency of sin from Christ: 'With my mind I serve the law of God,' says he, 'and what I do I allow not; therefore it is no more I that doth it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' My will stands close to Christ, and my affections are faithful to Christ, though by the prevalency of corruption I am now and then carried captive from Christ. It is one thing to be taken up by an enemy, and another thing for a man to lay down his weapons at his enemy's feet. I am, saith the apostle, a forced man, 'I do what I hate;' I do what I never intended. The heart may be sound, when more external and inferior parts are not. The heart of a man may be sound God-ward and Christ-ward and holiness-ward, when yet there may be many defects and weaknesses in his conversation. Now, a weak Christian should be very studious to observe how his heart stands God-wards; for the man is as his heart is; if that be right with Christ, then all is well; therefore, says Solomon, Pro 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The Hebrew runs more fully thus: 'Before all,' or, 'Above all keepings, keep thy heart;' for out of it is the goings forth of lives.' The heart is the spring and fountain of all natural and spiritual actions, it is the primum mobile, the great wheel that sets all other wheels agoing; it is the great monarch in the isle of man; therefore keep it with all custody and caution, or else bid farewell to all true joy, peace, and comfort. When the heart

stands right towards Christ, Christ will pardon much, and pass by much.

If the ravished virgin in the time of the law cried out, she was guiltless; so when a poor soul, ravished by the power of corruption, and strength of Satan's temptations, cries out, 'Lord, I would not, for all the world, sin against thee, I would not distrust thee, I would not be impatient under thy afflicting hand, I would not be proud under thy merciful hand; but, Lord, these sons of Zeruiah, 2Sa 3:39, these corruptions, are too hard for me; they commit a rape upon me; they ravish me of my Jesus, and of my joy, and of my peace; Lord, help me, Lord deliver me!' now these weaknesses shall not be charged upon the soul. The ravished virgin under the law, if she cried out, was guiltless; and certainly God is not, nor will not be, less merciful and gracious to his people under the gospel, who are still a-crying out against their sins and Satan's assaults. Surely those sins shall never be a Christian's bane, that are now his greatest burden. It is not falling into the water, but lying in the water, that drowns. It is not falling into sin, but lying in sin, that damns. If sin and thy heart be two, Christ and thy heart are one. If thy heart be Christward, thou art so happy that nothing can make thee miserable.

6. Sixthly, Take heed of making sense and feeling a judge of your condition. Though there is nothing more dangerous, yet there is nothing more ordinary, than for weak saints to make their sense and feeling the judge of their condition. Ah, poor souls! this is dishonourable to God, and very disadvantageous to yourselves. Sense is sometimes opposite to reason, but always to faith; therefore do as those worthies did, 2Co 5:8-9, 'We walk by faith, and not by sight.' For a man to argue thus: Surely God is not my God, for I am not enlightened, I am not quickened, I am not melted, I am not raised, I am not enlarged as formerly. Oh! I have not those sweet answers and returns of prayer that once I had! Oh! I cannot find the Lord's quickening presence, nor his enlivening presence, nor his humbling presence, nor his encouraging presence, as once I have; therefore surely my condition is not good. Oh! I am more backward to good than formerly, and more prone to evil than formerly, therefore I am afraid that God is not my God, and that the work of grace is not thorough upon me. Oh! God does not look upon me as in the days of old, nor speak to me as in the days of old, nor carry it towards me as in the days of old, and therefore I am afraid that all is naught.

Verily, if you will make sense and feeling the judge of your estate and condition, you will never have peace nor comfort all your days. Thy estate, O Christian, may be very good, when sense and feeling says it is very bad. That child cannot but be perplexed that thinks his father doth not love him, because he does not always feel him smoothing and stroking of him. Christians, you must remember that it is one thing for God to love you, and another thing for God to tell you that he loves you. Your happiness lies in the first, your comfort in the second. God hath stopped his ear against the prayers of many a precious soul whom he hath dearly loved. The best of men have at times lost that quickening, ravishing, and comforting presence of God that once they have enjoyed. And verily, he that makes sense and carnal reason a judge of his condition, shall be happy and miserable, blessed and cursed, saved and lost, many times in a day, yea, in an hour. The counsel that I would give to such a soul that is apt to set up reason in the room of faith is this, Whatsoever thy estate and condition be, never make sense and feeling the judge of it, but only the word of God. Did ever God appoint carnal reason, sense, and feeling, to be a judge of thy spiritual estate? Surely no. And why, then, wilt thou subject thy soul to their judgments? God will judge thee at last by his word: John 12:48, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last

day.' Carnal reason is an enemy to faith; it is still a-crossing and contradicting of faith; it fills the mind full of cavils and prejudices, full of pleas and arguments, to keep Christ and the soul asunder, and the soul and the promises asunder, and the soul and peace and comfort asunder. It will never be well with thee so long as thou art swayed by carnal reason, and reliest more upon thy five senses than the four evangelists. Remember Job was as famous for his confidence as for his patience: 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job 13:15. As the body lives by breathing, so the soul lives by believing, &c.

IV. The duties of strong saints to the weak.

We come now to the last thing propounded, and that is, the duties of strong saints to those that are weak. I intend at this time to finish this point, and therefore shall not speak everything that might be spoken, being not of their minds that think a man never speaks enough that speaks not all that may be spoken to an argument. I shall, as near as I can, instance in those duties that are most weighty and worthy. And surely those souls that are serious and conscientious in the discharge of these, cannot, nor will not, be negligent in the discharge of the rest. Now; there are eleven duties that strong saints are to perform to those that are weak. And the first is this.

[1.] Those that are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak.

Rom 15:1, 'We then that are strong,' saith the apostle, 'ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.' The word that is rendered to bear signifies to bear as pillars do bear the weight and burden of the house; to bear as porters do bear their burdens, or as the bones do bear the flesh, or rather as parents bear their babes in their arms.

'Bear the infirmities.' Mark, he doth not say the enormities, but the infirmities; he doth not say the wickedness, but the weakness. The strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak. The Lord bears with the weakness of his children. Peter is weak, and sinful through weakness; he will not let the Lord Jesus wash his feet, John 13:1-38; but the Lord Jesus knowing that this was from weakness, and not from wickedness, he passes it over, and notwithstanding his unkind refusal, he washes his feet. Thomas is very weak: 'I will not believe,' says he, 'except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side,' John 20:25. Now this Christ bears with much tenderness and sweetness, as you may see in John 20:27, 'Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy fingers, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.' The Lord Jesus doth, as it were, open his wounds afresh; he overlooks his weakness. Well, saith he, seeing it is so that thou wilt not believe, I will rather bleed afresh than thou shalt die in thy unbelief. So the three disciples that Christ had singled out to watch with him one hour, Mat 26:1-75, they shewed a great deal of weakness to be sleeping when their Lord was a-sorrowing, to be snorting when their Saviour was sighing, &c. Yet Christ bears this, and carries it sweetly towards them, and excuses their weakness: Mat 26:41, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Oh how sweetly doth the Lord carry it! Every new man is two men; he hath a contrary principle in him, the flesh and the spirit. The spirit, the noble part, is willing, but the flesh, the ignoble part, is weak and wayward.

Now shall the Lord thus bear with his weak ones, and shall not strong saints bear also? Remember, strong Christians, there was a day when you were as weak as others, as apt to fall as others, as easily conquered as others; and if then the Lord carried it sweetly towards you, let the

same spirit be in you towards those that are weak. It will be no grief of heart to you, if in this you act like your Lord and Saviour.

If you do not bear with the infirmities of the weak, who shall? who will? This wicked world cannot, nor will not. The world will make them transgressors for a word, and watch for their halting; and therefore you had need to bear with them so much the more, Isa 29:21, Jer 20:10. The world's cruelty should stir up your compassions.

[2.] Secondly, As it is your duty to bear with them, so it is your duty to receive them into communion with you.

Rom 14:1, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations.'

'Him that is weak in the faith receive,' that is, him that is not thoroughly persuaded of all things pertaining to Christian liberty, about things indifferent. 'Them that are weak in the faith receive,' he doth not say, 'Them that have no faith receive.' For there is no rule for the saints or churches to receive them into communion that have no faith, that have no fellowship with the Father and the Son. But 'him that is weak in the faith,' saith he, 'receive.' The word that is here rendered receive, signifies to receive into our bosom with charitable affection. The Greek word signifies three things.

(1.) It signifies to receive weak saints as our own bowels; to receive them with the greatest tenderness, affection, pity, and compassion that possibly can be. So the same Greek word is used in Phm 1:12, where Paul entreats Philemon 'to receive Onesimus as his own bowels.' The word there is the same word with this in the text. So must the strong receive the weak, even as their own bowels; receive them with the greatest affection, with the greatest compassion that possibly can be.

(2.) The word signifies patiently to bear with the weak when they are received; and not to take them into your bosom, into your communion one day and cast them out the next, but patiently to bear with them, as well as affectionately to receive them.

It was a heathen prince [Xerxes] that crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day, &c.

(3.) The word signifies by fatherly instruction to seek to restore him. It is not the will of Christ that weak saints should be rejected, or that the door of entrance should be shut against them, till they are stronger, or till they have attained to such heights and such perfections of grace and divine enjoyments of God as others have attained. Remember this, as the weakest faith, if true, gives the soul a right to all that that internal and eternal worth that is in Christ: so the weakest faith, if true, gives a man a real right unto all the external privileges and favours that come by Christ. In Rom 15:7, 'Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.' This is the standing rule for all the saints and churches in the world to go by. It is not their wills, but these two scriptures last cited, that are the standing rules by which all the churches on earth are to go by, in the admission of members.

'Them that are weak in the faith' are to be received by you, because the Lord Jesus hath received them. Christ does not receive the strong to the glory of God, and cast off the weak. No; the Lord Jesus gathers the weak into his bosom, and tenderly dandles them upon his knee. He receives the weak to glory, as well as the strong; therefore saith the apostle, 'As the Lord hath received them,

so do you.'

Bucer rejected none in whom he saw aliquid Christi, anything of Christ, but gave them the right hand of fellowship. Such persons and churches can never answer it to Christ, that keep the door of admission shut against souls truly gracious, though they are but weak in grace, though they have [not] attained to such a measure of light, or degrees of love, or to such perfections in holiness, as such and such have done. No; the standing rule is, 'Him whom the Lord hath received, receive.'

If weak saints shall desire communion, and be willing to walk in the ways that Jesus Christ hath appointed his saints to walk in, the churches ought to give them the right hand of fellowship. And that is the second duty that lies upon the strong, viz., that they are to receive the weak into communion and fellowship with them, and that with the greatest affection, love, and compassion, that possibly can be. A third duty that lies upon strong saints to the weak is this:

[3.] They must look more upon their graces than upon their weaknesses.

It is a sad thing when they shall borrow spectacles to behold their weak brethren's weaknesses, and refuse looking-glasses wherein they may see their weak brethren's graces. Saints that are strong ought to look more upon the virtues of weak saints than upon their miscarriages. When Christ saw but a little moral good in the young man, the text saith that 'He looked upon him, and loved him,' Mark 10:12. And shall not we look upon a weak saint and love him, when we see the love of God and the image of God upon him. Shall moral virtue take the eye, and draw the love of Christ? And shall not supernatural grace in a weak Christian take our eyes and draw our hearts? Shall we eye a little gold in much earth? And shall we not eye a little grace where there is much corruption?

It is an unsufferable weakness, I had almost said, for persons to suffer their affections to run out only to such that are of their judgments, and to love, prize, and value persons according as they suit their opinions, and not according to what of the image of God shines in them. But if this be not far from a gospel spirit, and from that God-like spirit that should be in saints, I know nothing. It speaks out much of Christ within, to own where Christ owns, and love where Christ loves, and embrace where Christ embraces, and to be one with every one that is practically one with the Lord Jesus. Christ cannot but take it very unkindly at our hands, if we should disown any upon whom he hath set his royal stamp. And I bless his grace that hath drawn out my desires and endeavours to love, own, and honour the people of Christ, according to what of the appearances of Christ I see in them. And, if I am not much mistaken, this is the highway to that joy, peace, and comfort, the want of which makes a man's life a hell. God looks more on the bright side of the cloud, than he doth on the dark, and so should we.

It was the honour of Vespasian that 'he was more ready to conceal the vices of his friends, than their virtues.' Surely there is much of God in that soul, that is upon a gospel account more careful and skilful to conceal the vices of weak saints, than their virtues. Many in these days do justly incur the censure which that sour philosopher passed upon grammarians, that 'they were better acquainted with the evil of Ulysses, than with their own.'

[4.] Fourthly, It is the duty of strong saints, in things indifferent to deny themselves, to please the weak.

1Co 8:13, 'Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.' Strong saints must stand unchangeably resolved neither to give offence carelessly, nor to take offence causelessly. Says the apostle, I will not stand to dispute my Christian liberty, but will rather lay it down at my weak brother's feet, than I will by the use of it offend one for whom Christ hath died. 1Co 9:22, 'To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' That is, I condescended and went to the uttermost that possibly I could, without sin, to win and gain upon the weak; I displeased myself in things that were of an indifferent nature, to please them. Thou oughtest not, O strong Christian, by the use of thy Christian liberty, to put a stumbling-block before thy weak brother. Rom 15:2, 'We then that are strong, ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' He doth not say, Let every one of us please the lust of his neighbour, but let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. Let us in things of an indifferent nature so yield as to please our neighbour. There were some thought that they might observe days; others thought they might not. Some thought they might eat meat; others thought they might only eat herbs. Why, saith the apostle, in these things that are of an indifferent nature, I will rather displease and deny myself, to profit my neighbour, than I will, by the use of my liberty, occasion my neighbour to offend. Ay, this is true Christian love indeed, for a man to cross himself to please his neighbour, so it may be for his soul's edification. But this heavenly love is driven almost out of the world, which causeth men to dislike those things in others which they flatter in themselves. A fifth duty incumbent upon strong saints is, [5.] To support the weak.

1Th 5:14, 'Support the weak, be patient towards all men.' Look, what the crutch is to the lame, and the beam of the house is to the ruined house, that ought strong saints to be to the weak. Strong saints are to be crutches to the weak, they are to be, as it were, beams to bear up the weak. Strong saints are to set to their shoulder, to shore up the weak by their counsels, prayers, tears, and examples. Strong saints must not deal by the weak, as the herd of deer do by the wounded deer; they forsake it and push it away. Oh no! When a poor weak saint is wounded by a temptation, or by the power of some corruption, then they that are strong ought to succour and support such an one, lest he be swallowed up of sorrow. When you that are strong see a weak saint staggering and reeling under a temptation or affliction, Oh, know it is then your duty to put both your hands underneath, to support him that he faint not, that he miscarries not in such an hour. Isa 35:3, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.'

'Strengthen the weak hands,' that is, hands that hang down; 'and confirm the feeble knees,' that is, such knees that by reason of feebleness are ready to fall. Strengthen such, that is, encourage them, by casting in a promise, by casting in thy experiences, or by casting in the experiences of other saints, that so they may be supported. It may be his case was once thine: if so, then tell him what promises did support thee, what discoveries of God did uphold thee; tell him what tastes, what sights, and what in-comes thou hadst, and how bravely thou didst bear up, by the strength of his everlasting arms that were under thee, &c. A sixth duty that is incumbent upon strong saints is,

[6.] To take heed of making weak saints halt and go lame in a way of holiness, or of keeping them off from the ways of God, or of turning them out of the ways of God. That is the meaning of that scripture, as I conceive, Luk 17:2. And of that, Mat 18:10, 'Take heed that ye offend not one of these little ones, for their angels do always behold the face of my Father.' You are apt to slight

them because they are weak in grace and holiness, and so you are apt to cause them to halt; but take heed of this, they have glistering courtiers that do attend them; therefore take heed that you do not offend them, for their angels, as so many champions, stand ready to right them and fight for them. A man were better offend and anger all the devils in hell, and all the witches in the world, than to anger and offend the least of Christ's little ones. If Cain do but lower upon Abel, God will arraign him for it: 'Why is thy countenance cast down?' Gen 4:6. If Miriam do but mutter against Moses, God will spit in her face for it, Num 12:14. That is a very dreadful word, Mat 18:6, 'Take heed how ye offend one of these little ones;' you make nothing of it, but saith Christ, take heed, 'for it were better that a millstone,' a huge millstone, as the Greek word signifies, such a one as an ass can but turn about; (this kind of punishment the greatest malefactors among the Jews were put to in those days, saith Jerome), 'and cast into the middle of the sea;' so it is word for word in the Greek, the middle being deepest and furthest off from the shore, rendering his estate most miserable and irrecoverable.

[7.] Seventhly, It is the duty of strong saints to suit all things to the capacity of the weak. To suit all their prayers and all their discourses to the capacity of the weak. Paul was good at this: 'To the weak became I as weak.' Paul was a man as strong in natural and acquired parts as any living, and he knew how to word it, and to carry it in as lofty strains, as any that breathed, yet who more plain in his preaching than Paul? It hath many a time made my heart sad, to think how those men will answer it in the day of Christ, that affect lofty strains, high notions, and cloudy expressions, that make the plain things of the gospel dark and obscure.

Many preachers in our days are like Heraclitus, who was called 'the dark doctor;' they affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard. 'They darken counsel with words without knowledge,' Job 38:2. Studied expressions and high notions in a sermon, are like Asahel's carcase in the way, that did only stop men and make them gaze, but did no ways profit them or better them. It is better to present truth in her native plainness, than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls. That is a remarkable scripture, 1Co 3:1-2, 'And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now are ye able.' The apostle did not soar aloft in the clouds, and express the mysteries of the gospel in such a dark obscure way as that poor creatures could not be able to pick out the mind of God in it. No; but he suited all his discourses to their capacities; and so must you.

[8.] Eighthly, It is your duty to labour to strengthen weak saints against sin, and to draw them to holiness argumentatively. When a strong saint comes to deal with one that is weak, and would strengthen him against sin, he must do it argumentatively; and when he would draw to holiness, he must do it argumentatively. 1Jn 2:1-2, compared with 1Jn 1:7, 1Jn 1:9, 'My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.' What things were those he wrote? Mark 1:7, 'If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sins.' Here he fenceth them against sin, by one of the strongest and choicest arguments that the whole book of God affords, by an argument that is drawn from the soul's communion with God. And then in verse 9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.' Here the apostle labours to strengthen weak saints argumentatively,

even by the strongest arguments that the whole book of God affords. So 1Jn 2:12-13, 'I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you, for his name's sake,' &c. So in 1Jn 2:18, 'Little children, it is the last times, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.' So 1Jn 2:28, 'And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him.' You see in all these scriptures how the apostle labours to strengthen weak saints in a way of holiness, and to fence them against ways of wickedness argumentatively, and so must you; this being the ready way to convince them, and to make a conquest upon them, &c. The ninth duty that lies upon strong saints is, [9.] To cast a mantle over the infirmities of the weak.

Now there is a three-fold mantle that should be cast over the infirmities of the weak. There is a mantle of wisdom, a mantle of faithfulness, and a mantle of compassion, which is to be cast over all the infirmities of weak saints.

First, Strong saints are to cast a mantle of wisdom over the infirmities of weak saints. They are not to present their sins in that ugliness, and with such aggravations, as may terrify, as may sink, as may make a weak saint to despair, or may drive him from the mercy-seat, or as may keep him and Christ asunder, or as may unfit him for the discharge of religious duties. It is more a weakness than a virtue in strong Christians, when a weak saint is fallen, to aggravate his fall to the uttermost, and to present his sins in such a dreadful dress, as shall amaze him, &c. It often proves very prejudicial and dangerous to weak saints, when their infirmities are aggravated beyond Scripture grounds, and beyond what they are able to bear. He that shall lay the same strength to the rubbing of an earthen dish, as he does to the rubbing of a pewter platter, instead of clearing it, shall surely break it all to pieces. The application is easy, &c.

Secondly, There is a mantle of faithfulness that is to be cast over the infirmities of weak saints. A man should never discover the infirmities of a weak saint, especially to such that have neither skill nor will to heal and bury them. The world will but blaspheme and blaze them abroad, to the dishonour of God, to the reproach of religion, and to the grief and scandal of the weak, &c. They will with Ham rather call upon others to scoff at them, than bring a mantle to cover them, &c. Ham was cursed for that he did discover his father's nakedness to his brethren, when it was in his power to have covered it. He saw it, and might have drawn a curtain over it, but would not; and for this, by a spirit of prophecy, he was cursed by his father, Gen 9:22. This age is full of such monsters, that rejoice to blaze abroad the infirmities of the saints, and these certainly justice hath or will curse.

Thirdly, There is a mantle of compassion that must be cast over the weaknesses and infirmities of weak saints. When a weak man comes to see his sin, and the Lord gives him to lie down in the dust, and to take shame and confusion to himself, that he hath dishonoured God, and caused Christ to bleed afresh, and grieved the Spirit, &c.; oh now thou must draw a covering, and cast a mantle of love and compassion over his soul, that he may not be swallowed up with sorrow. Now thou must confirm thy love to him, and carry it with as great tenderness and sweetness after his fall, as if he had never fallen. This the apostle presses, 2Co 2:7, 'Love,' says the wise man, 'covereth all sin.' Love's mantle is very large. Love claps a plaster upon every sore; love hath two

hands, and makes use of both, to hide the scars of weak saints. Christ, O strong saints, casts the mantle of his righteousness over your weaknesses, and will not you cast the mantle of love over your brother's infirmities?

[10.] Tenthly, It is the duty of strong saints to sympathize with the weak; to rejoice with them when they rejoice, and to mourn with them when they mourn.

2Co 11:29, 'Who is weak, and I am weak? who is σκανδαλίζεται, scandalized, offended, and I πυρομαι, am not on fire, burn not?

Thuanus reports of Lodovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs that were bound with cords, going to execution, and he for his dignity was not bound, he cried, Give me my chains too, let me be a knight of the same order.

It should be between a strong saint and a weak, as it is between two lute-strings, that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck, but the other trembles; no sooner should a weak saint be struck, but the strong should tremble. 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them,' Heb 13:3. The Romans punished one that was seen looking out at his window with a crown of roses on his head, in a time of public calamity; and will not God punish those that do not sympathize with Joseph in his afflictions? Surely he will. Amo 6:1-14.

[11.] Lastly, It is the duty of the strong to give to the weak the honour that is due unto them.

1Pe 3:7 : They have the same name, the same baptism, the same profession, the same faith, the same hope, the same Christ, the same promises, the same dignity, and the same glory with you; therefore speak honourably of them, and carry it honourably towards them. Let not them be under your feet, that Christ has laid near his heart, &c. And so much for this second doctrine.

We come now to the next words.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, &c.—Eph 3:8.

We shall speak now to the word grace. The Greek word χάρις, that is here rendered grace, hath a twofold signification.

First, Sometimes it is taken for the gracious favour and good-will of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to accept and own poor sinners in the Son of his love, for his own. This is called the first grace, because it is the fountain of all other graces, and the spring from whence they flow. And it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious with God.

Secondly, This word χάρις, that is here rendered grace, is taken for the gifts of grace, and they are of two sorts, special or common. Common grace is that which hypocrites may have, and in which they may excel and go beyond the choicest saints, as in a gift of knowledge, a gift of utterance, a gift of prayer, a gift of tongues, &c. A man may have these, and many other excellent gifts, and yet miscarry, yea, fall as low as hell; witness Judas, Demas, the scribes and pharisees, &c., Mat 7:21-25. Secondly, There is special grace, as faith, love, humility, meekness, which the apostle reckons up, Gal 5:22-23. Now here by grace you may either understand the gracious favour of God, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this choice favour given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,' or else you may take it for

the gifts of grace, both saving and common, which the apostle had given him, in order to the discharge of his ministerial office, which, by the special favour of God, he was advanced to. The word grace being thus opened, we may from thence observe, first, I. That the Lord gives his best gifts to his best beloved ones.

'Unto me,' saith the apostle, 'who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.' For the opening and clearing of this point, I shall premise these four things.

I. To shew you what those best gifts are that God bestows upon his best beloved ones.

II. I shall shew you the manner of his giving the best gifts to his beloved ones, or the difference there is between Christ's giving and the world's giving.

III. And then the excellency of those gifts that Christ gives, above all other gifts that the world gives.

IV. And lastly, The reason why Christ gives his best gifts to his best beloved ones. For the first, What are those best gifts that Christ bestows upon his best beloved ones?

I shall not instance in those common gifts that they have in common with others, but rather shew unto you those special gifts that he bestows upon them; and of those I shall single out them that are most choice, and that carry most in them of the glory, favour, and 'good will of him that dwelt in the bush.' And the first is this:

[1.] He gives light to his beloved ones; and 'light is a pleasant thing to behold,' as the wise man speaks, Ecc 11:7. He gives spiritual light, which is a mercy of mercies. Eph 5:14, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' So John 1:7-9, 'He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.' He gives that light whereby his people are enabled to see sin to be the greatest evil, and himself to be the chiefest good. He gives that light that melts the soul, that humbles the soul, that warms the soul, that quickens the soul, that quiets the soul, and that glads the soul. Man is not born with heavenly light in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Till Christ comes and sets up a light in the soul, the soul lives in darkness, and lies in darkness, yea, is darkness in the very abstract: Eph 5:8, 'Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.' Saints are always in the sunshine, therefore they should be like a crystal glass, with a light in the midst, which appeareth in every part. A Christian should be like the lamp in the story, that never went out. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all starlight, and torchlight, and moonlight. It is not the torchlight of natural parts and creature-comforts, nor the starlight of civil honesty and common gifts, nor yet the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, that can make day in the soul, till the Sun of righteousness rise and shine upon it. And that is the first thing he gives, light.

Now, the second thing he gives is,

[2.] Repentance. Repentance is not a flower that grows in nature's garden. Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God the Father exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' So in 2Ti 2:25, 'The servant of the Lord must in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.' By these scriptures, it is clear that repentance is no flower that grows in nature's garden, though

Arminians teach and print, that if men will put out their power and their strength they may repent, &c. But several that have been of this opinion, have experienced the falseness of it when it hath been too late: 'The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots,' Jer 13:23. And certainly, if there were such a power in man to repent, as some would make the world believe, man would never miscarry everlastingly for his not repenting. Oh, is it good dwelling with everlasting burnings, with a burning fire? Is it good being for ever shut out from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? Certainly, if there were such a power in vain man to repent, no man would go to hell for not repenting; and many that have boasted much of their abilities to repent, when they have been upon a dying bed, would have given a thousand worlds, were there so many in their power, that they could but repent.

Luther confesses, that before his conversion, he met not with a more displeasing word in all the study of divinity than this word repent; but after the Lord had converted him, and manifested himself to him, he delighted in this work; then he could sorrow for his sins, and rejoice in his sorrow.

Repentance strips the soul stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind. In this rotten building there is not one stone left upon another. As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, as well as strangers, so true repentance drowns all darling lusts. True repentance is the cutting off the right hand, and the pulling out of the right eye; and is this such an easy thing? Surely no. True repentance is a gift that is from above, and if the Lord doth not give it, man will eternally perish for the want of it. You may read much more of this in my treatise called Heaven on Earth.

[3.] Thirdly, Christ gives his Spirit. Rom 5:5, 'The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' So in 1Jn 3:24, 'And hereby we know that he abideth in us.' How? 'By the Spirit which he hath given us.' So in 1Jn 4:13. The Spirit that the Lord Christ gives is an enlightening Spirit, it is the candle of the Lord set up in the hearts of the saints, to guide them in the way everlasting. It is a sanctifying Spirit, a Spirit of burning, Isa 4:4. He is a fire to enlighten the soul, and a fire to enliven the soul, and a fire to warm the soul, &c. Whatsoever is of the Spirit is spirit. It is nimble, and lively, and active, and full of life and motion, as the Spirit is. A man without the Spirit of the Lord is a dull, dromish⁴ creature. As the Latins call a dull, dromish man, a fireless man, so we may call a man that hath not the Spirit, a spiritless man. The Spirit that Christ gives is a sealing Spirit, Eph 1:13; and a leading Spirit, Rom 8:1-39. He leads from sin, he leads from wrath, he leads from the curse; he leads to God, he leads to Christ, he leads to the promises, he leads to glory, &c.

Again, this Spirit is a comforting Spirit, John 4:16; and a pleading Spirit, Rom 8:26. Every Christian has three advocates pleading for him: the first is, that divine love that is in the bosom of the Father; the second is, the Lord Jesus that is at the right hand of the Father; and the third is, the Holy Spirit that is one with the Father.

[4.] Fourthly, He gives his blood. The blood of Christ is a gift of Christ to his beloved ones. Mat 20:28, 'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' So in John 10:11, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.' His blood was the purest blood, his human nature being most pure. His blood was the noblest blood, and therefore called in Scripture, 'the blood of God,' Rom 3:25 and Acts 20:28, by

reason of the conjunction of the divine nature with the human. It was his life-blood, his heart-blood that he gave. It was not the blood of his finger, but the blood of his heart; it was precious blood.

Three things are called precious in the Scripture.

(1.) Faith is called precious faith, 2Pe 1:1.

(2.) The promises are called precious promises, 2Pe 1:4.

(3.) The blood of Christ is called precious blood, 1Pe 1:19.

All your precious mercies swim to you in precious blood, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.

It was an excellent saying of Luther, speaking of this blood of Christ, *Una guttula plus valet quam cœlum et terra*, one little drop of this blood, saith he, is more worth than heaven and earth. Your pardon swims to you in blood; your peace swims to you in blood; your reconciliation is made by blood; your acceptation is wrought by blood, &c. *Sanguis Christi clavis cœli*, Christ's blood is heaven's key; Christ's blood is a preservative against the greatest evils; Christ's blood, as Pliny saith of polium, is a preservative against serpents, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Christ gives pardon of sin. And do you know what a mercy that is? Ask the troubled soul, ask the soul that knows what it is to lie under the wrath of the Almighty, and he will tell you that pardon of sin is a gift more worth than a thousand worlds. Now that pardon of sin is a gift of God, you may see in Acts 5:31, 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' So in Acts 26:18. Ah, souls! of all mercies pardoning mercy is the most necessary mercy. I may to heaven without honours, and without riches, and without the smiles of creatures; but I can never to heaven without pardoning mercy. A man may be great and graceless, he may be rich and miserable, he may be honourable and damnable, &c., but he cannot be a pardoned soul, but he must be a very blessed soul,⁴ Psa 32:1-2. It entitles souls to all blessedness, it puts the royal crown upon their heads. Of all mercies pardoning mercy is the most sweetening mercy; it is a choice jewel, and swims to the soul in blood, Heb 9:22. It is a mercy that makes all other mercies to look like mercies, and taste like mercies, and work like mercies; and the want of it takes off the glory and beauty of all a man's mercies, and makes his life a very hell. Pardon of sin is a voluminous mercy, a mercy that has many, many precious mercies in the womb of it. You may well call it Gad, Gen 30:11, for it ushers in troops of mercy. When you can number the sands of the sea, and tell the stars of heaven, then, and not till then, shall you be able to recount the mercies that attend pardoning mercy. He that has this mercy cannot be miserable, and he that wants it cannot be happy: get this and get all, miss this and miss all. This is a gift conferred only upon Christ's favourites: 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,' Mat 9:2. No mercy will make a man everlastingly merry below pardoning mercy. He hath no reason to be sad that hath his pardon in his bosom, nor he hath no reason to be glad, who is upon the last step of the ladder, ready to be turned off without his pardon. And this is the fifth gift that Christ gives to his, viz. pardon of sin.

[6.] Sixthly, Christ gives precious promises: 2Pe 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises,' &c. The promises are a precious book; every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. The promises are golden vessels, that are laden with the choicest jewels that heaven can afford or

the soul desire. All our spiritual, temporal, and eternal good is to be found in the belly of the promises. Promises are big-bellied mercies. There is nothing you can truly call a mercy but you will find it in the belly of a promise. Under all changes they are the comfort, support, and relief of the soul: Psa 119:49-176, 'Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.' If the soul groan under the power of sin, then that promise relieves it: Rom 6:14, 'For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.' If the soul groan under the guilt of sin, then that promise relieves it: Jer 33:8, 'I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned against me,' &c. And that promise, Isa 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I, even I, am he, blotting out thy transgression;' 'I, even I,' whom thou hast offended; 'I, even I,' whom thou hast provoked; 'I, even I,' whose glorious name thou hast profaned; 'I, even I,' whose righteous law thou hast violated; 'I, even I,' whose holy covenant thou hast transgressed; 'I, even I,' whose mercies thou hast despised; 'I, even I, whose chastisements thou hast slighted,' will blot out thy transgressions for my own sake.'

'I, even I,' is a passionate and emphatical expression. God's goodness runs over to sinful creatures; and 'where sin abounds, there grace doth superabound.'

If the creditor himself blot out the debt, and cross the book, surely it shall never be remembered more. Our sins are debts, which God, who hath the power of life and death, of heaven and hell, of condemning and absolving, hath engaged himself to blot out as a thick cloud: Isa 44:22, 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.' An under-officer may blot out an indictment, and yet the offender may be never the better for it; but if the king, who is the supreme judge, shall blot it out, then the offender is safe. The application is easy. If the soul be deserted, then that promise relieves it: Mic 7:18-19, 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us,' &c. If the soul be sliding and ready to fall, then that promise supports and upholds it: Psa 37:24, 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'the Lord upholding him with his hand;' Deu 33:26-27. The Hebrew particle **וְ** notes a continued act of God. God hath still his everlasting arms under his people, so that they shall never totally nor finally fall. And the root *samach*, from whence this word is derived, signifies to sustain or uphold, as the tender mother doth the little babe. The safety and security of the child lies not so much in the child's hanging about the mother's neck, as in the mother's holding it fast in her arms. So our safety and security lies not so much in our weak holding upon Christ, but in Christ's holding of us fast in his everlasting arms. This is our glory and our safety, that Christ's 'left hand is always under us, and his right hand does always embrace us,' Song of Solomon 2:6. If the soul be forsaken by friends, then that promise relieves it, Heb 13:5-6, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'

There are five negatives in the Greek to assure God's people that he will never forsake them. Five times this precious promise is renewed in the Scripture, that we might have the stronger consolation, and that we may press and oppress it till we have gotten all the sweetness out of it. And verily many precious souls have sucked much sweetness out of the breasts of this promise, when their nearest relations and their dearest friends have forsaken them and forgotten them. God loves that his people should put his bonds, his promises in suit; and he that doth shall find God near him, though friends should leave him, and the world be in arms against him, &c. If the soul be tempted, then that word of promise relieves it, 1Co 10:13, 'But God is faithful, who will not suffer

you to be tempted above that you are able,' &c. The promises are a Christian's magna charta; they are his chief evidences for heaven. Men highly prize their charters and privileges, and carefully keep the conveyances and assurances of their lands. Oh! how should saints then treasure up and keep these precious promises which the Lord hath given them, and which are to them, instead of all assurances, for their protection, maintenance, deliverance, comfort, and everlasting happiness! And thus much for the sixth gift the Lord gives, viz. the promises.

[7.] Seventhly, The Lord gives grace: 'Of his fulness we all have received grace for grace,' John 1:16. The Lord gives that grace, the least dram of which is more worth than heaven and earth.

It was an excellent saying of one of the ancients [Jerome], 'I had rather have St Paul's coat with his heavenly graces, than the purple robes of kings with their kingdoms.' Grace is that which truly ennobles the soul; it raises the soul up to converse with the highest and with the noblest objects, and every man is as the objects are with which he converses. If the objects are noble, the man is so; if the objects are base with which a man converses, the man is base. A man may better know what he is by eyeing the objects with which his soul does mostly converse, than by observing his most glorious and pompous services: 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Pro 12:26. Abraham was a prince of God among the Hittites, Gen 23:6. The Jews say that those seventy persons that went down with Jacob into Egypt were more worth than the seventy nations of the world. Indeed, it is only grace that makes a man truly noble. When one heard the king of Persia styled 'the Great King,' saith he, I acknowledge none more excellent than myself, unless more righteous; nor none greater, unless better. Grace, as it is bred by the noblest means, so it is preserved and maintained in the soul by the choicest means, viz. union and communion with God, &c.; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; grace makes a man all glorious within and without; grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring.

[8.] Eighthly, He gives peace: John 14:27, 'My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' Christ gives peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with the creatures. Dulce nomen pacis, the very name of peace is sweet, Rom 5:1, Hos 2:21-23, Job 5:19-25. The Hebrews, when they wished all happiness to any, used but this one word, 'Peace be with you;' and the ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand, all blessings. Ask a soul that hath been under terrors of conscience, and he will tell you, that of all gifts, inward peace is the most princely gift, &c.

[9.] Ninthly, He gives glory: John 10:28, 'My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life.' Rom 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.'

Now the glory that Christ gives is real glory: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory.' The Greek word **ποκατα** signifies two things: 1, a designation of a crown; 2, a reservation and safe keeping of it for him until the coronation day.

Again, the glory he gives the soul is soul-filling glory; glory that fills the understanding with the clearest and the brightest light; glory that fills the will with the greatest freedom; glory that fills the affections with the choicest joy and delight, Psa 16:11, and Psa 17:15, 2Co 12:1-6.

Again, the glory he gives is incomparable glory: Rom 8:18, 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' The Greek word **λογίζομαι**, that is here rendered I reckon, is not a word of doubting, but a word of

concluding. I conclude by arguments, that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared to that illustrious and glorious glory 'that is ready to be revealed on us,' as it is in the Greek. I have cast up the account, saith the apostle, as wise merchants use to cast up theirs, and I find in the balancing of the account, that there is nothing to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Again, the glory he gives is unmoveable glory. All worldly glory is tottering and shaking. Princes' crowns hang now but upon one side of their heads. 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed it to stain' (or pollute) 'the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth,' Isa 23:9. 'The Lord hath purposed it,' or as it is in the Hebrew [■■■■], 'The Lord hath consulted it; and the counsel of the Lord shall stand.' It is agreed upon in heaven, that the pride of all glory shall be stained and polluted, or thrown down, as some polluted filthy thing that is trampled under foot. Oh! but this glory that Christ gives is unmoveable glory, it is permanent glory; it is glory that cannot be changed, stained, or polluted, Heb 12:28.

Again, the glory he gives is suited glory. It is glory that is suited to the backs, hearts, hopes, desires, and capacities of his servants, John 14:1-3.

Again, the glory he gives is never-fading glory; it is glory that fadeth not away. When a man hath been in heaven as many millions of years as there be stars in heaven, his glory shall be as fresh and as green as it was at his first entrance into heaven. All worldly glory is like the flowers of the field; but the glory that Christ gives is lasting and durable like himself, &c.

[10.] Tenthly, and lastly, He gives himself, and verily this is a gift of gifts indeed, John 6:51, John 6:63; so in Eph 5:20. A saint may say, Methinks I hear Christ saying to me as Æschines said to Socrates, 'Others,' said he, 'give thee silver and gold, and precious jewels, but I give thee myself.' So the soul may say, One friend gives me bread, and another gives me clothes, and another gives me house-room, &c. Oh! but thou givest me thyself. Christ put into the balance will out-weigh all other gifts that he bestows upon the sons of men. Christ is the richest gift. Oh! there are unsearchable riches in Christ, as hereafter I shall shew you. He is the choicest and the rarest gift; he is a gift given but to a few. Rich and rare jewels are not commonly, but more rarely given; so is Christ. Though Israel be 'as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant only shall be saved,' Rom 9:17. 'A garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed, is my well-beloved,' Song of Solomon 4:12. 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom,' Luk 12:32. Christ is a drawing gift, a gift that draws all other gifts along with him. 'If he have given us his Son, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?' Rom 8:32. Christ is a drawing gift. When God the Father hath cast this incomparable jewel into a man's bosom, he cannot deny him anything. Such a soul may well say, Hath he given me a Christ? and will he not give me a crumb? Hath he given me his Son, which is the greatest mercy? and will he stand with me for lesser mercies? Surely no. In a word, Christ is of all gifts the sweetest gift. As the tree, Exo 15:25, sweetened the bitter waters, so this gift, the Lord Jesus, of whom that tree was a type, sweetens all other gifts that are bestowed upon the sons of men. He turns every bitter into sweet, and makes every sweet more sweet. And so I come to the second thing propounded, and that was, II. The difference between Christ's giving and the world's giving. And this I shall shew you in the following particulars:

[1.] First, The world gives, but they give grudgingly; but when Christ gives, he gives freely: Isa 55:1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come, and buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' So in Rev 21:6, 'I will give to every one that is athirst of the water of life freely.' To

do good, and not to do it freely, handsomely, is nothing. A benefit given with grudging is a stony loaf, only taken for necessity.

[2.] Secondly, The world they give, but they give poorly, niggardly, but Christ gives plenteously, richly: 1Ti 6:17, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' When Cæsar gave one a great reward, 'This,' saith he, 'is too great a gift for me to receive;' 'But,' says Cæsar, 'it is not too great a gift for me to give.' So, though the least gift that Christ gives, in some sense, is too much for us to receive, yet the greatest gifts are not too great for Christ to give.

It is said of Araunah, that noble Jebusite, renowned for his bounty, that 'he had but a subject's purse, but a king's heart.' But the Lord Jesus hath not only a king's heart, but he hath also a king's purse, and gives accordingly.

[3.] Thirdly, The world give, but they give tauntingly, they give upbraidingly; they hit men in the teeth with the gifts they give. Ay, but the Lord Jesus Christ gives, and he gives willingly, he upbraids none with the gifts he gives: Jas 1:5, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, that gives liberally, and upbraideth no man.' Where Christ gives, there he won't upbraid, neither with present failings nor former infirmities. Christ is not wont to reproach those to whom he gives the best gifts; he will not cast it in their dish, that he hath been thus and thus kind to them, but will always 'rejoice over them to do them good.' But the world gives, and then reproaches the receiver for receiving, and this turns all into gall and wormwood, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, The world gives, but they give more rarely, but Christ gives, and he gives frequently. He is every day, every hour, yea, every moment, a-giving of royal favours to his people. Here is peace for you that are in trouble, says Christ; and here is pardon for you that groan under guilt, says Christ; and here is comfort for you that are mourners in Zion, says Christ, &c. His hand is ever in his purse, he is still a-scattering pearls of glory, ay, the very jewels of his crown, among the beloved of his soul.

[5.] Fifthly, The world gives, but they give the worst, and keep the best; ay, but Christ gives the best, he gives the best of the best. He gives the best joy; the best comfort, the best peace, the best love, the best assistance, &c., he gives adoption, remission, justification, sanctification, acceptation, reconciliation, and glorification, &c. He gives the best; as that king in Plutarch said of a groat, 'it is no kingly gift;' and of a talent, 'it is no base bribe.' The world gives groats, ay, but Christ gives talents, 2Co 9:15, 1Pe 1:8, Php 4:7, Psalms 88:10-11.

[6.] Sixthly, The world gives a little, that they may give no more; ay, but Christ gives that he may give. He gives a little grace that he may give grace upon grace. He gives a little comfort that he may give fulness of comfort, John 1:16. He gives some sips that he may give full draughts, he gives pence that he may give pounds, and he gives pounds that he may give hundreds. The third particular that I am to shew you is, III. The excellency of those gifts that Christ gives, above all other gifts that the world gives. In this I shall mind brevity, and,

[1.] First, The gifts that Christ gives to his are spiritual and heavenly gifts, as is most clear by what hath been already said, and the spirituality of them doth demonstrate the excellency of them. And doubtless the more spiritual any gift, any promise, any truth, any prayer, or any service is, the more excellent is that gift, &c. All Christ's gifts are like himself, spiritual and heavenly.

[2.] Secondly, They are pure gifts. Christ gives wine without water, light without darkness, gold without dross, and sweet without bitter, Rev 22:1, Jas 3:17. There is much dross and poison in the gifts that the world gives, but there is none in the gifts that Christ gives. The streams are as the fountain is; the fountain is pure, and so are the streams. The branches are as the root is; the root is pure, and so are the branches.

[3.] Thirdly, The gifts that Christ gives are soul-satisfying gifts. They are such as are suitable to the soul, and therefore they satisfy the soul. Things satisfy as they suit. There is a good, and there is a suitable good. Now, it is only the suitable good that satisfies the soul of man. A pardon is most suitable to a condemned man, and therefore it best satisfies him. Health is most suitable to the sick, and therefore it satisfies when it is attained, &c. As bread satisfies the hungry soul, and drink the thirsty soul, and clothing the naked soul, so do the precious gifts that Christ bestows upon the soul satisfy the soul. The light, the love, the joy, the peace, the fellowship, &c., that Christ gives, doth abundantly satisfy the soul, Jer 31:15-16; Psa 90:14, Psa 36:8, Isa 63:5, Psa 65:4. Oh, but the gifts that this world gives can never satisfy the soul: Ecc 5:10, 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase.' A man may as soon fill a chest with grace, or a quart-pot with virtue, as a heart with wealth. If Alexander conquer one world, he will wish for another to conquer.

[4.] Fourthly, The gifts that Christ gives are most permanent and lasting gifts. The grace he gives is called 'an immortal seed,' 1Jn 3:9; and the glory he gives is called 'everlasting glory,' Rom 2:7. The gifts of the world are fading, 2Pe 1:11. A false oath, a spark of fire, a storm at sea, a treacherous friend, brings all to nothing in a moment. Sad experience doth every day confirm this.

[5.] Fifthly, and lastly, The gifts that Christ gives are the most useful gifts. They are useful to the strengthening of the soul against temptations, and to the supporting of the soul under afflictions, and to the sweetening of all changes; health and sickness, strength and weakness, plenty and poverty, honour or disgrace, life or death. Oh, but worldly gifts cannot bear up the spirits of men from fainting and sinking when trials come, when troubles come. Our modern stories relate of Queen Mary, that she should say, 'If they did open her when she was dead, they should find Calais lying at her heart;' the loss of which, it seems, hastened her end. The prior in Melancthon rolled his hands up and down in a basin full of angels, thinking to have charmed his gout, but it would not do. The precious gifts that Christ gives his, will bear up their heads above all waters, &c. Of all gifts, they are the most useful for the producing of the most noble effects. There are no gifts produce such effects as the precious gifts that Christ gives. They raise men up to much life and activity; they make souls strong to do for God, to bear for God, to suffer for God; to be anything, to be nothing, that God may be 'all in all.' They raise the strongest joy, the most lasting comfort, and the purest peace. There is no gifts draw out that thankfulness, and raise up to that fruitfulness, as the gifts that Jesus Christ gives. And so much for that third head, viz., the excellency of those gifts that Christ gives above all other gifts whatsoever.

I come now to the fourth head, and that is, IV. The reasons why God gives his best gifts to his dearest ones.

I shall only give you these six:

[1.] First, Because he loves them with the dearest, with the choicest, and with the strongest love; therefore he gives them the best gifts.

Christ doth not love believers with a low, flat, dull, common love, with such a love as most men love one another with, but with a love that is like himself. Now, men will give as they love: 1Sa 1:4-5, 'And Elkanah gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all his sons and daughters, portions, but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved her.' In the Hebrew it is, 'he gave her a gift of the face;' that is, a great, an honourable gift. Men look upon great and honourable gifts with a sweet and cheerful countenance; so the gifts that Jesus Christ gives to believers are the gifts of the face, that is, they are the greatest gifts, the honourablest gifts, the choicest gifts, gifts fit for none but a king to give.

Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, but gold to others. The Lord Jesus scatters the trifles of this world up and down; as Luther well speaks, 'The whole Turkish empire is but a crust that God throws to a dog.' God scatters giftless gifts, viz., the honours, riches, and favours of this world, up and down among the worst of men; but as for his gold—his Spirit, his grace, his Son, his favour—these are jewels that he only casts into the bosom of saints, and that because he dearly loves them.

[2.] Secondly, Christ gives the best gifts to his people, because they are best principled and fitted to make a divine improvement of them.

There is no men on earth that are principled and fitted for the improvement of the special gifts that Christ gives but his own people. None have such principles of wisdom, love, holiness, and faithfulness to make an improvement of the joy, the peace, the comfort, that the Lord gives as his people; ergo.... Abraham gave unto 'the sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away; but unto Isaac he gave all that he had,' Gen 25:5. As Isaac was better beloved than the concubines' sons, so Isaac was better principled to improve love than they were. The application is easy.

[3.] Thirdly, He doth it upon this account, that he may the more endear the hearts of his people to him. The greatest design of Christ in this world is mightily to endear the hearts of his people; and indeed it was that which was in his eye and upon his heart from all eternity. It was this design that caused him to lay down his crown and to take up our cross, to put off his robes and to put on our rags, to be condemned that we might be justified, to undergo the wrath of the Almighty that we might for ever be in the arms of his mercy. He gives his Spirit, his grace, yea, and his very self, and all to endear the hearts of his people to himself. When Isaac would endear the heart of Rebekah, then the bracelets, the jewels, and the earrings are cast into her bosom, Gen 24:53. So the Lord Jesus casts his heavenly bracelets, jewels, and earrings into the bosoms, into the laps, of his people, out of a design to endear himself unto them: Pro 17:8, 'A gift is a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it; whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.' In the Hebrew it is thus, 'a gift is as a stone of grace,' ■■■■■■, that is, it makes a man very acceptable and gracious in the eyes of others. A gift is like that precious stone pantarbe, that hath a marvellous conciliating property in it; or like the wonder-working loadstone, that, as some writers observe, hath among other properties this, that it makes those that have it well-spoken men and well accepted of princes. Certainly the gifts that Jesus Christ gives to his do render him very acceptable and precious in their eyes. Christ to them is the crown of crowns, the heaven of heavens, the glory of glories; he is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory: Pro 18:16, 'A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth

him before great men.' The gifts that Jesus Christ gives widen the heart and enlarge the soul of a believer to take in more of himself. Naturally we are narrow-mouthed heavenward and wide-mouthed earthward; but the Lord Jesus, by casting in his jewels, his pearls, his precious gifts, into the soul, doth widen the soul, and enlarge the soul, and make it more capacious to entertain himself. Christ by his gifts causes all doors to stand open, that 'the King of glory may enter in,' Psa 24:7-10.

4. Now the fourth reason of the point is, because Christ expects more from his people, than he doth from all the world besides, therefore he gives them the best gifts. Where the Lord expects and looks for most, there he gives most. Though believers are but 'a little flock,' though they are but 'a remnant,' though they are but 'a fountain sealed, a spring shut up, a garden enclosed,' yet Christ looks for more from them, than from all the world besides. He looks for more love from them, than from all the world besides; and he expects more service from them, than from all the world besides; and he looks for more honour from them than from all the world besides: Mal 1:6, 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: If I am your father, where is my honour? and if I am your master, where is my fear?' He looks for more fear from them than from all the world besides, and for more honour from them than from all the world besides, and for more prayers and praises from them than from all the world besides.

[5.] Fifthly, The Lord Jesus gives the best gifts to his own, people, that he may fence and strengthen them against the worst temptations.

There are no men on earth that lie open to temptations, as saints. The best men have been always the most tempted. The more excellent any man is in grace and holiness, the more shall that man be followed with temptations, as you may see in David, who was tempted by Satan to number the people; and Job, to curse God and die; and Peter, to deny Christ; and so Paul was buffeted, yea, and Christ himself most grievously assaulted. The Lord knows well enough that Satan hath a cruel eye, an envious eye, a malicious eye upon his beloved ones, and therefore he is pleased, by his precious gifts, to strengthen them against his assaults. What Paul once said concerning bonds and afflictions, that they attended him 'in every place,' that may believers say concerning temptations, that they attend them in 'every place,' in every calling, in every condition, in every company, in every service, &c. As now, that the hearts of his people and temptations may not meet, the Lord is pleased to give them the best and choicest gifts.

Austin thanked God for this, that his heart and the temptations did not meet. The Lord hath on purpose given these glorious gifts into the hearts of his saints, that their souls and temptations may be kept asunder; that though they be tempted, yet they may not be conquered; though they be assaulted, yet they may not be vanquished. Basil, Luther, Vincentius, and that famous marquis Galeacius [Carraciolus], &c., met with very strange and strong temptations, but the precious gifts that the Lord had cast into their bosoms made them triumph over all.³ Oh that grace, that peace, that life, that love, that communion with which the Lord had crowned them, made them too great, too noble, and too glorious to yield to any temptations with which they were beset. It was their pleasure to overcome offered pleasure, their honour to overcome offered honour, their greatness to overcome offered greatness. When one of them was tempted with money and preferment, he scorned the offers, saying, Give me money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish.

Jerome tells a story of a Christian soldier, whom when the prætor could not by any torments remove from Christianity, he commanded to be laid on a bed in a pleasant garden, among the flourishing and fragrant flowers; which done, all others withdrawing, a most beautiful harlot came to him, and used all art to destroy his soul; but the Christian soldier being filled with the royal gifts of the Spirit, bit off his tongue with his teeth, and spat it in her face as she was tempting him, and so got victory over all her temptations. The precious favours God confers upon his, make them temptation-proof; they make believers trample upon the most amiable baits. 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God,' says Joseph. Joseph's sense of Potiphar's favours heaped upon him, strengthened him against the impudent solicitations of his wanton mistress, Gen 39:1-23. And shall not the singular favours that God confers upon his dearest ones strengthen them against Satan's assaults? Surely gracious hearts are wrought more upon, and bettered and strengthened more by spirituals than by temporals; by eternals than by externals; and if Satan do not find it so, I am much mistaken.

Well, remember this, Satan's overcoming the saints gives him the greatest advantage to boast and triumph over Christ.

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own; He is not thine, Lord Jesus, saith he, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but he is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, but sells thy blood to me. So when Satan prevails over the saints, look, O Christ, says he, are these the price of thy blood? are these the objects of thy love? are these the delight of thy soul? what, are these thy jewels? are these the apple of thy eye? are these thy pleasant portion? Why, lo how I lead them! lo how I triumph over them! they seem rather to be mine than thine. Ah, Christians! resist as for life, that Satan may never have occasion thus to insult and triumph over Christ, &c.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Christ gives the best gifts to his dearest ones, that they may be an honour and a praise unto him in the glorious day of his owning of them, and marriage to them before all the world.

Believers in this life are but betrothed to Christ: 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness,' Hos 2:19-20. Their marriage-day is put off till the glorious day of Christ's appearing; the great day of his glory will be the day of solemnity; Rev 21:2, Rev 21:9-10, compared. It would not be for the honour and glory of Christ, that his spouse in that day should be clothed with rags; therefore he hath given them the bracelets, the ear-rings, and the jewels before-hand, that they may be a praise and an honour to him in the marriage day. Oh! when the saints shall appear with all those glorious jewels about them, that Christ hath bequeathed to them, how will their splendid glory darken all other glory, and make the very sun to hide its face. This is our betrothing day, that will be our marriage day.

Bishop Ridley, the night before he suffered, invited his hostess and the rest at table to his marriage, 'for,' said he, 'to-morrow I must be married.' so several other martyrs went as merrily to die, as to dine; knowing that their dying day did but make way for their marriage day. The Lord doth by his rich and royal favours trick and trim up his bride beforehand, that she may be an honour and a praise to him in the day of coronation, in the day of marriage, in the day of solemnity, when he will own her before devils, angels, and all reprobates; when he will say, 'Lo, here am I,

and the bride, O Father! that thou hast given me.' And thus you have a brief account of the reasons of the point, why the Lord gives the best gifts to his own people.

We shall make some short but sweet uses of this point.

And, first,

[1.] Doth the Lord give the best and greatest gifts to his people? Then you that are his people, sit down and wonder at this condescending love of God.

Oh! what is in thy soul or in my soul, that should cause the Lord to give such gifts to us as he hath given? We were all equal in sin and misery; nay, doubtless, we have actually outsinned thousands, to whom these precious gifts are denied. Let us therefore sit down and wonder at this condescending love of God. Oh! we were once poor wretches sitting upon the dunghill, yea, wallowing in our blood, and yet behold the King of kings, the Lord of lords, hath so far condescended in his love, as to bestow himself, his Spirit, his grace, and all the jewels of his royal crown upon us. Oh! what heart can conceive, what tongue can express, this matchless love! I will be thine for ever, says Christ, and my Spirit shall be thine for ever, and my grace thine for ever, and my glory thine for ever, and my righteousness thine for ever; all I am and all I have, shall be thine for ever. O sirs! what condescending love is this. Oh! what a Christ is this.

[2.] But then, secondly, Be greatly thankful, oh be greatly thankful for the great gift that Christ hath bestowed upon you.

It is not a little thankfulness that will answer and suit to the great gifts that the Lord Jesus hath bestowed upon you. Oh say with the psalmist, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his favours, and great benefits. I will take the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord,' Psa 116:13-14. Yea, say again with the psalmist, 'I will praise thee more and more.' Or as it is in the Hebrew, 'I will add to thy praise,' Psa 71:14. Oh when thou lookest upon the jewels, the pearls that Christ hath given thee, say, Lord, I will praise thee more and more, I will rise higher and higher in thy praises, I will be still a-adding to thy praise. The very law of nature bespeaks great thankfulness, where great favours are given; and the law of custom bespeaks it, and doth not the law of grace bespeak it much more? When Tamerlane had taken Bajazet, among other questions he asked him 'if ever he had given God thanks for making him so great an emperor?' He confessed immediately, that 'he never thought of that;' to whom Tamerlane replied, 'It is no wonder so ungrateful a man should be made a spectacle of misery. Oh! what do they then deserve that are unthankful for spiritual favours. Tell me, O Christians, are not the gifts that Christ hath conferred upon you, peculiar gifts? And will you not be thankful for them? Were they but common gifts, you ought to be thankful for them; how much more then for peculiar gifts, for right-handed favours? Tell me, are not the gifts that Christ hath given thee rare gifts? What hadst thou been if Christ had not made a difference between thee and others, by those glorious gifts that he hath conferred upon thee? Thou lookest upon some, and seest they are very ignorant. Oh! what hadst thou been if God had not bestowed that grace of knowledge upon thee? Thou lookest upon other persons that are unclean, profane, and filthy. Why! such a wretch wouldst thou have been, if the Lord had not made a difference between thee and them, by bestowing himself, his grace, and Spirit upon thee.

It was long since determined in the schools, that 'penitents had more reason to be thankful than innocent; sin giving an advantage to mercy to be doubly free in giving and in pardoning;' and so the greater obligation is left upon us to thankfulness.

Luther hath a very famous story, in his writing upon the fourth commandment, in the time of the council of Constance. He tells you of two cardinals, that as they were riding to the council, they saw a shepherd in the field weeping. One of them being affected with his weeping, rode to him to comfort him; and coming near to him he desired to know the reason of his weeping. The shepherd was unwilling to tell him at first, but at last he told him, saying, 'I looking upon this toad considered that I never praised God as I ought, for making me such an excellent creature as a man, comely and reasonable. I have not blessed him that he made me not such a deformed toad as this.' The cardinal hearing this, and considering that God had done far greater things for him than for this poor shepherd, he fell down dead from his mule; his servants lifting him up, and bringing him to the city, he came to life again, and then cried out, 'O St Austin! how truly didst thou say, the unlearned rise and take heaven by force, and we with all our learning wallow in flesh and blood.' The application is easy.

Thirdly, The next use is,

[3.] If the Lord hath given the best gifts to his people, then oh that his people would not give God the worst, but the best of everything.

Oh! give the Lord the best of your strength, the best of your time, the best of your mercies, and the best of your services, who hath given to your souls the best of gifts: Num 18:29, 'Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof, out of it.' So I say, of all thy offerings offer God the best, who hath given to thee the best and greatest gifts. So in Exo 35:22, 'For the service of the tabernacle they brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and tables, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord.' They gave the best of the best, and so must we. Oh do not offer to God the worst of your time, the worst of your strength, the worst of your mercies, the worst of your services. That same is a very dreadful text: Mal 1:8, Mal 1:13-14, compared, 'And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with it, and accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.' Saith God, Will men be put off thus? No, I know they won't; and why then should you deal worse with me than with men? Thy governors will have the best, ay, the best of the best; and will you deal worse with me, saith God, than with your governors? Will you thus requite me for all my favours, O foolish people and unwise? is this your kindness to your friend? Mal 1:13-14, 'Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts: and ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord.' Oh! that God had not cause to complain thus of many of your souls, to whom he hath shewn much love. But mark what follows: Mal 1:14, 'But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.' If you have better in your hands, and yet shall go to put off God with the worst, the curse will follow. Think of it and tremble, all you that deal fraudulently and false-heartedly with God. Ah, Christians! you must say, World, stand behind; sin and Satan, get you behind us, for the best gifts, the choicest favours that ever were

given, we have received from the Father of lights; and therefore by his gifts he hath obliged our souls to give him the best of our time, strength, and services; and therefore we will not be at your call or beck any longer. Oh, say, the Lord hath given us the best gifts, and 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.'

[4.] Fourthly, This should bespeak the people of God to trust and lean upon God for lesser gifts.

Hath God given thee a crown, and wilt thou not trust him for a crumb? 2Ti 4:8. Hath he given thee a house that hath 'foundations, whose builder and maker is God?' Heb 11:15. Hath he given thee 'a kingdom that shakes not'? Heb 12:28. And wilt thou not trust him for a cottage, for a little house-room in this world? Hath he given thee himself, his Son, his Spirit, his grace; and wilt thou not trust him to give thee bread, and friends, and clothes, and other necessary mercies that he knows thou needest? Rom 8:32, Mat 6:32. Hath he given thee the greater, and will he stand with thee for the lesser? Surely no. Wilt thou trust that man for much, that hath given thee but a little? And wilt thou not trust that God for a little, that hath given thee much? Wilt thou not trust him for pence, that hath given thee pounds? O sirs! hath the Lord given you himself, the best of favours; and will not you trust him for the least favours? Hath he given you pearls, and will not you trust him for pins? &c. Doth not the apostle argue sweetly? Rom 8:32, 'He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? What! says the apostle, hath he given us his Son, his only Son, his bosom Son, his beloved Son, the Son of his joy, the Son of his delights? Oh how can he then but cast in all other things, as paper and pack-thread, into the bargain? Oh! that Christians would learn to reason themselves out of their fears, and out of their distrusts, as the apostle doth. Oh! that Christians would no longer rend and rack their precious souls with fears and cares, but rest satisfied in this, that he that hath been so kind to them in spirituals, will not be wanting to them in temporals, Pro 8:23-32.

[5.] Fifthly, If the Lord hath given the best gifts to his people, this should then bespeak his people, not to envy the men of the world for those lesser favours that God hath conferred upon them.

It was horrid wickedness in Ahab to envy poor Naboth, because of his vineyard; and is it a virtue in you that are Christians to envy others, because their outward mercies are greater or sweeter than yours? Should the prince upon whose head the royal crown is set, and about whose neck the golden chain is put, envy those whose hands are full of sugar-plums, and whose laps are full of rosemary, &c. Hath not God, O Christians! put a royal crown of glory upon your heads, and a golden chain of grace about your necks, and his Son's glorious robe upon your backs? and why then should your hearts rise against others' mercies? O! reason yourselves out of this sinful temper.

I would have every Christian thus to argue: Hath not the Lord given me himself? Is not one dram of that grace that God hath given me, more worth than ten thousand worlds? and why then should I envy at others' mercies?

There was a soldier which, for breaking his rank in reaching after a bunch of grapes, was condemned to die by martial law, and as he went to execution, he went eating of his grapes; upon which, some of his fellow-soldiers were somewhat troubled, saying, 'He ought then to mind somewhat else;' to whom he said, 'I beseech you, sirs, do not envy me my grapes, they will cost me dear; you would be loath to have them at the rate that I must pay for them.' So say I, O saints!

do not envy the men of this world because of their honours, riches, &c., for you would be loath to have them at that rate that they must pay for them. Oh! there is a day of reckoning a-coming, a day wherein all the nobles and brave gallants in the world must be brought to the bar, and give an account how they have improved and employed all the favours that God hath conferred upon them; therefore envy them not. Is it madness and folly in a great favourite at court, to envy those that feast themselves with the scraps that come from the prince's table? Oh! then, what madness and folly is it that the favourites of heaven should envy the men of the world, who at best do but feed upon the scraps that come from God's table! Spirituals are the choice meat, temporals are but the scraps. Temporals are the bones, spirituals are the marrow. Is it below a man to envy the dogs because of the bones? And is it not much more below a Christian to envy others for temporals, when himself enjoys spirituals?

[6.] Sixthly, Be not troubled for the want of lesser gifts.

It is to me a sad thing to see gracious souls, that have some comfortable satisfaction in their own hearts that the Lord hath given Christ and grace to them, John 14:1-3, &c., go up and down whining and weeping because they have not health, or wealth, or child, or trade, &c., when the Lord hath bestowed upon them such choice, spiritual blessings, the least of which will out-weigh all temporal blessings. Well, Christians, remember this, you act below your spiritual birth, your holy calling, when you suffer your hearts to be troubled and perplexed for the want of temporal things. Can you read special love in these? Doth your happiness lie in the enjoyment of them? Are not the angels happy without them? Was not Lazarus more happy than Dives? Yes. Oh! then, let not the want of those things trouble thee, the enjoyment of which can never make thee happy. Should the child be troubled for want of a rattle or a baby, that is proclaimed heir of a crown? And why then should a Christian, that is heir-apparent to a heavenly crown, be troubled upon the want of worldly toys? &c.

Jerome tells us of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, coming to him, asked him whether he was not sore troubled and afflicted for want of his sight? 'Oh yes,' said Didymus, 'it is a great affliction and trouble to me.' Then Alexander chid him, saying, Hath God given you the excellency of an angel, of an apostle, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice and brute beasts have.

It is great folly, it is double iniquity for a Christian to be troubled for the want of those things that God ordinarily bestows upon the worst of men. Oh the mercies that a Christian hath in hand, oh the mercies that a Christian hath in the promises, oh the mercies that a Christian hath in hope, are so many, so precious, and so glorious, that they should bear up his head and heart from fainting and sinking under all outward wants.

There goes a story among scholars of Æsop's deceiving Mercury, he having promised him one part of his nuts, keeps all the meat to himself, and gives the other the shells. Ah, Christians! God hath given you the meat, but the world the shells; why then should you be troubled for want of the shells, when God hath given you the kernel? &c.

[7.] Seventhly, If the Lord hath given his people the best gifts, oh then, let not them leave off that God that hath bestowed such choice and noble favours on them.

Jer 2:11-13, 'Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit: Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord.' Why? 'For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,' &c. This was that aggravated the Israelites' sin, Psa 105:1-45 and Psa 106:1-48, that they forsook that God that had conferred upon them many rich and royal favours. But oh! then, what madness and folly is it in you, that you should forsake that God that hath done such mighty things for your souls? I may say, to keep you close to God, as Saul said to his servants, to keep them close to him, 1Sa 22:7, 'Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds?' Ah, Christians! can the world give you spiritual life? Can the world give you peace of conscience, pardon of sin, the favour of God, the hopes of glory? No. Oh then! never leave nor forsake that God that hath given you all these royal favours, which none can give nor take, but himself. He that forsakes God forsakes his own mercies; he forsakes his life, his joy, his crown, his all in all. No evil to this, of forsaking the greatest good. It makes a man's life a very hell. 'Such shall be written in the dust,' Jer 17:13.

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Be not impatient nor froward, when God shall take away some lesser mercies from you.

Hath God given you the best and the greatest gifts that your souls can beg or himself can give? And will you be froward or impatient when he shall come to take away lesser mercies? What? wilt thou be an impatient soul, when God comes and writes death upon such a near mercy, and passes the sentence of death upon such and such desirable mercies? Verily this is the way to provoke God to strip thee naked of thy choicest ornaments, and to put thee in chains, or else to turn thee a-grazing among the beasts of the field, as he did Nebuchadnezzar. God gives the best, and takes away the worst; he gives the greatest, and takes away the least; the sense of which made Job bless God when stripped of all. If a man should give you a pearl and take away a pin; if he should give you a bag of gold and take away a bag of counters, would it not be a madness in you to be impatient, and froward? Doth God take away a pin, and hath he not given you a pearl for it? He hath given thee a pound, O Christian! for every penny that he hath taken from thee; therefore be not froward nor impatient. Remember, Christians, how many in the world there be that sit sighing and mourning under the want of those very favours that you do enjoy. 'Why does the living man complain?' What! out of the grave, and complain! What! out of hell, and complain! This is man's sin, and God's wonder. But now some poor sinners may say, Here is good news for saints, but what is all this to us all this while?

Why, I will tell you; I have something to say for the comfort and encouragement of poor sinners. Ah, sinners! Christ is willing to bestow the best gifts upon the worst sinners. Take one text for all; it is a sweet one, and full to the point in hand: Psa 68:18, 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.'

Christ hath received gifts, as a steward, from the hand of the Father, to dispense them among men, yea, among the rebellious, the worst of men. If there be here at this time any rebellious sinner, or rebellious Sabbath-breaker, or rebellious drunkard, or rebellious curser, &c., let such

rebellious sinners know that Christ hath received gifts 'even for the rebellious.'

'That the Lord God might dwell amongst them.' That is, that the Lord God might have sweet fellowship and communion with them: 'Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

'Behold I stand at the door and knock.' I, that have heaven to give, and peace to give, and pardon to give, and grace to give, and myself to give; I, that have tried gold to enrich you, and white raiment to clothe you, and eye-salve to anoint you, 'I stand at the door and knock; if any man will open the door,' let him be never so guilty, never so filthy, never so unworthy, &c., 'I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.'

Lord, at whose door dost thou stand knocking? Is it at the rich man's door, or at the righteous man's door, or at the humbled man's door, or at the weary and heavy-laden man's door, or at the mourner's door, or at the qualified or prepared man's door? No, says Christ, it is at none of these doors. At whose then, O blessed Lord? At the lukewarm Laodicean's door; at their door that are neither hot nor cold, that are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' These, says Christ, are the worst of the worst; and yet if any of these wretches, these monsters of mankind, will open the door, 'I will come in, and will sup with them, and they with me.'

I have read a remarkable story of a great rebel that had raised a mighty party against a Roman emperor. The emperor upon this being much provoked and stirred in spirit, made a proclamation, that whosoever brought in the rebel, dead or alive, should have a great sum of money. The rebel, hearing of this, comes and presents himself unto the emperor, and demanded of him the sum of money; whereupon the emperor reasons thus, 'If I should now cut him off, the world would say I did it to save my money;' and so he pardoned him, and gave him the great sum of money, notwithstanding all his former rebellion.

Oh! shall a heathen emperor do thus to a rebel that was in arms against him, and will not God do as much for poor rebellious sinners? Surely he will. What though thou hast been in arms against God, and mustered up all the strength and force thou couldst, even all the members of thy body, and faculties of thy soul, against God, and Christ, and holiness, yet know that the King of Israel is a merciful king; he is a God of pardons; he delights to make his grace glorious, and therefore is very willing to shew mercy to the greatest rebels, to the worst of sinners. Witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, the thief, Paul, and others. The greatness of man's sins do but set off the riches of free grace. Sins are debts, and God can as easily blot out a debt of many thousands as he can a lesser debt; therefore let not the greatest rebel despair but believe, and he shall find that 'where sin hath abounded, there grace shall superabound,' &c. And thus much for this observation. We shall now proceed to the next words, viz., 'That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'—Eph 3:8. A little to open the words.

'That I should preach.' That is, declare good news, or the glad tidings of salvation that is brought by Jesus Christ to sinners. The Greek word Εὐαγγέλιον , in the New Testament, answers to the Hebrew word Bessorah in the Old Testament, both signifying good news, glad tidings, or a joyful message.

'That I should preach among the Gentiles' The word ἔθνεσιν , that is here rendered Gentiles, is sometimes used generally for all men, or all nations. So it is used in Mat 25:32, and Mat 28:19.

Sometimes this Greek word is used more especially for the people of the Jews; so in John 11:48, John 11:50-52, and Acts 10:22; and sometimes it is used for the Gentiles, distinguished from the Jews; so in Mat 6:32. By the Gentiles here you are to understand those poor heathens that were without God in the world, that never had heard of Christ, nor those unsearchable riches that be in him; as you may clearly see by comparing this text with that, Gal 1:15-16, 'But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach among the heathen,' saith he, 'immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood.'

1. The first observation that I shall speak to, from these words thus opened, is this: That the gifts and graces that God bestows upon his people should be improved, employed, and exercised by his people. The Greek word χάρις, that is here rendered grace, we shewed you, hath a three-fold signification in the Scripture. Sometimes it denotes the favour of God, sometimes the common gifts of the Spirit, and sometimes the saving graces of the Spirit. Now, says Paul, that singular favour that God hath conferred upon me, and all those common gifts and special graces with which he has enriched me, they are all to be employed and exercised. 'Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. So that there is nothing more clear than this, viz.: That the gifts and graces that God bestows upon his people, should be employed, improved, and exercised by his people.

'To me is this grace given.' Not that I should be idle, but active; not that I should be negligent, but diligent; not that I should hide my talents, but improve them.

I shall touch upon a few scriptures that speak out this truth, and then open it to you. 2Ti 1:6, 'Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God that is in thee.' As the fire is increased and preserved by blowing, so are our graces. Some think that it is a metaphor taken from a spark kept in ashes, which, by gentle blowing, is stirred up, till it take a flame. Others say, it is an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. We get nothing by dead and useless habits. Talents hid in a napkin gather rust. The noblest faculties are imbedded, when not improved, when not exercised. Php 2:12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.' The Greek is, κατεργάζεσθε, 'Work till you get the work through.' The reason why many men's hearts tremble, and are so full of fears and doubts, is because their salvation is not wrought out; they do not make thorough work in their souls, they put not that question home, Whether they have grace or no? an interest in Christ or no? They do not rise with all their strength against sin, nor with all their power to serve the Lord; and therefore fears and doubts do compass them round about. So in 1Co 15:58, 'Be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

'Be stedfast.' It is a metaphor taken from a foundation, on which a thing stands firmly; or a seat or chair, wherein one sits fast.

'Unmoveable' signifies one that will not easily move his place or opinion.

'Abounding,' or excelling 'in the work of the Lord.'

'Knowing that your labour is not in vain.' The Greek is 'labours unto weariness.' The apostle would have them labour unto weariness; 'For,' saith he, 'it is not in vain.' It will turn to a good account; it will yield you much of heaven here, and make you high in heaven hereafter.

There are only two things that I shall endeavour to do, for the opening of the point.

I. To shew you why persons must improve, employ, and exercise the graces and gifts that God hath bestowed upon them. And then, II. The end to which they are to exercise those graces and gifts.

I. For the first, There are these twelve reasons why gracious souls should exercise and improve their gifts and graces. Friends, this point is a point of as singular use and of as great concernment to you, as any that I know the Scripture speaks of, and therefore I desire you to lend your most serious and solemn attentions.

[1.] First, They must exercise and improve their graces, Because the exercise and improvement of their graces is the ready way to be rich in grace. As sin is increased in the soul by the frequent actings of it, so grace is nourished and strengthened in the soul by its frequent actings. The exercise of grace is always attended with the increase of grace. Pro 10:4, 'The diligent hand maketh rich;' or, the nimble hand; the hand that is active and agile, that will see nothing lost for looking after, that hand maketh rich. Ruth 2:1-23, how did Boaz follow the business himself! his eyes were in every corner, on the servants and on the reapers, yea, on the gleaners too.

It is recorded of Severus, that his care was not to look what men said of him, or how they censured him, but to look what was to be done by him. He will rise in judgment against those professors that look more what this man and the other man saith of them, than what is to be done by them. The heart of a Christian is to be taken up with what is to be done by him, and not with what this man thinks, or the other judges of him.

Pacunius hath an elegant saying; 'I hate,' saith he, 'the men that are idle in deed, and philosophical in word.' God loves, saith Luther, curristas, not quæristas, the runner, not the questioner. Grace grows by exercise and decays by disuse. Though both arms grow, yet that which a man most useth is the stronger and the bigger; so it is both in gifts and graces. In birds, their wings which have been used most are sweetest; the application is easy. Such men as are contented with so much grace as will bring them to glory, with so much grace as will keep hell and their souls asunder, will never be rich in grace, nor high in comfort or assurance. Such souls usually go to heaven in a storm. Oh how weather-beaten are they before they can reach the heavenly harbour!

[3.] Secondly, They must exercise their gifts and graces, because it is the main end of God's giving gifts and graces to them.

Grace is given to trade with; it is given to lay out, not to lay up. Grace is a candle that must not be put under a bushel, but set upon a candlestick. Grace is a golden treasure that must be improved, not hoarded up, as men do their gold. Grace is a talent, and it is given for this very end, that it should be employed and improved for the honour and advantage of him that gave it. The slothful servant, in God's account, is an evil servant, and accordingly God has denoted him, and doomed him for his ill husbandry, to destruction, Mat 25:24-31.

'What a shame is it,' saith one [Jerome], 'that faith should not be able to do that which infidelity hath done! What! not better fruit in the vineyard, in the garden of God, than in the wilderness? What! not better fruit grow upon the tree of life, than upon the root of nature? &c.

[3.] And then thirdly, Because grace, exercised and improved, will do that for us that all the means in the world can never do for us.

I shall evidence this truth in some remarkable instances.

Suppose the guilt of sin to be upon a man's soul, even as a heavy mountain, there is nothing but the exercise of grace now that can remove this guilt. The man prays, and yet guilt sticks upon him; he hears, and yet guilt as a mountain lies heavy upon him; he mourns, he sighs, he groans, and yet guilt sticks upon him; he runs from ordinance to ordinance, and from ordinary service to extraordinary, and yet guilt follows him; he runs from man to man, Sir, was ever any man's case like mine? I have prayed thus long, I have heard thus long, I have mourned thus long, &c., and yet guilt lies as a mountain upon my soul! There is nothing now below the exercise of grace that will remove this. It is only faith in the promises of remission that will remove the guilt of sin that lies so heavy upon the soul. It is only faith's application of the righteousness of Christ that can take off this burden that sinks the soul, even as low as hell. Faith must make a plaster of the blood of Christ, and apply it to the soul, or the soul will die under its guilt. There is nothing below this can do it. Faith's application of the blood of Christ takes off the guilt, and turns the storm to a calm: Rom 5:1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Again, suppose that the power and prevalency of sin hinders the soul's sweet communion with God, so that the soul cannot sport itself, and joy and delight itself in God, as in the days of old; it cannot see God smiling, stroking, and speaking kindly, as in former days. Now, there is nothing in all the world that can ease the soul of this burden of sin below the exercise of grace. Oh, saith such a poor soul, I pray, sir, and yet I sin; I resolve against sin, and yet I sin; I combat against sin, and yet I am carried captive by sin; I have left no outward means unattempted, and yet after all, my sins are too hard for me; after all my sweating, striving, and weeping, I am carried down the stream. There is nothing now but the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ that will take off this burden from the soul of man. Now, you must make use of your graces to draw virtue from Christ; now faith must touch the hem of Christ's garment, or thou wilt never be healed. It is just with a soul in this case as it was with the poor widow, Luk 8:43-49, that had the bloody issue; she leaves no means unattempted whereby she might be cured; she runs from one physician to another, till she had spent all she was worth, till she had brought a noble to nought, and now says she, 'If I could but touch the hem of his garment, I should be whole.' Hereupon she crowds through the crowd to come to Christ, and being got behind him, she touches the hem of his garment, 'and immediately she was made whole.' The cure being thus wrought, Christ uncrowns himself to crown her faith: 'And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.' He doth not say, Woman, thy trembling hath made thee whole; or, Woman, thy sweating and struggling in a crowd to come to me, hath made thee whole; or, Woman, thy falling down and abasing thyself, though she did all this; but, 'Woman, thy faith hath made thee whole.' Ah, Christians! it is not your trembling, or your falling down, or your sweating in this and that service, that will stop the bloody issue of your sins, but believing in Christ. It is sad to consider how few professors in these days have attained the right way of mortifying of sin. They usually go out against their sins in the strength of their own purposes, prayers, and resolutions, &c., and scarce look so high as a crucified Christ; they mind not the exercise of their faith upon Christ; and therefore it is a righteous thing with Christ that after all they should be carried captive by their sins. Nothing eats out sin like the actings of grace; nothing weakens and wastes the strength of sin like

the exercise of grace. Oh! did men believe more in Christ, sin would die more; did they believe the threatenings more, sin would die more; did they believe the promises more, sin would die more; did they believe reigning with Christ more, sin would die more: 'He that hath this hope purifies himself, even as Christ is pure,' 1Jn 3:3.

Again, Suppose that the soul be followed with black, dismal, fiery temptations, there is nothing now in all the world that can divinely strengthen and fence the soul against these temptations but the exercise of grace, the improvement of grace. It is true you are to hear, read, pray, meditate, &c.; but all these without the exercise of grace in them, will never make you victorious over Satan's temptations. Nothing puts Satan to it like the exercise of grace.

It is said of Satan, that he should say to a holy man who was much in the exercise of grace, Tu me semper vincis, thou dost always overcome me: Eph 6:16. 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil.' Whatsoever piece of armour you neglect, be sure that you neglect not the shield of faith. The Greek word that is here rendered a shield, $\Theta\upsilon\rho\alpha\sigma\ \alpha\ \Theta\upsilon\rho\alpha$, comes from another word that signifies a door or a gate, to note that as a door or a gate doth secure our bodies, so will the shield of faith secure our souls against the fiery darts of the devil: 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.' The apostle alludes to the custom of the Scythians, who used to dip the heads of their arrows or darts in the gall of asps and vipers, the venomous heat of which, like a fire in their flesh, killed the wounded with torments, the likeliest of any other. But the soldiers then had generally shields of raw neats' leather, as several writers testify, and when the fiery darts lighted upon them, they were presently quenched. So these fiery darts of Satan, when they light upon the shield of faith, they are presently quenched; and there is no other way to do it. Till the Lord draw out a man's faith to act upon the promises and upon Christ, these fiery darts will not be quenched.

Again, Suppose that the world, the smiling world or the frowning world, the tempting world or the persecuting world, should lie as a heavy stone or burden upon your hearts, as it doth upon the hearts of thousands in these days—witness their attempting anything to get the favours, honours and riches of this world! Ah! how many have turned their backs upon God, and Christ, and truth, &c., to gain the world! How will you get off this burden? No way in the world like to the exercise and actings of grace. Many men hear much, and yet remain worldly; and pray like angels, and yet live as if there were no heaven nor hell. They will talk much of heaven, and yet those that are spiritual and wise do smell their breath to stink strong of earth; and all the arts, and parts, and gifts in the world can never cure them of this soul-killing disease; but the exercise of grace, till faith break forth in its glorious actings. A man may hear and pray many years, and yet be as carnal, base, and worldly as ever. There is no way under heaven to remove this stone, this burden, but the exercise of faith and love, &c.: Song of Solomon 8:6-7; 1Jn 4:5, 'For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?' Not that the habit of faith overcometh the world, but faith in the exercise of it conquers the world, and that it does these three ways.

(1.) First, Faith in the exercise of it presents the world to the soul under all those notions that the Scripture holds forth the world unto us by. The Scripture holds forth the world as an impotent thing, as a mixed thing, as a mutable thing, as a momentary thing. Now faith comes and sets this home

with power upon the soul, and this takes the soul off from the world.

(2.) Secondly, Faith doth it by causing the soul to converse with more glorious, soul-satisfying, soul-delighting, and soul-contenting objects.

2Co 4:16-18, 'Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.' How comes this to pass? 'While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' Now when faith is busied and exercised about soul-ennobling, soul-greatening, soul-raising, and soul-cheering objects, a Christian tramples the world under his feet; and now heavy afflictions are light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, unto him, &c. Now, stand by world! welcome Christ! &c. So in Heb 11:1-40. It was the exercise of faith and hope upon noble and glorious objects that carried them above the world, above the smiling world, and above the frowning world, above the tempting world, and above the persecuting world, as you may see by comparing several verses of that chapter together: Heb 11:9-10, 'By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Heb 11:24-26, 'And by faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect to the recompence of reward.' Heb 11:27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.' And in Heb 11:35, 'They refused deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' So in Heb 10:34, 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,' (upon what account?) 'knowing in themselves, that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance.'

(3.) Thirdly and lastly, Faith doth it by assuring the soul of enjoying of better things. For my part I must confess, so far as I understand anything of the things of God, I cannot see how a soul under the power of a well-grounded assurance can be a servant to his slave, I mean the world. I confess men may talk much of heaven, and of Christ, and religion, &c.; but give me a man that doth really and clearly live under the power of divine assurance, and I cannot see how such a one can be carried out in an inordinate love to these poor transitory things. I know not one instance in all the Scripture that can be produced to prove that ever any precious saint that hath lived in the assurance of divine love, and that hath walked up and down this world with his pardon in his bosom, have ever been charged with an inordinate love of the world. That is a sad word, 1Jn 2:15.

[4.] Now a fourth reason of this point, why persons are to exercise their graces, is, because it is the best way to preserve their souls from apostasy and backsliding from God. 2Pe 1:5-11, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, &c.; for if ye do these things ye shall never fall.' 'Add to your faith virtue.' The Greek word ἐπιχορηγῆσατε, that is here rendered add, hath a great emphasis in it. It is taken from dancing round. Link them, saith the apostle, hand in hand, as in dancing, virgins take hands; so we must join hand to hand in these measures of graces, lead up the dance of graces, as in the galliard every one takes his turn. So in 2Pe 3:17-18, 'Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things, beware lest ye also, being led aside with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.' There are many turn aside, and shake hands with God, and Christ, and truth, and

the words of righteousness; and therefore you had need to take heed that you fall not as others have fallen before you. But how shall we be kept from apostatising? Why, 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' It is a growth in grace, it is the exercise of grace, that will make a man stand when others fall, yea, when cedars fall, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, All other exercises without the exercise of grace will profit nothing. Or if you will, take it thus:

All other exercises will be loss to us, without the exercise of grace; therefore we had need to improve our graces. When the house is on fire, if a man should only pray, and cry, &c., he may be burnt for all that; therefore he must be active and stirring; he must run from place to place, and call out for help, and must work even in the fire, and bestir himself as for life, in the use of all means, whereby the fire may be quenched. So if grace be not acted, it is not all a man's praying and crying, &c., that will profit him or better him. Grace must be exercised or all will be lost; prayers lost, tears lost, time lost, strength lost, soul lost, &c. 1Ti 4:7-8, 'But refuse profane and old wives' fables.' Shift them off, as the word is, set them by, say thou art not at leisure to attend them, make a fair excuse, as the word notes, tell them thou hast business of an eternal concernment to look after, and 'exercise thyself rather unto godliness;' or lay aside thy upper garments, as runners and wrestlers do, to which the apostle alludes, and bestir thyself lustily; for says he, verse 8, 'Bodily exercise profits little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, and hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come.' The Babylonians are said to make three hundred and sixty several commodities of the palm tree; but what are those hundred commodities to those thousands that attend holiness, that attend the exercise of grace? Nothing makes a man rich in spirituals, like the frequent and constant actings of grace. In Heb 4:2, 'The word did not profit them that heard it, because it was not mixed with faith.' He doth not speak there of unbelievers, but of those that had grace in the habit, but not in the exercise; and therefore the word did not turn to their accounts; they heard, and were never the better. And what was the ground of it? Why, it was because they did not exercise faith upon the word. The words that fell from the preacher's lips into their ears were a sweet potion, but they did not work kindly, because there wanted the ingredients of faith. Faith is one of those glorious ingredients, that must make every sermon, every truth, work for their souls' advantage. Nothing will work for a believer's good, for his gain, if his graces be asleep.

[6.] Sixthly, Because it is the end of all the dignity and glory that God hath conferred upon his people; therefore they must exercise and improve their grace. In 1Pe 2:9, 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye may shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

'Ye are a chosen generation.' That is, a picked people; the dearly beloved of his soul; such as he first chose for his love, and then loves for his choice.

'A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.' The Greek is, 'a people of purchase,' such as comprehendeth, as it were, all God's gettings, his whole stock, that he makes any reckoning of, λαός ἐκπεριποιησίν.

'That ye may shew forth,' or, as it is in the Greek, 'that ye may preach forth,' that ye may publicly declare the virtues of him that hath 'called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;' that ye may so hold forth the virtues of him that hath conferred all this dignity and glory upon you, as to

excite others, to 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.' You know the picture of a dear friend is not to be thrust in a corner, but in some conspicuous place of the house. Why, our graces are the very image of Christ, they are his picture; and therefore to be held forth to open view. These candles must not be put under a bushel, but set up in a candlestick. Jewels are to wear, not to hide; so are our graces.

It was a capital crime in Tiberius's days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin, into any sordid place; and shall not Christians be more mindful and careful, that their graces, which are Christ's image, be no ways obscured, but that they be kept always sparkling and shining? Christ's glory and thy comfort, O Christian! lies much in the sparkling of thy graces. Pearls are not to be thrust in mud walls, or hung in swines' snouts, but to be hung on the breasts.

[7.] Seventhly, Gracious souls must exercise their grace, because the more grace is exercised and improved, with the more ease and delight will all religious services be performed, Psa 40:7-8; Psa 119:96-112. When grace is improved and exercised, gracious services are easily performed. As the more natural strength is exercised and improved, with the more ease and pleasure are all bodily services performed; so the more grace is acted and improved, with the more ease and delight all Christian services are performed. Such souls find wages in their very work, they find not only for keeping, but also 'in keeping of his commands there is great reward.' 'All the ways of the Lord are ways of pleasantness to them,' and they find 'that all his paths drop marrow and fatness,' Rom 6:22; Psa 19:11; Pro 3:17; Psa 65:11. Ah, Christians! as ever you would have the services of God to be easy and delightful to your souls, look to the exercise and improvement of your graces, and then your work will be a joy.

[8.] Eighthly, You must exercise and improve your gifts and graces, because the more grace is improved, the more God will be honoured. Rom 4:19-21, 'And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither the deadness of Sarah's womb: he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform.'

'He gave glory to God.' But how did he give glory to God? Was it a dead habit of faith that set the crown of honour upon the head of God? No! It was the lively actings of his faith upon the promise and the promiser, that gave glory to God. All the honour and glory that God hath from believers in this life, is from the actings of their grace. It was Abraham's acting of faith that was his high honouring of God. Christians! I would entreat this favour of you, that you would be often in the meditation of this truth, viz.: That all the honour that God hath from believers in this life, is from the actings and exercise of their graces. When thou goest to prayer, then think thus with thyself: Is it so, that all the honour that God shall have from my soul in prayer, will be from the actings of grace in prayer? Oh then, what cause have I to stir up myself to lay hold on God, and to blow up all those sparks of grace that be in me! As a body without a soul, much wood without fire, a bullet in a gun without powder, so are words in prayer without the Spirit, without the exercise of the graces of the Spirit. Jonah acted his faith when he was in the belly of hell; and Daniel acted faith when he was in the lions' den; and the thief acted faith when he was on the cross; and Jeremiah acted faith when he was in the dungeon; and Job acted faith when he was on the dunghill; and David acted faith when he was in his greatest distress; and so did Moses in Exo 14:1-31. And you know the issue of

all was, much glory to God, and much good to them. His heart will never be long a stranger to joy and peace, who is much in the exercise and actings of grace.

[9.] Ninthly, Because the more grace is improved, the more afflictions and tribulations will be lessened and sweetened to us: 2Co 4:16-17, 'Though our outward man decreases, yet our inward man is renewed day by day,' or day and day. [■μ■ρ■ κα■ ■μ■ρ■.] When Peter Martyr was dying, he said, 'My body is weak, but my mind is well, well for the present, and will be better for ever hereafter.' This is the godly man's motto, 'For afflictions there is glory, for light afflictions a weight of glory, for momentary afflictions eternal glory.' So in Heb 10:1-39 and Heb 11:1-40. O friends! if your graces were more exercised and improved, afflictions would be more sweet. This would turn the cross into a crown; this would turn bitter into sweet, and long winter nights into summer days. It would make every condition to be a paradise to you, &c.

[10.] Tenthly, If grace be not exercised and improved, the soul may be easily surprised, conquered, and vanquished by a tempting devil and an enticing world. When the sword is in the scabbard, the traveller is easily surprised, and when the guard is asleep, the city is quickly conquered. The strongest creature, the lion, and the wisest creature, the serpent, if they be dormant, are as easily surprised as the weakest worms. So the strongest and wisest saints, if their graces be asleep, if they be only in the habit, and not in the exercise, they may be as easily surprised and vanquished as the weakest Christians in all the world, as you may see in David, Solomon, Samson, Peter. Every enemy insults over him that hath lost the use of his weapons, &c.

[11.] Eleventhly, We must improve our graces, because decays in grace are very great losses to us. By decaying in grace, we come to lose our strength, our best strength, our spiritual strength; our strength to do for God; our strength to wait on God, and walk with God; our strength to bear for God; our strength to suffer for God. By decaying in grace, we come to lose that 'joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and that comfort and 'peace that passes understanding,' and to lose the sense of that 'favour that is better than life.' Now our faith will be turned into fear, our dancing into mourning, our rejoicing into sighing; and when, O Christian! thou beginnest to fall, and to decay, who knows how far thou mayest fall, how much thy graces may be impaired, and how long it may be before thy sun rise when once it is set; therefore you had need to exercise and improve your graces.

[12.] Twelfthly, and lastly, You are to improve your graces, because souls truly gracious have a power to do good. I do not say that a man in his natural estate—though Arminians do—hath power in himself to do supernatural acts, as to believe in God, to love God, and the like, &c., for I think a toad may as well spit cordials as a natural man do supernatural actions, 1Co 2:14; Jer 13:23; Jas 1:17; Eph 2:1-3. No; I do not say that all the grace we have is not from God, nor that man in his natural estate is not dead God-ward, and Christ-ward, and holiness-ward, and heaven-ward. But this I say, that souls truly gracious have a power to do good. It is sad to think how many professors do excuse their negligence by pretending an inability to do good, or by sitting down discouraged, as having in their hands no power at all. What can we do, say they, if the Lord do not breathe upon us, as at first conversion? We can do nothing. I think in my very conscience, that this is one reason of much of that slowness, neglect, and omission of duties, that is among professors in these days, so that God may complain, as he doth, Isa 64:7, 'There is no man that stirreth up himself to take hold of me, they are as men asleep,' that sit still and do nothing. But certainly they that are truly

united to Christ, are not acted as dead stocks, as if every time and moment of their acting God-wards and holiness-ward they received new life from the Spirit of Christ, as at first conversion they did. And I am confident, for want of the knowledge and due consideration of this truth, many professors take such liberty to themselves, as to live in the neglect of many precious duties of godliness, for which, first or last, they will pay dear. But remembering that it is not a flood of words, but weighty arguments, that convince and persuade the souls and consciences of men, I shall give you four reasons to demonstrate, that believers have a power to do good; and the first is this.

First, because they have life; and all life is a power to act by. Natural life is a power to act by; spiritual life is a power to act by; eternal life is a power to act by. The philosopher saith, 'That a fly is more excellent than the heavens, because the fly hath life, which the heavens have not,' &c.

Secondly, Else there is no just ground for Christ to charge the guilt of sins upon them; as neglect of prayer, repentance, mortification; nor the guilt of carelessness and slothfulness, &c., which he doth. If they can act no further, nor no longer than the Holy Ghost acts them, as at their first conversion, notwithstanding their union with Christ, and that spiritual principle of life that at first they received from Christ, certainly if it be so, it will not stand with the unspotted justice of God to charge the guilt of sins of omission upon believing souls, if they have no power to act, but are as stocks and stones, &c., as some dream. A third ground is this: if there be not some power in believers to do good, then we should not have as much benefit by the second Adam as we had by the first. The first Adam, if he had stood, would have communicated a power to all his sons and daughters to have done good, as being corrupted he doth communicate power to sin, as all his children find by sad and woful experience; and shall not Christ much more communicate a power to us to do good in our measure? Surely he doth, though few mind it, and fewer improve it as they should. If there be not such a power in believers, how have they gained more by the second Adam than they lost by the first? and wherein lies the excellency of the second above the first?

Fourthly and lastly, All those exhortations are void, and of none effect, if there be not some power in souls truly gracious to do good; as all those exhortations to watchfulness, to stir up 'the grace of God that is in us,' and to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,' and that also, 'give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' To what purpose are all these precious exhortations, if the regenerate man have no power at all to act anything that is good? Nay, then, believers under the covenant of grace should be in no better a condition than unregenerate men that are under a covenant of works, who see their duties discovered, but have no power to perform; which is contrary, as to other scriptures, so to that Psa 40:7-9, 'Then said I, Lo I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart,' or, 'thy law is in the midst of my bowels,' as the Hebrew reads it; and to that of Eze 36:25-27, &c. A soul truly gracious can sincerely say, 'Thy law, O Lord, is in the midst of my bowels, and I delight to do thy will, O Lord.' I confess I cannot do as I should, nor I shall never do it as I would, till I come to heaven; but this I can say in much uprightness, that 'Thy law is in my heart, and I delight to do thy will, O Father.' And so Paul, 'With my mind I serve the law of God, though with my flesh the law of sin,' Rom 7:25. And we have many promises concerning divine assistance, and if we did but stir up the grace of God that is in us, we should find the assistance of God, and the glorious breakings forth of his power and love, according to his promise, and the work that he requires of us, Isa 26:12; Isa 64:5, &c. Though no believer doth what he should do, yet doubtless every believer might do more than he doth do, in order to God's glory, and his own

and others' internal and eternal good, Isa 41:10; Heb 13:5-6, &c. Affection without endeavour is like Rachel, beautiful but barren. They are blessed that do what they can, though they cannot but underdo. When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of an orator, what the second, what the third, he answered, Action; the same may I say, if any should ask me what is the first, the second, the third part of a Christian, I must answer, Action. Luther saith, 'He had rather obey than work miracles.' 'Obedience is better than sacrifice.'

But, sir, you will say, what is the meaning of that text, that is so often in the mouths of professors, 'Without me you can do nothing'? John 15:5.

I answer, All that that text holds forth is this, that if a man hath not union with Christ, if he be not implanted into Christ, he can do nothing. 'Without me,' that is, separate from me, or apart from me, as the words may be read, 'you can do nothing.' If you are not implanted into me, if by the Spirit and faith you are not united unto me, you can do nothing. The arm may do much; it may offend an enemy, and it may defend a man's life, by virtue of its union with the head; but if you separate the arm from the head, from the body, what can it do? Certainly the soul, by virtue of its union with Christ, may do much, though such as are separated from Christ can do nothing, at least as they should. Ah, Christians! if you would but put out yourselves to the utmost, you would find the Lord both ready and willing to assist you, to meet with you, and to do for you above what you are able to ask or think.³

Cæsar, by continual employment, overcame two constant diseases, the headache and the falling sickness. Oh the spiritual diseases that the active Christian overcomes! Among the Egyptians, idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucani, he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians, the slothful were delivered to the carnifex, saith Diphilus. Oh! the deadly sins, the deadly temptations, the deadly judgments, that idle and slothful Christians are given up to. Therefore be active, be diligent, be abundant in the work of the Lord. Idleness is the very source of sin. Standing pools gather mud, and nourish and breed venomous creatures; and so do the hearts of idle and slothful Christians, &c.

2. Now the second thing that we are to do for the further opening of this point is, to shew you The special ends that the gifts and graces that God hath bestowed upon believers should be exercised and improved to. And they are these that follow:

[1.] First, They are to be improved and exercised to the honour of God, to the lifting up of God, and to the keeping up of his name and glory in the world, 1Co 10:31.

He that improves not his gifts and graces to this end, crosses the grand end of God's bestowing such royal favours on him. Graces and gifts are talents that God hath given you to trade with, and not to hide in a napkin, Mat 25:1-46. The idle servant, in Christ's account, was an evil servant. The idle soul, in Christ's account, is an evil soul, and accordingly Christ will deal with him.

Seneca calls sloth 'the nurse of beggary, the mother of misery;' and slothful Christians find it so. Christians, God hath given you grace, that you should give him glory. His honour should be dearer to you than your jewels, than your crowns, than your lives, ay, than your very souls. Thou livest no longer than thou livest to his praise.

It is recorded of Epaminondas, the commander-in-chief of the Thebans, that he did not glory in anything but this, 'That his father, whom he dearly loved and honoured, was living when he won three famous battles against the Lacedæmonians,' that were then held for their valour to be invincible; regarding more the honour and content his father should receive of it, than his own. Shall a heathen thus strive to honour his earthly father? And shall not Christians strive more to honour their heavenly Father with all the gifts and graces that he hath conferred upon them. But you will say, How should we honour the Lord?

I answer,

(1.) By a free and frequent acknowledgment that all your graces flow from the Lord Jesus, the fountain of grace: John 1:16, 'Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace.' Jas 1:17, 'Every good and perfect gift comes down from above,' &c. Thou must say, O Christian, I have nothing but what I have received; I have no light, no life, no love, no joy, no peace, but from above, 1Co 4:7. The jewels that hang in my breasts, and the chains of pearl that be about my neck, and the golden crown that is upon my head, and all the sparkling diamonds in that crown, are all from above, Eze 16:11-15, Psa 45:8, seq. All those princely ornaments by which I am made more beautiful and lovely than others, and all those beds of spices and sweet flowers, by which I am made more desirable and delectable, is from above. Say, I am nothing. I have nothing of my own; all I am, and all I have, is from on high. 'We have given thee of thine own,' says David, 1Ch 29:14. So do thou say, Lord, the love with which I love thee, is thine own; and the faith by which I hang upon thee, is thine own; and the fear by which I fear before thee, is thine own; and the joy which I rejoice before thee with, is thine own; and the patience with which I wait upon thee, is thine own. And therefore say, as David did, upon the receipt of mercy, 'Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.'

(2.) You must honour him, by acknowledging the dependency of your graces upon the fountain of grace. And that your strength to stand lies not so much in your graces, as in their dependency upon the fountain of grace, as in their conjunction with the God of grace. A man by his arm may do much, but it is mainly by reason of its union and conjunction with the head. It is so between a Christian's graces and Christ. The stream doth not more depend upon the fountain, nor the branch upon the root, nor the moon upon the sun, nor the child upon the mother, nor the effect upon the cause, than our graces do depend upon the fountain of grace, Psa 138:3, Php 4:12-13.

Now that our very graces do thus depend upon the fountain of grace, and that our strength to stand lies not so much in our graces as in Christ, is clear by this, that the graces of the saints may and do most fail them when they have most need of them: Mark 4:40, 'And he said, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?' When the wind was high, their faith was low; when the storm was great, their faith was little; so Luk 8:25, 'And he said unto them, Where is your faith?' Are you now to seek it, when you should use it? Peter denied Christ, when he had need by faith to have confessed Christ. Moses's faith failed him, when it should have been most serviceable to him, Num 20:12. And David's courage failed him, when it should have been a buckler to him, 1Sa

21:13-14. And the disciples' love failed them, when it should have been most useful to them, John 14:28. And Job's wisdom and patience failed him, when they should have been greatest supporters to him. By all which it is most clear, that not only ourselves, but also our very graces, must be supported by the God of grace, the fountain of grace, or else they will be to seek when we most need them. Though grace is a glorious creature, it is but a creature, and therefore must be upheld by its Creator. Though grace be a beautiful child, yet it is but a child, that must be upheld by the Father's arms. This, Christians, you must remember, and give glory to God.

(3.) You must honour him by uncrowning your graces, to crown the God of your graces. By taking the crown off from your own heads, and putting it upon his, or by laying it down at his feet, as they did theirs, in Rev 4:10, Acts 3:11-12, Acts 3:16, and Acts 4:7-10. These scriptures are wells of living waters; they are bee-hives of living honey; see and taste. The Lord hath often uncrowned himself, to crown his people's graces, as you may see in these following scriptures, Mat 9:22, and Mat 15:28, Mark 10:52, Luk 7:50. And why, then, should not his people uncrown their graces to crown him? Song of Solomon 5:10, seq. That which others attribute to your graces, do you attribute to the God of grace. You must say, Though our graces are precious, yet Christ is more precious; though they are sweet, yet Christ is most sweet; though they are lovely, yet Christ is altogether lovely. Your graces are but Christ's picture, Christ's image; and therefore do not you worship his image, and in the mean while neglect his person. Make much of his picture, but make more of himself. Let his picture have your eye, but let himself have your heart, John 1:39, seq. Your graces are but Christ's hands, by which he works; be you therefore careful that you do not more mind the workman's hands than the workman himself. Your graces are but Christ's servants, therefore do not smile upon the servant, and look askint upon the Master. Your graces are but Christ's favourites; therefore do not so stare upon them, and be taken with them, as to forget the Prince on whom they wait, &c. All I drive at is this, that not your graces but Christ, may be all in all unto you, &c.

[2.] The second end to which you must improve your gifts and graces, is to the good of others: Psa 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul;' Psa 34:8, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him;' Isa 2:3; Acts 5:26-29. Bonum est communicativum. God hath given you gifts and grace, to that very end, that you should improve them for others' good. It is the very nature of grace to be diffusive and communicative. Grace cannot be long concealed. The better anything is, the more communicative it will be. Grace is as fire in the bones, as new wine in the bottles; you cannot hide it, you must give vent to it: Acts 4:28, 'We cannot but speak the things that we have heard and seen;' as Cræsus his dumb son did for his father. Can the fire cease to turn all combustible matter into fire? can the candle, once thoroughly lighted, cease to spend itself for the enlightening of others? Then may the precious sons of Zion cease to give light to others, by their examples, counsels, and communicating their experiences. No way to honour God, no way to win souls, nor no way to increase your own gifts and graces, than to exercise them for the good of others. Grace is not like to worldly vanities, that diminish by distribution; nor like candles which keep the same light, though a thousand are lighted by them. Grace is like the widow's oil, which multiplied by pouring out, 2Ki 4:1-44; and like those talents which doubled by employment, Mat 25:1-46.

It was a good saying of one, 'For insensible riches those who pay their money do diminish their substance, and they who receive are made richer, but these not so, but both he who numbereth

doth much increase his substance, and doth add much to the riches of the receiver.

Again, by how much more we pour out of these flowing spiritual things, by so much those spreading in abundance are greater to us; for in this case it doth not happen as in money, for there they who tell out to their neighbour diminish their own substance, and by how much the more he spendeth, by so much the less money he possesseth; but in spirituals it is quite otherwise. No way to advance the kingdom of Christ in the world like this, of improving your gifts and graces to the advantage and profit of others; no love nor pity to the precious souls of men like this; no way to abound in grace, to be rich in grace like this; nor no way to be high in heaven like this. Art thou, O Christian, bound to do good to others, by communicating earthly things? And art thou not much more bound to do them good by communicating of spiritual things? Surely thou art. Why are Christians so often in Scripture compared to trees, but because of their fruitfulness and usefulness to others? And why are they called 'stewards of the manifold gifts of God,' but to note to us, that their gifts are not to be enclosed, but employed for the good of others? And why hath Christ put a box of precious ointment into every Christian's hand, but that it should be opened for the benefit of others? Certainly, he that is good is bound to do good; for gifts and graces are given, not only to make us good, and keep us good, but also to make us, yea, to provoke us to do good. L'ilmod lelammed, 'We therefore learn that we may teach,' is a proverb among the rabbins. 'And I do therefore lay in, and lay up,' saith the heathen, 'that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.' I think they are no good Christians that shall scorn to learn this good lesson, though of a heathen. And oh that all that write themselves Christians, were so good as to imitate the good that shined in many heathens! To me it is very sad, that Christians that live and act below the very heathens, should be offended to hear now and then of those excellencies that sparkled in the very heathens. I think that is a very evil spirit, that cannot endure to hear of those excellencies in others that he wants himself. Certainly he is a brave Christian, and hath much of Christ within, that accounts nothing his own that he doth not communicate to others. The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit, and why then in this should not every Christian be like a bee?

Synesius speaks of some, who having a treasure of rare abilities in them, would as soon part with their hearts as their corruptions. I think they are rather monsters than real Christians, that are of such a spirit.

[3.] The third and last thing to which you are to improve your gifts and graces is, to the benefit and profit of your own souls. Not to improve them to your own internal and eternal good, is with a high hand to cross the main end of God's conferring them upon you. Ah, Christians! you must improve them to the strengthening of you against temptations, to the supporting of you under afflictions, to the keeping under of strong corruptions, to the sweetening of all mutations, and to the preparing and fitting of you for the days of your dissolution.

I shall content myself with giving you this hint, because I have before spoken more fully to this head. And thus we have done with the doctrinal part.

We shall come now to make some use and application of this point to ourselves.

If this be so, that it is the duty of Christians to improve and exercise the gifts and graces that the Lord hath given them,

Then, in the first place, this looks very sourly and wishly upon all lazy, idle, negligent Christians, that do not stir up themselves to lay hold on God, that do not stir up the grace of the Lord in them. It is sad to consider how many Christians can stir up themselves to lay hold on all opportunities to make themselves great and rich in the world, and yet suffer their golden gifts and graces even to grow rusty for want of exercise. It is sad to see how busy many men are to exercise and improve a talent of riches, who yet bind up their talents of gifts and grace in a napkin. By these God loses much honour and praise, and themselves lose much comfort and content, and others lose much profit and benefit, and the gospel loses much credit and glory. But the main use that I shall make of this point, shall be to exhort and stir you all up, to make a blessed improvement of your graces. And indeed it is a point of most singular use to us all our days, a truth that is every day of very great concernment to our souls.

Now there are seven considerations that I shall propound by way of motive, to stir up your souls to make a blessed improvement of the grace and gifts you have received.

[1.] And the first is this: seriously consider, that the exercise and, improvement of grace in your souls, will be more and more the death and ruin of sin in your souls.

Take it from experience; there is not a choicer way than this for a man to bring under the power of his sin, than to keep up the exercise of his grace. Sin and grace are like two buckets at a well, when one is up the other is down; they are like the two laurels at Rome, when one flourishes the other withers. Certainly, the readiest and the surest way to bring under the power of sin, is to be much in the exercise of grace: Rom 8:10, 'And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin: but the spirit is life because of righteousness.' The life and activity of Christ and grace in the soul, is the death and destruction of sin in the soul. The more grace acts in the soul, the more sin withers and dies in the soul. The stronger the house of David grew, 2Sa 3:1-39, the weaker the house of Saul grew. As the house of David grew every day stronger and stronger, so the house of Saul every day grew weaker and weaker. So the activity of the new man is the death of the old man. When Christ began to bestir himself in the temple, the money-changers quickly fled out, Mat 21:12-14. So when grace is active and stirring in the soul, corruption quickly flies. A man may find out many ways to hide his sin, but he will never find out any way to subdue his sin, but by the exercise of grace. Of all Christians, none so mortified as those in whom grace is most exercised. Sin is a viper that must be killed, or it will kill you for ever; and there is no way to kill it but by the exercise of grace.

[2.] Secondly, Consider this by way of motive to provoke you to exercise and improve your graces. The exercise and improvement of your graces will provoke others to bless and admire the God of grace. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Mat 5:16,—the light of your conversation, and the light of your graces. Oh how many thousand souls be there now triumphing in heaven, whose gifts and graces shined gloriously when they were on earth. And ah! how many thousands are there now on earth, that bless and admire the Lord for the shine of their graces who are now in heaven; that bless the Lord for the faith of Abraham, and the zeal of David, and the meekness of Moses, and the patience of Job, and the courage of Joshua, &c. Ah, Christians! as you would stir up others to exalt the God of grace, look to the exercise and improvement of your graces. When poor servants shall live in a family, and see the faith of a master, and the love of a master, and the wisdom of a master, and

the patience of a master, and the humility of a master, &c., shining like so many stars of heaven, oh how doth it draw forth their hearts to bless the Lord, that ever they came into such a family! It is not a profession of religion, but the exercise and improvement of grace, that contributes so much to the lifting up the glory of the Lord, and to the greatening of his praise in the world. Many saints have had their hearts warmed and heated by sitting by other saints' fires, by eyeing and dwelling upon other saints' graces. Ah! when men's graces shine as Moses his face did, when their lives, as one speaketh of Joseph's life, is a very heaven, sparkling with variety of virtues, as with so many bright stars; ah! how are others stirred up to glorify God, and to cry out, These are Christians indeed! These are an honour to their God, a crown to their Christ, and a credit to their gospel. Oh! if they were all such, we would be Christians too. It is a very great stumbling-block to many poor sinners, to see men that make a very great and large profession of Christ, never to exercise and shew forth the virtues of Christ. They profess they know him, and yet by the non-exercise of his virtues they deny him.

It was one of Machiavel's principles, that the appearance of virtue was only to be sought, because the use of it, saith he, is a trouble, but the credit of it a help. I am afraid that this cursed soul-damning principle is the best flower that grows in many men's gardens in these days. Though there is no virtue but is as a bright stone in a dark night, it shines and shews its clearness and beauty; it is as pure gold, the brighter for passing through the fire; yet how do most covet rather the name of virtue, than to be really virtuous! Such, I believe, shall have the hottest and the lowest place in hell. Well, Christians, remember this, it is not a show of grace, but the exercise of grace, that will provoke others to glorify the fountain of grace. That is a very remarkable scripture, 1Th 1:2-3, 1Th 1:8, compared, 'We give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God, and our Father. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad.' In this eighth verse you have an elegant metaphor, which signifies, that their faith was so lively, that with its sound, as it were, it stirred up other nations. The Greek word is to sound as with the sound of a trumpet, to make to sound afar off. Says the apostle, your graces made a noise like a trumpet; they stirred up others to be gracious and active, as the trumpet stirs up men to war. So in 2Pe 1:3-4, 'We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth. So that we ourselves glory in you the churches of God, for your patience and faith, in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure.' Hoc enim angelicum, this is the character of the angelical nature, to rejoice in the graces and gracious actings of others. He that acts otherwise holds forth the image of the devil, and declares himself a native of hell.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that the exercise and improvement of grace, may be a special means to stir up the exercise of grace in others. Your improvement of grace may be a special means to stir up others to improve their graces also. 1Th 1:7, 'So that we were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.' Or as the Greek is, 'you were types, moulds,' *τύποι*, patterns of piety to them that were in Christ long before you. So in 2Co 9:2, 'For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your zeal hath provoked very many.' I knew you were forward, and this I boasted of; I made it my glory to tell how grace shined in your souls. 'And,' saith he, 'your zeal hath provoked many.' When they saw

how warm and lively, and active, how open-handed and open-hearted you were to the poor saints, their hearts were stirred up to acts of charity also. Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The highest examples are very quickening and provoking. That this may stick upon your souls, I beseech you bed and board, rise and walk with this one consideration, viz., that all the good you provoke others to by counsel or example, shall be put down to your account. It shall certainly turn to your internal and eternal advantage. In the great day, Christ will make honourable mention of all the good that thou hast stirred and provoked others to, and will reward thee for it before angels and men. The faith, the love, the hope, the charity, the patience, &c., that thou hast provoked others to, shall be put down to thy account, as if thou hadst been the only actor of them, &c. As all the sins that men provoke or stir up others to by their counsel or example, shall be put down to their accounts, as you may see in David. David did but send a letter concerning the death of Uriah, and yet the charge cometh, 'Thou hast slain Uriah with the sword,' 2Sa 12:9. As whatsoever is done by letter, counsel, or example, to provoke others to sin, shall certainly be charged upon men's accounts at last, so whatsoever good thou dost stir up others to, that shall be set upon thy score, and shall turn to thy eternal account in the day of Christ. Oh! who would not then labour with all their might, even day and night, to stir up the grace of the Lord in themselves and others, seeing it shall turn to such a glorious account in that day wherein Christ shall say to his Father, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' &c.

[4.] Fourthly, consider this, the exercise and improvement of grace, contributes very much both to the stopping the mouths of your enemies, and to the rendering of you lovely in the very eyes of your enemies. Oh! there is nothing in all the world that contributes so much to the stopping of the mouths of your enemies, and to the rendering of your souls lovely in the eyes of your enemies, as the exercise and improvement of your graces. As you may see in David, David improved his grace to a glorious height, and says Saul, 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1Sa 24:17. John improved his grace to a glorious height, and was much in the exercise of it, and what follows? why, 'Herod feared and revered him, knowing that he was a just and a holy man,' Mark 6:20. Oh! how did the wisdom, faith, and holiness of Joseph, Daniel, and the three children silence their most enraged adversaries! yea, what a deal of honour did the exercise of their graces cause those heathen princes to put upon them? 1Pe 2:15, 'For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' It is not all the talking and profession in the world that can stop the mouths of foolish men; it must be well-doings, grace improved, grace exercised and manifested in ways of holiness, that must work so great a wonder as to stop the mouths of wicked men. The Greek word that is here translated well-doing, ■γαθοποιο■ντας is a participle of the present tense, and notes the continual custom of well-doing. And indeed, nothing but a continual course of well-doing will be able to stop the mouths of wicked persons. It is not a fit of holiness, but a course, that can produce so great a miracle as to stop the mouths of wicked men: 'That ye might stop the mouths of ungodly men.' The Greek is, 'that ye may muzzle,' or, 'halter up,' φμιο■ν, from φμ■ω. There is no way in the world to button, muzzle, or halter up the mouths of wicked men, but by the exercise of your graces in ways of well-doing. Oh! this will cause you to be well thought of, and well spoken of; this is that that will make even wicked men to say, These are Christians indeed! these are they that have not only a name to live, but are alive; that have not only a form of godliness, but the power. A Christian's exercise of faith in times of wants, and of patience in times of affliction, and of courage in times of temptation, and of contentation in times of opposition, &c.,

doth mightily silence and stop the mouths of the worst of men.

Henry the Second of France, being present at the martyrdom of a certain tailor burnt by him for religion, was so terrified by beholding the wisdom, courage, faith, and constancy of the said martyr, that he swore at his going away, 'that he would never be any more present at such a sight.'

[5.] Fifthly, Dwell much upon the sweet nature of grace, if you would have your souls carried out to the exercise and improvement of grace. The name of grace and the nature of grace is very sweet. The Hebrew word that is rendered grace signifies favour and mercy; and it answers to the Greek word χάρις, that signifies favour and mercy; and some derive the Greek word from a word that signifies joy, because grace begets the greatest joy and sweetness in the spirits of men that possibly can be.³

Grace is compared to the sweetest things; to sweet spices, to wine and milk. Grace is a beam of the Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace is a sweet flower of paradise, a spark of glory, &c. It is cherished and maintained by that sweet word, that is sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb, and by sweet union and communion with the Father and the Son. It is exercised about the sweetest objects, viz., God, Christ, promises, and future glory. It sweetens all your services and duties. Your best performances are but stinking sacrifices, if they are not attended with the exercise of grace. Grace is that heavenly salt that makes all our services savoury and sweet in the nostrils of God. Grace is of the greatest and sweetest use to the soul; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield at land; it is a staff to uphold the soul, and a sword to defend the soul; it is bread to strengthen the soul, and wine to cheer the soul; it is physic to cure all diseases, and a plaster to heal all wounds, and a cordial to strengthen the soul under all faintings, &c. Grace is thy eye to see for Christ, thy ear to hear for Christ, thy head to contrive for Christ, thy tongue to speak for Christ, thy hand to do for Christ, and thy feet to walk with Christ. Grace makes men of the frowardest, sourest, crabbedest natures, to be of a sweet, lovely, amiable, pleasing temper, Isa 11:7-9. It turns lions into lambs, wolves into sheep, monsters into men, and men into angels, as you may see in Manasseh, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and others. Yet sometimes grace, in a rugged unhewn nature, is like a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron, or a jewel in a swine's snout, &c.

[6.] Sixthly, By way of motive, consider this, that wicked men do exercise and improve to the uttermost, all those principles of wickedness that be in them, against the ways of God, the honour of God, and the comforts of the saints.

Now shall wicked men improve all their principles to the uttermost against God, his truth, and saints, &c.; and shall not saints improve their graces to the honour of God, the advancement of truth, and the joy and benefit one of another? You may see the activity of wicked men's spirits in Pro 4:16, 'They sleep not unless they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.' Oh, they cannot rest! 'The wicked are like the troubled sea,' as Isaiah speaks, 'when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt,' Isa 57:20-21. So in 2Pe 2:14, 'Having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls.' An heart they have, exercised with covetous practices; cursed children,' they break all promises and covenants with God and man, as Samson did the new ropes. So in Pro 19:19, 'A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, for if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again.' The Hebrew word *tosiph* signifies to add. Saith he, Thou must add deliverance to deliverance, for he will still be a-adding sin

to sin. So the Radix, jasaph, is used, Deu 29:19, and in several other scriptures. Such sinners make God a god of clouts, one that will not do as he saith. Ahab, after he was threatened with utter rooting out, begat fifty sons, as it were to cross God, and to try it out with him. Let God thunder in his judgments, yet he will add sin to sin, he will proceed from evil to evil, till he comes to the very top of evil, viz., to be hardened in sin, and to scoff at holiness, &c., Jer 9:3. The old Italians were wont, in time of thunder, to shoot off their greatest ordnance, and to ring their greatest bells, to drown the noise of the heavens. So let God thunder from heaven, yet wicked men will so improve their wicked principles, that their consciences may not hear the noise of the thunder-claps of divine displeasure. The covetous man will improve his earthly principles, and the ambitious man his ambitious principles, and the voluptuous man his voluptuous principles, and the unchaste man his unclean principles, and the erroneous man his erroneous principles, and the blasphemous man his blasphemous principles, &c. Ah sirs! shall wicked men thus improve their wicked principles to the uttermost against God, Christ, and religion, and against the prosperity, peace, joy, and happiness of the saints? And shall not saints improve their graces to the uttermost for the honour of the Lord, the advancement of religion, and the mutual profit and benefit of each other?

[7.] Seventhly, The more high and excellent any man is in grace, the more highly he shall be exalted in glory.

Oh! therefore, exercise your grace, improve your grace. As you would be high in heaven, labour to improve your graces much while you are here on earth; for glory will be given out at last according to the exercise and improvement of your grace. The more high and improved a man's graces be, the more that man will do for God; and the more any man doth for God, the more at last shall he receive from God: 1Co 15:58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' So Gal 6:7, seq., 'He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that sows liberally shall reap liberally.' The more any man hath improved his grace, the more that man will be able to bear and suffer for God; and the more any man bears and suffers for God, the more glory shall that man have at last from God: Mat 5:11-12, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad,' or 'leap and dance for joy, leap and skip for joy,' &c. Why so? 'For great is your reward in heaven.' God is a liberal paymaster, and no small things can fall from so great and so gracious a hand as his. The more excellent any man is in grace, the more he is the delight of God. Psa 16:3-4, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Now this is spoken in the person of Christ, for the apostle applies these words to Christ, Acts 2:25. Now saith Christ, 'My goodness reaches not to thee,' O Father! 'but to the saints, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' And doubtless, they that are his greatest delight on earth, shall be possessed of the greatest glory in heaven. If fathers give the greatest portions to those children in whom they delight, why should not Christ? Is it equity in the one, and iniquity in the other? Surely no. Christ may do with his own as he pleases.

Again, the more any man improves his grace, the clearer, sweeter, fuller, and richer is his enjoyments of God here. There is no man in all the world that hath such enjoyments of God, as that man hath that most improves his graces. It is not he that knows most, nor him that hears most, nor yet he that talks most, but he that exercises grace most, that hath most communion with God, that hath the clearest visions of God, that hath the sweetest discoveries and manifestations of

God. Now certainly if they that improve their graces most, have most of God here, then without controversy, they shall have most of God hereafter. Doubtless a man may as well plead for equal degrees of grace in this world, as for equal degrees of glory in the other world.

Again, if those who are most graceless and wicked shall be most tormented, then certainly they that are most gracious shall be most exalted in the day of Christ. But the more wicked any man is, the more shall he be tormented in the day of vengeance: 'Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shall receive the greater damnation,' Mat 23:14, Luk 12:47-48. The darkest, the lowest, the hottest place in hell is provided for you; therefore it roundly follows, that those that are most gracious shall at last be most glorious. And thus much for the motives that tend to provoke all the precious sons of Zion, to make a thorough improvement of the gifts and graces that the Lord hath bestowed upon them.

I shall now come to the resolution of a weighty question, and so conclude this point, which I have been the longer upon, by reason of its very great usefulness in these days, wherein men strive to exercise anything, yea, everything, but grace and holiness, &c.

Now this question is this, Quest. When may a soul be said to be excellent in grace, or to have highly improved grace?

Now to this question I shall give these following answers:

[1.] First, A soul that is high and excellent in grace, that hath improved his graces to a considerable height, will keep humble and unspotted under great outward enjoyments. It is said of Daniel, that he had 'an excellent spirit;' and herein did his excellent spirit appear, in that he was holy and humble in heart, though high in place and worth, &c., Dan 6:3-7. Daniel keeps humble and holy when he is lifted high, yea, made the second man in the kingdom. Malice itself could not find anything against him, but 'in the matter of his God.' It is much to be very gracious when a man is very great, and to be high in holiness when advanced to high places. Usually men's blood rises with their outward good. Certainly, they are worthy ones, and shall walk with Christ in white, whose garments are not defiled with greatness or riches, &c., Rev 3:4.

[2.] Secondly, They that have highly improved their graces, will comply with those commands of God that cross nature, that are contrary to nature. And doubtless that man hath improved his graces to a very high rate, whose heart complies with those commands of God that are cross and contrary to nature; as for a man to love them that loathe him, to bless them that curse him, to pray for them that persecute him, &c., Mat 5:44. It is nothing to love them that love us, and to speak well of them that speak well of us; and to do well, and carry it well towards them, that carry it well towards us. Oh, but for a man to love those that hate him, to be courteous to them that are curish to him, to be sweet to them that are bitter to him, &c., this strongly demonstrates a high improvement of grace. Certainly that man is very, very good, who hath learned that holy lesson of 'overcoming evil with good,' Rom 12:21. Such a one was Stephen, Acts 7:55, Acts 20:9. He was a man full of the Holy Ghost, that is, of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost; he was much in the exercise of grace, he can pray and sigh for them, yea, even weep tears of blood for them, who rejoiced to shed his blood. So did Christ weep over Jerusalem, so did Titus, so did Marcellus over Syracuse, so did Scipio over Carthage; but they shed tears for them, whose blood they were to shed, but Christ shed tears for them who were to shed his blood. So Abraham 'being strong in faith

gave glory to God,' Rom 4:20. How? Why, by complying with those commands of God that were contrary to flesh and blood, as the offering up of his son, his only son, his beloved son, his son of the promise, and by leaving his own country, and his near and dear relations, upon a word of command. The commands of God so change the whole man and make him new, that you can hardly know him to be the same one, saith one. Well, sirs, remember this, it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his commands, though it be never so cross to flesh and blood, who by another is able to command you into nothing or into hell. 'Let Luther hate me, and in his wrath call me a thousand times devil, yet I will love him, and acknowledge him to be a most precious servant of God,' saith Calvin.⁴

[3.] Thirdly, Consider this, such souls will follow the Lord fully, that have made an improvement of their graces. Oh, this was the glorious commendations of Caleb and Joshua in Num 14:24, that 'they followed the Lord fully,' in the face of all difficulties and discouragements. 'They had another spirit in them,' says the text, they would go up and possess the land; though the walls were as high as heaven, and the sons of Anak were there, they made no more of it than to go, see, and conquer.

'They followed the Lord fully.' In the Hebrew it is, 'They fulfilled after me.' The Hebrew word is a metaphor taken from a ship under sail, that is carried with a strong wind, as fearing neither sands, nor rocks, nor shelves, &c. Such have little if anything of Christ within, who follow him by halves or haltingly.

I remember Cyprian brings in the devil triumphing over Christ thus: 'As for my followers, I never died for them as Christ did for his; I never promised them so great reward as Christ hath done to his, and yet I have more followers than he, and they do more for me than his do for him.' Oh, where is that spirit in these days that was upon those worthies? Psa 44:7, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.'

[4.] Fourthly, Such souls that have improved their graces to a considerable height, will bless God as well when he frowns as when he smiles. As well when he takes as when he gives, when he strikes as when he strokes, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. When the Lord had stripped Job of all, and had set him naked upon the dunghill, why then says Job, 'The Lord gives, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' Where grace is improved to a considerable height, it will work a soul to sit down satisfied with the naked enjoyment of God, without other things: John 14:8, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' The sight of the Father, without honours, the sight of the Father, without riches, the sight of the Father, without men's favour, will suffice the soul. As Jacob said, 'It is enough that Joseph is alive;' so says the soul that is high in grace, It is enough that Jesus is alive, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Souls that have improved their graces to a considerable height, will be good in bad times and in bad places.

Such souls will bear up against the stream of evil examples, in the worst of times and in the worst of places. Abraham was righteous in Chaldea; Lot was just in Sodom; Daniel holy in Babylon; Job upright and fearing God in the land of Uz, which was a profane and most abominable superstitious

place; Nehemiah zealous in Damascus. Oh, take me a man that hath improved his grace, and the worser the times are the better that man will be; he will bear up bravely against the stream of evil examples, he will be very good when times and all round about him are very bad.

Some say that roses grow the sweeter when they are planted by garlic. Verily, Christians that have gloriously improved their graces are like those roses, they grow sweeter and sweeter, holier and holier, by wicked men. The best diamonds shine most in the dark, and so do the best Christians shine most in the worst times.

[6.] Sixthly, Such turn their principles into practice. They turn their speculations into power, their notions into spirit, their glorious inside into a golden outside, Psa 45:13.

[7.] Seventhly, Such as have made a considerable improvement of their gifts and graces, have hearts as large as their heads; whereas most men's heads have outgrown their hearts, &c.

[8.] Eighthly, Such are always most busied about the highest things, viz., God, Christ, heaven, &c., Php 3:1-21; 2Ti 4:8; 2Co 4:18; Rom 8:18.

[9.] Ninthly, Such are always a-doing or receiving good. As Christ went up and down doing good, Mat 4:23; Mat 9:35; Mark 6:6.

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Such will mourn for wicked men's sins as well as their own. Oh the tears, the sighs, the groans, that others' sins fetch from these men's hearts! Pambus, in the ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost, partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell, and partly because he had not been so careful to please God, as she had been to please a wanton lover, Jer 9:1-2; 2Pe 2:7-9.

I have at this time only given you some short hints, whereby you may know whether you have made any considerable improvement of that grace the Lord hath given you. I do intend, by divine permission, in a convenient time to declare much more of this to the world, I shall follow all what hath been said with my prayers, that it may help on your internal and eternal welfare.

'The unsearchable riches of Christ.'—Eph 3:8.

Now, the next observation that we shall begin with is this: That the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich. And the second will be this: That the great business and work of the ministry is to hold forth to the people the riches of Christ.

We shall begin with the first point at this time, namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich. For the opening of this point, we shall attempt these three things:

- I. To demonstrate this to be a truth, that the Lord Jesus is very rich.
 - II. The grounds why he is thus held forth in the word, to be one full of unsearchable riches.
 - III. To shew you the excellency of the riches of Christ, above all other riches in the world.
 - IV. And then the use of the point.
- I. For the first, that the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich.

[1.] First, Express scripture speaks out this truth. He is rich in goodness: Rom 2:4, 'Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness,' his 'native goodness,' &c., that is ready to be employed for thy internal and eternal good, &c.

Again, He is rich in wisdom and knowledge: Col 2:3, 'In whom,' speaking of Christ, 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Christ was content that his riches should be hid from the world; therefore do not thou be angry that thine is no more known to the world. What is thy one mite to Christ's many millions? &c.

Again, He is rich in grace: Eph 1:7, 'By whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'

Again, He is rich in glory: Eph 1:18, 'That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.' So in Eph 3:16, 'That he would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.' So in Php 4:19, 'But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.' The riches of glory are unconceivable riches. Search is made through all the bowels of the earth for something to shadow it by. The riches of this glory is fitter to be believed than to be discoursed of, as some of the very heathens have acknowledged.

[2.] But, secondly, as express scripture speaks out this truth, that Christ is very rich, so there are eight things more that do with open mouth speak out Christ to be very rich.

(1.) First, You may judge of his riches, by the dowry and portion that his Father hath given him. In Psa 2:7, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' He is the heir of all things; all things above and below, in heaven and earth, are his. Heb 1:2, 'God hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things.' Christ is the richest heir in heaven and earth. Men cry up this man to be a good match and that; and why so, but because they are great heirs? Ah! but what are all the great heirs of the world to this heir, the Lord Jesus? Joseph gave portions to all his brethren, but to Benjamin a portion five times as good as what he gave the residue. So the Lord scatters portions among the sons of men. He gives brass to some, gold to others; temporals to some, spirituals to others; but the greatest portion of all he hath given into the hands of Christ, whom he hath made the heir of all things: Rev 11:15, 'And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.' So in Rev 19:11-12, 'And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns.' Mark that! What are princes' single crowns, and the pope's triple crown, to Christ's many crowns? Certainly he must be very rich, that hath so many kingdoms and crowns. Wait but a while, and you shall see these scriptures made good, &c.

(2.) Secondly, You may judge of his riches, by his keeping open house for the relief and supply of all created creatures, both in heaven and in earth.

You look upon those as very rich that keep open house for all comers and goers; why, such a one is the Lord Jesus Christ; he keeps open house for all comers and goers, for all created creatures

both in heaven and earth. Psa 104:24, 'The earth is full of thy riches, so is the great and wide sea, where are things creeping innumerable, both small and great.' 'He opens his hand, and he satisfies every living creature,' says the Psalmist, Psa 145:16. So Isa 55:1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, let him come and buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore dost thou lay out thy money for that which is not bread, and thy strength for that which doth not profit?' All creatures, high and low, honourable and base, noble and ignoble, blessed and cursed, are fed at the cost and charge of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse. All angels and saints above, and all saints and sinners below, are beholden to Christ for what they enjoy. Oh! the multitudes, the numberless number of those that live upon the cost and charge of Christ. Can you number the stars of heaven? can you number the sands upon the sea-shore? then may you number the multitudes, the millions of angels and men that are maintained upon the cost and charge of the Lord Jesus. In Col 1:16-17, 'For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.'

(3.) Thirdly, You may judge of the riches of Christ by the time that he hath fed and clothed, cherished and maintained, so many innumerable millions of angels and men.

He hath maintained his court above and below, upon his own cost and charge, for almost six thousand years. Oh, to keep such a multitude, if it were but for a day, would speak him out to be richer than all the princes in the world; but to keep so many millions, and to keep them so long, what doth this speak out, but that Christ is infinitely rich, rich in goodness and mercy? It would beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of those that Christ maintains every day, &c.

(4.) But, fourthly, you may judge of the riches of Christ by this, that he doth not only enrich all the saints, but all of the saints. That is, he enriches all the faculties of their souls; he enriches their understandings with glorious light; their consciences with quickness, pureness, tenderness and quietness; and their wills with holy intentions and heavenly resolutions; and their affections of love, joy, fear, &c., with life, heat, and warmth, and with the beauty and glory of the most soul-enriching, soul-delighting, soul-ravishing, and soul-contenting objects &c. All saints' experiences seal to this truth, and therefore a touch shall suffice, &c.

(5.) Fifthly, Judge of the riches of Christ by this, that notwithstanding all the vast expense and charge that he is at, and hath been at for so many millions of thousands, and that for near six thousand years, yet he is never the poorer; his purse is never the emptier.

There is still in Christ a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundance, notwithstanding all that he hath expended. It were blasphemy to think that Christ should be a penny the poorer by all that he hath laid out for the relief of all those that have their dependence upon him. Col 1:19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' Not stay or abide a night or a day and away, but should dwell. The sun hath not the less light for filling the stars with light. A fountain hath not the less for filling the lesser vessels. There is in Christ plenitudo fontis, the fulness of a fountain. The overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet remains full. Why, the Lord Jesus is such an overflowing fountain; he fills all, and yet remains full. Christ hath the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so

all the petty excellencies scattered abroad in the creature are united to Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in him, &c.

(6.) Sixthly, The Lord Jesus is generally rich, and that speaks him out to be rich indeed. He is generally rich. You have few persons that are generally rich. That is a rich man indeed, that is generally rich; that is, that is rich in money and rich in land, and rich in commodities, and rich in jewels, &c. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is one that is generally rich; he is rich in all spirituals; he is rich in goodness, rich in wisdom and knowledge; he is rich in grace, and rich in glory. Yea, he is generally rich in respect of temporals. 'He is the heir of all things.' He is the heir of all the gold in the world, and of all the silver, and of all the jewels, and of all the land, and of all the cattle in the world, as you may see by comparing some scriptures together. Hos 2:5, Hos 2:8-9, 'For their mother hath played the harlot, she that conceived them hath done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers that gave me my bread and my water, and my wool, and my flax, and my oil, and my drink.' But mark what follows: verses 8, 9, 'For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal; therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax, given to cover her nakedness.' So in Psa 24:1, 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the round world, and all that dwell therein.' All others are either usurpers or stewards; it is the Lord Jesus that is the great landlord of heaven and earth. So in Psa 50:8-10, 'I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings; I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds: for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.' It is all mine, saith the Lord.

Thus you see that the Lord is generally rich, rich in houses, in lands, in gold, in silver, in cattle, &c., in all temporals as well as in spirituals; but where will you find a man that is generally rich either in spirituals or temporals? It is true, you may find one Christian rich in one grace, and another Christian rich in another; but where will you find a Christian that is generally rich, that is rich in every grace: that is rich in knowledge, in faith, in love, in wisdom, in humility, in meekness, in patience, in self-denial? Abraham was rich in faith, and Moses was rich in meekness, and Job was rich in patience, and Joshua was rich in courage, and David was rich in uprightness, &c. But where will you find a saint that is rich in all these graces? Or where will you find a man that is generally rich, in respect of temporals, as to be rich in lands, and rich in moneys, and rich in wares, and rich in jewels, &c. But now the Lord Jesus Christ is generally rich, both in respect of spirituals and temporals. 'In having nothing I have all things,' saith one, 'because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward,' &c.

(7.) Seventhly, You may judge of the riches of Christ, by the tribute and rent that is due to him.

He is the great landlord and owner of all that angels and men possess above and below. All created creatures are but tenants-at-will to this rich landlord, the Lord Jesus. He puts out and puts in as he pleases; he lifts up one, and casts down another; he throws down the mighty, and sets up the needy, according to the pleasure of his own will. 'Whom he will he destroys, and whom he will he saves alive,' Psa 113:7; Psa 148:14; Luk 1:52. Whom he will he binds, and whom he will he sets at liberty; whom he will he exalts, and whom he will he abases; whom he will he makes

happy, and whom he will he makes miserable, &c. The psalmist, Psa 148:1-14, upon this account, calls upon all celestial and terrestrial creatures, to pay their tribute of praise to the Lord. He hath given them all their beings, and he maintains them all in the beings that he hath given them. The ancient Hebrews, as Josephus relates, set marks and tokens sometimes on their arms, sometimes at their gates, to declare to all the world the tribute and praise that was due to the Lord, for all his benefits and favours shewed unto them. Bernard saith, 'We must imitate the birds, who morning and evening, at the rising and setting of the sun, omit not to pay the debt of praise that is due to their creator.'

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, judge of the riches of Christ by the multiplicity and variety of temporal and spiritual gifts and rewards that he scatters among the children of men.

He gives honours to thousands, and riches to thousands, and peace to thousands, and pardon to thousands, and the joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost to thousands. There is not a moment that passes over our head, but he is a-scattering of jewels up and down the world; he throws some into one bosom, and others into others, but the best into the bosom of his saints. Oh, the abundance of peace, the abundance of joy and comfort! Oh, the fear, the faith, the love, the kindness, the goodness and sweetness, that the Lord Jesus Christ scatters up and down among the precious sons and daughters of Zion, besides all temporal favours. There is not a saint that receives so much as a cup of cold water, but Christ rewards it abundantly into the bosom of the giver, Mat 10:42. By all which you may well judge, that certainly the Lord Jesus is very rich, for if he were not, he could never hold out in scattering of rich rewards among so many millions, and for so many thousand years, as he hath done. And so much for the proof of the point, viz., that the Lord Jesus is very rich.

We come now in the second place to discover to you, II. The grounds and reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ is held forth in the word to be so very rich. And they are these that follow:

[1.] First, To encourage poor sinners to look after, and to be willing to match with him.

Poverty hinders many a match. The Lord did foresee from eternity, that fallen man would never look after Christ, if there were not something to be gotten by Christ. The Lord hath therefore in his wisdom and goodness to fallen man, thus presented him as one exceeding rich, that so poor sinners might fall in love with him, and be willing to give up themselves to him; Pro 8:34-35, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors;' as princes' guards do at princes' gates and doors. Now, the arguments to draw out the soul thus to wait upon the Lord, lie in the next words, 'For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.' The Hebrew runs thus, 'For finding me he shall find lives, and shall draw forth the favour of the Lord.' Divine favour is as it were a jewel locked up; ay, but by finding Christ, by getting Christ, the soul gets this jewel, that is more worth than a world; yea, by gaining him, the soul gains lives; to wit, a life of grace, and a life of glory, and what would the soul have more? A second ground of this is, [2.] Because he is ordained by the Father to convey all riches of grace to his chosen and beloved ones.

John 1:16, 'Of his fulness we all receive grace for grace;' and this we receive by divine ordination. John 6:27, 'Labour not,' saith Christ, 'for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.'

God the Father hath sealed Christ; he hath designed Christ, he hath set Christ apart for this very work, that he might give grace unto us. God hath ordained to convey all fulness of light to the air by the sun, and therefore hath put a greater fulness of light into the sun. God hath ordained all fulness of nourishment to the branches by the roots, and therefore hath put a fulness of juice into the roots. So the Lord hath ordained that all the riches of grace, of peace, of glory, &c., that believers shall enjoy here and in heaven, they shall have from the Sun of righteousness, from this blessed root the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore the Father hath filled this Sun with light, this root with heavenly juice, because he is by divine ordination to convey all spiritual and glorious riches into the hearts of his chosen and beloved ones, John 15:21-22. A third ground is,

[3.] To take away all excuse from ungodly and wicked men, and that they may be found speechless in the day of vengeance, when the Lord shall come to reckon with them.

Ah, sinners! how will you that have turned your backs upon Christ, who is thus rich, be able to answer it in the day when God shall reason the case with you? When God shall say, Sinners, hath it not been often told you that Christ is rich in mercy, and rich in goodness, and rich in grace, rich in pardons, rich in loves, and rich in glory, rich in spirituals, rich in temporals, and rich in eternals, and yet you have slighted this Christ, you have turned your backs upon this Christ, you have preferred your lusts, and the world, and the service of the devil, above this Christ. Oh! how dumb, how speechless will sinners be, when the Lord shall thus plead with them. Oh! how will their countenances be changed, their thoughts troubled, and their joints loosed, their consciences enraged, and their souls terrified, when they shall see what a rich match they have refused, and thereupon how justly they are for ever accursed, &c.

[4.] Lastly, It is upon this account, That he may be a complete Redeemer to us, and that nothing may hinder our souls closing with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We stand in need of one that is rich; rich in grace to pardon us, rich in power to support us, and rich in goodness to relieve us, and rich in glory to crown us. There is none but such a Christ can serve our turns. We stand in need of one that is rich, that is generally rich, one that is rich in money to pay all our debts. We have run much upon the score with God, and none can pay this score but Christ. Our sins are debts that none can pay but Christ. It is not our tears but his blood, it is not our sighs but his sufferings, that can satisfy for our sins. We are much in debt to God for the ground we tread on, the air we breathe in, the beds we lie on, the bread we eat, the clothes we wear, &c.; and none can pay this debt but Christ. Angels and saints may pity us, but they cannot discharge the least debt for us, &c. Christ must pay all, or we are prisoners for ever, &c. We stand in need of one that is rich in goodness. We are a needy people, and are still in want. Christ must be still a-giving, or we shall be still a-languishing. If he shut his hand, we perish and return to dust. Our temporal wants are many, our spiritual wants are more, and if Christ do not supply them, who will? who can? Nay, our wants are so many and so great, that Christ himself could not supply them, were he not very, very rich. And thus I have given you a brief account of the reasons of the point, why the Lord Jesus is held forth by the Scripture to be so very rich.

We shall now come to the third thing proposed, and that is, III. The excellency of the riches of Christ above all other riches in the world.

I shall briefly run over this third branch, and so come to the application, which is most in my eye, and upon my heart.

[1.] First, The riches of Christ are incomparable riches: Pro 3:13-15, 'Happy is the man that findeth Wisdom,' that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, 'and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.' One grain of grace is far beyond all the gold of Ophir and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth. We may say of the riches of this world, compared with the riches of Christ, as Gideon sometime said of the vintage of Abiezer, 'The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer.' So the gleanings, the smallest gatherings of the riches of Christ, are far better, more excellent, more satisfying, more contenting, more ravishing than all the riches of this world.

'The whole Turkish empire,' saith Luther, 'is but a crust that God throws to a dog.' The wise merchant, Mat 13:44-45, parts with all to gain this pearl of price; the truth is, other riches are but a burden. Gen 13:2, 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. The Hebrew word chabbedh is, 'He was very heavy in cattle, in silver, and in gold'; to signify, that riches are but heavy burdens. A little will serve nature, less will serve grace, but nothing will serve men's lusts.

Pheraulus, a poor man, on whom Cyrus bestowed so much, that he knew not what to do with his riches, being wearied out with care in keeping of them, he desired rather to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent; therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might supply his necessities. Let worldly professors think seriously of this story and blush, &c.

[2] Secondly, The riches of Christ are inexhaustible riches. As I have shewed you, Christ can never be drawn dry. The Spanish ambassador coming to see the treasury of St Mark, in Venice, which is cried up throughout the world, fell a-groping whether it had any bottom, and being asked why, answered, 'In this among other things, my great master's treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom, as I find yours to have,' alluding to the mines of Mexico and Potosi, &c. Certainly Christ's treasures have no bottom, all his bags are bottomless; but Scripture, history, and experience, do abundantly testify that men's bags, purses, coffers, and mines, may be exhausted or drawn dry, but Christ's can never. Millions of thousands live upon Christ, and he feels it not; his purse is always full, though he be always giving, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, The riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches. Oh those riches of grace and goodness that be in Christ, how do they satisfy the souls of sinners! A pardon doth not more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread the hungry man, nor drink the thirsty man, nor clothes the naked man, nor health the sick man, than the riches of Christ do satisfy the gracious man. John 4:13-14, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water springing up to everlasting life.' Grace is a perpetual flowing fountain. Grace is compared to water. Water serves to cool men when they are in a burning heat, so grace cools the soul when it hath been scorched and burned up under the sense of divine wrath and displeasure. Water is cleansing, so is grace; water is fructifying, so is grace; and water is satisfying, it satisfies the thirsty, and so doth grace. 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' John 14:8. But now earthly

riches can never satisfy the soul; but as they said once of Alexander, 'that had he a body suitable to his mind, he would set one foot upon sea, and the other upon land;' he would reach the east with one hand, and the west with the other. And doubtless the same frame of spirit is to be found in all the sons of Adam. In Ecc 5:10, 'He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase. This is also vanity.' If a man be hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him, much less then is it able to satisfy him. Oh! but the riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches. A soul rich in spirituals, rich in eternals, says, I have enough, though I have not this and that temporal good, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, The riches of Christ are harmless riches. They are riches that will not hurt the soul, that will not harm the soul. Where is there a soul to be found in all the world that was ever made worse by spiritual riches? Oh but earthly riches have cast down many, they have slain many. If poverty, with Saul, hath killed her thousands, riches, with David, hath killed her ten thousands. Ecc 5:13, 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.' Earthly riches are called thorns, and well they may; for as thorns, they pierce both head and heart; the head with cares in getting them, and the heart with grief in parting with them. Oh the souls that riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds that riches have blinded! Oh the hearts that riches have hardened! Oh the consciences that riches have benumbed! Oh the wills that riches have perverted! Oh the affections that riches have disordered and destroyed! Earthly riches are very vexing, very defiling, very dividing, and to multitudes prove very ruining.

It was a wise and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the Duke of Venice, who, when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious memento, *Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches. This is plain in the text, 'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' There are riches of justification, riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, and riches of glorification in Christ. All the riches of Christ are unsearchable riches. A saint with all the light that he hath from the Spirit of Christ, is not able to search to the bottom of these riches. Nay, suppose that all the perfections of angels and saints in a glorified estate should meet in one noble breast, yet all those perfections could not enable that glorious glorified creature for to search to the bottom of Christ's unsearchable riches. Doubtless when believers come to heaven, when they shall see God face to face, when they shall know as they are known, when they shall be filled with the fulness of God, even then they will sweetly sing this song, 'Oh the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of the unsearchable riches of Christ!' As there is no Christ to this Christ, so there are no riches to his riches, &c. Oh but such are not the riches of this world, they may be reckoned, they may be fathomed, &c.

[6.] Sixthly, The riches of the Lord Jesus Christ are permanent and abiding riches; they are lasting, they are durable riches. That is a choice scripture, Pro 8:18, 'Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness.' The Hebrew word that is rendered 'durable riches' signifies old riches. All other riches are but new, they are but of yesterday as it were. Oh! but with me are old riches, durable riches. All other riches, in respect of their fickleness, are as a shadow, a bird, a

ship, an arrow, a dream, a post, &c. This Valerian, Valens, and Bajazet, three proud emperors, found by experience, and so have many kings, and generals, and nobles, as Scripture and history do abundantly evidence. Earthly riches are very uncertain, 1Ti 6:17. They are ever upon the wing; they are like tennis balls, which are banded up and down from one to another. As the bird hops from twig to twig, so do riches from man to man. This age can furnish us with multitudes of instances of this nature, &c.

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, They are the most useful riches, to sweeten all other riches, mercies, and changes, &c., which speaks out the excellency of these riches above all other riches. The more useful anything is, the more excellent it is. Now the riches of Christ are of all things the most useful to poor souls. When the soul is under the guilt of sin, nothing relieves it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is surrounded with temptations, nothing strengthens it like the riches of Christ. When the soul is mourning under afflictions, nothing comforts it like the riches of Christ. When state, friends, and trading fails, nothing makes a Christian sing care away like the riches of Christ, &c. The riches of Christ sweeten all other riches that men enjoy. If a man be rich in parts, or rich in grace, rich in faith, rich in knowledge, rich in wisdom, rich in joy, rich in peace, &c.; or if a man be rich in temporals, rich in money, rich in wares, rich in jewels, rich in lands, &c., the glorious and unsearchable riches of Christ sweeten all his riches, and the want of these riches embitters all the riches that men enjoy. When men's consciences are enlightened and awakened, then they cry out, what are all these worldly riches to us, except we had an interest in the riches of Christ? As Absalom once said, 'What are all these to me, except I see the king's face?'

I have read of one that, upon his dying bed, called for his bags, and laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then cried out, 'Take it away, it will not do, it will not do.' There are things that earthly riches can never do.

They can never satisfy divine justice;

They can never pacify divine wrath; Nor they can never quiet a guilty conscience. And till these things are done, man is undone. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the honourable garter cannot cure the gout, nor the chain of pearls about the neck cannot take away the pain of the teeth. Oh but the unsearchable riches of Christ give ease under all pains and torments.

Nugas, the Scythian king, despising the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the emperor of Constantinople (Michael Paleolagus), asked him that brought them, 'Whether those things could drive away calamities, diseases, or deaths?' looking upon all those presents as no presents, that could not keep off calamities from him. Verily, all the riches and glories of this world cannot keep off the least calamity, neither can they make up the want of the least mercy. But the riches of Christ do both keep off calamities, and make up the want of all mercies that the soul craves or needs. All which speak out the excellency of the riches of Christ above all other riches. We come now unto, IV. The uses of this point. And the first use that we shall make, is a use of exhortation, to exhort you all, seeing Christ is so rich, to labour to be spiritually rich. Oh labour to be rich in grace. In the handling of this use I shall propound this method.

[1.] I shall lay down some considerations that may provoke your souls to labour to be rich in grace.

[2.] I shall propound some directions or helps, to help you to be rich in grace, which is as much a mercy as a duty, &c.

[3.] I shall lay down some propositions concerning the soul's being rich in grace.

[4.] I shall shew you how you may know whether you are the persons that are rich in grace, or no.

I shall begin with the first, and be a little the more large upon it, because it is a point of mighty weight and concernment; and then be the more brief in the three following particulars. For the first, by way of motive, I shall only propound these following considerations, to provoke your souls to labour to be rich in grace. Laborandum was one of the emperors' motto, and must be every Christian's.

[1.] First, Consider that the more rich the soul is in grace, the higher the soul will be in joy and comfort.

It is the greatest measures of grace that usher in the greatest measure of joy and comfort into a believing heart. Christians, have you tasted of the consolations of God? Have you at times sat down and drank of these wells of salvation? Are your hearts carried out for more of those waters of life? Then labour to be rich in grace. A little star yields but a little light, and a little grace will yield but a little comfort, but great measures of grace will yield a man not only a heaven hereafter, but also a heaven of joy here. Divine comfort is a choice flower, a precious jewel, and only to be found in their bosoms that are rich in grace. Spiritual comforts are such strong waters, that weak Christians are not able to bear them. Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of the truth of grace; and the clearer evidence there is in the soul of the truth of grace, the higher will joy and comfort spring. The soul is apt to hang her comforts on every hedge, to shift and shank in every by-corner for comfort; but as air lights not without the sun, and as fuel heats not without fire, so neither can anything soundly comfort a Christian without the God of grace, without his being rich in grace. Great measures of grace carry with them the greatest evidence of a man's union and communion with God, and the more a man's union and communion with God is evidenced, the more will the soul be filled with that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and with that comfort and peace that passes understanding. In great measures of grace a man may read most of the love and favour of God; and the more a man sees of the love and favour of God to him, the more high the springs of comfort rise in him. In great measures of grace, as in a crystal glass, the soul sees the glorious face of God shining and sparkling, and this fills the soul with joy: Acts 9:31, 'Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.' The more their graces were increased, the more their comforts were augmented.

'If one drop of the joy of the Holy Ghost should fall into hell, it would swallow up all the torments of hell,' saith Austin. Oh! who would not then labour to increase in grace, that he may abound in joy? The promise lies most fair before their eyes that are rich in grace. Their interest in it is most clear, and rarely that they go without it, unless it is by taking part sometimes with Satan against their interest in Christ, or sometimes through the power of unbelief, which indeed cuts off all the comfort of the soul, or by looking after other lovers, or by not hearkening to the voice of the Comforter, &c. Christians, you often complain of the want of joy and comfort. Oh! do but abound in grace, and you won't complain of the want of comfort. 'Without delight the soul cannot live,' saith one; 'take away all delight, and the soul dies.' Let this that hath been spoken, provoke every Christian to labour to be rich in grace.

[2.] But, Secondly, consider this, you have singular opportunities and choice advantages to be rich in grace.

There is a price put into your hands, but where are your hearts? In former times God gave our grace by drops, but now by flagons, Song of Solomon 2:5. Opportunities, if not improved, will, as that sword that Hector gave Ajax, be turned into your own bowels. This will be a sword in thy bowels, that there hath been soul-enriching opportunities, and thou hast neglected them, and turned thy back upon them. The thoughts of this will one day be the scorpions that will vex thee, the rod that will lash thee, the thorns that will prick thee, and the worm that will gnaw thee. 'The stork,' saith the prophet, 'knows his appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord,' Jer 8:7. The market for your souls is open; slip not your season, lest with the foolish virgins you go to buy when it is too late, Mat 25:1-46. The merchant will not slip his opportunity of buying, nor the sailor his of sailing, nor the husbandman his of sowing, and why should you slip yours of growing rich in grace? Many men lose their souls, as Saul lost his kingdom, by not discerning their time to be spiritually rich.

Tamerlane at first hung out a white flag, but if they slipped that opportunity, then a red, and so death and destruction followed, &c. The Lord Jesus hangs out the white flag of mercy in these days, to entice souls to come in, and to share with him in his glorious and unsearchable riches, in the riches of his grace and mercy; but if you stand out, Christ hath a red flag, and if that be once put out, you are lost for ever. Thrice happy are those that take the first opportunity of closing with Christ, and of subjecting themselves to Christ.

Plutarch writes of Hannibal, 'That when he could have taken Rome he would not, but when he would have taken Rome he could not.' When many men may have mercy, they won't, and when they would have mercy, they shan't, Pro 1:24, seq. Mercy and grace are sometimes upon the bare knee. Christ stands knocking at sinners' doors; he is willing to come in and make sinners rich and happy for ever; he calls upon souls to open to him, Rev 3:20, seq. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle,' Psa 24:7-8. The King of glory comes not vacuis manibus, empty-handed; no, he comes with his hands and heart full of rich and royal presents, and blessed and enriched for ever are those that open to this King of glory, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider this, souls rich in grace shall have their names immortal.

Every man naturally would have, if it were possible, his name immortal. Now there is no way in the world to have your names immortal, like this of growing rich in grace. A man that is spiritually rich shall live, and his name shall live when he is dead. In Neh 7:2, it is said of Hananiah, that 'he was a faithful man, and feared God above many;' or, 'he feared God above multitudes,' as the Hebrew hath it: merabbim, from rahab. His name lives, though his body for many hundred years hath been turned to dust. So in Acts 7:55, 'Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost.' Though Stephen was stoned, yet his name lives, his memorial is precious among the saints to this very day. So in Heb 11:38, they were such 'of whom this world was not worthy.' And in 3Jn 1:1-6, compared 3Jn 1:12, Gaius and Demetrius, who were rich in grace, have crowns of honour set upon their heads, their names live, and are a sweet savour to this very day, &c. So in Psa 112:6, 'The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, but the name of the wicked shall rot.' The great man's name, and

the rich man's name, shall rot, saith he, but 'the name of the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.' The Persians use to write their kings' names in golden characters; so the Lord writes the names of souls rich in grace in golden characters. Their names are always heirs to their lives. Believe it, there is no such way in the world to have immortal names, like this of growing rich in grace. One man thinks to make his name immortal, by making himself great; another by heaping up silver and gold as the dust of the earth or the stones of the street, and another by doing some strange exploits, &c. But for all this the Lord will make good his word, 'the name of the wicked shall rot.' If God be God, his name must rot; but 'the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance;' they leave their names behind for a blessing, Isa 65:15. It is sad to consider what many poor carnal creatures have done and suffered to make their names immortal. The Romans' desires of praise and a name, made them bountiful of their purses, and prodigal of their lives.

Erostratus set the temple of Diana on fire, on that night that Alexander was born, only that he might be talked of when he was dead.

Calvin observes, that Servetus in Geneva, in the year 1555, gave all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burned, and all for a name, for a little glory among men. But these poor creatures have all missed the mark. There is no way, Christians, to have your names immortal, like this, of growing rich in grace. Satan nor the world shall never be able to bury such men's names, who are rich in grace; their names shall rise in glory here, as well as their bodies hereafter.

[4.] But then, fourthly and mainly, consider, that spiritual riches will enable you to live up to your principles. That man that hath but so much grace as will keep hell and his soul asunder, will never live up to his principles. Souls weak in grace are too apt to deny, and in their practices to contradict, their own principles; and oh that this age could not furnish us with too many instances of this nature! Oh! what is that that is the reproach of religion, and the dishonour of God and the gospel, but this, that professors live below their principles, that they live not up to their principles? And let me tell you, Christians, there is nothing but a rich measure of grace that will enable a soul to live up to his principles. A man that is not rich in grace will never be able to live up to his own principles, but will upon every occasion and temptation be ready to wound two at once; the honour of God and his own soul. Yea, men that are not rich in grace, will be ready to deny their own principles, as many weak Christians did in persecuting times. But you will say to me, What are those gracious and holy principles, that a rich measure of grace will enable a man to live up to?

I will instance only in those that have most worth and weight in them, and they are worthy of all your thoughts.

(1.) First, It is your principle, that you must rather suffer than sin.

It is your principle rather to undergo the greatest calamities, than willingly to commit the least iniquity. Now, pray tell me, what will enable a Christian to live up to this principle? Will a little grace, a little knowledge of God, a little faith in God, a little love to God, a little zeal for God, a little communion with God? Will this do it? Surely no. It must be much grace that must enable the soul to live up to this principle. When sin and suffering have stood in competition, many weak Christians have chosen rather to sin, than to suffer, which hath opened many a mouth, and saddened many a heart, and wounded many a conscience. Yea, such by their not suffering, have suffered more than ever they could have suffered from the wrath and rage of man. Oh! but now

spiritual riches will enable a man to live up to this principle, as you may see in Daniel, who had an excellent spirit in him, who was rich in grace, and filled with the Holy Ghost; he lives up to his principles; he lives out his principles, when he was put hard to it; when he must either neglect the worship of his God and make a god of his king, or to the lions' den. Now, Daniel chooses rather to be cast into the lions' den than not to do homage to his God; he had rather suffer much, than that God should lose a dram of his glory. Of the same spirit and metal were those worthies, Heb 11:1-40, who, when they were put to it, did rather choose to suffer the very worst of miseries, than they would in the least dishonour the Lord, wound their own consciences, and make work for repentance, &c. And so did Jovinian, Eusebius, Galeacius [Carraciolus], Basil, Vincentius, Bolilas, &c. By all which you see, that Christians that are spiritually rich, live up to this principle, viz., to suffer rather than sin, when sin and suffering stand in competition; which babes in grace cannot do.

(2.) Secondly, It is your principle, that grace and virtue are to be pursued after, for their own worth, beauty, and excellency. But pray, tell me, what will carry a Christian out to this principle? Will a little grace carry a man out to pursue after grace, for the beauty, holiness, excellency, and spirituality that is in it? Alas! we see by daily experience that it will not do it. All other considerations put together, are little enough to draw men on to pursue after grace for its native beauty and excellency. Many seek Christ, but it is for loaves more than for love, John 6:26; and they pursue after the means of grace, not for the beauty, excellency, and glory that is stamped upon the means, but one to maintain his honour, and another to keep up his name, and another to bring in credit or custom, and another to please his friends, and another to silence his conscience, &c., but few there be, if any, but those that are rich in grace, that are true to this principle, that pursue after grace for its own beauty and excellency. It was a notable expression of David, who was a man rich in grace, Psa 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' Oh! for a soul to love grace, and the word of grace, for its own interest, for the holiness, purity, and glory of it. This speaks out the soul to be rich in grace. So Paul, a man rich in grace, pursues after grace for its own interest, for the beauty and excellency of it. He forgets 'what is behind, and presses forward after the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead,' Php 3:13-14. That is, to that perfection that the dead shall reach to in the morning of the resurrection, &c. The young philosophers were very forward to get the precepts of their sect, and the rules of severity, that they might discourse with kings and nobles, not that they might reform their own manners. Many professors in this age are like those philosophers; they are very industrious to get knowledge, that they may be able to discourse, and that they may be eyed, owned, and honoured among others, for their knowledge and understanding. But now souls that are rich in grace, they labour after greater measures of grace, out of love to grace, and because of an excellency that they see in grace. Grace is a very sparkling jewel, and he that loves it, and pursues after it for its own native beauty, hath much of it within him, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, It is your principle, that men must subject themselves, and square all their actions by the word of God.

Now, what will make a man live up to this principle? Will a little grace? Surely no, Isa 8:10. But great measures of grace will. Zacharias and Elizabeth were rich in grace, and they lived up to this principle: Luk 1:5, 'They walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.' The apostles

were rich in grace, and they lived up to this principle: 2Co 1:12, 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.' So in 1Th 2:10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblameably, we have behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Oh! here are souls that live up to their principles. A Christian that is rich in grace is excellent all over.

George, prince of Anhalt his family is said to have been ecclesia, academia, curia, a church, a university, and a court. A Christian that is rich in grace hath a heart as large as his head, yea, a heart that is as large as the whole will of God: Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.' In the Greek it is, all my wills, θεληματα, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. Souls rich in grace practise that themselves which they prescribe to others. Lessons of music and copies must not be read only, but acted also. Souls rich in grace are good at this, and they will be good in all places and cases. They are as good at the particular duties of religion, as at those that are more general; they are good fathers, and good masters, and good husbands, as well as good Christians, in a more general sense. But now souls that have but a little grace, they are much in the general duties of religion, but very defective in the particular duties of religion, as sad experience doth abundantly evidence. Those that have a blemish in their eye, think the sky to be ever cloudy; and nothing is more common to weak spirits, than to be criticising and contending about other duties, and to neglect their own. But such that are rich in grace, make it their glory to subject themselves to the rule of righteousness; as Baldasser, a German minister, cried out, Let the word of the Lord come, let it come, saith he, and we will submit to it, if we had many hundred necks to put under. It must be much grace that must enable a man freely, fully, and sweetly to subject himself and his actions to the word of the Lord.

(4.) Fourthly, It is your principle, that you must deny yourselves, your own profit, ease, pleasure, &c., for a public good. And this the Scripture requires. It is your principle to deny yourselves, your own honour, pleasure, profit, &c., for a public advantage, when your particular advantages stand in competition with the public. Now self must be laid by, and the public must carry the day. Oh, but will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle! Woful experience shews the contrary. Ay, but now, take me a man that is rich in grace, and he will live up to this golden principle, as you may see in Neh 5:14-18. Nehemiah was a man eminent in grace, and he chose rather to live upon his own purse than upon the public purse: 'Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor. Behold the former governors that had been before me, were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants did bear rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God. Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work. Moreover, there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came in to us from among the heathen. And yet for all this,' saith he, 'I required not the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon the people.' Oh, here was a brave spirit indeed; he was far from enriching himself by others' ruins, from emptying others' purses to fill his own. But he is dead, and it seems this brave spirit is buried with him. There are few of his name, and fewer of his spirit, if any in this world, and therefore well might he pray,

'Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.' And accordingly God did think upon him for good, and made him very famous and glorious in his generation. And that is a remarkable passage concerning Moses: Num 14:12-21, 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a great nation, and mightier than they,' saith God to Moses. 'Therefore let me alone to destroy them and cut them off, for they are a rebellious generation. And I will make thee a mightier nation for honour, riches, and power, than they. Nay,' saith Moses, 'this may not be, Lord.' Oh, the people must be spared, the people must be pardoned, and the people must have thy presence with them, and rather than it should be otherwise, let my name, Lord, be blotted out of the book of life. Lord! I care not how ill it goes with my particular, so they may live. Can the self-seekers of our age think seriously of this and not blush? So Mordecai was a man of a brave public spirit: Est 10:3, 'Mordecai the Jew was next unto King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people.' Or as the Hebrew hath it, 'Seeking good for his people;' that is, he made it his business to seek their good. Christ also was full of grace, and had a brave public spirit; he laid out himself and laid down himself for a public good; and so did Paul, &c. Few in our days are of his opinion and mind, who was rather willing to beautify Italy than his own house. 'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.' Such that seek themselves more than the public good must be served as Æsop did his fellow-servant; he gave him warm water to drink, by which means he vomited up the stolen figs. Friends, it is not a little grace that will make a man prefer the public good, above his own particular good, but much grace will; therefore labour to be rich in grace.³

(5.) Fifthly, It is your principle, that you are to do the duties that God requires of you, and quietly leave the issues and events of all to the wise dispose of God. But pray tell me, will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle, to do his duty, and to leave issues and events to him to whom they belong? Surely no. Ecc 9:10, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest. Mark, he doth not say, what thy head finds to do, for that may find a thousand things; nor what thy heart finds to do, for that may find ten thousand things; but what thy hand finds to do; that is, look what work God cuts out to thy hand to do, that do with all thy might, for there is no working in the grave. We are to do much good in a little time; we are made here, and set to be a-doing something that may do us good a thousand years hence, yea, that may stand us in stead to eternity. Our time is short, our task is great, the devil knows that his time is but short, and that is the reason why he is so active and stirring, why he does outwork the children of light, in a quick despatch of the deeds of darkness. Christians, do not deceive yourselves; it is not shows of grace, nor little measures of grace, that will enable a man to live up to this principle, but great measures of grace will, as you may see in the three children, 'We are not careful to answer thee, O king, in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' We know our duty, and that we will keep to, whatever the issue and event be. So those worthies, Psa 44:19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.' Here was much of Christ and grace within. So in Acts 21:1-40, when Paul was to go up to Jerusalem to suffer, his friends, by many tears and arguments, laboured to dissuade him, for fear of some sad issue and event that would follow. But

Paul, rich in grace, answered, 'What mean ye to weep, and break my heart, for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.' I will go up to Jerusalem, and I am willing to go up, though I die for it. Ay, here is a soul that lives up to his principle, Ay, but now souls that are weak in grace, as we have had large experience of it in our times, they are more taken up and busied about the events and issues of things, than they are with their own duties. When they should be a-praying, a-believing, a-waiting, and acting for God, they have been a-questioning and fearing what the issue and event of this, and that, and the other thing would be. And indeed they have been high and low, as secondary causes have wrought, which hath made many of their lives a very hell. But now those that are rich in grace, they say as once he did, 'Let us be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good,' 2Sa 10:10-12. Let us do our duties, and let the Lord do as pleaseth him, &c.

(6.) Sixthly, It is your principle, that men are to be prepared, and to stand fast against all sudden assaults and invasions that may be made upon them.

Many a valiant person dares fight in a battle or a duel, who yet will be timorous and fearful if suddenly surprised in a midnight alarm. Many precious souls, when they have time to consider of the evil of sin, the holiness of God, the eye of God, the honour of God, the glory of the gospel, the joys of the saints, and the stopping of the mouths of sinners, will rather die than sin; they will rather suffer anything than do the least thing that may be a reproach to Christ. Oh! but when a sudden occasion or temptation is presented, why, then they often fall; as David, by chance, spied Bathsheba washing herself, and falls before the temptation; he is conquered and carried captive by that sudden occasion. But that is a more comfortable and considerable passage that you have concerning Joseph, in Gen 49:23-24, 'The archers sorely grieved him,' saith the text, 'and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.' Joseph never wanted counsel nor courage when he was at the worst. Souls rich in grace usually stand firm under the greatest and suddenest pressures, assaults, and invasions, as you may see in Paul, 2Co 1:9-12; and so the three children; and so Daniel; and so those worthies, Heb 11:35, 'They would not accept of deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.' Many sudden assaults and attempts were made upon them; their enemies would fain have stormed them, and overcome them; sometimes by golden offers, sometimes by terrible threats, but they are invincible; nothing stirs them, nothing takes them. Really, friends, it must be much grace that will make a man live up to this principle; and there is nothing that speaks out more the strength of grace in a man, than his standing against sudden assaults and invasions that by the devil and the world are made upon him. You may talk of this, but without much grace you will never be able to do it, &c.

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, It is your principle, that your hearts art to be ready for every work that God shall impose upon you.

You are not to choose your employment, neither are you to refuse any employment that God shall put upon you. You are always to have an open ear, a ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing cheerful soul to fall in with what work or service soever it is that God shall put upon you; this is your principle. Ay, but tell me, Christians, will a little grace enable a man to live up to this principle? I judge not. You are to stand ready to change your employment from better to worse, if the Lord

shall be pleased to order it so. You are to be ready to change your crown for a cross; to change that employment that is honourable, for that that is mean and low; and that which is more profitable, for that which is less profitable: as it were from the ruling of a province, to the keeping of a herd; from being a lord, to be a servant; from being a servant to great men; to be a servant to the meanest servant, yea, to the poorest beast. Certainly a little grace will never enable a man bravely and sweetly to live up to this principle. Their hearts that are poor in grace, are like a wounded hand or arm, which being but imperfectly cured, can only move one way, and cannot turn to all postures and all natural uses.

Weak Christians are very apt to three things, to choose their mercies, to choose their crosses, and to choose their employments.

They are often unwilling that God himself should choose out their way or their work. But now souls that are rich in grace, they are at God's beck and check; they are willing that God shall choose their work and their way; they are willing to be at his dispose; to be high or low; to serve or to be served; to be something or to be nothing, &c. Now I beseech you, Christians, that you would seriously and frequently remember this, that there is nothing in all the world that is such an honour to God, and a glory to the gospel, as for Christians to live up to their principles; nor nothing such a reproach to God and his ways, as this, for men to live below their principles, and to act contrary to their principles. And you will never be able to live up to your principles, nor to live out your principles, except you grow rich in grace; therefore labour, I say, labour as for life, to abound in grace, &c.

[5.] Now the fifth motive is this, consider that souls rich in grace are a mighty blessing to the land and place where they live.

There are no such blessings in the world to parishes, cities, and nations, as those souls are, that are rich in grace. Oh they are great blessings to all places where they come; they are persons that are fit for the highest and noblest employments. There is not the highest work that is too high for a man that is rich in grace; nor the hottest work that is too hot for a man rich in grace; nor the lowest work below a man rich in grace. Such a man will not say, I would do it, but that it is below my place, my blood, my parts, my education. May Christ have honour? may others have good? If so, I will do it, saith the soul that is rich in grace, whatever comes of it, and bless God for the opportunity: Dan 6:3, 'Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.' Why was Daniel set upon the throne, but because there was a glorious excellent spirit in him, that fitted him for the highest employment? So Joseph was a blessing to his master's family, and the people among whom he lived. No such blessings to people and places, as souls rich in grace. So in Neh 7:2, 'I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem;' and why he? 'for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.' Oh the wisdom, the prudence, the zeal, the courage, the compassion, the patience, the self-denial, that should be in magistrates! There is a truth in that old maxim, magistratus virum indicat, magistracy will try a man. None fit to rule, but such that are rich in grace; such a one will be pater patriæ, father of his country. What a world of good may a man do with worldly riches, in a parish, in a city, in a nation! but that is nothing to the good that a man may do that is rich in grace. Oh the sins that he may prevent! Oh the judgments that he may divert! Oh the favours and blessings that he may draw down upon the

heads and hearts of people! I presume you forget not what a blessing Moses, Joseph, Job, Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Daniel, proved to the people among whom they lived; and these were all rich in grace. A man rich in wisdom, rich in faith, rich in goodness, &c., oh what a blessing may he prove to ignorant souls, to staggering souls, to wandering souls, to tempted souls, to deserted souls, &c. Look, what the sun is to us, that may a soul rich in grace be to others, &c. O friends! would you be blessings to your families? would you be blessings to the city, to the nation? Oh then labour to be rich in grace, and do not think it enough that you have so much grace as will keep you from dropping into hell, and that will bring you to heaven; but labour to be rich in grace, and then you will prove indeed a blessing to the place and nation where you live. The Romans, when they did perceive any natural excellency to be in any persons, though they were never so poor and mean, they would take them from their dinners of turnips and water-cresses, to lead the Roman army. It is true, that natural and moral endowments will enable men to do much; but grace will enable men to do ten thousand times more. There is no work too high nor too hard for souls rich in grace; and therefore, as you would be choice instruments in the Lord's hand, and eminently serviceable in your generations, oh labour to be rich in grace! It is not he that, hath most wit in his head, but he that hath most grace in his heart, that is most fit for generation-work.

[6.] Sixthly, A rich measure of grace will bear out your souls in several cases, therefore labour to be rich in grace. A rich measure of grace will bear out the soul under great means of grace. When a soul is spiritually rich, this will bear him out under great means. Such a one will be able to look God in the face with joy and comfort; he can say, It is true, Lord, I have had more means than others, and lo! I am grown richer than others. Thou hast taken more pains with me than with others, and lo! I bring forth more fruit than others: my five talents are become ten. But a little grace will not bear men out under much means of grace.

Again, A great measure of grace will bear the soul out under a great name, as well as under great means. For a man to have a great name to live, and yet to have but a little life, is a stroke of strokes; to be high in name and little in worth, is a very sad and sore judgment. To have a name to be an eminent Christian, and yet to be poor in faith, in love, in wisdom, in knowledge, &c., is the greatest unhappiness in the world. This stroke is upon many in these days. But that which is saddest of all is this, they feel it not, they observe it not. But now he that is rich in grace, hath something within that will bear him out under a great name in the world.

Again, a great measure of grace will bear you out under great desires, as well as under a great name. A man that is rich in grace may ask what he pleases; he is one much in with God, and God will deny him nothing. The best of the best is for this man; he may have anything; he may have everything that heaven affordeth. He is able to improve much, and therefore he may ask much, and have it.

It was a sweet saying of one, 'O Lord, I never come to thee but by thee, I never go from thee without thee.'

Sozomen saith of Apollonius, that he never asked anything of God, but he had it. And another, speaking of Luther, saith, Hic homo potuit apud Deum quod voluit, He could have what he would of God. Rich men may long for this and that, and have it; they have something that will fetch it, but poor men may not. Oh! now, who would not labour as for life, to be rich in grace? Oh! this will bear you out under great means, and under great names, and under great desires; therefore, rest not

satisfied with a little grace. But then, seventhly and lastly, [7.] Souls rich in grace are the honour of Christ, and the glory of Christianity. As it is the glory of the stock, when the grafts grow and thrive in it, even so it is the glory of Christ when those that are ingrafted into him thrive and grow. This declares to all the world that Christ keeps a good house, and that he doth not feed his children with trash, but with the choicest delicacies; that he is open-handed and free-hearted. It is the glory of the father when the child grows rich under him, and the glory of the master when the servant grows rich under him; and so it is the glory of Christ when poor souls grow rich under him. The name of Christ, and the honour of Christ, is kept up in the world by souls that are rich in grace. They are the persons that make others think well and speak well of Christ. You may at your leisure read the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians, and there you shall see what an honour they were to the Lord Jesus and the gospel who abounded in spiritual riches. Such Christians that are like to Pharaoh's lean kine reproach three at once, God, the gospel, and their teachers: and this age is full of such Christians. It is your greatest work in this world to keep up the honour and the glory of the Lord, and this you can never, you will never do, except you labour to be rich in grace. Let others 'labour for the meat that perisheth,' do you 'labour for that which endureth to everlasting life.' When you come to die, and when you come to make up your accounts, it will never be a grief, but a joy unto you, that you have made it your greatest business and work in this world to be rich in grace. But here you may say, What means must we use that we may grow rich in grace?

I answer:

[1.] First, Let no discouragements take you off from labouring to be enriched with spiritual riches. A soul that would be spiritually rich must be divinely resolved, that come what can come, he will hold on in the use of means, that he may be rich with the riches of Christ. Joshua was resolute in this point: 'Choose you whom ye will serve, whether the Lord, or those other gods that your fathers served; as for my part, I and my house will serve the Lord,' Jos 24:15; Luk 13:24, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' The Greek word signifies, 'to strive with all your might,' with all your strength, to strive even to an agony, to strive as they did for the garlands in the Olympic games. The word here used seemeth to allude to their striving for the garland, where they put out themselves to the utmost. So in John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed.'

I have read of one that did not fear what he did, nor what he suffered, so he might get riches: 'For,' saith he, 'men do not ask how good one is, or how gracious one is, but how rich one is.' Oh, sirs! the day is a-coming when God will ask how rich your souls are; how rich you are, in faith, in wisdom, in knowledge, in fear, &c.; and not how rich you are in money, or in jewels, or in land, or in goods, but how rich are you in grace; which should provoke your souls to strive in the face of all discouragements to be rich in grace. What will not the merchant do, and the mariner do, for these temporal riches? Oh the dangers, the hazards, the tempests, the storms, the deaths that they run through for earthly riches, which are never without their sting! And shall not Christians labour in the face of all oppositions after spiritual riches?

It is reported of Nevessan the lawyer, that he should say, 'He that will not venture his body can never be valiant; and he that will not venture his soul will never be rich.' I am sure that man that will not venture, and venture hard, in the face of all discouragements, to be spiritually rich, will never be rich. He may be good in the main, and may go to heaven in a storm; but he will never be rich in

spirituals, that will not venture himself to the uttermost for the gain of spiritual riches.

[2.] Secondly, Be fixed under a Christ-exalting and a soul-enriching ministry.

Under that man's ministry that makes it his business; not a thing by the by but his business, his work; not to tickle the ear, to please the fancy, but to enrich the soul, to win the soul, and to build up the soul. 2Ti 4:3, 'For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears.' This age, yea, this city is full of such slight, light, mad souls, that love nor like nothing but what is empty and airy.

Junius confesses, 'that in his time there was one confessed that he had spent above twenty years in trying religions,' pretending that scripture, 'Try all things, and hold fast that which is good.' It is sad to see how many in our days, under pretences of angelical attainments, make it their business to enrich men's heads with high, empty, airy notions, instead of enriching their souls with saving truths. If these are not strangers to that wisdom that is from above, I know nothing. Pro 11:30, 'He that winneth souls is wise.' The Hebrew word signifies to catch souls, by using all art and industry, as fowlers do to take birds. No wisdom to that which wins souls from sin and the world, and that wins souls to Christ and holiness; no teaching to this. Remember this, you will never be rich in grace if you care not who you hear, nor what you hear. That Christ that commands you to take heed how you hear, commands you also to take heed who you hear. And every soul won to God is a new pearl added to a minister's crown, &c. But you will say to me, How should we know which is a soul-enriching ministry, that so we may wait on it?

Take these three rules:

(1.) First, Judge not of the soul-enriching ministry by the voice of the minister, nor by the multitude of hearers that follow him, nor by his affected tone, nor by his rhetoric and flashes of wit, but by the holiness, heavenliness, and spiritualness of the matter.

Some preachers affect rhetorical strains; they seek abstrusities, and love to hover and soar aloft in dark and cloudy expressions, and so shoot their arrows over their hearers' heads, instead of bettering their hearers' hearts. Gay things in a sermon are only for men to gaze upon and admire. What are high strains and flashes of wit, new-minted words and phrases, but like gay weeds and blue bottles to the good corn. Truth is like Solomon's spouse, 'all glorious within.' She is most beautiful when most naked, as Adam was in innocency. The oracle would have Philip of Macedon use silver lances in winning an impregnable fort, &c., but ministers must not use golden sentences, strong lines, froth of wit. It is iron, and not gold, that killeth in the encounter. It is the steel sword, not the golden, that winneth the field, &c.

(2.) Secondly, Judge of it by its revealing the whole counsel of God, the whole will of God, revealed in his word. In Acts 20:27, 'For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.' Some there be that make it their business only to advance the glory of Christ, and to darken the glory of the Father; and some cry up the glory of the Father, and yet cast clouds and darkness upon the glory of the Son. And what dirt and scorn is cast upon the Spirit by many vain, blasphemous persons in these times is notoriously known; and if these men are not far from declaring the whole counsel and will of God, I know nothing. Christ must be held out in all his offices, for they all tend to the enriching of poor souls, to the adding of pearls to a Christian's crown. And clearly it is sad to consider how many there be that cry up one office and cry down

another. Some cry up the kingly office of Christ, but mind not his prophetic office; and some cry up his prophetic office, but trample upon his kingly office; and some cry up both his kingly and prophetic office, and yet make slight of his priestly office. Christians, fix yourselves under his ministry that gives the Father his due, the Son his due, and the Spirit his due; that makes it his business to open the treasures and the riches both of the one and the other, and to declare to you the whole will of God; for many there be that 'withhold the word in unrighteousness,' Rom 1:18, and that will only acquaint you with some parts of the will of God, and keep you ignorant of other parts, whose condemnation will be great as well as just, &c.

(3.) Thirdly and lastly, You may judge of it by its coming nearest to the ministry of Christ and his apostles.

There was no ministry so soul-enriching and soul-winning as the ministry of Christ and his apostles. Oh! the thousands that were brought in by one exercise! Let men of frothy wits say what they will, there are no preachers to these that come nearest in their ministry to Christ and his apostles. Loquamur verba Scripturæ, &c., said that incomparable man, Peter Hamus: 'Let us speak the very words of Scripture, for so did Christ, the prophets, and apostles; let us make use of the language of the Holy Ghost, and for ever abominate those that profanely disdain at the stately plainness of God's blessed book, and that think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence with their own infancy and sophistry.' God's holy things ought to be handled with fear and reverence, rather than with wit and dalliance. Spiritual niceness is the next degree to unfaithfulness. No ministry to that which comes nearest to Christ, &c.

[3.] The third direction is this, If ever you would be rich in grace, be rich in spirituals, then keep humble.

Psa 25:9, 'The humble he will teach his way, and the meek he will guide in judgment; Jas 4:6, 'He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' 'He sets himself in battle-array against the proud,' as the Greek hath it, 'but he gives grace to the humble.' He pours grace into an humble soul, as men do water or wine into an empty vessel. Of all souls, humble souls do most prize spiritual riches; of all souls they most improve spiritual riches; of all souls they are most fearful of losing spiritual riches. In Isa 57:15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, With him will I dwell that is of an humble and contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.' The word there rendered dwell is an Hebrew participle, and signifies dwelling. 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, dwelling with him that is of an humble and a contrite spirit.' Humility, as the violet, though the lowest, yet is the sweetest of flowers. The word notes to us thus much: that God will not dwell with an humble man as a wayfaring man dwells with his relations, a few nights and away. Dwelling notes a constant and not a transient act of God. God will for ever keep house with the humble soul; when once they meet, they never part. There is no such way to be rich as to be poor and low in our own eyes. This is the way to enjoy his company in whom all treasures are.

[4.] Fourthly, Improve the riches that you have.

Improve that knowledge, that faith, that light, that love that you have. Those that had two talents did, by the improvement of them, gain other two; and those that had five did, by the improvement of them, gain ten: Pro 10:4, 'The diligent hand maketh rich.' Take hold of all opportunities to enrich your souls with spiritual riches. Men will easily, readily, greedily, and unweariedly close with all

opportunities wherein they may get earthly riches; and why should not you be as diligent in taking hold of all opportunities to enrich your precious souls? Is not the soul more than raiment, more than friends, more than relations, more than life, yea, more than all? And why, then, do you not labour to enrich your souls? Thou wert better have a rich soul under a thread-bare coat, than a thread-bare soul under a silk or golden coat. If he be a monster among men, that makes liberal provision for his servant, his slave, and starves his wife, what a monster is he that makes much provision for his baser part, but none for his noble part! A slothful heart in the things of God is a heavy judgment: Pro 24:30, 'I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'the man that had no heart,' that is, to make use of his vineyard, 'and lo, it was all grown over with thorns and nettles,' &c. Oh the lusts, the wickednesses that will overgrow slothful, sluggish souls! Spiritual sluggards are subject to the saddest strokes. Oh the deadly sins, the deadly temptations, the deadly judgments that spiritual sluggards will unavoidably fall under! None such an enemy to himself, none such a friend to Satan, as the spiritual sluggard. It is sad to think how the riches of Christ, the riches of consolation, the riches of justification, the riches of glorification, are brought to many men's doors, and yet they have no hearts to embrace them: no judgment to this. 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?' Pro 17:16. Well, spiritual sluggards, remember this, when your consciences are awakened, this will be a sword in your souls, that you might have been saved, you might have been spiritually and eternally enriched, but that you have trifled and fooled away golden opportunities and your own salvation. Wealth without wit is ill bestowed, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Walk uprightly, holily, and obedientially.

If ever you would be spiritually rich, look to your walking. It is not the knowing soul, nor the talking soul, but the close-walking soul, the obediential soul, that is in spirituals the richest soul. Others may be rich in notions, but none so rich in spiritual experiences, and in all holy and heavenly grace, as close-walking Christians: Psa 84:11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' The upright walker shall be both of his court and council; he shall know anything, and have anything. In John 14:21, John 14:23, compared, 'If any man love me, he will keep my commandments, and I will love him, and my Father will love him.' What then? 'We will make our abode with him, and will manifest ourselves to him.' Certainly they cannot be poor that enjoy such guests as these; they must needs be full who enjoy them that are fulness itself. God and Christ are overflowing fountains, and holy souls find it so.

[6.] Sixthly, Be most in with those souls that are spiritually rich.

Let them be thy choicest companions, that have made Christ their chiefest companion. Do not so much eye the outsides of men, as their inside; look most to their internal worth. Many persons have an eye upon the external garb of this and that professor, but give me a Christian that minds the internal worth of persons, that makes such as are most filled with the fulness of God, to be his choicest and his chiefest companions. In Psa 16:2, 'My goodness extends not to thee,' says David—now David speaks in the person of Christ,—'but to the saints that are in the earth, in whom is all my delight.' There are saints, and there are excellent saints. Now those are the excellent ones, that are most rich in heavenly treasures; and these you should make your bosom friends, your choicest companions: Pro 13:20, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise;' that is, he shall be more wise, more humble, more holy, and more abounding in all spiritual riches. The word

■■■■■, that is rendered walk, is an Hebrew participle, and signifies walking; to note to us, that it is not he that talks with the wise, nor he that commends the wise, nor he that takes a step or two or three with the wise, that shall be wise, but he that gives up himself to the society and Company of the wise, that shall be more and more wise, more and more gracious, more and more holy. He that cometh where sweet spices or ointments are stirring, doth carry away some of the sweet savour, though himself think not of it. The spouse's lips drop as the honeycomb: Song of Solomon 4:10, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver,' he scatters pearls, he throws abroad treasures where he comes: Pro 15:7, 'The lips of the wise disperse knowledge.' The Hebrew word, ■■■■■, from zarah, is a metaphor from scattering abroad with a fan, or from seedsmen scattering abroad of their seed in the furrows of the field. They scatter their light, their love, their experiences, among those with whom they converse, as seedsmen scatter their seed in the field. Christ says his spouse's lips are like a thread of scarlet, with talking of nothing but a crucified Christ; and thin like a thread, not swelled with other vain and wicked discourses. The old zealous primitive Christians did so frequently, and so effectually mind and talk of the kingdom of heaven, and of the riches and glory of that state, that the Ethnicks began to be a little jealous that they affected the Roman empire; when, alas,² their ambition was of another and a nobler nature: Psa 37:30, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh judgment; for the law of the Lord is in his heart.' Pro 12:28, 'The tongue of the wise is health, his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinable.' No way to be rich in spirituals, like being much in with precious souls, whose tongues drop marrow and fatness.

Utterance is a gift; and dumb Christians are blameworthy, as well as dumb ministers. We should all strive to a holy ability and dexterity of savoury discourse. If Christ should come to many of us, as he did to his two disciples, in that last of Luke, on Sabbath days and other times, and say to us, as to them, 'What manner of communication had ye,' or have ye? oh! with what paleness of face and sadness of countenance should we look! The story of Loquere ut videam is common. 'Speak that I may see thee,' said Socrates to a fair boy. When the heart is full, it overfloweth in speech. We know metals by their tinkling, and men by their talking. Happy was that tongue in the primitive time, that could sound out Aliquid Davidicum, anything of David's doing; but much more happy is he that speaks out Aliquid Christi, anything of Christ from experience.

[7.] Seventhly, If ever you would be spiritually rich, then take heed of eating or tasting of forbidden fruit. This stripped Adam of his crown, of his jewels, and of all his rich ornaments in a moment, and of the richest and greatest prince that ever breathed, made him the miserablest beggar that ever lived. Oh take heed of tasting of poison, of eating of poison. A person that hath ate poison will not thrive, let him take never such wholesome food. The choicest cordials will not increase blood, and spirits, and strength, but the man will throw up all. Poor souls that have been tasting of poison, are apt to find fault with the minister, and sometimes with this and that, as the cause of their not growing rich in spirituals; when, alas! the only cause is their eating of poison. These are like him in Seneca, that having a thorn in his foot, complained of the roughness of the way as the cause of his limping. Sirs, it is not the minister, nor this, nor that, but your eating of forbidden fruit, that is the cause of your non-thriving in spirituals. Sin is the soul's sickness, and nothing more prejudices growth than sickness. Christians, if ever you would be trees, not only having the leaves of honour, but the fruits of righteousness, then take heed of sin, abhor it more than hell, and fly from it as from your deadliest enemy, &c.

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Be sure to maintain a secret trade with God.

You know many men come to be very rich in the world by a secret trade. Though many have not such an open trade as others, yet they have a more secret trade, and by that they gain very great estates, as many of you here in London know by experience. Take it, friends, as an experienced truth, there is no such way under heaven, to be rich in spirituals, as by driving of a secret trade heaven-wards. It is true, it is good for men to attend upon this, and that, and the other public administration; for in all divine administrations God shews his beauty and glory. Ay, but such that delight to be more upon the public stage than in the closet, will never be rich in spirituals. They may grow rich in notions, but they will never grow rich in gracious experiences, Psa 63:2-3; Psa 27:4; Psa 84:10. Oh! God loves to see a poor Christian shut his closet door, Mat 6:6, and then to open his bosom, and pour out his soul before him. God hath very choice discoveries for souls that drive a secret trade; the best wine, the best dainties and delicates are for such. And I never knew any man or woman in my life, that was richer in grace, than those that were much in closet communion with God. Much of a Christian's spiritual strength lies in secret prayer, as Samson's did in his hair. Nothing charms Satan and weakens sin, like this. Secret prayers are the pillars of smoke wherein the soul ascendeth to God, out of the wilderness of this world. Secret prayer is Jacob's ladder, where you have God descending down into the soul, and the soul sweetly ascending up to God. No way to be rich in spirituals like this. Therefore be sure to maintain and keep up a secret trade between God and your own souls. Oh let God hear often of you in secret. In Song of Solomon 7:5, 'The king is held in the galleries.' Oh! in the secret walks, the soul meets with the King of glory. Oh! there the soul hangs upon Christ; there the soul sucks and draws virtue from Christ; and there the soul is made rich with the riches of Christ. Christ is much delighted and taken with secret prayer: Song of Solomon 2:14, 'O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs,' that art got into a hole, 'let me hear thy voice, let me see thy countenance; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is lovely.' Secret meals are very fattening, and secret duties are very soul-enriching. Christians! set more close to this work, and if you don't thrive by it, trust me no more. And thus you see by what means you may grow rich in grace.

3. The third thing I propounded to speak to was, Some propositions concerning spiritual riches. And the first proposition is this:

[1.] All that do grow rich in grace, they grow rich gradually. The sun ascends by degrees; children, plants, and trees they grow by degrees; so do saints in spirituals. It is true, many men as to temporals, by the death of some friend, or this and that providence, grow rich in a sudden; but no soul that is rich in grace, but grows rich gradually. In Pro 4:18, 'But the path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' He proceeds from virtue to virtue, until at length he shines like the sun in its strength. And so in Mal 4:2, 'Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and you shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.' Hos 14:5-7, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.' I shall but hint at this now, because I have spoken more fully to it already, &c. The second proposition is this:

[2.] Few or none are rich in all graces.

There are some men in the world that are generally rich, that are rich in money, and rich in land, and rich in goods, but where you have one man that is a general rich man in this sense, you have ten thousand that are only rich in some one thing, as money, goods, or land, &c.; so it is here. It is a hard thing, if possible, to find a soul that is generally rich; that is rich in every grace, that is rich in faith, and rich in wisdom, and rich in love, and rich in patience, &c. Abraham was rich in faith, and Job was rich in patience, and Moses was rich in meekness, and David was rich in zeal, &c; but none of these were rich in every grace. And so in these days you may find one Christian rich in one grace, and another Christian rich in another grace; but where will you find a Christian that is rich in every grace? Such that are rich in some graces, are yet very defective and lame in other graces. The saints once at Rome were richer in wisdom and knowledge than the saints at Thessalonica, Rom 15:14; and the saints at Thessalonica were richer in faith, love, patience, and charity than the saints at Rome, 1Th 1:4, 1Th 2:8, compared with 2Th 1:3-4. It is with saints as with sinners, one sinner excels in one vice, another in another vice; so one saint excels in one virtue, and another in another virtue. One is rich in joy, in comfort; another is rich in humility, in fear; another in faith and hope; and another in love, &c. And mark how this arises.

It arises sometimes from hence, that every saint doth endeavour to excel in that particular grace that is most opposite to his bosom sin. Now every saint's bosom sin is not alike. It may be pride is one man's bosom sin, and hypocrisy another man's bosom sin, &c. Now it is the very nature of grace to make a man strive to be most eminent in that particular grace that is most opposite to his bosom sin, and upon this account it comes to pass that one is rich in one grace, and another in another.

Again, some saints have frequent occasions to act and exercise such and such graces. Others are called forth to act such and such graces. Now the more any particular grace is acted, the more that particular grace is increased. Frequent acts cause a stronger habit both in graces and in sins. If all Christians should be rich in all graces, what difference would there be between heaven and earth? What need would there be of ordinances? And when would Christians long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ? &c. The third proposition is this:

[3.] Souls may be rich in grace, and yet not know it, and yet not perceive it. The child is heir to a crown, to a great estate, but knows it not. Moses his face did shine, and others saw it, but he perceived it not. So many a precious soul is rich in grace, and others see it, and know it, and bless God for it, and yet the poor soul perceives it not. Now because a right understanding of this may be of much use to some saddened, dejected souls, I will shew you how this comes to pass.

First, Sometimes it arises from the soul's strong desires of spiritual riches. The strength of the soul's desires after spiritual riches, doth often take away the very sense of growing spiritually rich. Many covetous men's desires are so strongly carried forth after earthly riches, that though they do grow rich, yet they cannot perceive it, they cannot believe it. It is just so with many a precious Christian; his desires after spiritual riches are so strong, that they take away the very sense of his growing rich in spirituals. Many Christians have much worth within them, but they see it not. It was a good man that said, 'The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not,' &c. Gen 28:1-22.

Again, This ariseth sometimes from men's neglecting the casting up of their accounts. Many men thrive and grow rich, and yet by neglecting the casting up of their accounts, they cannot tell whether they go backward or forward. It is so with many precious souls; they grow in grace and are spiritually rich, and yet by neglecting the casting up of their accounts, they do not know it, they do not perceive it, &c.

Again, sometimes it ariseth from the soul's too frequent casting up of its accounts. If a man should cast up his accounts once a week or once a month, he may not be able to discern that he doth grow rich, and yet he may grow rich; but let him compare one year with another, and he shall clearly see that he doth grow rich. Though most are to blame for neglecting the casting up of their accounts, yet some are to blame for casting up their accounts too often; for by this means they are not able to perceive their spiritual growth, and so can neither be so thankful nor so cheerful as otherwise they might. Let there be some considerable time between your casting up of your accounts, and you will find that your souls are grown rich, though for the present you perceive it not. But then again, sometimes it ariseth from the soul's mistake in casting up of its accounts. The soul many times mistakes; it is in a hurry; and there the soul puts down ten for a hundred, and a hundred for a thousand; as sometimes men in hurrying over their books, they slip and make mistakes, and so they think there is nothing got, whereas indeed there is much got, and in the close they shall find it so. Many a gracious soul many times takes a great deal of grace for a little, and little grace for no grace. Look, as hypocrites put down their counters for gold, their pence for pounds, and always prize themselves above the market; so sincere souls do often put down their pounds for pence, their thousands for hundreds, and still prize themselves below the market, &c. The fourth proposition is this:

[4.] That saints must endeavour to grow rich in every grace.

It is the duty and the glory of saints to endeavour to grow rich in every grace. So the apostle, 2Pe 1:5-12, 'Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,' &c. It is the work, the duty, the glory of a Christian, to be still adding one grace to another. So in 2Pe 3:18, 'Grow in grace,' that is, in every grace, but more particularly and specially, 'in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

'Grow in grace.' That is, grow in love, in faith, in humility, in meekness, &c., but especially 'in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour,' because there was a special remedy against the error of those times, &c. All the graces that be in you are weak; and therefore you had need to strengthen them all.

Again, You have the seeds of all corruptions in you; and is there any way to be rid of every sin, but by thriving in every grace?

Again, You have opportunities as well to thrive in one grace as in another.

Again, Will not Satan labour might and main to keep your graces low and poor? You never hurt him less, you never honour Christ less, you never mind your work less, than when grace is weak and low. This he knows, and therefore labours to keep your graces down.

Again, are not you liable to several changes in this world? As, to be rich and poor, exalted and abased; now to relieve, and anon to be relieved; now well, and anon sick; now strong, and anon weak; now in storms, and anon in calms; now tempted, and anon delivered; now in one condition,

and anon in another condition; now up, now down; now forward, now backward, &c. Now pray tell me, doth not the several changes and variety of providences that we meet with in this world bespeak us to be rich, not in some, but in every grace? Don't a state of prosperity bespeak a man to be rich in wisdom, rich in humility, rich in love, and rich in compassion, that his heart may be kept close to God in that state, and that he may do nothing unworthy of God, who hath done so much for him? And now, when God shall change the manner of his administrations towards such a man, when God shall put out his candle, pull off his robes, and clothe him with rags, and set him with Job upon the dunghill, don't this condition bespeak much patience, much contentation, much self-denial, much faith? How else will this man bravely bear up, when God shall write such bitter things against him, and pass the sentence of death upon his nearest and his dearest comforts? If a man be not rich in one grace as well as in another, when God shall bring changes upon him, and pour him from vessel to vessel, his life will be a burden, a hell to him, &c.

Again, consider this: growing rich in every grace renders a Christian most lovely and beautiful in grace; as a growth in all the members of the body renders the body most lovely and beautiful. The perfect beauty and comeliness of the body rises from the symmetry and fitness of the parts unto one another. Rare and excellent beauty ariseth from the comeliness of all parts. If one part be comely, and another deformed, then there is no perfect beauty. Well, remember this, there is no such beautiful Christians as those that grow rich in every grace. Oh! they are the beauty of Christ, the honour of the gospel, and the glory of Christianity. And so much for the fourth proposition, viz. that we must labour to be rich in every grace. The fifth proposition that I shall lay down is this, [5.] Saints should labour more particularly and more especially to be rich in faith.

Though it is of concernment to believers to be rich in every grace, yet it is of special concernment to them to labour to be rich in this particular grace of faith. In Jude, ver. 20, 'Building up yourselves in your most holy faith.' It is not enough to have faith, but they must build up themselves and build up one another 'in their most holy faith.'

There are three things that the Scripture calls precious:

First, The blood of Christ: in 1Pe 1:19, 'Ye are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.'

Secondly, The promises are called precious promises: 2Pe 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.'

Thirdly, Faith is called precious faith: 2Pe 1:1, 'Unto them that have obtained like precious faith with us.' Now, though it be of concernment for every saint to labour to be rich in every grace, yet more especially and more particularly to be rich in this grace of faith; and that upon this account that follows:

(1.) First, Because that faith is the soul's greatest and choicest fence, against her worst enemies. In Eph 6:16, 'Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.'

'Above all, take the shield of faith.' Neglect no part of your armour, but above all, look to the shield of faith. Look, what the shield is to the body, that is faith to a believer's soul, to secure him against all the fierce and fiery darts of Satan.

It is reported of Satan that he should say of a learned man, Tu me semper vincis, 'Thou dost always overcome me. When I would exalt and promote thee, thou keepest thyself in humility; and when I would throw thee down, thou liftest thyself up in assurance of faith.' Faith makes the soul invincible; it makes the soul victorious; it leads captivity captive; it binds Satan in chains; it foils him at every weapon; and therefore, above all, labour to be rich in faith.

(2.) Secondly, Growth in faith will advance the growth of all other graces.

All other graces thrive in the soul as faith thrives, and no otherwise. Be rich in this, and be rich in all; be weak in this, and be weak in all. Faith hath an influence upon all other graces; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearls; it puts strength and vivacity into all other graces. You never knew a man rich in any grace that hath not been rich in faith. Every man's hope, joy, fear, love, humility, patience, &c., is as his faith is. In Heb 11:1, 'Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for;' or, as the Greek hath it, **■π■σ■τ■α■σ■ι■ς■**, 'the substance of things hoped for.' All other graces live upon faith's cost and charge. Look, what the breast is to the child, wings to the bird, oil to the wheels, and the soul to the body, that is faith to all other graces in the soul of man.

It is reported of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and a beauty upon them. I am sure it is true of faith. There is such a divine virtue and power in faith, that it will quicken and cast a lustre and a beauty upon all other graces in the soul of man; and therefore you should labour as for life to be rich in this particular grace of faith.

(3.) Thirdly, consider this, Of all graces that be in the soul of man, faith is the most useful grace; and therefore you should, above all, labour to be rich in faith.

It is a Christian's right eye, without which he cannot see for Christ; it is his right hand, without which he cannot do for Christ; it is his tongue, without which he cannot speak for Christ; it is his very vital spirits, without which he cannot act for Christ.

Some say that king Midas had obtained of the gods, that whatsoever he touched should be turned into gold. I am sure that whatever faith toucheth, it turneth into gold, that is, into our good. If our faith touches the promises, it turns them into our good; whatsoever faith lays its hand upon, it appropriates to itself, and turns it into the soul's good. If faith looks upon God, it saith, 'This God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide unto death,' Psa 63:1; Psa 89:26. When it looks upon Christ, it saith with Thomas, 'My Lord, and my God,' John 20:28. When it looks upon the crown of righteousness, it saith, 'This crown is laid up for me,' &c. Faith is bread to nourish us, and wine to cheer us, and a cordial to strengthen us. Faith is a sword to defend us, a guide to direct us, a staff to support us, a plaster to heal us, a friend to comfort us, and a golden key to open heaven unto us. Faith, of all graces, is the most useful grace to the soul of man. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb 11:6; Heb 4:2. All those services are lost, wherein faith hath not a hand. You may write loss upon all the prayers you make, and upon all the sermons you hear, and upon all the tears you shed, and upon all the alms you give, if all be not managed by a hand of faith.

(4.) Fourthly, You should labour above all to be rich in faith, because faith is that princely grace that Christ is most taken with.

Song of Solomon 4:9, 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,'—that is, with that piercing eye of faith that looks up to my mercy-seat—'with one chain of thy neck.'

There are two things that with open mouth speak out Christ to be most taken with the faith of his people. And the first is, his uncrowning himself to crown his people's faith. Christ doth often take the crown off his own head, and put it upon the head of faith. Witness such passages as these, which are frequent in Scripture, 'Thy faith hath healed thee,' 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' 'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' &c. Christ takes the crown off his own head, and puts it upon the head of faith; and no wonder; for of all graces, faith takes the crown off a man's own head, and puts it on the head of Christ. Man naturally is apt to crown anything but Christ. He is apt to crown his prayers, and crown his desires, and crown his endeavours, &c. Oh but now faith acts like a king of kings, and uncrowns all, and sets the crown upon the head of Christ. And then a second thing that speaks out Christ to be most taken with the grace of faith is this, that he overlooks all other graces in comparison of faith, as you may see in the Canaanite woman, Mat 15:21-29. The poor woman shews a great deal of compassion, a great deal of wisdom, a great deal of humility, a great deal of love, and a great deal of self-denial; but in the close saith Christ, 'O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' He doth not say, O woman, great is thy love; nor, O woman, great is thy wisdom; nor, O woman, great is thy humility and self-denial; nor, O woman, great is thy patience, &c.; but, 'O woman, great is thy faith! He overlooks, as it were, all other graces, and sets the crown upon the head of faith: 'O woman, great is thy faith.' So in Mark 5:1-43, the woman that had a bloody issue twelve years comes to Christ for cure, and in the close of the story saith Christ to her, 'Woman, thy faith hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, Woman, thy pressing hard to come to me hath made thee whole, but 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, Woman, thy earnest desires and endeavours to be made whole hath made thee whole, but 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' He doth not say, Woman, thy fear and trembling hath made thee whole, but 'Thy faith hath made thee whole,' &c. So in Luk 7:50, 'Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.' Though she wept much, and loved much, yet Christ doth not say, Thy tears have saved thee, thy sorrow hath saved thee. He doth not say, Thy humility, thy charity hath saved thee; but 'O woman, thy faith hath saved thee.' Christ overlooks all other graces, as it were, and casts a lovely eye upon the grace of faith, &c.

(5.) And then again, in the fifth place, you should above all labour to be rich in faith, because of all graces in the soul of man, faith makes him most lively and active.

There is no grace, I say, no grace in the soul of man, that makes him so full of life and action, as the grace of faith. Faith is the *primum mobile*, the first pin, the first wheel that moves all the golden wheels of obedience. In Heb 11:1-40, you read what those worthies did; they left their country, their kindred, upon a bare command of God. Faith hath Rachel's eye, but Leah's womb; it makes souls very fruitful in ways of well-doing. Faith is as the spring in the watch, that moves the wheels. Not a grace stirs till faith sets it on work. Faith is like Solomon's virtuous woman, that sets all her maidens on work. Faith sets joy on work. 'Abraham desired to see my day, and saw it, and rejoiced.' Faith sets love on work; it works by love; Gal 5:6, it sets hope on work, Rom 8:24-25; it sets godly sorrow at work, Zec 12:10; it sets patience at work. I believe that God is wise and loving, and what he doth is out of some noble design to do my soul good; this spins out patience. Faith fits a man to do, to suffer, to wait, to walk, &c., therefore labour above all to be rich in faith.

(6.) And then, sixthly, of all graces, faith renders the soul most invincible; and therefore you should labour above all to be rich in faith.

It renders the soul invincible and unconquerable under all the hardships and trials it meets with in this world. Faith makes a man triumph in all the changes and conditions of this life. It was their faith that made them invincible in Dan 3:16-18, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up.' And so Daniel's faith stopped the lion's mouth; it made him too strong for the strongest beasts of prey, as you may see in Dan 6:1-27. Though the enemies of a believer are very subtle, strong, and experienced, and though the battle be hot and long, yet a soul rich in faith shall have the day. Faith will render a believer victorious in the close: 'He may suffer death,' as Cyprian said to Cornelius, 'but never conquest.' Faith renders the soul a lion, a rock, &c. It is reported of some of the Roman and Grecian captains, that they proved always victorious, and were never beaten by any. Such is the nature of faith; it renders a soul victorious in all engagements. In all engagements faith brings a man bravely off, and enables him to keep his ground, and triumph. Psa 60:6-10, 'God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of my head; Judah is my lawgiver; Moab is my wash-pot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me,' &c. It is not great resolutions, nor big words, nor high looks, but faith, that will make a man stand fast in shaking times. No hand can put the garland upon a Christian, but the hand of faith, &c. Faith alters the tenses, it puts the future into the present; Gilead is mine, &c.

(7.) And then, seventhly, above all labour to be rich in faith, because Satan will labour might and main to weaken your faith.

Oh! the great design of Satan is not so much to weaken you in externals, as it is to weaken you in internals. Satan can be contented that men should have their heads full of notions, and their mouths full of religion, and their bags full of gold, and their chests full of silver, and their shops full of wares, so their souls be either void of faith, or but poor and low in faith. Satan's greatest plot is to weaken the faith of Christians. Luk 22:31-32, 'And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' Satan hath an aching tooth at thy faith; his design is upon that; he will labour might and main to weaken that, to frustrate that, and therefore 'I have prayed that thy faith fail not.' Satan knows that nihil retinet qui fidem perdidit.

(8.) And then, eighthly, consider this, of all graces, faith contributes most to the bringing down of mercies and blessings upon yourselves and friends; and therefore you should above all labour to be rich in this particular grace of faith.

Faith contributes to the bringing down of blessings upon ourselves. In Dan 6:23, 'Daniel was delivered,' saith the text, 'because he believed in his God.' It was his faith, and not his prayers; it was his faith, and not his tears; it was his faith, and not his sighs that stopt the lion's mouths, and wrought deliverance for him. So in Psa 27:13, 'I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' So in 2Ch 20:20, 'Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper,' and so they did. That is a very

famous scripture to this purpose, 2Ch 13:15-17, 'Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam, and all Israel, before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. And Abijah and his people slew with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.' Here was a great slaughter; no wars, no slaughters comparable to those the Scripture speaks of And the reason is rendered, verse 18, 'Because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.' Were men more rich in faith, they would be more rich in other blessings, &c. And as faith is the only way to bring down a blessing upon ourselves, so faith is the only way to bring down blessings upon our friends and relations. Though another man cannot be saved by my faith, yet he may be blessed with many blessings, upon the account of my faith. In Mat 15:22-29, it was the Canaanitish woman's faith that brought a blessing of healing upon her daughter. And so in Mat 8:6-14, the centurion's faith healed his servant that was sick of a palsy, 'and from that very hour he was healed.' The servant got well by his master's faith. And so likewise in Mark 9:1-50, the faith of the father prevailed for the dispossessing of his son. 'If thou canst believe,' saith Christ, 'all things are possible.' And the poor man said with tears, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' And presently Christ charged the foul spirit to come out of him, &c. A believing husband, a believing wife, a believing child, or a believing servant, may bring down, by the actings of faith, many a blessing upon their relations. Faith hath a happy hand, and never but speeds in one kind or another. It hath what it would, either in money or money's worth.

Apollonius, saith Sozomen, never asked anything of God, either for himself or his friends, but he had it. And one pointing to Luther said, 'There is a man can have anything of God that he will ask.' Faith hath a kind of omnipotency in it, it is able to do all things, &c. And as faith brings down blessings upon our own heads and the heads of our friends, so it often brings down wrath upon our enemies. There is nothing contributes so much to our enemies' ruin as faith doth. I am confident it hath neither been armies, nor navies, nor parliaments, that have had the chief hand in bringing down the proud and stout enemies of Christ and Zion, in this and other nations, but the faith of his despised people. One enemy may stand before the face of another, but what enemy can stand before the face and power of faith? That is a remarkable scripture, Heb 11:33, 'Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens.' Other means were used, but that which did the work, and struck all dead, was faith. Faith engages God in every encounter, and who can stand before a consuming fire?

Polybius, speaking of Horatius his keeping of the field against his enemies' forces, saith, 'That his enemies were more afraid of his faith than of his warlike strength.' And truly there is nothing that renders men more dreadful to an understanding enemy than their faith. Oh! it is brave for men to believe down the power of darkness, to believe down those that war against the Lamb, &c. No way to get an enemy down like this; nor no way to keep an enemy down like this; no way to save a kingdom like this; nor no way to keep a kingdom like this. The nation is beholden to none so much as to believing souls. O England! England! thou hadst long before this been a prey to men that delight in blood, had it not been for the faith of the worm Jacob, &c. Christians! as you would have Christ, go on and do more and more for England; as you would be crowned with the choicest and the chiefest blessings, and as you would have vengeance executed upon all that hate, that wage

war against and persecute Christ and the saints, be mighty in believing.

(9.) Ninthly and lastly, Faith is a root grace; and will the branches flourish if the root wither?

Oh! therefore, water this root, have an eye to this root. If you have a choice root in any of your gardens, oh how careful are you of it! you will mind it and water it and look to it, &c. Well, of all graces faith is the root grace, and if this die you will find your graces to languish. Your hope, love, fear, patience, humility, joy, &c., can never outlive your faith. These live together and they die together; therefore, above all, labour to be rich in faith, for this is a root grace, and if this flourish all other graces will flourish; but if this decay, all other graces will lose their strength, beauty, glory, &c. And thus much for the fifth proposition. We come now to the sixth proposition, and that is this:

[6.] That no gracious souls do at all times alike grow and thrive in spiritual riches. A child sometimes shoots up more in a month than he doth at other times in many months, and sometimes more in a year than he does afterwards in many years. And do not plants and trees sometimes shoot up more in a week than in many, &c. So, many a Christian thrives more, and gets more spiritual riches in one month than in many, in one year than in many. I appeal to your experiences, Christians! don't you find it so? I know you do. To cite Scripture to prove this would be to cast water into the sea, and to light candles to see the sun at noon. Sin and Satan do sometimes work more violently and more strongly in the souls of saints than at other times. Now, when sin and Satan work most, and prevail most, then grace thrives least. As the life of grace is the death of sin, and the growth of grace the decay of sin, so the increase of sin is the decay of grace, and the strengthening of sin is the weakening of grace.

Again, No saints have at all times alike gales of the Spirit of God, and therefore they do not grow in spiritual riches at all times alike. No ships have at all times the same gales of wind, &c. A man thrives in spiritual riches as the gales of the Spirit of God are upon him, and no otherwise. When the Spirit of the Lord doth blow most sweetly and strongly upon his heart, then his graces thrive and flourish most, then those beds of spices do yield the most fragrant smell; but when the Spirit of the Lord doth withdraw and withhold his influences, how doth the strength and glory of grace wither and decay! Latimer said of the Spirit, that it is coming and going, &c. The herb heliotropium doth turn about, and open and shut, according to the motion of the sun; so do the graces of the saints according to the internal gales, motions, and operations of the Spirit, &c.

Again, no saints have at all times the like external advantages and opportunities of growing rich in spirituals. They have not the word, it may be, in that power and life as formerly; or it may be they enjoy not the communion of saints as formerly; or if they do, yet perhaps those that have formerly been as fire to warm and inflame them, are now become water to cool them, and deaden them; or it may be they have not those advantages for closet duties as formerly; or it may be, the course of nature is changed; and if so, it is no wonder that they thrive not in spirituals as formerly. When children have not as good food, and as good lodging, and as good looking after as at other times, no wonder if they thrive not as at other times. When men have not the same advantages and opportunities to grow rich in the world as formerly, do we wonder that they thrive not as before? Surely no. And sometimes this arises from the breaking of some bone by sin. David found it so. Many a man, by breaking a bone, is much hindered from thriving in the world. Oh! this broken arm, this broken leg, hath cost me many a fair pound which otherwise I might have got. Oh friends! sin is the breaking of the bones, the breaking of a man's peace and communion with God; it is the

breaking of his hope and confidence in God; it is the disjoining of a man from God; and so it hinders a man's spiritual growth: Isa 59:1-2; Isa 64:7; Gal 6:1. Believe it, Christians! if you play and dally with sin, if you fall in with sin, if you make one with sin, you will never grow rich in spirituals. Sin will cause such a breaking of bones, as will undoubtedly hinder the prosperity of your souls. And so much for the sixth proposition.

[7.] The seventh and last proposition that I shall propound is this: A man may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, that are less conversant about Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those graces, that, as special favourites, stand always at the elbow of Christ, and are most busied and conversant about Christ. Let me open it thus to you:

You know at court there are some that have the honour to attend always at the prince's elbow, and there are others that appertain to the same prince, but are more remote in their employments for him, &c. So in the soul, there are some graces that are more remote, and not so conversant about the person of Christ, as now humility, self-denial, patience, meekness, temperance, sobriety, and the like. Now, though these graces do appertain to the same prince, though they are all servants of the Lord Jesus, yet notwithstanding they are more remote, and busied about other objects and things. Oh! but now faith and love are choice favourites, that always stand at the elbow of Christ. Faith and love are Christ's greatest favourites in heaven. Now I say, a Christian may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, that are less conversant about the person of Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those particular graces that are most active about the person of Christ. He may grow rich in humility, in self-denial, in meekness, in temperance, &c., when he doth not grow up in joy and delight and comfort, &c. The tree grows downward, when it doth not grow upward; so a soul may grow rich in some particular graces, when he doth not grow rich in other graces. He may grow rich in those graces that are more remote from Christ, when he doth not grow rich in those graces that are more conversant about the person of Christ. Some limbs and branches of a tree grow more than others. And so I have done with these propositions; the serious minding of them may prevent many objections, and to many give satisfaction in several cases, &c. The fourth and last thing propounded was, to give you, 4. Some notes of a person that, is spiritually rich.

Clearly, as there are few worldly rich men to those that are poor, so there are few in this professing age, that will be found to be spiritually rich, compared with the multitude of Laodiceans that swarm in these times. We have many that say they are rich, and that think they are rich, when the truth is they have either no grace, or but a very little grace; and these five following things do clearly evidence it, &c.

[1.] First, Rich men have more variety of objects to delight themselves with, than poor men have.

They have houses and gardens, and lands and cattle, and silver and gold, and jewels and pearls, and what not, to delight themselves with. Oh! but poor men have not such variety of objects to delight themselves with, as rich men have. It is just thus in spiritual riches. A man that is rich in grace hath more variety of spiritual objects, about which his soul is most conversant, than a man that is poor in grace. He hath more objects of love, of joy, of delight, of content, to busy and exercise his soul about, than others that are weak in grace: 2Co 6:10, 'Enjoying nothing, and yet possessing all things.' A soul rich in grace possesses and enjoys all things in Christ, and Christ in all things. They enjoy all good in him who is the chiefest good, who is the spring and fountain of

good. Joseph, in Pharaoh's court, had more variety of objects to delight him, than his brethren had to delight themselves in their father's house, &c.

I have spoken largely to this already, and therefore shall content myself in giving you this hint. It stands upon you to inquire what variety of objects you have to delight your souls in. But, [2.] Secondly, Rich men can reach to those things that poor men cannot reach to.

I would have such and such things, saith the poor man, as the rich man hath; I would fare as he fares, and wear as he wears, and do as he doth, but my stock will not reach it. So a soul that is spiritually rich can reach to those things that one that is poor in grace cannot reach unto. He can reach to those joys, to those comforts, and to those contents, to those heights of communion with God, and to those visions and apprehensions of God, that a soul that is not rich in grace cannot reach to. Oh! I would fain have that comfort, and that joy, and that peace, and that communion with God, and those visions of God, that such and such souls have, saith a poor Christian; but I cannot; my stock will not reach to it. It is an argument a man is grown higher, when he can reach higher than he could before, whether it be a beam or a pin, &c. So it is an argument, that a soul is grown rich in grace, when he can reach beyond what formerly he could reach unto; when he can reach beyond his enlargements, beyond his in-comes, beyond his comforts, to a Christ; when in duty, he can reach above duty; when in an ordinance, he can reach to Christ, above the ordinance; when under enlargements, he can reach above enlargements, to Jesus Christ. Oh! but now a man that hath but a little grace, he can rarely reach above his duties, above ordinances, above enlargements, to Christ. He is very apt to sit down and warm himself with the sparks of his own fire, and to feed upon ashes, as the prophet speaks, Isa 1:11, Isa 44:20, &c. But now, a soul that is rich in grace, says, Well! these ordinances are not Christ, these refreshings are not Christ, these meltings are not Christ, these enlargements are not Christ; these are sweet, but he is more sweet; these are very precious, but he is most precious. And thus those that are spiritually rich do out-reach all others, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Rich men can with more ease and pleasure bear burdens, than poor men can. When taxes and burdens are laid upon poor men, they sigh, and shrug, and complain that they are not able to bear them, when rich men make nothing of them. So souls that are rich in grace can bear burdens without a burden; they can bear crosses, afflictions, and persecutions, with abundance of ease, cheerfulness, and contentedness of spirit; they do not shrug, nor grumble, but bear the greatest trials with greatest sweetness, as you may see in Acts 5:1-42, 'They went out rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.' So Paul, 2Co 12:10, 'I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.' 'I take pleasure.' The Greek word is an emphatical word, εὖδοκῶ; it is the same word that God the Father uses to express his infinite delight in his Son: Mat 3:17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;' or, 'in whom I am infinitely delighted.' The same word the apostle uses to express the wonderful delight that he took under all his sufferings; he rejoices and leaps under all his burdens. Oh! but now a soul that is poor in grace, he cannot bear a burden without a burden; every light affliction turns him, and sinks him; every molehill is a mountain; every scratch on the hand is a stab at the heart; every wave is a sea, and the poor Christian sighs and groans, and cries out, Oh! no sorrow to my sorrow! no loss to my loss! no cross to my cross! but souls rich in grace act quite contrary, as hath been hinted and proved, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, Rich men are most envied.

History and Scripture speak out this, as well as our own experience. The rich man above all others is the greatest object of envy, and it is as true that such that are most rich in spirituals are of all men the most envied. Moses and Aaron were rich in spirituals, and oh, how were they envied by Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and other wicked wretches! Ezra, Nehemiah, and Mordecai, were rich in spirituals, and who more envied? Among all the prophets and apostles, those have been most envied, that have most abounded in spiritual worth; and to this very day, none are such objects of scorn and envy, as those that have most of Christ within. Men that have more leaves than fruit, that have a golden outside, but a threadbare inside, are less envied than those that are 'all glorious within.' Men of greatest excellencies, are the main objects upon which the eye of envy is placed, Psa 45:13. Saul's envious eye was placed upon David, and Cain's upon Abel, and Esau's upon Jacob, and Herod's upon John, and the Pharisees' upon Christ. Envious souls are like the ravens, that fly over the sweet garden, and light upon the stinking carrion. Envy doth ever ascend; it never descends. An envious man can with more ease die miserably, than see another live happily. An envious heart weeps to see others' mercies, and joys to see others' miseries. An envious heart is like the mermaid, which never sings but in a storm, and never mourns but in a calm. An envious man cannot endure those excellencies in others that he wants in himself; he loves not any light that outshines his own, any crown that outweighs his own, &c. Socrates calls envy *Serram animœ*, the soul's saw, &c.

Cimon, the famous general of the Athenian commonwealth, hearing a friend of his highly commending his martial achievements, answered, 'That they were not worthy of commendations, because they were not envied,' &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Rich men are most tempted and assaulted.

Pirates do not use to set upon empty vessels, but those that are most richly laden; and beggars need not fear the thief, though the rich man do. Those that have been most rich in spirituals, have been most assaulted and tempted by Satan. Witness Abraham, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, yea, Christ himself. The best men have always been most and worst tempted. None so much in the school of temptation, as those that are most rich in grace. There are none that are such blocks, such mountains in Satan's ways, as these; none do him that mischief as these; none are so active and so resolute in their oppositions against him as they, &c.; and therefore none so assaulted and tempted as they. And thus by these five things you may know whether you are rich in grace or no.

Use 2. The next use is this:

If the Lord Jesus Christ be so rich, then do not join anything with him, in the great work of your redemption and salvation.

There are riches enough in Christ to pay all your debts, and to satisfy divine justice to the utmost farthing, without being beholden to your prayers, tears, or humiliations. Christ will be Alexander or Nemo on earth. Kings love no consorts; power is impatient of participation. When Augustus Cæsar desired the senate to join two consuls with him, for the carrying on the government of the state, the senators answered, 'That they held it a diminution to his dignity to join any with so incomparable a man as Augustus Cæsar was.' [Suetonius]. Was it a diminution to his dignity to join others with him in the government of the state? And is it not a diminution of the dignity and glory of Christ, to join

your actions and your endeavours with his blood, in the business of your redemption? In Isa 63:3, 'I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me.' And in Isa 44:24, 'Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.' It is a sad reproach to Christ to join anything with him in the great business of your salvation; therefore abhor it more than hell itself: let Christ be all in all. We must say of Christ as it was once said of Cæsar, *Socium habet neminem*, He may have a companion, but he must not have a competitor, &c.

Again, Thirdly, Use 3. If Christ be so rich, then take heed of three things.

(1.) First, Take heed of sitting down dejected and discouraged under any losses or troubles that do befall you, or that have or shall befall you for the name of Christ.

Christ is generally rich; he is able to make up all your losses and wants: Php 4:19, 'But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ,' as he did the widow's vessel. The fountain hath not the less water for the vessel it fills, nor the sun the less light for that it gives forth to the stars; so the Lord Jesus Christ hath never a whit the less for what he gives forth unto his saints. When Zedislaus, the king of Poland's general, had lost his hand in his service, the king sent him a golden hand. Ah, Christians! when you lose this or that for him, he will send you a golden hand; if you lose a penny for him, he will give you a pearl. Christ will not live long in any man's debt; if he should, he would lose his glory, &c.

(2.) Secondly, If the Lord Jesus be very rich, Oh then take heed of despairing by reason of your sins.

I confess, the least sin should humble the soul, but certainly the greatest sin should never discourage the soul, much less should it work the soul to despair. Read 1Ti 1:13-15, and despair, I had almost said, if thou can' st. Despairing Judas perished, Acts 2:1-47, when as the murderers of Christ, believing on Christ, were saved. Despair is a sin exceeding vile and contemptible; it is a word of eternal reproach, dishonour, and confusion; it declares the devil a conqueror; and what greater dishonour can be done to Christ, than for a soul to proclaim before all the world the devil a crowned conqueror? A despairing soul is *magor missabib*, a terror to himself; his heart a hell of horror; his conscience an *aceldama*, a field of black blood. He hath no rest at home nor abroad, at bed nor board, but is as if infernal devils followed him in fearful shapes, terrifying and tormenting his perplexed soul. Eternity of misery, feared or felt, begets that monster which, like Medusa's head, astonisheth with its very aspect, and strangles hope, which is the breath of the soul. As it is said, *dum spiro, spero*, so it may be inverted, *dum spero, spiro*; other miseries may wound the spirit, but despair kills it dead, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, If Christ be so rich, then take heed of presuming.

Take heed of taking encouragement to sin upon this account, that Christ is rich in grace and mercy. Christ is a lion as well as a lamb; he hath a sword as well as a sceptre. To argue from the riches of mercy to sinful liberty is the devil's logic. A soul that thus reasons is a soul left of God, a soul that is upon the last step of the ladder, a soul that Satan hath by the hand; and the eternal God knows whither he will lead him. What the women sung of Saul and David, that 'Saul had slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,' 1Sa 18:6-7, that I may say of despair and

presumption, 'Despair hath slain her thousand, but presumption hath slain her ten thousand.' 'Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Rom 6:1-2. As the beams of the sun, shining on the fire, put out the fire, so the shinings of God's mercy on us should extinguish sin in us, as the apostle argues, 2Pe 3:15, from Paul, Rom 2:4. Christ seems to say to souls, as Theseus said once, 'Go,' says he, 'and tell Creon, Theseus offers thee a gracious offer, yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit. This is my first message, but if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in arms.' Ah souls! if you shall abuse the riches of grace to a presumptuous sinning against Christ, Christ will take up arms, and you shall die for it. The next use is this:

Use 4. If Christ be so rich, Oh! then, open to Christ when he knocks.

Christ knocks by his word, and he knocks by his rod; he knocks by his Spirit, and he knocks by his messengers, and he knocks by conscience. Oh, open to him! for he is very rich. Though you shut the door against a poor man, yet you will open it to one that is rich; and why not then to Christ, who would fain have entrance? Rev 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.'

'Behold, I stand.' I that am the King of glory, I that am 'King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Psa 24:7-9, Rev 17:14. I that am rich in mercy, rich in goodness, rich in grace, rich in glory, 'I stand at the door and knock.' I that have gold to enrich you, I that have eye-salve to enlighten you, I that have glorious apparel to clothe you, I that have mercy to pardon you, I that have power to save you, I that have wisdom to counsel you, I that have happiness to crown you, 'I stand at the door and knock.'

'If any man open.' If the master will not, yet if the servant will; if the mistress will not, yet if the maid will; if the parent will not, yet if the child will; if the rich man will not, yet if the poor man will; if the pharisee won't, yet if the publican will;

'I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me.' Jesus Christ hath the greatest worth and wealth in him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is in one piece of gold, so all the heavenly excellencies that are scattered abroad in angels and men, are united in Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfection which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in Christ.

They say it is true of the oil at Rheems, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never wastes. Christ is a pot of manna, a cruse of oil, a bottomless ocean of all comforts and contents that never fail. A saint may say, 'In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ. Having therefore all things in him, I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward.' And then again, Use 5. If Christ be so rich, then sit down and wonder at his condescending love. That one so rich should fall in love with such that are poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked, Rev 3:17-21, &c.; that one so high should look so low as poor we; that one so great, that one who is the Lord and heir of all, should match with us that have nothing at all. 'O the breadth, the length, the depth, the height' of Christ's love to unlovely souls! to such that had neither portion nor proportion; that had neither external nor internal worth that might in the least draw his love towards them, Heb 1:2-4, Php 3:17-19, &c., Eze 16:16. You were indebted to God for the clothes you wear, for the bread you eat, for the houses you live in, the air you breathe in, the beds you lie on, the ground you tread on, &c. Now for Christ to love such, and to be willing

to bestow himself upon such nothings, oh! how should this work them to spend their days in admiring and contemplating upon his kindness and goodness!

I have read a story of an elephant, who being fallen down, and unable to help himself or get up again, by reason of the inflexibleness of his legs, a forester coming by helped him up, wherewith the elephant, by the very instinct of nature, was so affected, that he followed this man, would do anything for him, and never left him till his dying day. The application is easy. The next use that we shall make of this point is this.

Use 6. If Christ be so rich as hath been discovered to you, then prize Christ above all. As the people prized David above themselves, saying, 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' 2Sa 18:3, so should saints lift up Jesus Christ above themselves, and above everything below himself. He that lifts not Christ up above all hath no interest in Christ at all; he that sets not Christ above all is not a disciple of Christ: Luk 14:26, 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.' Surely they do not truly love Christ who love anything more than Christ.

It was a notable saying of Jerome, 'If my father should hang upon me, my brethren should press round about me, and my mother should stand before me, I would throw down my father, I would break through my brethren, and I would trample upon my mother, to come to Christ.'

Other saints have lifted up Christ above all their lands, relations, and lives, as you may see in Heb 11:1-40; and so did a multitude of the martyrs under the ten persecutions, &c. As Pharaoh set up Joseph above all, and made him governor of the land, and as Darius set up Daniel over all, so you must prize Christ, and set up Christ above all.

Remember a few things, that this may the better stick upon your hearts.

[1.] First, A Christ highly prized will be a Christ greatly delighted in.

Every soul delights in Christ as he prizes Christ, and no otherwise. The reason of reasons why Christ is no more delighted in, is because he is no more prized among the sons of men: Song of Solomon 2:5, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my well-beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant to my taste.' The seeing of this object delights the eye of a believer, the hearing of this object delights the ear of a believer, the enjoying, the possessing of this object delights the heart of a believer: 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight.' The apple-tree is delightful for shadow, so is Christ; he is a shadow to poor souls when they are scorched with troubles within and terrors without: Isa 32:2, 'And a man,' that is, Christ, 'shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and as a covert from the tempest, as rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' The apple-tree is delightful for pleasantness of fruit, so is the Lord Jesus for those pleasant fruits of righteousness and holiness that grow upon him. And the apple-tree is delightful for varieties, so is Christ; for there are all varieties of excellencies in himself: Col 1:19, 'It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.' We delight in persons and things as we prize them, and no otherwise. Jonathan highly prized David, and delighted in him accordingly. Jacob highly prized Rachel, and delighted in her answerably. You will delight in Christ as you prize him; if you prize him but a little, you will delight in him but a little.

[2.] Secondly, Remember this, a Christ highly prized will be a Christ gloriously obeyed.

Every man obeys Christ as he prizeth Christ, and no otherwise. The higher price any soul sets upon Christ, the more noble will that soul be in his obedience to Christ. If Christ were more prized in the world, he would be more obeyed in the world. A soul that highly prizeth Christ is better at obeying than at disputing any command of Christ. If Christ will command such a soul to step over the world's crown to take up his cross, the soul will do it, as you may see in Moses, Heb 11:24-26. He sets a higher price upon Christ's cross than upon Pharaoh's crown. When Christ's cross and the world's crown stood in competition, upon a bare command of God Moses steps over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross: 'He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' And so Abraham, upon a bare command of God, leaves his country, and his near and dear relations. He wholly resigns up himself to God; he puts his hand into God's, and is willing that God should lead him whither he pleases, and do with him what he pleases.

I remember an excellent saying of Luther, *Mallem ruere cum Christo, quam regnare cum Cæsare*, 'I had rather,' saith he, 'fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar.' And indeed every gracious soul that highly prizes Christ will rather choose to fall with Christ than to neglect his obedience to Christ. By obeying Christ we gain more honour than we can give; by kissing the Son we even command him, and make him ours, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Christians, remember this, all the causes of prizing persons and things are eminently and only in Christ; which bespeaks you all to set a very, very high price upon the Lord Jesus. Christ's beauty needs no letters of commendation. You prize some for their beauty; why, the Lord Jesus Christ is the fairest among the children of men, Psa 45:1-2; Song of Solomon 5:10, 'My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest,' or, the standard-bearer, 'among ten thousand.' You prize others for their strength; why, the Lord Jesus Christ hath in him everlasting strength: Isa 26:4, 'Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; he is the rock of ages.' You prize others for bearing their father's image; why the Lord Jesus bears the image of his Father: Heb 1:3, 'He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.' You prize others for their wisdom and knowledge; such a one is a very wise man, you say, and therefore you prize him; and such a one is a very knowing man, and therefore you prize him; why, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ: Col 2:3, 'In whom,' saith he, speaking of Christ, 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' The truth is, all those perfections and excellencies that are in all angels and men, they all centre in Christ, they are all epitomised in Christ. All the angels in heaven have but some of those perfections that be in Christ. All wisdom, and all power, and all goodness, and all mercy, and all love, &c., is in no glorified creature, no, not in all glorified creatures put together. But now in Christ all these perfections and excellencies meet, as all water meets in the sea, and as all light meets in the sun. Others you prize for their usefulness; the more useful persons and things are, the more you prize and value them. The Lord Jesus Christ is of universal use to his people; why, he is the right eye of his people, without which they cannot see; and the right hand of his people, without which they cannot do, &c. He is of singular use to all his people. He is of use to weak saints, to strengthen them; and he is of use to doubting saints, to resolve them; and he is of use to dull saints, to quicken them; and he is of use to falling saints, to support them; and he is of use to wandering saints, to recover them. In prosperity he is of use to keep his saints humble and watchful, spotless and fruitful; and in

adversity he is of use to keep them contented and cheerful. All which should very much engage our hearts to prize this Christ.

Again, we prize things as they suit us; why, Christ is not only a good, but a suitable good. Christ is light to enlighten us, John 1:8-9; and he is life to enliven us, Php 2:30. He is riches to supply us, and he is raiment to clothe us; he is a staff to support us, and he is a sword to defend us; he is bread to nourish us, and he is water to refresh us, and wine to cheer us; and what would we have more?

[4.] Fourthly, Yet once more, that this may stick upon us, let us consider, that where we are highly prized there we highly prize.

Why, the Lord Jesus Christ doth exceedingly prize every believing soul; yea, even such poor weak saints, that many swelled souls slight and despise as persons of no worth, because they want that light and knowledge, and those parts and gifts, that others have. Well, Christians, remember this, Christ prizes you as the apple of his eye, Zec 2:8; he prizes you as his jewels, Mal 3:17; he prizes you as his portion, Deu 32:9, 'The Lord's portion is his people;' he prizes you as his glory, Isa 46:13; he prizes you as his ornaments, Eze 7:20; he prizes you as his throne, Jer 45:5; he prizes you as his diadem, Isa 62:3; he prizes you as his friends, John 14:1-31; he prizes you as his brethren, Heb 2:11-12; he prizes you as his bride, Isa 62:5; he prizes you above his Father's bosom, for he leaves that to do you service, John 16:28; yea, he prizes you above his very life, he lays down his life to save your souls, John 10:1-42. Now, oh who would not highly prize such a Christ, that sets such an invaluable price upon such worthless souls!

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, consider, That your high prizing of Christ will work you to value the least things of Christ above the greatest worldly good.

It will make you value the least nod of Christ, the least love-token from Christ, the least good look from Christ, the least good word from Christ, the least truth of Christ, &c., above all the honours, treasures, pleasures, and glories of this world: Psa 119:72, 'The law of thy mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver.' Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. And oh that a serious consideration of these things might work all your hearts to a high prizing of the Lord Jesus!

Use. 7. The next use that we shall make of this point, is this, If Christ be so rich, then trust to Christ. Who will not trust a rich man? Every one strives to trust a rich man: 'The rich hath many friends,' Pro 14:20. Why, the Lord Jesus Christ is very rich; will you be persuaded to trust him? Oh trust him with your best treasures, with your choicest jewels, with your names, souls, estates, relations! The apostle was excellent at this: 2Ti 1:12, 'I know him,' saith he, 'in whom I have believed, that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, until that day.' I have committed my soul to him, and my life to him, and my name to him, and all my mercies and enjoyments to him. The child cannot better secure any precious thing it hath, than by putting it into the father's hands to keep. Our mercies are always safest and surest when they are out of our hands, when they are in the hands of God. We trust as we love, and we trust where we love; where we love much, we trust much. Much trust speaks out much love; if you love Christ much, surely you will trust him much. That was a notable bold expression of Luther, 'Let him that died for my soul, see to the salvation of it.' I have committed my soul to him, I have given it up into his

hands, who is my life, who is my love, and let him look after it, let him take care of it. In securing of that, he secures his own glory. Oh that Christians would trust in this rich Christ for a supply of necessities! Is Christ so rich, and will you not take his word that he will not see you want? Will you trust a rich man upon his word, and will you not trust a rich Christ upon his word? Do you believe he will give you a crown, and will you not trust him for a crust? Do you believe he will give you a kingdom, and do you doubt whether he will give you a cottage to rest in? Has he given you his blood, and do you think that he will deny you anything that is really for your good? Surely he will not, he cannot.'

Again, Trust him for power against all the remainders of sin in you.

Hath Christ freed you from the damnable power of sin, and from the dominion of sin, and will not you trust him for deliverance from the remainders of sin? Psa 65:3, 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' Oh excellent faith! Rom 8:1, Rom 6:14.

Again, Trust him to bring you into the land of rest. Do you think that this Joshua is not able to carry you through all difficulties, dangers, and deaths? Do you think that he will leave you to die in the wilderness, who have already had some glimpses of heaven's glory? Oh trust to this Christ for the bringing your souls into the promised land! Christ would lose his glory should you fall short of glory, &c.

Use 8. Again, If Christ be so rich, then do not forsake him, do not leave, do not turn your backs upon him. Is there riches of justification, and riches of sanctification, and riches of consolation, and riches of glorification in Christ? Yes, why then do not depart from him, do not shake hands with him. That is a sad complaint of God in Jer 2:12-13, 'Be ye astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' It is madness and folly to fly from the fountain to the stream, from the light of the sun to the light of a candle. And is it not greater madness and folly to forsake the Creator to run after the creature? Oh say as Peter, 'Whither should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life,' John 6:68. To run from Christ, is to run from all life, peace, and joy; it is to run from our strength, our shelter, our security, our safety, our crown, our glory. Crabs, that go backward, are reckoned among unclean creatures, Lev 11:10. The application is easy.

Origen coming to Jerusalem, after that he had shamefully turned his back upon Christ and his truth, and being exceedingly pressed to preach, at last he yields, and as he opened the book, he happened to cast his eye upon that place of the psalmist, 'What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my word behind thee?' Psa 50:16-17. Now the remembrance of his own folly so reflected upon his conscience, that it made him close the book and sit down and weep. Such as forsake a rich, a full Christ, shall have weeping work enough. That is a very dreadful scripture, Jer 17:13, 'All you that forsake the Lord, shall come to be ashamed, and they that depart from him, shall be written in the dust.' Can you read this text, backsliding souls, and not tremble? &c.

Use 9. Again, If the Lord Jesus Christ be so rich, Oh! then all you that have an interest in him, labour mightily to clear up your interest, and to be more and more confident of your interest in so rich a Jesus. My brethren, it is one thing for a man to have an interest in Christ, and another thing

to have his interest cleared up to him. I do speak it with grief of heart, that even among such Christians that I hope to meet in heaven, there is scarce one of forty, nay, one of a hundred, that is groundedly able to make out his interest in the Lord Jesus. Most Christians live between fear and hope, between doubting and believing. One day they hope that all is well, and that all shall be well for ever; the next day they are ready to say that they shall one day perish by the hand of such a corruption, or else by the hand of such or such a temptation; and thus they are up and down, saved and lost, many times in a day. But you will say unto me, What means should we use to clear up our interest in Christ?

I will tell you.

There are six singular means that you should labour after, for the evidencing more and more your interest in Christ. And take it from experience, you will find that they will contribute very much for the evidencing your interest in Christ.

[1.] And the first is this, Faithfully and constantly fall in with the interest of Christ.

Holiness is the interest of Christ, the gospel is the interest of Christ, the precious ordinances are the interest of Christ, &c. Now the more sincerely and roundly you fall in with the interest of Christ, the more abundantly you will be confirmed and persuaded of your interest in Christ. Such souls as fall in with strange interests, or with base and carnal interests, may justly question whether ever they had any real interest in Christ. Christians! did you more sincerely and fully fall in with Christ's interest, you would less question your interest in Christ; this would scatter many a cloud.

[2.] Secondly, Be kind to the Spirit of Christ. Do not grieve him, do not slight him. If you should set this Spirit a-mourning, that alone can evidence your interest, that alone can seal up your interest in Christ, by whom shall your interest in Christ be sealed up? Oh do not grieve the Spirit by acting against light, against conscience, against engagements; do not grieve him by casting his cordials and comforts behind your backs; do not grieve him by slighting and despising his gracious actings in others; do not cast water upon the Spirit, but wisely attend the hints, the items, and motions of the Spirit, and he will clear up thy interest in Christ, he will make thee say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his,' Song of Solomon 2:1.

[3.] Thirdly, Labour more and more after a full and universal conformity to Jesus Christ. The more the soul is conformable to Christ, the more confident it will be of its interest in Christ: 1Jn 4:17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.' 'As he, so are we.' The child is not more like the father than we are like our Saviour. The child is the father multiplied, the father of a second edition. Our summum bonum consists in our full communion with Christ, and in our full conformity to Christ. Oh! if men were more universally conformable to Christ in their affections, ends, designs, and actings, &c., they would have abundantly more clear, full, and glorious evidences of their interest in Christ. A more full conformity to Christ in heart and life will make your lives a very heaven, &c. As all good orators endeavour to be like Demosthenes, so all good Christians should endeavour to be like Jesus Christ; for therein lies their glory and perfection.

[4.] Fourthly, Interest Christ in the glory of all you enjoy, and in the glory of all you do. This is a precious way to have your interest in Christ more and more evidenced to your own souls, 1Co 10:31. Such as are good at this, as are much in this, will find Christ every day a-clearing up more

and more their interest in himself. It is not usually long night with such souls. Oh Christians! interest Christ more and more in the glory of all your graces, interest him in the glory of all your duties, interest him in the glory of all your abilities, as Christ doth interest you in himself, in his Spirit, in his graces, in his riches, in his titles, in his dignities, in his offices. Ah Christians! did you interest Christ more in all you have, in all you are, and in all you do, you would never be so full of fears, and doubts, and questions about your interest in Christ as you are, John 1:16, Rev 1:5-6, 1Pe 2:9. Your interesting of Christ in all you have and do, will speak out not only the truth of your love, but also the strength and greatness of your love; and where men love much, where they love strongly, there they do not question the truth of their love. The heathen gods were contented to divide their honours amongst themselves, and hence the senate of Rome rejected Christ, from taking him to be a god, after that they had consulted about it; for, said they, if Christ come to be acknowledged a god, he will not share with the rest, he will have all himself; and so upon this reason they refused him. Christians! Christ will not have any competitor; he will rather part with anything than with his glory: Isa 42:8, 'I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.' Christ will rather part with his life than with his honour; therefore, let every Christian say as David does: 1Ch 29:11-13, 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.' And clearly, friends, the more your hearts are led forth to interest Christ in all you enjoy, and in all you do, the more clear and glorious evidence you will have of your interest in Christ. Let his honour and glory lie nearer and nearer to your hearts, and you shall see that he has set you as a seal upon his arm, as a seal upon his heart.

[5.] The fifth means to gain the knowledge of your interest in Christ is, By cleaving to Christ, and whatsoever is dear to Christ, in the face of all miseries, difficulties, and dangers.

It is nothing to cleave to Christ in fair weather, when every one cleaves to Christ, when every one professes Christ; but to cleave to him in a storm, when every one runs from him, this speaks out a child-like disposition; it speaks out a Jacob's spirit: Psa 44:1-26; Acts 5:1-42; Heb 11:1-40; Dan 3:1-30; Acts 21:13. Surely he must needs have much of Christ, that nothing can take off from cleaving to Christ. When the soul says to Christ, as Ruth said to Naomi, 'Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me,' Ruth 1:15-18. When neither the frowns of men, nor the reproach of men, nor the contempt of men, nor oppositions from men, can take the soul off from cleaving to Christ, it will not be long before Christ speaks peace to such a soul: Psa 63:8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholds me.' In the Hebrew it is, 'My soul cleaveth to thee,' or 'is glued to thee,' as Jonathan's soul cleaved to David, and as Jacob's soul cleaved to Rachel, in the face of all difficulties and troubles. Doubtless, when the soul cleaves to Christ in the face of all afflictions and difficulties, this carries with it very much evidence of its interest in Christ. In temporals men cleave to persons and things, as their interest is in them; and so it is in spirituals also. Christ cannot, Christ will not, throw such to hell that hang about him, that cleave to him.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, If you would know whether you have an interest in Christ, then be very much in observing what interest Christ has in you.

Observe whether he has the interest of a head, a husband, a father, or no. Christ has a general interest in all creatures, as he is the Creator and preserver of them; and he has a head's interest, a husband's interest, a father's interest, only in them that have a saving interest in him. The interest of the head, the husband, the father, is the greatest interest; it is the sweetest interest, it is a commanding interest, it is a growing interest, it is a peculiar interest, it is a lasting interest; and really, if the Lord Jesus hath such an interest in you, you may be as confident that you have a real and glorious interest in him, as you are confident that you live. And thus much for the means whereby you may come to know your interest in rich Jesus.

Before I close up this discourse, give me leave to speak a few words to poor sinners who, to this very day, are afar off from this Jesus, who is so rich in all excellencies and glories. Ah poor hearts! you have heard much of the riches of the Lord Jesus, and oh that I could persuade with you to get an interest in this Christ! Get this Christ, and you get all; miss him, and you miss all. It is a matter of eternal concernment to your souls. Nothing can make that man miserable that hath this rich Christ; nothing can make that man happy that wants this rich Christ. In Pro 4:5-7, 'Get wisdom (that is Christ), get understanding, forget it not. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding.' And so in Pro 16:16, 'How much better is it to get wisdom than gold? and to get understanding, rather to be chosen than silver?' Hadst thou all the power of the world, without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but weak, 1Co 1:25-29. Hadst thou all the wit and learning in the world, without an interest in Christ, thou wilt be but a fool. Hadst thou all the honours in the world, yet without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but base. Hadst thou all the wealth in the world, yet without an interest in Christ, thou wouldst be but a beggar, Dan 4:17; Luk 16:22-26, &c. Oh, therefore, labour for an interest in Christ! Oh, turn the wise merchant at last! The wise merchant in the Gospel parts with all to buy the pearl, to get an interest in Christ, Mat 13:45-47. Oh it is your greatest wisdom, it is of an eternal concernment to your souls, to sell all, to part with all, for an interest in the Lord Jesus! Oh do not deal with your own souls, when Christ is tendered and offered to you, as sometimes simple people do when they go to market; they might have a good pennyworth, but that they are loath to part with some old piece of gold that has been given them by a father or a friend; somewhat willing they are to have a good pennyworth, but unwilling they are to part with their gold. It is so with many poor sinners, when the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to their souls as a very glorious pennyworth, somewhat willing they are to have him, but unwilling they are to part with their old good, with some old sweet darling lust. But, sinners, don't you deceive your own souls; sin and your souls must part, or Christ and your souls can never meet. Sin and your souls must be two, or Christ and your souls can never be one. Christ is a most precious commodity; he is better than rubies, Pro 8:11, or the most costly pearls; and you must part with your old gold, with your shining gold, your old sins, your most shining sins, or you must perish for ever. Christ is to be sought and bought with any pains, at any price. We cannot buy this gold too dear. He is a jewel more worth than a thousand worlds, as all know that have him. Get him, and get all; miss him and miss all.

Now if ever you would get an interest in Christ, and so by gaining an interest in him, be possessed of all the riches and glory that come by him, then be sure to get your hearts possessed with these nine principles that follow.

[1.] And the first principle is this, That the great end and design of Christ's coming into the world was the salvation of sinners.

Get this principle rooted in your spirits. 'I came not to call the righteous,' saith he, 'but sinners to repentance,' Mat 9:13, Mark 2:17. And in 1Ti 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' Christ lays aside his royal crown; he puts off his glorious robe; he leaves his Father's bosom; he takes a journey from heaven to earth; and all to save poor lost sinners. That which Christ had most in his eye, and upon his heart, in his coming into the world, was the salvation of sinners. Lay up this truth, feed upon this honey-comb.

[2.] Secondly, Get this principle rooted upon your hearts, viz., That none ever yet obtained an interest in Christ but unworthy creatures. When you are pressed to get an interest in Christ, you are ready to say, Oh 'I am unworthy,' will Christ ever look after such a one as I am?

I answer, yes; for this is a most certain principle, that none ever attained an interest in Christ but unworthy creatures. Was Paul worthy before he had an interest in Christ? What worthiness was in Matthew when Christ called him from the receipt of custom? And what worthiness was in Zaccheus when Christ called him down from the sycamore tree, and told him that this day salvation was come to his house? Was Manasseh or Mary Magdalene worthy before they had an interest in Christ? Surely no. Though you are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; though you have no merit, yet God has mercy; though there is no salvation for you by the law, yet there is salvation for you by the gospel.

Again, Christ requires no worthiness in any man before he believes; and he that won't believe before he is worthy will never believe. If you look upon God with an evangelical eye, you shall see that he that is most unworthy is most capable of mercy. A real sense of our own unworthiness renders us most fit for divine mercy. This objection, I am unworthy, is an unworthy objection, and speaks out much pride and ignorance of the gospel, and of the freeness and riches of God's grace, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Let this principle dwell in you, viz., That Christ hath lost none of his affections to poor sinners by going to heaven.

Oh how did his bowels work toward sinners when he was on earth! And certainly they work as strongly towards them now he is in heaven. His love, his heart, his good-will, is as much towards them as ever. Christ is Alpha and Omega; the phrase is taken from the Greek letters, whereof Alpha is the first, and Omega the last, Rev 1:8. I am before all, and I am after all. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb 13:8. [Vide Grotius.] Christ is the same before time, in time, and after time. Christ is unchangeable in his essence, in his promises, and in his love to poor sinners.

[4.] Fourthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, That he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him.

Heb 7:25, 'He is able to save to the uttermost;' that is, to all ends and purposes, perfectly and perpetually. He needs none to help him in the great business of redemption; he is thorough Saviour; 'he has trod the wine-press alone,' Isa 63:3.

[5.] Fifthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, That the want of such preparations or qualifications that many men lay a great stress upon, shall be no impediment to hinder your soul's interest in Christ, if you will but open to Christ, and close with Jesus Christ.

Rev 3:20, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open to me, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Pray tell me at whose door was this that Christ stood and knocked? Was it not at the Laodiceans' door? Was it not at their door that thought their penny as good silver as any? that said they were rich, and had need of nothing, when Christ tells them to their very faces, 'that they were poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.' None more unprepared, unqualified, and unfitted for union and communion with Christ than these lukewarm Laodiceans; and yet the Lord Jesus is very ready and willing that such should have intimate communion and fellowship with him.

'If any man will open, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' The truth of this you have further evidenced, Pro 1:20-24, and Pro 8:1-6 and Pro 9:1-6 All these scriptures with open mouth speak out the truth asserted, viz., That the want of preparations or qualifications shall not hinder the soul's interest in Christ, if the soul will adventure itself by faith upon Christ. I pray, what qualifications and preparations had they in Eze 16:1-3, when God saw them in their blood, and yet that was a time of love, and God even then spread his skirt over them, and made a covenant with them, and they became his. What qualifications or preparations had Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and Lydia, &c.? And yet these believed in Christ, these had a blessed and glorious interest in Christ, &c.

Ay, but some may object, and say,

Obj. What is the meaning of that text, Mat 11:28, 'Come unto me, all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest'?

Ans. There is a threefold answer to be given to this objection.

First, Though the invitation be to those that are weary and heavy laden, yet the promise is made to coming, to believing.

Secondly, This text shews only this, that those that are burdened and bowed down under sin, and under the sense of divine wrath, are to come to Christ, and that there is no way for them to obtain ease and rest but by coming to Christ. But this text doth not shew that only these must come to Christ, or that only these may come to Christ.

Thirdly, and lastly, No one scripture speaks out the whole mind of God; and therefore you must compare and consult this scripture with the scriptures, and instances lately cited, and then you will clearly see that souls may believe in Christ, and come to obtain an interest in Christ, though they are not so and so prepared, nor so and so qualified, as some would have them.

[6.] Sixthly, Get this principle rooted in your hearts, That Christ is appointed and anointed by the Father to this very office of receiving and saving poor sinners.

Turn to Isa 61:1-4, John 6:28, and Psa 68:18, 'Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also (what for?), that the Lord God might dwell among them.' Christ has received gifts for rebellious sinners, for rebellious Sabbath

breakers, for rebellious swearers, for rebellious drunkards, &c.

'That the Lord God might dwell among them.' That is, that he might have near communion and fellowship with them.

[7.] Seventhly, Get this principle rooted in you, That it is the delight of Christ to give poor sinners an interest in himself.

He is not only able to do it, but it is his delight to do it. Christ's soul is in nothing more. Witness his leaving his Father's bosom; witness his laying down his crown; witness those many sufferings and deaths that he went through in this world; witness those gospel acclamations, Mark 16:16, Rev 22:17; witness those persuasive exhortations and gracious impetrations and entreaties, Eze 44:13, Mat 11:28, 2Co 5:20; witness divine injunctions and comminations, 1Jn 5:20, Mat 11:21; witness those pathetic lamentations, Mat 23:37, Luk 19:42, Psa 81:13; and witness the inward motions and secret excitations of his blessed Spirit, Gen 6:3, all which speak out his great willingness and delight to save poor sinners; so in Psa 40:7-8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is in my heart;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, ■■■■■ ■■■■, 'It is in the midst of my bowels.' Now mark, the will of the Father was the salvation of sinners. This was the will of the Father, 'That Jesus Christ should seek and save them that are lost,' Mat 18:11. Now, saith Christ, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God;' it is the joy and rejoicing of my heart to be a-seeking and a-saving lost sinners. When Christ was an hungry, he went not into a victualling house, but into the temple, and taught the people most part of the day, to shew how much he delighted in the salvation of sinners, &c.

[8.] Eighthly, Get this principle riveted in your hearts, That as there is nothing in Christ to discourage you from looking after an interest in him, so there is everything in Christ that may encourage you to get an interest in him.

Look upon his name: 'Thy name is an ointment poured out, and therefore do the virgins love thee,' Song of Solomon 1:3. The name of Jesus hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it, saith Chrysostom; and so hath all his other names. If you look upon Christ in his natures, in his offices, in his graces, in his beauties, in his gifts, and in his works, you will find nothing but what may encourage you to believe in him, and to resign up yourselves to him. Ah, poor sinners, what would you have? Is there not power in Christ to support you, and mercy in Christ to pardon you, and grace in Christ to heal you, and goodness in Christ to relieve you, and happiness in Christ to crown you, and what would you have more? Oh that you would believe!

[9.] Ninthly, Let this principle be rooted in you, That the surest way, and the shortest cut to mercy, and to get an interest in Christ, is by a peremptory casting of the soul by faith on Christ.

There is no way under heaven to be interested in Christ but by believing. There is no way to get an interest in the riches of Christ but this, 'he that believes shall be saved,' let his sins be never so great; 'and he that believes not, shall be damned,' let his sins be never so little. And so much shall suffice to have spoken concerning this great and weighty point. I shall follow what hath been said with my prayers, that what has been said may work for your internal and eternal welfare, &c.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph 3:8.

There are other two observations that arise from these words. I shall, by divine assistance, speak something to them, and so finish this text. And the first is this, viz., Doct. That it is the great duty of preachers to preach Jesus Christ to the people.

'To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'

It is the great duty of ministers to preach the Lord Christ to the people.

I shall prove it, and then open it to you.

I. In Acts 5:42, 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach.' What? Jesus Christ. So in Acts 3:20, 'And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.' So in 1Co 1:23-24, and 2Co 4:5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' So in Acts 4:2, and Acts 2:35, and Acts 9:20. As soon as Paul was converted, straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that he was the Son of God.

Now for the opening of the point, I shall only attempt two things.

(1.) Give you the reasons why it is the great duty of ministers to preach Christ to the people.

(2.) Which will be the main, to shew you how they are to preach Christ to the people.

I confess this a very useful point in these days, wherein many men preach anything, yea, everything but a crucified Jesus. Well, Christians, remember this, as it is your duty to take heed how you hear, so it is as much your duty to take heed who you hear. Many there are that count and call themselves the ministers of Christ, and yet have neither skill nor will to preach Jesus Christ, to exalt and lift up Jesus Christ in lip or life, in word or work. A sad reckoning these will have to make up at last.

II. But to come to the reasons of the point, why it is the great work and duty of ministers to preach Jesus Christ to the people.

[1.] First, Because that is the only way to save and to win souls to Jesus Christ.

There is no other way of winning and saving souls, but by the preaching of Christ to the people. In Acts 4:10-12 compared, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' You may preach this and that, and a thousand things to the people, and yet never better them, never win them. It is only preaching of Christ, that allures and draws souls to Christ: John 17:3, 'This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.' Ah, nothing melts the hearts of sinners, nor wins upon the hearts of sinners, like the preaching of the Lord Jesus. It is true, the teaching of this and that opinion, may please many a man's fancy, but it is only the preaching of Christ that changes the heart, that conquers the heart, that turns the heart, &c. Peter, by preaching of a crucified Christ, converts three thousand souls at once, Acts 2:14-42. Were Christ more preached, men would be more enamoured with him. He is only precious to them that hear of him, and that believe in him. Christ is in all respects incomparable; and therefore, as you would honour him, and win upon others, make him more and more known to the world, 1Pe 2:7, &c.

[2.] Secondly, They are to preach Christ to the people, because it is the choicest and the chiefest way to ingratiate Christ with poor souls. This brings Christ and the soul together, and this keeps Christ and the soul together. Nothing endears Christ to the soul like this. We see, by woful experience, Christ neglected, despised, scorned, and trampled upon by most; and no wonder, for many preach themselves more than Christ, and they preach men more than Christ, and their own notions and impressions more than Christ. Surely Christ is but little beholding to such ministers, and, I think, the souls of men as little; and oh that they were so wise as to consider of it, and lay it to heart! Surely a real Christian cares not for anything that hath not aliquid Christi, something of Christ in it. There is a strange and strong energy or forcibleness in hearing Christ and his beauties and excellencies displayed and discovered. The daughters of Jerusalem, by hearing the church presenting Christ in so high a character, and by describing and painting him out in such lively colours, are so enchanted and inflamed that, might they but know where to find him, they would be at any pains to seek him. When Christ is set forth in his glories, with much affection and admiration, others fall in love with him, as you may see by comparing Song of Solomon 5:10, seq., with Song of Solomon 6:1.

[3.] Thirdly, It is their great duty to preach Jesus Christ to the people, because the preaching up of Christ is the only way to preach down antichrist, or whatever makes against Christ.

Some would have antichrist down, yea, they would have him down root and branch, but there is no such way for his total and final overthrow as the preaching of Christ; for the more the glory, fulness, perfection, and excellency of Christ is discovered, the more the horrid vileness and matchless wickedness of the man of sin will be discovered and abhorred, &c.: 2Th 2:3-4, 2Th 2:7-10, 'And then shall that wicked one be revealed.' The Greek word properly signifies a lawless, yokeless, masterless monster; one that holdeth himself subject to no law.

Pope Nicholas the First said 'that he was above law,' because Constantine styled the pope God; and of the same opinion were most of the popes.

'Whom he shall consume.' The Greek word signifies to consume by little and little, till a thing come to nothing.

'With the spirit of his mouth.' That is, with the evidence and glory of his word in the mouths of his messengers. The ministers of the word are as a mouth whereby the Lord breatheth out that glorious, mighty, and everlasting gospel which shall by degrees bruise antichrist and all his adherents, and break them in sunder like a rod of iron, &c. When Christ was born, all the idols that were set up in the world, as historians write, fell down. When Jesus Christ comes to be lifted up in a nation, in a city, in a town, in a family, yea, in any heart, then all idols without and within will fall before the power, presence, and glory of Jesus. Since Luther began to lift up Christ in the gospel, what a deal of ground has antichrist lost! and he does and will lose more and more, as Christ comes to be more and more manifested and lifted up in the chariot of his word. Many in these days that speak much against antichrist, have much of antichrist within them. And certainly there is no such way to cast him out of men's hearts, and out of the world, as the preaching and making known of Christ, as the exalting or lifting up of Christ in the gospel of grace.

[4.] A fourth reason why they are to preach Christ to the people is this, because else they contract upon themselves the blood of souls.

There is no other way for them to avoid the contracting of the blood of men and women's souls upon them, but the preaching of Christ unto them. Now, a man were better to have all the blood of the world upon him than the blood of one soul. The blood of souls, of all blood, cries loudest and wounds deepest. The lowest, the darkest, and the hottest place in hell will be the sad and dreadful portion of such upon whose skirts the blood of souls shall be found at last. Hence that passage of Paul in 1Co 9:16, 'Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.' The motto that should be writ upon preachers' study-doors, and on their walls, and on all the books they look on, on the beds they lie on, and on the seats they sit on, &c., should be this, 'The blood of souls, the blood of souls.' The soul is the better, the noble part of man; it bears most of the image of God; it is capable of union and communion with God. Christ sweat for it, and bled for it; and therefore woe to those merchants that make merchandise of the souls of men. This was a comfort and an honour to Paul, that he kept himself from the blood of souls, Acts 20:25-27. He appeals to them that they were witnesses that 'he was free from the blood of all men.' Paul had held out Jesus Christ in his natures, in his names, in his offices, and in all his excellencies and perfections, and so frees himself from the blood of all men. And ministers can no way secure themselves from the blood of souls, but by preaching up and living out a crucified Jesus.

[5.] The last reason is this, because the preaching of Christ contributes most to their comfort here, and to their reward hereafter; therefore they are to preach the Lord Christ to the people. When Luther was upon a dying bed, this was no small joy and comfort to his spirit. 'Thee, O Lord,' saith he, 'have I known, thee have I loved, thee have I taught, thee have I trusted, and now into thy hand I commend my spirit.' There can be no greater joy to a minister than, by preaching Christ, to win souls to Christ: 1Th 2:19-20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. Ye are our glory and joy.' They that by preaching Christ win souls to Christ shall shine as the stars in the firmament, Dan 12:3. Every soul won to Christ is a glorious pearl added to a preacher's crown: 1Pe 5:4, 'And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive a crown of glory.' A crown imports perpetuity, plenty, and dignity, the height of human ambition.

It is the opinion of some that there are three places of exaltation in heaven: The first and highest is for converting ministers. The second is for suffering martyrs. The third is for persevering Christians.

Without doubt, those ministers shall be high in heaven who make it their heaven to hold forth Christ, and to win souls to Christ; who are willing to be anything, to be nothing, that Christ may be all in all to poor souls. And thus I have given you the reasons of the point.

I shall now come to the second thing, which is the main, and that is, to shew you, II. How ministers are to preach Christ to the people.

Many weak and slight spirits in these days think that it is as easy to preach as to play, and so they hop from one thing to another, and those that are not qualified nor fit for the least and lowest employment, yet judge themselves fit enough for the greatest and the weightiest employment in the world, and that which would certainly break the backs, not only of the best and strongest men, but even of the very angels, should not God put under his 'everlasting arms.' No labour to that of the mind, no travail to that of the soul, and those that are faithful in the Lord's vineyard find it so. Luther was wont to say that if he were again to choose his calling, he would dig, or do anything,

rather than take upon him the office of a minister. And many other eminent lights have been of the same opinion with him.² But what are those rules that every preacher is to observe in his preaching of Christ to the people?

I answer, These eleven:

[1.] First, Jesus Christ must be preached plainly, perspicuously, so as the meanest capacity may understand what they say concerning Christ. They must preach Christ for edification, and not to work admiration, as too many do in these days. Paul was excellent at this kind of preaching, 1Co 14:18-19. He had rather speak five words to edification than ten thousand words to work admiration in ignorant people. So in 1Co 2:4-5, 'And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God;' as if he should say, such preach with little power who come with the excellency of speech, or with the enticing words of man's wisdom. Ah! many there are,—I speak it with grief, and to their shame,—that delight to soar aloft in obscure discourses, and to express themselves in new-minted words and phrases, and to shew high strains and flashes of wit, and all to work admiration in the ignorant. Such kind of preachers are as clouds, and painted glass windows, that hinder the light from shining in upon souls, that hinder the sun of righteousness from breaking forth in his beauty and glory upon the spirits of poor creatures. Woe unto these men in the day when such souls shall plead against them, when they shall say, Lord, here are the persons whose office and work was to make dark things plain, and they have made plain things dark and obscure, that we might rather wonder at them than any ways profit by them.⁴ Aaron's bells were of pure gold. Our whole preaching must be Scripture proof, or we and our works must burn together. The profoundest prophets accommodated themselves to their hearers' capacities. Holy Moses covers his glistening face with a veil when he was to speak to the people. Yea, it is very observable that the evangelists spake vulgarly many times for their hearers' sake, even to manifest incongruity, as you may see in John 17:2, Rev 1:4. But above all, it is most observable concerning God the Father, who is the great Master of speech, when he spake from heaven, he makes use of three several texts of Scripture in one breath: Mat 17:5, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him;' 'This is my beloved Son,' that scripture you have in Psa 2:7; 'In whom I am well pleased,' this you have in Isa 42:1; 'Hear him,' this you have in Deu 18:15; all which may bespeak them to blush, who through curious wiseness disdain at the stately plainness of the Scripture! Oh how unlike to God are such preachers, that think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence with their own infancy, vanity, novelty, and sophistry! Yea, Jesus Christ himself, the great doctor of the church, teaches this lesson: Mark 4:33, 'And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it;' not as he was able to have spoken. He could have expressed himself at a higher rate than all mortals can! he could have been in the clouds. He knew how to knit such knots that they could never untie, but he would not. He delights to speak to his hearers' shallow capacities. So in John 16:12, 'I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.' He that speaks not to the hearers' capacities is as a barbarian to them, and they to him.

'He is the best teacher,' saith Luther, 'that preaches vulgarly, that preaches most plainly.' He is not the best preacher that tickles the ear, or that works upon the fancy, &c., but he that breaks the heart and awakens the conscience. It is sad to consider how many preachers in these days are like Heraclitus, who was called 'the dark doctor,' because he affected dark speeches. Oh how do

many in these days affect sublime notions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard! 'They darken counsel by words without knowledge,' Job 38:2. But how unlike to Christ, the prophets, and apostles these dark doctors are, I will leave you to judge; nor would I have their accounts to make up for all the world; I will leave them to stand or fall to their own Master. God loves, owns, and crowns plain preaching. Though some account it foolishness, yet 'to them that are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God,' 1Co 1:20-30. I have stayed the longer upon this first direction, because of its great usefulness in these deluding days.

[2.] Secondly, As they must preach Christ plainly, so they must preach Christ faithfully, Pro 13:17, Pro 25:13, Job 33:23. Ministers are stewards, 1Co 4:2; and you know it is the duty of a steward to be faithful in his stewardship, to give to every man the portion that is due to him, cheering up those hearts that God would have cheered, and weakening those wicked hands that God would have weakened, and strengthening those feeble knees that God would have strengthened. Ministers are ambassadors; and you know it is the great concernment of ambassadors to be very faithful in their master's messages. God looks more, and is affected and taken more, with a minister's faithfulness than with anything else. A great voice, an affected tone, studied notions, and silken expressions, may affect and take poor weak souls; but it is only the faithfulness of a minister in his ministerial work that takes God, that wins upon God: Mat 25:21-23, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of the Lord:' a joy too big to enter into thee, and therefore thou must enter into it. This was Paul's glory, Acts 20:27, that he 'had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God.' Neither fear nor favour swayed him one way or another, but he was faithful in his Master's work, and usually God crowns him and his labours most, and sends most fish into his net, that is most faithful, though he be less skilful; that hath more of the heart in the work, though he hath less of the brain. The maid in Plutarch being to be sold in the market, when a chapman asked her, 'Wilt thou be faithful if I buy thee?' 'Ay,' said she, *etiamsi non emeris*, 'that I will though you do not buy me.' So ministers must be faithful, though God should not buy them, though he should not thus and thus encourage them in their work. Their very feet are beautiful who are faithful, and their message most comfortable to those that sigh and mourn, that labour and languish under the sense of sin and fear of wrath, Isa 52:7.

[3.] Thirdly, They must preach Christ humbly as well as faithfully: 2Co 4:5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.' Paul doth not compliment as the men of the world do, 'Your servants, sir,' but he spake as it was, for there are no greater servants than those that are servants to the souls of men for Jesus' sake. So John was very humble in the exercise of his ministry: John 3:30-31, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' &c.

Luther used to say, 'that a minister must take heed of bringing three dogs into the pulpit, viz., pride, covetousness, and envy.' The friends of the bridegroom must not woo and sue for themselves, but for the bridegroom. Dispensers of the gospel are the bridegroom's friends, and they must not speak one word for the bridegroom and two for themselves, as hath been the trade of many weak and worthless men. It is the greatest glory of a minister in this world to be high in spiritual work and humble in heart. Vain-glory is a pleasant thief; it is the sweet spoiler of spiritual excellencies. Paul was very humble in the exercise of his ministry: none so high in worth as he, nor none so low nor humble in heart as he. Though he was the greatest among the apostles, yet he accounts himself 'less than the least of all saints;' yea, he counted it not only his duty but his

glory, to be a servant to the weakest saints: 'To the weak I became as weak;' 'Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not,' 1Co 9:22, 2Co 11:29.

[4.] Fourthly, As they are to preach the Lord Jesus Christ humbly, so they are to preach him wisely. In Pro 11:30, 'He that winneth souls is wise;' and indeed the greatest wisdom in the world is requisite to the winning of souls to Christ. He that wins souls, or he that catcheth souls, as the fowler doth birds, as the Hebrew word imports [Veloeach, taketh, from Lakach, to take], or fishermen fishes, 'he is wise.' There is a holy and a heavenly craft required in the winning of souls to Christ: 2Co 12:16, 'Nevertheless being crafty,' saith the apostle, 'I caught you with guile.' He speaks of a holy and heavenly craft.

It is written of the fox, that when he is very hungry after prey, and can find none, that he lies down and feigneth himself dead, and so the fowls light upon him, and then he catcheth them. Paul, hungering after the welfare of the Corinthians' souls, makes use of his heavenly craft to catch them. There is a great deal of wisdom required to hold out Christ unto the people, not only as a good, but as the greatest good, as the choicest good, as the chiefest good, as the most suitable good, as an immutable good, as an independent good, as a total good, and as an eternal good. Christ must thus be held forth to draw souls to fall in love with him, and to work their hearts to run out after him. There is wisdom required to answer all cavils and objections that keep Christ and poor souls asunder. There is wisdom required to take souls off from all false bottoms that they are apt to build upon; there is wisdom required to present Christ freely to souls, in opposition to all unrighteousness, and to all unworthiness in man; there is wisdom required to suit things to the capacities and conditions of poor souls, to make dark things plain, and hard things easy. Ministers must not be like him in the emblem that gave straw to the dog and a bone to the ass; but they must suit all their discourses to the conditions and capacities of poor creatures, or else all will be lost; time lost, pains lost, God lost, heaven lost, and souls lost for ever.

[5.] Fifthly, They must preach Christ, zealously, boldly, as well as wisely, Acts 4:20. When they had charged them that they should preach no more in the name of Christ, Why, say they! what do you tell us of the whip, or of prisons, or of this and that? 'We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.' So in Jer 20:9, 'Thy word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay;' Isa 58:1, 'Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Israel their sins.' And Isaiah had his tongue touched with a coal of fire from the altar, Isa 6:6-7. And when the disciples were to go and preach the gospel, the fire sat upon their tongues, Acts 2:34. The worst of men are in a dead sleep, and the best of men are too often in a sinful slumber, as the spouse in Song of Solomon 5:2, and the wise virgins in Mat 2:1-23; and therefore faithful ministers had need cry aloud; they had need to be courageous and zealous, to awaken both sinners and saints, that none may go sleeping to hell. Every coward is a murderer, as the philosopher well observed. The cowardice of the minister is cruelty; if he fear the faces of men he is a murderer of the souls of men. Ministers must say, as Hector in Homer, 'I will combat with him, though his hands were as fire, and his strength as iron.' Let men's hands be as fire and their strength as iron, yet ministers must deal with them, and strive to make a conquest on them, Eze 2:3, seq.

Luther professed that he had rather be accounted anything than be accused of wicked silence in Christ's cause. 'Let me be accounted,' says he, 'proud, let me be accounted covetous, let me be

accounted a murderer, yea, guilty of all vices, so I be not proved guilty of wicked silence for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Themistocles being about to speak to the general of the Greek's army, against Xerxes, he held up his staff, as if he had been about to strike him, 'Strike,' said Themistocles, 'but yet hear.' So should ministers say, strike, but yet hear; rail, but yet hear; despise, but yet hear; censure, but yet hear; oppose, but yet hear; do what you will, but yet hear. Non amat, qui non zelat, saith Augustine, 'He is no friend to God that is not zealous for him.' When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was, saith the history, presented to him in a dream, a pillar of fire with this motto, Talis est Basilius, Basil is such a one, all on a-light fire for God. So every minister should be all on a-fire for God.

[6.] Sixthly, They are to preach Christ laboriously, painfully, frequently.³ A minister must be like the bee, that is still a-flying from one flower to another to suck out honey for the good of others. Should not that dreadful word make every idle shepherd tremble: Jer 48:10, 'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently;' 1Co 1:1-31 ult., 'Be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' Oh the dreadful woes that are pronounced in Scripture against idle shepherds! Jer 23:1; Eze 34:2; Zec 11:17; Mat 23:13-16, Mat 23:23, Mat 23:25, Mat 23:27. The great Shepherd of our souls, the Lord Jesus, was still a-feeding of his flock, and much in provoking others to the same work: John 21:15, 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep;' 2Ti 4:2, 'Preach the word in season, and out of season.' Christ wept for souls, and bled for souls, and prayed for souls; and shall not ministers sweat much for souls, and work much for the good of souls? Doubtless they will give but a sad account to Christ that make anything serve to fill up the hour; that spend two or three hours at the end of a week to fit themselves for Sabbath exercises. Idleness is hateful in any, but most abominable and intolerable in ministers; and sooner or later none shall pay so dear for it as such. Witness the frequent woes that are denounced in Scripture against them. Where should a soldier die but in the field? And where should a minister die but in the pulpit?

Pompey, in a great dearth at Rome, having provided store of provisions for his citizens that were ready to perish, and being ready to put to sea, he commanded the pilot to hoist sail and be gone. The pilot told him that the sea was tempestuous, and that the voyage was like to be dangerous. 'It matters not,' said Pompey, 'hoist up sail; it is not necessary that we should live, it is necessary that they should be preserved from ruin and famine.' So should ministers say, it is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that poor souls should live and be happy for ever; it is necessary that they should be acquainted with the things of their peace; it is necessary that they should be delivered from the power of Satan and from wrath to come; and therefore it is necessary that we should be frequent and 'abundant in the work of the Lord,' and not plead storms and tempests, or that a lion is in the way.

It was Vespasian the emperor's speech, and may well be applied to ministers, Oportet imperatorem stantem mori, an emperor ought to die standing.

[7.] Seventhly, As they are to preach Christ painfully, so they are to preach Christ exemplarily: 1Pe 5:3, 'Be thou an example to the flock.' They must preach Christ as well in life as in doctrine. Ministers must not be like the drugs, that physicians say are hot in the mouth and cold in operation; hot in the pulpit, and cold and careless in their lives and conversations. They must say,

as Gideon said to his soldiers: Jdg 7:17, 'Look on me and do likewise;' Mat 5:16, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' They are called angels, and they are called stars, because they should shine in righteousness and holiness.

What Cæsar once said of his wife, 'that it was not enough for her to be without fault, but she should be without all suspicion of fault,' may well be applied to ministers, who, of all men in the world, should be most free from the very appearances of evil. The lives of ministers oftentimes do convince more strongly than their words; their tongues may persuade, but their lives command.

Tace lingua, loquere vita, 'Talk not of a good life,' said the heathen, 'but let thy life speak.' God appointed that both the weights and measures of the sanctuary should be twice as large as those of the commonwealth, to shew, that he expects much more of those that wait upon him in the sanctuary than he doth of others. Ministers should be like musk among linen, which casts a fragrant smell, or like that box of spikenard, which being broken open, filled the house with its odour.

Gregory saith of Athanasius, that his life was a continual sermon and wooing men to Christ. Aristotle requires this in an orator, that he be a good man; how much more then should God's orators be good and gracious? When Eli's sons were wicked, the people abhorred the offering of the Lord, 1Sa 2:17; and what is that that renders the things of God so contemptuous and odious in the eyes of many people in this nation, but the ignorance, looseness, profaneness, and baseness of those that are the dispensers of them. Unholy ministers pull down instead of building up. Oh the souls that their lives destroy! These, by their loose lives, lead their flocks to hell, where themselves must lie lowermost. A painter being blamed by a cardinal for putting too much red upon the visages of Peter and Paul, tartly replied, that he painted them so, as blushing at the lives of those men who styled themselves their successors. Ah how do the lewd and wicked lives of many that are called and accounted ministers, make others to blush!

Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their ungodly lives, made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach: 'Where,' said they, 'is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostle's writings, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they possess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives.' As this is very applicable to many professors in those days, so it is applicable to many preachers also.

I have read of a scandalous minister that was struck at the heart, and converted in reading those words: Rom 2:21, 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' If this treatise should fall into any such hand, oh that it might have the same operation! Wicked ministers do more hurt by their lives than they do good by their doctrine.

I have read of a gentlewoman that turned athiest because she lived under a great learned doctor that preached excellently but lived very licentiously. The heathen brings in a young man, who hearing of the adulteries and wickedness of the gods, said, 'What! do they so, and shall I stick at it?' So say most, when their teachers and leaders are lewd and wicked, what! do they such and such abominations, and shall we stick at it? When one deisto in life among the Lacedemonians stept up and gave good counsel, they would not receive it; but when another of a better life stept

up and gave the same counsel, they presently followed it. The application is easy. Every minister's life should be a commentary upon Christ's life; nothing wins and builds like this.³

[8.] Eighthly, Ministers must preach feelingly, experimentally, as well as exemplarily. They must speak from the heart to the heart; they must feel the worth, the weight, the sweet of those things upon their own souls that they give out to others: 1Jn 1:1-3, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' The highest mystery in the divine rhetoric, is to feel what a man speaks, and then speak what a man feels.

Praxiteles exquisitely drew love, taking the pattern from that passion which he felt in his own heart.

It was said of Luther, that he spake as if he had been within a man. Ministers must so speak to the people, as if they lived in the very hearts of the people; as if they had been told all their wants, and all their ways, all their sins, and all their doubts. No preaching to this, no preachers to these.

Ministers should not be like Cæsar's soldier, that digged a fountain for Cæsar, and himself perished for want of water. Yet many such there be in these days, that dig and draw water out of the wells of salvation for others, and yet themselves eternally perish, by their non-drinking of the waters of life. If they are monsters, and not to be named among men, that feed and feast their servants, but starve their wives, then what monsters are they that feed and feast other men's souls, with the dainties and delicates of heaven, but starve their own? No misery, no hell to this!

[9.] Ninthly, As ministers must preach the word feelingly, experimentally, so they must preach the word rightly. They must divide and distribute the word according to every one's spiritual estate and condition. They must give comfort to whom comfort belongs, and counsel to whom counsel belongs, and reproof to whom reproof belongs, and terror to whom terror belongs: 2Ti 2:15, 'Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;' or, word for word, 'Rightly cutting into parts the word of truth,' Isa 40:1-2, Isa 50:4; 2Co 5:10-12. Some say [Gerhard, Perkins, &c.] the metaphor is taken from the priests of the Old Testament, who having slain the beasts that were to be sacrificed, did joint and divide the same in an accurate manner. Others say [Chrysostom, Bullinger, Theophylact, &c.] it is a metaphor taken from a cutter of leather, who cutteth off that which is superfluous, when he cutteth out reins and thongs. So in the handling of the word, questions that are superfluous and unprofitable, ought to be cut off; and that only is to be held forth that makes for the hearer's instruction, edification and consolation. Others say the metaphor is taken from the cutting and squaring out of the streets and highways, and setting out the bounds of men's lands and possessions. Others by cutting the word of truth aright, understand the raising of right instructions, by following the rule of the word, only as a ploughman that draweth or cutteth a right furrow in the ground. To divide the word aright, is to cut out, saith Calvin and others, to every one his portion, as a parent cutteth out bread to his children, or a cook meat to his guests. A general doctrine not applied, is as a sword without an edge, not in itself, but to the people, who by reason of their own singular senselessness and weakness, are not able to apply it to their own estates and conditions; or as a whole loaf set before children, that will do them no good. A garment fitted for all bodies, is

fit for nobody; and that which is spoken to all is taken as spoken to none. Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow, application is the hitting of the mark. How many are wise in generals, but vain in their practical inferences! Such preachers are fitter for Rome than England. Souls may go sleeping and dreaming to hell before such preaching, ere such preachers will awaken them and shew them their danger. Oh that therefore the people were so wise as, that when sin is reproved, judgments threatened, miseries promised, and Christ freely and fully offered, they would apply all to their own souls! This is the misery of many in our days; they come to sermons as beggars come to banquets, carrying nothing but the scraps away with them.

[10.] Tenthly, They must preach the word acceptably, as well as rightly: Ecc 12:10, 'The preacher sought to find out acceptable words;' or words of delight, as the Hebrew has it, 'and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.' Ministers' words should be divinely delectable and desirable; they should divinely please, and divinely profit; they should divinely tickle, and divinely take both ear and heart. A minister should be a weighty speaker; he should clothe his doctrine in such a comely, lovely dress, as that he may by it slide insensibly into his hearers' hearts. Ministers should clothe their matter with decent words. The leaves give some beauty to the tree. Good matter in an unseemly language, is like a bright taper in a sluttish candlestick, or like a fair body in unhandsome clothes, or like a gold ring on a leprous hand. 'Truth,' saith one, 'loves to be plain, but not sluttish.' As she loves not to be clad in gay colours, like a wanton strumpet, so not in lousy rags like a nasty creature. Aaron's bells were golden bells, dulce sonantes, sounding pleasantly, and not as sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals. Holy eloquence is a gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 18:24, and may doubtless, as well as other gifts of the Spirit, be made prudently useful to the setting forth of divine truth, and the catching of souls by craft, as the apostle speaks, 2Co 12:16. Surely where it is, it may be made use of as an Egyptian jewel to adorn the tabernacle.

Lactantius [De falsa Sap. lib. v. cap. 1] hath well observed, that philosophers, orators, and poets, were therefore very pernicious, in that they easily ensnared incautious minds with sweetness of speech; therefore his advice is, even in delivering the truth of Christ, to sweeten the speech for the winning of them to Christ, who will neither hear, nor read, nor value, nor regard the truth, except it be polished and trimmed up in a lovely dress.

[11.] In the last place, and so to add no more, as they must preach the word acceptably, so they must preach the word constantly. They must not lay down the Bible, to take up the sword, as some have done for worldly advantages, 1Co 7:10, 1Co 7:24; they must not leave the word to serve tables, Acts 6:1, as others have done upon the same account; they must not change their black cloaks, for scarlet cloaks; they must abide and continue in their places and employments; they must neither change their work nor their master: Acts 6:4, 'But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.' They would not assign their charge to some surrogates or deputies, that themselves might live at ease. No! they were peremptorily resolved to hold on, to continue in these two choice duties, prayer and ministry of the word. So in Acts 26:22, 'Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.' 1Ti 4:15-16, 'Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, [ἐν τοῖς σθι, spend thy time in them], that thy profiting may appear to all, or in all things. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee;' 2Ti 3:14, 'But [Μᾶρ. abide, keep thy station, thou wilt be put to it, thou wilt meet with earthquakes]

continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;' Ecc 12:9, 'And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.'

Hosea was fourscore years a prophet in Israel, and yet did not convert them; yet notwithstanding all discouragements he continued constant, and that with abundance of freshness and liveliness.

Chrysostom compares good pastors to fountains that ever send forth waters, or conduits that are always running, though no pail be put under. [Chrysost. in Mat. Hom. xv.]

Erasmus saith of Jerome, *Minima pars noctis dabatur somno, minor cibo, nulla otio*, He allowed least time for sleep, little for food, none for idleness. It best becomes a minister to die preaching in a pulpit.

Now if this be so, then by way of use let me say, That this truth looks very sourly and wistly upon all those that preach anything rather than Christ. The Lord be merciful to them! How have they forgotten the great work about which their heads and hearts should be most exercised, to wit, the bringing in of souls to Christ, and the building up of souls in Christ. Where do we find in all the Scripture, that Christ, his prophets or apostles, did ever in their preaching meddle with businesses of state, or things of a mere civil concernment? 'My kingdom is not of this world. Who has made me a judge?' says Christ.

I hope it will not be counted presumption in me if I shall propound a few rules for such to observe that are willing to preach Christ to poor souls. I will only propound three.

[1.] And the first is this, If you would preach Christ to the people, according to the rules last mentioned, then you must get a Christ within you.

There is nothing that makes a man indeed so able to preach Christ to the people, as the getting a Christ within him; and it is very observable, that the great rabbies and doctors that want a Christ within, they do but bungle in the work of the Lord, in the preaching of a crucified Jesus; and were it not for the help of Austin, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Tertullian, &c., what sad, dead, and pitiful work would they make! Yea, for want of a Christ within, how little of Christ do they understand! How little of Christ do they make known, notwithstanding all their borrowed helps! Paul was a man that had got a Christ within him: Gal 2:20, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life that I live is by the faith of the Son of God,' &c. Compare this with Gal 4:19, 'My little children, of whom I travail in birth till Christ be formed in you.' A Christ within, makes him travail in birth. The Greek word translated, 'I travail in birth,' signifies not only the travail of the woman at the birth of the child, but also the painful bearing thereof before the birth. The pains of travail breed not a greater desire to see a man-child born into the world, than Paul's love bred in him, till Christ were anew formed in them, 2Co 11:23. No man did so much for the winning of souls to Christ as Paul, nor no man had so much of a Christ within him as Paul. Nothing will naturalise a minister's heart to his work like a Christ within; nothing will make him so wise, so painful, so watchful, so careful to win souls, as a Christ within; nothing will make him hold out and hold on in the work of the Lord, in the face of all oppositions, persecutions, dangers, and deaths, as a Christ within; nothing will make a man strive with sinners, and weep over sinners, and wait upon sinners for their return, as a Christ within. Such ministers as have not a Christ within them, will find no comfort, and as little success, in their preaching of Christ. Above all gettings, get a Christ within, or else after all thy preaching, thyself

will be a cast-away.

[2.] Secondly, They that would preach Christ to the people, must study more Scripture truths, Scripture mysteries, than human histories.

They must study God's book more than all other books. The truth and antiquity of the book of God finds no companion, either in age or authority. No histories are comparable to the histories of the scriptures, for, 1, antiquity; 2, rarity; 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity.

'Gregory' calls the Scripture, *cor et animam dei*, the heart and soul of God; for in the Scriptures, as in a glass, we may see how the heart and soul of God stands towards his poor creatures. It was the glory of Apollos that he was mighty in the Scripture, Acts 18:24; John 5:39, 'Search the Scriptures,' saith Christ. The Greek word signifies to search as men search for gold in mines, *ῥευνετέ*. You must search the Scriptures, not superficially but narrowly. The Scriptures are a great depth, wherein the choicest treasures are hid; therefore you must dig deep if you will find: Col 3:16, 'Let the word of Christ dwell richly in you;' or as the Greek hath it, *νοικετω εν υμιν*. 'Let the word of Christ indwell in you, as an engrafted word, incorporated into your souls.' Let the word be so concocted and digested by you, as that you turn it into a part of yourselves. You must be familiarly acquainted with the word; you must not let it pass by you as a stranger, or lodge and sojourn with you as a wayfaring man; it must continually abide with you, and dwell richly in you: 2Ti 3:16-17, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' All books and helps are not comparable to the Bible, for the completing and perfecting of a man for the work of the ministry. That which a papist reports of their sacrament of the mass, that there are as many mysteries in it as there are drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, &c., may be truly asserted of the word of God; no study to the study of the Scripture for profit and comfort. Count Anhalt, that princely preacher, was wont to say, 'That the whole Scriptures were the swaddling bands of the child Jesus,' he being to be found almost in every page, in every verse, in every line.

Luther would often say, 'That he had rather that all his books should be burned, than that they should be a means to hinder persons from studying of the Scripture.'

[3.] The third and last rule I shall lay down, is this, Such as would preach Christ aright to the people had need dwell much upon the vanity of human doctrines. The vanity of which doctrines may be thus discovered:

First, They do not discover sin in its ugliness and filthiness as the Scriptures do. They search but to the skin, they reach not to the heart; they do not do as the master did in Jonah's ship, when they were in a storm.

Secondly, Human doctrines have no humbling power in them. They may a little tickle you, but they can never humble you; they cannot cast down Satan's strongholds; they cannot melt nor break the heart of a sinner; they cannot make him cry out with the leper, 'Unclean, unclean.'

Thirdly, Human doctrines nourish not the noble part, the soul of man. The prodigal was like to starve before he returned to his father's house. A man may study much, and labour much, and lay

out much of his time and spirits about human doctrines, and yet after all be like to Pharoah's lean kine. A man that studies human doctrines doth but feed upon ashes.

Fourthly, Human doctrines cannot cure a wound in the conscience. The diseased woman spent all she had upon physicians, but was not a penny the better. The remedy is too weak for the disease. Conscience, like Prometheus' vulture, will still lie gnawing notwithstanding all that such doctrines can do.

Fifthly, Human doctrines are so far from enriching the soul, that they usually impoverish the soul. They weaken the soul; they expose the soul to the greatest wants and to the greatest weaknesses; they play the harlot with the soul; they impoverish it, and bring it to 'a morsel of bread.' Who so poor in spiritual experiences and heavenly enjoyments as such that sit under the droppings of human doctrines?

Sixthly, Human doctrines make men servants to the humours and corruptions of men; they make men-pleasers of men rather than pleasers of God; yea, they make men set up themselves and others, sometimes in the room of Christ, and sometimes above Christ. I hope these few short hints may prevail with some to fall in with this counsel, that so they may the better preach the Lord Jesus to the people. And so much for this doctrine.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph 3:8.

Having spoken much concerning ministers' duty, I shall now speak a little concerning their dignity, and so finish this text.

'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' This grace, this favour, this honour is given to me, that I should preach, &c. I look not upon it as a poor, low, mean, contemptible thing, but as a very great honour, 'that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' The observation that I shall speak to is this:

Obs. That the office of a minister or preacher is honourable. For the understanding of this point, premise with me two things:

First, That by a minister, I understand one that is qualified according to gospel rules, and that is internally called by God, and externally called by the people of God, to the ministerial office. The second thing that I would have you premise with me for the understanding of the point is this, that the common appellation of those that are set apart for the preaching of the gospel in the New Testament is $\delta\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\iota$, ministers. So in 1Co 3:5; 2Co 3:6, and 2Co 6:4, and 2Co 11:15, 2Co 11:23; 1Ti 4:16, and in divers other places, the word minister is a title of office, service, or administration given frequently to the preachers of the gospel. As for the names of ambassadors, stewards, and the like, wherewith they are often honoured, they are figurative, and given to them by allusion only.

These two things being premised, we shall now proceed to the opening of the point.

1. And, in the first place, I shall prove that the office of a minister is an honourable office.

2. And then, in the second place, I shall shew you what honour is due to them.
3. And then, in the third place, I shall shew you how you are to honour them.
4. And then, in the last place, we shall bring home all by a word of application.

Christians, give me leave to tell you this by the way, that since the gospel hath shined in England, a godly, faithful, painful ministry was never more subtilly and vehemently struck at by men that make a fair show, and by men of corrupt opinions and wicked lives. This age affords many church-levellers as well as state-levellers. Some there be, that under that notion of plucking up corrupt ministers, would pluck up by the very roots the true ministry. But God has and will be still too hard for such men. If they will be monsters, God will be sure to be master. His faithful ministers are stars that he holds in his right hand, Rev 2:1; and men shall as soon pull the sun out of the firmament, as pull them out of the hand of God.

Now, considering that there is such a spirit abroad in the world, I hope no sober, serious Christians will be offended at my standing up to vindicate the honour of a godly, faithful ministry. In order to which, I shall first prove that the office of a minister is honourable; and to me these following things speak it out:

[1.] First, The several names and titles that are given to them in Scripture, doth speak them out to be honourable. They are called fathers, stewards, ambassadors, overseers, and angels, as you all know that know anything of Scripture. To spend time to prove this, would be to light candles to see the sun at noon.

[2.] Secondly, Their work is honourable. Their whole work is about souls, about winning souls to Christ, and about building souls up in Christ; and to these two heads the main work of the ministry may be reduced. The more noble the soul is, the more honour it is to be busied and exercised about it: Jas 5:20, 'Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.'

'Let him know,' that is, let him take notice that an honourable and glorious work is done by him. The soul is the immediate work of God; the soul is the image of God; the soul is capable of union and communion with God; the soul is worth more than a world, yea, than a thousand worlds. Christ prayed for souls, and wrought miracles for souls, and wept for souls, and left his Father's bosom for souls, and bled out his heart's blood for souls, and is gone to heaven to make provision for souls, yea, he is now a-making intercession for souls. All which speaks out the excellency of their office whose whole work is about souls. The Jews say of Moses his soul, that it was sucked out of his mouth with a kiss. Souls are dear and sweet to Christ.

[3.] A third thing that speaks out this truth is this, they are fellow-labourers with God; they are co-workers with God in the salvation of sinners. And this is a mighty honour, to be a fellow-labourer with God, to be a co-worker with God: 1Co 3:9, 'For we are labourers together with God.' Who would not work hard with such sweet company? Who would not affect, prize, love, and honour such service? Ministers are called the light and salt of the world, because they enlighten blind souls, and season unsavoury souls, and so save them from corruption and perdition, Mat 5:14; John 5:35; Mat 5:13; Mark 9:49-50. Oh, to be joined in any work with God, is an honour beyond what I am able to express! The senate of Rome accounted it a diminution of Augustus

Cæsar's dignity to join any consuls with him for the better carrying on the affairs of the state. Oh, but our God doth not think it a diminution of his dignity, that even his poor despised servants should be fellow-labourers and co-workers with him in the salvation of souls.

[4.] Fourthly, The honourable account that the Lord hath of them in this employment, speaks out this truth, that their office is honourable. In Mat 10:41-42, compared, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;' and Luk 10:16, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that despises you, despises me.' This honourable account God hath of all his faithful servants in this employment. Kings and princes have their ambassadors in very high account: so has God his.

[5.] The fifth thing that speaks out this truth is this, they serve an honourable master. They serve him that is all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve, and all mercy to pardon. They serve that God that is optimum, maximum, the best and greatest. God hath within himself all the good of angels, men, and universal nature; he hath all dignity, all glory, all riches, all treasure, all pleasure, all delight, all joy, all beatitudes. Mark, abstracts do better express God than concretes and adjectives. God is being, bonity,² beauty, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, and love itself. 'God is love,' saith the apostle, in the very abstract. God is one infinite perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. And oh then, what an honour must it be to those that are employed under so honourable a master!

[6.] Sixthly, Their very work and service is honourable. Why else did the apostle cry out, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' There is no such embassy in the world as this is in which they are employed: Eph 6:19-20, 'Pray for me, that I may make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds.' Faithful ministers do represent the person of the King of kings and Lord of lords; their work is to treat of peace between God and man, or of open hostility between the Creator and the creature, 2Co 5:19-20.

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, Their reward from God is honourable. Though the world crown them with thorns, as it did their Lord and master before them, yet God will crown them with honour: Dan 12:3, 'They shall shine as the stars in the firmament.' You know ambassadors have not preferments while they are abroad, but when they come home into their own country, then their princes prefer them, and put much honour upon them. So will God deal with his ambassadors: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' So in Isa 49:4-5. 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my reward with my God. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.' So in 2Co 2:15, 'For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.' Ministers shall be rewarded according to their faithfulness and diligence, though some perish. It shall be with them as with vine-dressers. You know vine-dressers are rewarded according to their diligence and faithfulness, though some vines never bear, nor bring forth fruit at all. As ministers are diligent and faithful, so the reward, the crown, shall be given forth at last. You know the barber is as much rewarded for trimming a blackamore, though all his pains in rubbing him can never make him

white, as he is for trimming and rubbing another man that is white, and by a little pains is made more white. This is many a faithful minister's grief, that he takes a great deal of pains in rubbing and washing, as it were, to make souls white and clean, pure and holy, and yet they remain after all as black as hell; but surely their reward shall be never the less with God. The nurse looks not for her wages from the child, but from the parent. If ministers, like clouds, sweat themselves to death that souls may be brought to life, great will be their reward, though their souls should perish for ever, for whom they have wept, sweat, and bled.

God won't deal by faithful ministers, as Xerxes did by his steerman, who crowned him in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day. No; God will set an everlasting crown upon their heads who remain laborious and faithful to the death. The world for all their pains will crown them with thorns, but God at last will crown them with glory; he will set a crown of pure gold upon their heads for ever. And thus you have the point proved. The second thing that I am to do is to shew you, 2. What honour that is which is justly due to faithful ministers.

Now, this I shall shew you in three things. There is a threefold honour that is due unto them.

[1.] First, Honourable countenance is due unto them that are in so honourable a place and office as they are in: 1Co 4:1, 'Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;' 1Th 5:12-13, 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very high in love for their work's sake;' or, 'to esteem them more than exceedingly,' or, more than abundantly, as the Greek will bear, ■περεκπερισσο■. And so in 1Ti 5:17, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' The Greek word ■κοπι■ντες, that is here rendered labour, signifies not simply to labour, but to labour with much travail and toil, to labour even to lassitude, as he doth that cleaveth wood, or that toileth in harvest, or that goeth a warfare. Preaching is a most painful work, and enfeebleth a man exceedingly; whence the prophet cries out, 'My leanness, my leanness,' Isa 24:16. No pains, no labour, no work to that of the brain, to that of the mind, nor none so worthy of praise as those that are most in that labour, in that work. No men's work is so holy and heavenly as theirs, nor no men's work is so high and honourable as theirs, and therefore none deserve to be more honoured than they, though not for their own sakes, yet their work's sake. Shall Turks and papists so highly esteem and honour every hedge-priest of theirs above their merits, and shall not Christians much more honour their faithful ministers? Faithful ministers must have countenance as well as maintenance, they must have reverence as well as recompense. You are not to nod the head and put out the lip, to scoff, and mock, and jeer at them: Gal 4:14, 'And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.' When Ehud told the king of Moab, 'I have a message to thee from God, O king,' he arose from his throne and bowed himself, Jdg 3:20. Isa 50:7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.'

'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet!' What is their face then? What is their doctrine then? Their very feet, when dirty, sweaty, and dusty, are yet very beautiful and lovely.

It was a common saying at Constantinople, that it was better the sun should not shine than that Chrysostom should not preach.

I have read of one that said, 'if he should meet a preacher and an angel together, he would first salute the preacher, and then the angel afterward.' If you do not give them honourable countenance, Jews and Turks, papists, and pagans, will in the great day of account rise up against you, and condemn you. I could say much of what I have observed in other nations and countries concerning this thing, but I shall forbear. Should I speak what I have seen, many professors might well blush. The Grecians used to give far greater respect and honour to their philosophers than to their orators, because that their orators did only teach them to speak well, but their philosophers did teach them to live well. Oh what honour then is due to them that do teach you both to speak well and to live well! both how to be happy here and how to be blessed hereafter. And thus you see that honourable countenance is due to faithful ministers.

[2.] Secondly, There is an honour of maintenance, as well as an honour of countenance that is due to them: 1Ti 5:17-18, 'Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward.' It was not the manner in the Eastern countries to thrash out corn as we do, but their oxen trod it out, to which the apostle allegorically compares laborious pastors, who after a sort crush out that corn of which the bread of life is made: Gal 6:6, 'Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' So in 1Co 9:7-11, 'Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?' Mat 10:9-10, 'Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat.' God's appointment in all these texts bespeak it.

Again, you may consider the necessity of it. How shall they go on in their warfare if they be troubled with the things of this life? Again, they are to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, 1Ti 4:5. And again, the equity and justice of the duty Christ and the apostle shews in the forenamed scriptures, Mat 10:10, 1Co 9:10. The maintenance of the minister should be so free, and so liberal, as may testify that you honour him in your hearts, and as may keep him from contempt and scorn in the world. There are multitudes that grumble at the expense of a penny for the maintenance of those divine candles that waste themselves to give light to them; that will rather die to save charges than spend a little money to save their lives, yea, their souls. They like well of religion without expense, in Basil; and a gospel without charge, but if it grow costly, it is none of their money. The scripture says, 'Buy the truth, sell it not.' You can never overbuy it, whatsoever you give for it; you can never sufficiently sell it, if you had all the world in exchange for it.

It is said of Cæsar that he had greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for swimming through the water to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the water, but lost his robes. But alas! what are Cæsar's books to God's book? The word is the field, and Christ

is the treasure that is hid in that field. The word is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring of gold, and is it then worth nothing? Many deal with faithful, painful ministers, as carriers do with their horses, they lay heavy burdens upon them, and exact work enough, and give them but easy commons; and then to recompense this, they hang bells at their ears and necks. They shall be commended and applauded for brave excellent preachers, and for great painstakers, &c. That maintenance that is justly due to the ministers of the gospel is honourable; it ought to be suitable to their condition and dignity. The maintenance that is due to them, is of the same nature with that which is given to princes and magistrates, by those who are under them, and not a common maintenance which superiors give to their inferiors or servants.

[3.] Thirdly, There is an honour of obedience and service that is due to them. And indeed, of all honours, this is the greatest honour that can be cast upon a faithful minister, the honour of obedience: Heb 13:7, 'Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken to you in the word of God;' and Heb 13:17, 'Obey them that rule over you.' Oh, submit yourselves, for they 'watch for your souls as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.'

'Obey them that have the rule over you.' The word ■γουμ[■]νοις, that is rendered 'Rule over you,' in the seventh and seventeenth verses, signifies captains, guides. Faithful ministers are your captains, they are your guides, they are your chieftains, they are your champions that bear the brunt of the battle, the heat of the day; and therefore you must obey them, even as soldiers do their captains. So in 2Th 3:14, 'And if any man obey not our words, note that man, and have no company with him.' Brand him as infamous, beware of him, let him see a strangeness in you towards him, that all may avoid him as one whose company is dangerous and infectious. Ah Christians! by your submission to their doctrine, you highly honour them, and you make their heavy task to be easy and sweet unto them. Christians! it will be your honour and happiness in the day of Christ, that you have lived out what they have made out to you. I suppose you remember that happiness is not entailed to hearing, or knowing, or talking, but to doing. 'If ye know these things, blessed and happy are you, if you do them,' John 13:17. There are some diseases that are called opprobria medicorum, the reproaches of physicians; and there are some people that may be truly called opprobria ministrorum, the reproach of ministers, and those are they that are great hearers, and talkers, and admirers of ministers, but never obey the doctrines delivered by them. The Corinthians were Paul's honour, they were his living epistles, they were his walking certificates, they were his letters-testimonial, 2Co 3:2-3. The obedience and fruitfulness of the people is the minister's testimonial, as the profiting of the scholar is the master's commendation. Oh what an honour is it to a minister, when it shall be said of him, as one said once of Octavius, 'When he came into Rome he found the walls all of base materials, but left them walls of marble!' So here is a minister that found the people dark and blind, but left them enlightened; he found them dead, but left them alive; he found them a proud people, but hath left them humble; a profane people, but hath left them holy; a carnal people, but hath left them spiritual; a worldly people, but hath left them heavenly; a wavering people, but hath left them settled and rooted, &c. No honour to a faithful minister like this. And thus you see what honour is due unto them, &c.

Use. And now let me make a word of use. Christians! if their office be so honourable, then honour them. Oh, give them the honour that is due unto them. Will you make conscience to give others their due, and will you make no conscience of giving ministers their due? Are there any that are

greater blessings to a nation than faithful ministers? Who have stood more in the gap to turn away wrath than they? Who have begotten you to Christ through the gospel but they? Who have turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God but them? Who have built you up in the light and love of Jesus but them? &c. Oh, do not cast scorn and reproach upon them, but give them that honour that is due unto them! But you will say to me, How shall we honour them?

I answer, you must honour them these five ways:

[1.] First, You must honour them by hearing them, and giving credit to their message. The want of this honour troubled Jonah too much; 'Who hath believed our report?' Not to believe the report that they make concerning God and Christ, &c., is to cast the greatest dishonour that can be upon them. The wise men, Mat 2:1-23, went many weary hundred miles to find Christ at Jerusalem; some think near a thousand miles. The Queen of Sheba, some say, went 964 miles to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and what was Solomon's wisdom to that wisdom of Christ that is held forth to souls in the ministry of the gospel. The holy martyrs thought no weather too hot, no winter too cold, no journey too long, nor no torment too great, to enjoy the preaching of the gospel, though darkly. The heathen priests began with hoc age; they thought it a very irreligious thing to be remiss and vain, though in a vain religion. Oh that vain professors would remember this, and blush!

[2.] Secondly, You may honour them, by standing fast in the doctrine of the Lord delivered by them: 1Th 3:8, 'Ye are our joy, our crown, if ye stand fast in the Lord;' else, saith the apostle, ye kill our very hearts. If after all our studying, wrestling, sweating, and preaching, ye shall play apostates, and leave the precious ways of God, and run after notions and vain opinions which cannot profit you, nor better you, you will kill many at once: your own souls and our hearts.

[3.] Thirdly, You should honour them, by being followers of them, so far as they are followers of Christ. So in 1Co 4:16, 'Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ.' Heb 11:1; Heb 13:7; 2Th 3:7; Php 3:7. All these scriptures bespeak you to be followers of them as they are followers of Christ.

Alexander had somewhat a wry neck, and his soldiers thought it an honour to be like him. Oh, it is an honour to ministers, when their people are like them in knowledge, wisdom, love, humility, holiness!

Plutarch said of Demosthenes that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them. Ah, many in these days are excellent at praising and commending the holy and gracious actings of their ministers, but not so at imitating them!

[4.] Fourthly, You must honour them by bearing them upon your hearts when you appear before the Lord in the mount: Eph 6:13 Eph 6:19; 2Th 3:1-2; 1Th 5:25; Col 1:2, Col 1:4; Heb 13:8; Acts 12:5. All these scriptures do bespeak Christians to bear their faithful ministers upon their hearts when they are a-wrestling with God. None usually are opposed as they. Their wants are many, their weaknesses are more, their work is great, their strength is small. Oh pray, pray more and more for them; yea, pray believingly, pray affectionately, pray fervently, pray unweariedly, that they may speak from the heart to the heart, that they may speak things that are seasonable and suitable to the capacities and conditions of his people. They can tell when they want your prayers, and when they enjoy your prayers; did you pray more for them, they might do more for your internal and eternal good, than now they do.

[5.] Lastly, You must honour them by adhering to them, and abiding with them in all their trials, afflictions, and tribulations that do or shall attend them. It is brave to own them in a storm, to own them when others disown them, when others oppose them, and act highly against them. Paul looked upon himself as much honoured by Onesiphorus owning of him in his chains: 2Ti 1:16, 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.' Chrysostom, in an oration, says of Christians, 'That they would not be kept from visiting the confessors in prison, although it was forbidden with many threatening terrors, and it was great danger to them.' But to draw to a close, you have heard that the office of a faithful minister is honourable, and you have heard what honour is due unto them. Let me therefore desire you all to take heed of scorning, contemning, and despising of those that are faithful, that are qualified according to gospel rules. That is a sad word, 2Ch 36:15-18. God sent his messengers early and late to reclaim them, but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy, nor no healing. David never played such a harsh part all his days, as he did to the Ammonites that despitefully used his ambassadors, as you may see at large in 2Sa 10:1-19. The Romans sacked the famous city of Corinth, and razed it to the ground, for a little discourtesy they offered to their ambassadors. And they slew many of the Illyrians and the Tarentines for misusing of their ambassadors. And do you think that the Lord is not as tender of the credit and honour of his faithful ministers, and that he will not avenge the affronts, wrongs, and injuries that are done unto them? Surely he will: Jer 29:17-19, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will send unto them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and I will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach among all nations, whither I have driven them.' But why will God do this? 'Because they have not hearkened to my word, saith the Lord, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the Lord,' See 2Ki 17:13-15. Now mark, though these temporal judgments are not visible among us, yet spiritual judgments, which are the worst of judgments, are very visible. Though there be no sword, no famine, no pestilence, yet there is spiritual madness, spiritual drunkenness, spiritual giddiness. Oh the blind minds, the corrupt judgments, the hard hearts, the seared consciences, that are to be found among the professors of this age! As there are no mercies to spiritual mercies, so there are no judgments to spiritual judgments. Jer 13:12; Eze 23:33; 1Ti 4:2; Tit 1:15. Oh the slighthness, the coldness, the deadness, the barrenness that is abroad in the world! God suits his judgments to men's sins; the greatest sins are always attended with the greatest judgments. In these days men sin against more glorious means, more great love, more clear light, more tender bowels of mercy, &c., than formerly; and therefore God gives men up to more sad and dreadful spiritual judgments than formerly.

They say when Hercules drew up Cerberus from hell, he led him in a chain, and he went quietly till he came to the horizon and saw the peeping of the light, but then he pulled so strongly that he had like to have pulled the conqueror and all back again. Ah it is sad when men had rather live in darkness, and die in darkness, and to hell in darkness, than they will see the light, enjoy the light, and walk in the light! Many fret at the light, and at those that bring it, as the Ethiopians once a year

solemnly curse the sun. Such souls stand in much need of pity and prayer. And thus, according to my weak measure, I have given out what God has given in from this scripture, and shall follow it with my prayers, that it may be a word of life and power both to writer, reader, and hearer. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria in Æternum.

A CABINET OF JEWELS

NOTE By a strange whim of public opinion, the 'Cabinet of Jewels' passed through only one edition in the outset—1669 (4to). Its title-page is given below.* See our Preface for remarks on a modern reprint. The Scottish edition of 1762 (Glasgow, 8vo) had an enormous circulation among the peasantry, as shewn by the long list of Subscribers.—G. a

CABINET of

CHOICE JEWELS or, a Box of precious Ointment Being a plain Discovery of, or, what men are worth for Eternity, and how 'tis like to go with them in another world. Here is also a clear and large Discovery of the several rounds in Jacob's Ladder, that no Hypocrite under Heaven can climb up to. Here are also such closs, piercing, distinguishing and discovering evidences as will reach and suit those Christians who are highest in Grace and spiritual Enjoyments; and here are many Evidences, which are suited to the Capacities and Experiences of the weakest Christians in Christ's School: And here Christians may see as in a Glass, what a sober Use and Improvement they ought to make of their evidences for Heaven; and how in the use of their gracious evidences they ought to live. First, upon the free grace of God. Secondly, upon the Mediatory righteousness of Christ. Thirdly, upon the Covenant of Grace: With several other Points of grand Importance, &c. By Thomas Brooks, formerly Preacher of the Gospel at St. Margarets, New-Fishstreet Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2Pe 1:10

Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates? Or, ■δ■κίμο■, unapproved or rejected Omnis anima est aut sponsa Christi, aut adultera Diaboli. Austin

London, Printed and are to be sold by John Hancock at the first Shop in Popes-Head-Alley in Cornhil, at the sign of the three Bibles, or at his Shop in Bishops-Gate-Street, near great St. Hellins, 1669 EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Right Worshipful Sir John Frederick, Knight, and the Lady Mary Frederick, his pious consort. To Mr Nathaniel Herne, and Mrs Judith his virtuous wife;

All confluence of blessings, both for this life and for that which is to come, from the Father of mercies and God of all consolations.

Honoured and beloved in our Lord Jesus,

Though I crowd your names together, yet I owe more than an epistle to each of your names; but the Lord having made you near and dear one to another more ways than one, I take the boldness to present this treatise to you jointly. Here is nothing in this book that relates to government of church or state. The design of this treatise is to shew what men are worth for eternity, and how it is like to go with them in another world. There are none of the sons of men but bear about with them precious and immortal souls, that are more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds. If the soul be safe, all is safe; if that be well, all is well; if that be lost, all is lost. The first great work that men

are to attend in this world is the eternal safety and security of their souls; the next great work is to know, to be assured, that it shall go well with their souls for ever. And these are the main things that are aimed at in this discourse. The soul is the better and more noble part of man. Upon the soul the image of God is most fairly stamped. The soul is first converted, and the soul shall be first and most glorified. The soul is that spiritual and immortal substance that is capable of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. Plato, though a heathen, could say that he thought the soul to be made all of eternity, and that the putting the soul into the body was a sign of great wrath from God.

'Each living corpse must yield at last to death, And every life must lose his vital breath. The soul of man, that only lives on high, And is an image of eternity.' The Romans, when their emperors and great ones died, and their bodies were buried, they caused an eagle to mount on high, thereby to signify the soul's immortality and ascent. He gave good counsel who said, 'Play not the courtier with your soul; the courtier doth all things late, he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and repents late.' A Scythian captain, having for a draught of water delivered up his city, cried out, Quid perdidit, quid prodidit? What have I lost, what have I betrayed? So many at last will cry out, what have I lost, what have I betrayed? I have lost God, and Christ, and heaven, and have betrayed my precious and immortal soul into the hands of divine justice, and into the hands of Satan! Who these men are that will at last thus cry out, this treatise doth discover. I have read that there was a time when the Romans did wear jewels on their shoes. Most men in this day do worse, for they trample that matchless jewel of their souls under feet; and who these are this treatise does discover. One well observes, [Chrysostom] 'That whereas God hath given many other things double; two eyes to see with, two ears to hear with, two hands to work with, and two feet to walk with, to the intent that the failing of the one might be supplied by the other; but he hath given us but one soul, and if that be lost, hast thou, saith he, another soul to give in recompense for it?' Now, who those are whose souls are in a safe estate, and who those are whose souls are in danger of being lost for ever, this treatise does plainly and fully discover. To describe to the life who that man is that is truly happy in this world, and that shall be blest for ever in the other world, is the work of this ensuing treatise, Psa 15:1-5, Psa 144:15. The grace of the covenant in us is a sure evidence of God's entering into the covenant of grace with us. To be in a gracious state is true happiness, but to know ourselves to be in such a state is the top of our happiness in this world. A man may have grace, and yet, for a time, not know it, 1Jn 5:13. The child lives in the womb, but does not know it. A man may be in a gracious state, and yet not see it; he may have a saving work of God upon his soul, and yet not discern it; he may have the root of the matter in him, and yet not be able to evidence it, Psa 77:6, Psa 88:1-18. Now to help such poor hearts to a right understanding of their spiritual condition, and that they may see and know what they are worth for another world, and so go to their graves in joy and peace, I have sent this treatise abroad into the world. Will you give me leave to say,

(1.) First, Some men of name in their day have laid down such things for evidences or characters of grace, which, being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, will be found too light. But here a mantle of love may be of more use than a lamp; and therefore,

(2.) Secondly, Many, yea, very many there are, whose graces are very weak, and much buried under the earth and ashes of many fears, doubts, scruples, strong passions, prevailing corruptions, and diabolical suggestions, who would give as many worlds as there be men in the

world, had they so many in their hands to give, to know that they have grace, and that their spiritual estate is good, and that they shall be happy for ever. Now this treatise is fitted up for the service of these poor hearts; for the weakest Christians may turn to many clear and well-bottomed evidences in this treatise, and throw the gauntlet to Satan, and bid him prove if he can, that ever any profane person or cunning hypocrite under heaven, had such evidences, or such fair certificates to shew for heaven, which he has to shew. The generality of Christians are weak; they are rather dwarfs than giants; they are rather bruised reeds than tall cedars; they are rather babes than men, lambs than sheep, &c. Now, for the service of their souls, I have been willing to send this treatise into the world; for this treatise may speak to them when I may not; yea, when I cannot; yea, which is more, when I am not. Famous Mr Dod would frequently say, he cared not where he was if he could but answer these two questions: 1, who am I? and 2, what do I hear? am I a child of God? and am I in my way? But,

(3.) Thirdly, Some there are who are so excessively and immoderately taken up with their signs, marks, and evidences of grace, and of their gracious state, &c., that Christ is too much neglected, and more rarely minded by them. Their hearts do not run out so freely, so fully, so strongly, so frequently, so delightfully towards Christ as they should do, nor as they would do, if they were not too inordinately taken up with their marks and signs. Now, for the rectifying of these mistakes, and the cure of these spiritual maladies, this treatise is sent into the world. We may and ought to make a sober use of characters and evidences of our gracious estates, to support, comfort, and encourage us on our way to heaven, but still in subordination to Christ, and to the fresh and frequent exercises of faith upon the person, blood, and righteousness of Jesus. But oh how few Christians are there that are skilled in this work of works, this art of arts, this mystery of mysteries. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Some there are who in those days are given up to enthusiastical fancies, strange raptures, revelations, and to the sad delusions of their own hearts; crying down with all their might all discoveries of believers' spiritual estates by Scripture characters, marks, and signs of sanctifications, 2Th 2:9-11, as carnal and low; and all this under fair pretences of exalting Christ, and maintaining the honour of his righteousness and free grace, and of denying ourselves and our own righteousness. Though sanctification be a branch of the covenant of grace as well as justification, yet there are a sort of men in the world that would not have Christians to rejoice in their sanctification, under a pretence of reflecting dishonour upon their free justification by Christ, Jer 33:8, Eze 36:25-27. There are many who place all their religion in opinions, in brain-sick notions, in airy speculations, in quaint disputations, in immediate revelations, and in their warm zeal for this or that form of worship. Now, that these may be recovered, and healed, and prevented from doing further mischief in the world, I have at this time put to a helping hand. But,

(5.) Fifthly, No man can tell what is in the breasts, in the womb, of divine Providence. No man can tell what a day, a night, an hour, may bring forth. Who can sum up the many possible deaths that are still lurking in his own bowels, or the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleaguer him on every side, or how many invisible arrows fly about his ears continually; and how soon he may have his mortal wound given him by one or other of them, who can tell? Now, how sad would it be for a man to have a summons to appear before God in that other world before his heart and life are changed, and his evidences for heaven cleared up to him! The life of a man is but a shadow, a post, a span, a vapour, a flower, &c. Though there is but one way to come into the

world, yet there are many thousand ways to be sent out of the world; and this should bespeak every Christian to have his evidences for heaven always ready and at hand, yea, in his hand as well as in his heart, and then he will find it an easy thing to die. The king of terrors will then be the king of desires to him, and he will then travel to glory under a spirit of joy and triumph. We carry about in our bodies the matter of a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand several ways several hours. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body, so many windows there are for death to enter in at. Death needs not spend all his arrows upon us; a worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a stone of a raisin, a kernel of a grape, the fall of a horse, the stumble of a foot, the prick of a pin, the paring of a nail, the cutting out of a corn; all these have been to others, and any of them may be to us, the means of our death within the space of a few days, nay, of a few hours. Does not it therefore highly concern us to have our evidences for heaven cleared, sealed, shining, and at hand? Naturalists tell us that if a man sees a cockatrice first, the cockatrice dieth; but if the cockatrice sees a man first, the man dies. Certainly if we so see death first as to prepare for it, as to get our evidences for heaven ready, we shall kill it; but if death sees us first, and arrests us first before we are prepared, and before our evidences for heaven are cleared, it will kill us everlastingly, it will kill us eternally. Time travaileth with God's decrees, and in their season brings them forth; but little doth any man know what is in the womb of to-morrow till God hath signified his will by the event: 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth,' Pro 27:1. That man that knows what himself intends to bring forth, does not know what the day will bring forth; the next day is not so near the former in time as it may be remote from it in the effects of it. Seneca could say, *Nihil est miserius dubitatione venientium, quo evadant*, There is nothing more miserable than the doubtfulness of things to come, to what they will come. Providence in this life is the map of changes, the picture of mutability. Who can sum up the strange circumferences, and rare circuits, and labyrinths of providence? Providence is as a wheel in the midst of a wheel, whose motion, and work, and end in turning is not discerned by every common eye, Eze 1:16. Three dreadful judgments God hath lately visited us with, viz., sword, pestilence, and fire. But who repents; who smites upon his thigh; who finds out the plague of his own heart; who says, What have I done? who ceases from doing evil; who learns to do well; who turns to the Most High; who lays hold on everlasting strength; who makes peace with God; who throws himself into the gap? &c., Isa 1:16-317, Psa 106:23. Are not multitudes grown much worse after judgments than they were before? Do not they bid higher defiance to heaven than ever? And, therefore, who can tell what further controversy God may have with such a people, especially considering that terrible scripture, Lev 26:14-34, with scores of others that sound that way? Were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid, degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of us! How is our forefathers' hospitality converted into riot and luxury, their frugality into pride and prodigality, their simplicity into subtilty, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their charity into cruelty, their chastity into chambering and wantonness, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into dissembling, and their works of compassion into works of oppression, &c. And may we not fear that even for these things God may once more visit us? The nations are angry, and we are low in their eyes; our enemies are not asleep abroad, and are not we too secure at home? And what further confusions may be in the world, who can divine? I point at these things only to provoke all those into whose hands this treatise may fall to make sure work for another world, to make sure their evidences for heaven, and to keep their evidences for life and glory always sparkling and shining; and then I am sure the worst of calamities, the sorest of

judgments, shall but translate them from earth to heaven, from a wilderness to a paradise, from misery to glory, and from mixed and mutable enjoyments to the pure and everlasting enjoyments of God, Christ, the angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb 12:22-24. But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, In this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [1.] that their present state and condition is not so safe, nor yet so happy, as they judge it to be. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [2.] the happy and blessed state of the people of God, against whom their spirits rise and swell, &c. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [3.] what those things are that they need, and that they ought to beg of God. Again, in this treatise, as in a glass, all sorts of profane persons, and all sorts of self-flatterers, and all sorts of hypocrites, may see [4.] what those things are without which they can neither be happy here nor hereafter. Now, were there no other reasons for my sending forth this treatise into the world, this alone might justify me.

But, honoured and beloved, before I close up this epistle, give me leave to say, that there are two sorts of men that myself and all the world are bound (1.) highly to prize, (2.) cordially to love, and (3.) greatly to honour above all other men in the world; and they are these: First, men of public spirits; secondly, men of charitable spirits, men of merciful spirits, men of tender and compassionate spirits.

(1.) First, Men of public spirits, myself and all others are bound, 1, highly to prize; 2, cordially to love; and, 3, greatly to honour above all other men in the world; and that,

1. First, because a public-spirited man is a common good, a common blessing. All in the family, all in the court, all in the city, all in the country, fare the better for that Christian's sake that is of a public spirit. All in Laban's family did fare the better for Jacob's sake; and all in the city of Zoar did fare the better for Lot's sake; and all Pharaoh's court and the whole country of Egypt did fare the better for Joseph's sake, Gen 30:27, and Gen 19:21-24, and Psa 41:1-13, &c. Sodom was safe while Lot was in it. Elijah was a man of public spirit, and he was 'the chariots and horsemen of Israel,' 2Ki 2:12. Moses was a man of public spirit, and he often diverted ruining judgments from falling upon Israel, Psa 106:23. Phinehas was a man of public spirit, and he takes up his censer, and stands between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed, Num 16:46, Num 16:49. Men of public spirits are public mercies, public blessings. A man of a public spirit is, κοινωγᾶν, a public diffusive blessing in the place where he lives. Men of public spirits are the true Atlases both of church and state; they are the pillars on whom all do rest, the props on whom all do lean. Do but overturn these pillars and all will fall about your ears, as the house did about the Philistines when Samson shook it. Rack but these, and kingdoms and commonwealths shall be quickly racked themselves. When Metellus heard of the death of Scipio Africanus, a man of a public spirit, he ran out into the market place and cried out, 'O citizens, come forth and consult what is to be done, for the walls of your city are fallen down.' But,

2. Secondly, Because public-spirited Christians are most like to Christ, and to the choicest and most excellent saints. Christ left his Father's bosom for a public good; he assumed our nature for a public good; he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for a public good; he died for a public good, and he rose for a public good; he ascended to heaven for a public good, and he continues in

heaven for a public good. When he was in this world he went up and down doing good. He healed others, but was hurt himself; he fed and filled others, but was hungry himself. Christ was all for a public good: 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others;' 'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' Php 2:4-5. Though self be a great stickler, yet he that will write after Christ's copy must neglect himself to serve others. That Christian acts most like Christ, who prefers the public interest before his own private interest. The stars have their brightness, not for themselves, but for the use of others; and the sun hath her shining light, but not for herself, but for others. In the natural body every member is diffusive; the eye conveys the light, the head spirits, the liver blood, &c. And why should it not be so in the politic body also? And as Christ, so Moses was a man of a public spirit, when God made a very fair proffer to him that he would make him a great nation if he would but stand neuter till he had revenged himself upon a rebellious people. But Moses had no mind to preferment upon those terms; he preferred the public good before his own honour, profit, and advancement, and therefore follows God close, and never gives over pleading for them till he had procured their pardon, and turned away the wrath of God from them, Exo 32:10-12; so Num 14:4, Num 14:10, Num 14:13-14. So Joshua was a man of a public spirit: 'When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them,' Jos 19:49. Joshua might have served himself first, and he might have taken as large an inheritance as he had pleased, but he preferred the good of the people before his own. He who had divided the land to others, was himself contented with very mean preferment, for his inheritance was among the barren mountains, as some observe [Jerome]. So Jehoiada was a man of a public spirit. You read that they 'buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God and towards his house,' 2Ch 24:16. Men of public spirits shall be honoured both living and dying. So Nehemiah was a man of a brave public spirit. He holds on twelve years together in public work upon his own cost and charge, Neh 5:14-15. So Esther was one of a public spirit, and therefore she takes her life in her hand, and goes in to the king with an If I perish, I perish, Est 4:16. And so Mordecai was a man of public spirit. Mordecai the Jew was 'next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed,' Est 10:3. Mordecai was more mindful and careful of his people's peace, prosperity, and welfare, than he was of his own concerns. And so David was a man of a public spirit, for 'after he had served his own generation, he fell asleep,' Acts 13:36. The Spirit of the Lord has put this upon record for David's honour and our imitation. David's soul did not live in a narrow bowling-alley. He was not a man of so poor, low, and narrow a spirit as to make himself the centre of his designs and actions. David was a man of a generous, noble spirit. The public good lay nearest his heart, and to serve his generation he was willing to spend and be spent. The public-spirited man, of all men, is most like to Christ, and to those worthies who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven. The apostle speaks of some who are lovers of themselves, 2Ti 3:2, and who are 'seekers of themselves,' Php 2:21, and who are 'minders of themselves,' Php 3:19. 'They mind earthly things.' Of all these we may say, as God speaks of Israel, 'Israel is an empty vine; he brings forth fruit unto himself,' Hos 10:1; yea, of all these we may say that light is not more contrary to darkness, heaven to hell, glory to shame, than these are contrary to Christ, and to those precious servants of his who are crowned and chronicled in the blessed Scriptures for their public spiritedness and public usefulness in the world. But,

3. Thirdly, Men of public spirits are rare men, excellent men; of all men they most resemble God, who does good to all, Mat 5:45; there are none so excellent and truly honourable as these. All the instances cited to make good the second particular evidences this: to which I may add that of Daniel, who was a man of a public spirit, and of that excellent spirit, as that he carried the bell from all the presidents and princes of Darius's court, Dan 6:3. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because 'an excellent spirit was in him,' and the king thought to set him over the whole realm. I might give you many other instances from the patriarchs and apostles, but what need that, when blind nature speaks so loud in the case. Men of public spirits have been very excellent and honourable in the very eyes of all the heathen. Take a few instances among the many hundreds that might be produced. M. Attilius Regulus was a man of that public spirit, that he valued neither state nor life to serve his country and preserve his own honour; he got very much for his country, but little for himself; seven acres of land being all that ever he had. He was a man highly honoured among the Romans.

Titus Vespasian was a man of a public spirit. He governed so sweetly, moderately, and prudently, that he was generally termed *deliciæ humani generis*, the delight of mankind. He was greatly honoured whilst he lived, and when he died the people wept so bitterly for him as if they had been resolved to have wept out their eyes.

Curius Dentatus was a man of public spirit, and very victorious. When his country was settled, he was found at dinner feeding hard on a few parched pease, when the ambassadors were sent to tender him a great sum of gold, which he refused, saying, 'He had rather be at his pease, while they whom he ruled over had the gold, than he to have the gold and they the pease.' When some unworthy persons once accused him for keeping back somewhat from the public, he brought forth a wooden platter, and did swear, that it was all he had reserved to himself of the spoils. He was had in great honour and reputation among the people.

'That pilot dies nobly,' saith Seneca, 'who perisheth in the storm with the helm in his hand.'

Aristides was a man of a public spirit. After the overthrow of the Persians, when there was a mass of treasure, gold, silver, and rich apparel, he would not touch it, nor take so much as one farthing of it to himself. He was in high esteem among the people.

Tully in his book of Scipio's dream, brings in a dead father, now in heaven as he supposed, encouraging his son to do service for his country, wherein himself had given him a most noble and notable example, upon a very high consideration, viz., There is a most sure and certain place in heaven for every man that shall procure the weal of his country, either by freeing it from peril, or increasing the happiness of it any way. To hear a Gentile tell of heaven as of a thing certain; to hear him tell of certain places provided there for those that should do virtuously; to have the service of one's country pressed on his soul with so celestial an argument, what matter of wonder and admiration is it!

Another [Cicero], speaking of men of public spirits, saith, 'Such ennobled spirits, they are the dear offspring, the delight and care of God; a divine race it is; from the heavens they comedown to us, and to the heavens again, whenever they take their leaves of us, shall they triumphantly return.' A Catiline, says the satirist, a trouble of mankind, grows as the weed, almost everywhere; but a Brutus, a worthy patriot, that bears the welfare of others, the true prosperity of his native land,

upon his heart, and sets his eyes perpetually thereon for good; such an one is a rare jewel, worthy of all honour and embraces wherever he is found.

Men of public spirits, of all men, do most exalt the Lord, and honour the Lord; and therefore the Lord, first or last, will most exalt them and honour them, 1Sa 2:30. In all the ages of the world, and in all the nations of the world, men of most public spirits have been best beloved, and most highly honoured. A man of narrow spirit is like the hedge-hog, that never goes abroad but to gather what he can for himself, whoever suffers by it; but a man of a public spirit is like the pelican, that draws out her own blood for the good of others; and therefore the light of nature, as well as the law of grace, will lead men by the hand to honour such.

4. Fourthly, Men of public spirits do most and best answer to one of the noblest and highest ends of their creation. By the law of creation every man is bound to serve the public, to serve his generation. A narrow, a private-spirited man is a shame to his creation, because he walks so contrary to the great intendment of God in it. It is a base and unworthy spirit for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say, 'That a man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him.' That man sins against the very law of his being who is swallowed up in his own private interests. Men of public spirits should not bear the sword of justice in vain, for by the law of creation they are bound so to handle it as to be 'a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well,' Rom 13:3-4. It is cruelty to the good to spare the bad; it is wrong to the sheep to let the wolves alone; it is the death of the lambs to spare the lions. 'If you will pity Cataline,' says one, 'pity Rome much more;' let the whole have a share in your pity rather than a part. *Pereat unus magis quam unitas*, Better have one injurious person sit mourning than a whole nation languishing, &c. Men of public spirits should be for the ease of all, and the peace of all, and the comfort of all, and the encouragement of all, and the safety of all. But this age is full of drones and ciphers, and of spiritless, lifeless men, who look at nothing, who design nothing, who aim at nothing, and who endeavour nothing, but how to raise themselves, and greatness themselves, and enrich themselves, and build up themselves, though it be upon other's ruins. How many are there who are so swallowed up in their own interests and private concerns, that Gallio-like, Acts 18:17, they care not whether the public sink or swim. These put me in mind of Jotham's parable, Jdg 9:8-11, &c. The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. They go to the olive, to the fig tree, and to the vine. But shall I leave my fatness? saith the olive; shall I leave my sweetness? saith the fig-tree; and shall I leave my wine? saith the vine, and go up and down for other trees? This is the very temper, spirit, and carriage of many in our day. If you go to them and desire them to lay out themselves for the public good, What, say some, shall we leave our ease, our pleasure, our profits? and, say others, shall we run this and that hazard? shall we lose such and such friends, and create to ourselves such and such enemies, to serve other men, to save other men, to advantage other men? We cannot do it, we will never do it. Learned Tully was a zealous patriot and lover of his country; he wished two wishes, though he never saw either of them effected. One was, that he 'might see Rome settled in its just liberties;' and the other was, that he 'might see every man's estate proportionable to his affection and love to the public.' Doubtless if Tully's wish might take place in our times, the purses of many would be more empty, and the public coffers would be more full. But,

5. Fifthly, Of all men on earth, there are none that have such a stock of prayers going for them as men of public spirits. Men of public spirits are not only highly prized, and cordially loved, and

greatly honoured, but they are also most upon the hearts of all sober and serious Christians, when they are in the mount with God. The lives of such are most desirable, and the deaths of such will be most lamented, who make it their business to serve their generation. Men of public spirits shall never die, as Jehoram did, undesired and unlamented, 2Ch 21:20. Men of public spirits lie most open to snares, temptations, and oppositions, &c. This all sober Christians well understand, and therefore they cannot but pray hard for such. The names, the lives, the liberties, the estates, and all the concernments of men of public spirits, always lie nearest their hearts who lie nearest to the heart of Christ. Men of the greatest name, and of the greatest renown, and that have had the greatest stock of prayers going for them all the world over, have been men of public spirits. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, When Christians of public spirits come to die, their public spiritedness and general usefulness will be no small comfort and cordial to them. Nehemiah was a man of a public spirit, and accordingly he pleads it with God. 'Think upon me, oh my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people,' Neh 5:19. [See Neh 13:22.] This was that which sweetened death to Hezekiah, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, to remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight,' 2Ki 20:3. And when David had 'served his generation, he fell asleep,' Acts 13:36. Sleep is not more welcome and sweet to a labouring man than death is to him who has made it his business, his work, sincerely and faithfully to serve his generation. Such magistrates, ministers, and Christians who have made it their business, according to their different measures, faithfully to serve their generation, have found the king of terrors to be but the king of desires to them, 2Ti 4:7-9; when death to men of narrow, selfish spirits, hath been like the handwriting upon the wall, very terrible, Dan 5:5-6. Many score instances might be produced out of history to evidence this. Take one for all. Henry Beaufort, that rich and wretched cardinal, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor of England,—a man swallowed up in self-interest,—in the reign of Henry the Sixth, when he perceived that he must die, and that there was no remedy, oh, how terrible was death to him! and oh, how did he murmur and fret, and vex at death, that his riches could not relieve him till a further time! For, saith he, 'wherefore should I die, being so rich? if the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it.' 'Fie upon death,' saith he, 'will not death be hired? will money do nothing?' I might instance in men of a higher rank, but then I should exceed the bounds of an epistle.

(2.) The second sort of men, that myself and all others are bound, (1.) highly to prize, (2.) cordially to love, and (3.) greatly to honour, are men of charitable spirits, men of merciful spirits, men of tender and compassionate spirits. The Hebrew word for godly (■ ■ ■ ■) signifies merciful, to note that the godly man is the merciful man, and the merciful man is the godly man. Loving-kindness is an ingredient unto godliness. The godly man is frequently called chasid, gracious or merciful. It notes one that hath obtained mercy, goodness, grace, piety, and benignity from the Lord, and that is pious, kind, gracious, and merciful to others. Though charity, bounty, is the most compendious way to plenty, and giving to getting, and scattering to increasing, and layings out to layings up:—Pro 11:24, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.' Pro 11:25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself',—yet how few in our days do honour the Lord with their substance! How few look at this as a duty, to consecrate any part of their gain unto the Lord, or of their substance to the Lord of the whole earth! Pro 3:9, Mic 4:13. Most men now carry it as if God himself had lost his propriety, and as if there were no rent-penny due to his poor. But yet some there are who have liberal hearts and open hands; some there are who do

open their hands wide to the poor and needy, Deu 15:11. Now, here give me leave to say that these, [1.] Discharge their consciences in the duty of charity, Mat 25:25, seq., Pro 31:8-9. [2.] These rightly improve the talents of mercy, with which they are intrusted, Job 29:13, 2Ti 1:16. [3.] These treasure up a stock of prayers, both for themselves and theirs; the blessing and the prayers of them that were ready to perish will come upon them and theirs. [4.] These evidence the liveliness of their faith: Jas 2:17, 'Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.' Jas 2:18, 'Yea, a man may say thou hast faith, and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' Jas 2:26, 'For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.' [5.] These take the surest way, the readiest course, to assure their own souls of God's eternal favours and mercies to them: 1Ti 6:17-18, 'Charge them that be rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.' Ver. 19, 'Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.' Charitable Christians are as wise merchants, happy usurers, parting with that which they cannot keep, that they may gain that which they cannot lose. [6.] These take surest way to draw down more outward mercies upon themselves.⁴ The fountain is not diminished, but augmented by giving water to the thirsty. The widow's oil did increase by running. We do not lose, but increase our mercies by imparting of them for God's honour, and the comfort and benefit of others. 'Give,' saith Christ, 'and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom,' Luk 6:38. The Jews wore large and loose garments, so that they could bear away much in their bosoms. Hence this expression, 'into your bosom.' The meaning is, that the Lord will largely reward the beneficence of his people; yea, that he will so reward them that they shall perceive that they are rewarded. 'Honour the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine,' Pro 3:9-10. God will certainly bless their substance who honour him with their substance. The Jews at this day, though they are not in their own country, and though they have not a Levitical priesthood, yet those who will be reputed religious amongst them, do distribute the tenth of their increase to the poor, being persuaded that God doth bless their increase the more; for they have among them a very elegant proverb to that purpose, *decima ut dives fias*, Pay thy tithes that thou mayest be rich. The poor man's hand is Christ's treasury, and he shall not lose his reward that casts his mites into that treasury.² It is fabled of Midas, that whatever he touched he turned it into gold. But this is most sure, that whatever the hand of charity toucheth, it turneth it into gold,—be it but a cup of cold water,—nay, into heaven itself: Mat 10:42, 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Cold water, having not fuel to heat it, cold water which cost not the charge of fire to warm it. A sea of pleasures, a heaven of blessings attends men of charitable minds, though their charity can extend no further than to a cup of cold water; for God measures men's deeds by their minds, and not their minds by their deeds. The Kenites in Saul's time, that were born many ages after Jethro's death, received life from his dust, and favour from his hospitality; nay, the very Egyptians, for harbouring and at first dealing kindly with the Israelites, though without any respect to their righteousness, were preserved by Joseph in that sore famine, and kindly dealt with ever after by God's special command. I have read a story of one Evagrius, a rich man, who lying upon his deathbed, and being importuned by Synesius, a pious bishop, to give something to charitable uses, he yielded at last to give three hundred pounds, but first took bond of the bishop that it should be repaid in

another world; but before he had been one day dead, he is said to have appeared to the bishop, delivering in the bond cancelled, as thereby acknowledging that what was promised was made good. Whether the relation be fabulous or not, I shall not now stand to determine; but this is certain, that all acts of charity shall be certainly and signally rewarded. Several writers observe that the ground is most barren nearest the golden mines; and experience tell us that many who are enriched with fair estates, are most barren in good works; but this will be bitterness in the end. He that shall consult two scriptures, among many others, will conclude that he that hath a withered hand has no honest heart, 2Ch 31:10, 1Jn 3:17. The wealth that such men have is but as Aristotle calls it, *foelix amentia*, a happy madness, because they are so taken up with their wealth, that they neither know what they are, nor what they do. Josephus, writing of the waters of Egypt, saith, that 'they were blood in the hands of an Egyptian, but water in the hand of an Israelite.' Wealth in the hand of a worldling is like blood in the hand, which is good for nothing; but wealth in the hand of a charitable Christian is like water in the hand, which may be of use both to a man's self and others. By what has been said, there is nothing more evident than this, viz., that men of public spirits, and men of charitable spirits, of all men on earth are, (1.) to be most highly prized; (2.) most cordially loved; and (3.) most greatly honoured, &c.

Gentlemen, Those that shall read what I have writ in this epistle, concerning public spiritedness and charitableness, and know you well, they know how to make the application without any further direction from me. Sir John, I must crave leave to say, that it is and will be your honour and comfort, both in life and death, and in the day of your account, that in all the great places, offices, and employments unto which divine providence has called you for divers years together, you have laid out your time, your strength, your estate, for the public good. When others have been serving themselves upon the public, you have been a-serving of the public. Sir, it is your great mercy and happiness that you can stand forth and say, as once Samuel did, 'Behold, here I am, witness against me, whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes there with?' 1Sa 12:3. Your prudence and moderation before your mayoralty, and in it, when you had many a narrow bridge to go over, and after it, to this day, will never be forgotten by all sober citizens. Sir, the French history tells us, that when an old courtier would needs depart from the court, and retire himself to a private life, the king desired him to leave his advice in some general rules, about the government of his kingdom. Upon this motion of the king, the old courtier took a sheet of white paper, and writ upon the top of the leaf, Moderation, and in the middle of the leaf, Moderation, and at the bottom of the leaf, Moderation, intimating to the king, that the only way to keep his kingdom in peace and prosperity, was to manage his government throughout with a spirit of moderation. When Vespasian asked Apollonius what was the cause of Nero's ruin, he answered, that Nero could tune the harp well, but in government he did always wind up the strings too high, or let them down too low. Both of your staying in London in the time of the last great plague, when death peeped in at every window, and when most magistrates, ministers, and people were fled from their habitations,—the terror of the Lord and of his judgments being very great in that day, upon all sorts and ranks of men,—and that chiefly, mainly, if not only, upon the account of public service, and that nothing might be wanting on your side to preserve poor creatures from perishing. The old Romans, for lesser services than you did in these dismal days, have set up many a statue of brass; but the Lord is faithful, and will not forget to reward your work, your great work, your hazardous work, and that matchless love and bowels that you shewed to

very many that were impoverished for want of trade, and to very many that lay in a sick, languishing, and dying condition. How free, how full, how seasonable, how suitable, how impartial, how constant, and well regulated your charity then was, and since hath been, is very well known to God above, and to some faithful friends still alive; but all will out in the great day, Mat 25:35, seq. I know you don't love that your left hand should know what your right hand doth, Mat 6:3, and therefore I shall not provoke you by sounding a trumpet. The angels have their hands under their wings; they do much good, and yet make no noise, Eze 1:8, and Eze 10:8. There are some in the world that are like to them. The violet grows low, and covers itself with its own leaves, and yet of all flowers yields the most fragrant smell to others. There are some charitable Christians that resemble this sweet flower.

Gentlemen and ladies, your respects and undeserved favours, that have been many ways manifested unto me, hath emboldened me to dedicate and present to you this treatise, as a real testimony of my unfeigned love, service, gratitude, and desires to promote the internal and eternal welfare of all your precious and immortal souls. And wherein could I, or any body else, be more truly serviceable to you than in endeavouring to promote your assurance of eternal salvation, which is the grand design and project of this book. 'Now, the God of all grace fill all your hearts with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, and of faith and hope in this life,' 1Pe 5:10; and at last crown you all, and all yours, with ineffable glory in the life to come,' Gal 5:22-23, Heb 10:22-23. To the everlasting arms of his protection, and to the perpetual influences of his grace and mercy in Christ, he commends you all, who is to you all, Your much obliged and affectionate friend and soul's servant in our dear Lord Jesus,

Tho. Brooks. A CABINET OF JEWELS

CHAPTER I

Containing eighteen special Maxims, Considerations, Rules, and Directions that are seriously to be minded and observed, in order to the clearing up of a man's interest in Christ: the saving work of God upon his own soul; and his title to all the glory of another world. The first maxim or consideration.

I. First, Some have made the witness of the Spirit to be the only mark or evidence of our interest in Christ, and deny all signs from the fruit of the Spirit; but this is to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be a sign that the tree is alive, whereas our Saviour expressly tells us, that 'the tree is known by his fruit,' Mat 12:33. Certainly it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to rest on our graces, or to put trust in our graces, or to make a Saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference between declaring and deserving. Doubtless, Christians may look to their graces as evidences of their interest in Christ, justification and salvation, though not as causes of their interest in Christ, justification and salvation. O sirs! we must always carefully distinguish betwixt the root and ground of our comfort, and between the testimonies or evidences of our interest in the root of our comfort. Now it must be readily granted that Jesus Christ is the only root and ground of a Christian's comfort and triumph; and, therefore, saith Paul, 'God forbid that I should rejoice in anything, but in the cross of Christ,' Gal 6:14; and so in that, 2Co 2:14, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ.' So that, if at any time we behold this or that saving grace, or this or that part of holiness shining in our hearts or lives, we take

comfort in it, not as the cause, or root, or ground of our comfort or triumph, but as in a testimony or evidence, because it doth manifest our interest in him, who is our comfort, our peace, our joy, our salvation, our 'all in all,' Luk 2:25; Col 3:11. Look, as the, rainbow is not a cause why God will not drown the world, but a sign that God will not drown the world; and as it is a sign that God will not drown the world, we may and ought to rejoice in it, and to take comfort from it, Gen 9:13-14, Gen 9:16. So here, &c. It is agreed on all hands, that sanctification is a precious benefit of the covenant of grace, as well as justification; and what crime can it then be to evidence one benefit of the covenant of grace, by another benefit of the same covenant? Jer 33:8-9; Eze 36:25-26; Heb 8:10, Heb 8:12, &c. That he that is justified, is also sanctified, and that he that is sanctified is also justified, is so clear, so bright, so sparkling, and so full a truth contained in the covenant of grace, that no man or devil can deny. Now what evil or error can it be for a man to assert, that he that is certainly sanctified, is certainly justified—it being the very language of the covenant of grace—and that therefore he that knows himself to be sanctified, may also know thereby that he is justified. Certainly, those persons that shall deny sanctification to be a most sure, sweet, and comfortable evidence of man's justification, they must not only blot out, and abolish the epistles of James and John, but must also raze out and abolish all those evangelical promises of grace and mercy, of happiness and blessedness, that are made to such persons as are invested, enriched, and bespangled with the several graces of the Holy Spirit. This might be made evident by many hundred scriptures, but take that one for all, Mat 5:1-48 where our Saviour himself, who was the most evangelical preacher that ever was in the world, makes eight or nine promises of mercy and blessedness to those very persons that had the graces of the Spirit inherent in them, as poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, &c. O sirs! why should we be so frequently and earnestly called upon to try and examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith or no, 2Co 13:5, if we were not to come to the knowledge of our faith, in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause? Have not the saints of old come to assurance, and the knowledge of the goodness of their estates, this way? Ponder seriously on that: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.' Mark, their joy was founded on the testimony of their conscience, and their conscience gave in this testimony from the sincerity of their conversation in this world. So Paul in that, 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' How plainly, how fully, how with open mouth, as I may say, does he conclude his right to the crown of righteousness,—so called, partly because it is purchased by the righteousness of Christ, and partly because he is righteous that hath promised it, and partly because it is a just and righteous thing with God to crown them with glory at last, who have for the gospel sake, and his glory sake, been crowned with shame and reproach in this world, and partly, if not mainly, because it is a crown that can only be had or obtained in a way of righteousness and holiness,—from his graces and gracious actings in this world: 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;' yea, it is further observable, that in the blessed Scripture, we are strongly pressed to do good works, that by them we may make our calling, election, and salvation sure: 2Pe 1:10, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, by good works.' So say all the Latin copies, and so say some Greek copies, though not those that our English translators have been pleased to follow, and that is the reason why those words, 'by good works,' are not in our English Bibles; but he that shall seriously weigh the scope of the apostle in this place, he must of necessity grant,

that good works are to be understood, though they are not expressed in the text; and that of the apostle in 1Ti 6:16-18, seems plainly and strongly to sound the same way. The second maxim or consideration.

II. Secondly, consider, that true, sound, solid marks, signs, and evidences, are the best way to prevent delusions. There is no such deceit in sound and solid evidences, as there is in flashy joys, and in high and strange raptures, by which many glistening professors have been sadly deceived and deluded. Young Samuel, being not acquainted with any extraordinary manifestations of the presence and power of God, took the voice of God from heaven to be the voice of old Eli, 1Sa 3:5. Ah! how many have there been in our days, that have taken the irregular motions of their own hearts, and the violent workings of their own distempered fancies, and imaginations, and Satanical delusions, to be the visions of God, celestial raptures, divine breathings, and the powerful impulses of the Spirit of God; and so have been stirred up to speak, write, and act such things that have been, not only contrary to the holy word of God, but also contrary to the very laws of nature and nations. Satan, by transforming of himself into an angel of light, hath seduced and ruined many professors, against whom, as an angel of darkness, he could never prevail, 2Co 11:14. Gerson tells a remarkable story of Satan's appearing to a holy man, in a most glorious and beautiful manner, professing himself to be Christ; and because he, for his exemplary holiness was worthy to be honoured above others, therefore he appeared unto him; but the good old man readily answered him, that he desired not to see his Saviour in this wilderness; it should suffice him to see him hereafter in heaven; and withal added this pithy prayer, 'Oh let thy sight be my reward, Lord, in another life, and not in this;' and so he became victorious over Satan, though he had transformed himself into a glorious angel of light. But such a victorious crown has not been set upon every one's head to whom Satan hath appeared as angel of glory.³ Certainly, they that stand so much, so mightily, for an immediate testimony, seem to open such a gap to enthusiasm, as will not be easily shut; yea, how will they be ever able to secure to purpose, poor souls from sad delusions? for how easy a thing it is for Satan,—who is the father of lies, John 8:44; who is an old deceiver, Gen 3:12; 1Ti 2:14; who is the grand deceiver, Rev 12:9; Rev 13:14; Rev 19:20; Rev 20:10; who has his devices, 2Co 2:11; his wiles, Eph 6:11; his snares, 1Ti 3:7; his depths, Rev 2:24,—to find various artifices to counterfeit this immediate testimony, and bear witness in the Spirit's stead; so that, when poor souls think that they have the spirit of grace and truth to assure them that all is well, and shall be for ever well with them, they have none but 'the father of lies' to deceive them, they have none but the devil in Samuel's mantle, to put a soul-murdering cheat upon them. I am not fond of advising any poor souls to lay the stress of their hopes in heaven and salvation merely upon immediate impressions, lest they should subject themselves to infinite delusions. O sirs! the way of immediate revelation is more fleeting and inconstant. Such actings of the Spirit are like those outward motions that came upon Samson, Jdg 13:25. The Spirit came upon him at times. And so upon every withdrawment, new doubts and scruples arise; but the trial of a man's estate by grace is more constant and durable, saving grace being a continual pledge of God's love to us. Flashes of joy and comfort are only sweet and delightful whilst they are felt, but grace is that immortal seed that abideth for ever, 1Jn 3:9. But, The third maxim or consideration.

III. Thirdly, consider, In propounding of evidences for men to try their spiritual and eternal estates by, there are two special rules for ever to be minded and remembered; and the first is this, That he

that propounds evidences of grace, which are only proper to eminent Christians, as belonging to all true Christians, he will certainly grieve and sad those precious lambs of Christ that He would not have grieved and sadded. Look, as there is a strong faith and a weak faith, so there are evidences that are proper to a strong faith, and evidences that are proper to a weak faith. Now, he that cannot find in himself the evidences of a strong faith, he must not conclude that he has no faith; for he may have in him the evidences of a weak faith when he has not the evidences of a strong faith in him. In Christ's school, house, church, there are several sorts and ranks of Christians, as babes, children, young men, and old men; and accordingly ministers, in their preaching and writing, should sort their evidences that so babes and children may not be found bleeding, grieving, and weeping, when they should be found joying and rejoicing.

Secondly, No man must make such characters, marks, or evidences of a child of God which may be found in an hypocrite, a formalist, &c. For this were to lay a stumbling-block before the blind, this were to delude poor souls, and to make them glad whom God would not have made glad; yea, this is the highway, the ready way, to make them miserable in both worlds, Eze 13:22. The rule or evidence that every Christian is to measure himself by must be neither too long nor too short, but adequate to the state of a Christian; that is, it must not be so long, on the one hand, as that all Christians cannot reach it, nor yet so short, on the other hand, as that it will not reach a true Christian; but the rule or evidence must be such as will suit and fit every sincere believer, and none else. Some Christians are apt to judge of themselves, and to try themselves, by such rules or evidences as are competent only to those that are strong men in Christ, and that are grown to a high pitch of grace, of holiness, of communion with God, of spiritual enjoyments and heavenly attainments, and sweet and blessed ravishments of soul; and by this means they come to conclude against the works of the blessed Spirit in them, and to perplex and disquiet their own souls with needless fears, doubts, and jealousies. Others, on the other hand, are apt to judge of themselves, and to try themselves, by such things, rules, or evidences that are too short, and will certainly leave them short of heaven; as a fair, civil deportment among all sorts and ranks of men; a good nature, paying every man their due; charity to the poor; a good name or fame among men, yea, happily among good men; outward exercises of religion, as hearing, praying, reading, fasting; or that they are good negative Christians, that is to say, that they are no drunkards, swearers, liars, adulterers, extortioners, oppressors, Sabbath-breakers, persecutors, &c., Mat 23:4, seq., Luk 18:9-12, Isa 1:2-5. Thus far Paul attained before his conversion, but if he had gone no further he had been a lost man for ever, Php 3:4-6, Gal 6:3, Isa 33:14; and by this means they flatter themselves into misery, and are still a-dreaming of going to heaven till they drop into hell, and awake with everlasting flames about their ears. And oh that all that preach or print, read or write, would seriously lay this to heart! Some, in describing the state of a Christian, shew rather what of right it should be than what indeed it is; they shew what Christians ought to be rather than what they find themselves to be, and so they become a double-edged sword to many Christians. But, The fourth maxim or consideration.

IV. Fourthly, consider, Where there is any one grace in truth, there is every grace in truth, though every grace cannot be seen. Look, as a man may certainly know a wicked man by his living under the reign and dominion of any one sin, though he does not live under the power of other sins, because there is not any one sin mortified in that man that hath any one sin reigning in him, and that does not set himself in good earnest against it as his greatest enemy; so when a Christian can

but find any one grace in him, as love to the saints for grace sake, for godliness sake, he may safely conclude that there is in him all other graces. Where there is but one link of this golden chain, there are all the links of this golden chain: John 13:35, 'By this shall all men know ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.' He doth not say if ye work miracles, if ye raise the dead, if ye give eyes to the blind, or ears to the deaf, or tongues to the dumb, or feet to the lame, but 'if ye love one another.' There have been many, yea, very many, precious Christians who have lived and died with a great deal of comfort and peace from the application of that text to their own souls: 1Jn 3:14, 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.' Sincere love to the brethren is a most evident sign of a Christian's being already passed or translated from death to life. Observe, the apostle doth not say, we think we have passed from death to life, but we know we have passed from death to life; nor he does not say, we conjecture we have passed from death to life, but we know we have passed from death to life; nor he does not say, we hope we are passed from death to life, but we are assured that we are passed from death to life, that is, from a state of nature into a state of grace, 'because we love the brethren.' For ever remember this, when all other evidences have failed many gracious Christians, and all other texts of Scripture have afforded them no comfort, here they have anchored, here they have found rest for their distressed souls; and upon this one single plank, this one evidence, they have swam safely and comfortably unto the haven of eternal happiness. Every real Christian hath in some measure every sanctifying grace in him. As a child so soon as it is born is a perfect man for integrity of parts and entireness of limbs, though not for bigness and bulk of body, so every regenerate person, at the very first hour of his conversion, he is in part renewed in all parts; all the habits of grace are infused into the soul by the Spirit at once. At first conversion the soul is bespangled with every grace, though every grace is not then grown up to its full proportion or perfection; so that where there is one grace in truth, there is every grace in truth. That soul that can truly and seriously conclude that he has any one grace in him, that soul ought to conclude that there is every grace in him. Such as diligently search the Scripture shall find that true blessedness, happiness, and salvation is attributed to several signs: sometimes to the fear of God, sometimes to faith, sometimes to repentance, sometimes to love, sometimes to meekness, sometimes to humility, sometimes to patience, sometimes to poverty of spirit, sometimes to holy mourning, sometimes to hungering and thirsting after righteousness; so that if a godly man can find any one of these in himself, he may safely and groundedly conclude of his salvation and justification, though he cannot see all those signs in him.² There is no saint but may perceive one sign in him, when he cannot another. Now, he that can groundedly be persuaded of any one sign of grace, he may safely conclude he hath all the rest, though for the present he can neither see them nor feel them in himself. But, The fifth maxim or consideration.

V. Fifthly, consider, That the promises of God are a Christian's magna charta, his chiefest evidences for heaven. Divine promises are God's deed of gift; they are the only assurance which the saints have to shew for their right and title to Christ, to his blood, and to all the happiness and blessedness that comes by him. Look, as Judah by pleading and bringing forth the signet, the bracelets, and the staff, saved her life, Gen 38:18-27; so we by believing, pleading, and bringing forth the promises, must save our own souls. The promises are not only the food of faith, but also the very life and soul of faith; they are a mine of rich treasures, a garden full of the choicest and sweetest flowers; in them are wrapt up all celestial contentments and delights. And this is most certain, that all a Christian's conclusions of interest in any of those choice and precious privileges

which flow from the blood of Jesus Christ ought to be bottomed, grounded, and founded upon the rich and free promises of grace and mercy.

Quest. But how may a person come to know whether he has a real and saving interest in the promises, or no? Now, to this great question, I shall give these nine following answers:

[1.] First, A holy reliance, a holy resting, a holy staying of thy soul upon the promises, makes the promises thine own; yea, it makes all the good, and all the sweet, and all the happiness and blessedness that is wrapped up in the promises thine. Even as thy staying, relying, and resting on Christ makes Christ thine, and all that is in him, and that comes by him, thine, so thy staying and resting upon the promises makes them thine.

[2.] Secondly, If thy heart ordinarily, habitually, lies under the word of command, then the word of promise does assuredly belong to thy soul, Psa 119:6; Acts 13:22; Luk 1:5-6. There is no soul under heaven that commonly lies under the commanding power of the word, but that soul that has an interest in the word of promise. Men that have no interest in the word of promise, commonly live in the neglect of the word of command. If the word of command commonly carries thy soul, then the word of promise, without all peradventure, belongs to thy soul. Many deal with the commands of God as the heathens dealt with the commands of their gods; when their gods called for a man, they offered a candle; or as Hercules offered up a painted man, instead of a living man. Such as deal thus with the commands of God, they have no interest in the promises of God. Flesh and blood looks upon the commands of God as impossible to be obeyed, like the unbelieving spies; 'Oh we cannot conquer the land;' but faith and love, like Caleb and Joshua, conclude the land may be conquered, the commands may be evangelically obeyed; and accordingly they readily undertake it. Now, to such a frame of heart the promises are entailed. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If in the face of all objections, discouragements, and difficulties, thy soul be kept up in a waiting frame, for the fulfilling of the promises, as Abraham's was, Rom 4:1-25, then certainly the promises belong to thee. There are some promises that relate to the subduing of sin, as that, Jer 33:8; Eze 36:25-27; Mic 7:19; Psa 65:3. And there are other precious promises that relate to a growth in grace, as that, Mal 4:2; Job 17:9; Psa 92:12-14; Pro 4:18; Hos 14:5-7. Now, if thy heart be kept up in a waiting frame for the accomplishment of these promises, then they do certainly belong to thee. The same I may say of all other promises; the waiting soul shall be sure to speed, Psa 40:1-3; Isa 40:29-31, Isa 30:18; Heb 6:12, &c. God never did, nor never will, frustrate the expectations of the patient waiter, &c. But,

[4] Fourthly, He that hath those divine qualities or supernatural graces in him, to which the promises are made, as faith, repentance, love, fear, hope, uprightness, patience, a waiting frame, &c., he has an undoubted interest in the promises. He may lay his hand upon any promise, and say, this promise is mine; and all the blessings, the benefits, the heavenly treasure that is laid up in it, is mine. But,

[5.] Fifthly, He that lives upon the promises as his daily food, he has an unquestionable interest in the promises. Wicked men may make use of promises as of physic, in some cases, as when they are under anguish of spirit, or gripes of conscience, or in fear of hell; or else when they are under some outward wants or straits, &c., but he that lives upon them as his daily food, he has a most assured interest in them. Our outward man lives not upon kickshaws, though now and then we

may taste of them, but we live upon wholesome food; so here, no man lives upon the blessed promises as his appointed food, but he that has a real interest in the promises. Look, as there is a nourishment proper to every animal,—spiders feed on flies, moles on worms, the horse on grass, the lion on flesh, &c.,—so there is food, nourishment, that is proper for men's souls, viz., the precious promises and Christ's 'flesh,' which is meat indeed, and his blood, which is drink indeed, John 6:53, seq.; and he that daily feeds on this food will be happy for ever. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you are united and married to Christ by faith, then you have a real, a saving interest in the promises: Gal 3:29, 'And if you be Christ's, then are you Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' The promise is the jointure, and there is no way under heaven to enjoy the jointure but by matching with the person of Christ, Col 1:28; Heb 1:2; Rev 21:7. And faith is the grace of graces, by which the soul gives both its assent and consent to take the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is tendered and offered in the gospel, and is therefore called sometimes a receiving of Christ, John 1:12. The only way to enjoy a lady's jointure, is to marry her person; and so the only way to enjoy the promise of Christ, is to be willing to marry the person of Christ. It is our marriage union with Christ that gives us a right and title to all the promises of Christ: 2Co 1:20, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen.' All absolute and conditional promises, either of grace or unto grace, are made to us in Christ, and only enjoyed by our enjoying of Christ.

[7.] Seventhly, He that can clear his right to any one promise, he may safely and boldly conclude his interest in every promise. The promises are a golden chain, and he that has a right in one link of the chain, has a right in every link of the chain, 2Pe 1:5-7; Eph 5:22-23; 2Pe 1:4. As there is a chain of graces, so there is a chain of promises. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise, and truly say, This is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon every promise, and say, These are mine; he that is an heir to any one promise, he is an heir to every promise. Hence it is they are called 'heirs of promise,' Heb 6:17; not heirs of this promise or that, but of promise; that is, of every promise, or the covenant which comprehends all the precious promises of the gospel in it. Though the promises may be distinguished one from another, yet they may not be severed one from another; he that has a right to any one promise, he may safely infer his right to every promise. The whole covenant, which is a bundle of promises, is certainly thine, if any one promise be thine. The promises by a divine hand are mutually tied and linked together; and those whom God has joined together no man may put asunder. The promises can be no more divided than Christ can be divided, or than heaven can be divided. The promises are not like loose and unstrung pearls, but as pearls made into one entire chain. He that can lay his hand upon that promise, Mat 5:6, 'Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied,' and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon that promise, Mat 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God,' and say, This promise is mine; and the same he may say of the rest of the precious promises that are specified in Mat 5:3-5, Mat 5:7, Mat 5:9-11 of that chapter. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to them that love him, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to them that love him, and say, These are all mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to them that fear him, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may assuredly lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to them that fear him, and say, These are all mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to faith in Christ, to believing in Christ, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may safely lay his hand upon

every promise that God has made to faith in Christ, to believing in Christ, and say, All these promises are mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to the returning sinner, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may securely lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to the returning sinner, the repenting sinner, and say, All these are mine. He that can lay his hand upon any one promise that God has made to the waiting soul, and truly say, This promise is mine, he may without all peradventure lay his hand upon every promise that God has made to the waiting soul, and say, All these are mine. Prove but your right in one, and you may safely infer your right to all. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If in the times of your greatest outward and inward straits and trials, when you are most sadly and sorely put to it, you fly to the precious promises, as to your surest and choicest city of refuge, then certainly you have an interest in them. Thus Abraham did, Rom 4:17-22; and thus Jacob did, Gen 32:6-12 compared; and thus Sarah did, Heb 11:11; and thus Moses did, Num 10:29; and thus Jehoshaphat did, 2Ch 20:1, 2Ch 20:10 compared with the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of that chapter; and this was David's common practice: Psa 27:12-13, and Psa 9:1-10, compared, and Psa 119:49-50. Turn to these scriptures, and ponder upon them. And so when a man is under the guilt of sin, he flies to promises of pardon and forgiveness, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, Num 14:19, Isa 55:7; Jer 33:8; Isa 40:1-2; Isa 43:25; Mic 7:18; Jer 31:34; Exo 34:7; Dan 9:9. And so when a man is under the strength, power, and prevalency of sin, he runs to such promises wherein God has engaged himself to subdue the sins of his people, and to purge and cleanse away the sins of his people, Mic 7:19; Rom 6:14; Psa 65:3; Isa 1:25; Mal 3:3; Zec 13:9; Isa 27:9; Mat 3:12; Eze 36:25, Eze 36:33; Jer 33:8, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge. And so when a man is deserted, he runs to such promises as are proper to that state, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, Mic 7:19; Isa 54:7-10; Psa 5:12; Psa 84:10; Psa 97:11; Psa 112:4; Isa 49:14-16. And so when a man is tempted, he runs to such supporting, succouring, and encouraging promises as are most suitable to that state, as to his surest and choicest city of refuge, 1Co 10:13; Heb 2:18; Rom 16:20; Jas 4:7. Now certainly, such as in all their inward and outward straits run thus to the promises, as to their surest and choicest city of refuge, they have an unquestionable interest in the promises. The rich man's wealth is his strong city, Pro 10:15. Wealthy world-lings, in times of distress and danger, do run to their hoards and heaps of riches, as to a strong city that is able to withstand all sieges and assaults, and to be safety and security to them; so when once a man makes the precious promises to be his strong city, and runs to them in the day of his distress and dangers, as his only safety and security, then he has doubtless an interest in them. But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, If you daily present a greater and a choicer good in the promises to your souls than any this world affords, then certainly you have an interest in the promises. If when honours, or riches, or pleasures, or the applause of men do present themselves unto you, you can readily present to your own souls higher honours in the promise, 1Sa 2:30; Luk 12:32; Rev 2:17, Rev 2:26-27; Rev 3:5, Rev 3:12, Rev 3:21; Rev 5:10; and more durable riches in the promise, Pro 8:18; 1Pe 3:4; and sweeter and choicer pleasures in the promise, Psa 16:11; Isa 12:3, Isa 35:2, Isa 35:10; Jer 33:9, Jer 33:11; Psa 132:16; and greater applause in the promise, Mat 10:32, 'Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;' ay, and before the angels too, Luk 12:8; Mat 25:31-41; 1Co 6:2-3; 2Th 1:6-10; Rev 3:9; Isa 9:12-14; then certainly you have an interest in the promise. When a man can shew his

own heart daily, in the glass of the promises, a greater worth, excellency, and glory, than all this world affords, without all controversy he has an interest in the promises. Thus those worthies, of whom this world was not worthy, Heb 11:1-40, and the martyrs in all ages, did commonly present better, higher, and greater things to their own souls in the promises, than any their adversaries were able to propose to draw them off from Christ, their profession or principles, &c., and by this means they did very courageously and honourably maintain their ground in the face of all the gay and golden temptations that they met withal. *Crudelitas vestra, gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory, said they in Tertullian; and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven. Basil will tell you, that the most cruel martyrdom is but a crafty trick to escape death, to pass from life to life, as he speaks. It can be but a day's journey between the cross and paradise. Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short. 'A little storm,' as one said of Julian's persecution, 'and an eternal calm follows.' Adrianus, seeing the martyrs suffer cheerfully such grievous and dreadful things, asked, Why they would endure such misery, when they might, by retracting, free themselves; upon which one of them alleged that text, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1Co 2:9. The naming of the text, and seeing them suffer such hard things cheerfully, did, by a blessing from on high, so really and effectually convert him, that afterwards he became a martyr too. When we see poor, weak, feeble Christians defying their torments, conquering in the midst of sufferings, singing in prison, as Paul and Silas did, Acts 16:25; kissing the stake, as Henry Voes did; clapping their hands when they were half consumed with fire, as Hawkes did;⁴ blessing God that ever they were born to see that day, as John Noyes did; calling their execution day their wedding day, as Bishop Ridley did;⁶ we cannot but conclude that they had an eye to 'the recompence of reward,' and they saw such great, and sweet, and glorious things in the promises, that did so refresh, delight, and ravish their hearts, and transport their souls, that all their heavy afflictions seemed light, and their long afflictions short, and their most bitter afflictions sweet and easy to them. But, The sixth maxim of consideration.

VI. Sixthly, Consider, that it is granted on all hands, that the least degree of grace, if true, is sufficient to salvation; for the promises of life and glory, of remission and salvation, of everlasting happiness and blessedness, are not made over to degrees of grace, but to the truth of grace; not to faith in triumph, but to faith in truth; and therefore the sense and evidence of the least grace, yea, of the least degree of the least grace, may afford some measure of assurance. Grace is the fruit of the Spirit, Gal 5:22; and the tree is known by his fruit, Mat 12:33; Mark 16:16; John 3:16, John 3:36; Mat 5:1, seq.; John 6:40. I do not say, that weak grace will afford a strong assurance, or a full assurance, for that rather arises from strength of grace than from truth of grace, but I say, weak grace may afford some assurance. And oh, that all weak Christians would seriously lay this to heart, for it may serve to relieve them against many fears, doubts, discouragements, and jealousies, which do much disturb the peace and comfort of their precious souls. Though the least measures of grace cannot satisfy a sincere Christian, yet they ought to quiet his conscience, and cheer his heart, and confirm his judgment of his interest in Christ. The least measure of grace is like a diamond, very little in bulk, but of high price and mighty value, and accordingly we are to improve it for our comfort and encouragement. A goldsmith makes reckoning of the least filings of gold, and so should we of the least measures of grace. A man may read the king's image upon a silver penny, as well as upon a larger piece of coin. The least dram of grace bears the image of God upon it; and why then should it not evidence the goodness and happiness of a Christian's

estate? It is a true saying, that the assurance of an eternal life is the life of this temporal life. I have read that Mr Jordain, one of the aldermen of the city of Exeter, would use to ask grown professors, whether they had any assurance; which if they denied, he would tell them, that he was even ashamed of them; 'In good earnest,' saith he, I would study the promises, and go into my closet, and lock the door, and there plead them to God, and say, that I would not go forth till he gave me some sense of his love.' He would often mention and try himself by these three marks: first, a sincere desire to fear the name of God, which he grounded upon that Neh 1:11; secondly, a sincere desire to do the will of God in all things required, which he grounded upon Psa 119:6; thirdly, a full purpose of heart to cleave to the Lord, which he grounded upon Acts 11:23. These he would often press upon others, and these he frequently tried himself by, and from these he had much assurance and comfort. Mr Stephen Marshal, in a sermon of his on Isa 9:2, saith, 'Look and examine, whether thou dost not loathe thyself as a base creature; and dost thou make this nothing? Secondly, Dost thou not in thy heart value and prize the meanest child of God more than the greatest man in the world, that have not the image of God, the image of grace and holiness stamped upon them? I pray God,' saith Mr Marshal, 'that many of God's people do not want these evidences.' 'If our souls,' saith another, 'shall like of Christ for a suitor, when we find no other jointure but the cross, we may be sure we are Christians. A man may want the feeling of his faith, and cry and call again and again for it, and feel nothing all this while, and yet nevertheless have true and sound faith; for the feeling of and mourning for the want of faith, and the earnest and constant desire of it, is an infallible sign of faith. For this is a sure rule, that so long as one feeleth himself sick he is not dead; and the high estimation of faith, joined with a vehement desire of it, is a singular evidence that there is a sound and lively root of faith in our hearts.' 'All the elect of God,' saith another,⁴ 'shall have the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon their hearts, sooner or later. I do not press the having of these things perfectly, but sincerely; an elect person may want many a degree of grace, but if he have them in sincerity, though in the least measure, it is a sufficient evidence of his election.' 'An earnest,' saith Dr Sibbes, 'is little in regard of the whole; perhaps we have but a shilling to secure us of many pounds; so then the point is this, that howsoever we may be assured of our estate in grace, and likewise that we shall hold out, yet the ground of this assurance is not from any great measure of grace; but though it be little in quantity, it may be great in assurance and security. As we value an earnest, not for the worth that is in itself, but because it assures us of a great bargain; we have an eye more to the consummation of the bargain, than to the quantity of the earnest; so it is here, grace is but an earnest; yet notwithstanding, though it be little, as an earnest is, yet it is great in assurance and validity, answerable to the relation of that it hath to assure us. Though grace be little, yet as little as it is, seeing it is an earnest, and 'the first fruits,' as the apostle saith,—which were but little in regard of the whole harvest,—yet it is of the nature of the whole, and thereupon it comes to secure. A spark of fire is but little, yet it is fire as well as the whole element of fire; and a drop of water is but little, yet it is water as well as the whole ocean. When a man is in a dark place, put the case it be in a dungeon, if he have but a little light shining in to him from a little crevice, that little light discovers that the day is broke, that the sun is risen. Put the case there be but one grape on a vine, it shews that it is a vine, and that the vine is not dead; so put the case that there be but the appearance of a little grace in a Christian, perhaps the Spirit of God appears but in one grace in him at that time, yet that one grace sheweth that we are vines, and not thistles, or thorns, or base plants, and it shews that there is life in the root.' Thus you see how fully this reverend doctor

speaks to the case. That friend that writes the life and death of Mr John Murcot, once preacher of the gospel at Dublin, saith, 'That in preparation for the supper ordinance, he would bring himself unto the test, and to say the truth, was very clear in the discovering and making out his own condition, being well acquainted with the way of God's dealing with the soul, and with the way of the soul's closing with Christ. Instance, April 3, 1653. Upon search I find, 1. Myself an undone creature. 2. That the Lord Jesus sufficiently satisfied as mediator the law for sin. 3. That he is freely offered in the gospel. 4. So far as I know my own heart, I do through mercy heartily consent that he only shall be my Saviour; not my works or duties, which I do only in obedience to him. 5. If I know my heart, I would be ruled by his word and Spirit.' 'Behold, in a few words,' saith he that writes his life and death, 'the sum and substance of the gospel.' By these instances we may see that some of the precious servants of God have found a great deal of comfort, support, rest, content, and some measure of assurance, from a lower rank of evidences, than those that many strong Christians do reach unto, &c. But, The seventh maxim or consideration.

VII. Seventhly, Consider, that all men and women that are desirous to know how it will go with them in another world, they must peremptorily resolve to be determined by Scripture in the great matters of their interest in Christ. This blessed scripture is the great uncontroverted rule, and therefore if a person can prove from Scripture that his graces are true, or that he is in a gracious estate, or that he has an interest in Christ, or that he has savingly, graciously stricken covenant with God, then he must resolutely and peremptorily resolve to grant so much as unchangeably to acquiesce in it, to stick fast to it, and to hear nothing against it from the world, the flesh, or the devil. God hath plainly told us in his blessed word who shall be saved, and who shall be damned; though not by name, yet by the qualifications by which they are described in the Bible. There are the statute laws of heaven, and the standing rule by which all must be tried. Every man must stand or fall, be eternally blessed or eternally miserable, as his condition is consonant to or various from the infallible characters of saving grace contained in the holy Scripture. Witness that Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or no morning) in them.' So John 12:48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' Mat 5:18, 'For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' So John 10:35, 'And the Scripture cannot be broken,' or violated, or made void. But though this be an indispensable duty, yet certainly there is, especially in times of great afflictions, temptations, desertions, fears, and doubts, a very great aptness and proneness in Christians to expect strange means rather than right means, and new means rather than old means, and invented means rather than appointed means, and to build their faith upon something beside the word, or that is without the compass of the word, rather than upon the plain and naked word itself; being in this very like to many weak, crazy, distempered, and diseased patients, that are more ready to fancy every new medicine and new doctor they hear of, and to be tampering with them, than to expect a recovery, by going through a course of physic prescribed by the physician that best understands their diseases, and the most proper and effectual means for their recoveries. You know when Naaman the Assyrian came to the prophet Elisha to be cured of his leprosy, he only sent out a messenger to him, who bid him go and wash seven times in Jordan, and his flesh should come again unto him, and he should be clean, 2Ki 5:10; but Naaman's blood rises, and his heart swells, and he grows very wroth, and all because he did not like the means prescribed by the prophet, and because he thought in his own heart that the prophet would have

used more likely means to have wrought the cure, 2Ki 5:11-12. So many Christians, when they lie under great agonies and sore perplexities of soul, and are encouraged to act faith upon the promises, and to rest their weary souls upon the word of grace, they are ready to think and say that these things, these means, will never heal them, nor comfort them, nor be a relief or support unto them, unless the Lord does from heaven, by extraordinary revelations, visions, signs, and miracles, confirm his promises to them; and hereupon they make light of the blessed scriptures, which are the springs of life, and the only bottom upon which all our comforts, peace, and happiness is to be built; yea, they relinquish that more sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place, 2Pe 1:19. Certainly the acting of faith on the precious promises, and the cleaving of the soul unto those blessed truths declared in the gospel of grace, is the most sure, ready, and compendious way of obtaining a blessed assurance, and a full establishment of heart, in all sound, solid, and abiding joy and peace, Eph 1:13; and therefore Luther, though, as he confesseth, he was often tempted to ask for signs, apparitions, and revelations from heaven to confirm him in his way, yet tells us how strongly he did withstand them, *pactum feci domino Deo meo, &c.* I have, saith he, indented with the Lord my God, that he would never send me dreams, visions, angels, for I am well contented with this gift, that I have the holy Scripture, which doth abundantly teach and supply all necessities for this life, and that also which is to come. Certainly Austin hit the mark, when he prayed, 'Lord, let thy holy Scriptures be my pure delights, in which I can neither deceive, or ever be deceived.' Certainly the balance of the sanctuary should weigh all the oracles of God, decide all, and the rule of God's word be the square and judge of all. O sirs! dare you venture your souls upon it, that the blessed Scriptures are false, that they are but a fable? dare you stand forth and say, If the Scriptures be not a lie, let us be damned for ever and ever? dare you stand up and say, We are freely contented that the everlasting worm shall gnaw on our hearts for ever, and that our bodies and souls shall for ever and ever lie burning in infernal flames, if the scriptures prove not at last a cheat, a deceit, a mere forgery and imposture? Now, if you dare not thus to say, and thus to venture, then peremptorily resolve to be determined by Scripture, in the great concernments of your precious souls. They that would take their parts in promised comforts, they must follow the voice of the word, and subscribe to the sentence of conscience, following that word. If the word approve of thee, as sound and sincere with God, assuredly thou art so, for that rule cannot err. If the word saith that thy heart is right with God, thou must maintain that testimony against all disputes whatever. Never enter into dispute with Satan, or thine own self, about thy estate, but by taking and making the Scripture the judge of the controversy. When fears rise high, you say you shall never have mercy! But doth the word say so? The Lord never gave himself to me! But doth the word say so? Never was any as I am! But doth the word say so? I cannot see, nor conceive, nor think, that the Lord hath any love for me! But doth the word say so? yea, doth not the word say, that his 'thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor his ways as your ways'? But as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways; and his thoughts than your thoughts,' Isa 55:8-9. I have not that peace and joy that others have, therefore the Lord intends no good towards me! But doth the word say so? Oh! but if my inside were but turned outward, good men would loathe me, and wicked men would laugh at me! But doth the word say so? Oh! but my heart was never right with God! But doth the word say so? Oh! but that which I have taken all this while for saving grace is but common grace! But doth the word say so? Oh! but the face of God is hid from me, my sun is set in a cloud, and will never rise more! But doth the word say so? Oh! but Satan is let loose upon me, and therefore God hates

me! But doth the word say so? yea, doth not the word tell you, that those who have been most beloved of God, have been most tempted by Satan? Witness Christ, David, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, &c. Oh! but I am afflicted, so as never was any before me! But doth the word say so? Oh! let the word have the casting voice, and not thine own frail distempered reason. Oh! do not only hear what sin, and Satan, and thine own heart can say against thee, but hear also what the word of the Lord Jesus can say for thee. Let the word of the Lord be judge on both sides, and then all will be well.

I know that the impenitent and unbelieving person, that lives and dies without grace in his heart, and an interest in Christ, shall as certainly be damned, as if I saw him this very moment under everlasting burnings; because God in the Scripture has said it, Mark 16:16; John 3:18-36; Rev 21:8; Rom 2:4-5; 1Co 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Heb 12:14. And I know that the holy, humble, true, penitent, believing, self-denying, and sin-mortifying Christian, shall be as certainly saved, as if at this very time I saw him in actual possession of glory; because God in the Scripture has said it, Mat 5:3-12; Rom 8:1-13; Acts 10:43; John 3:15-16, John 3:36; John 6:37-40, &c. O sirs! no man in his wits dares dispute against the authority of Scripture, or deny it, as false and erroneous; and therefore if the Scripture say a man has grace, he ought in conscience to subscribe to it against all objections or temptations to the contrary. For ever remember this, till a man comes to be willing to have his spiritual and eternal estate to be determined by Scripture, he will never enjoy any settled rest or quiet in his spirit. When once the goodness of a man's estate is cleared up to him by the word, he is never to regard what Satan or carnal reason objects against him. Satan is a liar and a deceiver of near six thousand years' standing; he is full of envy, and full of malice, and full of wiles, devices and fetches, and therefore give no credit to any of his reports against the report of the word, but stand by the testimony of the word, and the witness of your own consciences, against all Satan's cavils, temptations, objections and suggestions; and then, and not till then, will you find rest to your souls. He that would hold on cheerfully and resolutely in a Christian course, and go merrily to his grave, and singing to heaven, he must maintain the testimony of the word against all the gainsayings of sense or carnal reason; he must hear nothing, nor believe nothing against the word, nor against the goodness and happiness of his own estate or condition, which has been evidenced to him from the word. Men will not be easily baffled out of their estates. If some great man should come and lay claim to your estates, you will not presently give them up, though your evidences are not at hand, or though they are blotted, or though perhaps you cannot clearly make out your title, yet you will not tamely and quietly give up your estates; and yet how ready are many Christians, upon every clamour of Satan against their souls and spiritual estates, to give up all, and to conclude that they are hypocrites, and have no true grace and spiritual life in them! &c. But, The eighth maxim or consideration.

VIII. Eighthly, Consider, that a godly man may not only come to a sure knowledge of his gracious estate, but it is also more easily attainable than many,—may I not say, than most,—do apprehend or believe; for if a gracious man will but argue rationally from Scripture, he shall be forced to conclude that he has grace, and that he has an interest in Christ, and that he shall be saved, unless he be resolved beforehand boldly to deny Scripture truths. Sirs! look in what way the spirit of bondage doth ordinarily work fear, terror, and horror in the hearts of unconverted persons, in the same way the Spirit of adoption doth ordinarily work hope and assurance in the hearts of the saints, Rom 8:15; John 16:8. Now, the spirit of bondage commonly awakens secure sinners, and

fills the heart and consciences of poor sinners with fear, horror, and amazement, by setting home upon their souls such practical syllogisms as these:

'Every liar shall have his portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,' Rev 21:8. But I am a liar;

Therefore I shall have my portion in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Or thus:

'He that believeth not is condemned already,' John 3:18.

I believe not;

Therefore I am condemned already. Or thus:

'He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and hath not eternal life abiding in him,' 1Jn 3:15.

I hate my brother;

Therefore I am a murderer, and have not eternal life abiding in me. Or thus:

'Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of his Son,' 2Th 1:7-8.

I know not God, I obey not the gospel of his Son;

Therefore Christ shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on me. Or thus:

'The wicked shall be turned into hell,' Psa 9:17.

I am wicked;

Therefore I shall be turned into hell.

Now in like manner the Spirit of adoption brings the 'heirs of the promise,' Heb 6:17, to the assurance of hope, by setting home such practical syllogisms as these;—

[1.] First, Whosoever truly and heartily receives the Lord Jesus Christ, are truly and justly reputed to be the sons of God, John 1:12. But I have received Christ all the ways that the word there can import; I am heartily willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in all his offices, viz., as a king to rule me, a prophet to teach and instruct me, and a priest to offer and intercede for me; I am willing to receive him as a sanctifier, as well as a Saviour, and to receive him as my Lord, as well as to receive him as my Redeemer, and to receive him upon his own terms, viz., of taking up his cross, denying myself and following of him; therefore I may safely, boldly, plainly and warrantably conclude that I am a son of God, and that I have an interest in God, according to the scripture last cited: which scripture cannot be broken, nor cannot fail, nor cannot be unbound or loosed, as the Greek word in that John 10:35 imports, &c.

[2.] Secondly, A gracious soul may argue thus: All the great and precious promises concerning everlasting happiness and blessedness, are made over to faith and repentance, as the Scriptures do abundantly evidence. Now, he that really finds faith and repentance wrought in his soul, so that he is able to say I am a repenting and a believing sinner, he may truly and safely conclude that he shall be saved; for all the promises of eternal happiness and blessedness do run out with a full

stream to faith and repentance. I readily grant that a strong hope results from the clear evidence it hath of both these. We read in Scripture of a threefold assurance: as, first, an assurance of understanding, Col 2:2; secondly, an assurance of faith, Heb 10:22; thirdly, an assurance of hope, Heb 6:11. And it is a very choice note that acute D. A. hath upon it, viz., 'that these three make up one practical syllogism, wherein knowledge forms the proportion,³ faith makes the assumption, and hope draws the conclusion.' I do, saith the Christian, assuredly know from the word that cannot deceive me, that the believing and repenting sinner shall be saved; my conscience also tells me that I do unfeignedly believe and repent, therefore I do firmly hope that I shall, however vile and unworthy otherwise, be saved. Now mark, answerable to the evidence that a man hath in his own soul, that faith and repentance is wrought in him, so will his hope and assurance be weaker or stronger, more or less. If a man's evidence for the truth of his faith and repentance be dark, and weak, and low, and uncertain, his hope and assurance, that is born of these parents, as I may say, must needs partake of its parent's weakness and infirmities, and be itself weak, and dark, and low, and wavering, and uncertain, as they are from which it results. Hope and assurance ebbs and flows, as the evidence of a man's faith and repentance ebbs and flows.

Assurance cannot be ordinarily had without a serious examination of our hearts; for assurance is the certain knowledge of the conclusion drawn from the premises, one out of scripture, the other by a reflect act of the understanding or conscience, thus: He that believes and repents shall certainly be saved, that is the voice of the word of God; then by the search of a man's own heart, he must be able to say, But I believe and repent; and from these two doth result this assurance, that he may safely conclude, Therefore I shall be saved. And oh that all Christians were so wise, as seriously to ponder upon these things!

[3.] Thirdly, A godly man may argue thus: He that hath respect unto all God's commands shall never be ashamed. Psa 119:6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' He that is so honest and faithful with God, as to do his best, shall find that God will be so gracious as to pardon his worst. And this gospel indulgence David does more than hint at in those words, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'Then shall I not blush when my eye is to all thy commandments.' The traveller, you know, hath his eye towards the place where he is going; and though he be yet short of it, yet he is putting on and pressing forward all he can to reach it; so when the eye of a saint is to all the commands of God, and he is still a-pressing forwards toward full obedience, such a soul shall never be put to shame; it shall never be put to the blush, but it shall be able, living and dying, boldly to appear in the presence of the Lord. Mark, the psalmist doth not say, when I obey all thy commandments, but 'when I have respect to all thy commandments;' and that implies an inward awe and reverential eye towards every duty God requires. You know, to have respect unto a thing is this, when that of all others sways most with us, as when a master commands such a business, the servant will do it, because he respects him; and at his command he will go and come, though he will not at the command of any other. But I have respect unto all his commandments, therefore I shall never be ashamed.

[4.] Fourthly, A godly man may argue thus: He that loveth the brethren is passed from death to life, and consequently is in Christ, 1Jn 3:18-19. But I love the brethren, therefore I am passed from death to life, and so consequently am in Christ.

[5.] Fifthly, A godly man may argue thus: He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall certainly find mercy, Pro 28:13. But I confess and forsake my sins, 1, in respect of my sincere desires; 2, in respect of my gracious purposes; 3, in respect of my fixed resolutions; 4, in respect of my faithful and constant endeavours; therefore I shall certainly find mercy.

[6.] Sixthly, A godly man may argue thus: He that hath the testimony of a good conscience, he may rejoice in that testimony, 2Co 1:12; Isa 38:3. But I have the testimony of a good conscience, therefore I may rejoice in that testimony.

[7.] Seventhly, A godly man may argue thus, He over whom presumptuous sins has not dominion is upright: Psa 19:13, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright.' But presumptuous sins has not dominion over me; therefore I am upright. Mark, unfeigned willingness to part with every sin, and to mortify every sin, is a sure sign of uprightness, a sure sign of saving grace. When a man is sincerely willing to leave every sin, and to indulge himself in none, no, not his darling sin, it is a most certain sign of his integrity and sincerity, as you may evidently see by comparing of these scriptures together, Psa 17:1, Psa 17:3-4; Psa 119:1-3, Psa 119:6; Job 1:8, Job 2:3; Psa 18:23. I was upright before him. Oh! but how do you know that? how do you prove that? how are you assured of that? Why, by this, that 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.' Doubtless there is as much of the power of God required, and as much strength of grace required, and as much of the presence and assistance of the Spirit required, to work a man off from his bosom sins, from his darling sins, from his beloved sins, as there is required to work him off from all other sins. A conquest here clearly speaks out uprightness of heart.

[8.] Eighthly, A godly man may argue thus: He whose heart doth not condemn him, 1, of giving himself over to a voluntary serving of sin; or, 2, of making a trade of sin; or, 3, of allowing of himself in any course or way of sin; or, 4, of sinning, as wicked men sin, who sin studiously, resolutely, affectionately, delightfully, customarily, wilfully, or with their whole will, or with the full consent and sway of their souls; or, 5, of indulging, conniving or winking at any known sin; or, 6, of living in the daily neglect of any known positive duty against light and conscience, or of an ordinary shifting off of any known service that God requires of him in that place or station wherein God has set him, may have confidence, παρρησιαν, boldness, liberty of speech towards God, 1Jn 3:21. But my heart does not condemn me, 1, of giving myself over to a voluntary serving of sin; nor, 2, of making a trade of sin; nor, 3, of allowing myself in any course or way of sin; nor, 4, of sinning as wicked men sin, viz., studiously, resolutely, affectionately, delightfully, customarily, wilfully; nor, 5, of indulging, conniving, or winking at any known sin; nor, 6, of living in the daily neglect of any known duty against light and conscience; therefore I may have confidence or boldness towards God; I may use liberty of speech with God; I may use the liberty and freedom of a favourite of heaven; I may open my heart to God, as favourites do to their prince, viz., freely, familiarly, boldly. When Austin was converted, and his heart sincere with God, he could bless God that he could think of his former evil ways, which were very bad, without fear. Oh to what a height of holy boldness and familiarity with God had this man of God arrived to! But,

[9.] Ninthly, A godly man may argue thus, To such who are 'poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven belongs,' Mat 5:3. By poor in spirit is not meant poor in substance, that not being a thing praiseworthy in itself, but the broken and humble in heart, who hath no high thoughts or conceits of

himself, but is lowly in his own eyes, as a young child. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' that is, non habentes infantem spiritum, who hath no lofty or puffed up spirit. The poor in spirit are those that are lowly, being truly conscious of their own unworthiness. Nulli pauperes spiritu nisi humiles; none are poor in spirit but the humble. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' that is, blessed are they whose spirits are brought into such an humble gracious frame, as willingly, quietly, and contentedly to lie down in a poor low condition, when it is the pleasure of the Lord to bring them into such a condition. Blessed are the poor in spirit; that is, blessed are they who are truly and kindly apprehensive and sensible of their spiritual wants, poverty, and misery;³ that see their need of God's free grace to pardon them; that see their need of Christ's righteousness to clothe them; that see their need of the Spirit of Christ to purge, change, and sanctify them; that see their need of more heavenly wisdom to counsel them; that see their need of more of the power of God to support them, and of the goodness of God to supply them, and of the mercy of God to comfort them, and of the presence of God to refresh them, and of the patience of God to bear with them, &c.; that see their need of greater measures of faith to conquer their fears, and of greater measures of wisdom to walk holily, harmlessly, blamelessly, and exemplarily in the midst of temptations, snares, and dangers; and that see their need of greater measures of patience to bear their burdens without fretting or fainting; and that see their need of greater measures of zeal and courage to bear up bravely against all sorts of opposition, both from within and from without; and that see their need of greater measures of love to cleave to the Lamb, and to follow the Lamb whither ever he goes; and that see their need of living in a continual dependence upon God and Christ, for fresh influences, incomes, and supplies of grace, of comfort, of strength, whereby they may be enabled to act for God, and walk with God, and glorify God, and bring forth fruit to God, and withstand all temptations that tend to lead the heart from God; and that see nothing in themselves upon which they dare venture their everlasting estates, and therefore fly to the free, rich, sovereign, and glorious grace of God in Christ, as to their sure and only sanctuary: Luk 18:13, Php 3:9, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit;' that is, blessed are they that are truly apprehensive and sensible of their spiritual poverty, that see themselves fallen in the first Adam from all their primitive purity, excellency, and glory. There are five things we lost in our fall: 1, our holy image, and became vile; 2, our sonship, and became slaves; 3, our friendship, and became enemies; 4, our communion, and became strangers; 5, our glory, and became miserable. And that see an utter inability and insufficiency in themselves, and in all other creatures, to deliver them out of their fallen estate. But I am poor in spirit, therefore the kingdom of heaven belongs to me.

[10.] Tenthly, A godly man may argue thus, Such as are true mourners are blessed, and shall be comforted, Mat 5:4; that is, such as mourn for sin with an exceeding great mourning; that mourn for sin with a funeral sorrow, as the word πένθομα signifies; that mourn for sin as a man mourneth for the loss of his only son, Zec 12:10, or as Jacob mourned for Joseph, or as David mourned for Absalom, or as the people mourned for the loss of good Josiah, 2Ch 35:24-25; that mourn for secret sins as well as open, for sins against grace as well as for sins against the law; that mourn for sin as the greatest evil in the world, that mourn for his own sins, Eze 7:16; as David did, Psa 51:1-19.; or as Ephraim did, Jer 31:18-19; or as Peter did, Mat 26:75; or as Mary Magdalene did, Luk 7:38; and that mourns for the sins of others as well as for his own, as David did, Psa 119:136, Psa 119:158; or as Jeremiah did, Jer 13:17; or as Lot did, 2Pe 2:7-8; or as they did in that Eze 9:4; that mourns under the sense of his spiritual wants; that mourns under the sense of his spiritual losses, as loss of communion with God, loss of the favour of God, loss of the

presence of God, loss of the exercise of grace, loss of the joys of the Spirit, loss of inward peace, &c.; or that mourn not only for their own afflictions and miseries, but also for the afflictions and miseries of Joseph, as Nehemiah did, Neh 1:2-4; or as Jeremiah did, Jer 9:1-2; or as Christ did when he wept over Jerusalem, Luk 19:41-42; or that mourns because he cannot mourn for these things, or that mourns because he can mourn no more, or that mourns because God has so little honour in his heart, in his house, in his life, in the world, in the churches. But I am a true mourner, therefore I am blessed, and shall be comforted.

[11.] Eleventhly, A godly man may argue thus: They which truly 'hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed, and shall be filled,' Mat 5:6; or they that are hungering and thirsting, as the Greek runs, being the participle of the present tense, intimating, that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed. He that sees an absolute necessity of the righteousness of Christ to justify him, and to enable him to stand boldly before the throne of God; he that sees his own righteousness to be but as filthy rags, Isa 64:4; to be but as dross and dung, Php 3:7-8; he that sees the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his riches and righteousness, clearly and freely offered to poor sinners in the everlasting gospel; he that in the gospel-glass sees Christ to be made sin for them, that knew no sin, that they may be made the righteousness of God in him, 2Co 5:21; he that in the same glass sees Christ to be made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, to all those that are sincerely willing to make a venture of their immortal souls and eternal estates, upon him and his righteousness; and he that sees the righteousness of Christ to be a most perfect, pure, complete, spotless, matchless, infinite righteousness; and under these apprehensions and persuasions is carried out in earnest and unsatisfied hungerings and thirstings, to be made a partaker of this righteousness, and to be assured of this righteousness, and to put on this righteousness as a royal robe, Isa 61:10, he is the blessed soul; and he that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of Christ imparted, as well as after the righteousness of Christ imputed, after the righteousness of sanctification, as well as after the righteousness of justification, he is a blessed soul, and shall at last be filled. The righteousness of sanctification, or inherent righteousness, lies in the Spirit's infusing into the soul those holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces, that the apostle mentions in that Gal 5:22-23. These habits of grace, which are severally distinguished by the names of faith, love, hope, meekness, &c., are nothing else but the new nature or new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph 4:24. He that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, out of a deep serious sense of his own unrighteousness; he that hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, as earnestly as hungry men do for meat, or as thirsty men do for drink, or as the innocent person that is falsely charged or accused longs to be cleared and righted, or as Rachel did for children, or as David did after the water of the well of Bethlehem, or as the hunted hart doth after the water brooks; he that hungers and thirsts not after some righteousness only, but he that hungers and thirsts after all righteousness; he that hungers and thirsts not only after some grace, but all grace; not only after some holiness, but all holiness; he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, out of love to righteousness; he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, from a sight and sense of the loveliness and excellency that there is in righteousness, Php 3:10-15; he that hungers and thirsts after the highest degrees and measures of righteousness and holiness, Psal 63:1, Psal 63:8; he that primarily, chiefly, hungers and thirsts after righteousness and holiness, Jer 15:16; he that industriously hungers and thirsts after righteousness and holiness; he that ordinarily, habitually, constantly, hungers and thirsts after

righteousness and holiness: Psa 119:20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' By judgments we are to understand the statutes and commandments of God. Mark that word, 'at all times.' Bad men have their good moods, as good men have their bad moods. A bad man may, under gripes of conscience, a smarting rod, the approaches of death, or the fears of hell, or when he is sermon-sick, cry out to the Lord for grace, for righteousness, for holiness; but he is the only blessed man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness at all times, and that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, according to the other fore-mentioned short hints. He is certainly a blessed man, heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that hungers and thirsts in a right manner after the righteousness of justification, and after the righteousness of sanctification. But I do truly hunger and thirst after righteousness; therefore I am blessed, and shall be filled, &c.

[12.] Twelfthly, A godly man may argue thus: Such as are truly and graciously 'merciful, are blessed, and shall obtain mercy,' Mat 5:7. Mercy is a commiserating of another man's misery in our hearts, or a sorrow for another man's distress, or a heart-grieving for another man's grief, arising out of an unfeigned love unto the party afflicted. Or more plainly thus: mercy is a pitying of another man's misery, with a desire and endeavour to help him to the uttermost of our ability. The Hebrew for godly, **חַסִּיד**, chasid, signifies gracious, merciful. The more godly any man is, the more merciful that man will be. 'Blessed are the merciful,' that is, blessed are they that shew mercy to others, out of a deep sense of the mercy of God to them in Christ. Blessed are such who shew mercy out of love to mercy, out of a delight in mercy; blessed are such as shew mercy out of love and obedience to the God of mercy; blessed are such as shew mercy to men in misery, upon the account of the image of God, the glory of God that is stamped upon them; blessed are such as extend their piety and mercy, not only to men's bodies, but also to their precious and immortal souls. Soulmercy is the chief of mercies. The soul is the most precious jewel in all the world; it is a vessel of honour, it is a spark of glory, it is a bud of eternity, it is the price of blood, it is beautified with the image of God, it is adorned with the grace of God, and it is clothed with the righteousness of God. Such are blessed as shew mercy to others, from gracious motives and considerations, viz., it is free mercy that every day keeps hell and my soul asunder; it is mercy that daily pardons my sins; it is mercy that supplies all my inward and outward wants; it is mercy that preserves, and feeds, and clothes my outward man; and it is mercy that renews, strengthens, and prospers my inward man; it is mercy that has kept me many times from committing such and such sins; it is mercy that has kept me many a time from falling before such and such temptations; it is mercy that has many a time preserved me from being swallowed up by such and such inward and outward afflictions. Such as shew mercy out of a design to exalt and glorify the God of mercy; such who shew most mercy to them to whom God shews most mercy: these are blessed, and shall obtain mercy. Now mark, to such who are thus graciously, thus spiritually, thus divinely merciful, do these precious promises belong: Psa 12:1, 'Blessed is the man that considereth the poor and needy.' Pro 22:9, 'He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.' Pro 14:21, 'He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.' Pro 11:25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.' That 2Co 9:8 is very remarkable: 'And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' Behold, how words are here heaped up to make grace, and all grace, to abound; and who is it to? Unto the liberal man, the merciful man: Job 29:13, 'The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I

caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' Luk 6:38, 'Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.' Behold and wonder at the height of these expressions that you have in this text. We account it good measure when it is heaped up; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, that is more; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, and then heaped up and running over again, this is as much as possible can be made, this is as much as heart can wish. O sirs! those that are of merciful spirits, they shall have mercy heaped up, pressed down, and running over. Certainly that man must needs be in a happy and blessed condition, that can be in no condition wherein he shall not have mercy, yea, mercy heaped up and running over, to supply all his necessities: Mat 25:35, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.' Come, ye blessed, that is their estate; receive the kingdom, that is the issue and reward; and why so? 'I was hungry, and you gave me meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink,' &c. But I am truly and graciously merciful; therefore I am blessed, and shall obtain mercy, &c. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, A godly man may argue thus: They that are 'pure in heart are blessed, and shall see God,' that is, enjoy him, and live for ever with him, Mat 5:8. But I am pure in heart; therefore I am blessed, and shall see God. By the pure in heart, here in the text, we may safely understand the sincere and single-hearted Christian, in opposition to the double-minded Christian, as you may easily perceive by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Mark, purity is twofold: First, simple and absolute; and in this sense no man is pure in this life, no not one. Secondly, respective and in part, and that is the purity here meant. A pure heart is a plain, simple heart, without fraud or guile, like Nathanael, in whom there was no guile; it is a heart that is evangelically blameless and sincere. But, secondly, purity is opposed to mixture; purity consists in the immixedness of anything inferior. That metal we account pure metal, which hath not any baser than itself mixed with it. If you mix gold with silver, the silver is not made impure by the mixture of gold; but if you mix lead or tin with it, it is made impure. Remember once for all, viz., that a pure heart is such a one as hath cast off and cast out the love and allowance of every known sin, and mingles not with it, though never so small; such a heart as hath renounced every known way of sin. Though there is corruption remaining in it, &c., yet it can solemnly and seriously appeal to God, that there is no known way of sin, but it hates, and abhors, and strives against, and will upon no terms allow of. This heart, in the language of the gospel, is a pure heart; yea, it is such a heart as dares venture upon the trial of God himself. Psa 139:23-24, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' or any way of pain, or of grief, or of provocation, as the Hebrew hath it, or any course of sin that is grievous to God or man. A gracious heart, a pure heart, can neither allow of any way of wickedness, nor wallow in any way of wickedness, nor make a trade of any way of wickedness, nor give up itself to any way of wickedness. Though sin may cleave to a pure heart, as dross doth to silver, yet a pure heart will not mix nor mingle with sin. 'And lead me in the way everlasting,' or in the way of eternity, or in the way of antiquity, as the Hebrew hath it; that is, that good old way that leads to peace and rest, to heaven and happiness, Jer 6:16. Evangelical purity of heart lies in this, that it will not admit any known sin to mingle with the frame and purpose of the heart. A pure heart, like a pure fountain, will still be a-working and a-casting out the mud and filth that is in it. Though sin may cleave to a regenerate man, as dross doth to the silver, yet it mingles not with the regenerate part, nor the regenerate part mingles not with it, no more than oil mingles with the water, or water mingles with the oil. Now you know, though the water and the oil touch one another, yet they do not mingle one

with another; so though grace and sin, in a regenerate man, may as it were touch one another, yet they do not mingle one with another. Dear hearts! look, as we truly say, that gold is pure gold that is digged out of the mineral, though much dross may hang about it; and as we truly say, that such and such an air is pure air, though at times there be many fogs and mists within it; and as we truly say, that such and such springs are pure springs, though mud, and dirt, and filth may be lying at the bottom of those springs; and as we truly say, that face is a fair face, though it hath some freckles in it; so we may as truly say, that such and such a heart is a pure heart, though there may be much sinful dross and filth cleaving to it. The Jews report, that when Noah sent forth his sons to people the world, he delivered to every one of them some relics of old Adam. It may be fabulous for the history, but it is true in the morality; the relics of his sinful corruptions cleaves close to us all. Beloved! the best, the wisest, the holiest, and the most mortified Christians on earth, do carry about with them a body of sin and death, Rom 7:22-23; they have in them a fountain of original corruption, and from this fountain sin will still be arising, bubbling and a-boiling up as the scum in a pot over the fire. But mark, as in wine, or honey, or water, though scum and filth may arise, yet the wine, the honey, the water, will be still a-purging and purifying itself, and a-working and casting it out; so though sin, though corruption, though spiritual filth may, and too often doth, arise in a gracious heart, yet there is a spring of grace, a spring of living water in him, there is a holy cleansing and purifying disposition in a regenerate person, that will still be a-working and casting it out. But now mark, in men of impure hearts and lives, the scum doth not only arise, but it seethes and boils in. Eze 24:12, 'She wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her;' notwithstanding all the threatenings of God, and all the judgments of God upon her, yet her scum and filthiness boiled in. Though God boiled Jerusalem in the pot of his judgments, yet her scum and filth stuck to every side of her. Wicked men's scum and filth doth not only arise, but it also seethes and boils in, and mingles together with their spirits; but so doth not the scum and filth that rises in a gracious heart. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a swine delights to wallow in the mire. But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, A godly man may argue thus: Such as sin hath not a dominion over, are not under the law, but under grace. Rom 6:14, 'But sin hath not a dominion over me, therefore I am not under the law, but under grace.' Sin may rebel in a saint, but it shall never reign in a saint. Look, as those beasts, in that Dan 7:12, had their dominion taken away, though their lives were spared and prolonged for a season and a time; so when Christ and grace enters into the soul, they take away the dominion of sin, though they do for a time spare the life of sin. To prevent mistakes, premise with me briefly these few things: First, that in every regenerate man there are two men, an old man and a new man; or if you please, flesh and spirit, Rom 7:1-25. Secondly, The old man, the fleshly part, will incline the soul, and bias the soul, as well to sins against the gospel, as to sins against the law, and to great sins as well as small sins; witness Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Asa's oppression, David's murder and adultery, Solomon's idolatry, and Peter's blasphemy. Thirdly, The old man, the fleshly part, is as much in the will as in any other part of the regenerate man; and therefore, when he falls into heinous sins, he may fall into them with consent, delight and willingness, so far as his will is unrenewed. Though a real Christian be changed in every part, 1Th 5:23, yet it is but in part and imperfect. Fourthly, The old man, the fleshly part, is in a regenerate man's members, as well as in his will, and therefore they may be exercised and employed in and about those sins they have consented unto. Fifthly, High sinnings do waste and wound the conscience of a regenerate man, and lay him open to the sore rebukes of God, and call for great

repentance, and fresh and frequent applications of the blood of Christ. These things being premised, a question may be propounded, viz.:

Quest. What does the dominion of sin import, and wherein does it consist? Now to this considerable question, I shall give these eight following answers:

[1.] First, Sin is in dominion, when it hath the absolute and sovereign command of the soul, when it hath an uncontradicted power, when it hath such an authority in the soul to command it as a king doth his subjects, or as the centurion did his servants: Mat 8:9, 'For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' Now when sin has such a universal and easy authority and command over the whole man, body and soul, as that it can use them in the service of sin, when and where and how it pleaseth, then sin is in dominion. Where there is a peaceable, uncontrolled, willing, universal subjection of the whole man unto the commands of sin, there sin reigns, Eph 2:2-3. But,

[2.] Secondly, Sin is in dominion, when in a course, when ordinarily, there is a quiet, free, willing, and total yielding of subjection to the authority, law, and command of sin. Mark, it is a full possession, a plenary delight, and a constant content in sin, that speaks out the reign and dominion of sin, Rom 6:13-16. Dominion of sin imports a complete and universal resignation of the whole will and man to the obedience of it. That man that is wholly addicted and devoted to the ways of sin, that man is under the reign of sin; that man whose whole heart is universally married to his lusts, that man is under the dominion of his lusts. When a man does as freely, cheerfully, universally, and readily obey his lusts, as a child does his father, or a wife her husband, or a servant his master, or a subject his prince, then sin is in dominion. When a man sins with greediness, when with Ahab he 'sells himself to work wickedness,' 1Ki 21:25, when he commits 'wickedness with both hands,' Mic 7:3, when he gives himself up or over 'to all uncleanness and filthiness,' Eph 2:3, when he freely and voluntarily resigns and surrenders up his body and soul to the obedience of sin, then sin reigns, then it keeps the throne. Where the dominion of sin is erected, there it sits in the heart, as a king in his throne, and gives forth its laws and commands to the soul and body, and those commands are listened and consented to, approved and delighted in, &c. A subject cannot in a course more freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his prince, than a sinner doth in a course freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his lusts; and wherever this sad temper of spirit is, there is sin in dominion. But now mark, a regenerate man's will riseth against his sin, even then when he is worsted by sin and led captive by sin. A tyrant is obeyed unwillingly; the wills of his subjects rise up against his commands, and if his power were not superior to their wills, they would never obey him. Sin is no king, but a tyrant in the souls of the saints, and therefore their wills, so far as they are renewed, cannot but rise against it. O sirs! remember this for ever, that the molesting, vexing, and tempting power of sin, does not speak out its dominion; for sin may molest, and vex, and tempt as an enemy, where it doth not rule and reign as a king; as you see this day in many nations of the earth, there are many enemies that do molest, vex, and tempt the subjects of those nations, who yet are far enough off from having any rule or dominion over them; but then sin is in dominion, when it commands in the heart as a king in his throne, or as a lord in his house, or as a general in his army, freely, boldly, universally, cheerfully; and when the soul doth as freely, boldly, universally, and cheerfully subject itself to sin's commands. Where men commonly yield up their wills and

affections to the commands of sin, there sin reigns; and this is the case of every unregenerate man; but where the will does commonly make a stout opposition to sin, there it reigns not; now this is the case of every regenerate man. That prince cannot truly be said to reign in that kingdom, where commonly he meets with stout opposition; so it is here. A sincere Christian makes it the great business and work of his life, above all other things in this world, to make all the opposition he can against his lusts, and is thoroughly resolved to die fighting against his sins, as Pietro Candiano, one of the Dukes of Venice, died fighting against the Nauritines, with the weapons in his hand. As Cæsar said in a battle he fought against one of Pompey's sons, 'At other times I fought for honour, but now I fight for my life;' so a sincere Christian fights against his sins, as for his life. Castellio's opinion was vain, viz., that men were of three sorts, some unregenerate, some regenerating, and others regenerated, and that these last have no combat betwixt flesh and spirit, which is quite cross to Scripture, Rom 7:14-24, Gal 5:17, &c., and contrary to the experience of all saints, in all the ages of the world, &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, When a man is usually peremptory in his sinnings, in the face of all reprehensions and arguments that tend to dissuade him from sin, then sin is in dominion, Pro 29:1; Jer 5:3-4; and Jer 44:15-17. When the constant bent of the heart is inflamed towards sin, and when the desires of the soul are insatiably carried after sin, and when the resolutions of the soul are strongly and habitually set upon sin, then sin is in the throne, and then it reigns as a king. When God hedges up the sinner's way with thorns, yet the sinner will break through all to his sin, Hos 2:6-7; when life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, are set before the sinner, yet the sinner will be peremptory in his sinnings, though he lose his life, his soul, and all the glory of another world, then sin reigns, Deu 30:15-19, and Deu 11:26-29. But,

[4.] Fourthly, When men ordinarily, habitually, commonly are very careful, studious, and laborious to make provision for sin, then sin reigns: Rom 13:14, 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;' or, as the Greek has it, 'Make no projects for the flesh,' or 'cater not for the flesh.' When a man's head and heart is full of projects how to gratify this lust, and how to satisfy that lust, and how to fulfil the other lust, then sin reigns, then it is in its throne: Jas 4:3, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.' Both the law of God and nature requires me to make provision of raiment, food, and physic for my body, and for theirs that are under my charge; but it may cost me my life, my estate, yea, my very soul, to make provision for my lusts. Such as ask amiss shall be sure to ask and miss. He that would make God a bawd to his lusts, may ask long enough before God will answer. Of all affronts there is none to this of making God a servant to our lusts; and where this frame of spirit is, there sin is in dominion, Hos 2:8. He that abuses mercies to serve his lusts, fights against God with his own weapons, as David did against Goliath, and as Benhadad did against Ahab, with that very life that he had newly given him; such a soul, like the waters of Jordan, will at last certainly drop into the dead lake. But,

[5.] Fifthly, When sin is commonly, habitually sweet, and the soul takes a daily pleasure and delight in it, then it reigns; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. When a man daily takes as joyful contentation and satisfaction in his lusts, and in walking after the ways of his own heart, as he does in his highest outward enjoyments, or in his nearest and dearest relations, then certainly sin is in dominion. Such men as can go constantly on in a way of wickedness, merely to delight and content the flesh, such men are certainly under the power and reign of sin. Many of the heathens, who knew what rational delights were, scorned sensual

delights as inferior to them. These will one day rise in judgment against many of the professors in our days. I know there is no real pleasure or delight in sin. If intemperance could afford more pleasure than temperance, then Heliogabalus should have been more happy than Adam in paradise; yea, if there were the least real delight in sin, there could be no perfect hell, where men shall most perfectly sin, and most perfectly be tormented with their sins. 'Hark, scholar,' said the harlot to Apuleius, 'it is but a bitter sweet that you are so fond of.'³ When an asp stings a man, it doth at first tickle him, and make him laugh till the poison by little and little gets to his heart, and then it pains him more than before it delighted him. It is so with sin, it may tickle the soul at first, but it will pain it at last with a witness. I have read of a gallant addicted to uncleanness, who at last meeting with a beautiful dame, and having enjoyed his fleshly desires of her, he found her in the morning to be the dead body of one that he had formerly been naught with, which had been acted by the devil all night, and left dead again in the morning; so that the gallant's pleasure ended in no small terror. And thus it is doubtless with all sinful pleasures. What sin is there so sweet or profitable that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for? &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, When men commonly take part with sin, when they take up arms in the defence of sin, and in defiance of the commands of God, the motions of the Spirit, and the checks of conscience, then sin is in dominion. He that readily, resolvedly, and habitually fights sin's battles is sin's servant, and without all peradventure under the reign and dominion of sin. Look, as we groundedly conclude, that such men are under the reign and dominion of that king, that they readily, resolvedly, and habitually take up arms to fight for; so when the inward faculties of the soul, and the outward members of the body, do readily resolve, and habitually take up arms to fight for sin, then and there sin is in dominion, as you may plainly see by consulting the scriptures in the margin; but where the soul readily, resolvedly, and habitually strives against it, conflicts with it, and makes war against it, there it is not in dominion, there it reigns not, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² That man that can truly appeal to God, and say, Lord! thou that knowest all hearts and things, thou knowest that there is nothing under the whole heavens that I am so desirous and ambitious of as this, that my sins may be subdued, that my strongest lusts may be mortified, and that those very corruptions that my nature, constitution, and complexion is most inclined to, may be brought to an under;—that man that can appeal to God, and say, O Lord! whatever becomes of me, I will never be reconciled to any known sin; yea, Lord, though I should perish for ever, yet I am resolved to fight against my sins for ever; let God do what he will against me, I will do all I can against my sins, and to honour my God;—that man is not under the reign and dominion of sin. But,

[7] Seventhly, When sin commonly rises by opposition, then it reigns. Look, as grace, when it is in the throne, it rises by opposition: 2Sa 6:22, 'I will yet be more vile;' Mark 10:47-48, 'And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me'; so when sin is in the throne, it rises higher and higher by opposition. As the more water you cast upon lime, the more fiercely it burns; so when sin is in its reign and dominion, it flames out the more by opposition. Witness the Jews' malice and envy against Christ, which, when it received but a little easy, gentle check by Pilate, they cried out so much the more, 'Crucify him, crucify him,' Mark 15:12-14. A man that is under the reign and dominion of sin, is like the rainbow; the rainbow is never on that side of the world that the sun is, but wheresoever it appears, it is in opposition against the sun: if the sun be in the east, the rainbow is in the west, &c. Where

sin has the throne, it will still rise higher and higher by opposition. Reprove a swearer for swearing, and he will swear so much the more; yea, many times he will swear that he did not swear, when indeed he did; and so it holds in all other vices that the sinner is given up to. It is said of Catiline, that he was a compound and bundle of warring lusts and vices; the same may be said of all others, where sin is in dominion. But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, If the Lord Jesus Christ hath not dominion over you, then sin has certainly dominion over you, Rom 6:17-18. Christ hath no dominion over that soul that sin hath dominion over, and sin hath no dominion over that soul that Christ hath dominion over. Christ and sin cannot have dominion over the same soul at one and the same time; Christ's dominion is destructive, and inconsistent with sin's dominion, &c.

Quest. But how shall I know whether the Lord Jesus Christ hath dominion over my soul or no? How shall I know whether the Lord Jesus Christ be my Lord or no? For if I can but groundedly conclude that Christ is my Lord, then I may very boldly, safely, and undoubtedly conclude, that sin is not my Lord; but if Christ be not my Lord, I may more than fear that sin is certainly my Lord.

Ans. Sol. Canst thou truly say, in the presence of the great and glorious God, that is the trier and searcher of all hearts, that thou hast given up thy heart and life to the rule, authority, and government of Jesus Christ; and that thou hast chosen him to be thy sovereign Lord and King, and art truly willing to submit to his dominion, as the only precious and righteous, holy and heavenly, sweet and pleasant, profitable and comfortable, safe and best dominion in all the world; and to resign up thy heart, thy will, thy affections, thy life, thy all, really to Christ, wholly to Christ, and only to Christ? Canst thou truly say, O dear Lord Jesus! other lords, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, have had dominion too long over me; but now these lords I utterly renounce, I for ever renounce, and do give up myself to thee, as my only Lord, beseeching thee to rule and reign over me for ever and ever, Isa 26:13; O Lord, though sin rages, and Satan roars, and the world sometimes frowns, and sometimes fawns, yet I am resolved to own thee as my only Lord, and to serve thee as my only Lord, Jos 24:5; my greatest fear is of offending thee, and my chiefest care shall be to please thee, and my only joy shall be to be a praise, a name, and an honour to thee. O Lord, I can appeal to thee in the sincerity of my heart, that though I have many invincible weaknesses and infirmities that hang upon me, and though I am often worsted by my sins and overcome in an hour of temptation, yet thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know that I have given up my heart to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and do daily give it up to his rule and government; and it is the earnest desire of my soul, above all things in this world, that Jesus Christ may still set up his laws in my heart, and exercise his dominion over me. Now, doubtless there is not the weakest Christian in the world, but can venture himself upon such an appeal to God as this is; and without all peradventure, where such a frame and temper of spirit is, there the dominion of Jesus Christ is set up; and where the dominion of Christ is set up, there sin has no dominion; but where the dominion of Christ is not set up, there sin is in full dominion. Christ's dominion cannot consist with sin's dominion, nor sin's dominion cannot consist with Christ's dominion, Mat 6:24. Now by these eight things, if men are not resolved beforehand to put a cheat upon their own souls, they may know whether their sins have dominion over them or no, and so accordingly conclude for or against themselves. But,

[15.] Fifteenthly, and lastly, A godly man may argue thus: There is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom 8:1; but I walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; therefore there is no condemnation to me. Walking after the flesh notes a course of sin, and walking after the Spirit notes a course of godliness. Now, to such as keep off from a course of sin, and that keep on in a course of godliness, there is no condemnation, there is not one condemnation; for God the Father won't condemn such a person, nor Jesus Christ won't condemn such a person, nor the Holy Spirit won't condemn such a person, nor the word of grace won't condemn such a person, nor no commandment or threatenings will condemn such a person, no, nor such a man's own heart nor conscience, if it be rightly informed, won't condemn him; and therefore well may the Holy Ghost say to such a one, There is no condemnation to such a one; there is not one condemnation, &c.

Now thus you see, 'by comparing spiritual things with spiritual things,' and by a rational arguing from Scripture, a man may attain unto a comfortable certainty of his gracious state, and safely and groundedly conclude his interest in Christ. Now this assurance of God's favour, 'by the witnessing of our own spirits,' which assurance is deduced by way of argument syllogistically, is more easily attained than many—may I not say than most?—Christians imagine; for let a gracious man but clear himself of heart-condemning sins, and rationally argue as before has been hinted, and he will speedily reach to some comfortable, supporting, soul-satisfying and soul-quieting assurance, there being an infallible connection between the fore-mentioned graces and future glory, 1Jn 3:20-21. These fifteen arguments may well be looked upon as fifteen sure and infallible evidences of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's estate.

Oh that you would often, every day, think on this, viz. that the undoubted verity of God's promises proveth an inseparable connection between true faith and eternal glory: John 3:14-16, 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 5:24, 'Verily, verily'—these serious asseverations or protestations amount almost to an oath—'I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life.' John 3:36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.' He hath it in the promise, he hath it in the first-fruits, Rom 8:23; he hath it in the earnest, Eph 1:13-14; and he hath it in Christ his head, Eph 2:6. Mark 16:16, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.' 1Pe 2:6, 'Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.' John 6:40, 'And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.' John 6:47, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.' John 11:25, 'Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.' John 11:26, 'And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.' John 20:31, 'But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' Look, as certainly as the unbeliever shall be cast into outer darkness, so certainly shall the believer be partaker of the glorious inheritance of the saints in light; for certainly the promises are as true as the threatenings: Acts 16:30-31, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' The apostle speaks not

doubtingly, Perhaps thou shalt be saved; nor they do not say, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and it may be thou mayest go to heaven; but they speak boldly, confidently, peremptorily, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' Jos 23:14, Jos 21:45. O my soul! what greater certainty and security can any man have than the infallible promise of that God that is truth itself, who will not, who cannot, deny his word? But the same love and free grace that moved him to infuse grace into his children's souls, will move him also to keep the word that is gone out of his mouth, and to make good whatever he hath promised. Thus you evidently see that the promises prove an inseparable connection between grace and glory, between faith and everlasting life; so that, let me but prove that I have a saving faith, and the scriptures last cited prove infallibly that I shall be saved.

Oh labour as for life, daily to give a firm and fixed assent to the truth of those blessed promises last cited, and hold it as an indisputable and inviolable principle, that whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, or whosoever hath received Christ as his Lord and Saviour, shall be certainly saved. This is the person that hath the word, the promise, the covenant, the oath of that God that cannot possibly lie, or die, for the pardon of his sin, and for the salvation of his soul. Now, O my soul, what security couldst thou ask more of a deceitful man, than that which the great Jehovah, the faithful God, of his own accord, hath given to thee, viz., his word and his oath? Now not to believe God upon his promise and oath, is to make him a liar, yea, the worst of liars; yea, it is to do worse than the devils, for they 'believe and tremble.' Though the word of the Lord deserves the greatest credit that any mortals can give unto it, he being truth itself that hath said it, though it hath no oath nor no asseverations to be its surety, yet God, in his infinite condescending love to poor sinners, that he may sink the truth of what he saith deeper into the hearts and minds of his people, and leave the fairer and fuller print in our assents to the same, he sets on the word of promise with the weight of asseverations and oaths; yea, and to all these he hath annexed his broad seal, the Lord's supper, and the privy seal of his Spirit. Oh unreasonable unbelief! shall not the oath of God silence all disputes? A man would never desire of any honest man, so much as God hath condescended to, for the confirmation of our faith. Witness his promises, his covenant, his oath, and his seals; and therefore let us give glory to him by believing, and quietly rest upon his faithfulness.

O sirs! that soul that dares not take his sanctification as an evidence, yea, as a choice and sure evidence of his interest in Christ, and of the Lord's precious love to him, according to the promises of his favour and grace, several of which hath been but now under consideration, that soul ought to acknowledge it as his sin, yea, as his great sin, for which he deserves to be smartly rebuked, as making God a loud liar. O my friends! it is a spiritual peevishness and sinful crossness that keeps many good men and women long in a sad, dark, doubting, perplexed, and disconsolate condition; and certainly it is no small sin to set light by any work of the blessed Spirit, and the joy, comfort, and peace that we might have by it. Ah, how many are there that fear the Lord, who quench, grieve, vex, and provoke the Holy Spirit, by denying his work, and by quarrelling against themselves, and the blessed work of the Spirit in them! Certainly it is the duty of every Christian to hear as well what can be said for him, as what can be said against him. Many poor, weak, and yet sincere Christians, are often apt to be too sour, rigid and bitter against their own souls; they love to practise a merciless severity against themselves; they do not indifferently, impartially consider how the case stands between God and their own souls. It is in this case, as Solomon speaks in another: 'There is that maketh himself rich, and yet hath nothing; and there is that maketh himself

poor, and yet hath great riches,' Pro 13:7. That is, there be those in the world that pretend they are rich, and make a show before men as if they were men of great estates, whereas indeed they are exceeding poor and needy.

There are not a few that stretch their wing beyond their nest; that bear a port beyond their estates; that trick up themselves with other men's plumes, laying it on above measure in clothes, in high entertainments, in stately buildings, in great attendance, &c., when not worth one groat in all the world, but either they die in prison, or lay the key under the door, or compound for twelve pence in the pound, &c. And there are others again that are exceeding rich and wealthy, and yet feign themselves and look upon themselves to be very poor and needy. To apply this spiritually, it is the damning sin of the self-flattering hypocrite, to make himself rich, to make himself significant, to make his condition better than it is, Rev 3:17; and it is the vanity, the folly of some sincere Christians to make their condition worse than indeed it is, to make themselves more miserable and unhappy than indeed they are. Ah, Christians! it is sad with you, it is night with you, when you read over the evidences of God's love to your souls, as a man does a book which he intends to confute. Is it not sad when Christians shall study hard to find evasions to wheel off all those comforts, refreshings, cheerings, and supports, that are tendered to them, that are due to them, and that they may upon gospel grounds justly claim as their portion, as their inheritance? And oh that all such Christians would seriously and frequently lay to heart these eight things.

[1.] First, That they highly dishonour the blessed God, and the work of his grace, by denying that which he hath done for them and wrought in them.

[2.] Secondly, They are spiritual murderers, they are self-murderers, they are soul-murderers; for by this means they stab and wound their own precious souls and consciences through and through with many a deadly dart. Now is there any murder like to spiritual murder, to selfmurder, to soul-murder? Surely no. But,

[3.] Thirdly, They are thieves; for by this means they rob their own precious souls of that joy, peace, comfort, rest, content, assurance, and satisfaction which otherwise they might enjoy. Now there is no theft to spiritual theft; and of all spiritual theft, there is none to that which reaches the precious and immortal soul. Mark all prevalent disputes about our personal integrity, they do hold off the application and tastes of comfort, though they do not disannul the title and right. Even the good man will walk uncomfortably so long as he concludes and strongly fears that his estate is sinful; for sensible comfort riseth or falleth, cometh on or goeth off, according to the strength of our judgment and present apprehensions. Observe, it is not what indeed our estate is, but what we judge of it, which breeds in us sensible comfort or discomfort. A false heart may even break with a timpany of foolish joy upon an erring persuasion of his estate, and so may a sound sincere heart be very heavy and disconsolate upon an unsound misconstruction and judging of its true condition. But,

[4.] Fourthly, They bear false witness against Christ, his Spirit, their own souls, and the work of grace that is wrought in them. Oh how many dark, doubting, drooping Christians are there, who, if you would give them ten thousand worlds, yet would never be brought to bear false witness against their poorest neighbour, brother, or friend, and that out of conscience, because of that command, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness,' &c., who yet make no conscience, no bones of it, frequently to bear witness against the Lord Jesus Christ, and his gracious works upon their own

hearts! But,

[5.] Fifthly, They join with Satan and his work and his suggestions, and with that strong party he has in them, against the Lord Jesus Christ and his work, and his weak party in them. Sin is Satan's work, and grace is Christ's work. Now, how sad is it to see a Christian fall in with Satan's work in him, against the work of Christ that is in him. Satan has a strong party in their souls, and Christ has but a weak party. Now, how unjust is it for them to help the strong against the weak, when they should upon many accounts be a-helping the weak against the strong, a-helping the Lord against the mighty, a-helping weak grace against strong and mighty corruptions. Ah, how skilful and careful are many weak Christians to make head against the work of Christ in their own souls, and to plead hard for Satan and his works in them, as if they had received a fee from him to plead against Christ and their own souls. O Christians! that you would be wise at last, and let Baal plead for Baal, let Satan plead for himself, but do you plead for Christ and that seed of God that is in you. Well, remember this, that as fire is often hid under the embers, so grace is often hid under many foul distempers; and as a little fire is fire, though it be even smothered under the embers, so a little grace is grace, though it be even smothered under much corruption, 1Jn 3:9.

Now, by these short hints you may easily perceive how many royal commands these poor Christians transgress who deny and belie the blessed work of the Lord in them. But,

[6.] Sixthly, They rob the Spirit of all the honour and glory that is due unto him for that blessed work of grace and holiness that he has formed up in their hearts. Oh what a grief and dishonour must it be to the Holy Spirit, that when he hath put forth a power in men's hearts equivalent to that by which the world was created, and by which Christ was raised from the dead, we find it overlooked, and not at all acknowledged, Rom 8:11. Spiritus Sanctus est res delicata, the Holy Spirit is a very tender thing. But do these poor doubting souls carry it tenderly to him? Surely no. Dear Christians, the standing law of heaven is, 'Quench not the Spirit,' 1Th 5:19. Now, if the word Spirit is not here taken essentially for the three persons in Trinity, nor yet metonymically for the fruits of the Spirit, but hypostatically for the third person in Trinity, as some conceive, then you must remember that you may grieve and quench the Spirit (1.) not only by your enormities, Isa 63:10; (2.) not only by refusing the cordials and comforts that he brings to your doors, yea, that he puts to your mouths, Psa 77:2; (3.) not only slighting and despising his gracious actings in others, Acts 2:13; (4.) nor only by fathering those sins and vanities upon him that are only the brats and fruits of Satan and your own hearts; but also, (5.) in the fifth place, by misjudging and miscalling the precious grace that he has wrought in your souls, as by judging and calling your faith fancy, your sincerity hypocrisy, your wisdom folly, your light darkness, your zeal wild-fire, &c. Now, O sirs! will you make conscience, yea, much conscience, of quenching the Spirit in the four first respects, and will you make no conscience of quenching the Spirit in this fifth and last respect? Oh, how can this be? Oh, why should this be? But,

[7.] Seventhly, They keep grace at a very great under; for how can grace spring, and thrive, and flourish, and increase in the soul, when the soul is full of daily fears and doubts that the root of the matter is not in it, Job 19:28; or that the root is still unsound; or that the work that is passed upon it is not a work in power, 1Th 1:5; or that it is not a special and peculiar work, but some common work of the Spirit, which a man may have and go to hell? But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, They very much discourage, dishearten, and disanimate many poor, weak Christians, who observing of them, of whom they have had very high and honourable thoughts for the grace of God that they have judged to be in them, to be still a-questioning of their integrity, and still a-doubting of the graciousness and goodness of their conditions, do begin to question their own estates and conditions; yea, and many times peremptorily to conclude that surely they have no grace, they have no interest in Christ, and that all this while they have but put a cheat upon their own souls.

Now, oh that all poor, weak, dark, doubting Christians would never leave praying over these eight things, and pondering upon these eight things, till they are perfectly cured of that spiritual malady that they have been long labouring under, and which has been very prejudicial to the peace and comfort of their own souls.

Dear hearts, a gracious soul may safely, boldly, constantly, and groundedly say that which the word of the Lord saith. Now, the word of the Lord saith, that 'the poor in spirit are blessed, and that they that mourn are blessed, and that they that hunger and thirst after righteousness are blessed, and that they that are pure in heart are blessed,' Mat 5:3-4, Mat 5:6, Mat 5:8, and therefore he is blessed. And assuredly he that cannot embrace and seal to these as true and blessed evidences of a safe and happy condition, is greatly to lament and mourn over his unbelief, and earnestly to seek the Lord to persuade his heart and to satisfy and overpower his soul in this thing, as the poor man in the Gospel did: Mark 9:24, 'And straightway the father of the child cried out with tears, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.'

O sirs! the condition of the promises last cited being fulfilled, the promises themselves must certainly and infallibly be fulfilled, else the great and blessed God should lie, be unrighteous, unfaithful, and deny himself; which is as impossible as for God to die, or to send another Saviour, or to give his glory to graven images. Assuredly the too hard, the too harsh, the too severe, the too jealous thoughts and conjectures, and the too humble, if I may so speak, censures and surmises that many weak, doubting Christians have of themselves, or of the goodness or graciousness of their estates, by reason of the weakness of their graces, or depth of melancholy, or the present prevalency of some unmortified lusts, or the subtilty of Satan, shall never make void the faithfulness of God, or the promises of God, which in Christ Jesus are all yea and amen, 2Co 1:20. Doubtless God will never shut any poor, weak, doubting Christian out of heaven, because through bashfulness, or an excess of modesty, or the present darkness that is upon his understanding, or through the ungroundedness of some strong fears of an eternal miscarriage, he cannot entertain such good thoughts, such honest thoughts, such gracious thoughts of himself, or of the goodness or happiness of his condition, as he should entertain, and as he would entertain, if once he could but be too hard for the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Oh that you would remember this for ever, viz., that the Lord never makes any promises to support, comfort, cheer, and encourage his people against their sadness, darkness, doubts, and droopings, but they shall support, comfort, cheer, and encourage his poor people in that condition; for otherwise the Lord should provide means for an end, out of his infinite wisdom, love, and tender care and compassion towards his people, and yet they should never attain that end. But thus to imagine is no small folly; yea, it is little less than blasphemy. Well, sirs! this is to be for ever remembered, viz., that whatsoever gift or grace of God in man brings him within the compass of

God's promises of eternal favours and mercies, that gift, that grace, must needs be an infallible sign or evidence of salvation. But such are the gifts and graces specified in the fifteen particulars but now cited, and therefore that soul that really finds those gifts and graces in himself, or any of them, shall certainly be saved. But, The ninth maxim or consideration.

IX. Ninthly, Consider this, That in divers men there are divers degrees of assurance, and in one and the same gracious soul there are different degrees of assurance at divers times, but there is in no man at any time in this life perfection of degrees; for our understanding and knowledge in this life is imperfect both as to the faculty and its acts. 1Co 13:12, 'For now we see through a glass darkly (Gr., in a riddle), but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' A clear, distinct, immediate, full, and perfect knowledge of God is desirable on earth, but we shall never attain to it till we come to heaven. This well is deep, and for the most part we want a bucket to draw withal. The best of men can better tell what God is not than what he is; the most acute and judicious in divine knowledge have and must acknowledge their ignorance. Witness that great apostle Paul, who learned his divinity among the angels, and had the Holy Ghost for his immediate tutor, yet he confesses that he know but in part. Certainly there is no man under heaven that hath such a perfect, complete, and full assurance of his salvation, in an ordinary way, as that one degree cannot be added to the former. Neither is there any repugnancy in asserting an infallible assurance and denying a perfect assurance; for I infallibly know that there is a God, and that this God is holy, just, and true, and yet I have no perfect knowledge of a deity, nor of the holiness, justice, and truth of God, for in this life the most knowing man knows but in part. Dear friends! in the church of Christ there are believers of several growths: there are fathers, young men, children, and babes, 1Jn 2:13-14; 1Pe 2:2. And as in most families there are commonly more children and babes than grown men, so in the church of Christ there are commonly more weak, staggering, doubting Christians than there are strong ones, grown up to a full assurance. Some think that as soon as they be assured, they must needs be void of all fears, and filled with all joy in believing, but this is a real mistake; for glorious and ravishing joy is a separable accident from assurance; nor yet doth assurance exclude all doubts and fears, but only such doubts and fears as ariseth from infidelity and reigning hypocrisy. But, The tenth maxim or consideration.

X. Tenthly, Consider, We have no ground from Scripture to expect that God should, either by a voice from heaven, or by sending an angel from about his throne, or by any glorious apparitions or strong impressions, or by any extraordinary way of revelations, assure us that we do believe, or that our grace is true, or that our interest in God and Christ is certain, or that our pardon is sealed in heaven, or that we are in a justified state, and that we shall be at last undoubtedly saved. Oh no! But we are to use all those blessed helps and means that are appointed by God, and common to all believers, for the obtaining of a particular assurance that we are believers, and that our state is good, and that we have a special propriety in Christ and in all the fundamental good that comes by him. Mark, he that will receive no establishment, no comfort, no peace, no assurance, except it be administered by the hand of an angel, and witnessed to by some voice from heaven, &c., will certainly live and die without establishment, comfort, peace, or assurance. Gregory tells us of a religious lady of the empress's bed-chamber, whose name was Gregoria, that, being much troubled about her salvation, did write unto him, that she 'should never cease importuning of him till he had sent her word that he had received a revelation from heaven that her sins were

pardoned, and that she was saved.' To whom he returned this answer, 'That it was a hard and altogether a useless matter which she required of him; it was difficult for him to obtain, as being unworthy to have the secret counsels of God to be imparted to him, and it was as unprofitable for her to know: and that, first, because such a revelation might make her too secure; and secondly, because it was impossible for him to demonstrate and make known unto her or any other the truth and infallibility of the revelation which he had received to be from God, so that, should she afterwards call into question the truth of it, as well she might, her troubles and doubtings concerning her salvation would have been as great as they were before.' Oh therefore, let all believers that would have sure establishment, sound comfort, lasting peace, and true and sweet assurance of the love of God, and of their interest in Christ, &c., take heed of flying unto revelations, visions or voices from heaven, to assure them of their salvation, and of the love of God, and of their interest in Christ, &c. If you who are advantaged to consult history, please to do it, you will find upon record that where one hath been mistaken about searching his own heart, and trying his ways, and observing the frame and temper of his own spirit, many hundreds have been eternally deceived and deluded by voices, visions, apparitions, revelations, and strange impulses and strong impressions, especially among the Romanists, 2Th 2:9-12; and within these few years, have not many hundreds in this nation fallen under the same woful delusions, who are all for crying up a light within, and a Christ within? &c. And this you are seriously and conscientiously to observe in opposition to the papists, who boldly and stoutly affirm that assurance of a man's salvation can be had by no other means than by extraordinary revelation. Witness the council of Trent, who have long since said, 'That if any man say that he knoweth he shall certainly persevere, or infallibly be assured of his election, except he have this by special revelation, let him be Anathema.' Without all peradventure, God will one day cross and curse such a wicked council, that curseth, that anathematizeth his people for asserting and maintaining that that may certainly be obtained in this life, as I have sufficiently proved by ten arguments in my treatise called Heaven on Earth, from page 1 to page 26. I think there is a great truth in that Confession of Faith, that saith that 'infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it; yet, being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may without any extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereunto; and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure.' But, The eleventh maxim or consideration.

XI. Eleventhly, Consider that probabilities of grace, of sincerity, of an interest in Christ, and of salvation, may be a very great stay, and a singular support, and a special cordial and comfort to abundance of precious Christians that want that sweet and blessed assurance that their souls do earnestly breathe and long after. There are doubtless many thousands of 'the precious sons and daughters of Zion comparable to fine gold,' Lam 4:2, that have not a clear and full assurance of their interest in Christ, nor of the saving work of God upon their souls, who yet are able to plead many probabilities of grace, and of an interest in Christ. Now doubtless probabilities of grace and of an interest in Christ may serve to keep off fears and doubts, and darkness and sadness, and all rash and peremptory conclusions against a man's own soul, and his everlasting welfare, and may contribute very much to the keeping up of a great deal of peace, comfort, and quietness in his soul. The probable grounds that thou hast grace, and that God has begun to work powerfully and savingly upon thee, are mercies more worth than ten thousand worlds. Will you please seriously

and frequently to dwell upon these ten particulars.

[1.] First, That though many weak gracious souls do not enjoy communion with God in joy and delight, yet they do enjoy communion with God in sorrow and tears, Hos 12:4; Isa 38:3; Psa 51:17. A man may have communion with God in a heart-humbling, a heart-melting, and a heart-abasing way, when he hath not communion with God in a heart-reviving, a heart-cheering, and a heart-comforting way. It is a very great mistake among many weak, tender-spirited Christians, to think that they have no communion with God in duties, except they meet with God embracing and kissing, cheering and comforting up their souls. And oh that all Christians would remember this once for all, viz., that a Christian may have as real communion with God in a heart-humbling way, as he can have in a heart-comforting way, John 20:11-19. A Christian may have as choice communion with God when his eyes are full of tears, as he can have when his heart is full of joy. When a godly man upon his dying bed was asked which were his most joyful days, either those before his conversion or those since his conversion, upon which he cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days again, give me my mourning days again, for they were my joyfulest days.' Many times a poor Christian has never more joy in his heart than when his eyes are full of tears. But,

[2.] Secondly, Though many poor, weak, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they do love the Lord Jesus Christ, yet they dare say that they would love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts, and with all their souls, and they dare say, that if it were in their power, they would even shed tears of blood because they cannot love Christ both as they would and as they should. Blessed Bradford would sit and weep at dinner till the tears fell on his trencher, because he could love God no more. So the poor, doubting, trembling Christian mourns and laments because he can love Christ no more. 'A man may love gold, and yet not have it, but no man loveth God but he is sure to have God,' saith Augustine. A good man once cried out, 'I had rather have one Christ, than a thousand worlds.'

[3.] Thirdly, Though many poor, weak, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they have grace, yet they dare say that they prize the least dram of grace above all the gold and silver of the Indies. Were all the world a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of it, they would give it for grace, yea, for a little grace. Now certainly no man can thus highly prize grace but he that has grace. No man sees the worth and lustre of grace, no man sees a beauty and excellency in grace, nor no man can value grace above the gold of Ophir, but he whose heart has been changed, and whose eyes has been opened by the spirit of grace. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Though many poor, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that their condition is good, that their condition is safe and happy, yet they dare say that they would not for ten thousand worlds change their conditions with the vain and debauched men of the world, who delight in sin, who wallow in sin, who make a sport of sin, and who live under the reign and dominion of sin. They had rather, with Lazarus, be full of sores and full of wants, and live and die in rags, and after all be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, than with Dives, every day to fare sumptuously, and be clothed gloriously, and perish eternally, Luk 16:1-31. Though they are poor, and wicked men rich; though they are debased, and wicked men exalted; though they are empty, and wicked men full; though they are low, and wicked men high; though they enjoy nothing, and wicked men enjoy everything; yet they would not for as many worlds as there be men in the world change conditions with them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they do not sin, because there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not: Ecc 7:20, 'And because no man can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin;' Pro 20:9, 'And because in many things we offend all;' Jas 3:2, 'And because if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;' 1Jn 1:8, 1Jn 3:6, 1Jn 3:8-10; yet they dare say that they would not willingly, wilfully, wickedly, resolutely, maliciously, and habitually sin against the Lord to gain the whole world. Though they dare not say they do not sin, yet they dare say, if they might have their choice, they would never dishonour God more, nor crucify the Lord of glory more, nor grieve the Spirit of grace more, nor wound conscience more, nor cloud the face of God more, nor darken their evidences for heaven more, nor interrupt their communion with God more, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that God is their God, or that Christ is their Redeemer, or that the Spirit is their Comforter; yet they dare say, that if God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace and glory, and holiness and happiness, were offered to them on the one hand, and all the honours, pleasures, profits, delights, and carnal contents of the world were offered them on the other hand, they had ten thousand times rather, they had infinitely rather, choose God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace and holiness, and everlasting happiness, than the contrary: Song of Solomon 5:10; Deu 26:17; Psal 73:25; Php 3:6-8. Look, as Rachel cried out, 'Give me children, or I die,' Gen 30:1; so these poor hearts are still crying out, 'O Lord, give me thyself, or I die; give me thy Christ, or I die; give me thy Spirit and grace, or I die; give me pardon of sin, or I die; lift up the light of thy countenance upon me, or I die; bring me under the bond of the covenant, or I die. O Lord, let all these things be done, or I am undone, and that for ever; Lord, let the men of this world take the world, and divide it among themselves; let me but enjoy thyself, thy Christ, thy love, and I shall say, 'My lot is fallen to me in a pleasant place, and verily I have a goodly heritage,' Psal 16:5-6. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they have grace in their own hearts, yet they dare say that they dearly love, and highly honour, and greatly prize the graces of the Spirit which they see sparkling and shining in the hearts and lives and lips of other saints. And they dare say that there are no men in all the world that are so precious, so lovely, so worthy, and so honourable in their eyes, or so high in their esteems, as those who have the image of God, of Christ, of holiness, most clearly, fairly and fully stamped upon them. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Though poor, doubting, trembling Christians dare not say that they have such strength and power against their sins as they would have, or as they should have, or as many of the dear saints of God have, who often lead captivity captive; yet they dare say, that when the Lord is pleased, now and then, by his Spirit, power, word, grace, &c., to help them, though it be but a little, against their sins, to help them in any measure to subdue their sins, or to assist them to bring any one sin or another to an under, or to arm them against any temptations, occasions, or provocations to sin, there are no such times or seasons of joy, comfort, delight, refreshing, and content to their souls as these are: Psal 65:3, Gal 5:14. The language of their souls in such a day as this is, is this: Oh that it might be always thus with us! Oh that every day we might lead captivity captive! Oh that every day we might have our lusts at an under! Oh that every day we might triumph over the old man! Oh that every day one lust or another might fall before the power, the Spirit, the presence, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that they make so much advantage, so much earnings of the sermons they hear, or of the prayers they make, or of the scriptures they read, or of the communion of saints that they enjoy, as others do; yet they dare say that they would not for all the world cast off praying, or hearing, or reading, or the communion of saints, and give up themselves to the ways of sin and Satan, and the world. Psa 4:3; Psa 66:19-20; Psa 138:8; Lam 3:55-58. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Though poor, doubting, staggering, trembling Christians dare not say that Christ is their Saviour, yet they dare say that they desire and endeavour to honour Christ as their Lord, though they cannot see Christ bestowing himself on them as their Redeemer, John 20:28, yet they are willing to make a resignation of themselves up to him as their king; they are willing to resign up their hearts and lives to the government of Jesus Christ. Though they cannot find comfort, yet they will oppose sin; though they cannot comprehend Christ, yet they will not willingly offend Christ; though they cannot see their own propriety in Christ, yet they desire nothing more than that Christ may claim a propriety in them; though they cannot see Christ as a friend, yet they can look upon sin as an enemy; though they cannot close with the promises, yet they will close with the precepts; though they cannot close with the privileges of a Christian, yet they will close with the services of a Christian; though they cannot share in the comforts of a Christian, yet they will side with the duties of a Christian; though they cannot clear up their interest in Christ, yet they are willing to yield subjection to Christ; though they want strength to throw themselves into the arms of Christ to save them, yet they will cast themselves at the feet of Christ to serve him; though they want the light of comfort and consolation, yet they will walk in the light of commands and directions, Isa 1:10.

All men will grant that these ten things are strong probabilities of grace; but give me leave to say that they are, without all controversy, most sure, sound, solid, and infallible evidences of true grace, and of an interest in Christ and salvation; and therefore all those poor doubting, staggering, and trembling Christians that find all these, or any of these ten things in their own souls, they ought for ever to bless the Lord, and speak well of his name upon these accounts. And therefore, O my soul! be thou much in adoring and admiring of free and infinite grace, that hath wrought all these things in thee and for thee. But now, dear hearts, that this eleventh particular concerning probabilities of grace may the better stick upon you, and be the more seriously minded and weighed by you, I beseech you often to ponder upon these six following things:

[1.] First, That you have deserved hell, and therefore for you to have but a probability of going to heaven, is infinite grace and mercy. You have deserved to be shut up in chains of darkness with devils and damned spirits to all eternity, Jude 1:6, and therefore for you to have a probability of enjoying for ever the presence of God, Christ, the glorious angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven,' Heb 12:22-24, is a mercy more worth than ten thousand worlds. You have deserved to dwell with a 'devouring fire,' Isa 33:14, and to lie for ever under those flames and torments that are easeless, endless, and remediless; and therefore for you to have a probability of satiating and delighting your souls in that fulness of joy, and in those 'everlasting pleasures that be at God's right hand,' Psa 16:11, is grace, yea, glorious grace upon the throne, &c. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider that if you cast up a true and faithful account, you will certainly find that the comfort, the peace, the joy, the quiet, the rest, the satisfaction, the content that the generality of

saints do enjoy, is more from probabilities of grace, than it is from any certainty or assurance that they have of grace being in their souls; it is more from probabilities of an interest in Christ, than from any assurance of an interest in Christ; it is more from probabilities of being saved, than it is from any special persuasions that they shall be saved; it is more from probabilities of going to heaven, than it is from any raised fixed confidence that they shall go to heaven; and therefore the people of God have very great cause to bow before the Lord, and to adore his grace, and for ever to speak well of his name, for the very probabilities of grace, and of an interest in Christ, and of being saved and glorified.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that there have been very many under such dreadful horrors and terrors of conscience, and under such wrath and displeasure of an angry God, and that have lain trembling upon their dying beds, and that have been even ready to be swallowed up in the gulf of despair, who would have given all the world, had it been in their power, for the very probabilities of grace. Spira, being in a deep despair for renouncing of those doctrines of the gospel which he had once stoutly professed, said, 'That he would willingly suffer the most exquisite tortures of hell-fire for the space of ten thousand years, upon condition he might be well assured to be released afterward.' He further added, in that hellish and horrible fit, that his dear wife and children, for whose sake principally he turned away from the gospel, to embrace this present world, appeared now to him as hangmen, hags, and torturers. A despairing soul is Magor Missabib, a terror to himself; his heart a hell of horror, his conscience an Aceldama, a field of black blood. So that as Augustine describes such a one flying from the field to the city, from the city to his house, from his house to his chamber, from his chamber to his bed, &c., so that he can rest nowhere, but is as if infernal devils in fearful shapes were still following of him, and still terrifying and tormenting his distressed and perplexed soul. Now, doubtless such poor souls would have given ten thousand worlds, had they so many in their hands to give, and that for the very probabilities of grace; and how many tempted, deserted, clouded, wounded, and benighted souls are there, who would think it a heaven on this side heaven, if they could but see probabilities of grace in their souls! Oh, therefore, let not the probabilities of grace be a small thing in your eyes, but bow the knee, and let the high praises of God be found in your mouths, even for probabilities of grace! But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that Satan is a very deadly enemy to the least probabilities of grace, and will do all he can to cloud, darken, and obscure probabilities of grace, since divine vengeance has cut him off from the least hopes, from the least probabilities of ever obtaining the least dram of grace or mercy. Oh how does he storm and take on against every probability of grace and mercy that God vouchsafes to his people for their comfort and encouragement! Satan is an old experienced enemy, almost of six thousand years' standing, and he very well knows that probabilities of grace will certainly arm a Christian against many temptations, and sweetly support him under many afflictions, and exceedingly heighten and raise his resolutions. He knows that probabilities of grace will turn crosses into crowns, storms into calms, and winter nights into summer days. Satan knows that probabilities of grace will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet seven times more sweet; and therefore his spirit rises and swells against every probability of grace. Now the greater Satan's rage is against the probabilities of grace, the more thankful we should be for the probabilities [of] grace. It is good to move and act cross to him, who in all his actings loves to act cross to the glory of God and the good of our souls. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider that from probabilities in outward things, men commonly gather a great deal of comfort, support, quietness, and satisfaction. When the physician tells the patient that it is probable, yea, very probable that he will recover, live and do well, oh what a support, comfort, and refreshing is this to the languishing patient! When there is but a probability of a good market, how does the market-man smile; when there is but a probability of good trading, how does the tradesman cheer up; when there is but a probability of a good voyage, how does the merchants' and the mariners' spirits rise; when there is but a probability of a good harvest, how does the husbandman sing; when there is but some hopes, some probability of a pardon for a condemned man, how does his spirits revive, and how does his heart even leap and dance for joy; and so when a Christian has but some hopes, some probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, and of being saved, he may well cheer up and maintain his ground against all fears and doubts, objections and temptations. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Consider there is a great deal of grace and mercy in Scripture peradventures, as you may easily see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Scripture peradventures ought to keep down despair, and raise our hopes and our hearts. To know that God is favourable, and that sin is pardonable, and that mercy is attainable, and that hell is avoidable, is no small comfort to a poor doubting trembling Christian. And as there is a great deal of grace and mercy in Scripture peradventures, so there is a great deal of grace and favour in Scripture may-bes, as you may see by comparing these scriptures in the margin together.³ Now, if Scripture peradventures and Scripture may-bes afford so much support, relief, and comfort to your souls, as indeed they do, then doubtless probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, of going to heaven, and of being saved, ought very much to support, relieve, cheer, and comfort the hearts of all those that have such probabilities. A gracious soul may say when he is lowest and weakest, Well, though I dare not say that I have grace, yet I have a peradventure for it; and though I dare not, I cannot say I have an interest in Christ, yet if I have a may-be for it, I ought to bear up bravely and comfortably against all fears and doubts; yea, and to take the comfort and the sweet of all those blessed probabilities of grace, of an interest in Christ, and of being saved, and of all the peradventures and may-bes that are scattered up and down in the book of God, and with Hannah to walk up and down without a sad countenance, 1Sa 1:18. The twelfth maxim or consideration.

XII. Twelfthly, Consider that it is a Christian's greatest wisdom and highest concernment, to take the most commodious time for the casting up of his spiritual accounts. If I would know what I am worth for another world, and what I have to shew for 'the inheritance of the saints in light,' then I am to take my heart when it is at best, and when I am most divinely prepared and fitted for this great service then to enter upon it. It is no wisdom for a man to go to see his face in troubled waters, or to look for a pearl in a puddle. There are some particular times and seasons in which it is no way safe nor convenient for a Christian to enter upon the trial of his spiritual estate. As, first, When the body is greatly distempered; 2, When the soul is greatly tempted by Satan, or sadly deserted by God; 3, When the conscience is so deeply wounded by some great falls, as that the soul is filled with exceeding great fear, terror, and horror. It is with many poor Christians in this case, as it hath been with some who have been so struck with the fear and horror of death before the judge, that though they were good scholars, and able to read anything, yet fear and horror hath so surprised them, that when their lives have been at stake, and the book hath been given them to read, they have not been able to read one line, one word.² So many of the precious servants of

Christ, when they have been under wounds of conscience, and when they have been filled with fears, terrors, and horrors, they have not been able to look up to heaven, nor read their evidences, nor turn to the breasts of the promises, nor call to mind their former experiences, nor behold the least glimpse of heaven's glories, Psa 40:12, Psa 77:1-20, Psa 88:1-18; Job 23:8-9. No man in his wits, if he were to weigh gold, would weigh it in the midst of high winds, great storms, and horrible tempests, which would so hurry the balance up and down, this way and that, that it would be impossible for him to weigh his gold exactly. Now the trial of our spiritual estates is like the weighing of gold, for we are all to weigh ourselves by the balance of the sanctuary, Job 31:6; Dan 5:27. God himself will one day weigh us by that balance, and if we hold weight when he comes to weigh us, we are safe and happy for ever. But when he comes to weigh us in the balance of the sanctuary, if we shall then be found too light, it had been good for us we had never been born. When Belshazzar saw the handwriting upon the wall, his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled, and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another, Dan 5:5-6; but what was all this to an everlasting separation from God, and to those endless, ceaseless, and remediless torments that such must endure, who, when they are weighed in the balance, shall be found too light? 2Th 1:7-10. A man that would weigh gold to a grain, must weigh it in a quiet still place; and so a man that would make an exact trial of his spiritual estate, he must take his soul when it is most serious, quiet, still, and composed; he must take his heart when it is in the best frame, and most disposed to solemn and weighty work. There are some times which are very unapt for a gracious person to sit as judge upon his spiritual estate, and to pass sentence upon his own soul. The best Christians under heaven do meet with divers inward and outward changes; sometimes the light shines so clear that they can see things as they are, but at other times all is dark and cloudy, and tempestuous, and then they are apt to judge themselves by feeling and new representations, and not according to the truth. O sirs! remember this once for all, that times of inward or outward distresses are best for praying, and worst for judging. If a man will at such times pass sentence on himself or his estate as a judge, he will certainly judge unrighteous judgment, for then the soul is not itself, and is very apt and prone to take Satan's work for his own, and to side with him against itself, yea, and then usually it will see nothing, it will think of nothing, it will dwell upon nothing but what makes against itself. 4. When God exercises a man with some exceeding severe and unusual providences, when God steps out of his ordinary way of dispensations in his dealings with a man; when God sets a man up before all the world as a mark to shoot at, as he did Job, Job 7:20, Job 16:12. Now a poor Christian is ready to doubt and conclude, Surely the Lord has no regard of me, he has no entire love for me, his heart is certainly not towards me, seeing all these sore trials make so much against me; but here the poor Christian is mistaken, as Jacob once was: Gen 42:36, 'And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.' But Jacob was out, for all those things made for him, and for the preservation of the visible church of God in the world, Gen 45:5-9. Certainly all the afflictions that befall the people of God, are but his love-tokens. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,' Rev 3:19, Heb 12:5-6, and therefore those Christians are miserably mistaken that take them for testimonies of his wrath, and effects of his disfavour. O sirs! what can be more absurd, displeasing, and provoking, than for a Christian to make that an argument of God's hatred, that he intends for an instance of his love? and yet Christians are apt thus to act. It is observable the apostle reckons affliction amongst God's honoraries and tokens of respect, 'For to you it is given,'

saith he, 'not only to believe, but also to suffer,' Php 1:29, 'which,' saith father Latimer, 'is the greatest promotion that God gives in this world.' Job, when he was himself, could not but admire at it, Jos 7:17-18, that God should make such an account of man, and that he should so magnify him, and dignify him, as to think him worthy of a rod, a whipping; as to think him worth a melting and trying every morning, yea, every moment. It is certain that great prosperity and worldly glory are no sure tokens of God's love, Pro 1:32, Psa 73:5, Ecc 9:1-2; and it is certain that great troubles and afflictions are no sure marks of God's hatred; and yet many poor Christians, when the waters of affliction rise high, and are ready to overflow them, oh how apt are they to conclude that God hates them, and will revenge himself upon them, and that they have nothing of God or Christ, or the Spirit, or grace in them! Or, 5, when the Spirit, the Comforter, stands afar off, Lam 1:16, and withholds those special influences, without which, in a common ordinary way, a Christian cannot divinely, candidly, clearly and impartially transact with God in order to his own peace, comfort and settlement. Or, 6, when either a Christian's evidences are not at hand, or else they are so soiled, darkened, blotted and obscured, as that he is not able to read them. Or 7, when a Christian is extremely oppressed with melancholy. Melancholy is a dark and dusky humour, which disturbs both soul and body, and the cure of it belongs rather to the physician than to the divine. It is a most pestilent humour where it abounds; one calls it *balneum diaboli*, the devil's bath; it is a humour that unfits a man for all sorts of services, but especially those that concern his soul, his spiritual estate, his everlasting condition. The melancholy person tries the physician, grieves the minister, wounds relations, and makes sport for the devil. There are five sorts of persons that the devil makes his ass to ride in triumph upon, viz., the ignorant person, the unbelieving person, the proud person, the hypocritical person, and the melancholy person. Melancholy is a disease that works strange passions, strange imaginations, and strange conclusions. It unmans a man, it makes a man call good evil, and evil good; sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; light darkness, and darkness light. The distemper of the body oftentimes causeth distemper of soul, for the soul followeth the temper of the body. A melancholy spirit is a dumb spirit; you can get nothing out of him; and a deaf spirit, you can get nothing into him.² Now of all the evil spirits we read of in the Gospel, the dumb and the deaf were the worst. Darkness, sadness, solitariness, heaviness, mourning, &c., are the only sweet, desirable, and delightful companions of melancholy persons. Melancholy makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter seven times more bitter. The melancholy person is marvellously prone to bid sleep farewell, and joy farewell, and meat farewell, and friends farewell, and ordinances farewell, and duties farewell, and promises farewell, and ministers farewell, and his calling farewell, and it is well if he be not even ready to bid God farewell too. Melancholy persons are like idols, that have eyes but see not, and tongues but speak not, and ears but hear not. Melancholy turns truths into fables, and fables into truths; it turns fancies into realities, and realities into fancies. Melancholy is a fire that burns inwards and is hard to quench. Now if a Christian be under the power of natural or accidental melancholy, his work is not now to be a-trying his estate, or a-casting up of his accounts to see what he is worth for another world, but to use all such ways and means as God hath prepared in a natural way for the cure of melancholy; for as the soul is not cured by natural causes, so the body is not cured by spiritual remedies. Now in the seven cases last mentioned, a Christian's work lies rather in mourning, self-judging, self-loathing, self-abhorring, and in repenting and reforming, and in fresh and frequent exercises of faith on the Lord Jesus, on his blood, on his promises, and on his free rich sovereign and glorious grace, that is displayed and offered in the gospel, and in a patient waiting upon the Lord in the use of all holy

and heavenly helps for deliverance out of his present straits, trials and exercises, than in falling upon that great work of casting up his spiritual accounts, and of searching into the records of glory, to see whether his name be registered in the book of life or no. O sirs! when poor Christians are bewildered, their proper work is to cast themselves upon the promises, to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay themselves upon their God, Isa 1:10. Job, in a cloudy stormy day, resolves to trust in the Lord, though he should slay him, Job 13:15; and so must you. And oh that this rule were more seriously minded, and effectually observed by all doubting, trembling, and staggering Christians. But, The thirteenth maxim or consideration.

XIII. Thirteenthly, Consider you must never judge yourselves unsound, or hypocrites, by those things which the Scripture never makes a character of an unsound Christian, or of an hypocrite, or of hypocrisy. Mark, as you are to receive no comfort, but what is backed with clear scripture, nor no evidences for the goodness and happiness of your spiritual estate and condition, but such as are backed with clear scriptures; so you are to receive, you are to admit of no arguments, nor pleas, nor reasonings, to prove yourself an hypocrite, or unsound, or that you have no grace, or that your spiritual estate and condition is not good, but such arguments, pleas, and reasonings, as are backed with clear scriptures. Now tell me, O thou weak, doubting, staggering, trembling Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves wandering thoughts in duty, or that proves narrowness or straitness of spirit in a duty, to be characters of an hypocrite, or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? Tell me, O thou sighing Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves the want of a good memory for the best things, or the want of those gifts or abilities that many Christians have, to pray, to speak, to discourse, to open Scripture, or to dispute for the concernments of Christ and his kingdom, to be characters of an hypocrite or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? Tell me, O thou distressed Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that will justify thee to conclude that thou art an hypocrite, because thou art without the present evidence of thy sincerity? Are there not many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion, comparable to fine gold, Lam 4:2, who have true grace and sincerity in their hearts, though for the present it be hid from their eyes? Isa 1:10, 1Jn 5:13. Joseph's brethren had their money in their sacks, though they did not see it, nor know it till they came to their inn and opened them, Gen 44:1-34. So many of the dear children of God have sincerity in their hearts, though for the present they do not see it nor know it. O sirs! it is Christ's work, not grace's, to evidence itself so clearly and fully to our eyes, as to enable us to own it. It is one thing for the Spirit of God to work grace in the soul, and another thing for the Spirit to shine upon his own work. Now, till the Spirit shines upon his own work, the soul is in the dark. The graces of the Spirit are best seen in the light of the Spirit, as we see the sun best by his own light, 1Co 2:12. It is good for doubting Christians when they are in the dark, to hold fast this conclusion, viz., that they may be upright, though at present they are not able to see their uprightness. Now, though this will not bring in a full tide of comfort into their souls, yet it will keep them from despair, and it will support and uphold their hearts, till the Spirit, who is a messenger of a thousand, shall shew them their uprightness. Tell me, O thou mourning Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves deadness, dulness, and indisposedness in duty, though it be sadly lamented, bewailed, and mourned over, and much striven against, yea, though it be the great grief and burden of the soul, to be characters of hypocrites, or of hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? Tell me, O thou disquieted Christian, if thou canst, where are those clear scriptures that proves the want of those enlargements, ravishments, joys, comforts, peace, or assurance that some others

have, to be characters of hypocrites or hypocrisy, or of one that is unsound? And yet, upon the account of the above mentioned things on the one hand, and under a sensible want of the things last cited on the other hand, how exceeding apt and prone are many poor weak, doubting, trembling Christians, confidently and peremptorily to conclude themselves to be hypocrites, and to be unsound, and that they have not a dram of grace, nor no saving interest in Christ at all! O sirs! remember this once for all, that as you must never admit of any arguments, pleas, or reasonings, for the comfort, peace, and refreshment of your souls, but such as are attended with the evidence of clear Scripture, but such as are backed with pregnant scriptures, so you must never admit of any pleas, arguments, or reasonings, to trouble, vex, perplex, and disquiet the peace of your souls, but such as are attended with clear Scripture evidence, but such as are well backed with canonical Scripture. Now if this choice rule were but wisely observed, and carefully, frequently, and conscientiously practised by many weak, doubting, trembling Christians, how would it set them at liberty from their fears, doubts, and misgivings of heart! how would it knock off all their chains, and wipe all tears from their eyes, and remove that sadness that lies like a load upon their hearts, and how soon would it bring them into a condition of peace, comfort, quietness, and settlement. O sirs! every working and appearance of hypocrisy doth not presently prove the person in whom it is to be an hypocrite. A man may be hypocritical, either, 1, really; or, 2, in opinion and fancy. Many of the dear children of God are very apt and prone many times both to suspect and falsely charge the true estate of their souls. A child in a distemper may question the inheritance which is entailed on him, &c.; but, remember this, if thy heart be upright, all comfort is thy portion; for as our distrustful fears do not prejudice the reality of the estate of grace, so our frequent suspicions that we are hypocrites, does not cut us off from the title and right of promised comforts. Christians must carefully distinguish between the presence of hypocrisy and the predominancy of hypocrisy. In the most upright hearts that are in the world, there is more or less hypocrisy remaining in them. All the saints that ever were in the world have found more or less of this root of bitterness springing up in them, Rom 7:22-23, Heb 12:15. It is not the presence of hypocrisy, but the reign of hypocrisy that damns the soul. That hypocrisy that is discerned, resisted, opposed, and mourned over, will never make a Christian miserable. Where the standing frame and general bent of a man's heart is upright, there the presence of hypocrisy cannot denominate a man an hypocrite. All men must stand and fall for ever according to the standing frame and general bent of their hearts. If the standing frame and general bent of their hearts be sincere, they are happy for ever; but if the standing frame and general bent of their hearts be hypocritical, they are miserable for ever. But, The fourteenth maxim or consideration.

XIV. Fourteenthly, Consider you must never judge yourselves unsound, or hypocrites, for such things, or from such considerations, or by such arguments or reasonings, which being admitted and granted to be true, will necessarily and unavoidably prove the whole generation of the faithful, the whole body of them that fear the Lord, to be unsound, and to be a pack of notorious hypocrites, Psa 73:15. He that shall judge himself unsound, or an hypocrite, because his thoughts and imaginations are that he is not sincere, or because he is thus and thus tempted, or because he is at particular times, and in particular cases, thus and thus worsted and captivated by sin, Isa 55:7-9, notwithstanding all the resistance that he is able to make against it, and notwithstanding his hatred of it, and his loathing and judging of himself for it, or because he is thus and thus afflicted in his family, or in his relations, or in his own person; or because he is thus and thus distracted in prayer, and straitened in prayer; or because he is sometimes troubled with sad, hard,

hideous, and blasphemous thoughts of God; he does in so judging judge and condemn the whole generation of the righteous, for there are none of them but first or last, more or less, have been exercised even as he is, or as he has been exercised. Who dare judge his neighbour, his brother, his friend, an hypocrite, because the hand of the Lord has been various ways lifted up against him, or because Satan has been let loose to play with his grand battery upon him? Now if thou darest not judge thy neighbour an hypocrite upon these accounts, how darest thou to judge thyself an hypocrite upon the very same accounts? When thy neighbour, thy brother, thy friend is thus and thus afflicted, tempted, distressed, &c., thou canst tell them that this has been the common lot of the people of God in all the ages of the world; thou canst tell them that no man knows love or hatred by these things, and that all things come alike to all; thou canst tell them that the choicest saints have been most afflicted, tempted, clouded, and distressed; thou canst tell them that all shall end well, that all shall issue well. Remember the patience of Job, and consider the end that the Lord made with him. Thou canst tell them that thou hast got that good by afflictions, temptations, cloudings, distresses, that thou wouldst not exchange for ten thousand worlds. Now if Christians, when they are afflicted, tempted, clouded, distressed, would be but as kind, favourable, and merciful to themselves as they are to others in the same condition, how well would it be with them, how soon would they get out of the snare! O sirs! if this rule were but prudently considered, and seriously practised, how would the fears, doubts, and darkneses of many poor weak, doubting, staggering, and trembling Christians vanish, and what peace, comfort, and settlement would they quickly find. O sirs! we must never stand to that judgment which we pass upon our spiritual estates, which is irrational, or without sufficient ground from Scripture, or which would be to condemn the generation of the just. We may safely appeal from that sentence of our judgment, which acts itself in times of passion or violent temptation, as he did from Alexander drunk to Alexander sober, &c. We must not unjustly vex our own hearts, and dash out our integrity, when the sentence that we pass upon ourselves is rather of imagination than of reason. When a man thinks, and thinks again and again that his heart is not sincere with God, though many, if not all, evidences of sincerity appear in him, and when he cannot produce any one inherently distinguishing ground of an hypocrite in himself, why this is but an imaginary judgment, and utterly unreasonable, for this is to condemn the innocent without cause. O sirs! that soul will never be settled in peace and comfort, which gives way to his own imaginations and passions, and which hath a conceit that every sinful thought, or violent temptation, or more durable conflict with an inward corruption, or the resurrection of some old sin, or frequent distractions in religious duties, or particular falls or slips into this or that sin, cannot stand with grace, cannot stand with uprightness, cannot stand with singleness and soundness of heart. Oh that you would for ever remember this, viz., that where a man hath either no ground at all, or those that he hath are false, he should never so settle on them, and yield and entertain them, as to question his estate for them, or for them to shut the door of comfort against his own soul. But, The fifteenth maxim or consideration.

XV. Fifteenthly, Consider in judging of yourselves and your spiritual estates and conditions, you must always have an eye to your natural tempers, complexions, constitutions, and inclinations, and the sins and temptations that these do lay you most open to, and remember that as in some tempers a little grace makes a very great show, so in other tempers a great deal of grace makes but a very little show. A little water in a long narrow-mouthed glass seems to be a great deal, when ten times, yea, twenty times as much in a large cistern is hardly discernible; the application is easy. A little sugar will serve well enough for sweet wines, but much more is requisite to sweeten

that wine that is sharp and harsh. A little grace will make a very glorious show in such men and women whose very natural tempers are sweet, soft, gentle, meek, affable, courteous; when a great deal of grace is hardly discernible in those men and women whose very natural tempers are cross, crooked, choleric, fierce, passionate, rough, and unhewn. As a good man said of an eminent light now in heaven, 'That he had grace enough for ten men, but scarce enough for himself,' his natural temper was so bad, which he would himself often lament and bewail, saying to his friends, 'That he had such a cross, crooked nature, that if God had not given him grace, none would have been able to have lived one day quietly with him.' A sincere Christian may have more roughness of nature, and more sturdiness of passions, than is in many a moral man. He that hath more Christianity may have less morality, as there is more perfection of animal and sensitive faculties in some brutes than in some men. It is an old experienced truth, that those sins are with the greatest pains, labour, travail, and difficulty subdued and mortified, which our natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions do most strongly incline and dispose us to, and were but those lusts subdued and brought under, it would be no difficult thing to bring all other things to an under. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled, 1Sa 17:51-52; when a general in an army falls, the common soldiers are quickly routed. So it is here; get but the sins of your natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions under your feet, and you will quickly ride in a holy triumph over the rest. When justice is effectually done upon your constitution-sins, other sins will not be long lived; thrust but a dart through the heart of Absalom, and a complete conquest will follow, 2Sa 18:14, seq. Now before I close up this particular, let me advise you frequently to consider, that you can never make a true, a right, a serious judgment of yourselves, or of your spiritual estates and conditions, without a prudent eye upon your natural tempers, complexions, and constitutions, granting to yourselves such indulgence and grains of allowance upon the account of your natural tempers, as will stand with sincerity and the covenant of grace. But, The sixteenth maxim or consideration.

XVI. Sixteenthly, Consider, if you cannot, if you dare not say that you have grace, yet do not say that you have no grace, for the being of grace in the soul is one thing, and the seeing of grace in the soul is another thing. Mark 4:26-28 : A man may have grace, and yet not know that he has grace; he may have a seed of God in him, and yet not see it. 1Jn 5:13, He may believe, and yet not believe that he does believe; the child lives before it knows that it lives. If you cannot say that your graces are true, yet do not say they are counterfeit, lest you bear false witness against the real work of the Spirit in you. There are none so apt to question the truth of their grace as those are that are truly gracious. Though Satan cannot hinder the Holy Spirit from working true grace in the soul, yet he will do all he can to fill the soul with fears and doubts and jealousies about the truth of that grace that the Holy Spirit has wrought in it, 1Jn 4:4; Psa 77:1-20. When did you ever know the devil to tempt an hypocrite to believe that his graces were not true, and that certainly he had not the root of the matter in him? If you cannot say that you have an interest in Christ, yet do not say that you have no interest in Christ; for a man may have an interest in Christ, and yet not see his interest in Christ, not know his interest in Christ. There are many precious Christians that walk in darkness, who yet have an interest in that Jesus that is all light, life, and love, Isa 1:10. If you cannot say that your pardon is sealed in the court of your own conscience, yet do not say that it is not sealed in the court of heaven; for many a Christian has his pardon sealed in the court of heaven, before it is sealed in the court of his own conscience, Psa 51:1-19. A pardon sealed in the court of conscience, is that new name and white stone which God does not give to every one at

first conversion, Rev 2:17. God will take his own time to seal up every Christian's pardon in his bosom. If you cannot say that your name is written in the book of life, yet do not say that it is not written in the book of life. The disciples' names were first written in heaven before Christ bid them rejoice because their names were written in heaven, Luk 10:20. A man may have his name written in heaven, and yet it may be a long while before God may tell him that his name is written in heaven. Ay, you cannot say that the precious promises are yours, yet do not say that they are children's bread, and such dainties that your soul shall never taste of. It is not every precious Christian, that has an interest in the promises, that can run and read his interest in the promises, Psa 77:1-20, Psa 88:1-18; 1Pe 1:4. If you cannot say that the heavenly inheritance is yours, yet do not say that it is not yours. A Christian may have a good title to the heavenly inheritance, and yet not be able to make good his title, to clear up his title; as a child in the arms or in the cradle may be heir to a crown, a kingdom, and yet he is not able to make good his title. If you cannot say that you have assurance, yet do not say that you shall never have assurance, for a man may want assurance one year, and have it the next; one month, and have it another; one week, and have it another; one day, and have it another; yea, one hour, and have it another, Luk 19:1-10; Acts 16:29-35; Rom 11:33. If you cannot say that you shall certainly go to heaven, yet do not say that you shall undoubtedly go to hell; for who made you one of the privy-councillors of heaven? Who acquainted you with the secret decrees of God? &c. Now were this rule but thoroughly minded, and conscientiously practised, oh how well would it go with many tempted, troubled, bewildered, and clouded Christians! Oh how would Satan be disappointed, and poor souls quieted, composed, and refreshed. But, The seventeenth maxim or consideration.

XVII. Seventeenthly, Whenever you cast your eye upon your gracious evidences, it highly concerns you seriously to remember that you have to deal with God in a covenant of grace, and not in a covenant of works. Every breach of peace with God is not a breach of covenant with God. Though the wife hath many weaknesses and infirmities hanging upon her, and though she may often grieve, provoke, and displease her husband, yet as long as she remains faithful, and truly loving, and in the main obedient to him, though he may alter his carriage towards her, yet he will not withdraw his love from her, or deny his relation to her. No more will God towards his weak miscarrying ones, as you may evidently see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Doubtless there are many dear Christians whose troubles of conscience about their spiritual and eternal estates arise from their looking upon God and dealing with God in a covenant of works.² Are there not many precious Christians, who, when they fall before temptations, and are worsted by their corruptions, that are ready to question all, and throw up all as loss and peremptorily to conclude against their own souls, that all is naught, very naught, stark naught, and that they are hypocrites, and that God will never own such as they are, nor never accept of such as they are, nor never delight in such as they are, nor never have anything to do with such as they are; and all this because they do not aright understand the covenant of grace, and think that they have to deal with God in a covenant of works. Though many Christians do freely and readily acknowledge that there is a covenant of grace, yet upon the least stirring of any corruption, or the least conquest that is made upon them by the violence of any temptation, they are so full of fears, faintings, reasonings, diffidences, and despondencies, &c., and they carry it so weakly and unworthily towards the Lord, as if there were no covenant of grace at all, or as if they had wholly and only to deal with God in a covenant of works. Now what a high dishonour is this to the free, rich, infinite, sovereign, and glorious grace of God, which so sparkles and shines in the covenant of grace, and

which tells us that our eternal estates shall never be judged by a covenant of works, and that the want of an absolute perfection shall never damn a believing soul, and that the obedience that God requires at our hands is not a legal but evangelical! Oh that all those dear Christians who are so apt to be dejected and overwhelmed upon the account of the prevalency of such and such corruptions, and because they fail in keeping covenant with God, and in walking in a covenant-relation with God; I say, oh that all these would frequently and seriously consider of these three things.

[1.] First, That so long as a Christian doth not renounce his covenant with God, so long as he doth not wilfully and wickedly break the bond of the covenant, the substance of the covenant is not yet broken, though some articles of the covenant may be violated, Psa 89:30-35, 2Sa 23:5. While Christ lies at the bottom of the covenant, it cannot be utterly broken. As among men there be some trespasses against some particular clauses in covenants, which, though they be violated, yet the whole covenant is not forfeited; it is so here. Every jar, every miscarriage doth not break the marriage covenant; no more doth every sin, every miscarriage break the covenant between God and the soul. But,

[2.] Secondly, Seriously consider that many weak Christians are much mistaken about the terms and condition of the covenant of grace; they think that the condition of the covenant is perfect and unsinning obedience, whereas it is only sincere obedience. Mark, that man sincerely obeys and sincerely walks in covenant with God, who sincerely, who heartily, who ordinarily desires, labours, and endeavours to obey the law of God, the will of God, and to walk in covenant with God. Mark, particular actions do not denominate any estate; it is the course of actions which doth denominate a man's walking in covenant with God, or his not walking in covenant with God. If his course of actions be sinful, he walks not in covenant with God; but if his course of actions be holy and gracious, he walks in covenant with God. Though the needle of the seaman's compass may jog this way and that way, yet the bent of the needle will still be northward; so though a Christian in covenant with God may have his particular sinful joggings this way or that way, yet the bent of his heart will still be to walk in covenant with God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that infirmities, aberrations of weakness, do not nullify or evacuate our covenant with God, nor hinder our walking in covenant with God; for if they should, then no man could possibly keep covenant with God, or walk in covenant with God. Infirmities God passes by and pardons in course, and will never put them into the account, and therefore they cannot hinder our walking in covenant with God. Breaches made in the first covenant were irreparable, but breaches made in the covenant of grace are not so, because this covenant is established in Christ, who is still a-making up all breaches. Mark, there are five things which shew that the deviations of God's people are only infirmities and not enormities, weaknesses and not wickednesses; and the first is this, viz., that they do frequently and principally arise from the subtilty and sudden power of Satan's temptations. 1Ch 21:1. (2.) That the frame of their spirits is against the evil that they do, Rom 7:15-16, Rom 7:19, Rom 7:23-24. (3.) Their daily cries, tears, and complaints, speak it out to be an infirmity. They are in this particular like a lost sheep, or a lost child, or a lost friend. (4.) Though they do fall, yet they rise again; though they do step or wander out of the way, yet they do return into the right way again. (5.) When they do fall, there is a vast difference, a mighty difference between their falls, and the falls of wicked men that are not in covenant with God, and that [1.] first, in respect of willingness; [2.] in respect of choice; [3.] in respect of affection; [4.] in

respect of course; [5.] in respect of quietness; [6.] in respect of continuance. Mark, when wicked men fall, when men out of covenant with God fall, then they fall willingly, they fall out of choice, they fall out of affection to fall, they fall in a course, they fall, and they are quiet under their falls; they fall, and continue to fall, 'to-morrow shall be as to-day,' Isa 55:12. But persons in covenant with God, though they do fall, yet they do not fall, nor cannot fall, as they do that are out of covenant with God. For [1.] first, there is in all such persons an habitual purpose to keep covenant with God; [2.] an habitual desire to keep covenant with God; [3.] an habitual resolution to keep covenant with God; [4.] an habitual endeavour to keep covenant with God. Now, where it is thus, that man is certainly in covenant with God, and that man walks in covenant with God; he is under a covenant of grace; his sins are pardoned, and therefore they shall never be his ruin. Doubtless many precious Christians have charged and condemned themselves for those things that the great God will never charge them with, nor condemn them for, Isa 63:17. Blessed Bradford wrote himself an hypocrite, a painted sepulchre; but doubtless God will never bring in such a charge against him. O sirs! the stirrings of sin, and the workings of sin, and the prevalency of sin for particular acts will stand with the covenant of grace, though not with the covenant of works. You may not by any means conclude that you are not in a covenant of grace, because such and such corruptions stir in you, or because such or such weaknesses now and then break forth and discover themselves, either in your lips or lives. Did Christians but study the covenant of grace more, and understand better than they do the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of works, how would their fears and doubts about their spiritual and eternal estates vanish, as the clouds before the sun when it shines in its greatest strength and glory! &c.

It was the saying of an eminent minister on his deathbed, that he had much peace and quietness, not so much from a greater measure of grace than other Christians had, or from any immediate witness of the Spirit, but because he had a more clear understanding of the covenant of grace than many others, having studied it and preached it so many years as he had done. Doubtless, had Christians a more clear and a more full understanding of the covenant of grace, they would live more holily, serviceably, humbly, fruitfully, comfortably, and sweetly than they do; and they would die more willingly, readily, and cheerfully than many (may I not say than most?) Christians use to do. But, The eighteenth maxim or consideration.

XVIII. Eighteenthly and lastly, That trouble, grief, and sorrow for sin, that drives a man from God, is sinful, and must one day be repented of and wept over. All true trouble, grief and sorrow, drives to God, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin. Suppose thou hast so and so sinned, yet it is a false inference that therefore thou shouldst be discouraged, and let thy hopes sink, and thy heart faint, as if there were no help, no hope, no comfort for thee in thy God.

Quest. But when is a man's trouble or sorrow for sin sinful?

Ans. [1.] When it keeps Christ and the soul asunder. [2.] When it keeps the soul and the promises asunder. [3.] When it unfits a man for the duties of his place and calling, wherein the providence of God has stated him. [4.] When it unfits a man for the duties of religion, either private or public. [5.] When it takes off the sweet and comfort of all outward comforts and enjoyments, and renders all our mercies like the white of an egg, that has no taste or savour in it. [6.] When it weakens, wastes, or destroys the outward man; all godly sorrow is a friend to the soul, and no enemy to the body. And thus much for those divine maxims, considerations, and rules that are seriously to be

mindful and observed in order to the clearing up a man's interest in Christ, and his title to all the glory of another world. Certainly these eighteen maxims, considerations, or rules, if God shall please powerfully to set in with them, are of singular use for the clearing up of the saving work of God upon poor souls. And therefore it highly concerns Christians seriously to ponder upon them, as Mary did upon the sayings of the angel in her heart, Luk 2:19. Now these things being premised, I shall come in the next chapter to lay down some infallible evidences of saving grace.

CHAPTER II

Containing many choice, precious, and infallible evidences of true saving grace, upon which a Christian may safely and securely, comfortably and confidently, rest and adventure the weight of his precious and immortal soul, and by which he may certainly know that it shall go well with him for ever; and that he has a real saving interest in Christ, and shall be everlastingly happy, when he shall be here no more, &c.

I. First, There are some things in regard of sin, and a Christian's actings about it, that speaks out a gracious estate, and that discovers a saving principle of grace to be in the soul. I shall instance in these eleven particulars.

[1.] First, A universal willingness to be rid of all sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in a man's soul. The first saving work of the Spirit upon the soul is the dividing between sin and the soul; it is a making an utter breach betwixt sin and the soul; it is a dissolving of that old league that has been between the sinner and his sin. The first work of the Spirit is to make a man look upon sin as an enemy, and to deal with sin as an enemy, to hate it as an enemy, to loathe it as an enemy, to fear it as an enemy, and to arm against it as an enemy. When the Holy Spirit takes possession of a soul, from that day forward the soul looks upon sin with as evil and as envious an eye as Saul looked on David when the evil spirit was upon him. Oh, saith Saul, that I were but once well rid of this David; and oh, saith the gracious soul, that I were but once well rid of this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this froward heart, this earthly heart of mine, &c. Look, as the daughters of Heth even made Rebekah weary of her life, Gen 26:35, so corruptions within makes the gracious soul even weary of his life. 'Many a day have I sought death with tears,' said blessed Cowper, 'not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it.' Look, as when Christ hath won the will, he hath won the man; so when sin hath lost the will, it hath lost the man. The will is the heart; 'My son, give me thy heart,' is, My son, give me thy will. The will is the fort-royal of the soul; it is that stronghold that stands out stoutest and longest against all the assaults of heaven. When the will is won, all is won, the castle is won, the heart is won; the man is won when the will is won. A man's judgment and reason may say, I ought to turn from sin, and his conscience may say, I must turn from sin, or it will be bitterness in the end, and yet the work not done, nor the soul won; but when the heart says, the will says, I will turn from sin, then the work is done, and the man is won. Where reason saith these lusts ought to be subdued, and the conscience saith these lusts must be subdued, and the will saith these lusts shall be subdued,—Psa 65:3, 'As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away,'—there is a saving work upon the soul. When the will says to sin, as Ephraim said to his idols, 'Get you hence, what have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8, then the work of God is begun in power upon the soul. A universal willingness to be rid of all sin, speaks the heart to be sound and sincere with God. The enmity that grace works in the heart against sin is

against the whole kind; it is against all sin, as well profitable and pleasurable sins as disparaging and disgracing sins; and as well against small sins as against great sins. True grace strikes at root and branch, at head and members, at father and son. A true Israelite would not have one Canaanite left in the holy land; he would have every Egyptian drowned in the red sea of Christ's blood: Psa 119:104, 'I hate every false way': Psa 139:24, 'Search me, O Lord! and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' Saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts, as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags. But now take a man that is in his natural condition, and he is as unwilling to part with his sins, as Abraham was to turn Hagar and Ishmael out of doors. Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that having a disease upon his body, the physician told him, That except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c., he was like to lose his eyes; his heart was so desperately set upon his lusts, that he answered, Vale lumen amicum, Farewell, sweet light then; he had rather lose his eyes than leave his sins. So they in Mic 6:6-7, do make very large offers for a dispensation to live in their sins; they offer calves of a year old; they offer thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil; yea, they offer their first born for their transgressions, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. Sinners' hearts are so glued to their lusts, that they will rather part with their nearest, dearest, and choicest enjoyments, than part with their sins; yea, when they are put hard to it, they will rather part with God, Christ, and all the glory of another world, than they will part with some base bosom lust. Witness that young man in the Gospel, who went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions, Mat 19:21-22. Look, as a man leaves his wife and children, his country, estate, and trade, with tears in his eyes and sorrow in his heart; so does an unregenerate man leave his lusts, with tears in his eyes and sorrow in his heart. Very observable is the story of Phaltiel: David had married Michal; Saul injuriously gave her to another. When David came to the crown, and was able to speak a word of command, he sends for his wife Michal; her husband dares not but obey; he brings her on her journey, and then, not without great reluctancy of spirit, takes his leave of her. But what, was Phaltiel weary of his wife that he now forsakes her? Oh no! he was forced to it, and though she was gone, yet he cast many a sad thought after her, and never leaves looking till he sees her as far as Bahurim, weeping and bemoaning her absence, 2Sa 3:15-16. And just thus it is with carnal and unregenerate men, who, though for fear, or some other reasons, they shake hands with their sins, yet they have many a longing heart after them; they part, but it is upon a force; they part, and yet they are very loath to part asunder. Look, as the merchant throws away his goods in a storm, because he cannot keep them, so carnal men, in times of sickness and distress, or in times of horror and terror of conscience, or when death, the king of terrors, knocks at their doors, or when they see hell gaping to devour them, and God as a terrible judge standing ready to pass an eternal doom upon them, then they are willing to cast overboard their usury, their drunkenness, their swearing, their cursing, their lying, their flesh-pleasing, &c.; but not out of any hatred to their lusts, but out of love to themselves, and out of fear of being damned, &c.; for could they but enjoy their sins and heaven too, sin and they would never part. But now, were there no danger, no wrath, no hell, no damnation, no separation from God attending sin, yet a gracious soul would be heartily willing to part with all sin, and to be rid of all sin, upon the account of the vile nature of sin, upon the account of the defiling and polluting nature of sin. Of all things in the world, sin is the most defiling thing; it makes us red with guilt and black with filth; it is compared to a menstruous cloth, Isa 30:22, which of all unclean things in the law was the most unclean, as some observe; and

upon this very account a gracious soul would be willingly rid of it.

[2.] Secondly, A constant habitual willingness to be rid of all sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in the soul. It is not a transient willingness to be rid of sin, when a man is either under some outward trouble, or some inward distress, that speaks out the truth of saving grace, but a permanent, lasting, and abiding willingness to be rid of sin does. Pharaoh in a fit, in a fright, when thunder and hail and frogs and flies were upon him, was then willing to let Israel go; but when his fright was over, and the judgments removed, he grew prouder and harder than before. So many men, when they are a little sermon-sick, or under some smart pangs of conscience, or under some startling or amazing judgments, oh! then they will be willing to let Israel go, then they will be willing to let drunkenness go, and pride go, and uncleanness go, and worldliness go, &c.; but when their sickness is over, and the pangs of conscience abated, and judgments removed, oh! then they return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the mire again. There was a man well known to a minister in this city, who, in the time of his sickness, was so terrified in his conscience for his sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, 'I am damned, I am damned, I am damned;' and this man, in the days of his outward and inward distresses, made many and great protestations of amendment of life if God would be pleased to recover him; in a little while he did recover, and being recovered he was as bad and as wicked, if not worse, than he was before, 2Pe 2:20-22. So in the time of the great sweat in king Edward's days, as long as the heat of the plague lasted, all sorts and ranks of people were still a-crying out, Peccavi: 'Mercy, good Lord, mercy, mercy, mercy!' Then lords and ladies, and other persons of quality, cried out to the ministers, 'For God's sake tell us what we shall do to avoid the wrath of God; take these bags; pay so much to such a one whom I have deceived, and so much restore unto another, whom in bargaining I over-reached; oh! give so much to the poor, and give so much to such and such pious uses.' But after the sickness was over, they were just the same men that they were before. Men in time of trouble are very ready to cry out, 'Arise and save us,' Jer 2:27; and with them, 'Deliver us this time,' Jdg 10:15; and with the Samaritans, who when God had sent lions among them, inquired after the manner of his worship, 2Ki 17:25-26; and yet after all this to remain as vile and wicked as they did: Jer 2:20, 'For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands, and thou saidst, I will not transgress, when upon every high hill, and under every green tree thou wanderedst, playing the harlot.' A wicked man's willingness to be rid of his sins is transient, not constant; it is like the morning cloud and the early dew, that passeth away, Hos 6:4. The Jews were a very unstable people, a people bent to backsliding, a people that would often start aside like a deceitful bow, Hos 11:7; Psa 78:34, Psa 78:37, Psa 78:57; Hos 7:16. Sometimes when the judgments of God were heavy upon them, or when they were under the reign of some good kings, then down went their groves, their altars, their idols, and their high places; but soon after you shall have them as much set upon idolatry as before; sometimes they were willing to be rid of their idols, and at other times they were mad to go a-whoring after their idols. But now a godly man, when he is himself, he is never unwilling to be rid of his sins, yea, to be rid of all his sins. The fixed, standing, and abiding disposition and bent of a godly man's soul, of a godly man's will, is to be rid of every sin; and thrice happy is that man that is habitually under such a choice and blessed frame.

[3.] Thirdly, A transcendant willingness, a superlative willingness, an overtopping willingness to be rid of sin, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace in the soul. When a man's willingness to be

rid of his sins overtops his unwillingness; when a man is more willing to be rid of his sins than he is to continue in sin, then his spiritual state is certainly good. A gracious heart had much rather, if it were put to his choice, live without all sin, than to have allowance to wallow in any sin; he had rather live without the least sin, than to have liberty to live in the greatest, or the most flesh-pleasing sin. It is certain that sin is more afflictive to a gracious soul than all the losses, crosses, troubles, and trials that he meets with in the world. David cries, not *Perii*, but *Peccavi*; not 'I am undone,' but 'I have done foolishly,' 2Sa 24:10. He does not cry, Take away the pestilence, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant. Nor Daniel cries not out, Oh we are sadly reproached, we are greatly distressed, we are wofully oppressed, but, We have rebelled, Dan 9:5. And the church cries not out, Take away our captivity, but, Take away all iniquity. It is not, Take away our chains, but, Take away our sins; it is not, Take away our afflictions, but, Take away our pollutions; it is not, Take away all our enemies' lives, but, Take away the lives of all our lusts, Hos 14:2. And so Paul cries not out of his reproaches, or persecutors, or bonds, or chains, or stripes, or perils, or prisons; he rather glories in these. But he cries out of a law in his members, rebelling against the law of his mind, and bringing of him into captivity to the law of sin, which is in his members, 2Co 11:16; Rom 7:23. Paul does not cry out, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from all my sorrows and sufferings? but 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7:24. A sincere heart, when he is himself, had much rather be rid of his sins than of his sufferings, yea, of the least sins than of the greatest sufferings. It was a sweet saying of Bernard: 'I had rather,' saith he, 'that God should better my heart than remove his hand; I had rather that God should continue my strokes than my sins.' And the same noble spirit was working bravely in Job when he was under the heavy hand of God: Job 34:31-32, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' (See Job 7:20-21.) But now graceless men are much more willing to be rid of their afflictions than to be rid of their sins. Witness Pharaoh, who cries out, Take away the frogs! see Exo 10:17: Exo 8:8, 'Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.' It is not, Entreat the Lord, that he would take away this proud heart, or this hard heart, or this besotted heart, or this blind mind, or this perverse will, or this benumbed conscience that is in me and my people; but Entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me and my people. A graceless heart is more abundantly willing to be freed from punishment, the effect of sin, than it is willing to be freed from sin, the cause of punishment. A gracious heart sees more filthiness in sin than in frogs, and had rather be rid of his sins than of all the frogs or toads that be in the world. See what a sad spirit was upon the children of Israel, in that Num 21:6-7, 'And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned; for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.' Now, mark, in the fifth verse you have them murmuring against God, and Moses, and divine dispensations, and nauseating of the wheat of heaven as light meat, because they came lightly by it; they distrust the providence of God, they let fly at God; their spirit swells against the Holy One of Israel, and they scorn, deride, revile, and contumeliously and despitefully speak against Moses; and though they had often smarted for these sins, yet they are at them again. Upon this, God sends an army of fiery serpents among them, and they bite and devour many of them. And now they run to Moses, who but a little before they had despised, and

are very importunate with him to pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from them. They do not desire Moses to improve his interest in heaven, that God would take away their proud hearts, their distrustful hearts, their murmuring hearts, &c., but that God would take away the serpents; they were much more desirous to be rid of their serpents than they were to be rid of their sins. So those in Jer 30:15, 'Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.' They do not cry out of their sins, but they cry out of their afflictions. Why criest thou for thine affliction? Unsound hearts are more ready and willing to be rid of their afflictions than they are willing to have their souls bettered, or their lives mended, or their lusts subdued by them.

Pilate was unwilling to condemn Jesus; witness his seeking to release him, and his washing his hands, and his pleading his innocency, &c., Mat 27:17-18, Mat 27:22-24; but yet the prevailing part of his will carried him forth to deliver up Jesus to be scourged and crucified, Mat 27:26. So Herod was unwilling to behead John Baptist; witness that word, 'The king was exceeding sorry,' Mark 6:26; but yet the prevailing part of his will carried him forth to cut off John's head, Mark 6:27, whose head was more worth than Herod's kingdom. So Darius was very unwilling to cast Daniel into the lions' den; witness his being sore displeased with himself, and witness his setting his heart on Daniel to deliver him, and witness his great unquietness of spirit; for he could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, the night after he was cast into the lion's den; and witness his great joy at Daniel's safety, Dan 6:14, Dan 6:18-20: all which did clearly argue a very great unwillingness that Daniel should suffer; and yet the prevailing part of Darius, his will, carried him forth to sacrifice Daniel to the lions, yea, to that which was worse, viz. the lusts of his enemies, Dan 6:16-17. By all these instances, it is most evident that the prevalent part of a wicked man's will stands most strongly biased towards sin; but now the prevalent part of a Christian's will is to be rid of sin. If the Lord should say to a gracious Christian, Ask what thou wilt, O Christian, and it shall be granted to thee; the answer would be: Lord, rid me of my sins; Lord, take away mine iniquities; Lord, mortify my corruptions; Lord, whoever lives, let these lusts die; Lord, drown these Egyptians in the sea of thy Son's blood, who have so violently and unweariedly pursued after the blood of my precious soul; Lord, kill and crucify all these sinful evils that have killed and crucified the Lord of life and glory; 'Lord, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin,' Psa 51:2, Psa 51:7; 'Lord, purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;' Lord, carnal reason, and flesh and blood, would fain have such and such pleasurable sins, and such and such profitable sins, indulged and spared; but, Lord, the earnest, the ardent desires of my soul are, that I may be rid of them, and that justice to the height may be done upon them; Lord, be but the death of my sins, and my soul shall say, 'My lot is fallen in a pleasant place,' and 'verily I have a goodly heritage;' Lord, cleanse me but from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and I shall cry, 'Hosanna' to thee, Mat 21:9; Lord, let me but outlive my lusts, and follow them to the grave before others follow me to my grave, and I shall say it is enough, Psa 16:6; 2Co 7:1. And thus every gracious soul is more willing to be rid of his sins than he is to keep his sins. A porter cannot be more willing to be rid of his burden, nor a sick man to be rid of his disease, nor a beggar of his nasty lousy rags, nor a prisoner of his chains, than a gracious soul is willing to be rid of his lusts, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, That soul that does not, nor through grace assisting, will not allow himself, or indulge himself in a course of sin, or in the common practice of any known sin, that soul is certainly a

gracious soul. 'The evil that I do, I allow not,' Rom 7:15. So Psa 119:1, Psa 119:3, 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the law of the Lord, they also do no iniquity;' that is, they allow not themselves in the practice of any iniquity. Blessed souls live not in the service of sin, they live not in an ordinary practice of any iniquity: 1Jn 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' He that has the seed of God, the seed of grace and regeneration in him, he cannot allow himself in a way of sin, he cannot give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin, he cannot make a trade of sin. So Pro 16:17, 'The highway of the upright is to depart from evil;' that is, it is the ordinary, usual, constant course of an upright man to depart from evil. An honest traveller may step out of the king's highway into a house, a wood, a close, but his work, his business is to go on in the king's highway. So the business, the work of an upright man is to depart from evil. It is possible for an upright man to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts; but his main way, his principal work and business is to depart from iniquity, as a bee may light upon a thistle, but her work is to be gathering at flowers; or as the sheep may slip into the dirt, but its work is to be grazing on the mountains, or in the meadows. Certainly there is no man in the world so abominable wicked, but that he may now and then, when he is in a good mood, or when he is under distress of conscience, or bleeding under a smarting rod, or beholding the handwriting upon the wall, or under a sentence of death, depart from evil; but this is not his course, this is not his business, this is not his work, this is not his highway. Thieves do but now and then step into the king's highway to take a purse, they do not keep the king's highway. But now the upright man's highway, his common and ordinary course, is to depart from evil, and therefore he cannot allow himself liberty to walk in an evil way: Tit 2:11-12, 'For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men,' (without distinction of nations, sex, age, or condition) 'teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Under the name of ungodliness, he compriseth all the breaches of the first table; and under the name of worldly lusts, he compriseth all inordinate desires against the second table; and those three words, 'soberly, righteously, and godly,' have a threefold reference: the first to ourselves, the second to our neighbour, and the third to God. We must live soberly in respect of ourselves, righteously in respect of our neighbours, and godly in respect of God. And this is the sum of a Christian's whole duty. Now if the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teaches saints to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, then certainly saints that are taught by that grace cannot live, nor allow themselves in ungodliness or worldly lusts. Without all peradventure, heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that can appeal to heaven that he allows not himself in the practice of any known sin. Thus David did: 'Search me, O Lord,' says he, 'and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' Psa 139:24. It is a most sure sign, that sin hath not gained a man's heart nor consent, but committed a rape upon his soul, when he allows not himself in it, but cries out bitterly to God against it, as Paul did, Rom 7:1-25. If the ravished virgin under the law cried out, she was guiltless, Deu 22:25-27. Certainly such as cry out of their sins, and that would not for all the world allow themselves in a way of sin, such are guiltless before the Lord. That which a Christian does not allow himself in, that he does not do in divine account, &c. But now the whole trade, the whole life of formal and carnal Christians, is nothing else but one continued web of wickedness; there is no wicked unregenerate person in the world, but lives in the daily practice of some known sin or other; but allows himself in some trade or way of wickedness or other, as you may evidently see by comparing of these following scriptures together, Pro 1:20-33; Jer 5:3, Jer

44:16-19, Jer 9:3-6, Jer 7:8-1; Psa 59:16-17; Isa 66:3; Mat 7:23; Rom 6:12-13, Rom 6:19, Rom 8:5; Luk 13:27; Eph 2:2-3; Php 4:19; Tit 3:3; 2Pe 2:14. Sin is a sinner's absolute work, it is his main work, and the sinner is besides himself, besides his calling, as it were, when he is besides his sin.

[5.] Fifthly, He that conflicts most with heart-sins, and is most affected with spiritual sins, and that laments and mourns most over secret sins, invisible sins, sins that lie most hid and remote from the eyes of the world, he is certainly a gracious soul. Grace in truth, and grace in power, will rise and conflict, and make head against the most inward and secret vanities of the soul, as against secret self-love, and secret hardness of heart, Isa 63:17; and secret unbelief, Mark 9:24; and secret carnal confidence, and secret hypocrisy, and secret envy, and secret malice, and secret vain-glory, and secret fretting and murmuring, and secret lustings, and secret runnings-out of the soul after the meat that perisheth, and secret pride. Hence Hezekiah humbles himself for the pride of his heart; and so David, he humbles himself for the pride of his heart in numbering of the people, 2Ch 32:25, 2Sa 24:10. And how does the same prophet chide himself for sinful dejection of spirit: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?' Psa 42:11. And how does he at another time befool himself, and be-beast himself, for his secret grudging and fretting at the prosperity of the wicked: 'So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee,' Psa 73:22. And so Paul was most affected and afflicted with a law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind. Inward pollutions and defilements did sit closest and saddest upon his spirits. And the same apostle in that 2Co 7:1, is for keeping down the filthiness of the spirit, as well as the filthiness of the flesh; he is for inward cleansing, as well as for outward cleansing: 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,' 2Co 7:1. So Mr Bradford was a man that had attained to so great and eminent a height of holiness, that Doctor Taylor, the martyr, calls him 'that saint of God, John Bradford;' and yet, oh how sadly does he bewail his secret hypocrisy. True grace makes opposition as well against the being of sin in a man's nature, as against the breakings out of sin in a man's life, Col 3:5. True grace will make head against the corruptions of the heart, as well as against the excursions of the feet; it is as willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted heart, as it is willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted hand. It would fain have, not only sinful acts, but also sinful dispositions, and not only irregular actions, but also inordinate affections, mortified and subdued. O friends! heart sins are root sins; they are the springs that set all the wheels a-going, the fountain that sets all the streams a-running, the fire that sets the furnace a-smoking, the bellows that sets the fire a-burning. Certainly a proud heart hath more of Satan in it than a proud look, and a wanton heart is more vile than a wanton eye, and a murderous or adulterous heart is worse than a murderous or adulterous act, &c. And therefore true grace makes head against heart sins, against spiritual sins, against the most inward secret sins, against those very sins that lie not within the reach of reason, or the sword of the magistrate, or the piercing eye of the most knowing or observing man in the world, but are only obvious to an omniscient eye. But now carnal men, as they make little of outward sins, so they make nothing of heart sins, of spiritual sins. If they are not drunkards, nor swearers, nor extortioners, nor whoremasters, nor cursers, nor cheaters, nor oppressors, nor liars, nor persecutors, Mat 19:16-27; if they are good negative Christians, then they think themselves very good saints, and in a very fair way for heaven, and that no man can say black is their eye, when their hearts are as full of evil thoughts and secret lusts, as ignorance, atheism, unbelief, pride, envy, discontent, anger, formality, hypocrisy, indifferency,

lukewarmness, deadness, and hardness, &c., as the sun is full of light, or as hell is full of darkness. Restraining grace, common grace, only makes head against gross enormities, against palpable vanities, as you may see in the scribes and pharisees; but saving grace makes head against heart sins, against spiritual sins. Common grace is all for washing the outside, but saving grace is for washing the inside as well as the outside. Common grace is only for washing the feet and the head, but saving grace is for washing both feet, head, and heart, Mat 23:1-39, John 13:9-10. Look, as in a dark night we can only see those stars that are of the greatest magnitude; so by the starlight of natural conscience, the natural man can only see those sins that are more great and gross. Natural convictions can reach no further than natural light, but spiritual convictions can reach to the most inward, secret, spiritual, and undiscernible sins. Certainly that is a sincere heart, a heart more worth than gold, that smites a man for inward sins as well as for outward sins; for sins done in a corner, as well as for sins acted upon the house-top; for spiritual sins, as well as for fleshly sins; for sins against the soul, as well as for sins against the body; for sins committed in a closet, as well as for sins committed on the most public stage. Certainly that trouble and grief that springs from heart sins, from spiritual sins, from secret sins, bears a more immediate relation to the holiness of God, who only observes them, and is offended by them, and so is a most sure and infallible evidence of saving grace, and of the work of the Spirit in power upon the soul. When open commissions do humble and abase the heart, and secret inclinations to sin do even break and burst the heart asunder, then the heart is certainly sincere with God. A Christian will readily grant that his God is a good God, and that Jesus Christ is the chiefest of ten thousand, and that the gospel is a glorious gospel, and that the promises are precious promises, and that the ordinances are blessed ordinances, and that the lively communion of saints is the sweetest communion in all the world. But yet he will say, I have such a proud heart, such a hard heart, such a slight heart, such a carnal heart, &c., and I am so vexed and molested with sinful notions, and with sinful imaginations, and with sinful inclinations, and with atheistical risings, and with private murmurings, and with secret unbelievings, and that in despite of all my conflictings, and strivings, and prayings, and mournings, and sighings, and groanings, and complainings, that I am oftentimes even weary of my life. And if this does not speak out Christ within, and grace within, and the Spirit within such a soul, I know nothing. O friends! remember this once for all, viz., that the main battle, the main warfare of a Christian lies not in the open field, it lies not in visible skirmishes; but his main quarrels and conflicts are most within, and his worst and greatest enemies are them of his own house, they are them of his own heart. A little grace at first conversion may reform an ill life, but it must be a great deal of grace that must reform an ill heart. A little grace may make a man victorious over outward gross sins, but it must be a great deal of grace that must make a man victorious over inward sins, secret sins, spiritual sins, heart sins, yea, a thorough conquest of these sins will hold a man in play all his days. But,

[6.] Sixthly, He that abstains from sin, he whose heart rises against sin, he that sets himself against sin, because of the evil nature of sin, because of that vileness and filthiness that is in sin, he certainly has a principle of grace, a seed of God in him. He who refrains from sin, and whose heart rises more against sin, because of the purity of the law which forbids sin, than because of the severity of the law which condemns sin, is certainly under the power of renewing grace, of saving grace: Psa 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' It is only pure grace that can enable a man to love the word for its purity. The apostle, to set forth the formidable evil that is in sin, expresses it thus, Rom 7:13, 'That sin might appear to be sin.' He could find

nothing more evil and odious to express it by than itself. Sin is so great an evil, that it cannot have a worse epithet given it. Paul can call it no worse than by its own name, sinful sin. Had the apostle said that sin might appear to be a snare, a serpent, a viper, a toad, a plague, a devil, a hell, &c., he had said much, but yet not enough to set forth the transcendent evil that is in sin, and therefore he calls it sinful sin. All other evils are but outward, they only reach the name, the body, the estate, the life, but sin is an inward evil, a spiritual evil, an evil that reaches the precious and immortal soul, and therefore is the greatest evil. Death puts an end to all other troubles, viz., poverty, sickness, disgrace, scorn, contempt, crosses, losses, &c.; but sin is so great an evil, that death itself cannot put an end to it; eternity itself shall never put a stop, a period, to this evil of evils. All outward evils can never make a man the subject of God's wrath and hatred. A man may be poor, and yet precious in the eyes of God; he may be greatly abhorred by the world, and yet highly honoured by God; he may be debased by men, and yet exalted by God. But now sin is so great an evil, that it subjects the sinner's soul to the wrath and hatred of God. All other evils do but strike at a man's present well-being, but sin strikes at a man's eternal well-being; all other evils can never hinder a man's communion with God. A man may have communion with God in poverty, in sickness, in prison, in banishment; but sin is so great an evil, that it interrupts communion with God, it cuts off communion with God. All outward evils are God's creatures: 'Is there any evil in the city that the Lord hath not done?' But sin is the devil's creature, it is a brat of his own begetting; yea, it is worse than the devil, it is that which has turned glorious angels into infernal devils. All other evils do not fight against the greatest good, but sin is that grand evil that fights against the greatest good; it fights against the being of God, the essence of God, the glory of God. Peccatum est Deicidium, sin is a killing of God, it is a murdering of God. Sin is a universal evil, it is all evil, it is nothing but evil; there is not one drop, one spark of good to be found in any sin, but now in all outward evils there is some good; there is some good in poverty, in sickness, in war, in death, but there is not the least good in sin. Sin is the sole object of God's hatred; he hates nothing but sin; he is angry with nothing but sin; he has forbid nothing but sin; he has revealed his wrath from heaven against nothing but sin; so great an evil is sin. Sin is that grand evil that has midwived all other evils into the world. It was sin that drowned the old world with water; it was sin that destroyed Sodom with fire and brimstone; it was sin that laid Jerusalem in heaps; it was sin that has midwived sword, famine, and pestilence into the world; it was sin that laid the foundation of hell, that laid the corner-stone in that land of darkness, for before sin there was no hell, Jdg 5:8; Psa 107:34; Deu 28:21. It was sin that crucified the Lord of glory, Rom 8:7. Now, oh how great must that evil be that has ushered in all these great evils into the world! Sin is enmity against God; God hath no enemy in the world but sin, and those whom sin hath made him. Sin hath set all the world against the Lord of glory. It is sin that has turned men into incarnate devils, and that has drawn them out to fight against God, and Christ, and their own souls, and the things of their everlasting peace. Now, when a man looks upon sin as the greatest evil in the world, and his heart rises and is enraged against it, because of the vile, filthy, odious, and heinous nature of it, it is a clear evidence that such a man has the divine nature in him. Take that one instance for all: Psa 19:12-13, 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' But why does David pray thus? 'So,' says he, 'shall I be innocent from the great transgression.' Mark, he does not pray thus: Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins, that so I may be free from troubles without, and from terrors within, or from hell beneath; but, Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins, that so I may be innocent from the great transgression. He does not say, So shall I be free from the great correction, but, So shall I be free

from the great transgression. That is a heart worth gold, that is more sensible and more affected with the evil that is in sin than with the evil that comes by sin. It was a weighty saying of Austin: 'That man,' says he, 'which fears hell, he doth not fear to sin, but fears to burn; but that man fears to sin, that fears sin as he would fear hell.' Common grace never works a man thus to fear sin, but renewing grace doth. Common convictions carry the soul out to look more on the evil that comes by sin, than on the evil that is in sin; and hence it comes to pass, that souls under common convictions are more affected and afflicted at the fear of hell and dread of wrath and damnation, than they are affected or afflicted at the vileness, odiousness, and heinous nature of sin. When an unsanctified person is angry with sin, and chides sin, and falls out with sin, and makes some head against sin, it is either because it hath cracked his credit, or clouded his honour, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or provoked his friends, or incensed the magistrate, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame, disgrace, or contempt here and hell hereafter; but never because a holy God is dishonoured, a righteous law transgressed, a blessed Saviour frequently crucified, or the blessed Spirit greatly grieved. The child will not touch the coal because it will burn him, and the prudent man will not touch the coal because it will smut him. A gracious heart rises against sin because of its defiling and polluting nature, but an unsanctified heart rises against sin because of its burning and damning nature. A sanctified person hates sin, because it pollutes his soul, but an unsanctified person hates it because it destroys his soul. A sanctified person loathes sin, and abhors sin, because it fights against God's holiness; but an unsanctified person loathes it, and abhors it, because it provokes and stirs up God's justice. A sanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that is in sin; but an unsanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that follows sin, &c. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Where there is an irreconcilable opposition in the soul against sin, there is a saving work of God upon that man's heart. Where there is such a detestation of sin, and such an enmity raised in the soul against sin, as that the soul cannot, nor will not, upon no terms in the world, admit of any truce or reconciliation with sin, there is Christ and grace formed in the heart. The war between a gracious heart and sin, is like the war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam: 1Ki 14:30, 'There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.' The oracle said to the Cirrheans, noctes diesque belligerandum, they could not be happy unless they waged war night and day; no more can we, except we perpetually fight against our lusts. O friends! a gracious heart that is weary of sin, will certainly and habitually fall a-striving against it: Gal 5:17, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: for these two are contrary the one to the other.' Now contraries are naturally expulsive each of other. Such a pair as a Jacob and an Esau; such twins as an Isaac and an Ishmael, cannot lie quietly together in the same womb; no, nor live quietly together in the same house, but there will be a mutual prosecuting and persecuting each of other. Fire and water may as well agree in the same vessel, as grace and sin in the same heart. True grace hath a real repugnancy and contrariety to all sin; and remember this once for all, that saving grace is not contrary to sin because it is open and manifest, nor to sin because it is private and secret, nor to sin because it is of this or that consequence, but to sin as sin, whether public or private, because both the one and the other are contrary to the law of God, the will of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the designs of God, &c. As it is with true light, though it be but a beam, yet it is universally opposite to all darkness; or as it is with heat, though there be but one degree of it, yet it is opposite to all cold; so true grace, it is opposite to all sin, it cannot comply with any known sin. Look, as sin and grace were never born together, and as sin and grace shall never

die together, so sin and grace can never be reconciled together. There is a natural contrariety between sin and grace, and therefore you can never reconcile them in the heart. The opposition that grace makes against sin is inward as well as outward; it is against sin wheresoever it is. Nothing will satisfy a gracious soul but the destruction of sin: Rom 6:6, 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.' The Greek word καταργηθῆναι, that is here rendered destroyed, signifies weakened, and the strength of it broken, and made idle, fruitless, and ineffectual. So Psa 51:2, 'Wash me thoroughly' (or multiply to wash me, or play the fuller upon me), 'from mine iniquity;'—David looked upon his sin, his stain, to be so inveterate, so ingrained, that it would hardly be ever gotten out till the cloth were almost rubbed to pieces,—'and cleanse me from my sin.' David was as desirous to be cleansed of the leprosy of sin, as ever any poor leper was willing to be cleansed of his leprosy under the law. And so Psa 51:7, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' All the sacrifices of expiation of sin in the old law, were done by blood, and that blood was sprinkled upon the people by a bunch of hyssop, so called from the Hebrew word ezob, by reason of the nearness of the sound. In the legal sprinklings made with hyssop, was shadowed out the washing away of sin through the blood of Christ. The bride's garments are made white in the blood of the Lamb, and not by any washings in snow water, Rev 1:14, Job 9:30. When a gracious soul looks upon sin, he cries out, Lord, raze it, raze it down to the ground; Lord, let not one stone be left upon another. In every gracious soul there is such a detestation and such an indignation against sin, that neither mountains of gold, nor rocks of pearl, nor honour, nor applause, nor favour on the one hand, nor frowns, nor threats, nor neglects, nor scorns, nor contempt on the other hand, can win the soul over to sin, or make the soul one with sin. Look how it was between the Lord and Amalek, so it is between a gracious soul and his sins. Now if you turn to that Exo 17:16, you shall find how it was between the Lord and Amalek. 'Because the Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation;' or, as the Hebrew has it, 'The hand upon the throne of the Lord': God's hand is laid upon his own throne, as swearing to root out Amalek;' or because Amalek's hand is lifted up against God's throne, that is the church (so called in Jer 17:12, and crown of glory, Isa 62:3), therefore God will have perpetual wars with Amalek. God could as soon be reconciled to Amalek, as a gracious Christian can be reconciled to his sins. Others sense the words thus, that Moses had a solemn oath, as it were, laying his hand upon God's throne, for asseveration and assurance, that he and the people will have an irreconcilable war with the posterity of Amalek. And so every gracious soul is resolved to make an irreconcilable war with sin. But now, where there is only common grace, there a man deals by his sins as David did by his son Absalom, banish him his court for a time, and afterwards receive him into full favour, and court him as much or more than before. An unsound heart may fall out with his sin, and be very angry with its sin, for the consequence of it, for the shame it brings upon his person, for the blot it leaves upon his name, and for the stinging guilt and convulsion fits which it causeth in his conscience, and yet this very person be in a very close and strict league with sin, and his heart inwardly and strongly adhering unto sin. But a gracious heart will be still a-restraining of sin, a-curbing of sin, a-crossing of sin, a-making head against sin, and a-withstanding it in all its workings. Anger may be reconciled, but hatred cannot.

[8.] Eighthly, Where the very prevailings of sin are ordinarily made serviceable to high and holy, to gracious and spiritual ends, there certainly is a saving work of God upon that man's soul, Eze 16:61, Eze 16:63; Eph 2:5-7. As when they produce more soul-loathing, soul-humiliation,

self-judging, self-abasement, self-abhorring; or when they fill the soul with a greater admiration of the freeness and riches of grace; or when they keep down pride, and prevent the despising of others, or produce holy shame; or when they make the blood of Christ more precious and dear to the soul; or when they engage a Christian so much the more to watch and pray, and pray and watch, that he may either be kept from the hour of temptation, or in the hour of temptation; or when every fall makes sin more bitter to the soul than ever, and Christ more sweet to the soul than ever, and all the means of grace more delightful to the soul than ever, and heaven more desirable to the soul than ever; or when sin is made the prevention of sin; or when sin, through the over-ruling hand of grace, is made an occasion of more grace, as that good man said, 'As I get hurt by my graces, so I get good by my sins.' You know all the falls, and knocks, and blows, that children get that are learning to go, do but make them cleave the closer and hang the faster upon the nurse's skirts, or about the mother's neck. So when all a Christian's falls do but work him to cleave the closer and hang the faster upon the strength of Christ, and to be still a-drawing more and more virtue and power from Christ, then is the prevalency of sin made serviceable to holy and gracious ends; and where God ordinarily thus works, there is certainly a work of God in power upon that soul: 2Co 7:11, 'For, behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.' This scripture I have fully opened in my eighth sign of godly sorrow in this book, and to that I refer you. The mother, by suffering the child to get one fall, keeps the child from many a fall; and so it was with these Corinthians. Adam's fall was an inlet to abundance of grace, and his unrighteousness did usher into the world the most glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ. Hezekiah falls, and by his fall God gives him a clearer and fuller sight of his own heart than ever he had before in all his days, 2Ch 32:25-26, 2Ch 32:31. Sin is no gainer, but a loser, by every fall of the saints. God does and will, by the over-ruling hand of his grace, make the very miscarriages of his people to be glorious inlets to more eminent degrees of grace and holiness. God hath a great revenue of glory from the very infirmities of the saints; and the saints have a great revenue of comfort from their very miscarriages, by the wise, powerful, over-ruling, and sanctifying hand of God. God is that powerful, that skilful physician, that can make an antidote and sovereign remedy of sin, that is the most deadly poison in all the world. God does and will make the very sins of his people to further the salvation of his people, according to that golden promise, Rom 8:28. God never suffers his people to fall into any sin, but out of a design to break the neck and back of that sin they fall into. God suffered David to fall into those two great sins of murder and adultery, but by these very falls he broke the very back of those sins, for we never read that ever he fell into those sins the second time. And so God suffered Peter to deny him once, but by that sore fall God broke the neck of that very sin; for we never read that ever he denied Christ any more at the voice of a damsel; yea, it is very observable that Peter's courage and boldness for the truth received a very high advance by those deep wounds that he had formerly given them, when he denied the Lord that bought him. After his sore falls, for courage and boldness he carries the bell from all the apostles, as you may see in Acts 4:12. It is the nature of true grace to gather strength by every wound. Grace gathers strength by contraries, as fire doth when it is compassed about with coldness, by an antiperistasis. By all a Christian's falls, his graces grow brighter and stronger. At the long run, a Christian by all his falls loses nothing but his dross, his chaff, his scum, his filth. Now, he that finds his sins thus over-ruled for the good of his

soul, he is certainly a gracious soul. O sirs! remember this for ever, viz., that the oftener an hypocrite or a formalist falls, the more ground and strength his sins get upon him, and so will continue to do till all that grace and goodness which he seemed to have had be quite extinguished. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Where a bare naked command of God is commonly, ordinarily of that power, force, and authority with the soul, as to curb sin, and restrain the soul from sin, and to arm and fence the soul against the encroachments and commands of sin, there is certainly a saving work, a powerful work of God upon that soul. When a man can say to heaven and hell, Stand you by for the present, and to precious promises, Stand you by for the present, and to divine threatenings, Stand you by for the present, here is a command of God that forbids such and such actions, and therefore I cannot, I dare not do this or that wickedness, and sin against the Lord; there is certainly a principle of grace in that man's heart, Gen 39:9. That is a great word of David, Psa 119:161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' When a naked command from God does so overawe the heart, as that it dares not sin against God, then doubtless the heart is sincere with God. A child does not stand in more awe of the rod, nor a servant of a beating, nor a favourite of his prince's frowns, than a real Christian, when he is himself, stands in awe of the word. So Psa 119:11, 'Thy word have I hid within my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' When a man hides the word in his heart as a treasure, that he may not lose it, and as a rule that he may not transgress it, then his heart is indeed right with God. When the law of God in a man's heart arms him against the lusts of his heart and life, then doubtless his heart is sound with God. So Psa 17:4, 'By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;' or as some read the words, 'according to the command and charge of thy words, I have kept me from the sinful ways, manners, behaviours, &c., of the destroyer, or the cruel man.' Christ commanded his apostles to make him known to the world, and to preach the everlasting gospel, and to make known those mysteries and riches of grace that were hid in former ages, Mat 28:18-20; Acts 10:36, seq. The Jewish authority threatens them, and commands them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, Acts 4:17-18; but the command of Christ carries it with the apostles against all their threatenings and commands: Acts 4:19-20, 'But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have heard and seen.' When the commands of authority run counter-cross to the commands of God, the commands of God must be obeyed, though the greatest authority under heaven should be displeased and enraged. God never gave the greatest authority in the world any authority to act contrary to his commands. Disobedience to unlawful commands is no disobedience. Woe to him that obeys the commands of men in opposition to the commands of God: 1Co 9:16, 'For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!' Now it is infinitely better to fall under the displeasure of men, than to fall under the woes of God. The Jews, under a pretence of their authority, command the apostles not to preach Jesus to the people; but the commands of Christ carry it with the apostles against all their contrary commands. The apostles, who were like to bottles of new wine, that must either vent or burst, knew very well that it was not obedience to men's commands that could excuse their disobedience to God's commands. So in that third of Daniel, the commands of the great God carried it with the three children against all the dreadful threatenings, proud boastings, and idolatrous commands of king Nebuchadnezzar. Certainly the commands of sin are of all commands the vilest commands; they are all illegal; sin hath no ground,

no reason to command our souls. Sin is but a usurper, a traitor, and therefore has no authority over us. All sin's commands are purely sinful; they are plain and notorious rebellions against the laws of Christ, the life of Christ, and against the crown, honour, and dignity of Jesus. All sin's commands are grievous, burdensome, and painful commands; of all yokes, none so heavy as that which sin lays upon the sinner; hence sin is compared to a talent of lead, Zec 5:7, to shew the weightiness and burdensomeness of it; and hence it is that sinners are said to weary themselves in committing iniquity, Jer 9:5; and hence it is that wicked men are said to travail with iniquity, Psa 7:14, to shew what anxious pain and trouble they have in bringing about their wickedness: 'Behold he travaileth with iniquity;' or as the Hebrew hath it, he shall travail, or he continually travaileth, he takes as great pains to go to hell as a travailing woman doth to be delivered. Wicked men are as laborious, and as restless and unquiet in the practice of wickedness, as a woman in labour is when the pangs of travail are upon her, Pro 4:14-16. Sugared poisons go down pleasantly; oh but when they are down they gall, and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder; it is so with sin. Lastly, the commands of sin are extremely unreasonable. What an unreasonable thing it is to command a man to run into the fire, or to drown himself in the water, or to strangle himself, &c. Now all the commands of sin tend directly and intentionally to the burning, drowning, strangling, and destroying of the sinner. All sin's commands tend to the dishonour of God, the breach of his righteous laws, and the damnation of the precious and immortal soul. Now where the commands of God do commonly carry it, against all the commands of sin, there the soul is certainly sincere with God. That we owe perfect obedience to God's will, to God's commands, is evident enough several ways, and in particular from the universal obedience of all creatures; I mean those which are without reason, sense, or life, for they inviolably observe his commands: Isa 48:13, 'Mine hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call to them, they stand up together,' as prepared to execute his commands. The insensible parts of the world are so compliant with his will, as to contradict their proper natures to serve his glory. Fire descends from heaven at his command, Gen 19:24; 2Ki 1:10-12. And the fluid sea stands up at his command, Exo 14:22. Now what a sad thing is it that Christians should at any time prove disloyal and rebellious, when all inferior creatures do with one consent serve and glorify the great God! But, &c.

[10.] Tenthly, Constant desires, and earnest and constant endeavours to avoid and shun all known appearances of sin, evidences the truth and reality of grace in the soul. Certainly that man is a true Nathanael, that makes it his business, his work, to abstain from all appearances of evil. An hypocrite loves the appearance of good more than goodness itself, and a sincere Christian hates the very appearance of evil, as well as the evil itself. He who hates a person loathes his very picture. A wicked man may abstain from broad-faced evils, but commonly he is very bold and venturous upon appearing evils. Oh what vain apologies do many make in these days for long hair, gaudy apparel, antique fashions, spotted faces, naked breasts, wanton behaviours, effeminated alliances, and a thousand other suspicious practices and vanities! But now a man that is truly gracious, he makes conscience, not only of shunning real, gross, known evils, but also of shunning the very likeness of evil. His heart does not only rise against real sins, but he is very shy of that which looks like sin. When Joseph's mistress took hold of him and said, 'Lie with me, he left his garment in her hand and fled, and gat him out,' Gen 39:12. Joseph would not be found in the company of his impudent, brazen-faced mistress, that could so barely and basely, so boldly and frequently, solicit him to defile his master's bed, and to damn two souls at once, her own and his,

that so he might avoid the very appearance of evil, the very suspicion of sin. By wanton touches and dalliance, mental adultery is often committed; and therefore Joseph flies, as being unwilling to touch her, or to be touched by her. And so Paul refused the using his liberty in taking a lawful maintenance for his labours, lest a sinister interpretation of covetous and mercenary affection should have been put upon it by his adversaries, 1Co 9:11-15. And so the same apostle would needs have Titus and two others chosen by the church, to join with him in carrying the benevolence of the church of Macedonia to Jerusalem, because he was very careful to avoid all suspicion of dealing ill in that business. 2Co 8:20-21, 'Avoiding this, that no man should blame us, in this abundance that is ministered by us; providing for honest things, not only before the Lord, but also before men.' So Daniel would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, Dan 1:3, that is, say some, he would not defile his conscience by eating such unclean meats as were forbidden under the law, for the Babylonians did eat of divers meats, as of swine, hares, &c., and of sundry sorts of fishes and fowls, which were forbidden by God unto the children of Israel, Lev 11:1-47, Deu 14:1-29; nor with the wine which he drank; but in the Hebrew the plural number is used, of his drinks, whence some gather that the king drank divers sorts of wines, which were also set before Daniel and his companions; therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Daniel's living at a full table, and his feeding upon kingly dainties, might have been, not only a means to ensnare him, and drown him in the sensualities of the court, but it would have carried with it also too great a show of Daniel's conformity to the court's manners and customs, and have been too great an appearance of Daniel's forgetfulness of the sore and miserable calamities and matchless miseries of the captive church, who sat sighing and groaning and mourning in her cruel bondage, and had none to comfort her, or speak peace unto her; and therefore Daniel purposed in his heart, or set it upon his heart, or laid it upon his heart, as the Hebrew may be read, that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, &c., that so he might avoid all shows or suspicions of evil. It is very observable, that in the law of the Nazarite, who did for a time special consecrate himself to God, that besides his not coming to the dead, and suffering his hair to grow, it was ordained of God that he should abstain from these six things: (1.) From wine and strong drink; (2.) from the vinegar of wine or strong drink; (3.) from any liquor of grapes, though it were but the water wherein they were steeped; (4.) from the green or moist grape; (5.) from the dried grape or raisin; (6.) from the husk or kernel of them, Num 6:3-4. Had the Nazarite eaten but the skin of the grape or raisin, he had broken the law. Now hereby the Lord would teach us, that those that separate themselves from the world, to be in a special manner serviceable to the Lord, they must avoid not only that which is plain sin, downright sin, or such sins that men may run and read, but also that they must shun and be shy of the very appearances of sin. It was good counsel that Livia gave her husband Augustus, 'It behoveth thee,' saith she, 'not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so,' &c. We must shun and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin, if either we tender our credit abroad, or our comfort at home. Walking in the power of holiness lies much in shunning the very appearance of sin. The primitive Christians would not endure that any Christian should look towards Jerusalem praying, because they would avoid the least show of Judaism. And indeed there are great reasons why every Christian should avoid whatever may have the suspicion of sin; and this will be evident, if you please but seriously to consider of these eight following particulars:

(1.) First, Consider those clear and plain commands of God which makes this duty to be a duty, as that 1Th 5:22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' God requires us not only to abstain from all

apparent sins, but also from all appearance of sin. We must do nothing which hath a show or shadow of sin. It is duty to abstain from whatever is of an ill show, or an ill report. And so God commands us to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, Jude 1:23. Saints must abhor everything that carries with it but a favour or suspicion of uncleanness. The apostle alludes to legal uncleanness, which was contracted by touching the houses, the vessels, or the garments of unclean persons, Lev 15:1-33. Christians must not only hate uncleanness, but they must hate everything that looks like it, or that has the least communion with it. So in that Deu 12:30, 'Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared, by following of them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' God does not only command his people to abstain from gross idolatry, but he also commands them to take heed of all those ways and means and inquiries that might tend to draw them to idolatry, or that might carry with them the least show or appearance of idolatry. It is observable in the law, that God commanded his people not only that they should worship no idol, but that they should demolish all the monuments of them, and that they should make no covenant, nor have any affinity with those who worshipped them; and all to avoid the very shows of idolatry, and to prevent his people from being drawn by those means to commit idolatry with them. And so Exo 23:7, 'Keep thee far from a false matter.' Every good man must stand aloof off, he must keep at a distance, both from the occasions of sin, and from the appearances of sin. So Pro 5:8, 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.' He that is farthest from fire, is safest from burning, and he that is most remote from the water, is in least danger of drowning. It is no small wickedness to approach near the door of wickedness; he who approaches near the door of a whore's house, is already in the door of whoredom, Pro 22:14, Pro 23:27. It argues too much mind to be in the house, for any one knowingly, willingly, to come near the door of it. Oh how should a man dread the coming into that house, where he must needs either perish or else overcome! Certainly it is infinite better not to be in danger of perishing, than being in danger not to perish. So Hos 4:15, 'Though thou Israel play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend, and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, the Lord liveth.' Gilgal was once the key of Canaan, situate between Jordan and Jericho, famous for sundry services there performed to God, as might be easily shewed by many instances; but now Gilgal was basely abused to idol worship; and hence it is that God charges them not to come near it, that so they might avoid both the show and danger of idolatry; and it is upon the same account that God charges them not to go up to Bethaven. By these scriptures it is evident that God would have his people to abstain from all shows and appearances of sin. But, &c.

(2.) Secondly, The holiness of God, and the honour of God, calls aloud upon all Christians to avoid the suspicion of sin. God is so essentially holy, so unmixedly holy, so universally holy, so eminently, so transcendently holy, so superlatively holy, so originally, radically, and fundamentally holy; he is so independently holy, so unchangeably, so constantly, and so exemplarily holy, that he cannot but hate and abhor the very appearance of evil. Look, as apparent sins stir up the judicial anger of God against sinners, so the appearance of sin stirs up the fatherly anger of God against saints. A gracious heart knows that 'God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab 1:13, and therefore he keeps at a distance from the appearance of iniquity. Of all men in the world, none honour God at so high a rate as those that keep most aloof off from the appearance of evil. Many, by their apparent evils, have lived God, and Christ, and the gospel, and their profession, and precious ordinances, into disgrace, scorn, and contempt; and oh that we would all make it our

great business, by abstaining from all appearance of evil, to live God, and Christ, and the gospel, and our profession, and precious ordinances, into a greater credit, praise, and honour than ever! He keeps farthest off from dishonouring God that keeps farthest off from the appearance of sin. But, &c.,

(3.) Thirdly, This is the way of ways for a man to keep himself clear from other men's sins. That man that abstains from the appearance of sin is very rarely guilty of other men's sins. Men many times, by venturing upon the appearances of sin, come to wrap themselves up in the guilt of other men's sins. Effeminate dalliance is an appearance of evil; and had Joseph been toying, and playing, and sporting with his mistress in a wanton manner, how soon might he have wrapt himself up in the guilt of his mistress's burning lusts! He that would not tempt nor entice others to sin, must keep off from the very appearance of sin. Certainly there is not the holiest man in the world but has sins enough of his own to sad him, though not to sink him; to humble him, though not to damn him; to abase him, though not to deject him; and therefore how much does it concern the best men in the world to abstain from the very appearance of sin, that so they may not bring upon themselves the guilt and burden of other men's sins. It is very well observed by some, that a more grievous punishment is reserved for them which cause others to sin than for them which sin by their occasion; thus the serpent was punished more than Eve, and Eve more than Adam. And so Jezebel, who tempted and provoked Ahab to sin, was punished with a far greater and sorer punishment or judgment than Ahab himself was. To sin, saith one, hath not so much perdition in it as to make others to sin; and therefore, as you would never draw others to sin, keep off from all appearance of sin. Oh that all superiors, inferiors, and equals, would lay this counsel to heart! But,

(4.) Fourthly, The keeping off from all appearances of evil is the best and noblest way under heaven to keep a good name and to keep a good conscience. Now, a good name and a good conscience are jewels more worth than all the sceptres and mitres in the world, and there is no wisdom in the world to that which leads a man by the hand to secure his name and his conscience: Pro 22:1, 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving-favour rather than silver and gold.' So Ecc 7:1, 'A good name is better than precious ointment;' the one being but a perfume of the nostrils, the other a perfume of the heart. It is observable, the princely preacher does not say, 'a great name is better than precious ointments,' but 'a good name is better than precious ointments.' Ointments are here named, because in those eastern parts they were laid up in the king's treasury, even among his most precious things: Isa 39:2, 'And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed him the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointments,' &c. Precious aromatical ointments were things greatly in use and esteem amongst the Israelites, and a special part of their treasures, as is evident by the Scriptures in the margin. And yet a good name, which hath its foundation in virtue, and in a holy, innocent, blameless, harmless, and exemplary life, is better than those most precious ointments. And it is observable that the initial letter of the Hebrew word **טוב**, Tob, that is here rendered good, is bigger than ordinary, to shew the more than ordinary excellency of a good name and fame amongst men. It was good counsel the moralist gave when he said, Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that jewel of a good name. A good renown is better than a golden girdle, say some. And a man's eye and his good name can bear no jests, say others. And if I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough, said the naturalist. O friends! as ever you would keep a good name, keep off from the very appearance of evil; for the very appearance of evil will

both eclipse and wound a man's name and his conscience at once. Certainly a man were better not to live, than to outlive his good name. A man's good name is like a piece of white paper, which, if once blotted, will very hardly be got out again, so as to leave no print of it behind. It is like a fair structure, long time a-rearing, but quickly ruined; or like a merchant's estate, long a-getting, but lost in a moment. And therefore how much does it concern every Christian to keep his name as he would keep his life! and this he can never do, except he keeps off from the appearance of evil. It is his name only that shall be kept green and flourishing, like the rod of Aaron, that was laid up in the tabernacle, who keeps off from the appearance of evil. He takes the best and the wisest course under heaven to preserve his good name in the world, and to maintain the peace of his conscience, who is most studious and industrious to abstain from all appearances of evil. But, &c.

(5.) Fifthly, The appearance of evil may very much offend, scandalise, stumble, and tempt weak Christians; and therefore it highly concerns us to keep off from the very appearance of evil. The more grace any man hath in his own heart, the more fearful he will be of stumbling or offending those that have less. Venturing upon the appearance of evil may not only defile my own conscience, but also wound my weak brother's conscience; and therefore it concerns me to be very shy of the appearance of evil. If in things of an indifferent nature I must deny my own liberty, as I must, rather than grieve, or offend, or wound the conscience of a weak brother for whom Christ hath died, 1Co 8:11-13, 1Co 10:25, 1Co 10:28, oh how much more, then, must I shun the very resemblance of sin, considering how wonderful apt weak Christians are to be offended and stumbled when they see others so bold as to venture upon the appearance of evil! Alexander's Macedonians having offended him, laid by their arms, put on mourning apparel, and came running in troops to his tent, where, for almost three days together, they remained with loud cries and tears, to testify their remorse for offending him; and shall we make nothing of offending those weak Christians that are the price of Christ's blood, and the travail of his soul? The Lord forbid!

Besides, our venturing upon the appearance of evil may prove a great temptation to weak Christians, not only to venture upon seeming evils, but also to venture upon real evils. Doubtless many weak Christians have been drawn to apparent evils by observing others to venture upon the appearance of evil. It is commonly seen, that when strong Christians will adventure upon appearing evils, weak Christians will be emboldened thereby to commit real evils: 1Co 8:8-10, 'But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols?' When the weak shall see men of knowledge communicating with idolaters in their feasts, their consciences will be emboldened and confirmed in their old superstition about those idols which they were beginning to leave, returning now afresh to a more reverent esteem and service of them than ever, &c. O friends! as you would not offend the weak, as you would not tempt the weak, keep off from all shows and appearances of evil, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Christians venturing upon appearing evils, will exceedingly harden and encourage wicked men to commit real evils. It is very natural and customary with wicked men to make use of the appearing infirmities of the saints, as excuses and apologies to bear them out in their greatest enormities and wickednesses. Why, did not such and such knowing eminent Christians do thus and thus? and we have gone but one step beyond them, and is that so great and heinous a crime?

they have been playing and sporting themselves about the pit, and we are but slipped or stepped into the pit. They have been sitting and bibbing with such and such company, and we have but taken two or three merry cups more than ordinary in the same company, and is that so great a sin? &c. O sirs! as we should walk wisely towards those that are without, so we should walk compassionately towards those that are without, 1Th 4:12. 'Of some have compassion, making a difference,' Jude 1:22. Did not Jeremiah wish that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of his people? Jer 9:1. Did not Samuel mourn for Saul? Did not Christ weep over Jerusalem? Did not the compassionate Samaritan bind up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, who fell among thieves in his going from Jerusalem to Jericho? Did not Paul weep over those that were enemies of the cross of Christ? Yea, shall we shew pity and compassion to an ox or an ass that is fallen into a ditch? Nay, shall David rather venture upon a lion than lose a lamb? Shall Jacob rather endure heat by day, and cold by night, than neglect his flock? Shall Moses fight with odds, rather than the cattle shall perish with thirst? Nay, shall Xenocrates, a heathen, shew compassion to a poor sparrow, that being scared and pursued by a hawk, flew into his bosom for succour? &c. And shall not we have that compassion on poor sinners' precious and immortal souls, as to abstain from the appearance of sin, which may more ways than one prove so exceeding prejudicial to them? &c.

Wicked men are wonderful prone to watch for the saints' haltings, Jer 20:10. Christians are lights upon a high hill; yea, they are stars in the firmament of the church, and therefore every man's eye is upon them, and if wicked men can but discern the least indecency, the least appearance of any eccentric or irregular motion, oh how readily will they let fly against God and the gospel, against religion, and against all that have a profession of religion upon them! Now the honour of God, and the credit of the gospel, should be so dear and precious in the eyes of every Christian, that he should rather choose to die than to venture upon the least apparition of sin, whereby the honour of God may be clouded, or the credit of the gospel impeached or eclipsed, or the soul of a poor sinner endangered or worsted. Both the least sin, and the least appearance of sin, must be avoided and prevented; the cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent; the very thought of sin, if not thought on, will break out into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are in the ready way of being irrecoverably lost. Camerarius tells us a sad story of two brothers, who, walking out in the evening and seeing the element full of bright spangling stars, one of them being a grazier, wished that he had as many oxen as there were stars in the firmament; then said the other brother, If I had a pasture as big as all the world, where would you keep the oxen? He answered, In your pasture. What, said the other, whether I would or no? Yes, said his brother. The matter was very light; it was but a little evil, or an appearing evil, but it fell out very heavily; for presently they fell to words, and then drew one upon another, and in the close killed one another. O friends! as you love the lives of sinners, and as you love the souls of sinners, keep off from all appearance of evil. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Other precious saints have abstained from all appearances of evil; witness Joseph, Paul, Daniel, &c., but lately cited. And to these let me add that great instance of Augustine, who retracted even ironies because they had the appearance of evil. And so the primitive Christians would not set up lights and bays at their doors, though for this they were persecuted as enemies to the emperor, because the temple and the doors of idolaters were wont to be thus garnished. And so David refused to take the threshing-floor, and threshing instruments, and oxen, &c., of Araunah

as a gift, but would needs buy them at a price, and this he did, partly out of a divine nobleness, and partly to avoid the very show of covetousness, 2Sa 24:21-24. Now why has God left all these famous precedents upon record, but on purpose to encourage his saints in all ages to abstain from all appearing evils, as well as from all apparent evils. Certainly God looks that we should so eye the best, the highest, the worthiest, and the exactest examples, as that we should make it our great business and work to come up to them, and to imitate them to the life. O friends! the examples last cited should be very awakening, very persuading, very convincing, and very encouraging; because in them you may see that though abstinence from the appearance of evil be a difficult thing, yet it is a possible thing. Shall we love to look upon the pictures of our friends, and shall we not much more love to look upon the holy examples of those eminent saints that had the lively picture of grace, and the lovely image of Christ fairly stamped upon their hearts and lives? It is both our mercy and our duty to eye the examples, and to follow the footsteps of those Christians that have been most eminent in grace, as you may plainly see by comparing of these scriptures together, Pro 2:20; Heb 6:12; 1Th 1:6; Php 4:9; 2Ti 3:10-12; Heb 12:1; Php 3:17; 1Co 11:1; Tit 2:7. He that would fain write a fair hand, had need have his eye often upon his copy; and he that would fain abstain from all appearance of evil, he had need often to eye the gracious examples of such who have made conscience of abstaining from appearing evils, as well as from apparent evils. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Consider what some refined heathens and civilised pagans have done in this very case. There are stories of heathens that would not look upon excellent beauties, lest they should be ensnared. Democritus plucked out his own eyes to avoid the danger of uncleanness. Socrates speaketh of two young men that flang away their belts, when, being in an idol temple, the lustrating water fell upon them, detesting, saith the historian, the garment spotted by the flesh. Alexander would not see the woman after whom he might have lusted. Scipio Africanus, warring in Spain, took New Carthage by storm, aure victor, at which time a beautiful and noble virgin fled to him for succour to preserve her chastity; he being four-and-twenty years old, and so in the heat of youth, hearing of it, would not suffer her to come into his sight for fear of temptation, but caused her to be restored in safety to her father. So when Demosthenes the orator was asked an excessive sum of money to behold the beautiful *Lais*, he answered, He would not buy repentance so dear, neither was he so ill a merchant as to sell eternals for temporals. Nor *Cæsar* would not search *Pompey's* cabinet, lest he should find new matters of revenge. Memorable is the story of the children of *Samoseta*, that would not touch their ball, but burnt it, because it had touched the toe of a wicked heretical bishop as they were tossing and playing with it. Now shall some refined heathens, shall civilised pagans abstain from the appearance of evil, from occasions and temptations to sin? and shall real Christians fall short of them? Shall blind nature do more than grace? Shall men fallen in the first Adam do more than those that are raised and enlivened by the second Adam? But to prevent all mistakes, let me add, though many heathens have abstained from the appearance of some evil, yet they have not abstained from the appearance of all evil; neither have they abstained from the appearance of any evil out of a hatred of evil; nor from any principles of saving light, or life, or love; nor out of any regard to any royal law of God; nor out of any regard to the honour or glory of God, but either out of vain-glory and popular applause, the pole-stars by which they steered all their actions, or out of hypocrisy, which set a tincture and dye upon all their actions. What writer hath more golden sentences than *Seneca* against the contempt of gold; yet if *Tacitus* and others of his contemporaries may be credited, none more rich, none more covetous than he, as if out of design he had persuaded others to cast away their money, that

he himself might come and gather it up again, &c. And thus you see that there are very great reasons why every Christian should avoid the very show, suspicion, or appearance of evil, &c. But,

[11.] Eleventhly and lastly, He that sets himself resolutely, mostly, habitually, against his bosom sins, his constitution sins, his most prevalent sins, &c., he has certainly a saving work, a powerful work of God upon his soul, Psa 18:26. True grace will make a man stand stoutly and stedfastly on God's side, and work the heart to take part with him, against the most darling sins, though they be as right hands or as right eyes. True grace will lay hands upon a man's most beloved lusts, and cry out to heaven, Lord, crucify them, crucify them, down with them, down with them even to the ground. Lord, do justice, do signal justice, do speedy justice, do exemplary justice upon this head lust, this master sin! Lord, hew down root and branch! let the very stumps of this Dagon be broken all in pieces! Lord, curse this wild fig-tree, that never more fruit may grow thereon! Certainly God and Christ is set up highest in that man's heart, who bends most of his thoughts, strength, and endeavours against his constitution sins, against the sins of his place, calling, condition and complexion. It is very observable that the Jews, after they had been in the Babylonish furnace for idolatry, they ever hated and feared that sin, as much as the burned child dreads the fire; yea, they would die any death rather than admit an idol. Josephus tells us how stoutly they opposed Pilate and Petronius, that would have set up Cæsar's statue in their temples, offering their throats to the swords of the soldiers, rather than they would endure that idol in God's house. Oh when once the heart of a Christian comes thus to be set against all his golden and silver idols, then we may safely say, 'Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile.' He that finds his lusts, his bosom, his darling lusts, begin to fall before him, as Haman once begun to fall before Mordecai, Est 6:13, he may safely and confidently conclude that he is of the seed of the Jews, and that the seed of God abideth in him, 1Jn 3:9. But having discoursed so largely as I have concerning bosom sins, darling lusts, head corruptions, in my other writings, I need say no more at this time. And thus you see that there are eleven particulars in regard of sin and a Christian's actings about it, that speaks out a true saving work of grace to be in the souls of the saints. But, &c.

II. Secondly, Where the constant, ordinary, standing, and abiding purpose, disposition, frame, and general bent of a man's heart, soul, spirit, desires, and endeavours are fixed and set for God, for grace, for holiness in heart and life, there is a most sure and infallible work of God passed upon that man's soul. The constant bent and the settled purpose of a true child of God, is for God, for grace, for holiness in heart and life: Psa 119:112, 'I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always, even to the end.' Psa 119:38, 'Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.' Verse 44, 'So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.' Verse 45, 'And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.' Acts 24:16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' Heb 13:18, 'Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' Gracious souls do strongly affect that which they cannot easily effect: Psa 119:57, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words.' Some read this verse thus, 'Lord, I have said, my portion shall be to keep thy words.' Holy David was fully determined and resolved in himself, to keep God's royal law, in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And so Barnabas exhorted the disciples, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, Acts 11:23; as if all piety and truth of grace consisted in gracious purposes of heart. Certainly when the bent of a man's mind, and the settled purpose of a man's soul, and the unfeigned desires of his heart, are for God, for grace, for holiness in heart, in

life, then the estate and condition of that man is safe and happy. It is very observable that that great apostle Paul, in his spiritual conflict, lays a very great stress upon these things; witness Rom 7:16, 'If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.' So Rom 7:18, 'For to will is present with me.' So Rom 7:19, 'For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.' So Rom 7:21-22, 'I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' So Rom 7:25, 'So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God.' Certainly, the truth, the life, and power of grace; of holiness, of regeneration, is not so much seen in our actions, as in the renewing and sanctifying of our minds and wills, according to that Rom 12:2, 'Be ye transformed,' or metamorphosed, as the Greek has it, 'by the renewing of your mind.' No man is to judge of the soundness or sincerity of his spirit by some particular acts, but by the constant frame and bent of his spirit, and by his general conversation in this world. If particular actions might determine whether a man had grace or no grace, whether he were in Christ or not in Christ, whether he were a saint or not a saint, whether he were sincere or unsound, we should many times conclude, that those had no grace who indeed have, and that they were not in Christ who indeed are, and that they are no saints who indeed are, and that they are not sincere, who certainly are true Nathanaels. The best saints have had their extravagant motions, and have very foully and sadly miscarried as to particular actions, even then when the constant course and bent of their spirits have been God-wards and Christ-wards, and holiness-wards and heaven-wards, &c. Witness David's murder and adultery, Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Joseph's swearing, Job's cursing, Jonah's vexing, Peter's denying, and Thomas his not believing. Such twinklings do and will accompany the highest and fairest stars. As he who foots it best may be found sometimes all along, and the neatest person may sometimes slip into a slough. He that cannot endure to see a spot upon his clothes, may yet sometimes fall into a quagmire. So the holiest and exactest Christians may sometimes be surprised with many infirmities and unevennesses, and sad miscarriages. Certainly particular sinnings are compatible with a gracious frame, though none are with a glorious condition. Though no darkness, no clouds can be mixed with the sun in heaven, yet both may be in the air which is enlightened below. Our best estate on earth is mixed, and not absolute. Glory annihilates all sinful practices, but grace only weakens them. The most sincere Christian is but an imperfect Christian, and hath daily cause to mourn over his infirmities, as well as he has cause to bless God for his graces and mercies. Well, sirs! look, as every particular stain doth not blemish the universal fineness of the cloth, so neither doth this or that particular fact disprove and deny the general bent of the heart. Particulars may not decide the estate either way. It is true, a man by a particular sinning is denominated guilty, but by no one particular can a man's estate be challenged, either for good or bad. He that shall judge of a Christian's estate by particular acts, though notorious bad, will certainly 'condemn the generation of the righteous.' We must always distinguish betwixt some single good actions, and a series of good actions. It is not this or that particular good action, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates us holy. Certainly, as there is no man so holy, but sometimes he falls into this or that particular sin; so there is no man so wicked, but sometimes he falls in with this or that particular duty. Witness Pharaoh, who in a fit desires Moses and Aaron to pray for him; and witness Balaam, who in a good mood desires to die the death of the righteous; and witness Saul, who under a pang condemns himself, and justifies David; and so witness Ahab's humbling of himself, and Nineveh's repenting, and Felix his trembling, and Herod's hearing of John Baptist gladly. Now look, as every sin which a godly man falls into, through infirmity, doth not presently

denominate him ungodly, so neither will a few good actions done by a wicked man prove him godly. It is what the course and tenor of the life is, that must be most diligently and wisely observed, for every man is as his course is; if his course be holy, the man is so; if his course be wicked, the man is wicked. There is a maxim in logic, viz., that no general rule can be established upon a particular instance; and there is another maxim in logic, viz., that no particular instance can overthrow a general rule. So here, as no man can safely and groundedly conclude from no better promises² than from some few particular actions, though in themselves materially and substantially good, that his heart is therefore sincere; so on the contrary, no man ought to conclude, because of some gross particular sinful actions, and extravagant motions, that his heart is unsound. O sirs! we are not to make a judgment of our states and conditions, by some particular actions, whether they are good or evil, but we are to make a judgment of our estates and conditions by the general frame, bent, and disposition of our hearts, and by the constant tenor of our lives. It is certain, that God accounts every wicked man guilty of all those sins, wickednesses, and vanities, which the settled purpose, desire, bent, bias, and frame of his soul inclined him to, though he doth not actually commit them: Mat 5:28, 'He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.' A man may commit adultery, and yet not touch a woman. There are many thousands that die of the wound in the eye. So 1Jn 3:15, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.' A man may commit murder, and yet not kill a man, yea, he may commit murder, and yet not touch a man: Pro 23:7, 'For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The man is as the mind is. God esteems of wicked men according to their hearts, and not according to their words. So it is as certain that the Lord accounts every godly man to do all that good, that the settled purpose, frame, bent, bias, and unfeigned desires of the soul inclines him to: 2Co 8:12, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted.' So Heb 11:17, 'By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only son;' that is, in disposition and full purpose of heart, and willingness of mind, which God accepted for the deed. A true intent is in God's account as a real act. So David had a purpose, a mind, a will to build God a house, and for this God commends him: 1Ki 8:18, 'And the Lord said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thy heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart;' yea, God rewards him for it, as if he had actually done it, and tells him in his ear that he would build him an house, 2Sa 7:27. So when that servant that owed his Lord ten thousand talents had shewed his readiness, and willingness, and resolvedness to pay all: 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all!' Mat 18:26, a thing as impossible for him to do, as it is for us to keep the whole law, and not to fail in one point; but his desires, his mind, his will, his purposes was to do it; well, and what does his Lord do? Why, his Lord has compassion on him, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt, Mat 18:27; his Lord took this for full and current payment, he accepted of the will for the deed. So when Zaccheus had unfeignedly professed his purpose and willingness to make restitution, Christ presently replies, 'This day is salvation come to thy house,' Luk 19:9. Certainly the Lord accounts that soul a true believer, and a blessed soul, that unfeignedly desires to believe; witness that Mat 5:6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' And it is as certain that the Lord accounts that sinner a true penitent, that doth unfeignedly desire, purpose, and resolve to repent, to break off his sins, and to turn to the Lord, as you may see in that great instance of the prodigal: Luk 15:18-20, 'I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came

to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' As soon as ever the prodigal did but purpose and resolve to repent, and return to his father, the compassions of his father are kindled and turned towards him, and he does not go, but runs and falls on his neck, and instead of kicking and killing, there is nothing but kissing and embracing a returning prodigal. God always sets a higher value upon our dispositions than upon our actions, and in our best services he esteems more of our wills than he does of our deeds, as is evident by the scriptures in the margin. Every good man is as good in the eye and account of God, as the ordinary frame and bent of his spirit speaks him to be. Every man is as holy, as humble, as heavenly, as spiritual, as gracious, as serious, as sincere, as fruitful, as faithful, as watchful, &c., as the settled purposes, desires, resolutions, and endeavours of his soul speaks him to be. Hence Noah is said to be a just man, and perfect or upright in his generation, Gen 6:9. And hence Job is said to be a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil, Job 1:1-8. And hence David is said to be a man after God's own heart, 1Sa 13:14; and to fulfil all his wills, Acts 13:22. Here the Greek word *θελήματα* is wills, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience. And hence Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to be both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless, Luk 1:5-6. Hence the church is said to be all fair: Song of Solomon 4:7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' And hence those hundred forty and four thousand saints that had their Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev 14:1, are said to be without fault: Rev 14:5, 'And in their mouth was found no guile: for they were without fault before the throne of God.' God in the covenant of grace, and upon the credit of his Son's blood, and for the glory of his free grace and favour, is graciously pleased to accept of his people, and to approve of his people, and to delight in his people, and to interpret his people, according to the common bent, frame, disposition, resolution, unfeigned desires, and constant endeavours of their souls. But, &c.

III. Thirdly, If your obedience be the obedience of faith, then your estate is good, then you have assuredly an infallible work of God upon your souls.

Quest. But how shall we know whether our obedience be the obedience of faith or no? How may a man discern when his obedience springs from faith?

Ans. You may certainly know whether your obedience be the obedience of faith or no, by these following particulars:

[1.] First, That obedience that springs from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience. David did look upon his universal obedience as a special testimony of his uprightness: Psa 119:6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.' Mark! the psalmist doth not say, When I obey all thy commandments, then shall I not be ashamed; but, 'When I have a respect to all thy commandments, then shall I not be ashamed.' Now a respect to all God's commandments notes an inward awe and reverential eye towards every duty that God requires. The words, according to the Hebrew, may be read thus: 'Then shall I not blush when my eye is to all thy commandments.' Now you know the traveller hath his eye towards the place whither he is going, and though he be short of it, yet he is still a-putting on and pressing forwards all he can to reach it. So when the eye of a saint is to all the commands of God, and he is still a-pressing forwards towards full obedience, such a soul shall never be put to the blush; such a soul shall never be ashamed in the great day of our Lord Jesus. So Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son

of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will;’ π■ντα τ■ θελ■ματα μου, all my wills, to note the sincerity and universality of his obedience. So Acts 24:16, ‘And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.’ So Heb 13:18, ‘We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.’ That obedience that springs from faith doth neither dispute divine commands, nor divide divine commands one from another. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luk 1:5-6. That obedience that springs from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience. It is universal in respect of the subject, the whole man, and it is universal in respect of the object, the whole law. Mark! he who obeys sincerely obeys universally, though not in regard of practice, which is impossible; yet (1.) In regard of his will and desires; his will and desire is to obey all: Rom 8:18, ‘For to will is present with me.’ Psa 119:5, ‘Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!’ (2.) In respect of election or choice; he chooses to obey all: Psa 119:173, ‘Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts.’ The word here rendered chosen signifies to choose upon trial and examination: I have chosen thy precepts before all, and above all other things. I have chosen thy precepts for my chiefest good, and for my only treasure. I have chosen thy precepts to own them, to follow them, and to obey them. (3.) In respect of approbation; he approves of all the commands of God, as holy, just, and good; he highly approves of those royal commands that he cannot perfectly obey: Rom 7:12, ‘Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good.’ And ver. 16, ‘I consent unto the law that it is good.’ He assents to the commands of God as holy, and he consents to them as good. (4.) In respect of affection; he loves all the commands of God, he dearly loves those very commands that he cannot obey: Psa 119:97, ‘O how I love thy law!’ Such a pang of love he felt, as could not otherwise be vented, but by this pathological exclamation, ‘Oh how love I thy law!’ Psa 119:113, ‘I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.’ Psa 119:163, ‘I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.’ Psa 119:119, ‘Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.’ Psa 119:127, ‘Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold.’ Psa 119:159, ‘Consider how I love thy precepts.’ Psa 119:167, ‘My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.’ (5.) In respect of valuation or esteem, he highly values all the commands of God, he highly prizes all the commands of God, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together: Psa 119:72, Psa 119:127-128, Psa 19:8-11, Job 23:12. (6.) In respect of his purpose and resolution; he purposes and resolves, by divine assistance, to obey all, to keep all: Psa 119:106, ‘I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.’ Psa 17:3, ‘I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.’ (7.) In respect of his inclination; he has an habitual inclination in him to keep all the commands of God: 1Ki 8:57-58, 2Ch 30:17-20; Psa 119:112, ‘I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end.’ (8.) In respect of endeavours; they endeavour to keep all: Psa 119:59, ‘I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.’ There is no man that obeys God truly, who doth not endeavour to obey God fully. And thus you see in what respect that obedience that flows from faith is a full obedience, a universal obedience. A child of God obeys all the commands of God in respect of his sincere desires, purposes, resolutions, and endeavours; and this God accepts in Christ for perfect and complete obedience. This is the glory of the covenant of grace, that God accepts and esteems of sincere obedience as perfect obedience. Such who sincerely endeavour to keep the whole law of God, they do keep the whole law of God in an evangelical sense, though not in a legal sense. In the work of conversion, God infuseth all grace together, and writes not one particular law in the

hearts of his children, but the whole law, which is a universal principle, inclining the soul impartially to all, Eze 11:19-20. The gracious soul sincerely falls in with every command of God, so far as he knows it, without prejudice or partiality; he dares not pick and choose what commands to obey, and what to reject, as hypocrites do; he hath an eye to see, an ear to hear, and a heart to obey the first table as well as the second, and the second as well as the first. He doth not adhere to the first, and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second, and condemn the first, as profane men do. All Sauls, Jehus, Judases, Demases, scribes, pharisees, and temporaries, they are still partial in their obedience; for while they yield obedience to some commands, they live in the habitual breach of other commands, Mat 23:23. Jehu boastingly calls out, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,' 2Ki 10:29-30. But if Jehoshaphat had gone a little further, he might have seen his calves too, contrary to God's commands. Herod heard John Baptist gladly, and did many things; but if John will be close and plain with him, he shall then first lose his liberty, and then his head for his labour, Mark 6:16-17. A sincere Christian loves all the known commands of God, and prizes all the commands of God, and sees a divine image, majesty, and authority stamped upon all the commands of God. And therefore the main bent and disposition of his soul is to obey all, and to be subject to all the commands of God. Let me in a few particulars open this great truth a little more fully to you. And therefore take me thus.

First, A sincere Christian will endeavour to obey God in suffering commands as well as in doing commands, in losing as well as gaining commands. An unsound Christian, he loves cheap obedience; he is willing to fall in with those commands that are not chargeable or costly; he loves a cheap gospel, and a cheap ministry, and a cheap membership, and a cheap communion of saints, &c. But when his obedience comes to be chargeable, when his obedience to divine commands may cost him his health, his strength, his liberty, his riches, his estate, his friends, his credit, his name, &c., then he retires, then he cries out, *Durus sermo*, it is a hard saying, who can bear it? John 6:60. This is a hard commandment, who can obey it? When religion is attended with freedom, honour, and safety, when religion is attended with riches, pleasures, and applause, then unsound hearts will put forwards; but when these part, then they bid religion farewell. As you see in the young man in the Gospel, who was willing to follow Christ so long as he might be no loser in following of him, Mat 19:20-25; but when it came to this, that he must part with his riches or with Christ, then he falls off, and went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions. But now a sincere Christian will obey even the most chargeable and costly commands of God, as you may see in that little book of martyrs, tenth and eleventh chapters of the Hebrews; and as you may see in the three children in Daniel, in the disciples, in the primitive Christians, and in the martyrs in the Marian days: Mat 19:27. But,

Secondly, If your obedience springs from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in relative commands as well as in absolute commands. You will not only hear, and pray, and read, and meditate, and fast, and mourn, but you will labour to be good in your relations, both as a husband, a father, a master, a magistrate, a minister. Remember this for ever, every one is that really that he is relatively. Many make a great profession, and are under a great name, and have great parts and gifts, and can discourse rarely well on any subject, whose houses are not Bethels, but Bethavens; not little temples, but little hells. One, writing of the Italian women, saith that they were angels in the streets, saints in the church, and devils in their houses. This is very applicable to many high professors this day, who are very forward in the general duties of religion, and yet make

little conscience of relative duties; but he whose obedience springs from faith, he will make conscience of relative commands as well as of absolute commands. Whatever command hath the stamp of God, the authority of heaven, upon it, though it seem never so small, he dares not disobey it. If he sees a beam of divine majesty sitting upon the face of any command, he will submit to it. You know men will not refuse a penny if the king's stamp be upon it; so if the authority of God be stamped upon the least command, a sound Christian will yield subjection to it as well as the greatest. Mark, if a man make no conscience of relative commands, though his general conversation as a Christian be never so admirable, yet he hath great cause to suspect himself and his estate, and that his heart is not right in the sight of God, Acts 8:21. Oh that you would seriously consider that relative and domestical graces and duties do more demonstrate true piety and godliness than public duties, than general duties, do; for pride, vain-glory, self-ends, and a hundred other outward carnal considerations, may put a man upon the general duties of religion, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin, and as you may see in the scribes and pharisees throughout the New Testament; but it argues both truth and strength of grace to be diligent and conscientious in the discharge of relative duties; and this is the true reason why the apostles in their epistles do so frequently, so earnestly, and so strongly, by variety of motives, press Christians to the performance of those relative duties that lie upon their hands. But,

Thirdly, If your obedience springs from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in affirmative commands, as well as in negative commands. You will not only look upon what God would not have you to do, but you will also look to see what God would have you to do. Dives was not cast into hell for oppressing Lazarus, but for not shewing mercy to Lazarus; he was not damned because he took anything from him, but because he gave nothing to him, Luk 16:19-29. The evil servant did not riot out his talent, but omitted the improvement of it, for which he was cast into outer darkness, Mat 25:24-31. Nor those reprobates in the same chapter did not rob the poor saints, but omitted the relieving of them, which was their ruin. Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation for a mere omission, because they met not God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deu 23:3-4. Look, as the omission of good diet breeds diseases, so the omission of religious duties will either make, work for repentance, or for hell, or for the Physician of souls. Mark, there is many a man's religion lies merely in negatives; he is no swearer, no drunkard, no adulterer, no oppressor, no defrauder, &c., Luk 18:11. A formal professor's obedience to divine commands does principally lie in negatives; he considers not so much what the command requires as what it prohibits, and he pleases himself rather in abstaining from evil than in doing of good, in being outwardly reformed than in being inwardly renewed. He thinks it enough that he turns from sin, though he makes no conscience of turning to God. If you ask him concerning affirmative commands, there you will find him speechless. Ask him, Art thou holy? Art thou humble? Art thou heavenly? Art thou sincere? Art thou a believer? Dost thou set up God as the great object of thy fear? Dost thou love God with a superlative love? Is the Sabbath of the Lord a delight unto thee? &c. Now here you strike him dumb; he looks upon the neglect of these things as no sins, because they are not such scandalous sins as the others are, Isa 8:13, Psa 18:1, Isa 58:13. Remember, sirs, sinful omissions many times lead to sinful commissions, as you may see in the angels that fell from heaven to hell; and as you may see in Adam, who fell from his highest glory into a woful gulf of sin and misery. But,

Fourthly, If your obedience spring from faith, then you will endeavour to obey God in the spirit of the command, as, well as in the letter of the command. In every command of God there is an intra and an extra; one part of Christ's law binds the flesh, and another part binds the spirit: 'Thou shalt do no murder;' there is the letter of the command. 'Thou shalt not be angry with thy brother without a cause;' there is the spirit of the command. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery;' there is the letter of the command. 'Thou shalt not look upon a woman to lust after her;' there is the spirit of the command, Mat 5:21-22, Mat 5:27-28. The pharisees of old did not look to the spirituality of the law, but only to the letter of the law; they rested wholly upon an outward conformity to the law. When their hearts were full of hellish lusts, they were all for the outside of the law, they regarded not the inside of the law; they were all for washing of platters and cups, and for beautifying of tombs, like an adulteress, whose care is to paint and set a fair face upon a foul matter; they were all for paying tithe of mint and anise and cummin; but they regarded not the inside of the law, they omitted the weightier matters of the law, viz., judgment, mercy, and faith, Mat 23:23. While Paul walked by the letter of the command, he was blameless in his own account; but when he came to walk by the spirit of the command, then sin revived, and he died, Php 3:6, Rom 7:9. Friends, there are the more general duties of religion, as hearing, praying, reading, receiving, fasting, repeating, discoursing, &c. Now these all lie in the very letter of the command. And there are the more inward and spiritual duties of religion, as the exercise of faith, fear, love, hope, joy, patience, contentation, humble submission, and choosing of God, and cleaving to God, and delighting in God, and admiring of God, and exalting of God, and following hard after God, and holy meditation, and self-examination, &c. Now all these lie in the very spirit of the command. Now in the exercise of these more spiritual duties our fellowship and communion with God mainly lies. In the more general duties of religion, an hypocrite may manifest the excellency of his gifts; but in the more spiritual duties of religion, a sincere Christian doth manifest both the excellency and efficacy of grace. Mark, an unsound heart looks no further than to the bare letter of the command, to bare hearing, and bare praying, and bare preaching, and bare fasting, and bare giving, and bare receiving, and bare suffering; he looks no further than to that part of the command which only binds the flesh, or outward man; and if he does but observe that in the gross, he thinks he hath done marvellous well; like a melancholy man, that matters not what melody and harmony he makes, so he does but touch the strings of the instrument. But now, a sound, a sincere Christian, he looks to the spirit of the command; and if he does not come up to that in sincere desires, in gracious purposes, in fixed resolutions, and in cordial endeavours, he can have no peace, no rest, no quiet, no comfort. O sirs! as ever you would see God, and enjoy God another day, you must labour, not only to obey the letter of the command, but also to bring your hearts to the sincere obedience of the spirit of the command. This is a very close, piercing, distinguishing, and discovering sign. But,

Fifthly, If your obedience springs from faith, then you will labour, not only to obey God in the matter, but also in the manner of the command, not only in the substance of the command, but also in the circumstance of the command. God requires the manner as well as the matter; and God looks upon that work as not done, that is not done in a right manner. 'Did not the Lord command sacrifice? and did not Cain offer sacrifice? and yet God had no respect to him, nor to his offering, because his sacrifice was not offered up in a right manner, his offering was not offered up by a hand of faith; he offered his offering, but because he did not offer himself as an offering to God, his offering was rejected by God,' Gen 4:8. A work may be materially good that is not

formally and eventually good; and this was Cain's curse. How frequently did God command the Jews to pray? and yet he plainly tells them, 'When you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear,' Isa 1:15. He commanded them to sacrifice, and yet he saith, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices?' Isa 1:11, and all because they did not manage their prayers nor sacrifices in a right manner. Their hands were full of blood, and their hearts were full of sins, and their lives were full of lewdness; and therefore all their services were vain oblations, yea, an abomination to God. An unsound heart looks no further than to the substance of the command. If he has heard, and prayed, and fasted, and read, and repeated, and given alms, and received the Lord's supper, he strokes himself, and blesses himself, and hugs himself, and thinks all is well, and so he looks no further. But now a sound sincere Christian, he looks to the circumstance as well as the substance, to the manner as well as to the matter of the command. When he prays, he labours to pray fervently, earnestly; he labours to get his heart into his prayers; when he hears, he will hear with attention and intention of spirit; when he walks, he endeavours to walk wisely, humbly, faithfully, fruitfully, circumspectly, exemplarily, winningly, convincingly, blamelessly; when he obeys, he desires and endeavours to obey freely, willingly, cheerfully. O sirs! if we pray, and pray not fervently; if we hear, and hear not fruitfully; if we obey, and obey not willingly; if we shew mercy, and do it not cheerfully; if we sanctify the Sabbath, and not with delight, all is worth nothing, all will come to nothing, Isa 58:13. Mark, there are some circumstances accessory, some necessary, some wherein the being, and some wherein the well-being of a duty doth consist; and if you abstract these from them, the duty is worth nothing. Take away fervency and humility from prayer, take away faithfulness and fruitfulness from hearing, and take away willingness and delight from obedience, and all will be worth nothing. God regards not only the matter, but the manner. Criton the papist could say, That God loved better adverbs than nouns, not to pray only, but to pray well. Non bonum sed bene agere, Not to do good, but to do it well, is the great wisdom of a Christian. What is the sun without light, or the fountain without water, or the body without the soul, or wood without fire, or a bullet without a gun, or a ship without a rudder? No more are words in prayer, without the spirit of prayer. God looks more at the manner than at the matter of your prayers. And let thus much suffice to confirm the first particular. But,

[2.] Secondly, That obedience that springs from faith, is an obedience that is only grounded upon the word of God, the commands of God. Psa 119:4-5, 'Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently; Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Mat 5:18, 'For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' John 10:35, 'If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.' John 12:48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' 2Ti 3:16-17, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' Now the reasons why that obedience that springs from faith is an obedience that is only grounded upon the word of God, the commands of God, are these five:

(1.) And the first is drawn from the supremacy and sovereignty of God, who alone is to prescribe to man his duty. He is our great Lord and Master, he is our only Lord and Lawgiver. Isa 33:22, 'For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King.' Jas 4:12, 'There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?' Now by the laws of this Lord and Lawgiver, we must square all our actions. Look, as it would be very absurd in a servant to do that work which he thinks meet, and not what his master commands; so it is as absurd for men to think, that God will accept of this or that at their hands, when they cannot plead his superscription and authority for what they do. God will one day say to such, 'Who hath required this at your hands?' Isa 1:12. O sirs! you must lay the command of God as a foundation for what you do, or else all your buildings, though never so glorious, will certainly totter and fall; in all you do, you must be able to say, 'Thus saith the Lord,' or else after you have done your best, you may be undone for ever. But,

(2.) Secondly, God's promise and blessing is only annexed to God's command. He that will have the sweet of the promise, and the blessings of heaven, he must look that his obedience be bottomed upon divine commands. In holy actions it is not thy performance, nor thy grace, nor thy warmth, nor thy zeal, but the command and the promise that is annexed to it, that will bear thee out. Therefore we are called children of the promise, and heirs of the promise, Gal 4:28; Heb 6:17. The children of God, in all their obedience, should still keep an eye upon the command of God, and the promise of God, as ever they would run the race that is set before them, Heb 12:1. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Our obedience must be grounded and bottomed upon a divine command, because of that great corruption, pollution, blindness, and darkness which is upon our minds and understandings, which would carry us to what not, if we were not to steer our Christian course by divine commands, Col 2:20-22. The apostle condemns those things which had a show of humility and great mortification, because they were not bottomed upon a divine command; and Christ condemned many practices of the scribes and pharisees, because they were not bottomed upon a divine command, as you may see by comparing the 6th, 15th, and 23d chapters of Matthew together. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Our obedience must be bottomed upon a divine command, because else we can never be able to bear up our hearts comfortably, courageously, confidently, and resolutely, under all the afflictions, oppositions, temptations, persecutions, and discouragements that we meet with in the ways of the Lord, and in doing the work of the Lord, Psa 44:9, seq.; Eze 28:12, Eze 28:22. All the messages that the prophets delivered were still grounded upon a divine command, 'Thus saith the Lord;' and this steeled their spirits in the work of the Lord, this made them resolute and undaunted in the midst of all the afflictions and oppositions that they met with. And so it was a word of command that raised the spirits and encouraged the hearts of the apostles in the work of the Lord, in the face of all the oppositions, threatenings, and buffetings that they met with from the civil powers, Acts 4:19-20, and Acts 5:29. You know Absalom lays his bloody commands upon his servants, as their highest encouragement to that bloody work of killing his brother Amnon, 2Sa 13:28. 'Now Absalom had commanded his servants [his assassins], saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant; or sons of valour, as the Hebrew runs. And so a Christian must lay the command of God before him, as his highest encouragement to do what God requires of him, &c.

(5.) Fifthly and lastly, Our obedience must be bottomed and grounded upon the commands of God, to difference and distinguish ourselves from all hypocrites, formalists, superstitious and profane persons, whose obedience is sometimes bottomed upon the traditions of men, and sometimes upon the commandments of men. It was the sin of the ten tribes, that they complied with the command of Jeroboam and his princes, to worship the calves at Dan and Bethel; and for this the wrath of the Lord fell heavy upon them. 'Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandments.' And sometimes their obedience is bottomed upon the examples of men, sometimes their obedience is bottomed upon the examples of their forefathers and ancestors,—Jer 10:3, 'The customs of the people are vain,' &c.,—and sometimes upon the examples of great men. This was that which the pharisees objected against believing on Christ. 'Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees believed on him? but this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.' And sometimes they bottom their obedience upon the example of the multitude. This was Demetrius his argument against Paul, on the behalf of Diana, 'that all Asia and the world did worship her,' Acts 19:26-27; and therefore the doctrine of Paul, that they be no gods which are made with hands, was false, and not to be suffered. This hath always been, and is still, the common plea of many, We do but as the most do; and sure a great many eyes can see more than one or two. And hereupon they exclaim against others for their singularity, because they won't do as the rest of their neighbours do. But,

[3.] Thirdly, That obedience that springs from faith is a growing obedience, it is an abounding obedience. Such a man's desires, will, study, and labour, is to get up to the highest pitch of obedience, to get up to the highest round in Jacob's ladder: Rev 2:19, 'I know thy work, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.' The angel of the church of Thyatira is commended, (1) first, for his love; (2) for his charity; (3) for his faith; and (4) for his patience. And in the general course of his life, he daily became more excellent; for his 'latter works were more than the first,' that is, they were more manifest proofs of his constancy, and more worthy of praise than the first. This faithful pastor is commended for his holy progress in grace and holiness. So Paul, Php 3:12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' Php 3:13, 'Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.' Php 3:14, 'I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' The Greek word διώκω, doth emphatically import a pressing with an eager pursuit after the mark. It is the same word that signifies to persecute, because the earnestness of his spirit in pressing toward the mark now is the same that it was in the persecution of those that pressed toward, the mark before. Look, as good runners, when they come near unto the mark, stretch out their heads, and hands, and whole bodies, to take hold of them that run with them, or of the mark that is before them; so he in his whole race so laboured unto that which was before, as if he were still stretching out his arms to take hold of it. If such a man might have his choice, he would be the most humble, the most holy, the most heavenly, the most mortified, the most patient, the most contented, the most thankful, the most fruitful, the most active, the most zealous, and the most self-denying Christian in the world, 1Pe 1:15-16. If he might have his choice, he would be holy as God is holy, and perfect as his heavenly father is perfect; he would do the will of God on earth, as those princes of glory, the angels, do it now in heaven, viz., freely, readily, cheerfully, delightfully, universally, reverentially, and unweariedly, &c. If he might have his choice, he would exercise

every grace, and perform every duty, with all his might; he sees so much excellency and beauty in God and Christ, that he cannot be at rest till he be swallowed up in the enjoyment of them; he sees so much excellency in grace, that nothing but perfection of grace will satisfy him; he makes perfection not only his utmost end, but he also labours after perfection with his utmost strength and endeavours. When God is made the one of a man's desires, the one of a man's affections, the one of a man's life and comfort, then will he be the one of a man's endeavours too. That obedience that springs from faith, when it is not wintertime with a Christian, is a fruitful obedience, it is an abounding obedience, it is a progressive obedience. Look, as the mercy and favour of God to a believer is not stinted nor limited, so the obedience of a believer to God is not stinted or limited; but now the obedience of hypocrites is always stinted and limited. This command they will obey, but not that; this duty they will do, but not that; this work they will attend, but not that, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, That obedience that springs from faith is the obedience of a son, not of a slave; it is a free, voluntary, evangelical obedience, and not a legal, servile, and forced obedience: Psa 110:3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness;' in the Hebrew, it is willingnesses, in the plural number, to shew their exceeding great willingness: Psa 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' By face is meant, (1.) God himself: Exo 20:3, 'Before my face,' that is, before me. (2.) His favour, Jer 18:17, 'I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.' Now, no sooner had God given forth a word of command for the psalmist to seek him, and to seek his favour, but presently his heart did echo to that command: 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' So Jer 3:22, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings; behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' Every gracious soul hath the duplicate of God's law in his heart, and is willingly cast into the mould of his word: Rom 6:17, 'Ye have obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine that hath been delivered to you,' or whereto you were delivered, as the words may be read. They did not only obey, but they obeyed from the heart, their hearts were in their obedience: Psa 40:8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God! yea, thy law is within my heart,' or in the midst of my bowels, as the Hebrew runs; these note the tenderest affections. There is the counterpane of the law written, yea, printed upon every gracious heart; a godly man will live and die with the law of God stamped upon his heart, Col 1:12; Php 1:8; Jer 31:33. O beata Apocalypse! said the martyr; catching up the Revelation, that was cast into the same fire with him to be burned. O blessed revelation! how happy am I to be burned with thee in my hands? It was Christ's meat and drink to do his Father's will; and the same mind is in all the saints as was in Christ Jesus. 'They delight in the law of God after the inward man,' John 4:1-54; Php 2:5; Rom 7:22: True obedience flows from principles of heartiness and love within, and not from bye and base respects and ends, that are carnal and worldly. It is observable, that Jehu's obedience was as ample and as large as God's command: 2Ki 10:30, 'And the Lord said unto Jehu, because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' And yet because his heart was not in his obedience, and because he did not purely act for God, but for himself, that he might bring about his own designs, he met with a revenge instead of a reward; as you may see in that: Hos 1:4, 'And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel, for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Jehu's heart was not in his obedience, he had a dispensatory conscience: for though he rooted out Baal's worship, yet the golden calves must still continue. He destroyed idolaters, but not idolatry; and this carnal policy brought down vengeance

and misery upon him and his posterity. Artaxerxes goes far: Ezr 7:23, 'Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done.' To what a height doth this heathen prince rise! He will do anything for God, he will do everything for God that he requires. But mark, what is that which moves him to it? Is it love to God? is it delight in God? Oh no! all his obedience proceeded from nothing but fear of wrath and vengeance, as is evident in the latter part of the verse: 'For why should there be wrath upon the realm of the king, and of his sons?' or, as the Hebrew runs, Why should there be boiling or foaming anger, great indignation? as it is rendered and made the utmost degree of divine displeasure in that Deu 29:28. Some read these words, 'Against the realm of the king and his sons,' as distinct one from another, and not depending one upon another; thus: Against the realm, the king and his sons; and this reading the original will bear. And this reading shews, that as the king feared God's wrath against himself, so also against his realm and children; and accordingly he was the more studious and careful to escape it. Blind nature was afraid of divine wrath, and therefore was the more sedulous to prevent it. Oh! but now a true child of God, he has the law of God written, not only in his understanding, but also in his heart and affections, Eze 36:25-27; and this is that which makes his obedience to be pleasing and delightful to him; so that if he might be free from the injunctions and directions of the word, with the servant in the law, he would not value such a liberty, Exo 21:4-6, &c.; he would not swear, nor lie, nor be drunk, nor whore, nor dissemble, nor cheat, nor run into all excess of riot if he might, because in his soul he has a principle of grace, and an inward contrariety and antipathy against it; he would not cease to hear, to read, to pray, to meditate if he might, because his soul takes a delight and sweet complacency in these things. There is a principle within him agreeable to the precept without him, which makes all religious performances to be easy and pleasurable to him. Look, as the eye delights in seeing, and the ear in hearing, so a gracious heart (except when it is under a cloud of desertion, or in the school of temptation, or under some grievous tormenting afflictions, or sadly worsted by some prevalent corruption) delights in obeying. Actions of nature, you know, are actions of delight; and so are all those actions that spring from a new nature, a divine nature, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, That obedience that springs from faith is a transforming obedience. It mightily alters and changes a man; from impurity to purity, from sin to sanctity, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from earthly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness, from pride to humility, from hypocrisy to sincerity, &c., 2Co 3:18, Rom 12:1-2. Such as please themselves with this, that they are no changelings, and that they are whatever they were, these are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, Acts 8:23. That obedience of the Romans, which was said to have come abroad unto all men, was an exemplary obedience, and a transforming obedience, Rom 16:19. Certainly, gospelobedience is a grace of much worth, and of great force upon the whole man; for when it is once wrought in the heart, it worketh a conformity to all God's holy will. But having spoken more largely of this in my other writings, let this touch here suffice, &c.

[6.] Sixthly, That obedience that springs from, faith is a constant obedience; it is a fixed and resolved obedience. Not in respect of practice and continued acts, 'for in many things we offend all.' 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not.' 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' 'There is no man that sinneth not.' 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,' &c. But in respect of a Christian's sincere desires, bent of will, purpose of heart, resolution of soul, and faithful endeavours: Psa 119:20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Psa 119:112,

'I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always, even to the end.' Psa 119:33, 'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.' Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' So Isa 40:29-31, Job 2:3. Mark, the renewed man hath at all times a desire to fear the name of the Lord, Neh 1:11; a will to live honestly at all times, Heb 13:18. And it hath some endeavours and exercise of spirit, to keep always a conscience void of offence towards God and men, Acts 24:16. The Israelites, in their marches toward the holy land, were many times interrupted by divers enemies, but yet they advanced in their course, as soon as they could get rid of their enemies. So, though the believer be many times interrupted, in the course of his obedience, by many fierce temptations, and strange working of corruptions; yet after the temptation is over, the believer returns to the course of obedience with greater forwardness, and with redoubled strength and courage, and in the end perfects his course of holiness in the fear of the Lord, 2Co 7:1. Mark, the appearing motion and walking of an unregenerate man in a way of righteousness and holiness, is but artificial, from the engine of hypocrisy and self-interest, like the flying of Architus his artificial dove, and therefore having no inward principle of life, it endureth not; but the motion and walking of a man, renewed by grace in ways of holiness and righteousness, is like the natural living motion of birds, it continues as long as life continues; and as everything in motion, the nearer it comes to the centre, the more swiftly it moves, so the nearer the believer, through time, to his rest in heaven, the more propense he is in all his motions towards God; 'he forgets the things that are behind, and reacheth forth unto those things that are before,' Php 3:13. That obedience that springs from faith is a fixed and resolved obedience; like David's worthies, it will break through an host of Philistines, through an army of difficulties, impediments, and discouragements, that it may be found doing the will of God. To make this a little more clearly and fully out, observe with me these few things:

First, No contrary commands of men shall take this man off from his obedience to the commands of God, Acts 4:19, and Acts 5:29, &c.

Secondly, No stream of evil examples, no current of corrupt times, shall bear them down in ways of obedience: Jos 24:15, 'I and my household will serve the Lord, though all Israel should serve idols.' And Noah was upright with God, and walked with God in his generation, when the whole world was overspread with violence, and all flesh had corrupted their ways, Gen 6:9, and Gen 7:1.

Thirdly, No worldly profit or advantage shall bribe this man from his obedience, Heb 11:8. Abraham will obey and follow God, though he forsakes all the benefits and contentments of his native country, and of his father's house, not knowing where his lot should fall, &c.

Fourthly, No carnal disputes or reasonings with flesh and blood shall dissuade him from his obedience, Heb 11:7. Noah might have raised many objections against that strange attempt of building an ark, a work of an hundred and twenty years' continuance; but Noah waves all disputes, and falls upon building of the ark, according to the command of God. So Paul, as soon as he was converted, he was commanded by God to preach to the Gentiles; he might have made abundance of objections against that service, but instead of objecting, he falls close to his Master's work, and never consults with flesh and blood, Gal 1:15-17.

Fifthly, No flood of natural affection shall hinder them in the way of their obedience. When God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering, he goes about it readily, and never acquaints Sarah with it, lest she should have hindered him in his obedience, and he goes three

days' journey to effect it, Gen 22:1-24 compared with Heb 11:17-19. When God commands, Abraham will not stick at it, though it be to offer up a son, a natural son, and not an adopted son; an only son, and not one of many; a son of the free-woman, and not of the bond-woman; a son of his old age; a son of the promise; a son in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; a son of his love and delight; a son that made the good old man laugh and be merry,—Isaac signifies laughter,—a son that was grown up to some years; witness the wood of the burnt-offering that he laid upon him, Gen 22:6-7. And this was the commendation of Levi: Deu 33:8-9, 'And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one' [Urim and Thummim signify light and perfection, according to their best derivation in the Hebrew tongue, and they are here put in the plural number, lights and perfections, to note the plenty as well as the excellency of divine graces,] 'whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor know his own children.' This relates to that heroical fact of the Levites, Exo 32:26-29, when, at the commandment of Moses, they slew their idolatrous brethren that had worshipped the golden calf, not sparing those that were most nearly allied to them, but did execute God's judgments upon parents, brethren, and children, as if they had been mere strangers to them; the Levites were so impartial in God's cause as not to acknowledge either father or mother, brother or children, against his command. Natural affections are strong, but supernatural obedience is stronger. Some have well observed, that the married martyrs, who were parents of many children, as Rogers, Watts, Guest, Rawlins, &c., suffered with most alacrity.

Sixthly, No terrors, no threats, no reproaches, no afflictions, no oppositions, no persecutions, no bonds, no banishments, no dangers, no deaths, shall deter them or affright them from their obedience, as will evidently appear by comparing of these scriptures together, Psa 44:16-21; Acts 20:23-24, Acts 21:12-13, and Acts 24:14; Dan 3:14-19; Rev 12:11, 'This is most evident in the histories of the ten persecutions, and in all other histories, both of a former and a later date, &c.

Physicians observe a difference betwixt the natural and preternatural heat in men's bodies. The preternatural heat, which ariseth from distemper, may be more for the present; but as it exceeds for measure, so it abates for time, because the natural heat is a more equal, and moderate, and durable heat; every part hath an equal share, and it is not extreme, and yet it continues. Thus it is with hypocrites and upright persons in the matter of obedience. The hypocrite may, in a kind of preternatural heat, in a hot fit, in a present heat, fall upon hearing, and reading, and praying, and reforming of his family, and upon leaving of this sin and that, and upon casting off this vain company and that, and upon associating of himself with this good company and that. But this hot fit does not last; the cold fit takes him again, and then he shakes hands with all his duties, and loses all his good inclinations, and lays aside all his warm resolutions. Will the hypocrite pray always? Job 27:8-9. Ephraim's goodness was as a morning cloud, which soon vanisheth, and as the early dew, which is soon dried up by the sunbeams, Hos 6:4. They were both false and fickle, unsteady and unstable, constant only in inconstancy; their hearts were never right with God, for they were not stedfast in his covenant, Psa 78:36-37. There are four times wherein an hypocrite may express a great readiness and forwardness to religious duties:

(1.) First, When he is under terrors and distress of conscience. Oh, now for a little ease, a little rest, a little quiet, a little comfort, what won't the hypocrite do! &c.

(2.) Secondly, When he is under sore and heavy afflictions. Hos 5:15, 'In their affliction they will seek me early;' Isa 26:16, 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;' Psa 78:34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him.' It is a reproach to some: No penny, no paternoster. And it is a shame to others: No plague, no paternoster; no punishment, no prayer, &c. So Pharaoh and Ahab, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, When religion is in fashion, when it is a credit to be a professor, and when profession is the highway to profit and preferment. In the warm summer of prosperity, when there is no hazard, no danger, no loss to be a Christian, who then so forward in religious duties as the hypocrite? but when the sun of persecution is up, then he falls away, Mat 13:5-6.

(4.) Fourthly, When others' presence, counsel, and examples have an influence upon them. Oh, now they keep close duties! Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest; but when Jehoiada was dead, Joash serves groves and idols, and turns a deaf ear to those prophets that testified against him, and gives Zechariah the son of Jehoiada his passport out of the world for inveighing against his evil manners, and the wicked courses of his princes and people, 2Ch 24:2, 2Ch 24:17-23. Whilst the good judges lived, the Israelites kept close to the service of God: Jdg 2:7, 'And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.' But when the good judges were dead, the Israelites did what was right in their own eyes: every man's lust was his law, Jdg 17:6, and Jdg 21:25. Whilst Moses was present, there was no talking of a golden calf, but no sooner was his back turned but the Israelites make a golden calf, and worship it when they had done, Exo 32:1-9, &c. But now mark, that obedience that springs from, faith, that is a constant obedience, that is constant in opposition to fits and starts, and imports the course and bent of a Christian's life, which is always to walk with God, to cleave to God, to follow God, and to obey God. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, That obedience that springs from faith, is directed to right ends. Gospel obedience has always gospel ends attending of it. Quest. What are they? Ans. They are these nine.

(1.) First, To testify our thankfulness to the Lord for all his favours and benefits that we have received from him, Psa 103:1-4; Psa 116:12, &c.

(2.) Secondly, To recover the image of God again, to the height of what we are able. The first Adam lost the image of God by his disobedience. Now, this image of God we recover again in Christ our second Adam; but so as that the more enlightened, the more holy, the more humble, the more heavenly, the more righteous, the more gracious, and the more obedient we are, the more we recover of this image of God, which consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, Eph 4:24. Now, saith the believer, my intent is to recover that precious image of God which I lost in the first Adam, and therefore do I labour to come up to the highest pitches of obedience, because the higher I rise in my obedience, the more I shall recover of the lost image of God. I know that I lost this image by partaking of the disobedience and pollution of the first Adam; and I know that I have recovered in part the same image by partaking of the obedience and holiness of the second Adam; and I yet further know that the more holy and obedient I am, the more I shall be like to that God that is holiness itself, and the more I shall recover of that blessed image which consists in perfect holiness.

(3.) Thirdly, Not for the justification of their persons, for that is only by Christ's complete obedience, which is made theirs by faith, 1Co 1:30, Col 2:10; but for the testification of their justifying faith, according to that of the apostle, Jas 2:17-18, Jas 2:26, &c.

(4.) Fourthly, That they may imitate the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may be the more conformable to Christ their head, who proposes his holiness to believers as a pattern for them to follow, as a copy for them to write after: 1Jn 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' Now saith the believer, oh how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how meek, how compassionate, how zealous, how exemplary, how convincing, how winning, how obedient was he when in this world! and therefore, O my soul! look to it, that thou makest it thy business, thy work, thy heaven, to imitate the Lord Jesus to the utmost that thou art able to reach to, Mat 11:28-29

(5.) Fifthly, Though not for the obtaining of salvation, that being made sure to us by Christ, yet for the obtaining of assurance of salvation, and for the making of our calling and election sure, according to that word, 2Pe 1:5-11.

(6.) Sixthly, That they may keep up their communion with God; for though the union the saints have with God by Christ depends wholly upon that which is without, viz., their being married to Christ, and clothed with his righteousness, yet the communion which the saints have with God through the Spirit hath much dependence upon a saint's walking, and upon his obedience; so that, if a saint shall dare to walk carnally and loosely, though he shall not break the marriage-knot, and lose his union, yet he will by such sinful practices grieve the Spirit, and lose his communion with God, Jer 3:14, Isa 49:1-2. But on the other hand, when a believer walks spiritually, graciously, obedientially, oh what sweet communion! what delightful communion! what high communion, what commodious communion! what soul-satisfying, soul-ravishing, soul-filling, soul-contenting communion with God does he then enjoy! When the child walks wisely and obedientially before his father, what sweet and delightful converses and communion is there between the father and the child; but if the child walk foolishly, stubbornly, rebelliously, disobediently, the prudent father will carry it severely, strangely, frowningly, and at a distance. Though his heart be still full of love to his child, and though he won't disinherit him, yet he will not be familiar with him. The application is easy, &c.

(7.) Seventhly, To keep down the body, and to bring it into subjection to the soul: 1Co 9:27, 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.' By spiritual exercises the apostle did subdue his flesh to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit. In former times they had several exercises, as wrestling, and running for the prize. Now, such as were slow, palsy, unwieldy, and lazy, were cashiered; they would not admit such to be of their society or company, who wrestled and run for the prize. Them that were admitted to those exercises kept their bodies at an under, and did not pamper their bodies with dainties and delicacies. To these the apostle alludes; of idleness there comes no goodness. When the spirit is not acting in that which is good, that the flesh may be kept under, the flesh will take an advantage to be very active in those things that are evil, that the spirit may be kept under; the flesh is like an unruly beast, which through rest, idleness, and high feeding, grows wild and masterless. Now, the only way to tame this beast is to work him hard; so the way of ways to keep the body under is to keep up the soul as much as may be, in the full exercise of holiness and obedience. Such as have most pampered their bodies, have been the

greatest enemies to their own souls; and how many are there this day that pamper their bodies, but starve their souls; that adorn their bodies, but defile their soul; that trick and trim up their bodies with gold, and silver, and silks, whilst their souls are naked of all grace, holiness, and goodness, like the Laodiceans of old. The body itself, if you set too high a price upon it, will make a cheap soul; a man may be as happy in russet as in tissue; and he is certainly an unhappy man whose outside is his best side. Our bodies are but dirt handsomely tempered, and artificially formed; we derive our pedigree from the dust, and are akin to clay; and therefore we need not scruple the keeping of it under by holy exercises, and by all ways of gospel obedience, &c.

(8.) Eighthly, To the profit and advantage both of sinners and saints. [1.] To convince sinners, to silence sinners, and to stop the mouths of sinners. Let but one man that walks wisely, humbly, circumspectly, convincingly, exemplarily, blamelessly, come into a town, a parish, a family, made up of drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, whoremasters, &c., and his holy walking will convince them and condemn them, 1Pe 2:12, 1Pe 2:15; 1Pe 3:13, 1Pe 3:16. [2.] To the profit, advantage, and encouragement of the saints. The strict, exact-walking Christian provokes the slight, loose Christian to mend his manners, and to order his steps and conversation aright; and the lively active Christian puts the dull, heavy, sluggish Christian to a blush, and spurs and quickens him up to a more lively walking with God; and the warm, flaming, zealous, burning Christian puts heat and warmth into the cold, formal, frozen Christian; and the free, liberal, bountiful Christian provokes others to be free, noble, and liberal for the supply of the necessities of the saints, 2Co 9:1-2; 2Co 8:1-4, 2Co 8:19-20, &c.

(9.) The ninth and last, though not the least, end, is the honour and glory of the great God. God's grace is the spring, and God's glory is the end of all a Christian's obedience. God's glory is the ultimate end, the primary end, the universal end, the sea to which all a Christian's actions, like so many rivers, move and bend, Rom 14:7-8; Php 1:20-21. It is true many poor, low, mean, base ends may creep into a Christian's performances; but here mark, [1.] they are disallowed; [2.] they are loathed and abhorred; [3.] they are resisted and striven against; [4.] they are lamented and mourned over; [5.] the gracious soul would willingly be rid of them. If a Christian might have his choice, he would never be troubled with any base end any more. Beloved, you must always distinguish between a man's settled and his suggested ends. A man's settled end may be one thing, and his suggested end another thing. Now for ever remember this, that the great God always makes a judgment of men according to their settled ends, according to the universal frame of their spirits, and not according to those ends that may be suggested to them by the world, the flesh, or the devil. It is in this case as it may be with a man that shoots at a mark; he aims aright at the mark, but his elbow may meet with a jog, which may carry the arrow quite another way than what he intended; or as it is with a man that is sailing to such a haven, or to such a harbour, he steers a right course by his compass, but the winds blowing contrary, and the sea running high, he is forced into such a creek, or such a harbour, which he never intended, &c.

Quest. Is it requisite, for the clearing of the sincerity of our hearts, that we have a continual eye to the glory of God in every action we do?

Ans. 1. First, You must distinguish between an actual aim and intention, and an habitual aim and intention. For the first, an actual aim and intention of the spirit, in every particular action that a man doth to the glory of God, is utterly impossible, whilst we carry about with us a body of sin and

death. The angels and 'spirits of just men made perfect' do thus actually aim at the glory of God in all they do; but it is a work that will be too high and too hard for us, whilst we are here in a polluted estate. This was so high a mark, that Adam missed it in his innocency. No wonder then if we often miss it in our sinful state and condition. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, There is an habitual inclination in us, in every action we do, to aim at the honour and glory of God, though there be not the actual intention of the spirit in every action we do. It is with us, as with a man travelling towards a town or city; he thinks in the morning to go to such a town, such a place, where he purposes to lie the first night, and therefore sets forth towards it; and though he doth not think of this every step he takes, yet it is his purpose in his journey to rest there at night; or as it is with a man that comes to church, his end is to hear the word of the Lord; yet in every word he hears spoken, he hath not the thought of his end upon his spirit, but he is there by virtue of his first intention. So here, though in every particular there be not an intention of spirit to level this or that action to the glory of God, yet it is the main drift and habitual scope of a man's spirit, that God's glory may be the end of all his actions.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, There is a mediate and there is an immediate eyeing or looking to the glory of God; as when I forbear such and such a sin, because God by such a command hath forbidden it, or I do such and such a duty, because God hath commanded it. Now, in eyeing of the command of God, I eye the glory of God immediately, though not mediately. But,

Ans. 4. Fourthly, In some particular or special cases, I ought actually to eye the glory of God: as [1.] In some eminent or extraordinary service that I am to do for Christ; or [2.] In some special testimony that I am called to give for Christ or his gospel; or [3.] In some great thing that I am called to suffer for Christ, or his gospel, or his interest. But,

Ans. 5. Fifthly, The more a Christian actually eyes the glory of God in all he does, the more, [1.] He glorifies God; [2.] The nearer you are the life of heaven, and the more you act like the glorious angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect;' [3.] The more will be your joy, comfort, and peace, both in life and death, and in the day of your account; [4.] The more strong will be your confidence and assurance that your spiritual estate is good, and that you shall be saved for ever; [5.] The better you will be able to bear up under all the false, hard, and sour censures of this world; [6.] The more you will be temptation-proof; [7.] The more glorious and weighty will be your crown of glory at last. He shall be highest in heaven, who has actually aimed most at the glory of God in this lower world. And thus you see how you may know whether your obedience is such an obedience as springs from faith or no. Now, if upon trial you shall find that your obedience is the obedience of faith, then you may safely and groundedly conclude, that you have a saving work of God upon your hearts. But,

IV. Fourthly, A gracious heart is an uniform heart. Ubiquity is a sure evidence of integrity. He that is truly good, will be good in bad times, and in the worst of places. Principles of grace and holiness are lasting, yea, everlasting; they are not like the morning cloud, nor the early dew, Psa 119:112; 1Jn 3:9; Hos 6:4. A gracious soul will be steady and fixed in its principles, in the worst times, in the worst places, and under variety of dispensations. Let times and places be what they will, he will not dishonour his God, nor blemish his profession, nor wound his conscience to preserve his safety, or to secure his liberty. An upright man is a right man; so ■■■■, jashar is rendered by the Septuagint, Jdg 17:6. He is one that will not be bowed or bent by the sinful customs or examples of

the times and places where he lives. Abraham was righteous in Chaldea, and Noah was perfect in his generation, though it was the worst in the world; and Lot was just in Sodom, and Job was upright in the land of Uz, which was a place of much profaneness and superstition; and Nehemiah was courageous and zealous in Damascus; and Daniel was holy, yea, eminently and exemplarily holy, in Babylon. The several generations wherein these holy men lived, were wholly devoted to wickedness and superstition, and yet these precious, gracious souls had wholly devoted themselves to the Lord and his service; so David, 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgments at all times,' Psa 119:20. Let the times be never so dangerous, licentious, superstitious, idolatrous, or erroneous, yet David's heart was strongly carried forth to God's judgments; that is, to his word, for under this title, judgments, you are to understand the whole word of God. So there were some in Sardis that were of the same spirit with the worthies last mentioned: Rev 3:4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.' In polluting times pure hearts will keep themselves pure; a holy heart will keep himself undefiled, even in defiling times, Psa 119:1-3. Rev 14:4, 'These are they which were not defiled with women;' when others are besmeared all over, he will keep his garments white and clean. The three children, or rather the three champions, Dan 3:17-20, were so highly resolved to keep themselves pure from the abominations of their day, that it was neither Nebuchadnezzar's music that would flatter them, nor his fiery furnace that could scare them from their God, or from their duty, or from their religion. Let the times never so often turn, you shall find that he that is really holy, he will be holy under every turn; no turns shall turn him out of a way of holiness: Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' The laurel keeps its freshness and greenness in the winter season; a gracious soul is semper idem. Let the wind, and the world, and the times turn which way they will, a gracious soul for the main will still be the same; he is 'like mount Zion, which cannot be removed,' Psa 125:1. Job 27:5-6, 'Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' A gracious heart is, in some measure, like the heart of God, without variableness or shadow of changing. That Christian that is not for substance the same that once he was, was never what he ought to be, Jas 1:17. A gracious heart is firm and fixed for God and godliness, both in prosperity and in adversity; take him among the good or among the bad, take him in storms or calms, in winter nights or in summer days, take him among friends or foes, take him at bed or board, take him in health or sickness, take him in an ordinance or out of an ordinance, take him in his work or take him at his recreations, take him in his commerce or in his converse, take him living or take him dying, and you shall still find that the bias of his soul is still God-wards, Christ-wards, holiness-wards, and heaven-wards. A gracious man will stand his ground, and hold his own in all changes, his heart being fixed upon an, unchangeable God. The philosopher's good man is τετραγωνος, four square; cast him where you will, like a die he falls always square and sure. So cast a gracious man where you will, and into what company you will, and into what condition you will, yet still he falls, sure and square for God and godliness. Let the times be never so sad, nor never so bad, yet a gracious soul will keep his hold; he will let all go, he will let everything go, before he will let his God go, or his religion go, or his integrity go. A gracious Christian is like gold. Now cast gold into the fire, or into the water; cast it upon the dunghill, or into the kennel; cast it among the poor, or among the rich; among the religious, or among the superstitious, &c.; yet still it is gold, still it retains its purity and excellency. So cast a gracious Christian, who is the only golden

Christian in the world, into what condition you will, and into what company you will, yet still he will retain his purity, his innocency. Lapidaries tell us of the Chelydonian stone,² that it will retain its virtue and lustre no longer than it is enclosed in gold: a fit emblem of an hypocrite, who is only good while he is enclosed in golden prosperity, safety, and felicity. An unsound Christian, like green timber, shrinks when the sun of persecution shines hot upon him, Mat 13:6. The heat of fiery trials cools the courage of an unsound Christian. If you put water into a tub, it will have the shape of the tub that you put it into; or if you put water into a glass, it will have the shape of the glass you put it into. This is the very picture of an unsound heart; but a sincere Christian is like a massive vessel of gold, that keeps its own shape and figure, at all times, in all places, and in all companies. Unsound hearts, they will be righteous among the righteous, and licentious among the licentious. They will be as the company is amongst which they are cast. With the good they will be good, and with the bad they will be bad; with the zealous they will be zealous; and with the superstitious they will be superstitious; and with the lukewarm they will be lukewarm. They are for all times and tides; they are for any turn that will serve their turn; they are for any mood that will bring either profit or pleasure to them; they are like Alcibiades, of whom it was said, that he was omnium horarum homo, a man for all times; for he could swagger it at Athens, and take any pains at Thebes; he could live most sparingly at Lacedæmon, and bib among the Thracians, and hunt among the Persians. They are like the chameleon, ready to change their hue with every one they converse with; they are like Polypus, that resembleth every stone that it sticketh to; or they are like the buskins anciently used in tragedies, that would serve either leg alike; they are as fit for one society as another; or like the players that used them, such as acting princely parts, wear royal apparel, keep state, and demean themselves gravely and soberly, so long as they are in public view upon the stage; but when they have done acting, are no sooner off the stage, but they pass presently into another habit, and retain neither their princely behaviour nor apparel, but are most beggarly, base, and debauched, either in private among themselves, or among their companions like themselves.² Unsound hearts can accommodate themselves to the times, and comply with them, whatever they be. With Proteus they will transform themselves into all shapes; as the times change, so will they; what the times favour, that they will favour; what the times commend, that they will commend; what the times cry up and admire, that they will cry up and admire; and what the times frown upon and condemn, that they will frown upon and condemn. Look, as curious and well drawn pictures seem to turn their eyes every way, and to smile upon every one that looks upon them, so these can turn with the times, they can look as the times look, and smile as the times smile; they can say with the times, and sail with the times; sometimes they can act one part, and sometimes another part, as the times require. If the times require a large profession, they can make it; if the times bespeak them to leave their religion at the church door, they can leave it. But now, a sincere Christian, he will labour to be so much the more gracious, by how much the more the times are licentious. A sincere Christian is like gold. If you cast it into the fire, it will not waste; if you throw it into the water, it will not rust, it will retain its own purity and excellency where-ever you dispose of it. But,

V. Fifthly, A gracious heart sets himself most against his darling sin, his bosom-sin, against the sin of his complexion, constitution, inclination, and calling, &c., Heb 12:1. There is some one sinful quality that is more predominant in the heart of man than any other. There is some one Delilah, some one darling sin that a man is more apt to play withal, and to hug in his own bosom, than any other. There is usually some one sin that is a favourite, some one sin which the heart is most fond

of, and which the bias of the soul doth most naturally and strongly incline towards. Pliny writeth of some families that had privy marks on their bodies peculiar to those of that line; and so every man hath as it were his privy sin, which is most justly and peculiarly called his; as in a ground that lieth untilled, amongst the great variety of weeds, there is usually some master weed, one among the rest that is rifer and ranker than all the rest. And as it is in the body of man, that although in some degree or other, more or less, there be a mixture of all the four elements, not any of them wholly wanting, yet there is some one of them predominant that gives the denomination; in regard whereof some are said to be of a sanguine, some of a phlegmatic, some of a choleric, and some of a melancholic constitution. Now, thus it is in the souls of men. Though there be a general mixture and medley of all evil and corrupt qualities, yet is there some one usually that is paramount, more powerful and prevalent, that swayeth and sheweth forth itself more eminently and more evidently than any other of them do; and from this, therefore, more frequently and apparently discovering itself, is the denomination wont to be given whereby some are styled ambitious, some lascivious, some envious, some malicious, some haughty, some hasty, and the like. Or as in every man's body there is a seed and principle of death, yet some are more prone to die of a fever than of a dropsy, and others are more prone to die of a dropsy than of a fever, &c.; so though original sin hath spread itself over all our noble and ignoble parts, yet every man hath his particular inclinations to one kind of sin rather than another; and this may properly be called a man's own sin, his own evil way. Now mark, a gracious heart makes most head, most opposition, against his darling sin; against his complexion sin, against those sins that were once as dear to him as his right hand, or as his right eye, or as Delilah was to Samson, Herodias to Herod, Isaac to Abraham, and Joseph to Jacob: Psa 18:23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity;' that is, from my darling sin whereunto I was most inclined and addicted. What this bosom-sin was that he kept himself from, it is hard to say. Some suppose his darling sin was lying, dissembling, for it is certain he often fell into this sin: Psa 119:29, 'Remove from me the way of lying.' Others suppose it to be some secret iniquity, which was only known to God and his own conscience. Others say it was uncleanness, and that therefore he prayed that God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, Psa 119:37. Others judge it to be that sin of disloyalty which Saul and his courtiers falsely charged upon him. Well, be it this or that, it is enough for our purpose that his heart did rise against that very sin that either by custom or complexion, or some strong inclination, he was most naturally apt, ready, and prone to fall into. This is the laying of the axe to the root of the tree; and by this practice David gives a clear proof of the integrity of his heart. Idolatry was the darling sin of the people of Israel; they called their idols delectable or desirable things; they did dearly affect and greatly delight in their idols, Jer 17:1-2; Hos 2:8; Isa 31:6-7, Isa 44:9, &c. But when the Lord in the day of his power wrought savingly and gloriously upon their hearts, oh! how did their hatred and indignation against their idols rise! as you may see Isa 30:22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' They were so delighted and enamoured with their idols, that they would lavish gold out of the bag, or they waste or spend riotously, as the Hebrew runs, that they might richly deck them up, and set them forth in the greatest glory and bravery. Oh! but when the Lord should make a glorious turn upon their spirits, then they should readily and roundly deface, defile, and disgrace their idols, then they should hate and abhor them, then they should so detest and loathe them, that in a holy indignation they should cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get

ye hence, pack, begone, I will never have any more to do with you, Isa 46:6. And so in that Isa 2:20, 'In that day,' that is, in the day of his people; ver. 17, 'A man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' In the day when God should exalt himself in the souls of his people, and before the eyes of his people, they should express such disdain and indignation against their idols that they should not take only those made of trees and stones, but even their most precious and costly idols, those that were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats; that is, they should cast them into such blind holes, and into such dark, filthy, nasty, and dusty corners, as moles make underground, and as bats roost in. So when Christ, and grace, and holiness comes to be set up in men's hearts and lives, then all their darling sins, their bosom lusts, which are their idols of silver and their idols of gold, these are with a holy indignation cast to the moles and to the bats.; they are so loathed, abhorred, abandoned, and cashiered, that they desire they may be for ever buried in oblivion, and never see the light more. Idols were Ephraim's bosom sin: Hos 4:17, 'Ephraim is joined,' or glued, as the word signifies, 'to idols, let him alone.' But when the dew of grace fell upon Ephraim, as it did in Hos 14:5-7, then saith Ephraim, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' ver. 8. Now Ephraim loathes his idols as much or more than before he loved them; he now abandons and abominates them. Though before he was as closely glued to them as the wanton is glued to his Delilah, or as the enchanter is glued to the devil, from whom by no means he is able to stir, as the words in the fountain imports, when it was the day of the Lord's power upon Ephraim, then Ephraim cries out, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Oh! I have had to do with them too long, and too much already! Oh! how doth my soul now rise against them! how do I detest and abhor them! Surely I will never have more to do with them. The Scripture tells us, Deu 13:6-9, that if father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or kinsman, or friend, should go about to draw a man from God, his hand should be first upon him to put him to death. Now, bosom sins, complexion sins, they seek to draw a man's heart from God, and therefore a gracious soul can't but rise up against them, and do his best to stone them, and to be the death of them: 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand,' saith bloody Esau, 'then will I slay my brother Jacob,' Gen 27:41. It is a bloody speech of a vindictive spirit, whom nothing would satisfy but innocent blood. So saith the gracious soul, The days of mourning for the death of my dear Saviour are now at hand, and therefore I will slay my bosom lusts, my constitution sins; now will I be revenged on them for all the dishonours that they have done to God, and for all the wounds that they have made in my conscience, and for all the mercies that they have embittered, and for all the favours that they have prevented, and for all the afflictions that they have procured, and for all the duties that they have hindered. Samson pleads hard with God, that he might be avenged on the Philistines for his two eyes, Jdg 16:28; and so doth the gracious soul plead hard with God, that he may be avenged on his bosom lusts, on his complexion sins, which have put out his two eyes, which have so blinded him that he has not for a long time been able to see God, or Christ, or the things that belong to his external, internal, or eternal peace. The next of kin in the law was always the avenger of blood, and to him it appertained to hunt after the murderer, to bring upon his head the innocent blood that he had shed. If therefore we will shew ourselves brethren or sisters of Christ, or anything of kin unto him, we must even be the avengers of his blood upon bosom sins, upon complexion sins; for for them as well as others was his blood shed. O sirs! what bosom sin is there so sweet or profitable that is worth a-burning in hell for, or worth a-shutting out of heaven for? Surely none. This a gracious soul seriously weighs, and accordingly he sets himself against the toad in his bosom, against his

darling sins, against his complexion sins. But now, unsound hearts are very favourable to bosom sins, to complexion sins. They say of them, as Lot of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?' Gen 19:20. And as David once said concerning Absalom, 2Sa 18:5, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom;' 'beware that none touch the young man Absalom,' 2Sa 18:12. 'And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?' 2Sa 18:29. An unsound heart is as fond of his bosom sins, of his complexion sins, as Jacob was of his Benjamin; or as Jehu was of his calves; or as Naaman was of his idol Rimmon; or as Judas was of bearing the bag; or as Herod was of his Herodias; or as Demetrius was of his Diana; or as the Pharisees were of devouring widows' houses, and of having the upper-most seats in the synagogues, and of being saluted in the market places with those glorious titles, Rabbi, rabbi. The besotted sinner is most engaged to his bosom sins, his complexion sins; and therefore it is as bitter a thing as death for him to part with them. He had rather part with burnt-offerings and calves of a year old; he had rather part with 'thousands of rams, and with ten thousand rivers of oil; yea, he had rather part with his first-born, than with his bosom sin; he is ready to give the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul,' Mic 6:6. Let God frown or smile, stroke or strike, lift up or cast down, promise or threaten, yet he will hide and hold fast his bosom sin; let God set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery before him, yet will he not part with his bosom sins; let God wound his conscience, blow upon his estate, leave a blot upon his name, crack his credit, afflict his body, write death upon his relations, and be a Magor-missabib, a terror to his soul, yet will he not let go his darling sins, Jer 20:3-4. An unsound heart will rather let God go, and Christ go, and heaven go, and all go, than he will let his darling lusts go. But now a sound Christian, a throughout Christian, he sets himself most against the Delilah in his bosom, against the Benjamin, the son, the sin of his right hand. A sincere Christian looks upon bosom sins, upon complexion sins, as the most God-provoking sins. There are no sins so provoking to God's jealousies and justice as bosom sins; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as the most dangerous sins; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as the worst thing in all the world; he looks upon bosom sins, complexion sins, as more ugly and horrid than the devil himself, or than hell itself; he looks upon bosom sins as the great make-baits between God and his soul, and between his conscience and his comfort, Isa 59:1-2, Lam 3:8, Lam 3:44; he looks upon bosom sins as those enemies that have provoked God often to turn a deaf ear to all his prayers; he looks upon his bosom sins as so many Judases that have often betrayed him into the hands of the devil; he looks upon his bosom sins as the waters of Marah, that has embittered all his mercies; he looks upon his bosom sins as the only things that have often clouded the face of God; he looks upon his bosom sins as dead flies in the box of precious ointment, that spoils all, and accordingly with all his might he sets himself against them. (1.) He fights most against these; (2.) he weeps most over these; (3.) he watches and arms most against these; (4.) he prays most against these; (5.) he resolves most against these; and (6.) he lays the axe of repentance most to these, &c. But pray sir, before you close up this chapter, lay down some sure and infallible evidences of the goodness, graciousness, and happiness of their estates and conditions, who are but weak in grace, who are but babes of grace, that so they may have their portion, satisfaction, support, and consolation as well as others.

Ans. I shall endeavour to do it, and therefore thus:

VI. Sixthly, True desires of grace is grace, true desires after Christ, and grace, and holiness, is grace. He who does sincerely desire to believe, he does really believe; and he that does sincerely

desire to repent, he does really repent; and he that does sincerely desire to obey the Lord, and to fear the Lord, and to serve the Lord, he does really obey the Lord, and fear the Lord, and serve the Lord. It is the first step to grace, for a man to see his heart void of grace; and it is the first degree of grace, for a man to desire grace. Mark, all true desires of grace have the very nature and truth of grace in them, as there is true fire in a spark as well as in a flame, and true water in a drop as well as in a stream, and true light in a beam as well as in the sun, and true gold in the very filings of gold as well as in the whole wedge of gold; the least of anything partakes of the nature of the whole, Psa 55:1-2, Isa 65:1; John 7:37. True desires of grace argues a state of grace and salvation: Psa 38:9, 'Lord, thou knowest all my desires, my groaning is not hid from thee.' Mat 5:6, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;' or as the Greek runs, after the participle of the present tense, they that are hungering and thirsting; intimating, that wherever this is the present disposition of men's souls, they are blessed: Rev 22:17, 'And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Sincere desires of grace are those holy seeds, those divine beginnings of grace in the soul, out of which grace springs and grows up to its measure and perfection. O sirs! look, as no man can sincerely seek God in vain, so no man can sincerely desire grace in vain. A man may love gold, yet not have it; but no man loveth God, but is sure to have him. Wealth a man may desire, and yet be never the nearer for it; but grace no man ever sincerely desired and missed it. And why? it is God that hath wrought this desire in the heart, and he will never frustrate the desire that himself hath there wrought. Let no man say, I have no faith, no repentance, no love, no fear of God, no sanctifying, no saving grace in me. Doth he see a want of those things in himself? Yes, that is it which so grieves him, that he cannot love God, stand in awe of him, trust in his mercy, repent of sin as he should; yea, but doth he seriously and unfeignedly desire to do thus? Yes, he desires it above all things in the world, and would be willing, as it were, to buy even with a whole world the least measure, or dram, or drop only of such grace. Now let me ask him, who is it that hath wrought this desire in him? Not the devil; for he would rather quench it than kindle it in him; not his own corruption, for that is naturally averse to every thing that is good; it must needs then be the work of the Spirit of God, who 'works in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,' and who pronounceth all them blessed that thus desire after grace. 'When I have a good desire,' saith one, 'though it doth scarcely shew itself in some little slender sigh, I must be assured that the Spirit of God is present, and worketh his good work.' Wicked men do not desire the grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby they may resist sin, and therefore they are justly deprived of it; for he that earnestly desireth the Holy Ghost hath it already, because this desire of the Spirit cannot be but from the Spirit. 'Our faith,' saith another, 'may be so small and weak, as it doth not yet bring forth fruits that may be lively felt in us; but if they which feel themselves in such an estate desire to have these feelings, namely, of God's favour and love, if they ask them of God's hands by prayer, this desire and prayer are testimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they have faith already; for is such a desire a fruit of the flesh or of the spirit? It is of the Holy Spirit, who bringeth it forth only in such as he dwells in, &c.2 Then those holy desires and prayers, being the motions of the Holy Ghost in us, are testimonies of our faith, although they seem to us small and weak. As the woman that feeleth the moving of a child in her body, though very weak, assureth herself that she hath conceived, and that she goeth with a live child; so if we have these motions, these holy affections and desires before mentioned, let us not doubt but that we have the Holy Ghost, who is the author of them, dwelling in us, and consequently that we have also faith. Again, saith the same author,

(1.) if thou hast begun to hate and fly sin; (2.) if thou feelest that thou art displeased at thine infirmities and corruptions; (3.) if, having offended God, thou findest a grief and a sorrow for it; (4.) if thou desire to abstain from sin; (5.) if thou avoidest the occasions of sin; (6.) if thou doest thy endeavours against sin; (7.) if thou prayest to God to give thee grace; all these holy affections, proceeding from none other than from the Spirit of God, ought to be as so many pledges and testimonies that he is in thee. It is as impossible for us naturally to do the least good, or to desire the least grace, as it is for a toad to spit cordials, Php 2:13, 2Co 8:10, 2Co 8:12. Sincere desires after God, and Christ, and grace, is sometimes the all that the people of God find in themselves. This was all that Nehemiah could say of himself, and the rest of his brethren, Neh 1:11, that they did desire to fear God's name. And so the church: Isa 26:8, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thy holiness.' And ver. 9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night.' So the spouse, Song of Solomon 3:1-3. So David, Psa 27:4, Psa 42:1-2, Psa 63:1. They must needs be sure of grace that have an unfeigned desire of it. This is a maxim that we must live and die with, viz., that no man can truly desire grace but he that hath already grace; certainly he that desireth grace hath grace to desire it. It is an infallible sign, that that man hath already some measure of grace, that doth seriously desire to have it. He would never seriously desire to fear God, who stands not in some awe of him already; nor he would never desire seriously to love God, who has not in him some love to God already; nor he would never seriously desire to believe, who has not in him some faith already; nor he would never seriously desire to repent, that hath not repented already; nor he would never seriously desire sanctifying grace, whose heart in some measure is not already sanctified by the Spirit of grace. It is the very essence of righteousness, saith one of the ancients, for a man to be willing to be righteous. And the poor heathen could say, 'It is a principal part of goodness, for a man to be willing to be good.' It is natural for every one to desire his own natural good, but to desire spiritual grace, holiness, sound sanctification, faith unfeigned, the true fear of God, serious repentance, &c., is more than ever any natural man did or can do. No man did ever desire to eat which had not eaten before, nor no man did ever desire to believe, that did not believe before; all true desires after faith spring from faith as the root of them. Certainly wicked men do not, and cannot so much as desire saving grace, Job 21:14, Isa 53:2; and that,

[1.] First, Because grace is above the reach of nature. 1Co 2:14, 'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' The water riseth no higher than the springs from whence it came; so natural men can ascend no higher than nature. Spiritual things can neither be discerned nor desired but by those that are anointed with the eye-salve of the Spirit. The natural man is dark and blind, and he sees no beauty nor excellency in grace, that he should desire it or be in love with it. Man in his natural estate is without, Eph 2:12. There are five withouts: (1.) without Christ; (2.) without the church; (3.) without the promise; (4.) without hope; (5.) without God in the world. Now, every natural man being under these five withouts, how is it possible that he should have any serious desires after grace? Such is the corruption of our nature, that, if you propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet wood, with hissing. Propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which naturalists say sucks and snatches the fire to it with which it is consumed. The contrariety and enmity that is in every natural man's heart against God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness, may sufficiently satisfy us that the natural man is a mere stranger to serious and sincere

desires after God, or Christ, or grace, or the great things that belong to his everlasting peace, Rom 8:7. Such sincere and serious desires as these, Oh that Christ were mine! oh that I were married to his person! oh that I were clothed with his righteousness! oh that my soul were adorned with his grace! oh that I was filled with his Spirit! oh that he would be my king to rule me, and my prophet to teach and instruct me, and my priest to make an atonement for me! oh that I might enjoy choice and high communion with him! oh that I might sin no more against him! oh that I may do nothing unworthy of him! oh that after death I might live for ever in the enjoyments of him! &c. I say such serious and sincere desires are not to be found in the natural man's breast.

[2.] Secondly, Because grace is contrary to nature. 'The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God,' Rom 8:7. Fire cannot desire water, nor water fire, because they are contrary, one expelling the other; for either the water will quench the fire, or else the fire will lick up the water. So here, nature would have a man love himself, and seek himself, and exalt himself; but grace will have a man love God, and seek God, and exalt God, &c. Take nature when it is most adorned, enriched, raised, elevated, &c., yet then you shall find it at enmity with God and grace. Ergo, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Because grace is not only above nature, and contrary to nature, but it is even a hell to nature. Grace and holiness is a hell to a natural man. Look, as a glorified estate would be a hell to every wicked person (*Cœlum est altera gehenna damnatorum*, saith one of the ancients, heaven is another hell to the damned), so would a gracious estate also. Grace puts a man to keep up the cross of Christ, to deny his natural self, his sinful self, his religious self, his relative self, and to give up a man's self to the strictest and exactest ways of God, and to crucify his lusts, and to pull out his right eye, and to cut off his right hand, &c. And oh! what hard work is this, yea, what a hell is this to nature! &c.

[4.] Fourthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot so much as truly and seriously desire saving grace: witness their daily withstanding and slighting the offers of grace. Compare these scriptures, Pro 1:20, seq., Pro 8:1-12; Eze 24:13; Mat 23:37; Luk 19:41-42, &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot so much as truly and seriously desire saving grace: witness their common, ordinary, habitual provoking, vexing, quenching, resisting, and grieving of the Spirit of grace. Turn to these scriptures, Gen 6:3; Isa 63:10; Acts 7:55; Eph 4:30.

[6.] Sixthly, Wicked men do not nor cannot truly and seriously desire saving grace: witness that enmity, hatred, rage, and madness that is in them against the saints, whose hearts and lives are enamelled with grace, Gen 3:15; Psa 34:21, Psa 44:10; Job 31:29; Amo 5:10, &c. I have read of a desperate wretch, that, when he came to die, he gave good portions to all his children but one, and to him he would give but twelve pence; and being asked the reason of it, he made answer, he was a Puritan. I have heard him say, said his wretched father, that he had a promise to live on; let us now see whether a promise will maintain him or no. Certainly, wherever there are true serious desires after grace, there is a dear love to those upon whose hearts the work of grace is past.

Now, by these short hints, it is evident enough that wicked men do not, nor cannot sincerely, seriously desire grace. Certainly, such that are 'poor in spirit,' and that mourn for their spiritual defects, and that hunger and thirst after grace and holiness, after a righteousness imparted and a righteousness imputed, must confess themselves to be in a blessed estate, and consequently in a state of grace; for what true happiness is there out of it? or else they must contradict our Saviour,

and charge truth itself with untruth, who hath pronounced them blessed that are so qualified, so affected. Were this well weighed and seriously considered of, how would it comfort, refresh, support, and stay up many a troubled soul; and what a well-spring of life would this be to many a wounded spirit! Doubtless, the greatest part of a saint's perfection in this life (witness Paul's own ingenuous confession, after fourteen years' conversion, say some; and who ever went beyond him? and how exceedingly do most fall short of him!) consisteth rather in will than in work, and in desire and endeavour more than in deed. Rom 7:15, Rom 7:18-22. There is so much good in good desires, that it is the main that the godly have to speak of, and to reckon of. Make an inventory of a Christian's estate, and search every room; if you find not these, you find nothing; and if you set these down in the inventory, you set down even all he is worth for another world. Daniel is called a man of desires, and so is every gracious man, a man wholly made up of gracious desires, Dan 10:11. Mark, God makes a judgment upon the sons of men, according as their desires stand; he that desires to steal, he is a thief in the account of God; and he that desires to commit adultery, he is an adulterer in the account of God; and he that desires to oppress, he is an oppressor in the account of God; and he that desires to deceive, he is a deceiver in the account of God; and he that desires to persecute, he is a persecutor in the account of God; and he that desires to profane the Sabbaths of God, he is a profaner of the Sabbaths of God in the account of God, &c. Look, as every wicked man is as bad in the account of God as his desires are bad, so every godly man is as good in the account of God as his desires are good; he that sincerely desires to believe, he does believe in the account of God. 'The desire,' saith one, 'to believe in the want of faith is faith; though as yet there want firm and lively grace, yet art thou not altogether void of grace; if thou canst desire it, thy desire is the seed, conception, or bud of what thou wantest.' Now is the spring-time of the engrafted word or immortal seed cast into the furrows of thy heart; wait but a while, using the means, and thou shalt see that leaves, blossoms, and fruits will shortly follow, &c. Another saith [Ursinus], faith in the most holy is not perfect; nevertheless, whosoever feels in his heart an earnest desire to believe, and a striving against his doubts, he both may and must assure himself that he is endued with true faith. And he that sincerely desires to repent, he does repent in the account of God. Holy Bradford, writing to Mr Jo. Careless, saith, Thy sins are undoubtedly pardoned, &c., for God hath given thee a penitent and believing heart, that is, a heart which desireth to repent and believe; for such a one is taken of him, he accepteth the will for the deed, for a penitent and believing heart indeed. And he that sincerely desires to mortify sin, he does mortify sin in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to walk with God, he does walk with God in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to honour God, he does honour God in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to deny himself, he does deny himself in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to be weaned from the world, he is weaned from the world in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to be conformable to God, he is conformable to God in the account of God; and he that desires to grow in grace, he does grow in grace in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to improve mercies, he does improve mercies in the account of God; and he that sincerely desires to glorify God in the hour of his visitation, he does glorify God in the hour of his visitation in the account of God.² A gracious man may make a better judgment of his estate by his sincere desires than he can by his duties; and so a wicked man may make a better judgment of his estate by his desires than he can by his words or works. I have been the larger upon this evidence because of its great usefulness to weak believers. But.

[7.] Seventhly, No man can sincerely desire grace for grace's sake, viz., faith for faith's sake, and love for love's sake, and humility for humility's sake, and uprightness for uprightness's sake, and meekness for meekness's sake, and holy fear for holy fear's sake, and hope for hope's sake, and holiness for holiness's sake, and self-denial for self-denial's sake, &c., but he that has true grace. Mark, no man can sincerely and seriously desire grace for the inward beauty, glory, and excellency of grace, but he that has true grace. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Psa 45:13, though within is not all her glory. Grace differs nothing from glory but in name; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; grace has an inward glory upon it, which none can see and love, but such as have grace in their own hearts, 2Co 3:18. Wicked men can see no beauty, no glory, no excellency in grace why they should desire it, or be taken with it; and no wonder, for they could see no beauty, nor excellency, nor glory, nor form, nor comeliness in Christ the fountain of grace, why they should desire him, and be taken with him, Isa 53:1-4. Though next to Christ, grace is the most lovely and desirable thing in all the world, yet none can desire it for its own loveliness and desirableness, but such as have a seed of God in them. Though grace be a pearl of price, though it be a jewel more worth than the gold of Ophir, though it be a beam of God, a spark of glory, a branch of the divine nature; yet carnal hearts can see no glory nor excellency in it, that they should desire it. If carnal eyes were but opened to see the excellency of grace, *mirabiles sui excitaret amores*, it would ravish the soul in desires after it; but grace's beauty and glory is inward, and so it is not discerned but with spiritual eyes. Plato was wont to say, If moral virtues could be seen with bodily eyes, they would stir up in the heart extraordinary flames of admiration and love. I might say much more of grace, 1Co 2:14, seq. Grace (1.) puts an excellency, it puts a lustre and beauty upon men's persons. 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Pro 12:26; and pray what makes him so but grace? Wisdom makes a man's face to shine; riches, and honours, and dignities, and royal ornaments, and costly fare, and noble attendants, don't put an excellency and glory upon man, Dan 11:21; witness Antiochus, Saul, Haman, Herod, Dives, &c., but saving grace does, 1Pe 3:4-5, &c. The graces of the Spirit are that chain of pearl that adorns Christ's bride. (2.) Grace puts an excellency upon all a man's duties; 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;' faith put an excellency upon Abel's sacrifice. (3.) Grace puts an excellency upon all a man's natural and acquired excellencies. It puts an excellency upon beauty, honour, riches, name, arts, parts, gifts. Now, how excellent and glorious must that be that puts an excellency upon all our excellencies? (4.) Grace makes a man conformable to God and Christ. (5.) Grace fits a man for communion and fellowship with Father, Son, and Spirit. (6.) Grace fits a man for the choicest services. (7.) Grace turns all things into a blessing. (8.) Grace fills the soul with all spiritual excellencies. (9.) Grace preserves a Christian from the worst of evils, viz., sin. (10.) Grace sweetens death, it makes the king of terrors to be the king of desires. (11.) Grace renders a man acceptable to God, and that is the height of a Christian's ambition in this world: 2Co 5:9, 'Wherefore we labour' (φιλοτιμομεθα, we are ambitious), 'that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.' The apostles made it their ambition to get acceptance in heaven. Riches, and honours, and gifts, and arts, and parts, &c., may commend us to men, but it is only grace that commends us to God, and that renders us lovely in his eyes. (12.) Grace will eternalise your names, grace will perfume and embalm your names: Heb 11:2, 'By faith the elders obtained a good report.' Heb 11:39, 'And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.' Nothing raises a man's name and fame in the world like grace. A man may obtain a

great report without grace, but he can never obtain a good report without grace. Nothing below grace will perpetuate a man's name. The seven deacons that the church chose, Acts 6:3, Acts 6:5, were gracious men, and they were men of 'good report,' they were men well witnessed unto, well testified of, as the Greek word imports, Acts 10:1-4, Acts 10:22. Cornelius was a gracious man, and he was a man of good report among all the nation of the Jews, Acts 9:10, Acts 9:20, comp. with Acts 22:12. Ananias was a gracious man, and he was a man of a 'good report.' Gaius and Demetrius, they were both gracious men, and they were men of good report; witness that third epistle of John. How renowned was Abraham for his faith! and Moses for his meekness! and Jacob for his plain-heartedness! and Job for his uprightness! and David for his zeal! and Joshua for his courage! Holy Abel hath been dead above this five thousand years, and yet his name is as fresh and fragrant as a rose to this very day, Heb 11:4. Grace will make your names immortal. 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,' Psalms 112:6. 'The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot,' Proverbs 10:7. Wicked men many times outlive their names, but the names of just men outlive them. When a gracious man dies, he leaves his name as a sweet and as a lasting scent behind him; his fame shall live when he is dead. According to the Hebrew the words may be read thus: 'The memory of the just shall be for a blessing.' The very remembering of the just shall bring a blessing upon them that remember them. When a gracious man dies, as he carries a good conscience with him, so he leaves a perfumed name behind him. Grace is the image of God, the delight of God, the honour of God, the glory of God; grace is the purchase of Christ, and the birth of the Spirit, and the pledge of glory; grace is the joy of angels, the glory of man, and the wonder of the world. What is the body without the soul? what is the cabinet without the jewels? what is the sun without light? what is the fountain without water? what is paradise without the tree of life? what is heaven without Christ? That is a soul without grace. Now, every gracious soul sees a real eternal excellency, beauty, and glory in grace, and accordingly it is carried out in its desires after it. It sees such an innate excellency, beauty, and glory in that faith, wisdom, humility, meekness, patience, zeal, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, uprightness, &c., that sparkles and shines in such and such saints, that it many times strives with God in a corner, even to sweat and tears, that it may be bedecked and enriched with those singular graces that are so shining in others. Oh that I had the wisdom of such a Christian, and the faith of such a Christian, and the love of such a Christian, and the humility of such a Christian, and the meekness of such a Christian, and the zeal of such a Christian, and the integrity of such a Christian, &c. Oh that my soul was but in their case! I don't covet their riches, but their graces. Oh that I had but those graces! Oh that I had much of those graces that sparkles and shines in the hearts and lives of such and such Christians! I see a beauty and glory upon sun, moon, and stars, yea, upon the whole creation, but what is that to that beauty and glory that I see stamped upon grace? And this fires his heart with desires after grace. But,

[8.] Eighthly, No man can sincerely desire all grace, every grace, or the whole chain of graces, but he that has true grace, 2Pe 1:5-9. Vain men, when they are under some outward or inward distresses, may, to serve their present turns, desire, in a cold, formal, customary way, patience, or contentation, or meekness, or hope, or faith, &c.; but they don't, nor can't, whilst they are wicked, whilst they are in their natural estate, whilst they are 'in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity,' Acts 8:19-25, sincerely desire every grace, especially those particular graces that are most opposite to their master sin, to their darling lusts, to their constitution sins, to their complexion sins, to those particular lusts that are to them as dear as their right eyes or right hands. Austin before

his conversion he was much given to whoredom, and he would often pray, 'Lord, give me continency, but not yet; Lord, give me continency, but not yet.' He was afraid lest God should have heard him too soon, as he himself confesseth. Wicked men would be very sorry if God should take them at their words, and in good earnest answer the cold and lazy desires of their souls. If when the drunkard in a good mood should desire sobriety, God should take him at his word, he would be very angry; or if when the unclean person should desire chastity, continency, God should answer his desires, he would not be very well pleased. If when the covetous person should, under some pangs of conscience, desire a free, a charitable, a noble, generous spirit, God should take him at his word, he would be sorely displeased. The same may be said of all other sorts of sinners; but now a real Christian, though he be never so weak, yet he seriously desires every grace; he is for every link of the golden chain of graces; he finds in his own heart sins that are contrary to every grace; and therefore he desires every grace, that he may make head against every sin, and he finds his heart and life so attended and surrounded with all sorts and kinds of temptations, that he earnestly, seriously, and frequently desires the presence and assistance of every grace, that so he may be temptation-proof, yea, victorious over every temptation; and he sees and feels the need of every grace to fill up every place, station, and condition wherein the Lord has set him, and therefore he begs hard for every grace; and he sees a beauty, and a glory, and an excellency upon every grace, and therefore he desires every grace as well as any one single grace, which no hypocrite or profane person in the world does. But,

[9.] Ninthly, No man can sincerely and seriously desire grace for gracious ends and purposes, but he that has true grace in his soul. No man can truly desire grace, that he may enjoy communion and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and that he may be made conformable to Christ, and that he may be serviceable and useful to the interest of Christ, and that he may walk even as Christ walked, in the exercise of every grace, and that he may be rid of his sins, yea, all his sins, especially his special sins; and that he may run the ways of God's commands more easily, more readily, more delightfully, more resolutely, more patiently, more unweariedly, and more zealously; and that he may be made victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil; and that he may so live, as to be a praise, a name, an honour, and a glory to Christ; and that after all and by all he may be prepared and fitted for an eternal fruition and enjoyment of Christ, but he that has true grace in his soul. Now, every weak believer is able to appeal to God, that he desires grace for gracious ends and purposes, as for the ends last cited, and others of the like nature with them. Wicked men may in a fit desire grace, as Simon Magus did desire the Holy Ghost, to get money by it, Acts 8:18-20; or when they are under some pangs of conscience, they may desire grace to be rid of their horrors and terrors, or when they are upon a dying bed they may desire so much grace as may keep them out of hell, and bring them to heaven; but in all this they look no further than self, they are far from desiring of grace for gracious ends and purposes. There is nothing in all the world that the great God so much regards as man, 'All these things have my hands made, but to this man will I look,' Isa 66:2. Nothing in man so much as the heart; 'My son, give me thy heart.' That is the mount Zion which God loveth above all the dwellings of Jacob; and nothing in the heart so much as the aim and end of it. Let a man's profession be never so glorious, let him be never so abundant in the performance of duties, let his desires after this and that good thing be never so strong, yet if his ends be wrong, all his pretensions and performances are but beautiful abominations. Did David pray three times a-day? So did the pharisees. Did David and Daniel fast? So did the pharisees, and that twice in the week. Did Cornelius give alms? So did the

pharisees. Did Abraham pay tithes? So did the pharisees; they tithed their very mint and rue. But their ends being wrong, their time was lost, and their pains was lost, and their duties was lost, and their alms was lost, and their souls was lost, and that for ever. God writes a nothing upon all those services wherein men's ends are not right, Jer 32:23. But,

[10.] Tenthly, No man can sincerely desire and earnestly endeavour after the highest pitches of grace, but he that has true grace. Though the weak Christian has but a little grace in his heart, yet he has the top of grace, the perfection of grace in his sincere aims, in his sincere desires, and in his earnest and constant endeavours, Php 3:12-16, &c; and if the weakest saint might have his desires, his mind, his wish, his will, his choice, he would never sin more; he would never dishonour Jesus Christ more; he would never grieve the Spirit of grace more; he would yield unsinning obedience; he would obey in this lower world, as the angels, and as the 'spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb 12:22-23, do obey in that upper world. The weakest Christian has his eye to the highest round in Jacob's ladder, and fain would he be at the top of it, Luk 17:5; and oh, how sweet is every providence, and every ordinance, and every duty, and every mercy, and every opportunity, that helps his soul more Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards! Sincere desires, and serious endeavours to grow in grace, is an infallible evidence of the truth of grace, 2Pe 3:18, 1Pe 2:2, 1Jn 5:11, 1Jn 3:9. Look, as a man may have grace and not know it, so a man may grow in grace and yet not discern it. As in the lopping of a tree there seems to be a kind of diminution and destruction, yet the end and issue of it is better growth; and as the weakening of the body by physic seems to tend to death, yet it produceth better health and more strength; and as the ball by falling downward riseth upward; and water in pipes descends that it may ascend, so the Christian's spiritual growth, when seemingly dead and declining, and to stand at a stay, is still carried on by the hidden method of God to increase; for every true Christian is a member of a thriving body, in which there is no atrophy, but a continual issuing of spirits from the head; so that life, being wrought by the Spirit of life, never dieth, but is always upon the growing hand,—except in the dark winter night of desertion and temptations,—ripening and increasing even in the midst of all ordinary troubles and trials. The apostle tells us, that the whole body of Christ, whereof every true Christian is a limb, is so compact together in itself, and so firmly fastened with certain spiritual nerves and ligaments to the head, that from it there is by them conveyed to each part a continual supply of spiritual grace, both sufficient to furnish it, and to further the growth of it. Let me give a little further light into this particular, by this similitude: A man is bound for the East Indies, and shapeth his course thitherward, but by the way is put often off by cross winds to the west-ward; he is by contrary winds compelled to put into divers harbours, and to make some stay by the way there, either to shift off stormy weather, or to take in fresh water, or to stop a leak, or to get some fresh provisions; and yet all this while we truly say, he is going on in his way in his voyage, because his settled purpose and constant resolution is to make to his port, his haven, whither he is bound, and all these seeming lets shall help forward his voyage. It is so in spiritual things; for our very growth in grace consists much in sincere desires, in fixed resolutions, and in faithful endeavours to grow in grace. Aristotle makes it the mark of a good man, that he studieth how he may grow better than he is, not contenting himself with any degree or measure of goodness. And another heathen observes, that 'the earnest desire of what men would have, maketh them forgetful of what they have.'² 'I forget what is past,' saith the apostle, 'and press on to what is before,' Php 3:13. Their eye is more upon what they want than upon what they have. It is with good Christians in this case as it is with rich worldlings, that, like men in a race, have their eye on

those that be before them, not on those that come after them; they are ever eyeing those that seem to outstrip and outgo them in wealth, and think they have nothing, and that they are but poor men, so long as they come short of such and such, who are rich and great in the world. And so it is with many precious Christians; they have still their eye fixed upon those whose examples they either read of, or whose courses and graces they are eye-witnesses of; and hereupon they think that they have no grace, or else that they make no progress in grace, at least worth speaking of, so long as they come behind and fall short of such and such, who are very eminent, or most eminent, in grace and holiness; and upon this account it is, that they make such sore complaints of their spiritual wants, and of their slow progress in grace and holiness, and that they can hardly perceive but that they stand still at a stay. Now mark, these sad complaints of theirs, and their serious desires to grow in grace, is a sure and infallible evidence of the truth of grace in them; yea, it is a sure argument that they love grace as it is grace, that they love grace for grace's sake, which none can do but such as have grace. It is a sure sign that he was never truly good, that desireth not to be better; *ille non est bonus qui non vult esse melior*; yea, he has very great cause to fear, that his heart is naught, very naught, if not stark naught, that desireth not to be as good as the best, to be as gracious as he that is most gracious, and to be as holy as he that is most holy. Well, sirs! this will be found an everlasting truth, viz., That no man can sincerely desire, and habitually endeavour after the highest pitches of grace, but he that hath true grace.

[11.] Eleventhly, No man can always desire grace, but he that has true grace. Constant desires after grace argues the reality of grace; constant desires after grace speaks out a state of grace: Psa 119:20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' Isa 26:7-9, Song of Solomon 3:1-4, Psa 106:3. Pliny speaks of a golden vine which never withereth. All gracious desires are such golden desires as never wither. Take a Christian when you will, and where you will, and among whom you will, and in what condition you will, and still you shall find his heart full of gracious desires. Oh that I had grace! Oh that I had much grace! &c. Balaam in a fit, in a good mood, desires to die the death of the righteous, but his desires were fleeting and flashy, they were transient, not permanent, Num 23:10. Some poor sinners, when they are in a good mood, or under some distress of conscience, or under some grievous trials, or when they see the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:6; and when death, which is the king of terrors, and the terror of kings, knocks at their doors, oh then they cry out, Oh that we had grace! Oh, what shall we do for grace! Oh, send to such a minister, and to such a Christian, whom we have hated, scorned, reproached, and opposed, and desire them to be earnest with God, that he would give us grace; for now we see, that without grace there is no escaping of hell, nor no coming to heaven. But all these desires of theirs are but like the morning cloud, or the early dew, that quickly passeth away, Hos 6:4, Psa 78:37, Psa 5:9. But now if you look upon the weak Christian, as you shall commonly find a tear in his eye, a sigh in his breast, and a complaint in his mouth; so you shall always find desires in his heart after grace, Oh that I had grace! Oh that I had much grace! Oh that I did but excel in grace! Oh that I had as much grace as such a Christian! Oh that I had a greater exercise of grace! Psa 42:1-3, and Psa 63:1-3, Psa 63:8. Whatever outward or inward changes may attend a Christian in this world, yet you shall still find him full of holy desires, and breathings, and hankerings, and longings after God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness. Oh that I had more of these! Oh, when shall I have more of these! Oh that God would cut me short in anything, yea, in everything, rather than cut me short in these things, that the desires of my soul are so much running after! These desires of theirs may further be set forth by a spring between a couple of hills;

the spring will always run through those lets that stop it, or else it will run over those lets, for it cannot cease running if it be a living spring; so the desires of a gracious soul will still be running after God, and Christ, and grace. The good desires of bad men after God, and Christ, and grace, and holiness, are like water in a cistern, that quickly runs out; but the desires of a godly man after God, Christ, grace, holiness, are like water in a fountain that is still a-running. An unsound Christian is never good at all times; he is only good by fits, and starts, and turns, sometimes when he is sermon-sick, or under a smarting rod, or a galled conscience, or when he is under some heavy cross or sad loss. Oh, then he will be good! Oh, then he will have God, and he will have Christ, and he will have grace, and he will have heaven; but this good frame, this good temper of his, is not lasting, it is not abiding; it is like a vapour that quickly vanishes, or like a windmill that goes as long as the wind fills the sails, but no longer. These are like Sigismund the emperor, who, when he was sick, would be very godly, but when he was well, none more wicked. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, No man can sincerely desire to abound and excel most in those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary to those particular sins which his natural temper, constitution, complexion, calling, or condition, does most expose him and incline him to, but he that has true grace, but he whose heart is sincere with God. Psa 18:23, 'I was upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' If passion be a sincere Christian's head-lust, then his desires run most out for meekness; if pride, then his desires are most for humility; if earthliness, then his desires are most for heavenly-mindedness; if unbelief, then his desires are most for faith. You shall then find him with the disciples, crying out, 'Lord, increase our faith,' Luk 7:5. But now, though a wicked man's heart rise against every grace, yet it rises most strongly against those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary to those particular lusts which are a wicked man's bosom lusts, his darling sins, &c. Hence the covetous heart rises and swells most against liberality, as you see in Judas, 'What need this waste?' Mat 26:8-9. Flesh and blood looks upon all as lost that is laid out upon Christ, his servants and services. And the lukewarm Christian's heart rises and swells most against zeal and fervency, Rev 3:15-17, Luk 19:1-48; and the griping usurer's heart rises and swells most against restitution; and the adulterer's heart rises and swells most against purity, chastity, continency; and the ignorant man's heart rises and swells most against light and knowledge. The ignorant man is willing to go to hell in the dark, and ready and bold enough to conclude that we never had such sad and bad times as we have had since there hath been so much preaching, and so much hearing, and so much fasting, and so much praying, and so much light and knowledge in the world. But now it is quite otherwise with a true child of God; for his heart rises and swells most against the toad or toads that are in his own bosom, Rom 7:22-23; and the daily and earnest desires of his soul are, that God would make him eminent in every grace, yea, that God would make him most eminent in those particular graces which are most opposite and contrary to those particular lusts and corruptions which more peculiarly, more especially he hath cause to call his iniquity, or the iniquities of his heart, and of his heels, Psa 49:5. Look, as we have some dirt, more or less, that will still cleave to our heels whilst we are in a dirty world, so there is some defilements and pollutions that will still be cleaving to all our duties, services, ways, and walkings in this world, which we may well call the iniquity of our heels. Now, a gracious heart rises most against these, &c.

[13.] Thirteenthly, No man can truly love grace in another, but he that has true grace in his own soul, 1Jn 3:10. No man can love a saint as a saint but he that is a real saint. No man can love

holiness in another but he that has holiness in his own soul. No man can love a good man for goodness' sake but he that is really good. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren,' 1Jn 3:14. Sincere love to the brethren is a most evident sign of a Christian's being already passed or translated from death to life, that is, from a state of nature into a state of grace. Such a poor soul that dares not say that he has grace in his own heart, yet dares say before the Lord that he loves, delights, and takes pleasure to see the holy graces of the Spirit sparkling and shining in the hearts, lives, and lips of other saints, secretly wishing in himself that his soul were but in their case; and that dares say before the Lord that there are no men in all the world that are so precious, so lovely, so comely, so excellent, and so honourable in his account, in his eye, as those that have the image of God, of Christ, of grace, of holiness, most clearly, most fairly, and most fully stamped upon them. When a poor Christian can rejoice in every light, in every sun that outshines his own; when he sees wisdom and knowledge shining in one saint, and faith and love shining in another saint, and humility and lowliness shining in another saint, and meekness and uprightness shining in another saint, and zeal and courage shining in another saint, and patience and constancy shining in another, and then can make his retreat to his closet, admiring and blessing of the Lord for the various graces of his Spirit shining in his children, and be frequent and earnest with God, that those very graces might shine as so many suns in his soul; doubtless such a poor soul has true grace, and is happy, and will be happy to all eternity. In Tertullian's time, the heathen would point out the Christians by this mark, 'See how they love one another.' Now, to prevent mistakes, I shall shew you the several properties of sincere love to the saints.

(1.) First, True love to the saints is spiritual; it is a love for the image of God that is stamped upon the soul. 1Jn 5:1, 'Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him;' 1Jn 4:7. A soul that truly loves, loves the father for his own sake, and the children for the father's sake. If the image of God be the loadstone that draws out our love to the saints, then our love is real to them. He that does not love the saints as saints, he that does not love them under a spiritual notion, he hath no true affection to them. Naturally we hate God, because he is a holy God; and his law, because it is an holy law; and his people, because they are a holy people, Gen 3:15; 1Jn 3:12. It is only the Spirit of God that can enable a man to love a saint for the image of God that is in him. Many there are which love Christians for their goods, not for their good; they love them for the money that is in their purses, but not for the grace that is in their hearts. Many, like the Bohemian cur, fawn upon a good suit. Love to the saints, for the image of God stamped upon them, is a flower that does not grow in nature's garden. No man can love grace in another man's heart, but he that hath grace in his own. Men do not more naturally love their parents, and love their children, and love themselves, than they do naturally hate the image of God upon his people and ways, Pro 29:10; Eze 25:15. I have read of one who was so lusty and quarrelsome, that he was ready to fight with his own image so often as he saw it in a glass. Oh how many are there in these days, that are still a-quarrelling and fighting with the image of God wherever they see it! True love is for what of the divine nature, for what of Christ and grace shines in a man. It is one thing to love a godly man, and another thing to love him for godliness. Many love godly men as they are politicians, or potent, or learned, or of a sweet nature, or affable, or related, or as they have been kind to them; but all this is but natural love; but to love them because they are spiritually lovely, because of the seed of God in them, because they are all glorious within, is to love them as becometh saints; it is to love them at a higher and nobler rate than any hypocrite in the world can

reach to, John 3:9, Psa 45:13. The wasps fly about the tradesman's shop, not out of love to him, but the honey and fruit that is there. But,

(2.) Secondly, True love to the saints is appreciating. A gracious soul sets the highest price and the greatest value and esteem upon those that are gracious, Psa 15:4. He honours them that fear the Lord; he looks upon the wicked as lumber, but upon the saints as jewels; he looks upon the wicked as dross, but upon the saints as the gold of Ophir; he looks upon the wicked as chaff, but upon the saints as wheat; he looks upon the saints as sons, but upon the wicked as slaves; he looks upon the saints as heirs of salvation, but upon the wicked as heirs of damnation, Psa 119:119; Psa 1:4; John 1:12; Heb 1:14. Gracious souls do not value persons by their great places, offices, names, professions, arts, parts, gifts, gay clothes, gold chains, honours, riches, but by what they are worth for another world. As the great God, so gracious souls look not how rational men are, but how religious; not how great, but how gracious; not how high, but how holy; and accordingly they value them. 'My goodness extends not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight,' Psa 16:3. 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Pro 12:26. It is grace that differences one man from another, and that exalts one man above another. A gracious man, though never so poor, and low, and contemptible in the world, is a better man than his wicked neighbour, though he be never so great or rich in the world; in the eye, account, and esteem of God, angels, and saints, there is no man to the gracious man. The sun doth not more excel and outshine the stars, than a righteous man doth excel and outshine his unrighteous neighbour. 'Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich,' Pro 28:6. A gracious man prefers a holy Job upon the dunghill, before a wicked Ahab upon the throne. He sets a higher price upon a gracious Lazarus, though clothed with rags and full of sores, than upon a rich and wretched Dives, though he be clothed gloriously, and fares sumptuously every day, Luk 16:1-31. This is, and this must be for a lamentation, that this poor, blind, mad, besotted world rates and values men according to their worldly interest, greatness, glory, and grandeur; but gracious souls, they rate and value men by their graces, by their inward excellencies, and by what they are worth for eternity. In the eye of a gracious man, there is no wife to a gracious wife, no child to a gracious child, no friend to a gracious friend, no neighbour to a gracious neighbour, no magistrate to a gracious magistrate, no minister to a gracious minister, no master to a gracious master, nor no servant to a gracious servant. Internal excellencies carries it with a gracious man before all external glories. The Jews say, that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. Doubtless, seventy gracious persons, in the esteem and judgment of those that are gracious, are more worth than a whole world, yea, than seventy worlds of graceless persons. Well sirs, remember this: No man can truly prize, and highly value grace in another, but he that hath grace in his own heart. Some prize Christians for their wit, others prize them for their wealth; some prize them for their birth and breeding, others prize them for their beauty and worldly glory; some prize them for the great things that have been done by them, others prize them for the good things that they have received from them; some prize them for their eagle eyes, others prize them for their silver tongues, and others prize them for their golden parts; but he that is truly gracious, he prizes them for the grace of God that is in them, he sets the highest value upon them for their holiness, &c. But,

(3.) Thirdly, True love to the saints is universal, to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any; to poor Lazarus as well as to rich Abraham, to a despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Joseph as well as to a raised Jacob, to a despised disciple as well as to an exalted apostle: Eph 1:15, 'Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints'; Col 1:4, 'Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.' Faith in Christ Jesus maketh love to all the saints; therefore they go commonly coupled in Paul's Epistles. It was the glory of the Ephesians and Colossians that their faith and love reached to all the saints. Their love was not a narrow love, a love confined to some particular saints, but it was universal to all saints: Php 4:21, 'Salute every saint in Christ Jesus;' the meanest as well as the richest, the weakest as well as the strongest, the lowest as well as the highest, and those that have many infirmities as well as those that have fewer infirmities, and those that have but mean parts and gifts as well as those that have the strongest parts and the most raised gifts, Eph 1:21-23; 1Pe 2:17. All saints have the same Spirit, the same Jesus, the same faith, &c.; they are all fellow-members, fellow-travellers, fellow-soldiers, fellow-citizens, fellow-heirs, and therefore must they all be loved with a sincere and cordial love. Love is set upon the brotherhood, upon the whole fraternity of believers, and not here and there upon one. Divine love casts an eye of favour upon grace in rags, upon a dunghill, in a dungeon, a den, a prison, a fiery furnace. Grace is as lovely in the illiterate as in the greatest scholar, in the servant as in the master, in the maid as in the mistress, in the child as in the father, in the subject as in the prince, in the buyer as in the seller, &c. Look, as all our delight must be in the saints, so our delight must be in all the saints. It is sad and sinful to contemn our poor brethren; and yet this was the very case of the Corinthians, for they in their love-feasts carried it so unequally, 'that one was hungry,' to wit, the poor, 'and another was drunken,' to wit, the rich. And this made the apostle put that question to them, 'What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?' 1Co 11:21-22, or put them to shame that have nothing. And the apostle James doth very roundly reprove and condemn that partial love that was generally among the Jews in his days: Jas 2:1-4, 'My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons; for if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool, are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?' Not that the apostle doth simply or absolutely prohibit a civil differencing of men in place from others; for it cannot be denied but that there is a holy and warrantable respect of persons in respect of their age, callings, gifts, graces, and greatness in the world; but when the rich man's wealth is more regarded than the poor man's godliness, and when men carry it so to the rich as to cast scorn, contempt, disgrace, and discouragement upon the godly poor; they that respect a rich man that has but a little grace, before a poor man that is rich in grace, are worthy of blame. All true-born sons love to see the image and picture of their father, though hung in never so poor a frame, and in never so mean a cottage; so the true-born sons of God, they love to see the image of God, the picture of God, upon the poorest saints. It is sad to prefer a worldly lustre before heavenly grace, a gold ring before a rich faith, a chain of gold before a chain of grace. Jas 2:5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?' It is a vile thing, saith one of the ancients, to have the faith of Christ in respect of persons. We do not judge of faith by persons, but of persons by faith. It is the great wisdom of a Christian not to judge

of men by their outwards, but by their inwards; not by their externals, but by their internals; not by what they are worth for this world, but by what they are worth for that other world. The poorest saints are God's portion, Deu 32:9; they are his pleasant portion, Jer 12:10; they are his peculiar treasure, Exo 19:5; they are his jewels, Mal 3:17; they are the apple of his eye, Zec 2:8; they are his glory, Isa 4:5; they are the crown of his glory and royal diadem, Isa 62:3; and therefore it is a dangerous thing to slight them, to disown them, to look frowningly upon them, or to carry it unworthily towards them. Pompey told his Cornelia, It is no praise to thee to have loved Pompeium Magnum, Pompey the Great, but if thou lovest Pompeium miserum, Pompey the miserable, thou shalt be a pattern for imitation to all posterity. So I say, It is no great matter to love those that are rich and pious, great and gracious, high and holy; but to love the poor saints of God in their lowest and most miserable condition, when they have not a rag to cover them, nor a crust to refresh them, nor a fire to warm them, nor a friend to stand by them, nor a penny to help them, this is praiseworthy, this speaks out much of God, of Christ, of grace within. Romanus the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favour him for his nobility; for it is not, said he, the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian faith, that makes me noble. It is not race nor place, but grace, that makes a man truly noble. Without a peradventure, he that loves one saint for the image of God that is upon him, he cannot but fall in love with every saint that bears the lovely image of the Father upon him; he cannot but love a saint in rags as well as a saint in robes; a saint upon the dunghill as well as a saint upon the throne. Usually, those Christians that have least of the world have most of Christ. Commonly, those Christians that have least of the world have most of heaven in their hearts, houses, and lives. But,

(4.) Fourthly, True love to the saints will extend to those that are most remote in respect of place, as well as to those that are near. They of Macedonia and Achaia made a contribution for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom 15:26. The saints of Macedonia and Achaia did freely and cheerfully contribute to the poor saints at Jerusalem, whose faces probably they had never seen. And Gaius is commended for his love to strangers, 3Jn 1:5. A gracious man that has an estate, a treasury, an inheritance, he is like a common fountain, that freely gives out to strangers as well as to near neighbours. A great fire will warm those that sit far from it, as well as those that sit near unto it. So sincere love will extend and stretch out itself to those saints that are most remote. Gracious souls do dearly love and highly value those saints whose faces they have never seen, nor are like to see in this world, and from whose hands they have not received the least civility; and all upon the serious reports that they have had of the grace of God that has been sparkling and shining in them, whose habitations are at a great distance from them. A sincere love, an unfeigned love, a hearty love, will be running out towards those that live most remote from us, if we do but understand that God is in them and with them of truth, Rom 12:9, 1Pe 1:22, 1Jn 3:18. But,

(5.) Fifthly, Our love to the saints is right, when we love them best and most in whom the spiritual and supernatural causes of love are most sparkling and shining. Where grace draws the affections, there the more grace we see, the more we shall love: Psa 16:3, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' There are saints, and there are excellent saints. The Hebrew word that is here rendered excellent, signifies magnificent ones, noble ones, glorious ones, wonderful ones. O sirs! there are some saints that are magnificent in grace, noble in grace, glorious in grace, wonderful in grace. Now this is certain, if grace be the true reason why we love any, then the more excellent, the more

magnificent any are in grace, the more highly we shall prize them, and the more dearly we shall love them, and the more abundantly in our hearts we shall honour them, Psa 15:4. Look, as grace rises higher and higher in the same person, so we shall rise higher and higher in our love to the same person. Daniel was greatly beloved, Dan 9:23, and John was singularly beloved, John 21:20. And why, but because they were more eminently gracious than others were? Where there is most grace, there God is most honoured, and there Christ is most exalted, and there the Spirit is best pleased, and there religion is most adorned, and there Satan is most dethroned, and there the world is most conquered, and there sin is most subdued, and there duties are most exactly performed; and therefore there the gracious soul can't but love best and most. There are some that seem to love such and such godly men, whose judgments are weak, and light little, and parts low, and grace small, who yet look with a squint eye, an envious eye, upon every sun that outshines their own, upon every one's graces and excellencies that are more sparkling than their own. Though pride and envy have received their death's wound at the soul's first conversion, yet they are not quite slain in a believer. There is an aptness even in real saints to grudge and repine at those gifts, graces, and excellencies in others that outshine their own. John's disciples muttered and murmured because Christ had more followers and admirers than John, Luk 7:16-23, and that spirit that lived in John's disciples is still alive to this very day. This is, and this must be, for a lamentation. Well, sirs, look, as the fairest day hath its clouds, the finest linen its spots, the richest jewels their flaws, the sweetest fruits their worms, so when many precious Christians are not themselves, when they are in an hour of temptation, when their corruptions are up and their graces down, they may, and too often do, envy and repine at those graces, excellencies, and abilities, that do overcast, cloud, darken, and outshine their own, Num 11:29. The best of men are but men at the best, and there is still those bitter roots of pride, vain-glory, self-love, envy, &c., remaining in them that occasions their hearts to rise and swell, yea, sometimes to cast disgrace upon those excellencies in others that themselves want, Heb 12:15, as that great man that could not write his own name, and yet called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence. This spiritual disease is mostly to be found among Christians that are got into some of the highest forms in Christianity. Take your ordinary common Christians, and they commonly rejoice most where they see most grace. And so do your Christians in a higher form too, when they come to themselves, and to make up their accounts, and have wept over those cursed roots of bitterness that are so apt to be sprouting out. Now, there is no greater argument that our grace is true, and that we do love others for grace's sake, than our loving them best that have most grace, though they have but little of the world. A pearl is rich if found on a dunghill, though it may glister more when set in a ring of gold; so many a poor believer is rich in grace, and precious and glorious in the eye of Christ, and should be so in ours, though like Job he sits upon a dunghill. Though in the eyes of the world he may seem to glister most when adorned with riches, honour, and outward pomp, if grace be the true reason why we love any person, then the more grace that person hath, the more we shall love him. A godly man loves all that are godly, but he loves them most that excel most in the power, purity, and practice of godliness, &c. But,

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, True love to the saints is constant, it is permanent: 1Co 13:8, 'Love never faileth;' Heb 13:1, 'Let brotherly love continue.' It is a love like that of Christ's, who loved his to the end: 1Jn 4:16, 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' John 13:1, and John 15:12, &c., Our love to our brother must not only lodge with us a night and away, but we must dwell in brotherly love. Look, as our love must be sincere without hypocrisy, so it must be constant

without deficiency. That love was never true that is not constant. True love, like the pulse, will still be beating, it will still be working and running out to the person beloved. True love will not fawn upon a Christian when high, and frown upon him when low; it will not kiss him upon the throne and kick him upon the dunghill. The grounds and causes of their love are constant, viz., God's commands, their spiritual relations, and the truth of grace in their souls; and therefore their love cannot but be constant. 'A friend,' saith Solomon, 'loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity,' Pro 7:17. Euripides hit it when he said, 'That a faithful friend in adversity, is better than a calm sea to a weather-beaten mariner.' He that truly loves, will love in adversity as well as in prosperity, in storms as well as in calms, in winter nights as well as in summer days. He that sincerely loves the saints, he will love them as well when men frown upon them, as when they smile upon them; as well when men strike them, as when they stroke them; as well when men cast them down, as when they lift them up; as well when men cry, 'Crucify them, crucify them,' as when they cry, 'Hosanna, hosanna,' to them. Consalvus, a Spanish bishop and inquisitor, wondered how the Christians had that commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' so indelibly printed in their hearts, that no torture could blot it out, and make them confess and betray one another, or cease from loving one another. I have read of one [in Jerome] Ursinus, a Christian physician, who being to suffer martyrdom for the gospel of Christ, began to waver and faint; which, when Vitalis, a holy man, saw, he stepped to him, and though he knew it would cost him his life, yet he thus comforted and encouraged him, saying, What! have ye been heretofore so industrious to preserve men's bodies, and will you now shrink at the saving of your own soul? Be courageous, fear not, &c. For which faithful counsel, he also was condemned to death, and suffered accordingly. A true friend is neither known in prosperity, nor hid in adversity. True love is like that of Ruth's to Naomi, that of Jonathan's to David, permanent and constant. Many there be whose love to the saints is like Job's brooks, which in the winter, when men have no need of them, overflows with tenders of service and shows of love; but when the season is hot and dry, and the poor thirsty traveller stands in most need of water to refresh him, then the brooks are quite dried up. They are like the swallow, that will stay by you in the summer of prosperity, but fly from you in the winter of adversity. It is observed by Josephus of the Samaritans, that whenever the Jews' affairs prospered, they would be their friends, and profess much love to them; yea, they would vaunt of their alliance, saying, that they were near akin, and of the race of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. But when the Jews were in trouble and affliction, and brought to an under, then they would not own them, nor have any thing to do with them; yea, then they would set themselves with all their might against them, as the same historian tells us.² This age is full of such Samaritans; yet certainly, such as truly love, they will always love; such as truly love the people of God, they will love them to the end. In the primitive times it was very much taken notice of by the very heathen, that in the depth of misery, when fathers and mothers forsook their children, Christians, otherwise strangers, stuck close one to another. Their love of religion and one of another, proved firmer than that of nature. They seem to take away the sun out of the world, said the orator, who take away friendship from the life of man; for we do not more need fire and water than constant friendship. Though wicked men may pretend great love to the saints, yet their love is not constant. God sometimes indeed overrules their spirits with a very strong hand, as he did Laban's and Esau's, or as he overruled the spirits of the lions to preserve Daniel; and of the ravens to feed Elijah, Gen 31:24, Gen 31:29, Gen 33:1-5; Dan 6:1-28; but so soon as that overruling providence is over, they are as they were before. God for a time gave the Israelites

favour in the eyes of the Egyptians, but before and after they were their utter enemies. But now a gracious soul, he loves the saints at all times, his love to them is constant. But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, That soul that dares not say that he has grace, yet can truly say before the Lord, that he prizes the least dram of grace above ten thousand thousand worlds, certainly that soul has true grace in him. Doubtless there are none that can prize grace in their understandings and judgments above all the world, but such as are first taken out of the world by grace, Mic 6:6-7; Php 3:18-19; Mat 19:16-25; Psa 2:5. There is no man on earth whose heart is void and empty of grace, but sets a higher value and price upon his lusts, or upon his relations, or upon his honours, or riches, or pleasures, or upon this or that worldly enjoyment, than he does upon grace, or the fountain of grace; yea, how many thousands are there that set a higher price or value upon a hound, a hawk, a horse, a harlot, a good trade, a fair estate, a rich inheritance, yea, upon the very toys and trifles of this world, than they do upon God, or Christ, or grace! It was never yet known in the world, that ever God sent such a man to hell, who prized grace above heaven itself, who had rather have grace and holiness without heaven, than heaven itself without grace and holiness.

[15.] Fifteenthly, That soul that dares not say that his condition is good, yet can say in truth of heart before the Lord, that he would not change his condition with the vain, carnal, formal, and profane men of the world, for ten thousand worlds; that man is certainly for heaven, and heaven is certainly for that man. We may be very highly and groundedly confident, that God will never cast that man to hell, among devils and damned spirits, at the great day, who in his day of life would not choose to be in the condition of the men of the world, for as many worlds as there be men in the world. Look, as none meet in heaven, but such as are like to like in their renewed natures, principles, and practices; so none meet in hell but such as are like to like in their old natures, principles, and practices. That God that would not suffer an ox to be yoked with an ass in this world, Deu 22:10; nor a believer with an infidel, 2Co 6:14-18; will never suffer such to be yoked with devils and damned reprobates in that lower world, who would not, to gain many worlds, be willingly yoked with wicked men in this world. Certainly they shall never be a Christian's companions in that other world, whose society and company, and whose wickedness and baseness have been a grief, a torment, a hell to him in this world, Psa 119:53, Psa 119:136; Jer 9:1-2; Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6; 2Pe 2:7-8. When Mrs Catherine Brettergh was upon her dying bed, and most grievously assaulted by temptations, in the midst of her sore conflicts, this was no small support and comfort to her, that surely God would not send her to hell, to live for ever among such wicked persons, whose company and whose sin was a burden to her in this world, &c. But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, That soul that dares not say that he does not sin,—‘For in many things we offend all;’ ‘and there is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good, and sinneth not;’ and who can say, ‘I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?’ ‘And if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,’—yet can say in uprightness before the Lord, that he would not willingly, resolutely, maliciously, wilfully, wickedly, and habitually sin against the Lord to gain a world; that soul that don’t or won’t, through grace assisting, allow himself, or indulge himself in a course of sin, or in a trade of sin, or in the common practice of any known sin, that soul is certainly a gracious soul. ‘The evil that I do I allow not,’ Rom 7:15. It is one thing for a man to sin, it is another thing for a man to allow himself in sin; it is one thing for a godly man to step into a sin, and it is another thing to keep the road of sin. ‘Search me and try me, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me,’ or as the Hebrew runs, ‘any way of pain, or of grief, or of provocation,’ Psa

139:24, that is, any course of sin that is grievous or provoking to the eyes of divine glory. A real saint can neither allow of sin, nor wallow in sin, nor be transformed into the image of sin, nor mix itself with sin. It is possible for a sincere Christian to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts, and now and then in an hour of temptation, to slide, to trip, and to be overtaken unawares; but his main way, his principal work, is to depart from iniquity, Gal 6:1, Pro 16:17, as a true traveller may now and then step a few steps out of his way, who yet for the main keeps his way, keeps the road; or as a bee may now and then light upon a thistle, but her main work is to be gathering at the flowers; or as a sheep may now and then slip into the dirt, or into a slough, but its main work is to be grazing upon the mountains. Certainly, O soul, if sin be now thy greatest burden, it shall never hereafter prove thy eternal bane. God never yet sent any man to hell for sin, to whom sin has commonly been the greatest hell in this world. God has but one hell, and that is for those to whom sin has been commonly a heaven in this world. That man that hates sin, and that daily enters his protest against sin, that man shall never be made miserable by sin. Sin in a wicked man is like poison in a serpent; it is in its natural place, it is delightful to a sinner; but sin in a saint is like poison in a man's body, it is offensive, and the heart rises against it, and is carried forth to the use of all divine antidotes whereby it may be expelled and destroyed. Nothing will satisfy a gracious soul, but the heart blood of his lusts. Now, he shall never be damned for his sins, whose heart is set upon killing his sins.

[17.] Seventeenthly, Such a poor soul that dares not say, that God is his God, or that Christ is his redeemer, or that he has a work of grace upon his heart, yet can say with some integrity of heart before the Lord, that if God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, were offered to him on the one hand, and all the honours, pleasures, profits, delights, and carnal contents of the world were offered him on the other hand, he had infinitely rather ten thousand thousand times choose God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, than the contrary; certainly such a soul has true grace in him, and a saving work passed upon him; for none can freely, seriously, habitually, resolutely, choose God and Christ, grace and glory, holiness and happiness, as their summum bonum, chiefest good, but such who are really good. Look, as our love to God is but an effect of his love to us,—‘We love him because he first loved us,’ 1Jn 4:19,—so our choosing of God for our God, is but an effect of God's choosing us for his people; we choose him because he first chose us, Deu 7:6-9, Deu 26:17-19. Such who, in their serious choice, set up God and Christ above all other persons and things, such God will certainly make happy and blessed for ever. God never did, nor never will, reject those, or damn those, who really choose him for their God, and for their great all. The greatest part of the world choose their lusts rather than God, and the creatures rather than Christ; they choose rather to be great than gracious, to be rich in this world than to be rich towards God, Luk 12:21, to be outwardly happy than to be inwardly holy, to have a heaven on earth than to have a heaven after death, and so they miscarry for ever, Mat 10:42. That soul that with Mary has chosen the better part, that soul with Mary shall be happy for ever; every man must stand or fall for ever as his choice has been. But,

[18.] Eighteenthly, Canst thou truly say, in the presence of the great and glorious God, that is the searcher of all hearts, that thou hast given up thy heart and life to the rule, authority, and government of Jesus Christ? and that thou hast chosen him to be thy sovereign Lord and King, and art truly willing to submit to his dominion, as the only precious and righteous government, and as the only holy and heavenly, sweet and pleasant, profitable and comfortable, safe and best

dominion in all the world, and to resign up thy heart, thy will, thy affections, thy life, thy all, really to Christ, wholly to Christ, and only to Christ? Canst thou, O poor soul! look up to heaven and truly say, O dear Lord Jesus! other lords, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, have had dominion too long over me; but now these lords I do heartily renounce, I do utterly renounce, I do for ever renounce, and do give up myself to thee as my only Lord, beseeching thee to rule and reign over me for ever and ever! O Lord! though sin rages, and Satan roars, and the world sometimes frowns, and sometimes fawns, yet I am resolved to own thee as my only Lord, and to serve thee as my only Lord; and my greatest fear, by divine assistance, shall be of offending thee, and my chiefest care shall be to please thee, and my only joy shall be to be a praise, a name, and an honour to thee, Isa 26:13, Isa 33:22. O Lord! I can appeal to thee in the sincerity of my heart, that though I have many invincible sins, weaknesses, and infirmities that hang upon me; and though I am often worsted by my sins, and overcome in an hour of temptation; yet thou that knowest all thoughts and hearts, thou dost know that I have given up my heart and life to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and do daily give them up to his rule and government; and it is the earnest desire of my soul, above all things in this world, that Jesus Christ may still set up his laws in my heart, and exercise his dominion over me, Psal 65:3, Rom 7:23. Now certainly, there is not the weakest Christian in all the world but can venture himself upon such an appeal to God as this is; and without all peradventure, where such a frame and temper of spirit is, there the dominion of Jesus Christ is set up; and where the dominion of Christ is set up, there sin has no dominion; for the dominion of sin and the dominion of Christ are inconsistent, and therefore such a soul is happy, and will be happy to all eternity. But,

[19.] Nineteenthly, That man that will venture his soul upon Christ, and that will lean upon Christ, and cleave to Christ with full purpose of heart, and that will cleave to his blood, and cleave to his righteousness, and cleave to his merits and satisfaction, in the face of all fears, doubts, disputes, cavils, and objections; and though it cannot clear its title to Christ, yet will stay and hang itself upon Christ for life and happiness; that man is certainly a believer, and will be everlastingly saved. 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,' Job 13:15; if I must die, I will die at his feet, and in the midst of death expect a better life. That man acts faith to purpose that can love a frowning God, and hang upon an angry God, and follow hard after a withdrawing God, yea, and trust in a killing God, as here, Mat 15:22-28. Job had his feverish fits, and his impatient slips, and yet he kept up his heroical resolution to lean upon the Lord, whilst he had but one minute to live; and this speaks out not only the truth, but also the strength of Job's faith in the midst of his extraordinary combats. When the soul is peremptorily and habitually resolved to cleave to the person of Christ, and to cleave to the merits of Christ, and to cleave to the transactions of Christ with the Father for the salvation of sinners, as the wife cleaves to her husband, or as the child cleaves to the father, or as Ruth cleaved to Naomi, or as the ivy cleaves to the oak, with an 'If I perish, I perish,' Ruth 1:14-17, Est 4:16, then it is safe, then it is happy, then it is out of the danger of hell, then it is within the suburbs of heaven. God never did, nor never will cast such a man to hell, whose soul is drawn forth to a secret resting, staying, leaning, and relying alone upon Christ, for the obtaining of all that good, and all that glory that he has purchased, and his Father has promised. But,

[20.] Lastly, That man that makes it his principal care, his main business, his work of works, to look to his heart, to watch his heart, and to reform his heart, that man doubtless has a saving work of God upon his heart. There are two things which a gracious soul most looks at, his God and his

heart. Though a gracious man looks to the cleansing of his hands, yet his principal care is the reformation of his heart, the cleansing of his heart, according to that of the apostle James: 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded,' Jas 4:8. And that of the prophet Jeremiah: O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved,' Jer 4:14. Man must labour after a clean inside, as well as a clean outside. The conversation must not be only unspotted before the world, but the heart also must be unspotted before God; the heart is as capable of inward defilements as the body is of outward defilements, 2Co 7:1. O sirs! though heart defilement is least taken notice of, yet heart defilement is the worst defilement, and the most dangerous defilement in the world. Heart defilement is spiritual defilement, and spiritual defilement is the defilement of devils, which of all defilement is the most hateful, odious, and pernicious defilement, Eph 6:12, [vide Beza.] The hypocrite's only care is to keep his life from defilement, but the sincere Christian's care is mainly to keep his heart from defilement; for he very well knows, that if he can but keep his heart clean, he shall with more ease keep his life clean; if the fountain be kept pure, the streams will run pure. The heart is the spring of all actions, and therefore every action is as the spring is from whence it flows; if the spring be good, the action is good that flows from it; if the spring be evil, the action is evil that flows from it: 'A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things,' Mark 12:35. Certainly, the great work of a Christian lieth with his heart. The reformation of the heart is the highest and choicest part of reformation, because it is the reformation of the noblest part of man, and is that which God looks most after, Pro 23:26. The reformation of the heart is indeed the heart of reformation. There is nothing reformed to purpose till the heart be reformed; if the heart be naught, all is naught; if that be very naught, all is very naught; if that be stark naught, all is stark naught; but if that be reformed, all is reformed. A gracious man's watch is mainly about his heart: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me.' 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies.' 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.' 'When thou saidst, Seek my face, my heart answered, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness.' The heart of man is the fountain of life or death, and therefore sin in the heart, in some respects, is worse and more dangerous than sin in the life; and hence it is that the sincere Christian doubles his guard about his heart. Luther hit it when he said, 'I more fear what is within me than what comes from without.' The storms and winds without do never move the earth; it is only vapours within that causeth earthquakes, as philosophers observe. Hypocrites, as our Saviour testifies, are all for the outside; they wash the platters and the cups, and beautify the tombs, like an adulteress whose care is to paint and set a fair face upon a foul matter, Mat 23:25-30; but now a sincere Christian, though he has a special respect to the well ordering of his life, yet his main business and work is about his heart, Psal 50:23. Oh that this ignorant heart were but more enlightened! Oh that this proud heart were but more humble! Oh that this profane heart were but more holy! Oh that this earthly heart were but more heavenly! Oh that this unbelieving heart were but more believing! Oh that this passionate heart were but more meek! Oh that this carnal heart were but more spiritual! Oh that this lukewarm heart were but more zealous for God, and Christ, and the gospel, and the great concernments of eternity! Oh that this slight heart were but more serious! Oh that this dull heart were but more quickened! Oh that this dead heart were but more enlivened! &c. The highest and hardest work of

a Christian lieth with his heart. Mark, common light, common conviction, education, enforcement of conscience, principles of common honesty and morality, the eye of man, the fear of man, the examples of man, the laws of man, and the rewards of man, with a hundred other things, may be very prevalent to reform the life, to regulate the outward conversation, and to keep that in some due decorum; and yet all these things will be found too weak, too low to change the heart, to reform the heart, to mend the heart, to purify the heart. To this great work there are principles of a higher nature required: 'Purifying their hearts by faith,' Acts 15:9. It is not a guard of moral virtues, but a guard of saving graces that can keep the heart in order; to reform the heart, to keep the heart in a gracious frame, is one of the best and hardest works in the world: Pro 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' The text is about matter of life and death. The words are mandatory, for all counsels in Scripture carry in them the force of a command. In the words you have two things observable: (1.) A duty enjoined, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' (2.) The reason or motive enforcing it, 'For out of it are the issues of life.' In the duty there are two things considerable: (1.) Here is the subject matter, the thing that is to be done, and that is, 'keep thy heart.' This duty is charged upon all in peremptory and undispensable terms. (2.) Here is the manner how it must be done, and that is, 'with all diligence.'

(1.) 'Keep.' The Hebrew word נָצַר, natsar, to keep, hath various significations, but the main is to keep in safe custody; we should keep our hearts as under lock and key, that they may be always at hand when the Lord shall call for them, &c.

(2.) 'Thy heart.' By the heart we are not to understand that particular vital member of the body that in common speech we call the heart. Heart is not here taken properly for that noble part of the body which philosophers call the *primum vivens et ultimum moriens*, the first that lives and the last that dies. But by heart, in a metaphor, the Scripture sometimes understands some particular noble faculty of the soul. Sometimes the heart is put for the understanding: Rom 1:21, 'Their foolish heart was darkened,' that is, their understanding was darkened. Sometimes it is put for the will and affections: Mat 22:37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,' that is, with thy will and with all thy affections. So Pro 23:26, Deu 10:12. The will is the chieftest power of the soul, as the heart is the principal part of the body; and it commands all the affections, as the centurion did his servants, Mat 8:1-34. Sometimes it is put for the conscience: 1Jn 3:20, 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,' that is, if our conscience condemn us justly, then our case must be assuredly sad, because God knows much more by us than we know by ourselves, and can charge us with many sins that conscience is not privy to, Psa 19:12. Sometimes it is put for the memory: Psa 119:11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart,' that is, in my memory. So Luk 2:19. But here it is taken comprehensively for the whole soul, with all its powers, noble faculties, and endowments, together with their several operations,—all which are to be watched over.

(3.) 'With all diligence,' or as the Hebrew runs, 'with all keeping.' The Hebrew word שָׁמַר, shamar, signifies, to keep with watch and ward. A Christian is to keep a perpetual guard about his heart. A-Lapide notes, that the Hebrew word is borrowed from military affairs. We should keep our hearts as soldiers keep a garrison, with watch and ward. Lavater jumps with him, and tells us that the word shamar is taken from a besieged garrison, begirt by many enemies without, and in danger of being betrayed by treacherous citizens within; in which danger the soldiers upon pain of death are commanded to watch. Junius reads the word thus, 'Keep thy heart,' *supra omnem custodiam*,

above all keeping. So Jerome reads, *præ omne custodia*, above all keeping keep thy heart, that is, keep, keep, watch, watch, &c. So Rhodolphus reads it, *præ omni custodia*; and so we read it in the margin of our Bibles. And the Syriac reads it in the same manner that our English doth, *cum omni cautione*, with all caution and wariness we are to keep our hearts. Oh what guards and double guards! Oh what watches and double watches, should men put upon their hearts! These words, keeping, keep, import both a universal watchfulness over the heart, and a diligent watchfulness over the heart, and a constant watchfulness over the heart; and thrice happy are those persons who keep such a watch upon their hearts. A man is to keep his eye, and keep his mouth, and keep his feet; but above all keeping, he is to keep his heart. It is a duty incumbent upon every Christian to keep his own heart, 'Keep thy heart thyself.' Thou mayest make another thy park-keeper, or thy house-keeper, or thy shop-keeper, or thy cash-keeper, or thy horse-keeper, or thy nurse-keeper; but thou must be thy own heart-keeper. 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' Some understand this of all kind of watchfulness. The Hebrew word is applied to several sorts of keeping. As,

First, It is applied to those that are the keepers of a prison, where dangerous felons or malefactors are to be looked to, that they do not break away. 1Ki 20:39, 'Keep this man,' So Joseph was made the keeper of the prison, Gen 39:21-23; so Job 7:12. The Hebrew word is the same with that in Pro 4:23. Now, oh how diligent, how vigilant are men in looking after their prisoners! Even so should we be in looking after our hearts, &c.

Secondly, It signifies to keep, as men would keep a besieged garrison, or city, or castle, in time of war. So it is used in that Hab 2:1. Now what strong guards, what watchful guards do men keep up at such a time! A gracious heart is Christ's fort-royal. Now, against this fort Satan will employ the utmost of his strength, art, and craft; and therefore how highly does it concern every Christian to keep a strong guard, a constant guard about his heart! But,

Thirdly, It signifies to keep, as the priests and Levites kept the sanctuary of God, the temple of God, and all the holy things that were committed to their charge; so the word is often used by the prophet, Eze 44:8, Eze 44:15-16, &c. The temple, and all the vessels of the temple, were to be kept pure, and clean, and sweet. Our hearts are the temples of God, the temples of the Holy Ghost; and therefore we should always keep a strong and diligent guard about them, that nothing may pass in or out, that may be either displeasing, provoking, or grieving to them. But,

Fourthly, The word signifies to keep, as a man keeps his life. Job 10:12, 'Thy visitation hath preserved,' here is *shamar*, 'my life.' Now with what care, with what diligence, with what labour, with what watchfulness do men labour to preserve their natural lives! What a guard, what a watch do men daily set about their lives; the same they should set about their hearts. But,

Fifthly, Men should keep their hearts, as they keep a rich treasure of money, or jewels, or plate. Now, to preserve a rich treasure, what locks, what bolts, what bars, what chains are made use of! Our hearts are jewels more worth than all the kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres of this world. There are few men that know how to value a God, a Christ, a gospel, a covenant of grace, a heaven, or their own hearts as they should. What are mountains of gold, and rocks of pearl, to the heart, the soul of man! The heart is that pearl of price for which a man should venture his all, and lay down his all. Oh then, what a guard, what a watch should a man continually keep upon his heart! The heart is *camera omnipotentis Regis*, the presence-chamber of the King of heaven; and upon this account it becomes a Christian always to keep a guard upon his heart. He keeps his heart best

who keeps it as his choicest treasure, &c. But,

Sixthly, Men should keep their hearts, as a fond father keeps his only child. The fond father will still keep his child within doors, he will still have him under his eye, and in his presence, that so no hurt, no harm may befall him day or night. Our eye should be still upon our hearts, or else they will give us the slip, and play the wanton with us. But,

Seventhly, Men should keep their hearts, as lovers keep the love-tokens that are mutually sent one to another. They love to be often a-looking upon them, and a-thinking of them, and a-talking of them; and will be sure to keep the strictest and the strongest guard upon them. So a Christian should still be a-looking upon his heart, and a-thinking upon his heart, and a-speaking of his heart, either of the badness of it, or of the wants of it, and a-keeping of the strictest and strongest guard upon his heart. But,

Eighthly, A man should keep his heart as a man keeps his house, when he is afraid and in danger of being robbed by thieves in the night. Oh how wakeful, and watchful, and active will a man now be! But what is a man's house to his heart? A man's heart is in ten thousand times more danger than his house, and accordingly his guard should be most about his heart. But,

Ninthly, A man should keep his heart, as men keep their gardens that are full of choice, rich, rare, ripe fruits and flowers. Now, what care, cost, and pains men are at to keep such gardens, you well know. And oh that you did but every day more and more experimentally know what it is to spend your greatest care and pains about your hearts, which are Christ's garden, his bed of spices, where all graces flourish! Song of Solomon 4:16.

Tenthly,, and last, A man should keep his heart as spruce men and women do their fine clothes. Oh they won't endure a speck, a spot upon them! It is your wisdom, and oh that you would more and more make it your work, to keep your hearts from all sinful specks and spots! Let not others be more careful to keep their outsides clean, than you are to keep your insides clean; for what are clean clothes to a clean heart? It is better to go to heaven in ragged clothes with a clean heart, than to go to hell in fine clothes with an unclean heart. Doubtless that man that makes it his business to keep his heart as men keep dangerous felons or traitors, or as soldiers keep their garrisons or castles when closely besieged, or as the priests and Levites kept the sanctuary of God, or as a man keeps his natural life, or as a man keeps a rich treasure, or as a fond father keeps an only child, or as lovers keep their love-tokens, or as a man keeps his house when he is in danger to be robbed, or as a man keeps his pleasant garden, or as spruce men and women keep their fine clothes, that man is doubtless a true Nathanael, a man that has a work of God passed in power upon his soul; yea, that man whose sincere desires, and whose gracious purposes, and fixed resolutions, and faithful endeavours, is to guard and watch his heart, according to the particulars we have now hinted, that man, without a peradventure, is a gracious man, and one that has the root of the matter in him, and shall be happy to all eternity. Look, as no man can hear as he would and should, nor pray as he would and should, nor believe as he would and should, nor repent as he would and should, nor walk as he would and should, so no man can keep his heart as he would and should; but if a man makes it his great business and work to keep his heart, to watch his heart, to reform his heart, to better his heart, he is accepted of God, and shall be blessed for ever. It is one of the greatest and clearest evidences of grace for a man to make it his greatest business, work, and concernment in this world to keep his heart always in a

gracious frame, to keep his heart always in a wakeful frame, in a watchful frame, in a tender frame, in a believing frame, in a repenting frame, in an humble frame, in a patient frame, in a serious frame, in a heavenly frame, and in a jealous frame; for the more gracious the heart is, the more suspicious it will be. Satan has a strong party, a numerous party, an old party, a subtle party, in all our hearts, and therefore it highly concerns us to watch our hearts with a holy jealousy. O sirs! God hath never said, Above all keepings, keep your shops; or above all keepings, keep your estates; or above all keepings, keep your flocks; or above all keepings, keep your bags; or above all keepings, keep your friends; or above all keepings, keep your bodies; or above all keepings, keep your names; or above all keepings, keep your conversations; but he hath said, Above all keepings, keep your hearts. Look, as the heart is the fountain of natural life, and if it fail, life fails; and therefore it is strongly secured with ribs about it, it is guarded in a castle of flesh and bones; so is the soul the fountain of spiritual life, and runs invisibly through all the body. Fountains were to be kept pure, by the Roman laws of the twelve tables, and the heart, that is the spring and fountain of all actions, is to be kept pure, by the laws of the great God, 2Co 7:1; 1Th 5:23, &c. Men keep the heart principally from hurt, because every wound there is mortal. Oh that men were as wise for their souls! God's eye is mainly upon the heart. The heart, well guarded and watched, keeps all in security. Alexander was safe while Antipater kept the watch, so all within that little world Man will be safe while the heart is strongly guarded. The heart is the fountain, the root, the store-house, the primum mobile, the great wheel that sets all a-going, and therefore, above all keepings, keep your hearts. It is a foolish thing to watch the outworks, and leave the fort-royal without a guard; so it is a foolish thing to watch the out-works, the eye, the ear, the tongue, the hand, the feet,—though these must all be watched,—and to leave the heart, which is a Christian's fort-royal, without a guard.

Omnia si perdas, animam servare memento.

'If all things else must needs be lost, Yet save thy soul, whate'er it cost.'

He that makes it his business to watch, and weep, and sigh, and groan most over his own heart, he doubtless is in a gracious estate. He that makes it his work, his daily work, his greatest work, his work of works, to keep a continual guard upon his heart, he certainly is in a blessed estate. He that lamentingly cries out, Oh that my soul did but prosper as my body! Oh that my inward man were but in as good a frame as my outward man! Oh that this proud heart were but more humble! Oh that this hard heart were but more softened! Oh that this carnal heart were but more spiritual! Oh that this earthly heart were but more heavenly! Oh that this unbelieving heart were but more believing! Oh that this passionate heart were but more meek! Oh that this slight heart were but more serious! Oh that this blind heart were but more enlightened! Oh that this dull heart were but more quickened! Oh my heart, my heart! when wilt thou be better? Oh my God, my God! when shall my heart be better? Oh bring it into a gracious frame, and for ever keep it in a gracious frame! He that thus lamentingly cries out of his heart, he certainly has an honest heart, and will be happy for ever. O Lord, my memory is weak, and my utterance is bad, and my understanding is dark, and my gifts are low, and my affections are flat, and my temptations are strong, and my corruptions are prevalent, Psal 39:12; but thou, who art the great heart-searcher, thou knowest that I would fain have my heart in a better temper; I had rather have my heart brought into a gracious frame, and kept in a gracious frame, than to have all the riches of the Indies, than to be an emperor, yea, than to be king over all the earth. If it be indeed thus with thee, thou art blessed, and shalt be blessed

for ever: 2Co 8:12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' I know the apostle speaks this in point of alms, but it is applicable to the case in hand, and to a hundred other cases. God measures his people not by their works, but by their wills. If their wills be to be more holy, humble, heavenly, and to have their hearts always in a most gracious frame, then they are accepted of God; for every good man is as good in the eye of God, in the judgment of God, and in the account of God, as he would be. Not long before famous Mr Baynes died, some friends that were with him in his library, which was an excellent one, fell a-commending of it; 'Ay,' saith he, 'there stand my books, but the Lord knows that for many years last past I have studied my heart more than books. Oh no minister to him, no scholar to him, who studies his heart more than his books; nor no Christian to him who studies his heart more than his day-books, or more than his shop books, or that studies his heart more than his counting-house, or that studies his heart more than a good bargain, &c. That man is for heaven, and heaven is for that man, who makes it his greatest business in this world to watch his heart, to guard his heart. The hypocrite looks most to externals, but the sincere Christian looks most to internals. The hypocrite's main watch is about his lips, but a sincere Christian's main watch is about his heart. The hypocrite's main work lies without doors, but the sincere Christian's main work lies within doors. All know, that know anything, that both nature and grace begin at the heart, but art begins at the face. A painter doth not begin a picture at the heart; a picture hath but a face, but an outside. And as nature begins at the heart, but art at the face, so grace begins at the heart, but hypocrisy at the face, at the outside of religion. Every man is that really that he is inwardly: 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God,' Rom 2:28-29. Certainly that man that makes it his great business to watch his heart, and to keep his heart always in a gracious frame, that man is a gracious man. It is true our hearts are like our watches, seldom got to go well; and when they do go well, how hard a work is it to keep them going well! The motions of our watches are not constant; sometimes they go faster, and sometimes they go slower, and often they stand in need of mending. Though in these, and many other respects, our hearts are like our watches, yet if we make it our grand work to keep a constant guard upon our hearts, and our main design in this world to have our hearts brought and kept in a gracious frame, our spiritual estate is good, and we shall be happy for ever, &c. In my other writings there are variety of special evidences, which the Christian reader, if he please, and if need require, may make use of, in order to the further clearing up of his gracious estate, and therefore let these twenty suffice at this time. And thus much for this chapter, &c.

CHAPTER III

Now, in this chapter I shall treat of sound, saving repentance, of repentance unto life; yea, of that evangelical repentance that hath the precious promises of remission of sin and salvation running out unto it. My purpose at this time is not to handle the doctrine of repentance at large, but only to speak so far of it as may speak it out to be evidential of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's spiritual and eternal condition.

Now, before I come to open myself more particularly, give me leave to premise this in the general, viz., that there is a repentance that does accompany salvation: 2Co 7:10, 'For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.'

Jer 4:14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Acts 11:18, 'When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.' Mat 18:3, 'And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Acts 3:19, 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.'

Having premised thus much in the general, give me now leave to say, That there are three parts of true, sound, saving repentance, unto all which forgiveness of sin is promised. And the

1. First, is contrition or grief of heart for sins committed. Now this is called sometimes godly sorrow, 2Co 7:10; and sometimes a contrite spirit, Isa 66:2; and sometimes a broken and contrite heart, Psa 51:17; and sometimes the afflicting of our souls, Lev 16:29; and sometimes the humbling of the heart, 2Ch 7:14, Lam 3:20; and sometimes a mourning, Zec 12:10; and sometimes a weeping, Mark 14:72. All repenting sinners are mourning sinners. David repents, and waters his couch with his tears, Psa 6:6. Hezekiah repents, and humbles himself for the pride of his heart, 2Ch 32:26. Ephraim repents, and Ephraim bemoans himself and smites upon his thigh, and is even confounded, Jer 31:18-19. Mary Magdalene repents, and weeps, and washes Christ's feet with her tears, Luk 7:38. The Corinthians repented, and they were made sorry after a godly manner, 2Co 7:9. Repentance in the Hebrew is called **תשובה**, an irking of the soul; and in Greek, μεταμέλεια, after-grief, and μετάνοια, after-wit; and in the Latin, poenitentia; all which do import, that contrition or sorrow for sin is one part of true repentance. Oh the sighs, the groans, the sobs, the tears, that are to be found among repenting sinners, &c. Luther hit the mark when he said, 'What are all the palaces of the world to a contrite heart; yea, heaven and earth, seeing it is the seat of divine majesty?

2. Secondly, It is very observable, that all mourning persons for their sins, are within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sins: Zec 12:11, 'In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.' Zec 13:1, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness' Jer 31:18, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning of himself,' &c. Jer 31:20, 'I will surely have mercy on him;' or, as the Hebrew has it, I will, having mercy, have mercy on him. As soon as Ephraim's heart is troubled for his sins, God's bowels are troubled for Ephraim; as soon as Ephraim, like a penitent child, falls a-weeping at God's foot, God, like a tender indulgent father, falls a-bemoaning of Ephraim. Ephraim could not refrain from tears, and God could not refrain from opening his bowels of mercy towards him. So Isa 57:15. And how can the contrite heart be indeed revived and cheered without forgiveness of sins, without a pardon in the bosom? Melancthon makes mention of a godly woman, who having upon her deathbed been in much conflict, and afterwards much comforted, brake out into these words: Now, and not till now, did I understand the meaning of these words, 'Thy sins are forgiven.' There is no comfort to that which arises from the sense of forgiveness: Isa 40:1-2, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her iniquities are pardoned.' And why is the mourning soul pronounced the blessed soul: Mat 5:4, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted:' but because the mourning soul is the pardoned soul?

Quest. But what is that sorrow or mourning for sin, that is a part of true repentance? The resolution of this question is very necessary for the preventing of all soul-deceits and mistakes, and for the quieting, settling, and satisfying of souls truly penitent, and therefore I shall give these eight following answers to it.

[1.] First, It is a sorrow or grief that is spiritual, that is, supernatural. No man is born with godly sorrow in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Godly sorrow is a plant of God's own planting; it is a seed of his own sowing; it is a flower of his own setting; it is of a heavenly offspring; it is from God, and God alone. The spirit of mourning is from above; it is from a supernatural power and principle. There is nothing that can turn a heart of stone into flesh, but the Spirit of God, Eze 36:25-26. Godly sorrow is a gift from God: Job 23:16, 'God makes my heart soft.' No hand but a divine hand can make the heart soft and tender under the sight and sense of sin. Nature may easily work a man to mourn, and melt, and weep, under worldly losses, crosses, and miseries, as it did David's men, 1Sa 30:4; but it must be grace, it must be a supernatural principle, that must work the heart to mourn for sin.

[2.] Secondly, Godly sorrow is a sorrow for sin as sin, it is a mourning rather for sin than for smart; it is not so much for loss of goods, lands, wife, child, credit, name, &c., but for that a holy God is offended, a righteous law violated, Christ dishonoured, the Spirit grieved, and the gospel blemished, &c. Peter's sorrow was godly, but Judas his sorrow was worldly; Peter mourns over the evil of sin, but Judas mourns over the evil of punishment. David mourns over his sin, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,' Psa 51:4. And so 2Sa 24:10, 'And David's heart smote him after he had numbered the people; and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, O Lord! take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done foolishly.' David does not cry out, Take away the threatened famine, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant; nor he does not cry out, Take away the enemies of thy servant, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant; nor he does not say, Take away the pestilence from the land, but, Take away the iniquity of thy servant. But now when Pharaoh was under judgments, he never cries to the Lord to take away his sins, his pride, his hardness, his obdurateness, his envy, his malice, his hatred, &c., but he cries out, Take away the judgment, take away the judgment, take away the frogs, take away the lice, take away the caterpillars, &c. But under all these dreadful and amazing judgments that he was under, such a word as this never fell from his lips, Take away my sin, O Lord! take away my sins; thy judgments do terrify me, but my sins will damn me, and therefore whatever becomes of my life, kingdom, and crown, take away my sins and save my soul. David saw sin to be a greater evil than flying before his enemies, or than famine or pestilence was; and therefore he desires rather to be rid of his sins, than to be rid of the punishment that was due to his sin; but Pharaoh saw no such evil in sin, and therefore he cries out, Take away the plague, take away the plague. And Job upon the dunghill cries out, 'I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men!' Job 7:20. Job does not cry out, Oh, I have lost all my substance, I am bereaved of all my children, I am set as naked upon the dunghill as ever I was born! My friends reproach me, my wife tempts me to curse my God, which is ten thousand times worse than to curse myself; Satan persecutes me, and God has not only forsaken me, but is also become a severe enemy to me, &c. Job cries out of his sin, and not of his sufferings. A deep sense of his sins swallows up as it were all sense of his sufferings. And so that great apostle Paul does not cry out, O wretched man that I am! that bonds attend me in every place, and that I have neither house

nor home to go to, and that I am despised, scorned, reproached, and persecuted, and that I am accounted factious, seditious, rebellious, erroneous, and that I am looked upon as the offscouring of the world, &c. Oh no! but he cries out of his sin: 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7:23-24. So the prophet Micah, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned,' Mic 7:9. Though of all burdens the indignation of the Lord be the greatest burden, yet divine indignation is but a light burden in comparison of sin. A gracious soul can better stand under the burden of God's indignation for sin, than it can stand under the burden of sin itself, which hath kindled that indignation, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Godly sorrow is a great sorrow, it is a superlative sorrow, it is a sad and serious sorrow. A sincere mourning is a deep mourning, it springs from serious and deep apprehensions of the great anger and deep displeasure of God, and of the woful nature, demerit, burden, bitterness, vileness, and filthiness of sin, &c. The blessed Scripture seems to make godly sorrow a superlative sorrow, calling it a great mourning, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, and a bitterness, as one is in for his first-born, Zec 12:10-11. And so the church, 'My bowels are troubled within me, mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled,' Lam 1:20. And David watered his couch with his tears, Psa 6:6. And Mary Magdalene wept much, as well as she loved much, Luk 7:1-50. And Peter went out and wept bitterly, Mat 26:15. Clement observes, that all the time that Peter lived after this great fall, he would every night, when he heard the cock crow, fall upon his knees and weep bitterly. Look, as shallow brooks make the greatest noise, so hypocrites and formalists may howl, and roar, and cry, and make more noise than the true penitent; but yet the sorrow of a true penitent is more inward, secret, solid, still, and deep, Hos 7:14. As, you know, the deepest rivers run most silently, and make least noise, so the deepest sorrow makes least noise. The mourning of repenting souls, under the apprehensions of their sins, is like the mourning of doves; but the mourning of wicked men under the apprehension of their sins, is like the bellowing of bulls and roaring of bears, Eze 7:16; Isa 51:20, Isa 59:11.

[4.] Fourthly, A sincere mourning is an extensive mourning, it is an universal mourning. Godly sorrow and grief extends itself, not only to some sins, but to all sins, great and small. Look, as a holy heart hates all sin, so a holy heart mourns over all sin that it sees and knows to be sin. God hates one sin as well as another, and he has forbid one sin as well as another, and he has revealed his wrath from heaven against one sin as well as another, and he is provoked by one sin as well as another, and Christ is crucified by one sin as well as another, and the Spirit is grieved as well by one sin as by another, and the gospel is reproached by one sin as well as another, and the conscience is wounded by one sin as well as another, and Satan is gratified by one sin as well as another, and wicked men's mouths are opened by one sin as well as another, and young comers on in religion are stumbled, grieved, and offended by one sin as well as another, and the soul is endangered by one sin as well as another. An unsound heart may mourn for great sins, that make great wounds in his conscience and credit, and that leave a great blot upon his name, or that waste or rot his body, or destroy his estate, or that expose him to public scorn and shame, &c., but for sins of omission, for wandering thoughts, idle words, deadness, coldness, slowness in religious duties and services, unbelief, secret pride, self-confidence, and a thousand more, such gnats as these he can swallow without any remorse, Pro 5:8-14. But now godly sorrow is of a general extent, it mourns as well for small sins as for great. David's heart smote him, as well for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment, as it did for killing of Uriah with the sword. A gracious soul

weeps over many sins that none can charge upon him but God and his own conscience: Psa 19:12, 'Oh cleanse thou me from secret faults.'

Yea, let me say that godly sorrow and grief extends not only to a man's own sins, but also to the sins of others as well as his own, Eze 9:4-5. And this you may see also in David, Psa 119:53, Psa 119:136, Psa 119:158; and in Jeremiah, Jer 9:1-3; and in Paul, Php 3:18; and in Lot, 2Pe 2:7-8. And if you please to turn to my treatise on holiness, you may see seven special arguments for this their practice, page 139 to page 145, and therefore a touch in this place may suffice.

[5.] Fifthly, Godly sorrow is a lasting sorrow, it is a durable sorrow. As long as a Christian continues sinning, he cannot but continue mourning. David's sins were always before him, Psa 51:3, though his Absalom nor his Bathsheba were not ever before him. Godly sorrow will every day follow sin hard at heels. Look, as a wicked man, in respect of his desire and will to sin, would sin for ever, if he should live for ever; so I may say, if a godly man should live for ever, he would sorrow for ever. After Paul had been converted many years, some think fourteen, you shall find him a-mourning and lamenting over his sins, Rom 7:1-25. An ingenuous child will never cease mourning, till he ceases from offending an indulgent father. Though sin and godly sorrow were never born together, yet whilst a believer lives in this world, they must live together. And indeed holy joy and godly sorrow are no ways inconsistent, Psa 2:11; yea, a godly man's eyes are always fullest of tears, when his heart is fullest of holy joy, &c. A man may go joying and mourning to his grave, yea, to heaven, at the same time. But now the sorrow, the grief of wicked men for sin, it is like a morning cloud, or the early dew, or the crackling of thorns under a pot, or a post that quickly passeth by, or a dream that soon vanisheth, or like a tale that is told, &c., their sorrowful hearts and mournful eyes soon dry up together, as you may see in Esau, Ahab, Pharaoh, and Judas; but the streams of godly sorrow will last and run as long as sin hangs upon us, and dwells in us: 1Co 15:9, 'I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' Psa 25:7, 'Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions.' David prayeth to the Lord, not only to forgive, but also to forget, both the sins of his youth and the sins of his age. David remembered all his faults, both of former and of later times. David was well in years when he defiled himself with Bathsheba; and this he remembers and mourns over, Psa 51:1-19. And it is very observable, that God charged his people for to remember old sins: Deu 9:7, 'Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness.' Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces; witness the very covenant of grace itself: Eze 16:62-63, 'I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done.' Certainly a true penitent can no more satisfy himself with one act of repentance, than he can satisfy himself with one act of faith, or with one act of hope, or with one act of love, or with one act of humility, or with one act of patience, or with one act of self-denial. Godly sorrow is a gospel grace that will live and last as well and as long as other graces; it is a spring that in this life can never be drawn dry.

[6.] Sixthly, Godly sorrow is a divorcing sorrow; it divorces the heart from sin, it breaks that ancient league that has been between the heart and sin. There is a strong firm league between every sinner and his sin, Isa 28:15, Isa 28:18; but when godly sorrow enters, it dissolves that league, it separates between a sinner and his sin, it sets the soul at an everlasting distance from sin. The

union between the root and the branches, the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the father and the child, the husband and the wife, the body and the soul, are all near, very near unions; yet, that between a sinner and his sin seems to be a nearer union, Observable is the story of Phaltiel. You know when David had married Michal, Saul injuriously gave her to another; but when David came to the crown, and sent forth his royal commands that his wife should be brought to him, her husband dares not but obey, brings her on her journey, and then not without great reluctancy of spirit takes his leave of her, 2Sa 3:14-16. But what, was Phaltiel weary of his wife, that he now forsakes her? Oh no, he was enforced, and though she was gone, yet he had many a sad thought about parting with her, and he never leaves looking till he sees her as far as Bahurim, weeping and bemoaning her absence. Just thus stands the heart of every unregenerate man towards his sins, as Phaltiel's heart stood towards his wife. But when the springs of godly sorrow rise in the soul, the league, the friendship, the union that was between the sinner and his sins, comes to be dissolved and broken in pieces, Hos 14:8. All godly sorrow sets the heart against sin. He that divinely mourns over sin, cannot live in a course of sin. When of all bitters God makes sin to be the greatest bitter to the soul, then the soul bids an everlasting farewell to sin; now the soul in good earnest bids adieu to sin for ever, O sirs! this is a most certain maxim, to live and die with, that either a man's sins will make an end of his mourning, or else his mourning will make an end of his sin; for he that holds on sinning, will certainly leave off mourning. No man can make a trade of sin, and yet keep his heart in a mourning frame. But he that holds on mourning for sin, will certainly leave off the trade of sin. Holy grief for sin will sooner or later break off all leagues and friendships with sin. As sin makes a separation between God and a man's soul, so godly sorrow makes a separation between a man's soul and his sin, Isa 59:1-2. All holy mournings over sin will by degrees issue in the wasting and weakening of the strength and power of sin; nothing below the death and destruction of sin will satisfy that soul that truly mourns over sin. But now, though you may find an unsound heart sometimes a-lamenting over his sins, yet you shall never find him a-leaving of his sins. Pharaoh lamented over his sin, crying out, 'I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.' And again, 'Then Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron in haste, and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you,' Exo 9:27, Exo 10:16. But though you find him here lamenting and complaining over his sin, yet you never find him leaving or forsaking of his sin. So Saul could cry out, he had sinned, but yet he still continued in his sin; he acknowledged that he did evil in persecuting of David, and yet he still held on persecuting of him. An unsound heart mourns over sin, and yet he holds on in a course of sin; he sins and mourns, and mourns and sins, and commonly all his mourning for sin does but the more embolden him in a way of sin; but the gracious soul says with Job, 'If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more,' Job 34:32. He laments over sin and leaves it; he confesses it, and forsakes it, and he is as willing to forego it as he is willing that God should forgive it.

[7.] Seventhly, All,—and if you please I shall give you many things in one,—godly sorrow is the fruit and effect of evangelical faith. It flows from faith as the stream from the fountain, the branch from the root, and the effect from the cause: Zec 12:10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.' Look, as all legal sorrow flows from a legal faith, as you may see in Ahab's and the Ninevites, so all evangelical sorrow flows from an evangelical faith: 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn.' All gracious mourning flows from looking, from believing. Nothing breaks the heart of a sinner like a look of faith. All tears of

godly sorrow drop from the eye of faith. Godly sorrow rises and falls, as faith rises and falls. Faith and godly sorrow are like the fountain and the flood, which rise and fall together. The more a man is able by faith to look upon a pierced Christ, the more his heart will mourn over all the dishonours that he has done to Christ. The more deep and wide the wounds are that faith shews me in the heart and sides of Christ, the more my heart will be wounded for sinning against Christ.

Again, godly sorrow is not an enemy, but a friend to holy joy. I have read of a holy man, who lying upon his sick-bed, and being asked which were his joyfullest days that ever he had, cried out, 'Oh give me my mourning days, give me my mourning days again, for they were the joyfullest days that ever I had.' The higher the springs of godly sorrow rise, the higher the tides of holy joy rise. His graces will flourish most, who evangelically mourns most. Grace always thrives best in that garden, that heart, that is watered most with the tears of godly sorrow. He that grieves most for sin, will rejoice most in God; and he that rejoices most in God, will grieve most for sin.

Again, the more a man apprehends of the love of God, and of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and is assured of the love of the Father, and of the love of the Son, the more that person will grieve and mourn that he has offended, provoked, and grieved such a Father, and such a Son. Remember this, as a man's assurance of peace and reconciliation with God rises, so his grief for sin rises. The more clear and certain evidences a man has of the love and favour of God to his soul, the more that man will grieve and mourn for sinning against such a God. There is nothing that thaws and melts the heart, that softens and breaks the heart, like the warm beams of divine love; as you may see in the case of Mary Magdalene, Luk 7:1-50; she loved much, and she wept much, for much was forgiven her. A sight of the free grace and love of Christ towards her, in an act of forgiveness, broke her heart all in pieces. A man cannot stand under the shinings of divine love with a frozen heart, nor yet with dry eyes. The more a man sees of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and enjoys of the love of Christ, the more that man will grieve and mourn for all the dishonours that he has done to Christ. The more an ingenuous child sees, and tastes, and enjoys of his father's love, the more he grieves and mourns that ever he should offend such a father, or provoke such a father, who has been so loving and indulgent towards him. Injuries done to a friend cut deep, and the more near, and dear, and beloved a man's friend is to him, the more a man is afflicted and troubled for any wrongs or injuries that are done to him; and just so it is between God and a gracious soul. The free love and favour of God, and his unspeakable goodness and mercy manifested in Jesus Christ to poor sinners, is the very spring and fountain of all evangelical sorrow. Nothing breaks the heart of a poor sinner like the sight of God's free love in a redeemer. A man cannot seriously look upon the firstness, the freeness, the greatness, the unchangeableness, the everlastingness, and the matchlessness of God's free favour and love in Christ, with a hard heart, or with dry eyes: Eze 36:31, compared with Eze 36:25-26. Oh! who is there that has but one spark of ingenuity, that can read over that heart-breaking scripture with dry eyes? Isa 43:22-24, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices: I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,' see Isa 57:17-19. Now a man would think, after all this horrid abuse put upon God, this would certainly follow; therefore I will plague and punish thee;

therefore my wrath shall smoke against thee; therefore my soul shall abhor thee; therefore I will shut up my loving-kindness in displeasure against thee; therefore I will shew no more mercy towards thee; therefore I will hide my face for ever from thee; therefore I will take vengeance on thee; therefore I will rain hell out of heaven upon thee, &c. Oh! but read and wonder, read and admire, read and stand amazed and astonished, read and refrain from tears if thou canst: Eze 36:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' The prophet's expression in that Zec 12:10 is very observable, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son.' Now it is observable in a father's mourning for an only son, there is nothing but pure love, sincere love, hearty love; but in a son's mourning for his father, there may be, and often is a great deal of self-love, self-respect, because the child may run and read in his father's death, his own loss, his own ruin, his own undoing; but in the father's mourning for an only son, a man may run and read the integrity, purity, and ingenuity of the father's love; and it is only such a love as this as sets the soul a-mourning and a-lamenting over a crucified Christ, The thoughts and fears of wrath, of hell, and of condemnation, works unsound hearts to mourn; but it is the sight of a bleeding, dying Saviour that sets ingenuous, gracious souls a-mourning.

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, Godly sorrow, grief, or mourning, may be known by the inseparable concomitants or companions that attend it and wait on it, 2Co 7:11; and they are these seven:

First, 'What carefulness' or study; the word σπουδ■ notes the serious intension of the mind, and the diligence and dexterity of the soul in shunning and avoiding sin, and arming of the soul against all occasions and temptations thereunto. The great care of the repenting soul is to leave all sin, to shake off all sin, to avoid all sin, and to weaken and subdue, and bring under all sin. Oh! the care, the caution, the circumspection, the vigilancy, the strivings and the strugglings of the repenting soul against temptations and corruptions.

Secondly, Yea, 'what clearing of yourselves,' ■πολογ■α, apology or defence; which is not done either by denying of sin, or by excusing of sin committed, but by confession of sin, and disliking of sin, and bewailing of sin, and by walking quite cross and contrary to the sin confessed, disliked, and bewailed; as Zaccheus did, Luk 19:8; and as the jailor did, Acts 16:13. The true penitent has no ways to clear himself, but by arraigning, judging, and condemning of himself: 1Co 11:31, 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.' When men judge themselves, and condemn themselves, God is prevented, and the devil defeated, as having nothing to say against them but what they have said before. When men acknowledge their sins, and aggravate their sins, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon themselves for their sins, they shall find their acquittance from them fairly drawn in the blood of Christ. Repentance for sin takes off the guilt of sin, and sin bewailed is as if it had never been committed; and this becomes the soul's apology, Eze 18:21-22.

Thirdly, 'Yea, what indignation,' or stomach, ■γαν■κτησις, wrath unto grief. It notes the very rising of the stomach with rage, and a being angry unto fretting, fuming, and sickness. Again, it notes the very height of anger and rage. The true penitent is not so exceeding angry with himself for anything, as he is angry with himself for his sins. Indignation here imports the turning of all the passions of the soul wholly against sin. There are no men in the world so hot and angry against themselves for their sins as penitents are. Witness those that polluted the idols that they had perfumed, Isa 30:22; witness David, Psa 73:22; witness Ephraim, Hos 14:8; and witness Paul,

Rom 7:22-23. There are none that fret, and fume, and chafe at themselves for sin, as penitent souls do; there are none that loathe themselves, that abhor themselves, and that are weary of themselves, upon the account of their sins, like penitent souls. It is not this thing nor that, nor this enemy nor that, nor this party nor that, nor this design nor that; but sin that is the main, the grand object of a penitent's hatred, scorn, wrath, rage, reproach, disgrace, and contempt, &c. He that would be angry and sin not, must be angry at nothing but sin. If some men would but spend more of their anger and indignation against their sins, they would not be so angry as they are with their brethren, that in disputable things differ from them.

Fourthly, 'Yea, what fear' of God's displeasure, and of doing any more so wickedly before the Lord. Penitent souls are of all souls the most trembling souls, the most timorous souls: Pro 28:14, 'Blessed is the man that feareth always.' The penitent Christian has still a jealous eye upon his own heart, words, and ways. He is very apt to suspect a snake under every flower, and to fear a snare in every creature-comfort. The burnt child dreads the fire. He that has been once stung hates a snake; he that has been in danger of drowning, trembles at the thoughts of going by water; and he that has once broke his leg, rides and walks with a fear of diligence and vigilancy all his life after. I have read of the dove, that she is afraid of every feather that hath grown upon a hawk; the very sight of any of the hawk's feathers brings as much terror upon her as if she had seen the hawk herself. Such a native dread is, it seems, implanted in her, that it detests and abhors the very sight of any such feather. In every penitent, God implants such a holy fear, such a filial fear, such a reverential fear, such a fear of diligence and vigilancy, that the penitent Christian's heart rises, detests and abhors, not only gross sins, but the least motions, inclinations, and temptations to sin. They that have paid dear for past guilt, that have known what an aching heart, a wounded conscience, and a bleeding soul means; that have experienced what the frowns of God, the threatenings of God, and the wrath of God means, will certainly beware of sin, watch and war against it, and fear to fall into it.

Fifthly, 'Yea, what vehement desire,' *Επιθυσις*. It signifies such a desire of fervency that can admit of no delay; it notes such a desire as produces diligence, activity, and industry. The true penitent is full of fervent and vehement desires to be rid of his sins. Rachel was never more vehement and fervent in her desires after children, nor David after the water of the well Bethlehem, nor the hunted hart after the water-brooks, nor the betrothed virgin for her marriage-day, nor the apprentice for his freedom, nor the captive for his ransom, nor the soldier for the conquest, nor the sick man for his cure, nor the condemned man for his pardon, than the true penitent is vehement and fervent in his desires to have his lusts subdued, mortified, and destroyed, Rom 7:22-24. Many a day have I sought death with tears, said blessed Cowper, not out of distrust, impatience, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful of falling into it. If you ask the penitent, Why do you hear, pray, read, and apply yourself so seriously, so frequently, so unweariedly, and so constantly to all sin-subduing ministrations? he will tell you, it is out of a vehement and fervent desire that he has to be rid of his sins. If you ask him again, why he is so much in complaining against sin, in mourning over sin, and in warring against sin? &c., he will tell you, out of a vehement and earnest desire that he has to be fully and finally delivered from sin.

Sixthly, 'Yea, what zeal.' Zeal is an extreme heat of all the affections set against sin, and working strongly towards God. David's zeal did eat up his sin as well as himself. And Paul was as zealous in propagating the gospel, as he had been furious in persecuting of it. Many men's zeal is hot and

burning, when scorns and reproaches are cast upon them; but the penitent man's zeal is most hot and burning, when religion is scorned, saints persecuted, truth endangered, and the great and dreadful name of God blasphemed, &c. The zeal of a true penitent will carry him on in a course of godliness, and in a course of mortification, in spite of all the diversions and oppositions that the world, the flesh, and the devil can make. Holy zeal is a fire that will make its way through all things that stands between God and the soul. The true penitent is unchangeably resolved to be rid of his sins, whatever it cost him. Whoever escapes, whoever lives, he is fully determined his lusts shall die for it. Only remember this, though zeal should eat up our sins, yet it must not eat up our wisdom, no more than policy should eat up our zeal.

Seventhly, 'Yea, what revenge.' The true penitent revenges himself upon himself for his sins, not by whips and scourges, as the papists do, but by buffeting the flesh, and bringing it into subjection by fasting and prayer, and by crossing of his lusts, and loading of them with chains, and by drawing the sword of mortification against them, and by withholding from them that fuel that might feed them, and by the use of all other holy exercises, whereby the old man, the body of sin and death, may be subdued to the obedience and discipline of the Spirit of God. Holy revenge will shew itself by contradicting of corrupt self, and by a severe chastising and punishing of all those instruments that have been servants to the flesh; as you may see by the daughters of Israel in dedicating their looking-glasses, by which they had offended, to the service of the sanctuary, Exo 38:8; and as you may see by the Ephesians' burning of their costly and curious books before all men, Acts 19:19; and by Mary Magdalene's wiping of Christ's feet with her hair, wherewith formerly her fond and foolish lovers were enticed and entangled, Luk 7:1-50. And the same spirit you may see working in Zaccheus, Luk 19:8-9; and in the jailor, Acts 16:23-34. And so blessed Cranmer thrust his right hand first into the fire, that being the hand by which he subscribed the popish articles, revengefully crying out, 'This unworthy right hand, this unworthy right hand,' as long as he could speak. The common language of holy revenge is this: Lord, pour out all thy wrath, and all thy fierce anger, and all thy fiery indignation, upon this lust and that lust; Lord, bend thy bow, and shoot all the arrows of thy displeasure, into the very heart of my strong corruptions; Lord, when wilt thou rain hell out of heaven upon this proud heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this worldly heart, this froward heart, this treacherous heart of mine, &c. I have read of Hannibal, that when he saw a pit full of the blood of his enemies, he cried out with much content and delight, Oh beautiful sight! So when a penitent Christian sees his spiritual enemies, his strong corruptions, all in a gore-blood, oh how delightfully and rejoicingly does he cry out, Oh beautiful sight! Oh blessed sight, that ever I have seen! When the children of Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, then they sang a song of praise, Exo 15:1-27. The application is easy. O sirs! let no man deceive his own immortal soul; for it is most certain, that repentance to life hath all these lively companions attending of it. Sound repentance, and the companions of it, are born together, and will live and continue together till the penitent soul changes earth for heaven, grace for glory. And let this much suffice for the first part of true repentance, &c.

2. The second part of true repentance lies in confession of sin, which flows out of a contrite heart. I mean, not a bare, formal, empty confession, such as is common amongst the worst of sinners, as that we are all sinners, and stand in need of a Saviour, God help us! God be merciful unto us! &c.; but of such a confession of sin as ariseth from a true sight and full sense of sin, and from the due apprehensions of a righteous law that is transgressed, and a holy God that is provoked, &c. When

tongue and heart goes together; when the tongue speaks out of the abundance of the heart; when the tongue is the faithful interpreter of the heart, freely, ingenuously and humbly acknowledging iniquity, transgression, and sin; and the penitent judging himself worthy of death, of wrath, of hell, and unworthy of the least mercy and favour from God, &c.

Now such a confession as this is you shall find in repenting sinners; and if you look again, you shall find those persons so confessing, to be under the capacity of the promise of the forgiveness of their sins, &c.

[1.] First, You shall find repenting sinners confessing their sins: Ezr 9:6, 'O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.' Ezr 9:10, 'And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,' &c. Psa 51:3, 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.' Psa 51:4, 'Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' Dan 9:4-5, 'I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, &c.; we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments,' &c. Dan 9:8, 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face, as at this day.' Luk 15:18, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee;' Luk 15:19, 'And am no more worthy to be called thy son,' &c. 1Co 15:9, 'For I am the least of all the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.' 1Ti 1:13, 'Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,' &c. Isa 53:6, 'All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.' I might easily produce a hundred other scriptures to prove that repenting sinners are confessing sinners, but let these suffice, &c.

[2.] Secondly, If you please to cast your eyes upon other scriptures, you shall find these penitent confessing sinners to be expressly under the promises of the forgiveness of sins: 1Jn 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Psa 32:5, 'I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.' Lev 26:40-42, 'If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember.' Jer 3:12-13, 'Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord. Only acknowledge thine iniquity.' And observable is that prayer of Solomon, 1Ki 8:47-50, 'If they shall bethink themselves, and repent, and make supplication to thee, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; then hear thou their prayer, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee.'

Quest. But what are the properties or qualifications of true penitential confession of sin?

Ans. They are these eight that follow.

(1.) First, It is free, it is voluntary not forced, not extorted. Nehemiah, Ezra, Job, David, Daniel, Paul, &c., were free and voluntary in the confession of their sins, as all know that have but read the Scripture. The true penitent confesses his sins with much candour, ingenuity, and freedom of spirit. He is as free in his confession of sin, as he has been free in the commission of sin. His confessions are like water which runs out of a spring with a voluntary freeness, but the confessions of wicked men are like water that is forced out of a still with fire. Their confessions are forced and extracted merely from sense of pain and smart, or from fear of punishments, &c. Pharaoh never confessed his sin till God brought him to the rack, nor Saul till he was in danger of losing his crown and kingdom, nor Balaam till he sees the angel stand with his drawn sword ready to slay him, nor Judas till horror of conscience and the pangs of hell had surprised him, and taken fast hold on him.² Wicked men cast out their sins by confession, as mariners do their wares in a storm, wishing for them again in a calm. The confessions of wicked men are commonly extorted or squeezed out, either by some outward trouble, or by some inward distress; but penitential confession is free and ingenuous, arising from an inward detestation of sin, and from the contrariety of the heart to sin; and, therefore, were there no rod, no rack, no wrath, no hell, the true penitent would very freely and readily confess his sins. When God is most free in bestowing of mercies, then are they most free in confessing their iniquities, Hos 14:1-4. Look, as that is the best wine that flows from the grape with least pressing, and as that is the best honey which drops from the honeycomb without crushing; so those are the best confessions that flow, that drop freely, voluntarily from the soul, &c.

(2.) Secondly, True penitential confession is full as well as free. That confession is not sincere that is not full, Lam 1:18-19. God loves neither halting nor mincing confessions. These undid the pharisee, Luk 18:11. As penitential confessions are not extorted, so they are not straitened. Sin must be confessed in its particular species and parts; all known sins must be confessed fully, plainly, particularly, as you may see by turning to these scriptures, Lev 26:40-42, and Lev 19:21; Jdg 10:10; Psa 51:1-19; 1Sa 12:19; 1Ti 1:13; Acts 26:10-11; Dan 9:5-17; Lev 16:21-22, &c. Some there be that deny their sins, with the harlot: Pro 30:20, 'Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.' And others there be that father their sins on others, as Adam did, Gen 3:12; and as Eve did, Gen 3:13; and as Aaron did, Exo 32:22; and as Saul did, 1Sa 15:22. And many there are that hide their wickedness, that conceal their wickedness, as that proud pharisee did, Luk 18:11-12. That expression of the prophet Hosea, chap. 10:13, 'You have ploughed wickedness,' is rendered by the Septuagint, 'You have concealed wickedness;' and, indeed, there is nothing more common to a wicked heart, than to keep close his sin, than to cover and hide his transgressions. And, certainly, this is that sore disease that our first parents were sick to death of, almost six thousand years ago; and, therefore, it is no wonder if we are all infected with it. Man by nature is a vain-glorious creature, apt to boast and brag of the sins that he is free of, but unwilling to confess the sins that he is guilty of. There are no men so prone to conceal their own wickedness, as those that are most forward to proclaim their own goodness. There are many that are not ashamed to act sin, who yet are ashamed to confess sin; but certainly of all shame, that is the most shameful shame, that leads a man to hide his sins. But now the true penitent, he makes conscience of confessing small sins as well as great sins, secret sins as well as open sins, Psa 90:8, Psa 19:12. David confesses not only his great sins of murder and adultery, but he confesses also his self-revenge intended against Nabal, and of his knife being so near Saul's throat, when he cut off the lap of Saul's garment. A true penitent is

much in confessing and lamenting over that secret pride, that secret fleshliness, that secret worldliness, that secret hypocrisy, that secret vain glory, &c., that is only obvious to God and his own soul. But it is quite otherwise with wicked men; for they confess their grosser sins, but never observe their lesser sins; they confess their open sins, but never lay open their secret sins. Cain confesses the murdering of his brother, but never confesses his secret enmity, that put him upon washing his hands in his brother's blood. Pharaoh confesses his oppression of the children of Israel, but he does not confess the pride of his heart, nor the hardness of his heart. Judas confesses his betraying of innocent blood, but he never confesses his covetousness, that put him upon betraying of the Lord of glory. And others have confessed their apostasy, who have never confessed their hypocrisy that hath led them to apostasy, &c. Well, this is certain, that those little sins, those secret sins, that never break a sinner's sleep, do often break a believer's heart.

(3.) Thirdly, As true penitential confession is full, so it is sincere, it is cordial; it is not a feigned, nor a formal, nor a mere verbal confession, but an affectionate confession. It is a confession that has the mind, the heart, the soul, as well as the lip in it. The penitent man's confession springs from inward impressions of grace upon his soul, he feels what he confesses, and his affections go along with his confessions. The poor publican smote upon his breast and confessed. Look, as the sick man opens his disease to his physician, feelingly, affectionately; and as the client opens his case to his lawyer, feelingly, affectionately; so the penitent opens his case, his heart to God, feelingly, affectionately. Cold, careless, verbal, formal, customary confessions are no small abominations in the eye of God, Jer 12:2. Such men's confessions will be their condemnation at last, their tongues will one day cut their throats. Though confession to men is a work of the voice, yet confession to God must be the voice of the heart. Sometimes the heart alone is sufficient without the voice, as you may see in Hannah, 1Sa 1:13-15; but the voice is never sufficient without the heart, as you may see in that Isa 29:13. Such who make confession of sin to be only a lip labour, such, instead of offering the calves of their lips as the prophet requires, Hos 14:2, do but offer the lips of calves! Heart-confessions, without words, shall be effectual with God, and carry the day in heaven, when all formal, verbal confessions, though they are never so eloquent or excellent, shall be cast as dung in sinners' faces, Isa 1:12-16. Mary Magdalene weeps, and sighs, and sobs, but speaks never a word, Luk 7:38; and yet by her heart-confessions she carries it with Christ, as is evident by his answer to her: Luk 7:48, 'He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Penitent souls confess sins feelingly, but wicked men's confessions make no impression upon them; their confessions run through them as water runs through a pipe, without leaving any impression at all upon the pipe. Wicked men do no more taste nor relish the evil of sin, the poison of sin, the bitterness of sin in any of their confessions, than the pipe does taste or relish the water that runs through it. Such who confess sin formally, or rhetorically, and yet love sin dearly, heartily, shall never get good by their confessions. Certainly such confessions will never reach the heart of God, that do not reach our own hearts; nor such confessions will never affect the heart of God, that do not first affect our own hearts. Such as speak very ill of sin with their tongues, and yet secretly wish well to sin in their hearts, will be found at last of all men the most miserablest. But,

(4.) Fourthly, As penitential confession is sincere and cordial, so it is distinct and not confused. The true penitent has his particular and special bills of indictment, he knows his sins of omission, and his sins of commission; he remembers the sins that he hath most rejoiced and delighted in; he cannot forget the sins that have had most of his eye, his ear, his head, his hand, his heart; the

by-paths in which he has most walked, and the transgressions by which God has been most dishonoured, his conscience most wounded, and his corrupt nature most pleased and gratified, are always before him, Ezr 10:3. An implicit confession is almost as bad as an implicit faith; wicked men commonly confess their sins by wholesale, We are all sinners; but the true penitent confesses his sins by retail, Psa 51:3. Though it cannot be denied but that in some cases a general confession may be penitent, as you see in the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' Luk 18:13; yet it must be granted that a true penitent cannot content nor satisfy himself with a general confession. And therefore David confesses his particular sins of adultery and blood-guiltiness, and Paul particularizeth his sins of blasphemy, and persecution, and injuriousness against the saints, 1Ti 1:13. And more you have of this in that Acts 26:10-11, 'Which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them; and I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.' So Jdg 10:10, 'And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.' 'We have sinned,' there is their general confession; 'we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim,' there is their distinct and particular confession, both of their apostasy and idolatry. And so 1Sa 12:19, 'And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not, for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.' They were discontented with that government that the Lord had set over them, and they would need be governed by a king, after the mode of other nations; and this sin they confess distinctly and particularly before the Lord and Samuel. And so David, in that 1Ch 21:17, 'And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done?' Thus that princely prophet confesses that particular sin that he then lay under the guilt of. And so Zaccheus makes a particular confession; he does as it were point with his finger at that wrong and injustice that he had been guilty of: 'Behold, Lord, half my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' Thus you see that true penitents make a particular confession of their right-eye sins, and of their right-hand sins; and indeed, what is confession of sin but a setting our sins in order before the Lord? And how can this be done but by a distinct and particular enumeration of them? But to prevent mistakes, this must be taken with a grain of salt, this must be understood with this limitation; we are to confess our sins distinctly, particularly, so far as we know them, so far as we are acquainted with them. There are many thousand sins which we commit that we know not to be sins, and there are many thousand sins committed by us that cannot be remembered by us. Now certainly it is impossible for us to recount or confess those sins that we know not, that we remember not; so that our particular confessions can only reach to known sins, so far as we can call them to mind; for indeed our particular acts of sin are innumerable; they are 'more in number than the hairs of our head;' and indeed we are as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, and to recount all the sparing mercies, the pitying mercies, the preventing mercies, the succouring mercies, the supporting mercies, and the delivering mercies of God, as we are able to tell, to number, to recount, the individual particular acts of sin that we are guilty of; yet so far as the knowledge and memory of a penitent Christian reaches, so far his confession reaches. But now, wicked men confess sin in the general, in the lump; as Pharaoh, 'I have sinned;' and their confessions are commonly confused,

and at random. When and where do you find wicked men confessing their sins distinctly or particularly before God or man? This is none of the least of their miseries, that they have not a clear, distinct, particular view of their own corruptions and abominations. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The true penitent does not only distinctly and particularly confess his sins, but he does very highly aggravate his sins, by confessing not only the kinds and acts, so far as he knows and remembers them, but the circumstances of them also, Psa 32:5, Lev 16:21. There are sometimes some circumstances that may somewhat lessen a penitent man's sins. Now these he readily and easily passes over. But then there are other circumstances which do exceedingly heighten and aggravate his sins, and that makes them more heinous and dangerous; and these he carefully and faithfully acknowledges. The penitential confessions recorded in the Old and New Testament are full of exaggeating expressions, as is evident in these instances: Ezra at once heightens and aggravates their sins by this circumstance, that they had been committed against manifold experiments that they had had both of the severity and also the mercy of the Lord, Ezr 9:1-15; and so does Nehemiah also, Neh 9:1-38. The like instance you have in Daniel, Dan 9:5-6, 'We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.' In these words you have seven circumstances that Daniel useth in confessing of his and the people's sins, and all to heighten and to aggravate them. First, 'We have sinned;' secondly, 'We have committed iniquity;' thirdly, 'We have done wickedly;' fourthly, 'We have rebelled against thee;' fifthly, 'We have departed from thy precepts;' sixthly, 'We have not hearkened unto thy servants;' seventhly, 'Nor our princes, nor all the people of the land.' These seven aggravations which Daniel reckons up in his confession, are worthy of our most serious consideration. The same spirit you may find working in Peter: Mark 14:72, 'When he thought thereon he wept;' or nearer the original, 'When he cast all these things one upon another, he wept.' Ah wretch! that ever I was born, that ever I should deny the Lord that bought me; that ever I should deny him who hath not only externally, but also internally, called me; that ever I should deny him that made me an apostle, that fed me at his table, that beautified me with his grace, and that in the mount shewed me some glimpses of his glory; that ever I should deny him who has brought me out of a state of death and wrath, into a state of life and love; that ever I should deny him that has been the best, the wisest, the holiest, the tenderest, the faithfulest, and the noblest master that ever man served. Ah wretch that I am! he forewarned me of this sin beforehand, that I might be not only cautioned but armed against it, and yet I denied him. I promised him beforehand, that I would never deny him, that I would never forsake him, that I would never turn my back upon him, and yet like a base coward, I have denied the Captain of my salvation; yea, this very night, and no longer ago, did I say again and again, that I would not deny him, and yet now, even now, I have most shamefully denied him; yea, I told him, that though all others should deny him, yet would not I deny him, and yet in all the world there is not such another to be found, that has so sadly, so desperately denied him, as I have denied him, and that before a silly maid; nay, more beast that I am! to my denying of him, I have added a most incredible lie, saying, I know not the man, when there was not a man in all the world that I was so well acquainted with as I was with Christ, feeding constantly at his table, and drinking constantly of his cup, and living constantly upon his purse, and waiting constantly upon his person, and being a constant eye-witness of all the famous miracles that were wrought by him; nay, yet more monster that I am, I did not only lie,

but I also bound that lie with a hideous oath; I did not only say that I knew not the man, but I also swore that I knew not the man; nay, yet more than all this, I did not only basely deny him, I did not only tell an incredible lie against my own light and conscience, I did not only bind a fearful lie with a hideous oath, but I also fell a-cursing and damning of myself:—for so much the Greek word ἀναθεματίζειν imports;—I wished that the curse, the wrath, or vengeance of God might fall upon me if I knew the man, I wished myself separated from the presence and glory of God if I knew the man; and woe and alas to me! all this I did when my Lord and Master was near me, yea, when he was upon his trial; yea, and yet more, when all the world had forsaken him; yea, and yet more, when I had the greatest and loudest call that ever I had to have stood by him, and to have given my testimony for him. And thus Peter, casting up all these circumstances and aggravations together, and meditating seriously on them, ‘he went out and wept bitterly.’ Another famous instance of this you have in Paul, Acts 26:10-11. In these two verses the apostle lays down no less than eight aggravations of his sins, and all to greaten and heighten them, that his soul might be the more ashamed and humbled in him, &c.

First, That they were not the worst, but the best of men, viz., saints; that they were not sinners but saints; that they were not drunkards, swearers, adulterers, murderers, oppressors, Sabbath-breakers, but saints; saints by calling, saints by their high and holy calling, saints by profession, saints by a gospel-conversation. ‘The saints have I cast into prison.’

Secondly, To cast a man into prison for theft, for murder, for perjury, is no iniquity. Ay, but says he, many have I cast into prison for ‘professing the name of Jesus of Nazareth.’ Oh! it is dreadful to persecute men merely for professing of Christ! and yet this I did. Though their profession and practice went together; though they lived as they professed; though I had nothing against them, but in the matters of their God, yet upon that very single account I did persecute them.

Thirdly, If it had been been but one, or two, or three, or five, or ten saints that I had persecuted, the matter had not been much. Oh! but they were a great number; ‘many of the saints did I cast into prison.’ I have been a cruel ravening wolf, that have sucked the blood, not of a few, but of many of the precious lambs of Christ; I have neither spared nor pitied any sex, but have broken into every house, haling and dragging both men and women to prison. Acts 8:3, ‘As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.’

Fourthly, Though he had cast them into prison, yet if he had given them but some liberty in a prison, as Joseph had, and as others have had, and as himself once had when he begot Onesimus in his bonds, Phm 1:10, and when Onesiphorus oft refreshed him, and was not ashamed of his chain, 2Ti 1:16, &c., or as the primitive Christians had, the matter had not been so great. Oh! but I kept them close prisoners; ‘Many of the saints did I shut up in prison.’ I shut them up from friends, from relations, and from all comfortable accommodations; and thus he further aggravates his sin, Acts 9:1-2.

Fifthly, If he had rested there, if he had proceeded no further, the matter had not been so bad; Oh! ‘but I gave my voice against them to put them to death.’ My heart and my hand was not only against them, but my tongue also. If I could not kill them with my hand, I was ready and willing to kill them with my tongue; if the casting voice fell upon me, I would be sure to give it against them; I never wanted a word to do them mischief. If they wanted a word, instead of a knife, to cut their throats, I would be sure to lend them one.

Sixthly, He rises yet higher, for he does not only severely punish their bodies, but he does what he can to damn their souls; I compelled them to blaspheme, like that Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then stabbed him, and so at once murdered both body and soul. As there is no love to soul love, so there is no cruelty to soul cruelty; and as there is no mischief to soul mischief, so there is no murder to soul murder; and yet in this murder had Paul a hand. It is sad to compel a man to bear a burden beyond his strength, to lie in chains, to forsake his own country, &c., but it is infinitely more sad to compel a man to sin, to the least sin; but saddest of all to compel a man to blaspheme, 'And yet this I did,' says Paul, &c.

Seventhly, He yet further aggravates his sin by his madness, by his exceeding madness against the saints, in those words: 'and I was exceeding mad against them.' He was mad with rage and wrath, he was exceedingly mad with passion and fury against the dear saints of God. Madmen think madly, and madmen speak madly, and madmen act madly against those they are mad with; and so did he against the saints. The Alcoran saith, that God created the angels of light, and the devils of flame. Certainly, as God's children are children of the light, so Satan's children are furious children, wrathful children, children of the flame, children of madness; and such a one was Paul, &c.

Eighthly, and lastly, 'I did persecute them to strange cities;' them I did not kill I did scatter; I forced them to leave both house and home; them whom God had joined together I put asunder: I made the husband run one way, and the wife and children another way, and all of them glad to hide their heads in a corner. And thus you see, that true penitents, in the confession of their sins, do clothe their sins with the highest aggravations imaginable. A penitent in his confession of sin cries out, Oh the sparing mercies, the preventing mercies, the succouring mercies, the supporting mercies, the renewed mercies, the delivering mercies that I have with a high hand sinned against! Oh that clear light! oh that free love! oh that gospel grace! oh those bowels of mercy that I have sinned against! Oh the fatherly corrections, the dreadful warnings, the high resolutions, the serious protestations, the frequent vows and promises that I have desperately sinned against! Oh the checks of conscience, the rebukes of conscience, the lashes of conscience, the wounds of conscience, and the frequent motions of the Spirit, and strivings of the Spirit, that I have sinned against! &c. But now wicked men confess their sins slightly, carelessly, triflingly. They are careful and skilful to hide their sins, to cloak their sins, and to extenuate and lessen their sins; and with the unjust steward, for an hundred to set down fifty, Luk 16:6. All wicked men do commonly flatter themselves, that either their sins are not sins, when indeed they are, or that they are not great and grievous sins, when indeed they are, or that they are not so great and grievous as other men's sins are, when indeed they are more grievous and heinous than other men's sins are; so far are they from aggravating of their sins. The truth is, wicked men are so far from aggravating of their sins, that they are still extenuating of them, and that by fathering of them, sometimes upon their constitutions, sometimes upon bad company, sometimes upon their callings, sometimes upon Satan, and sometimes upon chance, as they call it, &c. But no more of this; enough is as good as a feast.

(6.) Sixthly, The true penitent confesses his sins humbly, sorrowfully. In his confessions he appears before the Lord with ropes about his neck, as Benhadad's servants, and with tears in his eyes. His confessions savour of contrition of heart, and not of ostentation of spirit. Contrition of heart, and confusion of face, is the common result of a penitential confession, Lev 23:27-28. David

waters his couch with his tears, Psa 6:6; and he mingles his meat with his tears, Psa 42:3; and Ezra and Daniel confess their sins with wet eyes and blushing cheeks, Ezr 9:1-15, Dan 9:1-27. Confession without contrition neither pleaseth God nor profiteth man. Confession is the language of the tongue, contrition is the language of the heart, and God looks for both. The publican does not only confess his sins, but he smites also upon his breast, as a man full of grief and sorrow, Luk 18:13. Lying in the dust, and rending of garments, and putting on sackcloth and ashes, were of old required of those that confessed their iniquities. The spirit of repentance is a spirit of mourning. Penitential confessions are commonly attended with grief in the heart, and with shame in the face: Psa 38:18, 'For I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin. He tells you not only that he will declare his iniquity, but he tells you also, that he will be sorry for his sin. The same spirit you may find working in Jacob, Hos 12:4; yea, he had 'power over the angel and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him.' The people of God, in the day of their confession, do not only say, We have sinned, but they also draw water and pour it out before the Lord in token of contrition, 1Sa 7:6. Every sin is as a sword in a penitent man's bosom, and therefore whilst confessions are in his mouth, you shall mostly find either tears in his eyes or sorrow in his heart. And indeed, true confession of sin is many times rather a voice of mourning than a voice of words. Sometimes a penitent man's eyes will in some sort tell what his tongue can in no sort utter. Many times the penitent is better at weeping than he is at speaking: Psa 39:12, 'Hold not thy peace at my tears.' Tears hath a voice as well as blood hath, and are very prevalent orators with God: Psa 6:8, 'The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.' Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors, and they never return from the throne of grace without an answer of grace. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which though they say nothing, yet they obtain pardon; they prevail for mercy, and they carry the day with God, as you may see in that great and clear instance of Peter. He said nothing, he confessed nothing that we read of, but 'went out and wept bitterly,' and obtained mercy. That prescription that God gave to the leper in the law is worthy of your most serious consideration; it is in that Lev 13:45, 'And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean.' In these words the leper stands charged with four things: (1.) to go in rent or torn garments, to note that there must be brokenness and sorrow of heart joined with confession of sin; (2.) to go bareheaded, and that partly that men might not mistake him, but mainly to shew his humility under his present misery; (3.) to put a covering upon his upper lip, some read it, upon his mouchaches. The Jews in their mournings used this ceremony among the rest, of covering their chin, mouth, mouchaches, all under the nose. Now, the use of this ceremony in lepers, was partly to preserve others from being infected by his loathsome breath, and partly to shew that God takes no pleasure nor delight in the breathings, the prayers of spiritual lepers, of wicked men,—God loves not to hear good words drop from an ill mouth,—and partly to note that shame that must be mingled with his sorrow. (4.) Twice to proclaim his own uncleanness, 'Unclean, unclean.' And thus you see that there was to be a close connection between the leper's confession and his contrition; and thus it is with the true penitent; he does not only cry out, Unclean, unclean, but he also rents and tears his garments, that is, he joins contrition to his confession. But to prevent mistakes, and that I may not shoot an arrow, instead of giving a cordial, to the weak and weary soul, let me only give you this short hint, viz., that when the true penitent cannot pour out his soul in heart-melting confessions before the Lord, yet then he can mourn over his own hardness of heart. When he is at worst he can grieve that he cannot grieve, and mourn that he cannot mourn, and melt that he cannot melt,

and break that he cannot break; and he can bless God for every rod, and every stroke, and every word, and every work, and every ordinance, and every frown, and every reproof, and every cross, and every comfort that has the least tendency to the melting and mollifying of his soul. The true penitent always sets a very high price and value upon a broken heart, though he has not the happiness always to have his heart broken. I know that sometimes the penitent soul is so shut up, that if he might have all the world he cannot mourn; he can only sit down and sigh, and groan; nay, if all the joys and delights of heaven were to be bought for one single tear, he cannot shed it; and yet all this time he can grieve that he cannot grieve for sin, and he can be sorry that he cannot be sorry for sin; and without all peradventure this is in a measure true godly gospel sorrow for sin, &c. But now wicked men confess their sins, but they never grieve for their sins. They confess their sins, but they are not ashamed of their sins; they confess their sins, but they cannot blush for their sins. Though men of good names, and of good natures, would be ashamed to be found doing of base things, things that are below them, that are not worthy of them, yet the generality of sinners are so bold and base, so ignorant, arrogant, and impudent, so frontless² and graceless, &c., that they are no ways ashamed, no, not of those very sins that has put Christ to an open shame, yea, that has put the sun and moon to a blush. Most sinners in these days have brows of brass, and whores' foreheads, that cannot blush. They are so far from being ashamed of their sins, that they think it a shame and disgrace not to sin, not to swear, and whore, and curse, and be drunk, and profane Sabbaths, and despise ordinances; yea, there are many that are so far from being ashamed of their abominations, that they even glory in them, like those in that Php 3:19. They shew their sins as Sodom, they make both a sport of acting, and a jest of confessing their sins. Thus Austin confesseth that it was sometimes with himself before the Lord wrought upon him; I was stricken with such blindness, as that I thought it a shame unto me to be less vile and wicked than my companions whom I heard boast of their lewdness, and glory so much the more, by how much they were the more filthy; therefore, saith he, lest I should be of no account, I was the more vicious; and when I could not otherwise match others, I would feign that I had done those things which I never did, lest I should seem so much the more abject, by how much I was the more innocent; and so much the more vile, by how much I was the more chaste. But for a close remember this, the true penitent knows, that the more God has been displeased with the blackness of sin, the better he will be pleased with the blushing of the sinner; and therefore he cannot but blush when either he looks upon sin within him, or God above him. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Penitential confession, it is believing and fiducial; it is mixed with some faith, though not always with a strong faith, Hos 14:2. It is not like the confession of a malefactor to the judge, but like the confession of a child to his father, or like the confession of a sick man to his physician. As a penitent man has one eye of sorrow upon his sin, so he has another eye of hope upon pardoning grace. Thus David, though he had sinned greatly, yet he hangs upon free mercy, and begs his pardon believingly, Psa 51:1-19. Thus Daniel, 'To the Lord our God belongs mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,' Dan 9:9. Thus Shechaniah, Ezr 10:2, 'And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.' If it were not for hope, the heart would break. There was hope among them that Israel would repent, and there was hope among them that God would have mercy upon their repentance. And the same spirit was working in the prodigal: 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee,' Luk

18:18. Though he was a prodigal, yet he would go to God as to a father, who knew how to pity and forgive the mourning and repenting child. When confessions of sin are mingled with hopes of mercy, and the soul draws near to God as a father, then the heart breaks most and melts and mourns most. That confession of sin that is not mixed with some hope of pardon, and with some faith in the mercy of God, is not penitential, but desperate. Cain in some sort confesses, but then he flies into the land of Nod, and there he falls a-building and planting, partly in contempt of the dreadful doom God had passed upon him, and partly to drown the noise of his conscience, and despairing of ever obtaining pardon in this world, or enjoying a house not made with hands in another world, Gen 4:16, 2Co 5:1-2. Judas likewise confesses his most heinous sins, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood,' Mat 27:3-4; but having no hope of pardon, no faith in that innocent blood he had shed, he goes out and hangs himself. Judas had no faith to mingle with his confession; he confesses despairingly, not believingly, and so goes forth and strangles himself. Since Adam fell in paradise, there has not been one wicked man in the world, continuing in that state, that has ever mixed faith with his sorrows, believing with his confessing. It is only the penitent man that confesseth sin believingly, and that is pardoned graciously. The confessing penitent reasons thus with God: Lord, though I am a sinful creature, yet thou art a merciful God; though I am unworthy of mercy, yet thou forgivest sins freely; though my sins reach as high as heaven, yet thy mercies reach above the heavens; I am here ready and willing to accuse and condemn myself, and therefore be thou as ready and as willing to absolve me, and forgive me. O Lord! though my sins are very many, yet thy mercies are exceeding more; though I have multiplied my sins, yet thou canst multiply thy pardons; though I am a sinner, a very great sinner, yet there is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared and loved, served and trusted; and therefore in the face of all my sins, provocations, and unworthiness, I will look up for mercy, and wait for mercy. But,

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, True penitential confession is joined with reformation. That confession of sin that carries forgiveness of sin with it, is attended with serious desires, and earnest endeavours to reformation, Psa 51:10; therefore forsaking of sin is annexed to confession of sin: Pro 28:13, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' Confession of sin must be joined with confusion of sin, or all is lost. God will never cross the book, he will never draw the red lines of Christ's blood over the black lines of our transgressions, except confessing and forsaking go hand in hand. He that does not forsake his sin, as well as confess it, forsakes the benefit of his confession. And indeed, there is no real confession of sin, where there is no real forsaking of sin. It is not enough for us to confess the sins we have committed, but we must peremptorily resolve against the committing again the sins we have confessed. We must desire as freely to forego our sins, as we do desire God to forgive us our sins. Confession of sin is a spiritual vomit. Now you know, a man that is burdened in his stomach, is heartily willing to be rid of that load on his stomach that doth oppress nature; and so a man that is real in his confession of sin, is as heartily willing to be rid of his sin, that lies as a load upon his conscience, as any sick man can be heartily willing to be rid of that load that lies upon his stomach. The penitential confessor doth as heartily desire to be delivered from the power of his sins, as he does desire to be delivered from the sting and punishment of his sins. This is observable in the confession of good Shechaniah: Ezr 10:2-3, 'We have trespassed against our God, and taken strange wives of the people of the land; now therefore let us make a covenant with Our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my

lord, and those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.' And this was the former practice of the children of Israel, who joined reformation with their confession, as you may see in that Jdg 10:15, 'We have sinned;' Jdg 10:16, 'And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.' That Job 34:31-32, is observable, 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' And the same spirit you may find working in those that were once given up to sorcery and witchcraft: Acts 19:18, 'And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.' Ver. 19, 'Many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men.' Penitential confession leaves a holy awe and dread on the soul, to take heed of committing sins confessed. Though a godly man may, in an hour of temptation, or in a day of desertion, or in a season of God's withholding the gracious influences of heaven from falling upon his soul, commit a sin which he has seriously confessed and sadly bewailed, yet he retains in his course and practice such a holy fear and awe upon his heart, as in some measure proves armour of proof against future commissions of sin. But now wicked men are very ready, bold, and venturous to commit the same sins they have confessed, as you may see in Saul: one while you shall have him confessing his sinful injuries against David with tears; and soon after you shall find him pursuing of him in the wilderness of Ziph with three thousand chosen men at his heels. The same evil spirit was predominant in Pharaoh; one day you shall have him confessing his sin, and promising to let Israel go, and the next day you shall find his heart hardened, and he peremptorily resolved that Israel shall not go. And so the harlot made the confession of her sin to be but a provocation to more sin, Pro 7:14. The wicked sometimes confess their sins, but they never forsake their sins; after confession they commonly return with the dog to the vomit, as Fulgentius hath worthily observed. 'Many,' saith he, 'being pricked in conscience, confess that they have done ill, and yet put no end to their ill deeds; they humbly accuse themselves in God's sight of the sins which oppress them, and yet with a perverse heart rebelliously heap up those sins whereof they accuse themselves. The very pardon which they beg with mournful sighs, they impede with their wicked actions; they ask help of the physician, and still minister matter to the disease, thus in vain endeavouring to appease him with penitent words, whom they go on to provoke by an impenitent course.' Well, remember this, real confession of sin is always attended with real endeavours of turning from sin. Look, as the patient lays open his diseases to the physician for this very purpose that he may be cured and healed, so the penitent soul confesses his sins to the physician of souls on purpose to be cured and healed. The daily language of the penitent soul is this, Lord, when wilt thou heal the maladies of my soul? When wilt thou heal my unbelief, and heal my pride, and heal my vain-glory, and heal my hypocrisy, and heal my impurity, and heal my hard-heartedness, and heal my carnalness, and heal my worldliness, and heal my selfishness? &c. Lord! I do as earnestly beg grace to heal my soul, as I do mercy to pardon my soul. And let thus much suffice for the second part of true evangelical repentance.

3. The third part of true repentance lies in turning from all sin to God. That great and precious promise of forgiveness of sin is made over to repenting and turning from sin. All who truly repent of their sins, and turn from their sins, shall receive the forgiveness of their sins. Pardon of sin is for that man, and that man is for pardon of sin, who truly repents and returns from his sin. Four things speak out this, &c.

[1.] First, Scripture exhortations to repent, that so our sins may be forgiven: Eze 18:30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Acts 2:38, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins.' Acts 2:19, 'Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,' &c.

[2.] Secondly, Express promises that our sins shall be forgiven upon our repentance: 2Ch 7:14, 'If my people shall turn from their evil way, then will I forgive their sin.' Pro 28:13, 'Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.' Eze 18:21, 'If the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die;' Eze 18:22, 'All his transgressions which he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him,'

[3.] Thirdly, A most certain assurance of the forgiveness of sins, upon repentance, though they have been never so great and heinous: Isa 1:16-18, 'Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

[4.] Fourthly, Express records and instances of forgiveness unto such as have repented and turned from their sins: 2Sa 12:13, 'And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord; and Nathan said to David, The Lord hath also put away thy sin.' Jer 31:18-20, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself; turn thou me, and I shall be turned,' &c. 'Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him,' saith the Lord.' Luk 7:38, 'And she stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head; and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment.' Luk 7:47, 'Wherefore, I say, her sins, which were many, are forgiven.' Luk 15:18-20, 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. And he arose, and came to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell upon his neck, and kissed him.'

Quest. But what are the properties or qualifications of that right turning from sin, which brings poor sinners within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sins? Now, to this great question I shall give these four following answers:

Ans. 1. First, That turning from sin which brings a man within the compass of the promise of forgiveness of sin, is a cordial turning from sin: Joe 2:12, 'Turn ye, even to me, with all your heart.' 2Ch 6:38-39, 'If they return to thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and forgive their sins.' Deu 30:10, 'If thou turn unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,' &c. Jer 3:10, 'And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.' Jer 24:7, 'And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.' Wicked men are serious and cordial in their sinning, and they must be as serious and cordial in their returning, or they are lost and undone for ever. The true penitent turns from sin with his heart, with all his heart, and with all his soul. He is turned in good earnest from his sins, whose heart is turned from

his sins. If the heart turns not, all is naught, all is stark naught. He that turns from sin, but not with his heart, turns but feignedly, partially, hypocritically, deceitfully. God is a jealous God, and he will never endure co-rivals or co-partners in the throne, the heart of man; a holy God will never divide with an unholy devil. The true God is a righteous God, and he will never share his glory with another. The true God must be served truly, heartily; he loves neither halting nor halving. Such as divide the rooms of their souls betwixt God and sin, God and Satan, God and the world, that swear by God and Malcham, that sometimes pray devoutly, and at other times curse most hideously, that halt betwixt God and Baal, are mere heteroclitics in religion, and such whom God abhors. When a man's heart gives a bill of divorce to his sins, when his heart breaks the league with sin, when his heart casts it off, and casts it out as an abominable thing, then the heart is turned from sin really, effectually, &c. If, notwithstanding all the professions that a man makes against his sins, his heart still loves them, and delights in them, and he will still retain them, and welcome them, and cleave to them, and make provision for them, &c., his repentance is feigned and not real, &c. But, The second answer.

Ans. 2. Secondly, A true penitential turning is an universal turning, a turning not from some sins, but from all sins: Eze 18:30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions.' Eze 18:31, 'Cast away from you all your transgressions.' 2Co 7:1, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit.' Psa 119:101, 'I have refrained my feet from every evil way.' Psa 119:128, 'I hate every false way.' Eze 14:14, 'Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.' Eze 18:28, 'Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' True repentance is a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. He never truly repented of any sin, whose heart is not turned against every sin. The true penitent casts off all the rags of old Adam; he throws down every stone of the old building; he will not leave a horn nor a hoof behind. That which Nehemiah speaks of himself in that Neh 13:7-8, is very observable to our purpose. 'And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore' (but he rests not there; but goes further); 'therefore I cast forth all the household-stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.' What should Tobiah do with a chamber? therefore he not only outs Tobiah, but out goes all his stuff too. Thus the true penitent, when he considers all the evil that sin has done, how it has taken up not only one chamber, but every chamber in the soul, and how it has for many years quite shut out God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and everything that is good; he is grieved sore, and so falls upon the outing of every lust; being highly resolved that neither Satan nor any of his retinue shall ever find the least entertainment in his soul any more. Such as are resolved against turning from any sin, are horribly profane; such as turn from some sins, but close with others, are hideous hypocrites; such as turn from one sin to another, or change their sins as men do their fashions, are most sadly blinded, and desperately deluded by Satan; but such as turn not from some sins, but from every sin, are sincerely penitent. And certainly there are very great reasons why the true penitent does turn, and must turn from sin universally. As,

[1.] First, It is to no purpose for a man to turn from some sins, if he does not turn from all his sins: Jas 1:26, 'If any man seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain.' This at first sight may seem to be a hard saying, that for one fault, for

one fault in the tongue, all a man's religion should be counted vain; and yet this you see the Holy Ghost does peremptorily conclude. Let a man make never so glorious a profession of religion, yet if he gives himself liberty to live in the practice of any known lust, yea, though it be but a sin of the tongue, his religion is in vain, and that one lust will separate him from God for ever. If a wife be never so officious² to her husband in many things, and though she gives him content several ways, yet if she entertains any other lover into his bed besides himself, it will alienate his affections from her, and for ever separate him from her. The application is easy. To turn from one sin to another, is but to be tossed from one hand of the devil to another; it is but, with Benhadad, to recover of one disease and die of another, it is but to take pains to go to hell. If a ship spring three leaks, and only two be stopped, the third will sink the ship; or if a man have two grievous wounds in his body, and take order only to cure one, that which is neglected will certainly kill him. It is so here; if a man that has divers lusts fighting against the life of his precious soul, shall only mortify and slay some of them, the rest will certainly destroy him, and all his pains in subduing some of them will be lost. I have read of a devout man, who had amongst many other virtues the gift of healing, unto whom divers made resort for cure; among the rest, one Chromatius being sick, sent for him. Being come, he told him of his sickness, and desired that he might have the benefit of cure, as others had before him. I cannot do it, said the devout person, till thou hast beaten all the idols and images in thy house to pieces. Oh that shall be done, said Chromatius; here take my keys, and where you find any images let them be defaced, which was done accordingly. To prayer went the holy man, but no cure was wrought. Oh, saith Chromatius, I am as sick as ever! Oh I am very weak and sick! It cannot be otherwise, replied the holy man, nor can I help it; for certainly there is one idol more in your house undiscovered, and that must be defaced too. True, says Chromatius, there is so indeed; there is one all of beaten gold, it cost two hundred pounds, I would fain have saved it; but here take my keys again, you shall find it locked up fast in my chest, take it and break it in pieces; which done, the holy man prayed, and Chromatius was healed. The moral of this story is this: we are all spiritually sick, full of wounds and putrefied sores; Christ our spiritual physician tells us, that if we will be cured, we must break off our sins by repentance. Now this we are willing to do in part, but not in whole; we would fain keep one Delilah, one darling beloved sin, but it must not be; there must not be one sin unrepented of; we must repent as well for our Achans as our Absaloms, our Rimmons as our Mammons, our Davids as our Goliaths, our covert as well as our open sins, our loved as well as our loathed lusts, our heart abominations as well as our gross transgressions, our babe iniquities as well as our giant-like provocations. Our repentance must be universal, or it will be to no purpose.

Herod turned from many evils, but would not turn from his Herodias, and that was his ruin, Mat 6:18-20. Judas his life was as fair and as free from spots and blots as the lives of any of the apostles; no scandalous sin was to be found upon him; only that golden devil covetousness was his sin, and his everlasting ruin. His apostleship, preaching, working of miracles, hearing of Christ, and conversing with him, &c., was to no purpose, because of that serpent he kept in his bosom, which at last stung him to death. If a man lives in the practice of any known sin, the union between sin and his soul is not dissolved; and if that union be not dissolved, Christ and his soul were never united, and therefore such a person can never be saved. Saul spared Agag and the witch of Endor, whom he should have destroyed, and so lost his crown, his kingdom, and his soul, which was saddest of all, Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard, and yet that one bastard destroyed all the rest, Jdg 8:13. The Jewish rabbins report, that the same night that Israel

departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down; so, when a man truly repents, all the idols that were set up in his soul are cast down. But,

[2.] Secondly, God has so connexed the duties of his law one to another, that if there be not a conscientious care to walk according to all that the law requires, a man becomes a transgressor of the whole law, according to Jas 2:10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.' The bond of all is broken, the authority of all is slighted, and that evil disposition, that sinful frame of heart, that works a man to venture upon the breach of one command, would make him venture upon the breach of any command, were it not for some infirmity of nature, or because his purse will not hold out to maintain it; or for shame, or loss, or because of the eye of friends, or the sword of the magistrate, or for some sinister respects; and might the breach of any other of the commands of God serve his turn, and advance his ends, he stands as strongly pressed in spirit to transgress them all, as to transgress any one of them. He that gives himself liberty to live in the breach of any one command of God, is qualified with a disposition of heart to break them all. Every single sin contains virtually all sin in it. He that allows himself a liberty to live in the breach of any one particular law of God, he casts contempt and scorn upon the authority that made the whole law, and upon this account breaks it all. And the apostle gives the reason of it in ver. 11, 'For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Not that he is guilty of all distributively, but collectively; for the law is copulative; there is a chain of duties, and these are all so linked one to another, that you cannot break one link of the chain, but you break the whole chain. All the precepts of the law are, as it were, a string of pearls strung by the authority of God. Now break this string in any place, and all the pearls fall to the ground. No man can live in the breach of any known command of God, but he wrongs every command of God: and this at last he shall find to his cost, without sound repentance on his side, and pardoning grace on God's. But,

[3.] Thirdly, One sin never goes alone. Cain's anger is seconded with murder; Ahab's covetousness is attended with bloody cruelty; and Jeroboam's rebellion with idolatry; and Judas his thievery with treason. I might give instances of this in Adam and Eve, and in Lot, Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Solomon, and Peter, &c., but a touch on this string is enough. One sin commonly disposes the heart to another sin. A small sin many times draws the heart to a greater, and one great sin draws the heart to another great sin, and that to a greater, till at last the soul comes to be drowned in all excess. Augustine relates the story of Manicheus, who being tormented with flies, was of opinion that the devil made them and not God. Why then, said one that stood by, if the devil made flies, then the devil made worms, and not God, for they are living creatures as well as flies. True, said he, the devil did make worms. But said the other, if the devil did make worms, then he did make birds, beasts, and man. He granted all. And thus, saith that old father, by denying God in the fly, he came to deny God in man, and so consequently the whole creation. And thus yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the commission of greater, yea, often to the greatest of all. I have both heard and read a story of a young man, who being often tempted by the devil and his own wicked heart, to commit three sins, viz., to kill his father, to lie with his mother, and to be drunk; the two former his heart would not yield to, as being things abhorrent to the light and law of nature, and therefore to free himself from the temptation, he yielded to the last

and least; but when he was drunk, he killed his father, and ravished his mother. Thus these two abominable sins, murder and incest, were ushered in by one that was not of so deep a dye.² There is something in sin, like the radical virtue that is in the seed of herbs and plants. The seed is but a small inconsiderable thing in itself, yet let it be but cast into the ground, and there rest quietly a time, and it will take root, and grow up to a great stock, and bring forth many flourishing branches; like the grain of mustard-seed, Mat 13:31-32, which though it be the least of seeds, yet being cast into the ground, grows up to be the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Satan will be sure to nest himself, to lodge himself in the least sins, as birds nest and lodge themselves in the smallest branches of a tree, and there he will hatch all manner of wickedness. A sinful motion, if it be not rejected, will procure consent, and consent will break forth into act, and one act will procure another act, until the multiplying of acts have begot a habit, and that habit hath choked and stifled conscience; and when once conscience is stifled and benumbed, it will be ready upon all occasions to lay the soul open, and to prostrate it to the basest and worst of sins. Oh there is a prodigious evil in the least of sins; it will quickly multiply itself into all manner of evils. Unless sin be cut off in the first motion, it will proceed to action, and from action to delectation, and from delight to custom, and from custom to a habit; and so the soul will be in eminent danger of being undone for ever. A little thief put in at the window, may open the doors for stronger and greater to come in, that may take away both life and treasure at once. A little wedge makes way for a greater, and so do little sins make way for greater. Satan and our own hearts will be modest at first, and therefore they are often in a combination, first to draw us to lesser sins and then to greater, and so from sins less obnoxious to sins more scandalous, till we come to be abominable to God, hateful to others, and a terror to ourselves. Such as live in one sin, God will in justice give over to other sins. The Gentiles gave up themselves to idolatry, Rom 1:23; 'And God gave them up to uncleanness,' Rom 1:24. It is impossible for any man to take one sin into his bosom, and to shut all others out. He that lives but in the allowance of himself in one sin, will find that sin at last to shut the door of heaven against him, and therefore the true penitent turns from sin universally.

[4.] Fourthly, The reasons of turning from, sin, are universally binding to a penitent soul. There are the same reasons, and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin, as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin, because the Lord has forbid it? Why, upon the same ground you must turn from every sin, for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all. There is one and the same Lawgiver in respect of all the commandments. He that gave one commandment gave also another; therefore, he that observes one commandment in obedience unto God, whose commandment it is, will observe all, because all are his commandments; and he that slights one commandment is guilty of all, because he doth contemn the authority and will of him that gave them all. Even in those commands which he doth observe, he hath no respect to the will and authority of him that gave them. Therefore, there is no obedience towards God, where there is not an uniform endeavour to please God, as well in one thing as in another. The same God that hath inhibited one sinful act, hath inhibited every sinful act; and, therefore, he that out of conscience and respect to God's will, and word, and authority, turns from any one sin, or abhors any one sin, he will out of conscience of the same will, and word, and authority, turn from every sin, and abhor every sin, because the same God in his word hath alike forbidden all. O sirs! how is it possible for a man truly to repent of

this or that sin, because it is contrary to the law, will, and authority of God, but he must needs repent of whatsoever he knows to be contrary to the law, will, and authority of God? He that turns from any one sin because it is a transgression of the holy and righteous law of God he will turn from every sin upon the same account. He that turns from any one sin, because it is a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a wound to religion, &c., will upon the same grounds turn from every sin. He that turns from any one sin, because of the curse, the threatenings, the judgments, the wrath, the hell that hangs, as it were, over the head of that sin, he will turn from every sin, because the curse, the threatenings, the judgments, the wrath, the hell, that hangs over the head of that one sin, hangs over the head of every sin. By these hints it is most evident, that the reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a penitent soul; and therefore he turns not from some sins only, but from every sin. He says not to one, but to all his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?'

[5.] Fifthly, One sin allowed, wallowed and tumbled in, is sufficient to deprive a man for ever of the greatest good. Moses came within the sight of Canaan; but for one sin, viz., not sanctifying God's name at the water of Meribah, he was shut out, Exo 22:1-31; for him to be so near the holy land, and yet so far off from entering into it, was doubtless of all strokes the hardest that ever he felt. In the law, the leper that had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, and accordingly he was to be shut up, and shut out from the society and company of the people of God, Lev 13:1-59; so one sin, one leprous spot, allowed and beloved, will for ever shut a man out from the glorious presence of God, Christ, the Spirit, angels, and the 'spirits of just men made perfect.' One sin wallowed in, will as certainly deprive a man of the blessed vision of God, and of all the treasures, pleasures, and delights that be at God's right hand, as a thousand. It was a sore vexation to king Lysimachus, that he should lose his earthly kingdom for one draught of water. O sirs! it will be an everlasting vexation to such, who for one lust shall at last lose not an earthly but a heavenly kingdom. One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory; and one sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency, Gen 3:4-. Satan, by one loud lie to Adam and Eve, made fruitless all that God had preached to them immediately before. To turn from some sins, but not from all, is gross hypocrisy, Job 20:13. One sin set up in the love and service of it, will keep Christ out of his throne. It speaks sin to be rampant, and Satan to be victorious; and what can be the issue of these things but ruin and damnation? Rom 6:16. One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box; one thief may rob a man of all his treasure; one disease may deprive a man of all his health; one strong wind may blow down and blow away all a man's comforts; and so one sin delighted and wallowed in, will make a man miserable for ever. Though this or that particular sin be very pleasant to the flesh, and delightful to the fancy, yet he is the wisest man, and he is the best man, and the only blessed man in all the world, that keeps furthest from it; and therefore the true penitent turns not merely from this or that sin, but from every sin.

[6.] Sixthly, The principle of regeneration, and seed of grace, which God lays into the soul of every penitent person at first conversion, is a universal principle, a principle that spreads itself over all the faculties of the soul, and over all the members of the body, 1Th 5:23: Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.' In regeneration there is infused the habits or principles of all grace, which like a divine leaven spreads itself over the whole man, Mat 13:33. Look, as Absalom's beauty was spread all over him, even from the crown of his head to the

soles of his feet, 2Sa 24:25; so grace spreads itself over every faculty of the soul, and over every member of the body. Look, as Solomon's temple was all glorious both within and without; so that grace which a man receives at first conversion, makes him all glorious both within and without. Look, as Adam's sin spread itself over the whole man, so that grace which we receive from the second Adam spreads itself over the whole man, John 1:16. And as that grace which was in Christ did diffuse and spread itself over all of Christ, so that grace which is in the true penitent does diffuse and spread itself all over the penitent. Now look, as heaven is contrary to all of hell, and as light is contrary to all darkness, and heat to all cold, so that divine, that noble, that universal principle of grace, which God at first conversion infuses into the penitent's soul, is contrary to all sin; and therefore the penitent turns from all sin. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The true penitent would have God to forgive him, not only some of his sins, but all his sins; and therefore it is but just and equal that he should turn from all his sins. 'If God be so faithful and just to forgive us all our sins,' 1Jn 1:9, we must be so faithful and just as to turn from all our sins. The plaster must be as broad as the sore, and the tent as long and as deep as the wound. It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and wonderful impudency, for a man to beg the pardon of those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake. Look, as he that hath any one sin forgiven hath all sins forgiven, so he that hath sincerely turned from any one sin, he hath turned from every sin; and he that hath not repented him of all known sin, he hath not yet sincerely repented of any known sin, nor as yet experienced the sweetness of forgiveness of sin. He that will not renounce those sins that he would have God to remit, shall be sure to have a hell of guilt in his conscience. Of all fools there is none to him that is very importunate with God to forgive those sins which he is resolved beforehand to commit; for what prince, in his wits, will pardon his treasons that is resolved to continue a traitor? or what judge will forgive his thievery, that is peremptorily determined to continue a thief? or what husband will pardon his wife, that is resolved to defile his bed with other lovers? Such as continue in the practice of those very sins, which they beg a pardon of, shall certainly go without their pardon. Pardon of sin is for that man, and that man is for pardon of sin, that is as truly willing to forsake his sins as he is to receive the pardon of his sins. Who would not look upon that man as a madman, who should earnestly beg his pardon, and yet before his pardon is sealed should afresh cut purses, and murder persons before the eyes of the judge? The pardoned soul is the repenting soul, and the repenting soul is the pardoned soul: Psa 32:2, 'Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.' He that begs pardon of sin, and is resolved against turning from sin, shall find no more sweetness in that grand promise of pardon, Pro 28:13, than devils or damned spirits do. Look, as one sin unforgiven will as certainly undo a man as a thousand, so one sin unforsaken will as certainly undo and damn a man as a thousand. The true penitent is as willing to turn from all his sins, as he is willing that God should pardon all his sins. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, There is in every penitent a sincere hatred of sin, a universal hatred of sin: Psa 97:10, 'Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.' Pro 8:13, 'The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.' Amo 5:15, 'Hate the evil and love the good.' Psa 119:104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.' Psa 119:128, 'Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.' Psa 119:113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' Psa 119:163, 'I hate and abhor lying, but thy law do I love.' True hatred is universal; it is of the whole kind. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; he that hates a

serpent because it is a serpent, hates every serpent; he that hates a wolf because it is a wolf, hates every wolf; he that hates a man because he is holy, hates every man that is holy; and so he that hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin, and therefore he cannot but turn from it, and labour to be the death and ruin of it. Holy hatred is an implacable and an irreconcilable affection. You shall as soon reconcile God and Satan together, Christ and antichrist together, heaven and hell together, as you shall be able to reconcile a penitent soul and his sin together. A true penitent looks upon every sin as contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, the glory of God, and accordingly his heart rises against it. He looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling and polluting;² and this turns his heart against every sin. He looks upon every sin as having a hand in apprehending, betraying, binding, scourging, condemning and murdering his Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and this works him not only to refrain from sin, but to forsake it, and not only to forsake it, but also to abhor it, and to loathe it more than hell itself. The penitent soul will do all he can to be the death of every sin that has a hand in the death of his Lord and Master. He looks upon the sins of his body to be the tormentors of Christ's body, and the sins of his soul to be the tormentors of Christ's soul, to be those that made his soul heavy to the death, and that caused the withdrawing of his Father's love from him, and that forced him in the anguish of his soul to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46. And this raises up in him a universal hatred of sin; and a universal hatred of sin always issues in a universal turning from sin. Now these eight arguments do sufficiently prove, that a true penitential turning is a universal turning; a turning not from some sins, but from all sins.

Objection. But some may be ready to object, and say, Sir, this is a hard saying, who can hear it, who can bear it, who shall then be saved? For if a man repents not unless he turns from every sin, then there is not a man to be found in all the world that repents; for there is not a man in all the world that turns from every sin, that forsakes every sin, &c.: 1Ki 8:46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' Pro 20:9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' It is a question that implies a strong denial. Who can say, and say it truly, that he is pure from his sin? Surely none. He that shall say that he has made his heart clean, and that he is pure from his sin, sins in so saying; and commonly there are none more unclean than those that say they have made their hearts clean, nor none more impure than they that say they are pure from their sin: Ecc 7:20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doth good and sinneth not.' These words, in their absolute sense, are a full testimony of the imperfection of our inherent righteousness in this life, and that even justified persons come very short of that exact and perfect obedience which the law requireth: Jas 3:2, 'For in many things we offend all'; or, as the Greek hath it, 'we stumble all.' It is a metaphor taken from travellers walking on stony or slippery ground, who are very apt to stumble or slide. This apostle was worthily called James the Just, and yet he numbers himself among the rest of the sanctified ones, that in many things offend all. The apostle does not say, in many things they offend all, but in many things we offend all. We that have more gifts than others, we that have more grace than others, we that have more assurance than others, we that have more experiences than others, we that have more preservatives to keep us from sin than others, even we in many things offend all. Nor the apostle does not say, in some things we offend all, but in many things we offend all; the apostle speaking not of the singular individual acts of sin, but of the divers sorts of sin. Nor the apostle does, not say, in many things we may offend all, but in many things we do offend all: 1Jn 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is

not in us.' The apostle does not say, If thou sayest thou hast no sin, thou deceivest thyself, as if he spake to some particular person only; but if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Nor the apostle does not say, If ye say ye have no sin, ye deceive yourselves, as if he intended weak or ordinary Christians alone, but if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves; we apostles, we that in all grace, and in all holiness, and in all spiritual enjoyments exceed and excel all others, even we sin as well as others. He that is so ignorant and so impudent, so saucy and so silly, as to say he has no sin, sins in saying so, and has no sincerity, no integrity, nor no ingenuity in him: 1Jn 1:10, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.' As much as in us lies we make God a liar, if we say we have not sinned. He that says he has no sin, he does no sin, he does by consequence charge God with falsehood, who hath frequently told us in that word of grace, that cannot deceive us, that all men are sinners, and that they have all gone astray, and that they all need pardoning and purging grace, and that upon these very accounts he sent his beloved Son to lay down his dearest life, and to make himself an offering for sin, Isa 53:3, Rom 5:10 and Rom 5:12, &c. Now, from these scriptures these two things are most evident: first, that sinful qualities do remain in the most sanctified persons; secondly, that these sinful qualities are sometimes very prevalent over the most sanctified persons, and therefore I shall answer the objection thus, viz. that a true penitential turning from all sin consists in these six things:

Ans. 1. (1.) First, In the alienation and inward aversion and drawing off of the soul from the love and liking of all sin, and from all free and voluntary subjection unto sin, the heart being filled with a loathing and detestation of all sin, Psa 119:104, Psa 119:128, as that which is most contrary to all goodness and happiness.

(2.) Secondly, In the will's detestation and hatred of all sin. When the very bent and inclination of the will is set against all sin, and opposes and crosses all sin, and is set upon the ruin and destruction of all sin, then the penitent is turned from all sin, Rom 7:15, Rom 7:19, Rom 7:21, Rom 7:3; Isa 30:20, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Hos 14:8, 'Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?' When the will stands upon such terms of defiance with all sin as that it will never enter into a league of friendship with any sin, then is the soul turned away from every sin. When the will is set upon avenging itself upon all sin, and upon daily endeavours to mortify and crucify all sin, then is the penitent turned from all his sins. When those sins that were once to the will as Delilah to Samson, are now to the will as Tamar to Amnon, then is the soul turned from sin with a witness.

(3.) Thirdly, In the judgment's turning away from all sin, by disapproving, disallowing, and condemning of it: Rom 7:15, 'For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.' Oh, saith the judgment of a Christian, sin is the greatest evil in all the world; it is the only thing that God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the cross, that damns souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundations of hell. Oh, it is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh, it is that which hath hindered my prayers, and embittered my mercies, and put a sting into all my crosses; and therefore I cannot but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death, yea, to hell, from whence it came. I thus preach and thus think, saith Chrysostom, that it is more bitter to sin against Christ, than to suffer the torments of hell. Plutarch reports of Marcus Cato, that he never declared his opinion in any matter in the senate but he would close it with this passage, Methinks still 'Carthage should be

destroyed.' So whenever a penitent looks upon his sins in his judgment, he is still saying, Methinks these sins should be destroyed; methinks this pride, this unbelief, this earthly-mindedness, this hypocrisy, this vainglory, &c., should be destroyed.

(4.) Fourthly, In the purpose and resolution of the soul, the soul sincerely purposing and resolving never willingly, wilfully, or wickedly to transgress any more. Psa 17:3, 'I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.' The general purpose and resolution of my heart is not to transgress. Though particular failings may attend me, yet my resolutions and purposes are firmly fixed against evil. Psa 39:1, 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked are before me.' David highly resolves so to bridle and muzzle up his mouth, that he would not break out into any impatient or unbeseeming speeches, that might give the wicked any advantage to reproach religion, or to blaspheme the Holy One of Israel, &c. Anselm was a man of a holy resolution: 'I had rather,' saith he, 'go to hell pure from sin, than to heaven polluted with that filth.' And saith another, 'I will rather leap into a bonfire, than wilfully to sin against God.' When Valens the emperor threatened Basil with imprisonment, banishment, death: 'Threaten,' says he, 'your boys with such fray-bugs, and your purple gallants, that give themselves to their pleasures; I am resolved neither menaces nor flatteries shall silence me, Or draw me to betray a good cause, or a good conscience,' &c.

(5.) Fifthly, In the earnest and unfeigned desires, and careful endeavours of the soul to abandon all sin, to forsake all sin, to be rid of all sin, Rom 7:22-23. Now where God sees this frame of spirit, there he will certainly pardon the failings, and pass by the imperfections of his people; and he 'will spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him,' Mal 3:17. Now you know, when a prudent, tender, indulgent father sees his child to fail and come short in that which he enjoins him to do, yet knowing that his desires and endeavours is to please him and serve him, he will not be harsh, rigid, sour, or severe towards him, but will spare him, and exercise much tenderness and indulgence towards him; and will God, will God whose mercies reach above the heavens, and whose compassions are infinite, and whose love is like himself, carry it worse towards his children than men do carry it towards theirs? Surely no. God's fatherly indulgence accepts of the will for the work, Heb 13:18, 2Co 8:12, as a father will accept in his child the desire for the deed, and if there be a blemish in his child, he will pity it, and cast a mantle of love over it. A sick man is not more desirous to be rid of all his diseases, nor a prisoner to be freed from all his bolts and chains, than the true penitent is desirous to be rid of all his sins, &c.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, In the ordinary declining, shunning, and avoiding of all known occasions, temptations, provocations, inducements, and enticements to sin, &c. That royal law, 1Th 5:22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' is a law that is very precious in a penitent man's eye, and commonly lies warm upon a penitent man's heart; so that take him in his ordinary course, and you shall find him very ready to shun and be shy of the very appearances of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin. Job made a covenant with his eyes, Job 31:1; and Joseph would not hearken to his bold tempting mistress, to lie with her, or to be with her, Gen 39:10; and David, when himself, would not sit with vain persons, Psa 26:3-5; and at another time he refused to take the threshing-floor, oxen, and threshing instruments of Araunah as a gift, but would buy them, because he would avoid the very show of covetousness, as some conceive, 2Sa 24:20, seq. Austin being often ensnared in uncleanness in his younger days, before his conversion, he was exceeding careful to avoid all occasions of it afterwards.

Now a true penitential turning from all sin lies in these six things, and therefore you had need look about you; for if there be any one way of wickedness wherein you walk, and which you are resolved you will not forsake, you are no true penitents, and you will certainly lose your souls, and all the great and glorious things of another world. The third answer.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, A true penitential turning is a constant and continued turning from sin, 2Ch 7:14. As it is total in respect of the act, so it is final in respect of the time. True repentance takes an everlasting farewell, an everlasting adieu of sin. It saith with the spouse, Song of Solomon 5:3, 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?' I have found the smart of sin, I have put off the garments of the old man, the rags of old Adam, and how shall I put them on again? The burnt child will dread the fire. The man that hath smarted for suretyship will by no means be persuaded to come into bonds. Though you urge him to it never so frequently, never so strongly, never so rhetorically, yet he will tell you he has smarted for it, he has paid dear for it, and therefore you must excuse him; he has peremptorily resolved, nay, he hath seriously vowed against it; and though he be never so much entreated and by variety of arguments importuned, yet still he remains inexorable, A Christian that hath truly repented, is so sensible of the freeness and sweetness of the grace of God on the one hand, and of the weight of sin and wrath of God on the other hand, that he is highly resolved never to have any more to do with idols, never to meddle more with those burning coals, Psa 40:12, Hos 14:8. True repentance is a continued act, 'a repentance never to be repented of.' The true penitent is every day a-turning further and further from sin, and nearer and nearer to God. There is nothing that fetches so many tears from a penitent man's eyes, nor so many sighs and groans from a penitent man's heart, as this, that he can get no further off from sin, and that he can get no nearer nor no closer to God. Repentance for sin, and a willing continuance in sin, cannot consist in the same subject. A sincere penitent makes as much conscience of repenting daily, as he doth of believing daily, and he can as easily content himself with one act of faith, or love, or fear, or hope, or joy, or obedience, as he can content himself with one act of repentance. 'My sins are ever before me,' Psa 51:3. This is the voice of every true penitent: Oh that I might sin no more! Oh that I might never dishonour God more! Oh that I might never walk contrary to Jesus Christ more! Oh that I might never grieve the Spirit of grace more! To sin is common to man, yea, to the best man in all the world; but to continue in a course of sin, is only proper to a wicked man. To err and fail, that is human; but to maintain a league or friendship with sin, that is diabolical. Though a true penitent dares not continue in a trade, a path of sin, whilst he lives in this world, yet sin will continue in him whilst he continues in this world. Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whilst a penitent man lives in this world they must live together. It is one thing for sin to continue in us, and it is another thing for us to continue in sin. The apostle having closed the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, in the triumph of gospel grace, that 'As sin hath reigned unto death, so grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,' begins the next with a prevention of the abuse of this grace; 'What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' Rom 6:1-2. To live in sin, in the face of gospel grace, is most unreasonable, and to a gracious and ingenuous nature impossible. The very question implies a kind of impossibility. Such as were once dead in sin, and now by gospel grace are dead to sin, such can no longer continue in sin. Look, as it is not the mere falling into the water that drowns a man, but his lying and continuing in it; so it is not a mere falling into sin that damns a man, that drowns a man, that everlastingly undoes a man, but

his living in it, his continuing in it. It is bad to sin, but it is infinitely worse to continue in sin. The first best is not to sin, the next best is not to continue in sin, no not for an hour, as Paul speaks in another case, Gal 2:5, 'To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour.' Certainly to argue from gospel mercy to sinful liberty, is the devil's logic. The more a man lives in the sight of gospel grace, the more sin will be discountenanced, resisted, hated, and totally displaced. A man may as truly assert that the sea burns, or that the fire cools, or that the sun darkens the air, as he may assert that the sight, sense, or sweet of gospel grace will breed security or carnality, looseness or wickedness, in a gracious heart. The true penitent never ceases repenting, till he ceases living. He goes to heaven with the joyful tears of repentance in his eyes; he knows that his whole life is but a day of sowing tears, that he may at last reap everlasting joys. True repentance makes a final and everlasting separation between sin and the soul. It makes such an absolute and complete divorce between sin and the soul, and casts them so far asunder, that no power nor policy can ever bring them to meet as lovers together. The true penitent looks upon sin as an enemy, and deals with it as Amnon dealt with Tamar: 2Sa 13:15, 'And Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her, was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her; and Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.' And just thus doth the penitent soul carry it towards sin. He that truly repents, so turns from his sins, that he never returns to the bondage and service of his sins any more, Isa 30:22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' Isa 1:16, Psal 85:8. But now the repentance of hypocrites is not constant, but inconstant; it is not stedfast, but unstedfast; it is not permanent, but transient; it is quickly on, as quickly off. 'Come,' say they, in that Hos 6:1, 'and let us return unto the Lord.' But Hos 6:4, 'O Ephraim! what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.' The hypocrite's repentance is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night, and perished in a night, Jon 4:10. An hypocrite's repentance springs from mutable grounds, causes, considerations and circumstances; and therefore it is compared to a deceitful bow, Hos 7:16; it is as variable as the wind. An hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy, Psal 78:8, 'whose spirit was not stedfast with God.' Psal 78:37, 'Neither were they stedfast in his covenant,' &c. An hypocrite puts off his sins in the day of adversity, as he doth his garments when he goes to bed, with an intent to put them on again in the morning of prosperity. Psal 78:34-36, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' In the language of the blessed Scripture, he is a dog that returns to his vomit again, and such a dog was Judas; and he is a swine that returns to the wallowing in the mire again, and such a swine was Demas; and such dogs and swine are all hypocrites, 2Pe 2:20-22. It is an extraordinary vanity in some men to lay aside their sins for a time, but with a purpose to return to them again; as they fable it of the serpent that layeth aside his poison when he goeth to drink, and when he hath drunk he returns to it again. It is a sad and sore evil, when men say to their lusts, as Abraham said to his servants, 'Abide you here, and I will go and worship, and return again unto you,' Gen 22:5. Doubtless such souls are as far off from sound repentance as light is from darkness, or as hell is from heaven, &c.

Quest. But in what respects is a true penitential turning from sin such a turning from sin as never to return to sin any more? In what respects is the penitent's turning from sin a continued and stedfast

turning from sin? &c.

Ans. This is a very sober, serious, weighty question, and bespeaks a very sober, serious, and satisfactory answer, and therefore I would answer the question, (1.) negatively; (2.) affirmatively, &c.

[1.] Negatively, It is not such a turning from sin as never to sin more. 1Ki 8:46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' Pro 20:9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean? I am pure from my sin?' Pro 24:16, 'A just man falleth seven times, and riseth again.' Ecc 7:20, 'For there is not a just man upon the earth that doth good, and sinneth not.' Luk 17:4, 'If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.' Mat 18:21-22. 'Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him; till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.' Jas 3:2, 'For in many things we offend all;' or we stumble all, as the Greek has it. 1Jn 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' 1Jn 1:10, 'If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. And what did the continual burnt-offering which was to be made day by day import, but a daily sinning, and expiating of it? &c., Num 28:3. Such is the universal corruption of human nature, that the souls of the best, of the purest, and of the holiest men in the world, do from day to day, yea, from moment to moment, contract some filth and uncleanness. The choicest saints can never acquit themselves from sins of infirmity, such as do inevitably and inseparably cleave unto the best of men, especially considering the state and condition wherein they are, carrying still about them corrupt flesh and blood. Methodius compares the in-bred corruptions of man's heart to a wild fig-tree, growing upon the wall of some goodly temple or stately palace, whereof although the main trunk of the stem be broke off, and stump of the root be plucked up, yet the fibrous strings of it piercing into the joints of the stone-work, will not be utterly extracted, but will be ever and anon shooting and sprouting out, until the whole frame of the building be dissolved, and the stone work thereof be disjoined and pulled in pieces.

[2.] Secondly, It is not such a turning from sin, as that the true penitent shall never relapse into the same kind of sin any more; for a true penitent may fall into the same sin again and again. It was a sin for the disciples to sleep when Christ had commanded them to watch and pray, and yet they slept again and again, Mat 26:40-45. The prophet Jonah was a holy man, and yet he relapsed into passion and discontent with God again and again; he was discontent with the work God set him about; therefore he flieth to Tarshish, Jon 1:2-3; and sorrows for it, and confesseth that they that 'trust upon lying vanities forsake their own mercies,' Jon 2:8; and yet when God had shewed mercy to Nineveh, he was exceedingly discontented with God again: Jon 4:1, 'But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.' And when the Lord, who might have sent him to his grave, or affrownded him to hell, reasons lovingly, sweetly, and mildly with him, to take him off from his passion, Jon 4:3-4, and provides for him in his extremity; yet upon a very small occasion, viz., the taking away of a gourd or shrub, which God did to convince him of his folly and, waspishness of spirit, he breaks out again into the same passion, or worse, as if he had never seen the evil of it, or been humbled for it: Jon 4:8-9, 'I am greatly angry,' or I do well to be angry, 'even unto death.' And that is very considerable that Job speaks concerning his friends: Job 19:3, 'These ten times have ye reproached me, yet are ye not ashamed.' It is a sin to reproach any man; it is a greater to reproach a godly man; but yet greater to reproach a godly man under sad and sore afflictions; but

yet greatest of all to reproach a godly man under his sufferings, often, frequently; yet, saith Job, 'These ten times have ye reproached me;' and yet Job's friends were not only godly, but eminently godly. By this sad instance it is evident, that gracious men, yea, that men eminently gracious, may fall into the same sin again and again, yea, ten times, that is, often. Though Christ told his disciples that his kingdom was not of this world, yet at three several times their pride and ambitious humour put them upon striving for pre-eminence and worldly greatness. King Jehoshaphat, though he was a godly man, yet he joins affinity with that nonsuch wicked Ahab, for which he was smartly reprov'd by the prophet: 2Ch 19:2, 'And Jehu went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord.' Now, though this gracious prince was thus reprov'd and saved, even by a miracle of mercy,—2Ch 18:1-3, 2Ch 18:30-31 compared;—yet soon after he falls into the same sin again, and joins himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly, 2Ch 20:35-36, and for which he is severely reprov'd in 2Ch 20:37. 'Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.' Lot was twice overcome with wine, &c., and Abraham, though the father of the faithful, yet falls once and again into the same sin: Gen 12:11-13, compared with Gen 22:1-4, Gen 22:13. Peter falls once and again into the same sin; and John twice worshipped the angel; and Samson, who is by the Spirit of the Lord numbered amongst those worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Heb 11:32-33, Heb 11:38, fell again and again into the same gross sin, as is evident in Jdg 14:1-20, Jdg 15:1-20, and Jdg 16:1-31. And the church confesses, that their backslidings are many, Jer 14:7. By all which it is most evident, that good men may fall again and again into the same sin; and no wonder, for though their repentance be never so sincere and sound, yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification but imperfect in this life, and therefore it is possible for a gracious soul to fall again and again into the same sin. If the fire be not wholly put out, who will think it impossible that it should catch, and burn again and again?

I readily grant that the Lord hath graciously promised to heal the backslidings of his people: Hos 14:4, and so Jer 3:22, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings: behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' See Jer 3:1, Jer 3:4-8, Jer 3:12, Jer 3:14. But I can nowhere find in all the Scriptures, that God hath engaged himself by any particular promise or promises, that Christians truly converted, truly penitent, shall never fall again and again into the same sins after their conversion. I cannot find in all the book of God, where God has engaged himself to give such strength or power against this sin or that, as that a Christian shall be for ever, in this life, put out of all possibility of falling again and again into the same sins. No person on earth can shew such a promise, that when a Christian has been thus or thus troubled, grieved, humbled, or melted for his sins, that then God will assuredly preserve him from ever falling into the same sins again. The sight of such a promise under God's own hand, would be as life from the dead to all real Christians, who fear nothing more than the sin of backsliding. Certainly, there is no such power or infinite virtue in the greatest horrors or terrors, troubles or sorrows, that the soul can be under for sin, nor in the fullest, sweetest, or choicest discoveries of God's rich grace and free love to the soul, as for ever to fence and secure the soul from relapsing into the same sin again and again. Though grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature. Grace is but a created habit, that may be prevailed against by Satan's temptations, and by the strong, secret, and subtle workings of sin in our hearts. But this must be carefully minded and remembered, that though the

saints may and do sometimes relapse, yet they do not relapse in such a manner as wicked men do relapse. For,

(1.) First, They do not relapse voluntarily, but involuntarily. Involuntary relapses are when the resolution and full bent of the heart is against sin, when the soul strives with all its might against sin, by sighs and groans, by prayers and tears, and yet by some invincible weakness is forced to fall back into sin again, because there is not spiritual strength enough to overcome.

(2.) Secondly, They do not relapse out of choice, as wicked men do, Isa 66:3.

(3.) Thirdly, They do not relapse out of any delight that they take in relapsing. Witness their sad complaints, their great lamentations, and their bitter mournings over their relapses. Relapses into diseases, and relapses into sins, are more troublesome and dangerous than they are any ways delightful to all that are in their wits.

(4.) Fourthly, They do not relapse out of any settled purpose or resolution of heart to relapse, as wicked men do, Jer 2:25. All the relapses of a saint are against the settled bent, bias, and resolution of his soul.

(5.) Fifthly, They do not relapse out of any love or longing to relapse, as wicked men do, who long and love to return to the flesh-pots of Egypt.

(6.) Sixthly, They do not relapse into enormities, as wicked men do, for it is not usual with God to leave his people frequently to relapse into enormities; for by his Spirit and grace, by his smiles and frowns, by his word and rod, he doth commonly preserve his people from a common, a frequent relapsing into enormities, into gross wickednesses. The common and ordinary relapses of the people of God are relapses into infirmities, as idle words, passion, hastiness, rashness, vain thoughts, &c., and these God pardons in course; but the common and ordinary relapses of wicked men are relapses into enormities, into gross impieties.

(7.) Seventhly, They do not relapse habitually, constantly, as wicked men do. Their relapses are transient, not permanent, they are not of course. A sheep may fall into the mire, but a swine wallows in the mire, &c.

[2.] But, secondly, I answer affirmatively, That notwithstanding all this, yet a true penitential turning from sin is a continued and stedfast turning from sin, and that in these five respects:—

(1.) First, In respect of his habitual purpose and resolution not to sin: Psa 39:1, 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.' David resolves to lay a law of restraint upon his tongue, and to clap a muzzle upon his mouth, whilst he was in the presence of the wicked, who did lie at the catch to ensnare him and trepan him. Come health, come sickness, come honour, come reproach, come poverty, come plenty, come liberty, come restraint, come life, come death, the true penitent is fixed in his purpose and resolution not to sin. Jerome writes of a brave woman, that being upon the rack, told her persecutors that they might do their worst, for she was firmly resolved rather to die than lie.

(2.) Secondly, In respect of his habitual desires, which are, that he may not sin: Psa 119:133, 'Order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.' David's great desire is that he may walk as in a frame, that he may walk by line and rule, exactly, accurately; and that

though sin did dwell in him, that yet it might not reign in him; and though it did rebel in him, that yet it might not have dominion over him. He would have his sins to be like those beasts in Daniel, whose dominion was taken away, though their lives were prolonged for a season and a time, chap. Dan 8:12; Psa 119:10, 'O! let me not wander from thy commandments.' Psa 119:36, 'Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.' Under the name of covetousness all manner of viciousness is to be understood, that being the root of all evil, 1Ti 6:10.

(3.) Thirdly, In respect of his habitual endeavours, which still are not to sin. The ordinary and habitual endeavours of a true penitent are still set against sin. He ordinarily rows against the stream of sin, though sometimes the stream proves too strong for him: Psa 119:11, 'Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.' He hides the word in his heart as a treasure, that he might not lose it, and as a rule, that he might not transgress against it. The law of God kept close in the heart is the best armour of proof against evil lusts. David locks up the law of God in his heart, as in a chest or cabinet, to secure him against Satan's ambushes and assaults on the one hand, and to preserve him from sin on the other hand. So Psa 18:23, 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.'

(4.) Fourthly, In respect of his habitual hatred of sin. Although the true penitent does sometimes sin, yet he always hates the evil he does. There is a firm and fixed hatred in his soul against sin: Psa 119:104, 'Therefore I hate every false way.' Psa 119:113, 'I hate vain thoughts.' Psa 119:163, 'I hate and abhor lying.' So Rom 7:15, 'The evil that I hate, that I do.' A penitent heart usually rises and swells against the toad in the bosom. Some say, that there is such a native dread and terror of the hawk implanted in the dove, that she is afraid of every feather, and that she detests and abhors the very sight of any feather that hath grown upon a hawk; so there is such a detestation and abhorrency of sin divinely implanted in every penitent man's heart, that he cannot but hate everything that looks like it, or that belongs to it, or that comes from it.

(5.) Fifthly, In respect of his constant path, or continued way, or course of life, which is quite opposite and contrary to sin: Gal 5:17, Isa 26:7, 'The way of the just is uprightness.' Pro 16:17, 'The highway of the upright is to depart from evil.' It is as common and ordinary for upright persons to depart from evil, as it is for passengers to keep the king's highways. Though an upright man, through mistake or weakness of grace, or violence of temptation, may step out of a way of holiness, yet walking in a way of wickedness cannot be charged upon him: Psa 139:23-24, 'Search me, O God! and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' You know the path and practice of penitent Zaccheus, of penitent Paul, and of the penitent jailor, was quite contrary to those ways of wickedness that they had formerly walked in. The fourth answer.

Ans. 4. But fourthly and lastly, As a true penitential turning from sin is a constant and continued turning from sin, so it is a returning to God. Sin is an aversion from God, and repentance is a conversion to God, Acts 26:18. Sound repentance is not only a ceasing from doing evil, but also a learning to do well, Isa 1:16-17. Repentance and turning to God are joined together, as being one and the same thing, Acts 26:20. The prodigal's repenting was his returning to his father: Luk 15:17, 'When he came to himself, he said, I will arise and go to my father, and say, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.' &c. The Hebrew word for repentance is from **שׁוּב**, shob, which signifies to return, implying a going back from what a man had done. It notes a returning or

converting from one thing to another, as from sin to God, from evil to good, from hell to heaven. The common call of sinners to repentance is to turn from sin, and to return to God: Isa 55:7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,' &c. Jer 1:4, 'If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me; and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.' And so Jer 18:11, 'Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your way and your doings good.' 1Pe 2:25, 'For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' It is not enough for a sinner to forsake his sins, but he must also return to the Lord. The true penitent subjects his heart to the power of divine grace, and his life to the blessed will and word of God. Look, as negative goodness can never satisfy a penitent soul, so negative goodness can never save an impenitent soul. It is not enough, O man, that thou art not thus and thus bad, but thou must be thus and thus good, or thou wilt be miserable for ever: Eze 18:21, 'But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Negative righteousness and holiness is no righteousness, no holiness in the account of God. It was not the pharisee's negative righteousness, nor his comparative goodness, that could prevent his being rejected of God, or his being shut out of heaven, or his being turned into hell, Luk 18:5, Mat 20:13-14. It is not enough that the tree bears no ill fruit, but it must bring forth good fruit, else it must be cut down and cast into the fire; that tree that is not for fruit, is for the fire: 'Every tree that brings not forth good fruit,' says Christ, 'is hewn down, and cast into the fire,' Mat 7:19. Heaven at last will be found too holy, and too hot, to hold such as please themselves, as satisfy themselves with a negative righteousness. All that negative righteousness and holiness can do, is only to help a man to one of the coolest chambers and casiest beds in hell. True repentance brings the heart and life, not only off from sin, but on to God too; it takes a man not only off from the ways of death, but it engages him to walk in the paths of life: Psa 119:3, 'They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.' Pro 13:14, 'The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.' Pro 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Psa 34:14, 'Depart from evil, and do good.' We read in Scripture of God's returning to us, as well as of our returning to God; in both there is repentance. When God returns to us, he repents of the evil of punishment that he hath brought upon us; and when we return to God, we repent of the evil of sin which we have committed against him. The true penitent does not only sadly smite upon his thigh, and say, What have I done? but he also speedily faces about and cries out, I will do so no more, Jer 31:19. When God calls for true repentance, it is with an 'If thou wilt return,' O Israel, 'return unto me,' Jer 4:1. And when the people of God do provoke and encourage one another to repentance, it is with a 'Come let us return unto the Lord,' Hos 6:1. Repentance unto life is not a turning from sin to sin, nor it is not a turning from profaneness to civility, nor it is not a turning from civility to formality; but it is a turning from darkness to light, it is a turning from the ways of iniquity into the ways of piety, it is a turning from sin to God, Acts 26:18. In this respect Israel's repentance was very defective. Witness that sad complaint of the prophet: Hos 7:16, 'They return,' that is, they make a show of repentance, 'but not to the most High.' So they in that Joe 2:12 have the half-turn, but returned not to the Lord with all their hearts. So Jehu went far, and gave many a half-turn, but never turned to the Most High; and that was his ruin at last. Such a repentance as brings the soul never the nearer to God, is a repentance never the nearer; but that repentance that brings the soul nearer to God, is a repentance never to be repented of. And let thus much suffice to have spoken concerning that

evangelical repentance that hath the precious promises of remission of sin and salvation running out unto it, &c.

CHAPTER IV

Several have observed to my hand how far an hypocrite may go, but my design in this chapter is to shew how far an hypocrite cannot go. Many have discovered at large what an hypocrite can do, but my scope in this chapter is to shew what an hypocrite cannot do. Some have shewed what an hypocrite is, and I shall now shew what he is not. Some have shewed the several rounds in Jacob's ladder, that an hypocrite may climb up to; but my business and work in this chapter, is to shew you the several rounds in Jacob's ladder that no hypocrite under heaven can climb up to.

[1.] First, An hypocrite's inside is never answerable to his outside. An hypocrite's inside is one thing, and his outside another thing; an hypocrite is outwardly clean, but inwardly unclean; he is outwardly glorious, but inwardly inglorious, Mat 23:25-27, Luk 11:39. Hypocrites are like apothecaries' gally-pots, having without the title of some excellent preservative, but within they are full of some deadly poison. They are like the Egyptian temples, that were beautiful without, but within there was nothing to be found but serpents and crocodiles, and other venomous creatures. Hypocrites trade more for a good name, than for a good heart; for a good report, than for a good conscience; they are like fiddlers, more careful in tuning their instruments than in watching their spirits. Hypocrites are like white silver, but they draw black lines; they have a seeming sanctified outside, but stuffed within with malice, worldliness, pride, envy, &c. Like window cushions, made up of velvet and richly embroidered, but stuffed within with hay. An hypocrite may offer sacrifice with Cain, and fast with Jezebel, and humble himself with Ahab, and lament with the tears of Esau, and kiss Christ with Judas, and follow Christ with Demas, and offer fair for the Holy Ghost with Simon Magus; and yet for all this his inside as bad as any of theirs. An hypocrite is a Cato without and a Nero within; a Jacob without and an Esau within; a David without and a Saul within; a Peter without and a Judas within; a saint without and a Satan within; an angel without and a devil within. An hypocrite is a Jew outwardly, but an atheist, a pagan, a Turk inwardly, Rom 2:28-29. I have read of certain images, which on the outside were covered with gold and pearl, resembling Jupiter and Neptune, but within were nothing but spiders and cobwebs; a fit resemblance of hypocrites. Hypocrisy is but an outside, like cloth of arras, fair and beautiful without; but if you look to the inside, you shall find nothing but rags and ends. That monk hit it, that said, To be a monk in outward show was easy, but to be a monk in inward reality was hard. To be a Christian in outward show is easy, but to be a Christian inwardly and really is very hard. An hypocrite's inside never echoes or answers to his outside; his inside is vicious, and his outside is religious. But let all such hypocrites know, that dissembled sanctity is double iniquity, and accordingly at last they shall be dealt with, Mat 24:5. But,

[2.] Secondly, No hypocrite under heaven is totally divorced from the love and liking of every known sin. There is still some secret lust or other, which as a sweet morsel he rolls under his tongue, and will not spit it out, Job 20:12-14. Every hypocrite tolerates some evil or other in himself, and takes liberty to transgress. An hypocrite will make hard shift to daub up his conscience, and to secure himself from the checks thereof. After once the bag was committed to Judas his custody, after once he was chosen into that sweet office, he quickly put conscience out of office, and never left stealing and licking his fingers, whilst there was any money in his bag to

finger. Herod knew much, and heard John Baptist, and had some temporary affections, and did many good things, Mark 6:20. But yet (1.) he kept Herodias his brother's wife, Mark 6:17; (2.) he took away the life of John the Baptist, Mark 6:27; (3.) he sets Jesus Christ at naught, and rejected him, Luk 23:11. As fair as Herod seemed to carry it, yet he lived in a known notorious sin, and unjustly murdered the messenger of God, and mocked and rejected Jesus Christ as a vile person. Some sin or other always reigns without control in an hypocritical heart. As they say of witches, that they have one familiar or another that still sucks them, an hypocrite always reserves one nest-egg or another in his heart or life, for Satan to sit and brood on. Jehu did many brave things, but yet he kept up the worship of his golden calves. Naaman promises high, but yet he is for bowing in the house of Rimmon. The pharisees were very devout, but yet they loved the praises of men, and the upper-most seats in the synagogues. There is never an hypocrite in the world, but will do what he can to save the life of his sin, though it be with the loss of his soul. O sirs! Satan can be contented that hypocrites should yield to God in many things, provided they will be but true to him in some one thing; for he very well knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, gives him as much advantage against the soul as more. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one claw. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will mar all a man's sweetest duties and services; as one dead fly will mar the whole box of precious ointment, Ecc 10:1, and as one jarring string will bring the sweetest music out of tune. It is said of Naaman the Syrian, that he was a valiant man, and a victorious man, and an honourable man, and a great favourite with his prince, but a leper, 2Ki 5:1. So it may be said of many hypocrites, they have such and such excellencies, and they perform such and such glorious duties, but they live and allow themselves in this or that sin, and that mars the beauty of all their services, Mat 7:21-23. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly damn a man as many; as one disease, one ulcerous part, may as certainly kill a man as many. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will render a man as unclean in the eye of God as many. If the leper in the law had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body, he was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, Lev 14:1-57. So he who hath the spot of the leprosy of sin allowed in any one part of his soul, he is a spiritual leper in the eye of God; he is unclean, though in other parts he may not be unclean. The schoolmen say, that if a sow do but wallow in one miry or dirty hole, she is filthy; and certainly, that soul that doth but wallow in any one sin, he is filthy in the eye of God. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as effectually keep Christ and the soul asunder as many, as one stone in the pipe will as effectually keep out the water as many. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will make way for many, as one thief can open the door to let in many more. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly shut the soul out of heaven as many. One enemy may shut the door upon a man as well as many; and what difference is there between that man that is shut out of heaven for living in many sins, and he that is shut out of heaven for living but in one sin? One sin lived in and allowed, will arm conscience against a man, as well as many. If there be but one crack in the honey glass, there the wasps will be buzzing, One sin allowed and countenanced, will spoil the music of conscience. One sin lived in and allowed, will make death as terrible and as formidable to the soul as many. One handwriting upon the wall made King Nebuchadnezzar's countenance to change, and his thoughts to be troubled, and the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another, Dan 5:5-6. Now, all this Satan knows, and therefore he labours mightily to engage hypocrites to live in the allowance of some one sin. O sirs! remember that as

one hole in a ship will sink it, and as one stab at the heart will kill a man, and as one glass of poison will poison a man, and as one act of treason will make a man a traitor, so one sin lived in and allowed will damn a man for ever. One wound strikes Goliath dead, as well as three-and-twenty did Cæsar; one Delilah will do Samson as much mischief as all the Philistines; one wheel broken spoils all the whole clock; one vein's bleeding will let out all the vitals as well as more; one bitter herb will spoil all the pottage. By eating one apple, Adam lost paradise, Gen 3:1-24; one lick of honey endangered Jonathan's life, 1Sa 14:33; one Achan was a trouble to all Israel, Jos 7:1-26; one Jonah was lading too heavy for a whole ship, John 1:1-17; so one sin lived in and allowed, is enough to make a man miserable for ever. One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea as well as a hundred; so one sin lived in and indulged will sink a man to the bottom of hell as well as a hundred. I have read of a great Roman captain, who, as he was riding in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eyes never off a courtesan that walked along the street, which made one say, Behold how this great captain, that hath conquered such and such armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman! There is never an hypocrite in the world, but lies under the conquest of one base lust or another, but lives under the reign and dominion of one sin or another. That soul that can in sincerity of heart appeal to a heart-searching God, that it is otherwise with him, viz., that he does not live nor allow himself in any one sinful way or practice, that soul, I dare assure in the Lord's name, is no hypocrite, Psa 139:23-24.

[3.] Thirdly, As an hypocrite's heart is never thoroughly subdued to a willingness to part with every lust, so neither is his heart thoroughly subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties. Sometimes he is all for public duties, but makes no conscience of closet-duties, or of family-duties; sometimes he is all for the duties of the first table, but makes no conscience of the duties of the second table; and sometimes he is all for the duties of the second table, but makes no conscience of the duties of the first table. If he obeys one command, he willingly lives in the neglect of another; if he does one duty, he will be sure to cast off another; as he is not willing to fall out with every sin, so he is not willing to fall in with every duty. An hypocrite's obedience is always partial, it is never universal; he still baulks or boggles with those commands that cross his lusts. The pharisees fasted, prayed, gave alms, and paid tithes, Mat 23:23. Oh but they omitted 'the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith,' Mat 6:1-34; and they were unnatural to parents, and under a pretence of praying, they made a prey of widows' houses, Mat 15:4-6; under a pretence of piety, they exercised the greatest covetousness, unrighteousness, and cruelty, and that upon widows, who are usually the greatest objects of pity and charity; they made no bones of robbing the widow, under a pretence of honouring of God. So Judas, under a pretence of laying up for the poor, robbed the poor; he pretended to lay up for the poor, but he intended only to lay up for himself, and to provide against a rainy day, John 12:6. It is probable that he had no great mind to stay long with his Lord, and therefore he was resolved to make the best market he could for himself. Judas being willing to set up for himself, under a cloak of holiness, he practises the greatest unfaithfulness. Though the eagle soars high, yet still her eye is upon her prey; so though Judas did soar high in profession, yet his eye was still upon his prey, upon his bags; and so he might have it, he cared not who went without it; so he might be rich, he did not care though his Lord and his retinue grew never so poor. Judas under all his shows and sanctity, had not so much as common honesty in him. Counterfeit holiness is often made a stalking-horse to much righteousness;² but certainly it were better with the philosopher to have honesty without religion, than to have religion without honesty. An hypocrite may exercise himself in some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion; but

when shall you see an hypocrite laying the axe to the root of the tree, or a-searching and trying his own heart, or severely judging his bosom sins, or humbly mourning and lamenting over secret corruptions, or doubling his guards about his own soul, or rejoicing in the graces, services, or excellencies of others, or striving or pressing after the highest pitches of grace, holiness, and communion with God, or endeavouring more to cast out the beam out of his own eye, than the mote out of his brother's eye, or to be more severe against his own sins than against the sins of others? Alas! an hypocrite is so far from practising these duties, that he thinks them either superfluous or impossible. An hypocrite's obedience is always a limited and stinted obedience. It is either limited to such commands which are most suitable to his ease, safety, honour, profit, pleasure, &c., or else it is limited to the outward part of the command, and never extends itself to the inward and spiritual part of the command; as you may see in the scribes and pharisees. Their obedience was all outward; they had no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command; as is evident in that high charge that Christ gives in against them, Mat 6:1-34. They did not murder, they did not commit adultery, they had an eye to the outward part of the command; but Christ charges them with unjust and adulterous thoughts, unchaste glances, contemplative wickedness, speculative uncleanness, &c., they having no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command. Common grace looks only to some particular duties, but saving grace looks to all. Renewing grace comes off to positives as well as negatives; it teacheth us to cease to do evil, and it learns us also to do good, Isa 1:16-17. It teacheth us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and also to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit 2:11-13. These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty. To live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our neighbours, and godly towards God, is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man. There is never an hypocrite in the world that can sincerely appeal to God, and say, Lord! thou knowest that my heart is subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties; I would willingly do the best I can to observe all thy royal laws: Lord! I unfeignedly desire, and really endeavour to have, an eye upon every command of thine, and to live up to every command of thine; and it is the real grief of my heart, and the daily burden of my soul, when I violate any of thy blessed laws, Psa 119:6; Luk 1:5-6; Acts 13:22. He that can in uprightness thus appeal to God, shall never miscarry in that other world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, There is never an hypocrite in the world that makes God, or Christ, or holiness, or his doing or receiving good in his station, relation, or generation, his grand end, his highest end, his ultimate end of living in the world. Pleasures, profits, and honours, are the hypocrite's all he aims at in this world; they are his trinity which he adores and serves, and sacrificeth himself unto, 1Jn 2:16. An hypocrite's ends are corrupt and selfish. God may possibly be at the higher end of his work, but self is at the further end; for he that was never truly cast out of himself, can have no higher end than himself. An hypocrite is all for his own glory; he acts for himself, and from himself. So I may have the profit, the credit, the glory, the applause, come of God's glory what will! this is the language of an unsound heart. An hypocrite will seem to be very godly when he can make a gain of godliness; he will seem to be very holy when holiness is the way to outward greatness and happiness; but his religious wickedness will double-damn the hypocrite at last. Self-ends are the operative ingredients in all an hypocrite does; self is the chief engine, self is the great wheel, that sets all an hypocrite's wheels a-going. When hypocrites take up religion, it is only to serve their own turns, to bring about their own carnal ends; they serve not the Lord, but their own bellies, Rom 16:18; Php 3:19. They use religion only as a stream to turn about their own mill, and the more

neatly to effect their own carnal projects. Simon Magus will needs be baptized, and he is very desirous to have power to give the Holy Ghost to others; but his aim being only to get a name, and to get money, Peter tells him to his face, that his heart was not right in the sight of God, Acts 8:21. No man can go higher than his principles, and therefore an hypocrite having no higher principles than himself, all he does must needs be terminated in himself. Look, as all the rivers that come from the sea do return back again to the sea, from whence they come, so all those duties which arise from a man's self, must needs centre in a man's self. An hypocrite always makes himself the end of all his service; but let such hypocrites know, that though their profession be never so glorious, and their duties never so abundant, yet their ends being selfish and carnal, all their pretensions and performances are but beautiful abominations in the sight of God. An hypocrite has always a squint eye, and squint-eyed aims and squint-eyed ends in all he does. Balaam spake very religiously, and he multiplied altars and sacrifices; but the thing he had in his eye was the wages of unrighteousness, Num 22:23, 2Pe 2:15. Jehu destroyed bloody Ahab's house, he executed the vengeance of God upon that wicked family; he readily, resolutely, and effectually destroyed all the worshippers of Baal, but his ends were to secure the kingdom to him and his, 2Ki 10:1-36. Ahab and the Ninevites fasted in sackcloth, but it was merely that they might not feel the heavy judgments that they feared would overtake them, 1Ki 21:1-29, Jon 3:1-10. The Jews in Babylon fasted and mourned, and mourned and fasted seventy years, but it was more to get off their chains than their sins, it was more to be rid of their captivity than it was to be rid of their iniquity, Zec 7:5-6. Look, as the eagle hath an eye upon her prey when she flies highest, so these Jews in all their fasting, praying, mourning, they had only an eye to their own ease, deliverance, freedom, &c.; in all their religious duties they were acted from evil principles, and carried on by self-respects; and therefore Daniel denies that in all that seventy years' captivity they had prayed to any purpose. 'All this has come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth,' Dan 9:13. It is the end that dignifies or debaseth the action, that rectifies it or adulterates it, that sets a crown of honour or a crown of shame upon the head of it. He that commonly, habitually, in all his duties and services, proposes to himself no higher ends than the praises of men, or rewards of men, or the stopping the mouth of natural conscience, or only to avoid a smarting rod, or merely to secure himself from wrath to come, he is an hypocrite. The ends of a man's actions are always a great discovery either of sincerity or hypocrisy. Look, as great gifts, not sweetened with sincerity, are no ornaments to us; so great infirmities, not soured with hypocrisy, are no great deformities to us. An hypocrite's ends are always below God; they are always below glorifying of God, exalting of God, walking with God, and enjoying communion with God. An hypocrite, in all he does, still proposes to himself some poor, ignoble, self-end or other. But now mark, a sincere Christian, if he prays or hears, or gives or fasts, or repents or obeys, &c., God's glory is the main end of all. The glory of God is his highest end, his ultimate end, Psa 115:1; 1Th 2:6. A sincere Christian can be content to be trampled upon and vilified, so God's name be glorified. The bent of such a heart is for God and his glory, nothing but sincerity can carry a soul so high, as in all acts natural, civil and religious, to intend God's glory, Rev 4:9-11. A sincere Christian ascribes the praise of all to God; he sets the crown on Christ's head alone; he will set God upon the throne, and make all things else his servants, or his footstool, Rom 14:7-8. All must bow the knee to God, or be trodden in the dirt. He will love nothing, he will embrace nothing but what sets God higher, or brings God nearer to his heart. The glory of God is the mark, the white, that the sincere Christian has in his eye. The sincere Christian lives not

to himself, but to him who lives for ever; he lives not to his own will, or lusts, or greatness, or glory in this world, but he lives to his glory, whose glory is dearer to him than his own life, 1Co 10:31; Rev 12:11. Look, as bright shining golden vessels do not retain the beams of the sun which they receive, but reflect them back again upon the sun; so the sincere Christian returns and reflects back again upon the Sun of righteousness the praise and glory of all the gifts, graces, and virtues that they have received from him. The daily language of sincere souls is this: Non nobis Domine, non nobis Domine, not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord, but to thy name be all the glory, 1Ch 29:10, 1Ch 29:18; Rom 13:7. A sincere Christian makes conscience of giving men their dues; how much more, then, does he make conscience of giving God his due, Psalms 86:7-8. Now glory is God's due, and God stands upon nothing more than that we give him the glory due unto his name, as you may see in Psalms 29:1-2. There are three gives in those two verses: 'Give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name.' Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this the sincere Christian knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honour and the glory that is due unto his name. But pray do not mistake me: I do not say that such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions. Oh no! This is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till we come to heaven. Bye and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into the best hearts, but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them; and it is the earnest desires and daily endeavours of their souls to be rid of them; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But now take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his bye-aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods, Exodus 7:10-12. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God, where it is aimed at, will put out and consume all bye and base ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. He that sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat, Genesis 41:4, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all bye and base ends will be kept at an under. By what has been said, it is most evident that an hypocrite in all his transactions looks at himself, and designs the advance and advantage of himself. An hypocrite is as well able to make a world, and to unmake himself, as he is able to make the glory of God, the exaltation of God, his highest end, his utmost aim, in what he does. But,

[5.] Fifthly, No hypocrite can live wholly and only upon the righteousness of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, the merits of Christ, for justification and salvation. The hypocritical scribes and pharisees prayed and fasted, and kept the Sabbath, and gave alms, &c., and in this legal righteousness they rested and trusted, Matthew 6:1-34, Luke 18:11-12. Ponder upon that Revelation 3:16-18. Upon the performance of these and such like duties they laid the weight of their souls and the stress of their salvation, and so perished for ever. An hypocrite rests upon what he doth, and never looks so high as the righteousness of Christ. He looks upon his duties as so much good moneys laid out for heaven; he weaves a web of righteousness to clothe himself withal; he never looks out for a more glorious righteousness to be justified by than his own, and so puts a slight upon the righteousness of Christ: Romans 10:3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish

their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' The first step to salvation is to renounce our own righteousness; the next step is to embrace the righteousness of Christ, which is freely offered to sinners in the gospel; but these things the hypocrite minds not, regards not. The righteousness of an hypocrite is not only imperfect, but impure, a rag, a filthy rag; and therefore he that rests upon such a righteousness must needs miscarry to all eternity, Isa 64:6. O sirs! who will say that that man needs a saviour, that can fly to heaven upon the wings of his own duties and services? If a man's duties can pacify an infinite wrath, and satisfy an infinite justice, then farewell Christ, and welcome duties. He that will rest upon his own righteousness for life and justification, must needs sit down on this side salvation; he that rests upon his duties, and that rests upon a gift of knowledge, a gift of utterance, a gift of memory, or a gift of prayer, though he may come near to heaven, and bid fair for heaven, yet he will never be able to get into heaven. Now, how sad is it for a man to lose himself and his soul in a wilderness of duties, when he is upon the borders, yea, the very brink, of the holy land. He that rests upon anything in him, or done by him, as a means to procure the favour of God, or the salvation of his soul, will put such a cheat upon himself as will undo him for ever. Non-submission to the righteousness of Christ keeps Christ and the hypocrite asunder. Christ will never love nor like to put the fine, clean, white linen of his own righteousness upon the old garment, the old rags of an hypocrite's duties, Rev 19:7-8; neither will Christ ever delight to put his new wine into such old bottles, Mat 9:16-17. An hypocrite's confidence in his own righteousness turns his righteousness into filthiness, Pro 21:27. But now a sincere Christian, he renounces his own righteousness, he renounces all confidence in the flesh, Php 3:3; he looks upon his own righteousness as dung, yea, as dogs' meat, as some interpret the word σκ■βαλα in that Php 3:8; he will say no more to his duties, to the works of his hands, 'Ye are my gods,' Hos 14:3. When they look upon the holiness, of God's nature, the righteousness of his government, the severity of his law, the terror of his wrath, they see an absolute and indispensable necessity of a more glorious righteousness than their own to appear before God in. A sincere Christian sets the highest price and value upon the righteousness of Christ: Psa 71:16, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.' Mark the emphasis doubled, 'of thine,' and 'thine only.' A sincere Christian is convinced of the nature, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ, and therefore he cries out, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine only.' The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for an hundred talents, was indeed a mean and beggarly rag in a sincere Christian's eye, to that embroidered mantle of righteousness that Christ puts upon his. A sincere Christian rejoices in the righteousness of Christ above all: Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' It is matter of joy, and a sign of great favour from the great Turk, when a rich garment is cast upon any that comes into his presence. Oh then, what matter of joy must it be to a sincere Christian to have the rich and royal garment of Christ's righteousness cast upon him! Isa 28:16. A sincere Christian rests on the righteousness of Christ as on a sure foundation: Isa 45:24, 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' It was a very sweet and golden expression of one, when he thought himself to be at the point of death: 'I confess,' said he, 'I am not worthy; I have no merits of mine own to obtain heaven by; but my Lord had a double right thereunto; an hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice; he was contented with the one right himself, the other right

he hath given unto me, by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded.' A sincere Christian looks upon the righteous-of Christ as that which renders him most splendid and glorious in the eyes of God: Php 3:9, 'And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' 'The church,' saith Marloratus, 'which puts on Christ and his righteousness, is more illustrious than the air is by the sun.' A sincere Christian looks upon the righteousness of Christ as his only security against wrath to come, 1Th 1:10. Wrath to come is the greatest wrath, wrath to come is the purest wrath, wrath to come is infinite wrath, wrath to come is everlasting wrath. Now the sincere Christian, he knows no way under heaven to secure himself from wrath to come, but by putting on the robe of Christ's righteousness, Rom 13:14. The story tells us, if we may believe it, that Pilate being called to Rome to give an account unto the emperor for some misgovernment and mal-administration, he put on the seamless coat of Christ, and all the time he had that coat upon his back, Cæsar's fury was abated. There is nothing that can abate the wrath and fury of a sin-revenging God, but the seamless coat of God's righteousness. Well, for a close remember this, there is never an hypocrite in the world that is more pleased, satisfied, delighted and contented with the righteousness of Christ, than with his own, &c. Though an hypocrite may be much in duties, yet he never lives above his duties; he works for life, and he rests in his work, and this proves his mortal wound. But,

[6.] Sixthly, An hypocrite never embraces a whole Christ; he can never take up his full and everlasting rest, satisfaction, and content in the person of Christ, in the merits of Christ, in the enjoyment of Christ alone. No hypocrite did ever long and mourn after the enjoyment of Christ, as the best thing in all the world. No hypocrite did ever prize Christ for a Sanctifier as well as a Saviour. No hypocrite did ever look upon Christ, or long for Christ to deliver him from the power of his sins, as much or as well as to deliver him from wrath to come. No hypocrite can really love the person of Christ, or take satisfaction in the person of Christ. The rays and beams of Christ's glory has never warmed his heart; he never knew what bosom communion with Christ meant, 1Th 1:10. An hypocrite may love to be healed by Christ, and to be pardoned by Christ, and to be saved by Christ, &c.; but he can never take any complacency in the person of Christ; his heart never seriously works after union with Christ. The love of a sincere Christian runs much out to the person of Christ. Heaven itself without Christ would be to such a soul but a poor thing, a low thing, a little thing, an uncomfortable thing, an empty thing. It is the person of Christ that is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory, Song of Solomon 5:10; Php 1:21, and Php 3:7-10. No hypocrite in the world is sincerely willing to receive Christ in all his offices, and to close with him upon gospel terms. The terms upon which God offers Christ in the gospel are these, viz., that we shall accept of a whole Christ with a whole heart, 1Jn 5:1; Mat 16:24. Now, mark, a whole Christ includes all his offices, and a whole heart includes all our faculties. Christ as mediator is king, priest, and prophet; and so God the Father in the gospel offers him. Salvation was too great and too glorious a work to be perfected and completed by any one office of Christ. Christ as a prophet instructs us, and as a priest he redeems us and intercedes for us, and as a king he sanctifies and saves us. The apostle hit it when he said, 'He is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1Co 1:30. Consider Christ as our prophet, and so he is made wisdom to us; consider him as our priest, and so he is made righteousness and redemption to us; consider him as our king, and so he is made sanctification and holiness to us. An hypocrite may be willing to embrace Christ as a priest to save him from wrath, from the curse, from hell, from everlasting burning, but

he is never sincerely willing to embrace Christ as a prophet to teach and instruct him, and as a king to rule and reign over him. Many hypocrites may be willing to receive a Christ Jesus, that are not willing to receive a Lord Jesus; they may be willing to embrace a saving Christ, but they are not willing to embrace a ruling Christ, a commanding Christ: 'This man shall not rule over us,' Luk 19:27. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' 'And ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' 'He came to his own, and his own received him not.' An hypocrite is willing to receive Christ in one office, but not in every office; and this is that stumbling-stone at which hypocrites stumble and fall, and are broken in pieces. Certainly Christ is as lovely and as comely, as desirable and delightful, as eminent and excellent in one office as he is in another; and therefore it is a just and righteous thing with God, that hypocrites that won't receive him in every office, should have no benefit by any one of his offices. Christ and his offices may be distinguished, but Christ and his offices can never be divided, 1Co 1:13. Whilst many have been a-labouring to divide one office of Christ from another, they have wholly stripped themselves of any advantage or benefit by Christ. Hypocrites love to share with Christ in his happiness, but they don't love to share with Christ in his holiness. They are willing to be redeemed by Christ, but they are not cordially willing to submit to the laws and government of Christ; they are willing to be saved by his blood, but they are not willing to submit to his sceptre. Hypocrites love the privileges of the gospel, but they don't love the services of the gospel, especially those that are most inward and spiritual. But now a sincere Christian, he owns Christ in all his offices, he receives Christ in all his offices, and he closes with Christ in all his offices. He accepts of him, not only as a Christ Jesus, but also as a Lord Jesus; he embraces him, not only as a saving Christ, but also as a ruling Christ. The Colossians received him as Christ Jesus the Lord, Col 2:6; they received a Lord Christ as well as a saving Christ; they received Christ as a king upon his throne, as well as a sacrifice upon his cross, 2Co 4:5. God the Father in the gospel tenders a whole Christ. We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and accordingly a sincere Christian receives a whole Christ, he receives Christ Jesus the Lord, Acts 5:31; he says with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God,' John 20:28; he takes Christ for his wisdom as well as for his righteousness, and he takes him for his sanctification as well as for his redemption. An hypocrite is all for a saving Christ, for a sin-pardoning Christ, for a soul-glorifying Christ, but regards not a ruling Christ, a reigning Christ, a commanding Christ, a sanctifying Christ, and this at last will prove his damning sin, John 3:19-20. But,

[7] Seventhly, An hypocrite cannot mourn for sin as sin, nor grieve for sin as sin, nor hate sin as sin, nor make head against sin as sin. Mark, to hate sin is not (1.) Merely to refrain from sin, for so Balaam did, even then when he was tempted to it, Num 22:1-41. (2.) To hate sin is not merely to confess sin, for so Pharaoh and Judas did, Exo 10:16, Mat 27:4. (3.) To hate sin is not merely to be afraid to sin, for this may be where the hatred of sin is not. (4.) To hate sin is not merely to mourn because of the dreadful effects and fruits that sin may produce, for so Ahab did, and the Ninevites did, &c. He that fears sin for hell, fears not to sin but to burn, but he hates sin indeed whoso hates sin as hell itself. It was a saying of one of the ancients, that if hell and sin were before him, he would rather fall into hell than fall into sin.³ Here was a true hatred of sin indeed. An hypocrite may be troubled for sin, as it blots his name, and wounds his conscience, and brings a scourge, and destroys his soul, and shuts him out of heaven, and throws him to hell; but he is never troubled for sin, he never mourns for sin, he never hates sin because it is contrary to the

nature of God, the being of God, the law of God, the glory of God, the design of God, or because of the evil that is in the nature of sin, or because of the defiling and polluting power of sin. True hatred of sin is universal; it is of the whole kind. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; and he who hates a man because he is holy, hates every holy man; and so he who hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin: Psa 119:128, 'I hate every false way.' True hatred is ever against the whole kind of a thing. Every sincere Christian hath in him a general hatred of every false way, and dares not allow himself in the least sin. 'What I do I allow not,' Rom 7:15: Rom 12:9, 'Abhor that which is evil.' The Greek word **μισοῦντες** is very significant. The simple verb imports extreme detestation, which is aggravated by the composition. The word signifies to hate evil as hell itself. Though an hypocrite may hate some sins,—'Thou abhorrest idols,' Rom 2:22,—yet that is out of some peculiar and particular indisposition to a particular sin; but this hatred of this or that particular sin, ariseth not from an inward nature or gracious principle, as it doth in him that is a sincere Christian; and the reason is this, because that contrariety to sin which is in a real Christian arising from this inward gracious nature, is to the whole species or kind of sin, and is irreconcilable to any sin whatsoever. As contraries of nature are to the whole kind, as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water; so this contrariety to sin arising from the inward man, is universal to all sin. Though a sincere Christian has not a universal victory over all sin, yet there is in him a universal contrariety to all sin. Victory argues strength, contrariety argues nature. Hence it is that an hypocrite may hate one sin and love another, because there is not a gracious nature in him which would be contrary to all. The inward nature of a Christian is to be judged by the universal contrariety of his inward man to all sin. Now this universal contrariety to all sin will beget a universal conflict with all sin. O sirs! remember this: universal contrariety to sin can be found in no man but he that is sincere; and this universal contrariety to sin argues an inward nature of grace, and this is that which differences a real Christian from an hypocrite, who may oppose some sins out of other principles and reasons. An hypocrite may be angry with this sin and that, which brings the smarting rod, and wounds his conscience, and disturbs his peace, and embitters his mercies, and strangles his comforts, and that lays him open to wrath, and that brings him even to the gates of hell, but he can never hate sin as sin. An hypocrite, he hates some sins but likes others, he loathes some but loves others, he opposes some but practises others, like the angel of the church of Ephesus, that hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but loved lukewarmness. Many men detest theft that love covetousness, abhor whoredom that like irreligiosity, &c., Rev 2:5-6. There is no hypocrite under heaven that can truly say, I hate every false way; but a sincere Christian he hates all sinful ways, but his own first and most. An upright heart leaves no nest-egg for Satan to sit on, but the hypocrite always does. Mark, in true hatred there are six things observable:

(1.) First, True hatred includes an extreme detestation. Every dislike is not hatred, but true hatred is an extreme loathing: 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence,' Isa 30:22; 'In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats,' Isa 2:20. Their detestation should be so great that they should cast their most costly idols of silver and gold to the most dark, nasty, dusty corners. To testify the sincerity of their conversion to God, they should hate and abhor, abandon and abolish, their gold and silver idols which they valued above all others.

(2.) Secondly, True hatred includes earnest separation. He that hates his sin would fain be separated from his sin; 'For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened,' 2Co 5:4. A sincere Christian finds no burden to lie so heavy and weighty upon his spirit as sin, and therefore he groans to be delivered from it. In the law, he that hated his wife did sue out a bill of divorce from her, Deu 24:3. He that truly hates sin, puts in many a bill into the court of heaven that he may be for ever divorced from his sin.

(3.) Thirdly, True hatred includes an irreconcilable alienation. He that hates sin has his heart for ever alienated from sin; he who hates sin can never be one with sin. Two angry men may be made friends; but if two men hate each other, all friendship is everlastingly broken betwixt them. A man may be angry with sin, and yet made friends with sin again; but if once he comes to hate his sin, then all friendship with sin is everlastingly broken. When Christ and the soul comes to be really one, then sin and the soul comes to be everlastingly two, &c.

(4.) Fourthly, True hatred includes a constant and perpetual conflict: 'The flesh will be still lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.' Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whilst a believer lives in this world, they must live together; and whilst sin and grace do cohabit together, they will still be opposing and conflicting one with another, Gal 5:17, Rom 7:22-23. That man that truly hates sin will everlastingly conflict with sin. He will die fighting against his sins, as one of the dukes of Venice died fighting against his enemies with his weapons in his hand. Well, Christians, remember this, though to be kept from sin brings most peace and comfort to us, yet for us to oppose sin, and for God to pardon sin, that brings most glory to God, 2Co 12:7-9.

(5.) Fifthly. True hatred includes a deadly intention and destruction, for nothing satisfies hatred but death and ruin. Saul hated David, and sought his life; he hunted him up and down as a partridge in the mountains; he left no stone unturned, nor no means unattempted, whereby he might revenge himself upon David, 1Sa 26:19-20; 1Sa 23:22. Haman hated Mordecai, and nothing would satisfy him but to bring him to a shameful death, to see him hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high, Est 5:14, which was designed, saith Lyra, to put Mordecai to the greater shame, for he hanging high, every one might see him and point to him. Now when there was but one night betwixt Mordecai and a shameful death, divine providence opportunely struck in and saved him from Haman's malice, and caused the mischief which he had plotted against Mordecai suddenly to fall upon his own pate; for he who was highly feasted with the king one day, was made a feast for crows the next day. Absalom hated Amnon and killed him, 2Sa 13:22-33. Julian the apostate hated the Christians with a deadly hatred. He put many thousands of them to death, and threatened and vowed that at his return from fighting against the Persians, he would put all the Christians in his empire to the sword; but God prevented him by cutting him off in that expedition. A Christian that hates sin can't be satisfied but in the death and destruction of it. In all his duties the language of his soul is, Lord, let my sins be destroyed; whoever escapes, let not my sins escape the hand of thy revenging justice. And in all ordinances the language of his soul is, O Lord! when shall my sins be subdued and mortified? when shall my cursed corruptions be brought to an under? yea, when shall they all be drowned in the Red Sea of my Saviour's blood? &c.

(6.) Sixthly, True hatred includes an impartial aversation; true hatred is of the whole kind. But of this before. To wind up all, ask thy heart what is it that thou abhorrest as the superlative evil? What

is that which thou wouldest have separated as far from thee as heaven is from hell? What is that thy heart will never renew league or friendship with any more? What is that against which thy soul doth rise, and with which, as Israel with Amalek, thou wilt have war for ever? Exo 17:16. What is that which thou wilt be avenged of, and daily dost endeavour the mortifying and crucifying of? What is that which thou settest thy heart against in the comprehensive latitude thereof, whether great or little, open or secret? If it be sin, if it be thy sins, if it be all thy sins, then assuredly here is a true hatred of sin, and assuredly here is a most distinguishing character of a child of God, of a sound conversion, and of a saving change. It was not wont to be thus with thee, nor is this findable in any hypocrite, or in any unconverted person upon the face of the earth. Sin was once to thee as Delilah to Samson, Jdg 14:3, Jdg 14:7; but now it is to thee as Tamar to Amnon, 2Sa 13:15. Once it was a sweet morsel which thou heldest fast and wouldest not let it go, Job 20:12-13; but now it is the menstruous cloth, Isa 30:22, which thou castest away, saying, 'Get thee hence.' Now with Ephraim thou criest out, 'What have I to do any more with idols?' Hos 14:8. Oh, if it be indeed thus with thee, then thou hast cause for ever to be much in blessing and in admiring of the Lord for his distinguishing grace and favour towards thee. O sirs! the world is full of baits, snares, and temptations; but whilst the hatred of sin burns in your breasts, you may cast up your caps, and throw the gauntlet to the world, the flesh, and the devil. Well, remember this for ever, there are three things an hypocrite can never do: (1.) He can never mourn for sin as sin. (2.) He can never mourn for the sins of others as well as his own. Moses, Lot, David, Jeremiah, Paul, and those in that Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6, mourned for others' sins as well as their own; but Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas, Demas, Simon Magus never did. (3.) He can never hate sin as sin. But,

[8.] Eighthly, No hypocrite is habitually low or little in his own eyes. No hypocrite has ordinarily mean thoughts of himself, or a poor esteem of himself. No hypocrite loves to lessen himself to greaten Christ, to debase himself to exalt Christ, 1Co 8:1-2, John 7:49 and John 9:34. No hypocrite loves to be outshined; all hypocrites love to write an I, not a Christ, upon what they do. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess,' Luk 18:11-12. All hypocrites stand not only upon their comparisons, but also upon their disparisons: 'I am not as this publican.' All hypocrites stand much upon their negative righteousness and their comparative goodness. There is no hypocrite in the world but sets down his penny for a pound, and always prizes himself above the market: 2Ki 10:15-16, 'And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab, coming to meet him; and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into his chariot; and he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.' Come, make a greater blaze than fixed stars: 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord.' Jehu his words were for the Lord, but his project was for the kingdom. The actor in the comedy said with his mouth, O cœlum, O heaven, but with his finger he pointed to the earth. Lapidaries tell us of a stone called the chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue no longer than it is enclosed in gold; a fit emblem of an hypocrite, of a Jehu. Jehu made a great blaze, but he was but a comet. An hypocrite always loves the praise of men more than the praise of God, John 12:43. He loves more to be honoured by men than to be honoured by God: 'How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?' John 5:44. Nothing below that power which raised Christ from the grave can make an hypocrite purely nothing in his own eyes. An hypocrite is always a

great thing in his own eyes; and when he is nothing, a great nothing in others' eyes; he cannot bear it. An hypocrite cannot endure to be outshined in gifts, in graces, in experiences, in duties, in communion with God, in spiritual enjoyments. An hypocrite's heart is full of pride when his deportment is most humble. He always thinks best of himself, and worst of others; he looks upon his own vices as graces, and he looks upon other men's graces as vices, or at least as no true current coin. A proud spirit will cast disgrace upon that excellency that himself wants; as Licinius, who was joined with Galerius in the empire, he was so ignorant that he was not able to write his own name; he was a bitter enemy to learning, and as Eusebius reports of him, he called the liberal arts a public poison and pestilence.³ The emptiest barrels make the loudest sound, the worst metal the greatest noise, and the lightest ears of corn hold their heads highest. An hypocrite may well lay his hand upon his heart, and say, Is it not so with me, is it not just so with me? But now sincere Christians, they are men of another spirit, of another temper, of another metal, of another mind; their hearts lie low when their gifts, and graces, and spiritual enjoyments are high. Abraham is but dust and ashes in his own eyes, Gen 18:27. The higher any man is in his communion with God, the more low that man will be in his own eyes. Dust and ashes are poor, base, vile, worthless things, and such a thing as these was Abraham in his own eyes. So Jacob was a plain man, an upright man, and lo! what a low esteem had he of himself: 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,' Gen 32:10. In the Hebrew it is, 'I am little before thy mercies;' for the Hebrews have no comparative, and therefore they are wont to express this by a positive and a preposition. When Jacob had to do with Laban, he pleads his merits; but when he has to do with God, he pleads nothing but grace, setting a very low esteem upon himself. He looks upon himself as less than the least of mercies, and as worse than the worst of creatures. The least of my mercies are greater than I deserve, and the greatest of my troubles are less than I deserve, saith Jacob. The language of a plain-hearted Jacob is this: O Lord, I might with Job have been stripped of all my comforts and enjoyments at a clap, and set upon a dunghill; I might with Lazarus have been begging my bread from door to door; or I might have been getting my bread with the peril of my life, because of the sword of the wilderness, Lam 5:9; or I might have been with Dives in hell a-crying out for a drop of water to cool my tongue, Luk 16:24. A sincere Christian cannot tell how to speak good enough of God, nor ill enough of himself. Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on earth, and see how greatly he debases himself: 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man,' Pro 30:1-2. Agur had seen Ithiel, God with me, and Ucal, God almighty, and this made him so vile and base in his own eyes; this made him vilify, yea, nullify himself to the utmost. You know no man ever received a fairer or a more valuable certificate under the hand of God or the broad seal of heaven, for his being a soul famous in uprightness and holiness, than Job, as you may see, Job 1:8, 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.' Job was high in worth and humble in heart: Job 42:5-6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' This expression is the deepest act of abhorrency. Abhorrency strictly taken is hatred wound up to the height: 'I abhor myself.' The Hebrew word that is rendered abhor signifies to reject, to disdain, to contemn, to cast off. Ah! says Job, I abhor myself, I reject myself, I disdain myself, I cast off myself, I have a very vile and base esteem of myself. David was a man of great integrity, a man after God's own heart, and yet he looks upon himself as a flea; and what is more contemptible than a flea? 1Ki 15:5, 1Sa 26:20. And as he looks upon himself as a

flea, so he looks upon himself as a worm: 'I am a worm, and no man,' Psa 22:6. The Hebrew word **תולע**, tolagath, that is here rendered a worm, signifies a very little worm which breedeth in scarlet, a worm that is so little that a man can hardly perceive it. A worm is the most despicable creature in the world, trampled under foot by man and beasts. He who was in God's eye a man after his own heart, is in his own eye but a despicable worm. A sincere Christian is a little nothing in his own eyes. So Paul, who had been caught up into the third heaven, and learned his divinity among the angels, as one speaks [Chrysostom], and had such glorious revelations as could not be uttered, yet he accounts himself less than the least of all saints: Eph 3:8, 'Unto me who am less than the least of all saints.' The Greek is a comparative made of a superlative: less than the least of all saints is a double diminutive, and signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be; not that any thing can be less than the least. Paul's rhetoric doth not cross Aristotle's philosophy. The original word being a double diminutive, his meaning is that he was as little as could be; therefore he put himself down so little as could not be less than the least. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility: great Paul is least of saints, last of the apostles, and greatest of sinners, 1Ti 1:15. So Peter, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' Luk 5:8, or as the Greek runs, **ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτωλός**, 'a man, a sinner,' a very mixture and compound of dirt and sin; a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity. So Luther, 'I have no other name than sinner, sinner is my name, sinner is my surname; this is the name by which I shall be always known. I have sinned, I do sin, I shall sin in infinitum,' saith Luther, speaking vilely and basely of itself. Lord, I am hell and thou art heaven, said blessed Hooper; I am a most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that the earth should bear me, said blessed Bradford. Thus you see by these several instances that sincere Christians do as it were take a holy pleasure and delight to debase, humble, and vilify themselves. But this is a work hypocrites are mere strangers to. There is not an hypocrite under heaven that loves to debase himself, or that makes it his duty conscientiously to vilify and lessen himself that Christ may be set up above all. Humility is a grace hardly attained unto. 'Many,' saith one [Augustine], 'can more easily give all they have to the poor, than themselves become poor in spirit.' But,

[9.] Ninthly, No hypocrite will long hold out in the work and ways of the Lord, in the want of outward encouragements, and in the face of outward discouragements. An hypocrite is an apostate cased, and an apostate is an hypocrite uncased: Job 27:8, 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God shall take away his soul?' Job 27:10, 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?' Or, as the Hebrew runs, 'Will he in every time call upon God?' It may be he may formally call on God in time of prosperity; but can he seriously do it in time of adversity? Sometimes when the rod is upon them, then they will pour out a prayer to God: 'In their affliction they will seek me early,' Isa 26:16, Hos 5:15. 'When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired after God,' Psa 78:34. But this was not the standing frame of their hearts: Psa 78:36, 'Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Psa 78:37, 'For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' When Pharaoh was upon the rack, he could roar a confession, and earnestly cry out for a prayer, Exo 10:16-17, Exo 10:19-20; but when the judgment was removed, Pharaoh was as proud, and hard, and blind as ever. When Adonijah was in danger of death, then he could hang on the horns of the altar, 1Ki 1:50-51. When Ahab was threatened with utter desolation, then he could fast and lie in sackcloth; and so did the Ninevites. But all this was but like Ephraim and Judah's goodness, that as a morning cloud and as the early dew passeth away. Will the hypocrite always,

or in every time, call upon God? Will the hypocrite call upon God as often as providence calls him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as judgments call him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as conscience calls him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as it is his duty to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as others call upon him to call upon God? Oh no! The hypocrite will not always call upon God; he will not persevere in prayer; he will not hold on nor hold out in prayer; he is short-spirited; he cannot always pray and not faint, or shrink back as sluggards do in work, or cowards in war, as the original word in Luke imports, Luk 18:1, ■κκακε■v. An hypocrite, for want of an inward principle, can neither delight in God, nor always call upon God. If God comes not at his call, if he opens not as soon as he knocks, he is out of patience, and ready to say with that proud profane prince, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord, and what should I wait for him any longer?' 2Ki 6:33. If an hypocrite obtains the mercy he desires, then he will throw off prayer, as he said, 'Take away the net, the fish is caught;' if he obtains not the mercy, then he will grow weary of his duty. 'Thou hast been weary of me,' O Israel, Mal 1:13, Isa 43:22. Prayer is too hard and too high a work for an unsound heart to hold on in. Prayer is heart-work, and that proves heavy work to him. The soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, and this is a work that an hypocrite has no skill in, 1Sa 1:15. It was a profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, that told God he was no common beggar, he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would but hear him that time, he would never trouble him again. Even such a spirit and such principles lie lurking in every hypocrite's breast. Doubtless he hit it who said, 'How canst thou expect that God should hear thee, when thou wilt not hear thyself? or that God should give thee a return in prayer, when thou art not mindful what thou askest in prayer?'² But now a sincere Christian he will go on in prayer, speed or not speed. If he prevails, he will love prayer the better all his days; if he do not for the present prevail, he will be so much the more importunate with God in prayer. It is as natural for a bird to live without air, and for a fish to live without water, and for a man to live without food, as it is for a sincere heart to live without prayer. 'Oh,' saith Chrysostom, 'it is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer.' And hereupon, as he observes, Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to lose or give over his private prayers, Dan 6:1-28. Prayer is the key of heaven, and a sincere Christian loves much to be a-handling of that key, though he should die for it. As that emperor said, *Oportet imperatorem stantem mori*, It behoves an emperor to die standing; so may I say, *Oportet Christianum mori precantem*, it behoves a Christian to die praying. An hypocrite will never hold out to the end. Let but outward encouragements fail him, and his heart will quickly fail him in a way of duty. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapours, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapours dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear. Let but the eye, the ear, the applause of men, fail the hypocrite, and he will be ready to throw up all. If an hypocrite cannot make some gain of his godliness, some profit of his profession, some advantage of his religion, he will be ready with Demas to turn his back upon all religious duties and services, 2Pe 2:20-22, 2Ti 4:10. Look, as a lame horse, when he is heated, will go well enough, but when he cools, will halt downright; even so an hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in his way, yet in the end he will halt downright, and bid farewell, if not defiance, to all religious duties and services. Profit and applause are usually the baits that hypocrites bite at, and if they miss these baits, then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all: John 6:66. 'From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.' Many hypocrites who had given up their names to Christ, and who for a time had been followers of Christ, at last deserted him and turned

their backs for ever upon him: Mat 13:5, 'Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth' (not much care to receive, not much understanding to apprehend, not much faith to believe, not much will to obey, or not much love to retain it), 'and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth.' Mat 13:6, 'And when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.' This second ground goes beyond the former: for (1.) it receives the seed; (2.) incontinently; (3.) with joy; (4.) it brings up the seed sown. It sprung up to sundry degrees: [1.] to external obedience and reformation in many things; [2.] to an outward profession; [3.] to a kind of faith; but when the sun of persecution beat hot upon them they withered and fell away; not all at once, but by little and little, as a leaf loseth his greenness and flourish, and withers by degrees. In the Palatinate, when the sun of persecution began to scorch them, scarce one professor of twenty stood out, but fell to popery as fast as leaves in autumn. The crystal looks like pearl till it comes to the hammering; so an hypocrite looks like a Christian, and in many things acts like a Christian, till he comes to be hammered by sufferings, by persecutions, and then he discovers himself in his colours; and with Hymeneus and Alexander, he makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1Ti 1:19-20, Hos 5:2. In suffering times, hypocrites labour mightily to put out that light which shines in their bosoms, and when they have quenched that light, then farewell faith, farewell profession, farewell a good conscience, farewell all. The wolf, though he often dissembles and closely hides his nature, yet he cannot always do so; for at one time or other he will shew himself to be a wolf; so though an hypocrite may carry it closely for a time, yet he will one time or other discover himself to be an hypocrite. It is reported of the waters of Nilus, that having run many hundred of miles a pure and clear water, when it comes near the Mediterranean Sea, it begins to grow brackish and salt, and at last it falls into the sea and loseth its name. Sooner or later this will be the case of all hypocrites; they won't retain their spiritual fairness, clearness, and sweetness long, but by degrees will grow brackish and salt, and lose their names, and all that seeming goodness and sweetness that once seemed to be in them. But now a sincere Christian, he will hold on and hold out in the ways of the Lord, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all multiplied discouragements. When the eye of men, the favour of men, the bounty of men, and all other encouragement from men fails, yet then a sincere Christian will hold up, and hold on in his work and way. 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger,' Job 17:9. The righteous man shall go on in a way of righteous[ness] to the end; no multiplied calamities or miseries shall ever work him to decline the way of righteousness. From this way a sincere Christian will never be withdrawn, either by any hopes or advantages on the one hand, or by any fears or dangers on the other. Sincere Christians have not taken up religion on such slight grounds, as to be either flattered or frightened out of it. Sincere Christians reckon upon afflictions, temptations, crosses, losses, reproaches on the one hand, and they reckon upon a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory on the other hand, and hereupon they set up their staff, fully resolving never to depart from the good old way wherein they have found rest to their souls, John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2Ti 4:8. Sincere Christians take Christ and his ways for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in prosperity and adversity; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer and reign, to live and die with him, Jer 6:16. When all outward encouragements from God shall fail, yet a sincere Christian will keep close to his God, and close to his duty. 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my

salvation.' Hab 3:17-18. When all necessary and delightful mercies fail, yet he will not fail in his duty. Though God withhold his blessings, yet he will not withhold his service; in the want of a livelihood, he will be lively in his duty; when he hath nothing to subsist by, yet then he will live upon his God, and joy in his God, and keep close to his God. Though war and want come, yet he will not be wanting in his duty. Mark, there are three things in a sincere Christian that will strongly incline him to keep close to the Lord, and close to his ways in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. And the first is a forcible principle, divine love; the second is a mighty aid, the Spirit of God; and the third is a high aim, the glory of God, 2Co 5:14; Php 4:12-13; Rom 14:7-8. Look, as Ruth kept close to her mother in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements,—'And Ruth said, Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part thee and me,' Ruth 1:16-17,—so saith a sincere Christian, I will take my lot with Christ wherever it falls; I will keep close to the Lord, and close to my duty, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. Though outward encouragements be sometimes as a side wind, or as oil, or as chariot wheels, means to move a Christian to go on more sweetly, easily, and comfortably in the ways of God, yet when this wind shall fail, and these chariot wheels shall be knocked off, a sincere Christian will keep close to the Lord and his ways. 'All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways,' Psal 44:17-18. But what do they mean by saying, 'All this is come upon us'? Why, that you may see in the foregoing part of the psalm: 'Thou hast cast us off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies. Thou makest us turn back from the enemy; and they which hate us spoil for themselves. Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price. Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a by-word among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people,' Psal 44:9-14. Antiochus Epiphanes looked upon the Jews' religion as superstition; his wrath and rage was exceeding great, both against the Jews and against their religion; he practised all manner of cruelty upon the miserable Jews, but yet there was a remnant among them who were faithful to the Lord, and to his covenant, and to his laws, and to his ways, even to the death. Though in the time of the Maccabees many revolted to paganism, yet some maintained their constancy and integrity to the last. That is a great word of the prophet Micah: 'For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever,' Mic 4:5. This absolute and peremptory resolution to be really the Lord's, and for ever the Lord's, is of the essence of true conversion. It is not the world's flatteries that can bribe off a sincere Christian from the ways of God; nor it is not the world's frowns that can beat off a sincere Christian from the ways of God; but an hypocrite will never, an hypocrite can never hold it out to the end. His ground tackle will never hold when the storm beats strong upon him. An hypocrite is hot at hand, but soon tires and gives in. But,

[10.] Tenthly, No hypocrite ever makes it his business, his work, to bring his heart into religious duties and services, Mat 15:8, Mark 7:6. He never makes conscience of bringing his heart into his work. An hypocrite is heartless in all he does: Psal 78:34, 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired early after God.' Psal 78:36, 'Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.' Psal 78:37, 'For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' All lip-labour is but lost labour. When

men's hearts are not in their devotion, their devotion is mere dissimulation. These hypocrites sought God, and inquired early after God, but it was still with old hearts, which are no hearts in the account of God. They made lip work of it, and head work of it, but their hearts not being in their work, all was lost: their seeking lost, their inquiring lost, their God lost, their souls lost, and eternity lost: Hos 7:14, 'And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds.' When men's hearts are not in their prayers, all their praying is but as an hideous howling in the account of God.³ The cry of the heart is the only cry that God likes, loves, and looks for. He accepts of no cry, he delights in no cry, he rewards no cry, but the cry of the heart. Hypocrites are heartless in their cries, and therefore they cry and howl, and howl and cry, and all to no purpose. They cry and murmur, and they howl and repine; they cry and blaspheme, and they howl and rebel; and therefore they meet with nothing from heaven but frowns, and blows, and disappointments: Isa 29:3, 'Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.' Eze 33:31, 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Though this people flocked to the prophet in troops, as men and women do to places of pleasure; and though they carried it before the prophet as if they were saints, as if they were the people of God, as if they were affected with what they heard, as if they were resolved to live out what the prophet should make out to them; yet their hearts ran after their covetousness. Though these hypocrites professed much love and kindness to the prophet, and paid him home with smooth words, and seemed to be much affected, delighted, ravished, and taken with his person, voice, and doctrine, yet they made no conscience of bringing their hearts into their duties. An hypocrite may look at some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion, but he never makes conscience of bringing his heart into any duties of religion. When did you ever see an hypocrite a-searching of his heart, or sitting in judgment upon the corruptions of his soul, or lamenting and mourning over the vileness and wickedness of his spirit? It is only the sincere Christian that is affected, afflicted, and wounded with the corruptions of his heart. When one told blessed Bradford that he did all out of hypocrisy, because he would have the people applaud him, he answered, It is true, the seeds of hypocrisy and vain glory are in thee and me too, and will be in us as long as we live in this world; but I thank God it is that I mourn under and strive against. How seriously and deeply did good Hezekiah humble himself for the pride of his heart! 'Out of the eater came meat,' out of his pride he gat humility, 2Ch 32:25.

O sirs! a sincere Christian makes it his great business to get his heart into all his religious duties and services, to get his heart into every way and work of God, Song of Solomon 3:1-6. Jehoshaphat's heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord, 2Ch 17:6. So David, 'I will praise thee, O Lord, with all my heart,' Psa 36:12. And so Psa 119:7, 'I will praise thee with uprightness of heart.' Psa 119:10, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee.' So Jehoshaphat he sought the Lord with all his heart, 2Ch 22:9. Isa 26:8, 'The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.' Isa 26:9, 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.' Lam 3:41, 'Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.' Rom 1:9, 'For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.' Paul's very spirit, his very soul, was in his service. Php 3:3, 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' Rom 7:25, 'With the mind I myself serve the law of God.' A

sincere Christian is always best when his heart is in his work, and when he cannot get his heart into his duties, oh! how does he sigh, and groan, and complain, and mourn at the foot of God! Lord, my tongue has been at work, and my head has been at work, and my parts have been at work, and my eyes and hands have been at work, but where has my heart been this day? Oh! it is and must be for a sore and sad lamentation that I have had so little of my heart in that service that I have tendered to thee! This is the daily language of an upright heart. But now all the work of an hypocrite is to get his golden parts into his duties, and his silver tongue into his duties, and his nimble head into his duties; but he never makes conscience of getting his heart into his duties. If any beasts sacrificed by heathens, who ever looked narrowly into the entrails, was found without a heart, this was held ominous, and construed as very prodigious to the person for whom it was offered, as it fell out in the case of Julian. Hypocrites are always heartless in all the sacrifices they offer to God, and this will one day prove ominous and prodigious to them. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, An hypocrite never performs religious duties from spiritual principles, nor in a spiritual manner. An hypocrite is never inclined, moved, and carried to God, to Christ, to holy duties, by the power of a new and inward principle of grace working a suitableness between his heart and the things of God. An hypocrite rests himself satisfied in the mere external acts of religion, though he never feels anything of the power of religion in his own soul. An hypocrite looks to his words in prayer, and to his voice in prayer, and to his gestures in prayer, but he never looks to the frame of his heart in prayer. An hypocrite's heart is never touched with the words his tongue utters; an hypocrite's soul is never divinely affected, delighted, or graciously warmed with any duty he performs. An hypocrite's spiritual performances never flow from spiritual principles, nor from a heart universally sanctified. Though his works may be new, yet his heart remains old; his new practices always spring from old principles; and this will prove the hypocrite's bane, as you may see in that Isa 1:15, 'When you spread forth your hands to heaven, I will hide my eyes; and when you make many prayers, when you abound in duty,' adding prayer to prayer, as the Hebrew runs, 'I will not hear, your hands are full of blood.' These were unsanctified ones; their practices were new, but their hearts were old still, Isa 1:10-16. The same you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who fasted, prayed, and gave alms, but their hearts were not changed, renewed, sanctified, nor principled from above; and this proved their eternal bane, Mat 6:1-34, Mat 23:1-39; Luk 18:1-43. Nicodemus was a man of great note, name, and fame among the pharisees, and he fasted, and prayed, and gave alms, and paid tithes, &c., and yet a mere stranger to the new birth; regeneration was a paradox to him. 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' John 3:4. This great doctor was so great a dunce, that he understood no more of the doctrine of regeneration, than a mere child does the darkest precepts of astronomy. Look, as water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it came, so the natural man can rise no higher than nature, 1Co 2:14. An hypocrite may know much, and pray much, and hear much, and fast much, and give much, and obey much, and all to no purpose, because he never manages anything he does in a right manner; he never carries on his work from inward principles of faith, fervency, life, love, delight, &c. Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Ans. No; he cannot delight himself in the Almighty.

(1.) To delight in God is one of the highest acts of grace; and how can an hypocrite put forth one of the highest acts of grace, who hath no grace? An hypocrite may know much of God, and talk much of God, and make a great profession of God, and be verbally thankful to God; but he can never

love God, nor trust in God, nor delight in God, nor take up his rest in God, &c.

(2.) An hypocrite knows not God; and how then can he delight in that God whom he does not know? An hypocrite has no inward, saving, transforming, experimental, affectionate, practical knowledge of God; and therefore he can never take any pleasure or delight in God.

(3.) There is no suitableness between an hypocrite and God; and how then can an hypocrite delight himself in God? There is the greatest contrariety imaginable betwixt God and an hypocrite. God is light, and the hypocrite is darkness; God is holiness, and he filthiness; God is righteousness, and he unrighteousness; God is fulness, and he emptiness, 2Co 6:15-16. Now what complacency can there be where there is such an utter contrariety?

(4.) Every hypocrite's heart is full of enmity against God; and how then can he delight himself in God? 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,' Rom 8:7. The best part of an hypocrite is not only averse, but utterly adverse to God and all goodness. The eagle, saith the philosopher, hath a continual enmity with the dragon and the serpent. And so an hypocrite's heart is still full of enmity against the Lord; and therefore he can never delight himself in the Lord.

(5.) The stream, cream, and strength of an hypocrite's delight runs out to himself, and to this lust or that, or this relation or that, to this creature-comfort or that, to this worldly enjoyment or that, or else to arts, parts, gifts, privileges, &c., and therefore how can he delight himself in the Almighty? An hypocrite always terminates his delight in something on this side God, Christ, and heaven. Look, as the apricock tree, though it leans against the wall, yet it is fast rooted in the earth; so though an hypocrite may lean towards God, and towards Christ, and towards heaven, yet his delight is still rooted fast in one creature-comfort or another, &c. God nor Christ is never the adequate object of an hypocrite's delight. An hypocrite is never principled to delight himself in a holy God, neither can he cordially, divinely, habitually delight himself in holy duties. An hypocrite may reform many evil things, and he may do many good duties, and yet all this while it is only his practices, but not his heart or principles, that are changed and altered. Mark, though an hypocrite hath nothing in him which is essential to a Christian as a Christian, yet he may be the complete resemblance of a Christian in all those things which are not essential to him. An hypocrite, in all the externals of religion, may be the complete picture of a sincere Christian; but then if you look to his principles, and the manner of his managing of holy duties, there you will find him lame and defective, and as much unlike a sincere Christian, as ever Michal's image was unlike to David, 1Sa 19:13-16; and this will prove the great crack, the great break-neck of hypocrites at last.

O sirs! it is considerable, that outward motives and natural principles have carried many heathens to do many great and glorious things in the world. Did not Sisera do as great things as Gideon? The difference did only lie here, that the great things which Gideon did, he did from more spiritual principles and raised considerations, than any Sisera was acted by. And did not Diogenes trample under his feet the great and glorious things of this world, as well as Moses? Heb 11:24. The difference did only lie in this, that Moses trampled under his feet the gay and gallant things of this world, from inward gracious principles, viz., faith, love, &c., and from high and glorious considerations, viz., heaven, the glory of God, &c., whereas Diogenes did only trample upon them from poor, low principles, and from mere outward, carnal, external considerations. The favour of men, the eye of men, the commendations of men, the applause of men, and a great name among

men, were golden apples, great things among the philosophers. The application is easy.

Mark, A sincere Christian, he looks to the manner as well as to the matter of his duties; he acts and performs duties, not only from strength of parts and acquired qualifications, but from strength of grace and infused habits; he acts from God and for God; he acts from a new heart; he acts from the law written in his heart; he acts from the love of God shed abroad in his heart; he acts from the divine nature communicated to him; he acts from the Spirit's indwelling in his heart; he acts from the fear of God established in his heart. These be the springs and principles of a sincere Christian's spiritual life and actions; and where they act and bear rule, it is no wonder if [there be] such motions and performances as the world may admire but not imitate. Saul's life, after his conversion, was a kind of constant miracle. So much he did, and so much he suffered, and so much he denied himself, that if he lived in these days his life would be a miracle; but yet if we consider the principles that he was acted by, the great wonder will be, not that he did so much, but that he did no more: 'For,' saith he, 'Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' Gal 2:20. It was a great saying of blessed Bradford, that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty, till he had brought his heart into a duty-frame. He could not leave confession till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin, nor petition till he had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and carried out after them; nor could he leave thanksgiving till he had found his spirit enlarged and his soul quickened in the return of praises. And it was a great saying of another, 'that he could never be quiet till he found God in every duty, and enjoyed communion with God in every prayer.' 'O Lord,' said he, 'I never come to thee but by thee, I never go from thee without thee.' A sincere Christian that is taken with Christ above all, cannot be satisfied nor contented with duties or ordinances, without he enjoys Christ in them, who is the life, soul, and substance of them. But now hypocrites they do duties, but all they do is from common principles, from natural principles, and from an unsanctified heart; and that mars all. Remigius, a judge of Lorraine, tells this story, that the devil in those parts did use to give money to witches, which did appear to be good coin; it seemed to be current at first, but being laid up a while, it then appeared to be nothing but leaves.² Hypocrites they make a great profession, and are much in the outward actions of religion; they make a very fair show, they hear, they read, they pray, they fast, they sing psalms, and they give alms; but these duties being not managed from a principle of divine love, nor from a principle of spiritual life, nor from a sanctified frame of heart, turn all into leaves; they are all lost, and the authors of them cast and undone for ever and ever. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, No hypocrite in the world loves the word, or delights in the word, or prizes the word, as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a beautiful word, a pure word, a clean word: Psa 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' There are no hearts but men after God's own heart, that can love the word, and delight in the word, and embrace the word for its holiness, purity, and spirituality. Witness Paul: Rom 7:12, 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' Well, and what then? Why, saith he, Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' But is this all? No; saith he, Rom 7:25, 'With the mind I myself serve the law of God.' Holy Paul delights in the law as holy, and serves the law as holy, just, and good. A sincere heart is the only heart that is taken with the word for its spirituality, purity, and heavenly beauty. None can joy in the word as it is a holy word, nor none can taste any sweetness in the word as it is a pure word, but sincere Christians: Psa 19:8-10, 'The statutes of the Lord are right,

rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean' (that is, the doctrine of the word that teacheth the true fear of God), 'enduring for ever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'sweeter than the droppings of honeycombs.' The word of God, as it is a pure word, a spiritual word, a clean word, a holy word; so it rejoices a sincere heart, and so it is sweeter than the very droppings of honeycombs. The word, as it is a pure word, a holy word, is more sweet to a sincere Christian than those drops which drop immediately and naturally without any force or art, which is counted the purest and sweetest honey. There is no profit, nor pleasure, nor joy to that which the purity of the word yields to a sincere heart: Psa 119:48, 'My hands will I lift up to thy commandments which I have loved.' Sometimes the lifting up of hands betokens admiration. When men are astonished and ravished, they lift up their hands. 'I will lift up my hands to thy commandments;' that is, I will admire the goodness, spiritualness, holiness, righteousness, purity, and excellency of thy commandments. Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible, he took such sweet pleasure and excellent delight in it. Rabbi Chiia, in the Jerusalem Talmud, says, 'That in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law.' The martyrs would have given a load of hay for a few chapters of the Bible in English. Some of them gave five merks for a Bible; they were so delighted and taken with the word, as it was a holy word, a pure word, a spiritual word. Dolphins, they say, love music; and so do sincere Christians love the music of the word. It is upon record, that Mary spent the third part of her time in reading the word, she was so affected and delighted with the holiness and purity of it. King Edward the Sixth being about to lay hold on something that was above the reach of his short arm, one that stood by espying a bossed Bible lying on the table, offered to lay that under his feet to heighten him; but the good young king disliked the notion, and instead of treading it under his feet, he laid it to his heart, to express the joy and delight that he took in the holy word. But now never did any hypocrite, since there was one in the world, ever love God as a holy God, or love his people as a holy people, or love his ways as holy ways, or love his word as a holy word. There is no hypocrite in the world that can truly say with David, 'Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.' Saul could never say so, nor Ahab could never say so, nor Herod could never say so, nor Judas could never say so, nor Demas could never say so, nor Simon Magus could never say so, nor the scribes and pharisees could never say so, nor the stony ground could never say so, nor Isaiah's hypocrites could never say so, Isa 58:1-14. It is true, some of these did rejoice in the word, and delight in the word, but not as it was a holy word, a pure word; for then they would have rejoiced and delighted themselves in the whole word of God, every part of God's word being pure and holy. Hypocrites are sometimes affected and delighted with the word, as it is dressed up with fine high notions, which are but mysterious nothings; they are taken with the word, as it is clothed with arts, parts, and elegancy of phrase; they are pleased with the word, as it is apparelled with a spruce wit, or with silken expressions, or with some delicate elocution: Eze 33:32, 'So thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;' or as the Hebrew may be read, 'Thou art as one that breaks jests.' These hypocrites looked upon the solemnity and majesty of the word but as a dry jest. The prophet being eloquent, and having a pleasing delivery, they were much taken with it, and it was as sweet and delightful to them as a fit of music; but they were not at all taken or delighted with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, as is evident in Eze 33:31, 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit

before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' It was a very smart reproof of Chrysostom to his hearers: 'This is that,' saith he, 'which is like to undo your souls; you hear your ministers as so many minstrels, to please the ear, not to pierce the conscience.' Augustine confesseth, that the delight which he took before his conversion in St Ambrose's sermons was more for the eloquence of the words than the substance of the matter. Hypocrites are taken more with the wit, eloquence of speech, action, quickness of fancy, smoothness of style, neatness of expression, and rareness of notion, than they are with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, which they either hear or read. These hypocrites are like those children who are more taken with the fine flowers that are strewed about the dish, than they are with the meat that is in the dish; and that are more taken with the red weeds and blue-bottles that grow in the field, than they are with the good corn that grows there. But now look, as the prudent farmer is taken more with a few handfuls of sound corn than he is with all the gay weeds that be in the field, so a sincere Christian is more taken with a few sound truths in a sermon than he is taken with all the strong lines, and high strains, and flourishes of wit; or than he is taken with some new-coined phrases, or some quaint expressions, or some seraphical notions, with which a sermon may be decked or dressed up. Some are taken with the word as the profession of it brings in customers into their shops, and keeps up their credits in the world; others are taken with the word as it seems to tickle their ears and please their fancies; some are affected with sermons because of the elegance of the style, delicacy of the words, smoothness of the language, and gracefulness of the delivery. And these deal by sermons as many do by their nose-gays, that are made up of many picked sweet flowers, who, after they have smelt to them awhile, cast them into a corner, and never mind them more; so these, after they have commended a sermon, after they have highly applauded a sermon, they cast away the sermon, they smell to the sermon, if I may so speak, and say, It is sweet, it is sweet; and presently they throw it by, as a nosegay that is withered, and of no further use. But now a sincere heart savours the word, and relishes the word, and is affected and taken with the word, as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a pure word, which the most refined hypocrite under heaven never was affected or taken with, nor can be, whilst hypocrisy keeps the throne in his soul. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, and lastly, An hypocrite cannot endure to be tried, and searched, and laid open. An hypocrite hates the light, and had rather go to hell in the dark than come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, John 3:20. A soul-searching ministry is to an hypocrite a tormenting ministry. That is no man for his money that will never let his conscience alone; he knows he is like a velvet saddle, velvet without and straw within; he knows he is like a whited sepulchre, glorious without and dead bones within, Mat 23:27-28; and therefore his heart rises and swells against such a man and such a ministry, that is all for the anatomising and laying of him open to himself and to the world. But now look, as pure gold fears neither fire nor furnace, neither test nor touchstone, neither one balance nor another, so a sincere heart dares venture itself upon trial, yea, upon the very trial of God himself: Psa 139:23, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts.' A sincere Christian prays his friends to search him, and he prays soul-searching ministers to search him; but above all, he begs hard of God to search him: 'Search me, O God.' The Hebrew word **חַדַּשׁ**, is imperat. kal; he commands God to search him. The original word signifies a strict, curious, diligent search: see Job 31:5-6. A sincere Christian is very willing and desirous that God should thoroughly search him, that God should search into every corner and cranny of his heart: Psa 26:2, 'Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my

heart.' Every word here has its weight: 'Examine me, O Lord.' The Hebrew word מִשְׁכַּח signifies to melt, and so to try which makes the most intrinsecal and exact discovery. O Lord, let my heart and reins be melted, that it may be known what metal they are made of, whether gold or tin; 'prove me.' The Hebrew word מֵבִיט signifies to view, as when a man gets upon some high tower or hill to see all from thence. 'Mount aloft, O Lord,' take the high tower, take the hill, 'that thou mayest see what is in me; try me, and know my thoughts.' The Hebrew word נָסָה, is from נָסָה, nasah, which properly signifies to take away, and is applied to Abraham's taking away of his son, Gen 22:1. Lord, saith the prophet, if, upon searching and examining of me, thou shalt find any sin, any creature, any comfort, any enjoyment that lies in thy room, take it away, that thou mayest be all in all to me. A sincere Christian knows that God never brings a pair of scales to weigh his graces, but only a touchstone to try the truth of his graces; he knows if his gold, his grace, be true, though it be never so little, it will pass for current with God, and therefore he is free to venture upon the closest search of God, Mat 12:20. Now look, as bankrupts care not for casting up their accounts, because they know all is naught, very naught, yea, stark naught with them; so hypocrites, they care not to come to the trial, to the test, because they know all is naught, yea, worse than naught with them. They have no mind to cast up their spiritual estates, because at the foot of the account they must be put to read their neck verse, 'Undone, undone.' And therefore, as old deformed women cannot endure to look into the looking-glass, lest their wrinkles and deformity should be discovered, so hypocrites cannot endure to look into the glass of the gospel, lest their deformities, impieties, and wickednesses should be discovered and detected. I have read of the elephant, how unwilling he is to go into the water, but when he is forced into it, he puddles it, lest by the clearness of the stream he should discern his own deformity; so hypocrites they are very unwilling to look into their own hearts, or into the clear streams of scriptures, lest their soul's deformity and ugliness should appear, to their own terror and amazement. O sirs! look, as it is a hopeful evidence that the client's cause is good when he is ready and willing to enter upon a trial, and as it is a hopeful sign that a man's gold is true gold when he is willing to bring it to the touchstone, and that a man thrives when he is willing to cast up his books, so it is a hopeful evidence that a Christian is sincere with God when he is ready and willing to venture upon the trial of God, when he is willing to cast up his books, his accounts, that he may see what he is worth for another world, Gal 6:4-5. Augustine speaks of an acute person, who was wont to say that he prized that little time which he constantly set apart every day for the examination of his conscience, far more than all the other part of the day, which he spent in his voluminous controversies. Of all the duties of religion, an hypocrite dreads most that of self-examination, and that of venturing himself upon the search and trial of God. Well, for a close, though an hypocrite may deceive all the world, like that counterfeit Alexander in Josephus his story, yet Augustus will not be deceived, the great God will not be deceived; for his eyes are quick and piercing into all things, persons, and places.² Look, as the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened on thee which way soever thou turnest, so are the eyes of the Lord fastened on thee, O hypocrite, which way soever thou turnest. It was a worthy saying of one, If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun? The eye of God many times is very terrible to an hypocrite, which makes him very shy of venturing upon the trial of God. No hypocrite since the world stood, did ever love or delight to be searched and tried by God. And thus I have shewed you the several rounds or steps in Jacob's ladder, which no hypocrite under heaven can, whilst he remains an hypocrite, climb up to. And so much

for this chapter.

CHAPTER V

Now in this fifth and last chapter, I shall lay down some propositions and directions, that so you may see what a sober use and improvement Christians ought to make of their evidences for heaven; and how, in the use of gracious evidences, they ought to live above their gracious evidences, and how to exalt and lift up Christ above all their graces, evidences, and performances.

[1.] First proposition. It is the wisdom, and ought to be the work of every Christian to own the least measure of grace that is in him, though it be mixed and mingled with many weaknesses and infirmities. Sin is Satan's work, and grace is Christ's work; and therefore Christ's work ought to be eyed and owned, though it be mingled with much of Satan's work. That Christian is much clouded and benighted who hath two eyes to behold his sins, but never an eye to see his graces. Christ gets no glory, nor the soul gets no good, when a Christian is still a-poring upon his sins. How can that Christian prize a little grace, and bless God for a little grace, and improve a little grace, who won't own a little grace because it is mingled with many weaknesses? Shall the husbandman own a little wheat when mingled with a great deal of chaff? Shall the goldsmith own a little filings of gold when mingled with a great deal of dust; and shall not a Christian own a little grace when mingled with a great many failings? David had a great many infirmities, 1Sa 21:13-14, yet he owns his uprightness: Psa 18:23, 'I was upright before him.' And Job had a great many weaknesses, Job 3:1-26, yet he owns his integrity: Job 27:5, 'Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.' Job 27:6, 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' The spouse was sensible of her blackness, yet owns her comeliness, Song of Solomon 1:5, 'I am black, but comely.' So Song of Solomon 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh.' Jeremiah was a man of many failings, yet he owns his hope in God, Jer 17:17 : 'Thou art my hope in the day of evil,' Jer 20:14, seq. The poor man in the Gospel was very sensible of the sad relics and remains of unbelief that was in him, and yet with a holy boldness and confidence he pleads his faith: Mark 9:24, 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' Peter miscarried sadly, Mat 26:69, seq., and yet he owns his love to Christ: John 21:15, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' John 21:16, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' John 21:17, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' Paul had his infirmities and weaknesses hanging upon him: witness that seventh of the Romans: and yet how frequently and boldly does he own the grace of God that was in him throughout his epistles. Nothing keeps grace more at an under than men's not owning of a little grace because it is mingled with many infirmities. The best way to be greatly good, is to own a little, little good, though in the midst of much evil. But,

[2.] The second proposition is this, It is your wisdom, and should be your work, to look upon all your graces and gracious evidences as favours given you from above, as gifts dropped out of heaven into your hearts, as flowers of paradise stuck in your bosoms by a divine hand. A man should never look upon his graces or his gracious evidences, but should be ready to say, These are the jewels of glory with which God has bespangled my soul: 1Co 4:7, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received? What gift, what grace, what experience, what evidence hast thou that thou hast not received? All the light, and all the life, and all the love, and all the joy, and all the fear, and all the faith, and all the hope, and all the patience, and all the humility, &c., that thou hast, with all the evidences that arise from the discovery of those graces, are all grace gifts, they are all from above.

'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights,' Jas 1:17. Look, as all light flows from the sun, and all water from the sea, so all temporal, spiritual, and eternal good flows from heaven. All your graces, and the greatest excellencies that are in you, do as much depend upon God and Christ, as the light doth upon the sun, or as the rivers do upon the sea, or as the branches do upon the root, John 15:1-5. All my springs are in thee, Psa 87:7; all the springs of comfort that I have communicated to my soul, and all the springs of grace that I have to quicken me, and to evidence the goodness and happiness of my spiritual estate and condition to me, they are all in thee. When a Christian looks upon his wisdom and knowledge, it concerns him to say, Here is wisdom and knowledge, ay, but it is from above; here is some weak love working towards Christ, but it is from above; here is joy, and comfort, and peace, &c., but these are all such flowers of paradise as never grew in nature's garden. Now, when a Christian looks thus upon all those costly diamonds of grace, of glory, with which his soul is bedecked, he keeps low, though his graces and gracious evidences are high. Where this rule is neglected, the soul will be endangered of being swelled and puffed.

It was a great saying of a very worthy man that is now with God, viz., That as he often got much good by his sins, so he often got much hurt by his graces. Dear hearts, when you look upon the stream, remember the fountain; when you look upon the flower, remember the root; when you look upon the stars, remember the sun; and whenever you look upon your graces, then be sure to remember Christ the fountain of grace, else Satan will certainly be too hard for you. Satan is so subtle, so artificial,² and so critical, that he can make your very graces to serve him against your graces, conquering joy by joy, sorrow by sorrow, humility by humility, fear by fear, and love by love, if you don't look upon all your graces as streams flowing from the fountain above, and as fruits growing upon the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God. Therefore, when one of your eyes is fixed upon your graces, let the other be always fixed upon Christ the fountain of grace. 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace,' John 1:16. Here they eye their graces and the fountain of grace together. So Paul: 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,' Gal 2:20. Paul eyes Christ and his graces together; so Peter eyes Christ and his graces together: John 21:15, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' So those worthies of whom this world was not worthy; they eye Christ and their graces together: Heb 12:2, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Though grace be a new creature, 2Co 5:17, a noble creature, a beautiful creature, an excellent creature, yet grace is but a creature, and such a creature that is strengthened, maintained, cherished, and upheld in your souls, Php 4:12-13; Song of Solomon 4:1-16. ult., in life and power, in beauty and glory, by nothing below the spiritual, internal, and glorious operations of Christ:

` 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' Ver. 11, 'Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.' Now, whenever you look upon grace as a lovely, beautiful creature, oh then remember that might and glorious power of Christ by which this creature is preserved and strengthened. Christians, your graces are holy and heavenly plants of Christ's own setting and watering, and will you mind the plants more than that noble hand that set them? It is Christ alone that can cause the desires of his people to bud, and their graces to blossom, and their souls to be like a watered garden, green and flourishing, Isa 58:11, and Isa

35:6-7; and therefore let the eye of your souls be firstly, mostly, and chiefly fixed upon Christ. But,

[3.] The third proposition is this, When you look upon your graces in the light of the Spirit, it highly concerns you to look narrowly to it, that you do not renounce and reject [y]our graces as weak and worthless evidences of your interest in Christ, and of that eternal happiness and blessedness that comes by Christ. The works of grace, saith my author, which consists in those divine qualities of holiness and righteousness, &c., Gal 5:22-23, is a sure mark, a blessed character, whereby men may know whose children they are, even as the Spartans or Lacedæmonians of old are said to know what stock and lineage they were of by a mark that was made upon their bodies by the head of a lance or spear. I readily grant that you must not trust in your graces, nor make a saviour of your graces, but yet you ought to look upon your graces as so many signs and testimonies of the love and favour of God to your souls. What certainty can there be of election, remission of sin, justification, or glorification, if there be not a certainty of your sanctification and renovation? If that persuasion that is in you about your grace or sanctification be false, then that persuasion that is in you concerning remission of sin, predestination, justification, and eternal salvation is false. This highly concerns all them to consider, that would not be miserable in both worlds. I know many cry up revelations, impressions, visions, yea, the visions of their own hearts, and speak lightly and slightly of the graces of the Spirit, of sanctification, of holiness, as evidences of the goodness and happiness of a Christian's condition. There were some in James his time who cried up faith, and union and communion with Christ, but were destitute of good works, Jas 2:18. Well, what saith the apostle? 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works; for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead,' Jas 2:26. Look, as the body without the spirit, or without breath,—as the Greek word *πνεύμα* primarily signifies,—is dead; so that faith that is without works, which are, as it were, the breathings of a lively faith, is a dead faith. Though it be faith that justifieth the man, yet it is works that justifies a man's faith to be right and real, saving and justifying. So there were some in John's time, viz., the Gnostics, who talked high of fellowship and communion with Christ, and yet walked in darkness; they lived in all impurity, and yet would make the world believe that they were the only people who knew God, and had fellowship with God, but John tells us they were liars: 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. What fellowship hath light with darkness?' 2Co 6:14. Such walk in darkness who promise to themselves the future vision of God's face, whilst they go on in the wilful breach of God's royal law. Such who say they know him, and are swallowed up in the enjoyments of him, and yet in the course of their lives walk contrary to him, such are liars: 'He that saith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar,' 1Jn 2:4. Sanctification and justification are both of them benefits of the covenant of grace, and therefore to evidence the one by the other can be no turning aside to the covenant of works, Jer 33:8-9; Heb 8:10, Heb 8:12. You may run and read in the covenant of grace, that he that is justified is also sanctified, and that he that is sanctified is also justified; and therefore why may not he that knows himself to be really sanctified, upon that very ground, safely and boldly conclude that he is certainly justified? O sirs! the same Spirit that witnesses to a Christian his justification can shine upon his graces, and witness to him his sanctification as well as his justification; and without all controversy, it is as much the office of the Spirit to witness to a man his sanctification as it is to witness to him his justification, 1Co 2:12, 1Jn 4:13-14. But you will say, Sir, pray what should be the reasons why many men have, and why some do still cry down marks and signs, and deny sanctification to be an evidence of men's justification, &c., and speak disgracefully of this practice that is now under

consideration? I conjecture the reasons may be such as follow:

First, Many professors take up in a great name, and in a great profession, and in great parts and gifts, though they have never found a thorough change, though they have never passed the pangs of the new birth, though they have never experienced what it is to be a new creature, a thorough Christian. And hence it comes to pass that they make head against this way of evidencing the goodness and happiness of a man's condition by inward gracious qualifications. Of all men these are most apt to outrun the truth, and to run from one extreme to another, and to be only constant in inconstancy. But,

Secondly, Many professors are given up to spiritual judgments, which are the sorest of all judgments, viz., lukewarmness, dead-heartedness, formality, indifferency, apostasy, blindness, hardness, and to 'strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,' 2Th 2:10-12. Now, is it any wonder to see such men quarrel, and wrangle, and rail against the way and method of evidencing the goodness and happiness of a man's spiritual condition by inherent gracious qualifications?. Of all men these are most apt to outrun the truth, and to run from one extreme to another, and to be only constant in inconstancy. But,

Thirdly, In some this ariseth from their lusts, which they indulge and connive at, and which they have a mind to live quietly in. They are desirous to keep their peace, and yet unwilling to forsake their lusts; and hence they exclude this witness of water or sanctification to testify in the court of conscience whether they are beloved of God, or whether they are sincere-hearted or no, or whether they have the root of the matter in them or no; for the want of this witness, water or sanctification, is a clear and full witness against them that they are yet in their sins, under wrath, and in the way to eternal ruin; and that they have nothing to do with peace, or comfort, or the promises, or Christ, or heaven, [or] to take God's name into their lips, seeing they secretly hate to be reformed, Isa 57:20, Psa 50:16. There are many fair professors that are foul sinners, and that have much of God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness in their lips, when they have nothing but sin and hell in their hearts and lives. These men's convers[at]ions shame their profession, and therefore they cry out against sanctification as a sure and blessed evidence of a man's justification. Such sinners as live in a course of sin, that make a trade of sin, that indulge their sins, that take up arms in defence of sin, that make provision for sin, that make a sport of sin, that take pleasure in sin, and that have set their hearts upon their sin, 1Th 2:11; such sinners cannot but look upon the witness of sanctification as the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:5-6. But,

Fourthly, There are many who are great strangers to their own hearts and the blessed Scriptures, and are ignorant of what may be said from the blessed word to evidence the lawfulness of this practice that is under our present consideration. And hence it comes to pass that they cry down marks and signs, and deny sanctification to be a sure and blessed evidence of men's justification. Ignorat sane improbus omnis, ignorance is the source of all sin, the very well-spring from which all wickedness doth issue. Ignorance enslaves a soul to Satan, it lets in sin by troops, locks them up in the heart, shuts out the means of recovery, and so plasters up a man's eyes that he cannot see the things that belongs to his own or to others' internal or eternal peace. The Scripture sets ignorant persons below the ox and the ass. Did men either see the deformity of sin, or the beauty and excellency of holiness, they would never delight in the one nor cry down the other, Isa 1:3.

Peter tells you of some that speak evil of the things that they understood not; they did reprehend that which they could not comprehend, 2Pe 2:12. Ignorance is a breeding sin, a mother sin; all sins are seminally in ignorance. Ignorance is the mother of all the mistakes, and of all the misrule in the world. Christ told the Sadducees that they did 'err, not knowing the Scriptures,' Mat 22:29. And so I may say, many err in crying down such signs and evidences of grace which are bottomed upon Scripture, because they are ignorant of what the Scripture saith in the case. But,

Fifthly, The generality of Christians are but lambs, babes, and children in grace. The springs of grace runs low in them; their fears frequently overtop their faith; and their strong passions and corruptions do often raise such a dust and smoke in their souls, that if they might have all the world, yea, if their salvation lay upon it, they were not able to discern the least measure of grace in their own souls, Isa 40:11; 2Pe 2:2-3; 1Jn 2:1. A little grace is next to none. Small things are hardly discerned. He had need to have a clear light and good eyes that is to discern a hair, a mote, or an atom. A little grace is not discoverable but by a shining light from above. There are none so full of fears, and doubts, and questions, and disputes, about the truth of their faith in Christ, and the sincerity of their love to Christ, as those that least believe and least love. The kingdom of God in most Christians is but as a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds; and therefore it is no wonder they see it not, Mark 4:30-32. The root of the matter in most Christians is but small, and that small root is often covered over with many sinful infirmities and weaknesses; and therefore we are not to look upon it as a strange thing if we see such Christians not sensible of the root of the matter that is in them. Weak habits put forth such faint actions, and with so much interruption, that it is not an easy thing to discern whether they are the products of special or of common grace. Now, most Christians having but small measures of grace, holiness, and sanctification in them, and these small measures being much obscured and buried under the prevalency of fears, doubts, and unmortified lusts, can speak but weakly and darkly for them; and upon this ground they are not fond of bringing in this witness of sanctification to speak for them. In civil courts, men are not ambitious to bring such witnesses to the bar as can witness but weakly and faintly in their case. It is so here.

Sixthly, Satan is a grand enemy to the peace, joy, comfort, assurance, settlement, and satisfaction of every poor Christian; and therefore he will leave no stone unturned, nor no means unattempted, whereby he may keep them in a low, dark, unsettled, and uncomfortable condition, Psa 77:1-20, Psa 88:1-18. When once a poor soul is brought over to Christ, how does the devil bestir himself to keep such a soul so under fears, doubts, and bondage, as that it may not in the least have an eye to anything that may have a proper tendency to its comfort, joy, assurance, peace, or quiet. The devil will do all he can to furnish such as are 'begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead' with all sorts of deadly weapons out of his armoury, to fight against those arguments and evidences which make for the peace and comfort of their own souls. He that shall look seriously and impartially upon the subtle, close, strong, and rhetorical arguings of many distressed Christians, above their own natural parts, against the peace, rest, comfort, and settlement of their own souls, may safely conclude that a hand of Joab, a hand of Satan, yea, a strong hand of Satan, has been with them, 2Sa 14:19. He that shall please to read the life of Francis Spira, though he be no great philosopher, yet he may easily discern with what subtlety and wonderful sophistry Satan helped him to argue against the pardonableness of his sins, and the possibility of his salvation. Satan knows how to transform himself into an angel of light, 2Co 11:14. Satan does not always

appear in one and the same fashion, but he appears in as many several shapes, fashions, and changes, as Proteus did among the poets. To deceive some, he has assumed a lightsome body, as if he were an angel of heaven, as if he had been a holy one clothed with the brightness of celestial glory; to deceive others, he has appeared as an angel of light, suggesting such things to them, and injecting such things into them, under fair and specious shows and pretences of religion, piety, zeal, and holiness, which have had a direct tendency to the dishonour of God, the wounding of Christ, the grieving of the Spirit, the clouding or denying their evidences for heaven, the strangling of their hopes, and the death of all their comforts and joy. But,

Seventhly and lastly, Some Christians live under high enjoyments and singular manifestations of God's love to them; they have God every day a-shedding abroad of his love into their hearts by the Holy Ghost, Rom 5:5. God is every day a-filling their souls with life, light, love, glory, and liberty, Psa 63:2-4. Christ every day takes them up into the mount, Mat 17:4, and makes such discoveries of himself and his glory to them, that they are ready frequently to cry out, Bonum est esse hic, it is good to be here. Christ often whispers them in the ear with an 'O man, O woman, greatly beloved,' Dan 9:22-23; Christ's 'left hand is every day under their heads, and his right hand doth embrace them,' Song of Solomon 2:6; they sit down every day 'under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto their taste;' he makes out every day such sweet and clear manifestations of his admirable favour to their hearts, that their souls are daily satisfied as with marrow and fatness, Psa 63:2-5. There are some precious Christians,—I say not all, I say not most,—who live daily under singular glances of divine glory, and who are daily under the sensible embracements of God, and who daily lie in the bosom of the Father, and who every night have Christ as a bundle of myrrh lying betwixt their breasts, Song of Solomon 1:13. Now these choice souls who live daily in the glorious manifestations of the Spirit, and enjoy a little heaven on this side heaven, these many times are so taken up with their high communion with God, with their spiritual enjoyments, and with their tastes of the glory of that other world, that they do not much mind such evidences as we have had under our consideration. And thus much for the reasons why some cry down Scripture marks, signs, and evidences of grace, of holiness, of sanctification, and why others don't much mind them, or take any great notice of them. But,

[4.] The fourth proposition is this, If this way of trying our spiritual estates by holy and gracious qualifications, were not both lawful and useful, then certainly the Holy Spirit would never have prescribed it, nor never have pressed men so earnestly upon it, as we find he has done in the blessed Scripture. Take a taste: 2Co 13:5, 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.' The precept is doubled, to teach us to redouble our diligence in this most needful but much neglected duty of self-examination. The final trial of our eternal estates doth immediately and solely belong to the court of heaven, but the disquisitive part belongs to us. Here are two emphatical words in the Greek: first, *πειραζετε*, 'examine yourselves.' The word in the general signifies to take an experimental knowledge of anything, that is either uncertain, unknown, or hidden. Most men are great strangers to God, to Christ, to Scripture, and to themselves; and therefore saith the apostle, 'Examine yourselves.' Now, if there were not sure marks and infallible signs whereby men may certainly know what their present estate is, and how it is like to go with them in another world, the redoubled command of the apostle would be in vain. The second Greek word is *δοκιμαζετε*, 'prove yourselves.' The original word signifies a severe and diligent inquisition into ourselves, so as to have a full experience of what is in us. Doubtless the apostle would never

call again and again upon us, to try and examine ourselves whether we be in the faith, if it were not lawful to come to the knowledge of our faith, or of our being in the state of faithful Christians, in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause. So in that 2Pe 1:10, 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.' The Greek word διμύλλον, δελφί, σπουδασατε, translated 'give diligence,' is very emphatical. It signifies to do a thing, not in an overly, lazy, careless way, but to do a thing with industry, vigilancy, and unweariedness of spirit. Now, it is granted on all hands, that election cannot be made more sure in respect of God or itself, but only in respect of us, that we may be more persuaded of it. Election cannot be made more sure than it is already, for those whom God hath elected shall be certainly glorified; but we must make it sure on our parts; that is, we must labour to have a real bottom and grounded assurance that we are elected by God in his eternal decree, to obtain life and glory by Jesus Christ, Rom 8:29-30. There is a double certainty: (1.) There is certitudo objecti, a certainty of the object; so our election is sure with God, for with him both it and all things are unchangeable. (2.) There is certitudo subjecti, the certainty of the subject; and so we must make our election sure to ourselves in our own hearts and consciences. Now, the means whereby we are to come to this assurance, is by adding grace to grace, and by causing those several graces to abound in us. This is the way of ways to make all sure to us. Now, by these scriptures it is most evident that we stand engaged to make our election sure by holy signs and marks. But,

[5.] The fifth proposition is this, That other precious saints that are now triumphing in glory, have pleaded their interest in God's love, and their hopes of a better life, from graces inherent. I will only point at some of those scriptures among many others, that clearly speak out this truth: the first epistle of John; Jas 2:17, seq.; Job 23:10-12; and Job 31:1-40; Psa 119:6; Isa 38:2-3; Neh 1:1, seq., and Neh 13:14, &c. Now, all these scriptures do evidently prove, that the precious servants of the Lord did take their graces for precious signs and testimonies of God's love, of their interest in Christ, and thereby received much comfort, peace, and satisfaction. And truly, to deny the fruit growing upon the tree to be an evidence that the tree is alive, is to me as unreasonable as it is absurd. Certainly, it is one thing to judge by our graces, and another thing to trust in our graces, to make a saviour of our graces. There is a great deal of difference betwixt declaring and deserving Christians. They may doubtless look to their graces as evidences of their part in Christ and salvation,—and the clearer and stronger they are, the greater will be their comfort and assurance,—but not as causes. No man advanced free grace like Paul; no man debased his own righteousness like Paul—he counted it but dung and dross, Php 3:6-9; and no man exalted the righteousness of Christ like Paul, and yet by this way of signs he gathered much comfort and assurance: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' How plainly, how fully doth he here conclude his right to the crown of life, from his fighting a good fight, his finishing his course, in a way of grace and holiness, and his keeping the faith. By this great instance you may clearly see, that a Christian may greatly exalt Christ, lift up free grace, tread upon his own righteousness, as to justification, and at the very same time take comfort in his graces, and in his gracious actings. So in that 2Co 1:12, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of a good conscience, that in godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world. His joy was founded on the testimony of his conscience; but from what did his conscience testify? from his sincere conversation. Again, take that memorable instance of Job; God hid his face from him; the arrows of the almighty stuck fast in him; Satan was let loose upon him; the wife of his bosom proved a tempter to him, a tormentor of

him; his most inward acquaintance deserted him, reproached him, and condemned him as a hypocrite; God writ bitter things against him, and made him 'to possess the iniquities of his youth:' all was clouded above him, and he stripped of all the outward comforts that did once surround him, Job 1:8, and Job 2:3, so that he had nothing left to stay him, to refresh him, to support him, and to be a comfort and joy to him, but the sense of his integrity, and the evidence he had of his own uprightness, his own righteousness: Job 27:5, 'Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me;' ver. 6, 'My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.' Job was under great afflictions, sore temptations, and deep desertions. Now that which was his cordial, his bulwark, in those sad times, was the sense and feeling of his own uprightness, his own righteousness. The sense and feeling of the grace of God in him kept him from fainting and sinking under all his troubles. So in 1Jn 2:3, 'Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments,' &c. In these words two things are observable: First, that where there is a true knowledge of Christ, there is an observation of his commandments. Secondly, that by this observation of his royal law, we may know that our knowledge is sound and sincere. He speaks not of a legal, but of an evangelical, keeping of his commandments. A conscionable and serious endeavour to walk in a holy course of life, according to God's will revealed in his word, is a most certain mark or evidence that we have a saving knowledge of God, and that we are his children, and heirs of glory. Such who sincerely desire, and unfeignedly purpose, and firmly resolve, and faithfully endeavour, to keep the commandments of God, these do keep the commandments of God evangelically and acceptably in the eye of God, the account of God. So 1Jn 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk even as he walked.' Here you may observe two things: First, that by faith we are implanted into Christ; secondly, that we discover our implantation into Christ by our imitation of Christ. Such as plead for sanctification as an evidence of justification don't make their graces causes of their implantation into Christ, or of their justification before the throne of Christ, but they make them testimonies and witnesses to declare the truth of their real implantation into Christ, and of their being justified before the throne of Christ. So 1Jn 3:14, 'We know we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.' The apostle makes this a great sign of godliness, to love another godly man for godliness's sake, and the more godly he is, the more to love him, and to delight in him. Now mark, this love of our brethren is not a cause of our translation from death to life, for the very word translated supposeth such a grace, such a favour of God as is without us, but a sign of our translation from death to life. But of this I have said enough already, as you may see if you will but read from page 189 to page 200 of this book. But,

[6.] The sixth proposition is this: There are many scores of precious promises made over to them that believe, to them that trust in the Lord, to them that set him up as the great object of their fear, to them that love him, to them that delight in him, to them that obey him, to them that walk with him, to them that thirst after him, to them that suffer for him, to them that follow after him, &c. Now all these scores of promises are made for the support, comfort, and encouragement of all such Christians whose souls are bespangled with grace. But now if we may not lawfully come to the knowledge of our faith, love, fear, delight, obedience, &c., in a discursive way, arguing from the effect to the cause, what support, what comfort, what advantage shall a sincere Christian have by all those scores of promissory places of Scripture? Doubtless all those scores of promises would be as so many suns without light, as so many springs without water, as so many breasts without milk, and as so many bodies without souls, to all gracious Christians, were it not lawful for them to form up such a practical syllogism as this is, viz. the Scripture doth plainly and fully declare that he

that believeth, feareth, loveth, obeyeth, &c., is blessed, and shall be happy for ever; But I am such a one that doth believe, fear, love, obey, &c.; Therefore I am blessed, and shall be happy for ever. Now, although it must be granted that the major of this proposition is Scripture, yet the assumption is from experience; and therefore a godly man, being assisted therein by the Holy Ghost, may safely draw the conclusion as undeniable. Oh that you would seriously consider how little would be the difference, should you shut out this discursive way, betwixt a man and a beast: if a man should assent to a thing unknown through an instinct and impression, and should to one who asks him a reason of his persuasion be able to return no other answer but this, I am persuaded because I am persuaded. But,

[7.] The seventh proposition is this, That the Scripture giveth many signs and symptoms of grace; so that if a man cannot find all, yet if he discover some, yea, but one, he may safely conclude that all the rest are there. He who hath but one in truth of the fore-mentioned characters in this book, hath seminally all; he who hath one link of the golden chain, hath the whole chain. Look, as he who hath one grace in truth, hath every grace in truth, though he doth not see every grace shining in his soul; so he that hath in truth any one evidence of grace in his soul, he hath virtually all. And oh that all weak, dark, doubting Christians would seriously and frequently ponder upon this proposition; for it may be a staff to uphold them, and a cordial to comfort them under all their fears and faintings. But,

[8.] The eighth proposition is this, Without the light of the Holy Ghost our graces shine not. Our graces are only the means by which our condition is known to us, Rom 9:2. The efficient cause of this knowledge is the Spirit illustrating our graces and making them visible, and so helping us to conclude from them, &c.: 1Co 2:12, 'Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' Our graces, our sanctification, as well as our election, vocation, justification, and glorification, are freely given to us of God; and the Spirit of God is given as well to discover the one as the other to us. Mark, the things freely given us may be received by us, and yet the receipt of them not known to us; therefore the Spirit for our further consolation doth, as it were, put his hand and seal to our receipts, whence he is said to 'seal us up unto the day of redemption,' Eph 4:30. The graces of the Spirit are a real 'earnest' of the Spirit, yet they are not always an evidential earnest; therefore an earnest is often superadded to our graces. For ever remember these few hints: (1.) that it is the work of the Spirit to plant grace in the soul; (2.) that it is the work of the Spirit to act and exercise the graces that he has planted there; (3.) that it is the work of the Spirit to shine upon those graces that he has planted in the soul, and to cause the soul to see and feel what he has wrote; (4.) that it is the work of the Spirit to raise springs of comfort and joy in the soul, upon the discovery of that grace which he has wrought in the soul. O Christians! till the Spirit of the Lord shine upon your graces, you will still be in the dark. It is only God's own interpreter that must shew a man his righteousness, Job 33:23. When the Holy Ghost shines upon a Christian's graces, then a Christian finds the springs of comfort to rise in his soul, and then he finds the greatest serenity and calmness in his spirit. O sirs! no man can, by any natural light or evidence in him, come to be assured of the grace wrought in his soul. Look, as no man can see the sun but in the light of the sun, so no man can see the graces of the Spirit but in the light of the Spirit, 1Jn 5:13. A man may have grace and not see it; he may be in a state of grace and not know it; as the child lives in the womb but don't perceive it, is heir to a crown but don't know it. Oh! till the Spirit shines upon his

own work, a child of light may walk in darkness and see no light, Isa 50:10. Look, as no man can subdue his sins but by the power of the Spirit; so no man can see his graces but in the light of the Spirit, Rom 8:13. The confidence that a believer hath of the truth of grace wrought in him, springs more from the Spirit's removing his slavish fears, and answering his doubts, and shining upon his graces, and supporting his soul, than it does from that excellency and beauty of grace which shines in him. A man may read the promises over and over a thousand times, and yet never be affected, delighted, or taken with them, till the Spirit of the Lord set them home upon his soul. And a man may read the threatenings over and over a thousand times, and yet never startle nor tremble, though he knows himself guilty of those very sins against which the threatenings are denounced, till the Spirit of the Lord sets home the threatenings in power upon his conscience; and then every threatening will be like the hand-writing upon the wall, which will cause his countenance to be changed, and his thoughts to be troubled, and his joints to be loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another, Dan 5:6-7. It is just so in the matter of our graces and gracious evidences; till the Holy Spirit shine upon them, till in the light of the Spirit we come to see them, they won't be witnessing, comforting, and refreshing to us; and therefore let not the pious reader think that, by the strength of his natural light, he shall ever attain to know the certainty of that grace which is in his soul; but let him rather beg hard of God for his Holy Spirit, and that his Spirit may shine upon that good work which he hath begun in him, that so he may be persuaded, assured, and comforted. Without the light of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit cannot be seen, no more than a book written in the fairest hand or print can be seen without light to see it or read it by. But,

[9.] The ninth proposition is this, Sincere Christians may safely and groundedly rejoice, delight, and take comfort in those graces, or in those divine qualities, which in the light of the Spirit they see and know are wrought in their souls. I do not say that a Christian should build the comfort of his justification upon his graces, or that he should rest on his graces, or trust to his graces, or make a saviour of his graces; for this would be such a piece of pharisaical popery, as is justly to be detested and abhorred by all that love Christ, or are looking towards heaven. But this I say, a Christian may make several uses of his graces; he may safely look upon his graces as so many evidences of Christ's dwelling in him, and he may look upon his graces as so many heavenly bracelets, or as so many love-tokens from God, in which he may safely rejoice. The gracious evidences that I have laid down in this treatise are blessed symptoms of salvation; and therefore to rejoice in them can be no transgression of any royal law of heaven. He that can experimentally subscribe to any of the gracious evidences that are laid down in this book, has such a fair certificate to shew for heaven, that no wicked man or hypocrite under heaven has the like to shew; and why such a man should not rejoice in such a certificate, I cannot at present see. I may and ought to rejoice in the works of creation. Oh how much more then ought I to rejoice in the work of renovation, in the work of sanctification, which does so infinitely transcend the work of creation? I may and ought to rejoice in my natural life, health, strength, beauty; and why then should I not rejoice in grace and holiness, which is the life, health, strength, and beauty of my soul? Christ delights in the graces of his people. 'Thou hast ravished my heart' (or thou hast behearted me, as the Hebrew runs), 'my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes' (or with one glance of thine eyes, as some read it), 'with one chain of thy neck,' Song of Solomon 4:9. The eye of faith, say some; the eye of love, say others; the chain of obedience, say some; the chain of spiritual graces, say others, ravished Christ's heart. The one eye of faith, the one chain of

obedience, unhearted Christ, wounded Christ; this one eye, this one chain, robbed Christ of his heart, and laid the spouse in the room of it. Now, shall Christ's heart be ravished with his children's graces, and shall not their hearts be ravished and delighted with those very graces that ravish Christ's own heart? I may, yea, I ought to rejoice in the graces of others, and why then not in my own? I may, yea I ought to rejoice in others' outward mercies, and in my own outward mercies, 1Th 1:2-5, 2Th 1:3-4. Oh how much more then ought I to rejoice in the saving and distinguishing graces of the Spirit, especially when I consider, that the least dram of grace is more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds, as every awakened conscience will tell you when they come to die, Hab 3:18, Gal 6:14, Php 3:3. Mark, firstly, mostly, and chiefly, a Christian is to rejoice in God and Christ; but secondarily and subordinately, he may rejoice in those graces, and in those gracious evidences that God has given into his soul. Firstly, mostly, and chiefly, a wife is to rejoice in the person of her husband; but secondarily, subordinately she may rejoice in the bracelets, in the ear-rings, in the jewels, in the gold chains that are given her by her husband. But,

[10.] The tenth proposition is this, viz., That that assurance that the people of God may rise to by sight of their graces, and upon the sight of their gracious evidences in the light of the Spirit, is not so clear, and bright, and high, and full, as that it utterly excludes all fears, doubtings, conflicts, or spiritual agonies, 1Co 13:12; Php 3:12-14. Our knowledge of God, of Christ, of ourselves, and of the blessed Scripture, which is the rule of trial, is imperfect in this life. And how then can our assurance be perfect? David, a man eminent in grace and holiness, had his up-hills and his down-hills, his summer days and his winter nights. Now you shall have him upon the mountain singing and saying, 'The Lord is my portion,' Psa 73:25; and presently you shall have him in the valleys, sighing and saying, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul; why art thou disquieted within me?' Psa 42:5, Psa 42:11. The same is evident in Job, Heman, and Asaph, Job 3:1-26; Psa 77:1-20; Psa 88:1-18. Such an assurance as shall exclude all fears, doubts, conflicts, agonies, is very desirable on earth, but shall never be obtained till we come to heaven. The grievous assaults of Satan, the power of unbelief, and the prevalency of other corruptions in a Christian's heart, may be such as may shake, I do not say overturn, that assurance which a Christian may gather from the sight and evidence of his graces in the light of the Spirit. 'The flesh lusteth as well against the Spirit,' Gal 5:17, as it is a Spirit of consolation, as it lusteth against the Spirit as it is a Spirit of sanctification; and therefore such an assurance as shall exclude all sorts and degrees of fears and doubts, is not attainable in this life. Whilst we are in this old world we shall have water with our wine, gall with our honey, and some clouds with our brightest sunshiny days, &c. Most Christians think, that as long as they have any doubtings they have no assurance; but they consider not that there are many degrees of infallible certainty, below a perfect or an undoubting certainty. Doubtless some darkness, more or less, will overspread the face of every Christian's soul, and unbelief in one degree or another will be making head against their faith; and hypocrisy in one degree or another will be making head against sincerity, and pride in one degree or another will be making head against humility, and passion in one degree or another will be making head against meekness, and earthly-mindedness in one degree or another will be making head against heavenly-mindedness, &c., yet as long as a Christian has the sight of his graces or his gracious evidences, he may and ought to walk in much peace, comfort, and joy. Such Christians as are resolved to lie down in sorrow, till they have attained to a perfect assurance, must resolve to lie down in sorrow till they come to lay down their heads in the dust. Our graces are imperfect, and therefore that assurance that arises from the sight and evidence of them must needs be imperfect.

Perfect signs of grace can never spring from imperfect grace, 1Th 3:10. Now, if this were seriously apprehended, studied, and minded by many weak Christians, they would not at every turn call their spiritual estates into question, as they do, because they find some seeds and stirrings of pride, hypocrisy, vain-glory, and other sinful humours and passions working in them. But,

[11.] The eleventh proposition is this, viz., When all your signs and evidences of the happiness and blessedness of your condition fails you, and are so clouded, obscured, darkened and blotted that you cannot read them, that you cannot take any comfort from them, then it highly concerns you to keep high, and precious, and honourable thoughts of God, of Christ, of his word, and of his ways in your souls, Psa 97:2. When Christ was withdrawn from his spouse, Song of Solomon 5:6-7, and when the watchmen that went about the city had smote her and wounded her, and when the keepers of the walls had took away her veil from her, yet then she keeps up in heart very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of Christ. Song of Solomon 5:10, 'My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.' Song of Solomon 5:16, 'His mouth is most sweet, and he is altogether lovely;' or his mouth is sweetnesses, and he is altogether desirablenesses, or all of him is desires, or he is wholly desirable. Here she breaks off her praises in a general eulogy, which no words can express enough. Alas! saith the spouse, I want words to express how sweet, how lovely, how comely, how desirable, how eminent, and how excellent Christ is in my eye, and to my soul! He is the desire of all nations de jure, Hag 2:8, and all that is perfect in heaven or earth is but a dim shadow of his excellency and glory. Where Christ is there is heaven. Heaven itself, in the spouse's eyes, without Christ, would be but a low little thing. The spouse looks upon Christ as the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. So David, when he was wofully clouded and benighted, when all was dark within him, and dark about him, and dark over him, Psa 73:13, 'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.' Psa 73:21, 'My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.' Psa 73:22, 'I was as a beast before thee;' or I was as a great beast, or as many beasts in one, as the Hebrew word Behemoth imports. Psa 73:26, 'My flesh and my heart faileth;' that is, my outward man and my inward man faileth me. And yet mark, at this very time, when the psalmist was thus overcast, he keeps up in him very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God. Psa 73:1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.' Psa 73:23, 'Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand.' Psa 73:24, 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.' Psa 73:25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.' Psa 73:26, 'God is the strength,' or rock, 'of my heart, and my portion for ever.' Psa 73:28, 'It is good for me to draw near to God.' So the church in that Mic 7:1-20, when God had hid his face from her; Mic 7:7, when she sat in darkness; Mic 7:8, when she was under the indignation of the Lord; Mic 7:9, when the righteous man was perished, and there was none upright among men; Mic 7:2, and when her enemies rejoiced, insulted and triumphed over her; Mic 7:8 and Mic 7:10, yet now, even now, she keeps up in her soul very high, precious, and honourable thoughts of the Lord. Mic 7:7, 'My God will hear me.' Mic 7:8, 'When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me.' Mic 7:9, 'He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' I might give you twenty more instances, but enough is as good as a feast. Dear Christians, when your graces are not transparent, when your evidences for heaven are blotted, and when the face of God is clouded, oh then, keep up in your hearts high, precious, and honourable thoughts of God and Christ, and of his word and ways, &c. When your sun of righteousness is set in a cloud, when great darkness is upon your spirits, when all moonlight and

starlight of your graces and gracious evidences fails you, Acts 27:20, yet then say with David, 'Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel,' Psa 22:3; and with Ezra, 'Thou hast punished me less than mine iniquities deserve,' Ezr 9:13; and with Nehemiah, 'Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;' and with the church, 'The Lord is righteous,' Neh 9:33. In the darkest night, and under your deepest soul-distresses, say, Well, if I perish, if I should miscarry for ever, yet I will maintain and keep up in my heart, high, and precious, and honourable thoughts of God and Christ, Lam 1:18. Say, Well, though my graces are obscured, and my evidences for heaven are blurred and soiled, yet I shall to my last breath say the Lord is good, and his word is good, and his ways are good; yea, though he should slay me, yet I will trust in him, and entertain noble and glorious thoughts of him, Job 13:15. This is the way of ways to have your graces cleared and strengthened, your evidences brightened, your comforts restored, and your assurance confirmed. But,

[12.] The twelfth proposition is this, viz., That it is the great duty and concernment of Christians to keep the evidences of their gracious and happy condition always bright and shining. Christians should make conscience of blurring and disfiguring the golden characters of grace in their souls. The least character of grace in the soul, is more worth than all the gold of Ophir, yea, more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds; and therefore every gracious Christian should be marvellous careful, that he does not by wilful omissions or sinful commissions cloud, dim, or darken the least character of grace, Eph 4:30, Psa 51:11-12. Such as blot or lose their evidences for heaven, they lose the comfort of their lives in this world. Satan's masterpiece is first to work Christians to blot and blur their evidences for glory, by committing this or that heinous sin; and then his next work is to rob them of their evidences for glory, that so though at the long run they may get safe to heaven, that yet Jacob-like they may go halting and mourning to their graves. Satan knows, that whilst a Christian's evidences are bright and shining, a Christian is temptation-proof. Satan may tempt him, but he cannot conquer him; he may assault him, but he cannot vanquish him. Satan knows, that whilst a Christian's evidences for heaven are bright and shining, no afflictions can sink him, nor no opposition shake him, nor no persecution discourage him, nor no outward wants perplex him; and therefore he will use all his power and policy, all his arts, crafts, and parts, to draw poor Christians to blot and blur their evidences for glory. Satan knows, that a man may lose one friend, and easily get another, lose his trade in one place, and soon get a trade in another place; lose his health and get it, lose an estate and get an estate, &c. But if he lose his evidences for heaven, he knows it will cost him many a prayer, and many a sigh, and many a groan, and many a tear, and many a sad complaint, before he recovers his lost evidences; and therefore his grand design is to plunder a Christian of his evidences for heaven. O sirs! keep but your evidences for heaven always bright and shining, and then heavy afflictions will be light, and long afflictions will be short, and bitter afflictions will be sweet, 2Co 4:16-18; and then every evidence fairly written in your hearts will be a living comfort to you in a dying hour. When the tokens of death are upon your bodies, and you shall see the lively characters of grace shining in your souls, you will then cry out with old Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' Luk 2:29; and with the spouse, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices,' Song of Solomon 8:14; and with the bride, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,' Rev 22:20; and with Paul, 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23. When a man's evidences for heaven are either lost or blotted and blurred, then he will be ready to cry out with David, 'Oh spare me yet a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be seen no more,' Psa 39:13; and

with Hezekiah, to turn his face to the wall and weep, Isa 38:3. There are four things that above all others a Christian should labour to keep; (1) Christ; (2) his own heart; (3) the word; (4) his evidences for heaven, bright and shining. But,

[13.] The thirteenth proposition is this viz., It is the high concernment of every Christian, either when he is in the dark, or when his graces shine brightest, and when his evidences for heaven are clearest, and his springs of comfort rise highest, then to have his heart and the eye of his faith most firmly fixed upon these three royal forts, or these three cities of refuge. It must be granted, that though our graces are our best jewels, yet they are imperfect, and do not give out their full lustre; they are like the moon, which when it shines brightest hath her dark spots; and therefore a Christian had need have his eye, his heart fixed upon the three following royal forts. You know in time of war there are the outworks, and there are the royal forts. Now, when the soldiers are beaten out of their outworks, they retire to the royal forts, and there they are safe; and then they cast up their caps and bid defiance to their proudest enemies. Now, our graces and our gracious evidences, they are our outworks; and from these we may be beaten in a day of desertion and temptation, &c. Now if we make our retrea to the three following royal forts, we may in a holy sense cast up our caps, and bid defiance to an host of devils, yea, to all the powers of darkness. But, Quest. But, sir, pray let us know which are these royal forts.

Ans. They are these three that follow.

1. The first is the free, rich, infinite, sovereign, and alorious grace of God. By free grace you are to understand the gracious good will or favour of God, whereby he is pleased of his own free love to choose and accept of some in Christ for his own. This we call first grace, because it is the fountain of all other grace, and the spring from whence they flow; and it is therefore called grace, because it makes a man gracious with God. Now mark, there have been many Christians who have had no assurance of the love of God, no sight of their interest in Christ, no sealing of the Spirit, nor no one clear evidence of grace, that they durst rest the weight of their souls upon; nor no one promise in the whole book of God that they durst apply or rest upon, who yet daily casting or rolling themselves, their souls, and their everlasting concerns, upon the infinite, free, rich, and sovereign grace of God in Christ, have found some tolerable peace, comfort, and refreshment in such a practice all their days. A Christian may lose the sight of his graces, and the evidences of his gracious estate; he may be so much in the dark, he may be so much benighted and bewildered in his spirit, that there may be no way under heaven left to him to enjoy peace, comfort, rest, quiet, settlement, or contentment, but by casting or rolling of his soul upon the free, rich, infinite, and sovereign grace of God in Christ; and here casting anchor, the poor bewildered, deserted, tempted, tossed soul may be safe and at rest, Isa 1:10. The free love and favour of God will be a lamp to the soul in the darkest night; it will be a sweet lump that will sweeten the bitterest cup; it will be a singular cordial against all faintings; it will be armour of proof against all temptations; it will be an everlasting arm to you under all afflictions; it will be a sun and a shield to you in every condition, Psa 4:6: Psa 80:3. 'Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.' Divine favour is that pearl of price that is most desirable: Dan 9:17, 'The Lord make his face to shine upon his sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake;' Num 6:24, 'The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;' Psa 67:1, 'God be merciful to you, and bless you, and cause his face to shine upon you.' Life is a very desirable thing; 'skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job 2:4; and yet the loving-kindness of God is better than life: Psa 63:3, 'Thy

loving-kindness is better than life.' The Hebrew word is *chajim*, lives; to note that the loving-kindness of God is better than many lives, yea, than all lives, and the revenues of life, put many lives together, put all lives together; and yet there is more excellency in the least discovery of divine love than in them all. Many a man has been weary of his life, but who have ever been weary of divine love? Dear Christians, are your graces or gracious evidences shining or sparkling? Oh then solace yourselves mostly in the free love and favour of God; for in his free favour lies the life of your souls, the life of your graces, the life of your comforts, yea, in his free favour your all is bound up. If your graces or evidences are so clouded and darkened, that you are in a stormy day beat out of your outworks, oh now run to the free grace and favour of God, as to your royal fort, as to your strong tower, as to your city of refuge, where you may be safe and happy for ever. In such a day ponder much upon these scriptures, Hos 14:4, 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.' God's love is a free love, having no motive or foundation but within itself. All the links of the golden chain of salvation are made up of free grace. The people of God are freely loved: Deu 7:6-8; and freely chosen, John 15:16-19, Eph 1:4; and freely accepted, Eph 1:6; and freely adopted, Eph 1:5, Gal 4:5-6; and freely reconciled, 2Co 5:18-20; and freely justified, Rom 3:24, 'Being justified freely by his grace;' and freely saved, Eph 2:5; 'By grace ye are saved,' Eph 2:8, 'For by grace ye are saved,' Tit 3:5, 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' Thus you see that all the golden rounds in Jacob's ladder, that reaches from heaven to earth, are all made up of free grace. Free grace is the foundation of all spiritual and eternal mercies; free grace is the solid bottom and foundation of all a Christian's comfort in this world. Were we to measure the love of God to us by our fruitfulness, holiness, humbleness, spiritualness, heavenly-mindedness, or gracious carriages towards him, how would our hope, our confidence every hour, yea, every moment in every hour, be staggered, if not vanquished! Rom 4:16. But all is of grace, of free grace, that the promise might be sure, and that our salvation might be safe. O sirs! it is free grace that will strengthen you in all your duties, and that will sweeten all your mercies, Rom 8:33-36, and that will support you under all your changes, and that will arm you against all temptations, and answer all objections, and take off all Satan's accusations, that may be cast in to disturb the peace and quiet of your souls; and therefore, whether your graces or gracious evidences do shine or are clouded, yet still have your recourse to the free grace of God, as to your first royal fort, your first city of refuge; and still cry out, Grace, grace. When your gracious evidences are clearest and fullest, then it concerns you to look upon free grace as your choicest and safest city of refuge. But,

2. The second royal fort that Christians should have their eyes, their hearts fixed upon, whether their graces or gracious evidences sparkle and shine, or are clouded and obscured, is the mediatory righteousness of Christ. Beloved, there is a twofold righteousness in Christ. First, there is his essential and personal righteousness as God. Now, this essential personal righteousness cannot be imputed to us; but then there is, secondly, his mediatory righteousness, that is, that righteousness which he wrought for us as mediator, whereby he did subject himself to the precepts, to the penalties, commands, and curses, answering both God's vindictive and rewarding justice. This is communicated to us and made ours, by virtue of which we stand recti in curia, justified in God's sight. The mediatory righteousness of Christ is the matter of our justification. Now, this mediatory righteousness of Christ includes, first, the habitual holiness of his person in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and requisite qualities; secondly, the actual holiness of his life and death by obedience. By his active obedience he

perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law, and by his passive obedience, his voluntary sufferings, he satisfied the penalty and commination of the law for transgressions. Mark, that perfect satisfaction to divine justice in whatsoever it requires, either in way of punishing for sin, or obedience to the law, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, the mediator of the new covenant, as a common head representing all those whom the Father hath given to him, and made over unto them that believe in him: this is that righteousness that is imputed to us in justification. No other righteousness can justify us before the throne of God. Look, as Christ was made sin for us only by imputation, so we are made righteous only by the imputation of his righteousness to us, as the Scripture clearly evidences: 2Co 5:21, 'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' Jer 23:6, 'The Lord our righteousness.' A soul truly sensible of his own unrighteousness, would not have this sentence, 'The Lord our righteousness,' blotted out of the Bible for ten thousand thousand worlds. 1Co 1:30, 'Christ Jesus is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness,' &c. And pray, how is Christ made righteousness to the believer? Not by way of infusion, but imputation; not by putting righteousness into him, but by putting a righteousness upon him, even his own righteousness; by the imputing his merit, his satisfaction, his obedience unto them, through which they are accepted as righteous unto eternal life: Rom 5:19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' Christ's righteousness is his in respect of inhesion, but it is ours in respect of imputation; his righteousness is his personally, but ours meritoriously. Look, as there is a true and real union between us and Christ, so there is a real imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. And a gracious soul triumphs more in the righteousness of Christ imputed than he would have done if he could have stood in the righteousness in which he was created. This is the crowning comfort to a sensible and understanding soul, that he stands righteous before a judgment-seat in that full, exact, perfect, complete, matchless, spotless, peerless, and most acceptable righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him. The righteousness of Christ is therefore called 'the righteousness of God,' Rom 3:21-22; Rom 10:3; Php 3:9, because it is it which God hath designed, and which God doth accept for us in our justification, and for and in which he doth acquit and pronounce us righteous before his seat of justice. That we are freely justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, is the very basis, foundation, and state of [the] Christian religion, whereby it is distinguished from all other religions whatsoever. Jews, Turks, pagans, and papists explode an imputed righteousness; yea, papists jeer it, calling it a putative righteousness. Well, sirs, remember this once for all, viz., that the mediatory righteousness of Christ is the life of your souls, and will afford you these most admirable comforts.

[1.] First, In this righteousness there is enough to satisfy the justice of God to the utmost farthing. The mediatory righteousness of Christ is so perfect, so full, so exact, so complete, and so fully satisfactory to the justice of God, as that divine justice cries out, I have enough, and I require no more; I have found a ransom, and I am fully pacified towards you, Eze 16:62-63. But,

[2.] Secondly, This mediatory righteousness of Christ takes away all our unrighteousness; it cancels every bond, it takes away all iniquity, and answers for all our sins, Isa 53:1-12; Col 2:12-15. Lord, here are my sins of omission, and here are my sins of commission; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them all. Here are my sins against the law, and here are my sins against the gospel, and here are my sins against the offers of grace, the tenders of grace, the strivings of grace, the bowels of grace; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them

all. When a cordial was offered to one that was sick, Oh, said he, the cordial of cordials which I daily take is this: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sins,' 1Jn 1:7. O sirs! it would be high blasphemy for any to imagine that there should be more demerit in sin, in any sin, in all sin, to condemn a believer, than there is merit in Christ's righteousness to absolve him, to justify him, Rom 8:1, Rom 8:33-35. But,

[3.] Thirdly, This righteousness of Christ presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God. It is that pure, fine, white linen garment whereby our nakedness is covered before the face of God: 'And to her was granted' (that is, to the Lamb's wife) 'that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints,' Rev 19:8; or the righteousnesses or justifications of saints, for the Greek is plural, $\tauὰ \deltaικαιώματα$. Some by righteousnesses understand the righteousness of Christ imputed, and the righteousness of Christ imparted; but I rather close with those who say it is an Hebraism; the plural righteousnesses noting that most perfect, complete, absolute righteousness which Christ is pleased to put upon his people, Eph 5:27. Upon the account of this righteousness of Christ, the church is said to be without spot or wrinkle, and to be all fair: 'Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee,' Song of Solomon 4:7; and to be complete: 'And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power,' Col 2:10; and to be without fault: 'They are without fault before the throne of God,' Rev 14:5. And so Col 1:21, 'And to present us holy, and unblameable, and unproveable, in the sight of God.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, This righteousness of Christ will answer to all the fears, doubts, and objections of your souls. How shall I look up to God? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I have any communion with a holy God in this world? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I find acceptance with God? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I die? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. How shall I stand before a judgment seat? The answer is, In the righteousness of Christ. Your sure and only way under all temptations, fears, conflicts, doubts, and disputes, is by faith to remember Christ, and the sufferings of Christ, as your mediator and surety, and say, O Christ! thou art my sin, in being made sin for me, and thou art my curse, in being made a curse for me; or rather, I am thy sin, and thou art my righteousness; I am thy curse, and thou art my blessing; I am thy death, and thou art my life; I am the wrath of God to thee, and thou art the love of God to me; I am thy hell, and thou art my heaven. O sirs! if you think of your sins, and of God's wrath; if you think of your guiltiness, and of God's justice, your hearts will fail you, and sink into despair, if you don't think of Christ, if you don't rest and stay your souls upon the mediatory righteousness of Christ. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, The righteousness of Christ is the best title that you have to shew for a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, for an inheritance that fadeth not away, and for an house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens. The righteousness of Christ is your life, your joy, your comfort, your crown, your confidence, your heaven, your all; and therefore whether your graces or gracious evidences do sparkle and shine, or are clouded or blotted, yet still keep a fixed eye and an awakened heart upon the mediatory righteousness of Jesus Christ; for that is the righteousness by which you may happily live, comfortably die, and boldly appear before a judgment-seat. But,

3. The third royal fort, that Christians should have their eyes, their hearts fixed upon, whether their graces or gracious evidences sparkle and shine, or are obscured and clouded, is the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is a new compact or agreement which God hath made with sinful man out of his own mere mercy and grace, wherein he undertakes both for himself and for fallen man, and wherein he engages himself to make fallen man everlastingly happy. All mankind had been eternally lost, and God had lost all the glory of his mercy for ever, had he not of his own free grace and mercy made such an agreement with sinful man. This covenant is called a covenant of grace, because it flows from the mere grace and mercy of God. There was nothing out of God, nor nothing in God, but his mere mercy and grace, that moved him to enter into covenant with poor sinners. In the covenant of grace there are two things considerable: First, The covenant that God makes for himself to us, which consists of these branches, (1.) that he will be our God; (2.) that he will give us a new heart, a new spirit; (3.) that he will not turn away his face from us from doing of us good; (4.) that he will put his fear into our hearts; (5.) that he will cleanse us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols; (6.) that he will rejoice over us to do us good. Secondly, Here is the covenant which God doth make for us to himself, which consists in these things, (1.) that we shall be his people; (2.) that we shall fear him for ever; (3.) that we shall walk in his statutes, keep his judgments and do them; (4.) that we shall not depart from him. Upon many accounts I may not enlarge on these things; but by these short hints it is evident that the covenant of grace is an entire covenant made by God, both for himself and for us. O sirs! in the covenant of grace God stands engaged to give whatsoever he requires.

[1.] First, He requires us to know him, and he has engaged himself that we shall know him: 1Ch 28:9, Jer 24:7, 'I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord;' and Jer 31:34, 'They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,' Heb 8:11. But,

[2.] Secondly, The Lord frequently requires his people to trust in him, Psa 62:8; Isa 26:4; 2Ch 20:20. And he has engaged himself that his people shall trust in him: Zep 3:12, 'I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, The Lord frequently commands his people to fear him, Deu 6:13, Deu 8:6. And he has engaged himself that they shall fear him: Jer 32:40, 'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Hos 3:5, 'They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, The Lord frequently commands his people to love him: Deu 11:1, Psa 31:23, 'O love the Lord, all ye his saints!' And he has promised and engaged himself that his people shall love him: Deu 30:6, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, The Lord frequently commands his people to call upon him, and to pray unto him, Psa 50:15, 1Th 5:17, &c.; and he has promised and engaged himself to pour upon them a spirit of prayer: Zec 12:10, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.' But,

[6.] Sixthly, The Lord frequently commands his people to repent and to turn from their evil ways, Hos 14:1, Eze 14:6, Eze 18:30, Acts 17:30, Acts 26:20; and he has promised and engaged himself that they shall repent and turn from their evil ways, Acts 5:30, Acts 11:18, 2Ti 2:25, Isa 30:22, Jer 24:7. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The Lord has commanded his people to obey him, and to walk in his statutes, Jer 24:7; and he has promised and engaged himself that his people shall obey him and walk in his statutes: Eze 36:27, 'And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' So Eze 11:19-20; Eze 37:23-24. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The Lord commands his people to mourn for their sins, Isa 22:12, Joe 2:12, Jas 4:10; and he has promised and engaged himself to give them a mourning frame: Zec 12:10, 'They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one that mourneth for an only son;' Eze 7:16, 'They shall be on the mountains as the doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity.' But,

[9.] Ninthly, The Lord commands his people to grow in grace, 2Pe 3:18, &c.; and he has promised and engaged himself that they shall grow in grace: Psa 92:12-14, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree' (which is always green and flourishing); 'he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.' The cedar of all trees is most durable, and shoots up highest. 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' See Hos 14:5-7; Mal 4:2, &c. But,

[10.] Tenthly, The Lord commands his people not to suffer sin to reign in them: Rom 6:12, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal body;' and he has promised and engaged himself that sin shall not reign in them: Rom 6:14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you;' Jer 33:8, 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity;' Eze 36:25, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you;' Mic 7:19, 'He will subdue our iniquities.' But,

[11.] Eleventhly, He has commanded his people to loathe their sins, and to loathe themselves for their sins: Psa 97:10, 'Ye that love the Lord hate evil; Rom 12:9, 'Abhor that which is evil.' And the Lord hath promised and engaged himself to give them such a frame of spirit: Eze 36:13, 'Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities, and for your abominations;' Eze 6:9, 'And they that escape of you shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, because I am broken with their whorish heart, which hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a-whoring after their idols; and they shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations;' Eze 20:43, 'And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings wherein you have been defiled, and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that ye have committed.' But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, for enough is as good as a feast, God has commanded us to hold out, to persevere to the end, 1Co 15:58, Rev 2:10, Luk 18:1; and the Lord has promised and engaged himself that they shall persevere: Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger;' Isa 40:31, 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.'

Thus you see by an induction of twelve particulars that whatever God requires of his people, he stands engaged by the covenant of grace to give to his people, to do for his people.

Now mark, the covenant of grace is confirmed to us in the surest and most glorious way that can be imagined, Gen 17:7; Heb 13:20; Psa 89:28; 2Sa 23:5. The covenant of grace is so strongly ratified that there can be no nulling of it. For,

[1.] First, It is confirmed to us by his word. 'I will be your God, and you shall be my people,' Jer 30:22. Now, 'all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us,' 2Co 1:20; that is, they are stable and firm, as the Hebrew word signifies. They will eat their way over all Alps of opposition. In the new covenant God neither makes nor fulfils any promises of salvation but in Christ and by Christ.

[2.] Secondly, God hath ratified the covenant of grace by his oath, Gen 22:16, Heb 6:19. His promise is enough, but surely his oath must put all out of question. There is no room for unbelief now God hath sworn to it. Had there been a greater God, he would have sworn by him. But,

[3.] Thirdly, God hath ratified it by the death of his Son, Gal 3:15, Heb 9:15-16. A man's last will and testament, as soon as he is dead, is in force, and cannot then be disannulled. The covenant of grace is a testamentary covenant, which, by the death of the testator, is so settled that there is no altering of it. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, The covenant of grace is ratified by the seals which God hath annexed to it. What was sealed by the king's ring could not be altered, Est 8:1-17. God hath set his seals to the covenant of grace, his broad seal in the sacraments, and his privy seal in the witness of his Spirit, and therefore it is sure, and cannot be reversed, &c.

Now, whenever you look upon your graces or gracious evidences with one eye, be sure you look upon the covenant of grace, your last royal fort, with the other eye. The whole hinge of a man's comfort and happiness hangs upon the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is the saint's original title to heaven; it is a saint's best and brightest evidence for life and salvation. There was an eternal design, an eternal plot, if I may so speak, betwixt God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; a bargain, a covenant made between the Father and the Son, for the salvation of his chosen ones; and by this patent and tenure of grace all saints have title to heaven, &c. Dear Christians, many times your gracious evidences are so blotted and blurred that you cannot read them. Oh then, turn to the covenant of grace! When other evidences fail you, the covenant of grace will be a glorious standing evidence to you. It is upon the score of the covenant that you must challenge an interest in all the glory of another world. The covenant of grace is the great charter, the magna charta, of all your spiritual privileges and immunities. Now, in this great charter the Lord declares that sincerity shall go for perfection, Luk 1:5-6. In this great charter the Lord hath declared that he judges his people by the standing bent and frame of their hearts, and not by what they are under some pangs of passion, or in an hour of temptation, Acts 13:22. In this great charter the Lord declares that his eye is more upon his people's inward disposition than it is upon their outward actions, 2Ch 30:18-20; and that his eye is more upon their will than it is upon their work, 2Co 8:12, Php 2:13. In this great charter, the covenant of grace, the Lord hath declared that he will not forsake his people, nor cast off his people, because of those failings and weaknesses that may, and do, attend them: 1Sa 12:22, 'For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.' Ponder much upon Jer 31:31-38. He chose you for his love, and he still loveth you for his choice. God will rather pity his people under their weakness than he will reject them for their weakness. The covenant of grace

that God hath made with his people is as the covenant that a man makes with his wife. 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you,' Hos 2:19-20; Jer 3:13. Now, a man will never reject his wife; he will never cast off his wife for those common weaknesses and infirmities that daily attends her; no more will the Lord cast off his people because of the infirmities that daily hang upon them. In this great charter—the covenant of grace—the Lord declares that he will require no more than he gives, and that he will give what he requires, and that he will accept what he gives; and what can a God say more? and what can a gracious soul desire more?

O sirs! when all is cloudy overhead, and all dark within doors; when a Christian's graces are not transparent, when his evidences for heaven are soiled and blotted, and when neither heart nor house are as they should be, it is good then to turn to the covenant of grace, and to dwell upon the covenant of grace. Thus David did: 2Sa 23:5, 'Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' Let me give a little light into the words.

'Although my house be not so with God.' Though David in the main had a good heart, yet he had but a wicked house. Absalom had slain his brother, rebelled against his father, and lay with his father's concubines; and Amnon had deflowered his sister, &c. Now David, under a deep sense of all this wickedness, and of his own personal unworthiness, sadly sighs it out, 'Although my house be not so with God,' &c.; though I have not walked so exactly and perfectly as I should have done, though neither I nor my house have walked answerable to those great mercies and singular kindnesses of God that have been extended to us;

'Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.' The word everlasting hath two acceptations. It doth denote, (1.) Sometimes a long duration, in which respect the old covenant, clothed with figures and ceremonies, is called everlasting, because it was to endure, and did endure a long time. (2.) Sometimes it denotes a perpetual duration, a duration which shall last for ever. In this respect the covenant of grace is everlasting. It shall never cease, never be broken, nor never be altered. Now, the covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant in a twofold respect:

First, *Ex parte fœderantis*, in respect of God, who will never break covenant with his people; but is their God, and will be their God for ever and ever: Psa 48:14, 'For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.' Ay, and after death too; for this is not to be taken exclusivè. He will never leave his people, nor forsake his people, Heb 13:5-6.

Secondly, *Ex parte confœderatorum*, in respect of the people of God, who are brought into covenant, and shall continue in covenant for ever and ever. You have both these expressed in that excellent scripture, Jer 32:40, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Seriously dwell upon the place. It shews that the covenant is everlasting on God's part, and also on our part. On God's part, 'I will never turn away from them, to do them good;' and on our part, 'they shall never depart from me.' How so? 'I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me' (even that fear spoken of in Jer 32:39, 'that they may fear me for ever').

'Ordered in all things.' Oh what head can conceive, or what tongue can express that infinite counsel, wisdom, love, care and tenderness, that the blessed God has expressed in ordering the

covenant of grace, so as it may most and best suit to all the wants, and straits, and necessities, and miseries, and desires, and longings of poor sinners' souls. The covenant of grace is so well ordered by the unsearchable wisdom of God, that you may find in it remedies to cure all your diseases, and cordials to comfort you against all your faintings, and a spiritual armoury to arm you against all your enemies, viz., the world, the flesh, and the devil, Isa 40:28, and Psa 147:5. Dost thou, O distressed sinner, want a loving God, a compassionate God, a reconciled God, a sin-pardoning God? Here thou mayest find him, in the covenant of grace. Dost thou want a Christ to counsel thee by his wisdom, and to clothe thee with his righteousness, and to adorn thee with his grace? Here thou mayest find him in a covenant of grace. Dost thou want the Spirit to enlighten thee, to teach thee, to convince thee, to awaken thee, to lead thee, to cleanse thee, to cheer thee, and to seal thee up to the day of redemption? Eph 1:13. Here thou mayest find him in a covenant of grace. Dost thou want grace, or peace, or rest, or quiet, or content, or comfort, or satisfaction? Here thou mayest find it in a covenant of grace. God has laid into the covenant of grace, as into a common store, all those things that sinners or saints can either beg or need. Look, as that is a well-ordered commonwealth where there are no wholesome laws wanting to govern a people, and where there are no wholesome remedies wanting to relieve a people; so that must needs be a well-ordered covenant, where there is nothing wanting to govern poor souls, or to relieve poor souls, or to save poor souls; and such a covenant is the covenant of grace. And sure the covenant of grace is a sure covenant: Deu 7:9, 'The Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God' (or the God of Amen), 'which keepeth covenant with them that love him;' Psa 89:33, 'My covenant will I not break' (Hebrew, I will not profane), 'nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. All God's precepts, all God's predictions, all God's menaces, and all God's promises, are the issue of a most just, faithful, and righteous will. God can neither die nor lie: Tit 1:2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' There are three things that God cannot do: (1.) He cannot die; nor (2.) he cannot lie; nor (3.) he cannot deny himself: Jos 23:14, 'And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' O sirs! the covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's everlasting love, upon God's unchangeable love, upon God's free love, John 13:1. Whom God loves once, he loves for ever: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' Jer 31:3. God can as well cease to be, as he can cease to love those whom he has taken into covenant with himself. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's everlasting love, so it is bottomed upon God's immutable counsel: 'God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath,' Heb 6:17. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon the immutable counsel of God, so it is bottomed upon the free purpose of God: 2Ti 2:19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure;' that is, the decree and purpose of God's election stands firm and sure. Now the purpose of God's election is compared to a foundation, because it is that upon which all our happiness and blessedness is built and bottomed, and because, as a foundation, it abides firm and sure. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon the free purpose of God, so it is bottomed upon the glorious power of God, Isa 33:11, Isa 41:2; Mal 4:1; 1Co 1:25. The power of God is an infinite power, it is a supreme power, a power that overtops the power of all mortals. What is the stubble to the flames, the chaff to the whirlwind? No more is all created power to the power of God. The weakness of God is stronger than men; and did not Pharaoh find it so? and Haman find it so? and Sennacherib find it so? and Nebuchadnezzar find it

so? and Belshazzar find it so? and Herod find it so? In all the ages of the world the power of God hath bore down all before it. The power of God is an independent power, a matchless power, an incomparable power, an enduring power, an eternal power. And as the covenant of grace is bottomed upon the power of God, so it is bottomed upon the oath of God: Luk 1:72, 'To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.' Luk 1:73, 'The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.'

Heb 6:17-18; Psa 89:34-35. To think that God will break his oath, or be perjured, is an intolerable blasphemy. Once more give me leave to say, the covenant of grace is bottomed not only upon the oath of God, but also upon the precious blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is called 'the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Heb 13:20, Mat 26:28. 'This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,' Heb 9:15. 'And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Heb 9:17, 'A testament is of force after men are dead.' It is called a covenant and a testament. (1.) A covenant in respect of God, and a testament in respect of Christ. (2.) A covenant in respect of the manner of agreement, and a testament in respect of the manner of confirming. Jesus Christ died as a testator, and by his death confirmed the testamentary gift before made of life and salvation. Now, the covenant of grace being thus gloriously bottomed as you see, it must roundly and undeniably follow, that the covenant of grace is a sure covenant.

'For this is all my salvation and all my desire;' i.e. this is the great ground of all my hope concerning my salvation, and of all the happiness and blessedness which I look for in another world. This everlasting covenant, this sure covenant, is the great charter of charters that I have to shew for eternal bliss. David was drawing near to his eternal home, and whether his graces and gracious evidences for heaven's happiness were bright and shining, or blotted and clouded, I shall not at this time stand to inquire. It is enough that he stays his soul upon the covenant of grace, and that he comforts and solaces his soul in the covenant of grace. And oh that all Christians, when their graces and gracious evidences are either clouded or blotted, or else sparkling and shining, that they would frequently eye these three royal forts, viz., (1.) the free grace and favour of God; (2.) the mediatory righteousness of Christ; (3.) the covenant of grace. Now, that I may the more effectually prevail with you to look upon these royal forts, and to delight in these royal forts, and to prize these royal forts, and to improve these royal forts, give me leave to offer these three things briefly to your consideration:

First, Our best graces and performances are not commensurate and square payment in the eyes of pure justice. All of them as inherent in us, and acted by us, are but imperfect excellencies. No man hath so much grace and holiness as is required, nor doth he so much as he is obliged to do. Every particular grace, though it be of an heavenly and divine original, yet it is like the stars twinkling, though placed in the heavens; so that if God should enter into judgment with the most righteous person, even the righteousness that is in him would not be safety and defence unto him, Psa 143:2, Job 14:3-4, Rom 3:20; for what a deal of pride have we mixed with a little humility! and what a deal of passion have we mixed with a little meekness! and what a deal of hypocrisy have we mixed with a little sincerity! and what a deal of earthly-mindedness have we mixed with a little heavenly-mindedness! and what a deal of unbelief have we mixed with a little faith! O sirs! in the great business of your access to God, and of your acceptance with God, and of your reconciliation

to God, and of your justification before God, it is best, safest, and noblest to bottom your faith, hope, and expectation infinitely rather upon imputed righteousness than inherent righteousness, upon what Christ has done for you than upon what he has done in you, Rom 3:20-27, Php 3:8-10. Inherent righteousness is stained, imperfect, impure; but imputed righteousness is pure and perfect. If there were any stain or any imperfection in that, it could not justify us, it could not save us, it could not secure us from wrath to come. Such evidences as are not fetched from any thing in us, nor from any things done by us, but are fetched by faith from our free justification, and from Christ's full satisfaction which he hath wrought for us, will be found the most full, the most sweet, the most refreshing, the most comforting, and the most satisfying evidences. Christ is all fair, all perfect, all pure; and therefore let him be most in your eye and most upon your hearts. But here take heed that you do not look upon your graces, or your gracious evidences, as poor, low, weak, contemptible things, as too many do; for the least of them is more worth than heaven and earth, and they may yield you much comfort, much support, much refreshing, and much satisfaction, though they cannot yield you that full comfort nor that full satisfaction as Christ himself can yield, as Christ's satisfaction can yield, as free justification can yield. Though children and friends cannot yield to a wife that full comfort, content, delight, and satisfaction as her husband does, yet they may yield her much comfort, much content, much delight, much satisfaction. The application is easy. But,

Secondly, Consider, that Christian that hath free grace, that hath free justification, that hath the mediatory righteousness of Christ, that hath the satisfaction of Christ, that hath the covenant of grace most constantly in his sight, and most frequently warm upon his heart, that Christian, of all Christians in the world, is most free from a world of fears, and doubts, and scruples, which do sad, sink, perplex, and press down a world of other Christians, who affect a life of sense, and who daily eye more what Christ is a-doing in them, and what they are a-doing for Christ, than they do eye either his active or passive obedience. Christ hath done great things for his people, and he has suffered great things for his people, and he has purchased great things for his people, and he has prepared great things for his people; yet many of his own dear people are so taken up with their own hearts, and with their own duties and graces, that Christ is little eyed by them or minded by them; and what is this but to be more taken with the streams than with the fountain? with the leaves, blossoms and fruit, than with the tree itself? with the bracelets, ear-rings, and gold chains, than with the husband himself? with the nobles that wait, than with the king that is waited on? And this is the great reason why so many Christians, who will certainly go to heaven, do walk in darkness, and lie down in sorrow. But,

Thirdly, Trusting in our own duties, and resting on our own righteousness, and not on Christ's solely, is a close, secret, spiritual, dangerous, and unperceivable sin, which the nature of man is exceedingly prone unto, Isa 58:1-3; Zec 7:5-6. The pharisees were mightily given up to trust in their own righteousness, to rest on their own righteousness, and to boast and glory in their own righteousness, Mat 23:1-39, Luk 18:1-43; and this proved their mortal disease, their damning sin. Trusting in their own righteousness had so besotted and benumbed them, that they had no mind, no heart to open the gates of their souls, that the King of glory might enter in. And this was that which undid the Jews, Rom 10:3, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' And it is observable, the apostle useth an emphatical word of a Jew, Rom 2:17, 'Thou

retest in the law,' ■παναπα■■, thou art secure in the law, and in some admirable privilege and signal testimony of God's love. This was Bernard's temptation, when being assisted in duty he could stroke his own head with Bene fecisti, Bernarde, O Bernard, this was gallantly done, now cheer up thyself! It was the saying of a precious saint, that he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins, for the one made him often proud, and the other made him always humble.² It was good counsel Luther gave, Cavendum est non solum a peccatis, sed a bonis operibus, we must take heed not only of our sins, but of our good works. Duties can never have too much diligence used about them, nor too little confidence placed in them. They are good helps, but bad saviours. It is necessary we do them, but it is dangerous to rely upon them. If the devil cannot dissuade us from performing religious duties, then his next work will be to persuade us all he can to rely upon them, to make saviours of them, because this will as much gratify Satan, and as certainly ruin our souls, as if we had wholly neglected them. O man! thine own righteousness rested in, will as certainly and eternally undo thee as the greatest and foulest enormities. This soul-sickness is that spiritual idolatry that will undo thee, for thou makest thyself a saviour, and thy duties a saviour, and sayest of thy duties as they did of the golden calf, 'These are the gods that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.' Open wickedness, open idolatry, slays her thousands, but secret idolatry, a secret resting upon duties, slays her ten thousands. Multitudes bleed inward by this disease, and die for ever. Open profaneness is the broad dirty way that leads to hell, but religious duties rested in, is as sure a way, though a cleaner way to hell. Profane persons and formal professors shall meet at last in one hell. Ah, Christians! don't make religious duties your money, lest you and your money perish together. The phoenix gathers sweet odoriferous sticks in Arabia together, and then blows them with her wings and burns with them; so do many shining professors burn themselves with their own duties and services. You know in Noah's flood, all that were not in the ark, though they clamb up the tallest trees, and the highest mountains and hills, yet were drowned: so let men climb up to the highest duties, yet if they be not housed in Christ, and in his righteousness, they will be as certainly damned, as the men in the old world were certainly drowned. Adam and all his posterity was to be saved by doing; 'Do this and live'. And hence it is natural to all the sons and daughters of Adam to rest on duties, and to look for life and happiness in a way of doing; but if salvation were to be had by doing, what need of a Saviour? Well, remember this once for all, such as rest on duties, such as rest on their own righteousness, or on anything on this side Christ, such shall find them as weak as the Assyrian, or as Jareb. They cannot heal them, they cannot cure them of their wounds. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb, yet could they not heal him, nor cure him of his wound, Hos 5:13. Duties are to Satan as the ark of God was to the Philistines; he trembles to see a soul diligent in the use of them, and yet not daring to rely on them but on Christ; but when he can draw poor souls to confide in their duties, and to rest on their duties, then he has his design, then he claps his hands for joy, then he cries out, Ah! ah! so would I have it. There is no sin that doth so formally and immediately oppose Christ, and reject Christ, and provoke Christ, as this of resting upon self-righteousness; and therefore above all, pray against this, and watch against this, and weep over this. There is no man in his wits that hath a precious lading, that will dare to adventure it in a cracked and broken vessel; so there is no Christian in his wits that will dare to adventure the everlasting safety of his soul upon the leaking vessels and bottoms of his own holiness or services. O sirs! your duties cannot satisfy the justice of God; they cannot satisfy the law of God; your present duties cannot satisfy for your former sins and rents that be behind. A man that pays

his rent honestly every year, does not thereby satisfy for the old rent not paid in ten or twenty years before. Thy new obedience, O Christian, is too weak to satisfy for old debts, and therefore roll thyself on Christ, and Christ alone, for life and for salvation. Bellarmine could say after all his disputes for relying on works, on saints and angels, Tutius est, &c. The safest way is to rely on Jesus Christ. Now, let all these things work you to renounce your own righteousness, and to take sanctuary alone in the pure, perfect, and most glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, and in the free grace of God. Paul is called by one [Augustine] the best child of grace in the world; for whatsoever he was, or had, or did, he ascribeth all to free grace, Eph 3:8; he was the chiefest of the apostles, and yet less than the least of all saints; he was very eminent in grace, and yet what he was, he was by grace. 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' 1Co 15:10. He lived, 'yet not he, but Christ lived in him,' Gal 2:20. He 'laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not he, but the grace of God which was with him,' 1Co 15:10. He was able to do all things, but still 'through Christ that strengthened him,' Php 4:13. Oh that these three last things might work you to be more in love with free grace than ever, and to be more in love with the righteousness of Christ than ever, and to be more in love with the covenant of grace than ever. But,

[14.] The fourteenth proposition is this, The more grace, the more holiness, the more any man has of the Spirit of sanctification, the more clear, the more fair, the more full, the more sweet will his evidences be for heaven, for salvation; and the more comfort, and the more assurance, and the more settlement, and the more of the witness of the spirit of adoption, such a person will certainly attain unto. That Spirit which is the earnest of our inheritance, and which seals us up to an holy assurance, is an holy Spirit, Eph 1:13-14; he is frequently called the Holy Spirit. 'Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' Psa 51:11. 'But they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit,' Isa 63:10. 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,' Eph 4:30. 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,' 1Th 4:8. To make a man holy, is more than to create a world; it is a work too high and too hard for angels or men; it becomes none, and it can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is the Spirit's personal operation; it is the great work of the Spirit to shape, form, and fashion the new-creature holiness in all the vessels of glory, 2Th 2:13, 1Pe 1:2. The Spirit is the root of all holiness, and therefore the several parts of holiness are called the fruits of the Spirit. Holiness is the very picture of God; and certainly no hand can carve that excellent picture but the Spirit of God. Holiness is the divine nature, and none can impart that to man but the Spirit; the Spirit is the great principle of holiness. Now, the more grace, the more holiness any man hath, the more he is the delight of the Spirit; and the more the Spirit will delight to witness his sonship, his saintship, and his heirship unto him. Scripture and experience will tell you, that commonly men of greatest holiness have been men of greatest assurance. This is certain, the more holiness the more assurance; for so the precious promises runs, Isa 32:17. 'The work of righteousness shall be peace,' to wit, peace of conscience, Rom 5:1; 'and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.' Inherent righteousness, for of that he speaks, as is evident by Rom 5:15-16, is the highway to assurance and peace. So Psa 50:23, 'To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God;' that is, declare myself to be his Saviour, say some; say others, I will give him a prospect of heaven here, and a full fruition of heaven hereafter; say others, I will cause him to see and know that he shall be saved. So John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him.' John

14:23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.' Holy Christians shall have most of the spiritual presence of Christ, and of the singular manifestations of the love of Christ to their souls. The great reason of reasons why the springs of comfort, of joy, of inward peace, and of assurance, rises no higher in many Christians' souls, is because the springs of grace and holiness rises no higher in their souls. Had Christians more grace, and more holiness in their hearts and lives, God would quickly bring down more of heaven and assurance into their souls. There is a blessed assurance, as I have told you before, which arises from the discovery of grace in the soul. Now, the more ample, large and full the matter of our assurance is, the more ample, large and full must our assurance be. Methinks the connection of these four verses in Tit 2:11-14, shews this; when 'grace that appears to us, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,' &c. See what follows; then we are most likely to 'look for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' And that prayer of the apostle for his Ephesians speaks as loudly in the case, Eph 3:16-18, that God would grant them to be strengthened by the Spirit, &c., to be rooted and grounded in love. And what then? That 'ye may comprehend with all saints, the length and breadth of the love of God.' Suppose in health or sickness, living or dying, a man should labour to support, comfort and cheer up his spirit, in the thoughts or meditations of his eternal election and free justification; and suppose that at that very time the Spirit of God, his own conscience, a faithful minister, or an experienced Christian should tell him that if he be really justified, he is really sanctified, 2Th 2:13-14; now, if this man should say, What do you tell me of sanctification? or, I know not whether I am sanctified or no; or, I look not to sanctification, I mind not holiness, I regard not the fruits of the Spirit; will not the Holy Spirit, will not an enlightened conscience, will not a faithful minister, will not an experienced Christian reply, Then certainly thou art not elected, thou art not justified, for it is a truth as clear as the sun, a truth that will admit of no dispute, viz., that none are eternally elected and freely justified but they are sanctified, Rom 8:1, Rom 8:13, Rom 8:19, Rom 8:30; and that they that are not sanctified are not justified? Mark, there is a close connection of sanctification with justification in the promises of the covenant. Sanctification and justification go hand in hand; they come forth like twins out of the womb of free grace, as you may see in these remarkable Scriptures: Jer 33:8, 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.' Here you see them both expressed together in the same deed, 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity;' there is our sanctification promised; 'And I will pardon all their iniquities;' there is justification promised. So Mic 7:19, 'He will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.' Here you find justification and sanctification again in the promise. 'He will subdue our iniquities;' this is sanctifying; 'and he will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea;' this is justifying. Heb 8:10, 'I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts' (there is the promise of sanctification); Heb 8:12, 'And I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more;' there is the promise of justification: 1Jn 1:9, 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins;' there is our justification promised; 'and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' there is the promise of sanctification: Eze 36:25, 'From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you;' there is the promise of sanctification; Eze 36:29, 'I will also save you from all your uncleannesses;' there is the promise of justification: 1Co 6:11, 'But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.' Justification and sanctification are inseparable companions; distinguished they must be,

but divided they can never be; where sin is pardoned, the gift of sanctity is still conferred. It is weakness, it is wickedness, for a man to conclude that he is in an elected and justified estate when he has nothing, when he has not the least thing to evidence himself to be in a sanctified estate. Both justification and sanctification have a necessary respect to the salvation of all those that shall go to heaven. He that will go to heaven must be sanctified, and he that will go to heaven must be justified. No man can go to heaven without both; no man can go to heaven unless he be justified: Rom 8:30, 'Whom he called, them also he justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' None are justified but such as are called, and none are glorified but such as are justified. And as no man can go to heaven but he that is justified, so no man can go to heaven but he that is sanctified: John 3:5, 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Ver. 5, 'Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;' Heb 12:14, 'And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' By these scriptures, it is evident that there is an absolute necessity both of sanctification and justification in reference to salvation. Now as sanctification and justification are linked together, so the more clear, the more full, the more evident, and the more eminent a man's sanctification is, the more clear, the more full, the more evident, and the more eminent, will the evidences of his justification be. The greatest evidences of our sanctification carries with them the greatest assurance of our justification and of our salvation. But,

[15.] The fifteenth proposition is this, When your graces are strongest, and your evidences for heaven are clearest, and your comforts rise highest upon the sight of your graces or gracious evidences, then in a special manner it concerns you to make it your great business and work to act faith afresh, to act faith with a greater strength, upon the free, rich, and glorious grace of God, and upon the Lord Jesus Christ. It is reported of the crystal, that it hath such a virtue in it, that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and beauty upon them. This is most true of faith. Faith is a grace that gives strength and efficacy to all other graces; it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl; it hath an influence upon all other graces that are in the soul. Faith is as the spring in the watch, that moves the wheels; not a grace stirs till faith sets it at work. What is said of Solomon's virtuous woman, viz., that she sets all her maidens to work, Pro 31:15, Pro 31:27, is most true of faith: faith sets all the graces in the soul at work. We love as we believe, and we obey as we believe, and we hope as we believe, and we joy as we believe, and we mourn as we believe, and we repent as we believe. All graces keep time and pace with faith, &c. Now when your graces are most shining, and your evidences for heaven are most sparkling, oh then give faith elbow-room, give faith full scope to exercise itself upon the Lord Jesus. Adam's obedience in innocency was not more pleasing and delightful to God, than the exercise of your faith on the Lord Jesus will be at such a time pleasing and delightful to him. You are to look upon all your graces and gracious evidences as your highest encouragement to a lively, cheerful, and resolute acting of faith upon the person of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, 1Jn 5:13; Rom 1:17, &c. All a Christian's graces, and all his gracious evidences, should be but as a golden bridge, or as Joseph's waggons, Gen 45:19, Gen 45:21, Gen 45:27, a means to pass his soul over to Christ afresh by a renewed exercise of faith. When your graces and gracious evidences are most splendid, then be sure that Christ be found lying as a bundle of myrrh between your breasts, and all is well, and will be well, Song of Solomon 1:12. Dear Christians, when your eyes are fixed upon inherent righteousness, and upon your gracious evidences, then let your hearts be firmly fixed

upon the Lord Jesus Christ and his imputed righteousness. Paul's eye was fixed upon his grace, upon his better part: Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' Rom 7:25, 'And with my mind I serve the law of God.' And yet at the very same time his heart was set upon Christ, and taken up with Christ. Rom 7:25, 'I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Though Paul had an eye to his noble part, his better part, his regenerate part, yet at the same time his heart was taken up with the Lord Jesus Christ, as freeing of him from the curse of the law, the dominion of sin, the damnable power of sin, and as translating of him into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. 'I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So in Col 2:2-3, you have their eyes fixed upon grace, and at the same time their hearts fixed upon Christ. 'That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' Their eyes were upon grace, but their hearts were taken up with Christ. So in Php 3:8, the apostle had his eye upon the excellent knowledge of Christ. But, Php 3:9, his heart is taken up with the righteousness of Christ. 'That I might be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' Though Paul had his eye upon grace, upon inherent righteousness; yet in the very presence of his grace his heart was taken up with Christ, and with his imputed righteousness, as is evident in the text. This is your glory, Christians, in the presence and sight of all your graces and gracious evidences, to see the free grace of Christ, and his infinite, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness to be your surest, sweetest, highest, and choicest comfort and refuge. Look, as Rebekah was more taken with the person of Isaac than she was with his ear-rings, bracelets, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, Gen 24:30, Gen 24:52, Gen 24:64-67: so it becomes a Christian, in the presence of his graces and gracious evidences, which are Christ's ear-rings, bracelets, and jewels, to be more taken up with Christ than with them. Christ, and his mediatory righteousness, should be more in a Christian's eye, and always lie nearer to a Christian's heart, than inherent righteousness. Grace is a ring of gold, and Christ is the sparkling diamond in that ring. Now, what is the ring to the sparkling diamond? It is not safe to pore more upon inherent righteousness than upon imputed righteousness. It is not wisdom to have our thoughts and hearts more taken up with our gracious dispositions and gracious actings, than with the person of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the life of Christ, the death of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, &c. Dear Christians, was it Christ, or was it your graces, or your gracious evidences, or your gracious dispositions, or your gracious actings, that trod the wine-press of your Father's wrath, that satisfied divine justice, that pacified divine anger, that did bear the curse, that fulfilled the law, that brought in an everlasting righteousness, that discharged your debts, that procured your pardon, that made your peace, and that brought you into a state of favour and friendship with God? If you answer, as you must, 'None but Christ, none but Christ,' oh then, let your thoughts and hearts be firstly, mostly, chiefly, and lastly taken up with the Lord Jesus. Though inherent grace be a glorious creature, yet it is but a creature. Now, when your thoughts and hearts are more taken up with inherent grace, than they are with Christ, the spring and fountain of all grace; you make an idol of inherent grace, and reflect dishonour upon the Lord Jesus, John 1:16; Col 2:2-3. A Christian may lawfully look upon his graces and his gracious evidences, and a Christian ought to be much in blessing and praising of God for his graces and gracious evidences, and a Christian may safely take comfort in his graces and gracious evidences, as they are the fruits of God's eternal and unchangeable love; but still his work should be to live upon Christ, and

to lift up Christ above all, Isa 38:3, 2Co 1:12. It is Christ, it is his mediatory righteousness, it is free grace, that a Christian ought to make the chief and only ground and bottom of his hope and comforts. Though good old Jacob did really rejoice in the chariots and waggons that Joseph had sent to bring him down to Egypt, yet he did more abundantly rejoice in this, that Joseph was alive, and that shortly he should see and enjoy Joseph himself, Gen 45:26-28. Though a Christian may really rejoice in his graces and gracious evidences, yet above all he ought to rejoice in Christ Jesus, to triumph in Christ Jesus, and to take up in Christ Jesus as in his great all, Gal 6:14, Php 3:3, 2Co 2:14, Col 3:11. There is a great aptness and proneness in many (may I not say in most?) gracious Christians, to gaze so much and so long upon their graces, upon their gracious dispositions, upon their gracious evidences, and upon their gracious actings, that too often they neglect the exercise of faith upon Christ, upon the promises; they gaze so much and so long upon what is wrought in them, and done by them, that they forget their grand work, which is immediate closing with Christ, immediate embracing of Christ, immediate relying upon Christ, immediate staying, rolling, and resting upon Christ, for justification and salvation. Now from these frequent miscarriages of Christians, some have taken the liberty and boldness very hotly and peremptorily to cry down the total use of all characters, signs, and marks, the evil of which I have formerly pointed at, and therefore let this touch suffice here. Grace is excellent, yea, very excellent, but Christ is infinitely more excellent than all your graces, and therefore above all let Christ still have the pre-eminence, Col 1:8. Now, though it must be granted that a Christian may lawfully make use of his graces and gracious evidences, in order to his support, comfort, and encouragement, yet it cannot be denied but that the noblest, purest, highest, and most excellent acts and exercises of faith, are when a Christian closes with Christ, embraces Christ, hangs upon Christ, and stays himself upon Christ, and upon free and precious promises, when sense and feeling fails, when joy and comfort fails, and when his gracious evidences for heaven fails. Oh now, to turn to Christ, and to turn to the breasts of a promise, and to live upon Christ, and to hang upon a promise, is the way of ways to exalt Christ, and to glorify Christ. There is nothing that pleases Christ, or that delights Christ, or that is such an honour to Christ, as these pure actings of faith are. Signs and evidences are most sweet, comfortable, and pleasing to us; but the pure actings of faith are most eyed and valued by Christ, and therefore many times Christ draws a curtain between him and the soul, and causes a Christian's sun to set at noon, and damps his joy, and mars his peace, and clouds his evidences for heaven, on purpose to train up his children in the pure actings of faith, Song of Solomon 3:1-5 and Song of Solomon 5:3-6. It is sad when Christians make such immoderate use of their signs, marks, evidences, as damps and hinders those direct and immediate acts of faith, whereby they should receive Christ, and apply Christ, and rest upon Christ alone for pardon, peace, reconciliation, justification, and salvation. He that pores so long and so much upon his graces or gracious evidences as shall hinder him from the fresh and frequent actings of faith upon Christ, he casts contempt upon Christ. Though the sight of a Christian's graces and gracious evidences be very comfortable and delightful to him, yet the sight of Christ should be ten thousand times more comfortable and delightful to him. O sirs! what are the favourites to the king himself? What are the servants to the lord they wait on? What are the friends of the bridegroom to the bridegroom himself? What are all the bracelets and jewels to the husband that gives them? No more are all a Christian's graces or gracious evidences to the Lord Jesus himself. A Christian should say to all his gifts, graces, evidences, and services, Stand by, make room for Christ, make room for Christ. Oh, none but Christ! Oh, none to Christ! Living by signs is most natural, pleasing

and comfortable to us, but living by faith is most honourable to Christ. It is said, 'the just shall live by his faith,' not by his evidences, Hab 2:4, Heb 10:38. When men pride themselves in their evidences, and when men secretly lean upon their evidences instead of leaning upon Christ, and when men bottom their hopes and comforts upon their signs and evidences, when they should be bottoming of all their hopes and comforts upon Christ; on a sudden Christ withdraws, and the soul is immediately filled with clouds, fears, doubts, darkness; and all a man's graces and gracious evidences are eclipsed, and he can see nothing, nor feel nothing, but deadness, hardness, barrenness, hypocrisy, unbelief, self-love, guilt, &c., which makes him a Magor-missabib, a terror to himself. Now the design of Christ in all this is to train up his people in a life of faith, and to teach them, in the want of their signs and evidences, how to live, above their signs and evidences, upon himself, who is their life, their hope, their heaven, their happiness, their all, Col 3:3-4, Col 1:27. Now, Christians, the best way to prevent these sore soul distresses, is in the moderate use of your signs and evidences, to live much in the fresh and frequent actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus, and in so doing, you will neither grieve Christ, nor provoke Christ, nor wrong your own precious and immortal souls. But,

[16.] The sixteenth and last proposition that I shall lay down is this: Whenever any fresh doubts or fears rise in your hearts upon the stirrings of corruptions, or debility of graces, or failing in duties, &c., then keep close to these two rules: First, have recourse to any of the former characters that are laid down in this book; and while you find any of them shining in your souls, nay, though it were but one, never pass any judgment against the happiness and blessedness of your spiritual or eternal estates. Secondly, turn yourselves to such particular promises, and plead such particular promises, and rest and stay your trembling souls upon such particular promises, and cling fast to such particular promises, that have been comforts, cordials, and supports to many weak, doubting, trembling Christians, who have been always afraid to say they had grace, or to say that God was their Father, or Christ their Redeemer, or the Spirit their sanctifier, or heaven their inheritance, &c. I have read of a woman that was much disquieted in conscience, even to despair, endeavouring to be her own executioner, but was comforted by that blessed promise, Isa 57:15, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of an humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' And I have read of another man, who being ready to die, Lord, saith he, I challenge thee by that promise, Mat 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' and so was comforted. And I have read of some others [Uranas and Beza] that were comforted with that promise, John 10:29, 'None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand.' And I have read of another who, having deeply wounded his conscience by subscribing to popish errors, was much comforted by that blessed scripture: 1Ti 1:15, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' And I have read of another [Mr Bilney the martyr] who was much comforted under sore distresses by that promise: Isa 26:3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace' (or as the Hebrew runs, shalom, shalom, peace, peace) 'whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee' And many have gone to heaven triumphantly by the refreshing and comfort that they have found in these following scriptures: John 6:37, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;' Isa 55:1, 'Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;' Isa 55:3, 'Incline your ear and come unto me: hear, and your

soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' And so Rev 22:17, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.' So Hos 14:4, 'I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely.' So Isa 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Isa 57:18, 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners;' Isa 57:19, 'I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.' Oh, these have been comforting promises, and upholding promises, and refreshing promises to many doubting, drooping souls. It is impossible that such a soul should ever drop into hell, that can cling fast to any of these promises, that can hang upon any of these promises, that can rest and lay the weight of their souls upon Christ in any of these promises. Doubtless reliance upon Christ in these precious promises hath ferried many poor, doubting, trembling souls to heaven. The promise is the golden cabinet, and Christ is the costly jewel that is laid up in it. The promise is the field, and Christ is the pearl of price that is hid in it.³ All the promises they point to Christ, they lead to Christ, they hang upon Christ: 'All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen,' 2Co 1:20. In the new covenant God neither makes any promises, nor fulfils any promises of salvation, but in Christ and through Christ. Now, when any fears, or darkness, or doubts, or disputes, arises in your souls about your spiritual estates, oh, then, run to Christ in the promise, and plead the promise, and hang upon the breasts of the promise, and let your souls cleave close to the promise; for this is the way of ways to have your evidences cleared, your comforts restored, your peace maintained, your graces strengthened, and your assurance raised and confirmed.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART liverpool

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Objection 1. We have no power to make ourselves holy; we are as well able to make a world, to command the winds, and to raise the dead, as we are able to cleanse our own hearts, or change our own natures, or sanctify our own souls; and therefore, to what purpose should we be so strongly pressed to do that which we have no power to do?

Six answers

Objection 2. But hereafter may be time enough to look after holiness; I may yet pursue after the pleasures and profits of the world, I may yet spend some years in gratifying mine own lusts, and in walking after the course of the world; I have time enough before me, and therefore some years hence may be time enough to look after holiness

Five answers

Objection 3. But if we should thus press and pursue after holiness, then we must take our farewell of all joy and comfort, of all delight and pleasure, and never expect to enjoy one merry day more, for we observe that there are no persons under heaven that live such a melancholy, sad, sorrowful, pensive life, as those who press most after, holiness, and who make most stir and noise about holiness, and therefore if we should resolve to follow after holiness, we must resolve to spend our days in sorrow and sadness, in sighing and mourning, and this we had as lief die as do, &c.

Eight answers

Objection 4. We see that no persons on earth are exposed to such troubles, dangers, afflictions, and persecutions, as those are exposed to who mind holiness, who follow after holiness. These are days wherein men labour to frown holiness out of the world, and to scorn and kick holiness out of the world; and do you think that we are mad now to pursue after holiness?

Twelve answers

Objection 5. We would labour after this holiness, without which there is no happiness, &c. But if we should, then we must resolve to be poor, and mean, and beggarly in the world, we must resolve then to fare hard, and lie hard, and labour hard, and live low in the world, for we shall never raise an estate to ourselves by holiness and strictness, we shall never grow rich and great in the world by godliness; nay, by driving this trade of holiness, we shall lose our trades, our customers, and those estates we have, and quickly bring a noble to ninepence, &c.

Six answers

Objection 6. Should we pursue after holiness, it would be a disgrace, a disparagement, and dishonour to us who are high, and great, and rich, and honourable in the earth. We are gentlemen, we are well-bred and high-born, and holiness seems to be too poor and too low a thing for such as we are to look after, &c.

Five answers

Objection 7. Should we pursue after holiness, we shall be sure to be reviled, slandered, and reproached on all hands; every one will hoot and hiss at us, we shall become a scorn and a byword to all that live in the family with us, and to all our neighbours round about us, every one will scorn us, and hate us, and we shall be their table-talk, and their song, and the butt at which they will shoot in all their meetings and discourses, &c.

Five answers (4.)To shew forth the reality and power of holiness:

[1.]Eight proofs of little holiness [2.]Seventeen 'provocations' to increased holiness [3.]Five arguments for degrees of glory

Two objections [4.]Eight means, helps, and directions Holiness of God: eight characteristics Signs or evidences of increasing holiness: twelve signs Comfort and consolation to all who have real holiness: twelve considerations Positions concerning holiness the

CROWN AND GLORY of

CHRISTIANITY note

Issued in the year of the Ejection [1662], the 'Crown and Glory of Christianity' appears to have been limited to a single edition; which however must have been a very large one, as scarcely any of the writings of Brooks is more frequently met with. This is the most inaccurately printed of Brooks's books. I have carefully corrected his own list of errata: but besides these, mistakes of words, texts, references, divisions abound. It may be permitted us to refer to the author's own appeal on this matter toward the close of his Epistle Dedicatory. The original title-page is given below.*—G. The Crown & Glory of

CHRISTIANITY: or

HOLINESS, The only way to happiness.

Discovered in LVIII. Sermons, from Heb 12:14. Where you have the Necessity, Excellency, Rarity, Beauty and Glory of Holiness set forth; with the resolution of many weighty Questions and Cases. Also Motives and Means to perfect Holiness: With many other things of very high and great importance to all the Sons and Daughters of men, that had rather be blessed then cursed, saved then damned. By Thomas Brooks, late Preacher of the Gospel at Margarets New Fish-street, and still Preacher of the Word in London, and Pastor of a Congregation there. To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God, Psa 50:1-23. ult.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Mat 5:8.

God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, 2Th 2:13.

LONDON,

Printed for H. Crips, J. Sims, and H. Mortlock, and are to be sold at their shops, at the entrance into Popes-head Alley out of Lumbard street, and at the sign of the Cross-keyes, and at the Phoenix in St. Pauls Church-yard, near the little North door, 1662. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To all the Lords, Knights, Ladies, Gentry, Ministers, and Commons of England—and the dominions thereunto belonging—that have but the least desire, the least mind, or the least will, to escape hell, and to go to heaven, or to be happy in both worlds, &c. My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen, &c.,—The philosophers, speaking of happiness, were divided into two hundred [and] eighty-eight opinions, every one intending something, yet resolving upon nothing; and therefore the man in Plutarch hearing them wrangle about summum bonum, the chiefest good—one placing of it in this, and another in that—went to the market and bought up all that was good, hoping that among all he should not miss of happiness; and yet he missed it; true happiness being too great and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below real holiness.

All men in the general, desire to be happy, but all men do not desire in this or that particular, or in this or that way, to be happy. Here there is an infinite difference, quot homines, tot sententiæ, so many men so many minds. A desire of happiness is planted in all men by the constitution of nature. This is so intrinsical and so innate in nature, it is so engraven in it, that even the fall of Adam, as great as it was, hath not blotted it out. This desire of happiness is left in man for a stock to graft holiness on. God grafts the plant of grace upon the stock of nature. Indeed happiness, like Rachel, Gen 29:17, is so fair and so beautiful a thing, that every one is apt to fall in love with it, and earnestly to desire it, yea, many there be that would serve twice seven years to enjoy it. But by the standing law of that heavenly country above, the younger sister must never be bestowed before the elder; you can never enjoy fair Rachel—heaven and happiness—except you are first married to tender-eyed Leah—real holiness, Gen 29:17-28. He that will have heaven, must have union and communion with Christ: and he that will have union and communion with Christ must be holy. 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?' 2Co 6:14-15. Of all the many thousands that have travelled to happiness, there is not one to be found but hath travelled thither in a way of holiness. Now the drift, the scope of this following Treatise, is to make men holy, that they may be

happy: it is to make men gracious on earth, that they may be glorious in heaven. Now to prevent all mistakes, rash censures, and misconstructions, I judge it very convenient and necessary, before I go any further, to acquaint the reader plainly and honestly with those arguments that have prevailed with me to dedicate this Book to all sorts, ranks, and degrees of persons, rather than to any single person, or to any one sort or rank of men whatsoever. And they are these six.

I. First, Because all sorts and ranks of men are fallen from that primitive holiness that once they had, Psa 14:3; Rom 3:12. There are five things that we have all lost by our fall in Adam. First, we have all lost that holy image that God had stamped upon us; and so we are become vile. Secondly, we have all lost our sonship; and so we are become slaves. Thirdly, we have all lost our friendship with God; and so we are become enemies. Fourthly, we have all lost our communion with God; and so we are become strangers. And fifthly, we have all lost our glory; and so we are become miserable. Some say that the naked body of man was so glorious in his estate of innocency, that all the beasts of the field admired it, and thereupon did homage to him. Oh, how glorious was his soul then! Certainly if the cabinet was so glorious, the jewel within it was much more glorious. But how glorious soever man was in his primitive estate, it is most certain that he is now so sadly fallen from the highest pinnacle of glory to so low a step of misery, that God sometimes sends him to the pismire to learn instruction, Pro 6:6-7; and sometimes he sends him to the stork and the swallow to make a right improvement of precious time, Jer 8:7; and sometimes he sends him to the ox and to the ass to learn knowledge, Isa 1:3; and sometimes he sends him to the fowls of the air to learn confidence, Mat 6:25 seq.; yea, and sometimes he sends him to the very lilies and grass of the field to learn how to live without carking and distracting cares. It is true, man's first estate was a state of perfect holiness, he being made in the image of God, and after the likeness of God, Gen 1:27. It was an estate of perfect light, knowledge, prudence, wisdom, and understanding. It was an estate of very great honour and dignity, and therefore the psalmist, speaking of man in this estate, brings him in with a crown of glory and honour upon his head, Psa 8:5, 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour.' Man's first estate was so stately an estate that he was not so much below the glorious angels, as he was above all other creatures. God made him the sovereign lord of the whole creation, God gave him an absolute dominion and authority both of sea and land, and all creatures in both were subjected to him, Gen 1:26; Psa 8:6-8. Such was the exquisite beauty and perfection of his body, that from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there was not the least blain or blemish. His outward man was clothed with all such requisite beauties and abilities that might render him lovely and comely to every eye. In a word, man's first estate was a state of perfect happiness. All within him, and all without him, and all about him, spoke him out to be completely blessed. There was nothing within him, but what was very sweet and desirable; there was nothing without him, but what was very delightful and amiable; neither was there anything about him, but what was serviceable and comfortable. Oh, but now by his fall, his crown is fallen from his head, and from the heads of all his posterity, Lam 5:16; for Adam was a public person. He was the prince of all mankind; and though all mankind was not actually in his loins when he fell, yet they were all potentially in his loins when he fell. If two kings make a league, and the one break it, he makes not only himself but all his subjects liable and obnoxious to all the calamities and miseries that shall follow thereupon. Adam was our common father, and we are all his sons and daughters. Now we know by the law of inheritance, that if the father forfeit his lease, he disinherits his posterity. Now Adam forfeited his lease, as I may say, and divine justice took the advantage of the forfeiture, and so hath turned all his posterity out of doors.

So that there is now no way under heaven to be happy, but by being holy. All sorts and ranks of men are fallen in Adam, and there is no way to rise but by Christ and holiness, &c.

II. A second reason why I dedicate this Treatise to all sorts and ranks of persons, is, because the matter contained in this book is of the greatest and highest concernment imaginable, to all ranks and degrees of men, from the greatest emperor that ever sat upon a throne, to the meanest and the poorest wretch that ever lay upon a dunghill. And doubtless that which is of such a marvellous importance to all, may very justly and reasonably be dedicated to all.

III. A third reason why I dedicate this Treatise to all sorts and ranks of persons, is, because God intends to save some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees. Though greatness and goodness do not always meet, yet greatness and goodness do sometimes meet; and though riches and religion do not always meet, yet riches and religion do sometimes meet; though not many wise, yet some wise, 1Co 1:26; though not many mighty, yet some mighty; though not many noble, yet some noble shall be called, sanctified, and saved. Look, as the sun in the firmament doth cast his light and warmth upon all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, Mat 5:45; so doth the Sun of righteousness shine upon the understandings and consciences of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, and by his secret and spiritual influences, he warms and cheers the hearts of high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble. Abraham was very great and very gracious: Joseph was very high and very holy: Job was very rich and very righteous. Though most of those kings and princes that we read of in Scripture were bad, very bad, yet some of them were good, yea, very good. Some of them were as famous for grace, righteousness, and holiness: witness David, Asa, Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, &c., as Saul, Jehoram, Jehu, Ahab, and others of them were infamous for all unrighteousness and wickedness. God, for the glory of his own grace, and the honour of his Son's blood, will have some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees sanctified and saved: and upon this very ground he engages his servants to pray for all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, in 1Ti 2:1-4. Now where God is resolved to save, there he is resolved to sanctify: where he is resolved to make happy, there he is resolved to make holy. And therefore I look upon myself as many ways obliged to have so large a heart for God, as to do all I can to help on the salvation of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men in the world. My heart's desire and prayer for England is, that her princes and nobles may be sanctified and saved, and that her gentry may be sanctified and saved, and that all the people of the nation may be sanctified and saved. I look upon myself as engaged to do all I can, by my pen and prayers, to help make England holy, that so England may be truly happy. For of this I am most certain, that if God will but make England a holy nation, it is not all the powers on earth, nor all the powers of hell, that shall ever make England a miserable nation.

IV. A fourth reason why I thus dedicate this Treatise as you see, is, because my former poor labours and endeavours have been acceptable to some of all ranks and degrees, and they have been blest to some of all ranks and degrees; and I have been encouraged, whetted, and stirred up by some on all hands, once more to cast in my net. And now I have done it, oh that it may issue in the drawing of many souls to Christ! and in the making of the graceless gracious, the profane holy! and in the making of those that are holy, to be yet more holy! &c.

V. A fifth reason why I thus dedicate this Treatise as you see, is, because though all men are bound to be holy, yet the great, the rich, the noble, and the honourable of the earth are bound above all other men in the world to be holy. God hath laid upon them greater obligations and ties to

holiness, than he hath upon any other men under heaven; and this you may see so clearly and so fully proved in this book—from page 433 to page 447—that neither the world nor the devil, as cunning and as learned a devil as he is, will ever be able to disprove. This reason alone is sufficient to justify my present practice.³

VI. My sixth and last reason why I thus dedicate this Treatise as you see, is, that it may be a blessed testimony and a standing witness for Christ in this day of blasphemy, profaneness, looseness, and wickedness, against all sorts and ranks of persons into whose hands it may fall, who, notwithstanding all that is here said, shall continue obstinate and impenitent in their ungodly courses and practices, as men resolved rather to go to hell than to heaven, and to be for ever unhappy rather than they will be holy, Isa 43:10, Isa 43:12, and Isa 44:8. Woe, woe to them for ever, that had rather be Satan's bond-slaves than Christ's free-men, that had rather be 'vessels of wrath' than vessels of honour, and that had rather be firebrands of hell than glorious saints in heaven, Eph 2:12; Rom 9:22. And so I have done with those reasons that may satisfy the reader concerning my dedication of this Treatise to all sorts, ranks, and degrees of persons.

Having premised these things in the general, give me leave to say, that if this Treatise should fall into the hands of any of the learned judges of this land, or into the hands of any of the justices of this nation, I would then take the humble boldness to offer this to their most serious consideration—viz., that if they would discharge the duties of their places, so as to give up their accounts at last with joy and cheerfulness to the King of kings and Lord of lords, it highly concerns them to study this doctrine of holiness, yea, to fall in love with holiness, and highly to prize it, and earnestly to press after it, and to be restless in their own spirits, till they have experienced the powerful operations of holiness in their own souls; for till then, they will never be able so to administer justice and judgment as becomes those that have the name of God, and the name of profession upon them, and that judge themselves to be in a higher form than those heathens were, who were famous for justice and righteousness—and yet never heard of a Christ nor salvation by him—and as becomes those that would not stand trembling and quaking in the great and terrible day, when Christ the Lord-Chief-Justice of heaven and earth shall pass a righteous and impartial judgment upon all the judges and justices that ever were on earth, Joe 2:11, Joe 2:31; Acts 17:31; 2Ti 4:1-2. My Lords and Gentlemen,—You know that the wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne hath told us that 'righteousness exalts a nation,' Pro 14:34. It is not valour in war, but righteousness; it is not policy in government, but righteousness; it is not wittiness of invention, but righteousness; it is not civility in behaviour, but righteousness; it is not antiquity of forms, but righteousness; it is not largeness of dominion, but righteousness; nor it is not greatness of command, but righteousness, that is the honour and the safety, that is the renown and the security of a nation. That nation that exalts righteousness, that nation shall be certainly exalted by righteousness, Amo 5:24. It is not Ahithophel's policy, it is not Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel, it is not Jehu's pompous zeal, it is not Goliath's sword, it is not rich mines of gold and silver, nor magazines, nor armies, nor councils, nor fleets, nor forts, but justice and righteousness that exalts a nation, and that will make a mean people to become a great, a glorious, and a famous people in the world. The world is a ring, and righteousness is the diamond in that ring: the world is a body, and righteousness and justice is the soul of that body. Ah! England, England! so long as judgment runs down as waters in the midst of thee, and righteousness as a mighty stream, thou shalt not die, but live and bear up bravely against all gainsayers and opposers; but if injustice shall

grow rampant, and thou shalt brandish the sword of justice in the behalf of the friends of Baal, Balaam, and Bacchus, and turn the wheel upon the righteous; if the sword of justice shall be a sword of protection to the desperate swearer, and to the cruel oppressor, and to the roaring drunkard, and to the cursing monster, and to the gospel despiser, and to the Christ contemner, &c., and shall be a devouring sword to the upright and peaceable in the land, divine vengeance will dig thy grave, and divine justice will tumble thee into it, though all the nations of the earth should labour to prevent it. It is a base and ignoble spirit, to pity Cataline more than to pity Rome; to pity any particular sort of men, more than to pity the whole. It is cruelty to the good, to justify the bad: it is wrong to the sheep, to animate the wolves: it is danger if not death to the lambs, not to restrain or chain up the lions. But from all these vanities the Lord deliver all your souls! And oh that you would for ever remember this, that as the constitution of a man's body is best known by his pulse: if it stir not at all, then we know he is dead; if it stir violently, then we know him to be in a fever; if it keep an equal stroke, then we know he is sound, well, and whole: so the estate and constitution of a kingdom or commonweal is best known by the manner of executing justice therein; for justice is the pulse of a kingdom. If justice be violent, then the kingdom is in a fever, in a very bad estate; if it stir not at all, then the kingdom is dead; but if it have an equal stroke, if it be justly and duly administered, then the kingdom is in a good, a safe, and sound condition. When Vespasian asked Apollonius what was the cause of Nero's ruin, he answered, that Nero could tune the harps well, but in government he did always wind up the strings too high, or let them down too low. The application is easy.

Now having premised thus much in the general, give me leave to tell you that there are eight special rules that you are carefully and faithfully to observe in the administration of justice and righteousness. And how you will be able to act suitable to those rules without a spirit of holiness, without principles of holiness, and without an experience of the powerful influences and operations of holiness in your own souls, I cannot for the present understand.

1. Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, the first rule that you are to observe in your administering of judgment and justice, is this, you must do justice impartially. You are called gods, and in this you must be like to God, who is no acceptor of persons. He accepts not the rich man because of his robes, neither doth he reject the poor man because of his rags.³ Deu 1:17, 'Ye shall not respect persons in judgment, but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.' And so in Lev 19:15, 'Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.' The great man is not to be spared for his might, nor the poor man for his misery. It is neither the great man's power, nor the poor man's meanness, that a judge is to mind in judgment. A judge, a justice, must never out of carnal pity cry out, Oh, he is a poor man! nor yet out of base fear cry out, Oh, he is a great man! Their eyes are always to be upon causes, and not upon persons. The statues of the Theban judges were made without hands and without eyes, to intimate to us, that as judges and justices should have no hands to receive bribes, so they should have no eyes to see a friend from a foe, a brother from a stranger.² And it was the oath of the heathen judges, as the orator relates, 'Audiam accusatorem ei rēum sine affectibus et personarum respectione,' I will hear the plaintiff and defendant, with an equal mind, without affection and respect of persons. In the twelfth novel⁴ of Justinian, you may read of an oath imposed upon

judges and justices, against inclining or addicting themselves to either party; yea, they put themselves under a deep and bitter execration and curse in case of partiality, imploring God in such language as this, 'Let me have my part with Judas, and let the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, and the trembling of Cain come upon me, and whatsoever else may astonish and dismay a man, if I am partial in the administration of justice.' That was a famous act of justice that was performed by Canutus, king of Denmark, who, when one of the twelve thieves that he had condemned pleaded that he was of the royal blood, saith the king, It is reason some favour should be shewed to this person; whereupon he commanded that he should be hanged on the highest gibbet: which was done accordingly. It was Cato's complaint of old, that those that robbed private men were clapped up and laid by the heels in cold irons: but, saith he, public thieves that wrong and rob the commonwealth, they sit in scarlet, with gold chains about their necks. And the Scythian philosopher hath long since complained, that laws were like spiders' webs, that would take flies but not wasps or hornets. His meaning was, that if poor mean men offended, they should be sure to be punished; but great men that were the makers of laws, they might be breakers of the laws, and yet never smart for it. In all ages some or others have poured out sad complaints against partial justice. Pilate, that unjustly condemned Christ, was afterwards kicked off the bench by Caius⁶ the emperor, for partial justice, and for grief and shame he became his own executioner. O sirs, God will one day kick such judges and justices, not only off the bench, but into hell, who make a trade of partial justice, except there be sound repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on his, Psa 9:17, and Psa 11:5. Oh that all the judges and justices of the land would for ever remember, what the wisest prince that ever swayed a sceptre saith in Pro 18:5, 'It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment.' It is not good, that is, it is bad, it is very bad, yea, it is so exceeding bad, as that it can hardly be expressed or uttered. It is so great a wickedness, it is so horrid and so hideous a wickedness, yea, it is so hellish a wickedness, as can hardly be imagined, as can rarely be declared. The poet in the Greek epigram taught the silver axe of justice that was carried before the Roman magistrate to proclaim, 'If thou be an offender, let not the silver flatter thee; if an innocent, let not the axe affright thee.' The Athenian judges judged in the night, when the faces of men could not be seen, that so they might be impartial in judgment. I have read of Zaleucus, that impartial law-giver and judge among the Locrians, how that he made a very severe law against adulterers—viz., that whosoever should be found guilty thereof should have both their eyes put out. Now it so fell out that his son proved the first offender. Forthwith sentence was pronounced, and execution ready to be done: whereupon the people earnestly entreated the judge, his father, that he would pardon the fact, who upon serious deliberation, put out one of his own eyes and one of his son's, and so shewed himself to be both a tender father and an upright and impartial judge at once.² O sirs! it is your wisdom and work, yea, it is as much your glory as it is your duty, to be impartial in all your administrations of justice, and not to favour friends or relations, nor to fear the frowns of enemies, but to proceed impartially, according to the merits of the cause that is before you. But,

2. Secondly, As you must do justice impartially, so you must do justice speedily. Jer 21:12, 'O house of David, thus saith the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.' After examination, execution is to be done with expedition, Ezr 7:16. When men cry out for justice, justice, you must not cry out cras, cras, to-morrow, to-morrow; you must do justice in the morning. Noon-justice and evening-justice is not

so acceptable to God, nor so honourable to yourselves, nor so advantageous to others, as morning-justice is. You are called gods: and as in other things, so in this, you should be like to God, who is speedy and swift in the exercise of justice, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. To delay justice, is worse sometimes than to deny justice. It is an evil thing and a dangerous thing, when magistrates, judges, and justices are as long a-bringing forth their verdicts as the elephant her young. Delays of justice makes many more irreconcilable. It makes the client often go with a heavy heart, an empty purse, and a threadbare coat. It fetcheth heavy sighs and groans from the hearts, and a sea of tears from the eyes of the delayed and oppressed. Magistrates, judges, and justices should be always ready to do justice: they should be always at leisure to do justice. I have read of one of the kings of Persia, how that he would many times alight off from his horse to do justice only to a poor body. It were well if all judges and justices would write after this copy, to be ready to do justice and judgment at all times, and upon all occasions. O sirs! you may have time to live, even when you have outlived your seasons and opportunities of doing justice and judgment; and what a hell will then your lives be to you! To prevent this hell, it is good to do justice in the morning. I have read of a very poor woman, who was very earnest with king Philip of Macedon to do her justice, but he deferred her, and told her that he had no leisure to hear her: she replied then, Why have you leisure to be king? The poor woman thought that they were very unmeet to be kings and judges, who could not be at leisure to do justice when the necessities and miseries of poor creatures cried aloud for justice, justice. I have read of a famous passage of Theodoric, king of the Romans, who, when a widow came to him with a sad complaint, that she had a suit depending in the court three years, which might have been ended in a few days: the king demands of her the judges' names: she tells him: he sends a special command to them to give all the speedy despatch that was possible to the widow's cause, which they did, and in two days determined it to the widow's liking. This being done, the king calls for the judges, and they supposing that they should have both applause and reward for their expedition, hastened to him full of joy: but after the king had propounded several things to them about their former delays, he commanded both their heads to be struck off, because they had spun out that cause to a three years' length, which two days would have ended.² Here was royal justice indeed! Oh that all the magistrates, judges, and justices of the nation would every morning lay Pro 13:12 warm upon their hearts! 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.' The Hebrew word, **וַיִּשְׁכַּח**, that is here rendered deferred, is from **שָׁח**, that signifies to draw out at length. Men are short-breathed and short-spirited, and hope's hours are full of eternity: and when their hopes are drawn out at length, this makes their hearts sick; and ah, what a world of such sick souls lies languishing at hope's hospital all the nation over, yea, all the world over! Hope in this text is put for the good things men hope for. Now, when the good things men hope for—be it justice or a quick despatch, &c.—are deferred and delayed, this makes the poor client sick at heart. A lingering hope always breeds in the heart a lingering consumption. The harder travail hope hath, and the more strongly it labours to bring forth, and yet is deferred and delayed, the more deadly sick the client grows. But when the desire cometh, that is, when the thing desired, wished, and looked for, be it justice, be it righteousness, be it success, &c., is gained, it is a tree of life; or rather as the Hebrew hath it, is a tree, **וַיִּשְׁכַּח**, of lives. All sorts of lives, and all the comforts and contents of life, are wrapt up in the enjoyment of the thing desired. He that hath those things granted to him that are earnestly desired by him, is once more put into a paradise. Wilful delays in justice makes the judge unrighteous, Luk 18:6. But,

3. Thirdly, As you must do justice speedily, so you must do justice sincerely. You must do justice out of love to justice, Isa 61:8. When the golden angels appear to draw you to pervert justice, you must say as Peter did to Simon Magus, 'Thy money perish with thee,' Acts 8:20. Deu 16:20, 'That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Or rather as the Hebrew hath it, צדק, צדק, tsedek, tsedek, justice, justice shalt thou follow, that is, pure justice shalt thou follow. The streams of justice should be always pure and clear. 'Justice, justice shalt thou follow,' that is, all manner of justice shalt thou follow, and nothing but justice shalt thou follow; and thou shalt follow justice sincerely, exactly, carefully, and constantly: thou shalt be not seemingly just, but really just; not hypocritically just, but entirely just; not partially just, but universally just; not just to some, but just to all; not transiently just, but perpetually just; not sometimes just, but always just; and so much the geminating of the word 'justice, justice,' imports. Pro 21:15, 'It is joy to the just to do judgment.' This argues much sincerity and integrity in a man's spirit, when he doth not only do judgment, but joys to do judgment. It is a vanity to do justice slightly, lightly, wantonly; but it is an honour to do justice from a principle of divine joy. He that joys to do judgment, he will do justice sincerely, he will do justice out of love to justice; and indeed there are no judges, there are no justices to those that do justice out of love to justice. Mazarinus complaineth of foreign judges, that they too much resembled the blood-stone, which hath a special property to stanch blood, but as jewellers observe, it puts not forth this virtue, unless it be let in or covered over with silver, and so applied to the vein: but certainly these men were far from doing justice sincerely, from doing justice out of love to justice. Some judges and justices there have been, who, for the cleanliness of the conveyance, would, like mendicant friars, touch no money themselves, but have a boy or a clerk with a bag to receive it for them. Certainly these were as far from doing justice out of love to justice, as heaven is from hell, or as the Pope, the Turk, and the devil are from being real saints. Doubtless many magistrates, judges, and justices have found that 'a gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous,' Exo 23:8. Golden dust hath put out more eyes than it hath done good to hearts. Oh, this golden wedge, this silver squinsie hath made many men silent and speechless in good causes! Titus Vespasian was so delighted in doing of justice, that if a day had passed over his head wherein he had done no act of justice, he would cry out, 'Amici, diem peridi:' O my friends, I have lost a day. And so Epaminondas, a heathen, though he was very poor, and often tempted with great bribes and presents to be unjust, yet he refused and scorned all, and would commonly say, that if the cause were good, he would do it without a bribe, because it was good; but if the cause was bad, he would not meddle with it for a world. These heathens will one day rise in judgment against all such corrupt judges and justices that will not do justice without a bribe. If this Treatise should fall into the hands of any such, I would then let them know that God will one day make good that dreadful word against them that you have in Job 15:34, 'For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery;' or as the Septuagint reads it, Of men that take gifts fire shall consume: or rather as the Hebrew hath it, Fire shall eat the tabernacles; it shall feed on their tabernacles as greedily as a hungry man doth feed on his meat. Oh, the sumptuous buildings and brave structures that have been built by the hands of bribery shall be set on fire by a hand of justice! Pro 10:2-3, and Pro 3:33. If bribery brings in a thousand one year, divine justice will cast away two for it the next year. God will one day burn up on both hands all the comforts, and all the contentments, and all the enjoyments of corrupt magistrates, judges, and justices. I have read of a Polonian judge, that stood up very stoutly and resolutely a long time for a poor

plaintiff against a rich defendant; but at last he received from the defendant a great sum of money, stamped with the usual stamp of that country, which is a man in complete armour; and at the next session in open court he adjudged the cause in the favour of the defendant: and being sharply blamed by his friends for it, he shewed them his large bribe, and demanded of them, Who could stand out against so many men in complete armour? Ah, England, England! it would be better with thee if this spirit did not still survive; but alas, what good will all these men's men in armour do them in the great day of our Lord, when the thoughts of all such corrupt magistrates, judges, and justices shall be exceedingly troubled, their countenances changed, their hearts terrified, their consciences awakened, their souls amazed, and their knees dashed one against another! Oh that all judges and justices would for ever make Isa 5:23 their daily companion, 'Woe to them which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.' I have read of Sysamnes, a covetous, tenacious judge, who for filthy lucre pronounced a false sentence; whereupon Cambyzes, king of Persia, commanded him to be killed and flayed, and his skin to be nailed over the tribunal: and then he commanded his son to sit as judge there, that so this sight might arm him against all injustice, and be a terror to all that succeeded him. If princes did but exercise such royal justice upon all corrupt covetous judges and justices, justice would be had at a cheaper rate, and poor men would not be so often put to pawn their coats, nor rich men would not so often empty their purses nor mortgage their inheritances. But,

4. Fourthly, As you must do justice sincerely, so you must do justice deliberately. You must have one ear for the defendant, and another for the plaintiff, or else you will tell the world at once that you are both weak and wicked, Deu 17:4; vide Deu 19:17-19. It argues much weakness and emptiness of spirit, to judge a matter before all is heard that can be said. Job's piety and prudence shined forth eminently in this, that the cause that he knew not, he searched it out, Job 29:16. Before God would pronounce judgment upon Adam, he first examines him, and propounds several interrogatories to him, Gen 3:1-24. And in those two great and famous acts of justice, when God confounded Babel's builders, and rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he tells you that he will go down and see, Gen 11:1-32 and Gen 18:1-33. You are called gods; in this it is as much your glory as it is your duty to imitate the great God. Though Solomon was in all his glory, yet he had patience to hear both what the mother and the harlot had to say. The Holy Ghost puts the fool upon him that answers a matter before he hears it, Pro 18:13. It was the usual custom of Philip, king of Macedon, to stop one of his ears whilst the accuser was speaking, that so he might reserve it for the defendant. I have read of some who have deeply suffered both in their civil liberties and in their consciences, for their rash and hasty passing of judgment upon others. Why hath God given the judges of the earth two ears and but one tongue, but that they should be swift to hear and slow to speak? I have read of Louis, king of France, that when he had through inadvertency granted an unjust suit, as soon as ever he had read those words of the psalmist, 'Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times,' Psa 106:3, he presently recollected himself, and upon better thoughts gave his judgment quite contrary. Certainly all acts of justice ought to flow from mature deliberation. All magistrates, judges, and justices, in their administrations of justice and judgment, should wisely observe by what principles they act, and by what rules they act, and by what authority they act, and in what manner they act, and to what ends they act: and how all these important things can be done without serious deliberation, I cannot for the present understand. Justice in the emblem is represented with a balance in the one hand, and a sword in the other, to note that matters must be first deliberately weighed in the balance before judgment

can be passed. He that only useth the sword and not the balance, may smite an innocent Naboth, and acquit a guilty Ahab. The civil law concludes it very unreasonable for any man to give advice or judgment before he hath considered and weighed the whole cause.² And therefore by your own laws you are bound to deliberate before you give judgment, unless you will tell the world that you, even you, are unreasonable men, who above all others should be the masters of the greatest reason, as well as men of the greatest measures of grace and holiness. But,

5. Fifthly, As you must do justice deliberately, so you must do justice resolutely, courageously, valiantly. As soon as Joshua came into the office of magistracy, God charges him no less than three times, in a breath as it were, to be very courageous, in Jos 1:6-9. A judge that is timorous will quickly be treacherous. A judge that is fearful can never be faithful. Solomon's throne was supported with lions, to shew that magistrates should be men of courage and mettle. The Athenian judges sat in Mars Street, to show that they had martial hearts, and that they were men of courage and mettle, Acts 17:22; Job 31:31, Job 31:34. Job was a judge of rare courage and magnanimity; nothing could fear him, nothing could daunt him, nothing could terrify him, nothing could discourage him from doing justice and judgment. The Grecians placed Justice betwixt Leo and Libra, to signify that as there must be indifferency in determining, so there ought to be courage in executing. Where there is courage without knowledge, there the eye of justice is blind; and where there is knowledge without courage, there the sword of justice is blunt. Judges and justices should be men of courage for God and godliness. Why should not the standard be of steel, and the chief posts in the house be heart of oak? I have read of Agesilaus, how that he was by all concluded fit to be made their king, but that he halted. Men of the best and choicest accomplishments, if they are not courageous and magnanimous, but lame and halting, they are no ways fit for magistrates. Judges and justices should have martial spirits, high spirits for justice and righteousness. Every judge, every justice, should have a lion's heart, an eagle's eye, and a giant's arm. Such men whose dull hearts are faint, whose heads are dull, whose ears are heavy, whose eyes are dim, whose hands are weak, and whose feet are lame, are more fit to sit in a chimney corner than to sit judges and justices upon the bench. It hath been long since said of Cato, Fabricius, and Aristides, that it was as easy to remove the sun out of the firmament as to remove them from justice and equity, they were men of such courageous and magnanimous spirits for justice and righteousness. No scarlet robe doth so well become a judge as holy courage and stoutness doth. I have read of Louis the Eleventh, king of France, who going about to establish some unjust edicts, which, when some of his chief courtiers perceived, they went altogether to him in red gowns; the king asked them what they would have: the president La Vacqueri answered, We are come with a full purpose to lose our lives every one of us, rather than by our connivancy any unjust ordinance should take place. The king being amazed at this answer, and at the courage, constancy, and resolution of those peers, gave them gracious entertainment, and commanded that all the former edicts should be forthwith cancelled in his presence. Courage and resolution may prevent many a public mischief and misery. But,

6. Sixthly, As you are to do justice resolutely, courageously, so you are to do justice and judgment exactly. 2Ch 19:5-7, 'And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city. And said to the judges, Take heed what you do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of person, nor taking of gifts.'

God is exact in all his ways, and he is exact in all his works; he is exact in all his promises, and he is exact in all his threatenings; he is exact in all his rewards, and he is exact in all his punishments; he is exact in the exercise of his mercy, and he is exact in the exercise of his justice. And therefore you that are called gods, should in this be like God. O sirs, some by force, others by flattery, some by large presents to your relations, and others by promising great rewards to yourselves, may endeavour to corrupt you, and blind you, and induce you to judge rashly, inconsiderately, irregularly, &c.; and therefore you have the more cause to be exact in transacting all your judicial affairs. Oh, remember that the most sharp and piercing eye of God is still upon you! Oh, remember that the severe eye of Jesus Christ, who is the judge of judges, is never off of you; and the angels, those princes of glory, are very strict observers of you. When the Ethiopian judges were set in their seats of judicature, certain empty chairs were placed about them, into which they conjectured the holy angels came and were spectators of all their transactions, and this they thought would work such an awe, such a dread, such a care, such a fear, and such a resolution in them, that they could not but manage all their judicial proceedings with much exactness and heedfulness.² And as the angels have their eyes upon you, so Satan hath always his eyes upon you; he hath always a watchful eye, an envious eye, a malicious eye, a crafty eye, and a revengeful eye upon you. Witness his dissuading you sometimes from your duty, and witness his distracting and disturbing of you whilst you are in your duty, and witness his accusing of you for the neglect of your duty, and witness his endeavours to pride you and puff you up upon the discharge of your duty. And as the eye of Satan is upon you, so the eyes of good men are always upon you, and the eyes of bad men are upon you. And if all this doth not bespeak you to be very exact and accurate in all your judicial transactions, I know nothing. My Lords and Gentlemen, if all this will not do, then remember that the lives, liberties, consciences, rights, privileges, estates, and interests of persons, next to God and Christ and grace, are the most choice and precious, the most desirable and delectable jewels that men have in all the world, and therefore you had need be very exact and accurate in all your judicial transactions. Yea, once more, remember that God will one day bring you to an exact account concerning all your judicial proceedings. That same mouth that tells you that you are gods, tells you also that you must die like men; and after death comes judgment, Psa 82:6-7; Heb 9:27. You that now call others to judgment, shall shortly be called to judgment yourselves: you that now sit in judgment upon others, shall ere long be judged by him that will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:31. My Lords and Gentlemen, give me leave to tell you that that judge to whom you must be responsible is no ignorant judge, nor no covetous judge, nor no partial judge, nor no fearful judge, nor no doting judge, nor no trifling judge, though such there may be in the world; but he is an omniscient judge, an omnipotent judge, an impartial judge, a holy judge, a courageous judge, a serious judge, a severe judge, an unbiassed judge, a righteous judge, and a resolute judge. Alas, sirs, it is not your scarlet gowns, nor your titles of honour, nor your great estates, nor your interest in princes, nor your noble relations, nor your applause among men, that will stand you in stead, when you shall stand before that judge that is a consuming fire, Heb 12:29. Well, Gentlemen, remember this, there is never a professing judge nor justice in the world that will be able at last to give up their accounts with joy, and to stand in judgment when the Lamb shall sit upon his throne, but such as have made it their great business to take the Spirit of the Lord for their guide, and to set up the glory of the Lord as their great end, and to make the word of the Lord their principal rule, and to eye the example of the Lord as their choicest and chiefest pattern; and therefore it is much to be feared that the number of such judges and justices, that will be able to

stand before the judge of all the world, will be but few. But,

7. Seventhly, As you must do justice and judgment exactly, so you must do justice to others as you would have others do justice to you. For judges and justices to do as they would be done by, is the royal law, the golden rule, and the standard of equity. Judges and justices should think of others, as they would have others think of them; and speak of others, as they would have others speak of them; and do to others, as they would have others do to them. Whatever by the light of nature, or by the light of conscience, or by the light of scripture, a judge, a justice, would have another do to him, the same must he do to another. In all just things—for so this law of Christ is only to be understood—we must do to others, as we would have others do to us. As we would have others carry it equally, justly, and righteously towards us, so we must carry it equally, justly, and righteously towards others: and as we would not have others to wrong us in our names, estates, rights, liberties, lives, so we must not wrong others in their names, estates, rights, liberties, lives, &c. This law of Christ is the sum of all righteousness. It is the foundation of all justice and equity. Self-love doth so commonly blind the sons of men, that to judge righteously, they must change the person, they must put themselves in others' room. All princes, judges, justices, parents, masters, subjects, servants, and children, should so act in their relations, as they would have others act in the co-relation. All injustice will be repaid one time or another; and therefore men had need be just, and do to others as they would have others do to them. I have read of a citizen of Comun, in the dukedom of Farrara, who being cast into prison upon suspicion of murder, his wife could get no promise of his deliverance, unless she would give the captain, whose prisoner he was, two hundred ducats, and yield her body to his pleasure; which, with the consent of her husband, she did; but after the captain had his desire, he notwithstanding put him to death. The Duke Gonzala hearing of it, commanded the captain to restore the two hundred ducats to the widow, with an addition of seven hundred crowns; then he enjoined him to marry her presently, and lastly, before he could enjoy his new wife, the duke caused him to be hanged for his treachery and injustice. Sometimes in this life, injustice is repaid upon the heads of unjust judges. My Lords and Gentlemen, before I close up this head, give me leave heartily to recommend to your justice those wrongs and injuries which more immediately strike at the honour and glory of the great God. God hath put his name upon you; Psa 82:6, 'I said that ye are gods:' yet it must be granted that you are gods in a smaller letter—mortal gods, gods that must die like men; all the sons of Ish are sons of Adam. And as God hath put his name upon you, so he hath made you his viceroys. 2Ch 19:6, 'Ye judge not for yourselves, but for the Lord.' And therefore God takes all affronts that are done to you, as done to himself, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. And God hath provided for your honour among men; Exo 22:28, 'Thou shalt not revile the gods,' i. e., the magistrates, 'nor curse the ruler of thy people.' I have read of Fabius Maximus, who highly revered and honoured his own son, being consul. This heathen will one day rise up in judgment against all such that scorn to give to magistrates that honour that, by the fifth commandment, is due unto them. And God is very severe in revenging the wrongs that are done to you, 2Pe 2:9-10; 1Sa 8:7. He interprets all the injuries that are done to you, as done to himself. And why then will you not revenge the wrongs and injuries that are done to the great God? Give me leave, Gentlemen, in the behalf of the great God, a little to expostulate with you. Shall the least dishonourable word that is spoken against an earthly prince be severely punished? and shall all those horrid and hellish blasphemies, by which the Prince of the kings of the earth is dishonoured and reproached all the nation over, pass unobserved? Shall all affronts that are offered to

ambassadors be deeply resented and justly censured, as high indignities done to the prince that employed them? and shall the ambassadors of the great God—I mean such as are called, commissioned, spirited, gifted, and graced for that high office by God himself—be scorned, defamed, injured, reviled, and on all hands evilly entreated, and yet no man say, Why do you thus wickedly, to provoke the great God to your own destruction? 2Ch 36:15, seq. Shall it be looked upon as noble and necessary justice, that all insurrections in the state be punished as rebellion? and shall those who are daily up in open arms against the great God, and that daily bid defiance to him, to his Son, to his ordinances, to his people, to his word, and to his ways, escape without the least lash, the least censure? Shall those that rob their neighbours, though it be but to the value of five shillings, yea less, be indicted, examined, condemned, and executed? and shall others that rob God of his glory, of his Sabbaths, and of his service, &c., escape without the least shaking of the rod, or without the least danger of the whip? Shall all profaneness, looseness, and wickedness, be winked at, yea, countenanced and encouraged, notwithstanding his Majesty's most zealous, pious, and renowned declaration against it? and shall real holiness and the power of godliness be on all hands scorned, discountenanced, opposed, and reviled, and yet no man say, What means these things? Well, my Lords and Gentlemen, for ever remember this: all those sins that are in this land committed, which by your just power and gracious examples might have been prevented, all those sins in the great day shall be charged upon your accounts; and therefore it highly concerns you with all your might to browbeat wickedness, to discountenance ungodliness, and to improve your power to the uttermost, for the suppressing of all profaneness, and for the countenancing, encouraging, and promoting of real holiness, that so you may give up your accounts at last with joy. I have read of king Ethelbert, how that by his godly example, and by his countenancing and encouraging such as were godly, and by his discountenancing of profaneness and wickedness, he drew this whole kingdom once to look after godliness. O my Lords and Gentlemen, if you would be but shining examples and patterns of holiness to the nation; if you would but in good earnest put forth your utmost power for the encouraging of godliness, and for the suppressing of profaneness: oh, what a holy nation, yea, what a happy nation should we have! King Cyrus commanded the chief officers of his army to keep a strict hand upon themselves; for, saith he, that is the best way in the world to keep the whole army in good order. The application is easy. But,

8. Eighthly, In the exercise of justice, you must look that justice and mercy, that justice and clemency go hand in hand. Pro 20:28, 'Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upholden by mercy,' Pro 29:14; Psa 101:1. Some read the words thus, 'Mercy and justice preserve the king; and his throne is upholden by mercy.' All justice will not preserve the king, nor all mercy will not preserve the king; there must be a mixture both of justice and mercy to preserve the king, and to uphold his throne; and to shew that mercy is more requisite than justice, the word mercy is doubled in the text. Justice without mercy turns into rigour, and so becomes hateful; mercy without justice turns into fond pity, and so becomes contemptible. Look, as the rod of Aaron and the pot of manna were by God's command laid up in the same ark, so must mercy and justice be preserved entire in the bosom of the same magistrate, judge, and justice.² Mercy and justice, mildness and righteousness, lenity and fidelity, are a safer and a stronger guard to princes and people, than rich mines, munitions of rocks, mighty armies, powerful navies, or any warlike preparations. It is very observable that Christ is called but once the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in the Book of the Revelation, and that is in Rev 5:5; but he is called a Lamb no less than nine-and-twenty times in

that book. And what is this but to shew the transcendent mercy, clemency, lenity, mildness, and sweetness, that is in Jesus Christ, and to shew that he is infinitely more inclined to the exercise of mercy, than he is to the exercise of justice. It is true, magistrates, judges, and justices should be lions in the execution of justice; and it is as true that they should be lambs in the exercise of mercy and clemency, mildness and sweetness: and the more ready and inclinable they are to the exercise of mercy, where mercy is to be shewed, the more like to the lamb they are. Seneca hath long since observed that the custom of anointing kings, was to shew that kings should be above all other men of the greatest sweetness and mildness, their anointing being a sign of that kingly sweetness and mildness that should be in them. Nero's speech hath great praise, who, when he was to subscribe to the death of any condemned man, would say, *Utinam nescirem literas*, I wish I did not know how to write. But,

9. Ninthly and lastly, You must do justice proportionable to the nature of the offence. Your penalties and punishments must be always suitable to the offence. To punish any fact more severely than it deserves, is always injustice to the offender; for so far innocency itself suffers, as any man is punished beyond the demerit of his offence; and to punish less than the fact deserves, may be of dangerous consequence to the public. The Roman fasces were a bundle of rods with an axe in the midst, to signify the equity of magistrates in punishing some only with rods, and others with the axe. The Romans had their rods for lesser faults, and their axe for capital crimes. Justice is then remiss, when it spares where it ought to punish; and justice is then too severe, when it punisheth where it ought to spare. Extreme right often proves extreme wrong. He that will always go to the utmost of what the law allows, will too too often do more than the law requires. It is rare, very rare, to see a man dance upon the brink of the pit, and not to tumble in. A rigid severity often mars all; equity is still to be preferred before extremity. To inflict great penalties and heavy censures for light offences, this is to kill a fly upon a man's forehead with a beetle. In the French history, there is mention made of an old courtier that would needs depart the court, and retire himself to a private life; the king desired him before he went to leave his advice in some general rules, what was best to be done in the government of the kingdom. Upon which motion he took a fair paper, and wrote upon the top of the leaf, Moderation; and in the middle of the leaf, Moderation; and at the bottom of the leaf, Moderation; signifying thereby thus much to the king, that the best way in the world to have his crown set fast, and to keep his kingdom safe, was to manage throughout all his affairs with moderation. And there is nothing more evident in scripture and history than this, that many by screwing the pegs of government too high, have broke all in pieces about their ears.

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, there are five things or rules that will be of singular use to help you in this case, to steer such a course as may be safe and honourable to you, and as may render you a mercy and a blessing to the nation.

1. And the first is this, Never make those things to be sins, which God never made to be sins. To make those things to be sins which God hath made to be no sins, is to make gods of yourselves; yea, it is to lift up yourselves above God himself, as if you were more holy, more wise, more just, and more righteous than the Holy One of Israel is. Indeed the Papists, that are will-worshippers, and commonly highly conceited of their own wisdom and worth, they frequently transgress this rule with their 'Touch not, taste not, handle not,' Col 2:21, Col 2:23; which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, &c. But why should you, why should you, who have a higher profession

upon you, and a more clear gospel-light shining every day more strongly upon you? But,

2. Secondly, Never make those things to be absolute and necessary duties, that God hath nowhere declared to be such, Isa 33:22; Jas 4:12. Such things that do neither fall under a general nor a particular command of God, may not be imposed upon the consciences of men as absolute and necessary duties to be performed by them. A faithful observing of these two rules would prevent a multitude of sins, a sea of sorrows, and a world of troubles. But,

3. Thirdly, In all your administrations of justice, take the authority of the word with you. This will yield you most comfort, most peace, most security, and most boldness, in the great day of your account. But,

4. Fourthly, Never put off your own souls with any such pleas or arguments now, that are not pleadable in the court of conscience, when you shall lie upon your dying-beds; nor that are not pleadable before the court of heaven, when you shall stand before Christ's judgment-seat. But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, In all your administrations of justice and judgment, be sure that you act nothing upon the account of any command, commission, or authority under heaven, that you dare not own, plead, and stand by before the great, authority of heaven, when the King of kings shall make a narrow inspection into all your judicial proceedings, and accordingly pass judgment upon you. What though this command, and that commission, and the other authority, may bear you out in this world? yet if they are too weak to bear you out in the other world, you will curse the day that ever you were born, and wish that you had rather been a-turning of spits, or lying under a hedge, or a-begging at the rich man's door, than that you had ever sat in seats of judicature, to act upon such grounds as are no ways pleadable before the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, to judge all the kings, princes, nobles, judges, and justices of the earth. My Lords and Gentlemen, if these five things or rules were but sincerely, seriously, resolutely, and constantly followed, no heart can conceive, nor no tongue can express, the heinous sins, the sore troubles, and the dreadful calamities and woeful miseries that thereby would be prevented. And thus, my Lords and Gentlemen, I have done with those special rules that you are carefully, diligently, faithfully, and constantly to observe in all your judicial administrations; but how you will be able to act suitable and answerable to these rules without a spirit of holiness, without a principle of holiness, and without an experiment of the powerful operations of holiness in your own souls, I am not able to see; and, therefore, how much it stands you upon that want, that holiness, that this Treatise holds forth, to study holiness, to love holiness, to prize holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to promote holiness, and to be restless till you have experienced the power, and life, and sweet of holiness in your own hearts and lives, I must leave you to judge.² And oh that after all this pains that I have taken upon the account of your immortal souls, I may not have cause to complain, as once Marcus Antonius did: Alas, saith he, those graces which the deity sent down as so many pillars to stay up human societies, viz., Faith and Modesty, Justice and Verity, they found such cold entertainment in the world, that they are fled back to heaven. I shall follow these weak endeavours with my best prayers, that you may all put on holiness as a royal robe, and that all your judicial administrations may savour of a spirit of holiness, and of the power and prevalency of holiness, that so you may be as high in happiness above others, as you are now in power and place exalted above others.

If this Treatise should fall into any of their hands who call and account themselves the only ministers of Jesus Christ; I mean such who preach rather to please than to profit; to tickle the ear than to awaken the conscience; that are better at fleecing of their flocks than they are at feeding of their flocks; that seek more men's goods than their good; that set up men's traditions above God's own institutions; that prefer human commands before divine commands; that are very zealous and warm for mint, anise, and cummin, but are very cold, careless, and negligent in the great and weighty matters of the law, viz., judgment, mercy, and faith; that can bless God in the church, and blaspheme him in the tavern; that prefer music in the church before singing of hallelujahs in heaven; that prefer a fat benefice before an interest in a heavenly inheritance; that can kneel devoutly behind a pillar, and in their drunken fits rail as stoutly against a post; that pretend a great deal of reverence to the name of Jesus, and yet in their lives do daily crucify the Lord Jesus; that with Judas can kiss Christ and betray Christ in a breath; that pretend much kindness to the head, and yet shew nothing but unkindness to the body; that preach as if they had no mind to go to heaven, and live as if they were resolved to go to hell; that feast their own bodies, but starve their people's souls; that are very devout upon a saint's day, but very loose and profane upon the Lord's-day; that think it a greater sin to eat flesh in Lent, than it is to lie with their neighbour's wife; that speak ten words for themselves, and hardly two for Christ; and that instead of preaching up holiness, and promoting of holiness, and countenancing and encouraging of holiness, do all they can to discontinue holiness, to browbeat holiness, to keep down holiness, to bespatter holiness, to work men out of love with holiness, and to hinder the growth and increase of holiness: oh that these men would seriously consider how unlike to the ministers of Jesus Christ they are! Do but look into a scripture-glass, and you may easily see that hell is not more unlike to heaven, nor sin more unlike to grace, nor Satan more unlike to God, than you are unlike to the holy, conscientious, painful, &c., ministers of Jesus Christ. Several authors in print have proved this to my hand at large, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon it; only give me leave to say, that God's holy things ought to be handled with fear and reverence, rather than with wit and dalliance. Spiritual niceness is the next degree to unfaithfulness. Ministers must not be like the drug that the physicians say is hot in the mouth and cold in the operation: hot in the pulpit, but cold, carnal, and careless in their conversations.² Those that stand before princes must be exact in their carriages. God appointed both the weights and measures of the sanctuary to be twice as large as those of the commonwealth; to shew that he expects much more of those that serve him there, than he doth of others. The souls of priests, I may say of ministers, must be purer than the sunbeams, saith golden-mouthed Chrysostom. Gay things in a sermon are only for men to gaze upon and admire. What are high strains and flashes of wit, new minted words and phrases, but like gay weeds and blue bottles to the good corn? Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow; application is the hitting of the mark. How many are wise in generals, but vain, ■ν διαλογισμοις, in their practical inferences. A general doctrine not applied, is as a sword without an edge, not in itself, but to others; or as a whole loaf set before children, that will do them no good. A garment fitted for all bodies, is fit for no body; and so that which is spoken to all, is taken as spoken to none. Aaron's bells were golden bells, Dulce sonantes, sounding pleasantly, and not as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals, as many of the carnal clergy of this nation are this day. Many there be that account themselves the only ministers of Jesus Christ, that are but like empty orators, that have a flood of words, and but a drop of matter; of whom we may truly say, Multa loquuntur et nihil dicunt, They speak much, and yet say nothing, because they say nothing to the purpose. When the

Lacedemonian in Plutarch heard how sweetly the nightingale sang, Oh, said he, that I had this bird, surely it is a rare dish! but when he had taken it, and ate it, and found nothing but a little picking meat, he concluded with that proverbial saying, *Vox es et præterea nihil*: Now I see that thou art a mere voice and nothing else. How applicable this is to many preachers in these days, who have good lungs, but bad brains, and worse hearts and lives, the prudent reader may easily see. John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light, as well as a voice. His sermons were stuffed with divine and weighty matter, &c., and not filled up with big words or strains of wit. Many there be that have John's voice in the ministry, that have not that heat and life that John had in his ministry. That great orator—Demosthenes—himself could say, that the riches of Greece did not consist in words. The oracle would have King Philip of Macedon to use silver lances in winning an impregnable fort, &c. But it is not for ministers to use golden sentences, strong lines, frothy wit, in winning of souls to Christ; for it is iron, and not gold, that killeth in the encounter; it is the steel sword, and not the golden sword, that winneth the field. Woe to such preachers that darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2, that affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard; that seek abstrusities, and love to soar aloft in dark expressions, and take pleasure to shoot their arrows over their hearers' heads. The heathenish priests had their mythologies and strange canting expressions of their imaginary inaccessible deities to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers, and thereby to hold up their Popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. And is not this spirit now revived among many? Certainly men of abstracted conceits, and sublime speculations, are but wise fools; and commonly they are as erroneous as they are curious. Such as mind more the humouring of their hearers' fancies, than the saving of their souls, do little consider that of Seneca, *Æger non quærit medicum eloquentem, sed sanantem*: Sick men are not bettered by physicians' sugared words, but by their skilful hands. The sword of the Spirit never wounds deep, till it be plucked out of the gaudy scabbards of human eloquence. Mr Greenham, speaking of non-residents, wisheth that this motto might be written on their study-doors without, and walls within, on all their books they look on, on all the beds they lie on, and on all the tables they sit at, &c.: 'The price of blood, the price of blood, the price of blood.' A preacher's life should be a commentary upon his doctrine; his practice should be the counterpane² of his sermons. Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.

'Preachers are the glass, the school, the book, Where people's eyes do learn, do read, do look.'

Gentlemen, by these short hints you may see, as in a glass, if you will not put a cheat upon your own souls, how unlike to the true, holy, and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ you are. O sirs, do not you know that the Holy Scriptures, that never spoke treason nor sedition, do clearly evidence that an ignorant, profane, scandalous, superstitious, insufficient, and soul-flattering clergy are the greatest pest, plague, affliction, judgment, &c., that can befall a people, as you may easily see by comparing these scriptures together—Mic 2:11; Isa 30:10-11; Jer 5:31; Lam 2:14; Isa 9:16; Eze 3:18; Jer 23:9, Jer 23:18; Eze 13:22; Jer 6:14, and Jer 27:14, Jer 27:16; 1Th 5:3; Jer 14:13-16; Isa 28:7-8; Eze 34:1-31 throughout; Rom 2:21-24. Other judgments, as sword, famine, pestilence, burning fevers, agues, &c., cannot separate between God and men's souls; for men may have very sweet and high communion with God under the sorest of those judgments. Other afflictions and judgments may spring from the fatherly love of God, and from a gracious design of good to his people: Rev 3:19; Pro 3:11; Heb 12:5-8; Ps 89:30, Ps 89:35; Job 7:17-18; but this is a sad fruit

of God's judicial anger and severe indignation against a people. Other judgments often issue in men's seeking of the Lord, and in men's returning to the Lord. Isa 26:16-17; Hos 5:14-15, compared with chap. Hos 4:1-3, and Hos 2:6-7; but this judgment frequently issues in men's forsaking of the Lord, and in their running from God, and in their walking contrary to God, and in the hardening of them against God, and in an everlasting shutting of them out from the presence of the Lord: as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together—Mat 15:14; Luk 6:39; 1Th 5:3; 2Th 1:7-10; Mat 23:13. Do not you know that where there is no vision, the people perish? Pro 29:18 : ■■■■, that is here rendered perish, is from ■■■■, that signifies to be made naked, to be made bare and uncovered. They are made naked as soldiers are among the shot and weapons of their enemies, when their armour is not on their backs; or they are naked as people that are stripped of their garments, and exposed to perish by cold in the winter, or to be scorched or roasted by heat in the summer; or they are naked, i.e., they are made the objects of shame and contempt to all that look upon them: or they are made naked, that is, of the grace, blessing, and protection of God: or they are naked, that is, say others, they are forsaken and cast off; for every one forsakes and casts off naked persons, they will have nothing to do with them, Exo 32:25. Others render the words thus, 'The people will keep holyday, they will have nothing to do but to weep and wail, or they will do nothing that is good.' Others thus, 'The people shall be stripped naked, they shall be left as a city without walls, exposed to the fury of the enemy, as a body without clothes, open to wind and weather.' Others carry it thus, 'The people shall be discovered; it will then appear what is within, whether grace or sin; it will then be discovered what pantings, breathings, hungerings, and longings there be in souls after God, and Christ, and holiness, and ordinances,' &c. Pagnine thus, 'The people will grow barbarous, rebellious, &c., as experience in all ages hath fully demonstrated.' Others thus, 'The people shall be of no esteem, of no repute; nobody will prize them, nobody will value them, nobody will regard them; men set no price, no value upon naked persons.' Others thus, 'The people shall be dispersed, scattered, shivered and shattered;' and this in all ages hath been too apparent. Others thus, 'They shall be drawn away with errors: they shall either be starved, or else poisoned with God-dishonouring, Christ-denying, scripture-debasing, conscience-wasting, life-polluting, and soul-damning opinions.' It is concluded on all hands, that it shall go ill, very ill, with that people that want vision, that want serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching; for where there is no vision, no serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching, there the people perish certainly, undoubtedly, there they go tumbling to hell thick and threefold; and this is evident in the text, 'Where there is no vision, the people perish.' He doth not say they may perish, but they do perish; or they are in danger of perishing, but they do certainly perish. Where there is no serious, conscientious, faithful, powerful preaching, there the people grow abominably wicked, as woeful experience tells us: and what the issue of that will be, you may see in Psa 9:17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;' or as the Hebrew hath it, the wicked shall be turned into into hell, that is, they shall certainly be turned into hell; yea, they shall be turned into the nethermost hell, into the lowest dungeon in hell. See Psa 11:6. Where vision fails, there men perish temporally; when vision, when preaching ceased among the Jews, oh the dreadful calamities and miseries that came upon that people! how soon did God burn up all their outward comforts, contentments, and enjoyments on every hand, 2Ch 15:3, 2Ch 15:5-6, compared with 2Ch 13:9-11, and 2Ch 36:15 seq.; Mat 23:37-38. They shut their eyes against all that light that Christ and his apostles brought amongst them: and what was the issue of this? Why, about forty years after Christ's ascension, the Romans came and took

away their city, and sold thirty of them a-penny, as Josephus writes, &c.; and ever since that time, which is above sixteen hundred years ago, they have been scattered as dung over the face of the whole earth. Where vision fails, there men perish totally: both the bodies and the souls of men perish, where serious, conscientious preaching fails; Hos 4:6, 'My people are destroyed for want of knowledge.' The Chaldee rendereth it, they are besotted, and so fitted for destruction. The Papists say that ignorance is the mother of devotion; but this text tells us that it is the mother of destruction. The heathens were wont to say that if their god Jupiter would destroy one, he would first besot him. So these people were first besotted, and then destroyed, Rom 6:16-19. Where vision fails, there the people perish insensibly and unexpectedly. They flatter themselves that God is made up all of mercy, and will not believe but they shall go to heaven, till they awake with everlasting flames about their ears, as you may see in Sodom and Gomorrah. Where vision fails, there men perish suddenly: in a moment they go down to hell, Job 21:13-15. As the travail of a woman comes suddenly upon her when she least expects it, so everlasting pains and torments come suddenly upon poor sinners when they least expect them, Pro 24:22; Deu 7:4; 1Th 5:3. As God rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah on a sudden, Gen 18:1-33; and as he swept away the old world on a sudden, Mat 24:37-39; and as Samuel cut off Agag on a sudden, when he concluded that the bitterness of death was past, 1Sa 15:32: so God casts sinners to hell on a sudden, he sweeps them away on a sudden, he cuts them off on a sudden; and when they say, Surely the bitterness of death is past, and everlasting wrath is past, and hell is past, and eternal ruin is past, then on a sudden God cuts them off, and gives them their portion with devils and damned spirits, &c. Where vision fails, there men perish inevitably, irrecoverably: 1Th 5:1-28, And they shall not escape; Pro 6:15, 'Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.' Here is their dismal doom: They shall not be only bruised, but broken; yea, they shall be suddenly broken when they least look for it, when they do not at all dream of it, or dread it, and this without remedy. They shall be so broken, as that there shall not be so much as a possibility of making them up again. If a man lose his estate, his friend, his child, this loss may be made up again; but if a man once lose his soul, there is no repairing nor making up of that loss. Where there is no vision, there men perish everlastingly, there they perish eternally, 2Th 1:7-9; Jude 1:7. Do not you know that God will require the blood of all their souls at your hands, that perish either by your insufficiency, or neglect, or bad examples? Eze 3:18-20, 'Thou shalt surely die,' Moth Tamuth, in dying thou shalt die; that is, thou shalt certainly die, thou shalt eternally die. The ancients commonly interpret it of the death of the soul. Do not you know that a man were better have the blood of all the men in the world upon him, than the blood of one soul upon him? For there is no blood that cries so loud, that will lie so heavy, and that will sink a man so deep in hell, as the blood of souls—I say, as the blood of souls. Do not you know that there are no men upon the face of the earth that are by office so strictly, so strongly, so universally, so indispensably, and so signally engaged to prize holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to promote holiness, and to practise holiness, as the ministers of Jesus Christ are? Do not you know that ministers are called angels, in respect of their offices? Rev 2:1-29. Now angels are spiritual creatures; their communion is spiritual, their food is spiritual, their delights are spiritual, their minds are spiritual, their affections are spiritual, and their exercises are spiritual, Psa 104:4; and in all these respects ministers should be like to the angels. But are not many of them spiritual madmen in these days?—being nothing less than what they profess to be—spiritual men in a mockery: such as many light slight souls call a spiritual pig, that is, the poorest, the leanest,

and the worst of all the ten; such a one as hath no substance in it. So these have no substantial goodness, no substantial holiness at all in them; whereas in holiness they should as far exceed all other men, as the angels in holiness do exceed them. Do not you know that there is no rank nor order of men on earth that have so enriched hell, that have been such benefactors to hell, as the ignorant, insufficient, profane, scandalous, and superstitious clergy? In times of Popery letters were framed and published as sent from hell, wherein the devil gave the carnal, ignorant, insufficient, scandalous, and superstitious clergy of those times no small thanks for so many millions of souls as by their means were daily sent to hell. Do not you know that all the true faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of Jesus Christ, that are mentioned in the Old and New Testament, were men of the greatest holiness; and men that made it their greatest business and work in this world to keep down a spirit of profaneness and wickedness, and to countenance, encourage, and promote holiness? Oh, how diligent! oh, how frequent! oh, how abundant! oh, how constant were they in the work of the Lord, that profane persons might be made holy, and that those that were holy might be made more and more holy, yea, that they might perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! &c. Bishop Latimer, speaking of the clergy of his time—in a sermon before King Edward the Sixth—tells us that many can away with *præsunt*, but not with *bene*; if that *bene* were out of the text, all were well; if a man might eat the sweet and never sweat, it were an easy matter to be a preacher; if there were not *opus* but *bonum*, all were well too. But every clergyman is, or ought to be, *Επισκοπος*, that is, saith Augustine, *Nomen operis*, to be a steward and overseer in God's house; and that is an office of great labour, trust, and employment. Stewards and overseers commonly eat their bread in the sweat of their brows, and after much beating of their brains; but how unlike to such stewards and overseers the clergy are that I am now expostulating with, I must leave the Christian reader to judge. Ernestus, Duke of Lunebury, caused a burning lamp to be stamped on his coin, with these four letters, A. S. M. C., by which was meant, 'Aliis serviens meipsum contero.' By giving light to others, I consume myself. And such were the Lord's faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of old: and such are all his faithful, laborious, and conscientious ministers now. But how unlike to the one or the other they are, that now I am reasoning with, you may easily perceive, by comparing them together. I have read of the nobles of Polonia, that when the gospel is read, they clap their hands upon their swords, and begin to draw them out, intimating by that ceremony their resolution to defend the faith, and their willingness to hazard their lives for the gospel's safety. The faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of old, were willing to sacrifice themselves for the gospel's sake: but how many are there in these days that are more ready and willing to make a sacrifice of the gospel for profit sake, and preferment sake, and honour sake, and lust's sake, &c., than they are to make themselves a sacrifice for the gospel's sake! and how unlike these are to the faithful, conscientious ministers of Jesus Christ that have been in all ages, I must leave you to judge. Do not you know that Pharaoh had that tender regard of his cattle, as that he thought none fit to be their ruler, their overseer, but such as were known men of activity? Gen 47:6-7. Pharaoh would have none to be his cowherds but men of activity, men of skill, men that were prudent and diligent, ingenuous and industrious. Shall Pharaoh be so careful for his cows, and shall not others be as careful for souls? What man is there under heaven that hath the use of his reason, his wits, &c., that when he is to travel, would take a fool, an ignoramus, for his guide; and that when he is sick, would send for a mountebank to be his physician; or that when he is to ride a dangerous way, would make choice of a coward to defend him; or that when he hath a lawsuit, would make use of a dunce to plead it; or that when he hath a

suit of clothes to make, would send for a bungling tailor to make it? Surely none. And why then should not men be as wise for their souls? Do not you know that that sort of persons that now I am a speaking of, have been the greatest instruments of bringing the greatest calamities and miseries, and the sorest desolations and destructions that ever have been brought upon cities, nations, kingdoms, and countries? Compare the scriptures in the margin together, and then let conscience speak. And who is so ignorant as not to know that it was the high-priests, scribes, and Pharisees that brought the innocent blood of our Lord Jesus Christ upon that once great and glorious nation of the Jews, to their utter destruction and desolation, about forty years after Christ's ascension, when the Romans came and took their city, and practised the greatest severity and cruelty imaginable upon them, as Josephus and other historians shew? In the Marian days, and in the massacre of the Protestants in France, how great a hand this sort of men had that I am now a-reasoning with, all the world knows. And so the pagan priests stirred up the pagan emperors to be desperate persecutors of the people of God that were within their empires; which occasioned Tertullian to give that good counsel to Scapula, a pagan persecutor; 'God,' saith he, 'will surely make inquisition for our blood, and therefore if thou wilt not spare us, yet spare thyself: if not thyself, yet spare thy country, which must be responsible when God comes to visit for blood. Do not you know that his Majesty hath very Christianly, zealously, argumentatively, and smartly declared against drunkenness, lewdness, profaneness, &c., and that he hath declared that his resolution is and shall be to promote the power of godliness, to encourage the exercises of religion, both public and private, to take care that the Lord's-day be applied to holy exercises, without unnecessary diversions; and that insufficient, negligent, and scandalous ministers be not permitted in the church? Do not you know that when the great Shepherd our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear, that he will call you to a particular and exact account for every soul that hath miscarried under your charge, either by reason of your ignorance, insufficiency, profaneness, looseness, or superstition, &c.? and how will you then be able to stand in that day? &c., 1Pe 5:2-4; Eze 3:17-19.

Gentlemen, if you say you know not these things, and that they are riddles and mysteries to you, how dare you say that you are the ministers of Jesus Christ? But if you shall say that you know very well that these things are certainly true, yea, that they are such clear and undeniable truths that no devil can deny, and yet shall continue in your ignorance, insufficiency, profaneness, looseness, superstition, &c., what man on earth is there that hath but read the scriptures, and that can but write his own name, and that would not be begged for a fool in folio, will believe you to be the true faithful ministers of Jesus Christ?

Well, Gentlemen, I have read of Alexander the Great, how that he had a soldier of his name that was a coward, which when he understood, he commanded him either to fight like Alexander, or else to lay down the name of Alexander. So say I to you, Gentlemen, either preach as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to preach—viz., plainly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, fervently, frequently, &c., and live as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to live—viz., heavenly, graciously, holily, humbly, righteously, harmlessly, and exemplarily, &c., or else lay down your very names of being the ministers of Jesus Christ, and put no longer a cheat upon yourselves, nor upon the people, by making them believe that you are the only ministers of Jesus Christ, when you have nothing of the spirit of Christ, nor of the anointings of Christ, nor of the grace of Christ, nor of the life of Christ in you. Gentlemen, if this counsel be seriously minded and faithfully followed, it will

turn more to your accounts in the great day of our Lord Jesus, and do you more good then, than all the profits, preferments, and honours of this world can do you good now. But if you shall slight and despise this counsel now, I shall be found a true prophet, to your woe and misery in that great day, &c.

If this Treatise should fall into the hands of any ladies and gentlewomen, as I suppose it may, that have not yet experienced the sweet and powerful operations of holiness in their own souls, I would then say,

Ladies and Gentlewomen, your souls are as precious, and as immortal, and as capable of union and communion with Christ here, and of an eternal fruition of Christ hereafter, as the souls of any men in the world are. I have read a sad story of one Bochna, a woman which had but two sons in all the world; and whilst she was walking with the one towards the river, she heard the other crying out, and hastening back, she found a knife sticking in his side, which killed him immediately: then she made haste to the other child, but he in her absence was fallen into the river and drowned, and so she lost both her sons at once. Now, ladies, this is your very case; every one of you have two children, as I may say, a soul and a body, a life eternal and a life temporal; and oh, what a dreadful and unspeakable loss would it be to lose both these at once! and yet, as certain as there is a God in heaven, you will lose them both without holiness.

All know, that know anything of scripture or history, that there have been many great ladies and gentlewomen, that have been great lovers of holiness, and great delighters in holiness, and great prizers of holiness, and great admirers of holiness, and great countenancers of holiness, and great encouragers of holiness, and great promoters of holiness, and great followers after holiness, and great experiencers of the sweet and powerful operations of holiness in their own souls. And oh that this might be all your honour and happiness, to be in all respects as famous for holiness, as any of your sex hath been before you.

Christ hath prayed as much for your souls, as he hath for the souls of others; and he hath paid as much for your souls, as he hath for the souls of others; and he hath sweat, and wept, and bled as much for your souls, as he hath for the souls of others; and he hath suffered, and satisfied as much for your souls, as he hath for the souls of others; and he hath purchased and prepared as great and as glorious things for your souls, as he hath for the souls of others, if you will be but a holy people to him: and what doth all this speak out, but an unspeakable readiness and willingness in Jesus Christ to sanctify you, and save you, as well as others?

All knowing men can tell you, that many ladies and gentlewomen in all ages have been very famous for all natural, moral, spiritual, and acquired excellencies; yea, more famous than many men that yet have done worthily in their generation; and by their attainments you may easily see what is possible for you to attain unto, both in respect of gifts and grace. Of all things, gracious examples are most awakening, convincing, and encouraging; for in them you may see that both the attainment of holiness, and the exercise of holiness, is possible, though difficult; in eyeing of examples, it is always best to eye the highest, the holiest, and the worthiest examples; for, as he that shooteth at the sun, though he falls short of his mark, yet will shoot higher than he that aimeth only at a shrub; so those that set up the highest examples of holiness for their mark, for their imitation, will certainly attain to greater degrees of holiness, than those that propose to themselves the meanest and the lowest examples of holiness for their pattern and imitation.

Well, Ladies and Gentlewomen, do you think that it is good going to hell, that it is good dwelling with the devouring fire, that it is good dwelling with everlasting burnings, that it is good for ever to be separated from the presence of God, Christ, angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect? Isa 33:14; 2Th 1:7-10; that it is good for ever to lie a-sweltering under the wrath of an infinite just God, and to abide for ever and ever under those pains and torments that are endless, easeless, hopeless, and remediless? and that it is good to be associated, and fettered with devils and damned spirits to all eternity? Oh no, this cannot be good; for the very serious thoughts of these things are enough even to raise a hell a-this-side hell in our hearts. Oh then, Ladies and Gentlewomen, pray that you may be holy; hear that you may be holy; read that you may be holy; and with all your might press after holiness, and pursue hard after holiness as after the one thing necessary; for without holiness you will as certainly go to hell, as holy persons shall certainly go to heaven; and this you will find as clearly and fully proved in this following Treatise, as heart can wish.

Oh that you would for ever remember this, that without all peradventure you shall never be saved, unless you are sanctified; you shall never be truly happy, unless you are really holy: except God should do five things that are not possible for him to do—viz., 1. Change his purpose; 2. Make null and void his decree; 3. Make a new gospel; 4. Find out a new way to heaven; and 5. Ungod himself. God must undo himself and ungod himself, if ever he make you happy before he hath made you holy; and therefore, oh, what infinite cause have you to read this following Treatise, and to study this Treatise, and to meditate on this Treatise, and to pray over this Treatise, and to look up to heaven for counsel and strength to make such an improvement of the means, helps, and directions that are here prescribed for the attaining of holiness, as that you may be made really holy, that so you may be everlastingly happy! And to quicken and encourage your hearts in this work, I could heartily wish, that as soon as you have read over the epistle, you would read from page 433 to page 447, for there you will find many arguments that are of a particular concernment to yourselves, and that ought to be no small obligations upon you to work you to pursue after holiness with all your might, &c.

If this Treatise should fall into the hands of any faithful, serious, gracious, conscientious, laborious ministers' hands, as I suppose it may, I would then say, Reverend sirs, let my weak endeavours be a spur, a provocation to you to lay out your choicest and your chiefest gifts, parts, strength, time, and opportunities to promote holiness of life, and holiness in doctrine, worship, discipline, and in all your sacred communions. Certainly, had we all eyed holiness more, and preached holiness more, and practised holiness more, and cried up holiness more, and encouraged holiness more, and countenanced holiness more, the countenance both of God and man might have been set more pleasingly towards us than they are this day. When once maintenance comes to be more in ministers' eyes than holiness, and when their studies and endeavours are more to make men proselytes to this or that way, this or that form, this or that party, than to make men holy, it is no wonder if God writes out 'bitter things' against them. I doubt not but providential dispensations have had such a teaching virtue in them, as to lead you to lay your fingers upon several such-like sores, and to mourn over them, and to justify the Holy One of Israel, who is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works.

Truly, brethren, I have always looked upon the great work of the ministry to lie in two things: first, in making unholy men holy; and, secondly, in making them that are already holy to be more and

more holy. First to beget holiness, and then to nurse up holiness; first to bring souls to Christ, and then to build up souls in Christ, is without all peradventure the work of works that should be most in every minister's eye, and that should always lie nearest and warmest upon every minister's heart, &c. And, through grace, I have made this my grand design in the course of my ministry, and throughout all my writings; and now it yields me that joy, that comfort, that content, and that satisfaction, that I would not be without for all the world. Besides, I know it will turn most to my account at the great day. Oh that all of you that yet have any opportunities and advantages in your hands to preach the everlasting gospel would make this your great business, to promote holiness, and to exalt and lift up holiness in the world! For as this great principle of holiness shall gain ground upon the hearts, consciences, and lives of men; so all the things of Antichrist, and all the trade of Antichrist, and all those grand mischiefs and miseries that threaten the sons of men, will fall before it, as Dagon fell before the ark.

If this Treatise should fall into the hands of any of God's sanctified ones, of what degree or rank soever they are of, as I suppose it may fall into the hands of many such, I would then say, Dear friends, in this Treatise you will find many strong motives to provoke you to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,' and many special means to enable you to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,' and many evidences whereby you may certainly and infallibly know whether you have attained to any considerable height of holiness or no; and in the opening of these things, you will find that great doctrine about degrees of glory in heaven to be asserted and proved, and the objections against it to be fairly dismissed, &c.

Reader, if thou art one that to this very day art in an unsanctified estate, and an enemy to holiness, or a scoffer at holiness, or a secret despiser of holiness, or a desperate opposer of holiness, or a bitter persecutor of holiness, then I would commend this following Treatise, before any I know extant in the world, to the service of thy soul; for I know none that is so calculated and fitted up for that purpose as this is. Read and judge. This I will assure thee, O thou unsanctified soul, that the grand design of this book is thy salvation; it is to make thee really holy, that thou mayest be eternally happy; and of this thou mayest be confident—viz., that I shall follow these poor labours with my earnest prayers, that they may be blessed to the internal and eternal welfare of thy soul, and that they may issue in the conviction, conversion, and salvation of thy soul. I shall send this Treatise forth into the world with Jacob's blessing and prayer for his sons, 'God Almighty send thee mercy in the sight of the man,' Gen 43:14, &c., in the sight of the proud man that he may be humbled, and in the sight of the hardened man that he may be softened, and in the sight of the carnal man that he may be spiritualised, and in the sight of the polluted man that he may be washed, and in the sight of the unsanctified man that he may be sanctified, and in the sight of the ignorant man that he may be enlightened, and in the sight of the stubborn man that he may be bowed, and in the sight of the unconverted man that he may be changed, and in the sight of the lost man that he may be saved.

Christian reader, I suppose by this time that I have almost tired thee in reading, as I have myself in writing, and therefore I shall presently draw to a close; only, before I take my leave of thee, give me leave to say, that I am much of Carthage's mind, who to those three things which the ancients held impossible, saith, that to find a book printed without erratas, should undoubtedly have been added as a fourth impossible, if the art of printing had been then invented, though the author had Briareus his hands, and the printer Argus his eyes. Notwithstanding all the care that

hath been taken, thou wilt find figures misplaced, and some mispointings, with some other mistakes of the printer. I hope the ingenuous reader will cast a mantle of love over the mistakes of the press, and do me that right, and himself that courtesy, as to correct such errors of the press that the second impression may prevent. Seneca, I remember, is railed upon by slanderous tongues for the faults of Nero his scholar. And the scapes of Quintilian's scholars are imputed to Quintilian himself; but I know the Christian reader, that is daily sensible of the erratas of his life, hath not so learned Christ.

Reader, I do not offer thee that which cost me nothing. This Treatise that now I put into thy hand is the fruit of much prayer and serious study. If thou findest any profit and benefit by it, give Christ all the glory, the crown of praise becomes no head but his; only when thou art in the mount, let me lie near thy heart. Oh, pray earnestly, pray fervently, pray frequently, and pray unweariedly, that I may have much of the fresh anointings of the Holy Spirit, that my communion with a holy God may every day rise higher and higher, and that all my transactions, both before God and man, may savour of some heights of holiness: so thou wilt the more strongly oblige me to be thy soul's servant in all gospel engagements,

Thomas Brooks. THE NECESSITY, EXCELLENCY, RARITY, AND BEAUTY OF HOLINESS
Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.—Heb 12:14.

I remember a saying of golden-mouthed Chrysostom, 'If I were,' said he, 'the fittest man in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for my pulpit, from whence I might have a prospect of all the world in my view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpet of the archangel, that all the world might hear me, I would choose to preach on no other text than that in Psa 4:2, "O mortal men, how long will ye love vanity, and follow after leasing?" ' So I say, had I Chrysostom's tongue, head, and heart, and were I every way advantaged to preach a sermon to the whole world, I would choose to preach on this text before any other in the Bible, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.'

Beloved! the salvation of souls is that which should be first and most in a minister's eye, and that which should always lie closest and warmest upon a minister's heart. O sirs! our dear Lord Jesus was infinitely tender of the souls of men. He left his Father's bosom for souls; he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he prayed for souls; he paid for souls; he sweated for souls; he bled out his heart's blood for souls; and he made himself an offering for souls: and oh, what an encouragement should this be to all his faithful messengers to woo³ for souls, to mourn for souls, to pray for souls, to study for souls, and in preaching to spend and to be spent for the salvation of souls! Ah, friends, there is no work nor wisdom on earth to that of winning souls, Pro 11:30, and 'he that winneth souls is wise.' There is no art, no industry to that of winning souls, of 'taking' souls, as fowlers take birds, as the Hebrew word **לָקַח** imports. Now, though there is a great deal of art required to take birds, yet there is ten thousand times more art required to take souls. In a word, to convert a soul is a greater work than to sway a sceptre, or than it is to pour out ten thousand talents into the baskets of the poor. My design in choosing this text is the winning of souls, it is the salvation of souls, it is the bringing in and building up of souls. I have read of Louis the Ninth, king of France, that he was found instructing his poor kitchen-boy in the way to heaven; and being asked the reason of it, he answered, 'The meanest hath a soul as precious as my own,

and bought by the same blood of Christ.' He who only went to the price of souls, hath long since told us that a soul is more worth than a world, Mat 16:26. That I may catch some poor soul or other by a holy craft, 2Co 12:16, and establish and strengthen others in the love and liking of holiness, and in the power and practice of holiness, I have cast my thoughts upon this scripture. But to draw nearer to my text. As no means hath more enriched hell than beautiful faces, so no means hath more enriched heaven than the beauty of holiness. Now that I may discover the necessity, beauty, rarity, and excellency of holiness, I have chosen this text, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' I shall give a little light into the words, and then come to that main point I intend to stand upon.

'Follow peace with all men.' The Greek word δι■κετε, translated follow, signifies to pursue and press after peace, as' the persecutor pursues and presses after him he persecutes. It notes an earnest, an eager, an affectionate, and an incessant pressing and following after peace with all men: Psa 34:14, 'Seek peace, and pursue it.' Here the Hebrew word, ■■■, translated seek, signifies to 'seek earnestly,' vehemently, studiously, industriously. Thus peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with men must be sought. 'Seek peace and pursue it.' The word translated pursue, ■■■■■, from ■■■, signifies an 'earnest pursuit.' It is a metaphor taken from the earnestness of wild beasts, or ravenous fowl, which will run or fly fast and far, eagerly and unweariedly, rather than be disappointed of their prey. Though Christians meet with many rubs and remoras, yet peace must be resolutely pursued. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of peace, and God delights to be styled Deus pacis, the God of peace, and Christ affects to be Princeps pacis, the Prince of peace, and King of Salem, i.e., King of peace. Ubi pax, ibi Christus, quia Christus pax: Where peace is, there is Christ, because Christ is peace. Therefore let all that are interested in Christ pursue after peace. But this is not the point that I have in my eye at this time. I shall hasten to it. 'With all men;' that is, with all orders, ranks, and sorts of men.

'And holiness,' &c. We must so pursue after peace as that we do not neglect holiness for peace sake. Better is holiness without peace, than peace without holiness. Holiness differs nothing from happiness but in name. Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. A man were better be holy in hell, than unholy in heaven. Holiness would make hell to be no hell, as the fire was no fire to those holy worthies, Dan 3:27. Look, as unholiness would make heaven to be no heaven, yea, turn a heaven into a very hell, so holiness would turn a hell into a very heaven. What holiness this is in the text, I shall discover to you in the opening of that point I intend to stand upon.

'Without which no man.' This expression is exclusive, 'no man,' be he rich or poor, high or low, honourable or base, young or old, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, under one form or another, &c.

'Shall see the Lord.' To 'see,' in the Hebrew phrase, is ordinarily used to 'enjoy:' Psa 4:6, 'Who will shew us any good?' The word in the Hebrew is from ■■■, to 'see,' 'Who will make us to see any good?' that is, to enjoy any good. 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;' that is, without holiness no man shall ever come to a blessed, to a glorious fruition and enjoyment of the Lord. There was once a holy man [Chrysostom] who professed that the want of the enjoyment of God would be a far greater hell to him than the feeling of any punishment; and yet this great hell, every one shall be sure to feel that lives and dies without holiness. The Jews say of holy Moses, that he died ad osculum oris Dei, at the kisses of God's mouth, and in divine embraces, Psa 37:37. When

a man of holiness dies, he shall be sure to die in divine embraces, and live for ever in divine embraces. When Socrates was to die, he comforted himself with this, that he should go to a place where he should enjoy Homer and Musæus, and other worthies who lived before him. But ah, what an unspeakable comfort is this to a holy man when he comes to die, to consider that he is going to a place where he shall see the Lord, not as now, through a glass darkly, but in all his heavenly bravery, and in all his divine embroidery and bespangled glory! 1Co 13:12. And let this suffice for the opening of the words. In my text you have two things: First, An exhortation to 'follow peace and holiness.' Secondly, The reason or argument to enforce the duty pressed, viz., 'without which no man shall see the Lord.' The words will afford us many weighty observations. I shall only name one, which I intend to insist upon, and that is this—viz.:

Doct. That real holiness is the only way to happiness. All men must be holy on earth, or they shall never see the beatifical vision, they shall never reach to a glorious fruition of God in heaven. For the clearing up, and making good of this great and glorious truth, I shall endeavour these three things:—

First, to shew you what this holiness is, 'without which no man shall see the Lord.'

Secondly, I shall, by an induction of particulars, make good the proposition.

Thirdly, Give you the reasons of the point.

I. First, What is this holiness 'without which no man shall see the Lord'? I answer, there is a sixfold holiness.

1. First, There is a legal holiness. Now a legal holiness consists in an exact, perfect, and complete conformity in heart and life to the whole revealed will of God, and this was the holiness that Adam had in his innocency; and this holiness was immediately derived from God, and was perfect. Adam knew the will of God perfectly, so far as it was revealed to him, and had a divine principle in him of perfect conformity to that blessed will. Adam's holiness was as co-natural to him, as unholiness is now to us; and had he stood fast in that glorious condition, we had all been as naturally holy from the womb, as now we are sinful. Adam's holiness was as natural, and as pleasing, and as delightful to him, as any way of unholiness can be natural, pleasing, and delightful unto us. But this holiness, which was Adam's choicest sparkling gem of beauty, and his weightiest crown of glory, is by Satan's policy long since fallen off from Adam's head, Psalms 51:5. Now if this legal holiness were the holiness meant in the text, then woe to man that ever he was born; for then no man should ever see the Lord, Romans 3:10. For by Adam's fall all men are gone out of the way, and there is none legally righteous, no not one. Now if we look upon man as fallen from that holiness which was his greatest honour, dignity, and excellency, he is become a pile of dust, a puff of wind, saith one; a dream of a shadow, saith another; a shadow of smoke, saith a third; a poor silly flea, a worm, a little soul, a curious nothing; yea, man fallen from his primitive glory is become a very vanity, saith the prophet: Psalms 39:5, 'Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.' 'Verily;' this asseveration is only used in matters of greatest weight and moment, and notes the reality and certainty of the things delivered. Every man, [■■■-■■■, 'all Adam,'] or every son of Adam; not some man, but every man at his best state, [■■■, from Jatsab;] that is, in his most settled and composed condition, when he is best constituted and underlaid, when he stands a-tip-toe, and is in the height and perfection of all creature comforts and contentments, is altogether, not in some

measure, but altogether, vanity, [chol hebel,] all vanity. Since the fall of Adam every natural man in his best estate is vanity; nay, every man is every vanity. Imagine what vanity you will, fallen man is that. He is a comprehensive vanity—he is an epitome of all vanity. Man in honour, before his fall, was the best of creatures; but since his fall, he is become the worst of creatures. By his fall he is fallen below the very beasts that perish, Isa 1:3-4; Pro 6:6; Jer 8:7; Mat 6:26. He that was once the image of God, the glory of paradise, the world's lord, and the Lord's darling, is now become a burthen to heaven, a burthen to himself, and a slave to others, &c., which made one cry out—

'Oh, what is man? A scuttleful of dust, a measured span, Man's breath a bubble, and his days a span;

'Tis glorious misery to be born a man.' By all which you may easily perceive how far we are off from that legal holiness that Adam had in innocency. Rabbi Solomon makes Adam so high, that he touched heaven with his head. I shall not dispute the certainty of that; but certainly the higher he was in holiness, the greater was his fall, and ours in him. This legal holiness was so lost in Adam, that no son of Adam could ever find it since Adam fell; and if this were the holiness without which no man should ever see the Lord, then farewell for ever to all the sons of Adam. But this legal holiness is not the holiness in the text.

2. Secondly, There is an imaginary holiness, a conceited holiness, an opinionative holiness: Pro 30:12, 'There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.' They were very bad, and yet they had a great opinion of their own goodness. They were very filthy, and yet they stood very much upon their own purity. Their hands were black, their hearts were black, their works were black, and their ways were as black as hell, and yet they durst say that none could say black was their eye. They were filthy within, and filthy without; filthy in body, and filthy in soul, and filthy in spirit. Filthiness had quite overspread them, and yet they thought to cover their filthiness with a vizard of holiness. The worst men are commonly best conceited of themselves. Ah, friends, there hath been no generation wherein there hath not been such a generation of men who have wallowed in sin like swine in the mire, and yet have kept up in themselves a strong opinion of their own goodness and holiness. This generation had neither their souls nor consciences washed in the blood of Christ, nor sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, and yet they gloried in their conceited purity and holiness, as if they had been purified by Christ. There are many that are shining Christians, that are pure golden Christians in their own eyes, that are viler than dross, yea, than smoke in God's eyes: Isa 65:5, 'Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou: these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.' They were very licentious, very ungracious, very rebellious, very superstitious, very idolatrous, (Isa 65:2-4) and yet counted themselves very religious. They were worse than others, and yet thought themselves better than others; they were very bad, and yet judged themselves very good; they were more impure, more profane, and more polluted than others, and yet they reckon themselves more pure and holier than others; they stand upon their comparative goodnesses, and yet at the same time are charged by God of the greatest wickedness. And thus their kinsmen the Pharisees stand upon their images, forgeries, and outward dresses of holiness, when at the same time they practised the worst of wickedness, Mat 23:5; Luk 18:11-12; so those in Hos 12:8, 'And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find no iniquity in me,' that were sin, or is sin. Ephraim's iniquities were grown over his head, as may be seen throughout this whole prophecy, and yet Ephraim cannot bear the being charged with iniquity. It was little less

than sin to charge Ephraim with sin; though he was notoriously guilty of the highest crimes, yet he would have you to know that he was as shy of sin, and as clear of sin, as he that was shyest and clearest. Ephraim could give good words, when his works were abominable; he could pretend much to innocency, when he was guilty of the greatest impiety. But though Ephraim had his cloak at hand, yet it was too short to cover his sin; for God saw it, and condemned him for it. Chrysostom doth elegantly set forth the blindness and brutishness of such persons. When they lie in the mire, saith he, they think they are besmeared with some sweet ointments; when they are full of vermin, they vaunt themselves, as if they were adorned with precious stones. And so the Laodiceans were of the same temper of spirit: Rev 3:17, 'Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' They had a great opinion of their own goodness, worth, and excellent state, having need of nothing, when they had nothing of a Christian in them. Thou sayest thou art 'rich;' ay, but thou dost but say so. Thou boastest and braggest of thy riches, as many proud beggars do of that wealth they have not. For all thou deemest thyself rich, thou art but poor and beggarly. It is man's sin and judgment, that ever since he ceased to be what he should be, he striveth to seem to be what he is not. Thou sayest thou art 'increased with goods, and needest nothing;' ay, but thou dost but say so, thou dost but dream it is so: for thou art ignorant of thine own wretched and lamentable estate. Thou sayest thou art rich, but I know thou art poor and beggarly. If a drachm of grace would save thy life, thy soul, thy family, nay, the whole world, thou hast it not. Thou sayest thou 'seest'; but thou art blind, thou art destitute of spiritual eyesight; thou seest not thine own wants, nor Christ's worth; thine own emptiness, nor Christ's fulness; thine own sinfulness, nor Christ's holiness; thine own poverty, nor Christ's riches and plenty; thine own misery, nor Christ's mercy; thine own insufficiency, nor Christ's all-sufficiency; thine own vanity, nor Christ's glory, &c. Multi multa sciunt, se autem nemo: Many know much, but few know themselves, or their own danger, infelicity, or misery; and indeed no misery to this. The Chinese used to say of themselves, that all other nations of the world did see but with one eye, they only with two; and of this spirit and temper were those blind Laodiceans. They thought they knew all things, when they knew nothing that they should, nor as they should. By all which you may see that there is an imaginary holiness, a conceited holiness, where there is no real holiness; but an imaginary holiness will bring a man but to an imaginary blessedness; a conceited holiness will bring a man but to a conceited happiness; he that doth but dream that he is holy, he doth but dream that he shall be happy.

Bastards of old were not to inherit, but to be thrust out from among the true heirs: Gen 21:10; Jdg 11:1-2, 'Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. And Gilead's wife bear him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.' Ah, sirs, you that are but bastard Christians, bastard professors, bastard believers, bastard saints, you shall never inherit among the heirs of glory, but shall be thrust out for ever from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, and thrust into utter darkness, because you have pleased yourselves, and satisfied your spirits, and blessed your souls in a bastard holiness, in a conceited holiness, 2Th 1:8-9; Mat 8:12, and Mat 22:13; Deu 23:2, 'A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.' He shall have no fellowship nor communion with the people of God; the door of admission shall be shut upon him. The foolish virgins had but a bastard holiness, a conceited holiness, an outward dress of holiness; and therefore the door of life, the door of hope, the door of help, the door of grace, the door of mercy,

the door of glory was shut upon them, Mat 25:10-12, Mat 7:21-23. William the Conqueror was much slighted and scorned because he was a bastard. God and his people will slight such, and scorn such, and turn their backs at last upon such that have no more than a bastardly holiness; and therefore this cannot be the holiness here meant. But,

3. Thirdly, There is an outward, external, visible holiness, which includes men's freedom from scandalous vices, and their ordinary performance of religious duties. Now, in this sense, Zacharias and Elizabeth were both holy persons: for they 'walked in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless.' And so the apostles, 1Th 2:10, 'For ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' Answerable to this, is that of the apostle in 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' These precious souls behaved themselves holily towards God, justly towards the world, and unblameably towards believers. They were holy in religious work, they were just in their civil affairs and commerce, and unblameable in their private carriage and behaviour amongst their familiar and most bosom friends. And this is that the apostle presses upon Christians in Php 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke,' (or unblemished,) 'in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine' (or shine ye) 'as lights in the world.' Christians must be the spotless sons of God: they must have no spots upon them that are inconsistent with sonship or saintship, Deu 32:5. Now it is certain, without this outward visible holiness there is no happiness, there is no fruition of God in everlasting blessedness. They that pretend their hearts are as good as the best, when their lives are as bad as the worst, shall experience this truth at last to their shame and cost, that without visible holiness here, there can be no fruition of God hereafter.

Yet this must be granted, that a man may be visibly holy, that is not inwardly holy, 2Ti 2:5. A man may be outwardly holy, that is not throughout holy: a man may have an outward dress of holiness upon him, that hath not the spirit and vitals of holiness in him. As Judas had, and Simon Magus had, and Demas had, and the Scribes and Pharisees had: Mat 23:25, Mat 23:27-28, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.' They were outwardly religious, but inwardly vicious; they had the semblance of sanctity, but inwardly very full of impurity; they were fair professors, but foul sinners; they were gracious without, but impious within. Look, as they are the worst of vices that are covered over with the show of virtue; so they are the worst of sinners that cover over their inward filthiness under the vizards of outward holiness. The Egyptian temples were fair without, but foul and filthy within. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's days, and such are many professors in our days. It is said of Dionysius the tyrant, that though he loved not the philosophers, yet he would wrap himself up in their cloaks, that men might have the better opinion of him: so there be many that put on an outward dress of holiness, that wrap themselves up in the cloak of holiness, that so others may take them for holy persons, and yet they love not holiness, they have nothing of real holiness in them; but 'as he is not a Jew which is one outwardly,' but not inwardly, Rom 2:28-29, and Rom 4:12; so he is not a holy person who is only so outwardly, but not

inwardly; that hath the name of holiness upon him, but hath no principles of holiness in him. Though without outward visible holiness no man shall see the Lord; yet a man may have an outward visible holiness, that shall never see the Lord in happiness. 'I hate him even to hell,' saith the heathen in Homer, 'that saith one thing with his mouth, and thinketh another thing in his heart.' So God will at last hate that man to hell, yea, cast him into the hottest place in hell, that hath a form of godliness upon him, but nothing of the reality and power of holiness in him. Outward holiness is good, but it must be throughout holiness that will do a man good to all eternity.³ It is not the shows but the substance of holiness that will bring a man to everlasting happiness. Mere outward holiness will certainly leave a man short of heaven and happiness; but throughout holiness will certainly lodge the soul in the bosom of God for ever. It is true, all men reach not to an outward holiness, which made Athanasius wish, *Utinam omnes essent hypocritæ!* Would to God that all were hypocrites! Without all peradventure it is a very desirable thing that all were outwardly holy; yet all that reach to this, must go farther, or else they will sit down on this side happiness: Mat 5:20, 'For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now they were much in works of piety, in works of charity, in works of equity, and in works of courtesy, by which means they gained so much upon the hearts of the people, that it was commonly conceited and voted among them, that if there were but two of all the world that should go to heaven, the one should be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee. Yet your righteousness must exceed theirs, or the gates of glory will be shut upon you. Their righteousness and holiness was only external, not internal; it was partial, not universal; it was rather circumstantial than substantial; and therefore heaven's doors were double-bolted against them. Heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that is not only outwardly holy, but throughout holy.

4. Fourthly, There is a relative holiness. Now relative holiness is a special relation which persons or things have unto God. Relative holiness includes two things—

(1.) First, A separation of persons or things from common use: and thus, in the law those things were called holy which were separated from common use and set apart for the worship and service of God—as the oil, shew-bread, first-fruits, incense, altars, vestments; and in this sense the priests and Levites were called holy, because they were separated from others to serve in the tabernacle; and in this sense the people of Israel are frequently called a sanctified people, a holy people, &c. The Greek word ἅγιος, answers to the Hebrew word ■■■■, which commonly signifies that which is appropriated to a holy use; and this is the proper notion of holiness in the Old and New Testament, as I might shew you out of some hundred places of scripture. Now certainly without this holiness of special separation from the common conversation of the world, there is no seeing of God, nor no fruition of God hereafter: 2Co 6:17-18, 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' God will have no communion with any in this world that are not separated from the sinful practices of the world. God will look upon none, he will own none, he will delight in none, he will acknowledge none, he will receive none for his sons and daughters, but such as are separated from all evil vices and unholy courses. Suitable to this is Isa 52:11, 'Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean things; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.' Estrange yourselves from them that are estranged from God; have nothing to

do with them that have nothing to do with God; separate yourselves from them who have separated themselves from God; have no delightful converse with them who have no delightful converse with God; have no bosom communion with them that have no bosom communion with God. O sirs, you are to keep yourselves as pure and clean from others' defilements, as you would keep yourselves free from others' punishments. He that will imitate others in their sins, shall certainly participate with others in their sorrows. It is true we may live with wicked men in their cities, but it is as true we must not lie² with wicked men in their enormities. There are many professors that are, like the planet Mercury, good in conjunction with those that are good, and bad with those that are bad; but these wound many at once, God, Christ, the gospel, and their own credits and consciences. These do virtutis stragulam pudefacere, put virtue to an open shame; and these are deservedly to be shamed by your separating from them, and by your renouncing all intimate communion or fellowship with them. But,

(2.) Secondly, As relative holiness takes in a separation of persons or things from common use, so it takes in a dedication and devoting of them to a holy use. And thus the Nazarites, Temple, Mount Zion, the Sabbath-day, and other festival days are said to be holy under the law. In short, the whole Jewish religion did lie in holy times, holy places, holy persons, and holy things; and certainly without this holiness, without this dedicating of ourselves to God, we shall never come to a glorious fruition of God. He that doth not dedicate himself really to God, wholly to God, only to God, and always to God on earth, shall never come to a sight and vision of God in heaven. If we do not give up ourselves to God, God will never give up himself to us: Hos 3:3, 'And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days: thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man; so will I also be for thee.' God will be only theirs that are really his, and he will be altogether theirs that are wholly his; he will only be a husband to them that dedicate themselves to him, as a wife doth to her husband. He will devote himself theirs who devote themselves his; he will avouch himself to be theirs who avouch themselves to be his: Deu 26:17-19, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldst keep all his commandments; and to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.' God will resign himself up to them who resign themselves up to him; he will give up himself to them that have given up their names and their hearts to him; he will bestow himself as the greatest pearl of price upon them that shall make a surrender of themselves to him. There is no way to be higher than others, happier than others, more noble and honourable than others, than by making a dedi-gift⁵ of ourselves to God. He that dedicates himself to God, dedicates all; he that doth not dedicate himself, dedicates nothing at all. What Æschines once said to Socrates—Others, said he, give thee gold, silver, jewels, but I give thee myself; that must a Christian say to his God, Ah, Lord! there are some that give thee their lips, but I give thee my heart; others give thee good words, good expressions, but I give thee the best of my affections; others give thee a few cold prayers, but I give thee my whole soul; and had I as many hearts in my body as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all to thee: for thou art worthy, thou only art worthy. What the king of Israel once said to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have,' 1Ki 20:4; that must a Christian say to his Christ, 'I am thine, O Lord, and all that I have.' A Christian must cry out with him who cried, Lord, I have two mites, a soul and a body, and I give them both to

thee.—[Bernard.] And this was the honour and commendations of the Macedonians, that they gave up themselves to the Lord, 2Co 8:5. Having no better present at hand, they present themselves to God; and certainly there is no present more honourable, delectable, and acceptable to God than this of giving up ourselves to God, Rom 12:1. Well, remember this: that man was never really holy that is not relatively holy; nor that man will never be really happy that is not relatively holy. Without relative holiness there will be no vision of God in everlasting happiness. We must be separated from the corruptions and pollutions of the world, and we must dedicate ourselves to God, or we shall never come to a future fruition of God. But,

5. Fifthly, There is an imputative holiness, and that is the holiness of Christ imputed to us. For to prevent mistakes, you may please to take notice that there is a twofold holiness in Christ: first, there is his essential and personal holiness as he is God. Now this essential holiness of Christ cannot be imparted nor imputed to any mortal man; it is essential to him; but secondly, there is his mediatory holiness, or that holiness which he wrought for us as Mediator. Now the holiness of Christ as Mediator did consist both in the habitual holiness of his person, in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and supernatural qualities, as also in the actual holiness of his life and death. By his active obedience, by his subjecting of his heart and life to divine precepts, he perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law; and by his passive obedience, his voluntary sufferings, he fully satisfied the comminations, penalties, and curses of the law. Now this mediatory holiness of Christ's is ours by imputation, and by virtue of which we stand recti in curia, justified in the sight of God: 1Co 1:30, 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' This mediatory holiness of Christ, reckoned unto a believing sinner, is that whereby he is constituted holy in foro Dei; and upon this account they are said to be 'all fair,' Song of Solomon 4:7; to be 'without spot or wrinkle,' Eph 5:25-27; to be 'complete in him,' Col 2:10; and to be 'without fault before the throne of God,' Rev 14:4-5. And certainly, without this mediatory holiness of Christ there is no appearing before God, there is no glorious vision nor fruition of God. God is a God of that infinite purity and holiness, that no holiness below the imputative holiness of Christ can make a man stand before him, or bring a man to the fruition of him, Hab 1:13. It was a very sweet and excellent saying of Bernard, when in his own opinion he was at the point of death: I confess, said he, I am not worthy, I have no merits of mine own to obtain heaven by: but my Lord had a double right thereunto; a hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice. He was contented with the one right himself; the other right he hath given unto me, by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded. Though we cannot lay claim to heaven, nor to a blessed fruition of God by any inherent holiness in us, it being weak and imperfect, yet we may lay claim to both by the mediatory holiness of Christ imputed to us. As Christ's essential holiness gives him a hereditary right to everlasting happiness, so his mediatory holiness gives us a right to everlasting blessedness. The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for a hundred talents, was but a mean and beggarly rag to that embroidered royal robe of Christ's mediatory holiness that is imputed or reckoned to us.³ And therefore, as ever you would come to a vision of God in happiness, you must labour to be interested by faith in Christ's mediatory holiness. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, There is an inherent, internal qualitative holiness. Now this inherent holiness lies in two things.

(1.) First, In the infusing of holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces into the soul, such as the apostle mentions in Gal 5:22-23, 'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.' These habits of grace, which are severally distinguished by the names of faith, love, hope, meekness, &c., are nothing else but the new nature, or 'new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph 4:24. These seeds of holiness, these habits of grace, are those sweet ointments with which all must be anointed that shall ever come to a blessed sight or vision of God, 1Jn 3:9; 2Co 1:21; 1Jn 2:27. You may know much of God, you may hear much of God, you may talk much of God, and you may boast much of your hopes and interest in God, and yet without these habits of holiness you shall never come to a blessed fruition of God in happiness; without these seeds of holiness you shall never reap a crop of blessedness. But,

(2.) Secondly, This inherent, this qualitative holiness, lies in a holy use and exercise of those supernatural graces in a way of holy walking. All holy habits must be brought forth into holy acts; gracious habits must be attended with gracious motions, gracious operations, and a gracious conversation. Outward works must be suitable to inward habits. It is with spiritual habits as it is with natural habits; the more they are acted and exercised, the more they are increased and strengthened. Holy habits are golden talents that must be employed and improved. Gracious habits are the candles of the Lord set up in us; and God hath set up those candles of heaven not to idle by, not to sleep by, but to work by, and to walk by. Where there is holiness of disposition, there must be, nay there will be, holiness of conversation. A holy heart is always attended with a holy life. You may separate a man from his friend, but you can never separate, though you may distinguish, acts of holiness from the habits of holiness. Now it is certain, without this holiness, you shall never come to a sight or fruition of God in happiness. And thus I have shewed you what that holiness is, without which there is no hope, no possibility of ever seeing the Lord.

II. I come now to the second thing, and that is to prove the truth of the proposition—viz., that without men are holy, they can never be happy. Without holiness on earth, none of the sons of men shall ever come to a blessed vision and fruition of God in heaven. Now this great and weighty truth I shall make good by an induction of particulars, thus:

1. First, God hath by very plain and clear scriptures bolted and barred the door of heaven and happiness against all unholy ones. Witness 1Co 6:9-10, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' Heaven is an undefiled inheritance, and none that are defiled can enter into the possession of it, 1Pe 1:4. When the angels fell from their righteousness, heaven rejected them; it would no longer hold them; and will it now accept of the unrighteous? will it now entertain and welcome them? Surely no. Such sinners make the very earth to mourn and groan now; and shall they make heaven to mourn and groan hereafter? Surely no. What though the serpent did wind himself into an earthy paradise, yet none of the seed of the serpent, so remaining, shall ever be able to wind themselves into a heavenly paradise. Witness Gal 5:19-21, 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I also have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the

kingdom of God.' Before they go to hell, he tells them again and again that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. By the kingdom of God we are to understand the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of glory. Now the kingdom of heaven, of glory, is called the kingdom of God; 1. Because he hath prepared it. 2. Because it is a royal gift that he confers and bestows upon his little, little flock, Mat 20:23; Luk 12:32. Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave trifles to some, and gold to others. The trifles of this world God often gives to the worst and basest of men; but the kingdom of heaven he only gives to his bosom-friends, Rev 4:10-11, and Rev 20:6; Dan 4:16-17. 3. Because that of and under him, the saints hold it and possess it. 4. Because with him they shall for ever reign in the fruition of it. And so that in John 3:3, 'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' To give a little light into the words:

'Verily, verily:' the Greek is 'amen, amen.' The word amen is Hebrew, and in the Old Testament is most commonly used by way of wishing or imprecation; but here, and in other places of the New Testament, the sense of it is altered from precatory to assertory, or from the way of wishing to the way of affirming. This phrase, 'Amen, amen,' or 'Verily, verily,' imports,

[1.] First, The truth and certainty of the things delivered; for the word 'amen' doth properly signify truth.

[2.] Secondly, This double asseveration is never used but in matters of greatest weight and importance: the matters here spoken of are of a very celestial and sublime nature.

[3.] Thirdly, This gemination, 'Verily, verily,' is a vehement confirmation of what Christ speaks.

[4.] Fourthly, This gemination calls aloud for the greatest observation and most serious attention of the soul to what Christ is a-saying.

'I say unto thee:' 'I,' that thou hast confessed to be a teacher sent from God; 'I,' that lie in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18; 'I,' that am of the cabinet-council of heaven; 'I,' that know his heart and all his secrets, Rev 3:14; 'I,' that am the faithful and true witness, and cannot lie; 'I,' that am called the 'Amen,' the truth itself; 'I,' that have the keys of heaven and hell at my own girdle, Rev 1:18; 'I,' that open and no man shuts, and 'I,' that shut and no man opens; 'I,' that shall be your Judge in the great day, 'I say unto thee,' &c.

'Except a man be born again:' A man, be he old or young, learned or unlearned, high or low, rich or poor, knowing or ignorant, circumcised or uncircumcised, under this form or that, a member of this church or that, let his disposition be never so ingenuous, and his parts never so high, and his conversation as to men never so blameless and harmless; yet, except this man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, Rom 2:28-29.

'Be born again:' Except a man be first unmade, and new-made up again; except he be of an old creature made a new creature, yea, a new creation of God, 2Co 5:17, there is no seeing of the kingdom of God. The whole frame of the old man must be dissolved, and a new frame erected, else there is no heaven to be enjoyed. The kingdom of God is a divine kingdom, and there is no possession of it without a divine nature. A new head without a new heart, a new lip without a new life, will never bring a man to this kingdom of light. That man is for the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is for that man, that hath got the kingdom of God within him. If the kingdom of

grace do not enter into thee here, thou shalt never enter into the kingdom of glory hereafter. A new heart is for a new heaven, and a new heaven is for a new heart. 'Except a man be born again,' except a man be born from above; and so Cyrill interprets that word ■νωθεν. Generation in some sense is from below, but regeneration is only from above, and without this there is no fruition of God above.

'He cannot see the kingdom of God.' The Scripture speaks of several cannots.

[1.] First, There is a natural cannot. Now, every son and daughter of Adam is by nature born under a cannot. They are all born under a cannot believe, a cannot repent, a cannot love God, a cannot walk with God, a cannot see God, a cannot enjoy God: 1Co 2:14, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' A blind man cannot see colours, nor a natural man cannot discern spiritual things. They are too high, they are too sublime for him; they are mysteries that he cannot understand, that he cannot unriddle. The natural man can ascend no higher than nature, as the water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it comes—Quantum descendit, tantum ascendit. The Scripture sets such sad souls below the ox and the ass, Isa 1:3. Take nature civilised and moralised, refined and raised, sublimated, strengthened, and improved to the utmost, and it cannot enable a man to do a supernatural action; nature cannot act ultra sphæram, above itself. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is a contracted and an habituated cannot; and of this cannot the prophet speaks in Jer 6:10, 'To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it.' They had by their carnality, impiety, sensuality, security, and obstinacy, contracted upon their poor souls such deafness, wretchedness, unteachableness, and untractableness, that they could neither love the word nor like it; they could neither take pleasure nor delight in it; nay, they could neither hear it nor bear it, though it never so nearly concerned the internal and eternal welfare of their souls. And of this cannot the apostle speaks in 2Pe 2:14, 'Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children.' By their riot and excess, by their lasciviousness and wantonness, by their looseness and uncleanness which they had habituated and accustomed themselves unto, they brought upon themselves a cursed necessity of sinning, so that they could not cease from sin. They mourn over sin, and yet they cannot cease from sin; they resolve against sin, yet they cannot cease to sin; they pray against sin, yet they cannot cease to sin; they make many promises, vows, and covenants against sin, yet they cannot cease from sin, their souls being habituated and accustomed thereunto: Jer 2:20, 'For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst I will not transgress'—I will never play the harlot more; but were they as good as their word? no)—'for upon every high hill and under every green tree they wandered, playing the harlot.' I have read of a man who, in the time of his sickness, was so terrified in his conscience for his sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, I am damned, I am damned, and made many great promises and protestations of amendment of life, if God would be pleased to recover him. In a little while he did recover, and being recovered, he was as base and vile, as wretched and wicked, as ever he was before. Custom in sin takes away all conscience of sin: Jer 13:23, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may he also do good that is accustomed to do evil.' The

Ethiopian cannot make his black skin white; he cannot change the hue or the colour of it by washing; to attempt this is but labour in vain. Nor the leopard cannot change his spots: no more can a poor sinner that hath habituated and accustomed himself to sin, that is desperately enthralled to sin, turn from his sin. The spots of the leopard are not in him by accident, but by nature; and they are such which no art can cure, nor water wash off; because they are not only in the skin, but in the flesh and bones, in the sinews and most inward parts. By custom sin hath bespotted not only the skin, the life, the outside of a poor sinner, but also the very heart and soul of a poor sinner, so as that he is never able to wash off these spots. Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that, having a disease upon his body, his physician told him, that except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c., he was like to lose his eyes. His heart being habituated to sin, and set upon wickedness, he answered, Vale lumen amicum—Farewell sweet light then. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As there is a contracted cannot, an habituated cannot, so there is a judicial cannot. The Lord inflicts a judicial cannot upon many persons in judgment: they cannot return from their sins, they cannot withstand a temptation, they cannot lay hold on eternal life, they cannot make sure work for their souls, they cannot leave their bosom-lusts, they cannot prefer Christ above all the world, they cannot make provision for eternity, they cannot see the things that belong to their peace, &c.; and this cannot the Lord in wrath hath brought upon them: Isa 6:9-10, 'And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes' (or anoint, besmear, lime their eyes); 'lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.' They would not see, they shall not see; they would not hear, they shall not hear; they would not understand, they shall not understand; they would not convert, they shall not convert; they would not be healed, they shall not be healed. When men are stiffly and desperately resolved upon their sinful courses, when men grow stubborn, rebellious, licentious, and will wilfully wink and shut their eyes against the light, and stop their ears against the truth, God in his just judgment gives them up to dulness, stupidity, blindness, darkness: Isa 44:18, 'They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see' (or he hath daubed up their eyes from seeing); 'and their hearts that they cannot understand. God in his righteous judgment casts a judicial cannot upon them; he hath daubed up their eyes that they cannot see, and he hath shut up their hearts that they cannot understand the great concerns of their souls. Now whilst men lie under these sad cannots, they can never see the kingdom of God. These three cannots, like a threefold cord, bind poor sinners, so as that they can never come to a sight or fruition of God in grace or glory, till they are delivered from these cannots by a new birth, by being born again.

'See the kingdom of God;' that is, they cannot enter into it, they cannot enjoy it, they can have no child's part or portion in it, except they are new born, except they pass the pangs of the second birth. Let their education be never so sweet, their illumination never so great, their profession never so amiable, and their conversation never so unblameable, yet except they are new born, it had been good for them that they had never been born. And thus you see by plain scriptures, that the Lord hath bolted the gates of glory against all unholy persons.

2. A second argument to prove that without holiness there is no happiness, &c., is this: Without holiness men are strangers to God; and therefore, without holiness they cannot be admitted to a

cohabitation with God. God loves not to dwell with strangers, nor to associate himself with strangers. Now such are all unholy persons: Eph 2:12, 'That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel' (or, being far removed from the citizenship of Israel), 'and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.' Here are five 'withouts' in the words, 1. They were without God, the author of hope. 2. They were without Christ, the foundation of hope. 3. They were without the church, which was contained in the commonwealth of Israel, the place of hope. 4. They were without the covenants of promise—that is, they were without the precious promises which God in his covenant had made and oftentimes renewed with the Israelites, and therefore called covenants in the plural number—the ground and reason of hope. And, lastly, They were without the grace of hope: they had no hope of communion with Christ, no hope of fellowship with the saints, no hope of any interest in the promise, no hope of reconciliation to God here, nor no hope of a fruition of God hereafter. And thus you see what strangers they were to the Lord, and to the great concernments of their own souls. God of old would not have strangers come into his sanctuary; and do you think, then, that he will ever admit such into heaven? Surely no. Eze 44:6-7, Eze 44:9, 'And thou shalt say to the rebellious, even to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations, in that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations. Thus saith the Lord God, No stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.' Such as had no holiness within, nor no holiness without; such as had no holiness in their hearts, nor no holiness in their lives, God would not have them to enter into his sanctuary; and, therefore, certainly such he will never suffer to enter into heaven.² If God shuts the doors of an earthly tabernacle against such as were strangers to him, to his covenant, to his church, and to themselves, will he not much more shut the door of his heavenly tabernacle against such that are strangers to him, and to his Christ, and to his word, yea, that are strangers to their own souls, and to all the concernments of another world? and such are all those that are uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh. Princes' palaces are not for strangers, but for sons, friends, familiars, favourites; no more is the palace of heaven. We will not admit strangers to cohabit with us; and will God admit such to cohabit with him, that never had any acquaintance or familiarity with him? Surely no. In history we read of such towns and cities as would not admit strangers to inhabit among them; and such a city is that above, Exo 33:12, Eze 33:17. It hath been long since concluded, that *In cœlo nullus erit alienus*—In heaven there shall be no strangers: none shall be admitted into that state but such as God knows by name. Charon in Lucian, requesting Mercurius to shew him Jupiter's palace above, How says Mercurius, that such a caitiff as thou, whose conversation hath been altogether with black shades and impure ghosts, shouldst set thy foot in that pure place of light? What a dishonour and derogation were that to the place! The application is easy.

3. Unholy persons have fellowship and familiarity with Satan, and therefore, doubtless, God will have no familiarity nor fellowship with them, 2Co 6:14-16. As righteousness can have no fellowship with unrighteousness, nor light with darkness, nor Christ with Belial, nor heaven with hell; no more can a holy God have any communion or fellowship with unholy souls, for they are Satan's house, Luk 11:21; Rev 18:2. He keeps possession of them as a man doth of his house,

and hath familiarity with them as a man hath with those of his house: he is their father, and they are his children, John 8:44; and look, what familiarity a father hath with his children, that hath an unholy devil with unholy souls. A workman cannot be more familiar with his tools than Satan is with unholy souls; and therefore he is said to work in the children of disobedience, as a smith worketh in his forge, or as an artificer worketh in his shop, Eph 2:2. Unholy persons have bosom-fellowship with Satan: 1Jn 5:19, 'And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;' or in that wicked one the devil, as the Greek will bear; they lie, as it were, in the bosom of Satan, as the child lies in the bosom of the mother, or as the wife lies in the bosom of the husband, or as a friend lies in the bosom of his friend. Unholy persons partake with him at his table; they eat with him, and drink with him, and converse with him: 1Co 10:21, 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.' Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own, thus: He is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, and sells thy blood to me. By all which you may see what fellowship and familiarity there is between Satan and a sinner. Now what is this less than blasphemy, to assert that a holy God will have fellowship with them that have fellowship with the devil? God hath not cast Satan out of heaven that he may make room for his familiars in heaven. If heaven was too holy to hold unholy devils, it will be found at last to be too holy to hold unholy souls. Certainly they shall not lie in the bosom of God who have the devil for their bedfellow.

4. Fourthly, Unholy persons are full of contrariety to God; their natures, principles, practices, aims, minds, wills, affections, judgments, intentions, and resolutions, are contrary to God, his name, nature, being, truth, and glory. You may as soon bring east and west, north and south, light and darkness, heaven and hell together, as you shall bring a holy God and unholy souls together. Antipathies will never incorporate; as soon may midnight be married to the noonday, as a holy God embrace an unholy sinner. That unholy persons are made up of contrarieties to God, is most evident, as you may see in Isa 22:12-13, 'And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die.' These sad souls practise quite contrary to what the Lord calls for at their hands. He calls them to weeping and mourning, and behold joy and gladness: he calls them to fasting, and behold here is nothing but feasting, carousing, and making merry and jovial, and that in contempt of God and his dreadful judgments, Rom 8:7; Jas 4:4. Unholy persons are like the rainbow: now the rainbow is never on that side of the world that the sun is on; but whensoever it appears, it is still in opposition against the sun. If the sun be in the east, the rainbow is in the west, &c. So unholy souls, in all their actings and walkings, will still be opposite to God; they will still be cross and contrary to him: John 8:38, 'I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.' Unholy hearts are full of the highest strains of contrariety and opposition against the Lord. I have read of a king that reigned in no very remote part of the world, who, having received a blow from the hand of God, took a solemn oath to be revenged on him; and ordained that for ten years' space no man should pray to him, speak of him, nor, so long as he was in authority, to believe in him. Oh the vanity, the contrariety, and blasphemy of this prince! Now we will not admit such to be about us, who are made up of contrarieties to us: and will God, will God? Heaven and earth, fire and water, the wolf and the lamb, the winds and the sea will

sooner accord, than a holy God and an unholy heart. There can be no amity where there is a spiritual antipathy.

5. Fifthly, Without holiness no man can have any spiritual communion with God in this world; he may hear, but he can have no communion with God in hearing without holiness; he may pray, but he can have no communion with God in prayer without holiness; he may come to the sacrament, but he can have no communion with God in the sacrament without holiness; he may come into the communion of saints, but he can have no communion with God in the communion of saints without holiness; he may read and meditate, but he can have no communion with God in reading and meditation without holiness: Deu 23:14, 'For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.' Keep up holiness among you, and you shall keep me among you, saith God; but if you turn away from holiness, I will undoubtedly turn away from you: a holy God will keep company with none but those that are holy. Holiness is the bond that ties God and souls together. God will cleave close to them who in holiness cleave fast to him; but if he see uncleanness and wickedness among you, he will certainly turn away from you. The Holy Spirit gives the lie to those that say they have fellowship with God, and yet maintain familiarity and fellowship with sin: 1Jn 1:6, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie.' The apostle dares give the lie to any man, without fearing the stab, who pretends to communion with God, and yet walks in darkness. Men may be much in ordinances, and yet, for want of holiness, may have no communion at all with God in ordinances, Isa 1:11-18; and though communion with God in ordinances is the very life and soul of ordinances, yet multitudes who enjoy ordinances can content and satisfy themselves without that which is the very life, soul, and quintessence of ordinances. There are many that cry out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' who have no communion with the Lord of the temple at all, Jer 7:4-12. Though unholy persons may trade much in ordinances, yet they will never make any earnings, any advantage by all their trading and stir, because they cannot reach to communion with God in them, which is the only means of being enriched by them, Isa 29:13; Eze 24:21-22, and Eze 33:30-32. As many men rise early and go to bed late, and make a great deal of stir and do to be rich in the world, and yet, for want of a stock, nothing comes on it; they are poor still, and beggarly still, and low and mean in the world still: so many rise early, and go late to ordinances, they exercise themselves much in religious duties, and yet nothing comes on it; their souls are poor and beggarly and threadbare still. And no wonder, for they want a stock of holiness to trade with. Remigius, a judge of Lorraine, saith that the devil in those parts did use to give money to witches which at first did appear to be good and current coin, but after a while it turned to dry leaves. Ah, sirs, all duties and ordinances to a man that wants holiness, will be found at last to be but as dry leaves, to be sapless and lifeless, and heartless and comfortless to him. Now if without holiness no man can have any spiritual communion or fellowship with God here, then certainly without holiness no man can have a glorious communion with God hereafter: if without holiness God will not take us into his arms on earth, then undoubtedly without holiness God will never put us into his bosom in heaven. But to proceed.

6. Unholy persons are fools; and what should such do in the presence of God, who is wisdom itself? The fool and the ungodly man are synonymous words, signifying the same thing, in Scripture: Psa 14:1, 'The fool' (i. e., the wicked, the unholy person) 'hath said in his heart, There is

no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good;' Jer 4:22, 'For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge;' Pro 1:7, 'Fools despise wisdom and instruction;' that is, wicked and ungodly men despise wisdom and instruction. And to shew that the world is full of such fools, he uses the word in the plural no less than sixteen times in this book of the Proverbs. I shall open this truth a little more to you, by proving that they have all the characteristical notes and properties of fools; so that one face is not more like another than a fool is like a wicked man, or than a wicked man is like a fool; for,

(1.) First, A fool prefers toys and trifles before things of greatest worth, Pro 1:29. He prefers a brass counter before a piece of gold, a fine baby before a rich inheritance, an apple that pleaseth the eye before a pearl of greatest price; so wicked and ungodly men, they prefer their lusts before the Lord: Isa 65:12, 'Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.' Upon choice, they preferred the honours, the riches, the bravery, and glory of the world, above their own souls and the great concernments of another world. Such fools were Laban and Nabal, in the Old Testament, (whose names by inversion of letters are the same, and the latter signifies a fool,) and such were the two rich fools in the New Testament, Luk 12:16-22, and Luk 16:19-31. I have read of the foolish people of the East Indies, in the isle Ceylon, who preferred a consecrated ape's tooth above an incredible mass of treasure. Such fools are all unholy persons, who prefer the toys, the trifles of this world before the pleasures and treasures that be at God's right hand, Psa 16:11, and Mat 6:19-20. The world is full of such fools. Si ad mores hominum respicias, mundum universum stultorum domum judicabis, saith one: If thou beholdest the manners of men, thou wilt judge the whole world to be a house of fools. Ah, friends! what folly to that of men's spending their time, their strength, their lives, their souls in getting the great things of this world, and neglecting that one thing necessary, the salvation of their souls! Mat 16:26. Oh, what vanity is it to prefer a smoke of honour, a blast of fame, a dream of pleasure, a wedge of gold, a Babylonish garment, and such like transitory trifles and trash, before a blessed eternity!

(2.) Secondly, Fools make no improvement of advantages and opportunities that are put into their hands: Pro 17:16, 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?' It is to no purpose to put a price into the hand, if folly be bound up in the heart. If a man had as much wealth as would buy all the grace, all the peace, all the comforts, and all the wisdom in the world; yet if he hath neither wit nor will to make an improvement of his wealth, what good would his wealth do him? To what purpose is the market open, and good pennyworths put into the buyer's hands, if the buyer hath neither wisdom nor heart to buy? Unholy persons are such spiritual fools: though they have a price, an opportunity put into their hands, which if improved might make them for ever; yet they have no heart to make an improvement of the means and advantages that might do them good to all eternity.² Ah, what opportunities have unsanctified persons to get changed hearts, renewed natures, purged consciences, reformed lives, to get an interest in Christ, to obtain the favour of God, to procure pardon of sin, to make provision for their immortal souls! But they have no hearts to improve these opportunities, and so by neglecting of them they cut the throat of their own souls. And this will be the worm that will lie gnawing of them to all eternity, that they have let slip the opportunities of grace, that they have trifled away the

seasons of mercy. Ah, sirs, there is no fool to that fool that hath an opportunity put into his hand to make himself for ever, and yet hath no heart to improve it. The hottest place in hell will be the portion of such fools, Mat 11:21-22. The little bee, so soon as flowers appear, goes abroad, views the gay diapery, and the diversity of the flowery fields, sucks the sweetest of them, freights her thighs, makes a curious comb, and so betimes hoards up honey in summer against winter. And so the little busy ant in summer provides food for winter, Pro 6:6-8; the stork, the crane, and the swallow know their seasons and opportunities, Jer 8:7. All these poor little creatures are not so much below man in nature, as they are above sinful man in worth, wisdom, and work. These improve their summer seasons, their harvest hours; and yet such spiritual fools are wicked men, that they let slip such seasons of grace and mercy, that cannot be redeemed with ten thousand worlds. Ah, how is man fallen from his primitive nobility and glory, that these little busy creatures are propounded as a pattern of diligence and wisdom unto him! The ancients painted Opportunity with a hairy forehead, but bald behind, to signify that while a man hath it before him, he may lay hold on it, but if he lets it slip away, he cannot pull it back again. There is a great truth in what the Rabbi hath long since said, *Nemo est cui non sit hora sua*: Every man hath his hour, and he who overslips his season may never meet with the like again. There are many thousand spiritual fools in hell, that find this true by experience, and therefore now they bewail their folly, but all too late, all too late.

(3.) Thirdly, Natural fools are very inconstant; they are never long in one mind: now they are for this, and anon for that; now in this mind, and anon in that, Sir 22:11-15. Their minds are more changeable than the moon; they turn oftener than the weathercock, they are only constant in inconstancy: and such spiritual fools are all unholy persons. For now they are for a righteous cause, and anon they are against it: now they are for God, and anon they are against him: now they are for Christ, and by and by they are against him: now they cry out 'Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest,' Mat 21:9, Mat 21:15; but did they hold in this mind long? No, their mind is presently changed, and they cry out, 'Crucify him, crucify him,' Luk 23:21. Now they are for the saints, and anon they are against them: they cry up the gospel, and presently they make opposition against the gospel; like the kingdom of Congo, who at first kindly embraced the gospel, but as soon as they found it restrain their lusts and carnal liberties, they made fierce opposition against the gospel. This week they are for ordinances, and the next they are against ordinances: this hour they will forsake their sins, and the next hour they will return to their sins as the 'dog to his vomit, and as the sow to her wallowing in the mire,' 2Pe 2:20-22. Now they are for this way, and anon for that: now they are for this opinion, and anon for that: now they are for this religion, and to-morrow they are for another religion, 2Ki 17:33; like Baldwin a French lawyer, of whom it is said [by Beza] that he had *religionem ephemeram*, every day a new religion, but constant to none. This moment you shall hear them bless, and the next moment you shall hear them curse: Jas 3:9-10, 'Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing.' Louis the Second would swear, and then kiss his crucifix, and then swear again more confidently, and kiss his crucifix again more devoutly. Now because this age is full of such swearing fools, and happily this Treatise may fall into some of their hands, give me leave to say, that it is observable that the word in the Hebrew which the Scripture useth for swearing, is always used in the passive voice, ■■■■, *nashabange*, to note, say some, that a man should not swear but when an oath is laid upon him, and he driven to it. The word also hath a signification of seven, ■■■■, as having reference, say some, to the seven spirits of God before the throne, before whom we swear, and therefore should never swear but in 'truth,

righteousness, and judgment,' Jer 4:2; Rev 1:4, and Rev 5:6. One day you shall have these spiritual fools, these profane fools, crying out, Oh heaven, heaven, heaven! Oh that we may go to heaven! and the next day you shall see them live as if there were neither heaven nor hell: one day with Balaam you shall have them wish, Oh that we might die the death of the righteous! and the next day with Saul you shall have them a-persecuting of the righteous to death: one day you shall have them cry out, 'What shall we do to be saved?' and the next day you shall see them live as if they were resolved to be damned. Thus these spiritual fools, like natural fools, are always fickle and inconstant.

(4.) Fourthly, Fools delight to sport and play with such things as are most hurtful, pernicious, and dangerous to them, as you all know that have observed anything of natural fools: Pro 10:23, 'It is a sport to a fool to do mischief.' Fools take as great delight and pleasure in doing mischief, as wise men do in their lawful sports or pastimes. Wisdom is not more a joy and delight to a man of understanding, than mischief and wickedness is a sport or recreation to a fool. It is a great contentment and merriment to a fool to do wickedly: Pro 14:9, 'Fools make a mock of sin,' they make a jeer of that which they should fear more than hell itself; they make that matter of sport which may prove matter of damnation to them; they make a Maygame, a pastime of that which may make them miserable to all eternity; they make a mock and flout of that on earth for which the devil will mock and flout them for ever in hell. Justice will at last turn over such fools to Satan, who will be sure to return mock for mock, jeer for jeer, and flout for flout. They that love such kind of pastime shall have enough of it in hell. Now all unholy persons are such spiritual fools, as that they delight and take pleasure in sin, which is the most pernicious and dangerous thing in the world: Psa 62:4, 'They delight in lies,' Pro 1:22. Though every lie deserves a stab from God, yet spiritual fools make but a sport of them. Such a one was Thespis the poet, who being reprov'd by Solon for lying, answered him that it was not material, seeing it was but in sport: upon which Solon, beating the ground with his staff, replied, If we commend lying in sport, we shall find it afterwards in good earnest in all our bargains and dealings. It is said of Epaminondas, a heathen, that he abhorred mendacium jocosum, a jesting lie; this heathen in the great day will put such liars to the blush who delight in lies: Isa 66:3, 'Their soul delighteth in their abomination;' 2Th 2:12, 'They take pleasure in unrighteousness;' 2Pe 2:13, 'They count it pleasure to riot in the daytime, sporting themselves with their own deceivings.' Not that there is any real delight in intemperance; for if there were, then Heliogabalus, an exceeding intemperate person, should have been more happy than Adam in paradise. Apicius was the greatest glutton that ever was; at length he hanged himself: such shall hang in hell at last, who delight to abuse many at once; the creatures, their Creator, and their own souls and bodies. Well, sirs, sin is the poison of the soul, the nakedness of the soul, the disease of the soul, the burden of the soul, and if mercy do not prevent, will prove the bane of the soul. Oh, then, how great is their folly that delight in it, and that make a sport of it!

[5.] Fifthly, Natural fools are taken more with the outward shine, lustre, beauty, and glory of things, than they are taken with the intrinsecal virtue, value, and worth of them; they are more taken with the shine and lustre of gold, jewels, and precious stones, than they are with the worth and value of them. So unholy hearts are taken more with the form of godliness than they are with the power, 2Ti 3:5; they are taken more with a name to live, with a name of being holy, than they are taken with holiness itself, Rev 3:1-2. Multi Christianum nomen ad judicium habent, non ad remedium [Augustine]: Many have the name of Christians to their condemnation, not to their salvation, Isa

58:2-6; Mat 1:21; Zec 7:4-7; Mat 23:1-39. They are taken more with the outward shine and pomp of duties, than they are taken with the spiritualness and holiness of duties; they are taken more with what of man is in duty, than they are taken with that of God which is in a duty; they are taken more with raised notions, than they are taken with raised affections; they are taken more with some witty, rhetorical expressions in duty, than they are taken with the holy movings and breathings of the spirit in duty, Eze 33:30-32. All which speaks them out to be spiritual fools; and indeed no fools to those who are taken more with the shadow of religion than they are with the substance of religion; who are taken more with the outside of godliness than they are with the inside of godliness: for what is this but to be taken more with the outside of the cabinet, than with the treasure that is within? or to be taken more with the purse that holds the gold, than with the gold that is in the purse? and with Democritus the philosopher, to esteem a room covered over with green branches of trees above the royal palace?

(6.) Sixthly, Natural fools are all for the present; they cry out, Spend and God will lend; they only mind and care for the things of this life: as what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and what they shall put on. They are all for their bodies, their bellies, their backs: they take no care, they make no provision for their immortal souls. A spruce Roman riding on a lean jade, was asked by the censor his reason: he answered, I look to myself, but my man to my horse. So fools look only to their bodies; let who list look to their souls. Such fools are all unsanctified persons; they look only after their bodies, and their outward concernments; they look not at the necessities, miseries, and wants of their souls. Such were those in John 6:26-27, who crossed the seas and followed after Christ for loaves, but never looked after the meat which endureth to everlasting life. And such fools were those in Hos 7:14, 'who howled upon their beds for corn and wine:' let them have but provender, provant for their bodies, and they care not what becomes of their souls; and such were they in Php 3:19, 'whose god was their gut.' And such were the Laodiceans in Rev 3:14-19, who had well-fed bodies, but starved souls; whose houses were full of goods, but their hearts empty and void of Christ and grace; who had threadbare souls under all their purple robes; who were rich in temporals, but very poor and beggarly in spirituals. And such a one was that rich fool in Luk 12:1-59, who only laid up for his body for this life, but never took care for another life, for a better life; he makes many years' provision for his body, and not a day's provision for his soul; he talks of living many years, when he had not a day nor a night to live in this world. And being thus foolish in his reckoning, Christ brands him for a fool to all generations: Luk 12:20-21, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?' So is he that heapeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. Every man in the world is a fool that heaps up treasure to himself, that adds land to land, and house to house, and heap to heap, and bags to bags, and hundreds to hundreds, and thousands to thousands, and is not rich towards God. This age is full of such golden fools, who pamper their bodies, but starve their souls: who trick and trim up their bodies with gold, silver, and silks, whilst their souls are naked, and ragged, and destitute of all grace and goodness. The Jews have a story of a foolish woman that took two children to nurse, the one very mean, deformed, crooked, blind, and not likely to live long; the other a goodly, lively, lovely, beautiful child, and likely to live long: now this foolish woman spent all her pains, care, diligence, and attendance upon the worst child, never so much as minding or regarding the best child. This age is full of such foolish men and women, who, having two to nurse, their bodies and their souls, spend their time, their care, labour, and pains in making provision for the flesh, in laying up for their bodies, and in the meanwhile never regard their souls,

never look after their souls, though they have the beauty of a deity upon them, and though they are immortal, and capable of union and communion with God in grace, and of a blessed fruition of God in glory. Surely no fools to these fools.

[7.] Seventhly, The sharpest and severest course you can take, cannot separate between a fool and his folly. Notwithstanding all your frowns, threats, checks, knocks, &c., a fool will not leave his folly; nay, you shall sooner beat a fool to death than you shall beat him off from his folly: Pro 27:22, 'Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.' The husk doth not stick so close to the grain of corn, as folly doth to the heart of a fool. There is a possibility of severing the husk from the flour by beating, but there is no possibility of severing a fool from his folly. You see it in Pharaoh, who, though he was often in God's mortar, yet he could not be severed from his folly; nay, he did choose rather to be beaten to death, and to see his friends, relations, favourites, followers, subjects, and soldiers, with their first-born, beaten to death before his eyes, rather than he would leave his folly. And such a fool was king Ahaz, who, when God had him in the mortar, and threatened to beat him and his people to death, yet then in his distress he sinned more against the Lord, 2Ch 28:22, and therefore for his obstinacy, obdurateness, and irreclaimableness, he is branded and marked with a black coal by the Lord to all posterity, 'This is that king Ahaz.' And such spiritual fools are all ungodly persons; let God frown, chide, strike, reprove, correct, yet they will not turn from the evil of their doings: they will rather be consumed and destroyed, than they will be amended or reformed: Jer 5:3, 'O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.' No smart nor grief, no calamities nor miseries, can turn obstinate fools from their impieties: Jer 6:29, 'The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain' (or in vain melting melteth he, trying trieth he): 'for the wicked are not plucked away.' All the cost and charge that God hath been at, all the pains and labour that he hath taken to sever these wicked ones from their wickedness was lost; they would not be refined nor reformed. After God's greatest severity, a spiritual fool will return to his iniquity: Pro 26:11, 'As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly,' or iterateth his folly. It is true, the comparison is homely, but good enough for those fools to whom it is applied. Spiritual fools sometimes vomit up their sins when they are under terrors of conscience, or under the afflicting hand of God, or upon a dying bed; but still retain a disposition and purpose to return to them again: as some say, the serpent vomits up his poison when he goes to drink, and then takes it in again. Foolish souls say to their lusts, as Abraham to his servants, Gen 22:5, 'Abide you here, and I will go yonder and come again to you.' Whatever becomes of their souls, they are resolved to keep close to their sins, Isa 1:5. And as Æsop's foolish fishes leaped out of the warm water into the burning fire for ease; so these poor fools will rather adventure a burning in hell, than they will attempt a turning from their folly.

[8.] Eighthly, Natural fools make the simplest and unhappiest exchanges: they will exchange a pearl for a pippin, things of greatest worth and value for a feather, a ribbon, a toy, a trifle; a house to live in, for a house of clay or a house of cards; and, like Glaucus, a foolish captain, who changed with Diomedes his armour of gold for Diomedes his armour of brass. All unholy persons are spiritual fools; they will exchange spirituals for carnals, and eternal for temporals; they will exchange God, Christ, the gospel, heaven, and their souls for a lust, for the world, nay, for a little

of the world's smiles, pleasures, or, profits, Mat 16:26; and well may he lay claim to a boatswain's place in Barclay's 'Ship of Fools,' that will exchange his soul and his soul concerns for the toys and trifles of this world.

Now do you think that God, who hath within himself all the wisdom of angels, of men, and universal nature—that he who hath all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all comforts, all delights, all joys, all beatitudes in himself—that that God who is a super-substantial substance, and understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken, that he will have everlasting fellowship and communion with fools?—that a God whose wisdom is infinite and unsearchable, will ever debase himself so as to have his royal palace filled with fools, as to make those his companions in heaven, that he can take no pleasure in on earth? Ecc 5:4, 'He hath no pleasure in fools.' The wise God would not have his children keep company with fools: Pro 14:7, 'Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge;' and will he keep company with them himself? Surely no. God hath given it under his own hand, that such shall not tarry in his sight: Psa 5:5, 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight' [or, as the Hebrew hath it, before thine eyes]: 'thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' God will never admit fools to be his favourites: he will at last shut the door of glory against them, Mat 25:4-13.

7. A seventh argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven, is this, Unholy persons are to be excluded and shut out from sacred, from special communion and fellowship with the saints in this world; and therefore, without all peradventure, they shall never be admitted to everlasting communion and fellowship with God, Christ, angels, and saints in that other world. That they are to be shut out from having any special communion with the saints here, is most plain and evident from several scriptures. Take these for a taste: Lev 10:10, 'And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;' Eze 44:23, 'And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.' And because the priests did not improve their power and interest to preserve the things of God from profaning and polluting, the Lord was very much offended and provoked: Eze 22:26, 'Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.' And in Eze 44:7-8, God sadly complains that they 'brought into his sanctuary strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh;' and prohibits such from entering into his sanctuary, Eze 44:9, 'Thus saith the Lord God, No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel.' God expects that faithful teachers should put a difference between person and person, between the holy and profane, between the clean and the unclean, in all holy administrations: Jer 15:19, 'Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou take forth the precious from the vile, then thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.' Now certainly if under the ceremonial law natural uncleanness did exclude and shut out the Israelites from a participation in holy things, then certainly moral uncleanness may justly exclude and shut out Christians from a participation in holy things under the gospel: Mat 7:6, 'Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.' Holy things are too precious to be spent and spilt upon swinish

sinners. Gospel administrations are precious pearls, that must not be given to swine. 2Co 6:17, 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.' Profane, scandalous, blind, and ignorant persons are very unclean things, and from them we must come out. As we would be in with God, we must be out with them: we must reject them as we would have God to receive us: 2Ti 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.' Our Saviour Christ hied him to the wilderness amongst the beasts, and carried his disciples with him, holding their fellowship to be less hurtful and dangerous. It is better to live among beasts, than to live among men of beastly principles and beastly practices. Now there are ten sorts of persons that Christians must turn from, that they must have no intimate, no special communion with in this world.

(1.) First, Unbelievers, 2Co 6:14-16. We should not close with them that have not closed with Christ; nor give ourselves up to them who have not given up themselves to Christ. Every unbeliever is a condemned person: the law hath cast him, the gospel hath cast him, and his own conscience hath cast him; and what sacred communion, what delightful fellowship can believers have with condemned persons? John 3:18, John 3:36. Every unbeliever is under the wrath of the great God; he is under that wrath that he can neither avoid nor abide; and what communion can such have who are under love, with those that are under wrath? Every unbeliever makes God a liar, 1Jn 5:10; and what children will have communion with such who every day give their father the lie to his very face? Every unbeliever doth practically say, Tush! there is no such loveliness or comeliness, there is no such beauty or glory, there is no such fulness or sweetness, there is no such goodness or graciousness in Jesus as men would make us believe; and what is this, but to give God the lie? Tush! there is no such favour, there is no such peace, there is no such pardon, there is no such righteousness, there is no such grace, there is no such glory to be reaped by Christ as God and men would persuade us; and what is this, but to tell God he lies to his very teeth? And what ingenuous child can take pleasure in such who are still a-spitting in his father's face? Every unbeliever is a disobedient person, and therefore unbelievers and disobedient are in the Greek expressed by one word; and what communion can obedient children have with those that are disobedient and rebellious? Every unbeliever is a pagan, a heathen, in the Scripture dialect; and what communion can those who are of the household of faith have with pagans and heathens? Every unbeliever is a traitor; he commits treason daily against the crown and dignity of heaven: and what loyal subjects will hold communion with traitors? Unbelievers are the greatest robbers; they rob God of his declarative glory, though they cannot rob him of his essential glory; they rob him of the glory of his truth and faithfulness; as if he would falsify the word that is gone out of his mouth: as if he were yea and nay; and as if his credit was so low and contemptible, that he must needs run a hazard that shall trust to him, or roll himself upon him. They rob him of the glory of his goodness and mercy, as if there were any sins too great for him to pardon, or any mercy too great for him to give, or any wrath too great for him to divert, or any debt too great for him to satisfy. They rob him of the glory of his omnipotency and all-sufficiency, as if there were something too hard for a God. Now what communion can the people of God have with robbers, with the greatest robbers, with the worst of robbers? and yet such are all unbelievers. And therefore let no unbelievers mutter or murmur when the door of admission is shut against them. But, (2.) Secondly, Such as have a form, a picture, a mask, a vizard of godliness, but deny the power, 2Ti 3:5.

(3.) Thirdly, Such as walk disorderly, that live either without a calling, or idly and negligently in their calling; these make religion odious, by making religion a mask for their idleness and laziness: 2Th 3:6, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.' Now, who they are that walk disorderly you may see in 2Th 3:11, 'For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.' Such vagrant professors that live idly, that will have an oar in every man's boat, a sickle in every man's harvest, a curious eye upon every man's way and work, are to be shut out of the communion of Christians, and to be shunned as a man would shun a serpent, an ill air, a contagious disease, or as the seaman shuns rocks, and sands, and shelves. It was a great vanity in Dionysius, that would needs be the best poet; and in Caligula, that would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, that would needs be the best fiddler; and so became the three worst princes, minding more other men's business than their own callings; so it is a very great vanity in many professors to mind more other men's business than their own; from the society of such saints must withdraw. No man is too noble to have a calling. If iron had reason, it would choose rather to be used in labour than to grow rusty in a corner. By Mahomet's law the Grand Turk himself was to be of some trade. The hour of idleness is the hour of temptation; an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure. God ordained the neck of the consecrated ass should be broken—Exo 13:13—instead of sacrificing him; peradventure because that creature hath ever been the hieroglyphic of sloth and laziness. Among the Egyptians idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans, he that lent money to an idle person was to lose it, saith Diphilus. Among the Corinthians idle persons were delivered to the carnifex. By Solon's law idle persons were to suffer death. The ancients call idleness the burial of a living man. And Seneca had rather be sick than idle. Now shall nature do more than grace? Shall poor blind heathens be so severe against idle persons, and shall Christians embrace them? Shall they not rather turn their backs upon them, and have no communion with them who think themselves too great or too good to hold the plough?

(4.) Fourthly, Such whose judgments are corrupt and unsound in foundation-truths: Tit 3:10, 'A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.' 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' and what leaven is more infectious than that of heresy and error? 2Jn 1:9-10, 'Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.' You must have nothing to do with them who have nothing to do with God, 1Jn 2:22-25; Col 2:18-19: your house must be too hot to hold him who holds not fast to foundation-truths, who holds not close to Christ the head. Eusebius reports of John the Evangelist, that he would not suffer Cerinthus the heretic in the same bath with him, lest some judgment should abide them both. He that had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean, Lev 13:44. The breath of the erroneous is more dangerous and infectious than the breath of lepers: for one infects but the body, but the other infects the soul, and therefore ought more carefully to be avoided. An erroneous mind is as odious to God as a vicious life; and why should it not be so to us also? Certainly we should shun the society of erroneous persons as we should shun a serpent in the way, or poison in our meat: 1Ti 6:5, 'Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself:' or, as the Greek word ἐκστασθε signifies, stand off, keep at a distance, as you would from one that hath an infectious disease, or as seamen stand

off from rocks or from a leeshore. It is recorded by Theodoret, that when Lucius, an Arian bishop, came and preached amongst the Antiochians his erroneous doctrines, the people went out of the congregation, and would not so much as lend an ear to him. In these days there are many old errors new vampt, and old Jezebels, old harlots, new painted. The best way is not to lend an ear to them, but to serve them as they served Jezebel: they gave her no quarter, but cast her down and trode her under foot, 2Ki 9:10, 2Ki 9:30-37. Errors about the foundation are like the Jerusalem artichokes, which overrun all the ground where they are planted, and choke the very heart of it; and therefore to be abhorred, avoided, and shunned, as a man would shun hell itself. Who but a fool or madman would exchange one old piece of gold for a hundred new counters? and what then shall we think of those who willingly and readily exchange old tried truths for new-minted errors? The society of such must be shunned.

(5.) Fifthly, Such as cause divisions and discord among the people of God: Rom 16:17, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.' 'Mark them;' the Greek word σκοπεῖν signifies such a marking as a watchman useth, that stands on a watchtower to descry an approaching enemy. Ah! with what a wary, with what a watchful, with what a curious, with what a jealous, with what a serious, with what a diligent eye doth the watchman watch all the motions, turnings, and windings of the approaching enemy! With such an eye we should mark them that cause divisions. 'And avoid them;' the Greek word ἐκκλινάτε signifies a studious, careful declining of them. A man must decline and shun them as he would decline and shun such persons or things that are most pernicious, dangerous, or infectious to him. Divisions are a dishonour to Christ, a reproach to Christians, a blot upon profession, a block in the way of the weak, and a sword in the hand of the wicked; they are Satan's engines, and an inlet to all destruction and confusion. And therefore the authors of them are to be shunned and avoided.

(6.) Sixthly, Such Christians as are scandalous and profane in their lives and conversations: 1Co 5:11, 'But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such a one no not to eat:' with such a brother who belies his profession, with such a brother whose course and conversation contradicts his profession, we must not hold Christian communion. Certainly I may not have fellowship with him at the Lord's table, whom I may not have fellowship with at my own table: Eph 5:11, 'Have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;' Acts 2:40, 'Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' Wicked company is very dangerous and infectious: 1Co 15:33, 'Evil communication corrupts good manners.' As he that walketh in the sun will be tanned, and he that toucheth pitch will be defiled; so he that associateth himself with the wicked will be tainted and polluted. Guilt or grief is all you shall gain by bad company, 2Pe 2:7-8—witness Lot, David, Joseph, and Peter. By bad company Christians come to lose much of the sweetness, seriousness, goodness, and graciousness of their spirits. Gold, though the noblest metal, loseth of its lustre by being continually worn in the same purse with silver. Familiarity with vain persons hath much worn off the spiritual lustre, beauty, and glory that hath been upon many Christians. Bad company will prove a very great hindrance to you in your Christian course: Psa 119:115, 'Away from me, ye wicked, for I will keep the commandments of my God.' I cannot keep my God's commands whilst I keep your company; I shall never do my duty till I abandon your society. Divine commands will never lie close and warm upon my heart, so long

as I give you my hand. How hard is it to keep the commandment of labour among the slothful, or the commandment of diligence among the negligent, or that of liberality among the covetous, or that of humility among the ambitious, or that of love among the malicious, or that of union among the contentious, or that of chastity among the lascivious, or that of righteousness among the unrighteous, or that of faithfulness among the unfaithful, or that of fruitfulness amongst the unfruitful, or that of thankfulness among the unthankful, or that of faith among the doubtful, &c. But,

(7.) Seventhly, A seventh sort of persons that Christians must have no intimate, no special communion with, is false prophets, false teachers. They are not to give such any house-room, 2Jn 1:10-11, nor heart-room, Mat 24:23-24, Mat 23:26. They are to shun them and avoid them, Rom 16:17. It is not safe for a Christian to hear them, or to have any communion or fellowship with them. Aristotle writeth of a certain bird called Capri-mulgus, a goat-sucker, which useth to come flying on the goats, and suck them, and upon that their milk drieth up, and they grow blind. Ah, how many a seeing man hath been made blind, and how many hopeful thriving Christians have had all their springs of love, of life, of sweetness and goodness dried up in them, by the sleights, deceits, and insinuations of false teachers! False prophets have their peithanology—their good words, and fair speeches, and subtle devices, whereby they blind many souls, and dry up all the spiritual milk and moisture that is in them, and therefore they are to be shunned and avoided. But,

(8.) Eighthly, You must have no intimate, no special communion with such as are obstinate and refractory, and that will not submit to Christ's rules and laws: 2Th 3:14, 'And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed,' or, that he may turn into himself, as it is in the original. Such as are refractory must be noted with a brand of infamy; such must be infamous in your eye, who look with an eye of contumacy upon any command or institution of Christ. The Greek word, σημειοσθε, signifies to note him so as to make a sign, as it were, of him; or to mark him so as to put him to the blush, to put him to shame. The obstinate, the refractory person should be a marked person, you must set a cross upon him, that all may know him and shun him; the assemblies of the saints are honourable, and refractory Christians are to be shut out of them: Mat 18:15-17, 'Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, [if he be refractory,] then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.' He that shall be refractory under private and public admonition, is to be shut out from church communion; he that to small faults shall add contumacy, is to be cut off from the saints' society. We must turn our backs upon him that turns his back upon the church. As we would keep ourselves untainted, as we would preserve the church from being infected, as we would not have the name of God blasphemed, and as we would have the refractory Christian ashamed and humbled, we must neither have sacred nor civil society with him.

(9.) A ninth sort of persons that Christians must have no intimate, no sacred, no special communion with, are fools: Pro 9:6, 'Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding;' Pro 14:7, 'Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge;' Pro 23:9, 'Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.' There is no profit, no pleasure, no delight to be had in the society of fools. Fools are

neither capable of doing good nor of receiving good; and therefore what should good souls do among such? A fool hath neither an ear to hear, nor an eye to see, nor a heart to understand, nor a memory to retain, nor a will to choose, nor affections to embrace, any thing that is good. And therefore their company is to be shunned and avoided. The society of fools is as dangerous as it is vexatious: Pro 13:20, 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' The Hebrew word, ■■■■, that is here used, signifies to be broken; yea, to be broken as sometimes an army is broken by some fierce and sudden surprisal; a companion of fools shall be broken in his credit, in his estate, in his name, in his reputation; yea, in his very wits, for nothing contributes so much to make a man a fool as the company of fools.

(10.) The tenth and last sort of persons that Christians must have no familiarity nor society with, are scorers. Such as scorn the saints, and scorn religion, and scorn profession; such who scorn every way of Christ, and every institution of Christ: Pro 9:8, 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.' Wise and gracious reproofs are pearls, that are not to be cast before scorers. Now certainly, if I may not reprove scorers, then I may not keep company with scorers: Pro 22:10, 'Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.' The scorner must be cast out of your family and out of your company. Strife and contention, shame and reproach, are the scorner's attendants; and therefore he that would be rid of them must cast out him. The Hebrew word, ■■■, here translated 'cast out,' signifies not simply to eject or cast out; but to cast out or drive out, as God did drive Adam out of paradise, Gen 3:24, for the word is the same; and this God did, as the Rabbins observe, with violence and displeasure. So must the scorner be cast out, or drove out. Look, as God did drive out the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite before his people, Exo 34:11; so must the scorner be driven out of the society of the saints; for the Hebrew word is the same in both places. Look, as Sarah would have Abraham to cast out the bond-woman and her son, Gen 21:10; so must the scorner be cast out of the company of the saints; the word is still the same. Look, as the sea casteth up mire and dirt, Isa 57:20; so should Christians cast out scorers from among them; the word being still the same. The scorner construes everything to the worst; he envies those that excel him; he disdains those that are below him; he is never contented, never satisfied, he is still a-quarrelling, still a-fretting, and still a-perplexing of himself and others; and therefore you must cast him out with scoffing Ishmael, or the house will be too hot to hold you. Cast out the firebrand, and the fire goes out; cast out Jonah, and the storm shall cease; cast out the bond-woman and her scornful son, and all will be quiet. David's blessed man is described by this, Psa 1:1, that he 'sits not in the seat of the scornful.' Scorers are no companions for blessed men. Of all men the blessed man will never choose the scorner for his pew-fellow. God himself scorers the scorner: Pro 3:34, 'Surely he scorneth the scorner,' &c. Of all men in the world God casts the greatest contempt and scorn upon scorers, and therefore why should we make such our bosom-associates? And thus you see the several sorts of persons that God hath shut out from the communion of his people. Well, Christians, remember this, dead stones must not be laid in a living temple. No stones but hewn stones were to be brought and laid in the building of Solomon's temple, which was a type of the church of Christ in gospel-days. Certainly such stones, such souls, as are not hewn by the word and Spirit, are not fit to be laid in Christ's building. In Josiah's days, when the passover was kept, there were porters at every gate of Jerusalem, that no unclean or uncircumcised ones might enter, 2Ch 35:1-27. And the 'English Annotations' on Rev 21:27, do say, that in the last church on earth, discipline in likelihood shall be so strictly executed that no

profane person shall be found there, only elect persons, so far as men can judge. That vain persons are to be shut out from sacred communion with the people of God, is further evident by the judgment of many approved authors. As,

Chrysostom saith that 'the table of the Lord is that whereon the carcase is laid, and that we must not suffer chattering jays to come thereunto; for only high-flying eagles are to feed thereupon.' Thereupon the same author protested 'that he had rather give his life to a murderer, than Christ's body to an unworthy receiver, and rather suffer his own blood to be poured out like water, than to tender Christ's blessed blood to a base liver.' And again, 'Church-officers,' saith he, 'are to keep the sacrament pure, as a man would keep a pleasant spring clean whereat he useth to drink, not letting the feet of filthy beasts and swine to puddle it.' The same author further saith that in the primitive times, whenever the sacrament was administered, a deacon stood up, and cried in the open assembly, 'Holy things to holy men, holy things to holy men,' thereby debarring all others that were unholy, and raising the hearts of the holy.

Justin Martyr, who was about the year after Christ 150—he lived not above thirty years after St John—he, in his Apology to Antoninus the Emperor for Christians, writes thus: 'In our assemblies we admit none to the Lord's supper but such as being baptized continue in professing the true faith, and in leading such lives as Christ hath taught.' There were three things, saith this author, that were required of them that were to be received to the sacrament: '1. A new birth; 2. Soundness in faith; 3. A promise to live well.'

Augustine well observes, 'That as many think the eating of an apple was but a small sin, so many think that the eating of the sacrament is but a small sin. But as many horrid sins were wrapt up in that, so are there many wrapt up in this: 1. Here is pride; else no man in his wickedness would presume to come to the Lord's table. 2. Here is rebellion and treason against the crown and dignity of Christ; their hands and lips adore him, as Judas his did, but their hearts and lives abhor him, Rom 2:22. 3. Here is theft and sacrilege; now if to take away the communion-cup be such a high offence, such horrid sacrilege, what is it then to take the bread and wine, set apart and sanctified for a holy use by the Lord himself? 1Co 11:27, 1Co 11:29. 4. Here is murder, the worst murder, the greatest murder, the cruellest murder; thou killest thyself, thy soul, and as much as in thee lies, God's dearest Son. Now certainly, in some respects, this sin is a greater sin than Adam's was: For, 1. Adam's eating was against a Creator, but thine is against a Redeemer: now it is more to redeem a soul than to create a world. 2. His was against the word of the Lord; thine against the blood of the Lord. 3. His struck at the covenant of works; thine at the covenant of grace. 4. He ate but once; but thou eatest often.'

'Yea,' Aquinas saith, 'the majesty of church discipline should never suffer this, to let open and known offenders presume to come to the table of the Lord.'

It was a worthy saying of Bilson, an approved author, 'Suppose any man,' saith he, 'be he a prince, if he will not submit himself to the precepts of Christ, but wilfully maintain either heresy or open impurity, the ministers are to admonish him what danger from God is at the door; and if he impenitently persist, they must not suffer him to communicate either in divine prayer, or any holy mysteries among the people of God; but wholly to be excluded the congregation.' Again, 'Not only the lack of the word and sacraments,' saith the same author, 'but the abuse of either, greatly hazards the weal of the whole church; yea, casting holy things to dogs, &c., procures a dreadful

doom as well to consenters as presumers, it being the way to turn the house of God into a den of thieves, if profane ones be allowed to defile the mysteries and assemblies of the faithful.'

'I,' said Calvin, 'will sooner die than this hand of mine shall give the things of God to the contemnners of God.'

Mr Rutherford, that champion for presbytery, in his 'Divine Right of Church Government,' page 520, saith 'that they are copartners with the wicked who dispense the bread to them who are knowingly dead in sins.' I might multiply many others; but let these suffice. For a close, let me only say, How the father can be guiltless of the death of his child, that giveth him poison to drink, with this caution, that he telleth him it is poison, I cannot see. Josephus reports of some that profanely searched the sepulchres of the saints, supposing to find some treasures there, but God made fire to rise out of the earth, that devoured them on a sudden.³ Now if God's wrath like fire breaks forth to consume such as wrong but the sepulchres of his saints, &c., oh then with what flames of fury will God burn up such as abuse not only the sacrament of his Son, but his Son himself! It was a very great wickedness in Julian to throw his blood in the face of Christ; but for a wicked communicant to take Christ's own blood as it were running from his heart, and to throw it into the face of Christ, is most abominable and damnable. By all that hath been spoken, you clearly see that unholy persons are to be shut out of the special communion of saints here on earth; and therefore certainly the Lord will never suffer such to have communion with him in heaven. It will not stand with the holiness and purity of God to have fellowship with such in the kingdom of glory, whom he would not have his people have fellowship with in the kingdom of grace.

8. The eighth argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven, is this, The Scripture, that speaks no treason, styles unholy persons beasts, yea, the worst of beasts; and what should such do in heaven? Unholy persons are the most dangerous, and the most unruly pieces in the world, and therefore are emblemized by lions, Psa 22:21, and they are cruel; by bears, and they are savage, Isa 11:7; by dragons, and they are hideous, Eze 29:3; by wolves, and they are ravenous, Eze 22:27; by dogs, and they are snarling, Rev 22:15; by vipers and scorpions, and they are stinging, Mat 12:34, Eze 2:6; by spiders and cockatrices, and they are poisoning, Isa 59:5; by swine, and they are still grunting, Mat 7:6. No man in this world is more like another than the epicure is like a swine; the fraudulent person a fox; the lustful person a goat; the backbiter a barking cur; the slanderer an asp; the oppressor a wolf; the persecutor a tiger; the seducer a serpent. Certainly the Irish air will sooner brook toads and snakes and serpents to live therein, than heaven will brook such beasts as unholy souls are to live there. Surely God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and angels, and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' are not so in love with dogs and swine, &c., as to put them into their bosoms, or make them their companions. Heaven is a place of too great state to admit such vermin to inhabit there. When Cyneas,² the ambassador of Pyrrhus, after his return from Rome, was asked by his master what he thought of the city and state, he answered and said, that it seemed to him to be *republica regum*, a state of none but great statesmen, and a commonwealth of kings. Such is heaven; it is no other state than a parliament of emperors, a commonwealth of kings. There is not a soul in heaven under the degree of a king, Rev 1:6, and every king there hath a robe of honour upon his back, a golden sceptre in his hand, and a glorious crown upon his head. And do you think that it will stand with the state of heaven, or with the state of this commonwealth of kings, to admit such vermin as unholy persons are, to be of

that noble society? Surely no. God hath long since resolved upon it, that no unclean beasts shall enter into heaven, that no dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement. All in heaven are holy: the angels holy, the saints holy, the patriarchs holy, the prophets holy, the apostles holy, the martyrs holy, but the Lord himself above all is most glorious in holiness, and therefore all those holy ones do, as it were in a divine anthem, sing and say, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory,' Rev 4:8; Isa 6:3. Now certainly it would be a hell to these holy ones to have unholy wretches to be their companions. When the holy angels fell from their holiness, heaven was so holy that it spewed them out, as once Canaan did its unholy inhabitants, Lev 18:28; and therefore certainly there will be no room in heaven for such filthy beasts as unholy persons are. Well, remember this, that all those stinging expressions and appellations which disgrace and vilify unholy persons, they were inspired by a holy Spirit, and penned by holy secretaries, and enrolled in his holy word, and published by his holy messengers, and all by his holy appointment, who, as he is greater than the greatest, and wiser than the wisest, and better than the best, so he is too pure and too holy to eat the words that are gone out of his mouth, or to deny or unsay what he hath spoken, or not to maintain the truth thereof against all gainsayers. It is prophesied that when the church shall be restored to her purity and glory, such beasts shall not be there, Isa 35:9; Eze 28:24. The majesty of church discipline shall be such as shall keep out all such beasts. 'Jerusalem above' is too glorious a habitation for beasts, or for men of beastly spirits, or beastly principles, or beastly practices. The city of the great God was never built for beasts. A wilderness and not a paradise is fittest for beasts.

9. The ninth argument to prove the truth of the proposition is this, God would not have his holy ones in this world to be yoked in marriage with unholy ones; and therefore certainly he will never suffer such to be yoked to himself to all eternity. That God would not have his righteous people to be yoked in marriage with the unrighteous, is most evident by these scriptures: Deu 7:3, Deu 7:6, 'Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give to his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son: for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.' Ezr 9:12, 'Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons.' But did they keep this commandment of the Lord? No, as you may see in the second verse of that chapter, 'For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers have been chief in this trespass.' But how did this operate upon good Ezra? That you may see in the third verse, 'And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head, and of my beard, and sat down astonished.' Oh the sorrow, the grief, the perplexity, the holy passion, the indignation, the amazement, the astonishment that this abomination begot in the heart of good Ezra! The like effect this sin had upon the heart of good Nehemiah, as you may see in that remarkable text, Neh 13:23-25, compared with Neh 10:29-30. So in 2Co 6:14-15, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' It is an evil thing, a dangerous thing, to be yoked to any who have neither skill nor will to bear the yoke of Christ. Under the law an ox and an ass might not be yoked or coupled together, Deu 22:10—and to this the apostle alludes as some judge—God would not have righteous souls to be yoked in marriage with those that are unrighteous; a gracious soul were

better be married to a quartan ague than to an ungracious wife. 'A virtuous wife is a crown to her husband,' Pro 12:4; she is the life of life. If thou art a man of holiness, thou must look more for a portion of grace in a wife, than for a portion of gold with a wife; thou must look more after righteousness than riches; more after piety than money; more after what inheritance she hath in heaven, than what possessions she hath on earth; more at what interest she hath in Christ, than at what interest she hath in creatures; more at her being new-born, than at her being high-born; more at her being good, than at all her worldly goods, 1Co 7:39. If money makes the match, and she be good enough that hath but goods enough, thou shalt be sure to have hell enough with such a wife. In thy choice to err but once is to be undone for ever, at least as to the comforts and contentments of thy life; once blest or curst must be for ever so: men have not leave to choose or change often. By what hath been said, it is most evident that God would not have the holy seed to mingle or marry with the unholy. And do you think that a holy God will mingle and marry with such in heaven, that he would not have his people to mingle or marry with on earth? Surely no. Or do you think that that God, that would not in the law have an ox and an ass plough together, that he will be yoked to such wretches, may I say to such asses, whose ungodliness hath debased them below the very ox and ass? Isa 1:3. Surely no.

10. The tenth and last argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness, &c., is this; Unholy persons are adjudged, doomed and sentenced to another place, viz., to hell: Psa 9:17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' In the Hebrew there are two 'intos;' 'into,' 'into' hell, that is, the wicked shall be turned into the nethermost hell, into the lowest and darkest dungeon of hell: 'They shall be turned into hell,' that is, they shall be certainly turned into hell; they shall be vehemently, forcibly turned into hell: God will, as it were with both hands, thrust them into hell. The wicked shall from hell to judgment, and from judgment they shall be turned with a witness into hell. The Photinians² hold that there is no hell, and many now-a-days say there is no hell but what a man finds in his own conscience; and multitudes with Cæsar do think that all that is spoken of hell is false and fabulous. They will not believe that there is a hell, till they come to feel themselves in hell, till they find everlasting flames about their ears. They are sentenced to the fire, to everlasting fire, they are doomed to fire and brimstone: Mat 25:41, 'Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' This terrible sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe. The last words that ever Christ will speak in this world, will be the most tormenting, and amazing, the most killing and damning, the most stinging and wounding. 'Depart from me;' there is rejection: pack, begone! get you out of my sight! let me never see your faces more! It was a heavy doom that was passed upon Nebuchadnezzar, that he should be driven from the society of men, and in an extremity of a sottish melancholy spend his time amongst the beasts of the field, Dan 4:25; but that was nothing to this soul-killing word, 'Depart from me;' it was nothing to men's being cast out of the presence of Christ for ever; the remembrance of which made one to pray thus, 'O Lord, deliver me at the great day from that soul-killing word, depart.' And what saith another, 'This word "depart," the goats with horror hears. But this word "come," the sheep to joy appears.'

'Ye cursed:' there is malediction. But, Lord, if we must depart, oh let us depart blessed! No, 'depart ye cursed!' You have cursed others, and now you shall be cursed yourselves; you have delighted yourselves in cursing, and now you shall be cursed for ever. You shall be cursed in your bodies

and cursed in your souls; you shall be cursed of God, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions, yea, you shall curse your very selves, your very souls. You loved not blessing, and therefore you shall have cursing enough: 'Depart from me, ye cursed:' all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls. Now thou cursest every man and thing that stands in the way of thy lusts, and that crosses thy designs: but at last all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon thee.

But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place! No, 'depart ye into everlasting fire.' There is the vengeance and continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, that will neither consume itself, nor consume you. Eternity of extremity is the hell of hell. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled could never be quenched. If all the fires that ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! yet such a fire would be but as a painted fire upon the wall, to the fire of hell. The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice in comparison of the fire of hell. If it be so sad a spectacle to behold a malefactor's flesh consumed by piece-meals in a lingering fire; ah! how sad, how dreadful would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire, not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred, or a thousand years, but for ever and ever! 'If it were,' saith one, 'but for a thousand years, I could bear it, but seeing it is for eternity, this amazeth and affrighteth me.' 'I am afraid of hell,' saith another, [Cyril,] 'because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goeth out:' it is called 'unquenchable fire,' Mat 18:8, and 'eternal fire' in Jude 1:7. The torments of the damned are very grievous for the bitterness of them, but more grievous for the diversity of them, but most of all grievous for the eternity of them. To lie in everlasting torments, Mat 25:46, goes beyond all the bounds of desperation. To roar for ever for disquietness of heart, to rage for ever for madness of soul, to weep, and grieve, and gnash the teeth for ever for vexation of spirit, is a misery beyond all expression. Suetonius reports of Tiberius Cæsar, that, being petitioned by a certain offender to hasten his punishment, and to grant him a speedy despatch, he made him this answer, *Nondum tecum in gratiam redii*: Stay sir, you and I are not friends yet. So if after a damned soul hath been in hell a thousand years, he should petition the Lord for a speedy death, the Lord would answer after the same manner, Stay soul, you and I are not yet friends: if after thousands and millions of thousands of years, the request should be renewed, the answer would still be the same, Stay, you and I are not yet friends. Wronged justice can never be satisfied, and therefore the sinner must be for ever tormented: the sinner in hell will sin for ever, and therefore he must be punished for ever. It will not stand with the unspotted justice and righteousness of God to cease punishing, where the sinner ceases not sinning. One tells us of some devout personages, who caused those words of the prophet, Isa 33:14, 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' to be written in letters of gold upon their chimney-pieces. The fear of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace made men do anything to avoid it, Dan 3:8; and shall not the fear of eternal flames, of everlasting burnings, work men to bewail their sins, to hate all their bitter-sweets, and to lay hold on everlasting strength, that it may go well with them for ever? I have read of a chaste virgin, who being strongly tempted and solicited by a lewd ruffian to uncleanness, after some discourse, she called for a pan of burning coals, requesting him for her sake to hold his finger in them but one hour; he answered, it is an unkind and unreasonable request: it is truth, saith she, it is so; but you ask me a more unkind and unreasonable request, viz., to satisfy you in a thing for which I shall not only burn an hour, but burn both body and soul in hell-fire for ever and ever; and so overcame the

temptation.

But, Lord, if I must go into fire, into everlasting fire, oh let me have some good company in my misery! No! the devil and his angels shall be your companions. Ah! who can conceive or express the misery of cohabitation with devils and damned spirits! Many unholy souls would not live in a house haunted with evil spirits one night for all the world; and yet they live as if it were nothing to be billeted with hellish fiends and furies for ever. If the sight of a seeming ghost for a moment be such a terror and torment to thee; what will the horrible sight of devils, and the ghastly sight of the damned be? If it was so great an affliction to Job to be a companion to owls, Job 30:29; what will it be to thee to be a companion to devils? If it was so great a grief and woe to David to sojourn in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar for a time, Psa 120:5; what a woe will it be to unholy souls to dwell with devils and reprobates for ever? Ah! how will Satan's deformity, antipathy, and cruelty amaze thee and torment thee! How will the damns' wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth abash thee and confound thee! How will thine old companions' cursing of thee, the sight of thy near relations in misery with thee, and devils scornfully insulting over thee, and the neverdying worm feeding perpetually upon thee, be many hells of horror to thee! Had an unholy soul as many worlds in his hand to give as there be stars in heaven, he would give them all for a licence always to sleep under those pains and torments that will admit of no intermission or mitigation. In Rev 21:8 you have a catalogue of that damned crew, of that rout of reprobates which shall be your companions for ever: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.' These companions are the devil's lime-twigs; they are his scorpions with which he will torment and whip poor souls for ever. Such companions will make many hells to meet in one; they will be the top of the soul's torments. Thus I have done with those arguments that prove the point; viz., that without holiness there is no happiness, &c.

III. I come now to the reasons of the point, Why is it that without holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven? Among other reasons that might be rendered, you may please to take these:—

Reason 1. First, Because God hath said it, who is truth and faithfulness itself, and cannot lie. That he hath said it, witness the very text, and the proofs that are produced to make good the doctrine: and hath he said it, and shall it not come to pass? Hath he spoken it, and will he not accomplish the word that is gone out of his mouth? 'God is not a man that he should lie,' Num 23:19. 'Also the Strength of Israel will not lie,' 1Sa 15:29. God will make good every word that is gone out of his mouth. Men sometimes eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; they often say and unsay, but so will not the Holy One of Israel; that first and supreme being, that gives being to all others, will certainly give being to all his promises and threatenings. God himself shall sooner cease to be, than the word that is gone out of his mouth shall be frustrated. He that is the faithful witness hath said it, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' 'And verily, heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or one tittle' (that is, before the least letter or particle of a letter) 'of God's blessed word shall pass unfulfilled,' Mat 5:18. God's 'faithfulness is great,' Lam 3:23; 'It reaches unto the clouds,' Psa 36:5; 'He will not suffer his faithfulness to fail,' Psa 89:33; 'His faithfulness endures through all generations,' Psa 119:90. God will never suffer his faithfulness to be stained or blotted, and therefore he will undoubtedly make good the word that is

gone out of his mouth. I had rather, said Plutarch, that men should say there was never any such person in the world as Plutarch, than that they should say Plutarch is unfaithful. A man were better say there is no God, than say that God is unfaithful. A noble spirit can better bear any charge, than that of being unfaithful; and so can a faithful God.

Reason 2. Secondly, Because real holiness is that great principle that fits and capacitates souls for communion with God, and for a blessed sight and fruition of God: Mat 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Without a principle of purity, of sanctity, there is no vision of God in glory. If a man be never so poor, yet if his heart be pure, God will make a house of his heart, wherein his honour will delight to dwell; let a man's outside be never so homely, yet if his inside be but cleanly, God will make it his own habitation. God is for that man, and that man is for God, that carries about with him a pure heart. Heart-purity makes a man a darling of heaven. Many affect pure language, pure houses, pure habits, pure hands, pure air, pure meat, pure drink, pure gestures, &c., who yet for want of heart-purity shall never see the face of God in glory. Heart-purity speaks a man eternally happy. Holiness is that noble principle that fits a man for the happiest sight of God: it makes a man a meet companion for God both here and hereafter. Without this principle no man can have communion with God in this world, much less can he have communion with God in heaven, if this precious principle of holiness be not seated in his heart. It will not stand with the holiness of God, to have anything to do with those that have no principles of holiness in them. It is a principle of holiness that fits a man for the service of God, that fits a man for fellowship with God, that fits a man for walking with God, that fits a man for correspondency with God, and that fits a man for the delight of God, and that fits a man for an everlasting fruition of God. And therefore certainly without holiness there is no happiness; without a principle of purity there can be no seeing of the face of God in glory.

Reason 3. A third reason why without real holiness there is no happiness, &c., is this, Because heaven is a holy place, and therefore no unholy souls can enter there. It is called the 'high and holy place,' Isa 57:15; the inheritance of the saints in heaven is an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, 1Pe 1:4. Holiness dwells in heaven, 2Pe 3:13, as a man dwells in his house. Heaven is the house of God's holiness, and therefore certainly without holiness there is no entering into that house, Rev 21:27. The Holy of Holies in the temple was a type of heaven. And as none might enter into the Holy of Holies that were unholy, so none can enter into heaven, which is the true holy of holies, but those that are holy. Heaven was so holy, that it cast out the angels when they fell from their holiness. Paradise was a type of heaven, and no sooner did Adam lose his holiness, but he was shut out of paradise. Heaven is a city of holiness: and none can enter into that city but such as are holy, Rev 22:14. Heaven is so holy that it would groan to bear one unholy soul. Well, heaven is a holy place, and the inhabitants are all holy, and the work of heaven is holy; and what then should unholy souls do there?

Reason 4. A fourth reason why without real holiness there is no happiness, &c., is this, Because unholy persons have no hearts to go to heaven. Though now and then they may talk of heaven, and now and then lift up their eyes and hands to heaven, and now and then express a few cold wishes and lazy desires after heaven, it is no difficult thing to demonstrate that in good earnest they have no heart to go to heaven. For first, How often hath God set life and death, heaven and hell before them, and they have chosen death rather than life, and hell rather than heaven! 2. Do you think that that man hath any heart to heaven, that will not so much as part with a lust for

heaven? 3. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, that hath not so much as a hand to lay hold on the opportunities of grace that might bring him to heaven? Luk 13:33-34. 4. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, that daily hardens his heart against him who is the way to heaven? John 14:6; Isa 63:10. 5. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, who is still a-grieving, vexing, and quenching that Spirit of holiness, that can only fit, frame, and form him for heaven? 6. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, that rarely spends a serious thought of heaven, and that lives in this world as if there were no heaven? 7. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, whose sinful courses speak him out to be one of those who have made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell? Isa 28:15, Isa 28:18. Do you think that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, that detests those most that are the best wooers for heaven? 9. Do you think that that man hath any heart to go to heaven, who can take no pleasure nor delight in those that are travelling towards heaven? Rom 3:8; 1Co 4:9-10. 10. Will you say that that man hath a heart to go to heaven, that will do nothing affectionately for heaven; that will not hear for heaven, nor pray for heaven, nor trade for heaven, nor look for heaven, nor long for heaven, nor strive for heaven, nor wait for heaven? The heart commands all, it carries all; if the heart were bent for heaven, the head would contrive for heaven, the eye would look out for heaven, and the ear would hear for heaven, and the tongue would speak for heaven, and the foot would walk towards heaven, and the hand would do for heaven. By all which it is most evident that unholy persons are not cordially willing to go to heaven. It is most certain that unholy persons have no such great mind to go to heaven as some imagine. When Dives was in hell, his desire was not to be with Abraham in heaven, but that Lazarus might come and give him a little ease in hell: he preferred a little ease in hell before his being with Abraham in heaven, Luk 16:24, Luk 16:27-29. Neither did he desire that his five brethren might go to heaven, but that they might be kept out of hell; and that not out of love to them, but out of love to himself, he knowing that their company would be no small increase of his own torments. Heaven would be a very hell to an unholy heart. If now the presence of God in his servants, and the presence of God in his ordinances, be such a hell to unholy souls, ah, what a hell would the presence of God in heaven be to unholy hearts! It is true an unholy heart may desire heaven, as it is a place of freedom from troubles, afflictions, oppressions, vexations, &c., and as it is a place of peace, rest, ease, safety, &c., but this is the least and lowest part of heaven; but to desire it as it is, a place of purity, of grace, of holiness, of enjoying of God, &c., is above the reach of an unholy heart. The company of heaven are all holy, the employments of heaven are all holy, and the enjoyments of heaven are all holy; and therefore heaven cannot but be an undesirable thing to unholy hearts. An unholy heart is no ways desirous nor ambitious of such a heaven as will rid him of his darling sins, as will make him conformable to a holy God, as will everlastingly divorce him from his old companions, and link him for ever to those gracious souls that he hath scorned, despised, and persecuted in this world. Ergo, &c.

Reason 5. Fifthly and lastly, Because without real holiness men are good for nothing, they are fit for nothing. Without holiness men are neither good for church nor state, they are neither fit to rule nor to be ruled; to command, nor to be commanded; to guide, nor to be guided, &c. Men void of holiness are in the Scripture resembled to chaff, to dust, to dirt, to briars and thorns, which are things that are good for nothing, that are fit for nothing. And what should such men do in heaven, who are good for nothing on earth? The horse is good to carry, the ox is good to draw, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, the ass is good to bear, and the dog is good to keep

the house; but what is a man void of holiness good for? An unholy person is good for nothing but to be destroyed, and to make some room for a better person to stand up in that place which he takes up in the world. As the hog in the Arabic fable tells us that a butcher, carrying three creatures upon his horse, a sheep, a goat, and a hog, the two former lay very quiet and still, but the hog kicked, and cried, and would never be quiet. Thereupon the butcher said, Why art thou so impatient when the other two are so quiet? The hog answered, Every one knows himself; the sheep knows that he is brought into the city for his wool's sake, and the goat knows that he is brought into the city for his milk's sake, and so they need not fear nor care; but, alas, I know very well that I have neither wool nor milk, but that as soon as I am come into the city I must be killed, for that is all I am good for. An unholy soul is like a hog, good for nothing but to be killed, Mat 7:6. Certainly heaven-happiness is too great and too glorious a thing to be possessed by them that are good for nothing. We look upon such as are fit for nothing, to be worthy of banishment from the society of men. But oh, how much more worthy are they to be banished from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, and to be shut out for ever from the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, who are fit for nothing but to dishonour the Lord, undo their own souls, and to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath! 2Th 1:8-9; Heb 12:22-23; Rom 2:5. And thus I have given you an account of the reasons of the point.

IV. Use 1. We shall now come to make some improvement of this great truth to our own souls. Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness, and that without holiness here, no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God hereafter? Then the first use shall be a use of conviction. This, then, may serve to convince the world of several things: As,

1. First, That the number of those that shall be eternally happy, the number of those that shall attain to a blessed vision and glorious fruition of God in heaven, are very few; for there are but a few that reach to this holiness without which there is no happiness: Rev 3:4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.' Among the many in Sardis there were but a few that had holy insides and pure outsides. Among the multitude that made a holy profession, there were but few that walked answerable to their holy calling; and therefore but a few that should walk with Christ in white. White in ancient times was the habit of nobles: to walk with Christ in white, is to partake with Christ in his glory. They, and only they, at last shall be clothed nobly, royally, gloriously, who maintain inward and outward purity. The holy seed is a 'little, little flock,' Luk 12:32. Here are two diminutives in the Greek, Μικρὴν πομπήν, 'little, little flock;' to shew the exceeding littleness of it. They were little in their own eyes, and little in their enemies' eyes, and little in regard of that world of wolves among whom they were preserved, as a spark of fire in the midst of the wide ocean. When the Syrians came up against Israel in the time of Ahab, it is said that 'the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, but the Syrians filled the country,' 1Ki 20:27. Holy souls are but like two little flocks of kids; but the unholy fill the world. Gracious souls are like the three hundred men of Gideon; but graceless souls are as the Midianites, that were like grasshoppers for multitude, Jdg 7:7, Jdg 7:12. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads unto life, and few there be that find it,' Mat 7:14. The way of holiness that leads to happiness, is a narrow way; there is but just room enough for a holy God and a holy soul to walk together. 'And few there be that find it.' And no wonder; for there are but few that minds it, that loves it, that likes it, or that inquires after it. 'The whole world lies in wickedness,' 1Jn 5:19; and will die in their

wickedness, John 8:21. Geographers say, that if all the known parts of the world were divided into one-and-thirty parts, there will be found but five parts that do so much as profess the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: for at this day, nineteen parts of the world are possessed by unholy Turks and Jews, which do not, nor will not so much as acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the King and Head of his church; and seven parts of the world is possessed this day merely by heathens, who worship stocks and stones. And of those five parts that are possessed by Christians, how many are Papists, atheists, hypocrites, drunkards, swearers, liars, adulterers, idolaters, oppressors! How many are proud, covetous, carnal, formal, lukewarm, indifferent, &c.! Now, should all these sorts of sinners be separated, as they shall in the great day, from those that are gracious and holy, would it not quickly appear that the flock of Christ is a little, little flock? Ah, how few among the great ones are found to be gracious! How few among the rich are found to be rich in Christ, rich in grace, rich in good works! How few among those that are high-born, can you find that are new-born! 1Co 1:16; 1Ti 6:16-17. It was the saying of one, that all the names of good emperors might be engraven in a little ring. And so saith Lipsius, that the names of all good princes may easily be written in a small ring. I have read of godly Mr Buchanan, that was King James his tutor, who lying upon his dying bed, desired a nobleman then with him to tell the king that his old master, Buchanan, was going to a place where few kings come.² Kings are as rare meat in heaven as venison is in poor men's kitchens, saith the Dutch proverb. And how few among the wise can you find that are wise for heaven, that are wise for their souls, that are wise for eternity! And how few among the learned; can you find that have learned Christ, and learned their own hearts, and learned to deny themselves, and learned to save their own souls and others! By all which it is most evident that few are holy, and that few shall be happy. But,

2. Secondly, and more particularly, Is it so that real holiness is the only way to happiness: and that without holiness here, no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God hereafter? Then this may serve to convince several sorts of persons of their woeful and miserable conditions. As,

(1.) First, All profane persons, who give up themselves to wickedness, who wallow in all ungodliness, and delight themselves in all manner of filthiness, who commit wickedness with greediness; who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope; who weary themselves to commit iniquity; who are so desperately set upon wickedness, that neither the rod of God, the lashes and checks of their own consciences, nor the flashes of hell upon their souls, can reduce them; who are resolved that they will gratify their lusts, though they damn their souls; and who will live wickedly, though they perish eternally: who by custom in sin have destroyed all conscience of sin, and contracted such desperate hardness upon their own hearts, as neither smiles nor frowns, promises nor threatenings, life nor death, heaven nor hell, ministry nor misery, miracle nor mercy, can possibly mollify them; these are grown from naught, to be very naught: from very naught, to be stark naught; these souls are sadly left of God, and woefully blinded by Satan, and fully ripened for ruin. Now if without holiness no man shall see the Lord, what will become of all profane wretches, who are so far from being holy, that they fall short of common honesty? Certainly God will shut the gates of glory upon such workers of iniquity. Such profane Esaus shall never be blessed with a sight of God in glory, Mat 7:22. A wicked man is a sin-lover; he is a sin-maker, he lives in sin upon choice; the Hebrew word that is commonly used for a wicked man, **שׂוֹנֵא**, properly signifies a laborious sinner, a practitioner in sin, Psa 11:5; 1Jn 3:8.

Now such as these are, God will have nothing to do with: Job 8:20, 'Behold God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evildoers;' or rather as the Hebrew carries it, he will not take the ungodly by the hand: that is, he will not have any fellowship, any society, any familiarity with the ungodly. The holy God will not so much as take an unholy soul by the hand; he will not in the least countenance him nor respect him; he will not welcome him nor entertain him, nor shew the least favour to him. Now certainly if God will not take the wicked by the hand, he will never take them into heaven, he will never take them into his bosom. God will have no commerce nor communion with those to whom he will not so much as lend a hand. God will wash his hands of them for ever, to whom he will not give a hand. Which made Augustine say, that he would not be a wicked man one half-hour for all the world, because he might die in that half-hour. God will wash his hands of every man that lives and dies a wicked man, Mat 25:11-12. The hearts and ways of wicked men are full of hells; and therefore to fill heaven with such, would be to fill heaven with hells.

(2.) Secondly, This truth may serve to convince those that are scoffers and mockers at holiness, of their woeful and miserable estate, 2Pe 3:3; Jude 1:18. Holiness is so high and so noble a thing, that men should rather honour it than deride it—reverence it than reproach it; they should rather set a crown of glory than a crown of thorns upon the head of it. Holiness is the glorious image of God fairly stamped upon the soul; and to deride holiness is to deride God himself. God takes all the affronts that are done to his image as done to himself; and this scoffers shall know at last to their eternal woe. If it was such a heinous crime in Tiberius his days, as Suetonius reports it was, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin into any sordid place, ah, how heinous a crime is it then to cast dirt and filth, scorn and reproach upon holiness, which is the image of the invisible God! The despite and contempt that is done to the image or coin of a prince is done to the prince himself, and accordingly he will revenge it. In old Rome there were near as many statues as there were living people, and some were made of gold, some of silver, some of brass, some of ivory, and some of polished marble; and there was an earl appointed whose office it was continually to walk up and down in the night, attended with many soldiers, to see that none did wrong the statues of those that were set up in the city, and if any such were found that had done wrong to any of the statues, they were put to death.² Holiness is the statue of God, and such as shall dare to deface it and wrong it, God will destroy. The old world scoffed and scorned at righteousness, and God sweeps them away with a flood. Ham mocked and scoffed at righteous Noah, and what did he get by it but a curse? Ishmael scoffed at holy Isaac, and what did he get by his scoffing and mocking but ejection out of Abraham's family? And what became of those two-and-forty young scoffers that scoffed and mocked at holy Elisha? were they not cursed in the name of the Lord, and torn in pieces by two she-bears which were more fierce and cruel than others? The Jews were given up to scoffing and mocking of the messengers of the Lord, till there was no remedy: till old and young were destroyed by the sword of the Chaldees; till their temple and city were fired and sacked, and thirty of them sold for a penny, &c., and those that escaped the sword were captivated and enslaved. Sennacherib scoffed and mocked at the virgin daughter of Sion, but his scoffs issued in the destruction of his army by the hand of an angel, and in his own by the hands of his two sons. Julian, the emperor, was a great mocker and scoffer at the Christians, but God struck him with an arrow from heaven, which made him cry out *Vicisti, Galilœe, thou Galilean,* [meaning our Lord Jesus,] *hast overcome me.* Felix, for one malicious scoff, did nothing day and night but vomit blood, till his unhappy soul was separated from his wretched body. Lucian, for barking against

religion as a dog, was by the just judgments of God devoured of dogs. History tells us of some scoffers that God hath stricken with madness, others with blindness, others with loathsome diseases, and some God hath stricken dead, and others he hath left to be their own executioners. Scoffing at holiness is a metropolitan sin,³ and therefore no wonder if God executes upon scoffers metropolitan judgments. Mockers and scoffers are the worst of sinners. Among the three sorts of sinners that David mentions, scorers have the chair, the chair of pestilence, as the Septuagint translateth it. Scorers are the pests of mankind. The eye of the scorer is blinded; the heart of the scorer is hardened; the judgment of the scorer is perverted; the will of the scorer is enthralled, and the conscience of the scorer is seared, and this makes the scorer fall mad upon scoffing at holy men and holy things. Look, as they are the worst of servants that will scoff and mock a child in the family, because he is his father's picture—though they take wages of his father, and live by his father—so they are the worst of sinners who scoff at holiness, which is the very picture of God, though they live by him and cannot live without him. Yet this world is full of such monsters, who count it a grace to disgrace holiness, and to lade holy ones with all the names of scorn and contempt that they can invent, or that Satan can help them to. These are your holy brethren, these are fanatics, these are your holy sect, these are your pure souls, these are your strict precisians, these are the saints forsooth, these are the brotherhood! Erasmus saith that that proverb, 'A young saint, and an old devil,' was devised by the devil himself to scoff and mock men out of their holiness. It hath been the common portion of men most eminent in grace and holiness to be most scoffed and scorned in all ages, Job 17:2; Neh 4:1; Isa 28:22; Luk 18:32. Witness Noah, Isaac, and Elisha but now cited, and witness Job, Job 21:3, 'Suffer me that I may speak, and after that I have spoken mock on;' Job 12:4, 'I am as one mocked of his neighbour, who calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.' So David, Psa 35:16, 'With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth;' Psa 44:14, 'Thou makest us a byword among the heathen;' Psa 79:4, 'We are become a reproach and derision to them who are round about us;' Psa 109:25, 'I am become a reproach to them; when they looked upon me they shaked their heads.' So Isaiah, Isa 8:18, 'Behold, I and the children that the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel.' So Jeremiah, Jer 20:7, 'I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.' So Paul, Acts 17:18, 'What will this babbler say?' So the apostles, Acts 2:13, 'Others mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.' So those worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Heb 11:36, 'Others had trial of cruel mockings.' But, above all, how sadly, how frequently, yea, how fearfully was our Lord Jesus Christ scoffed and scorned by Herod and Pilate, and flouted by the rascally soldiers! but the vengeance of his Father overtook them all. And in the primitive times, as Tertullian observes, the saints were called herds of asses, vile fellows, the disciples of a man crucified: Galileans, Nazarites, eaters of men's flesh, and drinkers of men's blood.² The heathens, as the same author observes, painted the God of the Christians with an ass's head, and a book in his hand; to signify that though the Christians pretended to knowledge, yet they were a company of silly ignorant asses. The libertines of old have cast much scorn and contempt upon all the apostles: they call Matthew a usurer, Peter an apostate, Luke a pelting physician, Paul a broken vessel, and John a foolish young man, &c., by way of scorn and contempt; Athanasius was called Sathanasius, and Cyprian was called Coprian, one that gathers up dung; and so Luther, Calvin, and almost every one that hath attained to any eminency in holiness, they have been commonly accounted as the offscouring and refuse among the people, 1Co 4:13-14; Lam 2:15-16, and Lam 4:2. Now certainly if holiness be the only way to happiness,

&c., then such as are scorers and scoffers at holiness are out of the very way to happiness; and how such are like to come to heaven, that scorn the very path that leads to heaven, I shall leave you to judge. If the ravens of the valley shall pick out his eyes that mocketh his father, and the young eagles eat out his eyes that despiseth the instruction of his mother, as Solomon speaks, then of how much sorer punishment are they guilty of, who mock and scoff at holiness, which is the very image, picture, and glory of God himself! Holiness is so near akin to God, that no man can deride holiness but he derides God himself. As he that 'mocks the poor, derides him that made him,' Pro 17:5, so he that mocks holy ones derides that God that made them holy. And will God take this at the scorner's hands? No, he will retaliate; he loves to retaliate scorn upon the scorner: Pro 3:34, 'Surely he scorneth the scorers: God will pay home scorers in their own coin; scorers shall be sure to have scorning enough. God so scorns the persons and prayers of scorers, that he will have nothing to do with them, Pro 1:24-33; Ps 2:4; Isa 37:36. The angels so scorn scorers, that instead of being a life-guard to them, they stand ready prest to execute the vengeance of heaven upon them. And saints are so far to scorn them, by a divine precept, as not to reprove them: Pro 9:8, 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.' Yea, God in his just judgments will make scorers to be an abomination to all sorts of men: Pro 24:9, 'The scorner is an abomination to men;' that is, to all sorts of men. The scorner is an abomination not only to holy men, but also to all ingenious men, and to all civil and moral honest men. As the scorner's tongue and hand is against every man, so every man's tongue and hand shall be against him. Now if the scorers of men be abominable to men, then much more are the scorers of holiness abominable to God, and therefore certainly such shall be shut out from a glorious fruition of God.

3. Thirdly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness, and that if men be not holy on earth, they shall never come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven; then, by way of conviction, this looks sourly and sadly upon all formalists who have only a form, a show, a profession of holiness, but have nothing of the reality, spirit, life, or power of holiness in them: 2Ti 3:5, 'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.' They have, Μᾶρψωσιν ἐσβεῖας, a face, a vizard, a mask, a show of godliness, but they have nothing of the pith, sap, life, or marrow of godliness. Their devotion, their godliness, lies in good words, and in fair shows, and in religious gestures, Isa 58:1-3, and Zec 7:4-6. If you hearken to their voice, if you look upon their eyes, if you observe the motion of their hands, and the bowing of their knees, and the shaking of their heads, &c., you would think that they were men of much religion, of much godliness; but if you look into their hearts and lives, you will find them to be the greatest renouncers and deniers of religion and godliness in the world. They have the semblance of godliness, but not the substance; they have the lineaments of godliness, but not the life; they have the face of godliness, but not the heart; they have the form, the shadow of godliness, but not the power. They are like a well-drawn picture, which hath all the lineaments of a man, but wants life, wants a principle of motion and operation. Mark 1:1-45. The form of godliness is common, but the power of godliness is rare. 2. The form of godliness is cheap, but the power of godliness is dear. 3. The form of godliness is easy, but the power of godliness is difficult. 4. The form of godliness is a credit, but the power of godliness is a reproach. 5. The form of godliness is pleasurable and delightful, but the power of godliness is displeasing and undelightful to the ignoble part of a Christian. 6. The form of godliness will stand with secret and with open wickedness—as you see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Simon Magus, Demas, and the Scribes and Pharisees—but the power of godliness will not. The power of godliness lays the axe to the very root of all sin, both secret and open. Rachel was very fair and

beautiful to the eye, but she was barren, and that marred all; so the formalist, he is a very fair and beautiful Christian to the eye, but he is barren Godwards, and Christwards, and heavenwards; he is fruitless, sapless, and lifeless, and that mars all. The formalist takes up a form of godliness, 1. To quiet his conscience; 2. To get himself a name; 3. To cloak over his sins; 4. To advance his worldly interest; and, 5. To avoid opposition and persecution from the world, the flesh, and the devil; 6. And to conform to old customs. And what should such formalists do in heaven? A formal Christian is but a figure, a flaunt, a flourish, a flash, and all he doth is but the shadow of what he should do. A formalist is more light than life, more notion than motion, more head than heart, more outside than inside, more leaves than fruit, more shadow than substance. A formalist is a blazing comet, a painted tomb, a stage-player, a white devil, or a devil in an angel's habit; and what should such devils do in heaven? Certainly if without real holiness no man shall see the Lord, then the formalist, that hath only the shape, the show, the form of godliness, but nothing of the reality and power of it, shall never be blessed with such a sight. A formalist is neither hot nor cold. Of all sorts of sinners he is the worst; and God so loathes him, that he is resolved he will rid his stomach of him: Rev 3:16, 'I will spue thee out of my mouth;' and certainly heaven is too holy a place to lick up that gorge God hath cast up. Lukewarm water cannot be so loathsome to our stomachs as a formalist is to God's. God is never at such ease as when he hath cast up and cast out the formal Christian. I have read of Anastasius the emperor, how God shot him to death with a thunderbolt because of his lukewarmness and formality. God hath a thunderbolt for every formalist, by which he will at last certainly strike them down to the lowest hell. A formalist is too loathsome a thing, too heavy a burden, for heaven to bear.

4. Fourthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or else they shall never see the face of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all those who please and satisfy themselves with civility and common honesty; who are good negative Christians, who bless themselves that they are no swearers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor adulterers, &c.; they pay every man his own, they are just and righteous in their dealings; no man can say black is their eye; their carriage is civil, comely, harmless, and blameless. 'They make a fair show in the flesh,' Gal 6:12, or as the Greek hath it, they set a good face on it. But as good a face as they do set on it, I must crave leave to tell them that civility is not sanctity; civility rested in is but a beautiful abomination, a smooth way to hell and destruction. I may truly say of all civil men—who are destitute of that real holiness that leads to happiness—what Erasmus said of Seneca: If you look upon him as a heathen, then he seemeth to write as if he were a Christian; but if you look upon him as a Christian, then he seemeth to write as a heathen. So if you look upon many civil, moral men's lives, you will find them so full of ingenuity, equity, righteousness, sweetness, and justice, that you will be ready to say, Sure these are holy men. But then do but observe how unacquainted they are with God, with Christ, with the Scripture, with the way and working of the Spirit, with the filthiness of sin, with the depths and devices of Satan, with their own hearts, with the new birth, and with the great concerns of eternity, and you will judge them to be mere heathens, to be men void of all principles of grace and holiness, and to be mere strangers to union and communion with Christ, and to the more secret and inward operations and workings of the Spirit of Christ, and to the most spiritual duties and services that are commanded by Christ. Civility is very often the nurse of impiety, the mother of flattery, and an enemy to real sanctity. A high conceit of civility keeps many a man from looking after inward and outward purity. Moral honesty proves to many men a bond of iniquity. There are those who are so

blinded with the fair shows of civility, that they can neither see the necessity nor beauty of sanctity; there are those that now bless themselves in their common honesty, whom at last God will scorn and cast off for want of real holiness and purity, Mat 25:3, Mat 25:11-12. Many of the heathens were so famous for justice and righteousness, for equity, fidelity, and sobriety, for civility and moral honesty, that it would put many professors to the blush to read what is written of them; and yet there was such a tincture of popular applause, of pride and vainglory, of hypocrisy and self-flattery, upon their civility and moral honesty, that, for anything we can find in Scripture to the contrary, there is cause to fear that they shall be miserable to all eternity: for all their civility and moral honesty, they were left in a damnable, I will not say in a damned, condition: he that rises to no higher pitch than civility and moral honesty shall never have communion with God in glory. Naaman was a great man, but a leper, 2Ki 5:1; Naaman was an honourable man, but a leper; Naaman was a mighty man, but a leper; Naaman was a victorious man, but a leper; Naaman was in high favour and esteem with his prince, but a leper. This but he was a leper stained all his honour, and was a blot upon all his greatness and glory, both at court and in the field, both in the city and in the country. So it is a stain, a blot upon the most moral honest man in the world, to say, he is a very civil honest man, but Christless; he is a very just man, but graceless; he is a man of much moral righteousness, but he hath not a drachm of real holiness, &c. This but is a fly in the box of ointment, that spoils all. Well, sirs, remember this, though the moral honest man be good for many things, yet he is not good enough to go to heaven, he is not good enough to be made glorious, Mat 5:20. Certainly there is nothing in all the world, below real sanctity, that will ever bring a man to the possession of glory. And though it may grieve us—to speak after the manner of men—to see sweet natures, to see many moral honest men, take many a weary step towards heaven, and to come near to heaven, and to bid fair for heaven, and yet after all to fall short of heaven; yet it will be no way grievous to a holy God to turn such sweet natures into hell, Psal 9:17. Moral honesty is not sufficient to keep a man out of eternal misery; all it can do is to help a man to one of the best rooms and easiest beds that hell affords. For, look, as the moral man's sins are not so great as others', so his punishments shall not be so great as others'. This is all the comfort that can be afforded to a moral man, that he shall have a cooler hell than others have: but this is but cold comfort. Moral honesty without piety is as a body without a soul; and will ever God accept of such a stinking sacrifice? Surely no.

5. Fifthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or else they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all neuters, who divide their hearts between God and, mammon, Mat 6:19; who halt between God and Baal, 1Ki 18:21; who divide their souls between heaven and earth, between religion and their lusts, Zep 1:5, like the Samaritans, who both worshipped the Lord, and the Assyrians' idols too, 2Ki 17:32-33, and 2Ki 18:11. A neuter is a monster; he hath two tongues, two minds, and two souls: he hath a tongue for God, and a tongue for the world too; he looks up to God, and saith, Certainly thou art mine; he looks down upon the world, and saith, Surely I am thine; he hath a mind to be religious, and a mind to save his own stake in the world too. He hath a soul reaching after the happiness of another world: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' saith Balaam, Num 23:10; and he hath a soul strongly reaching after this evil world too, as if heaven and happiness were wrapt up in it. As you may see in the same person, 'he loved the wages of unrighteousness:' he loved it as his portion, he loved it as his life, he loved it as his happiness, he loved it as his all; he loved it as his soul, yea, he loved it above his own

soul, for he damned his soul to gain it. It is true, when he was under a divine restraint, he professed that he would not curse the people of God for a house full of gold; but when he was from under that restraint, his heart was so set upon the unrighteous reward, that he would have cursed them for a handful of gold. The neuter, as the Romans paint Erasmus, hangs between heaven and earth; he is neither fit to go to heaven, nor yet worthy to live on earth. If Meroz was to be certainly cursed, to be bitterly cursed, to be universally cursed—as the Hebrew phrase, ‘cursing curse ye Meroz,’ imports, in Jdg 5:23—for standing neuter when they should have come forth to the help of the Lord; do you think that neuters in religion shall be blessed? Do you think that ever such shall go to heaven, who are indifferent whether they go to heaven or no? or that ever such shall be happy, who are indifferent whether they be holy or no? or that ever such shall see the face of Christ with joy, who are indifferent whether they have an interest in Christ or no? or that ever such shall be admitted into the kingdom of glory, who are indifferent wherever they have any entrance into the kingdom of grace or no? Certainly heaven is too holy to hold any such indifferent, irresolute, neutral souls. In the university, not long since, there were three doctors, heads of houses; one of them was accounted an innovator; the second a Puritan; the third a neuter. A witty scholar presented them thus to the world: the first in a coach driving to Rome; the second driving to Geneva; the third running on foot, begging sometimes the one, sometimes the other to receive him, but both refused him. Neuters shall be refused on all hands at last. God will refuse them, because he loathes halting; angels will refuse them, because they loathe halving; good men will refuse them, because they loathe lukewarmness; and bad men will refuse them, because they pretend to goodness, though they live in wickedness. Ambo-dexters in religion are ignominious disgracers both of the name and profession of Christians; they are prodigious traitors to the crown of heaven; they are the greatest enemies to the power of godliness; they are the very offspring of Judas; and in the day of account it will be found that it had been good for them that they had never been born. Neutrality is the spiritual adultery of the heart.² Neuters are spiritual harlots; they have their hearts divided between God and mammon, betwixt Christ and other lovers. Now harlots in ancient time were to be burnt, Gen 38:24. Certainly hell is for the neuter, and the neuter for hell. God will be as severe, yea, more severe, in punishing, spiritual whoredom, than ever men have been in punishing corporal whoredom. God looks upon every neuter as a man in arms against him: Mat 12:30, ‘He that is not with me, is against me;’ and, therefore, martial law shall be executed upon them. God will blot out their names, and hang them up as monuments of his justice and vengeance. Sirs, do not deceive your own souls; no man was ever yet carried to glory in the chariot of neutrality or mediocrity: he that is not throughout holy, is not really holy, and he that is not really holy, can never be truly happy: it is only throughout holiness that entitles a man to everlasting happiness, 1Pe 1:15; 2Pe 3:11. The true mother would not have the child divided; she would have all or none; you must be for all holiness, or for none. Neuters now divide and cut those things asunder that God hath closely joined together; but at last God will suit their punishment to their sin, and cut them asunder, Mat 24:51, and Luk 12:46. Now the neuter chooses here a piece, and there a piece; and at last God will cut him in pieces, as Samuel did Agag, 1Sa 15:33. Well, neuters, now you divide one command from another, one duty from another, one promise from another, one threatening from another, one ordinance from another, and one way of God from another. But the day is a-coming wherein God will divide your souls from your bodies, and both from himself, his Son, his saints, and his glory for ever.

6. Sixthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all hypocrites, who have only a seeming holiness, a feigned holiness, a counterfeit holiness. The apostle speaks of a true holiness, Eph 4:24—or holiness of truth, as the Greek reads it, ἐν ᾧ ὁποῖται τὸ ἀληθεύειν—in opposition to that feigned and counterfeit holiness that is in the world. Pretended holiness is most opposite to the holiness of God. Hypocritical holiness is the greatest unholiness; and as God hath, so certainly God will still suit the punishment to the sin. If it was death in Moses his law, to counterfeit that ceremonial and figurative ointment, Exo 30:32-33; what shall it then be to counterfeit the spirit of life and holiness? Dissembled sanctity is double iniquity. He that professeth religion without being religious, and godliness without being godly; he that makes counterfeit holiness a cloak to impiety, and a midwife to iniquity; he that is a Cato without and a Nero within, a Jacob without and an Esau within, a David without and a Saul within, a Peter without and a Judas within, a saint without and a Satan within, an angel without and a devil within, is ripened for the worst of torments: Mat 24:51, 'And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Hypocrites are the freeholders of hell; all other sinners do but hold under them. None have so large a portion in hell as hypocrites have. No man at last will be found so miserable as he that hath the name of a saint upon him, but not the divine nature in him; that hath a profession of holiness upon him, but no principles of holiness in him; that hath a form of godliness, but not the power; that can cry up godliness, and court godliness, but in practice denies it; that is a Jew outwardly, but an atheist, a pagan, a devil inwardly. Who had a greater name for holiness, and who made a greater show of holiness, and who did more despise and insult over men for the want of holiness, than the Scribes and Pharisees? And who so miserable now as they? Mat 23:14, 'Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.' Pretended holiness will doubledamn souls at last. Sirs, do not deceive your own souls. A painted sword shall as soon defend a man, and a painted mint shall as soon enrich a man, and a painted fire shall as soon warm a man, and a painted friend shall as soon counsel a man, and a painted horse shall as soon carry a man, and a painted feast shall as soon satisfy a man, and painted house shall as soon shelter a man, as a painted holiness shall save a man. He that now thinks to put off God with a painted holiness, shall not fare so well at last as to be put off with a painted happiness. The lowest, the hottest, and the darkest habitation in hell will be his portion whose religion lies all in shows and shadows. Well, spiritual counterfeits, remember this, it will not be long before Christ will unmask you, before he will uncase you, before he will disrobe you, before he will take off your vizards, your hoods, and turn your rotten insides outward, to your eternal shame and reproach before all the world. Counterfeit diamonds may sparkle and glisten, and make a great show for a time, but their lustre will soon wear off. Nil fictum est diuturnum—Nothing counterfeit will last long. Maud, mother to King Henry the Second, being besieged in Winchester Castle, [anno 1141,] counterfeited herself to be dead, and so was carried out in a coffin, whereby she escaped; at another time, being besieged at Oxford in a cold winter, by wearing white apparel she got away in the snow undiscovered; but at last vengeance did overtake her. So, though hypocrites may for a time seem to be dead to sin, and dead to the world, though they may clothe themselves with a snow-like purity, and with the white satin of seeming sanctity, yet God at last will unmask and unmuffle them, and vengeance will with a witness overtake them, Job 17:8, and Job 36:13; Isa 33:14. Hypocrites are like blazing stars,

which, so long as they are fed with vapours, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapours dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the goodness of the hypocrite is but for a moment; it is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew. A hypocrite is a mere comet, a flaunt, a flash. Principles of holiness are lasting, but hypocrisy makes a man only constant in inconstancy, Job 20:5; Hos 6:4.

7. Seventhly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon such who please and bless themselves with common gifts and common grace, with a gift of knowledge, a gift of faith, a gift of prayer, a gift of utterance, a gift of memory, &c., when they have nothing of real holiness in them. Like those in Mat 7:22-23, who had great gifts, but were so far from real sanctity that they were workers of iniquity; they had a flood of gifts, but not a drop of grace; they had many gifts, but not one saving grace: they could work miracles, but that miracle of holiness being not wrought in them, Christ takes an everlasting farewell of them, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' So they in Heb 6:1-20 had enlightened heads; but where was their humbleness and holiness of heart? They had silver tongues; but where was their sanctified souls? They had some smack, some tastes and relishes of heaven's glory; but where was their inward and outward purity? Notwithstanding all their extraordinary gifts of speaking with tongues, casting out of devils, and opening of prophecies, yet were they not renewed, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Their gifts might be of singular use to the enlightening, quickening, edifying, comforting, and encouraging of others, and yet never have any influence upon their own hearts, to the changing, renewing, and sanctifying of them. Men of greatest gifts are not always men of greatest holiness. The Scribes and Pharisees, Judas, Demas, Tertullus, and Simon Magus, were men of great gifts, and yet they had no real holiness. They had the ninety-nine of gifts which Christ looks not after, but wanted the one, viz., real holiness, which with Christ is all in all. The devil hath greater gifts than any man on earth, and yet he is a devil still. Gifts without holiness will but make a man twice told the child of hell, Mat 23:15. The more of gifts here, the more, without holiness, of hell hereafter. The greatest scholars have often proved the greatest sinners, the stoutest opposers, and the worst of persecutors. There are none so wicked as he that is wittily wicked. The highest gifts many times prove but the fairest paths to the chambers of death. As the richer the ship is laden with bars of silver and gold the deeper it sinks, so the richer the soul is laden with silver parts and golden gifts, and yet not balanced with real holiness, the deeper it sinks under wrath and misery. And no wonder, for, 1. Gifts do but tickle the ear, they do not cleanse the heart. 2. They do but stir the affections, they do not kill corruptions. 3. They are but ornaments to a man's profession, they have no saving influence upon a man's conversation. They tempt a man to take up with the world, but they never help a man to overcome the world. 4. They make a man wise to deceive, and wise to delude both himself and others. Rare accomplishments are many times turned into beautiful ornaments to adorn the devil and error withal. 5. The gifted man cares not who is most holy, so he may be most honoured; who is highest in favour with God, so he may be highest in favour with men; who is most serviceable, so he may be most acceptable; who gets most of another world, so he may have most of this world: and what should such a one do in heaven? Gifts differ as much from real holiness, as an angel in heaven differs from a devil in hell. 6. Gifts makes a man work for life, but holiness makes a man work from life, Zec 7:5-6. 7. Gifts work a man to set up for himself, and to deal and trade for himself, but holiness works a man to deal for God, and to trade for God and his glory, Rom 14:6-8. 8. Gifts

takes up in ingenuous civilities and outward formalities, but holiness takes up only in that Holy One, Hab 1:12. 9. Gifts only restrains the soul, but grace renews and changes the soul. 10. Gifts puffs the soul, but holiness humbles the soul. 11. Gifts makes a man beautiful, like Rachel, but holiness makes a man fruitful, like Leah. 12. Gifts makes a man most studious and laborious about mending and reforming other men's hearts and lives, but holiness makes a man most studious and industrious in mending and reforming his own heart and life. 13. Gifts makes all glorious without, but holiness makes all glorious within. 14. Gifts makes a good head, but holiness makes a good heart. 15. Gifts envies, lessens, darkens, obscures, and disparages with 'buts,' and 'ifs,' and 'ands,' the excellencies of others; but holiness makes a man rejoice in every sun that outshines its own, John 4:14. 16. Gifts are fading and withering, but holiness is an everlasting spring that can never be drawn dry, 1Jn 3:9. 17. Gifts draws from God, but holiness draws to God, 1Co 13:1, 1Co 13:6. Though men of gifts may bid fair for heaven, yea, come so near as to hear the music of heaven, yet without holiness they shall never enter into heaven. When night comes, the father will only take in his own child into his house, and though another child which may be much like his own should attempt to come in, yet the father will keep him out, and wish him to repair to his own home; so when the night of death comes, the Father of spirits will only take into the family of heaven his own child, viz., the child of holiness; but now if the child of gifts, which is so like the child of holiness, should press hard upon God to come in, as that child of gifts, Baalam, did, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' Num 23:10, God will answer him, No! He will say to him, as he did to that child of gifts, Judas, Go to your own place, Acts 1:25; Mat 8:12. In the night of death and judgment, the children of the kingdom shall be cast out—the children of the kingdom, that is, of the church. Now the children of the kingdom are children of gifts, and yet there will come a day when these children shall be cast out. As Abraham put off the sons of the concubines with gifts, but entailed the inheritance upon Isaac, Gen 25:6, &c.; so God puts off many men now with gifts, but he entails the heavenly inheritance upon holiness: Psa 24:3-4, 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.' Heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, who hath clean hands and a pure heart, whose holy conversation is attended with heart purification. A pure heart is better than a golden head; a heart full of holy affections is infinitely beyond a head full of curious notions. There is no jewel, there is no anointing to that of holiness. He that hath that hath all, and he that wants that hath nothing at all. But,

8. Eighthly and lastly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a blessed fruition of God in heaven; then, by way of conviction, let me say that this truth looks very sourly and angrily upon those who are so far from being holy themselves, that they cannot endure holiness in those that are about them, or any ways related to them. Ah, how many unholy people be there that cannot endure holiness in their ministers! and how many unholy husbands are there that cannot endure holiness in their yokefellows! and how many unholy parents are there that cannot endure holiness in their children! and how many unholy masters are there that cannot endure holiness in their servants! The panther, say some, when she cannot come at the man, she rendeth and teareth his picture in pieces; so many unholy husbands, unholy fathers, and unholy masters, when they cannot rend and tear the persons of their relations in pieces, ah, how do they do their best to rend and tear the image of God upon them, viz., holiness, in pieces! These forlorn souls will not be holy themselves, nor suffer others to be holy

neither; they will neither go to heaven themselves, nor suffer others to go thither who are strongly biassed that way, Mat 23:14-15; 2Sa 6:16, 2Sa 6:20. Some despise their gracious relations, even eo nomine, for that very reason, because they are holy. Sometimes you shall hear them speak at such a rate as this: Well, our relations are wise and witty, but so holy; they are very knowing and thriving, but so precise; they have good parts and sweet natures, but they are so strict; they are so round that they will not endure an oath, a lie, &c., and therefore I cannot abide them, I cannot endure them. These are like he in Seneca, which was so fearfully idle that his sides would ache to see another work. So these are so fearfully wicked, that it makes their sides, their heads, their very hearts ache, to see others holy. How far these are in their actings below heathens, you may see in Rom 16:10-11. Aristobulus and Narcissus, that are spoken of in this scripture, were both heathens, and yet they had in their families those that were in the Lord, those that were gracious, &c. Heathens were so ingenuous, that they would not despise that holiness in others that they wanted in themselves; they were so noble, that they would give holiness house-room, though they knew not how to give it heart-room. So Potiphar, though he was a heathen, yet he gave holy Joseph both house-room and heart-room, Gen 39:1-4. These, and several other heathens of the like spirit with them, will one day rise in judgment against many in these days that are so far fallen out with holiness, as that they will not endure it under the roof of their houses, yea, as that they make it the greatest matter of scorn and derision. Like those in Lam 2:15-16, 'All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee; they hiss and gnash the teeth; they say, We have swallowed her up,' &c. Ah, how many such monsters are there in these days, who express their derision, disdain, and contempt of holiness and holy persons, by all the scornful gestures, postures, and expressions imaginable; that clap their hands, that hiss, that wag their head, that gnash their teeth, and that say, Lo, these are your saints, these are your holy ones, your perfect ones, your beautiful ones! It is very sad to want holiness, but it is saddest of all to deride holiness, to disdain holiness. Of this evil spirit Salvian complained in his time. What madness is this, saith he, amongst Christians, that if a man be good he is despised as if he were evil! if he be evil, he is honoured as if he were good! And as great cause have we to complain of the prevalency of the same evil spirit in our times. If the wife be holy, how is she despised by her unholy husband as if she were wicked! 1Co 7:16; if she be wicked, how is she honoured as if she were holy! So if the child be gracious, how is he disdained as if he were graceless! if he be graceless, how is he admired as if he were gracious! So if a servant be godly, how is he scorned as if he were godless! if he be godless, how is he applauded as if he were godly! Certainly God will never endure such to stand in his sight, who cannot endure the sight of holiness, Psa 1:5. Doubtless God will never give them any room in heaven, who will not so much as give holiness a little house-room, I say not heart-room, here. He that now despises and disdains holiness in others, shall at last be eternally despised and disdained for want of holiness himself.

Use 2.—The second use is a use of trial and examination. Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness? must men be holy on earth, or else they shall never come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven? Oh then, what cause hath every one to try and examine whether he hath this real holiness, without which there is no happiness, or no! Now because this is a point of great importance, and a mistake here may undo a man for ever; and considering the great averseness and backwardness of men's hearts to this noble and necessary work, I shall therefore

in the first place propose some considerations to provoke all your hearts to fall in good earnest upon this great point of trial and examination. Now to this purpose consider,

1. First, It is possible for you to know whether you have this real holiness or not; it is possible for you by the light of the Spirit, by the light of the word, and by the light of your own consciences, to see whether holiness, which is the image of God, be stamped upon your souls or no. Though it be impossible for thee to climb up to heaven to search the records of glory, to see whether thy name be written in the book of life, yet it is possible for thee to go down into the chambers of thine own soul, to enter into the withdrawing-rooms of thine own heart, and there to read what impressions of holiness are upon thee. Though this work be hard and difficult, yet it is noble and possible; though the heart be deceitful and full of shifts, yet it is possible for a man to make such a curious, such a narrow, such a diligent, such a faithful, and such an impartial search into his own soul, as that he may certainly know whether he hath that real holiness that is the pledge of immortal happiness or no; it is possible for him that hath this jewel, this holiness, to know it, to find it, and in the beautiful face of holiness to read his own everlasting happiness. I might call in the experiences of many precious saints—as Abraham, Noah, Jacob, David, Job, Paul, and others—to bear witness to this truth; but I suppose it is needless. What great and weighty, what high and hard, what hazardous and dangerous things do many soldiers, sailors, sick patients, and others, attempt and undertake, upon the mere account of a possibility! It is possible that the soldier may win the field; it is possible that the mariner may make a happy voyage; it is possible that the sick patient may recover; it is possible that he that strives for mastery may overcome, &c. Now upon this very account, that it is possible, what will they stick at? what will they not attempt and endeavour to effect? And why then should not Christians, upon the account of a possibility, make a diligent search after that holiness that will at last throne the soul in everlasting happiness? Well, Christians, as a possibility of obtaining grace and mercy should bear up your hearts against despair; as a possibility of obtaining a pardon should keep up your hearts in a seeking and a waiting way; and as a possibility of salvation by Christ should be argument sufficient to work a soul to venture itself upon Christ; so a possibility of knowing whether you have this pearl of price, holiness, should work you to make a diligent search and inquiry after it.² Let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for this world, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for another world: let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for his body, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for your souls: let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for temporals, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for eternals. It is possible for you to know whether this babe of grace, holiness, be formed in your souls or no; and therefore search and inquire after it.

2. Secondly, Consider this, that it is a point of very great concernment to you to know whether you have this real holiness or no. Your souls lies upon it, eternity lies upon it, your all lies upon it, and an error here may make a man miserable for ever. It is good for thee to know the state of thy body, the state of thy family, the state of thy flock, but it is of infinite more consequence for thee to know the state of thine own soul. *Multi multa sciunt, se autem nemo*—No man lives so miserable, nor no man dies so sadly, as he that lives and dies a stranger to his own soul. It is good for thee to set all reckonings even between thyself and others, but it is far better to set all reckonings even between God and thine own soul. Ah, how many are there who are better known to others than they are to themselves! and who are able to give a better account of their lands and lordships, of their treasures and manors, yea, of their horses, hawks, and hounds, than they are of the state of their

souls! Ah, how many are there that are very inquisitive to know things to come, to know what will be hereafter, to know whether they shall be great and rich in the world, Ecc 7:10, to know whether they shall be prosperous and successful in their undertakings, to know whether they shall be crowned with length of days, or whether they shall be cut off in the flower of their age; to know the secret counsels of princes, and what will be the issue of such and such mutations and revolutions that have happened amongst us; and yet are not at all inquisitive after the state of their souls, nor whether they have this real holiness, without which there is no happiness! They never inquire what will become of them hereafter; they never inquire what state they shall enter upon after death, whether upon a state of eternal woe or a state of everlasting bliss. Of all acquaintances in this world, there is none to that of a man's being acquainted with the state of his own soul. A mistake about my outward condition may trouble me, but a mistake about my spiritual condition may damn me. There are many ways to make up my mistakes about temporals, but there is no way to make up my mistakes about eternals. If at last I shall be found to be mistaken in the great concernments of my soul, I am undone for ever. Well, sirs, you are in a state of nature or in a state of grace; you are in a state of darkness or in a state of light; you are in a state of life or in a state of death; you are in a state of love or in a state of wrath; you are either goats or sheep, sons or slaves; you are either in the broad way to destruction or in the narrow way of salvation; and therefore what can be of greater concernment in this world to you than to know in which of these two spiritual estates you are in? How can you order aright your prayers, or your praises, or any religious services, till you come to know in which of these two spiritual estates you stand?—whether you be in a state of nature or in a state of grace, in a state of sin or in a state of holiness: for all religious duties must be ordered according to men's spiritual estates. If a man be in a state of nature, his work lies one way; if he be in a state of holiness, his work lies another way; by all which it is most evident that it very nearly concerns you to search and try whether you have this bird of paradise, holiness, in your bosoms or no. And for a close, let me say, that a mistake about your spiritual estate will at last be found not only insufferable and inexcusable, but very terrible and damnable.

3. Thirdly, Consider that a cordial willingness to enter upon this work of trial, is a hopeful evidence of your real integrity and sanctity. Unsanctified souls hate the light; they had rather go to hell in the dark, than come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, John 3:20. As pure gold fears neither fire nor furnace, neither test nor touchstone, neither one balance nor another, so a pure heart, a sanctified soul, dares venture itself upon trial, yea, upon the very trial of God. For he knows that God never brings a pair of scales to weigh his graces, but only a touchstone to try the truth of his graces; he knows if his gold be true, though it be never so little, it will pass for current with God. As bankrupts care not for casting up their accounts, because they know all is naught, very naught, stark naught with them; so unsanctified souls they care not to come to the trial, to the test, because they know that all is naught, yea, worse than naught with them. They have no mind to cast up their spiritual estates, because at the foot of the account they must be put to read their neckverse, 'Undone, undone, for ever undone.'² And, therefore, as old deformed women cannot endure to look into the looking-glass, lest their wrinkles and deformity should be discovered; so unsanctified souls cannot endure to look into the glass of the gospel, lest their deformities, impieties, and wickednesses should be discovered and detected. I have read of the elephant, how unwilling he is to go into the water, but when he is forced into it, he puddles it, lest by the clearness of the stream he should discern his own deformity; so unholy persons are very unwilling to look into their own hearts, or into the clear streams of Scripture, lest their souls' deformity and ugliness

should appear, to their own terror and amazement. And therefore, as you would have a hopeful evidence of your integrity and sanctity, fall upon this work of trial. For as it is a hopeful evidence that the client's cause is good, when he is ready and willing to enter upon a trial, and as it is a hopeful sign that a man's gold is true gold, when he is willing to bring it to the touchstone, and that a man thrives, when he is willing to cast up his books; so it is a hopeful evidence that a Christian hath real holiness, when he is ready and willing to bring his holiness to the test, to try whether it be true or no—when he is willing to cast up his books, that he may see what he is worth for another world, Gal 6:4-5.

4. Fourthly, Consider that there are very many that deceive themselves about their spiritual estates. It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to deceive himself, Job 15:34, and Pro 30:12. There are those that do but think that they stand, (1Co 10:12,) and these at last come to fall from their seeming standing into a real hell—yea, from their highest standing into the lowest hell. There are many that think themselves to be something, when they are nothing, Gal 6:3. There are many that have a form of godliness, but none of the power, 2Ti 3:8. There are many that have a name to live, but are dead, Rev 3:1. There are many that are very confident of their integrity, and yet are full of horrible hypocrisy. There are many that carry the lamps of profession, that have no oil of grace in their hearts. There are many that take a good nature for grace, civility for sanctity, and a garb of godliness for real holiness—yea, there are those who dare say that they excel others in holiness, when, in truth, they exceed most men in wickedness—yea, there are many now in hell who have had a great confidence of going to heaven. There are many that cry out with Agag, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past,' wrath is past, and hell is past, and damnation is past, whenas vengeance is ready to fall on them, and hell stands gaping to devour them. The heart of man is full of self-love, full of self-flattery, and full of hypocrisy, and therefore many a man who is only a Jew outwardly, thinks himself to be a Jew inwardly, Rom 2:28-29. Many a man thinks himself to be as good a Christian as the best, and to be as happy as the best, and to be as fair for heaven as the best, till he comes to hear that tormenting word, 'Depart, I know ye not.' As many are kept off from Christ by a conceit that they have him already, so many are kept off from holiness by a conceit that they have it already. And therefore it doth very much concern you to make a diligent inquiry whether you have that holiness without which there is no happiness, or no. I have read of Plato, that when he did walk in the streets, if he saw any disordered in speech, disguised in drink, or otherwise out of frame, he would say to himself, Num ego talis?—Am I such a one as this is? Am I such a swearer as this is? Am I such a drunkard as this is? Am I such a wanton as this is? Am I such a riotous person as this is? &c. So should every Christian say when he hears of any that doth but think that they stand, Num ego talis?—Am I such a one as this is? When he sees one that thinks himself something when he is nothing, he should say, Am I such a one as this is? When he sees a man to have a form of godliness, but no power, he should say, Am I such a one as this is? When he hears of a man that hath a name to live, but is spiritually dead, he should say, Am I such a one as this is? &c. And when he hears or reads of one that is really holy, he should say, Am I such a one as this is? As you would not put a cheat upon your own souls, it highly concerns you to try whether you have real holiness or no. Look, as many young children catch many a fall out of a strong conceit of their abilities to go, so many a man, out of a strong conceit that he hath holiness when he hath none, catches many a fall in an eternal fall at last. The best way to prevent an everlasting miscarriage, is to make a privy search after holiness in thine own heart.

5. Fifthly, Consider that there is a great deal of counterfeit grace and holiness in the world. There is not more counterfeit coin this day in the world than there is counterfeit holiness in the world. Look, as many Bristows stones, and counterfeit gems, do so shine and sparkle like true jewels, that if a man be not very careful he may be easily cheated; so counterfeit grace, counterfeit holiness, doth so shine and sparkle, they do so nearly resemble real holiness, and the sanctifying and saving graces of the Spirit, that a man may be easily mistaken, if he do not make a narrow search. Doth the gracious soul abstain from gross sins? so doth the formalist too. Do saints fast and pray? so do Pharisees too. Doth Peter shed tears? so doth Esau too. Doth Peter repent? so doth Judas too. Doth Cornelius give alms? so do the Pharisees too. Doth Zaccheus believe? so doth Simon Magus too. Doth David confess his sin? so doth Saul too. Doth David delight in approaching to God? so doth Isaiah's hypocrites too. Doth Hezekiah humble himself? so doth Ahab and the king of Nineveh too. Doth a gracious soul hear the word with joy? so did Herod too. Doth a gracious soul receive the word with joy? so did the stony ground too. Doth a gracious soul delight in his teacher? so did Ezekiel's worldlings too. Is a gracious soul in closet duties? so is the Pharisee too, &c. When counterfeit coin is abroad, you will not take a piece but you will try it; you will bring every piece to the touchstone. Ah that you would deal so by your holiness! There is a great deal of counterfeit holiness abroad, and therefore you had need bring yours to the trial. As all is not gold that glisters, so all is not holiness that men take for holiness, that men count for holiness. The child is not more like the father, nor one brother like another. Wine in the bottle is not more like to wine in the butt, nor water in the cistern more like to water in the river, nor fire in the forge more like to fire in the chimney, nor milk in the saucer to milk in the breasts, than counterfeit grace and holiness is like to that which is real. Counterfeit faith doth so nearly resemble true faith, and counterfeit love true love, and counterfeit repentance true repentance, and counterfeit obedience true obedience, and counterfeit knowledge true knowledge, and counterfeit holiness true holiness, that it is not an easy matter to discover the one from the other. The Cyprian diamond, saith Pliny, looks so like the true Indian diamond, that if a man do not look warily to it he may easily be deceived and cheated. O sirs, true grace and counterfeit, true holiness and counterfeit, look so like one another, that, without a divine light to guide you, you may be easily cheated and deceived for ever. In these days of profession there is abundance of false ware put off. Satan is a subtle merchant; and where profaneness will not pass for current coin, there he labours to furnish his customers with the shows and resemblances of grace and holiness, that so he may hold them the faster in golden fetters, and put them off from looking after that real holiness, without which no man can be blessed here, or happy hereafter. And therefore it nearly concerns every man to search and try whether he hath real holiness or no.

6. Sixthly, Consider, if upon trial you shall find in you this real holiness that paves the way to happiness, it will turn exceedingly to your accounts. Thy happiness depends upon the real being of holiness in thee, but thy comfort depends upon thy seeing of holiness. Real holiness will yield thee a heaven hereafter; but the seeing of holiness will yield thee a heaven here. He that hath holiness and knows it, shall have two heavens—a heaven of joy, comfort, peace, content, and assurance here, and a heaven of happiness and blessedness hereafter; but he that hath holiness and doth not know it, shall certainly be saved, yet so as by fire; he shall have a heaven at last, but he must pass to it by the flaming sword, 1Co 3:11, 1Co 3:16. When a person is heir to a great estate, and knows it, when a person is son to a king, and knows it, when a person is highly in favour, and knows it, when a person is out of all hazard and danger, and knows it, when a person's pardon is

sealed, and he knows it, then the spring of joy and comfort rises in him; so when a man is holy, and knows it, then the spring of divine joy and comfort rises in his soul, as the waters rise in Ezekiel's sanctuary, Eze 47:2-5. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will make heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, 2Co 4:16-18; 1Co 15:58. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will make thee frequent, fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will strengthen thy faith, raise thy hope, inflame thy love, increase thy patience, and brighten thy zeal. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will make every mercy sweet, every duty sweet, every ordinance sweet, and every providence sweet. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will rid thee of all thy sinful fears and cares; it will give thee ease under every burden, and it will make death more desirable than life, Php 1:22-23; 2Co 5:1, 2Co 5:10. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will make thee more strong to resist temptation, more victorious over opposition, and more silent in every condition. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will turn every winter night into a summer's day, every cross into a crown, and every wilderness into a paradise. The knowledge of the goodness and holiness of thy estate will be a sword to defend thee, a staff to support thee, a cordial to strengthen thee, a plaster to heal thee, and a star to lead thee. And oh, who then will not take some pains with his own heart to know the goodness and holiness of his own estate? Well, remember this, next to a man's being holy, it is the greatest mercy in this world to know that he is holy. But if upon trial a man shall find that his estate is bad, and that his holiness is not of the right stamp, yet this will be many ways a mercy and an advantage to him. For the way to be found, is to see yourselves lost: the way to infinite mercy is to see your own misery; the way to Canaan is through the wilderness; the way to heaven is by the gates of hell. Upon the knowledge of the badness and sadness of thy estate, thou wilt be awakened out of thy security, and thou wilt be alarmed to loathe thyself, to judge thyself, to condemn thyself, to be sick of sin, to break with Satan, and to close with Christ. Now the daily language of thy soul will be, 'Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?' Acts 2:37, Acts 2:42, and Acts 16:22, Acts 16:35. Oh, what shall I do to get my sinful nature changed, my hard heart softened, my blind mind enlightened, my polluted conscience purged, and my poor naked soul with grace and holiness adorned? Now the daily language of thy soul will be that of the martyr, 'Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ!' Oh, none but Christ to pardon me; none but Christ to justify me; none but Christ to command me; none but Christ to save me; and none but Christ to reign over me. Now the language of thy soul will be this, Oh, though I have formerly thought myself to be wise, yet now I see myself to be a fool! Oh that Christ would be wisdom to me! 1Co 1:30-31. Oh, now I see myself to be red with guilt, and black with filth! Oh that Christ would be righteousness to me! Oh, now I see myself to be unclean, unclean! Oh that Christ would be sanctification to me! Oh, now I see myself to be in a damnable condition! Oh that Christ would be redemption to me! Rev 3:16-18. Oh, now I see myself naked! Oh that Christ would clothe me! Now I see myself poor and miserable! Oh that Christ would enrich me! Now I feel myself to be hungry! Oh that Christ would be bread of life to feed me! Now I perceive myself to be lost! Oh that Christ would seek me! Now I fear that I am perishing! Oh that Christ would save me! Now the language of your souls will be that of the lepers, 'If we stay here, we die,' 2Ki 7:3-6; if we stay in our unsanctified and unrenewed estate, we die; if we stay in our sins, we die; if we stay on our duties, we die; if we stay on a conceited or counterfeit holiness, we die; if we stay on a form of godliness, we die; if we stay on a name to live, we die; if we stay where

the world stays, we die; if we stay in anything a-this side Christ and real holiness, we die, we eternally die; and therefore, let us arise and make a venture of our souls upon Christ, and pursue after that holiness without which there is no happiness. But,

7. Seventhly and lastly, Consider that there are many that are truly holy, that have real holiness in them, and yet for want of a narrow search, a diligent inquiry into their spiritual estates, they come to be sorely and sadly afflicted with fears and doubts about their wants of holiness. As the treasures of this world often lie obscure and hid in the bowels of the earth, so the treasures of holiness often lie obscure and hid in many a gracious soul, for want of a privy search. As it is one mercy for me to believe, and another mercy for me to know that I do believe, 1Jn 5:13; as it is one mercy for me to be beloved, and another mercy for me to know that I am beloved, Psa 4:6, and Psa 51:1-3; as it is, one mercy for me to be pardoned in the court of glory, and another mercy, for, to know that I am pardoned in the court of conscience; as it is one mercy for me to have my name written in the book of life, and another mercy for me to be told that my name is written in that book, Luk 10:20; so it is one mercy for me to have real holiness in me, and, another mercy for me to see it and to know it. As we many times complain of the want of those things that we have in our hands, so many dear Christians complain of the want of that holiness that they have in their hearts. As the well, the spring of water, was near to Hagar though she saw it not, Gen 21:16-19; so the spring of holiness is near to many a Christian, yea, it is in many a Christian, and yet he sees it not, he knows it not. As Jacob once said, 'The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not,' Gen 28:16; so many a precious soul may say, I had real holiness in my heart, and I knew it not. As the face of Moses did shine, but he saw it not, he knew it not, though others did see it and take notice of it, Exo 34:29-35; so holiness shines in many a Christian's heart and life, yet corruptions raise such a dust in his soul that he sees it not, he knows it not, though others can see it, take notice of it, and bless and admire the Lord for it. As there be some that think they are rich, when they are not; and that say they are rich, when they are not, Rev 3:16-17; Pro 13:7; so there be others that are rich, and yet they will not say it, nor believe it; so there be some that think they have holiness, when they have not, yea, that say they have holiness when they have not, Isa 65:3-6; Mark 8:18; so there be others that have real holiness, and yet they dare not think so, they dare not say so; yea, they are apt, in times of temptation, desertion, sore afflictions, and when they are under the sensible stirrings of strong corruptions, to conclude that they have no holiness, no grace, when indeed they have. Witness Job, Job 13:24, and Job 19:9; witness David, Psa 22:1-2; witness Asaph, Psa 77:2, Psa 77:11; witness Heman, Psa 88:1, Psa 88:17; witness Jeremiah, Lam 3:18; witness the whole church, Isa 49:15-16; Eze 37:11-12; and witness the disciples, John 14:4-5, John 14:7-9, John 14:20, compared. To know ourselves to be holy, is very desirable; but woe were to many precious Christians if they might not be holy and yet not know it, if they might not have holiness in their hearts, when the appearance of holiness is hid from their eyes. Look, as sparks and coals of fire are often hid under the ashes, and we see them not; and as in winter the sap and life is hid in the root of the tree, and we perceive it not; and as precious flowers are hid in their seeds, and we discern them not; so when it is winter with a Christian, his holiness may be so hid and covered under fears, doubts, sins, &c., that he may not be able to see it, to discern it, or conclude that he hath it. As the air is sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy, and the sea sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing; so the holiness of the saints is sometimes so clouded, and at so low an ebb, that a Christian can hardly discern it, he can hardly say, Lo, here is my holiness! The being of holiness in the soul is one thing, the seeing of holiness in the soul is another

thing; the being of holiness is one thing, the feeling of holiness is another thing. A Christian may as safely conclude that there are no stars in the sky in a dark night, because he cannot see them; and that there is no treasure in the mine, because he cannot discern it, nor come to the feeling of it, as he may conclude that he hath no holiness in his heart, because he cannot see it, he cannot feel it. As the treasures of this world, so the treasures of holiness oftentimes lie low: a man must dig deep before he can come at them, Pro 2:3-6. As the babe lives in the womb, but doth not know it; and as the sun often shines into the house, and a man doth not see it: so the babe of grace may be formed in the soul, and yet a Christian not know it; and the sun of holiness may shine in his soul, and yet he not see it. Oh, therefore, how greatly doth it concern Christians to make a diligent, a narrow, and a serious search into their own hearts, whether they have this jewel of glory—holiness—in their souls or no! And if these arguments will not provoke you to fall upon this work of trial, I know not what will. But methinks I hear some of you saying, O sir, how shall we do to know whether we have this real holiness or no? we see it is our very great concernment to know whether God hath sown this heavenly seed in our souls or no: but how shall we come to know this? Now to this I answer, there are several ways whereby this may be discovered. As,

1. First, A person of real holiness is much affected and taken up in the admiration of the holiness of God. Unholy persons may be somewhat affected and taken with other of the excellencies of God; but it is only holy souls that are affected and taken with the holiness of God: Exo 15:11, 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' In this stately description of God, holy Moses is most taken up in magnifying and admiring the holiness of God. Holiness is that glory of the Creator that holy ones most delight to glory in. So holy David: Psa 71:22, 'Unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel:' so Isa 12:6, 'Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee:' so Psa 78:41, and Psa 89:19, &c.; Isa 43:3, and Isa 49:7. The inhabitants of Zion must shout and hollow out, (as the Hebrew word carries it,) in token of joy, because he that is great and in the midst of them is the Holy One of Israel. So Hab 1:12, 'Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?' Among holy ones, none to the Holy One: yea, the more holy any are, the more deeply are they affected and taken with the holiness of God: as you may see in Isa 6:3, 'And one cried unto another'—or this cried to this—and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' The holy seraphims, by trebling the acclamation of his holiness, 'Holy, holy, holy,' do denote not only the superlative eminency, glory, and excellency of God's holiness, but also they do discover how greatly, how abundantly they are affected and taken with the holiness of God. To the holy angels, the holiness of God is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. But now unholy persons are rather affected and taken with anything than with the holiness of God. The carnal-secure sinner is affected and taken with the patience, forbearance, and long-suffering of God: Oh, saith he, what a God of patience is this, that hath waited so many years for my repentance! that he that might long since have damned me, waits still to save me! that he who might long since have cast me into hell, is still willing that I should go to heaven! The presumptuous sinner is much affected and taken with the mercy and goodness of God. Well, saith the presumptuous sinner, though I have sinned thus and thus, yet God hath been merciful to me; and though I do sin daily thus and thus, yet God is still merciful to me; and though I should still go on to sin sevenfold more, yet he would be merciful to me, Deu 29:18-21; Ecc 8:11. He doth not delight in the death of a sinner, nor in the damnation of souls; oh, what a merciful God is God! The prosperous sinner, he is taken with the bounty and liberality of

God. Oh, saith he, what a bountiful God, what a liberal God is this, who fills my barns, who fills my bags, who prospers me at home and abroad, who hath blest me with a healthful body, a fair estate, a saving wife, a full trade, laborious servants, and thriving children! &c. But where is there a sinner in all the world that is affected and taken with the holiness of God? Certainly there is nothing that renders God so formidable and terrible to unholy persons as his holiness doth: Isa 30:11, 'Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.' Oh that you would not preach so much, nor talk so much to us of the Holy One of Israel! Oh that you would once cease from molesting and vexing us with message upon message from the Holy One! Why cannot you as well talk and preach to us of the merciful one, the compassionate One, the affectionate One, the pitiful One, &c., as be still a-talking to us of the Holy One, the Holy One! Oh, we love not to hear it! Oh, we cannot tell how to bear it! Nothing strikes the sinner into such a damp as a discourse on the holiness of God; it is as the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:4-6; nothing makes the head and heart of a sinner to ache like a sermon upon the Holy One; nothing galls and gripes, nothing stings and terrifies unsanctified ones, like a lively setting forth of the holiness of God, Hab 1:13. But now to holy souls, there are no discourses that do more suit them and satisfy them, that doth more delight and content them, that doth more please and profit them, than those that do most fully and powerfully discover God to be glorious in holiness. Well, this is an everlasting truth; he that truly affects the holiness of God, and affects God for his holiness, is certainly made partaker of his holiness. If you are really holy, you are much affected and taken with the holiness of God. Souls, what say you to this? But,

2. Secondly, True holiness is diffusive. Bonum est sui communicativum; it doth extend, diffuse, and spread itself all over the soul; it spreads itself over head and heart, lip and life, inside and outside: Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold.' Inward holiness is the inward glory of the king's daughter. The king's daughter is 'all glorious within;' her understanding is hanged with holiness, her mind is adorned with holiness, her will is bowed to holiness, and all her affections are sprinkled, yea, clothed with holiness. Her love is holy love, her grief is holy grief, her joy is holy joy, her sorrow is holy sorrow, her fear is holy fear, her care is holy care, her zeal is holy zeal; and her clothing is of 'wrought gold'—that is, her life and conversation, which is as visible to others as the clothes she wears, is very sparkling and shining in grace and holiness. True sanctification is throughout, it reaches to soul, body, and spirit, 1Th 5:23. True holiness is a divine leaven, which leavens the whole man, Mat 13:33. Look, as leaven diffuses itself through the whole dough, so true holiness diffuses itself through the whole man. Look, as Absalom's beauty was spread all over him, even from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, 2Sa 14:25, so the beauty of holiness spreads itself over every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul. Look, as Solomon's temple was glorious both within and without, so holiness makes all glorious both within and without. Look, as Adam's sin spread itself over the whole man, so that holiness that we have by the 'second Adam' spreads itself over the whole man; so that that man that is not all over holy, that is not throughout holy, that man was never truly holy, 1Co 15:45. Look, as that holiness which was in Christ did diffuse and spread itself over all Christ; so that his person was holy, his natures were holy, his heart was holy, his language was holy, and his life was holy; so real holiness spreads itself over head, hand, heart, lip, and life, 1Pe 1:15. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, Eph 5:9; he that is truly good, is all over good; he hath goodness engraven upon his understanding, and goodness engraven upon his judgment, and goodness engraven upon his will, and goodness engraven upon his affections, and goodness

engraven upon his inclination, and goodness engraven upon his disposition, and goodness engraven upon his conversation. He that is not all over good is not really good. There are those that have new heads but old hearts, new words but old wills, new expressions but old affections, new memories but old minds, new notions but old conversations; and these are as far off from true holiness, as the Pope, the Turk, and the devil are from real happiness. In every holy person there are many divine miracles: there is a dead man restored to life, a dumb man restored to speech, a blind man restored to sight, a deaf man restored to hearing, a lame man restored to walking, a man possessed with devils possessed with grace, a heart of stone turned into a heart of flesh, and a life of wickedness turned into a life of holiness. If it be thus with thee, I dare write thee, and call thee both holy and happy. But,

3. Thirdly, Persons of real holiness do set the highest price and the greatest value and esteem upon those that are holy; they do not, as the blind world do, value persons by their great places, names, professions, arts, parts, gifts, gay clothes, gold chains, honours, and riches, but by their holiness. As a holy God, so holy souls look not how rational men are, but how religious; not how notional, but how experimental; not how great, but how gracious; not how high, but how holy; and, accordingly they value them: Psa 16:3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Pro 12:26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' It is holiness that differences one man from another, and that exalts one man above another. A holy man is a better man than his neighbour, in the eye, account, and esteem of God, angels, and saints. There is no man to the holy man. The sun doth not more excel and outshine the stars, than a righteous man doth excel and outshine his unrighteous neighbour: Pro 28:6, 'Better is the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than he that is perverse in his ways, though he be rich.' A man of holiness prefers a holy Job, though upon the dunghill, before a wicked Ahab upon the throne; he sets a higher price upon a holy Lazarus, though clothed with rags, and full of sores, than upon a rich and wretched Dives, who is clothed gloriously, and fares sumptuously every day; as King Ingo valued poor, ragged Christians above his pagan nobles, saying, that when his pagan nobles, in all their pomp and glory, should be cast down to hell, those poor Christians should be his consorts and fellow-princes in heaven. This blind, mad world rates and values men according to their worldly interest, greatness, glory, and grandeur; but men of holiness rate and value men by their holiness, by their inward excellencies, and by what they are worth for another world. The world judgeth him the best man in the parish that is most rich; but a holy man judgeth him the best man in the parish that is most righteous. The world counts him the best man in the town that is clothed most gorgeously; but a holy man counts him the best man in the town whose inside and outside, whose heart and life, whose body and soul is clothed with sanctity and purity. The world reckons him the best man in the city whose bags are fullest, and whose estate is largest; but a holy man reckons him the best man in the city whose heart is fullest of holiness, and who hath most to shew for a fair estate in the other world. Certainly, to a holy man, there is no wife to a holy wife, no child to a holy child, no friend to a holy friend, no magistrate to a holy magistrate, no minister to a holy minister, nor no servant to a holy servant. Internal excellencies carries it with a holy man, before all external glories. The Jews say that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. Doubtless seventy holy persons, in the esteem and judgment of those that are holy, are more worth than a whole world, yea, than seventy worlds, of unrighteous souls. A soul, truly holy, sets the highest price upon those that are holy. Holy Paul prized holy Onesimus as his son, Phm 1:10, as himself, Phm 1:17, yea, as

his own bowels, Phm 1:12; 2Sa 22:27, 'With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure,' or (as the Hebrew will bear it) 'with the choice thou wilt shew thyself choice.' Pure souls are the choicest souls in all the world: they are choice in every eye but their own. All worldly excellencies, in the judgment of a holy man, are but as copper, brass, tin, and lead; but holiness is the tried silver, the gold of Ophir, the pearl of price, in his eye that hath purity in his heart. They only rate and value men aright, who rate and value them according to their holiness; and if men were thus rated and valued, most men in the world would be found not worth the money that Judas sold his Master for. If thou prizest others for their holiness, thou art a holy person. No man can truly prize and highly value holiness in another, but he that hath holiness in his own heart. Some prize Christians for their wit, others prize them for their wealth; some prize them for their birth and breeding, others prize them for their beauty and worldly glory; some prize them for the great things that have been done by them, others prize them for the good things that they have received from them; some prize them for their eagles' eyes, others prize them for their silver tongues; but he that is truly holy prizes them for their holiness, he values them for their purity and sanctity. But,

4. Fourthly, He that is truly holy will be still a-reaching and stretching himself out after higher degrees of holiness; yea, a man that is truly holy can never be holy enough; he sets no bounds nor limits to his holiness; the perfection of holiness is the mark that he hath in his eye; he hears, and prays, and mourns, and studies, and strives that he may come up to the highest pitch of holiness. Php 3:12-14, 'Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' Received measures of holiness will not satisfy a holy soul; so much holiness as will keep hell and his soul asunder will not satisfy him; nor so much holiness as will bring him to happiness will not satisfy him; he will be still reaching and stretching out after the highest measures of holiness; his desires are for more holiness, Psa 27:4. The beauties of holiness do so affect him and inflame him, that he cannot but desire to be more and more holy. Lord, saith the soul, I desire to be more holy, that I may glorify thy name more, that I may honour my profession more, and that I may serve my generation more. Lord, I desire to be more holy, that I may sin less against thee, and that I may enjoy more of thee; I would be more holy, that I may be more prevalent with thee, and that I may be more victorious over all things below thee. And as a man of holiness desires more holiness, so a man of holiness earnestly prays for more holiness, Psa 51:2, Psa 51:7. He prayeth that he may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and that he may go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength, Job 17:9, and Pro 4:18; he prayeth that his spark of holiness may be turned into a flame, his drop of holiness into a sea, and his mite of holiness into a rich treasury; he prayeth that he may, like the eagle, fly higher and higher, and that his soul may be like the rising sun, that shines brighter and brighter till it be perfect day; he prayeth that he may, like the giant refreshed, rejoice to run his course, and that holiness in his soul, like the waters in Ezekiel's sanctuary, may still be rising higher and higher. It was Beza's prayer, 'Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at heaven.' And as a man of holiness prayeth for more holiness, so a man of holiness believes for more holiness. Psa 51:7: in your translations you read the words prayerwise, but in the Hebrew the words run in the future thus: 'Thou wilt purge me from sin with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou wilt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' In the sense of all his sinfulness and vileness, he

believes that God will give out greater measures of purity and sanctity to him: 'Thou wilt purge me, and I shall be clean: thou wilt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' So in Psa 65:3, 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.' Though for the present iniquity did prevail, yet he had faith enough to believe that God would purge him from his transgressions, and that he would mortify prevailing corruptions. And as a man of holiness believes for more holiness, so a man of holiness hopes for more holiness, 1Jn 3:2-4. In every ordinance he hopes for more holiness, and under every providence he hopes for more holiness, and under every mutation and change of his condition he hopes for more holiness, 2Pe 3:14. When he is in prosperity, he hopes that God will make him more zealous, thankful, cheerful, fruitful, and useful; and when he is in adversity, he hopes that God will inflame his love, and raise his faith, and increase his patience, and strengthen his submission, and quiet his heart in a gracious resignation of himself to God. I dare boldly say that that man was never truly holy, who endeavours not to get up to the highest pitches of holiness. Ille non est bonus, qui non vult esse melior. True holiness knows no restrictions nor limitation. But now counterfeit holiness is either like Hezekiah's sun, which went backward; or like Joshua's sun, which stood still; or like Ephraim's morning cloud, which soon passed away. No round but the highest round in Jacob's ladder will satisfy a holy soul. True holiness makes a man divinely covetous. Look, as the victorious man can never make conquests enough, nor the ambitious man can never have honour enough, nor the voluptuous man pleasure enough, nor the worldling mammon enough, nor the wanton vain embraces enough, no more can a man of holiness have ever holiness enough in this world. As the grave and the barren womb are never satisfied, they never say it is enough, Pro 30:15-16; so a holy man, whilst he is a-this side eternity, he is never satisfied, he can never say that he hath holiness enough.

5. Fifthly, Where there is real holiness, there is a holy hatred, detestation, and indignation against all ungodliness and wickedness, and that upon holy accounts: Psa 119:101, 'I have refrained my feet from every evil way.' But why? 'That I may keep thy word;' Psa 109:104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.' The good that he got by divine precepts stirred up his hatred against every false way: Psa 119:128, 'Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.' His high esteem of every precept raised up in him a holy indignation against every evil way. A holy man knows that all sin strikes at the holiness of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the law of God; and therefore his heart rises against all; he looks upon every sin, as the Scribes and Pharisees that accused Christ; and as that Judas that betrayed Christ; and that Pilate that condemned Christ; and those soldiers that scourged Christ; and as those spears that pierced Christ; and therefore his heart cries out for justice upon all. He looks upon every sin as having a hand in the death of his Saviour, and therefore he cries out, Crucify them all, crucify them all; he looks upon every sin as a grieving of the Spirit, as a vexing of the Spirit, and as a quenching of the Spirit; and so nothing will satisfy him but the ruin of them all. He looks upon every sin as a dishonour to God, as an enemy to Christ, as a wound to the Spirit, as a reproach to the gospel, and as a moth to his holiness; and therefore his heart and his hand is against every sin. But now, if you will but look into the Scriptures, you shall find that all those that have been but pretenders to holiness, their hearts have been always engaged to some one way of wickedness or another, Isa 58:1, Isa 58:9; Zec 7:4-7. Jehu was very zealous against idolaters; but yet his heart was engaged to his golden calves. Herod hears John Baptist gladly, and reforms many things, Mark 6:1-56 &c.;

but yet his Herodias must still lie in his bosom. Judas was as forward in religious services as any others, but yet money did bear the mastery with him, John 12:6. The Pharisees made long prayers, that they might the better make a prey upon widows' houses, Mat 23:19, and Mat 26:23. The young man offered fair for heaven, but yet his possessions had so possessed and locked up his heart, that Christ could get no entrance. Though Simon Magus believed, and was baptized, and wondered at the miracles and signs which were done by Philip; yet for all these shows of godliness, he was a prisoner to his lusts; his condition was dangerous, poisonous, and odious; he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, Acts 8:13-23. So those in Mat 7:21-23, though they complimented with Christ, saying, 'Lord, Lord;' though they prophesied in Christ's name, and cast out devils in Christ's name; yea, though they did not a few, but many wonderful works in Christ's name; yet all this while they were workers of iniquity, they were artists in sin; they were so addicted to sin, that they made a trade of sin. Look, as every lion hath his den, every dog his kennel, every sow her sty, and every crow her nest; so every unholy person hath one sin or another, to which his heart is engaged and married; and that sin will undo him for ever. As Lysimachus lost his earthly kingdom by drinking one draught of water,² so many lose a heavenly kingdom by indulging some one sin or other. One flaw spoils the diamond, one treason makes a traitor, one turn brings a man quite out of the way, one leak sinks the ship, one wound strikes Goliath dead, one Delilah betrays Samson, one broken wheel spoils the whole clock, and one fly spoils the whole box of ointment. And as one bastard destroyed Gideon's seventy sons, Jdg 8:1-35, so one predominant sin is enough to destroy the soul for ever. As by taking one nap Samson lost his strength, and by eating one apple Adam lost paradise; so many men, by favouring one sin, lose God, heaven, and their souls for ever. He that favours any sin, though he frowns upon many, doth but as Benhadad, recover of one disease and die of another; yea, he takes pains to go to hell. Sin favoured ever ends tragically. And as no unholy heart rises against all sin, so no unholy heart disdains sin or rises against sin upon noble accounts, upon holy and heavenly accounts. Sometimes you shall have an unholy person angry with sin, and falling out with sin, because it hath cracked his credit, or clouded his honour, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame here and hell hereafter: but never because a righteous law is transgressed, a holy God is dishonoured, a loving Saviour is afresh crucified, or the blessed Spirit grieved. It is between a holy and an unholy soul, as it is between two children; one will not touch the coal because it will smut him, and the other will not touch it because it will burn him. A holy heart rises against sin because of its defiling nature; but an unholy heart rises against sin because of its burning and damning nature. A holy man is most affected and afflicted with the evil that is in sin; but an unholy heart is most affected and afflicted with the punishment that is due to sin. A holy person hates sin because it pollutes his soul; but an unholy person hates it because it destroys his soul. A holy person loathes sin because it makes against God's holiness; but an unholy person loathes it because it provokes God's justice. A holy person detests sin because of the hell that is in sin; but an unholy person detests sin because of the hell that follows sin. A holy heart abhors all sin; but an unholy heart is still in league with some sin, Rom 12:9, and Rom 7:15, Rom 7:19; Isa 28:15, Isa 28:18. Now because this is a point of great concernment, I shall a little more open and evidence the truth of it, in these three particulars:—

(1.) First, The heart of a holy man rises against secret sins, against such as lie furthest off from the eye of man: Psa 119:113, 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' What more secret than vain thoughts? and yet against these the heart of a holy man rises. When Joseph was tempted to be

secretly wicked with his mistress, his heart rises against it: Gen 39:9, 'How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against the Lord?' Hezekiah humbled himself for 'the pride of his heart,' 2Ch 32:24-26. Heart-sins lie most close and secret; and yet for these a holy man humbles himself. Job would not suffer his heart, in an idolatrous way, secretly to kiss his hand, Job 31:26-27. The heart of a holy man rises against wickedness in the dark, against folly in a corner, against sin [in] a closet. So Paul was much affected and afflicted with the operations of sin within him, 'with the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind,' Rom 7:23-24. Paul, after his conversion, never fell into any scandalous sin. Those sins that did most trouble him and distress him were of his own house, yea, were in his own heart. A holy man knows that secret sins are sins, as well as those that are open, Psalms 19:12. He knows that secret sins must be repented of as well as others; he knows that God takes notice of secret sins as well as of open: 2Sa 12:12, 'Thou didst it secretly;' He knows that secret sins do often interpose between God and his soul: 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee: our secret sins in the light of thy countenance,' Psalm 90:8. He knows that secret sins will quickly become public, except they are presently loathed and speedily mortified, Gen 38:24-27. He knows that secret sins, like secret diseases and secret wounds, do oftentimes prove most dangerous and pernicious; he knows that secret sins are the price of blood, as well as open sinnings. He knows that secret sins are a grief to the Spirit, as well as those that are manifest. He knows that sometimes God punishes secret sins with manifest judgments, as you may see in that great instance of David, 2Sa 12:10, 2Sa 12:18. Upon all which accounts, a holy heart rises in a detestation of secret sins. But,

(2.) Secondly, The heart of a holy man rises against the least sins, as well as against secret sins, in a strict sense. I know there is no sin little, because there is no little hell, no little damnation, no little law, nor no little God to sin against; but yet some sins may comparatively be said to be little, if you compare them with those that are more great and gross, that are more heinous and odious, Mat 23:24. Now the hatred of a holy man rises against the least: Psalm 119:163, 'I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.' I hate, I abhor with horror, I loathe, I detest, I abominate lying as I do hell itself: so much the original word imports. David's heart smote him for the cutting off the lap of Saul's garment; and his heart smote him again for numbering of the people; and yet neither of these sins were heinous or scandalous, 1Sa 24:5, and 2Sa 24:10. Some write, that there is such a native dread and terror of the hawk implanted in the dove, that it detests and abhors the very sight of the least feather that hath grown upon the hawk. Certainly, there is such a holy dread of sin implanted in the heart of a saint, that he cannot but detest and abhor the least sin, yea, the very appearance of sin: his soul rises against the least motions or inclinations to evil, though they are silvered over with the most specious shows, and most glorious pretences: for he knows that the least sins are contrary to a righteous law, a holy God, and to his blessed Saviour, and the Spirit his only Comforter.

[1.] First, A holy man knows that little sins, if not prevented, will bring on greater. David gives way to his wandering eye, and that led him to those scandalous sins for which God broke his bones, hid his face, and withdrew his Spirit, 2Sa 12:26, seq. So Peter first denies his Master, and then forswears him, and then falls a-cursing and damning of himself, Mat 26:70-75; as the Greek word καταναθεματίζειν imports, he imprecated the wrath of God to fall upon him, and that he might be separated from the presence and glory of God if he knew the man; and then concludes with a most incredible lie, 'I know not the man;' whenas there was hardly a Jew which knew not Christ by

face, he being very famous for the many miracles that he daily wrought before their eyes. Ah! to what a height will sin suddenly rise! So Jacob, first he tells three lies in a breath, Gen 27:19-20 : 1. I am Esau; 2. Thy firstborn; 3. I have done according as thou badest me: and then he dissembled, in calling his meat 'venison;' and then he takes the name of God in vain, by entitling God to that he did: 'The Lord thy God brought it to me.' Ah, of what an encroaching nature is sin! how insensibly and suddenly doth it get ground upon the soul! I have read of a young man that was tempted to three great sins, viz., to kill his father, to lie with his mother, and to be drunk; judging the last to be the least, he yielded to it, and being drunk, he killed his father, and ravished his own mother.³ Lesser sins usually are inlets to greater: as the little thief let in at the window opens the door, and makes way for the greater; and the little wedge makes way for the greater. When Pompey could not take a city that he assaulted by force, he pretended that he would withdraw his army: only he desired that they would entertain a few of his weak and wounded soldiers, which accordingly they did. These soldiers soon recovered their strength, and opened the gates of the city, by which means Pompey's army entered and subdued the citizens. So little sins yielded to soon gather strength, and open the door to greater; and so a conquest is made upon the soul. This a holy heart well understands, and therefore it hates and abhors the least sin. But,

[2.] Secondly, A holy heart knows that little sins have exposed both sinners and saints to very great punishments. A gracious soul remembers the man that was stoned to death for gathering of sticks on the Sabbath-day. He remembers how Saul lost two kingdoms at once, his own kingdom and the kingdom of heaven, for sparing of Agag and the fat of the cattle. He remembers how the unprofitable servant, for the non-improvement of his talent, was cast into outer darkness. He remembers how Ananias and Sapphira were stricken suddenly dead for telling a lie. He remembers how Lot's wife, for a look of curiosity, was turned into a pillar of salt. He remembers how Adam was cast out of paradise for eating an apple; and the angels cast out of heaven for not keeping their standings. He remembers that Jacob smarted for his lying to his dying day. He remembers how God followed him with sorrow upon sorrow, and breach upon breach, filling up his days with grief and trouble. He remembers how Moses was shut out of the Holy Land, because he spoke unadvisedly with his lips. He remembers the young prophet who was slain by a lion for eating a little bread and drinking a little water, contrary to the command of God, though he was drawn thereunto by an old prophet, under a pretence of a revelation from heaven, 1Ki 13:1-34. He remembers how Zacharias was stricken both dumb and deaf, because he believed not the report of the angel Gabriel, Luk 1:19-62. He remembers how Uzzah was stricken dead for staying up the ark when it was in danger to have fallen. Yea, he can never forget the fifty thousand men of Beth-shemesh who were slain for looking into the ark, 2Sa 6:7-8; 1Sa 6:19-21. Now, ah, how doth the remembrance of these things stir up the hatred and indignation of a gracious soul against the least sins! A drachm of poison diffuseth itself to all parts, till it strangle the vital spirits, and separates the soul from the body; a little coal of fire hath turned many a stately fabric into ashes; a little prick with a thorn may as well kill a man as a cut with a drawn sword; a little fly may spoil all the alabaster box of ointment. General Norris having received a slight wound in his arm in the wars of Ireland, made light of it, but his arm gangrened, and so he lost both arm and life together. Fabius, a senator of Rome, and lord chief-justice besides, was strangled by swallowing a small hair in a draught of milk. Three fits of an ague carried away Tamerlane, who was the terror of his time. Anacreon, the poet, was choked with the kernel of a grape. An emperor died by the scratch of a comb. One of the kings of France died miserably by the chock of a hog; and his brother, with a

blow of a ball at tennis, was struck into his grave. And thus you see little things have brought upon many great miseries. And so little sins may expose and make persons very liable to great punishments: and therefore no wonder if the heart of a holy man rises against them. Those sins which are seemingly but small, are very provoking to the great God, and very hurtful to the immortal soul: and therefore they cannot but be the object of a Christian's hatred.

[3.] Thirdly, A holy heart knows that a holy God looks and expects that the least sins should be shunned and avoided. He looks that the cockatrice should be crushed in the egg. God looks that Babylon's little ones should be dashed against the stones, Psa 137:9. Not only great sins, but little ones, must be killed, or they will kill the soul. The viper is killed by the little ones that she nourishes in her own bowels; so many a man is eternally slain by the little sins that he nourishes in his own bosom. As a little stab at the heart kills a man, so a little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man. God expects that his children should 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' 1Th 5:22. As thou wouldst neither wound thy conscience nor thy credit, God nor the gospel, thou must keep off from the very appearances of evil. A Christian is to hate not only the flesh, but the garment; and not only the garment which is besmeared, but the very garment that is but bespotted with the flesh, Jude 1:23. Our first parents were not only forbidden to eat of the forbidden fruit, but they were forbidden to touch it, Gen 3:3. And certainly he that would not gape after forbidden fruit, must not gaze upon forbidden fruit; he that would not long after it, must not look upon it; he that would not taste it, must not touch it. The pious Nazarite was not only commanded to abstain from wine and strong drink, but also from eating grapes, whether moist or dry; yea, he was prohibited from eating anything that was made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk, Num 6:3-4, lest by the sweet and contentment of any of these, he should be tempted or enticed to drink wine, and so forget the law, and break his vow, and make work for hell or repentance, or the Physician of souls, Pro 31:5. Sin is so hateful a thing, that both the remote occasion, and the least occasion that might draw the soul to it, is to be avoided and shunned, as a man would avoid and shun hell itself. He that truly hates the nature of sin, cannot but hate the least sin, yea, all appearances of sin. A holy heart knows that the very thought of sin, if not³ thought on, will break forth into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then body and soul are undone for ever. Look, as nothing speaks out more sincerity and real sanctity, than shunning the very appearances of vanity; so nothing speaks out more indignation against sin, than the avoiding the occasions of sin. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A holy heart knows that the indulging of the least sin is ground sufficient for any man to question his integrity and ingenuity towards God. He hath much reason to suspect himself, and to be suspected by others, who dares break with God, and with his own conscience, for a trifle. He that will transgress for a morsel of bread, will be ready enough to sell his soul for a groat, Pro 28:21. He that will pervert justice for a few pieces of silver, what will he not do for a hatful of gold? he that will sell the poor for a pair of shoes, will destroy the poor for a brace of angels, Amo 2:6. He that will sell souls dog-cheap, that will slay the souls that should not die, and save the souls alive that should not live, for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, will make no bones of making merchandise of souls for silver and gold, Eze 3:19. He that will sell his Saviour once for thirty pieces of silver, will sell him as often as you please for a greater sum, Zec 11:12. He that makes no conscience of betraying Christ into the hands of sinners for thirty shillings, will make no conscience of betraying his own soul into the hands of the devil at the price of a halter. He that dares lie to save a little of his estate, what will not he do to save his life? These things a holy heart

well understands, and the serious remembrance of them stirs up in him a holy indignation against the least transgression. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Take many things in one: a holy heart knows that the least sin cost Christ his dearest blood: Heb 9:22, 'Without shedding of blood there was no remission;' no remission of great sins, nor no remission of little sins. He knows that the blood of Christ is as requisite to cleanse the soul from the least sin, as it is to cleanse it from the greatest: 1Jn 1:7, 'And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all our sins.' It is not the casting of a little holy water upon us; it is not the Papists' purgatories, nor their whippings, nor St Francis his kissing or licking of our sores, nor a bishop's blessing, nor a few knocks on the breast, nor a few tears dropping from our eyes, that can cleanse us from the least sin. No, it is only the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all our sins. There is not the least spot in a Christian's heart that can be washed out but in the blood of the Lamb. When Satan appeared and presented to a dying man in a long parchment roll his idle words, his false words, his angry words, his wanton words, and his more wicked words and deeds; the dying man answered, All this is true, Satan, but yet there is one thing more for thee to set down under all my sins, and that is this, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all our sins.' Whereupon the devil vanished, as being vanquished.³ Certainly, there is not a vain thought, nor an idle word, nor an angry word, nor a wanton word that Can be pardoned or cleansed but by the blood of Jesus Christ; the remembrance of which cannot but stir up a holy indignation in a gracious soul against the least corruption. When Julius Cæsar the emperor was murdered, Antonius brought forth his bloody coat, and shewed it to the people, which stirred up in them such an indignation against the murderers, that they cried out, Slay the murderers: and went and burnt their houses, and all that was in them. So when a holy heart looks upon his sins, yea, his little sins, as those that have murdered the Prince of glory, ah, what an indignation doth it raise in the soul against them! A holy heart knows that there is not the least sin, but doth in a measure estrange the soul from God. As little clouds do somewhat interpose between the sun and us; so little sins do somewhat interpose between God and our souls: and as sometimes a little matter, a mistake, or lending an ear, or a word out of joint, or an act of forgetfulness, doth occasion some distance between dearest friends, Acts 15:36-41; so sometimes little sins do occasion some distance between our dearest God. and our souls, Pro 16:28, and Pro 17:9. A holy heart knows that Christ looks upon those sins as great, which the blind world accounts but little. Christ accounts hatred murder, 1Jn 3:15; a wanton eye adultery, Mat 5:28; and he reckons the officious lie and the merry lie amongst the most monstrous sins, and condemns it to the lowest hell, Rev 21:8. The consideration of all which raises no small indignation in a holy heart against the least, the smallest sin. But now unholy hearts make nothing of little sins: with Achan they will be bond-slaves for a wedge of gold; with Gehazi they will be servants of unrighteousness for a talent of silver and two changes of garments; with Adam they will transgress for an apple; and with Esau they will sell their birthright of grace here, and of glory hereafter, for a mess of pottage. The hearts of unholy persons may rise against gross sins, such as are not only against the law of God, but against the light and laws of nature and nations. Their souls may rise in arms against those sins that makes them liable to the laws of men, or that lays them open to shame, fear, grief, or loss; but as for vain thoughts, idle words, petty oaths, sinful motions, and frequent omissions, they look upon these as trifles, moths and gnats that are not to be regarded or bewailed. But,

(3.) Thirdly, As a holy heart rises against the least sins; so a holy heart rises against bosom-sins, against constitution-sins, against those that either his calling, former custom, or his present inclination or condition, do most dispose him to. It is true, a prodigal person may abhor covetousness, and a covetous person may condemn prodigality: a furious person may hate fearfulness, and a fearful person may detest furiousness. But now the hearts of those that are holy rise against complexion sins, against darling sins, against those that make for present pleasure and profit, against those that were once as right hands and right eyes; that were that to their souls, that Delilah was to Samson, Herodias to Herod, Isaac to Abraham, and Joseph to Jacob: Psa 18:23, 'I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from mine iniquity;' that is, from my darling sin, whereunto I was most inclined and addicted. What this bosom-sin was that he kept himself from, is hard to say. Some suppose his darling sin was lying, dissembling; for it is certain, he often fell into this sin: others suppose it to be some secret iniquity, which was only known to God and his own conscience: others say it was uncleanness, and that therefore he prayed that 'God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity,' Psa 119:37: others judge it to be that sin of disloyalty, which Saul and his courtiers falsely charged upon him. It is enough for our purpose that his heart did rise against that very sin, that either by custom or some strong inclination he was most naturally apt, ready, and prone to fall into. Idolatry was the darling sin of the people of Israel; they called their idols delectable, or desirable things, Isa 44:9; they did dearly affect and delight in their idols; but when God should come to put a spirit of holiness upon them, then their hearts should rise in hatred and detestation of their idols, as you may see in Isa 30:18, Isa 30:25; mark Isa 30:22, 'Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.' They were so delighted and enamoured with their idols, that they would deck them up in the greatest glory and bravery; they would attire them with the most rich, costly, pompous, and glorious raiment. Oh, but when a spirit of holiness should rise upon them, then they should defile, deface, and disgrace their idols, then they should so hate and abhor them, they should so detest and loathe them, that in a holy indignation they should cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get ye hence, pack, begone, I will never have any more to do with you. God hath now made an everlasting divorce between you and me. And so in Isa 2:20, 'In that day'—that is, in the day of the Lord's exaltation in the hearts, lives, and consciences of his people, Isa 2:17—'a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats.' In the day of God's exaltation they shall express such disdain and indignation against their idols, that they shall take not only those made of trees and stones, but even their most precious and costly idols, those that were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats; that is, they shall cast them into such blind holes, and into such dark, filthy, nasty, and dusty corners, as moles make underground, and as bats roost in: so when holiness comes to be exalted in the soul, then all a man's darling and bosom sins, which are his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, these are with a holy indignation cast to the moles and to the bats; they are so loathed, abandoned, and cashiered, that he desires they may be for ever buried in oblivion, and never see the light more. Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin: Hos 4:17, 'Ephraim is joined,' or glued, 'to idols, let him alone;' but when the dew of grace and holiness fell upon Ephraim, as it did in Hos 14:5-7, 'Then saith Ephraim, What have I any more to do with idols?' Hos 14:8. Now Ephraim loathes his idols as much or more than before he loved them; he now abandons and abominates them, though before he was as closely glued to them, as the

wanton is glued to his Delilah, or as the enchanter is glued to the devil, from whom by no means he is able to stir. Ephraim becoming holy, cries out, 'What have I any more to do with idols?' Oh, I have had to do with them too long and too much already! Oh, how doth my soul now rise against them! how do I detest and abhor them! surely I will never have more to do with them. But now unholy hearts are very favourable to bosom-sins; they say of them, as Lot of Zoar, 'Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live!' Gen 19:20. And as David spake of Absalom, 2Sa 18:5, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.' 'Beware that none touch the young man Absalom,' 2Sa 18:12. 'And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?' 2Sa 18:29. An unholy heart is as fond of his bosom-sins as Herod was of his Herodias; or as Demetrius was of his Diana; or as Naaman was of the idol Rimmon, which was the idol of the Syrians; or as Judas was of bearing the bag; or as the Pharisees were of having the uppermost seats, and of being saluted in the market-place with those glorious titles, 'Rabbi, rabbi.' Bosom-sins have at least a seeming sweetness in them; and therefore an unholy heart will not easily let them go. Let God frown or smile, stroke or strike, lift up or cast down, promise or threaten, yet he will hide and hold fast his darling sins; let God wound his conscience, blow upon his estate, leave a blot upon his name, crack his credit, afflict his body, write death upon his relations, and be a terror to his soul, yet will he not let go his bosom-lusts. He will rather let God go, and Christ go, and grace go, and heaven go, all go, than he will let some pleasurable or profitable lusts go. An unholy heart may sigh over those sins, and make war upon those sins, that war against his honours, profits, or pleasures, and yet at the same time make truce with those that are as right hands and right eyes; an unholy person may set his sword at the breasts of some sins, and yet at the same time his heart may be secretly courting of his bosom-sins. But now a holy heart rises most against the Delilah in his bosom, against the Benjamin, the son, the sin, of his right hand. And thus you see how a holy heart hates and disdains all sins; he abhors small sins as well as great, secret sins as well as open, and bosom-sins as well as others that have not that acquaintance and acceptance with the soul. Real holiness will never mix nor mingle itself with any sin, it will never incorporate with any corruption. Wine and water will easily mix, so the wine of gifts and the water of sin, the wine of civility and the water of vanity, the wine of morality and the water of impiety, will easily mix; but oil and water will not mix, they will not incorporate; so the oil of grace, the oil of holiness, will not mix; it will not incorporate with sin, the oil of holiness will be uppermost. Mark, natural and acquired habits and excellencies, as a pregnant wit, an eloquent tongue, a strong brain, an iron memory, a learned head, all these, with some high speculations of holiness, and some profession of holiness, and some commendations of holiness, and some visible actings of holiness, are consistent with the love of lusts, with the dominion of sin: witness the Scribes and Pharisees, Judas, Demas, and Simon Magus; but the real infused habits of true grace and holiness, will never admit of the dominion of any sin, whether great or little, whether secret or open. But,

6. Sixthly, Persons of real holiness are cordially affected and afflicted, grieved and troubled, about their own vileness and unholiness, Eze 36:25-26, Eze 36:31. You may see this in holy Job, Job 40:3-5, 'Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.' So holy Agur: 'Pro 30:2-3, 'Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' Though all men are brutish, yet holy men are most sensible of their brutishness, and most affected and afflicted with it; wicked men are more brutish than the beasts, yet they see it not, they bewail it

not; but holy Agur both sees his brutishness, and bewails it. Holy Agur, looking upon that rare knowledge, that depth of wisdom, and those admirable excellencies that Adam was endued with in his integrity and innocency, confesses himself to be but brutish, to be as much below what Adam once was as a brute is below a man. So holy David cries not Perii, I am undone, I shall perish, but peccavi, 'I have sinned, I have done foolishly,' Psa 51:3. And so for his being envious at the prosperity of the foolish, Psa 73:2-3, how doth he befool and be-beast himself! Psa 73:22, 'So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.' The Hebrew word Behemoth, that is here rendered beast generally, comprehends all beasts of the greater sort. As an aggravation of his folly, he confesseth that he was as a beast, as a great beast, yea, as an epitome of all great beasts. So the holy prophet Isaiah complains that he was undone, that he was cut off, not upon any worldly account, but because he was a man of unclean lips, and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips, Isa 6:5. So holy Daniel, Dan 9:1-27, complained not that they were reproached and oppressed, but that they had rebelled. So Peter, Luk 5:8, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord:' or as the Greek hath it, I am a man, a sinner. O Lord depart from me, for I am a mixture and compound of all vileness and sinfulness. So holy Paul cries not out of his opposers or persecutors, but of the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, Rom 7:23-24. Paul's body of death within him put him to more grief and sorrow than all the troubles and trials that ever befell him. A holy heart laments over those sins that he cannot conquer; a holy person labours to wash out all the stains and spots that be in his soul, in the streams of godly sorrow; that his sins may never drown his soul, he will do what he can to drown his sins in penitential tears. A holy person looks upon his sins as the crucifiers of his Saviour, and so they affect him; he looks upon his sins as the great incendiaries, make-baits, and separatist between God and his soul, and so they afflict him, Isa 59:1-2. He looks upon his sins as so many reproaches to his God, blemishes to his profession, and wounds to his credit and conscience, and so they grieve and trouble him; he looks upon his sins as those that make many a righteous soul besides his own sad, whom God would not have saddened; and that opens many a sinful mouth that God would have stopped, and that strengthens many a wicked heart that God would not have strengthened; and so they fetch many a sigh from his heart, and many a tear from his eyes, Eze 13:22. When a holy man sins he looks upwards, and there he sees God frowning; he looks downwards, and there he sees Satan insulting; he looks within himself, and there he finds his conscience either a-bleeding, raging, or accusing; he looks without himself, and there he finds gracious men lamenting and mourning, and graceless men deriding and mocking; the sense of which doth sorely and sadly afflict a gracious soul. Some say that St Peter's eyes, after his great falls, were always full of tears, insomuch that his face was furrowed with continual weeping for his horrid thoughts, his desperate words, his shameful shifts, and his damnable deeds, which made him look more like a child of hell than like a saint whose name was written in heaven. Some say of Adam, that when he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, he sadly lamented his great fall. Some say of Mary Magdalene, that she spent thirty years in Galba in weeping for her sins. David's sins were ever before him, and therefore no wonder if tears instead of gems were so constantly the ornaments of his bed. Wicked Pharaoh cries out, Oh take away these filthy frogs, take away these dreadful judgments; but holy David cries out 'O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant.' Pharaoh cries out because of his punishments, but David cries out because of his sin. Anselm saith that with grief he considered the whole course of his life: 'I found,' saith he, 'the infancy of sin in the sins of my infancy; the youth and growth of sin in the sins of my youth and growth; and the ripeness of all sin in the sins of my

ripe and perfect age;' and then he breaks forth into this pathetic expression, 'What remaineth for thee, wretched man, but that thou spend thy whole life in bewailing thy whole life!' By all which it is most evident, that holy hearts are very much affected and afflicted with their own unholiness and vileness. Now certainly those persons are as far off from real holiness, as hell is from heaven, who take pleasure in unrighteousness, who make a scoff and mock of sin, who commit wickedness with greediness, who talk wickedly, who live wantonly, who trade deceitfully, who swear horribly, who drink stiffly, who lie hideously, and who die impenitently. But,

7. Seventhly, Real holiness naturalises holy duties to the soul; it makes religious services to be easy and pleasant to the soul. Hence prayer is called the prayer of faith, because holy faith naturaliseth a man's heart to prayer, 1Pe 1:2, and Jas 5:15. It is as natural for a holy man to pray, as it is for him to breathe, or as it is for a bird to fly, or fire to ascend, or a stone to descend: and hence it is that obedience is called the obedience of faith, because holy faith naturalises a man's heart to obedience, Rom 16:26, and Psa 119:166. As soon as ever this plant of renown was set in the heart of Paul, he cries out, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Acts 9:6. And hence it is that hearing is called 'the hearing of faith,' because this holy principle naturalises a man's heart to hearing. Psa 122:1, 'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.' And so in Isa 2:3, 'And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem' And hence patience is called 'patience of hope,' because this holy principle of hope naturalises a man's heart to a patient waiting upon God, 1Th 1:3. Rom 8:25, 'But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.' So holy love naturalises the soul to holy service; in 1Th 1:3, you read of 'the labour of love.' Holy love is very laborious. Nothing makes a Christian more industrious, painful, and diligent in the service and ways of God, than holy love. Holy love will make us to pray and to praise, it will make us wait and work, it will provoke souls to study Christ, to admire Christ, to live to Christ, to lift up Christ, to spend and be spent for Christ, and to break through all difficulties that it may come nearer to Christ, and cleave closer to Christ, Rom 14:7-8, and 2Co 12:14-16. As Jerome once bravely said, 'If my father,' said he, 'should stand before me, my mother should hang upon me, and my brethren should press about me, I would break through my brethren, throw down my mother, tread under feet my father, that I might the faster cleave unto Christ my Saviour.' Oh the laboriousness of holy love! So far as a Christian is holy, so far holy services will be delightful and easy to him: Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man;' Rom 7:25, 'So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God;' Psa 119:16, 'I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word;' Psa 119:35, 'Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight;' Psa 119:47, 'And I will delight myself in thy commandments which I have loved;' Psa 119:92, 'Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction;' Psa 119:143, 'Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet thy commandments are my delights.' Sirs, honour is not more suitable, delightful, and pleasing to an ambitious man, nor pleasure to a voluptuous man, nor flattery to a proud man, nor gold to a covetous man, nor excess to an intemperate man, nor revenge to an envious man, nor pardon to a condemned man, than religious duties and services are suitable, pleasing, and delightful to a holy man, Psa 27:8, and Psa 81:8-16. But now unholy hearts are very averse to holy duties and services: they are averse to hearing, averse to praying, averse to reading, averse to meditating, averse to self-judging, averse to self-examining, averse to holy worship, averse to holy Sabbaths:

Amo 8:5, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?' Isa 26:10-11, and Jer 5:1, Jer 5:6. You may sooner draw a coward to fight, or a malefactor to the bar, or a bear to the stake, than you shall draw unholy hearts to holy services. But if at any time, by the strong motions of the Spirit, the close debates of conscience, the powerful persuasions of the word, the education of godly parents, the pious example of bosom friends, the rich treasures in precious promises, the dreadful evils in terrible threatenings, or if at any time by the displeasure of God, the smarting rod, the bowels of mercy, the wooings of love, or if at any time by some flashes of hell, or glimpses of heaven, or by the heavy sighs, the deep groans, and the bleeding wounds of a dying Saviour, their hearts are wrought over to religious services—Isa 58:1-5—ah, how soon are they weary of them! What little delight or pleasure do they take in them! Isa 43:22, 'But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob'—that is, thou hast not worshipped nor served me sincerely, faithfully, feelingly, heartily, affectionately, humbly, holily, as thou shouldest and as thou oughtest—'but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel;' that is, thou hast been weary of my worship and service, and thou hast counted it rather a burden than a benefit, a damage than an advantage, a reproach than an honour, a disgrace than a favour, a vexation than a blessing; and for all thy formal courtings and complimentings of me, thou hast been secretly weary of me. So in Mal 1:12-13, 'Ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts,' &c. They did God but little service, and that they did was after the worst manner too, and yet they snuff, and puff, and blow, and sweat, and swell, and fall into a fustian fume, as if they had been over-tired and wearied with the burden and weight of those sacrifices which they offered up to the great God. A holy heart thinks all too little that he doth for God; but an unholy heart thinks every little too much that he doth for God. A holy heart, like the holy angels, loves to do much and make no noise; but an unholy heart makes most noise when he doth least service; an unsanctified soul hath a trumpet in his right hand, when he hath but a penny to give in his left hand, as here. But,

8. Eighthly, Where there is real holiness, there will be the exercise of righteousness towards men from righteous principles, and upon religious accounts, viz., the honour of God, the command of God, the will of God, the credit of the gospel, &c. Real holiness towards God is always attended with righteousness towards men: Eph 4:24, 'And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' or, holiness of truth; Tit 2:11-12, 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present world.' These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty; to live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our neighbours, and godlily towards God, is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man. So holy Abraham in Gen 23:16, 'And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.' It is recorded to holy Abraham's everlasting honour and fame, that he paid for the field that he bought of Ephron current money, not counterfeit, pure, not adulterate shekels of silver, not shekels of brass silvered over; he paid the price that was pitched, and he paid it in such coin as would go current in one country as well as another. So holy Jacob, in Gen 43:1-34, supposing that the money that was returned in the sacks of corn that his sons brought out of Egypt was through some mistake or oversight, he very honestly and conscientiously ordered them to carry the money back again. Gen 43:12, 'And take double money in your hand:

and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hands; peradventure it was an oversight.' A holy heart will not, a holy heart dares not, take an advantage from another's error to do him wrong; it is but justice to return and restore to every man his due. So holy Moses, in Num 16:15, 'And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the Lord, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.' He sought their good, not their goods; he preferred their safety before his own life; he did right to every man, he did wrong to no man; he did every man some good, he did no man the least hurt. So holy Samuel, in 1Sa 12:3-5, 'Behold, here am I: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.' He makes a solemn protestation before the Lord, before his anointed, and before the people, that he had so lived in the exercise of justice and righteousness amongst them, that they could not accuse him of the least unrighteousness, they could not say black was his eye, they could not say that he had lessened them to greatness himself, or that he had impoverished them to enrich himself, or that he had ruined them to raise himself; upon his appeal they unanimously declare his innocency and integrity. So holy Daniel, in Dan 6:4-5, 'Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom, but they could find no occasion nor fault: forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.' Though envy be the father of cruelty and malice, the mother of murder and ambition, the plotter of others' destruction, yet holy Daniel was so just and righteous, so innocent and prudent, so careful and faithful in the administration of his high office, that none of his envious, malicious, and ambitious enemies could, after their unity in a hellish and cruel conspiracy, charge him with the least spot of injustice or show of righteousness; they narrowly scanned all his administrations, and diligently weighed all his actions, and yet themselves being judges, Daniel is found innocent. They could not so much as charge him with a colourable fault. So Zacharias and Elizabeth, they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luk 1:5-6; they walked not only in the ordinances, but also in the commandments of the Lord, and they walked not only in some commandments, but in all the commandments of the Lord; they walked in the commandments of the second table, as well as in the commandments of the first table; they were as well for righteousness towards man, as they were for holiness towards God. So the apostles, in 2Co 7:2, 'Receive us; we wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.' The apostle would have the Corinthians to make room for them in their hearts and houses, as the Greek word *χωρησατε* imports, for that they had wronged no man in his name or reputation, as the false apostles had; neither had they corrupted any man in his judgment by false doctrines or evil examples, as the false apostles had; neither had they defrauded any man in his estate, as the false apostles had, who made a prize of their followers and hearers. Of the same import is that of the apostle in 1Th 2:10, 'Ye are witness, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.' He takes God and them to witness, that they had lived holily in respect of God, and righteously in respect of the world, and unblameably in respect of them that believe. By all which it is most evident, that where

there is real holiness towards God, there will be the exercise of righteousness towards men. But now, where there is but the shows and appearances of holiness, there persons make no conscience of exercising righteousness towards men. Witness the Scribes and Pharisees, who, under a pretence of praying, made a prey of widows' houses; who, under a pretence of piety, exercised the greatest covetousness, unrighteousness, and cruelty, and that upon widows, who are usually the greatest objects of pity and charity; they made no bones of robbing the widow, under pretence of honouring of God, Mat 23:14. So Judas, who was a Cato without, but a Nero within, who, under a pretence of laying up for the poor, robbed the poor, John 12:6; he made use of counterfeit holiness, as a cloak to cover all his thievish villanies; he pretended to lay up for the poor, but he intended only to lay up for himself, and to provide against a rainy day. It is like he had no great mind to stay long with his Lord, and therefore he was resolved to make the best market he could for himself; that so when he should lay down his stewardship, he might have something to live upon. Judas acted the part of a saint in his profession and discourses, that so he might be the less suspected to act the part of a thief in his more secret practices. Judas had not been long in office, before he put conscience out of office, and conscience being put out of office, Judas sets up for himself, and, under a cloak of holiness, he practises the greatest unfaithfulness. Though the eagle soars high, yet still her eye is upon her prey; so though Judas did soar high in profession, yet his eye was still upon his prey, upon his bags, and so he might have it, he cared not who went without it; so he might be rich, he did not care though his Lord and his retinue grew never so poor. Judas had Jacob's voice, but Gehazi's heart and hands, and therefore he screws up his conscience till he makes all crack again. Under all his shows of sanctity, he had not so much as common honesty in him. Counterfeit holiness is often made a stalking-horse to the exercise of much unrighteousness. Certainly that man is as far from real holiness, as the devil himself is from true happiness, who lives not in the exercise of righteousness towards men, as well as in a profession of holiness towards God. Well, Christians, remember this, it were better with the philosopher to have honesty without religion, than to have religion without honesty. But,

9. Ninthly, He that is truly holy will labour and endeavour to make others holy. A holy heart loves not to go to heaven alone, it loves not to be happy and blessed alone. A man that hath experienced the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness, will strive and study how to make others holy. When Samson had tasted honey, he gave his father and mother some with him, Jdg 14:8-9. Holiness is so sweet a morsel, that a soul cannot taste of it but he will be a-commending of it to others. As you may see in holy Moses, in Num 11:29, 'And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them.' A holy soul will never make a monopoly of holiness. The prophets, you know, were men of greatest grace and holiness; now holy Moses is very importunate and earnest with God that he would not only make the two that prophesied, but all the Lord's people eminent and excellent in grace and holiness. Such was Moses his holiness and humbleness, that he desires that all others might either equal him or excel him in gifts and grace. A heart eminently holy is so far from envying of the gracious excellencies of others, that it can rejoice in every sun that outshines his own; and every light that burns more dim than his, he desires that it may be snuffed, not put out, that so it may give a clearer and a greater light to others. So holy Paul in Acts 26:29, 'And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.' True holiness is no churl; nothing makes a man more noble in his spiritual desires, wishes, and actings for others, than holiness.

Real holiness, like oil, is of a diffusive nature; like light, it will spread itself over all; like Mary's box of ointment, it fills all the house with the sweet scent thereof. Art thou a holy father? then thou wilt, with holy Abraham, labour to make thy children holy, Gen 18:17-19. A holy heart knows that both by his first birth, but especially by his new birth, he stands obliged to promote holiness in all, but especially in those that are parts and pieces of himself. Art thou a holy master? then thou wilt, with holy Joshua, labour to make all under thy charge holy: Jos 24:15, 'But as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.' True holiness cannot be concealed; it will be a-stirring and a-provoking of others to be holy: as a holy man doth not love to be happy alone, so a holy man doth not love to be holy alone. A holy master loves to see a crown of holiness set upon every head in his family. Holiness is a very beautiful thing, and it makes those beautiful in whom it is. In a holy master's eye, there is no servant so lovely and beautiful as he that hath the beauty of holiness upon him. A holy magistrate will labour to make both his servants and his subjects holy: as holy David, holy Asa, holy Isaiah, and holy Hezekiah did; he knows that the souls of his servants and subjects are the choicest treasure that God hath committed to his care; he knows that every soul is more worth than his crown and kingdom; he knows that he must one day give up an account for more souls than his own, and therefore he improves his power and interest every way for the making of all holy under him; as Louis the Ninth, king of France, took pains to instruct his poor kitchen-boy in the way to heaven, and being asked the reason of it, he answered, The meanest have a soul to save as precious as mine own, and bought by the same blood of Christ. It is said of Constantine that in this he was truly great, that he would have his whole court gathered together, and cause the Scriptures to be read and opened to them, that they might be made holy courtiers, and so fitted for the court of heaven, into which no unclean person or thing can enter, Rev 21:27. It grieved an emperor that a neighbour of his should die before he had done him any good. Ah, it is the grief of a holy magistrate to see others die before they are made holy. The great request of a holy magistrate, living and dying, is this, Lord, make this people a holy people! Oh, make this people a holy people! Art thou a holy kinsman, a holy friend, then thou wilt labour to make thy kindred holy, and thy friends holy: as holy Cornelius did, as you may see in Acts 10:24, Acts 10:27, 'And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.' And in Acts 10:33, saith Cornelius to Peter, 'Thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.' Devout Cornelius gets his kinsmen and near friends together, that they also might be partakers of the grace and mercy of God with him. He had experienced a work of grace and holiness upon his own heart, and he uses his best endeavours that they might experience the same on theirs. A holy Christian is like a loadstone, that draws to itself first one iron ring, and that another, and that a third. As there is a natural instinct in all creatures to propagate their own kind, as in beasts, birds, and fishes, so there is a holy, a spiritual instinct in all gracious hearts to propagate grace and holiness in whatever hearts they can. Look, as fire will assimilate and turn everything that comes near it into its own nature, so will a holy heart labour to make all that comes near him like himself. Look, as one drunkard labours to make another, and one swearer another, and one wanton another, and one thief another, and one idle person another, and one fearful person another, and one doubtful person another, and one erroneous person another, &c., so one holy heart labours to make another, one gracious heart labours to make another.² He that is humble will labour to make others humble, he that is sincere will labour to make others sincere, he

that is faithful will labour to make others to be faithful, he that is fruitful will labour to make others fruitful, and he that is watchful will labour to make others watchful. A heart that is truly holy will labour, by prayers, reproofs, tears, example, counsel, and commands, to make others like himself. He knows that there is no love, no wisdom, no care, no pains, next to that which he takes with his own heart, to that which is laid out to make unholy hearts holy. And therefore he prays and weeps, and weeps and prays, that holiness may be written upon all that his name is written upon; he learns and teaches, and he teaches and learns, and all that he may teach and learn others to be holy; he counts it not worth while to live in this world, were it not for the glory of God, and the good of his own and others' souls. But now, what shall we say of those persons who are so far from being holy, who are so far from drawing others to be holy, that they do what they can to make those that are holy to become unholy, and who strongly tempt those that are unholy to be more unholy? These are factors for hell, and certainly such solicitors shall at last be most dreadfully handled by hellish tormentors. But,

10. Tenthly, He that is really holy, will be holy in the use of earthly and common things, as well as in the use of spiritual and heavenly things, Tit 1:15. He will be spiritual in the use of carnal things, and heavenly in the use of earthly things. There is a silver vein of sanctity that runs through all his worldly concernments. If you look upon him in his eating and drinking, you shall find him holy, 1Co 10:31. If you look upon him in his buying and selling, in his paying and receiving, you shall find him holy: Isa 23:18, 'And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.' Before Tyre's conversion, she laboured to enrich herself by hook and by crook: all was fish that came to Tyre's net. Tyre could say anything, or do anything, or be anything, for gain. Oh, but when Tyre is converted and sanctified, then all her merchandise and hire, then all her gettings and earnings, shall be holiness to the Lord. Tyre now shall write holiness upon all her wares and commodities. Tyre shall buy nothing, nor sell nothing, nor exchange nothing, but there shall be holiness written upon it. And Tyre shall be as well holy in using and improving of her merchandise and hire, as she hath been holy in the getting of them; for so it follows in the same verse, 'It shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.' Tyre, before her conversion, hoarded up riches, and laid up her merchandise to spend upon her lusts, to spend upon her pride, and wantonness, and luxuriousness, &c. But now, being converted, she uses and improves what she hath in the service of the Lord, and for the comfort, support, and relief of the poor and needy. When Tyre is once made holy, then Tyre will be holy in the use of all her earthly enjoyments. If you look upon a holy man going to war, then you shall find holiness written upon the bridles of his horses: Zec 14:20-21, 'In that day shall there be upon the bridles, or bells, of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.' Here is holiness written upon the bridles of the horses they ride on, and holiness written upon the cups and pots they drink in. A holy heart will be holy in the use of the meanest things that are for common use. Every piece of his civility³ shall savour of sanctity, and in all the parts of his common conversation you shall be able to discern something of the power of religion: Job 5:24, 'And thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.' Thou shalt be holy in thy commerce, and holy in thy converse. Holiness shall be written upon thy dealings with thy servants, and holiness shall be written upon thy carriages towards thy children, and holiness shall be written upon all thy behaviours towards thy friends. Whatever thou puttest thy hand to in thy habitation, shall have holiness written upon it: thou shalt make a Jacob's ladder of all thy earthly enjoyments; all the comforts that be in thy habitation, shall be as so many bright

morning stars to lead thee on in a way of holiness, and to lead thee up to a holy God. Look upon a holy man in his calling, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in the use of the creatures, and you shall find him holy: look upon him in his recreations, and you shall find him holy. The habitual frame and bent of his heart is to be holy in every earthly thing that he puts his hand unto. A spirit of holiness runs and shines in all the common actions of his life. But now look upon those who have only the shows and appearances of holiness, and you shall find that they have but a common spirit in common things. Take them out of their duties, and you shall find them in a course to be earthly in the use of earthly things, and carnal in the use of carnal things, and worldly in the use of worldly things. All their religion, all their holiness, lies in a few duties; take them out of these, and you shall find them as carnal, as vain, as foolish, as filthy and as frothy, as light and as slight, as those that have not so much as a cloak of holiness upon them. But he that is really holy, will be holy as well out of duties as in duties. If you look narrowly upon him in all his worldly concernments, you shall find some footsteps of the awe, fear, dread, authority, and glory of God upon his spirit. Look, as an unholy heart is carnal in spiritual things, and earthly in heavenly things, and unholy in holy things; so a man that is truly holy, he is as well holy in the ordinary affairs and actions of this life, as he is holy in any of the exercises of religion. But,

11. Eleventhly, True holiness is conformable to the holiness of Christ. The holiness of Christ is that first and noble pattern that real holiness makes us conformable to: 1Jn 4:17, 'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.' There is no grace in Christ which is not in some degree formed in a holy heart, 1Jn 2:6 : and therefore the work of grace and holiness is called a forming of Christ in the soul, Gal 4:19. Holy hearts have the very prints, stamps, and impressions of the graces of Jesus Christ upon them: John 1:16, 'Of his fulness we have all received grace for grace.' Look, as face answers to face, so the graces that are in real Christians answer to the graces that are in Jesus; there is such love as answers to the love of Christ, and such lowliness as answers to the lowliness of Christ, and such heavenly-mindedness as answers to the heavenly-mindedness of Christ, and such meekness as answers to the meekness of Christ, and such patience as answers to the patience of Christ, and such faith as answers to the faith of Christ, and such zeal as answers to the zeal of Christ, and such fear as answers to the fear of Christ, in truth and reality, though not in degree and quantity. Look, as in generation the child receives member for member; or as the paper from the press, letter for letter; or the glass from the face, image for image; or as the wax from the seal, stamp for stamp; so holy hearts receive from Christ grace for grace. Look, as wine in the bottle is conformable to that in the butt, and as water in the cistern is conformable to that in the river, and as light in the air is conformable to that in the sun, and as milk in the saucer is conformable to milk in the breasts, and as money in the pocket is conformable to money in the bag, so the graces that are in a holy Christian are conformable to the graces that are in Christ, 2Co 3:17-18. To be a philosopher, saith Plato, is to know God, to be in love with God, and to imitate God. So say I, to be a holy person is to know a holy Christ, to be in love with a holy Christ, and to imitate the virtues of a holy Christ. It was the height of Cæsar's glory to walk in the steps of Alexander; and of Selymus, a Turkish emperor, to walk in the steps of Cæsar; and of Themistocles to walk in the steps of Miltiades; so it is the height of a Christian's glory to tread in the virtuous steps of his dearest Lord. And as Scipio accounted it no small disparagement for him to walk one foot awry from that course of life which Cyrus in Xenophon had gone before him in, so a holy heart counts it no small disparagement to him in the least to step awry from that holy pattern that Christ hath set him.

Look, as the holy prophet did lay his mouth to the Shunammite's child's mouth, and his eyes to his eyes, and his hands to his hands, 2Ki 4:34; so a holy Christian lays his mouth to the mouth of Christ, and his eyes to the eyes of Christ, and his hands to the hands of Christ, and his breasts to the breasts of Christ, and his heart to the heart of Christ: that is, he doth in all things labour to resemble Christ, to be like to Christ; especially in those holy virtues which were most shining in the heart and life of Christ, 1Pe 2:9. Now certainly they are far from being holy who count it a crime to be virtuous; and so are they who walk directly contrary to Jesus Christ. He was holy, but they are profane; he was humble, but they are proud; he was heavenly, but they are earthly; he was spiritual, but they are carnal; he was zealous, but they are lukewarm; he was meek, but they are contentious; he was charitable, but they are covetous; he was courteous, but they are malicious. Will you call these men holy? Surely no. But,

12. Twelfthly, He that is truly holy is much affected and afflicted with the unholiness of others: Psa 119:53, 'Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law;' Psa 119:158, 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word;' Psa 119:136, 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.' By this hyperbolical phrase he sets forth the greatness of his sorrows, and that not because his enemies had wronged him, but because they had dishonoured his God. It was a great grief to him to see others a-grieving his God. So Jer 9:1-3, 'Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night! oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them.' But why doth the holy prophet thus take on? why doth he thus lament? why doth he wish himself turned into waters, and into a fountain of tears? why doth he prefer a habitation amongst the wild beasts, before his habitation among his own people? Why, the cause you have in the following words, 'For they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord.' So Eze 9:4, 'And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.' There were holy hearts in Jerusalem that did sigh and cry, and cry and sigh for the wickedness of the times; the abominations of the times did lie in such full weight upon them, that they did fetch many a sigh from their hearts, and many a tear from their eyes. Holy hearts are able to tell you many sad stories of the groans, griefs, and gripes that other men's sins hath cost them. When most were a-sinning, God's marked ones were a-mourning; when others were with a high hand a-cursing, blaspheming, and a-rebelling, God's marked ones were deeply sorrowing; they mourned cordially, they sighed greatly, they grieved wonderfully, they groaned lamentably, and that not for some, but for all, for all court sins, and church sins, and city sins, and family sins. And so holy Paul could not with dry eyes make mention of those belly-gods and earthworms that were in his time, Php 3:18. So holy Lot was much affected and afflicted with seeing and hearing of the wickedness of those among whom he lived, 2Pe 2:7-8. The Greek word for vexed, in 2Pe 2:7, Καταπονόμενον, signifies to be oppressed under the wanton and wicked conversation of the ungodly Sodomites, as, a man that is oppressed under a heavy burden which he labours under, and would fain be delivered from; or to be oppressed, as the Israelites were under their cruel Egyptian taskmasters. Ah, the sins, the wickedness of others sets hard upon the hearts of the saints! The Israelites did not more labour and sigh and groan under all their loads and oppressions, than many holy hearts

do labour and sigh and groan under the load of wicked men's sins. And the Greek word for vexed, in ver. 8, βαστανιζεν, signifies to be tortured, tormented, and racked. Oh, their wickedness did torment and rack his righteous soul; he could not see nor hear of their wickedness, but his soul was as upon a rack. Pambus, in ecclesiastical history, wept when he saw a harlot take so much pains to deck and dress herself in curious and costly apparel, and all to entertain a wanton lover, and so to make work for hell. Oh, it cannot but grieve a gracious soul to see what pains poor sinners take to go to hell! A holy heart looks upon other men's sins as great dishonours done to his father, his king; and therefore he cannot but cry out with Cræsus his son, who though he was born dumb, yet seeing some going about to kill his father, his tongue-strings unloosed, and he cried out, 'Oh kill not king Cræsus, kill not my father.'² Oh kill not my God, and my King! Oh kill not, oh dishonour not my dear Father and Saviour, saith a holy heart. Such is the love and high respects that holy hearts bear to their heavenly Father, that they cannot but grieve, and mourn, and cry out when they see others to act treason against the crown and dignity of heaven. Elijah had rather die than to see Ahab and Jezebel to cast contempt and dishonour upon his God.

[1.] A holy heart mourns for sin as sin, he weeps over the very nature of sin; he grieves for sin as it is the breach of a holy law, and as it is a dishonour to a holy God, &c., and therefore he cannot but mourn for other men's sins as well as his own. He that hates a toad as a toad, will hate a toad in other men's bosoms as well as his own; he that hates poison as poison, will hate poison in another man's hand as well as his own: so he that hates sin as sin, will hate it wherever he sees it; and he that mourns over sin as sin, cannot but mourn over sin wherever he observes it.

[2.] By other men's sins a holy man is put in mind of the badness of his own heart. Bernard makes mention in one of his Homilies of an old man, who, when he saw any man sin, wept and lamented for him, and being asked why he grieved so for other men's sins, answered, Ille hodie, et ego cras; He fell to-day, and I may fall to-morrow. The falls of others puts a holy man in mind of the roots of bitterness that be in himself. Other men's actual sins are as so many glasses, through which a holy man comes to see the manifold seeds of sin that be in his own nature, and such a sight as this cannot but melt him and break him.

[3.] A holy heart knows that the best way to keep himself pure from other men's sins, is to mourn for other men's sins. He that makes conscience of weeping over other men's sins will rarely be defiled with other men's sins. He that mourns not over other men's sins is accessory to other men's sins: and first or last may find them charged upon his account. He that mourns not for other men's sins is in danger of being ensnared by other men's sins. And how then can a holy man look upon other men's sins with dry eyes?

[4.] A holy man looks upon other men's sins as the crucifiers of his Saviour. He looks upon the proud man's pride as that which set a crown of thorns upon the sacred head of Christ, and this makes him sigh; he looks upon the swearer's oaths as the nails that nailed his blessed hands and feet to the cross, and this makes him grieve; he looks upon scorers as spitting upon Christ, and worldlings as preferring Barabbas before Christ, and this makes him groan; he looks upon hypocrites as kissing and betraying of Christ, and he looks upon drunkards and wantons as giving gall and vinegar to Christ, and this makes him mourn; he looks upon other men's sins as having a hand in all Christ's torments, and this puts him upon the rack, and makes his very soul heavy, even to the death.

[5.] A holy heart knows that by mourning for other men's sins, he may be instrumental to keep off wrath, Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6. How oft did holy Moses by his tears quench the wrath of an angry God! However, if wrath should break forth upon a nation, yet they that mourn for the abominations of the times, they shall be hid in the day of God's public visitation, Isa 26:20. When the house is on fire, the father hath a special care to provide for the safety and security of his children; when the lumber is on fire, a man will be sure first to secure his box of jewels. In times of common calamity, God will be sure to look after his jewels, his mourning ones. Though the lumber, the wicked, be burnt up on every hand in the day of God's wrath, yet he will be sure to preserve his jewels in the midst of the flames. Augustine, coming to visit a sick man, found the room full of mourners; he found the wife sobbing, the children sighing, and the kindred lamenting; whereupon he suddenly breathed forth this short, but sweet ejaculatory prayer, 'Lord,' saith he, 'what prayers dost thou hear, if not these?' So in times of common calamity, holy hearts may look up and say, Ah, Lord, whose sighs, whose groans, whose tears wilt thou hear, if not ours? Who are mourners in Sion, and who wilt thou save and secure, in this day of thy fierce indignation, if not we, who have laboured to drown both our own and other men's sins in penitential tears?

[6.] A holy heart looks upon sinners' sins to contribute very much towards the bringing in of sore and sad changes upon a land and nation, Psa 107:33-34. He knows that sinners' sins may turn rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry ground, and a fruitful land into a barren wilderness; he knows that sinners' sins may have a deep hand in provoking God to rain hell out of heaven upon a sinful nation, as he did of old upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and this sets him a-mourning. If one sinner destroys much good, as Solomon speaks, Ecc 9:18, Ah, saith he, what a world of good will a world of sinners destroy then! The serious thoughts of this makes him sigh.

[7.] A holy heart looks upon other men's sins as their bonds and chains, Acts 8:23, and this makes him mourn. When Marcellus, the Roman general, saw the multitude of captives that were taken in the city of Syracuse, the tears trickled down his cheeks. Ah, how can tears but trickle down a Christian's cheeks when he sees multitudes, fast bound with the cords of their iniquity, trooping to hell? Who can look upon a sinner as a close prisoner to the prince of darkness, and not bemoan him? Now if holy persons thus mourn for the wickedness of others, then certainly they are far from being holy who take pleasure in the wickedness of others, who laugh and joy, who can make a sport, a pastime of other men's sins. These are rather monsters than men. There are none so nearly allied to Satan as these, nor none resemble Satan to the life so much as these. The devil always joys most when sinners sin most. Neither doubtless are they holy who tempt and entice others to be unholy; nor are they holy who only cry out of other men's sins, but never sigh for other men's sins; nor are they holy who insult over the iniquities of others, but never mourn for the iniquities of others; nor are they holy who can rail, reproach, and revile others for their sins, but have neither skill nor will to lament over others' sins: and yet this age is full of such wretches. Certainly that man's holiness will be found to be of the right stamp at last, who can evangelically mourn for other men's sins as well as his own. But,

13. Thirteenthly, He that is truly holy, he loves the word, and is affected and taken with the word for its holiness and purity: Psa 119:140, 'Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it.' A pure heart embraces the word for its purity, 1Pe 2:2; Psa 12:6-7, and Psa 18:30. So holy Paul in Rom 7:12, 'Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' Well, and what then? Why, saith he, Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' But is this all?

No, saith he, Rom 7:25, 'With the mind I myself serve the law of God.' Holy Paul delights in the law as holy, and serves the law as holy, just, and good. A holy heart is taken with the word for its spirituality, divinity, and purity. So in Psa 19:8-10, 'The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean,' (that is, the doctrine that teacheth the true fear of God,) 'enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb:' or, as the Hebrew hath it, sweeter than the dropping of honeycombs. The whole word of God, as it is a pure word, a clean word, so it rejoices a holy heart; and so it is sweeter than the very droppings of honeycombs. It is more sweet than those drops which drop immediately and naturally, without any force or art, which is counted the purest and the sweetest honey. There is no profit nor pleasure to that which the purity of the word yields to a holy heart. But now unholy hearts they are affected with the word as it is dressed up with fine high notions, which are but mysterious nothings: they are taken with the word, as it is clothed with arts, parts, and elegancy of phrase; they are pleased with the word, as it is apparelled with a spruce wit, or with silken expressions, or with some delicate elocution. Augustine confesseth that the delight which he took before his conversion in St Ambrose's sermons, was more for the eloquence of the words than the substance of the matter;³ so many are taken more with the wit, elocution, action, high notions, and far-fetched expressions that be in a sermon, than they are taken with the spirituality, divinity, weight, and holy worth that is in a sermon; these are like those children who are more taken with the fine flowers that are strewed about the dish, than they are with the meat that is in the dish; and that are more taken with the red weeds and blue-bottles that grow in the field, than they are with the good corn that grows there. But now, as the prudent farmer is taken more with a few handfuls of sound corn, than he is with all the gay weeds that be in the field; so a holy heart is more taken with a few sound truths in a sermon, than he is taken with all the strong lines, and high strains, and flourishes of wit with which a sermon may be decked up. Some are taken with the word, as the profession of it brings in customers into their shops, and keeps up their credits in the world. Others are taken with the word, as it seems to tickle their ears and please their fancies. Some are affected with sermons because of the elegancy of the style, delicacy of the words, smoothness of the language, and gracefulness of the delivery. And these deal by sermons as many men do by their nosegays; that are made up of many picked sweet flowers, who, after they have smelt to them a while, cast them into a corner. So these, after they have commended a sermon, after they have applauded a sermon, they cast away the sermon: they smell to the sermon, and say it is sweet, it is sweet, and presently they throw it by, as a nosegay that is withered, and of no further use. When a man that is sick, crazy, and unsound, is at a table that is furnished with variety of dishes, you know he easily and readily passes over all the most wholesome and nourishing dishes, and falls a-piddling and picking here and there upon kickshaws² and puff-paste, that have little or no substance in them. So unsound, unholy hearts, when God hath prepared his table, and made a feast of fat things for their souls in the ministry of his word, they can easily and readily pass over those sound, solid, and savoury truths that are prepared for their strength and nourishment, and fall a-piddling and picking upon some new-coined phrases, or some quaint expressions, or some seraphical notions: and no wonder, for they are not sound within, they are under a great distemper: as the Israelites would not be satisfied with wholesome diet, but they must needs have quails as picking meat; well, they had them, and whilst they were at their picking meat, the wrath of God came upon them. The application is as

easy as it is dreadful. But now a holy heart savours the word, and relishes the word, and is affected and taken with the word, as it is a holy word, a substantial word, a pure word, a clean word, and as it begets holiness, and cherishes holiness, and increases holiness, and as it works towards the completing and perfecting of holiness.

Quest. But how may a person know whether he loves the word, and is affected and taken with the word, as it is a holy word, or no?

Ans. [1.] First, By what hath been already said. But because the question is weighty, I further answer

[2.] In the second place, He that loves the word, and that is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word, he loves the whole word of God, and he is affected and taken with one part of the word as well as another. Every law of God is a holy law, and every statute is a holy statute, and every command is a holy command, and every promise is a holy promise, and every threatening is a holy threatening, and every exhortation is a holy exhortation; and, therefore, he that loves any part of the word as a holy word, he cannot but love every part of the word, because every part of the word is holy. And indeed he loves no part of the word as holy who loves not every part of the word as such. Every chapter in the book of God is a holy chapter, and every verse is a holy verse, and every line in that book is a holy line, and every word in every line is a holy word. He that loves a chapter as it is a holy chapter, he loves every verse in that chapter as a holy verse; and he that loves every verse as a holy verse, he loves every line as a holy line; and he that loves every line as a holy line, he loves every word in every line as a holy word. Upon easy commands he reads holiness, and upon difficult commands he reads holiness; upon comfortable commands he reads holiness, and upon costly commands he reads holiness, and upon dangerous commands he reads holiness, and therefore he loves all, and closes with all, and endeavours a conformity to all. A holy heart dares neither to dispute with that word, nor make light of that word, where he reads holiness engraven upon it. To a holy heart there is no command of God unjust or unreasonable. But now an unholy heart, though it may for some worldly advantages court and cry up some parts of the word, yet it is ready, with Judas, to betray and crucify other parts of the word. The whole Scripture is but one entire love-letter, despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse on earth; and this letter is written all in golden letters, and therefore a holy heart cannot but be taken and affected with every line in this letter. In this love-letter there is so much to be read of the love of Christ, the heart of Christ, the kindness of Christ, the grace of Christ, and the glory of Christ, that a holy heart cannot but be affected and taken with it. The whole word of God is a field, and Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field; it is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring, and therefore a holy heart cannot but be taken with the whole word of God. Luther was wont to say that he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. And Rabbi Chija, in the Jerusalem Talmud, says that in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law.

[3.] Thirdly, A man that is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word, he is always affected and taken with it; he loves it and takes pleasure in it, as well in adversity as in prosperity: Psa 119:59, 'Thy statutes have been my songs'—ay, but where?—'in the house of my pilgrimage,' or 'pilgrimages,' as the Hebrew hath it. When David was in his banishments, by reason of Saul, Absalom, and others, now the word of God was music to him, now it was matter of joy and rejoicing to him; his whole life was the life of a pilgrim and stranger; now as a pilgrim he sojourns

here, and anon as a stranger he sojourns there. No man could take more pleasure, joy, and contentment in the rarest and choicest music than David did in the word of God, and that not only when he was in his royal palace, but also when he was in the house of his pilgrimage. He that loves the word, and that delights in the word for its holiness and purity, he will love it and delight in it in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, in honour and disgrace, in wealth and want, in life and in death. The holiness of the word is a lasting holiness, and so will every man's affections be towards it who affects it, and is taken with it for its holiness and pureness. Some there be that cry up the word, and that seem to be much affected, delighted, and ravished with the word,—as Herod, Ezekiel's hearers, and the stony ground was, Eze 33:30-33, and Mark 4:1-41 and Mark 6:1-56, &c.,—whilst the word is either a cheap word to them, or a profitable and pleasing word to them, or whilst it is courted and countenanced in the world, or whilst it is the path to preferment, or a key to enlargement, &c. But when the word gets within them, and discovers their own sinfulness and wretchedness to them, when it shews them how Christless, and graceless, and lifeless, and helpless, and hopeless they are; when it discovers how far they are from heaven, and how near they are to hell, Jer 44:15, Jer 44:29; oh, then their hearts begin to rise against it, and to cry out, Away with it; it was never good days since we have had so much preaching and hearing: or when the word comes to be scorned, slighted, disgraced, opposed, or persecuted, oh, then they turn their backs upon it, and quickly grow weary of it. As the Iassians in Strabo delighted themselves with the music of an excellent harper till they heard the market-bell ring, and then they run all away save a deaf old man, that could take but little delight in the harper's ditties; so let these men but hear the bell of lust, or the bell of profit, or the bell of pleasure, or the bell of applause, or the bell of honour, or the bell of error, or the bell of superstition sound in their ears, and presently they will run from the sweet music of the word, to follow after any of these bells. But now a man that loves the word, and that is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word, no bell can ring him from the word, no disgrace, no affliction, no opposition, no persecution, can take him off from affecting the word, and from taking pleasure in the word. The cause of his love is abiding and lasting, and therefore his love cannot but be lasting and continuing. Not but that a holy heart may sometimes be more affected and taken with the word than at other times: as first, when a man enjoys much communion with God in the word; or second, when God speaks much peace and comfort to the soul by the word; or third, when God assures a man more clearly and fully of the goodness and happiness of his condition by the word; or fourth, when God lets in very much quietness, or quickness, or sweetness, or seriousness, or spiritualness into a man's spirit by the word. Oh, then a man may more than ordinarily be affected and taken with the word. But now, though a holy Christian is not at all times in the same degree and measure taken with the word, yet take such a Christian when he is at worst, and you shall find two things in him: (1.) you shall find in him a holy love to the word; and (2.) you shall find in him a real love to holy Christians.

[4.] Fourthly, He that loves the word, and that is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word, he is most affected and taken with those parts of the word that do most incite to holiness, that do most promote holiness, and that do most provoke to holiness. As 1Pe 1:15-16, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' [I shall give you light into these words when I come to open the holiness of God to you.] So Mat 5:48, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Our summum bonum in this world consists in our conformity to the heavenly pattern. In all imitations it is best to choose the most perfect pattern. There is nothing more laudable and

commendable than for a Christian to endeavour more and more to resemble his God in the highest perfections of righteousness and holiness. So Eph 5:15-16, 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, [■κρίβ■ς,] not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil.' Christians must walk precisely, curiously, exactly, accurately. As the carpenter works by line and rule, so a Christian must walk by line and rule; he must labour to get up to the very top of godliness; he must go to the utmost of every command, as the original word importeth. So Php 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless,' or sincere, 'the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine,' or shine ye, 'as lights in the world.' God's sons should be spotless sons, as the Greek imports, that is, they should be without all such spots as are inconsistent with sonship or saintship. And so in Col 2:6, 'As ye have therefore received Jesus Christ the Lord, so walk ye in him.' They had received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Law-giver, they had received Christ as a ruling Christ, as a reigning Christ, and as a commanding Christ; and now the great duty incumbent upon them is to walk at such a rate of holiness as may evidence that they have thus received Christ. And so in 1Jn 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.' Christians are to set all Christ's moral actions before them as a pattern for their imitation, John 13:15. In His life a Christian may behold the lively picture or lineaments of all virtues, and accordingly he ought to order his conversation in this world. To walk as Christ walked is to walk humbly, holily, justly, righteously, meekly, lowly, lovingly, fruitfully, faithfully, uprightly, with an 'as' of quality or similitude, but not with an 'as' of equality; for that is impossible for any saint on earth—to walk so purely, so holily, so blamelessly, so unspottedly, so spiritually, so heavenly as Christ walked; that is, with an 'as' of equality. To walk as Christ walked is to slight the world, and contemn the world, and make a footstool of the world, and to live above the world, and to triumph over the world as Christ did; that is, with an 'as' of quality, but not with an 'as' of equality. To walk as Christ walked is to love them that hate us, to pray for them that persecute us, to bless them that curse us, and to do good to them that do evil to us; but still with an 'as' of similitude, but not with an 'as' of equality, Mat 5:44-47. To walk as Christ walked is to be patient, and silent, and submissive, and thankful, under the vilest reproaches, the heaviest afflictions, and the greatest sufferings, 1Pe 2:20-23; with an 'as' of quality, but not with an 'as' of equality. Now a holy heart that is taken with the holiness of the word, he is certainly taken most with those parts of the word that do most call for holiness, and that do most strongly press the soul to make a progress in holiness. I have given you a taste of some of the most principal scriptures that do incite most to holiness, and I shall leave it to your own consciences to give in witness for you or against you, according to what you find in your own spirits. Certainly to a holy man there are no prayers, no sermons, no discourses, no conferences, no books, nor no parts of scripture, to those that do most encourage and provoke to holiness. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, He that loves the word, and that is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word, he highly prizes and values the holy dispensers of the word for their work's sake, Acts 10:24-26; Gal 4:14. Isa 52:7, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' If the very feet of those that brought good tidings, though they were afar off, and sweaty, dusty, and dirty with travelling upon the mountains, were so desirable and amiable, honourable and comfortable, oh then what was their faces, what was their messages! Surely they were much more amiable and desirable. So in 1Th 5:12-13, 'And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you in the Lord, and admonish you; and

to esteem them very highly' (or, more than abundantly, as the Greek hath it) 'in love for their work's sake; and be at peace among yourselves.' Their work is to bring Christ and your souls together, and to keep Christ and your souls together. Their work is to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ.² Their work is gradual: first, they are to bring you to a saving acquaintance with Christ; and then they are to bring you to a holy acceptance of Christ; and then they are to bring you to a willing resignation of yourselves to Christ; and then they are to bring you to a sweet and blessed assurance of your interest in Christ, and so to fit you and prepare you for a glorious fruition of Christ; and therefore certainly their work is high and honourable, excellent and eminent, laborious and glorious; and why, then, should you not have a high and honourable esteem of them, even for their work's sake? I have read of Ambrose, that being once to leave the church of Milan, the people of the place flocked about him, laid hold of him, protesting that they had rather lose their lives than lose their pastor, beseeching him to remain, and to promote among them the gospel and government of Christ, professing and promising, for his encouragement, their ready submission to Christ. Chrysostom's hearers were wont to say, that they had as good be without the sun in the firmament, as to be without Chrysostom in the pulpit. Some of the ancients have long since concluded that Herod might have kept his oath, Mark 6:23, and yet have spared John Baptist's head, because John's head, John's life, was more worth than all Herod's kingdom. O sirs, shall Titus Sabinus his dog bring meat to the mouth of his dead master, and hold up his head in Tiber from sinking, because sometimes he gave him a crust of bread; and will not you highly love, honour, and esteem of those pastors who feed your souls with the bread of life, yea, with that bread that came down from heaven? Certainly the more any man is affected and taken with the holiness of the word, the more highly they will honour and prize the holy and faithful dispensers of the word. Holy men know that their place is honourable, their calling honourable, and their work honourable; and therefore they cannot but honour them. Holy men know that if they do not honour them, they dishonour him whose ambassadors they are. Holy men know that Christ takes all the affronts that are put upon them as put upon himself, and will accordingly revenge them, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Ambassadors are inviolable by the law of nations. David never played any such harsh part as he did to the Ammonites, that despitefully used his ambassadors that he sent unto them, when they shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, &c. I have read that Rome was destroyed to the ground for some abuses that were offered to an ambassador that was sent unto it. And the Romans sacked the famous city of Corinth, and razed it to the ground, for a little discourtesy that they offered to their ambassadors.² No wonder then if God deal so severely with those that slight his ambassadors, who come with messages of grace and favour from the King of kings and Lord of lords, and whose great work is to make a firm, an everlasting peace between God and sinners' souls, and that all differences between God and them may be for ever decided, and a free trade to heaven fully opened and maintained. As for such as slight, scorn, and despise the holy and faithful dispensers of the word, I think they are as far from real holiness as hell is from true happiness. And so, doubtless, are they that grumble at the expense of a penny for the maintenance of that divine candle that wasteth itself to give light to them, that will rather die to save charges than spend a little money to save their lives, yea, their souls, 2Co 12:14-16.

14. In the fourteenth place, A man that is really holy will be holy among the unholy. He will retain and keep his holiness, let the times be never so unholy. Principles of grace and holiness are

lasting; they are not like the morning cloud nor the early dew, Psa 119:112, and Psa 106:3; 1Jn 3:9-10. Holy Abraham was righteous in Chaldea; holy Lot was just in Sodom; holy Job was upright in the land of Uz, which was a place of much profaneness and superstition; holy Nehemiah was courageous and zealous in Damascus; and so was holy Daniel in Babylon. The several generations wherein these holy men lived were wholly devoted to wickedness and superstition, and yet these precious souls had wholly devoted themselves to godliness. And of the same spirit, mind, and metal was holy David: Psa 119:20, 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath to thy judgments at all times.' Let the times be never so dangerous, licentious, superstitious, or erroneous, yet David's heart was strongly carried forth to God's judgments—that is, to his word; for under this title, 'judgments,' you are to understand the whole word of God. And so there were some in Sardis that were of the same spirit with the worthies above mentioned: Rev 3:4, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.' In polluting times pure hearts will keep themselves pure. A holy heart will keep himself undefiled, even in defiling times; when others are besmeared all over, he will keep his garments white and clean. Let the times never so often turn, you shall find that he that is really holy will be holy under every turn. No turns shall turn him out of a way of holiness: Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' Finis coronat opus. A man that is really holy will be holy among the holy, and he will be holy among the unholy. If you look upon him among unholy friends, unholy children, and unholy servants, you shall find him holy; if you look upon him among unholy neighbours, you shall find him holy; and if you look upon him among unholy buyers and sellers, you shall find him holy; if you take him at his table, you shall find him holy; if you take him in his shop, in his commerce, you shall find him holy; if you take him in his family, you shall find him holy; if you take him in his closet, you shall find him holy; if you take him in his journeyings, you shall find him holy; or if you take him in his recreations, you shall find him holy. True holiness is like that famous Queen Elizabeth, *Semper eadem*, always the same. The philosopher's good man is (τετραγωνος) four square. Cast him where you will, like a die, he falls always sure and square. So cast a holy man where you will, and into what company you will, yet still he falls sure and square for holiness. True holiness is a part of the divine nature; it is of such a heavenly complexion, that it will never alter. If the times should be so sad and bad that holy persons should not be able to hold fast their estates, their liberties, their trades, their lives, their religion, yet they will still hold fast their holiness. A holy Christian is like gold. Now cast gold into the fire, or into the water; cast it upon the dunghill, or into the pleasant garden; cast it among the poor or among the rich, among the religious or among the licentious; yet still it is gold, still it retains its purity and excellency: so cast a holy Christian, a golden Christian, into what condition you will, and into what company you will, yet still he will retain his purity, his sanctity; yea, the worse the times are, the more a holy man studies holiness, and prefers holiness, and prizes holiness, and practises holiness, that he may keep up the credit of holiness, and the credit of a holy God, and the credit of his holy profession in the world. But now such as have only a show of holiness, an appearance of holiness, these will be religious among the religious, and vicious among the vicious, Isa 9:17. They will be righteous among the righteous, and licentious among the licentious; they will be as the company is amongst which they are cast. With the good they will be good, and with the bad they will be bad; with the zealous they will be zealous, and with the superstitious they will be superstitious; and with the lukewarm they will be lukewarm, &c. They are for all times and tides; they are for any turn that will serve their turn; for any mode that will

bring pleasure or profit to them; they are like Alcibiades, of whom it was said that he was omnium horarum homo, a man for all times; for he could swagger it at Athens, and take any pains at Thebes; he could live most sparingly at Lacidæmon, and bib among the Thracians, and hunt among the Persians. So these men can accommodate themselves to the times, and comply with them, whatever they be. With Proteus they will transform themselves into all shapes; as the times change, so will they; what the times favour, that they will favour; what the times commend, that they will commend; and what the times cry up and admire, that they will cry up and admire; and what the times frown upon and condemn, that they will frown upon and condemn. Look, as curious and well-drawn pictures seem to turn their eyes every way, and to smile upon every one that looks upon them: so these can turn with the times; they can look as the times look, and smile as the times smile; they can say with the times, and sail with the times. Sometimes they can act one part, and sometimes another part, as the times require. If the times require a large profession, they can make it; if the times require a rigid spirit against such as cannot comply with the times, they can act it; if the times bespeak them to leave their religion at the church door, they can leave it, &c. If the times call upon them to worship God according to the prescriptions of men, they can do it. Oh, but give me a man that is really holy, and he will be holy though the times should be never so unholy; yea, the more licentious the times are, the more gracious he will labour to be.

15. In the fifteenth place, He that is really holy propounds ordinarily to himself holy aims and ends in his actings and undertakings. The glory of God is the mark, the white that holy men have in their eyes: Rom 14:7-8, They live not to themselves, but they live to him who lives for ever; they live not to their own wills, lusts, greatness, and glory in this world, but they live to his glory, whose glory is dearer to them than their very lives. They make divine glory their ultimate end: 2Co 4:5, 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord;' that is, in our preaching we woo not for ourselves but for Christ. We are no kin to those who speak two words for themselves, and hardly one for Christ. In all our preaching we eye the glory of Christ, we design the honour and exaltation of Christ. Real holiness is commonly attended with a single eye, as counterfeit holiness is commonly attended with a squint eye; squint-eyed aims, and squint-eyed ends, do usually wait upon double hearts. Take a holy man in the exercise of his gifts and graces for the good of men's souls, or take him in the exercise of charity for the good of men's bodies, and in both you shall find his eye fixed upon the glory of God: suitable to that, 1Pe 4:11, 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Look, as bright shining golden vessels do not retain the beams of the sun which they receive, but reflect them back again upon the sun; so those that are really holy, they do return and reflect back again upon the Sun of righteousness the praise and glory of all the gifts, graces, and virtues that they have received from him, Rom 13:7. The daily language of their souls is, Non nobis Domine, non nobis Domine, 'Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord, but to thy name be all the glory.' Holy men make conscience of giving men their dues; how much more then do they make conscience of giving God his due? 1Ch 29:10, 1Ch 29:18. Now glory is God's due, and God stands upon nothing more than that we give him the glory due unto his name, as you may see in Psa 29:1-2; so in Psa 96:7-8. There are three 'gives' in those two verses, 'Give unto the Lord,' 'give unto the Lord,' 'give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name;' glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this holy men know, and therefore they give him his right; they give him the honour and the glory that is due unto his name. Holy hearts do habitually eye the glory of Christ in all things.

When they eat, they eat to his glory; and when they drink, they drink to his glory, 1Co 10:31; and when they sleep, they sleep to his glory; when they buy, they buy for his glory; and when they sell, they sell for his glory; and when they give, they give for his glory; and when they recreate themselves, they recreate themselves for his glory: so when they hear, they hear for his glory; and when they pray, they pray for his glory; and when they fast, they fast for his glory; and when they read, they read for his glory; and when they come to the Lord's table, they come to his glory. In all natural, moral, and religious actions, holy hearts have an habitual eye to divine glory. Do not mistake me; I do not say that such as are really holy do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions: oh no, this is a happiness desirable on earth, but shall never be attained till we come to heaven. By and base ends and aims will too often creep into the holiest hearts, but holy hearts sigh and groan under them; they complain to God of them, and they cry for justice, justice upon them: and it is the strong and earnest desires of their souls to be rid of them. But take a holy Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and so he hath holy aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings. But now such whose holiness is counterfeit, they never look at divine glory in what they do; sometimes their eye is upon their credit, and sometimes their eyes are upon applause; sometimes they have pleasure in their eyes, and sometimes they have profit in their eyes, and sometimes they have preferments in their eyes, &c., Mat 6:5; John 6:26; Zec 7:5-7. They will be very godly when they can make a gain of godliness; they will be very holy when holiness is the way to outward happiness; but this religious wickedness will double damn them at last. This is most certain, that some carnal or worldly consideration or other, always acts him who hath not real principles of holiness in him; but he that is really holy makes the glory of God his centre. *Propter te Domine, propter te*, was once, and is still a holy man's motto.

Quest. But how may a person know when he makes the glory of God his aim, his end, in this or that service which he performs? I shall answer this question briefly thus:—

Ans. [1.] First, Such a man as makes the glory of God his aim, his end, he will do duty when all outward encouragements to duty fail. When the eye of men, the favour of men, the respects of men, and all other encouragements from men fails, yet then a holy man will hold up, and hold on in his work and way; yea, when all outward encouragements from God shall fail, yet such a person will keep close to his duty: Hab 3:17-18, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olives shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herds in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' When all necessary and delightful mercies fail, yet he will not fail in his duty. Though God withholds his blessings, yet he will not withhold his service: in the want of a livelihood he will be lively in his duty; when he hath nothing to subsist by, yet then he will live upon his God. Though war and want come, yet he will not be wanting in his duty. There are three things in a holy heart that strongly incline it to duty when all outward encouragements fail. The first is a forcible principle, divine love, 2Co 5:14; the second is a mighty aid, the Spirit of God, Php 4:12-13; the third is a high aim, the glory of God. But now it is otherwise with those that have only a show of godliness. Let but their outward encouragements fail them; let but the eye, the ear, the applause of the creature fail them; if they cannot make some gain of their godliness, some profit of their profession, some advantage of their religion, they are ready, with Demas, to throw up and throw off all. Profit and applause are usually the baits that these men bite at; and if they miss these baits, then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all. But now look, as Ruth kept close to her

mother in the want of all outward encouragements, Ruth 1:1-22; so souls that eye the glory of God in duties, they will keep close to duties when all outward encouragements fail. Though outward encouragements be sometimes as a side-wind, or as oil, or as chariot wheels, means to move a Christian to go on more sweetly, easily, and comfortably in the ways of God, yet when this wind shall fail, and these chariot wheels shall be knocked off, a real Christian will hold on his way, Job 17:9.

[2.] Secondly, When a man aims at the glory of God in what he doth, then he labours to hide and conceal all his human excellencies, that may any ways tend to obscure, eclipse, or darken the glory of God: 1Co 2:3-5, 'And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.' Holy Paul handled holy things in such a manner, as much of God, and little or nothing of man could be perceived. In religious exercises, Paul seems to say to human eloquence and fleshly wisdom, to affected rhetoric and flattering oratory, Stand afar off, come not near; I have now to do with God, and to do with souls, and to do with eternity, and therefore what have I to do with you? Paul had an eye to divine glory in what he did, and therefore he durst not tip his tongue and store his head with airy notions, or with 'the enticing words of man's wisdom.' Of all the apostles, Paul was most eminent and excellent in all human arts, parts, and gifts, and yet in religious exercises he lays them all by: 1Co 14:18-19, 'I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.' The church of Corinth excelled all other churches in gifts, I do not say in grace, and many among them prided themselves up in the exercise of their gifts and tongues in their church assemblies, that so they might win the more credit and repute to themselves, of being men of great learning, reading, and parts; but the holy apostle by his own example labours to win them to decline all vain ostentation, and to work them to express themselves so as might be most for the information, conviction, edification, and salvation of their hearers' souls. Holy Paul had much learning, and yet in religious exercises he used little. The Corinthians had less, and yet made such shows and flourishes of it, even in their religious duties, as if in their breasts all the libraries in the world had been locked up. This puts me in mind of what once I have read concerning a Rabbi, that had but little learning, and less modesty and ingenuity; for he usurping all the discourse at table where many were, one much admiring of him asked one of his friends in private, Whether he did not take such a man for a great scholar? to whom he answered, For aught I know he may be learned; but I never heard learning make such a noise. The more learning, the less noise; the less learning, the more noise men will make. The sun shews least when it is at the highest; and those waters are most deep that run most silent: they usually are men of the greatest parts that use them least in religious works. Famous Mr Dod was wont to say that so much Latin was so much flesh in a sermon. The gilt upon the pill may please the eye, but it profits not the patient; the paint upon the glass may feed the fancy, but the room is rather the darker than the lighter for it. Painted glass in churches is more glorious, but plain glass is most perspicuous. When men come to church-work, to pulpit-work, all plainness must be used. Starched oratory may tickle the brain, but it is plain doctrine that informs the judgment, that convinces the conscience, that bows the will, and that wins the heart. That sermon hath most learning in it, that hath most plainness in it. And therefore a great scholar was wont to say, 'Lord, give me learning enough that I may preach plain enough.' Silly, ignorant people are very apt to

dote upon that most, and admire that most, which they understand least; but prudent Christians judge of ministers not by their lungs, but by their brains; not by their throats, but by their hearts and lives; not by their voices and tones, but by the plainness, spiritualness, suitableness, and usefulness of their matter: like Demosthenes, who when he heard an orator bellowing with a loud and roaring voice, said, *Non quod magnum est bene est, sed quod bene est magnum est*, I mark rather the goodness than loudness of an oration. It is observable throughout the Scriptures, that the profoundest prophets, and the greatest apostles, yea, and Christ himself, did commonly accommodate themselves to their hearers' capacities.³ They kept in and kept under all those human excellencies, the discovery of which might anywise cloud divine glory. Men that have their eyes upon divine glory, do know that the more any acquired parts, gifts, and excellencies do appear in holy exercises, the more the name, honour, and glory of God is clouded, and the more those that have most of the indwellings of God are dissatisfied and disadvantaged; and therefore those that have real respect to divine glory, they draw as it were a curtain between all their human excellencies and religious exercises, 1Co 9:3. That none may think this is my private opinion, let me add a few sayings of theirs that have been eminent in acquired excellencies. Gregory Nazianzen, a holy and a weighty writer, compares curiosity and novelty of speech in the things of God unto lascivious dancing, and the arts of jugglers, whereby they deceive the senses of those that look on; and further saith that simple, proper, genuine language was in holy things wont to be esteemed godliness. And it was a remarkable saying of golden-mouthed Chrysostom, as some call him, 'When I first began to preach,' said he, 'I was a child, and delighted in rattles, in the applause of the people; but when I was a man, I began to despise them.' New phrases and expressions do many times make way for the introducing of new doctrines, as learned Paræus in his comment on 1Co 1:1 observes: 'For the most part,' saith he, 'those who in points of divinity devise new terms and unusual expressions, do hide under them some new and strange doctrines; they wrap up their error in some intricate words and distinctions. When our words in preaching differ from the style of the Holy Ghost, the people be in danger of turning aside to vain jangling, saith Danæus.⁶ *Loquamur verba scripturæ, &c.*, said that incomparable man, Peter Ramus: Let us speak the words of scripture, let us make use of the language of the Holy Ghost, and for ever abominate those that profanely disdain at the stately plainness of God's blessed book, and that think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence with their own infanoy and sophistry.⁸ *Non quanta eloquentia, sed quanta evidentia*, saith Augustine. *Melius est ut nos reprehendant grammatici, quam ut non intelligent populi*: the same author on Psa 138:1-8. Such as mind more, saith another, the humouring of their hearers' fancies than the saving of their souls, do little consider that of Seneca, *Æger non quærit medicum eloquentem, sed sanantem*: Sick men are not bettered by physicians' sugared words, but by their skilful hands. Dr Sibbes was wont to say, that great affection and good affection seldom go together. Truth is like Solomon's spouse, all glorious within; she is most beautiful when most naked, as Adam was in innocency.' The king of Persia having sent to Antalcidas, the Lacedemonian captain, a garland of roses wonderfully perfumed with spices and other sophistications, he accepted of his love, but misliked the present, and sent him word: *Rosarum odorem artis adulteratione perdidisti*: Thou hast marred the sweetness of the roses with the sweetness of thy perfumes. So many mar the sweetness of the word, by perfuming it with their human eloquence and oratory. For a close, remember that God himself, the great master of speech, when he spake from heaven, he made use of three several texts in a breath: Mat 17:5, 'This is my beloved Son,' Psa 2:7; 'In whom I am well pleased,' Isa 42:1; 'Hear ye him,'

Deu 18:15; which you may note against the curious queasiness of such nice ones as disdain at the stately plainness of the Scriptures. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If thou dost really and actually aim at the glory of God in what thou dost, then the glory of God will swallow up all by-aims and ends that may thrust themselves in upon the soul whilst it is at its work. Look, as Aaron's rod, Exo 7:10-12, swallowed up the magicians' rods, so the glory of God will swallow up all carnal aims and ends. Look, as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God will put out and consume all other ends. This is most certain, that which is a man's great end, that will work out all other ends. If thou settest up the glory of God as thy chief end, that will by degrees eat out all low and base ends. Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine, Gen 41:4, ate up the fat, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends that crowd in upon the soul in religious work. The keeping up of the glory of God as thy great end, will be the keeping down and the casting out of all other ends.

[4.] Fourthly, He that really and actually aims at the glory of God in what he doth, he will be doing what God commands, though nothing for the present comes of it. If his eye be truly fixed upon divine glory, a command of God shall be enough to carry him on in his work. Psa 27:8, 'When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' When the glory of God is a man's mark, his heart will sweetly echo and graciously comply with divine commands: Jer 3:22, 'Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.' God's commands fall with great power and force upon that man's heart, that hath divine glory in his eye. One word from God will command such a soul to a gracious compliance with what God requires: Psa 119:4-5, 'Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' As soon as God lays a command upon a Christian, he looks up to heaven for power to turn that precept into practice. Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! Oh that I were as holy as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as humble and lowly as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as heavenly and spiritual as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as pure and perfect as God would have me to be! So Psa 119:48, 'My hands will I lift up to thy commandments, which I have loved.' Many there be which thrust away with all their might thy commandments, but I lift up my hands to thy commandments. Many there be that will strain themselves to take a comfort, but I strain myself to lift up thy commandments. Many there are who will stretch out their hands to take a reward, but I stretch out my hands to take hold on thy commandments. To give a little more light into these words: Sometimes the lifting up of hands betokens admiration; when men are astonished and ravished they lift up their hands: 'I will lift up my hands to thy commandments,' that is, I will admire the goodness, the holiness, the righteousness, the purity and excellency of thy commandments. Again, we lift up our hands when we betake ourselves to refuge: why! God's commands are the saint's refuge. When they house and shelter themselves under the wings of God's commands they are safe. Again, men lift up their hands when they take hold on a thing. Now gracious souls do take hold on God's commandments to do them, to practise them, and to express the life and power of them. Again, men lift up their hands to those things that are high and above them. Now the commands of God are high, they are sublime, they are above us. They are sublime and high in regard of their original, they come down from God; they are sublime and high in regard of the matter of them, they are heavenly oracles, they are dictates of divine wisdom; they are sublime and high in regard of the difficulty of keeping of them, they exceeding all human strength; and they

are sublime and high in regard of their situation, they are situated in heaven: 'Thy word,' says David, 'endures for ever in heaven.' But yet as sublime and as high as they are, a man that hath his eye upon divine glory will lift up his hands unto them; he will do all he can to express the pleasure that he takes in them, and the readiness of his soul to a holy compliance with them. A man that hath his eye upon divine glory, he will keep close to his work, to his hearing work, to his praying work, to his mourning work, to his repenting work, to his believing work, to his waiting work; though nothing comes on it, though he make no earnings of it, though comfort doth not come, though joy and peace doth not come, though assurance doth not come, though enlargements do not come, though answers and returns from heaven do not come, though good days do not come, though deliverance doth not come, yet such will keep close to their work that have their eye upon divine glory. But now such who eye not the glory of God in what they do, they quickly grow weary of their work; if they can make no earnings of their seekings and fastings and prayings they are presently ready to throw up all, and to quarrel with God himself, as if God had done them an injury, Isa 58:1-4.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, A man that really aims at the glory of God in this or that duty, he cannot be satisfied nor contented with the performance of duties, without some enjoyments of God in duties. Without some converse and communion with God in duties, his soul cannot be satisfied; his soul thirsts and longs to see the beauty and the glory of the Lord in his sanctuary, Psa 63:1-3; and without this sight he cannot be quieted. Here is the ordinance, but where is the God of the ordinance? Here is prayer, but where is the God of prayer? Here is the duty, but where is the God of duty? Here is enlargements, but where is the God of enlargements? Here are meltings and breakings of spirit, but where is the God of these meltings and breakings? Psa 84:2, 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' The courts of the Lord, without spiritual converses with the living God, could not satisfy his soul: Oh, saith he, here be the courts of the Lord, the courts of the Lord, but where is the living God? where is the living God? where is that God that makes men to live, and that makes ordinances to be living and lively ordinances to his children's souls? Oh, the courts of the Lord are very desirable, but the living God is much more desirable! The courts of the Lord are precious and glorious, but the living God is infinitely more precious, and glorious! Here is the mantle of Elijah, but where is the God of Elijah? 2Ki 2:12-14. Here are the courts of the Lord, but where is the Lord of these courts? It was the speech of holy Mr Bradford, 'that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty; he could not give off a duty till his heart was brought into a duty frame; he could not leave confession till he had found his heart humbled and melted under the sense of his sin; he could not give over petitioning till he had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and strongly carried out after the enjoyment of them. Neither could he leave thanksgiving till he had found his spirit enlarged, and his soul quickened in the return of praises.' And so it was with holy Bernard, who was wont to say, 'O Lord, I never come to thee but by thee; I never go from thee without thee.'³ A man that hath his eye upon the glory of Christ, he cannot put off his soul with anything below communion with Christ, in those religious services and duties that he offers up to Christ. Though the breasts of duty are sweet, yet those breasts will not satisfy the soul, except Christ lies betwixt them, Song of Solomon 1:13. But now men that have base, poor, low, and by-ends in what they do, they can come off easily from their duties; though they find no spirit, no life, no warmth in duty, yet they can come off with content from duty. Though they have no communion, no converse at all with God in duty, though they have no pledges of

grace, no pawns of mercy, no tastes of love, no relishes of heaven in a duty, yet they can come off from the duty with content and satisfaction of spirit; let but others applaud him, and his own heart hug him, and he hath enough.

16. In the sixteenth and last place, A man that is really holy speaks a holy language. A holy heart and a holy tongue are inseparable companions; if there be grace in the heart, there will be grace in the lips; if the heart be pure, the language will be pure. Christ says his spouse's lips are like a thread of scarlet; they are red with talking of nothing but a crucified Christ; and they are thin like a thread, not swelled with other vain discourses. And ver. 11, he tells you that 'the lips of his spouse drop as the honeycombs,' or drop honeycombs; and that 'honey and milk are under her tongue.' You know that Canaan was a land that flowed with milk and honey. Why? the language of the spouse was the language of Canaan; her lips were still dropping such holy, spiritual, and heavenly matter, as was as sweet, pleasant, profitable, desirable, and delectable to men's souls, as ever honey and milk was to men's palates or appetites; and as many were fed and nourished by milk and honey, so many were fed and nourished by the holy droppings of her lips: Psa 37:30, 'The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.' If the heart be holy, the tongue will be a-talking wisely, fruitfully, feelingly, affectionately of that which may profit both a man's self and others: Pro 10:20, 'The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the heart of the wicked is little worth.' Good men's words are of more worth than wicked men's hearts: and look, as choice silver is known by its tinkling, so holy men are known by their talking. And as choice silver giveth a clear and sweet sound, so the tongue of the just soundeth sweetly and pleasantly in the ears of others. Look, as choice silver is highly prized and valued among men, so is the tongue of the righteous among those that are righteous: and look, as choice silver allures and draws the hearts of men to a love and liking of it; so the tongues of the righteous do allure and draw the hearts of men to a love and liking of virtue and goodness. Pro 10:21, 'The lips of the righteous feed many.' They feed many by their exhortations, instructions, admonitions, and counsels. The mouths of the righteous are like the gates of some hospitable persons, where many are fed. The lips of the righteous are a free and well-furnished table, at which many are fed and nourished with the dainties of heaven to eternal life. Righteous men keep open house, they keep free hospitality for all comers and goers; and if they have not always bread in their hands, yet they have always grace in their lips, to feed many. Though they may be outwardly poor, yet they have a treasure within to enrich many. The tongue is the instrument of a Christian's glory, and is so interested in the quality it expresseth, that in the original it is taken for it, cavod signifying both glory and the tongue—by the authority of no less Rabbins than Jacob and David—as thereby intimating that the chiefest glory of man is his tongue. The primitive Christians talked so much and so often of high and heavenly things, that the Ethnicks began to surmise that they affected the Roman empire, when indeed their ambition was of another, a nobler and a higher nature. But now men that have only a show of godliness, they do practically say, Our tongues are our own, and who shall control us? Their speech is so far from administering of grace to their hearers, that it administers usually either matter of carnal mirth, or of contempt, or of scorn, or of sorrow and mourning. Certainly they have no holiness in their hearts who have so much of hell, and the devil, and lusts in their mouths.² I may say to most, You are unholy persons, your speech bewrays you, your worldliness, your profaneness, your cursing, your swearing, your lying, your slandering, your reviling, your railing, your deriding, &c., doth plainly evidence that you have no holiness in you. Well! remember this, a tongue that is set on fire from hell, is in danger to be set on fire in hell. Hell is for that man, and that

man is for hell, that hath so much of hell in his mouth; the devil is for that man, and that man is for the devil, that hath so much of the devil in his mouth; damnation is for that man, and that man is for damnation, that hath so much of damnation in his mouth; the world is for that man, and that man is for the world, that hath so much of the world in his mouth. Whatever is in the heart will break out in the lips; if wickedness be in the heart, it will break out in the lips. Physicians say that the nature of diseases is as well known by the tongue as by the pulse or urine. The spiritual diseases that be in the heart will quickly discover themselves by the tongue. Wherever holiness is in the heart, it will break forth in the lips. A holy heart and a holy tongue are married together, and it is not in man to put them asunder. You shall sooner separate the soul from the body, than you shall separate a holy tongue from a holy heart. And thus I have done with this use of examination. The Lord make you wise to lay these things to heart, that so you may know how it is like to go with you in another world.

Use 3.—The third use shall be a use of exhortation, and that both to unsanctified and sanctified ones. First, let me speak to unsanctified ones. Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness, and that without men are holy on earth, they shall never come to the beatifical vision or blessed fruition of God in heaven? Oh then, how should this provoke and stir up all unholy persons to strive and labour, as for life, after this real holiness, without which they shall never come to have anything to do with God in everlasting happiness! &c.

Now that I may the better prevail with unsanctified souls, I shall, First, propound some motives to stir and provoke their hearts to look and labour after real holiness, &c.

Secondly, I shall propose some means for the obtaining of holiness.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to answer those objections, and remove those impediments, that hinder and keep men off from labouring after real holiness.

I. For the first, I shall propound these following considerations to provoke all unsanctified persons to look after holiness.

1. First, Consider the necessity of holiness. It is impossible that ever you should be happy, except you are holy. No holiness here, no happiness hereafter. The Scripture speaks of three bodily inhabitants of heaven—Enoch, before the law; Elijah, under the law; and Jesus Christ, under the gospel; all three eminent in holiness, to teach us, that even in an ordinary course there is no going to heaven without holiness. There are many thousand thousands now in heaven, but not one unholy one among them all: there is not one sinner among all those saints; not one goat among all those sheep; not one weed among all those flowers; not one thorn or prickle among all those roses; not one pebble among all those glistening diamonds. There is not one Cain among all those Abels; nor one Ishmael among all those Isaacs; nor one Esau among all those Jacobs in heaven. There is not one Seth among all the patriarchs; not one Saul among all the prophets; nor one Judas among all the apostles; nor one Demas among all the preachers; nor one Simon Magus among all the professors.² Heaven is only for the holy man, and the holy man is only for heaven: heaven is a garment of glory, that is only suited to him that is holy. God, who is truth itself, and cannot lie, hath said it, that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'⁴ Mark that word 'no man:' without holiness the rich man shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the poor man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the noble man shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the mean

man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the prince shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the peasant shall not see the Lord; without holiness the ruler shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the ruled shall not see the Lord; without holiness the learned man shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the ignorant man shall not see the Lord; without holiness the husband shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the wife shall not see the Lord; without holiness the father shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the child shall not see the Lord; without holiness the master shall not see the Lord; nor without holiness the servant shall not see the Lord. 'For faithful and strong is the Lord of hosts that hath spoken it,' Jos 23:14. In this day some cry up one form, some another; some cry up one church state, some another; some cry up one way, some another; but certainly the way of holiness is the good old way, Jer 6:16; it is the King of kings' highway to heaven and happiness: Isa 35:8, 'And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.' Some men say, Lo, here is the way; other men say, Lo, there is the way; but certainly the way of holiness is the surest, the safest, the easiest, the noblest, and the shortest way to happiness. Among the heathens, no man could enter into the temple of honour, but must first enter into the temple of virtue. There is no entering into the temple of happiness, except you enter into the temple of holiness. Holiness must first enter into you, before you can enter into God's holy hill. As Samson cried out, 'Give me water, or I die;' or as Rachel cried out, 'Give me children, or I die;' so all unsanctified souls may well cry out, Lord, give me holiness, or I die: give me holiness, or I eternally die. If the angels, those princes of glory, fall once from their holiness, they shall be for ever excluded from everlasting happiness and blessedness. If Adam in paradise fall from his purity, he shall quickly be driven out from the presence of divine glory. Augustine would not be a wicked man, an unholy man, one hour for all the world, because he did not know but that he might die that hour: and should he die in an unholy estate, he knew he should be for ever separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. O sirs, do not deceive your own souls; holiness is of absolute necessity; without it you shall never see the Lord, 2Th 1:8-10. It is not absolutely necessary that you should be great or rich in the world; but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy: it is not absolutely necessary that you should enjoy health, strength, friends, liberty, life; but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. A man may see the Lord without worldly prosperity, but he can never see the Lord except he be holy. A man may go to heaven, to happiness, without honour or worldly glory, but he can never go to heaven, to happiness, without holiness. Without holiness here, no heaven hereafter: Rev 21:27, 'And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.' God will at last shut the gates of glory against every person that is without heart-purity. Ah, sirs! holiness is a flower that grows not in nature's garden. Men are not born with holiness in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths: holiness is of a divine offspring: it is a pearl of price, that is to be found in no nature but a renewed nature, in no bosom but a sanctified bosom. There is not the least beam or spark of holiness in any natural man in the world: Gen 6:5, 'Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually;' Job 25:4, 'How can man be clean that is born of a woman?' The interrogation carries in it a strong negation, 'How can man be clean?' that is, man cannot be clean that is born of a woman: man that is born of a woman, is born in sin, and born both under wrath and under the curse. 'And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' Job 14:4; Isa 64:6, 'But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;' Rom 3:10-11, 'There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that

seeketh after God.' Every man by nature is a stranger, yea, an enemy to holiness, Rom 8:7. Every man that comes into this world, comes with his face towards sin and hell, and with his back upon God and holiness. Such is the corruption of our nature, that, propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water or wet wood, with hissing. Propound any evil, then it is like a fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which, the naturalists say, sucks and snatches the fire to it, with which it is consumed. All men are born sinners, and there is nothing but an infinite power that can make them saints. All men would be happy, and yet they naturally loathe to be holy. By all which you may clearly see that food is not more necessary for the preservation of natural life, than holiness is necessary for the preservation and salvation of the soul. If a man had the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the courage of Joshua, the policy of Ahithophel, the dignities of Haman, the power of Ahasuerus, and the eloquence of Apollos, yet all these without holiness would never save him.

2. Secondly, Consider there is a possibility of obtaining holiness. Holiness is a golden mine that may be come at if you will but dig, and sweat, and take pains for it, Pro 2:2-7. It is a flower of paradise that may be gathered; it is a crown that may be put on; it is a pearl of price that may be obtained, if you will but part with the wicked man's trinity—the world, the flesh, and the devil—to enjoy it, Rom 13:12-14. Though some of the attributes of God be incommunicable, yet holiness is a communicable attribute; and this should mightily encourage you to look after holiness. Well! sinners, remember this, it is possible that those proud hearts of yours may be humbled; it is possible that those hard hearts of yours may be softened; it is possible that those unclean hearts of yours may be sanctified; it is possible that those blind minds of yours may be enlightened; it is possible that those stubborn wills of yours may be tamed; it is possible that those disordered affections of yours may be regulated; it is possible that those drowsy and defiled consciences of yours may be awakened and purged; it is possible that those vile and polluted natures of yours may be changed and purified. There are several things that do witness that holiness is attainable; as,

[1.] Witness God's promise to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it: Luk 11:13, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' The Holy Spirit is a gift more worth than a world, yea, than heaven itself, and yet, to make men holy, God is willing to give his Holy Spirit upon very easy terms—they shall have it for asking. The Spirit is a spirit of holiness; he is holy in himself, and the author of all that holiness that is in man. It is he that most powerfully moves and persuades men to holiness; it is he that presents holiness in its beauty and glory to the soul; it is he that sows seeds of holiness in the soul; and it is he that causes those seeds to grow up to maturity and ripeness. Nil nisi sanctum à sancto Spiritu prodire potest, Nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy. The Holy Spirit is the great principle of all the holiness that is in the world; and this Holy Spirit God hath engaged himself to give to those that are unholy: Eze 36:25-27, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart will I also give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them.' The Holy Spirit is a gift, a free gift, a noble gift, a precious gift, a glorious gift, that God will bestow upon the unclean, upon the unsanctified, that they may be cleansed and sanctified, and so fitted

for the Lord's service and use. It is possible that you may be holy, 2Ti 2:21; witness,

[2.] His holy word, that he hath given on purpose to make men holy, and, to keep men holy. His commandments are holy, just, and good; his threatenings are holy, just, and good; and all his promises are holy, just, and good. The Holy Scriptures were written with a finger of holiness, so as to move to holiness, and to work holiness; the whole word of God is an entire love-letter to provoke to holiness, and to promote holiness. Holy commands should sweetly persuade us to holiness, and holy threatenings should divinely force us to holiness, and holy promises should effectually allure us to the love of holiness, to the embracing of holiness, and to the practice of holiness. The great design of God, in sending this sacred volume in golden letters from heaven, was to enamour men with the love and beauty of holiness. Again, it is possible that you may attain to true holiness; witness,

[3.] Those holy ambassadors that he hath sent on purpose to turn men from 'darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ;' their great business and work is to treat with you about holiness; it is to woo you to match with holiness, and to follow after holiness; it is to remove all lets and impediments that may anywise hinder your embracing of holiness; and it is to propose all manner of encouragements that may win you over to make holiness your great all, Acts 26:18, and 2Co 5:18-20. Again, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[4.] The holy examples of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and saints that are left on record, on purpose to provoke you to an imitation of them in holiness. Their holy examples, as so many shining stars, are left upon record to influence us to holiness. In the holy examples of those that are now triumphant in heaven, you may run and read that holiness is attainable. In their holy examples, as in so many looking-glasses, you may see that holiness is a jewel that may be procured. By that holiness that others have reached to, sinners may see that it is possible that they may be made saints. Again, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[5.] All those notorious sinners that the Scripture declares have been sanctified and made holy. To instance only in a few: Adam, you know, was created in an estate of innocency, integrity, and perfect holiness, Gen 1:26; he being made in the image of God, and after the likeness and similitude of God. It was agreed upon in the parliament of heaven that man should be made glorious in holiness; and so he was, for he was made after God's own image. And this the apostle clearly and fully evidences in that famous scripture, Eph 4:22-24. That Adam was invested and endowed with righteousness and holiness in his first glorious estate; with righteousness, that he might carry it fairly, justly, evenly, and righteously towards man; and with holiness, that he might carry it wisely, lovingly, reverentially, and holily towards God; and that he might take up in God as his chiefest good, as his great All, might be sufficiently made good out of this scripture last cited; but I shall not now stand upon the discovery of Adam's beauty, authority, dominion, dignity, honour, and glory, with which he was adorned, invested, and crowned in innocency. Let this satisfy, that Adam's first estate was a state of perfect knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; it was a perfect state of holiness, righteousness, and happiness. There was nothing within him but what was desirable and delectable; there was nothing without him but what was amiable and commendable; nor nothing about him but what was serviceable and comfortable; and yet, in the height of all his glory he falls to apostasy and open rebellion against God; he takes part with Satan against God himself; he transgresses his righteous law, he affronts his justice, he provokes his

anger, he stirs up his wrath against himself and his posterity. The sin of Adam was a voluminous sin; all kinds of notorious sins were bound up in it, as backsliding, rebellion, treason, pride, unbelief, blasphemy, contempt of God, unthankfulness, theft, murder, and idolatry, &c. The philosopher being asked which was the best member of the body, answered, The tongue; for if it be good, it is the best trumpet of God's glory. And being asked again which was the worst, answered, The tongue; for if it be bad, it is the worst firebrand of hell. So if any should ask me, Which was the best creature of God? I would answer, Man in honour before his fall. If you should ask me, Which is the worst? I must answer, Man in his fall. Adam was once the wonder of all understanding, the mirror of wisdom and knowledge, the image of God, the delight of heaven, the glory of the creation, the world's great lord, and the Lord's great darling; but being fallen, ah how low, how poor, how miserable, how sottish, how senseless, how brutish, yea how much below the beast that perisheth was he! and yet God pardoned, changed, and sanctified him, and stamped his image of holiness afresh upon him, when he made a covenant with him in Christ, Gen 3:1-24. So Manasseh, he was a notorious sinner, he was a sinner of the greatest magnitude; his sins reached up to heaven, his soul was ripe for hell, he had sold himself to work all manner of wickedness, as you may see in 2Ch 33:1-25. In 2Ch 33:3, 'He reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them;' 2Ch 33:4, 'he built altars in the house of God;' 2Ch 33:5, 'yea, for all the host of heaven did he build altars in the courts of the house of God.' This was a horrid piece of impudence, to provoke God to his very face, by equalizing his altars to God's altar. 2Ch 33:6, 'And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.' Here was inhuman superstition, and inhuman cruelty, to offer his own children in sacrifice to the devil. 'Also he observed times, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger;' 2Ch 33:9, 'he made Judah and Jerusalem to err, by his example, and to do worse than the heathens.' The actions of rulers are most commonly rules for the people's actions, and their example passeth as current as their coin. The common people dare practise the very worst of wickedness that they see acted in a scarlet robe; they are like tempered wax, easily receiving impressions from the seals of great men's vices; they make no bones on it to sin by prescription, and to damn themselves with authority. The heathen brings in a young man, who hearing of the adulteries and wickednesses of the gods, said, What, do they so, and shall I stick at it? So say most, when great ones are greatly wicked, Why, they do thus and thus, and why should we stick at it? The Egyptians esteemed it graceful, and their duty, to halt on that leg on which their king limped; most men think it a grace to imitate the greatest authority in their most graceless actings, which made the poet say, 'Subjects and kingdoms commonly do choose The manners that their princes daily use.'

2Ch 33:10, 'And the Lord spake unto Manasseh, but he would not hearken.' He was settled in idolatry, and stopped his ears against all the counsel and admonitions of the prophets that were sent to reclaim him. Now who would ever have thought that one so abominably wicked and wretched should ever have obtained such favour with God, as to be pardoned, renewed, and sanctified? and yet, 2Ch 33:12-13, 'he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly before the Lord, and prayed unto him, and God was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.' He now acknowledges Jehovah to be the true God, and renounces all other gods, that he may cleave to God alone. There is no heart so wicked but grace can make it holy. So Paul was

once so great a sinner, that had he stepped but one step further, he had fallen into the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. In 1Ti 1:13 you have a brief survey of his great transgressions. He was a blasphemer: he blasphemed God and Christ, and his ways and truth; he made a mock and scoff at holiness; he made nothing of blaspheming that God that he should have feared, and of blaspheming that Christ that he should have sweetly embraced, and of blaspheming those truths that he should have readily entertained. Paul was a great proficient in the school of blasphemy, he made nothing of belching out blasphemy in the very face of heaven. And he was a persecutor too: he persecuted holiness to the death, Acts 9:1-43 and Acts 26:11; yea, he was mad in persecuting the poor saints and servants of Christ; he did all he could to make their lives a hell, and to rid them out of this world; he thought them not worthy to live, though they were such worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Acts 8:3; he was a ravening and an untired wolf that was never weary in worrying Christ's little flock, and in sucking out the blood of his lambs. Yea, and he was an injurious person too: he made no conscience of wronging others, or of squaring his carriage by that golden rule, 'Do to others as you would have others do to you,' Mat 7:12. This royal law, this standard of equity, he regarded not; he made nothing of haling men and women to prison, and of compelling them to blaspheme by his cruelty and wicked example; he spared no sex, but practised the highest cruelty upon all that had anything of sanctity in them; he would adventure the torments of hell rather than not be a tormenter of the saints here; and the more active any were in holiness, the more injurious was he to them. And yet behold this blasphemer, this persecutor, this injurious person, became a sanctified Christian, an eminent saint, a pattern of holiness to all Christians in all ages.

Once more, witness that sad bed-room of unsanctified persons that are mentioned in 1Co 6:9-10, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.' These monstrous sinners and prodigious sins were enough to have brought another flood upon the world, or to have provoked the Lord to rain hell out of heaven upon them, as once he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, or to have caused the ground to open and swallow them up, as once it did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and yet behold some of these are changed and sanctified! 1Co 6:11, 'And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.' Oh, the infinite goodness! oh, the infinite grace! oh, the infinite wisdom and power of God, that hath pardoned, washed, sanctified, and cleansed such guilty, filthy, and polluted souls! The worst of sinners should never despair of being made saints, considering what unholy ones have been made holy. It is possible that you may be made holy; witness,

[6.] All those sanctified ones among whom you live, who once were as unholy, or more unholy, it may be, than ever you were. The sanctified husband is a clear witness to the unsanctified wife that she may be sanctified, 1Co 7:14, 1Co 7:16; 1Pe 3:1, 1Pe 3:6: the sanctified father is a witness to the unsanctified child that he may be sanctified; the sanctified master is a witness to the unsanctified servant that he may be sanctified; the sanctified prince is a witness to his unsanctified people that they may be sanctified; and the sanctified minister is a witness to his unsanctified hearers that they may be sanctified; the same Spirit, the same grace, the same power, the same presence that hath sanctified any of these, may sanctify all of these; there is no heart so unholy

but a holy God can make it holy; there is no spirit so unclean but a Holy Spirit can make it clean. Well, sinners! there are many living and standing witnesses of divine grace among you, and about you, that do sufficiently declare that it is possible that you may be sanctified and saved. Again, it is possible that you may be sanctified and made holy; witness,

[7.] The oath of a holy God: Eze 18:31-32, and Eze 33:11, 'Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' 'As I live' is the form of an oath, and is much used in the Scripture by God himself. Wicked men are very hardly persuaded to believe that God is willing that they should be sanctified and saved; and therefore God takes his oath on it, that he is infinitely more willing that wicked men should turn from their evil ways and be sanctified and saved, than that they should perish in their sins and be damned for ever. 'As I live' is a weighty oath, and imports the certainty of that which follows: it is absolute, without evasion or revocation; as sure as I live and am God, I have no pleasure in destroying and damning of souls, but desire that they would turn from their evil ways, and that they would be sanctified and saved; let me not live, let me be no longer a God, if I would not have the wicked to live and be happy for ever. The possibility of your being holy, God hath confirmed by an oath, and therefore you may no longer question it. The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear by the life of the king, and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no gold was to redeem his life. And do you think that a holy God doth not stand more upon his oath than heathens, yea, than the worst of heathens? Certainly he doth. Lastly, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[8.] The great designs and undertakings of Jesus Christ to make lost man holy. His great design in leaving his Father's bosom and coming into this world, was the destroying, the dissolving of the works of the devil: 1Jn 3:8, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' Sin is Satan's work, and Christ comes to destroy it, and break it all in pieces. Men's sins are Satan's chains, by which he links them fast to himself; but Christ was therefore manifested that he might loose and knock off these chains. Satan had knit many sinful knots in our souls, but Christ comes to untie those knots; he had laid many snares, but Christ comes to discover and to break those snares. It was the great design of Christ in the divesting of himself, as it were, of his divine honour, glory, and dignity, and in his taking on him the nature of man, to destroy Satan, and to sanctify the souls of men, Php 2:6-8, Php 2:15; Heb 2:11, Heb 2:14-15. It was the great design of Jesus Christ in giving of himself for us—in giving his soul, his body, his life, to justice, to death, to wrath for us, 'that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works,' Tit 2:14. The crown of holiness was fallen from our heads, and Christ freely and willingly uncrowns himself, that once more we might be crowned with holiness, immortality, and glory. Christ was resolved that he would lose all that was near and dear unto him, but he would recover our lost holiness for us. Christ knew that heaven had been but a poor purchase, had he not purchased holiness for us. As heaven is but a low thing without God, so heaven is but a low thing without holiness. It is holiness that is the sparkling diamond in the ring of happiness; a man were better be holy in hell than unholy in heaven; and therefore Christ ventures his all for holiness. The great design of Christ in redeeming of souls with the choicest, the purest, the costliest, the noblest blood that ever run in veins, was that they should 'serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives,' Luk 1:74-75.

In a word, Christ had never taken so great a journey from heaven to earth, but to make men holy; he had never taken upon him the form of a servant, but to make us the servants of the most high God. He had never lain in a manger, he had never trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath, but to make you holy. He prayed, he sweat, he bled, and he hung on the cross, and all to make you holy. He was holy in his birth, and holy in his life, and holy in his death, and holy in all his sufferings; and all to make you holy. The great design of Christ in all he did, and in all he suffered, was to make man holy. And thus you see by all these arguments that holiness is attainable.

3. Thirdly, Consider this, that real holiness is the honour and the glory of the creature; and therefore the apostle links holiness and honour together: 2Co 3:18, and Eph 5:27; 1Th 4:3-4, 'For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.' The vessel is man's body—which is the great utensil or instrument of the soul, and contains it as in a vessel. Now the sanctity and chastity of this vessel is the honour of a Christian. Even bodily purity is a Christian's glory. He that keeps his vessel in holiness, keeps it in honour. Holiness is the greatest dignity that mortal man is capable of; it is man's highest promotion, it is his highest exaltation. Holiness is the true gentility and the true nobility of the soul: Deu 26:19, 'And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour, and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God.' There is nothing that lifts a people so high, and that makes them so truly famous and glorious, as holiness doth. Holiness is the praise, the renown, the crown, and glory of a people. Holiness is the diadem, the beauty, and the excellency of a people. Holiness is the strength, the honour, and the riches of a people. Holiness is the image of God, the character of Christ. It is a beam of the divine nature, a spark of glory, it is the life of your lives, and the soul of your souls; it is only holiness that makes men to excel in honour all other people in the world. Look, as God's holiness is his glory, and the angels' holiness is their glory, and the church's holiness is their glory, Exo 15:11; Isa 6:2-3; Psalms 93:5; Eph 5:27; so the holiness of any particular person is the glory of that person. Why was Jabez reputed more honourable than his brethren, but because he was more holy than his brethren? 1Ch 4:9-10, 'And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.' Holiness is the truest and the greatest nobility and honour in the world. It is very observable that among Turks, Jews, Indians, Persians, and Papists, the strictest and holiest among them are most highly esteemed and honoured. Romanus, the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favour him for his nobility; for it is not, said he, the blood of my ancestors, but my Christian faith that makes me noble. David thought it not so happy nor so honourable a thing to be a king in his own house, as to be a door-keeper in God's house. Solomon did prefer the title of Ecclesiastes, that is, a soul reconciled to the church, before the title of the king of Jerusalem. Holy Theodosius, the emperor, preferred the title of *membrum ecclesiæ*, a member of the church, before that of *caput imperii*, the head of the empire, professing that he had rather be a saint and no king, than a king and no saint. And holy Constantine rejoiced more in being the servant of Christ, than in being the emperor of the world. And Luther had rather be *Christianus rusticus*, than *ethnicus Alexander*, a Christian clown than a pagan emperor. These holy men well knew that holiness was the top of all their honour and glory. Well, sinners,

remember this, that holiness is the high and ready way to the highest honour; and therefore, as ever you would be truly honourable, labour to be truly holy. Great swelling titles are but as so many rattles, or as so many feathers in men's caps, without holiness. He that can be content to live without holiness, must be contented to see his honour entombed whilst he lives. Honour without holiness is but a wind that will blow a man the sooner to hell. Honour without holiness is but magnum nihil, a great nothing, a glorious fancy. Many a man hath been the worse, but where lives that man that hath been ever the better, for his worldly honour? A man swelled with honour, without holiness, is like a man in a dropsy, whose bigness is his disease. Well, let ambitionists, and all others who hunt after the breath of popular applause, know that that honour which attends holiness is the truest honour, the highest honour, the greatest honour, the happiest honour, the surest honour, the purest honour, and the most lasting and abiding honour. Mollerus,³ upon Psa 73:20, concludes that wicked men's earthly honours and dignities are but as idle dreams, and their splendid braveries but lucid phantasies. Adonibezek, a mighty prince, is quickly made a fellow-commoner with the dogs, Jdg 1:7. And Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen, Dan 4:28. And Herod reduced from a conceited god to be the most loathsome of men, a living carrion arrested by the vilest of creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator, Acts 12:23. And great Haman feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next, Est 7:10. But that honour that waits on holiness is honour that will abide with a man, that will to the grave with a man, yea, that will to heaven with a man. Some heathens have been weary of their honours—Maximus, &c., but the honour that attends holiness is no burden to a Christian; and others have rejected honours when they have been offered them, because of the cumber and danger that attends them. High seats are never but uneasy, and crowns are usually stuffed with thorns. But the honour that attends holiness is a rose without prickles, it is a crown without thorns. That honour that springs from a root of holiness shall be both sanctified and sweetened by God, so as that it shall not hurt nor harm a gracious soul. Ah, sinners! sinners! if you will be ambitious, be ambitious of that honour that comes in upon the foot of holiness, for there is no honour to that honour. The Romans were insatiable in their desires after worldly honour, which is but as a blast, a shadow, a dream. Oh, how much more insatiable should you be in your desires and endeavours after that honour that is linked to holiness, and that is substantial and lasting! To stir you up to look after real holiness, consider, 4. Fourthly, That holiness is very attractive, drawing, and winning. It draws love, it draws desire, it draws delight. Holiness is like a precious perfume, whose savour spreads itself, and is pleasing and delightful to all that come near it: 2Ki 4:9-10, 'And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.' The holiness of the prophet's spirit, the holiness of his principles, the holiness of his behaviour, and the holiness of his conversation, did so allure and win upon this great lady, that she becomes an importunate suitor to her husband that he might be lovingly, freely, courteously, and commodiously entertained and accommodated as often as he came that way. So Acts 2:46-47, 'And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart; praising God, and having favour with all the people.' That which did grace and ingratiate these holy converts into the favour of the people, was the exercise of their grace and holiness. It was their sweet unity, their noble charity, their holy familiarity, their blessed harmony, their singular sincerity, and their

Christian constancy, that brought them into favour with all the people. Visible holiness is a loadstone that will draw eyes and hearts after it: 1Pe 3:1, 'Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wife.' A holy conversation is a winning conversation, Php 2:15, and 1Co 7:16. The holy conversation of the wife may be the conversion of the husband; the holy, the wise, the watchful, the circumspect conversation of the wife may issue in the salvation of the husband. Many a husband hath been won to Christ by the holy conversation of the wife; and many a wife hath been won by the holy conversation of the husband. Many a servant hath been won by the holy conversation of the master; and many a master hath been won by the holy conversation of the servant. Sozomen reports, that the holy life of a poor captive Christian maid, made a king and all his family to embrace the Christian faith. I have read of Cecilia, a poor virgin, who, by her holy and gracious behaviour in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. Many a soul hath been won by the dumb oratory of a holy life.² Justin Martyr confesseth that the constancy of Christians in their piety and sufferings was the chiefest motive that converted him to Christianity. 'For I myself,' saith he, 'was once a Platonist, and did gladly hear the Christians reviled: but when I saw they feared not death, nor any of those miseries which did most frighten all other men, I began to consider with myself that it was impossible for such men to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of piety; and that made me first think of turning Christian.' There is nothing that hath that influence upon the judgments of men to persuade them, upon the consciences of men to awe them, upon the mouths of men to stop them, upon the hearts of men to convince them, and upon the lives of men to reform them, as holiness, 1Pe 2:12. What Plato once said of his moral virtue—viz., that if it could be seen with bodily eyes it would be beloved of all, and draw all hearts to itself—that is most true of this theological grace, holiness. Holiness is so beautiful and so lovely a thing, that it renders men amiable and lovely in the very eyes of their enemies. Tilligny, for his rare virtues, was rescued from death by his greatest enemies at the massacre of Paris. Holiness makes a man's face to shine, as it did Moses his, and Stephen's. Nothing pleases the eye nor wins the heart like holiness. What is gold to godliness, gifts to grace, parts to piety? A spark, a ray, a beam of holiness, will certainly have an influence upon the spirits of men, either to restrain them or change them, or allay them or sweeten them, or win them, or one way or another to better them. Look, as the unholy lives and conversations of many professors do occasion some to blaspheme God, others to belie God, others to withstand God, and others to forsake God; look, as the looseness of many Christians doth work some to reproach Christ, others to deny Christ, others to refuse Christ, others to revile the good ways of Christ, and others to oppose and despise the faithful followers of Christ: as Lactantius reports, that the loose lives of many Christians was made by the heathens the reproach of Christ himself, *Quomodo bonus magister, cujus tam pravos videmus discipulos?* How can we think the master to be good, whose disciples we see to be so bad? And Salvian also complains that the loose walking of many Christians was made by the heathen the reproach of Christ himself, saying, If Christ had taught holy doctrine, surely his followers had led better lives. And further, the same author relates how the heathens did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach: Where, said they, is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostles' writings, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives. Now I say, look, as the holiness of many professors² is a

dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a scandal to religion, a blot to profession, and a grief to many whom God would not have grieved, Eze 13:22; so the power of holiness, the practice of holiness, is very influential upon the worst of men, to win and work them to the Lord, and to a love and liking of his ways. The holy lives of the saints made the very heathens to say, Surely this is a good God, whose servants are so good. Ambrose his holiness did very much draw out the heart of Theodosius, the emperor, to him; and the holiness of Paphnutius did very much draw out the heart of Constantine the Great to him. There is nothing that gives a man that heart-room and that hearty room in the souls of others, as holiness. It is the holy man that is a man of a thousand. But,

5. Fifthly, Consider that real holiness is the excellency of all a man's excellencies. As holiness is the glory of God, a part of the divine nature, a spark of heaven, a ray of glory, so it is the excellency of all a man's excellencies: it is the excellency of all our natural excellencies, it is the excellency of all our moral excellencies, and it is the excellency of all our intellectual excellencies. Look, as God's holiness is the excellency of all his excellencies, as the angels, who best know what is the top of his excellency, do evidence by that threefold repetition, 'Holy, holy, holy,' Isa 6:3; these multiplied acclamations of holiness denote the superlative eminency, excellency, and perfection of God's holiness. Both among the Hebrews and among the Grecians the holiness of God is the excellency of his omniscience, omnipotency, and omnipresence. It is the excellency of his eternity, immutability, and fidelity; it is the excellency of his wisdom, love, care, and goodness: Psa 111:9, 'Holy and reverend is his name.' God's name comes to be reverend by holiness. If his name were not holy, it would never be reverend; and why is God called so often 'the holy one,' but to shew us that holiness is the very top of all his glory and excellency. God could not be glorious in anything if he were not glorious in holiness. That which speaks his power to be glorious power, is his holiness; and that which speaks his mercy to be glorious wisdom, is his holiness; and that which speaks his mercy to be glorious mercy, is his holiness, &c. Were not the power of God a holy power, it could never be a glorious power; were not the wisdom of God a holy wisdom, it could never be glorious wisdom; and were not the mercy of God holy mercy, it could never be glorious mercy, &c. So the holiness of a man is the glory and excellency of all a man's excellencies; it is the perfection of all a man's perfections. In paradise, man's perfect holiness was his perfect blessedness; and in heaven, man's perfect holiness will be his perfect happiness, Heb 12:23. Holiness adds an excellency to all a man's excellencies. That which adds an excellency to a man's wisdom is holiness. When a man's wisdom is a holy wisdom, then it is excellent wisdom. So holy courage is excellent courage, and holy zeal is excellent zeal, and holy knowledge is excellent knowledge, and holy faith is excellent faith, and holy love is excellent love, and holy fear is excellent fear. It is the adding of holiness to all these that renders these virtues truly excellent; it is holiness that is the top of all these royalties. Look, as all ciphers signify nothing except you add a figure to them; so all the excellencies that be in men, whether they are natural, moral, or acquired, they signify nothing except you add holiness to them. Birth and breeding, wit and wealth, honour and learning, are but the shadows and shapes of nobleness and true excellency; it is holiness that is the soul and substance of all; and without holiness all other things are of no worth, all other excellencies have no excellency at all in them. Naaman was general of the king's army; he was a man in great favour with his prince, a man much honoured among the people for being a saviour and deliverer to them. He was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper, 2Ki 5:1. This 'but he was a leper' was a cloud upon all his glory; it was a veil upon all his honour, greatness, and nobleness. So to say, there is a wise man, but unholy; and there is a great man, but unholy; and

there is an ingenuous man, but unholy; and there is a noble man, but unholy; and there is a valiant man, but unholy; and there is a good-natured man, but unholy; and there is a learned man, but unholy, &c.,—what is this 'but unholy,' but a cloud of darkness upon all the excellencies that are in these persons? But let now holiness be but added to each of these, and then they will shine as so many suns. Holiness is a garment that sets off arts, and parts, and all other excellencies that be in man; let but this garment be wanting, and the nakedness of all things will quickly appear. And this made Jerome to say that he had rather have St Paul's coat with his heavenly graces, than the purple of kings with their kingdoms. Look, as a precious jewel set in gold makes that much more conspicuous and glorious which was glorious before; so holiness adds beauty, splendour, and glory to a man's parts, birth, honour, and estate, &c. But,

6. Sixthly, Consider that holiness is not only an honour and an ornament to the person that hath it, but it is also an honour and an ornament both to the persons and places to whom he stands related. The holiness of the father is an honour and ornament to the child; so was Abraham's to Isaac: and the holiness of the child is an honour and an ornament to the father; so was Isaac's to Abraham: the holiness of the husband is an honour and ornament to the wife; so was Abraham's to Sarah: and the holiness of the wife is an honour and an ornament to the husband; so was Sarah's to Abraham. So, in Pro 12:4, 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.' A crown is the top of honour, it is the top of royalty and glory; why! a virtuous wife is such a thing! A sweet, a good-natured wife is as a gold ring upon her husband's finger; a gifted wife is as a gold chain about her husband's neck; but a holy virtuous wife is as a crown upon her husband's head. The holiness of the prince is an honour and an ornament to the people; and the holiness of the people is an honour and an ornament to the prince. The holiness of the master is an honour and an ornament to the servant; and the holiness of the servant is an honour and an ornament to the master. And the holiness of one brother is an honour to another brother. Jude glories in this, that he was the brother of James, Jude 1:1. James was famous for his sanctity; for his holiness he was called the Just, as Eusebius writes. His holiness did so sparkle and shine, that the Jews were generally convinced that in holiness he was more eminent and excellent than others. Now Jude took it for a very high honour to be related to one so eminent in holiness. Holy persons reflect a credit and an honour upon their relations. It was the speech of a heathen notably qualified, though but meanly bred and born, to a dissolute person well born, upbraiding him with his birth, 'I am a grace to my stock, but thou art a blot to thy lineage.' Yea, holy persons are an honour to the places where they have been born and bred: Psa 87:5-6, 'And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the Highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that tins man was born there. Selah.' God seems to be very much affected and taken with the very places where holy men are born; he loves the very ground that holy men tread on, and he delights in the very air that holy men breathe in. Holy persons reflect honour upon the very places where they were born. The holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were the honour and the glory of the ages and places where they lived. They where as so many bright morning stars, they were as so many rising suns in the places where they were bred and born. Melanchthon was called the phoenix of Germany, and Luther was the glory of the age wherein he lived. And so were many of the ancients before them, and many since, who have been burning and shining lights in the places of their abode. Look, as an unholy person is a plague and a curse to the very place he lives in, and hasteneth down wrath and vengeance upon it, as Bias the philosopher hath long since observed; for he being at sea in a great tempest among many profane

debauched fellows, and perceiving them to call upon their gods, as the worst of men usually do in such cases, he comes to them, and desires them to hold their peace, lest the gods should take notice that they were in the ship, and so not only themselves, but others also, should suffer for their sakes. It was the wickedness of the wicked that brought the sweeping flood upon the old world; and it was the wickedness and filthiness of the Sodomites that caused God to rain hell out of heaven upon the cities where they lived. Let men be never so honourable, or never so potent, or never so witty, or never so wealthy, &c., yet if they are profane, if they are wicked, they will hasten down the wrath and vengeance of God upon the places of their abode. So a holy person is an honour and a blessing to the very place he lives in, as you may see in Jacob and Joseph, who were choice and noble blessings to the very families where they lived. O sirs, as ever you would be an honour to your relations, to your country, and to the places of your abode, labour for holiness! Some venture life and limb, and many a better thing, to reflect honour upon their relations, and upon their country—as many of the Romans did; and why then should not you venture, far, and venture high for holiness, which will be not only an honour to yourselves, but also an honour and a glory to all persons and places that you have relation to?

7. Seventhly, Consider that holiness is the very ear-mark, the very livery and badge of Christ's servants and subjects: Isa 63:8, 'For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour;' and Isa 63:18, they are called 'the people of his holiness.' God's people are too holy to lie; they will not lie for his glory, nor for their own worldly good. They will rather die than lie, with that brave woman that Jerome writes of, who being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved rather to die than lie. Neither the merry lie, nor the jesting lie, nor the officious lie, nor the pernicious lie, will down with those that are the people of God's holiness, or that are his holy people. Saith God, I have been at so much cost and charge about them, I have carried it so kindly, so bountifully, so sweetly, so favourably, so nobly to them; I have been such an all-sufficient Saviour, such a mighty preserver, and such a glorious deliverer of them, that certainly they will not lie, they will not deceive my expectation, they will not deny me, they will not deal disloyally nor unworthily by me.³ They are of Augustine's opinion, who hath long since told us, that we must not tell so much as an officious lie, though it were to save all the world. So Jer 2:3, 'Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.' Holiness to the Lord is the mark that God sets upon all his precious ones: Psa 4:3, 'Know that God hath set apart him that is godly for himself.' God hath wonderfully, gloriously, marvellously, yea, miraculously set apart the pious, the holy, the merciful, the godly man, the gracious saint, by some mark of distinction for himself, that is, for his own honour, and glory, and service, and delight. Look, as Rahab's house was known by a red thread, Jos 2:1-24; and the Ephraimites by their lisping, Jdg 11:1-40; and Jehu by his driving, 2Ki 9:1-37; and Peter by his speaking, Mat 26:1-75; so real Christians are known by their holiness. Holiness is King Jesus his livery, by which all his subjects and servants are known and differenced from all other persons in the world. And in the primitive times, a Christian was known from another man only by the holiness of his conversation, as Tertullian witnesses. Look, as our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of holiness raising him up from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God, Rom 1:4; so it is the spirit of holiness, it is principles of holiness, it is the life and practice of holiness, that declares us to be the sons of God, 2Co 6:17-18. Holiness is that golden character by which God differences and distinguisheth his people from all others in the world. Look, as the worshippers of the beast are known by the mark of the beast that is upon them; so the

worshippers of Christ, the people of Christ, are known by that mark of holiness that Christ hath set upon them. This title, this compellation, 'saints,' is given fourscore times to the people of God in Scripture, as if God took a greater delight to have his children known by this badge and livery than by any other. As for such that have the name of saints upon them, but nothing of the nature of a saint in them; that have a name to be holy, and yet are unholy; that have a name to be gracious, and yet are graceless; that have a name to live, and yet are dead; these God will in that day unmask, when he shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. An unholy saint is a white devil, he is a monster among men. Christ sweat, and prayed, and died, and was raised to make sinners saints, to make the rebellious religious, and the licentious conscientious. All he did and suffered was to stamp the seal and impress of holiness upon them. And therefore, as ever you would be owned and honoured by Christ another day, look that the Holy Spirit sets the seal of holiness upon you. If the impress of holiness be upon you in the day that the Lord makes up his jewels, he will declare you to be his before all the world. He will say, These are my sheep, these are my sons, I know them by that mark of holiness that I find upon them. But,

8. Eighthly, Consider this, that a man of holiness, or a holy man, is a common good, a common blessing. All fare the better for a holy man. All in the family, all in the court, all in the city, all in the country, fare the better for the holy man's sake. All in Laban's family did fare the better for Jacob's sake; and all in the city of Zoar did fare the better for Lot's sake; and all Pharaoh's court, and the whole country of Egypt, did fare the better for Joseph's sake. Sodom was safe whilst holy Lot was in it: holy Elijah was the chariots and horsemen of Israel. Whilst holy Moses stood in the gap, destroying judgments were diverted: when holy Phinehas took up his censer, and stood between the living and the dead, the plague was stayed. Holy persons are public mercies, public blessings: Job 22:30, 'He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands:' or, as some read the words, 'the innocent shall deliver the island;' that is, the inhabitants of the island. The innocent shall deliver those that are not innocent; had there been but ten innocent, but ten righteous persons in Sodom, Sodom might have been a glorious city to this day; had there been but ten righteous souls among them, God would never have rained hell out of heaven upon them; Gen 18:32 to the end. The guiltless shall deliver the guilty in an island; the guiltless, by lifting up pure hands to God in prayer, shall stay the hand of God, that it destroys not the guilty. It is the holy seed that upholdeth the civil state: Isa 6:13, 'But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.' The holy seed were the stay and prop of their land, and this the Lord evidences by a very familiar instance or similitude. It is as if he should say, You see the way or causey, leading from the king's house to the temple—spoken of in 1Ki 10:5; 2Ki 12:21; 1Ch 26:16-17, and 2Ch 9:11—how by reason of the oaks and trees on either side thereof the earth between is stayed and held up firm, which otherwise would fall to decay and moulder away: so saith God, it is the holy seed that bears up the whole state, and were it not for them, desolation and destruction would come in as a flood upon you: Pro 10:25, 'The righteous is an everlasting foundation.' The Hebrew doctors sense it thus, The righteous are the foundation of the world, which would soon shatter and fall to ruin but for their sakes. The whole world fares the better every day for the righteous' sake. If it were not for this holy seed, the chaff of this world would soon be set on fire. If the number of the holy seed were but called and converted, God would quickly turn the whole world into flames and ashes. It is they that bear up the pillars of the earth: Psa 75:3, 'I bear up the pillars of the earth.' Holy persons are the true Atlases both of church

and state; they are the pillars on whom all do rest, the props on whom all do lean; do but overturn these pillars, and all will fall about your ears, as the house did about the Philistines when Samson shook it. Let but kingdoms and commonwealths wreck these, and they shall quickly be shipwrecked themselves. There is not a sinner in the world but enjoys his estate, his relations, his outward accommodations, yea, his very life, upon the account of the saints; and therefore they must needs be bewitched, or fools, or madmen, that are still a-lifting and a-thrusting at these very pillars that bear them up. Look, as Samson's strength did lie in his locks, so the strength and safety of the nation lies in the holy seed: they are the bulwarks and ammunition of the nation; the safety and felicity of the whole is bound up in them. It is not armies, nor navies, nor walled cities, nor fortified castles, nor golden mines, nor grave counsels that will secure a nation, if once the people of God's holiness be cast by as broken pitchers. It is their piety and prayers that keeps off sweeping judgments from a nation, and that brings down variety of mercies upon a nation. Holy persons are the clouds that water the earth as a common blessing; and they are the rising sun that scatters all clouds and darkness. A holy man is Κοινον αγαθου, a public diffusive blessing in the place where he lives. Look, as one sinner destroys much good, Ecc 9:18, so one saint may save a land, a country: Jer 5:1, 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.' Though Jerusalem was far larger and more populous, I say not only than Sodom, but than all the other cities that sinned and perished with it, yet God makes so large and noble an offer, that if there could be found in it but one man divinely qualified, but a man of justice, a man of faithfulness, a man of uprightness, a man of holiness, the Lord would pardon it; that is, he would spare it, he would not destroy it, nor ruin it. God once made an offer to Abraham, that if there were but ten righteous souls in Sodom, he would save it; but here he falls so low as to make an offer, that if there could be but one righteous soul found in Jerusalem, he would not destroy it. One saint may save a city, yea, a world of sinners, from confusion and destruction. Luther, whilst he lived, by faith and prayer, kept off troubles from Germany, but soon after he was gone to his grave in peace, oh, the wars, the miseries and mischiefs, the distractions and confusions that came in like a flood upon them! Possidonius, in the life of Augustine, tells us that the famous city of Hippo could never be spoiled whilst Augustine lived. The flood could not drown the old world till holy Methuselah was laid up in peace. O sirs! as ever you would be a public blessing, labour to be holy. But,

9. Ninthly, Consider the antiquity of holiness. Holiness is of the greatest, highest, and ancientest antiquity. The first suit that ever was put upon the back of man's nature was holiness. Sin is of a later edition than holiness; holiness was when sin was not, Deu 32:7, &c. 'Let us make man,' saith God, 'in our own image.' Sin is against nature, it is a defect in nature, it came in by a lie, and, by-the-bye, through the subtlety of the father of lies, Gen 1:26. God stamped his image of holiness upon man before ever Satan assayed to tempt him. Holiness is of the ancientest house, of the greatest antiquity, John 8:44. Sin is but an upstart, holiness is the firstborn; the way of holiness is the oldest way: Jer 6:16, 'Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.' The way of holiness was that old way in which Adam at first, and in which all the holy patriarchs and prophets walked. In this sense it is most certain that the oldest way is the best way; the way of sanctity is of greatest antiquity. Let Papists and carnal superstitious Protestants cry up their superstitious ways as ways of greatest antiquity, yet when they have said

all they can, there is no antiquity to that of holiness. The way of will-worship was not the first way of worshipping God in the world. Many carnal men cry out that they are for the good old way, they care not for this new way, they care not for this new religion, as they call it; they say that we have never had good days since there hath been so much praying, and so much preaching, and so much fasting, and so much printing, and so much ado about close walking with God. 'Tis most certain that a carnal religion is best pleasing to a carnal heart; and this you may see evidently among the Turks, whose religion gives much carnal liberty to the professors of it; and whose religion promises them a paradise of sensual pleasures in another world. And the same is very observable among the Papists, and all the carnal Protestants in the world, who cry up that for the best religion, and for the true religion, and for the good old religion, that is most suitable to their carnal reason, and most pleasing and indulging to their lusts. Socrates is sufficiently condemned for his prescribing of men to worship God according to the manner of the country where they lived; and what was this but to gratify the lust of men, by subjecting the rule of God's worship to the laws and customs of men? But from the beginning it was not so. Holy Noah, holy Enoch, and the rest of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, walked only in ways of piety and purity. Holy Abraham, holy Isaac, and holy Jacob, never walked in those ways that are now by loose, formal, carnal, and superstitious persons cried up for the good old way, but in ways of holiness and righteousness. I have read of the Cretians, that when they cursed their enemies, they did not wish their houses on fire, nor a sword at their hearts, but that they might be delighted and given up to an ill custom. It is one of the greatest and bitterest curses and woes to be delighted and given up to ill customs; and the older the custom is of evil, the worse it is; and ah, how many are fallen under these curses in these days, wherein multitudes are addicted and given up to carnal and superstitious customs, and choose rather to follow an ill custom, though it be never so absurd, irregular, vain, and superstitious, than to walk in a way of peace and holiness! Well, sirs, shall the antiquity of holiness provoke you to be holy? Many will do much for antiquity sake; and why, then, should not you do much for holiness sake? Holiness is God's firstborn; it is as ancient as the ancient of days. The way of holiness is gray-headed, and of ancientest institution; all other ways are but of yesterday; they are but new ways to the way of holiness. And oh that this might alarm you to look after holiness! The Gibeonites cheated Joshua with their old clouted shoes, and with their old sacks, and old boots, and old garments, Jos 9:4-5; and so doth Rome this day cheat and delude multitudes of poor, blind, ignorant souls, with their old customs, and with their old ceremonies, and old traditions, and old inventions, under a pretence of the good old way, and the good old religion; but certainly the way of holiness, the way of purity, is of the greatest antiquity, and therefore, oh embrace it! oh, walk in it! Look, as the stamp of antiquity upon some things is a disparagement and a dishonour to them—as an old garment that is past wearing, and an old house that is past mending, and an old ship that is past rigging; so the stamp of antiquity upon other things is a praise and an honour to them—as old gold, old friends, old manuscripts, old monuments, old scars, and old holiness. The stamp of antiquity upon holiness is the praise and honour of holiness. Look, as it is an honour to a man to be descended of an ancient house; so it is an honour to a man to be allied to holiness; because sanctity is of greatest antiquity; and therefore, above all gettings, get holiness. But,

10. Tenthly, Consider, that of all things, holiness will render you most beautiful and amiable. As holiness is the beauty of God, and the beauty of angels, so it is the beauty and glory of a Christian too. Holiness is a Christian's greatest honour and ornament: Psa 93:5, 'Holiness becometh thine

house'—that is, thy church—'O Lord, for ever.' There is no garment that suits the church, that becomes the church, like the garment of holiness. It is sanctity that is the church's excellency and glory; it is purity that is the church's ornament and beauty. Holiness is a beauty that beautifies the church; it is the gracefulness and comeliness of the church. Holiness is so beautiful a thing that it puts a beauty on all things else. As holiness is the greatest ornament of the church triumphant, so it is the greatest ornament of the church militant, Eph 5:26-27. The redness of the rose, the whiteness of the lily, and all the beauties of sun, moon, and stars, are but deformities to that beauty that holiness puts upon us. If all natural and artificial beauty were contracted into one beauty, yet it would be but an obscure and an unlovely beauty to that beauty that holiness puts upon us: Psa 29:2, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:' Psa 96:9, 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:' Psa 110:3, 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauty of holiness.' You see beauty and holiness is by God himself still linked together; and those whom God hath so closely joined together, no man may put asunder. The scripture last cited doth not only speak out holiness to be a beautiful thing, but it speaks out many beauties to be in holiness. Those Christians that are volunteers in the beauties of holiness, they shall be very beautiful and shining through holiness. Holiness casts such a beauty upon man as makes him very amiable and desirable. The holiness of parents renders them very amiable and desirable in the eyes of their children; and the holiness of children renders them very amiable and desirable in the eyes of their parents, Isa 22:21. When that incomparable lady, Cornelia, presented her sons to the commonwealth, she said, *Hæc sunt mea ornamenta*—These are my jewels; these are my ornaments. Holy children are their parents' crown, their parents' ornaments; no glistening gold, no sparkling diamonds, no shining or glittering apparel, renders children so amiable and lovely in the eyes of their parents as holiness doth. The holiness of the husband renders him very amiable in the eyes of the wife, and the holiness of the wife renders her very desirable in the eyes of her husband. The holiness of the master renders him very lovely in the eyes of his servants, and the holiness of the servants renders them very comely in the eyes of their masters, &c. Jewel's holiness, Bradford's holiness, and Bucer's holiness, rendered them very amiable and lovely, not only in the eyes of their friends, but also in the eyes of their enemies. There is nothing in this world that will render all sorts and ranks of people so glorious and famous in the eyes of one another, as holiness will do. Were all ranks and orders of men more holy, they would certainly be more lovely in the eyes of one another. Oh that all men would cease from being injurious one to another, and labour to be more holy! and then, I am sure, they would be more comely in one another's eyes. Holiness is lovely, yea, loveliness itself. Purity is a Christian's splendour and glory. There is no beauty to that of sanctity; nothing beautifies and bespangles a man like holiness. Holiness is so lovely and so comely a thing, that it draws all eyes and hearts to an admiration of it. Holiness is so great a beauty, that it puts a beauty upon all other excellencies in a man. That holiness is a very beautiful thing, and that it makes all those beautiful that have it, is a truth that no devil can deny; and, therefore, O sirs, as ever you would be beautiful and lovely, labour to be holy. The natural beauty' of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Joseph, and Absalom, was no beauty to that beauty, lustre, and glory that holiness puts upon a man. Demetrius, saith Plutarch, was so passing fair of face and countenance, that no painter was able to draw him. Holiness puts so rare a beauty upon man, that no painter under heaven is able to draw him. Scipio Africanus was so comely a person, that the barbarians in Spain stood amazed at his comeliness. Mark 6:20, Holiness puts such a comeliness, and such an amiableness upon a

person, that many admire it, and stand amazed at it. O sirs, as ever you would be amiable and desirable, be holy; as ever you would be lovely and comely, be holy; as ever you would be famous and glorious, be holy; as ever you would outshine the sun in splendour and glory, labour to be holy. Many have ventured their names, their estates, their liberties, their lives, yea, their very souls, to enjoy a lovely Bathsheba, a fair Helena, a beautiful Diana, a comely Cleopatra, &c., whose beauties have been but clay well coloured. Oh, how much more, then, should you be provoked to labour and venture your all for holiness, that will imprint upon you that most excellent and most exquisite beauty, that will to the grave and to glory with you, yea, that will render you not only amiable and excellent in the eyes of men, but also lovely and comely in the eyes of God! I remember Bernard, writing to a noble virgin that was holy, tells her that others were clothed with purple and silk, but their consciences were poor and beggarly; they glistened with their jewels, but were loose in their manners; but you, saith he, are without meanly clad, but within shine exceeding beautiful, not to human, but to divine eyes, Psa 45:13-14. Both in the eyes of God, angels, and men, none shine and glister so gloriously as those that are holy, Eze 16:1, Eze 16:12. Unholy souls are foul souls, ugly souls, deformed souls, withered souls, wrinkled souls; they are altogether unlovely and uncomely souls. I have read of Acco, an old woman, who seeing her deformity in a glass, run mad. Should God but shew unholy men their deformity in the glass of the law, it would either make them spiritually mad, or else it would make them fall in love with holiness, that so they might be made comely and lovely by being made pure and holy. But,

11. Eleventhly, Consider this to provoke you to be holy; that holiness is the most gainfullest and the most thriving trade in the world. Now that every one cries out that all trading is gone, oh that every one would settle to the trade of holiness! Oh, there is no gain, there is no advantage, to the gain that comes in upon the account of godliness! 1Ti 6:6, 'But godliness with contentment is great gain.' Though godliness itself be great gain, yet godliness brings in a great deal of gain besides itself. The godly man is still of the gaining side, his piety brings him in the greatest plenty: chap. 4:8, 'Godliness is profitable to all things.' A man is as well able to tell the stars of heaven, and to number the hairs of his head, as he is able to tell the several commodities, or to number up the variety of blessings, or multitude of mercies, that comes flying in upon the wings of godliness. Godliness hath the promise of both lives, that is, both of earthly favours and of eternal blessings also. It is profitable, not for some things, but for everything; both temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings do grow upon this tree of life—holiness. There is no trade to the trade of godliness: Pro 22:4, 'By humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches, and honour, and life.' Godliness hath the promise of gold as well as of grace, of honour as well as of heaven; of life and happiness here, as well as of glory and blessedness hereafter. The good things of this life, as well as the great things of a better life, follows holiness hard at heels. Holiness is not a barren but a fruitful womb; it is like that tree in Rev 22:2, which did bear twelve manner of fruits, and that yielded fruit every month. What is of greater value among men than riches? and what is more glorious among men than honour? and what is more sweet among men than life? Why, all these fruits, and ten thousand more, grow upon the tree of holiness. The bag of riches, the robe of honour and life, that is, the comfort and sweet of both, hangs all upon the back of holiness. But that I may the more effectually win upon you, and provoke you to look after holiness, let me by an induction of particulars further confirm the truth of this last consideration, especially considering that there is no argument under heaven that is so taking with all men as this of gain. Profit is a bait that all bite at; it is the great god of the world. And therefore thus,

(1.) First, Consider that holiness brings in present gain; and what gain to present gain? There are many that lay out much, and venture far, and run the hazard of all, and yet it is long before they see returns. Oh, but holiness, that brings in present profit: Rom 6:22, 'But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' The apostle doth not say, ye may have your fruit unto holiness, but ye have your fruit unto holiness; he doth not say, ye shall have your fruit unto holiness, but ye have your fruit unto holiness; he doth not say, oh that ye had your fruit unto holiness, but ye have your fruit unto holiness. So Psa 19:11 : Not only for keeping but also in keeping of his commands there is great reward. Holiness is its own reward. Whilst a Christian is in the very exercise of holiness, oh what blessed sights, what sweet tastes, what glorious incomes, from heaven hath he! Oh the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret joggings, the secret love-tokens that Christians meet with in the very practice of holiness! Holiness brings in present comfort and joy: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.' There is no mirth, no joy, to that that holiness brings in. Let a man's load be never so heavy, yet holiness will bring in that joy that will make him bear up bravely and cheerfully under it. Holiness brings in present peace; hence it is that you read of 'the peaceable fruits of righteousness,' Heb 12:10-11. And holiness will bring in present communion with God: 1Jn 1:7, 'But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another:' that is, God and we have fellowship together, as it is ver. 3. Now to walk in the light as he is in the light, what is it but to walk in holiness, to walk in paths of sanctity? for only in such paths the Lord walks. And therefore as you love present gain, labour after holiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, As holiness brings in present gain, so holiness brings in the best and greatest gain; and this I shall evidence thus:

[1.] First, Holiness will make a man rich in the midst of poverty, Jas 2:5: Rev 2:9, 'I know thy poverty, but thou art rich;' though the church of Smyrna was poor in goods, yet she was rich in grace, she was rich in faith, and rich in hope, and rich in patience, and rich in contentment, &c.; she was rich in Christ her head, and rich in promises, and rich in experiences; she had spiritual riches in possession, and glorious riches in reversion. So in 2Co 6:10, 'As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' A holy man cannot be a poor man. A holy man is still the richest man. But this is a riddle the world understands not. The riches of a Christian have no bottom; all a saint's bags are bottomless bags. Experience tells us that unholy men's bags, purses, coffers, and mints, may be drawn dry; but the treasury, the riches of a saint, can never be exhausted, for he still possesses all things in Christ and with Christ, 1Co 3:22-23; though he hath nothing in hand, yet he hath all things in hope; though he hath nothing in the cistern, yet he hath all things in the fountain. Gen 33:9, Esau could say, (Li Rab,) 'I have much;' and it was much that an Esau should say he had much; but says holy Jacob, Gen 33:11, (Li col,) 'I have all.' Esau had much, but Jacob had all, because he had the God of all: he had him that was all in all. It hath been said of the great Duke of Guise, that though he was poor as to his present possessions, yet he was the richest man in France in bills, bonds, and obligations, because he had engaged all the noblemen in France to himself, by preferring of them. A holy man is the richest man in the world in promises and obligations, for he hath the great and glorious God engaged by many thousand promises to own him, to bless him, to stand by him, to give grace and glory to him, and

to withhold nothing from him that may be good for him, Psa 84:10-11. When wicked men brag of their lordships and manors, and boast of their great possessions, and glory in their thousands a year, a holy man may make his boast of God, and say, God is mine, God is mine; he is my great all; he is my all in all; and therefore I am richer and a greater possessor than any wicked man in the world, yea, than all wicked men in the world put together. But,

[2.] Secondly, By holiness you will gain a good report, a good name: Heb 11:39, 'And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.' Nothing raises a man's name and fame in the world like holiness. The seven deacons that the church chose were holy men, Acts 6:5; and they were men of good report, Acts 6:3; they were men well witnessed unto, well testified of, as the Greek word imports. Cornelius was a holy man, Acts 10:1-4; and he was a man of good report among all the nation of the Jews, Acts 10:22. Ananias was a holy man, Acts 9:10, Acts 9:20; and he was a man of a good report. Acts 22:12, Gaius and Demetrius were both holy men, and they were men of good report; witness that third epistle of John. The patriarchs and prophets were holy men, and they were men of a good report: Heb 11:1-2, 'For by it the elders obtained a good report;' their holiness did eternalize them. The apostles were holy men, 1Th 2:10; and they were men of a good report, 2Co 6:8. Now certainly it is none of the least of mercies to be well reputed and reported of. Next to a good conscience, a good report is the noblest blessing. Good fare doth not more rejoice and strengthen the outward man, the ignoble part of man, than a good report doth rejoice and strengthen the inward man, the noble part of man: Pro 15:30, 'A good report makes the bones fat.' Yea, and I may add, it makes the heart fat too. It is no small pleasure to a man to know that others are pleased with him. Beautiful objects do not more delight the eyes than a good report delights the ears. O sirs, as ever you would obtain a good report, you must labour after holiness. You may obtain a great report without holiness, but you can never obtain a good report without holiness. There is no such way to perpetuate your names as to labour after holiness. Holiness will embalm your names, it will make them immortal: Psa 112:6, 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance;' Pro 10:7, 'The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.' Wicked men many times outlive their names, but the names of just men outlive them. When a holy man dies, he leaves his name as a sweet and as a lasting scent behind him; his fame shall live when he is dead. According to the Hebrew, the words may be read thus, 'The memory of the just shall be for a blessing.' The very remembering of the just shall bring a blessing upon them that remember them. Whilst the just, the holy man lived, he was a blessing to those amongst whom he lived, and when he is dead, his memory is a blessing to posterity. But the name of the wicked shall rot. Whilst a wicked man lives, he lays his name under disdain and disgrace, and when he dies, he leaves it under an odious stink. Wickedness corrupts not only the heart, but the name. And look, as wickedness makes a man's soul stink in the nostrils of God, so wickedness makes a man's name stink in the nostrils of men. Look, as a wicked man's body, when he is dead, stinks under ground, so his name stinks above ground. His very name casts forth so stinking a savour, that all the perfumes in the world, and all the spicery of hell, can never sweeten it. Well, once more remember that these words, 'the name of the wicked shall rot,' are a metaphorical speech taken from a tree, which, though for a time it grows green and flourishes, yet at length it grows rotten; so though wicked men may flourish and be green and glorious for a time, yet at last they shall rot, their names shall rot on earth, their bodies shall rot in the grave, and their souls shall rot in hell; but the memory of the just shall be blessed. Next to a holy man's soul, there is nothing so near and dear to him as his name; and this God will so perfume as that the fragrantcy

of it shall last for ever. The name of a holy man shall be always as an ointment poured forth; but the name of a wicked man shall be always as a stinking jakes. O sirs, what a deal of stir do many men make to get a name, to get a name to be wise, a name to be knowing, a name to be learned, a name to be skilful, a name to be rich, a name to be great, a name to be mighty, and a name to be valiant, &c., as Nimrod, Cain, Absalom, Alexander, Pompey, Adrian, &c. And why then should you not labour after holiness, that so you may get a good name, which is rather to be chosen than riches, Pro 22:1, and which is better than precious ointment? Ecc 7:1. O sirs, shall many Romans and others run the hazard of damning their souls to immortalise their names, and will not you labour after holiness to eternalize yours? There is no way to a good name, to a good report, but by getting of holiness.

[3.] Thirdly, By holiness you will gain a hiding-place, a shelter, a refuge in stormy and tempestuous times: Pro 11:6, 'The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: but transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness.' Let a holy man's enemies, dangers, snares, hazards, be never so many, yet his righteousness shall shelter him against all, Isa 3:10, and Isa 26:20-21. In the midst of trouble, holiness will keep a man from trouble; and in the midst of dangers, holiness will keep a man from dangers, Isa 43:2-4; John 14:1. Holiness is the most sovereign antidote in the world against all the troubles of this life. Noah's sanctity was Noah's safety in the midst of a deluge: and Lot's piety was Lot's security in the day of Sodom's ruin and misery: and the three children's innocency was a wall of fire about them in the midst of the fiery furnace: and David's integrity was a shield and buckler against Saul's rage and cruelty. So in Pro 13:6, 'Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.' There is no guard, no protection against troubles and dangers, to that of righteousness. Righteousness and holiness is the most puissant army, and the strongest tower of defence against all hazards and enemies. The Hebrew word that is here rendered keepeth, is from natsar, that signifieth to keep with the greatest care, diligence, and vigilancy that can be; it signifies to preserve and keep, as a man would preserve and keep the apple of his eye, which is the chiefest and the tenderest piece of the tenderest part, Deu 32:14; and it signifies to keep, as a man would keep ammunition and provision from fire, or from treacherous hands, when a powerful and enraged enemy is drawing near, Nah 2:1. Why, says he, look how careful and diligent, &c., men are to keep and preserve those things that are most near and dear unto them, and that are most highly prized and valued by them; so will righteousness and holiness preserve and keep the righteous man in times of trouble and danger. So in Eze 14:14, Eze 14:20, 'Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.' These three, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were very holy men, they had great interest in God, and were very prevalent with God. But the decree being gone forth, they could not prevail with God for others; yet their righteousness should be their own perservation, safety, and security, in days of calamity and misery. So in Isa 33:15-16, 'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil, he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.' Let us dive a little into this admirable promise: 'He shall dwell on high;' but rather as the Hebrew hath it, 'He shall dwell on heights.' If the holy man were among his enemies, he might be in danger, but he shall dwell on

heights, on many heights, and many ascents, he shall be out of harm's way, out of gun-shot, he shall be above the reach of danger. Oh! but his enemies may raise up mounts, and so get as high as he is. Well, grant that, but yet they shall not hurt him; for he is in a place of defence. Oh! but though he be in a place of defence, yet his defence is not so strong but it may be broken down and destroyed. No, not so, for his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; many rocks, and many munitions of rocks, shall be the place of his defence; and therefore his defence is impregnable and invincible. Oh! but though his defence be munitions of rocks, yet he may be famished, he may be starved out, for rocks are barren places, and there is no ploughing and sowing upon rocks. No, he shall not be starved nor famished out of his strong place of defence; for bread shall be given him, God will spread a table for him. Oh! but though he hath bread, yet he may perish for want of water; for he hath no faith, skill, nor power to fetch water out of a rock: Moses had not, and he hath not, and therefore he may be forced to deliver up his place of defence for water to quench his thirst, as king Lysimachus and others have done. No, not so, for he shall have water too. Oh! but his water may be spent, his water will not always last, his well, as well as Hagar's bottle, may be dry, his pipes may be cut off, or the water that now supplies him may be turned another way. No, not so, for his water shall be sure. Oh! the safety and security of holy men! Plutarch, in the life of Alexander, tells us, that when he came to besiege the Sogdians, a people who dwelt upon a rock, or such as had the munition of rocks for their defence, they jeered him, and asked him whether his soldiers had wings or not; for, said they, except your soldiers can fly in the air, we fear you not. Such is the safety of God's holy ones, that they need not to fear. There are no ladders long enough to scale their place of defence, nor no artillery or engine strong enough to batter down their munitions of rocks. There is an apologue how the dove made moan to her fellow-birds of the tyranny of the hawk; one counsels her to keep below; but saith another, the hawk can stoop for his prey; another advised her to soar aloft; but saith another, the hawk can mount as high as she; another wished her to shroud herself in the woods, for there she should be secure; but saith another, alas! there is the hawk's manor, the place where he keeps court; another bids her keep the town; but saith another, that is to become a prey to man; but at last one bids her rest herself in the holes of the rock, and there she should certainly be safe, for violence itself could not surprise her there, and there she was safe. Dove-like saints, they have their munitions of rocks to fly to, and there they shall be safe. O sirs! there is no breastplate to that of righteousness, there is no armour of proof, no munitions of rocks, to that of holiness. Noah's holiness was an ark to save him, when Nimrod's Tower of Babel, which was raised five thousand one hundred forty-six paces high, could not secure him.² And therefore as you tender your own safety and security in times of trouble and calamity, oh, labour to be holy.

[4.] Fourthly, By holiness you will gain deliverance from death in death: Pro 11:4, 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death;' and Pro 10:2, 'Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death.' Many treasures of the most precious jewels that be in the world cannot ward off a blow, a disease, a sickness in the day of God's wrath. It is not the crown of gold that can cure the headache; nor the golden sceptre that can cure the palsied hand; nor the necklace of pearl that can cure the aching teeth; nor the honourable garter that can ease the gout; nor the purple robe that can chase away the burning fever; nor the velvet slipper that can heal the kibe-heel: no more can treasures of gold or silver deliver from wrath, or help in a day of death. Oh, but righteousness, that delivers from death. Look, what the sword, the shield, the helmet, the breastplate, the coat of mail, is to the soldier in the heat

of battle, that, all that, and more than that, is righteousness to the righteous in the day of death.² Righteousness or holiness of affection, of action, of life and conversation, delivers from spiritual death, and from eternal death, yea, it delivers from the evil, the hurt, the horror, the terror, the dread, and the sting of temporal death. Piety delivers not only from the second death, but also from all the evils and miseries of the first death too. As the righteousness of the righteous will be a royal protection to him, both against the day of wrath, and the wrath of the day; so the righteousness of the righteous will be a royal protection to him, both against death, and against all the evils of death. Righteousness unstings death, it takes away the venom, the poison and bitterness of death; it turns that curse into a blessing, that punishment into a benefit, that night of darkness into a day of light, that wilderness into a paradise, that hell into a heaven: Pro 12:28, 'In the way of righteousness is life, and in the path thereof there is no death.' In the way of righteousness is (chaiim) lives; so the Hebrew hath it, in the way of righteousness there are many lives: in that way there is spiritual life, and eternal life, and natural life, and all the comforts, and sweets, and blessings, and happiness of that life, without which man's life would be but a lingering, a languishing death; yea, a hell rather than a heaven unto him. 'And in the path thereof there is no death.' There is no spiritual death, there is no eternal death, yea, there is no corporal, no temporal death to hurt or harm them, to sting or terrify them, to damage or disadvantage them: for death is an outlet and an inlet to a holy man: it is an outlet to sin, to sorrow, to shame, to suffering, to afflictions, to temptations, to desertions, to oppressions, to confusions, and to vexations; and it is an inlet to a more clear, full, and constant fruition of God and Christ, and an inlet to the sweetest pleasures, the purest joys, the highest delights, the strongest comforts, and the most satisfying contentments. Death is the funeral of all a holy man's sins and miseries, and it is the resurrection of all his joys, and the perfection of all his graces and spiritual excellencies. Death to a holy man is nothing but the changing of his grace into glory, his faith into vision, his hope into fruition, and his love into perfect comprehension. The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day as that will the day of death be to a holy man. *Peccatum erat obstetrix mortis, et mors sepulchrum peccati*: Sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and death shall be the bearers that shall carry sin out of the world. When Samson died, the Philistines died together with him: so when a holy man dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goeth out by death. As the worm kills the worm that bred it; so death kills sin that bred it. Death cures all diseases, the aching head and the unbelieving heart: the diseased body and the defiled soul. At Stratford Bow were burned in Queen Mary's days a lame man and a blind man; after the lame man was chained, casting away his crutch, he bade the blind man be of good comfort; for, saith he, death will cure us both; it will cure thee of thy blindness and me of my lameness. Death will cure the holy man of all natural and spiritual distempers. Death is the holy man's jubilee, it is his greatest advantage, it puts him into a better estate than ever he had before. It is God's gentleman-usher to conduct us to heaven; it will blow the bud of grace into the flower of glory. Oh, who would not go through hell to heaven! who would not go through a temporary death to an eternal life! who would not willingly march through mortality to immortality and glory!² O sirs! holiness will make you look upon death as a welcome guest, a happy friend, a joyful messenger. It will make you kiss it and embrace it, as Favinus the Italian martyr kissed and embraced his executioner: it will make you desire it, and long after it with tears, as holy Bradford did. By all this you see that holiness will deliver you from death in death; and therefore I shall close up this head, as that wise and witty man, Sir Francis Bacon, closed up a paper of verses:—

‘What then remains, but that we still should cry, Not to be born, or being born, to die?’

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, By holiness you shall gain the greatest boldness in the day of judgment, Job 19:25. Nothing will embolden a man in that great day like holiness; holiness will then make the face to shine indeed: 1Jn 4:17, ‘Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world.’ That which will make Christ’s last appearance delightful to Christians, will be their likeness to Christ in holiness: in nature and grace likeness begets the greatest boldness. As there is no child so bold with the father, as he that is most like the father, so there is no Christian so bold with Christ, as he that is most like to Christ. A holy Christ is most familiar with a holy Christian; and a holy Christian is most bold with a holy Christ. The more a Christian is like to Christ in holiness of heart and life, in holiness of affection and conversation, the more divinely bold and familiar will that man be with Christ, both in this world and in the great day of account; when he that was a brat of Satan’s is made a saint, when he that was like hell is made like heaven, when he that was most ugly and uncomely is made like him that is the holy of holies; this is that which gives boldness both here and hereafter. O sirs, it is not wit nor wealth, but holiness; it is not race nor place, but holiness; it is not power nor policy, but holiness; it is not honour nor riches, but holiness; it is not natural excellencies nor acquired abilities, but holiness, that will give boldness in the day of Christ’s appearing: 1Pe 1:5-7, ‘A well-trying faith,’ which is but a branch of holiness, ‘shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.’ At the coming of Christ, holiness shall be a man’s praise and honour and glory. In that great day when shame and everlasting contempt shall be poured forth upon the great monarchs of the world, who have made the earth to tremble, ‘when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, &c., shall cry out to the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,’ Rev 6:15-17—then, I say, ‘then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the firmament,’ Dan 12:1-3. In life and death, and in the day of account, a righteous man will be as bold as a lion, Pro 28:1. Real holiness will make a man death-proof, and hell-proof, and judgment-proof. The day of judgment will be to a holy man a marriage-day, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, a day of exultation, and therefore he may well lift up his head and rejoice. Look, as the Israelites who had the blood of the passover on their door-posts, though the destroyer was abroad, and a dreadful cry was all over Egypt, yet they were not slain, not stricken, Exo 12:7, Exo 12:11; they did not fear nor tremble, but had their loins ready girt, and staves in their hands, boldly and cheerfully expecting when the happy and joyful hour of their redemption would come, Heb 9:14 : so those that have the door-posts of their hearts and consciences sprinkled with holiness, in this terrible day of the Lord, they shall with boldness and cheerfulness lift up their faces, because the day of their redemption is come. And this made Luther say that he had rather never have been born, than not to be in hope of this day. This day to God’s holy ones will be melodia in aure, jubilum in corde, Like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. It is true, the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, Psa 1:5; 2Th 2:7-10. Stand they must to be arraigned, sentenced, and condemned. Stand they shall, but not with any boldness or cheerfulness, comfort or content. Stand they shall, but not to be approved, acquitted, or absolved. Chaff and stubble cannot stand before that God that is a consuming fire, Heb 12:29. When Belshazzar saw the handwriting upon the wall, oh, how was he affrighted, how was his countenance changed, his joints loosed, and his knees dashed one against another! Dan 5:5-6. Oh, how do many ungodly men now tremble at a thunder-crack in the clouds, and at a flash of

lightning in the air! but how will they tremble and quake when the whole frame of heaven and earth shall break in pieces, and be set in a flame about their ears! Oh, what trouble of mind, what horror and terror of conscience, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, and what gnashing of teeth will there be among the ungodly in this day, when they shall see their sins charged on them on the one side, and divine justice terrifying them on the other side! when they shall look upward, and there see an angry God frowning upon them, and look downward, and there see hell gaping ready to receive them, and look inward, and there find conscience accusing and gnawing of them! when they shall look on their right hands, and there behold the good angels standing with so many flaming swords to keep them out of heaven, and look on their left hands, and there behold the devil and his angels ready pressed to drag them down to the lowest hell! oh, now how will they wish for the rocks to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them! how will they wish that they had never been born, or that they might now be unborn! how will they now wish that their immortal souls were mortal, or that their souls might be turned into the nature of beasts, birds, stones, trees, or air, or anything rather than what they are! I have read a story of two soldiers, who being in the valley of Jehoshaphat, in Judea, the one said to the other, Here in this place shall be the general judgment, and therefore I will now take up my place where I will then sit; and so, lifting up a stone, he sat down upon it, as taking possession beforehand; but being sat, and looking up to heaven, such a quaking and trembling fell upon him, that, falling to the earth, he remembered the day of judgment with horror and amazement for ever after. But alas! what heart is able to conceive, or what tongue is able to express, the fear and dread, the horror and terror, the astonishment and amazement that will fall upon all ungodly persons in this day! And yet even now God's holy ones shall lift up their heads and hearts: they shall be bold and steadfast, they shall be far from fear, shame, or trembling. And thus you see that godliness, that holiness is the most gainful trade. And therefore, sirs, as you love gain, as you tender your own profit and advantage, labour to be holy. But,

12. Twelfthly, Consider this, that holiness will put the greatest splendour and majesty upon persons that can possibly be put upon them, Job 29:8-11; Pro 12:26. There is nothing that imprints such a reverence and majesty upon man as holiness doth. There is nothing that is such a grace to man as grace. It is holiness that puts the greatest excellency and majesty upon man: Psa 16:3, 'But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Saints are the most excellent ones. The Hebrew word (veadire from adar) that is here rendered excellent, signifies (magnificis) the magnificent ones, or the noble, glorious, or wonderful ones. Saints or holy persons are the most excellent, magnificent, noble, and glorious ones; and in Dan 8:24 the holy people are called mighty, because there are no people upon the earth that have might and majesty stamped upon them as they have: Song of Solomon 6:10, 'Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?' The light, grace, glory, and holiness of the church rises by degrees: and this makes her terrible to all her enemies. Every degree of holiness is terrible to the unholy; but the higher the church rises in holiness, the more terrible and majestic it grows. Holiness puts such a splendour and graceful majesty upon all persons that have it, as even dazzles the eyes sometimes of wicked men, and begets in them an awe and reverence; as it is evident in Saul: 1Sa 24:17, 'And Saul said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.' So Herod: in Mark 6:20, it is said that he 'feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him.' Holiness is very majestic. The greatest monarchs fall down before it.

Herod reverences John, not for his birth or breeding, but for his holiness: not for his arts or parts, but for his holiness: not for his scholarship or greatness, but for his holiness. So that great monarch king Joash fell down before the holiness of Jehoiada whilst he lived, 2Ki 11:1-2, &c. And so did the holiness of the three children command respect and honour from that great monarch Nebuchadnezzar. And so did the holiness of Daniel cause king Darius to reverence him, and to cast a favourable aspect upon him, Dan 3:1-30. And so did the holiness that was written upon Judas the high priest cause Alexander the emperor to reverence him, and to fall down before him. In holiness there is such a sparkling lustre, that none can behold it but must admire it, and bow before the graceful majesty of it. It is not greatness but grace, it is not riches but righteousness, it is not outward pomp or splendour, but holiness, that can overawe the vain spirits of men. A holy life is the upbraiding of that which is corrupt: Wis 2:15, Wis 2:12, 'He is grievous unto us, even to behold him; for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion, he upbraideth us with our offending the law.' Grace will make a man majestic among those that have no grace. Bradford was had in so great reverence and admiration for his holiness, that a multitude that never knew him but by fame, greatly lamented his death, yea, and a number of Papists also wished heartily his life. Holy men have a daunting presence and majesty with them, as Athanasius had, and Basil had; for when Valens the emperor came to surprise him, he being in holy exercises, such a splendour and majesty was upon him, that it struck such a terror into the emperor that he reeled, and had fallen backward, had he not been upheld by those that were with him.³ Henry the Second, king of France, being present at the martyrdom of a certain tailor, who was burnt by him for his religion, and so terrified by the boldness of his countenance, and by his holy and gracious behaviour in his sufferings, that he swore at his going away that he would never be present at such a sight more. It is very observable, that the moral virtues of the heathen did put a great deal of splendour and majesty upon them: to instance only in Cato; Cato was a man of much justice and integrity; he was a man of an unspotted conversation and of high reputation among the Romans.⁵ Now his morality put such a splendour and majesty upon him, that when he was present the very worst of the worst durst not in speech or gesture discover any impiety or immodesty, any wantonness or wickedness. Now certainly if morality puts such a splendour and majesty upon men, true sanctity will put much more upon them. And therefore, sirs, as ever you would have a splendour and majesty upon you, labour to be holy. Maximilian the emperor had such a presence and majesty with him, that a stranger that never saw him before, pointed him out among thirty great persons. O sirs, it is not the gray beard, nor the purple robe, nor the grim look, that makes a man so much a man of presence and majesty, as holiness doth; and therefore as you would indeed be men of presence, men of majesty, labour to be holy. But,

13. Thirteenthly, Consider that the times and seasons wherein we live call aloud for holiness. Many say the times are bad, very bad, extreme bad: ay, and let me tell you that your hearts and lives are bad, very bad, extreme bad; and it is these that have made the times so bad, so very bad, so extreme bad. It is in vain to talk of better times, or wish for better times, till you mend your manners, and get better hearts. The times would quickly mend, if every man would but in good earnest labour to mend one. If your hearts and lives were but more holy, the times would quickly be more happy. You say you shall never have peace and prosperity till all be brought to uniformity in religion; but I say you shall never have any lasting peace, felicity, or prosperity till you come to be holy: 2Ki 9:22, 'And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts

are so many?' The interrogation carries with it a strong negation, 'What peace?' that is, there is no peace to such a wicked wretch as thou art: thou mayest wish for peace, and dream of peace, and long for peace, and look for peace, and pursue after peace, and yet thou shall be far off from peace. What Jehu said to Joram, I may say to all unholy persons. What peace and what prosperity can you expect whilst your drunkenness, and uncleanness, and worldliness, and lukewarmness, and dead-heartedness, and wantonness, and wickedness remains? what good days, what happy year can you look for, whilst your formality, and indifferency, and hypocrisy, and infidelity, do bear witness against you? So when Israel was very superstitious and vain in her worship, then 'there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed' (or beaten in pieces) 'of nation, and city of city; for God did vex them with all adversity,' 2Ch 15:5-6. When men are unholy, God will vex them; he will vex them with adversity, he will vex them with all adversity. When nations are ungodly, God will destroy them; he will beat them in pieces, he will beat them in pieces one against another. When there is no holiness in him that comes in, nor in him that goes out, then there shall be no peace to him that goes in, or to him that goes out. When all is said that can be said, and when all is done that can be done, wicked men will still be as unquiet as the raging and foaming sea, Isa 57:20-21. God will one day or another be still at war with that man that is at peace with his sin. It is said of the locusts that came out of the bottomless pit, in Rev 9:7-9, that 'they were like unto horses, and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces as it were faces of men, and their hairs as the hair of a woman, and their teeth were as it were the teeth of lions,' &c. Here are quasi horses, quasi crowns of gold, quasi faces of men, quasi hairs of a woman, and quasi teeth of lions, &c. Now just such things are all the comforts and contentments of unholy persons: their gold and silver, is but as it were gold and silver; and their prosperity and plenty, is but as it were prosperity and plenty; their peace and tranquillity, is but as it were peace and tranquillity; and their victories and triumphs, are but as it were victories and triumphs; and their joys and rejoicings, are but as it were joys and rejoicings. But mark, when the holy evangelist comes to set down a description of the locusts' tails, he doth not say that there were as it were stings in their tails, but in plain, positive, downright terms he tells you that there were stings in their tails; ver. 10, he tells you that their stings were true stings, real stings, certain stings. And so while men remain unholy, there are sure and certain stings in the tails of all their comforts, contentments, and enjoyments. The best way on earth to have a sure, a sound, a solid, a lasting peace with God, with ourselves, and with others, is to put on holiness as a robe upon us, Job 29:14, and to put all iniquity far from us, Job 11:13, Job 11:20.

O sirs, the worser the times are, the better should every man labour to be. Many complain of burdens, taxes, oppressions, and vexations; and they say with those, that 'judgment is turned backward, and that justice standeth afar off, and that truth is fallen in the street, and that equity cannot enter, and that he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; that judgment is far from us, and that justice doth not overtake us; that we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but behold darkness; that we grope for the wall like the blind, that we grope as if we had no eyes, that we stumble at noonday, that we roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves; that we look for judgment, but there is none; and for salvation, but it is far off from us,' Isa 59:9-11, Isa 59:14-15. These and a thousand more such complaints may be found amongst us. This scripture last cited, puts me in mind of a strange, but yet of a very true saying, viz., that there is more justice and equity in hell, than there is in France: for in hell the oppressor is oppressed; in hell he that would

not give a crumb of bread, shall not have a drop of water. In hell such as shed innocent blood, have blood to drink; in hell there are no bribes; in hell there is none to plead an unrighteous cause; in hell there is no respect of persons; in hell every man hath according to his deserts: but in France it is otherwise, &c. And do not the strong cries, tears, sighs, groans, and complaints of the poor and needy, of hirelings, orphans, and widows, &c., in most nations strongly demonstrate that there is more justice and equity in hell, than there is in most of the nations of the earth? But now what is the choicest salve for all these sores? Certainly holiness. What is the most sovereign remedy against all these maladies? Nothing but holiness. O sirs, the more holiness rises in a nation, the more will righteousness run down as mighty streams, and the more the hearts of the poor and needy will leap and sing for joy. There is no way to make a nation happy, but by making of it holy. O sirs! as you are men, as you are Englishmen, as you love your country, as you honour your king and country, and as you desire the peace, prosperity, and felicity of your country, labour to be holy. O England, England, it is holiness that will be a wall of fire about thee, and a glory in the midst of thee: it is holiness that will make thee happy at home, and prosperous abroad. Among all Englishmen, there is no man to the holy man. Certainly that man that is most busy about mending his own heart and life, contributes most to the mending of the times. There are many sturdy blades that will talk stiffly for their country, and that say that they will stand stoutly for their country, and yet by their daily ungodliness they do undo their country. These men destroy by their lives what they seem to build with their hands. And therefore, as ever you would have all things that are out of order in order, labour for a well-ordered heart, and a well-ordered life. Holiness of conversation is the best means under heaven to prevent confusion and desolation.

Again, if you will look upon the present times as times wherein the judgments of God are abroad in the world—I say, if you will thus look upon them, then, I say, the times call aloud upon you for holiness: Isa 26:9, ‘When thy judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.’ O sirs! when garments are rolled in blood, when the sword devours the flesh of the slain, when justice lays heap upon heap, when pestilence and famine destroys all on the right hand and on the left, oh! then every one will say, Come, let us break off our sins, let us turn to the Lord, let us mend our ways, and reform our lives, and get holiness into our hearts. We behold many sorer, heavier, and worse judgments than these are upon us this day, if we had but eyes to behold them. Oh, that hardness of heart, that barrenness of soul, that blindness of mind, that searedness of conscience, that perverseness of spirit, that superstitious will-worship, and that looseness of life that multitudes are given up to this day! Oh, those God-dishonouring, those Christ-denying, those ordinance-despising, those conscience-wasting, those life-corrupting, and those soul-damning opinions, principles, blasphemies, and practices that multitudes are given up to this day! Oh, the spiritual decays, the spiritual witherings, the spiritual slumberings, the spiritual faintings, the spiritual languishings that are to be found among a professing people this day! Now certainly there are no judgments to spiritual judgments; none reach the soul like these, none separate between God and the soul like these, none lay men open to temporal and eternal judgments like these. Spiritual judgments are the most insensible judgments, they are the most dreadful judgments, they are the most incurable judgments, they are the most damning judgments of all judgments. Spiritual judgments have most of wrath, and most of horror, and most of hell in them. Oh that now these terrible judgments are abroad in the earth, you would learn righteousness, that you would learn to be holy! For as there is no such sense against temporal judgments as holiness, so there is no such sense against spiritual judgments as holiness. Oh, the

spiritual strokes, the spiritual arrows, the spiritual diseases, the spiritual sicknesses, the spiritual plagues that are abroad in the world! and oh that the dread and sense of these might provoke you and prevail with you to labour after real holiness, to labour after the power of godliness, which will be your greatest security against these most deadly and soul-killing maladies!

Again, the days and times wherein we live call aloud for holiness. If you look upon them as days and times of grace, what greater and higher engagements to holiness were ever put upon a people, than those that God hath put upon us, who enjoy so many ways, means, and helps to make us holy? Oh, the pains, the care, the cost, the charge, that God hath been at, and that God is daily at, to make us holy! Hath he not sent, and doth he not still send his messengers, rising up early, and going to bed late, and all to provoke you to be holy? Have not many of them spent their time, and spent their strength, and spent their spirits, and spit up their lungs, and spent their very lives to make you holy? O sirs! what do holy ordinances call for, but holy hearts and holy lives? What do days of light call for, but walking in the light, and casting off the deeds of darkness? What is the voice of all the means of grace, but this, Oh, labour to be gracious? And what is the voice of the Holy Spirit, but this, Oh, labour to be holy? And what is the voice of all the miracles of mercy that God hath wrought in the midst of you, but this, 'Be ye holy, be ye holy'? O sirs, what could the Lord have done that he hath not done to make you holy? Hath he not lifted you up to heaven in respect of holy helps? Hath he not to this very day followed you close with holy offers, and holy entreaties, and holy counsels, and holy encouragements, and all to make you holy? And will you be loose still, and proud still, and worldly still, and malicious still, and envious still, and contentious still, and unholy still? Oh, what is this, but to provoke the Lord to put out all the lights of heaven, to drive your teachers into corners, to remove your candlesticks, and to send his everlasting gospel, that hath stood long a-tip-toe, among a people that may more highly prize it, and dearly love it, and stoutly defend it, and conscientiously practise it, than you have done to this very day? Rev 2:4-5; Isa 55:6. By what hath been said, I suppose there is nothing more evident than that the times and seasons wherein we live calls aloud upon every one to look after holiness and to labour for holiness; never complain of the times, but cease to do evil, and labour to do well, and all will be well; get but better hearts and better lives, and you will quickly see better times, Isa 1:16-19.

14. Fourteenthly, Consider that holiness will render you most like to a holy God, a holy Christ, and to holy angels. God is frequently called the Holy One in Scripture; he is called the Holy One above thirty times in the Old Testament. Angels are holy, and saints are holy, but it is God alone that is the Holy One. His person is holy, Isa 6:3; his name is holy, Luk 1:49; his works are holy, Psa 45:17; his judgments are holy, Psa 22:1-3; his habitation is holy, Isa 57:15; his temple is holy, 1Co 3:17; his kingdom is holy, Rev 21:27; his word is holy, Psa 29:7; and his Sabbaths are holy, Exo 16:23. Now this is God's own argument, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' Lev 19:2; 1Pe 1:15-16. Concerning the holiness of God, I shall speak at large, by divine assistance, when I come to press you upon perfecting of holiness; and therefore let this touch suffice for the present. Sirs, you cannot be like to God in many other things, but you may be like to God in this one thing, in this noble thing, in this most necessary thing—holiness; and therefore labour after it.

Again, as holiness will render you most like to a holy God, so holiness will render you most like to a holy Christ. The apostle calls him 'the Holy One,' 1Jn 2:20. Christ is essentially holy, he is infinitely holy, he is originally holy, he is singularly holy, he is eminently holy, he is perfectly holy, he is transcendently holy, and he is immutably holy. And so much the devil himself confesseth, in

Mark 1:24, 'I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God,' or rather as the Greek hath it, ἅγιος, that Holy One, by way of excellency and eminency—alluding, as some think, to Exo 28:36. Yea, Christ takes delight to characterise himself by this title: in Rev 3:7, 'These things saith he that is holy;' and in Dan 9:25, he is called 'the most holy;' or as the Hebrew hath it, 'the holiness of holinesses.' These abstracts speak out the vigour and strength, the eminency and excellency of Christ's holiness. Christ is holiness itself, yea, holinesses; and what do these abstracts speak out, but that perfect and complete holiness that is in Christ? The angels, in Isa 6:3, do three times iterate or repeat, 'holy, holy, holy.' Now though some do conceive that this threefold repetition hath reference to all the three persons, holy Father, holy Son, and holy Spirit, yet they that will but compare the text with John 12:37-41, shall plainly see that it relates only to our Lord Jesus Christ; and so the threefold repetition denotes only the superlative eminency of Christ's holiness. Christ is holy in his natures, in his offices, in his purposes, in his counsels, in his word, and in his works. His conception was holy, his conversation was holy, his converse was holy, &c., Acts 4:23; Luk 1:35; Eph 4:1-32; Gal 2:20. Holiness is the image of Christ, it is the picture of Christ, the perfection of Christ, it makes a man conformable to the life of Christ. Christ's holiness is that noble copy after which we should all endeavour to write. Subjects may without treason or offence attempt to be like their prince, in wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, peace, piety, clemency, and sanctity; though they cannot without rebellion and disobedience endeavour to be like him in power, greatness, might, majesty, splendour, and glory: so we may safely and honourably attempt to be like to Jesus Christ in wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, &c.; though we may not attempt to be like him in his miracles, signs, and wonders. O sirs! some have counted it their greatest honour and glory in this world, that they have been like such and such, who have been high and glorious in the world; and why, then, should not you reckon it your greatest glory and happiness to be like to Christ in holiness, though not in measure or quantity, yet in truth and reality? As you would resemble Christ to the life, labour to be holy; in other things you cannot be like to Christ, but in holiness you may. You cannot be like to Christ in his greatness, majesty, or glory, nor yet in his omnipotency, omniscency, nor omnipresence, nor yet in his general or special providence, nor in a thousand other things, but you may be like to Christ in his holiness. Look, as face answers to face, as Solomon speaks, so you may reach to that holiness that in reality may answer to the very holiness of Christ; and this is your only way to be like to Christ.

Again, as holiness will render you most like to a holy Christ, so holiness will render you most like to the blessed angels. The blessed angels are holy in their nature, and holy in their offices, and holy in their actings. They are called holy angels: Mat 25:31, 'When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him;' and so in Rev 14:9-10, 'And he that worshippeth the beast, or that receives his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.' The angels' holiness is their conformity to the original pattern of purity and excellency. The crown of holiness was set upon the heads of angels at their creation. Those princes of glory were crowned with holiness, as it were, in the cradle. The angels are holy in their praises, and holy in their waitings, and holy in their operations, and holy in all their ministrations. Bodin tells a story of one who desired of God the guidance and assistance of a holy angel, and accordingly he had sensible manifestations of a holy spirit that assisted him, and followed him to his death. If in company he spake any unwary words, he was sure to be advertised and reprov'd for it by a dream in the night; or if he read any book that was not good, the angel would strike upon the book, to cause him to

leave reading in it. When that sorcerer Balaam went to curse the people of God, a holy angel stood in the way, drew his sword upon him, and jostled his bones against the wall, and all to prevent the execution of his wicked and cursed intentions, Num 22:22. Oh, how much more, then, do they stand in the way of the saints, to prevent those weaknesses and miscarriages which Satan and their own corruptions would otherwise carry them to! And doubtless as they have a hand to restrain the saints from evil, so they have an eye and an influence upon them for good: 1Ti 5:21, 'I charge you before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels,' &c. The holy angels have their eyes and their influences upon us; they are our observers and overseers; they are called watchers in Dan 4:17, for they watch our words, and they watch our works, and they watch our ways; they watch us before duties, and they watch us in duties, and they watch us after duties. They watch us before duties, to see how we prepare and fit ourselves to meet with God; and they watch us in duties, to see how our graces are acted upon God, and how our hearts and affections are running out after God; and they watch us after duties, to see whether we walk worthy of God, and worthy of our duties, and worthy of our profession, and worthy of our high calling. In times of health, strength, peace, prosperity, &c., they watch to see how wisely, holily, humbly, fruitfully, cheerfully, and thankfully we will walk with God; and in times of adversity, they watch to see how believingly, how contentedly, how self-denyingly, and how patiently we will submit to God, &c.; all which speaks out the holiness of the angels. O sirs, you cannot in this world be like to the angels in power, strength, might, nor in agility, activity, splendour, beauty, or glory; but yet you may be like to them in purity and sanctity. Sirs, do not deceive yourselves. You shall never be like to the angels in glory, if you will not be like to them now in grace. If you will not with them now put on the robe of holiness, you shall not with them hereafter put on the crown of happiness. We are to follow the examples of the best men not an inch further than they were followers' of Christ, 1Co 11:1. Christians, saith father Latimer, are not bound to be the saints' apes, they are not to imitate them in everything. Where their examples were good, it is good to imitate them, and where they were bad, it is duty to decline them. The fairest copies that ever were written by saints have their blots, their blurs, and their erratas; and therefore it is best, it is safest, it is noblest, to set the most exact, the most perfect, and the most excellent copy of the angels before us, who, as they excel in strength, so they excel in holiness also: Psa 103:20, 'Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.' The angels obey divine commands readily, cheerfully, faithfully, universally, reverentially, humbly, affectionately, and unweariedly. O sirs, such obedience, such holiness will be your honour here, and your happiness hereafter. To gather up all, as ever you would be like to a holy God, a holy Christ, and the holy angels, labour to be holy. In holiness you may be like them, in other things you cannot resemble them. But,

15. In the fifteenth and last place, To provoke you to labour after holiness, consider the stinging argument in the text, viz., that without it no man shall see the Lord. The expression is exclusive. Now to 'see' is a Hebraism, and implies both vision and fruition. Now without holiness, no man, be he high or low, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, &c., shall ever come to a blessed acquaintance with God here, or to a glorious fruition of God hereafter. O friends, if it were so great a misery to Adam to be cast out of paradise, and so great a punishment to Cain to be cast out of his father's family—which was the only visible church of God on earth—and such a sore affliction for the lepers in the law to be shut out from all converse with men, and so great a trouble and torment to Absalom to be banished his father's court, and so great a hell to Jonah to be seemingly cast out of

God's sight, and so great a tribulation to John to be confined to the isle of Patmos; oh, how great a misery, how great a punishment, how great an affliction, how great a trouble and torment, how great a tribulation, how great a hell, will it be for all unholy persons for ever and ever to be banished the court of heaven, and to be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power! 2Th 1:7, 2Th 1:11. If it were such an unspeakable grief and misery to the primitive Christians, as indeed it was, to be debarred of one another's society and company, by being confined to isles, and mines, and strongholds; oh, then, what an unspeakable grief and misery will it be to all unholy persons to be for ever debarred of the blessed society of God, Christ, angels, and saints, and to be everlastingly confined to the strongholds of hell, and to the society and company of that damned crew who will be still a-cursing and a-blaspheming of God, and adding to one another's torments! O sirs, it is the sight of God in heaven wherein man's happiness and blessedness doth consist; it is the fruition of God in heaven that is the life, the honour, the crown, and glory of angels and saints. Heaven itself would be but a low thing, yea, it would be but magnum nihil, a great nothing, without the sight and fruition of God there. Now without holiness there is no seeing of God, there is no possessing or enjoying of God, there is no possibility of ever obtaining a part or portion in God. Ah, friends! without holiness all is lost. Thy soul is lost, thy Christ is lost, thy God is lost, thy crown is lost, thy heaven is lost, thy glory is lost; and what are all other losses to these losses? Demorrathus of Corinth saith, they lost the chiefest part of their lives' happiness that did not see Alexander sit on the throne of Darius; but what was their loss to that unconceivable and unexpressible loss that all unholy persons must sustain, who shall never see the King of kings in his beauty, who shall never behold the Lord on the throne of his glory? Well, sirs, if none of these arguments can prevail with you to labour after holiness, I must conclude that divine justice hath hardened you, and that Satan hath blinded you, and that your lusts have besotted you, and that this world hath bewitched you, and that it had been ten thousand thousand times better for you that you had never been born, than to live without holiness, and to die without holiness, and to be everlastingly damned for want of holiness. And thus much for the motives.

I come now to lay down some means and helps to holiness. Supposing that the language of some of your souls may be this: Oh, what shall we do to be holy! Oh, what course, what way, what means must we use that we may obtain this holiness, without which we now clearly see that we shall never come to a fruition of happiness! Methinks I hear some of you crying out, Oh, none but holiness, none but holiness! as that martyr once cried out, 'Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ!' Methinks I hear you crying out, Oh, give me holiness, or I die: as Samson once cried out, 'Give me water, or I die;' or as Rachel once cried out, 'Give me children, or I die.' So you cry out, Oh, give us holiness, or we die; give us holiness, or we eternally die. Oh, what shall we do to be holy! we see we are undone without holiness, we shall be damned without holiness. Oh that we were but made holy, that hereafter we may be assuredly happy!

Well, then, if you are in good earnest resolved to be holy, I would thus advise and counsel you: First, take heed of some things: Secondly, Labour to put in practice other things. The things that you are to avoid and shun, even as you would shun poison in your meat, or a serpent in your way, yea, as you would shun the devil himself, or hell itself, are these—

I. 1. First, Take heed of mistaking some particular scriptures, as that of Eze 14:6; Eze 18:30-32, and Eze 33:11, Eze 33:14, Eze 33:16, Eze 33:19. From these and such like scriptures, many unholy hearts are apt to conclude that they can repent when they please, and that though they do

defer their repentance, yet it is no such difficult thing to confess their sins at last cast, and to be sorry for their sins at last cast, and to forsake their sins at last cast, and to beg the pardon of their sins at last cast; and that if they do so, God hath given his word for it, he hath given it under his own hand, that he will pardon their sins, and save their souls. Now to prevent these soul-undoing mistakes, thou must know, O sinner,

[1.] First, That thou canst as well wash a blackamoor white at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well raise the dead at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well make a world at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well stop the course of the sun at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure; thou canst as well put the sea in a cockle-shell at pleasure, and measure the earth with a span at pleasure, as thou canst repent at pleasure: witness the proofs in the margin. I confess that if to repent were to hang down the head like a bulrush for a day, or to whine with Saul for an hour, or to put on sackcloth and walk softly with Ahab for a short space, or to confess with Judas, 'I have sinned,' or to say with Simon Magus, 'Pray to the Lord for me,' or to tremble with Felix for a moment—I say, if this were to repent, doubtless you might repent at pleasure; but alas! friends, to repent is another thing, to repent is the hardest and difficultest work in the world; and that will appear in the next particular. And therefore,

[2.] Secondly, To repent is to turn a flint into flesh, it is to turn darkness into light, hell into heaven; and is this easy? To repent is to make all clean: inside clean, and outside clean; it is to make a clean head and a clean heart; a clean lip and a clean life: and is this easy? True repentance includes a true sense of sin, a deep sorrow for sin, a hearty loathing of sin, and a holy shame and blushing for sin; and is this easy? To repent is for a man to loathe himself as well as his sin; and is this easy for man, that is so great a self-lover, and so great a self-exalter, and so great a self-admirer, to become a self-loather? To repent is to cross sinful self, it is to walk contrary to-sinful self, yea, it is to revenge a man's self upon himself; and is this easy? To repent is to pluck out right eyes, and to cut off right hands, and offer up only Isaacs; and is this easy? True repentance is a daily turning of the soul further and further from sin, and a daily turning of the soul nearer and nearer to God. It is a repentance not to be repented of; it is a repentance from sin, as well as a repentance for sin. Sin hath cast the soul at such a distance from God, that though the soul be every day a-turning nearer and nearer to God, yet it can never, in this life, get so near him as once it was, and as in heaven it shall be. And now tell me, O soul, is this such an easy thing, to be every day a-turning thy back upon sin, and a-turning thy face nearer and nearer to God? Surely no. True repentance lies in a daily dying to sin, and, in a daily living to him who lives for ever. The very life of repentance is the repentance of the life: and is this easy? But,

[3.] Thirdly, True repentance is a turning, not from some sin, but from every sin: Eze 18:30, 'Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.' Every sin strikes at the law of God, the honour of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore the penitent must strike at all. Every sin fetcheth blood from the heart of Christ, and every sin is a grief and vexation to the Spirit of Christ; and therefore the penitent must set upon crucifying of all. Every sin is an enemy to a man's peace, and to a man's comfort, and to a man's confidence, and to a man's assurance, and to a man's communion with God; and therefore he must set upon forsaking of all. If ever thou art saved, O man, thou must repent as well of thy Achans as thy Absaloms, of thy Rimmons as of thy Mammons, of thy Davids as of thy Goliaths, of

thy secret as well as thy open sins, of thy loved as well as of thy loathed lusts, of thy babe-transgressions as well as of thy giant-like provocations. If thy repentance be not universal, it will never be effectual. If a ship spring three leaks, and only two be stopped, the third will certainly sink the ship; or if a man hath two dangerous wounds in his body, and takes only order for the cure of one, the other will undoubtedly kill him; or if a man hath two grievous diseases upon him, and will only deal with the physician for remedies against the one, he will without all peradventure perish by the prevalency of the other. Herod turned from many sins, but not from his Delilah, his Herodias, which was his ruin. Judas, you know, was a devil in an angel's habit; he seemed to be turned from every sin, but he was not; he was a secret thief, he loved the bag; and that golden devil, covetousness, choked him, and hanged him at last. Saul for a time turned from several evils, but his sparing one, Agag, cost him his soul and his kingdom at a clap. I have read a story of a devout man, who amongst other gifts had the gift of healing, and many persons resorted to him for cure. Among the rest, one Chromatius, who being sick, sent for him, and told him of his sickness, and desired that he might have the benefit of cure, as others had before him. The devout man replied, I cannot do it till thou hast beaten all the images in thy house to pieces. Oh, that shall be done, said Chromatius. Here, take my keys, and where you find any images, break them in pieces; which accordingly was done. Upon this the devout man went to prayer, but no cure was wrought; whereupon the sick man cried out, Oh, I am as sick as ever! oh, I am very weak and sick still! It cannot be otherwise, replied the devout person, neither can I help it, for there is doubtless one idol yet in your house undiscovered, and that must be defaced too. True, saith Chromatius, it is so indeed, it is all of beaten gold, it cost £200. I would fain have saved it, but here take my keys again, you shall find it fast locked up in my chest, break it also in pieces; which being done, the devout man prayed, and Chromatius was healed. The moral of it is good; the sin-sick soul must break, not some, but all its idols in pieces, before a cure will follow. It must deface its golden idols, its most costly idols, its most darling idols; the returning sinner must make head against all his sins, and trample upon all his lusts, or else he will die and be undone for ever; and though this be as difficult as it is noble, yet it is no more than what God hath engaged to do, and to see done, as you may see by comparing Eze 36:25-27 with Isa 30:21-22. Now is this an easy thing, to turn from every sin, to loathe every sin, and to abandon every sin, with a 'Get you hence,' for what have I more to do with you? Hos 14:8. Surely no. As Nehemiah cast out Tobiah and all his household stuff, in Neh 13:6-8; so true repentance, it casts out Satan and all his retinue. As Moses would not leave so much as a hoof behind him, Exo 10:26; so true repentance will not leave so much as a lust behind. A dispensatory conscience is always an evil conscience; he that can dispense with one sin, will, when opportunity presents, commit any sin. And as the flood made clean work, it swept away all Noah's friends, and drowned all his servants; so the flood of penitent tears makes clean work, it sweeps away every lust, it drowns every corruption in respect of love and dominion. And as some conquerors would not give so much as one of their enemies quarter, so true repentance will not give one lust quarter; it falls heavily upon the bones of every sin, and nothing but the blood and death of sin will satisfy the penitent soul. The true penitent is for the mortifying of every lust that hath had a hand in crucifying of his dearest Saviour. It was worthily and wittily said by one, that true repentance strips us stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind. Well, sirs, remember this, to repent of sin, and yet to live in sin, is a contradiction; and if thou repentest with a contradiction, saith Tertullian, God will pardon thee with a contradiction. Thou repentest and yet continuest in thy sin, God will pardon thee, and yet

send thee to hell; there is a pardon with a contradiction. Again,

[4.] Fourthly, If repentance be such an easy work as you suppose, I beseech you tell me, why do many men lie under such horrors and terrors of conscience as they do, for not repenting, whenas repentance would quickly give them ease, and turn their hell into a heaven? I was last winter with a young man, who upon his dying bed for several hours together, being in a dreadful agony, lay crying out, I am damned, I am damned, I am damned, I am damned! Ah, how soon would this poor wretch have got out of this hell, if it had been so easy a thing to have repented, as you imagine it is! and how many, when they have been pressed to repent, have professed, that if they might have a thousand worlds to repent, they could not repent! And will you say that repentance is easy? How many have sought repentance with tears, and would have bought repentance with the price of their dearest blood, but could not obtain it! and will you say that repentance is easy? O sirs, is it good to be damned? is it good to go to hell? is it good to dwell with a devouring fire, and to live in ever lasting burnings? Is it good to have your habitations amongst devils and damned spirits? Is it good to be banished the court of heaven, and to be separated for ever from the glorious presence of God, and the sweet enjoyments of Christ, and the blessed society of angels and saints, and the fruition of all the happiness that heaven affords? Oh no! oh no! Oh, why then do not men prevent all this by repentance, if it be such an easy thing to repent! But,

[5.] Lastly, If repentance be such an easy work, why then do your hearts so rise both against the doctrine of repentance, and against those that preach it and press it? Of all words, is not the word of repentance the hardest word to read? John 6:60. And of all sayings and sermons, is not that of repentance the hardest to hear and bear? Luther confesses that before his conversion he met not with a more displeasing word in all the Scripture, nor in all his study of divinity, than that word repent. O man! if repentance be so easy, why doth thy spirit rage, and why doth thy heart so swell and rise against those that preach repentance unto life? Of all preachers, there are none that do so displease and move thee, that do so cut and gall thee, as those that are still a-crying out, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,' Mat 3:2. Repentance is the vomit of the soul; and ah, how do sinners' hearts rise against that physic, and those that bring it! Repentance is the bleeding of the soul; and ah, how do wicked men storm and take on at that hand that lets them blood! You love those that preach pleasing things, that tickle your ears, though they never touch your hearts; that please your fancies, though they never meddle with your consciences; and one sermon of mercy you prefer before a thousand sermons of repentance. Now certainly if repentance were so easy to you, the doctrine of repentance would be more pleasing to you. For a close, know that that white devil who now presents repentance to thee as the easiest thing in the world, he will at last cast, to work thee to despair, and to cut the throat of thy soul, present it not only as a hard and difficult work, but as an impossible work. Oh that these things may be so blessed unto you, as to preserve you from being deceived and deluded with a conceit that repentance is easy, and so by this means keep you from labouring to be holy!

Now as to that part of the plea, from the scriptures formerly cited—viz., that hereafter will be time enough to repent—I shall thus reply:

1. First, Certainly the present call of God, the uncertainty of the Spirit's motion, and the danger of delay, calls upon thee for present repentance. It is a dangerous thing to deal with God, as ill debtors do by their creditors; first they put them off one week, and then another week, and then a

third week, &c., till at last they provoke their creditors to cast them into prison, and to practise all severity upon them. They that thus deal with God shall be as severely dealt with by God, as you may see in Pro 1:24-32. The ancient warriors would not receive an old man into their army; and dost thou think, O vain man! that when thou hast spent thy time, and wasted thy strength, and exhausted thy spirits in the work of Satan, and in the service of thy lusts, that God will receive thee to his grace and favour? If thou dost thus flatter thyself, it is ten thousand to one but that thou wilt deceive thyself; that God, that hath made a promise to late repentance, hath made no promise of late repentance; and though true repentance is never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Ah, how many millions are now in hell, who have thought, and resolved, and said that they would repent hereafter, but that hereafter never came! Thou sayest to-morrow, to-morrow thou wilt repent, when thou knowest not what a to-morrow will bring forth. Alas! how many thousand ways may death surprise thee before to-morrow comes! Though there be but one way to come into the world, yet there is a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of the world. Oh, the diseases, the hazards, the dangers, the accidents, the deaths, that daily, that hourly attend the life of man! A Jewish Rabbin, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, exhorted them to be sure to repent the day before they died; to which one of them replied, that the day of a man's death was very uncertain; to which the Rabbin made answer, Repent, therefore, every day, and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die. O sirs, except you do repent to-day, you cannot tell that you shall repent the day before you die; for who knows to-day but that he may die to-morrow? It was once demanded of one, [Augustine,] what he would say of a wicked man who had lived loosely but died penitently, &c.; to whom he replied, What would you have me to say? That he is damned? I will not, for I have nothing to do to judge him. Shall I say that he is saved? I dare not, for I would not deceive thee. What then? Why, this, Repent thou out of hand, and thou art safe, whatever is become of him. Ah, friends, you are never safe till you repent; it is repentance that puts you out of all danger of miscarrying for ever. Shall the husbandman take his present seasons for sowing and reaping? shall the good tenant repair his house while the weather is fair? shall the careful pilot take his advantage of wind and tide, and so put out to sea? shall the traveller mend his pace when he sees the night comes on? and shall the smith strike when the iron is hot?—and shall not we take the present opportunity of repenting and turning to the Lord, remembering that there will be a time when time shall be no more; and when there shall be no place found for repentance, though it should be sought carefully with tears, Heb 12:17; and remembering that there will be a time when thy glass will be out, and when the door will be shut, and when there will be no entrance at all, Luk 13:24, Luk 13:27; and remembering that it is a safer course, with prudent Prometheus, to foresee a danger and shun it, than, with foolish Epimetheus, to go on unadvisedly and be punished?

Ah friends! it is a dangerous thing to make repentance, which should be the practice of all your days, to be the task of old age. Doth not common experience tell us that the longer the ship leaketh, the harder it is to be emptied; and that the longer the house goes to decay, the worse it is to repair; and that the further the nail is driven, the harder it will be to get out? and so certainly the longer any man defers his repentance, the more difficult it will be for him to repent; his heart will every day grow more and more hard, and his will more and more perverse, and his judgment more and more corrupted, and his affections more and more disordered, and his conscience more and more benumbed or enraged, and his whole life more and more defiled and debauched. Friends, do not deceive yourselves, old age is but a sad, a sandy, a tottering and sinking foundation for you to

build your hopes and happiness upon—for you to build your everlasting condition, your eternal making or marring upon. Are the dog-days of old age, are the trembling hands, the wrinkled face, the dazzled eyes, the stinking lungs, the fainting heart, the feeble knees, and the failing legs—are these a sacrifice worthy of God? is a body full of sores, aches, and diseases, and a soul full of sin, an offering becoming a God? Surely no. Oh, what madness, what wickedness is this, to serve Satan, your lusts, and this world with full dishes, and to put off God with scraps! to serve these in the flower, in the prime and primrose of your days, and to put off God with the dregs of old age! Certainly repentance is rather a work for youth than old age, it is a work rather for strength than weakness, and for health than sickness. Oh, do not let Satan deceive you, do not let your own hearts delude you, but fall upon the work of repentance presently, knowing that as you have one day more to repent of, so you have one day less to repent in. What a piece of vanity is it, that while the ship is sound, the tackling sure, the pilot well, the sailors strong, provisions laid in, and the wind favourable, that the mariners and passengers should lie in the road,² carding, drinking, dicing, dancing, and idling; and when the ship is leak[y], the pilot sick, the mariners faint, provisions spent, and the winds boisterous, then to weigh anchors, and hoist up sail, to make a voyage into a far country! And yet such is the vanity of most men, who in the days of their youth, health, and strength, who when their memories are strong, and their fancies quick, and their reason ripe, &c., do sin away, and fool away, and trifle away the day of grace, the offers of mercy, the motions of the Spirit, and the entreaties of Christ; and when old age comes, when their wits are cracked, their souls distracted, their senses stupified, their hearts astonied, their minds darkened, and their bodies diseased and distempered, oh, then they think to leap into heaven, with a ‘Lord have mercy upon me’ in their mouths: and though they have lived like devils, yet they, hope they shall die like saints; and though they never took no care of God’s honour, yet they hope that God will take care of their souls; but when the thread of their lives is cut, the next news that ever you shall hear of these is, that they are gone to hell.

I have read of a young man, who being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and being pressed to leave his wickedness, and to break off his sins by repentance, upon the consideration of judgment, eternity, and death a-coming: he answered, What do you tell me of these things? I warrant you I will do well enough, for when death comes I will speak but three words, and that will help all, and so he went on in his wickedness: but in the end coming to a bridge on horseback to go over a deep water, the horse stumbling, and he labouring to recover his horse, could not, but at last he let go the bridle, and gave up himself and his horse to the waters, and was heard to say these three words, ‘Devil take all.’ Here were three words with a witness! And oh that all that think to repent at last, with a ‘Lord have mercy upon me,’ would lay this instance to heart! The light of thy life may be put out before thou canst once say, Miserere mei Deus, Lord be merciful to me a sinner! Though the chariot wheels run all the day long very near one another, yet they never overtake one another. Oh, take heed of delaying thy repentance, for the more thou delayest it, the more will thy account be increased, thy debt augmented, Satan strengthened, thy body enfeebled, thy lusts emboldened, thy soul endangered, and all the difficulties of conversion more and more multiplied. By delaying of thy repentance thou goest the way to gratify Satan, to cozen thyself, to lose the opportunities of grace, and to damn thy soul for ever and ever. Well, remember this, if thou wilt not repent to-day, God may swear in his wrath to-morrow, that thou shalt not enter into his rest; and then woe to thee that ever thou wert born! And thus much for the preventing of these sad mistakes about repentance, which mistakes keep off many a man from looking and labouring

after that holiness without which there is no happiness.

2. Secondly, If ever you would be holy, oh, then take heed of a witch. Take heed of the world. The world often swells the heart with pride; it makes men forget God, neglect Christ, slight ordinances, and despise holiness, Deu 32:15, Deu 32:22. Ah, the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits that this enticing world hath made many to spend and consume, whilst their souls have lain a-bleeding, and eternity hath been posting upon them! Oh, the deadness, the barrenness, the listlessness, the heartlessness to anything that is good, that doth attend a worldly temper! Many men are so bewitched with the profits, pleasures, and honours of the world, that they mind not holiness, they regard not holiness, they care not for holiness, nor the means that lead to holiness: Php 3:18-19, 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and how I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things.' Who were those that walked disorderly? why, those that minded earthly things. Who were those that fetched tears from the apostle's eyes? why, those that minded earthly things. Who were those that were enemies to the cross of Christ? why, those that minded earthly things. Who were those whose end is destruction? why, those that minded earthly things. Who were those whose god was their belly? why, those that minded earthly things. Who were those whose glory was their shame? why, those that minded earthly things. Sicily is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there, [Diodorus Siculus]; and what do all the sweet contents and delights of this world, but make men lose the scent of heaven and holiness? The world proves silken halters to some, and golden fetters to others: to some it is like the swallows' dung that put out Tobias's eyes; to others it is like the waters of Nilus, that makes the inhabitants deaf. All the flowers of this world are surrounded with many briars. The world is all shadow and vanity; it is like Jonah's gourd—man may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon decays and dies. He that shall but weigh man's pains with his pay, his miseries with his pleasures, his sorrows with his joys, his crosses with his comforts, his wants with his enjoyments, &c., may well cry out, 'Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity.' The whole world is circular, the heart of man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle.² O sirs, if your hearts be not filled with holiness, they will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Either holiness or Satan must possess you. Some there be that have much holiness, and much of the world too; as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Hezekiah, Daniel, &c.; and others there be that have no holiness, nor nothing of the world neither: these men are fair for two hells—a hell of misery here, and a hell of torment hereafter. Some have much of the world, but not a spark of holiness; as Saul, Haman, Dives, Herod, &c., who had a world of wealth, but not a drachm of grace; and others have a great deal of holiness that have but little or nothing of the world; as the apostles and Lazarus, &c., Jas 2:5; Mat 11:5. Now is it not infinitely better to have holiness without the world, and so be happy for ever, than to have much of the world without holiness, and so be damned for ever? A man bewitched with the world will lose many precious opportunities of grace, which are more worth than a world: witness rich Felix, who had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, Acts 24:24, seq. A man bewitched with the world has his sinning times, and his eating times, and his sleeping times, and his trading times, and his feasting times, and his sporting times, &c.; but he has not his hearing times, nor his praying times, nor his reading times, nor his mourning times, nor his repenting times, nor his reforming times, &c. He can have time, yea, and he will have time, for everything, but to honour his God, and to make himself happy for ever. A man bewitched with the world will, when it is put to his choice, rather part with

Christ to enjoy the world, than part with the world to enjoy Christ: witness the young man in the Gospel, who preferred a drop before a sea, a crumb before a crown, and his treasure on earth before treasure in heaven, Mat 19:16, Mat 19:23. He would not leave that on earth which he could not long keep, for the enjoyment of that in heaven which he should never lose; rather than he would let his possessions go, he would let God and Christ go, and heaven go, and all go, &c. If heaven can be had at no cheaper a rate than parting with his possessions, Christ may keep his heaven to himself, and make the best of it he can if he will, for he'll have none of it upon those terms.

Again, a man bewitched with the world will prefer the most base and contemptible things before the Lord Jesus Christ; he will, with the Gergesenes, prefer his very swine before a Saviour, Mat 8:28, seq.; when they saw what a sad market their hogs were brought to, they desired Christ to depart out of their country; these Gergesites had rather lose Christ than lose their porkers; they had rather that the devil should possess their souls than that he should drown their pigs; they prefer their swine before their salvation, and present a wretched petition for their own damnation; they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts; though there be no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell to Christ's departure from a people, yet men bewitched with the world will desire this. Men bewitched with the world will prefer a Barabbas before a Jesus; they will with Judas betray Christ, and with Pilate condemn Christ, and with the Scribes and Pharisees they will cry out, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' away with this Jesus, away with this Jesus; let Barabbas live, but let Jesus die; let Barabbas be saved, but let Christ be hanged. Ah, what incarnate devils will such men prove, who are bewitched with this world! A man bewitched with the world will gain no good by the ministry of the word: witness Ezekiel's hearers, Eze 33:31-33; and witness the stony ground, Mat 13:22; and witness Christ's followers, John 6:1-71. Some writers say that nothing will grow where gold grows; certainly where the love of this world grows, there nothing will grow that is good. A heart filled either with the love of the world, or the profits of the world, or the pleasures of the world, or the honours of the world, or the cares of the world, or the businesses of the world, is a heart incapacitated to receive any divine counsel or comfort. It is a heart shut up against God and holiness, it is a heart possessed with many devils; and therefore no wonder if such a heart loathes the honeycomb of holiness; yea, it is no wonder to see such a heart to deride and scorn holiness as the greatest foolishness, Luk 16:14. The poets tell of Lycaon being turned into a wolf; but when a worldling is made holy, there is a wolf turned into a man, yea, a devil turned into a saint; therefore the Holy Ghost, speaking of Zaccheus, who had long been bewitched by the world, brings him in with an Ecce!—'Behold!'—as if it were a wonder of wonders that ever such a worldling should be made holy. A man bewitched with the world will venture the loss of his soul to enjoy the world, Mat 16:26; as that pope that sold his soul to the devil for the enjoyment of the popedom six years. We hate the Turks for selling of Christians for slaves; but ah, how many be there among us that call themselves Christians, who yet sell themselves and their souls to the devil for slaves for half-a-crown, yea, for a halfpenny! Look, as Shimei, by seeking his servant, lost his life; so many, by seeking of the world, have lost their souls. Now though of all losses the loss of the soul is the greatest, the saddest, the sorest, the heaviest, and the most intolerable, inconceivable, and irrecoverable loss, yet a man bewitched with the world will run the hazard of losing it, of damning it, to enjoy the world. You know the Reubenites in Jos 22:1-34 preferred the country that was commodious for the feeding of their cattle,—though it were far from the temple, where they might have fed their souls, and have got heaven and holiness for their souls,—before

their interest in the land of promise. Well, so men that are bewitched with this world in these days, oh, how do they prefer their sensual delights, their brutish contentments, and their carnal enjoyments, before the heavenly Canaan, and before the beauties of holiness, and before the temple of God's holiness, where holiness sparkles and shines in all its bravery and glory, and where their souls might be abundantly satisfied and delighted with the most ravishing joys, the most surpassing delights, and the most transcendent pleasures which are at God's right hand! To draw to a close, the Arabic proverb saith that *Mundus cadaver est, et petentes eum sunt canes*—The world is a carcase, and they that hunt after it are dogs. If this proverb be true, what a multitude of professors will be found to be dogs, who hunt more after earth than heaven, who hunt more after terrestrial than celestial things, who hunt more after nothingnesses and emptinesses, than they do after those fulnesses and sweetnesses that be in God, Christ, heaven, and holiness! Well, friends, as ever you would obtain that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, take heed of a witch, take heed of this world; and to that purpose, oh that you would always look upon the things of this world, as you will look upon them when you come to die! Oh that you would now look upon all the pomp, state, bravery, and glory of the world as you will look upon it when your souls shall sit upon your trembling lips! Oh, with what a disdainful eye, with what a weaned heart, do men look upon those things then! Do so now, and I dare assure you, that though the world may trouble you, yet it shall never bewitch you. I have read of a man that, lying in a burning fever, professed that if he had all the world at his dispose, he would give it all for one draught of beer; at so low a rate do men value the world at such a time as that is. If men were so wise to value the world at no higher a rate in health than they do in sickness, in life than they do at the time of their death, it would never bewitch them, it would never be as a wall of separation between holiness and them. As ever you would be holy here, and happy hereafter, take heed of this witch, and believe it to be a witch before it hath bewitched you, or else you may believe it too late.

3. Thirdly, If ever you would be holy, then take heed of comparing yourselves with those that are, at least supposedly, worse than yourselves. Many there be who by comparing themselves with those that are bad, very bad, think themselves to be good, very good, yea, to be too good to go to hell, and yet they are not good enough to go to heaven; and many there be who are worse than others, and yet by comparing themselves with those they suppose very bad, they conclude themselves to be very good. Such a one was that proud Pharisee in Luk 18:1-43, who thought himself a far better man than the poor publican, and yet he was not half so honest, nor half so just, nor half so righteous, nor half so good as he was. The poor publican was ashamed of himself; he loathed himself, he abased himself, he judged himself, and he condemned himself. The poor publican acknowledged God, he adored God, he dreaded God, he admired God, and he justified God; in all which he exceeded the proud Pharisee; and yet, oh how scornfully does this proud Pharisee look upon him! and how disdainfully and disgracefully does he speak of him! And this was the general frame and temper of the Scribes and Pharisees, who thought no man's penny so good silver as their own, who thought themselves better than the best, when they were the very worst of the worst; for publicans and harlots believed and repented, and entered into the kingdom of God before them, Mat 21:31-32. And so they in that of Isa 65:1-25 were naught, very naught, yea, stark naught; they were the basest among the base, they were the vilest among the vile, they were the most rebellious among the rebellious, and the most superstitious among the superstitious: witness Isa 65:2-4. And yet, oh how do they stroke themselves, and bless themselves, and commend themselves, and cry up themselves, and exalt themselves as the only

holy ones, Isa 65:5; they could deify themselves, and yet damn and devilify others, though they were such monsters as God abhorred, Isa 65:6. Ah! how many be there who, by comparing themselves with those that are worse than themselves, do judge themselves to be good enough, and holy enough! They are good negative Christians, and they think that is enough to bring them to heaven; they bless themselves that they are no Nabals for drunkenness, nor no Sodomites for filthiness, nor no Hamans for haughtiness, nor no Amnons for lustfulness, nor none of the old world for idleness, nor no Zaccheuses for covetousness, nor no Laodiceans for lukewarmness, &c. They bless themselves that they are no Gehazis for lying, nor no Shimeis for cursing, nor no Joabs for swearing, nor no Rabshakehs for railing, nor no Doegs for cruelty, nor no Judases for treachery, nor no Demases for apostasy, &c. And thus they cheat themselves, and find out fine ways to delude and damn their own souls; they think it grace enough, and holiness enough, that they have attained to this—viz., not to be so bad as the worst, though they fall infinitely short of coming near unto the best. Well, sirs, remember this, if you are not so great sinners as others, your horrors, your terrors, your torments, your hell shall not be so great, nor so hot as others', but without holiness you shall be as certainly damned as others; and what a cold comfort is this, to have a cooler and a lighter hell than others; and yet this is all the comfort that can be handed to unholy hearts. But,

4. Fourthly, Take heed of flatterers. Ah! how good might many men have been, who are yet exceeding bad, had they not sold their ears to flatterers. Flatterers are soul-murderers, they are soul-undoers, they are like vain surgeons, that skin over the wound, but kill the patient. Flattery is the very mother of folly, and the very nursery of all impiety. Flatterers will cry up those for religious who are only superstitious, and those for wise men who are foolish, and those for knowing men, who are ignorant, and those for virtuous men who are vicious, and those for holy men who at best are but civil, and those for happy men who are certainly miserable. Flatterers dare call the proud happy, and bless them whom God has cursed; they dare call evil good, and good evil; they dare call darkness light, and light darkness; they dare say that that man has grace that has none; yea, they dare swear that such and such shall be saved, though for the present they live as if they were resolved to be damned; they dare take upon them to tell you that such and such men's names are written in heaven, and that such and such belong to the election of grace, though their lives speak them out to be void of all grace. Ah! how many a man has been kept off from the thoughts of holiness, and from the ways of holiness, and from the love and liking of holiness, by flatterers who have flattered them, that doubtless they are in the favour of God, and that certainly God did not make men to damn them, and that without all peradventure they have an interest in Christ, and that there is no question but that their hearts are as good as the best, and that their conditions are good, and their souls happy; yea, they are so confident of their happiness, that they dare venture a-going to hell, if ever such should go to hell whom they fondly flatter; they dare pawn their souls and their salvation on it, that such shall never miscarry; and by these flatteries they harden men in sin, and arm them against holiness. Flattery is that sweet poison that has destroyed many a soul. Witness Rehoboam, Ahab, Herod, Nero, Alexander, &c. So true is that of the wise man: Pro 26:28, 'A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.' A flattering mouth ruins name, fame, estate, life, body and soul; it ruins a man both temporally and eternally; it often undoes a man in both worlds; it makes a man miserable both here and hereafter. Flatterers are devouring caterpillars: flatterers' tongues do more mischief than persecutors' swords, for their swords can but destroy the bodies of men, but flatterers' tongues

destroy the souls of men. Flatterers are the greatest soul-cheaters and soul-undoers in the world. Flatterers dare call vice virtue, they dare call pride neatness, covetousness good husbandry, drunkenness good-fellowship, prodigality liberality, wantonness a trick of youth, passion zeal, revenge courage, &c. They dare call enormities infirmities, and wickednesses weaknesses; they dare call great sins little sins, little sins no sins; they gild over all their poisonous pills with gold, they draw the fairest glove upon the foulest hand, they lay their neatest colours upon the filthiest sores, they put their best paint upon the worst faces, and the richest robes upon the most diseased bodies; and by these devices they entangle many to their utter ruin: Pro 29:5,. 'A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.' The Hebrew word—Machalik from Chalak—that is here rendered flatterer, signifies a smooth-boots, a soft, butter-spoken man; because flatterers, the better to deceive, do use to oil their tongues and to butter their lips, that so by their smooth, soft speeches they may the more insinuate themselves into men's affections, and so make way for their destruction. Flatterers have their silken nets to ensnare and entangle poor souls to their eternal ruin. Look, as fowlers strew corn and lay baits to draw birds into their nets; or look, as hunters spread their nets, that they may take beasts and prey upon them, or make a prey of them; so flatterers, they spread their nets that they may catch poor souls, and either prey upon them, or else make a prey of them. Flattery is the devil's invisible net; and happy is that soul that escapes it. The flatterer's net is worse than his sword, for his sword may be the more easily seen, feared, and avoided, than his net. Of all arms the flatterer's net is the most perilous and dangerous, both to the lives, estates, and souls of men. It were ten thousand times better to trample a flatterer under a man's feet, than for a man to suffer his feet to be taken in the flatterer's net. A flatterer is a sore enemy in the habit of a friend, he is a wolf in sheep's clothing, he is a devil transformed into an angel of light; and what punishment can be too great for such? The severity of many heathen princes and emperors has been very great against flatterers. Take one instance for all: Alexander Severus commanded one Turinus, a great flatterer, to be tied to a stake and stifled with smoke, with a herald standing by, and proclaiming to all the people, that it was but just that he that lived by the smoke of flattery should die by smoke. Now what a shameful thing is it that such as are called Christians should affect to be flattered, when heathens have so severely punished flatterers. Well, sirs, as ever you would be holy, take heed of flatterers, and take heed of flattery; let Solomon's counsel be always in your eye, and let it always lie warm upon your hearts: Pro 20:19, 'He that goeth about as a tale-bearer, revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.' A man that loves his soul, and would be happy in another world, should shun flatterers as he should shun a thief, a serpent, a wolf, a lion, a devil. Till thou stoppest thine ears against a spirit of flattery, there is little hopes that ever thou wilt be holy.

5. Fifthly, If ever you would be holy, oh! then take heed of putting the day of death far from you. Man is a creature naturally prone to look upon death at a distance, to look upon death afar off, and to say with those in Ezekiel, 'Behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are afar off,' Eze 12:27. So the rich man in the Gospel reckoned upon many years, when he had not many months, no not many weeks, no not many days, no not many hours, to live in this world. Unholy persons are very apt to say to death as Pharaoh said to Moses, 'Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more,' Exo 10:28. When death knocks at the poor man's door he sends it to the rich man's gate, and the rich man translates it to the scholar, and the scholar posts it away to the citizen, and the citizen to the courtier, and the courtier to his lady, and his lady to her maid, and so death is posted away, as it

were, from one to another, every one crying out to death, Oh, let me not see thy face! oh, let me not see thy face! It was even a death to Queen Elizabeth, Sigismund the emperor, Louis the Eleventh of France, Cardinal Beaufort, and others, to think of death, or to hear of death; and therefore they strictly charged all their servants about them, that when they saw them sick, they should never dare to name that bitter word death in their ears. And Pashur cannot cast his eye upon death, but he is presently a Magor-missabib, a terror to himself, Jer 20:3. And Saul, though he was a valiant king, yet at the news of death he falls on his face, 1Sa 28:20. And so Belshazzar, though he was a mighty emperor—Dan 5:1-7—yet a letter to him, from him whom Bildad calleth the king of terrors, Job 18:14, ah, how does it amaze, astonish, affright, and terrify him! and how many are there who, with Mæcenas in Seneca, had rather live in many diseases than die; and, with the most famous heathens, prefer the meanest life on earth above all the hopes they have of another world; like Achilles, who had rather be a servant to a poor country clown here, than to be a king to all the souls departed; or like Withipoll, a rich and wretched man, who, when he was in danger of death, earnestly desired that he might live five hundred years, though it were but in the shape of a toad.² Near Lewes in Sussex, a woman being ill, one of her neighbours coming to visit her, told her that if she died she should go to heaven and be with God and Jesus Christ, and with angels and saints; the sick woman answered, that she had no acquaintance there, she knew nobody there, and therefore she had rather live with her and her other neighbours here, than to go thither to live amongst strangers. And thus you see how apt persons are to shrug at death, which is a common lot, and to say to it, as Ephraim did to his idols, ‘Get you hence, what have we more to do with you?’ But this is and must be for a lamentation, that men put off the thoughts of their latter end to the latter end of their thoughts. Man naturally is a great life-lover, and therefore he will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, ay, limbs, to preserve his life; like him that cried out, ‘Oh, give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life.’ And upon this account it is that he desires that such a guest as death may not knock at his door; but ah! that all such vain men would consider, that by putting the day of their death far from them, they do but gratify Satan, strengthen their sins, provoke the Lord, and make the work of faith and holiness more hard and difficult, and so lay a deep foundation for their own eternal destruction.

Well, sirs, remember this, the serious thoughts and meditations of death, if anything, will work you to break off your sins, to mend your lives, and to look to the salvation of your souls. There is nothing that will sooner work a man to a holy fear of offending God in anything, and to a holy care of pleasing God in everything, than the serious meditation of death. Though that text, ‘Remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never do amiss,’ be apocryphal, yet the truth asserted is canonical. I have read a story of one that gave a young prodigal a ring with a death’s-head, on this condition, that he should one hour in a day, for seven days together, think and meditate upon death, which accordingly he did, and it bred a great change and alteration in his life and conversation. O man! thou dost not know but that the serious thoughts of death may work that desirable thing in thee, viz., holiness, which yet has not been wrought in thee by all the holy counsels, the gracious examples, the fervent prayers, and the sorrowful tears of thy dearest friends. Thou dost not know but that the serious meditation of death may do thee more good than all the sermons that ever thou hast heard, or than all the books that ever thou hast read, or than all the prayers that ever thou hast made, or than all the sighs or groans that ever thou hast poured out; and why then shouldst thou put the thoughts of death far from thee? Certainly as he is a sinner in grain that dares look death in the face and yet sin, that dares cut a purse when the judge looks on; so he is a

monster rather than a man, that dares look death in the face, and yet satisfy himself to live without holiness; that dares look death in the face, and yet say I'll drink and be drunk, I'll swear and swagger, I'll roar and whore, I'll cheat and cozen, I'll hate and oppose, I'll quarrel and kill, and my hands shall be as bloody as my heart, and let death do her² worst; if such a person be not in the ready way of being miserable for ever, I know nothing.

1. Firstly, Well, sirs, remember these three things:

[1.] First, That there is nothing more certain than death. That statute law of heaven, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,' Gen 3:19, will take hold of all the sons of men. 'There is no man that lives and shall not see death,' Psa 89:48. Though Jacob wrestled with an angel and prevailed, yet death was too hard for him, Gen 32:1-32; though Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe, yet he could not outrun death, and Absalom could not outride it, nor Pharaoh outdrive it; though Saul and Jonathan were as swift as eagles, and as strong as lions, yet were they slain among the mighty: it was not Solomon's wisdom that could deliver him, nor Samson's strength that could rescue him, nor Haman's honour that could secure him, nor Goliath's sword that could defend him, nor Dives's riches that could ransom him from the grave; and therefore why should men put this day so far from them? But,

[2.] Secondly, As there is nothing more certain than death, so there is nothing more sudden than death. When the old world, when Sodom, when Pharaoh, when Hagar, when Amalek, when Haman, when Nebuchadnezzar, when Belshazzar, when Dives, when the rich fool, and when Herod, were all in their prime and pride, when they were in their most flourishing estate, when they were at the very top of their glory, ah, how suddenly, how sadly, how strangely, how unexpectedly, and how wonderfully were they brought down to the grave, yea, to hell! Oh, the thousand thousands of crosses, losses, diseases, sicknesses, calamities, dangers, and deaths which attends the life of man, and by the least of which he may be suddenly surprised and carried into another world! and therefore why should man cry out cras, cras, to-morrow, to-morrow, when he does not know whether he shall have a to-morrow, when he does not know but that he may die before he has begun to live? Waldus, a rich merchant of Lyons, in France, seeing one suddenly drop down dead in the streets, went home, repented, changed his life, studied the Scriptures, and became a worthy teacher, father, and founder of the Christians called the Waldenses, or poor men of Lyons. And oh that the serious thoughts of the suddenness of death might have that happy effect upon your souls, as to work you to break your league with sin, and to fright you, as it were, into a love of holiness, and into a life of holiness! O swearer, what dost thou know but that death may seize on thee whilst the oath is in thy mouth? And what dost thou know, O drunkard, but that death may step in between the cup and the lip, as it did to Belshazzar? And what dost thou know, O adulterer, but that a poisoned dart may strike through thy liver whilst thou art in the very flagrancy of thy lust, as it did through Zimri's and Cozbi's? And what dost thou know, O proud Haman, but that thou who art thus nobly feasted one day, mayest be a feast for the crows the next day? And what dost thou know who art so crafty, O Ahithophel, but that if thy subtle counsel be rejected one hour, thou mayest hang thyself the next hour? And what dost thou know, O thou opposing and murmuring Korah, but that the earth may suddenly open and swallow thee up? and therefore why should you put that day so far from you, that may so suddenly overtake you?

Berline, in Germany, charged St Paul with a lie in the pulpit, and was suddenly smitten with an apoplexy, and fell down dead in the place. And what dost thou know, who art so apt to charge the people of God with lying, but that God may strike thee both dumb and dead whilst the lie is in thy mouth? Bibulus, a Roman general, riding in triumph in all his glory, a tile fell off from a house in the street and knocked out his brains. And what dost thou know, O vainglorious man, but that whilst thou art triumphing in thy world-glory, by some unexpected blow thou mayest be sent into another world?

Lepidus and Aufidius stumbled at the very threshold of the senate and died; the blow came in a cloud from heaven. God by an invisible blow may send thee out of this visible world.

Sophocles died suddenly by excessive joy, and Homer by immoderate grief; excessive joy or excessive grief may suddenly bring thee to thy long home. Olympus the Arian heretic, speaking against the Holy Trinity as he was a-bathing himself, was struck dead by a threefold thunderbolt. We may run and read some men's sins in the very face of their punishments. Mr Perkins speaks of one who, when it thundered, scoffingly said, it was nothing but Tom Tumbrel a-hooping his tubs, &c., and presently he was struck dead with a thunderbolt from heaven. There would be no end of recounting the several judgments that have suddenly surprised all sorts of sinners. Let these few instances suffice to stir up every unholy heart to take heed of putting far off the day of death. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As there is nothing more sudden than death, so there is nothing more short than life; and why then should you put the day of your death so far from you? If you consider the life of man absolutely, it is but short, it is but as a span, a shadow, a dream, a bubble, a blast, a puff of wind, a pile of dust, a fading leaf, or a tale that is told, &c. The life of man is as a dream that vanisheth when one awaketh, it is a wind that goeth away and cometh not again, it is as a cloud that is soon dispersed with the wind, it is as a vapour that appeareth for a time, and then vanisheth away, it is as the grass that soon withereth, it is as the flower that soon fadeth, it is as the candle that every light puff of wind bloweth out. The life of man is rather made up of days than years: Psa 90:12, 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.' Moses does not say, Lord, teach us to number our years, but 'Lord, teach us to number our days.' Fallen man is apt to misreckon, and to compute days for years; and therefore this holy prophet desires that God would teach them this divine arithmetic, of numbering their days, it being a lesson that none but a God can teach. So Job 14:1-2, 'Man that is born of a woman is of few days,' or short of days, 'and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.' He speaks not of an age, nor of years, nor of many days, but of a few days. Man's days are short in themselves, and shorter in respect of the troubles that attends this present life. Man's life is so short, Austin doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death. Now these few days of man's life are upon the wing, hastening and flying from us as the eagle hasteneth to his prey; and therefore man had need set a greater price upon every moment and minute of time, than he does upon all the world, and accordingly improve it.

2. Secondly, If you consider the life of man comparatively, it is but short, and that will appear briefly thus:

[1.] First, If you compare the life of man to what man might have reached to had he continued in his primitive glory. Had man stood fast in innocency, he had never known what death and misery had meant. Death is a fall that came in by a fall. Had man kept sin out of the world, he had kept

death out of the world. Had man kept fast his holiness and purity, he had remained a piece of immortality to this day; death could never have carried man out of the world, had not man first let sin into the world, Rom 5:12, seq.

[2.] Secondly, If you compare the life of man to the long lives of the patriarchs before the flood, then the life of man is but short: threescore years and ten is man's age, Psa 90:10. And where one man lives to this age, how many thousands die before they come to it! But what is this age to the age that men lived to in former times? Enoch lived as many years as there be days in the year, and Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and Methuselah lived nine hundred sixty and nine years, Gen 5:1-32. Now what were Plato's eighty years, or Thomas Paris's one hundred and sixty years, or Johannes de Temporibus, John of the Tirmes's, three hundred threescore and one years, to the long lives of the patriarchs? And though in David's time old age and seventy often shook hands, yet it is otherwise in our times; for as men's wickedness do more and more increase, so their days do more and more decrease. The more wicked any generation is, the shorter lived that generation shall be. God will quickly despatch them out of the world who make quick despatches in ways of wickedness.

[3.] Thirdly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it to what it shall be after the morning of the resurrection. Oh, then man's days shall reach to eternity! Eternity is that unum perpetuum hodie, one perpetual day that shall never have end. When men after the resurrection begin to live, they shall never die after that day; every man shall live in everlasting bliss or in everlasting woe; when the last trumpet has sounded, man shall live for ever and ever.

[4.] Fourthly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it with the days of God: Psa 39:5, 'Mine age is nothing before him;' all time is nothing to eternity; man's life is but a minute, it is but a point of time to the days of eternity. What head, what heart can conceive or reckon up the duration of God, who ever was, who still is, and who ever will be! Every child and every fool can tell you their age, but what man on earth or what angel in heaven can tell you the years of the Most High? Surely none.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it with the lives of other creatures. Some say that it is neither age nor sickness that killeth the eagle; she casteth her feathers yearly, and so gets new, whereby her youth and strength is renewed, by which means she will live till she be a hundred years old; she dies not till her upper bill be so grown over her under that she cannot take in her meat, and so at last she is starved. And some elephants live three hundred years; witness Ælian, Solinus, and Strabo, &c.: by all which you see the brevity of man's life. And why then should man be so weak, so vain, as to put the day of his death so far from him? I have read of the birds of Norway, that they fly faster than the fowls of any other country; they knowing, by an instinct that God has put into them, that the days in that climate are very short—not above three hours long, say some—do therefore make the more haste to their nests. And oh that all that hear me this day would learn by these birds of Norway, to make haste to believe, and to make haste to repent, and to make haste to love God, and to make haste to be holy, &c., seeing their day of life is so short, and their night of death is posting towards them. And as the life of man is very short, so it is very considerable that a very small matter, a very little thing, may quickly put an end to man's life. When the emperor threatened the philosopher with death, he replied, What is that more than a Spanish fly may do? An ordinary fly flying casually into the mouth of the proud Pope Adrian, stifled

him that made the highest state then in the Christian world stoop, even to the holding of his stirrup. Tamerlane, a Scythian captain, the terror of his time, died with three fits of an ague. Anacreon the poet was choked with the kernel of a grape. Æschylus was killed by the shell of a tortoise which fell from an eagle's talons, who, as some conceive, took his bald head for a white rock. The Lord Montaigne tells us of a duke of Brittany that was stifled to death in such a throng of people as is in some great congregations on the Lord's-day. An emperor died by the scratch of a comb; and one of the kings of France died by the chock of a hog; and one that was brother to a great lord, playing at tennis, received a blow with a ball a little above the right ear, which struck him into his grave. There is nothing so small but may be a man's bane. The paring of a toe, the cutting of a corn, the scratch of a nail, the prick of a pin, a fish-bone, a hair, a drop of water, a crumb of bread, a bad air, or an evil smell, may bring a man to his long home, yea, a little smoke may soon stifle him, or his own spittle, let down unwarily, may suddenly choke him. And oh that all I have spoken upon this account might be so blessed as to work you to take heed of putting the day of your death so far from you! The evil servant, when he thought his master was gone afar off, then he lays about him, distempers himself, and beats his fellow-servants, Luk 12:45. And so the lewd woman in the Proverbs, Pro 7:19-20, when the goodman was gone a long journey, when he was far from home, then she grew wanton, vain, and secure; so when men put afar off the day of their death, then they grow more loose, profane, and unholy; whereas a serious and frequent eyeing and minding of death as at hand, as at a man's elbow, would alarm a man to break off his sins by repentance, and to labour for holiness, as a man would labour for life itself. I have read of the women in the Isle of Man, that the first web they make is their winding-sheet, wherewith they usually gird themselves when they go abroad, to shew that they are still mindful of their mortality. Ah, friends, a constant minding of your mortality would contribute very much towards the making of you holy. He that daily looks upon death will be daily a-looking after holiness. The oftener any man looks into the grave, the oftener that man will be looking up to heaven, and a-begging that God would make him holy even as he is holy. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, Take heed of settling yourselves under a lewd and scandalous ministry, or of having any inwardness with such whose lives give the lie to their doctrine. An ill-lived preacher is the greatest destroyer of the souls of men. He that preacheth well, but lives ill, does what he can to murder all his hearers at once. There is no greater bar to holiness than ministers' lewdness: an unholy life mars the soundest and the sweetest doctrine: Isa 9:16, 'The leaders of this people have caused them to err.' The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins; as the corrupt glosses, so the lewd practices of many preachers makes many to stumble at that word, and to shuff, and chat, and contest, and kick against that word whereby they should be made holy and happy for ever. A scandalous minister is the greatest pest, the worst plague, and the sorest mischief that can be to a people; for his enormities, his wickednesses, will have the strongest influences upon the souls and lives of men, to make them miserable in both worlds. His falls will be the fall and ruin of many; for people are more prone to live by examples than by precepts, and to mind more what the minister does than what he says, and to eye more how he walks than how he talks. It was said of one, long since, that was an excellent preacher, but a very bad liver, that when he was in the pulpit it was pity he should ever come out of it, he preached so well; and when he was out of it, it was pity that ever he should go into it, he lived so ill. Certainly it is pity that ever such should go into a pulpit who preach well but live ill, who have much of God in their mouths, and much of the devil in their lives; who have the earth as much at their fingers' end as they have heaven at their tongue's end, who

puts a loud lie upon the truth, and whose lives puts their words to a blush; who have much of heaven in their expressions, and nothing of heaven in their conversations; who have much holiness in their books, but none in their bosoms, and much holiness in their lips, but none in their lives. The lewd lives of such persons causes people to slight and abhor the holy things of God, 1Sa 2:17; yea, their bad lives often raise doubts in their hearers' hearts whether those things be true that they preach or no. Hearers will be ready to object and say, If these things be true that the minister says, why does he not practise what he preaches? why does he not do as well as say? and with what face or confidence can he appear against that in the pulpit, which he countenanceth and patroniseth in his life? Who will credit that man's doctrine, who has Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands; who is a saint, yea, an angel, in the pulpit, but a debauched sinner, yea, an incarnate devil, out of it? I have read of a woman who, living in professed doubt of the Godhead, after better illumination and repentance, did often protest that the vicious life of a great scholar, under whose ministry she did live, did conjure up those damnable doubts in her soul. There is nothing that brings holy truths so much into question as the unholy conversations of such preachers; neither is there anything that exposes a minister's person and office to so much scorn and contempt as an unholy life. Let a minister be never so learned, solid, quaint, elegant, zealous, judicious, sententious, &c., yet if he be carnal, covetous, worldly, vain, and loose in his life and conversation, his hearers will rather deride his doctrine than reform by his doctrine, they will rather contemn it than study how to profit by it; therefore he said right that said—

'Turpe est doctori, cum culpa redarguit ipsum.'

'Unto a teacher it's no small disgrace When his own faults reprove him to his face.'

There is nothing in all the world that is more powerful and prevalent to corrupt and mislead unholy men, and to harden, strengthen, and encourage them in ways of wickedness, than the looseness of their lives whose office binds them to look to the salvation of their souls, Eze 13:22, and Jer 33:15; Mal 2:8, 'Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law.' When the preacher departs out of the way of holiness, the people will quickly stumble at the law of holiness; when ministers are as wandering stars, no wonder if their hearers wander from all that is good. He whose life is not a standing reproof to sin, will, by his life, encourage sinners more and more in a way of sin. There is nothing that keeps men so off from a good opinion of holiness, and from the love of holiness, and the liking of holiness, and from the pursuing after holiness, than the unholy lives of their teachers; and therefore, as ever you would be holy, fly their tents, and abandon their company and society. Ministers whose lives are lewd, though their parts may be high, are like a stone gutter, that conveyeth water into a garden, but receiveth no benefit itself thereby; or like a harp that maketh others melody, but heareth nothing itself; they are like those carpenters that built the ark to save others, and were drowned themselves; or like porters at great men's gates, that let in others, but lodge without themselves; or like sea-marks, that rot themselves, and yet give others warning to avoid shipwreck; or like Cæsar's soldier, that digged a fountain for Cæsar, and perished himself for want of water. Oh, the folly and madness of such ministers that give light to others, and yet walk in darkness themselves; that feast others' souls, but starve their own; that rescue others from a devouring enemy, and yet suffer themselves to be devoured; that forewarn others of the horrible pit, and yet fall into it themselves; that give good counsel to others, and yet can't take good counsel themselves; that study and strive to bring others to heaven, and yet have no mind to go thither themselves! Certainly society and company

with such upon choice can't but be a mighty hindrance to holiness: he that is in good earnest resolved to be holy, must resolutely be resolved to have nothing to do with such unholy persons. And thus you see the several things that you must decline, if ever you would be holy. But,

II. Secondly, As there are several things that you must decline if ever you would obtain that real holiness without which there is no happiness; so there are several things that you are to do, that you are to put in practice, without which you will never be holy here, nor happy hereafter. Quest. But what are they? Ans. They are these:—

(1.) First, Greatly lament and mourn over thine own unholiness, over thine own wickedness. The first step to holiness is melting and mourning over a man's own unholiness. Go to thy closet, and fall down before the most high and holy God, and mourn bitterly over the unholiness of thy nature, the unholiness of thy heart, the unholiness of thy affections, the unholiness of thy intentions, the unholiness of thy resolutions, the unholiness of thy expressions, and the unholiness of thy conversation: Joe 2:12, 'Turn ye to the Lord with weeping and with mourning.' The foundation of a thorough reformation must be laid in a deep humiliation. The best way to be holy is to accuse, indict, arraign, and condemn thyself for thy unholiness. You shall as soon espouse light and darkness, and marry midnight to the noonday, as you shall espouse or marry a holy God to an unhumbled sinner. Oh, who can look upon sin as an offence against a holy God, as the breach of a holy law, as the wounding and crucifying of a holy Saviour, as the grieving and sadding of a holy Sanctifier, and as an eternal loss and undoing of his own soul, and not mourn over it? Oh, who can cast a serious eye upon the nature of sin, or upon the exceeding sinfulness of sin, or upon the aggravations of sin, and not have his heart humbled, his soul grieved, and his spirit melted for sin? Oh, who can look upon sin as it strikes at the honour of God, the name of God, the being of God, the glory of God, and the design of God, and not have his mouth full of penitential confessions, his eyes full of penitential tears, and his heart full of penitential sorrow? Some, as they say of witches, cannot weep for sin; but they that weep not for sin here, where there are handkerchiefs in the hands of Christ to wipe off their tears, shall weep out their eyes in hell hereafter. It is better to weep bitterly for thy sins on earth, than to weep eternally for thy folly in hell. Ah, how hard is that heart that can sadly lament and bewail the loss of a groat, a chick, a child, a sheep, a ship, a friend, &c., and yet can't let fall a tear to save a lost soul! Jacob weeps and prevails with God, Hos 12:4; his tears made a happy conquest upon God. Jacob weeps and prevails with God for his life; and what dost thou know but that by thy penitential tears thou mayest prevail with God for thy soul? He weeps and prevails with God for temporals; and why mayest not thou by weeping prevail with God for eternals? He weeps and prevails with God for some outward happiness; and why mayest not thou by weeping prevail with God for inward holiness? It is an old observation, that the tears of repenting sinners are the wine of angels. Certainly God himself can smile to see a sinner grieve for his sins, and to see him grieve that he can grieve no more, for that he has sinned against a God so great, so gracious, so bountiful, so merciful, &c., Psa 51:17. Though God be displeased with a sinner's sins, yet he is very well pleased with a sinner's tears, and therefore as he has a bag for the one, so he has a bottle for the other. It cannot but be a pleasure to God to see a sinner drown his sins in a deluge of penitential tears. Though tears of indignation, as was Esau's, and tears of dissimulation, as was Ishmael's, and tears of desperation, as was Judas's, be abominable to God, yet tears of godly compunction and contrition are acceptable and delightful unto God. A sinner never looks so sweetly, as when he weeps most penitentially: witness Mary

Magdalene, Manasseh, and those murderers of Christ, Acts 2:1-47. A sinner's face never shines so beautiful, as when it is bedewed with penitential tears. Tears have a voice as well as blood, Psa 6:8. And God has an eye as well upon a man's tears as upon his prayers. Penitent tears are divine ambassadors, that never return from the throne of grace without answers of grace, Isa 38:5. Peter said nothing, but went out and wept bitterly, and obtained mercy, Mat 26:75. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, that will at last prevail for mercy. Naaman the Syrian was cleansed of his leprosy by the waters of Jordan; penitential tears may do much towards the cleansing of thy leprous soul from sin. He that really grieves that he cannot grieve for sin, is grieved for sin; he that is truly sorry that he cannot be sorry for sin, is in a measure sorry for sin; he that truly desires to drown his sins in his tears, he has in divine account drowned his sins in his tears. The maid in Scaliger swooned at the sight of a lily. Oh, how much more should you at the sight of your unholiness! Basil wept when he saw the rose, because it brought to his mind the first sin from whence it had the prickles. Oh, how should a sinner fall a-weeping when he looks upon the greatness of his wickedness and his want of holiness! As ever you would be holy, mourn over your own unholiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, If ever thou wouldst be holy, thou must seek the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the efficient cause of all that holiness that is in the world. The Spirit of God is a spirit of holiness, Rom 1:4; he is frequently called the Holy Spirit: 'Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me,' Psa 51:11; 'But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit,' Isa 63:10; 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,' Eph 4:30; 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit,' 1Th 4:8; 'In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise,' Eph 1:13. To make a man holy is more than to create a world; it is a work too high and too hard for angels or men; it becomes none, and it can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is made the Spirit's personal operation, in that 2Th 2:13, and in that 1Pe 1:2. It is the great work of the Spirit to shape, form, and fashion the new creature holiness, in all the vessels of glory. The Spirit is the root of all holiness; and therefore the several parts of holiness are called the fruits of the Spirit, Gal 5:22. It is true, God purposes holiness to his people, and Christ has purchased holiness for his people; but it is only the Spirit that is the efficient cause or worker of holiness in his people. Though the Father, Son, and Spirit hath designed to re-imprint holiness upon man's heart, yet the Spirit has the greatest hand in that work. When man was in his primitive glory, holiness was his loveliness and his likeness to God; but being now fallen, that image is so broken and marred, that no hand can repair it or restore it but the hand of the Spirit. The great principle of holiness which was in Christ, as to his human nature, was the Holy Spirit, which he had above measure; for he was anointed with the unction of the Spirit above his fellows. So that, look which way you will, the Spirit still appears to be the great principle of holiness. Holiness is the very picture of God, and certainly no hand can carve that excellent picture but the Spirit of God. Holiness is the divine nature, and none can impart that to man but the Spirit. A man never comes to see his sins, nor to be sick of his sins, nor to loathe his sins, nor to arraign his sins, nor to condemn his sins, nor to judge himself for his sins, evangelically, till he comes to be possessed of the Holy Spirit. A man never comes to spit out the sweet morsels of sin, he never comes to make a sacrifice of his only Isaac, and to cut his delicate Agag in pieces, and to strangle his Delilah, and in good earnest to set upon an utter extirpation of those sins that his constitution, inclination, custom, calling, and interest does most incline him to, till a Spirit of holiness comes upon him. Till this Holy Spirit, which is a spirit of judgment and burning, falls upon the hearts of sinners, they will never be

fired out of their pride, formality, carnality, sensuality, and security. When this Holy Spirit comes as a spirit of glory and power to change thy heart, to destroy thy sins, to reform thy ways, and to save thy soul, &c., oh, then cry out, let him still go on conquering and to conquer, till all his enemies are made his footstool. Oh, let him cut off every right hand, and pluck out every right eye, &c., that does offend! Oh, let him do justice upon every sin, upon every open sin, upon every secret sin, upon every bosom sin, upon every pleasing sin, and upon every gainful sin! Oh, set yourselves under the celestial influences and sweet distillings of the Holy Spirit! Oh, prize his motions! oh, welcome his motions! oh, comply with his motions! oh, follow his motions, that so you may be holy and happy for ever. When David asked counsel of God, whether he should go up against the Philistines or no, he received this answer: 'When thou hearest the noise of one going in the top of the mulberry trees, then remove, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the Philistines,' 2Sa 5:24. So should every one wisely observe, when the Spirit sweetly and strongly moves them to mind holiness, to fall in love with holiness, to press after holiness; when the Spirit moves them to leave off their sins, to turn to God, to open to Christ, to tremble at threatenings, and to embrace promises; oh, make much of these holy motions! oh, cherish these divine breathings! oh, don't quench these heavenly sparks, lest the Spirit never move thee more, nor never strive with thee more, Gen 6:3. Oh, when thou hearest a voice within thee, or a voice behind thee, saying, 'Come with me from Lebanon, my sister, my spouse,' &c., Isa 30:21, and Song of Solomon 4:8, come away from thy cups, thou drunken wretch! come away from thy wanton Delilahs, thou unclean wretch! come away from thy sinful pleasures, thou voluptuous wretch! come away from thy bags, thou worldly wretch! come away from thy honours, thou ambitious wretch! and come away from thy fraud, thou cheating wretch! oh hearken to this voice! oh obey this voice, that it may go well with thy soul for ever! If now thou strikest whilst the iron is hot, if now thou hoistest up sail whilst the wind is fair, thou mayest be made for ever. In that John 5:4, there were certain times when the angel came down and troubled the waters, and whosoever did then step in, was healed of whatsoever disease he had: so there are certain times and seasons wherein the Spirit of holiness stirs the heart and affections, and moves and breathes upon the soul. Now if men were wise to observe these times and seasons, they might be happy for ever. The time of the Spirit's moving is the acceptable time; if you observe it you are made, if you neglect it you are marred. All the movings and motions of the Spirit are in order to an eternity of felicity and glory, Spiritus sanctus est res delicata. Oh, therefore don't grieve the Spirit, don't cross the Spirit, don't vex the Spirit, don't tempt the Spirit, don't quench the Spirit, don't oppose the Spirit, don't resist the Spirit, don't deal harshly or unkindly with the Spirit, by sinning against illumination, conviction, resolutions and promises of reformation. Oh, be more tender of the gracious motions of the Spirit, than thou art of thy name, thy estate, thy liberty, thy life; for he designs thy internal good in this world, and thy eternal good in the other world; and therefore don't affront him, nor carry it unworthily towards him. If thou shouldst, it may be as much as thy life and thy soul is worth; if a man slip the opportunity of a favourable gale, he may lie wind-bound till all be spent. When the Spirit moves salvation, and all the glory of heaven stands waiting at thy door, if now thou wilt but open, the King of glory will enter in, and bless thee for ever. Saul, by neglecting his opportunity, lost an earthly kingdom. Take heed lest thou, by slighting the motions of the Spirit, comest to lose a heavenly kingdom. The letting slip one season when the Spirit moves may undo a man in both worlds; and some think Felix found it so. Well, sirs, as ever you would be holy, you must labour for a spirit of holiness; and for your encouragement remember this, that though the Holy Spirit be the great jewel of glory, yet God is

more ready to give it than you are to ask it: witness that Luk 11:9-14. But,

(3.) Thirdly, If ever you would be holy, then you must wait upon the word. The word of God faithfully preached, is the ordinary means by which holiness is wrought in sinners' hearts. The word is that triumphant chariot of the Spirit, wherein he rides conquering and to conquer the souls of men. The holy word is designed by God to beget holiness in sinners' hearts, and to countenance, cherish, nourish, and strengthen holiness where it is begotten: John 17:17, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.' And for their sakes, &c., 'I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth,' John 17:19. So John 15:3, 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you.' The ordinary way of making unclean souls clean, unholy souls holy, is the ministry of the word, Php 2:16. As there is a cleansing virtue in the blood of Christ, 1Jn 1:7, so there is a cleansing virtue in the word of Christ: Psa 119:9, 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.' Of all men, the young man is usually most wild and wicked, most licentious and rebellious; and yet the word of God is the power of God to his conviction and conversion, to his sanctification and salvation. Though the cleansing of a young man's heart be one of the hardest works in the world, yet this may be done by the word. There are no lusts so strong but the word can cast them down, nor no stains so deep but the word can wash them out. Three thousand sinners were made saints by one sermon, Acts 2:41; and five thousand more were converted and sanctified by another sermon, Acts 4:4. Here were eight thousand men cleansed, sanctified, and saved by two sermons, and doubtless most of them were young. O sirs, as ever you would have holy principles laid in your souls, and holy affections raised in your souls, and holy ends aimed at by your souls, hear the word in season and out of season. Oh attend it! oh wait on it! It will be soap to cleanse you, and fire to purge you, and water to wash you, and a wind to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ, Acts 26:16-24. The gospel preached hath been the power of God to the salvation of multitudes of souls, Rom 1:16. The word is that immortal seed by which holiness, which is not only a grace but the conjunction of all graces, is formed in the soul, 1Pe 1:23. It is the word that gives a spiritual birth and being to men, Gal 4:19. The word enlightens the eye, Psa 119:105; it softens the heart, Deu 32:2; it purges the conscience, and it converts the soul, Psa 19:7; it dethrones Satan, it casts down strongholds, 2Co 10:4-5; it quickens the dull, Psa 119:50; and it raises the dead, John 5:24-25. Oh, therefore, hear it, and wait on it, and come to it, that you may be made holy by it. Many come to hear the word to censure it, others to mock at it, others to enrich their curious notions by it, and others come to catch the minister at it; but do thou come to it that thou mayest be made holy by it, and doubtless first or last thou shalt obtain thy end. Yea, it is good for a man to come to the word, though his design in coming be bad; it is good for a man to sit under that great ordinance of the word, though he sits upon thorns, as it were, all the while he is there. They that come to see who hath got the newest fashions, may have their hearts fashioned into a conformity with the word. They came to catch, but were caught in that, John 7:46. Austin coming to Ambrose to have his ears tickled, had his heart touched and turned. 'Come,' saith old Father Latimer [1550,] in a sermon before king Edward the Sixth, 'to the public meeting, though thou comest to sleep, it may be God may take thee napping.' When thou comest, though it be but to taste the minister's spirit, yet then God may take hold on thy spirit, and make it the day of his power upon thy soul. Though thou comest with a heart full of prejudices against Christ, yet by the word thou mayest be brought to a love of Christ, to a liking of Christ, and to a choice of Christ, and to a blessed close and resignation of thyself to Christ. They that came to surprise Christ, were so taken with Christ,

that being filled with admiration they could not but proclaim his divine excellencies; 'Never man spake like this man.' The word is the word of the Lord, let the hand be what it will that brings it. When gold is offered, men care not how noble or ignoble, how great or how base he is that offers it; so men should not look so much at the hand that brings the word, as at the word itself. The word of the Lord was as much the word of the Lord in the hand and mouth of Amos, who was raised a prophet from amongst the herdsmen of Tekoa, as it was the word of the Lord in the hand and mouth of Isaiah, who, as some think, was a prophet of the blood-royal. Ambrose observes of the woman of Samaria, John 4:7, that she came peccatrix to Jacob's well, but she went away prædicatrix; she came a sinner, but she went away a prophetess. O sirs, let nothing hinder you from coming to the word! oh come to the word! though you come sinners, yet come, for though you do come sinners, yet you may go away saints; though the dew of heaven hath richly and sweetly fallen upon your hearts, and yet, like Gideon's fleece, you are still dry, yet come to the word still, for who can tell but that by the very next sermon God may make thy soul like a watered garden, and like a spring of water 'whose waters fail not,' Isa 58:11. It is reported of young king Edward the Sixth, that being about to lay hold on something that was above the reach of his short arm, one that stood by espying a great bossed Bible lying on the table, offered to lay that under his feet to heighten him, but the good young king disliked the motion, and instead of treading it under his feet he laid it to his heart. Oh come to the word, but come not to trample upon it, come not to scoff or mock at it, come not to despise it or to revile it, but come and lay it to your hearts, and it may do you good for ever. There is no better way to make thee holy than to attend on the holy word. But,

(4.) Fourthly, If ever you would be holy, then associate yourselves with those that are holy. Look, as he that walks with the wise shall be wise, so he that walks with the holy shall certainly be pressed and provoked to be holy, Pro 13:20. As Socrates made it his business to better others by his company, so a holy man will make it his business to make others holy by his counsel, prayers, and example. He knows that it is one of the most noble and divine employments in the world to make others holy, and therefore he sets upon that work with all his might. Look, as there is no greater a hindrance to holiness than the society of the wicked, so there is no greater a help to holiness than the society of those that are godly, Psa 119:115, and Psa 1:1. Look, as the beginning of ungodliness is to keep company with those that are ungodly, so the beginning of holiness is to keep company with those that are holy. Look, as one drunkard makes another, and one swearer makes another, and one proud person makes another, and one worldling makes another, and one formalist makes another, so one holy man makes another; or look, as one sober man makes another, and one prudent man makes another, and one resolute man makes another, and one zealous man makes another, and one heavenly minded man makes another, so one holy man makes another. Ah, sinners! sinners! there are no companions in the world that will pity you as these, that will weep and mourn over you as these, that will strive and wrestle with God for you as these, Rom 10:1; there are none that will be so tender of your salvation as these, nor none that will labour so much for your conversion as these, nor none that will so spend themselves to prevent your damnation as these, 2Co 12:15. O sirs, upon trial you will find that there are none so able to counsel you, nor none so faithful to reprove you, nor none so ready to help you, nor none so compassionate to sympathise with you, nor none so strong to support you, nor none so advantaged to convert you, as those that are holy; and why then will you not labour to be one of this society? O sirs, of all fellowships the fellowship of saints is the most noble, the most honourable, the most pleasant, the most amiable, the most desirable, the most profitable, and the

most commendable fellowship; and why then will you still live strangers, yea, enemies, to this fellowship? Ah sirs, holy men will still be awakening and alarming of your drowsy spirits, they will be still a-knocking at the door of your hearts, and asking of you whether it be good going to hell; they will still be inquiring of you what provision you have made for another world, and how all things stand within; they will still be jogging at your elbows, that you may not die in your sins; and they will still be whispering in your ear, that your souls may live for ever. The Jews have a proverb, that 'two dry sticks put to a green one will kindle it.' Oh, there is nothing in all the world that contributes so much to the kindling, to the firing, and to the inflaming of men's hearts after holiness, as the society of those that are holy. Algerius, an Italian martyr, 'had rather be in prison with Cato, than to live with Cæsar in the senate-house.' Oh, it is ten thousand times better to live with those that are holy, though in a dark prison, than to live amongst those that are unholy, though in a royal palace. Urbanus Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, tells us, 'that it was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life.' O sinners, did you but experience for one day the sweet and happiness of the communion of saints, you would then cry out, 'Oh, there is no society to the society of God's holy ones.' And therefore, as ever you would be holy, let holy men have more heart-room and house-room with you. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If ever you would be holy, then dwell much upon those solemn vows and covenants that you have formerly made in the days of your distress. Ah, how often have you, in the days of your calamity and misery, and in the days when sicknesses and weaknesses did hang upon you, and when the terrors of death were upon you, how frequently in those days did you solemnly vow and promise that, by the strength and assistance of the Lord, you would break off your sins by repentance, and that you would make it your greatest care, and your greatest business and work in this world, to mind holiness, and to press after holiness, and to give your souls no rest till you had experienced the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness! As David by an oath bound himself to keep God's righteous judgments: Psa 119:106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments,'—a religious vow is nothing else but a solemn promise or oath, whereby a man engages himself to the great God, that he will decline such ways, means, and methods as lead to wickedness, and that he will set in good earnest upon the practice of all the ways and means of holiness, by the strength and assistance of divine grace—so you have by many vows and promises engaged yourselves 'to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light,'—suitable to the apostle's exhortation, Rom 13:12. And as the people in Nehemiah's time did enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all his commandments, Neh 10:29; so you have in the times of your outward and inward distresses vowed to the Lord, that you would observe all his statutes, and walk in all his holy ways, and do all his righteous commandments. Job once made a covenant with his eyes, that he would not lustfully look upon a maid, Job 31:1-2; but how often have you made a covenant with your thoughts, that you would not think of vanity, and with your eyes, that you would not behold vanity, and with your ears, that you would not hear vanity, and with your tongues, that you would not speak vanity, and with your hearts, that you would not contrive vanity, and with your hands, that you would not act vanity; now your vows and your covenants are upon you, oh that you would not, with the strange woman in the Proverbs, Pro 2:17, forget the covenant of your God! Oh, it is better ten thousand times not to vow, than to vow and not to pay, Ecc 5:5. God can take no pleasure in such as are off and on with him, nor in such who are forward to vow, but make no conscience to pay their vows. These are fools in folio, and therefore God cannot but detest them, and turn his back upon them. If

good Jacob, who is called 'the father of vows,' was so backward to pay his vows, that God was forced, not only to round him in the ear again and again with a 'go up to Bethel, and there build me a chapel,' but also severely to punish his delays, both in the rape of his daughter, and in the cruelty of his sons, &c., Gen 35:1-29, ah, how severely then may God deal with such who do not only delay the paying of their vows, but who live also in the daily breach of their vows! Most men have need of that counsel which the bishop of Colen gave Sigismund the emperor, that asked him what he should do to be happy; 'Live,' said he, 'as you promised and vowed to do when you were last sick of the stone and gout.' Ah, that all men would make more conscience of living out, and of living up to the covenants, vows, and promises that they have made to God in the days when the hand of the Lord has gone out many ways against them, and when terrors of conscience have been strong upon them! Oh, what repentance! oh, what reformation! oh, what amendment have they promised in those days! and yet no sooner have these outward and inward storms been over, but they have been as vain and loose and base as ever. In the time of the great sweat in king Edward's days, as long as the heat of the plague lasted, oh how did every one cry out, peccavi, peccavi, I have sinned, I have sinned; mercy, Lord! oh mercy! mercy, good Lord! Then lords and ladies, and people of all sorts, cried out to the ministers, for the Lord's sake, sirs, tell us what shall we do to avoid the wrath of the Lord? what shall we do to be safe in this evil day? Oh take these bags, and pay so much to such a one whom I have deceived! and restore so much to such a one whom I have in bargaining overreached! Oh give so much to the poor, and so much to other pious uses, &c. But after the sickness was over, they 'returned with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the mire again; and so their latter end was worse than their former.' There was a very great sinner, who in the time of his sickness was so sorely terrified in his conscience for his many heinous sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, 'I am damned! I am damned! I am damned!' &c.; and in this his sickness he made many great protestations of amendment of life, if God would but be pleased to recover him, and prevent his going down to the grave at this time. Well, in a short time after he did recover, and being recovered he was as base, wretched, and wicked as ever he was before. This man, with those that were cited before him, were like that cunning devil, of whom the epigrammatist thus writeth:—

'Ægrota dæmon, monachus tunc esse volebat, Convaluit dæmon, monachus tunc esse nolebat:' Which is thus Englished:— The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be; The devil was well, the devil a monk was he. But those who are now like to Satan in sin, may hereafter be like to him in torment. Such who now outlive their vows, shall, when they die, have hell enough. You count it a very shameful thing to break promise or covenant with men; but is it not far more shameful to break with God? The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear by the life of the king, and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no gold was to redeem his life. When the Romans made covenants, they took stones in their hands, and said, 'If I make this covenant seriously and faithfully, then let the great Jupiter bless me; if not, so let me be cast away from the face of the gods as I cast away this stone. Covenant-breaking was a sin greatly detested and abhorred among the very heathens; and shall Christians make nothing of breaking their vows, promises, and covenants with the great God? Well, sirs, remember this, those sins that you have vowed against must be deserted, and that holiness which you have vowed to follow must be pursued, or a worse thing than the curse of Meroz must be expected; Jdg 5:23 compared with that John 5:14. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If ever you would be holy, then dwell much upon the worth and preciousness of your souls. Christ, that only went to the price of souls, hath told us that one soul is more worth than all the world, Mat 16:26. Christ left his Father's bosom, and all the glory of heaven, for the good of souls; he assumed the nature of man for the happiness of the soul of man; he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he wept for souls, he sweat for souls, he prayed for souls, he paid for souls, and he bled out his heart-blood for souls. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils; it is of an angelical nature, it is a heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring, it is a spiritual substance, capable of the knowledge of God, and of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. There is nothing that can suit the soul below God, nor nothing that can satisfy the soul without God; the soul is so high and so noble a piece, that it scorns all the world in point of acceptation, justification, satisfaction, and salvation. What are all the riches of the East or West Indies? what are rocks of diamonds, or mountains of gold, or the price of Cleopatra's draught, to the price that Christ laid down for souls? 1Pe 1:18-19. Christ made himself an offering for sin, that souls might not be undone by sin; the Lord died that slaves may live, the Son dies that servants may live; the natural Son dies that adopted sons may live, the only-begotten Son dies that bastards may live; yea, the Judge dies that malefactors may live. Ah, friends, as there was never sorrow like Christ's sorrow, so there was never love like Christ's love, and of all his love none to that of soul-love. In a word, the spiritual enemies which daily war against the soul, the glorious angels which hourly guard the soul, and the precious ordinances which God hath appointed as means both to convert and to feed the soul, do all speak out the preciousness and excellency of the soul. There was once a great contest among some nations about Homer, an excellent poet—they severally pleaded their interest in him; and truly so it is this day about the soul of man: many lay claim to it,—sin lays claim to it, and the world lays claim to it, and Satan lays claim to it, and Christ and holiness lays claim to it, and oh that Christ and holiness might have it before all others! O sirs, there is no wisdom nor policy to that of securing our precious souls, for they are jewels of more worth than all the world! All the honours, riches, greatness, and glory of this world are but chips and pebbles to these glorious pearls; therefore, before all and above all other things, make sure work for your souls; if they are safe all is safe, but if they are lost all is lost. Other things cannot be made sure; riches cannot, for as they are lying, so they are flying vanities, they make themselves wings, and they fly away; honours cannot: Haman is feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next; Herod is one hour cried up for a god, and the next hour he is eaten of worms. Princes' courts are very slippery: a man may quickly get a fall there, that may easily break both back and neck, as many in all ages have experienced; the applause and favour of creatures cannot, for many men's favours are got with an apple, and lost with a nut. Judas his heart was hardly warmed with the high-priest's favour, before they shut their doors upon him, with a 'what is that to us? look thou to that,' Mat 27:4-5. Most men's favours are as light as a feather, and so tossed up and down with every breath of windy vanity. The moon does not so often vary and change, as the respects of most men do vary and change. How many men have had their names written in golden characters one year, and in letters of blood the next! What is the favour of man but a blast, a sunshine-hour, a puff of wind, a magnum nihil, a great nothing? and who then would spend an hour's time to secure it? Near and dear relations cannot, for the delight of Ezekiel's eyes is taken away with a stroke, Eze 24:16; and all Job's children are snatched away in a day, Job 1:10. All our nearest and dearest relations are like a nosegay, which the oftener we

smell to it, the sooner it withers. But now holiness may be made sure: witness the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, Heb 12:23; and witness the many thousands of Christians this day in the world, who do experience the principles of holiness in their hearts, and who do evidence the power of holiness in their lives. O sirs, if the serious consideration of the preciousness and worth of your souls will not draw you out to study holiness, to love holiness, to prize holiness, and to press after holiness, what will? O sirs, it is only holiness that is the happiness of the soul, the safety and security of the soul, the prosperity and felicity of the soul, and the lustre and glory of the soul; and therefore why should you not labour, as for life, after this inestimable jewel, holiness? Oh, let the remembrance of the preciousness of your souls be an effectual means to draw you to hear that you may be holy, and to pray that you may be holy, and to read that you may be holy, and to mourn that you may be holy, and to sigh and groan after holiness, as after that which is the soul's only happiness. O sirs, there is nothing below heaven so precious and noble as your souls; and therefore do not play the courtier with your souls. Now the courtier does all things late—he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and repents late. Oh, do not poison your precious souls by gross enormities! oh, do not starve your souls by the omission of religious duties! Oh, do not murder and damn your souls by turning your backs upon holy ordinances! I have read of a woman, who, when her house was on fire, so minded the saving of her goods, that she forgot her only child, and left it burning in the fire; at last, being minded of it, she cries out, 'Oh, my child! oh, my poor child!' hut all too late, all too late. So there are many men now so mad upon the world, and so bewitched with the world, that they never mind, they never regard their poor souls, till they come to fall under everlasting burnings, and then they cry out, Oh, our souls! oh, our poor souls! Oh that we had been wise for our souls! Oh that we had got holiness for our souls! Oh that we had made sure work for our souls! but all too late, all too late. The Lord make you wise to prevent soul-burnings at last. If he be rather a monster than a man that feasts his slave but starves his wife, what shall we say of those that pamper their bodies but starve their souls, and that have threadbare souls under silk and satin clothes, and that please themselves with deformed souls under beautiful faces? Surely it had been good for these that they had never been born. I have read of a Scythian captain, who, having for a draught of water yielded up the city, cried out, Quid peridi! quid prodidi! What have I lost! what have I betrayed! So all unholy persons will at last cry out, We have betrayed our immortal souls, we have lost a precious Father, we have lost a dear Redeemer, we have lost the company of glorious angels, we have lost the society of 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' and we have lost all the pleasures and joys and delights that be at the right hand of the Most High! We have lost these, we have, lost all these, and we have lost them for ever and ever: surely there is no hell to this hell! For a close of this direction, remember this, that as the soul is the life and excellency of the body, so holiness is the life and excellency of the soul, and as the body without the soul is dead, so the soul without holiness is dead. 'This my son was dead, and is alive.' If you get holiness into your souls, your souls shall live for ever, but if you die without holiness, your souls shall die for ever and ever. I have read that there was a time when the Romans did wear jewels on their shoes. Oh that in these days most men did not do worse! oh that they did not trample under feet that matchless jewel, their precious souls! But,

(7.) Seventhly, If ever you would be holy, then set in good earnest upon reading of the Holy Scripture. Many a man has been made holy by reading of the holy word. The Bible is the book of books, it is the only book; all other books in the world are but waste paper to it. Augustine cries out, Away with our writings, that room may be made for the book of God. Notwithstanding the

greatness and multiplicity of the affairs of princes, yet they were diligently to read the word: Deu 17:19, 'And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them.' God looks that the greatest princes on earth should make use of this library. Though David was a great prince, and had a multitude of weighty businesses upon his hand, yet he was so much in reading and meditating on the word that he made it his counsellors: the word was David's learned counsel, Psa 119:24, to which he resorted for counsel, advice, and comfort, in all his necessities and miseries. Alphonsus, king of Arragon, hath been highly extolled for reading the Scriptures fourteen times over, with glosses and expositions, notwithstanding his great public employments. And Alphonsus, king of Naples, read over the Bible forty times, notwithstanding many great affairs were upon his hand. Theodosius the emperor, and Constantine the Great, were much taken up in reading of the Scriptures. So Queen Elizabeth, when she passed in triumph through the streets of London after her coronation, and had the Bible presented to her at the little conduit in Cheapside, she received the same with both her hands, and, kissing it, laid it to her breasts, saying, 'that the same had ever been her chiefest delight, and should be the rule whereby she meant to frame her government.' And it is very observable, that the eunuch was reading the Scripture when Philip was commanded, by commission from the Holy Ghost, to join himself to his chariot, and to instruct him in the knowledge of Christ, which proved his conversion and salvation, Acts 8:26, Acts 8:40. And Junius was converted by the reading of that first of John, 'In the beginning was the Word,' &c., being amazed with the strange majesty of the style, and the profound mysteries therein contained. And Augustine was strangely converted by hearing a voice from heaven, saying, Tolle lege, tolle lege—Take and read, take and read; and taking up the Bible, the first passage of Scripture that he cast his eyes upon was that Rom 13:13-14, 'Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in gluttony and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;' and no sooner had he read the verses but the work of conversion was finished, and pious resolutions for a thorough reformation of life was settled in him. The gospel read is sometimes the power of God to salvation, as well as the gospel heard, Rom 1:16. Cyprian confesseth that he was converted from idolatry and necromancy by hearing the history of the prophet Jonah read and expounded by Cecilius, whom therefore he calleth the father of his new life. And Luther confesseth that he was converted by reading. I have read of a scandalous minister that was struck at the heart and converted in reading that Rom 2:21-22, 'Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?' There is a scholar now alive, who being persuaded by an honest poor man to leave reading of poetry, and to fall upon reading of the Bible, did so, and before he had read out Genesis his heart was changed, and he was converted. O sirs, as you tender your conversion, your salvation, make more conscience of reading the Scripture than ever you have done; be often in whetting of these scriptures upon your hearts, Deu 6:6-9, and Deu 31:11-12; Jer 36:6-7; John 5:39. In these scriptures God requires all sorts of people, both men, women, children, and strangers, both learned and unlearned, to read the Scriptures, and to search after the heavenly treasures that are laid up in them, as men search for gold and silver in the ore. And Paul charges Timothy that he give attendance to reading, 1Ti 4:13. 'And blessed is he,' saith John, 'that heareth and readeth the words of this book,' Rev 1:3. Yea, Christ himself hath highly honoured reading with his own

example; for coming to Nazareth, as his custom was, he stood up to read the Scriptures, Luk 4:16, Luk 4:21; and the Bereans, for reading and searching of the Scriptures, are styled 'more noble than the Jews of Thessalonica,' or as the Greek has it, they were better born and bred, they were better gentlemen, they were of a more noble and ingenuous disposition, though they did belong to the country town of Berea, than the Thessalonians were who dwelt in the rich and stately city of Thessalonica, Acts 17:11, **■υγεν■στεροι**. Sometimes there is more true nobility and ingenuity under a russet coat than there is under a satin suit. The Holy Ghost gives a very large encomium and high commendation of the Scriptures in that 2Ti 3:15, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' It is observable that in these words you have not simply **■ερ■ γρ■μματα**, holy Scriptures, but **τ■ ■ερ■ γρ■μματα**, the holy Scriptures. The article **τ■** there is very emphatical, and it is used by the Holy Ghost to distinguish these sacred writings from all profane writings, and to note the eminency and excellency of the holy Scriptures above all other men's writings whatsoever. Now the Scriptures have this adjunct, this epithet 'holy' given them in five respects.

[1.] In respect of their author and original, viz., a holy God.

[2.] They are holy in respect of the penmen, who were holy men of God, 2Pe 1:21.

[3.] They are holy in respect of their matter; they treat of the holy things of God; a vein of holiness runs through every line of Scripture. The Scripture calls for holy hearts and holy lives; it calls for holy principles and holy practices, holy words and holy works, holy affections and holy conversations, 1Pe 1:15.

[4.] They are holy in respect of their effects and operations; they are a means to effect and work holiness, and they are a means to complete and perfect holiness, Job 37:16. The word is not only a pure word, but also a purifying word; it is not only a clean word, but also a cleansing word, Psa 19:8-9.

[5.] They are called holy by way of distinction, and in opposition not only to all human and profane writings, but also to the writings of the best and choicest men that ever wrote; for they have had their failings, weaknesses, and infirmities, and therefore must have their many grains of allowance; but the holy Scripture is most perfect and complete. Now, sirs, if ever you would be holy, it stands upon you to make more conscience of reading the holy Scriptures than ever yet you have done. Many a man has been made holy by reading the holy Scriptures; and why mayest not thou also be made holy by reading of the same holy word? Certainly all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, can't tell to the contrary, but that thou mayest be made holy even by reading of the holy word. The Holy Ghost is a free agent, and he can as well work holiness in thy heart by reading as by hearing, and therefore set thyself about this noble and necessary work. Ah, friends, the Scriptures are God's epistle; they are God's love-letter to the sons of men; and why then will you not read them? Count Anhalt, that princely preacher, was wont to say that the Scriptures were Christ's swaddling-bands, the child Jesus being to be found almost in every page, in every verse, and in every line. Oh, who would not therefore be often in looking upon and in handling of these swaddling-bands! O sirs, there are no histories that are comparable to the histories of the Scripture.

[1.] First, For antiquity. Moses is found more ancient than all those whom the Grecians make most ancient, as Homer, Hesiod, and Jupiter himself, whom the Greeks have seated in the top of their divinity.

[2.] Secondly, For rarity.

[3.] Thirdly, For brevity. Here you have much wrapped up in a little room: here you have Homer's 'Iliads' comprised in a nutshell.

[4.] Fourthly, For perspicuity. The foundations of religion and happiness are so plain and clear, that every one may run and read them. It was a true saying of Augustine, *Inclinavit Deus Scripturas, ad infantium et lactentium capacitatem*—That God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacities even of babes and sucklings.

[5.] Fifthly, For harmony. Though there may seem to be a contrariety between scripture and scripture, yet there is a blessed harmony between all the parts of Scripture; the contrariety is seeming, not real. As when a man is drawing water out of a well with two vessels of a different metal, the water at the first seemeth to be of a different colour, but when he draweth up the vessels nearer to him, the diversity of colours vanish, and the water appeareth to be of one and the same colour, and when he tasteth them, they have one and the same relish; so though at first sight there may seem to be some contradictions in the Scriptures, yet when we look more nearly and narrowly into them, and compare one place with another, we shall find no contrariety, no repugnancy in them at all, but a perfect harmony, and a full and sweet consent and agreement between one place and another, between text and text, scripture and scripture.

[6.] Sixthly, For verity. The Scriptures are most sure and certain; heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of the Scripture shall pass unfulfilled.

[7.] Seventhly, For variety. There are no varieties to those that are to be found in Scripture; as in Noah's ark all sorts of creatures were to be found, so in this heavenly ark, the Scriptures, all varieties are to be found. Here you may find physic for every disease, and balm for every wound, and a plaster for every sore. Here the lamb may wade, and here the elephant may swim; here is milk for babes, and here is meat for strong men; here is comfort for the afflicted, and succour for the tempted, and support for the distressed, and ease for the wearied; here is a staff to support the feeble, and a sword to defend the mighty. That which a Papist reports lyingly of their sacrament of the mass—viz., that there are as many mysteries in it as there are drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, &c.—may be truly asserted of the holy Scriptures; there are many thousand thousand varieties in this garden of paradise, the Scripture.

[8.] Eighthly, For fulness. The Scriptures are full of light, and full of life, and full of love; they are full of righteousness, and full of holiness, and full of all goodness. It was a weighty saying of Tertullian, *Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum*—I adore the fulness of the Scripture. Many men talk much of the philosopher's stone, that it turns copper into gold, and of cornucopia, that it had all things necessary for food in it, and of the herb panaces, that it was good for all diseases, and of the drug catholicon, that it is instead of all purges, and of Vulcan's armour, that it was full proof against all thrusts and blows; but that which they vainly attribute to these things for bodily good, may safely and honourably be attributed to the blessed Scriptures in a spiritual manner. The Scriptures turns

hearts of copper into hearts of gold; it is a paradise that is full of the trees of life, and these trees of life are both for food and physic; here is all manner of fruit to feed you and fill you, to delight you and satisfy you, and the very leaves of these trees are singular medicines to heal you and cure you, Rev 22:2. The Scripture prescribes the choicest drugs to purge you, viz., repentance and the blood of Christ; and it is the Scripture that furnishes you with the best armour of proof against all principalities and powers, and against all spiritual wickednesses in high places, Eph 6:11, Eph 6:18. Oh, how should the consideration of all these things work you to be much in reading of the holy Scriptures! If you will but make trial, you should be sure to find in them stories more true, more various, more pleasant, more profitable, and more comfortable than any you will find in all ancient or modern writers. Ah, friends, if you would but in good earnest set upon reading of the holy Scriptures, you may find in them so many happinesses as cannot be numbered, and so great happinesses as cannot be measured, and so copious happinesses as cannot be defined, and such precious happinesses as cannot be valued; and if all this won't draw you to read the holy Scriptures conscientiously and frequently, I know not what will.

It is said of Mary, that she spent the third part of her time in reading of the word; and Cæcilia, a Roman maiden of noble parentage, carried always about her the New Testament, and spent much time in reading it. Alfred, once king of England, compiled psalms and prayers into one book, and called it a Manual, which he always carried about him, and spent much time in the perusal of it. Augustine caused David's penitential psalms to be drawn upon the walls of his chamber, that he might read them as he lay in his bed; he read and wept, and wept and read. Well, if all this will not prevail with you to be much in reading of the Scriptures, consider that Agesilaus, an excellent king of Sparta, would never go to bed, nor rise up, before he had looked into Homer, whom he called amasium suum, his sweetheart; but what was Homer's books to God's book, which is the book of books, as Charles the Great did signify when he crowned it with his own crown. And Scipio Africanus was much commended for that he usually had in his hands the books of Xenophon. But oh, how much more commendable will it be for you to have always in your hands the book of God! Alphonsus had always in his bosom the Commentaries of Cæsar, and he was so much delighted with the history of Titus Livius, that he once commanded certain musicians, that were very skilful in that art, to depart his presence, saying, he could read a more pleasant story out of Livius. Alas! what are Livius his stories to the blessed stories that be in the Bible! O sirs, if Lipsius, when he did but read Seneca, thought that he was even on the top of Olympus, above mortality and human things; and if Julius Scaliger thought twelve verses in Lucan better than the German empire, oh, then, of what infinite worth and value is the blessed Scripture! Shall heathens take such pleasure in reading of the works of heathens, and shall not Christians take as much pleasure in reading of the holy Scriptures, wherein there is so much of the Spirit, hand, and heart of God? Shall they set so high a price upon the books of heathens, and shall we so slight and undervalue the book of God as not to think it worth a-opening once a day? Verily, I am afraid, I am afraid, that there are some among us that hardly open their Bibles once a week, and others that hardly open their Bibles once a month, and not a few that hardly open their Bibles once a quarter, &c. Certainly as the rustiness of some men's gold will be a witness against them in the great day of the Lord, so the mustiness of some men's Bibles will be a witness against them in that great day, Jas 5:1-3.

Quest. But is it not lawful for a man to read other men's books, to read other men's holy works? &c.

Ans. Doubtless it is lawful; and that,

[1.] First, Because other men's holy works, so far as they are holy, are but the fruits, products, and operations of the Holy Spirit, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Because their holy labours are of singular use for the clearing up of many hard, difficult, and mysterious scriptures, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Because they have been the means of many men's conversion. John Huss confesseth that the reading of Luther's works was the main cause of his conversion. And whilst Vergerius read Luther's books with an intent to confute them, himself was converted by them. I doubt not but that there are many now in heaven, and multitudes now on earth, that have been converted by the books and writings of holy men; and therefore it cannot but be lawful to read such books, &c.

[4.] Fourthly, Though it be lawful to read other men's holy works, yet the holy Scriptures must still have the pre-eminence, they must be firstly, chiefly, and mostly read. All other books in comparison of the book of God must be cast by; it is God's book that is indeed the book of books. Josephus, in his book of Antiquities, makes mention of one Cumanus, a governor of Judea, that, though he were but a heathen, and a wicked man, yet he caused a soldier to be beheaded for tearing a copy of the book of Moses's law, which he found at the sacking of a town. And venerable in all ages and among all nations have been the books wherein the laws either of their belief or polity have been contained; as the Talmud among the Jews, and the laws of the twelve tables among the Romans, and the Alcoran among the Turks, yea, all pagans have highly valued the laws of their legislators; and shall not Christians much more set a high esteem upon the holy Scriptures, which are the map of God's mercy, and man's misery, the touchstone of truth, the shop of remedies against all maladies, the hammer of vices, and the treasury of virtues, the displayer of all sensual and worldly vanities, the balance of equity, and the most perfect rule of all justice and honesty? What Chrysostom said of old to his hearers—viz., 'Get you Bibles, for they are your souls' physic'—that I say to you all, Oh, get you Bibles, for they are your souls' physic, your souls' food, your souls' happiness. Ah, friends, no book becomes your hands like the Bible. It was this book that made David wiser than his teachers; this is the book that makes the best preachers, and this is the book that is the best preacher. This book, this preacher will preach to you in your shops, in your chambers, in your closets, yea, in your own bosoms. This book will preach to you at home and abroad, it will preach to you in all companies, whether they are good or bad, and it will preach to you in all conditions, whether they are prosperous or afflictive. By this book you shall be saved, or by this book you shall be damned; by this book you must live, by this book you must die, and by this book you shall be judged in the great day, John 12:48. Oh, therefore, love this book above all other books, and prize this book above all other books, and buy this book before all other books. In King Henry the Eighth's time, and in Queen Mary's days, Christians would have given cartloads of hay and corn for a few chapters in the New Testament; and will not you part with three or four shillings to buy a Bible, that may save your souls, that may make you holy here and happy hereafter? And read this book before all other books, and study this book more than all other books; for he that reads much and understands nothing, is like him that hunts much and catcheth nothing. And let this suffice for this seventh direction.

(8.) Eighthly, If ever you would be holy, then be much in prayer. Prayer is the most prevalent orator at the throne of grace. Many that have gone to that throne with tears in their eyes, have come

away with praises in their hearts; and many that have gone to that throne with hearts full of sin, have returned with hearts full of grace. Jacob wept and prayed, and prayed and wept; and in the close as a prince he prevailed with God, Hos 14:4; so many a sinner has wept and prayed, and prayed and wept, and in the close as a prince he has prevailed with God. Ah, sirs, it may be that there are but a few weeks, nay, a few days, peradventure but a few hours, between your souls and eternity, between your souls and everlasting burnings, between your souls and a devouring fire, between your souls and damnation; and will you not then pray and mourn, and mourn and pray, for that holiness, without which there is no happiness, yea, without which hell and destruction will be for ever your portion? Oh, take that blessed promise, Eze 36:25-27, and urge God with it; oh, tell him that he has said that 'he will sprinkle clean water upon you, and that ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and that from all your idols he will cleanse you', &c. Oh, tell him, First, That he stands engaged by promise to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it, Luk 11:13.

Secondly, Oh, tell him that none can make an unholy heart holy, but a holy God.

Thirdly, Tell him that surely it is no sin to beg holiness of a holy God.

Fourthly, Tell him that he has made such who were once notorious in wickedness to become eminent in holiness: witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, the murderers of Christ, and those vile Corinthians, 1Co 5:6, 1Co 5:9-11.

Fifthly, Tell him that he has given holiness to them that have not sought it, and how then can it stand with his honour to deny it to them that seek it? Surely if he has been 'found of them that sought him not,' he will not hide himself 'from them that seek him,' Isa 65:1-2.

Sixthly, Tell him that thou hadst rather that he should deny thee anything, than that he should deny thee holiness; say to him, Lord, health is the prince of outward mercies, and wealth is the spring of many mercies, and wife, children, and friends are the set-offs of mercies, the cream of mercies, and that liberty is the sweetener of all thy mercies, and yet tell him that thou hadst rather that he should strip thee of any of these, nay, that he should deny thee all of these, than that he should deny thee holiness.

Seventhly, Tell him that thou didst never read of any man that did ever make a hearty request for holiness, but his request was granted. The leper would fain be clean, and Christ's answer is, 'I will; be thou clean,' Mat 8:2-3. Christ does neither delay him nor deny him. The poor leper could no sooner desire to be clean, but Christ commands him to be clean—'I will; be, thou clean.' His prayer was short and sweet, and his answer was sudden and gracious.

Eighthly, Tell him that thou art unwilling to be miserable for ever, tell him that thou canst not bear the thoughts of an eternal separation from him, and yet this must be thy portion, except he will glorify the riches of his grace in bestowing of that pearl of price, holiness, upon thee. Oh, tell him that thy want of holiness is now thy greatest hell! tell him that thou art now fully resolved to give him no rest till he has changed thy heart, and made thee in some measure to be what he would have thee to be, &c.

It is observable amongst the worst of men, the Turks, yea, amongst the worst of Turks, the Moors, that by their law it is a just exception against any witness, that he hath not prayed six times every natural day, it being a usual custom with them to pray for day before the day brake, and when it is

day they give thanks for daylight, and at noon they give thanks to God that half the day is past, and then at last they pray that they may have a good night after their day. Ah, sinners, sinners, shall not these Turks rise up one day in judgment against you that think not holiness worth a-praying for?

Object. But the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, Pro 15:8, and Pro 28:9; and he casts their sacrifices as dung in their faces, Isa 1:11-16, and Isa 58:1-7; their very prayers are sinful, and therefore they were better neglect prayer till God shall work graciously and savingly upon them, than to pray, and so to sin as often as they pray, &c. To this I answer,

(1.) First, The prayers of the wicked may be materially good, when they are not formally good, yea, when they are theologically evil, 2Ch 25:2. Amaziah did that which was perfect in the sight of the Lord, as to the matter, but not with a perfect or sincere heart. He failed not in the matter, but in the manner. He did not do that good he did from principles of faith, love, &c., nor to a right end, divine glory. Many unsanctified persons may have the gift of prayer, that have not the spirit of prayer, nor the grace of prayer, Mat 7:21, and Mat 23:14. Now certainly where God gives such a gift, he requires the use of it. The gift of prayer is from the Spirit, as well as the grace of prayer; and who can tell but that upon the use of the gift of prayer, the Spirit may give the grace of prayer? However, it is dangerous to neglect a gift. The slothful servant was not cast into utter darkness for rioting out his talent, but for not improving of his talent, Mat 25:30. That the prayers of a wicked man are not formally good, must be granted, yea, that they are abominable and ineffectual, cannot be denied; they are like the precious stone Diacletes, which though it hath many excellent sovereignties in it, yet it loseth them all if it be put in a dead man's mouth; so prayer, though it hath many virtues and excellencies in it, yet it loseth them all when it is performed by a man that is spiritually dead—that is, dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards; but if you consider the matter of a wicked man's prayers, so they may be good, yea, so good as that they may prevail with a good God for much temporal good, as I shall shew you before I close up all my answers to this objection. But,

(2.) Secondly, It is a less sin for an unholy person to do a religious duty, than it is to omit it. Now of two sins, whereupon, not God, but a man's self hath inevitably put him to commit one of them, he must choose the least, he must choose rather to sin in the manner, in not doing of it so well as he should, than to fail in the matter, and so quite neglect the duty itself. For this is most certain, when God commands a duty absolutely to be done, it is a greater sin not to do it at all, than to do it amiss, and the reason is evident, because our disobedience is total in not doing at all, and but only partial in doing it otherwise than we ought. As for a man wilfully and peremptorily to refuse to hear the word, is a greater and fouler fault than to hear it with a forgetful or disobedient heart, there being more hope of the latter than of the former; for some that have come to catch, have been caught by the word, John 7:46. And therefore 'come,' saith Latimer, 'to the word; though thou comest to sleep, it may be God may take thee napping.' When Mr Henry Sulphen was preacher at Bremen, several Roman Catholics sent their chaplains to trap him in his words; but the power of God was so wonderfully seen in his preaching, that the greatest part of them that came to ensnare him were converted by him. It is good to come to the word, though a man comes with an ill intent; to come, though he should come with a purpose to catch, for in so coming he may be caught, as Augustine was by Ambrose. Without doubt there is no disobedience to that which is total. Partial disobedience is no disobedience to that which is total. That wife that totally disobeys her husband,

and that child that totally disobeys the father, and that servant that totally disobeys his master, is much more to blame, and do much more provoke, than those that are only partial in their disobedience; and so it is between God and sinners, &c.

(3.) Thirdly, If there were any strength in this objection, it would lie as strong against a wicked man's civil actions, as it does against his religious actions: Pro 21:4, 'The ploughings of the wicked is sin;' not only the prayers of the wicked, but also the ploughings of the wicked are sin, not only the spiritual but also the natural and civil actions of a wicked man are sin; and therefore, according to their arguing, a wicked man must not exercise himself in his calling, in his ploughing and sowing, &c., because that his civil actions are sinful as well as his religious; and it is as impossible for him to please God in the one, as it is to please him in the other; but surely all men that are in their wits, will either sigh or laugh at such kind of reasonings. But,

(4.) Fourthly, This objection lies as strong against wicked men's natural actions—viz., their eating, drinking, and sleeping, &c.—as it does against their praying. When a wicked man eats, he is to eat to divine glory, and when he drinks, he is to drink to divine glory, 1Co 10:31; and when he recreates himself, he is to recreate himself to divine glory; and when he sleeps, he is to sleep to divine glory; in all these natural and common actions, he is to make the glory of God his supreme scope. Now there is not a wicked man on earth that does or can eat or drink, &c., to divine glory; he does not nor cannot set up the glory of God as the chief and ultimate end of his natural and common actions. Now who but fools in folio will reason thus: wicked men are to eat and drink, &c., to divine glory, but this they cannot do, Tit 1:15; and therefore wicked men must neither eat nor drink, &c. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The force and spirit of this objection, if there were any in it, lies as flat and full against all other religious duties, as it does against prayer. It lies as strong against hearing, reading, and meditating on the word, &c., as it does against prayer; and who but such who are sadly left of God, and woefully blinded by Satan, will be so wretched as to say, wicked men must neither hear the word, nor read the word, nor meditate on the word, because they cannot do these actions in faith, 'and whatsoever is not of faith is sin,' Rom 14:23. But,

(6.) Sixthly, There are those that can say by experience, that the first special work of God that ever they perceived on their own hearts, was while they were pleading with God at the throne of grace. There are those that have brought proud hearts to the throne of grace, but have returned with hearts humbled, and that have brought hard hearts, but have gone away with hearts graciously broken and melted, and that have brought carnal hearts, but returned with spiritual hearts, and that have brought worldly hearts, but returned with heavenly hearts. God sometimes hears prayers for his own sake, and for his Son's sake, and for his glory's sake, and for his promise sake, when he will not hear prayers for the sinner's sake. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Sinful omissions lead to sinful commissions, yea, sometimes they lead to ruin; as you may see in the angels that fell from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, and in Adam, who fell in paradise from the highest pinnacle of glory to the lowest step of sin and misery. Those reprobates in Mat 25:1-46 did not rob the saints, but only omitted the relieving of them, and this proved a damning to them; rich Dives did not rob the poor, but his not relieving of them was his ruin, Luk 16:1-31. Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation for a mere omission, because they met not God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deu

23:3-4, Deu 23:6. Look, as the omission of good diet breeds natural diseases in the body, so doth the omission of good duties breed spiritual diseases in the soul. All sinful omissions make work for hell, or for the physician of souls. O man! thou dost not know what deadly sin, what deadly temptation may follow upon a mere single omission. Origen, going to comfort and encourage a martyr that was to suffer, was apprehended by the officers, and constrained either to offer to the idols or to have his body abused by a blackamoor that was ready pressed for that service. Being thus hard put to it, to save his life, he bowed to the idols; but afterwards, when he came to himself, he sadly bewails his sin, and confesseth that he went forth that morning without making his prayers unto God, which sinful omission God did so severely punish, by leaving of him to fall into so great a sin, which pierced his soul through with many sorrows. I am apt to think that many a sin, many a snare, and many a fall might have been prevented, if such and such religious duties had not been omitted. Sinful omissions prepare the way to sinful commissions, and both prepare the way to a fatal destruction. I believe many men had never been so abominable vicious, if they had not first cast off religious duties. He that lives in the neglect of prayer, tempts more devils than one to beset his soul, yea, to destroy his soul, &c. But,

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, There are several weighty arguments that may be produced to prove that it is the duty of wicked and unconverted men to perform religious duties, as to pray and seek the Lord, &c. Among the many that may be brought forth, I shall only give you these six:

[1.] First, This is evident from divine commands, as you may clearly see by comparing of these scriptures together, Isa 55:6-7; Acts 8:21-23; Psa 65:2. 1Th 5:17, 'Pray without ceasing,' is an indefinite injunction; and who art thou, O man, that darest to prohibit what God commands? Are not his commands obliging? and may not disobedience to the least of them cost thee thy life, thy soul, thy all? God's commands are neither to be slighted, censured, nor neglected. Woe to him that looks upon great commands as little commands, and little commands as no commands, Mat 23:1-39. O sirs, it is a very dangerous thing to act or run counter-cross to God's express command; it may cost a man dear, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:24. The heathens, indeed, would frequently run cross to their gods' commands, for when their gods commanded them to offer up a man, they would offer up a candle; and so Hercules, when he was to offer up a living man, he offered up a painted man; but does it become Christians to deal thus with the great God, with the living God, with the God of gods, as the heathens did by their gods? Surely no. God's commands are not like unto the commands of the heathens, that might be contradicted and changed, but they are like to the commands of the Medes, that cannot be reversed nor changed; they must be evangelically obeyed, or you will be eternally destroyed. The Rechabites were very rigid observers of their father's commands; and will you make slight of God's commands? Jer 35:2, Jer 35:5-7. And 'the angels that excel in strength do his commandments,' Psa 103:20; and will you despise them? Why should the peasant scorn that work in which the prince himself is engaged? But,

[2.] Secondly, Prayer is a natural worship, and is incumbent upon all men, as they are created by God. Prayer is a duty which the very law of nature, as well as the law of the word, lays upon men. And this you may see in those pagans, Jon 1:5, 'The mariners cried every man to his god.' That there is a God, and that this God is to be called upon, are lessons that are taught in nature's school: Isa 45:20, 'They pray to a god that cannot save.' For any man to say a wicked man ought not to pray, is to say a wicked man ought not to worship God, nor acknowledge him to be his

maker; and who but such who are either blind or mad dare speak such language? Certainly they that live in the neglect of prayer under the gospel sin against a double light, the light of nature and the light of the gospel, and therefore they shall be double-damned. There is no hell to these men's hell who sin against a double light, &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The neglect of prayer is charged upon wicked persons as their sin; as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Psa 14:2, Psa 14:4, and Psa 10:4; Jer 10:21; Hos 7:7; Zep 1:6. Now doubtless if it were not a duty for unregenerate persons to pray, it could never stand with the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God, to charge the omission of prayer upon them as a sin, and therefore, without peradventure, it is their duty to pray. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Wicked and unregenerate persons are again and again imprecated against for not calling upon the Lord: Psa 79:6, 'Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name;' so Jer 10:25, 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.' Now certainly if prayer were not a duty incumbent upon wicked men, they would never be thus imprecated against for the omission of it. To imprecate that vials, that full vials, that full vials of wrath and fury should be poured forth, as water is poured forth, suddenly and plentifully, upon those kingdoms and families that do not call upon the name of the Lord, is so dreadful a thing, that it had never been mentioned in the Scripture, had it not been to alarm the worst of men to the work of prayer. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If absolute promises, or precious promises of special grace and mercy, be made to sinners, as sinners, then sinners may in prayer plead out those promises, and urge God upon making good his promises; but absolute promises, or promises of special grace and favour, are made over to sinners, as sinners, ergo, that such promises are made over to poor sinners, as sinners, is evident by comparing these scriptures together, Isa 57:17-19. These words drop nothing but myrrh and mercy. If Ennius could pick gold out of a dunghill, oh, what gold, what comfort, may be picked out of these golden promises! In these words, let us consider two things: first, the precious promises that are here made; secondly, the persons to whom they are made. In the words you have four precious promises of special grace and favour; they are as so many streams of grace flowing from the covenant of grace.

I. The precious promises that are here made.

First, You have here a promise of healing: Isa 57:18, 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him,' or, as you may read the words, though I have seen his ways and courses, and well observed how unworthily, how untowardly, and how obstinately he has carried it, 'yet I will heal him,'—'I will heal his backsliding nature.' Though his disease be dangerous, though it be very dangerous, yet to an almighty physician no disease is incurable. I will heal his inside by pardoning his sin and purging his conscience, and I will heal his outside by removing of judgments and calamities from him; and all this I will do upon the account of my promise and covenant: Hos 14:4; Jer 32:38, and Jer 40:2, compared; Psa 103:3; Jer 3:22; Mal 4:2.

Secondly, You have in the words a promise of leading; 'I will lead him also,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, 'and I will lead him, I will conduct him in safety to his own country.' So some sense it, but you may understand it, doubtless, of a spiritual, as well as of a providential leading. I will lead him by my word, and I will lead him by my Spirit, and I will lead him by my counsel, suitable unto many

precious promises of grace that are scattered up and down in the Scripture.

Thirdly, In the words you have a promise of comfort; 'I will restore comforts to him,' not comfort, but comforts; that is, in the room of all those discomforts, sorrows, calamities, and miseries that he has been exercised with, I will, says God, lay in abundance of comfort, yea, I will store him with all sorts of comforts, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, suitable to that word of grace that you have in Isa 40:1-2.

Fourthly, In the words you have a promise of peace: ver. 19, 'I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near,' saith the Lord. The gemination of the word Shalom, shalom, peace, peace, imports a large extent of peace; it notes true peace, firm peace, sure peace, great peace, abundance of peace, yea, constant and lasting peace. Under the name of peace in the Hebrew is denoted all manner of prosperity, and the geminating of the word always notes a large measure of tranquillity, plenty, prosperity, and felicity. O sirs, peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with the creatures, are all the products of God's creating power and grace, Eph 2:16-18, and so must be referred to the covenant of grace.

Let us consider, II. The persons to whom these precious promises are made; and here let us observe these three things.

First, Their sin; and this you have in Eph 2:17, 'For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth.' The sin that is charged upon him is a very great and grievous, it is a very vile and heinous sin; it is called not only covetousness, but the iniquity of his covetousness, to shew the height and transcendency of this their wickedness; for covetousness is a mother-sin, it is a breeding sin, it is a sin that has all sin in the womb of it; it is a sin not only against the light and law of grace, but also against the light and law of nature, for it makes the soul terrene which should be celestial; and therefore the Persians, though heathens, have a law that no man ought to covet what belongs to any other man; and they have another law, that they ought not to be worldly-minded. No sin lays men under greater woes, 1Ti 6:10. Woe to him that joineth house to house; and woe to you Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, Mat 23:1-39. It is an evil that subjects men to the basest and vilest evils; it is the root of all evil—it makes a man a fool: Luk 12:20, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be taken from thee.' It robs a man of all true peace, comfort, content, and quiet; it brings men into snares which drowns their souls in perdition; it renders men unsatisfied under all their outward enjoyments. Though a covetous wretch may have enough to sink him, yet he can never have enough to satisfy him; first he wishes for a bag-full, and then a chest-full, and then a chamber-full, and then a church-full, &c. The plague of unsatisfiedness is none of the least of plagues that covetous men are under. Certainly you shall as soon fill a triangle with a circle, and a chest with grace, and the body with air, as you shall be able to fill and satisfy a covetous mind with money. In a word, covetousness is a sin that renders a man unserviceable in his generation. A covetous man is like a swine, that is good for nothing whilst he lives. The horse is good to bear and carry, the ox is good to draw, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, and the dog is good to keep the house, but the hog is good for nothing whilst he lives; so a covetous man is neither good for church nor state—he is nowise serviceable in his generation, only when he is dead. That scripture often proves true, viz., that 'the riches of a sinner are laid up for the just,' Job 27:17. By all which you may see the greatness of this sin of covetousness that is so closely charged upon them. But,

Secondly, They grew worse under the afflicting hand of God; 'I was wroth, and smote him, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.' They were like peevish, froward, stubborn children, that grow more cross, crooked, and perverse under all the chastenings of their father; and this was no small aggravation of their sin, that they grew worse under the rod. Plutarch writes that it is the quality of tigers, that if the drums or tabors sound about them, they will grow mad, and rend and tear their own flesh in pieces; and so it was with these sinners in the text. Oh, how did they fret and fume, and tear, and take on, when they were under the rebukes of God! But,

Thirdly, They persevered and went on against all gainsayings; 'I have seen his ways,' that is, I have seen his obstinacy and incorrigibility in sin. Ah, poor creature! says God, he sees not his present misery and slavery, he takes no notice of his own folly and vanity, of his own frowardness and peevishness; he scorns to bend or bow under my mighty hand, he is resolved to stand it out to the death, he will persist on in his own ways, though he eternally perishes—though hell stands at the end of his ways, yet on he will. Well! what is the issue of all this? God saith, 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' It is not, I have seen his ways, and will curse him, no, but 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' It is not, I have seen his ways, and will never have any more to do with him; no, but 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' It is not, I have seen his ways, and will damn him; no, but 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.' Oh the freeness, oh the unsearchableness, oh the riches of God's grace! And thus you see that the precious promises last cited are promises that are made over to sinners as sinners. And this is further evident in that Isa 43:22-25. For sins of omission and sins of commission, what can be more charged upon a sinful people than here is charged upon them? They were not only negligent of his worship and service, but they were also weary of his worship and service, and counted it rather a burden than a benefit, a toil than a pleasure. In all their outward observances they did but court the Lord, they did but compliment with God; for whilst they were in his service, their hearts were secretly weary of his service; and by their sinful commissions, oh, how did they grieve, vex, oppress, and burden the Holy One of Israel! And yet, in Isa 43:25, God does passionately and emphatically proclaim their free pardon, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' The metaphor is taken from men's blotting out of debts out of their debt-book. Now when a debt is blotted out of the debt-book, it is never charged upon the debtor more, it is never regarded nor remembered more; so when God proclaims the sinner's pardon, when he forgives him his transgressions, he blots, he rases, he crosses his books, and cancels all bonds, so as that he will never object his sins against him, and never charge his sins upon him; but being once forgiven, they shall be for ever forgotten, they shall never come into his remembrance more. And all this he will do for his name sake, and for the praise and glory of his own free grace. So in Eze 36:26-28, Eze 36:37, compared. Now by all these scriptures it is most plain and evident that the precious promises of special grace and mercy are made over to sinners as sinners; and if so, then doubtless sinners may lawfully put these promises into suit. O sirs, don't you know that desire is the soul of prayer? and who, but such as are witless and graceless, will say that a wicked man may not desire the accomplishment of God's gracious promises, that will say an unregenerate man may not desire to be pardoned, sanctified, and renewed; and that the Lord would bestow his Spirit upon him, and that, by the finger of the same Spirit, the law of the Lord may be written in his heart, that he may observe his statutes, and do them? These are things that God has engaged himself to do for poor sinners, and therefore certainly sinners may put God in mind of his engagements. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, God would never have encouraged and rewarded with temporal favours wicked and unregenerate men's religious duties and services as he has done, if he would not have had them exercise themselves in religious duties. Now that he has thus encouraged and rewarded wicked and unregenerate men, is evident in these instances, 1Ki 21:19; Jon 3:4, seq.; 2Ch 26:5. Uzziah sought God in the days of Zechariah; and when he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. Had he been really godly, had he had the root of the matter in him, had he been a sincere, a throughout Christian, he would have sought the Lord all his days, he would have held on and held out in well-doing; but being carnal, hypocritical, and unregenerate, his religion dies with Zechariah. Another instance you have of this among the sailors, that usually are the worst of sinners, Psa 107:23-30; and another you have in that known case of Jehu. From all which we may well conclude, that God expects and looks that wicked men, that unregenerate men, should be found in the exercise of religious duties. It is an excellent observation of Calvin upon God's rewarding the Rechabites' obedience: Jer 35:19, 'God,' saith he, 'oft recompenseth the shadows and seeming appearances of virtue, to shew that complacency he takes in the ample rewards he hath reserved for true and sincere piety.' To conclude, it was as easy for Boaz to have given Ruth as much corn at once as would have yielded her an ephah of barley, and so have sent her home without any more ado, but he would not, being resolved that she should use her endeavour to gather and glean it, and beat it out too when she had gleaned it; so it is as easy a thing for God to give his Christ, to give his Spirit, and to give his grace immediately to poor sinners without their using of the means, but he won't, being resolved that they shall use the means of hearing, reading, praying, and conference, &c., and when they have done, leave the issue of all their labours and endeavours to his good-will and pleasure. I have taken the more pains fully and clearly to answer this objection, that it may never more have a resurrection in any of your souls.

(9.) Ninthly, If ever you would be holy, then, when you have done all, wait. Oh, hear and wait, and wait and hear; pray and wait, and wait and pray; read and wait, and wait and read; confer and wait, and wait and confer; watch and wait, and wait and watch. O sirs, shall the husbandman wait for a good harvest? and the merchant for good returns? Jas 5:7-8; and the watchman for the dawning of the day? and the patient for a happy cure? and the poor client for a day of hearing? &c.; and will not you wait for Christ, and wait for the Spirit, and wait for pardon, and wait for grace, and wait for glory? &c. O sinners, sinners, remember you are at the right door, and therefore wait. Oh, remember that whilst you are waiting for mercy, God is preparing of mercy. Oh, remember that it is mercy that you may wait for mercy. Devils and damned spirits can't wait for mercy. Wait they must; but, oh, it is for more wrath, anger, and fiery indignation. Oh, remember your condition bespeaks waiting, for you are poor, halt, lame, blind, and miserable creatures. Oh, remember that mercy is sweetest when it comes after a patient waiting: Deu 32:13, 'He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;' that is, he made him to suck water that was as sweet as honey out of the rock, out of the flinty rock. Oh, remember that a patient waiting for mercy is the only way to greaten your mercy. The longer, said the emperor's son, the cooks are a-preparing the meat, the better the cheer will be. His meaning was, the longer he stayed for the empire, the greater it would be. So the longer a soul waits for mercy, the greater and the better it will be when it comes; as you may see in that famous instance of the poor man that lay eight and thirty years at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:2, John 5:16. Famous was the patience of Elijah's servant, who, in obedience to his master's command, went seven several times up and down steep Carmel, 1Ki 18:8, which could not be without danger and difficulty, and all to bring news of nothing, till his last journey,

which made a recompense for all the rest, with the tidings of a cloud arising. Oh, so do but patiently wait upon the Lord, and that grace, that favour, that mercy, will come at last, which will fully recompense you for all your waitings. Remember that the mercies of God are not styled the swift, but the sure mercies of David, Isa 55:3. Mercy may be sure, though it be not presently upon the wing flying towards us. And the same prophet saith, 'The glory of the Lord shall be thy rere-ward,' Isa 58:8. Now this, we know, comes up last, to secure and make good all the rest, for where grace leads the front, glory at last will be in the rear. Oh, do but patiently wait, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry, Heb 10:37; not a year, not a quarter, not a month, not a week, not a day, no, not an hour beyond the prefixed time that he hath set of shewing mercy to poor sinners. Oh, how sad was it that Saul should lose his kingdom for want of two or three hours' patience! but oh, how much more sad will it be if thou shouldst lose all the prayers that thou hast made, and all the sermons that thou hast heard, and all the tears that thou hast shed, and all other pains that thou hast taken, and all for want of a little more patience! yea, how woeful-sad would it be if thou shouldst lose thy God, and lose thy Christ, and lose thy soul, and lose an eternity of glory, and all for want of a little patience to wait the Lord's leisure! Oh, therefore resolve to hold on waiting to the death, and if thou must perish, to perish in a waiting way, which if thou shouldst, thou wouldst be the first that ever so perished. Oh, remember that if God should come, and mercy come, and pardon come, and grace come, when thy sun is near setting, when thy glass is almost out, and when there is but a short step between thee and eternity, it will infinitely recompense thee for all thy waiting; and therefore wait still. And to keep up thy spirits, and to uphold thy soul in a waiting way, oh that thou wouldst make these following promises thy daily food, thy daily friends, thy daily companions: Psa 27:14, 'Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord;' Pro 20:22, 'Wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee;' Isa 30:18, 'And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for him;' Isa 40:31, 'But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint;' Isa 49:23, 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me;' and Isa 44:4, 'For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear; neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him;' Pro 8:34, 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.' Oh, how should these precious promises encourage your hearts to wait on the Lord! Oh, how should they lengthen and draw out your patience to the utmost! But,

(10.) Tenthly and lastly, Dwell much upon the memorable judgments of God, that even in this life has fallen upon unholy persons. 'Remember Lot's wife,' Luk 17:32. Oh, remember her sin and punishment, that so fearing the one, you may learn to take heed of the other: Isa 26:9, 'When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;' that is, they should learn righteousness—for so the words may be read—they should learn to fear thee, and learn to turn unto thee, and learn to forsake their sins and amend their lives: when thy judgments, thy memorable judgments, are abroad in the world, it highly concerns all the sons of men to look after holy dispositions, holy affections, and holy conversations, that so it may go well with them in the day of the Lord's wrath. Others sense the words thus: When thy judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants of the world, that is, sinners as well as saints, shall learn righteousness, that is, they shall learn to fear thee upon the account of thy righteous judgment; suitable to that, Job

37:23-24, 'Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice. Men do therefore fear him; he respecteth not any that are wise of heart;' and to that, Rev 15:4, 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy judgments are made manifest.' The judgments of God upon Antichrist shall so awaken, alarm, and affect the nations, that they shall cast off all false ways of worship, and worship the Lord in a more pure, spiritual, high, and noble way than ever yet they have done. God is a free agent, and he can make sinners saints, as well by judgments as by mercies. Waldus, from whom the Waldenses had their name, when many were met together to be merry, seeing one among them suddenly fall down dead, it struck so to his heart, that he went home a penitent, and proved a very precious holy man. Pharaoh was not a pin the better for all the plagues that came upon him; but Jethro, taking notice of God's heavy judgments upon Pharaoh, and likewise upon the Amalekites, was thereby converted, and became a proselyte, as some observe. O sirs, who can tell but that a fixed eye upon the remarkable judgments of God that has been inflicted upon notorious sinners, may be a means to change you and turn you to the Lord? Forget not the plagues that came upon bloody Pharaoh. Remember how crafty Ahithophel, and proud Haman, and covetous Judas, came all to the halter. Forget not how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up Korah and his companions. Forget not the angel that drew upon Balaam, nor Samuel's sword that cut Agag in pieces, nor the royal oak on which Absalom was hanged, nor the javelin by which Phinehas, in his zeal for God, thrust through Zimri and Cozbi. Remember how Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead with a lie in their mouths. Remember how God rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember how suddenly, how unexpectedly, and how inevitably the flood came upon the old world; and remember how the angels that kept not their first station of holiness are now in chains under everlasting darkness. Oh, who can seriously dwell upon the severe judgments of God upon these persons, and not resolve upon breaking off his sins, and pursuing after that holiness, without which there is no happiness! Oh, remember that God is as holy a God as ever, and as just a God as ever, and as jealous of his glory as ever; and therefore turn from the evil of your doings, that your souls may live. Oh that the dreadful judgments of God that has been executed upon others might so alarm all unholy hearts, that they may with all their might cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, that so they may be children of the light, and their souls may live for ever! And thus much for the means whereby men may reach to that holiness, without which there is no happiness.

I come now, in the third place, to answer those objections which usually are made against men's pursuing after holiness. As,

Object. 1. First, We have no power to make ourselves holy; we are as well able to make a world, to command the winds, and to raise the dead, as we are able to cleanse our own hearts, or change our own natures, or sanctify our own souls; and therefore, to what purpose should we be so strongly pressed to do that which we have no power to do? Now to this objection I shall give these following answers:

1. First, That thou hast no power to perform any supernatural act, as to believe or love God, or repent, or to change thine own heart, or to sanctify or make thyself holy, must be granted; that by nature thou art dead in trespasses and sins, and hast lost all thy spiritual senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling, can't be denied, Eph 2:1. It is certain that thy nature is so corrupted

that thou canst not think a good thought, nor speak a good word, nor do a good work; thou art not sick, but dead, God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, &c. I have read of the lioness, how that she brings forth her whelps dead, and so they remain, till, after some time, by her roaring aloud over them, they come to live. Certainly all unholy hearts are spiritually dead, and till Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, comes to roar over them, by uttering his voice in the gospel, they cannot live, John 5:25. It is Christ only that can quicken the dead. It was never known since the creation of the world that ever a dead man could make himself alive. Sin in dominion is the plague of the heart, 1Ki 8:38. Now as there is no disease so deadly as the plague, so there is no plague so deadly as the plague of the heart. Oh, this is a disease that none can cure but he who is the physician of souls. An unsanctified person is not half-dead, as the Pelagians, Arminians, and Papists say; but as to spirituals he is stark dead, Col 2:13. An unsanctified soul is dead.

[1.] Respectu operis, In respect of working, and therefore his works are called dead works, Heb 9:14. There is death written upon all he does.

[2.] Respectu honoris, He is dead in respect of honour; he is dead to all privileges, he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who will set the crown of life upon a dead man's head? The crown of life is for the holy Christian, and the holy Christian is for the crown of life, Rev 2:10; 2Ti 4:8. When he in Plutarch had tried all manner of ways to raise a dead man, and to make him stand upon his feet, and saw he could not do it, then he cried out, There must be something within, there must be something within; so when men have said and done all they can, there must be something within, there must be something of the power and spirit of Christ within, that must raise up spiritual life in those that are spiritually dead. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That God gave thee ability and power in Adam to obey him in all his commands, and though by Adam's fall thou hast lost thy power to obey, yet God has not lost his right and power to command thee to obey. Suppose a father should furnish a child with moneys and all other necessities to go a journey, and he should be drawn in by some strong temptation to spend his money, his time, and his strength, so as that now he is not able to go his journey; whose fault is this? Will you now say that the father hath lost his power to command, because his son hath lost his power to obey? Surely no. It is no iniquity in God to require that of us, which once he gave unto us. It is no injustice in the creditor to call for his debt, when the debtor is fallen into extreme poverty through his own default. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, Though an unsanctified person be not able to perform any theological or spiritual action, as to believe or repent, &c., yet he is able to perform all natural actions, as to eat, drink, work, walk, &c., and he is able to perform all political actions also, as to trade, bargain, buy, sell, plant, and build, &c. The soul even in an unsanctified person is not dead, but a living principle; and therefore it is able to understand, will, desire, discourse, reason, and to attend the means of grace. Though he be not able to work grace in his own heart, yet he is able to attend on the means of grace. An unsanctified person may as well go to a sermon as to a tavern, he may as well read the Scriptures as read play-books and pamphlets, he may as well associate himself with those that fear an oath, as he does with those that delight to blaspheme that name that all should tremble at, &c. Man's impotency lies in his obstinacy. Man pretends he cannot believe, nor he cannot come to Christ, nor he cannot repent, &c., when he is resolved that he will not believe, nor he will not come

to Christ, nor he will not repent, &c. Christ in the gospel comes and offers pardon and peace and reconciliation, and thou turnest thy back upon him; he woos and entreats and beseeches thee by his ambassadors, but thou wilt not hear, &c. He sets life and death, heaven and hell, mercy and misery before thee, but thou slightest all, 2Co 5:18-20. Christ brings a cordial in one hand to strengthen thee, and a remedy in the other hand to cure thee, but thou despisest both. Christ offers tried gold to enrich thee, and white raiment to clothe thee, and precious eye-salve to enlighten thee, Rev 3:18, and thou shuttest up thy heart against all his offers. Well, sirs! remember this, in the great day all unsanctified persons will be damned, not for cannots but for will-nots; it is neither men nor devils—it is neither the greatness of thy sins, nor the numberless number of thy sins that can damn thee, were it not for thy wiffulness in sin, Hos 13:9. O sinners, sinners, if you are but heartily willing to forsake your sins, and to accept of Christ as your Lord and King, and to resign up yourselves to him to be really his, to be wholly his, to be only his, and to be eternally his, he will certainly change you, and sanctify you, and save you; but if you will not be holy, if you will not be happy, if you will not be sanctified, if you will not be saved, if you will not go to heaven, but are resolved upon going to hell, what can be more just with God than that you should be Satan's bond-slaves, and firebrands of hell, and vessels of wrath to all eternity? But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, If thou dost but stir up thyself to obey the command as ivell as thou canst, thou dost not know but that a power may go forth with the command, that may enable thee to act suitable to the command. In that Mat 9:1-9, Christ bid the palsy man 'rise and walk, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.' The palsy man might have objected, Alas! I am carried by four, I am not able to stir a limb, much less to rise, but least of all to take up my bed and walk, &c. Oh! but he puts forth himself as well as he could, and a power went forth with the command, that enabled him to do what was commanded. So in that Mat 12:10-14, there was a poor man that had a withered hand, and Christ commands him to stretch forth his hand. He might have objected, My hand is withered, and if I might have a thousand worlds to stretch it forth I could not stretch it forth, yea, if my life, if my salvation did lie upon stretching forth my withered arm, I could not stretch it forth. Oh! but he throws by all objections, and complies as well as he could, and a power went forth and healed his hand. God commanded Moses to go and deliver his people out of Egypt. Moses might have objected his old age, the power of Pharaoh, and his want of an army to force their way, &c. But he turns his back upon these objections, and addresses himself to the work, and such a mighty power went along with him as did effect it. He commanded the Israelites to take rams' horns, and with them to go and blow down the walls of Jericho, Jos 6:1-27. They might have said, Lord, these are weak and contemptible means, yea, Lord, if we may speak after the manner of men, they are such ridiculous means as will expose us to scorn and laughter; but they pass over these things, and apply themselves to those weak and despicable means that God had appointed, and such a divine and glorious power went along with the means as made the walls of Jericho not only to tremble, but to tumble down before them. Christ commanded Lazarus to come out of the grave, and there went a divine power and virtue with that call of Christ, which made him to rise. The means are the Spirit's triumphing chariot, in which he pleases to ride conquering and to conquer the souls of men, 2Co 2:14. 'While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word,' Acts 10:44. O man, thou canst not tell but that whilst thou art in the use of divine helps, a secret power of the Spirit may break in upon thee, and make the means effectual to thy conversion and salvation. Many thousands have found it so, and therefore address thyself to the use of the means, and wait at the pool; thou canst not tell how soon the Spirit may come and move

upon thy soul; it may be this day, this hour, yea, this very moment wherein I am thus speaking to thee. But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That the sense of thine own inability, insufficiency, and impotency, should provoke thee to run to Christ, and to lay hold on his everlasting strength, and to ply the throne of grace, and to give God no rest, till he has renewed and sanctified thy soul, till he has effectually turned thee 'from darkness to light,' Acts 26:18, till he has bespangled thy soul with grace, and filled thee with his Spirit, and made thee partakers of his holiness, Heb 12:10. It was a good saying of one, *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*, Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt. Oh, go to God, and tell him that what he has commanded in some scriptures, he has promised to give in other scriptures, and therefore press him to make good his promises, that so you may obey his precepts. Oh, tell him that if he will but 'sprinkle clean water upon thee, and put his Spirit within thee, and give a new heart unto thee,' according to his promise, that then 'thou wilt walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them,' Eze 36:25-28. Oh, tell him that if he will but 'put his fear into thy heart,' according to his promise, that then 'thou wilt never depart from him,' Jer 32:40. Oh, tell him that he has commanded thee to believe, and that he has also promised to give thee faith, and therefore if he will but make good his promise, thou shalt be sure to obey his precepts, Php 1:29; Jas 5:17. Oh, tell him that he has frequently commanded thee to 'repent,' Acts 5:31, and that he has also graciously promised to give 'repentance,' 2Ti 2:25, and therefore if he will but perform his promise, thou shalt not fail to obey his precepts, &c. Oh, tell him that thou hast no mind to be damned, tell him that thou tremblest at the thoughts of hell, tell him that thou canst not without much horror think of 'dwelling with a devouring fire, of dwelling with everlasting burnings,' Isa 33:14; 2Th 1:7-10. Oh, tell him that thou darest an eternal separation from him, and therefore earnestly beseech him, for his Son's sake, and for his glory sake, and his promise sake, and thy soul's sake, that he would renew thy nature, and sanctify thy soul, that so thou mayest not perish to all eternity. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, What disingenuity, yea, what injustice and unrighteousness is this, that thou shouldst lie complaining of the want of power, when thou dost not use and improve the power thou hast. Without the power and assistance of special grace, thou hast power to attend religious duties and services; thou hast power to turn thy back upon the infectious and dangerous society of wicked and ungodly men; thou hast power to keep at a distance from the 'harlot's door,' thou hast power to keep thy mouth of blasphemy shut, thou hast power to keep thy hands from stealing, and thy feet 'from being swift to shed innocent blood;' thou hast power to bring thy body to an ordinance, though thou hast not power to bring thy soul to the ordinance. The noble Bereans brought their bodies to the ordinance, and they took the heads of the apostle's sermon, and compared them with the Scripture, and yet they were in an unrenewed and unsanctified estate, Acts 17:11-12. O sirs, you have power to come to public ordinances, and to set yourselves under the droppings of a gospel powerful ministry; you have power to lie at the pool of Bethesda, and there to wait till the cure be wrought; but where is the unsanctified soul that improves the power he has? Tell me, O vain man, why should God trust thee with a greater power, when thou makest no conscience of improving that power thou hast? Why should God trust thee with ten talents, when thou hast no heart to improve the two that he has already trusted thee withal? What wise father or master will trust that child or servant with hundreds or thousands, who makes no conscience of improving far lesser sums to the honour and advantage of the father or the master? How dost thou

know, O man, but that upon the faithful improvement of that power thou hast, God may add a greater power to thee? If thou wilt but go that two miles thou canst, God may strike in with thee, and enable thee to go ten. It is a dangerous thing to neglect the doing of that which thou canst do, because that thou canst not do everything that thou shouldst do. Suppose a father or a master should say to his son or servant, Take such and such wares and commodities, and carry them to such and such places, for such and such chapmen; and the son or servant should say, Well, though there be some small light burdens that I can well enough carry, yet there are many heavy burdens that I cannot carry, and therefore I will carry none at all: may not the father of such a son, or the master of such a servant, in much justice and righteousness severely punish such a son or servant? Doubtless yes. Why, this is the very case of all unsanctified souls. God commands them to believe and repent, and to love him with all their hearts, and to set him up as the object of their fear, and to give him the pre-eminence in all things, &c. But these are supernatural acts, beyond their power; and he commands them to attend on the means of grace, and to wait at wisdom's door. He commands them to apply themselves to public ordinances, and to keep close to family duties, and to turn their backs upon such and such vicious societies, &c., and these are things they can do; and yet because they cannot do the former, they wilfully and wickedly refuse to do the latter; because they cannot bear the heaviest burden, they are resolved they will bear none at all; and because they cannot do everything they should, they will do nothing at all, except it be to complain that God is a hard master, and expects to reap where he does not sow. Now how just and righteous a thing it is with God to deal severely with such, I will leave you to judge. And let this suffice for answer to the first objection.

Object. 2. But hereafter may be time enough to look after holiness; I may yet pursue after the pleasures and profits of the world, I may yet spend some years in gratifying mine own lusts, and in walking after the course of the world; I have time enough before me, and therefore some years hence may be time enough to look after holiness. Now to this objection I shall give these answers:

1. First, Thou wilt not say that thou canst be saved too soon, nor happy too soon, nor blessed too soon, nor pardoned too soon, nor in the favour of God too soon, nor out of the danger of wrath, hell, and everlasting burnings too soon; and if so, then certainly thou canst not be holy too soon; for thou canst never be truly happy till thou art truly holy. No man will be so foolish and mad as to say he may be rich too soon, and great too soon, and high and honourable in the world too soon, and in favour and esteem with men, especially with great men, too soon; and why then shouldst thou be so mad and foolish, as practically to say that thou canst be holy too soon? and yet thus much thou dost proclaim upon the house-top, when thou criest out, Hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to seek after holiness. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That it is thy wisdom and thy work to set one may-be against another; thou sayest now, that hereafter may be time enough to look after holiness, Ecc 7:14. Oh, set another may-be against this may-be, and say, If I now neglect this season of grace, may-be I shall never have another, Isa 55:6; if I now slight the offers of mercy, it may be I shall never have such offers more; if I now despise this day of salvation, it may be I shall never have such another day; if I now withstand the tenders of Christ, it may be Christ will never make a tender to me more; if I now resist the strivings of the Spirit, it may be the Spirit will never strive with my soul more, and then woe, woe to me that ever I was born! Oh, don't put off God, don't put off thy soul, don't put off the thoughts of holiness, don't put off eternity with may-bes, lest 'the Lord should swear in his wrath,

that thou shalt never enter into his rest,' Heb 3:18; and seeing that thou wilt not suffer holiness to enter into thee, thou shalt never enter into thy master's joy. Oh, why shouldst thou put off thy poor soul, so as thou wouldst not have God to put it off? Thou wouldst not have God to put off thy soul with may-bes; as with a may-be I will pardon thee, it may be I will lift up the light of my countenance upon thee, it may be I will change thy nature and save thy soul, it may be I will fill thee with my Spirit and adorn thee with my grace, it may be I will bring thee to my kingdom and glory. Oh, thou wouldst not have God to put thee off with such may-bes! and why then shouldst thou deal more hardly and cruelly with thine own soul than thou wouldst have God to deal with thee? But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, It is a clear argument that thou art not truly nor thoroughly sensible of thy present condition and danger, who thus objectest. Wert thou but truly sensible of thy lost and undone estate out of Christ; didst thou but indeed know what it is to live one hour in a Christless and graceless condition; didst thou but see that wrath that hangs over thy head; didst thou but read the curses that are pronounced in the book of God against thee; didst thou but behold how hell gapes to devour thee; didst thou but see how far off thou art from God, Christ, the covenant, and all the glory and happiness of another world; ah, how wouldst thou every day cry out, Give me holiness or I die, give me holiness or I eternally die! Acts 2:39; Eph 2:12. The patient that is truly sensible of his disease will not say, hereafter will be time enough to send for the physician; nor the wounded man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to fetch the surgeon; nor the condemned man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to sue for a pardon; nor the needy man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to look for relief; nor the fallen man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to lift me up; nor the drowning man will not say, hereafter will be time enough to bring a boat to save my life. Now this is the very case of all unsanctified persons in the world; and why then should they cry out, hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to be holy? The boar in the fable, being questioned why he stood whetting his teeth so when nobody was near to hurt him, wisely answered, that it would then be too late to whet them when he was to use them, and therefore he whetted them so before danger that he might have them ready in danger. Ah, sirs, there is nothing more dangerous than for you to have your holiness to seek, when temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers are at your heels. There is no wisdom to that which leads men forth to a present pursuit after holiness, nor no hell to that for a man to have his holiness to seek when he should use it.

4. Fourthly, I answer, That the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of time, calls aloud upon thee to pursue after holiness without delay. Time past is irrecoverable, time to come is uncertain, the present time is the only time, and on this moment of time depends eternity. This very day is a day of grace; oh that thou hadst but grace to take notice of it. This very time is an acceptable time; oh that thou hadst but a heart to accept of it, and to improve it. He that hath a great way to go, and a great deal of work to do in a little time, had not need to trifle away his time; and this is the case of every unsanctified soul. Oh, the sins that such a soul has to repent of! oh, the graces that such a soul has to seek! oh, the evidences for heaven that such a soul has to secure! oh, the miseries that such a soul has to escape! oh, the mercies that such a soul has to press after, &c.; and therefore of all men in the world, it stands upon unsanctified persons well to husband and improve their present time. Oh, it is a dangerous thing to put off that work to another day which must be done to-day, or else thou mayest be eternally undone to-morrow. The old saying was, Nunc aut nunquam: Now or never; if not now done, it may be never done, and if so, then thou art undone for

ever. Many sinners are now in hell, who when they were on earth were wont to put off the motions of the Spirit by crying out, *cras, cras, to-morrow, to-morrow*. Time is so precious a thing that mountains of gold and rocks of pearl cannot redeem one lost moment; which that great lady [Queen Elizabeth] well understood, when on her death-bed she cried out, 'Call time again, call time again; a world of wealth for an inch of time.' Ah, what a precious and gainful commodity would time be in hell, where for one day to repent, yea, for one hour to seek after holiness, a man would give ten thousand worlds, were they in his hands to dispose of. Time is so costly a jewel that few know how to value it and prize it at a due rate. Witness that sad and frequent complaint among many, Oh, what shall we do to drive away the time? come, let's go to cards to drive away the time! or let's go to tables to drive away the time! or let's go to the tavern, and take a pint and a pipe to drive away the time! or let's go and take a walk in the fields to drive away the time! &c. Thus most are lavishly and profusely prodigal of that precious time which is their greatest interest to redeem. Time is a precious talent, and the non-improvement of it God will charge upon men at last, as he did upon Jezebel, Rev 2:20-21, especially upon such who trifle away, who play away, who idle away, yea, who grossly sin away their precious time. How many are there like children, who play till their candle be out, and then they go to bed in the dark! So these play and fool away their precious time, till the candle of life be out, and then they go to their beds, they go to their graves in sorrow, yea, they go to hell in the dark. I have read of a young man who, living vainly and loosely, was very fearful of being in the dark, who after falling sick and could not sleep, cried out, 'Oh, if this darkness be so terrible, what is eternal darkness!' He that makes no conscience of trifling away his precious time, shall one day experience the terribleness of eternal darkness. The poets paint time with wings, to shew the volubility² and swiftness of it. O sirs, if the one sense of the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of time did but lie in its full weight upon your spirits, it would certainly put you upon a speedy and earnest pursuit after holiness! Oh, then you would never say, hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to seek after holiness; but you would address yourselves to a fervent and a constant pressing after holiness as the one thing necessary, and be restless in your own spirits, till you had experienced the power and sweetness that is in holiness! But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, I answer, That it is the greatest folly and madness in the world for thee to put off the great God and the great concernments of thy soul, so as thou darest not put off thy superiors. Where is the subject that dares put off a lawful duty urged upon him by his prince with a may-be, or with a hereafter it may be I will do it, or hereafter I will do it? or where is that servant that dares put off his lord's present commands with a may-be, or with a hereafter it may be I will do it, or hereafter I will do it? or where is the ingenuous child that dares put off a present duty pressed upon him by his parents with a may-be, or with a hereafter it may be I will do it, or hereafter I will do it? or where is the affectionate wife that dares put off the just desires and requests of her husband with a may-be, or with a hereafter it may be I will answer your desires, or hereafter I will answer your requests? O sirs, you dare not put off your superiors with may-bes, or with hereafters, and how then do you dare to put off the King of kings and the Lord of lords, with may-bes and with hereafters? it may be I will look after holiness, it may be I will study holiness, it may be I will prize holiness, or hereafter I will press after holiness, I will pursue after holiness, hereafter I will follow hard after holiness. Oh, remember that as there is nothing that does more incense, enrage, and provoke a prince against his subjects, a lord against his servants, a father against his child, and a husband against his wife, than the putting off of their services and commands with may-bes or with hereafters; so there is nothing that does more incense, inflame, and provoke the great God, than

to put him off with may-bes, or with hereafters; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. And oh that for time to come you would tremble at the very thoughts of a may-be, and at the very mentioning of a hereafter, that so you may never put off the commands of God, to pursue after holiness with a may-be, or with a hereafter any more. And let this suffice for answer to this second objection.

Object. 3. Thirdly, But if we, should thus press and pursue after holiness, then we must take our farewell of all joy and comfort, of all delight and pleasure, and never expect to enjoy one merry day more, for we observe that there are no persons under heaven that live such a melancholy, sad, sorrowful, pensive life, as those who press most after holiness, and who make most stir and noise about holiness, and therefore if we should resolve to follow after holiness, we must resolve to spend our days in sorrow and sadness, in sighing and mourning, and this we had as lief die as do, &c.

Now to this grand objection, I shall give these eight answers:

1. First, It may be thou lookest only on the dark side of the cloud, and not on the bright; thou lookest only on thy left hand, where the mourners in Zion stand, but didst thou but cast an eye on thy right hand, there thou wouldst see many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion rejoicing and triumphing. Now thus to look, what is it but to look for a straw to thrust out thine own eyes with. O sirs, it is neither wisdom nor righteousness to look only upon those who mourn, and not upon those that rejoice, upon those that sigh, but not upon those that sing, Isa 52:8-9; Jer 31:7, Jer 31:12. Before you pass a judgment upon the people of God, or the good ways of God, look on both hands, I say again, look on both hands, and then you will be sure to see some saints in their wedding attire, as well as others in their mourning weeds; no man in his wits will argue thus, because such and such men of such a calling or trade are in their mourning weeds, therefore all men of that calling or trade are in their mourning weeds; and yet so witless are many men as thus to argue against the people of God, and the ways of God. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, As there are tears of sorrow, so there are tears of joy. Jacob weeps over Joseph, but it was with tears of exceeding joy. The sweetest joy is from the sourest tears. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. A holy man's heart is usually fullest of joy when his eyes are fullest of tears. When Hannah had wept, she went away and was no more sad. The bee gathers the best honey of the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water: the best, the purest, the strongest, and the sweetest joys are made of the distilled waters of evangelical repentance. Gospel mourning is no way inconsistent with holy joy. Though it must be granted that the love of sin and true joy are inconsistent, and that the reign and dominion of sin and true joy are inconsistent, yet it must be confessed that mourning for sin and holy joy are consistent in one and the same heart; and though legal terror and evangelical joy are inconsistent, yet evangelical sorrow and evangelical joy are consistent in one and the same soul. The same eye of faith that drops tears of sorrow, drops also tears of joy, Zec 12:10; 1Pe 1:8. A clear sight of free grace, of pardoning mercy, and of a bleeding dying Saviour, will at the same time fill the soul both with sorrow and joy, as the experiences of a thousand Christians can testify. A Christian always joys most, and mourns most, when he is most under the sense of divine love, the influences and incomes of heaven, the hopes of glory, the reports of mercy, and the precious sealings of the blessed Spirit. Look, as physic is the way to health, so godly sorrow is the way to holy joy; and

look, as a wicked man's joy ends in sorrow, Pro 14:13, so a godly man's sorrow ends in joy: Isa 61:3, 'To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of gladness for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.' Godly sorrow is the parent of holy joy; a godly man's mourning time is his most joyful time. I have read of a godly man who, lying upon his dying bed, and being asked which was the joyfulest time that ever he had in all his life, cried out, 'Oh, give me my mourning days again, oh, give me my mourning days again, for they were the joyfulest days that ever I had.' The more a Christian 'sows in tears,' the greater, even in this world, shall be his 'harvest of joy;' his merry days shall be always answerable to his mourning days, Psa 126:6. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, That this is a false charge, a mere slander, an unjust calumny that Satan and his bond-slaves have cast upon holiness, and the ways of holiness, on purpose to hinder men from pursuing and following after holiness. The language of the objection is quite contrary to the language of the holy Scripture; witness that Psa 138:5, 'Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord; for great is the glory of the Lord.' When the kings of the earth shall be generally converted and sanctified, as it is in verse the 4th, 'then they shall sing in the ways of the Lord.' When they shall come to experience and taste the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness, 'then they shall sing in the ways of the Lord.' Conversion and sanctification administer the highest grounds of joy and rejoicing: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.' A holy conversation affords the greatest ground of rejoicing. There is no joy to that which springs from the testimony of a sanctified conscience. God has given it under his own hand, that 'the ways of wisdom' (which are always ways of holiness) 'are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,' Pro 3:17. There is no pleasure nor felicity to that which flows from the ways of sanctity. The sweetest roses, the strongest comforts, and the greatest pleasantness, is to be found in the ways of holiness. Oh the joy, the peace, the tranquillity, the serenity that attends the ways of purity. I might call in many millions of saints, who from their own experiences are able to give the lie to this objection, and further to tell you, that they have met with more comforts, sweetness, and pleasantness in one hour's communion with God, in one hour's walking with God, than ever they have found in all the ways of ungodliness and wickedness, wherein they have wandered. Oh, they are able to tell you, that when they walked in ways of impiety, they found by experience that God had made a separation between sin and peace, between sin and joy, between sin and assurance, between sin and the light of his countenance, &c., Isa 57:20-21; and they are able to tell you from what they have found, that there is no fear, no terror, no horror, no gripes, no grief, no stings, no hells to those that attend the ways of ungodliness; and this were enough to blow off this objection, Rom 6:21. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, That the joy of the saints is chiefly and mainly an inward joy, a spiritual joy, a joy that lies remote from a carnal eye. The joy of a Christian lies deep, it cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. Look, as no man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of grapes, nor the fragrantcy of the rose of Sharon; so no man can paint out the sweetness and spiritualness of a Christian's joy, it lies so deep and low in a gracious heart. And look, as the life of a Christian is 'hid with Christ in God,' Col 3:3; so the joy of a Christian is 'hid

with Christ in God.' As their life is a hidden life, so their joy is a hidden joy. The joy of a Christian is 'hidden manna,' it is the 'new name and white stone, that none knoweth but he that has it,' Rev 2:20; Pro 14:10, 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.' The joy of a saint is a jewel that falls not under a stranger's eye. Look, as the greatest terrors and torments of the wicked are inward, so the greatest joys and comforts of the saints are inward; and look, as the heart of man is deep, so holy joy is a treasure that lies deep, and it is not every man that has a golden key to search into this treasury, Jer 17:9-10. As a man standing on the sea-shore sees a great heap of waters, one wave riding upon the back of another, and making a dreadful noise, but all this while, though he sees the water rolling, and hears it raging and roaring, yet he sees not the wealth, the gold, the silver, the jewels, and incredible treasures that lie buried there; so wicked men they see the wants of the saints, but not their wealth, they see their poverty, but not their riches, their miseries, but not their mercies, their conflicts, but not their comforts, their sorrows, but not their joys, 1Co 2:14. Oh, the blind world cannot see the joys and rejoicings, the comforts and consolations of the saints, that lie at the bottom of their souls. Their joys are inward and spiritual, and so must the eye be that discerns them. The joy of the saints is like 'a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,' Song of Solomon 4:12; and as the glory of the church is inward, Psa 45:13, so the joy of the church is inward. The waters of consolation lie deep in the wells of salvation, Isa 12:3. The richest veins of ore lie deepest under ground; and so does the strongest and the choicest joys of the saints lie deep. The moon is often dark to the world, when yet that part which faceth the sun is very lightsome, beautiful, and glorious; so many times, if you look upon the outside of a Christian, which is his dark side, you may see his countenance clouded, and his carriage and behaviour as to the world either damped or obscured; but if you could but now look upon his inside, which is his best side, and which faces the Sun of righteousness, oh, then you should see the light of joy and comfort sweetly and gloriously shining forth. O sirs, look, as there are many rich men in the world, who make no show of it by their garb, or table, or attendance, &c., so there are many Christians that are rich in divine consolations, who yet don't shew it in such or such an outward carnal way as the men of the world do usually express their joy in: and look, as many a wicked man has heaviness in his heart when he has laughter in his face, as the wisest of princes has long since observed, in Pro 14:13, 'Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness.' The heart often weeps when the mouth laughs. Every laughter is not hearty, for laughter being but a sign of joy, the sign may be where the substance is not. Many wicked men are inwardly sad when they are outwardly glad, 2Co 5:12. The false apostles did glory in the face, and not in the heart; they set a good face on it, and seemed to be upon a merry pin, and yet all their smiles were but counterfeit smiles, all their joys were but skin deep; the joy that was in their faces was nothing to the terrors, horrors, and torments that were in their hearts; so the godly many times rejoice in heart, when sadness and blackness seems to cover their faces: 2Co 6:10, 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,' &c. It is very observable that the apostle brings in the sorrow of the godly with a quasi, as it were sorrow, not that it is sorrow indeed, but 'as sorrowful.' as if their sorrow had been rather a painted sorrow than a real sorrow; but when he speaks of their joy, there is no quasi, but true joy; he does not say 'as rejoicing,' but 'always rejoicing.' Their joy was a real joy, but their sorrow was but a seeming sorrow, to the weak and childish opinions of vain men. When a Christian is at worst, as to the eye of the world, he may say of his joy, as Christ speaks of his meat, &c., when he said, 'I have meat to eat that you know not of,' John 4:33; so he may say, I have joy, I have great joy, that the world knows not of. Look, as

there is life and sap and juice in the root of the tree, even in the winter season, when there is no leaves, nor blossoms, nor fruit hanging on the tree; so there is joy and comfort and peace in the heart of a saint, when there are no outward visible discoveries of it to others; and you may as rationally conclude that there is no life, sap, and juice in the root of the tree, because the tree has no leaves, blossoms, or fruit on it, as you may conclude that the saints have no joy in their hearts, because they do not express it in such outward visible acts as may convince the world that they have it, &c. But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That it is horrid injustice and disingenuity in thee, and in such as thou art, to make the hearts of the righteous sad, whom God would not have saddened, by your pride, profaneness, looseness, wickedness, worldliness, lukewarmness, filthiness, carnalness, &c., and then, to cry out against them, that they are the saddest and uncomfortablest people in the world, Eze 13:22-23. What is this but, with Nero, to set the city of Rome on fire, and then to lay it upon the Christians, and punish them for it? What is this but to deal by the saints as the devil deals by them? He loads them and follows them with most sad, grievous, blasphemous, horrid, and hellish temptations, on purpose to make them walk heavily, mournfully, and uncomfortably, and when he has accomplished his design, then he accuses them sometimes to God, sometimes to themselves, and sometimes to others, for their heavy and uncomfortable walking, Rev 12:10. Oh, what inhumanity, cruelty, and vanity was it in the Egyptians to double the Israelites' tale of bricks, and to take away their straw, and then to cry out 'that they were idle, they were idle,' Exo 5:8, Exo 5:17; so, oh what inhumanity and cruelty is this in unsanctified persons, to sad, grieve, and afflict the people of God with their drunkenness, wantonness, and lewdness, and with their cursing, swearing, and lying, and with their scorning and scoffing at godliness, and with their slandering of the Lord, his people and ways, and with their resisting and quenching of the blessed motions of the Spirit, and with their shifting off the glorious offers of grace and mercy, and with their treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, &c., and then to cry out, Oh, how sadly, oh, how mournfully, do these men walk! oh, what uncomfortable lives do these men live! oh, what sorrow and pensiveness does still attend them! But is this just? is this fair? Suppose a husband should do all he could to afflict and grieve his wife, and a father his child, and a master his servant, and a friend his friend, &c., and when they had done, then fall a-complaining that there were none so melancholy, nor none so sad and sorrowful as they; oh, what folly, what madness, and what injustice were this! and yet this is the common dealing of unsanctified persons with the people of God, Dan 4:27. Ah, sinners, sinners, if you would but break off your sins by repentance, and cease from doing evil, and turn to the Lord with all your hearts, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and fall in with the ways of God, and trample upon this wicked world, and seek after the things of a better life, oh, how soon would the saints' sighing be turned into singing, and their mourning into rejoicing! Oh, the music, the mirth, the melody, that your conversion would make, both in their hearts and in their ears! It is very observable that Abraham made a feast at the weaning of his son Isaac, Gen 21:8. He did not make a feast on the day of his nativity, nor on the day of his circumcision, but on that day when he was taken from his mother's breast. O sirs, if you were but once weaned from your lusts, and from the vanities of this world, if you were but once weaned from old corrupt customs, and from following after your sinful lovers, oh, how would all God's faithful Abrahams rejoice! 1Pe 1:18-19; Hos 6:7. Oh, what a feast of fat things! oh, what a heavenly banquet would this make in all their hearts! About three hundred years after the apostles' time, Caius Marius Victorius, an old pagan, was converted from his paganism, infidelity, and

impiety, and brought over to the Christian faith; which, when the people of God saw, there was wonderful rejoicing, and shouting, and dancing for gladness, and psalms were sung in every church, 'Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian!' This was written as a wonder, and sung as a wonder, that this old pagan, this gray-headed pagan, should become a gracious Christian, that he should in his old age be renewed and sanctified. Ah, friends, if you were but once converted and changed, if you were but once turned from darkness to light, if you were but once brought to Christ, if the people of God could but once see that you had passed the pangs of the new birth, and that Christ and holiness was but formed in your souls, ah, how would their hearts be filled with joy, and their mouths with laughter! Oh, what songs of salvation would they sing! Oh, how would the high praises of God be in their mouths! Thou sayest, Oh there are none so sad and sorrowful, &c., as such and such Christians; but what is the cause of their sorrow and sadness? is it not thy wickedness and ungodliness? is it not thy unconverted and unsanctified estate? Surely yes. Oh that thou wouldst therefore cease from complaining against them, and fall amending of thine own heart and ways! and then all tears will be quickly wiped away from their eyes. But,

6. Sixthly, I answer, That all the joys, delights, and pleasures that holiness debars men of, are sinful joys, delights, and pleasures. Unsanctified souls take pleasure in unrighteousness; they rejoice to do evil, they make a sport of sin, and delight to dishonour their God, and damn their own immortal souls: Pro 2:14, 'They rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked.' And this is brought in as an aggravation of Jerusalem's sin: Jer 11:15, 'When thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest.' Ah, how madly-merry are they that can take delight and content in that which is their shame and misery! ah, how is man fallen from his primitive glory, that he can now rejoice in that which is a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a provocation to divine wrath, a blot upon his name, a curse upon his estate, a wound upon his conscience, and a plague upon his soul! Now what a mercy must it be to be taken off from that carnal mirth that ends in mourning, and from those vain delights that ends in unspeakable torments, and from that foolish jollity that leads to everlasting misery! Rev 18:17. I have read of king Lysimachus, that when he and his army were besieged in one of his cities, and in great danger of perishing by thirst, for a cup of cold water he delivered up the keys of the city to his enemy, which cold comfort he had no sooner tasted but his tongue bewrayed the grief of his heart, saying, 'Oh that, in lieu of so momentary a pleasure, I should be made of a sovereign a servant, of a king a captive!' Ah, what folly and madness is it for men to run the hazard of losing the kingdom of heaven, and the pleasures that be at God's right hand, Psa 16:11, for those short-lived pleasures that are but like a blaze, or like the lightning, or like a morning cloud, or the early dew which soon passeth away! Ah, who would endure an ocean of torture for a drop of sensual pleasure, or for a few bitter sweets? And therefore doubtless God can't do the soul a greater pleasure than to take it off from such vanishing pleasures. All sensual pleasures defile the soul, they debase the soul, yea, they debauch the soul; they take off the heart from God, and they deaden the heart towards God. The widow whilst she lived in pleasure is reckoned dead, 1Ti 5:6. She is dead God-wards, and dead Christ-wards, and dead duty-wards, and dead heaven-wards, and dead holiness-wards, &c. Aristotle writes of a parcel of ground in Sicily that sends forth such a strong, such a sweet smell of fragrant flowers, that no hounds can hunt there; so the carnal pleasures of this world do send forth so strong a scent, that unsanctified persons cannot hunt after God, nor Christ, nor holiness, nor the great concerns of another world; and therefore it is rather man's felicity than his misery to

be taken off from such vain pleasures. Sensual pleasures and delights cannot satisfy the soul of man; they are but frothy and flashy, they only wet the mouth, they never warm the heart. A man may sooner break his neck than satisfy his heart with sensual pleasures. They are Junos in the pursuit, and but clouds in the enjoyment. Xerxes being weary of his sensual pleasures, promised great rewards to them that should invent new pleasures; and when they had invented new pleasures and delights, yet then he could not be satisfied nor contented; he would fain have had one pleasure to have taken off the weariness of another, but it could not be. There is nothing in carnal delights but imagination and expectation; for they can neither fill the heart nor satisfy the heart.

O sirs, there is no real pleasure in sin. All the pleasures of sin are counterfeit pleasures; they are but the shapes and shadows of pleasure; they are the seeds of future grief; they are but an earnest laid down for sorrow or ruin. It is observed by the mythologists that pleasure went on occasion to bathe herself, and having stripped off her clothes by the water-side, sorrow having hid herself at hand, steals the clothes away, puts them on, and so departs; so that carnal pleasures are nothing but sorrow in pleasure's clothes. Certainly if there were the least real delight in sin, hell could never be hell, yea, then it would follow that hell should be the greatest place of pleasure, for doubtless hell is the greatest place of sin. Oh, don't deceive your own souls! there can be no real joy in sensual pleasures. What real delight or pleasure can there be in tippling and fuddling in an ale-house or tavern, in swaggering and swearing, in dicing and carding, in dancing, masking, and whoring, in slighting of Sabbaths, in scoffing at saints, in despising of ordinances, and in pursuing after lying vanities? Surely none. And as for those seeming pleasures that attend the ways of sin, ah, how soon do they vanish and leave a sting behind them! Now all the pleasures that holiness deprives you of are only such that you may better ten thousand times want than enjoy. Look, as all the pleasures that manhood takes a man off from are babyish and toyish pleasures; as from delighting in a rattle, a pipe, a feather, a hobby-horse, a wooden sword, &c.; so all the pleasures and delights that holiness takes a man off from, they are babyish and foolish, yea, they are base, dangerous, and devilish; and therefore it must needs be rather a high felicity than a misery for God to take thee off from such sinful pleasures and delights, by laying principles of holiness into thy heart. Oh! remember that holiness will be no loss unto thee; it will be only an exchange of sinful delights for those that are holy, and of carnal for those that are spiritual, and of earthly for those that are heavenly. Isaac was not to be sacrificed, but the ram. All the delights that holiness will put thee upon to sacrifice are but the rammish and rank delights of sin and the world, which may better be sacrificed than spared. Holiness will secure thy Isaac—that is, thy spiritual laughter, thy spiritual joy, and thy heavenly delights and pleasure. Well, for a close, remember this, that sensual pleasures are below a man. Witness Tully, who saith that he is not worthy of the name of a man, *qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate*, that would entirely spend one whole day in pleasures; and witness Julian the apostate, who professed that the pleasures of the body were far below a great spirit. He that delights in sensual pleasures shall find at last his greatest pleasures to become his bitterest pains. All that holiness will do is but to ease thee of thy pains, and therefore thou hast more cause to pursue after it than to turn thy back upon it. But,

7. Seventhly, I answer, That it may be their present case and condition, bespeaks rather the exercise and evidence of sorrow and of grief, than of gladness, joy, and triumph.

[1.] For first, It may be some wound or guilt at present may lie hard upon their consciences, as once it did on David's, Psa 51:1-19. And who then is able to rejoice under a wounded conscience, a guilty conscience? As long as Adam did fast in paradise, he stood fast; but having once wounded his conscience by eating the forbidden fruit, though he tarried a while in paradise, yet he could take no delight nor content in paradise. It is true the sun did shine as bright as ever, and the rivers ran as clear as ever, and the birds sang as sweetly as ever, and the beasts played as pleasantly as ever, and the flowers smelled as fragrantly as ever, and all the trees and fruits of the garden did flourish as bravely as ever, &c. Ah, but now Adam had contracted guilt upon his conscience, and this mars his joy, and spoils his delight, and unparadises paradise to him; his fall had made so deep a wound in his conscience, that he could take no delight in any of the delights of paradise. Guilt as an arrow did stick so fast in his conscience, that instead of sucking sweetness from the fairest fruits, he runs to hide himself under the broadest leaves, Gen 3:10. Guilt makes a man a Magor-missabib, Jer 20:3, a terror to himself. Put never such stately robes upon a wounded man, he minds them not; set never such dainty fare before a wounded man, he relisheth it not; lay him on never so soft a bed, yet it pleaseth him not; and let him hear never such sweet music, yet it delights him not; the smart and sense of his wound takes off the sweet of all: and so does a wound in the conscience take off the sweet of all a man's enjoyments and contentments. A guilty conscience, like Prometheus's vulture, lies ever gnawing. What the probationer-disciple said to our Saviour—viz., 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' Mat 8:19—that a guilty conscience says to a fallen sinner: if thou fast I will follow thee, and fill thy mind with black and dismal apprehensions of God, of justice, of hell; if thou feast I will follow thee, and shew thee the handwriting on the wall that shall make thy countenance to change, thy thoughts to be troubled, and thy joints to be loosed, and thy knees to be dashed one against another, Dan 5:5; when thou goest forth I will follow thee with terrors, and when thou returnest home I will follow thee with horrors; when thou goest to board I will follow thee with stinging accusations, and when thou goest to bed I will follow thee with terrifying and affrighting dreams, Job 7:14. Now what joy can be in such a man's heart? what gladness can be in such a man's face? Surely none. I remember a saying of Luther, *Una guttula malæ conscientie totum mare mundani gaudii absorbet*, One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy. Oh, it is better with Evagrius to lie secure on a bed of straw, than to lie with a guilty conscience on a bed of down, having the curtains embroidered with gold, and the fringes bespangled with pearls. Sin brings such a stain and such a sting with it, as spoils all a man's joys and delights. And if this be the present case of a Christian, as it may, then never wonder to see him hang down his head, and to walk mournfully before his God. Or,

[2.] Secondly, This may arise from some great and heavy affliction, which for the present may sadly distress and oppress a saint's spirit; as Job's did his, or as Hezekiah's did his, or as Jacob's did his, &c. The disease may be so violent, the physic may be so strong, the wound may be so deep, the plaster may be so corroding, the melting pot may be so hot, the iron chains may be so heavy, the gall and wormwood may be so bitter, that a Christian may be so far from joy and rejoicing, as that he may for the present be so shut up under trouble and amazement, and under sorrow and grief, as that he may not be able, if you would give him all the world, to open his case unto you; his eyes may in some sort tell what his tongue can in no sort utter, Psa 77:4. Usually they are the smallest miseries, when he that hath them can presently tell all the world of them. The greatest sorrow hath for the most part the deepest silence attending on it. What Christian ever had

joy in his heart or gladness in his face, when God was carrying of it harshly and roughly towards him? Or,

[3.] Thirdly, It may be they are deserted, happily God is withdrawn from them, and he that should comfort them stands afar off. Ah, what Christian can rejoice when the countenance of God is not towards him as of old? who can be pleasant when God is displeased? who can smile when God frowns? who can sing when God sighs? who can be merry when God is sorry? Surely none that have ever experienced what the shinings of his face means! O sirs, the proper work of a deserted soul lies not in joy and rejoicing, but in mourning and waiting, and in seeking and suing at the throne of grace, that God would lift up the light of his countenance, and cause his face to shine, and his favour to break forth, that the bones that he has broken may rejoice: as Hudson the martyr, when he was deserted at the stake, he slipped from under his chain, and praying earnestly, he was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly. Look, as when Samson's locks were cut off, his strength was gone; so when God is gone, a Christian's locks are cut off, his strength is gone, his strength to joy and rejoice in God is gone, his strength to delight and to take pleasure in God is gone; and as Samson, when his locks were cut off, and his strength was gone, fell to prayer, Jdg 16:28, 'And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes;' so when God is gone, the work of a Christian lies more in praying than it does in rejoicing. Though Joseph's heart was as full of love to his brethren as it could hold, Gen 42:7-25, yet when he looked sourly upon them, and spake roughly to them, they were much afflicted and distressed; so though the heart of Jesus be as full of love to his people as it can hold, yet when he looks sourly, and speaks roughly to them, they can't but be grieved and sadded. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It may be they are sadly tempted and strangely buffeted by Satan, as Paul was, and from thence their present sadness may arise, 2Co 12:8-10. Tempted souls can tell you that it is one of the hardest works in the world to rejoice in the school of temptation, and to be merry when Satan's fiery darts stick fast in the soul. Adam's tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time, but his sinning-time; and David's tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time, but his miscarrying-time, 1Ch 21:1-30; and Job's tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time, but his complaining-time, Job 3:1-26; and Peter's tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time, but his cursing and blaspheming-time, Mat 2:1-23; and Paul's tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time, but his humbling-time, 1Co 12:7-8. The best men are most tempted, and oftentimes they are followed with the saddest, darkest, vilest, basest, and most amazing, affrighting, tormenting, and astonishing temptations; and how is it possible that they should be able to rejoice and be glad, when such dreadful storms beat upon them! Certainly the work of a Christian in the day of temptation lies in his putting on the whole armour of God, Eph 6:10-11, Eph 6:16-18, and in a prudent handling the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, and in earnest praying and vigilant watching, and a stout resisting of all Satan's fiery darts; for he who thinks, by disputing and reasoning, to put Satan off, does but shoot with him in his own bow, and will find to his cost that Satan will be too hard for him. It is open defiance, it is downright blows that makes Satan fly, and that secures the victory, Jas 4:7; 1Pe 5:9. Now joy and rejoicing attends not the combat, but the conquest. The Romans never used to ride in triumph, but after conquests obtained. A Christian's triumphing time is his conquering time. Joy is most seasonable and suitable when a Christian has beaten Satan out of the field. The cock in the Arabic fable began to crow and clap his wings, as if he had obtained a perfect conquest, but, behold, on a

sudden a vulture comes, and snatches this great conqueror away. They that triumph and rejoice over Satan before they have overcome him, are in no small danger of being worsted by him. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To gather up many things together. I say that their present sorrow and sadness may arise from their going astray into some by-path of vanity and folly, wherein they have got a fall, or broke a bone, or put their souls out of joint. As children sometimes get a fall, and then they come home by weeping cross; so Christians too often go astray and get a fall, and then they are fain to weep it out. When men keep not the king's highway, they are often robbed of their money, and stripped of their clothes, and wounded too, as he was in the Gospel who fell among thieves; so when Christians keep not in the King of kings' highways, which are ways of righteousness and holiness, then they are often robbed of their comfort, and joy, and peace, and assurance, and communion with God, &c., and sorely wounded and bruised, and then it is no wonder if they are brought home with tears in their eyes. Or it may be their evidences for heaven are so blotted and blurred that they cannot read their title to heaven, and then it is no wonder if they are perplexed and grieved; or it may be they call in question former grants of favour and grace; or it may be a deeper sense of misspent time lies harder than ever upon them; or else the littleness and smallness of their graces under such soul-enriching opportunities and advantages do sorely oppress them; or else the lateness of their conversion may sadly afflict them, &c.² Now how absurd and unreasonable a thing is it for any men to argue thus, that surely godly men have no joy, no delight, no pleasure, &c., because there are some particular cases and conditions wherein they may be cast which rather bespeaks sorrow than joy, grief than gladness, mourning than mirth! Certainly you may as rationally and as righteously expect mirth, joy, and gladness from carnal, worldly, and ungodly wretches when they are under burning fevers, loathsome diseases, or violent pains of the stone or gout, &c., as you may expect upon a rational or religious account, joy and gladness, &c., in the saints in the forementioned cases that are incident to them. It was a very unreasonable request that they made to the people of God in that Psa 137:3-4, 'For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?' And it is as unreasonable to expect or look that the people of God should sing and be merry, rejoice and be glad, when they are under soul distresses, and under the sore rebukes of God, and poured from vessel to vessel, &c. Music in times of mourning is as unreasonable as it is unseasonable and unsavoury, Jer 48:11: Pro 25:20, 'As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.' Music and mourning, singing and sorrow, agree like harp and harrow. There is such a contrariety between singing and sorrow, that he that sings does but add weight to his sorrow that cannot sing. O sirs, as there is a time for rejoicing, so there is a time for mourning, Ecc 3:4; as there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep; and as we must rejoice with them that rejoice, so we must mourn with them that mourn, and weep with them that weep, Rom 12:15. The condition of God's people in this life is a mixed condition. In this life they have their rejoicing times and their mourning times, their laughing times and their weeping times, their singing times and their sorrowing times, &c. It is true, in heaven there is all joy and no sorrow, all gladness and no sadness; and in hell there is all sorrow and no joy, all grief and no gladness, all howling and no singing, all madness and no mirth; but in this life it is otherwise, for if there should be nothing but joy, many would look for no other heaven; and if there should be nothing but sorrow, most would look for no other hell. If men should have nothing but joy, how sadly would they be puffed up! And if they should have nothing but

sorrow, how easily would they be cast down! But now, by a divine hand, our sorrows being mixed with our joys, our hearts come to be the more effectually weaned from the vanities of this life, and to long more earnestly after the pure and unmixed joys of a better life, &c. But,

8. Eighthly, I answer, That it is possible that the sadness, sorrow, and grief of those particular saints that thou hast thine eye upon may arise from the natural temper and constitution of their bodies: Many saints are often cast into a melancholy mould; for though grace changes the disposition of the soul, yet it alters not the constitution of the body. Now there is no greater enemy to holy joy and gladness than melancholy, for this pestilent humour will raise such strange passions and imaginations, it will raise such groundless griefs, and fears, and frights, and such senseless surmises and jealousies, as will easily damp a Christian's joy, and mightily vex, perplex, trouble, and turmoil, daunt, and discourage a Christian's spirit. A melancholy constitution is Satan's anvil, upon which he forms many black, dark, and dismal temptations, which do exceedingly tend to the keeping down of divine consolation from rising high in the soul.² This black, dark, dusky humour disturbs both soul and body; it tempts Satan to tempt the soul, and it unables the soul to resist the temptation; yea, it prepares the soul to hearken to the temptation, and to close and fall in with the temptation, as the experiences of all melancholy Christians can testify. Look, as coloured glass makes the very beams of the sun seem to be all of the same colour with itself—if the glass be blue, the beams of the sun seems to be blue; if the glass be red, the beams of the sun seems to be red; or if the glass be green, the beams of the sun seems to be green—so this black melancholy humour represents all things to the eye of the soul as duskish and dark, and as full of horror and terror, yea, many times it represents the bright beams of divine love, and the shinings of the Sun of righteousness, and the gracious whispers of the blessed Spirit, as delusions, and as sleights of Satan, to cozen the soul. I have read of a foolish melancholy bird that stands always but upon one leg, for fear her own weight, though she be very small, should sink her into the centre of the earth, and holding her other leg over her head, lest the heavens should fall upon her and crush her. I shall not dispute the credibleness of the relation; but certainly there is nothing that fills a Christian so full of fears and frights as a melancholy humour does; and all know that know anything, that there are no greater adversaries to joy and gladness than such fears and frights. Now how absurd and unreasonable is it to father that upon holiness, or upon all holy persons, that proceeds from the special constitution of some particular saints! and yet this is the trade that unsanctified souls drive. And let thus much suffice for answer to this grand objection; and oh that this objection may never have a resurrection in any of your hearts more! But,

Object. 4. Fourthly, Some may further object, and say, We see that no persons on earth are exposed to stick troubles, dangers, afflictions, and persecutions, as those are exposed to who mind holiness, who follow after holiness. These are days wherein men labour to frown holiness out of the world, and to scorn and kick holiness out of the world; and do you think that we are mad now to pursue after holiness? Now to this great and sore objection, I shall give these following answers:

1. First, It must be granted that afflictions and persecutions has been the common lot and portion of the people of God in this world. Abel was persecuted by Cain, 1Jn 3:12, and Isaac by Ishmael, Gal 4:28. That seems to be a standing law, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution,' 2Ti 3:12. A man may have many faint wishes and cold desires after godliness, and yet escape persecution; yea, he may make some essays and attempts as if he would be godly, and yet escape persecution; but when a man is thoroughly resolved to be godly, and sets himself

in good earnest upon pursuing after holiness and living a life of godliness, then he must expect to meet with afflictions and persecutions. It is neither a Christian's gifts nor his graces, it is neither his duties nor his services that can secure him. Whoever escapes, the godly man shall not escape persecution in one kind or another, in one degree or another. He that will live up to holy rules, and live out holy principles, must prepare for sufferings. All the roses of holiness are surrounded with pricking briars. The history of the ten persecutions, and that little book of martyrs, the 11th of the Hebrews, and Mr Foxe his Acts and Monuments, with many other treatises that are extant, do abundantly evidence that from age to age, and from one generation to another, they that have been born after the flesh have persecuted them that have been born after the Spirit, Gal 4:20, and that the seed of the serpent have been still a-multiplying of troubles upon the seed of the woman. Would any man take the church's picture, saith Luther, then let him paint a poor silly maid sitting in a wilderness, compassed about with hungry lions, wolves, boars, and bears, and with all manner of other cruel, hurtful beasts, and in the midst of a great many furious men assaulting her every moment and minute, for this is her condition in the world. As certain as the night follows the day, so certain will that black angel, persecution, follow holiness wherever it goes. In the last of the ten persecutions, seventeen thousand holy martyrs were slain in the space of one month. And in Queen Mary's days, or, if you will, in the Marian days, not of blessed, but of most abhorred memory, the Popish prelates in less than four years sacrificed the lives of eight hundred innocents to their idols! and oh that that precious innocent blood did not still cry to heaven for vengeance against this nation! But,

2. Secondly, Christ and his apostles hath long since foretold us that afflictions and persecutions will attend us in this world. The Lord hath long since forewarned us, that we may be forearmed, and not surprised on a sudden when they come. Christ hath shot off many a warning piece in his word, and sent many a harbinger, that so we may stand upon our guard, and not be surprised nor astonished when afflictions and persecutions overtake us: Mat 10:22, 'And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.' Chap. 16:24, 'Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' Luk 21:12, 'But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.' John 15:20, 'Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.' Ah Christians, since they have crowned your head with thorns, there is no reason why you should expect to be crowned with rosebuds. Godfrey of Bouillon, first king of Jerusalem, refused to be crowned with a crown of gold, saying, that it became not a Christian there to wear a crown of gold, where Christ for our salvation had sometime worn a crown of thorns. John 16:33, 'These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' Acts 14:21-22, 'And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' As there was no way to paradise but by the flaming sword, nor no way to Canaan but through a wilderness; so there is no way to heaven but by the gates of hell, there is no way to a glorious exaltation but through a sea of tribulation. They do but dream and deceive their own souls who think to go to heaven upon beds of down, or in a soft and delicate way, or that think

to be attended to glory with mirth and music, or with singing or dancing. The way to happiness is not strewed with roses, but full of thorns and briers, as those of whom this world was not worthy have experienced. Ecclesiastical histories tells us that all the apostles died violent deaths. Peter was crucified with his heels upward—Christ was crucified with his head upwards, but Peter thought this was too great an honour for him to be crucified as his Lord, and therefore he chose to be crucified with his heels upward; and Andrew was crucified by Egeus king of Edessa; and James the son of Zebedee was slain by Herod with the sword, Acts 12:2; and Philip was crucified at Hierapolis in Asia; and while Bartholomew was preaching the glad tidings of salvation, multitudes fell upon him and beat him down with staves, and then crucified him, and after all this, his skin was flayed off, and he beheaded; Thomas was slain with a dart at Calumina in India; and Matthew was slain with a spear, say some, others say he was run through with a sword; and James the son of Alpheus, who was called the Just, was thrown down from off a pinnacle of the temple, and yet having some life left in him, he was brained with a fuller's club; Lebbeus was slain by Agbarus king of Edessa; and Paul was beheaded at Rome under Nero; and Simon the Canaanite was crucified in Egypt, say some, others say that he and Jude was slain in a tumult of the people; and Matthias was stoned to death; and John was banished into Patmos, Rev 1:9, and afterwards, as some histories tells us, he was by that cruel tyrant Domitian cast into a tun of scalding lead, and yet delivered by a miracle. Thus all these precious servants of God, except John, died violent deaths, and so through sufferings entered into glory; they found in their own experience the truth of what Christ had foretold concerning their sufferings and persecutions. About the year 1626, a book formerly printed, and intituled, A Preparation to the Cross of Christ, composed by John Frith, martyr, was brought in the belly of a fish to the market in Cambridge, and that a little before the commencement-time; when there was a confluence of much people from all places of the land, which was construed by them that feared the Lord to be no less than a heavenly warning to all the people of England to prepare for the cross. But, ah, since that year, who can recount the heavy crosses that has generally attended the people of this nation? Most have walked cross to God, and cross to one another, and God has walked as cross to them. You have crossed the commands of God, and the truths of God, and the ways of God, and the works of God, and the designs of God, and God has crossed you in your hopes, desires, prayers, and endeavours, and God gave you warning of this beforehand by a fish, by a miracle, to provide for the cross, but you would not, and therefore it is that the cross lies so heavy upon you this day. When Mr. Bradford was told that his chain was a-buying, and that he must be burnt, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, I thank God for it; I have looked for this a long time; it comes not to me suddenly, but as a thing waited for every day, yea, every hour in the day; the Lord make me worthy thereof. If upon God's warning you will but prepare for sufferings, you will never fear nor faint under sufferings, yea, then you will be able under the greatest persecutions to bear up bravely, and with holy Bradford bless the Lord that has called you to so high an honour as to count you worthy to suffer for his name. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, That all the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that do befall you for holiness sake, shall never hurt you nor harm you, they shall never prejudice you, nor wrong you in your main and great concernments: Exo 3:2, 'And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.' Here you have a bush, a dry bush, a bramble-bush all on a-light fire, and yet not consumed. This burning bush was an excellent emblem of the church in the fire of

tribulation and persecution. Though the church may seem to be all on fire by reason of afflictions and persecutions, yet it shall be preserved, it shall not be destroyed. Though God be a consuming fire, yet he will never consume the bramble-bush. The bush was on fire, and yet the fire did not in the least hurt or harm the bush, it did not one whit prejudice or wrong the bush, Deu 4:24; Heb 12:29 : so though the church of God be on fire by the means of fiery trials, yet these fiery trials shall never hurt nor harm the church, they shall never prejudice it nor wrong it: Psa 105:12-15, 'When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, nor do my prophets no harm.' God would not suffer his anointed ones, his sanctified ones, so much as to be touched, hurt, or harmed by those who had malice enough in their hearts, and power enough in their hands, not only to hurt them, but even to destroy them.³ Sanctified persons are sacred persons, and they that touch them touch the apple of God's eye, and whosoever shall be so bold to touch the apple of God's eye shall dearly smart for it. It was no small affliction to have no settled habitation. To fly from place to place, from kingdom to kingdom, and from nation to nation, was without all peradventure an afflicted condition. Doubtless many fears and frights, many hazards and dangers did attend them, when they considered that they were as lilies among the thorns, and as a few sheep among a multitude of wolves. In the land of Canaan there were seven mighty nations, Deu 7:1. Now for the people of God, who were so few in number that they might easily and quickly be told, to sojourn and wander among these, could not but be very dangerous and perilous; and yet such was the love of God to them, and the care of God over them, that he suffered no man, whether he was high or low, honourable or base, rich or poor, civil or profane, to hurt or harm them: Dan 3:25, Dan 3:27, 'And the king answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.' Though these holy men were cast into a furnace, into a fiery furnace, into the midst of a hot fiery furnace, yet God will work a miracle, yea, a glorious miracle, rather than the fire shall in the least hurt or harm them. God gives a commission to the fire to burn those mighty men that made the fire, and that cast his children into the fire, and whom the king would have to be spared and saved; and he lays a law of restraint upon the fire, that it should not hurt nor harm them whom the king would have destroyed. Those whom the King of kings will not have hurt, shall not be hurt, let kings and princes do their worst; that fire that burnt their bonds had no power to burn, no nor to touch, their bodies. God would not suffer the fire to singe a hair of their heads, nor to change the colour of their coats, nor to leave so much as an ill smell upon his people, that those heathen princes might see how tender he was of them, and how willing he was to put forth his almighty power rather than he would see them wronged or harmed. So Dan 6:21-23, 'Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angels, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.' Holiness, innocency, and integrity will preserve a man even among lions. Daniel preferred the worship of his God before his life. He made no great reckoning

of his life when it stood in competition with divine glory, and therefore, rather than Daniel shall be hurt, God will by a miracle preserve him, he will stop the mouths of the hungry lions, and he will tame their rage, and overmaster their cruelty, rather than a hair of Daniel's head shall perish. When Daniel was taken out of the den, there was no hurt, no wound, no sore, no bruise found upon him. Daniel was a harmless man, and God keeps him from harms in the midst of harms: Acts 18:9-10\, 'Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.' Paul met with many trials and troubles, bonds and prisons, oppositions and persecutions, and yet none of all these hurt him, but God miraculously preserved him even to old age, Acts 20:23. All the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that attends holiness, can never reach a Christian's soul, they can never diminish a Christian's treasure; they reach the shell, not the kernel, the case, not the jewel, the lumber, not the goods, the outhouse, not the palace, the ribbon in the hat, not the gold in the purse. The most fiery trials and persecutions can never deprive a Christian of the special presence of God, nor of the light of his countenance, nor of the testimony of a good conscience, nor of the joys of the Spirit, nor of the pardon of sin, nor of fellowship with Christ, nor of the exercise of grace, nor of the hopes of glory, Psa 23:4; 2Co 1:8-9, 2Co 1:12; and therefore certainly they can't hurt a Christian, they can't wrong a Christian in his greatest and chiefest concernments. O Christian, let persecutors do their worst, they can't reach thy soul, thy God, thy comfort, thy crown, thy paradise, &c.; and therefore let no man be kept off from pursuing after holiness because of afflictions or persecutions, seeing none of these can reach a Christian's great concernments. When the emperor Valens threatened to confiscate Basil's goods, and to torment him, and to banish him or kill him, Basil makes this noble reply: He needs not fear confiscation of goods that hath nothing to lose, nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country, nor torments, when his body may be dashed with one blow, nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty. The emperor, hearing of him thus undauntedly to speak, told him that he was mad, to whom he replied, Opto me in æternum sic delirare—I wish that I may be for ever thus mad. Basil knew that no torments nor sufferings could hurt him or harm him, and therefore he bravely triumphs over them. They may kill me, said Socrates of his enemies, but they cannot hurt me. So may a saint say, They may kill my body, but they cannot hurt my soul; they may take away my natural life, but they cannot take away my spiritual life, for that is hid with Christ in God, Col 3:3; they may take away this and that outward comfort, but they cannot take away my Christ; they may take away my costly ornaments, but they cannot take away that robe of righteousness that Christ has put upon me; they may take away my earthly crown, but they cannot take away that crown of righteousness which Christ the righteous judge has laid up for all that love his appearing, 2Ti 4:8. Methinks, said one of the martyrs, [Vincentius,] I tread upon pearls, when he trod upon hot burning coals; and I feel, said he, no more pain than if I lay in a bed of down, and yet he lay in flames of fire. I have read of Nero, that he had a shirt made of a salamander's skin, so that if he walked through the fire in it, it would keep him from burning, it would keep him from being hurt or harmed by the fire. Our Lord Jesus Christ is this salamander's skin, that will keep the saints from burning, yea, from being hurt or harmed by the most fiery afflictions and persecutions that can befall them in this world. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, That the condition of persecutors, of all conditions under heaven, is the most sad and deplorable condition; and this will appear by the consideration of these five things:

[1.] First, By the prayers and indictments that the saints have preferred against them in the highest court of justice, I mean in the parliament of heaven: Psa 35:3-9, 'Draw out the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. Let them be as chaff before the wind; and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery,' or darkness and slipperiness; 'and let the angel of the Lord persecute them. For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul. Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.' So in that 83d Psalm David sighs out his sad complaints against his persecutors, from Psa 83:2-9; and from Psa 83:9-18 he prays against them. Turn to it; it is a text that is worthy of your most serious meditation: Psa 119:84, 'How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?' Jer 15:15, 'O Lord, thou knowest, remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke:' Jer 17:18, 'Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded; let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed; bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction,' or break them with a double breach: Lam 3:61, seq., 'Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord, and all their imaginations against me. The lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up, I am their music,' or I am their song. 'Render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger, from under the heavens of the Lord:' 2Ti 4:14, 'Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord reward him according to his works.' Thus you see how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. The Romans being in great distress were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temples of their gods to fight with their enemies, and so they overcame them; so when the people of God have been hard put to it, by reason of afflictions and persecutions, the weapons that they have fled to has been prayers and tears, and with these they have overcome their persecutors, as is evident in the three children in Daniel, and many others, &c. But,

[2.] Secondly, Persecutions do but raise, whet, and stir up a more earnest and vehement spirit of prayer among the persecuted saints: Rev 6:9-10, 'And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' The blood of the persecuted cries aloud for vengeance upon the persecutors. By the 'souls under the altar,' you are to understand the persons of the saints which were martyred and lay slain upon the ground, like sacrifices at the foot of the altar, under the Roman persecuting emperors. There is no blood that cries so loud, and that makes so great a noise in heaven, as the blood of the martyrs, as the blood of butchered persecuted saints. Persecutors, like these Roman emperors, in all ages have causelessly and cruelly destroyed the people of God; they delight in the blood of saints, they love to wallow in the blood of saints, they take pleasure in glutting themselves with the blood of saints, they make no conscience of watering the earth, nor of colouring the sea, nor of quenching the flames with the blood of the saints, yea, if it were possible, they would willingly swim to heaven through their

hearts' blood, whom Christ has purchased with his own most precious blood—as all historians know, and as you may all know if you would but search a little into ecclesiastical histories—and therefore it is no wonder if the blood of the martyrs cry aloud for vengeance upon such desperate persecutors. The blood and prayers of persecuted saints will first or last bring down wrath and ruin upon their persecutors. Persecution puts an edge, yea, a sharp edge, upon the prayers of the saints: Acts 12:5, 'Peter therefore was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.' The Greek word **■κτεν■ς** signifies earnest and stretched-out prayer. When Peter was in prison, sleeping between two soldiers, and bound with two chains, and the keepers standing before the prison door, oh, how earnest! oh, how instant! oh, how fervent! oh, how vehement! oh, how constant were the saints in their prayers for his deliverance! oh, their hearts, their souls, their spirits were in their prayers! oh, their prayers were no cold prayers, no formal prayers, no lukewarm prayers, nor no dull or drowsy prayers, but their prayers were full of life, and full of warmth, and full of heat. They knew Herod's bloody intention to destroy this holy apostle by his imprisoning of him, and by the chains that were put on him, and by the strong guards that were set upon him, and by his bathing of his sword in the innocent blood of James, that his hand might be the more apt and ready for further acts of murder and cruelty; and oh, how did the consideration of these things whet and provoke their spirits to prayer! Oh, now they will have no nay, now they will give God no rest till he has overturned the tyrant's counsel and designs, and sent his angel to open the prison doors, and to knock off Peter's chains, and to deliver him from the wrath and fury of Herod; and their prayers were successful, as is evident in the 12th verse, 'And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying,' or rather, as the original has it, 'where many thronged together to pray.' The violence and rage of their persecutors did so raise, whet, and encourage them to prayer, that they throng together, they crowded together to pray, yea, when others were a-sleeping they were a-praying, and their prayers were no sleepy prayers, they were no lazy dronish prayers, nor they were no book-prayers, but they were powerful and prevalent prayers; for as so many Jacobs, or as so many princes, they prevailed with God; they prayed and wept, and wept and prayed; they called and cried, and cried and called; they begged and bounced, and they bounced and begged; and they never left knocking at heaven's gates till Peter's chains were knocked off, and Peter given into their arms, yea, their bosoms, as an answer of prayer. Oh the power and force of joint prayer, when Christians do not only beseech God, but besiege him, and beset him too, and when they will not let him go till he has blessed them, and answered their prayers and the desires of their souls! I have read that Mary Queen of Scots, that was mother to king James, was wont to say, 'that she was more afraid of Mr Knox's prayers, and the prayers of those Christians that walked with him, than she was of a knocking army of ten thousand men.' And that is a remarkable passage of the psalmist, Psa 109:3-4, 'They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer;' or as the Hebrew has it, 'but I am prayer, or a man of prayer.' Persecuted saints are men of prayer, yea, they are as it were made up all of prayer. David prayed before, but, oh, when his enemies fell a-persecuting of him, then he gave up himself wholly to prayer. Oh, then he was more earnest, more fervent, more frequent, more diligent, more constant, and more abundant in the work of prayer! When Numa, king of the Romans, was told that his enemies were in arms against him, he did but laugh at it, and answered, 'And I do sacrifice;'³ so when persecutors arm themselves against the people of God, they do but

divinely smile and laugh at it, and give themselves the more up to prayer. When men arm against them, then they arm themselves with all their might to the work of prayer; and woe, woe to them that have armies of prayers marching against them. But,

[3.] Thirdly, It will appear that the condition of persecutors is the most sad and deplorable condition of all conditions under heaven, if you will but seriously consider and lay to heart the sore judgments that are threatened, and that have been executed upon them: Deu 30:7, 'And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them which hate thee, which persecuted thee;' Neh 9:9-11, 'And didst see the afflictions of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red Sea: and shewed signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on the people of his land; for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them. So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day. And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.' Pharaoh and his princes and people were very great oppressors and persecutors of God's Israel, and therefore God visited them with ten dreadful plagues, one after another; but when, after all these plagues, God saw that their enmity against his people was as great, or rather greater than ever, and that they were still set upon persecuting of his people, then God takes up Pharaoh and his mighty host, and throws them as a stone into the mighty waters, Exo 15:10; Psa 7:11-13, 'God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.' God whets before he strikes, he bends his bow before he shoots, he prepares instruments of death before he brings men down to the grave, his hand takes hold on judgment before his judgments take hold of men; but if all these warnings will not serve their turns, God will overturn them with a witness. 'He ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors,' or as the Hebrew has it, 'against the hot burning persecutors.' God hath his hot burning arrows for hot burning persecutors. Let persecutors be never so hot against the saints, God will be as hot against them; and let them be never so much inflamed against the people of God, God will be as much inflamed against them: Jer 20:10-11, 'For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, said they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail, they shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.' When malicious and mischievous persecutors have done all they can to vex and fret, to daunt and affright, to dismay and discourage the people of God, then God will terrify the most terrible among them, and 'they shall not prevail nor prosper, yea, they shall stumble and fall, they shall be ashamed and confounded.' Isa 33:1, 'Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.' When the time is expired that God has prefixed for his people's sufferings, then God will retaliate upon their persecutors, then they that spoiled his people shall be spoiled, and they that dealt perfidiously and treacherously with them, shall be dealt perfidiously and treacherously withal: 2Th 1:6, 'Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.' It is but justice that God should trouble those that are the troublers of his people; it is but justice that persecutors should be punished, and that the

persecuted should be righted; it is but justice that God should trouble them in both worlds, who would be troublers of his people in both worlds; it is but justice that God should trouble them to all eternity, who would be a-troubling of his people to all eternity, if their power were but answerable to their malice. And God has even in this life been a swift witness against the persecutors of his people. Cain was a persecutor, and his brother's blood pursued him to hell; Pharaoh was a great oppressor and persecutor of his people, and God followed him with plague upon plague, and judgment upon judgment, till he had overthrown him in the Red Sea; Saul was a persecutor, and falls by his own sword; Haman was a great persecutor of the saints, and he was feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next; Pashur was a great persecutor, he smote the prophet Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks, and God threatened to make him a Magor-missabib, a terror to himself and to all his friends, Jer 20:1-3; Zedekiah was a persecutor, he smote the prophet Micaiah on the cheek for dealing plainly and faithfully with the kings, and in the day of trouble and distress he goes from chamber to chamber to hide himself, 1Ki 22:1-53; Jezebel was a great persecutor, she slew the prophets of God, and she was thrown out of a window, and eaten up of dogs, 1Ki 18:4-13; 2Ki 9:30; Herod the Great, who caused the babes of Bethlehem to be slain, hoping thereby to destroy Christ, shortly after was plagued by God with an incurable disease, having a slow and slack tire continually tormenting his inward parts; he had a vehement and greedy desire to eat, and yet nothing would satisfy him; his inward bowels rotted, his breath was short and stinking, some of his members rotted, and in all his members he had so violent a cramp that nature was not able to bear it; and so growing mad with pain, he died miserably.

Herod Antipas, who beheaded John Baptist, not long after falling into disgrace with the Roman emperor, with his incestuous Herodias, the suggester of that murder, they were banished, and fell into such misery and penury, that they ended their wretched lives with much shame and misery.

Herod Agrippa was a great persecutor of the saints, and he was eaten up of worms, Acts 12:1-25. In the third year of his reign, as Josephus observes, he went to Cæsarea to keep certain plays in the honour of Cæsar. The gown he was in, as the same author relates, was a gown of silver wonderfully wrought, and the beams of the sun reflecting upon it, made it so glisten that it dazzled the eyes of the beholders; when he had made an end of his starched oration in this his bravery, his flatterers extolled him as a god, crying out, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,' Acts 12:21-23; whereupon he was presently smitten by the angel of the Lord, and so died with worms that ate up his very entrails. The blow the angel gave him was an inward blow, and so not visible to others, and his torments more and more increasing upon him, the people put on sackcloth and made supplication for him, but all in vain, for his pains and torments growing stronger and stronger every day upon him, they separated his wretched soul from his loathsome body within the compass of five days; and it is very probable that the prayers of the persecuted church did help to speed this persecutor out of the world. Caiaphas, the high priest who gathered the council and suborned false witnesses against the Lord Christ, was shortly after put out of his office, and one Jonathan substituted in his room, whereupon he killed himself. Not long after Pontius Pilate had condemned our Lord Christ, he lost his deputyship and Cæsar's favour, and being fallen into disgrace with the Roman emperor, and banished by him, he fell into such misery that he hanged himself.

Nero, that monster of men, who raised the first bloody persecution, to pick a quarrel with the Christians, set the city of Rome on fire, and then charged it upon them; under which pretence he

exposes them to the fury of the people, who cruelly tormented them, as if they had been common burners and destroyers of cities, and the deadly enemies of mankind; yea, Nero himself caused them to be apprehended and clad in wild beasts' skins, and torn in pieces with dogs; others were crucified; some he made bonfires of, to light him in his night-sports; to be short, such horrid cruelty he used towards them, as caused many of their enemies to pity them; but God found out this wretched persecutor at last, for, being adjudged by the senate an enemy to mankind, he was condemned to be whipped to death; for the prevention whereof he cut his own throat.

Domitian, the author of the second persecution against the Christians, was, by the consent of his wife, slain by his own household servants with daggers in his privy chamber, his body was buried without honour, his memory cursed to posterity, and his arms and ensigns were thrown down and defaced.

Trajan raised the third persecution against the church, and the vengeance of God followed him; for first he fell into a palsy, then lost the use of his senses, afterwards he fell into a dropsy, and died in great anguish.

There was not one of those persecuting emperors that carried on the ten bloody persecutions against the saints, but came to miserable ends; yea, histories tell us of three and forty persecuting emperors, who fell under the revenging hand of God, and came to untimely ends. Among the many thousand thousands of instances that might be given of the judgments of God that have fallen upon the persecutors of the people of God in these latter days, I shall only give you a few. Fælix Earl of Wartenburge was a great persecutor of the saints, and swore that 'ere he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans;' but the very same night wherein he had thus sworn and vowed, he was choked with his own blood: nothing would serve him but the blood of God's people, and God makes him drunk with his own blood. Sir Thomas More, once Lord Chancellor of England, was a sworn enemy to the gospel, and persecuted the saints with fire and faggot; and amongst all his praises, he reckons this the chiefest, that he had been a persecutor of the Lutherans, i.e., the saints; but what became of him? He was first accused of treason, and then condemned, and at last beheaded. Judge Morgan was a great persecutor of the people of God; but shortly after he had passed the sentence of condemnation upon that virtuous lady, the Lady Jane Grey, he fell mad, and in his mad raving fits he would continually cry out, 'Take away the Lady Jane, take away the Lady Jane from me;' and in that horror he ended his wretched life. Drahomira, after the death of her husband, usurped the government of Bohemia, and was a cruel persecutor of the people of God; but by a righteous hand of God it so fell out, that on that very place where the minister's bones lay unburied, the earth opened of itself, and swallowed her up alive, with her chariot and those that were in it, which place is now to be seen before the castle of Prague. The Archbishop of Tours was an earnest suitor for the erection of a court called Chamber-Ardent, for the condemning of the French Protestants to the fire, but before he died he had fire enough, for he was stricken with a disease called 'the fire of God,' which began at his feet, and so ascended upward, which occasioned one member to be cut off after another, and so he ended his miserable days. Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, was a grievous persecutor of the people of God, and a great suspender and silencer of good ministers; he made use of his tongue, brains, and power to stop the mouths and tie up the tongues of God's faithful ministers; but God in his righteous judgment so struck him in his tongue, that it swelled so big that he could neither swallow nor speak for some days before his death, and so he was starved, choked, and

killed by this strange tumour of his tongue. I have read of one Mr W—, who was very busy in prosecuting an indictment against his minister at a quarter sessions, for omitting the cross in baptism; and being a man in high favour with the justices, he made no question of prevailing. At night, according to his usual manner, he falls to drinking, till he was so extreme drunk that he was fain to be carried home; in the morning his wife began mildly to blame him for his acting against the minister the day before, at which he with fearful oaths swore that 'he would soon rid the town of that Puritan;' but behold the hand of God, for as this wretched man was about to rise, and having put one arm in his doublet, even as the oaths were uttering, he was taken speechless, yea, and senseless, and so died.² To conclude, the judgments of God upon the persecutors of the saints in Bohemia was such, that it was used as a proverb among the adversaries themselves, 'that if any man were weary of his life, let him but attempt against the Piccardines'—for so they called the saints—'and he should not live a year to an end.' And thus you see by these instances, that most severe judgments have still followed the persecutors of the people of God. Let me close up this argument thus: look, as in princes' courts they are judged but silly, shallow-brained men that profess open and mortal hatred to the greatest favourites of the king, because in so doing they take the right and ready way to ruin themselves and families; so they are doubtless the most silly, shallow-brained men in the world, how wise soever they may be in their own eyes, or in others' eyes who are like unto themselves, who persecute the favourites of the King of kings, that being the ready way to their own ruin and destruction. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It will appear that persecutors are in the most sad and deplorable condition, if you do but consider that there is a day a-coming wherein God will fully reckon with all persecutors for their persecuting of his saints: Psa 9:12, 'When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them; he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.' There is a time when God will make inquisition for innocent blood. The Hebrew word *doresh*, from *darash*, that is here rendered inquisition, signifies not barely to seek, to search, but to seek, search, and inquire with all diligence and care imaginable. Oh, there is a time a-coming, when the Lord will make a very diligent and careful search and inquiry after all the innocent blood of his afflicted and persecuted people, which persecutors and tyrants have spilt as water upon the ground; and woe to persecutors when God shall make a more strict, critical, and careful inquiry after the blood of his people than ever was made in the Inquisition of Spain, where all things are carried with the greatest diligence, subtlety, secrecy, and severity. O persecutors, there is a time a-coming, when God will make a strict inquiry after the blood of Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Taylor, Ridley, &c. There is a time a-coming, wherein God will inquire who silenced and suspended such and such ministers, and who stopped the mouths of such and such, and who imprisoned, confined, and banished such and such, who were once burning and shining lights, and who were willing to spend and be spent, that sinners might be saved, and that Christ might be glorified. There is a time when the Lord will make a very narrow inquiry into all the actions and practices of ecclesiastical courts, high commissions, committees, assizes, sessions, &c., and deal with persecutors as they have dealt with his people: Psa 12:5, 'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise,' saith the Lord; 'I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.' When oppressors and persecutors do snuff and puff at the people of God, when they defy them, and scorn them, and think that they can with a blast of their breath blow them away, then God will arise to judgment, as the Chaldee has it; at that very nick of time when all seems to be lost, and when the poor oppressed and afflicted people of God can do nothing but sigh and weep, and weep and sigh, then the Lord will arise and ease them of

their oppressions, and make their day of extremity a glorious opportunity to work for his own glory, and his people's good: Mat 22:6-7, 'And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them: but when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent for his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.' Christ sent his apostles and disciples to invite the Jews to a marriage-feast, to a stately feast, to a feast made by a king, upon the account of his son, of his only son, of his beloved son, of his Son that is King of kings and Lord of lords, but they entreated them spitefully, calling them pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition, and some they imprisoned and scourged, and others they put to death, as Stephen and James, &c.; and oh, what spitefulness and ingratitude was this, to return evil for good, to requite them with reproaches, prisons, scourges, and death, for their endeavouring to save their souls, and to make them happy for ever! But will this great King put up these injuries, indignities, and abuses that are done to his servants? No, he will not: for as soon as he heard of it, he was wroth, and sent forth his armies to be revenged on them. The murderers in the text were the Jews, and the armies were the Romans. Now they are called 'God's armies,' Dan 9:26, because God employed them as the executioners of his wrath upon Jerusalem. Now these Roman armies did burn up their city, which was once the paradise of the world, and brought to ruin and destruction eleven millions of men, women, and children, besides multitudes that were sold for slaves, and others that were scattered among all nations; and thus God took vengeance on these persecutors, and turned their temple and city into ashes. Plutarch, writing of the quality of tigers, saith, that if drums or tabors sound about them, they will grow mad, and rend and tear their own flesh in pieces.³ Oh, there is a day a-coming when the last trumpet shall sound, and then all the persecutors of the saints will grow mad! oh, then they will fret and fume, and tear and torment themselves, and wish for the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, who in that day will with a witness avenge all his afflicted and persecuted ones! Rev 6:15-17. Alas, all the sorrows, troubles, afflictions, vexations, torments, and punishments that befall the persecutors of the saints in this life, they are but quasi tales, as it were such, they are but the beginnings of sorrows, they are but types and figures of those easeless, endless, and remediless torments and punishments that will at last inevitably fall upon all the persecutors of the saints. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Persecutors at present are under an evident token of perdition and destruction; they have the marks and signs of divine displeasure upon them: Php 1:28, 'And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.' Persecuted Christians ought not to be disheartened or discouraged, but rather to take heart and courage, by all the persecutions that are raised against them, because they are most certain witnesses and evidences from God himself, both of their own salvation, and of their persecutors' perdition and destruction. A state of unbelief, hardness of heart, blindness of mind, searedness of conscience, perverseness of spirit, slighting and despising of that which is good, hating of the light,⁵ and a man's being given up to the ways and lusts of his own heart, are dreadful tokens of perdition, and fearful witnesses and evidences of destruction: and these tokens and evidences all persecutors are under, though it may be they want eyes to see them, and hearts to be affected with them. Plain and evident tokens of wrath and ruin are stamped in Roman characters upon all persecutors, and did they but see those tokens, they would be as so many handwritings upon the wall against them. And thus you see by these five things, that there is no condition under heaven that is so sad and deplorable a condition, as the condition of persecutors is. But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That God will bear his people company in all their afflictions and persecutions. If the bush, the church, be all on a-light fire, the angel of the covenant will be in the midst of it: Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.' Both in the waters of affliction, and in the fire of persecution, God will bear his people company. So in that Dan 3:24-25, 'Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God.' Christ is never so near to his people as when they are in their fiery trials; and the hotter the furnace is, the more eminently present will Christ be with his people. Saints never enjoy so much of the supporting, emboldening, comforting, and encouraging presence of the Lord, as they do when the sun of persecution shines hottest upon them. Though Mr Glover wanted the presence of God for a time, yet when he came near to the stake where he was burnt, he clapped his hands for joy, and cried out, 'He is come, he is come.' 2Co 4:8-9, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not destroyed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' Divine help is nearest when a saint's danger is greatest. It is the deriding question which persecutors put to the saints in the time of their trials and troubles, Ubi Deus? Where is now your God? Psal 42:10; but they may return a bold and confident answer, Hic Deus: 'Our God is here,' our God is nigh unto us, our God is round about us, our God is in the midst of us, our God has given us his promise 'that he will never, never leave us, nor forsake us,' Heb 13:5; in every trouble, in every danger, in every death, the Lord will be sure to keep us company. God will bear his children company, not only whilst they are in a delightful paradise, but also when they are in a howling wilderness, Hos 2:14. When a company of poor Christians were going into banishment, one standing by to see them pass along, said that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go; his presence is infinite, and filleth all places. The Rabbins put Makom, which signifies place, among the names of God; Bythner brings them in expounding that text, Est 4:14, thus, 'Deliverance shall arise from another place,' that is, from God. Now they called God place, because he is in every place, filling heaven and earth with his presence. Wherever God scatters his people, he will be a little sanctuary to them: Eze 11:16, 'Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, Although I have east them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.' The heathens were wont to say of a valiant man, Omne solum forti patria: Every soil is his country; so I may say of a Christian. Every country is his home who enjoys the presence of God with him, who finds God to be a little sanctuary to him. Persecuted saints shall be scattered nowhere but God will be a little sanctuary to them; in the want of a visible sanctuary, God will be an invisible sanctuary to them; in the want of outward ordinances, they shall have the presence of his grace and favour. God will be a protection to them, and a spring of joy and comfort in them. His power shall be as a wall of fire about them, and his Spirit shall be the guide and leader of them. Though the Jews at Jerusalem, who enjoyed their glorious temple, and their pompous worship,

and solemn assemblies, and precious ordinances, looked upon their brethren in Babylon as a poor, miserable, despicable, forlorn, and forsaken people, yea, as a people without God, and without his worship and ordinances, and as those that had nothing to do with their magnificent temple, they having no outward splendour or glory at all upon them; yet says God by Ezekiel, I will have them to know that I have other thoughts, and better thoughts, concerning their captived brethren; for I have thoughts of grace, and thoughts of mercy, and thoughts of love, &c.; for I will dwell among them, and be a little sanctuary to them, and make up the want of all outward ordinances and privileges to them. I have read of the Tyrians, that they bound their gods with chains, that they might not leave them in their greatest need; but our God has bound himself with many golden chains, [I] mean promises, that he will never leave nor forsake his people in their greatest necessity and extremity. Theodoret had a precious presence of God with him in his sufferings; for he found so much sweetness when he was on the rack, in the midst of his tortures, that he professed he did not find any anguish in his torments, but a great deal of pleasure; and when they took him down from the rack, he complained that they did him wrong in taking of him down, and in ceasing to torment him; 'For,' said he, 'all the while I was on the rack, and you were venting your malice against me, I thought there was a young man in white, an angel that stood by me, which wiped off the sweat, and I found a great deal of sweetness in my sufferings, which now I have lost.' O Christians, in all your sufferings the angel of God's presence will bear you company, and he will sweeten the most cruel torments, and wipe off all the sweat, and take away all the pain, yea, he will turn your pains into pleasure, Isa 63:9. If Joseph be cast into prison, the Lord will be with him there, Gen 39:20-21. If Jeremiah be thrown into the dungeon, the Lord will be with him there, Jer 36:6-14. If David walk through the valley of death, God's rod and his staff shall comfort him, Psa 23:4-5. If the three children be cast into a fiery furnace, the presence of the Son of God shall preserve them; if Daniel must to the lions' den, God will keep him company there, and chain up the lions' nature, and sew up the lions' mouths, and lay a law of restraint upon the lions' paws, that they shall not have so much as a disposition to touch him, or in the least to hurt him or harm him; if Paul be brought before Nero's judgment-seat, God will stand by him, though all men forsake him, and bring him off with credit and triumph, 2Ti 4:16-18. Thus you see that in all the afflictions and persecutions that do befall the people of God, God will not fail to keep them company; and therefore let not troubles trouble you, let not afflictions afflict you, nor let not persecutions discourage you. But,

6. Sixthly, I answer, That he shall be sure to suffer from Christ that refuses to suffer, or that is afraid to suffer, for Christ's sake, or holiness' sake, or the gospel's sake. No man can suffer so much for Christ as he shall be sure to suffer from Christ, if he disdain and refuse to suffer for Christ: Mark 8:35, 'For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it.' He that shall attempt to save his life by crossing his light, by shifting off of truth, or by forsaking of Christ, shall lose it. He that thinks to shun suffering by sinning, shall be sure to suffer with a witness. It is a gainful loss to suffer for the truth, it is a lossful gain, by time-serving and base complying with the lusts and humours of men, to provide for our present safety, security, plenty, peace, and ease, &c., either by denying the truth, or by betraying the truth, or by exchanging the truth, or by forsaking the truth. When Henry the Fourth of France had conquered his enemies, he turned Papist, and gave this reason of it, 'That he might settle himself in peace and safety.' Ravilliak,² who slew him as he was riding abroad in his coach to refresh himself, confessed that the reason why he stabbed him was, because he was

of two religions; and thus, by endeavouring to save his life, he lost it. One Philbert Hamlin, in France, having converted a priest to the profession of the truth, was, together with the priest, apprehended and cast into prison at Bourdeaux; but after a while, the priest, being terrified with the prison and fear of death, renounced Christ, and was set at liberty; whereupon Philbert said to him, 'O unhappy and more than miserable man, is it possible that, to save your life for a few days, you should so deny the truth? Know, therefore, that though you have avoided the corporal fire, yet your life shall not be prolonged, for you shall die before me, and you shall not have the honour to die for the cause of Christ, but you shall be an example to apostates;' and accordingly, as he went out of the prison, two gentlemen that had a former quarrel with him met him, and slew him; and thus he also lost his life by endeavouring sinfully to save it. Though life be sweet, and every creature makes much of it, from the highest angel to the lowest worm, yet woe to him that is set upon saving of it, when Christ calls upon him to be divinely prodigal of it. No fool to him who thinks to avoid a less danger by running himself into a greater danger, who thinks to save his body by losing his soul, and to save his temporal life by losing eternal life. There is no loser to him who, by sinful attempts to save his life, shall lose a better life than ever he can save. So ver. 38, 'Whosoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.' Ah, friends, what are prisons and dungeons, and racks and flames, to Christ's being ashamed of a man in the great day, when he shall be attended with troops of saints and millions of angels? when, in the face of the court of heaven, when all the princes of glory shall sit upon their thrones, Christ shall disdain a man, and scorn so much as to look upon him, or take any notice of him, or shew the least respect or favour towards him. Oh, what a sea of sorrow and a hell of horror will this raise in him! I have read that when Sapor, king of Persia, raised a violent persecution against the Christians, Usthazares, an old nobleman, and one of king Sapor's eunuchs and courtiers, being a Christian, was so terrified that he left off his profession, and sitting at the court gate when Simeon, an aged holy bishop, was led to prison, and rising up to salute him, the good bishop frowned upon him, and turned his face with indignation from him, as disdaining to look upon a man that had denied the faith; upon this Usthazares fell a-weeping, and went into his chamber, and put off his courtly garments, and then brake out into these like words, Ah, how shall I appear before that God that I have denied? with what face shall I behold that God of whom I have been ashamed, when Simeon, my old familiar acquaintance, will not endure to look upon me, but disdains to bestow a civil salute upon me? If he frown now, oh, how will God behold me when I shall stand before his tribunal seat! And this physic so wrought with him, that he recovered his spiritual strength, and went boldly and professed himself a Christian, and died a glorious martyr. The application is easy. Well, sirs, remember this, it is infinitely better to suffer for God, than to suffer from God: 1Pe 3:17, 'For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.' It is better to suffer for well doing from men, than to suffer for ill doing from God. Cyprian, in his sermon de lapsis, makes mention of divers, who, forsaking the profession of their faith, were given over by God to be possessed by evil spirits, and so died fearfully and miserably. The Angrognians that yielded and complied with the Papists that came against them, were more sadly and cruelly handled by them than their neighbours that continued constant in the truth. Under the fourth persecution there were some Christians who, for fear of torments and death, denied their faith and sacrificed to idols, yet did not their bloody persecutors spare them; and it was observed that, being full of guilt, they went to their deaths with dejected

and ill-favoured countenances, so that the very Gentiles took notice of it, and reproached them as degenerate persons, and worthy to suffer as evil doers. West, that was chaplain to Bishop Ridley, refusing to die in Christ's cause with his master, said mass against his conscience, and soon after pined away with sorrow. A smith in King Edward the Sixth's days, called Richard Denson, was a forward professor of religion,² and by his Christian instructions the happy instrument of the conversion of a young man to the faith; afterwards, in the reign of Queen Mary, this young man was cast into prison for his religion, who, remembering his old friend and spiritual father, the smith, to whom he always carried a reverent respect for the good that he had received by him, sent to know whether he was not imprisoned also, and finding that he was not, desired to speak with him; and when he came he asked his advice, whether he thought it best for him to remain in prison? and whether he would encourage him to burn at a stake for his religion? To whom the smith answered, that his cause was good, and that he might with comfort suffer for it. But for my part, said the smith, I cannot burn. But shortly after, he that could not burn for religion, by God's just judgment was burned for his apostasy, for his shop and house being set on fire, and he over busy to save his goods, was burnt in the flames. They that will not burn for Christ when he calls them to it, shall burn whether they will or no. Oh, how much better had it been for this smith to have burnt for Christ, than that Christ should set his house on fire, and burn him in the midst of it! He that will not suffer for Christ shall be sure to suffer worse things from Christ than ever he could have suffered, for Christ; and therefore Doctor Taylor, the martyr, hit it: If I shrink from God's truth, said he, I am sure of another manner of death than Judge Hales had, who, being drawn for fear of death to do things against his conscience, did afterwards drown himself. In the Bohemian persecution, John Campan, the famous poet, having forsaken his religion, said to his wife, this day is salvation come to our house; whereunto she answered, this day a curse is brought into our house; and so it proved, for he ended his life in despair.

Those apostates that left Galeacius to enjoy their sinful pleasures and delights, &c., were taken by the bloody Inquisition, and forced publicly to recant and abjure their religion, and when they had done it, they became the subjects of misery and infamy, and were equally odious to both parties.

Christ seems to say to all that refuse to suffer for him, as king Rehoboam said to the ten tribes, the order of the words being only inverted, 'My little finger shall be thicker than your persecutors' loins, and I will add to your yoke, and whereas they would have chastised you but with whips, I will chastise you with scorpions,' 1Ki 12:10-15. O my friends, it is ten thousand times worse to be given up to a proud heart, a hard heart, a worldly heart, a formal heart, a hypocritical heart, a persecuting heart, an impenitent heart, or a despairing heart, &c.—for this is to be whipped with scorpions—than it is to be given up to prisons, or racks, or lions, or flames, or banishment, &c., for this is only to be chastised with whips, yea, with such whips that can only reach our bodies, but can never touch our immortal souls. And therefore, as you would not suffer such hard things from Christ, oh take heed of being unwilling to suffer anything for Christ's sake, or the gospel's sake! But,

7. Seventhly, I answer, That great are the advantages that will redound to you by all the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that shall befall you for righteousness' sake, for holiness' sake, Luk 21:13. Persecutions are the workmen that will fit you and square you for God's buildings; they are the rods that will beat off the dust, and the scullions that will scour off the rust from your souls; they are the fire that will purge you from your dross, and the water that will cleanse you from your

filthiness. Physicians, you know, apply horse-leeches to their distempered patients. Now the horse-leech intends nothing but to satiate and fill himself with the blood of the sick patient, but the physician has a more noble aim, even the drawing away of that putrified and corrupt blood that endangers the life of his patient; so though persecutors aim at nothing more than to draw out the heart-blood of God's people, that they may satiate and fill themselves with it, yet God has other thoughts and other aims, even the drawing away of that corrupt blood, that pride, that self-love, that worldliness, that carnalness, and that lukewarmness, that otherwise would endanger the life, the health, and welfare of their souls. But this great truth I shall make more evident by an induction of particulars. Thus:

[1.] First, Hereby you will give an evident proof of the soundness and uprightness of your own hearts, Php 1:27-29. Afflictions and persecutions will discover what metal men are made of. All is not gold that glisters: many there be that glisten, and look like golden Christians, but when they come to the fire, they prove but dross: he is a golden Christian indeed, who remains gold when under fiery trials. The stony ground did glisten and shine very gloriously, for it received the word with joy for a time, but when the sun of persecution rose upon it, it fell away, Mat 13:20-21. Men that now embrace the word, will, in times of persecution, distaste the word, if it be not rooted in their understandings, judgments, wills, affections, and consciences. Men may court the word, and compliment the word, and applaud the word, and seemingly rejoice in the word, but they will never suffer persecution for the word, if it be only received into their heads, and not rooted in their hearts. The house built upon the sand was as lovely, as comely, as goodly, and as glorious a house to look upon as that which was built upon the rock; but when the rain of affliction descended, and the floods of tribulation came, and the winds of persecution blew and beat upon that house, it fell, and great was the fall of it, Mat 7:26-27. No professors will be able to stand it out in all winds and weathers, but such as are built upon a rock. All others will sink, shatter, and fall when the wind of persecution blows upon them, Mal 3:2; as sure as the rain will fall, the floods flow, and the winds blow, so sure will an unsound heart give out when trials come. No heart but a sound heart will hold out bravely when hardships attends holiness on both hands; no heart but a holy heart will bear the brunt of persecution for holiness' sake. The three children, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, would rather burn than bow, they would rather suffer than sin, Dan 3:17-18, which was an evident proof of their sincerity and ingenuity. They would be nonconformists, though court, city, and country cried up conformity, which was a sure argument of their integrity; but now unsound hearts will exceedingly shuffle and shift to shift off persecution. Witness those false teachers in Gal 6:12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show,' or as the Greek has it, ἐπιπροσώπου, 'to set a good face on it,' 'in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.' At this time the Jews, out of zeal to their law, did sorely persecute those that did either preach or practise anything contrary to their law. Now these false teachers set a good face on it, and made a fair show, as if they were all for carnal rites and ceremonies, and they urged circumcision upon the Galatians, but not out of any affection or zeal that they did bear to the law, but only to procure favour on the one hand, and to avoid and escape the malice and persecution of the Jews on the other hand. They that were no Jews, to avoid persecution, would comply with them that were; they would seem to be very earnest for Judaism, but not for Christianity, that so they might escape the fury of the Jews. Unsound hearts will say anything, and do anything, and be anything, to avoid persecution, and to ingratiate themselves with persecutors. The Samaritans, as long as the Jewish religion flourished and was in honour,

caused a temple to be built on Mount Gerizim, that therein they might not be inferior to the Jews; and they boasted themselves to be of the progeny of Joseph, and worshippers of God with them; but when they perceived that the Jews were cruelly afflicted and persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes for worshipping of the true God, and fearing lest they should be handled in the like manner, they changed both their coat and their note, affirming that they were not Israelites, but Sidonians, and that they had built their temple not unto God, but to Jupiter. Thus times of affliction and persecution will distinguish the precious from the vile, it will difference the counterfeit professor from the true. Persecution is a Christian's touchstone, it is a Lapis Lydius that will try what metal men are made of, whether they be silver or tin, gold or dross, wheat or chaff, shadow or substance, carnal or spiritual, sincere or hypocritical. Nothing speaks out more soundness and uprightness than a pursuing after holiness, even then when holiness is most afflicted, pursued, and persecuted in the world: to stand fast in fiery trials argues much integrity within. But,

[2.] Secondly, All the troubles and persecutions which Satan or his instruments raise against the saints of the Most High shall not diminish their number, but rather increase them. The more the Israelites in Egypt were oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted, the more they increased and multiplied, Exo 1:10-13. Come, say they, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply; let us increase their task, let us lay heavy burdens upon them, &c.; and accordingly they did, thinking by this means to cow out their spirits, and to have brought them low, and to have lessened their number; but did this stratagem prevail? Oh no, as you may see in Exo 1:12; but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. There were but seventy souls that went down to Egypt, but they multiplied to six hundred thousand, besides children, as is evident by comparing Exo 1:5, Exo 1:7 with Exo 12:37-38. So the Jews that were carried captive to Babylon were but twelve thousand six hundred, but they returned forty-two thousand three hundred and threescore, besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, Neh 7:66-67, &c.; Ezr 2:64-65. The kingdom of Christ is set forth by a little stone cut out of a mountain without hands, Dan 2:34-35; and though in all ages there has been many hammers at work to break this little stone in pieces, yet they have not been able to do it, but this little stone has proved a growing stone, and, in spite of the devil and a persecuting world, will grow more and more, till it comes to be a great mountain, and filleth the whole earth. In Acts 8:1-40 you read of a great persecution, and the storm beat so hard upon the churches, that it dispersed and scattered them up and down; and this was so far from lessening of the number of believers, that it did mightily increase their number; witness Acts 8:4-6, Acts 8:8, 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in that city.' Samaria was a very wicked, corrupt place, and bewitched by the sorceries of Simon Magus, yet God had his people there, and by the ministry of Philip—not Philip the apostle, but Philip the deacon—who was a persecuted brother, he called them home to be partakers of his Spirit and grace, Acts 8:14-17. And thus the scattering of the church was the great advantage and increase of the church. The persecution of one church may be the gathering, edifying, multiplying, and erecting of many churches. Such ministers who have been by persecution driven from their own churches have been eminently instrumental in the planting of many other churches. Though the gospel, and the faithful preachers and professors of it, was by the Scribes, Pharisees, high priests, elders, and great Council exploded, blasphemed, and persecuted at Jerusalem, which was

once the holy city, yet it was with joy received in the polluted, bewitched, scorned, and despised city of Samaria. Oh, the freeness, oh, the riches of grace! Persecution is the multiplication of the people of God; in all ages the more the saints have been afflicted, oppressed, and persecuted, the more they have increased. The removing of the seven churches in Asia brought the gospel to Europe and Africa. During the ten cruel persecutions of the heathen emperors, the Christian faith was spread through all places of the empire; because the oftener they were mown down, the more they grew, as Tertullian witnesseth; and the more we are cut down by the sword of persecution, saith the same author, the more still we increase. Persecuted saints are like camomile, which grows and spreads by being trod upon; the more persecutors tread upon the people of God, the more they will spread and grow. Austin has long since observed, that though there were many thousand Christians put to death for professing Christ, yet they were never the fewer for being slain. Julian the apostate devised all manner of torments to terrify the people of God, and to suppress them, and yet they increased and multiplied so fast, that at last he thought it his best course to give over persecuting of them, and this he did, not out of love to them, but because the more they were persecuted, the more they increased. In Dioclesian's time, under whom the last and worst of the ten persecutions fell—for then Christian religion was more desperately opposed and persecuted than ever—and yet then religion prospered and prevailed more than ever; so that Dioclesian himself, observing that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, the more legible it was, and the more he laboured to block up the way of Christ, the more passable it was, and that whatever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper, and rose the higher: thereupon he resolved to engage no further, but retired to a private life. And it is very observable, that the Reformation in Germany was much furthered by the very opposition that the Papists made against it; yea, and it is not to be forgotten, that when two kings wrote against Luther—viz., Henry the Eighth of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary, this kingly title being entered into the controversy, made men more diligently and curiously to examine the matter, by which means there was stirred up in men a general inclination to Luther's opinion.

I have read of one who, observing the Christian religion to be so furiously persecuted by bloody Nero, concluded that surely that must needs be good, yea, very good, which was so cruelly persecuted by Nero, who was so bad, so very bad. If men would sit down and study which way to make most proselytes to such and such opinions and practices that are different from their own, certainly they cannot pitch upon a better way than to persecute those that differ from them. It is the sword of the Spirit, and not the sword of persecution, that will reduce the erroneous. When the disease lies in the head, the remedy must be answerable to the disease. Certainly a man shall as soon conquer a castle by spiritual arguments, as he shall conquer a conscience by club-law. When our Lord Jesus Christ sent forth his disciples to make a conquest upon an ignorant, erroneous, and deluded world, he did not send them forth with swords, pistols, or any such military weapons. Oh no! but he sent them forth under the choice anointings of his Spirit, and with his everlasting gospel, and by these means he turned the world upside down,—these were the means by which he turned sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ, Acts 26:18. The weapons that the apostles used were not carnal, but spiritual: 2Co 10:4-5, 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' Satan had many strongholds, and sin had many strongholds, and carnal reason had many strongholds, and

the world had many strongholds in sinners' hearts; and yet all these strongholds, forts, towers, castles, &c., were not able to stand before the apostles' spiritual weapons; they all come tumbling down before the Spirit and the word of the Lord in the mouths of his faithful ministers; by the spiritual weapons Satan was disarmed, and rebellious transgressors were conquered, captivated, and subdued to the obedience of the Lord Jesus. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that befall you in the pursuit after holiness, may issue in the conversion and salvation of others; as is evident in Acts 8:1-40, which chapter I recommend to your most serious perusal. So in that 2Ti 2:9-10, 'Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds, but the word of God is not bound,' (though Paul was fettered, yet the word was free,) 'therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.' Paul, for preaching of the gospel clearly and faithfully, was imprisoned at Rome, and handled as if he had been a malefactor, all which he was contented to suffer upon these very grounds, that the elect might be called converted, saved, and glorified. It is very observable, that though Paul was a prisoner, yet he preached; though he was in bonds, yet he preached; and though he was accounted as an evil-doer, yet he preached, that the elect might be sanctified and saved. Though his persecutors did lay irons upon his legs, yet they did not lay a law of silence upon his lips; and though they shut him up from going to others, yet they did not shut out others from coming to hear him; for even in bonds he exercised his ministerial office. As cruel as his persecutors were, they would not shut the prison doors upon them that waited on his ministry.³ So Philemon was converted by Paul when he was in bonds: Phm 1:10, 'I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.' Paul had a blessing going along with his ministry, when he was in bonds, as well as when he was at liberty. Onesimus was converted when Paul was a prisoner. God made Paul's prison to be a paradise to Onesimus; Paul by his preaching, patience, and cheerfulness in suffering, converts Onesimus to the faith. Prisons in these times were turned into churches; and so they were in Queen Mary's days, for as bloody as her reign was, most of the prisons in England were turned into Christian schools and churches, saith Mr Foxe: so that there was no greater comfort than for Christians to resort to prisons, and to hear the martyrs to pray and preach, and to behold their holy, humble, heavenly, gracious conversation.⁶ So the affliction and persecutions of the saints in the primitive times issued in the conversion and salvation of many souls. We read that Cecilia, a poor virgin, by her gracious behaviour in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. Adrianus, by seeing the martyrs suffer so patiently and cheerfully, was converted to the faith, and afterwards sealed to the truth with his blood. Justin Martyr was also converted in the same way. In the third persecution, Faustus and Jobita, citizens of Brixia, suffered martyrdom with such invincible patience, courage, and cheerfulness, that Calocerius cried out, Vere magnus Deus Christianorum, Verily, great is the God of the Christians. Upon which words he was presently apprehended, and so suffered martyrdom with them. And that was a remarkable saying of Luther, Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione, The church converteth the whole world by blood and prayer. Now if by your troubles, afflictions, and persecutions, and the exercise of grace under them, you shall be instrumental to convert and save a soul or souls from wrath to come, it will turn wonderfully to your advantage, and you shall 'shine as the stars for ever and ever,' Dan 12:3. That same power, presence, wisdom, and grace, that converted others by the sufferings of former saints, is able to accomplish the same glorious effects by the sufferings of the saints of this generation; and therefore bear up bravely, and neither fear nor faint under your present sufferings.

But,

[4.] Fourthly, The troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that Christians meet with in their pursuit after holiness, will further the increase and growth of their grace. Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times, Psa 69:7-9, Psa 69:12. Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, saith, 'When Papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs,' &c. All the reproaches, frowns, threatenings, oppositions, and persecutions that a Christian meets with in a way of holiness, doth but raise his zeal and courage to a greater height. Michal's scoffing at David did but inflame and raise his zeal: 'If this be to be vile, I will be more vile,' 2Sa 6:20-22. Look, as fire in the winter burns the hotter, by an ■ντιπεριστασις, because of the coldness of the air; so in the winter of affliction and persecution, that divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. In times of greatest affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, a Christian hath, first, a good captain to lead and encourage him; secondly, a righteous cause to prompt and embolden him; thirdly, a gracious God to relieve and succour him; fourthly, a glorious heaven to receive and reward him; and certainly these things cannot but mightily raise him and inflame him, under the greatest opposition and persecution. These things will keep him from fearing, fawning, fainting, sinking, or flying in a stormy day; yea, these things will make his face like the face of an adamant, as God promised to make Ezekiel's, Eze 3:7-9, and Job 41:24. Now an adamant is the hardest of stones, it is harder than a flint, yea, it is harder than the nether-millstone. The naturalists [Pliny] observe, that the hardness of this stone is unspeakable: the fire cannot burn it, nor so much as heat it through, nor the hammer cannot break it, nor the water cannot dissolve it, and therefore the Greeks call it an adamant from its untameableness; and in all storms the adamant shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue; let the times be what they will, the adamant is still the same. In times of persecution, a good cause, a good God, and a good conscience will make a Christian like an adamant, it will make him invincible and unchangeable. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire with this motto, Talis est Basilius, Basil is such a one, he is all on a-light fire for God. Persecutions will but set a Christian all on a-light fire for God. Look, as well-water is warmest in the winter time, so real Christians are warmest for God, his glory, truth, and ways, in the winter of affliction and persecution. True grace rises by opposition and persecution. Many a man had not been so good if the times had not been so bad. Many a man had not been so gracious, if the times had not been so dangerous. Many a man had not been so holy, if the times had not been so profane. Many a man had not been so zealous, if the times had not been so lukewarm. Many a man had not been so stout and resolute against bowing the knee to Baal, if multitudes had not been worshippers of Baal. All the afflictions and persecutions that befall the people of God do but add to their spiritual life, light, and lustre, Rev 14:1-6. As stars shine brightest in the darkest nights, and as spices smell sweetest when pounded, and as vines are the better for bleeding, and gold the brighter for scouring, and palm-trees the better for pressing; so the graces of the saints shine brightest, and smell sweetest, and rise highest in times of affliction and persecution. The naturalists have long since observed, that though the south wind be more pleasant, yet the north wind is more healthful; for the south wind with his warmth raiseth vapours, which breed putrefaction and cause diseases; but the north wind with his cold drieth up those vapours, purging the blood, and quickening the spirits: so the north wind of affliction and

persecution contributes most to the drying up of sinful vapours, and to the quickening up of a Christian's graces. Though the wind may blow, and the rain in stormy weather may beat upon a painted post or sign, whose colour is laid in oil, yet the wind and rain is so far from blowing or washing off the colour or beauty that is upon the post or sign, that it rather adds to their beauty, and makes them shine more beautiful than before; so the rain of affliction and the wind of persecution do rather add to the beauty and lustre of a Christian's graces, than any way cloud them, or take off the spiritual beauty and glory of them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Persecuting times are uniting times. Oh! the discord, the division, the wrangling, biting and quarrelling that is to be found among professors in times of peace and prosperity! but when affliction and persecution comes upon them, this unites them together. Though the sheep in sunshine days feed at a distance, and wander one from another; yet when a storm comes, or the wolf comes, then they run all together; and so it is with Christians. Some religious bishops, that could by no means agree when they had their freedom and liberty, yet could well enough agree when they were in prison together. Though children in a family may fall out among themselves, yet they quickly unite when a common enemy assaults them. Persecuting times unite Christians closer together in their affections, resolutions, and prayers. They who formerly could hardly be brought to eat together, or trade together, or live together, or walk together, in persecuting times will be brought to hear together, and pray together, and fast together, and communicate experiences together, and stand together, and fall together, and rise together, &c., Psa 83:3-9. When Gebal and Ammon and Amalek did combine, the people of God kept close together; for they very well knew that broken forces were soon dissipated, 2Ch 20:1, 2Ch 20:4, 2Ch 4:12. I have read of Ptolomeus Philadelphus king of Egypt, that he caused the Bible to be translated by seventy interpreters, which seventy were severally disposed of in seventy several cells, and though they knew not the names of one another, nor never saw the faces of one another, yet they did so well agree in their several translations, that there was no considerable difference betwixt them in rendering the text: so when the people of God shall be put into cells and prisons and jails, then they will so agree together, that there will be little or no difference betwixt them. As all the stones that came about Stephen's ears did but knock him closer to Christ the corner-stone, Acts 7:1-60; so all the stones that come about the saints' ears will but knock them the nearer to Christ, and the closer one to another. But,

[6.] Sixthly, As persecuting times are uniting times, so persecuting times are truth-advancing times. Veritas vincit, Truth thrives most when it is most opposed and persecuted: Php 1:12-14, 'But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifested in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.' Both court, city, and country did ring of Paul's bonds, and the cause thereof. Paul's iron chain made more noise, and was more glorious, and wrought more blessed effects, than all the golden chains in Nero's court; for by his bonds and chains many of the brethren were mightily emboldened and encouraged to preach the word without fear. The brethren, when they saw that Paul preached, and kept up the exercise of his ministry, though a prisoner, and though he was in bonds and chains, could not but reason thus with themselves: if Paul a prisoner holds up and holds on in preaching the word, though he be in bonds and chains; ah, how much more ought we who are at liberty to hold up and hold on in

preaching the truth, and advancing the truth, and in spreading of the truth. There were many that took an occasion from Paul's imprisonment, bonds, and sufferings, to disgrace his apostleship. The apostle meets with these, and tells them, that though they designed and intended the disgrace and hindrance of the gospel by his imprisonment and bonds, yet God had by his wonderful providence and goodness so ordered the matter, that his bonds and imprisonment turned to his great honour and fame, and an occasion of further spreading and advancing the gospel. Though Satan and his instruments may disturb the truth, yet they cannot suppress it; for, *Magna est veritas et praevalerebit*, Great is truth, and shall prevail. So upon the persecution of Stephen many of the brethren preached the word far and near, and the hand of the Lord was with them to the conversion of many: Acts 11:19-23, 'Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem; and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people were added unto the Lord.' The brethren that were dispersed and scattered by reason of persecution, fall upon preaching of the Lord Jesus; and though they were laymen, yet the hand of the Lord was mightily with them, so that a great number believed and turned to the Lord. God is a free agent, and can work the hearts of men over to himself by what hand he pleases, and many times he doth the greatest works by the most despised hands, as it is evident in this instance. The apostles did not fret, and fume, and storm, and take on because these brethren preached the Lord Jesus without ordination to the work of the ministry. Oh no; but they were glad, and rejoiced in their bringing in of souls to Christ, and they made it their work to exhort, encourage, and build up those that were brought in; neither did they prohibit these brethren from preaching, because they had not apostolical hands laid on them, 1Co 1:21, 1Co 1:25, 1Co 1:27. By these laymen's preaching Christ is revealed, and multitudes are converted, and truth is advanced, and the apostles are gladdened. Now, by what hath been said, it is most evident that persecuting times are truth-advancing times. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, As persecuting times are truth-advancing times: so persecuting times are a Christian's rejoicing times. A Christian's heart is never so full of joy, as it is when he is under sufferings: Acts 5:41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' They counted it an honour to be dishonoured for Christ; they took it as a grace to be disgraced for Jesus. Stephen found the joys of heaven in his heart as the stones came clattering about his ears, Acts 7:55-56. So Paul and Silas, when they were in prison, their hearts were so full of joy that they could not hold, but at midnight when others were a-sleeping, they must fall a-singing out the praises of the Most High, Acts 16:25. They found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more comfort than torment in their bonds. The rods with which they were whipped were as rods made up all of rosemary branches. Divine consolations rise so high in their souls, that their prison was turned into a palace, yea, into a paradise. Paul was a man that took a great deal of pleasure in his sufferings for Christ: 2Co 12:10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses

for Christ's sake.' He did not only bear his sufferings patiently, but cheerfully also. He often sings it out, 'I Paul a prisoner,' as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together, 'of Jesus Christ;' not, I Paul an apostle, nor I Paul rapt up in the third heaven, nor I Paul that have more gifts, parts, and learning than others; but 'I Paul a prisoner,' to shew how much he rejoiced in his bonds and sufferings for Christ. Chrysostom did not hold Paul so happy for his rapture into paradise, as he did for his imprisonment for Christ. So Rom 5:3-4, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' Old soldiers could not glory and joy more in their marks and scars of honour, than these saints did in their tribulations and persecutions for Christ's sake. Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai lived twelve years in a dark dungeon for fear of the Roman persecution in the reign of Trajan the emperor; and he called his dark dungeon Zohar, that is, splendour, because God had turned his darkness into light, and made up the want of the light of the sun by the light of his countenance, and by the shinings of the Sun of righteousness upon his soul. Eusebius tells us of Algerius the Italian martyr, how that, writing to his friend from a stinking dungeon, he dates his letter 'from my delicate orchard;' such were his divine consolations, that they turned his dungeon into a pleasant orchard. 'I with my fellows,' saith Mr Philpot, 'were carried to the coal-house, where we do rouze together in the straw, as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down.'⁴ Mr Bradford put off his cap, and thanked the Lord, when his keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burned the next day: and Mr Taylor fetched a frisk when he was come near to the place where he was to suffer. Henry and John, two Augustine monks, being the first that were burned in Germany, and Mr Rogers, the first that was burned in Queen Mary's days, did all sing in the flames. If men did but know by experience the sweet that is in suffering for Christ, they would desire with Chrysostom, if it were put to their choice, rather to be Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ, than Paul rapt up in the third heaven. One of the holy women that suffered martyrdom in this nation, rejoiced that she might have her foot in the same hole of the stocks in which Mr Philpot's had been before. And Luther reports of that famous martyr St Agatha, that as she went to prisons and tortures, she said she went to banquets and nuptials. Vincentius, laughing at his tormentors, said that death and tortures were to Christians *jocularia et ludicra*, matters of sport and pastime, and he joyed and gloried when he went upon hot burning coals, as if he had trod upon roses. Philip Landsgrave of Hesse, being a long time prisoner under Charles the Fifth, it was demanded, what upheld him all that time, and he answered, that he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs. Basil, in his oration for Barlaam, that famous martyr, saith, that he delighted in the close prison as in a pleasant green meadow, and he took pleasure in the several inventions of tortures, as in several sweet flowers. William Tims, martyr, in a letter to a friend of his a little before his death, writeth thus, 'Now I take my leave of you till we meet in heaven, and hie you after; I have tarried a great while for you, and seeing you are so long in making ready, I will tarry no longer for you: you shall find me merrily singing, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth, at my journey's end,' &c. And when they kindled the fire at the feet of James Bainham, 'Methinks,' said he, 'you strew roses before me;' and Hawkes the martyr lifted up his hands above his head, and clapped them together when he was in the fire, as if he had been riding in state and triumph; and holy Mr Saunders, speaking of his consolations in his sufferings, saith, that he found a wonderful sweet refreshment flow from his heart unto all the members of his body, and from all the parts of his body to his heart again.² By all these instances it is most evident that persecuting times are the saints' rejoicing-times. God reserves the best and strongest wine of consolation to a day of persecution;

suitable to that 2Co 1:3-5, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.' Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet in-comes, the sweet joggings, the sweet embraces, the sweet influences, the sweet discoveries, the sweet love-letters, the sweet love-tokens, and the sweet comforts that Christians experience in their sufferings for Christ! In all their afflictions and persecutions, they may truly say, we have sweetmeats to eat, and waters of life to drink, and heavenly honeycombs to suck, that the world knows not of; and indeed, when should the torch be lighted, but in a dark night? and when should the fire be made, but when the weather is cold? and when should the cordial be given, but when the patient is weak? and when should the God of comfort, the God of all kinds of comfort, and the God of all degrees of comfort, comfort his people, but under their afflictions and persecutions? for then comfort is most proper, necessary, seasonable, and suitable, and then God will be sure to pour in of the oil of joy into their hearts. And thus you see the great and glorious advantages that will redound to the people of God by all their afflictions and persecutions. But,

8. Eighthly, I answer, That to suffer affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, is the greatest and highest honour that you are capable of in this world. The crown of a martyrdom is a crown that the angels, those princes of glory, are not capable of winning or wearing; and oh, who art thou! what art thou, O man! that God should set this crown upon thy head! 1Pe 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' The very suffering condition of the people of God is at the present a glorious condition, for 'the Spirit of glory rests upon them,' and they must needs be glorious, yea, very glorious, upon whom the Spirit of glory dwells. The sufferings of 'the three children,' Dan 3:1-30, tended very much to their honour and advancement, even in this world; and had those vessels of honour slipped their opportunity of suffering, they had lost their glory. The apostles all along counted their sufferings for Christ their highest honour. And that is a remarkable scripture that you have in that Heb 11:36-38, 'And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented.' Oh! but these were surely the most sad, miserable, wretched, and forlorn creatures in all the world. Oh no! and that is most evident if the testimony and judgment of the Holy Ghost may be received; for, Heb 11:38, 'They were such of whom the world was not worthy.' The persecuting world was not worthy of their love, nor worthy of their prayers, nor worthy of their presence, nor worthy of their fellowship; and therefore God called them home, and set them down upon thrones by himself. And to me it is very observable, that when that great apostle Paul would glory in that which he accounted his honour, glory, and excellency, he does not glory in his high office, nor in his being rapt up in the third heaven, nor in the interest that he had in the hearts of the saints, nor in his arts or parts, &c.; but he glories in his sufferings, in that 2Co 11:23-27, 'In stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck: a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In

weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.' Thus you see that this blessed apostle looks upon his sufferings as his greatest glory. To suffer for Christ is the greatest honour and promotion that God gives in this world, said old Father Latimer. John Noyes took up a faggot at the fire and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be the time that ever I was born to come to this preferment.' When they had fastened Alice Driyer with a chain to the stake to be burned, 'Never,' said she, 'did neckerchief become me so well as this chain.' Balilus the martyr, when he was to die, requested this favour of his persecutors—viz., that he might have his chains buried with him, as the ensigns of his honour. When Ignatius was to suffer, 'It is better for me,' saith he, 'to be a martyr, than to be a monarch.' What are we poor worms, full of vanities and lies, that we should be called to be maintainers of the truth? for sufferings for Christ are the ensigns of heavenly nobility, said Calvin. It was a notable saying of a French martyr, when the rope was about his fellow, 'Give me,' said he, 'that golden chain, and dub me knight of that noble order.' 'I am the unmeetest man for this high office of suffering for Christ that ever was appointed to it,' said blessed Sanders. I shall conclude this head with that excellent saying of Prudentius; 'Their names,' saith he, 'that are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, the book of life.' And thus you see on all hands that suffering for Christ is the highest honour that you are capable of in this world: and, therefore, there is little reason why a Christian should shrink or shrug at sufferings. But,

9. Ninthly, I answer, That the afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings that attend Christians in these days, are nothing to the fiery trials that the saints and martyrs of old have met with: for sevenfold harder measure has been measured forth to them than is this day measured forth to us. Our sufferings are hardly to be named in the day wherein those sore and heavy things are mentioned, that those precious and famous worthies of old have suffered. I may say to most Christians, as the apostle did to the Hebrews, Heb 12:4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Many have, but you have not; you have only met with hard words, when others have met with blows and wounds; you have been only a-contending with men, when others have been a-contending with beasts; you have been only whipped with rosemary branches, when others have been whipped with scorpions; you have been only bound with silken bands, when others have been bound with iron chains. Will you be so favourable to yourselves as to compare your sufferings with the sufferings of former saints; and that you may, let me give you a little breviae of their sufferings 'of whom the world was not worthy.' History tells us, that in the ten primitive persecutions, they exercised all manner of cruelty and torments that could be devised against the Christians:—1. In the reign of Hadrian the emperor, there were ten thousand Christians crucified in the Mount Ararat, crowned with crowns of thorns, and thrust into the sides with sharp darts. 2. Others were so whipped, that their very inward arteries and veins appeared, and their entrails and bowels were seen, and afterwards they were set upon sharp shells, taken out of the sea edged and sharp, and certain nails and thorns were sharpened and pointed, called Obelisci, for them to go upon, and after all this cruelty they were thrown to wild beasts to be devoured. 3. Multitudes were banished. 4. Others were drawn asunder with wild horses. 5. Some were racked with bars of iron. 6. Others were cast into loathsome dungeons. 7. Some were burnt in the fire. 8. Others were knocked down and had their brains beat out with staves and clubs. 9. Some were pricked in their faces and eyes with sharp reeds. 10. Others were stoned to death with stones, as Stephen was. 11. Some were dashed in pieces against millstones. 12. Others had their teeth dashed out of their jaws, and their joints broken. 13. Some were cast down from very high

places. 14. Others were beheaded. 15. Some were tormented with razors. 16. Others were slain with the sword. 17. Some were run through with pikes. 18. Others were driven into the wilderness, where they wandered up and down, suffering hunger and cold, and where they were exposed to the fury both of wild beasts, and also to the rage of the barbarous Arabians. 19. Some fled into caves, which by their persecutors were rammed up with stones, and there they died. 20. Others were trodden to death by the people. 21. Some were hanged on gibbets, with fire under their sides. 22. Others were cast into the sea and drowned. 23. Some were slain in metal mines. 24. Others were hanged by the feet, and choked with the smoke of a small fire, their legs being first broken. 25. Some were powdered with salt and vinegar, and then roasted with a soft fire. 26. Others were hung by one hand, that they might feel the weight of their whole bodies, scorching and broiling over burning coals. 27. Some were shot through with arrows, and afterwards thrown into stinking jakes. 28. Others were stripped stark naked as ever they were born, and turned out of doors in cold, frosty nights, and burnt the next day. 29. In Syria, a company of Christian virgins were stripped stark naked to be scorned by the multitude, then shaved, then covered with swill and draff, and then torn in pieces and devoured by swine. 30. Lastly, many women had one joint of their bodies pulled from another, and their flesh and sides scratched with talons of wild beasts to the bones, and their breasts seared with torches till they died. And thus you have an account of thirty several ways by which the precious sons and daughters of Zion have formerly been afflicted, tormented, and destroyed; and what heart of stone can read over this bill of particulars with dry eyes?² And now tell me, sirs, whether your sufferings are worth a naming in that day, wherein the sufferings of the precious servants of God in the primitive times are spoken of? Oh, no! Well then, take heed of making molehills mountains, and of crying out, Is there any sorrow to our sorrow, or any sufferings to our sufferings? But,

10. Tenthly, I answer, That unholy persons have suffered as great and grievous things for the satisfying of their lusts and humours, and for the compassing of some worldly good, as you have suffered, or are like to suffer, for your pursuing after holiness. Oh the hazards, the dangers, the deaths that many have run through to gratify their lusts! Petrus Blesensis has long since observed, that the courtiers of his time suffered as many vexations, with weariness and painfulness, with hunger and thirst, and with all the catalogue of Paul's afflictions that is reckoned up in that 2Co 11:1-33, as good Christians did for the truth. I have read of a Roman servant, who knowing his master was sought for by officers to be put to death, he, to save his master's life, put himself into his master's clothes that he might be taken for him, and accordingly he was taken and put to death for him, and all this out of a humour of vainglory. The Romans' desire of the praises of men, saith Augustine, made them bountiful of their purses, and prodigal of their lives. Servetus, at Geneva, gave all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burnt, and all for a name, for a little glory among men, saith Calvin. Ah what cutting, what lancing, what bleeding, what vomiting, and what searching will many men endure upon the advice of their physicians, and all for a little health, a little strength, or to preserve a wretched life for a few days, yea, for a few hours sometimes! Oh the tortures and torments that many Romans and others have undergone, sometimes out of love to their country, and sometimes to maintain their credit and reputation among men, and sometimes out of an affectation of future fame and renown, and to eternalize their names! and why then should Christians think so much of suffering afflictions and persecutions for holiness' sake, the least drachm of which being more worth than a thousand thousand of those things, for which they have suffered such exquisite pains and torments? Ah! what great things, what hard things do

many men daily suffer to gratify their own lusts, and to satisfy the lusts of others! Ah! how frequently do many venture their lives, their estates, their names, their consciences, yea, their very souls, to court a Delilah! Oh the hell of horrors and terrors, which are worse than a thousand deaths, that many a sinner daily wades through to enjoy his sin! and why then shouldst thou be startled in thy pursuit after holiness, because of afflictions and persecutions that may attend thee? when they are nothing to what many suffer from within and without, to enjoy that which will undo them to all eternity, &c. But,

11. Eleventhly, I answer, Though persecutions may attend the pursuit of holiness, yet God has a thousand thousand ways to preserve his people from being ruined and destroyed by persecuting hands. Several afflictions and persecutions befell Paul at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, 'but out of them all the Lord delivered him.' As a righteous cause led him into sufferings, so a righteous God led him out of sufferings. Both Jews and Gentiles, barbarians and Grecians, princes and people, were as madly set upon persecuting of him, as he was once madly set upon persecuting of the saints, but God delivered him from every hand of violence. Divine power and wisdom wrought gloriously for him; both in six troubles and in seven it brought him clearly off, and bravely out, not of some, but out of all his dangers and distresses, afflictions and persecutions, &c. Now,

[1.] First, God sometimes preserves his people from being ruined and destroyed, by laying a law of restraint upon the spirits of their persecutors, as he did upon Laban's and Esau's, that they could not hurt him; yea, instead of kicking and killing, behold kissing and embracing. God tied up those cursed dogs, and laid such a restraint upon their wrath, rage, and malice, that they could not so much as touch a hair of Jacob's head. God stopped their mouths and bound their hands, that they were not able to act anything to the prejudice of Jacob. That God that laid a restraint upon the fierce wild creatures in Noah's ark, that they might not prey upon the tamer, and that chained up the lions from preying upon Daniel, that God chained up these two lions, that they could not make a prey of innocent Jacob. But,

[2.] Secondly, God does this sometimes by setting persecutors one against another. When the Moabites were confederated with the Ammonites and those of mount Seir against Judah, God made them turn their swords into one another's bowels, and so they mutually became their own executioners, and by this means poor Judah escaped. God sometimes saves his lambs by setting the wolf and the dog together by the ears. When that wolf Saul was even ready to devour David the lamb, God lets loose those dogs the Philistines upon Saul, and so by this means David was preserved and secured, 1Sa 23:27. And so Paul, by setting the persecuting Pharisees against the persecuting scribes, he escaped persecution, Acts 23:6-8. And so the Lord, by stirring up the Persians against the Babylonians, he brought about the deliverance of the Jews out of their captivity; and afterwards by stirring up the Grecians against the Persians, and the Romans against the Grecians, and the Goths and Vandals and other barbarous nations against the Romans, he brought about the deliverance of his people. In all ages God, by engaging one furious lion against another, has preserved his sheep in quiet. When the emperor of Germany threatened utter ruin to all the Protestants within his empire, God let loose the Turk to fall with great fury upon his empire, and by that means diverted the emperor's rage, and preserved his poor people, which were as sheep appointed to the slaughter. Ah England, England! if God had not set thine enemies together by the ears, year after year, how had they combined and conspired together to have swallowed thee up long before this day! But,

[3.] Thirdly, God does sometimes save his people from persecutions by passing a sentence of death upon their persecutors: and thus by his sudden and fearful judgment upon Herod he gave rest, liberty, and quiet to his people, Acts 12:23-24. And so by his vengeance on persecuting emperors he gave rest to his people. When Julian the apostate had vowed to make an oblation of all the lives of the surviving Christians, as Gregory Nazianzen reports, God struck him with an arrow from heaven, so that he died reviling of Christ, and casting up his blood to heaven as if he would have cast it into the very face of Christ. And when Eugenius the tyrant endeavoured to destroy the armies of the Christians under the emperor Theodosius, God gave the very winds a command to wrest the weapons out of their enemies' hands, and so preserved his people. And in '88, how did God make the very winds to fight for his people, and so saved them from that bloody invasion, by causing his winds to blow, and their enemies to sink as lead in the mighty waters! And by giving Ahithophel rope enough, he preserved David from perishing. But,

[4.] Fourthly, God does this sometimes by altering and changing the very hearts and natures of their persecutors. And thus by changing Paul's nature, by turning that wolf into a lamb, that devil into a saint, he gave the churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, Acts 9:31; and this is one of the most desirable things in the world, that God would save his people from outward ruin by ruining their persecutors' sins, and by changing their hearts and saving their souls. This way God has taken, and this way God may take, being a free agent to work when and where and how and on whom he pleases, but I cannot turn to a promise wherein he has engaged himself to make converts of persecutors. His common way of dealing with such is to give them up to blindness of mind, and hardness of heart, and searedness of conscience, and perverseness of spirit, that so their hell may be the hotter at last. But,

[5.] Fifthly, God does this sometimes by taking persecutors' feet in the same snares that they have laid for others: Psa 9:16, 'The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion. Selah;' Psa 57:6. Higgsion selah signifies matter of great admiration, and of deep meditation; that the wicked should be snared in the work of his own hands is matter of perpetual admiration, and of most serious meditation. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honour: Psa 7:15-16, 'He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he hath made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.' The wicked shall be undone by their own doings; all the arrows that they shoot at the righteous shall fall upon their own pates. Maxentius built a false bridge to drown Constantine, but was drowned himself. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the very same chamber where he had helped to contrive the cruel massacre of the French Protestants.³ And his brother Charles the Ninth, who delighted in the blood of the saints, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. Soon after Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, had condemned Sir John Oldcastle, a godly knight, it pleased the Lord to strike the archbishop so in his tongue that he could neither swallow down any food nor speak a word before his death, and so he was starved to death. The Duke of Somerset, in King Edward the Sixth's days, by consenting to his brother's death, made way for his own, by the same axe and hand that beheaded his brother. It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, as many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day a-laying of snares and traps, and a-digging of pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal, yet do but wait

and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and digged for his people. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, God sometimes preserves his people from persecuting hands, by providing cities of refuge to shelter them, and by providing hiding-places to hide them in: Mat 10:23, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee to another.' God has always found one city of refuge or another to shelter his persecuted people in. And so when bloody persecuting Jezebel had cut off many of the Lord's prophets, God provided an Obadiah to hide a hundred of them by fifty in a cave, 1Ki 18:4, 1Ki 18:13. God never wants a chamber of presence, a chamber of providence, a chamber of protection, a chamber of salvation to hide his people in, Isa 26:20. I have read of one that, in the time of the massacre at Paris, crept into a hole to hide himself, and as soon as he was in there came a spider and weaved a web before the hole; the next morning the murderers came to search for him, Search in that hole, said one, and see if he be not there! O no, said another, he can't be there, for there is a cobweb at the hole's mouth; upon which they did not suspect his being there, by which means he was preserved from the rage and fury of those men of blood.² Constantius the emperor promised a reward to those captains or soldiers that should bring Athanasius' head to him, but God hid him in a pit, and fed him there a long time by the hand of a friend; but being at last discovered by a maid-servant, the very night before his adversaries searched for him, the providence of God opened a way for his escape, and sent him into the west, by which means he was preserved from the rage and fury of his adversaries. I think no men under heaven have had larger experience of this truth than Englishmen. Ah, what cities of refuge, what hiding-places has God provided for them to hide them from the wrath and rage of their persecutors for many years! And thus I have given you a brief account of some of those ways which God takes to deliver his people out of persecuting hands. But,

12. Twelfthly and lastly, I answer, That all the persecutions that you meet with on earth shall advance your glory in heaven. The more saints are persecuted on earth, the greater shall be their reward in heaven; as persecutions do increase a Christian's grace, so they do advance a Christian's glory: Mat 5:10-12, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Luk 6:22-23, 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is in heaven, for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.' They that are now opposed and persecuted by men, shall at last be owned and crowned by God; yea, and the more afflictions and persecutions are multiplied upon them in this world, the greater shall be their recompense in another world. The original words, ἡγαλλίσθε in Matthew, and σκιρτήσατε in Luke, signifies exceeding great joy, such as men usually express by skipping and dancing; let your hearts leap, and let your bodies leap for joy, for great is your reward in heaven. Look, as wanton young cattle in the spring, when everything is in its prime and pride, do use to leap and skip for joy; so says Christ, do you leap and skip under all the afflictions and persecutions that befalls you for righteousness' sake, for great is your reward in heaven. Bernard, speaking of persecutors, saith, that they are but his Father's goldsmiths, who are working to add pearls to the saints' crowns. It is to my loss, said Gordius the martyr, if you

abate me anything of my present sufferings; sufferings for Christ are the saints' greatest glory; they are those things wherein they have divinely glorified. *Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra*: Your cruelty is our glory, say they in Tertullian; and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven. Chrysostom hit the nail when he said, If one man should suffer all the sorrows of all the saints in the world, yet they are not worth one hour's glory in heaven. By the consent of the schoolmen, all the martyrs shall appear in the church triumphant, bearing the signs of their Christian wounds about them, as so many speaking testimonies of their godly courage, that what here they endured in the behalf of their Saviour, may be there an addition to their glory. O Christians, all your sufferings will certainly increase your future glory; every affliction, every persecution will be a grain put into the scale of your heavenly glory, to make it more weighty in that day, wherein he will richly reward you for every tear, for every sigh, for every groan, for every hazard, and for every hardship that you have met with in the pursuit of holiness, &c. For light afflictions you shall have a weight of glory; and for a few afflictions you shall have as many joys, pleasures, delights, and contents as there be stars in heaven or sands on the sea-shore; and for momentary afflictions you shall have an eternal crown of glory, 2Co 4:16-18. If you have suffering for suffering with Christ on earth, you shall have glory for glory with Christ in heaven. Ah Christians, your present sufferings are but the seeds of your future glory, and the more plentifully you sow in tears, the more abundant will be your harvest of glory. Cyrus, in a great expedition against his enemies, the better to encourage his soldiers to fight, in an oration that he made at the head of his army, promised, upon the victory, to make every foot-soldier a horseman, and every horseman a commander, and that every officer that did valiantly should be highly rewarded; but Christ our General promises more, for he promises a crown, Rev 2:10, and a throne, Rev 3:21, to all his afflicted and persecuted ones, which are the greatest rewards that a God can give or that man can crave. It troubled one of the martyrs when he was at the stake, that he was going to a place where he should be for ever a-receiving of wages for a little work. Aristippus being demanded in a storm why he was not as fearful as others were, answered that there was great reason for it; for, saith he, they fear the torments due to a bad life, but I expect the reward due to a good life. Ah Christians! shall not the hopes of that great reward that attends suffering saints bear you up bravely, and carry you out sweetly under all the storms that may beat upon you whilst you are sailing heaven-wards and holiness-wards? Surely yes. I have read that Lyncurgus could draw the Lacedemonians to anything by temporal rewards; and oh then how much more should I draw all your hearts to a readiness and willingness to do anything, to be anything, and to suffer anything for Christ's sake, and holiness sake, upon the account of that great reward, that sure reward, and that eternal reward, that attends suffering saints! And let thus much suffice for answer to this fourth objection. I hope none of you will think that I have been too long in answering this objection, considering the present times. But,

Object. 5. Fifthly, Others may object and say, We would labour, after this holiness, without which there is no happiness, &c. But if tee should, then we must resolve to be poor, and mean, and beggarly in the world, we must resolve then to fare hard, and lie hard, and labour hard, and live low in the world, for we shall never raise an estate to ourselves by holiness and strictness, we shall never grow rich and great in the world by godliness; nay, by driving this trade of holiness, we shall lose our trades, our customers, and those estates we have, and quickly bring a noble to ninepence, &c. Now to fence and arm you against this objection, give me leave to propose these six following considerations:

[1.] First, Consider that it is not absolutely necessary that you should be rich, or high, or great in this world; but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. The want of riches can only trouble you, but the want of holiness will certainly damn you. You may be happy in another world, though you are not high in this world. Many a man has gone to heaven without a penny in his purse, or good clothes on his back; and doubtless it is infinitely better with ragged, naked Lazarus to go to heaven, than it is with Dives to go rich and bravely clad to hell, Luk 16:19-31. It is better to go to heaven poor, and halt, and maimed, than to go to hell sound and rich. Poverty and outward misery with salvation, is far better than worldly prosperity and felicity with everlasting perdition. Holiness, and not riches, is the one thing necessary. If thou hast holiness, nothing can make thee miserable; but if thou wantest holiness, nothing can make thee happy. Outward blessings are no infallible evidences of a blessed estate. Was Abraham rich? so was Abimelech too. Was Jacob rich? so was Laban too. Was David a king? so was Saul too. Was Constantine an emperor? so was Julian too. It is only holiness that sets the crown of happiness upon a Christian's head. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider that it is not sanctity, but impiety, it is not holiness, but wickedness, that exposes men to the greatest poverty and misery: Pro 6:26, 'For by the means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread.' Whoredom is a very costly sin, Pro 24:33-34, and Pro 28:19, Pro 28:22; the prodigal had quickly spent his portion among his harlots, Luk 15:1-32. Whoredom cannot be a greater paradise to the flesh, than it is a purgatory to the purse, and many great ones have found it so. Herod, that old fornicator, was so inflamed and bewitched with the immodest wanton dancing of his damosel, that he swore he would give her to the half of his kingdom, Mark 6:23-24. And it is very observable, that whilst Solomon, in his younger days, kept holy, chaste, and pure, silver and gold was as plenteous at Jerusalem and at court as the stones of the street; but when Solomon had given himself up to his concubines, they quickly exhausted his treasures, and brought him to so low an ebb, that he was forced to oppress his subjects with such heavy taxes, burdens, and tributes, which occasioned the revolt of the ten tribes. Josephus, in his Antiquities, tells us of one Decius Mundus, that offered to give so many hundred thousand drachms, that came to six thousand pounds English money, to satisfy his lusts one night with a whore, and yet could not obtain his desire. There is no sin that has brought more men, and greater men, to beggary and misery than this has. It is a great misery to be brought to a piece of bread, to a scrap, a little bit of bread; but to be brought into so low a condition by harlots, doubles the misery; for he that is by a whorish woman brought to a piece of bread on earth, shall be brought to a drop of water in hell, except there be found repentance on his side, and pardoning mercy on God's. Take another instance in that Pro 23:20-21, 'Be not among wine-bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh: for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.' Many dukes, earls, lords, and gentlemen of great estates, have sadly experienced the truth of this scripture. Society and luxurious company hath brought many a man to extreme poverty. The full cup makes an empty purse, and the fat dish makes a lean bag; he that fills thee wine with one hand, and sets before thee dainty dishes with the other hand, will be sure to pick thy pockets with both hands; and this Caligula, the Roman emperor, found by experience; for his gluttony brought him to incredible poverty. Diogenes, hearing that the house of a certain prodigal was offered to sale, said, I knew that house was so accustomed to surfeiting and drunkenness, that ere long it would spew out the master. Excessive drinking is now so great in England, that the Germans may fear the loss of their charter. There was a street in Rome called vicus sobrius, the sober street, because there was never an ale-house in it; but this, I think, is hard to say of any street in London,

yea, of any street in England. It is an observation amongst the mariners, that as the sea grows daily shallower and shallower on the shores of Holland and Zealand, so the channel of late waxeth deeper and deeper on the coasts of Kent and Essex. Ah, sirs! what is more evident than this, that as drunkenness ebbs in Holland, so it flows in England! Oh, what a deal of ground has this sin got within this few months upon English hearts! There was a time when drunkards were as rare in England as wolves, but now they are as common as swine. Ah, what staggering, reeling, and shameful spewing is to be found, both among the great ones, the priests, and people of this nation! The prophet Hosea complained in his time, that the princes, upon their king's day, made him sick with bottles of wine, Hos 7:5. This day of their king was either his birthday, and so Pagninus rendereth it here, *Die natalis ejus*; or his coronation day, and so the Chaldee Paraphrast carrieth it; or the day wherein their king Jeroboam set up his golden calves at Dan and Bethel, as some others conceive. Now in this day of their king there was such carnal triumphing, and such pampering of the flesh, and such roaring, carousing, and drinking of bottles of wine, that the princes drank themselves sick, drowning their bodies and souls in bottles and butts of wine. Memorable is the king's late proclamation against all such debauched persons, who, pretending to drink his health, destroy their own by a shameful abusing of the precious creatures of God. But if the prophet Hosea were now alive in this nation, ah, what cause would he have to complain that both high and low, men and women, young and old have given themselves to this beastly sin, that unmans a man, and that besots the soul, and that destroys the body, and that proves a cankerworm to men's estates! What are most ale-houses but hell-houses, but the devil's houses, in which the name of God is notoriously blasphemed, religion scorned, the saints derided, the Sabbaths profaned, young ones impoisoned, and old ones hardened, and many thousand families impoverished? And why, then, should it be almost as easy a task to conquer the West Indies, to overcome the Turk, and to bring down the Pope, as it is to bring down such wretched ale-houses, as are the very nurseries of all sin, and the synagogues of incarnate devils, and the very sinks of all misery, poverty, and beggary. By these instances it is most clear that it is not holiness, but wickedness that exposes men to the greatest poverty and misery. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that God can make a little with holiness go a great way. A little with holiness shall serve the turn, and then enough is as good as a feast. God can make a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, hold out a long while, 1Ki 17:10-17. So Deu 8:4, 'Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years.' Deu 29:5, 'And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.' Their raiment in forty years' time was not the worse for wearing, their garments were not worn out with wearing, in all that time they were not grown old and so unfit to wear. Oh no; but they were as fresh and strong, and fit for use at the last, as they were when they first came into the wilderness, and this was by a divine power that preserved them from decay. God supplied all the backs and bellies of the Israelites in such state, as if every Israelite had been a prince. When God brings his people into a wilderness condition, he will make their mercies last and hold out as long as their wilderness condition continues. Some of the learned are of opinion, that the garments and shoes of children and young men grew up with their persons; so that as their stature increased, so their apparel and shoes waxed larger and longer. But I suppose that it is not safe for us to imagine or multiply miracles without necessity and clear warrant from Scripture; and, therefore, I shall rather fall in with those worthy men who thus judge—viz., that when any began to outgrow their apparel and shoes, they laid them aside, and took others that were fit for

their present stature, and that those which they laid aside were as sound and fresh, and fit for service, as when they first began to use them, and so those they put off were fit for others to put on that were of a less stature; and thus God lengthened out their mercies in their wilderness condition. So in that Pro 15:16-17, 'Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.' Pro 16:8, 'Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right.' Pro 17:1, 'Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.' Psa 37:16, 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' Where there is a holy God, and a holy heart, a little of the world will go far. A little will be a sufficiency to him, who with it enjoys that Holy One that is all-sufficiency itself, Php 4:11-20. Though a whole world will never fill nor satisfy an unsanctified heart; yet a little, a very little of the world will satisfy and content a holy heart. There are two things that an unholy heart can never find, it can never find any sweetness in spirituals, nor it can never find any satisfaction in temporals; but a holy heart always finds the greatest sweetness in spirituals, and is as easily satisfied with the least and meanest of temporals, Est 5:9-14. Gen 28:20-21, 'And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.' Holy Jacob does not indent with God for costly apparel, or delicate fare; he does not make a bargain with God to be housed bravely, and fed daintily, and clothed gorgeously, and lodged easily, and waited on nobly. Oh no; bread to eat and clothes to wear is as much as holy Jacob looks after. Ah friends, a little will serve nature, and less will serve grace, though nothing will serve or satisfy an unsanctified man's lusts. O sirs, the very pulse and locusts which a holy man eats, relishes better than all the glutton's delicious fare; and the very sheep-skins and goat-skins which he wears, wear softer and finer than all the purple and soft raiment that is in princes' houses; and the very holes, and caves, and dens wherein holy men live, are more pleasant and delightful than the stately palaces of the great ones of the world. Godliness and contentment does so sweeten and so lengthen out all a Christian's mercies, that he cannot but reckon himself a happy man, though he may be the poorest among many men. Let me conclude this third answer thus— This world's wealth that men so much desire, May well be likened to a burning fire;

Whereof a little can do little harm, But profit much our bodies well to warm: But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn; So too much wealth to too much woe does turn.

But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that worldly riches and holiness do often meet together. A man may be a very holy man, and yet a rich man too. Abraham and Lot were as wealthy men as most in their time, and yet behind none for faith and holiness, Gen 13:1-18; David, and Solomon, and Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah had crowns on their heads and sceptres in their hands, and very great revenues at their commands, and in all these grace and greatness sweetly meet. Job was a very holy man, and yet a very rich man, Job 1:3, Job 1:8. If you cast your eye upon the first of Job, and survey his estate, you shall find that he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and a very great family; but if you will look into the last of Job, and survey his estate, there you shall find it doubled. Joseph, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Daniel, and the three children, were very gracious, and yet very high and great in the world. As every wicked man is not a rich man, so every holy man is not a poor man. If you will but set the

gracious against the graceless, the holy against the profane, I doubt not but for one holy man whose estate is low and mean, you will find thousands of wicked men whose conditions are beggarly and low in this world. God many times delights to confute the devil's proverb—viz., that plain dealing is a jewel, but he that useth it shall die a beggar. Now God by heaping up riches and honour and greatness upon the righteous, gives the devil the lie, and lets the world see that holiness many times is the ready way to worldly greatness.

It is observable, that when all the sons of Jacob returned with corn and money in their sacks from Egypt, Benjamin had not only corn: and money in his sack, but he had over and above the silver cup put into the mouth of his sack, as a singular pledge of his brother Joseph's favour, Gen 44:1-34; so God many times gives to his Benjamins, the sons of his right hand, not only as much of the world as he does to others, but more of the world than he does to others; he does not only give them corn and money in common with others, but he also gives them the silver cup, the grace cup; he puts in some singular temporal blessings into their sacks more than into other men's; for he is the great Lord of all, and therefore may dispose of his own as he pleases. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider that most men are best in a low condition. David was never better than when he was in a wilderness condition, for degrees of grace, and for the exercise of grace, and for communion with the God of grace. It was best with David when his condition was low in the world, Psa 63:1-4. It was never better with Jacob than when he passed over Jordan with a staff in his hand, Gen 32:10. Job's graces never shined so gloriously as when he sat upon a dunghill, and could bless a taking God as well as a giving God, Job 1:1-22. Though John was poor in the world, yet the Holy Ghost tells us that he was the greatest that was born of women, Mat 11:11. Paul was but a poor tent-maker, and yet his conversation was in heaven, Php 3:20. The church of Smyrna was the poorest church, but yet the best of all the seven churches in Asia, Rev 2:8-9. Christ knew very well that his disciples would be best in a low condition, and therefore he fed them but from hand to mouth. He that could have turned stones into bread, could as easily have turned stones into gold, and so have made his disciples rich and great in the world, but he would not. Christ could easily have changed their rags into robes, and their cottages into stately palaces, and their barley loaves into costly banquets, but he knew that their hearts would be best when their condition was lowest; and therefore he makes them live upon short commons. As there was none so holy as Christ, so there was none so poor as Christ, Mat 8:20-21. Christ lived poor and died poor, for as he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. Austin has long since observed, that when Christ died he made no will; he had no crown lands; all he had was a coat, and that the soldiers, parted amongst them. Had there been any true happiness or blessedness in gold and silver, gay clothes, stately mansions, brave attendants, or in well-furnished tables, &c., Christ, who was, and still is, the Lord of all, would certainly have been so favourable to himself, and so kind to his disciples, as not to have deprived himself or his family of that happiness and blessedness which they might have enjoyed, by enjoying the brave things of this world; but he very well knew that true happiness and blessedness was too great and too glorious a thing to be found in any such worldly enjoyments, and upon that foot was willing to be without them himself; and in his wise providence he so ordered the affairs of his own house, that those whom he loved best should have least of those things wherein there was no true happiness. Lazarus was very poor, but very holy; he was houseless, but not Lordless; his body was clothed with rags, but his soul was adorned with grace; he had no bread to eat, and yet he had bread to

eat that the world knew not of: whilst he lived, the dogs, being more kind than their master, licked his sores, but when he died, the angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. In all ages this has been an experienced truth, that most men are best in a low condition. Pope Martin reports of himself, that whilst he was a monk, and lived in the cloister, he had some evidences for heaven, but when he was a cardinal, then he began to fear and doubt whether ever he should go to heaven; but afterwards, when he came to be pope, he utterly despaired of ever going thither. Ah, how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how gracious, how serious, how zealous, how prudent, how vigilant, and how diligent have many men been in these late years, whilst their condition was low, and poor, and mean in the world! but when under various changes they changed their brass into silver, their copper into gold, their cottages into palaces, their shops into lordships, and their sheep-skins into scarlet, &c., ah, how proud, how stately, how earthly, how carnal, how careless, how cold, how formal, how lukewarm, how indifferent, how light, how slight, how vain, how loose, did they generally grow! I think since Christ was on earth there has not been a more evident proof of men's being best when their condition was lowest than what has been given within these late years. Mandrobulus, in Lucian, offered to his god the first year gold, the second year silver, and the third year nothing at all; so many in our times, who were forward in the days of their poverty and adversity to offer gold and silver, I mean prayers and praises, to God, yet in the days of their prosperity and worldly glory, they offered either nothing to God, or else that which was next to nothing. I have read of the pine-tree, that if you pull off the bark it will last a long time; but if the bark continue on, it will rot the tree. Ah, how has the bark of honour, the bark of riches, the bark of pleasure, the bark of success, the bark of applause, and the bark of preferment, &c., rotted, and corrupted, and worsened many glorious professors in these days! And oh that, now their bark is taken off, they may with the pine-tree grow better and better! Oh that now they may grow more holy than ever, and more humble than ever, and more heavenly than ever, and more spiritual than ever, and more watchful than ever, and more faithful than ever, and more friendly than ever, and more united than ever! &c. Now if most men are best in a low condition, then there is no reason why any man should turn his back upon holiness because of poverty, that often treads upon holiness' heels. The cypress-tree is high, but barren; and the olive-tree is low, but fruitful. Ah, Christians, it is infinitely, better to be an olive-tree, low and fruitful, to be low in the world, and full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness, than to be a cypress-tree, high in honours, riches, and worldly greatness, &c., and to be barren of all grace and goodness. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Consider that spiritual riches, which are the test of riches, do commonly wait on the poorest saints. Usually there are none so rich in spirituals, as those that are poorest in temporals; there are none that have so much to shew for another world as those that have least to shew of this world: Jas 2:5, 'Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?' Though they have never a penny in their purses, nor never a rag to hang on their backs, nor never a bit to put in their bellies, yet they are rich heirs, and their heads are destined to the diadem. Usually the poorest saints are the richest Christians in comforts, in graces, in promises, in experiences, and in spiritual enjoyments, &c., 2Co 8:1-5; Rom 5:3. The holy soul drives the freest and the greatest trade heavenwards; the holy soul may sail to any port that lies in God's dominions, and trade freely,—and what enriches men like a free and a full trade? There are infinite treasures laid up in precious promises, and all these treasures lie open to the holy soul. A Christian may lade his soul as deep as he pleases with the precious commodities of heaven. I

have read of Tiberius the emperor, in the year of our Lord 577, who, seeing a cross set in a marble stone lying in the ground, commanded it to be dug up; and when it was dug up, he found a rich treasure under the cross. O sirs, under the cross of poverty there are treasures, spiritual treasures, lasting treasures, and satisfying treasures to be found. Though holiness may be attended with cross upon cross, loss upon loss, and misery upon misery, and calamity upon calamity, and sorrow upon sorrow, and vexation upon vexation, &c., yet under every cross and every loss, &c., a Christian shall be sure to find such spiritual and heavenly treasure, that for weight, worth, use, delight, and duration, all the treasures of the world are not to be compared to it.

O sirs, what is a cup of pleasant wine to a condemned man? or a ship's lading of gold to a drowning man? or a sumptuous feast to a sick man? or royal robes to a diseased man? &c.; no more are all the riches or treasures of this world to those spiritual riches and heavenly treasures that attends the poorest saints. Austin hath long since told us that *divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt*: Earthly riches are full of poverty. They cannot enrich the soul, for oftentimes where the purse is full of gold, the heart is empty of grace, and under many silken coats there are threadbare souls to be found. Now what are all the riches of this world to those riches of consolation, and riches of sanctification, and riches of justification, and riches of salvation, and riches of glorification, that attends the poorest saints? Suppose that poverty should break in upon you like an armed man whilst you are in the pursuit of holiness, yet if the best of riches, if spiritual riches, shall attend your poverty, as certainly they shall, what cause have you to be discouraged? Surely none. And let thus much suffice for answer to this fifth objection.

Object. 6. But sixthly, Some may further object, and say, Should We pursue after holiness, it would be a disgrace, a disparagement, and dishonour to us who are high, and great, and rich, and honourable in the earth. We are gentlemen, we are well-bred and high-born, and holiness seems to be too poor and too low a thing for such as we are to look after, &c.

Now to fence and arm you against this objection, give me leave to propose to your most serious thoughts these following considerations, &c.:

[1.] First, That holiness is man's greatest honour and excellency—and this I have made evident at large in the third motive to holiness; yea, holiness is the crown, excellency, and glory of all a man's excellencies and glories, as has been fully proved in the fifth motive to holiness; yea, and that which is yet more, holiness reflects honour, not only upon a man's own person, but it reflects honour also upon a man's near and dear relations, yea, upon the very country, city, or town where he was born, as is made good at large in the sixth motive to holiness, to which I refer you for more full and complete satisfaction to this objection. But,

[2.] Secondly, Ah, how is man fallen from his primitive glory, that looks now upon holiness as his disgrace, as his discredit and dishonour, which in innocency was the top and crown of all his glory and felicity! Ah, how has sin blinded, bebested, and besotted the sons of men, that they should look upon that to be their reproach which is their highest honour in this world, and to look upon that to be their disgrace which alone puts a grace upon them, and to look upon that to be their discredit which can only bring them into credit with God, angels, and good men! Augustine confesseth that it was just thus sometimes with him, for he was stricken with such blindness, that he thought it a shame unto him to be less vile and wicked than his companions, whom he heard boast of their lewdness, and glory so much the more, by how much they were the more filthy;³ therefore, saith

he, lest I should be of no account, I was the more vicious, and when I could not otherwise match others, I would feign that I had done those things which I never did, lest I should seem so much the more abject by how much I was the more innocent, and so much the more vile by how much I was the more chaste. Ah, what will not a soul blinded by sin say and do, when the work of holiness is not formed in him! Sin has certainly cast that sinner into a woeful lethargy, who is the father of this objection. Now, it is observed of those that are fallen into a lethargy, that their bodies are subject to a continual drowsiness, and their memories are so weak that they cannot remember anything that they speak or do; nay, it does so far debase them that they forget the very necessary actions of life: and just so has sin dealt with these objectors' souls, it has cast them under such a spiritual drowsiness, yea, it has cast them into such a deadly and fearful sleep, that it makes them forget the unum necessarium, the one thing necessary—viz., holiness. Souls under a spiritual lethargy forget their lost and lamentable condition, they forget how far off they are from God, Christ, heaven, and salvation, and they forget how near they are to hell, to ruin, to everlasting burnings, and to utter perdition and destruction. It is observable of the smith's dog, that neither the noise of hammers by him, nor the sparks of fire flying about him, nor those that light upon him, do any whit awaken him, but he snorts and sleeps on securely in the midst of all; so sin has cast the sinner into so deep a sleep, that though the sparks of hell-fire in the threatenings fly about him, and the hammers of God's judgments make a noise on all sides of him, yet he is so stupefied and benumbed that nothing will awaken him to behold his spiritual and eternal hazard, but he sleeps on securely, and so is like to do, if infinite grace and mercy does not prevent, till he awakes with everlasting flames about his ears. When a man is in a deep lethargy, if you pinch him with pincers, or prick him with needles, he feels it not; if you scourge him he cries not, if you threaten him he fears not, or if you speak him fair he regards it not, &c. Now this is the condition of such that are in a spiritual lethargy; let the judgments of God be denounced, and let the terrors of the law be preached, they tremble not; let the flames of hell-fire flash upon their souls, they regard it not, for they are sermon-proof, and judgment-proof, and hell-proof. Now this is thy very case, O sinner! who criest out that the pursuit of holiness will turn to thy disgrace and discredit in the world; for were thy eyes but open to see the necessity, beauty, and excellency of holiness, oh, then thou wouldst call for holiness, and cry for holiness, and search for holiness, and press for holiness, as that which is the chiefest ornament, and the only honour and glory of the creature. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That it is not holiness, but wickedness, it is not sancity, but impiety, that is the reproach, the dishonour, the disgrace, and disparagement of man: Pro 14:34, 'Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people,' or as the Hebrew has it, 'to nations.' The world usually accounts either beggarliness of estate, or badness of situation, or rudeness of behaviour, or changes in government, or dulness of invention, or a disuse of arms, or some suchlike imperfections, to be the reproach of nations; but the Holy Ghost tells us that it is sin, it is sin that is the reproach of nations, that is the shame of nations, that is the contempt and scorn of nations, and that blots and blurs all the excellencies and glories of nations. Impious persons makes the nations infamous; and the more impious any nation, city, or person is, the more infamous that nation, city, or person is: Pro 6:32-33, 'But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' There is nothing that is such a blemish and such a wound to a man's honour as sin. Sin leaves such a blot, such a blur, and such a reproach upon a man's name, fame, and reputation, that no art, no pains shall ever be able to wipe it out. All the water in

the sea cannot wash away, nor all the rubbing in the world cannot wipe away the disgrace, disdain, and contempt, that enormities, that wickednesses lays a people under: Jer 24:9, 'And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.' It was not for their holiness, their godliness, but for their wickedness and ungodliness, that God was resolved to make them a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places: Pro 10:7, 'The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot.' The wickedness of the wicked heaps so much disgrace, disparagement, and dishonour upon them, that it makes their very names to rot and stink above-ground; their carcasses do not more rot and stink under-ground, than their very names do rot and stink above-ground. The wickedness of the wicked will make their very names such a detestation and such an abhorring, that they shall either not be remembered at all, or if they be, they shall be only remembered as a rotten, slinking, putrified thing. As the curse of God follows the soul of a wicked man to hell, so the curse of God follows the name of a wicked man on earth, so that it becomes most noisome and loathsome among the sons of men. Sin does so debase and bebase the great ones of the world, that the prophets, as Grotius hath rightly observed, use to set forth wicked kings by the names of beasts—as the goat, the ram, the leopard, the bear—to note the beastliness of their conditions, and because they commonly maintain and exercise their government by brutish violence and tyranny, Dan 7:3-7; Pro 28:15-16. And Christ himself, who never spoke treason nor sedition, terms king Herod a fox in that Luk 13:32, 'And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.' Herod was as crafty and as subtle as a fox, he was as cruel and as fraudulent as a fox, and therefore he is very fitly termed by Christ a fox. And so Paul describes Nero by the name of a lion: 2Ti 4:17, 'And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion'—that is, out of the mouth of Nero, who for his power and cruelty was like a lion, for he was a most cruel and desperate persecutor of the Christians, and made a bloody decree, that 'whosoever confessed himself a Christian, should without any more ado be put to death as a convicted enemy of mankind.' Now, by what has been said, you see that it is not holiness but wickedness that is the greatest disgrace, dishonour, and disparagement imaginable to the sons of men; and therefore there is no reason why the great ones of the world should disdain to pursue after holiness upon the account of this objection. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, That this objection savours strongly of cursed pride, and of hellish loftiness and stateliness of spirit; for who art thou, O great mountain! who are thou, O great man! or what art thou, O mighty man! Zec 4:2; but that thou mayest be dishonoured and disparaged for holiness' sake? What are thy great swelling titles, but as so many rattles? what are thy honours, but as so many meteors? and what is all thy worldly greatness, but a wind that may blow thee the sooner to hell? All thy glory is but a glorious fancy, a magnum nihil, a great nothing; and this Haman and Herod found by experience, and so did Julius Cæsar and Augustus Cæsar, who gave a charge to the prætors of Rome, that they should not suffer his name to be worn threadbare. Bajazet, who was one of the greatest commanders in the world, was carried about in an iron grate to be a footstool to an insulting conqueror. And Belisarius, the most famous general that the latter age of the Roman empire knew, and in greatest favour with Justinian his prince, was reduced to that great want that he was fain to beg his bread. And thus in all ages men have quickly fallen from the highest pinnacle of honour, to sit with Job upon the dunghill. The true honour of a soldier lies not in boasting of the nobleness of his lineage, nor in the blaz[on]ing of his arms, nor in telling of large

stories of his pedigrees and genealogies, nor in his brave clothes, nor in his rich plunder, &c., but his honour lies in a torn buckler, a cracked helmet, a blunt sword, and in the scars and wounds that he has received in the defence of his country; so thy true honour, O thou great piece of vanity! that makest this objection, does not lie in thy coat of arms, nor in thy great titles, nor in thy great lordships and manors, nor in thy high birth, &c., but in thy interest in Christ, in thy new birth, in thy being an heir of the promises, in thy title to heaven, and in thy pursuit after holiness; and verily, if you should live and die without these things, it had been ten thousand times better that you had been brought up in a cave, than that you had been brought up at court; and that you had all your days lain under a hedge, than that you have sit so long upon seats of honour; and that you had begged your bread from door to door, than that you have had your full cups and full tables; and that you had been clothed with rags, than that you have put on costly robes; and that you had rather been a-turning of spits, than a-tossing of pots or pipes, for the great things of this world does but lay men the more open to great temptations, and to great provocations, even to commit the greatest abominations. O sirs, suppose a criminous² person, who is led to execution, should engrave his coat of arms upon the prison gate, would he not be accounted vain and mad? and yet such is the madness and vanity of the great ones of this world, that they endeavour with the greatest industry to leave monuments of their dignity in the prison of this world, but take no care to make provision for another world, Psa 49:10-15; and all this is out of the horrid pride and loftiness of their spirits: Psa 10:4, 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.' There is nothing that hinders a man from seeking after a holy God, and from pursuing after holiness, like pride. A proud heart is too stout to think of holiness, or to mind holiness, or to prize holiness, or to press after holiness. 'Who is the Lord,' says proud Pharaoh, 'that I should serve him?' Exo 5:2. So says the proud heart, Who is holiness, and what is holiness, that I should seek it, and press so hard after it? As there is no sin that fortifies the heart against holiness like pride, so there is no sin that weakens and disenables the heart to pursue after holiness like pride. O you proud and lofty ones of the world, who look upon holiness as a poor, low, contemptible thing, tell me, what are all your noble births, and great estates, &c., but trifles that God bestows upon the worst and basest of men? 'The whole Turkish empire,' says Luther, 'is but a crust that God casts to a dog.' Tell me whether the fly and the worm, yea, the most contemptible creature, if there be any such, was not man's elder brother at his first creation; and if so, why then should vain man be proud? Oh, tell me whether thou hast ever laid to heart that soul-abasing and soul-humbling text, Psa 39:5, 'Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Selah.' 'Verily' lets that in, and 'Selah' shuts that up; 'verily every man'—not some man, but 'every man;' Col Adam, Col Hebel, All Adam is all vanity, or every man is every vanity. Every man is a comprehensive vanity, every rich man is every vanity, and every great man is every vanity, and every mighty man is every vanity, and every noble man is every vanity; yea, and that which is yet more, 'every man at his best estate,' not in his childhood or decrepit age, but in his best estate, when he is best constituted and underlaid, when he is most firmly fixed and settled on his best bottom, yet even then he is vanity. The original runs [■■■■] thus, 'every man standing,' that is, as some carry it, standing a-tiptoe in all his gallantry and bravery, in all his beauty and glory, and in all his pomp and majesty, is vanity, yea, every vanity. Well sirs, remember this, that as rotten wood and glow-worms make a glorious show in the night, but when the day appears they appear to be poor, despicable, base creatures; so though now the high, the great, and mighty ones of the earth shine and gloriously sparkle in the darkness of this world, yet in that day when the Sun of

righteousness shall arise, and manifest the secrets of all hearts to the world, and strip the great ones of all their titles of honour, and their noble parentage, and their rich and royal robes, and their troops and trains, and their crowns and chains, then they will appear to be but base and despicable creatures; then their poverty and misery, their nakedness and vileness will appear to all the world; then the world shall see that riches without righteousness, power without piety, and greatness without holiness, will do the gods of this world no good. Oh that thou hadst now a heart to weep over that pride of heart that keeps thee from pursuing after holiness, that so thou mayest not weep to all eternity in utter darkness! But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, That there are no persons under heaven that stand so much obliged to look after holiness, and to press with all their might to obtain holiness, as the rich, the great, the mighty, and the honourable of the earth. For, first, why has God made them greater than others, but that they should labour to be better than others? They are therefore higher than others, that they may be holier than others. The greatness of their outward glory calls aloud upon them to excel in sanctity; and woe to them that are resolved to be worse than others, because God has done more for them than he has for others. Secondly, They of all men have more time, leisure, and advantages to hear much that they may be holy, and to read much that they may be holy, and to pray much that they may be holy, and to confer much with all sorts and ranks of men, that they may be holy; and therefore it concerns them above all other men in the world to be holy. Other men have neither the time nor the advantages to gain holiness as these men have. The poor people in Sweden say that it is only for gentlemen to keep the Sabbath. But thirdly, Their examples are most powerful and prevalent with the people, either for much good, or for much evil, Pro 29:12. If the mountains over flow with waters, the valleys are the better; and if the head be full of ill humours, the whole body fares the worse. The actions of rulers are most commonly rules for the people's actions, and their examples passeth as current as their coin. If their examples are evil, there are none so dangerous as theirs. Jeroboam the son of Nebat is never mentioned in the Scripture, nor never read of in the chronicles of Israel, but he draws a tail after him, like a blazing star, 'who made Israel to sin.' A sick head disordereth all the other parts, and a dark eye benights the whole body. The evil examples of great men corrupts the air round about. The common people are like tempered wax, easily receiving impressions from the seals of great men's vices. If a peasant meet with luxury in a scarlet robe, he dares be such, having so fair a cloak for it. If the vulgar people meet with drunkenness under a black cassock, they dare be such; they make no bones on it to sin by prescription, and to damn themselves with authority. Austin brings in some excusing their compliances with the sinful customs of those times in drinking healths, thus, Great personages urged it, and it was at the king's banquet, where they judged of loyalty by luxury, and put us upon this election, drink or die. They thought it a sufficient excuse to plead the examples of great men. And if their examples are virtuous, there are none so winning and drawing as theirs. It is observable in the very course of nature, that the highest spheres are always the swiftest in their motion, and carry about with them the inferior orbs by their celerity; so men that are high and eminent in authority, power, and dignity, and eminent also in grace and holiness, they carry the inferior people by their examples to a liking of holiness, and to a love of holiness, and to a pursuit after holiness. As the biggest stars in the firmament are always the brightest, and gives the greatest lustre to those of a lesser magnitude; so those that, in respect both of greatness and grace, are so many shining stars, they give the greatest light and lustre to others by their shining conversations. Oh, what a world of good will the gracious example of a good prince provoke unto!

It was the saying of Trajanus, a Spaniard, *Qualis rex, talis grex*, Subjects prove good by a good king's example. Stories tells us of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The gracious examples of great men are very awakening, quickening, and provoking to that which is good, as is most evident in all those kingdoms, countries, cities, and villages where such men live. And therefore great men are the more obliged to be good men, and honourable men to be holy men. But, fourthly, of all men under heaven you will have the greatest accounts to make up with God; and therefore you have the more cause to seek after holiness. Where God gives much there he looks for much, Luk 12:48. O sirs, God will bring you to an account for that talent of honour, and that talent of wealth, and that talent of birth, and that talent of power, and that talent of authority, and that talent of interest, and that talent of time, &c., that he has entrusted you with; and how will you be able to stand in the day of account without holiness in your hearts? King Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professing that he would rather lose all his kingdoms than offend God willingly; yet, being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of his account that he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words brake from him: 'Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh that those years I have spent in my kingdom I had lived a private life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely should I have now died! How much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What does all my glory profit me, but that I have so much the more torment in my death! Well, gentlemen, there is a day a-coming wherein the Lord will call you to a strict account, both for the principal, and also for the interest of all those talents of honour, riches, and greatness, &c., that he has put into your hands, and how will you be ever able to hold up your heads in this day of account, without you experience principles of holiness in your hearts, and hold forth the power of godliness in your lives? If Saul was astonished when he heard Jesus of Nazareth but calling upon him, Acts 22:7-8; if Herod was affrighted when he thought that John Baptist was risen from the dead, Mark 6:16; if the Philistines were afraid when they saw David's sword, 1Sa 21:9; if the Israelites were appalled when they saw Aaron's rod, Num 7:10; if Judah was ashamed when he saw Tamar's signet and staff, Gen 38:2; and if Belshazzar was amazed when he saw the handwriting on the wall, Dan 5:9, oh, how astonished, how affrighted, how ashamed, and how amazed will the great ones of the world be, who live and die without holiness, when God shall bring them to the bar, and command them to give an account of all the talents that he has put into their hands! If the Carthaginians were troubled when they saw Scipio's sepulchre; if the Saxons were terrified when they saw Cadwallon's image; and if the Romans were dashed when they saw Cæsar's bloody robe; ah! how will all the great unholy ones of the earth be troubled, terrified, and dashed in the great day of their accounts! There are none that will have such large accounts to give up as the great ones of the world, and therefore there are none that stand so strongly engaged to look after holiness as they do. But, fifthly, the greater any men are on earth, if they live and die without holiness, the greater will be their torments in hell; all their greatness, glory, and gallantry will but sink them the lower in hell. The Scribes and Pharisees were the rich, the high, and the great ones of the times, and these Christ lays under the greater damnation, Mat 23:14. The Germans have this proverb, 'The pavement of hell,' say they, 'is made of the bare skulls of the priests, and the glorious crests of gallants.' Their meaning is, that the more eminent any are in church or state, and do not employ their eminency, power, and authority in ways of piety and sanctity, the lower they shall lie in hell, yea, these men, of all others, shall lie lowest in hell, Rev 18:7. 'How much,' or inasmuch as, 'she

hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow,' Isa 47:8. Babylon's torment and sorrow must be suitable to her sin. Babylon excelled all others in pride, haughtiness, luxury, and blasphemy, &c., and her punishments must be answerable; so the great, the rich, the high, and the mighty men of the world, they usually exceed all others in pride, drunkenness, uncleanness, filthiness, oppression, vainglory, gluttony, and tyranny, &c., and answerable to their sins will be their torments and their punishments in hell: Isa 30:33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old,' ay, it may be for the poor, mean, and beggarly of the world; 'yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Alas! the brick-kilns of Egypt and the furnace of Babylon were but as a blaze of straw to this tormenting Tophet, that has been prepared of old for the great and mighty ones of the earth! Oh, how dreadful must that fire be that is prepared by God himself, and that is kindled by the breath of the Lord, and that shall never be quenched! and yet such is the fire that is prepared for the great and mighty ones of the world! Oh, the easeless, the endless, the remediless, the unsufferable, and yet the inevitable torments that are prepared for those that are great and graceless! In hell their wanton eyes shall be tormented with ugly and fearful sights of ghastly spirits; and their ears, that used to be delighted with all delightful music, shall now be filled with the hideous cries, howlings, and yellings of devils and damned spirits; and their tongues of blasphemy shall now be tormented with drought and thirst; and though with the glutton they cry out for a drop to cool their tongues, yet justice will deny them drops who have denied others crumbs; and their hands of bribery, cruelty, and tyranny shall now be bound with everlasting chains, and so shall their feet, which were once swift to shed innocent blood. In a word, their torments shall be universal, they shall extend to every member of the body, and to every faculty of the soul. Ah, sirs! fire, sword, famine, prisons, racks, and all other torments that men can invent, are but as flea-bitings to those scorpions, but as drops to those vials of wrath, and but as sparks to those eternal flames that all unsanctified persons shall lie under. Look, as the least joy in heaven infinitely surpasseth the greatest comforts on earth, so the least torments in hell do infinitely exceed the greatest that can be devised here on earth. For a close remember this, as there are degrees of glory in heaven, so there are degrees of torment in hell; and as those that are most eminent in grace and holiness shall have the greatest degrees of glory in heaven, so those that are most vile and wicked on earth shall have the greatest degrees of torments and punishments in hell.² Now common experience tells us that the rich, the great, the high, the honourable, and the mighty ones of the world are usually the most excelling in all wickedness and ungodliness; and therefore their condemnation will be the greater, they shall have a hotter and a darker hell than others, except they labour after this holiness, which will be their only fence against hell, and their sure path to heaven. But, sixthly and lastly, of all men on earth the rich, the great, and the honourable will be found most inexcusable. The poor and the mean ones of the earth will plead their want of time, and want of means, and want of opportunities; they will be ready to say, Lord, we have risen early, and gone to bed late, Psa 127:1-2, we have laboured, and sweat, and droyled, and all little enough to get bread to eat, and clothes to wear, and to keep the sergeant from the door, and to pay every man his own. Had we had but the time, the means, the advantages that such and such gentlemen have had, and that such and such nobles have had, and that such and such princes have had, &c.,² oh, how we would have minded holiness, and studied holiness, and pressed after holiness! But seeing it has been otherwise with us, we hope,

Lord, we may be excused. But what excuse will you be able to make, O ye great ones of the earth, who have had time, and opportunities, and all advantages imaginable, to make yourselves holy and happy for ever, and yet you have trifled away your golden seasons, and forgotten the one thing necessary, and given yourselves up to the lusts and vanities of this world, as if you were resolved to be damned? Let me a little allude to that John 15:22 : 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak or excuse for their sin.' So will God one day say to the great ones of the world: Had I not given you riches, and greatness, and honour, &c., to have encouraged you to look after holiness, and that you might have time, and leisure, and opportunity to seek holiness and pursue it, you might have had some cloak, some excuse for your neglecting so great, so glorious, so noble, and so necessary a work. Oh! but now you have no cloak, no excuse at all for your sin. Now you can shew no reason under heaven why an eternal doom should not be passed upon you; and ah how silent, how mute, how speechless, and how self-condemned, will all the great ones of the world be, when God shall thus expostulate with them! Oh that such would seriously lay to heart that Mat 22:11-12 : 'And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how Camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.' By the wedding garment the learned understand holiness of heart and life. Now when the king questions him about the want of this wedding garment, he is speechless, or as the Greek word ■φμ■θη imports, 'he was muzzled or haltered up,' that is, he held his peace, as though he had a bridle or a halter in his mouth; he was not able to speak a word for himself, his own conscience had passed a secret sentence of condemnation upon him, and he sat silent under that sentence, as having nothing under heaven to say why he should not be cast into utter darkness. And this will be the very case of all the rich, the great, and the mighty ones of the world, who shall be found without the garment of holiness, when the Lord shall enter into judgment with them. And thus you see by these six arguments, that there are no persons under heaven that are so eminently engaged to look after holiness, as the rich, the great, and the mighty ones of the earth. But,

Object. 7. Seventhly and lastly, Others may object and say, Should we pursue after holiness, we shall be sure to be reviled, slandered, and reproached on all hands; every one will hoot and hiss at us, we shall become a scorn and a byword to all that live, in the family with us, and to all our neighbours round about us, every one will scorn us, and hate us, and we shall be their table-talk, and their song, and the butt at which they will shoot in all their meetings and discourses, &c.

Now that you may be sufficiently armed against this objection, I desire you seriously to consider of these five following answers:

[1.] First, That those that revile and reproach holiness, are such that have never known the necessity nor the excellency of holiness; they have never experienced the power nor the sweetness of holiness; they speak evil of things they know not, of things they understand not, Jude 1:10; 1Ti 1:7. Not to know is man's misery, but to speak evil of that which a man understands not is the height of folly; and this these revilers do. 'Had they known,' saith the apostle, 'they would not have crucified the Lord of glory,' 1Co 2:8; so I say, had these revilers known the splendour, the beauty, and the glory of holiness, they would never have reviled it and scorned it. Had the Jews known the Godhead of Christ, the divinity of Christ, the glory of Christ, they would never have cried up Barabbas, and have railed on Jesus as they did: so, had these railers but known the worth and the weight of holiness, they would never have cried up wickedness, and decried holiness as they

do. Now, oh what shame, what folly, what vanity is it for a man to turn his back upon holiness because such revile it and scorn it, who never knew feelingly, nor experimentally, what holiness was! Would not a man either sigh or laugh at him that should turn his back upon riches, honours, and preferments, &c., because the blind, poor, and beggarly sort of people, who never experienced what these things mean, casts dirt, dung, scorn, and reproach upon them? and is not this the present case? Surely yes. The fox in the fable, when he could not come at the grapes, cried out, that 'they were sour, they were sour;' so men that cannot reach to the riches, the honours, and the great things of the world, oh, how do they cry out against these things! oh, what disgrace, scorn, and contempt do they cast upon these things! and all because they cannot reach them, because they cannot grasp them. The application is easy. It is men's ignorance of holiness that makes them cry out so much of holiness. That heathen, Aristotle, hit the mark when he cried out, Ignorat sane improbus omnis, Ignorance is the source of all sin; the very well-spring from whence all wickedness flows; for ignorance enslaves the soul to Satan, it lets in sins by troops, and then locks them up in the heart, and it shuts out all the means of recovery, &c. And who then will wonder to see ignorant persons let fly at holiness? Suppose a geometrician should be drawing of lines and figures, and there should come in some silly, ignorant fellow, who seeing him, should laugh at him, would the artist, think you, leave off his employment because of his derision? Surely no; for he knows that his laughter is but the fruit of his ignorance, as not knowing his art, and the grounds upon which he goes; and therefore he holds on drawing, though the silly fellow should hold on in his laughing. O sirs, though ignorant persons deride holiness, and laugh at holiness, yet be not you ashamed of holiness, but hold on, and hold out in your pursuit after holiness, for they understand not the rules and principles by which you are acted; and therefore it is that they throw dirt in the face of holiness; but it will be your wisdom to wipe that off, and so much the more to pursue after holiness, by how much the more the silly ones of the world slight holiness, and laugh at holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is no fence against an evil tongue. A man may fence himself against an evil eye, and against an evil hand, and against an evil head, &c., but there is no fence against an evil tongue. An evil tongue is such an unruly, such a mischievous, such a dangerous, such a killing, and such a destroying member, that there is no fence against it. A man may fence off the stroke of a sword, the thrust of a rapier, and the shot of an arrow, but he can never fence off the reproach and the reviling of an evil tongue. If the heart be sanctified the tongue is the best member in the body; if the heart be unsanctified it is the worst. Æsop being by his master sent to buy up all the best meat he could get in the market, bought up all the tongues; and being sent again to buy up all the worst meat he could get in the market, he bought up all the tongues again; and when he was asked why he did so, he answered, that there was no flesh better than a good tongue, nor no flesh worser than a bad tongue; which the apostle confirms fully in that Jas 3:2-12. An evil tongue is wilder than the wildest beast. The horse, the ass, the camel, the elephant, yea, the lion, the leopard, the bear, and all other beasts, have been tamed by man; but the tongue, no man, no monarch, on earth have ever been able to tame. An evil tongue, in some respect, is worse than the devil; for the devil may be shunned and avoided, but an evil tongue no man can shun; and if you resist the devil he will fly from you, but the more you resist an evil tongue the more it will fly upon you: Pro 16:27, 'An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is a burning fire.' An ungodly man, or a man of Belial, as the original has it, 'digs up evil.' Such old evils that have been long since buried in the grave of oblivion and forgetfulness, he digs up to cast in the saints' dishes,

and to reproach them with. The teeth of malice will be still a-digging to find out something against the people of God, and if they can pick up anything out of the dunghill of false reports to object against them, their lips presently are as so many burning beacons to discover it to all the world. Now their tongues will be set on fire of hell, and now they will labour to fire the hearts and tongues of others against the people of God. A wicked tongue, as Bernard observes, kills three at once: first, it kills his name and fame by ill report who is slandered; secondly, it kills his belief with a lie to whom the report is made; thirdly, it kills the slanderer himself with the sin of detraction. David, who fell oftener under the sad lashes of evil tongues, compares reviling tongues to three fatal weapons: a razor, a sword, and an arrow. 1. To a razor in that Psa 52:2. Now you know a razor meets with every little hair, and many times instead of shaving the hair it slashes the flesh; and sometimes by missing the beard it endangers the throat. And so the reviling tongue will take the least advantage imaginable to slash and cut the names and reputations of those that fear the Lord in a thousand pieces. 2. To a sword, Psa 57:4, that cuts and wounds deep; and so does the reviler's tongue cut deeply into the names, fames, and credits of the people of God; and, 3. To an arrow, Psa 64:3. The sword only cuts when we are near, but the arrow hits at a distance; the sword cannot cut except we be at hand, but the arrow may hit us when we are afar off. The reviler can easily shoot his arrows of reproach a great way off; he can shoot them from one town to another, from one city to another, from one kingdom to another, yea, from one end of the earth to the other, Psa 73:9. When the hands are manacled, and the feet fettered and stocked, the tongue travels freely all the world over, and loads the names of men with what reproaches it pleaseth. The tongue is the great interpreter of the heart; the tongue is the key that unlocks those treasures of wickedness that be in the heart; the corruptions of men's hearts commonly breaks forth at their lips, Mat 12:34. Look, as a pimpled face discovers a distempered liver, and as a stinking breath discovers corrupted lungs, so a reviling tongue discovers a base rotten heart. When the pump goes you may quickly know whether the water that is in the fountain or well be clear or muddy, sweet or stinking; and when the clapper strikes you may soon guess of what metal the bell is made of; and so by men's tongues you may easily guess what is in their hearts. If the tongue be vil'd,² the heart is so; if the tongue be bloody, the heart is so; if the tongue be adulterous, the heart is so; if the tongue be malicious, the heart is so; if the tongue be covetous, the heart is so; and if the tongue be cruel, the heart is so, &c. Men's minds are known by their mouths. If the mouth be bad, the mind is not good. He that is rotten in his talk, is commonly rotten in the heart. Of all the members of the body there is none so serviceable to Satan as an evil tongue; and therefore when all the body is full of sores he will keep the tongue from blisters, that so a man may the more freely and fully curse God and die. And this was the reason why Satan spared Job's tongue, when he sadly paid⁴ all other members of his body, that so his grand design, which was to provoke Job both to curse God and to charge him foolishly, might take place; but Job's tongue be-oiled with grace, proved his glory in his trying hour; and instead of cursing, he blesses a taking God, an angry God. O sirs, the world is as full of evil tongues as Nilus of crocodiles, or as Sodom of sulphur, or as Egypt of lice; and there is no fence, no guard against these evil tongues; and therefore why should any man be discouraged from pursuing after holiness, because of the revilings of evil tongues? Munster writes of men in India which speak not like men, but bark like dogs; and who regards such men? no more should we regard such foul-mouthed persons who are still barking against holiness, as the dogs bark against the moon; but as the moon runs her race and holds her course, though all the dogs in the town bark never so much at it; so should you pursue after holiness, though all the tongues in the town

should be barking and scoffing at you. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that those that now reproach holiness will ere long be of another mind, they that now revile and reproach holiness will in a short time change their minds and their notes. When these very men who revile holiness shall come to fall under terrors and horrors of conscience, and when they shall come to lie upon their dying beds, and to have their immortal souls sit trembling and quaking upon their pale lips, and when they shall appear before the great God, and awake with everlasting flames about their ears, oh, how will they then wish that they had never reviled holiness! How will they then wish that they had prized holiness, and that they had spent their all in pursuing after holiness! Num 23:10. Oh, how will they then charge themselves, and censure themselves, and arraign and condemn themselves, for their scorning and condemning of holiness! Oh, how will they then wish that they had never heard of holiness, nor read of holiness, nor thought of holiness! Oh, how will they then wish that their mothers' wombs had proved their tombs, and that they had rather lived and died in a land of darkness, than thus to live and die without holiness! Now, oh, what folly and madness is it for thee to neglect the pursuit of holiness, because such and such revile it, who perhaps before the next year, the next month, yea it may be the next Sabbath comes about, will wish ten thousand times over and over that they had pursued after it, and that they had made it their greatest work in this world to obtain it! But,

[4.] Fourthly, Such persons who are revilers, deriders, and haters of holiness, should rather be divinely contemned, scorned, and slighted, than anyways gratified, encouraged, pleased, and strengthened in their evil ways by thy neglect of holiness, and by thy non-pursuance after holiness. Oh, how may thy neglect of holiness upon the account of revilings and scornings strengthen the hands and the hearts of revilers and scornors! &c., Eze 13:19, seq.; and therefore it is much better divinely to slight and disdain them, than by sinful omissions to gratify and please them. See how slighting Elisha carries it to wicked Jehoram, though he was a king: 2Ki 3:13-14, 'And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father and prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.' It was not the great distress and danger that they were in, being like to perish for want of water, nor the dignity of kings, nor the number of three, but the goodness, the graciousness, and holiness of Jehoshaphat, that wrought upon Elisha to work a miracle to preserve them and their people alive. The holy prophet carries it very high towards this unholy prince, for had it not been for Jehoshaphat, he would not have honoured him with a look, no, not with a cast of his eye. These words, 'I would not look toward thee, nor see thee,' are words of a very high strain, and speak out a great deal of holy loftiness, stateliness, and contempt towards king Jehoram. And the same spirit was working in Mordecai towards wicked Haman, as you may see in that Est 3:2, 'And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate bowed and revered Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him; but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.' The Persian kings, as many other heathenish kings, were revered by their subjects with a kind of divine honour or service; and such reverence and honour the king commanded should be showed to his great favourite Haman; but this renowned Mordecai refused to do. He was so divinely noble and stout, that he would not reverence such a wicked wretch in his heart, nor yet yield to him that outward worship that was required by the king,

it being more than was due to a man. Some of the Rabbins say, as Aben Ezra, &c., that Haman had the image of some false god about him, and that therefore Mordecai would not bow before him, lest he might seem to bow to the idol that Haman carried about him: others of the Rabbins say, as R. Solomon, &c., that Haman did make himself a god, and required such worship as was due only to the true God, and that therefore Mordecai would not reverence him, nor bow before him. And so Junius and other expositors say that it was more honour than did belong to a man that they gave to Haman; and that therefore Mordecai refused to bow to him. And it is very remarkable that some of the wisest and best of heathens have forborne to come into their king's presence, because there was expected greater honour and worship to be done to their kings than was meet to be done to a mortal man. But that which is most considerable, and most probable, is this, that therefore Mordecai refused to reverence Haman, and to bow unto him, because he was a wicked Amalekite, and a bitter enemy to the people of God, and of that nation and of that stock whose remembrance God would have blotted out under heaven, Exo 17:14; Deu 25:19; and with whom the Lord had sworn that he would have war from generation to generation, until they were utterly wasted and destroyed, Exo 17:16, compared with that 1Sa 15:3.

It has been usual with the saints to slight such who have been slights of Christ and holiness. When Amphilochius the bishop came into the presence of the emperor Arcadius and his son, who was then partner with his father in the empire, he saluted the emperor with all reverence, but slighted his son, whereupon the emperor was very much displeased, and demanding the reason why he so slighted his son? the bishop answered, because he had slighted and neglected the eternal Son of God, he being at that time a professed Arian; whereupon the emperor received the bishop again into favour, and banished all Arians out of his dominions. I have read of one Maris, a godly bishop of Chalcedon, who, being blind, and Julian, that apostate emperor, giving him some opprobrious words, calling him blind fool, because he had rebuked him for his apostasy, the good man answered thus, 'I bless God that I have not my sight, to see such an ungracious face as thine is.' Do your worst, do your worst, said Justin Martyr slightly to his persecutors, but this I tell you, you may put all that you are like to gain by the bargain into your eye, and weep it out again. When a great lord of this land, who was as graceless as he was great, met Mr Fox in London streets, and asked him how he did, Mr Fox said little or nothing to him; whereupon says this great lord, Sir, do you not know me? No, not I, said Mr Fox; says the lord, I am such a one; Sir, said Mr Fox, I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Polycarpus meeting at a certain time with Marcion the heretic: says Marcion, Don't you know me? Yea, said Polycarpus, I know thee to be primo-genitum diaboli, The first-begotten child of the devil. And indeed, why should we prefer him before a piece of copper, that prefers a piece of gold before his God, yea, that prefers his lusts and every toy and trifle before Jesus Christ, his immortal soul, and the great concerns of another world? God commanded in the old law that whatsoever did go with its breasts upon the ground, should be an abomination to us. Oh, how much more should we abominate that man whose heart and soul is glued unto a piece of earth, or to this or that defiling and destroying lust: Pro 29:27, 'An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.' The quarrel between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is almost six thousand years old, Gen 3:15. Light and darkness, heaven and hell, are not more opposite and contrary one to another, than these are contrary one to another. That seed of enmity that was at first between them is now grown up on both sides to an abomination, and an abhorring of each other. The just man saith, What have I to do with thee, thou son of Belial? and the unjust man

saith, What have I to do with thee, thou son of David? The original in the text last cited is observable, the just abhorreth, ■■■■ ■■■■, vir iniquitatis, the man of iniquity, i.e., the man that is made up of iniquity, that is, nothing but iniquity. Now, this shews that it is iniquity in the man that makes the man to be an abomination to the just; but now wicked men they abhor the upright for their very uprightness, they abhor him that is upright in the way, and could wish him quite out of the way, and will do what they can to make him away. The uprightness of the upright is such a terror to the wicked that they cannot but abominate and abhor the upright; and therefore, no wonder if the upright abominate them; and indeed, who can look upon wicked men, as enemies to God, as adversaries to Christ, as murderers of their own souls, as fighters against the church, as champions for Satan, and as pests and plague of a nation, and not abhor them, and not abominate them? O sirs, not to condemn the wicked is an argument that you yourselves are wicked; and not to condemn the wicked is a means to make them more wicked; not to condemn the wicked is to encourage and tempt the wicked to be sevenfold more wicked; yea, not to condemn the wicked, who condemn God, Christ, heaven, and holiness, &c., is to condemn God himself. As for such that advance the wicked, that magnify the wicked, that flatter the wicked, that strengthen the hands of the wicked, that are most in with the wicked, that joy and glory in the prosperity of the wicked, and that sigh and mourn, that stamp and take on at the downfall of the wicked; these are certainly wicked, yea, they are eminently wicked, and therefore the more to be slighted and scorned by men of integrity and sanctity. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To neglect the pursuit of holiness upon the account of this objection, is to debase the great God, and to overvalue vain man, as if there were more power, ability, policy, and malice, &c., in worthless man to hurt and harm thee, than there is power, all-sufficiency, wisdom, goodness, and graciousness in God to defend thee, and secure thee, and arm thee against all the reproaches and revilings of slanderous tongues. Now who art thou, and what art thou, O vain man! that thou shouldst dare to lessen God and greatness of man, to debase God and exalt man, yea, to set up man above God himself, and to ungod him as much as in thee lies? And yet all this thou doest when thou turnest thy back upon holiness, because of the revilings and reproaches of wicked men. But I shall say no more to this objection, because I have spoken very largely to this objection in my former books. If you desire further satisfaction to this objection, turn to that treatise called 'Apples of Gold,' &c., and from page 311 to page 327, you will find seven more distinct answers to it. And see also my 'Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod,' and from page 304 to page 326 you will find eight answers more to this objection. I confess several other objections might be made against your pursuing after holiness, but because I have spoken to them at large in my former writings, therefore I shall not trouble you with them here; and therefore let thus much suffice for answer to those objections that usually men make when they are pressed home to follow after holiness. And so I shall come now to the second part of the exhortation, and that relates to God's holy ones, to his sanctified ones, to those that have obtained holiness, that have experienced the principles, the power, the life, and the sweetness of holiness. And here let me exhort such, 1. First, To express, declare, evidence, and hold forth both the reality and power of holiness; and that,

[1.] First, By keeping yourselves free from gross enormities, from scandalous wickednesses, Rom 2:23-25. Oh, remember that one scandalous sin will obscure and cloud all your graces and spiritual excellencies. Look, as one spot in the face spoils all the beauty, and one blot upon the copy obliterates the whole copy, and as one drop of ink coloureth a whole glass of clear water; so

one scandalous sin will blot and blur all former acts of piety and holiness, it will stain all a man's duties and services, it will deface all a man's contentments and enjoyments, it will dash and rase out all those golden characters of righteousness and goodness that have been stamped upon the soul. The Babylonians beholding the enormities of the Jews, cried out, 'These are the people of the Lord, these are come out of the Lord's land,' Eze 36:20. David's one act of folly with Bathsheba made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. When one commended Alexander for his many noble acts, another objected thus against him, Ay, but he killed Calisthenes: he was valiant and successful in the wars; ay, but he killed Calisthenes: he overcame the great Darius; ay, but he killed Calisthenes: his meaning was, that this one unjust and unrighteous action clouded and darkened all his most noble deeds. A Christian cannot after his conversion fall into a scandalous sin, but it will be objected against him by every one, to the defacing and darkening of all his spiritual glory. When Naaman the Syrian was cured, and as some think converted, by the prophet Elisha, he offers gold and rich garments, but he bows in the house of Rimmon; he seems to be very devout and religious, but he bows in the house of Rimmon; he promises to offer to none but the Lord, but yet he bows in the house of Rimmon. This Rimmon, like the fly in the alabaster box, spoiled all his best intentions and highest resolutions; and thus one scandalous vice disgraceth all the noble virtues that be in a Christian, 2Ki 5:1. Oh, such a man is a very holy man, but—and such a one is a very gracious, experienced disciple, but—and such a one is a very wise and understanding man, but—and such a one is a very active, stirring saint, but—&c., and this 'but' mars all. If there be but one crack in the honey-glass, there the wasp will be buzzing; and if there be but one scandalous sin that a Christian falls into in all his life, how will the wicked be still a-buzzing of that about, both in city and country! O sirs, there are no sins that opens so many mouths, and that sads so many hearts, and that swells so many eyes, and that endangers so many souls, as scandalous sins do; and therefore above all keeping keep off from them. O sirs, as you would not harden sinners, as you would not encourage sinners, as you would not tempt sinners, as you would not stumble sinners, yea, as you would not have a hand in the damnation of sinners, take heed of scandalous sins, Rom 14:13. O sirs, as you would not provoke the great God, 1Ki 11:9, as you would not crucify afresh the Lord of glory, and put him to an open shame, as you would not set the Comforter a-mourning, that alone can comfort you, as you would not raise a hell in your own consciences, and as you would not darken the church's glory, fly from scandalous sins as you would fly from hell itself. I have read of holy Polycarp, that religious martyr and bishop of Smyrna, how that in the time of the fourth persecution, under Marcus Antonius Verres, when he was commanded to swear but one oath, made this answer, 'Fourscore and six years have I endeavoured to do God service, and all this while he never hurt me, and how then shall I speak evil of so good a lord and master, who hath thus long preserved me?' And being further urged to swear by the pro-consul, he answered, 'I am a Christian and cannot do it; let heathens and infidels swear if they will, I cannot do it were it to the saving of my life.' This holy man would rather sacrifice his life than fall into a scandalous sin. O Christians, pray and watch, and watch and pray, that you may never be left to stain your own honour, or the honour of your profession, by falling into scandalous sins! Well, friends! remember this, it is not infirmities, but enormities, it is not weaknesses, but wickednesses, that will cast the crown from off your heads, and that will strip you of all your glory; and therefore, as you would hold fast your crown, keep at an everlasting distance from scandalous sins, &c. But,

[2.] Secondly, Declare and evidence the reality and power of holiness by your cordial thankfulness for so rare a jewel, and for so great a mercy. O sirs, one drop, one spark of holiness is more worth than heaven and earth, and how then can you but be thankful for it? Wilt thou be thankful to that God that made thee a man? and wilt thou not be thankful to the same God that made thee a saint? Wilt thou bless him that made thee a creature? and wilt thou not bless the same God that has made thee a new creature? Wilt thou praise him for the heavens that are but the workmanship of his hands? and wilt thou not praise him for holiness, which is the workmanship of his heart? Psa 8:1-9. Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a soul-mercy? and what mercies wilt thou be thankful for, if not for soul-mercies? Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness of all mercies the most necessary mercy? The want of other mercies might have troubled thee, ay, but the want of holiness would have damned thee; and wilt thou not be thankful for holiness, which is the one thing necessary? Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness an incomparable mercy? What is thy health, thy wealth, thy wit, to holiness? Darest thou mention thy birth, thy breeding, thy arts, thy parts, thy honour, thy greatness, or thy advancement in the world, in that day wherein holiness is spoken of? Surely no. And wilt thou not then be thankful for such an incomparable mercy as holiness is? Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a peculiar mercy, a peculiar treasure that God entrusts but few men with? Does not the world lie in wickedness? 1Jn 5:19. Are not the multitude in all places strangers, yea, enemies to holiness? And how then canst thou but be thankful for holiness? Yea, once more tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a mercy-sweetening mercy? Is it not the beauty of holiness that puts a beauty upon all thy mercies? Is it not holiness that bespangles all thy comforts and contentments? Oh, how sour would all thy mercies taste, and how pale and wan would all thy mercies look, were it not for holiness! It is the want of holiness that makes all a man's mercies look as ill-favoured as Pharaoh's lean kine, and it is the fruition of holiness that makes all a man's mercies look as well-favoured as Pharaoh's fat kine, Gen 41:2-4; it is holiness that both puts a colour upon all our mercies, and that gives a taste and a relish to them. All our mercies, without holiness, will be but as the waters of Marah, bitter, Exo 15:23-25; it is only holiness that is the tree that will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; and how then canst thou but be thankful for holiness? Oh, remember how far off thou wert from God, and Christ, and the promise, and heaven, and happiness, when thou wast without holiness in this world, Eph 2:12. Oh, remember what a child of wrath, what a bond-slave to Satan, what an enemy to God, and what an apparent heir to hell thou wert, when thou wert an opposer of holiness, and a secret despiser of holiness, and then be unthankful for holiness if thou canst! Oh, remember that now by holiness, of a slave thou art made a son, and of an heir of wrath thou art made an heir of heaven, and instead of being Satan's bondman, thou art now made Christ's freeman; thy iron chains are now knocked off, as sometimes Joseph's were, and the golden chain of holiness is now put upon thee, John 8:36. And what does all this call aloud for but thankfulness? Thales, a heathen, gave thanks to God for three things: 1. That he had made him a man, and not a beast; 2. That he had made him a man, and not a woman; 3. That he was born a Greek, and not a barbarian. And, oh then, what cause of thankfulness hast thou for thy supernatural being, and for all those noble principles of holiness that the Lord has stamped upon thy soul! &c. Shall the husband-man be thankful for a plentiful harvest, and the merchant for quick returns, and the shopkeeper for a full trade, and the mariner for a good voyage, and wilt not thou be much more thankful for holiness? Shall the beggar be thankful for a crust to feed him, and shall the blind be thankful for a dog to lead him, and shall the naked be thankful for rags to cover him, and shall the aged be thankful for a staff to support

him, and shall the diseased be thankful for a cordial to raise him, and wilt not thou be thankful for holiness, yea, for that holiness that is bread to strengthen thee, and a guide to lead thee, and raiment to clothe thee, and a staff to support thee, and a cordial to comfort thee? Ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris. Oh, remember that ingratitude is a monster in nature, a solecism in manners, and a paradox in grace, damming up the course of all donations, both divine and human. Lycurgus, as Musculus observes, among all his laws, made none against the ungrateful, because ingratitude was thought a thing so prodigious as not to be committed by man. And the Persians and Athenians condemned the ungrateful to death. Ah, unthankful Christians, how can you think of these heathens, and not blush! Shall they bless God for crumbs, and will not you bless God for crowns? Shall they bless God for the gifts of nature, and will not you bless God for the gifts of grace? &c. Next to a holy Christ, holiness is the greatest gift that God can give, and therefore be thankful for it, &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Evidence and declare your holiness, by the reality of your constant pursuit after holiness, by your holding up and holding on in a way of holiness, by your perseverance in holiness. This exhortation, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness,' Heb 12:14, was given forth to such as had a spirit of holiness, and principles of holiness in them; and these are the men that the holy apostle presses to press after holiness. That holiness will do us no good that is not made good by perseverance. O sirs, shall the ambitious person pursue after his honours, and the voluptuous person after his pleasures, and the worldling pursue after his gain, and the wanton pursue after his harlots, and the drunkard pursue after his full cups, &c.; and shall not Christians much more pursue after holiness? Not to go forward is to go backward, non progredi est regredi, and not to grow better is to grow worse, and not to grow more holy is to grow less holy. The crown, the new name, and the white stone, is for him that holds out, and that holds on in his pursuit after holiness. A progress in holiness is fitly compared to a building, to a race, to the morning light, and to the increasing moon. Now, you know, houses are raised from the foundations to the walls, and from the walls to the first storey, and then to the second storey, and then to the third, and so higher and higher, till you come up to the roof; and in a race, you know, men run on till they come to the goal; and the morning light shines brighter and brighter till it be perfect day; and the moon increaseth more and more till it come to the full; and so must Christians persevere and hold on in adding grace to grace. O Christians! you must not be like to a morning cloud, nor to the early dew; you must not stand still in the ways of holiness, as the sun stood still in Gibeon, Jos 10:13; much less are you to go back, like the sun on Ahaz's dial, 1Ki 10:11; but as a bridegroom which cometh out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race, Psa 19:5; so must you delight to run the ways of God's commands, Psa 119:32; you must maintain your progress in piety, whatever comes on't. O sirs, the way of holiness is the safest way, the noblest way, the sweetest way, the cleanest way, the pleasantest way, and the happiest way, Pro 3:17; and therefore hold on, and hold up in that way, though the world, the flesh, and the devil should cry out, 'There is a lion in the way, there is a lion in the way,' Pro 26:13. It is said of Hannibal, that notwithstanding the rough rocks, and the craggy cliffs of the Alps, yet he proceeded onward in his design for Italy, with this resolution, that he would either find a way or make a way; and so must Christians hold on in a way of holiness, notwithstanding all the rocks and lets and difficulties that they meet with in that way. It is an observation of some of the learned, that those that were marked to be preserved in Jerusalem, were marked with the letter ■, tau, which is the last of all the Hebrew letters, to signify that they must run the race of holiness even to the last, Psa 44:17-22; Eze 9:4. O sirs, in the face

of all your sins and unworthiness, God holds on in ways of mercy towards you; and why then should not you hold on in ways of sanctity towards him? Shall Satan persevere in his enmity against holiness? and shall wicked men persevere in their opposition to holiness? and shall formalists persevere in their neglect of holiness? and will not you persevere in your pursuit of holiness? A good husbandman will not give over sowing till he has sowed all his land; nor a good physician will not give over his patient till he has cured him; nor a good workman will not give over his work till he hath finished it; no more should a good Christian give over his pursuit of holiness, till he is come up to the highest perfection of holiness. Look, as God carried on the work of creation from day to day till he had finished it, Gen 1:1-31., and as Christ carried on the work of our redemption from day to day till he had completed it, John 17:1-26; so Christians should look to a daily carrying on of the work of holiness in their hearts and lives, till that work be perfected and completed. The philosopher being asked in his old age, why he did not give over his practice, and take his ease? answered, When a man is to run a race of forty furlongs, would you have him sit down at the nine-and-thirtieth, and so lose all his pains, and the prize for which he runs? Surely no. O Christians, you are racers, and you must run to the end of your race, Heb 12:1; it is not enough to begin well, and to run well for a time, but you must hold out in running till you come to the goal, or else you will lose all the pains and labour that ever you have taken in religion, you will lose all the prayers that ever you have made, and you will lose all the sermons that ever you have heard, and you will lose all the fasts that ever you have observed, and you will lose all the tears that ever you have shed, and you will lose all the alms that ever you have given, if you do not hold out to the end. If you do not persevere in well-doing, you will lose your crown, and be undone for ever after all your doings. A progress in holiness is requisite not only to your consolation, but also to your salvation, Mat 24:13. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness, by a resolute standing up for purity of religion, and for purity of worship and ordinances, in opposition to all mixtures and corruptions whatsoever. O sirs, the great God stands upon nothing more in all the world than upon purity in his worship, Jas 1:27. There is nothing that does so provoke and exasperate God against a people as mixtures in his worship and service, Mat 21:12-13; John 2:15-17. Pollutions in worship do sadly reflect upon the name of God, the honour of God, the truth of God, and the wisdom of God; and therefore his heart rises against them. The very spirit, life, and soul of the second commandment lies in these words, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image,' &c. In matters of divine worship God abhors that men should mix their water with his wine, their dross with his gold, their chaff with his wheat, &c. When once men come to be so bold as to defile his worship with their mixtures, then God is resolved to be a swift and a terrible witness against them, as you may clearly see by comparing those notable places of Scripture together in the margin, There is no sin that does so incense and provoke God to jealousy and wrath against a people, as mixtures in worship. God can bear with defilements anywhere rather than in his worship and service: and that,

First, Because mixtures in worship are cross to God's express commands; and who art thou, O man! that darest run cross to his commands, who can command thee into the dust, yea, into hell, at pleasure? &c.

Secondly, Because this is to accuse the blessed Scripture of insufficiency; for if the Scripture be a sufficient rule to order, guide, and direct us in all matters of worship, then how dost thou, O man!

detract from the sufficiency of the Scripture, who minglest thine own or other men's inventions with divine institutions, and settest up thy posts by God's posts? O sirs, the Scriptures are sufficient to direct us fully in everything that belongs to the worship and service of God; so as that we need not depend upon the wisdom, prudence, care, or authority of any men under heaven to direct us in matters of worship: 2Ti 3:16-17, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' The Scriptures are sufficient to inform the ignorant, to confute the erroneous, to reform the vicious, and to guide and direct, support and comfort those that are gracious. Here a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim; here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; here is comfort for the afflicted, and succour for the tempted, and ease for the troubled, and light for the clouded, and enlargement for the straitened, &c. Oh, how full of light, how full of life, how full of love, how full of sweetness, how full of goodness, how full of righteousness and holiness, &c., is every chapter, and every verse in every chapter, yea, and every line in every verse! The Rabbins say that a mountain of matter hangs upon every word of Scripture, yea, upon every tittle of Scripture. God never sends his people to the shop of men's traditions and inventions, but he still sends them to the Scripture: Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light, or no morning, in them.' Isa 34:16, 'Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them.' And in the New Testament Christ sends his hearers to the Scriptures: John 5:39, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' The Greek word **■ρουν■τε**, that is here rendered search, signifies a strict, narrow, curious, diligent search. We must search the Scripture as we would search for gold, or for some precious stones which we would fain find; we must search the Scriptures as hunters seek and search out their game. And so the apostle sends his hearers to the Scriptures, 2Pe 1:19-21, as to a surer word than that of revelation. All which speaks out the sufficiency of the Scripture to direct us in all matters that concern our internal or eternal welfare. Oh that you would for ever remember these two things:

(1.) First, That that which bred the Popish religion, superstition, idolatry, and pompous worship, was men's departing from the word, and not cleaving to the word as a sufficient rule to direct them in all matters of worship. And,

(2.) Secondly, That that which hath occasioned all those discords, divisions, heats, heart-burnings, animosities, and contentions, &c., about ceremonies, liturgy, forms, gestures, &c., has been men's not keeping close to the blessed word of God. When men forsake this perfect rule, whither won't they run? and what won't they do? Ah, who art thou, O vain man! that accuseth the holy Scriptures of insufficiency? and how wilt thou blush, and be ashamed and confounded, when in the great day the Lord shall plead the excellency, and vindicate the sufficiency and authority of his blessed book, in opposition to all the mixtures of men's traditions with divine institutions?

Thirdly, God won't nor can't bear with mixtures in his worship and service, because to bring them in is to accuse and charge God with weakness and folly, as if God were not careful enough, nor faithful enough, Heb 3:4-6, nor mindful enough, nor wise enough, nor prudent nor understanding enough, to order, direct, and guide his people in the matters of his worship, but must be beholding to the wisdom, prudence, and care of man, John 4:23-24, of vain man, of sinful man, of vile and unworthy man, of weak and foolish man, to complete, perfect, and make up something that was

wanting in his worship and service, Psa 39:5, &c.

Fourthly, God won't bear with mixtures in his worship and service, because all mixtures debases the worship and service of God, and makes the worship a vain worship, Isa 29:13-14; Mat 15:3, Mat 15:6, Mat 15:8-9. As the mixing of water with wine is the debasing of the wine, and the mixing of tin with silver, or brass with gold, is the debasing of the silver and gold; so for men to mix and mingle their traditions and inventions with God's institutions, is to debase the worship and service of God, and to detract from the excellency and glory of it. The kings and princes of this world have most severely punished such, who, by their base mixtures, have imbas'd their coin; and there is a day a-coming wherein the King of kings will most severely punish all such who have imbas'd his worship and service by mixing their Romish traditions with his holy institutions: Rev 22:18, 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.' And no wonder! For what horrible pride, presumption, stoutness, and baseness of spirit is it in foolish man to be so bold with the great God, as to dare to mix anything of his own with his worship and service, which, according to divine institution, is so perfect and complete! God will never bear it, to see men lay their dirt upon his gold, and to put their rags upon his royal robes. Ah, Christians, Christians, evidence your holiness by standing up for holy ordinances and pure worship, in opposition to all mixtures whatsoever. Oh, don't you touch a polluted worship, don't you plead and contend for a polluted worship, but let Baal plead for Baal; and though all the world should wander after the beast, yet don't you wander; and though every fore-head should have the mark of the beast upon it, yet do you abhor his mark, and whatever else it be that does but smell and savour of the beast. It is observable that in kings' and princes' courts, children, fools, and the rude rabble, are much taken with fine pictures, and rich shows, and glistening gaudy cloths, &c.; but such as are wise, serious, grave statesmen, they mind not, they regard not such poor things, they look upon those things as things that are much below the nobleness and the greatness of their spirits, who have honourable objects, and the great and weighty affairs of the state to busy themselves about: so, my brethren, though the children, the fools, and the rabble of the world are much affected and taken with such pollutions and mixtures as makes up a glorious pompous worship, yet you that have a spirit of holiness, and principles of holiness in you, oh, how should you slight such things, and pass by such things as things below you, as things not worthy of you, who have a holy God, a holy Christ, a holy gospel, and a holy worship to busy your thoughts, your minds, your heads, and your hearts about. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Evidence the truth and reality of your holiness, by bewailing and lamenting the loss of holiness. Ah, how is this crown of holiness fallen from our heads! Lam 5:16. Oh the leanness of souls! Oh the spiritual witherings and decays in grace and holiness that is to be found among many Christians this day! Some complain of the loss of trade, and others complain of the loss of estate; some complain of the loss of credit, and others complain of the loss of friends; but what are all these losses to the loss of holiness? And yet how few be there that complain of the loss of holiness. Holiness is fallen in our hearts, in our families, in our streets, and in our churches; and yet how few are there to be found that laments the fall of holiness. O sirs, will you lament such as are fallen from riches to poverty, from honour into disgrace, and from the highest pitch of prosperity to the lowest step of beggary and misery; and will you not lament such who are fallen from the highest round to the lowest round in Jacob's ladder? O sirs, will you mourn over a

decayed estate? will you weep over decayed friends? and will you sigh and sob over a decayed body? and will you not much more lament and mourn over decayed souls? &c. Ah, how many have lost that love, that life, that heat, that zeal, that readiness, that forwardness, and that resoluteness that once they had for God and godliness! Rev 2:4-5. Some are fallen from their holiness by giving themselves elbow-room to sin against the checks and lashes of conscience, Psa 51:1-19; others are decayed in holiness by their secret resisting and smothering the gracious motions of the Spirit, Acts 7:51; some are fallen from holiness, either by their neglect of precious means, or else by their heartless using of the means, 1Th 5:20; others are fallen from their holiness, either by the allurements and enticements of a tempting world, or else by the frowns and threatenings of a persecuting world, 2Ti 4:10; some are fallen from holiness by their non-exercise of grace; and others are fallen from holiness by not discerning their first decays in grace. So that, upon one account or another, multitudes in these days are fallen from that holiness which was once their glory. If you look into families, there you shall find masters complaining that their servants are so careless, foolish, frothy, light, slight, slothful, unfaithful, proud, and lofty, that they are not to be spoken to nor trusted; and if you look again into the same families, there you shall find servants complaining that their masters and mistresses are so exceeding froward, peevish, passionate, worldly, neglective of duties, and careless of their souls, that it is even a hell to servants to live with them. Now, what speaks all these sad complaints, but either a total want of holiness, or else a very great decay of holiness? And if you look among all other relations, as husbands and wives, parents and children, magistrates and people, ministers and Christians, oh, what sad divisions, what fiery contentions, and what fearful jars are there to be found! oh, what slightings, what revilings, what under-valuings, what heart-risings, what heart-swellings, and what heart-burnings are to be found amongst them! And what do all these things declare, but that the glory of God is departed from Israel, and that holiness is fallen to a very low ebb? Ah friends, were there but more holiness among you, there would be more union among you, and more love among you, and more sweetness and tenderness among you, and more forbearance and patience among you. Oh, then you would never be snarling one at another, nor biting one of another, nor plotting one against another, nor devouring one of another any more. Again, if you look among men whose parts are great, whose gifts are high, whose profession is glorious, and whose expressions and notions are very seraphical, ah, what a little holiness will you find! O sirs, shall the men of this world vex and fret, shall they weep and wail, and shall their lamentation and mourning be like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, 2Ch 35:24-25, and that for the loss of a little wealth, or for a punctilio of honour, or a day of pleasure, or the smiles of a prince, &c.? and will not you lament and mourn for the loss of holiness, which is the choicest jewel in a Christian's crown? Tears, instead of gems, were the ornaments of David's bed when he was fallen from his holiness, Psa 51:1-19. And though the Persian kings would have no mourning nor mourning apparel worn in their presence, yet the King of kings loves to see his people a-mourning for the falls of holiness, as well as for the heights of wickedness. When news was brought to Xenophon of his son's death, he put off his crown from his head, and wept. O my brethren, who can hear of the death of holiness, and behold the death of holiness in men's hearts, lives, and families, and not put off his crown, and weep, and not put off his ornaments, and weep till he can weep no more? &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Evidence the truth and reality of your holiness, by pursuing, pressing, and following after the highest degrees of holiness. Oh, sit not down satisfied with some drops or sips of holiness, but labour after the perfection of holiness. Oh, don't content yourselves with so much

holiness as will bring you to happiness, or with so much holiness as will keep wrath and your souls asunder, or hell and your souls asunder, or eternal ruin and your souls asunder. The exhortation in the text, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness,' Heb 12:14, is an exhortation that was given out to saints that were holy before, and the life and force of it lies in this, that those that were holy should labour to be more and more holy, they should still be adding of grace to grace, holiness to holiness, they should still be a-going on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength. As holiness hath its conception, birth, and infancy, so it hath its full growth, and after that all Christians must strive. Holiness is not like to Jonah's gourd, that shot up in a night, but it is like plants and trees that grows up by degrees,² (Psa 92:14,) and after the highest degrees we must endeavour. After the prophet Elias had travelled a day's journey in the wilderness, he sat down and slept under a juniper-tree, and there God calls upon him, 'Up and eat,' 1Ki 19:4-5; and when he found him the second time he calls again upon him, 'Up and eat, because thou hast a great journey to go,' 1Ki 19:7. O Christians, you have a howling wilderness to travel through, you have a great journey to go, you have many a mountain to walk over, and many an enemy to vanquish, even the world, the flesh, and the devil, and many a cross to bear, and many a mercy to improve, &c., and therefore you have very great cause to up and eat, I say, to up and eat, that is, to grow stronger and stronger in holiness, and to walk from grace to grace, and from virtue to virtue, and to come off from your milk, and to feed upon strong meat, Heb 5:12-14, that you may hold out to the end of your journey, and not faint nor fall short of that great salvation which attends perfection of holiness. And this progress in holiness is that main thing that the apostle presses upon the believing Corinthians in that 2Co 7:1, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' The apostle having in the former chapter armed the believing Corinthians with many strong arguments against all communion and fellowship with idolaters, he comes at last to touch upon those great and glorious promises which, upon the account of their high and holy calling, they were interested in, 2Co 7:16-16; and he presents them as singular motives, and as choice and precious encouragements, to move them to perfect holiness in the fear of God. There is no work on earth that so well becomes the heirs of such precious promises as that of cleansing themselves from all filthiness on the one hand, and that of perfecting holiness in the fear of God on the other hand. Now this being a point of the highest concernment, and of the greatest importance imaginable to the saints, I shall therefore endeavour these three things:

I. First, To lay down some motives to provoke you to perfect holiness in the fear of God, &c.

II. Secondly, I shall propound some means, some directions, that may help you to make a progress in holiness, &c.

III. Thirdly, I shall shew you how you may know whether you have attained to such a perfection of holiness as we are all to strive after, &c.

I shall first begin with the motives that may whet and stir up your spirits to labour after greater degrees and higher measures of holiness than yet you have attained to; and to that purpose, I beseech you seriously to consider of these following particulars:

(1.) First, Consider that notwithstanding all the means, and all the advantages, and all the opportunities that you have enjoyed to work you to perfect holiness in the fear of God, yet you have obtained but to very small measures of holiness. You are rather babes than men in holiness,

you are rather shrubs than cedars in grace, you are rather dwarfs than giants in godliness to this very day; and this sad charge I shall briefly make good against you by an induction of eight particulars, thus:

[1.] First, The strength, the power, the activity, and the prevalency of sin in you to this day does witness to your faces that you have yet obtained but small measures of holiness, Rom 7:22-24; Isa 59:12. O my brethren, are not many of your corruptions as powerful and as strong as they were five, ten, yea, twenty years ago; notwithstanding all the prayers that you have made, and all the sermons that you have heard, and all the tears that you have shed, and all the resolutions that you have taken, and all the promises that you have made, and all the conflicts that you have had? And what does this speak out but that holiness is at a low ebb in your souls? O sirs, were but holiness risen to a greater height in your souls, how readily would you trample upon your lusts! Rom 8:10; and how easily would you lead captivity captive! As the house of David grew stronger and stronger, so the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, 2Sa 3:1. As holiness rises in the soul by degrees, so sin dies in the soul by degrees; and the more any man abounds in holiness, the more he abounds in his spiritual conquests over the world, the flesh, and the devil, Gal 4:29. O sirs, your pride testifies to your faces, and your self-love testifies to your faces, and your worldliness testifies to your faces, and your passion testifies to your faces, and your diffidence testifies to your faces, and your hypocrisy testifies to your faces, and your carnality testifies to your faces, &c., that yet you are not got up many rounds in Jacob's ladder, that your degrees in holiness may be easily cast up, Hos 5:5, and Hos 7:10. But,

[2.] Secondly, You have not attained to much holiness; witness that high price that you set upon the toys, the trifles, and the vanities of this world, as Jonah did upon his gourd, Gen 24:30-31. Ah, at what a rate do men value the empty honours, the fading riches, and the declining greatness of this world! Democritus, the philosopher, esteemed his room covered over with green branches above the royal palace. And did not Peter prefer a tabernacle on earth before a royal palace, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens? But what do I talk of Peter, when this disease had again and again and again overspread the hearts of all the disciples, as you may evidently see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. They had dispute upon dispute, which of them should be accounted greatest; they had often sharp contests among themselves, which of them should have the greatest honour, the best office, and the highest preeminence in Christ's earthly kingdom; and indeed their thoughts, heads, and hearts were so taken up about an outward kingdom, a worldly kingdom, that they little minded either the spiritual kingdom of God within them, or the glorious kingdom of God above them. As the foolish Indians prefer every toy and trifle before their mines of gold, so many Christians, who are low in holiness, prefer the trifling vanities of this world before the glorious treasures and endless pleasures that be at God's right hand, Psa 16:11. Oh, but where holiness is risen to any considerable height, there men will make a very footstool of their crowns, for Christ to get up and ride in triumph. There all the glory and bravery of this world will be but as dross and dung, Php 3:7-8; there men would, like the woman, the church, in the Revelation, 'trample the moon,' that is, all the things of this world, which are as changeable as the moon, 'under their feet,' Rev 12:1. Were there but more holiness in your hearts, all the gay and gallant things of this world would be more contemptible in your eyes. O sirs, if Midas was condemned to wear ass's ears, because he preferred Pan's pipe before Apollo's lute, that is, human policy before divine providence, how severely are they to be censured who prefer the poor,

low, empty nothings of this world before all the glory and happiness of another world! &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, You have attained to but little holiness; witness your fears and faintings in a day of adversity. Though there be as many fear notes, as there be fears in Scripture, yet in a day of calamity, how easily and frequently does your fears get above your faith! Isa 51:12-13, and Isa 41:10, Isa 41:14; and what fainting-fits does then attend you! Pro 24:10, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small,' or as the Hebrew has it, 'thy strength is narrow or straitened.' Look, as bodily faintness discovers bodily weakness, so soul faintness discovers soul weakness. It is troubles that are the trials of a Christian's strength. Afflictions will try what sap and life we have within us. As the man is for holiness, so is his strength under trials. He that has no holiness, has no strength, and he that has but a little holiness, has but a little strength: but he that has much holiness, has much strength, and accordingly will bear up bravely in a day of trial; his bow, with Joseph's, will then abide in strength, Gen 49:23-24. Though Noah in the building of his ark met with many a sore trial, and many a sad affront, and many a broad jest, and many a bitter scoff; and though the people generally laughed at the good old man, thinking that he did not only dote, but dream, not of a dry summer, but of a wet winter, as we say; yet Noah, being eminent in holiness, his bow abode in strength, and he held on building of the ark, till he had finished the work that God had commanded. But oh the sadness, the weakness, the faintness that attends most persons in the day of their adversity! Jer 8:18, Jer 8:21, 'When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; am I black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.' Jer 45:3, 'Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighings, and I find no rest.' Lam 1:22, 'For my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.' Lam 5:17, 'For this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim.' Now this faintness in the day of adversity speaks out much spiritual weakness; for where holiness is risen to a noble height, there men will bear up courageously, even in a day of calamity. The eagle is the king of birds, and therefore the Romans, who were the greatest potentates on earth, still bore the eagle in their standards. Now the naturalist observes concerning this royal bird, that whereas all other birds make a noise when they are hungry, this princely bird makes no noise at all, though he be never so hungry, for such is the greatness and the nobleness of his spirit, that whatever befalls him, he won't cry, and whine, and repine, as other birds will do when they want their food; his princely spirit carries him above all hunger, thirst, or danger. So men that are eminent in holiness, are men of such noble, princely spirits, that they won't faint, nor vex, nor fret, nor complain, nor whine, whatever their wants, trials, or straits may be. Such afflictions as would break other men's hearts, cannot so much as break their sleep; they still hold on their way, and whatever they meet with, they will be still a-mounting nearer and nearer to heaven. But now where there is but a little holiness, there men will be like the common fowls of the air, still a-making a noise, they will still be a-crying, whining, and repining under every trial and trouble they meet with. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You have but a little holiness; witness your easy, your ready, and your frequent fallings before temptations and motions to sin. O sirs, when the temptation does but touch and take, when you are no sooner tempted but you are conquered, no sooner assaulted but you are vanquished, certainly holiness is at a very low ebb in your souls. That garrison, without all peradventure, is very weak, that is taken at the first assault, and that ship is but meanly manned, that is carried at first boarding, and that soldier is but slightly armed, that is run through at the first thrust; and so that Christian has but little spiritual strength in him, who is worsted and vanquished

upon the first appearance of a temptation. When men's understandings are easily corrupted with error, or their judgments with levity, or their wills with frowardness, or their affections with disorderdness, or their consciences with unrighteousness, it is a very great argument that there is but little holiness within. O sirs, men eminent in holiness, in their ordinary course, have been always eminent in the resisting and withstanding of temptations, as is evident in Joseph, Job, Daniel, the three children, &c. Austin thanks the Lord that his heart and the temptation did not meet together. The devil tempting Bonaventure, told him that he was a reprobate, and therefore persuaded him to drink in the present pleasures of this life, for, saith Satan, thou art excluded from the future joys with God in heaven; to whom he answered, No, not so, Satan, for if I must not enjoy God after this life, I will labour to enjoy him as much as I can whilst I live. When one of the martyrs was offered riches and honours if he would recant, he gave this excellent answer, Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you. When Valens the emperor offered large preferments to Basil, and told him what a great man he would make him, he answered, Offer these things to children, and not to Christians. When Bernard was tempted, Tell me not, Satan, said he, what I have been, but what I am and will be through grace. And so when Beza was tempted in the like case, he answered, Whatsoever I was, I am now in Christ a new creature, and that is it which troubles thee, Satan; I might have continued in my sins long enough ere thou wouldst have vexed at it, but now I see thou dost envy me the grace of my Saviour. And when Augustine was sadly reviled by the Donatists for the wickedness of his youth, he answered, The more desperate my disease was, so much the more I admire the physician. Thus men eminently holy have stood their ground in the face of all temptations and motions to sin; but, alas! in these times how easily, how readily, and how frequently do multitudes fall before every temptation! As soon as Achan had but cast his eye upon the Babylonish garment and shekels of silver and wedge of gold, his fingers itched to be handling of them, Jos 7:21; so many in these days, as soon as they do but see the way to honour or preferment, or a great place, or a high office, &c., oh, how do their fingers itch, how do their souls long after these things! and though they savour and smell never so strong of Babylon or of Rome, yet have them they must. Such persons may do well to remember, that Achan's Babylonish garment was but a shroud to shroud him, and his golden wedge was but a wedge to cleave him, and his shekels of silver were but shekels to hold him the faster, both under the wrath of God and man. Such as can turn with every wind, and close with every worship, and bow to every idol that man sets up, have either no holiness, or else but very little holiness, in their hearts. Such as easily and readily fall before temptations from within or without, have never attained to any great measures of holiness. But,

[5.] Fifthly, You have but a little holiness; witness the strange behaviour and carriage of your souls, when the Lord smites you in some near and dear enjoyment. If the Lord does but frown upon your Joseph, or touch your Isaac, or call for your Benjamin, or wither your gourd, oh, now with Rachel you will not be comforted, or with Jacob you will go mourning into the grave, or with David you will cry out, 'O Absalom, my son, my son! would God I had died for thee!' or with Jonah you will tell God to his face that you do well to be angry. Oh, now you can't look up and trust in God, you can't look up and delight in God, you can't look up and hope in God, you can't look up and solace yourselves in God, you can't look up and lie down in the good pleasure of God, you can't look up and justify God, you can't look up and say God is your God, &c. Oh, now God has touched you in your first-born, you can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep; now you can taste no sweet, nor take no comfort, nor find no content in any of all your enjoyments; now God has touched the apple of your

eye, you can neither think well of God, nor speak well of God, nor carry it well towards God. Oh, now nobody can please you, nor nothing can satisfy you; now you think that there is no sorrow to your sorrow, no cross to your cross, nor no loss to your loss, &c.; now every sweet is bitter, and every comfort is a cross; and accordingly you carry it both towards God and towards man, Lam 1:12, Lam 1:18; all which speaks out holiness to be at a very low ebb in your souls. O sirs, were holiness but risen to some considerable height in your souls, you would with Job, who was eminent in holiness, bless a taking God, as well as a giving God, Job 1:21; and you would carry it sweetly and ingenuously towards God, as well when he writes bitter things against you as when he is a-multiplying of favours and kindnesses upon you; but if when the rod smarts you kick, and fling, and fret, and fume, and vex, and tear your comforts in pieces, and your souls in pieces, and your God in pieces, as much as in you lies, certainly the streams of holiness runs low in your souls. But,

[6.] Sixthly, You have but little holiness; witness the ebbings and the flowings of your spirits according to the working of secondary causes. As secondary causes work, so you are up and down, high and low; now you are full of hopes, and anon you are full of fears; now you believe, and anon despair; now you are steadfast, and anon you are wavering; now you say, surely God will once more own us, and anon you say, verily God has forsaken us; now you say you see the clouds begin to scatter, and anon you say you see the clouds grow darker and thicker; now you say the winter is past, and the singing of birds is come, and anon you say your winter is like to be longer than ever; now you say there is balm in Gilead, and anon you say your wound is incurable; now you say all is your own, and anon you are ready to give up all as lost, &c.; and thus your hearts rise and fall according to the working of second causes. When you have full purses, and powerful armies, and subtle counsellors, and great allies, then you are ready to say, surely our mountain is strong, and we shall never be removed, Psa 30:6-8; but when your bags are empty, and your forces broken, and your counsels dissipated, and your allies fallen off, then you are ready to cry out, Oh, now there is no hope, there is no help! Oh, but now were you eminent in holiness, then, under the saddest and crossest workings of second causes, you would say with Asa, 'O Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power,' 2Ch 14:11; and with Elisha, 'They that be with us are more than they that be with them,' 2Ki 6:16-17; and with Moses, 'Stand still and see the salvation of God,' Exo 14:13; and with David, 'The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me,' Psa 118:6. Holiness in any considerable height will set the power of God in opposition to all the power of the world, and then divinely triumph over them, Psa 65:6-11. Pompey once gloried in this, that with one stamp of his foot he could raise all Italy up in arms; but the great God with one stamp of his foot, or with one word of his mouth, can raise not only Italy, but also all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, in arms at his pleasure; and in the power of this God, raised holiness will enable a man to glory all the day long. Where holiness is weak, there men stand and fall as second causes work, but where holiness is eminent, there men will live upon the first cause; and, however second causes may wheel about, yet such a man will live upon him, and look up to him that hath a wheel within every wheel, Eze 1:15-22. But,

[7.] Seventhly, You have but little holiness; witness that soul-leanness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness that is among you at this very day, Psa 106:15. Ah, how may most cry out with the prophet Isaiah, 'Oh my leanness, my leanness!' Isa 24:16, and Isa 10:16. Oh our leanness, our leanness, our barrenness, &c.! though God has waited many three years for fruit, yet behold

nothing but leaves. I have read of the Indian fig-tree, how that its leaves are as broad as a target, but its fruit is no bigger than a bean. Ah, how many Christians be there in these days whose leaves of profession are very broad, but their fruits of righteousness and holiness are very small; and as the Indian fig-tree, though it be of fair and goodly dimensions, yet it riots out all its sap and juice into leaves and blossoms. So many in these days, who, though they carry it fair, and make a goodly show, yet they riot out all that spiritual sap and life that is in them into the mere leaves and blossoms of an empty profession. Ah, how are many of our hearts like to the isle of Patmos, which is so barren that nothing that is good will grow on it; all the good things that grow there is from the earth that is brought from other places. Look, as a company of ants are very busy about a molehill, running to and fro, and wearying themselves in their several movings and turnings, this way and that, and yet never grow great; for after all their motions and stirring, they are still the same as to the slender proportion of their bodies: so many Christians in these days run to and fro, they run from one duty to another, and from one ordinance to another, and from one opinion to another, and from one principle to another, and from one minister to another, and from one church to another, and from one way to another, and from one notion to another, and yet they make little progress in holiness, they grow but little in the love, the life, the likeness, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2Pe 3:18; they are like those silly women that Timothy speaks of, who were ever learning, and yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, 2Ti 3:6-7; and they are like Nazianzen's country of Ozizala, [?] which abounded with gay flowers, but was barren of corn; so these abound in gay notions, and flourishing parts, but are barren of grace and holiness. Seneca hath long since observed that as the philosophers in his time grew more and more learned, so they grew less and less moral; and is there anything more evident in these days than this, viz., that as men grow more and more in empty airy notions, and in a pompous religion and profession, so they grow less and less zealous and religious. The reason, say some, why Christ cursed the fig-tree, though the time of bearing fruit was not come, was because it made a glorious show with leaves, and promised much, but brought forth nothing. What is a barren tree, a barren ground, or a barren womb, to a barren heart? Many in our days are like the cypress-tree, which, the more it is watered, the more it is withered; so the more many are watered with the means of grace, the more they wither; the more the dews of heaven falls upon them, and the more heavenly manna is daily rained round about them, the more lean, fruitless, and barren they grow. Such souls may do well to remember that those trees that are not for fruit are for the fire, John 15:6; Heb 6:8. For a close, let me tell you that I fear, with that Father, [Augustine,] that many grieve more for the barrenness of their lands, than they do for the barrenness of their lives, and for the barrenness of their trees, than they do for the barrenness of their souls, and for the loss of their cattle, than they do for the loss of God's countenance. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, You have but little holiness; witness that great indifferency and inconstancy that is to be found among you. Ah, how many Christians are there in these days of gospel light who are indifferent who they hear, or what they hear, who are indifferent whether they pray or not, or walk in gospel order or not, or keep Sabbaths or not, or maintain closet communion with God or not, or enjoy the Lord's supper or not, &c., and oh, what inconstancy is to be found among many in these days! Many persons are only constant in inconstancy. Now they are for ordinances, and anon they are against them; now ordinances are precious and glorious things, and anon they are poor low things; now they cry up this and that for glorious truths, and anon they cry down the same things as dangerous and pernicious errors; now they cry up Paul and cry down Apollos, and anon

they cry up Apollos and cry down Paul; now they are for this form, and anon they are for that; now they are very zealous, and anon they are very lukewarm; now they are for worshipping of God according to rule, and anon they are for worshipping of God according to the prescriptions of men; now they have their gales of devotion, and anon they are quite becalmed; now they are full of life, and anon they are very lumpish; now they stand fast, and anon they are wavering; now they are confident all will be well, and anon they give up all as lost; now they will lay down their lives for Christ, and anon they are afraid to own Christ, &c. Now what does this indifferency and inconstancy speak out, but either a total want of holiness, or else that holiness is at a very low ebb in these men's souls? Now these eight arguments do clearly evidence that many, oh that I could not say that most, Christians have attained but to small measures and degrees of holiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that it is possible for you to attain to greater measures of holiness than any yet you have reached unto. Though the work be hard, yet it is possible; and what great things won't men attempt upon the account of a possibility. Now that it is possible that you may attain to a greater perfection of holiness, I shall evidence able five ways:

[1.] First, By many precious promises that are scattered up and down in the blessed Scriptures; as that Job 17:9, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger;' or as the Hebrew has it, [■■■ ■■■■,] 'he shall add strength,' that is, he shall go on from one degree of spiritual strength to another, he shall go on from a lesser degree to a greater degree, and from a lower degree to a higher degree, of spiritual strength. A holy man shall not only have his spiritual strength maintained, but increased; he shall not only retain that spiritual strength he has, but he shall be still a-adding of strength to strength, Psa 84:7. They go from strength to strength, or from power to power, or as the word may be read, from company to company, or from troop to troop, in allusion to the custom of the Jews, when all the males went up thrice a year to Jerusalem; now when they went up to Jerusalem, they went up with their flocks, and in troops. Now those that were lively, active, and strong, they overtook this company and that, and this troop and that, and so they went on, their power and strength increasing daily more and more, till they appeared before God in Zion; or look, as the bee goes from flower to flower to gather honey, so those that had a principle of grace and holiness in them, they went from one good company to another, from one troop of Christians to another, still gathering up heavenly honey as they went. O sirs, there is no such way to perfect holiness, as to be still a-going on from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance; from praying to hearing, and from hearing to praying; from reading to meditating, and from meditating to reading; from public duties to closet duties, and from closet duties to public duties, &c.: Psa 92:12-14, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing.' Ille non est bonus, qui non vult esse melior. The promise of flourishing is three times repeated in these verses—they shall flourish, they shall flourish, they shall flourish—to note the more than ordinary flourishing estate of the saints, even in their old age. I have read of an old Christian, who being asked whether he grew in goodness or no, answered, I believe I do, because the Lord has promised that his people shall bring forth fruit in old age. Pliny, writing of the crocodile, tells us that she grows to her dying day; so Christians that are rooted in Christ, and planted in the house of the Lord, they will be still growing up in grace and holiness even to their dying day. It is with real

Christians as it is with wine, the older the better, or as it is with the sun, which shines most gloriously and amiably when it is near setting. Gracious souls are like the laurel, or the bay-tree, whose leaves are always green, not only in the summer of youth, but also in the winter of old age. The palm-tree is always green, it never loseth his leaves or fruit, and the more it is loaded the deeper it is rooted; and so it shall be with throughout Christians. So in that Isa 46:3-4, God has promised to carry us on to old age, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you.' That God that begins a work of grace and holiness in his people's hearts, that God will perfect and carry on that work. Mothers and nurses express their tender care, love, and delight, by carrying their babes in their arms till they can go alone; but God surpasses them in his love, care, tenderness, and divine fondness, for he will carry them even to hoary hairs. This word 'I,' that is six times repeated in verse the fourth, is doubtless of very great importance, and signifies not only God's eternal essence, and that he will be ever like himself, but also his unchangeableness in regard of us; for whatever our thoughts may be concerning God, yet we shall always find him one and the same; he will be as good to his people at last as he was at first, even to old age he will carry them. So in that Pro 4:18, 'But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' A holy man proceeds from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue; he goes from faith to faith, and from strength to strength, till at length he shines as the sun in his strength. So in that Hos 14:5-7, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his root as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.' The growth, the fruitfulness, and the flourishing estate of the saints in grace and holiness, is set forth by a sevenfold metaphor in these words. The similes are all plain and easy, and you may easily dilate upon them in your own thoughts; and therefore I shall pass them. I shall conclude with that precious promise, John 4:14, 'But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' The Spirit in its gracious operations shall be a constant spring in believers' hearts, and it shall every day rise higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel, till grace be swallowed up in glory, Eze 47:1-7. And thus you see by these choice promises, that it is possible for you to attain to a greater measure of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, The prayers that have been put up upon this very account, do clearly evidence the same. Certainly the people of God would never have prayed for higher degrees of grace and holiness, if they had not been attainable. Now it is very observable that the spirits of the saints have run out much this way, as is evident in these instances, Php 1:9-11, 'And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge, and in all judgment. That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ: being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.' Col 1:9, 'For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.' Col 4:12, 'Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' The Greek word *πεπληρωμένος*, is a metaphor from a ship, whose sails are filled with wind. Epaphras was a

humble petitioner that the souls of the Colossians might be filled with the highest degrees of grace and holiness, as the sails of a ship are filled with wind: 1Th 3:12, 'And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you.' The apostle, by doubling his word, increase and abound, discovers himself to be an importunate suitor, that a double portion of grace and holiness might be given out to the Thessalonians. So in that Heb 13:20-21, 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' The apostle cannot beg anything for these believing Hebrews below perfection. And the apostle Peter puts up the same requests for those blessed converts that were scattered throughout 'Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.' In that 1Pe 5:10, 'But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' God is called 'the God of all grace,' because he is the giver of all kinds of grace, and of all degrees of grace. Now nothing will satisfy this great apostle, when he comes to plead for these saints, below perfection. Though they had as much grace as would bring them to heaven, yet he begs such a perfection of grace as might raise them high in heaven. And thus it appeareth by the prayers of these holy men, that saints may still be rising in grace and holiness. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The experience of other saints does clearly evidence this, that you may attain unto higher degrees of grace and holiness than those that yet you have attained unto: Gen 6:9, 'Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God.' Noah was not only perfect with perfection of parts; nor only perfect in respect of desires, endeavours, and aims; nor only perfect in respect of his justification before God by imputed righteousness; nor only perfect in respect of God's approbation, acceptation, and delight; nor only perfect in respect of God's design and intentions to make him so in another world; nor only perfect in respect of those gifts and graces with which he was adorned and furnished for the discharge of his place, office, and work to which the Lord had called him; nor only comparatively perfect, in regard of that profane, ungodly, and debauched generation among whom he lived; but also he is said to be perfect in respect of an eminent progress that he had made in grace and holiness. He had attained to considerable degrees and measures of grace and holiness; and though his proficiency in the exercise of grace and practice of piety fell short of complete perfection, yet it rose to such a height that God could not but crown him and chronicle him for a perfect man. In all ages of the world there has been four several ages of Christians—viz., babes, children, young men, and old men. Noah was not a babe, nor a child, nor a young man, but an old man in grace and holiness; and therefore he is said to be perfect. There are several forms in Christ's school, some higher, some lower. Now he that is in the highest form may be said to be perfect, in regard of those that are in a lower or in the lowest form. Now Noah was in the highest form of grace and godliness, therefore he is said to be perfect; and in this sense, I suppose, Job is said to be a perfect man: Job 1:1, Job 1:8, 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?' Job was a very considerable person; he was a man of a choice spirit, he was taller in goodness, and higher by the head and shoulders in grace and godliness, than any of the saints in that age and corner of the world where he lived. Job was a man of the greatest weight and worth

for holiness that was in all the world. Job was a nonsuch; no Christians could come near him; as he was the greatest, so he was the best of the best of all the saints that were in the East for heights of grace and holiness; he was a giant, and all the Christians round about him were but as so many dwarfs; he was the paragon of his time; for piety and sanctity none could parallel him, none could match him; and in this sense we are to understand the apostle, both in that 1Co 2:6, 'We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,' and in that Php 3:15, 'Let as many as be perfect be thus minded.' He speaks here not of an absolute perfection, for such a perfection himself disclaimeth in ver. 12, 'Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' By the force of the original word, that is here rendered follow, the apostle declares that he had perfection in chase, as it were, and that his spirit was with much heat and eagerness carried out in pursuing after it, and resolved not to rest till he had attained to it. An absolute perfection is very desirable on earth, but shall never be obtained till we come to heaven. Absolute perfection is not the privilege of saints militant, but of saints triumphant; and therefore the perfection that the believing Corinthians and holy Philippians had attained to, was not an absolute but a comparative perfection; they were perfect in comparison of those that were but babes and shrubs and dwarfs in Christ. And it is a very high and honourable report that the apostle gives of the Corinthians in that 2Co 8:7, 'Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; see that ye abound in this grace also.' And it is a very large testimony that the same apostle gives of the Romans in that Rom 15:14, 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are also full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' Now the fulness the apostle speaks of is not a fulness of parts, for the weakest believer as well as the strongest is at first conversion renewed and sanctified in every part, though it be but in part and imperfect; and this is a fulness of parts. But of this fulness the apostle does not speak. But then there is a fulness of degrees. Now this fulness is either an absolute fulness, or a comparative fulness. The apostle is to be understood of a comparative fulness. The Romans were full of all goodness and knowledge, in comparison of those in whom Christ was but newly formed, and in whom the work of grace was but newly erected; and they were full of all goodness and knowledge now, in comparison of what they were at their first acquaintance with Christ, and first acceptance of Christ, and first resignation of themselves to Christ, and at their first marriage union and communion with Christ. And thus you see, by the experiences of other saints, that it is possible for you to attain to higher degrees of grace and holiness than any those are that yet you have attained to. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is possible for you to attain to higher degrees and pitches in holiness than any yet you have reached unto; witness the praises and thanksgivings that has been offered up to God upon their accounts who have attained to a very great height of holiness. Take a few Scripture instances for the clearing up of this particular: as that in 1Co 1:4-5, 1Co 1:7, 'I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; so that ye come behind in no good gift;' and that in Eph 1:3, Eph 1:7-8, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; who according to the riches of his grace, hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.' Here the apostle trumpets out the high praises of God, for that he had blessed them and enriched them, though not with corn, or oil, or wine, or with gold or silver, which is but red and white clay, that yet he had

blessed them with all spiritual blessings, which are the choicest, the chiefest, and the sweetest of blessings; for spiritual blessings are right-handed blessings, they are peculiar blessings, they are blessings-sweetening blessings, for they sweeten all the blessings man enjoys; and they are blessings-begetting blessings, for they beget and bring forth many other blessings, to the enriching and adorning of a Christian's soul; and they are blessings-sanctifying blessings, they are blessings that sanctify all other blessings; and they are blessings-preserving blessings, they are blessings that will preserve all our other blessings. Spiritual blessings are peculiar blessings, they are costly blessings, they are blessings that reach to the very spirit and soul of a Christian, they are blessings that raises the spirit of a Christian, and that ennoble the spirit of a Christian, and that cheers up the spirit of a Christian, and that a thousand ways betters the spirit of a Christian; and therefore it is no wonder that the apostle's heart was so affected with spiritual blessings, and that his mouth was so filled with spiritual praises, as indeed it was. And so in that 1Ti 1:12, 1Ti 1:14, 'And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, because the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.' And thus you see by others' thanksgivings, that it is possible for you to attain to far higher degrees of holiness than what for the present you are raised to. The stork is said to leave one of her young ones where she hatcheth them; and the elephant to turn up the first sprig towards heaven when he comes to feed, and both out of some instinct of gratitude; and shall not a divine instinct enable Christians to do much more in a way of gratitude, both upon the account of their own graces, and upon the account of those eminent measures of grace that other saints are blessed and crowned withal? Though Seiarus² did dare to sacrifice to himself, yet a Christian must not dare to sacrifice to himself, nor to his duties, nor to his graces, &c.; the sacrifice of praise in regard of grace received, is a crown of glory that is due to none but the God of grace. All the rivers return to the sea from whence they had their beginning. God will give you his covenant, and he will give you his ordinances, and he will give his heaven, and he will give you his Son, yea, he will give you himself; but his glory, his glory he will not give unto another, Isa 42:8. Whatever he parts with, he is resolved that neither angels nor men shall share with him in the glory of his grace. I have read of a stork that cast a pearl into the bosom of a maid which had healed her of a wound. O sirs! when God comes to heal you of your spiritual wounds and diseases, and not only so, but shall also richly bespangle and adorn your souls and others' with his precious graces, what can you do less than cast that pearl of praise into the bosom of God? as David did in that Psa 103:1-6. The best means to get more grace, is to be thankful for that grace you have, for God loves to sow much where he reaps much. If your returns are answerable to your receipts, you will still be on the receiving hand. Thankfulness is God's impost for all his blessings, and they that truly and duly pays this impost, shall be sure to abound in the best of blessings. Thankfulness for one blessing always draws on another blessing, as saints by experience daily find. And thus you see, by these arguments, that it is possible for you to attain higher degrees of holiness than any yet you have reached unto. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, It is possible for you to attain to higher degrees of holiness, &c.; witness those choice, those rare and singular gifts that Christ has bestowed upon many of his servants for this very purpose—viz., that they may help on a growth and an increase of holiness in your hearts: Eph 4:8, Eph 4:11-13, 'Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the

knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' One main end of Christ's giving such eminent gifts to his church officers is, that his people may be made eminent in holiness. It is not only to bring them in, but also to build them up; it is not only to convert them, but also to edify them; it is not only to begin a work of holiness, but also to perfect and carry on a work of holiness; and therefore the word is not only compared to seed, that begets holiness in men's hearts, but also to wine and milk and strong meat, that helps forward the growth and increase of holiness in men's hearts. And so the great end of the Lord's supper is not to work spiritual life where it is not, but to increase it where it is; it is not to change the heart, but more and more to sanctify the heart; it is not to work holiness, but to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord; it is not to sow the seed of grace in the soul, but it is to cause that seed to grow and flourish in the soul. The martyrs in the primitive church, when they were to appear before the cruel tyrants, they were wont, as Cyprian shews, to receive the Lord's supper, and thereby they were fired with zeal and fervour, and filled with faith and fortitude, &c. Chrysostom saith, that by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are so armed against Satan's temptations that he fleeth from us, as if we were so many lions that spit fire. The Lord's supper is a cabinet of spiritual jewels; and oh, then, how unmanly and unseemly a thing it is to hang this cabinet of jewels, which is more worth than the gold of Ophir, in a swine's snout! And how that mother can be guiltless of the death of her child, that giveth him poison in a golden cup, with this caution, that she tells him it is poison, I know not; no more do I know how that minister can be guiltless of the body and blood of our Lord, who dispenses the bread of life to those who are known to be without spiritual life—yea, that are known to be dead in sins and trespasses. And thus you see, by these five arguments, that it is possible for you to attain to greater measures of holiness than any yet you have reached unto; and so much for the second motive.²

(3.) Thirdly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy you are, the more you will be the delight of God, and the more dear you will be to God, and the more beloved you will be of God, Psa 16:3-4. For the right understanding of this argument you must carefully distinguish between God's love of goodwill, and his love of complacency. Now God's love of goodwill is equal to all his saints, whether they are rich or poor, high or low, bond or free, or whether they have a sea of grace or but a drop of grace. God's love of goodwill runs as much out to the weakest Christian as it does to the strongest, to a babe in grace as to a giant in grace. All saints are equally elected. God never chose one man a vessel of glory more than another; the weakest saint is as much elected as the strongest, Rom 11:17. And as all saints are equally elected, so all saints are equally redeemed by Jesus Christ. Christ bled as much for one saint as another, and he sweat as much for one saint as another, and he sighed and groaned as much for one saint as another, and he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath as much for one saint as another, Isa 53:3-12. Christ paid as great a price for his lambs as for his sheep, 1Co 6:19-20, for Lazarus in his rags as for David in his royal robes. And as all saints are equally redeemed, so all saints are equally called; one saint is as much called out of the kingdom of darkness as another, and one saint is as much called to Jesus Christ as another, 1Pe 2:9; in vocation God looks with as favourable an eye upon one as he does upon another. And as all saints are equally called, so all saints are equally justified, 2Co 5:19-20; though one saint may be more sanctified than another, yet no saint is more justified than another; the weakest believer is as much justified and pardoned before the throne of God as the strongest is; that pure, perfect, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ is as much imputed to one saint as it is to

another, 1Co 1:30. And as all saints are equally justified, so all saints are equally adopted, Gal 4:4-6; the weakest believer is as much an adopted son as the strongest believer in the world is. God is no more a father to one than he is to another; the babe in the arms is as much a son as he that is of riper years. Thus you see that God's love of goodwill is equal in all his saints, and therefore you are to understand this argument of God's love of complacency. Now this love runs out more to some saints than it does to others; for they that have much holiness are much beloved, but they that have most holiness are most beloved, John 14:21-23. The greater thou art in holiness, the greater wilt thou be beloved of God. 'O Daniel, thou art greatly beloved,' Dan 9:23. And why does God love more and delight more in Christ, than he does in all the angels and saints in heaven, and in all the upright ones that are on earth? but because Christ is more eminent and glorious in holiness than all created beings are; he is more the express image of his Father's person, and the brightness of his Father's glory than others, and therefore he is more beloved than others. It was an excellent observation of one of the fathers, viz., that God loved the humanity of Christ more than any man, because he was fuller of grace and truth than any man. Now for the further clearing up of this great argument,—Consider, first, that the more holy any person is, the more excellent that person is. All corruptions are diminutions of excellency. The more mixed anything is, the more abased it is. The more you mix your wine with water, the more you abase your wine, and the more you mix your tin with gold, the more you abase your gold; but the purer your wine is, the richer and the better your wine is, and the purer your gold is, the more glorious and excellent it is, so the purer and holier any person is, the more excellent and glorious that person is. Now the more divinely excellent and glorious any person is, the more he is beloved of God, and the more he is the delight of God. But, secondly, the more holy any person is, the more that person pleases the Lord, Heb 11:5. Fruitfulness in holiness fills heaven with joy. The husbandman is not so much pleased with the fruitfulness of his fields, nor the wife with the fruitfulness of her womb, nor the father with the thriving of his child, as God is pleased with the fruitfulness and thriving of his children in grace and holiness. Now certainly the more God is pleased with any person, the more he loves that person, and the more pleasure and delight he takes in such a person. If God be most pleased with holiness, he cannot but be most delighted in those that are most holy. But, thirdly, the more holy any person is, the more like to God he is, and the more like to God he is, doubtless, the more he is beloved of God. It is likeness both in nature and grace that always draws the strongest love. Though every child is the father multiplied, the father of a second edition, yet the father loves him best, and delights in him most, who is most like him, and who in feature, spirit, and action, does most resemble him to the life; and so does the Father of spirits also, he always loves them best who in holiness resemble him most. There are four remarkable things in the beloved disciple above all the rest: 1. That he lay nearest to Christ's bosom at the table; 2. That he followed Christ closest to the high priest's palace; 3. That he stood close to Christ when he was on the cross, though others had basely deserted him, and turned their backs upon him; 4. That Christ commended the care of his virgin mother to him. Now why did Christ's desire, love, and delight, run out with a stronger and a fuller tide towards John than to the rest of the disciples? Doubtless it was because John did more resemble Christ than the rest, it was because John was a more exact picture and lively representation of Christ than the others were. But fourthly, the more holy any man is, the more communion and familiarity that man shall have with God; as you may see in Moses. Moses was a nonsuch for meekness and holiness: Num 12:3, 'Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.'

There was no man so slighted, wronged, provoked, teased, perplexed, and troubled by that wicked, unthankful, unbelieving, and murmuring generation, as Moses was, and yet he did neither rail at them nor revile them; he did neither storm nor rage, he did neither fret nor fling; and though he had a sword of justice in his hand, and might easily have avenged himself on them, yet he would not, but exercised all patience, tenderness, goodness, and sweetness towards them. Oh the lowliness, the meekness, the holiness of this man Moses! And oh the freeness, the friendliness, the openness, and the familiarness of God with Moses! Deu 34:10, 'And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' To give you a little light into these words: some of the Rabbis observe that Moses surpassed all the other prophets, not only in sublimity of prophecies, but also in excellency and number of miracles; for Moses within one age wrought seventy-six miracles, when all the rest of the prophets from the beginning of the world quite down to the ruin of the first temple, wrought only seventy-four: and as for those words, 'whom the Lord knew face to face,' you are not to understand them thus, that God hath a face as man hath, nor that Moses had a view of the essence of God, which is invisible; for in this sense no man hath seen God at any time, John 1:18; and indeed the least beam of God's essential glory and majesty would have swallowed up Moses alive, 1Ti 6:16. But these words, 'whom the Lord knew face to face,' are to be understood of God's speaking to Moses in a free, friendly, familiar, and plain manner. God did speak to Moses by a clear articulate voice, even as one man speaks to another when they speak face to face. And so when Aaron and Miriam were swelled with pride and envy, and began to bespatter Moses, and to pick a hole in his coat, and to cloud, eclipse, and diminish his glory, see at what a high and noble rate God speaks of Moses; see how God magnifies and exalts and lifts up Moses in that Num 12:6-8, 'And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' Now here you see how God owns Moses, and stands up for Moses, and pleads for Moses, and tells Aaron and Miriam to their faces that Moses was the greatest favourite, and that he had far greater respects for Moses than he had for them, and that there was not a man in all the world that was so inward with him as Moses, and that had so much of his ear and heart as Moses had. God did appear to other prophets in dreams and visions, which were transient, but with Moses God will speak mouth to mouth, God will speak to him without an interpreter, he will speak to Moses more familiarly and frequently than he did to others by visions, and more clearly, plainly, and assuredly than he did to others by dreams. God here engages himself to hold a more close, familiar, friendly, and constant conference and correspondence with Moses, than with any others in the world. Moses was blessed with as clear, and with as full, and with as apparent sight of God, and communion with God, as he was able to bear and comprehend. Some of the learned are of opinion, that Christ did converse with Moses in a human shape, as he had done with Abraham before; they conjecture that the Lord Jesus did very friendly and familiarly shew himself to Moses with that very same face and form of human nature, which he afterwards assumed, but this I dare not press upon you as an article of your faith. And whether Moses had one hundred and seventy-three familiar conferences with God, which none of the prophets had, lies upon those Rabbis to prove that do assert it; but this is granted on all hands, that he was a special favourite, and a man in high communion with God, and one that had very clear and eminent discoveries and

manifestations of God. And so Abraham was a man of great holiness, and a man eminent in his communion with God. God owned him as a friend, as an honourable friend, as an eminent friend, as a bosom friend, as a peculiar friend, and as a faithful friend, Isa 41:8; and therefore he made him one of his privy council, and opened his heart and his secrets to him: 'And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?' Gen 18:17. Abraham is styled the friend of God by a specialty. Though God had many friends, yet it was Abraham that was his singular friend, his darling friend, his rare friend, &c., and accordingly God was most free, and full, and rich in the communications of his favours and secrets to Abraham. It was not enough for Abraham to be of God's court, but he must be also of his cabinet council. It was always a principle in morality, that sweet and intimate friendship cannot be extended to many. Friends usually go by pairs. And thus you see that the more holy any man is, the more communion that man shall have with God, and the more communion any man has with God, the more beloved shall that man be of God. The highest communion is always attended with the highest love. But, fifthly and lastly, the more holy any man is, the more actually ripe and fit for heaven that man is. A Christian at first conversion is but rough cast, but as holiness is increased, so he comes more and more every day to be prepared, polished, squared, and fitted for a full and glorious fruition of God in heaven, Job 5:26. Though the least degree of grace and holiness puts a man into a habitual preparedness and fittedness for heaven, yet it is only an eminency in grace and holiness that puts a man into an actual preparedness and fittedness for heaven. The richer in grace the riper for glory, the higher you are in holiness the fitter you are to enter into the joy of your Lord. Though the least drop or drachm of holiness is enough to keep a man from dropping into hell, yet it is only grown holiness that actually prepares and fits a man to go to heaven, Mat 25:19-24. Now, doubtless, the more actually ripe and ready any man is for heaven, the more pleasure and delight God takes in him. The more the vessels of grace are fitted for glory, the more complacency God takes in them. When God set himself upon the creation of the world, in the close of every day's work, except the second, for which the opinions of the learned are various, God set to his seal, 'that it was good;' but when he had perfected and completed the whole creation, and cast an eye upon all together, then he concludes, 'that it was very good;' 'and God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good,' or 'extreme good,' so some, or 'very pleasant and delightful,' so others, Gen 1:1-31. The work of creation was so curiously and gloriously framed, and so full of admirable rarities and varieties, that it raised delight and complacency in God himself: whereupon Augustine observes that even to every grace, yea, of the least degree of grace, he saith 'it is good;' but when he beholds the graces of his saints fresh and flourishing, your faith acted and strengthened, your repentance daily renewed, your humility increased, &c., then he concludes that 'all is very good.' O sirs, if the Lord Jesus Christ be so ravished with one of his spouse's eyes, and with one chain of her neck, Song of Solomon 4:9; with the least drops or sips of grace, or with the least grains and drachms of grace and holiness, oh, how much more will great measures of grace and holiness take him and ravish him! Well! for a close of this argument, remember this, that as the sun shines hotter on some climates than it doth upon others, and as the dew falls more upon one place than another, and as the water overflows some pastures more than others, so God's love of complacency and delight shines hotter and brighter upon some Christians than it does upon others; and these I have shewed you to be such who are most eminent and excellent in grace and holiness. And thus much for this third motive.

(4.) Fourthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more your holiness is increased, the more the great God will be honoured and glorified, Mat 5:16. Fruitfulness in holiness sets the weightiest crown of glory upon the head of God: John 15:8, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' The more eminent any person is in holiness, the more clearly and convincingly he proclaims God before all the world to be a rich God, a full God, a bountiful God, an overflowing good. There is nothing that works men to admire God so much, and to exalt God so high, as a Christian's fruitfulness in holiness. Oh, how good must that God be, whose servants are so good, said the heathen! Oh, how glorious in holiness must that God be, whose people are so holy! Look, as the thriving child is a credit to the nurse, and the rich servant an honour to his master, and a plentiful crop the praise of the husbandman, so that Christian that thrives in grace, that grows rich in holiness, is the greatest credit, and the highest honour, and the sweetest praise to God in the world. The tree in Alcinous's garden had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another. O sirs, those trees of righteousness that have not only the blossoms and buds of holiness upon them, but also the ripe fruits of holiness one under another, they are the greatest honour and glory to God in the world, Isa 61:3. What will men say when they shall behold your eminency in sanctity? will they not say, certainly God is no hard master; he never looks to reap where he does not sow, nor to gather where he does not straw, Mat 25:24. Certainly he keeps a noble house; his tables are richly spread, his cups overflow, he feeds, yea, he feasts his servants with the choicest rarities and varieties that heaven affords: witness their thriving and flourishing estate in grace and holiness. And thus you see that the more your holiness is increased, the more highly the God of heaven will be exalted and magnified. But,

(5.) Fifthly, To provoke you to endeavour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness thou hast, the more he will give thee. At first God gives holiness where there is none, and where this holiness is improved, there God will be still augmenting and increasing of it. Do thou but make it thy business to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,' Heb 6:7, and the Lord will not fail to make new and fresh additions of more grace and holiness to that thou hast: Psa 84:11, 'The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.' Mark those words, viz., that 'the Lord will give grace and glory,' that is, grace unto glory, he will still be adding more grace to that thou hast, till the bud of grace be turned into the flower of glory, till thy grace on earth commenceth glory in heaven; the more holiness any man has, the more still God will give him: Mat 13:12, 'For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.' He that hath principles of grace and holiness laid into his soul, he shall find a plentiful increase of those sanctifying and saving principles; he shall have more abundance; his spark of holiness shall grow into a flame, his drops of holiness shall be turned into a sea, and his mite of holiness shall be multiplied into millions. The greater harvest of holiness a Christian brings forth, the greater increase of holiness shall he experience; every exercise of grace and holiness is always attended with new increase of grace and holiness, Mat 25:29. Look, as that arm is greatest and strongest that is most used and exercised, so that particular grace that is most exercised and used is most strengthened and greatened. Look, as earthly parents, when they see their children to husband and improve a little stock to great advantage, then they add to their stock, they increase their stock, they double their stock; so, when the Father of spirits sees his children to husband and improve a little stock of grace and holiness to the great advantage of their souls, then he will increase their spiritual stock, he will be still a-adding to their stock, yea, he will double their stock: John 15:2, 'Every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.'

Such as are fruitful shall be made more fruitful. Christ will take most pains to make them better who are already very good. Of all Christians in the world, there are none that have so much grace as humble Christians have, and yet God delights to pour in grace into their souls, as men pour liquor into empty vessels, Jas 4:6. Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive more grace. And thus much for this fifth argument. But,

(6.) Sixthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you attain to, the greater will be your heaven of joy and comfort in this world. Though the least spark of true holiness will bring a man to heaven certainly, yet it is only an eminency in holiness that will make a man walk to heaven comfortably. The more holiness any man has, the more he shall enjoy him, in whose presence is fulness of joy, Psa 16:11; and the more any man enjoys the presence of God with his spirit, the greater will be his heaven of joy in this world. Look, as a little star yields but a little light, so a little holiness yields but a little comfort; and look, as the greatest stars yields the greatest light, so the greatest measures of holiness always yields the greatest comforts. Divine joy ebbs and flows as holiness ebbs and flows. Soul comforts rises and falls as holiness rises and falls. Great measures of holiness carries with them the greatest evidence of the reality of holiness. Now the more clearly and evidently the reality and sincerity of a man's holiness appears, the higher will the springs of joy and comfort arise in his soul. Great measures of holiness carry with them the greatest evidence of a man's union and communion with God; and the more evident a man's union and communion is with God, the more will that man's soul be filled with that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, 1Pe 1:8. In great measures of holiness a man may see and read most of the love of God, the face of God, the favour of God, and the heart of God, Acts 9:31; and the more a man is blessed with such a sight as this is, the more will that babe of grace, divine joy, spring in his soul. The greater measures of holiness and sanctification any man attains to, the clearer and brighter will the evidences of his justification be. Now the clearer evidences any man has of his justification, the stronger will be his consolation, Rom 5:1-3, and Rom 8:30, Rom 8:33-35; and indeed the strongest waters of consolation do always flow from a clear sight and a true sense of a man's justification. No man lives so comfortably, no man bears the cross so sweetly, no man resists the devil and the world so stoutly, nor no man will die so cheerfully, as he that lives and dies in a clear sight of his justification. The more holiness any man attains to, the more his fears will be scattered, his doubts resolved, and all those impediments removed that commonly bar out joy and comfort: and what will be the happy issue of these things, but the bringing in of a sea of joy and comfort into the soul! It is not riches, nor honours, nor applause, nor learning, nor friends, nor a great name in the world, but an eminency in holiness, that can highly raise the springs of divine joy in a Christian's soul. Though the windows of the temple were broad without but narrow within, yet the joy and comfort of a Christian that is eminent in holiness is broad and full within, though it be narrow and contracted without. O sirs, as ever you would have your joy full, labour for a heart filled with holiness. Your comforts will be always few and low, if your holiness be low. Why have the angels always harps in their hands, and hallelujahs in their mouths, but because they have attained to a fulness of holiness? But,

(7.) Seventhly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy any person is, the more the Lord will reveal and manifest himself, and his mind and will, unto him, John 14:21, John 14:23; Hos 6:3. Ezekiel was a man of eminent holiness, and a man that had

glorious visions, and deep mysteries, and rare discoveries of God, and of the great things that should be brought about in the latter days, discovered to him. And Daniel was a man of very great holiness: and oh, what secrets and mysteries did God reveal to him! Many of those great and glorious things which concerns the destruction of the four last monarchies, and the growth, increase, exaltation, flourishing, durable, invincible, and unconquerable estate of his own kingdom, was discovered to him. Among all the apostles, Paul was a man of the greatest holiness, and of all the apostles Paul had the most glorious revelations and discoveries of God manifested to him, 2Co 12:2, 2Co 12:4. Witness those glorious revelations that he had when he was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, or wordless words—**■**■**■**μᾶτα **■**■**■**ητα—such as words were too weak to utter, such as was not possible for man to utter, and that, either because they transcended man's capacity in this life, or else because the apostle was forbidden to utter them; they being revealed to him, not for the public use of the church, but only for his particular encouragement, that so he might be the better able to encounter with all the hardships, difficulties, dangers, and deaths that should attend him in the conscientious discharge of his ministerial work. Some of the ancients are of opinion that he saw God's essence; for, say they, other things in heaven might have been uttered, but the essence of God is so great and so glorious a thing, that no man or angel can utter it or declare it. But here I must crave leave to enter my dissent, for the Scripture is express in this, that no man hath thus ever seen the Lord at any time, John 1:18; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jn 4:12; and that no man can thus see the Lord and live. And as great a favourite of heaven as Moses was, yet he could only see the back parts of God, he could only behold some lower representations of God. Others say, that he heard the heavenly singing of angels and blessed spirits, which was so sweet, so excellent and glorious, that no mortal man was able to utter it, and this of the two is most probable; but no man is bound to make this opinion an article of his faith. This, I think, we may safely conclude, that in this rapture, besides the contemplation of celestial mysteries, he felt such unspeakable delight and pleasure, that was either like to that, or exceeding that, which Adam took in the terrestrial paradise. Doubtless, the apostle did see and hear such excellent and glorious things, as was impossible for the tongue of any mortal man to express or utter. And so John was a man of most rare holiness, and Christ reveals to him the general estate of his church, and all that should befall his people, and that from John's time unto his second coming. Christ gives John a true representation of all the troubles, trials, changes, mercies, and glories that in all times, and in all ages and places, should attend his church, until he come in all his glory. About sixty years after Christ's ascension, Christ comes to John and opens his heart, and unbosoms his soul, and makes known to him all that care, that love, that tenderness, that kindness, and that sweetness that he would exercise towards his church, from that very time to the end of the world. Christ tells John, that though he had been absent and seemingly silent for about threescore years, that yet he was not so taken up with the delights, contents, and glory of heaven, as that he did not care what became of his church on earth. Oh, no! And therefore he opens his choicest secrets, and makes known the most hidden and glorious mysteries to John, that ever was made known to any man. As there was none that had so much of the heart of Christ as John, so there was none that had so much of the ear of Christ as John. Christ singles out his servant John from all the men in the world, and makes known to him all the happy providences, and all the sad occurrences that were to come upon the followers of the Lamb, that so they might know what to pray for, and what to sit for, and what to wait for; also he declares to John all that wrath and vengeance, all that desolation and destruction

that should come upon the false prophet, and the beast, and upon all that wondered after them, and that were worshippers of them, and that had received their marks, either in their foreheads or in their hands. We read of holy Polycarpus, that as he lay in his bed he saw in a vision the bed set on fire under his head; and thus God did forewarn him, and manifest to him, what manner of death he should die, and accordingly it fell out, for he was burnt for the cause of Christ, and rejoicingly sealed to the truth with his blood. Mr John Huss was a man eminent in holiness,—he was born in Prague, in Bohemia, and was pastor of the church of Bethlehem—his name, Huss, in the Bohemian language, signifies a goose; at his martyrdom, he told them, that if they roasted him in the fire, out of the ashes of the goose, a hundred years after, God would raise up a swan in Germany that should carry the cause on for which he suffered, and whose singings would affright all those vultures, which was exactly fulfilled in Luther—whose name in the Bohemian language signifies a swan—for God raised him up as a famous instrument in his hand, who carried on that glorious cause with mighty success; and upon his death the Bohemians under Ziska rose in arms, and had most admirable success against the emperor and the Papists. Luther was a man of great holiness, and being one time more than ordinarily earnest with God in prayer, he came down to his friends, and told them with a very great confidence, that it should go well with Germany all his days; he knew what was done in heaven by that which God had done in his own heart, and accordingly it fell out. The martyr that was burnt last in Smithfield, told the people that they should be of good comfort, for he was fully persuaded that he was the last that should suffer under Queen Mary, and so he was. Thus you see that men of greatest holiness have had the clearest and choicest manifestations and discoveries of God, and of his mind, made known to them. Suitable to that choice promise that you have in that Jer 33:3, ‘Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty’—or hidden—‘things, which thou knowest not.’ God will make known to his holy ones the most hidden and abstruse things; and the more holy they are, the more they shall know of the most secret and mysterious things of God: John 7:17, ‘If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.’ Christ will be most open to them that are most obedient to him; they shall know most of the doctrine of Christ who are most complying with the will of Christ. David was a man of great holiness, as is evident by that glorious testimony that God has given of him in that Acts 13:22, ‘And when he had removed him,’ that is, Saul, ver. 21, ‘he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will’—θελ■ματα—‘all my wills;’ to note the eminency, transcendency, universality, and sincerity of his obedience. Now if you will but look into that 2Sa 7:27, there you shall see how the Lord declares and makes known himself and his intentions towards him; ‘For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house.’ But the Hebrew is more full and excellent; in the original it runs thus, ‘Lord, thou hast revealed this to the ear of thy servant.’ Now the emphasis lies in those words, ‘to the ear of thy servant.’ When God makes known himself and his intentions to such as are eminent in holiness, he does it in their ear. God tells David in his ear, that ‘he will build him an house,’ that is, that he would continue his kingdom to him, and to his posterity after him. This was blessed news, and this God tells in his ear. Such as are special friends and favourites, we often whisper them in the ear. When we would acquaint them with our most secret and weighty purposes, intentions, and resolutions, we give them a whisper in the ear. Such persons that are eminent in holiness, are the great favourites of heaven, and God tells them in the ear of many a rare secret, which all others are kept ignorant of.

Well, sirs, for a close, remember this, that there are no persons on earth that are so prepared and fitted for the clearest, fullest, and highest manifestations of God, as those that are eminent in holiness; nor none that set so high a price upon the discoveries of God, as men that are eminent in holiness; nor none that are so able to bear the revelations of his will, as men that are eminent in holiness; nor none that will make such a humble, faithful, constant, and through improvement of all that God shall make known to them, as men that are famous for holiness; and therefore, as ever you would have God in an eminent way to manifest and discover himself and his mind unto you, oh, labour after a greater measure of holiness! But,

(8.) Eighthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy a man is, the more singular delight and pleasure God will take in all his religious duties and services. Holiness puts a divine savour upon all a man's services. There are no duties so sweet as those that have most holiness in them: Mal 3:3-4, 'And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.' After the Lord Jesus Christ hath been to his people as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, that is, after he hath refined, scoured, and purged his people from their drossiness, filthiness, earthliness, selfishness, and sensualness, &c., then 'their offerings shall be pleasant to the Lord.' Look, as light makes all things pleasant and delightful to man, so holiness makes all a man's duties and services pleasant and delightful to the Lord: Zec 13:9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' When God has refined his people as silver is refined, then he will bow his ear, and open his hand, and grant them the desires of their hearts. Oh the pleasure and delight that God takes in the prayers, tears, hearings, readings, meltings, mournings, and repentings of such who are eminently purged and sanctified! The more holiness any man has, the less of the flesh, pollution, and corruption there is in all his duties and services; and the less there is of the old man in all our holy offerings, the more they are the delight of God. The more holiness any man has, the less there will be of man, and the more there will be of Christ and the Spirit in all his duties and services; and doubtless, the less there is of man, and the more there is of Christ in duties, the more pleasant and delightful they will be unto the Lord. The more holy any man is, the more there will be of his heart in his duties, and the more a man's heart is in his duties, the more pleasant and delightful they will be to God. God is a Spirit, John 4:23-24, and he is only taken with those duties wherein the spirit of a man is. The heart is camera omnipotentis Regis, the presence-chamber of the King of heaven, it is his bed of spices, it is his royal throne, on which he delights to sit and rule. A sanctified heart in duties shall carry it with God for crowns, when a silver tongue shall not carry it with God for crumbs. The more holy any man is, the more delight and pleasure he will take in religious duties and services. The more a man's natural strength is, the more easily he walks, and the more delightfully he works. The fuller the wings are of feathers, with the more ease and pleasure the bird flies; so the fuller the soul is of holiness, the more easily, the more pleasantly, and the more delightfully will it walk, yea, run, yea, fly in all the ways of God's commands. Every yoke of Christ is easy, and every command of Christ is joyous to a man that is eminent in holiness. Now the more any man delights and takes pleasure in religious duties and services, the more God delights and takes pleasure in his religious duties and services. The more a Christian's heart is affected and taken with the duties of religion, the

more the heart of God will be affected and taken with those duties. Look, as there is no duty that affects the heart of God, that does not first affect our own, or that takes the heart of God, that does not first take our own; so all those duties and services that are divinely pleasing and delightful to our noble part, they are also pleasing and delightful to God himself. The very heathen, as several authors report, had their store-pots of water set at the doors of their temples, where they used to wash before they went to sacrifice, having this notion and opinion amongst them, that their gods did best accept and most delight in those sacrifices that were offered by those who had washed themselves pure and clean. Sure I am that the great God, who is the God of gods, is most pleased and delighted with those sacrifices of prayers and praises that are offered up with the purest hands, and with the cleanest heart; and therefore, as ever you would have God to take singular pleasure and delight in all your duties and services, labour after an eminency in holiness. But,

(9.) Ninthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that many who have been won over to Christ later than you, do yet in holiness much excel you. Are there not many children who have been in Christ but yesterday, as it were, and yet how do they outstrip their parents, not only in parts, but in piety, who have been in Christ many years before them? And are there not many servants to be found who have not been in Christ seven years, who yet are more holy, more humble, more heavenly, more spiritual, more serious, and every way more gracious than their masters, who have been in Christ long before them? And are there not many poor, mean, neglected, despised, and scorned Christians, who have been converted and sanctified but a few years, who yet are more fearful of sinning against God, and more careful of pleasing God, and more studious of glorifying of God, and more wise, and watchful, and circumspect in their walking with God, and more laborious and diligent in the use of all holy means whereby God may be exalted and lifted up in the world, than many great and rich Christians in the world, who yet have been in Christ very many years before them? Paul had some kinsmen that were in Christ before him, as you may see in that Rom 16:5, Rom 16:7, 'Likewise greet the church that is in their house; salute my well-beloved Epænetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ; salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me,' and yet in grace and holiness he excelled them all. You know many men in riding a journey do often set out after their neighbours, and yet they do not only overtake them, but also get into their inns many hours before them; and among seamen, is there anything more common than for those who set sail some days after others, yet to get into their ports before them? so there are many Christians who have set out heavenwards and holinesswards after others, and yet they have not only overtaken them, but also in grace and holiness gone far before them. As Christ, in his nonage, put all the doctors in the temple down, Luk 2:46–48, so many Christians, even in their nonage, as I may say, do put down other Christians, who, in respect of their years and opportunities, might have been doctors in Christianity. In this great city you have very many who have set up many years after others, and yet they are grown far greater and richer than those of their callings who have set up many years before them; and doubtless there are very many in this city who have set upon the trade of Christianity, the trade of godliness, long after others, who yet are grown greater and richer in grace and holiness than those who have for very many years driven that trade. And oh, how should this alarm all such to double their diligence, and to strive and labour as for life to be eminent in holiness, yea, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! But,

(10.) Tenthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that there are no persons under heaven that are so strongly obliged and engaged to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord as you are, for you are the only persons on earth that are made partakers of the divine nature, and that have a more excellent spirit in you than the men of this world have, and that have more excellent principles in you, as knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, self-denial, humility, &c., to help on the advance and increase of holiness, than others have, whose souls are strangers, yea, enemies, to those noble and divine principles. And you are the only persons on earth upon whom all exhortations and commands to grow in holiness, to increase in holiness, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, does most immediately, most directly, most eminently, most roundly, and most fully fall, as you may easily see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.³ O sirs, how gloriously should that house be adorned with holiness that is of God's own building! and how fruitful should those vineyards and gardens be that are of God's own planting! and how full should those wells be that are of God's own digging! and how sweet should those flowers be that are of God's own setting! and how ripe should those fruits be that are of God's own grafting! O sirs, shall the eagle fly higher and higher; shall the sun shine brighter and brighter; and shall the giant refreshed with wine run swifter and swifter; and shall the woman that is with child grow fuller and fuller, and greater and greater; and shall not you who are the people of God's holiness fly higher and higher in holiness, and shine brighter and brighter in holiness, and run swifter and swifter in the ways of holiness, and grow fuller and fuller, and greater and greater in the births of holiness? O sirs, holiness in a Christian is not like a star in the sky, nor a stone in the centre, nor a bullet in a gun, which is always equal; but holiness is like to the seed, which, being sown in the furrows of the earth, first springs up into a blade, and then into an ear, and then into ripe corn, Mat 13:23; Mark 4:28. Holiness is like to the waters in Ezekiel's sanctuary, that rise by degrees, Eze 37:3-4. First, it rose to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and then to a mighty river that could not be passed over. Holiness is like to the house of David, that grew stronger and stronger, 2Sa 3:1; and like to the cedars of Lebanon, that grew greater and greater, Hos 14:6-7. O Christians, there are none that are so strongly obliged to go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength, and from holiness to holiness, as you are, Rom 1:17. Oh! you must labour to be filled up to the brim with holiness, Col 1:13, and Col 2:7. Oh! you must strive to equalise the first three of David's worthies, 1Ch 11:21. Oh! you must endeavour to be like the brethren of Gideon, every one resembling the children of a king, Jdg 8:18. Oh that you could all say as Elihu once did, 'I am full of matter, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles,' Job 32:18-19. O my brethren, to be as full of holiness as new bottles are full of wine, or as the moon is full of light, or as the black clouds are full of rain, or as nurses' breasts are full of milk, is the greatest happiness in this world. O sirs! there are no persons on earth that are engaged to love the Lord with such a vehement love as you, nor to trust in the Lord with such an inflamed faith as you, nor to hope in the Lord with such a raised hope as you, nor to delight in the Lord with such ravishing delights as you, nor to long after the Lord with such earnest longings as you, nor to fear before the Lord with so great a trembling as you, nor to be so zealous for God with such a burning zeal as you, nor to mourn before the Lord with so great a mourning as you, nor to hate all things that are contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the command of God, and the glory of God, with such a deadly hatred as you. Well, remember this, viz., it is no little sin for any Christian to sit down satisfied under a little measure of holiness, considering the many and the great obligations that lies upon him to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness any man attains to, the more bold, courageous, resolute, masculine, and heroic that man will be for God and godliness, 2Co 1:8-12. Holiness ennobles the heart, it raises the heart; and the higher the springs of holiness riseth in the heart, the higher it raiseth the heart, and the more it steels the heart for God and godliness. The more holiness any man has, the more resolutely he will set himself against sin, and the more divinely he will scorn the world, and the more courageously he will trample upon temptations, and the more heroic he will be under all his afflictions. Men of greatest holiness have been men of greatest boldness; witness Nehemiah, the three children, Daniel, and all the holy prophets and apostles: Pro 28:1, 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion,' yea, as a young lion, as the Hebrew has it, **לִיִּן**, that is in his hot blood and fears no colours, and that is more bold than any other's holiness—made Daniel not only as bold as a lion, but also to daunt the lions with his boldness. Luther was a man of great holiness, and a man of great boldness: witness his standing out against all the world; and when the emperor sent for him to Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, as sometimes Paul's did him, 'Go,' said he, 'I will surely go, since I am sent for, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yea, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me, as there be tiles to cover the houses, yet I would go.' And when the same author and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech, 'Come let us sing the 46th Psalm, and then let them do their worst.' Latimer² was a man of much holiness, counting the darkness and profaneness of those times wherein he lived, and a man of much courage and boldness; witness his presenting to King Henry the Eighth, for a New Year's gift, a New Testament wrapt up in a napkin, with this posie or motto about it, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' Dr Taylor, the martyr, was a very holy man, and being persuaded by some of his friends not to appear before Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, but to fly; 'Fly you,' said he, 'and do according to your consciences, but as for myself I am fully determined, by God's grace, to go to the bishop, and to tell him to his beard that he doth naught.' Colonus, the Dutch martyr, called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and then asked him whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's; here was a man of a heroic spirit indeed. Basil was a man of great holiness, and a man of a most masculine and courageous spirit. When the emperor sent to him to subscribe to the Arian heresy, and to engage him, promised him great preferment, to which he replied, 'Alas, these speeches are fit to catch little children withal, that look after such things, but we that are nourished and taught by the holy Scriptures are readier to suffer a thousand deaths than to suffer one syllable or tittle of the Scripture to be altered:' and when the emperor threatened him with imprisonment, banishment, death, he answered, 'Let him threaten boys with such fray-bugs, as for my part I am resolved that neither menaces nor flatteries shall silence me, or draw me to betray a good cause, or a good conscience.'⁴ Charles the Ninth, king of France, who had a deep hand in that barbarous and bloody massacre of many thousands of the saints in France; soon after that horrid tragical and perfidious slaughter was over he called the Prince of Conde, and proposed to him these three things, 'Either to go to mass, or to die presently, or to suffer perpetual imprisonment;' to which he returned this noble, bold, and heroic answer, viz., 'That by God's help he would never choose the first, and for either of the other two he left to the king's pleasure and God's providence.' John, Duke of Saxony, was eminent in Christianity, and he did heroically assert and maintain the cause of God against all opposition in three imperial assemblies; and when it was

told him that he should lose the favour of the Pope, and the emperor, and all the world besides, if he stuck so fast to the Lutheran cause, to which he gave this noble answer, 'Here are two ways,' said he, 'I must serve God or the world, and which of these do you think is the better?' and so put them off with this pleasant indignation; and when the States of the empire forbid all Lutheran sermons, he presently prepared to be gone, and professed boldly, 'that he would not stay there where he might not have liberty to serve God.' And thus you see by all these famous instances that the more eminent any persons are in holiness, the more bold, resolute, courageous, and heroical they will be for God, and for the things of God; and therefore, as ever you would be men of high courage and resolution for God, labour to be high in holiness. Such men who in all ages have been eminent in holiness have been like Shammah, one of David's worthies, who stood and defended the field when all the rest fled. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness any man attains to, the more serviceable and useful he will be in his generation. David was a man eminent in holiness, and as eminently serviceable in his generation: Acts 13:36, 'For David after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.' Men that have but a little stock of holiness, will be but a little serviceable in their generation, but men that have a great stock of holiness, will be greatly serviceable in their generation. Men that have but little farms, and little stocks, are but a little serviceable to their country, but men that have great farms, and large stocks, and rich revenues, are greatly serviceable to their country. What a world of good sometimes does one rich man do in a town, a city, a country! So one saint that is rich in grace and holiness, oh, what a world of good does he do to all that are round about him! Merchants that have great stocks, trade to the East and West Indies and so enrich their country, whenas those that have but weak estates can only barter with their neighbours at home, and so are instruments but of little public good. A candle enlightens the room, but the sun enlightens the whole world. The more holiness any man has, the more meet for public use that man will be, 2Ti 2:21. As there was none so holy as Christ, so there was none of so public a spirit as Christ; he went up and down doing good, Acts 10:38; he laid out himself, and he laid down himself for public good; he healed others, but was hurt himself; he filled others, but was hungry himself. A man that is eminent in holiness, will be of his mind, who was rather willing to beautify Italy than his own house. Moses was a man of great holiness, and of famous use in his generation, Num 14:11-14, Num 14:19-20. Ah, how often did he turn away the fierce anger and indignation of God from sinful Israel! Deu 9:14; and oh the famous deliverances and glorious salvations that God brought about by his hand! Psa 106:23. Nehemiah was a very holy man, and he laid out himself and his great estate for public service, Neh 5:14, seq. Mordecai was a very pious man, and a man famously serviceable in his generation, Est 4:1-17; Est 10:3, 'For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.' King Jehoshaphat and Joshua, were men of eminent holiness, and of singular use and service in their generation. Men that have no holiness, and others that have but a little holiness, will be still a-carrying on a private interest of honour, or profit, or friends, or relations, and this we have seen evident amongst us in these latter days; and therefore, as ever you would be eminently serviceable in your generation, labour after an eminency in holiness. But,

(13.) Thirteenthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the greatest degrees of holiness are usually attended with the highest degrees of honour. Grace is called glory, and the greatest measures of grace are commonly crowned with the greatest degrees of glory, 2Co 3:18. Abraham was a man eminent in grace and holiness, and he was highly in honour among the people: Gen 23:6, 'Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince amongst us;' or as the Hebrew has it, thou art a prince of God amongst us, that is, thou art a notable prince, thou art an excellent prince, for so the Hebrews speak of all things that are notable and excellent, Eph 5:27. Job was a man that had attained to a very high degree of holiness, Job 1:1-2; and he was highly honoured among the people: Job 29:25, 'I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army.' In all weighty matters Job was the only man, he was chosen by all, and advanced by all above all, in all assemblies and places of judicature, &c. Whoever was of the committee, yet Job was still chairman; whoever was of the council, yet Job was still president; and whoever was of the court, yet Job was still king, yea, he dwelt as a king in the army. Job was guarded as a king in the army, and honoured as a king in the army, and beloved and admired as a king in the army, and obeyed and served as a king in the army, and feared and revered as a king in the army. I might give you further instances of this in Joseph, Moses, Nehemiah, Mordecai, the three children, and Daniel, but I shall forbear. Faith is but a piece, a part, a branch of holiness; and yet, oh, what an honourable mention doth Paul make of the Romans' faith, in that Rom 1:8, 'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world.' The Romans had attained to an eminency in faith, and the report thereof sounded throughout the Roman empire, yea, throughout the world, for there being a great resort to Rome from all parts of the world, and by every one's discoursing and admiring of the Romans' faith, their faith came to be spread abroad among all the churches all the world over. Look, as Christ's fulness of grace was his highest glory in this world; so a Christian's fulness of holiness is his highest honour in this world, Psa 45:1-2. O sirs, there is no such way to be high in honour and renown, both in the consciences of sinners and saints, as to be high in holiness. Jewel was a man eminent in holiness, and his holiness set him high in the very judgments and consciences of the Papists. The dean of the college, though a Papist, yet speaks thus of him: In thy faith I hold thee a heretic, but surely in thy life thou art an angel; thou art very good and honest, but a Lutheran. Among the very heathens, those were most highly honoured that were most excellent and eminent in moral virtues. Aristides was so famous among the Athenians for his justice, that he was called Aristides the Just, &c., [Plutarch.] O Christians, it is your highest honour and glory in this world, to be so eminent and famous for holiness, that men may point at you, and say, there goes such a one the wise, and there goes such a one the humble, and there goes such a one the heavenly, and there goes such a one the meek, and there goes such a one the patient, and there goes such a one the contented, and there goes such a one the just, and there goes such a one the merciful, and there goes such a one the zealous, and there goes such a one the courageous, and there goes such a one the sincere, and there goes such a one the faithful, &c. Well, for a close, remember this, that though great places, great offices, great revenues, and great honours, &c., may exalt you and set you high in the uppermost seats and rooms among men, yet it is only an eminency in holiness that will exalt you and set you high in the consciences of sinners and saints. But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the times wherein you live calls for this at your hands, Jer 51:5. Ah, how is this land filled with sin, yea,

with the worst of sins, against the Holy One of Israel! Hell seems to be broken loose, and men strive to exceed and excel one another in all kinds of wickedness. Oh the scarlet sins that are now to be found under many scarlet robes! Oh the black transgressions that are now to be found under many black cassocks! Oh the new-found oaths, the hellish blasphemies, the horrid filthiness, and the abominable debaucheries that are committed daily in the face of the sun! Ah how shameless, how senseless are sinners grown in these days! Jer 3:3. Sin everywhere now appears with a whore's forehead. Ah what open opposition does Christ meet with in his gospel offices, members, ways, worship, and works! Mat 24:12; ah how does all iniquity abound, and how bold and resolute are multitudes now in dishonouring of God, in profaning his Sabbaths, in polluting his ordinances, in destroying their own souls, and in treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath! &c., Rom 2:5. Now the worser the times are, the better every Christian must labour to be; the more profane the age is wherein we live, the more holy we must endeavour to be. O sirs, how else will you recompense the great God, if I may so speak, for all the dishonours that are cast upon him by the matchless looseness and wickedness of the present times? how else will you shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation? Php 2:15; how else will you convince the consciences, and stop or button up the mouths of wicked and unreasonable men? 1Pe 2:15; how else will you be the Lord's witnesses against this sinful and adulterous generation? Isa 43:10, Isa 43:12, and Isa 44:8; how else will you manifest your great love to Christ, and your exceeding tenderness of the honour and glory of Christ? how else will you give an undeniable testimony of the glorious operations of the Spirit in you? Psa 18:20-25; how else will you satisfy your own consciences that your hearts are upright with God? and how else will you with Noah condemn a wicked world? Heb 11:7. Well, Christians, remember this, it is more than time for you to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, when so many thousands labour day and night to perfect wickedness in despite of the Lord; it is time for you to be angels in holiness, when multitudes strive to exceed the very devil in wickedness. Since Christ was on earth, there has been no times that have called louder for the perfecting of holiness than the present times wherein we live. But,

(15.) Fifteenthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider how the men of the world do study and strive to abound and increase in worldly blessings. Oh, what ado is there among worldlings to lay house to house, and field to field, to make a hundred a thousand, and a thousand ten, &c., Isa 5:8. Many men rise early and go to bed late, yea, they cross their light, and wound their consciences, and decline their principles, and endanger their immortal souls, and all to add to their worldly stores, Psa 127:1-2. This age is full of such Ahabs, that are even sick for their neighbours' vineyards, yea, that rather than they will go without them, will wade through Naboth's blood to them, 1Ki 21:1-29. And how many rich fools be there amongst us, who instead of minding their souls, and providing for eternity, mind nothing, nor talk of nothing, but pulling down their barns, and building of greater! Luk 12:16-21. What struggling is there for places of honour; what desperate ventures for rich commodities; and what high attempts there are for large possessions! Oh the time, the strength, the spirits, that many spend in an eager pursuit after earthly things! Psa 4:6. Oh, how sad it is to consider that Satan shall have more service of a worldling for an ounce of gold, than God shall have for the kingdom of heaven! though the world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty, 1Ki 9:13; yet, oh, how mad are men upon it! Though all the great, the gay, and the glorious things of the world may fitly be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in operation; yet, oh, how fond are

men of these things! and how do most long to be touching and tasting of them, though a touch, a taste, may exclude them out of paradise for ever! O sirs, what fools in folio are they who dare hazard the loss of a paradise for a wilderness, of a crown for a crumb, of a kingdom for a cottage, and of pearls for trifles! and yet such fools are all those who spend themselves in multiplying and increasing of their earthly enjoyments. In that Gen 13:2 it is said, that 'Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold;' but according to the Hebrew it runs thus, 'Abraham was very heavy, ■■■, in cattle, in silver, and in gold,' to shew that riches, that gold and silver, which is the great god of the world, are but heavy burdens, and rather a hindrance than a help to heaven and happiness. Gold and silver, which are but the white and yellow guts and garbage of the earth, is fitly called by the prophet, 'thick clay,' Hab 2:6, which will sooner break a man's back than satisfy his heart; and oh, what folly and madness is it for a man to be still a-loading of himself with the clay of this world! Though the sumpter-horse be loaden with rich treasure all the day long, yet when night comes he is turned into the dark stinking stable, with an empty belly, and with his back full of galls, sores, and bruises; so though vain men may be loaded with the treasures of this world during the day of their life, yet when the night of death comes, then they shall be turned into a dark stinking hell, with consciences full of guilt and galls, and with souls full of sores and bruises; and then what good will all their treasures do them? Though the rich man in the Gospel lived like a gentleman, a gallant, yet when he died he went to hell, Luk 16:1-31. Though mammon, as Aretius and many others observe, is a Syriac word, and signifies wealth, riches; yet Irenæus derives mammon of mum, that signifies a spot, and hon, that signifies riches, to shew that riches have their spots; and yet, oh, how unwearied are men in their adding of spots to spots! Men, in their pursuit after things of this world, seem to act by an untired power, they are never weary of heaping up bags upon bags, nor of enlarging their tents, nor of increasing their revenues, &c. Now, oh, how should this provoke every gracious soul to be adding of grace to grace, and holiness to holiness! Oh, let not the men of the world outdo you, let them not out-act you! Oh, let not nature excel grace! Oh, let the muckworms of this world know that divine principles are too high and noble to be matched, or to be out-acted by anything that they can do! O sirs, shall children grow in your families, and oxen grow in your stalls, and fish grow in your ponds, and grass grow in your fields, and flowers grow in your gardens, &c., and shall not holiness grow in your hearts? Well, friends, remember this, it is infinitely better to be poor men and rich Christians, than to be rich men and poor Christians. But,

(16.) Sixteenthly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you attain to in this world, the more weighty and heavy, the more bright and glorious will be your faithful ministers' crown. O sirs, as you rise higher and higher in holiness, so the springs of joy rises higher and higher in your ministers' souls, 2Jn 1:4. O Christians, it is neither your seraphical notions, nor your pompous profession, it is neither your good words, nor your sweet looks, it is neither your civilities, nor your courtesies, that raises joy in your ministers' hearts, or that will add to your ministers' crown, but an increase of holiness will do both, Rom 15:14. The Thessalonians were rare Christians, they were very eminent and high in holiness, as you may see in that 1Th 1:5-8, and they were the apostle's 'joy and crown of rejoicing,' as you may see in 1Th 2:19-20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.' The apostle tells these raised, these renowned Thessalonians, that as they were now his hope, his glory, and joy, so at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ they should be his joy, and crown of rejoicing. Look, as Christ has

his thousand shekels of silver, so his faithful laborious ministers have their two hundred shekels of silver, and that indeed is a great reward: Song of Solomon 8:12, 'My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.' Oh, what an honour is it for faithful ministers to have a fifth part of that reward that Christ has himself! In Song of Solomon 8:12. Christ opposeth his vineyard, his church, to that of Solomon's, which is mentioned in Song of Solomon 8:11, and though doubtless Solomon's vineyard was one of the rarest, choicest, and fruitfulest vineyards in all Judæa, yet it was wonderful inferior to Christ's vineyard; and that partly because Christ's vineyard cost him a dearer and a greater price, even the price of his blood, 1Pe 1:18-19, than ever Solomon's cost him, and partly because his vineyard serves to more spiritual, high, honourable, and noble ends, than ever Solomon's did, 1Ti 3:15, viz., the glory and exaltation of God, the propagating of truth, the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit, viz., love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, the bringing in of sinners, and the building up of saints, Gal 5:22-23; and partly because his eye is still upon it, and his protection is still over it, and his presence is still with it, Psa 121:3-8. Isa 27:2-3, 'In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' But Solomon's eye was not always upon his vineyard, neither was his hand of protection always over it, neither was his kingly presence always with it; and partly because all his treasure is laid up in his vineyard, his church. His treasures of grace, his treasures of mercy, his treasures of comfort, his treasures of goodness, &c., Eph 3:10, Eph 3:17-20, is all laid up in his church; but Solomon, as rich and as glorious a king as he was, yet he had no such treasures laid up in his vineyard. Solomon never made his vineyard his treasury; and partly because His vineyard was given to him for ever, as an everlasting inheritance; but Solomon's was but temporary and mutable, Psa 2:7; John 6:39, and John 17:6, John 17:8, John 17:12. Now all those that are painful and faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard, shall receive a noble, a liberal compensation and recompense for their labours. No man shall shut a door nor open a door in Christ's vineyard for nought; no man shall labour an hour there without a reward. All faithful ministers are fellow-labourers with Christ in the spiritual husbandry; they dig with Christ, and they plant with Christ, and they prune with Christ, and they water with Christ, and they watch with Christ, 1Co 3:8-9; and therefore Christ will allow them a fifth part of the glory and reward with himself. As he has his thousand pieces of silver, so he will look to it that they shall have their two hundred pieces of silver. A thousand is the number of perfection, and here it may note that fulness of glory that Christ should have, and the two hundred may note that very great proportion of heavenly glory that all the faithful labourers in Christ's vineyard shall have, who have helped forward the flourishing estate of that vineyard, Mat 19:27-29. Look, as the thriving of the child adds to the comfort and the credit of the nurse, and the fruitfulness of the field adds to the pleasure and delight of the husbandman, and the health and increase of the flock adds to the joy and reward of the shepherd; so the increase of holiness, the thriving, the fruitfulness of souls in holiness, adds to the credit and comfort, to the pleasure and delight, to the joy and reward of faithful painful ministers, who are nurses, husbandmen, and shepherds, in the language of the Holy Scriptures. Though it be true that faithful ministers are a sweet savour to God, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish, 2Co 2:15, though their labour, whether it hit or miss, is accepted, and shall be rewarded of the Lord, as the physician has his fee, though the patient dies, and the nurse has her wages, though the child don't thrive, and the vine-dresser has his hire, though the vines don't bear fruit, yet the more they win men to heaven, and the more by their

means the work of holiness is carried on in the hearts and lives of men, the weightier will be their crown of glory, and the greater will be their joy and rejoicing in the great day of our Lord, Isa 49:15. O sirs, did you but see your faithful ministers' tears, did you but hear their heavy sighs and groans, were you but acquainted with their fervent and frequent prayers on your behalfs, did you but believe how they beat their brains, and how willing they are not only to spend themselves, but even to spit out their very lungs in the service of your souls, how would you call upon your own souls to add holiness to holiness—yea, charge your own souls to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! Well, friends, as ever you would add to your faithful ministers' comfort here, and to their joy and crown at the coming of our Lord, labour after higher degrees of holiness. But,

(17.) Lastly, To provoke you to labour after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have here, the more happiness you shall have here after. The more grace you have on earth, the more glory you shall have in heaven. Now before I come to make good this argument—viz., that some saints shall partake of more glory in heaven than others shall—give me leave to premise these few things to prevent mistakes.

First, That the object of their happiness, which is God blessed for ever, will be one and the same to all saints. All glorified saints shall have but one God among them all. God shall be no more one saint's God than he shall be every saint's God in heaven, &c.

Secondly, That the beatifical vision shall be seen by all the saints, and communicated to all the saints; they shall all have a happy and blessed fruition and possession of God. All the vessels of glory shall be filled to the brim with a clear sight of God, and with a full enjoyment of God; and yet doubtless, for all this, some saints shall apprehend more of God than others, and comprehend more of God than others, and enjoy more of God than others. Though all shall be filled with those everlasting springs of pleasure and delight that be at God's right hand, Psa 16:11, yet some shall be able to take in more of those pleasures of paradise than others shall. Though all the widow's vessels were filled to the brim with oil, yet, doubtless, some being greater and larger than others, they accordingly contained more oil than others, 2Ki 4:3-8; and so it will be with the saints when they come to heaven. There shall be no lack of glory to any of the saints in glory. All the saints shall be filled with glory according to their capacity. If you bring a thousand vessels of different sizes to the sea, the sea fills them all. Though their sizes differ, and some are bigger, and others lesser, yet all are filled, every little vessel hath its fill as well as the greater; so every saint shall have his fill of glory when he comes to glory; the felicity of every saint shall be perfect God will be all in all to all saints, Psa 17:15.

Thirdly, All saints shall be freed from all evils alike; they shall all be freed from the aching head, and from the unbelieving heart; they shall all alike be free from the evil of sin, and from the evil of sufferings; there shall not be a saint in glory that shall ever feel a pricking brier or a grieving thorn, Eze 28:24; there all sorrow shall be removed from all their hearts, and all tears shall be wiped from all their eyes, Rev 7:17.

Fourthly and lastly, The degrees of glory that saints shall have in heaven shall not be given out to them upon the account of their merits, or the dignity of their persons, or the worthiness of their works, but upon the account of God's mere mercy and grace, who in the day of retribution will delight to crown his own gifts, not our merits; and where he shall find the greatest measures of grace and holiness, there he will, of his own free mercy, bestow the greatest measure of glory.

Well, friends, remember this, you must always carefully distinguish between the essence and substance of glory, and between degrees and measures of glory. Now the essence and substance of glory, which consists in the saints' full communion with God, and in their perfect conformity to God, and in their universal subjection to God, and in their everlasting fruition of God, be common to all the saints, so that no one saint shall have more of the essence and substance of glory than another has, yet the degrees and measures of glory shall be distributed to some more, to some less. Now that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, answerable to the different degrees of grace and holiness that the saints reach to here on earth, and that God will at last proportion his rewards according to the different degrees of labour, service, and sufferings of his people in this world, may be made evident, 1. By clear scriptures; 2. By arguments. Now there are several scriptures that speaks out this truth. Take these for a taste:

[1.] First, that 1Co 3:8, 'Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.' The apostle having compared his own and Apollos' work together, adds, 'That both should receive their reward according to their work'—that is, as their work differed, so should their reward differ. Though they both preached one and the same doctrine, and had both one and the same design and purpose, viz., to bring in souls to Christ, and to build up souls to Christ, yet according to their different degrees of labour, so should be their different degrees of reward. Though no man should work in God's vineyard for nought, yet he that was most faithful, diligent, and laborious in planting or in watering God's husbandry, should have the greatest reward. Paul and Apollos shall at last receive their different reward according to their different labour; or nearer the original, they shall each of them receive, τῷ ἑκάστῳ ἰδίον μισθὸν λαμβανέτω κατὰ τὸ ἑκάστου κῆπον, their proper reward according to their proper work.

[2.] A second scripture is that 1Co 15:41-42, 'There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another in glory; so also is the resurrection of the dead.' Mark here is the full stop, and these words are not to be referred to those following words, viz., 'That the body is sown in corruption, and riseth again in incorruption.' For the apostle speaks not here of the difference between glorious and inglorious, corruptible and incorruptible things; but he speaks here of the difference that is between heavenly and glorious things; 'for,' saith he, 'one star differs from another in glory.' It is very observable that the comparison runs between the glorified condition of some saints that shall rise, and other some that shall rise in the great day. So that look, as one star differs from another star in glory, so one saint shall differ from another saint in glory at the resurrection of the dead. Though every star is bright, shining, and glorious, yet some stars are more bright, shining, and glorious than others are; so, though every saint will shine gloriously in heaven, yet some saints shall have a greater lustre, glory and shine upon them than others shall. Look, as some heavenly bodies are more glorious than others, so in the morning of the resurrection some saints shall be more glorious than others, &c.

[3.] A third scripture is that 2Co 9:6, 'But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.' A sparing liberality shall be attended with a sparing reward, and a bounteous liberality shall be attended with a bounteous reward. Look, as the harvest answers the measure of seed that is sown, so that he that sows but little reaps but little, and he that sows much reaps much, so saints' reaping at last will be answerable to their sowing here. All men's charities shall at last be rewarded proportionable to the several degrees of it. He that gives a pound shall have a greater reward than he that gives a penny. He that sows

thousands shall reap more than he that sows hundreds. He shall have the most plentiful crop in heaven, who has sowed most seed here on earth, &c. They shall have interest upon interest in heaven, who sow much on this side heaven.

[4.] A fourth scripture is that Luk 19:12-20. Now in this parable you have a great lord going into a far country; but before he goes he gives ten pounds to ten of his servants to trade with till his return. Now upon his return, he that had increased his pound to ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities, Luk 19:17; and he that made five of one was made ruler over five cities, Luk 19:19. Here he that gained most received the greatest reward. The nobleman in this parable is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and highly noble, he being coeternal and co-equal with his Father, in respect of his deity; he was born a king, and is now King of kings, and Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth. The far country that he is gone to is heaven, for thither he went at his ascension. Now when he shall return from heaven to judge the quick and the dead, he will then bring men to an account, to a reckoning about their improvement of all the gifts and graces that he has intrusted them with, and, according to the different improvement that men shall make of their talents, so shall be their reward. He that makes the greatest improvement of his pound, he shall have the greatest reward, he shall be ruler over ten cities, that is, he shall be very highly honoured and exalted; and he that makes a lesser improvement, he shall have a lesser reward, he shall be ruler over five cities. He that makes a great improvement of a little, he shall, if I may so speak, sit at Christ's right hand; but he that makes a lesser improvement, he must be contented to sit at Christ's left hand. God will proportion out men's reward at last answerable to their improvement of that treasure that he has put into their hands; and yet this doth not infer merit of works, but a gracious disposition in God to encourage his servants in a way of well-doing, &c.

[5.] A fifth scripture is that Dan 12:3, 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.' The glory of heaven is here laid out in shining terms, for look how gloriously the shining of stars doth excel the shining of the firmament; so some saints shall as far outshine others in glory, as the stars do now outshine the firmament. Look, as the stars are a more beautiful and glorious part of the orb than the firmament is, so some saints shall have a great deal more beauty and glory upon them than others shall. And look, as there are different degrees of glory between the glory of the firmament and the glory of the stars now, so there shall be different degrees of glory between one glorious saint and another at last. All the saints shall at last shine as the firmament, but those that by their doctrine, instruction, and conversation, turn many to righteousness, these shall shine as the stars, for ever and ever. Some of the highest seats in glory shall be for such 'who turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ,' Acts 26:18. It is very observable, that as the apostles were very eminent in this work, so Christ has given it under his own hand, that they shall sit upon twelve thrones, as so many kings, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mat 19:28; Luk 22:28-29. They had done and suffered more for Christ than others, and therefore Christ will put a greater glory upon them than upon others. Though many learned men differ about the interpretation of those words, 'ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel'—and therefore I dare not peremptorily conclude this or that to be the sense of them—yet this is most plain and evident in the text, that the apostles are under a promise of some peculiar and more eminent degree of honour, glory, and dignity, than others are under. Look, as their service to Christ was a peculiar and eminent service, so Christ promises them a peculiar and

eminent reward. Every man of them shall have his particular throne, and every one of them shall have the honour and dignity of judging—that is, of governing and ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. Look, as ambassadors and chief councillors and presidents have the highest and chiefest seats in the kingly assembly, so the apostles shall have the highest and the chiefest seats in the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, Heb 12:22-23; they shall sit, as it were, on the throne, or on the bench, with Christ, so highly and greatly shall they be exalted. If we cannot hit upon the meanings of the reward here promised, yet we may safely and easily gather from the description of it that there shall be different degrees of glory in Christ's kingdom of glory. The apostles followed Christ through great tribulations and afflictions, and they continued with him in all his temptations; they forsook all to wait on him; and after they had faithfully, laboriously, successfully, and very eminently served him, they made themselves an offering for him, as I have formerly shewed you, and therefore Christ will at last in a more eminent way exalt them, and glorify them, than he will others that have never seen that of Christ, nor received that from Christ, nor done that for Christ, nor suffered that for Christ, as they have done. Degrees of glory shall at last be proportioned out answerable to those degrees of service which in this life men have been drawn out to. Such a thing as this the apostle Paul does more than hint, if I mistake not, in that 1Th 2:19-20, 'For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.' The crown that Paul speaks of here is not that common crown of righteousness, nor that common crown of life and immortality, nor that common crown of glory that all the saints shall be crowned with at last; but he speaks here of an apostolical crown, of a special, peculiar crown, that should accrue to him upon the account of his serviceableness to their souls; and of this crown he speaks again in that Php 4:1, 'Therefore, my brethren, my dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.' He calls the Philippians his crown, and that partly because their spiritual growth, constancy, and perseverance was now his glory among other churches, but mainly because they should be his particular crown of rejoicing in the great day of our Lord Jesus. He knew that the Philippians' profit would be his crown and his advantage another day. The apostle alludes here to the custom of the Romans, who, as they had their common crowns of bays, ivy, and laurel, &c.—and these were such that their horses which won the race were often crowned with, which occasioned Theocritus to say, See what poor things the world glories in; for, as their conquerors are crowned, so are their horses—so they had their peculiar, their special crowns, that were the rewards of their conquerors that had done special service for their country: so there are common crowns that belong to all the saints, as saints, as the crown of righteousness, the crown of life, and the crown of glory; and as there are these common crowns, so there are special and peculiar crowns, that they shall be crowned with that are exercised in more high and excellent services than others have been employed in; and this is the crown that here the apostle speaks of. He knew very well that his reward should be answerable to his work, for though God never did, nor never will, reward men for their works, as if they were the meritorious cause of the reward, yet he will for degrees reward them according to their works. There are peculiar crowns, special crowns, for those that have done peculiar and special services for Christ on earth.

[6.] A Sixth scripture is that Mat 5:11-12, 'Blessed are ye, When men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.' Suffering saints, persecuted saints, shall be sure of great rewards. God will reward upon his people, not only their innocence, integrity,

patience, and courage under their sufferings, but the more their sufferings, revilings, and persecutions are multiplied in this world, the more shall their recompense and reward be multiplied in another world. It is true, Christ hath many lovers of his crown, but few bearers of his cross. All would rejoice with him, but few care to suffer for him; but yet it is as true on the one hand—viz., that they who bear most of his cross shall be greatest sharers in his crown; they that suffer most for him on earth shall be most blessed and rewarded by him when they come to heaven. Look, as the consolation of the saints rises higher and higher in this world, even as their sufferings rise higher and higher, 2Co 1:4-5; so the glory of the saints shall rise higher and higher in the other world, as their sufferings rise higher and higher in this world. The persecuted Christians in Tertullian cries out, *Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra*, Your cruelty is our glory, and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven. One speaking of the martyrs said, look how many sufferings they have, so many crowns they shall have; for every suffering God shall set a crown on their heads. By how much men's sufferings have been greater, saith Chrysostom, by so much the more their crown shall be bright and splendid. The greater conflicts and buffetings any saint hath endured, the greater shall be his reward, and the more ample shall be his glory, saith Austin. As Christ hath many crowns upon his head, suitable to the multitude of his sufferings and victories, so Christians at last shall have crowns suitable to the multitude of their sufferings, and suitable to those famous victories they have gained over a tempting devil and a persecuting world, Rev 19:7. Certainly it will be but justice, that they should receive the weightiest crown who have bore the heaviest cross, 1Jn 5:4, and 1Jn 2:13-14.

[7.] The seventh and last scripture that I shall produce is that Mat 10:41, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;' that is, say some, they shall be partakers of the same reward that is laid up for the prophets. Without all dispute these two things lies fair in the text:

First, That there is some special and eminent degrees of reward due unto a prophet above other men. And,

Secondly, That he that shall entertain a prophet, and perform any offices of love and favour to him under that name and notion, he shall be partaker of that reward. He that receives a prophet, as he is God's messenger, and employed in his service, and sent about his errand, and not upon any carnal or worldly respects, he shall receive, a prophet's reward, that is, he shall receive either such a reward as the prophet himself shall receive at last, or he shall receive such a large, ample, and noble recompense as is meet for one to receive that received a prophet as coming from the Lord, and as acted by the Lord. Look, as such who give an honourable reception to the ambassadors of kings or princes, do highly raise themselves in the favour and esteem of those kings or princes that had sent them; so those that receive the faithful prophets of the Lord, as the ambassadors of God, they shall be highly interested in the favour of God, and as nobly be rewarded by God. I might produce several other scriptures that sound to the same purpose as these seven do, but enough is as good as a feast; as that Mark 4:20; John 14:2; Mat 20:20-24.

I shall, therefore, in the second place come to the reasons that may further evidence and confirm this great truth—viz., that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven. Among many other reasons that might be given, I shall only give you these five.

[1.] First, There are diversities of degrees of angels in heaven. There are cherubims and seraphims, and there are angels and archangels. Now the cherubims and seraphims are a lower rank and order of angels, and the archangels are a higher rank and order of angels. And the apostle speaks clearly of several ranks and orders of invisible creatures in that Col 1:16. Here you have an enumeration of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; and so in that Eph 1:21, 'Far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion.' These principalities and powers are the blessed angels that minister before the Lord, and that are subordinate unto one another; and here they are reckoned up by ascending, power is above principality, and might above power, and dominion above might. To define those orders and degrees of angels with which God is environed, is a work too high and hard for me, and though the Papists and several schoolmen are so bold as to define their particular offices and orders, yet I dare not be wise above what is written. Where the Scripture is silent, I love to be silent, and where the Scripture hath no tongue, there I desire to have no ears. There is an order in hell, an order among the devils, and therefore you read in three scriptures of the prince of devils,² and so much also that expression imports that you have in that Mat 25:41, 'The devil and his angels,' which intimates a prince among those unclean and damned spirits. Now shall there be order in hell and confusion in heaven? Shall there be order among the evil angels, and shall there not much more be order among the good angels? Certainly that God that is the God of order, and that hath made all things in order, and that to this day keeps all things in order here below, will never suffer the least disorder and confusion to be among those princes of glory that stand continually before him. He that denies order in heaven, denies heaven to be heaven, and he that grants order in heaven, grants degrees of glory in heaven. Though there is no difference between the angels in *natura angelica*, the angelical nature being alike in all, yet in *officio*, in office, there is a great deal of difference in the glory of the angels, for God employs some of the heavenly host in more high, noble, and excellent services than others, and answerable thereunto shall their reward be. Though all angels shall share alike in the essential and substantial glory of heaven, yet there is an additional glory, an accidental glory, an overplus of glory, that shall be conferred upon the angels, answerable to the several and various services that they have managed and engaged in. Now the Scripture tells us plainly that 'in heaven we shall be like to the angels,' Mat 22:30; and therefore if there be degrees of angels, and if the angels in heaven shall have a different glory and reward, according to the work in which they have been employed, then the glory of the saints in respect of degrees shall be different also. But,

[2.] Secondly, There are degrees of torments in hell, and therefore, by the rule of contraries, there shall be degrees of glory in heaven. Now that there are degrees of torments in hell is most evident from several plain scriptures, as from that Mat 10:14-15, 'And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.' Sodom and Gomorrah shall have an easier and cooler hell than such cities shall have that have contemned the tenders of grace, and the offers of mercy. It is very observable, that the punishments that God in this life hath inflicted upon the Jews for their contempt of Christ, and his everlasting gospel, have been more terrible than his raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah: for on a sudden, and in a moment, God consumed them, and burnt them up; but God hath for above this sixteen hundred years been a-raining hell out of heaven upon the Jews; he hath for a long time vexed them with all manner of adversity, and to this very day he hath made them, all the world over, a spectacle of his dreadful severity; but all those

plagues and punishments that the Jews have been and still are under, are but flea-bitings and scratches on the hand, to those dreadful and amazing judgments that God, in the great day of account, will inflict upon all Christ's refusers and gospel-despisers. And so Mat 11:20-23, 'Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted up to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.' The more mercy hath been upon the bare knee entreating sinners to repent, the more earnest the Lord Jesus hath been in wooing sinners to believe on him, and to resign up themselves wholly and only to him, the more clearly and sweetly the everlasting gospel hath sounded in sinners' ears, and the more near, and the more often heaven hath been brought to sinners' doors, and yet they have bid defiance to all, and hardened themselves in their sins, with the greater violence and with the more dreadful vengeance shall such be plunged into the lowest hell. And so in that Mat 23:14, 'Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.' Hypocrites shall be double damned; the hottest and the darkest place in hell is reserved for them. 'Give him his portion with hypocrites;' for number and weight there are no torments in hell to the torments of hypocrites. Counterfeit sanctity is double iniquity, and therefore it is but justice that the hypocrite should have double torment. And so in that Luk 12:47-48, 'That servant that knows his Master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. And he that knew it not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.' Sins against light and knowledge are sins against the noblest remedy. They waste and wound the conscience most, they most open sinners' mouths to blaspheme against God, and they most harden sinners' hearts in sinning against God; and every way they dare God most, and provoke God most to strike with an iron rod, and to whip the knowing transgressor, not with rods but with scorpions. It is very observable, that the more light and knowledge men sin against in this world, the greater judgments God gives them up to, even in this life, Rom 1:21-23. Take a remarkable instance in the most refined and civil heathens, who are presumed to have most light and knowledge, who were given up to the most beastly errors about the nature of God, as the Romans and Grecians, who worshipped fevers and human passions, yea, every paltry thing, &c.; whereas the Scythians and more barbarous nations worshipped the sun, and the thunder, &c., things terrible in themselves. Oh, how much more, then, will God in the great day give them up to the greatest judgments, who have given themselves up to the greatest sins! Certainly the professors of this age, yea, of this city, whether they go to heaven or hell, will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place—the one to the free grace of God, and the other to his justice. That they that have most of hell in their mouths, and most of hell in their hearts, and most of hell in their lives, should have most of hell in their souls at last, is but justice. I shall conclude this second argument with a saying of one of the ancients [Augustine]; Look, saith he, as in heaven one is more glorious than another, so in hell one shall be more miserable than another. Now if there be degrees of torments in hell, which I suppose the scriptures but now cited doth undeniably prove, then, doubtless, there will be degrees of glory in heaven.

[3.] Thirdly, God in this life dispenses the gifts and graces of his Spirit unequally among his saints; to some he gives two talents, to others five, and to others ten. Hence it is you read both of a weak faith, and of a strong faith. 'Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith?' and, 'O woman, great is thy faith;' and, 'Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.' And hence it is that you read both of weak Christians, and of strong Christians. 'He that is weak in the faith receive;' 'another who is weak eateth herbs;' 'and to the weak, I became as weak, that I might win the weak;' 'we then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;' 'when I am weak, then am I strong.'² And hence it is that you read of babes, and of children, and of young men, and of old men, in the Scripture. Saints are of different growths. Some are but babes in gifts and grace, others are children, others young men, and others old men. That God that distributes the good things of this world unequally among the sons of men, as to some more, to others less; to some great things, to others little things; to some high things, to others low things; that God unequally distributes spiritual blessings among his dearest children; to some he gives more light, to others less; to some a greater measure of love, to others a less; to some a greater degree of joy, to others a less, &c. Some saints shine in grace and holiness as the firmament, and others shine in grace and holiness as the stars; some shine in grace and holiness as the moon, and others shine in grace and holiness as the sun; and all this springs from those different measures of grace and holiness that God bestows upon his people. Now doubtless men may as well plead for equal degrees of grace, as they may for equal degrees of glory; they may as well plead for an equal share in the good things of this world, as they may plead for an equal share in the happiness and blessedness of that other world. Doubtless as God dispenses his gifts and graces unequally in this life, so he will dispense his rewards unequally in the other life. As men's gifts and graces are different here on earth, so their glory shall be different when they come to heaven. Without all peradventure they shall have the whitest and the largest robes of honour, and the heaviest and the brightest crowns of glory, whose souls are most richly adorned with grace, and whose lives are most eminently bespangled with holiness. The more grace and holiness any saint hath here, the more he is prepared and fitted for glory; and the more any saint is fitted for glory, the more that saint shall at last be filled with glory. The greatest measures of grace and holiness do most enlarge the soul, and widen the soul, and capacitate the soul, to take in the greatest measures of glory; and therefore the more grace, the more glory, the more holiness, the more happiness, a saint shall have at last. Certainly God will crown his own gracious works in his children proportionable to what they are, but they are different and unequally in all his children in respect of measures and degrees; and therefore God will set different crowns of glory upon the heads of his children at last. But,

[4.] Fourthly, They that have more grace and holiness than others, they are more like to God than others. They bear his glorious image in a greater print, they have a brighter character of God upon them, and they are the most lively picture of God in all the world.

Now we know, though parents love their children well, and wish all their children well, and do for all their children well, yet commonly they love them most, and provide for them best, that resemble them most. Parents cannot but love those children most, and lay up for them most, who have most of themselves in them; and I cannot see how God can do otherwise than love them most, and provide for them best, who most resemble him to the life. The nature of God is a holy nature, and so there lies a holy necessity on his nature to love them most who have most grace and holiness

in them, Psa 45:7. Look, as it is natural to God to hate wickedness, so it is natural to God to love holiness; and as the higher men rise in wickedness, the more a holy God hates them; so the higher men rise in holiness, the more a holy God loves them. Now the more any are like to God, and the more they are beloved of God, the higher doubtless in glory shall they be advanced by God. The best and the largest portion is laid up for that child that is most like his father. The more any man in holiness resembles God on earth, the greater and the larger portion of glory that man shall have when he comes to heaven. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To deny degrees of glory in heaven, and to say that God will not suit men's wages to their works, nor their rewards to their services, nor crown the highest improvements of grace with the highest degrees of glory, is to render useless many glorious exhortations that are scattered up and down in the Scripture; as that in the 1Co 15:58, 'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' If this were not a truth that I have been all this while asserting, why then, when men meet with this exhortation, they may say, Why, it is no great matter whether we are 'steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord' or no; for if we are, we shall never advance our reward in heaven, we shall never add pearls to our glorious crown, we shall never add one mite to our happiness and blessedness; and if we are not, we shall be as high in heaven, and our reward as great, and our crown as weighty, as theirs shall be who are 'steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.' And so the denial of degrees of glory in heaven will take off also the edge of all those other exhortations of perfecting holiness, of sowing liberally, of growing in grace, of bringing forth much fruit, and of adding virtue to virtue, &c.; yea, this will cut the throat of all divine endeavours; for who will labour to be rich in grace, and to be much in service, and to abound in all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, when none of all this will turn to a man's advantage in another world? If he that sows little shall have as great a harvest as he that sows much; if he that is dull and negligent in the work of the Lord shall have as great a reward as he that is active and abundant in the work of the Lord; if those trees of righteousness which bring forth much fruit shall have no greater a recompense than those trees of righteousness which bring forth many leaves of profession but little fruit, &c., who would sow much, and who would be active and abundant in the work of the Lord, and who would bring forth much fruit? verily but few, if any. But now the opinion, or rather the truth, that I have been labouring to make good, viz., that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, and that God will proportion men's reward to their work, and that he will measure out happiness and blessedness to them at last according to the different measures of grace bestowed upon his people, and according to the work, service, and faithfulness of his people in this world;—this truth, I say, held forth in its lustre and glory, is a marvellous encouragement, and a mighty provocation to all sincere Christians, to labour after the highest pitches in Christianity, and to be very eminent in grace and holiness; for what man is there that will not reason thus, the more grace the more glory, the more holiness the more happiness, the more work the more wages, and the greater my service shall be here, the greater shall be my reward hereafter; and therefore, O my soul! grow in grace, perfect holiness, and abound in the work and service of the Lord, knowing that 'thy labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.' And thus I have given you the reasons that prove that there shall be degrees of glory in heaven.

Now I have nothing further to do upon this point, but to give a few brief answers to such objections as are commonly raised against this truth, that I have asserted and proved.

Object. 1. First, Some object and say, That one Christ bought us all, and that all our portions are bought by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that therefore all believers shall share alike in the inheritance of the saints in light. Now to this objection I shall answer,

[1.] First, That all saints shall be equal sharers in the substantial and essential glory of heaven, &c. But of this I have spoken before; and, therefore,

[2.] Secondly, Though a father buys a rich inheritance for all his children, yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon him to allot to every one of his children an equal portion; so though our Lord Jesus Christ hath by his blood purchased a rich inheritance for his children, yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon Jesus Christ to divide this rich inheritance by equal portions among his children. It is true that Christ hath purchased all with his blood, and it is as true that he may divide his purchase among his people as he pleases. If every man may do with his own as he pleaseth, why may not Christ? Must he needs be bound when others are free?

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, I answer, That as it is true that the merits and satisfaction of Christ is the ground and foundation of our reward, and that alone which makes our works capable of a reward, so it is as true that our works are the subject of reward, and this is most agreeable to the compact that was made between Christ and his Father—that everlasting happiness and blessedness, that eternal glory and felicity, should be measured out to the saints according to their different measures of grace, and different degrees of service that they have been engaged in in this world, and all this upon the credit of Christ's blood. Certainly there is nothing under heaven, below the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that can make differing works capable of a different reward. The Papists are most sadly out, for they are so blind and bold as to affirm that the more grace any man hath, the more glory he merits by his grace. These men make degrees of grace, and not the blood of Jesus Christ, to be the meritorious cause of degrees of glory; and therefore of all men I think they are furthest from glory. Certainly this is the believer's glory, and his crown of rejoicing, that all recompenses and rewards shall flow in upon him, not upon the account of his merits, but upon the account of Christ's blood; and thus much shall suffice to have spoken by way of answer to this objection.

Object. 2. But now, in the second place, I shall come to answer their grand and main objection; and that is taken from that parable in the 20th of Matthew, where the kingdom of heaven is compared to a vineyard. Now in this parable there is mention made of a husbandman that called several labourers into his vineyard, at several hours in the day; some he called at the first hour, and some he called at the third, and some at the ninth, and some at the eleventh. Now when they came all to receive their wages, the story tells us that he gave every man a penny, he gave every man an equal reward. They that laboured from the first hour, and they that laboured from the third hour, and they that laboured from the sixth hour of the day, had no greater a recompense than he that came in at the eleventh hour, and so had laboured but one hour in the vineyard, and bore but little if any of the heat of the day. From whence the objectors conclude that there are no degrees of glory in heaven, but that all shall have glory alike, happiness and blessedness alike; every man shall have his penny, every man shall have an equal reward, and no man's penny in heaven shall be brighter or bigger than another's.

Now, by way of answer to this objection, give me leave to premise these three things:

First, That this parable of the householder, in giving to every man a penny, hath no reference at all to heaven, nor to the reward, nor to the glory that shall be conferred upon the elect, and this I shall clearly and fully prove by these four following arguments:

[1.] First, This illative particle, 'for,' in Mat 20:1, sheweth that this parable is inserted to expound the former conclusion, viz., 'that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first,' and therefore the end of the parable is concluded with the repetition of the same sentence, Mat 20:16, 'the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.' Christ by this parable would teach his hearers, that there is no reason under heaven why they which are first called in respect of time should boast or triumph over others, because he can easily call the uncalled at pleasure, and either make them equal with them, or else prefer them before them which are first. The scope of Christ in this parable is not to set forth the equality of celestial glory, it is not to prove that the happiness and blessedness of the saints shall be equal in heaven, but the very drift of the parable is to show, that they which are first called and converted have no cause at all to despise the uncalled and unconverted, or to trample upon them with the foot of pride, considering that they who are yet in their sins, and in their blood, and in an unconverted and unsanctified estate, may yet be called, and either made equal to them, or preferred before them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Interpreters do generally agree in this, that by the husbandman we are to understand God himself, and by the labourers men upon earth, and by the vineyard the church of God; and several of them say, that by the five hours in the parable we are to understand the five ages of man.

First, By those who were called in the morning and sent into the vineyard, we are to understand those who in their childhood are called and converted; they are such who begin to seek the Lord, and to serve the Lord, even as soon as they are capable of the use of reason; as Samuel did, and as Josiah did, and as Timothy did.

Secondly, By those who are called at the third hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their youth, in the prime, the spring and morning of their days.

Thirdly, By those who were called at the sixth hour, we are to understand those who are turned to the Lord in their strength, and in their full and perfect age.

Fourthly, By those who were called at the ninth hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their declining age. And fifthly, By those who were called at the eleventh hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their decrepit old age, when they have one foot in the grave, and there is but a short step between them and eternity, when, with the thief upon the cross, they are even ready to be turned off of the ladder of life. Now the vineyard being the church, all that this parable proveth is no more but this, that whether men are called into the vineyard of the church either sooner or later—either at the first hour, or at the ninth, or eleventh hour: yet this shall neither greaten nor lessen their reward; for if they are called at the first hour, their recompense shall be never the greater upon that account, or if they are called at the eleventh hour, their reward shall be never the lesser upon that account; the reward shall not be different according to the different times of men's being called and converted, and that this parable proves; but the reward shall be different according to the diversity of our

works, and that my former arguments prove.

[3.] Thirdly, If the penny that every one had in the parable be meant of glory, then it will roundly follow, that murmurers shall be saved and glorified as well as others, for the murmurers had their penny as well as the rest: Mat 20:10-12, 'But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.' The Greek word, ■γ■γγυζον, that is here rendered murmured, signifies to grunt as swine grunt. They grumbled and grunted, and they grunted and grumbled; and pray tell me what should such swine as murmurers are do grunting and grumbling in heaven? doubtless the crown of glory is too bright, too noble, too glorious, and too weighty a crown to be set upon murmurers' heads. Heaven would be no heaven if there were but one grunter or murmurer there. In heaven all the vessels of glory shall be full, and there shall not be the least shadow of envy or repining there. In the streets of that new Jerusalem above, none shall ever complain that others have too much, or that themselves have too little. Every glorified saint shall sit down fully satisfied and contented with his portion there. Now should we by the penny understand a glorified estate and condition, then this would unavoidably follow, that many shall be brought to a state of glory which are not elected, nor sanctified, nor prepared for glory; but this can never, nor must never be granted; and therefore without all peradventure this parable doth no way hold out that state of glory and felicity which all the called and chosen of God shall have at Christ's coming to judge the quick and the dead. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The penny that is here mentioned in this parable cannot, nor may not, be interpreted so as to signify an equality of glory, or an equality of happiness and blessedness, that the saints shall have in heaven, because such an interpretation, such an exposition, is cross and contrary to the common and received rules of interpreting and expounding of Scripture. Now, among other rules that are to be observed in the interpreting and expounding of Scripture, there are these two:

First, You must so interpret and expound one text of Scripture, that you do not set it at strife and variance with another text of Scripture; for though there is a seeming contradiction between scripture and scripture, yet there is a blessed harmony and a glorious correspondency between all the parts of Scripture. It is a very dangerous thing so to interpret Scripture as to raise contests and opposition between scriptures and scriptures; it is an evil thing to raise up scripture against scripture, and so to interpret one as to make it affront another. Woe to him that by his interpretations of Scripture proclaims the scriptures to be at open war amongst themselves. Now to interpret the penny in the parable so as to make it signify an equality of glory and happiness among the saints in heaven, is to set this scripture at variance and strife with all those scriptures that I have produced to prove an inequality in the glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, and therefore such an interpretation is rather to be abhorred than to be received. But,

Secondly, Another rule that is to be observed in the interpreting of Scripture is this, we must always interpret those scriptures that are more dark and mysterious by those scriptures that are more plain and clear, and not interpret those scriptures that are plain and clear by those that are dark and mysterious, for this were to darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2. Now they that interpret the penny in the parable to signify an equality of glory among the saints in heaven, they transgress this second rule; for they must then interpret all those clear and plain

scriptures that I have brought to prove degrees of glory in heaven by this dark and mysterious parable, whereas they should interpret this dark and mysterious parable, if I may so say, by those plain and clear scriptures that I have already cited; and therefore their interpretation must be rejected. It is true, of some parables we may say as Gregory doth, viz., that they rather require a practiser than an interpreter, Psa 49:4, and Psa 97:2; John 16:29. And it is as true that other parables are so dark, obscure, and mysterious, that we shall never understand them without the sweat of our brows and the beating of our brains, and such a parable this seems to be, and therefore we must interpret the parts of it rather by other clear scriptures, than to make clear and plain scriptures bow to this that seems to have a veil upon it. And thus you see by these arguments that the penny in the parable hath no reference at all to heaven, nor to any equality of glory that shall be among the saints there.

Secondly, Chrysostom's counsel on the text should be eyed and followed. Saith he, 'We should not strain every particular of a parable, but only consider the scope of Christ in the propounding of it, and accordingly apply it.' We look not on every particular colour in a well-drawn picture, but on the whole piece; so when we come to view a parable, it is enough that we cast our eye principally upon the general intention and scope of it. He that is very exact and curious to view and observe every particular circumstance about parables, may easily draw blood instead of milk out of the breasts of parables. Parables are like to the roll which Ezekiel saw in a vision spread before him, which was written within and without; without the history was written, and within the mystery was written, Eze 2:10. Now though the outside, the history, of a parable be like the golden pot, yet the inside, the mystery, of a parable is like the manna that was hid therein, and it is the manna, the manna, that we must seek after. Look, as it is their wisdom who deal in curious rich stuffs that are wrought on both sides to cast a special eye upon the flowers that are on the inside of those stuffs, so it is our wisdom to cast a special eye upon the inside of parables, upon the mystical reference that parables have, than to lie poring upon the outside of parables. Now the scope of this parable is not to prove that there is an equality of glory in heaven, but to reprove the Jews, who, being called into the Lord's vineyard betimes in the morning, repined and murmured that the Gentiles, who were called in at the latter end of the day, who were called in some thousand years after them, that they should through the riches of grace have an equal share with them in the reward, and stand upon as good and as noble terms with God as themselves, who had so long bore the heat of the day. God, to shew that his gifts, his grace, and his rewards are free, will give his pennies as well to those who have laboured but a little as to those who have laboured much; and this is no prejudice at all to his truth and justice, that his grace is free. But,

Thirdly and lastly, That by the penny we cannot, nor we may not, understand everlasting happiness and blessedness, but some other reward that hypocrites may attain to as well as sincere-hearted Christians; and the reason is obvious: for he that was sent away for his envious grumbling and grunting, was sent away also with his penny, 'take thy penny and be packing.' By the penny some pious interpreters do understand some competent gift or other, whatever it were, which might be well managed and improved to advantage. The vineyard is the church, and every one that is called to labour in the vineyard is called to labour in the use and improvement of ordinances. Now every one that is laborious in the use of ordinances shall be sure to get something; no man shall kindle a fire on God's altar for nought. And yet it many times comes to pass that those who have been called and converted long before others, do yet make no greater,

nor no better earnings³ on it than those do that have been called and converted long after them. He that is called at the first hour sometimes gets no more than he that is called at the eleventh hour. It is in the trade of Christianity as it is in other trades. Now you know that many men who have been set up in this or that trade ten, nay twenty, years before others, yet they many times make no more earnings, no more advantage of their trade, than they that have set up but the other day, as we say. Why so many that have been called long to the trade of Christianity before others, yet they make no more earnings, no more advantage of that trade, than those that have been called to it but yesterday, as I may speak. His gifts, his gain, his earnings that is called in at the eleventh hour of the day, is many times equal to his that was called in at the first hour of the day. Yea, I have formerly proved that sometimes many that are called later than others, do yet in gifts and grace excel those that were called long before them. Now these objections being answered, that truth stands firm, like mount Zion, viz., that the more holiness you have here, the more happiness you shall have hereafter; the more grace you have here on earth, the more glory you shall have when you come to heaven. And so I come to the second thing proposed, namely, to acquaint you with some means, helps, and directions that may enable you to make a progress in holiness, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. And,

[1.] First, If ever you would perfect holiness, if ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness than any yet you have attained to, then labour to be more and more sensible of your spiritual wants and deficiencies of grace and holiness. Ah Christians! you must be often in casting up your accounts, and in looking over the defects of your holiness. He that hath most holiness, yet wants much more than what he hath attained to. Witness the prevalency of his corruptions, witness his easy falling before temptation, witness his aptness to faint in the day of affliction, witness his staggering in the day of opposition, witness his shifts in the day of persecution, and witness his actual unpreparedness and unfitness for the day of his dissolution. The more any Christian sees himself defective in holiness, the more he will labour after holiness: Psa 119:59-60, 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies: I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.' The Hebrew word, חשב, that is here used for thinking, signifies to think on a man's ways accurately, advisedly, seriously, studiously, curiously. This holy man of God thought exactly and curiously on all his purposes and practices, on all his doings and sayings, on all his words and works, and finding too many of them to be short of the rule, yea, to be against the rule, he turns his feet to God's testimonies; having found out his errors, upon a diligent search, a strict scrutiny, he turns over a new leaf, and frames his course more exactly by rule. O Christians! you must look as well to your spiritual wants as to your spiritual enjoyments; you must look as well to your layings out as to your layings up; you must look as well forward to what you should be as backward to what you are. Certainly that Christian will never be eminent in holiness that hath many eyes to behold a little holiness, and never an eye to see his further want of holiness. He that is more affected with that holiness he hath than he is afflicted about those great measures of holiness that he needs, will never be but a puny, a dwarf in holiness. The more sensible we are of our own weakness and emptiness, the more pleasure God will take to fill us with his own fulness, and to perfect in us the work of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, If ever you would perfect holiness, if ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then set the Lord always before your eyes, set yourselves always as in his presence, Psa 41:12; 1Sa 2:1, 1Sa 2:3. David was a man that was very high and eminent in holiness; but

how came he to so great a height? why he tells you how, in that Psa 16:8, 'I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' David did not by fits and starts set the Lord before him; 'but he always set the Lord before him in his course;' he had his eye upon the Lord, and so much the Hebrew word imports: I have equally set the Lord before me, that is the force of the original word, that is, I have set the Lord before me, at one time as well as another, without any irregular affections or passions, &c. In every place, in every condition, in every company, in every employment, and in every enjoyment, I have set the Lord equally before me; and this raised him, and this will raise any Christian, by degrees, to a very great height of holiness: Psa 119:168, 'I have kept thy precepts, and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.' The Hebrew word ■■■■, shamar, that is here rendered kept, signifies to keep carefully, diligently, studiously, exactly. It signifies to keep as men keep prisoners, and to keep as a watchman keeps the city or the garrison, yea, to keep as a man would keep his very life. But now mark what was the reason that David kept the precepts and the testimonies of the Lord so carefully, so sincerely, so diligently, so studiously, and so exactly Why, the reason you have in the latter part of the verse, 'for all my ways are before thee.' O sirs! it is as necessary for him that would be eminent in holiness, to set the Lord always before him, as it is necessary for him to breathe. In Job 31:1-40 you have a very large narrative of that height and perfection of holiness that Job had attained to, and the great reason that he gives you for this is in the the verse, 'doth not he see my ways and count all my steps?' The eye of God had so strong an influence upon his heart and life, that it wrought him up to a very high pitch of holiness. The scholar writes most exactly whilst his master's eye is upon him, and the child walks most exactly whilst his father's eye is upon him, and the servant works most exactly whilst his master's eye is upon him; and so certainly all the sons and servants of the most high God do hear most exactly, and pray most exactly, and walk most exactly, when they set themselves most as in the presence of the great God, who is all sight, who is totus oculus, all eye. Ah friends! as ever you would be high in holiness, possess your hearts with a serious apprehension of God's presence, set yourselves daily as in his sight, as under his eye; and remember, though a man may easily baffle his conscience, and put out his light, and deceive the world, like that counterfeit Alexander in Josephus his story, yet he shall never be able to baffle or deceive the eye of God's omniscieny. You shall as soon get out of the reach of his hand, as you shall get from under the view of his eye. God hath his windows in all our breasts, and curiously and narrowly observes all that is done within us, and all that is done by us; and if the serious consideration of his all-seeing eye will not influence us to labour after the highest degrees of holiness, I know not what will. It was Seneca's advice to his friend Jucilius that whatsoever he was doing he should imagine that Cato did behold him; and Plutarch advised his friends to demean themselves so circumspectly, as if their enemies did always behold them. But my advice to you shall be this, upon every occasion, in every condition, and in every action, 'set the Lord always before you.' If the sharp and severe eye of a holy man, or of a holy friend, or of a holy relation will so overawe you, and so exceedingly influence you to the best of actions; then certainly the sharp, piercing, and all-seeing eye of God will do much more; and therefore let the Lord be always in your sight. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then fix and settle yourselves under a holy ministry, resign and give up yourselves to his ministry who makes it his great business and work to preach holiness, to promote holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to exalt holiness, and to remove all obstructions that may any ways hinder the

progress of holiness. Some there be that spend their time rather to please than to profit, and to tickle their hearers' ears than to touch their hearts, Isa 30:11 : from these turn aside; and some there be who make it their work rather to destroy churches than to build them up in faith and holiness, and from these turn aside, Gal 1:23; some there are who make it their business to delude and deceive the simple, by venting and setting to sale the devices of their own heads, and the deceits and visions of their own hearts, Php 4:14; Jer 14:14. How many are there in these days whose glorious visions are but golden delusions, and whose seraphical phrases are but brain-sick phantasies, and whose new notions are but new nothings; from these turn aside. And others there be that build the things that they have destroyed, and are returned, after they had been seemingly washed, with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire, Gal 2:18; 2Pe 2:20-22. They say that if tame foxes break loose and turn wild, they do more mischief than any. Julian was once a professor, but turning back to heathenism, he drew more from the faith by his fraud than his predecessors did by force; therefore from these turn aside.

Some there be that cry up the commandments of men above the commandments of God, and that set up the ordinances of men above the ordinances of God, and that prefer human institutions before divine institutions; from these turn aside. Mat 15:1-7; Mark 7:1-14. And others there be that have a vein of scorning and reproaching, of disdain and triumphing over the persons, names, and credits of those faithful ministers of Christ who upon all accounts excel them, and whom upon a dying bed, and before a judgment-seat, they will wish that they had imitated and not envied, 2Co 10:10. These labour to darken and obscure others that their own sun may shine the brighter. These labour to lessen others' reputation, hoping thereby to greaten their own; these admire themselves and condemn others; these look upon themselves as the greatest doctors, and upon all others as the worst of dunces; from these turn aside.

Some there be that spend their time and their strength in studying and preaching of dry and sapless controversies, which are so far from bettering of men's hearts, and from reforming of men's lives, that they leave men as much, and many times more, under the power of sin and dominion of Satan than they were before; from these turn aside. And others there be that stand most upon easy things, and little things, upon things of least worth and weight, and in these they will be very nice and curious, and yet readily pass over the great and the weighty things both of the law and of the gospel, 1Ti 1:5-7; Mat 23:23, and Mat 6:3-5. They stand more upon circumstantial than upon substantial, upon a saint's day than upon a Sabbath-day, upon an Easter offering than upon offering up of themselves to the Lord, upon a pipe, a vesture, a gesture, than upon saving of immortal souls; from these turn aside.

Some there be that speak two words for Christ and ten for themselves, that are very zealous to fleece their flocks, but are neither headed nor hearted to feed their flocks, 2Pe 2:1-4; Rev 18:11-13; that mind men's goods more than their good, and the serving of themselves than the saving of souls. So they may be clad sprucely, and fare deliciously, and live lazily, they care not though millions of souls go to hell yearly; to pick your purses they will indulge your consciences; and so it may go well with them in this world, they care not what becomes of you in the other world; from these turn aside, Eze 34:1-31. And others there be that take more pains to make proselytes than to make men holy, Mat 23:15; they make it their great business to win over men to their opinions, when they should be a-winning of men over to Jesus Christ; they make it more their work to convert men to their way, than they make it their work to better men's hearts, or mend their

lives, or save their souls. They will compass sea and land to make men one with themselves, and yet think all that time and pains lost that is spent in endeavouring to make men one with Christ. These are factors for hell, and resemble the prince of darkness to the life, for as he, so they, will spare no pains to gain proselytes; from these turn aside, and give up yourselves to their labours who make it the top of their glory to preach holiness, to advance holiness, to magnify holiness, and to practise holiness; and this will be an excellent means to raise you up to higher degrees of holiness. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Be most in with them that are most eminent and excellent in holiness. Let the delight and joy of your hearts run most out to them who are still adding to their stock of holiness. Thus it was with that princely prophet, in that Psa 16:2-3, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' The disciples, by discoursing with Christ, had a holy flame raised up in them: Luk 24:32, 'And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?' And when Paul met Silas and Timotheus, he burned in spirit, Acts 18:5. These two men were eminent in holiness, and by their company and communion, the zeal and courage of the apostle Paul was very much heated and raised. Look, as one flaming bavin may kindle a thousand, so one precious saint, in whom grace is strong, and holiness is high, may, by a divine and secret operation, convey heat and life, power and vigour, into all that touch him; or come near unto him; even as the loadstone by a secret operation conveyeth power and vigour into iron. The prayers, the conferences, the counsels, and all the carriages of a man eminent in holiness, will mightily help on the work of holiness in their hearts, where the streams of holiness runs but low. Look, as rich and costly banquets do refresh, and raise, and strengthen their spirits that are weak and faint, so men that are rich in grace and holiness will raise and strengthen their spirits who are weak in grace, and who, for want of greater measures of holiness, are apt to faint. Look, as young plants will not thrive under dropping trees, so such as are weak in holiness will never thrive so long as they only associate themselves with those that are weak. Look, as many times one rich man makes many poor men rich, so many times one man rich in holiness makes many rich in holiness; and therefore, as ever you would abound in holiness, look not so much at gifts as at grace; look not so much at saints' outsides as at their insides; look not so much at their external garb as at their internal worth; and always make them your choicest and your chiefest companions, who do most excel in grace and holiness. Their tongues, their lips, their lives, will still be a-dropping divine marrow and fatness, and therefore be sure to keep most in with them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then be much in the exercise and actings of that holiness you have. All the honour and glory that God hath from us in this world is from the exercise of holiness. Look, as the frequent actings of sin is the strengthening of sin, so the frequent actings of holiness is the strengthening of holiness. Look, as the non-exercise of holiness brings upon the soul a decay of holiness, so the exercise of holiness breeds in the soul an increase of holiness. Holiness is always made more and more perfect by acting. Look, as wells are the sweeter for drawing, and fountains the better for overflowing, so holiness is sweetest and best when it is drawn into action. Look, as the running water is the best and sweetest water, so the active Christian is the best and sweetest Christian. That musical instrument always makes the sweetest melody that is most frequently used, and so doth that Christian that is most frequent in the exercise of grace and holiness. We get nothing by dead and useless habits; talents hid in a

napkin gather rust, and the noblest faculties are imbedded when not improved in exercise; and therefore the apostle exhorts Timothy to stir up the gift of God that was in him, in that 2Ti 1:6. The words are an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. Paul would have Timothy to be always a-blowing his spark into a flame. Look, as fire is preserved and maintained by blowing and stirring of it up, so holiness is preserved and maintained in the soul by being stirred and blown up in the soul. The habits of grace and holiness are like dull coal-fires, which, if they are not now and then blown and stirred up, will certainly die and go out.

O Sirs! it is not the having but the husbanding of holiness that brings glory to God; for a man to have the habit of holiness, and not to put it in practice, is all one as for a man to have a talent, and to wrap it up in a napkin. It was a notable observation of Pliny upon Phidias the famous painter, that had the habit of that art above all of his time; saith he, 'That great art and skill that Phidias had, had been to no purpose, had he not exercised and practised it upon some table:' so it is with the habits of grace and holiness in the saints; if they are not brought forth into exercise, into action, it is all one as if they had no such habits at all. Holiness out of action is like a candle under a bushel, that yields no comfort to a man's self, nor no light to others. Though gold be gold in the mine, and though it be the most precious and desirable metal in the world, yet so long as it is only in the mine what profit or advantage have we by it? but now, when it is digged out of the mine, and becomes a treasure in men's hands, and is fitted for use and service, then it brings profit and advantage to men, and then the lustre and glory of it appears: so though grace and holiness in the habit, in the mine, be grace and holiness, yet what profit or advantage is there in those habits, till they are brought forth into action, into exercise? and till then all the lustre and glory of grace and holiness lies hid and obscure. The more the habits of holiness are brought into action, the more holiness will be augmented and increased; and therefore, above all, look to the frequent exercises and actings of that holiness you have; and this will be a ready way to turn your drop of holiness into a sea, and your spark of holiness into a flame, and your two mites of holiness into a vast treasure. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness; if ever you would perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, then be much in secret prayer, be much in closet duties, Mat 6:5, Mat 6:9. Christ takes a great deal of pleasure to hear and to see his people pour out their souls before him in a corner: Song of Solomon 2:14, 'O my dove! that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' Look, as secret meals are very fattening, so secret duties are very soul-enriching. Secret prayers are the pillars of smoke, whereby the soul ascends to God out of the wilderness of this world; secret prayers are the wings of the soul whereby it flies to God in a more still and silent way for the increase and augmentation of holiness. The tender dew that falls in the silent night, will abundantly more cause sweet herbs to flourish and grow than great showers of rain that falls in the stirring day; so secret prayer will abundantly more cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish, than all those more open and visible duties of religion, which too too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy. O sirs! secret prayer is Jacob's ladder, where you have God in his fulness and holiness descending down into the soul, and it is that ladder whereby the soul ascends to the highest pitch of communion with God. Witness Ambrose, who was wont to say, I am never less alone than when I am all alone, for then I can enjoy the presence of my God most freely, fully, and sweetly, without

interruption. And witness that heaven-born lady who spent most of her time in secret duties, in closet communion with God; and when persons of great quality came to visit her, she would so entertain them as she would be sure not to omit her set times for secret prayer. She would rather rudely take her leave of them, as some called it, than omit her closet communion with God. She had found such rare advantages by closet duties, that she would not upon any terms neglect them, or in the least turn her back upon them. And it was a most sweet and divine saying of Bernard; 'O saint! knowest thou not,' saith he, 'that thy husband, Christ, is bashful, and will not be familiar in company; retire thyself, therefore, by meditation into thy closet, or the fields, and there thou shalt have Christ's embraces.'² O sirs! it is an experienced truth, that there is no such way under heaven to be rich in grace, and to be high in holiness, as by driving and maintaining a secret trade with God, Song of Solomon 1:11-12. When had Peter that glorious vision and manifestation of grace, but when he was alone, and on the housetop a-praying? Acts 10:11-12. And when was that soul-ravishing, that soul-cheering, and that soul-strengthening message despatched by the angel to Daniel, viz., that he was greatly beloved of God, but when he was alone a-praying? Dan 9:20-23; and doubtless many thousand saints have had their hearts melted, their corruptions weakened, their fears scattered, their doubts resolved, their holiness raised, and their assurance sealed, whilst they have been in closet duties. Look, as men many times gives their best, their choicest, and their richest gifts in secret, so doth God many times give the choicest discoveries of his love, and the sweetest dainties and delicacies of glory, and the richest measures of grace and holiness to his people in secret. Look, as there was none so holy as Christ, so there was none so much in secret prayer as Christ. Look, as many men in this famous city, by driving a secret trade, a private trade, gain very great estates, beyond what many do who drive more public trades; so many Christians that drive a secret trade, a private trade with God in their closets, they grow abundantly more rich in grace, in holiness, in communion with God, and in all gracious experiences, than many other Christians who make a great deal of bustle in the world, and who are much in the public trade of Christianity, viz., hearing the word, conferences, family duties, &c., but very rarely shall you find them in their closets. As ever you would be eminent and excellent in holiness, keep up your private trade with God, maintain your closet communion with the Holy One of Israel. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then fall with all your might upon subduing and crucifying your most raging corruptions, and your most daring lusts. Oh do not defer! Oh do not delay the work of spiritual mortification! Oh do not think that you can both fight and overcome, fight and triumph in one day! Oh do not think that your golden and your silver idols will lay down their arms, and yield the field, and lie at your feet, and let you trample them to death without striking a blow! Isa 2:20. Oh remember that bosom-sins will do all they can to keep their ground, and therefore you must arise with all your strength against them, and 'bray them in a mortar, and stamp them to powder, and burn them to ashes! Oh deal with them as they dealt with the Levite's concubine, force them to death, and cut them to pieces! Jdg 19:1-30. Oh leave not the palm, the skull of this cursed Jezebel undevoured, undestroyed! 2Ki 9:1-37. Oh deal by your most enraged lusts as the Philistines did deal by Samson, pluck out their eyes, and make them to grind in the mill of mortification, till their strength be utterly consumed and wasted. Whilst Saul lived and kept the throne, and was in his strength, little David was kept exceeding weak and low; but when Saul was dethroned and slain, little David quickly grew stronger and stronger, 2Sa 3:1: so all the while a darling sin lives and keeps the throne in the heart, grace and holiness will be kept

exceeding weak and low; but when your darling sin is dethroned and slain by the power and the sword of the Spirit, grace and holiness will quickly grow stronger and stronger, and rise higher and higher, Rom 8:10, Rom 8:13. When men would have a rough field fitted for the plough, and fitted to bring forth fruit, will they not first fall with all their strength, and with all their might, upon grubbing up by the roots the strongest trees, and the sturdiest oaks, knowing that when these are grubbed up, weaker trees will easily fall? So, as ever you would have your hearts and lives full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness, fall with all your strength, and with all your might, upon grubbing up by the very roots your beloved sins, your strongest lusts, and then the rest of your corruptions will easily fall. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled, and were easily brought under. When a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are quickly routed. Down but with your darling sins, and then the conquest of other sins will be easy. When a man hath eat poison, nothing will make him thrive, till he hath vomited up the poison that he hath eaten. It is not the most wholesome food, the choicest dainties, nor the richest cordials under heaven that will increase blood, and spirits, and strength, in such a person; he will throw up all, and nothing will stay with him to do him good, till his poison be cast up and cast out. Beloved sins, they are the poison of the soul, and till these are vomited up, and cast out by sound repentance, and the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ, the soul will never thrive in grace and holiness; all the wholesome food of the gospel, and all the dainties and cordials of heaven, will never beget good blood, nor noble spirits, nor divine strength in their souls, that upon no terms will part with their darling sins; and therefore, as ever you would be strong in the grace of the Lord, draw up all the strength that ever you are able to make, and fall on with the greatest courage upon your bosoms-sins, and never cease till in the strength of Christ you have got a complete victory and conquest over them. In the law it was the blood of the sacrifice, and the oil, that cleansed the leper, and that by them was meant the blood of Christ and the Spirit of grace is agreed by all. Ah friends! as ever you would be cleansed from your darling sins, which do so exceedingly hinder the increase of holiness, be often in looking upon a crucified Christ, and in the application of his blood to your own souls.

I have read of five men, that being asked what was the best means to mortify sin, gave these answers. Saith the first, The best means to mortify sin is to meditate of death. Saith the second, The best means is to meditate of the judgment day. Saith the third, The best means is to meditate on the joys of heaven. Saith the fourth, The best means is to meditate on the torments of hell. But saith the fifth, The best means is to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Christ; and doubtless the last hit it to a hair. If anything under heaven will subdue and bring under darling sins, it will be the daily sight of a bleeding, groaning, dying Saviour. Philosophy, saith Lactantius, may cover vices, but it never cuts off vices; it may hide a lust, but it can never quench a lust, as black patches, instead of plasters, may cover some deformities in nature, but they can never cure them. Ah sirs! if you do not kill your darling sins, they will kill your precious souls. When Sennacherib's army was destroyed by an angel, Isa 37:1-38, and he returned home with a hook in his nose and a bridle in his lips, he inquired of one about him, what he thought the reason might be why God so favoured the Jews; to which he replied, That there was one I Abraham their father, that was willing to sacrifice his beloved son to death at the command of God, and that ever since that time God favoured that people. Well, said Sennacherib, if that be it, I have two beloved sons, and I will sacrifice them both to death, if that will procure their God to favour me; which when his two sons heard, they, as the story goes, slew their father, being more willing to kill than be killed, Isa 37:38. O friends! you must kill or be killed; if you are not the death of your beloved sins, your beloved sins

will prove the death and ruin of your immortal souls; and therefore never leave looking up to a crucified Christ, till virtue flow from him to the crucifying of those special sins that do most obstruct and hinder the growth and increase of holiness. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then dwell much upon the holiness of God. Oh, be still a-musing, be still a-pondering upon the holiness of God. Certainly, if there be any means under heaven to raise you up to higher degrees of holiness, it is this; and therefore keep always a fixed eye upon the infinite and most glorious holiness of God. Now that this direction may the better work, premise with me these eight things concerning the holiness of God:

First, Premise this with me, that God is essentially holy, and in this sense, none is holy but himself. Now essential holiness is all one with God himself. God's essential holiness is God's conformity to himself. Holiness in God is not a quality, but his essence. *Quicquid est in Deo, est ipse Deus*, Whatsoever is in God, is God. Holiness in angels and saints is but a quality, but in God it is his essence. The fallen angels keep their natures, though they have lost their holiness; for that holiness in them was a quality, and not their essence. Look, as created holiness is the conformity of the reasonable creature to the rule, so the uncreated holiness of God is God's conformity unto himself. God's holiness and his nature are not two things, they are but one. God's holiness is his nature, and God's nature is his holiness. God is a pure act, and therefore, whatsoever is in God is God. It is God's prerogative royal to be essentially holy. The most glorious creatures in heaven, and the choicest souls on earth, are only holy by participation: 1Sa 2:2, 'There is none holy as the Lord.' God's holiness is so essential and co-natural to him, that he can as soon cease to be, as cease to be holy. Holiness in God is a substance, but in angels and men it is only an accident, or a quality. The essence of the creature may remain when the holiness of the creature is lost, as you may see in Adam, and the fallen angels; but God's essence and his holiness are always the same. His very nature is holy, and therefore it is that he is called 'Jehovah,' and 'I am,' because what he is really, that he is essentially, Exo 3:14. Though men, for our information, do distinguish between the attributes of God and the nature of God, yet in him they are the same. Look, as the wisdom of God is the wise God, and the truth of God the true God, and the power of God the powerful God, and the justice of God the just God, and the mercy of God the merciful God, and the mightiness of God the mighty God, and the righteousness of God the righteous God, and the graciousness of God the gracious God, so the holiness of God is the holy God. God's nature and his name are one and the same. God is essentially holy, and that is the top of all his glory. But,

Secondly, As God is essentially holy, so God is unmixedly holy. The holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is an unmixed holiness: 1Jn 1:5, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright-shining light, yea, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. The moon, indeed, when it shines brightest, hath her dark spots and specks, but God is a light that shines gloriously without the least spot or speck. Now, look, as that darkness which hath not the least light attending it is the grossest, the thickest Egyptian darkness that can be, so that light that hath not the least cloud of darkness attending it must be the most clear, splendid light that possible can be; and such a light is the Holy One of Israel. It is very observable, the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity and sanctity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, 'In him is no darkness at all,' that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck, can cleave to him; he is so holy, that no iniquity can be found in him; there is no

defect nor default in the nature of God. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. As Moses spake in that Deu 32:4, God is a pure, a most pure act, without the least potentiality, defectability, or mutability, and therefore in the highest sense he is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Surely there is no unrighteousness in God; no evil can dwell with him, or come near unto him. God stands at such a distance from iniquity, yea, he so abhors it, that he never did, nor never will, bestow a good look upon it: Hab 1:13, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' There are four things that God cannot do: 1. He cannot lie; 2. He cannot die; 3. He cannot deny himself; nor, 4. He cannot look with a favourable eye upon iniquity. God doth indeed look upon iniquity with a hateful eye, with an angry eye, with a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye, but he never did nor will look upon iniquity with an eye of delectation, or with an eye of approbation. Witness his hurling the fallen angels out of heaven, and his banishing of sinning Adam out of paradise. By all this you see that the holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is a holiness without mixture. But now all the holiness that is in the best and choicest saints in the world is but a dreggy holiness, a mixed holiness, a weak and imperfect holiness; their unholiness is always more than their holiness. Ah, what a deal of pride is mixed with a little humility, and what a deal of unbelief is mixed with a little faith, and what a deal of passion is mixed with a little meekness, and what a deal of earthliness is mixed with a little heavenliness, and what a deal of carnalness is mixed with a little spiritualness, and what a deal of hardness is mixed with a little tenderness! Oh, but now the holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is a holiness without mixture, there is not the least drop nor the least dreg of unholiness in God. It is true the gods of the heathen were such as had been impure, beastly, filthy men, and therefore several writers have taken a great deal of pains to convince heathens of their impiety and folly in worshipping such for gods, upon whom they fastened many horrid, ridiculous, lascivious, and impious actions, and therefore they conclude against them, that they are no gods. It is most certain that the true God, that he that is the High and the Holy One, cannot be charged with any iniquity, no, nor with the least show or shadow of vanity. In God there is wisdom without folly, truth without falsehood, light without darkness, and holiness without sinfulness. But,

Thirdly, As God is unmixedly holy, so God is universally holy. He is holy in all his ways, and holy in all his works; his precepts are holy precepts, and his promises are holy promises, and his threatenings are holy threatenings, his love is a holy love, and his anger is a holy anger, and his hatred is a holy hatred, &c. His nature is holy, his attributes are holy, and all his actions are holy; he is holy in punishing, and holy in sparing, he is holy in justifying of some, and he is holy in condemning of others, he is holy in bringing some to heaven, and holy in throwing others to hell; God is holy in all his sayings, and God is holy in all his doings, God is holy in whatever he puts his hand to, and he is holy in whatever he sets his heart to; his frowns are holy, and his smiles are holy, his liftings up are holy, and his castings down are holy; when he gives, his givings are holy givings, and when he takes away, his takings are holy takings, &c. But,

Fourthly, As God is universally holy, so God is eminently holy. He is transcendently holy, he is superlatively holy, and therefore he is said to be glorious in holiness, Exo 15:11. There is no fathoming, there is no measuring, there is no comprehending, there is no searching, of that infinite sea of holiness that is in God. As neither men nor angels can set banks or bounds to God's holiness, so neither men nor angels can sound to the bottom of God's holiness. All that holiness that is in angels and men is but a spark to God's flame; it is but a drop to his sea; it is but a beam

to his sun; it is but a mite to his millions, &c. O sirs! you shall as soon stop the sun in his course, and change the day into night, and raise the dead, and make a world, and tell the stars of heaven, and empty the sea with a cockle-shell, as you shall be able either to conceive or express that transcendent holiness that is in God. This glorious name or title, the 'Holy One of Israel,' is ascribed to God about thirty times in the Old Testament, and all to shew that he is most excellent and transcendent in holiness; and the seraphims which stood before the throne cried out three times a-row, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts,' Isa 6:3, to shew that God is most eminently and superlatively holy; for so thrice holy in some languages is most holy. For holiness God is a nonesuch; there are none to be compared with him, neither are there any among angels or among men, yea, or among the gods, that are like unto him. 'Who is like to thee among the gods, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.' God's holiness is infinite, it is so super-eminent and so super-excellent that it can neither be limited, nor lessened, nor augmented. If men should blaspheme or reproach the Lord, he would be never the worse, he would be never the less holier than he is; and if men should bless him and worship him, he would be never the better, never the holier. Unto perfection there can be no addition. A drop taken out of the sea can no ways add unto the sea, Neh 9:5. He is exalted above all blessing and praise! All the angels in heaven and all the men on earth cannot add one ray, one beam of glory to the essence of God, to the holiness of God. As God is goodness in the very abstract, and justice in the very abstract, and mercy in the very abstract, and righteousness in the very abstract, and loving-kindness in the very abstract, so he is holiness in the very abstract, so that no man can flatter him or add unto him; and hence it is that God glories in the attribute of his holiness more than in any other attribute, 'For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy,' Isa 57:15. When God would lift up himself in all his glory, he doth it by declaring that his name is holy; and so when God would swear by himself, he swears by his holiness: Psa 89:35, 'Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David:' and so in that Amo 4:2, 'The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks.' Look, as the great men of the world are wont to swear upon their honour when they would give us the greatest assurance of what they will do, because such oaths are looked upon as most sacred and inviolable, so the great God swears by his holiness, because his holiness is his greatest honour, and because he hath no greater, nor no better, nor no choicer, nor no sweeter, nor no preciouser things to swear by. Let me, saith God, be never owned as a God, nor honoured as a God, nor trusted as a God, nor feared as a God, nor valued as a God, if I do not inviolably keep my promises, and make good my threatenings, having sworn thereunto by my holiness. Now you know the scripture saith, 'When God could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,' Heb 6:13; so I may say, when God could swear by no greater attribute, by no greater excellency, he swears by his holiness, that being the top and the glory of all. Look, as all the wisdom of the creatures, compared with the wisdom of God, is but folly; and as all the goodness of the creatures, compared with the goodness of God, is but naughtiness; and as all the fulness of the creature, compared with the fulness of God, is but emptiness; and as all the power of the creature, compared with the power of God, is but weakness; and as all the righteousness of the creature, compared with the righteousness of God, is but unrighteousness; so all the holiness of the creature, compared with the holiness of God, is but unholiness. Man's highest purity is but impurity, when it is compared to the purity of God, yea, the very holiness of angels, compared with the holiness of God, is chargeable with folly, Job 4:18. That fulness of holiness that is in angels or saints is only the

fulness of the vessel, but that fulness of holiness that is in God is the fulness of the fountain; that fulness of holiness that is in angels or saints is but the fulness of the branches, but that fulness of holiness that is in God is the fulness of the root; that fulness of holiness that is in angels or saints is but the fulness of sufficiency, but that fulness of holiness that is in God is the fulness of redundancy. But,

Fifthly, As God is infinitely holy, transcendently holy, superlatively holy, so God is originally, radically, and fundamentally holy. The divine nature is the root, original, and spring of all holiness and purity. All that holiness that is in angels and men flows from God, as the streams from the fountain, as the beams from the sun, as the branches from the root, and as the effect from the cause. There is no holiness to be had but from the Holy One, he is the author and original of all the holiness that ever was, or that is this day in the world. All the seeds of holiness, and all the roots of holiness that are to be found in angels or men, are of the Lord's sowing and planting, Php 1:11. All that holiness that the angels had in heaven, and all that holiness that Adam had in paradise, and all that holiness that Christ had in his human nature, and all that holiness that ever any saints have had, was from God, and all that holiness that any saints now have is from God. The divine nature is the first root and original fountain of all sanctity and purity, Jas 1:17. Ministers may pray that their people may be holy, and parents may pray that their children may be holy, and masters may pray that their servants may be holy, and husbands may pray that their wives may be holy, and wives may pray that their husbands may be holy; but none of these can give holiness, none of these can communicate holiness to their nearest and dearest relations. It is only God that is the giver and the author of all holiness. If holy persons could convey holiness into others' souls, they would never suffer them to go to hell for want of holiness. To hand out holiness to others is a work too high for angels, and too hard for all mortals; it is only the Holy One that can cause holiness to flow into sinners' hearts; it is only he that can form, and frame, and infuse holiness into the souls of men. A man shall sooner make a man, yea, make a world, and unmake himself, than he shall make another holy. It is only a holy God that can enlighten the mind, and bow the will, and melt the heart, and raise the affections, and purge the conscience, and reform the life, and put the whole man into a holy gracious frame and temper. But,

Sixthly, As God is originally, radically, and fundamentally holy, so God is independently holy, Isa 44:24; Rev 1:18. The holiness of God depends upon nothing below God. God is the Alpha, the fountain from whence all holiness springs, and he is the Omega, the sea to which all glory runs. As all our holiness is from God, so all our holiness must terminate in the honour and glory of God. It is God alone that is independently holy. All that holiness that is in angels and men is a dependent holiness; it depends upon the holiness of God, as the streams depend upon the fountain, the beams upon the sun, the branches upon the root, and the members upon the head. God is unum principium ex quo cuncta dependent, One beginning, upon whom all things depend. God hath his being only of himself, and it is he alone that gives being unto all other things. God is the first cause, and without all causes himself. The very beings that angels and men have they have by participation from God. And it is the first cause that giveth unto all causes their proper operations: Isa 44:6, 'I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.' God never had a cause of his being, as all other creatures have. He is a glorious being, a holy being, without all causes, either efficient, or formal, or material, or final; and therefore he must needs be independently holy. Look, as the power of God is an independent power, and the wisdom of God an independent

wisdom, and the goodness of God an independent goodness, and the righteousness of God an independent righteousness; so the holiness of God is an independent holiness. And as it is the glory of his power that his power is an independent power, and the glory of his goodness that his goodness is an independent goodness; so it is the glory of his holiness that his holiness is an independent holiness. And look, as all that power that angels and men have depends upon the power of God, and as all that wisdom that angels and men have depends upon the wisdom of God, and as all that goodness that angels and men have depends upon the goodness of God; so all that holiness that angels and men have depends upon the holiness of God, &c. Philo could say that God is such a fountain that he breaks forth with the streams of his goodness upon all things, but receives nothing back again from any to better himself therewith. There are none in heaven, nor none on earth, that are absolutely independent, but God alone.

Seventhly, As God is independently holy, so God is constantly holy, he is unchangeably holy. He was holy yesterday, and he is holy today, and he will be holy for ever. What is natural is constant and lasting. Now God's holiness is natural to him; it is as natural for God to be holy, as it is for us to breathe, yea, as it is for us to be unholy. God can as well and as soon cease to be, as he can cease to be holy. Holiness is his nature as well as his name; and therefore his holiness cannot decay, though ours may. Whatever we may lose of our holiness, yet it is certain that God can never lose one grain of that holiness that is in him. Here our holiness ebbs and flows, but the holiness of God never ebbs, but is always a-flowing and overflowing, there is still a full tide of holiness in God. Though the saints cannot fall from that seed of holiness that is sown in their hearts, 1Jn 3:9, yet they may fall from some degrees of holiness that they have formerly attained to. They that have been old men in holiness may fall from being old men to be but young men in holiness, and they that have been young men in holiness may fall from being young men to be but children in holiness, and they that have been children in holiness may fall from being children to be but babes in holiness, 1Jn 2:12-14; 2Pe 2:1-3; but now that holiness that is in God is never subject to any decayings, abatings, or languishing. That spring, that sea of holiness that is in God, is noways capable of diminution nor of augmentation.

Plato could say that God is one and the same, and always like himself. And it was a custom among the Turks to cry out every morning from a high tower, God always was, and always will be; and so salute their Mahomet. O sirs, God hath been always holy, and God will be always holy. Whatever men may lose, yet God is resolved that he will never lose his honour nor his holiness. But,

Eighthly and lastly, As God is continually holy, so God is exemplarily holy. He is the rule, pattern, and example of holiness: 1Pe 1:15, 'Be ye holy, as I am holy.' God's holiness is the great example and pattern of all that holiness which is in the creatures. God's holiness is the copy that we must always have in our eye, and endeavour most exactly to write after. Carnal friends, and this blind world, and Antichrist, and such as love to lord it over the conscience, will be still a-presenting to you other examples and patterns, but it is your wisdom and your work to cast them all behind your backs, and to trample them under your feet, and to follow that form and pattern that the Lord hath set before you; and that is, to be holy as he is holy. All our holiness is to be brought to the holiness of God, as the standard and measure of it; and therefore, oh what cause have we to be still a-perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord! And thus I have done with the second thing, viz., means to increase holiness, and to raise you up to the highest pitches and degrees of holiness.

And so I come to the third thing proposed, and that was, to lay down some signs or evidences whereby persons may know whether they have attained to any high pitch or eminent degrees of holiness or no. Now, sirs, if you desire in good earnest to know whether you have attained to any perfection of holiness or no, then seriously weigh these following particulars, and try yourselves by them.

[1.] First, The more a man can warm his heart at the promises, and cleave to the promises, and rest upon the promises, and suck marrow and fatness and sweetness out of the breasts of the promises, when divine providences seem to run cross to divine promises, the greater measure of holiness that man hath attained to. Where there are but little measures of holiness, there every seeming contrariety to the promise troubles a man, and every little cloud that hangs over the promise will mightily perplex a man, &c. But where holiness is raised to any considerable height, there that man will suck honey out of the flint, he will suck sweetness out of the promise, even then when providence looks sourly upon the promise; yea, when providence seems to bid defiance to the promise. Witness Jacob, in that Gen 32:6-8, compared with Gen 32:9, Gen 32:11-12, 'And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; and said, If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' Now here you see holy Jacob, in the midst of all his fears and frights, in the midst of all his perils and dangers, in the midst of all his damps and dreads, and in the midst of all cross, amazing and amusing providences, he turns himself to the breasts of the promise, and sucks marrow and sweetness out of those breasts. Jacob puts the promise into suit, he sues God upon his own bond, and so bears up sweetly under dark and dismal providences. And so did Moses in that Num 10:29, 'And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.' Moses had been almost now forty years in the wilderness, and many thousands were fallen on his right hand, and on his left; yet saith he to Hobab, in the face of all those dismal providences, come go along with us, and be as eyes unto us, and we will certainly do thee good, Num 10:31. But Hobab might have objected, Alas! what good can I expect in a wilderness condition, where so many are weak, and so many are sick, and so many thousands are fallen asleep; and where all the people are every day surrounded with a thousand dangers, difficulties, and deaths. Well, saith he, though all this be true, yet go along with us, and be serviceable and useful to us, and we will do thee good; 'for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.' Here this holy man Moses turns himself to the promise, and in the face of all sad providences, he draws comfort and encouragement from the promise. And so did Jehoshaphat, in that 2Ch 20:1-37. When the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir came against him to battle, 2Ch 20:1, 2Ch 20:10, he turns himself to the promise, 2Ch 20:7-9, and gathers life and spirit from thence. And so did David, in that Psa 60:1-12. In Psa 60:1-3, you have a narrative of many cross and dreadful providences, and yet in the face of them all holy David

sucks strong consolation out of the breasts of the promise, ver. 6, 'God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.' God hath promised in his holiness, that David should be king over all Israel, and therefore, notwithstanding all strange providences, David triumphs in the promise, and looks upon himself as master of all those strongholds that are mentioned in Psa 60:7-9. And so Abraham, he wanted a son, and God promised him an Isaac. Now in the face of all his own deadness, and natural inabilities as to generation, and Sarah's deadness and barrenness, Rom 4:17-21, he turns about to the promise; and his faith and holiness being high, he draws sweetness and satisfaction from thence. Notwithstanding present providences, the naked promise was a well of life and salvation to him.

O sirs! it is an argument of a very great measure of holiness, when troubles and difficulties vanish upon the sight of a promise, when all things work quite cross and contrary to sense and feeling. Now for a man to embrace a promise, to hug a promise, to kiss a promise, and to draw content and satisfaction from a promise, argues a great degree of holiness. It is a very hard and difficult thing for a man exactly to take the picture of divine providence at any time; for many are the voices and the faces of providence, and there are as great deeps in providences as there are in prophecies; and many texts of providence are as hard, as dark, and as difficult to be understood, as many texts of Scripture are. It is as hard to reconcile the works of God, as it is to reconcile the word of God, Psa 36:6; Rom 11:33; for as in the word of God there are many seeming contradictions, so in the works of God there are many seeming contradictions; for here one providence smiles, and there another frowns; here providence lifts up, and there providence casts down; here providence strokes, and there providence strikes; here providence leads towards Canaan, there providence leads towards a wilderness; here providence leads towards Zion, and there providence leads towards Babylon; here providence speaks us very fair, and there providence doth severely threaten; here providence is bright and lovely, and there providence is dark and dreadful. Now under all such providences, for a man to run to a promise, and to draw out life, and strength, and sweetness from a promise, is a clear evidence of a very high pitch of holiness that such a person hath attained to. I have read of an emperor that put on a new suit every day. O, sirs! when the great God shall every day apparel himself in strange changeable providences, now for a man to hang upon the breasts of a promise, and to suck milk out of a promise, argues a very great increase of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, The more a man can overcome evil with good upon holy and gracious accounts, as upon the account of God's command, God's honour, the credit of the gospel, and the conviction, conversion, and salvation of souls, the greater measure of holiness such a person hath attained to. To return reproach for reproach, reviling for reviling, and cursing for cursing, and scorning for scorning, and defaming for defaming, is exceeding natural to us; but to love them that hate us, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that abhor us, and to pray for them that persecute us, and that despitefully use us, according to Christ's express command in that Mat 5:44, are things exceeding contrary to nature, and exceedingly above nature. The power of grace and holiness appears in nothing more than in bringing the heart to a sweet and ready subjection to such commands as are most cross, and contrary to flesh and blood. As those are in that Rom 12:17, Rom 12:19-21, 'Recompense no man evil for evil. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink: be not overcome of evil, but

overcome evil with good.' And so that in 1Th 5:15, 'See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.' To return good for evil, and kindnesses for injuries, to behave ourselves courteously, humbly, meekly, tenderly, and sweetly towards those who behave themselves discourteously, proudly, passionately, harshly, and sourly towards us, argues a very great degree of holiness. David was a man eminent in holiness, and he was good at this good work, as you may see in that 2Sa 1:24, 'Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.' He doth not envy against Saul, nor insult or rejoice over Saul, as many carnal and unsanctified hearts would have done, nor he doth not provoke or stir up the daughters of Israel to rejoice in the death and destruction of such a tyrant, that had hunted him up and down as a partridge, and that had often designed his ruin, and that had always returned him evil for good, and that had bathed his sword in the blood of Abimelech the high-priest, and in the blood of fourscore more of the priests of the Lord, and that had forsaken the Lord, and gone to a witch, yea, to the devil, for help in his need. Oh no! he conceals what was bad, and remembers what was good; he passes over those things that were condemnable, and he instances only in those things that might make his memory most acceptable, commendable, and delightful among the weaker sex, viz., his making of bravery and gallantry fashionable amongst them. And so Joseph was a man eminent in holiness, and he was good at this hard work; as you may see in that Gen 1:16-23. And Moses was a man of great holiness, and he was good at this difficult work; as you may see in that Psa 106:16, Psa 106:23, Psa 106:33, compared together. And Stephen was a man full of the Holy Ghost, and he was good at praying for them that made a prey of him, Acts 7:60. And Paul was a man of the same mind and mettle, as you may see by comparing the 2Co 11:24, with the Rom 9:1-3. And Eusebius affirms that when Paul was beheaded, under Diocletian the emperor, he prayed both for Jews and Gentiles, for the multitude assembled, and also for the judge and executioner, that his death might not one day be laid unto their charge. Calvin was a man of great holiness, and therefore though Luther (who was a man of a most violent, bitter, passionate spirit) had woefully wronged him, and reviled him, yet, saith he, let Luther hate me, and in his wrath call me a thousand times devil, yet I will love him, and honour him, and acknowledge him a choice and precious servant of God. Mr Foxe, that writ the 'Book of Martyrs,' was so famous in the practice of this hard piece of Christianity, that it became a proverb: If any man would have Mr Foxe do him a good turn, let him do him an injury, and he will be sure to do him a good turn for it. Send me to my toads again, in the dungeon, where I may pray for your lordship's conversion, said Mr Sanders the martyr, to the bishop of Winchester. Thus you see that the more eminent any persons are in holiness, the more they overcome evil with good, the more good they will do them that do evil to them; and thus to do, is but to conform to Christ your head, for he shed tears for them that were to shed his blood, and he gave them his blood to drink, who gave him gall to drink and vinegar to drink. That man is almost got up to the very top of holiness, whose soul is habituated to overcome evil with good, upon holy and precious accounts. Julius Cæsar, and Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, and Titus Vespasian, Camillus, Darius, Lycurgus, Plato, Pericles, and Herod that is mentioned in Acts 12:23, with many other heathens, have done something this way, but what they did, they did by fits and starts, and from poor, low principles, and to vainglorious ends; and therefore all that they did this way is not worth a reciting. Well, Christians, the more you can overcome evil with good, the more certainly your hearts are filled with good. That man's heart is full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness, that, upon divine considerations is accustomed, not

to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. But,

[3.] Thirdly, When men in the main—I say, in the main—are as holy out of religious duties, as they are in religious duties; when in the main of their lives they are as spiritual, as heavenly, as humble, as gracious, as serious, as watchful, as circumspect, &c., as they are in their most religious performances and duties; this argues not only the truth of holiness, but a very high degree of holiness. Moses's face did shine as gloriously when he came off from the mount, as ever it did shine when he was upon the mount, Exo 34:29-30, Exo 34:33, Exo 34:35. O sirs! if when you come off from the mount of duties, there remains some rays and shinings of God upon you, it is an argument that the waters of sanctity are risen to a considerable height in your souls, Eze 47:2-6. Ah, how lively, how warm, how enlarged, how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how spiritual, how serious, how zealous, how religious, how gracious are many in duties, in ordinances; but ah! how dead, how cold, how straitened, how unholy, how proud, how worldly, how carnal, how slight, and how irreligious are they out of duties, out of ordinances. Now, certainly, these have either no holiness at all, or else they have attained to but a very little measure of holiness. But now, when a man in the main, when a man in his course is the same out of duties, out of ordinances, that he is in duties, in ordinances, it is a very great and glorious argument that such a person hath in a very great measure perfected holiness in the fear of the Lord. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The more a man can divinely joy and rejoice under tribulations and afflictions, the greater measure of holiness he hath attained to. It is a mercy not to grumble, not to mutter, not to murmur, not to fret, not to faint, not to despond, nor not to despair. It is much to be silent under afflictions, and to be quiet and patient under tribulations; oh, but divinely to joy and rejoice under afflictions, under tribulations, argues a very great height of holiness, Rom 5:3-4, 'And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope.' That glorying and rejoicing are both one in the New Testament, is sufficiently known; they differ only in degrees, glorying being a step above rejoicing. It is much to rejoice in tribulations, but it is more to glory in tribulations; yea, to glory in them as an old soldier glories in all those marks and scars of honour that he hath met with in the service of his king and country; and yet to this height the believing Romans were raised, which argues a very great measure of holiness in them. And so in that 2Co 7:4, 'Great is my boldness of speech towards you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation,' or as the Greek runs, I do over-abound exceedingly with joy, I have a superabundance of joy in all our tribulation, **περπερισσὸν** ἡομαι; and so in 2Co 12:9-10, 'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon me: therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' Paul rejoices and glories more in his heavy afflictions, and in his various tribulations, than he did in his glorious and mysterious revelations. The more he was afflicted and distressed, the more he had of the visible presence of Christ, and the more he had of the glorious assistance of Christ, and the more he had of sweet communion and fellowship with Christ, and the more he had of the choice supports and singular comforts of Christ, and therefore he takes pleasure in all the pressures that were upon him; and so in that Jas 1:2, 'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations,' that is, into divers afflictions. O sirs! to be divinely merry in misery, to rejoice in the cross as men rejoice in a crown, to rejoice in adversity as others rejoice in prosperity, to rejoice in a stinking prison as others rejoice in their stately palaces,

to rejoice in restraint as others rejoice in liberty, to rejoice in wants as others rejoice in abundance, to rejoice in reproaches as others rejoice in their honours, &c., is very much; but to be joyful in such cases, not with a little joy, but with exceeding great joy, is more. 'All joy' is a Hebraism, and it signifies great joy, full joy, exceeding joy, perfect joy. Oh! thus to rejoice, and that not only when you fall into some afflictions, but when you fall into divers afflictions, argues a very great measure of holiness; but ah! how rare is it to find such souls in these days, that can not only bear the cross, but also rejoice in the cross, that can not only bear reproaches, but also wear reproaches as their crown and glory. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The more extensive a man's obedience is to divine commands, the greater measure of holiness that man hath attained to. Caleb had a very great measure of the spirit of holiness upon him; and he is said to have followed the Lord fully, or as the Hebrew hath it, he fulfilled after me, that is, his obedience was full, universal, resolute, and constant to the end. The contrary is affirmed of Solomon in that 1Ki 11:6, 'And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father,' or as the Hebrew hath it, he fulfilled not after the Lord, that is, his obedience was not so full, so universal, so sincere, so resolute, and so constant as David his father's was. Zacharias and Elizabeth were persons of great holiness, and their obedience was very extensive; for they walked not only in some, but in all the commandments, and not only in all the commandments, but also in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luk 1:5-6. Their obedience was of such a universal extent and latitude, that it comprehended and took in all the duties both of their general and particular callings; they had an eye to the duties of the second table, as well as they had an eye to the duties of the first; and they subjected themselves to the duties of their particular calling, as well as to the duties of their general calling. As they had an eye to mint, anise, and cumin, Mat 23:23, that is, to the lesser and lower duties of religion, so they had an eye to the greater and weightier duties of religion, viz., judgment, mercy, and faith, &c. But now Christians at their first conversion, and whilst they remain weak in grace and holiness, their obedience is more strait and narrow; for commonly they spend much, if not most, of their time in praying, fasting, hearing, reading, Christian conference, &c., and neglect a hundred other duties that are incumbent upon them; they are very forward and warm in the duties of their general calling, but very cold and remiss in the duties of their particular calling; they are very frequent and fervent in some duties, and very rare in other duties; but now the more they grow in grace and holiness, the more extensive will their obedience be, and the more their hearts will be dilated and extended to all the duties both of the first and second table. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The more a man conflicts with heart sins, with spiritual sins, with invisible sins, with sins that lie most hid and obscure from the eyes of the world, and the more spiritual victories and conquests a man obtains over them, the greater measure of holiness that person hath certainly attained to. When the heart rises with all its strength and might against secret pride, secret self-love, secret bubbleings of lusts, secret carnal confidence, secret murmuring, secret hypocrisy, secret envy, secret self-applause, secret malice, secret hatred, secret snares, secret temptations, &c., it is an argument that holiness is grown up to some considerable height there. A little grace, a little holiness, will work a man to conflict with gross sins, with outward sins, with bodily sins, with such sins that every one may set their eyes on, and lay their hands on; yea, where there is no grace, no holiness at all, the light of nature, the common convictions of the Spirit, the laws of men, the eyes of men, the threats of men, the examples of men, a smarting rod, and good education,

may work men to conflict with such sins. Oh, but when all the strength and might of the soul is engaged against those very sins that lie not within the sight or reach of the most sharp and piercing men in the world, but in the heart, and about the heart, and are only obvious to an omniscient eye, this argues a great degree of holiness. And therefore Augustine hit the mark when he said that it is a harder thing for a man to fight with his lusts—understand it especially of heart lusts, of spiritual wickedness—than it is to fight with the cross. And Austin hath long since complained that we do not tame the beasts in our own bosoms. Oh, it is an easier thing to tame all the beasts in the world than it is to tame one beast in the bosom. All the beasts in the world may be tamed and brought under by a human power, Jas 3:7, but no power below that power that raised Christ from the grave can tame the beasts that be in our bosoms. Now look, as conflicts with heart sins, with spiritual sins, &c., argues some eminency in holiness, so victory over heart sins, over spiritual sins, over those sins that lie most remote from the eyes of others, argues a very great degree of holiness. When a Christian doth not only resist heart sins, but vanquishes heart sins; when he doth not only combat with heart sins, but conquers heart sins; when he doth not only fight with heart sins, but also overcomes heart sins; when he doth not only wrestle with heart sins, but also overthrows heart sins, this speaks out holiness in its growth. It was a good saying of Cyprian: There is no such pleasure, saith he, as to have overcome an offered pleasure, neither is there any greater conquest than that that is gotten over a man's corruptions. And it was an excellent saying of Eusebius Emesenus:³ 'Our fathers overcame the torments of the flames, let us overcome the fiery darts of vices.' And indeed it is an easier thing to overcome the flames, than it is to overcome those flaming lusts and corruptions that be in our own hearts. Philosophy may teach us to endure hardships, as it did Calanus in Curtius, who willingly offered his body to the fire, to the flames; but it is only grace, it is only holiness, that can enable us to overcome our lusts, our heart lusts. We read of many that, out of greatness of spirit, could offer violence to nature, but were at a loss when they came to deal with their corruptions.

I remember a notable saying of Ambrose, speaking of Samson, Vincula solvit hostium, &c. Saith he, he brake the bonds of his enemies, but he could not break the bonds of his own lusts; he choked the lion, but he could not choke his own wanton love; he set on fire the harvest of strangers, and himself being set on fire with the spark of one strange woman, lost the harvest of his virtue. And this saying of Ambrose puts me in mind of a great Roman captain, who, as he was riding in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eyes never off a courtesan that walked along the street, which made one say, Behold how this goodly captain, that conquered such potent armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman. Oh, it is not philosophy, nor morality, nor civility, &c., but holiness, but sanctity, that will make the soul victorious over iniquity; and the more victories and conquests a man makes upon heart sins, upon spiritual sins, upon secret sins, the greater measures of holiness that person hath certainly attained to. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The more a man is exercised and busied in the most internal and spiritual duties of religion, the greater measures of holiness that man hath attained to. You know there are external duties of religion, and there are internal duties of religion. There are external duties of religion, as public preaching, hearing the word, reading the word, fasting, singing of psalms, Christian conference, communion of saints, and receiving the Lord's supper, Mat 6:1-34 and Mat 23:1-39. Now such Christians as have but small measures of grace and holiness, and hypocrites and formalists that have not the least measure of true grace and holiness, these are most commonly

exercised and busied about the external duties and services of religion; but very seldom, very rare, shall you find them in the more inward and spiritual duties of religion, Isa 1:11-19, and Isa 58:1-5; Zec 7:4-7. But then, as there are external duties, so there are internal and spiritual duties, as self-examination, self-resignation to God, self-loathing, self-judging, divine meditation, praying in the Spirit, watchfulness over the heart, and making application of the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the grace of Christ, the love of Christ, and the word of Christ to a man's own soul. Now the more any Christian is exercised and employed in these internal, spiritual, and evangelical duties and services, the greater heights and degrees of holiness that Christian is grown to: Php 3:3, 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.' These Philippians were eminent in grace and holiness, as you may see in chap. 1. And they place no confidence in circumcision, nor in any such outward performances or services, but they were much in the exercise of grace, and in worshipping of God in the spirit, and in rejoicing in the person of Christ, the natures of Christ, the offices of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the communications of Christ, the glorious operations of Christ, the precious promises of Christ, and in the heart-warming and heart-cheering blood of Christ.

Now to be much exercised in the most internal, spiritual, and evangelical duties of religion, argues a very great height of holiness. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The more spiritual, internal, and intrinsecal principles, motives, and considerations, carries a person on in religious duties and services, the more holy that person is. When a man is carried on in the duties of religion, from a sense of divine love, or from a sense of the special presence of Christ with his Spirit, or from a sense of the excellency and sweetness of communion and fellowship with God, or from a sense of the graciousness and goodness of God towards him, or from a sense of singular influences and incomes from God, or from a sense of the choice and precious discoveries of God, or from a sense of the beauty and glory of God, &c., this argues a very great measure of holiness, that such a person hath attained to. The more the sweet looks of Christ, the secret visits of Christ, the private whispers of Christ, the divine joggings of Christ, the blessed love-tokens of Christ, and the holy kisses and glorious embraces of Christ doth incite and provoke a person to religious duties, the greater degrees of holiness that person hath reached to; but now it is an argument that the streams of holiness runs but low, when external motives and considerations have the greatest hand in carrying a person on in religious duties. The more bare custom, the eye of the creature, the favour of the creature, the example of the creature, the applause of the creature, the rewards of the creature, or the keeping up of a man's parts, or the keeping up of a man's name, esteem, and repute in the world doth influence a Christian's heart to religious duties, the less holiness that Christian hath. Yea, it is considerable, that outward motives and natural principles have carried many heathens to do many great and glorious things in the world. Did not Sisera do as great things as Gideon? the difference did only lie here, that the great things that Gideon did, he did from more spiritual principles and raised considerations than any Sisera was acted by. And did not Diogenes trample under his feet the great and glorious things of this world as well as Moses? the difference did only lie in this, that Moses trampled under his feet the gay and gallant things of this world from inward, holy principles, and from high and glorious considerations and motives, whereas Diogenes did only trample upon them from poor, low principles, and from carnal and external considerations.

I have read of one Cosmus Medici, a rich citizen of Florence, that he confessed to a near friend of his that he built so many magnificent structures, and spent so much on scholars and libraries, not for any love to learning, but to raise up to himself the trophies of fame and renown. And many of the Romans have done very great and glorious things for their country, but all from natural principles, and from carnal and external motives and considerations, as for a great name, a puff of honour, a little applause, &c., and therefore their most glorious actions have been but shining sins, Jer 32:23. God always writes a nothing upon all those services wherein men's principles and their ends are naught and low. It was a notable saying of Luther, 'One work of a Christian,' saith he, 'is more precious than heaven and earth, and if I might have my desire, I would rather choose the meanest work of a country Christian, or poor maid, than all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great and of Julius Cæsar, because whatsoever a saint doth, though it be never so small and mean, yet it is great and glorious, because he doth all in faith and by the word.' And saith the same author further, 'Let our works be never so small, servile, womanish, yet let but this title be added, the word of the Lord, and then they will be all glorious, yea, such as shall remain to all eternity.' O sirs, all our works and services must be wrought from God, for God, in God, and according to God, or else they will be but splendida peccata, glistening sins. Well, the more spiritual and internal the principles, motives, and considerations are that carries a Christian on in religious duties, the greater measure of holiness hath that Christian arrived to. But,

[9.] Ninthly, The more solid, precise, exact, and accurate a Christian is in religious duties and services, the greater measure of holiness that Christian hath attained to; and the more any Christian grows in holiness, the more spiritual, the more savoury, the more exact and accurate he will grow in all his religious services and performances. The more a Christian's heart is endeared to religious duties, and the more his heart is affected with the heavenly nature of religious duties, and the more easily, the more holily, the more freely, and the more spiritually he performs religious duties, the more he is thriven and grown in holiness. A young carpenter gives more blows, and makes more noise and chips than an old experienced workman doth, but the old experienced workman doth his work more solidly, more exactly, and more accurately than the young carpenter doth; so many young Christians, that are but newly entered into the trade of Christianity, and that are raised up but to a very small degree of sanctity, these may multiply duties upon duties, these may abound in religious performances, these may be much in adding of service to service; but yet the aged and experienced Christian in grace and holiness doth duties more solidly, more spiritually, more exactly, and more accurately than the young Christian doth. We must never judge of an eminency in holiness by the number or multitude of our duties, but by the seriousness, the graciousness, the solidness, the spiritualness, the holiness, the heavenliness, and the accurateness of our hearts in duties. A young musician may play longer and more quick and nimble upon an instrument than an old musician can, but yet the old musician plays with more art, accurateness, skill, judgment, and understanding than a young musician doth. So young Christians in grace and holiness may hold out longer, and be quicker and nimbler in religious duties, than others that are more aged in grace and holiness; but yet they that are aged in grace and holiness do perform religious duties with more spiritual art and accurateness, and with more divine skill, judgment, and understanding than they do in whom the spring of holiness runs low. A young scholar may run over more paper, and write more paper, and make more letters than his master doth, but yet his master writes more understandingly, exactly, and accurately than he doth. So many young converts may run over more duties than others, and yet others may perform duties

more understandingly, and more exactly, and more accurately than they do. Let the duty be never so short, yet if there be much spiritualness, holiness, brokenness, seriousness, and accurateness in it, it will carry all before it, it will win the blessing and obtain the crown, when the longest duties, wherein there is no such frame nor temper of spirit, shall not prevail with God at all, Zec 7:4-6; Isa 58:1-6. It argues a very great measure of holiness when the soul is habitually carried on in religious duties with much solidness, seriousness, spiritualness, exactness, and accurateness. But,

[10.] Tenthly, The more any man makes it his great business and work, in all his duties, ways, and walkings, to approve himself to God, and to be accepted of God, the greater height of holiness that man hath attained to, Jer 12:3; Psa 17:2. David was a man of great holiness; and how studious and industrious he was to approve his heart to the Lord you may see in that Psa 139:23-24, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' The psalmist knew that God had an eye upon him, both at home and abroad, both at bed and at board, both in public and in private, both in his family and in his closet; he knew that God had an eye in every corner of his house, and in every corner of his heart, and therefore he appeals to God, and he approves his heart to God, and nobly ventures upon the trial of God, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart,' &c. This frequent repetition and doubling of words, 'Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts,' &c., doth not only note the earnestness and seriousness of David's spirit in prayer, but also the soundness, the uprightness, the plainness, and the unfeignedness of David's heart, in that he was very willing and ready to submit himself to the search, trial, examination, and approbation of God. And so Peter, that great apostle of the Gentiles,² makes it his great business to approve himself to Christ thrice together, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, Lord, thou that knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' John 21:15-17. Christ best knew the reality and sincerity of Peter's love, and therefore Peter appeals to him, as to a judge that would be sure to judge righteous judgment, 'Thou knowest that I love thee.' And so the apostle Paul, speaking in the name of his fellow-apostles, saith, 'Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him,' 2Co 5:9. The Greek word that is here rendered labour, is a very emphatical word, [φιλοτιμουμεθα.] It signifies to labour and endeavour with all earnestness and might, to endeavour with a high and holy ambition, to be approved of by God, and to be accepted of God, judging it to be the greatest honour and the most desirable happiness in all the world to be graciously owned, approved, and accepted of the Lord. As ambitious, industrious, and laborious as Haman was to be highly accepted with king Ahasuerus, yet he was not more ambitious to be accepted with the king, than the apostles were ambitious to be accepted of the King of kings. O sirs, when in every sermon you hear, and in every prayer you make, and in every fast you keep, and in every action you do, and in every way that you walk, and in every mercy that you enjoy, and in every cross that you bear, &c., you make it your great business and work to approve yourselves to the Lord, and that though the world should discountenance you, and friends hate you, and near and dear relations reject you, that yet you may find blessed acceptance with God, this argues holiness to be upon the throne. When in all your dealings and tradings with God you make it your heaven to approve yourselves to God, and when in all your transactions with men you make it your happiness to approve yourselves to God, it is an argument that the springs of holiness are risen high in your souls. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, The more a man lives by the rule of expediency, as well as by the rule of lawfulness, the greater measure of holiness that person hath attained to, John 16:7; 2Co 8:10. Weak holiness hath only an eye upon the rule of lawfulness, but raised holiness hath one eye upon the rule of lawfulness, and the other upon the rule of expediency. Weak holiness saith, Oh, this is lawful, and that is lawful! Oh, but faith-raised holiness, is it expedient? is it expedient as well as lawful? That angelical apostle, Paul, had still his eye upon the law of expediency: 1Co 6:12, 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.' And so 1Co 10:23, 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.' And so in that 2Co 12:1, 'It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory.' Many things may be lawful, that yet may be very inexpedient for our place, state, calling, and condition in the world. It was lawful for the apostle to eat meat, but it was not expedient for him to eat meat; when his eating of meat would make his weak brother to offend, or grieve, or stumble, or fall, Rom 14:21. And therefore he resolves that, rather than he will eat meat to offend, he will never eat meat whilst the world stands, 1Co 8:13. The more unchangeably resolved any person is to eye the rule of expediency, and to live by the rule of expediency, the greater measure of holiness that person hath certainly attained to. The streams of holiness runs low in that Christian's heart, that hath two eyes to behold the rule of lawfulness, but never an eye to see the rule of expediency. It argues a very great height of holiness for a man to make as much conscience of living by the rule of expediency, as he doth of living by the rule of lawfulness. For a man to be often a-looking over his natural actions, his moral actions, and his religious actions, and to be still a-putting this question to himself, O my soul! dost thou eye what is expedient? dost thou eye as well what is expedient as what is lawful? such a frame and temper of spirit speaks out much of Christ and holiness within. Oh the sins! oh the sorrows! oh the shame! oh the reproach! oh the troubles! oh the travails! oh the trials, &c., that might have been prevented, had the law, had the rule of expediency been more minded and followed by Christians in these days, &c. But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, The more a man can deny himself, when he hath an opportunity, power, and authority to raise himself, to greaten himself, to seek himself, and to lift up himself, the greater measure of holiness that man hath attained to. Providence often puts many a rare and fair opportunity into Moses his hand, whereby he might have raised himself, and have greatened himself in the world, and yet then, even then, he denies himself; and Nehemiah was a man of the same mind and mettle. He stood upon the advantage ground, to have greatened himself, and to have lifted up himself as others had done before him; but instead of this he lessens himself, he denies himself, he degrades himself, and being of a very noble, generous, public spirit, he turns his back upon his own worldly interest, and keeps a very free and bountiful table, upon the account of his own particular revenue, and not upon the account of a public purse. And so Daniel was one in spirit with the former: Dan 1:8-11, 'When God had brought him into high favour with the prince of the eunuchs, and given him a great deal of heart-room there, yet upon no terms would he defile himself with the king's meat, or comply with the requests of the prince of the eunuchs. It argues a great deal of holiness for a man to deny his temporal self, to dethrone his temporal self, when he stands upon the advantage ground to advance his temporal self, and to throne his temporal self in the world, Rev 4:10-11.

I have read of Trajan the emperor, how he sent Eustochius, one of his chieftest captains, against the barbarians, who having vanquished them, returned home. The emperor being very joyful at this good news goes to meet him, and brings him gloriously into the city. Now Eustochius being high in the emperor's favour, it was but ask and have, speak and speed; but on this very day of pomp, triumph, and glory, he chose rather to suffer the martyrdom of himself, his wife, and children, than with the emperor to offer sacrifice to Apollo; and so denies himself, and all his present pomp and glory, when he might greatly have enriched himself and advanced himself. Nothing speaks out greater measures of holiness, than for a man to deny himself when he may seek himself, and exalt himself if he pleases.

I have read of a godly man, who being sorely tempted by Satan, was much in duty; to whom Satan said, Why takest thou this pains? thou dost watch, and fast, and pray, and abstainest from the sins of the times. But, O man! what dost thou more than I do? art thou no drunkard? no more am I; art thou no adulterer? no more am I; dost thou watch? why, let me tell thee, I never slept; dost thou fast? why, I never ate nor drank; what dost thou more than I do? Why, I will tell thee, Satan, said the holy man, I pray, I serve the Lord, nay, more than all this, I deny myself: Nay, then, saith Satan, thou goest beyond me, for I am proud, and I exalt myself, and so vanished. Oh the excellency of self-denial! and oh the holiness and the happiness of that man that can deny himself, that can debase himself, that can even trample upon himself, when he hath power and authority in his own hand to greaten himself and to exalt himself! Power and authority will try what mettle men are made of. Ah, how many have there been among us of late years, who, when they have had no power nor authority in their hands to help themselves, have seemed to be great deniers of themselves; but no sooner had they power and authority in their hands, but ah, what self-love, what self-interest, what self-seeking, and what self-exalting was to be found amongst them! Oh, how have many among them, instead of loving God to the contempt of themselves, loved themselves to the contempt of God! and who, instead of debasing themselves that they might exalt God, have debased God that they might exalt themselves, and who, instead of losing themselves that they might find God, have lost God that they might find themselves.

These put me in mind of the abbot in Melanchthon, who lived strictly, and looked demurely, and walked humbly, so long as he was but a monk, but when, by his seeming sanctity and humility, he had got to be abbot, he grew most intolerable proud and insolent, &c., and being asked the reason of it, he confessed that his former lowly looks was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey. How many such abbots we have had amongst us, you all know. Ah, how rare is it to find a man to deny himself, when he is advantaged to seek himself. Such a man is worth gold, but this iron age affords few such golden men. Where this frame of spirit is, there the streams of holiness runs deep. And thus much for this use of trial and examination. And so I come now to the last use of this doctrine, and that is for comfort and consolation to all those that have this real holiness, without which there is no happiness. O sirs! open wide the everlasting doors of your souls, that not a river, but a sea of joy and comfort may flow in upon you. For,

[1.] First, Know for your comfort, that real holiness is the seal of your eternal election. Some are elected to glorious offices in this world, others are elected to eternal glory in the other world. Judas was chosen to be an apostle on earth, but not to be a saint in heaven, John 6:70; but the Thessalonians were elected to eternal glory in heaven, though they were not chosen to any glorious offices here on earth, 1Th 1:4. It may be thou art a poor creature, that never wast, nor

never art like to be, elected to any noble or honourable employments, either in church or state. Oh, but if thou art a holy person, then know for thy everlasting comfort, that thy real holiness is a real seal of thine eternal election. It is the counterpane, as it were, of all that gracious love, good-will, and eternal favour that God bears unto thee: Eph 1:4, 'He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy.' God did not choose us either because we were holy, or because he did foresee that in time we would be holy, but he chose us to that very end that we should be holy. Look, as Esther was first chosen out among the virgins, Est 1:1-22, and then purified and decked with rich and royal ornaments and garments, before she was brought into the presence of the king: so God first chooses poor sinners, and then he purifies them, and adorns them with the rich and glorious garments of grace and holiness, Psa 45:13, that so they may be meet and fit to enter into his royal presence: 1Th 1:4, 'Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.' 1Th 1:5, 'For our gospel came not unto you in word only; but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.' 1Th 1:9, 'And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.' When the gospel comes in power and in the Holy Ghost, and turns persons from idols to serve the living God, it is a clear and evident sign of their election. Real sanctification is a sure evidence, a fair copy of a man's election. Look, as the pattern is known by the picture, and the cause by the effect; so election is known by real sanctification. A Christian need never put himself to the charge of making a ladder to climb up to heaven, to search the records of glory, to see whether his name is written in the book of life, in the book of election or no, but rather make a strict and diligent inquiry whether he be really and thoroughly sanctified or no; for where there is real sanctification, there the glorious image of God's election is in the golden characters stamped upon the soul. A man may have his name set down in the chronicles, yet lost; wrought in durable marble, yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a Colossus, yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates, yet go to hell; written in the front of his own house, yet another come to possess it. All these are but writings in the dust, or upon the waters, where the characters perish so soon as they are made; they no more prove a man happy than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate happy because his name was written in the creed; but in real sanctification a man may see his name so written in the book of God's election, as that it shall remain legible to all eternity. But,

[2.] Secondly, If thou art a holy person, if thou hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that the Lord takes singular pleasure, delight, and complacency, both in thy holiness and in thy person: Psa 149:4-5, 'For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing aloud upon their beds.' The Hebrew word *rotseh*, that is here rendered pleasure, is from *ratsah*, that signifies pleasure, delight, complacency, content, &c. Oh! God takes singular pleasure, singular delight, singular complacency, and singular content in all his saints, in all his sanctified ones. Holiness is the express image of God, and therefore he cannot but take pleasure in it, and in all those that bear it: Zep 3:13, 'The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.' Well! here are glorious characters of their holiness; but what pleasure, what delight, &c., doth God take in these holy ones? Why, certainly very much, as you may see in Zep 3:17, 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.' Look, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, Isa 62:4-5, so will the Lord rejoice over his holy ones; and look, what delight, complacency, and content the bridegroom takes in his bride, the same, yea, greater, God takes in all his sanctified ones. Yea, look, as a fond father joys over his

dear child that he carries in his arms, or dandles upon his knee with singing: so God will joy over all his holy ones, which are his fondlings, with singing; such is the singular delight, satisfaction, and content that he takes in them. Look, as the husbandman delights much in that ground that was once barren, but is now fruitful; and as the captain takes a great deal of pleasure in that soldier that once run from his colours, but is now returned, and fights valiantly and resolutely against all opposers and adversaries; and as the father takes a great deal of joy, content, and satisfaction in the return, reformation, and amendment of his prodigal son, Luk 15:1-32, even so a holy God is wonderfully delighted, pleased, enamoured, and even overjoyed, when such as brought forth nothing but the thorns and briers of wickedness, Heb 6:7-8, do now bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness and holiness, Heb 2:10; and when such as have run from Christ the captain of their salvation, and run from their profession, and run from their principles, and run almost from everything that is good, shall now return to the captain of their salvation, and fight it out most valiantly and resolutely against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and when such as have proved prodigals, and spent all that portion, all that stock, and all that treasure that they have been intrusted with, shall now break off their sins, and humble themselves, and reform their lives, and mend their ways; God is so infinitely pleased and delighted in these, that he records their names in heaven: Luk 10:20, 'Rejoice not in this, that the spirits are subjects unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' It is matter of the greatest joy in the world, for a man to have his name enrolled in heaven. Look, as it is the sinner's hell that his name is engrossed in the book of perdition, so it is the believer's heaven that his name is engrossed in the book of election.

I have read of a senator who, relating to his son the great honours that were assigned to some soldiers whose names were written in a certain book, whereupon the son was very importunate to see that book. His father shews him the outside, and it seemed so glorious that he earnestly desired him to open it. No, saith the father, by no means, for it is sealed by the council. Then saith the son, pray tell me if my name be written there: his father replies no; because all the names of those soldiers were kept secret in the breasts of the senators. The son, studying how he might get some satisfaction, desired his father to acquaint him with the merits of those soldiers whose names were written in that book. The father relates to him their noble achievements, and worthy acts of valour, wherewith they had eternized their names. Such are written, said he, and none but such must be written in this book. Whereupon the son, consulting with his own heart that he had no such trophies to shew, but had spent his time in courting of ladies, rather than in encountering of knights, and that he was better for a dance than for a march, and that he knew no drum but the tabret, nor no courage but to be drunk and rant; hereupon he presently retired himself, repented, entered into a combat with his own lusts and affections, and subdued them, and became temperate, continent, valiant, and virtuous. Now, when the soldiers came to receive their wreaths, their crowns, their honours, &c., he steps in and challenges a wreath, a crown for himself. But being asked upon what title his challenge was grounded, he answered, If honours be given to conquerors, then they must be given to me too, for I have gotten the noblest conquest of all. And it being demanded wherein, he answered, These have subdued strange foes, and conquered their outward enemies, but I have subdued myself, I have conquered the enemies that were in my own bosom. O sirs, there are no men's names written in the book of life but theirs who by grace and holiness have subdued and brought under their sinful selves, and who have conquered the corruptions that be in their own bosoms, that is, in respect of love and dominion. Many there be

who are exceeding inquisitive to know whether their names are written in heaven or no. I would say to such, there is no such way to know this as by your holiness. Hast thou broke off thy sins by sound repentance? Hath the gospel changed thy inside and thy outside? Hath it made thee a new creature, and turned thee from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ? &c. Then, without all peradventure, thy name is written in heaven, and thou art the person that hast the greatest cause in the world to joy and rejoice.

Again, the holy Christian is the best Christian in the world, nay, he is such a one 'of whom this world is not worthy,' and therefore God cannot but take singular pleasure and delight in him. Many there are which are accounted deep scholars, great linguists, profound philosophers, good grammarians, excellent mathematicians, sharp logicians, cunning politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, &c., but the truth is, he is the best grammarian that hath learned to speak the truth from his heart, and he is the best astronomer that hath his conversation in heaven, and he is the best musician that hath learnt practically to sing out the praises of God, and he is the best arithmetician that knows how to number his days, and he is the best read in ethics that every day grows holier and holier, and he is the best skilled in economics that trains up his family in the fear of the Lord, and he is the best politician that is as good at taking good counsel as he is at giving good counsel, and he is the best linguist that speaks the language of Canaan; and therefore God cannot but take the greatest content and satisfaction in such.

Again, the holy Christian is the only man for whom God hath wrought the greatest miracles. He can tell you that he was blind, but now God hath given him eyes to see sin to be the greatest evil, and Christ to be the choicest good. He can tell you that once he was so deaf, that though God called very often and very loud upon him, by his word and by his works, by his rods at home and by his judgments abroad, and by his Spirit and conscience that were still a-preaching in his bosom, sometimes life, sometimes death, sometimes heaven, and sometimes hell, yet he could not hear; but now God hath given him a hearing ear, so that now he can with delight hear the sweet music of the promises on the one hand; and with a holy trembling listen to the voice of divine threatenings on the other hand. He can tell you that once he was so dumb, that if he might have had the whole world he could not have spoke a good word for God, nor for his ways, nor for his people, nor for his ordinances, nor for any of his concernments in the world. Oh! but now his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, Psa 45:1, and he is never better than when he is a-speaking either of God, or for God and his concernments. Now he can contend for the faith, and speak for saints, and plead for ordinances, and though in some cases he may want power to act for God, yet he never wants a tongue to speak for God. The spouse's lips drop honeycombs, in that Song of Solomon 4:11; 'And the tongue of the just is as choice silver,' in that Pro 10:20; yea, his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinable, in that Pro 12:18. He can tell you that once he was so lame, that he was not able to move one foot heavenwards or Christ-wards, or holiness-wards, &c.; but now his feet delights, not only to go, but to run in all the ways of God's commands, Psa 119:32. Yea, he can tell you that once he was dead, as to all his soul-concernments, but now he is alive, and the life that he leads in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, that hath loved him and given himself for him, Gal 2:20. It was by a miracle that the river Jordan was driven back, and it is no less a miracle to see a sinner that was accustomed to do evil, habituated now to do good. That the tide of sin, which before did run so strong, should be so easily turned, that the sinner which a little before was sailing hellward, and wanted neither wind nor tide to carry him thither, should now on a sudden

alter his course, and tack about for heaven—what a miracle is this! To see the earthly man become heavenly, a carnal man become spiritual, a loose man become precise, a proud man become humble, a covetous man become liberal, and a froward man become meek, &c., is to behold no less than miracles. To see a sinner move cross and contrary to himself in the ways of Christ and holiness, should be as wonderful in our eyes, as to see the sun go backward, or the earth to fly upward, or the dead to raise themselves, or the bowl to run contrary to its own bias. Now how can God but take infinite delight and pleasure in his holy ones, considering the many miracles that he hath wrought both in them and for them?

Again, there are no persons under heaven that take any real pleasure, delight, content, and satisfaction in God, but those that are holy, Psa 4:6-7. The worldling takes pleasure and delight in his bags, and the ambitious man in his honours, and the voluptuous man in his pleasures, and the malicious man in his revenge, and the envious man in the harms that befalls others, and the drunkard in his cups, and the adulterer in his harlots, and the gamester in his shifts and tricks, and the player in his fopperies, fooleries, and mockeries. It is only the holy man that takes pleasure and delight in God, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. To delight and take pleasure in God, is a work too high, too hard, too spiritual, and too noble for any but holy persons. There are none headed, nor hearted, nor spirited, nor anointed, nor principled, for taking pleasure in God, but holy ones. Abraham did not take more pleasure in his Isaac, nor Jacob did not take more delight in his Joseph, nor David did not take more satisfaction in his Absalom, nor Jonah did not take more content in his gourd, than a holy man, when he is himself, takes pleasure, delight, satisfaction, and content in God; and therefore how can God but take pleasure and delight in him? Shall the child take delight in the father, and shall not the father delight again in the child? and shall the wife take pleasure and satisfaction in the husband, and shall not the husband take pleasure and satisfaction again in her? Look, as God hates them that hate him, so he takes pleasure in them that take pleasure in him. Now what a singular cordial and comfort is this to all God's holy ones, that God takes singular pleasure, delight, satisfaction, and content in them. What though the world hate you, and scorn you, and despise you, and prefer every Barabbas and Judas before you, yet cheer up your spirits with this cordial, and warm your hearts at this fire, that God takes singular pleasure and delight in you. What cares the child though others slight him, so long as his father at home delights in him; and what cares the wife though others despise her, as long as her husband at home honours her, and takes pleasure in her; and what cares the innocent person though the malefactor at the bar rails upon him, as long as the judge upon the bench acquits him; and what should a Christian care though all the world should abhor him, as long as the Lord takes singular pleasure and delight in him? But,

[3.] Thirdly, if thou art a holy person, if thou hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that thy real holiness is a substantial evidence of thy real union with Christ. All true holiness is the immediate fruit of our real union with Christ. Upon our union with Christ, Christ is made not only wisdom, righteousness, and redemption, but he is also made sanctification to us, 1Co 1:30. Christ and a holy person are one, as father and son are one, and they are one, as the vine and the branches are one, and they are one, as head and members are one; and they are one, as the foundation and the building are one; and they are one as husband and wife are one, and that which speaks out their oneness, their union, is their holiness. He that is in Christ is a new creature, 2Co 5:17. He that is ingrafted into Christ, he that is initiated

into Christ, he that is united unto Christ, he is a new creature; he hath a new head, a new heart, a new lip, a new life, a new spirit, new principles, and new ends; he can truly say with that convert, Ego non sum ego: I am not the man that I was; of a lion, holiness hath made me a lamb; of a wolf, holiness hath made me a sheep; of a raven, holiness hath made me a dove, &c. And what doth all this speak out but a man's being in Christ, but a man's union with Christ? Renovation speaks out union, and union speaks out renovation. Renewing by Christ speaks out the soul's in-being in Christ, and the soul's in-being in Christ speaks out the soul's renewing by Christ. Look, as there could be no depravation but from our union with the first Adam, so there can be no renovation but through our union with the second Adam, Col 3:10. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that God will certainly bless all thy blessings to thee, and he will bless every estate and condition to thee, Psa 34:12-14. Most men have many blessings, but it is only the holy man that hath his blessings blest unto him: Gen 22:17, 'In blessing I will bless thee,' saith God to holy Abraham, i.e., I will bless thy blessings to thee. The holy person is in covenant with a holy God, and therefore all the blessings of the covenant are his. All they that partake of the holiness of the covenant, they shall certainly partake of the blessings of the covenant. Now this is one of the blessings of the covenant, that all our blessings shall be blessed unto us. O Christian! all thy right hand blessings shall be blessed unto thee, and all thy left hand blessings shall be blessed unto thee; all the blessings of the upper springs shall be blessed unto thee, and all the blessings of the lower springs shall be blessed unto thee; and all the blessings of the throne shall be blessed unto thee, and all the blessings of the footstool shall be blessed unto thee. And as all thy blessings shall be blessed unto thee, so every estate and every condition shall be blessed unto thee; thou shalt be blessed in health, and blessed in sickness; blessed in strength, and blessed in weakness; blessed in wealth, and blessed in want; blessed in honour, and blessed in dishonour; blessed in life, and blessed in death; thou shalt be blessed at home, and blessed abroad; blessed at board, and blessed at bed; blessed lying down, and blessed rising up; blessed in liberty, and blessed in bonds. Look, as all the blessings of a wicked man are cursed unto him; and as all the relations of a wicked man are cursed unto him, and as all estates and conditions that are incident to a wicked man are cursed unto him; so all the blessings of a holy man are blessed unto him, and all the relations of a holy man are blessed unto him, and all estates and conditions that are incident to a holy man are blessed unto him.² Isaac tills the ground, and sows his seed, and God blesses him with a hundredfold, Gen 26:12; and Cain tills the ground, and sows his seed, but the earth is cursed to him, and commanded not to yield to him her strength, Gen 4:12. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that thy holiness is a glorious witness and evidence of thy effectual vocation: 1Pe 1:15, 'As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' Many are externally called that are not internally called, and many are ineffectually called that are not effectually called, 1Pe 2:9. But now, real holiness, that speaks out an internal call, an effectual call, a call out of darkness into marvellous light, it speaks out such a call as makes sinners saints, slaves sons, enemies friends, and strangers favourites. As Joseph, a stranger, was called out of a prison, a dungeon, and made a very great favourite in Pharaoh's court, Gen 41:1-57; so real holiness is a glorious witness and evidence that you are effectually

called out of the prison of sin, and the dungeon of wrath, and made a favourite to the King of glory, 2Ti 1:9; 1Pe 5:10; Gal 4:6. The author of this call is a holy God. Our holy calling depends upon the purpose of God, the power of God, and the grace and good pleasure of God. The means of our holy calling are the Spirit of God and the word of God; and the ends of our calling are holiness and the glory of God. O sirs, you are not called upon the account of your parents' faith or nobility, nor upon the account of any intrinsecal virtues in you, nor upon the account of any extrinsecal services done by you, but upon the account of God's peculiar election and particular vocation; and therefore by holiness make good the honour of your high calling. And if any should object against you the meanness of your birth and outward calling, put them in mind of your high and holy calling, and ask them what they think of Lazarus, that is now asleep in Abraham's bosom. And if others should object against you your former wickedness, and cast your sins as dirt and dung in your faces, let them know that St Paul can tell them from heaven, that though once he was a wretched blasphemer, and a bloody persecutor, that yet now he is a glorious saint in heaven. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast this real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that thy holiness is a blessed evidence of thy adoption and sonship, John 1:12; Rom 8:17. If thou art a holy person, then of a child of wrath thou art become a child of God, a child of love; and of an heir of hell thou art become an heir of heaven; and of a slave thou art become a son: Gal 4:4-5, Gal 4:7, 'But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son:' Rom 8:14, 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' The leadings of the Spirit are all holy leadings, and there are none that are the sons of God but such as are under the holy leadings of the Spirit of God: Php 2:15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' There are none worthy of this title of honour—viz., the sons of God—but such who in the main of their lives and conversations are blameless and harmless, without rebuke, and that are as shining lights in the world.

There are two ways whereby we may know fire to be real fire, and that differences real fire from painted fire, or from imaginary fire; the first is by the heat of it, and the other is by the flame of it. Now, though sometimes it so falls out that the fire do not flame, yet at that very time you may know it to be real fire by the heat it gives. So there are two ways of knowing our adoption; the first is by the spirit of adoption, crying 'Abba! Father! in our hearts,' Gal 4:6; and the other is by our sanctification and holiness, Rom 8:16. Now, though sometimes it may so fall out that the flame, the witness of the spirit of adoption, may be wanting, yet the heat of sanctification and holiness remains, and we may have recourse to this fire, and warm our hearts at it, and sit down satisfied and assured of our adoption; for as fire may be known to be fire by its heat, though it want a flame; so though the spirit of adoption do not witness our adoption to us, yet we may know our adoption by our real sanctification and holiness. Every holy person is a high-born person, for as his divine birth, so his divine adoption is high, very high, exceeding high, yea even as high as heaven itself, John 3:5, John 3:8, and John 1:12-13. It is a very high honour to be the son of a king, yea to be the son-in-law of a king, for so David reckoned it: 1Sa 18:23-24, 'Seemeth it' (saith he to Saul's servant) 'a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am vile and lightly esteemed?' Oh then what an honour it is to be the son of God, to be the son of the King of kings, and Lord of

lords! Rev 1:6. It is a very high honour to be God's servant, and so David accounted it, as you may see in that 2Sa 7:5, 2Sa 7:8. And so did Theodosius the emperor, and Constantine the Great, and many others account it. Oh then what an honour must it be to be God's son! The blessed apostle cannot speak of this high privilege but with great admiration; as you may see in that 1Jn 3:1, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.' It is an infinite condescension in God, to honour us with the title of sons, and therefore we should never think of it, nor never speak of it, but with much admiration. O sirs! what matter of admiration is this, that the great and glorious God, who hath many millions of glorious angels waiting on him, that he should look upon all holy persons as his sons, and that he should love them as sons, and delight in them as sons, and clothe them as sons, and feed them as sons, and protect them as sons, and stand by them as sons, and lay up for them as sons, and lay out himself for them as sons, that they that have not deserved a smile from God, a good word from God, a bit of bread from God, or a good look from God, should be made the sons of God? What manner of love is this, that they that have so highly provoked God, that they that have walked so cross and contrary to God, that they that were so exceeding unlike to God, that they that have preferred every lust, and every toy and vanity before God, that they that have fought many years under Satan's banner against God, that they that have refused all the offers of mercy that hath been made by God, that they that have deserved to be reprobated by God, to be damned by God, and to be thrown to hell by God, that these should be made the sons of God? Oh stand and wonder! oh stand and admire at the freeness of grace, and at the riches of grace! But,

[7.] Seventhly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that thou art an undoubted heir of everlasting glory: Rom 8:29-30, 'For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son' (that is, in holiness,) 'that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified.' Holiness is a most sure earnest and pawn of glory: 2Th 2:13, 'God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit;' Mat 5:8, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' 1Jn 3:2-3, 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him' (that is, in glory) 'for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.' He that hath a real hope, a lively hope, of being like to Christ in glory, and of reigning with Christ in heaven, will set roundly upon the work of self-purifying. There is no hope to that hope that runs out into holiness, and that leads the soul on to the highest degrees of purification, and that enables a man to set up Christ's purity as the most perfect pattern and exact copy for his imitation: Tit 3:4-7, 'But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being Justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' Holiness is an infallible forerunner of glory; it is the firstfruits of that eternal happiness and blessedness that God hath laid up for his children in the highest heavens. And oh, what cause of joy and gladness should this be to every holy heart! What though thou shouldst never have a good day more on earth; what though all the springs of comfort should be dried up on thy right hand and on thy left hand; what though God should never smile on thee more in this world; what though the remaining part of thy life should be filled up with crosses, losses, troubles, and trials; what though God should let Satan

loose to tempt thee, and wicked men grow strong to oppress thee, and friends turn enemies to grieve thee; yea, what if thou shouldst go to thy grave with tears in thy eyes, and with sorrow in thy heart; yet as long as thou art sure that thou art an heir of glory, and that all the happiness of heaven is thine, and that thy crown is safe, and that thou shalt be for ever filled and satisfied with those everlasting pleasures and delights that be at God's right hand, Psa 16:11; thou hast cause to joy and rejoice in the midst of all thy sorrows and sufferings, yea, to glory and triumph in the hopes and expectations of a kingdom that shakes not, of a crown that withers not, of riches that corrupt not, and of an inheritance that fadeth not away. O sirs! it is not all the silks of Persia, nor all the spices of Egypt, nor all the gold of Ophir, nor all the treasures of both Indies, nor all the crowns and sceptres in the world, no, nor yet the worth of ten thousand worlds, that are to be compared with that glory that is treasured up for all God's holy ones. They have an inheritance reserved in heaven for them that cannot be moth-eaten, nor spoiled by hostile invasion, nor wrung from them by power, nor won from them by law, nor mortgaged for debt, nor impaired by public calamity, nor plundered by thieves and robbers, nor changed by kings or parliaments, no, nor violated by death itself; and therefore, what infinite cause of joy and rejoicing have all such that are interested in such an inheritance, and in such a perfect happiness and complete blessedness that is reserved in heaven for all God's holy ones? Oh, what a singular comfort must this be to a Christian, in the midst of all his miseries and distresses, when he is able to look upon God, and say, This 'God is my God for ever and ever, and he shall be my guide to glory,' Psa 73:24; and when he is able to look up to heaven and say, This is my inheritance; yea, when he is able to look upon all the glory and happiness of another world, and to say, All this glory and happiness is mine, for I have that holiness that is the earnest of it, the pawn of it, and the firstfruits of it in my own soul. It was an observable saying of Macarius; 'They that are anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness,' saith he, 'have received a sign of that incorruptible kingdom, to wit, God's Spirit, for an earnest, they are the secretaries of the heavenly king, and relying confidently upon the Almighty, they enter into his palace, where the angels and the spirits of holy men are, although they be yet in this world; for although they be not yet come to the entire inheritance, which is prepared for them in that world, yet they are most sure of it by that pledge which they have newly received, as sure as if they were already crowned, and had the key of the kingdom in their own possession.

It was a very sweet and comfortable speech which the emperor used to Galba in his childhood and minority, when he took him by the chin and said, Tu Galba, &c., Thou Galba shalt one day sit upon a throne; so it is very sweet and comfortable for the saints to consider, that how mean and contemptible soever they may be in the eyes of the world, that yet there is a day a-coming when they shall sit upon a throne, and be crowned with glory, and reign with Christ to all eternity. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that all things shall be sanctified unto thee: Tit 1:15, 'Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.' When a man's heart is once sanctified, then all things are sanctified to him; when a man's spirit and way is clean and pure, then all things are clean and pure to him. O sirs! this is so great and so glorious a privilege, to have all things sanctified to us, that it is more worth than a world, yea, than many worlds. Next to a man's interest in Christ, he cannot beg a greater mercy than this, that all things may be sanctified to him—that is, that all things may so work as to make him more and more holy, that every cross may make him more

holy, and that every comfort may make him more holy; that every mercy may make him more holy, and that every misery may make him more holy; that every ordinance may make him more holy, and that every providence may make him more holy; that every affliction at home may make him more holy, and that every judgment abroad may make him more holy. Every condition is sweet when it is sanctified to us; sickness is as sweet as health when it is sanctified to us, and weakness is as sweet as strength when it is sanctified to us, and poverty is as sweet as riches when it is sanctified to us, and disgrace is as sweet as honour when it is sanctified to us, and bonds are as sweet as liberty when they are sanctified to us, and death is as sweet as life when it is sanctified to us. Look, as no condition can be a happy condition that is not a sanctified condition, so no condition can be a miserable condition that is a sanctified condition. Now this is only the holy man's privilege, the holy man's mercy, to have every estate and every condition sanctified unto him; and this indeed is the cream and crown of all our mercies to have them sanctified unto us, ay, and every bitter will be sweet, yea very sweet, when it is sanctified unto us. What though thy mercies, O Christian, are fewer than others', and lesser than others', and leaner than others', and shorter than others', yet thou hast no reason to complain, as long as thy mercies are sanctified mercies; and what though thy trials are greater than others', and thy burden is heavier than others', and thy sorrows are deeper than others', and thy crosses comes thicker than others', yet thou hast no cause to complain, as long as they are sanctified. Art thou a holy person? Oh then remember for thy comfort that every bit of bread thou eatest is sanctified, and every draught of beer thou drinkest is sanctified, and every suit of clothes thou wearest is sanctified; the beds thou liest on are sanctified, and the stools thou sittest on are sanctified; the very air thou breathest in is sanctified, and the very ground thou treadest on is sanctified; every penny in thy purse is sanctified, and every pound in thy shop is sanctified; whatsoever thou hast at home is sanctified, and whatever thou hast abroad is sanctified. And oh! how should the sense of these things sweeten all thy bitters, and turn thy hell into heaven, and wipe all tears from thy eyes, and turn thy sighing into singing, and thy mourning into rejoicing, &c. But,

[9.] Ninthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that thou art a person very high in favour with God, thou art one of his peculiar ones: Deu 14:1, 'Ye are the children of the Lord your God, ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead,' (as those heathens that have no hope, 1Th 4:13.) 'For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people to himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.' All God's holy ones are his peculiar ones, God hath a peculiar respect for their persons: Dan 9:23, 'O Daniel! thou art greatly beloved,' or as the Hebrew word, chamudoth, signifies, thou art a man of desires. Now Daniel is called a man of desires, because the desires of God run out strongly after him, as one that was singularly beloved of him, and as one that was highly in favour with him. And as God hath a peculiar respect for their persons, so he hath a peculiar respect for their duties and services: Pro 15:8, 'The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight.' God takes more delight to hear the prayers of the upright, and to grant the prayers of the upright, than the upright takes delight to pray. How burdensome and troublesome soever their prayers may be to others, yet they are still delightful to God; but more of this in the next particular. And as God hath a peculiar respect for their services, so he hath a peculiar respect for their tears, for he puts them into his bottle, Psa 56:8; and as he hath a peculiar respect for their tears, so he hath a peculiar respect for their names, for he writes them in his book, Luk 10:20; and

as he hath a peculiar respect for their names, so he hath a peculiar respect for their blood, Psa 116:15; and this Cain found by woeful experience, from the cry of his brother's blood. O sirs! God by making of you holy, hath made you like himself, like his Son, like his Spirit, and like his most glorious angels, which excel in strength; and what doth this speak out but God's peculiar favour? God makes many rich, and many great, and many honourable, and many mighty, and many wise, and many noble, and many beautiful, and many successful, whom he will never make holy; in making of you holy, God hath made you spiritually great, rich, honourable, wise, and beautiful, &c., Eph 1:3, and this speaks you out to be highly in the favour of God. Holiness is a singular fruit of God's special favour and love. God hath a common favour and love for all men, yea, for the worst of men; witness that common preservation, and common protection, and common provision, that he vouchsafeth to them; and God hath a special love and favour, and this runs out only to his holy ones, Eph 2:4-5. Holiness is a divine beam, a heavenly drop, a choice pledge of God's special favour and love. O sirs! though the world may slight you, and enemies revile you, and friends disfavour you, yet let this support you, let this rejoice you, that you are high in the favour of God. But,

[10.] Tenthly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort, that all thy duties and services are very pleasing, delightful, and acceptable to the Lord, Acts 10:4; Mal 3:3; 2Ti 2:21; and this roundly follows upon the former, for whenever a man's person comes to be accepted of God, and to be in favour with God, then all his services and sacrifices comes to be acceptable to God; Gen 4:5, 'And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering.' God had first a respect to his person in Christ, and then to his offering; and so his sacrifice was accepted for the man, and not the man for the sacrifice: Heb 11:4, 'By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.' God will always welcome the holy man into his presence, and he shall always have his ear at command, Isa 45:11; God will still be a-warming his heart, and a-cheering up his spirit, and a-satisfying of his soul, in meeting of him in all holy means, and in giving gracious answers to all his requests: Isa 66:5, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness; those that remember thee in thy ways:' Pro 21:8, 'The way of man,' that is, of unholy man, 'is froward and strange; but as for the pure, his work is right.' When God hath cleansed a man's heart, and sanctified his nature, then his work, his religious work, is right; it is then right in the eye of God, and in the account of God, and in estimation of God; and therefore his petitions are as soon granted as they are offered, Isa 65:24, and his requests performed as soon as they are mentioned: Psa 32:5, 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin, Selah.' Holy David had an inward purpose and resolution to confess his sin, but before he could do it God throws him his pardon; 'thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.' God loves to be beforehand with his people in acts of grace and favour. God's eye and his ear was in David's heart, before David's confession could be in his tongue. Oh the delight of God! Oh the pleasedness of God, with the duties and services of his holy ones! Psa 4:3, 'But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear, when I call upon him,' that is, the Lord will approve of my prayer, he will accept of my prayer, he will delight in my prayer, and he will answer my prayer when I call unto him; and what can the godly man desire more? Psa 61:1, 'Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer.' Aquinas saith that some read the words thus, Intende ad cantica mea, Attend unto my songs—and

so the words may be safely read, from the Hebrew word רָנָה, ranah, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful ditties in the ears of God. No mirth, no music can be so pleasing to us as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God, Song of Solomon 2:14 : Psalms 141:2, 'Let my prayer come before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.' What is more sweet, what is more pleasing, and what is more perfuming than incense? why, the prayers of the saints, as they are in the hands of a mediator, are as sweet and pleasing to God, as incense that is made up of the choicest and sweetest spices are sweet and pleasing unto us, Revelation 5:8, and Revelation 8:3-4 : 1 Peter 3:12, 'For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers;' or rather, as the Greek hath it, his ears are—δὲς ἡσιν ἀκούειν—to their prayers, that is, when their prayers are so faint and weak that they cannot reach to God, that they cannot travel as far as heaven, then God will come down to them, and lay his ears, as it were, unto their prayers! Oh, what matter of joy and comfort is this to all the holy seed, that God will graciously bow his ears to their prayers, when he turns his back with the greatest disdain and indignation upon the most costly sacrifices of the wicked. O you precious sons of Zion! that are daily lamenting and mourning over the weaknesses that cleaves to your best services, know for your comfort and joy, that though with Moses you can but stammer out a prayer, or with Hannah weep out a prayer, or with Hezekiah chatter out a prayer, or with Paul sigh and groan out a prayer, yet the Lord will own your prayers, and accept your prayers, and delight in your prayers. Oh, what a rare comfort is this for a Christian, to consider, that when he is under outward wants and inward distresses, that when he hath sickness upon his body, and reproach upon his name, and death knocking at his door, that in all these cases, and in all other cases, he may run to God as to a father, and tell God how it is with him, and when he hath done that, he may sit down satisfied and assured of audience and acceptance in heaven! O sirs! this is a privilege more worth than a thousand worlds, and had unsanctified persons as many kingdoms to give as they have hairs on their heads, they would give them all for an interest in this privilege, when guilt and wrath is upon their consciences, and when the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them, and when the terrors of death are round about them, and when the dreadful day of their account is every moment remembered by them. Oh! if it be so great a favour to have the ears of an earthly king at pleasure, what a transcendent favour must it be to have his ear at pleasure who is King of kings and Lord of lords! and yet this favour hath all his saints. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast that real holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort that Jesus Christ will certainly preserve thy holiness. Next to Christ, holiness is a Christian's choicest jewel, and this Christ will be sure to preserve. Self-preservation is natural to all creatures. Holiness is Christ's creature, Christ's image; and therefore he will certainly preserve it and maintain it,—Christ cannot neglect himself, he cannot be wanting to himself. Now holiness is himself; and therefore if there be but a spark of holiness in a dunghill of corruption, Christ will certainly own it, cherish it, and preserve it. He that is once really holy shall be for ever holy. Let the world, the flesh, and the devil, do what they can, the holy seed shall still remain in all God's sanctified ones. Though a holy man may fall strangely, sadly, frequently, foully, yet he shall never fall totally, he shall never fall finally, because that that holiness that is in him is a lasting, yea, an everlasting and abiding principle, that can never be destroyed or extirpated. A wicked person may be turned into a holy man, but a holy man can never be turned into a profane person again. A holy change is an unchangeable change; the state of

holiness is an unchangeable state. It is true the fallen angels quickly lost that stock of holiness that God had put into their hands; and Adam lost all his holiness upon the turn of a hand. He broke and proved a bankrupt almost as soon as God had set him up in paradise; but the state and condition of all the saints is a better and a safer state and condition than either the angels' or than Adam's was; and that partly because their state was mutable though perfect, but the state of the saints is an unchangeable state, though it be for the present an imperfect state; and partly because God put that stock of holiness that they had into their own hands, but now the saints' holiness is not a stock in their own hands but in Christ's hands; for not only their persons but their holiness is 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1Pe 1:5. As Christ is to manage our salvation for us, so he is to manage our grace and holiness for us; and therefore, as he will most certainly make sure the one, so he will as certainly preserve the other. Once a son, and for ever a son. Though the servant may be turned out of doors, yet the son abides in the house for ever, as Christ speaks, John 8:35. He that is once sanctified shall be for ever blessed.

Holiness is an abiding seed, an immortal seed. It is a royal gift, which being once given, shall never be taken away from him that hath it. I readily grant that the strength of holiness, and the lustre and shine of holiness, and the sense and feeling of holiness, and the comfort and sweet of holiness, and the lively stirrings and operations of holiness, may be somewhat abated and lessened in the soul; but the seed of holiness, the substance of holiness, always remains in a changed soul, Rom 11:29. There is always a divine fire, though sometimes it may be raked up under the ashes; there is always life and sap in the root, though there be neither leaves nor blossoms on the tree. It is true, the best of saints may have their spiritual autumn; and it is as true, that after their autumn there will certainly follow a spring of holiness. It is most certain that the truth and state of holiness remains under all a Christian's infirmities, darknesses, weaknesses, eclipses, clouds, failings, waverings, and wanderings; and the reasons are clear, because that great and glorious principle of holiness flows from God's unchangeable love, and is a fruit of the everlasting covenant, and the price of Christ's blood, and depends and hangs upon a perpetual union and communion with Christ, and is a sure pledge and earnest of a man's eternal enjoyment of Christ, and is always maintained and upheld by the everlasting arms of Christ, Deu 33:26-27; Gen 49:22-24. To say that the saints may fall totally and finally from all that grace and holiness they have, is to say, (1.) That the surety of the new covenant is grown very poor and weak, which is very little less than blasphemy, and quite contrary to that Heb 7:21-22. (2.) It is to say that the promises are yea and nay, quite contrary to what the apostle affirms in that 2Co 1:20. (3.) It is to say that the power of God is grown exceeding weak and contemptible, yea, it is to make sin and Satan stronger than God, which is quite contrary to the current of Scripture, 1Pe 1:5; John 10:27-31. (4.) It is to say that the decree of God is mutable, which is cross and contrary to the apostle in that 2Ti 2:19. (5.) It is to say that God's free, eternal, and everlasting love is become changeable and unconstant, which is expressly cross to that Jer 31:3; Mal 3:6; John 13:1, with many other scriptures; and therefore that Arminian principle is to be for ever detested and abhorred. But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, If thou art a holy person, if thou art one that hast that real holiness without which there is no happiness, then know for thy comfort that all things shall work together for thy good: Rom 8:28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.' All the afflictions, and all the temptations, and all

the desertions, and all the oppressions, and all the oppositions, and all the persecutions that befalls a godly man shall work for his good, Rev 2:10. Every cross, every loss, and every disease that befalls the holy man shall work for his good; every device, every snare, every method, every depth, every stratagem, and every enterprise of Satan against the holy man shall work for his good; they shall all help to make him more humble, more holy, more heavenly, more spiritual, more faithful, more fruitful, and more watchful, 2Co 12:9-10; every day of prosperity, and every night of adversity shall work for the holy man's good; every storm and every calm, every bitter and every sweet, every cross and every comfort, shall work for his good that is holy, Hos 2:5-7. When God gives a mercy, that shall work for his good; and when God takes away a mercy, that shall work for his good; when God gives him large commons, that shall work for his good; and when God cuts his commons short, that shall work for his good; yea, and all the falls and all the sins of the saints shall work for their good. As I get hurt by my graces, so I get good by my sins, said famous Mr Foxe. Oh the care, the fear, the watchfulness, the tenderness, the zeal, the revenge, that God raises in the souls of his saints by their very falls! 2Co 7:8-13. Oh the hatred, the indignation, and the detestation that God raises in the hearts of his children against sin, by their very falling into sin! Oh what love to Christ, what thankfulness for Christ, what admiration of Christ, what cleaving to Christ, what exalting of Christ, and what drawing from Christ, are saints led to by their very falls! Oh what exercise of grace, what increase of grace, what magnifying of grace, what liftings up of divine power, and what a high price are holy men led to set upon the precious blood of Christ, and all by their falls! It is the glory of God's holiness that he can turn spiritual diseases into holy remedies, and soul poisons into heavenly cordials; that he can prevent sin by sin, and cure falling by falling. One calls that Rom 8:28 the blind man's promise; and I may call it the lame man's promise that is holy, and the deaf man's promise that is holy, and the dumb man's promise that is holy, and the needy man's promise that is holy, and the sick man's promise that is holy, and the languishing man's promise that is holy, and the dying man's promise that is holy. Oh the comfort, oh the sweet, oh the content, oh the satisfaction that this promise hath afforded to many a precious saint, when other promises have not been at hand! O Christian, what though friends and relations frown upon thee, what though enemies are plotting and conspiring against thee, what though wants, like an armed man, are ready to break in upon thee, what though men rage and devils roar, what though sickness be in thy family, and death stands every day at thy elbow, yet there is no reason for thee to fear or faint, because all these things shall work for thy good. Yea, there is wonderful cause of joy and rejoicing in all the afflictions and tribulations that comes upon thee, considering that they shall all work for thy good. O Christians! I am afraid, I am afraid, that you do not run so often as you should to the breasts of this promise, nor draw that sweetness and comfort from it that it would yield, and that your several cases may require. And thus I have done with this use of comfort and consolation to all God's holy ones. You see what comfort, what consolation, yea, what strong consolation, waits upon all God's sanctified ones. I have been the longer upon this use, because the times require it, and the condition of God's people calls for the strongest cordials, and the choicest and the sweetest comforts. And now I have nothing to do but to lay down some positions concerning holiness, which may be of singular use for the preventing of some objections and mistakes, and for the giving of satisfaction, especially to such in whom the streams of holiness runs low, and who are still a-lamenting and mourning under the imperfections of their holiness, &c.

1. And the first position is this, Wherever real holiness is, it will appear, it will discover itself, it will shew itself, Eph 4:15-16. It is the very nature of grace and holiness to manifest itself, and therefore it is set forth in Scripture by the names of light, which shines abroad, Mat 5:16, and of ointment and perfume, which cannot be hid, Pro 27:9; Song of Solomon 3:6; of leaven and salt, which deriveth its own nature and relish upon a whole lump. And it is very observable, that when the Holy Ghost was given, he was given in tongues, fiery tongues, and with a rushing of a mighty wind, all of which have a quality of self-manifestation, and notifying of themselves to others, Acts 2:1-5.

Take a river that is dammed and stopped up, yet if the course of it be natural, and if it commonly runs downward, it will at length bear down all, and ride and run triumphantly over all that is in its way. So, though real holiness in a day of temptation, desertion, and affliction, &c., may seem to be dammed and stopped up, yet at length it will make its way through all, and over all, and shew itself in its native colours. Though fire for a time may lie hid under the ashes, yet at last it will flame forth, and shew itself to be fire. Holiness is a divine fire, and though in some cases it may for a time seem to be hid, it will at length break forth, and shew itself to be holiness. I have not faith enough to believe that that man was ever really holy, whose holiness is still under a bushel, or in a dark lantern. Look, as natural life cannot be so hid but that it will discover itself a hundred hundred ways, so holiness, which is a Christian's spiritual life, cannot be so hid but it will discover it a hundred hundred ways.

2. The second position is this, That holiness rises by degrees; it rises gradually in the souls of the saints. Though the first Adam was made a man, a holy man, yea, a man perfectly holy, and all at once, yet the holiness of all that is interested in the second Adam rises by degrees. It is true, in the creation of the world all the creatures were made in their full and perfect growth and strength at once; but in the new creation, holiness, which is God's own creature, is carried on by degrees, Luk 2:52. Look, as Christ increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man by degrees, so that babe of grace, holiness, increases in the soul by degrees. Look, as the seed which is sown in the furrows of the earth first springs into a blade, and then into an ear, and then into ripe corn, Mat 13:23; Mark 4:28; so that immortal seed, holiness, which is sown in the furrows of a Christian's soul, springs and grows by degrees. Look, as the waters in the sanctuary rise first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, then to the chin, and then to a river that was not passable, Eze 47:3-5; so holiness rises higher and higher in the soul by degrees. Look, as the morning light shines more and more unto the perfect day, Pro 4:18; so the light of holiness shines more and more clear, and more and more bright, until all darkness and imperfection be swallowed up in perfection. Look, as the body of a man grows and increases by degrees in stature and strength, till it comes to its full growth and perfection, Eph 4:16; so grace and holiness will grow and increase by degrees, till grace be turned into glory, till holiness be turned into happiness. Though the ocean be full, yet the bottle cannot be filled but by degrees. We are poor narrow-mouthed bottles, and therefore what we take in of holiness must be by degrees. Our incapacity is so great, that at present we are noways able to take in a fulness of holiness; and therefore God drops in now a drop and then a drop, now a little and then a little, as we are able to take it in. And, indeed, to difference the state of grace from the state of glory, the state of holiness from the state of happiness, it is necessary that holiness should be communicated to us by degrees. An absolute fulness of holiness will make an absolute fulness of happiness. When our holiness is perfect, our happiness shall be perfect; and if this were attainable on earth, there would

be but little reason for men to long to be in heaven.

3. The third position is this, That there is a great deal of preciousness in the least degree of holiness. For,

[1.] It is the special work of the Holy Spirit; and this I have shewed you already at large; and therefore it must needs be precious.

[2.] It is a part of the divine nature; it is a beam of God, a spark of glory, and therefore it must needs be precious.

[3.] There are many choice and special promises that are made over to the least degrees of holiness, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together; and therefore the least degree of holiness is very precious.

[4.] It gives a man a right to precious privileges, and to all the precious ordinances of Christ's house. Ergo, &c.

[5.] It is a fruit of the special love and favour of God. A man may read more of the heart of God, and of the special love of God towards him in the least spark of holiness, than he can in his highest worldly enjoyments. A man may read that special grace in the least degree of holiness, which he can never read in the honours, profits, pleasures, delights, and contents of this world. Ergo, &c.

[6.] The least degrees of holiness gives a man as great a right, and as good a title to everlasting happiness and blessedness, as the greatest degrees of holiness doth; and the reason is clear, because the promise of happiness and blessedness is not made over to degrees of holiness, but to the truth of holiness; and therefore he that hath but the least spark of true holiness may plead the promise, and apply the promise, and suck marrow and sweetness out of the promise, as well as he that hath the greatest measures of holiness in the world. The promises of salvation are not made over to the strength of faith, but to the truth of faith, John 6:35. It is nowhere said that only he that believes with the faith of an Abraham shall be saved, but it is often said, 'He that believes shall be saved;' that is, he that believes truly, though he doth not believe strongly, shall be saved. Ergo, &c.

[7.] When unholy persons are under terrors of conscience, and upon their dying beds, and when they shall stand before a judgment-seat, had they as many worlds to give as there be stars in heaven, and as there are men on earth, they would give them all for the least spark of true holiness; and therefore, without all peradventure, the least degree of holiness must be very precious, considering what a price the worst of men would give for it, were it in their power to purchase.

[8.] The least degree of holiness shall at last be blessed with a happy triumph over the strongest corruptions. The least degree of holiness will lead the soul to Christ; it will bring the soul into communion with Christ; it will work the soul to lean upon Christ, and by degrees to draw that life, that virtue, and that vigour from Christ, that will enable a Christian not only to combat but to conquer even Goliath himself; and therefore the least degree of holiness is doubtless very precious.

[9.] The least degree of holiness will render a Christian in some measure serviceable and useful to the turnings away of the wrath and judgments of God from a people or nation, and for the bringing down of favours and blessing upon a land, when all the power, authority, greatness, grandeur, and glory that wicked men have in their hands, can do just nothing either to the diverting of wrath, or the obtaining of mercy; and therefore the least degree of holiness is precious. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, The least degree of holiness is a sure pledge and pawn of greater degrees of holiness that in time thou shalt attain to. The tallest oak was once an acorn; the deepest doctor was once in his horn-book; and the greatest giant was once a child. Thy spark in time shall be blowed up into a flame; thy drop in time shall be turned into a sea; and thy penny in time shall be multiplied into pounds, and thy pounds into hundreds, and thy hundreds into thousands, and thy thousands into millions. And now tell me, Christians, whether these ten things do not sufficiently prove that there is a great deal of preciousness in the least degrees of holiness; and oh that you that have but a little holiness would be often a-warming of your hearts at this heavenly fire! and oh that you that have a great deal of holiness would not despise those that have but a little holiness! Oh that you that bring forth a hundredfold would not despise those that bring forth but thirtyfold! and oh that you that have ten talents would not despise those that have but two talents, considering that there is a great deal of preciousness in the least degree of holiness.

4. The fourth position is this, All saints are not alike holy. Some are more holy, and others are less holy; in some saints the springs of holiness runs low, in others the springs of holiness rise very high. Holiness thrives not alike in all saints. In the parable some brought forth thirty, some sixty, and others a hundredfold, and yet all was good ground too, Mat 13:8, Mat 13:23 : and in that other parable, every one had not ten talents—some had but five, others two, others but one, Mat 25:14-15; Luk 19:12-21. God never doth distribute holiness alike to all. To some he gives more, to others less, according to the good pleasure of his grace. God never intended that all should thrive alike in holiness. Though there were divers that feared God in Nehemiah's time, yet he tells you that his brother Hanani feared God above many, Neh 7:2. And though Job's three friends that came to visit him in the days of his sorrows, viz., Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad, were doubtless all holy men, Job 1:8, yet they fell very much short of Job in grace and holiness, as is evident not only by that high testimony that God himself gives concerning Job, 'That there was none like him upon the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil;' but also throughout that whole book of Job. It is true, all saints are equally justified, and equally pardoned, and equally reconciled, and equally accepted, but all saints are not equally sanctified. All saints are not of equal standing in the house of God. All saints have not been partakers of equal means, all saints have not had equal gales of the Spirit, all saints have not alike acted that holiness they have; and, therefore, no wonder if all saints are not alike holy. David's worthies were not all of equal strength, nor all the stones in the building are not of equal proportion, nor all the members in the natural body are not of equal magnitude; and so it is also in the mystical body of Christ. In God's house there are vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, 1Co 12:1-31; 2Ti 2:20, that is, there are some that are more eminently sanctified and purified than others are. You read in Scripture of babes, as well as of strong men; of lambs, as well as of sheep; of plants, as well as of trees. Besides, you read of a little faith, and of smoking flax, and of a bruised reed, and of a grain of mustard-seed, and what doth all this evidence, but that God gives different measures and degrees of grace and holiness to his people? Christ hath not work alike for all saints to do, nor burdens alike for all saints to bear,

nor mercies alike for all saints to improve, nor temptations alike for all saints to resist, nor difficulties alike for all saints to grapple withal, nor dangers alike for all saints to encounter withal, &c., and therefore he gives not a like measure of holiness to all, but to some more, to others less, according as their condition requires; some saints stand in need of a great deal more grace and holiness than others do. Their place, calling, condition, and employments in the world, calls for a greater stock than others need. One man may better keep house with a hundred a year, than another who hath a great family and great resort to his house, can do with a thousand a year; and so it is here. A little may serve a little farm, but it must be a great stock that must serve a great farm. A little stock of holiness will serve some Christians, but it must be a great stock of holiness that must serve to supply the necessities and the wants of other Christians; and therefore God gives different measures and degrees of holiness among his people as their needs require. Look, as one sinner excels another in wickedness, so one saint excels another in holiness; and therefore let not those that have much holiness despise those that have but little; nor let not those that have but a little holiness censure or judge those that have more holiness than themselves. All that holiness that any man hath, whether it be little, or whether it be much, is all of grace, it is all of free-grace; and therefore let every man improve it, be thankful for it, and walk humbly under it.

5. The fifth position is this, A Christian may be more eminently holy at one time than at another; he may thrive and increase more in holiness at one season than at another. Two men do not more differ one from another, than the self-same Christian at several times differs from himself. Now the spring-tide of holiness is risen high, very high, at another time the streams of holiness runs exceeding low; now he is full fraughted with high thoughts of God, with honourable thoughts of Christ, with precious thoughts of the saints, with pious thoughts of the Scripture, with delightful thoughts of ordinances, with serious thoughts of providences, and with ravishing thoughts of eternity; and at another time you shall have him filled with such hard thoughts of God, with such dishonourable thoughts of Christ, with such low thoughts of the saints, with such slight thoughts of the Scripture, with such undelightful thoughts of ordinances, and with such confused thoughts of providences, and with such muddy, dark, and unpleasing thoughts of eternity as if he were really another man.³ Now he is very lively and quick, very cheerful and thankful, very fruitful and faithful. Now he is very fearful of offending God, and very careful of pleasing God, and very circumspect and watchful in his walking with God, as if he were a man fully resolved instantly to start from holiness to happiness; but now, if you please to look on this man at another time, when he is either deserted of God, or tempted by Satan, or worsted by the world, or enthralled by his lusts, and ah, how unlike himself will you find him! for now he is flat, and dull, and dry, though not quite dead; now he is much straitened and shut up; now he can neither joy in God, nor delight in Christ, nor find sweetness in ordinances, nor any taste or relish in any of his mercies. Now his apprehensions are dark, his thoughts are dismal, his meditations are confused, his words are unadvised, and his ways are crooked. Now he saith, 'The Lord is my portion,' and anon he saith, 'Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more?' Now he believes, anon he doubts; this hour he hopes, the next he fears; to-day he is upon the mount, joying and triumphing, to-morrow you shall have him in the valleys, mourning and sighing; many clouds, many eclipses, many varieties, and many changes, passes upon God's holy ones in this life. A child, a tree, a plant, shoots up sometimes more in a month than they do in many months; and so doth many a child of God: many a tree of righteousness, and many a plant of renown, shoot up more in holiness in a month sometimes than they do in many months at another time; they thrive and flourish in holiness more

in a year sometimes than they do in many years at another time. Look, as many a man gets more money in one year than he doth afterwards get in seven; so many a Christian gets more grace and holiness sometimes in one year than he gets afterwards in seven. No saints have at all times alike the same blessed gales of the Spirit. It is just with a holy soul as it is with a ship; sometimes the ship hath a very fair and fresh gale of wind, and then she cuts her way through the proud waves of the sea, and the passengers sail very speedily and merrily towards their desired port; but anon the wind is slack, and veers about to another point of the compass, and then the passengers are all amote, and they sail but slowly and heavily towards their desired harbour. And so it is with a holy heart: sometimes the gales of the Spirit blow very fair and sweet, very strong and powerful, upon a gracious soul, and then a Christian sails most sweetly, most speedily, and most successfully on in a way of holiness, and towards his port of happiness; but anon the Spirit is either resisted, or grieved, or neglected, or quenched, or vexed, or disobeyed; and then his gales, his influences, his breathings, are slackened, and then a poor Christian sails but very slow on in a way of holiness, then he doth but even creep towards the harbour of everlasting blessedness.

Again, no saints have at all times alike the same external helps, advantages, and opportunities of being holy, and of thriving in holiness. It may be they have not the word so clearly, so powerfully, so sweetly, so faithfully, nor so frequently preached to them as formerly they have had; or it may be they have not other ordinances so lively, so purely, so spiritually, so evangelically dispensed to them as formerly they have had. It may be they have had stones instead of bread, and bones instead of flesh, and chaff instead of wheat, and muddy water instead of choice wine, and then no wonder if they do not thrive in holiness as they did when God rained manna every day about their tents, and when they were fed with the best of the best that their heavenly Father's table, wine-cellar, and house did afford. When children have not as good food, and as good physic, and as good lodging, and as good looking to as they have formerly had, no wonder if they thrive not as at other times. And so it is here: look, as no men have always the same helps, the same advantages, the same opportunities to grow great, and rich, and high, and honourable in the world, that sometimes they have had; so no Christian hath always the same helps, advantages, and opportunities to grow rich and high in holiness, as sometimes he hath had. It may be he hath not that communion and fellowship with the people of God that once he had, or if he hath, yet it may be their communion is not so pure, so holy, so lively, so heart-warming, so soul-enriching, as once it hath been; or it may be he hath not as good counsel as formerly, nor as good examples as formerly, nor as good encouragement as he hath formerly had to be holy; or it may be their calling, employment, and outward condition is so altered and changed from what once it was, that they have not that time for closet duties, and to wait on public ordinances, that once they had; or it may be bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, aches, and ailments are so increased and multiplied upon them, that they cannot make that improvement that once they did of those very advantages and opportunities, that yet, by a hand of grace, is continued among them. Now these cases being incident to the people of God, there is no reason to wonder, if at some times saints are more holy than they are at others; and if at some seasons they shoot up more in holiness than they do at others. The serious weighing of this position may serve to prevent many fears and scruples, many debates and disputes, that often rise in the hearts of Christians upon the often ebbings and flowings of holiness in their souls.

6. The sixth position is this, There will come a time when in this world holiness shall be more general, and more eminent, than ever it hath been since Adam fell in paradise. The Scripture speaks clearly, roundly, and fully to this: Deu 30:5-6, Deu 30:8, 'The Lord thy God will bring thee into thine own land, and the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments.' This gracious promise was made to the Jews above two thousand years ago, and yet to this very day it hath not been fulfilled; and therefore there will certainly come a time wherein God will make it good: Isa 11:6, 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, &c., and they shall not hurt, &c., for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' This glorious promise hath not been made good to this day, but there is a time a-coming wherein it shall be accomplished: Isa 35:8, 'There shall be a highway, and it shall be called a way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it.' Isa 59:21, 'This is my covenant, my word and my Spirit shall never depart from thee for ever.' Isa 60:21, 'Thy people shall be all righteous.' Jer 32:40-41, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and whole soul.' So Eze 36:23-30; Mal 4:1-2; 2Pe 3:13.

Now it is very observable that this great promise must be fulfilled when the Jews shall return and be settled in their own land. And so the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of the glorious state of the church in the last days, Eze 44:7, Eze 44:9, adds, 'Thus saith the Lord, no stranger uncircumcised in heart shall enter into my sanctuary.' Zep 3:13, 'The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths.' Now the context clearly shews that these words relate to the glorious state of the church on earth, and they have never yet received their accomplishment, but shall in the last days, for he is faithful that hath spoken it: Zec 14:20-21, 'Upon all shall be holiness to the Lord.' I have opened this text pretty fully to you already in my former discourses on holiness, and therefore shall pass it by now, Rev 21:1-27 verse the first and verse the last, 'And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, and I saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, &c., and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, &c., but they that are written in the Lamb's book.' I have formerly proved by several arguments, as divers of you knows, that this chapter cannot be understood of heaven, but must necessarily, and beyond all dispute, be understood of the glorious state of the saints on earth, which they shall certainly enjoy in the last days. By all these scriptures it is most evident that there will come a time when holiness shall be more general, and at a fuller height than ever yet it hath been since man fell from his original holiness; and therefore pray and wait, and wait and pray, look and long, and long and look, for the breaking forth of this day of glory upon the world.

[7.] The seventh and last proposition is this, That though the people of God ought to be holy at all times, yet there are some special times and seasons wherein God calls aloud for holiness, more than he doth at other times, and wherein he looks, and expects that his people should be eminently holy, as well as really holy.

Quest. But what are those special times and seasons wherein God calls loudest for holiness and most for holiness?

I answer, they are these:

[1.] First, After great and sore falls. Oh, now God calls aloud for holiness. David after his great falls greatly humbles himself before the Lord, Psa 51:1-19; and Job after his bitter cursing and heavy complaining abhors himself in dust and ashes, Job 3:1-26 and Job 42:4-5; and Hezekiah, after his great miscarriage, did chatter like a crane and mourn as a dove, Isa 38:14; and Peter after his hellish cursing, his desperate swearing, and his hideous lying, goes forth and weeps bitterly, Mat 26:1-75. So Origen, after he had denied the truth, and sacrificed to an idol, he came to Jerusalem, and being desired to preach, and having opened his Bible, the first scripture that his eye was fixed upon was that Psa 50:16-17, 'What hast thou to do to take my word into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed?' whereupon he shut his book, sat down, and fell into a passion of weeping, and so came out of the pulpit, as not being able to speak to the people. After great falls God expects and looks that his people should be more fearful of sin than ever, and more careful of pleasing and honouring of him than ever, and more resolute in resisting of temptations than ever, and more constant and abundant in a way of duty than ever, and more thankful and fruitful under mercies than ever, and more quiet and silent under afflictions than ever, and more stout and courageous in the face of all opposition than ever, and more wise and circumspect in their walkings than ever, and more vigilant and diligent to prevent and avoid future falls than ever. How else will the honour of God be repaired, and the glory of religion be vindicated, and the credit of the gospel be raised, and the grieved saints be rejoiced, and young, beginners in religion be afresh encouraged, and secure sinners be awakened, convinced, and converted? But,

[2.] Secondly, When God shews singular mercy to his people, and when he doth great things for his people, then he expects and looks that his people should be a holy people, and then he calls loudest for holiness; Exo 19:3-5, 'And Moses went up unto God and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel, Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you upon eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine.' Here Moses makes use of a very elegant expression, to shew the singular love, care, kindness, and goodness of God towards his people, 'He bare you upon eagles' wings.' The eagle is a very princely, noble bird, she fears no birds from above to hurt her young ones, and because she fears the arrow from beneath, therefore she carries her young ones upon her wings; so that there is no hurting, nor harming, nor no killing of them, but by shooting through the body of the old one. Other birds carry their young ones in their talons, and so expose them to danger, but the eagle carries hers upon her wings, that they may be safe and secure. Moses, to shew how choice and chary God was of Israel, and how much he stood upon their safety and security, tells them that he carried them upon eagles' wings; that so none of their enemies might ruin or destroy them, yea, that they might not so much as in the least hurt or harm them. He carried them out of Egypt, and he carried them through the Red Sea sweetly, swiftly, strongly, and tenderly, as the eagle carries her young ones when danger is at hand. Now God having expressed such love, such care, such bowels, such tenderness, such sweetness, and such kindness to his people, he looks and expects that they should be a holy people, and therefore he strongly urges them to obey God's voice indeed, and to keep his covenant. Now what is it for a man to obey God's voice indeed, and to keep his covenant, but to be really holy, yea, to be eminently holy? So in Deu 10:1-22, where Moses had made a large

narrative of the singular favours and mercies of God to Israel in Deu 10:1-11, he falls in Deu 10:12-13 upon pressing of them to be a holy people. 'And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul? To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day.' The word in Deu 10:12 rendered require, is **שָׁאַל**, shoel, from shaal, which signifies to ask, to request, or petition a person. Now here Moses brings in God, asking, requesting, and petitioning of Israel that they would fear him and walk in his ways, &c., and what is that but that they would be a holy people to him, that had done such great and glorious things for them? The word in Deu 10:13 rendered keep, is **שָׁמַר**, shamar, which signifies to keep carefully, diligently, faithfully to keep, Job 12:12; 1Ki 20:39, as watchmen keep the city, or as soldiers keep their garrisons, or as jailers keep their prisoners. Now God would have his people thus to keep his commandments and his statutes, and this God would have them to do upon the account of those high acts of favour and grace that he had shewed unto them; and thus to keep his commandments and his statutes, what is it but to be a holy people, yea, to be a very holy people unto the Lord? And so in that Ezr 9:13-14, 'Seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hast consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor escaping?' Free and rich mercy calls hardest and loudest for duty. The more merciful God hath been to his people, the more fearful they should be of offending of him, and the more careful they should be in pleasing of him. Divine blessings should be the greatest obligations in the world upon a Christian to keep at a distance from sin, and to keep close to a holy God. The greater the mercy is, and the more miraculous the deliverance and the salvation is, that God crowns his people with, the greater are the engagements that God hath put upon them to be a holy people to him. So in Psa 116:1-19 David gives in a bill of particulars in the eight first verses; he gives you a choice narrative of the singular favours and blessings of God, both in respect of his inward and his outward man. God had been good to his soul, and he had been kind to his body; he tells you of God's sparing mercy, and of his preventing mercy, and of his preserving mercy, and of his delivering mercy, and of his supporting mercy, and of his multiplying mercy, and of his pardoning mercy; he tells you that God hath heard his prayers, and wiped off his tears, and preserved his feet from falling, and his soul from death. And then in the following words he tells you what his resolution is upon the whole: 'I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,' Psa 116:9, or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, Ethhallech liphne Jehovah, I will walk before the face of the Lord. The Hebrew word that is here rendered walk, signifies a continued action, or the reiteration of an action. David resolves that he will not only take a turn or two with God, or walk a pretty way with God, as Orpah did with Ruth, and then take his leave of God, as Orpah did of her mother, Ruth 1:10-15; but he resolves, whatever comes on it, that he will walk constantly, resolutely, and perpetually before God, or before the face of the Lord. Now walking before the face of the Lord doth imply a very exact, circumspect, accurate, and precise walking before God; and indeed no other walking is either suitable or pleasing to the eye of God. But is this all that he will do upon the receipt of such signal mercies? oh no! for he resolves to take the cup of salvation, and to call upon the name of the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, Ruth 1:13, Ruth 1:17. But is this all that he will do? oh no! for he resolves that he will presently pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people, Ruth 1:14, Ruth 1:18. But is this all that he will do? oh no! for he resolves that he will love the Lord

better than ever and more than ever, Ruth 1:1-2. He loved God before with a real love, but having now received such rare mercies from God, he is resolved to love God with a more raised love, and with a more inflamed love, and with a more active and stirring love, and with a more growing and increasing love than ever. And so the apostle in that Rom 12:1-2, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' When this great apostle would work up the Romans to a full resignation of themselves to God and to his service, and would fence and arm them against the sinful fashions, customs, examples, dispositions, and practices of a corrupt and wicked world, he sets the mercies of God before them. The apostle very well knew that there was no such spur to holiness, nor no such preservative against wickedness, as this was. The apostle could have set threatenings before them, and the curse before them, and wrath before them, and former and latter judgments before them, and hell before them; and yet he passes over all these things, and presents the mercies of God before them, as the most effectual means under heaven to engage them to holiness, and to fortify them against all sinful conformity and worldly vanity. O sirs! you are all under several signal mercies this day. You are out of hell, and is not that a signal mercy? you have many mercies that others want, and is not that a signal mercy? yea, God rains manna every day about your tents when others wander several miles, and are too often put off with stones instead of bread, and is not that a signal mercy? That wicked men's hearts should be so full of wrath, rage, revenge, envy, and malice, and you cast at their feet and yet not trod to death, is a signal mercy; that you should stand when others fall, that you should be faithful when others are false, that you should persevere when others backslide, that you should be for God when so many are for Baal, and that you should be followers of the Lamb when so many thousands are dancing after Antichrist's pipes, are all very rare and signal mercies; and calls aloud upon you to be holy, yea, to be eminently holy, &c. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Times of personal afflictions are times wherein God calls aloud for holiness. When the rod of God is upon our backs, it highly concerns us to look that our words are full of grace, and that all our ways and works are full of holiness. Now God looks that his people should be divinely fearful of offending him, and divinely careful in pleasing of him, and divinely willing to resign up themselves to him, and divinely patient in waiting on him, and divinely humble in submitting to him, and divinely wise in justifying of him, and divinely resolute in serving of him: Heb 12:10, 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we might be made partakers of his holiness.' Why, they were before partakers of his holiness, that is true; and these words declare that the great reach and design of God, in all the afflictions that he brings upon his people, is to make them more and more holy; and therefore for Christians to be proud under the rod, and carnal under the rod, and worldly under the rod, and froward under the rod, and stupid under the rod, and wanton under the rod, and wicked under the rod, is to cross and frustrate the great design of God in afflicting of them. In afflictions God looks that his people should shine brighter and brighter, and grow better and better, and holier and holier. Oh, there is nothing that pleases God more, that delights God more, that affects God more, or that wins upon God more, than to see his people a holy people in the days of their afflictions: Jer 2:2-3, 'Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits

of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the Lord.' God was wonderfully affected and taken with the love of his people, and with the kindness of his people, and with the holiness of his people, when they were in their wilderness condition. Look, as stars shine brightest in the darkest nights, and as torches are the better for beating, and spices the sweeter for pounding, and young trees the faster rooted for shaking, and vines the more fruitful for bleeding, and gold the more glittering for scouring: so God looks that his children's graces should shine brightest in the darkest nights of afflictions, he looks that his children should be the better for his fatherly beating, and the sweeter for being pounded in the mortar of affliction, and the faster rooted in grace and holiness, by all divine shakings, &c. In times of affliction God looks that his children should be true salamanders, that live best in the fire. Where afflictions hang heaviest, he looks that there corruptions should hang loosest; he looks that that grace and holiness which lies hid in nature, as sweet water doth in rose leaves, should then be most fragrant, when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out, &c. But,

[4.] Fourthly, When persons that are under a great profession, or in church communion, shall fall presumptuously and scandalously, when they shall not only do weakly, but wickedly, when not only infirmities, but enormities may be justly and righteously charged upon them; when such persons walk so loosely, and vainly, as that they occasion the name of God to be blasphemed, religion to be scorned, the gospel to be despised, profession to be abhorred, the saints to be reviled, and young comers-on to be discouraged, and the ungodly in their wickedness to be hardened and confirmed; oh, this is a time wherein God calls aloud upon his people to be holy! Oh, now God expects an extraordinary measure of holiness in his people! Oh, now he looks that his people should rather walk like angels, than live like saints, that so they may in some measure repair and make up the sad breaches that have been made upon his honour, and the credit of religion, and that they may live profession into honour and esteem once more in the world. Such blessed effects as these, the horrid sin of the incestuous person did occasionally work in the hearts and lives of the Corinthians, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² O sirs! in these days are there not many that have made a very high profession, that have shined as the stars in the firmament, who are now fallen from their profession, from their principles, and from all things that are good! How many now do build the things that they have destroyed? What betraying of Christ, what betraying of truth, and what betraying of saints is there this day among many that have pretended very high to religion! How many now approve of those things that before they would never own, and that justify those things now that they have formerly condemned, and that comply with those things now that formerly they have abhorred, yea, that contend for those things now for which they have formerly suffered; and, therefore, certainly these are the very times wherein God calls aloud upon his people to be holy, yea, to be eminently holy, &c. But,

[5.] Fifthly, In all our approaches, addresses, and drawings near to God, God calls aloud for holiness: Lev 10:3, 'Then Moses said to Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified; and Aaron held his peace.' There is nothing more evident than this throughout the Old Testament, that the people of God were always to sanctify themselves when they were to draw nigh to God, John 4:23-24. God is a holy God, and there is no drawing nigh to him without holiness; the worship that God stands most upon, and that is most pleasing and delightful to him, is spiritual worship, and

none can offer this but a holy people. Such as draw nigh to God without holiness may, if they were not deaf, hear God saying to them, 'What have you to do to take my name into your mouths, seeing you hate to be reformed? and who required these things at your hands? Psa 50:16-17; Isa 1:12. The Persians every morning worship the rising sun, and the Turks their Mahomet, and the Papists their images, and some of the Indians worship the first thing that they meet with in the morning, and others of them worship a red rag, and others of them worship the devil. The Romans used to worship Jupiter, a hurtful god amongst them, not because they loved him, but because they would not be hurt or harmed by him. And Praxiteles the painter made the silly people worship the image of his strumpet, under the title and pretence of Venus. And verily all the worship that thou offerest to God is little better, if thou drawest nigh to him with thy body, without holiness in thy soul. O sirs, remember that in all your public duties God calls aloud for holiness, and in all your family duties God calls aloud for holiness, and in all your closet duties God calls aloud for holiness. Times of drawing near to God should be always times of much holiness. You may come to a duty, but you will never come to God in a duty, without holiness. You may come to an ordinance, but you will never come to God in an ordinance, without holiness; and therefore, in all your drawings nigh to God, remember that God calls for holiness in a special manner then. But,

[6.] Sixthly, When God eminently appears in the execution of his judgments upon wicked and ungodly men, oh, that is a time that God calls aloud for holiness. When he is a-raining hell out of heaven upon unholy persons, God now looks that his people should be holy, yea, eminently holy. So in that Exo 19:4-5, 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,' you have been eyewitnesses of my dealings with them in Egypt, you have seen how I have followed them with plague upon plague, because they did so sorely oppress you, and would not let you go to worship me and serve me according to my own prescriptions, Exo 24:1-18. And when they were judgment-proof, you saw me drown them in the Red Sea before your eyes; and upon this very ground he urges them to obey his voice, and to keep his covenant, Exo 24:5. And so in that Rev 15:1-4, 'And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; from them is filled up the wrath of God. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.' In this and the following chapters the utter overthrow of Antichrist is described. In this chapter you have a new vision of the gospel's restoring, and of Antichrist's ruin. By the sea of glass mingled with fire, we are to understand the fiery trials, and dreadful persecutions by fire and faggot, that Antichrist will inflict upon sincere and faithful Christians. The allusion is to the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's persecuting of Israel; but the addition of fire is plainly to distinguish the Pope's persecution from Pharaoh's; for though Pharaoh did sorely oppress the people of God both in their liberties and consciences, and though he had plotted and contrived a way to destroy their male children, yet he was never so cruel, he was never so bloody, as to burn the people of God with fire and faggot, as Antichrist hath done in all ages. But now mark, when the vials of the wrath of God comes to be poured out upon Antichrist, yea, upon whatever smells of Antichrist, or looks like Antichrist, why then the people of God will in a very eminent way lift up God as the great object of their fear, and then the generality of the nations shall be so deeply affected

with the dreadful, amazing, and astonishing judgments of God upon Antichrist, that they shall repent, worship him, and give glory to him. O sirs! when God strikes slaves, sons should tremble. Great judgments upon sinners speaks out a great deal of the justice and holiness of God; and the more the justice and holiness of God appears, the more holy his people should grow. Ah, Christians! had you grown more holy by those severe judgments of God that hath been inflicted upon others before your eyes, you had not been under those smart rebukes of God that now you are under this day! But,

[7.] Seventhly, When men are called forth to war by God. Oh! that is a special time and season wherein God calls aloud for holiness. The man of war must have holiness written upon the bridles of the horses, Zec 14:20. When men carry their lives in their hands, they had need of holiness in their hearts; when in every encounter a man must expect to enter upon a state of eternity, he had need be very holy, that so if he should fall in the encounter, he may be sure to be happy: Deu 23:9, Deu 23:14, 'When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee: therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.' When the sword devoureth on both hands, when it eats the flesh of nobles, and drinks the blood of nobles; when it feeds upon the flesh of the poor, and drinks the blood of the needy, then every soldier had need be a saint. When an eternity of glory and misery is every moment before every soldier, every soldier had need walk very accurately, he had need live very holily. Mark, though the people of God were to keep themselves from every wicked thing at all other times, yet when they went out against their enemies, then in a special manner it highly concerned them to keep themselves not from some, but from every evil thing, or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, from every evil word, **לכל דבר** dabar. He that is in danger of death every step he takes, and that carries his very soul in his hand, had need precisely to abstain not only from every evil work, but also from every evil word, as here God expressly charges Israel to do. When God finds holiness in Israel's camp, then God will quickly give up Israel's enemies into Israel's hands; but when the camp becomes a den of iniquity, then God will depart from the camp; and when God, who is the bulwark of a camp, is departed, all the world cannot preserve that camp from being destroyed. The Lamb looks that all those brave hearts that engage with him against Antichrist, should be called, and chosen, and faithful, Rev 17:14. There is no armour of proof to that of holiness. Let a man be never so well mounted, clothed, armed, weaponed, yet if he be unholy, he lies naked and open to all disasters, calamities, and miseries. O sirs! it is one of the dreadfulest things in the world to hear such a-cursing, swearing, lying, and damning of themselves, and to see such a-giving up themselves to work all manner of wickedness with greediness, who carry their lives in their hands every hour in the day; yea, at whose elbows damnation stands every moment. O sirs! when God gives the sword a commission to eat flesh, and drink blood, to slay both old and young, to spare none that come before it, and to pity none that come nigh unto it, it highly concerns all men to be holy. This is a special season wherein God calls aloud for holiness.

I confess I am for peace and truth, for peace and righteousness, for peace and holiness, against all war in the world; but whenever the Lord shall call forth his people to fight his battles against Antichrist, and to smite Daniel's image in pieces, it stands them very much upon to be a holy people, yea, to be eminently holy, as they would have the presence of God with them, and the power of God engaged for them, and the mercy, goodness, and blessing of God succeeding and

prospering of them, 1Sa 25:28; Dan 2:31, et seq. Though he that goes to war had need carry his purse with him, yet he must be sure to leave his sins behind him, or else his sins will do him more mischief than all his enemies, for they will set God against him; and how can straw and stubble possibly stand before a consuming fire?

I have read of Xerxes, that viewing almost an innumerable army of men, he fell a-weeping, saying, Where will all these men be within a hundred years? He wept to think that all that mighty army would be in their graves within a hundred years. Ah, what cause of weeping is there when we behold most armies in the world, considering that within a few years, yea, months, for anything we know, they may be most in hell, except there be found repentance on their sides, and pardoning mercy on God's, they are so abominable, debauched, and wicked. But,

[8.] Eighthly, When God hath separated and severed his people from the corrupt and sinful customs and manners of the world, and brought them into fellowship with himself, and into gospel-communion with one another, oh, then, in a special manner he calls aloud upon them to be holy: Lev 20:23-24, Lev 20:26, 'And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you; for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. But I have said unto you, ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people. And ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that you should be mine.' Distinguishing mercies should breed and nourish distinguishing qualities. O sirs, it is not for you who are separated and severed from the world by God to be proud, and carnal, and formal, and distrustful, and hypocritical, and earthly, and froward, &c., as the world is! it is not for you to deny your principles, to debauch your consciences, to change your notes, to turn your coats, to defile your souls, to blot your names, and to scandalise your profession! O sirs, if God hath separated you, and severed you from the world by a call from heaven, it highly concerns you not to think as the world thinks, nor to speak as the world speaks, nor to judge as the world judges, nor to walk as the world walks, nor to worship as the world worships, but so to think, speak, judge, walk, and worship as may make most for the honour of God, the glory of the gospel, and as best becomes those that have had the honour and the happiness of being separated and severed by God from the world. But,

[9.] Ninthly, When the day of the Lord draws near, and when we look for the accomplishment of great things, oh, then, God calls aloud upon his people to be holy: 2Pe 3:10-14, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for a new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.' The nearer the day of Christ is to us, and the more great and glorious things we expect from God, the more holy, the more spotless, and the more blameless we must labour to be, Isa 65:17-20. I know there are many that look for new heavens and a new earth, that is, for a glorious church-state here on earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. It is certain that the highest heavens, where God keeps his

royal court, was never without righteousness. Righteousness hath been always the habitation of his throne; righteousness hath always dwelt in the highest heavens; and, indeed, heaven would be no heaven, yea, it would rather be a hell than a heaven if righteousness did not always dwell there; neither can the highest heaven ever wax old, neither were they ever made of earth, or brittle mouldering matter. The palace of the great King will be always new, fresh, shining, and gloriousness; but, indeed, the earth in all ages, have been full of injustice, unrighteousness, wickedness, tyranny, cruelty, and oppressions; so that righteousness seems to have been banished out of the world, ever since Adam fell from his primitive righteousness and holiness. Oh, but there is a glorious day a-coming, wherein the earth shall be full of righteousness and holiness, as I have formerly proved at large from other Scriptures. Now, Christians, the more great and glorious things you expect from God, as the downfall of antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the conquest of the nations to Christ, the breaking off of all yokes, the new Jerusalem's coming down from above, the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, and a more general union among all saints, the more holy, yea, the more eminently holy in all your ways and actings it becomes you to be. Many there be that will talk high, and speak big words, and tell you stories of great things that they expect and look for in these days, which are the last of the last times; and yet if you look into their lives, you shall find them loose, and vain, and what not? Oh that these would for ever remember, that the more great and glorious things we expect and look for from God, the more holiness God expects and looks for from us; and therefore as we would not have God fail our expectation, let us not frustrate his, and the higher your expectation rises, the higher always let your holiness rise, for there is nothing that will hasten that desirable day of glory upon the world like this. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, When you draw near your end, when there are but a few steps between you and the grave, between you and eternity; when you have but a little time to live, when death stands at your back, and treads on your heels, and knocks at your door; when the eyes begin to grow dark, when the grinders begin to cease, when the keepers of the house—the hands and the arms—begin to tremble, and when the strong men—the legs and thighs—begin to bow and stagger, and totter, as being too weak to bear the body's burden, Ecc 12:2-3. Oh then! what a holy people should you be! This very consideration had a very great influence upon that great apostle's spirit in that 2Pe 1:12-15, 'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.' The apostle having the sentence of death in himself, oh, how doth he bestir himself, and how doth he stir up all that grace and holiness that was in his heart, yea, in all his ministerial and apostolical gifts, and all to better himself, and to make those that were really holy, to be eminently holy! Peter being very sensible of the near approaches of death, did very earnestly desire, and greatly endeavour so to act his part before he went off the stage of life, that when his head was in the dust, and his soul in heaven, those saints that should survive him might be very famous in grace and holiness. That of Eleazer is very remarkable, who would not do anything which might seem to be evil, because he would not spot his white head. O sirs! when once the gray hairs of holiness and righteousness are upon you, it highly concerns you to shun the very shows and appearances of evil, that so you may not spot nor stain the honour of your white head. I have read of Joshua, that valiant soldier, that when he was a young man, and in the prime and flower of his days, when

his 'bones were full of marrow, and his breasts full of milk,' as Job speaks, that then he was least in vigour and valour for God, and how that sometimes in cases of imminent danger he would conceal himself; but when he grew older, and found the strength of nature declining and decaying, then he bestirred himself exceedingly for God. O sirs! when you have one foot in the grave, God calls aloud upon you to bestir yourselves exceedingly for His honour and glory, and for your own internal and eternal welfare. Solon was not ashamed to say that he learned much in his old age. And Julianus, the lawyer,² was wont to say that when he had one foot in the grave, he would have the other in the school. O sirs! shall nature do more than grace? shall morality excel real piety? It was the glorious commendation of the church of Thyatira that her last works were more than her first, Rev 2:19, 'I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy work, and the last to be more than the first.' Oh, the happiness of that man that is best at last, that brings forth most of the fruits of righteousness and holiness in old age. Oh, the blessedness of that man whose faith is more strong at last than at first, and whose love is more inflamed at last than at first, and whose hopes are more raised and elevated at last than at first, and whose knowledge is more clear at last than at first, and whose zeal is warmer at last than at first, and whose thoughts are more heavenly at last than at first, and whose heart is more spiritual at last than at first, and whose communion with God is more high at last than at first, and whose life is more holy at last than at first!

If there be any man in the world that is ripe for heaven, and that enjoys a heaven in his own soul on this side heaven, this is the man whose graces, and whose gracious works, are more at last than at first. Well, Christians, for ever remember this, the nearer death makes her approaches to you, the louder God calls upon you to be holy. And thus, by a hand of grace that hath been in me, upon me, and with me, I have shewed you what those special times and seasons are wherein God calls loudest for holiness, and so, according to my weak measure, I have given out all that the Lord hath graciously given in concerning that most necessary, that most noble, that most glorious, and that most useful point of points, viz., holiness; and therefore I have nothing more to do but earnestly to pray that what hath been spoken and written may be so blessed from on high, that it may work mightily to the internal and eternal welfare both of writer, reader, and hearer, that so, when their race is run, and their work done here on earth, they may be everlastingly blessed with a happy sight of the beatifical vision of God in heaven. Amen.

01.05. Volume 5

THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART, liverpool

VOL. V containing: the golden key to open hidden treasures; paradise opened; and a word in season EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL london: james nisbet and co. dublin: g. herbert m.dccc.lxvii.

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2. What is that faith that gives a man an interest in Christ, and in all those blessed benefits and favours that come by Christ? or whether that person that experiences the following particulars, may not safely, groundedly, and comfortably conclude that his faith is a true, justifying, saving faith, the faith of God's elect, and such a faith as clearly evidences a gracious estate, and will certainly bring the soul to heaven?

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GOLDEN KEY to OPEN HIDDEN TREASURES note The 'Golden Key' forms Part I. of, spiritually, the richest and most nurturing of Brooks's larger treatises. Part II. follows in this volume. The title-page of the former will be found below.* It is interesting to compare Brooks's 'Golden Key' with the earlier work of Francis Dillingham, entitled 'A Golden Key opening the Locke to eternall Happiness: containing seven most sweete and comfortable directions to a Christian life,' 1609, 12mo.—G.

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Eleven serious singular Pleas, that all sincere Christians may safely and groundedly make, to those ten Scriptures in the Old and New Testament, that speak of the general Judgment, and of that particular Judgment, that must certainly pass upon them all immediately after death, The Godhead and Manhood of Christ, is here largely proved, and improved against all Gainsayers, by what names and titles soever they are distinguished and known among us. Several things concerning Hell, and hellish torments, opened, cleared and improved against all Atheists, and all others that boldly assert, that there is no Hell, but what is in us. Some other points of importance are here cleared and opened, which other Authors (so far as the Author hath read) have passed over them in great silence, all tending to the confirmation of the strong, and support, peace, comfort, settlement and satisfaction of poor, weak, doubting, trembling, staggering Christians. By Tho. Brooks late Preacher of the Gospel, at Margarets-New-Fish-street.

LONDON,

Printed for Dorman Newman, at the King's-Arms in the Poultry; and at the Ship and Anchor, at the Bridg-foot, on Southwark side, 1675.

[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his much honoured and worthily esteemed friend, Sir Nathaniel Herne, Knight, Sheriff of London, and Governor of the East India Company.

Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you and yours.

Sir,—Much might be said, were it necessary, for the dedication of books unto persons of worth, interest, service, and honour, this having been the constant practice of the best and wisest of men in all the ages of the world; and therefore I need not make any farther apology for my present practice.

What is written is permanent, *litera scripta manet*, and spreads itself farther by far, for time, place, and persons, than the voice can reach. Augustine, writing to Volusian, saith, 'That which is written is always at hand to be read when the reader is at leisure.'³ There are those that think—and, as they conceive, from Scripture grounds too—that the glory of the saints in heaven receives additions and increases daily, as their holy walk and faithful service when here on earth doth, after they are gone, bring forth fruit to the praise of God amongst those that are left behind them. If this be so, what greater encouragement can there be to write, print, preach, and to walk holily in this world?

I must also confess that that general acceptance that my former labours have found, both in the nation and in foreign parts, and that singular blessing that has attended them from on High, hath

been none of the least encouragements to me once more to cast in my mite into the common treasury. Besides, I am not unsensible of your candid esteem of some former endeavours of mine in this kind, neither do I know any way wherein I am more capacitated to serve the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the public good, reproached truths, and the interest of the churches, in my generation, than this, as my case and condition is circumstanced; and I am very well satisfied that there is nothing in this treatise but what tends to the advantage, comfort, support, settlement, and encouragement of those whose concernment lies in peace and truth, in holiness and righteousness, throughout the nations.

Sir the points here insisted on are of the greatest use, worth, weight, necessity, excellency, and utility imaginable; they are such wherein our present blessedness and our future happiness, yea, wherein our very all, both as to this and that other world, is wrapped up. It will be your life, honour, and happiness to read them, digest them, experience them, and to exemplify them in a suitable conversation, Deu 30:15, Deu 30:19, and Deu 32:47, winch, that you may, let your immortal soul lie always open to the warm, powerful, and hourly influences of heaven.

Let it be the top of your ambition, and the height of all your designs, to glorify God, to secure your interest in Christ, to serve your generation, to provide for eternity, to walk with God, to be tender of all that have aliquid Christi, anything of Christ, shining in them, and so to steer your course in this world as that you may give up your account at last with joy, Mat 25:21, seq. All other ambition is base and low. Ambition, saith one, [Bernard,] is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague, the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the original of vices, the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts, turning medicines into maladies, and remedies into diseases. In the enthronisation of the pope, before he is set in his chair and puts on his triple crown, a piece of tow or wad of straw is set on fire before him, and one appointed to say Sic transit gloria mundi, The glory of this world is but a blaze. St Luke calls Agrippa's pomp μετ' πολλὰς φαντασµας, a fantasy or vain show, Acts 25:23; and indeed all worldly pomp and state is but a fantasy or vain show. St Matthew calls all the world's glory Δόξαν, an opinion, Mat 4:8; and St Paul calls it Σχῆμα, a mathematical figure, 1Co 7:31, which is a mere notion, and nothing in substance. The word here used intimateth that there is nothing of any firmness or solid consistency in the creature; it is but a surface, outside, empty thing; all the beauty of it is but skin deep. Mollerus, upon that Psa 73:20, concludeth, 'that men's earthly dignities are but as idle dreams, their splendid braveries but lucid fantasies.' High seats are never but uneasy, and crowns are always stuffed with thorns, which made one say of his crown, 'O crown, more noble than happy.' Shall the Spirit of God, the grace of God, the power of God, the presence of God, arm you against all other sins, evils, snares, and temptations, as you are by a good hand of heaven armed against worldly ambition and worldly glory?

Sir, you know he was a Saul that said, 'Honour me before the people,' 1Sa 15:30; and he was a Jehu that said, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts,' 2Ki 10:16; and they were three Irish kings that rebelled in Henry the Second's days, being derided for their rude habits and fashions; and they were some of the worst of cardinals that, when they were like to die, would give great sums of money for a cardinal's hat, that they might be so styled upon their tombs; and they were the Romans and other barbarous nations that were most ambitious of worldly honour and glory; and he was a Julius Cæsar whose excessive desire of honour made him to be mortally hated by the senators and all others. God grants no man a patent for honour durante vita, but durante

bene-placito, as the lawyers speak, during his life, but during his own good pleasure. All worldly honour and glory is subject to mutability. Honours, riches, and pleasures are the three deities that in these days a world of men adore, and to whom they sacrifice, morning and evening, their best thoughts; and these, for their unparalleled vanity, may well be called the vanity of vanities, Ecc 1:2. Worldly honours are but a mere conceit, a shadow, a vapour, a feather in the cap, without substance or subsistence, and yet the most powerful charm of Satan, whereby he lulls men to sleep in the paradise of fools; to cast them, when they are awake, into the bottomless pit of eternal woe. For had not Satan held them to be the strongest of all temptations, he had not reserved them for his last battery against the constancy of our blessed Saviour, as he did, Mat 4:8-9. And although this roaring cannon of his could not prevail against Christ, the rock of ages, Mat 16:18, yet how many thousands in these days are captivated and deluded by the glorious glistening of worldly honours! Men of great honour and worldly glory stand but in slippery places. Adonibezek, a mighty prince, was made fellow-commoner with the dogs, Jdg 1:7; and Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, was turned a-grazing among the oxen, Dan 4:28; and Herod was reduced from a conceited god to the most loathsome of men, a living carrion, arrested by the vilest creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator, Acts 12:23. The lice did fully confute his auditory, and triumph over his throne. A great Haman is feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next, Est 7:10. In all the ages of the world God hath taken a delight to stain the pride of all the glory of this lower world, Isa 23:9. See it in a few instances:—

Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, king of Persia, as often as he took horse.

Bibulus the consul, riding in his triumphant chariot, by the fall of a tile-stone from a house was made a sacrifice before he could reach the capitol, to offer up there the bulls and garlands he had prepared.

Aurelianus, the Roman emperor, brought Tetricus his opposite, and the brave Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, in triumph to Rome in golden chains.

Sejanus, that prodigious favourite, on the same day that he was attended by the senate, on the same day he was torn in pieces by the people. Seneca, speaking of him, saith, that he who in the morning was swollen with titles, ere night there remained not so much as a mammock of flesh for the hangman to fasten his hook in.²

Belisarius, a most famous general under Justinian the emperor, after all the great and famous services that he had done, he had his eyes put out in his old age by the Empress Theodora; and at the temple of St Sophia forced to beg: *Date panem Belisario, &c.*, Give a crust to old blind Belisarius, whom virtue advanced, but envy hath brought into this great misery.

Henry the Fourth, emperor, in sixty-two battles, for the most part, he became victorious; yet he was deposed, and driven to that misery that he desired only a clerk's place in a house at Spire, of his own building, which the bishop of that place denied him: whereupon he brake forth into that speech of Job: *'Miseremini mei, amici; quia manus Dei tetigit me, Have pity upon me, oh my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me,'* Job 19:21. He died of grief and want.

Bajazet, a proud emperor of the Turks, whom Tamerlane a Tartarian took prisoner, and bound him in chains of gold, and used him for a footstool when he took horse; when he was at table he made

him gather crumbs and scraps under his table, and eat them for his food.

Dionysius, king of Sicily, was such a cruel tyrant that his people banished him. After his banishment he went to Corinth, where he lived a base and contemptible life. At last he became a schoolmaster; so that, when he could not tyrannise any longer over men he might over boys.

Pythias was pined to death for want of bread, who once was able to entertain and maintain Xerxes his mighty army.

Great Pompey had not so much as room to be buried in; and William the Conqueror's corpse lay three days unburied, his interment being hindered by one that claimed the ground to be his.

Cæsar having bathed his sword in the blood of the senate and his own countrymen, is, after a while, miserably murdered in the senate by his own friends, Cassius and Brutus.

King Guillimet, a potent king of the Vandals, was brought so low as to entreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and a harp; a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and a harp to solace himself in his misery. A Duke of Exeter, who, though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister, yet was seen begging barefoot in the Low Countries. The Emperor Nero promoted Tigelenus to the greatest dignities of the Roman empire, but it was because he had been the private agent to his base and lascivious delights, for which he was justly deprived of his honours and life by Otho the emperor. By all these instances, and many more that might be produced, it is most evident that worldly glory is but a breath, a vapour, a froth, a phantasm, a shadow, a reflection, an apparition, a very nothing. Like the incubus or nightmare in a dream, you imagine it a substance, a weight; you grasp at it and awake, and it is nothing. Pleasure and wealth will abide a sense or two—the one a touch or taste, the other a sight of the eyes; but this of glory can neither be felt, seen, or understood. The philosophers are at strife among themselves where to fix it in any being or existence, whether in honorante, or in honorato, the giver or the taker. The inconstancy and slipperiness of it is discernible in the instances last cited. It hath raised some, but hath ruined more; and those commonly whom it hath most raised, it hath most ruined. Sir, if there be anything glorious in the world, it is a mind that divinely contemns that glory; and such a mind I judge and hope God hath given you. I have hinted a little at the vanity of worldly glory, because happily this treatise, passing up and down the world, may fall into the hands of such as may be troubled with that itch; and if so, who can tell but that that little that I have said may prove a sovereign salve to cure that Egyptian botch; and if so, I have my end.

Sir, let nothing lie so near your heart in all the world as these eight things: 1. Your sins, to humble you and abase you at the foot of God. 2. Free and rich and sovereign grace, to soften and melt you down into the will of God. 3. The Lord Jesus Christ, to assist, help, strengthen, and influence you to all the duties and services that are incumbent upon you. 4. The blessed Scriptures, to guide you and lead you, 'and to be a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your paths.' 5. The afflictions of Joseph, to draw out your charity, mercy, pity, sympathy, and compassion to men in misery. 6. The glory and happiness of another world, to arm you and steel you against all the sins, snares, and temptations that your high places, offices, and circumstances may lay you open to. 7. The grand points in this treatise, which, being laid upon your heart by the warm hand of the Spirit, are able to make you wise unto salvation, and to secure your precious and immortal soul against those pernicious and most dangerous, may I not say damnable, errors and opinions, that are preached,

printed, and cried up in this vain world, 2Pe 2:1. 2Pe 2:8. The interest of Christ and his people, which will be your honour whilst you live, your joy and comfort when you come to die, and your crown of rejoicing in the great day of our Lord, 1Th 2:19-20.

Sir, I shall not so far disgust you as to tell the world how many several score pounds of your money hath passed through my hands towards the relief, refreshment, support, and preservation of such who, for their piety and extreme poverty and necessity, were proper objects of your charity; but shall take this opportunity to tell you, and all others into whose hands this treatise may fall, that of all the duties of religion there are none, 1. More commanded than this of charity, pity, compassion, and mercy to men in misery, especially to those of 'the household of faith;' 2. There is no one duty more highly commended and extolled than this; 3. There is no one duty that hath more choice and precious promises annexed to it than this; 4. There is no one duty that hath greater rewards attending it than this. Evagrius, a rich man, being importuned by Synesius, a bishop, to give something to charitable uses, he yielded at last to give three hundred pounds; but first took bond of the bishop that it should be repaid him in another world, according to the promise of our Saviour, with a hundredfold advantage, Mat 19:29. Before he had been one day dead, he is said to have appeared to the bishop, delivering in the bond cancelled, as thereby acknowledging that what was promised was made good. It is certain, that one day's being in heaven will make a sufficient recompense for whatsoever a man has given on earth.

Neither shall I acquaint the world with those particular favours and respects which you have shewed to myself, but treasure them up in an awakened breast, and be your remembrancer at the throne of grace. Only I must let the world know that I owe you more than an epistle; and if you please to accept of this mite in part of payment, and improve it for your soul's advantage, you will put a farther obligation upon me, to study how I may farther serve the interest of your immortal soul.

Let the lustre of your prudence, wisdom, charity, fidelity, generosity, and humility of spirit shine gloriously through all your places, offices, abilities, riches, employments, and enjoyments; for this is the height of all true excellency. And that it may be so, remember for ever that the eyes of God, of Christ, of angels, of devils, of sinners, of saints, of good, of bad, are always fixed upon you. God is all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve, all grace to pardon, and he is totus oculus, all eye, to observe the thoughts, hearts, words, ways, and walkings of the children of men. As the eyes of a well-drawn picture are fastened on us, which way soever we turn, so are the eyes of the Lord. Zeno, a wise heathen, affirmeth, that God beheld even the very thoughts of men. Athenodorus, another heathen, saith that all men ought to be careful of the actions of their life, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done. Of all men on earth, magistrates and ministers had need pray with David, 'Teach us thy way, O Lord, and lead us in a plain path, because of our enemies,' Psal 27:11; or, nearer the Hebrew, 'because of our observers.' In all the ages of the world there have been Sauls and Doegs, who have looked upon God's Davids with an evil eye, and watched for their halting, Jer 20:10. There are multitudes that will be still eyeing and prying into the practices, offices, carriages, and conversations of magistrates and ministers, the more it concerns them to watch, pray, act, and walk like so many earthly angels in the midst of a crooked, perverse, and froward generation, Php 2:15.

Wise and prudent governors are an unspeakable mercy to a kingdom or commonwealth, which Jethro well understood when he gave Moses that good counsel, to make choice out of the people of grave and able men, 'such as feared God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and to make them rulers over thousands, and rulers over hundreds, over fifties, and over tens.' But in the nations round, how rare is it to find magistrates qualified, suitable to Jethro's counsel! Alphonsus, king of Spain, coming very young to the crown, some advised that seven counsellors might be joined to govern with him, who should be men fearing God, lovers of justice, free from filthy lusts, and such as would not take bribes; to which Alphonsus replied, If you can find seven such men, nay, bring me but one so qualified, and I will not only admit him to govern with me, but shall willingly resign the kingdom itself to him. Wicked policies are ever destructive to their authors; as you may see in Pharaoh, in Ahithophel, in Haman, &c., Exo 1:10, Exo 1:22; 2Sa 16:1-23 and 2Sa 23:23; Est 7:10. As long as the Roman civil magistrates, senators, and commanders of armies were chosen into places of honour and trust for their noble descent, their prudence and valour, their state did flourish, and did enlarge its dominions more in one century of years than it did in three after these places of honour came to be venal, and purchased by concession. For then men of no parts were for money promoted to highest dignities; whereupon civil contentions were fomented, factions increased, and continual bloody intestine wars maintained; by which the ancient liberties of that state were suppressed, and the last government of it changed into an imperial monarchy. As long as the chief offices of the crown of France, and the places of judicature of the realm, were given by Charles the Fifth, surnamed the Wise, to men of learning, of wisdom, and valour in recompense of their loyalty, virtue, and merits, that kingdom did flourish, with peace, honour, and prosperity;³ and the courts of parliaments of France had the honour, for their justice and equity, to be the arbitrators and umpires of all the differences that happened in those days between the greatest princes of Christendom. But when these places of honour and trust were made venal, in the reigns of Francis the Second, Charles the Ninth, and Henry the Third, and sold for ready money to such as gave most for them, then was justice and equity banished, and that flourishing kingdom reduced to the brim of ruin and desolation by variety of factions and a bloody civil war. The wicked counsel given by the Cardinal de Lorraine, and the Duke of Guise his brother, to Charles the Ninth, king of France, to allure all the Protestants to Paris, under colour of the marriage of Henry de Bourbon with Margaret de Valois, the king's sister, to have them all as in a trap, for to cut their throats in their beds, as they did for the greatest part, proved fatal to the king, to the cardinal, and the duke; for the king, by the just judgment of God, died shortly after by an issue of blood, which came out of his mouth, ears, and nostrils, and could never be stopped; and the cardinal and the duke were both slain by the commandment of Henry the Third in the castle of Blois. The barbarous policy of Philip the Second, king of Spain, to banish two or three hundred thousand Moors, with their wives and children, under colour of religion, on purpose to confiscate all their land, and to appropriate the same to his demesnes, was fatal to him and to all the Spanish nation; for by the just judgment of God he was eaten up of lice, and the Spanish nation never thrived since, &c. Were it not for exceeding the bounds of an epistle, I might shew, in all the ages of the world, how destructive the wicked policies of rulers and governors have been to themselves and the states and nations under them, &c.; but from such policies God has, and I hope will for ever, deliver your soul. Sir, the best policy in the world is to know God savingly, to serve him sincerely, to do the work of your generation thoroughly, and to secure your future happiness and blessedness effectually, &c.

Sir, I do not offer you that which cost me nothing, or little, Mal 1:13-14. God best knows the pains, the prayers, and the study that the travailing of this treatise into the world hath cost me, in the midst of trials, troubles, temptations, afflictions, and my frequent labours in the ministry. The truths that I offer for your serious consideration in this treatise are not such as I have formerly preached, in one place or another, at one time or another, but such as, at several times, the Lord has brought to hand; and, I hope, in order to the service and saving of many, many souls. And should you redeem time from your many and weighty occasions, and live to read it as often over as there be leaves in it, I am apt to think you would never repent of your pains when you come to die and make up your account with God. Sir, I must and shall say, because I love and honour you, and would have you happy to eternity, that it is your greatest wisdom, and should be your greatest care, to redeem time from your worldly business to acquaint yourself more and more with the great and main points of religion, to serve your God, to be useful in your day, and to make sure and safe work for your soul to escape hell and to get heaven, Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5; Ecc 9:10. Sir Thomas More, one of the great wits of that day, would commonly say, There is a devil called negotium, business, that carries more souls to hell than all the devils in hell beside. Many men have so many irons in the fire, and are cumbered about so many things, Luk 10:40-42, that upon the matter they wholly neglect the one thing necessary, though I hope better things of you. The stars which have the least circuit are nearest the pole, and men that are least perplexed with a crowd of worldly business are commonly nearest to God. Sir, as you love God, as you love your soul, as you love eternity, as you would be found at Christ's right hand at last, and as you would meet me with joy in the great day of the Lord, make much conscience of redeeming time daily from your secular affairs, to be with God in your closet, in your family, to read the Scriptures, to study the Scriptures, and such men's writings that are sound in the faith, and that treat of the great things of the gospel. It is dangerous crying, Cras, cras, to-morrow, to-morrow. Manna must be gathered in the morning; the orient pearl is generated by the morning dew. There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit than to know the worth and preciousness of time. Time, saith one [Bernard], were a good commodity in hell, and the traffic of it most gainful; where, for one day, a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them. One called his friends thieves, because they stole time from him. And certainly there are no worse thieves than those that rob us of our praying seasons, our hearing seasons, our mourning seasons, &c. There was an eminent minister who would often say, that he could eat the flesh off his arm in indignation against himself for his lost hours.

It was good counsel that an ancient Christian, that is now triumphing in glory, gave to another, who is still alive, Be either like Christ or Mary: the first was always doing good, the latter was still a-receiving good. This is the way to be strong in grace, and to be soon ripe for glory. Certainly time is infinitely precious in regard of what depends upon it. What more necessary than repentance? yet that depends upon time: Rev 2:21, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornications.' What more desirable than the favour of God? This depends upon time, and is therefore called 'the acceptable time,' Isa 49:8. What more excellent than salvation? this likewise depends upon time: 2Co 6:4, 'Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' Pythagoras saith that time is anima cœli, the soul of heaven. But to draw to a close, what can there be of more worth, and weight, and moment, than eternity? it is the heaven of heaven, and the very hell of hell; without which neither would heaven be so desirable nor hell so formidable. Now this depends upon time. Time is the prologue to eternity. The great weight of eternity hangs upon the small wire of time. Whether our time here be longer or shorter, upon the spending of this depends either the bliss or the bane of

body and soul to all eternity. This is our seed-time, eternity is the harvest. Whatsoever seed we sow, whether of sin or grace, it cometh up in eternity; 'Whatsoever a man soweth, the same shall he reap,' Gal 6:7-8; 2Co 9:6. This is our market-time, in Which, if we be wise merchants, we may make a happy exchange of earth for heaven, of a valley of tears for a paradise of delights. This is our working time: 'I must work the works of him that sent me; the night cometh, when no man can work,' John 9:4. According as the work is we do now, such will be our wages in eternity. Though time itself lasts not, yet whatsoever is everlasting, dependeth upon it; and therefore should be carefully improved to the best advantage for our souls, and for the making sure of such things as will go with us beyond the grave. Shall your lady live to be an honour to God, to be wise for eternity, to be a pattern of piety, humility, modesty, &c., to others, to be a joyful mother of many children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Shall you both live to see Christ formed up in your offspring, and to see their souls flourish in grace and holiness, and God bestowing himself as a portion upon them? Shall you all round be blessed with 'all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,' and shall you all round be crowned with the highest glory, happiness, and blessedness in the world to come? Shall you all live in the sense of divine love and die in the sense of divine favour? Now, to the everlasting arms of divine protection, and to the constant influences of free, rich, and sovereign grace and mercy, he commends you all, Gal 5:22-23; who is,

Sir, Your much obliged friend and soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks. TO THE READER

Christian Reader!—Some preachers in our days are like Heraclitus, who was called the dark doctor, because he affected dark speeches; so they affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases: making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard, &c. They 'darken counsel by words without knowledge,' Job 38:2. Men of abstract conceits and wise speculations are but wise fools: like the lark that soareth up on high, peering and peering, but at last falleth into the net of the fowler. Such persons commonly are as censorious as they are curious, and do Christ and his church but very, very little service in this world. The heathenish priests had their mythologies and strange canting expressions, of their imaginary unaccessible deities, to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers; and thereby to hold up their Popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. The prudent reader can tell how to make application.

If thou affectest high strains of wit, or larded, pompous, and high-flown expressions, or eloquent trappings, or fine new notions, or such things that thou mayst rather wonder at than understand, I shall not encourage thee to the perusal of this treatise. But,

First, If thou wouldst be furnished with sovereign antidotes against the most dangerous errors that are rampant in these days, then seriously peruse this treatise: 2Pe 3:16; 1Jn 4:1-3; 2Jn 1:7-11.

Secondly, If thou wouldst be established, strengthened, settled, and confirmed in the grand points of the gospel, then seriously peruse this treatise: 1Pe 5:10. But,

Thirdly, If thou wouldst know what that faith is that gives thee an interest in Christ and in all that fundamental good that comes by Christ, then seriously peruse this treatise: John 1:12, John 3:16, and John 5:24. But,

Fourthly, If thou wouldst have thy judgment rightly informed in some great truths, about which several men of note have been mistaken, then seriously peruse this treatise: 1Co 2:6-7; Psa 119:18. But,

Fifthly, If thou wouldst know what safe and excellent pleas to make to those ten scriptures that refer to the general judgment, and to thy particular day of judgment, then seriously peruse this treatise: 2Co 5:10; Heb 9:27. But,

Sixthly, If thou wouldst have thy heart brought and kept in a humble, broken, bleeding, melting, tender frame, then seriously peruse this treatise: Psa 34:18; Isa 57:15; 2Ch 34:27. But,

Seventhly, If thou wouldst always come to the Lord's table with such a frame of spirit, as Christ may take a delight to meet thee, to bless thee, to bid thee welcome, and to seal up his love and thy pardon to thee, then seriously peruse this treatise, especially that part of it where the dreadful and amazing sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in body and soul, are at large set forth: Mat 26:26-28; Luk 22:19-20; 1Co 11:23-30. But,

Eighthly, If thou wouldst have a clear sight of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, then seriously peruse this treatise: Eph 3:18; Psa 146:8. But,

Ninthly, If thou wouldst have thy love to Christ tried, raised, acted, inflamed, discovered, and augmented, &c., then seriously peruse this treatise: Song of Solomon 1:7, and Song of Solomon 8:5-7. But,

Tenthly, If thou art a strong man in Christ Jesus, and wouldst have thy head and heart exercised in the great things of God, and in the deep things of God, and in the mysterious things of God, then seriously peruse this treatise: 2Ti 2:1; Heb 5:14; 1Co 2:6-7; 1Jn 2:14. But,

Eleventhly, If thou art but a weak Christian, a babe, a little child, a shrub, a dwarf in grace, holiness, and communion with God, and in thy spiritual attainments, enjoyments, and experiences, then seriously peruse this treatise, especially the first part of it: 1Co 3:1; Heb 5:13; 1Pe 2:2; 1Jn 2:1, 1Jn 2:12-13. But,

Twelfthly, If thou wouldst know whether thou art an indulger of sin, and if thou wouldst be stocked with singular remedies against thy special sins, then seriously peruse the former part of this treatise: Job 20:11-14; Mic 6:6-7; Rom 13:14; Jas 4:3. But,

Thirteenthly, If thou wouldst be rooted, grounded, strengthened, and settled in those two grand points of the gospel, viz., the active and passive obedience of Christ, and be daily refreshed with those pleasant streams, with those waters of life that flow from thence, then seriously peruse this treatise: 1Pe 5:10; Isa 53:1-12; Heb 10:12, Heb 10:14; Gal 4:4-5; Rom 8:3-4; 2Co 5:21. But,

Fourteenthly, If thou wouldst be thoroughly acquainted with the sufferings of Christ, in his body and soul, with their greatness and grievousness, &c., and if thou wouldst understand the mighty advantages we have by his sufferings, then seriously peruse this treatise: Isa 53:1-12: and Isa 63:2; 1Pe 2:21-24; John 10:11, John 10:15, John 10:17-18. But,

Fifteenthly, If thou wouldst be able strongly to prove, against the Socinians and the high atheists of the day, and such as make so great a noise about a light within them, that there is a hell, a place

of torment, provided and prepared for all wicked and ungodly persons, then seriously peruse this treatise: Mat 25:41; Psa 9:17; Pro 5:5. But,

Sixteenthly, If thou wouldst, in a scripture-glass, see the torments of hell, and know how to avoid them, and what divine improvements to make of them, and he resolved in several questions concerning hell and hellish torments, then seriously peruse this treatise. But,

Seventeenthly, If thou wouldst be able strenuously to maintain and defend Christ's eternal deity and manhood against all corrupt teachers and gainsayers, then seriously peruse this treatise: 1Jn 1:2, 1Jn 1:7; 1Ti 2:5. But,

Eighteenthly, If thou wouldst be rooted and grounded in that great doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and be warmed, refreshed, cheered, comforted, and delighted with those choice and singular consolations that flow from thence, then seriously peruse this treatise: Jer 23:6; Isa 45:24, and Isa 61:10; 1Co 1:30. But,

Nineteenthly, If thou wouldst be set at liberty from many fears and doubts and disputes that often arise in thy soul about thy internal and eternal estate, then seriously peruse this treatise: Psa 42:5, Psa 42:11, and Psa 55:5; 2Co 7:5. But,

Twentiethly, If thou wouldst have all grace to flourish and abound in thy soul, if thou wouldst be eminently serviceable in thy generation, if thou wouldst be ripe for sufferings, for death, for heaven, if thou wouldst be temptation-proof, if thou wouldst be weaned from this world and triumph in Christ Jesus when the world triumphs over thee, then seriously peruse this treatise: Psa 92:12-14; Rom 15:13; Acts 13:36; 2Co 12:9-10; Rev 12:1; 2Co 2:14.

Reader, if thou wouldst make any earnings of thy reading this treatise, then thou must—1. Read, and believe what thou readest. 2. Thou must read, and meditate on what thou readest. 3. Thou must read, and pray over what thou readest. 4. Thou must read, and try what thou readest by the touchstone of the word. 5. Thou must read, and apply what thou readest; that plaster will never heal that is not applied, &c. 6. Thou must read, and make conscience of living up to what thou readest, and of living out what thou readest. This is the way to honour thy God, to gain profit by this treatise, to credit religion, to stop foul mouths, to strengthen weak hands, to better a bad head, to mend a bad heart, to rectify a disorderly life, and to make sure work for thy soul, for heaven, for eternity.

Reader, in a fountain sealed and treasures hid, there is little profit or comfort. No fountain to that which flows for common good, no treasures to those that lie open for public service. If thou gettest any good by reading this treatise, give God alone the glory; and remember the author when thou art in the mount with God. His prayers for thee are, that thou mayest be a knowing Christian, a sincere Christian, a growing Christian, a rooted Christian, a resolute Christian, an untainted Christian, an exemplary Christian, a humble Christian, and then he knows thou wilt be a saved Christian in the day of Christ; so he rests, who is thy cordial friend and soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks.

SERIOUS AND WEIGHTY QUESTIONS CLEARLY AND SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED The first question or case is this:—

1st Quest. What are the special remedies, means, or helps against cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience?

Before I come to the resolution of this question, I shall premise a few things that may clear my way.

1. First, When men's hearts are sincere with God; when they don't indulge, cherish, or keep up any known transgression in their hearts or lives against the Lord, they may on very good grounds plead an interest in God, in Christ, and in the covenant of grace, though their corruptions prevail against them, and too frequently worst them and lead them captive, as is most evident in these special scriptures, 2Sa 23:5; Psa 65:3; Rom 7:23, Rom 7:25; Isa 63:16-17, Isa 63:19; Jer 14:7-9; Hos 14:1-4, Hos 14:8. But now, when any man's heart doth condemn him for dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God in this or that or the other particular, or for connivings or winking at any known transgression that is kept up, either in his heart or life against the Lord, and against the light of his own conscience, which he will not let go, nor in good earnest use the means whereby it should be subdued and mortified; it is not to be expected that such a person can come to any clearness or satisfaction about their interest in Christ and the covenant of grace and their right to the great things of that other world. When a person will dally with sin, and will be playing with snares and baits, and allow a secret liberty in his heart to sin, conniving at many workings of it, and not setting upon mortification with earnest endeavours; though they are convinced, yet they are not persuaded to arise with all their might against the Lord's enemies, but do his work negligently, which is an accursed thing; and for this, God casts such a person into sore straits, and lets him wander in the dark, without any sight, sense, or assurance of their gracious estate or interest in Christ, &c. The Israelites should perfectly have rooted out the Canaanites, but because they did it but by halves, and did not engage all their power and strength against them, therefore God left them to be as 'thorns in their eyes, and as goads in their sides.' So when men have taken Christ's press-money and are engaged to fight with all their might against those rebels that war against him in their hearts, ways, and walkings, and to pursue the victory to the utmost, till their spiritual enemies lie dead at their feet, and yet they do but trifle and make slender opposition against their sins; this provokes God to stand afar off, and to hide his reconciled face from them.

It is true, when men are really in Christ, they ought not to question their state in him, but yet a guilty conscience will be clamorous and full of objections, and God will not speak peace unto it till it be humbled at his foot. God will make his dearest children know that it is a bitter thing to be bold with sin. Now, before I lay down the remedies, give me leave to shew you what it is to indulge sin, or when a man may be said to indulge or cherish, or keep up any known transgression in his soul against the Lord. Now, for a clear understanding of me in this particular, take me thus:—

[1.] First, To indulge sin or to cherish it, it is to make daily provision for it, Rom 13:14. It is to give the breast to it, and to feed it and nourish it, as fond parents do feed and humour the sick child, the darling child; it must have what it will, and do what it will, it must not be crossed. Now, when men ordinarily, habitually, commonly, are studious and laborious to make provision for sin, then sin is indulged by them. But,

[2.] Secondly, When sin is commonly, habitually, sweet and pleasant to the soul, when a man takes a daily pleasure and delight in sin, then sin is indulged. 2Th 2:12 you read of them that had

'pleasure in unrighteousness;' Isa 66:3, 'And their soul delighteth in their abominations;' Pro 2:14, 'Who rejoice to do evil,' &c.

[3.] Thirdly, When men commonly, habitually, side with sin, and take up arms in the defence of sin, and in defiance of the commands of God, the motions of the Spirit, the checks of conscience, and the reproofs of others, then sin is indulged. But,

[4.] Fourthly, When men ordinarily, habitually, do yield a quiet, free, willing, and total subjection to the authority and commands of sin, then sin is indulged. That man that is wholly addicted and devoted to the service of sin, that man indulges sin. Now in none of these senses does any godly man indulge any one sin in his soul. Though sin lives in him, yet he doth not live in sin. Every man that hath drink in him is not in drink. A child of God may slip into a sin, as a sheep may slip into the mire, but he does not, nor cannot wallow in sin as the swine does in the mire, nor yet keep on in a road of sin, as sinners do: Psa 139:24, 'See if there be any way of wickedness in me.' A course, a trade of sin is not consistent with the truth or state of grace: Job 10:7, 'Thou knowest that I am not wicked.' He doth not say, Thou knowest that I am not a sinner, or thou knowest that I have not sinned. No! for the best of saints are sinners, though the worst and weakest of saints are not wicked. Every real Christian is a renewed Christian, and every renewed Christian takes his denomination from his renovation, and not from the remainders of corruptions in him; and therefore such a one may well look God in the face and say, 'Lord thou knowest that I am not wicked;' weaknesses are chargeable upon me, but wickednesses are not chargeable upon me. And certainly that man gives a strong demonstration of his own uprightness, who dares appeal to God himself that he is not wicked. That no godly man does, or can indulge himself in any course or way or trade of sin, may be thus made evident.

[1.] First, He sins not with allowance. When he does evil, he disallows of the evil he does: Rom 7:15, 'For that which I do, I allow not.' A Christian is sometimes wherried and whirled away by sin before he is aware, or hath time to consider of it. See Psa 119:1, Psa 119:3; 1Jn 3:9; Pro 16:12.

[2.] Secondly, A godly man hates all known sin: Psa 119:128, 'I hate every false way.' True hatred is $\pi\rho\sigma\tau\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta$, against the whole kind. That contrariety to sin which is in a real Christian, springs from an inward gracious nature or principle, and so is to the whole species or kind of sin, and is irreconcilable to any sin whatsoever. As contrarieties of nature are to the whole kind, as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water; so this contrariety to all sin arising from the inward man, is universal to all sin. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; and he who hates a godly man because he is godly, he hates every godly man; and so he who hates sin because it is sin, he hates every sin: Rom 7:15, 'What I hate, that do I.'

[3.] Thirdly, Every godly man would fain have his sins not only pardoned but destroyed. His heart is alienated from his sins, and therefore nothing will serve him or satisfy him but the blood and death of his sins, Isa 2:20, and Isa 30:22; Hos 14:8; Rom 8:24. Saul hated David, and sought his life; and Haman hated Mordecai, and sought his destruction; and Absalom hated Amnon, and killed him; Julian the apostate hated the Christians, and put many thousands of them to death. The great thing that a Christian has in his eye, in all the duties he performs, and in all the ordinances that he attends, is the blood and death and ruin of his sins.

[4.] Fourthly, Every godly man groans under the burden of sin: 2Co 5:4, 'For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.' Never did any porter groan more to be delivered from his heavy burden, than a Christian groans to be delivered from the burden of sin. The burden of affliction, the burden of temptation, the burden of desertion, the burden of opposition, the burden of persecution, the burden of scorn and contempt, is nothing to the burden of sin. Ponder upon that Psa 38:4, and Psa 40:12; Rom 7:24.

[5.] Fifthly, Every godly man combats and conflicts with all known sin. In every gracious soul there is a constant and perpetual conflict. 'The flesh will be still a-lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,' Gal 5:17; Rom 7:22-23; 1Ki 14:30-31. Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whiles a believer lives in this world, they must we together; and whilst sin and grace do cohabit together, they will still be opposing and conflicting one with another.

[6.] Sixthly, Every gracious heart is still a-crying out against his sins. He cries out to God to subdue them; he cries out to Christ to crucify them; he cries out to the Spirit to mortify them; he cries out to faithful ministers to arm him against them; and he cries out to sincere Christians, that they would pray hard that he may be made victorious over them. Now certainly it is a most sure sign that sin has not gained a man's heart, a man's love, nor his consent, but committed a rape upon his soul, when he cries out bitterly against his sin. It is observable, that if the ravished virgin, under the law, cried out, she was guiltless, Deu 22:25-27. Certainly such as cry out of their sins, and that would not for all the world indulge themselves in a way of sin, such are guiltless before the Lord. That which a Christian does not indulge himself in, that he does not do in divine account. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The fixed purposes and designs of a godly man, is not to sin: Psa 17:3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress,' that is, I have laid my design so as not to sin. Though I may have many particular failings, yet my general purpose is not to sin: Psa 39:1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.' Whenever a godly man sins, he sins against the general purpose of his soul. David laid a law upon his tongue. He uses three words in the first and second verses to the same purpose, which is as if he should say in plain English, 'I was silent, I was silent, I was silent;' and all this to express how he kept in his passion, that he might not offend with his tongue. Though a godly man sins, yet he doth not purpose to sin, for his purposes are fixed against sin. Holiness is his highway; and as sin is itself a byway, so it is besides his way. The honest traveller purposes to keep straight on his way; so that if at any time he miss his way, he misses his purpose. Though Peter denied Christ, yet he did not purpose to deny Christ; yea, the settled purpose of his soul was rather to die with Christ than to deny Christ: Mat 26:35, 'Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' Interpreters agree that Peter meant as he speaks. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The settled resolutions of a gracious heart is not to sin: Psa 119:106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments;' Neh 10:28-31, dwell on it; Job 31:1, &c.; Mic 4:5, 'For all people will walk, every one in the name of his god, and we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' So Daniel and the three children.

Blessed Hooper resolves rather to be discharged of his bishopric than yield to certain ceremonies.

Jerome writes of a brave woman, who, being upon the rack, bid her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved that she would rather die than lie. The Prince of Conde being taken prisoner by Charles the Ninth of France, and put to his choice—first, whether he would go to mass; or second, be put to death; or thirdly, suffer perpetual imprisonment, answered, ‘As for the first, I will never do, by the assistance of God’s grace; and as for the other two, let the king do with me what he pleaseth, for I am very well assured that God will turn all to the best.’

‘The heavens shall as soon fall,’ said William Flower to the bishop that persuaded him to save his life by retracting, ‘as I will forsake the opinion and faith I am in, God assisting of me.’ So Marcus Arethusius chose rather to suffer a most cruel death than to give one halfpenny towards the building of an idol temple. So Cyprian, when the emperor, in the way to his execution, said, ‘Now I give thee space to consider whether thou wilt obey me in casting a grain of frankincense into the fire, or be thus miserably slain.’ ‘Nay,’ saith he, ‘there needs no deliberation in the case.’ There are many thousands of such instances scattered up and down in history.

[9.] Ninthly, There is a real willingness in every gracious soul to be rid of all sin, Rom 7:24; Hos 14:2, Hos 14:8; Job 7:21. Saving grace makes a Christian as willing to leave his sin as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags. ‘Many a day have I sought death with tears,’ saith blessed Cooper, ‘not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful of falling into it.’ Look, as the daughters of Heth even made Rebekah weary of her life, (Gen 27:46;) so corruptions within makes a gracious soul even weary of his life. A gracious soul looks upon sin with as evil and as envious an eye as Saul looked on David when the evil spirit was upon him. ‘Oh,’ saith Saul, ‘that I was but once well rid of this David;’ and oh, saith a gracious soul, that I was but once well rid of ‘this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this earthly heart, this froward heart of mine.’

[10.] Tenthly, Every godly man complains of his known sins, and mourns over his known sins, and would be fain rid of his known sins, as might be made evident out of many scores of scripture, Job 7:21; Psa 51:14; Hos 2:1-23.

[11.] Eleventhly, Every gracious soul sets himself mostly, resolutely, valiantly, and habitually against his special sins, his constitution sins, his most prevalent sins: Psa 18:23, ‘I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.’ Certainly that which is the special sin of a godly man, is his special burden; it is not delighted in, but lamented. There is no sin which costs him so much sorrow as that to which either the temper of his body or the occasions of his life leads him. That sin which he finds his heart most set upon, he sets his heart, his whole soul, most against. The Scripture gives much evidence that David, though a man after God’s own heart, was very apt to fall into the sin of lying; he used many unlawful shifts. We read of his often faltering in that kind, when he was in straits and hard put to it, 1Sa 21:2, 1Sa 21:8, and 1Sa 27:8, 1Sa 27:10, &c., but it is as clear in Scripture that his heart was set against lying, and that it was the grief and daily burden of his soul. Certainly that sin is a man’s greatest burden and grief which he prays most to be delivered from. Oh, how earnestly did David pray to be delivered from the sin of lying: Psa 119:29, ‘Keep me from the way of lying.’ And as he prayed earnestly against lying, so he as earnestly detested it: Psa 119:163, ‘I hate and abhor lying.’ Though lying was David’s special sin, yet he hated and abhorred it as he did hell itself. And he tells us how he was affected, or afflicted

rather, with that sin, whatsoever it was, which was his iniquity: Psa 31:10, 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighings; my strength faileth, and my bones are consumed,' or moth-eaten, as the Hebrew has it. Here are deep expressions of a troubled spirit; and why all this? Mark, he gives you the reason of it in the same verse, 'because of mine iniquity:' as if he had said, there is a base corruption which so haunts and dogs me, that my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. He found, it seems, his heart running out to some sin or other, which yet was so far from being a beloved sin, a bosom sin, a darling sin, that it was the breaking of his heart and the consumption of his bones. So Psa 38:18, 'I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.' There is no sin that a gracious heart is more perfectly set against than against his special sin; for by this sin God first has been most dishonoured; and secondly, Christ most crucified; and thirdly, the Spirit most grieved; and fourthly, conscience most wounded; and fifthly, Satan most advantaged; and sixthly, mercies most embittered; and seventhly, duties most hindered; and eighthly, fears and doubts most raised and increased; and ninthly, afflictions most multiplied; and tenthly, death made most formidable and terrible; and therefore he breaks out against this sin with the greatest detestation and abhorrency. Ephraim's special sin was idolatry, Hos 4:17; he thought the choicest gold and silver in the world hardly good enough to frame his idols of. But when it was the day of the Lord's gracious power upon Ephraim, then he thought no place bad enough to cast his choicest idols into, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Hos 14:8; Isa 2:20, and Isa 30:22. True grace will make a man stand stoutly and steadfastly on God's side, and work the heart to take part with him against a man's special sins, though they be as right hands or right eyes. True grace will lay hands upon a man's special sins, and cry out to heaven, 'Lord, crucify them, crucify them; down with them, down with them, even to the ground: Lord, do justice, do speedy justice, do signal justice, do exemplary justice upon these special sins of mine: Lord, hew down root and branch; let the very stumps of this Dagon be broken all in pieces: Lord, curse this wild fig-tree, that never more fruit may grow thereon.' But,

[12.] Twelfthly, There is no time wherein a gracious soul cannot sincerely say with the apostle in that Heb 13:18, 'Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willingly to live honestly.' Gracious hearts affect that which they cannot effect. So Acts 24:16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men;' in all cases, in all places, by all means, and at all times. A sincere Christian labours to have a good conscience, void of offence towards God and towards men: Pro 16:17, 'The highway of the upright is to depart from evil,' that is, it is the ordinary, usual, constant course of an upright man to depart from evil. An honest traveller may step out of the king's highway into a house, a wood, a close; but his work, his business, is to go on in the king's highway; so the business, the work, of an upright man is to depart from evil. It is possible for an upright man to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts; but his main way, his principal work and business, is to depart from iniquity; as a bee may light upon a thistle, but her work is to be gathering at flowers; or as a sheep may slip into the dirt, but its work is to be grazing upon the mountains or in the meadows. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly and lastly, Jesus Christ is the real Christian's only beloved; he is the saint's only darling: Song of Solomon 2:3, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons;' Song of Solomon 2:8, 'The voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills;' Song of Solomon 2:9, 'My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart;' Song of Solomon 2:10, 'My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my

fair one, and come away;' Song of Solomon 2:17, 'Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether;' Song of Solomon 4:16, 'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.' Seven times Christ is called 'the beloved of his spouse' in the fifth of Canticles, and twice in the sixth chapter, and four times in the seventh chapter, and once in the eighth chapter. In this book of Solomon's Song, Christ is called the church's beloved just twenty times. I might turn you to many other scriptures, but in the mouth of twenty witnesses you may be very clearly and fully satisfied that Jesus Christ is the saints' beloved.

1. When the Dutch martyr was asked whether he did not love his wife and children, he answered, 'Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hand to dispose of, I would give it to live with my wife and children in a prison, but Christ is dearer to me than all.' 2. Saith Jerome, 'If my father should stand before me, and if my mother should hang upon me, and my brethren should press about me, I would break through my brethren, throw down my mother, and tread under foot my father, that I might cleave the faster and closer unto Jesus Christ.' 3. That blessed virgin in Basil, being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her if she would worship idols, cried out, 'Let money perish and life vanish, Christ is better than all.' 4. Love made Jerome to say, 'Oh, my Saviour, didst thou die for love of me, a love more dolorous than death, but to me a death more lovely than love itself. I cannot live, love thee, and be longer from thee.' 5. Henry Voes said, 'If I had ten heads, they should all off for Christ.' 6. John Ardley, martyr, said, 'If every hair of my head were a man, they should all suffer for the faith of Christ,' 7. Ignatius said, 'Let fire, racks, pulleys, yea, and all the torments of hell, come on me, so I may win Christ.' 8. George Carpenter, being asked whether he loved not his wife and children, when they all wept before them, answered, 'My wife and children are dearer to me than all Bavaria, yet for the love of Christ I know them not.' 9. 'O Lord Jesus,' said Bernard, 'I love thee more than all my goods, and I love thee more than all my friends, yea, I love thee more than my very self.' 10. Austin saith he would willingly go through hell to Christ. 11. Another saith, 'He had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ than in heaven without him.' 12. Another cries out, 'I had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds;' by all which it is most evident that Jesus Christ is the saint's best beloved, and not this or that sin.

Now by these thirteen arguments it is most clear that no gracious Christian does or can indulge himself in any trade, course, or way of sin.

Yea, by these thirteen arguments it is most evident that no godly man has, or can have, any one beloved sin, any one bosom, darling sin, though many worthy ministers, both in their preaching and writings, make a great noise about the saints' beloved sins, about their bosom, darling sins. I readily grant that all unregenerate persons have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins; but that no such sins are chargeable upon the regenerate is sufficiently demonstrated by the thirteen arguments last cited; and oh that this were wisely and seriously considered of, both by ministers and Christians! There is no known sin that a godly man is not troubled at, and that he would not be rid of. There is as much difference between sin in a regenerate person and in an unregenerate person, as there is between poison in a man and poison in a serpent. Poison in a man's body is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all arts and antidotes to expel it and get rid; but poison in a serpent, is in its natural place, and is most pleasing and delightful: so sin in a regenerate man is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all holy means and antidotes to expel it and to get rid of it. But sin in an unregenerate man is most pleasing and

delightful, it being in its natural place. A godly man still enters his protest against sin. A gracious soul, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits.

O sirs! there is a vast difference between a special and a beloved sin, a darling sin, a bosom sin. Noah had a sin, and Lot had a sin, and Jacob had a sin, and Job had a sin, and David had a sin. which was his special sin; but neither of these had any sin which was their beloved sin, their bosom sin, their darling sin. That passage in Job 31:33 is observable, 'If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.' Mark, in this text, while Job calleth some sin or other his iniquity, he denieth that he had any beloved sin; for saith he, 'Did I hide it in my bosom? did I shew it any favour? did I cherish it or nourish it, or keep it warm in my bosom? Oh, no; I did not.' A godly man may have many sins, yet he hath not one beloved sin, one bosom sin, one darling sin; he may have some particular sin, to which the unregenerate part of his will may strongly incline, and to which his unmortified affections may run out with violence to; yet he hath no sin he bears any good-will to, or doth really or cordially affect. Mark, that may be called a man's particular way of sinning, which yet we cannot, we may not call his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin; for it may be his greatest grief and torment, and may cost him more sorrow and tears than all the rest of his sins; it may be a tyrant usurping power over him, when it is not the delight and pleasure of his soul. A godly man may be more prone to fall into some one sin rather than another; it may be passion, or pride, or slavish fear, or worldliness, or hypocrisy, or this, or that, or t'other vanity; yet are not these his beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins; for these are the enemies he hates and abhors; these are the grand enemies that he prays against, and complains of, and mourns over; these are the potent rebels that his soul cries out most against, and by which his soul suffers the greatest violence. Mark, no sin, but Christ, is the dearly beloved of a Christian's soul; Christ, and not this sin or that, is 'the chiefest of ten thousand' to a gracious soul; and yet some particular corruption or other may more frequently worst a believer and lead him captive; but then the believer cries out most against that particular sin. Oh, saith he, this is mine iniquity; this is the Saul, the Pharaoh that is always a-pursuing after the blood of my soul. Lord! let this Saul fall by the sword of thy Spirit; let this Pharaoh be drowned in the Red Sea of thy son's blood. O sirs, it is a point of very great importance for gracious souls to understand the vast difference that there is between a beloved sin and this or that particular sin, violently tyrannising over them; for this is most certain, whosoever giveth up himself freely, willingly, cheerfully, habitually, to the service of any one particular lust or sin, he is in the state of nature, under wrath, and in the way to eternal ruin.

Now a little to shew the vanity, folly, and falsehood of that opinion that is received and commonly avowed by ministers and Christians—viz., that every godly person hath his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin—seriously and frequently consider with me of these following particulars:—

[1.] First, That this opinion is not bottomed or founded upon any clear scripture or scriptures, either in the Old or New Testament.

[2.] Secondly, This opinion that is now under consideration runs counter-cross to all those thirteen arguments but now alleged, and to all those scores of plain scriptures by which those arguments are confirmed.

[3.] Thirdly, This opinion that is now under consideration has a great tendency to harden and strengthen wicked men in their sins; for when they shall hear and read that the saints, the dearly

beloved of God, have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, what inferences will they not be ready to make! What are these they call saints? wherein are they better than us? Have we our beloved sins? so have they. Have we our bosom sins? so have they. Have we our darling sins? so have they. They have their beloved sins, and yet are beloved of God; and why not we—why not we? Saints have their beloved sins, and yet God is kind to them; and why then not to us, why not to us also? Saints have their beloved sins, and yet God will save them; and why then should we believe that God will damn us? Saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, and therefore certainly they are not to be so dearly loved, and highly prized, and greatly honoured as ministers would make us believe. Saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, and therefore what iniquity is it to account and call them hypocrites, deceivers, dissemblers, that pretend they have a great deal of love to God, and love to Christ, and love to his word, and love to his ways? and yet for all this they have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins. Surely these men's hearts are not right with God: with much more to the same purpose.

[4.] Fourthly, If Christ be really the saints' beloved, then sin is not their beloved. But Christ is the saints' beloved, as I have formerly clearly proved; and therefore sin is not the beloved. A man may as well serve two masters, as have two beloveds—viz., a beloved Christ and a beloved lust.

[5.] Fifthly, Those supernatural graces or those divine qualities that are infused into the soul at first conversion, are contrary to all sin, and opposite to all sin, and engages the heart against all sin; and therefore a converted person can have no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin. Seriously weigh this argument.

[6.] Sixthly, This opinion may fill many weak Christians with many needless fears, doubts, and jealousies about their spiritual and eternal conditions. Weak Christians are very apt to reason thus: Surely my conversion is not sound; my spiritual estate is not good; my heart is not right with God; a saving work has never yet passed upon me in power; I fear I have not the root of the matter in me; I fear I have never had a thorough change; I fear I have never yet been effectually called out of darkness into his marvellous light; I fear I have never yet been espoused to Christ; I fear the Spirit of God hath never taken up my heart for his habitation; I fear that after all my high profession I shall at last be found a hypocrite; I fear the execution of that dreadful sentence, Mat 25:41, 'Go ye cursed,' &c. And why all this? O poor soul answer [not] because I carry about with me my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins. Ministers had need be very wary in their preaching and writing, that they don't bring forth fuel to feed the fears and doubts of weak Christians, it being a great part of their work to arm weak Christians against their fears and faintings. But,

[7.] Seventhly, This opinion that is now under consideration, is an opinion that is very repugnant to sound and sincere repentance; for sound, sincere repentance includes and takes in a divorce, an alienation, a detestation, a separation, and a turning from all sin, without exception or reservation. One of the first works of the Spirit upon the soul, is the dividing between all known sin and the soul; it is a making an utter breach betwixt all sin and the soul; it is a dissolving of that old league that has been between a sinner and his sins, yea, between a sinner and his beloved lusts. One of the first works of the Spirit is to make a man to look upon all his sins as enemies, yea, as his greatest enemies, and to deal with his sins as enemies, and to hate and loathe them as enemies, and to fear them as enemies, and to arm against them as enemies. Seriously ponder upon these

scriptures, Eze 18:28, Eze 18:30-31; Eze 6:1-14; 2Co 7:1; Psa 119:101, Psa 119:104, Psa 119:128. True repentance is a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. He never truly repented of any sin, whose heart is not turned against every sin. The true penitent casts off all the rags of old Adam; he is for throwing down every stone of the old building; he will not leave a horn nor a hoof behind. The reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a penitent soul. There are the same reasons and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin, as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin because the Lord has forbid it? Why! upon the same ground you must turn from every sin; for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all. He that turns from any one sin, because it is a transgression of the holy and righteous law of God, he will turn from every sin upon the same account. He that turns from any one sin because it is a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a wound to religion, &c., will upon the same grounds turn from every sin.

Quest. But wherein does a true penitential turning from all sin consist? Ans. In these six things;—

First, In the alienation and inward aversation and drawing off of the soul from the love and liking of all sin, and from all free and voluntary subjection unto sin, the heart being filled with a loathing and detestation of all sin, [Psa 119:104, Psa 119:128,] as that which is most contrary to all goodness and happiness.

Secondly, In the will's detestation and hatred of all sin. When the very bent and inclination of the will is set against all sin, and opposes and crosses all sin, and is set upon the ruin and destruction of all sin, then the penitent is turned from all sin, Rom 7:15, Rom 7:19, Rom 7:21, Rom 7:23; Isa 30:22; Hos 14:8, When the will stands upon such terms of defiance with all sin, as that it will never enter into a league of friendship with any sin, then is the soul turned from every sin.

Thirdly, In the judgment's turning away from all sin, by disapproving, disallowing, and condemning all sin, Rom 7:15. Oh! saith the judgment of a Christian, sin is the greatest evil in all the world; it is the only thing God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the cross, that damns souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundations of hell! Oh! it is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh! sin is that which hath hindered my prayers, and imbittered my mercies, and put a sting into all my crosses; and therefore I can't but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death, yea, to hell, from whence it came.

Fourthly, In the purpose and resolution of the soul; the soul sincerely purposing and resolving never willingly, wilfully, or wickedly to transgress any more, Psa 17:3. The general purpose and resolution of my heart is not to transgress. Though particular failings may attend me, yet my resolutions and purposes are firmly set against doing evil, Psa 39:1. The true penitent holds up his purposes and resolutions to keep off from sin, and to keep close with God, though he be not able in everything and at all times to make good his purposes and resolutions, &c. But,

Fifthly, In the earnest and unfeigned desires, and careful endeavours of the soul to abandon all sin, to forsake all sin, and to be rid of all sin, Rom 7:22-23. You know when a prudent, tender, indulgent father sees his child to fail and come short in that which he enjoins him to do; yet

knowing that his desires and endeavours is to please him, and serve him, he will not be harsh, rigid, sour, or severe towards him, but will spare him, and exercise much tenderness and indulgence towards him; and will God, will God whose mercies reach above the heavens, and whose compassions are infinite, and whose love is like himself, carry it worse towards his children than men do carry it towards theirs? Surely no. God's fatherly indulgence accepts of the will for the work, Heb 13:18; 2Co 8:12. Certainly, a sick man is not more desirous to be rid of all his diseases, nor a prisoner to be freed from all his bolts and chains, than the true penitent is desirous to be rid of all his sins.

Sixthly and lastly, In the common and ordinary declining, shunning, and, avoiding of all known occasions of sin, yea, and all temptations, provocations, inducements, and enticements to sin, &c. That royal law, 1Th 5:22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' is a law that is very precious in a penitent man's eye, and commonly lies warm upon a penitent man's heart; so that take him in his ordinary course, and you shall find him very ready to shun and be shy of the very appearance of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin. Job made 'a covenant with his eyes,' Job 31:1; and Joseph would not hearken to his bold tempting mistress, 'to lie by her, or to be with her,' Gen 39:10; and David when himself, would not 'sit with vain persons,' Psa 26:3-5. Now a true penitential turning from all sins lies in these six things: and therefore you had need look about you; for if there be any one way of wickedness wherein you walk, and which you are resolved you will not forsake, you are no true penitents, and you will certainly lose your souls, and be miserable for ever.

[8.] This opinion that is now under consideration, is an opinion that will exceedingly deject many precious Christians, and cause them greatly to hang down their heads, especially in four days. 1. In the day of common calamity; 2. In the day of personal affliction; 3. In the day of death; 4. In the great day of account.

First, In a day of common calamity, when the sword is drunk with the blood of the slain, or when the raging pestilence lays thousands in heap upon heap, or when fevers, agues, gripes, and other diseases carry hundreds every week to their long homes. Oh, now the remembrance of a man's beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins—if a saint had any such sins—will be very apt to fill his soul with fears, dreads, and perplexities. Surely now God will meet with me, now God will avenge himself on me for my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins! Oh, how righteous a thing is it with God, because of my beloved lusts, to sweep me away by these sweeping judgments that are abroad in the earth! On the contrary, how sweet and comfortable a thing is it, when in a day of common calamity a Christian can appeal to God, and appeal to conscience, that though he has many weaknesses and infirmities that hang upon him, that yet he has no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin, that either God or conscience can charge upon him. Oh, such a consideration as this may be as life from the dead to a gracious Christian, in the midst of all the common calamities that does surround him and that hourly threaten him.

Secondly, In the day of personal afflictions, when the smarting rod is upon him, and God writes bitter things against him; when the hand of the Almighty has touched him in his name, estate, relations, &c. Oh, now the remembrance of a man's beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins—if a saint had any such sins—will be as 'the handwriting upon the wall,' Dan 5:5-6, 'that will make his countenance to be changed, his thoughts to be troubled, his joints to be loosed, and his

knees to be dashed one against another.' Oh, now a Christian will be ready to conclude, Oh, it is my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins that has caused God to put this bitter cup into my hand, and that has provoked him to 'give me gall and wormwood to drink,' Lam 3:19. Whereas on the contrary, when a man under all his personal trials, though they are many and great, yet can lift up his head and appeal to God and conscience, that though he has many sinful weaknesses and infirmities hanging upon him, yet neither God nor conscience can charge upon him any beloved sins, any bosom sins, any darling sins. Oh, such a consideration as this will help a man to bear up bravely, sweetly, cheerfully, patiently, and contentedly, under the heaviest hand of God, as is evident in that great instance of Job. Who so sorely afflicted as Job? and yet no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin being chargeable upon him by God or conscience, [Job 10:7, and Job 31:33,] how bravely, sweetly, and Christianly does Job bear up under those sad changes and dreadful providences that would have broke a thousand of such men's hearts, upon whom God and conscience could charge beloved sins, bosom sins, darling sins! But,

Thirdly, In the day of death; Death is the king of terrors, as Job speaks; and the 'terror of kings,' as the philosopher speaks. Oh how terrible will this king of terrors be to that man upon whom God and conscience can charge beloved sins, bosom sins, darling sins. This is certain, when a wicked man comes to die, all the sins that ever he committed don't so grieve him and terrify him, so sad him and sink him, and raise such horrors and terrors in him, and put him into such a hell on this side hell, as his beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins; and had saints their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, ah, what a hell of horror and terror would these sins raise in their souls, when they come to lie upon a dying bed! But now when a child of God shall lie upon a dying bed, and shall be able to say, 'Lord, thou knowest, and conscience thou knowest, that though I have had many and great failings, yet there are no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins, that are chargeable upon me! Lord, thou knowest, and conscience thou knowest: 1. That there is no known sin that I don't hate and abhor. 2. That there is no known sin that I don't combat and conflict with. 3. That there is no known sin that I don't grieve and mourn over. 4. That there is no known sin that I would not presently, freely, willingly, and heartily be rid of. 5. That there is no known sin that I don't in some weak measure endeavour in the use of holy means to be delivered from. 6. That there is no known sin, the effectual subduing and mortifying of which would not administer matter of the greatest joy and comfort to me!' Now, when God and conscience shall acquit a man upon a dying bed of beloved sins, of bosom sins, of darling sins, who can express the joy, the comfort, the peace, the support that such an acquittance will fill a man with?

Fourthly, In the day of account, the very thoughts of which day, to many, is more terrible than death itself. Such Christians as are captivated under the power of this opinion, viz., that the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, such cannot but greatly fear and tremble to appear before the tribunal of God. Oh, saith such poor hearts, how shall we be able to answer for our beloved sins, our bosom sins, our darling sins. As for infirmities, weaknesses, and follies that has attended us, we can plead with God, and tell him, Lord! when grace has been weak, corruptions strong, temptations great, and thy Spirit withdrawn, and we off from our watch, we have been worsted and captivated! But what shall we say as to our beloved sins, our bosom sins, our darling sins? Oh, these fill us with terror and horror, and how shall we be able to hold up our heads before the Lord, when he shall reckon with us for these sins! But now when a poor child of God thinks of the day of account, and is able, through grace, to say, 'Lord, though we cannot

clear ourselves of infirmities, and many sinful weaknesses, yet we can comfortably appeal to thee and our consciences that we have no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins!' Oh, with what comfort, confidence, and boldness will such poor hearts hold up their heads in the day of account, when a Christian can plead those six things before a judgment-seat, that he pleaded in the third particular, when he lay upon a dying bed! how will his fears vanish, and how will his hopes and heart revive, and how comfortably and boldly will he stand before a judgment-seat! But,

[9.] Ninthly, This opinion that is now under consideration, has a very great tendency to discourage and deaden the hearts of Christians to the most noble and spiritual duties of religion—viz., 1. Praising of God; 2. Delighting in God; 3. Rejoicing in God; 4. Admiring of God; 5. Taking full content and satisfaction in God; 6. Witnessing for God, his truth, his ordinances, and ways; 7. To self-trial and self-examination; 8. To the making of their calling and election sure. I cannot see with what comfort, confidence, or courage such souls can apply themselves to the eight duties last mentioned, who lie under the power of this opinion, viz., that saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins. But now when a Christian is clear, and he can clear himself, as every sincere Christian can, of beloved sins, of bosom sins, of darling sins, how is he upon the advantage ground to fall in roundly with all the eight duties last mentioned! But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, This opinion that is now under consideration, has a very great tendency to discourage multitudes of Christians from coming to the Lord's table. I would willingly know with what comfort, with what confidence, with what hope, with what expectation of good from God, or of good from the ordinance, can such souls draw near to the Lord's table, who lie under the power of this opinion or persuasion, that they carry about with them their bosom sins, their beloved sins, their darling sins. How can such souls expect that God should meet with them in the ordinance, and bless the ordinance to them? How can such souls expect that God should make that great ordinance to be strengthening, comforting, refreshing, establishing, and enriching unto them? How can such souls expect, that in that ordinance God should seal up to them his eternal loves, their interest in Christ, their right to the covenant, their title to heaven, and the remission of their sins, who bring to his table their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins? But now when the people of God draw near to the table of the Lord, and can appeal to God, that though they have many sinful failings and infirmities hanging upon them, yet they have no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins that they carry about with them; how comfortably and confidently may they expect that God will make that great ordinance a blessing to them, and that in time all those glorious ends for which that ordinance was appointed shall be accomplished in them, and upon them!

Now, by these ten arguments, you may see the weakness and falseness, yea, the dangerous nature of that opinion that many worthy men have so long preached, maintained, and printed to the world, viz., That the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins; neither do I wonder that they should be so sadly out in this particular, when I consider how apt men are to receive things by tradition, without bringing of things to a strict examination; and when I consider what strange definitions of faith many famous, worthy men have given, both in their writings and preachings; and when I consider what a mighty noise many famous men have made about legal preparations, before men presume to close with Christ, or to give up themselves in a marriage covenant to Christ, most of them requiring men to be better Christians before they come to Christ, than commonly they prove after they are implanted into Christ, &c.

Now, though I have said enough, I suppose, to lay that opinion asleep that has been last under consideration, viz., That the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, yet for a close of this discourse, premise with me these five things:

[1.] First, That all unconverted persons have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Jews was idolatry. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Corinthians was uncleanness, wantonness, 1Co 6:15, 1Co 6:20. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Cretans was lying, Tit 2:12. Jeroboam's beloved sin was idolatry, and Cain's beloved sin was envy, and Korah's beloved sin was gainsaying, and Esau's beloved sin was profaneness, and Ishmael's beloved sin was scoffing, and Balaam's beloved sin was ambition; Simeon and Levi's beloved sin was treachery, Manasseh's beloved sin was cruelty, and Nebuchadnezzar's beloved sin was pride, and Herod's beloved sin was uncleanness, and Judas his beloved sin was covetousness, and the young man's beloved sin in that 19th of Matthew was worldly-mindedness, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Premise this with me, that the elect of God, before their conversion, had their beloved sins. Manasseh's beloved sin was cruelty; and Ephraim's beloved sin, before conversion, was idolatry, Hos 4:17; and Zaccheus his beloved sin before conversion was worldly-mindedness and defrauding of others; and Paul's beloved sin, before conversion, was persecution; and the jailer's beloved sin, before conversion, was cruelty; and Mary Magdalene's beloved sin, before conversion, was wantonness and uncleanness, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Premise this with me, viz., that after conversion there is no sin that the heart of a Christian is more seriously, more frequently, more resolutely, and more perfectly set against than that which was once his beloved lust. The hatred, detestation, and indignation of a converted person breaks out and discovers itself most against that sin which was once a beloved sin, a bosom sin, a darling sin; his care, his fear, his jealousy, his watchfulness is most exercised against that sin which was once the darling of his soul. The converted person eyes this sin as an old enemy; he looks upon this sin as the sin by which God has been most dishonoured, and his own conscience most enslaved, and his immortal soul most endangered, and Satan most advantaged, and accordingly his spirit rises against it, Hos 14:8; Isa 2:20, and Isa 30:22. And all Christians' experience confirms this truth; but of this more before.

[4.] Fourthly, After conversion, a Christian endeavours to be most eminent in that particular grace which is most contrary and opposite to that sin which was once his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin. Zaccheus his beloved sin was worldliness and defrauding, but, being converted, he labours to excel in restitution and liberality; the jailer's beloved sin was severity and cruelty, but, being converted, he labours to excel in pity and courtesy; Paul's beloved sin was persecution, but, being converted, how mightily does he bestir himself to convert souls, and to edify souls, and to build up souls, and to strengthen souls, and to establish souls, and to encourage souls in the ways of the Lord—he gives it you under his own hand, 'That he laboured more abundantly than they all,' 2Co 11:23; Austin's beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin, before his conversion, was wantonness and uncleanness; but, when he was converted, he was most careful and watchful to arm against that sin, and to avoid all temptations and occasions that might lead him to it afterwards. If a man's beloved sin, before conversion, has been worldliness, then after conversion he will labour above all to excel in heavenly-mindedness; or if his sin, his beloved sin, has been

pride, then he will labour above all to excel in humility; or if his beloved sin has been intemperance, then he will labour above all to excel in temperance and sobriety; or if his beloved sin has been wantonness and uncleanness, then he will labour above all to excel in all chastity and purity; or if his beloved sin has been oppressing of others, then he will labour above all to excel in piety and compassion towards others; or if his beloved sin has been hypocrisy, then he will labour above all to excel in sincerity, &c. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Though no godly man, though no sincere gracious Christian hath any beloved sin, and bosom, darling sin, yet there is no godly man, there is no sincere gracious soul, but has some sin or other to which they are more prone than to others. Every real Christian hath his inclination to one kind of sin rather than another, which may be called his special sin, his peculiar sin, or his own iniquity, as David speaks in Psa 18:23. Now the main power of grace and of uprightness is mainly seen and exercised in a man's keeping of himself from his iniquity. Now that special, that peculiar sin, to which a gracious soul may be most prone and addicted to may arise—1. From the temperament and constitution of his body. The complexion and constitution of a man's body may be a more prepared instrument for one vice rather than another; or, 2. It may arise from his particular calling. Christians have distinct and particular callings that incline them to particular sins. For instance, the soldier's calling puts him upon rapine and violence: Luk 3:14, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.' And the tradesman's calling puts him upon lying, deceiving, defrauding, and overreaching his brother. And the minister's calling puts him upon flattering of the gallants and great ones of his parish, and upon pleasing the rest by speaking of smooth things, Isa 30:10, 'and by sewing of pillows under their elbows,' Eze 13:18, Eze 13:20. And the magistrates', judges', and justices' employments lays them open to oppression, bribery, injustice, &c. If Christians are not very much upon their watch, their very callings and offices may prove a very great snare to their souls; or, 3. It may arise from his outward state and condition in this world, whether his state be a state of prosperity or a state of adversity, or whether he be in a marriage state or in a single state. Many times a man's outward state and condition in this world hath a strong influence upon him to incline him to this or that particular sin as best suiting with his condition; or, 4. It may arise from distinct and peculiar ages; for it is certain that distinct and peculiar ages do strongly incline persons to distinct and peculiar sins. Youth inclines to wantonness and prodigality; and manhood to pride and ambition; and old age to covetousness and frowardness. Common experience tells us that many times wantonness is the sinner's darling in the time of his youth, and worldliness his darling in the time of his age; and without controversy, Christians' distinct and peculiar ages may more strongly incline them to this or that sin rather than any other; or, 5. It may arise from that distinct and particular way of breeding and education which he has had. Now to arm such Christians against their special sins, their peculiar sins—whose sins are advantaged against them, either by their constitutions and complexion, or else by their particular calling, or else by their outward state and condition, or else by their distinct and peculiar ages, or else by their particular way of breeding and education—is my present work and business; for though the reigning power of this or that special peculiar sin be broken in a man's conversion, yet the remaining life and strength that is still left in those corruptions, will by Satan be improved against the growth, peace, comfort, and assurance of the soul. Satan will strive to enter in at the same door; and by the same Delilah, by which he hath betrayed and wounded the soul, he will do all he can to do the soul a further mischief. Satan will be still a-reminding of the soul of those former sweets, pleasures, profits, delights, and contents that

have come in upon the old score, so that it will be a hard thing, even for a godly man, to keep himself from his iniquity, from his special or peculiar sin, which the fathers commonly call, though not truly, peccatum in deliciis, a man's special darling and beloved sin. Well, Christians, remember this once for all, viz., that sound conversion includes a noble and serious revenge upon that sin which was once a man's beloved, bosom, darling sin: 2Co 7:11, 'Yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge.' You see this in Cranmer, who when he had subscribed with his right hand to that which was against his conscience, he afterwards, as a holy revenge, put that right hand into the flames; so Mary Magdalene takes that hair of hers. Of all sins, saith the sound convert, I am resolved to be avenged on my once beloved, bosom, darling sins, by which I have most dishonoured God, and wronged my own precious and immortal soul, and by which I have most endangered my everlasting estate.

Having thus cleared up my way, I shall now endeavour to lay before you some special remedies, means, or helps against cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience.

1. First, Cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience, will hinder assurance these several ways:—

[1.] First, It will abate the degrees of our graces, and so make them more undiscernible. Now grace rather in its degrees than in its sincerity, or simple being only, is that which gives the clearest evidence of a gracious estate, or of a man's interest in Christ. Sin, lived in, is like a vermin to the tree, which destroys the fruit. Grace cannot thrive in a sinful heart. In some soil, plants will not grow. The cherishing of sin is the withering of grace. The casting of a favourable eye on any one special sin hinders the growth of grace. If a man has a choice plant or flower in his garden, and it withers and shrivels and is dying, he opens the ground and looks at the root, and there finds a worm gnawing the root; and this is the cause of the flower's fading: the application is easy.

[2.] Secondly, The cherishing of any special peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, and against the light of a man's own conscience, will hinder the lively actings and exercise of grace; it will keep grace at an under, so that it will hardly be seen to stir or act; yea, it will keep grace so down that it will hardly be heard to speak. When a special or peculiar sin is entertained, it will exceedingly mar the vigorous exercises of those graces which are the evidences of a lively faith, and of a gracious state, and of a man's interest in Christ. Grace is never apparent and sensible to the soul, but while it is in action; therefore want of action must needs cause want of assurance. Habits are not felt immediately but by the freeness and facility of their acts; of the very being of the soul itself, nothing is felt or perceived, but only its acts. The fire that lieth still in the flint, is neither seen nor felt; but when you smite it and force it into act, it is easily discernible. For the most part, so long as a Christian hath his graces in lively action, so long he is assured of them. He that would be assured that this sacred fire of grace is in his heart, he must blow it up and get it into a flame. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The cherishing of any special sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression in heart or life against the Lord and against the light of a man's own conscience, so blears, dims, and darkens the eye of the soul, that it cannot see its own condition, nor have any clear knowledge of

its gracious state, or of its interest in Christ, &c. Sometimes men in riding raise such a dust that they can neither see themselves nor their dearest friends, so as to distinguish one from another: the application is easy. The room sometimes is so full of smoke that a man cannot see the jewels, the treasures that lie before him; so it is here. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord or against the light of a man's own conscience, provokes the Lord to withdraw himself, his comforts, and the gracious presence and assistance of his blessed Spirit; without which presence and assistance the soul may search and seek long enough for assurance, comfort, and a sight of a man's interest in Christ, before it will enjoy the one or see the other. If by keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, you set the Holy Spirit a-mourning, which alone can comfort you, and assure you of your interest in Christ, you may walk long enough without comfort and assurance, Lam 1:16. 'The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me;' so in that 1Jn 3:21, it is supposed that a self-condemning heart makes void a man's confidence before God. The precious jewel of faith can be holden in no other place, but in a pure conscience; that is the only royal palace wherein it must and will dwell: 1Ti 1:19, 'Holding faith and a good conscience.' Heb 10:22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' He that comes to God with a true, honest, upright heart, being sprinkled from an evil conscience, may draw near to God in full assurance of faith; whereas guilt clouds, clogs, and distracts the soul, that it can never be with God, either as it would or as it should. *Conscientia pura semper secunda*, a good conscience hath sure confidence. Conscience is *mille testes*, a thousand witnesses for or against a man. Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom. It is better, with Evagrius, to lie secure on a bed of straw, than to have a turbulent conscience on a bed of down. It was a divine saying of Seneca, a heathen, viz., 'That if there were no God to punish him, no devil to torment him, no hell to burn him, no man to see him; yet would he not sin, for the ugliness of sin, and the grief of his own conscience.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression, in heart or life, against the Lord, and against the light of a man's own conscience, will greatly hinder his high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ, and so it will keep him from comfort, assurance, and sight of his interest in him, so that sometimes his dearest children are constrained to cry out, 'God is departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dream nor vision, neither this way nor that,' 1Sa 28:15. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The greatest and most common cause of the want of assurance, comfort, and peace, is some unmortified lust, some secret, special, peculiar sin, unto which men give entertainment, or at least, which they do not so vigorously oppose, and heartily renounce as they should and might. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*, and this is that which casts them on sore straits and difficulties. And how should it be otherwise, seeing God, who is infinitely wise, holy, and righteous, either cannot or will not reveal the secrets of his love to those who harbour his known enemies in their bosoms? The great God either cannot or will not regard the whinings and complainings of those who play or dally with that very sin which galls their consciences, and connive and wink at the stirrings and workings of that very lust for which he hides his face from them, and writes 'bitter things against them.' Mark, all fears and doubts and scruples are begotten upon sin, either real or imaginary. Now, if the sin be but imaginary, an enlightened rectified judgment may easily and quickly scatter such fears, doubts, and scruples, as the sun doth mists and clouds, when it shines in its brightness; but if the

sin be real, then there is no possibility of curing those fears, doubts, and scruples arising from thence, but by an unfeigned repentance and returning from that sin. Now, if I should produce all the scriptures and instances that stand ready pressed to prove this, I must transcribe a good part of the Bible; but this would be labour in vain, seeing it seemeth to have been a notion engraven even on natural conscience, viz., that sin so defiles persons, that till they be washed from it, neither they nor their services can be accepted; from whence arose that custom of setting water-pots at their entrance into their temples or places of worship. Let him that wants assurance, comfort, peace, and a sight of his interest in Christ, cast out every known sin, and set upon a universal course of reformation; for God will not give his cordials to those that have a foul stomach. Those that, against light and checks of conscience, dally and tamper with this sin or that, those God will have no commerce, no communion with; on such God will not lift up the light of his countenance: Rev 2:17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in that stone, a new name written.' These are all metaphorical expressions, which, being put together, do amount to as much as assurance; but mark, these are promised, τῷ νικῶντι, 'to him that overcometh,' to him that rides on conquering and to conquer. Oh that Christians would seriously remember this! The dearer it cost any one to part with his sins, the more sweet and comfortable will it be to call to mind the victory that through the Spirit of grace he has got over his sins. There is no comfort, joy, or peace to that which arises from the conquests of sin, especially of special sins. When Goliath was slain, what joy and triumph was there in the camp! So here.

[7.] Seventhly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression, either in heart or life, against the Lord, and against the light of a man's own conscience, will hinder the soul from that warm lively, fervent, frequent, seasonable, sincere, and constant way of duty, as contributes most to the increase of grace, peace, comfort, and assurance, &c.

[8.] Eighthly, Seriously consider of the several assertions and concurrent judgments of our best and most famous divines in the present case. I shall give you a taste of some of their sayings.

First, 'A man,' saith one, 'can have no peace in his conscience that favoureth and retaineth any one sin in himself against his conscience.'

Secondly, Another saith, 'A man is in a damnable state, whatsoever good deeds seem to be in him, if he yield not to the work of the Holy Ghost for the leaving but of any one known sin which fighteth against peace of conscience.' But,

Thirdly, 'So long,' saith another, 'as the power of mortification destroyeth thy sinful affections, and so long as thou art unfeignedly displeased with all sin, and dost mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, thy case is the case of salvation.' But,

Fourthly, Another saith, 'A good conscience stands not with a purpose of sinning, no, not with irresolution against sin.' This must be understood of habitual purposes, and of a constant irresolution against sin.

Fifthly, 'The rich and precious box of a good conscience,' saith another, 'is polluted and made impure, if but one dead fly be suffered in it. One sin being quietly permitted, and suffered to live in the soul without being disturbed, resisted, resolved against, or lamented over, will certainly mar

the peace of a good conscience.'

Sixthly, 'Where there is but any one sin,' saith another, 'nourished and fostered, all other our graces are not only blemished, but abolished; they are no graces.'

Seventhly, Most true is that saying of Aquinas, 'That all sins are coupled together, though not in regard of conversion to temporal good, for some look to the good of gain, some of glory, some of pleasure, yet in regard of aversion from eternal good, that is God; so that he that looks but towards one sin is as much averted and turned back from God as if he looked to all; in which respect St James says, "He that offendeth in one is guilty of all," ' Jas 2:10. Now, that ye may not mistake Aquinas, nor the scripture he cites, you must remember that the whole law is but one copulative, Exo 16:18; Eze 18:10-13. Mark, he that breaketh one command habitually, breaketh all; not so actually. Such as are truly godly in respect of the habitual desires, purposes, bents, biases, inclinations, resolutions, and endeavours of their souls, do keep those very commands that actually they daily break. But a dispensatory conscience keeps not any one commandment of God. He that willingly and wilfully and habitually gives himself liberty to break any one commandment, is guilty of all; that is, 1. Either he breaks the chain of duties, and so breaks all the law, being copulative; or, 2. With the same disposition of heart, that he willingly, wilfully, habitually breaks one, with the same disposition of heart he is ready pressed to break all. The apostle's meaning in that Jas 2:10, is certainly this, viz., that suppose a man should keep the whole law for substance, except in some one particular, yet by allowing of himself in this particular, thereby he manifests that he kept no precept of the law in obedience and conscience unto God; for if he did, then he would be careful to keep every precept. Thus much the words following import, and hereby he manifests that he is guilty of all. Some others conceive that therefore such a one may be said to be guilty of all, because by allowing of himself in any one sin, thereby he lies under that curse which is threatened against the transgressors of the law, Deu 27:26.

Eighthly, 'Every Christian should carry in his heart,' saith another, 'a constant and resolute purpose not to sin in anything; for faith and the purpose of sinning can never stand together.' This must be understood of a habitual, not actual; of a constant, not transient purpose. But,

Ninthly, 'One flaw in a diamond,' saith another, 'takes away the lustre and the price.' One puddle, if we wallow in it, will defile us. One man, in law, may keep possession. One piece of ward-land makes the heir liable to the king. So one sin lived in, and allowed, may make a man miserable for ever. But,

Tenthly, One turn may bring a man quite out of the way. One act of treason makes a traitor. Gideon had seventy sons, but one bastard, and yet that one bastard destroyed all the rest, Jdg 8:31. 'One sin,' as well as one sinner, 'lived in and allowed, may destroy much good,' saith another.

Eleventhly, 'He that favoureth one sin, though he forego many, does but as Benhadad, recover of one disease and die of another; yea, he doth but take pains to go to hell,' saith another.

Twelfthly, 'Satan, by one lie to our first parents, made fruitless what God himself had preached to them immediately before,' saith another.

Thirteenthly, A man may, by one short act of sin, bring a long curse upon himself and his posterity, as Ham did when he saw his father Noah drunk: Gen 9:24-25, 'And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him, and he said, Cursed is Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' Canaan was Ham's son. Noah, as God's mouth, prophesied a curse upon the son for his father's sin. Here Ham is cursed in his son Canaan, and the curse entailed not only to Canaan, but to his posterity. Noah prophesies a long series and chain of curses upon Canaan and his children. He makes the curse hereditary to the name and nation of the Canaanites: 'A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren,' that is, the vilest and basest servant; for the Hebrews express the superlative degree by such a duplication as 'vanity of vanities;' that is, most vain: 'a song of songs;' that is, a most excellent song. So here, 'a servant of servants;' that is, the vilest, the basest servant. Ah, heavy and prodigious curse, upon the account of one sin! But,

Fourteenthly, Satan can be content that men should yield to God in many things, provided that they will be but true to him in some one thing; for he knows very well, that as one dram of poison may poison a man, and one stab at the heart may kill a man; so one sin unrepented of, one sin allowed, retained, cherished, and practised, will certainly damn a man. But,

Fifteenthly, Though all the parts of a man's body be sound, save only one, that one diseased and ulcerous part may be deadly to thee; for all the sound members cannot preserve thy life, but that one diseased and ulcerous member will hasten thy death; so one sin allowed, indulged, and lived in, will prove killing and damning to thee.

Sixteenthly, 'Observe,' saith another, 'that an unmortified sin allowed and wilfully retained will eat out all appearance of virtue and piety. Herod's high esteem of John and his ministry, and his reverencing of him and observing of him, and his forward performance of many good things, are all given over and laid aside at the instance and command of his master-sin, his reigning sin. John's head must go for it, if he won't let Herod enjoy his Herodias quietly.' But,

Seventeenthly, Some will leave all their sins but one; Jacob would let all his sons go but Benjamin. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin that he allows and lives in, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one wing or by one claw.

Eighteenthly, Holy Polycarp, in the time of the fourth persecution, when he was commanded but to swear one oath, he made this answer: "Four-score and six years have I endeavoured to do God service, and all this while he never hurt me; how then can I speak evil of so good a Lord and Master who hath thus long preserved me! I am a Christian, and cannot swear; let heathens and infidels swear if they will, I cannot do it, were it to the saving of my life.'

Ninteenthly, A willing and a wilful keeping up, either in heart or life, any known transgression against the Lord, is a breach of the holy law of God; it is a fighting against the honour and glory of God, and is a reproach to the eye of God, the omnipresence of God.

Twentiethly, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord may endanger the souls of others, and may be found a fighting against all the cries, prayers, tears, promises, vows, and covenants that thou hast made to God, when thou hast been upon a sick-bed, or in eminent dangers, or near death; or else when thou hast been in solemn seeking of the Lord, either alone or with others. These things should be frequently and seriously thought of by such poor fools as are

entangled by any lust.

Twenty-firstly, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, either in heart or life, is a high tempting of Satan to tempt the soul; it will also greatly unfit the soul for all sorts of duties and services that he either owes to God, to himself, or others; it will also put a sting into all a man's troubles, afflictions, and distresses; it will also lay a foundation for despair; and it will make death, which is the king of terrors, and the terror of kings, to be very terrible to the soul.

Twenty-secondly, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, either in heart or life, will fight against all those patterns and examples in Holy Writ, that in duty and honour we are bound to imitate and follow. Pray, where do you find in any of the blessed Scriptures, that any of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, or saints are ever charged with a willing or a wilful keeping up, either in their hearts or lives, any known transgression against the Lord?

Twenty-thirdly, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord will highly make against all clear, sweet, and standing communion with God. Parents use not to smile, nor be familiar with their children, nor to keep up any intimate communion with them, in their neglects and disobedience. It is so here.

Twenty-fourthly, The keeping up, either in heart or life, of any known transgression against the Lord, will fight against the standing joy, peace, comfort, and assurance of the soul. Joy in the Holy Ghost will make its nest nowhere but in a holy soul. So far as the Spirit is grieved he will suspend his consolations, Lam 1:16. A man will have no more comfort from God than he makes conscience of sinning against God. A conscience good in point of integrity will be good also in point of tranquillity. If our hearts condemn us not, 'then have we confidence towards God'—and I may say also towards men, Acts 24:16—oh, what comfort and solace hath a clear conscience! he hath something within to answer accusations without. I shall conclude this particular with a notable saying of one of the ancients. The joys of a good conscience are the paradise of souls, the delight of angels, the garden of delights, the field of blessing, the temple of Solomon, the court of God, the habitation of the Spirit. [Bernard.]

Twenty-fifthly, The keeping up of any known transgression, either in heart or life, against the Lord, is a high contempt of the all-seeing eye of God, of the omnipresence of God. It is well known what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when coming in, he found him cast upon the queen's bed on which she sat; 'What,' saith he, 'will he force the queen before me, in the house?' Est 7:8. There was the killing emphasis in the words, 'before me;' 'will he force the queen before me?' What! will he dare to commit such a villany, and I stand and look on? O sirs! to do wickedly in the sight of God is a thing that he looks upon as the greatest affront and indignity that can possibly be done unto him. What, saith he, wilt thou be drunk before me, and swear and blaspheme before me, and be wanton and unclean before me, and break my laws before my eyes! This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin that is done before the face of God, in the presence of God; whereas, the very consideration of God's omnipresence, that he stands and looks on, should be as a bar, a remora, to stop the proceedings of all wicked intendments, a dissuasive rather from sin than the least encouragement thereunto. It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.' God's eye is the best marshal to keep the soul in a comely order. Let thine eye be ever on him whose eye is

ever on thee. 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,' Pro 15:9. There is no drawing of a curtain between God and thee. God is totus oculus, all eye; he seeth all things, in all places, and at all times. When thou art in secret, consider conscience is present, which is more than a thousand witnesses; and God is present, which is more than a thousand consciences. It was a pretty fancy of one that would have his chamber painted full of eyes, that which way soever he looked he might still have some eyes upon him; and he fancying; according to the moralist's advice, always under the eye of a keeper, might be the more careful of his carriage. O sirs! if the eyes of men make even the vilest to forbear their beloved lusts for a while, that the adulterer watcheth for the twilight, and 'they that are drunken are drunken in the night,' how powerful will the eye and presence of God be with those that fear his anger and know the sweetness of his favour! The thought of this omnipresence of God will affrighten thee from sin. Gehazi durst not ask or receive any part of Naaman's presents in his master's presence, but when he had got out of Elisha's sight, then he tells his lie, and gives way to his lusts. Men never sin more freely than when they presume upon secrecy; 'They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thy heritage. They slay the widow and stranger, and murder the fatherless,' yet they say, 'The Lord doth not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it,' Psa 94:5-7. They who abounded in abominations said, 'The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth,' Eze 8:9, Eze 8:12. The wise man dissuadeth from wickedness upon the consideration of God's eye and omniscience. 'And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger; for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings,' Pro 5:20-21. Joseph saw God in the room, and therefore durst not yield; but his mistress saw none but Joseph, and so was impudently alluring and tempting him to folly. I have read of two religious men that took contrary courses with two lewd women whom they were desirous to reclaim from their vicious course of life. One of the men told one of the women that he was desirous to enjoy her company, so it might be with secrecy, and when she had brought him into a close room, that none could pry into, he told her, 'All the bars and bolts here cannot keep God out.' The other desired the other woman to company with him, openly in the streets, which when she rejected as a mad request, he told her, 'It was better to do it in the eyes of a multitude, than in the eyes of God.' Oh, why shall not the presence of that God who hates sin, and who is resolved to punish it with hell-flames, make us ashamed or afraid to sin, and dare him to his face!

Twenty-sixthly, There have been many a prodigal, who, by one cast of the dice, have lost a fair inheritance. A man may be killed with one stab of a pen-knife, and one hole in a ship may sink it, and one thief may rob a man of all he has in the world. A man may escape many gross sins, and yet, by living in the allowance of some one sin, be deprived of the glory of heaven for ever. Moses came within the sight of Canaan, but for one sin—not sanctifying God's name—he was shut out. And no less will it be to any man that, for living in any one sin, shall be for ever shut out of the kingdom of heaven; not but that there may be some remainders of sin, and yet the heart taken off from every sin; but if there be any secret closing with any one way of sin, all the profession of godliness and leaving all other sins will be to no purpose, nor ever bring a man to happiness.

Twenty-seventhly, As the philosopher saith, a cup or some such thing that hath a hole in it is no cup; it will hold nothing, and therefore cannot perform the use of a cup, though it have but one hole in it. So if the heart have but one hole in it, if it retain the devil but in one thing, if it make choice but of any one sin to lie and wallow in, and tumble in, it doth evacuate all the other good, by the

entertainment of that one sin. The whole box of ointment will be spoiled by the dropping of that one fly into it. By the laws of our kingdom, a man can never have a true possession till he have voided all. And in the state of grace, no man can have a full interest in Christ till all sin, that is, all reigning, domineering sin be rooted out.

Thus you see the concurrent judgments of our most famous divines, against men's allowing, indulging, or retaining any one known sin against their light and consciences; but that these sayings of theirs may lie in more weight and power upon every poor soul that is entangled with any base lusts, be pleased seriously and frequently to consider of these following particulars:—

[1.] First, It is to no purpose for a man to turn from, some sins, if he does not turn from all his sins, Jas 1:26. 'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridle not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain.' This, at first sight, may seem to be a hard saying, that for one fault, for one fault in the tongue, all a man's religion should be counted vain; and yet this, you see, the Holy Ghost does peremptorily conclude. Let a man make never, so glorious a profession of religion, yet, if he gives himself liberty to live in the practice of any known sin, yea, though it be but in a sin of the tongue, his religion is in vain, and that one sin will separate him from God for ever. If a wife be never so officious to her husband in many things, yet if she entertains any other lover into his bed besides himself, it will for ever alienate his affections from her, and make an everlasting separation between them. The application is easy. To turn from one sin to another is but to be tossed from one hand of the devil to another, it is but, with Benhadad, to recover of one disease and die of another; it is but to take pains to go to hell. If a ship spring three leaks, and only two be stopped, the third will sink the ship; or if a man have two grievous wounds in his body, and takes order only to cure one, that which is neglected will certainly kill him. It is so here. Herod, Judas, and Saul, with the scribes and Pharisees, have for many hundred years experienced this truth. But,

[2.] Secondly, Partial obedience is indeed no obedience; it is only universal obedience that is true obedience: Exo 24:7, 'All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.' They only are indeed obedient who have a care to do all that is commanded; for to obey is to do that which is commanded because it is commanded. Though the thing done be commanded, yet if it be not therefore done because it is commanded, it is no obedience. Now if this be the nature of obedience, then where obedience is indeed, it is not partial, but universal; for he that doth any one thing that is commanded because it is commanded, he will be careful to do everything that is commanded, there being the same reason for all. They that are only for a partial obedience, they do break asunder the bond and reason of all obedience; for all obedience is to be founded upon the authority and will of God, because God, who hath authority over all his creatures, doth will and command us to obey his voice, to walk in his statutes. For this very reason do we stand bound to obey him; and if we do obey him upon this reason, then must we walk in all his statutes, for so hath he commanded us. And if we will not come up to this, but will walk in what statutes of his we please, then do we renounce his will as the obliging reason of our obedience, and do set up our own liking and pleasure as the reason thereof. God has so connexed the duties of his law one to another, that if there be not a conscientious care to walk according to all that the law requires, a man becomes a transgressor of the whole law; according to that of St James, Jas 2:10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.' The bond of all is broken, the authority of all is slighted, and that evil disposition, that sinful frame of heart, that works

a man to venture upon the breach of one command, would make him venture upon the breach of any command, were it not for some infirmity of nature, or because his purse will not hold out to maintain it, or for shame, or loss, or because of the eyes of friends, or the sword of the magistrate, or for some other sinister respects. He that gives himself liberty to live in the breach of any one command of God, is qualified with a disposition of heart to break them all. Every single sin contains virtually all sin in it. He that allows himself a liberty to live in the breach of any one particular law of God, he casts contempt and scorn upon the authority that made the whole law, and upon this account breaks it all. And the apostle gives the reason of it in Jas 2:11; for he that said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law; not that he is guilty of all distributively, but collectively; for the law is copulative, there is a chain of duties, and these are all so linked one to another, that you cannot break one link of the chain, but you break the whole chain. No man can live in the breach of any known command of God, but he wrongs every command of God. He hath no real regard to any of the commandments of God, that hath not a regard to all the commandments of God. There is one and the same lawgiver in respect of all the commandments; he that gave one command gave also another. Therefore he that observes one commandment in obedience unto God, whose commandment it is, he will observe all, because all are his commandments; and he that slights one commandment is guilty of all, because he doth condemn the authority of him that gave them all. Even in those commandments which he doth observe, he hath no respect to the will and authority of him that gave them; therefore, as Calvin doth well observe upon Jas 2:10-11. 'That there is no obedience towards God, where there is not a uniform endeavour to please God, as well in one thing as in another.'

[3.] Thirdly, Partial obedience tends to plain atheism; for by the same reason that you slight the will of God in any commandment, by the same reason you may despise his will in every commandment; for every commandment of God is his will, and it is 'holy, spiritual, just, and good,' Rom 7:12, Rom 7:14, and contrary to our sinful lusts. And if this be the reason why such and such commandments of God won't down with you, then by the same reason none of them must be of authority with you.

[4.] Fourthly, God requires universal obedience: Deu 5:33, &c., and Deu 10:12, and Deu 11:21-22, &c.; and Jer 7:23, 'Walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you;' Mat 28:20, 'Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,' &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Partial obedience is an audacious charge against God himself, as to his wisdom, or power, or goodness; for those statutes of God which you will not come up unto, either they are as righteous as the rest, and as holy as the rest, and as spiritual as the rest, and as good as the rest, or they are not. If they be as holy, spiritual, just, righteous, and good as the rest, why should you not walk in them as well as in the rest? To say they are not as holy, spiritual, righteous, &c., as the rest, Oh what a blasphemous charge is this against God himself, in prescribing unto him anything that is not righteous and good, &c., and likewise in making his will, which is the rule of all righteousness and goodness, to be partly righteous and partly unrighteous, to be partly good and partly bad.

[6.] Sixthly, God delights in universal obedience, and in those that perform it: Deu 5:29, 'O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments

always.' Upon this account Abraham is called the friend of God in Scripture three times, Isa 41:8; 2Ch 20:7; Jas 2:3. And upon the very same account God called David 'a man after his own heart.' Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,'—πάντα τὰ θελήματα, all my wills, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience.

[7.] Seventhly, There is not any one statute of God but it is good and for our good; ergo, we should walk in all his statutes: Deu 5:25, 'Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you.' What one path hath the Lord commanded us to walk in, but as it concerns his own glory, so likewise it concerns our good? Is it not good for us to love the Lord, and to set him up as the object of our fear, and to act faith on him, and to worship him in spirit and in truth, and to be tender of his glory, and to sanctify his day, and to keep off from sin, and to keep close to his ways? But,

[8.] Eighthly, Universal obedience is the condition upon which the promise of mercy and salvation runs: Eze 18:21, 'If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all his statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.'

[9.] Ninthly, Our hearts must be perfect with the Lord our God: Deu 18:13, 'Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;' and Gen 17:1, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' Now, how can our hearts be said to be perfect with God if we do prevaricate with him; if in some things we obey him and in other things we will not obey him, if we walk in some of his statutes but will not walk in all his statutes, if in some part we will be his servants and in other part of our lives we will be the servants of sin. But,

[10.] Tenthly, If the heart be sound and upright, it will yield entire and universal obedience: Psa 119:80, 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I may not be ashamed;' and verse 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy commandments.' By these verses, compared together, it appears that then the heart is sound and sincere, when a man has respect unto all God's commandments. Without a universal obedience, a man can never have that 'hope which maketh not ashamed.' But,

[11.] Eleventhly, Either we must endeavour to walk in all the statutes of God, or else we must find some dispensation or toleration from God to free us, and excuse us and hold us indemnified, though we do not walk in all of them. Now, what one commandment is there from obedience whereunto, God excuseth any man, or will not punish him for the neglect of obedience unto it? The apostle saith, 'That whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' Jas 2:10. If he prevaricates with God, as to any one particular commandment of his, his heart is naught; he is guilty of all, he hath really no regard of any of the rest of God's laws. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, The precious saints and servants of God, whose examples are recorded, and set forth for our imitation, they have been very careful to perform universal obedience. Will you see it in Abraham, who was ready to comply with God in all his royal commands? When God commanded him to leave his country, and his father's house, he did it, Gen 12:1-20. When God commanded him to be circumcised, though it were both shameful and painful, he submitted unto it, Gen 17:1-27. When God commanded him to send away his son Ishmael, though when Sarah spake to him about it, the thing seemed very grievous unto him, yet as soon as he saw it to be the will of God, he was obedient unto it, Gen 21:1-34. When God commanded him to sacrifice his son

Isaac, his only son, the son of his old age, the son of the promise, the son of his delight; yea, that son from whom was to proceed that Jesus in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and though all this might seem to cross both nature and grace, both reason and religion, yet Abraham was willing to obey God in this also, and to do what he commanded, Gen 22:1-24. So David was 'a man after God's own heart,' which fulfilled all his wills, as the original runs in Acts 13:22. And it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, &c., Luk 1:6; 1Th 2:10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.'

[13.] Thirteenthly, Universal obedience speaks out the strength of our love to Christ, and the reality of our friendship with Christ, John 15:14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' That child shews most love to his father, that observes all his precepts; and that servant shews most love to his master, that observes all his master's commands, and that wife shews most love to her husband, that observes all he requires in the Lord. So here, &c.

[14.] Fourteenthly, Universal obedience will give most peace, rest, quiet, and comfort to the conscience. Such a Christian will be as an eye that hath no mote to trouble it; as a kingdom that hath no rebel to annoy it; as a ship that hath no leak to disturb it: Psa 119:165, 'Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' But,

[15.] Fifteenthly Man's holiness must be conformable to God's holiness: Eph 5:1-2, 'Be ye followers of God as dear children;' Mat 5:48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Now 'God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,' and so ought all to desire and endeavour to be, that would be saved: 1Pe 1:15, 'As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all manner of conversation; 1Pe 1:16, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, The holiness of a Christian must be conformable to the holiness of Christ, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ,' 1Co 11:1. Now Christ was holy in all things. 'It behoveth us,' said he, 'to fulfil all righteousness.' And this should be the care of every one that professeth himself to be Christ's, to endeavour 'to be holy as Christ was holy:' 1Jn 2:6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk even as he walked.' But,

[17.] Seventeenthly, Servants must obey their earthly masters, not in some things only, but in all things, to wit, that are just and lawful: Tit 2:9, 'Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things.' What master will be content that his servant should choose how far forth he will observe and do those things which he doth require of him? much less may we think that such arbitrary and partial performances will please that God who is our heavenly Master.

[18.] Eighteenthly, The promises of mercy, both spiritual and temporal, are made over to universal obedience, 1Ki 6:12-13; Deu 28:1-3; Eze 18:21-22, Eze 18:27-28. Turn to all these promises and dilate on them, &c.

[19.] Nineteenthly, One sin never goes alone, as you may see in the falls of Adam and Eve, Lot, Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Solomon, Peter, Ahab, Judas, Jeroboam. One sin will make way for more; as one little thief can open the door to let in many great ones. Satan will be sure to nest himself, to lodge himself in the least sins, as birds nest and lodge themselves in the smallest branches of the tree, and there he will do all he can to hatch all manner of wickedness. A little wedge makes way for a greater; and so do little sins make way for greater.

[20.] Twentiethly, The reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a gracious soul. There are the same reasons and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin because the Lord hath forbid it? why! upon the same ground you must turn from every sin; for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all, &c. But,

[21.] Twenty-firstly, One sin allowed and lived in will keep Christ and the soul asunder. As one rebel, one traitor, hid and kept in the house, will keep a prince and his subjects asunder; or as one stone in the pipe will keep the water and the cistern asunder; so here. But,

[22.] Twenty-secondly, One sin allowed and lived in will unfit a person for suffering; as one cut or shot in the shoulder may hinder a man from bearing a burden. Will he ever lay down his life for Christ, that can't, that won't lay down a lust for Christ? But,

[23.] Twenty-thirdly, One sin allowed and lived in is sufficient to deprive a man for ever of the greatest good. One sin allowed and wallowed in will as certainly deprive a man of the blessed vision of God, and of all the treasures, pleasures, and delights that be at God's right hand, as a thousand. One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory; and one sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency, Gen 3:4-5. One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box; one thief may rob a man of all his treasure; one disease may deprive a man of all his health; and one drop of poison will spoil the whole glass of wine: and so one sin allowed and lived in will make a man miserable for ever. One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea, as well as a hundred. It is so here. But,

[24.] Twenty-fourthly, One sin allowed and lived in will eat out all peace of conscience. As one string that jars will spoil the sweetest music; so one sin countenanced and lived in will spoil the music of conscience. One pirate may rob a man of all he has in this world. But,

[25.] Twenty-fifthly and lastly, The sinner would have God to forgive him, not only some of his sins, but all his sins; and therefore it is but just and equal that he should turn from all his sins. If God be so faithful and just to forgive us all our sins, we must be so faithful and just as to turn from all our sins. The plaster must be as broad-as the sore, and the tent as long and as deep as the wound. It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and wonderful impudency for a man to beg the pardon of those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake, &c.

Objection. But it is impossible for any man on earth to walk in all God's statutes, to obey all his commands, to do his will in all things, to walk according to the full breadth of God's royal law.

Solution. I answer, there is a twofold walking in all the statutes of God; there is a twofold obedience to all the royal commands of God.

(1.) First, One is legal, when all is done that God requireth; and all is done as God requireth, when there is not one path of duty, but we do walk in it perfectly and continually. Thus no man on earth doth or can walk in all God's statutes, or fully do what he commandeth. 'For in many things we offend all,' Jas 3:2. So Ecc 7:20, 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.' 1Ki 8:46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' Pro 20:9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Job 14:4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?

not one.' 1Jn 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'

(2.) Secondly, Another is evangelical, which is such a walking in all the statutes of God, and such a keeping of all the commands of God, as is in Christ accepted of, and accounted of, as if we did keep them all. This walking in all God's statutes, and keeping of all his commandments, and doing of them all, is not only possible, but it is also actual in every believer, in every sincere Christian, and it consists in these particulars:—

[1.] First, In the approbation of all the statutes and commandments of God. Rom 7:12, 'The commandment is holy, and just, and good.' Rom 7:16, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.' There is both assent and consent. Psa 119:128, 'I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' A sincere Christian approves of all divine commands, though he cannot perfectly keep all divine commands. But,

[2.] Secondly, It consists in a conscientious submission unto the authority of all the statutes of God. Every command of God hath an authority within his heart, and over his heart. Psa 119:161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' A sincere Christian stands in awe of every known command of God, and hath a spiritual regard unto them all. Psa 119:6, 'I have respect unto all thy commandments.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, It consists in a cordial willingness and a cordial desire to walk in all the statutes of God, and to obey all the commands of God. Rom 7:18, 'For to will is present with me.' Psa 119:5, 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' Psa 119:8, 'I will keep thy statutes.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, It consists in a sweet complacency in all God's commands. Psa 119:47, 'I will delight myself in thy commandment which I have loved.' Rom 7:22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, He who obeys sincerely obeys universally. Though not in regard of practice, which is impossible, yet in regard of affection, he loves all the commands of God, yea, he dearly loves those very commands of God that he cannot obey, by reason of the infirmity of the flesh, by reason of that body of sin and death that he bears about with him. Ponder upon that: Psa 119:97, 'O how I love thy law!' Such a pang of love he felt, as could not otherwise be vented, but by this pathetical exclamation, 'O how I love thy law,' Psa 119:113, Psa 119:163, Psa 119:127, Psa 119:159, Psa 119:167. Ponder upon all these verses. But,

[6.] Sixthly, A sincere Christian obeys all the commands of God; he is universal in his obedience, in respect of valuation or esteem. He highly values all the commands of God; he highly prizes all the commands of God; as you may clearly see by comparing these scriptures together, Psa 119:72, Psa 119:127-128, Psa 19:8-11; Job 23:12. But,

[7.] Seventhly, A sincere Christian is universal in his obedience, in respect of his purpose and resolution; he purposes and resolves, by divine assistance, to obey all, to keep all. Psa 119:106, 'I have sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' Psa 17:3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. But,

[8.] Eighthly, A sincere Christian is universal in his obedience, in respect of his inclination; he has an habitual inclination in him to keep all the commands of God, 1Ki 8:57-58; 2Ch 30:17-20; Psa 119:112, 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end.' But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, Their evangelical keeping of all the commands of God consists in their sincere endeavour to keep them all; they put out themselves in all the ways and parts of obedience; they do not willingly and wittingly slight or neglect any commandment, but are striving to conform themselves thereunto. As a dutiful son doth all his father's commands, at least in point of endeavour, so your sincere Christians make conscience of keeping all the commands of God in respect of endeavours. Psa 119:59, 'I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' God esteems of evangelical obedience as perfect obedience. Zacharias had his failings, he did hesitate through unbelief, for which he was struck dumb; yet the text tells you, 'That he walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless,' Luk 1:6, because he did cordially desire and endeavour to obey God in all things. Evangelical obedience is true for the essence, though not perfect for the degree. A child of God obeys all the commands of God, in respect of all his sincere desires, purposes, resolutions, and endeavours; and this God accepts in Christ for perfect and complete obedience. This is the glory of the covenant of grace, that God accepts and esteems of sincere obedience as perfect obedience. Such who sincerely endeavour to keep the whole law of God, they do keep the whole law of God in an evangelical sense, though not in a legal sense. A sincere Christian is for the first table as well as the second, and the second as well as the first; he doth not adhere to the first and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second and contemn the first, as profane men do. O Christians, for your support and comfort, know that when your desires and endeavours are to do the will of God entirely, as well in one thing as another, God will graciously pardon your failings, and pass by your imperfections. 'He will spare you as a man spareth his son that serveth him,' Mal 3:17. Though a father see his son to fail, and come short in many things which he enjoins him to do, yet knowing that his desires and endeavours are to serve him, and please him to the full, he will not be rigid and severe with him, but will be indulgent to him, and will spare him, and pity him, and shew all love and kindness to him. The application is easy, &c. The second question or case is this, viz., What is that faith that gives a man an interest in Christ, and in all those blessed benefits and favours that come by Christ? or whether that person that experiences the following particulars, may not safely, groundedly, and comfortably conclude that his faith is a true, justifying, saving faith, the faith of God's elect, and such a faith as clearly evidences a gracious estate, and will certainly bring the soul to heaven? Now, in answer to this important question, we may suppose the poor believer is ready to express himself thus:—

[1.] First, Upon search and sad experience, I find myself a poor, lost, miserable, and undone creature, as the Scriptures everywhere do evidence, Eph 2:1-2, Eph 2:5, Eph 2:12; Col 2:13; Rom 8:7; Luk 19:10.

[2.] Secondly, I am convinced that it is not in myself to deliver myself out of this lost, miserable, and forlorn estate. Could I make as many prayers as might be piled up between heaven and earth, and weep as much blood as there is water in the sea, yet all this could not procure the pardon of one sin, nor one smile from God, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, I am convinced that it is not in angels or men to deliver me out of my lost, miserable, and undone condition. I know provoked justice must be satisfied, divine wrath pacified, my sins pardoned, my heart renewed, my state changed, &c., or my soul can never be saved; and I know it is not in angels or men to do any of these things for me.

[4.] Fourthly, I find that I stand in absolute need of a Saviour to save me from wrath to come, 1Th 1:10, 'to save me from the curse of the law,' Gal 3:10, Gal 3:13, 'and to save me from infernal flames,' Isa 33:14; so that I may well cry out with those in Acts 2:37, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' and with the jailer, Acts 16:36, 'Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?'

[5.] Fifthly, I see and know, through grace, that there is an utter impossibility of obtaining salvation by anything, or by any person, but by Christ alone, according to that of the apostle: Acts 4:12, 'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name' that is, no other person, 'under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved.' I know there is no saviour that can deliver me from eternal death, and bring me to eternal life and glory, but that Jesus, of whom it is said, 'that he shall save his people from their sins,' Luk 1:21; and therefore I must conclude that there is an utter impossibility of obtaining salvation by any other person or things, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, I see and know, through grace, that Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour, that he is a mighty, yea, an almighty Saviour, a Saviour that is able to save to the utmost all them that come to him, as the Scripture speaks, Psa 89:19, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty;' Isa 63:1, 'I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save;' Heb 7:25, 'Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' I know that the Lord Jesus is mighty to save me from that wrath, and from that curse, and from that hell, and from that damnation that is due to me, by reason of my sins; and that he is mighty to justify me, and mighty to pardon me, and mighty to reconcile me to God the Father, and mighty to bring me to glory, as the Scripture does everywhere testify. But,

[7.] Seventhly, I know, through grace, that Jesus Christ is the only person anointed, appointed, fitted, and furnished by the Father, for that great and blessed work or office, of saving sinners' souls; as these scriptures, amongst others, do clearly testify, Isa 61:1-4; Luk 4:18-21; Mat 1:20-21; John 6:27. Certainly were Jesus Christ never so able and mighty to save, yet if he were not anointed, appointed, fitted, and furnished by the Father for that great office of saving poor lost sinners, I know no reason why I should expect salvation by him. But,

[8.] Eighthly, I know through grace that the Lord Jesus Christ hath sufficiently satisfied, as mediator, the justice of God, and pacified his wrath, and fulfilled all righteousness, and procured the favour of God and the pardon of sin, &c., for all them that close with him, that accept of him, as he is offered in the gospel of grace, Gal 3:19-20; 1Ti 2:5; Heb 8:6; Heb 9:14-15, and Heb 12:24; Heb 10:12, Heb 10:14; Mat 3:15; Rom 8:1-4, Rom 8:33-34, and Rom 5:8-10; Acts 13:39.

[9.] Ninthly, I find that Jesus Christ is freely offered in the gospel to poor, lost, undone sinners, such as I am. I find that the ministers of the gospel are commanded by Christ to proclaim in his name a general pardon, and to make a general offer of him to all to whom they preach the everlasting gospel, without excluding any: Mark 16:15, 'And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature.' And what is it to preach the gospel unto every creature, but to say unto them, as the angels did to the shepherds, Luk 10:11, 'I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord'? &c.

[10.] Tenthly, I know, through grace, that all sorts of sinners are invited to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to accept of Christ, and to close with Christ, Isa 55:1-2; Mat 11:28-29; John 7:37;

Rev 3:20, and Rev 22:17, &c. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, Through grace, I do in my understanding really assent to that blessed record and report that God the Father, in the blessed Scriptures, has given concerning Christ, 1Jn 5:10-12. The report that God the Father has made concerning the person of Christ, and concerning the offices of Christ, and concerning the work of redemption by Christ, I do really and cordially assent unto, as most true and certain, upon the authority of God's testimony, who is truth itself, and cannot lie. Now, though this assent alone is not enough to make a saving reception of Christ, yet it is in saving faith, and that without which it is impossible that there should be any saving faith. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, I can say, through grace, that in my judgment I do approve of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as a good, but as the greatest good, as a universal good, as a matchless good, as an incomparable good, as an infinite good, as an eternal good, and as the most suitable good in heaven and earth to my poor soul; as these scriptures do evidence, Psa 73:25-26; Song of Solomon 5:10-11; Psa 1:2; Php 3:7-10; 1Ti 1:15. I know there is everything in Christ that may suit the state, case, necessities, and wants of my poor soul. There is mercy in him to pardon me, and power in him to save me, and wisdom in him to counsel me, and grace in him to enrich me, and righteousness in him to clothe me, &c., and therefore I cannot but approve of the Lord Jesus, as such a good as exceeds all the good that is to be found in angels and men. The good that I see in Christ doth not only counterpoise, but also excel all that real or imaginary good that ever I have met with in anything below Christ. Christ must come into the will, he must be received there, else he is never savingly received. Now before the will will receive him, the will must be certainly informed that he is good, yea, the best and greatest good, or else he shall never be admitted there. Let the understanding assent never so much to all propositions concerning Christ as true, if the judgment doth not approve of them as good, yea, as the best good, Christ will never be truly received. God in his working maintains the faculties of the soul in their actings, as he made them.

[13.] Thirteenthly, So far as I know my own heart, I am sincerely willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ in a matrimonial covenant; according to these scriptures, Hos 2:19-20; 2Co 11:2; Isa 54:5; Isa 61:10; Isa 62:5; Song of Solomon 3:11, &c. Through grace I am,

First, Sincerely willing to take the Lord Jesus Christ for my Saviour and sovereign Lord. So far as I know my own heart, I do through mercy give my hearty consent, that Christ, and Christ alone, shall be my saviour and Redeemer. It is true, I do duties, but the desire of my soul is to do them out of love to Christ, and in obedience to his royal law and pleasure. I know my best righteousnesses are but 'as filthy rags,' Isa 64:6. And woe would be to me, had I no other shelter, or saviour, or resting-place for my poor soul, than rags, than filthy rags. And so far as I know my own heart, I am sincerely willing to give up myself to the guidance and government of Jesus Christ, as my sovereign Lord and king, desiring nothing more in this world, than to live and die under the guidance and government of his Spirit, word, and grace. But,

Secondly, I am willing, through grace, to give a bill of divorce to all other lovers, without exception or reservation. So far as I know my own heart, I desire nothing more in this world, than that God would pull out right-eye sins, and cut off right-hand sins. I am very desirous, through grace, to have all sins brought under by the power, Spirit, and grace of Christ; but especially my special sins, my head corruptions. I would have Christ alone to rule and reign in the haven of my heart, without any competitor. But,

Thirdly, I am sincerely willing, through grace, to take the Lord Jesus Christ for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, and in his strength I would go with him through fire and water, resolving, through his grace, that nothing shall divide betwixt Christ and my soul. So far as I know my own heart, I would have Christ, though I beg with him, though I go to prison with him, though in agonies in the garden with him, though to the cross with him. But,

Fourthly, So far as I know my own heart, I am sincerely willing, First, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ presently, John 1:12. Secondly, to receive him in all his offices, as king, prophet, and priest, Col 2:6; Acts 5:31. Thirdly, To receive him into every room of my soul; to receive him into my understanding, mind, will, affections, &c. Fourthly, To receive him upon his own terms, of denying myself, taking up his cross and following of him wherever he goes, Mat 16:21; Rev 14:4, &c.

Fifthly and lastly, So far as I know my own heart, I do freely consent, 1. To be really Christ's; 2. To be presently Christ's; 3. To be wholly Christ's; 4. To be only Christ's; 5. To be eminently Christ's; 6. To be for ever Christ's, &c.

Certainly that Christian that has and does experience the particulars last mentioned under the second question, that Christian may safely, groundedly, boldly, and comfortably conclude that his faith is a true, justifying, saving faith, the faith of God's elect, and such a faith as clearly evidences a gracious estate, and will never leave his soul short of heaven.

Now how many thousand Christians are there, that have this faith that is here described, which is doubtless a true, justifying, saving faith, that gives a man an interest in the person of Christ, and in all the blessings and benefits that comes by Christ, who yet question whether they have true faith or no, partly from weakness, partly from temptations, and partly from the various definitions that are given of faith by Protestants, both in their preachings and writings; and it is and must be for a lamentation, that in a point of so great moment the trumpet should give such an uncertain sound. The third question, or case is this, viz., Whether in the great day of the Lord, the day of general judgment, or in the particular judgment that will pass upon every soul immediately after death, which is the stating of the soul in an eternal estate or condition, either of happiness or misery; whether the sins of the saints, the follies and vanities of believers, the infirmities and enormities of sincere Christians shall be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery, or no? Whether the Lord will either in the great day of account, or in a man's particular day of account or judgment, publicly manifest, proclaim, and make mention of the sins of his people, or no? This question is bottomed upon the ten scriptures in the margin, which I desire the Christian reader to consult; and upon the sad and daily complaints of many dear sincere Christians, who frequently cry out, 'Oh, we can never answer for one evil thought of ten thousand, nor we can never answer for one idle word of twenty thousand; nor we can never answer for one evil action of a hundred thousand; and how then shall we stand in judgment? how shall we look the judge in the face? how shall we be ever able to answer for all our omissions, and for all our commissions; for all our sins of ignorance, and sins against light and knowledge; for all our sins against the law, and for all our sins against the gospel, and for all our sins against sovereign grace, and for all our sins against the remedy, against the Lord Jesus, and for all the sins of our infancy, of our youth, and of old age? Job 9:3; Psa 19:12, and Psa 63:2; Ezr 10:6, &c. What account shall we be able to give up, when we come to our particular day of judgment, immediately after our death, or in the great and general day of account, when angels, devils, and men shall stand before the Lord Jesus, Heb 9:27, whom God

the Father hath ordained to be the judge of quick and dead, Acts 17:31?

Now to this great question I answer, that the sins of the saints, the infirmities and enormities of believers, shall never be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery; they shall never be objected against them, either in their particular day of judgment, or in the great day of their account. Now this truth I shall make good by an induction of particulars; thus,—

[1.] First, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his judicial proceedings in the last day, which is set down clearly and largely in Mat 25:34-42, doth only enumerate the good works they have done, but takes not the least notice of the spots and blemishes, of the infirmities or enormities, of the weaknesses or wickednesses, of his people. God has sealed up the sins of his people, never to be remembered or looked upon more, Deu 32:4-6; Dan 9:24. In the great day the book of God's remembrance shall be opened and publicly read, that all the good things that the saints have done for God, for Christ, for saints, for their own souls, for sinners; and that all the great things that they have suffered for Christ's sake, and the gospel's sake, may be mentioned to their everlasting praise, to their eternal honour. And though the choicest and chiefest saints on earth have, 1. Sin dwelling in them; 2. Operating and working in them; 3. Vexing and molesting of them, being as so many goads in their sides and thorns in their eyes; 4. Captivating and prevailing over them, Rom 7:23-24; Gal 5:17; yet in that large recital which shall then be read of the saints' lives, Mat 25:1-46, there is not the least mention made either of sins of omission or commission; nor the least mention made either of great sins or of small sins; nor the least mention made either of sins before conversion or after conversion. Here in this world the best of saints have had their butts, their spots, their blots, their specks, as the fairest day hath its clouds, the finest linen its spots, and the richest jewels their specks; but now in the judicial process of this last and universal assizes there is not found in all the books that shall then be opened, so much as one unsavoury 'but' to blemish the fair characters of the saints. Surely he that sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel, Num 23:21, to impute it to them whilst they live, he will never charge iniquity or perverseness upon them in the great day, Rev 20:12; Dan 7:10. Surely he who has fully satisfied his Father's justice for his people's sins, and who hath by his own blood balanced and made up all reckonings and accounts between God and their souls, he will never charge upon them their faults and follies in the great day. Surely he who hath spoken so much for his saints whilst he was on earth, and who hath continually interceded for them since he went to heaven, John 17:1-26; Heb 7:25; he won't, though he hath cause to blame them for many things, speak anything against them in the great day. Surely Jesus Christ, the saints' paymaster, who hath discharged their whole debt at once, who hath paid down upon the nail the ten thousand talents which we owed, and took in the bond and nailed it to the cross, Heb 10:10, Heb 10:12, Heb 10:14; Mat 18:24; Col 2:14; leaving no back reckonings unpaid, to bring his poor children, which are the travail of his soul, Isa 53:11, afterward into any danger from the hands of divine justice; he will never mention the sins of his people, he will never charge the sins of his people upon them in the great day. Our dear Lord Jesus, who is the righteous judge of heaven and earth in the great day of account, he will bring in omnia bene in his presentment, all fair and well, and accordingly will make proclamation in that high court of justice, before God, angels, devils, saints, and sinners, &c. Christ will not charge his children with the least unkindness, he will not charge his spouse with the least unfaithfulness in the great day; yea, he will represent them before God, angels, and men, as complete in him, as all fair and spotless, as without spot or wrinkle, as without fault before the throne of God, as holy and

unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight, as immaculate as the angels themselves who kept their first estate, Col 2:10; Song of Solomon 4:7; Eph 5:27; Rev 14:5. This honour shall have all the saints, and thus shall Christ be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe, 1Th 2:10. The greatest part of the saints by far will have passed their particular judgment long before the general judgment, Heb 9:27, and being therein acquitted and discharged from all their sins by God the Judge of the quick and dead, 2Ti 4:1, and admitted into heaven upon the credit of Christ's blood, righteous satisfaction, and their free and full justification, it cannot be imagined that Jesus Christ, in the great day, will bring in any new charge against his children when they have been cleared and absolved already. Certainly when once the saints are freely and fully absolved from all their sins by a divine sentence, then their sins shall never be remembered, they shall never be objected against them any more; for one divine sentence cannot cross and rescind another. The Judge of all the world had long since cast all their sins behind his back, Isa 38:17; and will he now set them before his face, and before the faces of all the world? Surely no. He has long since cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, Mic 7:19,—bottomless depths of everlasting oblivion—that they might never be buoyed up any more! He has not only forgiven their sins, but he has also forgotten their sins, Jer 31:34; and will he remember them and declare them in the great day? Surely no. God has long since blotted out the transgressions of his people, Isa 43:25. This metaphor is taken from creditors, who, when they purpose never to exact a debt, will blot it out of their books. Now after that a debt is struck out of a bill, bond, or book, it cannot be exacted, the evidence cannot be pleaded. Christ having crossed the debt-book with the red lines of his blood, Col 2:14; if now he should call the sins of his people to remembrance, and charge them upon them, he should cross the great design of his cross. Upon this foundation stands the absolute impossibility that any sin, that the least sin, yea, that the least circumstance of sin, or the least aggravation of sin, should be so much as mentioned by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth in the process of that judicial trial in the great day, except it be in a way of absolution in order to the magnifying of their pardon. God has long since blotted out as a thick cloud the transgressions of his people, and as a cloud their sins, Isa 44:22. Now we know that the clouds which are driven away by the winds appear no more; nor the mist which is dried by the sun appears no more; other clouds and other mists may arise, but not they which are driven away and dried up. Thus the sins of the saints being forgiven, they shall no more return upon them, they shall never more be objected against them.

[2.] Further, The Lord saith, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isa 1:18. Pardon makes such a clear riddance of sin, that it is as if it had never been. The scarlet sinner is as white as snow, snow newly fallen from the sky, which was never sullied. The crimson sinner is as wool, wool which never received the least tincture in the dye-fat. You know scarlet and crimson are double and deep dyes, dyes in grain; yet if the cloth dyed therewith be as the wool before it was dyed, and if it be as white as snow, what is become of those dyes? Are they any more? Is not the cloth as if it had not been dyed at all? Even so; though our sins, by reiterating them, by long lying in them, have made deep impressions upon us, yet, by God's discharge of them, we are as if we had never committed them.

[3.] Again, The psalmist pronounceth him 'blessed whose sin is covered,' Psa 32:1. A thing covered is not seen; so sin forgiven is before God as not seen. The same psalmist pronounceth him 'blessed to whom the Lord imputeth not sin,' Psa 32:2.

Now a sin not imputed is as not committed. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that 'the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found,' Jer 50:20. Now is not that fully discharged which shall never be found, never appear, never be remembered, never be mentioned?

Thus, by the many metaphors used in Scripture to set out forgiveness of sin, pardon of sin, you plainly and evidently see that God's discharge is free and full, and therefore he will never charge their sins upon them in the great day, Jer 31:34; Eze 18:22. But

Some may object and say, That the Scripture saith, that 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,' Ecc 12:14. How then can this be, that the sins of the saints shall not be mentioned, nor charged upon them in the great day?

I answer, This scripture is to be understood respectivè, &c., with a just respect to the two great parties which are to be judged, Mat 25:32-33. Sheep and goats, saints and sinners, sons and slaves, elect and reprobate, holy and profane, pious and impious, faithful and unfaithful; that is to say, all the grace, the holiness, the godliness, the good of those that are good, shall be brought into the judgment of mercy, that it may be freely, graciously, and nobly rewarded, and all the wickedness of the wicked shall be brought into the judgment of condemnation, that it may be righteously and everlastingly punished in this great day of the Lord. All sincerity shall be discovered and rewarded; and all hypocrisy shall be disclosed and revenged. In this great day all the works of the saints shall follow them into heaven; and in this great day all the evil works of the wicked shall hunt and pursue them into hell. In this great day all the hearts, thoughts, secrets, words, ways, works, and walkings of wicked men shall be discovered and laid open before all the world, to their everlasting shame and sorrow, to their eternal amazement and astonishment. And in this great day the Lord will make mention, in the ears of all the world, of every prayer that the saints have made, and of every sermon that they have heard, and of every tear that they have shed, and of every fast that they have kept, and of every sigh and groan that ever they have fetched, and of all the good words that ever they have spoke, and of all the good works that ever they have done, and of all the great things that ever they have suffered; yea, in this great day they shall reap the fruit of many good services which themselves had forgot. 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee; or thirsty, and gave thee drink; or naked, and clothed thee; or sick or in prison, and visited thee?' Mat 25:34-41. They had done many good works, and forgot them; but Christ records them, remembers them, and rewards them before all the world. In this great day a bit of bread, a cup of cold water shall not pass without a reward, Ecc 11:1, Ecc 11:6. In this great day the saints shall reap a plentiful and glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, that for a time hath seemed to be buried and lost. In this great day of the Lord the saints shall find that bread which long before was east upon the waters. But my

Second reason is taken from Christ's vehement protestations, that they shall not come into judgment: John 5:24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Those words, 'shall not come into condemnation,' are not rightly translated. The original is ἐν κρίσει, 'shall not come into judgment,' not into damnation, as you read it in all your English books. I will not say what should put men upon this exposition rather than a true translation of the original word. Further, it is very observable that no evangelist useth this double asseveration but St

John, and he never useth it but in matters of greatest weight and importance, and to show the earnestness of his spirit, and to stir us up to better attention, and to put the thing asserted out of all question and beyond all contradiction; as when we would put a thing for ever out of all question, we do it by a double asseveration—verily, verily, it is so, &c., John 1:51, John 3:3, John 3:11, and John 6:26, John 6:32, John 6:47, John 6:53, &c.

Thirdly, Because his not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with many precious and glorious expressions that we find scattered, as so many shining, sparkling pearls, up and down in Scripture; as,

First, With those of God's blotting out the sins of his people: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins,' Isa 43:25, and Isa 44:22. Who is this that blots out transgressions? He that hath the keys of heaven and hell at his girdle; that opens, and no man shuts; that shuts, and no man opens; he that hath the power of life and death, of condemning and absolving, of killing and making alive; he it is that blotteth out transgressions. If an under officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps might do a man no good; a man might, for all that, be at last cast by the judge; but when the judge or king shall blot out the indictment with their own hand, then the indictment cannot return. Now this is every believer's case and happiness.

Secondly, To those glorious expressions of God's not remembering of their sins any more, Jer 31:34; Isa 43:25. 'And I will not remember thy sins: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' So the apostle, 'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb 8:12. And again, the same apostle saith, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb 10:17. The meaning is, their iniquities shall be quite forgotten: I will never mention them more, I will never take notice of them more, they shall never hear more of them from me. Though God hath an iron memory to remember the sins of the wicked, yet he hath no memory to remember the sins of the righteous.

Thirdly, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with those blessed expressions of his casting their sins into the depth of the sea, and of his casting them behind his back. 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,' Mic 7:19. Where sin is once pardoned, the remission stands never to be repealed. Pardoned sin shall never come in account against the pardoned man before God any more; for so much doth this borrowed speech import. If a thing were cast into a river, it might be brought up again; or if it were cast upon the sea, it might be discerned and taken up again; but when it is cast into the depths, the bottom of the sea, it can never be buoyed up again. By the metaphor in the text, the Lord would have us to know that sins pardoned shall rise no more, they shall never be seen more, they shall never come on the account more. He will so drown their sins that they shall never come up before him the second time. And so much that other scripture imports, 'Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy

back,' Isa 38:17. These last words are a borrowed speech, taken from the manner of men, who are wont to cast behind their backs such things as they have no mind to see, regard, or remember. A gracious soul hath always his sins before his face, 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me,' Psa 51:3, and therefore no wonder if the Lord cast them behind his back. The father soon forgets, and casts behind his back those faults that the child remembers, and hath always in his eyes; so doth the Father of spirits.

Fourthly, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth best agree with that sweet and choice expression of God's pardoning the sins of his people.

'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby, they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me,' Jer 33:8. So in Micah, 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage?'—as though he would not see it, but wink at it—'he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy,' Mic 7:18. The Hebrew word—nose from nasa—that is here rendered pardoneth, signifies a taking away. When God pardons sin, he takes it sheer away; that if it should be sought for, yet it could not be found, as the prophet speaks, Jer 50:20, 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found, for I will pardon them whom I reserve;' and these words, 'and passeth by,' in the afore-cited seventh of Micah and the 18th verse, according to the Hebrew Vignobier Gnal is, 'and passeth over,' 'God passeth over the transgression of his heritage,' that is, he takes no notice of it; as a man in a deep muse, or as one that hath haste of business, seeth not things before him, his mind being busied about other matters, he neglects all to mind his business. As David, when he saw in Mephibosheth the feature of his friend Jonathan, took no notice of his lameness, or any other defect or deformity; so God, beholding in his people the glorious image of his Son, winks at all their faults and deformities, Isa 40:1-2, which made Luther say, 'Do with me what thou wilt, since thou hast pardoned my sin;' and what is it to pardon sin, but not to mention sin?

Fifthly, His not bringing their sins into the judgment of discussion and discovery doth best agree to those expressions of forgiving and covering, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,' Psa 32:1. In the original, it is in the plural, blessednesses; so here is a plurality of blessings, a chain of pearls. The like expression you have in Psa 85:2, 'Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.' For the understanding of these scriptures aright, take notice that to cover is a metaphorical expression. Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure; to be covered, it is to be so hid and closed as not to appear. Some make the metaphor from filthy loathsome objects which are covered from our eyes as dead carcasses are buried under the ground; some from garments, that are put upon us to cover our nakedness; others from the Egyptians that were drowned in the Red Sea, and so covered with water; others from a great gulf in the earth, that is filled up and covered with earth injected into it; and others make it, in the last place, an allusive expression to the mercy-seat, over which was a covering.

Now all these metaphors in the general tend to shew this, that the Lord will not look, he will not see, he will not take notice of the sins he hath pardoned, to call them any more to a judicial account. As when a prince reads over many treasons and rebellions, and meets with such and

such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, he passeth by, he taketh no notice of them, the pardoned person shall never hear more of them, he will never call him to account for those sins more; so here, &c. When Cæsar was painted, he puts his finger upon his sear, his wart. God puts his fingers upon all his people's scars and warts, upon all their weaknesses and infirmities, that nothing can be seen but what is fair and lovely: 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee,' Song of Solomon 4:7.

Sixthly, It best agrees to that,' expression of not imputing of sin. 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Psa 32:2. So the apostle in that Rom 4:6-8. Now not to impute iniquity, is not to charge iniquity, not to set iniquity upon his score who is blessed and pardoned, &c.

Seventhly, and lastly, It best agrees with that expression that you have in the 113th Psalm and the 11th and 12th verses, 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' What a vast distance is there betwixt the east and west! of all visible latitudes, this is the greatest; and thus much for the third argument. The

[4.] Fourth argument that prevails with me to judge that Jesus Christ will not bring the sins of the saints into the judgment of discussion and discovery in the great day is, because it seems unsuitable to three considerable things for Jesus Christ to proclaim the infirmities and miscarriages of his people to all the world.

First, It seems to be unsuitable to the glory and solemnity of that day, which to the saints will be a day of refreshing, a day of restitution, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, as hath been already proved. Now how suitable to this great day of solemnity the proclamation of the saints' sins will be, I leave the reader to judge.

Secondly, It seems unsuitable to all those near and dear relations that Jesus Christ stands in towards his. He stands in the relation of a Father, a Brother, a Head, a Husband, a Friend, an Advocate. Now, are not all these by the law of relation, bound rather to hide, and keep secret, at least from the world, the weaknesses, and infirmities of their near and dear relations; and is not Christ, is not Christ much more, by how much he is more a Father, a Brother, a Head, a Husband, &c., in a spiritual way, than any others can be in a natural way? &c.

Thirdly, It seems very unsuitable to what the Lord Jesus requires of his in this world. The Lord requires that his people should cast a mantle of love, of wisdom, of silence, and secrecy over one another's weaknesses and infirmities, &c.

Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins—love's mantle is very large. Love will find a hand, a plaster to clap upon every sore, Pro 10:12, and 1Pe 4:8. Flavius Vespasianus, the emperor, was very ready to conceal his friends' vices, and as ready to reveal their virtues. So is divine love in the hearts of the saints, 'If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,' Mat 18:15. As the pills of reprehension are to be gilded and sugared over with much gentleness and softness, so they are to be given in secret. Tell him between him and thee alone. Tale-bearers and tale-hearers are alike abominable. Heaven is too hot, and too holy a place for them, Psa 15:3. Now will Jesus Christ have us carry it thus towards offending Christians, and will he himself act otherwise? Nay, is it an

evil in us to lay open the weaknesses and infirmities of the saints to the world? and will it be an excellency, a glory, a virtue in Christ, to do it in the great day? &c.

[5.] A fifth argument is this, It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression. 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression,' Pro 19:11. Or to pass by it, as we do by persons or things we know not, or would take no notice of. Now, 'Is it the glory of a man to pass over a transgression?' and will it not much more be the glory of Christ, silently to pass over the transgressions of his people in that great day? The greater the treasons and rebellions are that a prince passes over, and takes no notice of, the more is his honour and glory; and so doubtless it will be Christ's in that great day, to pass over all the treasons and rebellions of his people, to take no notice of them, to forget them as well as to forgive them. The heathens have long since observed, that in nothing man came nearer to the glory and perfection of God himself than in goodness and clemency. Surely, if it be such an honour to man, 'to pass over a transgression,' it cannot be a dishonour to Christ, to pass over the transgressions of his people, he having already buried them in the sea of his blood. Again, saith Solomon, 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,' Pro 25:2. And why it should not make for the glory of divine love, to conceal the sins of the saints in that great day, I know not. And whether the concealing the sins of the saints in the great day, will not make most for their joy and wicked men's sorrows, for their comfort and wicked men's terror and torment, I will leave you to judge, and time and experience to decide; and thus much for the resolution of that great question.

I. Now, from what has been said, in answer to this third question, a sincere Christian may form up this first plea as to the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer either to the general judgment, or to the particular judgment that will pass upon every Christian immediately after death. O blessed God, Jesus Christ has by his own blood balanced and made up all reckonings and accounts that were between thee and me; and thou hast vehemently protested, that thou wilt not bring me into judgment; that thou wilt blot out my transgressions as a thick cloud, and that thou wilt remember my sins no more; and that thou wilt cast them behind thy back, and hurl them into the depth of the sea; and that thou wilt forgive them, and cover them, and not impute them to me, &c. This is my plea, O Lord, and by this plea I shall stand. Well, saith the Judge of quick and dead, 'I own this plea, I accept of this plea, I have nothing to say against this plea; the plea is just, safe, honourable, and righteous, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Secondly, Every sinner at his first believing and closing with Christ, is justified in the court of glory from all his sins, both guilt and punishment, Acts 13:39. Justification doth not increase or decrease, but all sin is pardoned at the first act of believing. All who are justified are justified alike. There is no difference amongst believers, as to their justification; one is not more justified than another, for every justified person hath a plenary remission of his sins, and the same righteousness of Christ imputed; but in sanctification there is difference amongst believers. Every one is not sanctified alike, for some are stronger and higher, and others are weaker and lower in grace. As soon as any are made believers in Christ, all the sins which they have committed in time past, and all the sins which they are guilty of, as to the time present, they are actually pardoned unto them in general, and in particular, 1Co 12:12-14; 1Jn 2:1, 1Jn 2:12-14. Now, that all the sins of a believer are pardoned at once, and actually unto them, may be thus demonstrated.

[1.] First, All phrases in Scripture imply thus much. Isa 43:25, 'I, even I, am he which blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Jer 31:34, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' Jer 33:8, 'And I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.' Eze 18:22, 'All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.' Heb 8:12, 'I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more;' ergo, all is pardoned at once. But,

[2.] Secondly, That remission of sins that leaves no condemnation to the party offending, is the remission of all sins; for if there were any sin remaining, a man is still in the state of condemnation; but justification leaves no condemnation. Rom 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' and ver. 33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth;' and ver. 38, 39, 'Nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;' and John 5:24, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life;' ergo, all sins are pardoned at once, or else they were in a state of condemnation, &c. Thus you see it evident that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Therefore there is full remission of all sins to the soul at the first act of believing. But,

[3.] Thirdly, A believer, even when he sinneth, is still united to Christ, John 15:1, John 15:6, John 17:21-23; 1Co 6:17, 'And he is still clothed with the righteousness of Christ which covers all his sins, and dischargeth him from them, so that no guile can redound to him,' Isa 61:10; Jer 23:6; 1Co 1:30; Php 3:9, &c. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A believer is not to fear curse or hell at all, which yet he might do if all his sins were not pardoned at once; but some of his new sins were for a while unpardoned, &c. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ, by once suffering, suffered for all the sins of the elect, past, present, and to come. The infinite wrath of God the Father fell on him for all the sins of the chosen of God, Isa 53:9; Heb 12:14, and Heb 10:9-10, Heb 9:12, Heb 9:14. If Christ had suffered for ten thousand worlds, he could have suffered no more than he did; for he suffered the whole infinite wrath of God the Father. The wrath of God was infinite wrath, and the sufferings of Christ were infinite sufferings; ergo, Look, as Adam's sin was enough to infect a thousand worlds, so our Saviour's merits are sufficient to save a thousand worlds. Those sufferings that he suffered for sins past, are sufficient to satisfy for sins present and to come. That all the sins of God's people, in their absolute number, from first to last, were laid upon Christ, who in the days of his sufferings did meritoriously purchase perfect remission of all their sins, to be applied in future times to them, and by them, is most certain, Isa 54:5-6. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Repentance is not at all required for our justification—where our pardon is only to be found—but only faith; therefore pardon of sin is not suspended until we repent of our sins. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If the remission of all sins be not at once, it is either because my faith, cannot lay hold on it, or because there is some hindrances in the way: but a man by the hand of faith may lay hold on all the merits of Christ, and the word reveals the pardon of all; and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper seals and confirms the pardon of all; and there is no danger nor inconvenience that attends this assertion, for it puts the highest obligation imaginable upon the soul, as to fear and

obedience: Psa 130:3, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?' ver. 4, 'But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.' Forgiveness makes not a Christian bold with sin, but fearful of sin, and careful to obey, as Christians find in their daily experience. By this argument it appears clear, that the forgiveness of all sins is made to the soul at once, at the first act of believing. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If new sins were not pardoned until you do repent, then we should be left to an uncertainty whiles our sins be pardoned, or when they will be pardoned; for it may be long ere we repent, as you see in David, who lay long under the guilt of murder and adultery before he repented, and you know Solomon lay long under many high sins before he repented, &c., and it may be more long ere we do, or can know that we do truly repent of our sins. But,

[9.] Ninthly, If all sins were not forgiven at once, then justification is not perfect at once, but is more and more increased and perfected as more and more sins are pardoned, which cannot consist with the true doctrine of justification. Certainly as to the state of justification, there is a full and perfect remission of all sins—considered under the differences of time past, present, and to come. As in the state of condemnation there is not any one sin pardoned, so in the estate of justification, there is not any one sin but is pardoned; for the state of justification is opposite to all condemnation and curse and wrath. But,

[10.] Tenthly, All agree that as to God's eternal decree or purpose of forgiveness, all the sins of his people are forgiven. God did not intend to forgive some of their sins and not the rest, but a universal and full and complete forgiveness was fixedly purposed and resolved on by God. Forgiveness of sins is a gracious act, or work of God for Christ's sake, discharging and absolving believing and repenting persons from the guilt and punishment of all their sins, so that God is no longer displeased with them, nor will he ever remember them any more, nor call them to an account for them, nor condemn them for their sins, but will look on them, and deal with them as if they had never sinned, never offended him.

Thirdly, Consider, that at the very moment of a believer's dissolution, all his sins are perfectly and fully forgiven. All their sins are so fully and finally forgiven them, that at the very moment of their souls going out from the body, there is not one sin of omission or commission, nor any aggravation or least circumstance left standing in the book of God's remembrance; and this is the true reason why there shall not be the least mention made of their sins in their trial at Christ's tribunal, because they were all pardoned fully and finally at the hour of their death. All debts were then discharged, all scores were then crossed, so that in the great day, when the books shall be opened and perused, there shall not one sin be found, but all blotted out, and all reckonings made even in the blood of Christ.

Indeed, if God should pardon some sins, and not others, he would at the same time be a friend and an enemy, and we should be at once both happy and miserable, which are manifest contradictions. Besides, God doth nothing in vain; but it would be in vain for God to pardon some sins but not all, for as one leak in a ship unstopped will sink the ship, and as one sore or one disease, not healed nor cured, will kill the body, so one sin unpardoned will destroy the soul.

Fourthly, God looks not upon those as sinners, whose sins are pardoned: Luk 7:37, 'And behold a woman in the city which was a sinner.' A notorious sinner, a branded sinner. Mark, it is not said,

behold a woman which is a sinner, but 'behold a woman which was a sinner;' to note that sinners converted and pardoned are no longer reputed sinners, 'Behold a woman which was a sinner.' Look, as a man, when he is cleansed from filth, is as if he had never been defiled; so when a sinner is pardoned, he is in God's account as if he had never sinned. Hence those phrases in Song of Solomon 4:7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' Col 2:10, 'And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power,' as though he had said, because in himself he hath the well-head of glory and majesty, the which becometh ours; in that he is also the head of his church: Col 1:21, 'And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind, by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled;' Col 1:22, 'In the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight;' that is, by his righteousness imputed and imparted: Eph 5:27, 'that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.' The word 'present' is taken from the custom of solemnizing a marriage; first the spouse was wooed, and then set before her husband adorned with his jewels, as Rebekah was with Isaac's: Rev 14:5, 'And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.' 1. They are without fault by imputation. 2. By inchoation. Hence Job is said to be a perfect man, Job 2:1-13, and David to be 'a man after God's own heart,' Acts 13:22. The forgiven party is now looked upon and received with that love and favour, as if he had never offended God, and as if God had never been offended by him, Hos 14:1-2, Hos 14:4; Isa 54:7-10; Jer 31:33-34, Jer 31:36-37; Luk 15:19-23. Here the sins of the prodigal are pardoned, and his father receives him with such expressions of love and familiarity as if he had never sinned against him; his father never so much as objects any one of all his high sinnings against him. Hence it is that you read of such sweet, kind, tender, loving, comfortable expressions of God towards those whose sins he had pardoned: Jer 31:16, 'Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears;' Jer 31:20, 'Is Ephraim my dear son, is he a pleasant child?' Mat 9:2, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' The schools say that the remission of sins is not only *ablative mali*, but *collativa boni*, a remotion of guilt, but a collation of good. Look, as he that is legally acquitted of theft or murder, is no more reputed a thief or murderer, so here, Jer 50:20, 'In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.' Pardoned sin is in God's account no sin, and the pardoned sinner in God's account is no sinner, as the pardoned debtor is no debtor. Where God hath pardoned a man, there he never looks upon that man as a sinner, but as a just man. Pardon of sin is an utter abolition of it, as it doth reflect upon the person, making him guilty, and obliging him actually to condemnation; in this respect the pardoned man is as free as if he had never sinned. Therefore the believer, the penitent person, hath infinite cause of rejoicing, that God hath perfectly pardoned his sins, and that he looks upon him no more [as] a sinner, but as a just and righteous person. O sirs! what can the great God do more for your comfort and consolation? and therefore, never entertain any hard thoughts of God, as if he were like those men who say they forgive with all their hearts, and yet retain their secret hate and inward malice as much as ever; but for ever live in the faith of this truth, viz., that when God doth pardon sin, he takes it so away, as that the party acquitted is no more looked upon as a sinner. Now upon this consideration, what a glorious plea hath every sincere Christian to make in the day of account! But,

Fifthly, Forgiveness takes off our obligation to suffer eternal punishment; so that, look, as a forgiven debtor is freed from whatsoever penalty his debt did render him liable to, so is the

forgiven sinner from the punishment itself. In this respect Aristotle saith, 'To forgive sin is not to punish it.' And Austin saith, 'To forgive sin is not to inflict the punishment due unto it.' And the schools say, 'To remit the sin is not to impute the punishment.' When a king pardons a thief, his theft now shall not prejudice him. The guilt obliging is that whereby the sinner is actually bound to undergo the punishment due to him by the law, and passed on him by the judge for the breach of it; this is that which by the schools is called the extrinsecal guilt of sin, to distinguish it from the intrinsecal, which is included in the deordination of the act, and which is inseparable from the sin. And if you would know wherein the nature of forgiveness immediately and primarily consists, it is in the taking off this obligation, and discharging the sinner from it. Hence it is that the pardoned sinner is said not to be under the law: Rom 6:14, and not to be under the curse; Gal 3:13, and not to be under the sentence of condemnation. And according to this notion, all Scripture phrases are to be construed by which forgiveness is expressed, Rom 8:1. God, when he forgives sin, he is said to cover them, Psa 32:1, Psa 85:2; Rom 4:7; 'to remember them no more,' Isa 43:25; Jer 31:34; Heb 8:12; 'to cast them behind his back,' Isa 38:17; 'to throw them into the depth of the sea,' Mic 7:19; 'to blot them out as a cloud,' Isa 44:22; 'and to turn away his face from them,' Psa 51:9. By all which expressions we are not to think that God doth not know sin, or that God doth not see sin, or that God is not displeased with sin, or that God is not displeased with believers for their sins; but that he will not so take notice of them as to enter into judgment with the persons for them. So that the forgiven sinner is free from obligation of the punishment, as truly, as surely, as fully, and as perfectly as if he had never committed the sin, but were altogether innocent. In every sin there are two things considerable: first, the offence which is done to God, whereby he is displeased; secondly, the obligation of the man so offending him to eternal condemnation. Now, remission of sin doth wholly lie in the removing of these two; so that when God doth will neither to punish or to be offended with the person, then he is said to forgive. It is true there remains paternal and medicinal chastisements after sin is forgiven, but no offence or punishment strictly so taken. And is not this a noble plea for a believer to make in the day of account? But,

Sixthly, Consider that all the sins of believers were laid upon Christ their surety, Heb 7:21-22. What is that? That is, he became bound to God, he became responsible to him for all their sins, for all that God in justice could charge upon them, and demand for satisfaction: Isa 53:5-6, 'Our salvation was laid upon one that is mighty;' Psa 89:19; Isa 63:1. As Judah became a surety to Jacob for Benjamin, he engaged himself to his father: 'I will be surety for him, of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever,' Gen 43:9; herein he was a type of Christ, that came of him, who is both our surety to God for the discharge of our debt and duty, and God's surety to us for the performance of his promises. 'Father,' saith Christ, 'I will take upon me all the sins of thy people; I will be bound to answer for them; I will sacrifice myself for them; at my hands do thou require satisfaction for their sins, and a full compensation unto thy justice; I will die, I will lay down my life, I will make my soul an offering for sins; I will become a curse, I will endure thy wrath.' Oh, what unspeakable comfort is this, that there is a Christ to answer for that which we could never answer! Christ is a surety in way of satisfaction, undertaking for the debts, the trespasses, the sins of his elect. In this respect it is that Christ is most properly called a surety, in regard of his taking upon him the sins of his elect, and undertaking to answer and make satisfaction unto the justice of God for them. Christ interposeth himself betwixt the wrath of God and his people, undertaking to satisfy their debts, and so to reconcile them unto God. Christ had nothing of his own to be condemned for, nothing of his own to

be acquitted from. He was condemned to pay your debt, as your surety, and therefore you cannot be condemned too. He was acquitted from it, being paid, as your surety, and therefore you cannot but be acquitted too. He appeared the first time with your sin to his condemnation, he shall appear the second time without your sin unto your salvation, Heb 9:28. God the Father says to Christ, 'Son, if you would have poor sinners pardoned, you must take their debts upon yourself, you must be their surety, and you must enter into bonds to pay every farthing of that debt poor sinners owe; you must pay all if you will undertake for them, for I will never come upon them for it, but on you.' Certainly these were some of those transactions that were between God the Father and God the Son from all eternity about the pardoning of poor sinners. If ever thy sins be pardoned, Christ must take thy debts upon himself, and be thy surety; 2Co 5:21, 'He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.' Christ was made sin for us—1, by way of imputation, 'for our sins were made to meet upon him,' as that evangelical prophet hath it, Isa 53:6; and, secondly, by reputation, 'for he was reckoned among malefactors,' Isa 53:12. The way of pardon is by a translation of all our sins upon Christ, it is by charging them all upon Christ's score. That is a great expression of Nathan to David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin;' but the original runs thus, 'The Lord hath made thy sins to pass over;' that is, to pass over from thee to his Son; he hath laid them to his charge.

Now Christ hath discharged all his people's debts and bonds. There is a twofold debt which lay upon us. One was the debt of obedience unto the law, and this Christ did pay by 'fulfilling all righteousness,' Mat 3:15. The other was the debt of punishment for our transgressions, and this debt Christ discharged by his death on the cross, Isa 53:4, Isa 53:10, Isa 53:12; 'And by being made a curse for us, to redeem us from the curse,' Gal 3:13. Hence it is that we are said to be 'bought with a price,' 1Co 6:20, and 1Co 7:23; and that Christ is called our 'Ransom,' λυτρον, Mat 20:28, and ντλυτρον, 1Ti 2:6. The words do signify a valuable price laid down for another's ransom. The blood of Christ, the Son of God, was a valuable price, a sufficient price; it was as much as would take off all enmities, and take away all sin, and to satisfy divine justice, and indeed so it did; and therefore you read that 'in his blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins,' Eph 1:7; Col 1:14, Col 1:20; and his death was such a full compensation to divine justice, that the apostle makes a challenge to all: Rom 8:33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' and Rom 8:34, 'Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died.' As if he had said, Christ hath satisfied and discharged all. The Greek word ντλυτρον is of special emphasis. The Vulgar Latin renders it redemptionem, redemption; Beza, redemptionis pretium, a price of redemption; but neither of them fully expressing the force of the word, which properly signifieth a counter-price, when one doth undergo in the room of another that which he should have undergone in his own person, as when one yields himself a captive for the redeeming of another out of captivity, or giveth his own life for the saving of another's. There were such sureties among the Greeks as gave life for life, body for body; and in this sense the apostle is to be understood, when he saith that Christ gave himself ντλυτρον, a ransom, a counter-price, paying a price for his people. Christ hath laid down a price for all believers, they are his 'dear bought ones,' they are his 'choice redeemed ones,' Isa 51:11. Christ gave himself ντλυτρον, a counter-price, a ransom, submitting himself to the like punishment that his redeemed ones should have undergone. Christ, to deliver his elect from the curse of the law, did subject himself to that same curse of the law under which all mankind lay. Jesus Christ was a true surety, one that gave his life for the life of others. As the apostle saith of Castor and Pollux, that the one redeemed the other's life with his own death, so did the Lord Jesus; he became such a surety for his elect, giving himself an

■ντ■λυτρον, a ransom for them, John 6:51; Tit 2:14; 1Pe 1:18; Rev 1:5, and Rev 5:9. Oh, what comfort is this unto us to have such a Jesus, who himself bare our sins, even all our sins, left not one unsatisfied for, laid down a full ransom, a full price, such an expiatory sacrifice as that now we are out of the hands of justice, and wrath, and death, and curse, and hell, and are reconciled and made near by the blood of the everlasting covenant! The blood of Christ, as the Scripture speaks, is 'the blood of God,' Acts 20:28, so that there is not only satisfaction, but merit in his blood. There is more in Christ's blood than mere payment or satisfaction. There was merit also in it, to acquire and procure and purchase all spiritual good, and all eternal good for the people of God; not only immunities from sin, death, wrath, curse, hell, &c., but privileges and dignities of sons and heirs; yea, all grace, and all love, and all peace, and all glory, even that glorious inheritance purchased by his blood, Eph 1:14.

Remember this once for all, that in justification our debts are charged upon Christ, they go upon his accounts. You know that in sin there is the vicious and staining quality of it, and there is the resulting guilt of it, which is the obligation of a sinner over to the judgment-seat of God to answer for it. Now this guilt, in which lies our debt, this is charged upon Christ. Therefore, saith the apostle, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,' 2Co 5:19; 'And hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,' 2Co 5:21. You know in law the wife's debts are charged upon the husband; and if the debtor be disabled, then the creditor sues the surety. Fide-jussor, or surety and debtor, in law are reputed as one person. Now Christ is our fide-jussor. 'He is made sin for us,' saith the apostle; 'for us'—that is, in our stead—a surety for us, one who puts our scores on his accounts, our burden on his shoulders. So saith that princely prophet Isaiah: Isa 53:4-5, 'He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' How so? 'He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities;' that is, he stood in our stead, he took upon him the answering of our sins, the satisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt; and therefore was it that he was so bruised, &c.

You remember the scape-goat; upon his head all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins were confessed and put: 'And the goat did bear upon him all their iniquities,' Lev 16:21-22. What is the meaning of this? Surely Jesus Christ, upon whom our sins were laid, and who alone died for the ungodly, Rom 5:6, 'and bore our burdens away.' Therefore the believer in the sense of guilt should run unto Christ, and offer up his blood unto the Father, and say, 'Lord, it is true, I owe thee so much; yet, Father, forgive me; remember that thine own Son was my ransom, his blood was the price; he was my surety, and undertook to answer for my sins. I beseech thee, accept of his atonement, for he is my surety, my redemption. Thou must be satisfied! but Christ hath satisfied thee, not for himself—what sins had he of his own?—but for me. They were my debts which he satisfied for; and look over thy book, and thou shalt find it so; for thou hast said, "He was made sin for us, and that he was wounded for our transgressions." ' Now, what a singular support, what an admirable comfort is this, that we ourselves are not to make up our accounts and reckonings; but that Christ hath cleared all accounts and reckonings between God and us. Therefore it is said that 'in his blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins,' Eph 1:7.

Quest. Whether it were not against the justice of God that Christ, who was in himself innocent,—without all sin, a Lamb without a spot,—should bear and endure all these punishments for us who were the offending and guilty and obnoxious persons only? Or if you please thus,

Whether God was not unjust to give his Son Jesus Christ to be our surety and mediator and redeemer and saviour, forasmuch as Christ could not be any one of these for and unto us but by a willing susception of our sins upon himself, to be for them responsible unto the justice of God, in suffering those punishments which were due for our sins?

I shall speak a few words to this main question. I say, then, that it is not always and in all cases unjust, but it is sometimes and in some cases very just, to punish one who is himself innocent, for him or those who are the nocent and guilty. Grotius in his book, *De Satisfactione*, gives divers instances; but I shall mention only two.

First, In the case of conjunction, where the innocent party and the nocent party do become legally one party; and therefore if a man marries a woman indebted, he thereupon becomes obnoxious to pay her debts, although, absolutely considered, he was not obnoxious thereunto. But,

Secondly, In case of suretyship, where a person, knowing the weak and insufficient condition of another, doth yet voluntarily put forth himself, and will be bound to the creditor for him as his surety to answer for him, by reason of which suretyship the creditor may come upon him, and deal with him as he might have dealt with the principal debtor himself; and this course we do ordinarily take with sureties for the recovery of our right, without any violation of justice. Now, both these are exactly applicable to the business in hand; for Jesus Christ was pleased to marry our nature unto himself; he did partake of our flesh and blood, and became man, and one with us. And besides that, he did, both by the will of his Father and his own free consent, become our surety, and was content to stand in our stead or room, so as to be made sin and curse for us—that is, to have all our debts and sorrows, all our sins and punishments laid upon him, and did engage himself to satisfy God by bearing and suffering what we should have borne and suffered. And therefore although Jesus Christ, absolutely considered in himself, was innocent and had no sin inherent in himself, which therefore might make him liable to death and wrath and curse, yet by becoming one with us, and sustaining the office of our surety, our sins were laid on him, and our sins being laid upon him, he made himself therefore obnoxious, and that justly, to all those punishments which he did suffer for our sins. I do confess, that had Christ been unwilling and forced into this suretyship, or had any detriment or prejudice risen to any party concerned in this transaction, then some complaint might have been made concerning the justice of God. But,

[1.] First, There was a willingness on all sides for the passive work of Christ. First, God the Father, who was the offended party, he was willing, which Christ assures us of when he said, 'Thy will be done,' Mat 26:42; Acts 4:25-28. Secondly, We poor sinners, who are the offending party, are willing. We accept of this gracious and wonderful redemption, and bless the Lord who 'so loved us as to give his Son for us.' And, thirdly, Jesus Christ was willing to suffer for us: 'Behold I come' Psal 40:7 : 'And shall I not drink of the cup which my Father hath given me to drink?' John 18:11 : 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?' Luk 12:50. He calls the death of his cross a baptism, partly because it was a certain immersion into extreme calamities into which he was cast, and partly because in the cross he was so to be sprinkled in his own blood as if he had been drowned and baptized in it. The Greek word, συν■χομαι, that is here rendered straitened, signifies to be pained, pressed, or pent up, not with such a grief as made him unwilling to come to it, but with such as made him desire that it were once over. 'There seems,' saith Grotius, 'to be a similitude implied in the original word, taken from a woman with child, which

is so afraid of her bringing forth that yet she would fain be eased of her burden.' John 10:11, 'I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' Christ is that good Shepherd by an excellency, that held not his life dear for his sheep's safety: John 10:15, 'I lay down my life for the sheep': John 10:17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life:' John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.' A necessity there was of our Saviour's death, but it was a necessity of immutability—because God had decreed it, Acts 2:23—not of coercion. He laid down his life freely, he died willingly. But,

[2.] Secondly, No parties whatsoever were prejudiced, or lost by it. We lost nothing by it, for we are saved by his death, and reconciled by his death; and Christ lost nothing by it: 'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and enter into his glory?' Luk 24:26. 'The Captain of our salvation is made perfect through sufferings,' Heb 2:10. You may see Christ's glorious rewards for his sufferings in that Isa 53:10-12. And God the Father lost nothing by it, for he is glorified by it: 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,' John 17:4. Yea, he is fully satisfied and repaired again in all the honour which he lost by our sinning—I say he is now fully repaired again by the sufferings of Christ, in which he found a price sufficient, and a ransom, and enough to make peace for ever. In the day of account, a Christian's great plea is, that Christ has been his surety, and paid his debts, and made up his accounts for him.

II. Now, from what has been said last, a Christian may form up this second plea to the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer either to the general judgment or to the particular judgment that will pass upon every Christian immediately after death. O blessed Lord! upon my first believing and closing with Jesus Christ, thou didst justify me in the court of glory from all my sins, both as to guilt and punishment. Upon my first act of believing, thou didst pardon all my sins, thou didst forgive all my iniquities, thou didst blot out all my transgressions; and as upon my first believing thou didst give me the remission of all my sins, so upon my first believing thou didst free me from a state of condemnation, and interest me in the great salvation. Upon my first believing, I was united to Jesus Christ, and I was clothed with the righteousness of Christ, which covered all my sins and discharged me from all my transgressions, Rom 8:10; Heb 2:3; and remember, O Lord, that at the very moment of my dissolution thou didst really, perfectly, universally, and finally forgive all my sins. Every debt that moment was discharged, and every score that moment was crossed, and every bill and bond that moment was cancelled, so that there was not left in the book of thy remembrance one sin, no, not the least sin, standing upon record against my soul; and besides all this, thou knowest, O Lord, that all my sins were laid upon Christ my surety, Heb 7:21-22, and that he became responsible for them all. He did die, he did lay down his life, he did make his soul an offering for my sins, he did become a curse, he did endure thy infinite wrath, he did give complete satisfaction, and a full compensation unto thy justice for all my sins, debts, trespasses. This is my plea, O Lord! and by this plea I shall stand. 'Well,' saith the Lord, 'I allow of this plea, I accept of this plea as just, honourable, and righteous. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' But,

Seventhly, Consider, that whatever we are bound to do, or to suffer by the law of God, all that did Christ do and suffer for us, as being our surety and mediator. Now the law of God hath a double challenge or demand upon us; one is of active obedience, in fulfilling what it requires; the other is of passive obedience, in suffering that punishment which lies upon us, for the transgression of it, in doing what it forbids. For as we are created by God, we did owe unto him all obedience which he required; and as we sinned against God, we did owe unto him a suffering of all that punishment

which he threatened, and we being fallen by transgression, can neither pay the one debt, nor yet the other; we cannot do all that the law requires, nay of ourselves we can do nothing; neither can we so suffer as to satisfy God in his justice wronged by us, or to recover ourselves into life and favour again; and therefore Jesus Christ, who was God, made man, did become our surety, and stood in our stead or room; and he did perform what we should but could not perform; and he did bear our sins and our sorrows. He did suffer and bear for us what we ourselves should have borne and suffered, whereby he did fully satisfy the justice of God, and made our peace, and purchased life and happiness for us. Let me a little more clearly and fully open this great truth in these few particulars.

(1.) First, Jesus Christ did perform that active obedience unto the law of God, which we should, but, by reason of sin, could not perform; in which respect he is said, Gal 4:4, 'to be made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law.' So far was Christ under the law, as to redeem them that were under the law. But redeem them that were under the law he could not, unless by discharging the bonds of the law in force upon us; and all those bonds could not be, and were not discharged, unless a perfect righteousness had been presented on our behalf, who were under the law, to fulfil the law. Now there is a twofold righteousness necessary to the actual fulfilling of the law: one is an internal righteousness of the nature of man; the other is an external righteousness of the life or works of man: both of these do the law require. The former, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' &c., which is the sum of the first table; 'And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' which is the sum of the second table: the latter, 'Do this and live,' Lev 18:5, 'He that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them, is cursed,' Gal 3:10. Now both these righteousnesses were found in Christ. First, the internal: Heb 7:26, 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners; Heb 9:14, 'And offered himself without spot to God;' 2Co 5:21, 'He knew no sin.' Secondly, external: 1Pe 2:22, 'He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;' John 17:4, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;' Mat 3:15, 'He must fulfil all righteousness,' Rom 10:4; 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Now concerning Christ's active obedience to the law of God, these things are considerable in it.

[1.] First, The universality of it: he did whatsoever his Father required, and left nothing of his Father's will undone. He kept the whole law, and offended not in one point. Whatever was required of us, by virtue of any law, that he did, and fulfilled. Hence he is said to be made under the law, Gal 4:4, subject or obnoxious to it, to all the precepts or commands of it. Christ was so made under the law, as those were under the law whom he was to redeem. Now we were under the law, not only as obnoxious to its penalties, but as bound to all the duties of it. That this is our being under the law, is evident by that of the apostle: Gal 4:21, 'Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law.' Surely it was not the penalty of the law they desired to be under, but to be under it in respect of obedience. So Mat 3:15. Here Christ tells you, that 'it became him to fulfil all righteousness,' πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην, all manner of righteousness whatsoever; that is, everything that God required, as is evident from the application of that general axiom to the baptism of John. But,

[2.] Secondly, The exactness and perfection of it. He kept the whole law exactly. As he was not wanting in matter, so he did not fail in the manner of performing his Father's will. There was no defects, nothing lacking in his obedience; he did all things well. What we are pressing towards, and reaching forth unto, he attained; he was perfect in every good work, and stood complete in the

whole will of his Father. And hence it is, that it is recorded of him, that he was without sin, knew no sin, did no sin, which could not be if he had failed in anything. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The constancy of it. Christ did not obey by fits, but constantly. Though we cannot, yet he 'continued in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' This righteous one held on his way, he did not fail, nor was he discouraged; yea, when persecution and tribulation did arise against him, because of his doing the will of his Father, he was not offended, but did always do the things which pleased his Father, as he told the Jews, John 8:29.

[4.] Fourthly, The delight that he took 'in doing the will of his Father:' Psa 40:8, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart,' or in the midst of my bowels, as the Hebrew runs. By the law of God we are to understand all the commandments of God. There is not one command which Christ did not delight to do. Christ's obedience was without murmuring or grudging; his Father's commandments were not grievous to him; he tells his disciples, that it was his 'meat to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work,' John 4:34. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The virtue and efficacy of it; for his obedience, his righteousness never returns to him void, but it always 'accomplishes that which he pleases, and prospers in the thing whereto he ordains it,' and that is the making others righteous, according to that of the apostle: Rom 5:19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the disobedience of one shall many be made righteous;' 2Co 5:21, 'God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;' and accordingly we are, 'for of God he is made unto us righteousness,' 1Co 1:30. The perfect complete obedience of Christ to the law is certainly reckoned to us. That is an everlasting truth, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,' Mat 19:17. The commandments must be kept either by ourselves, or by our surety, or there is no entering into life; Christ did obey the law, not for himself but for us, and in our stead: Rom 5:18-19, 'By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous.' By his obedience to the law, we are made righteous. Christ's obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness. Christ, by his obedience to the royal law, is made righteousness to us, 1Co 1:30. We are saved by that perfect obedience, which Christ, when he was in this world, yielded to the blessed law of God. Mark, whatever Christ did as mediator, he did it for those whose mediator he was, or in whose stead and for whose good he executed the office of a mediator before God. This the Holy Ghost witnesseth: Rom 8:3-4, 'What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.' The word 'likeness,' is not simply to be referred to flesh, but to sinful flesh, as Basil well observes; for Christ was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. If with our justification from sin, there be joined that active obedience of Christ, which is imputed to us, we are just before God, according to that perfect form which the law requireth. Because we could not, in this condition of weakness whereinto we are cast by sin, come to God, and be freed from condemnation by the law, God sent Christ as a mediator to do and suffer whatever the law required at our hands for that end and purpose, that we might not be condemned, but accepted of God. It was all to this end, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us; that is, which the law required of us, consisting in duties of obedience. This Christ performed for us. This expression of the apostle, 'God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,' if you will add to it that of Gal 4:4—'that he was so sent forth, as that

he was γενόμενος πᾶν νόμον, 'made under the law;' that is, obnoxious to it, to yield all the obedience that it doth require,—compares the whole of what Christ did or suffered; and all this, the Holy Ghost tells us was for us, ver. 5, He that made the law as God, was made under the law as God-man, whereby both the obligations of the law fell upon him: 1. Penal; 2. Preceptive. First, The penal obligation to undergo the curse, and so to satisfy divine justice. Secondly, The preceptive obligation, to fulfil all righteousness, Mat 3:15. This obligation he fulfilled by doing, the other by dying. Mark, this double obligation could not have befallen the Lord Jesus Christ upon any natural account of his own, but upon his mediatory account only, as he voluntarily became the surety of this new and better covenant, Heb 7:22; so that the fruit and benefit of Christ's voluntary subjection to the law, redoundeth not at all to himself, 'but unto the persons which were given him of the Father,' John 17:1-26, whose sponsor he became. For their sakes he underwent the penal obligation of the law, that it might do them no harm, 'He being made a curse for us," Gal 3:13; and for their sakes he fulfilled the preceptive obligation of the law, 'do this,' that so the law might do them good. This the evangelical apostle clearly asserts, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth,' Rom 10:4, 'Christ is the end of the law,' τέλος. What end? why finis perfectivus, the perfection and accomplishment of the law; he is the end of the law for righteousness, that is, to the end that by Christ his active obedience, God might have his perfect law perfectly kept, that so there might be a righteousness extant in the human nature, every way adequate to the perfection of the law. And who must wear this garment of righteousness, when Christ hath finished it? Surely the believer who wanted a righteousness of his own; for so it follows, 'for righteousness to every one that believeth,' that is, that every poor naked sinner, believing in Jesus Christ, might have a righteousness, wherein being found, he might appear at God's tribunal, but his nakedness not appear, but as Jacob in the garment of his elder brother Esau, so the believer in the garment of his elder brother Jesus, might inherit the blessing, even the great blessing of justification. The only matter of man's righteousness, since the fall of Adam, wherein he can appear with comfort before the justice of God, and consequently, whereby alone he can be justified in his sight, is the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the mediator. There is not any other way imaginable, how the justice of God may be satisfied, and we may have our sins pardoned in a way of justice, but by the righteousness of the Son of God, and therefore is his name Jehovah, יהוה, 'The Lord our righteousness,' Jer 23:6. This is his name; that is, this is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus, a matter that appertains to him alone, to be able to bring in 'an everlasting righteousness, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,' Dan 9:24. It is by Christ alone, that they who 'believe are justified from all things, from which they cannot be justified by the law of Moses,' Acts 13:39.

III. Now from the active obedience of Christ, a sincere Christian may form up this third plea as to the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer either to the general judgment, or to the particular judgment that will pass upon every Christian immediately after death. O blessed God, thou knowest that Jesus Christ, as my surety, did perform all that active obedience unto thy holy and righteous law that I should have performed, but by reason of the indwelling power of sin, and of the vexing and molesting power of sin, and of the captivating power of sin, could not. There was in Christ an habitual righteousness, a conformity of his nature to the holiness of the law: 1Pe 1:19, 'For he is a lamb without spot and blemish.' The law could never have required so much righteousness as is to be found in him; and as for practical righteousness, there was never any aberration in his thoughts, words, or deeds, Heb 7:25; 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath

nothing in me,' John 14:30. The apostle tells us, that 'we are made the righteousness of God in him,' 2Co 5:21. He doth emphatically add that clause, **■v ■vt■**, in him, that he may take away all conceit of inherence in us, and establish the doctrine of imputation. As Christ is made sin in us by imputation, so we are made righteousness in him by the same way. Augustine's place which Beza cites is a most full commentary, 'God the Father,' saith he, 'made him to be sin, who knew no sin, that we might be the righteousness of God, not our own; and in him, that is in Christ, not in ourselves; and being thus justified, we are so righteous, as if we were righteousness itself.' Oh, holy God, Christ my surety hath universally kept thy royal law, he hath not offended in any one point; yea, he hath exactly and perfectly kept the whole law of God, he stood complete in the whole will of the Father; his active obedience was so full, so perfect, and so adequate to all the law's demands, that the law could not but say, 'I have enough, I am fully satisfied; I have found a ransom, I can ask no more.' Neither was the obedience of Christ fickle or transient, but permanent and constant; it was his delight, his meat and drink, yea, his heaven, to be still a-doing the will of his Father, John 4:33-34. Assuredly, whilst our Lord Jesus Christ was in this world, he did in his own person fully obey the law; he did in his own person perfectly conform to all the holy, just, and righteous commands of the law. Now this his most perfect and complete obedience to the law is made over to all his members, to all believers, to all sincere Christians; it is reckoned to them, it is imputed to them, as if they themselves, in their own persons, had performed it. All sound believers being in Christ, as their head and surety, the law's righteousness is fulfilled in them legally and imputively, though it be not fulfilled in them formally, subjectively, inherently, or personally; suitable to that of the apostle, that 'the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,' Rom 8:4. Mark, not by us, but in us; for Christ in our nature hath fulfilled the right of the law, and therefore in us, because of our communion with him, and our ingrafting into him. God hath condemned sin in the flesh of his Son, that all that which the law by right could require of us might be performed by him for us, so as if we ourselves had in our own persons performed the same. The law must have its right before a sinner can be saved; we cannot of ourselves fulfil the right of it. But here is the comfort, Christ our surety hath fulfilled it in us, and we have fulfilled it in him. Certainly, whatsoever Christ did concerning the law is ours by imputation so fully, as if ourselves had done it. Does the law require obedience? saith Christ, 'I will give it,' Mat 3:15. Does the law threaten curses? says Christ, 'They shall be borne,' Mat 5:17-18. The precept of the law, saith Christ, shall be kept, and the promises received, and the punishments endured, that poor sinners may be saved. Our righteousness and title to eternal life do indispensably depend upon the imputation of Christ's active obedience to us. There must be a perfect obeying of the law, as the condition of life, either by the sinner himself or by his surety, or else no life; which doth sufficiently evince the absolute necessity of the imputation of Christ's active obedience to us. The sinner himself being altogether unable to fulfil the law, that he may stand righteous before the great and glorious God, Christ's fulfilling of it must necessarily be imputed to him in order to righteousness. There are two great things which Jesus Christ did undertake for his redeemed ones; the one was to make full satisfaction to divine justice for all their sins. Now this he did by his blood and death. The other was to yield most absolute conformity to the law of God, both in nature and life. By the one he has freed all his redeemed ones from hell, and by the other he has qualified all the redeemed ones for heaven. This is my plea, O Lord, and by this plea I shall stand. 'Well,' saith the Lord, 'I accept of this plea as honourable, just, and righteous; Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

(2.) Secondly, As Jesus Christ did for us perform all that active obedience which the law of God required; so he did also suffer all those punishments which we had deserved by the transgression of the law of God, in which respect he is said, 2Co 5:21, 'To be made sin for us;' 1Pe 2:24, 'Himself to bear our sins in his own body on the tree;' 1Pe 3:18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God;' Php 2:8, 'To humble himself and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;' Gal 3:13, 'To be made a curse, an execration for us;' Eph 5:2, 'To give himself for us an offering and sacrifice unto God;' Heb 9:15, 'And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Now concerning the passive obedience, or suffering of Christ, I would present unto you these conclusions.

[1.] First, That the sufferings of Jesus Christ were free and voluntary, and not constrained or forced. Austin saith, that Christ did suffer quia voluit, et quando voluit, et quomodo voluit: John 10:17, 'I lay down my life;' John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again;' Gal 2:20, 'Who gave himself for me.' Christ's sufferings did rise out of obedience to his Father: John 10:18, 'This commandment have I received of my Father;' and John 18:11, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' And Christ's sufferings did spring and rise out of his love to us, 'who loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal 2:20; so Eph 5:25, 'As Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it.' And indeed, had Christ's sufferings been involuntary, they could not have been a part of his obedience, much less could they have mounted to anything of merit for us. Christ was very free and willing to undertake the work of man's redemption. When he cometh into the world, he saith, 'Sacrifice and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,' Heb 10:5. It is the expression of one overjoyed to do the will of God. So Luk 12:50, 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' There was no power, no force to compel Christ to lay down his life, therefore it is called the offering of the body of Jesus, Heb 10:10. Nothing could fasten Christ to the cross, but the golden link of his free love. Christ was big of love, and therefore he freely opens all the pores of his body, that his blood may flow out from every part, as a precious balsam to cure our wounds. The heart of Christ was so full of love that it could not hold, but must needs burst out through every part and member of his body into a bloody sweat, Luk 22:44. At this time it is most certain that there was no manner of violence offered to the body of Christ; no man touched him, or came near him with whips, or thorns, or spears, or lances. Though the night was cold, and the air cold, and the earth on which he kneeled cold, yet such a burning love he had in his breasts to his people as cast him into a bloody sweat. It is certain that Christ never repented of his sufferings: Isa 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' It is a metaphor that alludes to a mother, who though she hath had hard labour, yet doth not repent of it, when she sees a child brought forth. So though Christ had hard travail upon the cross, yet he doth not repent of it, but thinks all his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees the man-child of redemption is brought forth into the world. He shall be satisfied: the Hebrew word, שָׂבַע, signifies such a satiating as a man hath at some sweet repast or banquet. And what does this speak out, but his freeness in suffering?

Obj. But here some may object, and say, that the Lord Jesus, when the hour of his sufferings drew nigh, did repent of his suretyship; and in a deep passion prayed to his Father to be released from

his sufferings: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' and that three times over, Mat 26:39, Mat 26:42, Mat 26:44.

Ans. Now to this objection I shall answer, first more generally, and secondly more particularly.

[1.] First, in the general, I say that this earnest prayer of his doth not denote absolutely his unwillingness, but rather sets out the greatness of his willingness; for although Christ as a man was of the same natural affections with us, and desires, and abhorrences of what was destructive to nature, and therefore did fear and deprecate that bitter cup which he was ready to drink; yet as our mediator and surety, and knowing it would be a cup of salvation to us, though of exceeding bitterness to himself, he did yield and lay aside his natural reluctances as man, and willingly obeyed his Father's will to drink it, as our loving mediator, as if he should say, 'O Father, whatsoever be-cometh of me, of my natural fear or desire, I am content to submit to the drinking of this cup; thy will be done.' But,

[2.] Secondly, and more particularly, I answer, that in these words of our Lord there is a twofold voice. 1. There is vox naturæ, the voice of nature; 'Let this cup pass from me.' 2. There is vox officii, the voice of his mediatory office; 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' The first voice, 'Let this cup pass,' intimates the velleity of the inferior part of his soul, the sensitive part, proceeding from unnatural abhorrency of death as he was a creature. The latter voice, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,' expresseth the full and free consent of his will, complying with the will of his Father in that grand everlasting design of 'bringing many sons unto glory, by making the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings,' Heb 2:10.

It was an argument of the truth of Christ his human nature, that he naturally dreaded a dissolution. He owed it to himself as a creature to desire the conservation of his being, and he could not become unnatural to himself, 'For no man ever yet hated his own flesh,' Eph 5:29: Php 2:8, 'But being a son, he learned submission, and became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross;' that shameful, cruel, cursed death of the cross, the suffering whereof he owed to that solemn astipulation, which from everlasting passed between his Father and himself, the third person in the blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost being witness. And therefore, though the cup was the bitterest cup that ever was given man to drink, as wherein there was not death only, but wrath and curse: yet seeing there was no other way left of satisfying the justice of his Father, and of saving sinners, most willingly he took the cup, and having given thanks, as it were, in those words, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' never did bridegroom go with more cheerfulness to be married to his bride, than our Lord Jesus went to his cross, Luk 12:20.

Though the cup that God the Father put into Christ's hand was bitter, very bitter, yea, the bitterest that ever was put into any hand, yet he found it sweetened with three ingredients. 1. It was but a cup, it was not a sea; 2. It was his Father, and not Satan, that mingled it, and that put in all the bitter ingredients that were in it; 3. It was a gift, not a curse, as to himself: 'The cup which my Father giveth me.' He drank it, I say, and drank it up every drop, leaving nothing behind for his redeemed but large draughts of love and salvation, in the sacramental cup of his own institution, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, for the remission of sins; this do ye in remembrance of me,' 1Co 11:25; Mat 26:28. Thus, my friends, look upon Christ as mediator, in which capacity only he covenanted with his Father for the salvation of mankind; and there was not so much as a shadow of any receding from or repenting of what he had undertaken. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, As the sufferings of Jesus Christ were very free and voluntary, so they were very great and heinous. What agony, what torment was our Saviour racked with! how deep were his wounds! how weighty his burden! how full of trembling his cup, when he lay under the mountains of the guilt of all the elect! How bitter were his tears! how painful his sweat! how sharp his encounters! how dreadful his death! who can compute how many vials of God's inexpressible, insupportable wrath Christ drank off? In Isa 53:1-12 you may read of despising, rejected, stripes, smittings, wounds, sorrows, bruising, chastisement, oppression, affliction, cutting off, putting to grief, and pouring out of his soul to death; all these put together speaks out Christ to be a very great sufferer. He was a man of sorrows, as if he were a man made up of sorrows: as the man of sin, as if he were made up of sin, as if he were nothing else. He knew more sorrows than any man, yea, than all men ever did; for the iniquity, and consequently the sorrows, of all men met in him as if he had been their centre; and he was acquainted with griefs; he had little acquaintance else, grief was his familiar acquaintance, he had no acquaintance with laughter. We read not that he laughed at all, when he was in the world. His other acquaintance stood afar off, but grief followed him to the cross. From his birth to his death, from his cradle to the cross, from the womb to the tomb, he was a man of sorrows, and never were sorrows like his; he might say, Never grief or sorrow like mine. It is indeed impossible to express the sufferings and sorrows of Christ; and the Greek Christians used to beg of God, διὰ τῶν ἀγνωστων κοπων, that for the unknown sufferings of Christ he would have mercy upon them! Though Christ's sufferings are abundantly made known, yet they are but little known; eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it or can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what Christ suffered; 'who hath known the power of God's wrath?' Christ Jesus knew it, for he underwent it; his whole life was made up of suffering. He was no sooner born, but sufferings came trooping in upon him. He was born in an inn, yea, in a stable, and had but a manger for his cradle. As soon as his birth was noised abroad, Herod, under a pretence of worshipping of him, had a design to murder him, so that his supposed father was fain to fly into Egypt to secure his life. He was persecuted before he could, after the manner of men, be sensible of persecution; and as he grew up in years, so his sufferings grew up with him. Hunger and thirst, travel and weariness, scorns and reproaches, false accusations and contradictions still waited on him, and he had not where to lay his head: 1Pe 3:18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins.' This is the wonderment of angels, the happiness of fallen man, and the torment of devils, &c., that Christ hath suffered. The apostle's words look like a riddle, 'Christ hath suffered;' as if he should say, read thou if thou canst what he hath suffered; as for my part they are so many, that in this short epistle I have no mind to record them; and they are so grievous, that my passionate love won't suffer me to repeat them, and therefore I content myself thus abruptly to deliver them, 'Christ hath suffered.' Christ's sufferings were unspeakable, his sufferings were unutterable; and therefore the apostle satisfies himself with this imperfect, broken speech, 'Christ hath suffered.' Oh, what woes and lamentations, what cries and exclamations, what complaints and sorrows, what wringing of hands, what knocking of breasts, what weeping of eyes, what wailing of tongues belong to the speaking and hearing of this doleful tragedy! Even in the prologue I tremble, and at the first entrance I am as at a non-plus, that I know not with what woeful gesture to act it, with what moanful voice to pronounce it, with what mournful words, with what pathetical speeches, with what emphatical phrases, with what interrupted accents, with what passionate compassionate plaints to express it. The multiplicity of the plot, and the variety of the acts and scenes is so intricate, that my memory fails to comprise it; the matter so important, and the story so excellent, that my tongue

fails to declare it; the cruelty so savage, and the massacre so barbarous, that my heart even fails to consider it. Wherefore I must needs content myself, with the apostle here, to speak but imperfectly of it, and thinks this enough to say, 'Christ hath suffered;' and well may I think this enough, for behold what perfection there is in this seeming imperfect speech. For,

First, To say indefinitely, he 'suffered,' without any limitation of time, what is it but to say that he always suffered without exception of time? And so indeed the prophet speaks of him, namely, 'That he was a man of sorrows,' Isa 53:3. His whole life was filled up with sufferings. But,

Secondly, To say only he 'suffered,' and nothing else, what is it but to say that he patiently suffered; he never resisted, never rebelled, never opposed? 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb dumb before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth,' Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7. 'And when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not,' 1Pe 2:23. But,

Thirdly, To say precisely he 'suffered,' and no more, what is it but to say that he freely suffered, that he voluntarily suffered? Christ was under no force, no compulsion, but freely suffered himself to suffer, and voluntarily suffered the Jews to make him suffer, having power to quit himself from suffering if he had pleased. 'I lay down my life, no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again,' John 10:17. But of this before.

Fourthly, To say plainly he 'suffered,' what is it but to say that he innocently suffered, that he wrongfully suffered? For had he been a malefactor, or an offender, it should have been said that he was punished, or that he was executed; but he was full of innocency, he was holy and harmless; and so it follows in that 1Pe 3:18, 'The just for the unjust.' But,

Fifthly, To say peremptorily he 'suffered' what is it but to say that he principally suffered, that he excessively suffered? To say he 'suffered,' what is it but to say he was the chief sufferer, the arch-sufferer? and that not only in respect of the manner of his sufferings, that he suffered absolutely so as never did any, but also in respect of the measure of his sufferings, that he suffered excessively beyond what ever any did. And thus we may well understand and take those words, 'He suffered.' That lamentation of the prophet, Lam 1:12, is very applicable to Christ, 'Behold, and see if there be any sorrows like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.' Now, is it not enough for the apostle to say that 'Christ has suffered;' but will you yet ask what? But pray, friends, be satisfied, and rather of the two ask what not? For what sufferings can you think of that Christ did not suffer? Christ suffered in his birth, and he suffered in his life, and he suffered in his death; he suffered in his body, for he was diversely tormented; he suffered in his soul, for his soul was heavy unto death; he suffered in his estate, they parted his raiment, and he had not where to rest his head; he suffered in his good name, for he was counted a Samaritan, a devilish sorcerer, a wine-bibber, an enemy to Cæsar, &c. He suffered from heaven, when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' He suffered from the earth, when, being hungry, the fig-tree proved fruitless to him. He suffered from hell, Satan assaulting and encountering of him with his most black and horrid temptations. He began his life meanly and basely, and was sharply persecuted. He continued his life poorly and distressedly, and was cruelly hated. He ended his life woefully and miserably, and was most grievously tormented with whips, thorns, nails, and, above all, with the

terrors of his Father's wrath and horrors of hellish agonies.

Ego sum qui peccavi: 'I am the man that have sinned; but these sheep, what have they done?' said David, when he saw the angel destroying his people, 2Sa 24:17. And the same speech may every one of us take up for ourselves and apply to Christ, and say, 'I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but this sheep, what hath he done?' Yea, much more cause have we than David had to take up this complaint. For,

First, David saw them die, whom he knew to be sinners; but we see him die, who, we know, 'knew no sin,' 2Co 5:21. But,

Secondly, David saw them die a quick, speedy death; we see him die with lingering torments. He was a-dying from six to nine, Mat 27:45-46. Now in this three hours' darkness, he was set upon by all the powers of darkness with utmost might and malice; but he foiled and spoiled them all, and made an open show of them, as the Roman conquerors used to do, triumphing over them on his cross as on his chariot of state, Col 2:15, attended by his vanquished enemies, with their hands bound behind them, Eph 4:8. But,

Thirdly, David saw them die, who, by their own confession, was worth ten thousand of them; we see him die for us, whose worth admitteth no comparison. But,

Fourthly, David saw the Lord of glory destroying mortal men, and we see mortal men destroying the Lord of glory, 1Co 2:8. Oh, how much more cause have we then to say as David, 'I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but this innocent Lamb, the Lord Jesus, what hath he done? what hath he deserved that he should be thus greatly tormented?' Tully, though a great orator, yet when he comes to speak of the death of the cross, he wants words to express it,—Quid dicam, in crucem tollere? What shall I say of this death? saith he. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, As the sufferings of Christ were very great, so the punishments which Christ did suffer for our sins, these were in their kinds and parts and degrees and proportion all those punishments which were due unto us by reason of our sins, and which we ourselves should otherwise have suffered. Whatsoever we should have suffered as sinners, all that did Christ suffer as our surety and mediator, always excepting those punishments which could not be endured without a pollution and guilt of sin: 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him,' Isa 53:5; and including the punishments common to the nature of man, not the personal, arising out of imperfection and defect and distemper. Now, the punishments due to us for sin were corporal and spiritual. And again, they were the punishments of loss and of sense; and all these did Christ suffer for us, which I shall evidence by an induction of particulars.

I. First, That Christ suffered corporal punishments is most clear in Scripture. You read of the injuries to his person, of the crown of thorns on his head, of the smiting of his cheeks, of spitting on his face, of the scourging of his body, of the cross on his back, of the vinegar in his mouth, of the nails in his hands and feet, of the spear in his side, and of his crucifying and dying on the cross: 1Pe 2:24, 'Who himself in his own body on the tree bare our sins;' 1Co 15:3, 'Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures;' Rev 1:5, 'And washed us from our sins in his own blood;' Col 1:14, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;' Mat 26:28, 'For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' Christ suffered derision in every one of his offices.

First, In his kingly office. They put a sceptre in his hand, a crown on his head, and bowed their knees, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' Mat 27:29.

Secondly, In his priestly office. 'They put upon him a gorgeous white robe,' such as the priests wore, Luk 23:11.

Thirdly, In his prophetic office. 'When they had blindfolded him, Prophecy, say they, who it is that smiteth thee,' Luk 22:64. Sometimes they said, 'Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil,' John 8:48; and sometimes they said, 'He is beside himself, why hear ye him?' Mark 3:21. And as Christ suffered in every one of his offices, so he suffered in every member of his body: in his hearing, by their reproaches, and crying, 'Crucify him, crucify him;' in his sight, by their scoffings and scornful gestures; in his smell, in his being in that noisome place Golgotha, Mat 27:33; in his taste, by his tasting of vinegar mingled with gall, which they gave him to drink, Mat 27:33; in his feeling, by the thorns on his head, blows on his cheeks, spittle on his face, the spear in his side, and the nails in his hands. He suffered in all parts and members of his body from head to foot. His head, which deserved a better crown than the best in the world, was crowned with thorns, and they smote him on the head. Osorius, writing of the sufferings of Christ, saith, 'That the crown of thorns bored his head with seventy-two wounds.' To see that head, before which angels cast down themselves and worshipped, as I may say, crowned with thorns, might well amaze us; to see those eyes, that were purer than the sun, put out by the darkness of death; to see those ears which hear nothing to speak to capacity, but halleluiahs of saints and angels, to hear the blasphemies of the multitude; to see that face which was fairer than the sons of men,—for being born and conceived without sin, he was freed from the contagious effects of it, deformity, and was most perfectly beautiful, Psa 45:2; Song of Solomon 5:10—to be spit on by those beastly, wretched Jews; to see that mouth and tongue, that 'spake as never man spake,' accused for false doctrines, nay blasphemy; to see those hands, which freely swayed the sceptre of heaven, nailed to the cross; to see those feet, 'like unto fine brass,' Rev 1:15, nailed to the cross for man's sins; who can behold Christ thus suffering in all the members of his body, and not be struck with astonishment? Who can sum up the horrible abuses that were put upon Christ by his base attendants? The evangelist tells us that they spit in his face and buffeted him, and that others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?' Mat 26:67-68; and, as Luke adds, 'many other things blasphemously spake they against him,' Luk 22:65. What those many other things were is not discovered; only some ancient writers say, 'That Christ in that night suffered so many and such hideous things, that the whole knowledge of them is reserved only for the last day of judgment.' Mallonius writes thus, 'After Caiaphas and the priests had sentenced Christ worthy of death, they committed him to their ministers, warily to keep till day, and they immediately threw him into the dungeon in Caiaphas's house; there they bound him to a stony pillar, with his hands bound on his back, and then they fell upon him with their palms and fists.' Others add that the soldiers, not yet content, they threw him into a filthy, dirty puddle, where he abode for the remainder of that night; of which the psalmist seems to speak, 'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps, and I sink in the deep mire, where there is no standing,' Psa 88:6, and Psa 69:2. But that you may clearly see what horrible abuses were put upon Christ by his attendants, consider seriously of these particulars:—

[1.] First, 'They spit in his face,' Mat 26:67. Now, this was accounted among the Jews a matter of great infamy and reproach: Num 12:14, 'And the Lord said to Moses, If her father had spit in her

face, should she not be ashamed seven days?' Spitting in the face among the Jews was a sign of anger, shame, and contempt: Job 30:10, 'They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.' The face is the table of beauty or comeliness, and when it is spit upon, it is made the seat of shame. Spitting in the face was a sign of the greatest disgrace that could be put upon a person; and therefore it could not but be very bitter to Job to see base beggars spit in that face that was wont to be honoured by princes. But this we are not to wonder at, for there is no indignity so base and ignominious but the choicest saints may meet with it in and from this evil world. Afflicted persons are sacred things, and by the laws of nature and nations should not be misused and trampled upon, but rather pitied and lamented over; but barbarous miscreants, when they have an opportunity, they will not spare to exercise any kind of cruelty, as you see by their spitting in the very face of Christ himself: 'I hid not my face,' saith Christ, 'from shame and spitting,' Isa 50:6, 2. Though 'I was fairer than the children of men,' Psa 45:2, yet I used no mask to keep me fair; though 'I was white and ruddy,' 'the chiefest among ten thousand,' Song of Solomon 5:10, yet I preserved not my beauty from their nasty spittle. Oh, that that sweet and blessed face of Jesus Christ, that is so much honoured and adored in heaven, should ever be spit upon by beastly wretches in this world!

[2.] Secondly, 'They struck him:' John 18:22, 'One of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?' Because our Saviour gave not the high priest his usual titles, but dealt freely with him, this impious apparitor, or sergeant, to curry favour with his master, strikes him with his hand, with his rod, say some, with his stick, say others; like master like man. Oh, that that holy face which was designed to be the object of heaven, in the beholding of which much of the celestial glory doth consist—that that face which the angels stare upon with wonder, like infants at a bright sunbeam—should ever be smitten by a base varlet in the presence of a judge! Among all the sufferings of Christ, one would think that there was no great matter in this, that a vain officer did strike him with the palm of his hand; and yet if the Scriptures are consulted, you will find that the Holy Ghost lays a great stress upon it. Thus Jeremiah: 'He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled full with reproach,' Lam 3:30. Christ did patiently and willingly take the stripes that vain men did injuriously lay upon him; he sustained all kinds of vexations from the hands of all kinds of ungodly ones. Thus Micah, speaking of Christ, saith, 'They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek,' Mic 5:1. Hugo, by this Judge of Israel, understandeth our Lord Jesus Christ, who was indeed at his passion contumeliously 'buffeted and smitten with rods upon the cheek,' Mat 26:67. By smiting the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek, they express their scorn and contempt of Christ. Smiting upon the face the apostle makes a sign of great reproach: 2Co 11:20, 'If a man smite you on the face.' 'There is nothing more disgraceful,' saith Chrysostom, 'than to be smitten on the cheek.' And the diverse reading of the original word does fully evidence it: 'He struck him with a rod,' or 'he struck him with the palm of his hand,' κδωε πσμα. Now, the word πσμα, say some, refers to his being struck with a rod, or club, or shoe, or plantofle; others say it refers to his being struck with the palm of men's hands. Now, of the two, it is generally judged more disgraceful to be struck with the palm of the hand than to be struck with either a rod or a shoe; and therefore we read the text thus, 'He struck Jesus with the palm of his hand,' that is, with open hand, or with his hand stretched out.

Some of the ancients, commenting on this cuff, say, Let the heavens be afraid, and let the earth tremble, at Christ's patience and his servant's impudence! O ye angels! how were ye silent? how could you contain your hands when you saw his hand striking at God? 'If we consider him,' saith another,² 'who took the blow, was not he that struck him worthy to be consumed of fire, or to be swallowed up of earth, or to be given up to Satan, and thrown down into hell.' Bernard saith, 'That his hand that struck Christ was armed with an iron glove.' And Vincentius affirms, 'That by the blow Christ was felled to the earth.'⁴ And Ludovicus adds, 'That blood gushed out of his mouth; and that the impression of the varlet's fingers remained on Christ's cheek with a tumour and wan colour.' If a subject should but lift up his hand against a sovereign, would he not be severely punished? But should he strike him, would it not be present death? Oh, what desperate madness and wickedness was it then to strike the King of kings and Lord of lords, whom not only men, but the cherubims and seraphims, and all the celestial powers above, adore and worship? Rev 17:16; Heb 1:6. Those monsters in that Mat 26:67 did not only strike Christ with the palm of their hands, but they buffeted him also. Now, some of the learned observe this difference betwixt πινμα and κολαφος; the one is given with the open hand, the other with the fist shut up; and thus they used him at this time. They struck him with their fists, and so the stroke was greater and more offensive; for by this means they made his face to swell, and to become full of bunches all over. One gives it in thus: By these blows of their fists his whole head was swollen, his face became black and blue, and his teeth ready to fall out of his jaws. Very probable it is that, with the violence of their strokes, they made him reel and stagger, they made his mouth, and nose, and face to bleed, and his eyes to startle in his head.

Now, concerning Christ's sufferings on the cross, I shall only hint a few things, and so close up this particular concerning Christ's corporeal sufferings. Take me thus,

1. First, The death of Christ on the cross, it was a bitter death, a sorrowful death, a bloody death. The bitter thoughts of his sufferings put him into a most dreadful agony: Luk 22:44, 'Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground.' The Greek word that is here used, γωνμα, signifies a striving or wrestling against, as two combatants or wrestlers do strive each against other. The things which our Saviour strove against was not only the terror of death, as other men are wont to do—for then many Christians and martyrs might have seemed more constant and courageous than he—but with the terrible justice of God, pouring out his high anger and indignation upon him on the account of all the sins of his chosen that were laid upon him, than which nothing could be more dreadful, Isa 53:4-6. Christ was in a vehement conflict in his soul, through the deepest sense of his Father's wrath against sinners, for whom he now stood as a surety and Redeemer, 2Co 5:21. And for a close of this particular, let me say that God's justice which we have provoked, being fully satisfied by the inestimable merit of Christ's passion, is the surest and highest ground of consolation that we have in this world; but for the more full opening of this blessed scripture, let us take notice of these following particulars:—

(1.) First, 'His sweat was as it were blood.' Some of the ancients look upon these words only as a similitude or figurative hyperbole, it being a usual kind of speech to call a vehement sweat a bloody sweat, as he that weeps bitterly is said to weep tears of blood; but the most and best of the ancients understand the words in a literal sense, and believe it was truly and properly a bloody sweat, and with them I close. But some will object, and say it was sicut guttæ sanguinis, as it were drops of blood. Now to this I answer, first, if the Holy Ghost had only intended that sicut for a

similitude or hyperbole, he would rather have expressed it as it were drops of water, than 'as it were drops of blood;' for we all know that sweat is more like to water than to blood. But, secondly, I answer that sicut, as in. Scripture phrase, doth not always denote a similitude, but sometimes the very thing itself, according to the verity of it. Take an instance or two instead of many: 'We beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father;' and 'their words seemed to them as it were idle tales, and they believed them not;' the words in the original, οὕτως, ὡς, are the same. Certainly Christ's sweat in the garden was a wonderful sweat, not a sweat of water, but of red gore-blood. But,

(2.) Secondly, He sweat great drops of blood, clotty blood, issuing through flesh and skin in great abundance, θρόμβοι αἱματός, clotted or congealed blood. There is a thin faint sweat, and there is a thick clotted sweat. In this sweat of Christ blood came not from him in small dewes, but in great drops, they were drops, and great drops of blood, crassy and thick drops. Some read it droppings down of blood; that is, blood distilling in greater and grosser drops; and hence it is concluded as preternatural; for though much may be said for sweating blood in a course of nature, according to what Aristotle affirms, and Austin saith that he knew a man that could sweat blood, even when he pleased; and it is granted on all hands that in faint bodies a subtle thin blood like sweat may pass through the pores of the skin; but that through the same pores crassy, thick, and great drops of blood should issue out,—it was not, it could not be without a miracle.⁴ Certainly the drops of blood that fell from Christ's body were great, very great; yea, so great as if they had started through his skin to outrun the streams and rivers of his cross. But,

(3.) Thirdly, These great drops of blood did not only distillare, drop out, but decurrere, run down like a stream, so fast, as if they had issued out of most deadly wounds. They were 'great drops of blood falling down to the ground'! Here is magnitude and multitude; great drops, and those so many, so plenteous, as that they went through his apparel, and all streamed down to the ground; and now was the time that his garments were dyed with crimson red. That of the prophet, though spoken in another sense, yet in some respect may be applied to this, 'Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat?' Isa 63:2. Oh, what a sight was here! His head and members are all on a bloody sweat, and this sweat trickles down, and bedecks his garments, which stood like a new firmament, studded with stars, portending an approaching storm; nor stays it there, but it falls down to the ground. Oh, happy garden that was watered with such tears of blood! Oh, how much better are these rivers than Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, yea, than all the waters of Israel; yea, than all those rivers that water the garden of Eden! So great was Scanderbeg's ardour in battle,² that the blood burst out of his lips; but from our champion's, not lips only, but whole body, burst out a bloody sweat. Not his eyes only were fountains of tears, or his head waters, as Jeremiah wished, Jer 9:1, but his whole body was turned, as it were, into rivers of blood. A sweet comfort to such as are cast down for that that their sorrow for sin is not so deep and soaking as they could desire.

Christ's blood is put in Scripture by a synecdoche of the part, for all the sufferings which he underwent for all the sins of the elect, especially his bloody death with all its concomitants, so called. First, because death, especially when it is violent, is joined with the effusion of blood: 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets,' Mat 23:30. And so again, Pilate said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person,' that is, of his death, Mat 27:24. Secondly, Herein respect is had to all the sacrifices of the law,

whose blood was poured out when they were offered up. 'Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission,' Heb 9:22; so that the blood of Christ is the antitype aimed at in the blood of those sacrifices that were slain for sinners' sins. But,

2. Secondly, as the death of Christ on the cross, was a bitter death, a bloody death, so the death of Christ on the cross was a lingering death. It was more for Christ to suffer one hour than for us to have suffered for ever; but his death was lengthened out, he hung three hours on the cross, he died many deaths before he could die one: 'from the sixth till the ninth hour'—that is, from twelve till three in the afternoon—'there was darkness over all the land,' Mat 27:45. About twelve, when the sun is usually brightest, it began now to darken, and this darkness was so great that it spread over all the land of Jewry; yea, some think over all the world. So we translate it in Luke, 'And there was darkness over all the earth,' Luk 23:44, to show God's dislike of their horrid cruelty. He would not have the sun give light to so horrid an act. The sun as it were, hid his face that he might not see the Sun of righteousness so unworthily, so wickedly handled. It was dark: 1. To show the blindness, darkness, and ignorance of the Jews in crucifying the Lord of glory; 2. To show the detestation of the fact; 3. To show the vileness of our sins. This darkness was not a natural eclipse of the sun; for, first, it cannot be so total, so general; nor secondly, it could not be so long, for the interposed moon goeth swiftly away. Certainly this was no ordinary eclipse of the sun, seeing the passover was kept at the full moon, when the moon stands right opposite to the sun on the other side of the heaven, and for this cause cannot hinder the light of the sun, but a supernatural work of God coming to pass by miracle, 'like as the darkness in Egypt,' Exo 10:22. The moon being now in the full, it being in the midst of the lunar month when the passover was killed, and so of necessity the body of the moon—which useth to eclipse the sun by its interposition, and being between us and the sun—must be opposite to and distant from the sun the diametrical breadth of the hemisphere, the full moon ever rising at the sun's setting, and therefore this eclipse could never be a natural eclipse. Many Gentiles besides Jews observed this darkness as a great miracle. Dionysius the Areopagite, as Suidas relates, could say at first sight of it, 'Either the world is ending, or the God of nature is suffering of this darkness. Amos long before had prophesied: 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day,' Amo 8:9. The opinion of authors concerning the cause of this darkness are various. Some think that the sun by divine power, withdrew and held back its beams; others say that the obscurity was caused by some thick clouds which were miraculously produced in the air, and spread themselves over all the earth; others say that this darkness was by a wonderful interposition of the moon, which at that time was at full, but by a miracle interposed itself betwixt the earth and sun. Whatsoever was the cause of this darkness, it is certain that it continued for the space of three hours as dark as the darkest winter nights.

About three, which the Jews call the ninth hour, Mat 27:46, the sun now beginning to receive his light, Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And then, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, he said 'I thirst;' and when he had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished,' John 19:28, John 19:30; and at last, crying with a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;' and having said thus, 'he gave up the ghost,' Luk 23:46. Christ's words were ever gracious, but never more gracious than at this time. You cannot find in all the books and writings of men, in all the annals and records of time, either such sufferings or such sayings as were these last words and wounds, sayings and sufferings of

Jesus Christ. 'And having said thus, he gave up the ghost;' or as John relates it, 'He bowed his head and gave up the ghost,' John 19:30. Christ would not off the cross till all was done that was here to be done. Christ bowed not because he was dead, but first he bowed and then died; that is, he died freely and willingly without constraint, and he died cheerfully and comfortably without murmuring or repining. Oh, what a wonder of love is this, that Jesus Christ, who is the author of life, the fountain of life, the lord of life, that he should so freely, so readily, so cheerfully lay down his life for us! &c.

About four in the afternoon he was pierced with a spear, and there issued out of his side both blood and water: 'and one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water,' John 19:34. Out of the side of Christ, being now dead, there issues water and blood, signifying that he is both our justification and sanctification.

Thus was fulfilled that which was long before foretold: 'They shall look upon me whom they have pierced,' Zec 12:10; thus 'came Jesus by water and by blood,' 1Jn 5:6; thus was there 'a fountain opened to the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,' even to all the elect, 'for sin and for uncleanness,' Zec 13:1. The soldier's malice lived when Christ was dead. The water and blood forthwith issuing out as soon as it was pierced with a spear, did evidently show that he was truly dead. The Syriac paraphrase saith he pierced his rib, that is, the fifth rib, where the pericardium lay. It is very likely that the very pericardium was pierced. Now the pericardium is a film or skin, like unto a purse, wherein is contained clear water to cool the heat of the heart. The blood, saith one,² signifies the perfect expiation of the sins of the Church, and the water, the daily washing and purging of it from the remainder of her corruption. 'Water and blood issued out of Christ's side,' saith another, 'to teach us that Christ justifieth none by his merit, but such whom he sanctifieth by his Spirit.' Christ was pierced with a spear, and water and blood presently issued out of his side, that his enemies might not object that he rose again because he was but half dead on the cross, and being so taken down he revived. To testify the contrary truth, John so seriously affirmeth the certainty of his death, he being an eye-witness of the streaming out of Christ's blood as he stood by Christ's cross. O gates of heaven! O windows of paradise! O palace of refuge! O tower of strength! O sanctuary of the just! O flourishing bed of the spouse of Solomon! Methinks I see water and blood running out of his side more freshly than these golden streams which ran out of the garden of Eden and watered the whole world. But here I may not dwell, &c. But to shut up this particular, about five, which the Jews call the eleventh and the last hour of the day, Christ was taken down and buried by Joseph and Nicodemus. But,

3. Thirdly, As the death of Christ on the cross was a lingering death, so the death of Christ was a painful death. This appears several ways.

[1.] First, His legs and hands were violently racked and pulled out to the places fitted for his fastenings, and then pierced through with nails. His hands and feet were nailed, which parts being full of sinews, and therefore very tender, his pains could not but be very acute and sharp.

[2.] Secondly, By this means he wanted the use both of his hands and feet, and so he was forced to hang immovable upon the cross, as being unable to turn any way for his ease, and therefore he could not but be under very dolorous pains.

[3.] Thirdly, The longer he lived, the more he endured; for by the weight of his body his wounds were opened and enlarged, his nerves and veins were rent and torn asunder, and his blood gushed out more and more abundantly still. Now the envenomed arrows of God's wrath shot to his heart. This was the direful catastrophe, and caused that vociferation and outcry upon the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' The justice of God was now inflamed and heightened to its full ■κμ■: Rom 8:32, 'God spared not his Son;' God would not abate one farthing of the debt. But,

[4.] Fourthly, He died by piece-meals, he died by little and little, he died not all at once. He that died on the cross was long a-dying. Christ was kept a great while upon the rack; it was full three hours betwixt his affixion and expiration; and certainly it would have been longer if he had not freely and willingly given up the ghost. I have read that Andrew the apostle was two whole days on the cross before he died; and so long might Christ have been a-dying, if God had not supernaturally heightened the degrees of his torment. Doubtless when Christ was on the cross he felt the very pains of hell, though not locally, yet equivalently. But,

4. Fourthly, As the death of Christ on the cross was a painful death, so the death of Christ on the cross was a shameful death. Christ was in medio positus, he hung between two thieves, as if he had been the principal malefactor, Mat 27:38. Here they placed him to make the world believe that he was the great ringleader of such men. Christ was crucified in the midst as the chief of sinners that we might have place in the midst of heavenly angels; the one of these thieves went railing to hell, the other went repenting forth right to heaven, living long in a little time, Zec 3:7.

If you ask me the names of these two thieves who were crucified with Christ, I must answer, that although the Scripture nominates them not, yet some writers give them these names, Dismas and Gesmas; Dismas the happy, and Gesmas the miserable thief, according to the poet—

Gesmas damnatur, Dismas ad astra levatur: that is, When Gesmas died, to Dives he was sent; When Dismas died, to Abraham up he went.

Well might the lamp of heaven withdraw its light and mask itself with darkness, as blushing to behold the Sun of righteousness hanging between two thieves! He shall be an Apollo to me that can tell me which was the greater, the blood of the cross, or the shame of the cross, Heb 12:2. It was a mighty shame that Saul's sons were hanged on a tree, 2Sa 21:6. Oh, what a shameful death was it for Christ to hang on a tree between two notorious thieves! But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, As the death of Christ was a shameful death, so the death of Christ was a cursed death; 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' Deu 21:23. The death on the tree was accursed above all kinds of death; 'as the serpent was accursed above all beasts of the field,' Gen 3:14, both for the first transgression, whereof the serpent was the instrument, the tree the occasion. Since the death of any malefactor might be a monument of God's curse for sin, it may be questioned, why this brand is peculiarly set upon this kind of punishment; that he that is hanged is accursed of God. To which I answer, that the reason of this was, because this was esteemed the most shameful, the most dishonourable and infamous of all kinds of death, and was usually therefore the punishment of those that had by some notorious wickedness provoked God to pour out his wrath upon the whole land, and so were hanged up, to appease his wrath, as we may see in the hanging of those princes that were guilty of committing whoredom with the daughters of

Moab, Num 25:4; and in the hanging of those sons of Saul in the days of David, when there was a famine in the land, because of Saul's perfidious oppressing of the Gibeonites, 2Sa 21:6. Nor was it without cause that this kind of death was both by the Israelites and other nations esteemed the most shameful and accursed; because the very manner of the death did intimate that such men as were thus executed were such execrable and accursed wretches, that they did defile the earth with treading upon it, and would pollute the earth if they should die upon it; and therefore were so trussed up in the air as not fit to live amongst men; and that others might look upon them as men made spectacles of God's indignation and curse, because of the wickedness they had committed, which was not done in other kinds of death. And hence it was that the Lord God would have his Son, the Lord Christ, to suffer this kind of death, that even hence it might be the more evident, that in his death he bare the curse due to our sins, according to that of the apostle: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' Gal 3:13. The Chaldee translateth, 'For because he sinned before the Lord he is hanged.' The tree whereon a man was hanged, the stone wherewith he was stoned, the sword wherewith he was beheaded, and the napkin wherewith he was strangled, they were all buried, that there might be no evil memorial of such a one, to say, This was the tree, sword, stone, napkin, wherewith such a one was executed. This kind of death was so execrable that Constantine made a law that no Christian should die upon the cross; he abolished this kind of death out of his empire. When this kind of death was in use among the Jews, it was chiefly inflicted upon slaves, that either falsely accused, or treacherously conspired their master's death. But on whomsoever it was inflicted, this death in all ages among the Jews had been branded with a special kind of ignominy; and so much the apostle signifies when he saith, 'He abased himself to the death, even to the death of the cross,' Php 2:2. I know Moses' law speaks nothing in particular of crucifying, yet he doth include the same under the general of hanging on a tree; and some conceive that Moses, in speaking of that curse, foresaw what manner of death the Lord Jesus should die. And let thus much suffice concerning Christ's sufferings on the cross, or concerning his corporeal sufferings.

II. I shall now, in the second place, speak concerning Christ's spiritual sufferings, his sufferings in his soul, which were exceeding high and great. Now here I shall endeavour to do two things: First, To prove that Christ suffered in his soul, and so much the rather because that the papists say and write, that Christ did not truly and properly and immediately suffer in his soul, but only by way of sympathy and compassion with his body to the mystical body; and that his bare bodily sufferings were sufficient for man's redemption. Second, That the sufferings of Christ in his soul were exceeding high and great. For the first, that Christ suffered in his soul, I shall thus demonstrate.

(1.) First, Express Scriptures do evidence this: Isa 53:10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,' &c.; John 12:27, 'Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour;' Mat 26:37-38, 'He began to be sorrowful and very heavy.' These were but the beginnings of sorrow: he began, &c. Sorrow is a thing that drinks up our spirits, and he was heavy, as feeling a heavy load upon him; ver. 38, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' Christ was as full of sorrow as his heart could hold. Every word is emphatical, 'My soul;' his sorrow pierced his heaven-born soul. As the soul was the first agent in transgression, so it is here the first patient in affliction. The sufferings of his body were but the body of his sufferings; the soul of his sufferings were the sufferings of his soul, which was now beset with sorrows, and heavy as heart could hold. Christ was sorrowful, his

soul was sorrowful, his soul was exceeding sorrowful, his soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death. Christ's soul was in such extremity of sorrow, that it made him cry out, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass;' and this was with 'strong cryings and tears,' Heb 5:7. To cry, and to cry with a loud voice, argues great extremity of sufferings: Mark 14:33, Mark saith, 'And he began to be amazed, and to be very heavy;' or we may more fully express it thus, according to the original, κ■ι ■ρξατο ■κθαμβε■σθαι, και ■δημονε■ν 'He begun to be gasted with wonderful astonishment, and to be satiated, filled brimful with heaviness: a very sad condition! All the sins of the elect, like a huge army, meeting upon Christ, made a dreadful onset on his soul: Luk 22:43-44, it is said 'He was in an agony.' That is a conflict in which a poor creature wrestles with deadly pangs, with all his might, mustering up all his faculties and force to grapple with them and withstand them. Thus did Christ struggle with the indignation of the Lord, praying once and again with more intense fervency, 'Oh, that this cup may pass away; if it be possible, let this cup pass away!' Luk 22:42-43; while yet an angel strengthened his outward man from utter sinking in the conflict. Now, if this weight that Christ did bear had been laid on the shoulders of all the angels in heaven, it would have sunk them down to the lowest hell; it would have cracked the axle-tree of heaven and earth. It made his blood startle out of his body in congealed cloddered heaps. The heat of God's fiery indignation made his blood to boil up till it ran over; yea, divine wrath affrighted it out of its wonted channel. The creation of the world cost him but a word; he spake and the world was made; but the redemption of souls cost him bloody sweats and soul-distraction. What conflicts, what strugglings with the wrath of God! the powers of darkness! what weights! what burdens! what wrath did he undergo when his soul was heavy unto death! 'beset with terrors,' as the word implies, when he drank that bitter cup, that cup of bitterness, that cup mingled with curses, which made him sweat drops of blood! which, if men or angels had but sipped of, it would have made them reel, stagger, and tumble into hell. The soul of Christ was overcast with a cloud of God's displeasure. The Greek Church, speaking of the sufferings of Christ, calls them ■γνωστα παθηματα, 'unknown sufferings.' Ah Christians! who can speak out this sorrow? 'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' Pro 18:14. Christ's soul is sorrowful; but give me that word again, his soul is exceeding sorrowful; but if that word be yet too low, then I must tell you that 'his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:' not only extensively, such as must continue for the space of seventeen or eighteen hours, even until death itself should finish it, but also intensively such, and so great as that which is used to be at the very point of death, and such as were able to bring death itself, had not Christ been reserved to a greater and heavier punishment. Of this sorrow is that especially spoken, 'Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger,' Lam 1:12. Many a sad and sorrowful soul hath, no question, been in the world; but the like sorrow to this was never since the creation. The very terms or phrases used by the evangelists speak no less. He was 'sorrowful and heavy,' saith one; 'amazed, and very heavy,' saith another; 'in an agony,' saith a third; 'in a soul-trouble,' saith a fourth. Certainly, the bodily torments of the cross were much inferior to the agony of his soul. The pain of the body is the body of pain. Oh, but the very soul of sorrow is the soul's sorrow, and the very soul of pain is the soul's pain.

(2.) Secondly, That which Christ assumed or took of our nature, he assumed to this end, to suffer in it; and by suffering, to save and redeem it. But he took the whole nature of man, both body and soul; ergo, he suffered in both. First, the assumption is evident, and needs no proof; that Christ

took upon him both our soul and body, the apostle assures us, where he saith, 'That in all things it became him to be like unto us,' Heb 2:17; therefore he had both body and soul as we have. Secondly, concerning the proposition, viz., That what Christ took of our nature, he took it by suffering in it properly and immediately to redeem us. Now this is evident by that blessed word, where the apostle saith, 'Christ took part with them that he might destroy, through death, him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,' Heb 2:14-15; 'and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.' Hence I reason thus, that wherein Christ delivered us, he took part with us in; but he delivered us from fear of death; ergo, he did therein communicate with us. Now mark, this fear was the proper and immediate passion of the soul, namely, the fear of death and God's anger. And the text giveth this sense, Because the fear of this death kept them in bondage, but the fear only of the bodily death doth not bring us into such bondage; witness that Song of Zacharias; 'That we, being delivered from the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear,' Luk 1:74. This then is a spiritual fear, from the which Christ did deliver us; ergo, He did communicate with us in this fear; for the apostle saith, 'In that wherein he suffered, and was tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted,' Heb 2:18. Certainly that fear which fell on Christ was a real fear, and it was in his soul, and did not arise from the mere contemplation of bodily torments only, for the very martyrs in the encountering with them have feared little. Assuredly there was some great matter that lay upon the very soul of Christ, which made him so heavy, and sorrowful, and so afraid, and in such an agony. But if you please, take this second argument in another form of words, thus: what Christ took of ours, that he in suffering offered up for us, for his assuming of our nature, was for this end, to suffer for us in our nature; but he took our nature in body and in soul, and he delivered our souls as well as our bodies; and the sins of our souls did need his sacrifice as well as the sins of our bodies; and our souls were crucified with Christ as well as our bodies. *Mens mea in Christo crucifixa est*, saith Ambrose. Surely if our whole man was lost, then our whole man did need the benefit and help of a whole Saviour; and if Christ had assumed only our flesh, our body, then our souls adjudged, adjudged to punishment, had remained under transgression without hope of pardon. Several sayings of the ancients doth further strengthen this argument. Take a taste of some. *Si totus homo periit, totus beneficio salvatoris indiguit*, &c. If the whole man perished, the whole man needed a Saviour. Christ therefore took the whole man, body and soul. If he had taken only flesh, the soul should remain addict to punishment of the first transgression, without hope of pardon. By the same reason, Christ must also suffer properly in soul, because not by taking our soul, but by satisfying in his soul, our soul is delivered.

'*Suscepit animam meam, suscepit corpus meum*,' [saith] Ambrose, 'He took all our passions, or affections, to sanctify them all in himself; but Christ was sanctified and consecrated by his death, and so doth he consecrate us,' [saith] Damascene. 'For by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb 10:14; ergo, by his offering of our soul, and suffering in our soul, hath he consecrated our soul and affections.'

Suscepit affectum meum, ut emendaret, He took my affection to amend it, &c. Now he hath amended it, in that he consecrated it by his offering, Heb 10:14; *Illud pro nobis suscepit, quod in nobis amplius periclitabatur*. He hath taken that for us, which was most in danger for us, &c., that is, our soul as he expoundeth it: [Damascene] *de Incarnatione*, c. 7. But Christ hath not otherwise delivered us from the danger, but by entering into the danger for us; this danger of the soul is the

fear and feeling of God's wrath.

(3.) Thirdly, Christ bore our sorrows, Isa 53:4. Now what sorrows should we bear, but the sorrows due unto us for our sins; and surely these were not corporal only, but spiritual also, and those did Christ bear in his soul. The same prophet saith, Isa 53:10, 'He shall make his soul an offering for sin;' ergo, Christ offered his soul as well as his body. Again, our Saviour himself saith, 'My soul is very heavy unto death,' Mat 26:38. Certainly it was not the bodily death which Christ feared, for then he should have been weaker than many martyrs, yea, than many of the Romans, who made no more of dying, than of dining; therefore Christ's soul was verily and properly stricken with heaviness, and not with the beholding of bodily torments only, as some dream. But,

(4.) Fourthly, That whereby Adam and we ever since, do most properly commit sin, by the same hath Christ, the second Adam, made satisfaction properly for our sin; but Adam did, and we all do properly commit sin in our souls, our bodies being but the instruments; ergo, Christ by, and in his soul, hath properly made satisfaction.

[1.] First, The truth of the proposition is confirmed by the apostle, 'As by one man's disobedience we are made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous,' Rom 5:19. Christ then satisfied for us by the same wherein Adam disobeyed. Now Adam's soul was in the transgression as well as his body, and accordingly was Christ's very soul in his sufferings and satisfaction, and Christ obeyed, that is, in his soul; for obedience belongeth to the soul, as one observeth upon those words of the apostle: Php 2:8, 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: who doth not understand,' saith the same author, 'that obedience doth belong to the human will?' That there is a kind of dying in the soul when it is pierced with grief, besides the death of the soul, either by sin or damnation, is not disagreeing to the Scripture. Simeon saith to Mary, 'A sword shall pierce through thy soul,' Luk 2:35. Look as then the body dieth, being pierced with a sword, so the soul may be said to die or languish, when it is pierced with grief. What else is crucifying but dying? Now, the soul is said to be crucified, as is evident by that passage of the apostle, 'I am crucified to the world,' Gal 6:14, when as yet his body was alive. So Ambrose doubts not to say, *Mens mea in Christo crucifixa est*, My soul was crucified in Christ, that is, Christ in his soul was crucified, which he calleth our soul, because he did assume our soul and body; or else where he saith, *Mea est voluntas, quam suam dixit*, &c. It is my will, which he calleth his; it is my heaviness, which he took with my affections; yet was it properly and personally Christ's soul and will, but ours by community of nature.

[2.] Secondly, For the assumption. 1. Howsoever it be admitted that the body is the instrument of the soul, both in sinning and suffering, yet the conclusion is this, that because sin is committed in the soul principally and properly, therefore the satisfaction must be made in the soul principally and properly. If this conclusion be granted, we have that we would; for the bodily pains affecting the soul are not the proper passions of the soul, neither is the soul said to suffer properly, when the body suffereth, but by way of compassion and consent. 2. We grant that in the proper and immediate sufferings of the soul the body also is affected: as when Christ was in his agony in the garden, his whole body was therewith stirred and moved, and that it did sweat drops of blood. But it is one thing when the grief beginneth immediately in the soul and so affecteth the body, and when the pain is first inflicted upon the body and so worketh upon the soul, there the soul suffereth properly and principally; of which sufferings we speak here neither properly nor principally, which

is not the thing in question. 3. It is not the reasonable soul that is affected with the body, for it is a ground in philosophy that the soul suffereth not, but only the sensitive part. But the grief that we speak of, that is satisfactory for sin, must be in the very reasonable soul where sin took the beginning, and so Ambrose saith upon those words of Christ, 'My soul is heavy to death,' *Ad rationabilis assumptionem animæ, &c., naturæ humanæ refertur affectum*, It is referred to the assumption of the reasonable soul, and human affection.

Pride, ambition, infidelity began in Adam's soul, and had their determination there. In the committing of those sins the body had no part. Indeed with the ear they heard the suggestion of Satan; but it was no sin till in their minds they had consented unto it. Wherefore seeing the first sin committed was properly and wholly in the soul, for the same the soul must properly and wholly satisfy.

Because sin took beginning from Adam's soul, the satisfaction also must begin in Christ's soul, as Ambrose saith, *Incipio in Christo vincere, unde in Adam victus sum*, I begin there to win in Christ, where in Adam I was overcome. Then it followeth that the sufferings of Christ's soul took beginning there, and were not derived by sympathy from the stripes and pain of the body. We infer, then, that therefore Christ's soul had proper and immediate sufferings, besides those which proceeded from sympathy with his body, and all Christ's sufferings were satisfactory: ergo, Christ did satisfy for our sins properly and immediately in his soul. But if you please, take this fourth argument in another form of words, thus, The punishment which was pronounced against the first Adam, our first surety, and in him against us, that same did Christ, the second Adam, our next and best surety, bear for us, or else it must still lie upon us to suffer it. But the punishment threatened and denounced against Adam for transgression, was not only corporal, respecting our bodies, but spiritual also, respecting our souls. There was a spiritual malediction due unto our souls, as well as a corporal, &c.

Look, as God put a sanction on the law and covenant of works made with all of us in Adam, that he and his should be liable to death, both of body and soul, which covenant being broken by sin, all sinners became obnoxious to the death both of body and soul, so it was necessary that the redeemed should be delivered from the death of both by the Redeemer's tasting of death in both kinds, as much as should be sufficient for their redemption. O sirs, as sin infected the whole man, soul and body, and the curse following on sin left no part nor power of the man's soul free; so justice required that the Redeemer, coming in the room of the persons redeemed, should feel the force of the curse both in body and soul. But,

(5.) Fifthly, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul,' Isa 53:11. Here the soul is taken properly, and the travail of Christ's soul is his sufferings; for it follows, 'and he shall bear their iniquities.' But,

(6.) Sixthly, Christ gave himself for his people's sins: 'Who gave himself for our sins,' Tit 2:14; 'Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquities,' &c., Eph 5:25; 1Ti 2:6. But the body only is not himself; ergo, the apostle saith, Php 2:7, *Christus ꝑꝑῶσε*, *exinanivit*, Christ did empty or evacuate himself; or, as Tertullian expounds it, exhaustit; he drew out himself, or was exhaust, which agrees with the prophecy of Daniel, Dan 9:26, 'Messias shall have nothing, being brought to nothing by his death, without life, strength, esteem, honour,' &c. Hence we conclude that if Christ were exhaust upon the cross, if nothing was left him, that he suffered in body and soul, that there was no part within or without free from the cross, but all was emptied and poured

out for our redemption.

Again, we read that Christ, 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God,' Heb 9:14. Whatsoever was in Christ did either offer or was offered; his eternal Spirit only did offer; ergo, his whole human nature, both body and soul, was offered. Thus Origen witnesseth in these words, *Vide quomodo verus pontifex Jesus Christus adsumpto batillo carnis humanæ, &c.*—See how our true priest, Jesus Christ, taking the censer of his human flesh, putting to the fire of the altar—that is, his magnificent soul, wherewith he was born in the flesh—and adding incense—that is, an immaculate spirit—stood in the midst between the living and the dead. Thus you see that he makes Christ's soul a part in the sacrifice.

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, Christ's love unto man, in suffering for him, was in the highest degree and greatest measure that could be; as the Lord saith, 'What could I have done any more for my vineyard that I have not done unto it?' But if Christ had given his body only, and not his soul for us, he had not done for us all he could, and so his love should have been greatly impaired and diminished; ergo, he gave his soul also, together with his body, to be the full price of our redemption. And certainly the travail and labour of Christ's soul was most acceptable unto God: 'Therefore I will give him a portion with the great, because he hath poured out his soul unto death,' &c., 'and bare the sins of many,' Isa 53:12. Doubtless the sufferings of Christ in his soul, together with his body, doth most fully and amply commend and set forth God's great love to poor sinners. Before I close up this particular, take a few testimonies of the fathers, which do witness with us for the sufferings of Christ, both in soul and body.

Christ hath taken off us that which he should offer as proper for us, to redeem us; and whatsoever Christ took off³ us, he offered; ergo, he offered body and soul, for he took both.

Another upon these words, 'My soul is heavy,' saith, '*Anima passionibus obnoxia, divinitas libera,*' His soul was subject to passions, his divinity was free, &c. If nothing were free but his divine nature, then his soul was subject to the proper and immediate passions thereof.

Perspicuum est, sicut corpus flagellatum, ita animam verè doluisse, &c.—It is evident that as his body was whipped, so his soul was verily and truly grieved, lest some part of Christ's suffering should be true, some part false; ergo, Christ's soul as properly and truly suffered as his body. The soul had her proper grief, as the body had whipping; the whipping, then, of the body was not the proper grief of the soul. Whole Christ gave himself, and whole Christ offered himself; ergo, he offered his soul, not only to suffer by way of compassion with his body, as it may be answered, but he offered it as a sacrifice, and suffered all passions whatsoever incident to the soul. The same author expounds himself further thus: 'Because this God took whole man, therefore he shewed in truth in himself the passions of whole man; and having a reasonable soul, what infirmities soever of the soul without sin he took and bare. If Christ, then, did take and bear all the passions of the soul without sin, then the proper and immediate grief and anguish thereof, and not the compassion only with the body. To these let me add the consent of the Reformed churches:² 'Christ did suffer both in body and soul, and was made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted.'

Thomas [Aquinas] granteth that Christ, *secundum genus, passus est omnem passionem humanam*, in general, suffered all human sufferings, as in his soul heaviness, fear, &c.

Now the testimonies of the fathers, and the consent of the Reformed churches, affirming the same, that Christ was crucified in his soul, and that he gave his soul a price of redemption for our souls.... Who can then doubt of this, but that Christ verily, properly, immediately suffered in his soul, in all the proper passions thereof, as he endured pains and torments in his flesh; and if you please, this may go for an eighth argument to prove that Christ suffered in his soul.

2. Secondly, That the sufferings of Christ in his soul were very high, and great, and wonderful, both as to the punishment of loss, and as to the punishment of sense; all which I shall make evident in these four particulars:

[1.] First, That Jesus Christ did suffer dereliction of God really; that he was indeed deserted and forsaken of God is most evident: Mat 27:46, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But to prevent mistakes in this high point, seriously consider, 1. That I do not mean that there was any such desertion of Christ by God as did dissolve the union of the natures in the person of Christ. For Christ in all his sufferings still remained God and man. Nor, 2, do I mean an absolute desertion in respect of the presence of God. For God was still present with Christ in all his sufferings, and the Godhead did support his humanity in and under his sufferings. But that which I mean is this—that as to the sensible and comforting manifestations of God's presence, thus he was for a time left and forsaken of God. God for a time had taken away all sensible consolation and felt joy from Christ's human soul, that so divine justice might in his sufferings be the more fully satisfied. In this desertion, Christ is not to be looked upon simply as he is in his own person, the Son of the Father, Mat 3:17, in whom he is always well pleased, Mark 1:11, but as he standeth in the room of sinners, surety and cautioner, paying their debt; in which respect it concerned Christ to be dealt with as one standing in our stead, as one guilty, and paying the debt of being forsaken of God, which we were bound to suffer fully and for ever, if he had not interposed for us. There is between Christ and God, 1. An eternal union natural of the person; 2. Of the Godhead and manhood; 3. Of grace and protection. In this last sense, he means forsaken according to his feeling. Hence he said not, My Father, my Father, but, My God, my God; which words are not words of complaining, but words expressing his grief and sorrow. Our Lord Christ was forsaken, not only of all creature comforts, but that which was worse than all, of his Father's favour, to his present apprehension, left forlorn and destitute for a time, that we might be received for ever. Christ was for a time left and forsaken of God, as David, who in this particular was a type of Christ's suffering, cried out, Psa 22:1, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from my help?' He was indeed really forsaken of God; God did indeed leave him in respect of his sense and feeling. So was Christ truly and really forsaken of God, and not in colour or show, as some affirm. Athanasius, speaking of God's forsaking of Christ, saith, 'All things were done naturally and in truth, not in opinion or show.'² Though God did still continue a God to David, yet in David's apprehension and feeling he was forsaken of God. Though God was still a God to Christ, yet as to his feeling he was left of God, to wrestle with God, and to bear the wrath of God, due unto us. Look, as Christ was scourged, that we might not be scourged, so Christ was forsaken, that we might not be forsaken. Christ was forsaken for a time, that we might not be forsaken for ever [Ambrose].

Fevardentius absolutely denies that Christ did truly complain upon the cross that he was forsaken of God; and therefore he thus objecteth and reasoneth: 'If Christ were truly forsaken of God, it would follow that the hypostatical union was dissolved, and that Christ was personally separated

from God, for otherwise he could not be forsaken.' To what he objects we thus reply, first, If Christ had been totally and eternally forsaken, the personal union must have been dissolved; but upon this temporal and partial rejection or dereliction there followeth not a personal dissolution, or general dereliction. But secondly, As the body of Christ, being without life, was still hypostatically united to the Godhead, so was the soul of Christ, though for a time without feeling of his favour. The dereliction of the one doth no more dissolve the hypostatical union than the death of the other. If life went from the body, and yet the deity was not separated in the personal consecration, but only suspended in operation, so the feeling of God's favour, which is the life of the soul, might be intermitted in Christ, and yet the divine union not dissolved. Thirdly, Augustine doth well shew how this may be when he saith, *Passio Christi dulcis fuit divinitatis somnus*,—That the passion of Christ was the sweet sleep of his divinity; like as when in sleep the soul is not departed, though the operation thereof be deferred; so in Christ's sleep upon the cross the Godhead was not separated, though the working power thereof were for a time sequestered. Look, as the elect members of Christ may be forsaken, though not totally or finally, but *ex parte*, in part and for a time, and yet their election remain firm still; the same may be the case of our head, that he was *ex parte derelictus*, only in part forsaken, and for a time, always beloved for his own innocency, but for us and in our person, as our pledge and surety, deserted.

There are two kinds of dereliction or forsaking; one is for a time and in part; so the elect may be, and so Christ was, forsaken upon the cross: another which is total, final, and general; and so neither Christ nor his members never was nor never shall be forsaken. Christ, in the deepest anguish of his soul, is upheld and sustained by his faith, 'My God, my God,' whereby he sheweth his singular confidence and trust in God, notwithstanding the present sense of his wrath.

Quest. But how can Christ be forsaken of God, himself being God; for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all three but one and the same God? Yea, how can he be forsaken of God, seeing he is the Son of God? and if the Lord leave not his children, which hope and trust in him, how can he forsake Christ, his only-begotten Son, who depended upon him and his mighty power?

Ans. 1. First, By God here we are to understand God the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity. According to the vulgar and common rule, when God is compared with the Son or Holy Ghost, then the Father is meant by this title God; not that the Father is more God than the Son—for in dignity all the three persons are equal—but they are distinguished in order only; and thus the Father is the first person, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third.

Ans. 2. Secondly, Our Saviour's complaint, that he was forsaken, must be understood in regard of his human nature, and not of his Godhead; although the Godhead and manhood were never severed from the first time of his incarnation; but the Godhead of Christ, and so the Godhead of the Father, did not shew forth his power in his manhood, but did as it were lie asleep for a time, that the manhood might suffer.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, Christ was not indeed utterly forsaken of God in regard of his human nature, but only as it were forsaken—that is, although there were some few minutes and moments in which he received no sensible consolations from the Deity, yet that he was not utterly forsaken is most clear from this place, where he flees unto the Lord as unto his God, 'My God, my God,' as also from his resurrection the third day.

Ans. 4. Fourthly, Divines say that there are six kinds of dereliction or forsakings:—1. By disunion of person; and 2. By loss of grace; and 3. By diminution and weakenings of grace; and 4. By want of assurance of future deliverance and present support; and 5. By denial of protection; and 6. By withdrawing of all solace and comfort. Now it is foolish and impious to think that Christ was forsaken any of the first four ways, for the unity of his person was never dissolved, his graces were never either taken away or diminished, neither was it possible that he should want assurance of future deliverance and present support that was eternal God and Lord of life; but the two last ways he may rightly be said to have been forsaken, in that his Father denied to protect and keep him out of the hands of his cruel, bloody, and merciless enemies, no ways restraining them, but suffering them to do the uttermost that their wicked hearts could imagine, and left him to endure the extremity of their fury and malice; and, that nothing might be wanting to make his sorrows beyond measure sorrowful, withdrew from him that solace and comfort that he was wont to find in God, and removed far from him all things for a little time that might any way lessen and assuage the extremity of his pain.

[2.] Secondly, That Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the wrath of God which was due unto us for our sins. The prophet Isaiah, Isa 53:4, saith, 'That he was plagued and smitten of God'; and Isa 53:5, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him.' To be plagued and smitten of God is to feel and suffer the stroke of his wrath; and so to be chastised of God, as to make peace with God or to appease him, is so to suffer the wrath of God as to satisfy God and to remove it. And truly how Christ should possibly escape the feeling of the wrath of God incensed against our sins, he standing as a surety for us with our sins laid upon him, and for them fully to satisfy the justice of God, is not Christianly or rationally imaginable. And whereas some do object that Christ was always the beloved of his Father, and therefore could never be the object of God's wrath:

I answer, By distinguishing of the person of Christ, whom his Father always loved, and as sustaining our sins, and in our room standing to satisfy the justice of God; and as so the wrath of God fell upon him and he bore it, and so satisfied the justice of God, that we thereby are now delivered from wrath through him. So the apostle, Rom 5:9, 'Much more, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him;' 1Th 1:10, 'And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.'

It is a groundless conceit of some learned heads, who deny the cause of Christ's agony to be the drinking of that cup of wrath that was given to him by his Father, John 18:11, saying that the sight of it only, and of the peril he saw we were in, was the cause of his agony; for the cup was not only shewed unto him, and the great wrath due to our sins set before him, that he should see it and tremble at the apprehension of the danger we were in, but it was poured not only on him, but into him, that he for the sins of his redeemed ones should suffer it sensibly, and drink it, that the bitterness thereof might affect all the powers of his soul and body; for the Scripture does sufficiently testify that not only upon the sight and apprehension of this wrath and curse coming on him the holy human nature did holily abhor it, but also that he submitted to receive it upon the consideration of the divine decree and agreement made upon the price to be paid by him, and that upon the feeling of this wrath, this agony in his soul, the bloody sweat of his body was brought on.

Quest. But how could the pourings forth of the Father's wrath upon his innocent and dear Son consist with his Fatherly love to him? &c.

Ans. Even as the innocency and holiness of Christ could well consist with his taking upon him the punishment of our sins; for even the wrath of a just man, inflicting capital punishment on a condemned person, put case it be his own child, can well consist with fatherly affection towards his child suffering punishment. Did you never see a father weep over such a son that he has corrected most severely? Did you never see a judge shed tears for those very persons that he has condemned? There is no doubt but wrath and love can well consist in God, in whom affections do not war one with another, nor fight with reason, as it often falls among men; for the affections ascribed unto God are effects rather of his holy will towards us, than properly called affections in him; and these effects of God's will about us do always tend to our happiness and blessedness at last, however they are diverse one from another in themselves.

[3.] Thirdly, That Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner. I readily grant that Jesus Christ did not locally descend into hell, to suffer there amongst the damned, neither did he suffer hellish darkness, nor the flames of hell, nor the worm that never dies, nor final despair, nor guilt of conscience, nor gnashing of teeth, nor impatient indignation, nor eternal separation from God. These things were absolutely inconsistent with the holiness, purity, and dignity of his person, and with the office of a mediator and redeemer. But yet I say that our Lord Jesus Christ did suffer in his soul for our sins such pain, horror, terror, agony, and consternation, as amounted unto cruciatus infernales, and are in Scripture called 'The sorrows of hell.' 'The sorrows of hell did compass me about,' Psa 18:5, or the cords of hell did compass me about, such as wherewith they bind malefactors when they are led forth to execution. Now these sorrows, these cords of hell, were the things that extorted from him that passionate expostulation, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46. Christ's sufferings were unspeakable, and somewhat answerable to the pains of hell. Hence the Greek Litany; 'By thine unknown sufferings, good Lord deliver us,' ΔΕΙΣΤΩΝ ΣΟΦΑΘΗΜΑΤΩΝ. Funinus, an Italian martyr, being asked by one why he was so merry at his death, sith Christ himself was so sorrowful; 'Christ,' said he 'sustained in his soul all the sorrows and conflicts with hell and death due to us;' by whose sufferings we are delivered from sorrow and the fear of them all. It was a great saying of a very learned man, that setting iniquity and eternity of punishment aside, which Christ might not sustain, Christ did more vehemently and sharply feel the wrath of God than ever any man did or shall, no not any person reprobated and damned excepted; and certainly the reason annexed to prove this expression is very weighty, because all the wrath that was due for all the sins of the elect, all whose sins were laid on Christ, Isa 53:6, was greater than the wrath which belonged to any one sinner, though damned for his personal sinning: and besides this, if you do seriously consider those sufferings of Christ in his agony in the garden, you may by them conjecture what hellish torments Christ did suffer for us. In that agony of his, he was afraid and amazed, and fell flat on the ground, Mat 14:33-34. He began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death,' Luk 22:44; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. He did sweat clotted blood to such abundance, that it streamed through his apparel, and did wet the ground; which dreadful agony of Christ, how it could arise from any other cause than the sense of the wrath of God, parallel to that in hell, I know not.

Orthodox divines do generally take Christ's sufferings in his soul, and the detaining his body in the grave, put in as the close and last part of Christ's sufferings, as the true meaning of that expression, 'He descended into hell,' not only because these pains which Christ suffered both in

body and soul were due to us in full measure, but also because that which Christ in point of torment and vexation suffered was in some respect of the same kind with the torment of the damned. For the clearing of this, consider, that in the punishment of the damned there are these three things: 1. The perverse disposition of the mind of the damned in their sufferings; 2. The duration and perpetuity of their punishment; and 3. The punishment itself, tormenting soul and body. Of these three, the first two could have no place in Christ: not the first, because he willingly offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, and upon agreement paid the ransom fully, Heb 9:14, and Heb 10:5-8 not the second, because he could no longer be held under sorrows and sufferings than he had satisfied divine justice, and paid the price that he was to lay down, Acts 2:24. And his infinite excellency and glory made his short sufferings to be of infinite worth, and equivalent to our everlasting sufferings, 1Pe 2:24; 1Co 6:20. The third, then, only remaineth, which was the real and sensible torments of his soul and body, which he did really feel and experience when he was upon the cross. O sirs! what need you question Christ's undergoing of hellish pains, when all the pains, torments, curse, and wrath which was due to the elect did fall on Christ, and lie on Christ till divine justice was fully satisfied. Though Christ did not suffer eternal death for sinners, yet he suffered that which was equivalent, and therefore the justice of God is by his death wholly appeased.

It is good seriously to ponder upon these scriptures: Ps. 18:51, 'The sorrows of hell did compass me about;' Ps. 88:31, 'My soul is filled with evil, and my life draweth near to hell;' Psa 86:13, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from the nethermost hell.' In these places the prophet speaks in the person of Christ, and the Papists themselves do confess that the Hebrew word sheol, that is here used, is taken for hell properly, and not for the grave; therefore these places do strongly conclude for the hellish sorrows or sufferings of Christ. So Acts 2:27, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.' If Christ's soul be not left or forsaken in hell, yet it follows it was in hell; not that Christ did feel the sorrows of hell after death, but that he did feel the very sorrows of hell in his soul while he lived. Certainly the whole punishment of body and soul which was due unto us, Christ our Redeemer was in general to suffer and satisfy for in his own person; but the torments and terrors of hell, and the vehement sense of God's wrath, are that punishment which did belong to the soul; ergo, Christ did suffer the torments and terrors of hell. By the whole punishment you are to understand the whole kind or substance of the punishment, not all the circumstances, and the very same manner. The whole punishment then is the whole kind of punishment—that is, in body and soul—which Christ ought to have suffered, though not in the same manner and circumstance. 1. Neither for the place of hell locally; nor 2. For the time eternally; nor 3. For the manner sinfully. When we say Christ was to suffer our whole punishment, all such punishments as cannot be suffered without sin, as desperation [and] final reprobation, are manifestly excepted. Christ did bear all our punishment, though not as we should have borne it; that is, 1. Sinfully; 2. Eternally; 3. Hellishly. But he did so bear all our punishment as to finish all upon the cross; and in such sort as God's justice was satisfied, his person not disgraced, nor his holiness defiled, and yet man's salvation fully perfected, Col 2:14-15; Heb 9:14, and Heb 10:15. We constantly affirm that Christ did suffer the pains of hell in his soul, with these three restrictions:—1. That there be neither indignity offered to his royal person; 2. Nor injury to his holy nature; 3. Nor impossibility to his glorious work. All such pains of hell then as Christ might have suffered:—1. His person not dishonoured; 2. His nature with sin not defiled; 3. His work of our redemption not hindered, we do steadfastly believe were sustained by our blessed Saviour. Consider a few things.

First, Consider the adjuncts of hell, which are these four: 1. The place, which is infernal; 2. The time, which is perpetual; 3. The darkness, which is unspeakable; 4. The ministers and tormentors—the spirits and devils, which are irreconcilable. Now these adjuncts of hell Christ is freed from. For the dignity of his person, it was not fit that the Son of God, the heir of heaven, should be shut up in hell, or that he should for ever be tormented, who is never from God's presence sequestered, or that the light of the world should be closed up in darkness, or that he who bindeth the evil spirits should be bound by them, &c.

Secondly, Consider the effects, or rather the defects, of hell, which are chiefly these two: First, The deprivation of all virtue, grace, holiness; Secondly, The real possession of all vice, impiety, blasphemy, &c. Now the necessity of the work of Christ doth exempt him from these effects; for if he had been either void of grace, or possessed with vice, he could not have been the Redeemer of poor lost souls; for the want of virtue he could not have redeemed others; for the presence of sin he should have been redeemed himself; and from fretting indignation and fearful desperation, the piety and sanctity of his nature doth preserve him, who, being without sin, could neither by indignation displease his Father, nor by desperation destroy himself. So that, if you consider either the adjuncts of hell or the effects, then I say we do remove all them as far off from the holy soul of Christ as heaven is from hell, or the east from the west, or darkness from light, &c.

Thirdly, Consider the punishment itself. Now, concerning this, we say that our blessed Saviour, as in himself he bare all the sins of the elect: so he also suffered the whole punishment of body and soul in general that was due unto us, for the same which we should have endured if he had not satisfied for it; and so consequently we affirm that he felt the anguish of soul and horror of God's wrath, and so in soul entered into the torments of hell for us, sustained them and vanquished them. One speaking in honour of Christ's passion, saith, *Cum iram Dei sibi propositum videret*, When he saw the wrath of God set before him, presenting himself before God's tribunal loaden with the sins of the whole world, it was necessary for him to fear the deep bottomless pit of death. Again saith the same author,² *Cum species Christo objecta est*, &c., Such an object being offered to Christ's view, as though God being set against him, he were appointed to destruction; he was with horror affrighted, which was able a hundred times to have swallowed up all mortal creatures, but he, by the wonderful power of his Spirit, escaped with victory. 'What dishonour was it to our Saviour Christ,' saith another, 'to suffer that which was necessary for our redemption,'—namely, that torment of hell which we had deserved, and which the justice of God required that he should endure for our redemption; or rather, what is more to the honour of Christ, than that he vouchsafed to descend into hell for us, and to abide that bitter pain which we had deserved to suffer eternally; and what may rather be called hell than the anguish of soul which he suffered, when, he being yet God, complained that he was forsaken of God? O sirs, this we need not fear to confess, that Christ, bearing our sins in himself upon the cross, did feel himself during that combat as rejected and forsaken of God and accursed for us, and the flames of his Father's wrath burning within him; so that to the honour of Christ's passion we confess that our blessed Redeemer refused no part of our punishment, but endured the very pains of hell, so far as they tended not neither to the derogation of his person, deprivation of his nature, destruction of his office, &c.

Here it may be queried whether the Lord Jesus Christ underwent the idem, the very self-same punishment that we should have undergone, or only the tantundem, that which did amount and was equivalent thereunto? To which I answer, that in different respects both may be affirmed. The

punishment which Christ endured, if it be considered in its substance, kind, or nature, so it was the same with that the sinner himself should have undergone; but if it be considered with respect to certain circumstances, adjuncts, or accidents which attend that punishment, as inflicted upon the sinner, so it was but equivalent, and not the same. The punishment due to the sinner was death, the curse of the law, upon the breach of the first covenant. Now this Christ underwent, for 'he was made a curse for us,' Gal 3:13. The adjuncts attending this death were the eternity of it, desperation going along with it, &c. These Christ was freed from, the dignity of his person supplying the former, the sanctity of his person securing him against the latter; therefore in reference unto these, and to some other things already mentioned, it was but the tantundem, not the idem; but suppose there had been nothing of sameness, nothing beyond equivalency in what Christ suffered, yet that was enough, for it was not required that Christ should suffer every kind of curse which is the effect of sin, but in the general accursed death. Look, as in his fulfilling of the law for us, it was not necessary that he should perform every holy duty that the law requireth; for he could not perform that obedience which magistrates or married persons are bound to do—it is enough that there was a fulfilling of it in the general for us: so here it was not necessary that Jesus Christ should undergo in every respect the same punishment which the offender himself was liable unto; but if he shall undergo so much as may satisfy the law's threatenings, and vindicate the lawgiver in his truth, justice, and righteous government, that was enough. Now that was unquestionably done by Christ.

Object. 1. But some may object and say, How could Christ suffer the pains of the second death without disunion of the Godhead from the manhood? For the Godhead could not die. Or what interest had Christ's Godhead in his human sufferings, to make them both so short and so precious and satisfactory to divine justice for the sins of so many sinners, especially when we consider that God cannot suffer?

Ans. 1. I answer, It followeth not that because Christ is united into one person with God, that therefore he did not suffer the pains of hell; for by the same reason he should not have suffered in his body, for the union of his person could have preserved him from sufferings in the one as well as in the other, and neither God, angels, nor men compelled him to undertake this difficult and bloody work, but his own free and unspeakable love to mankind, as himself declares, John 10:17, 'Therefore my Father loves me, because I lay down my life;' ver. 18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.' If Christ had been constrained to suffer, then both men and angels might fear and tremble; but as one [Bernard] saith well, *Voluntas sponte morientis placuit Deo*, The willingness of him that died pleased God, who offered himself to be the Redeemer of fallen man, Isa 53:12; Psa 40:7-8; Heb 10:9-10.

Ans. 2. But secondly, I answer from 1Jn 3:16, 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.' The person dying was God, else his person could have done us no good. The person suffering must be God as well as man, but the Godhead suffered not. As if you shoot off a cannon in the bright air, the air suffers, but the light of it suffers not. Actions and passions belong to persons. Nothing less than that person who is God-man could bear the brunt of the day, satisfy divine justice, pacify divine wrath, bring in an everlasting righteousness, and make us happy for ever. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, I answer thus, Albeit the passion of the human nature could not so far reach the Godhead of Christ, that it should in a physical sense suffer, which, indeed, is impossible, yet these sufferings did so affect the person, that it may truly be said that God suffered, and by his blood bought his people to himself; for albeit the proper and formal subject of physical sufferings be only the human nature, yet the principal subject of sufferings, both in a physical and moral sense, is Christ's person, God and man, from the dignity whereof the worth and excellency of all sorts of sufferings, the merit and the satisfactory sufficiency of the price did flow, Acts 20:28; 1Pe 1:18-20; 1Co 6:20, and 1Co 7:23.

O sirs! you must seriously consider, that though Christ as God in his Godhead could not suffer in a physical sense, yet in a moral sense he might suffer and did suffer. For he being 'in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,' Php 2:6-8. Oh, who can sum up the contradictions, the railings, the revilings, the contempts, the despisings and calumnies that Christ met with from sinners, yea, from the worst of sinners!

Object. 2. But how could so low a debasing of the Son of man, or of the human nature assumed by Christ, consist with the majesty of the person of the Son of God?

Ans. We must distinguish those things in Christ, which are proper to either of the two natures, from those things which are ascribed to his person in respect of either of the natures or both the natures; for infirmity, physical suffering, or mortality are proper to the human nature. The glory of power, and grace, and mercy, and super-excellent majesty, and such like, are proper to the Deity; but the sufferings of the human nature are so far from diminishing the glory of the divine nature, that they do manifest the same, and make it appear more clearly and gloriously; for by how much the human nature was weakened, depressed, and despised for our sins, for our sakes, by so much the more the love of Christ, God and man in one person toward man, and his mercy, and power, and grace to man, do shine in the eyes of all that judiciously do look upon him.

Object. 3. How could Christ endure hell fire without grievous sins, as blasphemy and despair, &c.?

Ans. 1. I answer, That we may walk safely and without offence, these things must be premised: First, That the sorrows and sufferings of hell be no otherwise attributed to Christ, than as they may stand with the dignity and worthiness of his person, the holiness of his nature, and the performance of the office and work of our redemption.

[1.] First, then, For the soul of Christ to suffer in the local place of hell, to remain in the darkness thereof, and to be tormented with the material flames there, and eternally to be damned, was not for the dignity of his person, to whom for his excellency and worthiness both the place, manner, and time of those torments were dispensed with.

[2.] Secondly, Final rejection and desperation, blasphemy, and the worm of conscience, agreeth not with the holiness of his nature, 'Who was a lamb without a spot,' Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:19, and therefore we do not, we dare not ascribe them to him. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Destruction of body and soul, which is the second death, could not fall upon Christ; for this were to have destroyed the work of our redemption, if he had been subject to destruction. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Blasphemy and despair are no parts of the pains of the damned, but the consequents, and follow the sense of God's wrath in a sinful creature that is overcome by it. But Christ had no sin of his own, neither was he overcome of wrath, and therefore he always held fast his integrity and innocency, Rev 16:9, Rev 16:11. Despair is an unavoidable companion, attending the pains of the second death, as all reprobates do experience. Desperation is an utter hopelessness of any good, and a certain expectation and waiting on the worst that can befall; and this is the lot and portion of the damned in hell. The wretched sinner in hell, seeing the sentence passed against him, God's purpose fulfilled, never to be reversed, the gates of hell made fast upon him, and a great gulf fixed betwixt hell and heaven, which renders his escape impossible; he now gives up all, and reckons on nothing but uttermost misery, Luk 16:26. Now mark, this despair is not an essential part of the second death, but only a consequent, or, at the most, an effect occasioned by the sinner's view of his irremediable, woeful condition. But this neither did nor could possibly befall the Lord Jesus. He was able, by the power of his Godhead, both to suffer and to satisfy and to overcome; therefore he expected a good issue, and knew that the end should be happy, and that he should not be ashamed, Isa 1:6-7, &c.; Psa 16:9-10; Acts 2:26, Acts 2:28, Acts 2:31. Though a very shallow stream would easily drown a little child, there being no hope of escape for it unless one or another should step in seasonably to prevent it, yet a man that is grown up may groundedly hope to escape out of a far more deep and dangerous place, because by reason of his stature, strength, and skill he could wade or swim out. Surely the wrath of the Almighty, manifested in hell, is like the vast ocean, or some broad, deep river; and therefore when the sinful sons and daughters of Adam, which are without strength, Rom 5:6, are hurled into the midst of it, they must needs lie down in their confusion, as altogether hopeless of deliverance or escaping. But this despair could not seize upon Jesus Christ, because, although his Father took him and cast him into the sea of his wrath, so that all the billows of it went over him, Isa 63:1-3, seq., yet being the mighty God, with whom nothing is impossible, he was very able to pass through that sea of wrath and sorrow, which would have drowned all the world, and come safe to shore.

Object. 4. But when did Christ suffer hellish torments? They are inflicted after death, not usually before it; but Christ's soul went straight after death into paradise. How else could he say to the penitent thief, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise'? Now, to this objection I shall give these following answers:

Ans. 1. First, That Christ's soul, after his passion upon the cross, did not really and locally descend into the place of the damned, may be thus made evident:

[1.] First, All the evangelists, and so Luke among the rest, intending to make an exact narrative of the life and death of Christ, hath set down at large his passion, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension; and besides, they make rehearsal of very small circumstances; therefore we may safely conclude, that they would never have omitted Christ's local descent into the place of the damned, if there had been any such thing. Besides, the great end why they penned this history was, that we might believe that 'Jesus Christ is the Son of God; and that thus believing we might have life everlasting,' John 20:31. Now there could not have been a greater matter for the confirmation of our faith than this, that Jesus, the son of Mary, who went down to the place of the damned, returned thence to live in all happiness and blessedness for ever. But,

[2.] Secondly, If Christ did go into the place of the damned, then he went either in soul, or in body, or in his Godhead. Not in his Godhead, for that could not descend, because it is everywhere, and his body was in the grave; and as for his soul, it went not to hell, but immediately after his death it went to paradise—that is, the third heaven, a place of joy and happiness: ‘This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,’ Luk 23:43; which words of Christ must be understood of his manhood or soul, and not of his Godhead; for they are an answer to a demand, and therefore unto it they must be suitable. The thief makes his request, ‘Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,’ Luk 23:42; to which Christ answers, ‘Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.’ ‘I shall,’ saith Christ, ‘this day enter into paradise, and there shalt thou be with me.’ Now, there is no entrance but in regard of his soul or manhood, for the Godhead, which is at all times in all places, cannot be properly said to enter into a place, Psa 139:7, Psa 139:13; Jer 23:23-24. But,

[3.] Thirdly, When Christ saith, ‘To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,’ he doth intimate, as some observe, a resemblance which is between the first and second Adam. The first Adam quickly sinned against God; and was as quickly cast out of paradise by God. Christ, the second Adam, having made a perfect and complete satisfaction to the justice of God, and the law of God, for man’s sin, must immediately enter into paradise, Heb 9:26, Heb 9:28, and Heb 10:14. Now to say that Christ, in soul, descended locally into hell, is to abolish this analogy between the first and second Adam. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, It is not impossible that the pains of the second death should be suffered in this life. Time and place are but circumstances. The main substance of the second death is the bearing of God’s fierce wrath and indignation. Divine favour shining upon a man in hell, would turn hell into a heaven. All sober, seeing, serious Christians will grant, that the true, though not the full joys of heaven may be felt and experienced in this life: 1Pe 1:8, ‘Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,’ or glorious; either because this their rejoicing was a taste of their future glory, or because it made them glorious in the eyes of men. The original word, δεδοξαμ■v■, is glorified already; a piece of God’s kingdom and heaven’s happiness aforehand. Ah, how many precious saints, both living and dying, have cried out, Oh the joy! the joy! the inexpressible joy that I find in my soul! Eph 2:6, ‘He hath made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.’ What is this else, but even while we live, by faith to possess the very joys of heaven on this side heaven! Now look, as the true joys of heaven may be felt on this side heaven, so the true, though not the full pains of hell, may be felt on this side hell; and doubtless Cain, Judas, Julian, Spira, and others have found, it so. That father hit the mark, who said, *Judicis in mente tua sedes; ibi Deus adest, accusator conscientia, tortor timor*, The judge’s tribunal-seat is in thy soul, God sitteth there as judge, thy conscience is the accuser, and fear is the tormentor. Now if there be in the soul a judge, an accuser, and a tormentor, then certainly there is a true taste of the torments of hell on this side hell.

Ans. 3. Thirdly, The place hell is no part of the payment. The laying down of the price makes the satisfaction. This is all that is spoken and threatened to Adam, ‘Thou shalt die the death,’ Gen 2:17; and this may be suffered here. The wicked go to hell as their prison, because they can never pay their debts, otherwise the debt may as well be paid in the market as the jail. Now Christ did discharge all his people’s debts in the days of his flesh, when he offered up strong cries and tears, Heb 5:7, and not after death. Look, as a king entering into prison to loose the prisoners’ chains, and to pay their debts, is said to have been in prison; so our Lord Jesus Christ, by his soul’s

sufferings, which is the hell he entered into, hath released us of our pains and chains, and paid our debts, and in this sense he may be said to have entered into hell, though he never actually entered into the local place of the damned, which is properly called hell; for in that place there is neither virtue nor goodness, holiness nor happiness, and therefore the holiness of Christ's person would never suffer him to descend into such a place. In the local place of heaven and hell, it is not possible for any neither to be at once, nor yet at sundry times successively, for there is no passing from heaven to hell, or from hell to heaven, Luk 16:26. The place of suffering is but a circumstance in the business. Hell, the place of the damned, is no part of the debt, therefore neither is suffering there locally any part of the payment of it, no more than a prison is any part of an earthly debt, or of the payment of it. The surety may satisfy the creditor in the place appointed for payment, or in the open court, which being done, the debtor and surety both are acquitted, that they need not go to prison. If either of them go to prison, it is because they do not or cannot pay the debt; for all that justice requires is to satisfy the debt, to the which the prison is merely extrinsecal. Even so the justice of God cannot be satisfied for the transgression of the law, but by the death of the sinner; but it doth not require that this should be done in the place of the damned. The wicked go to prison because they do not, they cannot, make satisfaction; otherwise Christ, having fully discharged the debt, needed not go to prison.

Object. 5. But the pains and torments that are due to man's sins are to be everlasting, and how then can Christ's short sufferings countervail them?

Ans. 1. That Christ's sufferings in his soul and body were equivalent to it; although, to speak properly, eternity is not of the essence of death, which is the reward of sin and threatened by God; but it is accidental, because man thus dying is never able to satisfy God, therefore, seeing he cannot pay the last farthing, he is for ever kept in prison, Mat 18:28, Mat 18:35. Look, as eternal death hath in it eternity and despair necessarily in all those that so die, so Christ could not suffer, but what was wanting in duration was supplied—1. By the immensity of his sorrows conflicting with the sense of God's wrath, because of our sins imputed to him, so that he suffered more grief than if the sorrows of all men were put together. Christ's hell-sorrows on the cross were meritorious and fully satisfactory for our everlasting punishment, and therefore in greatness were to exceed all other men's sorrows, as being answerable to God's justice. 2. By the dignity and worth of him that did suffer. Therefore the Scripture calls it the blood of God. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God for sin. Therefore they must lie by it world without end. But Christ hath made an infinite satisfaction in a finite time, by undergoing that fierce battle with the wrath of God, and getting the victory in a few hours, which is equivalent to the creatures bearing it and grappling with it everlastingly. This length or shortness of durance is but a circumstance, not of any necessary consideration in this case. Suppose a man indebted £100, and likely to lie in prison till he shall pay it, yet utterly unable, if another man comes and lays down the money on two hours' warning, is not this as well or better done? that which may be done to as good or better purpose in a short time, what need is there to draw it out at length? The justice of the law did not require that either the sinner or his surety should suffer the eternity of hell's torments, but only their extremity. It doth abundantly counterpoise the eternity of the punishment, that the person which suffered was the eternal God. Besides, it was impossible that he should be detained under the sorrows of death, Acts 2:24. And if he had been so detained, then he had not 'spoiled principalities and powers, nor triumphed over them,' Col 2:15, but had been

overcome, and so had not attained his end. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, The pains of hell which Christ suffered, though they were not infinite in time, yet were they of an infinite price and value for the dignity of the person that suffered them. Christ's temporal enduring of hellish sorrows was as effectual and meritorious as if they had been perpetual. The dignity of Christ's person did bear him out in that which was not meet for him to suffer, nor fit in respect of our redemption; for if he should have suffered eternally, our redemption could never have been accomplished. But for him to suffer in soul as he did in body, was neither derogatory to his person nor prejudicial to his work. Infinitely in time Christ was not to suffer. As one well observes, Christ died *secundum tempus*, in time, or according to time. *Tempora, in mundo sunt*, &c., Times are in the world where the sun riseth and setteth. Unto this time he died. But where there is no time, there he was found, not only living, but conquering. Christ, God-man, suffered punishment in measure infinite, and therefore there is no ground why he should endure it eternally; and indeed it was impossible that Christ should be holden of death, Acts 2:24, because he was both the Lord of life and the Lord's Holy One, 1Co 2:8; Acts 2:27. But,

Ans. 3. Thirdly, If the measure of a man's punishment were infinite, the duration needs not be infinite. Sinful man's measure of punishment is finite, and therefore the duration of his punishment must be infinite, because the punishment must be answerable to the infinite evil of sin committed against an infinite God. O sirs, continual imprisonment in hell arises from man's not being able to pay the price; for could he pay the debt in one year, he needs not lie two years in prison. Now the debt is the first and second death; and because sinful man cannot pay it in any time, he must endure it eternally. But now Christ has laid down ready pay upon the nail to the full for all his chosen ones, and therefore it is not required of him that he should suffer for ever, neither can it stand with the holiness or justice of God to hold him under the second death, he having paid the debt to the utmost farthing. Now that he hath fully paid the debt himself witnesseth John, John 19:30, saying 'when he had received the vinegar, It is finished;' so John 19:28, 'After this, Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished.' Though there are many interpretations given of this place by Augustine, Chrysostom, Jansenius, and others, yet doubtless this alone will hold water—viz., that the heavy wrath of the Lord which did pursue Christ, and the second death which filled him with grievous terrors, is now over and past, and man's redemption finished. He speaketh here of that which presently should be, and in the yielding up his ghost was accomplished. And thus you see that Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner; and you see also that Christ did not locally descend into hell. Shall we make a few inferences from hence:

1. First, then, Oh, how should these sad sufferings of Christ for us endear Christ to us! Oh, what precious thoughts should we have of him! Psa 136:17-18. Oh, how should we prize him! how should we honour him! how should we love him! and how should we be swallowed up in the admiration of him! As his love to us has been matchless, so his sufferings for us has been matchless. I have read of Nero, that he had a shirt made of a salamander's skin, so that if he did walk through the fire in it, it would keep him from burning. So Christ is the true salamander's skin that will keep the soul from everlasting burnings, Isa 33:14;. and therefore well may Christians cry out with that martyr, [Lambert], 'None but Christ, none but Christ.' Tigranes, in Xenophon, coming to redeem his father and friends, with his wife, that were taken prisoners by Cyrus, was asked among other things, what ransom he would give for his wife. He answered, 'He would redeem her

liberty with his own life;' but having prevailed, as they returned together, every one commended Cyrus for a goodly man; and Tigranes would needs know of his wife, 'What she thought of him.' 'Truly,' said she, 'I cannot tell, for I did not so much as look on him, or see him.' 'Whom then,' said he, wondering, 'did you look upon?' 'Whom should I look upon,' replied she, 'but him that would have redeemed my liberty with his own life?' so every believer should esteem nothing worth a looking on, but that Jesus who hath redeemed him with his own blood, 1Co 6:20; Acts 20:28; 1Pe 1:18-19. Plutarch tells us, 'That when Titus Flaminius had freed the poor Grecians from the bondage with which they had been long ground by their oppressions, and the herald was to proclaim in their audience the articles of peace he had concluded for them, they so pressed upon him, not being half of them able to hear, that he was in great danger to have lost his life in the press; at last, reading them a second time, when they came to understand distinctly how that their case stood, they so shouted for joy, crying σ■τηρ, σ■τηρ a saviour, a saviour, that they made the very heavens ring again with their acclamations, and the very birds fall down astonished.' And all that night the poor Grecians, with instruments of music, and songs of praise, danced and sang about his tent, extolling him as a god that had delivered them. But oh, then, what infinite cause have we to exalt and cry up our dear Lord Jesus, who by the hellish sorrows that he suffered for us, hath freed us from that more dreadful bondage of sin, Satan, and wrath that we lay under! Oh, prize that Jesus! Oh, exalt that Christ! Oh, extol that Saviour, who has saved you from that eternal wrath that all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth could never have saved you from! The name of Jesus, saith one, [Chrysostom,] hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it, and is therefore used by Paul five hundred times, as some have observed. The name of a Saviour, saith another, [Bernard,] 'is honey in the mouth, and music in the ears, and a jubilee in the heart,' Dulce nomen Christi. Were Christ in your bosom as a flower of delight, for he is a whole paradise of delight, saith one, [Justin Martyr.] 'I had rather,' saith another, [Luther,] 'be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him, for Christ is the crown of crowns, the glory of glories, and the heaven of heaven.' One saith, [Austin,] 'that he would willingly go through hell to Christ.' Another saith, [Bernard,] 'he had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him.' One cried out, 'I had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds.' Jesus, in the China tongue, signifies the rising sun, and such a rising sun was he to Julius Palmer, that when all concluded that he was dead, being turned as black as a coal in the fire, at last he moved his scorched lips, and was heard to say, 'Sweet Jesus,' Mal 4:2. It was an excellent answer of one of the martyrs, when he was offered riches and honours if he would recant: 'Do but,' said he, 'offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you.' Now, oh that the hellish sorrows and sufferings of Christ for us, might raise in all our hearts such a high estimation, and such a deep admiration, as hath been raised in those worthies last mentioned! It was a sweet prayer of him who thus prayed, 'Lord, make thy Son dear, very dear, exceeding dear, and only dear and precious to me.' Whenever we seriously think of the great and sore sufferings of Christ, it will be good to pray as he prayed. But,

2. Secondly, If Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, then let me infer that certainly there is a hell, a place of torment provided and prepared for all wicked and ungodly persons. Danæus reckons up no less than nineteen several sorts of heretics that denied it; and are there not many erroneous and deluded persons that stoutly and daily assert that there is no hell but what men feel in their own consciences? Ah, how many are there that rejoice to do evil, and delight in their abominations, and take pleasure in

unrighteousness!2 But could men do thus, durst men do thus, did they really believe that hell was prepared and fitted for them, and that the fiery lake was but a little before them? Heaven is a place where all is joyful, and hell is a place where all is doleful. In heaven there is nothing but happiness, and in hell there is nothing but heaviness, nothing but endless, easeless, and remediless torments. Did men believe this, how could they go so merrily on in the way to hell? Cato once said to Cæsar, *Credo quæ de inferis dicuntur falsa esse existimas*, I believe that thou thinkest all that is said of hell to be false and fabulous. So I may say to many in this day, Surely you think that all that is spoken and written of hell is but a story. Don't you look upon the people of God to be of all men the most miserable, and yourselves of all men the most happy? Yes! Oh, but how can this be, did you really believe that there was a heaven for the righteous and a hell for the wicked? It is an Italian proverb, *Qui Venetias non vidit, non credit, &c.*, He who hath not seen Venice will not believe; and he who hath not lived some time there doth not understand what a city it is. This in a sense is true of hell. But now for the *Quod sit*, that there is a hell, that there is such a place of misery prepared and appointed for the wicked, I shall briefly demonstrate against the high atheists and Socinians of this day, and therefore thus,

[1.] First, God created angels and men after his own image. Man must be so much honoured as to be made like God; and no creature must be so much honoured as to be made like man. The pattern after which man was made is sometimes called image alone. So 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him,' Gen 1:27. Sometimes likeness alone: Gen 5:1, 'In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him.' sometimes both: Gen 1:26, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;' which makes a prudent interpreter think that when they are joined it is by hendiadys, and that the Holy Ghost meaneth an image most like his own. It is exceeding much for man's honour that he is an epitome of the world, an abridgment of other creatures, partaking with the stones in being, with the stars in motion, with the plants in growing, with the beasts in sense, and with angels in science. But his being made after God's image is far more. You know, when great men erect a stately building, they cause their own picture to be hung upon it, that spectators may know who was the chief founder of it. So when God had created the fabric of this world, the last thing he did was the setting up his own picture in it, creating man after his own image. When the great Creator went about that noble work, that prime piece of making of man, he doth, as it were, call a solemn council of the sacred persons in the Trinity: 'And God said, Let us make man in our image,' &c., Gen 1:26. Man before his fall was the best of creatures, but since his fall he is become the worst of creatures. He that was once the image of God, the glory of Paradise, the world's lord, and the Lord's darling, is now become an abomination to God, a burden to heaven, a plague to the world, and a slave to Satan. When man first came out of God's mint he did shine most gloriously, as being bespangled with holiness and clad with the royal robe of righteousness; his understanding was filled with knowledge; his will with uprightness; his affections with holiness, &c. But yet, being a mutable creature, and subject to temptations, Satan quickly stripped him of his happiness, and cheated and cozened him of his imperial crown—as we use to do children—with an apple. If God had created angels and men immutable, he had created them gods and not creatures; but being made mutable we know they did fall from their primitive purity and glory; and we know that out of the whole host of angels he kept some from falling; and when all mankind was fallen he redeemed some by his Son. Now mark, as he shews mercy upon some in their salvation, so it is meet that he should glorify his justice upon others in their condemnation, Rom 7:21-23. And because there must be distinct

places for the exercise of the one and for the execution of the other, which are in God equally infinite by an irrecoverable decree from the foundation of the world, a glorious habitation was prepared for the one, and a most hideous dungeon for the other. 'These shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal,' Mat 25:46; yea, so certain are both these places that they were of old prepared for that very purpose. 'Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' and so, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat 25:41. Look, as God foresaw the different estates and conditions of men. and angels, so he provided for them distinct and different places. Doubtless, hell was constituted before angels or men fell. Hell was framed before sin was hatched, as heaven was formed and fitted before any of the inhabitants were produced. But,

[2.] Secondly, That there is a hell, both the Old and New Testament doth clearly and fully testify. Take some instances: Psa 9:17, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' In the Hebrew there are two 'intos,' 'into, into' hell; that is, 'The wicked shall certainly be turned into the nethermost hell;' yea, they shall forcibly be turned into the lowest and darkest place in hell. God will, as it were, with both hands thrust him into hell. If Sheol here signify the grave only, what punishment is here threatened to the wicked, which the righteous is not equally liable to? Doubtless, Sheol here is to be taken for that prison or place of torment where divine justice detains all those in hold that have all their days rebelled against him, scorned his Son, despised the means of grace, and died in open rebellion against him. The psalmist, saith my author, [Mollerus,] declares the miserable condition of all those who live and die in their sins: 'Æternis punientur pænis,' They shall be everlastingly punished. And Musculus reads the place thus: 'Animi impiorum cruciatibus debitis apud inferos punientur,' The souls of the ungodly shall be punished in hell with deserved torments. Certainly, the very place in which the wicked shall lodge and be tormented to all eternity—viz., hell, the bottomless pit, a dungeon of darkness, a lake of fire and brimstone, a fiery furnace,—will extremely aggravate the dolefulness of their condition. O sirs, were all the water in the sea ink, and every pile of grass a pen, and every hair on all the men's heads in the world the hand of a ready writer, all would be too short graphically to delineate the nature of this dungeon, where all lost souls must lodge for ever. Where is the man who, to gain a world, would lodge one night in a room that is haunted with devils; and is it nothing to dwell in hell with them for ever? So Solomon, Pro 5:5, saith of the harlot, 'that her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell.' Here Sheol is translated hell, and in the judgment of Lavater is well translated too: Foveam vel infernum passus ejus tenebunt; which, saith he, is spoken not so much of natural death as of spiritual, and that eternal destruction which followeth thereupon; and he gives this for a reason why we should understand the place so, because whoredom being an abominable sin, defiling the members of the body of Christ, dissolving and making void the covenant between God and man, must needs be accompanied with an equivalent judgment, even excluding those that are guilty thereof, without repentance, the kingdom of heaven, into which pure and undefiled place no unclean thing can enter. And mark those words of the apostle, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' If men will not judge them, God himself will, and give them a portion of misery answerable to their transgression.⁴ Though the magistrate be negligent in punishing them, yet God will judge them. Sometimes he judges them in this life, by pouring forth of his wrath upon their bodies, souls, consciences, names, and estates; but if he do not thus judge them in this life, yet he will be sure to judge them in the life to come; which Bishop Latimer well understood when he presented to Henry the Eighth, for a New-year's gift, a New

Testament, with a napkin, having this posie about it, 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;' yea, he has already adjudged them 'to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,' Rev 21:8. 'Nothing,' saith one, 'hath so much enriched hell as beautiful faces.' The Germans have a proverb that 'the pavement of hell is made of the skulls of shaved priests and the glorious crests of gallants.' Their meaning is, that these sorts of persons being most given up to fleshly lusts and pleasures, they shall be sure to have the lowest place in hell. The harlot's feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell. Wantonness brings men to hell. 'Whoremongers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,' Rev 21:8. 'For fornication and uncleanness the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience,' Col 3:5-6. The adulterer herself goes thither; and is it not fit that her companions in sin should be her companions in misery? 'I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation,' Rev 2:22. She hastens with sails and oars to hell, and draws her lovers with her. All her courses tend towards hell. Strumpets are the foundations and upholders of hell; they are the devil's best customers. Oh, the thousands of men and women that are sent to hell for wantonness! Hell would be very thin and empty were it not for these. Other sins are toilsome and troublesome, but wantonness is pleasant, and sends men and women merrily to hell. I have read a story, that one asking the devil which were the greatest sins? he answered, 'Covetousness and lust.' The other asking again, whether perjury and blasphemy were not greater sins? the devil replied, that in the schools of divinity they were the greater sins, but for the increase of his revenues the other were the greater. Bede, therefore, styleth lust, *Filiam diaboli*, 'the daughter of the devil, which bringeth forth many children to him.' Oh that all wantons would take that counsel of Bernard, '*Ardor gehennæ extinguat in te ardorem luxuriæ, major ardor minorem superet;*' let the fire of hell extinguish the fire of lust in thee; let the greater burning overcome the lesser, 1Ti 5:6. Ponder upon that Pro 9:18, 'But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.' To wit, those that are spiritually dead, and that are in the high way to be cut off, either by filthy diseases, or by the rage of the jealous husband, or by the sword of the magistrate, or by some quarrels arising amongst those that are rivals in the harlot's love, and are as sure to be damned as if they were in hell already. A metaphor from a dungeon. He knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell. Aben Ezra will have the original word ■ *ibi*, 'there,' to be referred to hell; and the meaning of the whole, verse to be more plainly thus, He knoweth not that her guests being dead are in the depth of hell. But the Hebrew word here used and translated dead, is *Rephaim*, which word, *Rephaim*, properly signifies giants, and to that sense is always rendered by the seventy γαγγατες. The meaning of this place seems to be no other, but that the strange woman will bring them who are her guests to hell, to keep the apostate giants company,—those mighty men of renown of the old world, whose wickedness was so great in the earth, that it repented and grieved God that he had made man, Gen 6:4-5; and to take vengeance on whom he brought the general deluge upon the earth, and destroyed both man and beast from the face thereof. These giants are called in Hebrew *Nephilim*, such as, being fallen from God, fell upon men, and by force and violence made others fall before them, even as the beasts of the field do fall before the roaring lions. These great oppressors were first drowned, and then damned, and sent to that accursed place which was appointed for them. Now to that place and condition, in which they are, the harlot will bring all her wanton lovers. Take one scripture more: Pro 15:11, 'Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men.' Some think the latter is exegetical of the former; some by *Sheol* understand the

grave, and by Abaddon hell. There is nothing so deep, or secret, that can be hid from the eyes of God. He knows the souls in hell, and the bodies in the grave, and much more men's thoughts here in this place, Pro 15:11. The Jews take the word Abaddon, which we render destruction, for Gehenna, that is, elliptically for Beth-Abaddon, the house of destruction. Though we know not where hell is, nor what is done there—though we know not what is become of those that are destroyed, nor what they suffer, yet God doth; and if the secrets of hell and devils are known to him, then much more the secrets of the hearts of the children of men. The devil, who is the great executioner of the wrath of God, is expressed by this word; as hell is called destruction in the abstract, so the devil is called a destroyer in the concrete. 'And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, or hell, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon,' Rev 9:11. Both the one and the other, the Hebrew and the Greek, signify the same thing—a destroyer. The devil, who is the jailer of hell, is called a destroyer, as hell itself is called destruction. Oh, sirs! hell is destruction; they that are once there are lost, yea, lost for ever, Rev 14:11. The reason why hell is called destruction, is because they that are cast to hell are undone to all eternity. 'If hell,' said one, 'were to be endured a thousand years, methinks I could bear it, but for ever, that amazeth me.' Bellarmine, out of Barocius, tells us of a learned man, who after his death appeared to his friend, complaining that he was adjudged to hell-torments, which, saith he, were they to last but a thousand thousand years, I should think it tolerable, but alas! they are eternal. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia I have read of, which being once kindled, could not be quenched.³ There is no estate on earth so miserable, but a man may be delivered out of it; but out of hell there is no deliverance. It is not the prayer, no, not of a Gregory, though never so great, whatever they fable, that can rescue any that is once become hell's prisoner. I might add other scriptures out of the Old Testament, but let these suffice. That there is such a place as hell is, prepared for the torment of the bodies and souls of wicked and impenitent sinners, is most clear and evident in the New Testament as well as in the Old. Amongst the many that might be produced, take these for a taste: Mat 5:22, 'But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause'—rashly, vainly, and unreasonably—'shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire,'—Gr., to, or in the Gehenna of fire. In this scripture our Lord Jesus doth allude to the custom of punishing offenders used among the Jews. Now there were three degrees of punishments that were used among the Jews.

First, In every town where there were a hundred and twenty inhabitants, there was a little council of three, which judged smaller matters, for which whipping or some pecuniary mulct was imposed.

Secondly, There was a council consisting of three-and-twenty; seven of these were judges, fourteen assessors, who were mostly of the Levites; and to these were added two supernumeraries, which made the twenty-three, which the Hebrews generally say was the number that made up the second council. Now this council sat in the gates of the city, and did judge of civil matters, having also power of life and death, [Josephus.]

Thirdly, There was the great synedion, or high court of judicatory, which consisted of seventy-and-two, six chosen of every tribe. Now this council sat in the court of the temple, and had all matters of greatest moment brought before them, as heresy, idolatry, apostasy. Sometimes they convened before them the high priest, and sometimes false prophets, yea, sometimes a

whole tribe, as my reverend author thinks, [Beza.] Now look, as there is a gradation of sin, so there is a gradation of punishment pointed at in this scripture; for the opening of which, consider you have here three degrees of secret murder, or of inward heart murder. And,

[1.] The first is rash anger. Now this brings a man in danger of the judgment. By the judgment he means not the judgment of the three, who judged of money matters, but by judgment he means the council of the three-and-twenty men. Now they are called 'the judgment,' because they judged of murders, and inflicted death, &c. Now he that shall rashly, vainly, causelessly, unseasonably be angry with his brother, he shall be liable to the punishments that are to be inflicted by the judges. Look, what punishments they in the Sanhedrim inflicted upon actual and apparent murderers, the same were they liable to, and did deserve at the hands of God, who were guilty of this secret kind of murder, viz., rash anger. From the different degrees of punishments among the Jews, Christ would shew the degrees of punishment in another world, according to the greatness of men's sins. As if he should say: Look, as among you Jews there are different offences—some are judged in your little council of three, and others are judged in your council of three-and-twenty, and others in your great Sanhedrim—so in the high court of heaven, some sins, as rash anger, are less punished, and others are more sorely punished, as when your rash anger shall break forth into railings, &c. In these words, 'Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of judgment,' you may see that Christ gives as much to rash anger as the Jews did to murder; as if he should have said, 'You Pharisees exceed all measure and bounds in your anger, and, with a malicious heart, you rail upon the most innocent persons, upon me and my disciples; but I would have you take heed of rash anger, for you shall have greater torments in hell for your rash anger than those that murderers suffer by your council of three-and-twenty.' But these words, 'he shall be in danger of judgment,' do contain the reward and punishment of unlawful anger; as if our Saviour had said, 'Rash anger shall not escape just punishment, but shall be arraigned and summoned before God's tribunal at the dreadful day of judgment, when the angry man shall not be able to answer one word of a thousand.'

[2.] The second kind of secret murder is to say to our brother, Raca, that is, say some, 'O vain man'! Others say, it signifies a brainless fellow; and the learned Tremellius saith, it signifies one void of judgment, reason, and brains. Some will have this word Raca come of the Greek $\rho\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omega\varsigma$ Racos, cloth, as though one should call a man a base patch, or piece of cloth, or beggarly. Raca signifies an idle head, a light brain; for so Rik in the Hebrew, to which the Syriac word Racha agreeth both in sound and sense, signifieth light or vain. Racha is a Syriac word, and signifies, say some, these three things:—1. Empty, as empty of wealth, or poor; or as some, empty of brains or wit; or, as others, a light-head or cock-brain, wide and empty of wisdom or understanding. 2. It signifies spittle or spit upon; to signify that they esteemed one another no better than the spittle they spat out of their mouths. 3. It signifies contemned, vile, despised, abject, and in this signification one, in his proem of the Syriac Grammar, [Michael Maronita,] thinks it to be taken. The Ethiopian expounds Racha thus, 'He that shall say to his brother, Be poor by contempt, and of torn garments, shall be guilty of the council;' such a one, saith our Saviour, 'shall be in danger of the council,' that is, contract as great guilt unto himself, and is subject to as severe a judgment in the court of heaven, as any capital crime that is censured in the Sanhedrim or high-court of the Jews. But,

[3.] The third kind of secret murder is an open reviling and reproaching of a brother in these words, 'But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.' 'Thou fool,' this is a word of greater disgrace than the former. $\mu\omega\pi$ signifies unsavoury, or without relish; a fool here is, by a metaphor, called insipid, Hebrew סוֹט Sote, which we call Sot, 'shall be in danger of hell-fire,' or to be cast into Gehenna. Gehenna comes from the Hebrew word Gettinnom, that is, the valley of Hinnom, lying near the city of Jerusalem; in which valley, in former times, the idolatrous Jews caused their children to be burned alive between the glowing arms of the brazen image of Moloch, imitating the abominations of the heathen, Jos 15:8. And hence the Scripture often makes use of that word to signify the place of eternal punishment, where the damned must abide under the wrath of God for ever, 2Ki 23:10; Jer 7:31, Jer 32:35, and Jer 19:4-6. There were four kinds of punishments exercised among the Jews,—1. Stranglings; 2. The sword; 3. Stoning; 4. The fire. Now this last they always judged the worst, as Beza affirms upon this very place. In these words, 'shall be in danger of hell-fire,' Christ alludes to the great Sanhedrim, and the highest degree of punishment that was inflicted by them, namely, to be burned in the valley of Hinnom, which, by a known metaphor, is transferred to hell itself, and the inexpressible torments thereof. For as those poor wretches being inclosed in a brazen idol, heat with fire, were miserably tormented in this valley of Hinnom; so the wicked being cast into hell, the prison of the damned, shall be eternally tormented in unquenchable fire. This valley of Hinnom, by reason of the pollution of it with slaughter, blood, and stench of carcasses, did become so execrable, that hell itself did afterwards inherit the same name, and was called Gehenna of this very place. And that, 1. In respect of the hollowness and depth thereof, being a low and deep valley. 2. This valley of Hinnom was a place of misery, in regard of those many slaughters that were committed in it through their barbarous idolatry; so hell is a place of misery and infelicity, wherein there is nothing but sorrow. 3. Thirdly, by the bitter and lamentable cries of poor infants in this valley, is shadowed out the cries and lamentable torments of the damned in hell. 4. In this valley of Hinnom was another fire which was kept continually burning for the consuming of dead carcasses, and filth, and the garbage that came out of the city. Now our Saviour, by the fire of Gehenna, in this Mat 5:22, hath reference principally to this fire, signifying hereby the perpetuity and everlastingness of hellish pains. To this last judgment of the Sanhedrim, viz., burning, doth Christ appropriate that kind of murder, which is by open reviling of a brother, that he might notify the heinousness of that sin. Mark, in this scripture, judgment, council, and hell-fire do but signify three degrees of the same punishment, &c.

See also Mat 5:29-30, 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell-fire.' Julian, taking these commands literally, mocked at [the] Christian religion, as foolish, cruel, and vain, because they require men to maim their members. He mocked at Christians because no man did it; and he mocked at Christ because no man obeyed him. But this apostate might have seen from the scope that these words were not to be taken literally, but figuratively. Some of the ancients, by the right hand, and the right eye, do understand relations, friends, or any other dear enjoyments which draws the heart from God. Others of them, by the right eye, and the right hand, do understand such darling sins that are as dear to men as their right eyes or right hands. That this hell here spoken of is not meant of the grave, into which the body shall be laid, is most evident, because those Christians who do pull out their right eyes, and cut off their right

hands—that is, mortify those special sins which are as dear and near to them as the very members of their bodies—shall be secured and delivered from this hell, whereas none shall be exempt from the grave, though they are the choicest persons on earth for grace and holiness. Death, like the Duke of Parma's sword, knows no difference betwixt robes and rags, betwixt prince and peasant. 'All flesh is grass,' Isa 40:6. The flesh of princes, nobles, counsellors, generals, &c., is grass, as well as the flesh of the meanest beggar that walks the streets. 'The mortal scythe,' saith one, 'is master of the royal sceptre, it mows down the lilies of the crown, as well as the grass of the field. Never was there orator so eloquent, nor monarch so potent, that could either persuade or withstand the stroke of death when it came. Death's motto is, Nulli cedo. It is one of Solomon's sacred aphorisms, 'The rich and the poor meet together,' Pro 22:2, sometimes in the same bed, sometimes at the same board, and sometimes in the same grave. Death is the common inn of all mankind. 'There is no defence against the stroke of death, nor no discharge in that war,' Heb 9:27; Ecc 8:8. Death is that only king against whom there is no rising up, Pro 30:31. If your houses be fired, by good help they may be quenched; if the sea break out, by art and industry it may be repaired; if princes invade by power and policy, they may be repulsed; if devils from hell shall tempt, by assistance from heaven they may be resisted. But death comes into royal palaces, and into the meanest cottages, and there is not a man to be found that can make resistance against this king of terrors and terror of kings. Death's motto is, Nemini parco, I spare none. Thus you see that by hell in Mat 5:29-30, you may not, you cannot, understand the grave; and therefore by it you must understand the place of the damned. But if you please you may cast your eye upon another scripture, viz., Mat 10:28, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' The word 'rather' is not a comparative, but an adversative. We should not fear man at all when he stands in competition with God. So Victorinus, the proconsul of Carthage, being solicited to Arianism by the ambassadors of King Hunnerick, answered thus, 'Being assured of God and my Lord Christ, I tell you, what you may tell the king, Let him burn me, let him drive me to the beasts, let him torment me with all kinds of torments, I shall never consent to be an Arian;' and though the tyrant afterwards did torture him with very great tortures, yet he could never work him over to Arianism. The best remedy against the slavish fear of tyrants, is to set that great God up as the object of our fear, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Mark, he doth not say to destroy soul and body simply or absolutely, so that they should be no more—for that many that love their lusts, and prize the world above a Saviour, would be contented withal, rather than to run the hazard of a fierce, hot persecution—but to punish them eternally in hell, where the worm never dieth, nor the fire never goeth out. Now by hell in this Mat 10:28, the grave cannot be meant, because the soul is not destroyed with the body in the grave, as they both shall be, if the person be wicked, after the morning of the resurrection, in hell, Ecc 12:7, and Php 1:3. From the immortality of the soul, we may infer the eternity of man's future condition. The soul being immortal, it must be immortally happy or immortally miserable. It was Luther's complaint of old, 'We more fear the pope, with his purgatory, than God, with his hell; and we trust more in the absolution of the pope from purgatory, than in the true absolution of God from hell.' And is it not so with many this day, who bear their heads high in the land, and who look and long for nothing more than to see Rome flourishing in the midst of us?

Take one scripture more, viz., 1Pe 3:19-20, 'By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the

days of Noah.' That is, Christ by his Spirit, in the ministry of Noah, did preach to the men of the old world who are now in hell. In Noah's time they were on earth, but in Peter's time they were in hell. Mark, Christ did not preach by his Spirit, in his ministry, or any other way, to spirits who were in prison or in hell while he preached to them. There are no sermons in hell, nor any salvation there. The loving-kindness of God is abundantly declared on earth, but it shall never be declared in hell. Look, as there is nothing felt in hell but destruction, so there is nothing found in hell of the offers of salvation. One offer of Christ in hell would turn hell into a heaven. One of the ancients hath reported the opinion of some in his time who thought, that though there be destruction in hell, yet not eternal destruction, but that sinners should be punished, some a lesser, others a longer time, and that, at last, all shall be freed. 'And yet,' saith he, 'Origen was more merciful in that point than these men, for he held that the devil himself should be saved at last.' Of this opinion I shall say no more in this place, than this one thing which he there said. These men will be found to err by so much the more foully, and against the right words of God so much the more perversely, by how much they seem to themselves to judge more mercifully; for indeed the justice of God in punishing of sinners is as much above the reach of man's thoughts as his mercies in pardoning them are, Isa 55:7-9. Oh, let not such who have neglected the great salvation when they were on earth, Heb 2:3, ever expect to have an offer of salvation made to them when they are in hell! Consult these scriptures, Mat 25:30, Mat 13:41-42; Rev 9:2, Rev 14:19-20, Rev 20:1-3, Rev 20:7. I must make haste, and therefore may not stand upon the opening of these scriptures, having said enough already to prove both out of the Old and New Testament that there is a hell, a place of torment, provided and prepared for all wicked and ungodly men. But the third argument to prove that there is a hell, is this,—

[3.] The beams of natural light in some of the heathens have made such impressions on the heart of natural conscience, that several of them have had confused notions of a hell, as well as of a judgment to come. Though the poor blind heathens were ignorant of Christ and the gospel, and the great work of redemption, &c., yet by the light of nature, and reasonings from thence, they did attain to the understanding of a deity, who was both just and good; as also, that the soul was immortal, and that both rewards and punishments were prepared for the souls of men after this life, according as they were found either virtuous or vicious. Profound Bradwardine, and several others, have produced many proofs concerning their apprehensions of this truth. What made the heathen Emperor Adrian when he lay a-dying, cry out, 'O animula vagula blandula,' &c. O my little wretched wandering soul, whither art thou now hastening? &c. Oh, what will become of me! live I cannot, die I dare not! but some discoveries of hell, of wrath to come? Look, as these poor heathens did feign such a place as the Elysian fields, where the virtuous should spend an eternity in pleasures; so also they did feign a place called Tartarum, or hell, where the vicious should be eternally tormented. Tertullian, and after him Chrysostom, affirmeth that poets and philosophers, and all sorts of men, speaking of a future retribution, have said that many are punished in hell. Plato is very plain, that whoever are not expiated, but profane, shall go into hell to be tormented for their wickednesses, with the greatest, most bitter and terrible punishments, for ever in that prison in hell. And Jupiter, speaking to the other gods concerning the Grecians and Trojans, saith,—

If any shall so hardy be, To aid each part in spite of me;

Him will I tumble down to hell, In that infernal place to dwell. So Horace, speaking concerning Jove's thunderbolts, says,—

Quo bruta tellus et vaga flumina, Quo Styx, et invisi horrida Tænari sedes, &c. With which earth, seas, the Stygian lake, And hell with all her furies quake. And Trismegistus affirms concerning the soul's going out of the body defiled, that it is tossed to and fro with eternal punishments. Nor was Virgil ignorant thereof when he said,—

Dent ocyus omnes, Quas meruere pati—sic stat sententia—pœnas.

They all shall pack, Sentence once past, to their deserved rack. The horror of which place he acknowledgeth he could not express, Non mihi si linguæ centum sint, oraue centum, ...

Omnia pœnarum percurrere nomina possim. No heart of man can think, no tongue can tell, The direful pains ordained and felt in hell.

It was the common opinion among the poor heathen that the wicked were held in chains by Pluto—so they called the prince of devils—in chains which cannot be loosed. To conclude, the very Turks speak of the house of perdition, and affirm that they who have turned the grace of God into impiety, shall abide eternally in the fire of hell, and there be eternally tormented. I might have spent much more time upon this head, but that I do not judge it expedient, considering the persons for whose sakes and satisfaction I have sent this piece into the world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The secret checks, gripes, stings, and the amazing horrors and terrors of conscience, that do sometimes astonish, affright, and even distract sinful wretches, do clearly and abundantly evidence that there is a hell, that there is a place of torment prepared and appointed for ungodly sinners. Doubtless, it was not merely the dissolution of nature, but the sad consequent, that so startled and terrified Belshazzar when he saw the handwriting on the wall, Dan 5:5-6. Guilty man, when conscience is awakened, fears an after-reckoning, when he shall be paid the wages of his crying sins proportionable to his demerits.

Wolfius tells you of one John Hufmeister that fell sick in his inn as he was travelling towards Augsburg in Germany, and grew to that horror that they were fain to bind him in his bed with chains, where he cried out that 'he was for ever cast off from before the face of God, and should perish for ever, he having greatly wounded his conscience by sin,' &c.

James Abyes, who suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake and the gospel's, as he was going along to execution he gave all his money and his clothes away to one and another to his shirt, upon which one of the sheriff's attendants scoffingly said that 'he was a madman and a heretic;' but as soon as the good man was executed this wretch was struck mad, and threw away his clothes, and cried out that 'James Abyes was a good man, and gone to heaven, but he was a wicked man, and was damned;' and thus he continued crying out until his death.

Dionysius was so troubled with fear and horror of conscience, that, not daring to trust his best friends with a razor, he used to singe his beard with burning coals, [Cicero.]

Bessus having slain his father, and being afterwards banqueting with several nobles, arose from the table and beat down a swallow's nest which was in the chimney, saying they lied 'to say that he slew his father,' for his guilty conscience made him think that the swallows, when they chattered, proclaimed his parricide to the world.

Theodoricus the king having slain Boetius and Symmachus, and being afterwards at dinner, began to change countenance, his guilty conscience so blinding his eyes that he thought the head of a fish which stood before him to have been the head of his cousin Symmachus, who bit his lip at him and threatened him, the horror whereof did so amaze him that he presently died.

Nero, that monster of nature, having once slain his mother, had never more any peace within, but was astonished with horrors, fears, visions, and clamours which his guilty conscience set before him and suggested unto him. Imo latens in prædio, familiares suspectos habuit, vocem humanam horruit, ad catuli latratum, galli cantum, rami ex vento motum, terrebatur; loqui non ausus, ne audiretur: He suspected his nearest and dearest friends and favourites, he trembled at the barking of a puppy, and the crowing of a cock, yea, the wagging of a leaf, and neither durst speak unto others nor could endure others to speak to him, when he was retired into a private house, lest the noise should be heard by some who lay in wait for his life.

Now were there not a hell, were there not a place of torment where God will certainly inflict unspeakable miseries and intolerable torments upon wicked and ungodly men, why should their consciences thus amaze, torture, and torment them? Yea, the very heathen had so much light in their natural consciences, as made such a discovery of that place of darkness, that some of them have been terrified with their own inventions concerning it, and distracted with the very sense of those very torments which their own persons have described. As Pygmalion doted on his own picture, so were they amazed with their own comments. The very flashes of hell-fire which sinners do daily experience in their own consciences in this world, may be an argument sufficient to satisfy them that there is a hell, a place of torment provided for them in another world.

[5.] Fifthly, Those matchless, easeless, and endless torments that God will certainly inflict upon the bodies and souls of all wicked and ungodly men, after the resurrection, does sufficiently evidence that there is a hell, that there is a place of torment provided, prepared, and fitted by God, wherein he will, 'pour forth all the vials of his wrath upon wicked and ungodly men.' Isa 30:33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.' This place that was so famous for judgment and vengeance is used to express the torments of hell, the place of the damned. Tophet was a place in the valley of Hinnom; it was the place where the angel of the Lord destroyed the host of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, Isa 30:31, Isa 30:33; and this was the place where the idolatrous Jews were slain and massacred by the Babylonian armies, when their city was taken and their carcasses left, for want of room for burial, for meat to the fowls of heaven and beasts of the field, according to the word of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, Jer 7:31-33, and Jer 19:4-6. And this was the place where the children of Israel committed that abominable idolatry in making their children pass through the fire to Moloch; that is, burnt them to the devil, 2Ki 23:10; 2Ch 33:6; for an eternal destruction whereof king Josiah polluted it, and made it a place execrable, ordaining it to be the place whither dead carcasses, garbage, and other unclean things should be cast out. For consuming whereof, to prevent annoyance, a continual fire was there burning, 2Ki 23:11. Now this place, being so many ways execrable for what had been done therein, especially having been as it were the gate to eternal destruction, by so remarkable judgments and vengeance of God there executed for sin, it came to be translated to signify the place of the damned, as the most accursed, execrable, and abominable place of all places. The Spirit of God, in Scripture, by metaphors of all sorts of things that are dreadful unto sense, sets

forth the condition of the damned, and the torments that he has reserved for them in the life to come. Hell's punishments do infinitely exceed all other punishments; no pain so extreme as that of the damned. Look, as there are no joys to the joys of heaven, so there are no pains to the pains of hell, Psa 116:3. All the cruelties in the world cannot possibly make up any horror comparable to the horrors of hell. The brick-kilns of Egypt, the furnace of Babel, are but as the glowing sparkle, or as the blaze of a brush-faggot, to this tormenting Tophet that has been prepared of old to punish the bodies and souls of sinners with. Hanging, racking, burning, scourging, stoning, sawing asunder, flaying of the skin, &c., are not to be named in the day wherein the tortures of hell are spoken of. If all the pains, sorrows, miseries, and calamities that have been inflicted upon all the sons of men, since Adam fell in Paradise, should meet together and centre in one man, they would not so much as amount to one of the least of the pains of hell. Who can sum up the diversity of torments that are in hell! In hell there is, 1. Darkness; hell is a dark region. 2. In hell there are sorrows. 3. In hell there are bonds and chains. 4. In hell there is pains and pangs. 5. In hell there is the worm that never dies. 6. In hell there is a lake of fire. 7. In hell there is a furnace of fire. 8. In hell there is the devil and his angels; and oh, how dreadful must it be to be shut up for ever with those roaring lions! 9. In hell there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.² Certainly, did men believe the torments of hell, that weeping for extremity of heat, and that gnashing of teeth that is there for extremity of cold, they would never offer to fetch profits or pleasures out of those flames. 10. In hell there is unquenchable fire, Mat 3:12, 'He will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire;' in hell there is 'everlasting burnings,' Isa 33:14. 'The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' Wicked men, who are now the only jolly fellows of the time, shall one day go from burning to burning; from burning in sin to burning in hell; from burning in flames of lusts to burning in flames of torment, except there be found true repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on God's. O sirs! in this devouring fire, in these everlasting burnings, Cain shall find no cities to build, nor his posterity shall have no instruments of music to invent there; none shall take up the timbrel or harp, or rejoice at the sound of the organ. There Belshazzar cannot drink wines in bowls, nor eat the lambs out of the flocks, nor the calves out of the midst of the stall. In everlasting burnings there will be no merry company to pass time away, nor no dice nor cards to pass care away; nor no cellars of wine wherein to drown the sinner's grief. By fire in the scriptures last cited, is meant, as I conceive, all the positive part of the torments of hell; and because they are not only upon the soul but also upon the body. As in heaven there shall be all bodily perfection, so there shall be also in hell all bodily miseries. Whatsoever may make a man perfectly miserable shall be in hell; therefore the wrath of God and all the positive effects of this wrath is here meant by fire.

I have read of Pope Clement the Fifth, that when a nephew of his, whom he had loved sensually and sinfully, died, he sent his chaplain to a necromancer to learn how it fared with him in the other world. The conjuror shewed him the chaplain lying in a fiery bed in hell; which when it was told the Pope, he never joyed more after it, but, within a short time after, died also. Out of this fiery bed there is no deliverance. When a sinner is in hell, shall another Christ be found to die for him, or will the same Christ be crucified again? Oh, no!

O sirs, the torments of hell will be exceeding great and terrible, such as will make the stoutest sinners to quake and tremble! If the handwriting upon the wall, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin, made Bel shazzar's 'countenance to change, his thoughts to be troubled, and his joints to be

loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another,' Dan 5:5, Dan 6:25; oh, how terrible will the torments of hell be to the damned! The torments of hell will be universal torments. All torments meet together in that place of torment. Hell is the centre of all punishments, of all sorrows, of all pains, of all wrath, and of all vengeance, &c. One of the ancients saith, [Bernard,] that the least punishment in hell is more grievous than if a child-bearing woman should continue in the most violent pangs and throes a thousand years together, without the least ease or intermission. An ancient writer mentioned by Discipulus, de tempore, goeth much further, affirming that if all the men which have been from Adam's time till this day, and which shall be to the end of the world; and all the piles of grass in the world were turned into so many men to augment the number; and that punishment inflicted in hell upon any one, were to be divided amongst all these, so as to every one might befall an equal part of that punishment; yet that which would be the portion of one man would be far more grievous than all the cruel deaths and exquisite tortures which have been inflicted upon men ever since the world began. A heathen poet, speaking of the multitude of the pains and torments of the wicked in hell, affirmed, 'that although he had a hundred mouths, and as many tongues, with a voice as strong as iron, yet were they not able to express the names of them.' But this poet spoke more like a prophet than a poet. The poets tell you of a place called Tartarum, or hell, where the impious shall be eternally tormented. This Tartarum the poets did set forth with many fictions to affright people from vicious practices, such as of the four lakes of Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon, and Cocytus; over which Charon, in his boat, did waft over the departed souls; of the three judges, Æacus, Minos, and Rhadamanthus,² who were to call the souls to an account, and judge them to their state; of the three furies, Tisiphone, Megæra, and Alecto, who lashed guilty souls to extort confession from them; of Cerberus, the dog of hell, with three heads, which would let none come out when once they were in; and of several sorts of punishments inflicted, as iron chains, horrid stripes, gnawing of vultures, wheels, rolling great stones, and the like. In the chapel of Ticam, the China Pluto, the pains of hell were so deciphered that could not but strike terror into the beholders,—some roasted in iron beds, some fried in scalding oil, some cut in pieces, or divided in the middle, or torn of dogs, &c. In another part of the chapel were painted the dungeons of hell, with horrible serpents, flames, devils, &c.

'In hell,' saith Mahomet, [Alcoran, &c.,] 'there is the floor of brimstone, smoky, pitchy, with stinking flames, deep pits of scalding pitch, and sulphurous flames wherein the damned are punished daily.' There the wicked shall be fed with the tree Ezecum, which shall burn in their bellies like fire; there they shall drink fire, and be holden in chains of seventy cubits. In the midst of hell, they say, is a tree full of fruit, every apple being like to the head of a devil, which groweth green in the midst of all those flames, called Zoaccum Agacci, or the tree of bitterness; and the souls that shall eat thereof, thinking to refresh themselves, shall so find them, and by them and their pains in hell, they shall grow mad, and the devils shall bind them with chains of fire, and shall drag them up and down in hell; with much more which I am not free to transcribe. Now, although most of those things which you may find among many poets, heathens, and Turks, concerning the torments of hell, are fictions of their own brains; yet that there is such a place as hell, and that there are diversity of torments there, the very light of nature doth witness, and hath forced many to confess, &c. And as there are diversity of torments in hell, so the torments of hell are everlasting. Mark, everything that is conducive to the torments of the damned is eternal. 1. God himself that damns them is eternal, Deu 33:27; 1Ti 1:17. 2. The fire that torments them is eternal, Isa 30:33, and Isa 66:24; Jude 1:7. 3. The prison and chains that hold them are eternal, Jude 1:6-7, Jude 1:13; 2Pe 2:17. 4. The worm

that gnaws them is eternal, Mark 9:44. 5. The sentence that shall be passed upon them shall be eternal, Mat 25:41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.' You know that fire is the most tormenting element. Oh, the most dreadful impression that it makes upon the flesh, everlasting fire! There is the vengeance and continuance of it, You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, that shall never consume itself, nor consume you. Eternity of eternity is the hell of hell. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled could never be quenched. If all the fires that ever were, or shall be in the world, were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as a painted fire upon the wall, to the fire of hell. For to be tormented without end, this is that which goes beyond all the bounds of desperation. Grievous is the torment of the damned, for the bitterness of the punishments, but it is more grievous for the diversity of the punishments, but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments.² If, after so many millions of years as there be drops in the ocean, there might be a deliverance out of hell, this would yield a little ease, a little comfort to the damned. Oh, but this word eternity, eternity, eternity; this word everlasting, everlasting, everlasting; this word for ever, for ever, for ever, will even break the hearts of the damned in ten thousand pieces! Oh, that word never, said a poor despairing creature on his death-bed, breaks my heart. 'The reprobate shall have punishment without pity; misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, crying without compassion, mischief without measure, and torment without end,' [Drexelius.] Plato could say, 'That whoever are not expiated, but profane, shall go into hell, to be tormented for their wickedness, with the greatest, the most bitter and terrible punishments for ever in that prison of hell.' And Trismegistus could say, 'That souls going out of the body defiled, were tossed to and fro with eternal punishments.' Yea, the very Turks, speaking of the house of perdition, do affirm, 'That they who have turned God's grace into wantonness, shall abide eternally in the fire of hell, and there be eternally tormented.' A certain religious man going to visit Olympius, who lived cloistered up in a dark cell, which he thought uninhabitable, by reason of heat, and swarms of gnats and flies, and asking him how he could endure to live in such a place, he answered, 'All this is but a light matter, that I may escape eternal torments: I can endure the stinging of gnats, that I might not endure the stinging of conscience, and the gnawing of that worm that never dies; this heat thou thinkest grievous, I can easily endure, when I think of the eternal fire of hell; these sufferings are but short, but the sufferings of hell are eternal.'⁴ Certainly, infernal fire is neither tolerable nor terminable. Impenitent sinners in hell shall have end without end, death without death, night without day, mourning without mirth, sorrow without solace, and bondage without liberty. The damned shall live as long in hell as God himself shall live in heaven. Their imprisonment in that land of darkness, in that bottomless pit, is not an imprisonment during the king's pleasure, but an imprisonment during the everlasting displeasure of the King of kings. Suppose, say some, that the whole world were turned to a mountain of sand, and that a little wren should come every thousand year and carry away from that heap one grain of sand, what an infinite number of years, not to be numbered by all finite beings, would be spent and expired, before this supposed mountain could be fetched away! Now if a man should lie in everlasting burnings so long a time, and then have an end of his woe, it would administer some ease, refreshment, and comfort to him; but when that immortal bird shall have carried away this supposed mountain, a thousand times over and over, alas, alas, sinful man shall be as far from the end of his anguish and torment as ever he was; he shall be no nearer a-coming out of hell, than he was the very first moment that he entered into hell. If the fire of hell were terminable, it might be tolerable; but being endless, it must needs be easeless, and remediless. We may well say of it, as

one doth, Oh, killing life! oh, immortal death!2

Suppose, say others, that a man were to endure the torments of hell as many years, and no more, as there be sands on the sea-shore, drops of water in the sea, stars in heaven, leaves on trees, piles of grass on the ground, hairs on his head, yea, upon the heads of all the sons of Adam that ever were or are, or shall be in the world, from the beginning of it to the end of it, yet he would comfort himself with this poor thought, Well, there will come a day when my misery and torment shall certainly have an end. But woe and alas, this word, 'never, never, never,' will fill the hearts of the damned with the greatest horror and terror, wrath and rage, amazement, and astonishment.

Suppose, say others, that the torments of hell were to end, after a little bird should have emptied the sea, and only carry out her bill-full once in a thousand years. Suppose, say others, that the whole world, from the lowest earth to the highest heavens, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should fetch away one grain, and so continue till the whole heap were spent. Suppose, say others, if one of the damned in hell, should weep after this manner, viz., that he should only let fall one tear in a thousand years, and these should be kept together, till such time as they should equal the drops of water in the sea; how many millions of ages would pass, before they could make up one river, much more a whole; and when that were done, should he weep again after the same manner, till he had filled a second, a third, and a fourth sea. If then there should be an end of their miseries, there would be some hope, some comfort, that they would end at last; but that they shall never, never, never end, this is that which sinks them under the most tormenting terrors and horrors.

You know that the extremity and eternity of hellish torments is set forth by the worm that never dies; and it is observable that Christ, at the close of his sermon, makes a threefold repetition of this worm: Mark 9:44, 'where their worm dieth not;' and again, Mark 9:46, 'where their worm dieth not;' and again, Mark 9:48, 'where their worm dieth not, and their fire goeth not out.' Certainly, those punishments are beyond all conception and expression, which our Lord Jesus doth so often inculcate within so small a space.

Now if there be such a diversity, extremity, and eternity of hellish pains and torments, which the great God will certainly inflict upon the bodies and souls of all impenitent persons, after the day of judgment; then there must certainly be some hell, some place of torment, wherein the wrath of God shall be executed upon wicked and ungodly men. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The greatest part of wicked and ungodly men escape unpunished in this world. The greatest number of men do spend their days in pride, ease, pleasures, and delights, in lust and luxury, in voluptuousness and wantonness: 'They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice to the sound of the organ;' 'They chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music;' 'They drink wine in bowls;' 'They lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;' and therefore there will be a time when these shall be punished in another world, Psa 73:3-13; Job 21:12; Amo 5:6.

God doth not punish all here, that he may make way for the displaying of his mercy and goodness, his patience and forbearance. Nor doth he forbear all here, that he may manifest his justice and righteousness, lest the world should turn atheist, and deny his providence, Rom 2:4-5; 2Pe 3:9-15.

He spares that he may punish, and he punisheth that he may spare. God smites some sinners in the very acting of their sins, as he did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and others, Num 16:1-50; not till they have filled up the measure of their sins, as you see in the men of the old world, Gen 6:5-7. But the greatest number of sinners God reserves for the great day of his wrath, Mat 7:13. There is a sure punishment, though not always a present punishment, for every sinner, Ecc 8:12-13. Those wicked persons which God suffers to go uncorrected here, he reserves to be punished for ever hereafter, 2Th 1:7-10. Sinners, know your doom,—yon must either smart for your sins in this world, or in the world to come. That ancient hit the mark that said, 'Many sins are punished in this world, that the providence of God might be more apparent; and many, yea, most, reserved to be punished in the world to come, that we might know that there is yet judgment behind.'

Sir James Hamilton, having been murdered by the Scottish king's means, he appeared to the king in a vision, with a naked sword drawn, and strikes off both his arms, with these words, 'Take this, before thou receivest a final payment for all thy impieties;' and within twenty-four hours two of the king's sons died. If the glutton in that historical parable being in hell, Luk 16:22-24, only in part, to wit, in soul, yet cried out that he 'was horribly tormented in that flame,' what think ye shall that torment be when body and soul come to be united for torture! It being just with God, that as they have been, like Simeon and Levi, brethren in iniquity, and have sinned together desperately and impenitently, so they should suffer together jointly, eternally, Gen 49:5. The Hebrew doctors have a pretty parable to this purpose: A man planted an orchard, and going from home, was careful to leave such watchmen as both might keep it from strangers and not deceive him themselves; therefore he appointed one blind, but strong of his limbs, and the other seeing, but a cripple. These two, in their master's absence, conspired together; and the blind took the lame on his shoulders, and so gathered the fruit. Their master returning, and finding out this subtlety, punished them both together. So shall it be with those two sinful yoke-fellows, the soul and the body, in the great day; they have sinned together, and they shall suffer at last together, 2Co 5:10-11. But now in this world the greatest number of transgressors do commonly escape all sorts of punishments; and therefore we may safely conclude that there is another world, wherein the righteous God will revenge upon the bodies and souls of sinners the high dishonours that have been done to his name by them. But,

[7.] Seventhly, In all things natural, and supernatural, there is an opposition and contrariety. There is good, and there is evil; there is light and darkness, joy and sorrow. Now as there are two several ways, so there are two distinct ends: Heaven, a place of admirable and inexpressible happiness, whither the good angels convoy the souls of the saints who have, by a holy conversation, glorified God, and adorned their profession, Luk 16:22; and hell, a place of horror and confusion, whither the evil angels do hurry the souls of wicked, incorrigible, and impenitent wretches, when they are once separated from their bodies. 'The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,' Luk 16:22-23; 'and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal,' Mat 25:46. In these words we have described the different estate of the wicked and the righteous after judgment, 'They shall go away into everlasting punishment, but these into life eternal.' After the sentence is past, the wicked go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. Everlasting punishment, the end thereof is not known, its duration is undetermined. Hell is a bottomless pit, and therefore shall never be fathomed. It is an unquenchable fire, and therefore the smoke of their torments doth ascend for

ever and ever, Rev 14:11. Hell is a prison from whence is no freedom, because there is no ransom to be paid. No price will be accepted for one in that estate. And as there is no end of the punishments of hell, into which the wicked must enter, so there is no end of the joys of heaven, into which the saints must enter. 'In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore,' Psa 16:11. Here is as much said as can be said, for quality, there is in heaven joy and pleasures; for quantity, a fulness, a torrent; for constancy, it is at God's right hand; and for perpetuity, it is for evermore. The joys of heaven are without measure, mixture, or end. Thus you see that there are two distinct ends, two distinct places, to which the wicked and the righteous go. And, indeed, if this were not so, then Nero would be as good a man as Paul, and Esau as happy a man as Jacob, and Cain as blessed a man as Abel. Then as believers say, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,' 1Co 15:19; because none out of hell ever suffered more, if so much, as the saints have done; so might the wicked say, 'If in this life only we were miserable, we were then of all men most happy.' But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, You know that all the princes of the world, for their greater grandeur and state, as they have their royal palaces for themselves, their nobles and attendants, so they have their jails, prisons, and dark dungeons for rogues and robbers, for malefactors and traitors. And shall not he who is the King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev 19:16; he who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, Rev 1:5; he who removeth kings and setteth up kings, Dan 2:21; shall not he have his royal palace, a glorious heaven, where he and all his noble attendants, angels, and saints shall live for ever? Shall not the great king have his royal and magnificent court in that upper world, as poor petty princes have theirs in this lower world? Surely he shall, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. And shall not the same great King have his hell, his prison, his dungeon, to secure and punish impenitent sinners in? Surely yes. And doubtless, the least glimpse of this hell, of this place of torment, would strike the proudest, and the stoutest sinners dead with horror. O sirs! they that have seen the flames, and heard the roarings of Ætna, the flashing of Vesuvius, the thundering and burning flakes evaporating from those marine rocks, have not yet seen, no, not so much as the very glimmering of hell. A painted fire is a better shadow Of these, than these can be of hell torments, and the miseries of the damned therein. Now these eight arguments are sufficient to demonstrate that there is a hell, a place of torment, to which the wicked shall be sent at last. Now certainly, Socinians, atheists, and all others that are men of corrupt minds, and that believe that there is no hell, but what they carry about with them in their own consciences; these are worse than those poor Indians that hold that there are thirteen hells,² according to the differing demerits of men's sins; yea, they are worse than devils, for they believe and tremble, Jas 2:19. φρῆσσοῦσι; this Greek word signifies to roar as the sea; from thence, saith Eustatius, it is translated to the hideous clashing of armour in the battle. The original word seemeth to imply an extreme fear, which causeth not only tremblings, but also a roaring and shrieking out. Their hearts ache and quake within them, they quiver and shake as men do when their teeth chatter in their heads in extreme cold weather, Mark 6:49, and Acts 16:29. The devils acknowledge four articles of our faith: Mat 8:29, 'And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time.' 1. They acknowledge God; 2. Christ; 3. The day of judgment; 4. That they shall be tormented then. They who scorn the day of judgment are worse than devils; and they who deny the deity of Christ are worse than devils, [Piscator.] The devils are, as it were, for a time respited and reprieved, in respect of full torment, and they are suffered as free prisoners to flutter in the air, and to course

about the earth till the great day of the Lord, which they tremble to think on; and which they that mock at, or make light of, are worse than devils. The devils knew that torments were prepared for them, and a time when these torments should be fully and fatally inflicted on them, and loath they were to suffer before that time. Ah, sirs, shall not men tremble to deny what the devils are forced to confess! Shall I now make a few short inferences from what has been said, and so conclude this head?

1. First, then, Oh labour to set up God as the great object of your fear. This grand lesson Christ commands us to take out, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him,' Mat 10:28. Christ doubles the precept, that it might stick with more life and power upon us, Luk 12:5. As one fire, so one fear, drives out another. Both the punishment of loss and the punishment of sense may be the objects of a filial fear, the fear of a son, of a saint, of a soul that is espoused and married to Christ. The fear of God, and the fear of sin, will drive out the fear of death, and the fear of hell, 2Co 11:2; Hos 2:19-20. O sirs, will you not fear that God that hath the keys of hell and death in his own hand, that can speak you into hell at pleasure, that can by a word of command bring you to dwell with a devouring fire, yea, to dwell with everlasting burnings? Rev 1:18.

Ah, friends, will you fear a burning fever, and will you not fear a burning in hell? Will you fear when the house you live in is on fire, and when the bed you lie on is on fire, though it may be quenched, and will you not fear that fire that is unquenchable? Isa 33:14. When men run through the streets and cry, Fire, fire, fire! how do your hearts quake and tremble in you; and will you not fear the fire of hell? will you not fear everlasting fire? Mat 3:12, Mat 25:41. Sir Francis Bacon, in his history of Henry the Seventh, relates how it was a byword of the Lord Cordes, who was a profane, popish, atheistical French lord, that he could be content to lie seven years in hell, so he might win Calais from the English; but had this popish lord lain but seven minutes under unsupportable torments, he would quickly have repented of his mad bargain. It was good counsel that one of the ancients gave, *Descendamus in infemum viventes, ne descendamus morientes*, Let us go into hell while we are alive, by a serious meditation and holy consideration, that we may not go into it when we be dead, by real miseries, [Bernard.] God can kill, and more than that, he can cast into hell. Here is both temporal and eternal destruction, both rods and scorpions. He can kill the body, and then damn both body and soul, and cast them into hell; and therefore it becomes every one to set up God as the great object of their fear. Yea, I say unto you, fear him; yea, I say unto you, fear him. This redoubling of the speech adds a greater enforcement to the admonition. It is like the last stroke of the hammer, that rivets and drives up all to the head. Thus David uses this ingemination, 'Thou, even thou, art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight; when thou art angry, thou canst look them to death, yea, to hell,' Psa 76:7. And it is worth the observing, that this ingemination and reinforcement here annexed is to the affirmative clause, not to the negative. Our Saviour saith not, 'Yea, I say unto you, fear not them;' but he places the reduplication upon the affirmative precept, 'I say unto you, fear him.' O sirs, temporal judgments are but the smoke of his anger, but in hell there are the flames of his anger. That fire burns fiercely, and there is no quenching of it. Excuse me, saith the father, thou breakest bonds and imprisonments, O emperor, but God's threatenings are much more terrible. He threatens hell torments and everlasting damnation; and certainly, where there is the greatest danger, there it is fit that there should be the greatest dread. But,

2. Secondly, Then flee from the wrath to come, Mat 3:7. O sirs, that you would seriously and frequently dwell upon those short hints!

[1.] Wrath to come is the greatest wrath, it is the greatest evil that can befall a soul. 'Who knows the power of thy wrath?' Psa 19:11. Wrath to come is such wrath as no man can either avoid or abide, and yet such is most men's stupidity, that they will not believe it till they feel it. As God is a great God, so his wrath is a great wrath. I may allude to that which Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, 'As the man is, so is his strength,' Jdg 8:21. So may I say, as the Lord is, so is his wrath. The wrath of an earthly king is compared to the roaring of a lion, Pro 19:12; Heb., of a young lion, which, being in his prime, roars most terribly. He roars with such a force that he amazes the creatures whom he hunts, so as that they have no power to fly from him. Now if the wrath of a king be so terrible, oh how dreadful must the wrath of the King of kings then be! The greater the evil is, the more cause we have to flee from it. Now wrath to come is the greatest evil, and therefore the more it concerns us to flee from it, Rev 17:14. But,

[2.] Secondly, Wrath to come is treasured-up wrath. Sinners are still 'a-treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath,' Rom 2:5. In treasuring there is, 1. Laying in; 2. Lying hid; 3. Bringing out again as there is occasion.

Whilst wicked men are following their own lusts, they think that they are still adding to their own happiness; but alas, they do but add wrath to wrath, they do but heap up judgment upon judgment, punishment upon punishment. Look, as men are daily adding to their treasure more and more, so impenitent sinners are daily increasing the treasures of wrath against their own souls. Now, who would not flee from treasures of wrath? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Wrath to come is pure wrath. It is 'judgment without mercy,' Jas 2:13. The cup of wrath which God will put into sinners' hands at last will be a cup of pure wrath, all wrath, nothing but wrath, Rev 14:10, 'The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the lamb.' Look, as there is nothing but the pure glory of God that can make a man perfectly and fully happy, so there is nothing but the pure wrath of God that can make a man fully and perfectly miserable. Reprobates shall not only sip of the top of God's cup, but they shall drink the dregs of his cup. They shall not have at last one drop of mercy, nor one crumb of comfort. They have filled up their lifetime with sin, and God will fill up their eternity with torments. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, As wrath to come is pure wrath, so wrath to come is everlasting wrath: Rev 14:11, 'And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.' 'Would to God,' saith one, [Chrysostom,] 'men would everywhere think and talk more of hell, and of that eternity of extremity, that they shall never else be able to avoid, or to abide.' See the scriptures in the margin. 'The damned,' saith Gregory, 'shall suffer an end without end, a death without death, a decay without decay; for their death ever liveth, their end ever beginneth, their decay never ceaseth, they are ever healed to be new wounded, and always repaired to be new devoured; they are ever dying and never dead, eternally broiling and never burnt up, ever roaring in the pangs of death, and never rid of those pangs; for they shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, crying without comfort, mischief without measure, and torment without ease, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is never quenched." ' The torments of the damned shall

continue as many worlds as there be stars in the firmament, as there be grains of sand on the sea-shore, and as there be drops of water found in the sea; and when these worlds are ended, the pains and torments of hell shall not cease, but begin afresh, and thus this wheel shall turn round without end.

Oh the folly and vanity, the madness and baseness of poor wretched sinners who expose themselves to everlasting torments for a few fleshly momentary pleasures! O sirs! who can stand before his indignation, and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? 'His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him,' Nah 1:6. Now how should these things work poor sinners to flee from wrath to come by fleeing to Christ, 'who alone is able to save them from wrath to come,' 1Th 1:10. Themistocles, understanding that King Admetus was highly displeased with him, he took up the king's young son in his arms, and so treated with the father, holding his darling in his bosom, and by that means pacified his wrath. Ah sinners, sinners, the King of kings is highly offended with you, and there is no way to appease his wrath, but by taking up Christ in your arms, and so present your suits to him. But,

3. Thirdly, If there be a hell, then don't let fly so fiercely against those faithful ministers who seriously and conscientiously do all they can to prevent your dropping into hell, 2Co 5:20, 2Co 12:15. Don't call them legal preachers who tell you that there is a hell, and that there is no torments to hellish torments, if either you consider their extremity or eternity. Be not so hot nor so angry with those ambassadors of Christ who are willing to spend and be spent that they may keep you from running headlong to hell. 'To think of hell,' saith one, 'preserves a man from falling into it;' and, saith the same author, *Utinam ubique de gehenna dissereretur*, I could wish men would discourse much and oft of hell. It was a saying of Gregory Nyssen, who lived about thirteen hundred years ago, 'He that does but hear of hell is, without any further labour or study, taken off from sinful pleasures.' But what minister can say so now? Surely men's hearts are grown worse since, for how do most men run headlong to hell, and take a pleasure to dance hoodwinked into everlasting burnings! Oh, had but the desperate sinners of this day who swear and curse, drink and drab, and drown themselves in fleshly pleasures, but one sight of this hell, how would it charm their mouths, appal their spirits, and strike fear and astonishment into their hearts!

I cannot think that the high transgressors of this day durst be so highly wicked as they are, did they but either see or foresee what they shall one day certainly feel, except there be sound and serious repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on God's. Bellarmine was of opinion that one glimpse of hell were enough to make a man, not only turn Christian and sober, but monk too; to live after the strictest rule that may be. And yet, he tells us of a certain advocate of the court of Rome, who being, at the point of death, stirred up by them that were about him to repent and call upon God for mercy, he, with a constant countenance, and without sign of any fear, turned his speech to God, and said, Lord, I have longed much to speak to thee, not for myself, but for my wife and children; for I am hasting to hell, I am now a-going to dwell with devils, neither is there anything that I would have thee to do for me; and this he spoke, saith Bellarmine, who was then present and heard it, *Animo tam tranquillo ac si de itinere ad villam loqueretur*, with as placate, serene and tranquil a mind, as if he had been speaking of going to the next town or village. Ah, who can read or write such a relation without horror and terror! But,

4. Fourthly, If there be a hell, then do not fret, do not envy the prosperity and flourishing estate and condition of wicked and ungodly men; for God has given it under his hand, that they shall be turned into hell: 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,' Psa 37:1-2, Psa 73:21; Pro 3:31; Psa 9:17. It was a wise saying of Marius to those that envy great men their honour, Let them, saith he, envy them their burdens. I have read a story of a Roman, who was by a court-martial condemned to die for breaking his rank to steal a bunch of grapes; and as he was going to execution, some of the soldiers envied him, that he had grapes, and they had none. Saith he, Do you envy me my grapes, I must pay dear for them! Ah sirs! do not envy wicked men's grapes, do not envy their riches, their honours, their greatness, their offices, their dignities; for they shall one day pay dear for their things. High seats to many are uneasy, and the downfall terrible: 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!' Isa 14:12. It is spoken of the Chaldean monarch, who, though high, yet had a sudden change befell him. It is not a matter of so great joy to have been high and honourable, as it is of grief, anguish, and vexation to be afterwards despicable and contemptible: 'Come down, and sit in the dust,' Isa 47:1. Babylon was the lady of kingdoms; but, saith God, 'sit in the dust; take the mill-stones, and grind,' Isa 47:2; 'The Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain (Heb., to pollute) the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth,' Isa 23:9; 'He shall bring down their pride together,' Isa 25:11; 'Woe to the crown of pride: the crown of pride shall be trodden under feet,' Isa 28:1, Isa 28:3. God will bring down the crown of pride to the dust, to ashes, yea, to hell; and, therefore, do not envy the crown of pride. Crœsus was so puffed up with his crown of pride, with his great riches and worldly glory, that he boasted himself to be the happiest man that lived; but Solon told him that no man was to be accounted happy before death. Crœsus little regarded what Solon had said unto him, until he came, by miserable experience, to find the uncertainty of his riches, and all worldly glory, which before he would not believe. For when he was taken by King Cyrus, and condemned to be burned, and saw the fire preparing for him, then he cried out, O Solon, Solon! Cyrus asking him the cause of the outcry, he answered, that now he remembered what Solon had told him in his prosperity—*nemo ante obitum felix*—that no man was to be accounted happy before death. Who can sum up those crowns of pride that in Scripture and history God has brought down to the dust, yea, to the dunghill! Have not some wished, when they have been breathing out their last, that they had never been kings, nor queens, nor lords, nor ladies? &c. Where is there one of ten thousand who is advanced, and thereby anything bettered? *Solus imperatorum Vespasianus in melius mutatus*. Few men believe what vexations lie under the pillows of princes. You look upon my crown and my purple robes, saith Artaxerxes; but did you know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up. Damocles highly extolled Dionysius his condition. Dionysius, to convince him of his mistake, provides a royal feast, invites him to it, commands his servants to attend him. No meat, no mirth, no music is wanting; but withal caused a sharp sword to be hung overhead by a horse hair, which made Damocles tremble, and to forbear both meat and mirth. Such, even such, saith Dionysius the Sicilian tyrant, is my life, which thou deemest so pleasant and happy. O sirs! there is a sword of wrath which hangs over every sinner's head, even when he is surrounded with all the gay and gallant things of this world.

Outward prosperity is commonly given in wrath, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Prosperity kills and damns more than adversity. The Germans have this proverb, That the pavement of hell is made of the glorious crests of gallants. It had been infinitely better for the great men of this world that they had never been so great, for their horrid abuse of God's

mercy and bounty will but increase their misery and damnation at last. That ancient hit it, [Augustine,] who said, Because they have tasted so liberally of God's kindness, and have employed it only against God's glory, their felicity shall be short, but their misery shall be endless; and therefore to see the wicked prosper and flourish in this world is matter rather of pity than envy, it is all the heaven they must have. These are as terrible texts as any in the whole Book of God: Mat 6:2, 'Verily I say unto you, they have their reward;' Luk 6:24, 'Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation;' Jas 5:1-3, 'Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.' Gregory, being advanced to places of great preferment, professed that there was no scripture that went so near his heart, and that struck such a trembling into his spirit, as that speech of Abraham to Dives, Luk 16:25, 'Son, remember thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.' They that have their heaven here, are in danger to miss it hereafter. It is not God's usual way, saith one, [Jerome,] to remove a deliciis ad delicias, from delights to delights—to bestow two heavens, one here and another hereafter; and doubtless hence it was that David made it his solemn prayer, 'Deliver me from the wicked, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure,' Psa 17:14. It is a very hard thing to have earth and heaven too. God did not turn man out of one paradise that he should here provide himself of another. Many men with the prodigal cry out, 'Give me the portion that belongs to me,' Luk 15:12—give me riches, and give me honour, and give me preferment, &c., and God gives them their desires, but it is with a vengeance; as the Israelites had quails to choke them, and afterwards a king to vex them, and a table to be a snare unto them, Psa 78:24-32. When the Israelites had eaten of their dainty dishes, justice sent in a sad reckoning which spoiled all. Ah friends, there is no reason why we should envy the prosperity of wicked men. Suppose, saith one, [Chrysostom,] that a man one night should have a pleasant dream that for the time might much delight him, and for the pleasure of such a dream should be tormented a thousand years together with exquisite torments, would any man desire to have such a dream upon such conditions? All the contentments of this life are not so much to eternity as a dream is to a thousand years. And, oh, how little is that man's condition to be envied, who for these short pleasures of sin must endure an eternity of torments! O sirs! do wicked men purchase their present pleasures at so dear a rate as eternal torments? and do we envy their enjoyment of them so short a time? Would any envy a man going to execution, because he saw him in prison nobly feasted and nobly attended and bravely courted? or because he saw him go up the ladder with a gold chain about his neck and a scarlet gown upon his back? or because he saw him walk to execution through pleasant fields or delightsome gardens? or because there went before him drums beating, colours flying, and trumpets sounding, &c.? Surely no. Oh, no more should we envy the grandeur of the men of the day, for every step they take is but a step to an eternal execution! The sinner is cursed, and all his blessings are cursed; and who in their wits would envy a man under a curse? Oh, how much more worthy of our pity than envy is that man's condition who hath all his happiness confined to the narrow compass of this life, but his misery extended to the uttermost bounds of an everlasting duration! Mal 2:2. But,

5. Fifthly, If there be a hell, then, Christians, spend your days in admiring and in being greatly affected with the transcendent love of Christ, in undergoing hellish punishments in our steads. Oh pray, pray hard that you 'may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge,' Eph 3:18-19,—of that love of Christ that put him upon these corporeal and spiritual sufferings which were so exceeding great, acute, extreme, universal and continual, and all to save us from wrath to come, 1Th 1:10. Christ's outward and inward miseries, sorrows, and sufferings are not to be paralleled, and therefore Christians have the more cause to lose themselves in the contemplation of his matchless love. Oh, bless Christ! oh, kiss Christ! oh, embrace Christ! oh, welcome Christ! oh, cleave to Christ! oh, follow Christ! oh, walk with Christ! oh, long for Christ! who for your sakes hath undergone insupportable wrath and most hellish torments, as I have evidenced at large before, and therefore a touch here may suffice. Oh, look up to dear Jesus, and say, O blessed Jesus, thou wast accursed that I might be blessed, Gal 3:13; thou wast condemned that I might be justified, Isa 53:1-12; thou didst for a time undergo the very torments of hell, that I might for ever enjoy the pleasures of heaven, Rom 8:30, Rom 8:34; Psa 16:11; and therefore I cannot but dearly love thee, and highly esteem thee, and greatly honour thee, and earnestly long after thee; and this is all I shall say by way of inference.

But, for a close, you will say, ubi sit? where is hell? where is this place of torment? where is that very place that is so frequently called hell in the Scripture? That there is a hell, you have sufficiently proved; but, pray, where is it? where is it? Now, to this I answer,

[1.] First, That it becomes all sober, serious Christians to rest satisfied and contented with those scriptural arguments that do undeniably prove that there is a hell, a place appointed where the wicked, the damned, shall be tormented for ever and ever, though they do not know, nor for the present cannot understand, where this hell is. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, Curiosity is one of the most dangerous engines that the devil uses to undo souls withal. When Satan observes that men do in good earnest set themselves to the obtaining of knowledge, then he strives to turn them to vain inquiries and curious speculations; that so, if they will be knowing, he may keep them busied about unprofitable curiosities. The way to make us mere fools is to affect to know more than God would have us. Adam's tree of knowledge made him and his posterity fools, Gen 3:5-6. Curiosity was the bait whereby the devil caught our first parents, and undid us all. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curiosity is spiritual drunkenness. So that, look, as the drunkard, be the cup never so deep, he is not satisfied unless he see the bottom of it; so the curious searcher into the depths of God, he is unsatisfied till he comes to the bottom of them, and by this means they come to be mere fools, as the apostle saith, Rom 1:22. Adam had a mind to know as much of God as God himself; and by this means he came to know nothing. Curiosity is that green-sickness of the soul, whereby it longs for novelties, and loathes sound and wholesome truths; it is the epidemical distemper of this age. Ah! how many are there who spend their precious time in nice and curious questions! As, what did Christ dispute of among the doctors? Where did Paradise stand? In what part of the world is local hell? What fruit was it that Adam ate, and ruined us all? What became of Moses his body? How many orders and degrees of elect angels are there? &c. Oh that we could learn contentedly to be ignorant where God would not have us knowing, and let us not account it any disparagement to acknowledge some depths in God's counsels, purposes, decrees, and judgments, which our shallow reason cannot fathom, Rom 11:33. It is sad when men will be wise above what is written, and love to pry into God's secrets, and scan the mysteries of religion by carnal reason, Rom 12:3, and 1Co 4:6. God often plagues such pride and curiosity by leaving that sort of men to strange and fearful falls. When a

curious inquisitor asked Austin what God did before he created the world, Austin told him he was making hell for such busy questionists, for such curious inquirers into God's secrets. Such handsome jerks are the best answers to men of curious minds. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, It concerns us but little to know whether hell be in the air, or in the concave of the earth, or of what longitude, latitude, or profundity it is. Let hell be where it hath pleased God in his secret counsel to place it, to men unknown, whether in the north or in the south, under the frozen zone, or under the burning zone, or in a pit or a gulf. Our great care should be to avoid it, to escape it, and not to be curiously inquisitive about that place, which the Lord in his infinite wisdom hath not thought fit clearly to reveal or make known to the sons of men. In hell there's nothing heard but yells and cries; In hell the fire never slacks, nor worm never dies. But where is this hell placed? 'My muse, stop there:

Lord, shew me what it is, but never where! To worm and fire, to torments there, No term he gave, they cannot wear.

Look, as there are many that please themselves with discourses of the degrees of glory, whilst others make sure their interest in glory; so many please themselves with discourses of the degrees of the torments of hell, whilst others make sure their escaping those torments; and look, as many take pleasure to be discoursing about the place where hell is, so some take pleasure to make sure their escaping of that place; and certainly they are the best and wisest of men who spend most thoughts, and time, and pains how to keep out of it, than to exercise themselves with disputes about it. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, That it has been the common opinion of the fathers, that hell is in the bowels of the earth; yea, Christ and the blessed Scriptures, which are the highest authority, do strongly seem to favour this opinion, by speaking of a descent unto hell, in opposition unto heaven; and, therefore, we may as well doubt whether heaven be above us, as doubt of hell being beneath us. Among other scriptures ponder upon these: Psa 140:10, 'Let them be cast into the deep pits, that they rise not up again. Bring them down into the pit of destruction;' Pro 9:18, 'Her guests are in the depths of hell;' Pro 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' Sheol is sometimes taken for a pit, sometimes for the grave, and sometimes, and that significantly too, for hell, all downwards. One saith that Sheol generally signifies all places under the earth; whence some conclude that hell is in the heart of the earth, or under the earth. Without doubt it is below, because it is everywhere opposed to heaven, which is above. It is therefore called Abyssus, a deep pit, a vast gulf; such a pit as, by reason of the depth thereof, may be said to have no bottom. The devils entreated Christ that he would not send them to this place, Luk 8:31, in Abyssum, which is, saith one, Immensæ profunditatis vorago, quasi absque fundo: A gulf of immeasurable depth, &c. The apostle, 2Pe 2:4, speaking of the angels that sinned, saith, 'God cast them down into hell.' So Beza, in his Annotations, telleth us the Greeks called that place which was ordained for the prison and torment of the damned. And reason itself doth teach us that it must needs be opposite and contrary to that place in which the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb 12:23, do reside, which, on all hands, is granted to be above; and hell therefore must needs be below, in the centre of the earth, say some, which is from the superficies three thousand five hundred miles, as some judge. Hesiod saith, hell is as far under the earth as heaven is above it. Some have been of opinion that the pit spoken of, into which Korah, Dathan, and Abiram went

down alive, when the earth clave asunder and swallowed them up, was the pit of hell, into which both their souls and bodies were immediately conveyed, Num 16:33. As we know little in respect of the height of heaven, so we know as little in respect of the lowness of hell. Some of the upper part of the earth is to us yet terra incognita, an unknown land; but all of the lowest parts of hell is to us an unknown land. Many thousands have travelled thither, but none have returned thence, to make reports or write books of their travels. That piece of geography is very imperfect. Heaven and hell are the greatest opposites, or remotest extremes: 'Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell!' Mat 11:23. Heaven and hell are at farthest natural distance, and are therefore the everlasting receptacles of those who are at the farthest moral distance—believers and unbelievers, saints and impenitents. And it is observable, that as the height of heaven, so the depth of hell, is ascribed to wisdom, to shew the unsearchableness of it. 'Oh the depth,' as well as 'Oh the height,' 'of the wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!' Rom 11:33. Certainly God's depths, and Satan's depths, and hell's depths, lie far out of our view, and are hard to be found out, 1Co 2:10, and Rev 2:24. Though I ought religiously to reverence the wonderful wisdom of God, and to wonder at his unsearchable judgments, yet I ought not curiously and profanely to search beyond the compass of that which God hath revealed to us in his word. The Romans had a certain lake, the depth whereof they knew not; this lake they dedicated to victory. Doubtless hell is such a lake, the depth whereof no man knows; it is such a bottomless pit that no mortal can sound. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, Some of the learned are of opinion, that hell is without this visible world, which will pass away at the last day, 2Pe 3:10-13, and removed at the greatest distance from the sedes beatorum, the place where the righteous shall for ever inhabit: Mat 8:12, 'But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.' Mat 22:30, 'Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.' Mat 25:30, 'And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.' Into a darkness beyond a darkness, into a dungeon beyond and beneath the prison. The darkness of hell is compared to the darkness of those prisons, which were oftentimes out of the city,² 2Pe 2:4; Jude 1:6; Acts 12:10. By outer darkness, the Holy Ghost would signify to us that the wicked should be in a state most remote from all heavenly happiness and blessedness; and that they should be expelled out of the blessed presence of God, who is mentium lumen. It is usual among the Greeks by a comparative to set forth the superlative degree. By outer darkness we are to understand the greatest darkness that is, as in a place most remote from all light. They shall be cast into outer darkness, that is, they shall be cast into the corporal and palpable darkness of the infernal prison; immediately after death sinners' souls shall be cast into the infernal prison, and in the day of judgment both, their souls and their bodies shall be cast into outer darkness. Darkness is no other thing than a privation of light.

Now light is twofold, viz.—1. Spiritual, as wisdom, grace, truth. Now the privation of this light is internal darkness, and ignorance in the spirit and inward Man 1:2. There is a sensible and corporal light, whose privation is outer darkness; and this is the darkness spoken of in the three scriptures last cited. For although there be fire in hell, yet it is a dark and smoky fire, and not clear, except only so as the damned may see one another, for the greater increase of their misery, as some write. Now I shall leave the ingenuous reader to conclude as he pleases concerning the place where hell is, desiring and hoping that he will make it the greatest business of his life to escape hell, and to get to heaven, &c.

6. Sixthly, If Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, then let me infer that certainly the papists are greatly out, they are greatly mistaken, and do greatly err, who boldly and confidently assert that Christ's soul in substance went really and locally into hell. Bellarmine takes a great deal of pains to make good this assertion, but this great champion of the Romish church may easily be confuted. First, Because that limbus patrum, and Christ's fetching the fathers from the skirts of hell, about which he makes so great a noise, is a mere fable, and not bottomed upon any solid grounds of Scripture. Secondly, Because upon Christ's dying, and satisfying for our sins, his soul went that very day into paradise—as Adam sinning was that very day cast out of paradise—and his soul could not be in two places at once. Thirdly, Because this descent of Christ's soul into hell was altogether needless, and to no end. What need was there of it, or to what end did he descend? Not to suffer in hell, for that was finished on the cross; not to redeem or rescue the fathers out of hell, for the elect were never there, and redemption from hell was wrought by Christ's death, as the Scriptures do clearly evidence; not to triumph there over the devils, &c., for Christ triumphed over them when he was on the cross.³ Christ, in the day of his solemn inauguration into his heavenly kingdom, triumphed over sin, death, devils, and hell. When Christ was on the cross, he made the devils a public spectacle of scorn and derision; as Tamerlane did Bajazet the great Turk, whom he shut up in an iron cage made like a grate, in such sort as that he might on every side be seen, and so carried him up and down all Asia, to be scorned and derided by his own people. By these few hints you may see the vanity and folly of the papists, who tell you that Christ's soul and substance went really and locally into hell. I might make other inferences, but let these suffice at this time.

7. Seventhly, As Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, so Jesus Christ was really, certainly made a curse for us. Jesus Christ did in his soul and body bear that curse of the law, which by reason of transgression was due to us. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,' Gal 3:13. He saith not Christ was cursed, but a curse, which is more: it shows that the curse of all did lie upon him. The death on the tree was accursed above all kinds of deaths, as the serpent was accursed above all the beasts of the field, Gen 3:14. This scripture refers to Deu 21:23, 'His body shall not remain all night upon the tree; but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, for he that is hanged is accursed of God.' The holy and wise God appointed this kind of punishment, as being the most cruel and reproachful, for a type of the punishment which his Son must suffer to deliver us from the curse. Hanging on a tree was accounted the most shameful, the most dishonourable, the most odious and infamous, and accursed, of all kinds of death, both by the Israelites and other nations, because the very manner of the death did intimate that such men as were thus executed were such execrable, base, vile, and accursed wretches, that they did defile the earth with treading on it, and would pollute the earth if they should die upon it, and therefore were hanged up in the air, as persons not fit to converse amongst men, or touch the surface of the ground any more. But what should be the reason why the ceremonial law affixed the curse to this death rather than any other death? I answer, first, because this was reckoned the most shameful and dishonourable of all deaths, and was usually therefore the punishment of those that had by some notorious wickedness provoked God to pour out his wrath upon the whole land, and so were hanged up to appease his wrath; as you may see in the hanging of those princes that were guilty of committing whoredom with the daughters of Moab, Num 25:4; and in the hanging of Saul's seven sons in the days of David, when

there was a famine in the land because of Saul's perfidious oppressing of the Gibeonites, 2Sa 21:6-9; and in Joshua's hanging of the five kings of the Amorites, Jos 10:26. But, secondly and mainly, it was with respect to the death Christ was to die. God would have his Son, the Lord Jesus, to suffer this kind of death, that hence it might be the more evident that in his death he bare the curse due to our sins, according to that of the apostle, Gal 3:13. Christ was certainly made that curse which he redeemed us from, otherwise the apostle does not reason either soundly or fairly, when he tells us we are redeemed from the curse because Christ was made a curse for us; he remitteth that curse to us which he received in himself. That father hit the mark who saith, *Christus supplicium nostrum sine reatu suscepit, ut solveret reatum, et finiret supplicium*, Christ hath taken our punishment without guilt, to loose the guilt and end the punishment. We were subject to the curse, because we had transgressed the law; Christ was not subject, because he had fulfilled it. *Eam ergo execrationem suscepit, cui obnoxius non erat, quum suspensus fuit in ligno, ut execrationem solveret, quæ adversus nos erat*, He therefore took that curse, to the which he was not subject, when he hanged upon the tree, to loose the curse which was against us. Such a curse or execration was Christ made for us, as was that from which he redeemed us; and that curse from which he redeemed us was no other than the curse of the law, and that the curse of the law included all the punishment which sinners were to bear or suffer for transgression of the law, of which his hanging on the cross was a sign and symbol; and this curse was Christ made for us, that is, he did bear and suffer it to redeem us from it. Christ was verily made a curse for us, and did bear both in his body and soul that curse, which by reason of the transgression of the law was due to us; and therefore I may well conclude this head with that saying of Jerome, *Injuria Domini, nostra gloria*, The Lord's injury is our glory. The more we ascribe to Christ's suffering, the less remaineth of ours; the more painfully that he suffered, the more fully are we redeemed; the greater his sorrow was, the greater our solace; his dissolution is our consolation, his cross our comfort; his annoy our endless joy; his distress in soul our release, his calamity our comfort; his misery our mercy, his adversity our felicity, his hell our heaven. Christ is not only accursed, but a curse; and this expression is used both for more significancy and usefulness, to note out the truth and realness of the thing, and also to shew the order and way he took for bringing us back unto that blessedness which we had lost. The law was our righteousness in our innocent condition, and so it was our blessedness; but the first Adam, falling away from God by his first transgression, plunged himself into all unrighteousness, and so in wrapped himself in the curse, Jas 1:24. Now Christ the second Adam, that he may restore the lost man into an estate of blessedness, he becomes that for them which the law is unto them, namely, a curse; beginning where the law ends, and so going backward to satisfy the demands of the law to the uttermost, he becomes first a curse for them and then their righteousness, and so their blessedness, Rom 12:14. Now Christ's becoming a curse for us stands in this, that whereas we are all accursed by the sentence of the law because of sin, he now comes in our room, and stands under the stroke of that curse which of right belongs to us; so that it lies not now any longer on the backs of poor sinners, but on him for them and in their stead; therefore he is called a surety, Heb 7:22. The surety stands in the room of a debtor, malefactor, or him that is any way obnoxious to the law. Such is Adam and all his posterity. We are by the doom of the law evil-doers, transgressors, and upon that score we stand indebted to the justice of God, and lie under the stroke of his wrath. Now the Lord Jesus, seeing us in this condition, he steps in and stands between us and the blow; yea, he takes this wrath and curse off from us unto himself. He stands not only or merely after the manner of a surety among men, in the

case of debt; for here the surety indeed enters bond with the principal for the payment of the debt; but yet he expects that the debtor should not put him to it, but that he should discharge the debt himself: he only stands as a good security. No, Christ Jesus doth not expect that we should pay the debt ourselves, but he takes it wholly to himself. As a surety for a murderer or traitor, or some other notorious malefactor, that hath broken prison and is run away, he lies by it body for body, state for state, and undergoes whatsoever the malefactor is chargeable withal for satisfying the law; even so, the Lord Jesus Christ stands surety for us runaway malefactors, making himself liable to all that curse which belongs to us, that he might both answer the law fully and bring us back again to God. As the first Adam stood in the room of all mankind fallen; so Christ the second Adam stands in the room of all mankind which is to be restored; he sustains the person of all those which do spiritually descend from him, and unto whom he bears the relation of a head, Eph 1:22-23. Christ did actually undergo and suffer the wrath of God, and the fearful effects thereof, in the punishments threatened in the law. As he became a debtor, and was so accounted, even so he became payment thereof; he was made a sacrifice for sin, and bare to the full all that ever divine justice did or could require, even the uttermost extent of the curse of the law of God. He must thus undergo the curse, because he had taken upon him our sin. The justice of the most high God, revealed in the law, looks upon the Lord Jesus as a sinner, because he hath undertaken for us, and seizeth upon him accordingly, pouring down on his head the whole curse, and all those dreadful punishments which are threatened in it against sin; for the curse followeth sin as the shadow the body, whether it be sin inherent or sin imputed; even as the blessing follows righteousness, whether it be righteousness inherent or righteousness imputed. But,

8. Eighthly, He that did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, was God man. Christ participates of both natures, being Θεῶν ἄνθρωπος, God and man, God-man. Such a mediator sinners needed. No mediator but such a one who hath interest in both parties, could serve their turns or save their souls, and such a one is the Lord Jesus; he hath an interest in both parties, and he has an interest in both natures, the Godhead and the manhood. The blessed Scriptures are so express and clear in these points, that they must shut their eyes with a witness against the light, that cannot see Christ to be God-man, to be God and man. I shall first speak something of Christ, as he is God. Now here are fathomless depths and bottomless bottoms, if I may so speak; here are stupendous and amazing mysteries, astonishing and confounding excellencies, such as the holy angels themselves desire to pry into. God is φῶς οὐκ ἔνι πρῶτον, dwelling in inaccessible light: 1Ti 6:16. Here are such beauties and perfections that had I, as the poet speaks, a hundred tongues, a hundred mouths, and a voice of steel, yet I could not sufficiently describe them. Nevertheless give me leave to say something concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, who is one eternal God with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost. I might produce a cloud of witnesses in the case, but it is enough that we have the authority of the sacred Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, confirming of it; and therefore I shall lay down some proofs or demonstrations of the eternal godhead of Christ, which I shall draw out of the blessed Scripture. This is a point of high concernment, that Christ is God; so high as whosoever buildeth not upon this buildeth upon the sands. This is the rock of our salvation, 'The Word was God,' John 1:1. Concerning this important point, consider—

1. First, That the godhead of Christ is clearly asserted, and manifested both in the Old and New Testament. Take a taste of some of those many scriptures which maybe cited: Isa 43:10-12, 'That

ye may know and believe, and understand that I am he, I, even I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour:' and Isa 41:21-25, 'There is no God else besides me: a just God and Saviour, there is none besides me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. To me every knee shall bow.... In Jehovah have I righteousness.... In Jehovah shall the seed of Israel be justified.' Compare this with Rom 14:10-11. And the Socinians may as safely conclude, that there is no other God but Jesus Christ, as they may conclude that there is no God but God the Father, from the 17th of John. But they and we ought to conclude from, these scriptures, that Jesus Christ is not a different God from the Father, but is one and the same God with him. So he is called 'The mighty God, the everlasting Father,' Isa 9:6. Take a few clear places out of the New Testament, as that in Rom 4:5, 'Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for evermore.' Christ is here himself called God blessed for ever. So Tit 2:13, 'Looking for that hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Who is it that shall appear at the last day in the clouds, but Christ? who is called the great God and our Saviour? 'God blessed for ever,' saith Paul to the, Romans; 'The great God,' saith Paul to Titus: 1Jn 5:20, 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life:' Php 2:6, 'He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God:' and Col 2:9, 'In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily:' John 20:28, 'My Lord, and my God:' 1Ti 3:16, 'God manifested in the flesh:' 'To which of the saints or angels did God say at any time, Thou art my Son?' Heb 1:1. 'The heir of all things, the illustrious brightness of my glory, and lively character of my person.' 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever I and ever, and all the angels of God shall worship thee.' Certainly he who is God's own proper, natural, consubstantial, co-essential, only-begotten Son, he is God; wherever this sonship is, there is the deity or the divine essence. Now Christ is thus God's Son, therefore he is God. What the Father is as to his nature, that the Son must also be; now the first person, the Father of Christ, is God; whereupon he too who is the Son must be God also. A son always participates of his father's essence, there is betwixt them evermore an identity and oneness of nature. If therefore Christ be God's Son, as is most evident throughout the Scripture he is, then he must needs have that very nature and essence which God the Father hath, insomuch that if the second person be not really a God, the first person is but equivocally a Father. These scriptures out of the Old and New Testament are so evident and pregnant to prove the godhead of Christ, that they need no illustration; yea, they speak so fully for the divinity of Christ, that all the Arians and Socinians in the world do but in vain go about to elude them. But,

2. Secondly, Let us ponder seriously upon these scriptures: John 3:13, 'And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven;' John 3:31, 'He that cometh from above is above all: he that cometh from heaven is above all;' John 8:23, 'Ye are from beneath, I am from above;' John 16:28, 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again I leave the world, and go to the Father.' Now from these blessed scriptures we may thus argue: he who was in heaven before he was on the earth, and who was also in heaven whilst he was on the earth, is certainly the eternal God; but all this doth Jesus Christ strongly assert concerning himself, as is evident in the scriptures last cited; therefore he is the eternal God, blessed for ever. But,

3. Thirdly, Christ's eternal deity, co-equality, and consubstantiality with the Father, may be demonstrated from his divine names and titles. As, (1.) First, Jehovah is one of the incommunicable names of God, which signifies his eternal essence. The Jews observe that in God's name Jehovah, the Trinity is implied. Je signifies the present tense, ho the preterperfect tense, vah the future. The Jews also observe that in his name Jehovah all the Hebrew letters are literæ quiescentes, that denote rest, implying that in God and from God is all our rest. Every gracious soul is like Noah's dove, he can find no rest nor satisfaction but in God. God alone is the godly man's ark of rest and safety. Jehovah is the incommunicable name of God, and is never attributed to any but God: Psa 83:18, 'Thou whose name alone is Jehovah.' Jehovah is a name so full of divine mysteries, that the Jews hold it unlawful to pronounce it. Jehovah signifies three things:—

[1.] That God is an eternal, independent being of himself.

[2.] That he gives being to all creatures, Acts 17:28.

[3.] That he doth, and will give, being to his promises. God tells Moses, Exo 6:3, that he 'appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of El Shaddai, God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.' The name Jehovah was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but not mysterium nominis, the mystery of the name. This was revealed to Moses from God, and from Moses to the people. It is meant of the performances of his great promises made to Abraham. God did promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed for an inheritance, which promise was not performed to him, but to his seed after him; so that this is the meaning, God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, El Shaddai, God Almighty, in protecting, delivering, and rewarding of them, but by his name Jehovah he was not known to them. God did not perform his promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but unto their seed and posterity after them. This name Jehovah is the proper and peculiar name of the one, only true God, a name as far significant of his nature and being as possibly we are enabled to understand; so that this is taken for granted on all hands, that he whose name is Jehovah is the only true God, Whenever that name is used properly, without a trope or figure, it is used of God only.

Now this glorious name Jehovah, that is so full of mysteries, is frequently ascribed to Christ: Isa 6:1, he is called Jehovah, for there Isaiah is said to see 'Jehovah sitting upon a throne,' &c. And, John 12:41, this is expressly by the holy evangelist applied to Christ, of whom he saith, that 'Isaiah saw his glory, and spake of him.' Exo 17:1, the people are said to 'tempt Jehovah;' and the apostle saith, 1Co 10:9; 'Let us not tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.' It is said of Jehovah, 'Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure,' &c., Psa 102:25-26; and the apostle clearly testifies, Heb 1:10, that these words are spoken of Christ, So Jehovah rained fire and brimstone from Jehovah out of heaven, Gen 19:24; that is, Jehovah, the Son of God, that stayed with Abraham, Gen 18:1-33, rained fire and brimstone from Jehovah the Father; and Christ is called Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness; and in that Zec 13:7, Christ is called the Father's fellow. The Lord Christ is that Jehovah, to whom every knee must bow, as appears by comparing Isa 45:21-25 with Rom 14:9-12 and Php 2:6, Php 2:9-11. I might further insist upon this argument, and shew that the title of Lord, so often given to Christ in the New Testament, doth answer to the title of Jehovah in the Old Testament. And, as some learned men conceive, the

apostles did purposely use the title of Lord, that they might not offend the Jews with frequent pronouncing of the word Jehovah: 'Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God.' Deu 6:13 and Deu 10:20 is rendered by the apostle, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God;' and so Deu 6:5, 'Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God,' is rendered, Mat 22:37, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' Thus you see that in several precious scriptures Jesus Christ is called Jehovah; and therefore we may very safely and confidently conclude that Jesus Christ is very God, God blessed for ever. But,

(2.) The second name or title which denotes the essence of God is Ehieh, 'I am that I am,' or, I will be what I will be, Exo 3:14. It hath the same root with Jehovah, and signifies that God is an eternal, unchangeable being. Some make this name to be God's extraordinary name. Damascene saith this name containeth all things in it, like a vast and infinite ocean without bounds. This glorious name of God, I am that I am, implies these six things. [1.] God's incomprehensibleness: as we use to say of anything we would not have others pry into, it is what it is, so God saith here to Moses, I am what I am. [2.] It implies God's immensity, that his being is without any limits. Angels and men have their beings, but then they are bounded and limited within such a compass; but God is an immense being that cannot be included within any bounds. [3.] It implies that God is of himself, and hath not a being dependent upon any other. 'I am,' that is, by and from and of myself. [4.] It implies God's eternal and unchangeable being in himself. It implies God's everlastingness. 'I am before anything was, and shall for ever be.' There never was nor shall be time wherein God could not say of himself, 'I am.' [5.] It implies that there is no succession of time with God. And, [6.] It implies that he is a God that gives being to all things. In short, the reason why God nameth himself, 'I am that I am,' or will be that I will be, is because he is the Being of beings, subsisting by himself; as if he should say, I am my being, I am my essence; my existence differeth not from my essence, because I am that I am, and as I am, so will I be to all eternity, 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' 'There is no shadow of change, no variableness at all in me.'

Now this glorious name is given to Jesus Christ: Rev 1:8, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.' This kind of speaking is taken from the Greek alphabet, in which language John wrote this book. A, called Alpha by them, being their first letter, and Ω, which they call Omega, the last. The sense is, I was before all creatures, and shall abide for ever, though all creatures should perish; or I am he from whom all creatures had their beginning, and to whom they are referred, as their uttermost end. Christ, in calling of himself Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and that absolutely, doth therein assume unto himself absolute perfection, power, dominion, eternity, and divinity, which is, and which was, and which is to come. Christ assumeth all those epithets here to himself by which John, Rev 1:4, described God; and what wonder is it if Christ, who is God, doth take to himself whatever is due to God? The Almighty: this is another epithet proper to God, which Christ also taketh to himself, shewing that he is the true, eternal, and omnipotent God, in all things equal and co-essential with the Father and the Holy Ghost. This being the seventh argument which John makes use of to prove the deity of Christ, is three times repeated. He is the first and the last, which is, was, and is to come, and the Almighty, and therefore he is. without a peradventure, God eternal; for so Jehovah saith of himself, 'I the Lord, the first and the last, I am he; I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God; I am God Almighty. But Christ doth challenge, as due to himself, all these divine attributes; therefore he is Jehovah, that one, eternal, and omnipotent God with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Oh, the stateliness and majesty of our Lord

Jesus Christ! What an excellent and stately person is he, there being not a property attributed to God but is agreeable to Christ! Every word in this Rev 1:8, is a proper attribute of God. He is infinite in power, sovereign in dominion, and not bounded as creatures are. And that this is clearly spoken of Christ is most evident, not only from the scope, John being to set out Christ, from whom he had this revelation, but also from the 11th and 17th verses following, where he gives him the same titles over again, or rather, if you please, Christ, speaking of himself, taketh and repeateth the same titles. Heb 13:8, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' 'Yesterday,' that is, the time past, before his coming in the flesh; 'to-day,' while in the flesh; 'and for ever,' that is, after. The same afore time, in time, and after time. 'Jesus Christ the same,' that is, unchangeable in his essence, promises, and doctrine. Jesus Christ was always the same, and is still the same, and will abide for ever the same, as being one selfsame God, and one selfsame Mediator, as well in the Old as in the New Testament. John 8:58, 'Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.' According to my divine nature, which is from everlasting, before Abraham was, I am. I who, according to my humanity, am not above fifty years old, according to my divine nature am eternal, and so before Abraham and all the creatures, Mic 5:1-2. I have a being from all eternity, and so before Abraham was born; and therefore, as young as you take me to be in respect of my age here, I may well have seen and known Abraham, though he died above two thousand years since. But,

(3.) The third name or title which denotes the essence of God is Elohim, which signifies the persons in the essence. It is a name of the plural number, expressing the trinity of persons in the unity of essence; and, therefore, it is observed by the learned that the Holy Ghost beginneth the story of the creation with this plural name of God, joined with a verb of the singular number, as Elohim Bara, Dii creavit, the mighty Gods, or all the three persons in the godhead, created, Gen 1:1-2. So Gen 3:22, 'And Jehovah Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.' It is a holy irrision of man's vain affectation of the deity. God upbraids our first parents for their vain affectation of being like unto him in that ironical expression, 'Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil;' meaning, that by his sin he was become most unlike him. This name Elohim, by which God expresseth his nature, denotes the power and strength of God; to shew us that God is strong and powerful, and that he can do great things for his people, and bring great desolations and destructions upon his and his people's enemies. O sirs, God is too strong for his strongest enemies, and too powerful for all the powers of hell! Though Jacob, a worm in his own eyes, and in his enemies' eyes, yet Jacob need never fear; for Elohim, the strong and powerful God, will stand by him, and help him, Isa 41:10, Isa 41:13-14.

Now this name is also attributed unto Christ: Psalms 45:6, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.' 'Thy throne, O God,' Hebrew ■■■■■ gods—'Thy throne, O Gods,' Elohim. It signifies the trinity of persons in the unity of essence, as I have before noted. The prophet directs his speech, not to Solomon but to Christ, as is most evident by the clear and unquestionable testimony of the Holy Ghost: Heb 1:8, 'But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.' Christ is called God, not by an excellency only as the angels are, nor by office and title only as magistrates are called gods, nor catachrestically and ironically as the heathen gods are called, nor a diminutive God, inferior to the Father, as Arius held, but God by nature every way, co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Hold fast all truth, but, above all, hold

fast this glorious truth, that Jesus Christ is God blessed for ever.

(4.) The fourth name or title which denotes the essence of God is El Gibbor, the strong and mighty God. God is not only strong in his own essence, but he is also strong in the defence of his people, and it is he that giveth all strength and power to all other creatures, 2Ch 16:9. There are no men, no powers, that are a match for the strong God.

Now this title is also attributed to Christ: Isa 9:6, 'El Gibber, the strong God, the mighty God.' The word ■■, signifying God, doth also signify strong. He is so strong that he is almighty, he is one to whom nothing is impossible. Christ's name is God, for he is the same essence with God the Father. This title, 'the mighty God,' fitteth well to Christ, who hath all the names of the deity given to him in Scripture; and who, by the strength and power of his godhead, did satisfy the justice of God, and pacify the wrath of God, and make peace, and purchase pardon and eternal life for all his elect.

(5.) The fifth name or title which denotes the essence of God is El Shaddai, God omnipotent or all-sufficient, Gen 17:1. He wanteth nothing, but is infinitely blessed with the infinite perfection of his glorious being. By this name God makes himself known to be self-sufficient, all-sufficient, absolutely perfect. Certainly that man can want nothing who hath an all-sufficient God for his God. He that loseth his all for God, shall find all in an all-sufficient God, Mat 19:29. Esau had much, but Jacob had all, because he had the God of all, Gen 33:9-11. Habet omnia, qui habet habentem omnia. What are riches, honours, pleasures, profits, lands, friends, yea, millions of worlds, to one Shaddai, God Almighty, God All-sufficient? [Augustine.] This glorious name Shaddai, was a noble bottom for Abraham to act his faith upon, though in things above nature or against it, &c. He that is El Shaddai is perfectly able to defend his servants from all evil, and to bless them with all spiritual and temporal blessings, and to perform all his promises which concern both this life and that which is to come.

Now this name, this title Shaddai, is attributed to Christ, as you may clearly see by comparing Gen 35:6, Gen 35:9-11, and Gen 32:24-30, with Hos 12:3-5. That angel that appeared to Jacob was Christ, the angel of the covenant. Mark, you shall never find either God the Father or the Holy Ghost called an angel in Scripture; nor was this a created angel, for then Jacob would never have made supplication to him; but he was an uncreated angel, even the Lord of hosts, the Almighty God, who spake with Jacob in Bethel. He that in this divine story is said to be a man, was the Son of God in human shape, as is most evident by the whole narration. The angel in the text is the same angel that conducted the Israelites in the wilderness, and fought their battles for them, Exo 3:2; Acts 7:30; 1Co 10:4-5, 1Co 10:9, even Jesus Christ, who is styled once and again the Almighty, Rev 1:8, and Rev 4:8. In this last scripture is acknowledged Christ's holiness, power, and godhead. Ah Christians! when will you once learn to set one Almighty Christ against all the mighty ones of the world, that you may bear up bravely and stoutly against their rage and wrath, and go on cheerfully and resolutely in the way of your duty.

(6.) The sixth name or title is Adonai, my Lord. Though this name Adonai be given sometimes analogically to creatures, yet properly it belongs to God above. This name is often used in the Old Testament; and, in Mal 1:6, it is used in the plural number to note the mystery of the holy Trinity, 'If I be Adonim, Lords, where is my fear?' Some derive the word Adonai from a word in the Hebrew [■■■■] that signifies judicare, to judge, because God is the Judge of the world; others derive it from

a word which signifies basis, a foundation, intimating that God is the upholder of all things, as the foundation of a house is the support of the whole building.

Now this name is given to Christ: Dan 9:17, 'Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for Adonai, the Lord Christ, sake.' Daniel pleads here no merits of their own, but the merits and mediation of the Messias, whom God hath made both Lord and Christ. So Psa 110:1, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' Christ applies these words to himself, as you may see in that Mat 22:24, 'Jehovah said,' that is, God the Father said, ■■■■■ La-adoni, 'unto my Lord,' that is, to Christ; 'sit thou at my right hand,' sit thou with me in my throne. It notes the advancement of Christ, as he was both God and man in one person, to the supremest place of power and authority, of honour and heavenly glory, Mat 28:18; John 3:35. God's right hand notes a place of equal power and authority with God, even that he should be advanced far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, Eph 1:21; Heb 1:3; Luk 22:69. Christ's reign over the whole world is sometimes called 'the right hand of the majesty,' and sometimes the 'right hand of the power of God.' 'Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' This implies, [1.] That Jesus Christ hath ever had, and will have enemies, even to the end of the world. [2.] Victory, a perfect conquest over them. Conquerors used to make their enemies their footstool. Those proud enemies of Christ, who now set up their crests, face the heavens, and strut it out against him, even those shall be brought under his feet. [3.] It implies ignominy, the lowest subjection. Sapoors, King of Persia, overcoming the Emperor Valerian in battle, used his back for a stirrup when he got upon his horse; and so Tamerlane served Bajazet. [4.] The footstool is a piece of state, and both raiseth and easeth him that sits on the throne; so Christ will both raise himself and ease himself by that vengeance that he will take on his enemies, &c.

Now from these divine names and titles which are given to Jesus Christ, we may thus argue, He to whom the incommunicable titles of the most high God are attributed, he is the most high God; but the incommunicable titles of the most high God are attributed unto Christ, ergo, he is the most high God. But,

4. Fourthly, Christ's eternal deity, co-equality, and consubstantiality with the Father may be demonstrated from his divine properties and attributes. I shall shew you for the opening of this that the glorious attributes of God are ascribed to the Lord Jesus. I shall begin,—

(1.) First, with the eternity of God. God is an eternal God. 'From everlasting to everlasting thou art God,' Psa 90:2; 'The eternal God is thy refuge,' Deu 33:27; 'He inhabits eternity,' Isa 57:15. He is called 'the ancient of days,' Dan 7:9; and he is said to be 'everlasting,' and to be 'king of old,' Psa 74:12. This sheweth he had no beginning. In respect of his eternity, after time, he is called 'the everlasting God,' Rom 16:26; 'An everlasting king,' 1Ti 1:17. That there is no succession or priority or poster[or]ity in God, but that he is from everlasting to everlasting the same, we may see Psa 102:26-27, 'The heavens shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.' There is no succession or variation in God, but he is eternally the same. Eternity is an interminable being and duration before any time, and beyond all time; it is a fixed duration, without beginning or ending. The eternity of God is beyond all possible conception of measure or time. God ever was, ever is, and ever shall be. Though the

manifestations of himself unto the creatures are in time, yet his essence or being never did nor shall be bound up by time. Look backward or forward, God from eternity to eternity, is a most self-sufficient, infinite, perfect, blessed being, the first cause of our being, and without any cause of his own being; an eternal infinite fulness, and possession to himself and of himself. What God is, he was from eternity, and what God is, he will be so to eternity. Oh, this glorious attribute drops mirth and mercy, oil and honey!

Now this attribute of eternity is ascribed to Jesus Christ: John 1:1, 'In the beginning was the Word;' 'was' notes some former duration, and therefore we conclude that he was before the beginning, before any creation or creatures, for it is said he was God in the beginning, and his divine nature whereby he works is eternal, Heb 9:14. He is 'the first and last,' Rev 1:17. Hence it is that he is called 'the firstborn of every creature,' because he who created all, and upholds-all, hath power to command and dispose of all, as the firstborn had power to command the family or kingdom, Col 1:15-17; compare Isa 66:6, with Rev 22:13. John 17:5, 'Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was.' Such glory had the Lord Christ with his Father, viz., in the heavens, and that before the world was. This he had not only in regard of destination, being predestinated to it by God his Father, as Grotius would evade it, but in regard of actual possession. 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way,' saith Christ the Son of God, Pro 8:22. And as his Father possessed him, so he was possessed of the selfsame glory with his Father before the world was, from eternity. 'His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,' from the days of eternity, saith the prophet Micah, speaking of the Messiah, Mic 5:2. See the eternity of Christ further confirmed by the scriptures in the margin. But,

(2.) Secondly, As the attribute of eternity is ascribed to Christ, so the attribute of omniscience is ascribed to Christ; and this speaks out the godhead of Christ. He knows all things: John 21:17, 'Lord, thou knowest all things,' τ■ παρ■ντα κα■ τ■ μ■λλοντα, all things present and future; what I now am, and what I shall be, saith one, [Chrysostom] on the words: John 2:25, 'He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.' Shall artificers know the nature and properties of their works, and shall not Christ know the hearts of men, which are the work of his own hands? Rev 2:23, 'And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.' Now of all a man's inwards, the heart and the reins are the most inward. Christ is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. The Greek word ■ρευν■ν, that is here rendered searcheth, signifies to search with the greatest seriousness, exactness, and diligence that can be; the word is metaphorically taken from such as use to search in mines for silver and gold. He is also frequently said to know the thoughts of men, and that before they bewrayed themselves by any outward expressions. Now this is confessedly God's peculiar, 'God which knoweth the hearts.' He is the wisdom of the Father, 1Co 1:24. He knows the Father, and doth, according to his will, reveal the secrets of his Father's bosom. The bosom is the seat of love and secrecy, John 1:18. Men admit those into their bosoms, with whom they impart all their secrets; the breast is the place of counsels; that is, Christ revealeth the secret and mysterious counsels, and the tender and compassionate affections of the Father to the world. Being in the bosom implieth communication of secrets: the bosom is a place for them. It is a speech of Tully to a friend that had betrusted him with a secret, crede mihi, &c., Believe me, saith he, what thou hast committed to me, it is in my bosom still, I am not ungirt to let it slip out. But Scripture addeth this hint too, where it speaketh of the bosom as the place of secrets: Pro 17:23, 'A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom, to

pervert the ways of judgment,' speaking of a bribe: Pro 21:14, 'A gift in secret pacifieth anger, and a reward in the bosom expiateth wrath.' Here is 'secret' and 'bosom' all one, as gift and reward are one. So Christ lieth in the Father's bosom; this intimateth his being conscious to all the Father's secrets. But,

(3.) Thirdly, As the attribute of God's omniscience is ascribed to Christ, so the attribute of God's omnipresence is ascribed to Christ; Mat 18:20, 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;' and Mat 28:20, 'I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' He is not contained in any place, who was before there was any place, Pro 8:22, and John 1:1, John 1:3, and did create all places by his own power. Whilst Christ was on earth in respect of his bodily presence, he was in the bosom of his Father, which must be understood of his divine nature and person. He did come down from heaven, and yet remained in heaven. Christ is universally present, he is present at all times and all places, and among all persons; he is repletively everywhere, inclusively nowhere. Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together; but Christ is present both in paradise and in the wilderness at the same time, *ubi non est per gratiam, adest per vindictam*, where he is not by his gracious influence, there he is by his vindictive power. Empedocles could say that God is a circle, whose centre is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere. The poor blind heathens could say that God is the soul of the world; and thus, as the soul is *tota in toto*, and *tota in qualibet parte*, so is he, that his eye is in every corner, &c. To which purpose they so portrayed their goddess Minerva, that which way soever one cast his eye, she always beheld him. But,

(4.) Fourthly, As the attribute of God's omnipresence is ascribed to Christ, so the attribute of God's omnipotency is ascribed to Christ, and this speaks out the Godhead of Christ, 'All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth,' Mat 28:18; John 5:19. 'What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son,' Php 3:21. He is called by a metonymy 'the power of God,' 1Co 1:24. 'He is the Almighty,' Rev 1:8, 'He made all things,' John 1:3. 'He upholds all things,' Heb 1:3. 'He shall change our vile body,' saith the apostle, 'that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,' Php 3:21. Now from what has been said we may thus argue. He to whom the incommunicable properties of the most high God are attributed, he is the most high God; but the incommunicable properties of the most high God are attributed to Christ, ergo, Christ is the most high God. But,

5. Fifthly, Christ's eternal deity, co-equality, and consubstantiality with the Father, may be demonstrated from his divine works. The same works which are peculiar to God are ascribed to Christ. Such proper and peculiar, such divine and supernatural works as none but God can perform, Christ did perform. As, [1.] Election. The elect are called his elect, Mat 24:31; John 13:18. 'I know whom I have chosen,' John 15:16. 'I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain;' John 15:19, 'But I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' [2.] Redemption. O sirs, none but the great God could save us from wrath to come, none but God blessed for ever could deliver us from the curse of the law, the dominion of sin, the damnable power of sin, the rule of Satan, and the flames of hell. Ah, friends, these enemies were too potent, strong, and mighty for any mere creature, yea, for all mere creatures, to conquer and overcome. None but the most high God could everlastingly secure us against such high enemies. [3.] Remission of sins. Mat 9:6, 'The Son of man hath power to forgive sins.' Christ here positively proves that he had power on earth to forgive sins, because

miraculously, by a word of his mouth, he causes the palsy man to walk, so that he arose and departed to his house immediately. Christ he forgives sin authoritatively. Preachers forgive only declaratively, John 20:23, as Nathan to David, 'The Lord hath put away thine iniquity,' 2Sa 12:7. I have read of a man that could remove mountains, but none but the man Christ Jesus could ever remit sin. All the persons in the Trinity forgive sins, yet not in the same manner. The Father bestows forgiveness, the Son merits forgiveness, and the Holy Ghost seals up forgiveness, and applies forgiveness. [4.] The bestowing of eternal life. John 10:28, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life.' Christ is the prince and principle of life, and therefore all out of him are dead whilst they live, Col 3:3-4. Eternal life is too great a gift for any to give but a God. [5.] Creation. John 1:3, 'All things are made by him;' and ver. 10, 'The world was made by him.' Col 1:16, 'By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in the earth, visible and invisible.' Now the apostle telleth you 'he that built all things is God;' Christ built all things, ergo, Christ is God. The argument lieth fair and undeniable. The all things that were created by Christ, Paul reduceth to two heads, visible and invisible; but Zanchius addeth a third branch to this distinction, and maketh it more plain by saying that all things that were made are either visible or invisible, or mixed—visible, as the stars and fowls and clouds of heaven, the fish in the sea, and beasts upon the earth; invisible things, as the angels, they also were made; then there is a third sort of creatures which are of a mixed nature, partly visible in regard of their bodies, and partly invisible in regard of their souls, and those are men: Eph 2:9, 'Who created all things by Jesus Christ;' Heb 1:2, 'He hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the worlds.' This may seem somewhat difficult, because he speaketh of worlds, whereas we acknowledge but one; but this seeming difficulty you may easily get over if you please but to consider the persons to whom he writes, which were Hebrews, whose custom it was to style God Rabboni, dominus mundorum, the Lord of the worlds. They were wont to speak of three worlds—the lower world, the higher world, and the middle world; the lower world containeth the elements, earth and water and air and fire; the higher world that containeth the heaven of the blessed; and the middle world that containeth the starry heaven. They now being acquainted with this language, and the apostle writing to them, he saith that God by Christ made the worlds—those worlds which they were wont to speak so frequently of. And whereas one scruple might arise from that expression in the Ephesians, 'God created all things "by" Jesus Christ,' and this to the Hebrews, 'by whom he made the worlds,' as if Christ were only an instrument in the creation and not the principal efficient; therefore another place in this chapter will clear it, which speaketh of Christ as the principal efficient of all things: Heb 1:1-14, compare the 8th and 10th verses together, 'To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;' then Christ is God. Then, 'And, Thou, Lord,' ver. 10, 'hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy bands.' Namely 'thine,' that is, the Son, which he spake of before. Christ is the principal efficient of the creation; and in this sense it is said, 'By him were all things made,' not as by an instrument, but as by the chief efficient. [6.] The preservation and sustentation of all things: Col 1:17, 'By him all things consist.' They would soon fall asunder had not Christ undertaken to uphold the shattered condition thereof by the word of his power. All creatures that are made are preserved by him in being, life, and motion: Heb 1:3, 'He upholdeth all things by the word of his power.' Both in respect of being, excellencies, and operations, sin had hurled confusion over the world, which would have fallen about Adam's ears had not Christ undertaken the shattered condition thereof, to uphold it. He keeps the world together, saith one, as the hoops

do the barrel. Christ bears up all things, continuing to the several creatures their being, ordering and governing them, and this he doth by the word of his power. By this word he made the world. 'He spake, and it was done.' And by this word he governeth the world, by his own mighty word, the word of his power. Both these are divine actions, and being ascribed unto Christ, evidence him to be no less than God. Now from what has been said we may thus argue, he to whom those actions are ascribed, which are proper to the most high God, he is the most high God; but such actions or works are ascribed to Christ, ergo, he is the most high God. But,

6. Sixthly, Christ's eternal deity may be demonstrated from that divine honour and worship that is due to him, and by angels and saints given unto him. The apostle sheweth, Gal 4:8, that religious worship ought to be performed to none but to him that is God by nature; and that they are ignorant of the true God who religiously worship them that are no gods by nature; and therefore, if Christ were not God by nature, and consubstantial with the Father, we ought not to perform religious worship to him. Divine worship is due to the second person of this co essential Trinity, to Jesus Christ our Lord and God. There is but one immediate, formal, proper, adequate, and fundamental reason of divine worship or adorability, as the schools speak, and that is the sovereign, supreme, singular majesty, independent and infinite excellency of the eternal Godhead; for by divine worship we do acknowledge and declare the infinite majesty, truth, wisdom, goodness, and glory of our blessed God. We do not esteem anything worthy of divine honour and worship which hath but a finite and created glory, because divine honour is proper and peculiar to the only true God, who will not give his glory to any other who is not God. God alone is the adequate object of divine faith, hope, love, and worship, because these graces are all exercised, and this worship performed, in acknowledgment of his infinite perfection and independent excellency; and therefore no such worship can be due to any creature or thing below God. There is not one kind of divine honour due to the Father and another to the Son, nor one degree of honour due to the Father and another to the Son; for there can be no degrees imaginable in one and the same excellency, which is single because infinite; and what is infinite doth excel and transcend all degrees and bounds. And if there be no degrees in the ground and adequate reason of divine worship, there can be no reason or ground of a difference of degrees in the worship itself. The Father and the Son are one, John 10:30,—one in power, excellency, nature,—one God, and therefore to be honoured with the same worship, 'that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father,' John 5:23. Every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ, who is man, is God also, and therefore equal to his Father, Php 2:6, Php 2:11-12; and it can be no robbery, no derogation to the Father's honour, for us to give equal honour to him and his co-equal Son, who subsists in the form of God, in the nature of God. Thus you see the divine nature, the infinite excellency of Jesus Christ, is an undeniable ground of this co-equal honour; and therefore the worship due to Christ as God, the same God with his Father, is the very same worship, both for kind and degree, which is due to the Father. But, for the further and clearer opening of this, consider, (1.) First, that all inward worship is due to Christ. As,

[1.] Believing on him. Faith is a worship which belongs only to God, enjoined in the first commandment, and against trusting in man there is a curse denounced, Jer 17:5-6. But Christ commands us to believe in him, John 1:12. John 14:1, 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.' John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John 3:36, 'He that believeth in the

Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' John 6:47, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.' The same respect that Christians give unto God the Father, they must also give unto the Son, believing on him; which is an honour due only to God. Other creatures, men and angels, may be believed, but not believed on, rested on. This were to make them gods; this were no less than idolatry.

[2.] Secondly, Loving of Jesus Christ with all the heart, commanded above the love, nay, even to the hatred, of father, mother, wife, children, yea, and our own lives, Luk 14:26. He who is not disposed, where these loves are incompatible, to hate father and all other relations, for the love of Christ, can be none of his. I ought dearly and tenderly to love father and mother—the law of God and nature requiring it of me,—but to prefer dear Jesus, who is God blessed for ever, before all, and above all, as Paul and the primitive Christians and martyrs have done before me. Your house, home, and goods, your life, and all that ever you have, saith that martyr, God hath given you as love-tokens, to admonish you of his love, to win your love to him again. Now will he try your love, whether you set more by him or by his tokens, &c. When relations or life stand in competition with Christ and his gospel, they are to be abandoned, hated, &c. But, (2.) Secondly, All outward worship is due to Christ. As,

[1.] First, Dedication in baptism is in his name. Mat 28:19, 'Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:' εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, into the name, by that rite initiating them, and receiving of them into the profession of the service of one God in three persons, and of depending on Christ alone for salvation. Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the consecrating of them unto the sincere service of the sacred Trinity.

[2.] Secondly, Divine invocation is given to Jesus Christ. Acts 7:59, 'Stephen calls upon the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit.' 1Co 1:2, 'All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.' 1Th 3:11, 'God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.' Eph 1:2, 'Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is the saints' character that they are such as call on the Lord Jesus, Acts 2:21; Acts 9:14. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Praises are offered to our Lord Jesus Christ: Rev 5:9, 'And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.' Rev 5:11, 'And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' Rev 5:12, 'Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' Rev 5:13, 'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.' Here you have a catholic confession of Christ's divine nature and power. All the creatures, both reasonable and unreasonable, do in some sort set forth the praises of Christ, because in some sort they serve to illustrate and set forth his glory. Here you see that Christ is adored with religious worship by all creatures, which doth evidently prove that he is God. Since all the creatures worship him with

religious worship, we may safely and boldly conclude upon his deity. Here are three parties that bear a part in this new song: 1. The redeemed of the Lord; and they sing in the last part of the 8th verse, and in the 9th and 10th verses. Then, 2, the angels follow, Rev 5:11-12. In the third place, all creatures are brought in, joining in this new song, Rev 5:13. That noble company of the church triumphant and church militant, sounding out the praises of the Lamb, may sufficiently satisfy us concerning the divinity of the Lamb. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Divine adoration is also given to him: Mat 8:2, 'A leper worshipped him.' Mark saith he kneeled down, and Luke saith he fell upon his face, Mark 1:40; Luk 5:12. He shewed reverence in his gesture. 'Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.' He acknowledged a divine power in Christ, in that he saith he could make him clean if he would. This poor leper lay at Christ's feet, imploring and beseeching him, as a dog at his master's feet, as Zanchy [de Red.] renders the word, which shews that this leper looked upon Christ as more than a prophet or a holy man; and that believing he was God, and so able to heal him if he would, he gave him religious worship. He doth not say to Christ, Lord, if thou wilt pray to God, or to thy Father for me, I shall be whole; but 'Lord, if thou wilt I shall be whole.' He acknowledges the leprosy curable by Christ, which he and all men knew was incurable by others, which was a plain argument of his faith; for though the psora or scabbedness may be cured, yet that which is called lepra physicians acknowledge incurable; for if a particular cancer cannot be cured, much less can a universal cancer. As Avicenna observes: Mat 2:11, 'Though the wise men of the east, who saw Herod in all his royalty and glory, worshipped him not, yet they fell down before Christ.' No doubt but that by divine instinct they knew the divinity of Christ, hence they worshipped him, not only with civil worship, as one born king of the Jews, but with divine worship; which was, it is like, the outward gesture of reverence, and kneeling, and falling down, for so the Greek words signify. Is it probable that they would worship a young babe, that by reason of his infancy understands nothing, except they did believe some divine thing to be in him? and therefore not the childhood, but the divinity in the child, was worshipped by them, [Chrysostom.] Certainly if Christ had been no more than a natural child, they would never have undertaken so long, so tedious, and so perilous a journey to have found him out; principally, considering, as some conceive, they themselves were little inferior to the kings of the Jews. It is uncertain what these wise men, who were Gentiles, knew particularly concerning the mystery of the Messiah; but certainly they knew that he was something more than a man, by the internal revelation of the Spirit of God, who by faith taught them to believe that he was a king though in a cottage, and a God though in a cradle; and therefore as unto a God they fell down and worshipped him, &c. But,

[5.] Fifthly, When Jesus Christ was declared to the world, God did command even the most glorious angels to worship him, as his natural and co-essential Son, who was begotten from the days of eternity, in the unity of the Godhead; for, when he brought in his first-begotten and only-begotten Son into the world, he said, 'And let all the angels of God worship him,' Heb 1:6,—the glorious angels who refuse divine honour to be given to themselves: 'See thou do it not,' saith the angel to John, when John fell at his feet to worship him, 'I am thy fellow-servant,' &c., Rev 19:10, and Rev 22:9; yet they give, and must give, divine honour unto Christ, Php 2:9. The manhood of itself could not be thus adored, because it is a creature, but as it is received into unity of person with the Deity, and hath a partner agency therewith, according to its measure in the work of redemption and mediation. All the honour due to Christ, according to his divine nature, was due

from all eternity; and there is no divine honour due to him from and by reason of his human nature, or any perfection which doth truly and properly belong to Christ as man. He who was born of Mary is to be adored with divine worship; but not for that reason, because he was born of Mary, but because he is God, the co-essential and eternal Son of God. From what has been said we may thus argue, He to whom religious worship is truly exhibited, is the most high God. But religious worship is truly exhibited unto Christ, ergo, Christ is the most high God. But,

7. Seventhly, Christ's eternal deity may be demonstrated from Christ's oneness with the Father, and from that claim that Jesus Christ doth lay to all that belongs to the Father, as God. Now, certainly, if Jesus Christ were not very God, he would never have laid claim to all that is the Father's, as God. The ancients insist much upon that: John 16:15, 'All things that the Father hath,' as God, 'are mine.' The Father hath an eternal godhead, and that is mine; the Father hath infinite power and wisdom, and that is mine; the Father hath infinite majesty and glory, and that is mine; the Father hath infinite happiness and blessedness in himself, and that is mine, saith Christ. The words are very emphatical, having in them a double universality. [1.] 'All things:' there is one note of universality; [2.] 'Whatsoever:' there is another note of universality. Well, saith Christ, there is nothing in the Father, as God, but is mine, 'All that the Father hath is mine;' the Father is God, and I am God; the Father is life, and I am life; for whatsoever the Father hath is mine: John 10:30, 'I and my Father are one;' we are one eternal God, we are one in consent, will, essence, nature, power, dominion, glory, &c., 'I and my Father are one;' two persons, but one God. He speaketh this as he is God, one in substance, being, and deity, &c. As God, he saith, 'I and my Father are one;' but, secundum formam servi, in respect of the form of a servant, his assumed humanity, he saith, John 14:28, 'My Father is greater than I:' John 10:37, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not:' John 10:38, 'But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works,' &c. The argument of itself is plain. No man can of himself, and by his own power, do divine works, unless he be truly God; I do divine works by my own power, yea, 'I do the works of my Father;' not only the like and equal, but the same with the Father. Therefore I am truly God; neither deserve I to be called a blasphemer, because I said I was one with the Father; 1Jn 5:7, 'And these three are one,' one in nature and essence, one in power and will, and one in the act of producing all such actions, as without themselves any of them is said to perform. Look, as three lamps are lighted in one chamber, albeit the lamps be divers, yet the lights cannot be severed; so in the godhead, as there is a distinction of persons, so a simplicity of nature. From the scriptures last cited we may safely and confidently conclude that Christ hath the same divine nature and godhead with the Father, that they both have the same divine and essential titles and attributes, and perform the same inward operations in reference to all creatures whatsoever. To make it yet more plain, compare John 17:10 with John 16:15. 'All things that the Father hath are mine,' John 16:15; 'Father, all mine are thine, and thine are mine,' John 17:10. That is, whatsoever doth belong to the Father, as God, doth belong to Christ; for we speak not of personal but essential properties. Christ doth lay claim to all that is natural, to all that belongs to the Father, as God, not to anything which belongs to him as the Father, as the first person of the blessed Trinity. 'All things that the Father hath are mine.' This he speaketh in the person of the mediator, 'Because of his fulness we all receive grace for grace,' John 1:16; and herein sheweth the unity of essence in the holy Trinity, and community of power, wisdom, sanctity, truth, eternity, glory, majesty. Such is the strict union of the persons of the blessed Trinity, that there is among them a perfect communion in all things, for 'all things that the Father hath are mine.' And let thus much suffice for the proof of the godhead of Christ.

Concerning the manhood of Christ, let me say, that as he is very God, so he is very man: 1Ti 2:5, 'the man Christ Jesus.' Christ is true man, but not mere man; verus, sed non merus. The word is not to be taken exclusively, as denying the divine nature. Christ is Θεῶνθρωπος, both God and man; sometimes denominated from the one nature, and sometimes from the other; sometimes called God, and sometimes man; yet so as he is truly both, and in that respect fitly said to be a mediator betwixt God and men, having an interest in and participating of both natures. This title, 'the Son of man,' is given to Christ in the New Testament four score and eight times, the design being not only to express a man, according to the Syrian dialect then used, ܡܢ ܡܢܫܐ, bar noshō; nor only to express Christ's humanity, who was truly man, in all things like unto us, sin only excepted; nor only to intimate his humility, by calling himself so often by this humble name; but also to tell us to what a high honour God hath raised our nature in him, and to confute their imaginations who denied him to be very man, flesh, blood, and bones, as we truly are; and who held, that whatever he was, and whatever he did, and whatever he suffered, was only seeming and in appearance, and not real; and to lead us to that original promise, the first that was made to mankind, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head,' Gen 3:15, that so he might intimate, saith Epiphanius, that himself was the party meant, intended, and foretold of by all the prophets, who was to come into the world, to all nations in the world. Jews and Gentiles originally alike descended of the woman, who both had a like interest in the woman and her seed, though the Jews did and might challenge greater propriety in the seed of Abraham than the Gentiles could, Rom 3:1-2; but they having been a long time, as it were, God's favourites, a selected people, a chosen nation, did wholly appropriate the Messias to themselves, and would endure no co-partners, Exo 19:6; 1Pe 2:9; nor that any should have any right, title, or interest in him but themselves; and therefore they would never talk otherwise than of the Messias, the King of Israel, the son of David, never naming him once the light of the Gentiles, the expectation of the Gentiles, the hope and desire of the eternal hills, the hope of all the ends of the earth, the seed of the woman, the Son of man, as descending from Eve, extracted from Adam, and allied unto all mankind. And it is observable that the evangelist Luke, at the story of Christ's baptism, when he was to be installed into his ministry, and had that glorious testimony from heaven, deriveth his pedigree up to the first Adam, the better to draw all men's eyes to that first promise concerning the seed of the woman, and to cause them to own him for that seed there promised, and for that effect that is there mentioned of dissolving the works of Satan. And as that evangelist giveth that hint when he is now entering this quarrel with Satan, even in the entrance of his ministry, so doth he very frequently and commonly by this very phrase give the same intimation for the same purpose. No sooner had Nathanael proclaimed him the Son of God: John 1:49, 'Nathanael answered, and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel:' but he instantly titles himself the Son of man, John 1:51; not only to shew his humanity, for that Nathanael was assured of by the words of Philip, who calls him Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, John 1:45; but also to draw the thoughts of the hearers to the first promise, and to work them to look for a full recovery of all that by the second Adam which was lost in the first. Though the gates of heaven were shut against the first Adam by reason of his fall, yet were they open to the second Adam: John 1:51, 'And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you'—this double asseveration, 'Verily, verily,' puts the matter beyond all doubt and controversy—'hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man,'—the Jacob's ladder, the bridge that joineth heaven and earth together, as Gregory hath it. This 51st verse doth greatly illustrate

Christ's glory, and further confirm believers' faith, that Christ is Lord of angels even in his state of humiliation, and hath them ready at his call, as he or his people shall need their service, to move from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. This title, 'the Son of man,' shews that the Son of God was also the Son of man; and that he delighted to be so, and therefore doth so often take this title to himself, 'the Son of man.'

Now concerning the manhood of Christ, the prophet plainly speaks: Isa 9:6, 'Unto us a child is born, and unto us a son was given.' Parvulus, a child, that noteth his humanity; Filius, a Son, that noteth his deity. Parvulus, a child, even man of the substance of his mother, born in the world, Mat 1:25; Filius, a Son, even God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the world, Pro 8:22 to the end. Parvulus, a child: behold his humility, 'she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger,' Luk 2:7; Filius, a Son: behold his dignity; 'when he bringeth his first begotten Son into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him,' Heb 1:6; to prove that he was man, it is enough to say, that he was born, he lived, he died. God became man by a wonderful, unspeakable, and inconceivable union. Behold God is offended by man's affecting and coveting his wisdom and his glory—for that was the devil's temptation to our first parents, 'Ye shall be as gods,' Gen 3:5; and man is redeemed by God's assuming and taking his frailty and his infirmity. Man would be as God, and so offended him; and therefore God becomes man, and so redeemeth him. Christ, as man, came of the race of kings; as man he shall judge the world, Acts 17:31; as man, he was wonderfully born of a virgin, Mat 1:23; Isa 7:14; called therefore by a peculiar name, Shiloh, which signifies a secundine or after-birth, Gen 49:19. The word comes of **שָׁלוֹם**, which signifies tranquillum esse, intimating that Christ is he who has brought us peace and tranquillity; and that he might be our peacemaker, it was necessary that he should be Shiloh, born of the sanctified seed of a woman without the seed of man. The apostle expounds the name where he saith of Christ that he was 'made of a woman,' not of a man and woman both, but of a woman alone without a man, Gal 4:4. Christ as man was foretold of by the prophets, and by sundry types. Christ as man was attended upon at his birth by holy angels, and a peculiar star was created for him, Luk 2:13-14; Mat 2:1-2. Christ as man was our sacrifice and expiation; he was our **ἀντὶ λυτροῦ**, a counterprice, such as we could never have paid, but must have remained, and even rotted in the prison of hell for ever. Christ as man was conceived of the Holy Ghost, Mat 1:18. Christ as man is ascended into heaven, Acts 1:9-10. Christ as man sits at the right hand of God, Col 3:1. Now what do all these things import, but that Jesus Christ is a very precious and most excellent person, and that even according to his manhood? Christ had the true properties, affections, and actions of man. He was conceived, born, circumcised; he did hunger, thirst; he was clothed; he did eat, drink, sleep, hear, see, touch, speak, sigh, groan, weep, and grow in wisdom and stature, &c., as all the four evangelists do abundantly testify. But because this is a point of grand importance, especially in these days, wherein there are risen up so many deceivers in the midst of us, it may not be amiss to consider of these following particulars,—

(1.) First, Of these special scriptures that speak out the certainty and verity of Christ's body: John 1:14, 'And the Word was made flesh;' 1Ti 3:16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh.' Christ is one and the same, begotten of the Father without time, the Son of God without mother; and born of the Virgin in time, the Son of man without father; the natural and consubstantial son of both; and, oh! what a great mystery is this! Heb 2:14, Heb 2:16, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise

took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: for verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham:’ according to the Greek **ἐπ’ αὐτὸν λαμβάνεται**, He assumed, caught, laid hold on, as the angels did on Lot, Gen 19:16; or as Christ did on Peter, Mat 14:31; or as men use to do upon a thing they are glad they have got, and are loath to let go again. O sirs! this is a main pillar of our comfort, that Christ took our flesh, for if he had not taken our flesh, we could never have been saved by him: Rom 1:3, ‘Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh:’ Rom 9:5, ‘Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.’ This is a greater honour to all mankind, than if the greatest king in the world should marry into some poor family of his subjects. Christ saith, ‘My flesh is meat indeed,’ and I say his flesh was flesh indeed; as true, real, proper, very flesh as that which any of us carry about with us: Col 1:22, ‘In the body of his flesh through death;’ Heb 10:5, ‘Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.’ **Κατηρτισμένος**: It is a metaphor taken from mechanics, who do artificially, fit one part of their work to another, and so finish the whole; God fitted his Son’s body to be joined with the deity, and to be an expiatory sacrifice for sin: 1Pe 2:24, ‘Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,’ &c. The word **αὐτοῦ**, himself, hath a great emphasis, and therefore that evangelical prophet Isaiah mentions it no less than five times in that Isa 53:4-5, Isa 53:7, Isa 53:11-12. Christ had none to help or uphold him under the heavy burden of our sins and his Father’s wrath, Isa 63:3. It is most certain, that in the work of man’s redemption Christ had no coadjutor. He who did bear our sins, that is, the punishments that were due to our sins, in his own body on the tree; he did assume flesh, cast into the very mould and form of our bodies, having the same several parts, members, lineaments, the same proportion which they have. Christ’s body was no spectrum or phantasm, no putative body, as if it had no being but what was in appearance and from imagination—as the Marcionites, Manichees, and other heretics of old affirmed, and as some men of corrupt minds do assert in our days—but as real, as solid a body as ever any was. And therefore the apostle calls it a body of flesh, Col 1:22—a body, to shew the organisation of it, and a body of flesh, to shew the reality of it, in opposition to all aerial and imaginary bodies. Christ’s body had all the essential properties of a true body; such as are organicalness, extension, local presence, confinement, circumscription, penetrability, visibility, palpability, &c., as all the evangelists do abundantly witness. Take a few instances for all: Luk 24:39, ‘Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.’ Christ here admits of the testimony of their own senses to assure them that it was no vision or spirit, but a true and real body risen from the dead, which they now saw. Certainly whatever is essential to a true glorified body, that is yet in Christ’s body. Those stamps of dishonour that the Jews had set upon Christ by wicked hands, those he retained after his resurrection, partly for the confirmation of his apostles, and partly to work us to a willingness and resoluteness to suffer for him when we are called to it: 1Jn 1:1, ‘That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life.’ He alludes to the sermons which he and the other apostles heard from Christ’s own mouth, and also to the glorious testimony which the Father gave once and again from heaven to Christ. He alludes also to the miracles that were wrought by Christ, and to that sight that they had of his glory in the mount, and to his resurrection and visible ascension into the highest heaven, Mat 17:1-27, Acts 1:1-26. He alludes to

the familiar conversation which the apostles had with Christ for about three years, and also to that touching, when after the resurrection Christ offered himself to the apostles that believed not in him to touch him, Luk 24:1-53. The truth of these things were confirmed to them by three senses—hearing, seeing, handling, the latter still surer than the former; and this proves Christ to be a true man, as his being from the beginning sets out his deity. Christ had also those natural affections, passions, infirmities, which are proper to a body, as hunger: Mat 4:2, ‘When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungered.’ All Christ’s actions are for our instruction, not all for our imitation. Matthew expressly makes mention of nights, lest it should be thought to be such a fast as that of the Jews, who fasted in the day, and did eat at the evening and in the night, [Chemnitius.] He would not extend his fast above the term of Moses and Elias, lest he should have seemed to have appeared only, and not to have been, a true man. He was hungry, not because his fasting wrought upon him, but because God left man to his own nature, [Hilary.] It seems Christ felt no hunger till the forty days and forty nights were expired, but was kept by the power of the Deity, as the three children, or rather champions, from feeling the heat of the fire, Dan 3:27. Christ fasted forty days and forty nights, and not longer, lest he might be thought not to have a true human body; for Moses and Elias had fasted thus long before, but never did any man fast longer. When Christ began to be hungry the tempter came to him, not when he was fasting. The devil is cunning, and will take all the advantage he can upon us. During the forty days and forty nights the devil stood doubtful, and durst not assault the Lord Jesus, partly because of that voice he heard from heaven, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,’ Mat 3:17, and partly because his forty days and forty nights’ fast did portend some great thing; but now, seeing Christ to be hungry, he impudently assaults him. Christ was not hungry all the forty days; but after, he was hungry, to shew he was man. Some think that Christ by his hunger did objectively allure Satan to tempt him, that so he might overcome him, as soldiers sometimes feign a running away, that they may the better allure their enemies closely to pursue them, that so they may cut them off, either by an ambush or by an orderly facing about: so the devil tempted Christ as man, not knowing him to be God; or if he did know him to be God, Christ did as it were encourage his cowardly enemy, that durst not set upon him as God, shewing himself to be man. And as Christ was hungry, so Christ was thirsty: John 4:7, ‘There came a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me drink.’ Here you see that he that is rich and Lord of all became poor for us, that he might make us rich, 2Co 8:9; and he that gives to all the creatures their meat in due season, Psa 104:27, he begs water of a poor tankard-bearer to refresh himself in his weariness and thirst: John 19:28, ‘Jesus saith, I thirst.’ Bleeding breeds thirsting. Sleeping: Mat 8:24, he was asleep, to shew the truth of the human nature, and the weakness of his disciples’ faith. Christ was in a fast and dead sleep, for so much the Greek word, **καθευδεν**, signifies: his senses were well and fast bound, as if he had no operation of life, and therefore the disciples are said to raise him, as it were from the dead. The same Greek word is used in many places where mention is made of the resurrection, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. He was asleep, [1.] By reason of his labour in preaching, and journey he slept; [2.] To shew forth the truth of his human nature. Some think the devil stirred up the storm, hoping thereby to drown Christ and his disciples, as he had destroyed Job’s children in a tempest before, Job 1:18-19; but though Satan had malice and will enough to do it, yet he had not power; yea, though Christ slept in his human nature, yet was he awake in his deity, that the disciples being in danger might cry unto him more fervently, and be saved more remarkably. And as Jesus slept, so he was also weary: John

4:6, 'Now Jacob's well was there; Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour,' about noon. In the heat of the day Christ was weary. Christ took on him not only our nature, but the common infirmities thereof, and he is to be as seriously eyed in his humanity as in the glory of his godhead. Therefore it is recorded that he was weary with his journey ere half the day was spent; and that through weariness 'he sat thus on the well,' that is, even as the seat offered, or as weary men use to sit, &c. But, in a word, he was conceived, retained so long in the virgin's womb, born, circumcised, lived about thirty years on earth, conversed all that time with men, suffered, died, and was crucified, buried, rose again, ascended, and sat down with his body at the right hand of God, and with it will come again to judge the world. Now what do all these things speak out, but that Christ hath a true body? and who in their wits will assert that all this could be done in, and upon, and by, an imaginary body? But,

(2.) Secondly, The several denominations that are given to Jesus Christ in Scripture do clearly evidence the verity and reality of his human nature. He is called (1.) The son of the virgin, Isa 7:14: (2.) Her first-born son, Luk 2:7: (3.) The branch, Zec 3:8, and Zec 6:12: (4.) The branch of righteousness, Jer 33:15, and Jer 23:5: (5.) A rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots, Isa 11:1 : (6.) The seed of the woman, Gen 3:15 : (7.) The seed of Abraham, Gen 22:18 : (8.) The fruit of David's loins, Psa 80:3-6, and Psa 132:11; Acts 2:30 : (9.) Of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom 1:3; 2Sa 7:2 : (10.) The lion of the tribe of Judah, Rev 5:5 : (11.) The seed of Jacob, Gen 28:14 : (12.) The seed of Isaac, Gen 26:4 : (13.) A son born to us, a child given to us, Isa 9:6 : (14.) The son of man, Mat 8:20, and Mat 17:13; Rev 1:13; Dan 7:13; John 3:13 : (15.) He is called the man Christ Jesus, 1Ti 2:5; 1Co 15:21, 'Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.' God's justice would be satisfied in the same nature that had sinned: (16.) God's Son made of a woman, Gal 4:4 : (17.) Man, 1Ti 2:5; the man Christ Jesus: (18.) The son of David, Mat 1:1 Mark 12:35. 'How say the scribes, that Christ is the son of David?' In that the scribes and Pharisees knew and acknowledged, according to the Scripture, that Christ should be the son of David—that is, should be born and descend of the stock and posterity of David according to the flesh,—hence we may easily gather the truth of Christ's human nature, that he was ordained of God to be true man as well as God, in one and the same person; for else he could not be the son of David. Now, that he must be the son of David, even the scribes and the Pharisees knew and acknowledged, as we see here; and this was a truth which they had learned out of the Scriptures; and not only they, but even the common sort of Jews in our Saviour's time: John 7:42, some of the common people spake thus, 'Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David?' And the Messiah was then commonly called the son of David, Rom 1:3. So then, Christ being of the seed of David after the flesh, he must needs be true man as well as God; for which cause he was incarnate in the due time appointed of God; that is to say, he being the Son of God from everlasting, did in time become man, taking our nature upon him, together with the infirmities of our nature, sin only excepted, John 1:14. Now thus you see that the eighteen denominations that are given to Christ in the blessed Scriptures do abundantly demonstrate the certainty of Christ's human nature. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Christ took the whole human nature. He was truly and completely man, consisting of flesh and spirit, body and soul; yea, that he assumed the entire human nature, with whatever is proper to it. Christ took to himself the whole human nature, in both the essential parts of man, soul and body. The two essential and constitutive parts of man are soul and body; where these two are,

there is the true man. Now Christ had both, and therefore he was true man.

[1.] First, Christ had a true human and reasonable soul. The reasonable soul is the highest and noblest part of man. This is that which principally makes the man, and hath the greatest influence into his being and essence. If, therefore, Jesus Christ had only a human body without a human soul, he had wanted that part which is most essential to man, and so he could not have been looked upon as true and perfect man. O sirs! Christ redeemed and saved nothing but what he assumed. The redemption and salvation reach no further than the assumption. Our soul then would have been never the better for Christ, had he not taken that as well as our body. Hence said Augustine, Therefore he took the whole man without sin, that he might heal the whole of which man consists, of the plague of sin. And Fulgentius, to the same purpose:2 As the devil smote by deceiving the whole man, so God saves by assuming the whole man. If he will save the whole man from sin, he will assume the whole man without sin, saith Nazianzen. The Scriptures do clearly evidence that Christ had a real human soul: Mat 26:38, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' Every word is emphatical: 'My soul;' his sorrows pierced his soul, and 'sorrowful round about,' even to death, $\pi\epsilon\rho\lambda\upsilon\pi\zeta$ —that is, 'heavy round about,' Psa 22:16. Look, as the soul was the first agent in transgression, so it is here the first patient in affliction. 'To death;' that is, this sorrow will never be finished or intermitted but by death. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful.' Then Christ had a true human soul; neither was his deity to him for a soul, as, of old, men of corrupt minds have fancied; for then our bodies only had been redeemed by him, and not our souls, if he had not suffered in soul as well as in body. The sufferings of his body were but the body of his sufferings; the soul of his sufferings were the sufferings of his soul, which was now beset with sorrows, and heavy as heart could hold: John 12:27, 'Now is my soul, troubled, and what shall I say?' The Greek word signifies a vehement commotion and perturbation; as Herod's mind was troubled when he heard that a new king was born, Mat 2:3; or as the disciples were troubled when they thought they saw a spirit walking on the sea, and cried out for fear, Mat 14:26; or as Zacharias, Luk 1:12, was troubled at the sudden sight of the angel. The rise and cause of Christ's soul-trouble was this: the Godhead hiding itself from the humanity's sense; and the Father letting out, not only an apprehension of his sufferings to come, but a present taste of the horror of his wrath due to man for sin. He is amazed, overwhelmed, and perplexed with it in his humanity; and no wonder, since he had the sins of all the elect, laid upon him by imputation, to suffer for. And so this wrath is not let out against his person, but against their sins which were laid on him. Now though Christ was here troubled, or jumbled and puzzled, as the word imports, yet we are not to conceive that there was any sin in this exercise of his, for he was like clean water in a clean vessel, which, being never so often stirred and shaken, yet still keeps clean and clear. Neither are we to think it strange that the Son of God should be put to such perplexities in this trouble as not to know what to say; for considering him as man, encompassed with our sinless infirmities, and that this heavy weight of wrath, did light upon him on a sudden, it is no wonder that it did confound all his thoughts as man. O sirs! look, that as sin has infected both the souls and bodies of the elect, and chiefly their souls, where it hath its chief seat, so Christ, to expiate this sin, did suffer unspeakable sorrows and trouble in his soul, as well as torture in his body; 'for my soul is troubled,' saith he. Though some sufferings of the body be very exquisite and painful, and Christ's in particular were such, yet sad trouble of mind is far more grievous than any bodily distress, as Christ also found, who silently bare all his outward troubles, but yet could not but cry out of his inward trouble, 'Now is my soul troubled.' Isa 53:10, 'Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,'

Isa 53:7; 1Pe 2:24. When Christ suffered for us, our sins were laid upon him, 1Pe 2:5-6, as by the law of sacrificing of old, the sinner was to lay his hands upon the head of the beast, confessing his sins, and then the beast was slain, and offered for expiation, Lev 8:14, Lev 8:18, Lev 8:22; thus having the man's sins as it were taken and put upon it, and hereby the sinner is made righteous. The sinner could never be pardoned, nor the guilt of sin removed, but by Christ's making his soul an offering for sin. What did Christ in special recommend to God, when he was breathing out his last gasp, but his soul? Luk 23:46, 'When Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost;' that is, To thy safe custody and blessed tuition I commend my soul, as a special treasure or jewel, most charily and tenderly to be preserved and kept: Luk 2:52, 'He increased in wisdom and stature;' here is stature for his body, and wisdom for his soul. His growth in that speaks the truth of the former, and his growth in this the truth of the latter: his body properly could not grow in wisdom, nor his soul in stature, therefore he must have both. There are two essential parts which make up one of his natures, his manhood, viz., soul and body, but both of these two of old have been denied. Marcion divests Christ of a body, and Apollinaris of a soul; and the Arians held that Christ had no soul, but that the deity was to him instead of a soul, and supplied the office thereof, that what the soul is to us, and doth in our bodies, all that the divine nature was to Christ, and did in his body; and are there not some among us, that make a great noise about a light in them, that dash upon the same rock? But the choice scriptures last cited may serve sufficiently to confute all such brain-sick men. But,

[2.] Secondly, As Christ had a true human and reasonable soul, so Christ had a perfect, entire, complete body, and everything which is proper to a body; for instance, (1.) He had blood: Heb 2:14, 'He also took part of the same,' that is, of flesh and blood. Christ had in him the blood of a man. Shedding of blood there must be, for without it there is no remission of sin, Heb 9:22. The blood of brute creatures could not wash away the blots of reasonable creatures, Heb 10:4-5, Heb 10:10; wherefore Christ took our nature, that he might have our blood to shed for our sins. There is an emphasis put upon Christ as man, in the great business of man's salvation, 'The man Christ Jesus,' 1Ti 2:5; the remedy carrying in it a suitableness to the malady, the sufferings of a man to expiate the sin of man. (2.) He had bones as well as flesh: Luk 24:39, 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.' (3.) Christ had in him the bowels of a man, Php 2:8, which bowels he fully expressed when he was on earth, Mat 12:18-20; nay, he retaineth those bowels now he is in heaven; in glory he hath a fellow-feeling of his people's miseries: Acts 9:4, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' See Mat 25:35-46. Though Christ in his glorified state be freed from that state of frailty, possibility, mortality, yet he still retains his wonted pity. (4.) He had in him the familiarity of a man; how familiarly did Christ converse with all sorts of persons in this world, all the evangelists do sufficiently testify. Man is a sociable and familiar creature; Christ became man that he might be a merciful high priest, Heb 2:17; not that his becoming man made him more merciful, as though the mercies of a man were more than the mercies of God, but because by this means mercy is conveyed more suitably and familiarly to man. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, Our Lord Jesus Christ took our infirmities upon him. When Christ was in this world he submitted to the common accidents, adjuncts, infirmities, miseries, calamities, which are incident to human nature. For the opening of this, remember there are three sorts of infirmities; (1.) There are sinful infirmities: Jas 5:7; Psalms 77:10. The best of men are but men at the best.

Witness Abraham's unbelief, David's security, Job's cursing, Jonah his passion. Thomas his unbelief, Peter's lying, &c. Now these infirmities Jesus Christ took not upon him; for though he was made like unto us in all things, yet without sin, Heb 4:15. (2.) There are personal infirmities, which from some particular causes befall this or that person; as leprosy, blindness, dumbness, palsy, dropsy, epilepsy, stone, gout, sickness. Christ was never sick. Sickness arises from the unfit or unequal temperature of the humours, or from intemperance of labour, study, &c., but none of these were in Christ. He had no sin, and therefore no sickness. Christ took not the passions or infirmities which were proper to this or that man. (3.) There are natural infirmities which belong to all mankind since the fall; as hunger, thirst, wearisomeness, sorrowfulness, sweating, bleeding, wounds, death, burial. Now these natural infirmities that are common to the whole nature, these Jesus Christ took upon him, as all the evangelists do abundantly testify. Our dear Lord Jesus he lay so many weeks and months in the Virgin's womb; he received nourishment and growth in the ordinary way; he was brought forth and bred up just as common infants are; he had his life sustained by common food, as ours is; he was poor, afflicted, reproached, persecuted, tempted, deserted, falsely accused, &c.; he lived an afflicted life, and died an accursed death; his whole life, from the cradle to the cross, was made up of nothing but sorrows and sufferings; and thus you see that Jesus Christ did put himself under those infirmities which properly belong to the common nature of man, though he did not take upon him the particular infirmities of individuals. Now what do all these things speak out, but the certainty and reality of Christ's manhood?

Quest. But why must Christ partake of both natures? was it absolutely necessary that he should so do? Ans. Yea, it was absolutely necessary that Christ should partake of both natures; and that both in respect of God, and in respect of us: (1.) First, in respect of us: and that,

[1.] First, Because man had sinned, and therefore man must be punished. By man came death, therefore by man must come the resurrection of the dead, 1Co 15:21. Man was the offender, therefore man must be the satisfier; man had been the sinner, and therefore man must be the sufferer. It is but justice to punish sin in that nature, in which it had been committed. By man we fell from God, and by man we must be brought back to God. By the first Adam we were ruined, by the second Adam we must be repaired, Rom 5:12. The human nature was to be redeemed, therefore it was necessary that the human nature should be assumed. The law was given to man, and the law was broken by man, and therefore it was necessary that the law should be fulfilled by man. But,

[2.] Secondly, That by this means the justice of God might be satisfied in the same nature which had sinned, which was the nature of man. Angels could not satisfy divine justice, because they had no bodies to suffer. The brutish sensible creatures could not satisfy the justice of God, because they had no souls to suffer. The sensible creatures could not satisfy divine justice, because they had no sense to suffer. Therefore man, having body, soul, and sense, must do it; for he had sinned in all, and he could suffer in all.

(2.) Secondly, There are reasons both in respect of God and in respect of ourselves, why Jesus Christ should be God, and God-man also; and they are these five:—

[1.] First, That he might be a meet mediator between God and man. Christ's office, as mediator, was to deal with God for man, and to deal for God with man. Now that he might be fit for both these transactions, for both parts of this office, he must partake of both natures. That he might

effectually deal with God for man, he must be God, 'If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' saith Eli to his sons, 1Sa 2:25. And that he might deal for God with man, he must be man. He must be God, that he may be fit to transact, treat, and negotiate with God; and he must be man, that he may be fit to transact, treat, and negotiate with man. When God spake unto Israel at Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, the people were not able to abide that voice or presence, and therefore they desired an Internuncius, a man like themselves, who might be as a mediator to go betwixt God and them, Exo 20:18-19. Now upon this very ground, besides many others that might be mentioned, it was very requisite that Jesus Christ should be both God and man, that he might be a meet mediator to deal betwixt God and man, Heb 12:18. Jesus Christ was the fittest person, either in that upper or in this lower world, to mediate between God and us. There was none fit to umpire the business between God and man, but he that was God-man. Job hit the nail when he said, 'Neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both,' Job 9:33. There was a double use of the days-man, and his laying his hand upon them: (1.) To keep the dissenting parties asunder, lest they should fall out and strike one another; (2.) To keep them together, and compose all differences, that they might not depart from each other. The application is easy. Man is not fit to mediate, because man is the person offending; angels are not fit to mediate, for they cannot satisfy divine justice, nor pacify divine wrath, nor procure our pardon, nor make our peace, nor bring in an everlasting righteousness upon us. God, the Father, was not fit for this work, for he was the person offended; and he was as much too high to deal with man, as man was too low to deal with God. The Holy Ghost was not fit for this work, for it is his work to apply this mediation, and to clear up the believer's interest in this mediation. So then there is no other person fit for this office but Jesus Christ, who was a middle person, betwixt both, that he might deal with both. Christ could never have been fit to be the mediator in respect of his office, if he had not first been a middle person in respect of his natures; for, saith the apostle, Gal 3:20, 'Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.' 'A mediator is not a mediator of one,' that is, of one party, but is always of two differing parties to unite them; 'not of one;' that is, (1.) Not of one person, because mediation implies more persons than one; it necessarily supposes different parties betwixt whom he doth mediate. Christ, to speak after the manner of men, lays his hand upon God, the Father, and saith, O blessed Father, wilt thou be at peace with these poor sinners? wilt thou pardon them? and wilt thou lift up the light of thy countenance upon them? If thou wilt, then I will undertake to satisfy thy justice, and to pacify thy wrath, and to fulfil thy royal law, and to make good all the wrong they have done against thee. And then he layeth his hand upon the poor sinner, and saith, Sinner, art thou willing to be changed and renewed? art thou willing to come under the bond of the covenant? art thou willing to give up thy heart and life to the guidance and government of the Spirit? Then be not discouraged, for thou shalt certainly be justified and saved. (2.) Not of one nature—the mediator must necessarily have more natures than one—he must have the divine and human nature united in his single person, or else he could never suffer what he was to suffer, nor never satisfy what he was to satisfy, nor never bring poor sinners into a state of reconciliation with God; and it is further observable that the text last cited saith, 'God is one,' 1Ti 2:5; viz., as he is essentially considered, and therefore as so he cannot be the mediator; but Christ, as personally considered, he 'is not of one,' that is, not of one nature, for he is God and man too, and therefore he is the only person that is fitted and qualified to be the mediator; and it is observable that, when Christ is spoken of as mediator, his manhood is brought in, that nature being so necessary to that office: 1Ti 2:5, 'For there is one God, and one mediator

between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' Jesus Christ was God and man; as man he ought to satisfy, but could not; as God he could satisfy, but ought not. But consider him as God and man, and so he both could satisfy and ought to satisfy, and accordingly he did satisfy, according to what was prophesied of him: Dan 9:24, 'He did make reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.' He did not begin to do something and then faint and leave his work imperfect, but he finished it, and that to the glory of his Father: John 17:4, 'I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which, thou gavest me to do.' And it is good to observe the singularity and oneness of the person mediating; not many, not a few, not two, but one mediator between God and man. There was none with him in his difficult work of mediatorship, but he carried it on alone. Though there are many mediators among men, yet there is but εἷς μεσότης, one only mediator betwixt God and men: and it is as high folly and madness to make more mediators than one, as it is to make more Gods than one, Isa 63:3. 'There is one God, and one mediator betwixt God and men;' for look, as one husband satisfies the wife, as one father satisfies the child, as one lord satisfies the servant, and one sun satisfies the world, so one mediator is enough to satisfy all the world, that desire a mediator, or that have an interest in a mediator. The true sense and import of this word μεσότης, a mediator, is a middle person, or one that interposes betwixt two parties at variance, to make peace betwixt them. Though μεσότης, a mediator, be rendered variously, sometimes an umpire or arbitrator, sometimes a messenger betwixt two persons, sometimes an interpreter imparting the mind of one to another, sometimes a reconciler or peace-maker; yet this word, μεσότης, doth most properly signify a mediator or a middler, because Jesus Christ is both a middle person, and a middle officer betwixt God and man, to reconcile and reunite God and man. This of all others is the most proper and genuine signification of this name μεσότης, Jesus Christ is the middle, that is, the second person in the Trinity, betwixt the Father and the Holy Ghost. He is the only middle person betwixt God and man, being in one person God-man; and his being a middle person fits and capacitates him to stand in the midst between God and us. And as he is the middle person, so he is the middle officer, intervening or interposing or coming between God and man by office, satisfying God's justice to the full for man's sins by his sufferings and death, and maintaining our constant peace in heaven by his meritorious intercession. Hence, as one observes, [Gerhard,] Jesus Christ is a true mediator, is still found in medio, in the middle. He was born, as some think, from Wis 18:14, about the middle of the night; he suffered, Heb 13:12, in the middle of the world, that is, at Jerusalem, seated in the middle of the earth: he was crucified in the midst, between the two thieves, John 19:18: he died in the air on the cross, in the midst between heaven and earth: he stood after his resurrection in the midst of his disciples, John 20:19; and he has promised, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them, Mat 18:20: and he walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, Rev 2:1, that is, the churches: and he as the heart in the midst of the body, distributes spirits and virtue to all the parts of his mystical body, Eph 4:15-16. Thus Jesus Christ is the mediator betwixt God and man; middle in person and middle in office. And thus you have seen at large what a meet mediator Jesus Christ is, considered in both his natures, considered as God-man. But,

[2.] Secondly, If Jesus Christ be not God, then there is no spiritual nor eternal good to be expected or enjoyed. If Christ be not God, our preaching is in vain, and your hearing is in vain, and your praying is in vain, and your believing is in vain, and your hope of pardon and forgiveness by Jesus Christ is in vain; for none can forgive sins but a God. Christ hath promised that 'believers shall

never perish;' he hath promised them 'eternal life,' and that he will 'raise them up at the last day,' he has promised 'a crown of righteousness,' he has promised 'a crown of life,' he has promised 'a crown of glory,' he has promised that conquering Christians shall 'sit down with him in his throne, as he is set down with his Father in his throne:' he has promised that they shall not be hurt of 'the second death.' And a thousand other good things Jesus Christ has promised; but if Jesus Christ be not God, how shall these promises be made good? If a man that hath never a foot of land in England, nor yet worth one groat in all the world, shall make his will, and bequeath to thee such and such houses, and lands, and lordships in such a county or such a county; and shall by will, give thee so much in plate, and so much in jewels, and so much in ready money; whereas he is not, upon any account, worth one penny in all the world; certainly such legacies will never make a man the richer nor the happier. None of those great and precious promises, which are hinted at above, will signify anything, if Christ be not God; for they can neither refresh us, nor cheer us in this world, nor make us happy in that other world. If Christ be not God, how can he purchase our pardon, procure our peace, pacify divine wrath, and satisfy infinite justice? A man may satisfy the justice of man, but who but a God can satisfy the justice of God? 'Will God accept of thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or the firstborn of thy body for the sin of thy soul?' Mic 6:7. Oh, no! he will not, he cannot. That scripture is worthy to be written in letters of gold: Acts 20:28, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' This must needs relate to Christ, and Christ is here called God, and Christ's blood is called the blood of God; and without a peradventure Christ could never have gone through with the purchase of the church, if the blood he shed had not been the blood of God. This blood is called God's own blood, because the Son of God, being and remaining true God, assumed human flesh and blood in unity of person. By this phrase, that which appertaineth to the humanity of Christ is attributed to his divinity, because of the union of the two natures in one person, and communion of properties. The church is to Christ a bloody spouse, an Aceldama or field of blood: for she could not be redeemed with silver and gold, but with the blood of God, 1Pe 1:18-19: so it is called by a communication of properties, to set forth the incomparable value and virtue thereof. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If Christ be not God, yea, God-man, then we shall never be able to answer all the challenges that either divine justice or Satan can make upon us. Whatsoever the justice of God can exact, that the blood of God can discharge. Now the blood of Christ is the blood of God, as I have evidenced in the second reason. By reason of the hypostatical union, the human nature being united to the divine, the human nature did suffer, the divine did satisfy. Christ's godhead did give both majesty and efficacy to his sufferings. Christ was sacrifice, priest, and altar. He was sacrifice as he was man, priest as he was God and man, and altar as he was God. It is the property of the altar to sanctify the thing offered on it, Mat 23:19; so the altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it meritorious. Man sinned, and therefore man must satisfy. Therefore the human nature must be assumed by a surety, for man cannot do it. If an angel should have assumed human nature, it would have polluted him. Human nature was so defiled by sin that it could not be assumed by any but God. Now Christ being God, the divine nature purified the human nature which he took, and so it was a sufficient sacrifice, the person offered in sacrifice being God as well as man. This is a most noble ground upon which a believer may challenge Satan to say Iris worst and to do his worst. Let him present God as terrible, yea, as a consuming fire, Heb 12:29; let him present me as odious and abominable in the sight of God, as

once he did Joshua, Zec 3:2-3; let him present me before the Lord as vile and mercenary, as once he did Job, Job 1:9-11; let him aggravate the height of God's displeasure, and the height and depth and length and breadth of my sins, I shall readily grant all, and against all this I will set the infinite satisfaction of dear Jesus. This I know, that though the justice of God cannot be avoided nor bribed, yet it may be satisfied. Here is a proportionable satisfaction, here is God answering God. It is a very noble plea of the apostle, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died,' Rom 8:34. Let Satan urge the justice of God as much as he can, I am sure that the justice of God makes me sure of salvation; and the reason is evident, because his justice obligeth him to accept of an adequate satisfaction of his own appointing, 1Jn 1:7-9. The justice of God maketh me sure of mine own happiness, because if God be just, that satisfaction should be had, when that satisfaction is made, justice requireth that the person for whom it is made shall be received into favour. I confess that unless God had obliged himself by promise, there were no pressing his justice thus far, because *noxa sequitur caput*. There was mercy in the promise of sending Christ, out of mercy to undertake for us, otherwise we cannot say that God was bound in justice to accept of satisfaction, unless he had first in mercy been pleased to appoint the way of a surety, Gen 2:15. Justice indeed required satisfaction, but it required it of the person that sinneth: Gen 2:17, 'But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die'—or dying thou shalt die; or, as others read the words, thou shalt surely and shortly or suddenly die; and, without controversy, every man should die the same day he is born. 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom 6:23; and this wages should be presently paid, did not Christ, as a boon, beg poor sinners' lives for a season: for which cause he is called the Saviour of all men, 1Ti 4:10—not of eternal preservation, but of temporal reservation. It was free and noble mercy to all mankind, that dear Jesus was promised and provided, sealed and sent into the world, John 6:27, that some might be eternally saved, and the rest preserved from wrath for a time. Here cometh in mercy, that a surety shall be accepted; and what he doth is as if the person that offended should have done it himself. Here is mercy and salvation surely bottomed upon both. Ah, what sweet and transcendent comfort flows from this very consideration, that Christ; is God! But,

[4.] Fourthly, The great and glorious majesty of God required it, that Christ should be God. God the Father being a God of infinite holiness, purity, justice, and righteousness, none but he who was very God, who was essentially one with the Father, could or durst interpose between God and fallen man, John 10:30, and John 14:9-11, &c. The angels, though they are glorious creatures, yet they are but creatures; and could these satisfy divine justice, and bear infinite wrath, and purchase divine favour, and reconcile us to God, and procure our pardon, and change our hearts, and renew our natures, and adorn our souls with grace? and yet all these things must be done, or we undone, and that for ever! Now if this were a work too high for angels, then we may safely conclude that it was a work too hard for fallen man. Man was once the mirror of all understanding, the hieroglyphic of wisdom, but now *quantum mutatus ab illo*, there is a great alteration; for poor sorry man is now sent to school to learn wisdom and instruction of the beasts, birds, and creeping things, he is sent to the pismire to learn providence, Pro 6:6, to the stork and to the swallow to learn to make a right use of time, Jer 8:7, to the ox and the ass to learn knowledge, Isa 1:3, and to the fowls of the air to learn confidence, Mat 6:1-34. Man that was once a master of knowledge, a wonder of understanding, perfect in the science of all things, is now grown blockish, sottish, and senseless, and therefore altogether unfit and unable to make his peace with God, to reconcile himself to God, &c. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, That Christ's sufferings and merits might be sufficient, it was absolutely necessary that he should be God. The sin of man was infinite, I mean infinitely punishable; if not infinite in number, yet infinite in nature, every offence being infinite, it being committed against an infinite God. No creature could therefore satisfy for it, but the sufferer must be God, that so his infiniteness might be answerable to the infiniteness of men's offences. There was an absolute necessity of Christ's sufferings, partly because he was pleased to substitute himself in the sinner's stead, and partly because his sufferings only could be satisfactory. Now, unless he had been man, how could he suffer? and unless he had been God, how could he satisfy offended justice? Look, as he must be more than man, that he may be able to suffer, that his sufferings may be meritorious, so he must be man, that he may be in a capacity to suffer, die, and obey; for these are no work for one who is only God. A God only cannot suffer, a man only cannot merit; God cannot obey, man is bound to obey; wherefore Christ, that he might obey and suffer, he was man; and that he might merit by his obedience and suffering, he was God-man; just such a person did the work of redemption call for. That Christ's merits might be sufficient, he must be God; for sufficient merit for mankind could not be in the person of any mere man, no, not in Christ himself, considered only as man; for so all the grace he had he did receive it, and all the good he did he was bound to do it; for he 'was made of a woman, and made under the law,' Gal 4:4—not only under the ceremonial law as he was a Jew, but under the moral as a man, for it is under that law under which we were, and from which we are redeemed, Gal 3:13—therefore in fulfilling it he did no more than that which was his duty to do; he could not merit by it, no, not for himself, much less for others, considered only as man; therefore he must also be God, that the dignity of his person might add dignity, and virtue, and value to his works. In a word, *Deus potuit, sed non debuit; homo debuit, sed non potuit*—God could, but he should not; man should, but he could not make satisfaction; therefore he that would do it must be both God and man. *Torris erutus ab igne?* as the prophet speaketh; 'Is not this a firebrand taken out of the fire?' Zec 3:2. You know that in a firebrand taken out of the fire, there is fire and wood inseparably mixed, and in Christ there is God and man wonderfully united. He was God, else neither his sufferings nor his merits could have been sufficient; and if his could not, much less any man's else; for all other men are both conceived and born in original sin, and also much and often defiled with actual sin, and therefore we ought for ever to abhor all such Popish doctrines, prayers, and masses for the dead, which exalt man's merits, man's satisfaction: 'For no man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever,' Psa 49:7-8. And therefore all the money that hath been given for masses, dirges, trentals, &c., hath been cast away; for Jesus Christ, who is God-man, is the only Redeemer, and in the other world money beareth no mastery. Let me make a few inferences from what has been said; and therefore,

1. First, Is it so, that Christ is God-man, that he is God and man? Then let this raise our faith, and strengthen our faith, in our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith is built on God; 1Pe 1:21. Now, Jesus Christ is very God, and therefore the fittest foundation in the world for us to build our faith upon. 'God manifest in the flesh' is a firm basis for faith and comfort. 'He is able to save to the uttermost,' Heb 7:25. Christ is a thorough Saviour, he saves perfectly, and he saves perpetually; he never carries on redemption work by halves. Christ being God as well as man, is able, by the power of his godhead, to vanquish death, devils, hell, and all the enemies of our salvation; and by the power of his godhead is able to merit pardon of sin, the favour of God, the heavenly inheritance, and all the

glory of the other world; for this dignity of his person addeth virtue and efficacy to his death and sufferings, in that he that suffered and died was very God; therefore God is said to have 'purchased the church with his own blood,' Acts 20:28. Christ having suffered in our nature, which he took upon him, that is, in his human soul and body, the wrath of God, the curse, and all the punishments which were due to our sins, hath paid the price of our redemption, pacified divine wrath, and satisfied divine justice, in the very same nature in which we have sinned and provoked the Holy One of Israel, so that now all believers may triumphingly say, 'There is no condemnation to us that are in Christ Jesus, Rom 8:1, Christ having, in our nature, suffered the whole curse and punishment due to our sins, God cannot in justice but accept of his sufferings as a full and complete satisfaction for all our sins, 1Jn 1:7, 1Jn 1:9; so that now there remaineth no more curse or punishment properly so called for us to suffer, either in our souls or bodies, either in this life or in the life to come, but we are certainly and fully delivered from all; not only from the eternal curse, and all the punishments and torments of hell, but also from the curse and sting of bodily death, and from all afflictions as they are curses and punishments of sin, 1Co 15:55-56. That Jesus, who is God-man, hath changed the nature of them to us, so that of bitter curses and heavy punishments, they are become fatherly chastisements, the fruits of divine love, and the promoters of the internal and eternal good of our souls, Heb 12:5-7, and Rev 3:19. Oh, how should these things strengthen our faith in dear Jesus, and work us to lean and stay our weary souls wholly and only upon him who is God-man, 'and who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' 1Co 1:30. Among the evangelists we find that Christ had a threefold entertainment among the sons of men: some received him into house, not into heart, as Simon the Pharisee, who gave him no kiss nor water to his feet, Luk 7:44; some neither into heart nor house, as the graceless, swinish Gergesites, Mat 8:34, who had neither civility nor honesty; some both into house and heart, as Lazarus, Mary, Martha, &c., John 11:16. Certainly that Jesus who is God-man deserves the best room in all our souls, and the uppermost seat in all our hearts. But,

2. Secondly, If Jesus Christ be God-man, very God and very man, then what high cause have we to observe, admire, wonder, and even stand amazed at the transcendent love of Christ in becoming man! Oh! the firstness, the freeness, the unchangeableness, the greatness, the matchlessness of Christ's love to fallen man in becoming man! Men many times shew their love to one another, by hanging up one another's pictures in their families; but, ah, what love did Christ shew when he took our nature upon him! Heb 2:16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham;' ■πῖλαμβ■νεταί, he assumed, apprehended, caught, laid hold on the seed of Abraham, as the angel did on Lot, Gen 19:16, as Christ did on Peter, Mat 14:31, or as men do upon a thing they are glad they have got and are loath to let go again. O sirs! it is a main ground and pillar of our comfort and confidence, that Jesus Christ took our flesh; for if he had not took our flesh upon him, we could never have been saved by him. Christ took not a part, but the whole nature of man, that is, a true human soul and body, together with all the essential properties and faculties of both; that in man's nature lie might die, and suffer the wrath of God, and whole curse due to our sins, which otherwise, being God only, he could never have done; and that he might satisfy divine justice for sin, in the same nature that had sinned, and indeed it was most meet and fit, that the mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should partake in the natures of both parties to be reconciled, Heb 2:14. Oh, what matchless love was this, that made our dear Lord Jesus to lay by for a time all that 'glory that he had with the Father

before the world was,' John 17:5, and to assume our nature, and to be 'found in fashion as a man,' Php 2:8. To see the great God in the form of a servant, or hanging upon the cross, how wonderful and astonishing was it to all that believed him to be God-man! God 'manifested in our flesh' is an amazing mystery, 1Ti 3:16, a mystery fit for the speculation of angels, 1Pe 1:11, that the eternal God should become the man Christ Jesus, 1Ti 2:5; that a most glorious creator should become a poor creature; that the ancient of days, Dan 7:9, Dan 7:13, Dan 7:22, should become an infant of days, Mat 2:11; that the most high should stoop so low as to dwell in a body of flesh—is a glorious mystery, that transcends all human understanding. It would have seemed a high blasphemy for us to have thought of such a thing, or to have desired such a thing, or to have spoken of such a thing, if God, in his everlasting gospel, had not revealed such a thing to us. Among the Romish priests, friars, Jesuits, they count it a great demonstration of love, a high honour that is done to any of their orders, when any nobleman or great prince, who is weary of the world, and the world weary of him, comes among them, and takes any of their habits upon him, and lives and dies in their habits. Oh, what a demonstration of Christ's love is it! and what a mighty honour hath Jesus Christ put upon mankind, in that he took our nature upon him, in that he lived in our nature and died in our nature, and rose in our nature, and ascended in our nature, and now sits at his Father's right hand in our nature! Acts 1:10-11. Though Jacob's love to Rachel, and Jonathan's love to David, and David's love to Absalom, and the primitive Christians' love to one another was strong, very strong; yet Christ's love in taking our human nature upon him does infinitely transcend all their loves. I think, saith one speaking of Christ, he 'cannot despise me, who is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; for if he neglect me as a brother, yet he will love me as a husband; that is my comfort.' 'O my Saviour,' saith one, [Jerome,] 'didst thou die for love for me? a love more dolorous than death, but to me a death more lovely than love itself; I cannot live, love, and be longer from thee.' I read in Josephus,² that when Herod Antipater was accused to Julius (?) Cæsar as no good friend of his, he made no other apology, but stripping himself stark naked, shewed Cæsar his wounds and said, let me hold my tongue, these wounds will speak for me how I have loved Cassar. Ah, my friends, Christ's wounds in our nature speak out the admirable love of Jesus Christ to us; and oh, how should this love of his draw out our love to Christ, and inflame our love to that Jesus who is God-man blessed for ever. Mr Welch, a Suffolkshire minister, weeping at table, being asked the reason, said, it was because he could love Christ no more. Ah, what reason have we to weep, and weep again and again, that we can love that Jesus no more, who hath shewed such unparalleled love to us in assuming of the human nature! Et ipsam animam odio haberem, si non diligeret meum Jesum, I must hate my very soul, if it should not love my Jesus, saith Bernard. Ah, what cause have we even to hate ourselves, because we love that dear Jesus no more, who is very God and very man. But,

3. Thirdly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then we may very safely and roundly assert that the work of redemption was a very great work. The redemption of souls is a mighty work, a costly work. To redeem poor souls from sin, from wrath, from the power of Satan, from the curse, from hell, from the condemnation, was a mighty work. Wherefore was Christ born, wherefore did he live, sweat, groan, bleed, die, rise, ascend? Was it not to bring 'deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound'? Was it not to 'make an end of sin, to finish transgression, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,' and 'to destroy the works of the devil,' and to 'abolish death,' and to 'bring life and immortality to light,' and to 'redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself, and to make us a peculiar people, zealous of good works'?

Certainly the work of redemption was no ordinary or common thing; God-man must engage in it, or poor fallen man is undone for ever. The greater the person is that is engaged in any work, the greater is that work. The great monarchs of the world do not use to engage their sons in poor, low, mean, and petty services, but in such services as are high and honourable, noble and weighty; and will you imagine that ever the great and glorious God would have sent his Son, his own Son, his only-begotten Son, his bosom Son, his Son in whom his soul delighted before the foundations of the earth was laid, to redeem poor sinners' souls, if this had not been a great work, a high work, and a most glorious work in his eye? John 1:18, and Pro 8:22-33. The creation of the world did but cost God a word of his mouth, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' Gen 1:3; but the redemption of souls cost him his dearest Son. There is a divine greatness stamped upon the works of providence, but what are the works of providence to the work of redemption? What are all providential works to Christ's coming from heaven, to his being incarnate, to his doings, sufferings, and dying; and all this to ransom poor souls from the curse, hell, wrath, and eternal death? Souls are dear and costly things, and of great price in the sight of God. Amongst the Romans, those their proper goods and estates which men had gotten in the wars with hazard of their lives, were called *Peculium Castrense*, of a field purchase. Oh, how much more may the precious and immortal souls of men be called Christ's *Peculium Castrense*, his purchase, gotten, not only by the jeopardy of his life, but with the loss of his life and blood! 'Ye know,' saith the apostle, 'that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without a spot,' 1Pe 1:18-19. Christ, that only went to the price of souls, hath told us that one soul is more worth than all the world, Mat 16:26. Christ left his Father's bosom, and all the glory of heaven, for the good of souls; he assumed the nature of man for the happiness of the soul of man; he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he wept for souls, he sweat for souls, he prayed for souls, he paid for souls, and he bled out his heart blood for the redemption of souls. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature, it is a heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. It is capable of the knowledge of God, of union with God, of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God, John 14:8, and Psal 17:15. There is nothing that can suit the soul below God, there is nothing that can satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece that it scorns all the world. What are all the riches of the East or West Indies, what are rocks of diamonds, or mountains of gold, or the price of Cleopatra's draught, to the price that Christ laid down for souls? It is only the blood of him that is God-man that is an equivalent price for the redemption of souls. Silver and gold hath redeemed many thousands out of Turkish bondage, but all the silver and gold in the world could never redeem one poor soul from hellish bondage, from hellish torments. Souls are a dear commodity. He that bought them found them so; and yet at how cheap a rate do some sinners sell their immortal souls! Callenuceus tells us of a nobleman of Naples that was wont profanely to say that he had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it; but if he hath one soul in hell, I believe he will never find another for heaven. A person of quality, who is still alive, told me a few years since, that in discourse with one of his servants he asked him what he thought would become of his soul if he lived and died in his ignorance and enmity against God, &c. He most profanely and atheistically answered that when he died, he would hang his soul on a hedge, and say, Run God, run devil, and he that can run fastest let him take my soul.² I have read of a most blasphemous wretch that, on a time being with his companions in a common inn,

carousing and making merry, asked them if they thought a man had a soul or no; whereunto when they replied that the souls of men are immortal, and that some of them after death lived in hell and others in heaven—for so the writings of the prophets and apostles instructed them—he answered and swore that he thought it nothing so, but rather that there was no soul in man to survive the body, but that heaven and hell were mere fables and inventions of priests to get gain; and for himself, he was ready to sell his soul to any that would buy it. Then one of his companions took up a cup of wine, and said, sell me thy soul for this cup of wine; which he receiving, bade him take his soul, and drank up the wine. Now Satan himself being there in man's shape, bought it again of the other at the same price, and by and by bade him give him his soul, the whole company affirming it was meet he should have it, since he had bought it, not perceiving the devil; but presently, he laying hold of this soul-seller, carried him into the air before them all, to the great astonishment and amazement of the beholders; and from that day to this he was never heard of, but hath now found by experience that men have souls, and that hell is no fable!4 Ah, for what a thing of nought do many thousands sell their souls to Satan every day! How many thousands are there who swear, curse, lie, cheat, deceive, &c., for a little gain every day! I have read that there was a time when the Romans did wear jewels on their shoes. Oh that in these days men did not worse! Oh that they did not trample under feet that matchless jewel, their precious and immortal souls! O sirs, there is nothing below heaven so precious and noble as your souls, and therefore do not play the courtiers with your poor souls. Now the courtier does all things late. He rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and goes to bed late, and repents late. Christ made himself an offering for sin, that souls might not be undone by sin; the Lord died that slaves might live; the Son dies that servants might live; the natural Son dies that adopted sons may live; the only-begotten Son dies that bastards might live; yea, the judge dies that malefactors may live. Ah, friends, as there was never sorrow like Christ's, so there was never love like Christ's love; and of all his love, none to that of soul love. Christ, who is God-man, did take upon him thy nature, and bare thy sins, and suffered death, and encountered the cross, and was made a sacrifice and a curse, and all to bring about thy redemption; and therefore thou mayest safely conclude that the work of redemption is a great work. But,

4. Fourthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then let this encourage poor sinners to come to Christ, to close with Christ, to accept of Christ, to match with Christ, and to enter into a marriage union and communion with Christ. The great work of gospel ministers is like that of Eliezer, Abraham's servant, to seek a match for our Master's Son. Now our way to win you to him, is not only to tell you what he has, but what he is. Now he is 'God-man in one person.' He is man, that you may not be afraid of him; and he is God, that he may be able to save you to the uttermost; he is 'the Prince of the kings of the earth;' he is 'Lord of lords and King of kings;' he is the 'Heir of all things;' he is 'fairer than the children of men;' he is 'the chiefest of ten thousand;' he is 'altogether lovely.' There is everything in Jesus, who is God-man, to encourage you to come to him. If you look upon his names, if you look upon his natures, if you look upon his offices, if you look upon his dignities, if you look upon his personal excellencies, if you look upon his mighty conquests, if you look upon his royal attendance,—all these things call aloud upon you to come to Christ, to close with Christ. If you look upon the great things that he has done for sinners, and the hard things that he has suffered for sinners, and the glorious things that he has prepared and laid up for sinners, how can you but readily accept of him, and sweetly embrace him? Though thou hast no loveliness nor comeliness, no beauty nor glory, Eze 16:4-5, and Isa 55:1-2; though thou

hast not one penny in thy purse, nor a rag to hang on thy back, yet if thou art but really and heartily willing to be divorced from all thy sinful lovers, and accept of Christ for thy sovereign Lord, he is willing that the match should be made up between thee and him, Hos 3:3, and Rev 22:17. Now shall Christ woo you himself, shall he declare his willingness to take you with nothing, shall he engage himself to protect you, to maintain you, and at last, as a dowry, to bestow heaven upon you, and will you refuse him, will you turn your backs upon him? O sirs! what could Christ have done that he has not done to do you good, and to make you happy for ever? Lo! he has laid aside his glorious robes, and he has put on your rags; he has clothed himself with your flesh; he came off from his royal throne, he humbled himself to the death of the cross, and has brought life, immortality, and glory to your very doors; and will you yet stand out against him? Oh, 'how shall such escape who neglect so great salvation,' Heb 2:3; who say, 'This man shall not rule over us,' Luk 19:14; who 'tread under foot the Son of God'? Heb 10:28. Oh, what wrath, what great wrath, what pure wrath, what infinite wrath, what everlasting wrath, is reserved for such persons! John 3:36. Doubtless, Turks, Jews, and Pagans will have a cooler and a lighter hell than the despisers and rejecters of Christ, John 5:40, and Mat 23:13-14. The great damnation is for those that might have Christ, but would not. And no wonder! for the sin of rejecting Christ is not chargeable upon the devils. Ah sinners, sinners! that you would labour to understand more, and dwell more upon, the preeminent excellencies of Christ! for till the soul can discern a better, a greater excellency in Christ than in any other thing, it will never yield to match with Christ. Oh, labour every day more and more to take the height and depth and breadth of the excellency of Christ. He is the chiefest and the choicest of all, both in that upper and in this lower world. The godhead dwells bodily in him; he is full of grace; he is the heir of glory; the holy one of God; the brightness of his Father's image; the fountain of life, the well of salvation, and the wonder of heaven. Oh, when will you so understand the superlative excellency of Christ as to fall in love with him, as to cry out with the martyr, 'Oh, none but Christ; oh, none to Christ!' It is your wisdom, it is your duty, it is your safety, it is your glory, it is your salvation, it is your all to accept of Christ, to close with Christ, and to bestow yourselves, your souls, your all on Christ. If you embrace him, you are made for ever; but if you reject him, you perish for ever. Bernard calls Christ, Sponsus sanguinum, the Bridegroom of Bloods, because he espoused his church to himself upon the bed of his cross, his head begirt with a pillow of thorns, his body drenched in a bath of his own blood. To turn your backs upon this bridegroom of bloods will certainly cost you the blood of your souls; and therefore look to it. But,

5. Fifthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Oh, then, honour him above all. Oh, let him have the preeminence, exalt him as high as God the Father hath exalted him. It is the absolute will of the Father that 'all should honour his Son, even as they honour himself:' for he having the same nature and essence with the Father, the Father will have him have the same honour which he himself hath; which whosoever denies to him reflects dishonour upon the Father, who will not bear anything derogatory to the glory of his Son. Certainly there is due to Christ, as he is God-man, the highest respect, reverence, and veneration, which angels and men can possibly give unto him. Oh, look upon the Lord Jesus as God; and according to that honour that is due to him as God, so must you honour him. The apostle speaks of some who, 'when they knew God, they did not glorify him as God,' Rom 1:21; so several pretend to give some glory to Christ, but they do not glorify him as God. O sirs, this is that which you must come up to, viz., to honour Christ in such a manner as may be suitable to his natures, and as he is the infinite, blessed, and eternal God; and ah! what honour can be high enough for such a person? Christ's honour was very dear

to him, who said, Lord, use me for thy shield to keep off those wounds of dishonour, which else would fall on thee, [Bernard.] Luther, in an epistle to Spalatinus, saith, 'They call me a devil, but be it so, so long as Christ is magnified, I am well a-payd.' The inanimate creatures are so compliant with his pleasure, that they will thwart their own nature to serve his honour; fire will descend, as on Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen 19:1-38; and water, though a fluid body, stand up like a solid wall, as in the Red Sea, Exo 14:22; if he do but speak the word. Oh, let not the inanimate creatures one day rise in judgment against us for not giving Christ his due honour. If we honour Christ we shall have honour, that is a bargain of Christ's own making; but if we dishonour him, he will put dishonour upon us, as Scripture and history in all ages do sufficiently evidence, 1Sa 2:30. In history we read of an impostor that gave it out that he was that star which Balaam prophesied of, which was a prophecy of Christ, Num 24:17; this fellow called himself Ben-chomar, the son of a star. This man professed himself to be Christ, but he was slain with thunder and lightning from heaven, and then the Jews called him Ben-cosmar, which signifieth the son of a lie. Learned Buxtorf tells us that the Jews call Christ Bar-chozabb, the son of a lie, a bastard; and his gospel Aven-gelaion, the volume of lies, or the volume of iniquity; and hath not God been a-revenging this upon them for above this sixteen hundred years? Rabbi Samuel, who long since writ a tract in form of an epistle to Rabbi Isaac, master of the synagogue of the Jews; wherein he doth excellently discuss the cause of their long captivity and extreme misery, and after that he had proved it was inflicted for some grievous sin, he sheweth that sin to be the same which Amos speaks of. 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes,' Amo 2:6. The selling of Joseph he makes the first sin, the worshipping the calf in Horeb the second sin, the abusing and killing God's prophets the third sin, and the selling of Jesus Christ the fourth sin. For the first they served four hundred years in Egypt, for the second they wandered forty years in the wilderness, for the third they were captives seventy years in Babylon, and for the fourth they are held in pitiful captivity, even to this very day. Oh, how severely has God revenged the wrongs and indignities done to Christ the Lord, by this miserable people, to this very hour! and yet, oh, the several ways, wherein this poor people do every day express their malice and hatred against the Lord Jesus! Oh, pray, pray hard, that the veil may be taken away that has been so long before their eyes. Herod imprisons Peter, and killeth James with the sword, Acts 12:1-4; this God puts up, but when he comes to usurp the honour due to Christ, he must die for it, Acts 12:23. Herod might more safely take away the liberty of one, and the life of another, than the glory due to Christ. Long before his death, being in chains, he met with a strange omen; for, as he stood bound before the palace, leaning dejectedly upon a tree, among many others that were prisoners with him, an owl came and sat down in that tree to which he leaned; which a German seeing, being one of those that stood there bound, he asked who he was that was in the purple, and leaned there; and understanding who he was, he told him of his enlargement, promotion to honour, and prosperity; and that when he should see that bird again he should die within five days after. Now when Herod had imprisoned Peter, and slain James with the sword, he went down to Cæsarea, and there he made sports and shows in honour of Cæsar; and, on the second day, being most gorgeously apparelled, and the sun shining very bright upon his robe of silver, his flatterers saluted him for a god, and cried out to him, 'Be merciful unto us! hitherto have we feared thee as a man, but, henceforward, we will acknowledge thee to be of a nature more excellent than mortal frailty can attain to.' The wretched king reprov'd not this abominable flattery, but was well pleased with it; and, not long

after, he espied the owl which the German had foretold to be the omen of his death. And suddenly he was seized with miserable gripings in his belly, which came upon him with vehement extremity; whereupon, turning himself towards his friends, saith, Lo, he whom you esteem for a god is doomed to die, and destiny shall evidently confute you, in those flattering and false speeches which you lately used concerning me; for I, who have been adored by you as one immortal, am now under the hands of death; and his griefs and torments increasing, his death drew on apace; whereupon he was removed into the palace, and all the people put on sackcloth, and lay on the ground, praying for him; which he, beholding, could not refrain from tears; and so after five days he gave up the ghost. Thus you see how dearly they have paid for it that have not given Christ his due glory; and let these instances of his wrath alarm all your hearts so, that we may make more conscience than ever, of setting the crown of honour only upon Christ's head, 'for he only is worthy of all honour, glory, and praise,' Rev 14:10-11. But,

6. Sixthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then from hence as in a glass you may see the true reasons why the death and sufferings of Christ, though short, very short, yet have a sufficient power and virtue in them to satisfy God's justice, to pacify his wrath, to procure our pardon, and to save our immortal souls—viz., because of the dignity of his person that died and suffered for us, the Son of God, yea, God himself. There was an infinite virtue and value in all his sufferings; hence his blood is called 'precious blood,' yea, 'the blood of God.' Did man transgress the royal law of God? behold God himself is become a man to make up that breach, and to satisfy divine justice to the uttermost farthing, Rom 8:2-4. For the man Christ Jesus to stand before the bar of the law, and to make full and complete reparation to it, was the highest honour that ever was done to the law of God. This is infinitely more pleasing and delightful to divine justice than if all the curses of the law had been poured out upon fallen man, and than if the law had built up its honour upon the destruction of the whole creation. To see one sun clouded is much more than to see the moon and all the stars in heaven overcast. Christ considered as God-man was great, very great; and the greater his person was, the greater were his sorrows, his sufferings, his humiliation, his compassion, his satisfaction to divine justice. Had not Christ been God-man, he could never have been an able surety, Heb 7:25—he could never have paid our debts, he could never have satisfied divine justice, he could never have brought in an everlasting righteousness, Dan 9:24, he could never have 'spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them on the cross,' Col 2:15—a plain allusion to the Roman triumphs, where the victor ascending up to the capitol in a chariot of state, all the prisoners following him on foot with their hands bound behind them, and the victor commonly threw certain pieces of coin abroad to be picked up by the common people. So Christ, in the day of his solemn inauguration into his heavenly kingdom, triumphed over sin, death, devils, and hell, 'and gave gifts to men.' And had he not been God-man, he could never have merited for us a glorious reward. If we consider Christ himself as a mere man, setting aside his godhead, Eph 4:8, he could not merit by his sufferings; for, 1. Christ as he was man only, was a creature. Now a mere creature can merit nothing from the Creator. 2. Christ's sufferings, as he was man only, were finite, and therefore could not merit infinite glory. Indeed, as he was God, his sufferings were meritorious; but, consider him purely as man, they were not. This is wisely to be observed against the papists, who make so great a noise of men's merits; for if Christ's sufferings, as he was mere man, could not merit the least favour from God, then what mortal man is able to merit, at the hand of God, the least of mercies by his greatest sufferings? But,

7. Seventhly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then from hence we may see the greatest pattern of humility and self-denial that ever was or will be in this world. That he who was the Lord of glory, that he who was equal with God, that he should leave the bosom of his Father, Php 2:6; John 1:18, which was a bosom of the sweetest loves and the most ineffable delights, that he should put off all that glory that he had with the Father before the foundation of the world was laid, John 17:5, that he should so far abase himself as to become man, by taking on him our base, vile nature, so that in this our nature he might die, suffer, satisfy, and bring many sons to glory, Heb 2:10,—oh, here is the greatest humility and abasement that ever was! And oh that all sincere Christians would endeavour to imitate this matchless example of humility and self-denial! Oh the admirable condescensions of dear Jesus, that he should take our nature, and make us partakers of his divine nature!; 2Pe 1:4, that he should put on our rags, and put upon us his royal robes! Rev 19:7-8, that he should make himself poor that we might be rich! 2Co 8:9, low that we might be high! accursed that we might be blessed! Gal 3:10, Gal 3:13. Oh wonderful love! oh grace unsearchable! Ah, Christians, did Christ stoop low, and will you be stout, proud, and high? Was he content to be accounted a worm, a wine-bibber, an enemy to Cæsar, a friend of publicans and sinners, a devil, and must you be all in a flame when vain men make little account of you? Was he willing to be a curse, a reproach for you, and will you shrug, and shrink, and faint, and fret when you are reproached for his name? Did Jesus Christ stoop so low as to wash his disciples' feet, John 13:14, and are you so stout and sturdy that you cannot hear together, nor pray together, nor sit at the table of the Lord together, though you all hope at last to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven? Mat 8:11. Shall one heaven hold you at last; and shall not one house, one bed, one table, one church, hold you here? Oh, that ever worms should swell with such intolerable pride and stoutness! He who was God-man, was lowly, meek, self-denying, and of a most condescending spirit; and oh that all you, who hope for salvation by him, would labour to write after so fair a copy. Bernard calls humility a self-annihilation. The same author saith that humility is conservatrix virtutum. 'Thou wilt save the humble,' saith Job, Job 22:29; in the Hebrew it is, 'him that is of low eyes,' ■■■■ ■■■■■■. A humble Christian hath lower thoughts of himself than others can have of him. Abraham is 'dust and ashes' in his own eyes, Gen 18:1-33, Jacob is 'less than the least of all mercies,' Gen 32:10; David, though a great king, yet looks upon himself as a worm; 'I am a worm, and no man,' Psa 22:6. The word in the original, Tolugnath, signifieth a very little worm, which breedeth in scarlet; a worm that is so little, that a man can hardly see it or perceive it. Oh, how little, how very little was David in his own eyes; and Paul, who was the greatest among the apostles, yet, in his own eyes, he was 'less than the least of all saints.' Non sum dignus dici minimus, saith Ignatius, 'I am not worthy to be called the least.' 'Lord! I am hell, but thou art heaven,' said blessed Cooper: 'I am a most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that the earth should bear me,' said holy Bradford: Luther, in humility, speaks thus of himself; 'I have no other name than sinner; sinner is my name, sinner is my surname; this is the name by which I shall be always known; I have sinned, I do sin, I shall sin, in infinitum.' Ah, how can proud, stout spirits read these instances and not blush! Certainly the sincere humble Christian is like the violet, which grows low, hangs the head down, and hides itself with its own leaves; and were it not that the frequent smell of his many virtues discovers him to the world, he would choose to live and die in his self-contenting secrecy. But,

8. Eighthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then hence we may see how to have access to God; namely, by means of Christ's human nature, which he hath taken

upon him, to that very end, that he might in it die and suffer for our sins, and so reconcile us to God, and give us access to him, Rom 5:1-2; Eph 3:12, and Eph 2:18. 'By him we have access to the Father.' The word is προσάγωγην, 'a leading by the hand,' an introduction, an adduction: it is an allusion, saith Estius, to the customs of princes, to whom there is no passage, unless we are brought in by one of their favourites, Est 1:1-22. Though the Persian kings held it a piece of their silly glory to hold off their best friends, who might not come near them, but upon special licence; yet the great King of heaven and earth counts it his glory to give us free access at all times, in all places, and upon all occasions, by the man Christ Jesus: 1Ti 2:5, 'There is one mediator between God and us, even the man Christ Jesus.' Christ was made true man, that in our nature he might reconcile us to God, and give us access to God, which he could never have done, had he not been very God and very man. Without the human nature of Christ, we could never have had access to God, or fellowship with God; being by nature enemies to God, and estranged from God, and dead in trespasses and sins, Rom 5:10, it is only by the mediation of Christ incarnate that we come to be reconciled to, God, Eph 2:1, Eph 2:12-14, to have access to him, and acceptance with him. In Christ's human nature God and we meet together, and have fellowship together, 1Jn 1:1-3. It could never stand with the unspotted holiness and justice of God, who is 'a consuming fire,' Heb 12:29, to honour us with one cast of his countenance, or one hour's communion with himself, were it not upon the account of the man Christ Jesus. The least serious thought of God out of Christ will breed nothing in the soul but horror and amazement; which made Luther say, Nolo Deum absolutum, let me have nothing to do with an absolute God. Believers have free and blessed access to God, but still it is upon the credit of the man Christ Jesus, Heb 4:15-16. 'Let us come boldly to the throne of grace,' saith the apostle, speaking of Christ, 'that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' The apostle's phrase is μετὰ παρρησίας, a word which signifies liberty of speech, and boldness of face; as when a man with a bold and undaunted spirit, utters his mind before the great ones of the world without blushing, without weakness of heart, without shaking of his voice, without imperfection and faltering in speech, when neither majesty nor authority can take off his courage, so as to stop his mouth, and make him afraid to speak. With such heroic and undaunted spirits would the apostle have us to come to the throne of grace; and all upon the credit of Christ our high priest, who is God-man. But,

9. Ninthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then you may be very confident of his sympathising with you in all your afflictions, Eze 35:10-13; Isa 37:23-24; then this may serve as a foundation to support you under all your troubles, and as a cordial to comfort you under all your afflictions, in that Christ partaking of the same nature, and having had experience of the infirmities of it, he is the more able and willing to help and succour us Heb 2:17, 'Wherefore in all things it behoveth him to be like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people:' so Heb 4:15. If one come to visit a man that is sick of a grievous disease, who hath himself been formerly troubled with the same disease, he will sympathise more, and shew more compassion than twenty others, who have not felt the like: so here, from Christ's sufferings in his human nature we may safely gather that he will shew himself a merciful high priest to us in our sufferings, and one that will be ready to help and succour us in all our afflictions and miseries, which we suffer in this life, inasmuch as himself had experience of suffering the like in our nature; 'for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted:' and this should be a staff to support us, and a cordial to comfort us in all our sorrows and miseries. It is between Christ and his

church as it is between two lute strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner is one struck but the other trembles: Isa 63:9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted.' These words may be read interrogatively thus: was he in all their afflictions afflicted? Christ took to heart the afflictions of his church, he was himself grieved for them and with them. The Lord, the better to allure and draw his people to himself, speaks after the manner of men, attributing to himself all the affection, love, and fatherly compassion that can possibly be in them to men in misery. Christ did so sympathise with his people in all their afflictions and sufferings, as if he himself had felt the weight, the smart, the pain of them all. 'He was in all things made like unto his brethren,' not only in nature, but also in infirmities and sufferings, and by all manner of temptations, that thereby 'he might be able,' experimentally, 'to succour them that are tempted.' He that toucheth them toucheth not only his eye but the apple of his eye, which is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part, to express the inexpressible tenderness of Christ's compassion towards them. Let persecutors take heed how they meddle with God's eyes, for he will retaliate eye for eye, Exo 21:24: he is wise in heart and mighty in strength, and sinners shall one day pay dear for touching the apple of his eye. Christ counts himself persecuted when his church is persecuted; 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Acts 9:4. And he looks upon himself as hungry, thirsty, naked, and in prison, when his members are so, Mat 25:35-36; so greatly does he sympathise with them. Hence the afflictions of Christians are called στερματα, 'the remainders of the afflictions of Christ,' Col 1:24: such as Christ, by his fellow-feeling, suffereth in his members, and as they by correspondency are to fill up, as exercises and trials of their faith and patience. Christ gave many evidences of his sympathy or fellow-feeling of our infirmities when he was on earth, as he groaned in his spirit and was troubled, John 11:33; when he saw those that wept for Lazarus he wept also, John 11:35; as he did over Jerusalem also, Luk 19:41. It is often observed in the Gospel that Christ was moved with compassion; and that he frequently put forth acts of pity, mercy, and succour to those that were in any distress, either in body or soul. Christ retaineth this sympathy and fellow-feeling with us now he is in heaven; and does so far commiserate our distresses as may stand with a glorified condition. Jesus Christ grieves for the afflictions of his people; 'the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, now long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem,' Zec 1:12. The angel here is that Jesus who is our advocate with the Father, 1Jn 2:1-2. He speaks as one intimately affected with the state and condition of poor Jerusalem. Christ plays the advocate for his suffering people, and feelingly pleads for them; he being afflicted in all their afflictions, it moved him to observe that God's enemies were in a better case than his people; and this put him upon that passionate expostulation, 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem!' Alexander the Great applied his crown to the soldier's forehead that had received a wound for him; and Constantine the Great kissed the hollow of Paphnutius's eye that he had lost for Christ. What an honour was it to the soldier and to Paphnutius that these great men should have fellow-feeling of their sufferings, and sympathise with them in their sorrows! but, oh then! what an honour is it to such poor worms as we are, that Jesus Christ, who is God-man, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, that he should have a fellow-feeling of all our miseries, and sympathise with us in all our troubles! Rev 1:5. But,

10. Tenthly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then from hence you may see the excellency of Christ above man, above all other men, yea, above Adam in innocency. Christ, as man, was perfect in all graces: Isa 11:1-2, 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon

him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.' God gave the Spirit of wisdom to him not by measure; and therefore, at twelve years of age, you find him in the Sanhedrim disputing with the doctors, and asking them questions, John 3:34; Luk 2:46-47; John 1:16, 'And of his fulness have all we received grace for grace;' Col 1:19, 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;' Col 2:3, 'In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' The state of innocency was an excellent estate, it was an estate of perfect holiness and righteousness, Gen 1:27. By his holiness he was carried out to know the Lord, to love the Lord, to delight in the Lord, to fear the Lord, and to take him as his chiefest good, Eph 4:22-24. A legal holiness consists in an exact, perfect, and complete conformity in heart and life to the whole revealed will of God; and this was the holiness that Adam had in his innocency, and this holiness was immediately derived from God, and was perfect. Adam's holiness was as co-natural to him as unholiness is now to us. Adam's holiness was as natural, and as pleasing, and as delightful to him as any way of unholiness can be natural, pleasing, and delightful to us. The estate of innocency was an estate of perfect wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Witness the names that Adam gave to all the creatures, suitable and apposite to their natures, Gen 2:20. The estate of innocency was an estate of great honour and dignity. David brings in Adam in his innocent estate with a crown upon his head, and that crown was a crown of glory and honour: 'Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour,' his place was 'a little lower than the angels,' but far above all other creatures, Psa 8:5. The estate of innocency, it was an estate of great dominion and authority, man being made the sovereign lord of the whole creation, Psa 8:6-8. We need not stand to enlarge upon one parcel of his demesnes, namely, that which they call paradise, sith the whole both of sea and land, and all the creatures in both, were his possession, his paradise. Certainly man's first estate was a state of perfect and complete happiness, there being nothing within him but what was desirable, nothing without him but what was amiable, and nothing about him but what was serviceable and comfortable; and yet Jesus Christ, who is God-man, is infinitely more glorious and excellent than ever Adam was; for Adam was set in a mutable condition, but Christ is the Rock of ages. He is steadfast and abiding for ever; he is 'yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb 13:8. He is the same afore time, in time, and after time; he is the same, that is unchangeable, in his essence, promises, and doctrine. Christ is the same in respect of virtue, and the faith of believers; even his manhood, before it was in being, was clothed with perfection of grace, and so continueth for ever. And again, Adam was a mere man, and alone by himself; but in Christ the human nature was hypostatically united unto the divine; and hence it comes to pass that Christ, even as man, had a greater measure of knowledge and revelation of grace and heavenly gifts than ever Adam had. The apostle tells us that in 'Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead,' σωματικῶς, bodily, that is, essentially; that is, not by a naked and bare communicating of virtue, as God is said to dwell in his saints, but by a substantial union of the two natures, divine and human, the eternal Word and the man, consisting of soul and body, whereby they become one, ἑνὸς φύσιν, one person, one subsistence. Now from this admirable and wonderful union of the two natures in Christ, there flows to the manhood of Christ a plenitude and fulness of all spiritual wisdom and grace, such as was never found in any mere man, no, not in Adam whilst he stood in his integrity and uprightness. But,

11. Eleventhly, Is Jesus Christ God-man? is he very God and very man? Then this truth looks very sourly and frowningly upon all such as deny the godhead of Christ; as Arians, Turks, Jews. How many be there in this city, in this nation, who stiffly deny the divinity of Christ, and dispute against

it, and write against it, and blaspheme that great truth, without which, I think, a man may safely say, there is no possibility of salvation. In ancient times, near unto the age of the apostles, this doctrine of Christ's godhead, and eternal generation from the Father, was greatly opposed by sundry wicked and blasphemous heretics, as Ebion, Cerinthus, Arius, &c., who stirred up great troubles, and bloody persecutions against the church, for maintaining this great truth of Christ's godhead. They asserted that Christ had no true flesh; it was only the likeness of flesh which he appeared in, and that his body was only a fantastic imaginary body; but had the body of Christ been only such a body, then his conception, nativity, death, resurrection, are all too but imaginary things; and then his sufferings and crucifixion are but mere fancies too; and if so, then what would become of us, what would become of our salvation? then our faith would be in vain, and our hope would be in vain, and our hearing, preaching, praying, and receiving, would all be in vain; yea, then all our religion would vanish into a mere fancy also. When a man's conscience is awakened to see his sin and misery, and he shall find guilt to lay like a load upon his soul, and when he shall see that divine justice is to be satisfied, and divine wrath to be pacified, and the curse to be borne, and the law to be fulfilled, and his nature to be renewed, his heart to be changed, and his sins to be pardoned, or else his soul can never be saved: how can such a person venture his soul, his all, upon one that is but a mere creature? Certainly, a mere man is no rock, no city of refuge, and no sure foundation for a man to build his faith and hope upon. Woe to that man, that ever he was born, that has no Jesus, but a Socinian's Jesus to rest upon! Oh, it is sad trusting to one, who is man, but not God; flesh, but not spirit. As you love the eternal safety of your precious souls, and would be happy for ever; as you would escape hell, and get to heaven, lean on none, rest on none, but that Jesus who is God-man, who is very God and very man. Apollinaris held that Christ took not the whole nature of man, but a human body only, without a soul, and that the Godhead was instead of a soul to the manhood. Also Eutyches, who confounded the two natures of Christ, and their properties, &c. Also Apelles and the Manichees, who denied the true human body, and held him to have an aerial or imaginary body. Though the popular sort deified Alexander the Great; yet, having got a clap with an arrow, he said, ye style me Jupiter's son, as if immortal; sed hoc vulnus clamat esse hominem; this blood that issues from the wound proves me in the issue a man: this is αἷμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, the blood of man, not of God, and smelling the stench of his own flesh, he asked his flatterers if the gods yielded such a scent. So may it be said of Jesus Christ our Saviour, though myriads of angels and saints acclaim he is a God, ergo, immortal; and a crew of heretics disclaim him to be man, as the Marcionites averred that he had a fantastical body, and Apelles who conceived that he had a sidereal substance, yet the streams of blood following the arrow of death that struck him, makes it good that he was perfect man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. And as this truth looks sourly upon the above-mentioned persons, so it looks sourly upon the papists, who, by their doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, do overthrow one of the properties of his human nature, which is to be but in one place present at once. This truth also looks sourly upon the Lutherans or Ubiquitaries, who teach that Christ's human nature is in all places by virtue of their personal union, &c. I wonder that of all the old errors, swept down into this latter age, as into a sink of time, this of the Socinians and Arians should be held forth among the rest. O sirs, beware of their doctrines, shun their meetings, and persons that come to you with the denial of the divinity of Christ in their mouths. This was John's doctrine and practice. Irenæus saith, that after he was returned from his banishment, and came to Ephesus, he came to bathe himself, and in the bath he found Cerinthus, that said, Christ had no

being till he received it from the Virgin Mary; upon the sight of whom, John skipped out of the bath, and called his companions from thence; saying, let us go from this place, lest the bath should fall down upon us, because Cerinthus is in it, that is so great an enemy to God. Ye see his doctrine, see his words too: 2Jn 1:10-11, 'If any come to you, having not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.' What that doctrine was, if you cast your eye upon the scripture, you shall find it to be the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Shew no love where you owe nothing but hatred: 'I hate every false way,' saith David, Psalms 119:118. And I shall look upon Auxentius as upon a devil, so long as he is an Arian, said Hilarius. We must shew no countenance, nor give no encouragement to such as deny either the divinity or humanity of Christ.

I have been the longer upon the divinity and humanity of Christ, 1. Because the times we live in require it. 2. That poor, weak, staggering Christians may be strengthened, established, and settled in the truth, as it is in Jesus. 3. That I may give in my testimony and witness against all those who are poisoned and corrupted with Socinian and Arian principles, which destroy the souls of men. 4. That those in whose hands this book may fall may be the better furnished to make head against men of corrupt minds; who, 'by sleight-of-hand and cunning craftiness, lie in wait to deceive,' Eph 4:14.

[6.] Sixthly, As he that did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, was God-man, so the punishments that Christ did sustain for us must be referred only to the substance, and not unto the circumstances of punishment. The punishment which Christ endured, if it be considered in its substance, kind, or nature, so it was the same with what the sinner himself should have undergone. Now the punishment due to the sinner was death, the curse of the law, &c. Now this Christ underwent, for 'he was made a curse for us,' Gal 3:13. But if you consider the punishment which Christ endured, with respect to certain circumstances, adjuncts, and accidents, as the eternity of it, desperation going along with it, &c., then, I say, it was not the same, but equivalent. And the reason is, because, though the enduring of the punishments, as to the substance of them, could, and did agree with him as a surety, yet the circumstances of those punishments could not have befallen him unless he had been a sinner; and therefore every inordination in suffering was far from Christ, and a perpetual duration of suffering could not befall him, for the first of these had been contrary to the holiness and dignity of his person, and the other had made void the end of his suretyship and mediatorship, which was so to suffer, as yet to conquer and to deliver, and therefore, though he did suffer death for us in the substance of it, yet he neither did nor could suffer death in the circumstances of it, so as for ever to be held by death; for then, in suffering death, he should not have conquered death, nor delivered us from death. Neither was it necessary to Christ's substitution that he should undergo in every respect the same punishment which the offender himself was liable unto; but if he underwent so much punishment as did satisfy the law, and vindicate the lawgiver in his holiness, truth, justice, and righteousness, that was enough. Now that was unquestionably done by Christ, as the Scriptures do abundantly testify. It must be readily granted that Christ was to suffer the whole punishment due unto sin, so far as it became the dignity of his person and the necessity of the work; but if he had suffered eternally, the work of redemption could never have been accomplished; and besides, he should have suffered that which could noways beseem him. And therefore the apostle saith, Heb 2:10, 'It became him to be consecrated through sufferings.' Christ

was only to pass through such sufferings as became him who was ordained to be the prince and captain of our salvation. It became him to be man, and it became him in our human nature to suffer death, and it became him to sustain for us the substance of those punishments that we should have undergone; and accordingly he did. What our sins did deserve, and what justice might lay upon us for those sins, all that did Christ certainly suffer or bear. Jesus Christ did so suffer for our sins, as that his sufferings were fully answerable to the demerit of our sins. And I think I may safely say that God, in justice, could not require any more, or lay on any one more punishment than Jesus Christ did suffer for our sins; and my reason is this, because Christ bare all our sins, and all our sorrows, and was obedient unto the death, and made a curse for us, Isa 53:1-12, and Gal 3:13; and more than this the law of God could not require. And if Christ did suffer all that the law of God required, then certainly he suffered so much as did satisfy the justice of God, viz., as much punishment as was commensurated with sin. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, The meritorious cause, the main end, and the special occasion of all the sufferings of Christ were the sins of his people. Christ was our surety, and he could not satisfy for our sins, nor reconcile us to God without suffering: Isa 53:5, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions.' The Hebrew word for wounded, פצע, hath a double emphasis: either it may signify that he was pierced through as with a dart, or that he was tormented or pained, as women or other creatures are wont to be that bring forth with pain and torment, at the time of their travail; for the word in the text last cited comes regularly from a root that signifies properly to be in pain, as women are when they bring forth. It was our transgressions that gave Christ his deadly wounds; it was our sins that smote him, and bruised him. Look, as Zipporah said to Moses, Exo 4:25, 'Surely a bloody husband art thou to me,' so may Christ say to his church, Surely a bloody spouse hast thou been to me. Christ's spouse may look upon him and say, It was I that have been that Judas that have betrayed thee! It was I that was the soldiers that murdered thee! It was my sins that brought all sorrows and sufferings, all mischiefs and evils upon thee! I have sinned, and thou hast suffered! I have eaten the sour grapes, and thy teeth were set on edge! I have sinned, and thou hast died! I have wounded thee, and thou hast healed me! It is the wisdom, and oh that it might be more and more the work of every believer to look upon a humble Christ with a humble heart, a broken Christ with a broken heart, a bleeding Christ with a bleeding heart, a wounded Christ with a wounded heart; according to that, Zec 12:10, Christ was wounded, bruised, and cut off for sinners' sins. When Christ was taken by the soldiers, he said, 'If ye seek me, let these go their way.' Christ was willing that the hurt which sinners had done to God, and the debt which they owed to him, should be set upon his score, and put upon his account; and the apostle mentions it as a remarkable thing, 'that Christ died for the ungodly,' Rom 5:8; 'the just for the unjust,' 1Pe 3:18. Our sins were the meritorious cause of Christ's sufferings, Heb 4:15, and Heb 7:26. Christ did not suffer for himself, 'for he was without sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' The grand design, errand, and business about which Christ came into the world, was to save sinners, 1Ti 1:15. He had his name Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins, Mat 1:21. He died for our sins; not only for our good, as the final cause, but for our sins, as the procuring cause of his death. 'He was delivered for our offences,' 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,' Rom 4:25, and 1Co 15:3; that is, according to what was typified, prophesied, and promised in the blessed Scriptures: Gal 1:4, 'He gave himself for our sins;' 1Pe 2:24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree; ... by whose stripes ye were healed, οτι τμλωπι ατου θητε. The whole Testament hath not the like two relatives at once in the original, as if I should

say, by whose stripes of his we are healed. Peter, saith Estius, alludes to the stripes that servants receive from their cruel masters; therefore he returns to the second person, 'ye are healed.' Here you see that the physician's blood became the sick man's salve. We can hardly believe the power of sword salve! But here is a mystery, that only the gospel can assure us of, that the wounding of one should be the cure of another. Oh, what an odious thing is sin to God, that he will pardon none without blood, yea, without the blood of his dearest Son! Heb 9:22, and 1Pe 1:18-19. Oh, what a hell of wickedness must there be in sin, that nothing can expiate it but the best, the purest, the noblest blood that ever run in veins! Oh, what a transcendent evil must sin be, that nothing can purge it away but death, but the death of the cross, no death but an accursed death! Oh, what a leprosy is sin, that it must have blood, yea, the blood of God, to take it away!

Now thus you have seen, (1.) That the sufferings of Christ have been free and voluntary, and not constrained or forced. (2.) That they have been very great and heinous. (3.) That the punishments which Christ did suffer for our sins, were, in their parts, and kinds, and degrees, and proportion, all those punishments which were due unto us by reason of our sins; and which we ourselves would otherwise have suffered. (4.) That Jesus Christ did feel and suffer the very torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner. (5.) That he that did feel and suffer the torments of hell, though not after a hellish manner, was God-man. (6.) That the punishments that Christ did sustain for us, must be referred only to the substance, and not to the circumstances of punishment. (7.) That the meritorious cause of all the sufferings of Christ, were the sins of his people.

IV. Now to that great question of giving up your account at last, according to the import of those ten scriptures in the margin, you may, in the fourth place, make this safe, noble, and happy plea. 'O blessed God, Jesus Christ hath suffered all those things that were due unto me for my sin; he hath suffered even to the worst and uttermost; for all that the law threatened was a curse, and Christ was made a curse for me, Gal 3:13; he knew no sin, but was made sin for me, 2Co 5:21; and what Christ suffered he suffered as my surety, and in my stead; and therefore, what he suffered for me, is as if I had suffered all that myself; and his sufferings hath appeased thy wrath, and satisfied thy justice, and reconciled thee to myself. For, 2Co 5:19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' 'And he hath reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, in one body, on the cross; having slain enmity thereby.' Jesus Christ took upon him all my sins, they were all of them laid upon him, and he bare or suffered all the wrath and punishment due for them, and he suffered all as my surety, in my stead, and for my good; and thou didst design him for all this, and accepted of it as sufficient and effectual on my behalf. Oh, with what comfort, courage, and confidence, may a believer, upon these considerations, hold up his head in the great day of his account. Let me now make a few inferences from the consideration of all the great and grievous sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore,

1. First, Let us stand still, and admire and wonder at the love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners; that Christ should rather die for us, than the angels. They were creatures of a more noble extract, and in all probability might have brought greater revenues of glory to God: yet that Christ should pass by those golden vessels, and make us vessels of glory,—oh, what amazing and astonishing love is this! The angels were more honourable and excellent creatures than we. They were celestial spirits; we earthly bodies, dust and ashes: they were immediate attendants upon God, they were, as I may say, of his privy chamber; we servants of his in the lower house of this world, farther

remote from his glorious presence: their office was to sing hallelujahs, songs of praise to God in the heavenly paradise; ours to dress the garden of Eden, which was but an earthly paradise: they sinned but once, and but in thought, as is commonly thought; but Adam sinned in thought by lusting, in deed by tasting, and in word by excusing. Why did not Christ suffer for their sins, as well as for ours? or if for any, why not for theirs rather than ours? 'Even so, O Father, for so it pleased thee,' Mat 11:26. We move this question, not as being curious to search thy secret counsels, O Lord, but that we may be the more swallowed up in the admiration of the 'breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' The apostle, being in a holy admiration of Christ's love, affirms it to pass knowledge, Eph 3:18-19; that God, who is the eternal Being, should love man when he had scarce a being, Pro 8:30-31, that he should be enamoured with deformity, that he should love us when in our blood, Eze 16:1-63, that he should pity us when no eye pitied us, no, not our own. Oh, such was Christ's transcendent love, that man's extreme misery could not abate it. The deploredness of man's condition did but heighten the holy flame of Christ's love. It is as high as heaven, who can reach it? It is as low as hell, who can understand it? Heaven, through its glory, could not contain him, man being miserable, nor hell's torments make him refrain, such was his perfect matchless love to fallen man. That Christ's love should extend to the ungodly, to sinners, to enemies that were in arms of rebellion against him, Rom 5:6, Rom 5:8, Rom 5:10; yea, not only so, but that he should hug them in his arms, lodge them in his bosom, dandle them upon his knees, and lay them to his breasts, that they may suck and be satisfied, is the highest improvement of love, Isa 66:11-13. That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father, to a region of sorrow and death, John 1:18; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature, Isa 53:4; that he that was clothed with glory, should be wrapped with rags of flesh, 1Ti 3:16; that he that filled heaven, should be cradled in a manger, John 17:5; that the God of Israel should fly into Egypt, Mat 2:14; that the God of strength should be weary; that the judge of all flesh should be condemned; that the God of life should be put to death, John 19:41; that he that is one with his Father, should cry out of misery, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!' Mat 26:39; that he that had the keys of hell and death, Rev 1:18, should lie imprisoned in the sepulchre of another, having, in his lifetime, nowhere to lay his head; nor after death, to lay his body, John 19:41-42; and all this for man, for fallen man, for miserable man, for worthless man, is beyond the thoughts of created natures. The sharp, the universal and continual sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the cradle to the cross, does above all other things speak out the transcendent love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners. That wrath, that great wrath, that fierce wrath, that pure wrath, that infinite wrath, that matchless wrath of an angry God, that was so terribly impressed upon the soul of Christ, quickly spent his natural strength, and turned, his moisture into the drought of summer, Psa 32:4; and yet all this wrath he patiently underwent, that sinners might be saved, and that 'he might bring many sons unto glory,' Heb 2:10. Oh wonder of love! Love is passive, it enables to suffer. The Curtii laid down their lives for the Romans, because they loved them; so it was love that made our dear Lord Jesus lay down his life, to save us from hell and to bring us to heaven. As the pelican, out of her love to her young ones, when they are bitten with serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them again; so when we were bitten by the old serpent, and our wound incurable, and we in danger of eternal death, then did our dear Lord Jesus, that he might recover us and heal us, feed us with his own blood, Gen 3:15; John 6:53-56. Oh love unspeakable! This made one cry out, 'Lord, thou hast loved me more than thyself; for thou hast laid down thy life for me.' It was only the golden link of love that fastened

Christ to the cross, John 10:17, and that made him die freely for us, and that made him willing 'to be numbered among transgressors,' Isa 53:12, that we might be numbered among [the] 'general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,' Heb 12:23. If Jonathan's love to David was wonderful, 2Sa 1:26, how wonderful must the love of Christ be to us, which led him by the hand to make himself an offering for us, Heb 10:10, which Jonathan never did for David: for though Jonathan loved David's life and safety well, yet he loved his own better; for when his father cast a javelin at him to smite him, he flies for it, and would not abide his father's fury, being very willing to sleep in a whole skin, notwithstanding his wonderful love to David, 1Sa 20:33-35; making good the philosopher's notion, that man is a life-lover. Christ's love is like his name, and that is Wonderful, Isa 9:6; yea, it is so wonderful, that it is *supra omnem creaturam, ultra omnem mensuram, contra omnem naturam*, above all creatures, beyond all measure, contrary to all nature. It is above all creatures, for it is above the angels, and therefore above all others. It is beyond all measure, for time did not begin it, and time shall never end it; place doth not bound it, sin doth not exceed it, no estate, no age, no sex is denied it, tongues cannot express it, understandings cannot conceive it: and it is contrary to all nature; for what nature can love where it is hated? what nature can forgive where it is provoked? what nature can offer reconciliation where it receiveth wrong? what nature can heap up kindness upon contempt, favour upon ingratitude, mercy upon sin? and yet Christ's love hath led him to all this; so that well may we spend all our days in admiring and adoring of this wonderful love, and be always ravished with the thoughts of it. But,

2. Secondly, Then look that ye love the Lord Jesus Christ with a superlative love, with an overtopping love. There are none have suffered so much for you as Christ; there are none that can suffer so much for you as Christ. The least measure of that wrath that Christ hath sustained for you, would have broke the hearts, necks, and backs of all created beings. O my friends! there is no love but a superlative love that is any ways suitable-to the transcendent sufferings of dear Jesus. Oh, love him above your lusts, love him above your relations, love him above the world, love him above all your outward contentments and enjoyments; yea, love him above your very lives; for thus the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, primitive Christians, and the martyrs of old, have loved our Lord Jesus Christ with an overtopping love: Rev 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death;' that is, they slighted, contemned, yea, despised their lives, exposing them to hazard and loss, out of love to the Lamb, 'who had washed them in his blood.' I have read of one Kilian, a Dutch schoolmaster, who being asked whether he did not love his wife and children, answered, Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hands to dispose of, I would leave it at my enemies' feet to live with them in a prison; but my soul and my Saviour are dearer to me than all. If my father, saith Jerome,² should stand before me, and my mother hang upon, and my brethren should press about me, I would break through my brethren, throw down my father, and tread underfoot my mother, to cleave to Jesus Christ. Had I ten heads, said Henry Voes, they should all off for Christ. If every hair of my head, said John Ardley, martyr, were a man, they should all suffer for the faith of Christ. Let fire, racks, pulleys, said Ignatius, and all the torments of hell come upon me, so I may win Christ. Love made Jerome to say, O my Saviour, didst thou die for love of me?—a love more dolorous than death; but to me a death more lovely than love itself. I cannot live, love thee, and be longer from thee. George Carpenter, being asked whether he did not love his wife and children, which stood weeping before him, answered, My wife and children!—my wife and children! are dearer to me than all Bavaria; yet, for the love of Christ, I know them not. That

blessed virgin in Basil, being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her if she would worship idols, cried out, 'Let money perish, and life vanish, Christ is better than all.' Sufferings for Christ are the saints' greatest glory; they are those things wherein they have most gloried: *Crudelitas vestra, gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory, saith Tertullian. It is reported of Babylas, that when he was to die for Christ, he desired this favour, that his chains might be buried with him, as the ensigns of his honour. Thus you see with what a superlative love, with what an overtopping love, former saints have loved our Lord Jesus; and can you, Christians, who are cold and low in your love to Christ, read over these instances, and not blush? Certainly the more Christ hath suffered for us, the more dear Christ should be unto us; the more bitter his sufferings have been for us, the more sweet his love should be to us, and the more eminent should be our love to him. Oh, let a suffering Christ lie nearest your hearts; let him be your manna, your tree of life, your morning star. It is better to part with all than with this pearl of price. Christ is that golden pipe through which the golden oil of salvation runs; and oh how should this inflame our love to Christ! Oh that our hearts were more affected with the sufferings of Christ! Who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to Christ, and cry out with Ignatius, Christ my love is crucified? Song of Solomon 8:7-8. If a friend should die for us, how would our hearts be affected with his kindness! and shall the God of glory lay down his life for us, and shall we not be affected with his goodness? John 10:17-18. Shall Saul be affected with David's kindness in sparing his life, 1Sa 24:16, and shall not we be affected with Christ's kindness, who, to save our life, lost his own? Oh, the infinite love of Christ, that he should leave his Father's bosom, John 1:18, and come down from heaven, that he might carry you up to heaven, John 14:1-4; that he that was a Son should take upon him the form of a servant, Php 2:5-8; that you of slaves should be made sons, of enemies should be made friends, of heirs of wrath should be made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom 8:17; that to save us from everlasting ruin, Christ should stick at nothing, but be willing to be made flesh, to lie in a manger, to be tempted, deserted, persecuted, and to die upon a cross! Oh what flames of love should these things kindle in all our hearts to Christ! Love is compared to fire; in heaping love upon our enemy, we heap coals of fire upon his head, Rom 12:19-20; Pro 26:21. Now the property of fire is to turn all it meets with into its own nature: fire maketh all things fire; the coal maketh burning coals; and is it not a wonder then that Christ, having heaped abundance of the fiery coals of his love upon our heads, we should yet be but key-cold in our love to him. Ah! what sad metal are we made of, that Christ's fiery love cannot inflame our love to Christ! Moses wondered why the bush consumed not, when he sees it all on fire, Exo 3:3; but if you please but to look into your own hearts, you shall see a greater wonder; for you shall see that, though you walk like those three children in the fiery furnace, Dan 3:1-30, even in the midst of Christ's fiery love flaming round about you; yet there is but little, very little, true smell of that sweet fire of love to be felt or found upon you or in you. Oh, when shall the sufferings of a dear and tender-hearted Saviour kindle such a flame of love in all our hearts, as shall still be a-breaking forth in our lips and lives, in our words and ways, to the praise and glory of free grace? Oh that the sufferings of a loving Jesus might at last make us all sick of love! Song of Solomon 2:5. Oh let him for ever lie betwixt our breasts, Song of Solomon 1:13, who hath left his Father's bosom for a time, that he might be embosomed by us for ever. But,

3. Thirdly, Then in the sufferings of Christ, as in a gospel-glass, you may see the odious nature of sin, and accordingly learn to hate it, arm against it, turn from it, and subdue it. Sin never appears so odious as when we behold it in the red glass of Christ's sufferings, Psa 119:1-176, Psa

104:1-35, Psa 113:1-9, Psa 128:1-6 and Rom 7:15, and Rom 12:9. Can we look upon sin as the occasion of all Christ's sufferings, can we look upon sin as that which made Christ a curse, and that made him forsaken of his Father, and that made him live such a miserable life, and that brought him to die such a shameful, painful, and cruel death, and our hearts not rise against it? Shall our sins be grievous unto Christ, and shall they not be odious unto us? shall he die for our sins, and shall not we die to our sins? did not he therefore suffer for sin, that we might cease from sin? did not he 'bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live to righteousness'? 1Pe 4:1, and 1Pe 2:24. If one should kill our father, would we hug and embrace him as our father? no, we would be revenged on him. Sin hath killed our Saviour, and shall we not be revenged on it. Can a man look upon that snake that hath stung his dearly-beloved spouse to death, and preserve it alive, warm it at the fire, and hug it in his bosom, and not rather stab it with a thousand wounds? It is sin that hath stung our dear Jesus to death, that has crucified our Lord, clouded his glory, and shed his precious blood, and oh, how should this stir up our indignation against it. Ah, how can a Christian make much of those sins that killed his dearest Lord! how can he cherish those sins that betrayed Christ, and apprehended Christ, and bound Christ, and condemned Christ, and scourged Christ, and that violently drew him to the cross, and there murdered him! It was neither Judas, nor Pilate, nor the Jews, nor the soldiers that could have done our Lord Jesus the least hurt, had not our sins, like so many butchers and hangmen, come in to their assistance. After Julius Cæsar was treacherously murdered in the senate-house, Antonius brought forth his coat, all bloody, cut and mangled, and laying it open to the view of the people, said, Look, here is your emperor's coat; and as the bloody conspirators have dealt by it, so have they dealt with Cæsar's body; whereupon the people were all in an uproar, and nothing would satisfy them but the death of the murderers, and they ran to the houses of the conspirators and burnt them down to the ground. But what was Cæsar's coat and Cæsar's body to the body of our dear Lord Jesus, which was all bloody, rent, and torn for our sins? Ah, how should this provoke us to be revenged on our sins! how should we for ever loathe and abhor them! how should our fury be whetted against them! how should we labour with all our might to be the death of those sins that have been the death of so great a Lord, and will, if not prevented, be the death of our souls to all eternity! To see God thrust the sword of his pure, infinite, and incensed wrath through the very heart of his dearest Son, notwithstanding all his supplications, prayers, tears, and strong cries, Heb 5:7, is the highest discovery of the Lord's hatred and indignation of sin that ever was or will be. It is true God discovered his great hatred against sin by turning Adam out of paradise, and by casting the angels down to hell, by drowning the old world, and by raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and by the various and dreadful judgments that he has been a-pouring forth upon the world in all ages; but all this hatred is but the picture of hatred, to that hatred, which God manifested against sin in causing the whole curse to meet upon our crucified Lord, as all streams meet in the sea. It is true God discovers his hatred of sin by those endless, easeless, and remediless torments that he inflicts upon devils and damned spirits; but this is no hatred to that hatred against sin which God discovered when he opened all the floodgates of his envenomed wrath upon his Son, his own Son, his only Son, his Son that always pleased him, his Son that never offended him, Isa 53:5-6, and Pro 8:30-31, and Mat 3:17. Should you see a father that had but one son, and he such a son in whom he always delighted, and by whom he had never been provoked; a son that always made it his business, his work, his heaven to promote the honour and glory of his father, John 8:49-50, and John 9:4; a son who was always most at ease when most

engaged in his father's service; a son who counted it his meat and drink to do his father's will, John 4:34 : now should you see the father of such a son inflicting the most exquisite pains and punishments, tortures and torments, calamities and miseries upon this his dearest son, you would readily conclude that certainly the sins, the offences that have put the father upon exercising such amazing, such matchless severity, fury and cruelty upon his only son, are infinitely hateful, odious, and abominable to him. Now, if you please but to cast your eye upon the actings of God the Father towards Jesus Christ, you will find that he hath inflicted more torments and greater torments upon the Son of his dearest love, than all mortals ever have or could inflict upon their only sons: Isa 53:6, 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all,' Heb., hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on him, or to light or fall on him rather. God made all the penalties and sufferings that were due to us to fall upon Jesus Christ, as a man is wont to fall with all his might, in a hostile manner, upon his enemy. God himself inflicted upon dear Jesus whatsoever was requisite to the satisfying of his justice, to the obtaining of pardon, and to the saving of all his elect: ver. 10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief.' All the devils in hell, nor all the men upon earth, could never have bruised or put to grief our Lord Jesus. If it had not pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief, he had never been bruised or put to grief. Oh, how should this work us to look upon sin with indignation!

Suppose a man should come to a table, and there should be a knife laid at his trencher, and it should be told him, This is the very knife that cut the throat of your child or father; if this person should use this knife as any other knife, would not every one say, Surely this man had but very little love to his father or his child, who can use this bloody knife as any other knife. So when you meet with any temptation to sin, oh, then say, This is the very knife that cut the throat of Jesus Christ, and pierced his sides, that was the cause of his sufferings, and that made Christ to be a curse; and accordingly let your hearts rise against it. Ah, how well doth it become Christians to look upon sin as that accursed thing that made Christ a curse, and accordingly to abhor it! Oh, with what detestation should a man fling away such a knife! and with the like detestation should every Christian fling away his sins, as Ephraim did his idols: 'Get you hence; what have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8. Sin, thou hast slain my Lord; thou hast been the only cause of the death of my Saviour, Isa 2:20, and Isa 30:22. Let us say as David, 'Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?' 2Sa 23:17. So is not this the sin that poured out Christ's blood? Oh, how should this enrage our hearts against sin, because it cost the Captain of our salvation, Heb 2:10, not the hazard, but the very loss of his life! God shewed Moses a tree wherewith he might make the bitter waters sweet, Exo 15:25; but, lo! here is a tree wherewith ye may make the sweet waters of sin to become bitter. Look upon the tree on which Christ was crucified, remember his cross, and the pains he suffered thereon, and the seeming sweetness that is in sin will quickly vanish. When you are solicited to sin, cast your eye upon Christ's cross, remember his astonishing sufferings for sin, and it will soon grow distasteful to your souls; for how can that choose but be hateful to us, if we seriously consider how hurtful it was to Jesus Christ? Who can look upon the cross of Christ and excuse his sin, as Adam did, saying, 'The woman which thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat'? Gen 3:12. Who can look upon the cross of Christ and colour his sin, as Judas did, saying, 'Hail, Master'? Mat 26:49. Who can look upon the cross of Christ and deny his sin, as Gehazi did, saying, 'Thy servant went no whither'? 2Ki 5:25. Who can look upon the cross of Christ and defend his sin, as Jonah did, saying, 'I do well to be angry'? Jon 4:9. O sirs! where is that hatred of sin that used to be in the saints of old? David could say, 'I hate vain

thoughts and I hate every false way,' Psa 119:104, Psa 119:113, Psa 119:128. And Paul could say, 'What I hate that do I,' Rom 7:15. It is better, saith one, to be in hell with Christ, than to be in heaven with sin. Oh, how odious was sin in the saints' eye! The primitive Christians chose rather to be cast to lions without than to be left to lusts within, so great was their hatred of sin. 'I had rather,' saith Anselm, 'go to hell pure from sin, than to heaven polluted with that guilt.' 'I will rather,' saith another, 'leap into a bonfire, than wilfully to sin against God.' Under the law, if an ox gored a man that he died, the ox was to be killed, Exo 21:28; sin hath gored and pierced our dear Lord Jesus, oh, let it die for it! oh, avenge yourselves upon it, as Samson did avenge himself upon the Philistines for his two eyes! Jdg 16:28. Plutarch reports of Marcus Cato, that he never declared his opinion in any matter in the senate, but he would close it with this passage, 'Methinks still Carthage should be destroyed;' so a Christian should never cast his eye upon the cross of Christ, the sufferings of Christ, nor upon his sins, but his heart should say, Methinks pride should be destroyed, and unbelief should be destroyed, and hypocrisy should be destroyed, and earthly-mindedness should be destroyed, and self-love should be destroyed, and vain-glory should be destroyed, &c. The Jews would not have the pieces of silver which Judas cast down in the temple put in the treasury, because they were the price of blood, Mat 27:5-6. Oh, lodge not any one sin in the treasury of your hearts, for they are all the price of blood. But,

4. Fourthly, Let the sufferings of our Lord Jesus raise in all our hearts a high estimation of Christ. Oh, let us prize a suffering Christ above all our duties, and above all our graces, and above all our privileges, and above all our outward contentments, and above all our spiritual enjoyments! Mat 10:37; Luk 14:26. A suffering Christ is a commodity of greater value than all the riches of the Indies, yea, than all the wealth of the whole world. 'He is better than rubies,' saith Solomon, 'and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to him,' Pro 8:11. He is that pearl of price which the wise merchant purchased with all that ever he had, Mat 13:46; no man can buy such gold too dear. Joseph,—a type of the Lord Jesus,—then a precious jewel of the world, was far more precious, had the Ishmaelitish merchants known so much, than all the balms and myrrhs that they transported, Gen 27:37; and so is a suffering Christ, as all will grant that really know him, and that have experienced the sweet of union and communion with him. Christ went through heaven and hell, life and death, sorrow and suffering, misery and cruelty, and all to bring us to glory, and shall we not prize him? When in a storm the nobles of Xerxes were to lighten the ship to preserve their king's life, they did their obeisance, and leaped into the sea; but our Lord Jesus Christ, to preserve our lives, our souls, he leaps into a sea of wrath, Col 1:18. Oh, how should this work us to set up Christ above all! What a deal ado has there been in the world about Alexander the Great, and Constantine the Great, and Pompey the Great, because of their civil power and authority; but what was all their greatness and grandeur to that greatness and grandeur that God the Father put upon our Lord Jesus Christ when he gave all power in heaven and in earth unto him, and set him down at his own right hand? Mat 28:13; Heb 1:13; Eph 1:20. O sirs! will you value men according to their titles, and will you not highly value our Lord Jesus Christ, who has the most magnificent titles given him? He is called King of kings and Lord of lords, Rev 17:14, and Rev 19:16. It is observed by learned Drusius, that those titles were usually given to the great kings of Persia, than which there was none assumed more to themselves than they did; yet the Holy Ghost attributes these great titles to Christ, to let us know that, as God hath exalted Christ above all earthly powers, so we should magnify and exalt him accordingly. Paul, casting his eye upon a suffering Christ, tells us that he, esteems of τὰ πάντα, 'all things,' Php 3:8, as nothing in comparison of

Christ. 'All things' is the greatest account that can be cast up, for it includeth all prizes, all sums; it taketh in heaven, it taketh in the vast and huge globe and circle of the capacious world, and all excellencies, within its bosom. 'All things' includes all nations, all angels, all gold, all jewels, all honours, all delights, and everything else besides; and yet the apostle looks upon all these things but as σκ■βαλλα, 'dung,' dogs' dung, as some interpret the word, or dogs' meat, coarse and contemptible, in comparison of dear Jesus. Galeacius, [Carraciolus,] that noble Italian marquis, was of the same mind and metal with Paul, for when he was strongly tempted, and solicited with great sums of money and preferments, to return to the Romish church, he gave this heroic answer, Cursed be he that prefers all the wealth of the world to one day's communion with Christ. What if a man had large domains, stately buildings, and ten thousand rivers of oil! What if all the mountains of the world were pearl, the mighty rocks rubies, and the whole globe a shining chrysolite! yet all this were not to be named in the same day wherein there is mention made of a suffering Christ. Look, as one ocean hath more waters than all the rivers in the world, and as one sun hath more light than all the luminaries in heaven, so one suffering Christ is more 'all' to a poor soul than if it had the all of the whole world a thousand times over and over. O sirs! if you cast but your eye upon a suffering Christ, a crucified Jesus, there you shall find righteousness in him to cover all your sins, and plenty enough in him to supply all your wants, and grace enough in him to subdue all your lusts, and wisdom enough in him to resolve all your doubts, and power enough in him to vanquish all your enemies, and virtue enough in him to heal all your diseases, and fulness enough in him both to satisfy you and save you, and that to the utmost, Heb 7:25. All the good things that can be reckoned up here below have only a finite and limited benignity. Some can clothe but cannot feed, others can nourish but they cannot heal, others can enrich but they cannot secure, others can adorn but cannot advance, all do serve but none do satisfy. They are like a beggar's coat, made up of many pieces, not all enough either to beautify, defend, or satisfy; but there is enough in a suffering Christ to fill us and satisfy us to the full. Christ has the greatest worth and wealth in him. Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the creatures are to be found in a bleeding, dying Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in him that suffered on the cross—Nec Christus, nec cœlum patitur hyperbolen, A man cannot hyperbolise in speaking of Christ and heaven, but must entreat his hearers, as Tully doth his readers concerning the worth of L. Crassus—Ut majus quiddam de iis quam quœ scripta sunt suspicarentur, That they would conceive much more than he was able to express. Certainly it is as easy to compass the heavens with a span, and contain the sea in a nut-shell, as to relate fully a suffering Christ's excellencies, or heaven's happiness. O sirs! there is in a crucified Jesus something proportionable to all the straits, wants, necessities, and desires of his poor people.² He is bread to nourish them, and a garment to cover and adorn them, a physician to heal them, a counsellor to advise them, a captain to defend them, a prince to rule, a prophet to teach, and a priest to make atonement for them; a husband to protect, a father to provide, a brother to relieve, a foundation to support, a root to quicken, a head to guide, a treasure to enrich, a sun to enlighten, and a fountain to cleanse. Now what can any Christian desire more to satisfy him and save him, to make him holy and happy in both worlds? Shall the Romans and other nations highly value those that have but ventured to lay down their lives for their country, and shall not we highly value the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath actually laid down his life for his sheep? John 10:11, John 10:15, John 10:17. I have read of one who, walking in the fields by himself, of a

sudden fell into loud cries and weeping, and being asked by one that passed by and overheard him the cause of his lamentation,—I weep, saith he, to think that the Lord Jesus Christ should do so much for us men, and yet not one man of a thousand so much as mind him or think of him. Oh what a bitter lamentation have we cause to take up, that the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered so many great and grievous things for poor sinners, and that there are so few that sincerely love him, or that highly value him: most men preferring their lusts, or else the toys and trifles of this world, above him. But,

5. Fifthly, Let the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ work us all into a gracious willingness to embrace sufferings for his sake, and cheerfully and resolutely to take up his cross and follow him, Mat 16:24. Did Christ suffer, who knew no sin; and shall we think it strange to suffer, who know nothing but sin? Shall he lie sweltering under his Father's wrath, and shall we cry out of men's anger? Was he crowned with thorns, and must we be crowned with rose-buds? Was his whole life, from the cradle to the cross, made up of nothing but sorrows and sufferings; and must our lives, from the cradle to the grave, be filled up with nothing but pleasures and delights? Was he despised, and must we be admired? Was he debased, and must we be exalted? Was he poor, and must we be rich? Was he low, and must we be high? Did he drink of a bitter cup, a bloody cup; and will no cups serve our turns but cups of consolation? Let us not think anything too much to do for Christ, nor anything too great to suffer for Christ, nor anything too dear to part with for such a Christ, such a Saviour, that thought nothing too much to do, or too grievous to suffer, that so he might accomplish the work of our redemption. He left heaven for us; and shall not we let go this world for him? He left his Father's bosom for us, John 1:18; and shall not we leave the bosoms of our dearest relations for him? Psa 45:10-11; Mat 10:37. He underwent all sorts of sufferings for us, let us as readily encounter with all sorts of sufferings for him. Paul was so inured to sufferings for Christ, that he could rejoice in his sufferings, he gloried most in his chains, and he looked upon his scars, buffetings, scourgings, stonings for Christ, as his greatest triumphs, 2Co 12:10, and 2Co 11:23-28. And how ambitious were the primitive Christians of martyrdom in the cause of Christ: and of late, in the times of the Marian persecution, how many hundreds cheerfully and willingly laid down their lives—mounting Elijah-like to heaven in fiery chariots! And oh, how will Christ own and honour such Christians at last, as have not set on others, but exposed themselves to hazards, losses, and sufferings for his sake! Rev 3:21, as those brave souls, who loved not their lives unto the death, Rev 12:11; that is, they despised their lives in comparison of Christ; they exposed their bodies to horrible and painful deaths, their temporal estates to the spoil, and their persons to all manner of shame and contempt, for the cause of Christ, Heb 11:33-39, and Heb 10:34. In the days of that bloody persecutor Dioclesian, the Christians shewed as glorious power in the faith of martyrdom as in the faith of miracles, the valour of the patients, and the savageness of the persecutors, striving together; till both, exceeding nature and belief, bred wonder and astonishment in beholders and readers. In all ages and generations, they that have been born after the flesh have persecuted them that have been born after the Spirit. Gal 4:29; and the seed of the serpent have been still a-multiplying of troubles upon the seed of the woman. Would any man take the church's picture, saith Luther, then let him paint a poor silly maid, sitting in a wilderness, compassed about with hungry lions, wolves, boars, and bears, and with all manner of other cruel hurtful beasts; and in the midst of a great many furious men, assaulting her every moment and minute. And why should we wonder at this, when we consider that the whole life of Christ was filled up with all sorts and kinds of sufferings? Oh, where is that brave spirit that has

been upon the saints of old? Blessed Bradford looked upon his sufferings for Christ as an evidence to him that he was in the right way. 'It is better for me to be a martyr than a monarch,' said Ignatius when he was to suffer. Happy is that soul, and to be equalled with angels, who is willing to suffer, if it were possible, as great things for Christ, as Christ hath suffered for it, saith Jerome. Sufferings are the ensigns of heavenly nobility, saith Calvin. Modestus, lieutenant to Julian the emperor, said to Julian, While they suffer they deride us, saith he, and the torments are more fearful to them that stand by than to the tormented. Luther reports of Vincentius, that he laughed at those that slew him, saying, that to Christians tortures and death were but sports, and he gloried when he went upon hot burning coals, as if he trod upon roses. It was a notable saying of a French martyr, when the rope was about his fellow, Give me that golden chain, and dub me a knight of that noble order. Paul rattled his chain, which he bore for the gospel, and was as proud of it as a woman of her ornaments, saith Chrysostom. Do your worst, do your worst, said Justin Martyr to his persecutors; but this I will tell you, that you may put all that you are like to gain by the bargain into your eye and weep it out again. Basil will tell you, that the most cruel martyrdom is but a trick to escape death, to pass from life to life, as he speaks, for it can be but a day's journey between the cross and paradise. Their names that are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, in the book of life, saith Prudentius. Though the cross be bitter, yet it is but short. A little storm, as one said of Julian's persecution, and an eternal calm follows. Methinks, said one, I tread upon pearls, when he trod upon hot burning coals, and I feel no more pain than if I lay in a bed of down, and yet he lay in flames of fire. 'I am heartily angry,' saith Luther, 'with those that speak of my sufferings, which, if compared to that which Christ suffered for me, are not once to be mentioned in the same day.' Paul greatly rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ; and therefore oftentimes sings it out: 'I Paul a prisoner,' as you may see by the scriptures in the margin,² not 'I Paul an apostle,' nor 'I Paul rapt up in the third heaven.' Christ shewed his love to him, in rapping him up in the third heaven; and he shews his love to Christ in suffering for him. During the cruel persecutions of the heathen emperors, the Christian faith was spread through all places of the empire, because the oftener they were mowed down, saith Tertullian, the more they grew. 'I am in prison till I am in prison,' said one of the martyrs. 'I am the unmeetest man for this high office of suffering for Christ that ever was appointed to it,' said blessed Sanders. Austin observed, that though there were many thousand Christians put to death for professing Christ, yet they were never the fewer for being slain. Cyprian, speaking of the Christians and martyrs in his time, said, Occidi poterant, sed vinci non poterant, They may kill them, but they cannot overcome them. 'The more we are cut down by the sword of persecution, the more we increase,' saith Tertullian. Eusebius tells us of one that writ to his friend from a stinking dungeon, and dates his letter from 'My delicate orchard.' 'Burn my foot if you will,' said that noble martyr in Basil, 'that it may dance everlastingly with the blessed angels in heaven.' The young child in Josephus, who, when his flesh was pulled in pieces with pincers, by the command of Antiochus, said with a smiling countenance, 'Tyrant, thou lovest time; where are those smarting pains with which thou threatenest me? Make me to shrink and cry out if thou canst:' and Bainam, an English martyr, when the fire was flaming about him, said, You Papists talk of miracles, behold here a miracle, I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; it is as sweet to me as a bed of roses. Lawrence, when his body was roasted upon a burning gridiron, cried out, 'This side is roasted enough, turn the other side.' Marcus of Arethusa, when his body was cut and mangled, and anointed with honey, and hung up aloft in a basket, to be stung to death by wasps and bees,

looked down, saying, 'I am advanced, despising you that are below.' Henry Voes kissed the stake. Hawks clapped his hands in the flames when they were half consumed. John Noys blessed God that ever he was born to see that day; and Bishop Ridley called his execution day his wedding day. Thus you see a 'cloud of witnesses' to raise and inflame your hearts into a free, ready, willing, cheerful, and resolute suffering for that Jesus who has suffered so much for you. O sirs, when we see all sorts and sexes of Christians, divinely to defy and scorn their torments and tormentors, when we see them conquering in the midst of hideous sufferings, when we hear them expressing their greatest joy in the midst of their greatest sufferings, we cannot but conclude that there was something more than ordinary that did thus raise, cheer, and encourage their spirits in their sufferings; and doubtless this was it, 'the recompense of reward' on the one hand, and the matchless sufferings of Jesus Christ for them on the other hand, Heb 11:24-26, and Heb 12:2. The cordial wherewith Peter is said, by Clemens, to comfort his wife when he saw her led to martyrdom, was this, 'Remember the Lord, whose disciples if we be, we must not think to speed better than our master.'

It is said of Antiochus that, being to fight with Judas, captain of the host of the Jews, he showed unto his elephants the blood of the grapes and mulberries, to provoke them the better to fight, 1Ma 6:3-4: so the Holy Ghost hath set before us the wounds, the blood, the sufferings, the dying of our dear Lord Jesus, to encourage us to suffer, with all readiness and resoluteness, whatsoever calamities or miseries may attend us for Christ's sake, or the gospel's sake. Ah, what a shame would it be if we should not be always ready to suffer anything for his sake, who hath suffered so much for our sins as is beyond all conception, all expression! Never was Jacob more gracious and acceptable to his father Isaac, than when he stood before him clothed in the garments of his rough brother Esau. Then the father, smelling the savour of the elder brother's garments, said, 'Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed,' Gen 27:27. And never are we more gracious and acceptable to our heavenly Father, than when we stand before him clothed in the rough garments of Christ's afflictions and sufferings. O Christians, all your sufferings for Christ, they are but inlets to your glorious reigning with Christ. Justin Martyr saith that when the Romans did immortalise their emperors, as they called it, they brought one to swear that he saw him go to heaven out of the fire; but we may see, by an eye of faith, the blessed souls of martyrs fly to heaven, like Elias in his fiery chariot, or like the angel that appeared to Manoah, in the flames. By the consent of the schoolmen, all martyrs shall appear in the church triumphant, bearing the signs of their Christian wounds about them, as so many speaking testimonies of their holy courage, that what here they endured in the behalf of their Saviour may be there an addition to their glory. But,

6. Sixthly, Hath Jesus Christ suffered such great and grievous things for you? Oh then, in all your fears, doubts, and conflicts with enemies, within or without, fly to the sufferings of Christ as your city of refuge. Did Christ endure a most ignominious death for thee? Did he take on him thy sinful person, and bear thy sin and death and cross, and was made a sacrifice and curse for thee? Oh then, in all thy inward and outward distresses, shelter thyself under the wings of a suffering Christ, Psal 90:1, and Psal 91:1, Psal 91:4, Psal 91:9. I have read of Nero, that he had a shirt made of a salamander's skin, so that if he went through the fire in it, it would keep him from burning. O sirs, a suffering Christ is this salamander's skin, that will keep the saints from burning in the midst of burning, from suffering in the midst of sufferings, from drowning in the midst of drowning, Dan

3:24, Dan 3:29, and Isa 43:2. In all the storms that beat upon your inward or your outward man, eye the sufferings of Christ, lean upon the sufferings of Christ, plead the sufferings of Christ, and triumph in the sufferings of Christ, Zec 12:10; Song of Solomon 8:5; 2Co 2:14; Eph 6:14. It is storied of a martyr, that, writing to his wife, where she might find him when he was fled from home, 'Oh, my dear,' said he, 'if thou desirest to see me, seek me in the side of Christ, in the cleft of the rock, in the hollow of his wounds; for there I have made my nest, there will I dwell, there shalt thou find me, and nowhere else but there.' In every temptation let us look up to a crucified Christ, who is fitted and qualified to succour tempted souls, Heb 2:17-18, and Heb 4:15-16. Oh my soul, whenever thou art assaulted, let the wounds of Christ be thy city of refuge whither thou mayest fly and live! Let us learn in every temptation which presseth us, whether it be sin, or death, or curse, or any other evil, to translate it from ourselves to Christ; and all the good in Christ, let us learn to translate it from Christ to ourselves. Look, as the burgess of a town or corporation, sitting in the Parliament-house, beareth the persons of that whole town or place, and what he saith the whole town saith, and what is done to him is done to the whole town; even so Christ upon the cross stood in our place, and bare our sins, Isa 53:4-6; and whatsoever he suffered we suffered; and when he died all the faithful died with him and in him. I have read of a gracious woman who, being by Satan strongly tempted, replied, Satan, if thou hast anything to say to me, say it to my Christ, say it to my surety, who has undertaken all for me, who hath paid all my debts, and satisfied divine justice, and set all reckonings even between God and my soul. Do your sins terrify you? Oh then, look up to a crucified Saviour, who bare your sins in his own body on the tree, 1Pe 2:24. When sin stares you in the face, oh then turn your face to a dying Jesus, and behold him with a spear in his side, with thorns in his head, with nails in his feet, and a pardon in his hands. Hast thou wounded thy conscience by any great fall or falls? Oh then, remember that there is nothing in heaven or earth more efficacious to cure the wounds of conscience than a frequent and serious meditation on the wounds of Christ.³ Doth death, that rides upon the pale horse, Rev 6:8, look gashly and deadly upon thee? Oh then, remember that Christ died for you, Rom 5:6, Rom 5:8, and that by his death he hath swallowed up death in victory, 1Co 15:55-57. Oh, remember that a crucified Christ hath stripped death of his sting, and disarmed it of all its destroying power. Death may buzz about our ears, but it can never sting our souls. Look, as a crucified Christ hath taken away the guilt of sin, though he hath not taken away sin itself, so he hath taken away the sting of death, though he hath not taken away death itself. He spake excellently that said, 'That is not death, but life, which joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not life, but death, which separates the living man from Christ.' Austin longed to die, that he might see that head that was crowned with thorns. 'Did Christ die for me,' saith one, 'that I might live with him? I will not, therefore, desire to live long from him.' All men go willingly to see him whom they love, and shall I be unwilling to die that I may see him whom my soul loves? Bernard would have us never to let go out of our minds the thoughts of a crucified Christ. Let these, says he, be meat and drink unto you, let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your contemplation, your life, death, and resurrection. Certainly he that shall live up to this counsel will look upon the king of terrors as the king of desires. Are you apt to tremble when you eye the curse threatened in the law? Oh then, look up to a crucified Christ, and remember that 'he hath redeemed you from the curse of the law, being made a curse for you,' Gal 3:13. Doth the wrath of God amaze you? Oh then, look up to a crucified Christ, and remember that Christ hath trod the winepress of his Father's wrath alone, Isa 63:3, that he might deliver you from wrath to come, 1Th 1:10. Is the face

of God clouded?—doth he that should comfort you stand afar off? oh then, look up to a crucified Christ, and remember that he was forsaken for a time, that you might not be forsaken for ever. Are you sometimes afraid of condemnation? Oh then, look upon a crucified Christ, who was condemned that you might be justified, Lam 1:16. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' Rom 8:33-34. Ah, Christians, that you would at last, under all your temptations, afflictions, fears, doubts, conflicts, and disputes, be persuaded to keep a fixed eye upon crucified Jesus; and remember that all he did he did for you, and that all he suffered he suffered for you; and this will be a strong cordial to keep you from fainting under all your inward and outward distresses, according to that saying of one of the ancients, *Turbabor, sed non perturbabor, quia vulnerum Christi recordabor*, I may be troubled, but I shall not be overwhelmed, because I remember the print of the nails and of the spear in the hands and side of Jesus Christ, [Augustine.] Oh that Christians would labour, under all their soul-troubles, to keep a fixed eye upon a bleeding Christ; for there is nothing that will ease them, quiet them, settle them, and satisfy them like this. Many, may I not say most, Christians are more apt to eye their sins, their sorrows, their prayers, their tears, their resolves, their complaints, than they are to eye a suffering Christ; and from hence springs their greatest woes, wounds, miseries, and dejection of spirit. Oh that a crucified Christ might be for ever in your eye, and always upon your hearts! But,

7. Seventhly and lastly, Hath Jesus Christ suffered such great and grievous things? Then this truth looks sadly and sourly upon the papists. In this red glass of Christ's blood, you may see how vain and wicked, how ridiculous and superstitious the devices of the papists are, who for pacifying of God's wrath, and for the allaying of his anger, and for satisfying his justice, and for the obtaining of pardon, &c., have appointed penances and pilgrimages, and self-scourgings and soul-masses, and purgatory, and several other suchlike abominations, which the Scripture nowhere commands, but everywhere forbids; which inventions and abominations of theirs tend only to derogate from the dignity and sufficiency of Christ's sufferings, and to reflect dishonour and disgrace upon that full and perfect price that Christ hath paid for our ransom, and to set up other saviours in the room of our blessed Redeemer. Certainly all Popish pardons, penances, pilgrimages, masses, whippings, scourgings, &c., they unavoidably fall before the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Dagon fell before the ark, Goliath before David, Haman before Mordecai, and as the darkness falls before the morning light; and as for their purgatory, they do not know certainly where it is, nor how long it will last, nor what sort of fire is there; neither can they shew us how corporeal fire should work upon the souls in purgatory, they being spiritual and incorporeal; they cannot tell us whether the pains of purgatory be at all times alike, neither can they tell us whether the good or evil angels are the tormentors of the souls in purgatory; and as for the whipping, scalding, freezing of souls in purgatory, they are but 'old wives fables,' and the brain-sick fancies of some deceitful persons, to cheat poor ignorant people of their money, under a blind pretence of praying their souls out of purgatory. Christ offered himself 'once for all,' Heb 10:10, but the Romish priests offer him up daily in the mass, an unbloody sacrifice; and so they do what lies in them to 'tread under foot the blood of God, the blood of the covenant,' Acts 20:28; Heb 10:29. To be short, Popery in effect is nothing else but an underhand, close witness-bearing against Christ in all his offices, and against all that he hath done and suffered for the redemption and salvation of sinners, as might be made abundantly evident, but that I may not now launch out into that ocean. I only give this brief touch by the way, that I might raise up in all your hearts a greater detestation of Popery, in this day wherein

many are so warm for it, as if it were their only Diana. And let thus much suffice concerning the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the improvement that we should make of them.

Thus you may clearly see, by what I have said concerning the active and passive obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ, that whatsoever we are bound to do or suffer by the law of God, all that did Christ do and suffer for us, as being our surety and mediator. Now the law of God hath a double challenge or demand upon us; one is of active obedience, in fulfilling what it requires; the other is of passive obedience, in suffering that punishment which is due to us for the transgression of it, in doing what it forbids: for as we were created by God, we did owe unto him all obedience which he required; and as we sinned against God, we did owe unto him a suffering of all that punishment which he threatened; and we being fallen by transgression, can neither pay the one debt, nor yet the other. Of ourselves we can do nothing that the law requires; neither can we so suffer as to satisfy God in his justice wronged by us, or to recover ourselves into life and favour again. And therefore Jesus Christ, who was God-man, did become our surety, and stood in our stead or room, and he did perform what we should but could not perform, and he did bear our sins and our sorrows, he did suffer and bear for us what we ourselves should have borne and suffered, whereby he did fully satisfy the justice of God, and made our peace, and purchased pardon and life for us. Christ did fully answer to all the demands of the law, he did come up to perfect and universal conformity to it. He did whatever the law enjoins, and he suffered whatever the law threatens. Christ, by his active and passive obedience, hath fulfilled the law most exactly and completely, Gal 3:13. As he was perfectly holy, he did what the law commanded, and as he was made a curse, he underwent what the law threatened; and all this he did and suffered in our steads and as our surety. Whatever Christ did as our surety, he made it good to the full; so that neither the righteous God, nor yet the righteous law, could ever tax him with the least defect. And this must be our great plea, our choice, our sweet, our safe, our comfortable, our acceptable plea, both in the day of our particular accounts when we die, and in the great day of our account, when a crucified Saviour shall judge the world. Although sin, as an act, be transient, yet in the guilt of it, it lies in the Lord's high court of justice, filed upon record against the sinner, and calling aloud for deserved punishment, saying, Man hath sinned, and man must suffer for sin! But now Christ has suffered, that plea is taken off. Lo here, saith the Lord, the same nature that sinned, suffereth; mine own Son, being made flesh, hath suffered death for sin in the flesh; the thing is done, the law is satisfied, and so nonsuits the action, and casts it out of the court as unjust. Thus whereas sin would have condemned us, Christ hath condemned sin; he hath weakened, yea, nullified and taken away sin, in the guilt and condemning power of it, by that abundant satisfaction that he hath given to the justice of God by his active and passive obedience: so that, 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus,' Rom 8:1, Rom 8:3; for the blood of the mediator outcries the clamour of sin; and this must be a Christian's joy and triumph and plea in the great day of our Lord Jesus. As Christ was 'made sin for us,' 2Co 5:21, so the Lord doth impute the sufferings of Christ to us—that is, he accepts of them on our behalf, and puts them upon our account; as if the Lord should say unto every particular believer, My Son was thy surety and stood in thy stead, and suffered and satisfied and took away thy sins by his blood, and that for thee: in his blood I find a ransom for thy soul; I do acknowledge myself satisfied for thee, and satisfied towards thee, and thou art delivered and discharged; I forgive thee thy sins, and am reconciled unto thee, and will save thee and glorify thee for my Son's sake; in his blood thou hast redemption, the forgiveness of thy sins. As when a surety satisfies the creditor for a debt, this is accounted to the debtor, and

reckoned as a discharge to him in particular. I am paid and you are discharged, saith the creditor; so it is in this case; I am paid, saith God, and you are discharged, and I have no more to say to you but this, 'Enter into the joy of your Lord,' Mat 25:21.

V. The fifth plea that you are to make in order to the ten scriptures in the margin, that respects the account that you are to give up in the great day of the Lord, is drawn from the imputed righteousness of Christ to us. The Justification of a sinner in the sight of God, upon the account of Christ's righteousness imputed to him, whereby the guilt of sin is removed, and the person of the sinner is accepted as righteous with the God of heaven, is that which I shall open to you distinctly in these following branches:—

1. First, That the grace of justification in the sight of God is made up of two parts—1. There is forgiveness of the offences committed against the Lord; 2. Acceptation of the person offending, pronouncing him a righteous person, and receiving him into favour again, as if he had never offended. This is most clear and evident in the blessed Scriptures.

[1.] First, There is an act of absolution and acquittal from the guilt of sin, and freedom from the condemnation deserved by sin. The desert of sin is an inseparable accident or concomitant of it, that can never be removed. It may be truly said of the sins of a justified person, that they deserve everlasting destruction; but justification is the freeing of a sinner from the guilt of his iniquity, whereby he was actually bound over to condemnation. As soon as any man doth sin, there is a guilt upon him, by which he is bound over to the wrath and curse of God; and this guilt or obligation is inseparable from sin; the sin doth deserve no less than everlasting damnation. Now, forgiveness of sin hath a peculiar respect to the guilt of sin, and removal of that. When the Lord forgives a man, he doth discharge him of that obligation by which he was bound over to wrath and condemnation: Rom 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;' Rom 8:33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth;' Rom 8:34, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.' Beloved, the Lord is a holy and just God; and he 'reveals his wrath from heaven against all unrighteousness,' Rom 1:18; and there is a curse threatened to every transgression of the law, Gal 3:10; and when any man sinneth, he is obnoxious unto the curse, and God may inflict the same upon him, Rom 1:32; but when God forgives sins, he therein doth interpose, as it were, between the sin and the curse, and between the obligation and the condemnation, Rom 6:23. When the sinner sins, God might say unto him, Sinner, by your sinning you are now fallen into my hands of justice; and for your sins I may, according to my righteous law, condemn and curse you for ever; but such is my free, my rich, my sovereign grace, that for Christ's sake I will spare you and pardon you, and that curse and condemnation which you have deserved shall never fall upon you. Oh, my bowels, my bowels, are yearning towards you, Jer 31:20; and therefore I will have mercy, mercy upon you, and will deliver your souls from going down into the pit, Job 33:13, Job 33:24, Job 33:28, Job 33:30. When the poor sinner is indicted and arraigned at God's bar, and process is made against him, and he found guilty of the violation of God's holy law, and accordingly judged guilty by God, and adjudged to everlasting death, then mercy steps in and pleads, I have found a ransom, Job 33:24; the sinner shall not die, but live. When the law saith, Ah, sinner, sinner! thus and thus hast thou transgressed, all sorts of duties thou hast omitted, and all sorts of sins thou hast committed, and all sorts of mercies thou hast abused, and all sorts of means thou hast neglected, and all sorts of offers thou hast slighted; then God steps in and saith, Ah, sinner, sinner! what dost thou say, what canst thou say, to this heavy charge? Is it true or

false?—wilt thou grant it or deny it?—what defence or plea canst thou make for thyself? Alas! the poor sinner is speechless: Mat 22:12, ■φίμ■θη, he was muzzled or haltered up, that is, he held his peace as though he had a bridle or a halter in his mouth. This is the import of the Greek word here used: he hath not one word to say for himself; he can neither deny, nor excuse, or extenuate what is charged upon him. Why now, saith God, I must and do pronounce thee to be guilty; and as I am a just and righteous God, I cannot but adjudge thee to die eternally. But such is the riches of my mercy, that I will freely justify thee through the righteousness of my Son; I will forgive thy sins, and discharge thee of that obligation by which thou wast bound over to wrath, and curse, and condemnation; so that the justified person may triumphingly say, 'Who is he that condemneth?' He may read over the most dreadful passages of the law without being terrified or amazed, as knowing that the curse is removed, and that all his sins, that brought him under the curse, are pardoned, and are, in point of condemnation, as if they had never been. This is to be justified, to have the sin pardoned and the penalty remitted: Rom 4:5-8, 'But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that Justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.' It is observable that what David calleth forgiveness of sin, and not imputing of iniquity, St Paul styles a being justified. But,

[2.] Secondly, As the first part of justification consists in the pardon of sin, so the second part of justification consists in the acceptation of the sinner's person as perfectly righteous in God's sight, pronouncing him such, and dealing with him as such, and by bringing of him under the shadow of that divine favour which he had formerly lost by his transgressions: Song of Solomon 4:7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee;' that is, none in my account, nor no such spots as the wicked are full of, Deu 32:5. Look, as David saw nothing in lame Mephibosheth but what was lovely, because he saw in him the features of his friend Jonathan, 2Sa 9:3-4, 2Sa 9:11-12, so God, beholding his people in the face of his Son, sees nothing amiss in them. They are all 'glorious within and without,' Psa 45:13. Look, as Absalom had no blemish from head to foot, so they are irreprehensible and 'without blemish before the throne of God,' Rev 14:5. The pardoned sinner, in respect of divine acceptation, is 'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,' Eph 5:26-27. God accepts the pardoned sinner as complete in him who is the head of all principality and power, Col 2:10. Christ makes us comely through his beauty; he gives us white raiment to stand before the Lord. Christ is all in all in regard of divine acceptance: Eph 1:6, 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved;' ■χαρ■τωσεν ■μ■ς, 'he hath made us favourites,' so Chrysostom and Theophylact render it; 'God hath ingratiated us,' he hath made us gracious in the Son of his love. Through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes: Isa 62:4, 'Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, but thou shalt be called Hephzibah; for the Lord delighteth in thee.' The acceptation of our persons with God takes in six things: (1.) God's honouring of us; (2.) His delight in us; (3.) His being well pleased with us; (4.) His extending love and favour to us; (5.) His high estimation of us; (6.) His giving us free access to himself. It is the observation of Ambrose, that though Jacob was not by birth the first-born, yet, hiding himself under his brother's clothes, and having put on his coat, which smelled most fragrantly, he came into his father's presence, and got away the blessing from his elder brother, Gen 27:36; so it is very necessary, in order to our acceptation with God, that we lie hid under the precious robe of Christ, our elder brother; that, having the sweet savour of his garments upon us, our sins may be covered

with his perfections, and our unrighteousness with the robes of his righteousness, 2Co 2:15; that so we may offer up ourselves unto God 'a living and acceptable sacrifice,' Rom 12:1; 'not having our own righteousness, which are but as filthy rags,' Isa 64:6; but that which is 'through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,' Php 3:9.

Thus you see that justification, for the nature of it, lies in the gracious pardon of the sinner's transgressions, and in the acceptation of his person as righteous in God's sight. But,

2. Secondly, In order to the partaking of this grace, of the forgiveness of our sins and the acceptation of our persons, we must be able to produce a perfect righteousness before the Lord, and to present it and tender it unto him; and the reason is evident from the very nature of God, who is 'of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' Hab 1:13, that is, with patience or pleasure, or without punishing it. There are four things that God cannot do: (1.) He cannot lie; (2.) He cannot die; (3.) He cannot deny himself; (4.) He cannot behold iniquity with approbation and delight: Jos 24:19, 'And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins:' such is the holiness of God's nature that he cannot behold sin, that he cannot but punish sin wherever he finds it, Psa 5:4-6. God is infinitely, immutably, and inexorably just, as well as he is incomprehensibly gracious. Now, in the justification of a sinner God doth act as a God of justice, as well as a God of compassion. God is infinite in all his attributes, in his justice as well as in his mercy: these two cannot interfere. As justice cannot intrench upon mercy, so neither may mercy encroach upon justice; the glory of both must be maintained. Now, by the breach of the law the justice of God is wronged; so that although mercy be apt to pardon; yet justice requires satisfaction, and calls for vengeance on sinners. 'Every transgression must receive just recompense,' Heb 2:2, and God will not in any case absolve the guilty, Exo 34:7: till this be done, the hands of mercy are tied that she cannot act. And seeing satisfaction could not be made to an infinite Majesty, but by an equal person and price; therefore the Son of God must become a curse for us, by taking our nature and pouring out his soul to the death; and by this means justice and mercy are reconciled and kiss each other, and mercy now being set at liberty, hath her free course to save poor sinners. God will have his justice satisfied to the full, and therefore Christ must bear all the punishment due to our sins; or else God cannot set us free, for he cannot go against his own just will. Observe the force of that phrase, 'Christ ought to suffer,' and 'thus it behoved Christ to suffer,' Luk 24:26; Mat 26:54, 'Thus it must be.' Why must? but because it was, (1.) So decreed by God; (2.) Foretold by the prophets. Every particular of Christ's sufferings were foretold by the prophets, even to their very spitting in his face. (3.) Prefigured in the daily morning and evening sacrifice; this Lamb of God was sacrificed from the beginning of the world. A necessity then there was of our Saviour's sufferings; not a necessity of co-action, for he died freely and voluntarily, but of immutability and infallibility, for the former reasons mentioned, John 10:11, John 10:14, John 10:17-18. An earthly prince that is just, holds himself bound to inflict punishment impartially upon the malefactor or his surety. It stands upon his honour; he saith, It must be so, I cannot do otherwise. This is true much more of God, who is justice itself. God, 'who is great in counsel and excellent in working,' had store of means at hand whereby to set free and recover lost mankind; yet he was pleased, in his infinite wisdom, to pitch upon this way of satisfaction, as being most agreeable to his holy nature, and most suitable to his high and sovereign ends—viz., man's salvation and his own glory: and that God doth stand upon full satisfaction, and will not forgive one sin without it, may be thus made evident.

[1.] First, From the nature of sin, which is that 'abominable thing which God hates,' Jer 44:4. The sinner deserves to die for his sins: Rom 6:23, 'The wages of sin is death,' Every sinner is worthy of death; 'they which commit such things are worthy of death,' Rom 1:32. Now God is just and righteous. 'It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,' 2Th 1:6; yea, and God did, therefore, 'set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,' Rom 3:25; 'to declare his righteousness, that he might be just,' Rom 3:26. Now, if God be a just and righteous God, then sin cannot absolutely escape unpunished; for it is just with God to punish the sinner who is worthy of punishment; and certainly God must deny himself if he will not be just, 2Ti 2:13; but this he can never do. Sin is of an infinite guilt, and hath an infinite evil in the nature of it; and therefore no person in heaven or earth, but that person our Lord Jesus, who is God-man, and who had an infinite dignity, could either procure the pardon of it, or make satisfaction for it. No prayers, no cries, no tears, no humblings, no repentings, no resolutions, no reformatations, &c., can stop the course of justice, or procure the guilty sinner's pardon. It is Christ alone that can dissolve all obligations to punishment, and break all bonds and chains of guilt, and hand a pardon to us through his own blood, Eph 1:7. We are set free by the blood of Christ. 'By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit,' Zec 9:11: it is by his blood that we are justified and saved from wrath: Rom 5:9, 'Much more being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him.' Pray tell me what is it to be justified but to be pardoned; and what is it to be saved from wrath but to be delivered from all punishment? and both these depend upon the blood of Christ, Eph 2:13; Col 1:20. But,

[2.] The veracity of God requires it. Look, as God cannot but be just, so he cannot but be true; and if he cannot but be true, then he will make good the threatenings that are gone out his mouth: Gen 2:17, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:' Heb. 'In dying, thou shalt die.' Death is a fall that came in by a fall, and without all peradventure every man should die the same day he was born, for 'the wages of sin is death,' and this wages should be presently paid, did not Christ relieve poor sinners' lives for a season, upon which account he is said to be the Saviour of all men, 1Ti 4:10; not of eternal preservation, but of a temporal reservation. 'He will by no means clear the guilty,' Exo 34:7. 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die;' 'The wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him,' Eze 18:20. 'He will render to every man according to his deeds,' Rom 2:6. O sirs, God can never so far yield as to abrogate his own law, and quietly to sit down with injury and loss to his own justice, himself having established a law, &c. The law pronounces him cursed that 'continues not in all things that are written therein, to do them,' Gal 3:10. Now, though the threatenings of men are frequently vain and frivolous, yet the threatenings of the great God shall certainly take place and have their accomplishment; though many ten thousand millions of sinners perish, not one tittle of the dreadful threatenings of God shall fail till all be fulfilled, Mat 5:18. Josephus saith that from that very time that old Eli heard those terrible threatenings, that made their ears tingle and hearts tremble that heard them, Eli never ceased weeping, 1Sa 3:11-14. Ah, who can look upon the dreadful threatenings that are pointed against sinners all over the book of God, and not tremble and weep! God cannot but in justice punish sinners; neither is it in his choice or freedom whether he will damn the obstinate impenitent sinner or no. Look, as God cannot but love holiness wherever he sees it, so he cannot but loathe and punish wickedness wherever he beholds it; neither will it stand with the infinite wisdom of God to admit of a dispensation or relaxation of the threatenings without satisfaction. God had passed a peremptory doom, and made a solemn declaration of it in his word, that 'he that sinneth, shall die the death;' and he will not, he

cannot break his word. You know he had foreordained Jesus Christ, and set him forth to take upon himself this burden, to become a propitiation for sin through his blood, Rom 3:25; 1Pe 1:20, and made known his mind concerning it in his written word plainly, Isa 53:7. If we read the words, 'it is exacted or strictly required,' meaning the iniquity or punishment of us all, ver. 6. It is required at his hands, he must answer it in our stead, and so he is afflicted, and this affliction reacheth even to the cutting him off, ver. 8. Therefore when Christ puts this work upon an ought and must be, he lays the weight of all on the Scriptures, 'Thus it is written,' as you may see in the texts lately cited; as if he should say, God hath spoken it, and his truth engageth him to see it done; so God hath threatened to punish sin, and his truth engageth him to see it done. O sirs, there is no standing before that God that is 'a consuming fire,' a just judge, a holy God, except I have one to 'undertake for me,' Heb 12:29, that is 'mighty to save,' Isa 63:1, and mighty to satisfy divine justice, and mighty to pacify divine wrath, and mighty to bear the threatenings, and mighty to forgive sin. When God forgives sin, he does it in a way of righteousness, Isa 19:20. 1Jn 1:9, 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' He doth not say he is merciful, but 'just, to forgive us our sins;' because they are satisfied for, and God's justice will not let him demand the same debt twice, of the surety and of the debtor too. It will never stand with the unspotted justice and righteousness of God to require such debts of us, which Christ, by shedding his most precious blood, hath discharged for us, Rom 3:25. Mark, the maledictory sentence of death, denounced by the law against sinners, was inflicted by God upon Christ. This is that which the prophet Isaiah positively asserts, where he saith, 'The chastisement,' that is, the punishment (called a chastisement, because inflicted by a father, and only for a time,) 'of our peace was upon him.' And again, 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,' Isa 53:5, Isa 53:7; which, according to the genuine sense of the original, is better rendered, 'It was exacted'—to wit, the punishment of our sin; and he was afflicted, or he answered—to wit, to the demand of the penalty. The curse to which we are subject, saith Theodorus, he assumed upon himself of his own accord. 'The death that was not due to him he underwent, that we might not undergo that death which was due to us,' saith Gregory.² 'He made himself a debtor for us, who were debtors; and therefore the creditor exacts it from him,' saith Arnoldus. Now God's justice being satisfied for our offences, it cannot but remit those offences to us. As the creditor cannot demand that of the debtor which the surety hath already paid, so neither can God exact the punishment of us which Christ hath suffered; and therefore 'it is just with God to forgive us our sins.' It will be altogether needless to inquire whether it had been injustice in God to forgive without satisfaction. St Austin's determination is very solid: There wanted not to God another possible way, and if it were unjust, it were impossible; but this of satisfaction was most agreeable to divine wisdom.⁴ Before God did decree this way, it might be free to have used it or not; but in decreeing, this seemed most convenient, and after, it became necessary, so that there can be no remission without it; and however it might not have been unjust with God to have forgiven without it, yet we are sure it is most just with him to forgive upon satisfaction. Indeed, the debt being paid by Christ, God's very justice, as I may say with reverence, would trouble him if he should not give in the bond, and give out an acquittance. The believing penitent sinner may, in a humble confidence, sue out his pardon, not only at the throne of grace, but at the bar of justice, in these or the like expressions: Lord, thou hast punished my sins in thy Son, wilt thou punish them in me? Thou hast accepted that suffering of thy Son as the punishment of my sin, therefore thou canst not in justice exact it of me, for this were to punish twice for one offence, which thy justice cannot but abhor. O sirs! God doth not pronounce men righteous when

they are not; but first he makes them so, and then he pronounces them to be such; so that if a man will be justified, he must be able to produce such a complete righteousness wherewith he may stand before the justice of God. Ah sinners! the Lord is infinitely just, as well as merciful; and if ever your sins be pardoned, it must be by an admirable temperament, or mixture of mercy and justice together. It was one of the great ends of the gospel dispensation that God might exalt his justice in the justification of a sinner: Rom 3:26, 'To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' But,

3. Thirdly, The only matter of man's righteousness, since the fall of Adam, wherein he can appear with comfort before the justice of God, and consequently whereby alone he can be justified in his sight, is the obedience and suffering of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of the mediator. There is not any other way imaginable, how the justice of God may be satisfied, and we may have our sins pardoned in a way of justice, but by the righteousness of the Son of God; and therefore this is his name, 'Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness,' Jer 23:6. 'This is his name,' that is, this is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus, a matter that appertaineth to him alone, to be able to 'bring in everlasting righteousness, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,' Dan 9:24. The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for an hundred talents, was indeed a mean and beggarly rag to that embroidered mantle of Christ's righteousness that he puts upon us: Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' Christ's righteousness is that garment of wrought gold, that we all need, to cover all our imperfections, and to render us perfectly beautiful and glorious in the sight of God.² In this robe of righteousness we are complete, we are without spot or wrinkle, we are without fault before the throne of God. Through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, we are made righteous in the sight of God. God looking upon us, as invested with the righteousness of his Son, accounts us righteous. All believers have a righteousness in Christ as full and complete as if they had fulfilled the law. 'Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to believers,' Rom 8:3-4, invests believers with a righteousness every way as complete, as the personal obedience of the law would have invested them withal. When men had violated God's holy law, God in justice resolved that his law should be satisfied before man should be saved. Now this was done by Christ, who was the end of the law; he fulfilled it actively and passively, and so the injury offered to the law is recompensed. God had rather that all men should be destroyed, than that his law should not be satisfied. No man can perfectly be justified in the sight of God without a perfect righteousness, every way commensurable to God's holy law, which is the rule of righteousness, 'Do this and live:' neither can any person have any choice, spiritual, lively communion with a righteous God, till he be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. All Christ's active and passive obedience was either for himself, or in our stead and behalf; but it was not for himself, but for us, that he suffered and obeyed. Whatsoever Christ did or suffered in the whole course of his life, he did it and suffered it as our surety, and in our steads: for as God would not dispense with the penalty of the law without satisfaction, so he would not dispense with the commands of the law without perfect obedience. Remember, once for all, that the actions and sufferings of Christ make but up one entire and perfect obedience to the whole law; nor had Christ been a perfect and complete Saviour, if he had not performed what the law required, as well as suffered the penalty which the law inflicted. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to us is a gracious act of God the Father,

according to his good will and pleasure, whereby as a judge he accounts believers' sins unto the surety, as if he had committed the same; and the righteousness of Christ unto the believer, as if he had performed the same, the same obedience that Christ did in his own person: so that Christ's imputed righteousness is as effectual to the full, for the acceptance of the believing sinner, as if he had yielded such obedience to the Lord himself. Hence his righteousness is called 'our righteousness,' Jer 23:6. Now without this righteousness there is no standing before the justice of God. But,

4. Fourthly, As this great design of Christ's redeeming sinners by his blood and sufferings, and by his being made a curse for them, doth sound aloud the glory of divine justice, and the glory of God's veracity, so it sounds forth the glory of his wisdom; for hereby he maintains the authority of his righteous law. When a law is solemnly enacted, with a penalty in case of transgression, all those whom it concerns may conclude for certain, that the lawgiver will proceed accordingly; and it is a rule in policy, that laws once established and published, should be vigorously preserved. If the Lord should have wholly waived the execution of the law upon sinners or their surety, it might have tended greatly to the weakening of its authority, and the diminishing of the reverence of his sovereignty in the hearts of the sons of men. How often does God use that oath, 'As I live,' for the fulfilling of his threatenings as well as of his promises, Jer 22:24, and Eze 5:9-11. The Lord Jehovah is as true, faithful, and constant in his threatenings as in his promises. What he hath threatened shall undoubtedly come to pass; he will be made known by his name Jehovah in the full execution of all his threatenings. The old world found it so, and Jerusalem found it so; yea, the whole nation of the Jews have found it so to this very day, see Eze 5:13, Eze 5:15. Look, as all the saints in heaven will readily put to their seals, that God is true. and faithful in all his promises; so all the damned in hell will readily put to their seals, that God is faithful in all his threatenings. Men frequently deride the laws and threatenings of great men, when they are not put into execution. It is the execution of laws that is the very life and soul of good laws, Ecc 8:11. Should God pardon sin, without exacting the penalty of the law, how would sinners be hardened, and emboldened to say, with those men, or rather monsters, in Malachi, 'Where is the God of judgment?' Mal 2:17, i.e., nowhere; either there is no God, or at least not a God of that exact, precise, and impartial judgment, as some men say and as others teach. But now when God lets sinners see that he will not pardon sin without exacting the penalty of the law, either of the sinner or of his surety, then the sinner cries out, 'O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' Rom 11:33. God stood so much upon the complete satisfaction and accomplishment of his law, that he was willing that Christ should be a sacrifice, that the law might be satisfied in its penalty, and that Christ in his own person should fulfil the righteousness of the law, that it might be satisfied in its commands, Rom 8:3-5. Now in this plenary satisfaction made to the law, the wisdom of God does gloriously shine. The heart of God was so set upon a full satisfaction to his law, that rather than it should not be done, his own Son must come from heaven and put on flesh, and be himself made under the law, Gal 4:4-5; he must live a holy life, and die a cursed death, and all to satisfy the law, and to keep up the authority of it. But,

5. Fifthly, God doth stand upon full satisfaction, and will not forgive one sin without it, that he might hereby cut off all occasions, which the devil, his arch-enemy, might take to calumniate and traduce him; for if God did not stand upon full satisfaction, the devil might accuse him (1.) of inconstancy and changeableness, that having threatened death to transgressors, he did quite forget himself, in

waiving the threatening, and dispensing wholly with his law, by granting them free remission; yea, (2.) of partiality and respect of persons, that he should be so easy and forbearing, as to let them pass without any punishment at all; having been formerly so severe and rigid against himself, in casting him and his angels down to hell, and keeping them in everlasting flames and chains of darkness, without the least hope of recovery, 2Pe 2:4; Jude 1:6. Satan might say, Lord, thou mightest have spared me as well as man. But the Lord can now answer, Man hath made satisfaction, he hath borne the curse, and thereby fully discharged all the demands of the law; if he had not, I would no more have spared him than thee. Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own; he is not thine, Lord Jesus, he is mine, his thoughts beat for me; he eats with thee, but is fed by me; he takes bread from thee, but money from me; he drinks with thee, but sells thy blood to me. Had God pardoned sin without satisfaction, ah how would Satan have boasted and triumphed over God himself! But,

6. Sixthly, God's standing upon full satisfaction, and his not forgiving one sin without it, bears a visible character of his goodness and loving-kindness, as well as it sounds out aloud the glory of divine justice. 'The great and the holy God, whose name is holy,' Exo 15:1, Exo 15:11, might have rigorously exacted the penalty of the law on the persons of sinners themselves; but he hath so far dispensed with his own law, as to admit of a surety, by whom the end of the law, that is, the manifestation of his justice and hatred of sin, might be fulfilled, and yet a considerable part of mankind might be preserved from the jaws of the second death, which otherwise must unavoidably have perished to all eternity, Rev 20:6. God seems to speak at such a rate as this; I may not, I will not, suffer this high affront of Adam and his posterity against my 'holy and righteous law,' Rom 7:12, Rom 7:14, whereby the honour both of my justice and truth is in danger to be trampled underfoot; and yet if I should let out all my wrath upon them, they were never able to stand under it, but 'their spirits would fail before me, and the souls that I have made,' Psa 78:38; Isa 57:16. I will therefore let out all my wrath upon their surety, and he shall bear it for them, that they may be delivered; and thus the Lord 'in wrath remembers mercy,' Hab 3:2. But,

7. Seventhly, We can receive no benefit by the righteousness of Christ for justification in the sight of God, nor can we be pardoned and accepted thereupon, until that righteousness become ours, and be made over unto us. How can we plead this righteousness before God, except we have an interest in this righteousness? Isa 45:24-25. How can we rejoice and triumph in this righteousness, if this righteousness be not made ours? How can we have peace with God, and boldness at the throne of grace, through this righteousness, except we can lay claim to this righteousness? How can we conclude that we are happy and blessed upon the account of this righteousness, except it be made over to us? There is none of us that have such an inherent righteousness in ourselves that we dare plead before the bar of God; and though God hath provided such a glorious robe of righteousness for poor sinners, as is the wonder and amazement of angels, yet what would all this avail the poor sinner, if this righteousness be not made over to him? O sirs! remember this, Christ's righteousness must be yours, it must be made over to you, or else it will never stand you in stead: Rom 5:17, 'For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in glory by one. Jesus Christ.' Except they receive the righteousness of Christ, it is nothing to them. Christ's righteousness is in itself white raiment, and beautiful and glorious apparel but it will never cover our nakedness, except it be put on, and we are clothed with it. It must be made over to us, or we

can never be justified by it: 1Co 1:30, 'He of God is made to us righteousness;' if he be not made to us righteousness, we shall never be righteous. Though man hath lost a righteousness to be justified by, yet there is an absolute necessity of having one. God cannot love nor delight in anything but righteousness. God is a holy God, a righteous God, and therefore can only love and take pleasure in those that are righteous, both by a righteousness imputed, and a righteousness imparted: Isa 45:24, 'Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength;' Isa 45:25, 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory:' Isa 54:17, 'Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord;' Psa 71:16, 'I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.' Look, as no man can be made rich by another man's riches, except they are made his; so no man can be made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, except his righteousness be made over to him; hence he is called, 'The Lord our Righteousness,' Jer 23:6; and hence we are said to be 'the righteousness of God in him,' 2Co 5:21; hence we are said 'by his obedience to be made righteous,' 2Co 5:21.

8. Eighthly and lastly, The way whereby this righteousness of God's providing is conveyed and made over to us, that we may receive the benefit thereof, and be justified thereby, it is by way of imputation. The meaning is this: God doth reckon the righteousness of Christ unto his people, as if it were their own; he doth count unto them Christ's sufferings and satisfaction, and makes them partakers of the virtue thereof, as if themselves had suffered and satisfied. This is the genuine and proper import of the word imputation, when that which is personally done by one, is accounted and reckoned to another, and laid upon his score, as if he had done it. Thus it is in this very case; we sinned and fell short of the glory of God, and became obnoxious to the vindictive justice of God; and the Lord Jesus Christ, by his obedience and death, hath given full content and satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf. Now when God doth pardon and accept us hereupon, he doth put it upon our account, he doth reckon or impute it unto us as fully, in respect of the benefit thereof, as if we ourselves had performed it in our own persons; and this is the way wherein the Holy Ghost frequently expresseth it: Rom 4:6, 'Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;' and Rom 4:11, 'That righteousness might be imputed to them also;' and therefore it highly concerns us to mind this scripture rule, that in order to the satisfaction of the justice of God, the sins of God's people were imputed and reckoned unto Christ; and in order to our partaking of the benefit of that satisfaction, or deliverance thereby, Christ's righteousness must be imputed and reckoned unto us. The first branch of this rule you have, Isa 53:5-6, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities,' &c., and 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;' and for the other branch of the rule, see Rom 5:19, 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous;' Rom 5:17, 'As by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.' From the comparison between the first and second Adam, it is evident that as Adam's transgression of the law of God is imputed to all his posterity, and that in respect thereof they are reputed sinners, and accursed and liable to eternal death; so also Christ's obedience, whereby he fulfilled the law, is so imputed to the members of his mystical body, that in regard of God, they stand as innocent, justified and accepted to eternal life. Look, as Adam was the common root of all mankind, and so his sin is imputed to all his posterity, so Jesus Christ is the common root of all the faithful, and his obedience is imputed to them all; for it were ridiculous to say that Adam's sin had more power to condemn, than Christ's righteousness hath to save; and

who but fools in folio will say that God doth not impute Christ's righteousness, as well as Adam's sin? The apostle's parallel between the two Adams does clearly evidence that as the guilt of Adam's disobedience is really imputed to us, insomuch that in his sinning we all sin; so the obedience of Christ is as really imputed unto us, insomuch that in his obeying, reputatively and legally we obey also. How did Adam's sin become ours? Why, by way of imputation. He transgressed the covenant, and did eat the forbidden fruit, and it was justly reckoned unto us. It was personally the sinful act of our first parent, but it is imputed to all of us who come out of his loins; for we were in him not only naturally, as he was the root of mankind, but also legally, as he was the great representative of mankind. In the covenant of works, and the transactions thereof, Adam stood in the stead, and acted in the behalf, not only of himself, but of all his posterity, and therefore his sin is reckoned unto them; even so, saith the apostle, after the same manner, the obedience and righteousness of Christ is made over to many for justification. I cannot understand the analogy betwixt the two Adams, wherein the apostle is so clear and full, unless this imputation, as here stated, be granted. Look, as Christ was made sin for us only by imputation, so we are made righteous only by the imputation of his righteousness to us, as the Scripture everywhere evidences, 1Pe 2:22; 2Co 5:21, 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' How was Christ made sin for us? Not sin inherent, for he had no sin in him; he was 'holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,' Heb 7:26; but by imputation. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us in that way wherein our sin was imputed to him. Now our sin was imputed to Christ, not only in the bitter effects of it, but he took the guilt of them upon himself, as I have in this treatise already evidenced; so, then, his righteousness or active obedience itself must be proportionably imputed to us; and not only in the effects thereof. The mediatory righteousness of Christ can no way become the believer's, but as the first Adam's disobedience became his posterity's, who never had the least actual share in his transgression; that is, by an act of imputation from God as a judge. The Lord Jesus having fulfilled the law as a second Adam, God the Father imputeth it to the believing soul, as if he had done it in his own person. I do not say that God the Father doth account the sinner to have done it, but I say that God the Father doth impute it to the believing sinner, as if he had done it, unto all saving intents and purposes. Hence Christ is called 'the Lord our Righteousness,' Jer 23:6. An awakened soul, that is truly sensible of his own baseness and unrighteousness, would not have this golden sentence, 'The Lord our Righteousness,' blotted out by a hand of heaven out of the Bible, for as many worlds as there are men in the world. So is that text to a believer, living and dying, a strong cordial, viz., 1Co 1:30, 'Christ Jesus is made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness,' &c. And pray how is Christ made righteousness to the believer? Not by infusion, but imputation; not by putting righteousness into him, but by putting a righteousness upon him, even his own righteousness, by the imputing his merits, his satisfaction, his obedience unto them, through which they are accepted as righteous unto eternal life, Rom 5:19. Christ's righteousness is his in respect of inhesion, but it is ours in respect of imputation; his righteousness is his personally, but ours meritoriously; we are justified by another's righteousness, and that only, and therefore by imputed righteousness; for another's righteousness can no other way be made ours, but only by imputation: Rom 5:18, 'By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification.' Were it any other than imputed righteousness, it would be as manifold a righteousness as there are persons justified; but it is said to be 'the righteousness of one, that comes upon all men for justification of life.' That is a choice word that you have in Rev 19:8, 'And

to her,' that is, Christ's spouse, 'was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.' The Greek word here is δικαιοματια, 'righteousnesses' or 'justifications.' This, say some, signifieth a double righteousness given to us—(1.) The righteousness of justification, whereby we are justified before God; (2.) The righteousness of sanctification, by which we evidence our justification to men. But others say it is a Hebrewism rather, by the plural righteousnesses noting the most absolute, complete, and perfect righteousness which we have in Christ. Now though I would not exclude inherent righteousness, yet I judge that imputed righteousness is the righteousness here meant; and that, (1.) Because this clothing is that which is the righteousness of all saints, by which they stand recti in curia before God. Now there is no standing before God in our inherent righteousness; for though, next to Christ, our graces are our best jewels, yet they are but weak and imperfect, they have their specks, and spots, they are like the moon, which, when it shines brightest, yet has her black spots. (2.) Christ's righteousness is the only pure, clean, white, spotless righteousness. There is no speck or spot to be found upon Christ's righteousness; but 'we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,' as that evangelical prophet speaks, Isa 64:6, Isa 64:3. The word here is plural, δικαιοματια, 'righteousnesses.' Christ hath many righteousnesses—first, He hath his essential and personal righteousness as God. Now this essential personal righteousness of Christ cannot be imputed to us. Osiander was of opinion that men were justified by the essential righteousness of Christ as God, which was a most dangerous opinion, and learnedly and largely confuted by Calvin in his Institutions, and by others since; secondly, There is the mediatory righteousness of Christ. Now this is that righteousness which he wrought for us as mediator, whereby he did subject himself to the precepts, to the penalties, commands and curses, answering both God's vindictive and rewarding justice. There is Christ's active righteousness, and there is Christ's passive righteousness, &c. Of these I have spoken already in this treatise, and therefore a hint here is enough; but, thirdly, There are some expressions in the text that is under consideration that do best agree with the righteousness of Christ; as first that, that 'she is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.' This clearly points at imputed righteousness, which Christ puts upon his bride as a royal robe. That which makes Christ's bride beautiful, yea, whiter than the snow, and more glorious than the sun in his eyes, is not any beauty of her own, nor any inherent righteousness in herself, but the white robe of Christ's own righteousness that he puts upon her; second, that expression in the text, 'to her it was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen,' &c. 'It was granted to her,' to shew that this fine linen was none of her own spinning, it was a free gift of Christ unto her. Saints have no other righteousness, to make them comely and lovely in the eyes of God, but the robe of Christ's righteousness, which is that fine white linen that Christ gives them, and that he puts upon them; lastly, observe the confirmation and ratification that is given to these words in Isa 64:9, 'Write, these are the true sayings of God.' These are not my sayings, nor the sayings of angels, but they are the sayings of that God that is truth itself, that cannot die, nor lie, nor deny himself, nor deceive the sons of God; and therefore you may safely rest upon these sayings of God, both in Isa 64:8-9, as most sure and certain. Surely the righteousness the believer hath is imputed; it is an accounted or reckoned righteousness to him; it is not that which he hath inherently in himself, but God through Christ doth esteem of him as if he had it, and so deals with him as wholly righteous—(1.) It stands with reason that that satisfaction should be imputed to me, which my surety hath made for my debt. Now Christ was our surety, as the apostle calls him, Heb 7:22. (2.) Adam's sin was justly imputed by God to all his posterity, though it was not their own

inherently and actually, as the apostle tells us, Rom 5:14; and the sins of all the elect were imputed unto Christ, though they were not his own inherently and actually. 'He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,' saith the apostle, 2Co 5:21; and 'upon him was laid the iniquity of us all,' Isa 53:6. All the sins of all the believers in the world, from the first creation to the last judgment, were laid on him. How laid on him but by imputation? Surely there was in Christ no fundamental guilt! No, no; but he was made sin by imputation and law-account; he was our surety, and so our sins were laid on him in order to punishment. And to prefigure this, all the iniquities of God's people were imputed to their sacrifice, though they were not inherently his own, as we read, Lev 16:21-22, 'Aaron shall put all the iniquities of all the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, and all their sins, upon the head of the goat; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities.' And why then should it seem strange that the perfect righteousness of our sacrifice and surety, though it be not our own inherently, should be imputed to us by the Lord and made ours?

Frequently and seriously consider that the word answering this imputing is in the Hebrew Chashab, and in the Greek λογίζεσθαι, of which the sum, as the learned say, comes to this, that though the words in the general signify to think, to reason, to imagine, &c., yet very frequently they are used to signify to account or reckon, by way of computation, as arithmeticians use to do, so that it is, as it were, a judgment passed upon a thing when all reasons and arguments are cast together. And from this it is applied to signify any land of accounting or reckoning; and in this sense imputation is taken here for God's esteeming and accounting of us righteous; λογίζεσθαι, signifies to reckon or account. It is taken by a borrowed speech from merchants' reckonings and accounts, who have their debt-books, wherein they set down how their reckonings stand in the particulars they deal in. Now, in such debt-books merchants use to set down whatever payments are only made, either by the debtors themselves, or by others in the behalf of them; an example whereof we have in the Epistle of Philemon, ver. 18, where Paul undertakes to Philemon for Onesimus, 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee anything, put that on my account;' that is, account Onesimus his debt to Paul, and Paul's satisfaction or payment to Onesimus, which answers the double imputation in point of justification; that is, of our sins to Christ, and of Christ's satisfaction to us, Psa 32:1-2; both which are implied, 2Co 5:21, 'He made him to be sin for us;' that is, our sins were imputed to him, 'that we might be the righteousness of God in him;' that is, that his righteousness might be imputed to us. The language of Jesus Christ to his Father seems to be this, O holy Father, I have freely and willingly taken all the debts and all the sins of all the believers in the world upon me; I have undertaken to be their paymaster, to satisfy thy justice, to pacify thy wrath, to fulfil thy law, &c., and therefore, lo, here I am, ready to do whatever thou commandest, and ready to suffer whatsoever thou pleasest; I am willing to be reckoned a sinner, that they may be reckoned righteous; I am willing to be accounted cursed, that they may be for ever blessed; I am willing to pay all their debts, that they may be set at liberty; I am willing to lay down my life, that they may escape the second death; I am willing that my soul should be exercised with the most hideous agonies, that their souls may be possessed of heaven's happinesses, Psa 40:6-8; Heb 10:4-9; John 10:11, John 10:15, John 10:17-18; Rev 20:6. Oh, what wonderful wisdom, grace, and love is here manifested! that when we were neither able to satisfy the penalty of the law, or to bring a conformity to it, that then Christ should interpose, and become both redemption and righteousness for us!

Now, from the imputed righteousness of Christ, a believer may form up this fifth plea, as to all the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer to the great day of account: O blessed God, thou hast given me to understand that the mediatory righteousness of Christ includes, first, the habitual holiness of his person, in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and requisite qualities; secondly, the actual holiness of his life and death by obedience. By his active obedience he perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law, and by his passive obedience, his voluntary sufferings, he satisfied the penalty and commination of the law for transgressions, that perfect satisfaction to divine justice, in whatsoever it requires, either in way of punishing for sin, or obedience to the law, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, the mediator of the new covenant, as a common head, representing all those whom the Father hath given to him, and made over unto them that believe in him; this is that righteousness that is imputed to all believers in their justification, and this imputed righteousness of thy dear Son and my dear Saviour is now my plea before thy bar of justice. Imputed righteousness is the same materially with that which the law requireth. It is obedience to the law of God, exactly and punctually performed, to the very utmost iota and title thereof. Without the least abatement, Christ hath paid the uttermost farthing. He is the fulfilling of the law for righteousness, and he hath fulfilled the law in the human nature, to the intent that it might be fulfilled in the same nature to which it was at first given; and all this he hath expressly done in all their names, and on all their behalfs, that believe in him, 'that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them,' Rom 8:3-4. It is as if our dear Lord Jesus had said, O blessed Father, this I suffer, and this I do, to the use and in the stead and room of all those that have ventured their souls upon me, that they may have a righteousness which they may truly call their own, and on which they may safely rest, and in which they may for ever glory, Isa 45:24-25. Now it will never stand with the unspotted holiness, justice, and righteousness of God, to reject this righteousness of his Son, or that plea that is bottomed upon it. Oh, the matchless happiness of believers, who have so fair, so full, and so noble a plea to make in the great day of our Lord Jesus!

Quest. But some may say, What blessed fruit grows upon this glorious tree of paradise—viz., the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that is imputed to all believers? What strong consolations flows from this fountain, the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ? I answer, there are these nine choice consolations, that flow in upon all believers, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them:—

1. First, Let all believers know for their comfort, that in this imputed righteousness of Christ there is enough to satisfy the justice of God to the uttermost farthing, and to take off all his judicial anger and fury. The mediatory righteousness of Christ is so perfect, so full, so exact, so complete, and so fully satisfactory to the justice of God, as that divine justice cries out, I have enough, and I require no more; I have found a ransom, and I am fully pacified towards you, Eze 16:61-63; Heb 10:10-12, Heb 10:14; Isa 53:4-6. It is certain that Christ was truly and properly a sacrifice for sin; and it is as certain that our sins were the meritorious cause of his sufferings. He did put himself into poor sinners' stead, he took their guilt upon him, and did undergo that punishment which they should have undergone; he did die, and shed his blood, that he might thereby atone God and expiate sin, Rom 5:6-12; and therefore we may safely and boldly conclude, that Jesus Christ hath satisfied the justice of God to the uttermost; so that now the believing sinner may rejoice and triumph in the justice as well as in the mercy of God, Heb 7:25; for doubtless the mediatory

righteousness of Christ was infinitely more satisfactory and pleasing to God, than all the sins of believers could be displeasing to him. God took more pleasure and delight in the bruising of his Son, in the humiliation of his Son, and he smelt a sweeter savour in his sacrifice, than all our sins could possibly offend him or provoke him, Isa 53:10. When a believer casts his eyes upon his many thousand sinful commissions and omissions, no wonder if he fears and trembles; but then, when he looks upon Christ's satisfaction, he may see himself acquitted, and rejoice; for if there be no charge, no accusation against the Lord Jesus, there can be none against the believer, Rom 8:33-37. Christ's expiatory sacrifice hath fully satisfied divine justice; and upon that very ground every believer hath cause to triumph in Christ Jesus, and in that righteousness of his by which he stands justified before the throne of God, 2Co 2:14; Rev 14:4-5. Christ is a person of infinite, transcendent worth and excellency, and it makes highly for his honour to justify believers, in the most ample and glorious way imaginable, &c.; and what way is that, but by working out for [them], and then investing them with, a righteousness adequate to the law of God; a righteousness that should be every way commensurate to the miserable estate of fallen man, and to the holy design of the glorious God. It is the high honour of the second Adam that he hath restored to fallen man a more glorious righteousness than that he lost in the first Adam; and it would be high blasphemy, in the eyes of angels and men, for any mortal to assert that the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, was less powerful to save, than the first Adam was to destroy. The second Adam is 'able to save to the uttermost all such as come to God through him,' Heb 7:25. The second Adam is able to save to all ends and purposes perfectly, saith Beza; perpetually, or for ever, saith Tremellius; in æternum, saith Syrus; in perpetuum, saith the Vulg.; ad plenum, saith Erasmus; ad perfectum, saith Stapulensis. He is able to save to the uttermost obligation of the law, preceptive, as well as penal; and to bring in perfect righteousness, as well as perfect innocency. He is able to save to the uttermost demand of divine justice, by that perfect satisfaction that he has given to divine justice. 'Christ is mighty to save,' Isa 63:1; and as he is mighty to save, so he loves to save poor sinners, in such a way wherein he may most magnify his own might; and therefore he will purchase their pardon with his blood, 1Pe 1:18-19, and make reparation to divine justice for all the wrongs and injuries which fallen man had done to his Creator and his royal law; and bestow upon him a better righteousness than that which Adam lost; and bring him into a more safe, high, honourable, and durable estate than that which Adam fell from when he was in his created perfection. All the attributes of God do acquiesce in the imputed righteousness of Christ, so that a believer may look upon the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God, and rejoice, and lay himself down in peace, Psa 4:8. I have read in story, that Pilate being called to Rome, to give an account unto the emperor for some misgovernment and mal-administration, he put on the seamless coat of Christ; and all the time that he had that coat upon his back, Cæsar's fury was abated. Christ has put his coat, his robe of righteousness, upon every believer, Isa 61:10; upon which account all the judicial anger, wrath, and fury of God towards believers ceaseth: Isa 54:9, 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.' Isa 54:10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' But,

2. Secondly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed, this mediatory righteousness of Christ takes away all your unrighteousness. It cancels every bond; it takes away all iniquity, and answers for all your sins, Isa 53:5-7; Col 2:12-15. Lord, here are my sins of omission, and here are my sins of

commission; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them all. Here are my sins against the law, and here are my sins against the gospel, and here are my sins against the offers of grace, the tenders of grace, the strivings of grace, the bowels of grace; but the righteousness of Christ hath answered for them all. I have read that when a cordial was offered to a godly man that was sick, Oh, said he, the cordial of cordials which I daily take is, 'that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all our sins,' 1Jn 1:7. O sirs! it would be high blasphemy for any to imagine that there should be more demerit in any sin, yea, in all sin, to condemn a believer, than there is merit in Christ's righteousness to absolve him, to justify him, Rom 8:1, Rom 8:33-35. The righteousness of Christ was shadowed out by the glorious robes and apparel of the high priest, Exo 30:1-38. That attire in which the high priest appeared before God, what was it else but a type of Christ's righteousness? The filthy garments of Joshua, who represented the church, were not only taken off from him, thereby signifying the removal of our sins, Zec 3:4-5; but also a new, fair garment was put upon him, to signify our being clothed with the wedding-garment of Christ's righteousness. If any shall say, How is it possible that a soul that is defiled with the worst of sins should be whiter than the snow, yea, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God? Psa 51:7. The answer is at hand, because to whomsoever the Lord doth give the pardon of his sins, which is the first part of our justification, to them he doth also impute the righteousness of Christ, which is the second part of our justification before God. Thus David describeth, saith the apostle, 'the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered,' Rom 4:6-7. Now to that man whose sins the Lord forgives, to him he doth impute righteousness also: 'Take away the filthy garments from him,' saith the Lord of Joshua; 'and he said unto him, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment,' Zec 3:4. And what was that change of raiment? Surely the perfect obedience and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which God doth impute unto us; in which respect also we are said, by justifying faith, to put on the Lord Jesus, Rom 13:14; and to be clothed with him as with a garment, Gal 3:27. And no marvel if, being so apparelled, we appear beautiful and glorious in the sight of God: 'To her,' that is, Christ's bride, 'was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints,' Rev 19:8. This perfect righteousness of Christ, which the Lord imputeth to us, and wherewith, as with a garment, he clotheth us, is the only righteousness which the saints have to stand before God with; and having that robe of righteousness on, they may stand with great boldness and comfort before the judgment-seat of God. But,

3. Thirdly, Know for your comfort, that this righteousness of Christ presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God. 'He is made to us righteousness,' 1Co 1:30. The robe of innocency, like the veil of the temple, is rent asunder; our righteousness is a ragged righteousness, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isa 64:4. Look, as under rags the naked body is seen, so under the rags of our righteousnesses the body of death is seen. Christ is all in all in regard of righteousness: Christ is 'the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe,' Rom 10:4. That is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. The end of the law is to justify and save those which fulfil it. Christ subjected himself thereto; he perfectly fulfilled it for us, and his perfect righteousness is imputed to us. Christ fulfilled the moral law, not for himself, but for us; therefore Christ doing it for believers, they fulfil the law in Christ. And so Christ by doing, and they believing in him that doth it, do fulfil the law; or Christ may be said to be the end of the law, because the end of the law is perfect righteousness, that a man may be justified thereby, which

end we cannot attain of ourselves, through the frailty of our flesh; but by Christ we attain it, who hath fulfilled the law for us. Christ hath perfectly fulfilled the decalogue for us, and that three ways: (1.) In his pure conception; (2.) In his godly life; (3.) in his holy and obedient sufferings; and all for us. For whatsoever the law required that we should be, do, or suffer, he hath performed in our behalf. Therefore one wittily saith, (Aretius,) that Christ is τέλος, the end or tribute; and we by his payment ■τελεις, tribute-free. We are discharged by him before God. Christ, in respect of the integrity and purity of his nature, being conceived without sin, Mat 1:18; and in respect of his life and actions, being wholly conformed to the absolute righteousness of the law, Luk 1:35; and in respect of the punishment which he suffered, to make satisfaction unto God's justice for the breach of the law, 2Co 5:21; Col 1:20,—in these respects Christ is the perfection of the law, and 'the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe.' Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother; so in the garment of Christ's righteousness, who is our elder brother, we obtain the blessing; yea, 'all spiritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph 1:4. We are made 'the righteousness of God in him,' 2Co 5:21. The church, saith Marorate, which puts on Christ, and his righteousness, is more illustrious than the air is by the sun. The infinite wisdom and power of dear Jesus in reconciling the law and the gospel, in this great mystery of justification, is greatly to be magnified. In the blessed Scriptures we find the righteousness of justification to take its various denominations. In respect of the material cause, it is called the righteousness of the law, Rom 5:17; in respect of the efficient cause, it is called the righteousness of Christ, 1Co 1:30; in respect of the formal, it is called the righteousness of God, he imputing of it, Rom 3:22; in respect of the instrumental cause, it is called the righteousness of faith, Php 3:9; and in respect of the moving and final cause, we are said to be justified freely by grace, Rom 3:24; Tit 3:7. The law, as it was a covenant of works, required exact and perfect obedience, in men's proper persons; this was legal justification. But in the new covenant, God is contented to accept this righteousness in the hand of a surety, and this is evangelical justification. This righteousness presents us in the sight of God as 'all fair,' Song of Solomon 4:7; as 'complete,' Col 2:10; as 'without spot or wrinkle,' Eph 5:27; as 'without fault before the throne of God,' Rev 14:5; as 'holy, and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight,' Col 1:22. Oh, the happiness and blessedness, the safety and glory, of those precious souls, who, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, stand perfectly righteous in the sight of God! But,

4. Fourthly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed righteousness of Christ will answer to all the fears, doubts, and objections of your souls. How shall I look up to God? The answer is, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. How shall I have any communion with a holy God in this world? The answer is, in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I find acceptance with God? The answer is, in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I die? The answer is, in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I stand before the judgment-seat? The answer is, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Your sure and only way, under all temptations, fears, conflicts, doubts, and disputes, is, by faith, to remember Christ, and the sufferings of Christ, as your mediator and surety; and say, O Christ, thou art my sin, in being made sin for me, 2Co 5:21; and thou art my curse, being made a curse for me, Gal 3:13; or rather, I am thy sin, and thou art my righteousness; I am thy curse, and thou art my blessing; I am thy death, and thou art my life; I am the wrath of God to thee, and thou art the love of God to me; I am thy hell, and thou art my heaven. O sirs! if you think of your sins, and of God's wrath; if you think of your guiltiness, and of God's justice, your hearts will faint and fail, they will fear and tremble and sink into despair, if you do not think of Christ, if you do not stay and rest your souls upon the mediatory righteousness of Christ, the imputed righteousness of Christ. The

imputed righteousness of Christ answers all cavils and objections, though there were millions of them, that can be made against the good estate of a believer. This is a precious truth, more worth than a world, that all our sins are pardoned, not only in a way of truth and mercy, but in a way of justice. Satan and our own consciences will object many things against our souls, if we plead only the mercy and the truth of God; and will be ready to say, Oh, but where is then the justice of God? can mercy pardon without the consent of his justice? But now, whilst we rest upon the satisfaction of Christ, 'justice and mercy kiss each other,' Psa 85:10; yea, justice saith, I am pleased. In a day of temptation, many things will be cast in our dish, about the multitude of our sins, and the greatness of our sins, and the grievousness of our sins, and about the circumstances and aggravations of our sins; but that good word, 'Christ hath redeemed us from all iniquities,' he hath paid the full price that justice could exact or require; and that good word, 'Mercy rejoiceth against judgment,' Jas 2:13, may support, comfort, and bear us up under all. The infinite worth of Christ's obedience, did arise from the dignity of his person, who was God-man; so that all the obedience of angels and men, if put together, could not amount to the excellency of Christ's satisfaction. The righteousness of Christ, is often called the righteousness of God, because it is a righteousness of God's providing, and a righteousness that God is fully satisfied with; and therefore, no fears, no doubts, no cavils, no objections, no disputes, can stand before this blessed and glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, that is imputed to us. But,

5. Fifthly, Know for your comfort, that the imputed righteousness of Christ is the best title that you have to shew for 'a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, for an inheritance that fadeth not away, and for an house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens,' Heb 12:28; 1Pe 1:3-5; 2Co 5:1-4. It is the fairest certificate that you have to shew for all that happiness and, blessedness that you look for in that other world. The righteousness of Christ is your life, your joy, your comfort, your crown, your confidence, your heaven, your all. Oh that you were still so wise as to keep a fixed eye and an awakened heart upon the mediatory righteousness of Christ; for that is the righteousness by which you may safely and comfortably live, and by which you may happily and quietly die. It was a very sweet and golden confession, which Bernard made, when he thought himself to be at the point of death. I confess, said he, I am not worthy, I have no merits of mine own to obtain heaven by, but my Lord had a double right thereunto; an hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice; he was contented with the one right himself, the other right he hath given unto me; by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded. Ah, that believers would dwell much upon this, that they have a righteousness in Christ, that is as full, perfect, and complete, as if they had fulfilled the law. 'Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to believers,' invests believers with a righteousness, every way as complete as the personal obedience of the law would have invested them withal, Rom 8:3-4; yea, the righteousness that believers have by Christ is, in some respect, better than that they should have had by Adam: (1.) Because of the dignity of Christ's person, he being the Son of God, his righteousness is more glorious than Adam's was; his righteousness is called 'The righteousness of God;' and we are made the 'righteousness of God in him,' 2Co 5:21. The first Adam was a mere man, the second Adam is God and man. (2.) Because the righteousness is perpetual. Adam was a mutable person, he lost his righteousness in one day, say some, and all that glory which his posterity should have possessed, had he stood fast in innocency; but the righteousness of Christ cannot be lost. His righteousness is like himself, from everlasting to everlasting. It is an everlasting righteousness, Dan 9:24. When once this white raiment is put upon a believer, it can never fall off,

it can never be taken off. This splendid glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ's, is as really a believer's, as if he had wrought it himself, Rev 19:8. A believer is no loser, but a gainer, by Adam's fall. By the loss of Adam's righteousness is brought to light a more glorious and durable righteousness than ever Adam's was; and upon the account of an interest in this righteousness a believer may challenge all the glory of that upper world. But,

6. Sixthly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed righteousness of Christ is the only true basis, bottom, and ground, for a believer to build his happiness upon, his joy and comfort upon, and the true peace and quiet of his conscience upon. What though Satan, or thy own heart, or the world, condemns thee; yet in this thou mayest rejoice, that God justifies thee. You see what a bold challenge Paul makes, Rom 8:33, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth;' some read it question-wise, thus, 'Shall God that justifieth?' no such matter. And if the judge acquit the prisoner at the bar, he cares not though the jailer or his fellow-prisoners condemn him; so here there are no accusers that a believer needs to fear, seeing that it is God himself, who is the supreme judge, that absolves him as just. God absolves, and therefore it is to no purpose for Satan to accuse us, Rev 12:10; nor for the law of Moses to accuse us, John 5:45; nor for our own consciences to accuse us, Rom 2:25; nor for the world to accuse us. God is the highest judge, and his tribunal-seat is the supreme judgment-seat; therefore from thence there is no appealing. As amongst men, persons accused or condemned, may appeal, till they come to the highest court; but if in the highest, they are absolved and discharged, then they are free, and safe and well: so the believer being absolved before God's tribunal-seat, there is no further accusations to be feared, all appeals from thence being void and of no force. The consideration of which should arm us and comfort us and strengthen us against all terrors of conscience, guilt of sin, accusation of the law, and cruelty of Satan; inasmuch as these either dare not appear before God to accuse us or charge us; or if they do, it is but lost labour. Ambrose gives the sense thus, None can or dare retract the judgment of God; for he confidently provoketh all adversaries, if they dare come forth to accuse; not that there is no cause, but because God hath justified. 'It is God that justifieth,' therefore it is in vain to accuse them; and 'it is God that justifieth them:' if God doth it none can reverse it, for there are none that are equal with God. Let all the accusations, which shall come in against thee, from one hand or another, be true or false, they shall never hurt thee; for he from whom there is no appeal, hath fully acquitted thee, and therefore no accusation can endanger thy peace. Ah! what a strong cordial would this be to all the people of God, if they would but live in the power of this glorious truth, that it is 'God that justifies them,' and that there lies no accusations in the court of heaven against them! The great reason why many poor Christians are under so many dejections, despondencies, and perplexities, is because they drink no more of this water of life, 'It is God that justifieth.' Did Christians live more upon this breast, 'It is God that justifieth,' they would be no more like Pharaoh's lean kine, but would be fat and flourishing, Gen 41:1-3. Did they but draw more out of this well of salvation, 'It is God that justifieth,' how would their spirits revive, and a new life rise up in them, as did in the dead child, by the prophet Elisha's applying himself to it, 2Ki 4:34-37. The imputed righteousness of Christ is a real, sure, and solid foundation, upon which a believer may safely build his peace, joy, and everlasting rest; yea, it will help him to glory in tribulations, and to triumph over all adversities; Rom 5:1-3; Isa 45:24, 'Surely, shall one say, in the Lord I have righteousness and strength.' That which is the greatest terror in the world to unbelievers, is the strongest ground of comfort to believers; that is the justice and wrath of God against sin. Look how it was when the angel appeared at the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus

Christ, 'The keepers were affrighted, and became as dead men;' but it was said to the women, 'Fear not ye, for ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, that was crucified,' Mat 28:4-5: so it is much more in this case. When God's justice is powerfully manifested, the sinners of Sion and the world are afraid and terrified, Isa 33:14. But yet, poor believers, seek for Christ who was crucified; ye need not fear anything; yea, you may be wonderfully cheered at this, and it is your greatest comfort that you have to deal with this just God, who hath already received satisfaction for your sins. It is observable that the saints triumph in the justice and judgments of God, that are most terrible to the enemies of God, in that which is the substance of the song of Moses and the Lamb, Rev 15:3-5: so in that, Luk 21:28, where the day of judgment is described, say some, and that in it, 'there shall be distress of nations, and men's hearts failing them for fear'—viz., of the justice and wrath of God. Why so? It is for 'looking after those things that are to come upon the earth; for the powers of the earth shall be shaken,' &c. 'But when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth near.' This day is the most dreadful day that ever was in the world to all the ungodly; but the just and faithful then shall be able to lift up their heads, to see all the world on a light fire about them, and all the elements in terrible confusion. But how dare a poor creature lift up his head in such a case as this? 'They shall see the Son of man, coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.' Here is enough to comfort the poor members of Christ,—to see Christ, on whom they have believed, and who hath satisfied God's justice for them, and imputed his own righteousness to them: to see him set upon his judgment-seat, cannot but be matter of joy and rejoicing to them. Now they shall find the power of that word upon their souls: Isa 40:1, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith the Lord; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for her sins;' i.e., their conflict with the wrath of God is at an end, the punishment of their iniquity is accepted, they have received in their head and surety, Christ Jesus, double for their sins; i.e., justice hath passed upon them, in their head, Christ Jesus; and they are sure that the judge of all the earth will do right, and will not punish their sins twice. The exactness of God's justice cannot do this: Job 34:10, 'Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity;' Job 34:12, 'Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.' It would be high injustice in a magistrate to punish the same offence twice; and it would be high blasphemy for any to assert that ever God should be guilty of such injustice. Whilst Christians set up a righteousness of their own, and build not upon the righteousness of Christ, how unsettled are they! Rom 10:3; how miserably are they tossed up and down, sometimes fearing and sometimes hoping, sometimes supposing themselves in a good condition, and anon seeing themselves upon the very brink of hell! but now all is quiet and serene with that soul that builds upon the righteousness of Christ; for, he being 'justified by faith, hath peace with God,' Rom 5:1. Observe that noble description of Christ in that Isa 32:2, 'And a man,' that is, the man Christ Jesus, 'shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' When a man is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, who is God-man, it is neither wind nor tempest, it is neither drought nor weariness, that can disturb the peace of his soul; for Christ and his righteousness will be a hiding-place, a covert, and rivers of water, and the shadow of a great rock unto him; for, being at perfect peace with God, he may well say with the psalmist, 'I will lay me down in peace,' Psa 4:6-8. The peace and comfort of an awakened sinner can never stand firm and stable, but upon the basis of a positive righteousness. When a sensible sinner casts his eye

upon his own righteousness, holiness, fastings, prayers, tears, humblings, meltings, he can find no place for the sole of his foot to rest firmly upon, by reason of the spots, and blots, and blemishes, that cleaves both to his graces and duties. He knows that his prayers need pardon, and that his tears need washing in the blood of the Lamb, and that his very righteousness needs another's righteousness to secure him from condemnation. 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?' Psa 130:3, and Psa 1:5; that is, rectus in curia, 'stand,' that is, in judgment. Extremity of justice he de-precateth; he would not be dealt with in rigour and rage. The best man's life is fuller of sins than the firmament is of stars, or the furnace of sparks; and therefore who can stand in judgment, and not fall under the weight of thy just wrath, which burneth as low as hell itself? i.e., none can stand. Were the faults of the best man alive but written in his forehead, he was never able to stand in judgment. When a man comes to the law for justification, it convinceth him of sin; when he pleads his innocence, that he is not so great a sinner as others are, when he pleads his righteousness, his duties, his good meanings, and his good desires, the law tells him that they are all weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and found too light, Dan 5:27; the law tells him that the best of his duties will not save him, and that the least of his sins will damn him; the law tells him that his own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, do but defile him, and that his best services do but witness against him; the law looks for perfect and personal obedience, and because the sinner cannot come up to it, it pronounceth him accursed, Gal 3:10; and though the sinner sues hard for mercy, yet the law will shew him none, no, though he seeks it carefully with tears, Heb 12:17. But now, when the believing sinner casts his eye upon the righteousness of Christ, he sees that righteousness to be a perfect and exact righteousness, as perfect and exact as that of the law; yea, it is the very righteousness of the law, though not performed by him, yet by his surety, 'The Lord his righteousness;' and upon this foundation he stands firm, and 'rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' The saints of old have always placed their happiness, peace, and comfort, in their perfect and complete justification, rather than in their imperfect and incomplete sanctification, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin, with many others that are scattered up and down in the blessed book of God. That text is worthy to be written in letters of gold: Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,' saith the sound believer, 'my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation.' He hath imputed and given unto me the perfect holiness and obedience of my blessed Saviour, and made it mine. 'He hath covered me (all over, from top to toe) with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.' Though a Christian's inherent righteousness be weak and imperfect, maimed and stained, blotted and blurred, as it is, yet it affords much comfort, peace, joy, and rejoicing, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Job was much taken with his inherent righteousness: Job 29:14, 'I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a rote and a diadem unto me.' Look, as sober, modest, comely apparel doth much set forth and adorn the body in the eyes of men, so doth inherent grace, inherent holiness, inherent righteousness, when it sparkles in the faces, lips, lives, and good works of the saints, much more beautify and adorn them in the eyes both of God and man. Now if this garment of inherent righteousness, that hath so many spots and rents in it, will adorn us, and joy us so much, what a beauty and glory is that which the Lord our God hath put upon us, in clothing us with the robe of his Son's righteousness; for by this means we shall recover more by Christ than we lost by Adam. The robe of righteousness which we have gotten by Christ, the second Adam, is far more glorious than that which we were deprived of by the first Adam. But,

7. Seventhly, Then know for your comfort, that you have the highest reason in the world to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus, Gal 6:14: Php 3:3, 'For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus.' We rejoice in the person of Christ, and we rejoice in the righteousness of Christ: 2Co 2:14, 'Now thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.' Deo gratias was ever in Paul's mouth, and ever in Austin's mouth, and should be ever in a Christian's mouth, when his eye is fixed upon the righteousness of Christ. Every believer is in a more blessed and happy estate, by means of the righteousness of Christ, than Adam was in innocency. And that upon a threefold account; all which are just and noble grounds for every Christian to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus.

(1.) That righteousness which Adam had was uncertain, and such as it was possible for him to lose, Gen 3:1-24; yea, he did lose it, and that in a very short time, Psa 8:5. God gave him power and freedom of will either to hold it or lose it; and we know soon after, upon choice, he proved a bankrupt; but the righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is made more firm and sure to us. It is that good part, that noble portion, that shall never be taken from us, as Christ said to Mary, Luk 10:42. Adam sinned away his righteousness, but a believer cannot sin away the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not possible for the elect of God so to sin as to lose Christ, or to strip themselves of that robe of righteousness which Christ hath put upon them, 1Jn 3:9; Rom 8:35, Rom 8:39. The gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against that soul that is interested in Christ, that is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, Mat 16:18. Now what higher ground of joy and triumph in Christ Jesus can there be than this? But,

(2.) The righteousness that Adam had was in his own keeping; the spring and root of it was founded in himself, and that was the cause why he lost it so soon. Adam, like the prodigal son, Luk 15:12-13, had all his portion, his happiness, his holiness, his blessedness, his righteousness, in his own hands, in his own keeping; and so quickly lost stock and block, as some speak. Oh but now, that blessed righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ, is not in our own keeping, but in our Father's keeping. Look, as our persons, graces, and inherent righteousness are kept, as in a garrison, by the power of God unto salvation, 1Pe 1:5; so that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is kept for us by the mighty power of God unto salvation. God the Father is the Lord Keeper, not only of our inherent righteousness, but also of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ unto us. 'My sheep shall never perish,' saith our Saviour, John 10:28-29, 'neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; my Father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands.' Though the saints may meet with many shakings and tossings in their various conditions in this world, yet their final perseverance, till they come to full possession of eternal life, is certain. God is so unchangeable in his purposes of love, and so invincible in his power, that neither Satan, nor the world, nor their own flesh, shall ever be able to separate them from 'a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:7-8; 'a crown of life,' Rev 2:10; 'a crown of glory,' 1Pe 5:4. The power of God is so far above all created opposition, that it will certainly maintain the saints in a state of grace. Now what a bottom and ground for rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus is here! But,

(3.) Admit, that the righteousness that Adam had in his creation had been unchangeable, and that he could never have lost it; yet, it had been but the righteousness of a man, of a mere creature; and what a poor, low righteousness would that have been, to that high and glorious righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ, which is the righteousness of such a person as was God as well as

man; yea, that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is a higher righteousness, and a more excellent, transcendent righteousness than that of the angels. Though the righteousness of the angels be perfect and complete in its kind, yet it is but the righteousness of mere creatures; but the righteousness of the saints, in which they stand clothed before the throne of God, is the righteousness of that person which is both God and man. Look, as the second Adam was a far more excellent person than the first Adam was: 'The first man was of the earth, earthy,' as the apostle speaks; 'the second was the Lord from heaven,' 1Co 15:47; not for the matter of his body, for he was made of a woman, but for the original and dignity of his person; whereof you may see a lively and lofty description in Heb 1:2-3; so his righteousness also must needs be far more excellent, absolute, glorious, and every way all-sufficient to satisfy the infinite justice of God, and the exact perfection of his holy law, than ever Adam's righteousness could possibly have done. Remember, sirs, that that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is called the righteousness of God: 'He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' saith the apostle in 2Co 5:21. Now that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ, is called the righteousness of God: (1.) Because it is such a righteousness as God requires; (2.) As he approves of and accepts; (3.) As he takes infinite pleasure and delight and satisfaction in. The righteousness the apostle speaks of in that scripture last mentioned, is not to be understood of the essential righteousness of Christ, which is infinite, and no ways communicable to the creature, unless we will make a creature a god; but we are to understand it, of that righteousness of Christ that is imputed to believers, as their sin is imputed to him. Now what a well of salvation is here! What three noble grounds and what matchless bottoms are here for a Christian's joy and triumph in Christ Jesus, who hath put so glorious a robe as his own righteousness upon them! Ah, Christians, let not the consolations of God be small in your eyes, Job 15:11; why take you no more comfort and delight in Christ Jesus? why rejoice you no more in him? Not to rejoice in Christ Jesus is a plain breach of that gospel command, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway,' that is, rejoice in Christ, 'and again I say, rejoice,' saith the apostle, Php 4:4. He doubleth the mandate, to shew the necessity and excellency of the duty: so Php 3:1, 'Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.' Now, in some respects, the breach of the commands of the gospel are greater than the breach of the commands of the moral law; for the breach of the commands of the gospel carrieth in it a contempt and light esteem of Jesus Christ, see Heb 2:2-3, Heb 8:6, and Heb 10:28-29. Men's not rejoicing in Christ Jesus must flow from some dangerous humour, and base corruption or other, that highly distempers their precious souls. If all created excellencies, if all the privileges of God's people, if all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them, were to be presented at one view, they would all appear as nothing and emptiness, in comparison of the excellency and fulness that is to be found in Christ Jesus: and therefore the greater is their sin, who rejoice not in Christ Jesus. Do you ask me where be my jewels? my jewels are my husband and his triumphs, said Phocion's wife. Do you ask me where be my ornaments? my ornaments are my two sons brought up in virtue and learning, said the mother of the Gracchi. Do you ask me where be my treasures? my treasures are my friends, said Constantius, the father of Constantine. But now, if you ask a child of God, when he is not clouded, tempted, deserted, dejected, where be his jewels, his treasures, his ornaments, his comfort, his joy, his delight; he will answer with that martyr, none but Christ, none but Christ. Oh! none to Christ, none to Christ! 'Christ is all in all unto me,' Col 3:11. *Æterna erit exultatio, quæ bono lætatur æterno*: That joy lasts for ever, whose object remains for ever. Such an object is our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the joy of the saints

should still be exercised upon our Lord Jesus Christ. Shall the worldling rejoice in his barns, the rich man in his bags, the ambitious man in his honours, the voluptuous man in his pleasures, and the wanton in his Delilahs; and shall not a Christian rejoice in Christ Jesus, and in that robe of righteousness, and in those garments of salvation, with which Christ hath covered him? Isa 61:10. The joy of that Christian that keeps a fixed eye upon Christ and his righteousness cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. No man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of Canaan, nor the fragrantcy of the rose of Sharon. As the being of things cannot be painted, so the sweetness of things cannot be painted. The joy of the Holy Ghost cannot be painted, nor that joy that arises in a Christian's heart, who keeps up a daily converse with Christ and his righteousness, cannot be painted, it cannot be expressed. Who can look upon the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seriously consider, that even every vein of that blessed body did bleed to bring him to heaven, and not rejoice in Christ Jesus? who can look upon the glorious righteousness of Christ, imputed to him, and not be filled with an exuberancy of spiritual joy in God his Saviour? There is not the pardon of the least sin, nor the least degree of grace, nor the least drop of mercy, but cost Christ dear, for he must die, and he must be made a sacrifice, and he must be accursed, that pardon may be thine, and grace thine, and mercy thine: and oh, how should this draw out thy heart to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus! The work of redemption sets both angels and saints a-rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus, Rev 5:11-14; and why not we, why not we also, who have received infinite more benefit by the work of redemption, than ever the angels have? Rev 1:5-6, and Rev 5:8-10. A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye; but then especially, when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful, to be exceeding beautiful, it puts a lustre upon beauty; so does holy joy and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, put, as it were, a new beauty and lustre upon Christ. Though the Romans punished one that feasted, and looked out at a window with a garland on his head, in the second Punic war; yet, you may be sure, that God will never punish you for rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus, let the times be never so sad or bad, in respect of war, blood, or misery. But,

8. Eighthly, The imputed righteousness of Christ may serve to comfort, support, and bear up the hearts of the people of God, from fainting and sinking under the sense of the weakness and imperfection of their inherent righteousness. The church of old have lamentingly said, 'We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags,' Isa 64:6. When a Christian keeps a serious eye upon the spots, blots, blemishes, infirmities, and follies, that cleaves to his inherent righteousness, fears and tremblings arise, to the saddening and sinking of his soul; but when he casts a fixed eye upon the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, then his comforts revive, and his heart bears up; for, though he hath no righteousness of his own, by which his soul may stand accepted before God, yet he hath God's righteousness, which infinitely transcends his own, and such as, in God's account, goes for his, as if he had exactly fulfilled the righteousness which the law requires; according to that of the apostle, Rom 9:30, 'What shall we say then? the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.' Faith wraps itself in the righteousness of Christ, and so justifieth us. The Gentiles sought righteousness, not in themselves but in Christ, which they apprehending by faith, were by it justified in the sight of God; and the Jews, seeking it in themselves, and thinking, by the goodness of their own works, to attain to the righteousness of the law, missed of it; it being in no man's power perfectly to fulfil the same, only Christ hath exactly fulfilled it for all that by faith close

savingly with him. O sirs! none can be justified in the sight of God, by a righteousness of their own making: but whosoever will be justified, must be justified by the righteousness of Christ through faith, Rom 3:20, Rom 3:28, and Rom 10:3; Gal 2:16; Tit 3:5. The Gentiles by faith attain the righteousness of the law, therefore the righteousness of the law and of faith are all one; viz., in respect of matter and form; the difference is only in the worker. The law requires it to be done by ourselves; the gospel mitigates the rigour of the law, and offers the righteousness of Christ, who performed the law, even to a hair's-breadth. The right way to righteousness for justification is by Christ, who is the way, the door, the truth, and the life. Because we want a righteousness of our own, God hath assigned us the righteousness of Christ, which is infinitely better than our own, yea, better than our very lives—may I not say, yea, better than our very souls? 'The branch,' Christ Jesus is called, 'Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness.' Jer 23:6, 'And this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.' Where note, first, to be called by this name is to be so really, for Christ is never called what he is not; and so he is to the same purpose elsewhere called 'Immanuel, God with us,' Mat 1:23; that is, he shall be so indeed, 'God with us,' so here he shall be called, 'the Lord our righteousness;' that is, he shall be so indeed. Secondly, observe this is one of his glorious names; that is, one of his attributes, which he accounts his excellency and his glory. Now all the attributes of Christ are unchangeable, so that he can as easily change his nature as his name. Now remember that this imputed righteousness of Christ procures acceptance for our inherent righteousness. When a sincere Christian casts his eye upon the weaknesses, infirmities, and imperfections that daily attend his best services, he sighs and mourns; but if he looks upward to the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, that shall bring forth his infirm, weak, and sinful performances perfect, spotless, and sinless, and approved according to the tenor of the gospel, so that they become spiritual sacrifices, he cannot but rejoice, 1Pe 2:5. For as there is an imputation of righteousness to the persons of believers, so there is also an imputation to their services and actions. As the fact of Phinehas was imputed to him for righteousness, Psa 106:31, so the imperfect good works that are done by believers are accounted righteousness, or, as Calvin speaks, 'are accounted for righteousness, they being dipped in the blood of Christ,' *tincta sanguine Christi*, i.e., they are accounted righteous actions; and so sincere Christians shall be judged according to their good works, though not saved for them, Rev 11:18, and Rev 20:12; Mat 25:34-37. And it is observable, in that famous process of the last judgment, that the supreme judge makes mention of the bounty and liberality of the saints, and so bestows the crown of life and the eternal inheritance upon them; so that, though the Lord's faithful ones have eminent cause to be humbled and afflicted for the many weaknesses that cleaves to their best duties, yet, on the other hand, they have wonderful cause to rejoice and triumph that they are made perfect through Jesus Christ, and that the Lord looks at them, through the righteousness of Christ, as fruits of his own Spirit, Heb 13:20-21; 1Co 6:11. The Sun of Righteousness hath healing enough in his wings for all our spiritual maladies, Mal 4:2. The saints' prayers, being perfumed with Christ's odours, are highly accepted in heaven, Rev 8:3-4. Upon this bottom of imputed righteousness believers may have exceeding strong consolation, and good hope through grace, that both their persons and services do find singular acceptation with God, as having no spot or blemish at all in them. Surely righteousness imputed must be the top of our happiness and blessedness, Rom 4:5-6. But,

9. Ninthly and lastly, Know for your comfort, that imputed righteousness will give you the greatest boldness before God's judgment-seat. There is an absolute and indispensable necessity of a

perfect righteousness wherewith to appear before God. The holiness of God's nature, the righteousness of his government, the severity of his law, and the terror of wrath, calls aloud upon the sinner for a complete righteousness, without which there is no standing in judgment, Psa 1:5. That righteousness only is able to justify us before God which is perfect, and that hath no defect nor blemish in it, such as may abide the trial before his judgment-seat, such as may fitly satisfy his justice, and make our peace with him; and consequently, such as whereby the law of God is fulfilled. Therefore it is called the righteousness of God; such a righteousness as he requires, as will stand before him, and satisfy his justice, Rom 10:3. So the apostle saith, 'The righteousness of the law must be fulfilled in us,' Rom 8:4. Now there is no other righteousness under heaven whereby the law of God was ever perfectly fulfilled, but by the righteousness of Christ alone. No righteousness below the righteousness of Christ was ever able to abide the trial at God's judgment-seat, and fully to satisfy his justice, and pacify his wrath. A gracious soul triumphs more in the righteousness of Christ imputed, than he would have done if he could have stood in the righteousness in which he was created. This is the crowning comfort to a sensible and understanding soul that he stands righteous before a judgment-seat, in that full, exact, perfect, complete, matchless, spotless, peerless, and most acceptable righteousness of Christ imputed to him. The righteousness of Christ is therefore called the righteousness of God, because it is it which God hath assigned, and which God doth accept for us in our justification, and for and in which he doth acquit and pronounce us righteous before his seat of justice, Rom 3:21-22, and Rom 10:3; Php 3:9. There is an indispensable necessity that lies upon the sinner to have such a righteousness to his justification as may render his appearance safe and comfortable in the day of judgment. Now there is no righteousness that can abide that day of fiery trial, but the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Paul, that great apostle, had as fair and as full a certificate to shew for a legal justification as any person under heaven had, Php 3:4-6; Acts 23:6; 2Co 11:22; but yet he durst not stand by that righteousness, he durst not plead that righteousness, he durst not appear in that righteousness before the dreadful judgment-seat. But oh, how earnest, how importunate is he, that he may be found, in that great day of the Lord, in the mediatory righteousness of Christ, and not in his own personal righteousness, which he looked upon as filthy rags, as dross, dung, dogs' meat, Php 3:9-10. The great thing that he most strongly insists upon is, that he might be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness; for then he knew that the law could not say black was his eye, and that the judge upon the bench would pronounce him righteous, and bid him enter into the joy of his Lord, Mat 25:21, Mat 25:23-24; a joy too great to enter into him, and therefore he must enter into that. When the match is made up between Christ and the soul, that soul bears her sovereign's name. The spouse of the first Adam and her husband had both one name, 'God called their name Adam, in the day that he made them,' Gen 5:2; so the spouse of the second Adam, in the change of her condition, from a single to a married estate with Christ the Lamb, had a change of her name. The head is called, 'the Lord our righteousness,' Jer 23:6; and so is the church: Jer 33:16, 'In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.' Here is a sameness of name. As Christ is called, 'the Lord our righteousness,' so his spouse is called, 'the Lord our righteousness.' Oh, happy transnomination! Christ's bride being one with himself, and having his righteousness imputed to her, is called, 'the Lord our righteousness;' and therefore they may, with the greatest cheerfulness and boldness, bear up, in the great day of account, who have the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to them, especially if you consider, (1.) That this

righteousness is of infinite value and worth; (2.) That it is an everlasting righteousness, a righteousness that can never be lost, Dan 9:24; (3.) That it is an unchangeable righteousness. Though times change, and men change, and friends change, and providences change, and the moon change, yet the Sun of Righteousness never changes, 'in him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,' Mal 4:2; Jas 1:17; (4.) That it is a complete and unspotted righteousness, an unblamable righteousness, and unblemished righteousness; and therefore God can neither in justice except or object against it. In this righteousness the believer lives, in this righteousness the believer dies, and in this righteousness believers shall arise, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to the deep admiration of all the elect angels, and to the transcendent terror and horror of all reprobates, and to the matchless joy and triumph of all on Christ's right hand, who shall then shout and sing, Isa 61:10, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels.' Oh, how will Christ, in this great day, be admired and glorified in all his saints, 2Th 1:10, when every saint, wrapped up in this fine linen, in this white robe of Christ's righteousness, shall shine more gloriously than ten thousand suns! In the great day of the Lord, when the saints shall stand before the tribunal of God, clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, they shall then stand, *rectus in curiâ*; they shall then be pronounced righteous, even in the court of divine justice, which sentence will fill their souls with comfort, and the souls of sinners with astonishment, Rev 20:12, and Rev 12:10. Suppose we saw the believing sinner, holding up his hand at God's bar; the books opened, the accuser of the brethren present, the witnesses ready, and the judge on the bench thus bespeaking the sinner at the bar, Rom 7:12, Rom 7:14, Rom 7:16, and Gal 3:10. O sinner, sinner, thou standest here indicted before me, for many millions of sins of commission, and for many millions of sins of omission; thou hast broken my holy, just, and righteous laws beyond all human conception or expression, and hereof thou art proved guilty; what hast thou now to say for thyself why thou shouldst not be eternally cast? Upon this, the sinner pleads guilty; but withal he earnestly desires that he may have time and liberty to plead for himself, and to offer his reasons why that dreadful sentence, Go, you cursed, &c., Mat 25:41, should not be passed upon him. The liberty desired being granted by the judge, the sinner pleads that his surety, Jesus Christ, hath, by his blood and sufferings, given full and complete satisfaction to divine justice, and that he hath paid down upon the nail the whole debt at once, and that it can never stand with the holiness and unspotted justice of God to demand satisfaction twice, Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14. If the judge shall further object, Ay, but sinner, sinner, the law requireth an exact and perfect righteousness in the personal fulfilling of it; now, sinner, where is thy exact and perfect righteousness? Gal 3:10; Isa 45:24. Upon which the believing sinner very readily, cheerfully, humbly, and boldly replies, My righteousness is upon the bench, 'in the Lord have I righteousness.' Christ, my surety, hath fulfilled the law on my behalf. The law's righteousness consists in two things, (1.) In its requiring perfect conformity to its commands; (2.) In its demanding satisfaction, or the undergoing of its penalty, upon the violation of it. Now Christ, by his active and passive obedience, hath fulfilled the law for righteousness, and this active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ is imputed to me. His obeying the law to the full, his perfect conforming to its commands, his doing, as well as his dying obedience, is by grace made over and reckoned to me, in order to my justification and salvation; and this is my plea, by which I will stand before the judge of all the world. Upon this the sinner's plea is accepted as good in law, and accordingly he is pronounced

righteous; and goes away, glorying and rejoicing, triumphing and shouting it out, Righteous, righteous, righteous, righteous; 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory,' Isa 45:25. And thus you see that there are nine springs of strong consolation that flow into your souls, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto you. But,

VI. The sixth plea that a believer may form up as to the ten scriptures in the margin that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn from the consideration of Christ as a common person, a representative head, one that represents another man's person, and acts the part of another, according to the appointment of the law, the acceptance of the judge; so that what is done by him, the person is said to do whose person he doth represent. And so was Adam a common person, and that by an act of God's sovereignty appointing him, in making a covenant with him so to be, and he did represent all mankind, Rom 5:15-19. And hence it comes to pass that his sin is imputed unto us, and made ours; so in our law an attorney appears in the behalf of his client, and so Christ is said to be gone to heaven as our attorney, to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb 9:24. ■μφανισθ■ναι, To appear as a lawyer appears for his client, opens the cause, pleads the cause, and carries it. The word appear is verbum forense, an expression borrowed from the custom of human courts; for in them, when the plaintiff or defendant is called, their attorney appeareth in their behalf; so 1Jn 2:1. You know that the Levitical priest was wont to appear before God in the people's name. Now he was but a figure; in Christ is the solid truth, and full effect of the figure. Or as taking possession, livery, and seizing by an attorney is all one as if done by the person himself who is represented, and is valid; so the Lord Jesus, he is a common person by an act of God's sovereignty, representing the persons of all the elect of God, being designed and appointed by God to be a second Adam. And as the first Adam did represent all in him, so the second Adam does represent all in him also; and therefore as judgment came upon all in the first Adam, so righteousness comes upon all in the second Adam. We all transgressed the royal law in Adam, we were all in Adam's loins; what he was, we were; what he did, we did. Although we did not in our own persons either talk with the serpent, or put forth our hands to take the fruit, yet we did eat the forbidden fruit as well as he, and so broke the holy law, and turned aside in him; for he was not a single person, standing for himself alone, but a public person, standing in the room of all mankind; therefore his sin, being not merely the sin of his person, but of the whole nature of man, is justly imputed to us all. If Adam had stood fast in his uprightness, in his primitive purity, glory and excellency, we should all have shared in his happiness and blessedness, Ecc 7:29; but he falling and forfeiting all, we must all share with him in his loss and misery. Ponder upon Rom 5:12, 'In whom all have sinned.' As the murrain infects the whole flock, so sin and the curse seizeth upon all the whole world, as well as upon Adam and Eve. And Rom 5:19, 'By one man's disobedience many are made sinners.' 'Many' is here put for 'all,' as 'all' elsewhere is put for 'many,' 1Ti 2:3. All sinners are tainted with Adam's guilt and filth. Adam was the head, all his posterity the members. If the head plot and practise treason against the state, is not this judged the act of the whole body? He was the tree, we the branches; when the tree falls, all the branches fall with it. When Christ died on the cross, he did stand in our room, and place, and stead; for he did lay down his life for us as a ransom. Now when one dies for another in way of ransom, he does not only die for the benefit and profit of the ransomed, but in the place, and room, and stead of the ransomed; and thus Christ died for us, as himself testifies: 'The son of man came to give himself a ransom for many,' Mark 10:45. λ■τρον ■ντι πολλ■ν. Christ rose as a common person, representing all his elect; and Christ was sanctified as a common person,

representing all his elect; and Christ was justified as a common person, representing all his elect. Look, as we were condemned in Adam, as he was a common person, so we are justified by Christ, as in a common person also; so that every believer may well look upon himself as acquitted, in his justification, from the guilt of his sins, they being laid upon the head of his surety, Heb 9:28. It is a very great part of a Christian's wisdom to be often looking upon Christ as a representative-head, as one in whom he died, in whom he rose, in whom he is sanctified, and in whom he is justified, Eph 2:6. How would such a daily eyeing of Christ scatter a Christian's fears, arm him against temptations, support him under afflictions, weaken his sins, strengthen his graces, cheer his soul, and mend his life!

It is very observable, that in the Levitical expiatory sacrifices there was the substitution of them in the place and stead of the offenders themselves. The people's sin, and the punishment due to them thereupon, was laid upon the poor beasts that died for them. I might multiply scriptures to evidence this, but I shall only hint at one or two plain, pregnant texts to clear it. Take that, Lev 17:11, 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.' Mark here, the blood is to make atonement for the souls of the people of Israel—that is, in the room and stead of their souls, and accordingly it did make atonement for their souls; so that in the blood sacrificed, which was a type of the blood of Christ, there was soul for soul, life for life; the soul and life of the sacrifice for the precious soul and life of the sinner. Now here you see substitution of the one in the room of the other. The transferring of the guilt and punishment of the people's sins over to their sacrifices in those days, was the reason why the sacrifices were said to bear the iniquities of the people, Lev 16:22, and Lev 10:17, &c. And it is observable that at the great expiation Aaron was to lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and to confess over him all the sins of the children of Israel, &c., Lev 16:21. By this ceremony of imposition of hands, is signified the transferring of their sins upon the goat, herein to type out Christ, upon whom God 'did lay the iniquity of us all,' Isa 53:6. Certainly the main thing that is held forth by this rite,—viz., Aaron's laying both his hands upon the head of the live goat, is the translation of the sinner's guilt to the sacrifice, and the substitution of it in his stead. Typically, the very sins of the people were imposed upon the goat, who herein was a type of Christ which did himself bear our sins. Yea, the Hebrews [Maimonides] themselves hold that the scapegoat made atonement for all their sins, lighter and greater, presumptuously and ignorantly committed. Certainly the scapegoat was a most lively type of our blessed Saviour—(1.) In that 'the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all,' as the sins of Israel were laid upon the head of the goat. (2.) As the goat was carried away, so Christ was 'cut off from the land of the living, his life was taken from off the earth,' Isa 4:3, and Isa 53:8. (3.) As this goat was not killed, so 'Christ through the eternal Spirit offered up himself,' whereby he was made alive after death, Acts 9:33; Heb 9:14; 1Pe 3:18. Though Christ Jesus died for our sins according to his humanity, yet death could not detain him nor overcome him, nor keep him prisoner, Hos 13:14, but, by virtue of his impassible deity, he rises again and triumphs over death and the grave, and over principalities and powers, Col 2:15. (4.) As this goat went into an inhabitable place, so Christ went into heaven—'whither I go ye cannot come,' John 13:33. Christ speaks this not to exclude his disciples out of heaven, but only to shew that their entrance was put off for a time, ver. 36. Saints must not expect to go to heaven and rest with Christ till they have 'fought the good fight of faith, finished their course, run their race,' and 'served their generation.' Christ's own children, by all their studies, prayers, tears, and endeavours, cannot get to heaven unless Christ come and

fetches them thither. Christ's own servants cannot get to heaven presently nor of themselves, no more than the Jews could do. Now if you please to cast your eye upon the Lord Jesus, you will find an exact correspondency between the type and the antitype, the one fully answering to the other. Did they carry substitution in them? that eminently was in Christ. He indeed substituted himself in the sinner's room; he took our guilt upon him, and put himself in our place, and died in our stead; he died that we might not die. Whatever we should have undergone, that he underwent in his body and soul; he did bear as our **■ντ■** ψυχος all the punishments and torments that were due to us. Christ's suffering, dying, satisfying in our stead, is the great article of a Christian's faith, and the main prop and foundation of the believer's hope. It is bottomed, as an eternal and unmovable truth, upon the sure basis of the blessed word. Substitution, in the case of the old sacrifices, is not so evidently held forth in the law, but substitution with respect to Christ and his sacrifice is more evidently set forth in the gospel. Ponder seriously upon these texts: Rom 5:6, 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;' Rom 5:8, 'For God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.' Herein God lays naked to us the tenderest bowels of his Fatherly compassions, as in an anatomy. There was an absolute necessity of Christ's dying for sinners, for, (1.) God's justice had decreed it; (2.) His word had foretold it; (3.) The sacrifices in the law had prefigured it; (4.) The foulness of man's sin had deserved it; (5.) The redemption of man called for it; (6.) The glory of God was greatly exalted by it. So 1Pe 3:18, 'For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust.' To see Christ the just suffer in the stead of the unjust, is the wonderment of angels and the torment of devils: 1Pe 4:1, 'Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh,' &c., that is, in the human nature, for the expiation and taking away of our sins; 1Pe 2:21, 'Because Christ also suffered for us;' John 10:11, 'I lay down my life for the sheep.' This good shepherd lays down life for life, his own dear life for the life of his sheep: John 11:50, 'Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,' that is, rather than the whole nation should perish. Caiaphas took it for granted, that either Christ or their nation must perish, and, as he foolishly thought, that of two evils he designed the least to be chosen, that is, that Christ should rather perish than their nation; but God so guided his tongue that he unwittingly, by the powerful instinct of the Spirit, prophesied of the fruit of Christ's death for the reconciliation and salvation of the elect of God. Heb 2:9, 'That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man,' **■π■ρ** παντ**■ς**, or for every creature. Who all these be, the context sheweth—(1.) Sons that must be led unto glory, Heb 2:10; (2.) Christ's brethren, Heb 2:11; (3.) Such children as are given by God unto Christ, Heb 2:13. In all which scriptures the preposition **■π■ρ** is used, which most commonly notes substitution, the doing or suffering of something by one in the stead and place of others, and so it is all along here to be taken. But there is another preposition, **■ντ■**, that proves the thing I am upon undeniably: Mat 20:28, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many,' **λ■τρον ■ντ■** πολλ**■ν**. **Λ■τρον** signifies a redemptory price, a valuable rate; for it was the blood of God wherewith the church was purchased, Acts 20:28 : 1Ti 2:6, 'Who gave himself a ransom,' **■ντ■**λυτρον, 'for all.' The Greek word signifies a counterprice, such as we could never have paid, but must have remained everlasting prisoners to the wrath and justice of God. O sirs! Christ did not barely deliver poor captive souls, but he delivered them in the way of a ransom, which ransom he paid down upon the nail. When their ransom was ten thousand talents, and they had not one farthing to lay down, Christ stands up in their room and pays the whole ransom, Mat 18:24. Every one knows that

■ντ■, in composition, signifies but two things, either opposition and contrariety, or substitution and commutation, Mat 5:38; so that the matter will thus issue, that either we must carry it thus, that Christ 'gave himself a ransom against sinners,' than which nothing can be more absurd and false, or else thus, that he 'gave himself a ransom in the room and stead of sinners,' which is as true as truth itself, 1Jn 2:28-29. Certainly no head can invent, no heart can conceive, nor no tongue can express more clear, plain, pregnant, and apposite words and phrases for the setting forth of Christ's substitution, than is to be found in that golden chapter of Isa 53:1-12. In this chapter, as in a holy armoury, we may find, had I time to go through it, many pointed daggers, and two-edged swords, and shields of brass, to arm us against the corrupt notions and opinions of the blinded and deluded Socinians, who fight with all their might against the doctrine of Christ's substitution. Isa 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,' &c.; Isa 53:5, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;' Isa 53:6, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all;' or, 'the Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him;' Isa 53:7, 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted,' &c; or, as the words are rendered by some, 'It was exacted and he answered;' Isa 53:8, 'For the transgression of my people he was stricken;' Isa 53:11, 'For he shall bear their iniquities;' Isa 53:12, 'And he bare the sin of many.' All men of worth and weight conclude that all this is spoken of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now what more clear and evident proofs can there be of Christ's susception, of the sinner's guilt, and of his bearing the punishment due for it? The priests of old, you know, are said to bear the iniquity of the people: Lev 10:17, 'God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord.' The sinner bears his iniquity subjectively, the priest typically, and the Lord Christ really: Exo 28:38, 'That Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things.' Herein the high priest was a type of Christ; answerable to which the prophet Isaiah tells us that Christ, our high priest, had the iniquities of all believers laid upon him, and that he bare them in his own person, Heb 4:14-15; so the apostle, Heb 9:28, 'So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,' &c., ■νενεγκε■ν ■μαρτ■ας. It is an allusion to the priests who carried up the sacrifice, and with it the sins of the people, to the altar. Christ our priest did carry up the sins of his people upon the cross, and there made satisfaction for them, in their room or stead, by the sacrifice of himself; and that scripture is more worth than the Indies—viz., 1Pe 2:24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' ■ν■νεγκεν, 'he bare them aloft'—viz., when he climbed up his cross, and nailed them thereunto, Col 2:13-15. Christ in the human nature, when he was upon the cross, did suffer all the punishments and torments that were due to our sins; he cancelled all bonds, annihilated the curse; in which respects he is said 'to bear our sins in his own body on the tree.' But to prevent prolixity I shall produce no more scriptures, though many more might have been produced, to prove Christ a common person, a representative head of all his elect; and that he did really substitute himself in their room, and took upon himself their guilt, and put himself in their place, and did undergo whatever they should have undergone.

Now from all these considerations, a child of God may form up this sixth plea as to the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account. O blessed God, Jesus Christ was a common person, a representative head: I am to be considered in him, who is my surety, and therefore he is bound to pay all my debts: and as he is a common person and stood in my stead, so the satisfaction that is made unto thy justice by him, is in law to be accounted mine, as really as if my attorney should pay a debt for me: and therefore, I must rest satisfied that the debt is paid, and in law shall never be exacted of me; though it was not paid by

myself in person, but by another who did personate me in that act, and did it for me and in my behalf. Christ was a common person, personating as a second Adam, the first Adam and all his posterity; offering the same nature for sin, which fell by sin from the pattern of perfection, God himself. 'By man came death, and by man came the resurrection from the dead,' 1Co 15:21; man for man, person for person, nature for nature, and name for name. There are two roots out of which life and death springs. (1.) As all that die receive their death-wounds by the disobedience of the first Adam; so all that live receive life from the obedience of the second Adam. (2.) As all die who are the sons of the first Adam by natural generation; so all live, who are the sons of the second Adam through spiritual regeneration. O holy and blessed God, thou hast set up Jesus Christ as a common person, as the representative head of all thy elect, and I am to be considered in that common head; and all that he has done as my head, and in my stead and room, is to be reckoned to me, as if I had done it in my own person, and by this plea I will stand, rejoice, and triumph. Upon this God accepts of the plea, as sound and good, and saith to him that pleads it, 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' Mat 25:21.

VII. The seventh plea that a believer may form up, as to the ten scriptures formerly cited, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn from the consideration of Christ's suretyship. Christ is called a surety: Heb 7:22, 'By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.' The Greek word ὑποστροφος, sponsor, fidejussor, prœs, a surety, a pledger, is very significative, being derived, as some think, from χειρ, an hand, as it were ἐν χειρὶ, in hands, because the security or pledge is given in hand. A surety is properly one that willingly promiseth and undertakes to pay and discharge the debt, if the debtor fail, and be not able to make satisfaction himself. Thus Paul willingly and spontaneously, from the love he had to his new convert Onesimus, promised and undertook to make satisfaction to Philemon, for any wrong that Onesimus had done him: Phm 1:18-19, 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put it upon mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it,' i.e., account Onesimus his debt to Paul, and Paul's satisfaction or payment to Onesimus; which answers the double imputation in point of justification, that is, of our sins or debts to Christ, and of Christ's satisfaction to us. Consider Christ as a surety, and so he hath fully paid all our debts, and set us perfectly free for ever. A surety is one that enters into bond, and engages himself for the debt of another; and so Christ is become our surety. Therefore he was bound by our bond, and engageth himself for the debt of another. For our debt he was made under the law, and so as a sacrifice, he stood in the stead of a sinner, and the sacrifice was to be offered for the man; and so some expound that place, 'He was made sin for us,' 2Co 5:21, that is, a sin-offering; therefore he doth take our sins upon him as his own, Isa 53:1-12; and so the Lord doth impute them and lay them upon him as his own: ver. 6, 'He did make to meet upon him the iniquities of us all.' The original word here used comes from πασχω, pagang, which word in its native propriety intends a kind of force or violence, impetum fecit, they met with all their violence upon him, and therefore 'he was made sin for us,' that is, as a surety in our stead, 'he did bear our sins in his body upon the tree; he was delivered for our transgressions.' Our surety hath paid all our debts. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and it pleased the Father to bruise him,' Isa 53:5, Isa 53:10. The original word signifies to break him to pieces as in a mortar. By the great things that our surety has done for us, and the great things that he hath suffered for us, he hath given most perfect and complete satisfaction both to his, Father's law, and to his Father's justice; and this pleased the Father. Weigh well that, Col 2:14, 'He blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, that was contrary unto us,

and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.' Christ hath crossed out the black lines of our sin with the red lines of his own blood. The Greek word χειρ■γραφον, i.e., the handwriting, some do take here for a writing written with God's own hand in tables of stone, as the law of the ten commandments were, Exo 34:1; and this is by them understood of the moral law, or of the ten commandments, which are said to be against us, in respect of their strict requiring of perfect obedience, or in default thereof, by reason of its curse, which Christ as our surety hath borne for us on the cross, and delivered us from it, Gal 3:10, Gal 3:13. But others by this handwriting do understand the law of the ceremonies of the Old Testament. In the general, it was something that God had against us; to shew or convince, or prove, that we had sinned against him, and were his debtors. I suppose that this handwriting was principally the moral law, obliging us unto perfect obedience, and condemning us for the defect of the same, and likewise those ceremonial rites, which, as Beza observes, were a kind of public confession of our debts. Now these were against, and contrary unto us, inasmuch as they did argue us guilty of sin and condemnation, which the moral law threatened and sentenced, &c., but saith the apostle, 'Christ hath blotted out the handwriting, and hath taken it out of the way and nailed it to his cross,' that is, Jesus Christ hath not only abrogated the ceremonial law, but also the damnatory power of the moral law, as our surety, by performing an act of obedience which the law did require, and by undergoing the punishment which the law did exact from the transgressors of it; and so Christ doing and suffering, what we were bound to do and to suffer, he did thereby blot out the handwriting, and cancelled it; and therefore we may safely conclude, that the creditor is fully satisfied, when he gives in his bond to be cancelled. There are two ways of cancelling a bond, laceratione et liturâ. Here it is blotted out, and can be read no more than if it had never been; the obligatory power of the law as a covenant is taken away. God delivered his people from Pharaoh by force, and from Babylon by favour; but that deliverance that Christ, as our surety, hands out to us, from sin, from wrath, from hell, from the curse, and from the moral law as it is a covenant of works, is obtained *justo pretio soluto*, by paying a full price; by which one becomes satisfied, and another thereupon delivered: Heb 9:26, 'He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;' to put away sin, Dan 9:24, is to abolish or make void the guilt or obligation of sin, whereby it binds over unbelievers to condemnation; to put away sin is to abrogate it, it is to bind it up in a bundle, to seal it up in a bag, to cast it behind him, as cancelled obligations, Isa 38:17; Mic 7:19; it is to blot out the black handwriting with the red lines of his blood drawn over it; so that sin has no force, no power to accuse or condemn, or shut such poor souls out of heaven, who have that Jesus for their surety, that made himself a sacrifice to put away sin. Christ as our surety laid down a satisfactory price, not only for our good, but also in our stead or room: 1Pe 3:18, 'Christ also hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' What the unjust sinner should have suffered, that the just Christ suffered for him: 2Co 5:21, 'He was made sin for us;' that is, an offering, a sacrifice in our stead, for the expiation of our sins: 'Christ was made a curse for us,' Gal 3:13. Now Christ's becoming a curse for us stands in this, that whereas we are all accursed by the sentence of the law because of sin, he now comes into our room, and stands under the stroke of that curse which of right belongs to us; so that it lies not now any longer on the backs of poor sinners, but on him for them and in their stead; therefore he is called a surety, Heb 7:22. The surety stands in the room of a debtor, malefactor, or him that is any way obnoxious to the law. Such is Adam and all his posterity. We are, by the doom of the law, evildoers, transgressors; and upon that score we stand indebted to the justice of God, and lie under the stroke of his wrath. Now the Lord Jesus Christ

seeing us in this condition, he steps in and stands between us and the blow; yea, he takes this wrath and curse off from us unto himself; he stands not only or merely after the manner of a surety among men in the ease of debt, for here the surety enters bond with the principal for the payment of the debt, but yet expects that the debtor should not put him to it, but that he should discharge the debt himself, he only stands as a good security for the debtor: no, Christ Jesus doth not expect that we should pay the debt ourselves, but he takes it wholly upon himself. As a surety for a murderer or traitor, or some other notorious malefactor that hath broken prison and is run away, he lies by it body for body, state for state, and undergoes whatsoever the malefactor is chargeable withal for satisfying the law; even so the Lord Jesus stands surety for us runaway malefactors, making himself liable to all that curse that belongs to us, that he might both answer the law fully, and bring us back again to God. As the first Adam stood in the room of all mankind fallen, so Christ, the second Adam, stands in the room of all mankind that are to be restored; he sustains the person of all those which do spiritually descend from him, and unto whom he bears the relation of a head. When God appointed his clearest Son to be a surety for us, and charged all our debts upon him, and required an exact satisfaction to his law and justice, insomuch that he would not abate the Son of his love one farthing-token of the debt, he did demonstrate a greater love to justice than if he had damned as many worlds as there are men in the world. Oh, let us never cast an eye upon Christ's suretyship, but let us stand and wonder, yea, let us be swallowed up in a deep admiration of Christ's love, and of his Father's impartial justice! Ah, what transcendent wisdom also does here appear in reconciling the riches of mercy and infinite justice both in one by the means of a surety! If all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, had been put to answer these questions, How shall sin be pardoned? How shall the sinner be reconciled and saved? How shall the wrath of God be pacified? How shall the justice of God be satisfied? How shall the redemption of man be brought about, in such a way whereby God may be most eminently glorified? they could never have answered the questions. But God, in his infinite wisdom, hath found out a way to save sinners, not only in a way of mercy and grace, but in a way of justice and righteousness; and all this by the means of Christ's suretyship, as hath been already declared.

Now, from the consideration of Christ's suretyship, a believer may form up this seventh, safe, comfortable, and blessed plea as to the ten scriptures formerly cited, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account: O blessed Father, remember that thine own Son was my ransom, his blood was the price; he was my surety, and undertook to answer for my sins. I know, O blessed God, that thou must be satisfied, but remember my surety hath satisfied thee; not for himself, for he was holy and harmless, a lamb without a spot; but for me. They were my debts he satisfied for; and look over thy books, and thou shalt find that he hath cleared all accounts and reckonings between thee and me. The guilt of all my sins have been imputed to my surety, who did present himself in my stead, to make full payment and satisfaction to thy justice. As Paul said to Philemon, Phm 1:18, concerning his servant Onesimus, 'If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee anything, put it upon my account,' so saith Christ to the penitent and believing soul, If thou hast any guilt, any debt to be answered for unto God, put them all upon my account. If thou hast wronged my Father, I will make satisfaction to the uttermost: for I was made sin for thee, Isa 53:12; 2Co 5:21. I poured out my soul for thy transgressions. It cost me my heart's blood to reconcile thee to my Father, and to slay all enmity, Acts 20:28. And as Rebekah said to Jacob in another case, 'Upon me, my son, be the curse,' Gen 27:13, so saith Christ to the believing soul, Why, thy sins did expose thee unto the curse of the law, but I was made a curse for thee, Gal 3:13. I did bear that

burden myself upon the cross, and upon my shoulders were all thy griefs and sorrows borne; I was wounded for thy transgressions, and I was bruised for thy iniquities, Isa 53:4-8, Isa 53:10; and therefore we are said to have 'redemption and remission of sins in his blood,' Eph 1:7. O blessed God! thou knowest that a surety doth not pay the debt only for the debtor's good, but as standing in the debtor's stead, and so his payment is reckoned to the debtor. And thus the ease stands between Christ and my soul; for, as my surety, he hath paid all my debts, and that very payment that he hath made, in honour and justice, thou art obliged to accept of as made in my stead. O dearest Father! that Jesus, who is God-man, as my surety, he hath done all that the law requireth of me, and thereby he hath freed me from wrath to come, and from the curse that was due to me for my sins, 1Th 1:10. This is my plea, O holy God, and by this plea I shall stand. Hereupon God declares, This plea I accept as just and good, and therefore 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Christian reader, I have gone as far in the opening and clearing up of those grand points of the gospel that have fallen under our consideration as I judge meet at this time. By the title-page thou mayest safely conclude, that I have promised much more than in this treatise I have performed; but be but a little patient, and by divine assistance, I shall make sure and full payment. The covenant of grace, and the covenant of redemption, with some other points of high importance, I shall present to thee in the second part, which will be the last part. In this first part I don't offer thee that which cost me nothing. I desire that all the interest thou hast in heaven may be so fully and duly improved, that this first part may be so blest from on high, as that saints and sinners may have cause to bless God to all eternity, for what is brought to hand; and beg hard, that the other part, which is drawn up and fitted for the press, may also be crowned with many blessings. Hereby thou wilt put a high obligation upon the author, to do all he can, to be yet a little further serviceable to thy soul and others', to thy salvation and others', before he goes hence and shall be seen no more.

PARADISE OPENED note

Though 'Paradise Opened' makes a 'Second Part' to the 'Golden Key,' (ante,) it forms two separate treatises: one, 'Paradise Opened,' having a lengthy 'Epistle Dedicatory,' and occupying pp. 1–194; the other, 'A Word in Season,' having its own title-page and a long 'Epistle,' and occupying pp. 3–223. The title-page of the former will be found below,* that of the latter in its own place.—G.

Paradice opened, or the SECREETS, MYSTERIES, and

RARITIES Of Divine Love, of Infinite Wisdom, and of Wonderful Counsel, laid open to Publick View. also The Covenant of Grace, and the high and glorious Transactions of the Father and the Son in the Covenant of Redemption opened and improved at large, with the Resolution of divers important Questions and Cases concerning both Covenants. you have further,

Several singular Pleas, that all sincere Christians may safely and groundedly make to those Ten Scriptures in the Old and New Testament, that speak of the general Judgment, and of that particular Judgment, that must certainly pass upon them all after Death. With some other Points of high Importance, that tend to the Peace, Comfort, Settlement and Satisfaction of all serious sincere Christians. To which is added a sober and serious Discourse, about the Favourable, Signal and Eminent Presence of the Lord with his People in their greatest Troubles, deepest

Distresses, and most deadly Dangers. Being the Second and Last Part of the Golden Key. By Thomas Brooks, late Preacher of the Gospel, at Margarets New Fishstreet.

LONDON,

Printed for Dorman Newman, at the King's Arms in the Poultry and at the Ship and Anchor at the Bridg-foot on Southwark-side, 1675.

[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his honoured friends, Sir John More, Knight and Alderman of the City of London; and to his good Lady, Mary More, his most affectionate Consort. The Father of all mercies, and the God of all blessings, bless you both with grace and peace here, and glory hereafter.

Honoured Friends,—Christian friendship makes such a knot, that great Alexander cannot cut. It was well observed by Sir Francis Bacon, 'That old wood is best to burn, and old books best to read, and old friends best to trust. It was a witty saying of the Duke of Buckingham to Bishop Morton,³ in Richard the III. his time, 'Faithful friends,' saith he, 'are in this age for the most part gone all in pilgrimage, and their return is uncertain.' 'They seem to take away the sun out of the world,' said the heathen orator, 'who take away friendship from the life of men, and we do not more need fire and water than true friendship.⁵ In this epistle I shall endeavour so to acquit myself as becomes a real friend, a cordial friend, a faithful friend, and a soul-friend, as to your great and everlasting concernments, that it may go well with you for ever and ever.

Sir, The points that are handled in this following treatise, and in the first part, are of as high, choice, necessary, noble, useful, and comfortable a nature, as any that can be treated on by mortal man. The four things which God minds most and loves most are, (1.) His honour. (2.) His worship. (3.) His people. (4.) His truth. Surely their souls must needs be of a very sad complexion who can read the great truths that are here opened and applied, and not (1.) dearly love them, (2.) highly prize them, (3.) cordially bless God for them, (4.) seriously ponder and meditate upon them, (5.) and not frequently and diligently study them, and make a gracious and daily improvement of them. The covenant of grace, and the covenant of redemption, are a rich armoury, out of which you may furnish yourselves with all sorts of spiritual weapons, wherewith you may encounter Satan's temptations, wiles, devices, methods, depths, stratagems. Nothing of Satan's can stand before the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, well understood and well applied, Eph 6:11; 2Co 2:11; Rev 2:24. In the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption that is passed betwixt God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, you will find many rich and rare cordials, which have a strong tendency to preserve all gracious souls from desponding and fainting: (1.) in times of afflictions; (2.) in times of temptations; (3.) in times of desertion; (4.) in times of sufferings for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake; (5.) in times of opposition; (6.) and at the time of death and dissolution. There are no comforts nor cordials that can reach the souls of Christians in their deep distresses, but such as flow from these two covenants. The more it concerns all such Christians to study these two covenants, and to be well acquainted with them, that so they may the more readily have recourse to such cordials as their present estate and condition calls for. In these two covenants you will find much matter which has a strong tendency (1.) to inflame your love to God and Christ, and all in the covenant of grace; (2.) to strengthen your faith; (3.) to raise your hopes; (4.) to cheer your souls; (5.) to quiet and satisfy your consciences; (6.) to engage you to a close and holy walking with God; (7.) to provoke you to triumph in free

grace, and in the Lord Jesus Christ; (8.) to sit loose from this world. The riches and treasures that are wrapt up in both these covenants are so great, so sure, so durable, and so suitable to all believers, as may well deaden their hearts to all the riches and glories of this lower world, Rev 12:1. In these two covenants every sincere Christian will find (1.) a special salve for every spiritual sore; (2.) a special remedy against every spiritual malady; (3.) a special plaster against every spiritual wound; (4.) a spiritual magazine to supply all their spiritual wants; and (5.) a spiritual shelter under every spiritual storm. In these two covenants you will find food to nourish you, a staff to support you, a guide to lead you, a fire to warm you, and springs of life to cheer and refresh you. In this covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, you may clearly see the wisdom, counsel, love, and transactions between the Father and the Son sparkling and shining, there being nothing under heaven that contributes more to the peace, comfort, assurance, settlement, and satisfaction of sincere Christians than such a sight. The main reason why so many gracious souls are so full of fears, doubts, darkness, and disputes about their internal and eternal estates, is because they have no more clear and full understanding of these two covenants; and if such Christians would but more seriously buckle to the study of those two covenants, as they are opened and applied in the following treatise, their fears and doubts, &c., would quickly vanish; and they would have their triumphant songs: their mourning would soon be turned into rejoicing, and their complaints into hallelujahs. Neither do I know anything in all this world that would contribute more to seriousness, spiritualness, heavenliness, humbleness, holiness, and fruitfulness, than a right understanding of these two covenants, and a divine improvement of them. There are many choice Christians who have always either tears in their eyes, complaints in their mouths, or sighs in their breasts; and oh that these, above all all others, would make these two covenants their daily companions! Let these few hints² suffice concerning the following treatise.

Now, Sir John, I shall crave leave to put you and your lady a little in mind of your deceased and glorified father. 'He is a true friend,' saith the Smyranean poet of old, 'who continueth the memory of his deceased friend.'⁴ When a friend of Austin's died, he professed he was put into a great strait, whether he himself should be willing to live or willing to die: he was unwilling to live, because one half of himself was dead; yet he was not willing to die, because his friend did partly live in him, though he was dead. Let you and I make the application as we see cause: your glorified father's name and memory remains to this day as fresh and fragrant as the Rose of Sharon—Song of Solomon 2:1—among all those that fear the Lord, and had the happiness of inward acquaintance with him. 'The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot,' Pro 10:7. In the original it is, 'The memory of the just ■■■■■ in benedictionem, shall be for a blessing;' the very remembering of them shall bring a blessing to such as do remember them. The moralists say of fame, or of a man's good name—

Omnia si perdas famam servare memento, Quà semel amissâ postea nullus eris; i.e, Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that jewel of a good name. This jewel, among others, your honoured father carried with him to the grave—yea, to heaven. There is nothing raises a man's name and fame in the world like holiness. The seven deacons that the church chose were 'holy men,' Acts 6:5; and they were men of 'good report,' Acts 6:3. They were men well witnessed unto, well testified of, as the Greek word imports. Cornelius was a 'holy man,' Acts 10:1-4; and he was a man of 'good report' among all the nation of the Jews, Acts 10:22. Ananias was a 'holy man,' Acts 9:10, Acts 9:20; and he was a man of a 'good report,' Acts 22:12. Caius and Demetrius

were both 'holy men,' and of a 'good report;' witness that Third Epistle of John. The patriarchs and prophets were 'holy men,' and they were men of a 'good report,' Heb 11:1-2—'For by it the elders obtained a good report;' their holiness did eternalise their names. The apostles were 'holy men,' 1Th 2:10; and they were men of 'good report,' 2Co 6:8. Now certainly it is none of the least of mercies to be well reputed and reported of. Next to a good God and a good conscience, a good report, a good name, is the noblest blessing. It is no great matter, if a man be great and rich in the world, to obtain a great report; but without holiness you can never obtain a good report. Holiness, uprightness, righteousness, will embalm your names; it will make them immortal: Psa 112:6, 'The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.' Wicked men many times outlive their names, but the names of the righteous outlive them. Holy Abel hath been dead above this five thousand years, and yet his name is as fresh and fragrant as it was the first day he was made a martyr, 1Jn 3:12. When a sincere Christian dies, he leaves his name as a sweet and as a lasting scent behind him; his fame shall live when he is dead. This is verified in your precious father, who is now 'asleep in Jesus,' 1Th 4:14.

Now you both very well know that there was no Christian friend that had so great a room in his heart, in his affections, as I had, and you can easily guess at the reasons of it. Neither can you forget how frequently, both in his health, sickness, and before his death, he would be pressing of me to be a soul-friend to you, and to improve all the interest I had in heaven for your internal and eternal good, that he might meet you both in that upper world, Mat 25:33, and that you might both be found with him at the right hand of Christ in the great day of the Lord. I know that your glorified father, whilst he was on earth, did lay up many a prayer for you in heaven. My desire and prayer is, that those prayers of his may return in mighty power upon both your hearts; and having a fair opportunity now before me, I shall endeavour to improve it for the everlasting advantage of both your souls; and therefore let my following counsel be not only accepted, but carefully, faithfully, and diligently followed by you, that so you may be happy here and blessed hereafter.

1. The first word of counsel is this: Let it be the principal care of both of you to look after the welfare of your precious and immortal souls. If your souls are safe, all is safe; if they are well, all is well; but if they are lost, all is lost, and you lost and undone in both worlds. Christ, that only went to the price of souls, hath told us that one soul is more worth than all the world. Chrysostom well observeth, 'that whereas God hath given us many other things double—viz., two eyes to see with, two ears to hear with, two hands to work with, and two feet to walk with, to the intent that the failing of the one might be supplied with the other—he hath given us but one soul; if that be lost, hast thou,' saith he, 'another soul to give in recompense for it?' Ah, friends! Christ left his Father's bosom and all the glory of heaven for the good of souls; he assumed the nature of men for the happiness of the soul of man; he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he prayed for souls; he paid for souls, and he bled out his heart-blood for souls.² The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature; it is a heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring, 1Pe 5:8. Again, weigh well τὸ ἀντίτιμον, 'the incomparable price,' which Christ paid for the redemption of the soul, 1Pe 1:18-19. What are the riches of the East or West Indies, the spoil of the richest nations, rocks of diamonds, mountains of gold, or the price of Cleopatra's draught, to the price that Christ laid down for souls! 1Jn 1:4, 12, and Heb 12:2. The soul is a spiritual substance, capable of the knowledge of God, of union with God, of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. There is nothing can

suit the soul below God, nor nothing that can satisfy the soul without God, nor nothing that can save the soul but God. The soul is so choice, so high, and so noble a piece, that it divinely scorns all the world in point of acceptation, justification, satisfaction, delectation, and salvation. Christ made himself an offering for sin, that souls might not be undone by sin. The Lord died that slaves might live; the Son died that servants might live; the natural Son died that adopted sons might live; the only-begotten Son died that bastards might have; yea, the judge died that malefactors might live, Heb 9:11-14, and Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14; Gal 4:4-6; Heb 2:8. Ah, friends! as there was never sorrow like Christ's sorrow, so there was never love like Christ's love, and of all his love none to that of soul-love, Isa 53:3, and Gal 2:20. To say much in a little room, the spiritual enemies which daily war against the soul, the glorious angels which hourly guard the soul, and the precious ordinances which God hath appointed as means both to convert and nourish the soul, [shew forth that love,] Eph 6:11-12; 1Pe 2:11; Rom 10:17; 1Co 11:23-27. The soul is capable of 'a crown of life,' Rev 2:10; of 'a crown of glory,' 1Pe 5:4; of 'a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:8; of 'an incorruptible crown,' 1Co 9:25. The crowns of earthly princes stand as a sophister's cap, on one side of the head. Many may say of their crowns as that king said of his, O crown, more noble than happy!⁴ In the time of Galienus the emperor, Anno Christo 260, there were thirty competitors on foot for the Roman crown and throne, who confounded and destroyed one another. A princely crown is oftentimes the mark for envy and ambition to shoot at. Henry the Sixth was honoured with the crowns of two kingdoms, France and England; the first was lost through the faction of his nobles, the other was twice plucked from his head. Earthly crowns have so many cares, fears, vexations, and dangers that daily attend them, that oftentimes they make the heads and hearts of monarchs ache, which made Cyrus say, 'You look upon my crown and my purple robes, but did you but know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up.' But the crowns that immortal souls are capable of are crowns without crosses; they are not attended with care of keeping or fear of losing; there are no evil persons nor evil spirits that haunt those crowns. Darius, that great monarch, fleeing from his enemies, he threw away the crown of gold from his head that he might run the faster; but a sincere Christian is in no danger of losing his crown, 2Ti 4:8. His crown is laid up in a safe hand, in an omnipotent hand, 1Pe 1:5. Now what do all these things speak out but the preciousness and excellency of the said? Once more, the excellency of the ease or cabinet—viz., the body—intimates a more than ordinary excellency of this jewel. The body is of all materials the most excellent. How does David admire the rare texture and workmanship of his body! 'I am wonderfully made; I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,' Psa 139:13, Psa 139:15. When curious workmen have some choice piece in hand, they perfect it in private, and then bring it forth to the light for men to gaze at. So here, the greatest miracle in the world is man, in whose very body—how much more in his soul!—are miracles enough, betwixt head and feet, to fill a volume. One complains that men much wonder at the high mountains of the earth, the huge waves of the sea, the deep falls of rivers, the vastness of the ocean, and at the motions of the stars, &c., but wonder not at all at their wonderful selves. Galen, a profane physician and a great atheist, writing of the excellent parts of man's body, he could not choose but sing an hymn to that God, whosoever he were, that was the author of so excellent and admirable a piece of work; he could not but cry out, 'Now I adore the God of nature.'³ Now if the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel that is contained in it! Oh, how richly and gloriously is the soul embroidered! How divinely inlaid and enamelled is that! Princes impress their images or effigies upon the choicest metals, viz., gold and silver. God hath engraven his own

image with his own hand upon angels and men, Gen 1:26, [Damascene.] The soul is the glory of the creation, a beam of God, a spark of celestial brightness, a vessel of honour, a bird of paradise, a habitation for God. The soul is spiritual in its essence; God breathed it in; God hath invested it with many noble endowments; he hath made it a mirror beauty, and printed upon it a surpassing excellency. The soul is spiritual in its object; it contemplates God and heaven. God is the orb and centre where the soul doth fix. God is the terminus ad quem, the soul moves to him as to his rest, 'Return to thy rest, O my soul.' This dove can find no rest but in this heavenly ark. Nothing can fill the soul but God, nothing can quiet the soul but God, nothing can satisfy the soul but God, nothing can secure the soul but God, nothing can save the soul but God. The soul being spiritual, God only can be the adequate object of it. The soul is spiritual in its operations. It being immaterial, doth not depend upon the body in its working. The rich and rare endowments, and the noble operations of the soul, speak out the excellency of the soul. The soul, saith one, [Aristotle.] hath a nature distinct from the body; it moves and operates of itself, though the body be dead, and hath no dependence upon, or co-existence with, the body. The soul hath an intrinsecal principle of life and motion, though it be separate from the body. And doth not the immortality of the soul speak out the excellency of the soul, against that dangerous notion of the soul's mortality? Consult the scriptures in the margin,³ and seriously and frequently think of this one argument, among a multitude of arguments that might be produced to prove the immortality of the soul. That which is not capable, of killing is not capable of dying; but the soul is not capable of killing, ergo. Our Lord Jesus proves the minor proposition, that it is not capable of killing: Luk 12:4, 'Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.' Therefore the soul, not being capable of killing, is not in a possibility of dying. The essence of the soul is metaphysical: it hath a beginning, but no end; it is eternal à parte post; it runs parallel with eternity. The soul doth not wax old; it lives for ever, which we cannot affirm of any sublunary created glory. To conclude this first word of counsel, what Job saith of wisdom, I may fitly apply to the soul, 'Man knows not the price thereof; it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire, the gold and crystal cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold,' Job 28:13, Job 28:16-17. O my friends, it is the greatest wisdom, policy, equity, and justice, to provide for your precious souls, to secure your precious souls; for they are jewels of more worth than ten thousand worlds. All the honours, riches, greatness, and glory of this world are but chips, toys, and pebbles to these glorious pearls. But,

2. The second word of counsel is this, as you would be safe here, and saved in the great day of the Lord, as you would be happy here, and blessed hereafter, take up in nothing below a gracious acquaintance with Christ, a choice acceptation of Christ, a holy reliance upon Christ, a full resignation of yourselves to Christ, and a real and glorious union with Christ, Acts 2:20; Job 22:21; 1Ti 1:15; Job 13:15; 2Co 2:11. If you do, you are lost and undone in both worlds.

[1.] First, Some take up in a name to live when they are dead, Rev 3:1, dead in trespasses and sins, Eph 2:1, dead Godwards, and dead Christwards, and dead heavenwards, and dead holinesswards. The Sadducees derive their name from Zeduchim or Zadducæus, a just man. But the worst men, saith the historian, got the best names. The Alcoran of the Turks hath its name from brightness, Al, in the Arabic, being as much as Kazan in the Hebrew, 'to shine' or 'cast forth in brightness,' when it is full of darkness, and fraught with falsehoods. It will be but a poor comfort to any for the world to commend them as gracious, if God condemn them as graceless; for the

world to commend them as pious, if God condemn them as impious; for the world to commend them as sincere, if God condemn them as hypocrites. But,

[2.] Secondly, Some take up in a form of godliness when they are strangers to the power, 2Ti 3:5; when they deny, yea, when they oppose and persecute, the power. Such monsters this age hath abounded with; but their seeming goodness is but a religious cheat, Acts 13:45, Acts 13:50.

[3.] Thirdly, There are some that take up in their religious duties and services; in their praying, fasting, prophesying, hearing, receiving; they make a God, a Christ, a Saviour of their own duties and services. This was the undoing and damning sin of the Scribes and Pharisees, and is the undoing and damning sin of many thousands in our days, Mat 7:22; Luk 18:12, Luk 13:26, and Luk 16:15; Eze 33:31-32.

[4.] Fourthly, There are many that take up in their common gifts and parts; in a gift of knowledge, and in a gift of teaching, and in a gift of utterance, and in a gift of memory, and in a gift of prayer, and this proves ruinous and destructive to them, Mat 7:22; Rom 2:17-24; 1Co 12:1-31; Heb 6:4-5.

[5.] Fifthly, There are many that take up in their riches, prosperity, and worldly grandeur and glory: Pro 18:11, 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city.' It is hard to have wealth, and not trust to it, Mat 19:24. Wealth was never true to those that trusted it. There is an utter uncertainty in riches, 1Ti 6:17; a nonentity, Pro 23:5-6; an impotency to help in an evil day, Zep 1:18; an impossibility to stretch to eternity, unless it be to destroy the owner for ever, Pro 10:15; Psa 73:19; Mat 20:26. There is nothing more clear in Scripture and history than that riches, prosperity, and worldly glory hath been commonly their portion who never have had a God for their portion, Luk 16:25. It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bavaria, emperor of Germany: *Hujusmodi comparandæ sunt opes, quæ cum naufragio simul enatent*, Such goods are worth getting and owning as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen. *Solus sapiens dives*, Only the wise man is the rich man, saith the philosopher. Another saith, [Augustine,] *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plencæ sunt*, That earthly riches are full of poverty, they cannot enrich the soul; for oftentimes under silken apparel there is a threadbare soul.

He that is rich in conscience sleeps more soundly than he that is richly clothed in purple. No man is rich which cannot carry hence that which he hath; that which we must leave behind us is not ours but some other's, [Ambrose, lib. 8, ep. 10.] The shortest cut to riches is by their contempt. It is great riches not to desire riches, and he hath most that covets least. If there were any happiness in riches, the gods would not want them, saith the same author, [Seneca.] When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants: I do not love that wealth, said a poor heathen, which hangs upon ropes; for if they break, the ship miscarrieth, and then where is the merchant's riches?

If I had an enemy, saith one, whom it was lawful to wish evil unto, I would chiefly wish him great store of riches, for then he should never enjoy quiet, [Latimer.] The historian [Tacitus] observes, that the riches of Cyprus invited the Romans to hazard many dangerous fights for the conquering of it.

Earthly riches, saith one, [Augustine,] are an evil master, a treacherous servant, fathers of flattery, sons of grief, a cause of fear to those that have them, and a cause of sorrow to those that want them.

I have read a famous story of Zelimus, emperor of Constantinople, that after he had taken Egypt, he found a great deal of treasure there; and the soldiers coming to him, and asking of him what they should do with the citizens of Egypt, for that they had found great treasure among them, and had taken their riches? Oh, saith the emperor, hang them all up, for they are too rich to be made slaves; and this was all the thanks they had for the riches they were spoiled of. What more contemptible than a rich fool, a golden beast, as Caligula called his father-in-law Syllanius? Not but that some are great and gracious, rich and righteous, as Abraham, Lot, Job, David, Hezekiah, &c.

It is said of Shusa in Persia, saith Cassiodorus, that it was so rich that the stones were joined together with gold; and that in it Alexander found seventy thousand talents of gold. If you can take this city, saith Aristagorus to his soldiers, you may vie with Jove himself for riches. The riches of Shusa did but make the soldiers the more desperate in their attempt to take it. By these short hints you may see the folly and vanity of those men who take up in their riches. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Many there are that take up in their own righteousness, which at best is but as filthy rags, Isa 64:6. This was the damning sin of the Jews, and of the scribes and Pharisees; and is the undoing sin of many of the professors of this age, Rom 10:2-3; Mat 5:20.

[7.] Seventhly, Many there are that take up in their external church privileges, crying out, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,' Jer 7:4, Jer 7:8-11, when they have no union nor communion with the Lord of the temple. These forget that there will come a day, when the 'children of the kingdom shall be cast out,' Mat 8:12. It would be very good for such persons to make these five scriptures their daily companions, Mat 22:10, Mat 22:12-14; Luk 13:25-28; Rom 2:28-29; Gal 6:15; Jer 9:25-26. That they may never dare to take up in their outward church privileges, which can neither secure them from hell, nor secure them of heaven. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Many there be that take up in common convictions. Judas had mighty convictions of his sin, but they issued in desperation, Mat 27:4-5. Balaam was mightily enlightened and convinced, insomuch that he desired to die the death of the righteous; but under all his convictions he died Christless and graceless, Num 23:1-30 and Num 24:1-25. Nebuchadnezzar had great convictions, Dan 4:31-32, yet we do not read that ever he was converted before he was driven from the society of men, to be a companion with the beasts of the field, Dan 4:31-32. He had strong convictions, (1.) by Daniel's interpreting of his dream, Dan 2:47. (2.) He told Daniel, that 'his God was the God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets;' and yet presently he fell into gross idolatry, Dan 3:1-30, and strictly commanded to worship the golden image that he had set up; and as if he had lost all his former convictions, he was so swelled up with pride and impudence, as to say to the three children, when they divinely scorned to worship the image he had set up, 'What God is there that can deliver you out of my hand?' Dan 3:15. Saul had great convictions, 'I have sinned, return, my son David, I will no more do thee harm,' &c. And Saul lifted up his voice and wept; and he said unto David, 'Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil,' 1Sa 26:21, 1Sa 26:25, and 1Sa 24:16-19. But these convictions issued in no saving change, for after these he lived and died in the height of his sins. Pharaoh had great convictions: 'And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.' And again, 'Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against

the Lord your God, and against you,' Exo 9:27, and Exo 10:16. But these convictions issued in no reformation, in no sound conversion, and therefore drowning and damning followed. Cain was under convictions, but went and built a city, and lost his convictions in a crowd of worldly business, Gen 4:1-26. Herod and Felix were under convictions, but they went off, and never issued in any saving work upon their souls, Mark 6:20; Acts 24:25. Oh, how many men and women have fallen under such deep convictions, that they have day and night cried out of their sins, and of their lost and undone estates, and that they should certainly go to hell and be damned for ever, so that many good people have hoped that these were the pangs of the new birth; and yet either merry company, or carnal pleasures and delights, or much worldly business, or else length of time, have wrought off all their convictions, and they have grown more profane and wicked than ever they were before. As water heated, if taken off the fire, will soon return to its natural coldness, yea, becomes colder after heating than before, [Aristotle,] this hath been the case of many under convictions. I shall forbear giving of particular instances. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Many take up in an outward change and reformation; they have left some old courses and sinful practices which formerly they walked in, &c., and therefore they conclude and hope that their condition is good, and that all is well, and shall be for ever well with them. They were wont to swear, whore, be drunk, profane Sabbaths, reproach saints, &c.; but now they have left all these practices, and therefore the main work is done, and they are made for ever. I confess sin is that abominable thing which God hates, Jer 44:4, and therefore it is a very great mercy to turn from it. To leave one sin is a greater mercy than to win the whole world, Mat 16:26; and it is certain that he that doth not outwardly reform shall never go to heaven, Job 22:23, Job 22:26. He that doth not leave his sins, he can never be happy here nor blessed hereafter; and yet it is possible for a man, with Herod, to reform many things, and yet be a lost and undone man for ever, as he was, Mark 6:20. Judas was a very reformed man, but he was never inwardly changed nor throughout sanctified, Mat 26:20-22; 1Th 5:23. The scribes and Pharisees were outwardly reformed, but they were not inwardly renewed. A man may be another man than what once he was, and yet not be a new man, a new creature. When a sinner is sermon-sick, oh, then he will leave his sins; but when that sickness is off, he returns with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire, 2Co 5:17; 2Pe 2:20, 2Pe 2:22. Sometimes conscience is like the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:5-8: it makes the sinner's countenance to change, and his thoughts to be troubled, and the joints of his loins to be loosed, and his knees to smite one against another. And now the sinner is all for reforming, and turning over a new leaf; but when these agonies of conscience are over, the sinner returns to his old courses again, and oftentimes is twofold more a child of hell than before, Mat 23:15. There was a man in this city who was given up to the highest wickednesses; on his sick-bed conscience made an arrest of him, and he was filled, with such wonderful horror and terror, that he cried out day and night that he was damned, he was damned, he was damned; and when he had some small intervals, oh, what large promises did he make! what a new man, a reformed man, he would be! but when in time his terrors and sickness wrought off, he was sevenfold worse than before. Sometimes the awakened sinner parts with some sins to make room for others, and sometimes the sinner seems to give a bill of divorce to this sin and that, but it is only because his bodily strength fails him, or because he wants an opportunity, or because there is a more strict eye and watch upon him, or because the sword of the magistrate is more sharpened against him, or because he wants fuel, Jas 4:3; he wants a purse to bear it out, or because some company, or some relations, or some friends lie between him and his sins, so that he must either

tread over them, or else keep from his sins; or because he has deeply smarted for this sin, and that his name has been blotted, his credit and reputation stained, his trade decayed, his health impaired, his body wasted, &c., Pro 6:32-35. By these short hints it is evident that men may attain to some outward reformation, whose states and hearts were never changed, and who were never taken into marriage union with Christ. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Many take up in a party. As of old some cried up Paul as the only deep preacher, and others cried up Apollos as the only eloquent preacher, and many cried up Cephas as the most zealous preacher, 1Co 1:10-13. We are for the Church of England, say some; we are for the Baptized people, say others; we are for the Presbyterian government, cry some; we are for the Congregational way, cry others. I have so much ingenuity and charity, as to judge that some of all these several parties and persuasions are really holy and will be eternally happy, are gracious and will be glorious, are sanctified and will be saved, are now governed by Christ and will be hereafter glorified with Christ. Judas was one of Christ's party, if I may so speak, and yet he had no part nor portion in Christ, Mat 26:20-26. Demas was one of Paul's party, and yet he played the apostate, and turned an idolatrous priest at Thessalonica, as Dorotheus saith, 2Ti 4:10. And Phygellus and Hermogenes were of Paul's party, but were only famous for their recidivation² and apostasy, 2Ti 1:15. Hymeneus and Alexander were of Paul's party, but they made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1Ti 1:19-20. The five foolish virgins were in society with the wise, and were accounted as members of their association, and yet the door of heaven was shut against them, Mat 25:1-2, Mat 25:12. Many light, slight, and vain persons went with the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, even a mixed multitude that embarked in the same bottom with them, and yet never arrived at the land of promise, Exo 12:38; Num 11:4. O my friends, it is not a man's being of this party or that, this church or that, this way or that, this society or that, that will bring him to heaven, without a spiritual conjunction with Christ, 1Pe 1:4; Heb 1:2. He that would enjoy the heavenly inheritance must be espoused to Christ, the heir of all things: 'For he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life,' 1Jn 5:12. This marriage-union between Christ and the soul is set forth to the life throughout the book of Solomon's Song, Song of Solomon 2:16. Though the marriage-union between Christ and the soul be imperceptible to the eye of reason, yet it is real, 1Co 6:17. Things in nature often work insensibly, yet really. We do not see the hand move on the dial, yet it moves. The sun exhales and draws up the vapours of the earth insensibly, yet really, Ecc 11:6. Now this marriage-union between Christ and the soul includes and takes in these following particulars:—

First, This marriage-union between Christ and the soul does include and take in the soul's giving a present bill of divorce to all other lovers; sin, the world, and Satan. Are you seriously and sincerely willing for ever to renounce these, and be divorced from these? There is no compounding betwixt Christ and them. Sin and your souls must part, or Christ and your souls can never meet; sin and your souls must be two, or Christ and your souls can never be one; you must in good earnest fall out with sins, or else you can never in good earnest fall in with a Saviour; the heart must be separated from all other lovers, before Christ will take the soul into his bed of loves. Christ takes none into marriage-union with himself, but such as are cordially willing that all old former leagues with sin and the world shall be for ever broken and dissolved. Your cordial willingness to part with sin, is your parting with sin in divine account. You may as soon bring east and west together, light and darkness together, heaven and hell together, as bring Christ to espouse himself to such a

soul, as has no mind, no will, no heart to be divorced from his former lovers. It is a foolish thing for any to think of keeping both Christ and their lusts too. It is a vain thing for any to think of saving the life of his sins, and the life of his soul too. If sin escape, your soul cannot escape; if thou art not the death of thy sins, they will be the death and ruin of thy soul. Marriage is a knot or tie, wherein persons are mutually limited and bound each to other, in a way of conjugal separation from all others, and this in Scripture is called a covenant, Pro 2:7. So when any one marries Christ, he doth therein discharge himself in affection and subjection from all that is contrary unto Christ, and solemnly covenants and binds himself to Christ alone; he will have no Saviour and no Lord but Christ, and to him will he cleave for ever, Psa 63:8; Acts 11:23. But,

Secondly, This marriage-union with Christ doth include and take in a hearty willingness, to take, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ for your Saviour and sovereign. Are you willing to consent to the match. It is not enough that Christ is willing to enter into a marriage-union with us, but we must be willing also to enter into a marriage-union with him.² God will never force a Christ, nor force salvation upon us, whether we will or no. Many approve of Christ, and cry up Christ, who yet are not willing to give their consent, that he, and he alone shall be their Prince and Saviour. Though knowledge of persons be necessary and fit, yet it is not sufficient to marriage, without consent, for marriage ought to be a voluntary transaction of persons. In marriage we do in a sort give away ourselves, and elect and make choice for ourselves, and therefore consent is a necessary concurrence to marriage. Now this consent is nothing else but a free and plain act of the will, accepting of Jesus Christ before all others to be its head and Lord, and in the soul's choice of him to be its Saviour and sovereign. Then a man is married to Christ, when he doth freely and absolutely and presently receive the Lord Jesus; not, I would have Christ if it did not prejudice my worldly estate, ease, friends, relations, &c., or hereafter, I will accept of him when I come to die, and be in distress, but now when salvation is offered, now while Christ tenders himself, I now yield up my heart and life unto him. But,

Thirdly, This marriage-union with Christ includes and takes in a universal and perpetual consent for all time and in all states and conditions. There is, you know, a great difference between a wife and a strumpet; a wife takes her husband upon all terms, to have and to hold, for better and for worse, for richer and for poorer, in sickness and in health, whereas a strumpet is only for hire and lust. When the purse is emptied, or the body wasted and strength consumed, the harlot's love is at an end: so here. That acceptance and consent which ties the marriage-knot between Christ and the soul, must be an unlimited and indefinite acceptance and consent, when we take the Lord Jesus Christ wholly and entirely, without any secret reservations or exceptions. That soul that will have Christ, must have all Christ or no Christ, 'for Christ is not divided,' 1Co 1:13. That soul must entertain him to all purposes and intents, he must follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, Rev 14:4, though it should be through fire and water, over mountains and hills. He must take him with his cup of affliction as well as his cup of consolation, Psa 66:12, with his shameful cross as well as his glorious crown, with his great sufferings as well as his great salvation, Heb 2:3, with his grace as well as his mercy, with his Spirit to lead and govern them, as well as his blood to redeem and justify them, to suffer for him as well as to reign with him, to die for him as well as to live to him, 2Ti 2:12; Acts 21:13; Rom 14:7-8. Christianity, like the wind Cœcias, doth ever draw clouds and afflictions after it. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' 2Ti 3:12. A man may have many faint wishes and cold desires after godliness, and yet escape persecution, yea, he

may make some essays and attempts, as if he would be godly, and yet escape persecution; but when a man is thoroughly resolved to be godly, and sets himself in good earnest upon pursuing 'after holiness, and living a life of godliness, then he must expect to meet with afflictions and persecutions. Whoever escapes, the godly man shall not escape persecution in one kind or another, in one degree or another. He that is peremptorily resolved to live up to holy rules, and to live out holy principles, must prepare for sufferings. All the roses of holiness are surrounded with pricking briars. The history of the Ten Persecutions, and that little Book of Martyrs, the 11th of the Hebrews, and Mr Foxe his Acts and Monuments, with many other treatises that are extant, do abundantly evidence that from age to age, and from one generation to another, they that have been born after the flesh have persecuted them that hath been born after the spirit, and that the seed of the serpent have been still a-multiplying of troubles upon the seed of the woman, Gal 4:29; but a believer's future glory and pleasure will abundantly recompense him for his present pain and ignominy. But such as will have Christ for their Saviour and sovereign, but still with some proviso or other—viz., that they may keep such a beloved lust, or enjoy such carnal pleasures and delights, or raise such an estate for them and theirs, or comply with the times, and such and such great men's humours, or that they may follow the Lamb only in sunshine weather, &c., these are still Satan's bond-slaves, and such as Christ can take no pleasure nor delight to espouse himself unto. But,

3. The third word of advice and counsel is this, viz.—'Put off the old man, and put on the new,' Col 3:9-10. Consult the scriptures in the margin. You must be new creatures, or else it had been better you had been any creatures than what you are: 2Co 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.' The new creature includes a new light, a new sight, a new understanding. Now the soul sees sin to be the greatest evil, and Christ and holiness to be the chiefest good, Psa 38:4, and Song of Solomon 5:10. When a man is a new creature he has a new judgment and opinion, he looks upon God as his only happiness, and Christ as his all in all, Col 3:11, and upon the ways of God as ways of pleasantness, Pro 3:17. The new man has new cares, new requests, new desires. Oh that my soul may be saved! Acts 2:37, and Acts 16:30; Oh that my interest in Christ may be cleared! Oh that my heart may be adorned with grace! Oh that my whole man may be secured from wrath to come! 1Th 1:10. The new man is a man of new principles. If you make a serious inspection into his soul, you shall find a principle of faith, of repentance, of holiness, of love, of contentment, of patience, &c. There is not any one spiritual and heavenly-principle respecting salvation, but may be found in the new creature. The new man experiences a new combat and conflict in his soul. 'The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit lusteth against the flesh.' 'I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind,' Gal 5:17, and Rom 7:23. The new man experiences a combat in every faculty. Here is the judgment against the judgment, and the will against the will, and the affections against the affections. And the reason is this; because there is flesh and spirit, sin and grace co-existent and cohabiting in every faculty of the soul; renewing grace is in every faculty, and remaining corruption is also in every faculty, like Jacob and Esau struggling in the same womb, or like heat and cold in the same water, and in every part of it. The new man also combats with all sorts of known sins, whether they be great or small, inward or outward, whether they be the sins of the heart or the sins of the life; and besides, the conflict in the new man is a daily conflict, a constant conflict. The new creature can never, the new creature will never, be at peace with sin; sin and the new creature will fight it out to the death. The new creature will never be

brought into a league of friendship with sin. The new man is a man of a new life and conversation. Always a new life attends a new heart. You see it in Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, the jailor, and all the others that are upon Scripture record. The new man has new society, new company: Psa 119:63, 'I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.' Psa 16:3, 'My goodness extends not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.' Holy society is the only society for persons of holy hearts, and in that society can no man delight until God renew his heart by grace. Many men be as the planet Mercury, good in conjunction with those that are good, and bad with those that are bad; these are they that do Virtutis stragulam pudefacere, Put honesty to an open shame. Clothes and company do oftentimes tell tales in a mute but significant language. Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou art, saith the Spanish proverb. Algerius, an Italian martyr, had rather be in prison with Cato than with Cæsar in the senate-house.² But to conclude this word of counsel, the new man walks by a new rule. As soon as ever God has made a man a new creature, he presently sets up a new rule of life to walk by, and that is no other but that which God himself sets up for his people to walk by, and that is his written word: Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony;' Psa 119:105, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path;' Psa 119:133, 'Order my steps in thy word;' Gal 6:16, 'And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.' This rule he sets up for all matters of faith, and for all matters of fact. The word is like the stone Garamantides, that hath drops of gold within itself, enriching of every soul that makes it his rule to walk by. Alexander kept Homer's Iliads in a cabinet, embroidered with gold and pearls; and shall not we keep the word in the cabinet of our hearts, that it may be always ready at hand as a rule for us to walk by? Well, friends, whatever you do forget, be sure that for ever you remember this—viz., that none can or shall be glorious creatures, but such as by grace are made new creatures. But,

4. The fourth word of advice and counsel is this, Labour to be more inwardly sincere than outwardly glorious. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Psa 45:13. Oh labour rather to be good than to be thought to be good, to live than to have a name to live, Rev 3:1, Rev 3:15-17. Whatever you let go, be sure you hold fast your integrity. A man were better to let friends go, relations go, estate go, liberty go, and all go, than let his integrity go. 'God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove my integrity from me; my righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live,' Job 27:5-6. Job is highly and fully resolved to keep his integrity close against all assaults of enemies or suspicions of friends. Job's integrity was the best jewel he had in all the world, and this jewel he was resolved to keep to his dying day. It was neither good men, nor bad men, nor devils that should baffle Job out of his integrity; and though they all pulled, and pulled hard, at his integrity, yet he would not let it go, he would hold fast this pearl of price whatever it cost him. The sincere Christian, like John Baptist, will hold his integrity though he lose his head for it, Mark 6:1-56. The very heathens loved a candid and sincere spirit, as he that wished that there was a glass in his breast, that all the world might see what was in his heart. Integrity will be a sword to defend you, a staff to support you, a star to guide you, and a cordial to cheer you; and therefore, above all gettings get sincerity, and above all keepings keep sincerity, as your crown, your comfort, your life. But,

5. The fifth word of comfort and counsel is this, Be true to the light of your consciences, and maintain and keep up a constant tenderness in your consciences. A tender conscience is a mercy

more worth than a world. Conscience is God's spy in our bosoms: keep this clear and tender, and then all is well, Acts 24:16; 2Co 1:12. Act nothing against the dictates of conscience, rebel not against the light of conscience. You were better that all the world should upbraid you and reproach you, than that your consciences should upbraid you and reproach you, Job 27:5-6. Beware of stifling conscience, and of suppressing the warnings of conscience, lest a warning conscience prove a gnawing conscience, a tormenting conscience. The blind man in the Gospel, Mark 8:1-38, newly recovering his sight, imagined trees to be men: and the Burgundians, as Comines reports, expecting a battle, supposed long thistles to be lances. Thus men under guilt are apt to conceit every thistle a tree, and every tree a man, and every man a devil. Take heed of tongue-tied consciences; for when God shall untie these strings, and unmuzzle your consciences, conscience will then be heard, and ten concerts of music shall not drown her clamorous cries. Harken to the voice of conscience, obey the voice of conscience, and when conscience shall whisper you in the ear, and tell you there is this and that amiss in the house, in the habit, in the heart, in the life, in the closet; don't say to conscience, Conscience be quiet, be still, make no noise now, I will hear thee in a more convenient season, Acts 24:24-25. The heathen orator could say, *A recta conscientia ne latum quidem unguem discedendum*, A man may not depart a hair's-breadth all his life long from the dictates of a good conscience. Will not this heathen one day rise in judgment against those who daily crucify the light of their own consciences? But,

6. The sixth word of advice and counsel is this, Make it the great business of your lives to make sure such things as will go with you beyond the grave. Riches and honours and offices, and all worldly grandeur, won't go with us beyond the grave. Saladin, a Turkish emperor—he was the first of that nation that conquered Jerusalem—lying at the point of death, after many glorious victories, commanded that a white sheet should be borne before him to his grave, upon the point of a spear, with this proclamation: 'These are the rich spoils which Saladin carrieth away with him, of all his triumphs and victories, of all his riches and realms that he had; now nothing at all is left for him to carry with him but this sheet.' It is with us in this world as it was in the Jewish fields and vineyards, pluck and eat they might what they would while they were there, but they might not pocket nor put up aught to carry with them, Deu 23:24-25. Death, as a porter, stands at the gate, and strips men of all their worldly wealth and glory. Athenæus speaks of one that, at the hour of death, devoured many pieces of gold, and sewed the rest in his coat, commanding that they should be buried with him. Hermocrates, being loath that any man should enjoy his goods after him, made himself by will heir of his own goods. These muck-worms would fain live still on this side Jordan; having made their gold their god, they cannot think of parting with it. They would, if possible, carry the world out of the world. But what saith the apostle? 'We brought nothing with us into this world, and it is certain'—see how he assevereth and assureth it, as if some rich wretches made question of it—'we can carry nothing out,' nothing but a winding-sheet, 1Ti 6:7. Oh, how should this alarm us to make sure our calling and election, to make sure our interest in Christ, to make sure our covenant-relation, to make sure a work of grace in power upon our souls, to make sure the testimony of a good conscience, Gal 4:5-7, to make sure our sonship, our saintship, our heirship, &c., Rom 8:15-16; for these are the only things that will go with us into another world. In the Marian persecution there was a woman who, being convened before Bonner, then Bishop of London, upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her. Saith she, Christ is my husband. I will take away thy child. Christ, saith she, is better to me than ten sons. I will strip thee, saith he, of all thy outward comfort. Yea, but Christ is mine, saith she, and

you cannot strip me of him. Assurance that Christ was hers, and that he would go with her beyond the grave, bore her heart up above the threats of being spoiled of all, Heb 10:34. When a great lord had shewed a sober, serious, knowing Christian his riches, his stately habitation, his pleasant gardens, his delightful walks, his rich grounds, and his various sorts of pleasure, the serious Christian, turning himself to this great lord, said: My lord, you had need to make sure Christ and heaven, you had need make sure something that will go with you beyond the grave, for else when you die you will be a very great loser. O my friends, I must tell you, it highly concerns you to make sure something that will go with you beyond the grave, or else you will be very great losers when you come to die, God having given you an abundance of the good things and of the great things of this world, beyond what he has given to many thousands of others. But,

7. The seventh word of advice and counsel is this, Look upon all the things of this world, and value all the things of this world now, as you will certainly look upon them and value them when you come to lie upon a sick-bed, a dying-bed, 1Co 7:29-31. When a man is sick in good earnest, and when death knocks at the door in good earnest, oh, with what a disdainful eye, with what a weaned eye, with what a scornful eye does a man then look upon the honours, riches, dignities, and glories of this world! If men could but thus look upon them now, it would keep them from being fond of them, from trusting in them, from doting upon them, from being proud of them, and from venturing a damning either in getting or in keeping of them. But,

8. The eighth word of advice and counsel is this, In all places and companies carry your soul-preservatives still about you—viz., a holy care, a holy fear, a holy jealousy, a holy watchfulness over your own thoughts, hearts, words, and ways, Pro 4:23, and Pro 28:14; Gen 6:9, and Gen 39:9-10; Psa 17:4, Psa 18:23, and Psa 39:1, &c. You know that in infectious times men and women carry their several preservatives about them, that they may be kept from the infection of the times. Never were there more infectious times than now. Oh the snares, the baits, the infections that attend us at all times, in all places, in all companies, in all employments, and in all enjoyments, so that if we do not carry our soul-preservatives about us, we shall be in imminent danger of being infected with the pride, ill customs, and vanities of the times wherein we live. But,

9. The ninth word of advice and counsel is this, Live not at uncertainties as to your spiritual and eternal estates. There are none so miserable as those that are strangers to the state of their own souls. It is good for a man to know the state of his flock, the state of his family, the state of the nation, the state of his body; but above all to know the state and condition of his own soul. How many thousands are there that can give a better account of their lands, their lordships, their riches, their crops, their shops, their trades, their merchandise, yea, of their hawks, their hounds, their misses, than they can of the estate of their own souls! O my friends, your souls are more worth than ten thousand worlds, Mat 16:26, and therefore it must be the greatest prudence, and the choicest policy in the world, to secure their everlasting welfare, and to know how things stands between God and your souls, what you are worth for eternity, and how it is like to go with you in that other world. Whilst a Christian lives at uncertainties as to his spiritual and everlasting estate, as whether he has grace or no grace, or whether his grace be true or counterfeit, whether he has an interest in Christ or not, a work in power upon his soul or not, or whether God loves him or loathes him, whether he will bring him to heaven or throw him to hell—how can any Christian who lives at so great an uncertainty delight in God, rejoice evermore, triumph in Christ Jesus, be ready to suffer, and desirous to die? Job 27:10; Php 4:4; 2Co 2:14; Php 1:23. All men love to be at a

certainty in all their outward concernments; and yet how many thousands are there that are at a marvellous uncertainty as to the present and future state of their precious and immortal souls! But,

10. The tenth word of advice and counsel is this, Set the highest Scripture examples and patterns before you, of grace and holiness, for your imitation, 1Co 4:16. In the point of faith and obedience set an Abraham before you, Gen 12:1-20 and Gen 22:1-24; in the point of meekness set a Moses before you, Num 12:3; in the point of courage set a Joshua before you, Jos 1:1-18; in the point of uprightness set a David before you, Psa 18:23; in the point of zeal set a Phinehas before you; and in the point of patience set a Job before you. Make Christ your main pattern, 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ,' Jas 5:11-12, and 1Co 11:1. And next to him set the patterns of the choicest saints before you for your imitation. The nearer you come to those blessed copies that they have set before you, the more will be your joy and comfort, and the more God will be honoured, Christ exalted, the Spirit pleased, religion adorned, the mouths of sinners stopped, and the hearts of saints rejoiced. He that shooteth at the sun, though he shoot far short, yet will shoot higher than he that aimeth at a shrub. It is safest, it is best, to eye the highest and worthiest examples. Examples are, (1.) More awakening than precepts; (2.) More convincing than precepts; (3.) More encouraging than precepts, Heb 11:8; and that because in them we see that the exercise of godliness, though difficult, yet is possible; when we see men subject to like passions with ourselves to be so and so mortified, self-denying, humble, holy, &c.; what should hinder but that it may be so with us also? Such as begin to work with the needle, look much on their sampler and pattern: it is so in learning to write, and indeed in learning to live also. Observe the gracious conversations and carriage of the choicest saints, keep a fixed eye upon the wise, prudent, humble, holy, and heavenly deportment; write after the fairest copy you can find, labour to imitate those Christians that are most eminent in grace. I shall conclude this head with that of the heathen: *Optimum est majorum sequi vestigia, si rectè præcesserint*, It is best to tread in the steps of those who are gone in a safe and good way before us, [Seneca.] But,

11. The eleventh word of advice and counsel is this, Be much in the most spiritual exercises of religion. There are external exercises, such as hearing, praying, singing, receiving, holy conference, &c., Isa 1:11-14, and 1Ti 4:8, and Mat 6:1-34. Now custom, conviction, education, and a hundred other external considerations, may lead persons to these external exercises: but then there are the more spiritual exercises of religion, such as loving of God, delighting in God, prizing of Christ, compliance with the motions, counsels, and dictates of the Spirit, living in an exercise of grace, triumphing in Christ Jesus, setting our affections upon things above, meditation, self-examination, self-judging, &c. Now the more you live in the exercise of these more spiritual duties of religion, the more you glorify God—the more you evidence the power of grace, and the in-dwellings of the Spirit—and the more you difference and distinguish yourselves from hypocrites and all unsound professors, and the better foundation you lay for a bright, strong, and growing assurance. But,

12. The twelfth and last word of advice and counsel I shall give you is, To make a wise, a seasonable, a sincere, a daily, and a thorough improvement of all the talents that God has intrusted you with. There is a talent of time, of power, of riches, of honour, of greatness, that some are more intrusted with than others are. The improvement of these is your great wisdom, and should be your daily works, 1Co 4:1-2. You know you are but stewards, and that you must shortly give an account of your stewardship, Luk 16:1-4. And oh that you may make such a faithful and full

improvement of all the great talents that God has intrusted you with, that you may give up your account at last with joy, and not with grief! Some princes have wished upon their beds that they had never reigned, because they have not improved their power for God and his people, but against God and his people; and some rich men have wished that they had never been rich, because they have not improved their riches for the glory of God, nor for the succour and relief of his suffering saints. A beggar upon the way asked something of an honourable lady: she gave him sixpence, saying, This is more than ever God gave me. Oh! says the beggar, Madam, you have abundance, and God hath given you all that you have; say not so, good madam. Well, says she, I speak the truth, for God hath not given but lent unto me what I have, that I may bestow it upon such as thou art. And it is very true, indeed, that poor Christians are Christ's alms-men, and the rich are but his stewards, into whose hands God hath put his moneys, to distribute to them as their necessities require. It is credibly reported of Mr Thomas Sutton, the sole founder of that eminent hospital commonly known by his name, that he used often to repair into a private garden, where he poured forth his prayers unto God, and, amongst other passages, was frequently overheard to use this expression: Lord, thou hast given me a liberal and large estate, give me also a heart to make good use of it; which was granted to him accordingly. Riches are a great blessing, but a heart to use them aright is a far greater blessing. Every rich man is not so much a treasurer as a steward, whose praise is more how to lay out well than to have received much. I know I have transgressed the bounds of an epistle, but love to your souls, and theirs into whose hands this treatise may fall, must he my apology.

Sir, if you and your lady were both my own children, and my only children, I could not give you better nor more faithful counsel than what I have given you in this epistle; and all out of a sincere, serious, and cordial desire and design, that both of you may be happy here, and found at Christ's right hand in the great day of account, Mat 25:33-34.

Now the God of all grace fill both your hearts with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, and greatly bless you both with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and make you meet-helps to each other heaven-ward, and at last crown you both with ineffable glory in the life to come. 1Pe 5:1; Gal 5:22-23; Eph 1:3. So I take leave, and rest your assured friend, and soul's servant,

Thomas Brooks. THE COVENANT OF GRACE PROVED AND OPENED

Beloved in our Lord,—In the first part of my Golden Key, I have shewed you seven several pleas, that all sincere Christians may form up, as to those several scriptures in the Old and New Testament, that refer either to the great day of account, or to their particular days of account. In this second part, I shall go on where I left, and shew you several other choice pleas, that all believers may make in the present case.

VIII. The eighth plea that a believer may form up as to the ten scriptures in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn up from the consideration of the covenant of grace, or the new covenant that all believers are under. It is of high concernment to understand the tenure of the covenant of grace, or the new covenant, which is the law you must judge of your estates by, for if you mistake in that you will err in the conclusion. That person is very unfit to make a judge, who is ignorant of the law, by which himself and others must be tried. For the clearing of my way, let me premise these six things:—

1. First, Premise this with me, that God hath commonly dealt with man in the way of a covenant; that being a way that is most suitable to man, and most honourable for man, and the most amicable and friendly way of dealing with man. No sooner was man made, but God entered into covenant with him, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death,' Gen 2:17; and after this, he made a covenant with the world, by Noah, Gen 9:11-15, and Gen 6:18; and after this, he made a covenant with Abraham, Gen 17:1-2; and after this, he made a covenant with the Jews at Mount Sinai, Exo 19:1-25. Thus you see that God has commonly dealt with man in the way of a covenant. But,

2. Secondly, Premise this with me, All men are under some covenant or other; they are either under a covenant of works, or they are under a covenant of grace. All persons that live and die without an interest in Christ, they live and die under a covenant of works; such as live and die with an interest in Christ, they live and die under a covenant of grace. There is but a twofold standing taken notice of in the blessed Scriptures; the one is under the law, the other is under grace. Now he that is not under grace, is under the law, Rom 6:14. It is true, in the Scripture you do not read, in totidem syllabis, of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace; but that of the apostle comes near it: Rom 3:27, 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.' Here you have the law of works, opposed to the law of faith; which holds out as much as the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The apostle sets forth this twofold condition of men, by a very pertinent resemblance, namely, by that of marriage, Rom 7:1-3. All Adam's seed are married to one of these two husbands; either to the law, or to Christ. He that is not spiritually married to Christ, and so brought under his covenant, is still under the law as a covenant of works; even as a wife is under the law of her husband while he is yet alive. Certainly there were never any but two covenants made with man, the one legal, the other evangelical; the one of works, the other of grace; the first in innocency, the other after the fall: ponder upon Rom 4:13. But,

3. Thirdly, Let me premise this, that the covenant of grace was so legally dispensed to the Jews, that it seems to be nothing else but the repetition of the covenant of works; in respect of which legal dispensations of it, the same covenant, under the law, is called a covenant of works; under the gospel, in regard of the clearer manifestation of it, it is called a covenant of grace: but these were not two distinct covenants, but one and the same covenant diversely dispensed. The covenant of grace is the same for substance now the us since Christ was exhibited, as it was to the Jews before he was exhibited; but the manner of administration of it is different, because it is:—(1.) Now clearer: things were declared then in types and shadows, heaven was then typed out by the land of Canaan, but now we have things more plainly manifested, 2Co 3:12; Heb 7:22. In this respect it is called 'a better testament or covenant,' Heb 8:6; not in substance, but in the manner of revealing it; and the promises are said to be 'better promises' upon the same account, Acts 10:35. (2.) The covenant of grace, is now more largely extended; then it extended only to the Jews, but now to all that know the Lord, and that choose him, fear him, love him, and serve him in all nations, Col 3:11; Neh 7:2; Job 1:1, Job 1:8; Acts 13:22, seq.; Rom 4:18-20. (3.) There is more abundance of the Spirit, of grace, of light, of knowledge, of holiness, poured out generally upon the people of God now, than there was in those times. Though then some few eminent saints had much of the Spirit, and much of grace and holiness, both in their hearts and lives; but now the generality of the saints have more of the Spirit, and more grace and holiness, than the generality

of the saints had in those times. But,

4. Fourthly, Premise this with me, that a right notion of the covenant, according to the originals of the Old and New Testament, will conduce much to a right understanding of God's covenant. The derivation of the Hebrew word, and of the Greek, may give us great light, and is of special use to shew the nature of the covenant which they principally signify, and what special things are therein required. (1.) The Hebrew word, בְּרִית, Berith, a covenant, is by learned men derived from several roots:

[1.] First, Some derive it from בָּרַר, Barar, to purify, make clear, and to purge out dross, chaff, and all uncleanness; and to select, and choose out, and separate the pure from the impure, the gold and silver from the dross, and the pure wheat from the chaff. The reasons of this derivation are these two:—(1.) Because by covenants open and clear amity is confirmed, and faithfulness is plainly and clearly declared and ratified, without deceit or sophistication, betwixt covenanters; and things are made plain and clear betwixt them in every point and article. (2.) Because God, in the covenant of works, did choose out man especially, with whom he made the covenant; and because in the covenant of grace he chooseth out of the multitude his elect, even his church and faithful people, whom he did separate by predestination and election from all eternity, to be a holy people to himself in Christ, Eph 1:4. (3.) Some derive it from בָּרָא, and verily, the Lord, when he makes a covenant with any, he doth separate them from others, he looks on them, and takes them, and owns them for his 'peculiar people,' 1Pe 2:9, for his 'peculiar treasure,' Exo 19:5, and agrees with them as the chosen and choicest of all others. The first staff in Zec 11:10, is called 'Beauty,' and this was the covenant; and certainly it must be a high honour for a people to be in covenant with God; for by this means God becomes ours, and we are made nigh unto him, Jer 32:38, Jer 32:40-41. He is ours, and we are his, in a very peculiar way of relation; and by this means God opens his love and all his treasures of grace unto us. In his covenant he tells us of his special care, love, kindness, and great intentions of good to us; and by this means his faithfulness comes to be obliged to make good all his covenant relations and engagements to us, Deu 7:9. Now in all this God puts a great favour and honour upon his people. Hence, when the Lord told Abraham that he would make a covenant with him, Abraham fell upon his face; he was amazed at so great a love and honour, Gen 17:2-3.

[2.] Secondly, Some derive the word from בָּרַח, Barah, comedit, to eat, because usually they had a feast at the making of covenants. In the Eastern countries they commonly established their covenants by eating and drinking together. Herodotus tells us that the Persians were wont to contract leagues and friendship, inter vinum et epulas, in a full feast, whereat their wives, children, and friends, were present. The like, Tacitus reports of the Germans. Amongst the Greeks and other nations, the covenanters ate bread and salt together. The Emperor of Russia, at this day, when he would shew extraordinary grace and favour unto any, sends him bread and salt from his table; and when he invited Baron Sigismund, the Emperor Ferdinand's ambassador, he did it in this form: Sigismunde, comedes sal et panem nostrum nobiscum: Sigismund, you shall eat our bread and salt with us. Hence that symbol of Pythagoras, μὴ καταγινεῖν, 'break no bread,' is interpreted by Erasmus and others to mean, 'break no friendship.' Moreover, the Egyptians, Thracians, and Lybians in special, are said to have used to make leagues, and contract friendship, by presenting a cup of wine one to another; which custom we find still in use amongst our western nations. It has been the universal custom of mankind, and still remains in use, to contract

covenants, and make leagues and friendship, by eating and drinking together. When Isaac made a covenant with Abimelech, the king of Gerar, the text saith, 'He made him, and those that were with him, a feast; and they did eat and drink, and rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another,' Gen 26:30-31. When Jacob made a covenant with Laban, after they had sworn together, he made him a feast, 'and called his brethren to eat bread,' saith the text, Gen 31:54. When David made a league with Abner, upon his promise of bringing all Israel unto him, David made 'Abner and the men that were with him a feast,' saith the text, 2Sa 3:20. Hence, in the Hebrew tongue a covenant is called **ברית**, Berith, of **אכל**, Barah, to eat, as if they should say an eating; which derivation is so natural, that it deserves, say some, to be preferred before that, from the other signification of the same verb, which is to choose; of which before. Now they that derive Berith from Barah, which signifies to eat and refresh one's self with meat, they give this reason for that derivation, viz., because the old covenant of God, made with man in the creation, was a covenant wherein the condition or law was about eating; that man should eat of all the trees and fruits, except of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Gen 2:16-17; and in the solemn making and sealing of the covenant of grace in Christ, the blessed seed, the public ceremony was slaying and sacrificing of beasts, and eating some part of them, after the fat and the choice parts were offered up and burned on the altar. For God, by virtue of that covenant, gave man leave to eat the flesh of beasts, Deu 12:27, which he might not do in the state of innocency, Gen 1:29, being limited to fruits of trees, and herbs bearing seed, for his meat. So, also, in solemn covenants between men, the parties were wont to eat together, Gen 31:46.

[3.] Thirdly, Others derive the word Berith from **כרת**, Bara, or **כרית**, Barah, to smite, strike, cut, or divide, as both these words signify. The word also signifies to elect or choose; and the reasons they give for this derivation, are these two:—First, Because covenants are not made, but by choice persons, chosen out one by another, and about choice matters, and upon choice conditions, chosen out, and agreed upon by both parties. Secondly, Because, in making of covenants, commonly sacrifices were stricken and slain, for confirmation and solemnity. Of old, God sealed his covenants by sacrifices of beasts slain, divided, and cut asunder, and the choice fat, and other parts, offered upon the altar. And in making of great and solemn covenants, men, in old time, were wont to kill and cut asunder sacrificed beasts; and to pass between the parts divided, for a solemn testimony, or for the confirmation of the covenants that they had made, Gen 15:9-10, Gen 15:17. And as learned men have long since observed, that the very heathen, in their covenanting, used sacrifices, and divided them, passing between the parts; and this they did, as some conjecture, in imitation of God's people. This third is the common opinion, about the original of this name; and therefore preferred before all other. So this word **ברית**, Berith, covenant, seems to sound as much as **כרית**, Kerith, a smiting or striking, because of sacrifices slain in covenanting. Hence the word covenant is often joined with **כרת**, Karath, which signifies striking of covenant. An example of this beyond all exception, saith my author, is in that sacrifice, wherein God by Moses, made a covenant with all the people of Israel, and bound them to obey his law: the description of it is in Exo 24:4-8, 'And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And

Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.' I shall not trouble my reader with that mystical and too curious a sense, that some of the ancients put upon these words:⁴ the historical sense is here more fit: for in this ceremony of dividing the blood in two parts, and so besprinkling the altar with the one half, which represented God; and the people with the other, between whom the covenant was confirmed, the old use in striking of covenants is observed. For the ancient custom was, that they which made a league or covenant, divided some beasts, and put the parts asunder, walking in the midst; signifying that as the beast was divided, so they should be which brake the covenant. So when Saul went against the Ammonites, coming out of the field, he hewed two oxen, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, 1Sa 11:7; expressing the like signification, that so should his oxen be served that came not forth after Saul and Samuel. After the same manner, when God made a covenant with Abraham, Gen 15:12-19, and he had divided certain beasts, as God had commanded him, and laid one part against another, a smoking firebrand went between, representing God, signifying, that so he should be divided, which violated the covenant. So in this place, not much unlike; the blood is parted in twain, shewing that so should his blood be shed, which kept not the covenant.

[4.] Fourthly, Some derive the word Berith from ■■■■, Bara, to create; and the reason they give for this derivation is this, because the first state of creation was confirmed by the covenant which God made with man, and all creatures were to be upheld by means of observing of the law and condition of the covenant; and that covenant being broken by man, the world, made subject to ruin, is upheld, yea, and as it were created anew, by the covenant of grace in Christ.

[5.] Fifthly, Some derive the word Berith from ■■■■, Berath, which signifies firmness, sureness, because covenants are firm and sure, and all things agreed on are confirmed and made sure by them. God's covenant is a sure covenant: Deu 7:9, 'The Lord thy God, he is the faithful God,' or the God of Amen, 'which keepeth covenant with them that love him:' Psal 89:34, 'My covenant will I not break'—Hebrew, 'I will not profane,' 'nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.' All God's precepts, all God's predictions, all God's menaces, and all God's promises, are the issue of a most just, faithful, and righteous will. There are three things that God cannot do:—(1.) He cannot die. (2.) He cannot lie: Tit 1:2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' (3.) He cannot deny himself. Now the derivation of Berith, from the several roots specified, and not from one only, doth give much light to the point under consideration; and doth reconcile in one, all the several opinions of the learned, and justifies their several derivations, without rejecting or offering any wrong or disgrace to any.

(2.) Secondly, The Greek name Διαθήκη, Diatheke, a covenant or a testament. By this Greek word the Septuagint, in their Greek translation, do commonly express the Hebrew word Berith; and it is observable that this is the only word by which the Hebrew word Berith is rendered in the New Testament. This Greek word, Διαθήκη, is translated covenant in the New Testament about twenty times; and the same word is translated testament in the New Testament about twelve times. Wherever you find the word covenant in the New Testament, there you shall find Diatheke; and wherever you find the word testament in the New Testament, there you shall find Diatheke; so that it is of importance for us to understand this word aright. Now this Greek word, Διαθήκη, is derived from Διατίθημι, Diatithemi, which hath divers of the significations of the Hebrew words of which Berith is derived; for it signifies to set things in order and frame, to appoint orders, and make laws,

to pacify and make satisfaction, and to dispose things by one's last will and testament. Now to compose and set things in order is to uphold the creation; to walk by orders and laws made and appointed is to walk by rule, and to live, to deal plainly and faithfully without deceit. To pacify and make satisfaction includes sacrifices and sin-offerings. To dispose by will and testament implies choice of persons and gifts; for men do commonly by will give their best and most choice things to their most dear and most choice friends. Thus the Greek which the apostles use in the New Testament to signify a covenant, to express the Hebrew word Berith, which is used in the law and the prophets, doth confirm our derivation of it from all the words before named. And this derivation of the Hebrew and Greek names of a covenant being thus laid down, and confirmed by the reasons formerly cited, is of great use. The various acceptation and use of these two names in the Old and New Testament is very considerable for the opening of the covenant: First, To shew unto us the full signification of the word covenant, and what the nature of a covenant is in general. Second, To justify the divers acceptations of the word, and to shew the nature of every word in particular, and so to make way for the knowledge of the agreement and difference between the old and new covenant. Here, as in a crystal glass, you may see that this word Berith, and this word Diatheke, signify all covenants in general, whether they are religious or civil; for there is nothing in any true covenant which is not comprised in the signification of these words, being expounded according to the former derivations. Here also we may see what is the nature of a covenant in general, and what things are thereunto required; as, first, every true covenant presupposeth a division or separation; secondly, it comprehends in it a mutual promising and binding between two distinct parties; thirdly, there must be faithful dealing, without fraud, or dissembling on both sides; fourthly, this must be between choice persons; fifthly, it must be about choice matters and upon choice conditions, agreed upon by both; sixthly and lastly, it must tend to the well-ordering and composing of things between them. Now all these are manifest by the several significations of the words from which Berith and Diatheke are derived. And thus much for the word covenant according to the originals of the Old and New Testament.

5. Fifthly, Premise this with me, that there was a covenant of works, or a reciprocal covenant, betwixt God and Adam, together with all his posterity. Before Adam fell from his primitive holiness, beauty, glory, and excellency, God made a covenant with Adam as a public person, which represented all mankind. The covenant of works was made with all men in Adam, who was made and stood as a public person, head and root, in a common and comprehensive capacity. I say, it was made with him as such, and we all in him; he and all stood and fell together. (1.) Witness the imputation of Adam's sin to all mankind: Rom 5:12, 'In whom,' or forasmuch as, 'all have sinned;' they sinned not all in themselves, therefore in Adam; see Rom 5:14, 'In him all died.' (2.) Witness the curse of the covenant that all mankind are directly under; consult the scriptures in the margin. Those on whom the curse of the covenant comes, those are under the bond and precept of the covenant. But all mankind are under the curse of the covenant, and therefore all mankind are under the bond and precept of the covenant. Adam did understand the terms of the covenant, and did consent to the terms of the covenant; for God dealt with him in a rational way, and expected from him a reasonable service., The end of this covenant was the upholding of the creation, and of all the creatures in their pure natural estate, for the comfort of man continually, and for the special manifestation of God's free grace; and that the might put the greater obligation upon Adam to obey his Creator and to sweeten his authority to man; and that he might draw out Adam to an exercise of his faith, love, and hope in his Creator; and that he might leave Adam the more inexcusable in

case he should sin; and that so a clear way might be made for God's justification and man's conviction. Upon these grounds God dealt with Adam, not only in a way of sovereignty, but in a way of covenant.

Quest. But how may it be evidenced that God entered into a covenant of works with the first Adam before his fall, there being no mention of such a covenant in the Scripture that we read of?

Ans. Though the name be not in the Scripture, yet the thing is in the Scripture, as will evidently appear by comparing scripture with scripture. Though it be not positively and plainly said in the blessed Scripture that God made a covenant of works with Adam before his fall, yet, upon sundry scripture grounds and considerations, it may be sufficiently evidenced that God did make such a covenant with Adam before his fall; and therefore it is a nice cavil, and a foolish vanity, for any to make such a noise about the word covenant, and for want of the word covenant, boldly to conclude that there was no such covenant made with Adam, when the thing is lively set down in other words, though the word covenant be not expressed; and this I shall make evident by an induction of particulars, thus:—

[1.] First, God, to declare his sovereignty and man's subjection, gave Adam, though innocent, a law. God's express prescription of a positive law unto Adam in his innocent state, is clearly and fully laid down in that Gen 2:16-17, 'And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' Hebrew, 'dying thou shalt die.' Mark how God bounds man's obedience with a double fence: first, He fenced him with a free indulgence to eat of every tree in the garden but one, the less cause he had to be liquorish after forbidden fruit; but 'stolen waters are sweet.' secondly, By an exploratory prohibition, upon pain of death. By the first, the Lord woos him by love; by the second, he frights him by the terror of his justice, and bids him touch and taste if he durst. The *fœderati* were God and Adam; God the Creator, and man, the creature, made 'after God's image and likeness;' and so not contrary to God, nor at enmity with him, but like unto God, though far different and inferior to God in nature and substance. Here are also terms agreed on, and matters covenanted reciprocally, by these parties. Adam, on his part, was to be obedient to God, in forbearing to eat of the tree of knowledge only. God's charge to our first parents was only negative, not to eat of the tree of knowledge; the other, to eat of the trees, was left unto their choice. Eve confesseth that God spake unto them both, and said, 'Ye shall not eat of it,' Gen 3:2; and God speaks unto both of them together in these words, 'Behold, I have given unto you every herb, and every tree,' &c., Gen 1:19. At which time also it is very like that he gave them the other prohibition of not eating of that one tree; for if God had made that exception before, he would not have given a general permission after; or if this general grant had gone before, the exception coming should seem to abrogate the former grant. The Septuagint seem to be of this mind, that this precept was given both to Adam and Eve, reading thus in the plural number, 'In what day ye shall eat thereof ye shall die.' And though, in the original, the precept be given in the name of Adam only, that is only (1.) Because Adam was the more principal, and he had the charge of the woman; and (2.) Because that the greatest danger was in his transgression, which of his posterity; (3.) Because, as Mercerus well observes, Adam was the common name both of the man and woman, Gen 5:2, and so is taken, Gen 5:15. And God, on his part, for the present, permits Adam to eat of all other trees of the garden; and for the future, in his explicit threatening of death in case of disobedience, implicitly promiseth life in case

of obedience herein.

[2.] Secondly, The promises of this covenant on God's part were very glorious—First, That heaven, and earth, and all creatures should continue in their natural course and order wherein God had created and placed them, serving always for man's use, and that man should have the benefit, and lordship of them all. Secondly, As for natural life, in respect of the body, Adam should have had perfection without defect, beauty without deformity, labour without weariness. Thirdly, As for spiritual life, Adam should never have known what it was to be under terrors and horrors of conscience, nor what a wounded spirit means, Pro 18:14; he should never have found 'the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in him, nor the poison thereof drinking up his spirits, nor the terrors of God to set themselves in array against him,' Job 6:4; nor he should never have tasted of death. Death is a fall that came in by a fall. Had Adam never sinned, Adam had never died; had Adam stood fast in innocency, he should have been translated to glory without dissolution. Death came in by sin, and sin goeth out by death. As the worm kills the worm that bred it, so death kills sin that bred it. Now where there are parties covenanting, promising, and agreeing upon terms, and terms mutually agreed upon by those parties, as here, there is the substance of an express covenant, though it be not formally and in express words called a covenant. This was the first covenant which God made with man, and this is called by the name Berith, Jer 33:20, where God saith, 'If you can break my covenant of the day and night, and that there shall not be day and night in their season,' ver. 21, 'then may also my covenant with David be broken.' In these words he speaks plainly of the promise in the creation, that day and night should keep their course, and the sun, moon, and stars, and all creatures, should serve for man's use, Gen 1:14-16. Now though man did break the covenant on his part, yet God, being immutable, could not break covenant on his part, neither did he suffer his promise to fail; but, by virtue of Christ promised to man in the new covenant, he will keep touch with man so long as mankind hath a being on the earth. In this first covenant, God promised unto man life and happiness, lordship over all the creatures, liberty to use them, and all other blessings which his heart could desire, to keep him in that happy estate wherein he was created. And man was bound to God to walk in perfect righteousness, to observe and keep God's commandments, and to obey his will in all things which were within the reach of his nature, and so far as was revealed to him. In the first covenant, God revealed himself to man as one God, Creator, and Governor of all things, infinite in power, wisdom, goodness, nature, and substance. God was man's good Lord, and man was God's good servant; God dearly loved man, and man greatly loved God with all his heart. There was not the least shadow or occasion of hatred or enmity between them; there was nothing but mutual love, mutual delight, mutual content, and mutual satisfaction between God and man. Man, in his primitive glory, needed no mediator to come between God and him. Man was perfect, pure, upright, and good, created after God's own image; and the nearer he came to God, the greater was his joy and comfort. God's presence now was man's great delight, and it was man's heaven on earth to walk with God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider the intention and use of the two eminent trees in the garden, that are mentioned in a more peculiar manner—viz., the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. The intended use of these two trees in paradise was sacramental. Hence they are called symbolical trees, and sacramental trees, by learned writers, both ancient and modern. By these the Lord did signify and seal to our first parents that they should always enjoy that happy state of life in which they were made, upon condition of obedience to his commandments; i.e., in eating of the tree of

life, and not eating of the tree of knowledge. The tree of life is so called, not because of any native property and peculiar virtue it had in itself to convey life, but symbolically, morally, and sacramentally. It was a sign and obligation to them of life, natural and spiritual, to be continued to them as long as they continued in obedience to God. The seal of the first covenant was the tree of life, which if Adam had received by taking and eating of it, whilst he stood in the state of innocency before his fall, he had certainly been established in that estate for ever; and the covenant being sealed and confirmed between God and him on both parts, he could not have been seduced and supplanted by Satan, as some learned men do think, and as God's own words seem to imply, Gen 3:22, 'And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.' 'The tree of knowledge of good and evil' was spoken from the sad event and experience they had of it, as Samson had of God's departing from him when he lost his Nazaritish hair by Delilah. 'The tree of life' was a sacrament of life; 'the tree of knowledge' a sacrament of death. 'The tree of life' was for confirmation of man's obedience, and 'the tree of knowledge' was for caution against disobedience. Now if those two trees were two sacraments, the one assuring of life in case of obedience, the other assuring of death in case of disobedience, then hence we may collect that God not only entered into a covenant of works with the first Adam, but also gave him this covenant under sacramental signs and seals. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Seriously consider that a covenant of works lay clear, in that commandment, Gen 2:16-17, which may thus be made evident:—(1.) Because that was the condition of man's standing and life, as it was expressly declared; (2.) Because, in the breach of that commandment given him, he lost all, and we in him. God made the covenant of works primarily with Adam, and with us in him, as our head, inclusively; so that when he did fall we did fall, when he lost all we lost all. There are five things we lost in our fall:—(1.) Our holy image, and so became vile; (2.) Our sonship, and so became slaves; (3.) Our friendship, and so became enemies; (4.) Our communion with God, and so became strangers; (5.) Our glory, and so became miserable. Sin and death came into the world by Adam's fall. In Adam's sinning we all sinned, and in Adam's dying we all died; as you may see, by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. In Adam's first sin, we all became sinners by imputation: Adam being a universal person, and all mankind one in him, by God's covenant of works with him. *Omnes ille unus homo fuerunt*, All were that one man, [Augustine,] viz., by federal consociation. God covenanted with Adam, and in him with all his posterity; and therefore Adam's breach of covenant fell not only upon him, but upon all his posterity. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, We read of a second covenant, Heb 10:9; Rom 9:4; Gal 4:24; Eph 2:12, and we read of a 'new covenant:' Jer 31:31, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.' So Heb 8:8, 'I will make a new covenant,' &c.; Heb 8:13, 'In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old,' &c.; Heb 12:24, 'And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,' &c. Now if there be a 'second covenant,' then we may safely conclude there was a 'first;' and if there be a 'new covenant,' then we may boldly conclude that there was an 'old covenant.' A covenant of grace always supposeth a covenant of works, Heb 8:7-9. I know there is a repetition of the covenant of works with Adam, in the law of Moses; as in that of the apostle to the Galatians, 'The law is not of faith, but the man that doth these things, shall live in them,' Gal 3:10-12. The law requires works, and promiseth no life to those that will be justified by faith. In the first covenant, three things are observable:—(1.) The precept, that 'continueth not in all things;' the precept requires perfect, personal, and perpetual

obedience; (2.) The promise, 'live;' 'the man that doth them shall live;' live happily, blessedly, cheerfully, everlastingly; (3.) The curse in case of transgression, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' One sin, and that but in thought, broke the angels' covenant, and hath brought them into everlasting chains, Jude 1:6. So the same apostle to the Romans further tells us, that 'Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man that doth those things shall live by them,' Rom 10:5. Thus it was with Adam, principally and properly, therefore he was under a covenant of works, when God gave him that command, Gen 2:16-17. This first covenant is called a covenant of works, because this covenant required working on our part as the condition of it, for justification and happiness, 'The man that doth these things shall live.' Under this covenant God left man to stand upon his own bottom, and to live upon his own stock, and by his own industry. God made him perfect and upright, and gave him power and ability to stand, and laid no necessity at all upon him to fall. In this first covenant of works, man had no need of a mediator, God did then stipulate with Adam immediately; for seeing he had not made God his enemy by sin, he needed no daysman to make friendly intercession for him, Job 9:33.

Adam was invested and endowed with righteousness and holiness in his first glorious estate; with righteousness, that he might carry it fairly, justly, evenly, and righteously towards man; and with holiness, that he might carry it wisely, lovingly, reverentially, and holily towards God, and that he might take up in God as his chiefest good, as in his great all. I shall not now stand upon the discovery of Adam's beauty, authority, dominion, dignity, honour, and glory, with which he was adorned, invested, and crowned in innocency. Let this satisfy, that Adam's first estate was a state of perfect knowledge, wisdom, and understanding; it was a perfect state of holiness, righteousness, and happiness. There was nothing within him but what was desirable and delectable; there was nothing without him but what was amiable 'and commendable; nor nothing about him but what was serviceable and comfortable. Adam, in his innocent estate, was the wonder of all understanding, the mirror of wisdom and knowledge, the image of God, the delight of heaven, the glory of the creation, the world's great lord, and the Lord's great darling. Upon all these accounts, he had no need of a mediator. And let thus much suffice to have spoken concerning the first covenant of works, that was between God and Adam in innocency. But,

6. Sixthly, Premise this with me—viz., that there is a new covenant, a second covenant, or a covenant of grace betwixt God and his people, Heb 8:6-13. Express scriptures prove this: Deu 7:9, 'Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God; the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations;' 2Sa 23:5, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire; although he make it not to grow;' Neh 1:5, 'I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God; that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and keep his commandments;' Isa 54:10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee;' Jer 32:40, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;' Eze 20:37, 'And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;' Deu 29:12, 'That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God; and into his oath, which the

Lord thy God maketh with thee to-day.' Consult the scriptures in the margin also, for they cannot be applied to Christ, but to us. But for the further evidencing of that covenant that is between the Lord and his people—now that there is a covenant betwixt God and his people may be further evinced by unanswerable arguments—let me point at some among many.

[1.] First, Christ is said to be 'the mediator of this covenant:' Heb 9:15, 'And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.' Certainly that covenant, of which Christ is the testator, must needs be a covenant made with us; for else, if the covenant were made only with Christ, as some would have it, then it will roundly follow that Jesus Christ is both testator and the party to whom the testaments and legacies are bequeathed; which sounds harsh, yea, which to assert is very absurd. Since the creation of the world, was it ever known that ever any man did bequeath a testament and legacies to himself? Surely no. Christ is the testator of the new covenant, and therefore we may safely conclude that the new covenant is made with us. The office of mediator, you know, is to stand betwixt two at variance. The two at variance were God and man. Man had offended and incensed God against him. God's wrath was an insupportable burden, and a consuming fire; no creature was able to stand under it, or before it. Therefore Christ, to rescue and redeem man, becomes a mediator. Christ, undertaking to be a mediator, both procured a covenant to pass betwixt God and man, and also engaged himself for the performance thereof on both parts; and to assure man of partaking of the benefit of God's covenant, Christ turns the covenant into a testament, that the conditions of the covenant, on God's part, might be as go many legacies, which, being confirmed by the death of the testator, none might disannul: Heb 8:6, 'He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.' The promises of the new covenant are said to be better in these six respects:—(1.) All the promises of the law were conditional; 'Do this, and thou shalt live.' The promises of the new covenant are absolute, of grace, as well as to grace. (2.) In this better covenant God promiseth higher things. Here God promiseth Himself, his Son, his Spirit, a higher righteousness and a higher sonship. (3.) Because of their stability; those of the old covenant were 'swallowed up in the curse.' These are the 'sure mercies of David.' (4.) They are all bottomed upon faith, they all depend upon faith. (5.) They are all promised upon our interest in Christ. This makes the promises sweet, because they lead us to Christ, the fountain of them, whose mouth is most sweet, and in whose person all the sweets of all created beings do centre. (6.) Because God hath promised to pour out a greater measure of his Spirit, under the new covenant, than he did under the old covenant: Heb 12:24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.' Thus you see that Christ is called 'the mediator of the covenant' three several times. Now he could not be the mediator of that covenant that is betwixt God and himself, of which more shortly, but of that covenant that is betwixt God and his people. But,

[2.] Secondly, The people of God have pleaded the covenant that is betwixt God and them: 'Remember thy covenant.' Now how could they plead the covenant betwixt God and-them if there were no such covenant? See the scriptures in the margin. But,

[3.] Thirdly, God is often said to remember his covenant: Gen 9:15, 'I will remember my covenant, which is between you and me;' Exo 6:5, 'I have remembered my covenant;' Lev 26:42, 'I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember;' Eze 16:60, 'I will remember my covenant with thee, and I will establish

unto thee an everlasting covenant.' Now how can God be said to remember his covenant with his people, if there were no covenant betwixt God and them? But,

[4.] Fourthly, The temporal and spiritual deliverances that you have by the covenant do clearly evidence that there is a covenant betwixt God and you: Zec 9:11, 'As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein there was no water.' These words include both temporal and spiritual deliverances. So that now, if there be not a covenant betwixt God and you, what deliverances can you expect, seeing they all flow in upon the creature by virtue of the covenant, and according to the covenant? By the blood of the covenant believers are delivered from the infernal pit, where there is not so much water as might cool Dives his tongue, Luk 16:24-25; and by the blood of the covenant they are delivered from those deaths and dangers that do surround them, 2Co 1:8-10. When sincere Christians fall into desperate distresses and most deadly dangers, yet they are prisoners of hope, and may look for deliverance by the blood of the covenant. This does sufficiently evince a covenant betwixt God and his people. But,

[5.] Fifthly, God has threatened severely to avenge and punish the quarrel of his covenant: Lev 26:25, 'And I will bring a sword upon-you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant;' or which shall avenge the vengeance of the covenant, &c. Consult the scriptures in the margin. Breach of covenant betwixt God and man, breaks the peace, and breeds a quarrel betwixt them; in which he will take vengeance of man's revolt, except there be repentance on man's side, and pardoning grace on his. For breach of covenant, Jerusalem is long since laid waste, and the seven golden candlesticks broken in pieces; and many others, this day, lie a-bleeding in the nations who have made no more of breaking covenant with the great God than if therein they had to do with poor mortals, with dust and ashes like themselves. Now how can there be such a sin as breach of covenant, for which God will be avenged, if there were no covenant betwixt God and his people? But,

[6.] Sixthly, The seals of the covenant are given to God's people. Now to those to whom the seals of the covenant are given, with them is the covenant made; for the seals of the covenant, and the covenant, go to the same persons: but the seals of the covenant are given to believers. 'Abraham receives the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith,' Rom 4:11, ergo, the covenant is made with believers. Circumcision is a sign, in regard of the thing signified, and a seal, in regard of the covenant made betwixt God and man. Seal is a borrowed word, taken from kings and princes, who add their broad seal, or privy-seal, to ratify and confirm the leagues, edicts, grants, covenants, charters, that are made with their subjects or confederates. God had made a covenant with Abraham, and by circumcision signs and seals up that covenant. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The people of God are said sometimes to keep covenant with God: Psa 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.' Mercies flowing in upon us, through the covenant, are of all mercies the most soul-satisfying, soul-refreshing, soul-cheering mercies; yea, they are the very cream of mercy. Oh, how well is it with that saint that can look upon every mercy as a present sent him from heaven by virtue of the covenant! Oh, this sweetens every drop, and sip, and crust, and crumb of mercy that a Christian enjoys, that all flows in upon him through the covenant! The promise last cited is a very sweet, choice, precious promise, a promise more worth than all the riches of the Indies. Mark, 'all the paths of the Lord' to his people, they are not only 'mercy,' but they are 'mercy and truth;' that is

they are sure mercies that stream in upon them, through the covenant. Solomon's dinner of green herbs, Pro 15:17; Daniel's pulse, Dan 1:12; barley loaves and a few fishes, John 6:9; swimming in upon a Christian, through the new covenant, are far better, greater and sweeter mercies, than all those great things are that flow in upon the great men of the world, through that general providence that feeds the birds of the air, and the beasts of the field: Psa 44:17, 'Yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant;' that is, we have kept covenant with thee, by endeavouring to the uttermost of our power to keep off from the breach of thy covenant, and to live up to the duties of thy covenant, suitable to that of the prophet Micah, 'We will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever,' Mic 4:5. Persons in covenant with God will not only take a turn or two in his ways, as temporaries and hypocrites do, who are hot at hand, but soon tire and give in, but they will hold on in a course of holiness, and not fail to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goes: Rev 14:4, and Rev 17:14; Psa 103:17, 'The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting:' Psa 103:18, 'To such as keep his covenant,' &c. All sincere Christians they keep covenant with God:—(1.) In respect of their cordial desires to keep covenant with God; (2.) In respect of their habitual purposes and resolutions to keep covenant with God; (3.) In respect of their habitual and constant endeavours to keep covenant with God, Neh 1:11; Psa 119:133, and Psa 39:1-2. This is an evangelical and incomplete keeping covenant with God, which in Christ God owns and accepts, and is as well pleased with it as he was with Adam's keeping of covenant with him before his fall. From what has been said, we may thus argue: Those that keep covenant with God, those are in covenant with God, those have made a covenant with God; but all sincere Christians they do keep covenant with God, ergo. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, The Lord hath, by many choice, precious, and pathetical promises, engaged himself to make good that blessed covenant that he has made with his people, yea, with his choice and chosen ones, 2Pe 1:4. Take a few instances, 'If ye hearken to these judgments,' saith God to Israel, 'and keep and do them, the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers,' Deu 7:12. This blessed covenant is grounded upon God's free grace; and therefore in recompensing their obedience God hath a respect to his own mercy, and not to their merits. So Jdg 2:1, 'I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I sware unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.' God is a God of mercy, and his covenant with his people is a covenant of mercy; and therefore he will be sure to keep touch with them. So Psa 89:34, 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth;' as if he should have said, Though they break my statutes, yet will I not break my covenant; for this seems to have reference to the 31st verse, 'If they break my statutes,' &c. Though they had profaned God's statutes, yet God would not profane his covenant, as the Hebrew runs, 'My covenant will I not break;' that is, I will stand steadfastly to the performance of it, and for every part and branch of it, I will never be inconstant, I will never be off and on with my people, I will never change my purpose, nor eat my words, nor unsay what I have said. So Jer 33:20, 'Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there shall not be day and night in their season;' Jer 33:21, 'Then may also my covenant be broken with my servant David,' &c. It is impossible for any created power to break off the intercourse of night and day, so it is impossible for me to break the covenant that I have made with David, my servant; the day and night shall as soon fail as my covenant shall fail. So Isa 54:10, 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the

Lord that hath mercy on thee.' Though great and huge mountains should remove, yea, though heaven and earth should meet, Psa 46:2, yet the covenant of God with his people shall stand unmovable. The covenant of God, the mercy of God, and the loving-kindness of God to his people, shall last for ever, and remain constant and immutable, though all things in the world should be turned upside down. So Psa 111:4, 'The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion;' Psa 111:5, 'He will ever be mindful of his covenant.' God looks not at his people's sins, but at his own promise; he will pass by their infirmities, and supply all their necessities. God will never break his covenant, he will never alter his covenant, he will still keep it, he will for ever be mindful of it. The covenant of God with his people shall be as inviolable as the course and revolution of day and night, and more immovable than the very hills and mountains. From what has been said, we may thus argue: If God hath, by many choice, precious, and pathetical promises, engaged himself to make good that blessed covenant that he has made with his people, then certainly there is a covenant between God and his people; but God hath, by many choice, precious, and pathetical promises, engaged himself to make good his covenant to his people. ergo....

I might have laid down several other unanswerable arguments to have evinced this blessed truth, that there is a covenant betwixt God and his people; but let these eight suffice for the present.

7. Seventhly and lastly, Premise this with me—viz., that it is a matter of high importance and of great concernment, for all mortals to have a clear and a right understanding of that covenant under which they are, 2Sa 23:3-4. God deals with all men according to the covenant under which they stand. We shall never come to understand our spiritual estate and condition, till we come to know under what covenant we are, Psa 105:8, Psa 111:5; 1Co 11:28; Gal 4:23-25. If we are under a covenant of works, our state is miserable; if we are under a covenant of grace, our state is happy; if we die under a covenant of works, we shall be certainly damned; if we die under a covenant of grace, we shall be certainly saved. Until we come to understand under what covenant we are, we shall never be able to put a right construction, a right interpretation, upon any of God's actions, dealings, or dispensations towards us. When we come to understand that we are under the covenant of grace, then we shall be able to put a sweet, a loving, and a favourable construction upon the most sharp, smart, severe, and terrible dispensations of God, knowing that all flows from love, and shall work for our external, internal, and eternal good, and for the advancement of God's honour and glory in the world. When we come to understand that we are under a covenant of works, then we shall know that there is wrath, and curses, and woes wrapped up in the most favourable dispensations, and in the greatest outward mercies and blessings that Christ confers upon us. If a man be under a covenant of grace, and doth not know it, how can he rejoice in the Lord? How can he sing out the high praises of God? How can he delight himself in the Almighty? How can he triumph in Christ Jesus? How can he cheerfully run the race that is before him? How can he bear up bravely and resolutely in his sufferings for the cause of Christ? How can he besiege the throne of grace with boldness? How can he be temptation-proof? How can he be dead to this world? How can he long to be with Christ in that other world? And if a man be under a covenant of works, and doth not know it, how can he lament and bewail his sad condition? How can he be earnest with God to bring him under the bond of the new covenant? How can he make out after Christ? How can he choose the things that please God? How can he cease from doing evil, and learn to do well? How can he lay hold on eternal life? How can he be saved from wrath to come? &c. if we are under a covenant of grace, and do not know it, how can we manage our

duties and services with that life, love, seriousness, holiness, spiritualness, and uprightness, as becomes us?2 &c. If we are under a covenant of works, and do not know it, how rare shall we be in religious duties! How weary shall we be of religious duties, and how ready shall we be to cast off religious duties! By these few things I have been hinting at, you may easily discern how greatly it concerns all sorts of persons to know what covenant they are under; whether they are under the first or second covenant; whether they are under a covenant of works or a covenant of grace. Now having premised these seven things, my way is clear to that I would be at, which is this—viz., 1. That there are but two famous covenants that we must abide by. In one of them, all men and women in the world must of necessity be found—either in the covenant of grace or in the covenant of works. The covenant of works is a witness of God's holiness and perfection; the covenant of grace is a witness of God's goodness and commiseration. The covenant of works is a standing evidence of man's guiltiness; the covenant of grace is the standing evidence of God's righteousness. The covenant of works is the lasting, monument of man's impotency and changeableness; the covenant of grace is the everlasting monument of God's omnipotency and immutability. Now no man can be under both these covenants at once. If he be under a covenant of works, he is not under a covenant of grace; and if he be under a covenant of grace, he cannot be under a covenant of works. Such as are under a covenant of works, they have the breach of that covenant to count for, they being the serpentine brood of a transgressing stock; but such as are under a covenant of grace shall never be tried by the law of works, because Christ, their surety, hath fulfilled it for them, Acts 13:38-39; Rom 8:2-4; Gal 4:4-6. But let me open myself more fully thus:— That all unbelievers, all Christless, graceless persons, are under a covenant of works, which they are never able safely to live under. Should they live and die under a covenant of works, they were surely lost and destroyed for ever; for the covenant of works condemns and curses the sinner: Gal 3:10, 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.' Neither hath the sinner any way to escape that curse of the law, nor the wrath of God revealed against all unrighteousness and ungodliness, but in the covenant of grace, Rom 1:18. This covenant of works the apostle calls 'the law of works,' Rom 3:27. This is the covenant which God made with man in the state of innocency before the fall, Gen 2:16-17. In this covenant God promised to Adam, for himself and his posterity, life and happiness, upon the condition of perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience; and it is summed up by the apostle, 'Do this and live,' Gal 3:12. God having created man upright, after his own image, Ecc 7:29; Gen 1:26-27, and so having furnished him with all abilities sufficient for obedience, thereupon he made a covenant with him for life upon the condition of obedience; I say, he made such a covenant with Adam, as a public person, as the head of the covenant; and as he promised life to him and his posterity in case of obedience, so he threatened death and a curse unto him and his posterity in case of disobedience: 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;' or, 'dying thou shalt die,' Gen 2:17. God, in this covenant of works, did deal with Adam and his posterity in a way of supremacy and righteousness, and therefore there is mention made only of the threatenings: 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death.' And it is further observable, that in this covenant that God made with Adam and his posterity, he did promise unto them eternal life and happiness in heaven, and not eternal life in this world only, as some would have it; for hell was threatened in these words, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die the death;' and therefore heaven and happiness, salvation and glory, was promised on the contrary. We must necessarily conclude that the promise was as ample, large, and full as the threatening was; yet this must be

remembered, that when God did at first enter into covenant with us, and did promise us heaven and salvation, it was upon condition of our personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, and therefore called a covenant of works. 'Do this and live' was not only a command, but a covenant, with a promise of eternal happiness upon perfect and perpetual obedience. All that are under a covenant of works, are under the curse of the covenant, and they are all bound over unto eternal wrath; but the Lord Christ has put an end to this covenant, and abolished it unto all that are in him, being himself made under it; and satisfying the precept and the curse of it, and so he did cancel it, 'as a handwriting against us, nailing it unto his cross,' Col 2:14. So that all they that are in Christ are freed from the law as a covenant; but unto all other men it remains a covenant still, and they remain under the curse of it for ever, and the wrath of God abides upon them, John 3:36. Though the covenant of works, as it is a covenant for life, ceaseth unto believers, yet it stands in force against all unbelievers.

Now, oh how sad is it for a man to be under a covenant of works! For,

First, The covenant of works, in the nature of it, requires perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, under pain of the curse and death, according to that of the apostle, 'As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse,' Gal 3:10—presupposing man's fall, and, consequently, his inability to keep it—'For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them,' Deu 27:26. The covenant of works, therefore, affords no mercy to the transgressors of it, but inflicts death and curse for the least delinquency: 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' Jas 2:10. The whole law is but one copulative; he that breaketh one commandment habitually, breaketh all. A dispensatory conscience keeps not any commandment. When the disposition of the heart is qualified to break every command, then a man breaks every command in the account of God. Every one sin contains virtually all sin in it. He that dares condemn the lawgiver in any one command, he dares condemn the lawgiver in every command. He that allows himself in any one known sin, in any course, way, or trade of sin, he lays himself under that curse which is threatened against the transgressors of the law.

They that are under this covenant of works must of necessity perish. The case stands thus: Adam did break this covenant, and so brought the curse of it both upon himself and all his seed to the end of the world; in his sin all men sinned, Rom 5:12. Now if we consider all men as involved in the first transgression of the covenant, they must all needs perish without a Saviour. This is the miserable condition that all mortals are in that are under a covenant of works. But,

Secondly, Such as are under a covenant of works, their best and choicest duties are rejected and abhorred, for the least miscarriages or blemishes that do attend them or cleave to them. Observe the dreadful language of that covenant of works, 'Cursed is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the law of God to do them,' Gal 3:10. Hence it is that the best duties of all unregenerate persons are loathed and abhorred by God; as you may clearly see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. The most glorious duties and the most splendid performances of those that are under a covenant of works, are loathsome to God, for the least mistake that doth accompany them. The covenant of works deals with men according to the exactest terms of strict justice. It doth not make nor allow any favourable or gracious interpretation as the covenant of grace doth; the very least failure exposes the soul to wrath, to great wrath, to everlasting wrath.

This covenant is not a covenant of mercy, but of pure justice. But,

Thirdly, This covenant admits of no mediator. There was no daysman betwixt God and man, none to stand between them, neither was there any need of a mediator; for God and man were at no distance, at no variance. Man was then righteous, perfectly righteous. Now the proper work of a mediator is to make peace and reconciliation between God and us. At the first, in the state of innocency, there was peace and friendship between God and man, there was no enmity in God's heart towards man, nor no enmity in man's heart towards God: but upon the fall a breach and separation was made between God and man; so that man flies from God, and hides from God, and trembles at the voice of God, Gen 3:8-10. Fallen man is now turned rebel, and is become a desperate enemy to God; yea, his heart is full of enmity against God. 'The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God,' Rom 8:7; not an 'enemy,' as the Vulgar Latin readeth it, but 'enmity,' in the abstract; noting an excess of enmity: as when we see a proud man, we say, There goes pride, so here is enmity. Nothing can be said more; for an 'enemy' may be reconciled, but 'enmity' can never; a vicious man may become virtuous, but vice cannot. There are natural antipathies between some creatures, as between the lion and the cock, the elephant and the boar, the camel and the horse, the eagle and the dragon, &c. But what are all these antipathies to that antipathy and enmity that is in the hearts of all carnal men against God? Now whilst men stand under a covenant of works, there is none to interpose by way of mediation, but fallen man lies open to the wrath of God, and to all the curses that are written in this book. When breaches are made between God and man, under the covenant of grace, there is a mediator to interpose and to make up all such breaches; but under the covenant of works there is no mediator to interpose between God and fallen man. These three things I have hinted a little at, on purpose to work my reader, if under a covenant of works, to be restless till he be got from under that covenant, into the covenant of grace, where alone lies man's safety, felicity, happiness, and comfort. Now this consideration leads me by the hand to tell you,

2. Secondly, That there is a covenant of grace, that all believers, all sincere Christians, all real saints are under; for under these two covenants all mankind fall. The apostle calls this covenant of grace, 'the law of faith,' Rom 3:17. Now, first, this covenant of grace is sometimes styled an 'everlasting covenant:' Isa 55:3, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' You need not question my security, in respect of the great things that I have propounded and promised in my word, for the encouragement of your faith and hope; for I will give you my bond for all I have spoken, which shall be as surely made good to you as the mercies that I have performed to my servant David, 2Sa 23:5. The word everlasting hath two acceptations; it doth denote, (1.) Sometimes a long duration; in which respect the old covenant, clothed with figures and ceremonies, is called everlasting, because it was to endure, and did endure, a long time, Psa 105:9-10; (2.) Sometimes it denotes a perpetual duration, a duration which shall last for ever, Heb 13:20, &c. In this respect the covenant of grace is everlasting; it shall never cease, never be broken, nor never be altered. Now the covenant of grace is an everlasting covenant in a twofold respect.

First, Ex parte fœderantis, in respect of God, who will never break covenant with his people; but is their God, and will be their God, for ever and ever, Tit 1:2; Psa 90:2, and Psa 48:14, 'For this God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our God even unto death;' ay, and after death too: for this is not to be taken exclusively; oh no! for 'he will never, never leave them, nor forsake them,' Heb

13:5. There are five negatives in the Greek, to assure God's people that he will never forsake them. According to the Greek it may be rendered thus, 'I will not, not leave thee, neither will I not, not forsake thee.' Leave us! God may, to our thinking, leave us; but forsake us he will not. So Psa 89:34, 'My covenant will I not break'—Heb., I will not profane my covenant—'nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth'—Heb., the issue of my lips I will not alter. Though God's people should profane his statutes, Psa 89:31, yet God will not profane his covenant; though his people often break with him, yet he will never break with them; though they may be inconstant, yet God will be constant to his covenant: Isa 54:10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' Though huge mountains should remove, which is not probable, or though heaven and earth should meet, which is not likely, yet his covenant shall stand immovable; and his mercy and kindness to his people shall be immutable. This new covenant of grace is like the new heavens and new earth, which will never wax old or vanish away, Isa 66:22. But,

Secondly, The covenant of grace is called an everlasting covenant: *Ex parte confæderatorum*; in respect of the people of God, who are brought into covenant, and shall continue in covenant for ever and ever, Mal 3:6; Hos 2:19; Gen 17:7. You have both these expressed in that excellent scripture, Jer 32:40, 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them'—Heb., I will cut out with them a covenant of perpetuity—'that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but'—Heb., and—'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' Seriously dwell upon the place; it shews that the covenant is everlasting on God's part, and also on our part. On God's part, 'I will never turn away from them to do them good;' and on our part, 'they shall never depart from me.' How so? 'I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' That they may continue constant with me, and not constrain me, by their apostasy, to break again with them: I will so deeply rivet a reverent dread of myself in their souls, as shall cause them to cling, and cleave, and keep close to me for ever. In the covenant of grace, God undertakes for both parts; for his own, that he 'will be their God'—i.e., that all he is, and all he has, shall be employed for their external, internal, and eternal good; and for ours, that we 'shall be his people'—i.e., that we shall believe, love, fear, repent, obey, serve him, and walk with him, as he requires, Jer 32:38; Eze 36:26-27; and thus the covenant of grace becomes an 'everlasting covenant;' yea, such a covenant as hath the sure or unfailable mercies of David wrapped up in it. The covenant of grace is a new compact or agreement, which God hath made with sinful man, out of his mere mercy and grace, wherein he undertakes, both for himself and for fallen man, and wherein he engages himself to make fallen man everlastingly happy. In the covenant of grace there are two things considerable: first, the covenant that God makes for himself to us, which consists mainly of these branches: (1.) That he will be our God; that is as if he said, You shall have as true an interest in all my attributes for your good, as they are mine for my own glory, Jer 31:38; Psa 144:15; 2Co 6:16-18. My grace, saith God, shall be yours to pardon you, and my power shall be yours to protect you, and my wisdom shall be yours to direct you, and my goodness shall be yours to relieve you, and my mercy shall be yours to supply you, and my glory shall be yours to crown you. This is a comprehensive promise, for God to be our God: it includes all, *Deus meus et omnia*, said Luther. (2.) That he 'will give us his Spirit.' Hence the Spirit is called 'the Holy Spirit of promise.' The giving of the Holy Ghost is the great promise which Christ, from the Father, hath made unto us. It is the Spirit that reveals the promises, that applies the promises, and that helps the soul to

live upon the promises, and to draw marrow and fatness out of the promises. The great promise of the Old Testament was the promise of Christ, Gen 3:16, and the great promise of the New Testament is the promise of the Spirit, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin. That in this last age of the world there may be a more clear and full discovery of Christ, of the great things of the gospel, of Antichrist, and of the glorious conquests that are in the last days to be made upon him, the giving of the Spirit is promised as the most excellent gift. (3.) That he 'will take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh,' i.e., a soft and tender heart, Eze 36:26. (4.) That he 'will not turn away his face from us, from doing of us good;' and that 'he will put his fear into our hearts,' Jer 32:40. (5.) That he 'will cleanse us from all our filthiness, and from all our idols,' Eze 36:25. (6.) That he 'will rejoice over us, to do us good,' Jer 33:9-10, and Jer 32:41. The second thing considerable in the covenant of grace is the covenant which God doth make for us to himself, which consists mainly in these things: (1.) That we 'shall be his people.' (2.) That we 'shall fear him for ever.' (3.) That we 'shall walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them.' (4.) That we 'shall never depart from him.' (5.) That we 'shall persevere, and hold out to the end.' (6.) That we 'shall grow, and flourish in grace.' (7.) A true right to the creatures. (8.) That all providences, changes, and conditions shall work for our good. (9.) Union and communion with Christ. (10.) That we shall have a kingdom, a crown, and glory at last. And what would we have more? By these short hints it is most evident that the covenant of grace is an entire covenant, an everlasting covenant, made by God both for himself and for us. O sirs! this is the glory of the covenant of grace, that whatsoever God requires of us, that he stands engaged to give unto us. Whatever in the covenant of grace God requires on man's part, that he undertakes to perform for man. That this covenant of grace is an 'everlasting covenant' may be made further clear,

[1.] First, From God's denomination, who hath often styled it an 'everlasting covenant.' In the Old Testament he frequently calls it, in Heb., בְּרִית עוֹלָם, Bereth Gnolam, a covenant of eternity. In the New Testament he calls it, in Greek, Διαθήκη αἰώνιος, the eternal covenant, or the everlasting covenant. And those whom God has taken into covenant with himself, they have frequently acknowledged it to be an everlasting covenant, as is evident up and down the Scripture. The covenant of works was not everlasting, it was soon overthrown by Adam's sin; but the covenant of grace is everlasting. The joy that is wrapped up in the covenant is an everlasting joy, Isa 35:10; and the righteousness that is wrapped up in the covenant is an everlasting righteousness, Dan 9:24; and the life that is wrapped up in the covenant is an everlasting life, John 3:16; and all the happiness, and glory, and salvation that is wrapped up in the covenant is everlasting, John 12:2; Mat 19:29; 1Pe 5:4; Isa 45:17. The covenant-relation that is betwixt God and his people is everlasting; and the mediator of the covenant is everlasting—viz., 'Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb 13:8. Though the covenant, in respect of our own personal entering into it, is made with us now in time, and hath a beginning; yet for continuance it is everlasting and without end; it shall remain for ever and ever But,

[2.] Secondly, This covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is sometimes styled a covenant of life: Mal 2:5, 'My covenant was with him of life and peace.' Life is restored, and life is promised, and life is settled by the covenant. There is no safe life, no comfortable life, no easy life, no happy life, no honourable life, no glorious life, for any sinner that is not under the bond of this covenant. All mankind had been eternally lost, and God had lost all the glory of his mercy for ever, had he not, of his own free grace and mercy, made a covenant of life with poor sinners. A man, in

the covenant of grace, hath three degrees of life: the first in this life, when Christ lives in him; the second, when his 'body returns to the earth, and his soul to God that gave it;' the third, at the end of the world, when body and soul reunited shall enjoy heaven.

[3.] Thirdly, This covenant of grace, under which the saints or faithful people of Christ stand, is sometimes styled a holy covenant. Daniel, describing the wickedness of Antiochus Epiphanes, saith, 'His heart shall be against the holy covenant,' Dan 11:28, Dan 11:30; he shall have indignation against the holy covenant, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant. So the psalmist, 'For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant,' Psa 105:42-43; promise here being put for covenant by a synecdoche; Luk 1:72, 'To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.' The parties interested in this covenant are holy. Here you have a holy God and a holy people in covenant together. Holiness is one of the principal things that is promised in the covenant. The covenant commands holiness, and encourages to holiness, and works souls up to a higher degree of holiness, and fences and arms gracious souls against all external and internal unholiness. The author of this covenant is holy; the mediator of this covenant is holy; the great blessings contained in this covenant are holy blessings; and the people taken into this covenant are sometimes styled holy brethren, holy men, holy women. 'An holy temple, an holy priesthood, an holy nation, an holy people,' as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.³ Whenever God brings a poor soul under the bond of the covenant, he makes him holy, and he makes him love holiness, and prize holiness, and delight in holiness, and press and follow hard after holiness. A holy God will not take an unholy person by the hand, as Job speaks, Job 8:1-22; neither will he allow of such to take his covenant into their mouths, as the psalmist speaks, Psa 20:6.

[4.] Fourthly, This covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is sometimes styled a covenant of peace: Num 25:12, 'Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace.' Peace is the comprehension of all blessings and prosperity. All sorts of peace, viz., peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with the creatures, flows from the covenant of grace, Mal 2:5. There is (1.) An external peace, and that is with men; (2.) There is a supernatural peace, and that is with God; (3.) There is an internal peace, and that is with conscience; (4.) There is an eternal peace, and that is in heaven. Now all these sorts of peace flow in upon us through the covenant of grace. The Hebrew word for peace comes from a root which denotes perfection. The end of the upright man is perfection of happiness, Psa 37:37. Hence the Rabbins say, that 'the holy blessed God finds not any vessel that will contain enough of blessings for Israel, but the vessel of peace.' Peace is a very comprehensive word. It carries in the womb of it all outward blessings. It was the common greeting of the Jews, 'Peace be unto you:' and thus David, by his proxy, salutes Nabal, 'Peace be to thee, and thy house.' The ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman, with a horn of plenty in her hand. The covenant of grace is that hand, by which God gives out all sorts of peace unto us: Isa 54:10, 'Neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' The covenant is here called the covenant of peace, because the Lord therein offers us all those things that may make us completely happy; for under this word peace the Hebrews comprehend all happiness and felicity: Eze 34:25, 'And I will make with them a covenant of peace;' the Hebrew is, 'I will cut with them a covenant of peace.' This expression of cutting a covenant is taken from the custom of the Jews in their making of covenants. The manner of this ceremony or solemnity, Jeremiah declares, saying, 'I will give the men that have

transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had struck before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof,' Jer 34:18. Their manner was to kill sacrifices, to cut these sacrifices in twain, to lay the two parts thus divided in the midst, piece against piece, exactly one over against another, to answer each other: then the parties covenanting passed betwixt the parts of the sacrifices so slit in twain, and laid answerably to one another: the meaning of which ceremonies and solemnities is conceived to be this—viz., as part answered to part, so there was a harmonious correspondency and answerableness of their minds and hearts that struck covenant: and as part was severed from part, so the covenanters implied, if not expressed, an imprecation or curse; wishing the like dissection and destruction to the parties covenanting, as most deserved, if they should break the covenant, or deal falsely therein. To this custom God alludes, when he saith, 'I will cut with them a covenant of peace,' Isa 42:6; and this he did by making Christ a sacrifice, by shedding his blood, and dividing his soul and body, who is said to be given for a covenant of the people, that is, to be the mediator of the covenant between God and his people. So Eze 37:26, 'Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them,' &c. The word for peace is Shalom, by which the Hebrews understand not only outward quietness, but all kind of outward happiness. Others, by the covenant of peace here, do understand the gospel, wherein we see Christ hath pacified all things by the blood of his cross. And Lavater saith, it is called a covenant of peace, Quia Christi merito, pax inter Deum et nos constituta est. Not only outward, but inward peace, between God and us, is merited by our Lord Jesus Christ, Col 1:20. But,

[5.] Fifthly, This covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is sometimes styled a new covenant: Jer 31:31, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house, of Israel, and with the house of Judah:' Heb 12:24, 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,' &c., Heb 8:8, Heb 8:13, and Heb 9:15. Now the covenant of grace is styled a new covenant in several respects. (1.) In opposition to the former covenant, that was old, and being old, vanished away, Heb 8:13. It is called a new covenant in opposition to the covenant that was made with Adam in the state of innocency, and in opposition to the covenant that was made with the Jews in the time of the Old Testament. (2.) To shew the excellency of the covenant of grace. New things are rare and excellent things. In the blessed Scriptures excellent things are frequently called 'new,' as a 'new testament,' a 'new Jerusalem,' 'new heavens,' and 'new earth,' 'a new name,' that is, an excellent name; a 'new commandment,' that is, an excellent commandment; a 'new way,' that is, an excellent way; a 'new heart,' is an excellent heart; a 'new spirit,' is an excellent spirit; and a 'new song,' is an excellent song. (3.) In regard of the succession of it in the room of the former. (4.) In regard of the dilation and enlargement of it, it being in the days of old confined to the Jewish nation and state, and some few proselytes that adjoined themselves thereunto; whereas now it is propounded and extended, without respect of persons or places, unto all indifferently, of all people and nations that shall embrace the faith of Christ. (5.) Sometimes that is styled new, which is diverse from what it was before: 2Co 5:17, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,' that is, he is not such a man as he was before; a man must be either a new man or no man in Christ. The substance of the soul is not changed, but the qualities and operations of it are altered; in regeneration our natures are changed, not destroyed. This word 'new,' in Scripture, signifieth as much as 'another;' not that it is essentially new, but new only in regard of qualities. A new creature is a changed creature: 2Co 3:18, 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory,' that is, from grace to

grace. In this respect also, is the covenant styled new, not only because it is diverse from the covenant of works, but also because it is diverse from itself in respect of the administration of it, after that Christ was manifested in the flesh, and died and rose again. From the different administration it is called old and new. This new covenant hath not those seals of circumcision and the passover; nor those manifold sacrifices, ceremonies, types, and shadows, &c., to the observation whereof the Jews were strictly obliged; but now all these things are taken away upon the coming of Christ, and a service of God, much more spiritual, substituted in the room of them; upon which accounts the covenant of grace is called a 'new covenant.' (6.) It is styled new, because it is fresh, and green, and flourishing, it is like unto Aaron's rod, which continued new, fresh, and flourishing, Num 17:8. All the choice blessings, all the great blessings, all the internal and all the eternal blessings of the new covenant, are as new, fresh, and flourishing, as they were when God brought your souls first under the bond of the new covenant. But, (7.) Such things are sometimes styled new which are strange, rare, wonderful, marvellous, and unusual, the like not heard of before. So Jer 31:22, 'The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man;' as the nut encloseth the kernel, not receiving aught from without, but conceiving and breeding of herself, by the power of the Almighty, from within. That a virgin should conceive and bring forth a man-child, this was indeed a new thing, a strange thing, a wonderful thing, a thing that was never thought of, never heard of, never read of, from the creation of the world to that very day. So Isa 43:19, 'Behold, I will do a new thing, I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.' This was a new work, that is, a wonderful and unusual work; for God to make a plain or free way in the wilderness, where the ways are wont to be uneven, with hills and dales, and obstructed with thickets, and overgrown with brambles and briars, is a strange and marvellous work indeed. In this respect also, the covenant of grace is styled new, that is, it is a wonderful covenant. O sirs! what a wonder is this, that the great God, who was so transcendently dishonoured, despised, provoked, incensed, and injured by poor base sinners, should yet so freely, so readily, so graciously, condescend to vile forlorn sinners, as to treat with them, as to own them, as to love them, and as to enter into a covenant of grace and mercy with, them! This may well be the wonder of angels, and the astonishment of men. (8.) and lastly, It is called a new covenant, because it is never to be antiquated, as the apostle explains himself, Heb 8:13. But,

[6.] Sixthly, This covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is sometimes styled a covenant of salt: Lev 2:13, 'Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from the meat-offering,' &c. The salt of the covenant signifies that covenant that God hath made with us in Christ, who seasoneth us, and makes all our services savoury. The meaning of the words, say some, is this, The salt shall put thee in mind of my covenant, whereby thou standest engaged to endeavour always for an untainted and uncorrupted life and conversation. By this salting, say others, was signified the covenant of grace in Christ, which we by faith apprehend unto incorruption, wherefore our unregenerate estate is likened to a child new born and not salted, Eze 16:4. Others say it signifies the eternal and perpetual holiness of the covenant between God and man; and some there be that say that this salt of the covenant signifies the grace of God, whereby they are guided and sanctified that belong unto the covenant of grace. So Num 18:19, 'It is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord, unto thee, and to thy seed with thee.' A covenant of salt is used for an inviolable, incorruptible, and perpetual covenant. This covenant which the Lord made with the priests is called a covenant of salt, because, as salt keepeth from corruption, so that covenant was perpetual, authentical, and inviolable—as anciently the most solemn ceremony that

was used in covenants was to take and eat of the same salt, and it was esteemed more sacred and firm than to eat at the same table and drink of the same cup. This covenant, in regard of its perpetuity, is here called a 'covenant of salt,' that is, a sure and stable, a firm and incorruptible covenant. So 2Ch 13:5, 'Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?'—i.e., perpetual and inviolable, solemn and sure. By this metaphor of salt, a perpetuity is set forth, for salt makes things last. The covenant therefore here intended is by this metaphor declared to be a perpetual covenant, that was not to be abrogated or nulled. In this respect these two phrases, 'a covenant of salt,' and 'for ever,' are joined together. Some take this metaphor of salt to be used in relation to their manner of making their covenant with a sacrifice, on which salt was always sprinkled, and thereby is implied that it was a most solemn covenant not to be violated.² But,

[7.] Seventhly, The covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is sometimes styled a sure covenant, a firm covenant, a covenant that God will punctually and accurately perform. In this regard, the covenant of grace is in the Old Testament styled **שְׁמִירָה**, Shemurah, that is, kept, observed, performed. The word imports care, diligence, and solicitude lest anything be let go, let slip, &c. God is ever mindful of his covenant, and will have that singular care and that constant and due regard to it, that not the least branch of it shall ever fail, as you may clearly see by consulting the special scriptures in the margin. Hence it is called the mercy and the truth: Mic 7:20, 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob'—Heb., 'thou wilt give,' for all is of free gift—'and the mercy to Abraham.' The covenant is called mercy, because mercy only drew this covenant; it was free mercy, it was mere mercy, it was only mercy which moved God to enter into covenant with us. And it is called truth, because the great God who has made this covenant will assuredly make good all that mercy and all that grace and all that favour that is wrapped up in it. God having made himself a voluntary debtor to his people, he will come off fairly with them, and not be worse than his word. Hence Christ is said to have a rainbow upon his head, to shew that he is faithful and constant in his covenant, Rev 10:1. God hath hitherto kept promise with nights and days, that one shall succeed the other, Isa 54:9-10; therefore much more will he keep promise with his people, Jer 33:20, Jer 33:25. Hence also the covenant is called the oath: Luk 1:73, 'The oath which he swore unto our father Abraham.' You never read of God's oath in a covenant of works. In that first covenant you read not of a mediator nor of an oath; but in the covenant of grace you read both of a mediator and of an oath, the more effectually to confirm us as touching the immutability of his will and purpose, for the accomplishment of all the good and the great things that are mentioned in the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is incomparably more firm, sure, immutable, and irrevocable than all other covenants in the world. Therefore it is said, Heb 6:17-18, 'God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation,' **σχυράν παρακλήσιν**, that is, a valiant, strong, prevailing consolation, such as swalloweth up all worldly griefs, as Moses his serpent did the sorcerers' serpents, or as the fire doth the fuel. God's word, his promise, his covenant, is sufficient to assure us of all the good that he has engaged to bestow upon us; yet God, considering of our infirmity, hath bound his word with an oath. His word cannot be made more true, but yet it may be made more credible. Now two things make a thing more credible: (1.) The quality of the person speaking; (2.) The manner of the speech. If God doth not simply speak, but solemnly swear, we have the highest cause imaginable to rest assured and abundantly satisfied in the word and oath of God. An oath amongst men is the

strongest, surest, most sacred, and inviolable bond; 'For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife,' Heb 6:16. The end of an oath among men is to help the truth in necessity, and to clear men's innocency, Exo 22:11. O sirs! God doth not only make his covenant, but swears his covenant; 'My covenant,' saith the psalmist, 'will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips; once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David,' Psa 89:34-35. This is as great and deep an oath as God could take; for his holiness is himself, who is most holy, and the foundation of all holiness. God is essentially holy, unmixedly holy, universally holy, transcendently holy, originally holy, independently holy, constantly holy, and exemplarily holy. Now for so holy a God to swear once for all by his holiness that he will keep covenant, that he will keep touch with his people, how abundantly should it settle and satisfy them! Ah! my friends, hath God said it, and will he not do it? Yea, hath he sworn it, and will he not bring it to pass? Dare we trust an honest man upon his bare word, much more upon his oath; and shall we not much more trust a holy, wise, and faithful God upon his word, upon his covenant, when confirmed by an oath? The covenant of grace is sure in itself; it is a firm covenant, an unalterable covenant, an everlasting covenant, a ratified covenant; so that heaven and earth may sooner pass away, than the least branch or word of his covenant should pass away unfulfilled, Mat 5:18.

(1.) Let us but cast our eyes upon the several springs from whence the covenant of grace flows, and then we cannot but strongly conclude that the covenant of grace is a sure covenant. Now if you cast your eye aright, you shall see that the covenant of grace flows from these three springs.

First, From the free grace and favour of God. There was nothing in fallen man to invite God to enter into covenant with him; yea, there was everything in fallen man that might justly provoke God to abandon man, to abhor man, to revenge himself upon man. It was mere grace that made the covenant, and it is mere grace that makes good the covenant. Now that which springs from mere grace must needs be unexceptionably sure. The love of God is unchangeable; 'whom he loves he loves to the end,' John 13:3; whom God loves once he loves for ever. He is not as man, soon in and soon off again, Mal 3:16; Jas 1:17; soon in, and as soon out, as Joab's dagger was! Oh no! his love is like himself, lasting, yea, everlasting: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' Jer 31:3. Though we break off with him, yet he abides faithful, 2Ti 2:13. Now what can be more sure than that which springs from free love, from everlasting love? Rom 4:16. Hence the covenant must be sure. The former covenant was not sure, because it was of works; but this covenant is sure, because it is of grace, and rests not on any sufficiency in us, but only on grace.

Secondly, The covenant of grace springs from the immutable counsel of God: Heb 6:17, 'God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.' Times are mutable, and all sorts of men are mutable, and the love and favour of the creature is mutable; but the counsel of God, from which the covenant of grace flows, is immutable, and therefore it must needs be sure, Isa 40:6; Psa 146:3-4; Jer 33:14. The manifestation of the immutability of God's counsel is here brought in, as one end of God's oath. God swears, that it might evidently appear that what he had purposed, counselled, determined, and promised to Abraham and his seed should assuredly be accomplished; there should be, there could be, no alteration thereof. His counsel was more firm than the laws of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not, Dan 6:13. Certainly God's counsel is inviolable: 'My counsel shall stand,' Isa 46:10; Psa 33:11, 'The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations;' Pro 19:21, 'Nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.' The

immutability of God's counsel springs from the unchangeableness of his essence, the perfection of his wisdom, the infiniteness of his goodness, the absoluteness of his sovereignty, the omnipotency of his power. God in his essence being unchangeable, his counsel also must needs be so. Can darkness flow out of light, or fulness out of emptiness, or heaven out of hell? No! no more can changeable counsels flow from an immutable nature. Now the covenant of grace flows from the immutable counsel of God, which is most firm and inviolable, and therefore it must needs be a sure covenant. But,

Thirdly, The covenant of grace springs from the purpose of God, resolving and intending everlasting good unto us. Now this purpose of God is sure; so the apostle, 2Ti 2:19, 'The foundation of God standeth sure.' That foundation of God is his election, which is compared to a foundation; because it is that upon which all our good and happiness is built, and because as a foundation it abides firm and sure. The gracious purpose of God is the fountain-head of all our spiritual blessings. It is the impulsive cause of our vocation, justification, glorification; it is the highest link in the golden chain of salvation. What is the reason that God has entered into a covenant with fallen man? it is from his eternal purpose. What is the reason that one man is brought under the bond of the covenant and not another? it is from the eternal purpose of God, Eze 20:37. In all the great concerns of the covenant of grace, the purpose of God gives the casting voice. The purpose of God is the sovereign cause of all that good that is in man, and of all that external, internal, and eternal good that comes to man. Not works past, for men are chosen from everlasting; not works present, for Jacob was loved and chosen before he was born; nor works foreseen, for men were all corrupt in Adam. All a believer's present happiness, and all his future happiness, springs from the eternal purpose of God; as you may see, by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. This purpose of God speaks our stability and certainty of salvation by Christ, God's eternal purpose never changes, never alters; 'Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, and as I have purposed,' saith God, 'so shall it stand.' God's purposes are immutable, so is his covenant. God's purposes are sure, very sure, so is his covenant. The covenant of grace that flows from the eternal purpose of God, is as sure as God is sure; for God can neither deceive nor be deceived. That covenant that is built upon this rock of God's eternal purpose, must needs be sure; and therefore all that are in covenant with God need never fear falling away. There is no man, no power, no devil, no violent temptation, that shall ever be able to overturn those that God has brought under the bond of the covenant, John 10:28-31; 1Pe 1:5. But,

(2.) Secondly, Consider that the covenant of grace is confirmed and made sure by the blood of Jesus Christ, which is called 'the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Heb 13:20. Christ, by his irrevocable death, hath made sure the covenant to us, Heb 9:16-17. The covenant of grace is to be considered under the notion of a testament; and Christ, as the testator of this will and testament. Now look, as a man's will and testament is irrevocably confirmed by the testator's death;—'For where a testament is, there must also, of necessity, be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force, after men are dead; otherwise, it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth;'—these two verses are added as a proof of the necessity of Christ's manner of confirming the new testament as he did, namely, by his death. The argument is taken from the common use and equity of confirming testaments, which is by the death of the testator. A testament is only and wholly at his pleasure that maketh it, so that he may alter it, or disannul it while he liveth, as he seeth good; but when he is dead, he not remaining to alter it, none else can do it. In the

seventeenth verse, the apostle declareth the inviolableness of a man's last will, being ratified as before by the testator's death. This he sheweth two ways: (1.) Affirmatively; in these words, 'A testament is of force after men are dead.' (2.) Negatively, in these words, 'Otherwise it is of no strength.' Now from the affirmative and the negative, it plainly appears that a testament is made inviolable by the testator's death; so Jesus Christ hath unalterably confirmed this will and testament—viz., the new covenant, by his blood and death, 'that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance,' Heb 9:15. Christ died to purchase an eternal inheritance; and on this ground eternal life is called an eternal inheritance; for we come to it as heirs, through the good-will, grace, and favour of this purchaser thereof, manifested by the last will and testament. Hence you read, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins,' Mat 26:28. Again, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you,' Luk 22:20; 1Co 11:25. The covenant is called both a covenant and a testament, because his covenant and testament is founded, established, ratified, and immutably sealed up, in and by his blood. Christ is the faithful and true witness, yea, truth itself; his word shall not pass away, Rev 3:14; John 14:6; Mark 13:31. If the word of Christ be sure, if his promise be sure, if his covenant be sure, then surely his last will and testament, which is ratified and confirmed by his death, must needs be very sure. Christ's blood is too precious a thing to be spilt in vain; but in vain is it spilt if his testament, his covenant, ratified thereby, be altered. If the covenant of grace be not a sure covenant, 1Co 15:14, then Christ died in vain, and our preaching is in vain, and your hearing, and receiving, and believing is all in vain. Christ's death is a declaration and evidence of the eternal counsel of his Father, which is must stable and immutable in itself. But how much more it is so when it is ratified by the death of his dearest Son, 'In whom all the promises are yea and amen,' 2Co 1:20; that is, in Christ they are made, performed, and ratified. By all this we may safely conclude that the covenant of grace is a most sure covenant. There can be no addition to it, detraction from it, or alteration of it, unless the death of Jesus Christ, whereby it is confirmed, be frustrated and overthrown. Certainly the covenant is as sure as Christ's death is sure. The sureness and certainty of the covenant is the ground and bottom of bottoms for our faith, hope, joy, patience, peace, &c. Take this corner, this foundation-stone away, and all will tumble. Were the covenant uncertain, a Christian could never have a good day all his days, his whole life would be filled up with tears, doubts, disputes, distractions, &c.; and he would be still a-crying out, Oh, I can never be sure that God will be mine, or that Christ will be mine, or that mercy will be mine, or that pardon of sin will be mine, or that heaven will be mine! Oh, I can never be sure that I shall escape 'the great damnation, the worm that never dies, the fire that never goes out, or an eternal separation from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power,' 2Th 1:9. The great glory of the covenant is the certainty of the covenant; and this is the top of God's glory, and of a Christian's comfort, that all the mercies that are in the covenant of grace are 'the sure mercies of David,' and that all the grace that is in the covenant is sure grace, and that all the glory that is in the covenant is sure glory, and that all the external, internal, and eternal blessings of the covenant are sure blessings.

I might further argue the sureness of the covenant of grace from all the attributes of God, which are deeply engaged to make it good, as his wisdom, love, power, justice, holiness, faithfulness, righteousness, &c.; and I might further argue the certainty of the covenant of grace from the seals which God hath annexed to it. You know what was sealed by the king's ring could not be altered,

Est 8:8. God hath set his seals to this covenant: his broad seal in the sacraments, and his privy seal in the witness of his Spirit; and therefore the covenant of grace is sure, and can never be reversed. But upon several accounts I may not now insist on these things. And therefore,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, The covenant of grace is styled a well-ordered covenant: 2Sa 23:5, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.' Oh, the admirable counsel, wisdom, love, care, and tenderness of the blessed God, that sparkles and shines in the well-ordering of the covenant of grace! Oh, how comely and beautiful, with what symmetry and proportion, are all things in this covenant ordered and prepared! Oh, what head can conceive, or what tongue can express, that infinite understanding that God has manifested in ordering the covenant of grace, so as it may most and best suit to all the wants, and straits, and necessities, and miseries, and desires, and longings of poor sinners' souls! Here are fit and full supplies for all our spiritual wants, so excellently and orderly hath God composed and constituted the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace every poor sinner may find a suitable help, a suitable remedy, a suitable succour, a suitable support, a suitable supply, Jer 33:8; Eze 36:25; Psa 94:19. The covenant of grace is so well ordered by the unsearchable wisdom of God, that you may find in it remedies to cure all your spiritual diseases, and cordials to comfort you under all your soul-faintings, and a spiritual armoury to arm you against all sorts of sins, and all sorts of snares, and all sorts of temptations, and all sorts of oppositions, and all sorts of enemies, whether inward or outward, open or secret, subtle or silly, Eph 6:10-18. Dost thou, O distressed sinner, want a loving God, a compassionate God, a reconciled God, a sin-pardoning God, a tender-hearted God? Here thou mayest find him in the covenant of grace, Exo 34:5-7. Dost thou, O sinner, want a Christ, to counsel thee by his wisdom, and to clothe thee with his righteousness, and to enrich thee with his grace, and to enlighten thee with his eyesalve, and to justify thee from thy sins, and to reconcile thee to God, and to secure thee from wrath to come, and after all, to bring thee to heaven? Rev 3:17-18; Acts 13:39; 1Th 1:10; John 10:28-31. Here thou mayest find him in a covenant of grace. Dost thou, O sinner! want the Holy Spirit to awaken thee, and to convince thee of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? or to enlighten thee, and teach thee, and lead thee, and guide thee in the way everlasting? or to cleanse thee, or comfort thee, or to seal thee up to the day of redemption? Eze 36:25-27; Luk 11:13; Eph 1:13. Here thou mayest find him in the covenant of grace. Dost thou, O sinner! want grace, all grace, great grace, abundance of grace, multiplied grace? Here thou mayest find it in the covenant of grace? Dost thou, O sinner! want peace, or ease, or rest, or quiet in thy conscience? Here thou mayest find it in the covenant of grace. Dost thou want, O sinner! joy, or comfort, or content, or satisfaction? Here thou mayest have it in a covenant of grace. O sinner, sinner! whatever thy bodily wants are, or whatever thy soul wants are, they may all be supplied out of the covenant of grace. God, in his infinite wisdom and love, has laid into the covenant of grace, as into a common store, all those good things, and all those great things, and all those suitable things, that either sinners or saints can either beg or need. Now the adequate suitableness of the covenant of grace to all a sinner's wants, straits, necessities, miseries, and desires, does sufficiently demonstrate the covenant of grace to be a well-ordered covenant. Look, as that is a well-ordered commonwealth, where there are no wholesome laws wanting to govern a people, and where there are no wholesome remedies wanting to relieve a people, and where there are no defences wanting to secure a people; so that must needs be a well-ordered covenant, where there is nothing wanting to govern poor souls, or to secure poor souls, or to save poor souls; and such a covenant is the covenant of grace. I might easily lay down

other arguments to evince the covenant of grace to be a well-ordered covenant. As for the right placing of all persons and things in the covenant of grace, and from the outward dispensation of it, God revealed it but gradually. First, he discovered it more darkly, remotely, and imperfectly, as we see things a great way off; but afterwards the Lord did more clearly, fully, immediately, frequently, and completely discover it, as we discern things at hand. God did not at once open all the riches and rarities of the covenant to his people, but in the opening of those treasures that were there laid up, God had a respect to the non-age and full-age of his people; and from God's dispensing and giving out all the good and all the great things of the covenant in their fittest time, in a right and proper season, when his people most need them, and when they can live no longer without them. But I must hasten to a closing up of this particular. Thus you see in these eight particulars how gloriously the covenant of grace, under which the saints stand, is set out in the blessed Scriptures.

Concerning the covenant of grace, or the new covenant, that all sincere Christians are under, and by which at last they shall be judged, let me further say, besides what I have already said, All mankind had been eternally lost, and God had lost all the glory of his mercy for ever, had he not, of his own free grace and mercy, made a new covenant with sinful man. The fountain from whence this new covenant flows is the grace of God: Gen 17:22, 'I will make' (Heb., 'I will') 'my covenant.' This covenant is called a covenant of grace, because it flows from the mere grace and mercy of God. There was nothing out of God, nor nothing in God, but his mere mercy and grace, that moved him to enter into covenant with poor sinners, who were miserable, who were loathsome, and polluted in their blood, and who had broken the covenant of their God, and were actually in arms against him. This must needs be of mere favour and love, for God to enter into covenant with man, when he lay wallowing in his blood, and no eye pitied him, no, not his own. As there was nothing in fallen man to draw God's favour or affection towards him, so there was everything in fallen man that might justly provoke God's wrath and indignation against him; and therefore it must be a very high act of favour and grace, for the great, the glorious, the holy, the wise, and the all-sufficient God, to enter into covenant with such a forlorn creature as fallen man was. Nothing but free grace was the foundation of the covenant of grace with poor sinners. Now let us seriously mind how this covenant of grace, or this new covenant, runs both in the Old and in the New Testament: 2 Jer 31:31, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah;' Jer 31:32, 'Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord;' Jer 31:33, 'But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people;' Jer 31:34, 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more.' Now let us see how Paul doth exegetically explain this new covenant in that Heb 8:6, 'But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises;' Heb 8:7, 'For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second; but finding fault with them, he saith,' Heb 8:8, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah': Heb 8:9, 'Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out

of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord;' Heb 8:10, 'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;' Heb 8:11, 'And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest;' Heb 8:12, 'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;' Heb 8:13, 'In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.' This is the substance of the new covenant; and thus the Lord did fore-promise it by Jeremiah, and afterwards expounded it by Paul. Some small difference there is in their words, but the sense is one and the same. Now this covenant is styled the new covenant, because it is to continue new, and never to wax old or wear away, so long as this world shall continue. Neither doth the Holy Scriptures anywhere reveal another covenant, which shall succeed this covenant. If any covenant should succeed this, it must be either a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace; not a covenant of works, for that would bring us all under a curse, and make our condition utterly desperate; not a covenant of grace, because more grace cannot be shewn in any other covenant than in this; here is all grace and all mercy, here is Jesus Christ with all his righteousness, mediator-ship, merits, purchase. This covenant is so full, so ample, so large, so perfect, so complete, and is every way so accommodated to the condition of lost sinners, that nothing can be altered, nor added, nor mended: and therefore it must needs be the last covenant, that ever God will make with man. So Heb 10:16, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;' Heb 10:17, 'And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' Rom 11:26, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' The person delivering is Christ, described here by his office and by his original; his office, the deliverer; the original word **ἐλευθεριος**, which Paul useth, signifies delivering by a strong hand, to rescue by force, as David delivered the lamb out of the lion's paw; Rom 11:27, 'For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sin.' This covenant concerning the pardon of believers' sins, and their deliverance by Christ, God will certainly make good to his people.

Now from the covenant of grace, or the new covenant that God has made with sincere Christians, a believer may form up this eighth plea to the ten scriptures cited in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, viz., O blessed God, thou hast, in the covenant of grace, by which I must be tried, freely and fully engaged thyself that thou wilt pardon mine iniquities, and remember my sins no more; so runs the new covenant: Jer 31:34, 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more;' so again, Heb 8:12, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;' so Heb 10:17, 'Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;' Isa 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins;' Eze 18:22, 'All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him;' Jer 50:20, 'In those days, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve.' Now, O holy God, I cannot but observe that in the new covenant thou hast made such necessary, choice, absolute, and blessed provision for thy poor people, that no sin can disannul the covenant, or make a final separation between thee and thy covenant-people. Breaches made in the first covenant were

irreparable, but breaches made in the new covenant are not so, because this new covenant is established in Christ. Christ lies at the bottom of the covenant. The new covenant is an everlasting covenant; and all the breaches that we make upon that covenant are repaired and made up by the blood and intercession of dear Jesus. Every jar doth not break the marriage covenant between husband and wife; no more doth every sin break the new covenant that is between God and our souls. Every breach of peace with God is not a breach of covenant with God. That free, that rich, that infinite, that sovereign, and that glorious grace of God that shines in that covenant of grace, tells us that our eternal estates shall never be judged by a covenant of works; and that the want of an absolute perfection shall never damn a believing soul; and that the obedience that God requires at our hands is not a legal, but an evangelical obedience. So long as a Christian doth not renounce his covenant with God, so long as he doth not wilfully, wickedly, and habitually break the bond of the covenant, the main, the substance, of the covenant is not yet broken, though some articles of the covenant may be violated; as among men, there be some trespasses against some particular clauses in covenants, which, though they be violated, yet the whole covenant is not forfeited; it is so here between God and his people.

And, O blessed God, I cannot but observe that in the new covenant thou hast engaged thyself to pardon all my sins: 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb 8:12; Jer 31:34. Here are two things worthy of our notice: (1.) The reconciliation of God with his people, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness;' he will be merciful or propitious, appeased and pacified towards them; which hath respect to the ransom and satisfaction of Christ. (2.) That God will pardon the sins of his people fully, completely, perfectly. Here are three words, 'unrighteousness,' 'sins,' and 'iniquities,' to shew that he will forgive all sorts, kinds, and degrees of sins. The three original words here expressed are all in the plural number; 1. Ἀδικήματα, unrighteousnesses. This word is by some appropriated to the wrongs and injuries that are done against men; 2. ἁμαρτίαι, sins, is a general word, and according to the notation of the Greek, may imply a not following of that which is set before us; for he sinneth that followeth not the rule that is set before him by God. The third word, Ἀνομιαι, iniquities, according to the notation of the Greek, signifies in general, transgressions of the law. This word is by some appropriated to sins against God. The Greek word ἄνομον, that is frequently translated 'iniquity,' is a general word, which signifieth a transgression of the law, and so it is translated, 1Jn 3:4. The word iniquity is of as large an extent as the word unrighteousness, and implieth an unequal dealing, which is contrary to the rule or law of God. And all this heap of words is to intimate to us that it is neither the several sorts of sins, nor degrees of sin, nor aggravations of sin, nor yet the multitude of sins, that shall ever prejudice those souls that are in covenant with God. God hath mercy enough, and pardons enough, for all his covenant-people's sins, whether original or actual, whether against the law or against the gospel, whether against the light of nature or the rule of grace, whether against mercies or judgments, whether against great means of grace or small means of grace. The covenant remedy against all sorts and degrees of sin, doth infinitely transcend and surpass all our infirmities and enormities, our weaknesses and wickednesses, our follies and unworthinesses, &c. What is our unrighteousness to Christ's righteousness, our debts to Christ's pardons, our unholiness to Christ's holiness, our emptiness to Christ's fulness, our weakness to Christ's strength, our poverty to Christ's riches, our wounds to that healing that is under the wings of the Sun of Righteousness! 1Co 1:30; Psa 112:3, Psa 112:9-10; Mal 4:2. Parallel to this, Heb 8:12, is that noble description that Moses gives of God in that Book of Exodus: Exo 3:4, Exo 3:6-7, 'The

Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious; forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.' Some, by these three words, do understand such sins as are committed against our neighbour, against God, or against ourselves. A merciful God, a gracious God will pardon all sorts of sinners, and all sorts and degrees of sin, by what names or titles soever they may be styled or distinguished. Some by iniquity do understand sins of infirmity; and by transgression they understand sins of malice; and by sin they understand sins of ignorance. God is said to keep mercy, and to forgive all sorts of sins, as if his mercy were kept on purpose for pardoning all sorts of sinners and all sorts of sins. The Hebrew word **חַטָּאת**, Gnavon, that is here translated iniquity, signifies that which is unright, unequal, crooked or perverse; it notes the vitiosity or crookedness of nature; it notes crooked offences, such as flow from malice, hatred, and are committed on purpose. Secondly, the Hebrew word **פְּשָׁע**, from **פָּשַׁע**, Pashang, that is here translated transgression, signifies to deal unfaithfully; it notes such sins as are treacherously committed against God, such sins as flow from pride and contempt of God. Thirdly, the Hebrew word **חַטָּאת**, Chataah, generally signifieth sin, but is more especially here taken for sins of ignorance and infirmity. Oh, what singular mercy, what rich grace is here: that God will not only pardon our light, our small offences, but our great and mighty sins! &c. And I cannot, O dear Father, but further observe that in the new covenant thou hast frequently and deeply engaged thyself, that thou wilt remember the sins of thy people no more! O my God, thou hast told me six several times in thy word, that thou wilt remember my sins no more. In the new covenant thou hast engaged thyself not only to forgive but also to forget, and that thou wilt cross thy debt-book, and never question or call me to an account for my sins; that thou wilt pass an eternal act of oblivion upon them, and utterly bury them in the grave of oblivion, as if they had never been. The sins that are forgiven by God are forgotten by God, the sins that God remits he removes from his remembrance, Heb 10:13-19, and Heb 10:1-15. Christ hath so fully satisfied the justice of God for the sins of all his seed, by the price of his own blood and death, that there needs no more expiatory sacrifices to be offered for their sins for ever. Christ hath, by the sacrifice of himself, blotted out the remembrance of his people's sins with God for ever. The new covenant runs thus, 'And their sinful error,' **וְאֵת חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם**, Lo escar guhod, 'I will not remember any more,' Jer 31:34; but the Greek runs thus, 'And their sinful errors and their unrighteousnesses, I will not remember again, or any more,' Heb 8:12; **οὐ μὴ μνησθῶμαι**. Here are two negatives, which do more vehemently deny, according to the propriety of the Greek language; that is, I will never remember them again, I will in no case remember them any more, I will so forgive as to forget: not that in propriety of phrase, God either remembers or forgets, for all things are present to him; he knows all things, he beholds, he sees, he observes all things, by one eternal and simple act of his knowledge, which is no way capable of change, as now knowing and anon forgetting; but it is an allusion to the manner of men, who, when they forgive injuries fully and heartily, do also forget them, blot them out of mind; or rather, as some think, it is an allusion to the manner of the old covenant's administration in the sacrifices, where there was a remembrance again of sins every year, there was a fresh indictment and arraignment of the people for sin continually, Heb 10:1-3, &c.; but under this new covenant our Lord Jesus Christ hath, 'by one offering, perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' [see Heb 10:5-20;] Christ hath, for ever, taken away the sins of the elect; there needs no more expiatory sacrifice for them; they that are sprinkled with the blood of this sacrifice shall never have their sins remembered any more against them. God's not remembering or forgetting a thing is not simply to be taken of his essential knowledge, but respectively of his judicial knowledge, to bring the same into judgment. Not to remember a

thing that was once known, and was in mind and memory, is to forget it; but this properly is not incident to God, it is an infirmity. To him all things past and future are as present. What he once knoweth he always knoweth. His memory is his very essence, neither can anything that hath once been in it slip out of it. For God to remit sin is not to remember it; and not to remember it is to remit it. These are two reciprocal propositions, therefore they are thus joined together. 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,' Jer 31:34; Isa 43:25. To remember implieth a fourfold act; (1.) To lay up in the mind what is conceived thereby; (2.) To hold it fast; (3.) To call it to mind again; (4.) Oft to think of it. Now in that God saith, 'I will remember their iniquities no more;' he implieth that he will neither lay them up in his mind, nor there hold them, nor call them again to mind, nor think on them, but that they shall be to him as if they had never been committed. God's discharge of their sins shall be a full discharge. Such sinners shall never be called to account for them. Both the guilt and the punishment of them shall be fully and everlastingly removed. Let the sins of a believer be what they will for nature, and never so many for number, they shall all be blotted out, they shall never be mentioned more; (1.) God will never remember, he will never mention their sins, so as to impute them or charge them upon his people; (2.) God will never remember, he will never mention their sins any more, so as to upbraid his people with their follies or miscarriages. He will never hit them in the teeth with their sins, he will never cast their weaknesses into their dish. When persons are justified, their sins shall be as if they had not been; God will bid them welcome into his presence, and embrace them in his arms, and will never object to them their former unkindness, unfruitfulness, unthankfulness, vileness, stubbornness, wickedness, as you may plainly see in the return of the prodigal, and his father's deportment towards him: Luk 15:20-23, 'When he was a great way off.' The prodigal was but conceiving a purpose to return, and God met him. The very intention, and secret motions, and close purposes of our hearts, are known to God. The old father sees a great way off. Dim eyes can see a great way when the son is the object; 'his father saw him, and had compassion.' His bowels roll within him. The father not only sees, but commiserates and compassionates the returning prodigal, as he did Ephraim of old, 'My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him;' or, as the Hebrew runs, 'I will, having mercy, have mercy, have mercy on him, or I will abundantly have mercy on him,' Jer 31:20. Look, saith God, here is a poor prodigal returning to me, the poor child is come back, he hath smarted enough, he hath suffered enough. I will bid him welcome, I will forgive him all his high offences, and will never hit him in the teeth with his former vanities. 'And ran.' The feet of mercy are swift to meet a returning sinner. It had been sufficient for him to have stood, being old, and a father; but the father runs to the son. 'And fell on his neck.' He cannot stay and embrace him, or take him by the hand; but he falls upon him, and incorporates himself into him. How open are the arms of mercy to embrace the returning sinner, and lay him in the bosom of love! 'And kissed him.' Free, rich, and sovereign mercy hath not only feet to meet us, and arms to clasp us, but also lips to kiss us. One would have thought that he should rather have kicked him or killed him, than have kissed him. But God is Pater miserationum, he is all bowels. All this while the father speaks not one word. His joy was too great to be uttered. He ran, he fell on his neck, and kissed him, and so sealed up to him mercy and peace, love and reconciliation, with the kisses of his lips. And the son said unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight.' Sincerely confess, and the mends is made; acknowledge but the debt, and he will cross the book. 'And am no more worthy to be called thy son.' Infernus sum, Domine, said that blessed martyr,

'Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven; I am soil and a sink of sin, but thou art a gracious God,' &c. But the father said to his servants, 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hands, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.' Here you have, (1.) The best robe; (2.) The precious ring; (3.) The comely shoes; and (4.) The fatted calf. The returning prodigal hath garments, and ornaments, and necessities, and comfortables. Some understand by the robe the royalty which Adam lost; and by the ring they understand the seal of God's Holy Spirit; and by the shoes the preparation of the gospel of peace; and by the fatted calf they understand Christ, who was slain from the beginning. Christ is that fatted calf, saith Mr Tyndale the martyr, slain to make penitent sinners good cheer withal, and his righteousness is the goodly raiment to cover the naked deformities of their sins. The great things intended in this parable is to set forth the riches of grace, and God's infinite goodness, and the returning sinner's happiness. When once the sinner returns in good earnest to God, God will supply all his wants, and bestow upon him more than ever he lost, and set him in a safer and happier estate than that from which he did fall in Adam; and will never hit him in the teeth with his former enormities, nor never cast in his dish his old wickednesses. You see plainly in this parable that the father of the prodigal does not so much as mention or object the former pleasures, lusts, or vanities wherein his prodigal son had formerly lived. All old scores are quit, and the returning prodigal embraced and welcomed, as if he had never offended. And now, O Lord, I must humbly take leave to tell thee further that thou hast confirmed the new covenant by thy word, and by thy oath, and by the seals that thou hast annexed to it, and by the death of thy Son, and therefore thou canst not but make good every tittle, word, branch, and article of it. Now this new covenant is my plea, O holy God, and by this plea I shall stand. Hereupon God declares, this plea, I accept as holy, just, and good. I have nothing to say against thee; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

IX. The ninth plea that a believer may form up as to the ten scriptures that are in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn up from the consideration of that evangelical obedience that God requires, and that the believer yields to God. There is a legal, and there is an evangelical account. Now the saints, in the great day, shall not be put to give up a legal account; the account they shall be put to give up is an evangelical account. In the covenant of works, God required perfect obedience in our own persons; but in the covenant of grace God will be content if there be but uprightness in us, if there be but sincere desires to obey, if there be faithful endeavours to obey, if there be a hearty willingness to obey. Well, saith God, though I stood upon perfect obedience in the covenant of works, 2Co 8:12; yet now I will be satisfied with the will for the deed; if there be but uprightness of heart, though that be attended with many weaknesses and infirmities, yet I will be satisfied and contented with that. God, under the covenant of grace, will for Christ's sake accept of less than he requires in the covenant of works. He requires perfection of degrees, but he will accept of perfection of parts; he requires us to live without sin, but he will accept of our sincere endeavours to do it. Though a believer, in his own person, cannot perform all that God commands, yet Jesus Christ, as his surety and in his stead, hath fulfilled the law for him. So that Christ's perfect righteousness is a complete cover for a believer's imperfect righteousness. Hence the believer flies from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace; from his own unrighteousness to the righteousness of Christ. If we consider the law in a high and rigid notion, so no believer can fulfil it; but if we consider the law in a soft and mild notion, so every believer does fulfil it: Acts 13:22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will;' $\pi \nu \tau \alpha \tau \theta \epsilon \lambda \mu \alpha \tau \alpha$, 'All my wills,' to note the

universality and sincerity of his obedience. David had many slips and falls, he often transgressed the royal law; but being sincere in the main bent and frame of his heart, and in the course of his life, God looked upon his sincere obedience as perfect obedience. A sincere Christian's obedience is an entire obedience to all the commands of God, though not in respect of practice, which is impossible, but in disposition and affection. A sincere obedience is a universal obedience. It is universal in respect of the subject, the whole man; it is universal in respect of the object, the whole law; and it is universal in respect of duration, the whole life; he who obeys sincerely obeys universally. There is no man that serves God truly that doth not endeavour to serve God fully: sincerity turns upon the hinges of universality; he who obeys sincerely endeavours to obey thoroughly, Num 14:24. A sincere Christian does not only love the law, and like the law, and approve of the law, and delight in the law, and consent to the law, that it is holy, just, and good, but he obeys it in part, Rom 7:12, Rom 7:16, Rom 7:22; which, though it be but in part, yet he being sincere therein, pressing towards the mark, and desiring and endeavouring to arrive at what is perfect, Php 3:13-14, God accepts of such a soul, and is as well pleased with such a soul, as if he had perfectly fulfilled the law. Where the heart is sincerely resolved to obey, there it does obey. A heart to obey, is our obeying; a heart to do, is our doing; a heart to believe, is our believing; a heart to repent, is our repenting; a heart to wait, is our waiting; a heart to suffer, is our suffering; a heart to pray, is our praying; a heart to hear, is our hearing; a heart to give, feed, clothe, visit, is our giving, feeding, clothing, visiting; a heart to walk circumspectly, is our walking circumspectly; a heart to work righteousness, is our working righteousness; a heart to shew mercy, is our shewing mercy; a heart to sympathise with others, is our sympathising with others. He that sincerely desires and resolves to keep the commandments of God, he does keep the commandments of God, and he that truly desires and resolves to walk in the statutes of God, he does walk in the statutes of God. In God's account and God's acceptance, every believer, every sincere Christian, is as wise, holy, humble, heavenly, spiritual, watchful, faithful, fruitful, useful, thankful, joyful, &c., as he desires to be, as he resolves to be, and as he endeavours to be; and this is the glory of the new covenant, and the happiness that we gain by dear Jesus. And, my friends, it is remarkable that our inchoate, partial and very imperfect obedience is frequently set forth in the blessed Scriptures by our fulfilling of the law, Luk 10:25-27. Take a few places for a taste: Rom 2:27, 'And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee?' &c.; Rom 13:8, 'He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law;' ver. 10, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Not to love is to do ill and to break the law, but love is the fulfilling of it; Non potest peccari per illam, quæ legis est perfectio; we cannot do ill by that which is the perfection and the fulfilling of the law. Love is the sum of the law, love is the perfection of the law; and were love perfect in us, it would make us perfect keepers of the law. Love works the saints to keep the law in desires and endeavours, with care and study to observe it in perfection of parts, though not in perfection of degrees: Gal 5:14, 'All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;' Gal 6:2, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Now in this sense that is under consideration, the saints in themselves, even in this life, do keep the royal law. Now, from what has been said, a believer may form up this plea:—

O blessed God, in Christ my head I have perfectly and completely kept thy royal law; and in my own person I have evangelically kept thy royal law, in respect of my sincere desires, purposes, resolutions, and endeavours to keep it: and this evangelical keeping in Christ, and in the new covenant, thou art pleased to accept of, and art well satisfied with it. I know that breaches made in

the first covenant were irreparable, but breaches made in the covenant of grace are not so; because this covenant is established in Christ; who is still a-making up all breaches. Now this is my plea, O holy God, and by this plea I shall stand. Well, saith God, I cannot in honour or justice but accept of this plea, and therefore enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

X. The tenth plea that a believer may form up, as to the ten scriptures that are in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn up from the consideration of that compact, covenant, and agreement, that was solemnly made between God and Christ, touching the whole business of man's salvation or redemption. We may present it to our understanding in this form: God the Father saith to Christ the mediator, I look upon Adam and his posterity as a degenerate seed, 'a generation of vipers,' of apostates and backsliders, yea, traitors and rebels; liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments; yet I cannot find in my heart to damn them all; 'Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together; I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger: for I am God, and not man,' Hos 11:8-9: and therefore I have determined to shew mercy upon many millions of them, and save them from wrath to come, and to bring them to glory, Rev 7:9-10; but this I must do with a salvo to my law, justice, and honour. If, therefore, thou wilt undertake for them, and become a curse for their sakes, Gal 3:10, Gal 3:13, and so make satisfaction to my justice for their sins; I will give them unto thee, John 17:2, John 17:6, John 17:11, to take care of them, and to bring them up to my kingdom, for the manifestation of the glory of my grace. Well, saith Christ, I am content, I will do all thou requirest with all my heart, and so the agreement is made between thee and me. This may be gathered from the scriptures in the margin. Christ the Son speaks in both places. In the first he publisheth the decree or ordinance of heaven, touching himself, and bringeth in the Father, installing him into the priesthood or office of mediator; for so the apostle applieth that text, Heb 5:5, 'Thou art my son,' &c., and also avoucheth this covenant and agreement in the two main parts of it.

1. First, The condition which he will have performed on Christ's part, as mediator; or what Christ must do, as mediator, 'He must ask of God;' that is, not only verbally, by prayers and supplications, beg mercy, pardon, righteousness, and salvation for poor lost sinners; but also really, by fulfilling the righteousness of the law, both in doing and suffering; and so by satisfaction and merit, purchasing acceptation for them at his hands. The Father engaged so and so to Christ, and Christ reciprocally engaged so and so to the Father; a considerable part of the terms and matter of which covenant is set down: Isa 53:10, 'When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed,' &c. The Father covenants to do thus and thus for fallen man; but first in order thereunto the Son must covenant to take man's nature, therein to satisfy offended justice, to repair and vindicate his Father's honour, &c. Well, he submits, assents to these demands, indents and covenants to make all good; and this was the substance of the covenant of redemption. But,

2. Secondly, Let us consider the promise which the Father engageth to perform on his part; the Son must ask, and the Father will give: 'He will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,' Psa 2:8. An allusion to great princes, when they would shew great affection to their favourites, they bid them ask what they will, as Ahasuerus did, and as Herod did; that is, he shall both be the Lord's salvation to the ends of the earth, and 'have all power given him in heaven and earth; so that all knees shall bow to him, and every tongue shall confess him to be Lord.' In the other text before mentioned, Psa 40:1-17, Christ declares his compliance to the agreement, and his subscribing the covenant on his part, when he came into the

world, as the apostle explains it, Heb 10:5, &c.; 'Mine ears,' saith he, 'hast thou digged or pierced: Lo, I come to do thy will;' as if he had said, O Father, thou dost engage me to be thy servant in this great work of saving sinners. Lo, I come to do the work, I here covenant and agree to yield up myself to thy disposing, and to serve thee for ever. It seems to be an allusion to the master's 'boring through the servant's ear,' Exo 21:6. Among the Jews only one ear was bored, but in this Psa 40:6, here are ears in the plural number, a token of that perfect and desirable subjection, which Christ, as mediator, was in to his Father. But for a more clear, distinct, and full opening of the covenant of redemption, or that blessed compact between God the Father and Jesus Christ, which is a matter of grand importance to all our souls; and considering that it is a point that I have never yet treated of in pulpit or press, I shall therefore take the liberty at this time to open myself as clearly and as fully as I can. And therefore thus:—

Quest. If you ask me, What this covenant of redemption is?

Ans. 1. I answer, in the general, that a covenant is a mutual agreement between parties, upon articles or propositions on both sides, so that each party is tied and bound to perform his own conditions. This description holds the general nature of a covenant, and is common to all covenants, public and private, divine or human. But,

Ans. 2. Secondly, and more particularly, I answer, the covenant of redemption is that federal transaction or mutual stipulation that was betwixt God and Christ from everlasting, for the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, to the eternal honour, and unspeakable praise, of the glorious grace of God. Or, if you please, take it in another form of words, thus:—

It is a compact, bargain, and agreement between God the Father and God the Son, designed mediator, concerning the conversion, sanctification, and salvation of the elect, through the death, satisfaction, and obedience of Jesus Christ, which in due time was to be given to the Father. But for the making good the definition I have laid down, I must take leave to tell you that there are many choice scriptures which give clear intimation of such a federal transaction between God the Father and Jesus Christ, in order to the recovery, and everlasting happiness, and salvation of his elect. I shall instance in the most considerable of them:—

(1.) The first is this, Gen 3:15, 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' Here begins the book of the Lord's wars, God's battles. This is spoken of that holy enmity that is between Christ and the devil, and of Christ's destroying the kingdom and power of Satan: 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,' Heb 2:14. God, by way of threatening, told Satan that the seed of the deceived woman should overmatch him at last, and should break in pieces his power and crafty plots. He gives Satan leave to do his worst, and proclaims an open and an utter enmity between Christ and him. From this scripture some conclude that Christ covenanted from eternity to take upon him the seed of the woman, and the sinless infirmities of our true human nature; and under those infirmities to enter the lists with Satan, and to continue obedient through all his afflictions, temptations, and trials, to the death, even to the death of the cross, Php 2:8-9. And that God the Father had covenanted with Christ, that in case Christ did continue obedient through all his sufferings, temptations, and trials, that

then his obedience to the death should be accounted as full satisfaction to divine justice for all those wrongs and injuries that were done to God by the sins of man. Christ must die, or else he could not have been the mediator of the new covenant through death, Heb 9:15-16. But,

(2.) The second scripture is that, Isa 42:6, 'The Lord hath called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.' Thus God speaks of Christ. In this chapter we have a glorious prophecy of Christ our Redeemer. Here are four things prophesied of him: (1.) The divine call, whereby he was appointed to the work of our redemption: Isa 42:1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' Jesus Christ would not, yea, he could not, he durst not, thrust himself upon this great work, or engage in this great work, till he had a clear call from heaven. (2.) Here you have the gracious carriage and deportment of Christ, in the work to which he was called; this is fully set down, Isa 42:2-4, 'He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.' He shall come clothed with majesty and glory, and yet full of meekness: 'a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.' In the words there is a meiosis, 'he will not break,' that is, he will bind up the bruised reed, he will comfort the bruised reed, he will strengthen the bruised reed. Christ will acknowledge and encourage the least degrees of grace; he will turn a spark of grace into a flame, a drop into a sea, &c.: 'He shall not fail, nor be discouraged.' These words shew his kingly courage and magnanimity. Though he should meet with opposition from all hands, yet nothing should daunt him, nothing should dismay him; no afflictions, no temptations, no sufferings should in the least abate his courage and valour. (3.) The divine assistance he should have from him that called him. This is set down in two expressions: ver. 6, 'I will hold thy hand, I will keep thee.' Divine assistance doth usually concur with a divine call. When God sets his servants on work, he uses to defend and uphold them in the work. (4.) The work itself to which Christ was called. This is expressed under divers phrases: Isa 42:6-7, 'To be a light to the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and to be a covenant to the people.' In these last words you have two things observable; the first is one special part of Christ's office: 'He was given for a covenant.' Second, The persons in reference to whom this office was designed: 'a covenant of the people.' One end why God the Father gave Christ out of his bosom, was, that he might be a covenant to his people. Christ is given for a covenant both to the believing Jews and Gentiles. As he is 'the glory of the people of Israel,' so he is 'a light to lighten the Gentiles.' In this scripture last cited, you have the Father's designation and sealing of Christ to the mediatorial employment, promising him much upon his undertaking it, and his acceptance of this office, and voluntary submission to the will of the Father in it: 'Lo, I come to do thy will,' Heb 5:4-5; Psalms 40:7-8; John 10:17-18. And these together amount to the making up of a covenant between God the Father and his Son; for what more can be necessary to the making up of a covenant than is here expressed? But,

(3.) The third scripture is that, Isa 49:1, 'Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord God hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.' These words are spoken in the person of Christ; he tells us how he is called by his Father to be a mediator and Saviour of his people. Jesus Christ would not take one step in the work of our redemption till he was called and commissioned by his Father to that work. God the Father, who from eternity had fore-assigned Christ to this office of a mediator, a Redeemer,

did, both while he was in the womb, and as soon as he was come out of it, manifest and make known this his purpose concerning Christ both to men and angels. Christ did not thrust himself, he did not intrude himself at random into the office of a Redeemer: 'No man takes this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron,' Heb 5:4-5. So Christ took not upon himself the office of a mediator, a Saviour, but upon a call and a commission from God. The sum is, that Christ took up the office of a Redeemer by the ordinance of his Father, that he might fulfil the work of our redemption unto which he was destined. Isa 49:2, 'And he made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.' Christ having avouched his Father's calling of him to the work of man's redemption, he gives you a relation in this verse of God's fitting and furnishing of him with abilities sufficient for so important a work, together with his sustaining and supporting of him in the performance of the same. Here are two similitudes or comparisons: (1.) That of a 'sharp sword;' that of a bright and 'sharp arrow,' to shew the efficacy of Christ's doctrine. The word of Christ is a sword of great power and efficacy for the subduing of the souls of men to the obedience of it, and for the cutting off of whomsoever or whatsoever shall oppose or withstand it. Christ was not sent of the Father to conquer by force of arms, as earthly princes do; but he conquers all sorts of sinners, even the proudest and stoutest of them, by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Having spoken of the efficacy of Christ's doctrine, he tells us that he will take care of the security of his person: 'In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and in his quiver hath he hid me.' God the Father undertakes to protect the Lord Jesus Christ against all sorts of adversaries that should band themselves against him, and to maintain his doctrine against all enemies that should conspire to suppress it.² God so protected his dear Son against all the might and malice of his most capital enemies that they neither could lay hold on him, or do aught, before the time by God fore-designed was come. Christ was sheltered under the wing of God's protection till that voluntarily he went to his passion; neither could they keep him under when that time was once over, though they endeavoured with all their might to do it. Now in the third verse, God the Father tells Jesus Christ what a glorious reward he should have for undertaking the great work of redemption: 'And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' God having called Christ, set him apart, sanctified him, and sent him into the world for the execution of the office of a Redeemer, he doth in this third verse encourage him to set upon it, and to go on cheerfully, resolutely, and constantly in it, with assurance of good and comfortable success, notwithstanding all the plots, designs, and oppositions that Satan and his imps might make against him. Isa 49:4, 'Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.' In these words Jesus Christ complains to his Father of the incredulity, wickedness, and obstinate rebellion of the greatest part of the Jews against that blessed word which he had clearly and faithfully made known to them. When Christ looked upon the paucity and small number of those that his ministry had any saving and powerful work upon, he pours out his complaints before the Father: not that Christ's pains in his ministry among the Jews were wholly in vain, either in regard of God that sent him, or in regard of the persons unto whom he was sent, as if not any at all were converted. Oh no! for some were called, converted, and sanctified, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin. Or in regard of himself, as if any loss or prejudice should thereby redound unto him. Oh no! but in regard of the small, the slender effect, that his great labours had hitherto found. 'Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord.' Christ,

for the better support and re-encouraging of himself to persist in his employment, opposeth unto the want of the chiefly desired success of his labours with men, the gracious acceptance of them with God. It is as if Christ had said, Although my labour hath not produced such fruits and effects as I indeed desired, yet I do comfort and bear up my heart with this, that my heavenly Father knows that in the office and place wherein he hath set me, I have faithfully done all that could be done for the salvation of poor sinners' souls, and for the securing of them from wrath to come: 'And my work,' or reward, 'with my God;' that is, the reward of my work, or my wages for my work, which God will render unto me, not according to the issue or success of my labours, but according to my pains therein taken, and the faithful discharge of my office and duty therein. What, saith Christ, though the Jews believe not, repent not, return not to the Most High, yet my labour is not lost, for my God will really, he will signally reward me. Upon this, God the Father comes off more freely and roundly, and opens his heart more abundantly to Jesus Christ, and tells him in the fifth and sixth verses following, that he will give him full, complete, and honourable satisfaction for all his pains and labours in preaching, in doing, in suffering, in dying, that he might bring many sons to glory. Isa 49:5, 'And now, saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel is not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.' In this verse you have a further encouragement to our Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father engaging himself not only to support him and protect him in the work of his ministry, but of making him glorious in it and by it also; and that though his work should not prove so successful among his own people as he desired, yet his ministry should become very glorious and efficacious upon the Gentiles, far and near, throughout the whole world. Jesus Christ is very confident of his being high in the esteem of his Father for the faithful discharge of his duty; and that, notwithstanding all the hard measure that he met with from the body of the Jews, that yet his Father would crown him with honour and glory, and that he would enable him to go through the work that is incumbent upon him, and that he would protect him and defend him in his work, against all might and malice, all power and policy, that should make head against him. Isa 49:6, 'And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth.' Thus you see that God the Father still goes on to shew that the labours of Christ should be very glorious, not only in the eyes of God, but in the eyes of all the world. You know elsewhere Christ is called 'the way, the truth, and the life,' John 14:6; and here he is called the light and salvation of the Gentiles. God the Father, speaking to Jesus Christ, tells him that it was but a small matter, a mean thing—Heb., it is too light—for him to have such happy and ample success as to reduce and win the Jews, in comparison of that further work that he intended to effect by him, even the salvation of the Gentiles unto the ends of the earth. God the Father seems to say thus to Jesus Christ, The dignity and worthiness of thy person, thou being the eternal and only Son of God, as also the high office whereunto I have called thee, requireth more excellent things than that thou shouldest only raise up and restore the people of Israel to their right; I have also appointed and ordained thee for a Saviour to the Gentiles, even to the ends of the earth; therefore though the greatest part among the Jews will not receive thee nor submit unto thee, yet the Gentiles they shall own thee and honour thee, they shall embrace thee and give themselves up unto thee. I shall be briefer in the remaining proofs; and therefore,

(4.) The fourth scripture is that, Isa 52:13-14, 'Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.' The three last verses of this chapter, with the next chapter,

do jointly make up an entire prophecy concerning Christ his person, parentage, condition, manner of life, sufferings, humiliation, exaltation, &c., with the noble benefits that redound to us, and the great honour that redounds to himself. In these two verses you have—(1.) The two parties contracting, viz., God the Father, and Jesus Christ: 'Behold my servant,' saith God the Father. This title is several times given by the Father to Jesus Christ, because he did the Father great service in the work of man's redemption, freeing fallen man from the thralldom of sin and Satan. (2.) Both parties are very sure and confident of the event of the paction, and of the accomplishment of the whole work of redemption: 'Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.' Here are divers terms heaped up to express in part the transcendent and unexpressible advancement of Jesus Christ. When men are raised from a mean and low estate to some honourable condition, when men are furnished with such parts and endowments of prudence, wisdom, and understanding as makes them admirable in the eyes of others, and when they are enabled to do and suffer great things whereby they become famous and renowned far and near, then we say they are highly exalted. Now in all these respects our Lord Jesus Christ was most eminently exalted above all creatures in heaven and earth, as is most evident throughout the Scriptures. (3.) He tells you of the price which Jesus Christ should pay for the redemption of his people, agreed upon by paction, viz., the humbling of himself to the death of the cross, as you may see in Isa 49:14 : 'As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred, more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.' This is the speech of the Father to Jesus Christ; his visage was so marred that the Jews were ashamed to own him for their King and Messiah. The astonishment here spoken of is such an astonishment as ariseth from the contemplation of some strange, uncouth, and rueful spectacle of desolation, deformity, and misery. And no wonder if many were astonished at the sight of our Saviour's condition, in regard of those base, disgraceful, and despiteful usages that were offered and done to him in the time of his humiliation here on earth, when his own followers were so amazed at the relation of them when they were foretold of them, Mat 10:32-34. O sirs! the words last cited are not so to be understood as if our blessed Saviour had, in regard of his bodily person or presence, been some strange, deformed, or misshapen creature, Isa 53:3, but in regard of his outward estate, coming of mean and obscure parents, living in a low, despicable condition, exposed to scorn and contempt, and to much affliction, through the whole course of his life, and more especially yet in regard of what he was also in his personal appearance, through the base and scornful usages that he sustained at the hands of his malicious and mischievous adversaries, when they had gotten him into their power; besides his watchings, draggings to and fro from place to place, buffetings, scourgings, carrying his cross, and other base usages, could not but much alter the state of his body, and impair, yea, deface all the sightliness of it. And yet all this he suffered, to make good the compact and agreement that he had made with his Father about the redemption of his elect. But,

(5.) The fifth scripture is Isa 53:1-12. This scripture, among many others, gives us very clear intimations of a federal transaction between God the Father and Jesus Christ, in order to the recovery and everlasting happiness of poor sinners. The glorious gospel seems to be epitomized in this chapter. The subject-matter of it is the grievous sufferings and dolorous death of Christ, and the happy and glorious issue thereof. Of all the prophets, this prophet Isaiah was the most evangelical prophet, and of all the prophecies of this prophet, that which you have in this chapter is the most evangelical prophecy. In this chapter you have a most plain, lively, and full description and representation of the humiliation, death, and passion of Jesus Christ; which indeed is so

exact, and so consonant to what hath fallen out since, that Isaiah seems here rather to pen a history than a prophecy.² The matter contained in this chapter is so convictive, from that clear light that goes along with it, that several of the Jews, in reading of this chapter, have been converted, as not being able to stand any longer out against the shining light and evidence of it. Out of this chapter, which is more worth than all the gold of Ophir, yea, than ten thousand worlds, observe with me these eight things:

[1.] First, Observe that God and Christ are sweetly agreed, and infinitely pleased in the conversion of the elect: Isa 53:10, 'He shall see his seed,' that is, he shall see them called, converted, changed, and sanctified: 'he shall see his seed,' that is, an innumerable company shall be converted to him by his word and Spirit, in all countries and nations, through the mighty workings of the Spirit, and the incorruptible seed of the word, Psa 110:3; 1Pe 1:23; infinite numbers of poor souls should be brought in to Jesus Christ, which he should see to his full content and infinite satisfaction, Rev 7:9; Heb 2:10, Heb 2:13. 'He shall see his seed,' that is, he shall see them increase and multiply; he shall see believers brought in to him from all corners and quarters, and he shall see them greatly increase and grow by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, especially after his ascension into heaven, and a more glorious pouring forth of the Holy Ghost upon his apostles and others, Acts 2:37, Acts 2:41, Acts 4:1-4, and Acts 4:8. No accountants on earth can count or reckon up Christ's spiritual seed and issue. But,

[2.] Secondly, Observe with me, that in the persons redeemed by Jesus Christ there was neither weight nor worth, neither portion nor proportion, neither inward nor outward excellencies or beauties, for which the punishment due to them should be transferred upon dear Jesus, Eze 16:1-10; for if you look upon them in their sins, in their guilt, you shall find them despisers and rejecters of Christ: Isa 53:4, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' Christ took upon him not our nature alone, but the infirmities also of it, and became liable to such sorrows, and afflictions, and pains, and griefs, as man's sinful nature is exposed and subject unto. They are called ours because they were procured to him by our sins, and sustained by him for the discharge of our sins; unto the guilt whereof, out of love to us undertaken by him, they were deservedly due, Rom 8:3; Heb 4:15. Christ, for our sakes, hath taken all our spiritual maladies, that is, all our sins, upon him, to make satisfaction for them; and as our surety, to pay the debt that we had run into. Christ, in the quality of a pledge for his elect, hath given full satisfaction for all their sins, bearing all the punishments due for them, in torments and extreme griefs, both of body and soul. The reason why they so much disesteemed of Christ was, because they made no other account, but that all those afflictions that befell him were by God inflicted upon him for his own evil deserts. They accounted him to be one out of grace and favour with God, yea, to be one pursued by him with all those evils, for his sins. When the Jews saw what grievous things Christ suffered, they wickedly and impiously judged that he was thus handled by God, in way of vengeance for his sins. By all which, you may see, that in the persons redeemed by Christ, there was nothing of worth or honour to be found, for which the punishment, due to them, should be transferred upon our Lord Jesus Christ. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Observe with me, that no sin, nor meritorious cause of punishment, is found in Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer, for which he should be stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God: Isa 53:5, Isa 53:9, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. He had done no

violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.' Sin had cast God and us at infinite distance. Now Christ is punished that our sins may be pardoned; he is chastised that God and we may be reconciled. Guilt stuck close upon us, but Christ, by the price of his blood, hath discharged that guilt, pacified divine wrath, and made God and us friends. God the Father laid upon dear Jesus all the punishments that were due to the elect, for whom he was a pledge; and by this means they come to be acquitted, and to obtain peace with God. 'Christ was holy, harmless, and undefiled.' No man could convince him of sin; yea, the devil himself could find nothing amiss in him, either as to word or deed. Christ was without original blemish or actual blot.³ All Christ's words and works were upright, just, and sincere. Christ's innocency is sufficiently vindicated, Isa 53:9. It is true, Christ suffered great and grievous things, but not for his own sins; 'For he had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth;' but for ours. Christ had now put himself in the sinner's stead, and was become his surety, and so obnoxious to whatever the sinner had deserved in his own person; and upon this account, and no other, was he wounded, bruised, and chastised. The Lord Jesus had no sin in him by inhesion, but he had a great deal of sin upon him by imputation: 'He was made sin that knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' 2Co 5:21. It pleased our Lord Jesus Christ to put himself under our guilt, and therefore it pleased the Father to wound him, bruise him, and chastise him. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Observe with me, that peace and reconciliation with God, and the healing of all our sinful maladies, and our deliverance from wrath to come, are all such noble favours as are purchased for us by the blood of Christ: Isa 53:5, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Christ was chastised to procure our peace, by removal of our sins, that set God and us asunder; the guilt thereof being discharged with the price of his blood, and we reconciled to God by the same price. Christ was punished that we by him might obtain perfect peace with God, who was at enmity with us by reason of our sins. By Christ's stripes we are freed both from sin and punishment. Now because some produce this scripture to justify that corrupt doctrine of universal redemption, give me leave to argue thus from it. That chastisement for sin that was laid upon the person of Jesus Christ procured peace for them for whom he was so chastised, Isa 57:21; Eph 2:14; but there was no peace procured for the reprobates, or those who should never believe, ergo.... Further, 'By his stripes we are healed.' Whence I reason thus: the stripes inflicted upon Christ are intended, and do become healing medicines for them for whom they are inflicted; but they never become healing medicines for reprobates or unbelievers: Nah 3:9, 'There is no healing of their bruise.' ergo ... But,

[5.] Fifthly, Observe with me, that the great and the grievous sufferings that were inflicted upon Jesus Christ he did endure freely, willingly, meekly, patiently, according to the covenant and agreement that was made between the Father and himself: Isa 53:7, 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.' This is a very pregnant place to prove the satisfaction made by Christ's sufferings for our sins; if we look upon the words as they run in the original, for thus they run; 'It was exacted, and he answered;' that is, the penalty due to God's justice for our sins was exacted of Christ, and he sustained the same for us. The prophet doth not speak of one and the same party or parties, both sinning and suffering or sustaining penalties for their own defaults; but as one suffering, for the sins of another, and sustaining grievous penalties for faults made and faults committed by other persons. The words, rightly read

and understood, do sufficiently confirm the doctrine of satisfaction, made to God's justice by Christ's sufferings, for our sins. The penalty due to us was, in rigour of justice, exacted of him, and he became a sponsor or surety for us, by undertaking in our behalf the discharge of it. Christ did voluntarily undertake and engage himself unto God his Father in our behalf, as a surety for the payment of all our debts. They were exacted of him, and he answered for them all; that is, he not only undertook them, but he also discharged us of them. So we use the word commonly in our English tongue; to answer a debt, for to discharge it; and this is most true of our dear Lord Jesus, for he answered our debt, and caused our bond to be cancelled, that it might never come to be put in suit against us, either in this or that other world, John 19:30; Rom 4:25; Col 2:14. 'Yet he opened not his mouth:' this has respect to his patience; for the oppressions and afflictions that he sustained for others, and that in regard of those by whom he suffered them unjustly, yet was he silent. He neither murmured or repined at God's disposal of things in that manner, nor used any railing or reviling speeches against those that dealt so despitefully with him, but carried himself calmly and quietly under them; Christ having an eye to his voluntary obedience and submission to the will of his Father, and agreement thereunto, Mat 26:39, Mat 26:42; Mark 14:36; John 18:23; 1Pe 2:23. He undertook willingly what his Father required of him, and as willingly, when the time came, underwent it; neither hanging back or opposing aught in way of contradiction thereunto, when it was by his Father propounded to him at first; nor afterward seeking to shift it off, when he was to perform what he had engaged himself unto, by pleading aught for himself, and the releasement of him from their most unjust proceedings in whose hands he then was. 'He opened not his mouth' to confute the slanders and false accusations of his enemies; neither did he utter anything to the prejudice of them that put him to death, but prayed for them that crucified him, Luk 23:34; Mat 26:63, and Mat 27:12, Mat 27:14. 'He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,'—properly, as a ewe-lamb, or she-lamb; the ewe is mentioned as the quieter of that kind, because the rams are sometimes more unruly,—'and as a sheep that is dumb before the face of her shearers.' A lamb doth not bite nor push him that is going about to kill it, but goeth as quietly to the shambles or the slaughter-house as if it were going to the fold wherein it is usually lodged, or the field where it is wont to feed. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Observe with me, that the original cause of this compact or covenant between the Father and the Son, by virtue of which God the Father demands a price, and Jesus Christ pays the price according to God's demands, is only from the free grace and favour of God: Isa 53:10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief.' God the Father looks upon Jesus Christ as sustaining our person and cause; he looks upon all our sins as laid upon him, and to be punished in him. Sin could not be abolished, the justice of God could not be satisfied, the wrath of God could not be appeased, the terrible curse could not be removed, but by the death of Christ; and therefore God the Father took a pleasure to bruise him, and to put him to grief, according to the agreement between him and his Son. It must be readily granted that God did not incite or instigate the wicked Jews to those vile and cruel courses and carriages of theirs to Jesus Christ. But yet that his sufferings were by God predetermined for the salvation of mankind is most evident by the scriptures in the margin; and, accordingly, it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief. The singular pleasure that God the Father takes in the work of our redemption is a wonderful demonstration of his love and affection to us.

[7.] Seventhly, Observe with me, that it is agreed between the Father and the Son that our sins should be imputed unto him, and that his righteousness should be imputed unto us, and that all the redeemed should believe in him, and so be justified: Isa 53:11, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge (or faith in him) shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities;' or, as some render it, 'He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied'—that is, Jesus Christ shall receive and enjoy that, as the effect and issue of all the great pains that he hath taken, and of all the grievous things that he hath suffered, as shall give him full content and satisfaction. When Christ hath accomplished the work of redemption, he shall receive a full reward for all his sufferings. Christ takes a singular pleasure in the work of our redemption, and doth herein, as it were, refresh himself, as with the fruits, of his own labours. God the Father engages to Jesus Christ that he should not travail in vain, but that he should survive to see with great joy a numerous issue of faithful souls begotten unto God. You know when women, after sore, sharp, hard labour, are delivered, they are so greatly refreshed, delighted, gladdened, and satisfied, that they forget their former pains and sorrow, 'for joy that a man-child is born into the world,' John 16:21. God the Father undertakes that Jesus Christ should have such a holy seed, such a blessed issue, as the main fruit and effect of his passion, as should joy him, please him, and as he should rest satisfied in. Certainly there could be no such joy and satisfaction to Christ as for him to see poor souls reconciled, justified, and saved by his sufferings and satisfaction; as it is the highest joy of a faithful minister to see souls won over to Christ, and to see souls built up in Christ, 1Th 2:19-20; Gal 4:19. Christ did bear the guilt of his people's sins, and thereby he made full satisfaction; and therefore he is said here 'to justify many;' not all promiscuously, but those only whose sins he undertook to discharge, and for whom he laid down his life. Christ's justifying of many is his discharging of many from the guilt of sin, by making satisfaction to God for the same. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Observe with me, that it is agreed between the Father and the Son, that for those persons for whom Jesus Christ should lay down his life, he should stand intercessor for them also, that so they may be brought to the possession of all those noble favours and blessings that he has purchased with his dearest blood: Isa 53:12, 'He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors,' saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do,' Luk 23:34. For those very transgressors, by whom he suffered, he does intercede; for the article here is emphatical, and seems to point unto that special act, and those particular persons. Not but that these words have relation also to Christ's intercession for all those sinners that belong to him, and that have an interest in him; which intercession continues still, and shall do to the end of the world, Heb 7:25. But,

(6.) The sixth scripture is that, Isa 59:20-21, 'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever.' Out of this blessed scripture you may observe these following things: First, The parties covenanting and agreeing, and they are God the Father and Jesus Christ: God the Father in those words, 'Saith the Lord;' and Jesus Christ in those words, 'The Redeemer shall come to Zion.' Secondly, You have God the Father, first covenanting with Jesus Christ, and then with his seed, as is evident in Isa 59:21. Thirdly, You have the persons

described, that shall be sharers in redemption mercies, and they are the Zionites, the people of God, the citizens of Zion. But lest any should think that all Zion should be saved, it is added by way of explication, that only such of Zion 'as turn from transgression in Jacob,' shall have benefit by the Redeemer. The true citizens of Zion, the right Jacobs, the sincere Israelites, in whom there is no guile, Rom 11:26, are they and only they that turn from their sins. None have interest in Christ, none have redemption by Christ, but converts, but such as cast away their transgressions, as Ephraim did his idols, saying, 'What have I any more to do with you?' Hos 14:8. Fourthly, You have the way and manner of the elect's delivery, and that is, not only by paying down upon the nail, the price agreed on, but also by a strong and powerful hand, as the original imports in the scriptures cited in the margin. The Greek word that is used by Paul, and the Hebrew word that is used by Isaiah, do both signify delivering 'by strong hand,' to rescue by force, as David delivered the lamb out of the lion's paw. Fifthly, You have the special blessings that are to be conferred upon the elect—viz., redemption, conversion, faith, repentance, reconciliation, turning from their iniquity; all comprehended under that term 'the redeemed.' Sixthly, You have the Lord Jesus Christ considered as the head of the church, from whom all spiritual gifts—sanctification, salvation and perseverance do flow and run, as a precious balsam, upon the members of his body: 'My Spirit that is in me,' saith God the Father, to Christ the Redeemer, 'and my word which I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth; nor out of the mouth of thy seed,' &c. In these words, God the Father engages, that his Spirit and word should continue with his church to direct and instruct it, and the children of it, in all necessities, throughout all ages successively, even unto the world's end. But,

(7.) The seventh scripture is that, Zec 6:12-13, 'And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Now that the business of man's redemption was transacted betwixt the Father and the Son, is very clear from this text, 'And the counsel of peace shall be between them both,' that is, the two persons spoken of—viz., the Lord Jehovah, who speaks, and the man, whose name is the Branch, Jesus Christ. This counsel was primarily about the reconciliation of the riches of God's grace, and the glory of his justice. The design and counsel, both of the Father and the Son, was our peace. The counsel of reconciliation, how man, that is now an enemy to God, may be reconciled to God, and God to him; this counsel or consultation shall be 'betwixt them both,' that is Jehovah and the Branch. There were blessed transactions between the Father and the Son, in order to the making of peace between an angry God and sinful men. I know several learned men interpret it of Christ's offices—viz., of his kingly and priestly office; for both conspire to make peace betwixt God and man. Now if you will thus understand the text, yet it will roundly follow, that there was a consultation at the council-board in heaven, concerning the reconciliation of fallen man to God; which reconciliation Christ, as king and priest, was to bring about. Look, as there was a counsel taken, touching the creation of mankind, between the persons in the blessed Trinity, 'Let us make man after our image,' Gen 1:26; Col 3:19; Eph 4:24; so there was a consultation held concerning the restoration of mankind out of their lapsed condition: 'The counsel of peace shall be between them both.' Certainly there was a covenant of redemption made with Christ; upon the terms whereof he is constituted to be a reconciler and a redeemer, to say to the prisoners, 'Go forth, to bring deliverance to the captives,

and to proclaim the year of release or jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord,' as it is, Isa 61:1-2. But,

(8.) The eighth scripture is that, Psa 40:6-8, 'Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart'—Heb., 'in the midst of my bowels.' Compared with that, Heb 10:5-7, 'Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.' In these two scriptures, two things are concluded:—(1.) The impotency of legal sacrifices, Heb 10:5-6; (2.) The all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, Heb 10:7, There is some difference in words and phrases betwixt the apostle and the prophet, but both agree in sense, as we shall endeavour to demonstrate. Penmen of the New Testament were not translators of the Old, but only quoted them for proof of the point in hand, so as they were not tied to syllables and letters, but to the sense. That which the prophet speaketh of himself, the apostle applieth to Christ, say some. This may be readily granted; for David being a special type of Christ, that may in history and type be spoken of David, which, in mystery and truth, is understood of Christ. But that which David uttered in the aforesaid text, is questionless, uttered by the way of prophecy, concerning Christ, as is evident by these reasons.

First, In David's time, God required sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and took delight therein, 1Ch 21:26; 1Sa 26:19; for God answered David from heaven by fire, upon the altar of burnt-offering; and David himself advised Saul to offer a burnt-offering that God might accept of it.

Secondly, David was not able so 'to do the will of God,' as by doing it, to make all sacrifices void; therefore this must be taken as a prophecy of Christ.

Thirdly, In the verse before, namely, Psa 40:5, such an admiration of God's goodness is premised, as cannot fitly be applied to any other evidence, than of his goodness in giving Christ; in reference to whom, it may be truly said, 'That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1Co 2:9.

Fourthly, These words used by the apostle, 'when he cometh into the world, he saith,' are meant of Christ; which argue that that which followeth was an express prophecy of Christ. These things being premised, out of the texts last cited we may observe these following particulars that make to our purpose.

[1.] First, That the Holy Spirit opens and expounds the covenant of redemption, bringing in the Father and the Son, as conferring and agreeing together about the terms of it; and the first thing agreed on between them is the price; and the price that God the Father stands upon is 'blood;' and that not 'the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of his Son;' which was the best, the purest, and the noblest blood, that ever ran in veins. Now Christ, to bring about the redemption of fallen man, is willing to come up to the demands of his Father, and to lay down his blood. The scripture calls the blood of Christ, τιμιον αιμα, precious blood. Oh, the virtue in it, the value of it! Through this red sea we must pass to heaven; Sanguis Christi clavis coeli, Christ's blood is heaven's key. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the blood of the saints,' Psa 116:15, and truly 'precious in the

sight of the saints is the blood of Christ.' Una guttula plus valet quam cœlum et terra, One little drop is more worth than heaven and earth, [Luther.] Christ's blood is 'precious blood,' in regard of the dignity of his person. It is 'the blood of God himself,' Acts 20:28, it is the blood of that person, who is very God as well as very man. Christ's blood was noble blood, and therefore precious. He came of the race of kings, as touching his manhood; but being withal the Son of God. This renders his nobility matchless and peerless. It was Pharaoh's brag that he was the son of ancient kings, Isa 19:11. Who can lay claim to this more than Christ? Who can challenge this honour before him? He is the Son of the ancientest king in the world, he was begot a king from all eternity, Dan 7:9, Dan 7:13, Dan 7:27; and the blood of good kings is precious; 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us,' said David's subjects to him, 2Sa 18:3; and therefore they would not suffer him to hazard himself in the battle. The nobleness of his person did set a high rate upon his blood. And whom doth this argument more commend unto us than Christ? And the blood of Christ is precious blood in regard of the virtues of it. By this blood, God and man are reconciled; by this blood, the chosen of God are redeemed. It was an excellent saying of Leo, 'The effusion of Christ's blood is so rich and available, that if the whole multitude of captive sinners would believe in their Redeemer, not one of them should be detained in the tyrant's chains.' This precious blood justifies our persons in the sight of God, it frees us from the guilt of sin, and it frees us from the reign and dominion of sin, and it frees us from the punishments that are due to sin, it saves us, **ἐκ τοῦ ὀργῆς τοῦ ῥυπαρίου** 'from that wrath that is to come,' Acts 13:38-39; Rom 3:24-25; 1Jn 1:7; 1Th 1:10. Now were not Christ's blood of infinite value and virtue, it could never have produced such glorious effects. The blood of Christ is precious, beyond all account; and yet our Lord Jesus did not think it too dear a price to pay down for his saints. God the Father would be satisfied with no other price; and therefore God the Son comes up to his Father's price, that our redemption might be sure. But,

[2.] Secondly, Observe that God rejects all ways of satisfaction by men. Could men make as many prayers as there be stars in heaven and drops in the sea, and could they weep as much blood as there is water in the ocean, and should they 'give all their goods to the poor, and their bodies to be burned,' 1Co 13:3, as some have done, yet all this would not satisfy for the least sin, not for an idle word, not for a vain thought: Heb 10:5, 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not;' that is, thou wilt not accept of them for an expiation and satisfaction for sin, as the Jews imagined. The apostle shews the impotency and insufficiency of legal sacrifices by God's rejecting of them. The things here set down not to be regarded by God—as sacrifices, offerings, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin, together with other legal ordinances comprised under them—do evidently demonstrate that God regards none of those things in a way of satisfaction; they are no current price, they are no such pay that will be accepted of in the court of heaven. Remission of sin could never be obtained by sacrifices and offerings, nor by prayers, tears, humblings, meltings, watchings, fastings, penances, pilgrimages, &c. Remission of sins cost Christ dear, though it cost us nothing. Remission of sins drops down from God to us through Christ's wounds, and swims to us in Christ's blood. It was well said by one of the ancients: 'I have not whence I may glory in my own works, I have not whence I may boast myself, and therefore I will glory in Christ; I will not glory that I am righteous, but I will glory that I am redeemed; I will glory, not because I am without sin, but because my sins are forgiven; I will not glory because I have profited, or because any hath profited me, but because Christ is an advocate with the Father for me, but because the blood of Christ is shed for me.' Certainly the popish doctrine of man's own satisfaction in part for his sins is most derogatory to the blood, and to the plenary and complete satisfaction, of Jesus Christ. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Observe that nothing below the obedience and sufferings of Christ, our mediator, could satisfy divine justice: Heb 10:5, 'But a body hast thou prepared me.' The Hebrew text, Psa 40:7, saith, 'Thou hast bored through mine ears;' but the apostle follows the Greek translation, seeing the same sense is contained in both. Christ having declared what his Father delighteth not in, he further sheweth affirmatively what it was wherein he rested well pleased, in these words, 'But a body hast thou prepared me.' In this phrase, 'A body hast thou prepared me,' Christ is brought in, speaking to his Father. By body is meant the human nature of Christ. Body is synecdoehieally put for the whole human nature, consisting of body and soul; the body was the visible part of Christ's human nature. A body is fit for a sacrifice, fit to be slain, fit to have blood shed out of it, fit to be offered up, fit to be made a price, and a ransom for our sins, and fit to answer the types under the law. Pertinently therefore, to this purpose, is it said of Christ, 'He himself bare our sins in his own body,' 1Pe 2:24; and those infirmities wherein he was 'made like unto us,' Heb 2:9, Heb 2:14, Heb 2:17, were most conspicuously evidenced in his body; and hereby Christ was manifested to be a true man: he had a body like ours, a body subject to manifold infirmities, yea, to death itself. That body which Christ had is said to be 'prepared by God;' the Greek word, *κατηρτισω*, which is translated prepared, is a metaphor from mechanies, who do artificially fit one part of their work to another, and so finish the whole. God fitted his son's body to be joined with the deity, and to be an expiatory sacrifice for sin. The word 'prepared' implies that God the Father ordained, formed, and made fit and able, Christ's human nature to undergo, suffer, and fulfil that for which he was sent into the world. God the Father is here said to have prepared Christ a body; because Christ having received of his Father the human nature out of the flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost, Mat 1:20; Luk 1:31, Luk 1:35, here gives up the same unto the service of his Father, to do, to suffer, to die, that he might be a sacrifice of expiation for our sins. As for the words of the psalmist, Psa 40:6, 'Mine ear hast thou opened,'—Heb., 'dugged open,' it is a proverbial manner of speech, whereby there is implied the qualifying or fitting a man unto obedience in service—the ear, or the opening of the ear, being an emblem, or symbol, or a metaphorical sign of obedience, Isa 55:5; Job 33:16. Now St Paul, following the translation of the Septuagint, and being directed by the Spirit of God, expounds this of God's sanctifying and fitting a body unto Christ, wherein he was obedient, even unto the shameful death of the cross. These words, 'Thou hast bored through mine ears,' do import that Christ, now becoming man, gives up himself to be a willing servant of his Father, to obey him unto the death of the cross. And it is a similitude taken from the servants of the Hebrews, who, after that they had served their masters six years, would not depart out of their masters' service the seventh year, but abide in it continually until death; for a testimony whereof their ear was bored through on the posts of the door, as may be seen, Exo 21:6. It is therefore as much as if he should say, Thou hast given me a body that is willing and ready in thy service, even unto death. But to conclude this head, the apostle speaking of disannulling the sacrifice of the law, he uses this word body to set out a sacrifice which should come instead of the legal sacrifices, to effect that which the legal sacrifices could not effect. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Observe that Christ, our mediator, freely and readily offers himself to be our pledge and surety. 'Then said I, Lo, I come,' to wit, as surety, to pay the ransom, and to do thy will, O God. Every word carrieth a special emphasis as, (1.) The time, 'then,' even so soon as he perceived that his Father had prepared his body for such an end, then, without delay. This speed implieth forwardness and readiness; he would lose no opportunity. (2.) His profession in this word, 'said I;'

he did not closely, secretly, timorously, as being ashamed thereof, but he maketh profession beforehand. (3.) This note of observation, 'Lo;' this is a kind of calling angels and men to witness, and a desire that all might know his inward intention, and the disposition of his heart; wherein was as great a willingness as any could have to anything. (4.) An offering of himself without any enforcement or compulsion; this he manifesteth in this word, 'I come.' (5.) That very instant set out in the present tense, 'I come;' he puts it not off to a future and uncertain time, but even in that moment, he saith, 'I come.' (6.) The first person twice expressed, thus, 'I said,' 'I come.' He sendeth not another person, nor substituteth any in his room; but he, even he himself in his own person, cometh. All which do abundantly evidence Christ's singular readiness and willingness, as our surety, to do his Father's will, though it were by suffering, and by being made a sacrifice for our sins. God's will was the rule of Christ's active and passive obedience. Jesus Christ, our only mediator and surety, by free and ready obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice for the sins of all the elect. Christ hath, by his death and blood, as an invaluable price of our redemption, made sure the favour of God, the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls. Christ hath freed his chosen from all temporal, spiritual, and eternal punishments, properly so called; so that now the mercy of God may embrace the sinner without the least of wrong to his truth or justice. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Observe that Jesus Christ, our surety, does not only agree with his Father about the price that he was to lay down for our redemption, but also agrees with his Father about the persons that were to be redeemed, and their sanctification: Heb 10:10, 'By the which will'—that is, by the execution of which will, by the obedience of Christ to his heavenly Father—'we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.' Jesus Christ agrees with the Father that all those shall be sanctified for whom he has suffered and satisfied. The virtue, efficacy, and benefit of that which ariseth from the aforesaid will of the Father and of the Son is expressed under this word, 'sanctified.' To pass by the notation and divers acceptations of this word 'sanctified,' let it suffice to tell you it is not here to be taken, as distinguished from justification or glorification, as it is elsewhere taken, 1Co 1:30, and 1Co 6:11; but so as comprising under it all the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, Heb 10:14, and Heb 2:11; Acts 26:18. In this general and large extent it is sometimes taken; only this word, sanctified, here gives us to understand that perfection consisteth especially in holiness; for he expresseth the perfection of Christ's sacrifice under the word 'sanctified,' which implieth 'a making holy.' This was that special part of perfection wherein man was made at first, Eccles. 7:31; and whereunto the apostle alludeth, where he exhorteth, 'To put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph 4:24; for this end, Christ gave himself even unto death, for his church, 'that he might sanctify it,' Eph 5:25. The principal thing under this word 'sanctified' in this place is, that Christ's sacrifice maketh perfect. In this respect, Christ's sacrifice is here opposed to the legal sacrifices, which could not make perfect; so that Christ's sacrifice was offered up to do that which they could not do; for this end was Christ's sacrifice surrogated in the room of the legal sacrifices. Now this surrogation had been in vain, if Christ's sacrifice had not made us perfect. If the dignity of his person that was offered up, and his almighty power, and unsearchable wisdom, and other divine excellencies of his, be duly weighed, we cannot but acknowledge, that as his sacrifice is perfect in itself, so it is sufficient to make us perfect also. Christ's body was given up as a price and ransom, and offered up as a sacrifice for our sins; and that we might be sanctified and made holy, Christ, by the offering of his body once for all, has purchased of his Father grace and holiness for all his redeemed ones.

Christ agrees with his Father that he will lay down an incomparable price for his chosen ones; and then he further agrees with his Father that all those shall be sanctified for whom he has laid down an invaluable price. The will of God the Father was, that Jesus Christ should have a body, and that that body of his should be offered up, that his elect might be sanctified and saved. Now to this Christ readily answers, 'Lo, I come to do thy will.' From what hath been said from Psa 40:1-17, compared with Heb 10:1-39, we may very safely and roundly conclude that it is most clear and evident that there was a covenant, compact, or agreement, between God the Father and Jesus Christ, concerning the redemption of fallen man. This I shall more abundantly clear up before I have said all I have to say about the covenant of redemption that is under our present consideration. But,

(9.) The ninth scripture is that, Psa 89:28, 'My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.' With whom? why, with our dear Lord Jesus, of whom David was a singular type. There are many passages in this psalm which do clearly evidence that it is to be interpreted of Christ; yea, there are many things in this psalm that can never be clearly, pertinently, and appositely applied to any but Jesus Christ. For a taste, see Psa 89:19, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty,' mighty to pardon, to reconcile, to justify, to save, to bring to glory; suitable to that of the apostle, Heb 7:25, 'He is able to save unto the uttermost'—that is, to all ends and purposes, perfectly, completely, fully, continually, perpetually. Christ is a thorough Saviour, a mighty Saviour: Isa 63:1, 'Mighty to save.' There needs none to come after him to finish the work which he hath begun: Isa 63:19, 'I have exalted one, chosen out of the people,' which is the very title given to our Lord Jesus: Isa 42:1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect,' or chosen one, 'in whom my soul delighteth: Isa 42:20, 'I have found David my servant.' Christ is very frequently called by that name, as being most dearly beloved of God, and most highly esteemed and valued by God, and as being typified by him both as king and prophet of his church: Isa 42:10, 'With my holy oil have I anointed him;' suitable to that of Christ: Luk 4:18, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;' and therefore we need not doubt of the excellency, authority, certainty, and sufficiency of the gospel: Luk 4:27, 'I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.' Christ is the firstborn of every creature, and in all things hath the pre-eminence: Luk 4:29, 'His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.' This is chiefly spoken of Christ and his kingdom. The aspectable heaven is corruptible, but the kingdom of heaven is eternal; and such shall be Christ's seed, throne and kingdom: Luk 4:36, 'His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.' 'Christ shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands,' Isa 53:10. 'And his throne as the sun before me;' that is, perpetual and glorious, as the Chaldee explaineth it, 'shall shine as the sun.' Other kingdoms and thrones have their times and their turns, their rise and their ruins, but so hath not the kingdom and throne of Jesus Christ. Christ's dominion is 'an everlasting dominion,' which shall not pass away; 'and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed,' Dan 7:13-14. I might give further instances out of this Psalm, but enough is as good as a feast. Now saith God, 'I have made a covenant with him;' so then there is a covenant that God the Father hath made with Christ the mediator; which covenant, the Father engages to the Son, shall stand fast, there shall be no cancelling or disannulling of it. God the Father hath not only made a covenant of grace with the saints in Christ, of which before; but he has also made a covenant of redemption, as we call it for distinction sake, with Jesus Christ himself, 'My covenant shall stand fast with him;' that is, with Christ, as we have fully and clearly

demonstrated. But,

(10.) The tenth scripture is that, Zec 9:11, 'As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant,' or whose covenant is by blood, 'I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.' Here God the Father speaks to Christ, with relation to some covenant between them both; and what covenant can that be but the covenant of redemption? All the temporal, spiritual, and eternal deliverances which we enjoy, they swim to us through the blood of that covenant that is passed between the Father and the Son. By virtue of the same blood of the covenant, wherewith we are reconciled, justified, and saved, were the Jews delivered from their Babylonish captivity. The Babylonish captivity, thralldom, and dispersion, was that waterless pit, that dirty dungeon, that uncomfortable and forlorn condition, out of which they were delivered by virtue of the blood of the covenant; that is, by virtue of the blood of Christ, figured by the blood that was sprinkled upon the people, and by virtue of the covenant confirmed thereby, Exo 24:8; Psa 74:20; Heb 13:20. Look, as all the choice mercies, the high favours, the noble blessings that the saints enjoy, are purchased by the blood of Christ; so they are made sure to the saints by the same blood; by the blood of thy covenant 'I have sent forth thy prisoners.' Whatever desperate distresses, and deadly dangers, the people of God may fall into, yet they are 'prisoners of hope,' and may look for deliverance by the blood of the covenant. By these ten scriptures it is most clear and evident that there was a covenant, a compact, and agreement between God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning the work of our redemption. Christ's being called 'the surety of the better covenant,' Heb 7:21, shews that there was a covenant between God the Father and him, as there is between a creditor and a surety. Christ gave bonds, as it were, to God the Father, and paid down the debt upon the nail, that breaches might be made up between God and us, and we restored to divine favour for ever. But for the further clearing up of the covenant of redemption, I shall, in the second place, lay down these propositions. And,

(1.) The first is this, That the covenant of redemption differs from the covenant of grace. It is true, the covenant of redemption is a covenant of grace, but it is not properly that covenant of grace which the Scripture holds out in opposition to the covenant of works; which I shall thus evidence:—

[1.] The covenant of redemption differs from the covenant of grace in regard of the federates. In the covenant of redemption, it is God the Father and Jesus Christ that mutually covenant; but in the covenant of grace the confederates are God and believers.

[2.] In the covenant of redemption, God the Father requires of Jesus Christ that he should suffer, shed his blood, die, and make himself an offering for our sins. In the covenant of grace, God requires of us that we should believe and embrace the Lord Jesus.

[3.] In the covenant of redemption, God the Father has made many great, precious, and glorious promises to Jesus Christ. As, 'Sit on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool,' Heb 1:13; and, 'He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands,' Isa 53:10; and, 'Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,' Psa 2:8; and, 'I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son,' Heb 1:5. But in the covenant of grace, God promises to us grace and glory, holiness and happiness, both the upper and the lower springs, Psa 84:11; Eze 36:26-27.

[4.] The covenant of redemption betwixt God and Christ secures the covenant of grace betwixt God and believers; for what God promises to us, he did, before the foundation of the world, promise to Jesus Christ, Tit 1:2; and therefore, if God the Father should not make good his promises to his saints, he would not make good his promises to his dearest Son, which for any to imagine would be high blasphemy. God will be sure to keep touch with Jesus Christ; and therefore we may rest fully assured that he will not fail to keep touch with us.

[5.] The covenant of redemption is the very basis or bottom of the covenant of grace. God made a covenant with Christ, the spiritual David, that he might make a covenant with all his elect in him, Psa 89:3-4; Rom 11:26-27. He made this agreement with Christ, as the head, and on this is reared up the whole frame of precious promises comprised in the covenant of grace, as a goodly building upon a sure foundation. But,

(2.) The second proposition is this, God the Father, in order to man's redemption and salvation, stands stiffly and peremptorily upon complete satisfaction. Without full satisfaction, no remission, no salvation. Satisfaction God will have to the utmost, though it cost Christ his life and blood. Man is fallen from his primitive purity, glory, and excellency, and by his fall he hath provoked divine justice, transgressed God's righteous law, and cast a deep dishonour upon his name, Rom 8:32. The case standing thus, God is resolved to have ample satisfaction in the reparation of his honour, in the manifestation of his truth, and in the vindication of his holiness and justice. All the attributes of God are alike dear to him, and he stands as much upon the advance of his justice as he does upon the glory of his grace; and therefore he will not remit one sin, yea, not the least sin, without entire satisfaction. In this God the Father is fixed, that he will have 'an offering for sin,' in an expiatory and propitiatory way; 'a price and a ransom' he will have paid down upon the nail, or else the captive sinner shall never be released, pardoned, saved, Isa 53:10; 1Ti 2:6. Now lost man being wholly incapable of giving such a satisfaction to divine justice, Christ must give it, or fallen man must perish for ever. Sin and sorrow, iniquity and misery, always go hand in hand. 'The wages of sin is death,' Rom 6:23. Every sinner is worthy of death. 'They which commit such things are worthy of death,' Rom 1:32. If God be a just and righteous God, then sin cannot absolutely escape unpunished; for it is but 'a just and righteous thing with God' to punish the sinner, who is worthy of punishment. 'It is a righteous thing with God,' saith the apostle, 'to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,' 2Th 1:6. And as God cannot but be just, so he cannot but be true; and if he cannot but be true, then he cannot but make good his threatenings against sin and sinners. The word is gone out of his mouth, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die; and the soul which sins shall die,' Gen 2:17. Look, as there is not a promise of God but shall take place in time, so there is not a threatening of God but shall take place in time, Eze 18:4. The faithfulness of God, and the honour of God, is as much concerned in making good of terrible threatenings, as they are concerned in making good of precious promises, 2Pe 1:4. God has given it under his own hand, that 'he will by no means clear the guilty;' and that 'the soul that sinneth shall surely die;' and that 'the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him;' and that 'he will render to every man according to his deeds,' Exo 34:7; Eze 18:20; Rom 2:6. And will God abrogate his own laws, or will he dare men to sport and play with his threatenings? Will not every wise and prudent prince look to the execution of their own laws? and shall not that God, who is wonderful in wisdom, and whose understanding is infinite, see all his laws put in execution against offenders? Isa 40:28; Psa 147:5. Surely yes. Thus you see that God stands upon full satisfaction, and will

admit of no treaty of peace with fallen man without it. Now sorry man is never able, either by doing or suffering, to compensate and make God amends for the wrong and injury that he has done to God by his sin; and therefore one that is able, by doing and suffering, to give complete satisfaction, must undertake it, or else we are lost, cast, and undone in both worlds. Concerning that full and complete satisfaction that Jesus Christ has given to God's enraged justice, I have in part discovered already, and shall say no more to it before I close up the covenant of redemption. But,

(3.) The third proposition is this, The business transacted between those two great and glorious persons, God the Father, 'whose greatness is unsearchable,' Psa 145:3, and Jesus Christ, 'who is the prince of the kings of the earth,' Rev 1:5, was the redemption and salvation of the elect. Our everlasting blessedness was now fresh in their eyes, and warm upon their hearts. How lost man might be found, and how fallen man might be restored, and how miserable man might be made happy, how slaves might be made sons, and how enemies might be made friends, Luk 15:30, and how those that 'were afar off might be made nigh,' Eph 2:12-17, without the least prejudice to the honour, holiness, justice, wisdom, and truth of God, was the grand business, the thing of things, that lay before them. Upon the account of the covenant, compact, and agreement that was between the Father and the Son, it is that Christ is called 'the second Adam,' 1Co 15:25; for as with the first Adam God plighted a covenant concerning him and his posterity, so also he did indent with Jesus Christ, concerning that eternal redemption, that he was to obtain and secure for his seed, Heb 9:12. For the clearing of this, let us a little consider of the excellent properties of that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ.

[1.] First, It is a great redemption. The work of redemption was a great work. The greatness of the person employed in this work speaks out the work to be a great work. This was a work too high, too hard, too great for all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth to undertake. None but that Jesus who is 'mighty to save,' Isa 63:1, was ever able to bring about the redemption of man. Hence Christ is called the Deliverer, Rom 11:26 : 'And their redeemer is mighty,' Pro 23:11; Isa 44:6, 'And his redeemer, the Lord of hosts;' Isa 47:4, 'As for our redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name;' Isa 49:26, 'And thy redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob;' Jer 50:34, 'Their redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name.' Again, the great and invaluable price that was paid down for our redemption speaks it out to be a great redemption. The price that we are bought with is a price beyond all compute. 1Pe 1:18-19, 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,' 1Co 6:19-20, and 1Co 7:23. Christ was a lamb (1.) for harmlessness; (2.) for patience and silence in afflictions; (3.) for meekness and humility; (4.) for sacrifice. This lamb was 'without blemish,' Isa 53:7, that is, free from actual sin, and 'without spot,' that is, free from original sin, Jer 11:19, [Aquinas.] That the most absolute and perfect purity of Christ—prefigured in the lambs of the Old Testament, that were to be sacrificed—might be better expressed, the apostle calls him 'a lamb without blemish, and without spot,' Eph 5:27. The price that this lamb without a spot has laid down is sufficient to pay all our debts; it is a price beyond all compute. All the silver, gold, pearls, jewels in the world, are of no value, in respect of this price; a price in itself infinite, and of infinite value. Among the Romans, the goods and estates which men had gotten in the wars, with hazard of their lives, were called *peculium castrense*, or a field-purchase. Oh how well then may the elect be called Christ's

peculium castrense, his purchase, gotten not only by the jeopardy of his life, but with the loss of his life and blood, John 10:11, John 10:15, John 10:17-18, and Acts 20:28. Again, if you compare the work of redemption with other great works, you must necessarily conclude that the work of redemption is a great work. The making of the world was a great work of God, but yet that did but cost him a word of his mouth, a 'let it be;' he spake the word, and it was done; 'He said, Let there be light, and there was light,' &c., Gen 1:3-6, Gen 1:9, Gen 1:11, Gen 1:14, Gen 1:20, Gen 1:24-; but the work of redemption cost Christ's dearest blood. Much matter of admiration doth the work of redemption afford us. The work of creation is many ways admirable, yet not to be compared with the work of redemption, wherein the power, wisdom, justice, mercy, and other divine attributes of God do much more shine forth; and wherein the redeemed reap, much more good than Adam did by his creation, which will evidently appear by observing these particular differences:

First, In the creation God brought something out of nothing; but in the work of redemption, out of one contrary he brought another; out of death he brought life. This was a work of far greater power, wisdom, mercy. Death must first be destroyed, and then life brought forth.

Secondly, In creation there was but a word; and thereupon the work followed; in redemption there was doing and dying. The work of redemption could be brought about by none but God. God must come down from heaven, God must be made man, God must be made sin, God must be made a curse, 2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13.

Thirdly, In the creation God arrayed himself with majesty, power, and other like properties, fit for a great work; in the work of redemption he put on weakness, he assumed a nature subject to infirmities, and the infirmities of that nature. He did as David did when he fought against Goliath, he 'put off all armour, and took his staff in his hand, and drew near to the Philistine,' 1Sa 17:39-40.

Fourthly, In the work of creation there was nothing to withstand God, to make opposition against God; but in the work of redemption there was justice against mercy, wrath against pity; death, and he that had the power of death, was vanquished, Heb 2:14-15; Col 2:14-15.

Fifthly, By creation man was made after God's image, like him, Gen 1:26-27; by redemption man was made a member of the same mystical body 'whereof Christ is the head,' Eph 1:22-23.

Sixthly, By creation man received a natural being, by redemption a spiritual.

Seventhly, By creation man received a possibility to stand, by redemption a certainty of standing and impossibility of falling, John 10:28-31; 1Pe 1:5; Jer 32:40-41.

Eighthly, By creation man was placed in an earthly paradise, but by redemption he is advanced to an heavenly paradise.

Thus you see how the work of redemption transcends the work of creation. Again, the works of providence are great, very great, in the eye of God, of angels, of men; but what are the works of providence to the works of redemption? For in order to the accomplishment of that great work, Christ must put off his royal robes, take a journey from heaven to earth, assume our nature, do and die, &c. Again, the work of redemption by Christ will be found a great work, if you will but compare it with those redemptions that were but types of this. Israel's redemption from their Egyptian bondage, and from their Babylonish bondage, were very great redemptions, that were brought about by a strong hand, a mighty hand, and an out-stretched arm, as the Scripture

speaks; but, alas! what were those redemptions to our being redeemed from the love of sin, the guilt of sin, the dominion of sin, the damnable power of sin, and to our being redeemed from the power of Satan, the curse of the law, hell and wrath to come? 1Th 1:10. Lastly, the great things that are wrapped up in the womb, in the belly, of redemption, speak out our redemption by Christ to be a very great redemption. In the womb of this redemption you shall find reconciliation, justification, adoption, eternal salvation, &c.; and are not these great, very great, things? Surely yes. But,

[2.] A second excellent property of that redemption that we have by Christ is this, that it is a free and gracious redemption. All the rounds in this ladder of redemption are made up of free, rich, and sovereign grace. Though our redemption cost Christ dear, as has been before hinted, yet as to us it is most free: Eph 1:7, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;' that is, according to his exceeding great and abundant grace: 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' Our redemption is from the free love and favour of God. It was free grace that put God the Father upon finding out a way for the redemption of lost sinners. It was free grace that put God upon providing of such a surety, as should undertake the work of redemption, as should carry on the work of redemption, and as should accomplish and complete the work of redemption; and it was free grace that moved God the Father to accept of what Christ did and suffered, in order to the bringing about of our redemption; and it is free grace that moves God to make an application of this redemption to the souls of his people. Ah, poor souls! the Lord looks not, neither for money nor money's worth from you, towards the purchase of your redemption, and therefore always look upon your redemption as the mere fruit of rich grace, Isa 52:3. But,

[3.] The third excellent property of that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ is this, it is a full and plenteous redemption: Psa 130:7, 'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.' Christ redeems us from all sin, and from all the consequences of sin. He redeems from death, and from the power of the grave; he redeems us from the law, and from the malediction of the law. Christ took that off; he was made a curse for all that believe on him. He did not only stand in the room of eminent believers, but he stood in the room of all believers, and endured the wrath of God to the uttermost for every one that believeth on him. Every believer is freed from a cursed estate by the least faith. Every degree of true faith makes the condition to be a state of life, and passeth us from death and condemnation: 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' And Christ redeems us from this present evil world, and from the earth, and from among men, and from wrath to come, and from 'the hands of all our enemies.'³ Jesus Christ hath gone thorough-stitch with the work of our redemption. Christ does not his work by halves; all his works are perfect; there is no defect or flaw in them at all. Christ does not redeem us from some of our sins, and leave us to grapple with the rest; he doth not work out some part of our redemption, and leave us to work out the rest; he doth not bear the heat and burden of divine wrath in part, and leave us to wrestle with other parts of divine wrath. Oh, no; Christ makes most complete work of it. He redeems us from 'all our iniquities; he delivers us out of the hands of all our enemies,' Heb 7:25. He pays all debts, he cuts all scores, he delivers from all wrath, he takes off the whole curse, he saves to the uttermost, and will settle us in a state of full and perfect freedom, when grace shall be turned into glory. In heaven our redemption shall be entire and perfect.

[4.] The fourth excellent property of that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ, is this, it is an eternal, a permanent, a lasting, yea, an everlasting redemption: Heb 9:12, 'Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.' Redemption is in general a freeing one out of thralldom, Exo 6:6. Now this is done three ways—(1.) By interceding and pacifying wrath. Thus the prophet Oded, 2Ch 28:9, &c., procured redemption for the captives of Judah by his intercession. (2.) By force and might. Thus Abraham redeemed his brother Lot, and the people that were captives with him, by overcoming their enemies, Gen 14:16. (3.) By ransom, or paying a price. Thus a Hebrew that was sold a slave to a stranger might be redeemed by one of his brethren, Lev 25:48-49. The last of these is most agreeable to the notation of the several words, which in the three learned languages do signify to redeem, though the last be especially intended. In that, mention is made of a price, namely, Christ's blood; yet the other two are not altogether exempted, for Christ hath all those three ways redeemed his people. This will more clearly appear if we duly weigh the distinct kinds of bondage in which we were by reason of sin—(1.) We were debtors to divine justice, Mat 6:12; (2.) We were children of wrath, Eph 2:3; (3.) We were slaves to Satan, Heb 2:14-15. (1.) As debtors, Christ hath paid a ransom for us; (2.) As children of wrath, Christ makes intercession for us; (3.) But though divine justice be satisfied and divine wrath pacified, yet the devil will not let his captives go; therefore Christ by a strong hand wrests us out of Satan's power, 'and destroys him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,' Heb 2:14-15. The ransom which Christ paid was the ground of man's full and eternal redemption, for by satisfaction of justice way was made to pacify wrath; both which being accomplished, the devil lost his right and power over such as he held in bondage. This redemption is a full freedom from all misery, and compriseth under it reconciliation, justification, sanctification, and salvation. By this redemption divine justice is satisfied, wrath pacified, grace procured, and all spiritual enemies vanquished. The perfection of this redemption is hinted in this word eternal. The eternity here meant hath a special respect to the continual duration thereof without end, yet also it respecteth the time past, so as it looks backward and forward. It implieth a virtue and efficacy from the beginning of the world, for Christ was 'a lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev 13:8. Christ himself is, Rev 1:8, 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come.' Now that which is spoken of the person of Christ may very well be applied to our redemption by Christ. This epithet eternal is here added to redemption, in opposition to the legal purifications, which were momentary and temporary. They had a day, and endured no longer than the 'time of reformation.' On this ground, by just and necessary consequence, it followeth that the redemption wrought by Christ is absolutely perfect, and that there is no need of any other. This being eternal, all that have been, all that shall be redeemed, have been and shall be redeemed by it; and they who are redeemed by it need no other means. The liberty where into Christ Jesus brings the elect is permanent and lasting, it abides irremovable and unchangeable to all eternity. The Jews which had sold themselves to be servants were to be set free at the jubilee, yet the jubilee lasted but for one year; therefore the same persons might afterwards become bondmen again, Lev 25:1-55. But this 'acceptable year of the Lord's redeemed,' Isa 61:2, and Isa 63:4, is an everlasting year, it shall never end; therefore they shall never be subject to bondage any more. It is observable that when the Lord would comfort the Jews with hopes of a return from Babylon, he usually annexed evangelical promises respecting the deliverance of poor sinners from the slavery of Satan, whereof that captivity was a type, some of which promises do plainly express the perpetuity of that

spiritual freedom which they shall enjoy. Take a taste: Isa 35:10, 'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away,' Isa 51:6, 'Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.' Isa 60:19-20, 'The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.' Jer 31:11-12, 'For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.' But,

[5.] The fifth excellent property of that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ is this—viz., it is an enriching redemption; it is a redemption that makes men rich in 'spiritual blessings in heavenly places,' Eph 1:3. There are many choice and rare spiritual benefits that wait and attend on redemption, that go hand in hand with redemption: as reconciliation, remission of our sins, justification of our persons, adoption, sanctification, full glorification, Rom 5:1, and Rom 3:24-25. We have some foretastes of it in this life. Here we have the 'first-fruits of the Spirit,' Rom 8:23, Rom 8:30; but in the morning of the resurrection we shall reap the whole harvest of glory. It is called, by way of eminency, 'the salvation of our souls,' 1Pe 1:9. Redemption, and the noble benefits attending on it, are salvation begun; but in heaven this shall be salvation consummate. Redemption is a rich mine, containing a mass of treasure that cannot be valued. Could we dig into it, could we pry into it, we might find variety of the choicest jewels and pearls, in comparison whereof all the riches of the Indies, all the gold of Ophir, and all the precious jewels and most orient pearls that are in the world, are no better than dross. I have read of Tiberius the emperor, that passing by a place where he saw a cross lying in the ground upon a marble stone, and causing the stone to be digged up, he found a great treasure under the cross: but what was this treasure but a great nothing to that treasure that is wrapped up in our redemption by Christ! What the Lord said once to his anointed Cyrus, a temporal deliverer of his people, the same he hath spoken, and much more, to his anointed Jesus, the greater Saviour and Redeemer of his church: 'I will give thee the treasures of darkness, the hidden riches of secret places,' Isa 43:3. There are 'unsearchable riches' in Jesus Christ. In him are riches of grace, of all grace; in him are riches of justification, and riches of sanctification, and riches of consolation, and riches of glorification. Would you share in the best of riches, would you share in the most durable riches, would you share in soul riches, would you share in heavenly riches? Oh, then, secure your interest in the redemption that is by Jesus Christ. But,

[6.] The sixth, and last, excellent property of that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ is this—viz., it is a redemption-sweetening redemption; it is such a redemption as sweetens all other redemptions. It is redemption by Christ that sweetens our redemption out of this trouble and that, out of this affliction and that, out of this danger and that, out of this sickness and that, out of this bondage and that. Redemption by Christ is like that tree which Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah, that made them sweet, Exo 15:23. This water became sweet for the use and service of the

Israelites for a time only, and remained not always sweet after, as appears by Pliny's Natural History, who makes mention of those bitter waters in his time. But the redemption that we have by Jesus Christ does for ever sweeten all the bitter trials and afflictions that we meet with in this world. The Jewish doctors say that this tree was bitter, and they give us this note upon it, 'that it is the manner of the blessed God to sweeten that which is bitter by that which is bitter.' I shall not dispute about the truth of their notion; but this I may safely say, that it is the manner of the blessed God to sweeten our greatest troubles, and our, sharpest trials, by that redemption that we have by Jesus Christ. And thus you see the excellent properties of that redemption that Jesus Christ, by covenant or compact with his Father, was engaged to work for us. But,

(4.) The fourth proposition is this—viz., That the blessed and glorious titles that are given to Jesus Christ, in the Holy Scriptures, do clearly and strongly evidence that there was a covenant of redemption passed between God the Father and Jesus Christ. He is called a 'mediator of the covenant' of reconciliation, interceding for and procuring of it; and that not by a simple entreaty, but by giving himself over to the Father, calling for satisfaction to justice, that reconciliation might go on, for paying a compensatory price sufficient to satisfy divine justice for the elect. 'There is one God, and one mediator between God and men'—to wit, God incarnate—the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all—to wit, his elect children—to be testified in due time,' 1Ti 2:5-6. Let me glance a little upon the words, 'one mediator between God and men.' In the Greek, it is one mediator of God and men; which may refer either to the two parties betwixt which he deals, pleading for God to men and for men to God, or to the two natures, mediator of God, having the divine nature, and of men, having the human nature upon him; one mediator, not of redemption only, as the papists grant, but of intercession too. We need no other master of requests in heaven, but the man Christ Jesus, who being so near us, in the matter of his incarnation, will never be strange to us in the business of intercession. 'A ransom,' the Greek ■ντ■λυτρον, is a counter-price such as we could never have paid, but must have remained and even rotted in prison, but for our all-sufficient surety and Saviour. The ransom that Christ paid was a real testimony of his mediatorship betwixt God and men, whereby he reconciled both. 'The man Christ Jesus.' Paul speaks not this to exclude his divinity from this office of mediatorship, for he is 'God manifested in the flesh,' 1Ti 3:16, and 'God hath purchased his church by his own blood,' Acts 20:28; but to shew that, in his human nature, he paid the ransom for us, and that, as man, he is like unto us, Heb 2:10; and therefore all sorts and ranks of men have a free access by faith unto him, and to his sacrifice. He is also called a Redeemer, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' Job 19:25. The word redeemer in the Hebrew is very emphatical, Goel; for it signifieth a kinsman, near allied unto him; one that was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. Christ is of our kindred by incarnation, and redeems us by his passion. The words are an allusion to the ceremonial law, where the nearest kinsman was to take the wife and buy the land, Ruth 3:9, Ruth 3:12-13, and Ruth 4:4-5. We were Satan's by nature, but Christ our brother, our kinsman, hath redeemed us by the price of his own blood, and will deliver us from hell, and bring us 'to the inheritance of the saints in light,' John 20:17; and therefore deserves the name of a redeemer, 1Pe 1:3-4; Col 1:12. Jesus Christ is near, very near, yea, nearest of kin to us, Eph 5:30; he is flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and blood of our blood: 'Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same,' Heb 2:14. Now it is evident, by the old law of redemption, that the nearest kinsman was under a special obligation to redeem; as you may see by comparing Ruth 3:12-13 with Ruth 4:4-5. Boaz was a kinsman, and had right to redeem; yet

because there was a nearer kinsman, he would not engage himself, but upon his refusal: 'If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it; but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it besides thee, and I am after thee.' Now Jesus Christ is nearest of kin to us, and therefore, upon the strictest terms and laws of redemption, he is Goel, our Redeemer. If we consider Jesus Christ as a kinsman, a brother, we must say, that he had not only a right to redeem us; but that he was also under the highest obligation to redeem us. There is a double way of redeeming persons:—(1.) By force and power: thus when Lot was taken prisoner by those four kings that came against Sodom, 'Abraham armed his servants,' and by force and power redeemed them, Gen 14:14, Gen 14:16. We were all Satan's prisoners, Satan's captives, but Christ our nearest kinsman, our brother, 'by spoiling principalities and powers,' Col 2:15, rescues us out of that tyrant's hand. (2.) There is a redemption by price or ransom; to redeem is to buy again, 1Co 6:20, 'Ye are bought with a price;' 1Co 7:23, 'Ye are bought with a price.' The word price is added, not by a pleonasmus, but κατὰ ἕξιόν, to intimate the excellency and dignity of the price wherewith they were bought, which was not 'silver or gold; but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot,' 1Pe 1:18-19. 'Ye are bought with a price;' that is, ye are dearly bought, by a price of inestimable value; but of this before. Again, sometimes Christ is called 'the surety of a better covenant.' Heb 7:22, 'By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament,' so called from the manner of the confirmation of it—viz., by the death of Christ. Look, as Christ was our surety to God, for the discharge of our debt—the surety and debtor, in law, are reputed as one person—so he is God's surety to us, for the performance of his promises. The office of a surety being applied to Christ sheweth that he hath so far engaged himself for us, as that he neither can nor will start from his engagement. You shall as soon remove the earth, stop the sun in his course, empty the sea with a cockle-shell, make a world, and unmake yourselves, as any power on earth, or in hell, shall ever be able to hinder Christ from the performance of the office of a surety. A perfect fulfilling of all righteousness, according to the tenor of the law, is required of man. Now Christ our surety, by a voluntary subjection of himself to the law, and by being made under the law, he hath fulfilled all righteousness, Gal 4:4; Mat 3:15; and that he did this for us is evident by that phrase of the apostle, Rom 5:19, 'By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' The contents of the law must be accomplished by our surety, or else we can never escape the curse of the law, Gal 3:10, Gal 3:13; there must be a translation of the law from us in our persons, unto the person of our surety, or we are undone, and that for ever. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, and hath made us just by his obedience; 'We are made the righteousness of God in him,' Rom 10:4. Our surety became subject to the law, that he might redeem us that were obnoxious to the law, 2Co 5:21. Again, full satisfaction for every transgression is required of man. Now Christ our surety hath made satisfaction for all our sins, he was made a curse for us,' Gal 3:13; and by that means he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law. To exact a debt which is fully satisfied, is a point of injustice. Now Christ our surety having made full satisfaction for all our sins, we need not fear to stand before the face of God's justice. A debtor that hath a surety that is able and willing to pay his debt, yea, who hath fully paid it, need fear no colours. This title, 'a surety of a better covenant,' does necessarily import a blessed covenant between Jesus Christ and his dear Father, to whom he freely and readily becomes surety for us; for what is suretyship but a voluntary transferring of another's debt upon the surety, he obliging to pay the debt for which he engageth as surety? Thus you see, by the blessed and glorious titles that are given to Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, that there was a covenant of

redemption passed between God the Father and Jesus Christ. But,

(5.) The fifth proposition is this, That the work of our redemption and salvation, was transacted between God the Father and Jesus Christ, before the foundation of the world. This federal transaction between the Father and the Son was from eternity. Upon this account the Lord Jesus is said to be 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev 13:8, because that it was agreed and covenanted between God the Father and Jesus Christ, that he should, in the fulness of time, be made flesh and die for sinners; and therefore it was said to be done from the foundation of the world. Though Christ was not actually slain, but when he suffered for us upon the cross, yet he was slain from the beginning in God's purpose, in God's decrees, in God's promises, in the sacrifices, in the faith of the elect, and in the martyrs; for Abel, the first that ever died, died a martyr, he died for religion. This compact betwixt the Father and the Son bears date from eternity. This the apostle asserts: 2Ti 1:9, 'Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.' Here is grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But what grace was that which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began? Doubtless it was the grace of redemption, which God, in his purpose and decree, had given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. The scripture last cited does clearly shew that God the Father and Jesus Christ dealt together about the redemption of souls before the world began; and that all our everlasting concernments were agreed on and made sure between them: so that Tit 1:2 gives the same sound, 'In hope of eternal life; which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.' How was this life promised before the world began, but in this covenant of redemption, wherein God the Father promised and engaged to Jesus Christ that he would give eternal life to all his seed? So the apostle tells us, 'He hath chosen us in him,' that is, in Christ, 'before the foundation of the world.' There was an eternal contrivance, compact, covenant, or agreement between God the Father and Jesus Christ, concerning the sanctification, holiness, and salvation of the elect. God agrees with Christ about the everlasting happiness of his chosen before the world began. So John 10:16, 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring.' Why must he bring them home? how was he bound, how was he engaged to bring home his other sheep, that he puts a must upon it? 'Them also I must bring.' doubtless it was from this covenant and agreement which he had made with God the Father, wherein he had engaged himself to bring home all his elect. Christ takes a great deal of pains to bring home his sheep; being bound in the covenant of redemption, to present all that are given him by charter blameless before the Father; therefore, saith he, I bring them, and 'I must bring them;' the matter not being left arbitrary, even in respect of his obligation to God the Father, Col 1:22. Certainly the decree, covenant, and agreement between God the Father and Jesus Christ about the whole way of redemption, about all things belonging to the salvation of the elect, to be brought about in due time, was fixed and settled before the world began. Ponder seriously on this, it may be a loadstone to draw out your hearts more than ever, to love the Father and the Son, and to delight in the Father and the Son, and to act faith upon the Father and the Son, and to long to be with the Father and the Son, and all your days to admire at the love of the Father and the Son, who have from eternity, by compact and agreement, secured your souls and your everlasting concernments. But,

(6.) The sixth proposition is this, That God the Father had the first and chief hand in this great work of saving sinners, by virtue of this covenant of redemption, wherein he and his Son had agreed to

bring 'many sons to glory,' Heb 2:10. Weak Christians many times have their thoughts and apprehensions more busied and taken up with the love of the Son, than with the love of the Father; but they must remember, that in the great and glorious work of redemption, God the Father had a great hand, an eminent hand, yea, the first and chief hand. God the Father first laid the foundation-stone of all our happiness and blessedness. His head and heart was first taken up about that heaven-born project, the salvation of sinners: Isa 28:16, 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation;' Heb., 'I am he that foundeth a stone in Zion.' It is God the Father that hath long since laid Christ as a sure foundation, for all his people to build their hopes of happiness upon; it is he that first laid Christ, the true corner-stone, whereby Zion is for ever secured against death, hell, and wrath. Hence it is said, 'The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand,' that is, God's eternal decree about the work of our redemption and salvation, shall be powerfully, faithfully, and completely executed by Jesus Christ; who, by his word and Spirit, shall communicate unto all his elect the fruit of his death, to life and salvation, Rom 9:33; 1Pe 2:6; Isa 53:10. Again: Job 33:24, 'Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.' The Hebrew word signifies a price paid to redeem a man's life or liberty, 'I have found a ransom,' or an atonement, a cover for man's sin. Angels and men could never have found a ransom, but by my deep, infinite, and unsearchable wisdom, saith God the Father, 'I have found a ransom,' I have found out a way, a means for the redeeming of mankind, from going down to the infernal pit, viz., the death and passion of my dearest Son. But where, O blessed God, didst thou find a ransom? Not in angels, not in men, not in legal sacrifices, not in gold or silver, not in tears, humblings, and meltings of my people; but in my own bosom. That Jesus, that Son of my love, who has lain in my bosom from all eternity, John 1:18, he is that ransom, that by my own matchless wisdom and singular goodness, 'I have found.' I have not called a council to inquire where to find a ransom, that fallen man might be preserved from falling into the fatal pit of destruction; but I have 'found a ransom' in my own heart, my own breasts, my own bosom; without advising or consulting with others, I have found out a way how to save sinners with a salve to my honour, justice, holiness, and truth. Had all the angels in heaven, from the first day of their creation, to this very day, sat in serious council, to invent, contrive, or find out a way, a means, whereby lost man might be secured against the curse of the law, hell, condemnation, and wrath to come, and whereby he might have been made happy, and blessed for ever; and all this without the least wrong or prejudice to the justice and righteousness of God, they could never have found out any way or means to have effected those great things. Our redemption, by a ransom, is God's own invention, and God's only invention. The blessed ransom which the Lord has found out for poor sinners, is the blood of his own dearest Son—a ransom which never entered into the thoughts or hearts of angels and men, till God had revealed it—which is called 'the blood of the covenant,' Heb 10:29, because thereby the covenant is confirmed, and all covenant-mercies assured to us. Again,—'God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,' John 3:16; Hos 14:4. Here is a sic, without a sicut, that sic, so, signifies the firstness of the Father's love, and the freeness of the Father's love, and the vehemency of the Father's love, and the admirableness of the Father's love, and the matchlessness of the Father's love. Oh! what manner of love is this, for God to give his Son, not his servant; his begotten Son, not his adopted Son, his only Son, and not one son of many; his only Son by eternal generation, and communication of the same essence; to be a ransom and mediator for sinners! God the Father loving lost man, sent his Son to suffer and to do the office of a mediator, that through his

mediation, he might communicate the effects of his love, in a way agreeable to his justice! for God loved the world, and that antecedently to his giving Christ, and as a cause of it. The design, the project of saving sinners, was first contrived and laid by God the Father; therefore Christ says, 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do.' God the Father sent his Son, and God the Father sealed his Son a commission to give life to lost sinners. 'Him hath God the Father sealed;' that is, made his commission authentical, as men do their deeds by their seals. It is a metaphor taken from them who ratify their authority whom they send; that is, approve of them, as it were, by setting to their seal. Christ is to be acknowledged to be he whom the Father hath authorised and furnished to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners, and the storehouse from whence they are to expect all spiritual supplies. Look, as kings give sealed warrants and commissions to their ministers of state, who are sent out or employed in great affairs, 1Ki 21:8; Eph 3:12, and Eph 4:8, so Christ is the Father's great ambassador, authorised and sent out by him to bring about the redemption and salvation of lost man. And look, as a seal represents in wax that which is engraven on it, so the Father hath communicated to him his divine essence and properties, and stamped upon him all divine perfection, for carrying on the work of redemption. And look, as a seal annexed to a commission is a public evidence of the person's authority, so Christ's endowments are visible marks whereby to know him, and clear evidences that he was the true Messiah, and of the Father's installing him into that office of a Redeemer. So John 6:38, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.' In this verse Christ declares in the general that his errand into the world is to do his Father's will who sent him, and not his own; which is not to be understood that, as God, he hath a different and contrary will to the Father's, though, as man, he hath a distinct and subordinate will to his; but the meaning is, he came not to do his own will only, as the Jews alleged against him, but the Father's also; and that in this work he was the Father's commissioner, sent to do what he had intrusted him with, and not, as the Jews gave out, that he was one who did that for which he had no warrant. Christ, in entertaining them that come to him, as in ver. 37, is not only led thereunto by his own mercy, and bounty, and love towards them, as the reward of all his sufferings, but doth also stand obliged thereunto by virtue of a commission and trust laid upon him by the Father, and accepted and undertaken by him; therefore he doth mention 'the will of him that sent him' as a reason of his fidelity in this matter. By what has been said, it is most evident that God the Father had the first and chief hand in the great work of our redemption. It is good to look upon God the Father as the first projector of our happiness and blessedness, that we may honour the Father as we honour the Son, and love the Father as we love the Son, and value the Father as we value the Son, and admire the Father as we admire the Son, and exalt the Father as we exalt the Son, and cleave to the Father as we cleave to the Son, &c. I have a little the longer insisted on this proposition, because commonly we are more apprehensive of the love of the Son than we are of the love of the Father, and that I may the more heighten your apprehensions of the Father's love in the great work of redemption. Ah! what amazing love is this, that the thoughts of the Father, that the eye of the Father, that the heart of the Father, should be first fixed upon us, that he should begin the treaty with his Son, that he should make the first motion of love, that he should first propose the covenant of redemption, and thereby lay such a sure foundation for man's recovery out of his slavery and misery. To speak after the manner of men, the business from eternity lay thus: Here is man, saith God the Father to his Son, fallen from his primitive purity, glory, and excellency, into a most woeful gulf of sin and misery; he that was once a son is now become a slave; he that was once a friend is

now become an enemy, Eph 2:12-13; he that was once near us is now afar off; he that was once in favour is now cast off; he that was once made in our image has now the image of Satan stamped upon him, Gen 1:26-27; he who had once sweet communion with us has now fellowship with the devil and his angels. Now out of this forlorn estate he can never deliver himself, neither can all the angels in heaven deliver him. Now this being his present case and state, I make this offer to thee, O my Son: If, in the fulness of time, Php 2:7-8, thou wilt assume the nature of man, 'tread the winepress of my wrath alone,' Isa 63:3, bear the curse, Gal 3:13, shed thy blood, die, suffer, satisfy my justice, fulfil my royal law, then I can, upon the most honourable terms imaginable, save fallen man, and put him into a safer and happier condition than ever that was from whence Adam fell, and give thee a noble reward for all thy sufferings. Upon this Jesus Christ replies: O my Father! I am very ready and willing to do, to suffer, to die, to satisfy thy justice, to comply with thee in all thy noble motions, and in all thy gracious and favourable inclinations, that poor sinners may be sanctified and saved, made gracious and glorious, holy and happy, that poor sinners may never perish, that poor sinners may be secured from wrath to come, and be brought into a state of light, life, and love, 1Th 1:10; Heb 10:10, Heb 10:14; I am willing to make myself an offering; and, 'Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God,' Psalms 40:6-7. Thus you see how firstly, and greatly, and graciously, the thoughts of God have been set at work, that poor sinners may be for ever secured and saved. But,

(7.) The seventh proposition is this, It was agreed between the Father and the Son that Jesus Christ should be incarnate, that he should take on him the nature of those whom he was to save, and for whom he was to satisfy, and to bring to glory. Christ's incarnation was very necessary in respect of that work of redemption, that he, by agreement with the Father, had undertaken. He had engaged himself to his Father that he would redeem lost sinners, and, as their surety, make full satisfaction. By the fall of Adam, God and man was fallen out, they were at variance, at enmity, at open hostility, Rom 8:7; so that by this means all intercourse between heaven and earth was stopped, and all trading between God and us ceased. Now to redress all this, and to make an atonement, a mediator was necessary; now this office belonged unto Jesus Christ, both by his Father's ordination and his own voluntary susception, Heb 10:5-7; and for discharge of it a human nature was very requisite. There was an absolute necessity that Christ should suffer, partly because he was pleased to substitute himself in the sinner's stead, and partly because his sufferings only could be satisfactory. But now, unless Christ be incarnate, how can he suffer? The whole lies thus: without satisfaction no redemption, without suffering no satisfaction, without flesh no suffering; ergo, Christ must be incarnate. The Word must be made flesh, John 1:14 : and so Heb 2:14, Heb 2:16, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; for verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' 1Ti 3:16, 'Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' This is only applicable to the person of Christ. He that by his office is to be Emmanuel, God with us, he must, in regard of his person, be Emmanuel also, that is, God-man in one person. He that by office is to make peace between God and man, he must be God-man; he that by office is to stand and minister between God and men, he must be God and man, that so he might not be only zealously faithful towards God's justice, but also tenderly merciful towards men's errors, Heb 2:17-18, and Heb 4:15-16. Look, as he must be more

than man that he may be able so to suffer, that his sufferings may be meritorious, that he may go through-stitch with the work of redemption, and triumph over death, devils, difficulties, discouragements, curse, hell, wrath, &c., all which Christ could never have done had he been but a mere man, so it was requisite that he should be man, that he might be in a capacity to suffer, die, and obey; for these are not works for one who is only God. A God only cannot suffer, a man only cannot merit. God cannot obey, man is bound to obey. Wherefore Christ, that he might obey and suffer, he was man; and that he might merit by his obedience and suffering, he was God-man. Now such a person, and only such a person, did the work of redemption call for. That is a mighty scripture, Php 2:6-7, 'Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal with God'—here's Christ's preexisting in the nature of the Godhead, and then after comes his manhood—'but made himself of no reputation:' Greek, he 'emptied himself,' as it were, of his divine dignity and majesty; he did disrobe himself of his glory, and became a sinner, both by imputation and reputation, for our sakes, for our salvation—'and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men,' Isa 53:6, Isa 53:9. All this Christ did upon his Father's prescription, and in pursuit of the great work of redemption. The blessed Spirit fitted the man Christ Jesus to be a meet mediator and redeemer for poor sinners. The Spirit formed the nature of man, of the substance of the virgin, after an extraordinary manner for the service of the Lord Christ, Luk 1:35; he sanctified the human nature which Christ assumed, after such a perfect manner, that it was free from all sin, Gal 4:4; Luk 1:35; in the very moment of conception he united this pure human nature with the divine in the same person, the person of the Son of God, that he might be a fit head, mediator, and redeemer for us, Heb 10:5. But,

(8.) The eighth proposition is this,—viz., That there were commandments from the Father to the Son which he must obey and submit to. God the Father did put forth his paternal authority, and lay his commands upon his Son, to engage in this great work of redeeming and saving poor sinners' souls. He had a command from the Father what to teach his people, as the prophet of the church: 'For I have not spoken of myself,' saith Christ; 'but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak,' John 12:49. Christ declares that he had received a commission from the Father, who sent him, concerning his doctrine, and what to say and speak; and that he was persuaded that this doctrine delivered to him by the Father points out the true way to eternal life; and that he had exactly followed this commission in preaching, both for matter and manner. The two words of saying and speaking may be taken comprehensively, pointing out all the ways of delivering his commission, by set and solemn preaching, or occasional conferences, and the whole subject-matter of his preaching, in precepts, promises, and threatenings; and so it will import that his commission from the Father was full, both for matter and manner, and his discharge thereof answerable. Christ is a true prophet, who speaks neither more or less in the doctrine of the gospel than what was the Father's will should be delivered to us: 'For whatsoever I speak, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.' Christ keeps close to his commission, without adding or diminishing; and herein Christ's practice should be every faithful minister's pattern. Again, Christ had a command to lay down his life for those that were given him: 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father,' John 10:18. The Father is so well pleased with the reconciliation of lost sinners, that he loveth Christ for the undertaking thereof, and is fully satisfied with his suffering for attaining that end. In both these respects it holds good: 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life,' John 10:17. The Father is

pleased with him that he undertook this service, and is content with his death as a sufficient ransom. Christ having laid down his life for the redemption of lost man, did take it again, as a testimony that the Father was satisfied with his sufferings. Now the way of the accomplishment of our redemption was agreed on betwixt the Father and the Son before the accomplishment thereof; therefore saith he, 'This commandment have I received of my Father,' which makes it clear that he came into the world fully instructed about carrying on the work of redemption, [Psa 40:6-7 with Heb 10:6-8.] It pleased Christ to suffer death, not only voluntarily, but in a way of subjection to his Father's command, that so the merit thereof might every way be full and acceptable to the Father: 'For this commandment have I received.' He was content to be a servant by paction, that so his sufferings might be accepted for his people. And so when Christ was going to die, he saith, 'That the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do: arise, let us go hence,' John 14:31. As if he had said, Power is permitted to Satan and his accomplices to persecute me to death, that dying for man's redemption, the world may see the obedience and love I bear to the Father, who hath thus determined. All that Christ suffered for the redemption of sinners was by the order, and at the command, of the Father, who did covenant with him concerning this work: 'For as the Father gave me a commandment, even so do I.' In this scripture, as in a crystal glass, you may see that Christ did enter the lists in his sufferings with much willingness and alacrity, with much courage and resolution, that so he might commend his love to us, and encourage us to do the like through him. Therefore, saith he, 'Arise, and let us go hence.' I am very free and ready, by my death and sufferings, to complete the work of man's redemption, according to the covenant and agreement that long since was made between the Father and myself. If Christ should fail in complying with his Father's commands about suffering and dying for us, then not only the breach of articles, but high disobedience too, might be justly charged upon him; but from all such charges Christ has bravely quitted himself. There was a special law laid upon Christ. as he was our mediator, which law he was willing and ready to obey, in order to our redemption. That Christ should die was no part of the moral law, but it was a positive special law laid upon Christ Well, this law he obeys, he complies with: 'I lay down my life for my sheep; this commandment have I received of my Father,' John 10:11, John 10:15, John 10:17-18. Christ, as mediator, had a command from his Father to die, and he observes it; hence God calls him his servant: 'Behold my servant whom I uphold,' Isa 42:1. And in pursuance of God's royal law, will, and pleasure, he takes upon him the form of a servant; and frequently proclaims before all the world, that he 'came to do the will of him that sent him,' Php 2:6-7. Again, God the Father lays a special command upon Jesus Christ, to preserve and bring to glory all those that come unto him. Jesus Christ has not only leave to save the elect, but a charge to save the elect: 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out'—where the doubled negatives, in the original, serve to make the assertion strong, and to carry their faith over all their doubts and fears—'for I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Christ is to be answerable for all those that are given to him, at the last day, and therefore we need not doubt but that he will certainly employ all the power of his Godhead to secure and save all those that he must be accountable for. In this blessed scripture there are several special things that we may take notice of, that are pat to our

present purpose:—

[1.] As first, that it is the great dignity and happiness of the elect, that they are, from eternity, given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, as the reward of his sufferings, to come to him in due time; and that they are given to him in trust, and that he must be accountable for them, as being given by the Father to him, Psa 24:1. They were the Father's first, not only by the right of creation, but by particular election also; and being thus the Father's, they are given to Christ from eternity, to be redeemed by him, and as the reward of his sufferings. Again, such as are elected and given to Christ, will certainly, in due time, come to him. Their being given from eternity, produceth their being given and coming in time; for God is faithful, who will not frustrate Christ of what he hath purchased; and the power that draweth them is invincible and irresistible; therefore, saith he, 'All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me.' Again, Christ in entertaining them that come to him is not only led thereunto by his own mercy, and bounty, and love towards them as the reward of his sufferings, but doth also stand obliged thereunto by virtue of a commission and trust laid upon him by the Father, and accepted and undertaken by him; therefore doth he mention 'the will of him that sent me,' as a reason of his fidelity in this matter. Further, from ver. 39, we may observe that the gospel contains an extract of the deep counsels of God, and of the eternal transactions betwixt the Father and the Son concerning lost man, so far as is for our good; for he brings out and reads in the gospel his very commission, and some articles of the covenant, passed betwixt the Father and him. Again, the first fountain and rise of the salvation of any of lost mankind, is in the absolute and sovereign will and pleasure of God; for here he mentions the will of him that sent him, as the first original of all; from whence their giving to Christ, their coming and safety, do flow. Again, these, whose salvation the Father willeth, are given over to Christ in his eternal purpose, to be brought to him in due time; for so it is here held out. Again, such as are given to Christ by the Father, and do in time come to him, are put in his keeping, and he hath a care of them, not to lose the least of them, 'For this is the will of him that sent me, that of all he hath given me, I should lose nothing,' John 10:28-29; wherein the Father doth so commit the trust to him, as that he still keeps them in his own hand also. Again, Christ's charge and care of these that are given to him, extends even to the very day of their resurrection, that there he may make a good account of them, when all perils and hazards are now over, and that he may not so much as lose their dust, but gather it together again, and raise it up in glory, to be a proof of his fidelity; for, saith he, 'I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day;' and so death and dissolution proves no loss.

[2.] Again, from ver. 40, we may observe, that such as are given to Christ, to be under his charge, and to participate of his benefits, are drawn to believe on him: and it is the Father's will, and a part of the transaction betwixt him and his Son, that faith be the way to partake of these benefits, and not the fulfilling of the impossible condition of the works of the law; for they who are given to Christ, are expounded to be they who believe on him; and it is the Father's will that such partake of these benefits here mentioned, as of the rest of his purchase. Albeit mortification, holiness, &c., do prepare for the possession of these benefits, and do evidence a right thereunto, and the begun possession thereof; yet it is only faith in Christ that giveth the right and title, that so it may be of grace, Eph 2:6-8. Again, it is covenanted betwixt the Father and the Son, that believers shall be made partakers of everlasting life; for it is explained, that not to lose them, ver. 39, is 'that they may have everlasting life.' For the further assurance of believers of their eternal happiness, it is also covenanted that they shall have this life in present possession, in the earnest, and firstfruits

thereof; for they have everlasting life even here, and before their raising up. They have everlasting life—(1.) In promisso; (2.) In pretio; (3.) In primitiis. He stands already on the battlements of heaven, he hath one foot in the porch of paradise. Again, Christ having given an earnest-penny of salvation, will not suffer it to be lost, by any difficulty or impediment in the way, but will carry believers through all difficulties, till he destroy death and the grave, and raise up their very dust, that in body and soul they may partake of that bliss; and that he may make it manifest, that death and rotting in the grave doth not make void his interest, nor cause his affection to cease. Therefore it is added, 'And I will raise him up at the last day.' Thus you see that God the Father did lay his commands upon his Son, to engage in this great work of redeeming and saving poor sinners' souls, &c.

[3.] In the third place, I shall shew you that the manner or quality of the transaction between God the Father and Jesus Christ, was by mutual engagements and stipulations; each person undertaking to perform his part in order to our recovery and eternal felicity. We find each person undertaking for himself by solemn promise. The Father promiseth that he will hold Christ's hand and keep him, Isa 42:6. God the Father engages himself to direct and assist Christ, and to keep him from miscarrying; and that he will give him all necessary strength and ability for the execution of his mediatory office, and work wonders by him and with him, according to that word, 'My Father hitherto worketh, and I work,' John 5:17. And the Son engages himself that he will obey the Father's call, and not be rebellious: Isa 50:5, 'I was not rebellious, neither turned away back;' that is, I did not hang back, as Moses once and again did, Exo 3:11, Exo 3:13, and Exo 4:1, Exo 4:10, Exo 4:13; nor refuse to go when God sent me, as once Jonah did, Jon 1:3; but I offered myself freely and readily to my Father's call. There was no affliction, no opposition, no persecution, no evil usage that I met with in carrying on the work of redemption that did ever startle me or discourage me, or make me flinch or shrink back from that great and blessed work that I had undertaken. I was dutiful and obedient to the calls and commands of my Father, in all things that he required of me or set me about. Now the Father and the Son being thus mutually engaged by promise one to another in honour and faithfulness, it highly concerned them to keep one another close to the terms of the covenant that was made between them, and accordingly they did; for God the Father peremptorily stands upon that complete and full satisfaction that Christ had promised to give to his justice; and therefore, when the day of payment came, he would not abate Jesus Christ one penny, one farthing of the many ten thousand talents that he was to pay down upon the nail for us, Mat 18:24: Rom 8:32, 'God spared not his own Son;' that is, he abated nothing of that full price that, by agreement with his Father, he was to lay down for us. Other fathers give their all to spare and redeem their children; but the heart of God the Father is so fully and strongly set upon satisfaction that he will not spare his Son, his own Son, his only Son, but give him up to death, yea, to an accursed death, that we might be spared and saved for ever. I have read of a Roman emperor—Mauritius, who died most miserably—who chose rather to spare his money than to redeem his soldiers being taken prisoners. But to redeem us God would not spare, no, not his own Son; because no money nor treasure would serve the turn, but only the blood, yea, the heart-blood of his dear Son, 1Pe 1:18-19. And as God the Father keeps Christ close to the terms of the covenant, so Jesus Christ keeps his Father close to the terms of the covenant also: John 17:4-5, 'I have glorified thee on the earth,' saith Christ to his Father, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.' O my Father, I have finished the work of redemption; but where is

the wages, where is the glory, where is the reward that thou hast promised me? There was nothing committed to Christ by the Father, to be done on earth for the purchasing of our redemption, but he did finish it; so that the debt is paid, justice satisfied, and sin, Satan, and death spoiled; so that nothing remains but that Christ be glorified, according to the promise of the Father to him. The sum of Christ's petition is this, that since he had finished the work of redemption, that therefore the Father, according to his engagement, would advance him to the possession of that glory that he enjoyed from all eternity. Now for the clearing of this we must consider, that as Christ was from eternity the glorious God, so we are not to conceive of any real change in this glory of his godhead; as if by his estate of humiliation he had suffered any diminution; or by his state of exaltation any real accession were made to his glory as God. But the true meaning is this, that Christ having, according to the paction passed betwixt the Father and him, obscured the glory of his godhead for a time, under the veil of the form of a servant, and our sinless infirmities, Php 2:5-8, doth now expect, according to the tenor of the same paction, after he had done his work, to be exalted and glorified, and 'openly declared to be the Son of God,' Rom 1:4; the veil of his estate of humiliation, though not of our nature, being taken away. It is further to be considered that however this eternal glory be proper to him as God, yet he prays to be glorified in his whole person. 'Glorify me,' because not only his human nature was to be exalted to what glory finite nature was capable of, but the glory of his godhead was to shine in the person of Christ, God-man, and in the man Christ, though without confusion of his natures and properties. Christ did so faithfully discharge his trust, and perfect the work of redemption, as that the Father was engaged by paction to glorify him; and accordingly Christ, God incarnate, is exalted with the Father in glory and majesty; so that believers may be as sure that all things necessary for their redemption are done, as it is sure that Christ is glorified. But,

[4.] In the fourth place, let us seriously consider of the articles agreed on between the Father and the Son,—let us weigh well the promises that God the Father makes to Jesus Christ, and the promises that Jesus Christ makes to the Father, for the bringing about our reconciliation and redemption, that so we may the more clearly see how greatly both the heart of the Father and the heart of the Son is engaged in the salvation of poor sinners' souls. Now there are seven things which God the Father promiseth to do for Jesus Christ, upon his undertaking the work of our redemption.

First, That he will give him the Spirit in an abundant measure 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord,' Isa 11:2. God the Father fits Jesus Christ for the work of redemption by a large effusion of the graces and gifts of the Spirit upon him. The Spirit of the Lord shall not only come upon Christ, but rest and abide with him. The Holy Spirit shall take up in a more special, yea, singular, manner its perpetual and never-interrupted or eclipsed residence with him and in him. God the Father promises that Christ shall, in his human nature, be filled with all the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, that he may be as an everlasting treasure, and as an overflowing fountain, to all his people. So Isa 42:1, 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.' So Isa 61:1, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.' So John 3:34, 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.' Christ, as mediator, is endued with the Spirit for the discharge of that office; and though Christ as man hath not an infinite measure of the Spirit, though indeed in that person the fulness of

the Godhead dwells, as being God also, for that were to be no more man, but God, yet the gifts and graces of the Spirit are poured out upon the man Christ in a measure far above all creatures, Col 2:10; for though every believer be complete in him, yet, for what is inherent in him, they have but some gifts of the Spirit, 1Co 12:4; Eph 4:7; but Jesus Christ had all sorts of gifts. They had gifts for some particular uses, but he had gifts for all uses; they have a measure of gifts which are capable of increase, he above measure, so much as the human nature is capable of, which, though it be finite in itself, yet it cannot be measured nor comprehended by us. So much is imported in that, 'God giveth not the Spirit by measure to him,' being understood of his manhood; though, as we said, if we speak of his person, he hath the Spirit infinitely and without measure, Col 1:19, and Col 2:3, Col 2:9. This fulness became Christ as man, that he might be a fit temple for the Godhead, and as a mediator, that he might be the universal head of his church and storehouse of his people, that from him, as from a common person, spiritual root or principle, the Holy Ghost with his gifts and graces might be communicated to us. 'He received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them,' Psa 68:18; 'Of his fulness we receive grace for grace,' John 1:16; 'The first Adam was a living soul, but the second Adam is a quickening spirit,' 1Co 15:45. In the man Christ Jesus there is a treasury and fulness of grace and glory for us; he is the lord-keeper of all our lives, of all our souls, of all our comforts, and of all our graces; and he is the lord-treasurer of all our spiritual, durable, and eternal riches, 2Ti 1:12. We lost our first stock by the fall of Adam, Pro 8:18. God put a stock into our own hands, and we soon proved bankrupts and run out of stock and block. Now since that fatal fall, God will trust us no more; but he hath out of his great love and noble bounty put a new stock of grace and glory for us into the hands of Jesus Christ, who is mighty, who is able to save to the uttermost, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Isa 9:6; Heb 7:25; Col 2:3. Christ was more capable, by infinite degrees, of the fulness of the Holy Ghost than mere men were or could be; and his employment being also infinitely beyond the employment of men, the measure of the Holy Ghost's fulness in him must needs be accordingly beyond all measure. Hence, by way of emphasis, Christ is called 'the anointed one of God,' John 12:15; Acts 3:22-23. The kings, priests, and prophets among the Jews, who were anointed, were in their unction but types of Christ, who is the great king, priest, and prophet of his church, and anointed above them all, yea, and above all the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and believers under the new testament ministration. In Christ there is all kind of grace, and it is in him in the highest and utmost degree, that he might be able to manage all his offices, and finish 'that work which God gave him to do,' John 17:4; and God hath filled him with his Spirit, that he might successfully bring about the redemption and salvation of sinners. But,

Secondly, God the Father promiseth to invest Jesus Christ with a threefold office, and to anoint him and furnish him with whatever was requisite for the discharge of those three offices—viz., his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, Isa 61:1-3, and Isa 33:22. Christ never forced himself into any of these offices, he never intruded himself into any one office, he never run before he was sent, he never assumed any office till his Father had signed and sealed his commission, John 6:17. Whatever Jesus Christ had acted without a commission under his Father's hand had been invalid and lost, and God would one day have said to him, 'Who hath required this at thy hand?' Isa 1:12. In order to our spiritual and eternal recovery out of sin and misery, it was absolutely necessary that whatever Christ did act as a priest, prophet, or king, he should act by the authority of his Father, by a commission under the broad seal of heaven: Heb 5:5, 'So also Christ glorified

not himself to be made an high-priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son.' These two conjunctions, οὐτω καὶ, 'so also,' being joined together, are notes of a reddition, or later part of a comparison, which is the application thereof. This application may have reference either to the general proposition, thus, 'As no man taketh this honour unto himself,' so also, nor Christ; or to the particular instance of Aaron, thus, 'As Aaron took not to himself that honour; so, nor Christ.' Both tend to the same end. The high-priesthood was an honour; for Christ to have taken that to himself, without a commission from his Father, had been to glorify himself, by conferring glory and honour upon himself. This negative, that 'Christ glorified not himself,' is a clear evidence that Christ arrogated no honour to himself. Christ would not arrogate honour to himself, but rather wait upon his Father, that he might confer upon him what honour he saw meet. Christ glorified not himself to be made a high-priest; but his Father glorified him, in ordaining or commissionating him to be the high-priest. In short, to be made a high-priest is to be deputed or appointed and set apart to that function; and thus was our Lord Jesus Christ made a high-priest. He had never undertaken that office had he not been ordained to it by his Father. But, that you may see Christ's threefold commission to his threefold office, consider,

[1.] First, that God the Father promiseth to Jesus Christ an excellent, royal and eternal priesthood: Heb 7:21, 'For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;' Heb 2:17-18; Psa 110:4. Among the Jews, in the times of the old testament, they had a high-priest, that was in all things to stand between God and them; and in case any sinned, to make an atonement for them. Now look, as the Jews had their high-priest, so the Lord Jesus Christ, he was to be, and he is, the apostle and the high-priest of our Christian profession, as Aaron was of the Jews' profession. The priestly office of Jesus Christ is erected and set up, on purpose for the relief of poor distressed sinners. The work of the high-priest, is to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. In the times of the old testament, the high-priest made an atonement for the people. In case any man had sinned, he brought a sacrifice, and his sins were laid upon the head of the sacrifice. Once every year, the high-priest did enter into the Holy of holies, and with the blood of the sacrifice, did sprinkle the mercy-seat, and laid the sins of the people upon the head of the scape-goat, and so made an atonement for the people, as is clear in that, Lev 16:14, 'He shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger, upon the mercy-seat eastward: and before the mercy-seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times;' and at Lev 16:21, 'Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, and all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and so he shall make an atonement.' This was the work of the high-priest, in case any had sinned, to make an atonement and satisfaction, by the way of type, for the sins of the people. The main scope of the apostle in that, Heb 7:1-28, is to advance Christ his priesthood above the Levitical priesthood, in order to which he premiseth this, that those 'priests were made without an oath,' Heb 7:20. The apostle's third argument to prove the excellency of Christ's priesthood above the Levitical, is taken from the different manner of instituting the one and the other. Christ's institution was more solemn than the Levites'; their institution was without an oath, Christ's institution was with an oath. The argument may be thus framed: that priesthood which is established by an oath, is more excellent than that which is without an oath; but Christ's priesthood is with an oath, and theirs without, ergo.... It is here taken for granted that Christ was most solemnly instituted a priest,

even by an oath; yea, by the oath of God himself, which is the greatest and most solemn manner of institution that can be. God's oath imports two things:—(1.) An infallible certainty of that which he sweareth; (2.) A solemn authority and dignity conferred upon that which he instituted by oath. Great and weighty matters of much concernment use to be established by oath. Hereby it appeareth that Christ's priesthood is a matter of great moment, and of much concernment. This will appear the more evident, if we consider the person who was made priest, viz., our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the greatest person that could be; Heb 7:28; therefore he is fitly called 'a great high-priest,' Heb 4:14. Or if we consider the ends of Christ's priesthood, which were very weighty, and that in reference both to God and man; to God, for the manifestation of his perfect justice, infinite mercy, almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and other divine attributes, which never were, nor ever can be so manifested, as in and by Christ's priesthood; to man, that God's wrath might be averted, his favour procured, man's sin purged, and he freed from all evil, and brought to eternal happiness. Or if we consider the benefits of Christ's priesthood, which are answerable to the foresaid ends. Jesus Christ was appointed and made by the Father, 'The apostle and high-priest of the church's profession.' Heb 3:1-2, 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him.' Christ had a divine call to the execution of all those offices, which he sustained as our mediator, he did not run before he was sent, he did not act without a commission and warrant, he was lawfully constituted by him who had power to undertake that great charge he hath over the church; this we shall find asserted of all his three offices. As for his priestly office, he was made a priest by an immediate call and ordination from God, Heb 5:4-6. The scope of the apostle is to set out the excellency of Christ's priesthood, by comparing it with the Levitical. His priesthood had a concurrence of all things necessary to the Levitical; and it had many excellencies above that. Now among other things required in the priesthood of Aaron, this was one, there must be a divine regular call. This was in the priesthood of Christ; 'He was called of God, a high-priest, after the order of Melchisedec.' That Psa 110:4, is God's sure and irrevocable promise to Christ, touching that excellent and eternal priesthood, whereby the recovery of his seed was to be meritoriously obtained. This priestly office of Christ is sure, because it is confirmed by God's oath, of which before as well as his promise. The promise makes it sure, the oath doubly sure, irrevocable; and certainly the Lord neither can nor will ever repent himself of this promise and oath. The priesthood of Christ is the most noble part of all his mediation. In the priesthood of Christ, and in that especially, lies the latitude and longitude, the profundity and sublimity of God's love towards us; and in respect of this especially, is the whole mystery of our redemption by Christ called *μεγαλεα το θεο*, the magnificent works of God. Christ as man, and as mediator between God and man, was, by his Father, deputed unto his priestly office. Concerning the dignity and excellency of Christ's priestly office, above the Levitical priesthood, I have spoken elsewhere. But,

[2.] Secondly, God the Father promises to Jesus Christ to make him a prophet, a great prophet, yea, the prince of prophets. Christ is a prophet, in way of eminency and excellency, above all other prophets; he was the chief, the head of them all. Christ was made a prophet by an immediate call and ordination from God. Christ, in respect of his prophetic office, can plead the authority of his Father; he can shew a commission for this office, under his Father's own hand. Deu 18:18, 'I will raise them a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command them.' Christ does not raise himself up to

the prophetical office, but God the Father raises him up to this great office. He was anointed of God to preach glad tidings. Weigh that, Isa 42:6, 'I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from their prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.' 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,' &c., Luk 4:18. Thus you see that this prophetical dignity of Christ, that he is the grand doctor of the church, is built upon the authority of his Father, who hath authorised and commissioned him to that great office: Isa 50:4, 'The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.' Thus you see that God the Father promiseth to invest Christ with a prophetic office for the opening the eyes of the blind, &c. This great prophet is richly furnished with all kinds of knowledge; 'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.' They are hid in him as gold and silver are in suo loco, as the philosopher speaks, hid in the veins of the earth. 'Treasures of knowledge,' that is, precious knowledge, saving knowledge; 'Treasures of knowledge,' that is, plentiful knowledge, abundance of knowledge; 'Treasures,' that is, hidden and stored knowledge, was laid up in him. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, do not know all that is in the heart of God; but now Jesus Christ, 'who lies in the bosom of the Father,' John 1:18, he knows all that is in his Father's heart. All those secret mysteries, that were laid up in the bosom of eternity, are fully known to this great prophet of the church; John 5:20, 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth,' by a divine and unspeakable communication. God the Father shews to Jesus Christ all things that he doth. God's love is communicative, and will manifest itself in effects, according to the capacity of the party beloved; so much appeareth in that unspeakable love of the Father to the Son, 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things,' &c., or communicateth his nature, wisdom, and power, for operation with him; which is expressed in terms taken from among men, because of our weakness: and ought to be spiritually, and not carnally conceived of. And therefore these terms of the Father's 'shewing,' and the Son's 'seeing,' are made use of to prevent all carnal and gross conceptions of this inexpressible communication from the Father, and participation by the Son. In the blessed Scripture, Jesus Christ is sometimes called 'the' prophet, and 'that' prophet; because he is one that came from the bosom of the Father, and lives and lies in the bosom of the Father, and understands the whole mind, will, heart, counsels, designs, ways, and workings of the Father. Jesus Christ is anointed by God the Father to be the great prophet and teacher of his elect; and accordingly Jesus Christ has taken that office upon himself. God the Father has laid a charge upon Jesus Christ, to teach and instruct all those that he has given him, in his whole mind and will, so far as is necessary to their salvation, edification, consolation, &c. 'Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son,' Heb 3:2, Heb 3:5-6. Christ cannot be unfaithful in his prophetical office. Those that God the Father hath charged him to teach and instruct, he will teach and instruct, in the great things of their peace; and no wonder, for the knowledge that is communicated to Jesus Christ, the great prophet of his church, is not by dreams, or visions, or revelations of angels, as to the prophets of old, but by a clear, full, intimate view, and beholding of the Godhead, the fountain of all sacred knowledge; Rev 5:6, 'And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.' The lamb slain opens the prophecies, and foretells what shall befall the church, to the end of the world. The

discovery of the secrets of God in his word, are the fruit of Christ slain, ascended, and anointed as the great prophet of the church. The lamb wanted neither power nor wisdom to open the seven seals, and therefore he is said to have 'seven horns and seven eyes.' Seven is a number of perfection. Horns signify power, eyes signify knowledge or wisdom;² both joined together, argue a fulness and perfection of power and wisdom in Christ; so that we have here a lively representation of the threefold office of Christ: his sacerdotal or priestly office in the lamb as slain, his royal or princely office in the horns, and his prophetic office in the eyes. But,

[3.] Thirdly, God the Father promises to make him a king, yea, a mighty king also. The kingly office speaks might and power. Christ is a king above all other kings; he is a king 'higher than the kings of the earth; he is the prince of the kings of the earth; he is Lord of lords, and King of kings,' Psa 89:27; Rev 1:5, and Rev 17:14. I remember Theodosius the emperor and another emperor did use to call themselves the vassals of Christ; and it is most certain that all the emperors, kings, and princes of the world are but the vassals of this great king. Christ is not only 'King of saints,' but he is also 'King of nations.' 'There was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages should serve him,' Rev 15:3-4, and Rev 12:5; Dan 7:17. God, by promise, hath 'given him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession,' Psa 2:8. The monarchs of the world have stretched their empires far. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom in Strabo reached as far as Spain; the Persians reached farther, Alexander farther than they, and the Romans farther than them all; but none of all these has subdued the whole habitable world, as Christ has and will. 'All power is given unto him both in heaven and in earth. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand, and the Father also hath put all things under his feet,' Rom 10:18; Rev 11:15; Mat 28:18; John 3:35; 1Co 15:27. The government of all the world is given to Jesus Christ as God-man. All the nations of the earth are under the government of Christ. He is to govern them, and rule them, and judge them, and make what use he pleases of them, as may make most for his own glory, and the good of his chosen. Now God the Father promiseth to invest Jesus Christ with his kingly office: Psa 2:6, 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.' These words are spoken by God the Father, of his Son Jesus Christ. In a promissory way, God the Father anoints Jesus Christ as Zion's king; and therefore it cannot but be the highest madness, folly, and vanity, for any sort or number of men under heaven to seek or attempt to pull that king of saints down, whom God the Father hath set up. Christ rules for his Father, and from his Father, and will so rule in despite of all the rage and wrath, malice and madness, of men and devils: 'yet have I set my king'—Heb., 'I have anointed'—where the sign of Christ's inauguration, or entrance into his kingdom, is put for the possession and enjoying thereof. Christ was anointed and appointed by his Father to the office and work of a mediator, and is therefore here called his king. There is an emphasis in the word 'I,' 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion:' 'I,' before whom all the nations of the earth are but as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance, Isa 40:15, Isa 40:17; I, before whom all nations are as nothing, yea, less than nothing; I, by whom princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth, Pro 8:16; I, that rule the kingdoms of men, and give them to whomsoever I will, and who set over them the basest of men, Dan 4:17; I, that change times and seasons, and that remove kings and set up kings, Dan 2:21; I, that can kill and make alive, save and damn, bring to heaven and throw down to hell, Deu 32:39; I am he that hath set up Christ as king, and therefore let me see the nation, the council, the princes, the nobles, the judges, the family, the person, that dare oppose or run counter-cross to what I have done. Again, the Lord, in

a promissory way, approves and established this king by a firm decree: Psa 2:7, 'I will declare the decree,' not the secret decree, but the decree manifested in the word. I, the Son of God, will, by my everlasting gospel, proclaim my Father's counsel, concerning the establishment of my kingdom. I will declare that irrevocable decree of the Father, for the setting up of his Son's sceptre, contra gentes, point-blank, opposite to that decree of theirs, ver. 3. The decree of God, concerning the kingly office and authority of Christ, is immutable, and in effect as irrevocable—so much may be collected out of the propriety of the word ■■—as those things are that are most irrevocable in the course of nature. Again, the Lord, in a promissory way, extends the dominion of Christ to the Gentiles, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, ver. 8. So far should the enemies of Christ be from ruining his kingdom, that God the Father promiseth that all the inhabitants of the earth should be his, and brought into subjection to him, not only the Jews, but all the inhabitants of the earth shall be subjected to Christ's kingdom, the elect he shall save, and the refractory he shall destroy. 'He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.' Again, the Lord, in a promissory way, declares the power, pre valency, and victory of Christ over all his enemies: ver. 9, 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' This signifies their utter destruction, so that there is no hope of recovery. A potter's vessel, when it is once broken, cannot be made up again. This proverb also signifies facility in destroying them. As for such that plot, bandy, and combine together against the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall as easily and as irrecoverably by his almighty, eternal, and irresistible power, dash them in pieces, as a potter breaks his vessels in pieces: Jer 19:11, 'I will break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again:' so Isa 30:14, 'And he shall break it, as the breaking of the potter's vessel, that is broken in pieces, he shall not spare; so that there shall not be found in the burstings of it, a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit.' The Jews, you know, were Christ's obstinate enemies; and he hath so dashed them in pieces, that they are scattered abroad all the world over. The Lord hath made another promise, that Christ shall king it, Psa 110:1-6. And no wonder, when we consider that God the Father hath called Christ to the kingly office. The sceptre is given into his hand, and the crown is put upon his head, and the key of government is laid upon his shoulder by God himself. Isa 22:22, it is written thus of Eliakim, 'The key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.' Now herein was this precious soul a lively figure and type of Christ. The words of the prophecy are applied to Christ, in his advertisement to Philadelphia, Rev 3:7; and the sense is this, that look, as Eliakim was made steward or treasurer under Hezekiah, that is, the next under the king in government all over the land, to command, to forbid, to permit, to reward, to punish, to do justice, and to repress all disorder; of which authority the bearing of a key on the shoulder was a badge; so Christ, as mediator under his Father, hath regal power and authority over his Church, where he commands in chief, as I may say, and no man may lift up his hand or foot without him; he hath the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, to prescribe, to inhibit, to call, to harden, to save, and to destroy at his pleasure. Such a monarch and king is Christ, neither hath any such rule and sovereignty beside him. And if you look into Dan 7:13-14, you may observe, that after the abolishing of the four monarchies, Christ's monarchy is established by the Ancient of days, giving to Jesus Christ dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Christ did not thrust himself into the throne, as some have done; neither did

he swim to his crown through a sea of blood, as others have done; nor yet swam he through a sea of sorrow to this crown, as Queen Elizabeth is said to do; no, he stayed till authority was given him by his Father. But,

Thirdly, God the Father hath promised, that he will give to Jesus Christ assistance, support, protection, help, and strength to carry on the great work of redemption. God the Father promises and covenants with Jesus Christ, to carry him through all dangers, difficulties, perplexities, trials, and oppositions, &c., that he should meet with in the accomplishing our redemption; upon which accounts Jesus Christ undertakes to go through a sea of trouble, a sea of sorrow, a sea of blood, and a sea of wrath: Isa 42:1, 'Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth;' Isa 42:4, 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law;' Isa 42:6, 'I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee.' What is that? Why, I will support, strengthen, and preserve thee with my glorious power; I will so hold thy hand, that thou shalt not be discouraged, but finish that great work of redemption, which, by agreement with me, thou hast undertaken. God the Father agreed with Jesus Christ about the power, strength, success, and assistance that he should have to carry on the work of redemption, all which God the Father made good to him till he had sent forth judgment unto victory; as Christ himself acknowledged, saying, 'Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; the Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; and said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified,' Isa 49:1-3. The work of redemption was so high, so hard, so great, so difficult a work, that it would have broken the hearts, backs, and necks of all the glorious angels in heaven, and mighty men on earth, had they engaged in it; and therefore God the Father engages himself to stand close to Jesus Christ, and mightily to assist him, and to be singularly present with him, and wonderfully to strengthen him in all his mediatory administrations, John 17:2; upon which accounts Jesus Christ despises his enemies, bears up bravely under all his sore temptations and trials, and 'triumphs over principalities and powers,' Mat 4:11; Luk 22:43; Col 2:15. And certainly if Christ had not had singular support, and an almighty strength from the Godhead, he could never have been able to have bore up under that mighty wrath, and to have drunk of that bloody cup that he did drink of. Now upon the account of God the Father's engaging himself to own Christ, and stand by him in the great work of our redemption, Jesus Christ acts faith against all his deepest discouragements, which he should meet with in the discharge of his mediatory office, as the prophet tells us: 'The Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me?' Isa 50:7-8. From the consideration of God's help, Jesus Christ strengthens and encourages himself, in the execution of his office, against all oppositions. God's presence and assistance made Jesus Christ victorious over all wrongs and injuries. Jesus Christ knew that God the Father would clear up his innocency and integrity, and this made him patient and constant to the last. But,

Fourthly, God the Father promiseth to Jesus Christ that he shall not labour in vain, and that the work of redemption shall prosper in his hand, and that he will give a blessed success to all his undertakings, and crown all his endeavours. 'He shall see his seed, and he shall see the travail of his soul.' Another promise of the Father to the Son you have in that, Isa 55:5, 'Nations that know

thee not, shall run unto thee.' The Gentiles, that never heard of Christ, nor ever were acquainted with Christ, nor ever had any notice of Christ; when Christ calls, they shall readily and speedily repair unto him and submit unto him. Christ shall one day see and reap the sweet and happy fruit of his blood, sufferings, and undertakings; 'The pleasure of the Lord shall,' certainly, 'prosper in his hand.' Christ's sufferings were as a woman's travail, sharp though short. Now though a woman suffers many grievous pains and pangs, yet, when she sees a man-child brought into the world, she joys and is satisfied. So when nations shall run to Christ, he shall see his seed and be satisfied. God the Father promiseth that Jesus Christ shall have a numerous spiritual posterity, begetting and bringing many thousands to the obedience of his Father; 'Nations shall run unto thee;' and this shall fill the heart of Jesus Christ with abundance of joy and comfort, contentment and satisfaction, when he shall see the fruit of his bitter sufferings, when he shall see abundance of poor, filthy, guilty, condemned sinners pardoned, justified, and accepted with his Father, 'his soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,' Psa 63:5. The numerous body of believers, past, present, and to come, that God the Father had promised to Jesus Christ, was the life of his life. That is a sweet promise, Psa 110:2, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' They that will not bend must break; those that will not stoop to his government shall feel his power. 'Thy people'—the people of God are Christ's five ways: (1.) By donation; (2.) By purchase; (3.) By conquest; (4.) By covenant; (5.) By communication—'shall be willing in the day of thy power'—Heb., willingnesses in the abstract and in the plural number, as if the Holy Ghost could not sufficiently set forth their exceeding great willingness to submit to all the royal commands of the Lord; John 17:6; 1Pe 2:9; Luk 1:57; 1Co 3:23. All Christ's subjects are volunteers, free-hearted, like those isles that wait for God's law, Isa 42:4, and Isa 56:6; Zec 8:21, 'And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also;' 'From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth,' Psa 110:3. Here is the success of Christ's office promised, both in the victorious subduing of his enemies, and in the cheerful willingness of his subjects, and in the wonderful numerousness of his people brought over to him, even like the innumerable drops of the morning dew. Another promise of that great and complete success that God the Father hath made for Jesus Christ in his mediatory office, you have in that Isa 49:1-26 from Isa 49:6-14 : Christ shall have a people gathered to him, and a seed to serve him, 'because he hath made his soul an offering for their sins.' The multitude of sinners brought over to Jesus Christ, is the product of the satisfaction which he hath made for them, and the trophies of the victory that he hath got by dying the death of the cross. Thus you see that God the Father hath not only engaged himself by compact to preserve Jesus Christ in his work, but he hath also made to him several precious promises of preservation, protection, and success, so that the work of redemption shall be sure to prosper in his hand. And, to make these glorious promises the more valid and binding, God confirms them solemnly by an oath: Heb 7:21, 'This priest,' Christ, 'was made with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever.' God the Father foresaw from everlasting that Jesus Christ would so infinitely satisfy him and please him by his incarnation, obedience, and death, that thereupon he swears. But,

Fifthly, God the Father promiseth to Jesus Christ rule, dominion, and sovereignty, Psa 2:8-9. This sovereignty and rule is promised to Jesus Christ in Isa 40:10, 'His arm shall rule for him.' 'He shall sit in judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law,' Isa 42:4—not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also, the people of divers countries and nations shall willingly and readily receive and

embrace his doctrine, and submit to his laws, and give up themselves to his rule. Mic 4:3, 'He shall judge among many nations,' that is, rule, order, command, and direct as a judge and a ruler among many nations. The conquests that Christ shall gain over the nations shall not be by swords and arms, but he shall bring them to a voluntary obedience and spiritual subjection by his Spirit and Gospel: John 3:35, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,' that is, God the Father hath given the rule and power over all things in heaven and earth to Jesus Christ. In carrying on the redemption of sinners, as the matter is accorded betwixt the Father and the Son, so the redeemed are not left to themselves, but are put under Christ's charge and custody, who has 'purchased them with his blood,' God the Father having given him dominion over all that may contribute to help or hinder his people's happiness, that he may order them so as may be for their good. And this power he hath as God with the Father, and as man and mediator by donation and gift from the Father, Mat 28:18, and Mat 2:3; and thus every believer's happiness is most firm and sure, all things being wisely and faithfully transacted between the Father and the Son. As long as Jesus Christ has all power to defend his people, and all wisdom and knowledge to guide and govern his people, and all dominion to curb the enemies of his people, and a commission and charge to be answerable for them, we may roundly conclude of their eternal safety, security, and felicity, Col 1:19, and Col 2:1. But,

Sixthly, God the Father promiseth to accept of Jesus Christ, in his mediatory office, according to that of Isaiah, 'Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord,' Isa 49:5; that is as if he had said, notwithstanding the infidelity, obstinacy, and impenitency of the greatest part of the Jews, yet my faithful labour and diligence in the execution of my mediatory office is, and shall be, greatly accepted, and highly esteemed of by my heavenly Father. Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, lovingly accepted of the poor man's present of water, because his good will was in it, and put it into a golden vessel, and gave him the vessel of gold, accounting it the part of a truly noble and generous spirit to take in good part small presents offered with a hearty affection. Oh, how much more will God the Father kindly accept of Jesus Christ in his mediatory office: Isa 49:7, 'Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.' God the Father, comforting of Christ, tells him that though he were contemptible to many, yea, to the nation of the Jews, and used basely, like a servant, by their princes, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, and Pontius Pilate, yet other kings and princes should see his dignity and glory, and submit to him, and honour him as the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. God the Father chose Jesus Christ to be his servant, and to be a mediator for his elect; he designed him to that office of being a Saviour, both to the Jew and Gentile, and accordingly he accepted of him, 'Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritage.' Here you see that God the Father still goes on to speak more and more comfortably and encouragingly to Jesus Christ; for he tells him that he will be at hand to hear, and help, and assist him; and he tells him that he will preserve him, both in his person, and in the execution of his office; and he tells him that he will accept of his person, and of his services, and of his suits and intercession for himself and his people. So Mat 3:17, 'And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' The voice from heaven was doubtless the voice of his Father, in that he saith, 'This is my beloved

Son,' my natural Son, by eternal and incomprehensible generation, and therefore dearest to me, and most acceptable with me; my judgment is satisfied in him, my love is settled upon him, and I have an inestimable value for him; and therefore I cannot but declare my approbation and acceptation both of him and his work. I am well pleased in him, I am infinitely pleased in him, I am only pleased in him, I am at all times pleased in him, I am for ever pleased in him; I am so well pleased in him, that, for his sake, I am fully appeased with all them whom 'I have given him, and who come unto him,' John 6:37-40. But,

Seventhly, God the Father promiseth highly to exalt Jesus Christ, and nobly to reward him, and everlastingly to glorify him. 'And nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee,' Isa 49:4-6, and Isa 40:10. These are the words of God the Father to his Son, promising of him to set such a crown of glory upon his head as should make the nations of the world run unto him. God the Father made Christ glorious in his birth, by the angels' doxology, 'Glory be to God on high;' in his baptism, by his speaking of him from heaven. 'as his beloved Son;' in his transfiguration on the mount, in his resurrection, and in his ascension into heaven. So Isa 53:12, 'Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.' The meaning is this: I will impart, saith God the Father, to my Son, such honour, glory, renown, and riches, after his sufferings, as conquerors use to have; and he shall have them as a glorious reward of all his conflicts with my wrath, with temptations, with persecutions, with reproach, with contempt, with death, yea, and with hell itself. The words are a plain allusion to conquerors in war, who are commonly exalted and greatly rewarded by their princes for venturing of their lives, and obtaining of conquests, as all histories will tell you. And, indeed, should not God the Father reward Jesus Christ for all his hard services, and his matchless sufferings, he would express less kindness to him than he has done to heathen princes; for he gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as his hire, for his service at Tyre; and to Cyrus he gave hidden treasure, Eze 29:18-19; Isa 45:1-3. But, alas, what were their services to Christ's services, or their sufferings to Christ's sufferings? I have read of Cyrus, how that in a great expedition against his enemies, the better to encourage his soldiers to fight, in an oration that he made at the head of his army, he promised, upon the victory, to make every foot soldier a horseman, and every horseman a commander, and that no officer that did valiantly should be unrewarded. And will God the Father let the Son of his dearest love, who has fought against all infernal powers, and conquered them, go without his reward? Surely no! Col 2:14-15. So in Psa 2:7, 'I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' David was God's son by adoption and acceptation; but Christ was his Son, Psa 89:26-27, Pro 8:1-36, and Heb 1:5, (1.) By eternal generation; (2.) By hypostatical union; and so God had one only Son, as Abraham had one only Isaac, though otherwise he was the father of many nations. Some by 'this day' do understand the day of eternity, where there is no time past nor to come, no beginning nor ending, but always one present day. Others by 'this day' do understand it of the day of Christ's incarnation, and coming into the world. Some again do understand it of the whole time of his manifestation in the world, when he was sent forth as a prophet to teach them, and was declared evidently to be the Son of God, both by his miracles and ministry, John 1:14, and by that voice that was heard from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' Others do understand it of the day of Christ's resurrection, and with them I close, for this seems to be chiefly intended; partly because it

seems to be spoken of some solemn time of Christ's manifestation to be the Son of God, and 'he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead,' Rom 1:4; that is, by the power and force of the Deity, sanctifying and quickening the flesh, he was raised from the dead, and so declared mightily to be the Son of God; but mainly because the apostle doth clearly affirm that this was in Christ's resurrection: 'He hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' Acts 13:33. In the day of Christ's resurrection he seems to tell all the world, that though from the beginning he had been hid in the bosom of his Father, John 1:18, and that though in the law he had been but darkly shadowed out; yet in the day of his resurrection they might plainly see that he had fully satisfied divine justice, finished his sufferings, and completed the redemption of his elect; and that accordingly his Father had arrayed him with that glory that was suitable to him. Before the resurrection the godhead was veiled under the infirmity of the flesh; but in the resurrection, and after the resurrection, the godhead did sparkle and shine forth very gloriously and wonderfully, 2Co 13:4. Lest the human nature of Christ, upon its assumption, should shrink at the approach of sufferings, God the Father engages himself to give Jesus Christ a full and ample reward, 'and to exalt him far above all principality and power, and to put all things under his feet, and to make him head over all things to the church:' and to 'give him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;' and all because, to give satisfaction to his Father, he 'made himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;' that is, to his dying day, Eph 1:21-22; Php 2:9. He went through many a little death, all his life long, and at length underwent that cursed and painful death of the cross; upon which account the Father rewards with highly by exalting him to singular glory and transcendent honour. Look, that as the assumption of the human nature is the highest instance of free mercy, so is the rewarding thereof in its state of exaltation the highest instance of remunerative justice. Oh, how highly is the human nature of Christ honoured by being exalted to a personal union with the Godhead! Though vain men may dishonour Christ, yet the Father hath conferred honour upon him as mediator, that it may be a testimony to us that he is infinitely pleased with the redemption of lost man. Although Christ be, in himself, God all-sufficient, 'God blessed for ever,' and so is not capable of any access of glory; yet it pleased him to condescend so far as to obscure his own glory under the veil of his flesh, and state of humiliation, till he had perfected the work of redemption; and to account of his office of mediator, and the dignity accompanying it, as great honour conferred upon him by the Father, John 8:54: and it is observable that Christ having finished our redemption on earth, he petitions his Father to advance him to the possession of that glory that he enjoyed from all eternity; 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self; with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,' John 17:5. Now for the clearing up of this text we are to consider, that as Christ was from all eternity the glorious God, the God of glory; so we are not to conceive of any real change in this glory of his godhead; as if by his estate of humiliation he had suffered any diminution, or by his state of exaltation any real accession were made to his glory as God. But the meaning is this, that Christ having, according to the paction passed betwixt the Father and him, obscured the glory of his godhead for a time, under the veil of the form of a servant, and our sinless infirmities, doth now expect, according to the tenor of the same paction, that, after he hath done his work as mediator, he be highly exalted and glorified in his whole person; that his human nature be exalted to what glory finite nature is capable of, and that the glory of his godhead might shine in the person of

Christ, Godman, and in the man Christ Jesus. Thus you see the promises, the encouragements, and rewards that God the Father sets before Jesus Christ. And let thus much suffice concerning the articles of the covenant on God's part. In the last place, Let us seriously consider of the articles of the covenant on Christ's part; and let us weigh well the promises that Jesus Christ has made to the Father for the bringing about the great work of our redemption, that so we may see what infinite cause we have to love the Son as we love the Father, and to honour the Son as we honour the Father, and to trust in the Son as we trust in the Father, and to glorify the Son as we glorify the Father, &c. Now there are six observable things on Christ's part, on Christ's side, that we are to take special notice of, &c.

[1.] First, Christ having consented and agreed with the Father about our redemption, accordingly he applies himself to the discharge of that great and glorious work by taking a body, by assuming our nature: Heb 2:14, 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.' He who was equal with God did so far abase himself as to take on him the nature of man, and subjected himself to all manner of human frailties, so far as they are freed from sin, even such as accompany flesh and blood; and this is one of the wonders of mercy and love, that Christ our head should stoop so low, who was himself full of glory, as to take part of flesh and blood, that he might suffer for flesh and blood: Heb 2:16, 'For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' Christ assumed the common nature of man, and not of any particular person. The apostle doth here purposely use this word 'seed,' to shew that Christ came out of the loins of man, as Jacob's children and their children are said to come out of his loins, Gen 46:26, and as all the Jews are said to come out of the loins of Abraham, Exo 1:5; Heb 7:5; and as Solomon is said to come out of the loins of David, 1Ki 8:19. In a man's loins his seed is, and it is a part of his substance. Thus it sheweth that Christ's human nature was of the very substance of man, and that Christ was the very same that was promised to be the Redeemer of man; for of old he was foretold under this word seed, as 'the seed of the woman,' 'the seed of Abraham,' 'the seed of Isaac,' 'the seed of David.' This word, 'he took on him,' as it setteth out the human nature of Christ, so it gives us a hint of his divine nature; for it presupposeth that Christ was before he took on him the seed of Abraham. He that taketh anything on him must needs be before he do so. Is it possible for him that is not, to take anything on him? Now Christ, in regard of his human nature, was not before he assumed that nature; therefore that former being must needs be in regard of his divine nature. In that respect he ever was even the eternal God. Being God, he took on him a human nature. Christ's eternal deity shines in this 16th verse, and so does his true humanity; in that he took upon him the seed of man, it is most evident that he was a true man. Seed is the matter of man's nature, and the very substance thereof. The seed of man is the root, out of which Christ assumed his human nature, Isa 11:1. The human nature was not created of nothing, nor was it brought from heaven, but assumed out of the seed of man, Luk 1:35. The human nature of Christ never had a subsistence in itself. At or in the very first framing or making it, it was united to the divine nature; and at or in the first uniting it, it was framed or made. Philosophers say of the uniting of the soul to the body, in creating it it is infused, and in infusing it it is created, *Creando infunditur, et infundendo creatur*. Much more is this true, concerning the human nature of Christ, united to his divine. Fitly therefore is it here said, that he 'took on him the seed of Abraham.' So John 1:14, 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' The evangelist having proved the divinity of Jesus Christ, comes now to speak of his humanity, incarnation, and manifestation in the flesh, whereby he became God and man in one

person. 'Flesh' here signifies the whole man in Scripture. Ye all know that man consisteth of two parts, which are sometimes called flesh and spirit, and sometimes called soul and body. Now by a synecdoche, either of these parts may be put for the whole: and so sometimes the soul is put for the whole man, and sometimes the body is put for the whole man, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Christ did assume the whole man, he did assume the soul as well as the body, and both under the term flesh. And indeed, unless he had assumed the whole man, the whole man could not have been saved. If Christ had not taken the whole man, he could not have saved the whole man. Christ took the nature of man that he might be a fit mediator. If he had not been man, he could not have died; and if he had not been God, he could not have satisfied. So great was the difficulty of restoring the image of God in lost man, and of restoring him to God's favour, and the dignity of sonship, that no less could do it than the natural Son of God his becoming the Son of man, to suffer in our nature; and so great was the Father's love and the Son's love to fallen man, as to lay a foundation of reconciliation betwixt God and man in the personal union of the divine and human nature of Christ. So much is imported in those words, 'the Word was made flesh.' The person of the godhead that was incarnate was neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son, the second person, for 'the Word was made flesh.' There being a real distinction of the persons, that one of them is not another; and each of them having their proper manner of subsistence, the one of them might be incarnate, and not the other; and it is the Godhead, not simply considered, but the person of the Son subsisting in that Godhead, that was incarnate. And it was very convenient that the second or middle person, in order of subsistence of the blessed Trinity, should be the reconciler of God and man; and that 'he, by whom all things were made,' Col 1:16-17, should be the restorer and maker of the new world; and that he who was 'the express image of his Father,' Heb 1:2-3, should be the repairer of the image of God in us. Oh the admirable love and wisdom of God that shines in this, that the second person in the Trinity is set on work to procure our redemption! Though reason could never have found out such a way, yet when God hath revealed it, reason, though but shallow, can see a fitness in it; because there being a necessity that the Saviour of man should be man, and an impossibility that any but God should save him, and one person in the Trinity being to be incarnate, it agrees to reason that the first person in the Trinity should not be the mediator; for who should send him? he is of none, and therefore could not be sent. There must be one sent to reconcile the enmity, and another to give gifts to friends; two proceeding persons, the Son from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Accordingly the second person, which is the Son, he is sent upon the first errand, to reconcile man to God; and the third person, the Holy Ghost, he is sent to give gifts to men so reconciled; so as to reason it is suitable, and a very great congruity, that God, having made all things by his Son, should now repair all things by his Son; that he that was the middle person in the Trinity should become the mediator between God and man; that he that was 'the express image of the Father's person' should restore the image of God, defaced in man by his sins. Ah, Christians, how well does it become you to lose yourselves in the admiration of the wisdom of God in the contrivance of the work of our redemption! For the Son of God to take on him the nature of man, with all the essential properties thereof, and all the sinless infirmities and frailties thereof, is a wonder that may well take up our thoughts to all eternity. And Christ took the infirmities of our nature as well as the nature itself. To shew the truth of his humanity he had a nature that could hunger and thirst even as ours do, and to sanctify them to us; and that so he might sympathise with us as 'a merciful and faithful high priest,' Heb 2:16-18, and Heb 4:15-16;

and that we might confide the more in him, and have access to him with boldness. By reason of the personal union of the two natures in Christ, he is a fit mediator betwixt God and man. His sufferings are of infinite value, being the sufferings of one who is God, Acts 20:28, and who is mighty to carry on the work of redemption, and to apply his own purchase, and repair all our losses, Isa 63:1; Heb 7:25. Oh, what an honour has Jesus Christ put upon fallen man by taking the nature of man on him! What is so near and dear to us as our own nature? and lo, our nature is highly preferred, by Jesus Christ to a union in the Godhead. Christ now sits in heaven with our nature, and the same flesh that we have upon us, only glorified, Acts 1:9-11. It is that which all the world cannot give a sufficient reason, why the same word in the Hebrew, Basher, should signify both 'flesh' and 'good tidings.' Divinity will give you a reason, though grammar cannot. Christ's taking of flesh upon him was good tidings to all the whole world, therefore no wonder if one word signify both. Abundance of comfort may be taken from hence to poor souls, when they think God hath forgotten them, to consider, is it likely that Christ, who is man, should forget man, now he is at the right hand of the Father, clothed in that nature that we have? When we are troubled to think it is impossible God and man should ever be reconciled, let us consider that God and man did meet in Christ, therefore it is possible we may meet. What hath been may be again. The two natures met in Christ, therefore God may be reconciled to man; yea, they therefore met, that God might be reconciled to man. He was made Emmanuel, 'God with us,' that he might bring God and us together. When a man is troubled to think of the corruptions of his nature, that is so full of defilements, that it cannot be sanctified perfectly, let him withal think that his nature is capable of sanctification to the full. Christ received human nature which was not polluted, his nature is the same, therefore that nature is capable of sanctification to the uttermost. O Sirs! if Christ, the second person in the Trinity, did put on man, how careful should men be to put on Christ! 'Put you on the Lord Jesus,' saith the apostle, Rom 13:14. If Christ assumed our human nature, how should we wrestle with God to be made partakers of the divine nature: 2Pe 1:4, 'Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these we may be made partakers of the divine nature.' If Christ became thus one flesh with us, how zealous should we be to become one spirit with Christ, 1Co 6:17. Even as man and wife is one flesh, so 'he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' Was the Word made flesh? did Christ take our nature? yea, did he take our nature at the worst, after the fall? What high cause have we to bless his name for ever for this condescension of his! Should all the princes of the world have come from their thrones, and have gone a-begging from door to door, it would not amount to so much as for Christ to become man for our sakes. Christ took our nature, not in the integrity of it, as in Adam before his fall, but in the infirmities of it, which came to it by the fall. What amazing love was this! For Christ to have taken our nature as it was in Adam, while he stood clothed in his integrity, and stood right in the sight of God, had not been so much as when Adam was fallen and proclaimed traitor; as Bernard saith, Quo pro me vilior, eò mihi carior, Domine, Lord, thou shalt be so much the more dear to me, by how much the more thou hast been vile for me. Here is condescension indeed, that Christ should stoop so low to take flesh, and flesh with infirmities. But,

[2.] Secondly, Jesus Christ promiseth to God the Father that he will freely, readily, and cheerfully accept, undertake, and faithfully discharge his mediatory office, to which he was designed by him, in order to the redemption and salvation of all his chosen ones. Consult the scriptures in the margin, they having been formerly opened, and in them you will find that Christ did not take the office of mediatorship upon himself, but first the Father calls him to it, and then the Son accepts it:

'Christ glorified not himself, to be made a high-priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,' Heb 10:12, Heb 10:14, he called him, and then the Son answered him, 'Lo, I come.' God the Father promiseth that upon the payment of such a price by his Son, such and such souls should be ransomed and set free from the curse, from wrath, from hell, &c. Jesus Christ readily consents to the price, and pays it down upon the nail at once, and so makes good his mediatory office. It pleased the glorious Son of God, in obedience to the Father, to humble himself and obscure the glory of his godhead, that he might be like his brethren, and a fit mediator for sympathy and suffering, and that he might engage his life and glory for the redeeming of the elect, and lay by his robes of majesty, and not be reassumed till he gave a good account of that work, till he was able to say, 'I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.' Christ very freely and cheerfully undertakes to do and suffer whatever was the will of his Father that he should do or suffer, for the bringing about the redemption of mankind. Christ willingly undertakes to be his Father's servant in this great work, and accordingly he looks upon his Father as his Lord, 'Thou art my Lord,' Isa 50:5-7; Psa 16:2—that is, thou art he to whom I have engaged myself that I will satisfy all thy demands, I will fulfil thy royal law, I will bear the curse, I will satisfy thy justice, I will humble myself to the death of the cross, Php 2:8, I will 'tread the wine-press of my Father's wrath,' Isa 63:3, I will fully discharge all the bonds, bills, and obligations that lie in open court against any of those whom by compact thou hast given me, Col 2:13-15, let their debts be never so many or never so great, or of never so long continuance, I will pay them all. There is no work so high, nor no work so hard, nor no work so hot, nor no work so bloody, nor no work so low, in which I am not ready to engage upon the account of my chosen: 'Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will; yea, thy law is in my heart.' Christ freely submits, not only to the duty of the law, but also to the penalty of the law,—not only to do what the law enjoins, but also to suffer what the law threatens; the former he makes good by his active obedience, and the latter by his passive obedience, Gal 4:4-5. This was the way wherein the Father, by an eternal agreement with his Son, would have the salvation of lost sinners brought about, and accordingly Jesus Christ very readily complies with his Father's will and way, Tit 1:2. Christ, as mediator, had a command from his Father to die, which command he readily closes with: John 10:11, 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep;' John 10:15, 'I lay down my life for the sheep;' John 10:17, 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again;' John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; this commandment have I received of my Father.' Christ was content to be a servant by paction, that so his sufferings might be accepted for his people; and certainly whatever God the Father put Jesus Christ upon in his whole mediatory work, that Jesus Christ did freely, fully, and heartily comply with: 'Lo, I come; and I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do,' John 17:4. And had not Christ been free and voluntary in his active and passive obedience, his active and passive obedience would never have been acceptable, satisfactory, or meritorious. To go further to prove it, would be to light a candle to see the sun at noon. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Jesus Christ promises and engages himself that he will confide, depend, rely, and trust upon his Father for help and for assistance to go through with his work a-notwithstanding all the wrath and rage, all the malice and oppositions, that he should meet with from men and devils: Heb 2:13, 'And again, I will put my trust in him.' Christ's confidence in his Father was one great encouragement to him to hold out in the execution of his office; and his confidence in God speaks him out to be a true man, in that, as other men, he stood in need of God's aid and assistance; and thereupon, as others of the sons of men, his brethren, he puts his trust in God. The Greek phrase

used by the apostle carrieth emphasis; it implieth trust on a good persuasion that he shall not be disappointed. It is translated 'confidence,' Php 1:6; word for word it may be here thus translated, 'I will be confident in him.' The relative 'him' hath apparent reference to God, so as Christ himself, being man, rested on God to be supported in his works, and to be carried through all his undertakings, till the top-stone was laid, and the work of redemption accomplished. Christ had many great and potent enemies, and was brought to very great straits; yea, he and his were 'for signs and wonders in Israel;' yet he fainted not, but put his trust in the Lord; yea, his greatest enemies gave him this testimony, that 'he trusted in God;' and though they spoke it in scorn and derision, yet it was a real truth, Psa 18:3-5; Isa 8:18; Mat 27:43. Christ's confidence in his Father was further manifested by the many prayers which, time after time, he made to his Father, Heb 5:7. Another proof of Christ's confidence in God's assistance, even in his greatest plunges and his sharpest sufferings, the prophet Isaiah will furnish us with: 'The Lord God hath opened mine ear,' saith the prophet, 'and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up,' Isa 50:5-9. Christ, as mediator, trusted God the Father to carry him through all difficulties and oppositions, till he had completed the great work of his mediation. Christ strengthens and encourages himself in the execution of his office against all hardships and oppositions, from his confidence and assurance of God's aid and assistance; and by the same eye of faith, he looks upon all his opposites as worn out and weathered by him. Christ's faith, patience, and constancy gave him victory over all wrongs and injuries; so Isa 49:5, 'My God shall be my strength.' Christ is very confident of his Father's assistance to carry him through that work that he had assigned him to. Christ, in the want of comfort, never wanted faith to hang upon God, and to call him his God: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46. Christ was never forsaken in regard of the hypostatical union; the union was not dissolved, but the beams, the influence, was restrained. Nor in regard of his faith; for though now he was sweltering under the wrath of God, as our surety, and left in the hands of his enemies, and deserted by his disciples and dearest friends, and under the loss of the comforting and solacing presence of his Father, yet, in the midst of all, such was the strength and power of his faith, that he could say, 'My God, my God.' Christ, before the world began, having promised and engaged to the Father that, in the fulness of time, he would come into the world, assume our nature, be made under the law, tread the winepress of the Father's wrath, bear the curse, and give satisfaction to his justice; now upon the credit of this promise, upon this undertaking of Christ, God the Father takes up the patriarchs and all the old testament believers to glory. God the Father, resting upon the promise and engagement of his Son, admits many thousands into those mansions above, before Christ took flesh upon him, John 14:2-3. Now as the Father of old hath rested and relied on the promise and engagement of Christ, so Jesus Christ doth, to this very day, rest and stay himself upon the promise of his Father, that he shall, in due time, 'see all his seed,' Isa 53:10, and reap the full benefit of that full ransom that he has paid down upon the nail for all that have believed on him, that do believe on him, and that shall believe on him. Christ knew God's infinite love, his tender compassions, and his matchless bowels, to all those for whom he died; and he knew very well the

covenant, the compact, the agreement that passed between the Father and himself; and so trusted the Father fully in the great business of their everlasting happiness and blessedness, relying upon the love and faithfulness of God, his love to the elect, and his faithfulness to keep covenant with him. As the elect are committed to Christ's charge, to give an account of them, so also is the Father engaged for their conversion, and for their preservation, being converted; as being not only his own, given to Christ out of his love to them, but as being engaged to Christ, that he shall not be frustrate of the reward of his sufferings, but have a seed to glorify him for ever, John 6:37; Isa 53:11. Therefore doth Christ not only constantly preserve them by his Spirit, but doth leave also that burden on the Father: 'Father, keep those whom thou hast given me,' John 17:11. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Jesus Christ promises and engages himself to his Father that he would bear all and suffer all that should be laid upon him, and that he would ransom poor sinners, and fully satisfy divine justice by his blood and death, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. The work of redemption could never have been effected by 'silver or gold,' or by prayers or tears, or by the 'blood of bulls or goats,' but by the second Adam's obedience, even to the death of the cross. Remission of sin, the favour of God, the heavenly inheritance, could never have been obtained but by the precious blood of the Son of God. The innocent Lamb of God was slain in typical prefigurations from the beginning of the world, and slain in real performance in the fulness of time, or else fallen man had lain under guilt and wrath for ever. The heart of Jesus Christ was strongly set upon all those that his Father had given him, and he was fully resolved to secure them from hell and the curse, whatever it cost him; and seeing no price would satisfy his Father's justice below his blood, he lays down his life at his Father's feet, according to the covenant and agreement of old that had passed between his Father and himself. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The Lord Jesus Christ was very free, ready, willing, and careful to make good all the articles of the covenant on his side, and to discharge all the works agreed on for the redemption and salvation of the elect: John 17:4, 'I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do,' John 12:49-50, and John 17:6. There was nothing committed to Christ by the Father to be done on earth, for the purchasing of our redemption, but he did finish it; so that the debt is paid, justice satisfied, and sin, Satan, and death spoiled of all their hurting and destroying power, Col 2:14-15, and Heb 2:14. By the covenant of redemption Christ was under an obligation to die, to satisfy to divine justice, to pay our debts, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, Dan 9:24, to purchase our pardon, and to obtain eternal redemption for us, Heb 9:12; all which he completed and finished before he ascended up to glory: and, without a peradventure, had not Jesus Christ kept touch with his Father, had not he made good the covenant, the compact, the agreement on his part, his Father would never have given him such a welcome to heaven as he did, nor he would never have admitted him to have 'sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,' as he did, Acts 1:9-11. The right hand is a place of the greatest honour, dignity, and safety that any can be advanced to. But had not Jesus Christ 'first purged away our sins,' he had never 'sat down on the right hand of his Father.' Christ's advancement is properly of his human nature. That nature wherein Christ was crucified was exalted; for God, being the Most High, needs not be exalted; yet the human nature in this exaltation, is not singly and simply considered in itself, but as united to the deity; so that it is the person, consisting of two natures, even God-man, which is thus dignified, Mat 26:64; Acts 7:56. For as the human nature of Christ is inferior to God, and is capable of advancement, so also

is the person consisting of a divine and human nature. Christ, as the Son of God, the second person of the sacred Trinity, is, in regard of his deity, no whit inferior to his Father, but every way equal; yet he assumed our nature, and became a mediator betwixt God and man; he humbled himself, and made himself inferior to his Father; his Father therefore hath highly exalted him, and set him down on his right hand, Php 2:8-9; Eph 1:20. If Christ had not expiated our sins, and completed the work of our redemption, he could never have sat down on the right hand of God: Heb 10:12, 'But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.' This verse is added in opposition to the former, as is evident by the first particle, **δ**. But in the former verse it was proved that the sacrifices which were offered under the law could not take away sins. This verse proveth that there is a sacrifice which hath done that that they could not do. The argument is taken from that priest's ceasing to offer any more sacrifices after he had offered one; whereby is implied that there needed no other, because that one had done it to the full. Sin was taken away by Christ's sacrifice, for thereby a ransom was paid, and satisfaction made to the justice of God for man's sin, and thereupon sin taken away. Now sin being taken away, Christ 'sits down on the right hand of his Father.' Look, as the humiliation of Christ was manifested in offering a sacrifice, so his exaltation, in sitting at God's right hand, was manifested after that he had offered that sacrifice. This phrase, 'set down,' is a note of dignity and authority; and this dignity and authority is amplified by the place where he is said to sit down—viz., on 'the right hand of God;' and this honour and dignity is much illustrated by the continuance thereof, which is without date, 'For ever sat down on the right hand of God.' It is an eclipse of the lustre of any glory to have a date and a period. The very thought that such a glory shall one day cease, will cast a damp upon the spirit of him that enjoys that glory. Christ's constant sitting at the right hand of his Father is a clear evidence that he has finished and completed the work of our redemption. Christ could never have gone to his Father, nor never have sat down at the right hand of his Father, if he had not first fulfilled all righteousness, and fully acquitted us of all our iniquities: John 16:10, 'Of righteousness, because I go to my Father.' The strength of the argument lies in this, Christ took upon him to be our surety, and he must acquit us of all our sins, and satisfy his Father's justice, before he can go to his Father, and be accepted of his Father, and sit down on the right hand of his Father. If God had not been fully satisfied, or if any part of righteousness had been to be fulfilled, Christ should have been still in the grave, and not gone to heaven; his very going to his Father argues all is done, all is finished and completed. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Christ having performed all the conditions of the covenant on his part, he now peremptorily insists upon it, that his Father should make good to him and his the conditions of the covenant on his part. Christ having finished his work, looks for his reward: 'Father,' says he, 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was,' John 17:4-5. There was a most blessed transaction between God the Father and God the Son before the world began, for the everlasting good of the elect; and upon that transaction depends all the good, and all the happiness, and all the salvation of God's chosen; and upon this ground pleads with his Father, that all his members may behold his glory: John 17:24, 'Father, I will that they also which thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;' 'Father, I will,' not only I pray, I beseech, but 'I will;' I ask this as my right, by virtue of the covenant betwixt us; I have done thus and thus, and I have suffered thus and thus, and therefore I cannot but peremptorily insist upon it, that those that I have undertaken for, 'be where I am, that

they may behold my glory;' for though glory be a gift to us, yet it is a debt due to Christ. It is a part of Christ's joy that we should be where he is. Christ will not be happy alone. As a tender father, he can enjoy nothing if his children may not have part with him. The greatest part of our happiness that we shall have in heaven lies in this, that then we shall be with Christ, and have immediate communion with him. O sirs! the great end of our being in heaven is to behold and enjoy the glory of Christ. Christ is very desirous, and much taken up with his people's fellowship and company, so that before he removes his bodily presence from them, his heart is upon meeting and fellowship again, as here we see in his prayer before his departure; and this he makes evident from day to day, in that until that time of meeting come, two or three are not gathered in his name but he is in the midst of them, Mat 18:20, to eye their behaviour, to hear their suits, to guide their way, to protect their persons, to cheer their spirits, and to delight in their presence. He delights to 'walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,' Rev 2:1. The golden candlesticks are the churches, which are 'the light of the world,' Mat 5:14, Mat 5:16, and excel all other societies as much as gold doth other metals. And he desires to dwell in the low and little hill of Zion, Psa 68:16. Zion is his resting-place, his chosen place, his dwelling-place: Psa 132:13, 'For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation;' Psa 132:14, 'This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it.' Christ chose Zion for his love, and loves it for his choice; and accordingly he delights to dwell there. The Lamb stands on mount Zion, Rev 14:1. Christ is ready prest for action; and in the midst of all antichrist's persecutions he hath always a watchful eye over mount Zion, and will be a sure life-guard to mount Zion, Isa 4:5-6; he stands readily prepared to assist mount Zion, to fight for mount Zion, to communicate to mount Zion, and to be a refuge to mount Zion; and no wonder, for he 'dwells in mount Zion,' Isa 8:18. Now if Christ take so much delight to have spiritual communion with his people in this world, no wonder that he can never rest satisfied till their gracious communion with him here issue in their perfect and glorious communion with him in heaven. And certainly the glory and happiness of heaven to the elect will consist much in being in Christ's company, in whom they delight so much on earth. To follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes, to enjoy him fully, and to be always in his presence, is the heaven of heaven, the glory of glory; it is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. The day is coming wherein believers shall be completely happy in a sight of Christ's glory, when he shall be conspicuously glorified and admired in all his saints, and glorified by them; and when all veils being laid aside, and they fitted for a more full fruition, shall visibly and immediately behold and enjoy him; therefore is their condition in heaven described, as consisting in this, that they 'may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' Thus I have glanced at Christ's solemn demand on earth for the full accomplishment of that blessed compact, covenant, agreement, and promises that were made to him when he undertook the office of a mediator; and now in heaven he appears 'in the presence of God for us,' Heb 9:25, as a lawyer appears in open court for his client, opens the case, pleads the cause, and carries the day. The verb, ■μφανισθ■ναι, translated 'to appear,' signifieth conspicuously 'to manifest.' It is sometimes taken in a good sense, viz., to appear for one as a favourite before a prince, or as an advocate or an attorney before a judge, or as the high-priests appeared once a year in the holy of holies, to make atonement for the people, Exo 30:10. Christ is the great favourite in the court of glory, and is always at God's right hand, ready on all occasions to present our petitions to his Father, to pacify his anger, and to obtain all noble and needful favours for us, Rom 8:34. And Christ is our great advocate to plead our cause effectually for us, 1Jn 2:1. Look, as in human courts there is the guilty, the accuser, the court, the judge, and the advocate; so it is here. Heaven

is the court, man is, Satan is the accuser, God is the judge, and Christ is the advocate. Now look, as the advocate appeareth in the court before the judge to plead for the guilty against the accuser, so doth Christ appear before God in heaven, to answer all Satan's objections and accusations that he may make in the court of heaven against us. 'He ever lives to make intercession for us,' Heb 7:25. The verb, ■ντυγγ■νειν, translated 'intercession,' is a compound, and signifies 'to call upon one.' It is a judicial word, and importeth a calling upon a judge to be heard in this or that, against another or for another; so here Christ maketh intercession for them, Acts 25:24; Rom 11:2, and Rom 8:34. The metaphor is taken from attorneys or advocates who appear for men in courts of justice; from counsellors, who plead their client's cause, answer the adversary, supplicate the judge, and procure sentence to pass on their client's side. This act of making intercession may also be taken from kings' favourites, who are much in the king's presence, and ever ready to make request for their friends. But remember, though this be thus attributed to Christ, yet we may not think that in heaven Christ prostrateth himself before him, or maketh actual prayers; that was a part of his humiliation which he did in the days of his flesh; but it implieth a presenting of himself a sacrifice, a surety, and one that hath made satisfaction for all our sins, together with manifesting of his will and desires, that such and such should partake of the virtue and benefit of his sacrifice, Heb 5:7, so as Christ's intercession consisteth rather in the perpetual vigour of his sacrifice and continual application thereof, than in any actual supplication. The intendment of this phrase applied to Christ, 'to make intercession,' is to shew that Christ, being God's favourite, and our advocate, continually appeareth before God, to make application of that sacrifice which once he offered up for our sins. Christ appears in the presence of God for us; (1.) To present unto his Father himself, who is the price of our redemption; (2.) To make application of his sacrifice to his church time after time, according to the need of the several members thereof; (3.) To make our persons, prayers, services, and all good things acceptable to God. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, The whole compact and agreement between God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, about the redemption of poor sinners' souls, was really and solemnly transacted in open court; or, as I may say, in the high court of justice above, in the presence of the great public notary of heaven—viz., the Holy Ghost; who being a third person of the glorious Trinity, of the same divine essence, and of equal power and glory, makes up a third legal witness with the Father and the Son. They being, after the manner of kings, their own witnesses also: 1Jn 5:7, 'For there be three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.' Three, (1.) In the true and real distinction of their persons; (2.) In their inward properties, as to beget, to be begotten, and to proceed; (3.) In their several offices one to another, as to send and to be sent: 'And these three are one,' one in nature and essence, one in power and will, one in the act of producing all such actions as, without themselves, any of them is said to act; and one in their testimony concerning the covenant of redemption that was agreed on between the Father and the Son. Consent of all parties, the allowance of the judge, and public record, is as much as can be desired to make all public contracts authentic in courts of justice; and what can we desire more, to settle, satisfy, and assure our own souls that all the articles of the covenant of redemption shall, on all hands, be certainly made good, than this, that these three heavenly witnesses, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, do all agree to the articles of the covenant, and are all witnesses to the same covenant? Thus you see that there was a covenant of redemption made with Christ; upon the terms whereof he is constituted to be a Redeemer; 'to say to the prisoners, go forth, to bring deliverance to the captives, and to proclaim

the year of release (or jubilee) the acceptable year of the Lord,' as it is, Isa 61:1-2. I have been the longer in opening the covenant of redemption, partly because of its grand importance to all our souls, and partly because others have spoken so little to it, to the best of my observation, and partly because I have never before handled this subject, either in the pulpit or the press, &c.

Now from the serious consideration of this compact, covenant, and agreement, that was solemnly made between God and Christ, touching the whole business of man's salvation or redemption, I may form up this tenth plea as to the ten scriptures that are in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular day of account. O blessed God! I have read over the articles of the covenant of redemption that were agreed on between thyself and thy dearest Son; and I find by those articles that dear Jesus has died, and satisfied thy justice, and pacified thy wrath, and bore the curse, and purchased my pardon, and procured thy everlasting favour: and I find by the same articles that whatever Jesus Christ acted or suffered, he did act or suffer as my surety, and in my stead and room. O Lord! when I look upon my manifold weaknesses and imperfections, though under a covenant of grace, yet I am many times not only grieved, but also stumbled and staggered; but when I look up to the covenant of redemption, I am cheered, raised, and quieted; for I am abundantly satisfied that both thyself and thy dear Son are infinitely ready, able, willing, and faithful to perform whatever in that covenant is comprised, Isa 38:16-17; by these things men live, and in these is the life of my spirit. Men may fail, and friends may fail, and relations may fail, and trade may fail, and natural strength may fail, and my heart may fail, but the covenant of redemption can never fail, nor the federates, who are mutually engaged in that covenant, can never fail, Psal 73:24-25; and therefore I am safe and happy for ever. What though my sins have been great and heinous, yet they are not greater than Christ's satisfaction; he did bear the curse for great sins as well as small, for sins against the gospel as well as for sins against the law, for omissions as well as for commissions. Assuredly the covenant of redemption is a mighty thing, and there are no mighty sins that can stand before that covenant. If we look upon Manasseh, in those black and ugly colours that the Holy Ghost paints him out in, we must needs conclude that he was a mighty sinner, a monstrous sinner, 1Ki 21:1-16; and yet his mighty sins, his monstrous sins, could not stand before the covenant of redemption. The greatest sins are finite, but the merit of Christ's redemption is infinite. All the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. There remained not so much as one of them; there was not one of them left alive to carry the news; the high and the low, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the honourable and the base, were all drowned, Exo 14:28; Psal 106:11. The red sea of Christ's blood drowns all our sins, whether they are great or small, high or low, &c., 'Though my sins be as scarlet, my Redeemer will make them as white as snow; though they be as red as crimson, they shall be as wool,' Isa 1:18. There is not one of my sins for which Jesus Christ hath not suffered and satisfied, Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; nor there is not one of my sins for which Jesus Christ hath not purchased a pardon, and for which he hath not made my peace. Though my sins are innumerable, though they are more than the hairs of my head, Psal 40:12, or the sands on the sea-shore, yet they are not to be named in the day wherein the merits of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the covenant of redemption, is mentioned and pleaded. Be my sins ever so many; yea, though they might fill a roll that might reach from east to west, from north to south, from earth to heaven, yet they could but bring me under the curse. Now Christ my surety, that he might redeem me from the curse, hath taken upon him the whole curse, Gal 3:13. I know there is no summing up of my debts, but Christ has paid them all. Woe had been to me for ever, had Christ left but one penny upon the score for me to pay.

As I have multiplied my sins, so he has multiplied his pardons, Isa 55:7. Christ has cancelled all bonds, and therefore it is but justice in God to give me a full acquittance, and to throw down all bonds as cancelled, saying, 'Deliver him, I have found a ransom,' Col 2:13-15; Job 33:24. O God, though my sins are very many, and very great, yet if thou dost not pardon them, the innocent blood of thy dearest Son will lie upon thee, and cry out against thee; for he therefore died, that my sins might be pardoned; so that now, in honour and justice, thou art obliged to 'pardon all my transgressions, and remember mine iniquities no more,' Isa 43:25; Dan 9:24. Now this is my plea, O holy God, which I make to all those scriptures that respect my last account, and by this plea I shall stand. Well, saith God the Father, I accept of this plea, I am pleased with this plea, thy sins shall not be mentioned, Eze 18:22; 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

I shall now make a little improvement of what has been said as to the covenant of redemption, and so draw to a conclusion.

First, [1.] This covenant of redemption, as we have opened it, looks sadly and sourly upon those that make so great a noise about the doctrine of universal redemption. The covenant of redemption extends itself, not to every man in the world, but only to those that are 'given by God the Father to Jesus Christ.' [2.] It looks sadly and sourly upon those that make so great a noise about God's choosing or electing of men, upon the account of God's foreseeing their faith, good works, obedience, holiness, when our election is merely of grace and favour, and flows only from 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush;' and faith, good works, holiness, sanctification, are the fruits and effects of election, as the Scripture everywhere tells us, and as has been made evident in my opening the gracious terms of the covenant of redemption. But because I have, in another place, treated of these things more largely, a touch here may suffice. But,

(2.) Secondly, How should this covenant of redemption spirit animate and encourage all the redeemed of God, to do anything for Christ, to suffer anything for Christ, to venture anything for Christ, to part with anything for Christ, to give up anything to Christ, who, according to the covenant of redemption, hath done and suffered such great and grievous things, that he might bring us to glory, that are above all apprehensions, and beyond all expressions, Mark 8:34-35, Mark 8:38; Heb 10:34, and Heb 11:1-40. Who can tell me what is fully wrapped up in that one expression—viz., 'That he poured out his soul unto death,' Heb 2:10-11. Let us not shrink, nor faint, nor grow weary under our greatest sufferings for Christ. When sufferings multiply, when they are sharp, when they are more bitter than gall or wormwood, yea, more bitter than death itself, then remember the covenant of redemption, and how punctually Christ made good all the articles of it on his side, and then faint and give out if you can. Well may I be afraid, but I do not therefore despair, for I think upon and remember the wounds of the Lord, saith one, [Austin.] *Nolo vivere sine vulnere, cum te video vulneratum*; O my God, as long as I see thy wounds, I will never live without wound, saith another, [Bonaventura.] *Crux Christi clavis paradisi*; The cross of Christ is the golden key that opens paradise to us, saith one, [Damascene.] I had rather, with the martyrs and confessors, have my Saviour's cross, than, with their persecutors, the world's crown. The harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven, saith another, [Tertullian.] Gordius the martyr hit the nail, when he said, it is to my loss if you abate me anything in my sufferings, [Chrysostom.] If you suffer not for religion, you will suffer for a worse thing, saith one. Never did any man serve me better than you serve me, said another to his persecutors, [Vincentius.] *Adversus gentes, gratias agimus quod à molestis dominis liberemur* We thank you for delivering

us from hard task-masters, that we may enjoy more sweetly the bosom of our Lord Jesus, said the martyr. It was a notable saying of Luther, *Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione*; The church converteth the whole world by blood and prayers. They may kill me, said Socrates of his enemies, but they cannot hurt me. So may the redeemed of the Lord say, they may take away my head, but they cannot take away my crown of life, of righteousness, of glory, of immortality, Rev 2:10; 2Ti 4:8; 1Pe 5:4-5. The Lacedemonians were wont to say, it is a shame for any man to fly in time of danger; but for a Lacedemonian, it is a shame for him to deliberate. Oh, what a shame is it for Christians, when they look upon the covenant of redemption, so much as to deliberate whether they were best to suffer for Christ or no. Petrus Blesensis has long since observed, that the courtiers of his time suffered as great trouble, and as many vexations, for vanity, as good Christians did for the truth. The courtiers suffered weariness and painfulness, hunger and thirst, with all the catalogue of Paul's afflictions; and what can the best saints suffer more? Now shall men that are strangers to the covenant of redemption, suffer such hard and great things for their lusts, for very vanity; and will not you, who are acquainted with the covenant of redemption, and who are interested in the covenant of redemption, be ready and willing to suffer anything for that Jesus, who, according to the covenant of redemption, has suffered such dreadful things for you, and merited such glorious things for you? But,

(3.) Thirdly, From this covenant of redemption, as we have opened it, you may see what infinite cause we have to be swallowed up in the admiration of the Father's love in entering into this covenant, and in making good all the articles of this covenant on his side. When man was fallen from his primitive purity and glory, from his holiness and happiness, from his freedom and liberty, into a most woeful gulf of sin and misery; when angels and men were all at a loss, and knew no way or means, whereby fallen man might be raised, restored and saved; that then God should firstly and freely propose this covenant, and enter into this covenant, that miserable man might be saved from wrath to come, and raised and settled in a more safe, high and happy estate than that was from which he was fallen in Adam,—oh, what wonderful, what amazing love is this! Abraham manifested a great deal of love to God in offering up of his only Isaac, Gen 22:12; but God has shewed far greater love to poor sinners, in making his only Son an offering for their sins: for [1.] God loved Christ with a more transcendent love than Abraham could love Isaac; [2.] God was not bound by the commandment of a superior to do it, as Abraham was, John 10:18; [3.] God freely and voluntarily did it, which Abraham would never have done without a commandment, Heb 10:10, Heb 10:12; [4.] Isaac was to be offered after the manner of holy sacrifices, but Christ suffered an ignominious death, after the manner of thieves; [5.] Isaac was all along in the hands of a tender father, but Christ was all along in the hands of barbarous enemies; [6.] Isaac was offered but in show, but Christ was offered indeed and in very good earnest. Is not this an excess, yea, a miracle of love? It is good to be always a-musing upon this love, and delighting ourselves in this love. But,

(4.) Fourthly, From this covenant of redemption, as we have opened it, you may see what signal cause we have to be deeply affected with the love of Jesus Christ, who roundly and readily falls in with this covenant, and who has faithfully performed all the articles of this covenant. Had not Jesus Christ kept touch with his Father as to every article of the covenant of redemption, he could never have saved us, nor have satisfied divine justice, nor have been admitted into heaven. That Jesus Christ might make full satisfaction for all our sins, 'he was made a curse for us, whereby he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,' Gal 3:13. All his sufferings were for us. All that can be

desired of God by man is mercy and truth; mercy in regard of our misery, truth in reference to God's promises. That which moved Christ to engage himself as a surety for us was his respect to God and man: to God, for the honour of his name. Neither the mercy nor the truth nor the justice of God had been so conspicuously manifested, if Jesus Christ had not been our surety, to man, and that to help us in our succourless and desperate estate. No creature either would or could discharge that debt, wherein man stood obliged to the justice of God. This is a mighty evidence of the endless love of Christ, this is an evidence of the endless and matchless love of Christ. We count it a great evidence of love for a friend to be surety for us when we intend no damage to him thereupon; but if a man be surety for that which he knoweth the principal debtor is not able to pay, and thereupon purposeth to pay it himself, this we look upon as an extraordinary evidence of love. But what amazing love, what matchless love is this, for a man to engage his person and life for his friend! when as 'skin for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life,' Job 2:4; and yet, according to the covenant of redemption, Jesus Christ has done all this and much more for us, as is evident, if you will but cast your eye back upon the articles of the covenant, or consult the scriptures in the margin. If a friend, to free a captive, or one condemned to death, should put himself into the state and condition of him whom he freeth, that would be an evidence of love beyond all comparison. But now, if the dignity of Christ's person and our unworthiness, if the greatness of the debt and kind of payment, and if the benefit which we reap thereby, be duly weighed, we shall find these evidences of love to come as much behind the love of Christ, as the light of a candle cometh short of the light of the sun. Christ's suretyship, according to the covenant of redemption, is and ought to be a prop of props to our faith. It is as sure a ground of confidence that all is well, and shall be for ever well between God and us, as any the Scriptures does afford. By virtue hereof we have a right to appeal to God's justice, for this surety hath made full satisfaction; and to exact a debt which is fully satisfied is a point of injustice. Christ knew very well what the redemption of fallen man would cost him, *Solus amor nescit difficultates*; he knew that his life and blood must go for it; he knew that he must lay by his robes of majesty, and be clothed with flesh; he knew that he must encounter men and devils; he knew that he must tread the wine press of his Father's wrath, bear the curse, and make himself an offering for our sins, for our sakes, for our salvation; yet, for all this, he is very ready and willing to bind himself by covenant, that he will redeem us, whatever it cost him. Oh, what tongue can express, what heart can conceive, what soul can comprehend, 'the heights, depths, breadths, and lengths of this love'? Eph 3:18-19. O blessed Jesus, what manner of love is this! that thou shouldst wash away my scarlet sins in thine own blood! that thou shouldst die that I may live! that thou shouldst be cursed that I might be blessed! that thou shouldst undergo the pains of hell that I might enjoy the joys of heaven! that the face of God should be clouded from thee, that his everlasting favour might rest upon me! that thou shouldst be an everlasting screen betwixt the wrath of God and my immortal soul! that thou shouldst do for me beyond all expression, and suffer for me beyond all conception, and gloriously provide for me beyond all expectation and all this according to the covenant of redemption! What shall I say, what can I say to all this, but fall down before thy grace, and spend my days in wondering at that matchless, bottomless love, that can never be fathomed by angels or men! O Lord Jesus, saith one, *plusquam meet, plusquam meos, plusquam me*; I love thee more than all my goods, and I love thee more than all my friends, yea, I love thee more than my very self, [Bernard.] It is good to write after this copy. But,

XI. The eleventh and last plea that a believer may form up as to the ten scriptures that are in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account, may be drawn up from the consideration of the book of life, out of which all the saints shall be judged in the great day of our Lord: Rev 20:11, 'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them:' Rev 20:12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works:' Rev 20:13, 'And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works:' Rev 20:14, 'And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' In Rev 20:11 John describes the judge with his preparation; in Rev 20:12 he describes the persons that should be judged; and then he describes the process and sentence; and lastly, he describes the execution of the sentence, viz., the casting of the reprobates into the lake of fire, and the placing and fixing of the elect in the heavenly Jerusalem, Rev 20:13-15. In the five last verses cited you have a clear and full description of the last general judgment, as is evident by the native context and series of this chapter, Rev 20:1-3. For having spoken of the devil's last judgment, which, by Jude, is called 'The judgment of the great day,' Jude 1:6; it is consentaneous, therefore, to understand this of such a judgment whereby he is judged. And, indeed, the expressions are so full, and the matter and circumstances so satisfying and convincing, that they leave no place for fears, doubts, or disputes. This scripture that is under our present consideration runs parallel with that Dan 12:1-3, and several other places of Scripture where the day of judgment is spoken of; and let him that can, shew me at what other judgment all the dead are raised and judged, and all reprobates sent to hell, and all the elect brought to heaven, and death and hell cast into the lake; all which are plainly expressed here. He shall be an Apollo to me that can make these things that are here spoken of to agree with any other judgment than the last judgment. Let me give a little light into this scripture, before I improve it to that purpose for which I have cited it.

'And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it:' a lively description of the last judgment, 'a great throne.' 'Great,' because it is set up for the general judgment of all, for the universal judgment of the whole world. Before this throne all the great ones of the world must stand,—popes, emperors, kings, princes, nobles, judges, prelates, without their mitres, crowns, sceptres, royal robes, gold chains, &c.,—and before this throne all other sorts and ranks of men must stand. And he that sits upon this throne is a great King, and a great God above all gods; he is 'Prince of the kings of the earth, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords,' Rev 1:5, Rev 17:14, and Rev 19:16. Upon all which accounts this throne may well be called a great throne; and it is called 'a white throne,' because of its celestial splendour and majesty, and to shew the uprightness and glory of the judge. The white colour in Scripture is used to represent purity and glory. Here it signifies that Christ, the judge, shall give most just and righteous judgment, free from all spot of partiality.

'From whose face the heaven and the earth fled away.' The splendour and majesty of the judge is such, as neither heaven nor earth is able to behold or abide the same; how then shall the wicked be able to stand before him? Augustine understands it, for the future renovation of heaven and earth; and here he acknowledgeth an ■σ■τ■ρ■ο■σ■ι■ς, for the heaven and the earth fled not before, but

after the judgment; to wit, saith he, the judgment being finished, then shall this heaven and earth cease to be, 'when the new heaven and earth shall begin;' for this world shall pass away by a change of things, not by an utter destruction. 'The heaven and the earth shall flee away;' that is, this shape of heaven and earth shall pass away; because they shall be changed from vanity, through fire, that so they may be transformed into a much better and more beautiful estate; according to that which the apostle Peter writeth, 'The heaven shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with heat; but we expect new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' 1Pe 3:12. How this passing away, or perishing of heaven and earth, shall come to pass, there are divers opinions of learned men. Some think that the substance or essence itself of the world shall wholly perish and be annihilated. Others are of opinion, that only the corruptible qualities thereof shall perish and be changed, and the substance or essence remain. There shall be a renovation of all things, say most, and that only the fashion of the world, that is, the outward form and corruptible qualities, shall be destroyed; and so the earth shall be found no more as it was, but shall be made most beautiful and glorious, being to be 'delivered into the glorious liberty,' as far as it is capable, 'of the sons of God,' Rom 8:19-22; being to be freed from corruption and bondage; and with these I close. The sum of Rom 8:21 is, that the creature shall not be always subject to vanity, but shall have a manumission from bondage; of the which deliverance, three things are declared; First, Who the creature [is], that is, 'the world;' Secondly, From what, from 'corruption,' which is a bondage; Thirdly, Into what estate, into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.' Some here note the time of the deliverance of the creature, namely, when the children of God shall be wholly set free; for though they have here a freedom unto righteousness, from the bondage of sin, yet they have not a freedom of glory, which is from the bondage of misery. But others take it for the state itself which shall be glorious, not the same with the children of God, but proportioned according to its kind with them; for it is most suitable to the liberty of the faithful, that as they are renewed, so also should their habitation. And as when a nobleman mourneth, his servants are all clad in black; so it is for the greater glory of man, that the creatures, his servants, should in their kind partake of his glory. And whereas some say that it is deliverance enough for the creature, if it cease to serve man, and have an end of vanity, by annihilation, I affirm, it is not enough, because this 21st verse notes, not only such deliverance, but also a further estate which it shall have after such deliverance—namely, to communicate in some degree, with the children of God in glory. Certainly the creatures, in their kind and manner, shall be made partakers of a far better estate than they had while the world endured; because that God shall fully and wholly restore the world, being fallen into corruption through the transgression and sin of mankind. And this doth more plainly appear by the apostle's opposing subsequent liberty against former bondage; which, that he might more enlarge, he calleth it not simply freedom or liberty, but liberty of glory, as it is in the Greek text, meaning thereby, according to the phrase and propriety of the Hebrew tongue, glorious liberty, or liberty that bringeth glory with it; under which term of glory, he compriseth the excellent estate that they shall be in after their delivery from their former baseness and servitude. As for those words, of the 'sons of God,' to which we must refer the glorious liberty before mentioned, they must be understood by a certain proportion or similitude thus; that as in that great day, and not before, God's children shall be graciously freed from all dangers and distresses of this life whatsoever, either in body or soul, and on the other side, made perfect partakers of eternal blessedness; so the creatures then, and not before, shall be delivered from the vanity of man, and their own corruption, and restored to a far better estate than at present they

enjoy; which also may further appear by the words the apostle useth, setting glorious liberty, deliverance and freedom, against servile bondage and slavery. Chrysostom reads διότι, for the glorious liberty of the sons of God: as if the end or final cause of their deliverance were pointed at, namely, that as God made the world for man, and for man's sin subdued it to vanity; so he would deliver it and restore it for men, even to illustrate and enlarge the glory of God's children. I could, by variety of arguments, prove that this deliverance of the creature that our apostle speaks of, shall not be by a reduction into nothing, but by an alteration into a better estate. But I must hasten to a close.

Rom 8:12, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.' The judge, before whom all do appear, is our dear Lord Jesus, 'who hath the keys of hell and death in his hands,' Rev 1:18; Acts 17:30-31, and who is designed and appointed by God the Father to be the judge of quick and dead. He hath authority, and a commission under his Father's hand, to sit and act as judge. Here you see that John calleth the judge absolutely God, but Christ is the judge; therefore Christ is God absolutely; and he will appear to be God in our nature in that great day. The parties judged, who stand before the throne, are, (1.) Generally 'the dead,' all who had died from Adam to the last day. He calls them 'the dead,' after the common law of nature, but then raised from death to life by the power of God, Eph 2:5; Col 2:13. He speaks not of men dead in sins and trespasses, but of such as died corporally, and now were raised up to judgment. But shall not the living then be judged? Oh, yes! 'For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: that he may be judge of the quick and the dead, and be Lord both of the dead and the living,' 2Co 5:10; Rom 14:9-10. Under this phrase, 'the dead,' are comprehended all those that then shall be found alive. By 'the dead' we are to understand the living also, by an argument from the lesser. If the dead shall appear before the judgment-seat, how much more the living! But the dead alone are named, either because the number of the dead, from Adam to the last day, shall be far greater than those that shall be found alive on earth in that day, or because those 'that remain alive shall be accounted as dead, because 'they shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye,' 1Co 15:52. Secondly, He describes them from their age and condition, for the words may be understood of both 'great and small,' which takes in all sorts of men, tyrants, emperors, kings, princes, dukes, lords, &c., as well as subjects, vassals, slaves, beggars; rich and poor, strong and weak, bond and free, old and young. All and every one, without exception, are to be judged; for the judgment shall be universal. No man shall be so great as to escape the same, nor none so small as to be excluded; but every one shall have justice done him, without respect of persons, as that great apostle Paul tells us, 'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,' 2Co 5:10. I am no admirer of the schoolmen's notion, who suppose that all shall be raised about the age of thirty-three, which was Christ's age; but do judge that that perfection, which consisteth in the conforming them to Christ's glorious body, is of another kind than to respect either age, stature, or the like.

'Stand before God,' that is, brought to judgment. The guilty standing ready to be condemned, and the saints standing ready in Christ's presence to be absolved and pronounced blessed, John 3:18.

'And the books were opened.' Christ the judge being set on his throne, and having all the world before him, 'the books are opened.' (1.) In the general the books are said to be open. (2.) Here is a special book for the elect, 'The book of life was opened.' (3.) Here you have sentence passed and pronounced, 'according to what was written in these books, and according to their works: and the

dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.' Here the judicial process is noted by imitation of human courts, in which the whole process is wont to be drawn up, and laid before the judge, from whence the judge deter mineth for or against the person, according to the acts and proofs that lie open before him. The equity, justice, and righteousness of Christ the judge, that sits on his white throne, is set forth by a metaphor taken from human courts, where the judge pronounceth sentence according to the written law, and the acts and proof's agreeing thereunto. 'All things are naked and bare before him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire,' Heb 4:13; Rev 1:14. But to shew that the judgment shall be as accurate and particular in the trial, and just and righteous in the close, as if all were registered and put on record, nothing shall escape or be mistaken in its circumstances, but all things shall be so cleared and issued beyond all doubts and disputes, as if an exact register of them had been kept and published; in all which there is a plain allusion unto the words of Daniel, speaking thus of this judgment, 'The judgment was set, and the books were opened,' Dan 7:10. We find six several books mentioned in the Scripture.

[1.] The book of nature, that is mentioned by David, 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them,' Psa 139:16. It is a metaphor from curious workmen, that do all by the book, or by a model set before them, that nothing may be deficient or done amiss. Had God left out an eye in his commonplace-book, saith one, thou hadst wanted it. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.' The psalmist looks upon that great volume of heaven and earth, and there reads in capital letters the prints and characters of God's glory. This book, saith one, was imprinted at the New Jerusalem by the finger of Jehovah; and is not to be sold, but to be seen, at the sign of glory, of every one that lifts up his eyes to heaven. In this book of nature, which is made up of three great leaves, heaven, earth, and sea, God hath made himself visible, yea, legible, 'even his eternal power and godhead,' Rom 1:20. So that all men are left without excuse. Out of this book the poor blind Gentiles might have learned many choice lessons, as, first, that they had a maker; secondly, that this maker, being before the things made, is eternal, without beginning or ending; thirdly, that he must needs be almighty, which made all things out of nothing, and sustained such a mass of creatures; fourthly, the order, variety, and distinction of creatures declare his marvellous wisdom; fifthly, in this book they might run and read the great goodness, and the admirable kindness of God to the sons of men, in making all the creatures for their good, for their service, and benefit; sixthly and lastly, in this book they might run and read what a most excellent, what a most admirable, what a most transcendent workman God was. What are the heavens, the earth, the sea, but a sheet of royal paper, written all over with the wisdom and power of God? Now, in the great day of account, this book shall be produced to witness against the heathen world, because they did not live up to the light that was held forth to them in this book, but crucified that light and knowledge by false ways of worship, and by their wicked manners, whereof the apostle gives you a bead-roll or catalogue, from Rom 1:21-32. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is the book of providence, wherein all particulars are registered, even such as atheists may count trivial and inconsiderable: Mat 10:30, 'But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' And where is their number summed up? Even in the book of providence. The three worthies were taken out of the fiery furnace, with their hairs in full number, not one of them singed, Dan 3:27. Paul, encouraging the passengers to eat, who were in fear and danger of death, tells

them that 'there should not a hair fall from the head of any of them,' Acts 27:34. And when Saul would have put Jonathan to death, the people told him 'that there should not a hair of his head fall to the ground,' 1Sa 14:45. Christ doth not say that the hairs of your eyelids are numbered, but the hairs of your head, where there is the greatest plenty, and the least use. Though hair is but an excrement, and the most contemptible part of man, yet every hair of an elect person is observed and registered down in God's books, and not one of them shall be lost. Nor the Holy Ghost doth not say the hairs of your heads shall be numbered, but the hairs of your head are all numbered. God has already booked them all down, and all to shew us that special, that singular care that God takes of the smallest and least concernments of his chosen ones. This book of providence God will produce in the great day, to confute and condemn the atheists of the world, who have denied a divine providence, and whose hearts have swelled against his government of the world, 'according to the counsels of his own heart.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, There is the book of men's afflictions. This some account an entire book of itself: Psa 56:8, 'Thou tellest my wanderings; put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?' God told all those weary steps that David took in passing over those two great forests, when he fled from Saul, or thou cipherest up my flittings, as the words may be read. Whilst David was hunted up and down like a partridge, and hushed out of every bush, and had no certain dwelling-place, but driven from post to pillar, from one country to another, God was all this while a-noting down and a-numbering of his Sittings, and a-bottling up his tears, and a-booking down his sighs: 'Put thou my tears into thy bottle;' Heb., 'my tear,' that is, every tear of mine; let not one of them be lost, but kept safe with thee, as so much sweet water. God is said in Scripture to have a bag and a bottle: a bag for our sins, and a bottle for our tears. And oh that we would all labour to fill his bottle with our tears, as we have filled his bag with our sins; and certainly if the white tears of his servants be bottled up, the red tears of their blood shall not be cast away. If God keeps the tears of the saints in store, much more will he remember their blood, to avenge it; and though tyrants burn the bones of the saints, yet they cannot blot out their tears and blood out of God's register: 'Are they not in thy book?' are they not in thy register, or book of accounts, where they cannot be blotted out by any time or tyrants? i.e., yes, certainly they are; thou dost assuredly book them down, and wilt never forget one of them, according to the usual interrogatory that was used among the Hebrews when they affirmed a thing past all doubt. Let the great Nimrods and oppressors of the saints look to themselves, for God books down all the afflictions, sufferings, and persecutions of his servants; and in the great day he will bring in this book, this register, to witness against them. Ah, sinners, sinners! look to yourselves. In the great day of account, the Lord will reckon with you for every rod that he hath spent upon you; he will reckon with you, not only for all your mercies, but also for all your crosses; not only for all your sweets, but also for all your bitters; not only for all your cordials, but also for all your corrosives. In this book of afflictions there is not only item for this mercy and that, but item also for this affliction and that, this sickness and that, this cross and that, this loss and that. And will not the opening of this book of the saints' afflictions and sufferings, and of sinners' afflictions and sufferings, be as the handwriting upon the wall, to all the wicked of the earth, in the great day of account? Dan 5:5-6. Surely yes; for as they cannot answer for one mercy of ten thousand that they have enjoyed, so they cannot answer for one affliction of ten thousand that they have been exercised with. But,

[4.] Fourthly, There is the book of conscience. Conscience, saith Philo, is the little consistory of the soul. Conscience is mille testes, a thousand witnesses, for or against a man, Rom 2:14-15. Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom. Conscience hath a good memory, saith one. The chief butler forgot the promise that he had made to Joseph, but conscience told him of it, Gen 41:9. Fama propter homines, conscientia propter Deum, saith Augustine: a good name will carry it amongst men, but it is a good conscience only that can acquit us before God. In this great day the book of every man's conscience shall be opened for their conviction, wherein they shall read their guilt in legible characters; for that is a book of record, wherein men's actions are entered. And although now it be shut up close, and sinners will by no means be brought to look into it, and though many things that are written in this book seem to be so greatly obliterated and blotted that they can hardly be read, yet in that great day of accounts God will refresh and recover the lustre of those ancient writings; and sinners, in that day, shall find that conscience hath an iron memory. In the last day God will bring the book of conscience out of the rubbish, as they did the book of the law in Josiah's time; and the very laying open of this book before sinners will even put them beside their wits, and fill them with unspeakable horror and terror, and be a hell on this side hell unto them. In this book they shall find an exact account of every vain thought they have had, and of every idle word they have spoken, and of every evil action they have done; and oh, what amazement and astonishment will this fill them with! By the books in this Rev 20:12, Origen does understand the books of conscience, which now are hid, not from God, but from most men; for the hidden things of the heart are not now known, but then they shall be opened, and manifested to the consciences of every sinner, so as there shall be no place, no room left for any excuse or plea. Ambrose saith that the books that are here said to be opened are the books of men's consciences and God's omniscience.² Oh, what dreadful challenges and accusations will every sinner be forced to read out of this book of conscience in the great day! Oh, how in that great day will all wicked men wish that they had followed the counsel of the heathen orator when he said, A recta conscientia ne latum quidem unguem discedendum; A man may not depart an hair's-breadth all his life long from the dictates of a good conscience. The book of God's omniscience takes in all things past, present, and to come, as if he had kept a diary of every man's thoughts, words, and actions. But,

[5.] Fifthly, There is the book of Scripture; and of all books this book is the most precious book. The book of the creature is but as the inventory of the goods; the book of the Scripture is the evidence, and conveyance, and assurance of all good to us. The book of Scripture is the book of the statutes and ordinances of the King of heaven, which must be opened and consulted, and by which all must be judged in the great day: Jas 2:12, 'So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty;' i.e., by the gospel of Jesus Christ, by the whole word of God, registered in the blessed Scriptures, Jas 1:23-25. Now the whole word of God is called the law of liberty; because thereby we are born again to a new spiritual life, and so freed from the bondage and slavery of sin and Satan. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his proceedings in the great day of account, will judge us by the Scriptures, and pass everlasting sentence upon us according to the tenor of the Scriptures. At the great and general assizes Christ will try all causes by the word of God, and pass judgment upon all sorts of persons according to the word: John 12:48, 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' The persons that are to be judged in the great day are not believers in Christ, they are not receivers of Christ, but such as reject his person, and receive

not his doctrine. 'He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him,' &c. However the rejecters of Christ may escape judgment for a time, yet they shall never be able to escape the judgment of the last day; they shall assuredly, they shall unavoidably, be judged in the last day. Though the rejecters of Christ had none to witness against them, yet the word of the Lord shall be more than a thousand witnesses against them in the great day, 'The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.' The word of the Lord is so sure and infallible a word, that Christ's sentence in the great day, when heaven and earth shall pass away, 2Pe 3:7, 2Pe 3:10-12, shall proceed according to the verdict and testimony thereof, 'For the word that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day.' Christ will pronounce then according to what it saith now; and that as well in favour of believers as against unbelievers. Look, as Christ himself is 'ordained to be the judge of quick and dead,' Acts 17:31; so the word, the doctrines which he hath delivered, will be the rule of all his judicial proceedings, both in acquitting the righteous, and condemning the wicked. By the books in this Rev 20:12, Augustine understands the books of the Old and New Testament, which shall then be opened; because, according to them, the judge will pronounce sentence: Rom 2:16, 'When God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel,' which promiseth heaven and happiness to all believers. The sentence of the last day shall be but a more manifest declaration of that judgment, that the Lord, in this life, most-an-end hath passed upon men. Heathens shall be judged by the law of nature; profligate professors by the written law, and the word preached; believers by the gospel, which saith, 'He that believeth shall be saved; he that believes shall not perish, but have eternal life; he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life,' Mark 16:16; John 3:15-16, John 3:36, and John 5:24. Christ shall, in the great day, give sentence according to the doctrine of the gospel, which saith, 'If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' The Jesuits report of a student at Paris who, coming to confession, and not being able, for tears and sobbings, to speak, was willed by his confessor to write down his sins, which he did; and when the confessor received it, the writing vanished, and there remained nothing but the white and clean paper; this, say they, was by a miracle, because of his great contrition. Let the credit of this story be upon the reporter; but upon the credit of the word of God, if we believe, really, savingly, and repent unfeignedly, all our sins shall be blotted out; and a book of clean paper, in respect of sin, shall be presented to the judge. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, There is a book of life: Rev 20:12, 'And another book was opened, which is the book of life.' The book of life is the book of all those that were elected and redeemed to life through Christ Jesus. This book of life containeth a register of such particular persons in whose salvation God from all eternity determined to have his mercy glorified, and for whom Christ merited faith, repentance, and perseverance, that they should repent, believe, and be finally saved. 'The book of life shall be opened;' that is to say, the decrees of God will be then published and made known, which now are sealed up in his breast and locked up in his archives. Then it will be seen who are appointed to life for the glorifying of God's free, rich, and sovereign grace, and whom he purposed to leave in their sins, and to perish for ever, for the exaltation of his justice. It is called 'a book of life,' not that God hath need of a book, but to note the certainty of predestination—viz., that God knows all and every of the elect, even as men know a thing which, for memory's sake, they set down in writing. This book of life shall be opened in the great day, because then it shall appear who were elect, who reprobates; who truly believed in Christ, who not; who worshipped God in

spirit and in truth, and who not; who walked with God as Noah, and who not; who set up God as the object of their fear, who not; who followed the Lamb whither ever he went, and who not; who were sincere, and who not; who preferred Christ above ten thousand worlds, and who preferred Barabbas before Jesus, and their farms, and their oxen, and their swine, yea, their very lusts, before a Saviour, a Redeemer; who are sheep, and who are goats, Mat 25:32; who are sons, and who are slaves; who have mourned for their own sins and the sins of the time, and who they are that have made a sport of sin, Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6, &c. Of this book of life you read often in Scripture: Php 4:3, 'And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life.' Vorsitus thinks it a speech taken from the custom of soldiers or cities, in which the chosen soldiers or citizens are by name written in a certain book or roll. This book or roll is called here 'the book of life,' because therein are written all the elect who are ordained to eternal life: Rev 3:5, 'He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.' In this book of life all 'the just, that live by faith,' are written. The elect are certain of eternal life, they shall never perish, nor none can ever pluck them out of the Father's hand, nor out of Christ's hand, John 10:28-31. God is said to have books metaphorically; he needs no books to help his memory; he does all things by his infinite wisdom, eternal foreknowledge, counsel, government, and judgment. But thus men cannot do; for whatsoever is done in their councils, cities, families, contracts, &c., for memory's sake, is set down in writing, that so, as there is occasion, they may look it over, and call to mind such things as they desire. Mark, not to have our names blotted out of the book of life is to have them always remain therein; that is, to enjoy eternal glory; and what can the soul desire more? The names of the elect are written in the book of life. They do not obtain salvation by chance, but were elected of God to life and happiness before the foundation of the world. Now their names being once written in the book of life, they shall never, never be blotted out of that book. In the book of predestination there is not one blot to be found—the salvation of the elect is most sure and certain: Rev 13:8, 'And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.' The names of the elect are said to be written in the book of life by a usual metaphor; for we commonly write down the names of such as are dear unto us, that we may continually remember them. So God having in his eternal counsel elected some to salvation, hath written their names in the book of life; as our Saviour tells us, 'Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven,' Luk 10:20. Some understand the metaphor of the sonship of the elect; so that to be written in the book of life shews that they are heirs of glory; for we know that such are to inherit whose names are written in the last will and testament of men. Of this book of life you may further read, Rev 17:8, Rev 20:15, Rev 21:27, and Rev 22:19.

Now from this book of life, that shall be opened in the great day, when the other books shall be opened, as hath been shewed, every sincere Christian may form up this eleventh plea as to the ten scriptures that are in the margin, that refer to the great day of account, or to a man's particular account. Most holy and blessed Lord, cast thine eye upon the book of election, and there thou wilt find my name written. Now my name being written in that book, I am exempt from all condemnation, and interested in the great salvation; my name being written in the book of life, I am secured from coming into the judgment of reprobation or condemnation, John 5:14; Rev 21:27. Jesus Christ, who hath written my name in the book of life, hath made up my accounts for me; he hath satisfied thy justice, and pacified thy wrath, and borne the curse, and purchased my pardon,

and put upon me an everlasting righteousness, and given me my quietus est; he has crossed out the black lines of my sins with the red lines of his blood; he has cancelled all the bonds wherein I stood obliged to divine justice. I further plead, O blessed Lord, that there is an immutable connexion betwixt being written in this book of life and the obtaining of eternal life; and if the connexion betwixt being written in this book of life and the obtaining of eternal life were not peremptory, what reason could there be of opening this book in the day of judgment? The book of life is a book of sovereign grace, upon which lies the weight of my salvation, my happiness, my all; and therefore by that book I desire to stand or fall. Well, saith the Lord, I cannot but accept of this plea as holy, honourable, just, and righteous; and therefore 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee,' Mat 25:21, Mat 25:34. Thus, by divine assistance, and by a special and a gracious hand of providence upon me, I have finished those select and important cases of conscience which I designed to speak to.

Soli Deo Gloria in Aeternum. note

* By the general title-page (See page 264, ante) it will be Seen that the 'Word in Season' is included in the 'Golden Key;' but nevertheless it forms a separate treatise, of which the title-page will be found below.*—G. A WORD IN SEASON To this Present

GENERATION or A SOBER AND SERIOUS DISCOURSE

About the favorable, Signal and eminent Presence of the LORD with his PEOPLE, in their greatest Troubles, deepest Distresses, and most deadly Dangers. with the

Resolution of several Questions, concerning the DIVINE PRESENCE, as also the Reasons and improvements of this great and glorious Truth.

All tending to encourage Christians in the way of their Duty, in the face of all Afflictions, Oppositions, and Sufferings that they may meet with for Righteousness sake from the Serpents seed, or from Wolves in Sheeps-cloathing. By THOMAS BROOKS, the Author of the Golden Key to open hidden Treasures. But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this House that I have builded. 1Ki 8:27.

Deus unus est, & ubique totus diffusus. Cyprian.

Maximilian the Emperour was so delighted with that Sentence of PAUL, Si Deus nobiscum, If God be with us, who shall be against us, that he caused it to be written upon the Walls in most rooms of his Palace.

LONDON, Printed for Dorman Newman, at the Sign of the Kings Arms in the Poultry. [1675. 4to.] A GENERAL EPISTLE TO ALL SUFFERING SAINTS To all afflicted and distressed Christians all the world over, especially to those that are in bonds for the testimony of Christ in Bristol; and to those that are sufferers there, or in any other city, town, country, or kingdom whatsoever; and to all that have been deep sufferers in their names, persons, estates, or liberties, upon the account of their faithfulness to God, to their light, to their consciences, to their principles, to their profession, and to Christ the king and head of his church; and to all that have been long prisoners to their beds or chambers by reason of age, and the common infirmities that do attend it, or that are under any other afflictive dispensation: and more particularly to my ancient dear and honoured friend, Mrs Elizabeth Drink-water, who has been many years the Lord's prisoner, and upon the matter, kept

wholly from public ordinances, by reason of her bodily weaknesses and infirmities; though in the want of a greater sanctuary, God has been 'a little sanctuary' to her soul, Eze 11:16,—Grace, Mercy, and Peace be multiplied.

Dear and Honoured Friends,—The ensuing treatise about the signal presence of God with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses and most deadly dangers, I present to the service of all your souls. There has not been any treatise on this subject, that hath ever fallen under mine eye; which hath been one great reason to encourage me in this present undertaking. I know several holy and learned men have written singularly well upon the gracious presence of God with his people, in ordinances and in the worship of his house; but I know that none have made it their business, their work, to handle this subject that I have been discoursing on: though a more excellent, noble, spiritual, seasonable, and necessary subject can rarely be treated on.

There are ten things that I am very well satisfied in, and to me they are things of great importance in this present day. And the first is this—viz.,

1. That there is no engagement from God upon any of his people, to run themselves into sufferings wilfully, causelessly, groundlessly. Christians must not be prodigal of their blood, for their blood is Christ's. Their estates, their names, their liberties, their all, is his; they are not their own, they are bought with a price, 1Co 6:20, and 1Co 7:23; and therefore to him they must be accountable for their lives, liberties, &c., and therefore they had need be very wary how they part with them. We must not step out of our way to take up a cross. The three worthies were passive, Dan 3:20-21, Dan 3:28. They did not rush into the fiery furnace, but yielded themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace; they did not stubbornly oppose nor struggle against their enemies, but patiently and quietly yielded their bodies to the flames: neither did the prophets or apostles step over God's hedge, to make way to their own sufferings or martyrdom. No men may, with the Donatists, destroy themselves, rather than they would conform to this or that religion. No man may have a hand in his own destruction, no man may cut his throat with his own hands to avoid a prison, a dungeon, a den, a fiery furnace. Cyprian tells the Christians in his time, that were ambitious of martyrdom, *Non est in tua potestate, sed in Dei dignatione, martyrium*. We may not run ourselves into prison without a mittimus from heaven. If righteousness lead me into prison, a righteous God will stand by me in prison, and in the issue, give me a gracious or a glorious deliverance out of prison. But if I wilfully, causelessly run myself into prison, it will be a righteous thing with God, to leave me to shift for myself in prison. If God should meet a man in prison, and say to him—as he did once to Elijah, 'What dost thou here, Elijah?' 1Ki 19:9—What dost thou here, O man? is this a fit place for truth's champion? if a man cannot readily answer, Lord, I have not run myself into a prison—but it is thyself, it is thy truth, it is thy interest, it is thy honour, it is my conscience, it is duty that has brought me hither—what confusion would attend him! Philustrius (?) and Theodoret speak of some that would compel men to kill them out of an affectation of martyrdom; but this was a mad ambition, but no true zeal. It was an error in Tertullian, to say that afflictions, that sufferings were to be sought. No man is to make his own cross, nor scourges to whip himself; nor to cast himself into a suffering state, so long as God hath left him a plain open way to escape suffering without sinning: not but that most men are more apt and prone to sin themselves out of smart sufferings, than unwarrantably to run themselves into sufferings; but it is good for every Christian to be upon his guard, and not run till God sends him, Acts 9:23-25; John 20:19, John 20:26. As a Christian must not shun sufferings, so he must not seek them.

(2.) Secondly, That afflictions, sufferings, persecutions, hath been the common lot and portion of the people of God in all the ages of the world. Witness the sufferings of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, the primitive Christians, and the martyrs of a later date. Abel was persecuted by Cain, 1Jn 3:12; and Isaac by Ishmael, Gal 4:29; and Jacob by Esau. That seems to be a standing law, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution,' 2Ti 3:12. A man may have many faint wishes and cold desires after godliness, and yet escape persecution; yea, he may make some essays and attempts as if he would be godly, and yet escape persecution; but when a man is thoroughly resolved to be godly, and sets himself in good earnest upon pursuing after holiness, upon living a life of holiness, upon growing up in holiness, then he must expect to meet with afflictions and persecutions. The history of the ten persecutions, and that little Book of Martyrs, the eleventh of the Hebrews, and Mr Foxe his Acts and Monuments, with many other histories that are extant, do abundantly evidence that from age to age, and from one generation to another, they that have been 'born after the flesh have persecuted them that have been born after the Spirit,' Gal 4:29; and that 'the seed of the serpent hath been still a-multiplying of troubles upon the seed of the woman,' Gen 3:15. As there was no way to paradise but by a flaming sword, nor no way to Canaan but through a howling wilderness, so there is no way to heaven but by the gates of hell; there is no way to a glorious exaltation but through a sea of tribulation, of persecution, Acts 14:21-22. The way to heaven is not strewed with roses, but full of thorns and briars, as those 'of whom this world is not worthy' have always experienced, Heb 11:1-40. The serpentine brood takes a very great pleasure to be still a-representing the people of God as foolish, hypocritical, precise, proud, schismatical, seditious, factious, and as persons against order and government, against good laws and customs, as disturbers and troublers of the peace. Thus Ahab accounts Elijah 'the troubler of Israel,' 1Ki 18:17; and Haman laid it to the charge of the Jews, that 'they were disobedient to the king's laws,' Est 3:8; and the adversaries of the Jews told Artaxerxes the king that 'Jerusalem was a rebellious city, hurtful unto kings and princes,' Ezr 4:15; and the unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica did as much for the apostles, they said they were the men 'that turned the world upside down,' Acts 17:6. So Luther was called 'the trumpet of rebellion;' and Tertullus calls Paul 'a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition,' Acts 24:5; λοῖμω, a pestilence, a botch. Foolish Tertullus mistook the antidote for the poison, the remedy for the disease. Now if so precious a man as Paul, than whom, saith Chrysostom, the earth never bare a better since it bore Christ, were accounted and called a pest, a botch, let us think much if the choicest saints in our days are accounted and esteemed as so many pests and botches. This is the reward the ungrateful world gives the servants of Christ for their zeal and faithfulness in the cause of Christ; instead of encouraging them, they load them with ignominious and hateful terms of rebellion and turbulency, &c., labouring thereby to make them odious, and to enrage the people against them, as the persecutors of old used to wrap the christians up in bears' skins, and lions' skins, &c., and then to bait them with dogs. It is a very great vanity to think of passing to heaven without suffering. The saints in all ages have found the way thither paved with troubles, and it would be a foolish, childish thing for any of us to think of finding it otherwise now. Constantine the Great, as piously as wittily, told Acesius the Novatian, that if he, would not take up with persecution, and such like dealing, he must provide him a ladder and climb alone to heaven. We must go to heaven some other way than the saints have done of old, except we resolve of going thither through much tribulation, Acts 14:22.

3. Thirdly, That no person or persons on earth may sinfully shift off sufferings, or avoid sufferings. There being infinitely more evil in the least sin than there can be in the greatest sufferings that can befall us in this world, it is best, it is safest to choose suffering rather than sinning, as Moses did. So Daniel chose rather to be cast among lions than that his conscience should be a lion within him, Dan 6:1-28; and the three children, or champions rather, who were holily wilful, chose rather to burn in the fiery furnace than to bow to the image that the king had set up, Dan 3:1-30. He that values peace with God, and peace with conscience, and the honour of God, and the credit of religion, the silencing of sinners, and the rejoicing of the saints, must choose to suffer rather than to sin. When storms arise, and troubles and dangers approach, many begin to consult, not how they may glorify God by suffering, but how they may provide for their own safety by sinning. Plato knew much of God, but, as Josephus shews, durst not set it down for fear of the people; and Lactantius charges the same upon Tully: 'Thou darest not,' saith he, 'undertake the patronage of the truth, for fear of the prison of Socrates;' and Augustine doth as much for Seneca; he spends a whole chapter in shewing how he held the truth in unrighteousness, telling us how he revered that which he reprov'd, did that which he condemn'd, and worshipp'd that which he found fault with.³ Though these wise men saw the vanity of the heathenish deities, and the worship that was given to them, and looked upon them as utterly unworthy of respect from wise and sober men, nay, secretly scorn'd and derided them; yet would they not openly declare against them, and that for fear of the people who so much doted upon them. But Daniel's three young worthies were men of that heavenly gallantry, that they peremptorily resolv'd upon this, that though they should not be deliver'd by their God, yet they would not sin against their God, nor so much as demur, deliberate, or take time to consider whether they should suffer or sin; it was past dispute with them, brave and noble souls that they were. It is observable that when Paul speaks of his afflictions, his sufferings, he calls them 'light,' 2Co 4:17; but when he speaks of his sin, he speaks of it as a burden that press'd him down, and made him cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!' and to cry out again, 'we groan, being burdened,' Rom 7:23; 2Co 5:2, 2Co 5:4. Moses his choice is famous, and celebrated all the world over; for it was not made when he was a child, but when he came to forty years of age, Heb 11:25-27; then he preferred suffering, not only before sinning, but before all the honours, riches, and pleasures of Egypt, accounting the worst of Christ, viz., reproaches, better than the best of the world. When Eleazar was promised to be saved from torments and death if he would but make show of yielding, he courageously answer'd, 'It becometh not our age in anywise to dissemble,' 2Ma 6:24; whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore and ten years old, were now gone to a strange religion. Thus also one of the seven brethren, in the name of the rest, 'We are ready to die, rather than transgress the laws of our fathers,' 2Ma 7:2; meaning such laws as God of old had given to their fathers, to be observ'd by them, and by their posterity age after age. Polycarpus, when the governor promised to let him go free if he would deny Christ, answer'd, I have serv'd him fourscore and six years, and he never hurt me in anything; how shall I curse him who hath saved me? And the governor adding one while promises, another while threatenings, Polycarpus thus cuts off all, Why dost thou make delays? inflict what thou lists.² So Galeacius, [Carraciolus,] a gentleman of great estate, who suffer'd martyrdom at St Angelo in Italy, being much press'd by his friends to recant, and save his life, he replied, that death was much more sweet to him with the testimony of verity, than life with the least denial of truth. Hooper desired rather to be discharged of his bishopric, than yield to certain ceremonies. A man were better displease all his friends, all his

relations, yea, all the world, than to displease his God, and displease his own conscience. So Cyprian,—Augustine relates the story,—when the emperor, as he was going to execution, told him that he would give him space to consider whether he were not better cast in a grain into the fire, than be so miserably slain; to which he replied, *In re tam sancta deliberatio non habet locum*, There needs no deliberation in this case. The like we read in the history of France, in the year 1572, presently after that tragical and perfidious slaughter and massacre of so many thousands of protestants by treacherous bloody papists, Charles the Ninth, king of France, called the Prince of Conde, and proposed to him this choice, either to go to mass, or to die presently, or to suffer perpetual imprisonment; to which he returned this noble answer, That by God's help he would never choose the first; and for either of the two latter, he left it to the king's pleasure, and God's providence. Thus you see that the people of God have, when put to it, chose rather to suffer than to sin. But,

4. Fourthly, That they shall be sure to suffer with a witness, that refuse to suffer, or are afraid to suffer, when Christ calls them to a suffering state. No men can suffer so much for Christ, as they shall be sure to suffer from Christ, if through weakness or wickedness they either disdain or refuse to suffer for Christ: Mark 8:35, 'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.' There is no loss, but gain, in losing for Christ. It is a very dangerous thing for men to prefer the safety of their natural lives before the glory of Christ, the cause of Christ, the gospel of Christ, and the profession of his name. It is certain that the glory of Christ ought to be more dear and precious to us than our very lives. Christ, for our redemption and salvation, freely and readily lays down his life, 'I lay down my life for my sheep,' John 10:15; and shall we stand with him for ours, when our call is clear, to lay them down for his sake and the gospel's sake? He that shall attempt to save his life by crossing his light, by shifting of the truth, or by forsaking of Christ, shall lose it. It is a gainful loss to suffer for the truth; it is a lossful gain, by time-serving and base complying with the times, the lusts, the wills, the humours of the men of this age, in whom the spirit of Cain and Esau works so furiously, to provide for our present safety, security, plenty, peace, and ease, &c., either by denying the truth, or by betraying the truth, or by exchanging the truth, or by forsaking the truth: Mat 10:39, 'He that findeth his life shall lose it.' This is a strange expression, a riddle to the world, a seeming contradiction, such as natural reason can never reconcile. 'He that findeth his life;' that is, redeemeth it with the forfeiture of his faith, with the shipwreck of his conscience, 1Ti 1:19-20, makes a loser's bargain; he makes more haste than good speed, whilst in running from death as far as he can, he runs to it as fast as he can. See it in some great instances. When Henry the Fourth of France had conquered his enemies, he turned papist, and gave this reason of it, that he might settle himself in peace and safety. Bavaillac, who slew him as he was riding abroad in his coach to refresh himself, confessed that the reason why he stabbed him was because he was of two religions; and thus, by his sinful endeavours to save his life, he lost it. There was one Philbert Hamlin in France, having converted a priest to the profession of the truth, was, together with the priest, apprehended, and cast into prison at Bourdeaux; but after a while, the priest, being terrified with the prison and fear of death, renounced Christ, and was set at liberty. Whereupon Philbert said unto him, O unhappy and more than miserable man! is it possible that, to save your life for a few days, you should so deny the truth? Know, therefore, though you have avoided the corporal fire, yet your life shall not be prolonged; for you shall die before me, and you shall not have the honour to die for the cause of Christ; but you shall be an example to apostates; and accordingly, as he went out of the prison,

two gentlemen, that had a former quarrel with him, met him, and slew him; and thus, also, he lost his life by endeavouring sinfully to save it.² The Angrognians that yielded to the papists, and complied with them, that they might sleep quietly in a whole skin, were more sadly and cruelly handled by the papists than those that continued stout, courageous, and resolute for the truth. Under the fourth persecution there were some Christians who, for fear of torments and death, denied their faith, and sacrificed to idols, yet did not their bloody persecutors spare them; and it was observed that, being full of guilt, they went to their deaths with dejected and ill-favoured countenances, so that the very Gentiles took notice of it, and reproached them as base apostates, and as such who were worthy to suffer as evil-doers. West, that was chaplain to Bishop Ridley, refusing to die in Christ's cause with his master, said mass against his conscience, and soon after pined away with sorrow and grief. A smith in King Edward the Sixth's days, called Richard Denton, was a forward professor of religion, and, by his Christian instruction, the happy instrument of the conversion of a young man to the faith. Afterwards, in the reign of Queen Mary, this young man was cast in prison for his religion; who, remembering his old friend and spiritual father, the smith, to whom he always carried a reverent respect for the good he had received by him, sent to know whether he was imprisoned also, and finding that he was not, desired to speak with him; and when he came he asked his advice, whether he thought it best for him to remain in prison, and whether he would encourage him to burn at a stake for his religion. To whom the smith answered, that his cause was good, and that he might with comfort suffer for it; but for my part, said the smith, I cannot burn. But shortly after, he that could not burn for religion, by God's just judgment was burned for his apostasy; for his shop and house being set on fire, and he over-busy to save his goods, was burnt in the flames. They that will not burn for Christ when he calls them to it, shall burn whether they will or no. He that will not suffer for Christ, shall be sure to suffer worse things from Christ than ever he could have suffered for Christ. And therefore Dr Taylor, the martyr, hit the nail when he said, If I shrink from God's truth, said he, I am sure of another manner of death than Judge Hales had, who being drawn, for fear of death, to do things against his light and conscience, did afterwards drown himself.² Cyprian, in his sermon, De Lapsis, makes mention of divers who, forsaking the profession of their faith, were given over by God to be possessed by evil spirits, and so died fearfully and miserably, making good that word that is more worth than a world, John 12:25, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' A man that is sparing of his life when Christ calls for it, doth take the ready way to lose it; and he that doth hazard it for him at his call, is sure to live eternally. Christ approves of no followers who are not resolved on the loss of what is dearest to them, yea, even of life, for his sake; therefore doth he mention our life to be hated, which is not to be understood absolutely, as if it were a sin to love life, as it is the gift of God, or that they should be weary of it, but comparatively, that they should not love it more than Christ, his word, his worship, his ways. He that resolves to save his temporal life upon any terms, he takes the shortest cut to lose both temporal and eternal life also. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it.' He that prefers the honour and service of Christ above his own life, he takes the surest way to preserve both body and soul into eternal life; for 'he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' Though life be sweet, and every creature makes much of it, from the highest angel to the lowest worm, yet woe, woe to him that is set upon saving of it when Christ calls upon him to lay it down for his sake, or the gospel's sake. No fool to him that thinks to avoid a less danger by running himself into a greater danger, who thinks to save his body by losing his soul, and to save his temporal life by losing eternal life. There is no loser to

him who, by sinful attempts to save his life, shall lose a better life than ever he can save. But,

5. Fifthly, Consider, That of old there had been a very great willingness, readiness, forwardness, and resoluteness in the people of God, cheerfully to suffer for Christ, his truth, his gospel, his worship, his ways, his ordinances, his interest, his honour. Consult the scriptures in the margin, and many others of the like import, which all knowing Christians can turn to at pleasure. To these I shall add a few examples amongst a multitude of those blessed souls, who willingly, readily, cheerfully, resolutely hazarded all for Christ while they were on earth, and are now a-receiving their reward with him in heaven. Oh, how my heart leapeth for joy, said Mr Philpot, the martyr, that I am so near the apprehension of eternal life! I with my fellows were carried to the coal-house, where we do rouse together in the straw as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down.² Mr Glover, the martyr, wept for joy of his imprisonment: and Mr Bradford put off his cap and thanked the Lord when his keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burnt the next day: and Mr Taylor fetched a pleasant delightful frisk when he was come near to the place where he was to suffer. Mr Rogers, the first that was burnt in Queen Mary's days, did sing in the flames: Vincentius, laughing at his torments, said that death and tortures were to Christians *jocularia et ludicra*, matters of sport and pastime; and he joyed and gloried when he went upon hot burning coals, as if he had trod upon roses. Fire, sword, death, prison, famine, are all pleasures, they are all delightful to me, saith Basil; and in his oration for Barlaam that famous martyr, saith that he delighted in the close prison as in a pleasant green meadow; and he took pleasure in the several inventions of tortures, as in several sweet flowers. William Tims, martyr, in a letter to a friend of his a little before his death, writeth thus, 'Now I take my leave of you till we meet in heaven, and hie you after. I have tarried a great while for you; and seeing you are so long in making ready, I will tarry no longer for you! you shall find me merrily singing, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath, at my journey's end,' &c. And when they kindled the fire at the feet of James Bainham, Methinks, said he, you strew roses before me. When the prefect urged Basil to comply with the emperor, and threatened him with death if he denied, he gave him this resolute and stout answer, 'Thou threatenest me with death,' saith he, 'and I would that it would fall out so well on my side, that I might lay down this carcase of mine in the quarrel of Christ, and in defence of the truth, who is my head and captain:' and when the prefect pressed him to remember himself, and obey the emperor; he, rejecting all, told him, What I am to-day the same thou shalt find me to-morrow.⁴ When Chrysostom was greatly threatened by the cruel empress and others, he made this answer, 'If they keep me poor, I know Christ had not a house to put his head in: if they silence me, and put me out of the synagogue; so was that poor man that confessed Christ, and the apostles enjoined not to speak in the name of Jesus: if they cast me into prison, so was Jeremiah, St Peter, and St Paul, and many more: if I am forced to flee my country, I have that beloved John, and that Atlas-like Athanasius, for precedents of the like nature: or whatsoever else should be done unto me, I have the holy martyrs for my fellow-sufferers; and I will never count my life dear unto me, so I may finish my course with joy; but I will, by God's help be every ready, with all my heart, to suffer anything for the name of Jesus Christ, and for the least jot of his truth,' John 9:22, John 9:24; Acts 5:40, &c., and Acts 5:12; Eph 6:20; Rev 1:1-20.

Neither were they only a few choice persons who willingly, readily, cheerfully, and resolutely endured martyrdom in Christ's cause; but such multitudes, year after year, month after month, week after week, and day after day, as that one of the ancients testifieth that there was never a

day in the year, except the first of January, whereunto the number of five hundred martyrs at least might not be ascribed. So many, one after another, in one day suffered, as the executioner blunted his sword, and, with the pains he took, fainted.² That which many of them endured, though to flesh and blood it seemed intolerable, yet with much patience, excellent cheerfulness, and divine courage, they endured it. They were not like bears hauled to the stake; but while persecutors were sitting on their judgment-seats, and condemning some Christians, others leaped in and professed themselves Christians, and suffered the uttermost that could be inflicted, with joyfulness and a kind of pleasantness, singing psalms as long as their breath lasted.

Bucer, in an epistle to Calvin, tells him that there were some that would willingly redeem to the commonwealth the ancient liberty of worshipping Christ with their very lives. True grace makes a Christian of a very heroic nature. Holy zeal will make a Christian very ready to endure anything, or to suffer anything for Christ, his worship, his ways, his truth.

It is a high vanity for any man to think of getting to heaven without suffering. In all the ages of the world the saints have found the way to happiness paved with troubles, and we must not think of finding it strewn with rosebuds. When Paul and Silas were in prison, their hearts were so full of joy that they could not hold; but at midnight, when others were sleeping, they must fall a-singing out the praises of the Most High, Acts 16:25. They found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more comfort than torment in their bonds. The consolations of the Spirit rose so high in their souls that their prison was turned into a palace, yea, into a paradise. Paul was a man that took a great deal of pleasure in his sufferings for Christ: 2Co 12:10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake.' He did not only bear his sufferings patiently, but cheerfully also; he often sings it sweetly out, 'I Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' Col 4:3, Col 4:10; Rom 16:7; Eph 6:20; 2Ti 1:16, &c.; not I Paul an apostle, nor I Paul rapt up into the third heaven, nor I Paul that have more gifts, parts, and learning, than others; but 'I Paul a prisoner,' to shew how much he-rejoiced in his bonds and sufferings for Christ. Chrysostom did not hold Paul so happy for his rapture into paradise as he did for his imprisonment for Christ.

Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet in-comes, the sweet joggings, the sweet embraces, the sweet influences, the sweet discoveries, the sweet love-letters, the sweet love-tokens, and the sweet comforts that Christians experience in their sufferings for Christ! In all their troubles and persecutions they may truly say, We have sweetmeats to eat, and waters of life to drink, and heavenly honeycombs to suck that the world knows not of; and, indeed, when should the torch be lighted but in a dark night; and when should the fire be made but when the weather is cold; and when should the cordial be given but when the patient is weak; and when should the God of comfort, the God of all kinds of comfort, and the God of all degrees of comfort, comfort his people, but under their troubles and persecutions; for then comfort is most proper, necessary, seasonable, and suitable, and then God will be sure to pour in the oil of joy into their hearts? 2Co 1:3-5. But,

6. Sixthly, Consider, That there is a great truth in that old maxim, *Non pœna, sed causa facit martyrem*; It is not the punishment, but the cause, that makes a martyr. Let every man look that his cause be good. It is not the blood, but the cause, that makes a martyr. It is no ways meet that I should engage to suffer in every cause. Every cause will no more bear a man out in suffering than

every shoulder will bear every burden, or than every little river will bear every ship that is of the greatest burden. One man suffers as a murderer, another suffers as a thief, another suffers as an evil-doer, and another suffers as a busybody in other men's matters; but all such sufferers are rather malefactors than Christ's martyrs. 'Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters,' 1Pe 4:15. It is but one word in the original, **■λλοτριοεπ■σκοπος**, as bishops in another's diocese, as pryings into other men's matters, as pragmatical persons that meddle with other men's concerns, without cause or call. It is not suffering for evil-doing, but suffering for well-doing that carries the crown, 2Ti 2:12. It is not just, but unjust suffering that hath the recompense of reward annexed to it, 1Pe 3:14, and 1Pe 4:14. It is not sufferers for the evil of sin, nor sufferers of the evil of sin; but sufferers of the evil of punishment, for the avoiding of the evil of sin, whose cause is good. When I consider the cause of my condemnation, said Mr Bradford, I cannot but lament that I do no more rejoice than I do; for it is for God's verity and truth. So that the condemnation is not a condemnation of Bradford simply, but rather a condemnation of Christ and of his truth. Bradford is nothing but an instrument in which Christ and his doctrine is condemned. Christ and the thieves were in the same condemnation; Samson and the Philistines in the same destruction by the downfall of the house. *Similis poena, dissimilis causa*, saith Augustine. Martyrdom is a crown, as old age, if it be found in a way of righteousness. Though life be a poor little thing to lay down for that Christ that has done such great things for us, and that has suffered such grievous things, and that has prepared such glorious things for us; yet, it is too precious to lay down in any cause but what is honourable, just, and good, Isa 53:1-12; John 14:1-31. Luther professed to Spalatine that he rejoiced with all his heart, that God called him to suffer for so good a cause, acknowledging himself unworthy of such a favour. It is the goodness of a man's cause that makes him divinely merry with the martyrs, and to sing in a prison with Paul and Silas, Col 1:24. When a man's cause is good he may call his sufferings the sufferings of Christ, and his scars and marks, **στ■γματα**, brands and marks of the Lord Jesus, Gal 6:17. The Jews have been hated and persecuted for many ages; first by the Romans, and since by all other nations, but not for any just or righteous cause, but for their impiety, obstinacy, and contempt of Christ and his gospel, and for killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent amongst them, Mat 22:2-8, and Mat 23:30, Mat 23:34, Mat 23:37-38. But gracious persons are endued, not only with reason, but also with spiritual understanding and divine wisdom, which makes them well weigh what they do, and what they suffer. Sincere Christians advisedly endure what they endure for the faith's sake, 'So fight I, not as one that beateth the air,' 1Co 9:26; that is, not as a madman that fighteth with a shadow, not weighing what he doth, but as a man of understanding, that doth very well know that I have good cause to do what I do. Persecutors commonly judge suffering saints to be no better than sots, idiots, frantics, mad, &c., not knowing the goodness of the cause for which they suffer, nor the noble ends which they aim at in suffering, nor the blessed fruits that attend their sufferings. But when may a man safely and groundedly conclude that his cause is good, or that he suffers for well-doing, or for a good cause, and as a Christian? Now to this question I shall give these following answers:—

[1.] First, When a man suffers for doing that which Christ commands, then he suffers for well-doing, then he suffers as a Christian, and then his cause is good, 1Pe 4:15-16. You know there is nothing in all the Scripture that God stands more upon than purity of religion, than purity of worship, than purity of ordinances, in opposition to all mixtures and corruptions whatsoever, Jas 1:27; Php 3:3; John 4:23-24. O sirs! the great God stands upon nothing more in all the world than

upon purity in his worship. There is nothing that does so provoke and exasperate God against a people as mixtures in his worship and service, Mat 21:12-13; John 2:15-17. And no wonder, for mixtures in his worship are expressly cross to his commands, and pollutions in worship do sadly reflect upon the name of God, the honour of God, the truth of God; and therefore his heart rises against them. Defilements in worship do sorely reflect upon the wisdom of Christ and the faithfulness of Christ, as if he were not faithful enough, nor wise enough, nor prudent, nor understanding enough, to order, direct, and guide his people in the matters of his worship; but must be beholden to the wisdom, prudence, and care of man, of vain man, of sinful man, of vile and unworthy man, to complete, perfect, and make up something that was wanting in his worship and service, &c., Heb 3:4-6. Now if a man suffers for owning pure worship and ordinances, for standing for pure worship and ordinances, and for being found in the practice of pure worship and ordinances, his cause is good, and he suffers as a Christian. But,

[2.] Secondly, When a man suffers for refusing, or for not doing, that which Christ condemns in his word, then his cause is good, and he suffers as a Christian for well-doing. Now in matters of divine worship, God condemns all mixtures, all inventions and devices of men. The very spirit, life, and soul of the second commandment lies in these words, 'Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.' God abhors that men should mix their water with his wine, their dross with his gold, their chaff with his wheat, &c. When men will venture to be so hardy and bold with God as to defile his worship with their mixtures, then God is fully resolved to be a swift and terrible witness against them, as you may clearly see by comparing those notable places of Scripture together in the margin. There is no sin that does so greatly incense and provoke God to jealousy and wrath against a people, as mixtures in his worship. God can bear with defilements anywhere rather than in worship and service. God did bear much and bear long with the Jews; but when they had defiled and corrupted his worship, then God gave them a bill of divorce, and scattered them as dung among the nations. Now when a man suffers for refusing to worship God with a mixed worship, or with an invented or devised worship, which Christ in his word doth everywhere condemn, then his cause is good, and he suffers as a Christian. But,

[3.] Thirdly, They that stoutly and resolutely assert that the blessed Scriptures are a sufficient rule to order, guide, and direct them in all matters of worship, they have a good cause, Luk 10:25-26; and they that suffer upon this account suffer as Christians for well-doing. Such vain men greatly detract from the sufficiency of the Scripture, who mingle their own or other men's inventions with divine institutions; and who set their posts by God's posts, and their thresholds by God's thresholds, Eze 43:9. The precepts and traditions of men, with their inventions and additions to the worship of God, are styled posts and thresholds, because the authors of them do lean and stand so much upon them, and set them in the way to hinder others from the enjoyment of temple-privileges, unless they will own and comply with them in their way and mode of worship; but upon all such posts and thresholds, that are of men's setting up in the worship of God, you may run and read folly, weakness, rottenness, and madness. It is only God's posts, God's thresholds, God's institutions, God's appointments, that have wisdom and holiness, beauty and glory, written upon them. For men to set up their posts by God's posts, and to give their posts equal honour and authority with God's posts, this is a defiling of the worship of God, and a profaning of the name of God, which he will certainly avenge; for he will admit no rival or proprietary in the things of his worship. O sirs! the blessed Scriptures are sufficient to direct us fully

in everything that belongs to the worship and service of God, so as that we need not depend upon the wisdom, prudence, care, and authority of any man under heaven to direct us in matters of worship: 2Ti 3:16-17, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' The Scriptures are sufficient to inform the ignorant, to confute the erroneous, to reform the vicious, and to guide and direct, support and comfort, those that are gracious. Here a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim; here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men; here is comfort for the afflicted, and succour for the tempted, and ease for the troubled, and light for the clouded, and enlargement for the straitened, &c. Oh, how full of light, how full of life, how full of love, how full of sweetness, how full of goodness, how full of righteousness and holiness, &c., is every chapter, and every verse in every chapter, yea, and every line in every verse! The Rabbins say that a mountain of matter hangs upon every word of Scripture, yea, upon every title of Scripture. When the people of God have been in any outward or inward distresses or troubles, God never sends them to the shop of men's traditions and inventions, but he still sends them to the blessed Scriptures: Isa 8:20, 'To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light' (■■■■, no morning) 'in them:' Isa 34:16, 'Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and my Spirit it hath gathered them.' And in the New Testament, Christ sends his hearers to the Scriptures: John 5:39, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' The Greek word, ■ρευν■τε, that is here rendered 'search,' signifies a strict, narrow, curious, diligent search. We must search the Scriptures as we would search for gold, or for some precious stones, which we would fain find; we must search the Scriptures as hunters seek and search out their game. The Scripture is so perfect a rule that the most specious observances, the most glorious performances, the most exact worship, is no way acceptable unto God if not directed in his word. They may have λ■γον σοφ■ας ■ν ■θελοθρησκε■α, 'a show of wisdom in will-worship,' to the pleasing of men, not to the honour of God,' Col 2:23. God gave Moses a pattern for the making of the tabernacle, Exo 25:9, and David for the temple, Heb 8:5, and all things were to be ordered, and regulated according to this pattern, God hath set us a perfect rule of worship in his word, and no service pleaseth him but what is according to this rule. As our Saviour told the woman of Samaria concerning the Samaritan worship at Mount Gerizim, and the Jewish worship at Jerusalem, that the Samaritans worshipped they knew not what, John 4:20-22; the Jews knew what they worshipped, for salvation was of the Jews. Why so? Because the Jews had God's special direction and appointment of God's word for their worship and service, which the Samaritans had not. All our worship must be regulated by God's will, not our own: Non ex arbitrio Deo serviendum, sed ex imperio; Not according to our own fancy, but God's command and prescription. I say of all human-invented will-worship of God, as Tertullian of the heathen worship, Ex religione superstitio compingitur, et eo irreligiosior, quanto Ethnicus paratior; Men in this are no better than laboriously superstitious, taking pains to be irreligious. And so the apostle, 2Pe 1:19-21, sends his hearers to the Scriptures, as to a surer word than that of the revelation, all which speaks out the sufficiency of the Scripture, to direct us in all matters of divine worship, and in whatever else may help on the internal and eternal welfare of our precious and immortal souls. That which bred the popish religion, superstition, idolatry, and pompous worship, was men's departing from the word, and not cleaving to the word as a sufficient rule to direct them in all

matters of worship; and what woeful mischiefs and miseries have been brought upon the people of the Lord in this land and elsewhere by men that make not the word the rule of their worship, but cry up an outward pompous worship, I have no mind to enumerate at this time. But how will these vain men, that accuse the holy Scriptures of insufficiency, blush, be ashamed, and confounded, when in the great day the Lord shall plead the excellency and vindicate the sufficiency and authority of his blessed book, in opposition to all the mixtures of men's traditions with divine institutions! Now they that suffer for asserting the holy Scriptures to be a sufficient rule to order, guide, and direct them in all matters of worship, they have a good cause, and they suffer as Christians for well-doing. But,

[4.] They that are assertors of the true God, in opposition to the idols of the nations, have a good cause; and they that suffer upon this account suffer as Christians for well-doing. Upon this foot the Christians under the heathen emperors in the primitive times suffered great things; and are there none that suffer this day upon this account by the Romish powers? But,

[5.] Fifthly, They who assert that God will not bear with mixtures in his worship and service, but revenge himself upon the corrupters of his worship, they have a good cause; and they that suffer upon that account suffer as Christians for well-doing. All mixtures debase the worship and service of God, and makes the worship a vain worship, Isa 29:13-14; Mat 15:3, Mat 15:6, Mat 15:8-9. As the mixing of water with wine is the debasing of the wine, and the mixing of tin with silver, or brass with gold, is debasing of the silver and gold, so for men to mix and mingle their traditions and inventions with God's institutions is to debase the worship and service of God, and to detract from the excellency and glory of it. You know that the kings and princes of the world have most severely punished such who by their base mixtures have imbasd their coin; and assuredly there is a day a-coming when the King of kings will most severely punish all such who have imbasd his worship and service, by mixing human inventions and Romish traditions with his holy institutions: Rev 22:18, 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.' And no wonder; for what horrible pride, presumption, stoutness, and baseness is it in foolish man to be so bold with the great God, as to dare to mix anything of his own with his worship and service, which, according to divine institution, is so perfect and complete. God will never bear it to see men lay their dirt upon his gold, and to put their rags upon his royal robes. Ah, Christians, it is best to stand up for holy ordinances and pure worship, in opposition to all mixtures whatsoever. Oh, do not touch a polluted worship, do not plead and contend for a polluted worship, but let Baal plead for Baal, 1Ki 18:21; and though all the world should wonder after the beast, yet do not you wonder² after the beast, Rev 13:3-4, Rev 13:6, Rev 13:17; and though every forehead should have the mark of the beast upon it, yet do you abhor his mark, and whatever else it be that does but smell and savour of the beast, Rev 14:9, Rev 14:11. It is a very dangerous thing for any mortals to be adding to God's worship and word; there is a horrible curse that hangs over the heads of all such that add or detract from the blessed Scriptures. If falsifiers of coin are liable unto the civil curse of the law, how much more shall the anathema of eternal damnation be inflicted upon the corrupters of God's word and worship. 'To them that add thereto, God will add all the plagues of this book'—to wit, the seven last plagues—'and cast them into the lake of fire and brimstone, with the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet,' Rev 19:1-21. Now they that suffer for asserting that God will not bear with mixtures in his worship and service, but revenge himself upon

the corrupters of his worship and service, they have a good cause, and they suffer as Christians for well-doing. But,

[6.] Sixthly, They who are hated, scorned, despised, reproached opposed, persecuted, imprisoned, ruined for their non-compliance with the times, and with the wills and lusts of men, and with the worship of the world and the ways of the world, they have a good cause, and they suffer as Christians for well-doing, 1Pe 4:4-5; Jude 1:15; Rev 3:4; 1Co 7:23; Gal 1:10. And is not this the very case of the people of God this day? for would they, or durst they, comply with the times, and with the wills and lusts of men, and with the worship of the world and the ways of the world, they should be white boys, and instead of prisons might stand in princes' palaces as well as others, and might eat the fat and drink the sweet, and live at ease, and grow rich as well as others. But some do not love that we should either harp hard or long upon this string; and therefore,

[7.] Seventhly, They that are assertors of Christ, of the true Messiah, and his glorious gospel and gospel ordinances, in opposition to all such as either deny him or his gospel, or that make head against him or gospel ordinances, gospel administrations, they have a good cause, and if they suffer upon that account, they suffer as Christians for well-doing. The sufferings of the people of God for the first three hundred years, were clearly stated for Christ and the gospel in common. It was the administration of the gospel in the whole and in every part of it, and Gentilism advanced instead thereof, that brought on a warm persecution. Seeing serious Christians are for pure ordinances and pure administrations, and what they have suffered and do daily suffer upon that account, all that do not wilfully shut their eyes may easily discern. It is sad when such men's mouths must be stopped who are qualified, gifted, graced, and called, both by God and men, to preach the glorious, the everlasting gospel, 2Co 4:4. But when the devil and his factors have done their worst, the gospel will get ground by all the opposition that is made against it, Rev 14:6. Among many other visions that John had, 'he saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth; and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him,' &c., Rev 14:7-8. Now mark what next follows: 'Another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; Babylon the Great is fallen.' Now behold the efficacy and power of gospel-preaching. Let but the gospel be sincerely preached, and Babylon must down. The devil and Dagon must fall before the ark of God's presence; whatsoever the purposes, projects, pretences, policies, conspiracies, combinations, and confederacies of lewd, superstitious, atheistical, wicked wretches be, yet they shall never be able to stop the stream of God's word, dam up the wells of salvation, or hinder the free passage of the gospel, no more than they are able to bind up the wind in their fists, or stop the sun from running its race, or hinder the clouds from watering the earth. It is true that the faithful ministers of the gospel may, by the instruments of Satan, be stocked, stoned, sawn asunder, burned with fire, slain with the sword, clapped up in prison, fettered in chains, plundered, &c., yet the gospel may be, nay is, in lively operation, a light that cannot be put out, a heat that cannot be smothered, a power that cannot be broken; for even then the courageous and constant sufferings of God's faithful ministers, and their cheerful and patient bearing of the cross, doth, as by a lively voice, publish and proclaim the truth of the gospel for which they suffer, and serves to win many to the faith of Christ. Paul's bonds fell out to the furtherance of the gospel, Php 1:7, Php 1:12-14, Php 1:17. Paul's iron chain was more famous and glorious all the world over, than all the golden chains in Nero's palace. Whatsoever persecuting popes and persecuting emperors have attempted

against the gospel, Christ has turned it all to the furtherance of the gospel. The pope's bulls, and the emperor's thunderbolts, did not amaze and discourage men, but did exceedingly animate and encourage them to own the gospel, to embrace the gospel, and to stand up in the defence of the gospel. Cæsar sending the Protestants' confession abroad to other Christian princes, as desiring their advice about it, dispersed and spread it more in all parts than all the Lutheran preachers could have done; for which cause Luther laughs not a little at the foolish wisdom of the papists, in a certain epistle of his to the elector of Saxony.² Julian, observing that the more ministers and Christians were persecuted the more they increased, he gave over persecution, and spared those whom he could have wished out of the world. And would it not be the wisdom and the interest of the persecutors in our days to write after Julian's copy? and if they will not, then let them remember that it is the most effectual way under heaven to propagate those truths, opinions, ways, principles, and practices, which their hearts rise and swell against, by laying them in bonds which stand up most eminently in the defence of those truths, opinions, ways, principles, and practices. The nature of man is very curious and inquisitive. Men, as men, are led by common compassion to desire to understand the grounds of men's sufferings. By this means the sufferings, especially the imprisonment of the apostles, carried the doctrine of the gospel to many places where the apostles themselves never came, nor perhaps could come; no doubt but the fame of their suffering went faster and farther too than they could go. But,

[8.] Eighthly, They that are assertors of any one fundamental truth, in opposition to error and heresy truly so called, have a good cause; and if they suffer upon that account, they suffer as Christians for well-doing, Acts 24:14; 1Co 11:9; 2Pe 2:1; Gal 5:20. Such were those Christians that suffered under the Arian emperors, Constantius, Valens, and others, who suffered for maintaining that Christ was co-essential, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father; and such were Wickliffe, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, &c. Are there none this day among us that suffer in their names, in their estates, in their persons, in their liberties, for asserting and maintaining the great truths of the gospel, in opposition to Socinianism, Arianism, Popery, will-worship, &c.? Are there no Socinian atheists among us who deny with open face the godhead of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, as if Christ were a constituted God, and not of the same substance with the Father from all eternity; not a God by nature, but by donation in time? And though God hath raised up several champions in this his Israel, to disarm them of all their subtilties, and to beat them out of all their trenches, though they were dug as low as hell; yet, how have they put on a brow of brass, and do all they can to bring on a warm persecution upon their opposers? Pro 27:22. But,

[9.] Ninthly, They that plead for the reduction of all ordinances, worship, church-government, and discipline, to the primitive pattern and institution, in opposition to all human and antichristian inventions, traditions, and innovations in the worship of God, they have a good cause; and they that suffer upon that account, suffer as Christians for well-doing. Surely this is a truth we must live and die by, viz., That no ordinance, worship, government, or discipline, is to be held up or maintained in the church but what has the stamp of a divine institution upon it. The worshipping of God in spirit and in truth is that worship which God commands, commends, accepts, and rewards; and therefore let us make it our business, our work, our heaven, to keep close to this kind of worship, John 4:23-24; Rom 1:9; Php 3:3. Christ will shortly come in flames of fire, and vindicate this kind of worship against all opposers, 2Th 1:7-10. Hold out faith and patience a little, and Christ will call all the troublers of his church and people into the valley of decision, Joe 3:14; and there,

with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, he will plead with them, and with all such as have muddied the waters of his sanctuary, and polluted those silver streams; and then it will appear whether the outward ceremonious worshipping of God, or the worshipping him in spirit and in truth, be the true worship, Isa 40:10; Jer 21:5; Eze 32:2. Judicious Hooker determines, that in God's service to do that which we are not to do is a greater fault than not to do that which we are commanded. Amongst other reasons, he gives this to our purpose, because in the one we seem to charge the law of God with hardness only, and in the other, with foolishness and insufficiency, which God gave us as a perfect rule of his worship and service. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, They that are assertors of those precious privileges that are the purchase of the blood of Christ, they have a good cause; and if they suffer upon that account, they suffer as Christians for well-doing, Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18; Php 2:6-10. As for instance,

First, Christ as mediator hath purchased for himself a headship and supremacy over his church. Now such as stand up for the headship of the Lamb, against all those that would rob him of his headship, either at Rome or elsewhere, they have a righteous cause; and if they suffer upon that account, they suffer as Christians for well-doing.

Secondly, He has purchased for his people a liberty to serve and worship him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life, Luk 1:69-70, Luk 1:74-75. He has purchased for his people a liberty from the ceremonies of Moses' law, which were originally the commands of God himself; how much more then from all Paganish and Antichristian ceremonies! Gal 5:1. The imposition of traditional observances and ceremonies, is to reduce us under the Jewish yoke, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, Acts 15:10; or to impose them as equally obligatory to conscience, as divine commands; or to impose them as the immediate worship of God, or as duties essentially necessary in order to salvation: Christians justly abhor, as the tyranny of Rome, as the infringement of Christian liberty, and as a violation and making void the commandment of God; as our Saviour told the Pharisees of old, that 'they made the commandment of God of none effect,' Mat 15:6. The Greek word κύρσασατε, signifies 'to deprive of all rule and authority.' They had such a superstitious esteem of their traditions, ceremonies, &c., that they sought to shoulder God out of his throne, to divest and spoil him of his rule and authority, to ungod him, as it were, by making his commandment void and invalid. Christ reprehends three things in the Jewish traditions; (1.) That they obtruded outward cleanness on God, instead of the purity of the heart; (2.) That by their human traditions, they made void the worship of God; (3.) That they preferred human traditions before the divine precepts; and were so taken with their traditions, that they neglected the divine precepts; yea, made them altogether vain as the papists, and others that are popishly affected, do this day. They that are the most zealous for the introducing of useless ceremonies in the church, are usually the most negligent to preach the cautions in using them; and simple people, like children in eating of fish, swallow bones and all, to the danger of choking. Besides, what is observed of horse-hairs, that lying nine days in water, they turn to snakes; so some ceremonies, though dead at first, in continuance of time quicken, get stings, and may do much mischief; especially in such an age, wherein the meddling of some have justly awakened the jealousy of all.² Now, whoever shall suffer for asserting of any of the precious privileges, that are the purchase of Christ's blood, they suffer in a righteous cause, they suffer as Christians, for well-doing. And thus you see how a man may know when his cause is good, just, and righteous, and when he suffers as a Christian for well-doing. But,

7. Seventhly, Consider, That it is not enough for a man to have a good cause, but he must have a clear call; else he may be a sufferer, but no martyr. Some may have a good cause, and yet want a clear call. Some may suffer for the cause of God, and yet sin in suffering, for want of a call. Christ calls not all to suffer; to some it is given, to others it is not given. When a man's call is clear, his peace will be sweet, his courage will be high, and his comforts will be strong, though his sufferings be never so great, nor never so long. Though it be a high honour to suffer for the gospel, yet 'no man ought to take this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God.' Christians must take as much heed how they espouse a suffering state, as how they shun a suffering state. I am not to go to prison upon choice, but upon a call, but upon a warrant under God's own hand; though it be an argument of a gracious spirit, to be always of a ready and forward mind to suffer for Christ. And when he demands, Who will go with me? who will bear my cross? cheerfully to answer, I will go, Lord, let me bear it: yet should we take heed, that as we hang not back when he says go; so that we run not before he sends us, before he calls us.

Quest. But how shall I know when I am called to suffer, when I am called to lay down life, liberty, and all, for the profession of Christ and the gospel? To this I answer:—

[1.] First, When the truth will suffer, and the name of God suffer, and the gospel will suffer, should we decline suffering, then we are called to suffer. It is our duty to suffer anything, to suffer the worst of things that the worst of men can inflict, rather than that the truth should suffer, or the name of God suffer, or the gospel suffer.

[2.] Secondly, When the case stands so with us, that we cannot keep life, estate, liberty, &c., without denying of Christ or the gospel, or without concealing this precious truth or that, or without turning our backs upon this ordinance or that, &c., then we are called to suffer. When we cannot preserve our lives, our liberties, our estates, without denying of Christ, or the concerns of Christ, in one degree or another, in one kind or another, then we are called to lay down our lives, our liberties, our estates, &c., at the feet of Christ, as the saints and martyrs of old have done before us.

[3.] Thirdly, When our way is so hedged up with thorns, Hos 2:6, that we must either sin or suffer, when sin and sufferings surround us, so that we cannot get out or come off, but we must either sin or suffer, then I must, with the three champions, choose rather to burn than to bow; and with Daniel to the lion's den, than to omit my duty, Dan 3:17; and with Moses, choose to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, Heb 11:24-26. I may safely and groundedly conclude, that Christ calls me to suffer, when I must either sin or suffer. When the case stands thus, then I may be confident of the singular presence of God with me, the special blessing of God upon me, and a gracious or a glorious deliverance out of all my sufferings. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, When a Christian, to the best of his understanding, has seriously weighed all things and circumstances, and is well satisfied in his mind and conscience that his sufferings will be the exaltation of Christ, the furtherance of the gospel, the stopping of the mouths of the wicked, the confirmation of those that are strong, and the strengthening and encouraging of those that are weak, then he may safely conclude that Christ calls him to suffer. But,

8. Eighthly, Consider, That the sufferings of the saints in these days are light and easy to the sufferings that were inflicted upon the Jews in the days of Antiochus, and on Christians in the times of the ten notorious persecutions under the Roman emperors, and to those that have been inflicted upon the martyrs since. So cruel was the sight of those tortures which persecutors inflicted, as exceeds all expression.² Constant Christians had their flesh torn from their backs with rods, scourges, whips, and cords, so as their bones lay bare; and the raw parts of their bodies were washed with vinegar and salt. They were stretched on racks, their legs were broken, and so left miserably to perish; they were gored with sharp pricks under the lowest parts of their nails; their bodies were scraped with shells to death; their backs were flayed; their skins were pulled over their heads, from the brow to the chin; their noses, lips, ears, hands, and feet were cut off, and they, as sacrifices, cut in gobbets; their tongues were cut out by the roots, and pulled out of their jaws; their eyes were bored, and digged out; their bodies were rent and pulled in pieces by strong boughs forced together by instruments, and let loose when the limbs of the bodies of martyrs were tied fast unto them; their limbs were also pulled to pieces with wild horses; their brains were knocked out with fuller's clubs; their legs were broken in pieces; they were burnt with fire; they were a long while together parched with hot burning coals; being hanged by the heels, and their heads downward over a soft fire, they were choked with smoke; they were roasted at the fire, as flesh to be eaten used to be roasted; they were leisurely broiled on gridirons over the fire; they were fried in red-hot iron chairs, as in a frying-pan, which annoyed the standers-by with a stench; hot boiling lead was poured down their throats; they clapped fiery plates of brass upon the most tender parts of their bodies. A persecuting tyrant, considering the nature of the country, that it was terrible cold, and the time of the year, that it was winter, and a night wherein the cold extremely increased, and that the north wind then blew there, commanded forty Christians to be set stark naked under the open air in the midst of the city to freeze to death. Then, when they heard that charge, with joy casting away even their innermost vestment, they went on to their death by cold.² They endured the violence of leopards, bears, wild boars, and bulls. Attalus and Alexander were twice baited with wild beasts, to be torn in pieces by them, as Eusebius reports. Attalus, escaping the beasts, was reserved to other torments, to be burnt to death in an iron chair, heated red fire hot. Macedonius, Theodulus, and Tatianus were laid upon a gridiron, and broiled to death.⁴ There were many Christians together stopped up in lakes or caves, artificially made close, which lakes or ditches were filled with a company of dormice, kept hungry, to gnaw and feed upon the poor Christians, they being all the while bound hand and foot, that they could not keep off those hunger-starved creatures, which were kept without meat also, purposely that they might fasten with the more eagerness upon the bodies of those precious Christians. They were destroyed with hunger, thirst, and cold. Such as were stifled in prisons, they cast to dogs, setting watchmen night and day, lest any of them should be buried. And such remainders as were left both of beasts and fire, in part torn, and in part burnt, together with the heads and bodies of others, they cast out in like manner, unburied, and committed them some days to the custody of soldiers.⁶ Thus the barbarous cruelty of persecutors extended itself as far as it could beyond them temporal lives of the martyrs. Ecclesiastical histories tell us that all the apostles died violent deaths. Peter was crucified with his heels upwards. Christ was crucified with his head upwards, but Peter thought this was too great an honour for him to be crucified as his Lord, and therefore he chose to be crucified with his heels upward; and Andrew was crucified by Egeus, king of Edessa; and James, the son of Zebedee, was slain by Herod with the sword, Acts 12:2; and Philip was crucified

at Hierapolis, in Asia; and while Bartholomew was preaching the glad tidings of salvation, multitudes fell upon him, and beat him down with staves, and then crucified him; and after all this, his skin was flayed off, and he beheaded; Thomas was slain with a dart at Calumina, in India; and Matthew was slain with a spear, say some; others say he was run through with a sword; and James, the son of Alpheus, who was called the Just, was thrown down from off a pinnacle of the temple; and yet having some life left in him, he was brained with a fuller's club. Lebbeus was slain by Agbarus, king of Edessa, and Paul was beheaded at Rome by Nero; and Simon the Canaanite was crucified in Egypt, say some; others say that he and Jude were slain in a tumult of the people; and Matthias was stoned to death, and John was banished into Patmos, Rev 1:9; and afterwards, as some histories tell us, he was by that cruel tyrant Domitian cast into a tub of scalding oil, and yet delivered by a miracle. Thus all these worthies, 'of whom this world was not worthy,' Heb 11:38, except John, died violent deaths, and so, through sufferings, entered into glory. To conclude, Lactantius saith, not only the men among the Christians, and those of stronger years and hearts, but even our women and little children, saith he, have endured all torments, and been too hard for their tormentors. No rack, no fire could fetch so much as a groan from them, which the stoutest thieves and malefactors among their persecutors could not undergo, but they would roar and cry out through impatience and disability to endure them. I suppose that more cruel torments cannot be invented than of old have been inflicted on Christians. Persecutors have acknowledged that they were overcome, and had no more to inflict.² Such torture and torments so courageously and manfully have sundry Christians in all ages suffered as to them who only heard thereof they seemed incredible; and to many who were eye-witnesses thereof they seemed so strange, and beyond admiration, as they thought the martyrs to be mad, witless, and senseless: but the martyrs had peace and rest and quiet within, and the favourable presence of God so shining upon their souls, that they were encouraged and enabled with a holy and heavenly bravery of spirit to bid defiance to their most cruel persecutors.

Now, Christians, if you compare your most cruel sufferings with the sufferings of the saints of old, how easy and light will they be found to be! What are molehills to mountains, scratches upon the hand to stabs at the heart? No more are your greatest sufferings to those that the saints have met with in former ages. And therefore, though men frown upon you, and threaten you with censures, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation, and all the evil human might and cruelty can do unto you, yet be not moved, but account yourselves happy that you have any opportunity to do or suffer anything whereby you may testify that Christ and his concerns do lie near your hearts, and whereby you may further his opposed interest, and bear witness to his despised truth, 1Pe 4:14-15. But,

9. Ninthly, Consider, That the saints and martyrs of old have made little reckoning or account of their lives, liberties, relations, or estates, when they stood in competition with Christ, or his truth, worship, ways, ordinances, interest, or with their profession of the Christian faith. Witness that glorious testimony that the apostle gives of them, 'They would not accept deliverance.' He means deliverance from death, or preservation of life. This, though offered, they would not accept—namely, on persecutors' terms or conditions, which was to deny the truth of God, or renounce their faith in him. They scorned deliverance upon base terms, and would rather die than deny Christ or his truth. This phrase, 'Not accepting deliverance,' presupposeth that deliverance was offered to them, otherwise they could not have rejected it, for their not accepting was a

rejecting. Their persecutors offered them deliverance upon their compliance with their wills, lusts, ways, worship, &c. This is evident by that which Nebuchadnezzar said to Daniel's three champions when they were accused for not worshipping his idol, which was this, 'If ye be ready to fall down and worship the image,' Dan 3:15. He hereby implies that they should be spared; for he addeth, 'If you worship not, you shall be cast into a fiery furnace.' And this is further evident in those to whom the apostle hath reference—viz., the Maccabees, 2Ma 6:18-31. And this was the common practice of the persecuting emperors in the ten persecutions; and after them, with the Antichristian persecutors; and more particularly, with the high persecutors in Queen Mary's days. But the Christians in those several ages had such a mighty presence of God with them, that they chose rather to suffer the worst of deaths than to preserve their lives by complying with the wills, lusts, ways, and worship of their persecutors. For ever remember this, that the envy and malice of persecutors is more against the glorious truth the saints profess than it is against their persons; for let but Christians relinquish the truth, deny the truth, reproach the truth, or oppose the truth, and presently they shall be white-boys, great favourites, good sons of the church, and what not. That the envy and malice of persecutors is more against the truth than the professors of it, is most evident, in that they persecute strangers whom they never knew before. It is said of Paul, that 'if he found any such, he brought them bound,' Acts 9:2. All was fish that was caught in his net. If father or mother, brother or sister, child or cousin profess the truth, plead for the truth, stand up for the truth, men of persecuting spirits will prosecute and persecute them to the death: 'The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death,' Mat 10:21; Luk 21:16. Alphonsus Diarius delivered up his own brother John at Neuberg in Germany into his enemies' hands. So Dr London⁴ made Filmer the martyr's own brother witness against him, by supplying of him with meat and money, and by telling of him he should never want. So one Woodman was delivered by his own brother into his enemies' hands. And in the civil wars of France, not to mention that of England, the sons fought against their fathers, and brothers against brothers; and even women took up arms on both sides for defence of their religion. And Philip, king of Spain, could frequently say that he had rather have no subjects than heretics, as he called the Protestants; and out of a blind, bloody zeal he suffered his eldest son Charles to be murdered by the cruel Inquisition, because he seemed to favour the Protestant side, [Jerome.] Truth is a glorious, shining light, that discovers the ignorance and darkness, the wickedness and baseness, the unsoundness and hypocrisy, the superstition and vain conversation, of persecutors; and therefore they cannot endure this light, they hate this light, and will do all they can to suppress this light, and those that hold out this light to the world, John 3:19. The saints and martyrs of old were as willing to die as to dine. Pliny, writing to Trajan the emperor, declares to him that such was their zeal and courage in behalf of their God, that nothing could stir them from it. Neither the imperious checks of the potent emperors, nor the soft language of the eloquent orators, could draw them from the faith; but they steadfastly owned it, and constantly persevered in the defence of it, and were ready and willing to lay down their lives for it. When Ignatius was to suffer, It is better for me, saith he, to be a martyr than to be a monarch. It was a notable saying of a French martyr, when the rope was about his fellow, Give me, said he, that golden chain, and dub me knight of that noble order. Let, saith Ignatius, fire and cross, invasion of beasts, breaking of bones, pulling asunder of members, grinding of my whole body, and what else the devil can inflict, come, so I may hold Jesus Christ.³ Lucius thanked him that brought him forth to suffer, and said that he should be free from those evil masters, and go to God,

a good Father and King. Germanieus, when he was brought forth to be torn in pieces and devoured by wild beasts, the governor, persuading him to be mindful of his youth, that he might be spared, of his own accord incited the beasts against himself. Sanctus, being under tortures for professing himself to be a Christian, unto every question propounded to him, he answered, I am a Christian; whereby he occasioned his torments to be continued to death.⁵ Can we think that St Laurence would have accepted of deliverance, who, lying on a red-hot gridiron, over burning coals, with an invincible spirit thus said to the tyrants: Turn the side broiled enough, and see what thy burning fire hath done; and being turned, and thoroughly broiled on the other side, saith thus again: Eat that which is broiled, and try whether raw or broiled be the sweeter. Hippolytus, when he was tied to wild horses to be pulled asunder, thus prayed: Let them rend my limbs; do thou, O Christ, wrap up my soul. To omit other particulars of the ancient martyrs in the primitive times, with whose courageous speeches, manifesting a contempt of death, of which volumes might be filled, it is indefinitely recorded of many, who were famous for their wealth, nobility, glory, eloquence, and learning, that nevertheless they preferred true piety and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ before all those. And though they were entreated by many of their kindred and friends otherwise, yea, and by others in great place, and by the judge himself, that they would take pity of themselves, their wives, and children; yet would they not be induced and entreated by so many, and great ones, so to be affected with the love of this life as to forbear the confession of our Saviour, and to set light by the denial of him. Thus you see what little reckoning or account the Christians of old have made of their lives, liberties, and estates, or whatever else was near or dear unto them, when these things stood in competition with Christ, his truth, his worship, his ways, his interest, or with their profession of the Christian faith.

Take a few instances of a later date. John Huss being at the stake, a pardon was offered him if he would recant; to which he answered, I am here ready to suffer death. So Jerome of Prague: If I had feared the fire, said he, I had not come hither. Francis Camba, a martyr, in the diocese of Milan, being much assailed by his friends, and terrified by his foes, by no means could be overcome; but gave thanks to God that he was accounted worthy to suffer a cruel death for the testimony of his Son; and such were his expressions of joy in his sufferings, that his persecutors caused his tongue to be bored through, that he might speak no more to the people. Another [Mrs Anne Askew] being offered the king's pardon if she would recant, gave this resolute answer: I came not here to deny my Lord and Master. By that which she with admirable courage and constancy endured, she verified that which of old Julitta spake concerning their sex, viz., We women ought to be as constant as men in Christ's cause. Another [Walter Mill] who suffered martyrdom in Scotland, being solicited to recant, made this reply: ye shall know that I will not recant the truth, for I am corn, I am no chaff; I will not be blown away with the wind, nor burst with the flail; but I will abide both. Another, [Mr John Rogers,] being the first martyr in Queen Mary's days, being solicited to recant, that so he might save his life, boldly replied, That which I have preached I will seal with my blood. Another, [Hooper, bishop of Gloucester,] when a pardon was set before him in a box, cried out, If you love my soul, away with it; if you love my soul, away with it. Another [Mr Thos. Hawks, a gentleman in Essex] on the like occasion, gave this resolute answer, If I had a hundred bodies I would suffer them all to be torn in pieces, rather than abjure or recant. So another [Bishop Ridley] spake to the like purpose. So long, said he, as the breath is in my body, I will never deny my Lord Christ and his known truth. Another [Father Latimer] used such a speech to one that advised him to spare himself, as Christ did to Peter on the like occasion, 'Get

thee behind me, Satan.' There are a world of other instances of the like nature, but enough is as good as a feast. By all these instances, you may see that blessed word verified, 'They loved not their lives unto the death,' Rev 12:11. They were willing to lay down their lives for the glory of Christ, and for the truth of Christ; so that οκ γησαν, 'They loved not,' is put for ληγησαν, 'they neglected or contemned' their life, as Brightman hath well observed. They slighted, yea, despised their lives, and rather exposed them to hazard and loss, than to deny Christ, or their holy profession. It is a paraphrase of the constancy of their faith, even unto martyrdom for the name of Christ. But,

10. Tenthly, Consider, That God puts a great deal of honour upon suffering saints. To suffer for Christ is honourable, Php 1:29. God will not put this honour upon every one, he puts this honour only upon those that are vessels of honour. By grace God makes men vessels of silver and vessels of gold, and then casts them into the fire to melt and suffer for his name, 2Ti 2:20-21; and a higher glory he cannot put upon them on this side glory. The crown of martyrdom is a crown that the blessed angels, those princes of glory, are not capable of winning or wearing; and oh, who art thou? and what art thou, O man, that God should set this crown upon thy head? Mark at what a rate Peter speaks: 1Pe 4:14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' The very suffering condition of the people of God is at the present a glorious condition, 'for the Spirit of glory rests upon them;' and therefore they must needs be glorious, yea, very glorious, upon whom the Spirit of glory falls, and in whom the Spirit of glory dwells, Rom 8:9, Rom 8:11. What a glorious mould and metal were the three children made up of, that were cast into the fiery furnace, Dan 3:1-30; and what a deal of honour and glory did God put upon them in the eyes of all the world! The apostles all along accounted their own sufferings, and the sufferings of the saints for Christ, to be the highest honour and glory that God could put upon them in this world, as will be evident by our comparing the scriptures in the margin together. To suffer for Christ is the greatest honour and promotion that God gives in this world, said old Father Latimer; and, therefore, when sentence was pronounced against him, he cried out, I thank God most heartily for this great honour. So Saunders, 'I am the unmeetest man for this high office that ever was appointed to it.' So Careless, the martyr, 'This is such an honour,' said he, 'as the greatest angel in heaven is not permitted to have.' God forgive me mine unthankfulness,² &c. John Noyes took up a fagot at the fire, and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be the time that ever I was born to come to this preferment.' So when they had fastened Alice Driver with a chain to the stake to be burnt, 'Never,' said she, 'did neckerchief become me so well as this chain.' So Balilus, the martyr, when he was to die, requested this favour of his persecutors, viz., that he might have his chains buried with him as the ensigns of his honour. 'What are we, poor worms, full of vanities and lies,' said Calvin, 'that we should be called to be maintainers of the truth; for sufferings for Christ are the ensigns of heavenly nobility.' To die for Christ is the greatest promotion that God can bring any in this vale of misery unto, said Mr Philpot, the martyr. A French soldier, for his zealous profession of the Reformed religion, was condemned to the fire with others, only he should have the favour of going to the stake without a wyth; but he desired that he might wear such a chain as his fellows did, esteeming this rebuke of Christ more glorious than the ensigns of St Michael's order. It was an excellent saying of Prudentius, 'Their names,' saith he, 'that are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, the book of life.' The passion-days of the martyrs were anciently called the Natalitia salutis, the birthdays of salvation,

the daybreak of eternal brightness. We count it a great honour to have princes to be our companions; Christ, the Prince of peace, and the angels, those princes of glory, are our companions in all our sufferings. Such is the honour that God puts upon his suffering saints, that nothing shall hinder him from being their companion in all their sufferings, in all their afflictions, in all their temptations; and this, believe it, is no small honour. I have read³ how that, in the primitive times, when some good people came to comfort some of the martyrs that were in prison and ready to suffer, they called them blessed martyrs; Oh no, said they, we are not worthy of the name of martyrs! These holy humble hearts thought martyrdom too high an honour for them. And Luther, writing to those which were condemned to death, saith, The Lord will not do me that honour after all that bustle I have made in the world. In the primitive times they were wont to call martyrdom by the name of Corona Martyrii, the crown of martyrdom. We read of a woman-martyr who, having her child in her hand, gave it to another, and offered herself to martyrdom. Crowns, said she, are to be dealt out this day, and I mean to have one. You see what high and honourable thoughts the saints had of their sufferings in those days; and oh that all suffering saints would labour to write after that noble copy that they have left upon record! But,

11. Eleventhly, Consider, That suffering saints do put a great deal of honour and glory upon God, Christ, religion, and upon God's truth, worship, and ways. What a spreading fame and glory of God did the sufferings of the three worthies scatter all the world over! Dan 3:28-29. God is acknowledged and adored by Nebuchadnezzar: a decree is made that 'Every people, nation, and language, which speak amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill,' &c. Here God's glory wonderfully shines out of their sufferings; here this poor, blind, idolatrous heathen prince is forced to confess that there is no God like Israel's God. Basil and Tertullian do well observe of the primitive martyrs, that divers of the heathen, seeing their zeal, courage, and constancy, glorified God, and turned Christians. Religion is that phoenix which hath always revived and flourished in the ashes of holy men; and truth hath never been so honoured and gloriously dispersed as when it hath been sealed by the blood of the saints. This made Julian to forbear to persecute; non ex clementia, sed invidia, not out of piety, but envy; because the church grew so fast, and multiplied, as Nazianzen well observes. We read that sometimes the sufferings of one saint have begot many to the love of the truth. We read that Cecilia, a poor captive virgin, by her gracious behaviour in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. Justin Martyr was also converted by observing the cheerful and gracious carriage of the saints in their sufferings. And so Adrianus, seeing the martyrs suffer readily and joyfully such grievous torments, asked why they would endure such misery, when they might, by retracting, free themselves. Upon which one of them cited that text: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1Co 2:9. Upon the naming of this scripture, and seeing of them suffer so willingly, cheerfully, and resolutely, such a divine power took hold of his heart, that he was converted, and afterwards became a martyr. Now God, and Christ, and truth, and religion are never more honoured than when poor souls are soundly converted. Surely the crown of martyrdom is a glorious crown; and every soul won over to God by a dying martyr will be as an Orient pearl and precious diamond in his crown, of far more value than that adamant found about Charles Duke of Burgundy, slain by the Switzers at the battle of Nantz, sold for twenty thousand ducats, and placed, as it is said, in the pope's triple crown.² Oh, what foretastes of glory, what ravishments of soul have many of the blessed martyrs had in their sufferings for Christ! Holy Lord,

stay thy hand, I can bear no more, said one of the martyrs; like weak eyes, that cannot bear too great a light. Is it not a high honour to a king to have such captains and champions as will not yield to their sovereign's enemies, but stand it out to the uttermost till they get the victory, though it cost them their lives to get it? yet no mortal king can, as Christ doth, put spirit, courage, and strength into a subject; only we may well conceive and conclude that such valorous soldiers as are ready to hazard their lives for their sovereign serve a good master. Thus do suffering Christians and martyrs give persecutors to understand that they serve a good Master, and that they highly prize him, who hath done more, and suffered more for them, than their dearest blood is worth; and who enables them, with courage, constancy, and comfort, to endure whatsoever, for his name's sake, can be inflicted on them; and therein to be (■περνικ■μεν) more than conquerors, or above conquerors, Rom 8:37. How can that be? Can a man get more than the victory? The meaning is, 'we do over-overcome,' supersuperamous—that is, triumph or overcome before we fight We are famous and renowned conquerors, we easily conquer, we conquer by those things which are used to conquer us, we beat our enemies with their own swords, as Julian sometime said, being confuted by heathen learning, 2Co 2:14. Martyr and Piscator expound it thus, We do more than overcome—that is, we obtain a noble, a famous victory. And is not this a great honour to Christ, the captain of our salvation? The invincible courage of suffering Christians puts life and spirit into others. In an army valorous leaders much animate the rest of the soldiers, and embolden them to follow their leaders, Heb 2:10. Now you know the church is an army with banners, Song of Solomon 6:4, and suffering ministers and suffering saints are as leaders; they courageously and victoriously make the onset, and other Christians, by their pious examples, are pricked on to follow them so far as they are followers of the Lamb. But,

12. Twelfthly, Consider, That all the sufferings and persecutions that you meet with on earth shall advance your glory in heaven. The more saints are persecuted on earth, the greater shall be their reward in heaven. Look, as persecutions do increase a Christian's grace, so they do advance a Christian's glory. In heaven the martyrs shall have the highest degree of glory; for though God doth not reward men simply for their works, namely, for the merit of them, yet he rewards according to their works, and proportions the degree or measure thereof according to the kind of work which on earth is done, and according to the measure of grace whereby he enables men to do it. Now martyrdom is the most difficult, the most honourable, and the most acceptable work that on earth can be done, and therefore in heaven martyrdom shall be crowned with the highest degree of glory. On this ground, they who set down the different degrees of celestial glory by the different fruits which the good ground brought forth, some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundredfold, Mat 13:8; apply the hundredfold, which is the highest and greatest degree of glory, to martyrdom. Doubtless God's suffering servants, and amongst them especially his martyrs, shall sit down in the chiefest mansions and in the highest rooms in the kingdom of glory. According to the degrees of our sufferings for Christ will be the degrees of our glory. 'What shall we have,' says Peter, that have suffered so many great and grievous things for thy name, 'that have forsaken all, and followed thee?' 'Verily,' says our Saviour, 'every one that hath forsaken houses, &c., shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life; but ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,' Mat 19:27-29. A Christian will never repent of all the hard things that he has suffered for Christ or his truth, whenas every one of his sufferings shall be a sparkling jewel to give a lustre to his crown of glory. Suffering for Christ and religion is the most gainful kind of merchandise. Christ is so well pleased with the sufferings of his saints, that he has engaged

himself to make up whatever they lose upon his account, yea, to repay all with interest upon interest to a hundred times over. Oh, who would not then turn spiritual purchaser! Christ is a noble, a liberal paymaster, and no small things can fall from so great a hand as his is: Mat 5:10-12, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.' Luk 6:22-23, 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.' They that are now excommunicated and anathematised as notorious, shameful, and abominable offenders,—they that are now opposed and persecuted by men, shall at last be owned and crowned by God; yea, and the more afflictions and persecutions are multiplied upon them in this world, the greater shall be their recompense in another world. The original words ἡγαλλίσθε in Matthew, and σκίπτετε in Luke, signify 'exceeding great joy,' such as men usually express by skipping and dancing. Let your hearts leap, and let your bodies leap for joy, for great is your reward in heaven. A Dutch martyr, seeing the name to come to his beard, said he, What a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come. Helen Stirk, a Scotch woman, when her husband was at the place of execution, she said to him, Husband, rejoice; for we have lived together many joyful days; but this day, in which we must die, ought to be the most joyful to us both, because we must have joy for ever; therefore I will not bid you good-night, for we shall suddenly meet within the kingdom of heaven. The subscription of Mrs Anne Askew to her confession was this, Written by me, Anne Askew, that neither wisheth for death nor feareth his might, and as merry as one that is bound toward heaven. Oh, how my heart leapeth for joy, said Mr Philpot, that I am so near the apprehension of eternal life! God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory. I have so much joy of the reward prepared for me most wretched sinner, that though I be in a place of darkness and mourning, yet I cannot lament, but both night and day am so joyful as though under no cross at all; yea, in all the days of my life I was never so merry; the name of the Lord be praised therefore for ever and ever! The same author, in a letter to the congregation, saith, Though I tell you that I am in hell in the judgment of this world, yet assuredly I feel in the same the consolation of heaven; and this loathsome and horrible prison is as pleasant to me as the walks in the garden in the King's Bench.² Thus you see that suffering saints have had a heaven beforehand,—they have had an exuberancy of joy such as no good could match nor no evil overmatch, 1Pe 1:8. Bernard, speaking of persecutors, saith, That they are but his Father's goldsmiths, who are working to add pearls to the saint's crown. It is to my loss, saith Gordius the martyr, if you abate me anything of my present sufferings. Sufferings for Christ are the saints' greatest glory. Crudelitas vestra, gloria nostra, your cruelty is our glory, say they in Tertullian, and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven. Chrysostom hit the nail when he said, If one man should suffer all the sorrows of all the saints in the world, yet are they not worth one hour's glory in heaven. By the consent of the schoolmen, all the martyrs shall appear in the church triumphant, bearing the signs of their Christian wounds about with them, as so many speaking testimonies of their holy courage, that what here they endured in the behalf of their Saviour, may be there an addition to their glory. O Christians, all your sufferings will certainly increase your future glory; every affliction, every persecution, will be a grain put into the scale of

your heavenly glory, to make it more weighty in that day, wherein he will richly reward you for every tear, for every sigh, for every groan, for every hazard, and for every hardship that you have met in the way of your duty, 2Co 4:16-18. For light afflictions you shall have a weight of glory; and for a few afflictions you shall have as many joys, pleasures, delights, and contents, as there be stars in heaven, or sands on the sea-shore; and for momentary afflictions you shall have an eternal crown of glory. If you have suffering for suffering with Christ on earth, you shall have glory for glory with Christ in heaven. Ah, Christians, your present sufferings are but the seeds of your future glory; and the more plentiful you sow in tears, the more abundant will be your harvest of glory, Psa 126:5-6. Christ our general, the captain of our salvation, promises a crown, Rev 2:10, and a throne, Rev 3:21, to all his afflicted and persecuted ones, which are the greatest rewards that a God can give, or that man can crave. It troubled one of the martyrs when he was at the stake that he was going to a place where he should be for ever a-receiving of wages for a little work. But,

13. Thirteenthly and lastly, Afflictions, sufferings, persecutions, will discover what metal men are made of. All is not gold that glisters. Many there be that glisten, and look like golden Christians; but when they come to the fire they prove but dross. He is a Christian more worth than the gold of Ophir, who remains gold when under fiery trials. The stony ground did glisten and shine very gloriously, for it received the word with joy for a season, Mat 13:20-21; but when the sun of persecution arose upon it, it fell away. Men that in times of liberty and prosperity embrace the word, will, in times of persecution, distrust the word, reject the word, and turn their backs upon the word, if it be not rooted in their understandings, judgments, wills, affections, and consciences. Men may court the word, and compliment the word, and applaud the word, and seemingly rejoice in the word, but they will never suffer persecution for the word, if it be only received into their heads, and not fast rooted in their hearts. The house built upon the sand, Mat 7:26-27, was as lovely, as comely, as goodly, and as glorious a house to look upon as that which was built upon a rock; but when the rain of affliction descended, and the floods of tribulation came, and the winds of persecution blew and beat upon the house, it fell, and great was the fall of it. No professors will be able to stand it out in all winds and weathers, but such as are built upon a rock; all others will sink, shatter, and fall when the wind of persecution blows upon them. As sure as the rain will fall, the floods flow, and the winds blow, so sure will an unsound heart give out when trials come. No heart but a sound heart will hold out bravely when sufferings come; no heart but a sincere heart will bear the brunt of persecution. The three worthies, Dan 3:17-18, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, would rather burn than bow, they would rather suffer than sin, which was an evident proof of their sincerity and ingenuity; they would be Nonconformists, though court, city, and country cried up conformity, which was a sure argument of their integrity. Hypocrites have heart enough for themselves, but none for God. If they see their names, estates, or carnal interest any way touched, they are all on fire, and ready to be burnt up with the flames of their own zeal; but they can see the name, truth, and interest of God, assaulted and torn in pieces, and never stir. In their own concerns, they are as if they were all heart; but in the cause of God, they are as if, with Ephraim, they had no heart at all, Hos 7:11. Oh, it is sad that men should have a heart for themselves, and none for God; that they should have courage in their own cause, and none in his. As the soul is the glory of the body, so integrity is the glory of the soul. A sincere Christian, with Job, will rather let all go than let his integrity go, Job 27:5; he will sooner let the blood be pressed out of his veins, and his soul out of his body, than his integrity out of his soul. Oh, how bravely did the primitive

Christians carry themselves as to this matter. Pliny, writing to Trajan, declares to him that such was their zeal and courage in the behalf of their God, that nothing could stir them from it; neither the imperious checks of the potent emperors, nor the soft language of the eloquent orators, could draw them from the faith; but they steadfastly owned it, and constantly persevered in the defence of it. But now base unsound hearts will exceedingly shuffle and shift to shake off persecution. Witness those false teachers, Gal 6:12, 'As many as desire to make a fair show,' or, as the Greek has it, to set a good face on it, in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised, only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.' Mark, at this time the Jews, out of zeal to their law, did sorely persecute those that did either preach or practise anything contrary to their law. Now these false teachers set a good face on it, and make a fair show, as if they were all for carnal rites and ceremonies; and they pressed circumcision upon the Galatians, but not out of any true affection or zeal that they did bear to the law, but only to procure favour on the one hand, and to avoid and escape the malice and persecution of the Jews on the other hand. They that were no Jews, to avoid persecution, would comply with them that were; they would seem to be very earnest for Judaism, but not for Christianity, that so they might escape the fury of the Jews. Unsound hearts will say anything, and do anything, and be anything, to avoid persecution, and to ingratiate themselves with persecutors. The Samaritans, so long as the Jewish religion flourished, and was in honour, caused a temple to be built on Mount Gerizim, that therein they might not be inferior to the Jews; and they boasted themselves to be of the progeny of Joseph, and worshippers of God with them. But when they perceived that the Jews were cruelly afflicted and persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes for worshipping of the true God, and fearing lest they should be handled in the like manner, they changed both their coat and their note, affirming that they were not Israelites, but Sidonians, and that they had built their temple, not unto God, but unto Jupiter. Thus you see that times of affliction and persecution will distinguish the precious from the vile, Jer 15:19. It will difference the counterfeit professor from the true. Persecution is a Christian's touchstone; it is a Lapis Lydius that will try what metal men are made of, whether they be silver or tin, gold or dross, wheat or chaff, shadow or substance, carnal or spiritual, sincere or hypocritical. Nothing speaks out more soundness and uprightness than keeping close to Christ, his worship, truth, and ways, in a day of warm persecution. To stand close and fast to God and his interest in fiery trials, argues much integrity within.

These thirteen particulars are so great truths, written with the beams of the sun, that no man or devil can deny, and therefore I shall make no apology to the persecutors of the day to excuse my writing of this general epistle; but shall beg hard of God that it may be so owned and crowned and blessed from on high, that it may really and fully answer to all those holy and gracious aims and ends that the author had in his eye and upon his heart when he writ it. And thus much for this general epistle.

SOME WORDS OF COUNSEL TO A DEAR FRIEND

Dear Lady and Sister in the Lord,—I shall now address myself to you in a few lines, and so conclude. I know you have for many years been the Lord's prisoner. Great have been your trials, and many have been your trials, and long have been your trials; but to all these I have spoken at large in my treatise called 'The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod,' which you have in your hand, which you have read, and which God has greatly blessed to the support, comfort, quiet, and refreshment of your soul under all your trials; and therefore I shall say no more as to those

particulars. But knowing that the many weaknesses that hang upon you, and the decays of nature that daily do attend you, seem to point out an approaching dissolution, I shall at this time give you this one word of counsel, viz., that every day you would look upon death in a scripture glass, in a scripture dress, or under a scripture notion; that is,

1. First, Look upon death as that which is best for a believer: Php 1:23, 'For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' The Greek is very significant, 'far, far the better,' or far much better, or much more better. It is a most transcendent expression. Ecc 7:1, 'Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth.' A saint's dying day is the daybreak of eternal righteousness. In respect of pleasure, peace, safety, company, glory, a believer's dying day is his best day. I have read of one Trophonius, that when he had built and dedicated that stately temple at Delphos, he asked of Apollo, for his recompense, that thing which was best for man. The oracle wished him to go home, and within three days he should have it; and within that time he died. It was an excellent saying of one of the ancients, 'That is not a death, but life, which joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life, but death, which separates a living man from Christ.' But,

2. Secondly, Look upon death as a remedy, as a cure. Death will perfectly cure you of all corporeal and spiritual diseases at once: the crazy body and the defiled soul, the aching head and the unbelieving heart: ultimus morborum medicus mors. Death will cure you of all your ails, aches, diseases, and distempers. At Stratford-Bow, in Queen Mary's days, there was burned a lame man and a blind man at one stake. The lame man, after he was chained, casting away his crutch, bade the blind man be of good comfort; For death, saith he, will cure us both; thee of thy blindness, and me of my lameness. And as death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will cure all your soul distempers also. Death is not mors hominis, but mors peccati; not the death of the man, but the death of his sin. Death will work such a cure as all your duties, graces, experiences, ordinances, assurances, could never do; for it will at once free you fully, perfectly, and perpetually from all sin; yea, from all possibility of ever sinning more. Sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sire And why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die, unwilling to die, seeing death gives him a writ of ease from infirmities and weaknesses, from all aches and pains, griefs and gripings, distempers and diseases, both of body and soul? When Samson died, the Philistines also died together with him; so when a saint dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goeth out by death; as the worm kills the worm that bred it, so death kills sin that bred it. But,

3. Thirdly, Look upon death as a rest, a full rest. A believer's dying day is his resting day. It is a resting day from sin, sorrow, afflictions, temptations, desertions, dissensions, vexations, oppositions, and persecutions. This world was never made to be the saints' rest. Arise, for this is not your resting-place. They are like Noah's dove, they can rest nowhere but in the ark and in the grave. 'In the grave,' saith Job, 'the weary are at rest.' Upon this very ground some of the most refined heathens have accounted mortality to be a mercy, for they brought their friends into the world with mournful obsequies, but carried them out of the world with all joyful sports and pastimes, because then they conceived they were at rest, and out of gunshot. Death brings the saints to a full rest, to a pleasant rest, to a matchless rest, to an eternal rest. But,

4. Fourthly, Look upon your dying day as a reaping day: 2Co 9:2; Gal 6:7-9; Isa 38:3; Mat 25:31, Mat 25:41. Now you shall reap the fruit of all the prayers that ever you have made, and of all the tears that ever you have shed, and of all the sighs and groans that ever you have fetched, and of all the good words that ever you have spoken, and of all the good works that ever you have done, and of all the great things that ever you have suffered. When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then reap a plentiful crop, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed that for a time hath seemed to be buried and lost, Ecc 11:1, Ecc 11:6. As Christ hath a tender heart and a soft hand, so he hath an iron memory; he punctually remembers all the sorrows, and all the services, and all the sufferings of his people, to reward them and crown them, Rev 22:12. But,

5. Fifthly, Look upon your dying day as a gainful day. There is no gain to that which comes in by death: Php 1:21, 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' A Christian gets more by death than he doth by life, Ecc 7:1; to be in Christ is very good, but to be with Christ is best of all, Php 1:23. It was a mighty blessing for Christ to be with Paul on earth, but it was the top of blessings for Paul to be with Christ in heaven. Seriously consider of a few things:—

[1.] First, That by death you shall gain incomparable crowns. (1.) A crown of life, Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12; (2.) A crown of righteousness, 2Ti 4:8; (3.) An incorruptible crown, 1Co 9:24-25; (4.) A crown of glory, 1Pe 5:4. Now there are no crowns to these crowns, as I have fully discovered in my discourse on 'The Divine Presence,' to which I refer you. But,

[2.] Secondly, You shall gain a glorious kingdom: Luk 12:32, 'It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom.' But death is the young prophet that anointeth them to it, and giveth them actual possession of it. They must put off their rags of mortality, that they may put on their robes of glory. Israel must first die in Egypt before he can be carried into Canaan. There is no entering into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel death, who standeth at the gate. Death is the dirty lane through which the saint passeth to a kingdom, to a great kingdom, to a glorious kingdom, to a quiet kingdom, to an unshaken kingdom, to a durable kingdom, to a lasting kingdom, yea, to an everlasting kingdom. Death is a dark, short way, through which the saints pass to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, Heb 12:28; Dan 2:44, and Dan 4:3; Rev 19:7. But,

[3.] Thirdly, You shall gain a safe and honourable convoy into that other world, Luk 16:22. Oh, in what pomp and triumph did Lazarus ride to heaven on the wings of angels! The angels conduct the saints at death through the air, the devil's region; every gracious soul is carried into Christ's presence by these heavenly courtiers. Oh, what a sudden change does death make! behold, he that even now was scorned by men, is all on a sudden, carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You shall gain a glorious welcome, a joyful welcome, a wonderful welcome into heaven. By general consent of all antiquity, the holy angels and blessed Trinity rejoice at the sinner's conversion; but oh, what inexpressible, what transcendent joy is there, when a saint is landed upon the shore of eternity, Rev 4:8-11; Luk 15:7, Luk 15:10; Heb 12:23. God and Christ, angels and archangels, all stand ready to welcome the believer as soon as his feet are upon the threshold of glory. God the Father welcomes the saints as his elect and chosen ones, Jesus Christ welcomes them as his redeemed and purchased ones, and the Holy Spirit welcomes them as his sanctified and renewed ones, and the blessed angels welcome them as those they have guarded and attended on, Heb 1:14. When the saints enter upon the suburbs of glory, the glorious angels

welcome them with harps in their hands, and ditties in their mouths. But,

[5.] Fifthly, You shall gain full freedom and liberty from all your enemies within and without—viz., sin, Satan, and the world, Luk 1:70-71, Luk 1:74-75. (1.) Death will free you from the indwelling power of sin, Rom 7:23. In heaven there is no complaints. As in hell there is nothing but wickedness, so in heaven there is nothing but holiness. (2.) Death will free you from the power and prevalency of sin. Here sin plays the tyrant, but in heaven there is no tyranny, but perfect felicity. (3.) Death will free you from all provocations, temptations, and suggestions to sin. Now you shall be above all Satan's batteries. Now God will make good the promise of treading Satan under your feet, Rom 16:20. Some say serpents will not live in Ireland. The old serpent is cast out, and shall be for ever kept out of the new Jerusalem above, Rev 12:8-9, and Rev 21:27. (4.) Death will free you from all the effects and consequents of sin—viz., losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, disgraces, sufferings, &c. When the cause is taken away, the effect ceases; when the fountain of sin is dried up, the streams of afflictions, of sufferings, must be dried up; the fuel being taken away, the fire will go out of itself. Sin and sorrow were born together, do live together, and shall die together. To open this fourth particular a little more fully to you, consider these four things:

First, That death will free you from all reproach and ignominy on your names. Now Elijah is accounted the troubler of Israel, Nehemiah a rebel against his king, and David the song of the drunkards, and Jeremiah a man of contention, and Paul a pestilent fellow. Heaven wipes away all blots, as well as all tears; as no sins, so no blots are to be found in that upper world. The names of all the saints in a state of glory are written, as I may say, in characters of gold. But,

Secondly, Death will free you from all bodily infirmities and diseases. We carry about in our bodies the matter of a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand several ways each several hour. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body, so many windows there are for death to enter at. Death needs not spend all its arrows upon us; a worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, the stone of a raisin, the kernel of a grape, the fall of a horse, the stumbling of a foot, the prick of a pin, the paring of a nail, the cutting of a corn; all these have been to others, and any one of them may be to us, the means of our death, within the space of a few days, nay, of a few hours. Here Job had his blotches, and Hezekiah had his boil, and David his wounds, and Lazarus his sores, and the poor widow her issue of blood, Job 2:6-7; Isa 37:21; Psa 38:5; Luk 16:20; Mat 9:20. Now the fever burns up some, and the dropsy drowns others, and the vapours stifle others; one dies of an apoplexy in the head, another of a struma in the neck, a third of a squinancy in the throat, and a fourth of a cough and consumption of the lungs; others of obstructions, inflammations, pleurisies, gouts, &c. We are commonly full of complaints; one complains of this distemper, and another of that; one of this disease, and another of that; but death will cure us of all diseases and distempers at once. But,

Thirdly, Death will free you from all your sorrows, whether inward or outward, whether for your own sins or the sins of others, whether for your own sufferings or the sufferings of others, Psa 38:18; 2Co 7:11; Psa 119:136; Neh 1:3-4. Now, it may be, one shall seldom find you but with tears in your eyes, or sorrow in your heart; Oh, but now death will be the funeral of all your sorrows, death will wipe all tears from your eyes, 'and sorrow and mourning shall flee away,' Isa 51:11. But,

Fourthly, Death will free you from all those troubles, calamities, miseries, mischiefs, and desolations, that are a-coming upon the earth, or upon this place or that, Isa 57:1; Mic 7:1-7. A

year after Methuselah's death, the flood came and carried away the old world. Augustine died a little before the sacking of Hippo. Luther observes that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Luther himself died a little before the wars broke forth in Germany. Dear lady, death shall do that for you, which all your physicians could never do for you, which all your relations could never do for you, which all ordinances could never do for you, nor which all your faithful ministers could never do for you. It shall both instantly and perfectly cure you of all sorts of maladies and weaknesses, both inward and outward, or that respects either your body or your soul, or both. O my dear friend, is it not better to die, and be rid of all sin; to die, and be rid of all temptations and desertions; to die, and be rid of all sorts of miseries; than to live, and still carry about with us our sins, our burdens, and such constant ailments, as takes away all the pleasure and comfort of life? Here both our outward and inward conditions are very various; sometimes heaven is open, and sometimes heaven is shut; sometimes we see the face of God, and rejoice, and at other times he hides his face, and we are troubled, Lam 3:8, Lam 3:44, Lam 3:54-57; Psa 30:7; 1Th 4:17-18; Isa 35:10. Oh, but now death will bring us to an invariable eternity. It is always day in heaven, and joy in heaven.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, You shall gain a clear, distinct, and full knowledge of all great and deep mysteries, 1Co 13:10, 1Co 13:12. The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, the mystery of man's redemption, the mysteries of providences, the mysteries of prophecies, and all those mysteries that relate to the nature, substances, offices, orders, and excellencies of the angels. If you please to consult my 'String of Pearls, or the Best Things Reserved till Last,' with my sermon on Ecc 7:1, 'Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth;' which is at the end of my 'Treatise on Assurance'—both which treatises you have by you—there you will find many more great and glorious things laid open that we gain by death; and to them I refer you. But,

6. Sixthly, Look upon death as a sleep. The Holy Ghost hath phrased it so above twenty times in Scripture, to shew that this is the true, proper, and genuine notion of death. When the saints die, they do but sleep: Mat 9:24, 'The maid is not dead but sleepeth.' The same phrase he also used to his disciples concerning Lazarus, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,' John 11:11. The death of the godly is as a sleep; Stephen fell asleep, Acts 7:60; and 'David fell asleep,' Acts 13:36; and 'Christ is the firstfruits of them that sleep,' 1Co 15:20; 'Them that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him,' 1Th 4:14. The saints of God do but sleep when they lie down in the grave. That which we call death in such, is not death indeed; it is but the image of death, the shadow and metaphor of death, death's younger brother, a mere sleep, and no more. I may not follow the analogy that is between death and sleep in the latitude of it, the printer calling upon me to conclude. Sleep is the nurse of nature, the sweet parenthesis of all a man's griefs and cares. But,

7. Seventhly, Look upon death as a departure: 2Ti 4:6, 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.' He makes nothing of death. It was no more betwixt God and Moses, but go up and die, Deu 32:49-50; and so betwixt Christ and Paul, but launch out, and land immediately at the fair haven of heaven: Php 1:23, 'For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' Paul longed for that hour wherein he should loose anchor, and sail to Christ, as the Greek word **■ναλ■σαι** imports. It is a metaphor from a ship at anchor, importing a sailing from this present life to another port. Paul had a desire to loose from the shore of life, and to launch out into the main of immortality. The apostle, in this phrase, **■ναλ■σαι**, hath a reference both to his bonds and to his death; and his meaning is, I desire to be

discharged and released, as out of a common jail, so also out of the prison of my body, that I may presently be with Christ my Saviour in heaven, in rest and bliss. After Paul had been in the third heaven, his constant song was, 'I desire to be with Christ.' Nature teacheth that death is the end of misery; but grace will teach us that death is the beginning of our felicity. But,

8. Eighthly and lastly, Look upon death as a going to bed. The grave is a bed wherein the body is laid to rest, with its curtains close drawn about it, that it may not be disturbed in its repose: so the Holy Ghost is pleased to phrase it, 'He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, every one walking in their uprightness,' Isa 57:2. As the souls of the saints pass to a place of rest and bliss, so their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave, as in a bed or bedchamber, there to sleep quietly until the morning of the resurrection. Death is nothing else but a writ-of-ease to the weary saints; it is a total cessation from all their labour of nature, sin, and affliction, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours,' Rev 14:13, &c. Whilst the souls of the saints do, rest in Abraham's bosom, their bodies do sweetly sleep in their beds of dust, as in a safe and consecrated dormitory. Every sincere Christian may, like the weary child, call and cry to be laid to bed, knowing that death would send him to his everlasting rest. Now you should always look upon death under scripture notions, and this will take off the terror of death; yea, it will make the king of terrors to be the king of desires; it will make you not only willing to die, but even long to die, and to cry out, 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove, to fly away, and be at rest!' At death you shall have an eternal jubilee, and be freed from all incumbrances. Now sin shall be no more, nor trouble shall be no more, nor pain nor ailments shall be no more. Now you shall have your quietus est, now 'the wicked shall cease from troubling, and now the weary shall be at rest,' Job 3:17, now 'all tears shall be wiped from your eyes,' Rev 7:17, now death shall be the way to bliss, the gate of life, and the portal to paradise. It was well said of one, so far as we tremble at death, so far we want love. It is sad, when the contract is made between Christ and a Christian, to see a Christian afraid of the making up the marriage. Lord, saith one, [Austin.] I will die that I may enjoy thee; I will not live, but I will die, I desire to die, that I may see Christ; and refuse to live, that I may live with Christ. The broken rings, contracts, and espousals contents not the true lover, but he longs for the marriage day. It is no credit to your heavenly Father for you to be loath to go home. The Turks tell us that surely Christians do not believe heaven to be such a glorious place as they talk of; for if they did, they would not be so unwilling to go thither. The world may well think that the child hath but cold welcome at his father's house, that he lingers so much by the way, and that he does not look and long to be at home. Such children bring an ill report upon their father's house, upon the holy land; but I know you have not so learned Christ, I know you long with Paul, 'to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23; and with old Simeon, to cry out, 'Lord, let thy servant depart in peace,' Luk 2:29. That God whom you have long sought and served will make your passage into that other world safe, sweet, and easy. Now to the everlasting arms of divine protection, and to the constant guidance and leadings of the Spirit, and to the rich influences of Christ's sovereign grace, and to the lively hopes of the inheritance of the saints in light, he commends you, who is, dear sister, yours in the strongest bonds,

Tho. Brooks. THE SIGNAL PRESENCE OF GOD WITH HIS PEOPLE, IN THEIR GREATEST TROUBLES, DEEPEST DISTRESSES, AND MOST DEADLY DANGERS.

'Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the

lion.’—2Ti 4:17. In my text you have three things that are most remarkable:—

First, You have Paul’s commemoration of that singular experience that he had of the favourable presence of Christ with him, and of his strengthening of him, ‘Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me,’ or *παρ■στη*, ‘by me, and assisted me,’ Acts 23:11; though I was deserted by men, yet I was aided and assisted by Christ, 2Ti 4:16; though all men left me to shift for myself, yet the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me with wisdom, prudence, courage, and constancy, in the want of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements, 2Ti 1:15.

Secondly, Here is the end for which the Lord stood by him, assisted, strengthened, and delivered him, viz., that he might preach the gospel to the nations, Rom 11:13; Php 4:22, that he might have more time, and further opportunity, to spread abroad the everlasting gospel among the Gentiles, whose apostle he was. Rome, at this time, was the queen of the world, and in its most flourishing condition; people from all parts of the world flocked to Rome. Now when they should hear and see Paul’s prudence, courage, constancy, and boldness, in professing of Christ, and in preaching and professing the gospel, even before that grand tyrant, that monster of mankind, Nero, they could not but be wrought upon, and the fame of the glorious gospel could not but by this means be spread all the world over.

Thirdly, Here is the greatness of the danger from which he was delivered, viz., ‘from the mouth of the lion.’ Some authors [Calvin, Estius, &c.] do conceive these words, ‘and I was delivered from the mouth of the lion,’ to be a proverbial speech, noting some eminent, present, devouring danger; ‘I was delivered from the extremest hazard of death,’ even as a man rescued out of a lion’s mouth, and pulled from between his teeth. Others more genuinely and properly, by ‘the mouth of the lion,’ do understand Nero’s rage and cruelty, who, for his potency in preying on the flock of Christ, is here fitly compared to a lion, which devoured and destroyed the flock of Christ. This cruel lion Nero put a world of Christians to death, and made a bloody decree, that whosoever confessed himself a Christian, he should, without any more ado, be put to death as a convicted enemy of mankind. Tertullian calleth him the dedicator of the condemnation of Christians.² This bloody monster, Nero, raised the first bloody persecution. To pick a quarrel with the Christians he set the city of, Rome on fire, and then charged it upon the Christians, under which pretence he exposed them to the fury of the people, who cruelly tormented them as if they had been common burners and destroyers of cities, and the deadly enemies of mankind; yea, Nero himself caused them to be apprehended and clad in wild beasts’ skins and torn in pieces with dogs; others were crucified; some he made bonfires of to light him in his night-sports. To be short, such horrid cruelty he used towards them as caused many of their enemies to pity them. But God found out this bloody persecutor at last, for being adjudged by the senate an enemy to mankind, he was condemned to be whipped to death, for the prevention whereof he cut his own throat. The words being thus briefly opened, the main point I shall insist upon is this—viz., That when the people of God are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then the Lord will be most favourably, most signally, and most eminently present with them. The schoolmen say that God is five ways present—(1.) In the humanity of Christ, by hypostatical union; (2.) In the saints, by knowledge and love; (3.) In the church, by his essence and direction; (4.) In heaven, by his majesty and glory; (5.) In hell, by his vindictive justice.

Hemingius saith, There is a fourfold presence of God:—(1.) There is a presence of power in all men, even in the reprobates; (2.) A presence of grace, only in the elect; (3.) A presence of glory, in the angels, and saints departed; (4.) A hypostatical presence of the Father with the Son. But, if you please, you may take notice that there is a sixfold presence of the Lord:—

1. First, There is a general presence of God, and thus he is present with all creatures: 'Whither shall I flee from thy presence?' Psa 139:7. Empedoeles, the philosopher, said well, That God is a circle, whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. God is included in no place, and excluded from no place, saith another: Non est ubi, ubi non est Deus. They could tell us that God is the soul of the world; and that as the soul is Tota in toto, et tota in qualibet parte, so is he; his eye is in every corner, &c. To which purpose they so pourtrayed their goddess Minerva, that which way soever one cast his eye, she always beheld him. Though heaven be God's palace, yet it is not his prison. Diana's temple was burned down when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together, but God is present both in paradise and in the wilderness at the same time: 1Ki 8:27, 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?' By the heaven of heavens is meant that which is by the learned called the empyreal heaven, where the angels and the saints departed do enjoy the glorious and beatifical vision of God; and it is called the heaven of heavens, both because it is the highest and doth contain the other heavens within its orb, and also by way of excellency, as the 'most holy place' in the temple is called the 'holy of holies,' because it far surpasseth all the rest in splendour and glory, Isa 66:1; Pro 5:21; Heb 4:13; Job 26:6. Jer 23:24, 'Can any hide himself in secret places that I should not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.' Pro 15:3, 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' God is πανόφθαλμος, all eye. The poor heathen could say, Deus intimior nobis intimo nostro: God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. Repletively he is everywhere, though inclusively nowhere: Job 34:21, 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings;' Job 34:22, 'There is no darkness, nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.' Sinners shall never be able to shroud themselves nor their actions from God's all-seeing eye. The Rabbins put Makom, which signifies place, among the names of God. Bythner brings them in expounding that text in Est 4:14, 'Deliverance shall arise from another place;' that is, from God. They called him Place, because he is in every place, though in the assemblies of his saints more eminently and gloriously. God is present with all his creatures—(1.) Viâ productionis, by raising them up; (2.) Viâ sustentationis, by staying of them up; they are his family, and he feeds and clothes them, Mat 5:45; Acts 17:27-28; Psa 33:13-14; (3.) Viâ inclinationis, by giving unto them power of motion; man could neither live nor move unless the Lord were with him; (4.) Viâ observationis, by taking notice of them; he observeth and marks both their persons and their actions—he sees who they are, and how they are employed; (5.) Viâ ordinationis, by governing and ruling of them and all their actions, to the service of his glory and the good of his poor people, Acts 4:25-29. But this is not that presence that we are to discourse of.

2. Secondly, There is a miraculous presence of Christ, and this some of the prophets of old had, and the apostles and others had in Christ's time; and by virtue of this miraculous presence of Christ with them, they cast out devils, healed diseases, and did many wonderful things, Mat 7:22; Mark 3:15. But this is not the presence that falls within the compass of that main point we purpose to speak to.

3. Thirdly, There is a relative presence of Christ, and that is his presence in his ordinances, and with his churches. Of this presence the Scripture speaks very largely: Exo 20:24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;' Exo 25:8, 'And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them;' Exo 29:45, 'And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God;' Lev 26:11, 'And I will set my tabernacle amongst you, and my soul shall not abhor you;' Lev 26:12, 'And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people;' Psa 76:1, 'In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel;' Psa 76:2, 'In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion;' Isa 8:18, 'From the Lord of hosts which dwelleth in mount Zion;' Psa 9:11, 'Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion.' The churches are said to be the temples in which the Lord doth dwell, and the house of the living God, and the golden candlesticks amongst which he doth walk. Oh, how much does it concern all the churches to prize their church state, and to keep close together, and to walk suitable to that gracious presence of God, that shines in the midst of them! But this is not that presence that falls under our present consideration. But,

4. Fourthly, There is a majestical and glorious presence of Christ, and thus he is said to be in heaven: Psa 2:4, 'He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision;' Heb 1:13, 'But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?' Heb 9:24, 'For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figure of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' Not that heaven is *circulus concludens*, a place wherein Christ is shut up, but, *palatium resplendens*, the court, as it were, where his majesty, in acts of wisdom, and power, and mercy, and conjunction of grace and glory, doth most of all appear. As the soul of man, though it be in every part of man, yet it doth principally appear and manifest itself in the heart and brain; so here, &c. Monica, Austin's mother, standing one day and seeing the sun shine, raised this meditation, 'Oh, if the sun be so bright, what is the light of Christ's presence in glory!' But this is not the presence we design now to discourse of.

5. Fifthly, There is a judicial or wrathful presence of the Lord; and thus he is present with wicked men, sometimes blinding of them, sometimes hardening of them, sometimes leaving of them to their own heart's lusts, sometimes giving them up to their own heart's lusts, sometimes filling their faces with shame, and their consciences with terrors. He is judicially present with wicked men by a particular observation of their persons and ways, Psa 33:13-14; Job 34:21-22. He sees who they are, and how they are employed against his honour, his interest, his saints, his ways, and by a special detestation of their persons and ways, &c. But this is not that presence that at this time falls under our consideration; and therefore,

6. Sixthly and lastly, There is a gracious, a favourable, a signal, or eminent presence of the Lord with his faithful people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, as the Scriptures do everywhere evidence. Take a taste of some: Gen 39:20, 'And Joseph's master toot him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound, and he was there in the prison;' Gen 39:21, 'But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.' A prison keeps not God from his. Witness the apostles and martyrs, whose prisons, by God's presence, became palaces, and their stocks a music-school, Acts 16:25. Bradford, after he was put in prison, had better health than before, and found great favour with his keeper, who suffered him to go whither he would upon his promise to

return by such an hour to his prison again. If men knew by experience the sweet that is in suffering for Christ, they would desire with Chrysostom, if it were put to their choice, rather to be Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ than Paul rapt up in the third heaven. Basil, in his oration for Barlaam,³ that famous martyr, saith, 'He delighted in the close prison as in a pleasant green meadow, and he took pleasure in the several inventions of tortures, as in several sweet flowers.' Luther reports of that martyr, St Agatha, that as she went to prisons and tortures, she said she went to banquets and nuptials. The sun enlightens the world, saith Cyprian, but he that made the sun is a greater light to you in prison, &c. Fire, sword, prisons, famines, are pleasure, they are all delightful to me, saith Basil. Paul rattles his chain which he bears for the gospel, and was as proud of it as a woman of her ornaments, saith Chrysostom. Paul and Silas in a prison found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, and when they were whipped, it was with rosemary branches, as I may say. Paul greatly rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and therefore often sings out, 'I, Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ,' not I, Paul, rapt up in the third heaven. Christ shewed his great love to him in rapping him up in the third heaven, and he shewed his great love to Christ in a cheerful suffering for him. Eusebius tells of one that writ to his friend from a stinking dungeon, and dated his letter 'From my delicate orchard.' Mr Glover the martyr wept for joy of his imprisonment; and God forgive me, said Mr Bradford when a prisoner, my unthankfulness for this exceeding great mercy, that among so many thousands he chooseth me to be one in whom he will suffer. I was carried to the coal-house, saith Mr Philpot, the martyr, where I with my fellows do rouse together in the straw as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down.⁵ Philip, landgrave of Hesse, being a long time prisoner under Charles the Fifth, was asked what upheld him in his long imprisonment. He answered that he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs: Gen 49:23, 'The archers,' or, as the Hebrew here hath it, the arrow-masters, 'have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him.' These arrow-masters were his barbarous brethren that sold him, his adulterous mistress that, harlot-like, 'hunted for his precious life,' his injurious master that, without any desert of his, imprisoned him, the tumultuating Egyptians, that pined with hunger, perhaps spake of stoning of him, and the envious courtiers and enchanterers that spake evil of him before Pharaoh, to bring him out of favour; but by divine assistance, and God's favourable preference, 1Sa 30:6, he proved too strong for them all. Ver. 24, 'But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob,' &c. Joseph is likened to a strong archer, that, as his other enemies as archers shot at him, so his bow was steadfast, and his arms strong by the signal presence of God with him. Such an eminent presence of God had Joseph with him, that he never wanted courage, comfort, or counsel when he was at the worst. The divine presence will make a man stand fast and firm under the greatest pressures. It made Joseph use his bow against his adversaries, as David did his sling against Goliath. He slung, saith one, as if he had wrapped up God in his sling. Psa 23:4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' The presence of the Lord with his people in the most deadly dangers fills their souls full of courage, confidence, and comfort. That darkness which comes upon a dying man, a little before he gives up the ghost, is the greatest darkness; and yet let a Christian then have but God by the hand, and he will not fear the most hideous and horrid representations of death: Dan 3:24, 'Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king;' Dan 3:25, 'He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they

have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' The presence of the Son of God turned the fiery furnace into a garden of delights, a gallery of pleasure. This divine presence in the midst of fire and flame kept them from fainting, sinning, and shrinking, and filled their souls with comfort, peace, ease, and heavenly refreshing. One of the ancients [Augustine] rhetorically speaking to Nebuchadnezzar, who said, 'he saw one like the Son of God,' 'Whence came this?' saith he. 'Who told thee that this was the Son of God, what law, what prophet? He is not yet born into the world, and the similitude of him that was to be born is known to thee. Whence came this? Who told thee this, but the divine fire enlightening thee within, that whilst thou beholdest these three as thine enemies in the fire, thou mightest give testimony to the Son of God?' This heathenish prince looked upon the fourth person as one like a son of the gods, or like some young god, most bright and glorious, exceeding fair, and excelling in beauty, as if he were not of human, but of divine offspring. But whatever notions or apprehensions Nebuchadnezzar had, we may very safely understand this fourth to be, as the words do literally bear, the very true Son of God, our Lord and Saviour, who is signally present with his people in their greatest extremities and most deadly dangers: Zec 1:8. 'I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood amongst the myrtle-trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were three red horses, speckled, and white.' The man riding upon the red horse is the man Christ Jesus; it is the captain of the Lord's host, and the captain of our salvation. Christ is here represented in his kingly state, under the type of a man riding on a red horse, and having his royal attendants; for under the type of red horses, speckled, and white, behind him, is represented his having angels for ministers, and all creatures ready for every dispensation; whether sad, represented by red; or comfortable, represented by white; or mixed of mercy and judgment, represented by speckled horses. Christ is here represented as a man on horseback, ready to make out or sally forth for the good of his people when they are at the lowest. The low, afflicted, and suffering state of the church is fitly compared to myrtle-trees that grow in a shady grove, in valleys, and bottoms, and by water-sides. Now, when his people are in a very low condition, then Christ appears on horseback, for his people's protection, and their enemies' confusion. Christ will be sure to lodge with his people when they are at lowest. When the church is in danger Christ is not asleep; he is always ready upon his red horse, watching all opportunities and advantages, to shew his zeal and courage for his people, and his severity and fury against their enemies. The man that stood amongst the myrtle-trees, Zec 1:10, is that man Christ Jesus, whose special residence is with his people when they are in the most low, dangerous, and forlorn condition. No troubles, no distresses, no dangers, can banish Christ from his people, or make him seek another lodging: Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,' The Israelites went through the Red Sea, and were not drowned; and the three children walked up and down in the fiery furnace, and were not so much as singed, Dan 3:27. By 'fire and water' we may well understand the various troubles, distresses, and dangers that may attend the people of God. Now in all these various troubles, &c., the Lord will be signally present with them, to protect and defend, to secure and deliver them out of all their various troubles, their deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. 2Co 4:9, 'Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' Persecuted by men, but not forsaken by God. The saints may be shaken, not shivered; persecuted, not conquered; cast down, but not cast off. Luther, speaking of his enemies, saith, They may thrust me, but not throw me; shew their teeth, but not devour me; kill me, but not hurt

me, &c., because of that favourable and signal presence of Christ that is with me. Now this is that presence of the Lord that falls under our present consideration. But for the further opening of this important point, let us a little inquire how the Lord does manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence to his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Now to this question I shall give these twelve answers:—

(1.) First, The Lord does manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by raising their faith to more than an ordinary pitch at such a time: Exo 14:10, 'And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord;' Exo 14:11, 'And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth of Egypt?' Exo 14:12, 'Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.' Thus you see their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, they having a Red Sea before them, and a cruel, bloody, and enraged enemy just at the heels of them. Now in this extremity, see to what a high pitch Moses his faith rises: Exo 14:13, 'And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever.' He saith they shall never see the Egyptians again, that is, in that manner as they saw them that day insulting against them and pursuing after them, as the Septuagint do well interpret it, ■ν τρ■πον ■ωρ■κατε, 'after what sort ye have seen them,' for they saw them afterward, but drowned, and lying dead upon the shore, Exo 14:30 : Exo 14:14, 'The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.' A strong faith will help a Christian at a dead lift. Though Moses had received no particular promise how the Israelites should be delivered, yet he rested upon God's general promise before, that he would get himself honour upon Pharaoh and his host: 'The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall be still.' As if he had said, Ye shall be merely passive, and do nothing at all towards the subduing of your enemies, neither in words nor deeds; the Lord shall fight against your enemies, and defeat them himself by a strong hand and an outstretched arm; compose yourselves, act faith and hope in God, without doubting, murmuring, grudging, fainting, or fretting; for God deferreth his chiefest aid until man's greatest need. When the enemy is highest, salvation is nearest; when the danger is greatest, the help of God is readiest, as at this time they found it.

2Ch 13:3, 'Abijah set, the battle in array, with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him, with eight hundred thousand chosen-men, being mighty men of valour.' Jeroboam had two to one: 2Ch 13:7, 'And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them.' Rehoboam was no warrior, he was no expert prince in the use of arms; he was hut young, not in age, but in experience, policy, and valour; he was hen-hearted, he had no courage, no mettle. Jeroboam takes hold of these advantages, and gathers eight hundred thousand Racas, brainless fellows, light and empty, yokeless and masterless persons; men of no piety, civility, ingenuity, or common honesty. Now see what a mighty spirit of faith God raised in the children of Judah: 2Ch 13:17, 'And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so

there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.' A monstrous and matchless slaughter, the greatest number that ever we read slain in any battle; far beyond that of Tamerlane when he took Bajazet, or Atius the Roman prefect, when he fought with Attila and his Huns in the fields of Catalonia, where were slain on both sides one hundred sixty-five thousand: 2Ch 13:18, 'Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed,' because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. Faith at a dead lift never miscarrieth. God never has, nor never will, fail those that place their confidence upon him in their greatest dangers.

Est 4:14, 'For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' Their great trouble, their deep distress, and their most deadly danger you have in that, Est 3:13, 'And the letters were sent by the posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, (which is the month Adar,) and to take the spoil of them for a prey.' Haman, that grand informer, with his wicked crew, would have spoiled them of their lives and goods, but that they were prevented by a miraculous providence, as you know. Now in this deep distress and most deadly danger, at what rate doth Mordecai believe? 'For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement'—[Heb., respiration]—'and deliverance arise'—[Heb., stand up, as on its basis or bottom, so as none shall be able to withstand it.] This Mordecai speaketh not by a spirit of prophecy, but by the power and force of his faith, grounded upon the precious promises of God's defending his church, hearing the cries of his people, arising for their relief and succour, and grounded upon all the glorious attributes of God, viz., his power, love, wisdom, goodness, and all-sufficiency, &c., all which are engaged in the covenant of grace, to save, protect, and secure his people in their greatest troubles and most deadly dangers. Mordecai's faith in this black, dark, dismal day, was a notable faith indeed, and worthy of highest commendation. Faith can look through the perspective of the promises, and see deliverance at a great distance, salvation at the door. What though sense saith, Deliverance will not come; and what though reason saith, Deliverance cannot come; yet a raised faith gets above all fears, and disputes, and says, Deliverance will certainly come, redemption is at hand.

Num 13:30, 'And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it;' Num 14:9, 'Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread before us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.' The spies by their lies did what they could to daunt and discourage the people, by crying up the strength of the Anakims, and the impossibility of the conquest, Num 13:32-33. These hollow-hearted hypocritical spies blow hot and cold almost in a breath, Num 13:23-28. First, they make a narrative of the fruitfulness of the land, and presently they conclude that it was a land that was not sufficient to nourish the inhabitants, yea, a land that did devour the inhabitants, Num 13:32. Liars have no iron memories. But now behold to what a mighty pitch Caleb's faith is raised. 'Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are able to overcome it.' Or, nearer the Hebrew, 'Marching up, march up, subduing, subdue.' Let us, saith believing Caleb, march up to the land of Canaan courageously, resolutely, undauntedly, for the day is our own, the land is our own, all is our own. 'They are bread for us,' we shall make but a breakfast of them, we shall as easily and as surely root them out, and cut them down with our

swords, as we cut the bread we eat. 'Their defence is departed from them.' In the Hebrew it is, 'Their shadow is departed from them.' The shadow you know guards a man from the scorching heat of the sun, Psa 91:1, and Psa 121:5-6. Caleb, by faith, saw God withdrawn from them; by the eye of his faith he looked upon them as a people without a fence, a shadow, a guard, a covert, a protection; and therefore, as a people that might easily be subdued and destroyed. His faith told him that it was not their strong cities, nor their high walls, nor their sons of Anak, that could preserve, shelter, secure, or defend them, seeing the Lord had forsaken them, and would be no longer as a shadow or a shelter to them. 'And the Lord is with us,' to make us victorious, to tread down our enemies, and to give us a quiet possession of the good land. So Dan 3:16, 'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter,' Dan 3:17, 'If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king.' In the fiery furnace they are protected by a divine providence, they escape death beyond all men's expectations, for the fire touched them not, neither could it burn during their abode in the furnace, for God so fortified their bodies that they could not be consumed by fire, which accident² made them in great estimation with the king, for that he saw that they were virtuous, and beloved of God, and for that cause they were highly honoured by him. Here is a fiery furnace before them, and a proud, boasting, tyrannical, enraged prince domineering over them, for not obeying his idolatrous will. Now to what a mighty pitch is their faith raised! 'Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us.' Their faith was bottomed upon their propriety in God: 'Our God;' and upon the power, providence, and all-sufficiency of God: 'Is able to deliver us;' and upon the gracious readiness and willingness of God: 'And he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king.' When dangers are greatest, then God commonly raises the faith of his people highest; faith doth most and best for us, when we are at a dead lift. It quenches the violence of fire, Heb 11:34; as the apostle speaks, pointing at the faith of these three children, or rather champions. Though now the fiery furnace was heat[ed] seven times hotter than it used to be at other times, yet such was the strength, and might, and power of their faith, that it so quenched the flames, that they had not one hair of their heads singed, nor their coats changed, nor the smell of fire found upon them, Dan 3:27; and thus the blessed martyrs may be said by their faith, patience, and constancy to quench the violence of the fire, though their bodies were consumed to ashes in the fire. So Dan 6:16. Daniel is cast into the den of hungry, enraged lions; innocent Daniel is exposed to the cruel paws and hungry jaws of lions. This kind of capital punishment was not unusual among the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, and among the Romans also, with whom it was a common saying in Tertullian's time, Let the Christians be cast to the lions. The faces of the lions are stern, and their voices are terrible, Amo 3:8; they are roaring and ravening, they are greedy of their prey. They are vigilant and subtle. Lying in wait to get their prey, they sleep little, and when they sleep, it is apertis oculis, with open eyes. They mind their prey much, and are cunning to catch it, Psa 17:12. The lion hides himself, and when the prey comes near he suddenly surprises it. They are proud and stately, they go alone, they eat not with the lioness, much less with other creatures, they will not stoop to any, or turn away from any, they do what they list; they are most cruel, bloody, devouring creatures; they have terrible claws, sharp teeth, and are strong and mighty to crush and break the bones; and it is very dangerous to meddle with lions. Num 24:9, 'He lieth down as a lion, as a great lion: who shall stir him up?' Lions if offended and provoked are very revengeful. In the hunting or taking of lions, the lion observes who wounds him, and on him if possible he will be revenged.

Ælian tells of a bear that came into a lion's den, and bit the whelps she found there. The lion returning, the bear to shift for herself got up into a high tree. The lioness watched at the foot of the tree. The lion ranged abroad in the woods, and meets with a man that had an axe, and used to fell trees; this man the lion brings to the den, shewed him the wounded whelps, directs him to the tree where the bear was, which he cut down; the bear being torn in pieces, the man was safely dismissed. By these hints we may guess at the deadly danger that Daniel was in. Some writers tell us, that if a cloth be cast upon the eyes of a lion to cover them, he will not hurt a man; or if he be full.—Josephus, to illustrate the history, saith, that these princes pleaded before the king, saying that the lions were full and gorged, and therefore they would not touch Daniel;³ which he hearing, being displeased with their injurious malice, said, that the lions should now be fed, and then they cast in to see when they were gorged, whether they could likewise escape: but this being done, they were suddenly destroyed, before they came to the bottom of the den, Dan 6:24. To what a fatal end came these informers! As to their wives and children that were cast into the den of lions, it is most probable that they were accessory to that wicked conspiracy against Daniel, by stirring up and provoking their husbands and fathers, to engage all their power, interest, and policy against him, and never to suffer a poor captive to be advanced in honour and dignity above them; and how just and righteous a thing was it with God, that they who had plotted together, and contrived together, the ruin and destruction of a holy innocent person, that these should suffer together, and go to the den together, and be torn in pieces together. Sinners, look to yourselves; if you will sin with others, you must expect to suffer with others.—Or if a man hath been beneficial to him; or if a man lieth prostrate before him, in the manner of a suppliant. But Daniel was not safe, he was not secured by any of these means, but God secured him in the midst of these dreadful dangers by the ministry of an angel. 'My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me,' Dan 6:22. Others say, that God secured Daniel, by taking away the lions' hunger from them at that time, and by causing in them a satiety. And some tell us, that God secured him, by raising such a fantasy in the lions that they looked upon Daniel, not as a prey, but as on one that was a friend unto them. But now in the midst of this dreadful danger, how doth Daniel's faith sparkle and shine: Dan 6:23, 'Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den; so Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.' Daniel in a fiery furnace looks upon God as his God, in the midst of the flames he acts faith upon the power of God, the promises of God, &c. Of all living creatures lions are most fierce, cruel, and irresistible, and yet such was the strength and force of Daniel's faith, that it stopped their mouths, see Heb 11:33; Jdg 14:6; 1Sa 17:34. Though Daniel was but one man, yet such was the power of his faith, that it stopped the mouths of many lions. As Luther says of prayer, so may I say of faith; it hath a kind of omnipotency in it; it is able to do all things, est quædam omnipotentia precum. Thus you see by these famous instances to what a mighty pitch the Lord has raised the faith of his people, when they have been in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers; and this is the first way wherein the Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

(2.) Secondly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by his teaching and instructing of them; Psa 94:12, 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.' This divine presence turn every lash into a happy lesson. In this

psalm the Holy Ghost useth six arguments to prove that a man is blessed who is chastened. [1.] Because he is instructed by being afflicted, as here. [2.] Because the end why God lays affliction on his people is to give them rest from the days of adversity, Psa 94:13. [3.] Until the pit be digged for the wicked, in the same verse, until the cold grave hold his body, and hot hell hold his soul. [4.] Because God will support them under all their afflictions. When God casteth his people into the furnace of afflictions, his everlasting arms shall be underneath them. Though God may cast down his people, yet he will never cast off his people. [5.] Because there shall be a glorious restoration: Psa 94:15, 'Judgment shall return unto righteousness.' [6.] Because all the upright in heart shall follow it, in the same verse—viz., in their affections they are carried out after it, earnestly desiring that dear day when God will unriddle his providences, and clear up his proceedings with the sons of men. Jerome, writing to a sick friend, hath this expression: 'I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable.' Demetrius saith, Nothing seems more unhappy to me than he to whom no adversity hath happened: Impunitas, securitatis mater, virtutum noverca, religionis virus, tinea sanctitatis: Freedom from punishment is the mother of security, the stepmother of virtue, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness, [Bernard.] It was a speech of a German divine, [Gaspar Olevianus,] in his sickness: In this disease, saith he, I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is. I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin meant before. God's corrections are our instructions, his lashes our lessons, his scourges our schoolmasters, his chastisements our advertisements. And to note this, the Hebrews and Greeks both express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, ■■■■, musar, παιδε■α; because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Job 36:8. 'And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction;' Job 36:9, 'Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded;' Job 36:10, 'He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.' Sanctified afflictions open men's ears to discipline, and turn them from iniquity, which is a piece of learning that a Christian can never pay too dear for. Affliction is verus Scripturæ commentarius: An excellent comment upon the Scriptures. Afflictions make way for the word of the Lord to come to the heart. Affliction sanctified is Lex practica, a practical law. Bernard had a brother of his, who was a riotous and profane soldier; Bernard gives him many good instructions and admonitions, &c., but his brother slighted them, and made nothing of them. Bernard comes to him, and puts his hand to his side. One day, saith he, God will make way to this heart of yours by some spear or lance. And so it fell out; for, going into the wars, he was wounded, and then he remembers his brother's instructions and admonitions, and then they got to his heart, and lay upon it to some purpose: Job 33:16, 'Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.' Oculos quos peccatum claudit, pœna aperit: The eye that sin shuts, afflictions open, [Gregory.] The cross opens men's eyes, as the tasting of honey did Jonathan's. By correction God seals up instruction; God sets on the one by the other; as when a schoolmaster would have a lesson learned indeed, he sets it on with a whipping. As Gideon taught the elders of the city and the men of Succoth with the thorns and briars of the wilderness, so God teaches his people by affliction many a holy and happy lesson, Jdg 8:16. By afflictions, troubles, distresses, and dangers, the Lord teaches his people to look upon sin as the most loathsome thing in the world, and to look upon holiness as the most lovely thing in the world. Sin is never so bitter, and holiness is never so sweet, as when our troubles are greatest and our dangers highest. By afflictions the Lord teaches his people to sit

loose from this world, and to make sure the great things of that other world. By affliction God shews his people the vanity, vexation, emptiness, weakness, and nothingness of the creatures, and the choiceness, preciousness, and sweetness of communion with himself, and of interest in himself. Christ, though he knew, 'yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,' Heb 5:8; that is, he shewed obedience more than before; not as if Christ were to go to school to learn, or as if by certain acts he were to fit himself for obedience; he did not learn that which he knew not before, but did that which he did not before. He that was put upon the trial of his obedience, he came to know by experience what a hard matter it was thus to obey God. By God's favourable presence a man comes to learn many lessons in a time of adversity which he never learned in a day of prosperity; for we are like idle boys and bad scholars, that learn best when the rod is over us. Hezekiah was better upon his sick-bed than when he was shewing of his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, Isa 39:1-5; and David was a better man when he was in his wilderness-condition than when he sat upon his royal throne, Psa 30:6-7. The Jews are ever best when in the worst condition; the Athenians would never mend till they were in mourning. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself; he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, These are God's gems and jewels wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. Here, as that martyr phrased it, we are but learning our a b c, and our lesson is never past Christ's cross, and our walking is still home by Weeping-Cross. Usually men are worst in a prosperous condition. In a prosperous condition God speaks to us, and we mind him not: 'I spoke to thee in thy prosperity, but thou wouldest not hear: and this hath been thy manner from thy youth upwards,' Jer 2:21. Pope Martin reported of himself that, whilst he was a monk and lived in the cloister, he had some evidences for heaven; when he was a cardinal, he began to fear and doubt; but after he came to be pope, he utterly despaired. The Lord never shews more of his favourable, signal, and eminent presence, than by teaching of his people many gracious and gospel lessons by their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers. But

(3.) Thirdly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, his signal, his eminent presence with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by raising, strengthening, and acting, their suffering graces—viz., their faith, hope, love, patience, prudence, courage, boldness, zeal, constancy. Thus in the text, 'The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me.' He put new life, and strength, and vigour into all my graces. Although there are habits of grace always resident in the hearts of the saints, yet those habits are not always in exercise. The habits of grace cannot act of themselves, there must be renewed strength imparted to set them on work. 'Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight,' Psa 119:35. Though David had a spirit of new life within him, yet he could not actually walk in the path of God's precepts, till by an additional force he was set agoing: Song of Solomon 4:16, 'Awake, O north wind, and come thou south wind, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.' By the garden we may safely understand a sanctified soul, and by the spices in this garden we may understand the several graces planted in the soul. Now these spices can never flow out, and send forth their fragrant smell, till the north and south wind blows upon them. Habitual grace cannot operate, and dilate, and put forth itself into exercise, till by the concurrent presence and assistance of Christ it is educed into act. No saint can act that grace he hath received, by his own strength, without the presence and assistance of Christ: 1Co 15:16, 'But by the grace of God, I am what I am; and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain, but I labour more abundantly

than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.' He does not say, the grace of God which was in me, that habitual grace which I had; but the grace of God which was with me. So then it is not the strength of habitual grace that will carry a man through doing or suffering work, but the auxiliary, the assisting, the conquering grace of Jesus Christ. It is his grace with us, more than his grace in us. So John 15:5, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Ye that are my disciples, ye that have the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' The habits of grace, the actings of grace, and the perfecting of grace, are all from Jesus Christ. It is more emphatical in the original, for there you have two negatives, 'cannot do nothing.' He does not say, 'Without me ye cannot do many things,' but, 'Without me ye can do nothing;' nor he does not say, 'Without me ye can do no great thing,' but, 'Without me ye can do nothing;' nor he does not say, 'Without me ye can do no difficult thing,' but, 'Without me ye can do nothing;' nor he does not say, 'Without me ye can do no spiritual thing,' but, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' Whatever a saint may do by the power of gifts, or habits of grace received, yet he can do nothing in a lively spiritual acceptable way without the presence of Christ, without a constant dependence upon Christ, without a sweet and special communion and fellowship with Christ. If we cannot put forth a natural action without him—for in him we live, move, and have our being, Acts 17:28—how much less can we perform a spiritual action, in a spiritual manner, without his presence and assistance? Let the king sit but at his table, and then our spikenard will send forth a sweet smell, Song of Solomon 1:12; that is, let Jesus Christ be but present with us, and then our graces, which are compared to spikenard, will send forth a sweet smell. Sitting at the table with King Jesus intimates the sweetest friendship and fellowship with him. It was held a great honour and happiness to stand before Solomon, 1Ki 10:8; what is it then to sit with Christ at his table? 'My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof;' that is, My faith is actuated, and all my other graces are exercised and increased. Christ's presence puts life into all our graces: Isa 41:10; Luk 21:14-15, 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' 2Co 12:10, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' When I am weak in myself, then am I strong in Christ. If the sun shine upon the marigold, how soon does the marigold open; so when the Sun of righteousness does but shine upon a Christian's graces, how do they open and act! Mal 4:2. To shew how the presence of Christ has acted the faith, love, courage, boldness, and patience, &c., of the saints in the Old and New Testament, the primitive Christians and the martyrs, in the latter ages of the world, when they have been in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, would take up more than a little time; besides, in my other writings I have opened these things more fully to you, and to them I must refer you. And therefore,

(4.) Fourthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by laying a law of restraint upon every wicked man, and by bridling and checking, their fury and insolency, that they shall not add afflictions to the afflicted, as otherwise they would; as he did upon Laban: Gen 31:24, 'And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad.' Gen 31:29, 'It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but the God of your fathers spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad.' see what a law of restraint God laid upon Esau, Gen 33:1-4; and upon Abimelech, Gen 20:6-8, Gen 20:17-18; and upon Benhadad, 1Ki 20:1, 1Ki 20:10, 1Ki 20:29-30; and upon Haman, as you may see by comparing the 3d and 6th chapters of Esther together; and upon Pharaoh, Exo 15:9-10; and upon Sennacherib, Isa 37:28-29, Isa 37:33-3; and upon Herod,

Acts 12:1-25. Maximinus set forth a proclamation engraven in brass for the utter abolishing of Christ and religion: he was eaten up of lice. Valens being to subscribe an order for the banishment of Basil, was smitten with a sudden trembling of his hand that he could not subscribe the order; afterwards he was burned to death by the Goths.

Domitian, the author of the second persecution against the Christians, having drawn a catalogue of the names of such as he was to kill, in which was the name of his own wife and other friends; upon which he was, by the consent of his wife, slain by his own household servants with daggers in his privy-chamber. His body was buried without honour, his memory cursed to posterity, and his arms and ensigns were thrown down and defaced. Julian vowed to make a sacrifice of the Christians upon his return from the wars; but, in a battle against the Persians, he was deadly wounded, and throwing his blood in the air, in a high contempt of Christ, he died with that desperate blasphemous expression in his mouth, *Vicisti tandem, Galilæe*, 'Thou Galilean hast overcome me.'

Felix, Earl of Wurtemberg, was a great persecutor of the saints, and did swear that ere he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans; but the very same night, wherein he had thus sworn and vowed, he was choked in his own blood. The judgments of God were so famous and frequent upon the persecutors of the saints in Bohemia, that it was used as a proverb among the adversaries themselves, that if any man were weary of his life let him but attempt against the Piccardines—so they called the Christians—and he should not live a year to an end. By these short hints you may see that all along God has made good that word that is more worth than a world, 'Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain'—Hebrew, 'Shalt thou gird,' that is, curb, and keep within compass; or as the Greek hath it, 'It shall keep holiday to thee,' that is, cease from working or acting outwardly, how restless soever it be within. 'The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain,' that is, those that are left alive of thy wrathful enemies, that have still any malice against thy people, thou wilt curb and restrain, and not suffer their wrath to be so great as formerly; or if they go about to recruit their forces, and to set again upon thy people, thou wilt set such bounds to their wrath that they shall not accomplish their desires, nor shall they proceed one step further than shall make signally for thy glory and thy people's good; so some carry the words. The more eager and furious the enemies are against God's people, the more honour and glory will God get in protecting and securing his people, and in girding, binding, and tying up their enemies. Were it not for this favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, wicked men would still be a-multiplying of their sorrows, increasing their troubles, and adding of burden to burden. It is this favourable presence of God that binds wicked men over to their good behaviour, and that chains them up from doing that mischief that they design and intend. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The Lord does manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by guiding and leading them into those paths and waves which make most for their own peace and quiet, safety and security, contentation and satisfaction, happiness here, and blessedness hereafter, Exo 12:21-22; Isa 63:12-14; Psa 5:8. Deu 32:10, 'He found me in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.' A wilderness-condition is, you know, a condition of straits, wants, deep distresses, and most deadly

dangers. Now when his people were in this condition he instructs them by his words and works, and he takes them by the hand, as I may say, and leads them with all care, tenderness, gentleness, and sweetness, as a man would do a poor helpless infant, which he should find in a desert, in a waste howling wilderness. God never left leading of his people till he had brought them at last through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. Ah! this leading presence of God turns a wilderness into a paradise, a desert into a Canaan. Let a Christian's troubles, distresses, and dangers, be never so many or never so great, yet as long as he has the guiding presence of God with him, he is safe from dangers in the midst of dangers. 'The fire shall not burn him, nor the waters overflow him,' Isa 43:2: Psa 107:4, 'They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in:' Psa 107:5, 'Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them:' Psa 107:6, 'Then they cried unto the Lord in their troubles, and he delivered them out of their distresses.' Here you see their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers; and now God gives them his hand, Psa 107:7, 'And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation;' that is, to a state of settlement, say some, to Jerusalem, say others, or to that 'city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God,' saith another, Heb 11:10. In Psa 32:1-11 you may see David's great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers: Psa 32:3, 'When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long:' Psa 32:4, 'For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.' But will God be his guide now? Oh yes, Psa 32:8, 'I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.' Let the hand of the Lord be never so heavy upon a person, yet the presence of God guiding and instructing of him will keep him from utter fainting and sinking under that hand, Isa 30:21; Psa 73:24. When the people of God are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, he leads and guides them, Psa 25:9, Psa 25:12, and Psa 5:8. [1.] Into supernatural ways: Pro 15:24, 'The way of life is above to the wise.' He hath his feet where other men's heads are, and, like a heavenly eagle, delights himself in flying high. [2.] Into good ways, Jer 6:16. [3.] Into strait and strict ways, Mat 7:14. Hence they are called right or straight paths which lie betwixt two extremes; or, if you will, which directly lead you to the view of heaven. They are paths which lie level with the rule and with the end. A man may see salvation and heaven at the end of them. [4.] Into pleasant ways: Pro 3:17, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Such as were those of Adam before his fall, strowed with roses and paved with peace. Some degree of comfort, pleasantness, and peace, follows every good action, as heat accompanies fire, as beams and influences issue from the sun. [5.] Into right paths: Pro 4:11, 'I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths:' Hos 1:9, 'The ways of the Lord are right, and the righteous shall walk in them.' The ways of his will, the ways of his word, and the ways of his worship, are all right ways, they carry us on in a straight line unto a right end. [6.] Into old and ancient ways: Jer 6:16, 'Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls:' Jer 18:15, 'They have caused them to stumble in their way from the ancient paths.' The ways of holiness are of the greatest, highest, and ancientest antiquity. The first ways of Adam were ways of holiness. The ways of sin are of a later edition than the ways of holiness. God stamped his image of holiness upon man before ever Satan assayed to tempt him. Holiness is of the ancientest house, of the greatest antiquity. Sin is but an upstart, holiness is the firstborn. The way of holiness is the eldest way, the way of holiness is gray-headed and of ancientest institution. All other ways are but of yesterday, they are but new ways to the ways of holiness. The stamp of antiquity upon many

things is a praise and an honour to them, as old gold, old friends, old manuscripts, old monuments, old scars, and old holiness. The stamp of antiquity upon the ways of holiness is the praise and honour of the ways of holiness. [7.] Into paths of righteousness: Psa 23:3, 'He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake;' or in plain, smooth, easy paths, or in sheep-tracks, wherein I may walk unweariedly and unblamably. Herein he alludes to the shepherd's care in leading his sheep gently in fair and plain ways, and not through deep mire, brambles, and briars, or over craggy ways that must needs be hard and troublesome for them to go in. The word here used is metaphorical; sometimes respecting the blind, who cannot walk without a guide; sometimes little or weak children, who cannot go without a leader; and here the weak and wandering sheep, which stand in need of the shepherd to go in and out before them. [8.] Into paths of salvation: Acts 16:17, 'These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.' [9.] Into ways of truth: 2Pe 2:2, 'And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.' 'The way of truth,' that is, the true Christian religion revealed from heaven, which shews the way to true happiness, to eternal salvation. [10.] Into ways of uprightness: Pro 2:13, 'Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness.' Now when the people of God are in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, the Lord by leading them [1.] into supernatural ways, [2.] into good ways, [3.] into strict and straight ways, [4.] into pleasant ways, [5.] into right ways, [6.] into old and ancient ways, [7.] into righteous ways, [8.] into ways of salvation, [9.] into ways of truth, and [10.] into ways of uprightness, does gloriously manifest his favourable, his signal, and his eminent presence with them. There is nothing below a mighty presence of God that can enable a Christian—especially when he is under great troubles, and in deep distresses, and most deadly dangers—to do these five things:—[1.] To approve of the ways of God; [2.] To choose the ways of the Lord; [3.] Highly to prize them; [4.] To delight and take pleasure in them; [5.] To walk in them and to keep close to them; and yet in all these five things the Lord doth greatly and graciously help his poor people, when they are, as it were, in the very mouth of the lion. But,

(6.) Sixthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable presence, his signal and eminent presence with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by encouraging, imboldening, animating and heartening up his people in the midst of all their troubles, distresses, and dangers, and by putting new life, spirit, and mettle into them, when they are even in the very mouth of the lion: Jos 1:6, 'Be strong and of a good courage.' Jos 1:7, 'Only be thou strong and very courageous.' Jos 1:9, 'Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.' 2Ch 13:12; Num 13:32-33, compared with Num 14:9. Joshua was a sword-man as well as a book-man; he had his name changed from Oshea to Joshua, from Let God save, to God shall save, Num 13:16. Christ will never want a champion to stand up for his church. If Moses dies, Joshua shall stand up. There shall be a succession of sword-men and bookmen, of rulers and teachers, to carry on Christ's work in the world till the top-stone be laid with grace unto it, Zec 4:7; Mal 2:15. The residue of the Spirit is with the Lord, and therefore he can and will put such an anointing of his Spirit upon one and another as shall fit them to carry on his works in the world. Joshua was very valiant, and a man of singular good mettle, yet because he was sure to meet with such troubles, deep distresses, and deadly dangers, as would put him to it, therefore he is pressed so frequently to be courageous: Jos 1:6, 'Be strong and of good courage.' Jos 1:7, 'Only be thou strong and very courageous.' Jos 1:9, 'Be strong and of a good courage.' Jos 1:18, 'Only be strong and of a good

courage.' Deu 31:7, 'And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage,' &c. And why all this? Not because Joshua had discovered any faintheartedness or cowardice, but because the work he was to undertake was so weighty and perilous, in regard of those many and mighty nations whom he was to destroy, and plant the Israelites in their room. The work that Joshua was to undertake was attended with many great difficulties and dangers, in respect of the enemies he was to encounter, as being men of vast and giant-like statures and strength, and dwelling in cities with high walls and strongly fortified. Now the main argument to raise his courage and mettle is drawn from God's special presence and assistance: Jos 1:9, 'For the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.' We are not to understand it of God's general presence in all places, but of his special, favourable, signal, and eminent presence, which God would manifest in his preservation, and protection, notwithstanding all the difficulties, enterprises, dangers, and enemies that he was to encounter with. So 2Ch 32:7, 'Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him.' 2Ch 32:8, 'With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles,' &c. At this time the king of Assyria was the greatest monarch in the world, and the most formidable enemy Israel had. He had a mighty army, for there was a hundred fourscore and five thousand of them slain in one night, 2Ch 32:21. Now the great thing they were to mind and attend was to look narrowly to it, that the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with them, did raise all their hearts above all discouragements, fears, and dismayedness. What is the chaff to the whirlwind? what are thorns and briars to a consuming fire? what is an arm of flesh to the arm, strength, and power of a God? what is weakness to strength, and the nothing-creature to the Lord of hosts? Now if the special signal presence of God with his people in their greatest troubles and most deadly dangers won't put singular courage, life, and mettle into them, what will? Acts 23:10, 'And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.' Acts 23:11, 'And the night following the Lord stood by him, [namely, in a vision, or in a dream, or in an ecstasy,] and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.' The favourable, signal presence of the Lord with him turned his prison into a palace. Mr Philpot, being a prisoner for the testimony of Jesus, writes thus to his friends: 'Though I tell you that I am in hell in the judgment of this world, yet assuredly I feel in the same the consolation of heaven, I praise God; and this loathsome and horrible prison is as pleasant to me as the walks in the garden of the King's Bench.' When Paul was in great danger the Lord stood by him, to cheer, comfort, and encourage him, see Acts 27:23-24 Now God claps him on the back, and puts new life and mettle into him. When Dionysius was given up by the executioner to be beheaded, he remained constant and courageous, saying, Come life, come death, I will worship none but the God of heaven and earth. When Chrysostom had told Eudoxia the empress that for her covetousness she would be called a second Jezebel, she thereupon sent him a threatening message, to which he gave this stout and resolute answer, 'Go tell her, nil nisi peccatum timeo, I fear nothing but sin.' When the executioner had kindled the fire behind Jerome of Prague, he bade him kindle it before his face; For, said he, if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities offered me to escape it. At the giving up of the ghost he said, Hanc animam in flammis offero, Christe, tibi, This soul of mine, inflames of fire, O Christ, I offer thee. The emperor, coming into Germany, sent for Luther to

Worms; but many of his friends, from the danger they apprehended hanging over his head, dissuaded him from going; to whom he gave this prudent, courageous, and resolute answer, 'That these discouragements were cast in his way by Satan, who knew that by his profession of the truth in so illustrious a place, his kingdom would be shaken; and that, therefore, if he knew that there were as many devils in Worms as there were tiles on the houses, yet he would go.' The German knight, in his apologetical letter for Luther against the pontifical clergy, saith, 'I will go through with what I have undertaken against you, and will stir up men to seek their freedom. I neither care nor fear what may befall me, being prepared for either event, either to ruin you to the great benefit of my country, or myself to fall with a good conscience,' &c.

William Flower the martyr said, 'That the heavens should as soon fall as I will forsake my profession, or budge in the least degree from it.'

Apollonius being asked, 'If he did not tremble at the sight of the tyrant,' made this answer, 'God, which gave him a terrible countenance, hath given also unto me an undaunted heart.' When Gardiner asked Rowland Taylor if he did not know him, &c., to whom he answered, 'Yea, I know you, and all your greatness, yet you are but a mortal man; and if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why fear ye not God the Lord of us all?'

Basil affirms of the primitive Christians, that they had so much courage and magnanimity of spirit in their sufferings, that many heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, resoluteness, and undauntedness, turned Christians. When one of the ancient martyrs was terrified with the threatenings of his persecutors, he replied, 'There is nothing of things visible, nor nothing of things invisibles that I fear; I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, come on it what will.' By these instances, which may be of great use in this trying day, you may clearly see how the Lord has manifested his favourable, signal, and eminent presence to his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by raising up in them a spirit of courage, magnanimity, and holy gallantry. But,

(7.) Seventhly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence to his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by preserving them from troubles in the midst of troubles, from dangers in the midst of dangers: Dan 3:25, 'He answered, and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' The presence of the Son of God preserves these three valiant champions from dangers in the midst of dangers. 'They fell down bound in the fiery furnace,' saith my author, [Polanus,] 'and they walked loose in the midst of the fire without any hurt, for the angel of the Lord descended together with them in the same moment, who shook the flames of the fire forth out of the furnace, and preserved the servants of God safe without any trouble, being cooled, as it were, with a dew coming upon them in a pleasant manner.' But give me leave to say, that these words, 'One like the Son of God,' doth not argue that in this vision there was not a representation of the Son of God to come afterwards in the flesh, but rather that this great mystery was here shewed for the greater comfort of the faithful, that they might courageously bear all their sufferings, having the Prince and Head both of angels and men present with them herein to mitigate their pains, and carry them through with joy; this being a greater wonder of grace and love than to have the protection of a mere angel, concerning whose power also, whether he can change the nature of fire, that it shall not burn, is very doubtful and questionable, seeing this

argueth omnipotency, which is in God alone, and not communicable to any creature. Where, by the way, you may observe a strong and solid argument to prove that Jesus is the Son of God against all gainsayers, thus: he whom Nebuchadnezzar saw in the fiery furnace was the Son of God in a human shape; but he was typically Jesus, ergo, &c. The major is proved, because he did that which none but God could do, viz., he qualified the most fierce and raging fire, which burned up some coming but near it, and had no power, at the same instant of time, so much as to singe a hair of the heads of others. The minor is proved also, because God, appearing in a glorious human shape at any time, was not God the Father or Holy Ghost, but God the Son; for 'no man hath seen God at any time,' John 1:18; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jn 4:12; but the Son hath revealed him, both when in him appearing in a human shape under the law, and when, under the Gospel, shewing himself in the man Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, and hypostatically united unto him: Exo 3:2, 'And the angel of the Lord,' that is, Christ, the angel of the covenant, 'appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed;' ver. 3, 'And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.' The Hebrew word Seneh which is here used signifies a dry bush, a bramble bush, whence the mount and wilderness is called Sinai, of the store of brambles that grew there, or of this bush or vision. Now for a bush, a dry bush, a bramble bush, to be all on fire and yet not consumed, this must be a wonder of wonders; but all this is from the good will 'of him that dwelt in the bush.' Out of these two verses we may briefly observe these few things:—

[1.] First, The low, and weak, and brittle estate of the church, represented by a bush, a dry bush, a bramble bush. What more brittle, weak, base, low, and despicable than a dry bush, a bramble bush? What is such a bush good for but the fire, or to stop a gap, or some such inferior use? A bush is a black, deformed, and uncomely thing. Corruption and affliction, sin and suffering, renders the saints very uncomely. The church is compared not to a strong, sturdy oak, but to a weak, brittle bush; and elsewhere to a vine, a dove, a lamb, a sheep, &c., all frail, weak creatures. It is good for all saints to have low and mean thoughts of themselves, for here they are resembled to a dry bush, a bramble bush. But,

[2.] Secondly, A dry bush, a bramble bush, pricks, wounds, and vexes them that handle it roughly. This bush is in Hebrew called Seneh, as I have hinted before, which the Hebrews describe to be a shrub full of pricks, and without fruit, and so thick that a bird cannot enter without the ruffling and pulling off her feathers. Let the proud enemies of the church look to themselves, for this bramble bush will vex, prick, wound, tear, and put them to the worst, when they have done their worst. In all the ages of the world this bramble bush, the church, hath been a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, and a burdensome stone; so that all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it, Zec 12:2-3. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider the cruelties of the church's enemies is signified and represented by a fire. The bush burns with fire. In this resemblance is shadowed out the oppressed, afflicted, and persecuted estate of the Israelites in the Egyptian furnace; and by fire here is meant the most painful, terrifying, and tormenting afflictions and miseries that should attend them. Great afflictions and persecutions are in Scripture commonly set out by fire, as the fiery trial, the fire of affliction, 1Pe 4:12; Lam 2:3-4; Hab 2:13. Fire is very painful and tormenting, in which respects hell torments are compared to fire; so are great afflictions, miseries, and sufferings; they are very painful and tormenting; they put persons into sore pain and travail. Next to the pangs of conscience, and the

pains of hell, there are none to these pains and pangs that are bred and fed by sore afflictions, by terrible trials. It has been the lot and portion of God's dearest children, to be exercised with very great and grievous afflictions, and that in order to the discovery of sin, to the embittering of sin, to the preventing of sin, and to the purging away of sin, and in order to the trial of grace, the discovery of grace, the exercise of grace, and the increase of grace; and in order to the weaning of them from this world, and to the completing their conformity to Christ, the captain of their salvation, 'who was made perfect through sufferings,' Heb 2:10; and to ripen them for heaven, and to work in them more bowels of pity and compassion to those that are in misery, and that sigh and groan under their Egyptian taskmasters.

[4.] Fourthly, Consider the eminence of their preservation, though in the fire, yet unconsumed. The church of God was hot, yea, all in flames, and yet not consumed. Let the fire be never so hot, so fierce, so furious, so spreading, the church shall have a being, and live and bear up in the midst of the flames. If the church like the sea lose in one place, it gets ground in another. When the worst of men, and devils, and informers have done their worst, the Lord will have a name among his people on earth. The church, with the lamp in the story, laughs at all those winds, that would blow it out. Well may we stand amazed and wonder, that so flaming and terrible a fire, falling upon so contemptible a bush, and so dry and despicable a shrub, should not presently turn it into ashes; for why, is the fire too weak? Oh no! Is the bush so strong, as to defend and secure itself against devouring flames? Oh no! Or is the bush not apt to burn and consume by so fierce a fire? Oh no. It is not from the impotency of the fire, nor from the strength or constitution of the bush; for a dry bramble bush, in the matter of it is as combustible as any chaff, and as easily destroyed as any stubble; but because the natural force thereof was restrained by the glorious power of God: for if God concur not with the nature of things, they cannot work nor shew their kind. There are two inseparable qualites of fire: (1.) To give light. (2.) To burn; and yet divine power divides and separates these two: for this fire giveth light, but burneth not. Oh, what a mighty, what an astonishing preservation is here! The afflictions and sufferings of the church are not a consuming fire, but a trying fire, as the fire in a furnace consumes the dross, but tries the gold, and puts a new lustre, beauty, and glory upon it. Hesiod speaks of thirty thousand demigods, that were keepers of men; but what are so many thousand gods to that one God that neither slumbers nor sleeps, but day and night keeps his people as his jewels, as the apple of his eye, that keeps them in his pavilion, as a prince his favourite? There is a dialogue between a heathen and a Jew; after the Jews returned from captivity—all nations round about them being enemies unto them—the heathen asked the Jew, how he and his countrymen could hope for any safety, because, saith he, every one of you is as a silly sheep compassed about with fifty wolves. Ay, but, saith the Jew, we are kept by such a shepherd, as can kill all these wolves when he pleases, and by that means preserve his sheep. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider how this eminent preservation of his people from dangers in the midst of dangers is effected and brought about, and that is by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great angel of the covenant; for Moses saith expressly of this vision, that 'The Lord appeared unto Moses, and God calleth unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses,' &c., ver. 4. This calling of Moses by his name, and the doubling of his name, in such a familiar and loving manner, was a sign of God's singular favour to Moses. Choice favourites God frequently called by name, as you may see in those instances of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c., and so our Lord

Jesus Christ called Peter by his name, and Nathanael by his name, and Mary by her name, &c. The same presence of the Son of God, that preserved the three children, or rather champions; in that furious furnace of Nebuchadnezzar from burning or singeing, preserved the bush, though not from burning, yet from consuming, by restraining the natural force of the fire, and strengthening the bush against it. The bush, the church in the fire, came forth of the hottest furnace that ever was kindled, not blacker nor worser, but brighter and better, and more glorious than the sun in his strength; and all this from the presence of the angel of the covenant that dwelt in the bush. Divine presence can preserve a flaming bush from being consumed: Witness our preservation to this day, though we have been as a burning bush. 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved, God shall help her, and that right early,' Psa 46:5. Heb., 'When the morning appeareth,' that is, in the nick of time, when help shall be most seasonable and best welcome. The presence of the Lord in the midst of his church, will secure her from being greatly moved in the midst of all those great dreadful confusions that are abroad in the world. Hence the church is called, Jehovah shammah, 'The Lord is there', Eze 48:35. His presence in heaven, makes it heaven, and his presence in the church, makes it happy and safe. Nothing shall disturb or harm them that have the presence of God in the midst of them. The church is built upon a rock, she is invincible, Mat 16:18. Jer 1:8, 'Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord.' Jer 1:17, 'Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.' Jer 1:18, 'For behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar and brazen wall against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.' Jer 1:19, 'And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.' God's presence with his messengers is a guard, and a safeguard, all-sufficient against all opposition whatsoever. Earthly princes and sovereigns are not wont to go with those whom they send on embassy, but God always goes along with those whom he sends, and will, by his powerful presence, protect and defend them against opposers, at all times and in all places, when all others fail and forsake us. Christ's presence is security sufficient, for 'if he be with us, who can be against us?' They must first prevail against him before they can prevail against them that withstand and oppose those whom he standeth by to back and protect. How comes this to pass, that Jeremiah, a man, a man alone, should bear up so stoutly, and stand so strong against kings, princes, priests, and people? It is from the signal presence of God with him. 'I am with thee.' And what can all the great ones of the world, and all the wicked ones of the world, do against one messenger of the Lord, that is armed with his glorious power? The ambassadors of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, must not be terrified with the multitude of opposers, nor with the grandeur or greatness of opposers; but set the presence of the Lord against them all, and say as that noble soldier, Pædarelus, in Erasmus, did to them that told him of that numerous and mighty army which came against him, Tanto plus gloriæ, referemus, quoniam eo plures superabimus, The number of opposers makes the Christian conquests the more illustrious. The more the Pharisees of old, and their successors of late time, have opposed the truth, the more it hath prevailed; and it is observable that the reformation in Germany was much furthered by the papists' opposition, yea, when two kings, amongst many others, wrote against Luther, viz., Henry the Eighth of England, and Ludovicus of Hungary; this kingly title being entered into the controversy, making men more curious to examine the matter, stirred up a general inclination towards Luther's opinion. So Jer 15:20, 'And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen

wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord.' When the messengers of the Lord go on constantly and courageously in the faithful discharge of their duties, not relenting, or yielding, or complying with their greatest opposers, then they shall have such a signal presence of the Lord with them, as shall sufficiently protect them against all their enemies' might and malice, wrath and rage: Jer 15:21, 'And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible or violent ones.' Though thou shouldst fall into the hand of the wicked, id est, power, and into the hand of the terrible and violent ones, yet they shall not hurt thee, nor harm thee; they shall not have their wills upon thee. When thou art in their hands, I will lay a law of restraint upon their hearts, that they shall not mischief thee, nor triumph over thee; I will be sure to secure thee, and rescue thee from dangers in the midst of dangers. A gracious messenger of the Lord in the midst of all oppositions, as Chrysostom said of Peter, is a man made all of fire walking in stubble, he overcomes and consumes all opposition; all difficulties are but whetstones to his fortitude. The moon will run her course though the dogs bark at it; so does the traveller, and so will the faithful messengers of the Lord hold on in their way and work, let men and devils bark and do their worst.

Moulin, speaking of the French Protestants, said, 'When papists hurt us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them.' He is a fool, we say, that will be laughed out of his coat, but he is a fool in folio that will be laughed out of his skin, out of his profession, out of his religion, out of his principles, out of the ways of God, nay, out of his soul, out of his salvation, because he can't endure to be opposed, derided, or laughed at by lewd and wicked men. The divine presence will make a man set light by such paper-shot. A gracious spirit is raised by opposition. The more opposition it meets with in a way of duty, the more resolute he is for it. So far is he from being afraid of the threatenings of men, of the frowns of men, or of losing this man's favour, or of incurring such a man's displeasure, that his spirit riseth far more for it. It is with such a man as it is with the fire in winter. The fire burns the hotter because of the coldness of the air; so it is with all the messengers of the Lord, who are inflamed in the way of their duty. Come to David, and tell him, Oh, there is a Goliath, and he is come out with a spear like a weaver's beam, and there is one that bears his target goes before him! Where is he? saith David; I will fight with him, saith he, [1Sa 17:4-11, compared with 1Sa 17:26-27.] Difficulties and dangers do but whet and raise his spirit; he is not afraid of any uncircumcised Philistine. Ah, my friends, this is a true noble spirit! Holy greatness of mind lies in this, when a man's spirit is borne up upon the greatness of his God, and the goodness of his cause; and if that will not bear me out, saith such a soul, let me sink in it, I am content to perish. That is a good word, more worth than a world in a faithful minister's eye: Eze 3:8, 'Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads;' Eze 3:9, 'As an adamant, harder than a flint, have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.' The adamant is the hardest of stones, it is lapis servabilis, because it keeps itself by its hardness from all injuries; no weather, no violence of hammer or fire will break it or conquer it. God engages himself to give the prophet such undaunted boldness, and invincible courage and constancy, as neither shame nor fear should prevail against. Divine presence, divine assistance, does always accompany a divine call. Such whom God sends he seconds, such whom he calls he encourages against all difficulties and discouragements; such as are called by Christ, and sent by Christ, shall never want the strengthening, comforting, corroborating, animating, and preserving presence of Christ. It is this divine presence that makes them stand it out, and shew themselves like men—like men of

courage, like men of God, and that secures them from dangers in the midst of dangers. In the greatest storms the adamant shrinks not, it fears not, it changeth not its hue, no, not in the least. Divine presence will keep gracious men from shrinking, fearing, and changing their way, their work, their Lord, and Master, in the worst of storms that can beat upon them. In all winds and weather the adamant is still the same, and so will all the faithful messengers of the Lord be, whatever wind may blow upon them. The signal presence of God with them will keep them from fearing, fainting, flying, and preserve them from dangers in the midst of dangers. But,

(8.) Eighthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by frustrating and disappointing the plots, designs, counsels, and contrivances of their powerful, subtle, secret, and malicious adversaries, who would fain be multiplying of their troubles, sorrows, sufferings, and miseries upon them: Neh 4:8, 'And conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.' Neh 4:11, 'And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst amongst them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.' Neh 4:15, 'And it came to pass, when our enemies knew that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsels to nought,' &c. The craft of the church's enemies is never but accompanied with cruelty, and their cruelty is seldom without craft. The devil lends them his seven heads to plot, and his seven horns to push; but in the things wherein they deal proudly, God is above them, and by his presence with his people he brings all their plots, counsels, and enterprises to nought. The gunpowder traitors betrayed themselves, and all came to light, though they had digged as low as hell to hide their counsels from the Lord. The enemies of the Jews, in Nehemiah's time, made great brags at first what they would do; but when they saw their plots discovered, and their purposes defeated, they are presently crestfallen, and have no mind nor courage to advance at all; so that to these plotters may be fitly applied that which Guicciardini saith of Charles the Eighth, king of France, in his expedition against Naples, 'That he came into the field like thunder and lightning, but went out like a snuff; more than a man at first, and less than a woman at last.' In all the ages of the world, the heads, the wits, the hands, the hearts, and the tongues of the wicked have been engaged against the just; they have been still a-plotting and devising mischief against the favourites of heaven, as if rebels could meddle with none but the children of a king, and yet God's signal presence with his people, in point of affection and protection, has blasted all their designs, and frustrated all their counsels. As the rage of wicked men against the saints have been endless, so it has been fruitless, because God has been in the midst of them. Haman plots against the lives, liberties, and estates of the Jews, Est 3:8, seq., but his plot was timely discovered and seasonably prevented, and the grand plotter and informer detected, debased, condemned, and executed: Est 7:10, 'So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.' The kings of Persia had absolute and unquestionable power to do whatsoever they listed. Quicquid libuit, licuit: all their subjects, except their queens, were no better than slaves,—'whom they would they slew, and whom they would they kept alive; whom they would they set up, and whom they would they put down,' Dan 5:19; Est 7:9. Haman is here without order of law, more than the king's command, adjudged to be hanged. The truth is, it was a clear case, and the malefactor was self-condemned. 'Hang him, therefore,' saith the king; a short and a just sentence, and soon executed. Ah, how soon is Haman fallen from the palace to the gallows, from the highest stage of honour to the lowest stair of disgrace; from feasting with the king to be made a feast for crows, and so lies wrapped up in the sheet of perpetual infamy. 'So let

all thine enemies perish, O Lord.' It is a good observation of Josephus upon Est 7:10 : 'I cannot,' saith he, 'but admire the Lord's wisdom, and acknowledge his justice, in that he not only punished him for his malice to the church, but, by turning his own mischief upon himself, hath made him an example to all posterity; hanging him up in gibbets that others may take warning.' Let all plotters and informers beware of making a match with mischief, they may have enough of it in the end. Haman was a main stickler for the devil, who paid him his wages at last, with a witness, or, if you will, with a halter. Let all the enemies of the saints tremble at such ends, and be careful to avoid them by flying such like foul and flagitious practices. The bloody plot being thus laid by Haman, the king's minion, behold the footsteps of God's favourable, signal, and eminent presence for his people and with his people in their deadly dangers, and that in raising up in them a very great spirit of faith, prayer, and mourning, and by raising an undaunted courage and resolution in Esther: 'And so I will go in unto the king, and if I perish, I perish,' Est 4:16. This she speaks not rashly or desperately, as prodigal of her life, but as one willing to sacrifice the same for the honour of God, his cause and people, saying, as that martyr, 'Can I die but once for Christ?' Esther had rather die than shrink from her duty. She thought it better to do worthily and perish for a kingdom, than unworthily and perish with a kingdom. Here was a mighty preference of God in raising Esther's heroical courage and resolution above all those visible dangers that did attend her attempt of going in to the king against the known law of the land. And the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre, Est 5:2. He did not kick her out of his presence, as some Cambyses would have done; neither did he command her to the block, as Henry the Eighth did his Anne Boleyn, upon a mere misprision of disloyalty; neither yet did he cashier her, as he had Vashti for a less offence, but by holding out his sceptre, shews his gracious respects unto her. This was the Lord's own work, and a great demonstration of his signal presence with her, in giving her favour in the eyes of the great king. 'So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre' with her hand, saith the Chaldee, with her mouth, saith the Vulgar translation. This she did either in token of submission, or as a sign of reverence and subjection, or for the avoiding of danger; for, as Josephus saith, 'He that touched the king's sceptre was out of the reach of evil,' or, according to the custom of the times, God's favourable presence is transparent, in the king's extended favour to her. 'On that night could not the king sleep,' Heb., 'the king's sleep fled away,' Est 6:1; and like a shadow it fled away so much the faster, as it was more followed. Crowns have their cares, thistles in their arms, and thorns in their sides. Lo! he that commanded one hundred and twenty-seven provinces cannot command one hour's sleep. The king's head might perhaps be troubled with thinking what great request it should be that Esther had to make, that was so hardly drawn from her; but herein appeared the signal presence of God in keeping the king awake; for Mordecai might have been hanged before Esther had known anything of it—Haman being come early the next morning, ver. 4, to beg this of the king—had not God kept him from sleep, and directed him to read in that place of the Chronicles where Mordecai's service was recorded, and so made way to his advancement and Haman's ruin. God's favourable presence shined upon his people in keeping the king from sleep, for excellent ends, and in putting small thoughts into his heart for great purposes. God will appear for his poor people, ■v τ■ κα■ρ■, in the nick and opportunity of time, when there is but a step between them and death; and further, the power, providence, presence, and goodness of God was made evident, in the behalf of his people, in directing the reader to that very place where Mordecai's singular service, in discovering the barbarous and murderous plot that was laid against the king's life and crown, was recorded, Est 6:2. That Mordecai should have no present reward,

but that it should be deferred till a fitter opportunity, when God might be more glorified in the signal preservation of his people, and in the famous overthrow of their enemies, was from that mighty hand of God, that was stretched out for the good of his people. In this great story we may, as in a mirror, see how the Lord, by his wisdom, providence, presence, and grace, brings about and overrules the wills of men, the affairs of men, the counsels of men, the designs of men, the words and speeches of men, to the fulfilling of his own will and decree, and the promoting of his own honour and glory, and the good of his people, when vain men think least of doing his will, or serving his providence. Here you may see the wisdom, prudence, and courage of Esther, striking whilst the iron was hot, charging the bloody decree upon Haman to his face, and that before the king, that things might the better stick and work, and painting him out in his own proper colours. 'The adversary,' Heb., 'the man adversary,' the Lycanthropos, the man of might that distresseth us. 'And enemy,' that is, the cruel enemy, the bloody enemy, the utter enemy, the worst enemy, that sworn swordman of Satan, from whom Haman hath drawn his ancient enmity, Gen 3:15. 'Is this wicked Haman,' that is, as wicked a wretch as goes on two legs, a man of blood, a man made up of mischief and malice, a sink of wickedness, a very mystery of iniquity, a breathing devil. Tiberius was rightly characterised, by his tutor Theodoras Gadareus, dirt knead² with blood. Haman was such another, if not worse. And now Queen Esther is plain and round with him, and calls a spade a spade. Though others styled him noble, great, serene, magnificent, &c., Esther gives him his own with a witness. 'The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.' But what a mighty courage had Esther to speak at this rate before the king, and of his grand favourite, and before his face. Surely all this was from the signal presence of God with her soul. This was a great work of faith, and a singular fruit of prayer. 'And now Haman stood up to make request for his life.' Oh, what a strange turn of things is here all upon a sudden! He that a little before was bowed unto by all men, is now upon his knees before a woman; he that was, the very day before, a professed enemy of the Jews, is now suppliant to a Jewess; he that a few weeks before had contrived the death and ruin of the Jews, is now begging hard for his own life; he that had provided a gallows for Mordecai, fears nothing more now than that himself should be hanged on it. Yesterday, oh the caps, knees, and bows that Haman had, and now the same man covers his face, in token of his irrecoverable ruin, Est 7:8. The Turks cast a black gown upon such as they sit at supper with the great Turk, and presently strangle them. Many of their viziers or greatest favourites die in this sort, which makes them use this proverb, 'He that is greatest in office, is but a statue of glass.' Plutarch wittily compareth great men to counters, which now stand for a thousand pounds, and anon for a farthing. This was Haman's case. And so Sejanus, the same senators who accompanied him to the senate, conducted him to prison; they which sacrificed to him as to their god, which kneeled down to adore him, scoffed at him, seeing him dragged from the temple to the gaol, from supreme honour to extreme ignominy. When once the emperor frowned upon him, they shewed themselves most passionate against him, saying that if Cæsar had clemency, he ought to reserve it for men, and not to use it toward monsters. This is courtier's custom, to adore the rising sun, and when great favourites fall into disgrace, all about princes will be ready to pluck them up by the roots, if the season be fair to clear the court or land of such noisome weeds. The king's indignation being up, the courtiers point at the gallows fifty cubits high, that Haman had set up for Mordecai. All are now for Mordecai, there is not a courtier that has one good word for Haman. Ah, what a rare hand of God was there in all these things, for the good of his people, and the utter overthrow of their grand enemy! To sum all up in a little room, the breaking of the king's sleep, was the breaking of

one of the most bloody designs that ever was laid against the people of God. Well, what though the king could not sleep, could he not lie still in his bed? No, he must have a book, and that book must be the Book of Chronicles, and that book must be opened where accidentally—not by turning to that place purposely—yet surely by God's providence directing him that read, to that very story concerning Mordecai, where was registered his faithfulness, in discovering and disappointing of a murder intended against the king; whereupon God sets this act of faithfulness so close upon the king's heart, that he could not rest till Mordecai was nobly rewarded for it, and this reward must be Haman's ruin; his advancement, Haman's abatement; and this was the rise of Haman's disappointment. In this famous instance you may run and read the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of the Lord, in the miraculous preservation of his church from a total ruin and destruction, and in the disappointing the plots, designs, and counsels of their greatest enemies, and in taking of them in the very snares that they had laid for others; suitable to that of the psalmist, 'He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made; his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing upon his own pate,' Psalms 7:16-17. Henry the Third of France was stabbed in the same chamber where he had helped to contrive the French massacre; and his brother, Charles the Ninth, had blood given him to drink, for he was worthy. There is no end of stories of this nature. So Psalms 9:15, 'The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid, is their own foot taken.' The wicked are compared to hunters for their cruelty, and to fowlers for their craft; but see their success, they are sunk down in their own pit, caught in their own net. Thus it befell Pharaoh, Jabin, and Sisera, Sennacherib, Antiochus Epiphanes, Maxentius the tyrant, who fell into the Tiber, from his own false bridge laid for Constantine; the Spanish armada, and our powder-plotters: Psalms 9:16, 'The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgajon, Selah.' Goliath was killed with his own sword. Christ's justice hath two acclamatory notes, 'Higgajon, Selah;' the like is not found in all the Scripture, as worthy of present admiration, and of deep and perpetual meditation. I have been the longer a-glancing at this famous story of Esther, because of its seasonableness and suitableness to the days and times wherein we live. A further proof of this eighth particular, that is under our present consideration, you have in Isaiah 8:9, 'Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces'—Hebrew, 'And be broken in pieces, And be broken in pieces: And be broken in pieces.' It is thrice repeated, to work it the deeper into the minds and hearts of those, that should either hear or read it; and to give the stronger assurance of the certainty of their being inevitably broken in pieces, who were adversaries and conspirators against the people of God. This speech is directed to the kings of Assyria, and other nations that combined with him against the people of God; but especially against the city of Jerusalem. It is a holy irony, or laughing to scorn the associating enemies of the church. Well saith the prophet, Proceed as unanimously, as politicly, and as powerfully in your combinations, consultations, and preparations as you can, yet be assured that all your associations shall be dissolved, and your counsels frustrated, and your attempts returned back upon yourselves to your own ruin and confusion: Isaiah 8:10, 'Take counsel together,'—[Hebrew, 'Consult a consultation,' to wit, about invading Judah, and surprising Jerusalem,]—'and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us:' Isaiah 7:5-6; Psalms 33:3. Consult, conclude, determine, resolve upon what you please, you shall never be able, by all your power and policy, to prevail against the people of God; for his favourable, signal, and eminent presence is constantly with them, to assist, counsel, and protect

them against all oppositions and assaults. God bringeth to nought the counsel of the nations, Psa 33:10. Neither the devil nor his imps, nor any of their counsels, or enchantments, shall ever be able to stand before the presence of the Lord with his people. Charles the Fifth and the French king had, upon counsel, taken, covenanted, and agreed utterly to extirpate the Lutheran faction out of all their dominions; but God found them other employment, and, by his signal presence with his people, he gave them a happy halcyon. Let men and devils conspire, let them plot, consult, and determine, all shall be in vain, because there is no counsel against the Lord, there is no possibility of carrying of it against the presence of the Lord with his people. His signal presence will be their greatest safety and security in the midst of all plots, designs, dangers, &c. The signal presence of God with his people mars and frustrates all the plots, counsels, and curious contrivances of the world's wizards, as might be shewed in those instances of Balaam, Pharaoh, Saul, Herod, with many others. But I must hasten, and therefore,

(9.) Ninthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by his sympathising with them in all their troubles, trials, distresses, dangers, as you may clearly see by consulting the choice scriptures in the margin. So Isa 63:9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' Christ is here in the Hebrew called 'the angel of his face,' either because he doth exactly resemble God his Father, or because he appeareth before the face or in the presence of God for us. This angel took to heart their afflictions, he was himself grieved for them and with them. This angel secured and safeguarded them all the way through the wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. This angel did not only lead them, but he also lifted them up and took them in his arms, as parents or nurses are wont to do with such children that are young and weakly and in danger. And this angel carried them, as the eagle doth her young ones, that are not fully fledged, or that are unable yet to fly, on her wings. Oh the pity, the clemency, the sympathy, and admirable compassion of Christ to his people in their suffering state! Zec 2:8, 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.' The eye is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part. The eye is kept most diligently, and strongly guarded by nature with five tunicles. A man can better bear a thump on the back, the biting of his finger, the cutting of his hand, the pricking of his leg, or a blow upon his arm, than a touch on the eye. Oh that persecutors would be quiet, and let God's people alone, and take heed how they meddle with God's eyes. There is no touching of them, to wrong or injure them, but you wrong and injure the Holy One of Israel, who will certainly revenge himself upon you. They that strike at God's eyes, do through them strike at God himself, which he will never put up. It is a dangerous thing to molest and trouble, to afflict or annoy the people of God; for God himself is very sensible of it, and accordingly he will certainly requite it. Acts 9:4, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' They that persecute the servants of Christ, they persecute Christ himself, who liveth in them, and is mystically united to them. Look, as there is by virtue of the natural union a mutual sympathy betwixt the head and the members, the husband and the wife, so it is here betwixt Christ and his saints, for he is a most sympathising, compassionate, tender-hearted Saviour, Heb 4:15, and Heb 5:2; Col 1:24; Heb 13:13; Isa 53:4. Those that shoot at the saints, hit Christ; their sufferings are held his, and their reproaches are counted his. He that bore the saints' griefs when he was on earth, really and properly, he bears them still now he is in heaven; in a way of sympathy. Christ in his glorified state hath a very tender sense of all the evil that is done to his children, his members, his spouse, and looks upon it as done to himself. A great

lord said to another great lord of the council, in king Henry the Eighth's days, concerning Cranmer, 'Let him alone, for the king will not suffer his finger to ache.' so say I to the persecutors of the day, Let the people of God alone, for if you do but make their finger ache, God will make your heads and hearts ache for it before he has done with you. But,

(10.) Tenthly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by pouring out upon them a greater spirit of prayer and supplication in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, than formerly they have had. Isa 26:16, 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.' 'They poured out their still prayer.' The Hebrew word *Lachus* signifieth properly a soft or low kind of muttering which can hardly be heard. The prophet hereby would intimate to us, that in their great troubles and deepest distresses they sighed or groaned unto God, and prayed in a still and silent manner. Saints never visit God more with their prayers, than when he visits them most with his rod. Saints never pray with that seriousness, that spiritualness, that heavenliness, that humbleness, that brokenness, that fervency, that frequency, as they do when they are under the mighty hand of God; and all this is from that signal presence of God, that it is with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, &c. When it was a day of great trouble, of great distress, of great danger to the people of God in Germany, God poured out a very great spirit of prayer upon Luther; at length he comes out of his closet triumphantly, saying to his fellow-labourers and friends, 'Vicimus, vicimus, We have overcome, we have overcome;' at which time it is observed that there came out a proclamation from Charles the Fifth that none should be further molested for the profession of the gospel. In days of troubles and distress Luther was so warm, zealous, and powerful in prayer, that made one of his best friends say, *Iste vir potuit, quod voluit*, That man could have of God what he pleased. Being once very warm in prayer, he let fall this transcendent rapture of a daring faith, *Fiat mea voluntas*, Let my will be done; and then falls off sweetly, *Mea voluntas, Domine, quia tua*, My will, Lord, because thy will. It is reported in the life of Luther, that when he prayed it was *tantâ reverentiâ ut si Deo, et tantâ fiduciâ ut si amico*, It was with so much reverence as if he were praying to God, and with so much boldness as if he had been speaking to his friend. I have read of a fountain that at noonday is cold, and at midnight it grows warm; so many Christians are cold in praying, in hearing, &c., in the day of prosperity, but yet are warm and lively in praying and wrestling with God in the day of adversity. Manasseh got more by prayer in his iron chains than ever he got by his golden crown. Afflictions are like the prick at the nightingale's breast that awakens her, and that puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing. A sincere Christian never prays so sweetly as when under the rod. One reports of Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary, that he would often say, *Cibus et potus mihi erit oratio*, Prayer is my meat and drink. When a Christian is in trouble, then prayer is his meat and drink. Oh, what a spirit of prayer was upon Jonah when he was in the whale's belly; and upon Daniel when he was among the lions; and upon David in his wilderness-state; and upon the thief when he was on the cross; and upon Jehoshaphat, when Moab and Ammon and others came against him to battle; and upon Hezekiah, when Sennacherib had invaded Judah; and upon Jacob, when his brother Esau came to meet him with four hundred bloody cut-throats at his heels! As there be two kinds of antidotes against poison—viz., hot and cold; so there are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles of this life—viz., fervent prayer and holy patience, the one hot, the other cold; the one quenching, the other quickening. When a Christian under great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly

dangers, prays more for the sanctification of affliction than the removal of affliction; when he prays more to get off his sins than to get off his chains; when he prays more to get good by the rod than to get free from the rod; when he prays more that his afflictions may be a refining fire than a consuming fire, and that his heart may be low and his graces high, and that all his troubles may wean him more from this world, and ripen him the more for the glory of that upper world,—it is a great demonstration of the signal presence of God with him in all his troubles and deep distresses. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by drawing the hearts of his people nearer and closer to himself, by all the afflictions, troubles, distresses, and dangers that do attend, them in this world: Psa 119:67, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.' God brought David nearer to himself by Weeping-Cross, [Chrysostom.] Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine. It is a potion to carry away ill humours, better than all the benedicta medicamenta, as physicians call them. Master Ascham was a good schoolmaster to Queen Elizabeth, but affliction was a better, &c. By afflictions God humbles the hearts of his people, and betters the hearts of his people, and draws the hearts of his people nearer and closer to himself: Psa 119:71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' The Lacedemonians of old grew rich by war, and were bettered by it, when all other kingdoms were undone by it. The saints gain by their crosses, troubles, and distresses. Their graces are more raised, their experiences are more multiplied, and their comforts are more augmented, and their communion with God is more heightened, Rom 5:3-4; 2Co 1:3-5; Hos 2:14. The waves did but lift Noah's ark nearer to heaven, and the higher the waters grew the more the ark was lifted up to heaven. The troubles and distresses that the saints meet with do but raise them in their fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit, Psa 73:13-14, Psa 73:28. When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, at first he drew out his sword to defend himself; but when they charged him in the king's name, and informed him that they came from the king to carry him to the king, he yielded willingly. So when afflictions arrest a noble Christian, he may murmur and struggle at the first; but when he considers it is sent from God, to bring him to the sight of God, the King of glory, he willingly and readily submits to the rod, and kisses the rod. All the stones that came thick about Stephen's ears did but knock him the closer to Christ the corner-stone, Acts 7:55, Acts 7:60. Tiburtius saw paradise when he walked upon burning coals. If there be any way to heaven on horseback, it is by the cross, said Bradford. Hos 2:6, 'Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.' By afflictions, difficulties, and distresses God hedges up his people's way. Well, what then? Mark, Hos 2:7, 'I will go and return to my first husband;' that is, to God: I have run away from him by my sins, and now I will return to him again by repentance. The grand design of God in all the afflictions that befall his people, is to bring them nearer and closer to himself. The church could have no rest at home, nor no comfort abroad, till by affliction she was brought into the presence and company of her first husband: Hos 6:1, 'Come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.' The great design of God in playing the lion's part with his people, Hos 5:14, is to bring them nearer and closer to himself. And, behold, how sweetly this blessed design of God did take: 'Come and let us return unto the Lord,' &c. The power of God, the presence of God, and the grace of God, is most gloriously manifested by bringing the hearts of his people nearer and closer to himself by all the troubles, distresses, and dangers that do attend them. In the winter season all

the sap of the tree runs down to the root, and when a man is sick all the blood goes to the heart; so in the winter of affliction, when the soul is running out more and more to God, and a-getting closer and nearer to God, it is a most sure evidence of the signal presence of God with that soul. But,

(12.) Twelfthly and lastly, The Lord doth manifest his favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, by rendering them invincible and unconquerable under all their troubles, distresses, and dangers: Rev 12:11, 'And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death:' Rev 14:1-4; 2Ch 32:7-8, 2Ch 32:21-22. By virtue of Christ's blood the saints are made victorious both over Satan and all his instruments; they set little by their lives in respect of Christ and his truth; yea, they despised them in comparison of God's glory and the great things of the gospel. They made so little account of them that they exposed them to all hazards and dangers, for the cause of Christ. In the days of that bloody persecutor, Diocletian, the Christians shewed as glorious power in the faith of martyrdom as in the faith of miracles. The valour of the patients, and the savageness of the persecutors, striving together, till both exceeding nature and belief, bred wonder and astonishment in beholders and readers. It was a good saying of Cyprian, speaking of the saints and martyrs in those days, *Occidi poterant sed vinci non poterant*: They may kill them, but they cannot overcome them. Rev 17:14, 'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.' The presence of the Lamb has and will make the saints victorious in all the ages of the world. Modestus, lieutenant to Julian the emperor, said to Julian, While they suffer they deride us, saith he; and the torments are more fearful to them that stand by than to the tormented. There is no end in instances of this nature. There is nothing more clear in Scripture and in history than this, that the signal presence of the Lord with his people, in all their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, hath made them invincible and unconquerable. But now others, that have been destitute of this favourable, signal, and eminent presence of the Lord, in times of great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, how have they fled when none have pursued them! How faint-hearted, how greatly daunted, and how sadly discouraged have they been! How have they turned their backs, and quitted the field, and run from their colours, without striking one stroke! Many in Cyprian's time were overcome before the encounter, for they revolted to idolatry before any persecution once assailed them. In the Palatinate, when there was a warm persecution, scarce one professor of twenty stood out, but fell to popery as fast as leaves fall from the trees in autumn. And so in the persecution under Decius many professors that were rich and great in the world, they soon shrunk from Christ, and turned their backs upon his ways. It is God's favourable, signal, and eminent presence with his people that makes them stand to it in an evil day: Rom 8:31, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' that is, none; but this is a more forcible denying, 'Who can?' dost thou Paul ask, 'Who can?' I will tell thee. The devil can, and tyrants can, and informers can, and persecutors can, and the whole world can; but *ridendus est furor inanis*: They are as nothing, and can do nothing against us. Wicked men may set themselves against the saints, but they shall not prevail against the saints. What if all the world should strive to hinder the sun from rising or shining, or the wind from blowing, or the rain from falling; or, like those pigmies which went with their arrows and bows to repress the flowing of the sea. Ludibrious acts, and mere follies! All that wicked men can do against the people of God will be but as throwing stones against the wind. 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' Methinks these are words of great resolution; as if he

should say, We have many enemies, and powerful enemies, and daring enemies, and malicious enemies, and designing enemies, and enraged enemies, yet let the proudest of them shew their faces, and lift up their banners, I fear them not, I regard them not: 'Who can?' who dare be against us? Let me give a little light into this precious scripture, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' That is, none.

[1.] First, None can be so against us as to hurt us or harm us; therefore Aquinas well expounds that *Quis contra nos?* i.e., *Quis efficaciter?* and others, *Quis læsivè et prevalenter?* Who can be against us, so as to hurt us? Dan 3:25, Dan 3:27, and Dan 6:22. Acts 18:9, 'Then spoke the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace;' ver. 10, 'For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.' God had many souls in this city to convert and to bring in to Christ, and therefore he animates and encourages Paul to preach boldly, and to go on in his work undauntedly. Ay, but, Lord, there be many in the city, that will set themselves against me. Ay, but I am with thee. Ay, but, Lord, there be many in the city that will hate me. Ay, but there is no man that shall set on thee to hurt thee. They may kill me, said Socrates of his enemies, but they cannot hurt me. It was the speech of Anaxarchus, a heathen, when as he by the tyrant was commanded to be put in a mortar, and be beaten to pieces with an iron pestle, he cries out to the persecutors, You do but beat the vessel of Anaxarchus; you do not beat me, nor hurt me; you do but beat the case, the husk, the vessel that contains another thing. His body was to him but as a case, a husk; he counted his soul himself, which his persecutors could not reach nor hurt. Though there were many in the city of Corinth that would be ready furiously to set on Paul, yet there should not be a man that should be able to hurt Paul. God would be his lifeguard to protect him, and he would make void all the mischievous designs and endeavours of his adversaries against him. When in a city the Lord hath those that are ordained to salvation, he will bless the labours of his faithful servants with happy success; so that faithful ministers may not, yea, must not, for fear of the invincible malice of some, neglect the salvation of others. All the arrows that men of might and malice should shoot at Paul in the city of Corinth, should never reach him, they should never hurt him, nor harm him: 1Pe 3:13, 'And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' They may oppose you, but they cannot harm you; they may hate you, but they cannot harm you; they may plot and devise mischief against you, but they cannot harm you; they may persecute you, but they cannot harm you. I know Cæsar told Metellus that he could as easily take away his life as bid it be done; but these were only bravadoes, for that is a royalty which belongs to God only, 'to whom belong the issues of death,' Psa 68:20, or the goings out from death; that is, deliverances from death and deadly dangers. It is an allusion to one that keepeth a passage or a door; that is, God hath all the ways which lead out from death in his own keeping. Christ hath the keys off death, the sole dominion and disposal of it, Rev 1:18; 2Pe 2:9. The Lord knows how to deliver his people from the most desperate and deadly dangers; he can deliver them out of the mouth of the lion, he can pull them out of the jaws of death, and so secure them from all harm or hurt. None can be so against the people of God as to harm, their souls, as to hurt their happiness. But, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer,

[2.] Secondly, None can be so against us as to prevail over us. The gates of hell may fight against us, but the gates of hell cannot prevail against us. Christ is the captain of your salvation, God hath made him general of the field, and therefore you may be sure that he will stand by you and bring

you off with honour, Mat 16:18; Heb 2:10; Jer 1:19, and Jer 20:11. You need never fear having the day, who have Christ your captain for your second. Though your persecutors are as so many roaring lions, yet Christ, who is the lion of the tribe of Judah, will make you victorious over them all, Rev 5:5. In all storms and tempests the church will stand fast, because it stands upon a rock, Psa 129:2. God is on Zion's side, and the enemies of Zion must first prevail against Zion's God before they can prevail over Zion herself. Zion's God will be a wall of fire about her, and therefore Zion's enemies shall never prevail over her, Zec 2:5; Deu 33:26-29. Were Zion's shelter stones, these might be battered; were it walls of lead, these might be melted; were it a defence of waters, these might be dried up; were it garrisons of mighty men, these might be scattered; were it engines of war, these might be defeated; were it trenches, these might be stopped; were it bulwarks, these might be overthrown; but Zion is guarded with a wall of fire round about her, and therefore all her opposers can never prevail over her. The enemies of Zion are weak enemies, they are infatuated enemies, they are conquered enemies, they are limited enemies, they are chained enemies, they are cursed enemies, and they are naked enemies, and therefore they shall never be prevalent enemies over Zion, 2Ch 32:7-8; Rom 8:37; Gen 3:12; Num 14:9. Pharaoh followed the Israelites, but he and his mighty men were drowned, and Israel delivered, for God was with them, Exo 14:1-31. Saul hunted David as a partridge in the mountains, 1Sa 26:20, but Saul perisheth, and David was crowned, for God was with him. Haman hated Mordecai and plotted against Mordecai, but Haman is hanged and Mordecai advanced, for God was with him, Est 6:7. The presidents and princes inform against Daniel and plot against Daniel, but they are by the lions torn and devoured, and Daniel is delivered and exalted, for God was with him, Dan 6:1-28. Herod kills James with the sword and imprisons Peter, but Herod is devoured by worms, and Peter is delivered out of prison by an angel, for God was with him, Acts 12:1-25. Let atheists, papists, and persecutors cease from plotting against Zion, from persecuting of Zion, for it is utterly impossible to prevail against Zion. Let all Zion's adversaries remember once for all that if any policy, counsel, lying, cursing, strength, or cruelty could have prevailed against Zion, Zion had been rooted out of the world long ago. If Balaam was at our enemies' elbows he would tell them roundly and plainly, that it is 'in vain to curse those whom God blesseth,' Num 23:8. 'It is hard to kick against the pricks,' Acts 9:5. It is high madness for men to run their naked bodies against a sword's point. Let Zion's enemies remember that God, who takes pleasure in Zion, sits upon the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants are as grasshoppers; yea, all the nations as a drop of a bucket, and less than the dust of the balance, Isa 40:12, Isa 40:15, Isa 40:17, and therefore he can easily revenge all the wrongs and injuries that is done to Zion by those that would fain prevail over her, and triumph in her ruin. But,

[3.] Thirdly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None can be so against us as to be able to separate us from the love of God and the love of Christ: Rom 8:35, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distresses, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?' Rom 8:36, 'As it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long: we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Rom 8:37, 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.' Rom 8:38, 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,'—Rom 8:39,—'nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.' It is not the pleasures of life nor the pains of death, it is not evils felt nor evils feared, it is not the height of prosperity nor the depth of adversity, it is not bonds nor banishment, it

is. not power nor policy, honour nor baseness, it is not violent persecutions nor multiplied tribulations, it is not the scorns of men, nor reproaches of men, nor revilings of men, nor designs of men, nor anything else, that can separate us from the love of the Father or the love of the Son. In the 35th ver. is a position that no crosses nor creatures can deprive us of the love of God, which is set down in a double interrogation, that he might add the more force and life to it and ravish the readers: 'Who shall separate us?' That is, none can. But he speaks with contempt; 'Who shall? shall tribulation?' as if he should say, I scorn it. As Goliath defied David, saying, 'Dost thou come to me with a staff?' so Paul with a better spirit defies all crosses, sufferings, trials, &c., as things not able to deprive sincere Christians of Christ's love; 'shall tribulation,' &c. He had before spoken of persons, now here he speaks of things, because Satan and his sworn slaves think by such things to separate between God and his people. Chrysostom observes Paul's wisdom in three things. (1.) That he saith not, Shall the love of riches, pleasures, honours, &c., which have a mighty force in them to bewitch us; but 'shall tribulation, distress,' &c. (2.) That he begins with the lighter, and so riseth to greater troubles, placing them in this order, not casually, but by singular art. (3.) That though these which he here rehearseth consist of a certain number, yet every one as a general hath special troops under it: as when he saith tribulation, he saith imprisonments, bonds, slanders, banishments, &c. 'Shall tribulation, distress, persecution,' &c.? No. They are 'blessed which endure these things,' Mat 5:10-11. Shall famine? He which feeds on Christ shall never perish for hunger. Shall nakedness? Christ's righteousness is my clothing; I shall willingly follow him even naked; who when he was clothed with infinite glory as with a garment was content to be born naked and to be stripped on the cross for my sake. Shall peril? I know the hardest. Shall the sword? Christ is to me in life and death advantage. But,

[4.] Fourthly, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' I answer, None can be against us so, as to bring us to their bow, their beck, their will, their humour, their lusts: 1Ki 19:18, 'Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him;' that is, I have many thousands that have not worshipped Baal. Here a set number is put for an indefinite number; he means a very great number. Idolaters used not only to bow and kneel before their idols, but also to kiss them, according to that Hos 13:2, 'Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.' Cicero saith that the chin of the image of Hercules was much worn with the kisses of them that adored him. Now God had several thousands of true Israelites indeed that had not in the least kind polluted themselves with the idolatry of Baal. The denial of bowing the knee and kissing with the mouth shews that God's faithful servants were so far from setting their hearts upon Baal, as that they would not make the least show of any affection or subjection to him. These good souls had too great spirits to be conformable to the idolatry of the times. Jeroboam with his eight hundred thousand chosen men, his popish priests, and his golden calves, could not bring Judah to his bow, 2Ch 13:3, 2Ch 13:20. Nebuchadnezzar, nor his princely informers, nor his fiery furnace, could never bring the three children to his bow; the three champions would be Nonconformists, though court, city, and country were violent for conformity, Dan 3:1-30. Neither Darius, his presidents, nor princes, could ever bring Daniel to their bow, Dan 6:1-28; Daniel would keep off from idolatry, and keep close to his God, and close to his duty, let all his enemies do their worst. The rulers and elders of Israel charged the apostles, and threatened the apostles, and beat the apostles, and commanded the apostles, that they should, not speak in the name of Jesus; but they could never bring them to their bow, Acts 3:1-26, Acts 4:1-37, Acts 5:1-42. For 'they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted

worthy to suffer shame for his name, and daily in the temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ,' Acts 5:41-42. Pharaoh by all his oppressions could never bring Israel to his bow; nor Saul by all his persecutions could never bring David to his bow; nor Haman by all his plots and designs could never bring Mordecai to his bow; and Paul will rather die upon the spot than be brought to his enemies' bow, Acts 20:21-24, and Acts 21:13. The ten persecuting emperors could never bring the primitive Christians to their bow; nor the bloody, fierce, and fiery papists could never bring the martyrs to their bow, as you may see throughout the books of martyrs. Among the many hundred instances that are there, I shall only refresh your memory with this one: There were endeavours to bring Hawkes to their bow, but all in vain. At last some of his Christian friends desired him, for their encouragement and confirmation, to give some token when he was in the flames; a strange time one would think to attend upon signs by friends, whether the pains were tolerable or no. He was bound to the stake, fire put to the wood, it burns, it flames, it consumes his flesh, his eyes start out of his head, his fingers are consumed with the fire; and when every one thought him dead, expecting the fall of his body: lo, suddenly he lifts up his stumps, and thrice as a famous conqueror he claps them over his head. In this he was more than conqueror. In former times the sense of the love of God made the martyrs esteem tyrants as gnats and fleas, and torments as fleabittings. Tertullian, speaking of his times, saith, That to be accused was the wish of Christians, and punishment for Christ they counted felicity. A certain woman, running in all haste with her child in her arms, being asked the cause, Oh, saith she, I hear a great sort of Christians are appointed to be martyred, and I am afraid lest I and my little one come too late. When the Emperor Valens banished Basil, and the tribune threatened his death, I would, said Basil, I had anything of worth, I would bestow it on him that should cut Basil's windpipe. And when he had that night given him to deliberate, he answered, That he would be the same man to-morrow, and wished that the tribune should not be changed. Chrysostom, being in banishment by the means of Eudoxia the empress, wrote to a bishop called Cyriacus, and, upon occasion, tells of his resolution before he was banished: I thought with myself, saith he, that if she will banish me, the earth is the Lord's; if she will saw me asunder, I remembered the prophet Isaiah; if drown me, Jonas came to my mind; if stone me, I thought of Stephen; if behead me, of John Baptist; if take away my goods, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb.' By all which you may clearly see, that let the wicked do their worst, they can never bring the saints to their bow. But,

[5.] Fifthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder the operation of all things for our good. When men and devils have done their worst, all the great troubles, I deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, that do attend the saints, shall work for their good: Rom 8:28, 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.' In this verse there are two things observable: First, A proposition, or a glorious privilege: 'All things work together for good.' This word, συνεργεῖται εἰς, 'work together,' is a physical expression. Several poisonful ingredients put together, being tempered by the skilful apothecary, make a sovereign medicine, and work together for the good of the patient. They work together, not invicem, between themselves, but together with God; not of their own nature, for so they do not co-operate, but contra-operate, but being sanctified by God. And therefore one takes the verb passively, are 'wrought;' for, indeed, take away God, and afflictions work for our hurt; but all God's providences, being divinely tempered and sanctified, do work together for the best to the people of God. When the worst of men have done their worst against the saints, all things shall sweetly concur, yea, conspire for their good. Second, The proof,

which is double. (1.) From the experience of all saints, 'We know;' it is not a matter pendulous or doubtful. The apostle doth not say, 'We think,' but 'We know.' Nor he doth not say, 'We hope,' but 'We know.' Nor he doth not say, 'We guess,' 'we conjecture,' but 'We know.' Nor he doth not say, 'We desire that all things may work together for good, but 'We know all things work together for good.' Nor he doth not say, 'We pray' that all things may work together for good, but 'We know all things work together for good.' The wicked know not this secret, as the Philistines understood not Samson's riddles, Jdg 14:12-14; but we know that all the world shall not hinder the cross from working for our good. (2.) From a description of them that love God, they are 'called according to God's purpose;' that is, God hath purposed the salvation of his people, he hath chosen them to salvation, and called them to it; and therefore it must needs be that all these afflictions that befall his people must work together for their internal and eternal good, otherwise he should do that which should cross his own purpose, which wise men will not do; and oh, how much less will the most wise God act counter-cross to his own purpose! So Jer 24:5, 'Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.' To be carried captive to Babylon was doubtless a very sore and matchless affliction: Dan 9:12, 'And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil; for under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem.' This may be the abridgment of Jeremiah's Lamentations: Lam 1:12, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger;' Lam 4:16, 'For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.' Sodom sustained not any siege from foreign forces, they were not vexed and plagued with the armies of the Chaldeans; there was no hand of man in the destruction of Sodom, but a hand of heaven only. Sodom was not kept long in pains and misery as and my people have been, but was suddenly overwhelmed, and in an instant despatched; all which shews that their miseries and sufferings were incomparable and matchless; and that they were so indeed will evidently appear, if you please but seriously to consider either the antecedents of it or the consequents of it. The antecedents of it: what went before their captivity—viz., blood, and slaughter, and dreadful devastations. Or if you consider the consequents of it: as, (1.) The enslaving of their persons under a fierce and most cruel enemy; (2.) The loss of their estates; (3.) The leaving of their country and the land of their nativity; (4.) A deprivation of the ordinances and worship of God; (5.) The scorns and reproaches, the exultations and triumphs of their adversaries, that pleased and delighted themselves in their captivity and misery. These were the woeful consequences of that captivity, and yet all the power and malice of men in the world could not hinder these amazing and astonishing trials from working together for the spiritual and everlasting good of his captive people. That God will do his people good by the most terrible dispensations that they are under, you may see more and more evident by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.² As the apothecary of poison makes treacle to drive out poison, so can God make the poison of afflictions, which in themselves are the curse of the law, to drive out the poison of sin. All the world can never hinder the affliction, troubles, and evils that befall the people of God, from working for their good; for God does and will by these means, (1.) Discover sin; (2.) Prevent sin; (3.) Imbitter sin; (4.) Mortify sin. And God will by afflictions, troubles, &c., (1.) Revive, quicken, and recover his children's decayed graces; (2.) Exercise his children's

graces; (3.) Increase his children's graces; (4.) Make a further trial and discovery of his children's graces. Let the enemies of Sion storm and rage, plot and combine, &c., yet they shall never be able to hinder the greatest troubles, the deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, from working for the internal and eternal good of all the sincere lovers of God. I have read a story of one Pereus, who, running at another with a sword to kill him, by accident the sword only run into his imposthume and broke that; and so he was instrumental to save him whom he designed to have killed: and so all the afflictions and troubles that the righteous meet with, they do but serve to cure them of the imposthume of pride, or of the imposthume of earthly-mindedness, or of the imposthume of self-love, or of the imposthume of hypocrisy. Look upon the revolution of the heavens, how every planet moves in its proper orb. Their motions are not alike, but various, nay, opposite each unto the other. Hence those different conjunctions, oppositions, and aspects of the planets, yet by the wheeling round of the primum mobile, they are brought about to one determinate point. The people of God have many enemies in the world, whose course and scope, whose aims and ends and actions are not the same, yea diverse, nay adverse, one thwarting and crossing the other, yet the overruling providence so sways all subordinate and inferior instruments and enemies, that in the midst of their mutual jars they conspire in a sacred harmony, as if they were entered into a holy league, or some sacred combination for the good of his chosen. Wherever our enemies be in respect of their places, whosoever they be in regard of their persons, and however they are disjoined in regard of their affections, yet all their projects and practices shall tend and end in the good of those that love God. But,

[6] Sixthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder our communion and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Spirit: 1Jn 1:3, 'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.' Man's summum bonum stands in his communion with God, as Scripture and experience evidences. A man whose soul is conversant with God, shall find more pleasure in a desert, in a den, in a dungeon, in a fiery furnace, yea, and in the valley of the shadow of death, than in the palace of a prince. There is a sweet and intimate communion which believers have with God; hence they are said to 'walk with God,' Gen 5:24, and Gen 6:9; and to 'talk with God,' as Moses frequently did; and to 'dwell in God,' 1Jn 4:15; and to 'sup with God,' Rev 3:20; and to 'lodge with God,' Song of Solomon 7:11. The nearness of this fellowship which we have with the Father, is represented by a gradation of allusions in Scripture, all which do excellently illustrate this truth. There is some kind of participation that a servant hath with his master; yet greater is that which one friend hath with another; but yet greater is that which a son hath with the father; but greatest of all is that which the bride hath with the bridegroom. Now in all these relations we stand to the Father; we are his servants and he is our Lord, Exo 12:7; we are his friends, John 15:14-15; Jas 2:23; and he is our friend, Song of Solomon 5:1; an able friend, a sure friend, a faithful friend, a close friend, a constant friend. Plutarch's reasoning is good, τὰ τῶν φίλων πρὸς ἅπαντας κοινόν, friends have all things in common. But God is our friend: ergo we cannot want; a most rare speech from a poor heathen! He is our Father, Isa 63:16, and Isa 64:8; and we are his children, Isa 63:8. He is our bridegroom, and we are his bride, Isa 61:10; Hos 2:19-20; Isa 62:5. And therefore it is no pride nor presumption for believers to say, 'Our fellowship is with the Father.' Our fellowship with Jesus Christ is set forth by the parable of the wedding-feast, and by the entertainment of the prodigal son, and by such relations or various similitudes, as carry communion in their bosoms, as of the head and the members, root and branches, foundation and

building, husband and wife, Mat 22:1-3; Luk 15:1-32. The head hath communion with the body by sense, influence, motion. The root with the branches, by leaf, sap, and juice. The foundation with the building, by support and strength. The husband with the wife, by love and consent. Thus it is betwixt Christ and the believers: 1Co 1:9, 'God is faithful, by whom ye are called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.' All believers have fellowship with Christ, whether they be strong or weak, rich or poor, high or low, ripe and well grown, or new-born babes, and very tender, Gal 3:28; 1Pe 2:2; John 17:20-23. The head hath conjunction with all the members, and an influence into all the members, even the little toes, as well as into the strongest arms; and the root, in the virtue of it, extends to the weakest branches, as well as to the strongest limbs of the tree. Communion is as large as union. All believers are united to Christ, and all believers have communion with Christ. Though one star exceeds another in magnitude, yet all are alike seated in the heavenly orb; and though one member be larger in the body than another, yet every one hath an equal conjunction with the head: and as believers have fellowship with the Father and the Son, so they have fellowship with the Spirit also. Every believer's communion extends to all the persons in the Trinity: 2Co 13:14, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.' Now no men, no devils, no wrath, no rage, no malice, no enmity, no afflictions, no oppositions, no persecutions, no troubles, no trials, no bonds, no banishment, can interrupt or hinder a believer's communion with the three persons in Trinity. But,

[7.] Seventhly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder our private trade to heaven. All the world can never hinder a sincere Christian from driving a secret trade with heaven, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. A Christian can as well hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet, as he is able to live without secret prayer. Secret prayer is the life of our lives, the soul, the sweet, the heaven of all our enjoyments. Of all the duties of religion, secret prayer is the most soul-sweetening, soul-strengthening, soul-nourishing, soul-fattening, soul-refreshing, soul-satisfying, and soul-encouraging duty. In all the ages of the world, the saints have kept the trade. In spite of all opposers and persecutors, in prisons, in dungeons, in dens, in bonds, in banishments, on racks, and in the very flames, the saints have still kept up this secret trade; as you may see at large in my treatise on closet prayer, called 'The Privy Key of Heaven,' to which I refer you.² But,

[8.] Eighthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to deprive us of the sweet testimony of our renewed consciences: 2Co 1:12, 'For our rejoicing,' or boasting, 'is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.' They were in great and pressing troubles in Asia, 2Co 1:8, and yet they boasted in the testimony of their consciences; they were under a sentence of death in themselves, 2Co 1:9, and yet gloried in the testimony of their consciences. Joy of conscience is the greatest joy, as trouble of conscience is the greatest trouble; when conscience bears its testimony with us, and for us, how full of joy is the soul, even in the midst of the deepest sorrows and greatest sufferings! Conscientia pura semper segura, a good conscience hath sure confidence, and he that hath it, sits Noah-like—

——mediis tranquility in undis— quiet in the greatest combustions; freed, if not from the common destruction, yet from the common distraction. A good conscience is an impregnable fort. It fears no colours; it will enable a man to stand against the fiercest batteries of men and devils. A

good conscience will fill a man with courage and comfort in the midst of all his troubles and distresses. Paul had enough to say for himself when standing before the council; he could say, 'Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day,' Acts 23:1-2. And though as soon as he had said so, Ananias commanded to smite him on the mouth, yet he bears up bravely, because his conscience did not smite him, but acquit him. That man can never want music, whose conscience speaks in consort, and is harmonious with himself. A good conscience is a paradise in a wilderness, it is riches in poverty, and health in sickness, and strength in weakness, and liberty in bonds, and life in death, Isa 38:3. A good conscience will enable a man to triumph over innumerable evils, yea, over death itself. Death to such a person is not the king of terrors, but the king of desires, Php 1:23. A good conscience will be a Christian's best friend in the worst times; it will be a sword to defend him, a staff to support him, a pillar of fire to lead him, a Joseph to nourish him, a Dorcas to clothe him, a Canaan to refresh him, and a feast to, delight him: 'He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast,' Pro 15:15. Now there is nothing that can make a man divinely merry below a good conscience. A good conscience, saith one, is *thalamus Dei*, *palatium Christi*, *habitaculum Spiritus Sancti*, *paradisus deliciarum*, The bed of God, the palace of Christ, the habitation of the Holy Ghost, the paradise of delights, and wherein every tree yieldeth a feast. *Tranquillitas conscientiae*, *et securitas innocentiae*, *quaecunque mundus bonae* *judicat*, *excellunt*, The tranquillity of conscience, and the security of innocence, excel all the things which the world counteth good. He that hath a good conscience enjoys a continual serenity, and sits continually at that blessed feast, whereat the blessed angels are cooks and butlers, as Luther hath it, and the three persons in Trinity glad guests. All other feasts to this of a good conscience are stark hunger. The feast of a good conscience is a full feast, a noble feast, a lasting feast; not for a day, as that of Nabal's; nor for seven days, as that of Samson's; nor of nine score days, as that of Ahasuerus; but a durable, continual feast, without intermission of solace, or interruption of society. The best way in this world for a man to turn his whole life into a merry festival, is to get and keep a good conscience. The heathen philosopher could say, *ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ὅλην τὴν ἐτήσιον ἑορταζέται*, a good man keeps holiday all the year about. It was the testimony of a good conscience that made the apostles rejoice when they were beaten and abused by the council. It was the testimony of a good conscience that made Paul and Silas to sing in the prison, Acts 5:40-42, and Acts 16:25-26. It was the testimony of a good conscience that made Moses prefer Christ's cross before Egypt's crown, and Christ's reproaches before Egypt's treasures. It was the testimony of a good conscience that made those worthies in that 11th of the Hebrews more willing to die than to live, to die than to dine, Heb 11:35. It was the testimony of a good conscience that made the martyrs to kiss the stake, to hug their executioners, to clap their hands in the flames, and to tread upon burning coals as upon beds of roses. Now it is not in the power or policy of men or devils to deprive a Christian of the testimony of his conscience; and as long as that bird in the bosom sings, no troubles, no trials, no oppositions, no persecutions, no dangers, no death can make a Christian miserable. The testimony of a good conscience will make a man triumph over the worst of men, and the worst of sufferings. But,

[9.] Ninthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder the help, assistance, and succour of God at a dead lift. Heb 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness,'—or 'without the love of silver,' as the Greek word signifies—'and be content with such things as you have.' *Contenti praesentibus*, so Beza, 'Be content with present things.' The Hebrews had been plundered of all they had; though they had nothing they must be content, Heb

10:34. If men cannot bring their means to their minds, let them bring their minds to their means; a little will serve our turn till we get to heaven, till we come to our Father's house: 'For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' There are five negatives in the Greek; I read not the like throughout the New Testament. In that this promise is set down negatively, 'I will never leave thee,' this makes the promise to be of a larger extent; for it includes all times, all places, all estates, all dangers, all in needs, all distresses whatsoever; as if he had more largely said, thou shalt never stand in need of any of my help and protection, but thou shalt be sure to find it. Affirmative promises are not of that extent as negative promises are; for if a man should promise to assist, help, succour, or counsel me, if he do it now and then, or upon some special occasions, he has kept his promise; but negatively for a man to say, I will not fail thee, I will never leave thee, though he should help, assist, succour, or stand by me, a hundred, yea, a thousand times, and yet fail me but once, that negative promise is not punctually kept, it is not perfectly kept. It is further considerable that there is a great emphasis in doubling and trebling a negative particle in Greek. Doubling and trebling negatives in Greek makes them much the stronger. The doubling of the negative particle doth in this place carry the greater emphasis, because, in setting down the same thing, it is not only twice doubled, but in the latter place it is trebled; so as there are in all five negatives, as I have already hinted. These two phrases, 'Never leave nor forsake,' are so general as they include all the wants, all dangers, all distresses, all necessities, all calamities, all miseries, that can befall us in this world.² These two phrases, God's not leaving, God's not forsaking, imply all needful succours. It is more than if he had said, I will supply all thy wants, I will heal all thy diseases, I will secure thee against all sorts of dangers, I will ease thee of all thy pains, I will free thee of all thy oppressors, I will break all thy bonds, I will bring thee out of prison, I will vanquish all thine enemies, I will knock off all thy chains, and I will make thee triumph over all thy sufferings; for these generals comprise all manner of particulars under them: Heb 13:6, 'So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' In this verse there is an inference made upon the former promise of God's not leaving nor forsaking his; the conjunction, 'so that,' implieth an inference, and such an inference in this place as teacheth us to make a good use of the forenamed promise. The use here set down is double: the first is confidence in God, 'The Lord is my helper;' secondly, courage against man, 'I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' Assurance of God's presence to help at a dead lift should raise us up above all base and slavish fears of the power of men, of the spoilings of men, of the designs of men, &c. God being with us, and for us, and on our side, we may boldly, safely, and confidently, rest upon it, that he will freely, readily, graciously, afford all needful help, assistance, and succour, when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The Greek word βοηθος, 'helper,' according to the notation of it, signifies one that is ready to run at the cry of another. This notation implies a willing readiness, and a ready willingness in God, to help and succour his people when they are at a dead lift. You know the tender father, the indulgent mother, the careful nurse, they presently run when any of them hears the child cry, or sees the child in any danger or distress; so when God sees his poor children in any danger or distress, when he hears them complain and cry out of their sufferings, their bonds, their burdens, their oppressions, their dangers, &c., he presently runs to their relief and succour, Exo 2:23-25, and Exo 3:7-10. Psa 33:20, 'Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield:' Psa 49:17, 'Thou art my deliverer: God is the Lord of hosts, with him alone is strength and power to deliver Israel out of all his troubles.' He may do it, he can do it, he will do it, he is wise in heart and mighty in strength; besides him there is no

Saviour, no deliverer; he is a shield to the righteous, strength to the weak, a refuge to the oppressed; he is Instar omnium, all in all. Who is like him in all the world to help his people at a dead lift? when friends cannot help, when power cannot help, when policy cannot help, when riches cannot help, when princes cannot help, when parliaments cannot help, yet then God can and will help his people when all human help fails. 'For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power,' or hand, 'is gone, and there is none shut up, or left,' Deu 32:36. When God's people are at the very brink of ruin, then God will come in seasonably to their help; their extremity shall be his opportunity, to succour his people, and to judge their enemies. No men, no devils, no power, no policy, can hinder God from helping, aiding, assisting, and succouring of his people when they are at a dead lift. But,

[10.] Tenthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder the springs of joy and comfort from rising and flowing in their souls: Psa 71:20, 'Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth;' Psa 71:21, 'Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' The psalmist was in those desperate dangers, that he seemed to be as a man that was dead and buried, and yet he had faith enough to believe that God would surround him with cordials, and supply him with comforts from all sides. There is no true comfort to be drawn out of the standing pools of outward sufficiencies, but out of the living fountains of the all-sufficiencies of the Lord Almighty. 'Thou shalt comfort me on every side.' Psa 94:19, 'In the multitude of my thoughts within me,' or of my careful, troubled, perplexed thoughts, as the word properly signifies, 'thy comforts delight my soul.' As the psalmist always found God a present help, so he always found him a present comfort in the day of troubles. God never did, nor never will want a cordial to revive and keep up the spirits of his people from fainting and sinking in an evil day. When the psalmist was under many griefs, cares, fears, and perplexities of spirit, God came in with those comforts that did delight his soul, and cheer up his spirits, Psa 119:49-50. The word of the Lord is never more a word of comfort, nor the Spirit of the Lord is never more a Spirit of comfort, than when the saints are in their deepest distresses and sorest perplexities: John 14:16, 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;' John 14:26, 'But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.' Hudson, the martyr, being at the stake, he went from under his chain, and having prayed earnestly, he was so comforted and refreshed by the Holy Spirit that he suffered valiantly and cheerfully. The Holy Ghost is called again and again the comforter, because his office is to work consolation in the hearts of God's people in all their troubles and distresses. Spiritual comfort is therefore called 'joy in the Holy Ghost,' because the Holy Ghost doth create it in the soul, Rom 14:17. When a man suffers for righteousness' sake, God comes with his cordials in the very nick of time, 1Pe 4:13. When a man's suffering is upon the account of Christ, God seldom fails to send the comforter for the refreshing and relieving of his spirit. When a man is under bodily confinement for the cause of Christ, God will never fail to be a spring of life, a well of salvation, and breast of consolation to him, Isa 12:3, and Isa 66:11. When a Christian is brought to 'a piece of bread,' then is the season for God to feed him with heavenly manna. I have told you of Mr Glover, who found no comfort in the time of his imprisonment, but when he was going to the stake, he cried out to his friend, 'He is come, he is come,' meaning the comforter. Hab 3:17, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls;' Hab 3:18, 'Yet I will

rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' In these words you have these two parts: (1.) A sad supposition, 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,' &c.; (2.) A noble and comfortable resolution, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' Let me first hint a little at the sad supposition, 'Although the fig-tree should not blossom,' &c.

[1.] First, Though there should be a famine in that land, that of all lands was the most plentiful and fruitful land, yet Habakkuk would 'rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation.' The land of Canaan, of all lands, was the fruitfulness. It was as the garden of God. It was a land that 'flowed with milk and honey,' a land of vineyards, the best of all lands, as Moses describes it; a land that brought forth to Isaac no less than a hundredfold. It was so rich a land that it was the granary of other neighbouring cities and countries. It had not only plenty for itself, but bounty for others. Yet now, when God shall turn a paradise into a wilderness, Habakkuk will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation, Deu 8:7-9, and Deu 32:13-14; Gen 26:12; 1Ki 5:11; Acts 12:20. But,

[2.] Secondly, When the anger and wrath of God shall cause a dearth in those fruits that naturally are most yielding and pleasant, yet then Habakkuk would rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation. The fig-tree, of all trees, is most fruitful, bringing forth of its own accord, with the least care and culture, fructifying in the most barren and stony places, bearing twice a year, soonest ripening, and rarely failing. So the vine, that is a fruitful plant, is made the emblem of plenty and fruitfulness. Now when there shall be a dearth upon these pleasant fruits, yet then Habakkuk will 'rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, Another print of divine displeasure in the scarcity threatened is, that it is a national famine, a general famine, an overspreading famine. Usually, if one part of the land suffers scarcity, other parts abound with plenty; but when God calls for a famine, he turns a whole land into a desert, into a barren wilderness. 'Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth,' Psa 107:33-34; Nah 1:4. These were the richest soil of all the country, yet these were parched up and fruitless by his displeasure, and yet for all this Habakkuk will 'rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, Another print of divine displeasure is this, that the Lord makes it a universal scarcity upon all kind of foods and supports of life. Here is the 'staff of bread' broken, and 'the herds and flocks fail,' and the refreshing of the wine-press, 'the seed and the vine, and the fig-tree and the olive-tree,' all become fruitless. Such a desolation is more than ordinary. Usually, when one commodity fails, another abounds. If corn be dear, cattle will be cheap. That weather oftentimes that hinders one kind of grain, helps another; but here God blasts all the helps of nature. Therefore God compares his judgments to a fire that burns all before it: Joe 2:3, 'The land is as the garden of Eden before it; and behind it a desolate wilderness,' and this the Lord points at as a wonder: Joe 1:2, 'Hear this, ye old men'—who can talk of dear years—'hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? that which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the caterpillers eaten.' When God begins in a way of judgment, he makes an end, he makes the decays of nature excessive and violent; and yet Habakkuk will 'rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of his salvation.' In his resolution you have the first particle, 'although,' ver. 17. Now this particle is an act of forecast; these miseries may befall us; and in the 18th verse you have the particle 'yet,' and that is an act of preparation against these miseries. That particle 'although' forecasts the misery, and that particle 'yet' fore-lays the remedy. He foresees sorrows in the first, and he provides against them in the

second, 'Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.' So Paul comes with a benedictus in his mouth—and surely it was in his heart before it was in his mouth: 2Co 1:3, 'Blessed be God, even the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort:' 2Co 1:4, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God:' 2Co 1:5, 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.' The apostle begins here with thanksgiving, according to his accustomed manner in all his epistles; but contrary to his custom doth he apply this thanksgiving wholly to himself. The reason was, saith Beza, because the Corinthians did begin to despise him for his afflictions—it being the common course of the world to despise the people of God when they are under sufferings; therefore he answered confidently for himself, that though he had been much afflicted, yet he had been much comforted; and rejoiced the more in his comforts, because God had comforted him for that very cause, that he might be able and willing to comfort others. God is the God of all sorts and degrees of comfort, who hath all comforts at his disposal. This phrase, 'The God of all comforts,' intimates to us; (1.) That no comfort can be found anywhere else; he hath the sole gift of comfort. (2.) Not only some, but all comfort; no imaginable comfort is wanting in him, nor to be found out of him. Look, as the airlights not without the sun, and as fuel heats not without fire, so neither can anything soundly comfort us without God. (3.) All degrees of comfort are to be found in him, in our greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The lower the ebb, the higher the tide; the deeper the distress, the greater the comforts. Though the apostle was greatly afflicted, yet his comforts did exceed his afflictions: 2Co 7:6, 'Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.' When the Corinthians were in a very low condition, when they were even spent with grief and swallowed up in sorrows, when they were destitute of all relief and comfort, then the God of all comforts did comfort them. No tribulations, no persecutions, no grievances, no prison doors, no bolts, no bars, can keep out the consolations of God from flowing in upon his people. God loves to comfort his people when all their outward comforts fail them. God's comforts are not only sweet, but seasonable; he never comes too soon, nor never stays too long. If one drop of the joy of the Holy Ghost should fall into hell, it would swallow up all the torments of hell, saith Austin. 'The joy of the Holy Ghost' will certainly swallow up all the troubles and sufferings that we meet with in a way of righteousness. None have been more divinely cheerful and merry than the saints have been under their greatest sufferings, 1Pe 4:12-14. John Noyes took up a faggot at the fire and kissed it, saying, 'Blessed be the time that ever I was born to come to this preferment.' When they fastened Alice Driver to the stake to be burnt, 'Never did neckerchief,' said she, with a cheerful countenance, 'become me so well as this chain.' Mr Bradford put off his cap and thanked God when the keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burnt on the morrow. Mr Taylor fetched a frisk when he was come near the place where he was to suffer. Henry and John, two Augustine monks, being the first that were burnt in Germany, and Mr Rogers, the first that was burnt in Queen Mary's days, did all sing in the flames. Thus you see that it is not the greatest troubles, nor the deepest distresses, nor the most deadly dangers, that can hinder the joy of the Lord from overflowing the soul. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our graces, which next to Christ are our choicest jewels. 1Jn 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.' That is, doth not give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin; he does not make a trade of sin; he sins not totally, finally, maliciously, habitually, studiously, resolutely, wilfully,

delightfully, deadly, ■μαρτ■αν ο■ ποιε■, ‘He does not make it his work to sin,’ he cannot follow his lusts, as a workman follows his trade, ‘for his seed remaineth in him.’ ‘The seed of God,’ the seed of grace, is an abiding seed. Grace in itself is certain and unchangeable, though the feeling thereof be uncertain. Grace hath an abiding excellency in it; grace hath eternity stamped upon it. It is durable riches. Other riches ‘make themselves wings, and fly from us,’ Pro 8:18, and Pro 27:24; but grace will keep us company till we get to heaven. Our last step in holiness will be into happiness. Grace is a blossom of eternity. It is an anointing that abides, 1Jn 2:27; John 4:14, and John 7:38. That is, the principle of grace infused into you, which was typified by the unctions or anointings in the ceremonial law, which was signified by the precious ointment poured upon the head of Aaron, that ran down to the skirts of his garments—this principle will prove durable and lasting. Grace is ‘a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.’ Grace is a river of living water. Now this river can never be dried up, because the Spirit of God is the constant spring that feeds it and maintains it. Grace is not a stream or a pond that may run dry, but a well, yea, a springing well of inexhaustible fulness, sweetness, virtue, and refreshment. Grace will still be springing up and flowing out in all the carriages and deportments of a Christian. Grace will be flowing out in all a Christian’s duties and services, in his outward calling and employments, in his trials and sufferings. Grace will break out at a Christian’s eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet. Where grace is a well of water, a river of living water, there that Christian will see for Christ, and hear for Christ, and talk for Christ, and do for Christ, and walk with Christ. Grace is a well, a river, that will be springing up to everlasting life. Grace and glory differ, non specie sed gradu, in degree, not in kind. Grace differs very little from glory. The one is the seed, the other the flower. Grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant. Grace is a beginning of glory. It may be compared to the golden chain in Homer, whose top was fastened to the chair of Jupiter. Grace and glory are individual, and inseparable. The psalmist joins them together, ‘The Lord will give grace and glory,’ Psa 84:11. Grace is a living spring that never faileth, a seed that never dieth, a jewel which never consumeth, a sun that never setteth. All other gifts of whatsoever kind, worth, or excellency, are but like a cloud soon dispelled, a vessel of clay soon broken, a sandy foundation soon sunk. Grace is more excellent than gold. Gold draws the heart from God, grace draws the heart to God; gold doth but enrich the mortal part, the ignoble part, but grace enriches the angelical part, the noble part; gold perishes, but grace perseveres, 1Pe 1:7. If grace were not permanent, it could not be excellent; if grace were not durable, it could not be pleasurable; if grace were not lasting, yea everlasting, it could not be a Christian’s comfort in life, his support in death, and his glorious crown in the great day of account. Grace in itself is permanent, incorruptible; it fadeth not away; it is a birth that shall never die; it is a plant of renown that shall never wither, but grow up more and more till grace be turned into glory: upon which account one of the ancients [Jerome] had rather have St Paul’s coat with his heavenly graces, than the purple of kings with their kingdoms. No troubles, no distresses, no dangers can deprive us of our graces, can rob us of our spiritual treasure. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, ‘If God be with us, who can be against us?’ I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our inward peace, rest, and quiet. Though, it thunder, and lighten, and rain, and blow abroad, yet a man may be at peace and rest and quiet at home. A man may have much trouble in the world, and yet rest and quiet in his own spirit: John 14:27, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you,’ [as bonum hœreditarium;] ‘let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,’ No men nor devils, no troubles nor distresses, can deprive a Christian of that inward and blessed peace that Christ hath purchased and paid so dear for. Peace with God,

and peace of conscience, are rare jewels, that none can strip us of. The world may wish you peace, but it is only Christ can give you peace, Rom 5:1, and 2Co 1:12. The world's peace is commonly a dear-bought peace; but Christ's peace is a cheap peace, a free peace. 'My peace I give unto you.' The world's peace is commonly a sinful peace, but Christ's peace is a holy peace; the world's peace is a cursed peace, but Christ's peace is a blessed peace; the world's peace is but an earthly peace, but Christ's peace is a heavenly peace, Rom 14:17; Heb 12:14, and Psalms 29:11. Some Christians thought that others could not come to heaven if they did not eat such meats as they; but Paul tells them that the kingdom of God consists not in meat or drink, but 'in righteousness, and peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost.' The world's peace is but an imaginary peace, but Christ's peace is a real peace. The world's peace is but a superficial peace, but Christ's peace is a solid and substantial peace. The world's peace is but a transient peace, but Christ's peace is a permanent peace. The world's peace is but a temporary peace, but Christ's peace is an eternal peace. It is a peace that all the world can't give to a Christian, and it is a peace that all the world can't take from a Christian, 1Th 5:3; 1Pe 3:11; Jas 3:18; Isa 9:6-7; Psalms 37:1-40; Isa 26:3, and Isa 27:5. When the tyrant threatened one of the ancients that he would 'take away his house,' he answered, 'Yet thou canst not take away my peace.' 'I will break up thy school;' 'yet shall I keep whole my peace.' I will 'confiscate all thy goods;' 'yet there is no premunire against my peace.' 'I will banish thee thy country;' 'yet I shall carry my peace with me.' All above a believer is at peace; the controversy betwixt God and him is ended. Christ takes up the quarrel betwixt God and a believer. 'We have peace with God,' Rom 5:1. All within a believer is at peace. A peaceable God makes all at peace. When our peace is made in the court of heaven, which is upon the first act of believing, then follows peace in the court of conscience, 'peace which passeth all understanding,' Php 4:7. And all below a believer is at peace with him. He has peace with all the creatures. When we are friends with God, then all the creatures are our friends. 'The stones of the field shall be at league with thee, the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee,' &c., Job 5:23. The peace that Christ gives is the inheritance of saints only. It was all the legacy which the prince of peace left to his subjects, and this legacy none can take from them. Persecutors may take away my goods, but they cannot take away my peace; they may take away my estate, but they cannot take away my peace; they may take away my liberty, but they cannot take away my peace; they may take away my good name, but they cannot take away my peace; they may take away my relations, but they cannot take away my peace; they may take away my life, but they cannot take away my peace. I grant that the best have no perfection of peace, because they have no perfection of grace. If there were a perfection of grace, then there might be a perfection of peace; but the perfection of both is reserved for another world; and it must be granted that though sometimes a believer may want the sense of peace, the sweet of peace, yet the grounds of his peace are still fixed, certain, and constant; they are 'like mount Zion, that cannot be removed.' Now the grounds of a Christian's peace are these—viz., interest in Christ, reconciliation with God, justification, remission of sin, adoption, the covenant of grace and peace, &c. Now these are always sure and everlasting, though the sense of peace may ebb and flow, rise and fall, in a believer's breast, especially when he is a-combating with strong corruptions, or high temptations, or under sad desertions, or when unbelief has got the throne, or when their hearts are quarrelsome—for commonly a quarrelsome heart is a troublesome heart, or when they have blotted their evidences for heaven, or when they are fallen from their first love, or when they have contracted eminent guilt upon their souls, or when they are declined in their communion with God, &c. Now in these cases, though a believer

may lose the sense of peace, yet the grounds of his peace remain firm and sure; and though he may lose the sense of his peace, yet in all these sad and dark conditions his soul is day and night in the pursuit of peace, and he will never leave the chase till he has recovered his peace, knowing that God will first or last speak peace to his soul; yea, though he has lost the sense of peace, yet he has that abiding seed of grace in his soul that will in time recover his peace, Psa 85:8. Do your enemies threaten to take away this or that from you, you may throw up your caps at them, and bid them do their worst, for they can never take that peace from you that Christ has given as a legacy to you, 1Jn 3:9. When there are never so great storms within or without, yet then a believer may find peace in the prince of peace, Isa 9:6. When his imperfections are many, a perfect Saviour can keep him in perfect peace in the midst of them all, Isa 26:3-4. Though his sacrifices are imperfect, yet Christ a perfect priest can speak peace to his soul, Heb 7:1-28. Peace is that never-fading garland which Christ will so set and settle upon the heads of the upright, that none shall be able to take it off. A Christian can never lose his inward peace, either totally or finally. It is true by sin, Satan, and the world, a Christian's peace may be somewhat interrupted, but it can never be finally lost. The greatest storms in this world that beat upon a believer will in time blow over, and the Sun of righteousness, the prince of peace, will shine as gloriously upon him as ever. Under this word ■■■■, Shalom, the Jews comprehend all peace, prosperity, and happy success. When the worst of men have done their worst against the people of God, yet the issue shall be peace, prosperity, and happy success. 'My peace I give unto you,' that is, that 'peace with God and peace with conscience that I have purchased with my blood, I give unto you.' And what power or policy is there that can deprive us of this legacy? surely none. The peace that Christ gives is bottomed upon his blood, upon his righteousness, upon his satisfaction, upon his intercession, and upon a covenant of peace, and therefore it must needs be a lasting peace, an abiding peace. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder us from being hid, secured, guarded, and protected by God in an evil day, or in a day of greatest trouble, distress, or danger: Jer 39:11, 'Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard, saying,' Jer 39:12, 'Take him, and look well to him,'—Heb., 'set thine eyes upon him,'—'and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.' Here you shall see the admirable power, wisdom, and goodness of God inclining the heart of this great monarch and conqueror to provide for the prophet's safety and security. He that was a dreadful scourge to punish the wicked, is made by God the deliverer and preserver of the prophet. In Jer 39:12 you have the king's royal commission to the captain of his guard to be as kind to him, as tender of him, and to carry it as courteously to him even as the prophet himself should desire: 'Look well to him, do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.' Let him have all the content, all the satisfaction, and all the accommodation that himself shall require. Jer 15:11, 'The Lord said, Verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil, and in the time of affliction,'—Heb., 'If I do not cause,' &c. A defective speech in the nature of an oath, as if God had said, 'Let me not be deemed a God of my word, let me not be accounted true, let none reckon me faithful in my promise, if I don't turn his sufferings into his advantage, and save him from danger in the midst of danger.' If in the time of the enemies' invasion I be not 'a wall of fire about him,' Zec 2:5, if in the time of public calamity I don't secure him, never trust me for a God more. If he don't find more favour at the hand of his enemies than he hath formerly found among his own people, never own me for a God more. Ver. 20, 'I am with thee to save thee, and to deliver thee, saith the Lord;' ver. 21. 'And I will deliver thee out of the hand of

the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible,' Jer 40:1-5, Jer 26:23-24, and Jer 45:4. God engages himself to protect him against all the might and malice of his most terrible enemies; and though he should fall into their hands, yet he would deliver him out of their hands. Psa 33:3, 'They have consulted against thy hidden ones.' The saints are (1.) hid in God's decree, (2.) hid in Christ's wounds, (3.) hid in the chambers of divine providence, (4.) hid in common dangers, as Noah was hid in his ark, and as Lot was hid in Zoar, and as Daniel was hid in the lions' den, and as the three children were hid in the fiery furnace, and as Jonah was hid in the whale's belly, Isa 26:20; (5.) hid 'with Christ in God,' Col 3:3. In times of greatest trouble the saints are hid under the hollow of God's hand, under the shadow of God's wing, Psa 91:1, Psa 91:4. Psa 27:5, 'For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion.' The Hebrew Succoh is written with a little samech, to shew, say some, that a little pavilion or cottage where God is shall be sufficient to safeguard the saints in the day of adversity. 'He shall hide me in his hut, as a shepherd doth his sheep in a stormy day.' 'In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me.' I shall be as safe as if I were shut up in his holy ark, tabernacle, or temple,—whither they use to flee for shelter to the horns of the altar, yea, as if a man were hid in the most holy place, where none might enter but only the high-priest once a year, which is therefore called 'God's secret place.' A shepherd should not be more careful to shelter his sheep in a tent or tabernacle from the heat of the sun, nor a king should not be more ready to protect a favourite in his pavilion, whence none durst venture to take him, than God would be careful and ready to shroud and shelter his people from the rage, madness, and malice of their enemies, Eze 7:22. How did God hide his church in Egypt? the bush was still burning, and yet was not consumed, Exo 3:2-3; and how did he hide seven thousand in Elijah's time, that had not bowed their knees to Baal? 1Ki 19:18. Though 'the woman,' the church, 'be driven to flee into the wilderness, yet there she is hid, and there she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days,' Rev 12:6. Let our enemies do their worst, they shall not hinder us of divine protection. No power nor policy can hinder our being preserved and secured by God in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers that can attend us. But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our union with Christ, as to dissolve that blessed union that is between Christ and our souls, John 15:1-5. When men and devils have done their worst, our marriage-union with Christ holds good. This union is indissoluble. This union between Christ and believers is not capable of any separation. They are so one, that all the violence of the world, nor all the power of darkness, can never be able to make them two again. Hence the apostle's triumphant challenge, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' Rom 8:35. If the question did not imply a strong negation, the apostle himself doth give us a negation in words at length, 'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us,' &c., Rom 8:38-39. Here you have a long catalogue, consisting of a large induction of various particulars; but none of all these can dissolve the union between Christ and believers. None can untie that knot that is tied by the Spirit on Christ's part, and by faith on ours. Christ and believers are so firmly joined together, that all the powers on earth, and all the united strength of hell, shall never be able to put them asunder, or to separate them one from another. Look, as no distance of place can hinder this union, so no force or violence from devils or men shall ever be able to dissolve this union; and herein lies the peculiar transcendent blessedness of this union above all other unions. They all may cease, be broken, and come to nothing; every one

of them is soluble: the head may be separated from the members, and the members from the head; the husband must be separated from the wife, and the wife from the husband; the parents must be separated, from the children, and the children from the parents, and bosom friends must be separated one from another. The foundation and the house may be separated, and the branches may be cut off from the vine—yea, the soul and body may be disunited by death, but the mystical union stands fast for ever. Christ and a gracious soul can never be separated; God hath joined them together, and no mortal shall ever be able to put them asunder, Mat 19:6. There is not only a continuation of it all our life, but also in death itself. Our very bodies sleeping in the dust are even then in union with Christ. There are two abiding things in the saints, their unction and their union. Their unction abides, 'But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you,' 1Jn 2:27; and their union abides, for it follows, 'and ye shall abide in him.' Christ earnestly prays that we might be one, as he and his Father are one, John 17:20-23; not essentially, nor personally, but spiritually, so as no other creature is united to Christ. There can be no divorce between Christ and the believing soul. Christ hates putting away, Mal 2:16. Sin may for a time seemingly separate between Christ and the believer, but it can never finally separate between Christ and the believer. Look, as it is impossible for the leaven that is in the dough to be separated from the dough after it is once mixed, for it turneth the nature of the dough into itself; so it is impossible for the saints ever to be separated from Christ: for Christ is in the saints as nearly and as really as the leaven is in the dough. Christ and believers are so incorporated as if Christ and they were one lump, Rom 8:10; Col 1:27; 1Jn 3:21; John 17:23. Our nature is now joined to God by the indissoluble tie of the hypostatical union in the second person; and we in our persons are joined to God by the mystical indissoluble bond of the Spirit, the third person. Our union with the Lord Jesus is so near, so close, and so glorious, that it makes us one spirit with him. In this blessed union the saints are not only joined to the graces and benefits which flow from Christ, but to the person of Christ, to Christ himself, 1Co 6:17. All the powers on earth, and all the powers in hell, can never separate Christ from the believer, nor the believer from Christ. When all other unions are dissolved, this union holds good, John 1:16; Rom 8:32; 1Co 3:21-23.

I readily grant that the sense and apprehension of this union may in this life be much interrupted, and many times greatly darkened, but the substance of the union still remains. And I readily grant that a believer may be much assaulted and tempted to doubt of his union with Christ, and to question his union with Christ, and yet nevertheless a believer's union with Christ continues and abides for ever. And I readily grant that the influences of it for some time may be suspended, but yet the union itself is not—nay, cannot be dissolved. As it was in the hypostatical union; for a time there was a suspending of the comforting influences of the divine nature in the human, insomuch that our Saviour cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46; yet for all this the union between the two natures was not in the least abolished. So here in the mystical union the sensible effects, comforts, and benefits of our union with Christ may sometimes be kept in and not appear, but yet the union itself abides, and shall abide firm and inviolable for ever; it is an inseparable and insuperable union. Look, as no power on earth is sufficient to overpower the Spirit of Christ, which on Christ's part makes the union, so no power on earth shall be able to conquer faith, which on our part also makes the union, John 10:27-31; 1Jn 4:4; 1Pe 1:5; Luk 22:31-32. Satan and the world may make attempts upon this union, but they will never be able to break this union, to dissolve this union; yea, though death be the bane of all natural unions, yet death can never be the bane of this mystical union. Though death puts a period to all other unions,

yet death can never put a period to this union. When the believer is in his grave his union with Christ holds good. But,

[15.] Fifteenthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to deprive us of our crowns. There is no power nor policy on earth or in hell that can deprive a Christian,

First, Of his crown of righteousness: 2Ti 4:8, 'Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.' It is a metaphor, say several, [Estius, Scultetus, &c.,] from the custom in war, who used to crown the conquerors with honour, &c. It is a similitude taken from fighters or combatants, who for a prize received a crown when they had contended lawfully. The reward of eternal life here is called 'a crown of righteousness,' (1.) Because it is purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ. By his perfect and complete righteousness and obedience, dear Jesus hath merited this for us, and so in Christ it is due to us by way of merit, though in respect of us it is of mere grace, of rich grace, of sovereign grace, of infinite grace, of glorious grace. (2.) Because he is righteous that hath promised this crown. Though every promise that God makes is of free and rich grace, yet when once they are made, the truth and justice of God obligeth him to keep touch with his people; for as he cannot deny himself, so he cannot do anything unworthy of himself, Rev 2:10, and Rev 3:21; 1Jn 2:25; 2Th 1:5-7, 2Th 1:10. Men say and unsay, they promise one thing and mean another. Men many times eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; but thus God can never, thus God will never, do. God can never repent of his promises; he can never waver, he can never go back from his word: 'God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?' Num 23:19. All the promises that refer to this life and a better are sure, firm, faithful, unchangeable, immutable. All the promises are the word of a God, and given upon the honour of a God, that they shall be made good. O my friends, the all-sufficiency of God, the omniscience of God, the omnipotency of God, the loving-kindness and faithfulness of God, yea, and the oath of God, may fully, yea, abundantly, satisfy us, and secure us, that God will certainly make good all his precious promises to us. We commonly say, when an honest man passeth his word for a little money, Oh, it is as sure as if it were in our purse; but God's word of promise is abundantly more sure, for as his nature is eternal, so his word of promise is unchangeable. The promises are a firm foundation to build our hopes and happiness upon; they are an anchor both sure and steadfast, Hab 2:3; Jer 32:41; Psal 89:34. Memorable is that saying of David, Psal 138:2, 'For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name;' which words are to be understood, as David Kimchi saith, *hysteron proteron*, that thou hast by thy word, that is, by performing thy word and promises, magnified thy name above all things. (3.) Because it is a just and righteous thing with God to crown them with glory at last, who have been crowned with shame, reproach, and dishonour for his name and interest in this world; so that eternal life is a crown of righteousness, *ex parte Dei*, God hath promised it to such as overcome; and, *ex parte rei*, it is just with God to give unto his suffering servants rest and peace. (4.) Because it is given only to righteous men. All that wear this crown come to it in a way of righteousness. A righteous crown cannot be had but in the use of righteous means. The Chaldean, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman princes commonly gained their crowns by fraud, flattery, policy, blood, &c.; so that their crowns were bloody crowns, and not righteous crowns. (5.) And lastly, the apostle calls it 'a crown of righteousness, which the righteous judge shall give him,' the more fitly to follow the metaphor

taken from runners and wrestlers for prizes at their solemn exercises or games in Greece, in which there were certain judges appointed to observe those that proved masters, and gave just sentence on the conqueror's side, if he strove lawfully, and fairly won the prize. Now this crown is 'laid up;' the Greek word **■π■κειται** imports two things: (1.) A designation of that which is laid up to some peculiar person; (2.) A reservation and safe keeping of it, to the use of those it is designed to. Earthly crowns have been often pulled off from princes' heads, but this crown of righteousness is so safely laid up, that none can reach it, none can touch it, none can pull it from a believer's head. Xerxes crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day. And Andronicus the Greek emperor crowned his admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon. Roffensis had a cardinal's hat sent him, but his head was cut off before it came to him. 'Doth the crown,' saith Solomon, 'endure to every generation?' Pro 27:24. It is a question which implieth a strong negation: oh, no! there is nothing more uncertain than earthly crowns. Henry the Sixth was honoured with the crowns of two kingdoms, France and England; the first was lost by the faction of his nobles, the other was twice pulled from his head. Princes' crowns are withering things. Earthly crowns may be soon put on, and as soon be pulled off. Most princes' crowns do but hang on one side of their heads. All the powers on earth, and all the devils in hell, can never reach this crown of righteousness. Though wicked men have long reaches, yet they can never reach a believer's crown, which is his joy and comfort in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings. Thus Basil speaketh of some martyrs that were cast out all night naked in a bitter cold frosty season, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themselves in this manner: 'The winter is sharp, but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all.' The philosopher could say to the tyrant's face: You may kill me, but you cannot hurt me; you may take away my head, but you cannot take away my crown. O Christians! let this be your joy and triumph, that the crown of righteousness is laid up safe for you; no tyrant's arm is long enough to reach that crown. But,

Secondly, There is no power nor policy on earth or in hell that can deprive a Christian of his crown of life: Jas 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' 'The crown of life,' that is eternal life, whereby after the fight and conquest he shall be glorified as with a crown; as there was a crown to him that overcame in their exercises among the Grecians, [Piscator.] Blessedness is the general reward, the crown of life is the particular reward. In these words, as Chrysostom observes, there is a great emphasis, they are both emphatical; for life is the best of all natural things, and a crown is the best of all civil things. Here is the best and the best. Words are too weak to express what a rare blessing a crown of life is. The crown of life is in the other world, saith Gregory. This life is the life of conflict; that, of crowns and wreaths. But you will say, What doth this crown of life signify? I answer,

(1.) First, The crown of life signifies solid and substantial honour and, glory; as a crown is a solid and substantial thing. Heaven admits of no honour and glory but what is solid and substantial. The crown of life is a massy crown, a ponderous crown, to shew that the glory above is a massy glory, substantial glory. That you may see it is massy and substantial, observe what a word the apostle useth: 'The weight of glory,' 'the exceeding eternal weight of glory,' 2Co 4:17. Such a weight as infinitely over-poiseth all afflictions. The apostle alludeth to the Hebrew and Chaldee words which signify both weight and glory. The Arabic version renders it, 'Worketh for us a weight of glory in the

most eminent and largest degree and measure.’³ The Syriac reads it, ‘*Infinitam gloriam,*’ An infinite glory. Haymo reads it, ‘*Magnitudinem gloriæ, supra omnem modum et mensuram,*’ A greatness of glory, beyond all bounds and measure. Beza reads it, ‘*Excellenter excellens*’ Exceedingly excellent. Yet none of these reach the height of the apostle’s rhetoric, neither is any translation able to express it, Glory is so great a weight that if the saints were not upheld by the infinite power and strength of God, it were impossible they should be able to bear it. To gold and precious things the weight addeth to the value; as the more massy and weighty a crown is, the more it is worth. The glory of heaven is not only eternal glory, but it is a weight of glory; yea, such a weight as exceeds all expressions, all comparisons. The honour and glory of this world is but like the cracking of thorns under a pot; it is but like a blaze, a shadow, a dream, a vapour; it is but like a fading flower, or the picture of a prince drawn upon the ice, with his purple robes and his glorious crown, &c., which melts away as soon as the sun riseth; the consideration of which made one prince say of his crown: ‘O crown! more noble than happy!’ A crown is the choicest and chiefest of all human rewards. Amongst all terrene gifts none more honourable and glorious than a crown. This is the height of human excellencies, and for the attainment of which many have made most sad, desperate, and dangerous adventures; but, alas! what are all earthly crowns, for honour and dignity, to the crown of life? No more than shadows to substances, pebbles to pearls, or dross to gold. But,

(2.) Secondly, The crown of life signifies the greatest honour and glory. There is nothing higher in the estimation and in the admiration of men than a crown; it is the highest appendant of majesty. A crown is the emblem of majesty, and so it notes that imperial and kingly dignity to which believers are advanced by Christ, Psa 8:7. There is nothing that men esteem of above a crown, or admire than a crown, or are ambitious of than a crown, Eph 1:3. The crown is the top of royalty. All earthly crowns have crosses hanging upon them; all earthly crowns are stuffed with thorns: which made a great prince [Xerxes] say, ‘You look upon my crown and my purple robes, but did you but know how they are lined with thorns, you would not stoop to take them up.’ Queen Elizabeth is said to swim to her crown through a sea of sorrow: and so many of the princes of this world have swam to their crowns through a sea of sin, a sea of trouble, a sea of sorrow, and a sea of blood. The crown of life is an honourable crown, and that is the reason why the heavenly glory is expressed by a crown, Rev 3:21. The saints are heirs, not only of Christ’s cross, but also of his crown; that is, of his honour and glory. The honour and glory of all earthly crowns are greatly darkened and obscured by the cares and troubles, the temptations and dangers that are inseparably annexed to them; but no cares, no troubles, attend the crown of life, the crown of glory. Eternal life is a coronation day. But,

(3.) Thirdly, The crown of life signifies the reward of victory. A crown is the honour of those that strive; crowns were always the rewards of conquerors: Rev 2:10, ‘Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’ A crown without cares, corrivals, envy, end; a crown not of gold, silver, pearls, laurels, or such like fading, perishing, corruptible things, but a crown of life, an ever-living crown, an everlasting crown, a never-fading crown. It is an allusion to a custom that was amongst the Grecians, for such as got the mastery in their games of wrestling, or running, or the like, were crowned with a garland in token of victory. It is not he that fights, but he that conquers, that carries the crown. The crown of life is for that man, and that man is for the crown of life, who holds on conquering and to conquer, as Christ his head has done before him. The

heathens in their Olympics had their cups, and garments, and crowns that were the rewards of the conquerors; yea, if a horse did but run a race and won, he had a cup or a crown; and thereupon Theocritus saith, 'See what poor things the world glories in, that brute beasts are taken with; their conquerors are crowned, and so are their horses'. But what were all their cups, garments, and crowns of ivy and laurel, &c., to this crown of life that is promised to the overcoming Christian? You must first be conquering Christians before you shall be crowned Christians. Why do you require that in one place, saith one of the ancients, [Ambrose,] which is due in another? why would you preposterously have the crown before you overcome? Whilst we are in our warring state fighting against the world, the flesh and the devil, a crown does not become us. I have read how that upon a triumph all the Emperor Severus his soldiers, for the greater pomp, were to put on crowns of bays, but there was one Christian among them that wore it on his arm, and being asked the reason of it he boldly answered, *Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari*, It becomes not a Christian to wear his crown in this life. That crown that is made out of the tree of life is a wreath of laurel that never withers, a crown that never fades, a crown that will sit fast on no head but the conqueror's. But,

(4.) Fourthly, The crown of life signifies a lasting crown, a living crown. To say the crown of life, is to say a living crown; and living crowns are only to be found in heaven, Pro 27:24; Eze 21:25-27. The word crown notes the perpetuity of glory. A crown is round, and hath neither beginning nor ending; and therefore the glory of the saints in heaven is called an immortal, an immarcessible, incorruptible, and never-fading crown, 2Pe 1:4; 1Co 9:24. The crown of life signifies the lasting honour and glory of the saints in heaven. I have read of an emperor that had three crowns, one on his sword, another on his head, and then cries out, *Tertiam in cœlis*, 'The third is in heaven, and my hope,' saith he, 'shall be in the everlasting crown.' The life to come is only the true life, the happy life, the safe life, the honourable life, the lasting, yea, the everlasting life, and therefore the crown is reserved for that life. King William the Conqueror was crowned three times every year all his reign, at three several places—viz., Gloucester, Winchester, and Westminster—but death hath long since put a period to his crown. The crowns of the greatest monarchs in the world, though they last long, yet are corruptible, subject to wearing, cracking, stealing: they will be taken from them, or they from their crowns, suddenly. Witness that pile of crowns, as the historian speaks, [Hakewill,] that was piled up, as it were, at Alexander's gates, when he sat down and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. All scripture and histories do abundantly tell us that there is nothing more fading than princes' crowns. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The crown of life notes a well-entitled crown; a crown that comes by a true and noble title. A Christian has the best title imaginable to the crown of life. (1.) He has a title by Christ's blood; (2.) By the new birth; (3.) By free and precious promises; (4.) By donation; (5.) By marriage union and communion with Christ, who is heir-apparent to all the glory of heaven; (6.) By a sure and everlasting covenant. King Henry the Seventh of England pretended a sixfold title to the crown; (1.) By conquest; (2.) By the election of the soldiers in the field; (3.) By parliament; (4.) By birth; (5.) By donation; (6.) By marriage. But what was his pretended title to that real and full title that a believer has to the crown of life? But,

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, The crown of life notes the perfection of the glory of the saints in heaven. As the crown compasseth the head on every side, so in heaven there is an aggregation of all internal and eternal good. One of the ancients, speaking concerning what we can say of the glory of

heaven, saith, 'It is but a little drop of the sea, and a little spark of the great furnace; for those good things of eternal life are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they are above all estimation.' Nec Christus nec cœlum patitur hyperbolem, Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolised. Nescio quid erit, quod ista vita non erit. And, saith one of the fathers, 'What will that life be, or rather, what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? Light which place cannot comprehend, voices and music which time cannot ravish away, odours which are never dissipated, a feast which is never consumed, a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end!' Do you ask me what heaven is? saith one: when I meet you there I will tell you. The world to come, say the Rabbins, is the world where all is well. I have read of one that would willingly swim through a sea of brimstone to get to heaven; for there, and only there, is perfection of happiness. What are the silks of Persia, the spices of Egypt, the gold of Ophir, and the treasures of both Indies, to the glory of another world? Augustine tells us that one day, when he was about to write something upon the eighth verse of the thirty-sixth Psalm, 'Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures;' and being almost swallowed up with the contemplation of heavenly joys, one called unto him very loud by his name; and, inquiring who it was, he answered, I am Jerome, with whom in my lifetime thou hadst so much conference concerning doubts in Scripture, and am now best experienced to resolve thee of any doubts concerning the joys of heaven; but only let me first ask thee this question, Art thou able to put the whole earth, and all the waters of the sea, into a little pot? Canst thou measure the waters in thy fist, and mete out heaven with thy span? or weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? If not, no more is it possible that thy understanding should comprehend the least of the joys of heaven; and certainly the least of the joys of heaven are unconceivable and inexpressible. But,

Thirdly, There is no power nor policy on earth or in hell, that can deprive a believer of an incorruptible crown: Psa 21:3; 1Co 9:25, 'And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.' He alludes to the Olympic exercises; now running and wrestling were two of the Olympic games. Now in these Olympic games the reward was only a corruptible crown, a crown made up of laurels, or olive-branches, or oaken-leaves, or of flowers and herbs, or at the highest of silver and gold, which soon faded; but we run for an incorruptible crown of glory. A man, saith Chrysostom, would dwell in this contemplation of heaven, and be loath to come out of it. Nay, saith Augustine, a man might age himself in it, and sooner grow old than weary: 1Pe 1:4, 'To an inheritance incorruptible and undented, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' Here are superexcellent properties of the heavenly inheritance.

(1.) First, It is κληρονομίαν ■φθαρτον, an 'incorruptible inheritance.' All earthly inheritances are liable to corruption; they are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars, thorns, and thistles. Oh, the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives that have been corrupted by earthly inheritances! Oh, the impure love, the carnal confidence, the vain boastings, the sensual joys, that have been the products of earthly inheritances. If a man's estates lies in money, that may rust, or the thieves may break through and steal it; if in cattle, they may die, or fall into the hands of the Sabeans and Chaldeans; if in houses, they may be burnt. Witness the late dreadful fire that turned London into a ruinous heap. If in lands, a foreign enemy may invade them and conquer them.² All earthly inheritances are no better

than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is to say, displeasing or dirty, 1Ki 9:13. Earthly inheritances they do but dirt, daub, and dust the children of men; it is only the heavenly inheritance that is incorruptible.

(2.) Secondly, It is κληρονομία ἀμύραντος, an 'inheritance undefiled.' There are few earthly inheritances, but some defilement or other sticks close to them. Many times they are got by fraud, oppression, violence, injustice, &c., and as they are often wickedly got, so they are as often wickedly kept. They that will but go to Westminster Hall may every term understand enough of these things. The heavenly inheritance is the only undefiled inheritance. There is no sin, no sinner, no devil, to defile or pollute the heavenly inheritance, the incorruptible crown. The Greek word, ἀμύραντος, signifies a precious stone, which though it be never so much soiled, yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled, yea the oftener you cast it into the fire and take it out, the more clear, bright, and shining it is. The apostle may probably allude to this stone: and it is as if he should say, 'The incorruptible crown that you shall receive shall be studded with the stone amiantos, which cannot be defiled. No unclean thing shall enter into heaven to defile this crown, this inheritance, Rev 21:27. The serpent got into the earthly paradise, and defiled Adam's crown, yea he robbed him of his crown, but the subtle serpent can never enter into the heavenly paradise. But,

(3.) Thirdly, It is κληρονομία ἀμάραντον, an 'inheritance that fadeth not away:' a metaphor taken from flowers. The beauty of flowers, and the sweetness of flowers, withers in a moment, and is quickly gone, and then they are good for nothing but to be cast upon the dunghill; so it is with all earthly inheritances, they soon lose their glory and fragrancy. Where is the glory of the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms? Dan 7:3-8. Sic transit gloria mundi hath been long since written upon them all; yea, all the glory of the world is like the flower of the field that soon fadeth away, Isa 40:6; 1Pe 1:24. How many great men and great kingdoms have for a time shined in great glory, even like so many suns in the firmament, but are now vanished away like so many blazing comets! How hath the moon of great men's honours been eclipsed at the full, and the sun of their pomp gone down at noon! How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed if his prince do but frown upon him! and how soon does the prince become a peasant if God does but frown upon him! The Greek word amarantos, say some, is the proper name of a flower which is still fresh and green after it hath hung up in the house a long time. It is as if the apostle had said, 'Your incorruptible crown shall be garnished or adorned with the precious flower amarantos, which is always fresh and green and flourishing. And indeed this is the excellency of the heavenly inheritance, that it fadeth not away, that it is a flower that never withereth. All the glory of that upper world is like God himself, lasting, yea, everlasting. This never-fading crown is like the flower we call Semper vivens, it keeps always fresh and splendent. The glory of believers shall never fade nor wither, it shall never grow old nor rusty. Thrice happy are those souls that have a share in this incorruptible crown. When Alexander heard the philosopher's discourse of another world in which he had no part, he wept, to speak with the apostle, as 'one without hope,' 1Th 4:13. None on earth have such cause to weep, as those that have no interest in that inheritance that fadeth not away. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, There is no power nor policy on earth or in hell that can deprive a sincere Christian of a crown of glory. 1Pe 5:4, 'And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away,'—as the garlands did wherewith the conquerors at games, races, and combats were crowned, which were made of herbs, leaves, and flowers. A crown

imports perpetuity, plenty, dignity. It is the height of human ambition. The Greek word *amarantinon* cometh from *amarantus*, which is a flower that fadeth not, of which garlands were made in former times, and wherewith they crowned the images of the heathen gods. A believer's crown, his inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness shall be as fresh and flourishing after he hath been many millions of years in heaven as it was at his first entrance into it. Earthly crowns are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wear out. When time shall be no more, when earthly crowns and kingdoms shall be no more, yea, when the world shall be no more, a Christian's crown of glory shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing. All the devils in hell shall never wrangle a believer out of his heavenly inheritance, nor deprive him of his crown of glory. The least thing in heaven is better than the greatest things in this world. All things on earth are fading, but the crown of glory never fadeth away. Thus you see why heaven and the glory above is expressed by a crown. Sometimes it is called a crown of righteousness, to note the grounds and rise of it; sometimes it is called a crown of life, because it is only to be enjoyed in everlasting life; sometimes it is called an incorruptible crown, to note the duration and continuance of it; and sometimes it is called a crown of glory, to note the honour, splendour, and eternity of it. Now let devils, let oppressors, let persecutors do their worst, they shall never be able to deprive the saints of their blessed and glorious crowns. But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to make void our covenant-relation, or our covenant-interest; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. The covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's free love, upon God's everlasting love, upon God's special and peculiar love, upon God's unchangeable love, so that God can as soon cease to be, as he can cease to love those whom he has taken into covenant with himself, or cease to keep covenant with them. Those whom free grace hath brought into covenant shall continue in covenant for ever and ever. Once in covenant and for ever in covenant. The covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's immutable counsel and purpose. 'The foundation of God standeth sure,' Heb 6:17; 2Ti 2:19, that is, the degree and purpose of God's election stands firm and sure. Now the purpose of God's election is compared to a foundation, because it is that upon which all our happiness and blessedness is built and bottomed, and because as a foundation it abides firm and sure, John 10:28-32; 1Pe 1:5; Jude 1:1. The covenant of grace is bottomed upon God's glorious power, upon God's infinite power, upon God's supreme power, upon God's invincible power, upon God's independent power, upon God's incomparable power, and till you can find a power that can overmatch this divine power, the saints' covenant-relation holds good. The covenant of grace is bottomed upon the oath of God; 'To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our fathers,' Luk 1:72-73. Now to think that God will break his oath, or be perjured, is an intolerable blasphemy. The covenant of grace is bottomed upon the precious blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is called 'The blood of the everlasting covenant.' 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Mat 26:28; Heb 9:15, and Heb 13:20. Now by these hints it is most evident that the saints' covenant-relation, their covenant-interest, holds good at all times, in all cases, and in all conditions. It is not the indwelling power of sin, nor spiritual desertions, nor violent temptations, nor heavy afflictions, nor divine delays, that can dissolve our covenant-relation. Though sin may work, and Satan may tempt, and fears may be high, and God may hide his face from his people, and stop his ears at the prayers of his people, Isa 8:17; Lam 3:44, yet God will still maintain his interest

in his people, and his people's relation to himself. 'God hath not cast away his people, whom he foreknew,' Rom 11:2; 'I am the Lord, I change not,' Mal 3:6; 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever,' Hos 2:19; 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb 13:5. It is not all the powers of hell, nor all the powers on earth, that can make null or void our covenant-relation, our covenant-interest. But,

(17.) Seventeenthly and lastly, 'If God be with us, who can be against us?' I answer, None, so as to hinder our growth in grace, or the thriving and flourishing estate of our precious and immortal souls. The troubles, afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings that the saints meet with in a way of holiness shall but further the increase and growth of their graces. Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times, Psa 60:7-9, Psa 60:12. Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember Moulin, speaking of the French Protestants, saith, When papists hurt us, and persecute us for reading the Scripture, we burn with zeal to be reading of them, but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacks. Michal's scoffing at David did but inflame and raise his zeal; 'If this be to be vile, I will be more vile,' 2Sa 6:20-22. Look, as fire in the winter burns the hotter, by an antiperistasis, because of the coldness of the air, so in the winter of persecution, that divine fire, the zeal of a Christian, burns so much the hotter, and flames forth so much the more vehemently and strongly. When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him in a dream, saith the historian, a pillar of fire, with this motto, Talis est Basilius, Basil is such a one, he is all on a-light-fire for God. Warm persecutions will but set Christians all on a-light-fire for God, as you may see among the apostles, primitive Christians, and the martyrs of a later date. Grace usually is in the greatest flourish when the saints are under the greatest trials. The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God suffers wicked men to beat and bruise his links, to make them burn the brighter; and to pound and bruise his spices to make them send forth the greater aromatical flavour. Fiery trials are like the teazle, which though it be sharp and scratching, it is to make the cloth more pure and fine. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights, and so do the graces of the saints shine brightest in the darkest nights of affliction and tribulation. God does sometimes more carry on the growth of grace by a cross than by an ordinance; yea, the Lord will first or last turn all fiery trials into ordinances, for the helping on the growth of grace in his people's souls. Commonly the saints' spiritual growth in grace is carried on by such divine methods, and in such ways as might seem to deaden grace, and weaken it, rather than any ways to augment and increase it. We know that winter is as necessary to bring on harvest as the spring, and so fiery trials are as necessary to bring on the harvest of grace as the spring of mercy is. Though fiery trials are grievous, yet they shall make the saints more gracious. God usually, by smart sufferings, turns his people's sparks of grace into a mighty flame, their mites into millions, their drops into seas. All the devils in hell, and all the sinners on earth, cannot hinder the Lord from carrying on the growth of grace in his people's souls. When men and devils have done their worst, God will, by all sorts of ordinances, and by all sorts of providences, and all sorts of changes, make his people more and more holy, and more and more humble, and more and more meek and lowly, and more and more heavenly, wise, faithful, fruitful, sincere, courageous, &c. Though the church of Smyrna was outwardly poor, yet she was inwardly rich, rich in grace, and rich towards God, Rev 2:9. I think he hit the mark who said, It is far better to be a poor man and a rich Christian, than to be a rich man and a poor Christian. Though the Corinthians were under great trials and sufferings, yet they did abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and diligence, and in their love to gospel ministers, 2Co 8:7. The storm beat hard upon the Romans, and yet you see what a singular

testimony the apostle gives of them, 'I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able to admonish one another,' Rom 15:14. The Thessalonians were under great persecutions and troubles, and yet were strong in the grace that was in Christ Jesus; they were very growing and flourishing Christians. Singular prophecies speak out the saints growth and flourishing in grace. 'The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.' 'The Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness shall be a fruitful field.' 'The desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose: it shall blossom abundantly:' 'the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon;' 'they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' And as singular prophecies, so choice and precious promises, speak out the saints' growth in grace. Take a taste of some of them. 'But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' 'The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' 'They shall go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.' 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.' 'Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; in old age they shall be fat and flourishing,' Pro 4:18; Job 17:9; Psa 84:7, and Psa 92:12-14. I have read of an old man who, being asked whether he grew in grace? answered, I believe I do, for God hath promised that in old age his children should be fat and flourishing. So Isa 46:3, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb:' ver. 4, 'And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you:' Zec 12:8, 'And he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them:' Hos 14:5, 'I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon:' Hos 14:6, 'His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon:' Hos 14:7, 'They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon:' Mal 4:2, 'But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as the calves of the stall:' Psa 1:3, 'He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper:' John 4:14, 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.' The light and glory of the church rises by degrees; (1.) Looking forth as the morning; with a little light; (2.) Fair as the moon; more light; (3.) Clear as the sun; that is, come up to a higher degree of spiritual light, life, and glory, Song of Solomon 6:10. By all which it is most evident that all the powers of hell, nor all the powers on earth, cannot hinder the saints' growth in grace, nor the thriving and flourishing estate of their precious and immortal souls. But you will say, What are the reasons why God will be favourably, signally, and eminently present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? I answer there are these ten great reasons for it:—

[1.] First, To awaken and convince the enemies of his people, and to render his suffering children glorious in the very eyes and consciences both of sinners and saints: Dan 3:24, 'Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake and said unto his counsellors, Did we not cast three men into the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.' Dan 3:25, 'He answered and said, 'Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the

fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' Now see what a majesty there is in this presence of Christ with his people in the fire, to convince Nebuchadnezzar, and to render the three champions very glorious in his eyes. Dan 3:28, 'Then Nebuchadnezzar spake and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God except their own God.' Dan 3:29, 'Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.' Dan 3:30, 'Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.' The presence of the Lord with the three children commanded favour, respect, reverence, and honour from this great monarch, Nebuchadnezzar. The presence of God with his people is very majestic; the greatest monarchs have fallen down before it; not only Nebuchadnezzar, but also Darius, falls down before the signal presence of God with Daniel when he was in the lions' den, Dan 6:20 seq. And Herod falls down before the presence of God with John, Mark 6:20. And King Joash falls down before the presence of God with Jehoiada, 2Ki 11:1-2. And Saul falls down before the presence of God with David: 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1Sa 24:17, &c. And Alexander the emperor falls down before the presence of God in Jaddua, the high-priest. In the signal presence of God with his people in their affliction there is such a sparkling lustre, that none can behold it but must admire it, and bow before the graceful majesty of it. Such has been the signal presence of God with the martyrs in their fiery trials, that many have been convinced and converted. I have read of a citizen of Paris who was burned for Protestantism, how the presence of God did so shine in his courage and constancy, that many did curiously inquire into that religion for which he so stoutly and resolutely suffered, so that the number of sufferers was much increased thereby.² I read that Cecilia, a poor virgin, by her gracious behaviour in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. It was the observation of Mr John Lindsay, that the very smoke of Mr [Patrick] Hamilton converted as many as it blew upon. Alexandrinus cites Plato, expressing himself thus: 'Although a righteous man be tormented, although his eyes be digged out, yet he remains a blessed man.'⁴ The same Plato could say, 'That no gold or precious stone doth glisten so gloriously as the prudent spirit of a good man.' And the very Hittites could say of Abraham, who had a very signal presence of God with him, 'Thou art a prince of God among us,' Gen 23:6; not that he was a king or had any authority over them, as the Septuagint reads, 'Thou art a king from God among us;' but he is called a prince of God, say some, [Lyra and Tostatus,] because he was as God's oracle—the Lord speaking to him by visions and dreams—unto whom they had recourse for counsel in difficult matters. Others say, he is called Prince of God, because God prospered him, and made him famous for his virtue and godliness. But the Hebrews commonly speak so of all things that are notable and excellent, because all excellency cometh from God; as the angel of God, the mount of God, the city of God, the wrestlings of God, Exo 3:2, and Exo 24:16; Psa 26:4; Gen 30:8, &c. 'Thou art a prince of God;' that is, Thou art a most excellent person. Seneca saw so much excellency that morality put upon a man, that he could say, Ipse aspectus boni viri delectat: The very looks of a good man delights one. And why then may not the sons of Heth call him a prince of God, from that majesty and glory that they saw shine forth in his graces, and in his gracious behaviour and conversation, and because they did observe a signal presence of God with him in all he did, it being no higher observation than what Abimelech had

made before them? Gen 21:22. Chrysostom, speaking of Babilas the martyr, saith, Magnus atque admirabilis vir, &c.: He was an excellent and admirable man, &c. Tertullian, writing to some of the martyrs, who had a mighty presence of God with them, saith, Non tantus sum ut vos alloquar, &c.; I am not good enough to speak unto you. Oh that my life and a thousand more such wretches might go for yours, &c. In Queen Mary's days, not of blessed but of abhorred memory, the people of God met—sometimes forty, sometimes a hundred, sometimes two hundred—together. The fiery persecutors of that day sent in one among them to spy out their practices and to give information of their names, that they might be brought to Smithfield shambles; but there was such a presence of God in the assembly of his people, that this informer was convinced and converted, and cried them all mercy: 1Co 14:24, 'But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all;' 1Co 14:25, 'And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.' It may be before they came to the assembly of the saints, they had hard thoughts of the people of God: they thought that folly was in them, or that disloyalty was in them, or that madness and rebellion was in them, or that plots and designs against the government was in them, or that the devil was in them. Oh, but now such a majestic presence of God appears in the midst of his people, that the unbeliever is convinced, and confesses 'that God is in them of a truth.' Blessed Bradford had such a signal presence of God with him in his sufferings, as begot great reverence and admiration, not only in the hearts of his friends, but in the very hearts of very many papists also. Henry the Second, king of France, being present at the martyrdom of a poor tailor, who was burnt by him for his religion; the poor man had such a signal presence of God with him in his sufferings, that his courage and boldness, his holy and gracious behaviour, did so amaze and terrify the king, that he swore, at his going away, that he never would be present at such a sight more. As the presence of God is the greatest ornament of the church triumphant, so the presence of God is the greatest ornament of the church militant. The redness of the rose, the whiteness of the lily, and all the beauties of sun, moon, and stars, are but deformities to that beauty and glory that the presence of God puts upon his people, in all their troubles and trials. There is nothing in the world that will render the saints so amiable and lovely, so eminent and excellent in the eyes of their enemies, as the signal presence of God with them in their greatest trials, Demetrius³ was so passing fair of face and countenance, that no painter was able to draw him. The presence of God with his people in their greatest trouble deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, puts so rare a beauty and glory upon them, that no painter can ever be able to draw them. But,

[2.] A second reason why God will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, is drawn from the covenant of grace, and those precious promises that God has made to be with his people. God's covenant is, that he will be with his people for ever, and that he will never turn away from them to do them good, Jer 32:40-41. That is a branch of the covenant: 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb 13:5. And that is a branch of the covenant: 'I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,' Gen 15:1; see Psa 115:9-11. The shield is between the body and the thrust. So saith God, I will put in betwixt thee and harm. Though those kings whom thou hast even now vanquished, may rant high and threaten revenge, yet I will shield off all dangers that thou mayest be incident to. Though God's people be in the waters and in the fires, yet his promise is to be with them; so the psalmist, 'I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him,' Isa 43:2; Psa 91:15, and Psa 50:15; Job 5:19; Hos 2:14. God will not fail to keep his people company in all their troubles. No storm, no danger, no

distress, no fiery trial, can keep God and his people asunder. God is immutable in his nature, in his counsels, in his covenant, and in all his promises, Mal 3:6. Though all creatures are subject to change, yet God is unchangeable; though angels and men, and all inferior creatures are dependent, yet God is independent. He is as the schoolmen say, *Omnino immutabilis*, altogether immutable, and therefore he will be sure to keep touch with his people. Precious promises are *Pabulum fidei, et anima fidei*, The food of faith, and the very soul of faith. They are a mine of rich treasures, a garden full of choice flowers, able to enrich a suffering Christian with all celestial contentments, and to sweeten the deepest distresses. God has deeply engaged himself, both by covenant and promises, that he will be with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers; and therefore he will not fail them: Deu 7:9, 'Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant,' &c., or 'the God of amen.' God will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his mouth, Psa 89:33. All his precepts, menaces, predictions, and promises are the issue of a most wise, holy, faithful, and righteous will, and therefore they shall certainly be made good to his people. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because it makes most eminently for the advancement of his own honour and glory in the world. God never gets more honour than by helping his people when they are at a dead lift. God's signal presence with Israel at the Red Sea, makes Moses sing a song of praise, Exo 15:1-27. A great part of the revenue of divine glory arises from the special presence of God with his people in their deepest distresses and most deadly dangers, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. It is the honour of a husband to be most present with his wife in her greatest troubles, and the honour of a father to be most present with his children in their deepest distresses, and the honour of commanders to be present with their soldiers in the heat of battle, when many fall on their right hand and on their left: Exo 15:3, 'The Lord is a man of war,' that is, an excellent warrior, 'the Lord is his name;' according to the Septuagint, *συντρίβων πολέμων*, 'He breaketh battles, and subdueth war.' God, like a brave commander, stands upon his honour, and therefore he will stand by his soldiers in the greatest dangers. The word *ish*, here used for man, signifies an eminent man, a mighty man, a famous warrior, or, as the Chaldee paraphrast hath it, *Victor bellorum*, an overcomer of battles. Now eminent warriors, mighty warriors, famous warriors, they always stick closest to their soldiers in their greatest dangers, as all know that have read either Scripture or history. Now the Lord is such a man of wars, such a famous warrior, as that he will be sure to stick closest to his people in the greatest dangers. God is both in the van and in the rear, Isa 52:12. And as there is nothing that more raises the honour, fame, and renown of great warriors in the world than their presence with their soldiers when the bullets fly thickest; so there is nothing by which God gets himself a greater name, fame, and honour in the world, than by his signal presence with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because then his people stands in most need of his presence. A believer needs the presence of God at all times, but never so much as in great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers; for now Satan will be stirring. He loves to fish in troubled waters. Now earthly friends and earthly comforts and earthly succours will commonly fail us; now cares and fears will be multiplied upon us; now unbelief, which is virtually all evil, will

be raising doubts and cavils and objections in the soul, so that if God does not stand by us now, what can we say? what can we do? how can we bear up? how can we stand fast? What was Samson, that man of strength, when his hair was gone, but as weak as water? Jdg 16:19-20; and what is the strongest Christian when his God is gone, but as weak as weakness itself? All our doing strength, and all our suffering strength, and all our bearing strength, and all our witnessing strength, lies in the special presence of God with our souls. All our comforts, and all our supports, and all our ease, and all our refreshments, flow from the presence of God with our souls in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses; and therefore, if God should leave us in a day of trouble, what would become of us? and whither should we go? and where should we find rest? When doth a man need a brother or friend, but in a day of adversity? 'A brother is born for adversity,' Pro 17:17. Though at other times brethren may jar and jangle and quarrel, yet in a day of adversity, in a strait, in a stress, birth and good blood and good nature will be working. Adversity breeds love and unity. Ridley and Hooper differed very much about ceremonies in the day of their liberty; but when they were both prisoners in the Tower, then they could agree well enough, and then they could be mutual comforts one to another. And when does a Christian most need the strength of God, the consolations of God, the supports of God, the teachings and quickenings of God, and the signal singular presence of God, but when they are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? When the people of God are in a low and afflicted condition, then the Lord knows that that is the season of seasons for him to grace them with his gracious presence, Isa 33:9-10. When calamities and dangers break in upon us, and when all heads and hands and hearts and counsels are set against us, now is the time for God to help us, for God to succour us, for God to stand by us. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because he dearly loves them. God entirely loves his people, and therefore he will not leave his people. Persons whom we entirely love we cannot leave, especially when they are in a distressed condition. 'A friend loves at all times,' saith Solomon, and God is such a friend, Pro 17:17. God loves not by fits and starts, as many do, but his love is like himself, sincere and steadfast. Because he loves them, he won't forsake them when they are in the greatest troubles and most terrible dangers, 1Sa 12:22, 'For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.' He chose you for his love, and he still loveth you for his choice, and therefore he won't forsake you. Chide you he may, but forsake you he won't; for it will not stand with the glory of God to leave a people, to forsake a people of his love. Should I cast you off whom I love, the heathen nations would say that I was mutable in my purposes, or unfaithful in my promises. Though David's parents forsook him, yet God did not forsake him, but took him up into his care and keeping, Psa 27:10. It is the deriding question which the enemies of the saints put to them in the time of their greatest troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, Ubi Deus? Where is now your God? Psa 79:10. But they may safely and groundedly return this answer when they are at lowest, Hic Deus, Our God is here; he is nigh unto us, he is round about us, and he is in the midst of us, Isa 52:12. Witness that golden promise, that is more worth than a world, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb 13:5, Heb 13:11. God is a God of bowels, a God of great pity, a God of tender compassion, and therefore he will not leave his people in a time of distress, Hos 8:9; Mic 7:19; Jer 31:18-20. Parents' bowels do most yearn towards their children when they are sick, and weak, and most in danger. It goes to the very heart of a man to leave a friend in misery. But

what are the bowels of men to the bowels of God! or the compassions of men to the compassions of God! There is an ocean of love in the hearts of parents towards their children when they are in distress, 2Sa 19:6; and this love makes them sit by their children, and sit up with their children, and not stir from their children. God's love does so link his heart to his people in their deep distresses, that he cannot leave them, he cannot stir from them, Psa 91:15: Isa 43:4, 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.' Well, and what then? This love so endears and unites God to his people, that he cannot leave them, he cannot stir one foot from them: Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' The Lord dearly loves his people, and he highly prizes his people, and he greatly delights in his people, and therefore he will be signally present with his people, both in the fire and in the water, both in the fire of persecution, and in the waters of affliction. God loves the persons of his people, and he loves the presence of his people, and he loves the graces of his people, and he loves the services of his people, and he loves the fellowship of his people; and therefore he will never leave his people, but stand by them, and be signally present with them, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Such is God's singular love to his covenant-people, that he will neither forsake them nor forget them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. The Jews were low—yea, very low, in Babylon; their distresses were great, and their dangers many; they looked upon themselves as so many dead men, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our parts,' Eze 37:1-15. They looked upon themselves both as forsaken and forgotten by God. Behold, captive Zion lamentingly saith, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,' Isa 49:13-18; Psa 84:7; Isa 1:27; Heb 12:22. Zion is taken several ways in Scripture: (1.) For the place properly so called, where they were wont to meet to worship the Lord; but this place was long ago destroyed. (2.) For the blessed angels, 'Ye are come to mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.' (3.) For the congregation of saints, of believers, of which it is said, 'The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the habitations of Jacob,' Psa 87:2. The believing Jews being sorely oppressed and afflicted by a long captivity, Dan 9:22; Lam 4:6, and by many great and matchless miseries that did befall them in their captive state, they look upon God as one that had quite forsaken them and forgotten them; but they were under a very high mistake, and very erroneous in their complaint, as appears by God's answer to Zion: Lam 4:15, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.' Lam 4:16, 'Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.' In these words, as in a crystal glass, you may see how pathetically, how sweetly, how graciously, how readily, how resolutely God doth engage himself that he will neither forsake Zion, nor yet forget Zion in her captive state. Now let us a little observe how this singular promise is amplified, and that, (1.) By an emphatical illustration; God's compassionate remembering of Zion far transcends the most compassionate remembrance of the tenderest mother to her dear sucking babe. Now this is laid down—

First, Interrogatively, 'Can a woman,' the most affectionate sex, 'forget a sucking child, for having compassion on the son of her womb?' Can a woman, can a mother so forget as not to compassionate a child, which she naturally inclines to pity? A sucking child that hangeth on her breast, such as mothers are wont to be most chary of, and to be most tenderly affected towards? her sucking child, which, together with the milk from the breast, draws love from her heart? her

sucking child of her own womb, which her bowels do more yearn over than they do over any sucking nurse-child in the world? And this is the 'son of her womb,' which the mother usually embraceth with more warm affections than the daughter of her womb. Can a woman, yea, can a mother forget to exercise love, pity, and compassion to such a poor babe? Surely very rarely.

Second, Affirmatively, 'Yea, they may forget.' It is possible that a woman may be so unwomanly, and that a mother may be so unmotherly in some cases, and in some extremities, as to forget her sucking child, yea, as to eat the fruit of her womb, as the pitiful women did boil and eat their own children in the siege of Samaria and Jerusalem, 2Ki 6:24-30; Lam 4:10. Extremity of hunger overmastered natural affections, and made the pitiful mothers require, of their children those lives which not long before they had given them, laying children not in their bosoms, but in their bowels.

Thirdly, Negatively, 'Yet will I not forget thee.' God will be more constantly, unmovably, and unchangeably mindful of Zion, and tender of Zion, and compassionate of Zion, and watchful over Zion, than any mother could be over her youngling; yea, he would be more motherly to his poor captives in Babylon than any mother could be to her sucking babe. This precious promise is amplified by a convincing argumentation, and that partly from his 'engraving of them upon the palms of his hands.' This is an allusion, say some, to those that carry about with them, engraven on some tablet, or on the stone of some ring which they wear on their finger, the mark, name, or picture of some person they entirely affect. Their portraiture, their memorial, was like a signet graven upon his hand. God will as soon blot out of mind, and forget his own hands, as his Zion; and partly from his placing their walls still in his sight. The ruined demolished walls of Jerusalem were still before him as to their commiseration, and to their reparation, God being fully resolved in the fittest season to raise and re-edify them. Look, as the workman hath his model or pattern constantly either before his eye, or in his thoughts, or in his brain, that he is for to work by, so, saith God, Zion is continually in my eye, Zion is still in my thoughts; I shall never forsake her, I shall never forget her. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because of his propriety and interest in them, and his near and dear relation to them: Isa 43:1, 'But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.' Thou art mine, for I have made thee; thou art mine, for I have chosen thee; thou art mine, for I have bought thee, I have purchased thee; thou art mine, for I have called thee; thou art mine, for I have redeemed thee; thou art mine, for I have stamped mine image upon thee; thou art mine, for I have put my Spirit into thee, Isa 37:7; 1Co 6:20; 1Pe 1:18; Eze 3:23-24, Eze 36:26-27. Now mark what follows: ver. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' God will certainly keep his own people, his own children, company, both in the fire and in the water; that is, in those various trials and troubles that they are incident to in this world, Isa 54:5; Psa 103:13-14; Exo 15:3; Mal 4:2; Mat 9:12; Psa 23:1. When should a husband be with his wife, but when she is in greatest troubles? and a father with his child, but when he is in deep distresses? and a general with his army, but when they are in greatest dangers? When should the physician be most with his patient, but when he is most desperately sick? and when should the shepherd be nearest his sheep, but when they are diseased, and the wolf is at hand? Now God, you know, stands in all these relations to his people,

and therefore he will not fail to be near them when troubles, distresses, and dangers are growing upon them. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because such times are commonly times of great and sore temptations. When God's hand is heaviest, then Satan will be busiest, Job 2:7-8; Mat 9:4; Heb 2:18. The devil is never more violent in his temptations than when the saints are under afflictions: Jas 1:2, 'My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations,' that is, 'afflictions;' Jas 1:12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,' that is, affliction; 2Pe 2:9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,' that is, out of affliction. Now affliction is called temptation, not in the vulgar sense, as temptation is put for an occasion or inducement to sin, but in its proper and native signification, as it is taken for probation and trial. Thus God is said to tempt Abraham, Gen 22:1, that is, he did try and prove the faith, the fear, the love, the obedience of Abraham. Afflictions are called temptations, partly because as afflictions will try what mettle we are made off, so will temptations; and partly because as afflictions are burdensome and grievous to us, so are temptations. But mainly afflictions are called temptations, because in time of affliction Satan will be sifting and winnowing of the saints. Now he will make use of all his devices, methods, depths, darts, yea, fiery darts, that he may vex, afflict, trouble, grieve, wound, torture, and torment those dear hearts that God would not have grieved and wounded; and therefore, now the Lord steps in and stands by his people, and by his favourable, signal, and refreshing presence, he bears up their heads above water, and keeps their hearts from fainting and sinking under Satan's most dangerous and desperate temptations, Luk 22:31; 2Co 12:7; 2Co 2:11; Eph 6:11; Rev 2:24; Eph 6:16. When a city is besieged, and the enemies have raised their batteries, and have made breaches upon their walls, and their provisions grow low, oh, then, if ever, there is need of succour and relief! So here. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because he highly prizes them, and sets an honourable value and esteem upon them: Isa 43:4, 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee,' [Heb., 'In thy room, or in thy stead,] 'and people for thy life,' that is, for thy preservation and protection. God sets such a mighty price upon his people, that to preserve them from ruin and destruction, he makes nothing of giving up to the sword and destruction, the most rich, strong, populous, and warlike nations in the world. Now the high price and value that he sets upon them, engages him to be present with them: ver. 2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Them we highly prize, we won't leave in a day of distress; no more won't God. God prizes his people as his peculiar treasure: Exo 19:5, as his 'portion;' Deu 32:9, as his 'pleasant portion;' Jer 12:10, as his 'jewels;' Mal 3:17, as his 'glory;' Isa 4:5, as his 'crown and royal diadem.' Yea, he prizes the poorest, the meanest, and the weakest saint in the world above a multitude, yea, above a world of sinners. Heb 11:37-38, 'Of whom the world was not worthy.' Though they did not rustle in silks and velvets, but were clad 'in sheep-skins and goat-skins;' yet they had that inward excellency, as that the world was not worthy of their company: and though they did not dwell in ceiled houses, nor in stately palaces, but 'in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;' yet the vile sinful persecuting world was not worthy of their presence,

or prayers, or of their prudent counsels, or pious examples, &c. God sets a higher value upon a Job, though on a dunghill, than upon an Ahab, though on his royal throne, Job 1:1, and Job 2:3. God values men by their inward excellencies, and not by their outward dignities and worldly glories. He sets a higher price upon a Lazarus in his tattered rags, than upon a rich Dives in his purple robes. Such persons have most of our company whom we prize most, Job 2:11-13. Job's three friends did highly value him, and therefore in his deepest distresses, they own him, they pity him, they weep over him, they accompany him, and they keep close unto him. Because God highly prizes his people, he will be signally present with them in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. But,

[9.] Ninthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, because they won't leave him, but stick close to him, and to his interest, gospel, and glory; and will cleave fast to his word, worship, and ways, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, come what will on it, Jos 24:1-33; Jer 13:11; Acts 11:23. You may take away my life, said Basil, but you cannot take away my comfort; my head, but not my crown; yea, saith he, had I a thousand lives, I would lay them all down for my Saviour's sake, who hath done abundantly more for me. John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, and how ill he could endure it, that if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire before he would lose his Christ or part with his Christ. It was a common thing among the martyrs to make all haste to the fire, lest they should miss of that noble entertainment. Gordius the martyr said, It is to my loss if ye bate me anything of my sufferings. The sooner I die, said another, the sooner I shall be happy. Psal 63:1, 'O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;' ver. 8, 'My soul followeth hard after thee,' &c. This notes, (1.) The strength of his intention; (2.) The strength of his affection; (3.) The constancy of his pursuit; and all this in a dry and barren wilderness, and in the face of all discouragements, and in the want of all outward encouragements, Dan 9:3; Psal 119:20. Whatever the danger or distress be, the psalmist is peremptorily resolved to cleave close to the Lord, and to follow hard after the Lord: Psal 44:17, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant;' Psal 44:18, 'Our heart is not turned hack, neither have our steps declined from thy way;' Psal 44:19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death;' see 2Ti 1:11-12, and 2Ti 2:8-10; Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3, Col 4:18. In the face of all dangers, deaths, distresses, miseries, &c., God's faithful servants will own the Lord, and cleave to his ways, and keep close to his worship and service, let persecutors do their worst: ver. 22, 'Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,' Rom 8:36. It is a question when, and upon what occasion, this psalm was written. Some think that it was written upon occasion of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon; but this cannot be, because that captivity was the fruit and product of their high iniquities, as the Scriptures do everywhere evidence, Dan 9:11-14. They could not say in Babylon, 'For thy sake we are killed all the day long;' but for sin's sake, for our wickedness' sake, we are killed all the day long. It is more probable that this psalm was penned upon the occasion of the horrible persecution of the church under Antiochus Epiphanes, unto which I guess Paul hath reference towards the latter end of that 11th to the Hebrews. In this 22d verse you have three things observable, (1.) The greatness of their sufferings: 'they were killed,' amplified by a similitude, 'as sheep to the slaughter.' (2.) The cause: not for their sin, but 'for thy sake.' (3.) The continuance: how long, even 'all the day long.' Their

sufferings are great and long. That tyrant Antiochus made no more reckoning of taking away of their lives, than a butcher doth of cutting the throats of the poor sheep, Dan 11:1-45; and as butchers kill the sheep without making conscience of the effusion of their blood, even so did that tyrant Antiochus destroy the saints of the Most High, without making the least conscience of shedding innocent blood. And as butchers think well of their work, and are glad when they have butchered the poor sheep, so did this tyrant Antiochus; he thought he did God good service in butchering of the holy people, and rejoiced in that bloody service; and yet notwithstanding all the dreadful things that these blessed souls suffered, they still kept close to God, and close to his covenant, and close to his ways, and close to his worship. And Austin observes, that though the heathen sought to suppress the growth of Christianity by binding, butchering, racking, stoning, burning, &c., yet still they increased and multiplied, Exo 1:12, and still they kept close to God and his ways. The church was at first founded in blood, and it has thriven best when it has been moistened with blood. It was at first founded in the blood of Christ, and ever since it has been moistened or watered, as it were, with the blood of the martyrs. The church of Christ in all ages hath been like the oak, which liveth by his own wounds; and the more limbs are cut off, the more new sprouts. Oh, how close to God, his ways and worship, did the saints keep in the ten persecutions! 'They have followed the Lamb whithersoever he went,' Rev 14:4-5. If they would have complied with the ways of the world, and the worship of the world, and the customs of the world, they might have had ease, honour, riches, preferments, &c., Heb 11:35; but nothing could work them off from God or his ways; and therefore he will certainly stand by them, and cleave to them, and be signally present with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. But,

[10.] Tenthly, The Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, that they may be joyful and cheerful under all their troubles, and that they may glory in all their tribulations, Mat 5:12; Luk 6:23. It is good to have a patient spirit, but it is better to have a joyful spirit in all our sufferings, troubles, distresses, &c., that we meet with in a way of well-doing, 2Co 12:10. Acts 5:40, 'And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go;' ver. 41, 'And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing' [Gr., 'rejoice and leap for joy,'] 'that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' In the original, τι κατηξιθησαν τιμασθῆναι, 'that they were honoured to be dishonoured for Christ.' They looked upon it as a high honour to be dishonoured for Christ, and as a grace to be disgraced for Christ. It was the divine presence that made Paul and Silas to sing when they were accounted trouble-towns, and when they were beaten with many stripes, and cast into prison, into the inner prison, and laid neck and heels together, as the word τῷ ξύλον notes, Acts 16:20, Acts 16:22-24, [Beza.] The divine presence made Paul and Silas to glory in all their stripes, sores, and wounds, as old soldiers glory in their scars and wounds which they receive in battle for their prince and country, Eph 6:17; Rom 5:3. The divine presence might well make Paul and Silas to say of their stripes and sores, as Munster once said of his ulcers, Hæ sunt gemmæ et pretiosa ornamenta Dei, These are the jewels and the precious ornaments with which God adorns his dearest servants. It was the divine presence that made Ignatius say in the midst of all his sufferings, τῷ δεσμῷ περιφύω τοὺς πνευματικοὺς μαργαριτάς, I bear my bonds as so many spiritual pearls. So 2Co 7:4, 'I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations.' Gr. περισσεύω, 'I do overabound with joy.' 2Co 7:5, 'For, when we were come into

Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears;' 2Co 7:6, 'Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us.' It was the divine presence that filled the Corinthians with exceeding comfort and joy when their flesh had no rest, and when they were troubled on every side. This signal presence of God with them in all their tribulations filled their souls with such an exuberancy of joy, that no good could match it nor no evil overmatch it. It was the divine presence that made the martyrs, both ancient and modern, so comfortable and cheerful under all their hideous sufferings. It was the divine presence that made Francisco Soyit (?) say to his adversaries, 'You deprive me of this life and promote me to a better, which is as if you should rob me of counters and furnish me with gold.' Oh, how my heart leapeth for joy, said one, that I am so near the apprehension of eternal bliss! God forgive me mine unthankfulness and unworthiness of so great glory. In all the days of my life I was never so merry as now I am in this dark dungeon. Believe me, there is no such joy in the world as the people of Christ have under the cross, said blessed Philpot, that went to heaven in flames of fire. Let God but withdraw this signal presence from his people in their sufferings, and you will quickly find their hearts to droop, their spirits to fail, and they overwhelmed in a sea of sorrows, as you see in Mr Glover the martyr, and many others. It was this divine presence that made the primitive Christians to rejoice more when they were condemned than absolved,² and to kiss the stake, and to thank the executioner, and to sing in the flames, and to desire to be with Christ. So Justin Martyr, Apol. i., Adv. Gent, Gratias agimus quod à molestis dominis liberemur, We thank you for delivering us from hard taskmasters, that we may more sweetly enjoy the bosom of Jesus Christ. The bee gathers the best honey of the bitterest herbs, and Christ made the best wine of water. Certainly the best, the purest, the strongest, and the sweetest joys spring from the signal presence of God with his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Only remember this, that that joy that flows from the divine presence in times of troubles and distress, it is an inward joy, a spiritual joy, a joy that lies remote from a carnal eye. 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.' Pro 14:10. The joy of the saints in sufferings is a jewel that falls not under a stranger's eye. The joy of a Christian lies deep, it cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. Look, as no man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of grapes, nor the fragrancy of the rose of Sharon; so no man can paint out the sweetness and spiritualness of that joy that the divine presence raises in the soul when a Christian is under the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Holy joy is a treasure that lies deep; and it is not every man that has a golden key to search into this treasury. Look, as a man standing on the sea-shore sees a great heap of waters, one wave riding upon the back of another, and making a dreadful noise, but all this while, though he sees the water rolling, and hears it raging and roaring, yet he sees not the wealth, the gold, the silver, the jewels, and incredible treasures that lie buried there: so wicked men they see the wants of the saints, but not their wealth; they see their poverty, but not their riches; their miseries, but not their mercies; their conflicts, but not their comforts; their sorrows, but not their joys. Oh, this blind world cannot see the joys, the comforts, the consolations that the divine presence raises in the souls of the saints when they are at worst! Holy joy and cheerfulness under great troubles and deep distresses is an honour to God, a glory to Christ, and a credit to religion; it stops the mouths of sinners, and it encourages and strengthens weak saints; and therefore the Lord will be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, &c., that they may grace their suffering condition with joy and cheerfulness. And let thus much suffice for the reasons of the point. But before I come

to the useful application, to prevent the objections, and to allay the fears and doubts and disputes that may arise in the hearts of weak Christians concerning this signal presence of God, I shall briefly lay down these following propositions:—

1. First, That Christ is many times really present when he is seemingly absent: Gen 28:16, 'And Jacob said, Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.' Choice Christians may have the presence of Christ really with them when yet they may not be kindly sensible of his presence, nor yet affected with it, Psa 139:1-24. God is present everywhere, but especially with his saints; and not only then when they are apprehensive of him, but when they perceive no evidence of his presence. Being awakened, he perceived that God had very graciously and gloriously appeared to him; and therefore he falls admiring and extolling the singular goodness and the special kindness of God towards him: as if he had said, I thought that such strange and blessed apparitions were peculiar to the family of the faithful; I thought that God had only in this manner revealed himself in my father's house: I did not in the least think or imagine that such an apparition, such a divine revelation should happen to me in such a place; but now I find that that God, who is everywhere in respect of his general presence, he hath, by the special testimonies of his presence, manifested himself to me also in this place. So Job, 'Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not,' Job 9:11. So Jonah, Jon 2:4, 'Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.' In times of sore afflictions God's children are very prone to have hard conceits of God, and heavy conceits of themselves. Unbelief raises fears, doubts, despondency, despair, and works a Christian many times, when he is under deep distresses, to draw very sad conclusions against his own soul, 'I am cast out of thy sight.' But this was but an hour of temptation, and therefore he soon recollects and recovers himself again; 'yet I will look again toward thine holy temple.' Here now faith has got the upper hand of unbelief. In the former part of the verse you have Jonah doubting and despairing, 'I am cast out of thy sight;' but in the latter part of the verse you have Jonah conquering and triumphing, 'yet I will look again toward thine holy temple.' When sense saith a thing will never be, and when reason saith such a thing can never be, faith gets above sense and reason, and saith, ay, but it shall be. What do you tell me of a roaring, raging sea, of the belly of hell, of the weeds about my head, of the billows and waves passing over my head; for yet as low as I am, and as forlorn as I am, 'I will yet look towards God's holy temple,' I will eye God in the covenant of grace; though I am in the sea, though I am in the belly of hell, yet by faith 'I will look toward thy holy temple,'—toward which they were to pray, 1Ki 8:1-66—and triumph over all those difficulties which formerly I looked upon as insuperable; I will pray and look, and look and pray; all which does clearly evidence a singular presence of God with him, even then when he peremptorily concludes that he was cast out of God's presence, out of his sight, out of his favour, out of his care, out of his heart. The Lord is many times really present with his people when he is not sensibly present with his people: Jdg 6:12, 'And the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.' Jdg 6:13, 'And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord; if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles, which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.' God may be really present with his people, they may have his favourable presence with their inward man, when it goes very ill with their outward man. Certainly we must frame a new Bible ere we can find any colour out of God's afflicting us to prove that he doth not love us, or that he hath withdrawn his presence from us. Christ had never more of the real presence of his Father than

when he had least of his sensible presence, of his comfortable presence: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Mat 27:46. Here is first a complation or invocation of God twice repeated: 'My God, my God.' Secondly, the complaint itself, or matter complained of, touching God's forsaking of him. Christ was forsaken of God in some sort, and he was very sensible of his Father's withdrawing, though it was but in part and for a time, 'Why hast thou forsaken me?' This forsaking is not to be understood of his whole person, but of his human nature only, according to which and in the which he now suffered on the cross. Though the person of Christ suffered, and was forsaken, yet he was not forsaken in, or according to his whole person, but in respect of his human nature only. The godhead of Christ could not be forsaken, for then God should have forsaken himself, which is impossible. The personal union of the godhead with the manhood of Christ continued all the time of his passion and death, it was never dissolved, nor ever shall be: yea, the godhead did uphold the manhood all the time of Christ's sufferings, so that he was not forsaken when he was forsaken; he was not forsaken wholly when he was forsaken in part. The love and favour of God the Father towards Jesus Christ did not ebb and flow, rise and fall; for God never loved Jesus Christ more or better than at the time of his passion, when he was most obedient to his Father's will. 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for my sheep,' John 10:17. Christ had never more of the supporting presence of his Father than when he had least of his comfortable presence. When Christ was in his grievous agony and distress of body and mind, the godhead did withdraw the comfortable presence from the manhood; and so far, and so far only, was Christ forsaken. Though the union was not dissolved, yet there was a suspension of vision for the time, so as the human nature did neither see nor feel any present comfort from God. Now so far as the godhead did withdraw its comfortable presence, so far our Saviour was forsaken, and no further; that was but in part, and therefore he was but in part forsaken. God was really present with Christ when in respect of his comfortable presence he was withdrawn from him. So here. The husband may be in the house and the wife not know it; the sun may shine and I not see it; there may be fire in the room and I not feel it; so God may be really present with his people when he is not sensibly present with his people. But,

2. The second proposition is this, That the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, is only to be extended to his covenant-people, to those that are his people by special grace: Jer 32:38, 'And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:' Jer 32:40, 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me:' Jer 32:41, 'Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good.' There are many precious promises of the divine presence, as I have already shewed; but they are all entailed upon God's covenant-people. We are all the people of God by creation, both good and bad, sinners and saints, bond and free, rich and poor, high and low; and we are all the people of God by outward profession. All that do make an outward profession of God, and perform external worship to God, they are all the people of God in this sense. All the carnal Israelites are frequently called the people of God, as well as the spiritual seed. Thus Cain was one of God's people as well as Abel, and Esau as well as Jacob. Now such as are only the people of God by creation, or by profession, these are strangers to God, these are enemies to God, Eph 2:12; and will he be favourably present with these? Such as are only the people of God by creation and outward profession, they are dead in trespasses and sins; and can the living God take pleasure in being among the dead? Eph 2:1; Col 2:13. Such are under all the threatenings of the law, and

under all the curses of the law, Gal 3:10, even to the uttermost extent of them; such are not one moment secure; the threatenings of God and the curses of the law may light upon them, when in the house, when in the field, when waking, when sleeping, when alone, when in company, when rejoicing, when lamenting, when sick, when well, when boasting, when despairing, when upon the throne, when upon a sick-bed; and will God grace these with his presence? Lev 26:1-46; Deu 28:1-68. Surely no. Such say to God, 'Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?' Job 21:14-15. Such queryings as this carry greatest contempt in them, and would lay the Almighty quite below the required duty as if Almighty were but an empty title; and will God ever honour such with his favourable presence, who bid him be packing, who reject his acquaintance, and are willing to be rid of his company? Surely no. Such as are only his people by creation, and an outward profession, such are under the wrath and displeasure of God. 'God is angry with the wicked every day,' Psalms 7:11; not with a paternal, but with a judicial anger, even to hatred and abhorment. 'The wicked is an abomination to him, and he hates all workers of iniquity,' Proverbs 3:32, and Proverbs 15:19. And therefore to these he will never vouchsafe his signal presence. Such may well expect that God will pour on them the fierceness of that wrath and indignation, that they can neither decline nor withstand. Such wrath is like the tempest and whirlwind that breaks down all before it. It is like burning fire, and devouring flames, that consumes all. This wrath will break down all the sinner's arrogancies, and strangle all his vain hopes, and mar all his sensual joys, and fill him with amazing distractions, and make him drunk with the wine of astonishment. And will God dwell with these? will he keep house with these? Surely no. By these short hints it is most evident that the special presence of God is entailed upon none out of covenant, John 14:21, John 14:23. God loves to keep house with none but his covenant-people. He will grace none with his gracious presence, but those that are his people by special grace, 1Co 1:16-18. When wicked men are in great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, God either leaves them, as he did Saul, 1Sa 28:15-16, &c.; or else pursues them to an utter overthrow, as he did Pharaoh, Exo 14:1-31; or else cuts them off by an invisible hand, as he did Sennacherib's mighty hosts, Isa 37:36, and proud king Herod, Acts 12:23; or else he leaves them to be their own executioners, as he did Ahithophel and Judas, &c. But,

3. The third proposition is this, That a sincere Christian may enjoy the presence of the Lord in great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, supporting and upholding of him when he has not the presence of God quickening, comforting, and joying of him, Psalms 119:117 : Psalms 37:24, 'Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,' Psalms 124:1-6, 'upholding with his hand.' This is the upholding psalm. There is not one moment wherein the Lord doth not uphold his people by the hand. The root *samach* signifies to sustain and bear up, as the nurse or tender mother does the little child, the weak child, the sick child. God's hand is still under his, so that they can never fall below supporting grace: Psalms 63:8, 'Thy right hand upholdeth me;' or, 'Thy right hand underprops me.' God never did, nor never will, want a hand to uphold, a hand to underprop his poor people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Though the saints have not always the comforting presence of God in their afflictions, yet they have always the supporting presence of God in their afflictions, as Christ in his bitter and bloody agony had much of the supporting presence of his Father, when he had none of the comforting presence of his Father with him: Mat 27:46, 'My God, my God,' &c.; so, the saints in their deep distresses have many times much of the supporting presence of God. His left hand is under their

heads, and his right hand doth embrace them, Song of Solomon 2:6, when, in respect of his comforting presence, they may say with the weeping prophet, 'The comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me,' Lam 1:16. When the love-sick spouse was ready to faint, Christ circleth her with amiable embracements; 'His left hand is under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her.' It is an allusion to their conjugal and mensal beds, on which the guests are so bestowed, that the first laid his left hand under the head of him that was next, and put him so in his bosom, that with his other hand he might also, if he pleased, embrace him, which was a posture and sign of the greatest love, which the sick fainting spouse here glories in. Christ's two hands are testimonies and witnesses of his great power and might, who is able to preserve his people, though lame cripples, from falling, and also to lift them up again when they are fallen never so low, and likewise to support and uphold them, that they shall never finally and utterly be cast down. When the hearts of the saints are ready to faint and sink, then the Lord will employ all his power for their support, bearing them up as it were with both hands. He hath put his left hand under my head, as a pillow to rest upon, and with his right hand he hath embraced me, as a loving husband cherisheth his sick wife, and doth her all the help he can, Eph 5:29. The best of saints would fail and faint in a day of trouble, if Christ did not put to both his hands to keep them up. In days of sorrow God's people stands in need of a whole Christ to support them and uphold them. My head sinks, O my beloved, put thy left hand, softer than pillows of roses, firmer than pillars of marble, under it; my heart faileth and dieth—oh let thy right hand embrace me. But,

4. The fourth proposition is this, That all saints have not a like measure of the presence of the Lord in their troubles and trials, in their sorrows and sufferings. Some have more, and others have less of this presence of God in an evil day. (1.) All saints have not alike work to do in an evil day. (2.) All saints have not alike temptations to withstand in an evil day. (3.) All saints have not alike testimony to give on an evil day. (4.) All saints have not alike burdens to bear in an evil day. (5.) All saints have not alike things to suffer in an evil day. There are greater and there are lesser troubles, distresses, and dangers; and there are ordinary troubles, distresses, and dangers; and there are extraordinary troubles, distresses, and dangers. Now, where the trouble, the distress, the danger, is ordinary, there an ordinary presence of God may suffice; but where the trouble, the distress, the danger, is extraordinary, there the people of God shall have an extraordinary presence of God with them, as you may see in the three children, Daniel, the apostles, the primitive Christians, and the Book of Martyrs. Some troubles, distresses, and dangers, are but of a short continuance, as Athanasius said of his banishment, *Nubecula est, cito transibit*, It is but a little cloud, and will quickly be gone. Others are of a longer continuance, and accordingly God suits his presence. All saints have not alike outward succours, supplies, reliefs, comforts, &c., in their troubles, distresses, and dangers. Some have a shelter, a friend at hand, others have not; some have many friends, and others may cry out with him, O my friends, I have never a friend! some are surrounded with outward comforts, and others have not one, not one penny, not one friend, not one day's work, &c.; in a storm some have good harbours at hand, others are near the rocks, and in danger of being swallowed up in the sands. So here, and accordingly God lets out more or less of his presence among his people; some need more of his presence than others do, and accordingly God dispenseth it among his saints. But,

5. The fifth proposition is this, That none of the saints have at all times, in all afflictions, distresses, and dangers, the same measure and degree of the presence of the Lord; but in one affliction they

have more, in another less, of the divine presence.' In one affliction a Christian may have more of the enlightening presence of God than in another; and in another affliction a Christian may have more of the comforting presence of God than in another. In this trouble a Christian may have more of the awakening presence of God than in another, and in that trouble a Christian may have more of the sanctifying presence of God than in another; and in this distress a Christian may have more of the supporting presence of God than in that. No one saint doth at all times, nor in all troubles, need a like measure of the divine presence. The primitive Christians and the martyrs had sometimes more and sometimes less of the divine presence with them, as their condition did require. God, who is infinitely wise, does always suit the measures and degrees of his gracious, favourable, signal presence to the necessities of his saints. This is so clear and great a truth, that there are many thousands that can seal to it from their own experience; and therefore I need not enlarge upon it. But,

6. The sixth and the last proposition is this, That many precious Christians, in their great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, may have this favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with them, and yet fear and doubt, yea, peremptorily conclude that they have not this presence of God with them, Psa 77:7-10. These sad interrogatories argues much fear and diffidence; but let me evidence the truth of this proposition by an induction of particulars. Thus, first: If Christ be not signally with you, why are you in your troubles so fearful of offending of him, and so careful and studious in pleasing of him? Gen 39:9-10; Psa 17:3-5; Dan 3:16-17, and 6:10-13. Secondly, If Christ be not signally with you, how comes it to pass that under all your troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, you are still a-justifying of God, a-clearing of God, a-speaking well of God, a-giving a good report of God? Psa 119:75; Ezr 9:13; Neh 9:32-33; Dan 9:12, Dan 9:14. Thirdly, If God be not signally with you, how come you to bear up so believingly, sweetly, stoutly, cheerfully, and patiently under your troubles, deep distresses, and greatest dangers? Gen 49:23-24; 1Sa 30:6; Hab 3:17-18; Acts 5:40-42, Acts 16:25-26, and Acts 27:22-26; Heb 10:34. Fourthly, If Christ be not signally present with you, how comes it to pass that your thoughts, desires, hearts, thirstings and longings of soul, are so earnestly, so seriously, so frequently, and so constantly carried out after more and more of Christ, and after more and more of the presence of Christ, and after more and more communion with Christ? Psa 139:17-18, Psa 63:1, Psa 63:8, Psa 27:4, and Psa 42:1-3; Exo 33:13-16; Song of Solomon 1:2. Fifthly, If Christ be not signally present with you, why are you so affected and afflicted with the dishonours and indignities, wrongs and injuries, that are done to the Lord by others? Psa 69:9, and Psa 119:53, Psa 119:136, Psa 119:158; Jer 9:1-2; Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6; 2Pe 2:7-8, None but such that have the presence of the Lord signally with them can seriously and sincerely lament over the high dishonours that are done to the Lord by others. Sixthly, If the Lord be not signally present with you under all your troubles and deep distresses, why do you not cast off prayer, and neglect hearing, and forsake the assembling of yourselves together, and turn your backs upon the table of the Lord, and take your leaves of closet duties? Job 15:4; Heb 10:25. But, seventhly, If the Lord be not signally present with you under your great troubles and deep distresses, why don't you say with Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?' And with the king of Israel, 'Behold, this evil is of the Lord, and why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' Or with that noble pagan, 'If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?' Or with Saul, Why don't you run to a witch? Or with Ahab, Why don't you sell yourselves to work evil in the sight of the Lord? Or with Ahaz, Trespass most when you are distressed most? Why don't you fret, and faint, and lie in the

streets as a wild bull, full of the fury of the Lord? Why don't you grope for the wall, and stumble at noonday, and roar all like bears? But, eighthly, If the Lord be not signally present with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, why do you, with Moses, prefer suffering before sinning, and Christ's reproaches before Egypt's treasures? Heb 11:25-26. Why do you scruple the sinning of yourselves out of your sorrows? Psa 38:4; Gen 39:9-10. Why do you look upon sin as your greatest burden? Why are you so tender in the point of transgression, and so stout in resistance of the most pleasing temptation? But, ninthly, If the Lord be not signally with you in your great troubles and deep distresses, why do you set so high a price upon those that have much of the presence of God with them in their troubles and trials? Psa 16:3-4; Pro 12:26; Heb 11:38. Why do you look upon them as more excellent than their neighbours? yea, as such worthies of whom this world is noways worthy? But, tenthly and lastly, If the Lord be not signally present with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, how comes it to pass that you are somewhat bettered, somewhat amended, somewhat reformed by the rod—by the afflictions that have been, and still are, upon you? Psa 119:67, Psa 119:71; Hos 5:14-15, and Hos 6:1-2; Hos 2:6-7. When the heart is more awakened, humbled, and softened by the rod, when the will is more compliant with the will of God in doing or suffering, when the mind is more raised and spiritualised, when the conscience is more quick and tender, and when the life is more strict and circumspect,—then we may safely and roundly conclude that such persons do undoubtedly enjoy the signal and singular presence of God with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, Eph 5:15. And thus I have laid down these six propositions; which, if well weighed and improved, may many ways be of singular use to sincere Christians.

We shall now come to the application or useful improvement of this great and seasonable truth. Explication is the drawing of the bow, but application is the hitting of the mark, the white. Is it so, that when the people of the Lord are in great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, that then the Lord will be favourably, signally, and eminently present with them? Then let me briefly infer these ten things.

[1.] First, That the saints are a people of Christ's special care: 2Ch 16:9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect towards him.' The words contain, (1.) The universality of God's providence. His eyes walk the rounds, they run to and fro through the whole earth, to defend and secure the sincere in heart. Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busied at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together; but God is present at all times, in all places, and among all persons, and therefore his church, which is his temple, can never suffer through his absence, 1Co 3:16, and 1Co 6:19. The Egyptians had an idol called Baal-Zephon, which is by interpretation, Dominus speculæ, Lord of the watch-tower, Exo 14:2; his office was to fright such fugitive Jews as should offer to steal out of the country; but when Moses and the people of Israel passed that way, and pitched their camp there, this drowsy god was surely fast asleep, for they all marched on their way without let or molestation; whereas he that keepeth Israel 'neither slumbereth nor sleepeth,' he kept his Israel then, and he hath kept his Israel ever since: he made good his title then, and will make good his title still; he ever was, and he ever will be, watchful, over his people for their good, Psa 121:3-5; Isa 27:3-4. (2.) The efficacy of his providence, to shew himself strong. God fights with his eyes as well as his hands; he doth not only see his people's dangers, but saves them from dangers in the midst of dangers, Zec 2:5. When the philosopher in a starry night was in danger of drowning, he cried

out, Surely I shall not perish; there are so many eyes of providence over me. King Philip said he could sleep safely because his friend Antipater watched for him. Oh, how much more may the saints sleep safely, who have always a God that keeps watch and ward about them! Psa 3:5-6. God is so strong a tower that no cannon can pierce it, Pro 18:10, and he is so high a tower that no ladder can scale it, and he is so deep a tower that no pioneer can undermine it; and therefore they must needs be safe and secure who lodge within a tower so impregnable, so inexpugnable. Now this is the case of all the saints. The fatherly care and providence of God is still exercised for the good of his people: Deu 32:10, 'He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye:' Deu 32:11, 'As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:' Deu 32:12, 'So the Lord alone did lead him,' &c. The eagle carries her young ones upon her wings, and not between her talons, as other birds do, openly, safely, swiftly; and so did God his Israel, being choice and chary of them all the way, securing them also from their enemies, who could do them as little hurt as any do the eagle's young, which cannot be shot but through the body of the old one, Isa 63:4-6, and Isa 59:15. See at what a rate God speaks in that, Isa 40:27-28. Observe how God comes on with his high interrogatories, 'Hast thou not known?' What an ignorant people! 'Hast thou not heard?' What a deaf people! What! keep no intelligence with heaven? 1Pe 5:7, 'Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.' I will now with you sing away care, said John Careless, martyr, in his letter to Mr Philpot, for now my soul is turned to her old rest again, and hath taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap. I have cast my care upon the Lord, which careth for me, and will be careless according to my name. It was a strange speech of Socrates, a heathen, Since God is so careful of you, saith he, what need you be careful for anything yourselves? God's providence extendeth to all his creatures; it is like the sun, of universal influence, but in a special manner it is operative for the safety of his saints. In common dangers men take special care of their jewels, and will not God; will not God take special care of his jewels? Mal 3:17; Heb 3:6; 1Pe 2:5. Surely, yes. The church of God is the house of God, and will not God take care of his house? Surely that shall be well guarded, whatsoever be neglected. His house is every moment within the view of his favourable eye, and under the guard of his almighty arm; his thoughts and heart is much upon his house. God hath a peculiar and paternal care over his saints. That distich of Musculus cometh in fitly:—

Est Deus in cælis, qui providus omnia curat, Credentes nunquam deseruisse potest. A God there is, whose providence doth take Care for his saints, whom he will not forsake.

'His eyes run,' implying the celerity and swiftness of God in hastening relief to his people; 'His eyes run through the whole earth,' implying the universality of help. There is not a saint in any dark corner of the world, under any straits or troubles, but God eyes him, and will take singular care of him. God will always suit his care to his people's conditions, to which his eminent appearances for them in days of distress and trouble give signal testimony. It is our work to cast care; it is God's work to take care. Let not us, then, by soul-dividing thoughts, take the Lord's work out of his hand. But,

[2.] Secondly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then here you may see the true reason why the saints are so comfortable, cheerful, and joyful in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. It is because of that signal presence of God with them. It was this signal presence of God

with the martyrs that made them rejoice in the midst of their greatest sufferings, and that made them endure great sufferings without any sensible feeling of their sufferings: as that young child in Josephus, who, when his flesh was pulled in pieces with pincers, by the command of Antiochus, said, with a smiling countenance, Tyrant, thou lovest time. Where are those smarting pains with which thou threatenedst me? make me to shrink and cry out if thou canst! And Bainham, an English martyr, when the fire was flaming about him, said, You papists talk of miracles; behold here a miracle. I feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of down; it is as sweet to me as a bed of roses.² Surely their strength was not the strength of stones, nor their flesh of brass, Job 6:12, that they should not be sensible of so great sufferings; but this was only from that signal presence of God, that made them endure grievous pains without pain, and most exquisite torments without torment, and sore sufferings without feeling of their sufferings, Heb 11:33-39. And other choice souls there were, who, though they were sensible of their sufferings, yet by the divine presence they were filled with unspeakable courage, comfort, and alacrity. Laurence, when his body was roasted upon a burning gridiron, cried out, This side is roasted enough; turn the other. Marcus of Arethusa, a worthy minister, when his body was cut and lanced and anointed with honey, and hung up aloft in a basket to be stung to death by wasps and bees; he, looking down cheerfully upon the spectators, said, I am advanced, despising you that are below. And when we shall see poor, weak, feeble creatures like ourselves defying their tormentors and their torments, conquering in the midst of their greatest sufferings, and rejoicing and triumphing in the midst of their fiery trials; singing in prison, as Paul and Silas did; kissing the stake, as Henry Voes did; clapping their hands when they were half consumed in the flames, as John Noyes did; calling their execution-day their wedding-day, as Bishop Ridley did; we cannot but conclude that they had a singular presence of God with them, that made all their sufferings seem so easy and so light unto them. Cæsar cheered up his drooping mariners in a storm by minding them of his presence; but, alas! alas! what was Cesar's presence to this divine, this signal presence that the saints have enjoyed in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then from hence you may see the weakness, madness, sottishness, and folly of all such as make opposition against the saints; that affront, injure, and make head against those that have the presence of the great God in the midst of them, Isa 8:9-10, and Isa 27:4; 1Co 1:25. O sirs! the weakness of God is stronger than men. What then is the strength of God? 1Co 10:22, 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?' Ah, who knows the power of his anger! Psa 90:11, It is such that none of the potentates of the world, who set themselves against the saints, can avert or avoid, avoid or abide. That God is a mighty God the Scriptures do abundantly evidence, and it appears also in the epithet, that is added unto El-, which is Gibbor, importing that he is a God of prevailing might. By Daniel he is called El-Elim, 'the mighty of mighties.' Now what folly and madness is it for dust and ashes, for crawling worms, to make head against a mighty God; yea, an Almighty God, who can curse them, and crush them with a word of his mouth: 2Ch 32:7, 'Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there be more with us than with him;' ver. 8, 'With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles;' Gen 49:25; Num 24:4, Num 24:16; Ruth 1:20-21. The king of Assyria was at that time the greatest monarch in the world, and the most formidable enemy the church had, yet the divine presence was a sovereign antidote to expel all base slavish fears that might arise in any of their

hearts concerning his greatness, power, or multitude. What was that great multitude that was with the king of Assyria, to that innumerable company of angels that was with Hezekiah? And what was an arm of flesh to God's supreme sovereignty, that had this proud prince in chains, and that put a hook in his nose, and a bridle in his lips, and cut off his great army by the hand of an angel in one night, and left him to fall by the sword of his own sons? The Lord of hosts can crush the greatest armies in the world into atoms at pleasure. When the emperor Heraclius sent ambassadors to Chosroes, king of Persia, to desire peace of him, he received this threatening answer: I will not spare you, till I have made you curse your crucified God, and adore the sun. He was afterwards, like another Sennacherib, deposed and murdered by his own siroes.² When the divine presence is armed against the great ones of the world they must certainly fall. In Dioclesian's time, under whom was the last and worst of the ten persecutions, though then Christian religion was more desperately opposed than ever, yet such was the presence of God with his people in those times, that religion prospered and prevailed more than ever; so that Dioclesian himself, observing that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ it became the more legible, and to block up the way of Christ it became the more passable; and whatever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper and rose the higher, thereupon he resolved to engage himself no further, but retired to a private life, [Ruffinus,] This is a good copy for the persecutors of the day to write after. O sirs! what folly and madness is it for weakness to engage against strength, the creature against the Creator, an arm of flesh against the Rock of Ages! What is the chaff to the whirlwind, stubble and straw to the devouring flames? No more are all the enemies of Zion to the great and glorious God, that is signally present with his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses, &c., Acts 5:38-40; Psa 76:12, and Psa 110:5-6; Rev 6:14-16. There was not one of those persecuting emperors that carried on the ten bloody persecutions against the saints, but came to miserable ends; yea, histories tell us of three and forty persecuting emperors that fell by the hand of revenging justice; first or last the presence of God with his people will undo all the persecutors in the world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then from hence you may see the Lord's singular love and admirable kindness to his people in gracing them with his presence in their greatest troubles, Isa 43:2, Isa 43:4. That is a friend indeed that will stick close to a man in the day of his troubles, as Job's friend did stick close to him in the day of his troubles, and as Jonathan did stick close to David in his greatest dangers, and as the primitive Christians did stick close one to another, though with the hazard of their lives, and to the amzeement of their enemies, Job 2:11-13; 1Sa 20:30-33. 'Behold,' said they, 'how the Christians love one another,' and stand by one another. The people of God, in their greatest troubles, are a people of his special love. When they are in distress, he lays them in his very bosom, and his 'banner over them is love,' Song of Solomon 2:4. The love of God to his people is engraven upon the most afflictive dispensation they are under. When he smartly rebukes them, even then he dearly loves them, Rev 3:19. 'Hear ye the rod,' Mic 6:9. Oh, the rod speaks love. Many of the saints have read much of the Lord's love, written in letters of their own blood. They have read love in prisons, and love in flames, and love in banishment, and love in the cruellest torments their enemies could invent. When a Christian's wounds are bleeding, then God comes in with a healing plaster, Mal 4:2. When a Christian is in a storm, then the presence of the Lord makes all calm and quiet within, Mat 8:26. The presence of the Lord with his people in their troubles and distresses speaks out the reality of his love, the

cordialness of his love, the greatness of his love, and the transcendency of his love. The truth and strength of relations' love one to another doth best appear by their presence one with another, when either of them are in the iron furnace, or in bonds, or in great straits or wants, or deep distresses. The parents shew most of their love to their sick and weak children by their daily presence with them; and the husband shews most of his dear and tender love by keeping his wife company when she is in greatest straits and dangers. So here. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then this may serve to justify the saints, and to encourage the saints to write after this fair copy that Christ has set them. Oh visit them! oh stand by them! oh stick close to them in all their troubles, distresses, and dangers. Let the same mind be in you, one towards another, as is in Christ towards you all. Are there any Jobs upon the dunghill? visit them. Are there any Pauls in chains? find them out, and be not ashamed of their chains: 2Ti 1:16, 'The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain;' 2Ti 1:17, 'But when he was in Rome, he sought me out diligently, and found me;' 2Ti 1:18, 'The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.' 'He oft refreshed me.' Greek, [ἐκψύξε,] 'Poured cold water upon me;' as that angel did upon the racked limbs of Theodorus the martyr, mentioned by Socrates and Ruffinus, in the days of Julian the apostate. It is a metaphor taken from those who, being almost overcome with heat, are refreshed by cooling. 'And was not ashamed of my chain.' Learned antiquaries observe that the apostle at this time was not in prison with fetters, but in the custody of a soldier, with whom he might go abroad, having a chain on his right arm, which was tied to the soldier's left arm. Paul at this time was not in prison, much less a close prisoner; for then Onesiphorus needed not to have made any great search to find him; but was a prisoner at large, going up and down with his keeper to despatch his affairs; and therefore he speaks not of chains in the plural number, but of a chain in the singular, with which he was tied to the soldier that kept him. It now becomes the saints to be ashamed of the bonds or chains that may be found upon the ambassadors of Christ in an evil day. The primitive Christians were not ashamed of the martyrs' chains, but owned them in their chains, and stood by them in their chains, and frequently visited them in their chains, and freely and nobly relieved them and refreshed them in their chains: and will you, will you be ashamed to visit the saints in bonds? 'Oh let not this be told in Gath, nor published in the streets of Askelon,' 2Sa 1:20, that the high-flown professors and Christians of these times are ashamed to own, relieve, and stand by the saints in bonds. So Mat 25:36, 'I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' It is very remarkable that the last definitive sentence shall pass upon men, according to those acts of favour and kindness that have been shewed to the saints in their suffering state; and that the sentence of absolution shall contain a manifestation of all their good works. In this great day Christ sees no iniquity in his people, he objects nothing against them, and he only makes honourable mention of the good that has been done by them. O sirs, all the visits you give to sick saints, and all the visits you give to imprisoned saints, Christ takes as visits given to himself: suffering saints and you are brethren; and will you not visit your own brethren? suffering saints and Christ are brethren; and will you not visit Christ's brethren? suffering saints and you are companions; and will you not visit your own companions? suffering saints and you are travelling heaven-wards; and will you not visit your fellow-travellers? suffering saints and you are fellow-citizens; and will you not visit your fellow-citizens? suffering saints and you are fellow-soldiers; and will you not visit your

fellow-soldiers? suffering saints and you are fellow-heirs; and will you not visit your fellow-heirs? Oh, never be ashamed of those that Christ is not ashamed of! Oh, never fail to visit those whom Christ daily visits in their suffering state! Oh, never turn your backs upon those to whom Christ hath given the right hand of fellowship! Oh, be not shy of them, nor strange to them whom Christ lays daily in his bosom! Oh, be not unkind to them with whom one day you must live for ever! But,

[6.] Sixthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then never give way to base slavish fears, Psa 51:12-13, and Psa 46:1-3; Mat 10:28, &c. There are as many fear notes in Scripture as there are fears. Take a taste of some of them:—Heb 13:5, 'He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' Heb 13:6, 'So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' This text is taken out of Psa 118:6, 'The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.' Some read it by way of interrogation, 'What can man do unto me?' There is some difference in the apostle's quoting the text betwixt the Hebrew and the Greek. The Hebrew thus reads it, 'The Lord is with me,' or for me; or as our English hath translated it, 'The Lord is on my side.' The Greek thus, 'The Lord is my helper.' But the sense being the same with the Hebrew, the apostle would not alter that translation. The alteration which is in the Greek serves for an exposition of the mind and meaning of the psalmist; for God being with us, or for us, or on our side, presupposeth that he is our helper. So as there is no contradiction betwixt the psalmist and the apostle, but a clear interpretation of the psalmist's mind; and a choice instruction thence ariseth—viz., that God's signal presence with us, for us, or on our side, may abundantly satisfy us, and assure us that he will afford all needful help and succour to us. The consideration of which should abundantly arm us against all base slavish fears. God is not present with his saints in their troubles and distresses as a stranger, but as a father; and therefore he cannot but take such special care of them, as to help them, as to succour them, and as to secure them from dangers in the midst of dangers, and therefore why should they be afraid? Isa 43:2. The Greek word βοηθός, that is translated helper in that Heb 13:6, according to the notation of it, signifieth one that is ready to run at the cry of another. Now this notation implieth a willing readiness and a ready willingness in God to afford all succour and relief to his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Herein God shews himself like a tender father, mother, or nurse, who presently runs when any of them hear the child cry, or see danger near: Isa 8:10, 'God is with us.' Isa 8:12, 'Fear ye not their fear, nor be afraid.' The divine presence should arm us against all base slavish fears of men's power, policy, wrath, or rage. Kings and princes, compared with God, or with the signal presence of God, are but as so many grasshoppers, skipping and leaping up and down the field; and does it become Christians that enjoy this divine presence to be afraid of grasshoppers? Isa 40:22 : Isa 41:10, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' God expects that his signal presence with us should arm us against all base fear and dismayedness: Psa 23:4, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.' The divine presence raised David above all his fears: Psa 27:1, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?' Who is the enemy that I should be afraid of? where is the enemy that I should be afraid of? by what name or title is the enemy dignified or distinguished that I should be afraid of? I look before me and behind me, I look round about me and I look at a distance from me, and I cannot see the man, the devil, the informer that I should fear or be afraid of, for God is with

me. Where God is, said king Herod in a speech to his army, there neither wants multitude nor fortitude. We may safely, readily, and cheerfully set the divine presence against all our enemies in the world. When Antigonus his admiral told him that the enemies number far exceeded his: But how many do ye set me against? said the king. Look about you and see who is with you. Ah, Christians, Christians, look about you, look about you, and see who is signally present with you, and then be afraid if you can. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then certainly there is no such great evil in troubles, distresses, sufferings, &c., as many conceive, fear, dream, think, judge. Many men look upon troubles, afflictions, sufferings, in a multiplying glass, and then they cry out, There is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets, Pro 22:13, and Pro 26:13. But, sirs, the lion is not always so fierce as he is painted, nor afflictions are not always so grievous as men apprehend. There are many who have been very fearful of prisons, and have looked upon a prison as a hell on this side hell, who when they have been there for righteousness' sake, and the gospel's sake, have found prisons to be palaces, and the imaginary hell to be a little heaven unto them. Many fear afflictions, and flee from afflictions as from toads and serpents, as from enemies and devils; and yet certainly there is no such great evil in affliction as they apprehend, for the Lord is signally present with his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Now what evil can there be in that condition wherein a man enjoys the divine presence, that makes every bitter sweet, and every burden light, and that turns winter nights into summer days, &c.? yea, many times the saints enjoy more of the singular presence of God in their afflictions, in their day of adversity, than ever they did in the day of prosperity, or in the day of their worldly glory. What bride is afraid to meet her bridegroom in a dark entry, or in a dirty lane, or in a narrow passage, or in a solitary wood; and why then should a Christian be afraid of this or that afflicted condition, who is sure to meet his blessed bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ, in every state, in every condition, who is sure to enjoy the presence of Christ with him in every turn or change that may pass upon him? How many martyrs have ventured into the very flames to meet with Christ, Heb 11:34, and that have many other ways made a sacrifice of their dearest lives, and all to meet with Christ! Oh the cruel mockings, the scourgings, the bonds, the imprisonments, the stoning, the sawing asunder that many of the Lord's worthies have ventured upon, and all to meet with the presence of the Lord; and why then should any of you be afraid to enter into an afflicted condition, where you shall be sure to meet the singular presence of the Lord, that will certainly turn your afflicted condition into a comfortable condition to you? Rev 12:11, and Heb 11:36-38. The great design of the Lord in afflicting his people is to meet with them, and to draw them into a nearer communion with himself. It is that they may see more of him than ever, and taste more of him than ever, and enjoy more of him than ever; in order to which he subdues their corruptions by afflictions, and strengthens their graces, and heightens their holiness by all their troubles and trials, Isa 1:25, Isa 27:8-9; Heb 12:10-11; Hos 2:14. Whenever he leads his spouse into a wilderness, it is that he may speak friendly and comfortably to her, or that he may speak to her heart, as the Hebrew runs. The great design of the Lord in bringing her into a wilderness was that he might make such discoveries of himself, of his love, and of his sovereign grace, as might cheer up her heart, yea, as might even make her heart leap and dance within her. Or, as some sense it, 'I will take her alone for the purpose, even into a solitary wilderness, where I may more freely impart my mind to her,' that she having her whole desire she may come up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved, Song of Solomon 8:5, and

so be brought into the bride-house with all solemnity. By all which it is most evident that there is no such evil in a wilderness estate, in an afflicted condition, as many imagine. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then what a high encouragement should this be to poor sinners to study Christ, to acquaint themselves with Christ, to embrace Christ, to choose Christ, to close with Christ, to submit to Christ, and to make a resignation of themselves to Christ, and to secure their interest in Christ, that so they may enjoy his signal presence in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, John 1:12; Psa 112:2-3, and Psa 2:12; 2Co 8:5. Oh, how many mercies are wrapt up in this mercy of enjoying the singular presence of the Lord in all the troubles and trials of this life! Psa 23:4. It is a mercy to have the presence of a friend, it is a greater to have the presence of a near and dear relation with us in a day of distress, in a day of darkness; but what a mercy is it then to have the presence of the Lord with one in a dark day! That is excellent counsel that the wisest prince that ever swayed a sceptre gives in that Ecc 11:8, 'Remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many.' When light shall be turned into darkness, pleasure into pain, delights into wearisomeness, calms into storms, summer days into winter nights, and the lightsome days of life into the dark days of old age and death; oh, now the singular presence of the Lord with a man in these days of darkness will be a mercy more worth than ten thousand worlds! To have a wise, a loving, a powerful, a faithful friend to own us in the dark, to stand by us in the dark, to uphold us in the dark, to refresh us in the dark, to encourage us in the dark, &c., is a very choice and singular mercy, Psa 71:20-21. Oh then, what is it to have the presence of the Lord with us in all those dark days that are to pass over our heads! What David said of the sword of Goliath in another case, 'There is none like that,' 1Sa 21:8-9, that I may say of the divine presence with a man in the dark, 'There is none like that.' The psalmist hit the mark, the white, when he said, 'My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' When his 'flesh,' that is his outward man, and when his 'heart,' his courage, that is his inward man, failed him, then God was 'the strength of his heart,' or 'the rock of his heart,' as the Hebrew runs. At the very last gasp God came in with his sovereign cordial, and revived him and recovered him, and brought new life and strength into him. When a saint is at worst, when he is at lowest, when he is even overwhelmed with troubles and sorrows, and when the days of darkness so multiply upon him that he seems past all hope of recovery, then the divine presence does most gloriously manifest itself and display itself in supporting, strengthening, comforting, and encouraging of him. In the Rev 4:6, you read that the world is like a sea of glass, 'I saw before the throne a sea of glass.' The world is transitory, very frail and brittle as glass, and it is unstable, tumultuous, and troublesome as the sea. Here the world is shadowed out to us by a sea of glass; and how can we stand on this sea, how can we live on this sea, how can we walk on this sea, if Christ don't take us by the hand, and lead us and support us and secure us? O sirs, we cannot uphold ourselves on this sea of glass, nor others cannot uphold us on this sea of glass; it is none but dear Jesus, it is no presence but his singular presence that can make us to stand or go on this sea of glass. And if this world be a sea of glass, oh what infinite cause have we to secure our interest in Christ, who alone can pilot us safe over this troublesome, dangerous, and tempestuous sea! Oh that I could prevail with poor sinners to take Christ into the ship of their souls, that so he may pilot them safe into the heavenly harbour, the heavenly Canaan. No pilot in heaven or earth can land you on the shore of a happy eternity, from off this sea of glass, but Jesus. When on this sea of glass the winds blow high, storms arise, and the bold waves beat into the ship, oh then the

sinner cries, 'A kingdom for a Christ,' a world for a pilot to save us from eternal drowning! Oh that before eternal storms and tempests do beat upon poor sinners, they would be prevailed with to close with Christ, to accept of Christ, and to enter into a marriage-covenant, a marriage-union with Christ; that so they may enjoy his singular presence with them whilst they are on this sea of glass, Psa 11:6, and Psa 9:17; Hos 2:19-20; 2Co 11:2. There is no presence so greatly desirable, so absolutely necessary, and so exceeding sweet and comfortable, as the presence of Christ; and therefore, before all and above all, secure this presence of Christ by matching with the person of Christ, and then you will be safe and happy on a sea of glass. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then let me infer that unbelief, infidelity, and despondency of spirit in an evil day, does very ill become the people of God. Is the Lord present with you in your greatest troubles, and will you flag in your faith, and be crestfallen in your courage, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall? Isa 25:4; what is this but to tell all the world that there is more power in your troubles to sink and daunt you, than there is in the presence of the Lord to support and encourage you? When a Christian is upon the very banks of the Red Sea, yet then the divine presence should encourage him 'to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord,' Exo 14:13. It would be good for timorous Christians in an evil day to dwell much upon the prophet's commission: Isa 35:3, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not.' Ah, but how shall weak hands be strong, and a timorous heart cease to fear and faint? Why, 'Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you;' he is on his way, he will be suddenly with you, yea, he is already in the midst of you, and he will save you. If you cast but your eye upon precious promises, if you cast but your eye upon the new covenant, which is God's great storehouse, there you will find all supports, all supplies, all helps, and all comforts, laid up, and laid in for you; and therefore never despond, never faint, never be discouraged in an evil day, in a dark time. As Joseph had his storehouses to give a full supply to the Egyptians in time of famine, so dear Jesus, of whom Joseph was but a type, has his storehouses of mercy, of goodness, of power, of plenty, of bounty, out of which in the worst of times he is able to give his people a full supply according to all their needs; and therefore be not discouraged, do not despond in a day of trouble. O my friends, how often has the Lord hid you in the secret of his presence from the pride of men, and kept you secretly in his pavilion from the strife of tongues! Psa 27:5, and Psa 31:20. And therefore 'be strong, and lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees,' Heb 12:12. When David was in a very great distress, he does not despond nor give way to unbelief, but encourages himself in the Lord his God, 1Sa 30:6. The Hebrew word is derived from Chazack, which notes a laying hold on God with all his strength, as men do when they are in danger of drowning, who will suffer anything rather than let go their hold. When David was almost under water, when he was in danger of drowning, then, by a hand of faith, he lays hold on the Rock of Ages, and encourages himself in the Lord his God. What heavenly gallantry of spirit did good Nehemiah shew from that divine presence that was with him in that great day of trouble and distress, when 'the remnant of the captivity were in great affliction and reproach: and the wall of Jerusalem broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire!' Neh 1:3. You know Shemaiah advises him to take sanctuary in the temple, because the enemy had designed to fall upon him by night and slay him, and cause the work to cease; but Nehemiah, having a signal presence of God with him, gives this heroic and resolute answer, 'Should such a man as I flee? and who is there,

being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life?' Neh 6:10-11. I will not go in. Should I flee into the temple like a malefactor to take sanctuary there, how would God be dishonoured, religion reproached, the people discouraged, the weak scandalised, and the wicked emboldened to insult and triumph over me! saying, Is this the man that is called by God, and qualified by God, for this work and service? Is this the man that is countenanced and encouraged by the king to build the walls, and gates, and city of Jerusalem? Neh 2:5-10. Is this the man that is the chief magistrate and governor of the city? Is this the man that is sent and set for the defence of the people, and that should encourage them in their work? Oh what a mouth of blasphemy would be opened, should I make a base retreat into the temple to save my life! This is a work that I will rather die than do. I have found the face of God, the presence of God, in bowing the heart of king Artaxerxes, to contribute his royal aid, and commission me to the work; and in the bending of the hearts of the elders of the Jews to own my authority, and to rise up as one man to build; and therefore I will rather die upon the spot than go into the temple to save my life. O my friends, it becomes not those that have the presence of God with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, to sink so low in their faith and confidence, as to cry out with the prophet's servant, 'Alas, master! what shall we do?' or, with the disciples when in a storm, 'We perish;' or, with the whole house of Israel, 'Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts;' or, with weeping Jeremiah, 'My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord;' or, with Zion, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,' 2Ki 6:15; Mat 8:25; Eze 37:11; Lam 3:18; Isa 49:14. Oh, it is for a lamentation when God's dearest children shall bewray their infidelity by a fainting, sinking, discouraged spirit in an evil day. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Will the Lord be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? Then let the people of the Lord be very thankful for his presence with them in their greatest troubles, &c., Exo 33:13-16; 2Ti 4:22; Psal 16:11. O sirs! this divine presence is a great mercy. It is a peculiar mercy, it is a distinguishing mercy, it is a big-bellied mercy, it is a mercy that hath many mercies in the womb of it. It is a mercy-greatening mercy; it greatens all the mercies we do enjoy. It is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it sweetens health, strength, riches, honours, trade, relations, liberty, &c. It is a soul-mercy, a mercy that reaches the soul, that cheers the soul, that lifts up the soul, that quiets the soul, that satisfies the soul, and that will go to heaven with the soul, Eph 1:3. And will you not be thankful for such a mercy? Will you be thankful for temporal mercies, and will you not be thankful for spiritual mercies? Will you be thankful for left-handed mercies, and will you not be thankful for right-handed mercies? Will you be thankful for the mercies of the footstool, and will you not be thankful for the mercies of the throne? Will you be thankful for the mercies of this lower world, and will you not be thankful for the mercies of the upper world? Psal 103:1-4. To enjoy the presence of God when we most need it, is a mercy that deserves perpetual praises. Oh, it is infinite mercy not to be left alone in a day of trouble. It is very uncomfortable to be left alone: 'Woe to him that is alone,' Ecc 4:10-11. If a man fall, and be left alone, who shall help him up? If a man be in danger and alone, how miserable is his case! But this is the support and comfort of a Christian in all his difficulties, that he is never left alone; but his God is with him when he is at the lowest ebb, Heb 13:5; Psal 37:24, Psal 31:3, Psal 73:24; Exo 33:2, Exo 33:14-16. For God to afford us the presence of our friends in a day of trouble is a very great mercy; but what is it, then, to enjoy the presence of God in a day of trouble? What is the presence of a friend, a favourite, in a day of distress, to the presence of a prince? yea, what is the presence of an angel to the presence of God in an evil day? To enjoy the presence of God in an

afflicted condition is a more transcendent mercy than to enjoy the presence of twelve legions of angels in an afflicted condition. The divine presence is the greatest good in the world. It is life eternal; it is the bosom of God, the gate of glory, the beginning of heaven, the suburbs of happiness; and therefore be much in blessing of God, in admiring of God, for his presence with you in a dark and trying day. There is no gall, no wormwood, no affliction, no judgment to that of God's departing from a people, Lam 3:19-20: Jer 6:8, 'Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.' When God departs, nothing followeth but desolation upon desolation; desolation of persons, desolation of peace, of prosperity, of trade, and of all that is near and dear unto us: Hos 9:12, 'Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left; yea, woe also to them when I depart from them.' All terrible threatenings are summed up in this, 'Woe unto them when I depart from them.' Surely even woe to them; he put a sureness upon this 'woe to them when I depart from them.' As if the Holy Ghost should say, What, do I threaten this or the other evil? the great evil of all, the rise of all evils, is God's forsaking of them. Hell itself is nothing else but a separation from God's presence, with the ill consequents thereof. And were hell as full of tears as the sea is full of water, yet all would not be sufficient to bewail the loss of that beatifical vision. How miserable was Cain when cast off by God! Gen 4:1-26; and Saul, when the Lord departed from him! It was a most dreadful speech of Saul, 'I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me,' 1Sa 28:15-16. When God left the Israelites, though for a little while, the Holy Ghost saith they were naked, Exo 32:25. How naked? Non veste, sed gratia et præsidio Dei, Not for want of raiment, or weapons of war, but for want of God's presence and protection. When God departs from a people, that people lies naked; that is, they lie open for all storms, tempests, and dangers. Now if it be the greatest evil in the world to be shut out from the gracious presence of Christ, then it must be the greatest mercy in this world to enjoy the gracious presence of God in our great troubles and desperate dangers. And therefore let all sincere Christians be much in thankfulness to the Lord, and in blessing and praising the Lord, for his signal presence with them in their low and afflicted estate. Oh, the light, the life, the love, the holiness, the peace, the grace, the comforts, the supports that always attends the gracious presence of the Lord with his people in their deep distresses, &c. Therefore let the high praises of God for ever be in their mouths, who enjoy this signal presence of God. Psa 46:1-11 is called by some Luther's psalm; that is a psalm that Luther was wont to call to his friends to sing when any danger, trouble, or distress was near. When the clouds began to gather, Come, saith Luther, let us sing Psa 46:1-11, and then let our enemies do their worst. Observe the confidence and triumph of the church in the face of the greatest dangers: Psa 46:1, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble:' Psa 46:2, 'Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;' Psa 46:3, 'Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.' Psa 46:6, 'Though the heathen rage, and the kingdoms were moved,' to remove and root out the church with great force and fury. Now mark, by the change of the earth and removing of the mountains, are often meant the greatest alterations and concussions of states and polities, Hag 2:22-23; Jer 51:25; Rev 6:14. Now, saith the psalmist, all these dreadful turns, changes, shakings, and concussions of states and kingdoms shall never trouble us, nor daunt us; they shall never make us fret, faint, or fear. Why, what is the ground? 'The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge,' ver. 7; and so, ver. 11, the same words are repeated again. 'God is not gone, God is not withdrawn, God is

not departed from us.' Oh no! 'The Lord of hosts is with us, the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, the God of Jacob is our refuge;' and therefore we are divinely fearless and divinely careless. Though hell and earth should combine against us, yet we will bear up, and be bold to believe that all shall go well with us; for God is in the midst of us, 'The Lord of hosts is with us,' even the Lord, who commandeth far other hosts and armies than the enemy hath any. 'The God of Jacob is our refuge;' Heb., 'Our high tower.' God is a tower, so high, so strong, so inaccessible, so invincible, that all our enemies, yea, all the powers of darkness, can never hurt, reach, storm, or take; and therefore we that are sheltered in this high tower may well cast the gauntlet to our proudest, strongest, and subtlest enemies. And let thus much suffice for the inferences. The next use is a use of exhortation, to exhort all the people of God so to order and demean themselves as to keep the divine presence, as to keep the signal, the singular presence of God, with them in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Now that this may stick in power upon your souls, consider seriously of these following motives:—

[1.] First, The signal presence of God with his people puts the greatest honour, dignity, and glory upon a people imaginable; vide Isa 43:2, Isa 43:4; Jer 13:11; Eze 48:35. There are many titles of honour amongst men; but this, above all, is the truly honourable title, that we have God so near unto us: Deu 4:7, 'What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is to us?' Whilst he vouchsafed his presence amongst them, how honourable, how renowned were they all the world over! But when he departed from them they became the scorn and contempt of all nations. It may be said of some men, they have large estates, but not the presence of God with them; they are highly honoured and dignified in the world, but no presence of God with them; they have great trades and vast riches, but no presence of God with them; they are nobly related, but no presence of God with them; they have singular parts and natural accomplishments, but no presence of God with them. The want of the divine presence gives a dash, casts a blot upon all their grandeurs and worldly glory, and, like coprice, turns all their wine, be it never so rich, into ink and blackness. What a deal of honour and glory did the presence of God cast upon Joseph in prison, Gen 39:19-20; and upon Daniel in the den; and upon the three children in the fiery furnace; and upon David, when a persecuting Saul could cry out, 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1Sa 24:17; and upon John, when a bloody Herod feared him and observed him, Mark 6:20; and upon Paul, when a tyrannical Felix trembled before him, Acts 24:25; as if Paul had been the judge, and Felix the prisoner at the bar. Some write of the crystal, that what stone soever it toucheth, it puts a lustre and loveliness upon it. The presence of God puts the greatest lustre, beauty, glory, and loveliness that can be put upon a person. Now because the witness of an adversary is a double testimony, let Balaam—who, as some write of a toad, had a pearl in his head, though his heart was naught, very naught, stark naught—give in his evidence. 'How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel,' Num 24:5. He speaks both by way of interrogation and admiration: their tents are so comely, and their tabernacles so lovely, that their grand enemy was affected and ravished with them. But whence is it that Israel is so formidable and terrible in his eye? How comes this about, that he who came to fight against them thinks them beyond all compare; nay, doth himself admire their postures and order, their great glory and brave gallantry? Why, all is from the presence of their Lord-General with them: 'The Lord their God is with them; the shout of a king is amongst them,' Num 23:21. It is the highest honour, renown, and dignity of a people to have God in the midst of them, to have God near unto them. Thus Moses sets out the honour and dignity of the Jews: Deu 26:18, 'The Lord hath avouched thee this day to

be his peculiar people.' Deu 26:19, 'To make thee high, above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour.' When God reckons up the dignities of his people, this is the main, the top, of all: Psalms 87:5, 'And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her.' If you would keep your honour and dignity, keep the presence of God in the midst of you. When God is departed from Israel, then you may write Ichabod upon Israel; 'The glory is departed from Israel,' 1Sa 4:21-22. But,

[2.] Secondly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves as you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that nothing can make up the want of this signal presence of God. It is not the presence of friends, of relations, of ministers, of ordinances, of outward comforts, that can make up the want of this presence. It is not candlelight, or torchlight, or starlight, nor moonlight, that can make up the light of the sun. When the sun is set in a cloud, all the world cannot make it day; and when the presence of God is withdrawn, nothing can make up that dismal loss. 'Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled,' Psalms 30:6-7, that is, thou didst suspend the actual influence and communication of thy grace and favour. The Chaldee calleth it 'Shechinah, the divine presence:' and I was all-amort. It was not his crown, his kingdom, his riches, his dignities, his royal attendance, &c., that could make up the loss of the face of God; neither is it the presence of an angel that can make up the want of the presence of God: Exo 33:2, 'And I will send an angel before thee' God here promiseth Moses that he would send an angel before them, but withal adds that he would not go up himself in the midst of them: ay, but such a guide, such a guardian, such a nurse, such a companion, such a captain-general would not satisfy Moses, Exo 33:3. Exo 33:14, 'And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.' Exo 33:15, 'And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' Nothing would satisfy Moses below the presence of God, because he knew that they were as good never move a foot farther, as to go on without God's favourable presence. God engages himself that he will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite out of the land. Oh, but 'if thy presence go not with me, carry us up not hence.' I will bring the necks of all thy proud, stout, strong, and subtle enemies under thy feet. Oh, but 'if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' Ay, but, Deu 32:13-16, 'I will bring thee to a land flowing with milk and honey: I will make thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and I will make thee to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; and thou shalt drink the pure blood of the grape.' Oh, but 'if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' I will bring thee to the paradise of the world, to a place of pleasure and delight, to Canaan, a type of heaven! Oh, but 'if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' O Lord, if I might have my wish, my desire, my choice, I had infinitely rather to live in a barren, howling wilderness with thy presence, than in Canaan without it! It is a mercy to have an angel to guard us, it is a mercy to have our enemies sprawling under our feet, it is a mercy to be brought into a pleasant land: oh, but 'if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' Lord, nothing will please us, nothing will profit us, nothing will secure us, nothing will satisfy us, without thy presence; and therefore 'if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.' I have read of the Tyrians, that they bound their gods with chains, that they might not in their greatest need pass over to the enemy; and among the rest they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that they might be sure to keep their idol, because they thought their safety was in it. I am sure our safety, our comfort, our all, lies in the signal presence of God with us; and therefore let us by faith and prayer chain God to us; if we let him go, a thousand worlds cannot make up his absence. I

suppose you have heard of the palladium of the heathens in Troy; they imagined that so long as that idol was kept safe, they were unconquerable; all the strength and power of Greece were never able to prevail against them. Wherefore the Grecians sought by all the means they could to get it from them. O my friends, so long as you keep the presence of God with you, I am sure you are unconquerable! but if God withdraw his presence, the weakest enemy will be too hard for you, yea, wounded men will prevail over you: Jer 37:10, 'For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up and burn this city with fire.' The bush, which was a type of the church, consumed not while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst of it. Oh, do but keep God in the midst of you, and nothing shall hurt you, nothing shall burn you I but if God depart, nothing can secure you, nor nothing can make up his withdrawing from you. But,

[3.] Thirdly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in the greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that if you do not labour to demean, order, and carry yourselves so as that you may enjoy the favourable, signal, and eminent presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, you have high reason to question whether ever you have really enjoyed this favourable, this signal presence of God with you or no; for there are always four things to be found in him that has really tasted, and in good earnest experienced, the sweet, the life, the power, the virtue, that is in the favourable signal presence of God—(1.) Such a person sets the highest price and value imaginable upon it, he prizes it above all the honours, riches, dignities, delights, comforts, and contents of this world, Psa 4:6-7; yea, he prizes it above life itself: Psa 63:3, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life.' The Hebrew is plural, Chajim, lives. The loving-kindness of God, the presence of God in a wilderness, is better than lives, than many lives, than all lives with the appurtenances. There is a greater excellency in the favour of God, in the presence of God, than in all lives put together. There have been many persons that have been weary of their lives, but there never was any man that has been weary of the favour of God, of the presence of God, 1Ki 19:4; Job 7:15; Jon 4:8; Pro 28:14. (2.) Such a person keeps up in his soul a humble fear of losing of it. The divine presence is a jewel more worth than all the world, and he that has experienced the sweetness of it had rather lose all he hath in this world than lose it. I have read of a religious woman, that having born nine children, professed that she had rather endure all the pains of those nine travails at once, than endure the misery of the loss of God's presence. (3.) Such a person keeps up in his soul a diligent care to maintain this presence; his head, his heart is still a-contriving how he may keep his God with him: Jer 14:9, 'Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.' This person had rather that his dearest friends should leave him, that his nearest relations should leave him, yea, that all the world should leave him, than that his God should leave him. The daily, yea, the hourly language of the soul is, Lord, leave me not; though all the world should leave me, yet don't thou leave me! (4.) Such a person will do all he can that all under his care and charge may partake of this signal presence of God; he will do his utmost that children, yoke-fellow, kindred, servants, may taste the sweetness of the divine presence, John 1:40-51, and John 4:28-43; Acts 10:24-36. When Samson had found honey in the carcase of the lion, he did not only eat himself, but he gave of the honey to his father and mother, and they did eat also, Jdg 14:8-9. Of all sweets the presence of God is the greatest sweet; and whenever a poor soul comes to taste of this heavenly honey, he will do his best that all others, especially those

that are near and dear to him, may taste of the same honey. But,

[4.] Fourthly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider the excellent properties or qualities of this favourable, this signal presence of God with his people. This I can but hint at, because I must hasten all I can to a close. (1.) It is the best presence, Psa 63:3. It is better than the presence of friends, of relations, of saints, of angels, &c. (2.) It is the greatest presence, it is the presence of the great King, it is the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords, it is the presence not only of a mighty but of an almighty God, 1Ki 8:27; Rev 17:14, and Rev 19:16; Num 24:4, Num 24:16; Ruth 1:20, Ruth 1:22. (3.) It is the happiest presence. It is a presence that makes a man really happy, presently happy, totally happy, eminently happy, and eternally happy, Psa 144:15; 1Ki 10:8; Deu 33:29; Pro 3:18. He can never be truly happy that wants this presence; he can never be truly miserable that enjoys this presence. True happiness is too great a thing to be found in anything below this favourable, this signal presence of God. He that enjoys this presence enjoys all; he that wants this presence enjoys nothing at all; he that wants this presence may write nothing or nought upon his honours, riches, pleasures, dignities, offices, relations, friends, &c., Amo 6:13. All a man has are but ciphers without a figure if he be not blessed with this divine presence. This divine presence was Jacob's 'enough,' yea, Jacob's 'all.' Gen 33:11, 'I have all,' Esau had much, Li-zab, 'I have much, my brother;' Gen 33:9, 'But Jacob had all.' Habet omnia, qui habet habentem omnia, 'He hath all who hath him that is all in all.' Omne bonum in summo bono, 'All good is in the chiefest good,' [Augustine.] Secure this divine presence, and you secure all, Col 3:11. (4.) It is the most desirable presence. Consult these scriptures in the margin. Job 23:3, 'Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat.' Exo 33:15, 'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence;' ver. 16, 'For wherein shall it be known here, that I and my people have found grace in thy sight, is it not in that thou goest with us?' Song of Solomon 3:1, 'By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him, but I found him not.' The presence of bad men is never desirable; the presence of good men is not always desirable, for there are cases wherein their presence may be a burden to us, as Job and others have experienced, Jer 9:1-2; Job 16:1-4, and Job 19:3-5. Job 16:2, 'Miserable comforters are ye all;' Job 19:2, 'How long will you vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?' But the presence of the Lord is very desirable, most desirable, and always desirable, and the more any man has of this divine presence, the more his heart will be inflamed after more and more of it. A sound sincere Christian can never have enough power against sin, nor never enough strength against temptation, nor never enough weanedness from this world, nor never enough ripeness for heaven, nor never enough of the presence of the Lord. Enough of the divine presence he may have to quiet him, and cheer him, and encourage him, but whilst he is out of heaven he can never have enough of the divine presence to satisfy him, so as not to cry out, Lord, more of thy presence! oh, a little more of thy presence! Pro 30:15-16. (5.) It is the most joyful, refreshing, and delightful presence, Psa 16:11; Acts 5:40-41, and Acts 16:25. This Vincentius and many thousand martyrs and suffering Christians have experienced in all the ages of the world, but of this before, Isa 60:1-2; Psa 46:7. (6.) It is a peculiar and distinguishing presence, Exo 33:16. This favourable signal presence of God is a choice jewel that he hangs on no breasts, a bracelet that he puts upon no arms, a crown that he sets upon no heads, but such whom he loves with a peculiar love, with an everlasting love. The general presence of God extends and reaches to all sinners and saints, angels and devils; to all, both in that upper and this lower world; but this favourable signal

presence of God is peculiar to those that are the purchase of Christ's blood, and the travail of his soul, Jer 31:3; John 13:1; Psa 139:7-10; 1Pe 1:18-19; Isa 53:11; Ruth 1:4-18. (7.) It is an inflaming presence. Oh, how does it, [1.] Inflame the heart to duty! Psa 63:1-3. [2.] How does it inflame the heart against sin! Job 31:4-7; Gen 39:9-10; Rom 8:10. [3.] To long for the majestic and glorious presence of God in heaven, Song of Solomon 8:14; Luk 2:28-30; 2Co 5:8; Php 1:23; Rev 22:20. [4.] How does it inflame their love to the Lord, his ways, his worship, his interest, his glory! Song of Solomon 1:3-4, Song of Solomon 2:3-6, and Song of Solomon 8:1-3, Song of Solomon 8:5-7. [5.] It inflames against temptations, Song of Solomon 8:10-11. It was this divine presence that did steel and strengthen Basil, Luther, and a world of others, against the worst of temptations, Heb 11:1-40. [6.] It inflames the hearts of the saints into great freeness, readiness, and willingness to suffer many things, to suffer great things, to suffer anything for Christ, his gospel, his interest, &c. Oh, how did this divine presence make many martyrs hasten to the flames! &c. [8.] It is a soul-quieting, a soul-silencing, and a soul-stilling presence, Psa 3:5, Psa 4:8; Song of Solomon 2:3, Song of Solomon 3:4-5. When friends can't quiet us, when relations can't quiet us, when ministers can't quiet us, when duties can't quiet us, when ordinances can't quiet us, when outward comforts can't quiet us, yet then this divine presence will quiet us. When babies and rattles can't quiet the child, yet then the breasts can. So here. [9.] This divine presence is a sweetening presence: (1.) It sweetens all duties and services, public and private, ordinary and extraordinary. (2.) It sweetens all personal afflictions and trials. (3.) It sweetens all our sufferings for righteousness' sake. (4.) It sweetens all gospel ordinances, Exo 20:24. (5.) It sweetens all a man's outward mercies and blessings; it sweetens health, strength, riches, trade, &c. (6.) It sweetens all interchangeable providences. Here providence smiles, and there it frowns; here it lifts up, and there it casts down; this providence is sweet, and that is bitter; this providence kills, and that providence makes alive. Oh, but this divine presence sweetens every providence! (7.) It sweetens all other presences; it sweetens the presence of friends, it sweetens the presence of relations, it sweetens the presence of strangers, it sweetens all civil societies, it sweetens all religious societies. (8.) It sweetens the thoughts of death, the arrests of death; it turns the king of terrors into the king of desires, Job 14:5, Job 14:14, Job 30:23, and Job 17:13-14. How does Job court the worms, as if he were of a family with them, and near of kin to them! How does he look upon the grave as his bed, and makes no more to die than to go to bed! It was this divine presence that made the martyrs as willing to die as to dine. But,

[5.] Fifthly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that in great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, you will most need the favourable signal presence of God with you. We always stand in need of the divine presence, but never so much as when we are under great troubles and deep distresses. For, (1.) In days of trouble and distress, men's affections are most apt to be greatly disordered, and their hearts discomposed, as you see in Job and Jonah, Job 3:1-26; Jon 4:1-11. (2.) Now their fears, doubts, and disputes are apt to rise highest. When the wind rises high, and the sea roars, men are most apt to be afraid, Jon 2:2-7. (3.) Now Satan commonly is busiest. Satan loves to fish in troubled waters. When the hand of God is heaviest upon us, then Satan will shoot his most deadly darts at us, Job 2:9; Jas 1:12. The sons of Jacob fell upon the Shechemites when they were sore, Gen 34:25; and Amalek fell upon God's Israel and smote them, when they were weak, and feeble, and faint, and weary, Deu 25:17-19; and Satan falls foul upon Christ, when he was in the wilderness, and when he had

fasted forty days and forty nights, and was a-hungry, Mat 4:1-11; and as he dealt with the head, so he still deals with the members. (4.) Now unbelief is most turbulent, strong, and mighty in operation, as you may see in the spies, Num 13:31-33, 'We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight:' so 2Ki 6:33, 'This evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?' Vide 2Ki 7:1-2, 2Ki 7:19-20: so David, Psa 116:11, 'I said in my haste, all men are liars.' The prophets have all deceived me, and Samuel has deluded me, they have told me of a kingdom, a crown, but I shall never wear the one, nor possess the other: so 1Sa 27:1, 'I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.' Thus his fear is got above his faith, and his soul wherried about with unbelief, to the scandal of the weak, and the scorn of the wicked, besides his own particular disadvantage. (5.) Now fainting fits will be most strengthened, increased, and multiplied. Now fainting-fits, like Job's messengers, or like the rolling waves, will come thick one upon another, Pro 24:10; Job 4:5; Lam 1:12-13. (6.) Now conscience will be most startled and disquieted, Gen 42:21, and Gen 50:15; 1Ki 17:18. Great troubles and deep distresses are many times like strong physic, which stirs the humours and makes the patient sick, very sick, yea, heart-sick. Conscience commonly never reads the soul such sad and serious lectures as when the rod lies heaviest upon the back. By all which you see, what high cause the people of God have so to order, demean, and carry themselves, as that they may find the gracious presence of God with them in their greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, for then they will certainly need most of the divine presence. But,

[6.] Sixthly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider this divine presence will make you divinely fearless in the midst of your greatest troubles and deepest distresses: Psa 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me:' Psa 46:2, 'We will not fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea:' Psa 46:3, 'Though the waters thereof roar,' &c. Why? 'God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early,' Psa 46:5; 'The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah,' Psa 46:7 : Num 14:9, 'Neither fear ye the people, for they are bread for us, their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not:' Deu 7:21, 'Thou shalt not be affrighted at them, for the Lord thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible:' so Heb 13:5, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:' Heb 13:6, 'I will not fear what man shall do unto me.' There is no such way to keep down all base slavish fears of men, as to keep up the presence of God in the midst of you. You will not fear the power of men, nor the policy of men, nor the threats of men, nor the wrath of men, if you do but enjoy this gracious, this signal presence of God that is under our present consideration. Men's fears are never so rampant as when God withdraws his presence from them, 1Sa 28:15, 1Sa 28:20. But,

[7.] Seventhly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that there is in God a very great unwillingness to withdraw his presence from his people when they are in great troubles and deep distresses: Eze 8:6, 'Son of man, seest thou what they do? even the

great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?’ Isa 1:2-4, Isa 1:16, Isa 1:18; Eze 18:31, and Eze 33:11; Jer 3:13-14. Of all sins, the sin of idolatry drives God farthest off from his sanctuary. When God goes off from a people, he goes not off rashly, he goes not off suddenly, but he goes off gradually; he removes not at once, but by degrees; now a step, and then a step, as Lot did when he lingered in Sodom, Gen 19:16. Lot was not more loath to depart out of Sodom than God is loath to leave his people. He goes first to the threshold: Eze 9:3, ‘And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub whereupon he was to the threshold of the house.’ Then over the threshold: Eze 10:4, ‘Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house.’ Here is a second step. This is the second time of resting before God departs. The Lord had his ordinary dwelling-place in the holy of holies. Now God’s first remove was from the most holy place; his second remove was from the holy place; his third remove was higher towards heaven: Eze 10:19, ‘And the cherubims lift up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight, then to the door of the east gate,’ or foremost gate, ‘of the Lord’s house,’ to note God’s total remove from his house. Then to the midst of the city: Eze 11:23, ‘And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and then he stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.’ This is God’s last stop in his departure, by which is signified that he was willing to make one trial more, to see if the people would, in this present danger, call him back by invitation and lively repentance. God is greatly troubled when it comes to parting: Hos 11:8, ‘How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.’ This is spoken per anthropopatheian and not properly, because diverse thoughts and repentance are not incident to God, ‘who is without all variableness, or shadow of change,’ Jas 1:17. The Lord seemeth here to be at a stand, or at strife with himself, about the destruction of this people. Howbeit God, in the bowels of his mercy, yearning, and taking pity of his elect amongst them, spareth to lay upon them the extremity of his wrath, and is ready to save them for his mercy’s sake. Observe how fatherlike he melts and mourns over them, and how mercy interposeth her four several ‘hows!’ Here are four such pathetical interrogations as the like are not to be found in the whole book of God, and not to be answered by any but God himself, as indeed he doth to each particular in the following words: ‘My heart is turned within me;’ that is the first answer. The second is, ‘My repentings are kindled together.’ The third is, ‘I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath.’ The fourth is, ‘I will not destroy Ephraim.’ And why? First, ‘I am God, and not man;’ secondly, ‘The Holy One in the midst of thee.’ God is mighty unwilling to break up house, and to leave his people desolate. Now is God so unwilling to withdraw his presence; and shall not we do all what we can to retain him in the midst of us? When dear friends are unwilling to leave us, we are the more earnest in pressing them to stay and abide with us. God is marvellously unwilling to go, and therefore let us, with the church, cry out, ‘Leave us not,’ Jer 14:9. But,

[8.] Eighthly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that troubles will be no troubles, distresses will be no distresses, dangers will be no dangers, if you can but secure the presence of God with you. Mountains will be molehills, stabs at the heart will be but as scratches upon the hand, if the divine presence be with you. God’s signal presence will turn storms into calms, winter nights into summer days, prisons into palaces, banishments into enlargements. The favourable presence of God will turn sickness into health, weakness into

strength, poverty into plenty, and death into life. It can never be night so long as the sun shines. No afflictions, no trials, can make it night with a Christian, so long as he enjoys the presence of God with his spirit, 2Ti 4:22. That courtier need not complain that this man slights him, and that the other neglects him, who enjoys the delightful presence of his prince. When Samson had the presence of God with him, he made nothing of carrying the gates of the city, with the posts and bars, to the top of a hill, Jdg 16:3. So whilst a Christian enjoys the singular presence of God with him, he will make nothing of this affliction and that, of this trouble and that, of this loss and that. This presence makes heavy afflictions light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, 2Co 4:16-17. It was this presence that made the martyrs set light by all the great and grievous things that they suffered for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake, Heb 11:33-39. God's gracious presence makes every condition to be a little heaven to the believing soul. A man in misery, without this gracious presence of God, is in a very hell on this side hell. There is nothing, there can be nothing, but heaven, where God is signally present. But,

[9.] Ninthly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that the worst of men cannot fasten a curse upon you whilst you keep the presence of God with you: Num 23:21, 'The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.' There could be no enchantment against them, for the Lord their God was with them, and the shout of a king was among them, that is, God reigneth as a king among them. Hereby also is meant the faith, joy, boldness, courage, and confidence of God's people in their king. As when a king comes amongst the armies of his people, he is received with joyful shoutings and acclamations, and when he goes forth to battle with them, he goes accompanied with the sound of trumpets and shouts of the people, signs of their joy and courage; so it fared with the Israelites, because of that signal presence of God that was amongst them, which was evident by his protecting and defending of them: 1Sa 4:5, 'And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.' Here is a valorous shout of a puissant people, encouraging each other to the battle, and a victorious shout as having obtained the victory in the battle. So 2Ch 13:12, 'And behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you, O children of Israel.' Num 23:23, 'Surely, there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel;' that is, there is none against Israel that shall be of force, or that shall take any effect to do the posterity of Jacob or Israel any hurt, any harm, any prejudice. But why? Because the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. The presence of God with his Israel blasts all Balaam's enchantments, and makes null and void all his divinations. God is with his people to counsel them in all doubtful and difficult cases, and to defend them, and secure them against all their enemies and opposers. Balaam had a month's mind to curse the people of God, as his unwearied endeavours to that purpose do abundantly evidence, Num 23:1, Num 23:13, Num 23:28-29, and Num 24:1; but the presence of God with his people prevented all his mischievous designs. Shimei curses David, but his curses could not hurt him, for God was with him, 2Sa 16:7, 2Sa 16:9, 2Sa 16:11-12. The people generally cursed Jeremiah, Jer 15:10, and Jer 1:17-19; but all their curses could not harm him, for God was with him. The Jews in their prayers daily curse the Christian churches, but all their curses can't prejudice them, because God is in the midst of them, Exo 20:24. And who will say that the reformed churches are one pin the worse for all the pope's excommunications and execrations with bell, book, and candle? The signal presence of God with

his people is a most sovereign antidote against all the curses and cursings of cursed men, and therefore whatever you part with, be sure you don't part with your God; let him be but in the midst of you, and then no curses shall be prevalent against you. This age abounds with such monsters, whose mouths are full of curses; but if every curse should stick a visible blister on the curser's tongue, as it doth insensible ones on the curser's soul, their tongues would quickly be too big for their mouths, and they would soon grow weary of cursing the people of God, the things of God, the ways of God, the providences of God, and the faithful dispensers of the mysteries of God. But the best of it is, when they have done their worst, and spat out all their curses, 'the curse causeless will not come,' Pro 26:2, for the ever-blessed God is in his people, and with his people, and among his people, and 'a wall of fire always about his people,' Zec 2:5, and therefore they are safe and secure enough when men and devils have done their worst. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, To move you so to order, demean, and carry yourselves, as that you may enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, consider that the divine presence will make up the absence of all outward comforts. This gracious presence will supply and fill up the place of a friend, a child, a father, a husband. Some of the rabbis write that manna had all sorts of tastes and all sorts of sweets in it. Sure I am that the favourable presence of God has all sorts of sweets in it, Psa 4:6-7; Pro 4:23. It has the sweet of all ordinances in it, it has the sweet of all duties in, it has the sweet of all church privileges in it, it has the sweet of all relations in it, it has the sweet of all your outward comforts in it; and therefore, above all keeping, keep the presence of God with you. Many in their distresses and miseries are full of complaints. One cries out, he wants a faithful friend; another cries out, he wants an active relation; a third cries out that he wants necessities both for back and belly; a fourth cries out he wants the means that others enjoy; but he that enjoys the gracious presence of God finds all these wants made up to him—yea, he finds the divine presence to be infinitely better than the presence of all outward comforts. As Elkanah said to Hannah, 'Am not I better than ten sons?' 1Sa 1:8, so assuredly the presence of the Lord is wonderfully better than all other things to every soul that has tasted the sweetness of it. You know that one sun is more glorious, delightful, useful, and comfortable than ten thousand stars; so here. Seneca tells a courtier that had lost his son, *Fas tibi non est, salvo Cæsare, de fortuna tua queri, &c.*, That he had no cause to mourn, either for that or aught else, so long as his sovereign was in safety, and he in favour with his sovereign; he had all things in him, and he should be unthankful to his good fortune if he were not cheerful both in heart and look, so long as things stood so with him as they did. How much more may we say to every sincere Christian that enjoys the gracious presence of God with him, let thy wants and thy crosses be never so great, thy afflictions never so pressing, thy necessities never so biting, thou hast no just cause to be troubled or dejected, so long as thou art in favour with God, and enjoyest the presence of God. All mercies, all comforts, all contentments, all enjoyments, they meet and centre in the gracious presence of God, as all lights meet in the sun, and as all waters meet in the sea; and therefore let not that soul mourn or complain of the want of anything, who enjoys that gracious presence of God that is better than every terrene thing. Thus much for the motives. But some may say, O sir, what means should we use that we may enjoy the gracious presence of the Lord with us in our greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers? I answer, 1. First, There are some things that you must carefully shun and take heed of; as,

[1.] First, Take heed of high sinnings, take heed of scandalous sins. High sinnings do greatly dishonour God, wound conscience, reproach religion, stagger the weak, grieve the strong, open the mouths of the wicked, and provoke God to withdraw his gracious presence, Psa 51:11-12; Exo 32:8, and Exo 33:3; Isa 63:10. Turn to these scriptures, and seriously ponder upon them. Great transgressions do eclipse the favour of God as well as the honour of God. In great transgressions we turn our backs upon God, and God turns away his face from us. Gross sins will provoke God to withdraw his presence, both in respect of vigour and strength, as also in respect of peace and comfort. But,

[2.] Secondly, Take heed of impenitency. Next to our being preserved from sin, it is the greatest mercy in the world, when we are fallen by our transgressions, to make a quick and speedy return to God. When by your sins you have made work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician, souls, immediately make up the breach, take up the controversy between God and your souls, humble yourselves, judge yourselves, and speedily return to the Most High, Hos 6:1; Exo 32:9-15. Thus Peter did, and recovered the favourable presence of God presently, Mat 26:75; Mark 16:7. But if men will commit sin and lie in it, if they will fall and have no mind to rise, God will certainly withdraw his favourable presence from them, as you see in David and Solomon, Psa 51:11-12; 1Ki 11:9; Jos 7:1-5. This is further evident in that case of Achan, Jos 7:1-26, 'The Israelites they came to fight with the men of Ai, and fled before them, for the Lord was not with them.' Why, what was the cause of God's withdrawing himself? See Jos 7:11, 'Israel hath sinned.' And Jos 7:12, 'Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs.' Their sins having betrayed them into the hand of divine justice, and into their enemies' hands also; mark what follows, 'Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from amongst you.' If we will not stone our Achans, our sins, by the lively exercise of faith and repentance; if we will keep up our lusts in despite of all that God does against us, we must never expect to retain the gracious presence of God with us. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Take heed either of neglecting gospel-worship, or of corrupting gospel-worship. Omissions will damn as well as commissions, and omissions will provoke God to withdraw his presence, as well as commissions. When persons are careless in their attendance on gospel ordinances, no wonder if God withdraw his presence from them in their distresses, Song of Solomon 5:2-3, Song of Solomon 5:6, and Song of Solomon 4:1-3. Cain went off from ordinances, and the Lord set a mark upon him, Gen 4:15-16. Oh, the black and dismal marks of misery, that God has set upon many that have neglected gospel-worship, and for profit's sake, and for Diana's sake, are fallen roundly in with the worship of the world! 2Ti 4:10; Acts 19:24, Acts 19:36. O sirs, the great God stands upon nothing more in all the world than upon purity in his worship. There is nothing that doth so provoke and exasperate God against a people as corrupt worship. Corrupt worship sadly reflects upon the name of God, the honour of God, the truth of God, and the wisdom of God; and therefore his heart rises against such worship and worshippers, and he will certainly withdraw from them, and be a swift and terrible witness against them, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Corrupt worship is contrary to the unity of God. Now deny his unity, and you deny his deity, 'For the Lord is one, and his name is one,' Zec 14:9. It is contrary to the sovereignty of God, 'He is the only ruler, the only potentate,' 1Ti 6:15. It is contrary to the all-sufficiency of God. The heathen worshipped several gods, as thinking that several gods did bestow several blessings. They begged health of one god, wealth of another god,

and victory of a third god, thus imagining to themselves several deities for several supplies. Their god was but a Jupiter, a partial helper, an auxiliary god, but 'our God is Jehovah,' who is abundantly able to supply all our wants, Eph 3:20. Now, if either we neglect his true instituted worship, or fall in with a false worship, with a devised worship, with a human worship, with a worldly worship, he will certainly withdraw his gracious presence from us. Will-worship accuses and charges God with weakness and folly, as if God were not careful enough, nor faithful enough, nor mindful enough, nor wise enough, to order, direct, and guide his people in the matters of his worship, but must be beholden to the wisdom, prudence, and care of man, of vain man, of sinful man, of vile and unworthy man, of weak and foolish man, to complete, perfect, and make up something that was wanting in his worship! Heb 3:4-6; John 4:23-24. Now assuredly God will never keep house with them who give in such severe accusations and charges against him. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Take heed of a willing, wilful, and presumptuous running cross to divine commands, to divine warnings. The disobedient child is turned out of doors; the disobedient servant shall have none of his master's smiles, the disobedient wife has little of her husband's company. A willing, wilful, presumptuous running cross to divine commands speaks out much pride, atheism, hardness, blindness, and desperate security and contempt of the great God. It speaks out the greatest disingenuity, stoutness, and stubbornness that is imaginable; and therefore no wonder if God turn his back upon such, and if he disdains to be in the midst of such: Num 14:42, 'Go not up, for the Lord is not among you, that ye be not smitten before your enemies.' Num 14:43, 'For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you'—that is, on the top of the hill, lying in readiness to set upon you, and therefore are said, 'to come down,' Num 14:45—'and ye shall fall by the sword; because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you,' Num 14:43. See Deu 1:42-46. But they presumed to go up to the hill-top, though they had not the presence of God with them, nor the signs of his grace and favour with them, nor the company of Moses with them; but mark, they paid dear for their presumption. Deu 1:45, 'Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them even unto Hormah.' When men are without God's presence they are without God's precincts, and so out of his protection. To act or run cross to God's express command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:24. We frequently deny our presence unto disobedient persons, and so does God his. Disobedience to divine commands shuts the door against the divine presence, and will not suffer God to come in to succour us, comfort us, or support us, under our greatest troubles and deepest distresses. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Take heed of carnal confidence, of resting upon an arm of flesh: Psa 30:6, 'And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved;' that is, when I was prosperously settled in the kingdom, I began to conclude within myself that now there was an end of all my troubles, I should now live all my days in a prosperous estate. David having taken the strong fort of Zion, and having vanquished his enemies round about, and all the tribes having submitted themselves to him, and having built a fair palace, and being quietly settled in his throne, he began to be puffed up with carnal confidence. Oh the hazard of honour! Oh the damage of dignity! how soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease! Flies settle upon the sweetest perfumes when cold; and so does sin on the best hearts, when they are dissolved and dispirited by prosperity. Oh how apt are the holiest of men to be proud and secure, and promise themselves more than ever God promised them—viz.,

immunity from the cross. He thought that his kingdom and all prosperity was tied unto him with cords of adamant; he sitting quietly at Jerusalem, and free from fear of all his enemies, 2Sa 11:1; but God quickly confutes his carnal confidence by giving him to know that he could as easily blast the strongest oak as he could trample the smallest worm under his feet. 2Sa 11:7, 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' God will quickly suspend his favour and withdraw his presence when his children begin to be proud and carnally confident. Look, as at the eclipse of the sun the whole frame of nature droops; so when God hides his face, when he withdraws his presence, the best of saints cannot but droop and hang down their heads. So Jer 17:5, 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' Ver. 6, 'For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh.' But,

[6.] Sixthly, Take heed of barrenness and unfruitfulness under gospel ordinances. Turn to these scriptures, Isa 5:1-8; Mat 13:34-42; 2Ch 32:16, to the last. Of all spiritual judgments, barrenness is the greatest; and when men are given up to this judgment, God withdraws; he has no pleasure to dwell in a barren soil. What are barren grounds and barren wombs to barren hearts? He that remains wholly barren under gospel ordinances, may well question his marriage-union with Christ, Eze 47:11; Mat 13:19; Hos 9:14; John 15:3; Heb 2:6-8; Jude 1:12: for, Rom 7:4, We are said to be 'married to Christ, that we may bring forth fruit to God.' There is a double end of marriage—viz., cohabitation and propagation; and therefore there cannot be a greater and clearer evidence that thou art not yet taken into a married union with Christ, than a total barrenness under gospel enjoyments. Christ's spouse is fruitful: Song of Solomon 1:16, 'Our bed is green;' Song of Solomon 4:1, 'Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair: thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead;' Song of Solomon 4:2, 'Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing: whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them.' Christ hath no further delight in his people, nor will no further grace his people with his special presence, than they make conscience of weeping over their barrenness, and of bringing forth fruit to him, Song of Solomon 7:11-13. 'Now my husband will love me, now he will be joined to me, now I have born him this son also,' Gen 29:34, said Leah. So may the fruit-bearing soul reason it out with Christ: Now I know dear Jesus will love me, now I know he will delight in me, now I know he will dwell with me, now I know he will honour me with his presence, for now I bring forth fruit unto him. Barrenness under the means of grace drives God from us, and the gospel from us, and trade, and peace, and prosperity from us, and one Christian from another. Ursinus observes, that the sins and barrenness of the Protestants under the gospel in king Edward's days, brought in the persecution in queen Mary's days; and he tells us, that those who fled out of England in queen Mary's days acknowledged that that calamity befell them for their great unprofitableness under the means of grace in king Edward's days. Among other prodigies, which were about the time that Julian came to the empire, there were wild grapes appeared upon the vines, with which many wise men in that day were much affected, looking upon it as ominous. Ah, England! England! I look upon nothing to be so ominous to thee as the barrenness of the professors of the day! No wonder if God leave his house, when the trees that are planted in it and about it are all barren. The nutmeg-tree makes barren all the ground about it; so doth the spice of worldly love make the hearts of Christians barren under the means of grace. But I must hasten.

[7.] Seventhly, Take heed of pride and haughtiness of spirit: Hos 5:5, 'And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity: Judah also shall fall with them;' ver. 6, 'They shall go with their flocks, and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him, he hath withdrawn himself from them.' Pride is the great master-pock of the soul; it will bud and blossom, it cannot be hid; it is the leprosy of the soul, that breaks forth in the very forehead, and so testifieth to his face, Eze 7:10; Isa 3:16-25. Some have called Rome, Epitomen universi, An epitome, or abridgment of the whole world: so it may be said of pride, that it is the sum of all naughtiness, a sea of sin, a complicated sin, a mother sin, a breeding sin, a sin that has all sorts of sin in the womb of it. Consult the scriptures in the margin. Aristotle, speaking of justice, saith, That in justice all virtues are couched, συλλ■βδην, summarily; so it may be truly said of pride, that in it all vices are as it were in a bundle lapped up together; and therefore no wonder if God withdraw his presence from proud persons, 'He hath withdrawn himself from them'—Heb., 'Hath snatched away himself;' hath thrown himself out of their company, as Peter threw himself out from the rude soldiers into a by corner to weep bitterly, Mark 14:72. God will have nothing to do with proud persons, he will never dwell with them, he will never keep house with them. He that dwells in the highest heavens will never dwell in a haughty heart. 'The proud he knoweth afar off,' Isa 57:15; Psa 138:6. He won't vouchsafe to come so near such loathsome lepers; he stands off from such as [are] odious and abominable; he cannot abide the sight of them, yea, his very heart rises against them, Pro 15:25, and Pro 16:5: Jas 4:6, 'God resisteth the proud,'—■ντιτ■σσεται, 'He sets himself in battle array against him,' as the Greek word emphatically signifies. Above all sorts of sinners, God sets himself against proud persons, as invaders of his territories and foragers or plunderers of his chief treasures. God defieth such as deify themselves. God will arm himself against them, he will never vouchsafe his gracious presence to them; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the divine presence, arm against pride, watch against pride, and pray hard against pride. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Take heed of a slothful, lazy, trifling spirit in the things of God: Song of Solomon 5:2, 'I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night;' Song of Solomon 5:3, 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Christ's head is filled with dew; i.e., Christ came to his spouse full of the dew of spiritual and heavenly blessings. Christ always brings meat in his mouth, and a reward in his hand, Eph 1:3-4; Rev 22:12. Christ never visits his people empty handed. He is no beggarly or niggardly guest. When he comes, he brings everything that heart can wish or need require. And now stand and wonder at the silly excuse that the spouse makes for herself: ver. 3, Trouble me not, for I am in bed; my clothes are off, my feet are washed, and I am composed to a settled rest! But are you so indeed? might Christ have replied. Is this your kindness to your friend? 2Sa 16:17. Is this the part and posture of a vigilant Christian? Would it not have been much better for you to have had your loins girt, your lamp burning, and you waiting for your Lord's return? Is it so great a trouble? Is it such a mighty business for you to rise out of your bed, to put on your clothes, and to let in such a guest, as comes not to take anything from you, but to enrich you with the best and noblest of favours? Now mark how severely Christ punishes his spouse's sluggishness, laziness, slothfulness, and delays to entertain him when he knocked: ver. 6, 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave no answer;' or he was gone, he was gone, a

most passionate complaint for his departure; or my best-beloved was departed, he was gone away. By the iteration or doubling of this sentence, wherein the spouse complains of the departure of her bridegroom, is signified her great trouble, her hearty sorrow, her inexpressible grief, that lay as a heavy load upon her spirit; because, by her unworthy usage of him, she had foolishly occasioned him to withdraw his presence from her. Spiritual desertions are of three sorts: (1.) Cautional, for preventing of sin, as Paul's seems to be, 1Co 1:2, 1Co 1:7-8; (2.) Probational, for trial and exercise of grace; (3.) Penal, for chastisement of spiritual sloth and sluggishness, as here in the spouse. Now this last is far the saddest and heaviest; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the gracious presence of the Lord, take heed of a lazy, slothful, sluggish spirit in the things of God, in the concernments of your souls. That man must needs be miserable that is lazy and slothful, and had rather go sleeping to hell than sweating to heaven. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Take heed of a covetous worldly spirit under the smarting rod, under the severe rebukes of God: Isa 57:17, 'For the iniquity of his covetousness I was wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.' Covetousness was the common sin of the Jews. This disease had infected all sorts and ranks of men; this leprosy did spread itself over princes, prophets, and people, as you may see in comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Now 'covetousness being the root of all evil,' as the apostle speaks, and the darling sin of the nation, God is so provoked by it that he first smites, and then hides himself, as one that in displeasure, having left one to the evil and harsh usage of some other, withdraweth himself out of the way, and having shut himself up in his closet, will not be seen or spoken with. A worldly man makes the world his god. Covetousness is flat idolatry: Col 3:5, 'Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.' Now though it be true that whatever a man loves most and best, that is his god, be it his belly or his back; yet, in a special manner, covetousness is idolatry, so as no other sin is, Php 3:19; Isa 3:16-25. Three things especially make a god; First, our judgment, when we esteem it in our serious thoughts to be our chiefest good, and that in which we place our happiness. Now the covetous man looks upon the riches of the world as his heaven, his happiness, his great all. Pope Sylvester placed so much happiness in riches, that, to enjoy the popedom for seven years, he sold his soul to the devil. The people of Constantinople placed so much of their happiness in riches, and were so excessively covetous, that they were buying and selling in their shops, even three days after the Turks were within the walls of the city, and that was the reason that the streets run down with the blood of them, their wives, and children. Secondly, our confidence. That is a homage which makes a god, when we place our trust in anything make it our rock, our fortress, our all-sufficient good. This the covetous man doth, 'He saith to the wedge of gold, thou art my confidence,' Job 21:34. The rich man's heart dances about his golden calf, saying to his 'wedge of gold, thou art my confidence;' and yet his wedge of gold shall prove but as Achan's wedge, a wedge to cleave his soul in sunder, and, as that Babylonish garment, to be his winding-sheet, Jos 7:21 to end. 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city,' Pro 10:15; 1Ti 6:17. Covetous persons do really think themselves simply the better and the safer for their hoards and heaps of riches; but they may one day find themselves greatly mistaken. Famous is that story of Cræsus among the heathens. He was a great king, and tumbled up and down in his gold and silver; and Solon, that wise man of Greece, coming into his country, he desired to speak with him, and when he saw him, after Solon had seen and viewed all his wealth and glory, he asked him whom he thought to be the happiest man in the world, imagining

that Solon would have said Crœsus. But Solon answered, I think Tellus was the most happy man. Tellus, saith he; why Tellus? Because, said Solon, though he was poor, yet he was a good man, and content with that which he had; and having governed the commonwealth well, and brought up his child honestly and religiously, he died honourably. Well, then, said Crœsus, but who dost thou think the second happy man in the world? I think, said he, those two brothers that, instead of horses, drew their mother in a chariot to the temple. Whereupon, said Crœsus, what thinkest thou of me? I think, says he, thou art a very rich man; but a man may be happy though he be poor, and a man may be unhappy though he be rich, for he may lose all his riches before he die; and therefore, *Ante obitum nemo, &c.*, I think none truly happy but he that lives well and dies well. Whereupon that wise man Solon was dismissed the court with neglect. But afterward this Crœsus, making war against Cyrus, he was overcome by Cyrus; and being taken captive, he was laid upon a pile of wood to be burned to death, then lying on the pile of wood he cried out and said, O Solon! Solon! Solon! Cyrus inquiring what he meant, he answered, This Solon was a wise man of Greece, that told me that happiness did not consist in riches, for they might all be lost, and a rich man might die miserable; whose words, said he, I then neglected, but now I find true; and therefore now I cry out, O Solon, Solon, Solon! Let us now tell the covetous man, the worldly man, that his happiness lies not in riches, though he looks upon his riches as his strong city; he won't mind us, he won't regard. Oh but there is a time a-coming wherein the worldling will cry out, O Solon, Solon, Solon! Thirdly, Our service, Mat 6:24. That is a homage which makes a god. When we devote all our pains, labour, and service to it, be it this or that, that makes a god. Now the covetous man, his heart is most upon the world, his thoughts are most upon the world, his affections are most upon the world, and his discourse is most about the world. He that hath his mind taken up with the world, and chiefly delighted with the world's music, he hath also his tongue tuned to the same key, and taketh his joy and comfort in speaking of nothing else but the world and worldly things. If the world be in the heart, it will break out at the lips. A worldly-minded man speaketh of nothing but worldly things. 'They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world,' John 4:5. The water riseth not above the fountain. Out of the warehouse the shop is furnished. The love of this world makes men forget God, neglect Christ, slight ordinances, refuse heaven, despise holiness, and oils the tongue for worldly discourses, Mat 19:21-22. Ah the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits, the words that are spent upon the world, and the things of the world, whilst sinners' souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity is posting on upon them! I have read of a griping usurer, who was always best when he was most in talking of the world. Being near his end, he was much pressed to make his will. At last he was overcome, and then he dictates to the scrivener after this manner:—First, I bequeath my own soul to the devil, for being so greedy of the muck of this world; item, next I give my wife's soul to the devil, for persuading me to this course of life; item, I give the parson of our parish's soul to the devil, because he did not shew me the danger I lived in, nor reprove me for it. Oh, the danger of making the world our god, when we come to die and to make up our accounts with God! Now when men make the world their god, and set up their riches, pleasures, and profits in the place of God, no wonder if God withdraws his presence from them; and therefore, as ever you would retain the gracious presence of God with you, take heed of a covetous spirit, a worldly spirit. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, As ever you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, take heed of a cross, froward, and inflexible spirit under the rod. When the child is froward under the rod, the father withdraws; so

here, Isa 57:17, 'I was wroth, I smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his hearty' Isa 47:6. Though I manifested my displeasure by giving them up to their enemies, and by laying them under the tokens of my anger, they persisted in their own cross, crooked, and rebellious courses, refusing to repent and turn to the Most High; and therefore God changes his countenance, hides his face, and withdraws his presence from them: Deu 32:20, 'And he said, I will hide my face from them, for they are a very froward generation.' Heb., A generation of perversenesses. When the sick man is froward, friends withdraw and leave him alone: Psa 18:26, 'With the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.' God will meet with froward persons in their own way, and make them reap the fruits of their own doings. God will walk cross and contrary to the froward, opposing and crossing them in all they do. God has no delight to grace froward persons with his presence. When men begin to be froward under a divine hand, God commonly hides his face, and turns his back upon them. Men sick of impatience are no fit company for the God of all patience. Men that are peevish and pettish under the rod will always see a cloud upon the face of God; and thus you see that there are ten things that you must carefully take heed of, as you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, Rom 15:5; Pro 11:20. But,

2. Secondly, As there are many things to be avoided, so there are several things to be put in practice, as you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. Let me glance at a few:—

[1.] First, Be sure that you are brought under the bond of the covenant. This gracious signal presence of God with his people, under their greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, is peculiar to those that are in covenant with God. Noah was in covenant with God, and God was with him, providing an ark for him, and preserving of him from drowning in the midst of drowning. Lot was in covenant with God, and God was with him, and secures him in Zoar, when he rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Joseph was in covenant with God, and God was with Joseph in prison. Jeremiah was in covenant with God, and God kept him company in the dungeon. The three children, or rather champions, were in covenant with God, and God was signally present with them in the fiery furnace. Daniel was in covenant with God, and God was wonderfully with him in the lions' den. Job was in covenant with God, and God was with him in six troubles, and in seven, Job 3:18-19. David was in covenant with God, and God was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, Psa 89:33-34, and Psa 23:4. Take not up in a name to live, nor in a form of godliness, nor in common convictions, nor in an outward reformation; take up in nothing below a covenant-relation, as you would enjoy the precious presence of the Lord with you in your greatest troubles, and deepest distresses, Deu 26:17-19. If you choose him for your God, you shall then assuredly find him to be your God; if he be the God of our love and fear, he will be the God of our comfort and safety; if God be your God in covenant, then in distress the cities of refuge are open to you; he will stick close to you, he will never leave you nor forsake you, Heb 13:5-7; you have a Father to go to, a God to flee to, a God that will take care of you: 'Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpassed.' Here are chambers, with drawing-rooms provided, not open chambers, but with doors, and doors shut round about, intimating that guard of protection, which the people of God shall find from him, even in a common inundation. But,

[2.] Secondly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you, in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then look to the practical part of holiness, keep up the power of godliness in your hearts and lives: 2Ch 15:2; John 14:21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.' John 14:23, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' He that frames his heart and life according to Christ's rule, shall be sure of Christ's presence. Ezekiel was a man that kept up the power of holiness and godliness in his heart and life. And oh! the glorious visions, and deep mysteries, and rare discoveries of God, and of his presence, and of the great things that should be brought about in the latter days, that was discovered to him! Daniel kept up the power of holiness and godliness in his heart and life; and oh, what secrets and mysteries did God reveal to him! Many of those great and glorious things, which concerns the destruction of the four last monarchies, and the growth, increase, exaltation, flourishing, durable, invincible and unconquerable estate of his own kingdom, was discovered to him. Paul was a person that kept up the power of holiness and godliness in his heart and life; and oh, what a mighty presence of God had he with him, in all his doing, suffering, and witnessing work! And oh, what glorious revelations and discoveries of God had he, when he was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, or wordless words, such as words were too weak to utter, such 'as was not possible for man to utter,' and that either because they transcended man's capacity in this life, or else because the apostle was forbid to utter them, they being revealed to him not for the public use of the church, but only for his particular encouragement, that he might be the better able to encounter with all hardships, difficulties, dangers, and deaths that did or might attend him in his ministerial work, 2Co 1:7-10. Some of the ancients are of opinion that he saw God's essence, for, say they, other things in heaven might have been uttered, but the essence of God is so great and so glorious a thing that no man or angel can utter it. But here I must crave leave to enter my dissent from these learned men, for the scripture is express in this, 'that no man hath thus ever seen the Lord at any time, and that no man can thus see the Lord, and live,' John 1:18; 1Ti 6:16; 1Jn 4:12; Exo 33:20-23. And as great a favourite of Heaven as Moses was, yet he could only see the back parts of God, he could only behold some lower representations of God. Some say that he heard the heavenly singing of angels and blessed spirits, which was so sweet, so excellent and glorious, that no mortal man was able to utter it; and this of the two is most probable. But no man is bound to make this opinion an article of his faith. This, I think, we may safely conclude, that in this rapture, besides the contemplation of celestial mysteries, he felt such unspeakable delight and pleasure, that was either like to that, or exceeded that, which Adam took in the terrestrial paradise. Doubtless the apostle did see and hear such excellent things as was impossible for the tongue of any mortal man to express or utter. John was 'a burning and a shining light,' John 5:35, both in life and doctrine. He was a man that kept up in his heart and life the power of holiness and godliness; and Christ reveals to him the general estate of his church and all that should befall his people, and that from John's time unto his second coming. Christ gives John a true representation of all the troubles, trials, changes, mercies, and glories that in all times and in all ages and places should attend his church until he came in all his glory. About sixty years after Christ's ascension, Christ comes to John, and opens his heart, and unbosoms his soul, and makes known to him all that care, that love, that tenderness, that kindness, and that sweetness that he would exercise towards his

church from that very time to the end of the world. Christ tells John, that though he had been absent, and seemingly silent for about threescore years, that yet he was not so taken up with the delights, contents, and glory of heaven, as that he did not care what became of his church on earth. Oh no! and therefore he opens his choicest secrets, and makes known the most hidden and glorious mysteries to John that ever was made known to any man. As there was none that had so much of the heart of Christ as John, so there was none had so much of the ear of Christ as John. Christ singles out his servant John from all the men in the world, and makes, known to him all the happy providences and all the sad occurrences that were to come upon the followers of the Lamb, that so they might know what to fit for, and what to pray for, and what to wait for. Also he declares to John all that wrath and vengeance, all that desolation and destruction that should come upon the false prophet and the beast, and upon all that wandered after them, and that were worshippers of them, and that had received their marks either in their foreheads or in their hands. Thus you see that they which keep up the power of holiness in their hearts and lives, they shall be sure to enjoy the choicest presence of God, and the clearest, fullest, and sweetest discoveries of God, and of these great things that concern the internal and eternal good of their souls. Nothing wins upon God like holiness, nothing delights God like holiness, nothing engages the presence of God like holiness, Psa 50:23. He shews his salvation to him that ordereth his conversation aright. He that puts every piece of his conversation in the right order, he shall see and know that he shall be saved. He that walks accurately and exactly, that walks as in a frame, treading gingerly, stepping warily, he shall have a prospect of heaven here, and a full fruition of heaven hereafter, 'Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways,' Isa 64:5. He that works righteousness and walks in righteousness shall be sure to meet with God, and to enjoy the precious presence of God in his greatest troubles and deepest distresses. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then keep close to instituted worship, keep close to gospel ordinances, keep close to your church state: Exo 20:24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and bless thee, Isa 64:5; Rev 2:1; Song of Solomon 7:5; Eze 48:35. Where God fixeth his solemn worship for the memorial and honour of his name, there he will vouchsafe his gracious presence: Mat 18:20, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' The promise of God's gracious assistance, presence, and acceptance is annexed to his church, whether it be great or small, numerous or few: Mat 28:20, 'Lo, I am with you alway,' according to my godhead, majesty, grace, and Spirit. Lo, I am with you, to own you! Lo, I am with you, to counsel and direct you! Lo, I am with you, to cheer and comfort you! Lo, I am with you, to assist and strengthen you! Lo, I am with you, to shelter you and protect you! Lo, I am with you, to do all your works in you and for you! Lo, I am with you, to strengthen your graces and to weaken your sins! Lo, I am with you, to scatter your fears and answer your doubts! Lo, I am with you, to better your hearts and to mend your lives! Lo, I am with you, to bless you and crown you with immortality and glory! And what can the soul desire more? Such as have low thoughts of gospel ordinances, such as slight gospel ordinances, such as neglect gospel ordinances, such as vilify gospel ordinances, such as decry gospel ordinances, such as oppose gospel ordinances,—such may talk of the presence of Christ, and such may boast of the presence of Christ, but all such are out of the way of enjoying the presence of Christ. Christ is only to be met with in his own worship, and in his own ways. Ah, how many in these days are there that are like to old Barzillai, that had lost his taste and hearing, and so cared not for David's feasts and music!

2Sa 19:35. How many are there that formerly were very zealous for ordinances, but now are as zealous against them! How many formerly have made many great, hard, and dangerous ventures to enjoy gospel ordinances, who now won't venture a broken shin for an ordinance, no, nor stir out of doors to enjoy an ordinance, &c.! How many in our days, upon neglecting and despising gospel ordinances, have grown from naught to be very naught, and from very naught to be stark naught. He shall be an Apollo to me that can shew me one man in the world that ever grew better or holier by neglecting or slighting gospel ordinances. Many come to the ordinances, too, like the Egyptian dog, which laps a little as he runs by the side of Nylus,² but stays not to drink. How many in this great city run every Sabbath to hear this man and that; and here they lap a little and there a little, but never stay to drink—never fix in this congregation or that, this way or that. These persons are neither wise, serious, lovely, nor lively in the ways of God. I think they are judicially blinded and hardened, that are indifferent whether they enjoy ordinances or not, or that can part with ordinances with dry eyes. Surely the child is either very sullen or very sick that cries not for the breast, Zep 3:18. As ever you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in all your troubles and distresses, make conscience of sticking close to gospel ordinances. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then, when you are not in troubles, distresses, dangers, &c., be sure you make much conscience of five things, (1.) Of prizing his presence above all other things; so Moses did, Exo 33:13-17; so Augustine would willingly go through hell to Christ; and Luther had rather be in hell with Christ than in heaven without him; and Bernard had rather have Christ in a chimney corner than be in heaven without him. (2.) Of improving this gracious presence against sin, the world, the flesh, oppositions and temptations, &c. (3.) Of walking suitable to this gracious presence. (4.) Of lamenting and mourning over those that want this gracious presence. (5.) Of holding any secret intelligence or correspondence with the profest and known enemies of Christ. Princes will never vouchsafe their favourable presence to such subjects as hold any secret intelligence with their profest and known enemies, either at home or abroad; so here. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then, in all your troubles and distresses, &c., maintain uprightness and integrity of spirit with God, Psal 5:12: 2Ch 16:9, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.' Psal 84:11, 'For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly.' This is the largest promise we find in the whole book of God. The creature stands in need of two things, provision and protection; for the first, the Lord is a sun, as full of goodness as the sun is of light. He is a sun, in that he doth enlighten and enliven his church, when as all the world besides lie under darkness and the shadow of death; and in that he doth cheer, and warm, and comfort the hearts of his people by his presence and lightsome countenance, and is the fountain from whence all external, internal, and eternal blessings are derived to them. For the second, a shield, Psal 18:2. Among all inanimate creatures the sun is the most excellent, and among all artificial creatures a shield is chiefest, and was of greatest use in those days. The sun notes all manner of excellency and prosperity, and the shield notes all manner of protection whatsoever, Isa 60:20; Psal 3:4. Under the name of 'grace,' all spiritual good things are to be understood; and under the name of 'glory,' all

eternal good things are to be understood; and under that phrase of 'No good thing will he withhold,' all temporal good things are to be understood, so far as they make for his glory, and his people's real good. Now this choice, this sweet, this full, this large promise, is made over only to the upright, and therefore, as you would have any share in it, maintain your uprightness: Psa 11:7, 'His countenance doth behold the upright;' Heb., His faces. Every gracious discovery of God to the upright is his face. God will all manner of ways make gracious discoveries of his love and delight to upright ones. No father can so much delight to behold the countenance of his child, as God delights to behold the countenance of the upright: Psa 112:4, 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.' Light commonly signifies joy, comfort, peace, help, deliverance, Job 30:26; Est 8:16; 2Co 6:10. The upright man shall have joy in tribulation, plenty in penury, liberty in bonds, life in death, as the martyrs have frequently and gloriously experienced. Sometimes God turns the upright man's adversity into prosperity, his sickness into health, his weakness into strength, his night into day, his storms into calms, his long winter nights into pleasant summer days. Sometimes God hides his upright ones in the hollow of his hand, in his pavilion, in his presence-chamber, Isa 26:9, Isa 26:20; Mal 3:17. When his judgments are abroad in the earth he takes special care of his jewels, and many times, when the upright are in darkness and in great distress, God cheers their hearts with the consolations of his Spirit and the light of his countenance, Psa 94:19, and Psa 71:20-21. By all which it is most evident that 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.' O sirs, do but maintain your uprightness in all your troubles and distresses, and then you will be sure of the gracious presence of God with you in all your troubles and distresses. God values an upright Job upon a dunghill before a deceitful Jehu upon his royal throne, Job 1:8, and Job 2:3, Job 2:7-9; he sets a higher price upon an upright Lazarus in rags than upon a rich Dives in his purple robes, Luk 16:1-31. And therefore when an upright man is in troubles and distresses, God will be sure to keep him company. The upright man's motto is semper idem; he is like the philosopher's die, cast him which way you will, and into what condition you will, he is still upright; and therefore, of all persons, God loves to grace the upright man with his gracious presence. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you would enjoy the gracious presence of God with you in all your troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, then you must be very earnest and importunate with God not to leave you, but to stay with you, to abide with you, and to dwell in the midst of you, Psa 145:18, 'The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him;' but, to prevent mistakes, I mean, 'to all that call upon him in truth.' There are many that call upon God, but not in truth; from these God stands at a distance, Pro 1:28; Isa 1:11-17; Deu 4:4; 2Jn 1:4. There are others that call upon God in truth, in plainness and singleness of heart; and these God are near, not only in regard of his essence, which is everywhere, but also in regard of the effects of his power, and the readiness of his will in granting their requests. Abijah prays, and finds an admirable presence of God with him, giving him a mighty victory over his most powerful enemy, 2Ch 13:3, 2Ch 13:10-11, 2Ch 13:17-18. Asa prays, and finds such a singular presence of God with him as made him victorious over a host of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots, a huger host than that of Xerxes. Josephus saith it consisted of nine hundred thousand foot, and one hundred thousand horse, 2Ch 14:9 to the end. Jehoshaphat prays, and had such a signal presence of God with him that those numerous forces that were combined against him fall by their own swords, 2Ch 20:1-11, with 2Ch 20:22-25. The wrath of God wrought their ruin, as by an ambuscade, unexpectedly and irresistibly. Some understand this ambushment of the holy angels sent suddenly in upon them to slay them; whereupon they, mistaking the matter, and supposing it had been their own companions, flew

upon them, and so sheathed their swords in one another's bowels. Others say that the Lord did suddenly and unexpectedly cut them off, as when men are cut off by enemies that lie in ambush against them, and that by sending some unexpected strife among those nations, whereupon they fell out among themselves, and slew one another, and so accomplished that which the Levite had foretold, 2Ch 20:17, 'Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.' It was the presence of God with his people that was their preservation, and their enemies' destruction. There is no power, no force, no strength, no combinations that can stand before the powerful presence of God with his people, and a spirit of prayer upon his people. Hezekiah prays, and finds such a powerful presence of God with him as bears up his heart, and as strengthens his faith, and as cuts off his enemies, Isa 37:14-21, with Isa 37:36. Oh, beg hard of the Lord that he will stay with you, do as they did when Christ made as though he would have gone from them: Luk 24:29, 'But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent; and he went in to tarry with them.' By prayer and importunity lay hold on Christ; say, Lord, night is near, the night of trouble, the night of distress, the night of danger, the night of death is near; stay with us, depart not from us. They over-entreated him by their importunity, they compelled him by entreaty. 'Night is near, and the day is far spent.' Some conjecture that Cleophas, observing Christ to be very expert in the prophets, and to discourse so admirable well of Christ's person, sufferings, and glory, his heart burning in him with musing who this should be, he is marvellous importunate with him to stay at his house, and at last prevails. Oh, lay a hand of holy violence upon God, as Jacob did, and say, as he, 'I will not let thee go.' Jacob, though lamed and hard laid at, yet will not let Christ go. Jacob holds fast with both hands when his joints were out of joint, being fully resolved that whatever he did let go, he would not let go his Lord till he had blessed him, Gen 32:25-26; Hos 4:12. Oh, be often a-crying out with Jeremiah, 'Leave us not, Lord,' Jer 14:9. Though in our great troubles and deep distresses friends should leave us, and relations leave us, and all the world leave us, yet don't thou leave us. Oh, don't thou leave us, Lord! Though all creatures should desert us, yet, if thou wilt but stand by us, we shall do well enough; but woe, woe unto us if God depart from us. Oh, leave us not! But,

[7.] Seventhly, Keep humble, and walk humbly with your God, Mic 6:8; Psa 25:9. The highest heavens and the lowest hearts, are the habitation of God's glorious presence: Isa 57:15, 'For saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.' He that would in good earnest enjoy the gracious presence of God with him in his great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, he must keep humble, and walk humbly with his God. God will keep house with none but humble souls. There are none that feel so great a need of the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so prize the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so love the divine presence, and that are so enamoured with the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so thirst and long for much of the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that so lament and bewail the loss of the divine presence as humble souls, there are none that make such a singular and thorough improvement of the divine presence as humble souls; and therefore no wonder that of all the men in the world God singles out the humble Christian, to make his heart the habitation where his honour delights to dwell. Abraham is but dust and ashes in his own eyes, Gen 18:27; and what

man on earth had ever more of the divine presence of God with him than he? Gen 15:12-19, Gen 17:1-10, and Gen 18:17-19, &c. Jacob was less than the least of all mercies in his own eyes, Gen 32:10; and he had a mighty presence of God with him, Gen 32:24-31, &c. David in his own eyes was but a worm and no man, Psa 22:6. The word in the original, *tolagnath*, signifieth a very little worm, which breedeth in scarlet. It is so little, that no man can hardly see it or perceive it; and yet what a mighty presence of God had David with him in the many battles he fought, and in the many dangers he was in, and in the many miraculous deliverances he had! See them all summed up in that 18th Psalm. It is his triumphant song after many victories won, deliverances vouchsafed, and mercies obtained; and therefore worthy of frequent perusal. Paul was the least of all saints in his own eyes; yea, he was less than the least of all saints, Eph 3:8, **■λαχιστοτ■ρ■**. This is a double diminutive, and signifies 'lesser than the least,' if lesser might be. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility, 1Co 15:8, 1Co 4:9; 1Ti 1:15. Great Paul is least of saints, least of the apostles, and greatest of sinners in his own eyes, and never had any mortal more of the gracious presence of God with him in all his services and in all his sufferings, in all his afflictions and in all his temptations, in all his trials and in all his troubles, which were many and great. See Acts 16:23-25, Acts 23:10-11, Acts 27:23-25; 2Co 1:8-10, 2Co 4:8-11, 2Co 7:4-7, 2Co 11:21, seq., 2Co 12:7-10. Is your condition low, then let your hearts be low. He that is little in his own account, is great in God's esteem, and shall be sure to enjoy most of his presence. God can dwell, God will dwell with none but those that are lowly in heart; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the signal presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses, be sure you walk humbly with your God. Many may talk much of God, and many may profess much of God, and many may boast much of God; but he only enjoys much of God who makes conscience of walking humbly with God. But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, If you would enjoy the signal presence of God with you in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then labour every day more and more after greater measures of holiness. The more holiness you reach to, the more you shall have of the presence of a holy God with you in all your straits and trials. If the Scriptures be narrowly searched, you will find that men of the greatest measures and degrees of holiness have always enjoyed the greatest measures of the divine presence: witness Enoch, Gen 5:24; Noah, Gen 6:8-9, Gen 6:17-18. So Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Daniel, John, Paul, &c. They were all famous for holiness; and accordingly they had a famous presence of God with them, as hath been shewed in part, and might more fully have been discovered, but that the press calls upon me to hasten to a conclusion; and therefore I shall now but hint at things. Consider,

[1.] First, That the more holy any person is, the more excellent that person is. All corruptions are diminutions of excellency. The more mixed anything is, the more abased it is. The more you mix your wine with water, the more you abase your wine; and the more you mix your gold with tin, the more you abase your gold: but the purer your wine is, the richer and better your wine is; and the purer your gold is, the more glorious and excellent it is. So the purer and holier any person is, the more excellent and glorious that person is. Now the more divinely excellent and glorious any person is, the more he is beloved of God, Dan 9:23; and the more he is the delight of God, and the more he shall have of the presence of God. Consider,

[2.] Secondly, The more holy any person is, the more that person pleases the Lord. Fruitfulness in holiness fills heaven with joy. The husbandman is not so much pleased with the fruitfulness of his

fields, nor the wife with the fruitfulness of her womb, as God is pleased with the fruitfulness of his people in grace and holiness. Now certainly, the more God is pleased with any person, the more he will be present with that person. They commonly have most of our presence that most please us. Enoch had this testimony, before his translation, that he pleased God, or gave God content, as the original word, ἐνέπρεσθη, imports. Enoch eyed God at all times, in all places, and in all companies; and this pleased God. Whereever Enoch was, his eye was still upon God. Enoch walked constantly with God; his whole life was but one continued day of walking with God; and this pleased God. Enoch kept himself from the corruptions and pollutions of the times, which were very great; he was not carried away with the stream of the times; he kept a constant counter-motion to the corrupt courses of the times; and this pleased God. Enoch maintained and kept up a clear, choice, and standing communion with God; and this pleased God. Enoch made it his business, his work, his heaven, to approve his heart to God, and his ways to God; and this pleased God. Enoch was very serious and studious to avoid everything that might be a dishonour to God, or displeasing to God; and this pleased God. Enoch had great, and high, and honourable thoughts of God; and this pleased God. God was so pleased and taken with Enoch that he translates him from earth to heaven, from a gracious to a glorious presence.² It was a singular mercy for God to be with Enoch on earth, but it was a far more glorious mercy for Enoch to be with God in heaven. The gracious presence of God is very desirable, but the glorious presence of God is most comfortable. Enoch pleases God, and God translates Enoch. We can never have those friends near enough to us who take a pleasure and delight to please us: so here Enoch was a bright morning star, a rising sun, for virtue and holiness; and therefore God could not satisfy himself, to speak after the manner of men, that he should live at so great a distance from him, and therefore translates him from earth to heaven. Well, my friends, the greater measures of holiness you reach to, the more you will please God; and the more you please God, the more you shall be sure to enjoy of the presence of God. Consider,

[3.] Thirdly, The more holy any person is, the more like to God he is; and the more like to God he is, doubtless the more he is beloved of God. It is likeness both in nature and grace that always draws the strongest love, 1Pe 1:15-16; Lev 11:44, and Lev 19:2, and Lev 20:7. Though every child is the father multiplied, the father of a second edition; yet the father loves him best, and delights in him most who is most like him, and who in feature, spirit, and action does most resemble him to the life; and so does the Father of spirits also; he always loves them best who in holiness resemble him most, Heb 12:9. There are four remarkable things in the beloved disciple above all the rest, John 13:23, and John 18:16, and John 19:26-27, and Mark 14:50 : (1.) That he lay nearest to Christ's bosom at the table; (2.) That he followed Christ closest to the high-priest's palace; (3.) That he stood close to Christ when he was on the cross, though others had basely deserted him and turned their backs upon him; (4.) That Christ commended the care of his virgin mother to him. Now why did Christ's desire, love, and delight run out with a stronger and a fuller tide towards John than to the rest of the disciples? doubtless it was because John did more resemble Christ than the rest, it was because John was a more exact picture and lively representation than the others were of Christ. Now the more any man in holiness is like to Christ, the more any man in holiness resembles Christ, the more that man shall enjoy of the presence of Christ, the more that man shall lie in the bosom of Christ. The Father loves to be most with that child that is like him most: so here, as ever you would enjoy the presence of God in your greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, be sure that you keep up holiness in your

hearts and lives, be sure that you grow in holiness, and flourish in holiness, and then you shall be sure of the presence of God with you in all your troubles and deep distresses; a holy God will never leave the holy Christian. And thus much for this use of exhortation. The last use of all is a use of comfort and consolation to all the people of God, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Now here consider,

(1.) First of all, That God himself hands out this as a rare comfort to his people in all their troubles, distresses, and dangers—viz., That he will be graciously present with them in the midst of all their sorrows and sufferings: Gen 26:3, 'Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee;' Gen 28:15, 'And behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee,' &c., Isa 43:2; Psa 91:15; Jos 1:5; Heb 13:5; Exo 3:12. Don't talk of thy loss of friends, for I will be with thee; nor don't talk of thy country, for I will give thee this land, which is the paradise of the world; nor don't talk of thy poverty, for thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south, Exo 3:14. Nor don't talk of thy solitariness and aloneness, 'for I will not leave thee.' Isa 41:10, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' Suppose a man was injuriously dealt with by this man or that, would it not be a comfort to him that a just and righteous judge stood by and was an eye-witness of all the violences that were offered to him? Suppose a man were in exile with David, or in prison with Joseph, or in a dungeon with Jeremiah, or in the stocks with Paul and Silas, or in banishment for the testimony of Jesus, with John, yet would it not be a singular comfort to him to have the presence of a kind father, a bosom friend, a wise counsellor, an able physician with him? O Christian, be thou in what place thou wilt, and with what company thou wilt, and in what condition thou wilt, yet thy loving God, thy kind father, thy bosom friend, &c., will be still with thee, he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; and oh what a spring of comfort should this be to thee! But,

(2.) Secondly, Know for your comfort, that there is always some special favours and blessings annexed to this signal presence of God, as 'I will be with thee, and bless thee:' Gen 26:3, 'I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest:' Gen 28:15, 'I will be with him in trouble, and honour him:' Psa 91:15, 'I will be with him, and strengthen him:' Isa 41:10, 'I will be with thee, and the flames shall not kindle upon thee:' Isa 43:2, 'I will be with thee, and there shall not a man be able to stand before thee:' Jos 1:5, 'I will be with thee, to deliver thee:' Jer 1:19, 'I am with thee, to save thee, and to deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and out of the hand of the terrible,' Jer 15:20-21. Hushai's presence with David was a burden: Job's wife's presence was but a vexation unto him, and Christ's presence among the Gergesenes was a terror to them, and the presence of talkative friends is many times a trouble to us, 2Sa 15:33; Job 2:9-10; Mat 8:28, Mat 8:34. Oh, but this signal, this favourable presence of the Lord with his people, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses, is a sweet presence, a comfortable presence, a delightful presence, a blessed presence, yea, such a presence as has many singular blessings annexed to it. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Know for your comfort, that you shall have mercy and kindness, and whatever good you need in due season, at that very instant, at that very nick of time wherein you most need mercy. God will time your mercies, and your blessings for you; he is nigh, and will not fail you at a dead lift, Psa 145:18; Deu 4:7; Gen 22:10-13. When Abraham had bound his son, and bent his

sword, and the knife was up, then comes a voice from heaven, 'Abraham, Abraham, hold thy hand.' At that very nick of time, when the four hundred and thirty years were expired, Israel was delivered out of their captivity and slavery, Exo 12:41, Exo 12:51: Deu 11:14, 'I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain, and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.' God gives rain to all by a providence, but he gives rain to his Israel by virtue of a promise, Acts 14:18; Job 38:26. God engages himself not only to give rain, but to give it in due season; he will give the first rain after the sowing of the seed, that it might take rooting in the earth; and he will give the latter rain a little before harvest, that the ears might be full. O my friends! it is wonderful mercy, that God will time our mercies for us. When Jehoshaphat was put to a hard pinch, at that very nick of time God owns him, stands by him, and gives him a great victory, 2Ch 20:12, 2Ch 20:22-26. When David was at a great plunge, Saul being at his very heels, at that very nick of time, tidings were brought to Saul, that the Philistines had invaded the land, and so David escapes, 1Sa 23:26-28. When all human help failed, God came in and helped at a dead-lift. So Julian was cut off by the Persian war, at that very nick of time when he had vowed at his return, to make a sacrifice of the Christians' lives. And so Charles the Fifth was diverted from persecuting of the Protestants by the Turks breaking into Hungary, at that very nick of time when his heart was set upon a warm persecution. And so Justice Gilford, a violent papist in Queen Mary's days, going up the stairs to Mrs Roberts her chamber, to compel her, will she or will she not, to go to mass, at that very nick of time he was suddenly taken with his old disease the gout, and so grievously tormented, that he swore he would never trouble her more.² When Faux was giving fire to the match, that should have given fire to the powder that should have blown up king, lords, and commons, at that very nick of time, he that never slumbers nor sleeps prevented him; and so turned our intended funeral into a festival, Psa 121:3-5. O Christian! are thy troubles many in number, strange in nature, heavy in measure, much in burthen, and long in continuance, yet remember that thy God is near, whose mercies are numerous, whose wisdom is wondrous, and whose power is miraculous. The nearness or remoteness of a friend is very material and considerable in our troubles, distresses, wants, dangers, &c. I have such a friend, and he would help me, but he lives so far off; and I have another friend that has a great love for me, that is able to counsel me, and to speak a word in season to me, and that in my distress would stand close to me, but he is so remote. I have a special friend, that did he know how things stand with me, would make my burdens his, and my wants his, and my sorrows his; but he is in a far country, he is at the Indies, and I may be undone before I can hear from him. But it is not thus with you, O Christians! who have a God so nigh unto you, who have the signal presence of God in the midst of you, yea who have a God always standing by you, 'The Lord stood by me,' &c. O my friends, how can you want comfort, that have the God of all consolation present with you? How can you want counsel, that have the wonderful counsellor so near unto you? How can you want grace, who have the God of all grace standing by you? How can you want peace, who have always the presence of the prince of peace with you? 2Co 1:3; Isa 9:6; 1Pe 5:10; Isa 9:6. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Know for your comfort, that if God be with you, there is nothing, there can be nothing but weakness against you. Isa 27:4, 'Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle, I would go through them, I would burn them together?' What are briars and thorns to a devouring fire, to the consuming flames? no more are all the enemies of the church to the presence of God with his people. God will be a burning and destroying fire to all the enemies of Zion. Wicked men are chaff: Psa 1:4, 'And what is that to the wind, to the whirlwind? they are stubble.' Job 21:18,

'They are as driven stubble to his bow.' Isa 41:2, 'They are as stubble fully dry.' Nah 1:10. 'They are as stubble before the flame.' Joe 2:5, 'They are like dust.' 2Ki 13:7, 'Yea, like small dust.' Isa 29:5, 'They are like a morning cloud, an early dew, a little smoke.' Hos 13:3. The morning cloud is soon dispelled, the early dew is soon dried up, the rolling smoke out of the chimney is presently scattered.' Oh, the weakness of man! Oh, the power of God! No people on earth have such a power on their sides as the saints have. Consult these scriptures, 2Ki 6:16; 2Ch 32:6-7; Isa 8:9-10; Num 13:28, Num 13:30-33, and Num 14:9. No Christian can look upon the strong and mighty enemies of Zion in a scripture glass, but must behold them as weak and impotent persons. Who could but smile to see weak children to attempt to besiege a wall of brass, or a wall of fire? Zec 2:5; as great a folly and weakness it is for wicked men to make attempts upon the saints, who have been to this day, and will be to the end, a trembling and a burdensome stone to all that gather together against them, Zec 12:2-3. Sense looks upon the powers of the world as strong, mighty, and invincible; but faith looks upon them as poor, weak, contemptible, gasping, dying men. Thus heroical Luther looked upon them, *Contemptus est a me Romanus et favor et furor*, I care neither for Rome's favour nor fury; I am neither fond of the one, nor afraid of the other. It is dangerous to look upon the powers of the world in the devil's multiplying glass; it is best and safest to look upon them in a scripture glass, and then we shall never fear them, nor sinfully shift them. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If God be signally present with his people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers, then know for your comfort, that none can be against you but they must be against God himself, Acts 9:4-6; for God is with you in all your troubles, as a father is with his child, a husband with his wife, a general with his army, and as a confederate with his allies, who is with them offensively and defensively. Hence they are said to rage against God, Isa 37:28-29; and to blaspheme God, 2Ki 19:3, 2Ki 19:6; and to fight against God, Acts 5:38-39, and Acts 23:9; Pro 21:30. To fight against God is labour in vain. Who ever fought against God and prospered? Some think that this phrase of fighting against God is drawn from the fable of the giants, which were said to make war with the gods. The church of Christ always flourisheth most, and increaseth most, when the tyrants of the earth oppose it most, and persecute it most. Diocletian laid down the empire in great discontent, because he could not by any persecution suppress the true Christian religion. The more violent he was against the people of God, the more they increased and multiplied, and the more they were emboldened and encouraged; and therefore in a rage he throws up all. But,

[1.] First, It is the presence of an Almighty God: Gen 17:1, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect,' Gen 49:25, and Num 24:4. Some derive the word Shaddai, here used from dai, that signifieth sufficiency. God is an all-sufficient good, and a self-sufficient good; he is an independent good, an absolute good, an original good, a universal good. Some derive the word Shaddai from Shad, that signifieth a breast, a dug, because God feedeth his children with sufficiency of all good things, as the loving mother doth the child with the milk of her breasts. God is the only satisfactory good, and proportionable good, and suitable good to our souls; as the breast, the dug is the most suitable good to the child's stomach. And others derive the word Shaddai from Shaddad, which signifieth to spoil, conquer, or overcome, and so they say that God did here invert or overcome the order of nature, in causing the barren to bear. But most authors do translate it omnipotent. God, then, is called Shaddai, that is omnipotent and all-sufficient, for his

omnipotency includeth also all-sufficiency.

[2.] Secondly, You have the presence of a loving God with you: Isa 43:4, 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.' But that this may the better stick and work, you must remember, First, That God loves you with a first love, see Deu 7:7-8: 1Jn 4:19, 'We love him because he first loved us.' Our love is but a reflex of his. God first cast an eye of love upon us before we cast an eye of love on him, and therefore God is no way indebted to us for our love. Mary answers not Rabboni till Christ first said unto her Mary, John 20:16. The pure nature of love is more seen in God's first love to us than in ours to him. By nature we were without God, and afar off from God; we were strangers to God, and enemies to God, yea, haters of God; and therefore if God had not loved us firstly, we had been done everlastingly, Eph 2:12, Eph 2:19; Rom 5:10, and Rom 1:30. Secondly, As God loves you with a first love, so he loves you with a free love: Hos 14:4, 'I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.' I know they are backslidden, but I will heal their backslidings. I know they have broken their bones by their fall, but I will make those broken bones to rejoice. I know there is nothing at all in them that is excellent or eminent, that is honourable or acceptable, that is laudable or lovely, yet 'I will love them freely,' Ex mero motu, of mine own, free, rich, absolute, sovereign, and independent grace. Thirdly, As he loves you with a free love, so he loves you with an everlasting love: Jer 31:3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.' Heb., I love thee with the love of perpetuity, or with the love of eternity. My love and my affections continue still the same to thee, and shall do for ever; or, as others carry the words, I love thee with an ancient love, or with the love of antiquity; I love thee still with the same affection that in former ages I bare towards thee. Fourthly, As he loves you with an everlasting love, so he loves you with an unchangeable love: Mal 3:6, 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' Men change, and counsels change, and occurrences change, and friends change, and relations change, and kingdoms change, and commonwealths change, but God never changes, as Balaam confesses, who was the devil's hackney, and who had a mind to dance with the devil all day, and then sup with Christ at night, Num 23:10. God is neither false nor fickle; he cannot, like men, say and unsay; he cannot alter his mind nor eat his words. 'The eternity of Israel cannot lie nor repent, for he is not a man that he should repent,' Psal 89:34; 1Sa 15:29. Men are so mutable and changeable, that there is no hold to be taken of what they say; but God is immutable in his nature, in his essence, in his counsels, in his attributes, in his decrees, in his promises, &c. He is, as the school-men say, *Omninò immutabilis*, Altogether immutable. Fifthly, As he loves you with an unchangeable love, so he loves you with a special love, with a peculiar love, with a distinguishing love, with a superlative love, Psal 146:7-8. The Lord executes judgment for the oppressed; he gives food to the hungry, he looseth the prisoners, he opens the eyes of the blind, he raises them that are bowed down, he loveth the righteous, and this is more than all the rest. Sixthly and lastly, As he loves his people with a special love, with a peculiar love, so he loves them with the greatest love, with a matchless love. 'O Daniel greatly beloved:' John 3:16, 'God so loved the world,' &c. Here is a sic without a sicut, there being nothing in nature wherewith to parallel it. This sic without a sicut signifies the greatness of God's love, the vehemency of his love, and the admirableness of his love. Now, what an unspeakable comfort must this be to his saints, to have the presence of a loving God, to have the presence of such a loving God with them in all their troubles and deep distresses! If the presence of a loving friend, a loving relation in our troubles and distresses, be such a mercy, oh, what then is the presence of a loving God!

[3.] Thirdly, It is the presence of an active God, who will be a defence to you, a shield to you, a sword to you, a buckler to you, a sun to you, a strong tower to you, a salvation to you. None can withstand him, none can equal him, none can out-act him, Psa 18:2; 2Ch 16:9; Pro 18:10; Jer 32:40-41; Isa 30:18-19, and Isa 27:3; Jer 31:28.

[4.] Fourthly, It is the presence of a wakeful God, of a watchful God, of a God that never, no never, slumbers or sleeps. God will be so far from sleeping, that he will not so much as slumber, Psa 121:3-5. The phrase is taken from watchmen, who stand on the walls in time of war to discover the approaches of enemies, and accordingly give warning. Now watchmen have been treacherous and sleepy. The capitol of Rome had been taken by the Gauls, if the geese had not been more wakeful than the watchmen of the walls. Iphicrates, the Athenian captain, visiting the guards on the walls of Corinth, found one of the watch asleep, and presently thrust him through with his sword, saying, Dead I found him, and dead I left him. Though watchmen slumber and sleep, yet that God that is present with his people doth neither; his seven eyes are always open.

[5.] Fifthly, It is the presence of a wise God, of an omniscient God. God fills all things, he encompasseth all things, and he sustaineth all things, and therefore he must needs know all things, Eze 3:9; Psa 33:10-11; Isa 46:10, and Isa 40:28; Rom 11:33; 2Pe 2:9; Jon 1:5; 2Ki 14:6; Mat 26:24-25. God can find Jonah in the bottom of the ship; and Jeroboam's wife in her disguises; and Judas in his treason; and Demas in his apostasy; and the scribes and Pharisees in their hypocrisy, 2Ti 4:10; Mat 23:1-39; Rev 4:6. The whole world is to him as a sea of glass: corpus diaphanum; a clear transparent body. There is nothing hid from his eyes; so that he that can but find out a place where God sees not, there let that man sin and spare not: 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do,' Heb 4:13 : γυμν■, 'naked,' as when the skin is pulled off, and τετραχελισμ■να, 'opened as the entrails of a sacrifice,' cut down the back. The apostle, say some, useth a metaphor taken from a sheep, whose skin is taken off, and he hanged up by the neck, with his back towards the wall, and all his entrails laid bare and exposed to open view. He alludes, say others, to the anatomising of a creature, wherein men are very cautious to find out every little vein or muscle, though they be never so close. They are naked, therefore God sees their outside; and opened, dissected, quartered, and cleft asunder through the backbone, so that he sees their inside also. Opened is more than naked: naked is that which is not clothed or covered; opened is that whose inwards are discovered and made conspicuous. Some make it a metaphor from those that lie with their faces upwards, that all passengers may see who they are. Is it such a comfort to have the presence of a wise and knowing friend with us in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses? what a transcendent comfort must it be then to enjoy the presence of an all-seeing and an all-knowing God in all our troubles and distresses! The eye of heaven sees all, and knows all, and writes down all thy troubles and trials, thy sorrows and sufferings, thy losses and crosses, Mat 6:32; and accordingly will an all-knowing God act for his own glory and his people's good.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, It is the presence of a God of mercy, a God of bowels, a God of compassions, Exo 33:7-8; Jer 31:18-20; Hos 11:8-9; Lam 3:22. 'His compassions fail not.' Mercy is as essential to God as light is to the sun, Mic 7:18-19, or as heat is to the fire. He delights in mercy, as the senses and faculties of the soul do in their several actions. Patience, and clemency, and mercy, and compassion, and peace are the fruits of his bowels—the offspring which the divine nature doth produce. God's compassions are fatherly compassions, Psa 103:13; they are motherly

compassions, Isa 49:15; they are brotherly compassions, Heb 2:12; they are friendly compassions, Song of Solomon 5:1-2. Oh, how sweet must the presence of a God of mercy, a God of compassion, be to the saints in a day of trouble! The presence of a compassionate friend in a day of distress is very desirable and comfortable; what then is the presence of a compassionate God! Thus you see that there is no presence to the divine presence—no presence to the signal presence of God with his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. But,

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, If God be signally present with his people in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses, then let them all know for their comfort, that this presence will make up the want or loss of all outward comforts, this presence will make up the loss of a husband, a child, a friend, an estate, &c., 1Sa 1:8. Look, as all light meets in the sun, and as all water meets in the sea, so all our outward comforts meets in the God of all comfort, 2Co 1:3. When Alexander asked king Porus, being then his prisoner, how he would be used? He answered in one word, Βασιλικός, i.e., like a king. Alexander again replying, Do you desire nothing else? No, saith Porus, all things are in Βασιλικός, in this one word, like a king; so all things, all comforts are to be found in this signal presence of God with his people, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. Certainly the gracious presence of the Lord is infinitely better than the presence of all outward comforts, as you know one sun is more glorious and comfortable than ten thousand stars.

Question. But how may a person that has lost this gracious presence of God, recover it again?

Response 1. First, Observe how you lost this presence of God, and labour to recover it by a contrary course. Did you lose it by sinful omissions? then be more active in a way of duty. Didst thou lose the presence of God by neglecting thy watch, or by not walking with God, or by an eager pursuit of the world, or by closing with this or that temptation, or by letting fall thy communion with God? take a contrary course. Now keep up thy watch, walk close with God, keep up a daily converse with lively Christians, let thy heart and affections be set upon things above, keep thy ground in the face of all temptations, maintain a standing communion with God, Psa 119:63; Col 3:1-2. After Christ had stood knocking and calling to his spouse—‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night,’ Song of Solomon 5:2-3, Song of Solomon 5:6—but found no entrance, he retired and withdrew himself, because she would not arise and put on her coat; but when she bestirs herself, ‘she finds him whom her soul loved,’ Song of Solomon 3:1-4. Then Christ comes into his garden again, and returns to his spouse again, and forgets all former unkindness, Song of Solomon 6:1-2. But,

Response 2. Secondly, Inquire where, when, and why God has withdrawn himself; as we do when dear friends absent themselves from us. ‘O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?’ Jer 14:8. Jer 14:9, ‘Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.’

Response 3. Thirdly, Stand not with Christ for anything, not for a right eye, or a right hand, nor for an Isaac or a Benjamin. Don’t say this work is too high, and that too hard, and the other too hot, and the other too dangerous, in order to the recovery of God’s countenance and presence. Thou must not think anything in the world too much to do for Christ, or to suffer for Christ. Thou wilt be a happy man if thou canst recover Christ’s lost presence; though it be upon the hardest terms

imaginable. But,

Response 4. Fourthly, Let your hearts lie humble and low under the loss of God's gracious presence, Psa 51:8-12; 1Pe 5:6. For, (1.) It is the greatest loss. (2.) It is a loss-embittering loss; it is a loss that will greatly embitter all your worldly losses. I have lost my health, I have lost a hopeful child, I have lost a gracious yoke-fellow, which was the delight of mine eyes and the joy of my heart; I have lost a fair estate, I have lost an intimate friend, I have lost a brave trade. Oh, but that which embitters all my losses, and puts a sting into them, is this, that I have lost the gracious presence of God that once I enjoyed. (3.) It is a loss that all outward comforts can never make up. When the sun is down, nothing can make it day with us. (4.) It is an invisible loss; and no losses to invisible losses. As there are no mercies to invisible mercies, so there are no losses to invisible losses. (5.) It is a loss that will cost a man dear before it will be made up again. Oh the sighs, the groans, the strong cries, the earnest prayers, the bottles of tears that the recovery of the divine presence will cost a Christian; upon all which accounts, how well does it become a Christian to lie humble at the foot of God!

Response 5. Fifthly, Lift up a mighty cry to heaven. Thus the saints of old have done. Consult these scriptures, Psa 51:6-13; Lam 3:56-57; Psa 4:6-7, Psa 27:9, Psa 38:21-22, Psa 138:3, and Psa 119:8, 'O forsake me not utterly.' Christ was forsaken for a few hours, David for a few months, and Job for a few years, for the trial and exercise of his faith and patience; but then they all sent up a mighty cry to heaven. Leave them God did, to their thinking; forsake them he did in regard of vision, but not in regard of union. The promise is, that 'God will draw near to us if we draw near to him,' Jas 4:8. Draw nigh to God in duty, and he will draw nigh to you in mercy: sanctify him, and he will satisfy you. Prayer is the only means to supply all defects, it gets all, and makes up the loss of all; as a gracious poor woman said in her distress, I have no friend, but I have prayer; that will get favour with my God; so long as I can find a praying heart, God will, I am sure of that, find a pitying heart and a helping hand. It is not the length, but the strength of prayer; it is not the labour of the lip, but the travail of the heart that prevails with God, Jer 29:12-14. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet they be; nor the logic of our prayers, how methodical they be, that will carry the day with God. It is only fervency, importunity in prayer, that will make a man prevalent with God. Fervent prayer hits the mark, carries the day, and pierceth the walls of heaven, though like those of Gaza, made of brass and iron, Jas 5:16-17; Luk 18:1-43; Isa 45:2. The child has got many a kiss and many a hug by crying. If God has withdrawn his presence, the best, the surest, and the readiest way to recover it is to send up a mighty cry to heaven. But,

Response 6. Sixthly, Be sure you don't take up your rest in any creature, in any comfort, in any contentment, in any worldly enjoyment, Jer 50:6. When the presence of God is withdrawn from you, say as Absalom, 'What is all this to me, so long as I am banished my father's presence, so long as I can't see the king's face?' 2Sa 14:24, 2Sa 14:28, 2Sa 14:32-33. When the mother sees that the child is taken with the baby, the rattle, the fiddle, she comes not in sight. If you take up your rest in any of the babies, in any of the poor things of this world, God will certainly keep out of sight. He will never honour them with his countenance and presence, who take up in anything below himself, below his favour, below his presence. I have read of a devout pilgrim, who going up to Jerusalem was very kindly and nobly entertained in several places, but still he cried out, Oh, but

this is not Jerusalem! this is not Jerusalem! So when you cast-your eye upon this creature or that, oh then cry out, This is not the presence of God, this is not the presence of God; and when you begin to be tickled and taken with this and that enjoyment, with this or that contentment, oh then remember this is not the presence of God, this is not the presence of God! Here is a gracious yoke-fellow, here are hopeful children, here is a pleasant habitation, here is brave air, here is a gainful trade, &c., but what are all these to me, so long as my sun is set in a cloud, and God has withdrawn his presence from me? Remember this once for all, that the whole world is but a barren wilderness without the countenance and presence of God, Psa 63:1-3. But,

Response 7. Seventhly and lastly, Patiently and quietly wait upon him in the way of his ordinances for the recovery of his presence. Consult the scriptures in the margin. Here God dwells, here he walks, here he makes known his glory, here he gives forth his love, here he vouchsafes his presence. When God is withdrawn, your great business is to prize ordinances, and to keep close to ordinances, till God shall be pleased to lift up the light of his countenance and vouchsafe his presence to you. You will never recover the divine presence by neglecting ordinances, nor by slighting ordinances, nor by turning your back upon ordinances, nor by entertaining low thoughts of ordinances. He that thinks ordinances to be needless things, concludes—(1.) That the taking away of the kingdom of heaven from the Jews was no great judgment, Mat 21:43. (2.) That the bestowing of it upon other people is no great mercy. If God be gone, it is good to lie at the pool till he returns, John 5:2-10. There are many dear Christians who have lost their God for a time, but after a time they have found him again in the way of his ordinances; and therefore let no temptation draw thee off from ordinances; say, Here I will live, here I will lie, here I will wait at the pool of ordinances, till the Lord shall return in mercy to my soul.

I shall follow this discourse of the divine presence with my earnest prayers that it may from on high be so signally blest, as that it may issue in the furtherance of the internal and eternal good, both of Writer, Reader, and Hearer.

01.06. Volume 6

THE COMPLETE WORKS of

THOMAS BROOKS

Edited, with Memoir, BY THE REV. ALEXANDER BALLOCH GROSART liverpool

VOL. VI. containing: london's lamentations on the late fiery dispensation—the glorious day of the saints' appearance—god's delight in the progress of the upright—hypocrites detected—a believer's last day is his best day—a heavenly cordial—the legacy of a dying mother and mrs bell's experiences—indices, etc.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL london: james nisbet and co. dublin: g. herbert m.dccc.lxvii.

EDITORIAL POSTSCRIPT

FOLLOWING the last of his larger treatises—'London's Lamentations'—there will be found in the present concluding volume certain minor writings of Brooks, of some of which the Editor had despaired securing copies—having searched in vain for most of them in all our great Libraries, and applied with similar result to innumerable book-lovers and booksellers. He has not anywhere chanced upon another copy besides his own of either the 'Heavenly Cordial' or of 'The Legacy of a Dying Mother;' while years since the learned editor of the 'Depositions from the Castle of York, relating to Offences committed in the Northern Counties in the Seventeenth Century,' for the Surtees Society—James Raine, Esq.,—with reference to the Funeral Sermon of Colonel Rainsborough, designated it 'a very rare tract,' and congratulated himself that by the kindness of a local Bibliopole he was 'able to give a copy of the title.' Apart from the intrinsic worth of these excessively scarce, if not unique tractates, it is exceedingly satisfactory to the Editor that he has been enabled by lucky chances to present the entire writings of Brooks in this—like Sibbes'—first collective edition. As simple matter of fact, the Works given in these six volumes could not be purchased in the market in the original and early editions for as many pounds as the shillings they cost in this form: and it is ventured to indulge a hope that the accuracy of our reprint from a genuine and unmutilated text, the careful verification of the numerous Bible quotations and references, the annotation of names, &c., and the Glossary and marking of Shakesperean words—these sometimes explaining obscurities—will be accepted as additions to their value. The Editor may be permitted to notice the copious Indices. Ordinarily it is to be feared that labour spent on such work is ill appreciated, too many, as rare Thomas Fuller complained, regarding an index as 'the bag and baggage of a book, of more use than honour, even to such who, seemingly slighting, secretly use it, if not for need, for speed of what they desire to find.' But he has so constructed these—incorporating the full 'Tables' of Brooks himself wherever prepared by him—as to render any preliminary essay here unnecessary, inasmuch as, well used, they will guide readily the reader of our Worthy to his wealth of fine thought, of priceless insight into the 'mind of the Spirit' and human nature, as well unrenewed as gracious, of definite doctrinal statement, of rich spiritual-mindedness, of tender and yet pungent appeal, of happy allusion, of brilliant, rapid wit, of

racily-put, telling anecdote and asides, of recondite reading and multifarious lore unexpectedly turned to account, with many a pat, almost sly foot-note, 'You know how to make the application'—in a way hitherto impossible. With such a 'Cabinet of Jewels'—to appropriate one of his own titles—as these Works present, one can read with a smile the depreciatory estimate of Brooks as of Bunyan, formed by High Church contemporaries, and later. One of these is so characteristic, and serves as so excellent an illustration of the apothegm, that the eye sees what it brings with it, that it must find a place here, especially as it has not before been published: it was come upon by us in an examination of the MSS. of Walker, of the 'Sufferings,' folio, preserved in the Bodleian. This 'character' of Brooks occurs in a letter from Luke Milbourne. It is literally as follows—the name, to start with, being misspelled—'Mr Tho. Brook was another of those 'pleasant preachers' whose sermons would require a man of a very staunch temper to preach them over again without smiling. Abundance of 'fine metaphors' and 'charming similitudes' a man may meet with in his Works, fit only to debase Divinity, or to dress it up in a fool's Coat; and I'm afraid such jingling Preachers turn'd men from Truth to fables [rather] than from sin to righteousness. Souls are no more to be taken with chaff than old Birds are. His stile is neither prophetic nor Apostolical, nor were any of ye antient fathers guilty of such Trifling; and indeed it would be well if all such Preachers were silenced. A sound Christian, though he be no Critic, loves plain Truth delivered in good words, but always hates jesting in a serious matter.' The italicised sentence reveals the animus of these small sarcasms and smaller comparisons with 'antient fathers,'—of whom the writer was evidently as ignorant as he was of the preacher and author he misjudges. Yet is it almost wholly from such witnesses that too many even now express their opinions on the Writings of the Puritans and Nonconformists; and perchance it must be admitted that the anti-Puritans and High Churchmen have been too much read at second-hand and controversially. In the present instance, it is ludicrous to find one so inane and sand-barren as Milbourne sitting in judgment upon a nature so rich and so much larger than his own; but it is a typical and hence valuable example of how an over-dainty culture may be offended by superficial faults, so as to be stone-blind to the preciousness of the substance of the works which these blemish; it being granted that occasionally Brooks is homely to excess, in common with the greatest divines of his age.

Calamy's summary of the 'character' of Brooks—inadequate though it be—may fitly accompany the preceding:—'He was a very affecting preacher, and useful to many; and the' he us'd many homely phrases and sometimes too familiar resemblances, which to nice criticks appear ridiculous; yet he did more good to souls than many of the exactest composers; and let the wits of the age pass what censures they please, 'he that winneth souls is wise.' In characterising Sibbes generally, we selected the epithet universally applied to him, 'heavenly;' and in like manner, the word 'useful' is the one word which accurately expresses the position of Brooks among his contemporaries. His slightest 'Epistle' is 'Bread of Life:' his most fugitive 'Sermon' a full cup of 'Living Water;' the very foliage of his exuberant fancies 'Leaves' of the Tree of Life: his one dominating aim to make dead hearts warm with the Life of the Gospel of Him who is Life; his supreme purpose to 'bring near' the very Truth of God. Hence his directness, his urgency, his yearning, his fervour, his fulness of Bible citation, his wistfulness, his intensity, his emotion, and that fine passion of enthusiasm sprung of compassion, and his iteration and forgetfulness, and Pauline accident of choice words or melody of sentence. His desire to be 'useful' to souls, to achieve the holy success of serving Christ, to win a sparkling crown to lay at His feet, breathes

and burns from first to last. Everything is subordinated to ‘usefulness;’ and while he gathered around him the cultured and the titled—who all but worshipped the ‘good old man’—it was his chief rejoicing that, like his Master, ‘the common people’ heard and read him ‘gladly.’ In loving association with Sibbes and Sheffield, Baxter and Bunyan, Brinsley and Samuel Richardson, his books were well thumbed in the hamlets of his own England, and, in quaint ‘Glasgow’ editions, among the godly peasantry of Scotland, and gained wide and long-sustained welcome in Germany and Holland, as Brooks gratefully acknowledges repeatedly. But more cannot be needed: and so—in the words of the loving biographer of good Bishop Lake—“I will detain thee no longer, gentle Reader, at this time, from the reading of so useful and precious works—only thus much I will promise thee for thine encouragement before thou begin, that if thou take the pains to go through with attention these.... first, Thou shalt gain thereby an exact knowledge of the meaning of the text he handles, and of every particular word and phrase in it; secondly, Thou shalt meet with a great variety of choice observations, both theological and moral, aptly deduced, and methodically laid down, as thou art like to find anywhere in so few leaves again; lastly, If thou be endued, as I hope thou art, with the same spirit of grace and regeneration that the author was, thou shalt find thine affections kindled and stirred up thereby to a real practice of piety and good works, more than by a great many more flourishing discourses than these at first sight seem to be.” May this complete edition of these inestimable Works be used at this ‘later day’ to cause him, ‘being dead, yet to speak’ for that dear Lord Jesus he loved and served so well!

Alexander B. Grosart.

Liverpool.

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LONDON’S LAMENTATIONS

NOTE

'London's Lamentations,' as it is the largest, so it is perhaps the most remarkable contemporary memorial of the 'Great Fire.' It seems singular that Defoe does not appear to have known it, else his well known compilation might have been enriched by its vivid and powerful incidental notices of public opinion and feeling during and subsequent to the direful calamity. Reeve's 'Plea for Nineveh'—by Nineveh, London being intended—may be compared with the present work. Royalist and Puritan alike give terrible pictures of the licentiousness and general wickedness of the 'great city.' The title-page will be found below.* * LONDON'S

LAMENTATIONS: or, A serious Discourse concerning that late fiery Dispensation that turned our (once renowned) City into a ruinous Heap. Also the several Lessons that are incumbent upon those whose Houses have escaped the consuming Flames. By THOMAS BROOKS, late Preacher of the Word at S. Margarets New-Fish-street, where that Fatal Fire first began that turned London into a ruinous Heap.

Una dies interest inter magnam Civitatem & nullam.

There is but the distance of one day between a great City and none, said Seneca when a great City was burnt to Ashes.

Come, behold the Works of the Lord, what Desolations he hath made in the Earth. Psa 46:8.

LONDON,

Printed for John Hancock and Nathaniel Ponder, and are to be sold at the first Shop in Popes-Head-Alley in Cornhill, at the Sign of the Three Bibles, or at his Shop in Bishopsgate-street, and at the Sign of the Peacock in Chancery-lane. 1670.

[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Right Honourable Sir William Turner, Knight, Lord Mayor of the City of London.

Right Honourable,—It is not my design to blazon your worth, or write a panegyric of your praises. Your brighter name stands not in need of such a shadow as men's applause to make it more renowned in the world. Native worth is more respected than adventitious glory. 'Your own works praise you in the gates,' Pro 31:31. It is London's honour and happiness, tranquillity and prosperity, to have such a magistrate, that 'bears not the sword of justice in vain,' Rom 13:4, and that hath not brandished the sword of justice in the defence of the friends of Baal, Balaam, or Bacchus. My Lord, had your sword of justice been a sword of protection to desperate swearers, or to cruel oppressors, or to deceitful dealers, or to roaring drunkards, or to cursing monsters, or to gospel despisers, or to Christ contemners, &c., might not London have lain in her ashes to this very day? yea, might not God have rained hell out of heaven upon those parts of the city that were standing monuments of God's mercy, as once he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah? Gen 19:1-38. Woe to that sword that is a devouring sword to the righteous, to the meek, to the upright, and to the peaceable in the land, Psa 35:19-20. O happy sword! under which all sorts and ranks of men have worshipped God in peace, and lived in peace, and rested in peace, and traded in peace, and built their habitations in peace, and have grown up in peace. Sir, every man hath sat, under your sword, as under his own vine and fig-tree, in peace. Words are too weak to express how great a mercy this hath been to London, yea, I may say, to England. The ancients set forth all their gods

with harps in their hands, the hieroglyphic of peace. The Grecians had the statue of Peace, with Pluto, the god of riches, in her arms. Some of the ancients were wont to paint peace in the form of a woman with a horn of plenty in her hands, viz., all blessings. The orator hit it when he said, Dulce nomen pacis, The very name of peace is sweet. No city so happy as that wherein the chief magistrate has been as 'eyes to the blind, legs to the lame, ears to the deaf, a father to the fatherless, a husband to the widow, a tower to the righteous, and a terror to the wicked,' Job 31:1-40.

Certainly rulers have no better friends than such as make conscience of their ways; for none can be truly loyal but such as are truly religious. Witness Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and the three children. Sincere Christians are as lambs amongst lions, as sheep amongst wolves, as lilies amongst thorns. They are exposed more to the rage, wrath, and malice of wicked men, by reason of their holy profession, their gracious principles and practices, than any other men in all the world. Now did not God raise up magistrates, and spirit magistrates, to own them, to stand by them, and to defend them in all honest and just ways, how soon would they be devoured and destroyed! Certainly the sword of the magistrate is to be drawn forth for the natural good, and civil good, and moral good, and spiritual good, of all that live soberly and quietly under it. Stobæus² tells us of a Persian law, that after the death of their king every man had five days' liberty to do what he pleased, that by beholding the wickedness and disorder of those few days, they might prize government the better all their days after. Certainly had some hot-headed, and little-witted, and fierce-spirited men had but two or three days' liberty to have done what they pleased in this great city during your lordship's mayoralty, they would have made sad work in the midst of us. When a righteous government fails, then (1.) Order fails; (2.) Religion fails; (3.) Trade fails; (4.) Justice fails; (5.) Prosperity fails; (6.) Strength and power fails; (7.) Fame and honour fails; (8.) Wealth and riches fails; (9.) Peace and quiet fails; (10.) All human converse and society fails. To take a righteous government out of the world, is to take the sun out of the firmament, and leave it no more a κοσμησις, a beautiful structure, but a χαλσις, a confused heap. In such towns, cities, and kingdoms where righteous government fails, there every man's hand will be quickly engaged against his brother, Gen 26:12. Oh the sins, the sorrows, the desolations, and destructions that will unavoidably break in like a flood upon such a people!

Public persons should have public spirits; their gifts and goodness should diffuse themselves for the good of the whole. It is a base and ignoble spirit to pity Cataline more than to pity Rome, to pity any particular sort of men more than to pity the whole. It is cruelty to the good to justify the bad; it is wrong to the sheep to animate the wolves; it is danger, if not death, to the lambs not to restrain or chain up the lions; but, Sir, from this ignoble spirit God has delivered you. The ancients were wont to place the statues of their princes by their fountains, intimating that they were, or at least should be, fountains of the public good. Sir, had not you been such a fountain, men would never have been so warm for your continuance. My Lord, the great God hath made you a κοινωσις, a public good, a public blessing; and this hath made your name precious, and your government desirable, and your person honourable in the thoughts, hearts, and eyes of all people. Many—may I not say most?—of the rulers of this world are, as Pliny speaks of the Roman emperors, Nomine dii, naturâ diaboli, Monsters, not men; murderers, not magistrates. Such a monster was Saul, who hunted David as a partridge, slew the innocent priests of the Lord, ran to a witch, and who was a man of so narrow a soul that he knew not how to look or live above himself,

his own interests and concernments. The great care of every magistrate should be to promote the public interest more than their own, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. It was Cæsar's high commendation, that he never had himself after the world had him for a governor; his mind was so set on the public, that he forgot his own private affairs. The stars have their brightness, not for themselves, but for the use of others. The application is easy. My Lord, several philosophers have made excellent and elegant orations in the praise of justice. They say that all virtues are comprehended in the distribution of justice. Justice, saith Aristotle, is a synopsis and epitome of all virtues. All I shall say is this, the world is a ring, and justice is the diamond in that ring; the world is a body, and justice is the soul of that body. It is well known that the constitution of a man's body is best known by his pulse: if it stir not at all, then we know he is dead; if it stir violently, then we know him to be in a fever; if it keep an equal stroke, then we know he is sound, well, and whole. So the estate and constitution of a city, kingdom, or commonweal is best known by the manner of executing justice therein; for justice is the pulse of a city, kingdom, or commonweal. If justice be violent, then the city, kingdom, or commonweal is in a fever, in a very bad estate; if it stir not at all, then the city, kingdom, or commonwealth is dead; but if it hath an equal stroke, if it be justly and duly administered, then the city, kingdom, or commonweal is in a good, a safe, and a sound condition. When Vespasian asked Apollonius what was the cause of Nero's ruin, he answered, that Nero could tune the harp well, but in government he did always wind up the strings too high or let them down too low. Extremes in government are the ready way to ruin all. The Romans had their rods for lesser faults, and their axe for capital crimes. Extreme right often proves extreme wrong. He that will always go to the utmost of what the law allows, will too too often do more than the law requires. A rigid severity often mars all. Equity is still to be preferred before extremity. To inflict great penalties and heavy censures for light offences, this is to kill a fly upon a man's forehead with a beetle. The great God hath put his own name upon magistrates: Psa 82:6, 'I said that ye are gods.' Yet it must be granted that you are gods in a smaller letter: mortal gods—gods that must die like men. All the sons of Ish are sons of Adam. Magistrates must do justice impartially; for as they are called gods, so in this they must be like to God, who is no acceptor of persons, Deu 1:17; Lev 19:15. He accepts not of the rich man because of his robes, neither doth he reject the poor man because of his rags. The magistrates' eyes are to be always upon causes, and not upon persons. Both the statues of the Theban judges and the statues of the Egyptian judges were made without hands and without eyes, to intimate to us that, as judges should have no hands to receive bribes, so they should have no eyes to see a friend from a foe, or a brother from a stranger, in judgment. And it was the oath of the heathen judges, as the orator relates, *Audiam accusatorem et reum sine affectibus, et personarum respectione*: I will hear the plaintiff and the defendant with an equal mind, without affection and respect of persons. In the twelfth Novel of Justinian you may read of an oath imposed upon judges and justices against inclining or addicting themselves to either party; yea, they put themselves under a deep and bitter execration and curse in case of partiality, imploring God in such language as this: 'Let me have my part with Judas, and let the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, and the trembling of Cain come upon me, and whatsoever else may astonish and dismay a man, if I am partial in the administration of justice.' The poet in the Greek epigram taught the silver axe of justice that was carried before the Roman magistrates to proclaim, 'If thou be an offender, let not the silver flatter thee; if an innocent, let not the axe affright thee.' The Athenian judges judged in the night, when the faces of men Could not be seen, that so they might be impartial in judgment. My Lord, your

impartiality in the administration of justice in that high orb wherein divine providence hath placed you, is one of those great things that hath made you high and honourable in the eyes and hearts of all that are true lovers of impartial justice. Some writers say, that some waters in Macedonia, being drunk by black sheep, change their fleece into white. Nothing but the pure and impartial administration of justice and judgment can transform black-mouthed, black-handed, and black-hearted men into white. There is nothing that sweetens, satisfies, and silences all sorts of men like the administration of impartial justice. The want of this brought desolation upon Jerusalem and the whole land of Jewry, Isa 1:23-24, and upon many other flourishing kingdoms and countries, as all know that have but read anything of Scripture or history. St Austin plainly denies that ever the Roman polity could be called properly a commonwealth, upon this ground, that *Ubi non est justitia, non est republica*. He calls commonwealths without justice but *magna latrocinia*; or in Lipsius his language, congeries, confusio, turba. It is but an abuse of the word *respublica*—commonwealth—where the public good is not consulted by an impartial justice and equity; it is but a confused heap, a rout of men; or if we will call it so at present, it will not be so long without impartial justice, partly because injustice and oppression makes the multitude tumultuous, and fills the people's heads with dangerous designs, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together; and partly because it lays a nation open and obnoxious to the wrath and vengeance of God, as might easily be made good by scores of scriptures. Impartial justice is the best establishment of kingdoms and commonwealths. 'The king by judgment establisheth the land,' Pro 29:4: see Num 25:11; 2Sa 21:14. It is the best security against desolating judgments. 'Run ye through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, and I will pardon it,' Jer 5:1. My Lord, as it is the honour of a magistrate to do justice impartially, so it is the honour and glory of a magistrate to do justice speedily: Jer 28:12, 'O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.' After examination, execution is to be done with expedition. When men cry out for Justice, Justice, magistrates must not cry out, *Cras, Cras*—to-morrow, to-morrow. Magistrates must do justice in the morning. Neither noon-justice, nor afternoon-justice, nor evening-justice, nor night-justice is so acceptable to God, or so honourable to magistrates, or so advantageous to the people, as morning-justice is. To delay justice is worse sometimes than to deny justice. It is a very dangerous thing for magistrates to be as long a-bringing forth their verdicts as the elephant her young. Delay of justice makes many more irreconcilable; it makes many men go up and down this world with heavy hearts, empty purses, and threadbare coats. I have read of a famous passage of Theodoric, king of the Romans, who, when a widow came to him with a sad complaint, that she had a suit depending in the court three years, which might have been ended in a few days; the king demands of her the judges' names: she tells him; he sends a special command to them to give all the speedy despatch that was possible to the widow's cause, which they did; and in two days determined it to the widow's liking. This being done, the king calls for the judges, and they, supposing that they should have both applause and reward for their expedition, hastened to him full of joy; but after the king had propounded several things to them about their former delays, he commanded both their heads to be struck off, because they had spun out that cause to a three years' length, which two days would have ended. Here was royal justice, and speedy justice indeed. Psa 101:8, 'I will early destroy all the wicked of the land;' *summo mane*, I will do

morning-justice. Festinanter, so Genebrad, 'I will hastily do it.' Justice should be on the wing; delays are very dangerous and injurious: Pro 13:12, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' The Hebrew word Memushshacah, that is here rendered 'deferred,' is from Mashach, that signifies 'to draw out at length.' Men are short-breathed and short-spirited, and hope's hours are full of eternity, and when their hopes are drawn out at length, this makes their hearts sick; and, ah! what a world of such sick souls lies languishing at hope's hospital all the world over. Hope in the text is put for the good things hoped for. Now when the good things men hope for, be it justice or a quick despatch, &c., are deferred and delayed, this makes the poor client sick at heart. A lingering hope always breeds in the heart a lingering consumption; the harder travail hope hath, and the more strongly it labours to bring forth, and yet is deferred and delayed, the more deadly sick the client grows. The speedy execution of justice is the very life and soul of justice: Amo 5:24, 'But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.' The Hebrew word Veiiggall, that is here rendered 'run down,' is from Galal, that signifies to 'roll down freely, plentifully, vigorously, constantly, speedily,' as the great billows of the sea, or as waves roll speedily over the rocks. Judgment and righteousness, like a mighty stream, should bear down all before it. Fiat justitia, ruat orbis—Let justice be done, whatever come of it: Deu 16:20, 'That which is altogether just shalt thou follow,' or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, ■■■■ ■■■■, Tsedek, Tsedek, Justice, justice shalt thou follow—that is, all manner of justice thou shalt follow, and nothing but justice shalt thou follow, and thou shalt follow justice sincerely, out of love to justice; and thou shalt follow justice exactly, without turning to the right hand or the left; and thou shalt follow justice resolutely, in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and thou shalt follow justice speedily, without delays or excuses. A magistrate that has the sword of justice in his hand must never plead, 'There is a lion in the way.' My Lord, this will be your honour while you live, and your comfort when you come to die, that whilst the sword was in your hand, you did justice speedily as well as impartially. You did justice in the morning, and justice at noon, and justice in the afternoon, and justice at night. What has been your whole mayoralty but one continued day of justice? Who can sum up the many thousand causes that you have heard and determined, and the many thousand differences that you have sweetly and friendly composed and ended? If the lawyers please but to speak out, they must ingenuously confess that your Lordship has eased them of a great deal of work. My Lord, as it is the honour and glory of a magistrate to do justice speedily, so it is the honour and glory of a magistrate to do justice resolutely, courageously, valiantly. It is observable that as soon as ever Joshua came into the office of magistracy, God charges him no less than three times, in a breath as it were, to be very courageous, Jos 1:6-7, Jos 1:9. A magistrate that is timorous will quickly be treacherous. A magistrate that is fearful can never be faithful. Solomon's throne was supported with lions, to shew that magistrates should be men of mettle and courage. The Athenian judges sat in Mars' street, Acts 17:22, to shew that they had martial hearts, and that they were men of courage and mettle. The Grecians placed justice betwixt Leo and Libra, to signify that as there must be indifferency in determining, so there ought to be courage in executing. Where there is courage without knowledge, there the eye of justice is blind; and where there is knowledge without courage, there the sword of justice is blunt. A magistrate's heart, a judge's heart and his robes must be both dyed in grain, else the colour of the one and the courage of the other will quickly fade. Why should not the standard be of steel, and the chief posts of the house be heart of oak? It hath been long since said of Cato, Fabricius, and Aristides, that it was as easy to remove the sun out of the firmament as to remove them from justice and equity; they were men of such

courageous and magnanimous spirits for justice and righteousness. No scarlet robe doth so well become a magistrate as holy courage and stoutness doth. As bodily physicians, so state physicians should have an eagle's eye, a lady's hand, and a lion's heart. Cowardly and timorous magistrates will never set up monuments of their victories over sin and profaneness. It is very sad when we may say of our magistrates, as the heathen did of magistrates in his time, they were very good, *si audeant quæ sentiunt*, if they durst but do what they ought to do. My Lord, had not the Lord of lords put a great spirit of courage, boldness, and resolution upon you, you had never been able to have managed your government as you have done, counting the various winds that have blown upon you, and the several difficulties and discouragements that have risen up before you, Rev 1:5-6, and Rev 17:14. My Lord, once more give me leave to say, that in a magistrate justice and mercy, justice and clemency ought to go hand in hand: Pro 20:28, 'Mercy and truth preserve the king, and his throne is upholden by mercy.' All justice will not preserve the king, nor all mercy will not preserve the king; there must be a mixture both of justice and mercy to preserve the king, and to uphold his throne; and to shew that mercy is more requisite than justice, the word mercy is doubled in the text. Justice without mercy turns into rigour, and so becomes hateful. Mercy without justice turns into fond pity, and so becomes contemptible.³ Look, as the rod of Aaron and the pot of manna were by God's own command laid up in the same ark; so must mercy and justice be preserved entire in the bosom of the same magistrate. Mercy and justice, mildness and righteousness, lenity and fidelity are a safer and a stronger guard to princes and people than rich mines, munitions of rocks, mighty armies, powerful navies, or any warlike preparations. It is very observable that Christ is called but once the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' in the book of the Revelation, and that is in Rev 5:5; but he is called a Lamb no less than nine-and-twenty times in that book. And what is this but to shew us the transcendent mercy, clemency, lenity, mildness, and sweetness that is in Jesus Christ, and to shew that he is infinitely more inclined to the exercise of mercy than he is to the exercise of justice. It is true, magistrates should be lions in the execution of justice, and it is as true that they should be lambs in the exercise of mercy and clemency, mildness and sweetness; and the more ready and inclinable they are to the exercise of mercy, where mercy is to be shewed, the more like to Christ the Lamb they are. God is slow to anger, he abounds in pity, though he be great in power, Psa 68:18, and Psa 103:13-14; Hos 11:8. Seneca hath long since observed, that the custom of anointing kings was to shew that kings, above all other men, should be men of the greatest sweetness and mildness, their anointing being a sign of that kingly sweetness and mildness that should be in them. Theodosius the emperor, by his loveliness and clemency, gained many kingdoms. The Goths, after the death of their own king, beholding his temperance, patience, and justice mixed with mercy and clemency, gave themselves up to his government. When Cicero would claw Cæsar, he tells him that his valour and victories were common with the rest of his soldiers, but his clemency and goodness were wholly his own. Nero's speech hath great praise, who in the beginning of his reign, when he was to subscribe to the death of any condemned person, would say, *Utinam nescirem literas*, I wish I did not know how to write. I know there are a thousand thousand cases wherein severity is to be used; but yet I must say that it is much safer to account for mercy than for cruelty; it is best that the sword of justice should be always furbished with the oil of mercy. My Lord, in the management of your government you have been so assisted and helped from on high, that stoutness and mildness, justice and mercy, justice and clemency, hath like a silver thread run through all your mayoralty, and by this means you have very signally served the interest of the crown, the interest of the city, the interest of the nation, and

that which is more than all the rest, the interest of your own soul. Rigour breeds rebellion. Rehoboam by his severity, by his cruelty, lost ten tribes in one day, 1Ki 12:16. My Lord, your prudence, justice, and moderation, your burning zeal against the horrid, hideous, heady vices of this day; your punishing of oaths, drunkenness, and the false balance; your singular sobriety and temperance in the midst of all your high entertainments; your fidelity and activity, your eminent self-denial in respect of your perquisites; your unwearied endeavours to see London raised out of its ruins, and to see the top-stone laid; your great readiness and willingness to spend and be spent for the public good: these are the things that have made your name as a precious ointment, and that have erected for you a noble living monument in the breasts and hearts of all sober, serious Christians: these are the things that have made you the darling of the people. Let all succeeding lord mayors but manage their own persons, families, and government as you have done, by divine assistance, and without a peradventure they will have a proportionable interest in the hearts and affections of the people. For, my Lord, it is not barely the having of a sword of justice, a sword of power, but the well management of that sword, that makes most for the interest both of prince and people, and that gives the magistrate a standing interest in the hearts and affections of the people. My Lord, the generality of people never concern themselves about the particular persuasions of this or that magistrate in the matters of religion, their eyes are upon their examples, and upon the management of their trust and power for public good; and they that do them most good shall be sure to have most of their hearts and voices, let their private opinions in the matters of religion be what they will. My Lord, I have not so learned Christ as to give flattering titles to men, Job 32:22. The little that I have written I have written in the plainness and singleness of my heart, and for your lordship's comfort and encouragement in all well-doing, and to provoke all others that shall succeed in your chair to write after that fair copy that you have set them, which will be their honour, London's happiness, and England's interest. Plutarch said of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them. The Lord grant that this may never be made good of any that shall succeed your lordship! Carus the emperor's motto was, Bonus dux, bonus comes, A good leader makes a good follower. The complaint is ancient in Seneca, that commonly men live not ad rationem, but ad similitudinem. Præcepta docent, exempla movent, Precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. Stories speak of some that could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies that went before them. The highest examples are very quickening and provoking. Oh that by all that shall succeed your lordship in the chair, we may yet behold our city rising more and more out of its ashes in greater splendour and glory than ever yet our eyes have seen it, that all sober citizens may have eminent cause to call them the repairers of the breaches and restorers of our city to dwell in! Concerning Jerusalem burned and laid waste by the Assyrians, Daniel foretold that the streets and the walls thereof should be rebuilt, even in troublesome times, Dan 9:25. Though the Assyrians have laid our Jerusalem waste, yet even to a wonder how have the buildings been carried on this last year! My Lord, the following treatise, which I humbly dedicate to your lordship, has been drawn up some years. The reasons why it has been buried so long in oblivion are not here to be inserted. The discourse is sober, and of great importance to all that have been burnt up, and to all whose houses have escaped the furious flames. Whilst the remembrance of London's flames are kept alive in the thoughts and hearts of men, this treatise will be of use in the world. My Lord, I do not dedicate this tractate to your lordship as if it stood in need of your honour's patronage; I judge it to be of age both to plead for itself and to defend itself against all gainsayers. veritas vincit, veritas

stat in aperto campo. Zeno, Socrates, Anaxarchus, &c., sealed the lean and barren truths of philosophy with the expense of their dearest blood, as you may see in the heathen martyrology. Oh, how much more should we be ready to seal all divine truths with our dearest blood, when God shall call us forth to such a service! My Lord, I humbly lay this treatise at your lordship's foot, to testify that love and honour that I have in my heart for you, both upon the account of that intrinsecal worth that is in you, and upon the account of the many good things and great things that have been done by you, and publicly to testify my acknowledgment of your lordship's undeserved favours towards me. My Lord, of right this treatise should have been in your hands several months since, and in that it was not it is wholly from others and not from me. If your lordship please but to favour the author so far as to read it once over for his sake, he doubts not but that your lordship will oftener read it over for your own soul's sake, and for eternity's sake, and for London's sake also. My Lord, by reason of my being remote from the city several weeks, I have had the advantage but of reading and correcting two or three sheets, and therefore must beg your lordship's pardon as to all the neglects and escapes of the press. A second impression may set all right and straight. My Lord, that to your dying day you may be famous in your generation, and that your precious and immortal soul may be richly adorned with all saving gifts and graces, and that you may daily enjoy a clear, close, high, and standing communion with God, and that you may be filled with all the fruits of righteousness and holiness, and that your soul may be bound up in the bundle of life, and crowned with the highest glory in the other world, in the free, full, constant, and uninterrupted enjoyment of that God who is the heaven of heaven and the glory of glory, is, and by divine assistance shall be, the earnest prayers of him who is your honour's in all humble and due observance,

Thomas Brooks. the fiery jesuit's temper and behaviour.

I fain would be informed by you what ails These foxes to wear firebrands in their tails.

What! did you teach these cubs the world to burn, Or to embottle London in its urn? Are Huguenots as rank Philistines grown With you, as dwelt in Gath or Askelon?

Bold wretches! must your fire thus antedate The general doom, and give the world its fate?

Must hell's edict to blend this globe with fire Be done at your grave nods when you require?

LONDON'S LAMENTATIONS ON THE LATE FIERY DISPENSATION Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not I the Lord? he against whom we have sinned; for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law.

Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.—Isa 42:24-25. The Lord in this chapter, by the prophet Isaiah, doth foretell heavy things against the people, and, by the way, marks the Lord's dealings. He ever gives warnings before he sends any plagues. He lightens before he thunders, that the people might not say, they did not hear of it, and that the wicked might be the more inexcusable, and that the godly might make an ark to save themselves in. These words contain in them five several things. (1.) The author of this destruction or judgment. (2.) The causes of it. (3.) The judgment itself. (4.) Who they were on whom this judgment was inflicted. (5.) The effects of it. Now by divine permission I will open these words in order to you.

1. For the first, The author of it. Now this is laid down by question and answer: 'Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers?' There is the question. 'Did not I the Lord?' There is the answer. God is the author of all the plagues and judgments that befall a nation.

2. Secondly, The causes why the Lord did this to a people that he had chosen to be a special people unto himself; to a people upon whom he had set his love; to a people that he had owned for his portion, and that he had formerly kept as the apple of his eye, and carried as upon eagles' wings, Deu 7:5, Deu 7:8, and Deu 32:10-12. Now the causes are set down, first, more generally, in these words, 'Because they have sinned against the Lord;' secondly, more particularly, in these words, 'For they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law.'

3. The third thing observable in the words is, the dreadful judgments themselves that God inflicted upon his sinful people, his sinning people; and these you have in Isa 42:25.

'Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger:' not only his anger, but the fury of his anger, to shew the greatness of it, the extremity of it. Mark, he doth not say that God did drop down his anger, but he poured down his anger and indignation. This phrase, 'he poured out,' is an allusion to the clouds pouring down of water violently all at once, in an instant, as they do many times in the Levant seas, in Egypt, at the Indies, and in several other parts of the world; as they did in the deluge, when the windows of heaven were broke open, Gen 6:11. Now, by this similitude, the Lord shews the dreadfulness, the grievousness, the suddenness, and the vehemency of the judgments that were fallen upon them.

'And the strength of battle.' The Lord appears in arms against them in the greatness and fierceness of his wrath; he sent in a very powerful enemy upon them, that with fire and sword overran them and their country, and destroyed them on every side, as you may see by comparing 2Ki 23:33, seq., with 2Ki 24:1-20 and 2Ki 25:1-30.

'And hath set him on fire round about.' That is, say some, all the countries, cities, and towns round about Jerusalem were set on fire.

'Yet he knew not.' Though God had burnt them up on every hand, yet they took no notice of it, they regarded it not, they were not at all affected with the fiery dispensations of God. Oh the dulness, the insensibleness, the sottishness of the Jews under the most awakening and amazing judgments of God! 'And it burned him.' This some apply to the city of Jerusalem itself. God did not only fire the cities and towns round about Jerusalem, but he also set Jerusalem itself into a flame. Jerusalem, which was 'beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth,' the paradise and wonder of the world, is turned into ashes. 'Yet he laid it not to heart,' or upon his heart, as the original runs. Oh the monstrous stupidity, insensibleness, and blockishness of this people! Though God had brought them low, though their crown was fallen from their head, though their glorious city was turned into ashes, and though they were almost destroyed by many smarting miseries and dreadful calamities, yet they were not affected with the stupendous judgments of God, they were not awakened by all the flames that God had kindled about their ears, they did not lay the judgments of God to heart, nor they would not lay the judgments of God upon their hearts.

4. The fourth thing observable in the words is, the persons, the people that were spoiled, destroyed, and consumed by fire; and they were Jacob and Israel. 'Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers?' They were a praying people, a professing people, a fasting people, a

peculiar people, a privileged people; and yet for their sins they became a destroyed people, a consumed people, a ruined people, Isa 58:2; Zec 7:5; Exo 19:5.

5. The fifth thing observable in the words is, the little effect the judgments of God had upon them. Now they were under such monstrous stupidity that they were not [at] all awakened nor affected with the judgments of God; they regarded them not, they laid them not to heart. And as stupid and senseless were they when Titus Vespasian had laid their city desolate by fire and sword, and sold thirty of them for one piece of silver, as Josephus and other historians tell us. O sirs, since their crucifying of the Lord of glory, they have never laid their finger upon the right sore; to this very day they won't acknowledge their sin in crucifying of the Lord of glory. They confess they have sinned more than ever, and therefore it is that God hath more sorely afflicted them than ever; but their cruelty to Christ, their crucifying of Christ, which ushered in the total ruin of their city and country, they cannot be brought to acknowledge to this very day, though the Lord hath burnt them up on every hand, and hath scattered them as dung all over the earth to this very day. A learned writer tells us that they call Christ Bar-chozab, the Son of a Lie, a Bastard, and his Gospel Aven Gilaion, the Volume of Lies, or the Volume of Iniquity, and us Christians Goiim, that is, Gentiles, Edomites. When they salute a Christian, they call him Shed, that is, Devil. They hate all Christians, but none so much as those that are converted from Judaism to Christianity, and all this after so great a burning and desolation that the Lord has made in the midst of them. It is true the length of those heavy judgments under which they groan to this very day hath often puzzled the intellectuals of their Rabbis, and hath many times put them to a stand, and sometimes to break out into a kind of confession, that surely their judgments could not last so long, but for crucifying of one that was more than a man. There was one Rabbi Samuel, who, six hundred years since, wrote a tract in form of an epistle to Rabbi Isaac, master of the synagogue of the Jews, wherein he doth excellently discuss the cause of their long captivity and extreme misery. And after that he had proved it was inflicted for some grievous sin, he sheweth that sin to be the same which Amos speaks of, Amo 2:6, 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they sold the righteous for silver.' The selling of Joseph he makes the first sin; the worshipping of the calf in Horeb, the second sin; the abusing and killing of God's prophets, the third sin; and the selling of Jesus Christ, the fourth sin. For the first they served four hundred years in Egypt, for the second they wandered forty years in the wilderness, for the third they were captives seventy years in Babylon, and for the fourth they are held in pitiful captivity even till this day. It is certain that the body of that people are under woeful blindness and hardness to this very day. And thus much for the opening of the words. The 25th verse is the scripture that I do intend to speak something to, as the Lord shall assist. Now the proposition which I only intend to insist upon is this, viz:— That God is the author or efficient cause of all the great calamities and dreadful judgments that are inflicted upon cities and countries, and in particular, of that of fire.

Now, that God is the author or efficient cause of all the great calamities and dreadful judgments that are inflicted upon cities and countries, will evidently appear to every man's understanding, that will but take the pains to read over Lev 26:1-46, and Deu 28:1-68, with Eze 14:13-22. That God is the author or efficient cause of this dreadful judgment of fire that is at any time inflicted upon cities and countries, will sufficiently appear in these following scriptures: Amo 3:6, 'Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' This is to be understood of the evil of punishment, and not of the evil of sin. Amo 4:11, 'I

have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burnings: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.' Here 'I' is emphatical and exclusive, as if he should say, 'I, and I alone.' Amo 1:14, 'But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,'—that is, in the metropolis or chief city of the Ammonites,—'and it shall devour the palaces thereof.' Rabbah, their head city, was a cruel, bloody, covetous, and ambitious city, ver. 13; and therefore, rather than it should escape divine vengeance, God will kindle a fire in the wall of it, and burn it with his own hands. Eze 20:47, 'And say to the forest of the south,'—that is, to Jerusalem, that did lie southwards from Chaldæa—'Hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flames shall not be quenched, and all fuel from the south to the north shall be burnt therein.' ver. 48, 'And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.' Men shall see that it was God that kindled the fire, and not man, and therefore it was beyond man's skill or power to quench it, or to overmaster it. Jer 7:20, 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.' The point being thus proved; for the further opening of it, premise with me these things:—

(1.) First, That great afflictions, dreadful judgments, are likened unto fire in the blessed Scriptures: Psa 66:12, 'We went through fire and water:' Jer 4:4, 'Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings:' Jer 21:12, 'O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings:' Lam 2:3-4, 'He hath cut off in his anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about: he hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that was pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire:' Eze 15:7, 'And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them: and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I set my face against them:' Eze 22:20-22, 'As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you: yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof: as silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.' Thus you see that great afflictions, great judgments, are likened unto fire.

Quest. But in what respects are great afflictions, great judgments, like unto fire?

Ans. In these eight respects they are like unto fire:—

[1.] First, Fire is very dreadful and terrible to men's thoughts, spirits, and apprehensions. How dreadful was the fire of Sodom, and the fire of London, to all that were near it, or spectators of it! It is observable that some are set out in the blessed Scriptures as monuments of most terrible and dreadful vengeance, whom the kings of Babylon roasted in the fire; of them, it is said, shall be

taken up a curse, Jer 29:21-22. When any imprecated sore vengeance from the Lord upon any one, it is said, 'The Lord make thee like Ahab and Zedekiah, whom the kings of Babylon roasted in the fire.' It is very dreadful and terrible for a man to have the least member of his body frying in the fire; but how terrible and dreadful must it be for a man's whole body to be roasted in the fire! so are the judgments of the Lord very terrible and dreadful to the children of men. 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments,' Psa 119:120, Hab 3:16, 'When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.' But,

[2.] Secondly, Fire is very painful and tormenting—in which respects hell-torments are compared to fire—so are great afflictions and judgments; they are very painful and tormenting, they put a land into sore travail. Next to the pangs of conscience, and the pangs of hell, there are none to those pangs that are bred and fed by terrible judgments, Isa 26:17-18. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Fire is of a discovering nature; it enlightens men's eyes to see those things that they did not see before; so do the terrible judgments of God enlighten men's minds and understandings sometimes to know the Lord, Rev 15:4; Eze 21:3-7. Hence it is that, after judgments threatened, God doth so often tell them that they shall know the Lord. Sometimes God, by his judgments, enlightens men's minds to see such an evil in sin that they never saw before, and to see such a vanity, mutability, impotency, and uncertainty in the creature that they never saw before; and to see such a need of free-grace, of rich mercy, and of infinite favour and goodness, that they never saw before; and to see such majesty and terribleness in God that they never saw before, Psa 66:3, Psa 66:5, Job 37:22, 'With God is terrible majesty.' But,

[4.] Fourthly, Fire is probatory and refining, and so are the judgments of God; they will try what metal men are made of; they will try whether men are sound and sincere, or hypocritical and hollow; whether men are real Christians or nominal Christians; whether they are throughout Christians or almost Christians; whether their graces are true or counterfeit, and whether they have much, or but a little, grace, Isa 1:25; Mal 3:1-3; Acts 26:28-29, Isa 31:9, 'The Lord's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.' Zec 13:9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.' 1Pe 4:12, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.' Stars shine brightest in the darkest night. Torches are the better for beating. Grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press. Spices smell sweetest when pounded. Young trees root the faster for shaking. Vines are the better for bleeding. Gold looks the brighter for scouring; and juniper smells sweetest in the fire. The application is easy. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Fire is of a consuming and devouring nature, as we have lately found by woeful experience: Psa 18:8, 'There went out a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured.' Jer 15:14, 'A fire is kindled in my anger, which shall burn upon you.' Eze 22:31, 'Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath,' Isa 66:15-16; Psa 21:9; Jer 17:4; Eze 38:19-20. Natural fire is a great devourer, but mystical fire, the fire of divine wrath, is infinitely a greater devourer. Men may stand before a natural fire, but no man has ever been able to stand before the devouring fire of divine wrath. The anger and wrath of God against wicked men is exceeding hot; it is a burning, fiery, flaming wrath, against which they are never able to stand: Isa 27:4, 'Who would set the briers and thorns against

me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.’ Briers and thorns are as well able to stand before a devouring fire, as wicked men are able to stand before the smoking wrath of that God which is ‘a consuming fire,’ Heb 12:29.

[6.] Sixthly, Fire breaks out suddenly and unexpectedly; in an hour, in a moment, when no man thinks of it, when no man looks for it; as you see by that late dreadful fire, that in a few days turned a glorious city into a ruinous heap. So the judgments of God, they come suddenly and unexpectedly upon the sons of men. Witness the judgments of God that came upon the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, Nadab and Abihu, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram: 1Th 5:3, ‘For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.’ Security is a certain forerunner of desolation and destruction. The apostle, by the similitude he uses, shews that the destruction of the wicked is—(1.) certain, (2.) sudden, (3.) inevitable, Mat 24:37-39; Gen 19:1-38. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Fire is impartial; it makes no difference between rich and poor, high and low, honourable and base, bond and free, male and female, &c. So the judgments of God are impartial, they reach all sorts and ranks of persons. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Fire is violent and irresistible. We have had as dreadful a proof of this in the late dreadful conflagration of London as ever any people have had since the Lord Jesus was on earth. So are the judgments of God violent and irresistible. Witness the raging pestilence and the bloody sword that, in 1665 and 1666, has sent many score thousands to their long homes. And thus you see how that metaphorically or typically great and sore judgments do resemble fire. But,

(2.) Secondly, Premise this with me: Fire is sometimes attributed unto God: Heb 12:29, ‘Our God is a consuming fire.’ Sometimes fire is attributed to Christ: Mal 3:2, ‘But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap.’ And sometimes fire is attributed to the Holy Ghost: Mat 3:11, ‘I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire’—that is, with that fiery Holy Ghost, that spirit of judgment and of burning wherewith the filth of the daughter of Zion is washed away, Isa 4:4. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Premise this with me: The word fire in Scripture is sometimes used by the Holy Ghost to set forth sin by: Isa 9:18, ‘For wickedness burneth as the fire, it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.’ So the burning lust of uncleanness: Rom 1:27, ‘They burned in lust one towards another.’ So 1Co 7:9, ‘It is better to marry than to burn.’ And so Sodom was first in a flame of burning lusts, before it was burned with fire from heaven. But this is not the fire that is here meant in the proposition that we are upon. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Premise this with me: Fire is sometimes taken for the blessed angels: Psa 104:4, ‘Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire,’ Heb 1:7. Hence it is that the angels are called seraphims, which signifies burning or flaming ones, and they are set forth by this name to note their irresistible power, Isa 6:2; for as there is no withstanding of the furious flames, so there is no withstanding of these burning or flaming ones. Jerome, Musculus, and several others, are of opinion that the angel that destroyed of Sennacherib’s host a hundred and fourscore and

five thousand in one night, that he did it by fire, burning their bodies, their garments being untouched, 2Ki 19:35. But the fire in the proposition cannot be understood of the blessed angels, for several reasons not here to be alleged. But,

(5.) Fifthly, Premise this with me: Fire in Scripture is sometimes taken for wars: 'The fire of thine enemies'—that is, the wars that shall be amongst the nations—'shall devour them.' 'Thou shalt be visited of the Lord with a flame of devouring fire; but the nations that fight against the altar shall be a dream,' Isa 26:11-12, &c., and Isa 29:6-7. Now fire in this sense is not to be excluded out of the proposition. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Premise this with me: Fire sometimes notes the special presence of God in a way of special love and favour to his people. In Exo 3:2 you read how 'the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.' Here was a representation of the church's affliction, that was then in Egypt, a house of bondage, in the midst of a fiery furnace, Deu 4:20. But now the Lord was in the bush, while the bush—the dry bush, or the bramble-bush, as the Hebrew word signifies—was in a flaming fire. In that Deu 32:16 you read of 'the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush.' God was there in a way of merciful protection and preservation. They were in the fire, but the Lord was with them in the fire; in all their fiery trials God did bear them company. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Premise this with me: In the blessed Scriptures we read of supernal fire, of fire that came down from above, and that first as a sign of God's anger. So fire came down from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen 19:24. Also fire came down from heaven on them that offered incense in the conspiracy of Korah, Num 16:35. And so fire came down from heaven on the two captains and their fifties, 2Ki 1:10-12. Secondly, we read of fire that came down from heaven as a sign and token of God's favour. And so fire came down from heaven on the sacrifice of Solomon, and on the sacrifice of Elijah, 2Ch 7:1; 1Ki 18:38. God in those times did delight to shew his special love and favour to his precious servants by fire from heaven. But in the proposition we are to understand not supernal, but material fire. But,

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, Premise this with me: Fire is sometimes taken literally for that material fire that consumes houses, towns, cities, and the most stately structures. Jer 21:10, 'For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the Lord; it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire;' 2Ch 35:13. 'And they roasted the passover with fire;' Neh 1:3, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire;' Neh 2:2-3, 'Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, and said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?' See 2Ch 36:19; 2Ki 19:18, and 2Ki 21:6; Psa 74:7; Deu 13:16. Now this material fire is the fire that is meant in the proposition. O sirs! God is as much the author or efficient cause of this judgment of fire, as he is the author or efficient cause of sword, famine, and pestilence. This I have in part proved already; but shall more abundantly make it good in that which follows. But you will say, Sir, we know very well that God is the author or efficient cause of this dreadful judgment of fire, as well as he is the author or efficient cause of any other judgment that we have either felt or feared; but

we earnestly desire to know what the ends of God should be in inflicting this sore and heavy judgment of fire upon his poor people, and in turning their glorious city into ashes? This we are sure of, that whoever kindled the fire, God did blow the coal, and therefore we shall not now consider what there was of man's treachery concurring with God's severity in that dreadful calamity by fire; but rather inquire after the grounds, reasons, or ends that God aims at by that fiery dispensation that has lately passed upon us.

Now here give me leave to say, that so far as the late fire was a heavy judgment of God upon the city, yea, upon the whole nation, the ends of God in inflicting that judgment are doubtless such as respect both sinners and saints, the righteous and the wicked, the profane and the holy, the good and the bad. Now such as respect the wicked and ungodly I take to be these that follow:—

[1.] First, That he may evidence his sovereignty, and that they may know that there is a God. The profane atheist saith in his heart, 'There is no God;' but God by his terrible judgments startles and awakens the atheist, and makes him unsay what he had said in his heart. When God appears in flames of fire, devouring and destroying all before him, then the proudest and the stoutest atheists in the world will confess that there is a God—yea, then they will bow and tremble under a sense of the sovereignty of God. The sovereignty of God is that golden sceptre in his hand which he will make all bow to, either by his word or by his works, by his mercies or by his judgments. This sceptre must be kissed and submitted to, or else fire and sword, desolation and destruction, will certainly follow. Jer 18:2–4, 6, 'Arise, and go down to the potter's house; and there will I cause thee to hear my word. Then I went down to the potter's house; and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, that seemed good to the potter to make it. O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as the potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.' The Jews were so stupid and sottish that verbal teaching without signs would not work upon them, and therefore the Lord sent Jeremiah to the potter's house, that he might see, by what the potter did, that though he had made them a people, a nation, a church, a state, yet he could as easily unmake them and mar them, as the potter marred the vessel that he had made. God would have this people to know that he had as much power over them and all they had as the potter had power over the clay that he works upon, and that he had as much both might and right also to dispose of them at his pleasure as the potter had over his clay to dispose of it as he judged meet. Nay, beloved, the potter has not such an absolute power over his pots and clay as the Lord has over the sons of men, to make them and break them at his pleasure; and that partly because that the clay is none of his creature, and partly because without God give him strength he has no power to make or break one vessel. God by the prophet would have the Jews to know that it was merely by his good pleasure and grace that they came to be so glorious and flourishing a nation as they were at this time; yea, and further to know that they were not so great, and rich, and flourishing, and settled, and built, but that he could as easily break them and mar them as the potter could the vessel that was under his hand, Isa 64:8. Ah sirs! God by that dreadful fire that has destroyed our houses, and burnt up our substance, and banished us from our habitations, and levelled our stately monuments of antiquity and glory even with the ground, has given us a very high evidence of his sovereignty both over our persons and all our concerns in this world. Ah London! London! were there none within nor without thy walls that did deny the sovereignty of God, that did belie the sovereignty of God, that did slight the sovereignty of God,

that did make head against the sovereignty of God? Were there none within nor without thy walls that did say, 'We are lords, and we will come no more unto thee'? that did say, 'Is not this great Babylon, is not this great London that we have built?' that did say, 'The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy, the flaming and consuming fire, should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem, into the gates of London?' that did say, 'Who is the Lord, that we should obey his voice?' that did advance a worldly sovereignty above and against the sovereignty of God and Christ? Jer 2:31; Dan 4:30; Lam 4:12; Exo 5:2. Ah London! London! if there were any such within or without thy walls, then never wonder that God has in a flaming and consuming fire proclaimed his sovereignty over thee, and that he hath given such atheists to know from woeful experience that both themselves and all their concernments are in the hands of the Lord as the clay is in the hands of the potter, and that the sorest judgments that any city can fall under are but the demonstrations of his sovereign prerogative, Isa 5:16, Psa 9:16, 'The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth; the power, justice, and sovereignty of God shines most gloriously in the execution of his judgments upon the world.'

[2.] Secondly, God inflicts great and sore judgments upon the sons of men, that the world may stand in awe of him, and that they may learn to fear and tremble before him. When he appears as a consuming fire, he expects that the nation should tremble, and that the inhabitants should fear before him: 1Sa 16:4, 'And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem: and the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?' Shall the elders of Bethlehem tremble for fear that Samuel came to denounce some grievous judgment against them; and shall not we tremble when God has executed his terrible judgments upon us? Shall Ahab tremble and humble himself, and fast and lie in sackcloth when judgments are but threatened; and shall not we tremble and fear before the great God, who has actually inflicted upon us his three great judgments, pestilence, sword, and fire? Shall the Ninevites, both princes, nobles, and people, tremble and humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes when God doth but threaten to overthrow their great, their rich, their populous city; and shall not we tremble and lie low before the Lord when we see great London, rich and populous London, laid in ashes before our eyes? 1Ki 21:20-24, 1Ki 21:27-29; Jon 3:3-10. When the hand of the Lord was stretched out against the Egyptians, 'the dukes of Edom were amazed, and the mighty men of Moab trembled,' Exo 15:15-16; 2Ki 6:30, and 2Ki 7:6-7, 2Ki 7:15; Jer 4:7-9. Ah, how severely has the hand of the Lord been stretched out against London and all her inhabitants! and therefore what cause have we to be amazed and to tremble before that God who has appeared in flames of fire against us! Lam 2:3-4, 'He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. He bent his bow like an enemy: and poured out his fury like fire.' God burnt down their city, their temple, their gates, their princely habitations, their glorious structures, in the fierceness of his anger and in the greatness of his wrath. O sirs! when God falls upon burning work, when he pours out his fury like fire, when like a flaming fire he devours all our pleasant things, and lays all our glory in dust and ashes, we may safely conclude that his anger is fierce and that his wrath is great against us; and therefore what eminent cause have we to fear and tremble before him! God is a great and dreadful God: Dan 9:4, 'A mighty God and terrible;' Deu 7:21, 'A great and terrible God,' Neh 1:5. He is so in himself, and he has been so in his fiery dispensations towards us, that the world by such remarkable severities may be kept in awe of him. Generally fear doth more in the

world than love. As there is little sincerity, so there is but little ingenuity² in the world; and that is the reason why many very rarely think of God but when they are afraid of him. Many times judgments work where mercies do not win. That famous Thomas Waldo of Lyons, the father of the Waldenses, seeing, among many met together to be merry, one suddenly fall down dead in the street, it struck so to his heart that he went home a penitent,—it wrought to a severe and pious reformation of his life, and he lived and died a precious man. Though Pharaoh was not a pin the better for all the heavy judgments that God inflicted upon him, yet Jethro, taking notice of those dreadful plagues and judgments that fell upon Pharaoh and upon his people, and likewise upon the Amalekites, was thereby converted and became a proselyte; as Rabbi Solomon noteth upon that 19th of Pro 25:1-28: The world is so untractable, that frowns will do more with them than smiles. That God may keep wicked men in awe and in subjection to him, he sees it very needful to bring common, and general, and overspreading judgments upon them: Rev 15:4, 'Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.' O sirs! when the judgments of the Lord come to be made manifest, then it highly concerns all ranks and sorts of men to fear the Lord and to glorify his name. How manifest, how visible has the raging pestilence, and the bloody sword, and the devouring flames of London been in the midst of us! and oh that our fear, and dread, and awe of God were as manifest and as visible as his judgments have been and still are; for his hand to this very hour is stretched out against us! Isa 9:12. But,

[3.] Thirdly, God inflicts great and sore judgments upon the sons of men, and upon cities and countries, to express and make known his power, justice, anger, severity, and indignation against sinners and their sinful courses, by which he has been provoked: Deu 32:19, 'And when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters.' Deu 32:21, 'They have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.' Deu 32:22, 'For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.' Deu 32:24, 'They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, or with burning coals, and with bitter destruction.' There is a knowledge of God by his works as well as by his word, and by his judgment as well as by his mercies. In his dreadful judgments every one may run and read his power, his justice, his anger, his severity, and his indignation against sin and sinners. It is irrevocable sins that bring irrevocable judgments upon sinners. Whilst men hold on in committing great iniquities, God will hold on in inflicting answerable severities. When God cannot prevail with men to desist from sinning, men shall not prevail with God to desist from destroying of them, their habitations, and all their pleasant things: Jer 2:15, 'The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burnt without inhabitant.' Jer 2:17, 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way?' When Nicephorus Phocas had built a mighty strong wall about his palace for his own security, in the night-time he heard a voice crying unto him, βασιλε ψιεις τειχ, &c., O emperor, though thou buildest the wall as high as the clouds; yet if sin be within, it will overthrow all. Sin, like those traitors in the Trojan horse, will do cities and countries more hurt in one night than ten thousand open enemies could do in ten years. Cities and countries might flourish, and continue as the days of heaven, and be as the sun before the Almighty, if his wrath be not provoked by their profaneness and wickedness; so that it is not any divine³ aspect of the heavens, nor any malignant conjunction of the stars and planets, but the loose manners, the ungracious

lives, and the enormous sins of men, that lay cities and countries desolate: Jer 13:22, 'And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? wherefore hath the Lord sent plague, sword, famine, and fire to devour and destroy, and to lay all in ashes?' The answer is, 'For the greatness of thine iniquity.' God will in flames of fire discover his anger and indignation against sin and sinners. The heathen historian [Herodotus] observes in the ruin of Troy, that the sparkles and ashes of burnt Troy served for a lasting monument of God's great anger and displeasure against great sinners. The burning of Troy served to teach men that God punisheth great sinners with great plagues; and certainly London's being laid in ashes is a high evidence that God knows how to be angry with sinners, and how to punish sin with the sorest of judgments. The gods of the Gentiles were senseless stocks and stones, not able to apprehend, much less to revenge, any injury done unto them. Well therefore might the philosopher be bold with Hercules to put him to his thirteenth labour in seething of his dinner; and Martial with Priapus, in threatening him to throw him into the fire if he looked not well to his trees. A child may play at the hole of a dead asp, and a silly woman may strike a dead lion; but who dare play with a living serpent? who dare take a roaring lion by the beard? Oh that Christians then would take heed how they provoke the living God, for he is 'a consuming fire,' and with a word of his mouth, yea, with the breath of his mouth, he is able to throw down, and to burn up the whole frame of nature, and to destroy all creatures from the face of the earth. Some heathen philosophers thought anger an unseemly attribute to ascribe to God, and some heretics conceived the God of the New Testament void of all anger. They imagined two Gods: the God of the Old Testament was, in their account, Deus justus, a Deity severe and revengeful: but the God of the New Testament was Deus bonus, the good God, a God made up all of mercy; they would have no anger in him. But Christians do know that God proclaims this attribute among his titles of honour: Neh 1:2, 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, and is furious; he reserveth wrath for his enemies.' It is the highway to atheism and profaneness, to fancy to ourselves a God made up all of mercy, to think that God cannot tell how to be angry and wroth with the sons of men. Surely they that have seen London in flames, or believe that it is now laid in ashes, they will believe that God knows how to be angry, and how to fix the tokens of his wrath upon us. But,

[4.] Fourthly, God inflicts great and sore judgments upon the sons of men, and upon cities and countries, that they may cease from sin, receive instruction, and reform and return to the most High; as you may evidently see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. God's corrections should be our instructions, his lashes should be our lessons, his scourges should be our schoolmasters, his chastisements should be our advertisements: and to note this the Hebrews and the Greeks both express chastising and teaching by one and the same word [μαρτυρία, Masar, παιδεία], because the latter is the true end of the former, according to that in the proverb, 'Smart makes wit, and vexation gives understanding.' Whence Luther fitly calls affliction, Theologiam Christianorum, The Christian man's divinity: Jer 6:8, 'Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.' Zep 3:6-7, 'I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passed by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is no inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me; thou wilt receive instruction: so their dwellings should not be cut off, however I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.' By all the desolations that God had made before their eyes he designed their instruction and reformation. From those words, Jdg 3:20, 'I have a message from God unto thee, O king,' said Ehud. Lo, his poniard was God's message: from

whence one well observes, That not only the vocal admonitions, but the real judgments of God are his errands and instructions to the world. God delights to win men to himself by favours and mercies; but it is rare that God this way makes a conquest upon them: Jer 22:21, 'I spake unto thee in thy prosperity,' saith God; 'but thou saidst, I will not hear:' and therefore it is that he delivers them over into the hands of severe judgments, as into the hands of so many curst schoolmasters, as Basil speaks, that so they may learn obedience by the things they suffer, as the apostle speaks, Deu 32:14-17; Jer 5:7-10; Psa 73:1-10. It is said of Gideon, he took briers and thorns, and with them he taught the men of Succoth, Jdg 8:16. Ah, poor London! how has God taught thee with briers and thorns, with sword, pestilence, and fire! and all because thou wouldst not be taught by prosperity and mercy 'to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God,' Mic 6:8; Lam 3:32-33; Isa 28:21. God delights in the reformation of a nation; but he doth not delight in the desolation of any nation. God's greatest severity is to prevent utter ruin and misery, Schola crucis, schola lucis. If God will but make London's destruction England's instruction, it may save the land from a total desolation. Ah, London! London! I would willingly hope that this fiery rod that has been upon thy back has been only to awaken thee, and to instruct thee, and to refine thee, and to reform thee, that after this sore desolation God may delight to build thee, and beautify thee, and make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations, Isa 60:15. But,

[5.] Fifthly, God inflicts sore and great judgments upon the sons of men, that he may try them, and make a more full discovery of themselves to themselves. Wicked men will never believe that their lusts are so strong, and that their hearts are so base, as indeed they are: 2Ki 8:12-13, 'And Hazeal said, Why weepeth my lord? and he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel; their strongholds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazeal said, But what, is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.' Hazeal could not imagine that he should be as fierce, cruel, murderous, and merciless as a dog, that will tear all in pieces that he can come at. It could never enter into his thoughts that ever he should do such cruel, barbarous, horrid, and inhuman acts as the prophet spoke of; but he did not know the depth of his own corruption, nor the desperateness, nor deceitfulness of his own heart, Jer 17:9; Isa 8:21, 'And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry they shall fret themselves, and curse their king, and their God, and look upward.' When judgments are upon them, then their wickedness appears rampant. They shall curse their own king for not defending, protecting, or relieving of them; they shall look upon him as the cause of all their wants, sorrows, and sufferings; and as men overwhelmed with misery, and full of indignation, they shall fall a-cursing of him. And they shall curse their God as well as their king; that is, say some, the true God, who deservedly brought these plagues upon them. Their God; that is, say others, their Melchom, to whom they had sacrificed, and in whom they see now that they vainly trusted. So those desperate wretches under the beast: Rev 16:8-9, 'And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And the men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not, to give him glory;' Rev 16:10, 'And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the scent of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.'² The top of the judgment that is and shall be upon the wicked is this, that under the

sorest and heaviest judgments that shall come upon them, they shall not repent, nor give glory to God. They shall blaspheme the name of God, and they shall blaspheme the God of heaven; and they shall be scorched with great heat, and they shall gnaw their tongues for pain, but they shall not repent of their deeds, nor give glory to that hand that smites them. The fierce and fiery dispensations of God upon the followers and worshippers of the beast shall draw out their sins; but they shall never reform their lives, nor better their souls. God kept the Jews forty years in the wilderness, and exercised them with many sore and smart afflictions, that he might prove them, and make a more full discovery of themselves to themselves. And did not the heavy trials that they met with in their wilderness condition make a very great discovery of that pride, that unbelief, that hypocrisy, that impatience, that discontent, that self-love, that murmuring, &c., that was wrapt up close in all their souls? O sirs! since God has turned our renowned city into ashes, what discoveries has he made of that pride, that unbelief, that worldliness, that earthliness, that self-love, that inordinate affection to relations and to the good things of the world, that discontent, that disquietness, that faint-heartedness, that has been closely wrapped up in the spirits of many thousands whose habitations are now laid in ashes! We try metals by fire and by knocking, and God has tried many thousands this day by his fiery dispensations and knocking judgments that have been in the midst of us. I believe there are many thousands who have been deep sufferers by the late dreadful fire, who never did think that there had been so much sin and so little grace, so much of the creature and so little of God, so much earth and so little of heaven in their hearts, as they now find by woeful experience. And how many wretched sinners are there who have more blasphemed God, and dishonoured Christ, and provoked divine justice, and abused their best mercies, and debased and be-beasted themselves since the late fire, than they have done in many years before! But,

[6.] Sixthly, God inflicts great and sore judgments upon persons, cities, and countries, that others may be warned by his severities to break off their sins, and to return to the most High. God's judgments upon one city, should be advertisements to all other cities to look about them, and to tremble before him who is 'a consuming fire,' Heb 12:29. The flaming rod of correction that is laid upon one city, should be a rod of instruction to all other cities. Jer 22:6-9, 'I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this great city? Then shall they answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.' God punisheth one city, that all other cities may take warning. There is no judgment of God, be it sword, pestilence, famine, or fire, upon any people, city, nation, or country, but what is speaking and teaching to all others, had they but eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand, Mic 6:9. Thus Tyrus shall be devoured with fire, saith the prophet; Ashkelon shall see it and fear; Gaza and Ekron shall be very sorrowful, Zec 9:4-5. When Ashkelon, Gaza, and Ekron shall see the destruction of Tyre by fire, it shall make them afraid of the like judgment. They shall be a little more concerned than some were at the siege of Rhodes, and than others were at the ruin and desolation of Troy by fire. London's sufferings should warn others to take heed of London's sins. London's conflagration should warn others to take heed of London's abominations. It should warn others to stand and wonder at the patience, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness of God towards them who have deserved as hard things from the hand of God, as London have felt in 1665 and 1666, Rom 2:4-5. It should warn others to search their hearts, and try their ways, and break off their sins, and turn to the Lord, lest his anger should break

forth in flames of fire against them, and none should be able to deliver them, Lam 3:40. It should warn others to fear and tremble before that power, justice, severity, and sovereignty that shines in God's fiery dispensations towards us. Eze 30:7-9, 'And they shall be desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities'—meaning Egypt—'shall be in the midst of the cities that are wasted. And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have set a fire in Egypt. In that day shall messengers go forth from me in ships, to make the careless Ethiopians afraid, and great pain shall come upon them, as in the day of Egypt; for, lo, he cometh,' Exo 15:14-16; Isa 13:6-8. God by his secret instinct and providence would so order the matter, as that the news of the Chaldeans' inroad into Egypt, laying all their cities and towns waste by fire and sword, should be carried over into Ethiopia; and hereupon the secure Ethiopians should fear and tremble, and be in pain as a woman is that is in travail; or as the Egyptians were, when they were destroyed at the Red Sea; or as they were, when the Lord smote their firstborn throughout the land of Egypt. Now shall the Ethiopians, the poor, blind heathens, fear and tremble, and be in pain, when they hear that Egypt is laid waste by fire and sword; and shall not Christians all the world over fear and tremble, and be in pain, when they shall hear that London is laid waste, that London is destroyed by fire? What though papists and atheists have warmed themselves at the flames of London, saying, Aha! so would we have it; yet let all that have the name of God upon them fear and tremble, and take warning, and learn righteousness by his righteous judgments upon desolate London. London's murdering-piece should be England's warning-piece to awaken them, and to work them to bethink themselves, and to turn to him who is able by a flaming fire quickly to turn them out of all, Isa 26:8-9. The Jews have a saying, that if war be begun in another country, yet they should fast and mourn because the war is begun, and because they do not know how soon God may bring it to their doors. O sirs! London is burnt, and it highly concerns you to fast, and mourn, and pray, and to take the alarm; for you do not know how soon a fire may be kindled in your own habitations. Now God has made the once famous city of London a flaming beacon before your eyes, he expects and looks that you should all fear before him. Secure your interest in him, walk humbly with him, and no more provoke the eyes of his jealousy and glory. The design of Heaven by this late dreadful fire, is not to be confined to those particular persons upon whom it hath fallen heaviest; but it is to awaken all, and warn all. When a beacon is fired, it gives warning as much to the whole country as to him who sets it on fire; or as it does to him on whose ground the beacon stands. We can neither upon the foot of reason or religion, conclude them to be the greatest sinners who have been the greatest sufferers; for many times we find that the greatest saints have been the greatest sufferers, both from God and men. Job was a non-such in his day for holiness, uprightness, and the fear of the Lord, and yet by the wind and fire from heaven on the one hand, and by the Sabeans and Chaldeans on the other hand, he is stript of all his children and of a fair estate in one day: so that in the morning it might have been said, Who so rich as Job? and in the evening, Who so poor as Job? Job was poor even to a proverb, Job 1:1-4. Look, as wicked men are very incompetent judges of divine favours and mercies, so they are very incompetent judges of divine trials and severities; and whatever they may think or say, I dare conclude that they who have drank deepest of this cup of sorrows, of this cup of desolation and fire in London, are not greater sinners than all others in England, who yet have not tasted of this bitter cup. But more of this when I come to the application of the point. O sirs! I beg upon the knee of my soul, that you will not slight this dreadful warning of God that he has given to the whole nation, in turning London into ashes. To that purpose seriously consider, First, Divine warnings slighted and neglected will certainly

bring down the greater wrath and vengeance upon you, as you may clearly see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Secondly, Slighting of judgments is the greatest judgment that can befall a people; it speaks out much pride, atheism, hardness, blindness, and desperate security, and contempt of the great God. To be given up to slight divine warnings, is a spiritual judgment, and therefore must of all judgments be the greatest judgment. To be given up to sword, famine, fire, pestilence, burning agues, and fevers, is nothing so great a judgment as to be given up to slight divine warnings; for in the one you are but passive, but in the other you are active. Thirdly, Heathens have trembled, and mended, and reformed, at divine warnings, Jon 3:1-10; and therefore for you to slight them is to act below the heathens, yea, it is to do worse than the heathens, who will certainly one day rise up in judgment against all such who have been slighers of the dreadful warnings of heaven. Fourthly, Slighting of divine warnings lays men open to such anger and wrath, as all the angels in heaven are not able to express, nor all the men on earth able to conceive, Pro 1:24-32. Fifthly, Slighting and neglecting of divine warnings speaks out the greatest disingenuity, stoutness, and stubbornness that is imaginable. The ingenuous child easily takes warning, and to an ingenuous Christian every divine warning is as the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:5. Sixthly, Slighting of divine warnings provokes God many times to give up men to be their own executioners, their own destroyers. Saul had many warnings, but he slighted and neglected them all; and at last God leaves him to fall on his own sword, 1Sa 31:4. Christ cast hell-fire often into Judas his face, 'Thou hast a devil;' and 'Woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed; it had been good for that man that he had never been born,' But Judas slights all these warnings, and betrays his Lord and Master, and then goes forth and hangs himself, John 6:70-71; Mat 26:21-25, and Mat 27:5. It was a strange conceit of the Cerinthians that honoured Judas, the traitor, as some divine and superhuman power, and called his treason a blessed piece of service, and that he, knowing how much the death of Christ would profit mankind, did therefore betray him to death to save the race of mankind, and to do a thing pleasing to God. Judas withstood all divine warnings from within and without, and you know how the tragedy ended; he died a miserable death, he perished by his own hands, which were the most infamous hands in all the world; 'he went and hanged himself.'³ And as Luke hath it, 'he fell headlong and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.' In every passage of his death we may take notice of divine justice, and accordingly take heed of slighting divine warnings. It was but just that he should hang in the air, who, for his sin, was hated both of heaven and earth, and that he should fall down headlong, who was fallen from such a height of honour as he was fallen from; and that the halter should strangle that throat through which the voice of treason had sounded; and that his bowels should be lost who had lost the bowels of all pity, piety, and compassion; and that his ghost should have his passage out of his midst: 'he burst asunder in the midst,' saith the text, and not out of his lips, because with a kiss of his lips he had betrayed our Lord Jesus. But Seventhly, By slighting divine warnings you will arm both visible and invisible creatures against you. Pharaoh slights divine warnings, and God arms the winds against him to his destruction. Sisera slights divine warnings, and the stars in their course fought against Sisera. Sennacherib slights divine warnings, and an angel of the Lord destroyed a hundred fourscore and five thousand of his army in one night, 2Ki 6:8-11, 2Ki 6:16-17; Exo 14:1-31; Jdg 5:19-20; Isa 37:7-9, Isa 37:36. Eighthly, By slighting of divine warnings you will tempt Satan to tempt your souls. He that dares slight divine warnings will stick at nothing that Satan shall tempt him to; yea, he does to the utmost what lies in him to provoke Satan to follow him with the blackest and sorest temptations. Ninthly, He that

slights divine warnings dams up all the springs of mercy, and turns the streams of loving-kindness and favour another way. Tenthly and lastly, Slighting of divine warnings will be the sword that will wound you, and the serpent that will sting you, and the worm that will be still gnawing upon you; especially (1.) When your consciences are awakening; (2.) When you shall lie upon a dying bed; (3.) When you shall stand before a judgment-seat; (4.) and lastly, When you shall awake with everlasting flames about your ears, Psa 81:11-16; Jer 7:23-29, Jer 7:34; Isa 13:14-16. Upon all these considerations, take heed of slighting the warnings of God that you are under this day. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, God inflicts great and sore judgments upon persons, cities, and countries, to put the world in mind of the general judgment. Who can think upon the conflagration of our late glorious city, and not call to mind the great and terrible day of the Lord? Psa 1:3, 'Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.' As God gave his law in fire, so when he comes to judgment, in fire he will require it, to shew himself a judge and revenger of it, and to bring the world to a strict account for their breaking of it, Ecc 12:13-14. In the promulgation of the law a flaming fire was only on mount Sinai, Exo 20:18; but when Christ shall come to execute vengeance on the transgressors of it, all the world shall become a bonfire, Heb 12:18-21. In the promulgation of the law there was fire, smoke, thunder, and an earthquake; but when Christ shall come in flaming fire to revenge the breaches of it, 'the heavens shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,' so that not only a few cities and kingdoms, but all this lower world shall be of a flame; and therefore if any of the wicked should be so weak as to think to secure themselves by creeping behind the Lord, they will but deceive themselves; for the fire shall not only devour before him, but it shall also devour round about him. When an unquenchable fire shall be kindled above the sinner, and below the sinner, and round about the sinner, how is it possible that he should escape, though he should cry out to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon him, and to cover him from the wrath of the Lamb? Rev 6:15-17; Jer 5:14, Isa 66:15-16, 'For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many.' There is nothing more fearful or formidable either to man or beast than fire. Now when God comes to execute his judgments, and to take vengeance on the wicked in this life, as some carry the words, or in the other life, as others carry the words, he will come in the most terrible and dreadful manner imaginable, he will come with fire, and he will render his rebuke with flames of fire, or with fiery flames, as some say, or with flaming fire, as others say: 2Th 1:7-8, 'And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Beloved, that Christ will come to judgment in flaming fire is no politic invention found out to fright men from their pleasures; nor no engine of state devised to keep men tame and quiet under the civil powers; nor no plot of the minister to make men melancholy, or to hurry them into a blind obedience; but it is the constant voice of God in the blessed Scriptures: 2Pe 3:10-12, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.' Pareus is of opinion that that fire that shall set all the world in a flame at last will be kindled and cherished by lightning from heaven. The earth being smitten with lightning from

heaven, shall be shaken and torn into ten thousand pieces, and by fire utterly consumed; now the earth shall quake, the sea roar, the air ring, and the world burn. Now you shall look no way but you shall see fire; you shall see fire above you, and fire below you, and fire round about you. Christ's first coming was attended with a general peace, and with carols of angels: he came as rain upon the mown grass, silently, sweetly into the world, Luk 2:8-15; Psa 71:6. Then a babe cried in the manger, but now Judah's lion will roar and thunder in the heavens. Then he came riding on an ass's colt, but now on the clouds. Then he was attended with twelve poor despised apostles, but now he shall be waited on with many score millions of angels. At his first coming he freely offered grace, and mercy, and pardon to sinners; but now he will come in flames of fire to execute wrath and vengeance upon sinners, 2Th 1:7; and it will be no small honour to Christ, nor no small comfort to the saints, nor no small torment to the wicked, for Christ to come in flames of fire when he comes to judgment. Saul was astonished when he heard Jesus of Nazareth but calling unto him out of heaven, Acts 22:8. Herod was affrighted when he thought that John Baptist was risen again, Mat 6:16. The Philistines were afraid when they saw David's sword, 1Sa 21:9. The Israelites were startled when they saw Aaron's rod, Num 7:10. And Judah was ashamed when he saw Tamar's signet and staff; and Belshazzar was amazed when he saw the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:5. The Carthaginians were troubled when they saw Scipio's sepulchre; and the Saxons were terrified when they saw Cadwallon's image. Oh, how terrified, amazed, and confounded will wicked men be when they shall see that Christ, whom they have rejected, betrayed, crucified, scorned, opposed, and persecuted, come in flames of fire to pass an eternal doom upon them! I have read a story of two soldiers,² that coming to the valley of Jehoshaphat in Judea, and one saying to the other, Here in this place shall be the general judgment, wherefore I will now take up my place where I will then sit; and so lifting up a stone, he sat down upon it, as taking possession beforehand: but being seated, and looking up to heaven, such a quaking and trembling fell upon him, that falling to the earth, he remembered the day of judgment with horror and amazement ever after. The case of this soldier will be the case of every wicked man when Christ shall appear in flames of fire to pass an eternal sentence of condemnation upon all the goats that shall be found on the left hand, Mat 25:41-46. It is strange in this so serious a business of the day of judgment, and of Christ's appearing in flaming fire, which so nearly concerns the sons of men, how men's wits will busy themselves in many nice inquiries. Ye may meet with many such questions in the schoolmen as—(1.) How long is it to the day of judgment? (2.) In what place of the world shall the judgment-day be held? (3.) What kind of fire shall then be burning? (4.) Whether Christ shall come with a cross carried before him? As if malefactors in the jail should fall a-reasoning and debating what weather it would be at the day of assizes, or of the judge's habit and retinue, and never bethink themselves how to answer their indictment, that they may escape condemnation. London's flames should put us in mind of Christ's coming in flames of fire; and the burning of London should put us in mind of the burning of the world, when Christ shall come to judge the sons of men according to their works; and the terror and dread of that fire, and men's endeavours to escape it, should put us upon all those holy ways and means whereby we may escape the fury of those dreadful flames that shall never be quenched; and the houses and estates that were consumed by the devouring fire in London streets should put us upon securing 'a house not made with hands,' but one 'eternal in the heavens,' and upon securing 'durable riches,' and 'an inheritance that fadeth not away,' and upon 'laying up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust, nor thieves,' and let me add, nor flames, 'can break through, corrupt,

or steal, or burn,' 2Co 5:1-2; Pro 8:18; 1Pe 1:4; Mat 6:19-21. The more general any judgment is, the more it should put us in mind of the general day of judgment. Now the burning of London was a general judgment, a judgment that reaches from one end of the land to another, as I shall more fully evidence before I close up this discourse; and therefore it should remind us of the universal conflagration of the whole world and the works thereof. And thus you see the ends that God has in respect of the wicked in inflicting great and sore judgments upon persons, cities, and countries.

Quest. But pray, sir, what are those high and holy ends, in respect of the people of God, that God aims at by his inflicting of great and sore judgments upon persons, cities, and countries? I suppose they are such as follow:

Ans. (1.) First, To bring about those special favours and mercies that God intends them. By the dreadful judgments that God inflicted upon Pharaoh, and upon his people, and upon his country, God brought about the freedom and liberty of his people to worship him according to his own prescriptions. The great difference and contest between God and Pharaoh was, who should have their wills. God would have his people to worship him according to his own mind; but Pharaoh was resolved to venture his all before they should have their freedom and liberty to serve their God. Upon this God follows him with plague upon plague, and never leaves spending of his plagues upon him till he had overthrown him, and through his ruin brought about the freedom and liberty of his poor people. The Babylonians were cruel enemies to God's poor Israel, and kept them in bondage, yea, in a fiery furnace, seventy years. At last God stirs up the spirit of Cyrus, for his church's sake, and he, by fire and sword, lays Babylon waste, and takes them captive who had held his people in a long captivity, Jer 11:4, and Dan 9:12. Now he, by breaking the Babylonians in pieces like a potter's vessel, brought about, as an instrument in the hand of God, the freedom and liberty of God's poor people, as you may see by comparing that xlvth of Isa 1:1-31, with that 1st chapter of Ezra. God stirs up the spirit of Cyrus to put forth a proclamation for liberty for the Jews to go to their own land, and to build the house of the Lord God of Israel; and then he graciously stirs up the spirits of the people wisely and soberly to improve the liberty he had proclaimed. Jer 49:1, 'Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith the Lord, Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities?' When the ten tribes were carried away captive, the Ammonites who dwelt near the tribe of Gad intruded into it and the cities of it; but mark what God saith in Jer 49:2, 'Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites [that was their chief city]; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters [that is, lesser towns] shall be burnt with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the Lord.' God, by fire and sword, would lay desolate the chief city of the Ammonites, and her towns and villages that did belong to her: and by these dreadful dispensations he would make way for his people, not only to possess their own land, but the Ammonites' also; and I will leave the prudent reader to make the application. We have been under greater and dreadfuller judgments than ever this poor nation hath groaned under in former times; and who can tell but that the Lord by these amazing judgments may bring about greater and better mercies and blessings than any yet we do enjoy? The Rabbins say of civil liberty, that if the heavens were parchment, the sea ink, and every pile of grass a pen, the praises of it could not be comprised nor expressed. May we not say more of a holy liberty? Liberty to serve and worship the Lord according to his own prescriptions and directions laid down in his blessed word, by which all worship and worshippers must be tried at last, is a pearl of price that none can

sufficiently value. Justinus the second emperor's motto was, *Libertas res inæstimabilis*, Liberty is unvaluable. The Lord give his people holy, wise, prudent, sober, humble, and understanding hearts, that they may know both how to prize and how to improve those liberties and mercies that he has handed to them through terrible dispensations! But,

(2.) Secondly, God inflicts great trials and sore judgments upon persons and places, that he may awaken his own people out of that deep security that oftentimes seizeth upon them: Psa 30:5-9; Mat 25:5; 2Sa 2:7, 2Sa 2:15, and 2Sa 24:15-17; 2Ki 14:25; Mat 12:40; Jon 1:1-3. What deep security had seized upon David, so that God was forced to make use of the bloody sword and of the sweeping pestilence to awaken him! Jonah was a prophet, he was a servant of the Lord, he was a type of Christ, he was a good man. His name Jonah signifies a dove, though he had but little of the dove in him, being as passionate a man of an honest man as you have lightly heard of, saith Luther. Now Jonah having contracted guilt upon his conscience by acting quite contrary to God's royal call, what a desperate, senseless stupidity and security had seized upon him! what a spiritual lethargy was poor Jonah in! not much unlike that of the smith's dog, whom neither the hammers above him, nor the sparks of fire falling round about him, can awake. Jonah was not in a slumber, but in a sound, heavy, deep, and dead sleep; and what a wonder, what a prodigy was here, that in all this stir and tumult and danger, the winds whistling and roaring, the sea working, raging, swelling, frothing, foaming, and boiling like a pot, the waves mounting up to heaven and sinking down again to hell, as the psalmist speaks, the ship tumbling and tossing like a tennis-ball, the mariners, as stout fellows as they were, surprised with fear, and running up and down like men at their wits' end, like men that could not look pale death in the face with blood in their cheeks, that yet Jonah should sleep, and be as secure in that dreadful danger as if he had been in his own house sleeping on a bed of down! Oh the desperate security that may seize upon the best of saints! But this security God will cure in his Jonahs by some smart trial, or by some heavy judgment or other. The lethargy is best cured by a burning ague. Absalom sends once or twice to Joab to come and speak with him; but when he saw that Joab would not come, he commands his corn-fields to be set on fire, and this awakens him, and fetches him with a witness, 2Sa 14:30. So God, by fiery afflictions, and by burning up our comforts round about us, awakens us, and brings us to himself with a witness. When iron grows rusty, we put it into the fire to purify it; and so when the people of God grow rusty and secure, then the Lord brings them under fiery trials to awaken them, and to purify them. If Nero was so angry with Vespasian because he slept at his music, how much more may the Lord be angry with all such as sleep and are secure under the most amazing and awakening judgments? But my hope and prayer is, that the Lord has, and will more and more graciously and effectually awaken all the wise slumbering virgins upon whom this fiery dispensation has passed. And therefore,

(3.) Thirdly, In respect of his people's sins, God has several special ends that he aims at by all the fiery trials and smart providences that he exercises them and others with. As,

[1.] First, God by these means designs a further and a fuller discovery of they sins. In standing waters you cannot see the mud that lies at the bottom of the pool or pond; but when once the water is drawn away, then it appears, Deu 8:2. In times of prosperity there is a great deal of mud, a great deal of atheism, unbelief, discontent, murmuring, impatience, passion, pride, &c., that lies at the bottom of men's hearts undiscovered. Oh, but when God shall once empty them of their estates, and burn up all their outward comforts, and set them with Job upon the dunghill, then the

mud appears, then a whole army of lusts discover themselves, as we see in many this day, whom you shall rarely find without tears in their eyes, sighs in their hearts, and complaints in their mouths. Severe providences are pills made purposely to clear the eyesight: 1Ki 17:18, 'And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?' If God had not taken away her son, her sin had not been brought to remembrance. O sirs! if God by this late dreadful fire had not taken away your houses, your goods, your estates, your trades, many of your sins had not been brought to your remembrance, though now you have lost most or all. You may say with the psalmist, 'My sins are ever before me,' Psa 51:3. My pride is ever before me, my unbelief is ever before me, my frowardness is ever before me, my murmuring is ever before me, my discontent is ever before me, and my impatience is ever before me, &c. Good men never come to know how bad they are, till they come to be exercised with severe providences and smart trials. It was the speech of a holy man in a great sickness, In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is; I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin was before. Afflictions are a Christian's glass, in which they may run and read the greatness of God and the vileness of sin. But,

[2.] Secondly, By severe providences and fiery trials God designs the preventing of sin. Paul was one of the holiest men on earth, called by some an earthly angel, and yet he needed a thorn in the flesh to prevent pride: 2Co 12:7, 'And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' Paul was in very great danger of being exalted above measure. Witness the doubling of those words in one verse, 'Lest I should be exalted, lest I should be exalted.' Prudent physicians sometimes give physic to prevent diseases; and so does the Physician of souls, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. The burnt child dreads the fire. Sin is but a bitter sweet, it is an evil worse than hell itself. Salt brine preserves from putrefaction, and salt marshes keep the sheep from rotting; and so sharp trials, severe providences preserve the saints from spiritual putrefying, and from spiritual rotting. The Rabbins, to keep their scholars from sin, were wont to tell them that sin made God's head ache; and saints under fiery trials do find by experience that sin makes not only their heads, but also their hearts ache; and by this means God preserves his people from many sins which otherwise they would certainly fall into. Beloved, God by his fiery dispensations has destroyed many or most of your outward comforts; but little do you know the horrible sins that by this means the Lord has preserved you from. A full estate lays men most open to the greatest sins, the worst of snares, and the deadliest temptations. The best of men have fallen foulest under their highest worldly enjoyments. Witness David, Solomon, Hezekiah, &c. Under your outward fulness, how low was your communion with God! how languishing were your graces! how lean were your souls! and how was your spring of inward comforts dried up! How little had God of your thoughts, your hearts, your time, your strength! O sirs! how bad would you have been by this time if God had not removed those things that were but fuel to your lusts, and quench-coals to your grace! Well, often think of this: it is a greater mercy to be preserved from sin, yea, from the least sin, than it is to enjoy the whole world. But,

[3.] Thirdly, By severe providences and by fiery trials God designs the imbittering of sin to his people. When God shall come and burn up men's comforts round about them, then they will cry

out, Ah! what a bitter thing is sin! That puts God upon burning work! Then they will speak that language to their own souls that the prophet once spake to the Jews: Jer 2:15, 'They made his land waste: his cities are burnt with fire.' Jer 2:17, 'Hast thou not procured these things to thyself?' Jer 2:19, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.' So Jer 4:18, 'Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee: this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thy heart.' Yea, now they will say that sin is bitterness in the abstract, and in the plural number also, according to that of the prophet Hosea, Hos 12:14, 'Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly,' or 'with bitteresses,' as the Hebrew has it. Relations and friends may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and conscience may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and good books may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and men under terrors and horrors of spirit may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and the sore and heavy judgments of God upon others may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and the Spirit by his secret whispers may tell us that sin is a bitter thing, and ministers may tell us that sin is a bitter thing; they may tell you that it is bitter to God, it being the only thing in all the world that he has revealed his wrath from heaven against, and that is contrary to the nature of God, the law of God, the being of God, the glory of God, and the grand designs of God. They may tell you that it is bitter to Christ. Witness his crying out in the bitterness of his soul, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and witness the sorrows and heaviness of his soul, and his sweating clods of blood. When he hung upon the cross they gave him gall and vinegar to drink; but no gall was so bitter to him as your sins. They may tell you that sin is bitter to the Spirit of God; for nothing grieves him and provokes him and vexes him but sin, Gen 6:3, and Eph 4:29. They may tell you that sin is bitter to the good angels. Every sin that you commit is as a dagger at their hearts: there is nothing in all the world so bitter to them as to see their Lord and Master daily, yea, hourly, crucified by sinners' sins. They may tell you that sin is bitter to the evil angels, it being the only thing for which they were banished the court of heaven, and turned down to the lowest hell, where they are kept in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day, Jude 1:6. They may tell you that sin is bitter to the worst of men; witness Adam's hiding of himself, and Judas his hanging of himself, and Cain's crying out, 'My burden is greater than I am able to bear,' Gen 3:10; Mat 27:1-66; Gen 4:13. They may tell you that it is bitter to the creatures who 'groan under their burdens, and who long to be delivered from that bondage that the sin of man hath subjected them to,' Rom 8:20-22; and yet for all this we will not feelingly, affectionately, experimentally say that sin is bitter, till God comes and burns us up: Lam 4:11, 'And gives us gall and wormwood to drink.' Lam 3:19-20, 'Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.' O sirs, how bitter should sin be to you, who have seen London all in flames! Certainly God, by burning up your sweet, pleasant, and delightful things, would teach you to taste a greater bitterness in sin than ever. O happy fire, that shall render God and Christ, and heaven, and promises, and ordinances more sweet, and sin more bitter to poor sinners' souls! Doubtless, one of God's great designs by this late judgment of fire is to imbitter sin to all sorts of men. When judgments imbitter our sins to us, then they work kindly, powerfully, effectually, and then we may conclude that there was a hand of love in those judgments, and then we shall justify the Lord, and say with the church, Lam 1:18, 'The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against him:' or as the Hebrew runs, 'because I have imbittered him,' he is righteous in all the sore judgments that he hath inflicted upon me; for I have imbittered him

against me by my most bitter sins. But,

[4.] Fourthly, By severe providences and fiery trials, God designs the mortifying and purging away of his people's sins: Isa 1:25, 'And I will turn my hand upon thee,' [to wit, to correct or chastise thee,] 'and purely purge away thy dross,' [or drosses,] 'and take away all thy tin,' or tins in the plural number. Some by dross understand gross iniquity; and by tin, glittering hypocrisy. For as tin is very like unto silver, so is hypocrisy very like unto piety. Others by dross understand persons that are openly profane; and by tin, such as are inwardly unsound. The words are a metaphor taken from them that try metals in the fire, purging from precious silver all dross and tin, Isa 31:9. The Jews, who were once silver, were now turned into dross and tin; but God by fiery trials would burn up their dross and tin, their enormities and wickednesses, and make them as shining Christians in grace and holiness as ever they were. So Isa 27:9, 'By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.' God by the Babylonish captivity would as by fire purge away the iniquity of Jacob; and to shew the certainty of it, he instanceth in their darling sin—viz., idolatry. When he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk-stones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and the images shall not stand up. Idolatry was the great sin for which God sent them into captivity. Now how they were purged from this sin after their return out of captivity, appears by their history. Take one instance for all: Pilate being [appointed] by Tiberius to be governor over the Jews, caused in the night-time the statue of Cæsar to be brought into Jerusalem covered, which thing within three days after caused a great tumult among the Jews; for they who beheld it were astonished and moved as though now the law of their country were profaned, for they hold it not lawful for any picture or image to be brought into the city. At their lamentation who were in the city, there was gathered together a great multitude out of the fields adjoining, and they went presently to Pilate, then at Cæsarea, beseeching him earnestly that the images might be taken away out of Jerusalem, and that the laws of their country might remain inviolated. When Pilate denied their suit, they prostrated themselves before his house, and there remained lying upon their faces for five days and nights, never moving. Afterwards Pilate, sitting in his tribunal-seat, was very careful to call all the Jews together before him, as though there he would have given them an answer, when upon the sudden a company of armed soldiers, for so it was provided, compassed the Jews about with a triple rank. The Jews were hereat amazed, seeing that which they expected not. Then Pilate told them, that except they would receive the images of Cæsar, he would kill them all, and to that end made a sign to the soldiers to draw their swords. The Jews, as though they had agreed thereto, fell all down at once, and offered their necks to the stroke of the sword, crying out that they would rather lose their lives than suffer their religion to be profaned. Then Pilate, admiring the constancy of the people in their religion, presently commanded the statues to be taken out of the city of Jerusalem. All the hurt the fire did the three children, or rather champions, was to burn off their cords, Dan 3:23-24. Our lusts are cords of vanity, but by fiery trials God will burn them up: Zec 13:9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried.' The best of men are but men at the best; they have much corruption and dross in them, and they need refining; and therefore God by fiery trials will refine them, but not as dross or chaff which are burnt up in the fire, but as silver and gold which are purified in the fire. He will so refine them as that they shall leave their dregs and dross behind them. Look, what the fire is to the gold, the file to the iron, the fan to the wheat, the soap to the clothes, the salt to the flesh, that shall fiery trials be to the saints. But what shall be the fruit of their refining? Ans. 'They shall call on my name, and I will hear

them. I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' By fiery trials God will purge out our dross and make virtue shine. All the fiery trials that befall the saints shall be as a potion to carry away ill humours, and as cold frosts to destroy the vermin, and as a tempestuous sea to purge the wine from its lees, and as the north wind that drieth up the vapours, that purges the blood, and that quickens the spirits, and as a sharp corrosive to eat out the dead flesh. The great thing that should be most in every burnt citizen's eye and heart and prayers and desires is, that the fire of London maybe so sanctified as to issue in the burning up of their lusts, and in the purging away of the filth of the daughter of Zion, Isa 4:4. Jerome reports of Plato, how he left that famous city of Athens, and chose to live in a little ancient village almost overturned with tempests and earthquakes, that, being often minded therein of his approaching desolation, he might get more power over his strong lusts, and learn to live a more virtuous life than ever he had lived before.² O sirs! if God by this fiery dispensation shall make you more victorious over your strong lusts, and help you to live more virtuous lives, you will have cause to bless him all your days, though he has turned you out of house and home, and burnt up all your comforts round about you. But,

(4.) Fourthly, By severe providences and fiery trials, God designs these four things, in respect of his children's graces:

[1.] First, He designs the reviving, quickening, and recovering of their decayed graces. By fiery trials he will inflame that love that was even key-cold, and raise that faith that was fallen asleep, and quicken up those hopes that were languishing, and put life and spirits into those joys and comforts that were withering and dying, Rev 2:4; Jas 1:2-12; 2Co 12:10. God, under fiery trials, lets his poor children see how that by their spiritual decays he has been dishonoured, his Spirit grieved, religion shamed, the mouths of the wicked opened, weak saints staggered, strong saints troubled, conscience wounded, and their souls and graces impaired; and by these discoveries he engages them to the use of all those holy and heavenly helps, whereby their decayed graces may be revived and recovered. Many creatures that have been frozen, and even dead with cold, have been revived and recovered by being brought to the fire. God by fiery trials will unfreeze the frozen graces of his people, and put new life and spirits into them. As the air is sometimes clear, and sometimes cloudy; and as the sea is sometimes ebbing, and sometimes flowing; and as the trees of the field are sometimes flowering, green, and growing, and sometimes naked, withered, and as it were even dead: so it is sometimes with the graces of the saints; but the Lord by one fiery trial or another will revive, and recover, and raise their graces again. Epiphanius makes mention of those that travel by the deserts of Syria, where are nothing but miserable marshes and sands, destitute of all commodities, nothing to be had for love or money. Now if it so happen that their fire go out by the way, then they light it again at the heat of the sun, by the means of a burning-glass: and thus if the fire of zeal, if the sparks of divine grace, by the prevalency of some strong corruption, or by the violence of some dreadful temptation, should be put out, or die as to its lively operations, by a burning-glass, or by one fiery dispensation or another, God will inflame the zeal, and enliven the dying graces of his poor people. I know the saving graces of the Spirit—viz., such as faith, love, hope, &c.—cannot be finally and totally extinguished in the souls, when they are once wrought there by the Spirit; yet their lustre, their radiancy, their activity, their shine and flame may be clouded and covered, whilst the season of temptation lasteth; as living coals may be so covered with ashes, that neither light, nor smoke, nor heat may appear, and yet when the embers, the

ashes, are stirred to the bottom, then live coals appear, and by a little blowing a flame breaks forth.² There are several cases wherein grace in a Christian's breast may seem to be hid, cold, dead, and covered over; as sap in the winter is hid in the roots of trees, or as flowers and fruits are hid in the seeds, or roots in the earth, or as sparks of fire are hid in the ashes, or as bits of gold are hid in a dust heap, or as pearls may be hid in the mire. Ay, but God by one severe providence or another, by one fiery trial or another, will blow that heavenly grace, that divine fire, into a perfect flame: he will cause their hid graces to revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and blossom as the lily, and smell as the wine of Lebanon, Hos 14:5-7. O sirs! how many Christians were there amongst us, who were much decayed and withered in their graces, in their duties, in their converses, in their comforts, in their spiritual enjoyments, in their communions with God, and with one another; and yet were not sensible of their decays, nor humbled under their decays, nor industrious to recover themselves out of their withering and dying condition! and therefore no wonder if the Lord, to recover them and raise them, hath brought fiery trials upon them. But,

[2.] Secondly, God, by severe providences and by fiery trials, designs a further exercise of his children's graces. Sleepy habits bring him no glory, nor do us no good. All the honour he has, and all the advantage we have in this world, is from the active part of grace. Consult the scriptures in the margin. There is little difference—as to the comfort and sweet of grace—between grace out of exercise, and no grace at all. A man that has millions, but has no heart to use what he has, wherein is he better, as to the comfort and sweetness of his life, than a man that hath but a few mites in the world? Ecc 6:1-4. 'How is it that you have no faith?' saith Christ to his disciples, when they were in a dreadful storm, and in danger of drowning, and so stood in most need of their faith, yet they had then their faith to seek. They had faith in the habit but not in the exercise, and therefore Christ looks upon their faith as no faith, Mark 4:40. How is it that you have no faith? what is the sheath without the knife? the scabbard without the sword? the musket without the match? the cannon without the bullet? the granado without powder? no more are all your graces when not in exercise. The strongest creature, the lion, and the subtlest creature, the serpent, if they are dormant, are as easily surprised and destroyed as the weakest worm; so the strongest saints, if grace be not in exercise, are as easily surprised and captivated by sin, Satan, and the world, as the weakest saints are. O sirs! if Christians will not stir up the grace of God that is in them, if they will not look to the daily exercise of grace, God, by some severe providence or other, by some fiery dispensation or other, will stir up their graces for them, Jon 1:6. Ah sluggish, slumbering Christians, who are careless as to the exercise of your graces, how sadly, how sorely do you provoke the Lord to let Satan loose to tempt you, and corruptions grow strong to weary you, and the world grow cross to vex you, and friends turn enemies to plague you, and the Spirit withdraw to discomfit you, Lam 1:16, and fiery trials to break in to awaken you! And all this to bring you to live in a daily exercise of grace. God was fain to be a moth, a worm, a lion, yea, a young lion to Ephraim and Judah, before he could bring them up to an exercise of grace, Hos 5:12-14; but when he was all this to them, then they fall roundly upon a lively exercise of grace. Hos 6:1-3, 'Come, let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.' Here you see their faith, their repentance, their love, their hope, all in exercise. When a soldier's courage, mettle, and gallantry, lies as it were hid, his captain will put him upon such hardships,

hazards, and dangers, as shall rouse up his courage, mettle, and gallantry; if a scholar has excellent acquired parts and abilities, and will not use them nor improve them, his master will put him upon such tasks as shall draw out all his parts and abilities to the height: so when the Lord has laid into the souls of his people a stock of grace, and they grow idle and careless, and will not improve that stock for his glory and their own good, he will then exercise them with such severe providences and fiery trials, as shall put them to a full improvement of that blessed stock of grace that he has intrusted them with. The fire that came from heaven was to be kept continually burning that it might never go out, Lev 6:13. God loves to see the graces of his children in continual exercise. Neglect of our graces is the ground of their decrease and decay. Wells are the sweeter for drawing, and grace is the stronger for acting; we get nothing by dead and useless habits. Talents hid in a napkin gather rust; the noblest faculties are imbrued when not improved in exercise: 2Ti 1:6, 'Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.' It is an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. All the praise that God has from us in this life is from the actings of grace. It was Abraham's acting of faith that set the crown of glory upon the Lord's head. O sirs! look narrowly to it, that you fail not in the activity and lively vigour of your graces. Look to it that your graces be still acted, exercised, and blown up, that so they may be still flaming and shining. The more you exercise grace, the more you strengthen it, the more you increase it. Repeated acts strengthen habits; it is so in sin, and it is so in grace also. The more the little child goes, the more strong it grows by going. The more a man plays upon an instrument, the more dexterous he grows. Money is not increased by lying in a chest, but by trading, Mat 25:27. The more any member is used, the stronger it is. As the right hand is most used, so it is commonly strongest. 'The diligent hand makes rich,' Pro 10:4. A little stock well husbanded will daily increase, when a greater stock neglected shall decay and come to nothing. The exercise of grace will best testify both the truth and the life of your graces. Grace is never more evident than when it is in exercise. When I see a man rise, and walk, and work, and exercise his arms, I know he is a real man, a living man. The more the fire is blown up the sooner it is seen to be fire. There are many precious Christians, who are full of fears and doubts that they have no love to God, no faith in God, no hope of glory, &c., but the best way under heaven to put an end to these fears and doubts is to be fervent in exerting acts of love, of faith, of hope, &c. The non-exercise of grace cast Adam out of paradise; it shut Moses and Aaron out of Canaan, Num 20:12; it brought Jacob into fourteen years' hard service and bondage; for had he exercised faith, hope, patience, &c., as he should have done, he would never have got the blessing by indirect means as he did; it provoked the Lord to strike Zacharias dumb, Luk 1:18-20; it shut thousands of the Jews out of the land of Canaan, Heb 3:17-18. I dare not be so harsh, so rash, and so uncharitable, as to think that none of those that died in the wilderness had the habits of faith, the seeds of grace in their souls; but it was their non-acting of faith that kept them out of the Holy Land, as it did Moses and Aaron, according to what I hinted but now. Beloved, by these instances, among many others that might be produced, you see that God hath dealt very smartly and severely with his choicest servants for their not exercising of their graces as they ought to have done. And though I dare not, upon many accounts, say that for the saints' not exercising and improving their graces, God has turned London into a heap of ashes; yet I dare say that this neglect of theirs may be one thing that added fuel to that fire. Well, sirs, you had not long since many outward comforts to live upon, but the Lord has now burnt them up, that so he might lead you forth to live in a daily exercise of grace upon himself, upon his power, upon his all-sufficiency, his goodness, his faithfulness, his fulness, his

graciousness, his unchangeableness, his promises. And if this fiery dispensation shall be so sanctified to us as to work us to a further activity of grace, and to a further growth and increase of grace, we shall be happy citizens though we are burnt citizens. But,

[3.] Thirdly, By severe providences and by fiery trials God designs the growth of his people in grace. Usually the graces of the saints thrive best when they are under a smarting rod. Grace usually is in the greatest flourish when the saints are under the sorest trials, Rom 5:3-4; 2Co 1:3-6. The snuffling of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God beats and bruises his links to make them burn the brighter; he bruises his spices to make them send forth the greater aromatical savour. Fiery trials are like the tazel, which, though it be sharp and scratching, it is to make the cloth more pure and fine. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots that be in his people. The Jews were always best when they were in their lowest condition. Well-waters arising from deep springs are hotter in the winter than they are in the summer. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights; and so do the graces of the saints shine brightest in the darkest nights of affliction and tribulation. God will sometimes more carry on the growth of grace by a cross than by an ordinance; yea, the Lord will, first or last, more or less, turn all fiery trials into ordinances for the helping on the growth of grace in his people's souls, Heb 12:10; Jas 1:3-4; 1Pe 1:6-7. Look, as in the lopping of a tree, there seems to be a kind of diminution and destruction; yet the end and issue of it is better growth: and as the weakening of the body by physic seems to tend to death, yet it produceth better health and more strength: and as the ball by falling downward riseth upward, and as water in pipes descends that it may ascend: so the saints' spiritual growth in grace is carried on by such divine methods and in such ways as might seem to deaden grace, and weaken it, rather than anywise to augment and increase it. We know that winter is as necessary to bring on harvest as the spring; and so fiery trials are as necessary to bring on the harvest of grace as the spring of mercy is. Though fiery trials are grievous, yet they shall make us more gracious. Though for the present we cannot see but that such and such severe providences and fiery trials as the loss of house, estate, trade, friends, will redound much to our prejudice and damage, yet in the issue we shall find that God will turn them to the internal and eternal advantage of our precious souls, Heb 12:11. We may in a pang of passion say, as Jacob. 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not!' Gen 42:36. 'All these are against me'—children are not, honours are not, riches are not, habitations are not, credit is not. All these are against us; but in the close we shall find that promise made good in power upon us, Rom 8:28, 'We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose.' O sirs! all the power of heaven stands engaged to make good this promise to you; and if you would but live in the daily actings of faith upon this blessed promise, you would then be able to bear up bravely under all the troubles and trials, crosses and losses that you meet with in this world; and you would then experience the truth of Samson's riddle—'Out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong sweetness,' Jdg 14:14. What Paul said of his fiery trials, viz., 'I know that this shall turn to my salvation,' Php 1:19, that may you safely say of all your fiery trials: We know that they shall work for our good, we know that they shall turn to our salvation. Though wicked instruments might design our destruction, yet the wise God that sits at the helm will turn all into our salvation. Those severe providences which for the present may seem very prejudicial, in the issue shall prove very beneficial. Joseph's brethren threw him into a pit, afterwards they sell him, then he is falsely accused, and as unjustly cast into prison and laid in cold iron, Psa 105:17-18: yet all this issued in his good; his abasement made way for his advancement; for his thirteen years' imprisonment he

reigned fourscore years like a king, Gen 1:20, and Gen 41:40. David, you know, had seven years' banishment, yet it ended in a glorious reign of forty years' continuance. Job lost all that ever he had in one day; he was a man under great calamity, he was a spectacle of the highest misery, he abounded only in boils, and sores, and rags; but all this issued in the trial of his grace, in the discovery of his grace, and in the improvement of his grace, and in the close God did compensate his very great losses by giving him twice as much as ever he had before, Job 42:10. Dear friends, that by all severe providences and fiery trials God will turn your spark of grace into a flame, your mites into millions, and your drops into seas, is, and shall be the hearty desire of my soul. O sirs! if Christ be even ravished with one of his spouse's eyes, and with one chain of her neck, Song of Solomon 4:9, with the least grains and drachms of true grace, how will he be taken with abundance of grace! how will he be ravished with the flourishing estate of your souls in grace! Well, remember this, the more under all your fiery trials grace is increased, the more God is honoured, religion adorned, the mouths of the wicked stopped, the hands and hearts of weak saints strengthened and encouraged, the smarting rod sweetened, and threatened judgments prevented. Oh that those two prophecies might be made good in power upon all the burnt citizens of London! That Isa 32:15, 'Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field:' and that Isa 35:1-2, 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' Thrice happy will the burnt citizens of London be, if under all their crosses and losses they grow into a more deep acquaintance with God, the world, and their own hearts; with God and his holiness, with the world and its vanity, mutability, impotency, and uncertainty; and with their own hearts, and the deceitfulness, vileness, baseness, and wretchedness of them. If under fiery dispensations we grow more holy than ever, and more humble than ever, and more heavenly than ever, and more meek and lowly than ever, and more tender and compassionate than ever, and more faithful and fruitful than ever, and more patient and contented than ever, then we may be confident that the grand design of God in bringing all that evil that he has brought upon us was his glory and our own internal and eternal good, and accordingly we may rejoice in the Lord, though we have nothing else to rejoice in, Hab 3:17-18. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, By severe providences and by fiery trials, God doth design the trial of his people's graces, and the discovery of their sincerity and integrity to the world, 1Pe 1:6-7; Rev 3:18, Deu 8:2, 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.' God knew them well enough before, without any experimental trial of them; but that he might the better make a discovery of themselves to themselves and to others, he led them up and down in the wilderness forty years: Psal 66:10-12, 'For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou hast brought us into the net; thou hast laid affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads: we went through fire and through water.' God proves his people, not thereby to better his own knowledge of them, but to bring them to a better knowledge both of their own vices and graces. It is not known what corn will yield till it come to the flail, nor what grapes will yield till they come to the press. Grace is hid in nature as sweet water in rose leaves; but fiery trials will fetch it out. Fire and water are merciless elements, and they note variety of sharpest trials. Now through these God

led his people, that so he might discover to them and others both the strength of their graces, and the strength of their sins. God many times exercises his dearest children with fiery trials, that he may discover the sincerity and integrity of his people to the world. The profane atheistical world are apt very boldly and confidently to conclude that the people of God are a pack of hypocrites and dissemblers, and that they serve God for a livery, for loaves, and not for love, John 6:26; and that they are mercenary in all they do, having more in their eye the hedge that he has made about them, and the gold and silver that he has bestowed upon them, than the honour and glory of the great God; just as the devil objected against Job, Job 1:9. Now God, to convince these men, these monsters, of the integrity and sincerity of his people, he breaks down the hedge that he had made about them, and turns the wheel upon them, and breaks them with breach upon breach; he strips them of all, and turns them out of house and home, as he did Job, Job 20:21; and yet this people, with Job, will still worship the Lord, and bless a taking God, as well as a giving God. They will still keep close to the Lord and his ways, whatever God doth with them or against them. Psa 44:17-19, 'All this is come upon us,' [it is a terrible 'all,' as you may see from Psa 44:9-17;] 'yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.' In spite of all the wrath and rage of Antiochus Epiphanes, that cruel and bloody persecutor of the saints, these servants of the Lord shew their sincerity by their constancy in keeping close to the Lord and his ways in the face of the greatest opposition and hottest persecution that they met withal. When the emperor sent to Basil to subscribe to the Arian heresy, the messenger at first gave him good language, and promised him great preferment, if he would turn Arian; to which Basil replied, Alas, these speeches are fit to catch little children withal that look after such things; but we that are nourished and taught by the Holy Scriptures, are readier to suffer a thousand deaths than to suffer one syllable or tittle of the Scripture to be altered. The same Basil affirms that many of the heathens, seeing the heroic zeal, courage, and constancy of the primitive Christians in the face of all oppositions and persecutions, turned Christians. Justin Martyr confesseth that the constancy of the Christians in their sufferings was the chief motive that converted him to Christianity; for I myself, saith he, was once a Platonist, and did gladly hear the Christians reviled; but when I saw they feared not death, nor any of those miseries which most frighten all other men, I began to consider with myself that it was impossible for such men to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of piety, and that made me first think of turning Christian.² Now by these means and methods God convinceth the blind world of the integrity and sincerity of his people. When they see those whom they have severely judged for hypocrites shall own the Lord and his ways, and cleave to the Lord and his ways, and continue to follow the Lord and his ways, and hold on in a high honouring of the Lord and his ways, when their hedge is broken down, and God has stripped them as naked as in the day wherein they were born, oh now they begin to change their note, and to conclude, surely these are the servants of the Most High God, Dan 3:26, and Acts 16:17; these are no hypocrites nor dissemblers, but true Nathanaels in whom there is no guile, John 1:47. How have the people of God in London been judged hypocrites, dissemblers, deceivers, factious, and what not! Now God, by burning up their substance, and by turning them out of house and home, and destroying all their pleasant things, doth certainly design to give those that have so deeply censured them a proof of their integrity and sincerity, by letting them see that all the changes that have passed upon them can never work them to change their Master Christ, nor to change his ways for the ways of sin, nor to change his

worship for the worship of the world, nor to change their religion for the religion of Rome. Certainly those that love the Lord, that delight in the Lord, and that highly prize the Lord for those infinite perfections, beauties, glories, and excellencies that are in him, they will own him, and cleave to him, and follow after him when they have little as when they had much, yea, when they have nothing of the world as when they had all the world; and by so doing, they put a padlock upon the lying lips of such, they button up the mouths of such who asperse and calumniate them as a generation that only serve God upon the account of a worldly interest. There is nothing that doth more amuse,² amaze, and astonish wicked men, than to see the people of God keep close to him and his ways when they are in a suffering estate, yea, when they have lost all but their God and their integrity. The fire tries the gold as well as the touchstone, and diseases try the skill of the physician, and tempests try the skill of the pilot; and so do fiery trials try both the truth and the strength of a Christian's graces. Paulinus Nolanus, when his city was taken by the barbarians, prayed thus to God: Lord, let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, city, &c.; for thou art all, and much more than all these to me. Here was a heroic spirit, here was grace in strength, yea, in triumph. The spirits of the men of the world usually sink under their losses. Menippus of Phenicia, having lost his goods, strangled himself. Dinarcus Phiton,⁴ at a certain loss, cut his own throat to save the charge of a halter. Another, being turned out of his estate, ran out of his wits. And another, for the death of his son, threw himself headlong into the sea. Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the relation of a foil and overthrow from Varus, that for certain months together he let the hair of his beard and head grow still, and wore it long; yea, and other whiles he would run his head against the doors, crying out, Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again; Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again. Henry the Second, who was none of the best of princes, hearing that his city Mentz was taken, used this blasphemous speech: I shall never, saith he, love God any more, that suffered a city so dear to me to be taken from me. Now by all these instances you may clearly and plainly see the different temper and carriage of wicked men under their losses, crosses, trials, and sufferings, from the people of God. When they are under fiery trials, what an evil spirit, what a desperate spirit, what a sullen spirit, what a proud spirit, what a satanical spirit, what a hellish spirit, do they discover! They tell all the world that they are under the power and dominion of the god of this world; Php 2:2 and 2Ti 2:26. But when the people of God are under fiery trials, they make conscience of carrying of it so as that they may convince the world that God is in them of a truth, and that they are sincere and upright before the Lord, however they are judged and censured as hypocrites, deceivers, dissemblers, and what not. Oh that all that are sufferers by this fiery dispensation would make it their business, their work, their heaven, so to carry it under their present trials, as to convince all gainsayers of the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of their hearts, both towards the Lord, his people, his ways, his ordinances, his interest, and all his concernments in this world! And thus much for the gracious ends that God aims at in all those severe providences and fiery trials that of late he has exercised his people with. The next thing we have to inquire after is those sins for which the Lord inflicts so heavy a judgment as this of fire upon the sons of men. Now for the opening of this, give me leave to propose this question—viz.,

Quest. What are those sins that bring the fiery dispensation, that bring the judgment of fire upon cities, nations, and countries? Now, that I may give a full and fair answer to this necessary and important question, will you please to premise with me these four things:—

[1.] First, We need not question but that some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men in and about that once great and glorious city did eminently contribute to the bringing down of that dreadful judgment of fire, that has turned that renowned city into ashes. Doubtless superiors and inferiors, ministers and people, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, honourable and base, bond and free, have all had a hand in the bringing down that judgment of fire that has turned London into a ruinous heap. But,

[2.] Secondly, Premise this with me—viz., That it is a greater argument of humility, integrity, and holy ingenuity to fear ourselves, and to be jealous of ourselves rather than others, as the disciples of Christ did: Mat 26:21-22, 'And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?' It is better for every man to do his best to ransack and search his own soul, Lam 3:40, and to find out the Achan, Jos 7:1-26, the accursed thing in his own bosom that has brought that dreadful judgment of fire upon us, than for men, without any Scripture warrant, to fix it upon this party and that, this sort of men and that. There is no Christian to him that smites upon his own heart, his own breast, his own thigh, saying. What have I done? The neglect of this duty the prophet long since has complained of: 'No man repents himself of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?' Jer 8:6—that is, none comparatively. So how rare is it to find a burnt citizen repenting himself of his wickedness, and saying, What have I done? Most men are ready to blame others more than themselves, and to judge others rather than themselves to be the persons that have brought down this judgment of fire upon us, Mat 7:1-4. It was a good saying of one of the ancients, [Augustine,] Amat Deus seipsos judicantes non judicare, God loves to judge them that judge others rashly, but not those that judge themselves religiously. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Premise this with me, In times of common judgments, common calamities, and miseries, other of the saints and servants of God have looked upon their own sins as the procuring causes of the common calamity. Thus David did in that 2Sa 24:15, 'So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, seventy thousand men.' But mark 2Sa 24:17, 'And David spake unto the Lord, when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thy hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.' And thus did good Nehemiah, Neh 1:3, Neh 1:6-7, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire. Both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept thy commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.' Now certainly it is as much our glory as our duty to write after these blessed copies that these worthies have set before us. Alexander had somewhat a wry neck, and his soldiers thought it an honour to be like him. How much more should we count it an honour to be like to David and Nehemiah in such a practice as is honourable to the Lord, and advantageous to ourselves! But what Plutarch said of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them, is applicable to the present case, and to many who have been burnt up in our day. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Premise this with me, There were many sins amongst them that did profess to fear God in that great city, which may and ought to work them to justify the Lord, and to

say that he is righteous in his fiery dispensations. I may well say to the burnt citizens of London what the prophet Oded to them in that 2Ch 28:10, 'But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?' But you will say, What sins were there among the professing people in London that may and ought to work them to justify the Lord, and to say that he is just and righteous, and that he has done them no wrong, though he has burnt them up, and turned them out of all?

Ans. I answer, That there were these seven sins, among others, to be found amongst many of them, I say not amongst all of them, all which call aloud upon them to lie low at the foot of God, and to subscribe to the righteousness of God, though he has turned them out of house and home, and burnt up their substance on every hand.

[1.] First, There was among many professors of the gospel in London too great a conformity to the fashions of the world. How many professing men in that great city were dressed up like fantastical antics, and women like Bartholomew-babies, to the dishonour of God, the shame of religion, the hardening of the wicked, the grieving of the weak, and the provoking of divine justice! When Darius changed the fashion of his scabbard from the Persian manner into the mode of the Greeks, the Chaldean astrologers prognosticated that the Persian monarchy should be translated to them whose fashion he counterfeited. Certainly that nation may fear a scourge from that nation or nations whose fashion they follow: Zep 1:8, 'And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.' This is a stinging and a flaming check against all fashion-mongers, against all such as seem to have consulted with French, Italian, Persian, and all outlandish monsters, to advise them of all their several modes and fashions of vice, and that are so dexterous at following of them, that they are more complete in them than their pattern. Certainly, if ever such wantons be saved, it will be by fire. Strange apparel is part of the old man, that must be put off, if ever men or women intend to go to heaven. What dreadful things are thundered out against those proud, curious dames of Jerusalem, by the prophet Isaiah, who being himself a courtier, inveighs as punctually against the noble vanity of apparel, as if he had even then viewed the ladies' wardrobes, Isa 38:16, seq. And those vanities of theirs brought desolating and destroying judgments upon them: Isa 3:24-26, 'And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be a stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she, being desolate, shall sit upon the ground.' As light and slight as many make of vain apparel, yet Cyrian and Augustine draw up this conclusion: that superfluous apparel is worse than whoredom, because whoredom only corrupts chastity, hut this corrupts nature. Seneca complained, that many in his time were more solicitous of their attire than of their good behaviour, and that they had rather that the commonwealth should be troubled than their locks and set looks. I have read of the Grecians, that when they wished a curse upon their enemies, it was this—that they should please themselves in bad customs. There are many who lift their heads high, who seem to be under this curse this day. Why doth the apostle say, saith one of the ancients, [Austin,] 'Above all things swear not'? Is it worse to swear than to steal? worse to swear than to commit adultery? worse to swear than to kill a man? No; but the apostle would fortify us as much as he could against a pestilent custom, to punish the pestilent customs and fashions that were amongst us, Jas 5:12. God sent the

pestilence in 1665, and the fiery judgment in 1666. And the Lord grant that the bloody sword, in the hands of cruel cut-throats, that are brutish and skilful to destroy, be not sent amongst us some other year to punish the same iniquity, Eze 21:31. O sirs! what was more common among many professors in London than to be clothed in strange apparel, à la mode de France? Mark, those that affected the Babylonian habit were sent captives to Babylon, Eze 23:15. They that borrowed the fashions of the Egyptians may get their boils and blotches. Certainly such as fear the Lord should go in no apparel, but, first, such as they are willing to die in; secondly, to appear before the Ancient of days in, when his judgments are abroad in the earth, Isa 26:8-10; thirdly, to stand before a judgment-seat. But,

[2.] Secondly, There was among many professors of the gospel in London much lukewarmness and coldness in the things of God. The city was full of lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev 3:16-17. The love of many to God, to his people, to his ways, and to his instituted worship, was cold, very cold, stark cold, Mat 24:12. God destroyed the old world by water for the heat of their lusts, and God has destroyed the city of London by fire for the coldness of their love that dwelt therein. I have read of Anastasius the emperor, how God shot him to death with a thunderbolt, because of his lukewarmness and formality. But,

[3.] Thirdly, There was a great deal of worldliness and earthly-mindedness, and covetousness among the professing people of London. O sirs! the world is all shadow and vanity; it is filia noctis, like Jonah's gourd. A man may sit under its shadow for a time, but it soon decays and dies. The main reason why many professors dote upon the world is, because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. The loadstone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is in presence; and shall earthly vanities draw the soul, when Christ, the pearl of price, is in presence? Many of the professors of London were great worshippers of the golden calf, and therefore God is just in turning their golden calf into ashes. The world may well be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in effect and operation. The world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty, 1Ki 9:13. The whole world is circular, the heart of man triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle. If the heart of man be not filled with the three persons in Trinity, it will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil, 1Jn 5:7. Riches, like bad servants, never stay long with one master. What certainty is there in that which one storm at sea, one treacherous friend, one false oath, one ball of fire, yea, one spark of fire may strip us of? O sirs! if you can gather grapes off thorns, and figs off thistles, then go on, and dote upon the world still. All the things of this world are vain things—they are vanity of vanities, Ecc 1:2. All in heaven count them vain, and all in hell count them vain: a Jacobus piece is but as a chip to them; pearls are but as pebbles in their eyes. Lazarus was a preacher, as some conceive, and Dives a lawyer: sure I am, that Lazarus in heaven is now rich enough, and happy enough, and Dives in hell is now poor enough, and miserable enough. He who makes his world his god while he is in the world, what will he do for a god when he goes out of this world? Well, sirs, remember this inordinate love to the world will expose a man to seven great losses—viz.,

First, To the loss of many precious opportunities of grace. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul; and Martha, busied about many things, had no time to hear Christ preach, though never man preached as he preached, Acts 24:1-27, Luk 10:1-42, John 7:1-53. Men inordinately in love with

the world have so much to do on earth, that they have no time to look up to heaven.

Secondly, To the loss of all heavenly benefit and profit by the ministry of the word, Eze 33:31-33; Mat 13:22. Nothing will grow where gold grows. Where the love of the world prevails, there the ministry of the word will not prevail. If the love of the world be too hard for our hearts, then the ministry of the word will work but little upon our hearts.

Thirdly, To the loss of the face and favour of God. God doth not love to smile upon those who are still smiling upon the world, and still running after the world, Psa 30:6, and Isa 57:17. The face and favour of God are pearls of price that God bestows upon none but such whose conversation is in heaven, Php 3:20, and who have the moon—viz., all things that are changeable as the moon—under their feet, Rev 12:1-2. God never loves to lift up the light of his countenance upon a dunghill-spirited man. God hides his face from none so much and so long as from those who are still longing after more and more of the world.

Fourthly, To the loss of religion, and the true worship and service of God; as you may see by comparing of the scriptures in the margin together. Many worldlings deal with religion as masons deal with their ladders when they have work to do, and to climb, &c. Oh then how they hug and embrace the ladder, and carry it on their arms and on their shoulders! but then, when they have done climbing, they hang the ladder on the wall, or throw it into a corner. O sirs, there is no loss to the loss of religion. A man were better lose his name, his estate, his limbs, his liberty, his life, his all, than lose his religion.

Fifthly, To the loss of communion with God, and acquaintance with God, Deu 8:10-11; Jer 2:31, and Jer 22:21; Psa 144:15. A man whose soul is conversant with God shall find more pleasure, delight, and content in a desert, in a den, in a dungeon, and in death, than in the palace of a prince. Man's summum bonum stands in his communion with God, as Scripture and experience evidences—nay, God and I are good company, said famous Doctor Sibbes. Macedonius the hermit, retiring into the wilderness that he might with more freedom enjoy God and have his conversation in heaven, upon a time there came a young gentleman into the wilderness to hunt wild beasts, and seeing the hermit, he rode to him, asking him why he came into that solitary place? he desired he might have leave to ask him the same question, why he came thither? I came hither to hunt, said the young gallant: and so do I, saith the hermit, Deum venor meum, I hunt after my God;—they hunt best who hunt most after communion with God. Urbanus Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, said, it was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life. But what was one day's, yea, one year's converse with Luther, to one hour's converse with God? Now an inordinate love of the world will eat out all a man's communion with God. A man cannot look up to heaven and look down upon the earth at the same time. But,

Sixthly, To the loss of his precious and immortal soul. Shimei, by seeking his servant, lost his life, and many by an eager seeking after this world, Mat 16:26, and 1Ti 6:9, lose their precious and immortal souls. Many have so much to do on earth, that they have no time to look up to heaven, to honour their God, to secure their interest in Christ, or to make sure work for their souls. But,

Sevently, To the loss of the world; for by their inordinate love of the world they highly provoke God to strip them of the world. Ah, how rich might many a man have been had he minded heaven more, and the world less! When men set their hearts so greedily upon the world, it is just with God

to blast, and curse, and burn up all their worldly comforts round about them.

[4.] Fourthly, Many in London were fallen under spiritual decays, witherings, and languishings, in their graces, in their comforts, in their communions, and in their spiritual strength. They are fallen from their first love, Rev 2:4. The flame of divine love being blown out, God sends a flaming fire in the midst of them. Many Londoners were fallen into a spiritual consumption, and to recover them out of it, God sent a fire amongst them. Many in London were withered in their very profession. Where was that visible forwardness, that zeal, that diligence in waiting upon the Lord in his ordinances, that once was to be found amongst the citizens of London? And many citizens were withered in their conversations and converse one with another. There was not that graciousness, that holiness, that spiritualness, that heavenliness, that fruitfulness, that exemplariness, that seriousness, and that profitableness sparkling and shining in their conversations and converse one with another, as once was to be found amongst them. And many were withered in their affections. Ah, what a flame of love, what a flame of joy, what a flame of desires, what a flame of delight, what a flame of zeal as to the best things, was once to be found, amongst the citizens of London! but how were those mighty flames of affection reduced to a few coals and cinders! and therefore no wonder if God sent a flaming fire in the midst of them, and many were withered in their very duties and services. How slight, how formal, how cold, how careless, how remiss, how neglective were many in their families, in their closets, and in their church-communions, who heretofore were mighty in praying and wrestling with God, and mighty in lamenting and mourning over sin, and mighty in their groanings and longings after the Lord, and who of old would have taken the kingdom of heaven by violence! Mat 11:12. There were many in that great city that had lost their spiritual taste; they could not taste that sweetness in promises, in ordinances, in Sabbaths, and in the communion of saints, that once they had tasted and found, 2Sa 19:35. In spiritual things, many citizens could taste no more sweetness than in the white of an egg, Job 6:6. Many in that great city had lost their spiritual appetite, they had lost their stomachs, they did not hunger and thirst after God and Christ, and the Spirit and grace, and the light of God's countenance, and pure ordinances, and the fellowship of the people of God, as once they did. Now is there anything more contrary to the nature of God, the works of God, the word of God, the glory of God, than spiritual decays? Oh the prayers and the praises that God loses by decayed Christians! Ah, how do decayed Christians grieve the strong, and stumble the weak, and strengthen the hands of the wicked, and lay themselves open to divine displeasure! Many in London did like Mandrobulus in Lucian, who offered to his god the first year gold, the second year silver, and the third year nothing; and therefore no wonder if God sent a fire amongst them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Their non-improvement of the mercies and privileges that they were surrounded with, and their non-improvement of lesser and greater judgments that God had formerly inflicted on them, and their non-improvement of their estates to that height they should have done for the supply of them whose wants, bonds, necessities, and miseries did call aloud for supplies. Many did something, a few did much, but all should have done more.

[6.] Sixthly, Those unnatural heats, fiery contests, violent passions, and sore divisions that have been amongst them, may well work them to justify the Lord in his fiery dispensations towards them; for a wolf to worry a lamb is usual, but for one lamb to worry another is unnatural; for Christ's lilies to be among thorns is common, Song of Solomon 2:16, but for these lilies to become thorns, and to tear and rend, and fetch blood of one another, is monstrous and strange. The contest that

was between the birds about the rose that was found in the way, was fatal to many of them, and issued in the loss of the rose at last.

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, There were many in London who were so very secure, and so excessively taken up with their worldly comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, that they did not lay the afflictions of Joseph (1.) so kindly, (2.) so seriously, (3.) so affectionately, (4.) so readily, (5.) so frequently, (6.) so lamentingly, and (7.) so constantly to heart as they ought to have done, Amo 6:6. Upon all these accounts, how well does it become the citizens of London to cry out, The Lord is righteous, the Lord is righteous in all his fiery dispensations towards us! But to prevent mistakes, and that I may lay no heavier a load upon the people of God that truly feared him, and that had and have a saving interest in him, than is meet, and that I may give no advantage to profane persons to father the burning of the city of London wholly, mainly, or only upon the sins of the people of God, give me leave therefore to propound these four queries:—

First, Whether all these seven sins last cited, or most of them, can be justly charged upon the body of those sincere Christians who lived then in London, and whose habitations are now burnt up?

Secondly, Whether those of the people of God, upon whom any of the forementioned sins are chargeable, have not, before the city was burnt, daily lamented, bewailed, and mourned over those sins that might have been charged upon them either by their own consciences or others?

Thirdly, Where and how it doth appear by the blessed Scriptures that ever God sent so great a judgment of fire as was poured out upon London upon the account of the sins of those that truly feared him, be it those seven that have been already specified, or any others that can be now clearly and justly proved against them?

Fourthly, Whether there are not some other men's sins upon whom in the clear evidence of Scripture light this heavy judgment of fire may be more clearly, safely, and fairly fixed, than upon the sins of those who had set up God as the great object of their fear?

Now, in answer to this last query, give me leave to say,

[1.] First, That sin in the general brings the dreadful judgment of fire upon a people. Mark, personal afflictions and trials may come upon the people of God for trial, and to shew the sovereignty of God, as in the case of Job, whose afflictions were for trial, and not for sin, Job 1:1-22. The same may be said of the man that was born blind, John 9:1-41. But general judgments, such as this fiery dispensation was, never comes upon a people but upon the account of sin. This is evident in my text, Isa 42:24-25; God set Jacob and Israel on fire, and burnt them round about; but it was because they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Jer 4:4, 'Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.' So Psa 107:33-34, 'He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.' The very country of Jewry, as travellers report, which flowed once with milk and honey, is now for fifteen miles about Jerusalem like a desert, without grass, tree, or shrub. Ah, what ruins doth sin bring upon the most renowned countries and cities that have been in the world! Such is the destructive nature of sin, that it will first or last level the richest, the strongest, and the most glorious cities in the world. So the prophet Amos tells us that it is sin that brings God's sorest

punishments upon his people: Amo 1:3, 'For three transgressions of Damascus,' (by which we are to understand the greatness of their iniquities,) 'and for four,' (by which we are to understand the multitude of their transgressions,) 'I will not turn away the punishment thereof.' The same is said of Gaza, Amo 1:6, and of Tyrus, Amo 1:9, and of Edom, Amo 1:11, and of Ammon, Amo 1:13, and of Moab, Amo 2:1, and of Judah, Amo 2:4, and of Israel, Amo 2:6. Now it is very observable of every one of these, that when God threatens to punish them for the greatness of their iniquities, and for the multitude of their transgressions, he doth particularly threaten to send a fire among them to consume the houses and the palaces of their cities; so he doth to Damascus: Amo 1:4, 'But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.' So he doth to Gaza, Amo 1:7, 'But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof.' So he doth to Tyrus, Amo 1:10, 'But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.' So he doth to Edom, Amo 1:12, 'But I will send a fire upon Teman, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.' So he doth to Ammon, Amo 1:14, 'But I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind. So he doth to Moab, Amo 2:2, 'But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kiriath; and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of a trumpet.' So he doth to Judah, Amo 2:5, 'But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.' By all these remarkable instances it is evident that God, by his fiery dispensations, tells all the world that the sins of that people are great and many, upon whom the dreadful judgment of fire is inflicted in its fury, and therefore it is high folly and madness in many men that makes them impute this heavy judgment of fire to anything rather than to their sins. O sirs, it is sin that burns up our habitations, and that turns flames of love into a consuming fire. And this the Parliament, in their Act for the Rebuilding of the City of London, well observes. The clause of the Act is this: 'And that the said citizens, and their successors for all the time to come, may retain the memorial of so sad a desolation, and reflect seriously upon their manifold iniquities, which are the unhappy causes of such judgments: Be it further enacted, That the second of September (unless the same happen to be Sunday; and if so, then the next day following) be yearly for ever hereafter observed as a day of public fasting and humiliation within the said city and liberties thereof, to implore the mercies of Almighty God upon the said city, to make devout prayers and supplications unto him to divert the like calamity for the time to come.' So Sir Edward Turner, knight, in his speech to the king upon the prorogation of the Parliament: 'We must,' saith he, 'for ever with humility acknowledge the justice of God in punishing this whole nation by the late dreadful conflagration of London. We know they were not the greatest sinners on whom the tower of Siloam fell,' Luk 13:4, 'and doubtless all our sins did contribute to the filling up that measure, which being full, drew down the wrath of God upon that city.' So much the king, in his proclamation for a general fast on the 10th of October, observes. The words of the proclamation are these: 'His majesty therefore, out of a deep and pious sense of what himself and all his people now suffer, and with a religious care to prevent what may yet be feared, unless it shall please Almighty God to turn away his anger from us, doth hereby publish and declare his royal will and pleasure, that Wednesday, being the tenth of October next ensuing, shall be set apart, and kept, and observed by all his majesty's subjects of England and Wales, and the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation, to implore the mercies of God, that it would please him to pardon the crying sins of this nation, those especially which have drawn down this last and heavy judgment upon us, and to remove from us all other his judgments which our sins have deserved,

and which we now either feel or fear.' Thus you see that not only the blessed Scriptures, but also king and Parliament, do roundly conclude that it was for our sins, our manifold iniquities, our crying sins, that God has sent this heavy judgment upon us. His majesty also well observes, that there are some special crying sins that bring down the fiery judgment upon us. Now this royal hint leads me by the hand to say:—

[2.] Secondly, That though sin in the general lays people under the fiery dispensations of God, yet if we will but diligently search into the blessed book of God, which never spoke treason nor sedition, we shall find that there are several sins that brings the heavy judgment of fire upon cities and countries. As,

First, Gross atheism, practical atheism, is a sin that brings desolating and destroying judgments upon a people: Zep 1:12, 'And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees, that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.' What horrid blasphemy, what gross atheism is here! How do these atheists ungod the great God! How do they deny his omnipotency and omniscency! What a god of clouts, what an idol-god do they make the great God to be, when they make him to be such a God as will neither do good nor hurt! Epicurus denied not God's essence, but only his providence; for he granted that there was a God, though he thought him to be such a one as did neither good nor evil; but certainly God sits not idle in heaven, but has a sharp and serious eye upon all that is done on the earth: and this both saints and sinners shall find by experience, when in the great day he shall distribute both his rewards and punishments according to what they have done in the flesh. Atheism is the main disease of the soul, not only pestilent to the person in whom it is harboured, but also to the whole land where it is practised and permitted. Atheism is worse than idolatry; for idolatry only robs God of his worship, but atheism robs God both of his attributes and being; and therefore mark what follows: Zep 1:13, 'Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation; they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.' So Eze 20:47-49, 'And say to the forest of the south, Hear the word of the Lord; thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein. And all flesh shall see that I the Lord have kindled it; it shall not be quenched. Then said I, Ah, Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speak parables?' Here was a pack of atheists, that did mock and scoff at the prophet and his parables; they told him that he talked like a madman, and that he spoke of such things that neither himself nor others understood; for he talked of the south, and of the forests of the south, and of fire, and of flaming fire, and of green and dry trees, and that all these things were dark and obscure to them: they put off all the prophet spoke as allegorical, as mystical, and as enigmatical, and as dark visions, and as dreams, and imaginations, and divinations of his own brain, and therefore they needed not much mind what he said. Now mark these atheists, what do they do? They provoke the Lord to kindle a fire, a universal fire, an unquenchable fire, an inextinguishable fire in the midst of Jerusalem, which is here termed a forest, by reason of its barrenness and unfruitfulness, and the multitudes that were in it; and because it was fit for nothing but the axe and the fire. Atheism is a sin that has brought the greatest woes, miseries, destructions, and desolations imaginable upon the most flourishing kingdoms and most glorious cities in the world. Holy Mr Greenham was wont to say that he feared rather atheism than Popery would be England's

ruin. O sirs! were there none within the walls of London that said in their hearts with David's atheistical fool, 'There is no God'? Psa 14:1. Caligula the emperor was such a one; and Claudius thought himself a god till the loud thunder affrighted him, and then he hid himself and cried, Claudius non est deus—Claudius is not a god. Leo X., Hildebrand the magician, and Alexander VI., and Julius II. were all most wretched atheists, and thought that whatever was said of Christ, of heaven, of hell, of the day of judgment, and of the immortality of the soul, were but dreams, impostures, toys, and old wives' fables. Pope Paul III., at the time of his death, said he should now be resolved of three questions that he had doubted of all his life. (1.) Whether the soul was immortal or no; (2.) Whether there were a hell or no; (3.) Whether there were a God or no. And another grand atheist said, I know what I have here, but I know not what I shall have hereafter. Now were there no such atheists within the walls of London before it was turned into ashes? The atheist in Psa 10:11 says, 'He will never see;' and in Psa 94:7, they rise higher; they say, 'The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.' They labour to lay a law of restraint upon God, and to cast a mist before the eye of his providence. And in Isa 29:15, they say, 'Who seeth us? who knoweth us?' And in Eze 9:9, they say, 'The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.' These atheists shut up God in heaven as a blind and ignorant God, not knowing, or not regarding, what is done on the earth; they imagine him to be a forgetful God, or a God that seeth not. Psa 73:11, they say, 'How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?' Thus they deny God's omniscieny and God's omnipreseney, which to do is to ungod the great God, as much as in them lies.

Now were there no such atheists within the walls of London before it was destroyed by fire? Oh how did practical atheism abound in London! How many within thy walls, O London! did profess they knew God, but in their works did deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate! Tit 1:16. O sirs! some there are that live loosely under the gospel, that run into all excess of riot, and that in the face of all promises and threatenings, mercies and judgments, yea, in the very face of life and death, of heaven and hell; and others there are that sin freely in secret, that can be drunk and filthy in the dark, when the eye of man is not upon them. Certainly those men's hearts are very atheistical, that dare do that in the sight of God which they tremble to do before the eyes of men. How many are there that put the evil day far from them, that flatter themselves in their sins, that with Agag conclude, surely the bitterness of death is past, and that hell and wrath is past, and that they are in a fair way for heaven, when every step they take is towards the bottomless pit, and divine vengeance hangs over their heads, ready every moment to fall upon them! Are there not many that seldom pray, and when they do, how cold, how careless, how dull, how dead, how heartless, how irreverent, are they in all their addresses to the great God? Are there not many such atheists that use no prayer, nor Bible, but make Lucian their Old Testament, and Machiavel their New? Are there not many that grant there is a God, but then it is such a God as is made up all of mercy, and thereupon they think, and speak, and do as wickedly as they please? And are there not some that look upon God as a sin-revenging God, and thereupon wish that there were no God, or else that they were above him, as Spira did? And are there not others that have very odd and foolish conceptions of God, as if he were an old man, sitting in heaven with royal robes upon his back, a glorious crown upon his head, and a kingly sceptre in his hand, and as if he had all the parts and proportion of a man, as the papists are pleased to picture him? Some there are that are so drowned in sensual pleasures, that they scarce remember that they have a God to honour, a hell to escape, a heaven to secure, souls to save,

and an account to give up. And others there are who, when they find conscience begin to accuse and terrify them, then, with Cain, they go to their buildings, or with Saul to their music, or with the drunkards to their cups, or with the gamesters to their sports, Gen 4:1-26; 1Sa 18:6, 1Sa 18:10; Job 31:24; Php 3:19. Some there are that make their gold their god, as the covetous; others make their bellies their god, as the drunkard and the glutton. Some make honours their god, as the ambitious; and others make pleasures their god, as the voluptuous. Some make religious duties their god, as the carnal gospellers; and others make their moral virtues their god, as the civil honest man, Amo 6:1-14; Mat 23:1-39. Now what abundance of such atheists were there within and without the walls of London before the fiery judgment passed upon it! The Scripture attributes the ruin of the old world to atheism and profaneness, Gen 6:1-22; and why may not I attribute the ruin and desolation of London to the same? Practical atheists are enough to overthrow the most flourishing nations, and the most flourishing cities that are in all the world. But to prevent all mistakes in a business of so great a concernment, give me leave to say, that if we speak of atheists in a strict and proper sense, as meaning such as have simply and constantly denied all deity, then I must say that there was never any such creature in the world as simply and constantly to deny that there is a God. It is an inviolable principle, and indelibly stamped upon man's nature, that there is a God. They that shall deny that there is a God, must extinguish the very light of nature, by which the very heathen in all the ages of the world have acknowledged a supreme divine Being. Bion of Boristenesa was a very great atheist all his lifetime; he denied the gods, despised their temples, and derided their worship; yet when death came, he would rather have endured the greatest torment than to have died, and that not so much for fear of a natural death, but for fear of what followed after, lest God, whom he had denied, should give him up into the hand of the devil whom he had served; and therefore at the time of his death he put forth his hand, crying, Salve, Pluto, salve, Welcome, devil, welcome—foolishly thinking to pacify the devil by this flattering salutation. And Tully observes of Epicurus, that though no man seemed more to condemn both God and death, yet no man feared more both the one and the other. The philosophers did, with one consent, affirm that there is a God, and they called him, *Nomine Deum, naturâ Spiritum, ordine Motorem primum*, but knew him not. He that shall deny there is a God, sins with a very high hand against the light of nature; for every creature, yea, the least gnat and fly, and the meanest worm that crawls upon the ground, will confute and confound that man that disputes whether there be a God or no. The name of God is written in such full, fair, and shining characters upon the whole creation, that all men may run and read that there is a God. The notion of a deity is so strongly and deeply impressed upon the tables of all men's hearts, that to deny a God is to quench the very principles of common nature; yea, it is formally deicidium, a killing of God, as much as in the creature lies. There are none of these atheists in hell; for the devils believe and tremble, Jas 2:19. The Greek word φοβισσονται, that is here used, signifies properly the roaring of the sea; it implies such an extreme fear, as causeth not only trembling, but also a roaring and screeching out, Mark 6:49; Acts 16:29. The devils believe and acknowledge four articles of our faith, Mat 8:29, (1.) They acknowledge God; (2.) Christ; (3.) The day of judgment; (4.) That they shall be tormented then; so that he that doth not believe that there is a God, is more vile than a devil. To deny there is a God, is a sort of atheism that is not to be found in hell.

'On earth are atheists many, In hell there is not any.'

Augustine, speaking of atheists, saith, That albeit there be some who think, or would persuade themselves, that there is no God; yet the most vile and desperate wretch that ever lived would not say, there was no God. Seneca hath a remarkable speech, *Mentiuntur qui dicunt se non sentire Deum esse: nam etsi tibi affirmant interdù, noctu tamen dubitant*, They lie, saith he, who say they perceive not there is a God; for although they affirm it to thee in the daytime, yet by night they doubt of it. Further, saith the same author, I have heard of some that have denied that there was a God; yet never knew the man but, when he was sick, he would seek unto God for help; therefore they do but lie that say there is no God; they sin against the light of their own consciences; they who most studiously go about to deny God, yet cannot do it, but some check of conscience will fly in their faces. Tully would say that there was never any nation under heaven so barbarous as to deny that there was a God. I have seen a city without walls, but never any city but acknowledged a God. *Quicquid vides, et quicquid non vides, Deus est*, Whatsoever thou seest, and whatsoever thou seest not, is God; that is, all things visible and invisible do express unto thee a deity, and lead thee as by the hand to contemplate heavenly, spiritual, and eternal things. God is known by his effects, though not by his essence. The creation of the world is a glass, wherein, saith Paul, we may behold his eternal power and Godhead, Rom 1:1-32, which that divine poet hath well observed, 'The world's a school, where in a general story God always reads dumb lectures of his glory.'—[Du Bartas.]

Austin [Soliloquiis] having gone round all the creatures, and seeing in them the characters of the Godhead imprinted, and seriously inquiring of them for God, not one or two, but all made him this answer, with an audible voice, *Non sum ego, sed per ipsum sum ego quem quæris* in me, I am not he, but by him I am whom thou seekest in me. 'I have heard,' saith my author, 'of some learned atheists met together to discourse of the power of nature, to prove there was no God: a poor shepherd present asked how the rain came then? they bid him look upon a still, and he might know that vapours were drawn up by the sun and let fall again, as moisture in a still; he replied, I never yet could see a still work unless some man put fire to it.' This so wrought on one in the company, that he gave glory to God, and forsook his companions. I think Zeno hit the mark when he said, To hear and see an atheist die, will more demonstrate that there is a God, than all the learned can do by all their arguments. That epitaph which was written upon Sennacherib's tomb, [Herodotus,] may well be written upon every atheist, He that looks upon us, let him believe there is a God, and learn to fear him. In all the ages of the world, God has given a most severe testimony against atheists. That Assyrian that bragged at a feast that he did never offer sacrifice to a god, was eaten up of lice. And Lucian, a great atheist, going to supper abroad, left his hounds fast when he went, and as he returned home, having railed against God and his word, his dogs fell mad, met him, and tore him in pieces. I have read of some heathens who, being at sea in a very dangerous storm, where they were like to be cast away, they began every one apart to examine themselves what should be the reason of so dreadful a storm, and after that they had all cast up their accounts by querying with themselves, What have I done, said one, and What have I done, said another, that has occasioned this storm? At last it issued thus, they remembered that they had Diagoras the atheist on board; and rather than they would all perish for that atheist's sake, they took him by the heels and hurled him overboard, and then the storm ceased, and the sea was quiet. It will be hard to name an atheist either in the Holy Scripture, or in ecclesiastical histories, or in heathen writings, which came not to some fearful end; and therefore no wonder if Austin would not be an atheist for half an hour for the gain of a million of worlds, because he knew not but God

might in that time make an end of him. I have been the longer upon this head, because atheist and atheism did never so abound in this land as it hath done these last years, and that you may the clearer see who they are that have brought that sad judgment of fire upon that once glorious city of London. Ah London, London! it was the gross atheism and the practical atheist that was within and without thy walls, that has turned thee into a ruinous heap.

Mark, I readily grant that there is the seeds, relics, stirring, and moving of atheism in the best and holiest of the sons of men; but then (1.) They disallow of it, and discountenance it; (2.) It is lamented and bewailed by them; (3.) They oppose it, and conflict with it; (4.) They use all holy and conscientious means and endeavours to be rid of it; (5.) By degrees they get ground against it, and therefore God never did, nor never will, turn cities or kingdoms into flames for those seeds and remains of atheism that are to be found in the best of saints.

It is that atheism that is rampant, that reigns in the hearts and lives of sinners, as a prince reigns upon his throne, that brings desolating and destroying judgments upon the most flourishing kingdoms and the most glorious cities that are in the world. But,

2. Secondly, Luxury and intemperance bring desolating and destroying judgments upon places and persons: Joe 1:5, 'Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth;' Joe 1:19, 'O Lord, to thee will I cry, for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flames have burnt all the trees of the field;' Joe 1:20, 'The beasts of the field cry unto thee; for the rivers of the water are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness.' Luxury is a sin that brings both famine and fire upon a people; it brought the Chaldeans upon the Jews, who by fire and sword laid all waste. The horses of the Chaldeans destroyed their pastures, vines, fig-trees, pomegranates, &c., which grew in many places of the land, and their soldiers set their houses on fire, and so brought all to ruin. Amo 6:1, 'Woe to them that are at ease in Zion;' Amo 6:3, 'That put far away the evil day;' Amo 6:4, 'That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;' Amo 6:5, 'That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;' Amo 6:6, 'That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph;' Amo 6:7, 'Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed;' Amo 6:8, 'The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the Lord God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city, with all that is therein;' Amo 6:11, 'For, behold, the Lord commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.' Luxury is a sin that forfeits all a man's enjoyments, that turns him out of house and home. Samaria was a very glorious city, and a very strong city, and a very rich city, and a very populous city, and a very ancient city, &c., and yet luxury and intemperance turned it into ashes,—it brought desolating and destroying judgments upon it. The rich citizens of Samaria were given up to mirth and music, to luxuries and excesses, to riotousness and drunkenness, to feasting and carousing, and by these vanities and debaucheries they provoked the Lord to command the Chaldeans to fall on and to spoil them of their riches, and to lay their glorious city in ashes. So it was luxury and intemperance that provoked the Lord to rain hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen 18:1-33; luxury turned those rich and populous cities into ruinous heaps. Ah London! London! the luxuries and excesses, the riotousness and drunkenness, the mad feasting and carousing that

have been within and without thy walls, that have been within thy great halls, taverns, and other great houses, hath turned thee into ashes, and laid thy glory in the dust. O you burnt citizens of London! what shameful spewing hath been in some of your feasts, as if Sardanapalus, Apicius, and Heliogabalus were still alive! How often have many of you poured into your bodies such intoxicating drinks as hath many times laid you asleep, stripped you of your reason, took away your hearts, robbed you of yourselves, and laid a beast in your room! Drunkenness is so base, so vile a sin, that it transforms the soul, deforms the body, bereaves the brain, betrays the strength, defiles the affections, and metamorphoseth the whole man; yea, it unmans the man. Cyrus the Persian monarch being demanded of his grandfather Astyages why he would drink no wine, answered, For fear lest they give me poison; for, saith he, yesterday, when you celebrated your nativity, I judged that somebody had poisoned all the wine they drank, because at the taking away of the cloth not one of all those that were present at the feast arose in his right mind. [Xenophon.] Hath it not been thus with many of you? If it hath, lay your hands upon your mouths, and say, The Lord is righteous, though he hath laid your houses in ashes. Anacharsis used to say that the first cup of wine was for thirst, the second for nourishment, the third for mirth, and the fourth for madness; but what would he have said had he lived within or without the walls of London these last six years? Isa 5:22; Hab 2:17. Ah London! London! were there none within nor without thy walls that were strong to drink, and that gave their neighbour drink, and that put the bottle to them to make them drunk, that they might look on their nakedness? Were there none within nor without thy walls, that with Marcus Antoninus, Darius, Alexander the Great, &c., did boast, and glory, and pride themselves in their great abilities to drink down any that should come into their company? Were there none within nor without thy walls, O London! that cried out, If you take away our liquor, you take away our lives? Austin brings in the drunkard, saying, *Malle se vitam quàm vinum eripi*, He had rather lose his life than his wine. And Ambrose speaks of one Theotimus, who being told by his physicians that much quaffing would make him blind, answered then, *Vale lumen amicum*, Farewell sweet light, farewell sweet eyes; if ye will not bear wine, ye are no eyes for me. Were there none within nor without thy walls, O London! that did abuse the good creatures of God so profusely, so prodigally, so prodigiously, as if they had been sent into the world for no other end but thus to abuse themselves, reproach their Maker, and destroy those choice blessings which God had given for more noble ends, than to be spewed against the walls, for these last six years? A drunken health, like the conclusion in a syllogism, must not upon any terms be denied, especially in the company of such grandees whose age, whose place, whose office should have taught them better things; yea, the custom of high drinking hath been these last six years so great within and without thy walls, O London! that it is no wonder if the Lord for that alone has laid thy glory in the dust; yea, and that shameful spewing is upon all thy glory, Hab 2:16, considering what shameful spewing have been in thy streets, taverns, halls, alehouses, and other great men's houses, where temperance, righteousness, justice, and holiness should have dwelt in glory and triumph! Ah London! how many within and without thy walls have been drinking wine in bowls, when they should have been mourning over their sins, and grieving for the afflictions of Joseph, and sighing over those distressed Christians whose drink was nothing but sorrow and blood and tears! These are the men that have kindled a burning upon all thy glory.

O sirs! that you would for ever remember that intemperance, luxury, is a sin, an enemy that,

[1.] First, Robs God of his glory. It denies him all service and obedience. Intemperate persons are neither fit for praying to God, nor praising of God, nor receiving from God. Intemperance turns the temple of the Holy Ghost into a sepulchre, a kitchen, a hog-stye; and what glory then can God have from an intemperate person? 1Co 6:19. But,

[2.] Secondly, It robs both God and man of much precious time. Time is a precious jewel, more worth than all the world. One called his friends thieves, because they stole time from him; and certainly there are no worse thieves than intemperance; for that robs men of their hearing-times, and their praying-times, and their reading-times. There is so much precious time spent in the tavern and in the tippling-house, that the intemperate person cannot be at leisure to spend any time in his family or in his closet, &c., to save his own or others' souls. But there will come a time, either in this or the other world, wherein all intemperate persons will wish that they had spent that precious time in serving of God, and in saving their own and others' souls, which they have spent in luxury and excess, carousing and drinking; but all too late, all too late. Time is not only the fruit of God's indulgence, but also the fruit of Christ's purchase. That doom passed upon Adam, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death,' or dying, thou shalt die, had been put in execution immediately, had not Christ interposed immediately between man's sin and God's wrath. What can there be of more weight and moment than eternity? It is the heaven of heaven, and the very hell of hell, without which neither would heaven be so desirable, nor hell so formidable. Now this depends upon time. Time is the prologue to eternity; the great weight of eternity hangs upon the small wire of time: our time, whether it be longer or shorter, is given us by God to provide for our everlasting condition, 2Co 6:2; Isa 49:8. We have souls to save, a hell to escape, a heaven to make sure, our pardon to sue out, our interest in Christ to make good; and all this must be quickly done, or we undone, and that for ever. Man's eternal weal or woe depends upon his well or ill improvement of that inch of time that is allotted to him. Now what a dreadful account will such give up at last, who have wasted away their precious time in luxury and excess. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Luxury, intemperance, it robs men of their names. Bonosus, a beastly drunken emperor, was called a tankard, and Tiberius was surnamed Biberius for his tippling, and Erasmus called Eccius Jeccius for the same cause, and Diotimus of Athens was called a tun-dish, and young Cicero a hog's-head. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Luxury, intemperance, it robs men of their health; for how many are there, that by drinking other men's healths have destroyed their own! Many more perish by intemperance than by violence. Intemperance is the source and nurse of all diseases. More perish by surfeiting than by suffering. Every intemperate person digs his own grave with his own mouth and teeth, and is certainly a self-tormentor, a self-destroyer, a self-murderer. I have read of a monk at Prague, who having heard at shrift the confessions of many drunkards, wondered at it, and for an experiment he would needs try his brain with this sin, so accordingly he stole himself drunk. Now after the vexation of three days' sickness, to all that confessed that sin he enjoined no other penance but this, Go and be drunk again; intimating thereby that there was no punishment, no torment that could be inflicted upon a drunkard so great as that, Go and be drunk again. Besides all other plagues that attend this sin, drunkenness is a woe to itself. Temperance is the best and noblest physic, and they that use it commonly are most long-lived. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Intemperance robs men of their estates. It robs the wife many times of her dowry, and the children of their portion, and the husband of his inheritance, his trade, his all. The very word **■σωτ■α**, luxury, properly signifies the not preventing or keeping of the good which at the present we enjoy. Solomon hit the mark when he said, 'The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty,' Pro 23:21. The full cup makes an empty purse, and a fat dish makes a lean bag. He that draws thee wine out of the pipe, puts thy money into his own pocket; and this Diogenes the philosopher well understood when he asked of the frugal citizen but a penny, but begged of the prodigal a talent; and being asked the reason of his practice, he answered, Because of the one he thought he might beg often, but of the other who spent so fast, he was like to receive but once. Mr Livius, (?) when he had spent a great estate in luxurious living, jesting at his own folly, he said that he had left nothing for his heir more than air and mire. Philip king of Macedon, making war upon the Persians, understood that they were a luxurious people; he presently withdrew his army, saying it was needless to make war upon them, who by their luxury would shortly overthrow themselves. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Intemperance robs men of everlasting happiness and blessedness, Gal 5:19-21. It shuts them out from all the glory of that upper world, and tumbles them down to the lowest hell, as you may see in that great instance of luxurious Dives, Luk 16:19-26. The intemperate man's table proves a snare to his soul; fulness breeds forgetfulness, wantonness, blockishness, and stupidity; and therefore no wonder if God shuts the gates of glory against intemperate persons. Look, as no leper might be in the camp of Israel, Num 5:1-31; and as no Gileadite might pass over Jordan, Jdg 12:1-15; and as no fearful man might enter into the wars of Midian, chap. 7; and as no bastard might enter into the sanctuary, Deu 33:1-29; so no luxurious person shall enter into heaven. Of all sorts of sinners, the luxurious sinner is most rarely reformed. The adulterer may become chaste, the thief may become an honest man, the swearer may obtain a sanctified tongue; but how rare is it to see a luxurious person repent, break off his sins, close with Christ, and walk to heaven! Luxurious persons eat and drink away their Christ; yea, they eat and drink away their souls, nay, they eat and drink away their own salvation, Mat 21:31-32; Luk 23:43. They that serve their own bellies, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore they shall never reign with him in the other world. Certainly that man that makes his belly his god, shall be for ever separated from God, Php 3:19. All belly-gods shall at last be found in the belly of hell. The intemperate person hath his heaven here; his hell is to come. Now he has his sweet cups, his merry cups, his pleasant cups: oh, but there is a cup of shame and sorrow, 'and this shall be their portion for ever and ever,' Psa 11:6. The intemperate person hath been a gulf to devour many mercies, and therefore he shall at last be cast into a gulf of endless miseries. In a word, intemperance is a mother sin, a breeding sin; it is a sin that is an inlet to all other sins; we may call it 'Gad, for behold, a troop cometh,' Deu 32:17, Deu 32:24. Oh the pride, the oppression, the cruelty, the security, the uncleanness, the filthiness, the profaneness that comes trooping after intemperance, Jer 5:7-9. And therefore Aristotle concludes, that double punishments are due to drunkards; first for their drunkenness, and then for other sins committed in and by their drunkenness. Now seeing that intemperance and luxury is so great a sin, is it any wonder to see divine justice turn the most glorious cities in the world into a ruinous heap, when this sin of intemperance is rampant in the midst of them? Ah, London! London! the intemperance and luxury that has been within and without thy walls, has brought the desolating judgment of fire upon thee, that has laid all thy glory in ashes and rubbish. How many great houses were there once within and without thy walls, that should have been

public schools of piety and virtue, but were turned into mere nurseries of luxury and debauchery! How have the rules of the Persian civility been forgotten in the midst of thee! Est 1:6-7. How many within and without thy walls did make their belly their god, their kitchen their religion, their dresser their altar, and their cook their minister, whose whole felicity did lie in eating and drinking, whose bodies were as sponges, and whose throats were as open sepulchres to take in all precious liquors, and whose bellies were as graves to bury all God's creatures in! And how have many men been forced to unman themselves, either to please some, or to avoid the anger or wrath of others, or else to gain the honourable character of being a high boy, or of one that was strong to drink among others, or to drink down others! Oh the drunken matches that have been within and without thy walls, O London!—the Lord has seen them, and been provoked by them to kindle a fire in the midst of thee. Luxury is a sin that never goes alone; it hath many other great sins attending and waiting on it; it is as the nave in the wheel, which turning about, all the spokes turn with it. Idleness, fighting, quarrelling, jewling, whoring, cheating, stealing, robbing, are the handmaids that wait on luxury, Pro 23:29-33; and therefore no wonder if God has appeared in flames of fire against it. I have been the longer upon this head, because luxury, intemperance, is one of the great darling sins of our age and day; it is grown to epidemical, not only in the city, but in the countries also, and it is a very God-dishonouring, and a God-provoking, and a soul-damning, and a land-destroying sin: and oh that what I have writ might be so blessed as to put some effectual stop to those notorious public excesses and luxuries that have been and still are rampant in most parts of the land. But now, beloved, this sin of luxury and intemperance I cannot charge with clear and full evidence upon the people of the Lord, that did truly fear him and sincerely serve him, whose habitations were once within or without the walls of London; nay, this I know, that for this very sin among others, their souls did often mourn before the Lord in secret. And truly of such Christians that live and wallow in luxury and intemperance, if we compare their lives and Christ's laws together, I think we may confidently conclude, Aut hæc non est lex Christi, aut nos non sumus Christiani: Either this is not Christianity, or we are not Christians. And thus Tertullian, Cyprian, Justin Martyr, and others concluded against the luxurious and intemperate Christians of their times. Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach such luxurious Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach: Where, said the heathen, is that good law which they do believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostles' writings, and yet are drunk; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives. And Panormitan having read the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and comparing the loose and luxurious lives of Christians with those rules of Christ, concluded that either that was no gospel, or the people no Christians. The loose and luxurious lives of many Christians was, as Lactantius declares, made by the heathen the reproach of Christ himself: Quomodo bonus magister cuius tam pravos videmus discipulos?—How can we think the master to be good whose disciples we see to be so bad? Epiphanius saith that in his days many shunned the society of the Christians because of the looseness and luxuriousness of their lives. And Augustine confessed that in his time the loose and luxurious lives of many who professed the Christian religion gave a great advantage to the Manichees to reproach the whole church of God and the ways of God. The Manichees were a sort of people who affirmed that there were two principles or beginnings of things—viz. a summum bonum and a summum malum—a summum bonum, from whence sprang all good, and a summum malum, from whence issued forth all evil. Now the loose and luxurious

lives of such as had a profession upon them hardened these in their errors, and caused them with open mouth greatly to reproach and deeply to censure the sincerest saints. And Chrysostom preferred brute beasts before luxurious persons; for they go from belly to labour, when the luxurious person goes from belly to bed, or from belly to cards or dice, if not to something that is worse. And Augustine well observes that God hath not given to man talons and claws to rend and tear in pieces, as to bears and leopards; nor horns to push, as to bulls and unicorns; nor a sting to prick, as to wasps, and bees, and serpents; nor a bill to strike, as to eagles and ostriches; nor a wide mouth to devour, as to dogs and lions; but a little mouth, to shew that man should be very temperate both in his eating and drinking. How applicable these things are to the luxurious persons that lived within and without the walls of London before it was turned into ashes, I shall leave the wise in heart to judge. But,

3. Thirdly, Those great and horrid sins that were to be found in many men's callings—viz., excessive worldliness, extortion, deceit, bribery, &c.—these brought the sore judgment of fire upon us, Pro 28:20, Pro 28:22, and see Jos 7:15, Jos 7:21, Jos 7:24-25. When men are so greedy and mad upon the world that they make haste to be rich by all sinful devices and cursed practices, no wonder if God burns up their substance, and turns their persons out of house and home. The coal the eagle got from the altar—the sacrifice—and carried it to her nest, set all on fire; so that estate that men get by sinful ways and unwarrantable courses first or last will set all they have on fire. He that resolves to be evil, may soon be rich, when the spring of conscience is screwed up to the highest pin, that it is ready to crack, when religion is locked up in an out-room, and forbidden upon pain of death to look into the shop or warehouse. No wonder such men thrive and grow great in the world; but all the riches such men store up, is but fuel for the fire: Hab 2:9, 'Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!' Hab 2:11, 'For the stone shall cry out of the wall, the beam out of the timber shall answer it:' Hab 2:13, 'Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?' They had got great estates by an evil covetousness, and God was resolved that he would make a bonfire of all their ill-gotten goods; and though they should venture their lives to save their goods and quench the flames, yet all should be but labour in vain, according to that word, Jer 51:58, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burnt with fire, and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.' Though Babylon was a city of great fame and state and riches, and deservedly accounted one of the world's nine wonders; though the compass of the walls was three hundred and sixty-five furlongs, or forty-six miles, according to the number of the days in the year, and the height fifty cubits, and of so great a breadth that carts and carriages might meet on the top of them; yea, though it was so great and vast a city, that Aristotle saith that it ought rather to be called a country than a city, adding withal, that when the city was taken, it was three days before the furthest part of the city could take notice of it; yet at last, according to the word of the Lord, it was set on fire; and though the inhabitants did weary and tire out themselves to quench the flames, and to save their stately houses and ill-gotten riches, yet all was labour in vain, and to no purpose. In the days of Pliny it was an utter desolation, and in the time of Jerome it was turned into a park, in which the king of Persia did use to hunt. So Eze 28:18, 'Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee; and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.'

ver. 19, 'All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.' Tyrus, among the sea-bordering cities, was most famous and renowned for merchandise and trade; for thither resorted the merchants of all countries for traffic of Palestina, Syria, Egypt, Persia, and Assyria. They of Tarshish brought thither iron, lead, brass, and silver. The Syrians brought thither carbuncles, purple, brodered work, fine linen, coral, and pearl. The Jews brought thither their honey, oil, treacle, cassia, and calamus. The Arabians brought thither lambs, muttons, and goats. The Sabeans brought thither their exquisite spices and apothecary stuff, with gold and precious stones. Now by fraud and deceit they grew exceeding rich and wealthy, which in the close issued in their total ruin, according to that of the prophet: Zec 9:3-4, 'And Tyrus did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.' The Tyrians did hold themselves invincible, because of their situation being round about environed by the sea; but yet the prophet tells them, that though they were compassed about with deep waters, yet they should be destroyed by fire, which was executed by Alexander the Great, as historians testify. It is not the strength, nor riches, nor situation, nor trade, nor honour, nor fame, nor antiquity of a city, that can preserve it, when God beforehand has by fire determined the destruction of it. Tyrus was a city of the greatest merchandising, it was a city of mighty trade, they were set upon heaping up of riches by hook or by crook; so riches came in, though it were at the door of oppression, violence, or injustice, all was well, Eze 27:1-36; Isa 23:5-9. The traffic of Tyrus was great, and the sins that attended that traffic were very great, and for these God sent a devouring fire amongst them, which destroyed their palaces and treasures, and reduced their glorious city to ashes. By the iniquity of their traffic they had built palaces and stately houses, and filled their shops and warehouses and cellars with rich and choice commodities; but when God brought Nebuchadnezzar upon them, what the Chaldeans could not destroy by the sword they consumed by fire, turning all their glorious palaces, and stately buildings, and costly shops, and warehouses, into ashes, as historians testify. So Nineveh, for greatness, riches, and antiquity, was one of the noblest cities in the world, it was the capital and chief city of the Assyrian empire; and though God, upon their repentance and humiliation, did spare them for a time, Jon 3:1-10, yet afterwards, she returning to her old trade of robberies, covetousness, extortions, fraud, deceitful dealings, &c., God delivered her up as a prey into the hands of many of her enemies, who wonderfully spoiled and pillaged her; and at last God gave her into the hands of the Medes, who brought her to a final and irrecoverable desolation, according to the prophecy of the prophet Nahum, Nah 2:10, 'She is empty, and void, and waste; and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness,'—that is, such blackness as is on the sides of a pot. Nah 2:13, 'Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will burn her chariots in the smoke;' see also Nah 3:12-15. The like judgment fell upon Sidon, [Sabel:] and upon that rich and renowned city of Corinth, which, through the commodiousness of the haven, was the most frequented place in the world for the intercourse of merchants out of Asia and Europe, and great and many were their sins about their trade and traffic; and for these she was finally destroyed, and turned into cinders and ashes by the Romans, [Thucyd.] So bribery is a sin that brings desolating and destroying judgments both upon persons and places: Amo 5:11-12, 'Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stones, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.' Bribery is one of those mighty sins, or one of those bony or big-boned sins, as the Hebrew hath it, for which God threatens to turn them out of house and home. Bribery is a bony sin, a huge sin, a heinous sin, a monstrous sin, a sin that is capable of all manner of aggravations, and therefore the Lord punisheth it with desolating judgments: Job 15:34, 'And fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery,' or the receivers of gifts, as both the Hebrew and the Septuagint may be read. When wicked men build their houses, their tabernacles, by pilling and polling, by bribery, cheating, defrauding, or overreaching others, it is a righteous thing with God to set their houses on fire about their ears. Thus Dioclesian had his house wholly consumed by lightning and a flame of fire that fell from heaven upon it, as Eusebius tells us. Upon such a generation of men as build their houses by bribery, or oppression, or deceit, &c., God many times makes good that word, Job 18:15, 'Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation;' and that word, Mic 3:11-12, 'The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.' Bribery and covetousness had overrun all sorts of such as were in power and authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, and for this Zion must be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest. By these exquisite terms the total and dismal desolation and destruction of Zion, Jerusalem, and the temple, that famous house that was once worthily reckoned one of the seven wonders of the world, is set forth unto us, Jer 7:4-5. That Jerusalem, that God's house and temple wherein they so much trusted and gloried, should become as a mountainous forest and wilderness, was incredible to them as the jumbling of heaven and earth together, or the dethroning of God by taking the crown from his head and thrusting of him from his chair of state; and yet all this was made good according to that dreadful prophecy of Christ, 'There shall not be left one stone upon another,' Luk 19:43-44. These are the sad effects of bribery, covetousness, &c. So Pro 29:4, 'The king by judgment establisheth the land; but he that receiveth gifts, or bribes, overthroweth it.'

Ah London! London! were there none within nor without thy walls that did take a gift out of the bosom to pervert the ways of judgment? Pro 17:23; were there none whose right hands were full of bribes? Psa 26:10; were there none like Samuel's sons, who turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment in the midst of thee? 1Sa 8:3; were there no rulers nor others within nor without thy walls that did love to say with shame, Give ye? Hos 4:18; or that asked for a reward? Mic 7:3; or that with Gehazi run after rewards? or that were not ready to transgress for a piece of bread? Pro 28:21; or that were not like the horse-leech's daughter, still crying out, Give, give? Pro 30:15. Themistocles caused a brand of infamy to be set upon Athmius his children, and all his posterity after him, because he brought gold from the king of Persia to corrupt, bribe, and win the Grecians. If all that were within and without the walls of London that received bribes, and run after rewards, had a brand of infamy set upon them, I am apt to think many of them would be ashamed to walk the streets, who have once carried it with a very high hand.

Ah London! London! were there none within nor without thy walls that had the balance of deceit in their hands, and that loved to oppress, falsifying the balances by deceit, and that had in their bags divers weights, that did sell by one measure and buy by another, that had wicked balances, and

the bag of deceitful weights in their hands, their houses, their shops, their warehouses? Hos 12:7; Amo 8:5; Deu 25:13; Mic 6:11. Well, suppose there were many such within and without the walls of London, what of that? why then, I would say,

[1.] First, Such run counter-cross to divine commands: Lev 19:35-36, 'Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have.' Eze 45:10, 'Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath.' Deu 25:13-15, 'Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;' Lev 19:13; Mark 10:19; 1Co 7:5. We have a common saying, Weight and measure is heaven's treasure. But,

[2.] Secondly, Such persons and such practices are an abomination to the Lord: Deu 25:16, 'For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteousness, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.' Pro 11:1, 'A false balance is abomination to the Lord;' Pro 20:10, 'Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord, and a false balance is not good.' Now mark, the very weights and measures are an abomination to the Lord; how much more the men that make use of them! But,

[3.] Thirdly, Such act counter-cross to God's delight: Pro 11:1, 'A just weight is his delight;' chap. 16:11, 'A just weight and balance are the Lord's.' They are commanded by the Lord, and commended by the Lord, and they are the delight of the Lord. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Such act counter-cross to his nature, which is holy, just, and righteous, and to all his administrations, which are full of righteousness, justice, and equity, Eze 18:1-32, and Eze 33:17, Eze 33:20, Eze 33:29. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Such act counter-cross to the very light and law of nature, by not dealing by others as they would have others deal by them, Mat 7:12. They are the very botches of the land, and enemies to all civil society. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Such stir up the anger and indignation of God against themselves: Eze 22:13, 'Behold, therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made,' or 'at thy covetousness,' as some render the Hebrew word, or 'at thy money gotten by fraud and force, and overreaching and cheating of others,' as others render it. God is here said to smite his hands at their dishonest gain, to note the greatness of his anger, wrath, and indignation against them; and his readiness and resolvedness to take vengeance on them, by animating, instigating, encouraging, and stirring up the Chaldeans to destroy their persons by the sword, and to consume their riches and houses by fire, Eze 21:17. God has no hand to smite; but this is spoken after the manner of men, who oftentimes express the greatness of their wrath and rage by smiting their hands one against another. God, to shew the greatness of his spleen and rage, in a holy sense, against them for their dishonest gain, expresses it by the smiting of his hands: 1Th 4:6, 'That no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.' First or last vengeance will reach them who make it their business, their trade, to overreach others. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Such act counter-cross to the examples of the most eminent saints. To the example of Moses: Num 16:15, 'I have not taken an ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.' Of

Samuel, 1Sa 12:3-5; of Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luk 1:5-6; of Paul, Acts 24:16; yea, to the examples of all the apostles, Judas excepted: 2Co 1:12, and 2Co 7:2, 'Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Such act counter-cross to their own everlasting happiness and blessedness: 1Co 6:8-9, 'Nay, you do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven?' Unrighteous persons may hear much of heaven, and talk much of heaven, and set their faces towards heaven; but they shall never inherit the kingdom of heaven. God himself has locked fast the gate of blessedness against the unrighteous; and therefore all the world shall never be able to open it. Heaven would be no heaven, but a hell, if the unrighteous should inhabit there. To sum up all: If such persons run counter-cross to God's commands, if their persons and practices are an abomination to the Lord, if they act counter-cross to God's delight and to his nature, yea, to the very light and law of nature, to the best examples, and to their own happiness and blessedness, is it any wonder then to see divine justice set such men's houses on fire about their ears, and to see the flames consume such estates as were got either by fraud or force, by craft or cruelty, &c.?

Now the gaining of the things of this world by hook or by crook, or by such wicked courses and cursed practices that we have been discoursing on, I cannot charge upon the people of God, that did truly fear him, whose habitations were once within or without the walls of London, because such practices would neither stand with grace, nor with the honour of God, nor with the credit of religion, nor with the law of God, nor with the law of nature, nor with the peace of a saint's soul. Besides, it is very observable to me, that those that have the balances of deceit in their hand, are called Canaanites in that 12th of Hos 7:1-16th verse, 'He is a merchant; the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress'—Heb., he is Canaan, that is, a mere natural man, that hath no common honesty in him, a money-merchant, one that cares not how he comes by it, so he may have it; one that counts all good fish that comes to his net, though it be through cunning contrivances or violent practices. But,

4. Fourthly, Desperate incorrigibleness and unreformedness under wasting and destroying judgments, brings the desolating judgment of fire upon a people, Lev 26:1-46; Deu 28:1-68; turn to that Jer 30:23-24, Isa 42:24-25, 'Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.' Lev 26:27-28, Lev 26:31-33, 'And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then will I walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.' Isa 1:5, Isa 1:7-8, 'Why should you be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.' Amo 4:7-11, 'And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not

returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens, and your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees increased, the palmer-worm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt; your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses, and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.' By all these scriptures it is most evident that desperate incorrigibleness and unreformedness under wasting and destroying judgments brings the fiery dispensations of God upon a people. Ah London, London! how long has the Lord been striving with thee by his Spirit, by his word, by his messengers, by his mercies, and by lesser judgments, and yet thou hast been incorrigible, incurable, and irrecoverable under all! God looked that the agues, fevers, small-pox, strange sicknesses, want of trade, and poverty that was coming on like an armed man upon thee, with all the lesser fires that have been kindled in the midst of thee, should have awakened thee to repentance; and yet under all, how proud, how stout, how hard, how obdurate hast thou been! God looked that the bloody sword that the nations round hath drawn against thee should have humbled thee, and brought thee to his foot: and yet thou hast rejected the remedy of thy recovery. God looked that the raging, devouring pestilence that in 1665 destroyed so many ten thousands of thy inhabitants should have astonished thee, and have been as a prodigy unto thee, to have affrighted thee out of thy sins, and to have turned thee to the Most High: but yet after so stupendous and amazing judgments, thou wast hardened in thy sins, and refusedst to return. By all these divers kinds of judgments, how little did God prevail with thy magistracy, ministry, or commonalty to break off their sins, to repent, and to abhor themselves in dust and ashes! Hath not God spent all his rods in vain upon thee? Were not all sorts of men generally seven times worse after those wasting judgments than they were before? Jer 24:2-3. And therefore thou hast cause to fear that this is that which hath kindled such a devouring fire in the midst of thee, and that hath turned thy glory into shame, thy riches, palaces, and stately houses into ashes. When after the raging pestilence men returned to the city, and to their estates and trades, &c., they returned also to their old sins; and as many followed the world more greedily than ever, so many followed their lusts, their sinful courses, more violently than ever; and this has ushered in thy desolation, O London! The physician, when he findeth that the potion which he hath given his patient will not work, he seconds it with one more violent; and thus doth the chirurgeon too. If a gentle plaster will not serve, then he applies that which is more corroding; and to prevent a gangrene, he makes use of his cauterising knife, and takes off the joint or member that is so ill affected. So doth the great God; when men are not bettered by lesser judgments, he sends greater judgments upon them. God was first as a moth to Ephraim, which consumed him by little and little; but when that would not better him, and reform him, then the Lord comes as a lion upon him, and tore him all to pieces, Hos 5:12, Hos 5:14. If the dross of men's sins will not come off, he will throw them into the melting-pot again and again, he will crush them harder and harder in the press of his judgments, and lay on such irons as shall enter more deep into their souls. If he

strikes, and they grieve not; if he strikes again, and they tremble not; if he wounds, and they return not; then it is a righteous thing with God to turn men out of house and home, and to burn up their comforts round about them. Now this has been thy case, O London! and therefore God has laid thee desolate in the eyes of the nations.

Now this desperate incorrigibleness and unreformedness under wasting and destroying judgments I cannot groundedly fix upon those who did truly fear the Lord within and without the walls of London, because they made it their business, according to the different measures of grace they had received, to mourn under wasting judgments, and to lament after the Lord under wasting judgments, and to be bettered and reformed under wasting judgments, and not only to understand, but also to obey the voice of the rod. Their earnest prayers, strong cries, bitter tears, sad sighs, and heavy groans under wasting judgments, may sufficiently evidence that they were not incorrigible under wasting judgments. But,

5. Fifthly, Insolent and cruel oppressing of the poor is a sin that brings desolating and destroying judgments upon a people. God sent ten wasting judgments one after another upon Pharaoh, his people, and land, to revenge the cruel oppression of his poor people, Exo 3:9, Pro 22:22-23, 'Rob not the poor, because he is poor; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: for the Lord will plead their cause.' To rob and oppress the rich is a great sin; but to rob and oppress the poor is a greater; but to rob and oppress the poor, because he is poor, and wants money to buy justice, is the top of all inhumanity and impiety. To oppress any one is a sin; but to oppress the oppressed is the height of sin. Poverty and want and misery should be motives to pity; but oppressors make them the whetstones of their cruelty and severity, and therefore the Lord will plead the cause of his poor oppressed people against their oppressors without fee or fear; yea, he will plead their cause with pestilence, blood, and fire. Gog was a great oppressor of the poor, Eze 38:8-14, and God pleads against him with pestilence, blood, and fire: Eze 38:22, 'And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.' Such as oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage, they take the surest and the readiest way to bring ruin upon their own houses, Mic 2:1-2, Isa 5:8, 'Woe unto them that join house to house, and field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!' But mark what follows: Isa 5:9, 'In mine ears said the Lord of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair, without inhabitants; of a truth many houses shall be desolate.' This is an emphatical form of swearing; it is as if the Lord had said, 'Let me not live, or let me never be owned or accounted a God, or let me never be looked upon as a God of truth, a God of my word; let me never be believed nor trusted more for a God, if I do not lay desolate the houses of oppressors, the great houses of oppressors, the fair houses of oppressors; yea, the multitude and variety of the houses of oppressors.' So Amo 3:9-11, 'Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed,' or oppressions, 'in the midst thereof. For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled.' Now mark the 15th verse, 'And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith

the Lord.' In their palaces, and in their winter and summer houses, they stored up all the riches, preys, and spoils that they had got by oppression. But God tells them that their palaces should be spoiled, and that he would smite the winter-house upon the summer-house—so the Hebrew runs. God was resolved that he would dash one house against the other, and lay them all on heaps. Though their palaces and houses were never so rich, and strong, and stately, and pompous, and glorious, and decked, and adorned, and enamelled, and checkered, yet they should all down together. So Zec 7:10-11, Zec 7:14, 'Oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.' Well now, mark what follows: ver. 14, 'But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them, that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land' (or as the Hebrew has it, the second land of desire) 'desolate.' Palestine was a very pleasant land—a land which flowed with milk and honey, a land which was the glory of all lands; God had made it as his paradise, and enriched it with all plenty and pleasure, and, above all, with his presence and residence in his city and temple; but they by oppressing the poor, the widow, and the fatherless, laid all desolate: Jer 12:12, 'O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it.' Oppression lays a people open to God's fury, it provokes the Lord to turn their all into unquenchable flames: Psa 12:5, 'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.' Upon these words Chrysostom saith, *Timeate quicumque pauperem injuriâ afficitis; habetis vos potentiam et opes, et judicium benevolentiam; sed habent illi arma omnium validissima, luctus et ejulatus, quæ à cœlis auxilium attrahunt. Hæc arma domus effodiunt, fundamenta evertunt, hæc integras nationes submergunt:* Fear ye, whosoever ye be, that do wrong the poor, you have power and wealth, and the favour of the judges; but they have the strongest weapons of all, sighings and groanings, which fetch help from heaven for them. These weapons dig down houses, throw up foundations, overthrow whole nations. Thus you see by all these clear scriptures that oppression is a sin that brings wasting and destroying judgments upon a people.

Ah, London! London! was there no oppression and cruelty to be found within and without thy walls? Ecc 4:1, 'So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.' And behold the tears of such as were oppressed. The original word signifies *lachrymam*, non *lachrymas*, a tear, not tears; as if the oppressed had wept so long, and wept so much, that they could weep no longer, nor weep no more, having but only one tear left them. Were there not, O London! many of thy poor oppressed inhabitants that wept so long, that they could weep no longer; and that wept so much, that they had but one tear left? Oh, the cries and tears of the oppressed within and without thy walls did so pierce God's ears, and so work upon his heart, that at last he comes down in flames of fire to revenge the oppressed. Were there no rich citizens that did rack their tenants, and grind the faces of the poor, that took an advantage from their necessities to beat down the price of their commodities, that so they might raise themselves on the poor's ruin? Were there no false weights, false wares, false lights, false measures to be found within and without thy walls by which the poor has been cheated, cozened, and oppressed? Oh how did the rich work upon the necessities of the

poor, bringing them to such under-prices as hath undone both them and their making good that word, Amo 8:4, 'They swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land to fail!' Oh the heavy burdens that have been laid upon the poor by their Egyptian taskmasters! what overreaching of the poor, and what overrating of the poor have been within and without thy walls, O London! Thy poor, O London, did rise early and go to bed late; they did fare hard, and lie hard, and work hard; and yet by reason of the cruelty, oppression, and unmercifulness of many of thy wealthy citizens, they were hardly able to make any convenient supplies for themselves and their families. Oppression turns princes into roaring lions, and judges into evening wolves: it is an unnatural sin, it is a sin against the light of nature. No creatures do oppress them of their own kind. Look upon the birds of prey, as upon eagles, vultures, hawks, and you shall never find them preying upon their own kind. Look upon the wild beasts of the forest, as upon the lion, the tiger, the wolf, the bear, &c., and you shall find them favourable to them of their own kind; and yet men unnaturally prey upon one another—like the fish in the sea, the great swallowing up the small. It is a sin against that great and common rule of equity, Mat 7:12, 'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.' Now no man in his wits would have another to wrong and oppress him in his estate, name, or conscience: and therefore he should not wrong or oppress others in their estates, names, or consciences: and therefore no wonder if God punishes this sin with flames of fire. It is thy oppressors, O London, that has turned thy glory into ashes.

Now this insolent oppressing of the poor is a sin that I cannot make good against the people of God that did truly fear him in that great city. It is a sin they have often bewailed and lamented before the Lord in their solemn addresses to God. Where this sin is rampant, where it rules as a prince upon the throne, it is a clear evidence that the fear of the Lord is not in such men's hearts: Lev 25:17, 'Ye shall not oppress one another, but thou shalt fear thy God.' Now this lies fair in the words,—viz., that such as do oppress others, they do not fear God: and such as do fear God, they will not oppress others. Amalek was a great oppressor of the poor people of God, and the Holy Ghost hath set this black brand of infamy upon him, that he feared not God, Deu 25:18. Had Amalek feared the Lord, he would have been so far from oppressing the poor people of God, that he would have comforted them, and succoured them, and relieved them in the midst of their necessities, miseries, and distresses. The Jews oppressing one another is attributed to their not fearing of God, Neh 5:9. Oppression is so crying a sin against the law of God, the law of grace, the law of nature, and the law of nations, that certainly it cannot be justly charged upon such as have set up God in their hearts as the great object of their fear. The word for oppression in the Hebrew is *mispach*, which signifies a scab, a wound, a leprosy. Now oppression is such a scab, a wound, a leprosy as is not to be found upon those that have fellowship with the Father and the Son. Oppressors may boast of their profession, and call themselves saints, or the people of God, but God accounts them worse than Scythians. Witness those dreadful woes that God has denounced against them in the blessed Scriptures: Zep 3:1, 'Woe to the oppressing city!' Jer 22:13, 'Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong: that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work!' Isa 10:1-3, 'Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless! And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?' Mic 2:1-2, 'Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light they practise it, because it

is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.' Now by all these dreadful woes it is further evident that this horrid sin of insolent oppression cannot be charged upon the called and chosen of God; for where do you find in all the Scriptures the vessels of glory under those woes that are denounced against the ungodly? But,

6. Sixthly, Rejecting the gospel, contemning the gospel, and slighting the free and gracious offers of Christ in the gospel, brings the fiery dispensation upon a people, and causes the Lord to lay their cities desolate: Mat 22:2-7, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son. And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.' In this parable the vocation of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews is set forth. The Jews have the honour to be first called to the marriage-feast—they are invited by the prophets, and afterwards by the apostles to partake of Christ, and of all his royal benefits and favours which are displayed in the gospel, Isa 25:8-9; Pro 9:1-6; Isa 55:1-3. God the Father was very willing and desirous to make up a match between Christ and the Jews, and between Christ and the Gentiles; and he is here called a King, to declare his divine majesty, and to set forth the stateliness and magnificence of the feast. Marriage-feasts that are usually made by kings are full of joy, and full of state, full of splendour and glory. Who can sum up the variety of dishes and dainties that then the guests are feasted with? The variety of the glorious excellencies, favours, and mercies of Christ that are discovered and tendered by God in gospel-offers, in gospel-ordinances, is the wedding-feast to which all sorts of sinners are invited. But here you see they slight, and scorn, and condemn both the master of the feast and the matter of the feast, and all those servants that were sent to invite them to the feast; and hereupon the king was wroth, and sent forth his armies—the Romans, as most interpreters do agree—and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city. About forty years after the death of Christ, the Lord, to revenge the blood of his Son, the blood of his servants, and the contempt of his gospel upon the Jews, brought his armies, the Romans, against Jerusalem, who by fire demolished their temple and city, and by sword and famine destroyed eleven millions of men, women, and children; and those that escaped fire, sword, and famine, were sold for slaves, and scattered among all the nations. Christ and the way of salvation by him is the subject-matter of the gospel. The word **εὐαγγέλιον**, that is rendered 'gospel,' signifies glad tidings, good news; and certainly salvation by Christ is the best news, it is the greatest and the gladdest tidings that ever was brought to sinners' ears. What the psalmist had long before said of the city of God, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee,' Ps 87:3, that I may truly say of the blessed gospel, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou gospel of God.' The gospel is called 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God,' 1Ti 1:11. The gospel is a glorious gospel in respect of the Author of it, and in respect of the penmen of it, and in respect of the glorious discoveries that it makes of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of heaven, and in respect of its glorious effects, in turning of poor sinners 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,' Acts 26:18, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified. Certainly Solomon's natural history, in which he treated of all trees, 'from the

cedar to the hyssop, of all beasts, fowls, and creeping things,' 1Ki 4:33, was a very rare and incomparable piece in its kind; yet one leaf, yea, one line of the gospel is infinitely more worth, and of greater importance to us, than all that large volume would have been. For what is the knowledge of trees, and birds, and beasts, and worms, and fishes, to the knowledge of God in Christ, to the knowledge of the great things of eternity, to the knowledge of a man's sinful estate by nature, or to the knowledge of his happy estate by grace? Doubtless to a soul that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, there is no book to this of the Bible. Acts 19:19 : When the Lord had made it the day of his glorious power to their conviction, conversion, and salvation, they burnt their costly books of curious arts. And no wonder; for they had found the power and the sweet of a better book, even of God's book, upon their hearts. Luther, speaking of the gospel, saith, 'that the shortest line, and the least letter thereof, is more worth than all heaven and earth.' He tasted so much of the sweetness of the gospel, and saw so much of the glory and excellency of the gospel, that he would often say to his friends, that he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. Rab. Chiia, in the Jerusalem Talmud, saith, that in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law. Israel had three crowns, as the Talmud observes, (1.) of the king, (2.) of the priest, (3.) of the law; but the crown of the law was counted by them the chiefest of the three. Then what is the crown of the gospel to all those upon whom the gospel is come in power? 1Th 1:5-7. How divinely did that poet speak, who said he could read God in every leaf on the tree, and that he found his name written on every green herb; and shall not we read God, and Christ, and grace, and mercy in every leaf, yea, in every line of the gospel? The Bible, saith Luther, is the only book; all the books in the world are but waste paper to it, so highly did he prize it, and so dearly did he love it. Contempt of the gospel is a great indignity cast upon the great God, and a great indignity cast upon Jesus Christ; for though the law was delivered by Moses, yet the gospel was delivered by Jesus Christ. And if they escaped not who despised him that spake from earth, of how much sorer punishment are they worthy that contemn him that speaks from heaven? Heb 2:3, and Heb 10:28-29. If the book of the law happen to fall upon the ground, the Jews' custom is presently to proclaim a fast. O sirs! what cause then have we to fast and mourn, when we see the glorious gospel of God fallen to the ground, scorned, despised, contemned, and trampled upon by all sorts of sinners! Contempt of the gospel is a sin of the greatest ingratitude. In the gospel God offers himself, his Son, his Spirit, his grace, his kingdom, and all the glory of another world. Now for men to despise and contemn these offers, is the highest ingratitude and unthankfulness imaginable; and therefore no wonder if God burn such men up, and turn them out of house and home. Such justly deserve the worst of judgments, who despise the best of mercies. The strongest and the sweetest wine always makes the sharpest vinegar; the freest, the richest, and the choicest offers of mercy, if slighted and contemned, turn into the greatest fury and severity. Divine wrath smokes and burns against none so fiercely, as it doth against those who are despisers of gospel mercies. When gold is offered, men care not how great or how base he is that offers it: neither is it material by whom the gospel is brought unto us, whether it be brought unto us by Isaiah, as some think, a prophet of the blood-royal, or by Amos from amongst the herdmen of Tekoa. Let the hand be more noble or more mean that brings it, if it be slighted and contemned, provoked justice will revenge it. Such as slight the gospel, and contemn the gospel, they sin with a high hand against the remedy, against the means of their recovery. 'This is the condemnation,' John 3:19, this is that desperate sin that hastens judgments upon cities and countries, as Jewry, Asia, Bohemia, and other parts of the world have sadly experienced. He that hath eat poison, and shall despise the

means of his recovery, must certainly die for it. He who, when he hath committed treason against his prince, shall not only refuse, but scorn and slight his prince's favour and pardon, and fling it from him with disdain, is assuredly past all help and hope. Sins against the gospel are sins of a greater size, of a louder cry, and of a deeper dye, than sins against the law are, and accordingly God suits his judgments. Where the gospel shines in power, it will either mend a people or mar a people: it will either better them or worsen them; it will either fit them for the greatest good, or it will bring upon them the greatest evils: where it doth not reform, there it will destroy. And this London hath found by woeful experience. Slighting and contemning of the offers of grace in the gospel, is a sin that is not chargeable upon the greatest part of the world, who 'lieth in wickedness,' and who 'sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death,' 1Jn 5:19; Mat 4:16; yea, it is a sin that is not chargeable upon the devils themselves, and therefore the more severely will God deal with those that are guilty of it. The gospel hath for above this hundred years shined forth out of the dark and thick clouds of popery and antichristianism which had overspread the nation. And in no part of the land hath the gospel been preached with more clearness, spiritualness, life, power, and purity than in London. And oh that I had not cause to say that there was no part of the nation where the gospel was more undervalued, slighted, and contemned by many than in London! For,

[1.] First, Where the faithful and painful ministers of the gospel are slighted and contemned as ministers of the gospel, there the gospel is slighted and contemned, Mat 23:37, and Luk 10:16. Now were there none within nor without thy walls, O London! that did slight, scorn, reproach, and condemn the ambassadors of Christ, who were faithful to their light, their Lord, their consciences, and the souls of their hearers? But,

[2.] Secondly, Where the ministrations of the gospel, where the ordinances of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; yea, where any one ordinance of the gospel is slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned: where baptism is slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; where the Lord's supper is slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; where the offers of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; where the commands of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; where the threatenings of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; where the promises of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned; and where the comforts of the gospel are slighted and contemned, there the gospel is slighted and contemned. Now were there none within nor without thy walls, O London! that did slight and condemn the ministrations of the gospel, 'the ordinances of the gospel'? Luk 1:5-6. When old Barzillai had lost his taste and hearing, he cared not for David's feasts and music, 2Sa 19:35. There were many within and without the walls of London that had lost their spiritual taste and hearing, and so cared not for gospel ministrations, for gospel ordinances. There were many who, under a pretence of living above ordinances, lived below ordinances, and made light of ordinances; yea, who scorned, vilified, and contemned the precious ordinances of Christ. 'Thou art to them as a lovely song,' saith the prophet, Eze 33:31-32. In the Hebrew it runs thus, 'Thou art to them as one that breaks jests.' The solemnity and majesty of the word was but as a dry jest unto them. Ordinances were but as dry jests to many within and without the walls of London; and therefore no wonder if God hath been in such good earnest with them who have made but a jest of those precious ordinances, that are more worth than heaven and

earth. Many came to the ordinances too much like the Egyptian dog, which laps a little as he runs by the side of Nilus, but stays not to drink. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Such as are weary of the gospel, such slight the gospel, such contemn the gospel. Never were the Israelites more weary of manna, than many within and without the walls of London were weary of the plain and powerful preaching of the gospel, Num 11:6; Amo 8:5. We were better have a biting gospel than a toothless mass, said blessed Bradford. But were there not some that had rather have a toothless mass than a biting gospel? Were there not many that were willing to let God go, and gospel go, and ordinances go, and all go, so they might be eased of their burdens and taxes, and greaten their relations, and have peace with all nations, and enjoy a sweeping trade, and every one sit under his vine and under his fig-tree, eating the fat, and drinking the sweet, and enjoy liberty to dishonour the Lord, to gratify their lusts, to damn their own souls, and to bring others under their feet, so weary were they of the blessed gospel?

[4.] Fourthly, Such as have but a low and mean opinion of the gospel, such are slighers and contemnors of the gospel. Such as prefer every toy, and trifle, and fashion, and sinful custom, and base lust above the light of the gospel, the power of the gospel, the purity and simplicity of the gospel, the holiness and sweetness of the gospel, such are slighers and contemnors of the gospel, 1Co 1:23. Though it be better to present truth in her native plainness than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls, yet there were many that set a greater price upon the arts, the parts, the gifts, the studied notions and seraphical expressions of their ministers, than they did upon the gospel itself; and what was this but to prefer the handmaid before the mistress, the servant before his lord, the flowers about the dish before the meat that was in the dish, the chaff before the wheat, and pebbles before the richest pearls? The gospel is the field, and Christ is the treasure that is hid in that field; the gospel is a ring of gold, and Christ is the pearl in that ring of gold; and yet how many were there within and without the walls of London that put no considerable price or value upon the gospel! But,

[5.] Fifthly, Such as wilfully disobey the gospel, and live and walk in ways quite cross and contrary to the gospel, such are slighers and contemnors of the gospel, and accordingly the Lord will deal with them. Take one text for all, 2Th 1:7-9, 'And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' This is a more terrible text against all such as are either ignorant of the gospel or that disobey the gospel, than any is to be found in all the Old Testament. In the last day Christ will take vengeance in flaming fire on them that disobey his gospel, and that walk contrary to the rules of his gospel; and therefore no wonder if before that day he lays their habitations desolate by a flaming fire, whose lives give the lie to his glorious gospel. These men above all others expose the gospel to the derision and contempt of the basest and vilest men. When some of the heathens have looked upon the loose lives of professors, they have said, Aut hoc non est evangelium, aut hi non sunt Christiani, Either this is not the gospel, in which there is so much goodness, or these are not Christians, in whom there is none at all. Did you never hear nor read of one who, eyeing the loose conversations of professors, cried out, Sit anima mea cum philosophis, Let my soul be rather with the honest philosophers—who were heathen—than with these wicked lewd men that are called Christians? Now were there none within nor without the walls of London that did wilfully disobey

the gospel, and that walked in ways quite cross and contrary to the gospel? Surely there were; and therefore at their doors we may safely lay the burning of London. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Such as slighted, scorned, and contemned the faithful, sincere, serious, gracious, and conscientious professors of the gospel, such slighted, scorned, and contemned the gospel itself. When the Jews were in prosperity, it was the manner of the Samaritans to repute themselves their nearest cousins. When the Jews were in a thriving and flourishing condition, then the Samaritans could derive their pedigree from Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph; but when the Jews were in any great affliction, or under persecution, then they would deny all acquaintance with them and all relation to them. When profession was in fashion and religion was in credit, how many were there within and without the walls of London that did pretend to be kin, to be cousins to the serious, conscientious, and sincere professors of the gospel, who since the day of their affliction have not only denied all acquaintance with them, and renounced all relation to them, but also are turned slighers, scorers, and contemners of them! If these may not be reckoned among the slighers, scorers, and contemners of the gospel, I do not know who may. To sum up all, I have shewed you that slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel, is a sin of that high nature that it provokes the Lord to lay cities desolate. I have shewed you the greatness of that sin, and the persons that are guilty of it; so that now you may point with a finger to those persons that have laid London in ashes. But before I close up this particular, give me leave to say, that this sin of slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel, I dare not charge upon those that truly fear the Lord, and that have found the gospel to be a gospel of power upon their own souls, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ, 1Th 1:5-7; Acts 26:18. And I shall freely give you my reasons, that you may be the better satisfied that it was not so much their sins as your own that has brought down that heavy judgment of fire upon the city, wherein once you and they had your respective habitations. My reasons are these:—

[1.] First, Those that did truly fear the Lord, and that had experienced the power of the gospel in a saving way upon their own souls, they did frequently before the Lord bewail and mourn over—both together and apart—that heinous sin of slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel, which many were guilty of, whose habitations were then some within, and others without the walls of London, Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6. The Jews have a law which enjoins them to take up any paper which they see lying on the ground, and the reason is, lest haply the name of God be written in the paper, and ignorantly trodden under foot. Though Christians ought to be free from such superstitious curiosities, yet they ought to be very careful that the least tittle of the gospel, the least command of the gospel, be not trod under foot. Now the saints who once lived within and without the walls of London, who through grace have experienced the saving power of the gospel upon their own souls, how have they mourned and lamented to see that glorious gospel of Christ trod under foot, which they have laid so near their hearts! and therefore I cannot fairly charge this sin upon them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel, is a great step towards the sin against the Holy Ghost, and a sin of so great a cry, and so deep a dye, that I cannot at present find where it is in Scripture charged upon such as truly fear the Lord, and that have really experienced the power of the gospel in a saving way upon their own souls, Heb 2:3, and Heb 10:28-29; and therefore I cannot fairly charge this sin upon them.

[3.] Thirdly, Next to God, the gospel is the most sweet and delightful thing in all the world to gracious souls, who have experienced the saving power of it upon themselves. Luther found so much sweetness in it, that it made him say, that he would not live in paradise if he might without the word, at cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere—but with the word he could live in hell itself. Dolphins, they say, love music, and so do gracious souls love the music of the gospel. The gospel is like the stone garramantides, that hath drops of gold within itself, enriching all that will embrace it and conform to it: and this the saints have found by experience, and therefore they cannot but delight in it, and draw sweetness from it. Aglutuidas never relished any dish better than what was distasted by others: so do the saints relish that gospel best that others distaste most; and therefore I cannot charge this sin fairly upon them. But,

[4.] Fourthly, There are none that do so highly prize the gospel, and that set so high a value upon the gospel, as those do who have experienced the saving power of the gospel upon their own souls, Rev 12:11, and Rev 2:12-13; Heb 11:33, Heb 11:38. Such prefer the gospel before all their nearest and dearest concernments and enjoyments that they have in this world; as might be made evident from their practice in the primitive times, and in the Marian days, and in those late years that are now passed over our heads. The tabernacle was covered over with red, and the purple feathers² tell us, they take that habit for the same intent, to note that we must defend the truth of the gospel, even to the effusion of blood: and this they have made good in all the ages of the world, who have found the saving power of the gospel upon their own souls. Tertullian concludes, that the gospel must needs be a precious thing, because Nero hated it; and indeed it was so precious to the saints in his days, that they very willingly and cheerfully laid down their lives for the gospel's sake. Now the same spirit rests upon the saints in our days, and therefore upon this ground I cannot charge that horrid sin of slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel upon them. Israel had three crowns, as the Talmud observes, (1.) of the king, (2.) of the priest, (3.) of the law; but the crown of the law, that was the chief of the three.

[5.] Fifthly, Who were so ready and free to countenance the gospel, and to maintain the gospel, and to encourage the faithful and painful preachers of the gospel, as those that had found the sweet of the gospel, and the saving power of the gospel, upon their own souls? They like well of religion without expense in Basil, and a gospel without charge in Nazianzen; but if it grow costly, it is no commodity for their money. Now this was the very frame and temper of many thousands in London, who never experienced the saving work of the gospel upon their poor souls: but they were of another frame and temper of spirit in London upon whom the gospel was fallen in power; and therefore I may not charge upon them this odious sin of slighting, scorning, and contemning the gospel. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Who were there within or without the walls of London that were so much in a hearty and serious blessing, praising, and admiring of the Lord and his goodness for bringing them forth in gospel times, as those that had a saving work of the gospel upon their own souls? When Alexander was born, his father Philip blessed such gods as he had, not so much that he had a son, as that he had him in Aristotle's days; he was thankful for natural and moral discoveries. The clearest, the choicest, the fullest, and the sweetest visions and discoveries that we have of God on this side eternity, we have in the gospel, and this they frequently experience who have found the gospel falling in power upon their souls; and therefore they cannot but always have harps in their hands, and hallelujahs in their mouths, upon this very account, that they have lived under the

warm sunshine of the gospel, Rev 14:1-4, and Rev 19:1-8. And therefore I shall not charge this vile sin of slighting, scorning, and contemning the gospel upon them who, above all other men, were most exercised in a serious and hearty blessing and praising of God for his glorious gospel. Some there were that blessed God for their yearly incomes, and others there were that blessed God for their prosperous relations and friends, and many there were that blessed God for their deliverance from various perils and dangers; but those that had the gospel working in power upon them, they made it their business and work above all to bless the Lord for the gospel; and therefore who dare charge upon them the contempt of the gospel? But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, There were none within nor without the walls of London that have suffered so many things and such hard things, for the enjoyment of the gospel in its power and purity, as they have done who have found the powerful and saving work of the gospel upon their own souls. Such have been as signs and wonders in Israel, in London, Isa 8:18. Now what folly and vanity would it be to charge them with slighting, scorning, and contemning of the gospel, who have been the only sufferers for the gospel's sake. And thus much for the twelfth sin that brings the fiery dispensation upon cities and people.

7. The sin that brings the fiery dispensation upon a people, and that provokes the Lord to lay their cities desolate, is a course, a trade of lying: Nah 3:1, 'Woe to the bloody city, it is full of lies;' Nah 3:7, 'And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste, who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?' Nah 3:13, 'Behold, thy people in the midst of thee are women: the gates of thy land shall be set wide open to thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars,' that is, thy strongholds; for so the word bars is frequently taken, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin. Nineveh was a great city, a rich city, a populous city, a trading city, it was a city that was wholly made up of fraud and falsehood; it was all full of lies, or it was full of all sorts of lies; there was no truth to be found either in her private contracts or in her public transactions and capitulations with other nations; and therefore the Lord resolves to lay her desolate, and to consume her with fire. So Jer 9:3, 'And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies;' Jer 9:5, 'And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity;' Jer 9:9, 'Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?' Jer 9:10, 'For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burnt up; so that none can pass through them, neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts are fled, they are gone;' Jer 9:11, 'And I will make Jerusalem heaps,' (as London is this day,) 'and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant;' Jer 9:12, 'Who is the wise man that may understand this? and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth, and is burnt up like a wilderness that none passeth through?' Jer 13:23. The Jews had so inured and accustomed their tongues to speak lies, they had got such a haunt, a habit, and custom of lying, that they could not leave it; and this was the procuring cause of that dreadful and utter devastation that befell their city and country: Hos 4:1-3, 'Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth

therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.' This people made it their common practice to lie; they were given up to a course, a trade of lying, which God here threatens to punish with an extreme and universal desolation. A lie is a voluntary and wilful telling of an untruth, with a purpose to deceive; so that three things are required to the nature of a lie: (1.) There must be an untruth and falseness in the thing; (2.) This untruth must be known to be so, he must be conscious to himself that it is false; (3.) He must have an intent and purpose to utter this falsehood with a desire or design to deceive another by it. Augustine makes eight sorts of lies, but the schoolmen reduce all to three: 1. Is jocosum, the sporting lie; 2. Is officiosum, the helpful lie; 3. Is perniciosum, the pernicious and hurtful lie.

(1.) First, There is mendacium jocosum, the sporting lie; and this is when men will lie and tell untruths to make men sport, to make men merry. Of this sin the prophet Hosea complains, chap. 7:3, 'They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.' Courtiers frame fictions, and tell ridiculous stories to delight princes. Among many courtiers loud lies are esteemed ornaments and elegancies of speech; and none are accounted so sweet and pleasant in their discourse as those that can tell the most pleasing lies; but such mirth-mongers and mirth-makers may do well to remember that such kind of mirth will bring bitterness in the end. If for 'every idle word that men shall speak, they must give an account in the day of judgment,' Mat 12:36, then surely much more for every lying word. And if foolish talking and jesting be condemned, then surely lying talking and jesting shall be much more condemned, if not here, yet in the great day, when all lying jesters shall hold up their hands at Christ's bar. Now were there none within nor without the walls of London that were guilty of merry lies, of sporting lies? But,

(2.) Secondly, There is mendacium officiosum, the officious lie, the helpful lie; and that is when a man lies to help himself or others at a pinch, at a dead lift. When men lie, either to prevent some danger they fear, or else to bring about some good they desire, then they tell an officious lie. Thus the Egyptian midwives lied, and thus Rahab lied, and thus the old prophet lied, who, contrary to the command of God, persuaded the man of God to go back and eat bread with him under the pretence of a divine revelation, Exo 1:15-20; Jos 2:1-9; 1Ki 13:14-27. And thus Jacob told his father an officious threefold lie, Gen 27:19, but he hardly ever had a merry day, a good day after it; for God followed him with variety of troubles, and his sorrows, like Job's messengers, came posting in one after another, even to his dying day, that both himself and others might see what bitterness is wrapped up in officious lies. Solon, reproving Thespis the poet for lying, Thespis answered him, That it was not material, seeing it was but in sport; then Solon, beating the ground with his staff, said, If we commend lying in sport, we shall find it afterwards in good earnest. In all our bargains and dealings let us make it our wisdom and our work to remember, 'That we must not do evil, that good may come,' Rom 3:8; yea, we must not tell a lie to save all the souls under heaven. The Priscillianists in Spain, a most pestilentious sect, taught in Augustine's time that it was lawful to lie for the helping of a good cause, and for the propagating of the gospel, and for the advantage of religion. But Augustine confuted them, and stoutly asserts in two books that we are not to tell an officious lie, to tell a lie for no hurt but for good, though it were to save all the world. 'Will ye speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?' saith Job, chap. 13:7, to his friends. A man may as well commit fornication with the Moabites to draw them to our religion, or steal from the rich to give to the poor, as lie to do another man a good turn. Nepos reporteth of Epaminondas,

a nobleman of Thebes, and a famous warrior, that he would never lie in jest nor in earnest, either for his own or another's gain. This refined heathen will one day rise in judgment against such kind of Christians who take a great pleasure in officious lies. Now were there none within or without the walls of London that delighted themselves in officious lies? But,

(3.) Thirdly, and to come closer to our work, There is mendacium perniciosum, the pernicious and hurtful lie; and this of all lies is the worst, Gen 39:13-20, and 2Ki 5:22-23. When men will lie out of a design to hurt, to cheat, to defraud, or to make a prey of those they deal with, this is the sorest of all lies. Now, how rampant was this sort of lying among all sorts of citizens before London was in flames! What a common trade of lying did many, I say not all, drive in their buying and selling! The trade of lying was got into every trade, as if there had been no living but by lying. Many sellers had their lies to set off their commodities. It is good, it is very good, it is special good, it is the best of its kind, when it was naught, very naught, yea, stark naught: of this sort there are none so good in the city, when their consciences told them that they had much better in their own shops; that their commodity cost them so much, and that they could not abate, nor would not abate anything of that price they had pitched, though it were to their own father or mother; and yet, rather than they would lose a good customer, they presently agree at a lower price. And so when poor workmen came to their shops, and offered their commodities to sell, being forced thereunto for the relief of themselves and their miserable families, they slighted their commodities, telling them that they had no need of them, and that they had much of those commodities upon their hands already, and that they had no way to vend them; and all to beat down the price, and to make a prey of their pressing necessity; and all this when they wanted those very commodities, and had more vend for them than they knew how to supply. Now, as the seller abounded with his lies, so the buyer had his lies too, and all to bring down the price: It is naught, it is naught, it is very naught, saith the buyer. I will not give you your price, and yet gives it before he goes out of the shop or warehouse. I have bought as good, yea, better for a lower price than what I offer you, saith the buyer, when yet he had never bought of that commodity before. Use me well, saith the buyer, and you shall have my custom another time, when in his heart he resolves never to come into the seller's shop more. Ah, London! London! it is these lies and liars that have made thee desolate, and that have laid thy glory in the dust. O sirs! a man were better be a loser than a liar; a man were better, much better, to keep his commodity than to sell his conscience with his commodity. We hate the Turks for selling of Christians for slaves; and what shall we then think of those citizens, who by lying sell themselves and their precious souls for half a crown, yea, oftentimes for a penny? I have read that there was a time when the Romans did wear jewels on their shoes; but liars do worse, for they trample that matchless jewel, viz., their precious souls, under feet. Doubtless the lies that were told in London, and the liars that lived in London, did more than a little help on the ruin of London. Now, that you may the better read and understand the righteousness of God in his highest acts of severity against lies and liars, premise with me briefly these four things:—

[1.] First, That lying is a very great sin. It is a transgression not of one, but of many of the royal laws of heaven: Lev 19:11, 'Ye shall not lie one to another;' Zec 8:16, 'Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour;' Eph 4:25, 'Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' In the body of man one member will not lie to another; the hand will not lie, in telling what it toucheth; the tongue will not lie, in telling what it tasteth; the eye will not lie, in telling what it seeth; but every member is a true witness to another, a

true witness to his neighbour: and so it should be both in the politic body and in the mystical body of Christ, seeing we are members one of another. Every one should speak the truth with his neighbour. One member in the natural body will not mock another, nor make a fool of another; and why then should one Christian by lying mock another, or make a fool of another? Tremellius translates it thus: *Ne fatuum agito*, Do not play the fool with him. For certainly he is the veriest fool who by lying thinketh to make a fool of another: Col 3:9, 'Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.' God's commands are not like those that are easily reversed, but they are like those of the Medes, that cannot be changed, Dan 6:1-28. To act or run cross to God's express command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1Ki 13:1-34. It is a dangerous thing for a man to neglect one of his commands, who by another is able to command him into nothing, or into hell. What God commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying, or delaying, or disputing the difficulties that attend it. The great God will not endure to be called to an account by the poor creature concerning his royal commands; but expects that with all readiness and cheerfulness we should obey what he requires, even when the reason of our obedience is hid from our eyes; for then grace shines most transparently and gloriously, Gen 22:1-24. I have read of one Johannes Abbas, who being commanded by his confessor to go some miles every day to water a dry stick, which he accordingly did out of a pure respect to the command of his superior, without disputing the reason of it. Oh, how much more then should we readily obey divine commands, which are all holy, spiritual, just, and good, considering the authority, sovereignty, and majesty of the great God, without disputing the reasons of our obedience; for let a man's reasons, though never so many and weighty, be put into one scale, and God's absolute command weighed against them in the other, the man may well write *tekel*, 'They are weighed in the balance, and found too light,' Dan 5:27. O sirs! (Psa 103:20,) 'the angels that excel in strength do his commandments;' and shall the peasant scorn that work in which the prince himself is engaged? The commands of God, both in the Old and New Testament, lie fair and full against lying; and therefore no wonder if God revenge the habitual breach of them in flames of fire. The Holy Ghost in the Hebrew tongue calleth a lie *aven*, which also signifieth iniquity, implying that all lies are iniquity, and that all iniquity is after a sort included in a lie, which doth sufficiently evidence that lying is no small sin. I might further argue thus, that which is contrary to God, who is the choicest and the chiefest good, yea, who is goodness and truth itself, that must needs be the greatest evil: but lying is contrary to the nature, essence, and being of God. Witness the description that he gives of himself, both in the Old and New Testament: Exo 34:6, 'And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.' So Moses in his song, 'He is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.' Deu 32:4. So Isaiah, 'He who blesseth himself in, the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth,' Isa 65:16. So the psalmist, 'Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth,' Psa 31:5. Again, 'Thou, O Lord, are plenteous in mercy and truth,' Psa 86:15. So in the New Testament, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar,' Rom 3:4. Again, 'They themselves shew how ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God,' Acts 14:15. Though God can make a world with a word of his mouth, Gen 1:1-31, and mar a world with a word of his mouth, chap. 6, yet he can neither die nor lie: Tit 1:2, 'In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;' yea, it is impossible for God to lie: Heb 6:18, 'That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.' Now by all these plain pregnant

texts it is most evident that lying is most opposite and contrary to the very nature, essence, and being of God; and therefore no wonder if the anger and wrath of God rises high against it. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, That pernicious lies and liars are very destructive to all human societies, kingdoms, and commonwealths. Lying destroys all society, all commerce and converse among the sons of men. Man, as the philosopher observeth, is ζῷον πολιτικόν, a sociable creature. Speech is the means whereby men have society and commerce one with another. Now lying perverts that order which the God of truth hath appointed to be among the sons of men. It is the will and pleasure of God that the sons of men, conversing together, should by their words and speeches and discourses impart and communicate their minds, designs, intentions, and meanings one to another, for the mutual good of one another, and for the profit and benefit of the whole. Now if there be nothing in men's words but lying, deceit, and fraud, instead of truth, what can follow but confusion and desolation? When the language of men was confounded, so that one could not tell what another spake, then presently followed the dissolution of their combination; for the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth, and they left off to build the city, Gen 11:7-8. When one asked brick, saith a Rabbin, another brought clay, and then they fell together by the ears, and one dashed out the other's brains; and by this means their communion was dissolved, and God brought on them the evil which they sought to prevent, ver. 4. But surely a lying tongue is a far worse enemy to society than an unknown tongue; and much better it is for a man to have no society at all, than with such as he cannot believe what they say, or if he do, he shall be sure to be deceived by them. Concerning such we may well take up the words of Jacob: 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united,' Gen 49:6. And pray with David: 'Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue,' Psa 120:2. Jeremiah did so loathe and abominate the society of liars, that he had rather live in a wilderness than live among them, or have anything to do with them, Jer 9:1-6. Liars destroy that communion and society that by the law of God, nature, and nations they ought to preserve and maintain. Lying dissolves that mutual trust that we should have with one another; for hereby all contracts, covenants, and intercourse of dealings between man and man, which is, as it were, the life of the kingdom or commonwealth, are quite overthrown. When men make no conscience of lying, nor of keeping their word any further than either fear of loss or force of law compelleth them, all civil communion is at an end. There can be no trust where there is no truth, nor no commerce with those that cannot be trusted. The Scythians had a law, that if any man did, duo peccata contorquere, bind two sins together, a lie and an oath, he was to lose his head, because this was the way to take away all faith and truth among men. Had this law been put in execution in London, I have reason enough to fear that many citizens would have lost their heads long before they had lost their houses by the late dreadful fire. Now, seeing that pernicious lying, a course, a trade of lying, is so destructive to human society, why should we wonder to see the Lord appear in flaming fire against it? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider, That lying is a sin that is most odious and hateful to God; yea, a sin that makes men odious and hateful to him. Lying is repugnant unto God; for God is ψευδής one that cannot lie, Tit 1:2. He is ὁ Θεὸς ἀληθείας, the God of truth, Isa 65:16, and therefore lying cannot but be odious to him. God is said not only to forbid a lie, but to hate a lie. A lie, it is an abomination. Now we abominate that which is contrary to our natures. Amongst those things that are an abomination to the Lord, a lying tongue is reckoned: Pro 6:16-17, 'These six things doth the Lord hate: yea,

seven are an abomination to him: a proud look, a lying tongue,' or as the Hebrew runs, 'a tongue of lying,' that is, a tongue that hath learned the trade, and can do it artificially; a tongue that is accustomed to lying, a tongue that is delighted in lying. So Pro 6:19, 'A false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.' Among these seven things abominated by God, lying is twice repeated, to note how great an abomination lying is in the eye and account of God: Pro 12:22, 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;' not only offensive or odious, but abominable. Liars pervert the end for which God created speech, which was to give light to the notions of the mind, and therefore the Lord loathes them, and plagues them in this life with great severity, as you may see in those sad instances of Gehazi, whose lie was punished with a perpetual leprosy upon himself and his posterity, 2Ki 5:20 to the end; and of Ananias and Sapphira, who for their lying were punished with present and sudden death, Acts 5:5-11; and of Haman, who slandering Mordecai and the Jews, and by his lies plotting their ruin, was taken in the same snare that he had laid for them, and both he and his sons hanged upon the same gallows which he had made for innocent Mordecai, Est 3:8-11. The same liar that was feasting with the king one day was made a feast for crows the next day, Est 7:9, and Est 9:13-14. Dreadful are the threatenings that the great God has given out against liars: Psalms 5:6, 'Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing.' Such as lie in jest will, without repentance, go to hell in earnest: Psalms 12:3, 'The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.' God, by one judgment or another, in one way or another, will cut off all flattering lying lips, as a rotten member is cut off from the body, or as a barren tree that is stocked up, that it may cumber the ground no more: Psalms 120:2-4, 'Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee—or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? Sharp arrows of the mighty'—God will retaliate sharp for sharp—'with coals of juniper.' The coals of juniper burn hot and last long, some say a month and more and smell sweet. Now upon these coals will God broil lying lips and a deceitful tongue, pleasing himself and others in the execution of his wrath upon a lying tongue: Pro 19:5, 'A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.' Though men sometimes by lying may escape the displeasure of men, yet they shall never by lying escape the wrath and displeasure of God. Wrath is for that man, and that man is for wrath, who hath taught his tongue the trade of lying: Hosea 12:1, 'Ephraim daily increaseth lies and desolation.' Desolation is the fruit and consequent of lying. Sin and punishment are inseparable companions. They who heap up lies hasten desolation, both upon themselves and the places where they live. Now, if lying be a sin so hateful and odious to God, no wonder if God appears in flaming fire against it. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Lying is a sin against the light and law of nature. It is a sin against natural conscience, and therefore it is that a little child will blush many times when he tells a lie. It was observed of Pomponius Atticus, Cicero's great friend, that he never used lying, neither could he with patience lend his ear to a liar. Tennes, the son of Cynus, who was worshipped as a god, was so strict in judgment that he caused an axe to be held over the witnesses' head to execute them out of hand if they were taken with falsehood or a lie. Among the Scythians, when their priests foretold an untruth, they were carried along upon hurdles full of heath and dry wood, drawn by oxen, and manacled hand and foot, and burnt to death. Aristotle saith, by the light of natural reason, that a lie is evil in itself, and cannot be dispensed withal, it being contrary to the order of nature; for, saith he, we have tongues given us to express our minds and meanings one to another by. Now, if our tongues tell more or less than our minds conceive, it is against nature.² It is said of

Epaminondas, a heathen, that he abhorred mendacium jocosum, a jesting lie. Plutarch calls lying a tinkerly sin, a sin that is both hateful and shameful. Euripides saith, that he is unhappy who rather useth lies, though seemingly good, than truths when he judgeth them evil. To think the truth, saith Plato, is honest; but a filthy and dishonest thing to lie. I could, saith my author, both sigh and smile at the simplicity of some pagan people in America, who having told a lie, used to let their tongues bleed in expiation thereof,—a good cure for the squinancy, but no satisfaction for lying. These heathens will one day rise in judgment against such amongst us as make no conscience of lying. To bring things close, those that lived within and without the walls of London, that were given up to a trade, a course of lying, those persons sinned with a high hand, not only against the light of nature, but also against as clear, as glorious a gospel-light as ever shined round a people since Christ was upon the earth; and therefore no wonder if God hath laid their city in ashes. He that shall seriously dwell upon these four things—viz., (1.) That lying is a very great sin; (2.) That lies and liars are very destructive to all human societies, kingdoms, and commonwealths; (3.) That lying is a sin most hateful and odious to God; (4.) That lying is a sin against the light and law of nature,—he will see cause enough to justify the Lord in that late dreadful fire that has thus been amongst us. But before I close up this particular, give me leave to say, that this trade, this course of lying that brings that sore judgment of fire upon cities and countries, I cannot charge with any clear evidence upon those that did truly fear the Lord, whose habitations were once within or without the walls of London before it was turned into a ruinous heap; and that upon these grounds:—

[1.] First, Because a trade, a course of lying is not consistent with the truth or state of grace, Psa 139:23-24; 1Jn 3:6-10. A trade, a course of drunkenness, of whoring, of swearing, of cursing, is as inconsistent with a state of grace, as a trade, a course of lying is. I know Jacob lied, and David lied, and Peter lied, but none of these were ever given up to a trade of lying, to a course of lying. The best saints have had their extravagant motions, and have sadly miscarried as to particular actions; but he that shall judge of a Christian's estate by particular acts, though notorious bad, will certainly condemn where God acquits: *una actio non denominat*. We must always distinguish between some single evil actions and a serious course of evil actions. It is not this or that particular evil action, but a continued course of evil actions, that denominates a man wicked, as it is not this or that particular good act, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates a man holy. Every man is as his course is; if his course be holy, the man is holy; if his course be wicked, the man is wicked. There is a maxim in logic, viz., That no general rule can be established upon a particular instance; and there is another maxim in logic, viz., That no particular instance can overthrow a general rule. So here, look, as no man can safely and groundedly conclude from no better premises than from some few particular actions, though in themselves materially and substantially good, that this or that man's spiritual estate is good; so, on the other hand, no man ought to conclude, because of some particular sinful actions and extravagant motions, that this or that man's spiritual estate is bad. A trade of lying can never stand with a trade of holiness; a course of lying can never stand with a course of godliness. Though the needle of the seaman's compass may jog this way and that way, yet the bent of the needle will still be northward; so though a Jacob, a David, a Peter may have their particular sinful joggings this way or that way, yet the bent of their hearts will still be God-wards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards. But,

[2.] Secondly, Such as did truly fear the Lord within or without the walls of London, such did in their solemn addresses to the Lord, both together and apart, lament and bewail that trade, that course of lying that was predominant among many that day; and therefore I dare not charge the trade, the course of lying upon their scores. But,

[3.] Thirdly, A lie draws its pedigree from the devil, and such as make a trade of lying, such are certainly Satan's children, 1Ki 22:22; Acts 5:3-10; John 8:44, 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.' 'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it,' Gen 3:1-24. Satan is the father of all sins, as well as the father of lies; but here he is said to be a liar and the father of it, because by lying he first brought sin into the world. Satan began his kingdom by a lie, and by lies he still labours to uphold it. He is the inventor and author of all the lies that be in the world. The devil's breasts, says Luther, are very fruitful with lies. Liars are the devil's children by imitation. There are none that resemble him so much to the life as liars do. They are as like him as if they were spit out of the very mouth of him. Lying is a part of the devil's image. Other sins make men like beasts; but this of lying makes men like devils. Leo, speaking of lying, saith: Totam vim suam in mendacio diabolus collocavit, omniaque deceptionum genera de hoc venenatissimo artis suæ fonte produxit: The devil hath placed his whole strength in lying, and from this most poisoned fountain of his craft hath he brought forth all kinds of deceit. Now upon this account also I dare not charge the trade of lying upon such who feared the Lord within or without the walls of London. Though many that make a profession of Christ are no more like Christ than Michal's image of goats' hair was like David; yet all such as are really united to Christ, they are like to Christ, they bear upon them the image of Christ, they resemble him to the life. Jesus Christ is such a fountain, in which whosoever bathes, and of which whosoever drinks, they shall be sure to be changed into the same likeness from glory to glory, that is, from a lower degree of grace to a higher degree, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2Co 3:18. Such as truly fear the Lord have an image of righteousness and holiness stamped upon them, and do more resemble Christ than Satan, Php 4:22-23; and therefore the trade of lying may not be charged upon them. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Have they not chosen rather to suffer, than by lying either to free themselves from sufferings, or to secure themselves against sufferings? Jerome writes of a brave woman, that being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst; for she was resolved rather to die than to lie. Has not much of this spirit been upon them? and therefore I dare not charge the trade of lying upon them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Such as truly fear the Lord, they hate lying: Psa 119:163, 'I hate and abhor lying.' David hated lying as he hated hell itself. So Pro 13:5, 'A righteous man hateth lying.' Lying is a noisome, stinking weed, and therefore a righteous man abhors to touch it, he hates to come near it, and can by no means endure the scent of it in others, least of all in himself. Justin Martyr, speaking of the persecuted Christians, hath this memorable saying: In nostra est potestate, ut quum inquirimur negemus; sed vivere nolumus mendaciter quicquam loquentes, It is in our power, when we are sought for and examined, to deny what we are, what we believe; but we will not live speaking anything untruly. These blessed souls so hated and abhorred lying, that they would rather die than lie. A lie, saith Plato, is odious not only to the gods, but also to every wise man. Cleobulus, another heathen, affirmeth that every wise prudent man hateth a lie. Erasmus had such an antipathy

against lying, that from his youth he would usually tremble at the sight of a noted liar. Now upon this account also I dare not charge the trade of lying upon their score that truly fear the Lord. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Lying is that sad character and black brand that the Lord hath only put upon wicked and ungodly men: Psa 4:2, 'O ye sons of men,'—ye grandees who are potent at court,—'how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity and seek after leasing?' Psa 58:3, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies;' no sooner could they do anything, but they were doing evil, lisping out lies even as soon as they were born. Isa 30:8-9, 'Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.' Why, what must he write? mark ver. 9, 'That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.' Now upon this account also I dare not charge the trade of lying upon them that feared the Lord in that great city before it was laid in ashes. But,

[7.] Seventhly, A trade of lying is inconsistent with the relation of children: Isa 63:8, 'Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.' God makes this the ear-mark of his people, that they are children that will not lie, Col 3:9. When the heathen philosopher was asked in what things men were most like unto God, he answered, In their speaking of truth. Not lying is one of the choice characters by which the Lord doth difference and distinguish his own peculiar people from other men: Zep 3:13, 'The remnant of Israel shall do no iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth.' In the primitive times this was a common saying, Christianus est, non mentietur, He is a Christian, he will not lie: Rev 14:5, 'And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.' Now upon this account also I dare not charge the trade of lying upon those gracious souls that feared the Lord within or without the walls of London, before it was turned into a ruinous heap. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Liars are reckoned amongst the basest and the worst of sinners that you read of in all the book of God: Lev 19:11, 'Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.' Pro 6:16-19, 'These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination to him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren.' So the apostle Paul, setting down a catalogue of the basest and worst of sinners, he ranks liars in the rear of them: 1Ti 1:9-10, 'Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers, for liars, for perjured persons.' So John numbers them amongst the damned crew that shall be sent to hell, and that must perish for ever: Rev 21:8, 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.' In this catalogue of the damned crew, the 'fearful' are placed in the front, and the 'liars' in the rear. See once more how the Holy Ghost couples liars: Rev 22:15, 'For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' Thus you see in all these scriptures that liars are numbered up among the rabble of the most desperate and deplorable wretches that are in the world; and therefore upon this account also I cannot charge the trade of lying upon them that feared the Lord, whose habitations were once within or without the walls of

London.

8. The eighth sin that brings the judgment of fire, is men's giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh: Jude 1:7, 'Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' In these words there are these three things observable:—

[1.] First, The places punished, and they are Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, which were Admah and Zeboiim, Deu 29:23; Hos 11:8. Hegesippus and Stephanus say that ten cities were destroyed, and some say thirteen cities were destroyed when Sodom was destroyed; but these things I shall not impose upon you as articles of faith. The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them was total, both in respect of the inhabitants, and the places themselves. Their sin was universal, and their punishment was as universal. That pride, idleness, and fulness of bread that is charged upon them by the prophet Ezekiel, did usher in those abominable wickednesses that laid all waste and desolate, Eze 16:49-50.

[2.] Secondly, The sins that brought these punishments—viz., 'The giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh.' The first is, 'Giving themselves over to fornication.' Now the word 'fornication' is not to be taken properly and strictly for that act of uncleanness that is often committed between persons unmarried; but it is here to be taken for all sorts of carnal uncleanness. The heathen thought fornication no vice, and therefore they made it a common custom, and were wont to pray thus: 'The gods increase the number of the harlots.' The second sin that is charged upon them is, 'Their going after strange flesh:' σαρκὸς ἑτέρας, 'another flesh,' as the words in the original run. The apostle in this modest and covert expression, 'Going after strange flesh, or other flesh, or another flesh,' doth hint to us their monstrous and unlawful lusts, that were against the course, light, and law of nature. They gave themselves up to such filthiness as is scarce to be named among men; they went after other flesh than what nature or the God of nature had appointed. The great God never appointed that male and male, but only that male and female should be one flesh; it is impossible that man and man in that execrable act should make one flesh, as man and woman do: Gen 2:21, seq. The flesh of a male to a male must needs be another flesh. The apostle Paul expresseth their filthiness thus, 'For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the women, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly,' Rom 1:26-27. Chrysostom well observes on these words, that 'whereas by God's ordinance in lawful copulation by marriage, two became one flesh, both sexes were joined together in one; by Sodomitical uncleanness the same flesh is divided into two, men with men working uncleanness as with women, of one sex making as it were two.' The Gentiles had left the God of nature, and therefore the Lord in his just judgment left them to leave the order of nature, and so to cast scorn and contempt upon the whole human nature.

Again, there is another sort of pollution by strange flesh, and that is a carnal joining of a man with a beast, which is prohibited: 'Neither shalt thou lie with any beast,' Lev 18:23. Oh what a sink of sin is in the nature of man, the heart of man! And as this pollution is prohibited, so it is punished with death: 'And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death, and ye shall slay the beast,' Lev 20:15. The Lord, to shew the horridness and the heinousness of this beastly sin, commands

that even the poor, harmless, innocent beast, that is neither capable of sin, nor of provoking or enticing man to sin, must be put to death. Oh how great is that pollution that pollutes the very beasts, and that makes the unclean more unclean, and that doth debase the beast below a beast! Now to this sort of pollution the beastly Sodomites had without doubt given up themselves.

[3.] The third thing observable in the words is, the severity of their punishment: 'Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' We commonly say that fire and water have no mercy, and we have frequently experienced the truth of that saying. When God would give the world a proof of his greatest severity against notorious sinners and notorious sins, he doth it by inflicting the judgment of fire. When the Sodomites burned in their lusts one towards another, 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.' 'The Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord;' that is, by an elegant Hebraism, from himself, it being usual with the Hebrews to put the noun for the pronoun, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Now this fiery vengeance came not from any inferior cause, but from the supreme cause, even God himself. This brimstone and material fire that was rained by the Lord out of heaven, was not by any ordinary course of nature, but by the immediate almighty power of God. Doubtless it was the supernatural and miraculous work of the Lord, and not from any natural cause, that such showers, not of water,—as when the old world was drowned,—but of material fire and brimstone, should fall from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah—to which add Admah and Zeboiim, for all these four cities were burned together. God rained, not sprinkled, yea, he rained not fire only, but fire and brimstone for the increase of their torment, and that they might have a hell above-ground, a hell on this side hell. They had hot fire for their burning lusts, and stinking brimstone for their stinking brutishness. They burned with vile and unnatural lusts, and therefore against the course of nature fire falls down from heaven and devours them, and their stinking abominable filthiness is punished with the stench of brimstone mingled with fire. Thus God delights to suit men's punishments to their sins; yea, that temporal fire that God rained out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah was but a forerunner of their everlasting punishment in that lake which burns with fire and brimstone for evermore, Rev 21:8. The temporal punishment of the impenitent Sodomites did but make way to their eternal punishments, as Jude tells us, Rev 21:7. I readily grant that the fire of hell was typified by that fire which fell from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah; but I cannot conceive that the apostle Jude, in the place last cited, doth intend or design to prove that the Sodomites were destroyed by hell-fire; for in the history of Genesis, to which the apostle alludes, there is no mention at all of hell-fire or of eternal fire. And doubtless the example that should warn sinners to repent of their sins, and to turn to the Most High, is to be taken from the history in Genesis. I cannot at present see how Sodom and Gomorrah can be set forth as an example to sinners by suffering the punishment of hell-fire, when the history is wholly silent as to any such fire. Some, to mollify the seeming austerity of that phrase which Jude uses, viz., 'eternal fire,' read the words thus, 'were made an example of eternal fire, suffering vengeance;' by which construction they gather that the fire which hath irreparably destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was a type and figure of that fire of hell, of that eternal fire that is reserved for wicked men, and by which sinners ought to be warned. Others by 'eternal fire' understand the duration of the effects of the first temporal punishment, the soil thereabout wearing the marks of divine displeasure to this very day. Several authors write, that the air there is so infectious, that no creature can live there; and though the apples and other fruit that grow there seem pleasant to the eye, yet if you do but touch them, they presently turn into cinders and ashes. The stinking lake of

asphaltes near to Sodom is left as a perpetual monument of God's vengeance, killing all fish that swimmeth in it, and fowls that fly over it. Others by eternal fire understand an utter destruction, according to that 2Pe 2:6, 'And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow,' that is, utterly destroyed them, 'making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.' God hangs them up in gibbets, as it were, that others might hear and fear, and not dare to do wickedly as they had done.

What though it be said that the fire wherewith these Sodomites were destroyed was eternal, yet there is no necessity to understand it of hell-fire; for even that very fire which consumed those cities may be called eternal, because the punishment that was inflicted on Sodom and Gomorrah by fire was a punishment that should last as long as the world lasted. God resolved those cities should never be rebuilt, but remain perpetual desolations in all generations. Now, in this sense, the word 'eternal' is often used in the Scripture. Again, the fire and brimstone that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah was a type and figure of that eternal fire, or those eternal torments that shall be inflicted upon all impenitent sinners for ever and ever. The sum of all is this, that the Sodomites, by giving themselves over to fornication, and by going after strange flesh, did provoke the Lord to rain hell out of heaven upon them; they did provoke the Lord to rain material fire and brimstone both upon their persons and their habitations. Now give me leave to say, that doubtless the body of the inhabitants of that famous city, which is now laid in ashes, were as free from giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, as any in any part of the nation; yea, more free than many in some parts of the nation; yea, give me leave to say, that I cannot see how these sins that are charged upon the Sodomites can be clearly or groundedly charged upon any of the precious servants of the Lord, that did truly fear him in that renowned city; and my reasons are these:—

[1.] First, Because in all their solemn and secret addresses to the Lord they have seriously lamented and mourned over these crying abominations.

[2.] Secondly, Because men's giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are such high and horrid sins against the light and law of nature, that God commonly preserves his chosen from them. He shall be an Apollo to me that can produce any one instance in the Old or New Testament of any one person that, after real and through conversion, did ever give himself over to fornication, and to go after strange flesh. Aristotle calls beastiality a surpassing wickedness. By the laws of those two emperors, Theodosius and Arcadius, Sodomites were adjudged to the fire. In the Council of Vienna the templars who were found guilty of this sin were decreed to be burnt. And among the Romans, it was lawful for him who was attempted to that abuse to kill him who made the assault. Tertullian brings in Christianity triumphing over paganism, because this sin was peculiar to heathens, and that Christians never changed the sex, nor accompanied with any but their own wives. This and such like, as Tertullian speaks, being not so much to be called offences as monsters, and not to be named without holy detestation by saints, though they be committed without shame by Sodomites. The Saxons, who of old inhabited this land, strangled the adulteress being taken, and then burnt her body with fire, and hanged the adulterer over a flaming fire, burning him by degrees till he died, [Boniface.] Opilius Macrinus, an emperor, caused the body of the adulterer and the whore to be joined together, and so burnt with fire, [Julius Capitolinus.] Aurelianus caused the adulterer's legs to be bound to the boughs of two trees bent together, and then violently being lifted up again, his body was torn asunder. And the

Julian law, among the Romans, punished adultery with death, by cutting off the heads of those that were guilty of that fact. And the Turks stone adulterers to death. Zaleucus, king of the Locrians, ordained that adulterers should have their eyes put out; and therefore, when his son was taken in adultery, that he might both keep the law and be compassionate to his son, he put forth one of his own eyes to redeem one of his son's. I have read of some heathens that have punished this sin with a most shameful death, and the death was this: they would have the adulterer's or adulteress's head to be put into the paunch of a beast, where lay all the filth and uncleanness of it, and there to be stifled to death. This was a fit punishment for so filthy a sin. In old time the Egyptians used to punish adultery on this sort: the man with a thousand jerks with a reed, and the woman with cutting off her nose; but he who forced a free woman to his lusts, had his privy members cut off, [Diodorus.] But,

[3.] Thirdly, Such who give themselves over to fornication, overthrow the state of mankind, while no man knoweth his own wife, nor no wife knoweth her own husband, and while no father knows his own children, nor no children know their own father. Affinities and consanguinities are the joints and sinews of the world; lose these and lose¹ all. Now what affinities or consanguinities can there be when there is nothing but confusion of blood—the son knoweth not his father, nor the father the son? But,

[4.] Fourthly, These expressions of giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, implies—

First, Their making constant provisions for their base lusts, Rom 13:14. Oh the time, the pains, the cost, the charge that such are at to make provision for their unsatiable lusts!

Secondly, It implies an excessive violent spending of their strength beyond all measure and bounds in all lasciviousness and Sodomitical uncleanness. Pliny tells of Cornelius Gallus and Q. Elerius (?) two Roman knights, that died in the very action of filthiness. Theodebert, the eldest son of Glotharius, died amongst his whores; so did Bertrane Ferrier at Barcelona, in Spain; Giachet Geneve of Saluces, (?) who had both wife and children of his own, being carnally joined with a young woman, was suddenly smitten with death; his wife and children wondering why he stayed so long in his study, when it was time to go to bed called him, and knocked at his door very hard, but when no answer was made, they broke open the doors, that were locked on the inner side, and found him lying upon the woman stark dead, and her dead also.³ Claudus of Asses, (?) counsellor of the parliament of Paris, a desperate persecutor of the Protestants, whilst he was in the very act of committing filthiness with one of his waiting-maids, was taken with an apoplexy, which immediately after made an end of him. Many other instances might be produced, but let these suffice.

Thirdly, It implies their impudency and shamelessness in their filthiness and uncleanness. They had a whore's forehead; they proclaimed their lasciviousness before all the world; they were not ashamed, neither could they blush: hence it is that the men of Sodom are said to be sinners before the Lord—that is, they sinned openly, publicly, and shamelessly, without any regard to the eye of God at all, Jer 3:3, and Jer 6:15; Isa 3:10; Gen 13:13. 'Bring them out to us, that we may know them,' Gen 19:5. Oh faces hatcht with impudency! they shroud not their sins in a mantle of secrecy, but proclaim their filthiness before all the world, they had out-sinned all shame: and therefore they gloried in their shame: they were so arrogant and impudent in sinning, that they

proclaimed their filthiness upon the house-top. But,

Fourthly, It implies their resolvedness and obstinacy in sinning in the face of all the terrible warnings and alarms that God had formerly given them by a bloody war, and by the spoiling and plundering of their cities, and by taking away of their victuals—'fulness of bread' was a part of their sin, and now 'cleanness of teeth' is made a piece of their punishment in God's just judgment—and by Lot's admonition and mild opposition, Gen 14:10-12, and Gen 19:11. It is observable, that when they were smitten with blindness, they wearied themselves to find the door. God smote them with blindness, both of body and mind; and yet they continued groping to find the door, being highly resolved upon buggery and bestiality, though they died for it. Oh the hideous wickedness and prodigious madness of these Sodomites, that when divine justice had struck them blind, their hearts should be so desperately set upon their lusts, as to weary themselves to find the door! But what will not Satan's bond-slaves and firebrands of hell do? Sottish and besotted sinners will never tremble when God strikes, Php 2:12. But,

Fifthly, These expressions of giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, implies the delight, pleasure, content, and satisfaction that they took in those abominable practices: Rom 1:32, 'They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations.' 'They had pleasure in unrighteousness,' Isa 66:3; 2Th 2:12; 2Pe 2:13. Luther tells us of a certain grandee in his country, that was so besotted with the sin of whoredom, that he was not ashamed to say, that if he might ever live here, and be carried from one whore-house to another, there to satisfy his lusts, he would never desire any other heaven. This filthy grandee did afterwards breathe out his wretched soul betwixt two notorious harlots. All the pleasure and heaven that these filthy Sodomites look after, was to satisfy their brutish lusts. Hark, scholar, said the harlot to Apuleius, it is but a bitter-sweet that you are so fond of; and this the Sodomites found true at the long run, when God showered down fire and brimstone upon them. But,

Sixthly and lastly, These words of giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, implies their great settled security in those brutish practices. The old world was not more secure when God swept them away with a flood, Gen 6:1-22, than the Sodomites were secure when God rained fire and brimstone out of heaven upon them, Gen 19:14. Mercury could not kill Argus till he had cast him into a sleep, and with an enchanted rod closed his eyes. No more could the devil have hurt these Sodomites, if he had not first lulled them asleep in the bed of security. Carnal security opens the door for all impiety to enter into the soul. Pompey, when he had in vain assaulted a city, and could not take it by force, devised this stratagem in way of agreement; he told them he would leave the siege, and make peace with them, upon condition that they would let in a few weak, sick, and wounded soldiers among them to be cured. They let in the soldiers, and when the city was secure, the soldiers let in Pompey's army. A carnal settled security will let in a whole army of lusts into the soul; and this was the Sodomites' case. To sum up all, those expressions in Jude, (Jude 1:7,) of giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, do imply or take in these six things last mentioned, which things will not stand with the truth of grace or state of grace; and therefore those sins that are specified by Jude cannot be charged with any clear, fair, or full evidence upon the people of God, who did truly fear him within or without the walls of London. But should this treatise fall into any of their hands who have given themselves over to fornication, or to go after strange flesh, then I would say that it very highly concerns all such persons to lay their hands upon their loins, and to say, we are the very men, the sinners, the

monsters that have turned a rich and populous city into a ruinous heap. But,

9. The ninth sin that brings the sore judgment of fire upon a people, is profanation of the Sabbath: Jer 17:27, 'But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath-day, and not bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.' In this memorable scripture you may observe—(1.) A specification of the judgment that God will punish profaners of his Sabbath with, and that is fire; (2.) The specification of the object that this fire shall fall upon, viz., a city, not a town, a village, or any other mean place, but a city, a stately city, a populous city, a trading city, a secure city; (3.) Here is the specification of the city, viz., not every city neither, but Jerusalem, the city of cities, the best of cities, the beloved city, the joyous city, the glorious city, the renowned city, the crowned city, the metropolitan city, the city of God, the wonder of the world, the joy of the whole earth, Isa 52:1; Psa 48:1-8, and Psa 87:3; Jer 22:8; yet God threatens to destroy this Jerusalem with fire and flames for profaning of his Sabbath. But did God only threaten Jerusalem? No, for he executed his threatenings upon it, as you may see in that 2Ki 25:8-10 : 'And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, (which is the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,) came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, to Jerusalem: and he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.' The same you have Jer 52:12-14. The Jews were great profaners of the Sabbath: Neh 13:15-18, 'In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.' Now this is observable, that as they had profaned the Sabbath, so Nebuzar-adan set their temple on fire, and their noblemen's houses on fire, and all the considerable men's houses in Jerusalem on fire on their Sabbath-day. I know Jeremiah saith it was on the tenth day, Jer 52:13, which several of the learned thus reconcile—viz., That on the seventh day, which was their Sabbath, Nebuzar-adan kindled a fire in their habitations, and burnt them all quite down on the tenth. Now Calvin upon the text gives these reasons of God's severity against them for profaning his Sabbath:—(1.) Because it was an easy precept to cease from labour one day in seven, and therefore they that would not herein obey were worthy of all severity, as Adam for eating the forbidden fruit; (2.) Because the Sabbath was a sign of God's people by him peculiarly chosen, and therefore not to rest now was a gross neglect of upholding the memorial of the greatest privilege that ever was bestowed upon mortal men, Exo 31:13, Exo 31:17; (3.) Because the Lord would, by their keeping of a rest now from servile works, draw them to a rest from the servile works of sin, as he rested from the works of creation. To which others add a fourth—viz., That it might always be remembered that the whole world was created by God, that we might acknowledge his infinite power and wisdom herein appearing. And others add a fifth—viz., Because by keeping the Sabbath-day, it being the day wherein all religious duties were done, all the exercises of religion is meant, which if it had been

purely upheld, both princes, nobles, priests, and people should have flourished for ever, and never have known what it was to have their houses set on fire about their ears. Now is not famous London the sad counterpane of desolate Jerusalem? a sore and unquenchable fire hath turned England's metropolis into ashes and rubbish. But, That the Lord may appear most just and righteous in inflicting this dreadful judgment of fire upon those that profaned his Sabbaths in London, consider seriously with me these twelve things:—

(1.) First, That God hath fenced this command more strongly about than he has any other, and all to prevent our transgression of it, and the more effectually to engage us to the keeping of it holy. Now here observe,

[1.] First, It is marked with a memento above all other commands. Exo 20:8, 'Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy,' and that partly because we are so desperately apt and prone to forget it; and partly because none can keep it holy when it comes that do not remember it before it comes; and partly because this is one of the greatest, if not absolutely the greatest, of all the commandments. It is sometimes put for all the ten. It is the synopsis of them all. And partly because the observation of all the commandments depends chiefly upon the observation of this fourth. None walk so much after the Spirit on other days, as they who are most in the Spirit on the Lord's day. There are none that walk so close with God all the six days, as those that keep closest to God on the seventh day. In the due observation of this command, obedience to all the rest is comprised. And partly because this command has least light of nature to direct us to the observation of it; and partly because the forgetting of this duty, and profaning of this day, is one of the greatest sins that a people can be guilty of. It is a violation of all the decalogue at once; it is a sin against all the concernments and commandments of God at once. But,

[2.] Secondly, It is delivered both negatively and affirmatively, which no other command is, to shew how strongly it binds us to a holy observation of it.

[3.] Thirdly, It hath more reasons to enforce it than any other precept—viz., its equity, God's bounty, his own pattern, and the day's benediction.

[4.] Fourthly, It is put in the close of the first, and beginning of the second table, to note that the observation of both tables depends much upon the sanctification of this day.

[5.] Fifthly, It is very considerable also, that this command is more frequently repeated than others of the commands are: Exo 20:26, Exo 14:26, and Exo 24:12; Lev 19:3, and 28:30. God would have Israel know in these scriptures last cited, that their busiest times, as earing and harvest, yea, and the very building of the tabernacle, must give way to this precept.

(2.) Secondly, Consider that God is highly pleased and delighted with the sanctification of his Sabbaths, Jer 17:24-25. Now in this promise he shews that the flourishing estate both of church and state depends greatly upon the sanctification of this day. Two things are observable in this promise. (1.) The duty unto which the promise is made, and that is in Jer 17:24. (2.) Observe the reward that is promised, and that is twofold: [1.] The first concerns the commonwealth and civil state, Jer 17:25, as if he should say, I will maintain the honour and dignity, the wealth and strength, the peace and safety of this nation. [2.] The second blessing that is promised concerns the church, and state of religion, Jer 17:26. As if he should say, My solemn assemblies shall be duly frequented, and I will continue my own worship in the purity, liberty, and power of it. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Consider that all public judgments and common calamities that ever befell the people of God, are imputed by the Holy Ghost to no sin more than to the profanation of the Sabbath, 2Ch 36:17-21, turn to it. So Neh 13:15-18; Eze 22:26-31, 'Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.' Lev 26:31-33, 'And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.' Ay, but what is the reason why God brings those two terrible judgments of fire and sword upon them? The resolution of this question you have in Lev 26:34-35, 'Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.' The land did not rest in your sabbaths, saith the Lord, when ye dwelt upon it. But when it is eased from the wicked weight of such inhabitants, which brought upon it heavy curses, and toiled and tired it out with continual tillage, it shall then rest and be at quiet. According to the law of God, the land should have rested every seventh year, Lev 25:4. But they got out the very heart of the land to spend on their lusts: but, saith God, I will ease the land of such inhabitants, and then it shall in a manner take its recreation, then it shall rest, and take its own pleasure, Lam 1:7. Where there is not a resting from sin, there Sabbaths are not truly kept. Profaning the Sabbath brings most desolating and destroying judgments upon a professing people. The first blow given to the German churches was on the Sabbath-day; for on that day Prague was lost. The Sabbaths were woefully profaned amongst them; their nobility thought it was for their not trimming and beautifying of their churches; but better and wiser men concluded it was for their profaning of the Lord's day. Some are of opinion that the flood began on the Lord's day, from that Gen 7:1-24, they being grown notorious profaners of the Sabbath. The Council of Matiscon, in France, attributed the irruption of the Goths and Vandals to their profanation of the Sabbath. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Consider there are singular blessings which the sanctifying of the Sabbath will crown us with: Eze 20:12, 'Moreover also, I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they may know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.' The singular blessings that the right sanctifying of the Sabbath will bring upon us, are, (1.) Spiritual. They that conscientiously sanctify the Sabbath, they shall see and know the work of God, the work of grace, upon their own souls. There are many precious Christians that have a work of God, a work of grace upon their own souls, who would give ten thousand worlds, were there so many in their hands to give, to see that work, to know that work. Oh! but now they that sanctify the Sabbath, they shall both see and know the work of God upon their own souls! And they shall find the Lord carrying on the work of grace and holiness in their souls; they shall find the Lord destroying their sins, and filling their hearts with joy, and with a blessed assurance of his favour and love: Isa 56:6-7, 'Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold on my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt-offerings

and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.' So Isa 58:13-14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable: and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.' (2.) Now, in the second place, the other blessings that the right sanctifying of the Sabbath will invest us with, are temporal blessings; for so they follow in the scripture last cited: 'And I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth;'—here is honour, and esteem, and safety;—'and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father.' Now the land of Canaan was the inheritance which God promised to Jacob, Gen 28:13, and Gen 48:4. Hereby is noted that comfortable provision that God would make for them that sanctified his Sabbaths. Such as make the Sabbath their delight, they shall never want protection nor provision. God will be a wall of fire about them, and a Canaan to them. But,

(5.) Fifthly, Consider that our Lord Jesus, who is the Lord of the Sabbath, and whom the law itself commands us to hear, did alter it from the seventh day to the first day of the week, which we now keep, Mat 12:8; Deu 18:18-19. For the holy evangelists note that our Lord came into the midst of the assembly on the two first days of the two weeks immediately following his resurrection, and then blessed the church, breathing on them the Holy Ghost: John 20:19-26, 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.' 'And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them, then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.' Look, as Christ was forty days instructing Moses in Sinai what he should teach, and how he should govern the church under the law: so he continued forty days teaching his disciples what they should preach, and how they should govern the church under the gospel: Acts 1:2-3, 'Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.' And it is not to be doubted, but that within those forty days he likewise ordained on what day they should likewise keep the Sabbath; and it is observable that on this first day of the week he sent down from heaven the Holy Ghost upon his apostles: Acts 2:1-4, 'And when the day of the Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.' So that on that day they first began, and ever after continued, the public exercise of their ministry. Christ who was Lord of the Sabbath—Mark 2:28—had a sovereign right to change and alter it to what day he pleased. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Consider that according to the Lord's mind and commandment, and the direction of the Holy Ghost, the apostles in all the Christian churches ordained that they should keep the holy Sabbath upon the first day of the week: 1Co 16:1-2, 'Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.' In which words you may observe these five things.

[1.] First, That the apostles ordained this day to be kept holy; therefore it is of a divine institution.

[2.] Secondly, That the day is named the first day of the week; therefore not the Jewish seventh, or any other.

[3.] Thirdly, Every first day of the week, which sheweth its perpetuity.

[4.] Fourthly, That it was ordained in the churches of Galatia, as well as of Corinth, and he settled one uniform in all the churches of the saints; therefore it was universal: 1Co 14:33, 'For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.'

[5.] Fifthly, That there should be collections for the poor on that day, after the other ordinances were ended. Now why should the apostles require collections to be made on the first day of the week, but because on that day of the week the saints assembled themselves together in the apostles' time? And in the same epistle he protesteth, that he delivered them no other ordinance or doctrine but what he had received from the Lord: 1Co 11:23, 'For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread:' 1Co 14:37, 'If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.' Now mark, he wrote to them, and ordained among them to keep their Sabbath on the first day of the week, therefore to keep the Sabbath on that day is the very commandment of the Lord. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Consider the apostles on that day ordinarily dispensed the holy ordinances, John 20:19-26, Acts 20:7, 'And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.' 1Co 16:1-2, and 1Co 11:23. But,

(8.) Eighthly, Consider such things as are named the Lord's in Scripture, are ever of the Lord's institution: as 'the word of the Lord,' 1Ti 6:3, 'the cup of the Lord,' 1Co 11:27; 'the supper of the Lord,' 1Co 11:20; and so 'the Lord's day': Rev 1:10, 'I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' Now why does John call it the Lord's day, but because it was a day known to be generally kept holy, to the honour of the Lord Jesus, who rose from death to life upon that day, throughout all the churches which the apostles had planted, which St John calls the Lord's day, that he might the better stir up Christians to a thankful remembrance of their redemption by Christ's resurrection from the dead? But,

(9.) Ninthly, Consider that a right sanctifying of the Sabbath is one of the best signs in the Bible that God is our God, and that his sanctifying work is passed in power upon us: Eze 20:20, 'And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.' So Exo 31:13, 'Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths shall ye keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.' Look, as circumcision and the passover were signs that the Jews were in covenant with God; so likewise was the Sabbath, Eze 31:13; and because it was a sign of the covenant between God and them. Exo 31:16, 'Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout the generations for a perpetual covenant.' God tells them that they must observe it for a perpetual covenant; and hence it was that when they violated the Sabbath, God accounted it the violation of the covenant between him and them. The sanctifying of the Sabbath in the primitive times was the main character by which sincere Christians were differenced from others; they judged of men's sanctity by their sanctifying

of the Sabbath. And, indeed, as there cannot be a greater argument or evidence of a profane heart than the profaning the Sabbath, so there cannot be a greater argument or evidence of a gracious heart than a right sanctifying of the Sabbath. But,

(10.) Tenthly, Consider a right sanctifying of the Sabbath will be a most sure and certain pledge, pawn, and earnest of our keeping of an everlasting Sabbath with God in heaven: Heb 4:9, 'There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God'—Gr. 'A sabbatism, an eternal rest, a Sabbath that hath no evening.' Now mark, if this Sabbath be a sign and pledge of heaven, then we must keep it till we come there. For if we lose the pledge of a benefit, we lose the evidence of that benefit whereof it is a pledge. A man that is in the Spirit on the Lord's day, Rev 1:10, he is in heaven on the Lord's day. There cannot be a more lively resemblance of heaven on this side heaven than the sanctifying of the Sabbath in a heavenly manner. What is heaven but an eternal Sabbath? And what is a temporal Sabbath but a short heaven, a little heaven on this side heaven? Our delighting to sanctify God's Sabbath on earth gives full assurance to our faith, grounded upon God's infallible promise that we shall enter into God's eternal rest in heaven; for so runs the promise: Isa 58:14, 'Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' The former part of the verse relates to earthly blessings; but these words, 'I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father,' that is, with a heavenly inheritance; for what is the heritage of Jacob, but Canaan in the type and heaven itself in the antitype? But should I thus sanctify the Sabbath, should I be sure of going to heaven? Yes; for so it roundly follows in the next words, 'The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' But,

(11.) Eleventhly, Consider, that of all days God hath put the highest honour upon his Sabbaths, by appointing his precious ordinances in a special manner to be used on those days. The Sabbath is a gold ring, and the ordinances are as so many costly sparkling diamonds in that ring. All the works of the new creation are commonly wrought on this day. This is the joyful day wherein ordinarily God gives spiritual sight to the blind, and spiritual ears to the deaf, and spiritual tongues to the dumb, and spiritual feet to the lame. That Exo 12:42, is here applicable. It is a night to be much observed to the Lord, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. Those that are new born are commonly new born on this day; and therefore it is a day to be much observed to the Lord. Those that are converted are ordinarily converted on this day; and therefore it is that day of the Lord that ought to be observed by all the converted Israel of God. Those that are edified are commonly most edified on this day. Oh the sweet communion! oh the choice converse! oh the singular discoveries! oh the blessed manifestations! oh the excellent enjoyments that Christ vouchsafes to his people on this day! Oh the discoveries of grace! oh the exercise of grace! oh the increase of grace, the progress in grace! oh the comforts of grace that God vouchsafes to his chosen on this day! Experience shews that the right sanctifying of the Sabbath is a powerful means under Christ to sanctify us, and to increase our faith, and raise our hope, and inflame our love, and to kindle our zeal, and to enlarge our desires, and to melt our hearts, and to weaken our sins. But,

(12.) Twelfthly and lastly, Consider this, that a right sanctifying of the Sabbath will cross Satan's grand design, it will spoil his plot, his masterpiece. Satan is a deadly enemy to the right sanctifying of the Sabbath. Witness the many temptations that many Christians are more troubled with on this day than they are on any other day in the whole week; and witness the many vain, wandering, and

distracting thoughts that many precious Christians are more afflicted with on this day than they are on all the days of the week beside; and witness that high and hot opposition that he in his instruments makes against the strictest observers of that day, Rev 2:10; and witness his constant prompting and spurring such on to the profanation of the Sabbath, whose examples are most dangerous and encouraging to wicked men, as magistrates, ministers, parents, and masters, &c.; and witness his strong endeavours, constant attempts, crafty devices, and deep policies that he has made use of in all the ages of the world, to keep people off from a religious observation of the Sabbath; yea, and to make them more wicked on that day than on any other day of the week—may I not say than on all other days of the week? I have been the longer upon this ninth particular, partly because of the weightiness of it, and partly to encourage the reader to a more close and strict observation of the Sabbath, and partly to justify those that are conscientious observers of it, and partly to justify the Lord in turning London into ashes for the horrible profanation of his day. The Sabbath-day is the queen of days, say the Jews. The Sabbath-day among the other days is as the Virgin Mary among women, saith Austin. Look, what the phoenix is among the birds, the lion among the beasts, the whale among the fishes, the fire among the elements, the lily among the thorns, the sun among the stars, that is the Sabbath-day to all other days; and therefore no wonder if God burn such out of their habitations who have been profaners of his day. Ah London! London! were there none within nor without thy walls that made light of this institution of God, and that did offer violence to the queen of days by their looseness and profaneness, by their sitting at their doors, by their walking in Moorfields,² by their sportings and wrestlings there, and by their haunting of alehouses and whorehouses, their tossing of pots and pipes, when they should have been setting up God and Christ and religion in their families, and mourning in their closets for the sins of the times, and for the afflictions of poor Joseph? How did the wrath and rage of king Ahasuerus smoke against Haman, when he apprehended that he would have put a force upon the queen! Est 7:8-10. And why then should we wonder to see the wrath of the Lord break forth in smoke and flames against such a generation, that put a force upon his day, that profaned his day, the queen of days? Ah sirs! you have greatly profaned and abused the day of the Lord; and therefore why should any marvel that the Lord has greatly debased you, and laid your glory in dust and ashes? In these late years how has profaneness, like a flood, broke in upon us on the Lord's-day! and therefore it highly concerns all the profaners of the day of the Lord to lay their hands upon their hearts, and to say, The Lord is righteous, the Lord is righteous, though he has laid our habitations desolate. Who is so great a stranger in our English Israel as not to know that God was more dishonoured on the Sabbath-day, within and without the walls of London, than he was in all the other six days of the week? and therefore let us not think it strange that such a fire was kindled on that day as has reduced all to ashes. What antic habits did men and women put on, on this day! what frothy, empty, airy discourses and intemperance was to be found at many men's tables this day! how were alehouses, stews, and Moorfields filled with debauched sinners this day! No wonder then if London be laid desolate. Now this abominable sin of open profaning the Sabbaths of the Lord, I cannot with any clear evidence charge upon the people of God that did truly fear him within or without the walls of London. For, first, They did lament and mourn over the horrid profanation of that day. Secondly, I want eyes at present to see how it will stand, either with the truth of grace, or state of grace, for such as are real saints to live in the open profanation of God's Sabbaths. Thirdly, Because an ordinary profaning of the Lord's Sabbaths is as great an argument of a profane heart as any that can be found in the whole book of God. Fourthly, Because

Sabbath-days are the saints' market-days, the saints' harvest-days, the saints' summer-days, the saints' seed-days, and the saints' feasting-days, Pro 10:5, and 17:16; Isa 25:6; and therefore they will not be such fools as to sleep away those days, much less will they presume to profane those days, or to toy and trifle away those days of grace. Fifthly, What singular thing do they more than others, if they are not strict observers and conscientious sanctifiers of the Lord's-day? Mat 5:47. Sixthly and lastly, Of all the days that pass over a Christian's head in this world there are none that God will take such a strict and exact account of as of Sabbath-days; and therefore it highly concerns all people to be strict observers and serious sanctifiers of that day. Now, upon all these accounts, I cannot charge such throughout saints as lived within or without the walls of London with that horrid profanation of the Sabbath as brought the late fiery dispensation upon us, and that turned a glorious city into a ruinous heap. Whatever there was of the hand of man in that dreadful conflagration, I shall not now attempt to divine, but without a peradventure, it was Sabbath-guilt which threw the first ball that turned London into flames and ashes. When fire and smoking was on mount Sinai, God was there, Exo 19:18; but when London was in flames and smoke, Sabbath-guilt was there. Doubtless all the power of Rome and hell should never have put London into flames, had not London's guilt kindled the first coal. But, We come now to the use and application of this important point.

10. Tenthly, The profaneness, lewdness, blindness, and wickedness of the clergy, of them in the ministry, brings the judgment of fire, and provokes the Lord to lay all waste before him: Zep 3:4-6, 'Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant.' Their prophets and priests were rash, heady, and unstable persons,—they were light, faithless men, or men of faithlessness, as the Hebrew runs. They were neither faithful to God, nor faithful to their own souls, nor faithful to others' souls. They invented and feigned prophecies of their own, and then boldly maintained them, and imposed them upon their hearers; they were profane and light in their carriages, they fitted their doctrines to all fancies, humours, parties, and times; they betrayed their trust, they betrayed the lives of men into the hand of divine justice, and the souls of men into the hands of Satan; they polluted the sanctuary, they polluted the holy things of God, by managing of his worship and service in a profane carnal way, and with a light, slight, perfidious spirit, and by perverting the true sense of the law in their ordinary teaching of the people. They did violence to the law, or they contemned, removed, or cast away the law, as the original runs: the Hebrew word here used signifies also to ravish, Psa 50:17. Their prophets and priests did ravish the law of God by corrupting the law, and by putting false glosses upon it, and by turning of it into such shapes and senses as would best suit the times, and please the humours of the people. Now for these abominations of their prophets and priests, God denounces a dreadful woe against the city of Jerusalem in ver. 1, 'Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city.' Lam 4:11-13, 'The Lord hath accomplished his fury: he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundation thereof. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquity of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her.' God sent a consuming flame into Jerusalem, which did not only burn the tops of their houses, but also the foundations themselves, leaving no mark whereby they might know where their houses stood, nor any hopes of building them up again. But why did God kindle such a devouring fire in Jerusalem, which was one of the world wonders, and a city that was not

only strong in situation and building, and deemed impregnable, but a city that was God's own seat, the palace of his royal residence; yea, a city that the Lord had for many years, to the admiration of all the world, powerfully and wonderfully protected against all those furious assaults that were made upon her by her most potent and mighty adversaries? Ans. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, as God himself testifies, who can neither die nor lie. You may see this further confirmed, if you please but seriously to ponder upon these scriptures, Eze 22:25-26, Eze 22:31; Jer 23:11, Jer 23:14-15, Jer 23:39-40. Look, as the body natural, so the body politic cannot be long in a good constitution, whose more noble and essential parts are in a consumption. The enormities of ministers have the strongest influence upon the souls and lives of men, to make them miserable in both worlds. Their falls will be the fall and ruin of many; for people are more prone to live by examples than by precepts, and to mind more what the minister does than what he says: *Præcepta docent, exempla movent*, Precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. The complaint is ancient in Seneca, that commonly men live, not *ad rationem*, but *ad similitudinem*. The people commonly make the examples of their ministers the rules of their actions; and their examples pass as current among them as their prince's coin. The common people are like tempered wax, easily receiving impressions from the seals of their ministers' vices. They make no bones of it to sin by prescription, and to damn themselves by following the lewd examples of their ministers. The vulgar unadvisedly take up crimes on trust, and perish by following of bad examples. I will leave the serious reader to make such application as in prudence and conscience he judges meet. But,

11. Eleventhly, Sometimes the sins of princes and rulers bring the fiery dispensations of God upon persons and places: Jer 38:17-18, Jer 38:23, 'Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel, If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and thou shalt live, and thine house. But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shalt be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon, and thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire;' or, as the Hebrew runs, 'thou shalt burn this city with fire;' that is, thou, by thy obstinacy, wilt be the means to procure the burning of this city, which by a rendition of thyself thou mightest have saved. So Jer 34:2, Jer 34:9-11, compared with Jer 37:5-21. Judges and magistrates are the physicians of the state, saith B[ishop] Lake in his sermon on Ezra, and sins are the diseases of it. What skills it whether a gangrene begins at the head or the heel, seeing both ways it will kill, except this be the difference, that the head being nearer the heart, a gangrene in the head will kill sooner than that which is in the heel; even so will the sins of great ones overthrow a state sooner than those of the meanest sort, 2Sa 24:9-18. But,

12. Twelfthly, The abusing, mocking, and despising of the messengers of the Lord is a sin that brings the fiery dispensation upon a people, 2Ch 36:15-19; Mat 23:34, Mat 23:37-38, 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.' Here is used the present for the future, to note the certainty of the desolation of their city and temple, and their own utter ruins; and about forty years after the Romans came and burned their city and temple, and laid all waste before them. They had turned the prophets of the Lord out of all, and therefore the Lord resolves to turn them out of all. O sirs! will you please seriously to consider these six things: (1.) That all faithful, painful, conscientious ministers or messengers of the Lord, are great instruments in the hand of the Lord for stopping or

stemming the tide of all profaneness and wickedness in a land, which bring all desolating and destroying judgments upon cities and countries, Isa 58:1. (2.) For converting souls to God, for turning poor sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ, Acts 26:15-18, and Dan 12:3. (3.) For promoting of religion, holiness, and godliness in men's hearts, houses, and lives, which is the only way under heaven to render cities, countries, and kingdoms safe, happy, and prosperous. (4.) For the weakening of the kingdom of Satan and antichrist, the weakening of whose kingdom is the glory, safety, and security of the land. (5.) For the turning away of wrath, either felt or feared. (6.) For the bringing down of the greatest, weightiest, and noblest of temporal favours and blessings upon cities and countries, as might be proved from scores of scripture, Jas 5:16-18. And therefore never marvel if God revenges the abuses done to them in flames of fire. It was on a Sabbath that the public liberty of the painful, faithful ministers of London was terminated and came to an end, and it was on a Sabbath that London was burned.

13. Thirteenthly, Shedding of the blood of the just is a crying sin, that brings the judgment of fire, and lays all desolate: Eze 35:4-5, Eze 35:7, 'I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred,' or hatred of old, 'and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end. Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out, and him that returneth;' Eze 35:10, 'Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, whereas the Lord was there;' Eze 35:11, 'Therefore as I live, saith the Lord God, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy, which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them: and I will make myself known among them when I have judged thee.' Eze 35:12, 'And thou shalt know that I am the Lord, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume or devour:' Eze 35:13, 'Thus with your mouth you have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.' Eze 35:14, 'Thus saith the Lord God, When the whole earth rejoiceth I will make thee desolate:' Eze 35:15, 'As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it: and they shall know that I am the Lord.' The Edomites were deadly enemies to the Israelites—their hatred was old and strong, and active against them; and they took hold on all occasions wherein they might express their rage and cruelty against them, both in words and works. And therefore when the Babylonians took Jerusalem, they cried, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof, Psa 137:7. When the Babylonians entered Jerusalem, many of the Jews fled to the Edomites for succour, they being their brethren; but instead of sheltering them, they cruelly destroyed them, and greatly insulted over them, and were glad of all opportunities wherein they might vent all their rage and malice against them, that so they might the better ingratiate themselves with the Babylonians. Now for these cruel practices and barbarous severities of theirs towards the poor, afflicted, and distressed Israel of God, God is resolved to bring utter desolation upon them: ver. 3, 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out my hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate:' or as the Hebrew is, Shemamah Umeshammah, desolation and desolation. Now this doubling of the Hebrew word shews the certainty of their desolation, the speediness of their desolation, and the greatness and thoroughness of their desolation: Jer 26:14-`5; see Jer 26:8-9, Jer 26:11, 'As for me, behold, I am in your hand, do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. But know ye for

certain, that if you put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof.' That was good counsel which Tertullian gave Scapula, a pagan persecutor: God will surely make inquisition for our blood, therefore, saith he, if thou wilt not spare us, yet spare thyself; if not thyself, yet spare thy country, which must be responsible when God comes to visit for blood: so Lam 4:11-13, 'The Lord hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her.' The prophets and the priests enraged the people against them, and engaged the civil power against the just and the innocent, to the shedding of their blood. But this innocent blood could not be purged away but by fire. To shed the blood of the just is a most crying sin, and that for which God has turned the most glorious cities in the world into ashes. Jerome upon the text saith, that the prophets and priests shed the blood of the just in the midst of Jerusalem, by drawing them into error, which is to the destruction of the soul. But Calvin upon the text well observes this cannot stand, because just men are not so destroyed; but the wicked only, that take no heed to their false teaching. Therefore, saith he, the true prophets of God are meant by the just, for whom they had prisons, dungeons, and stocks to put them into; and sometimes stoning, or otherwise tumults, which they stirred up among the people, whereby their blood was shed.

Rome has much of the blood of the saints upon her skirts, and for this very sin she shall be utterly burnt with fire, as you may see at large, if you will please to read Rev 18:1-24 at your leisure, Rev 16:6, Rev 17:6, Rev 19:2, and Rev 18:24. Though Rome was a cage of unclean birds, and full of all manner of abominations, yet the sin that shall at last burn her to ashes, is the blood of the saints. Mark, though the people of God are in Babylon, and may partake of her plagues, and fall under the fiery dispensation with her, it is not the sins of the saints, but the sins of Babylon that bring the judgment of fire upon Babylon. Mark, the people of God may live in a city that may be burnt to ashes, and yet their sins may not be the procuring causes of that judgment. Lot lived in Sodom, and had his failings and infirmities as well as other saints, Gen 19:1-38; but it was not his sins that brought the judgment of fire upon that city, but the sins of the citizens, as the Scripture assures us. But you may say, Pray, sir, why is God so severe as to turn stately cities, rich and populous cities, great and glorious cities, into a ruinous heap, for shedding the blood of the just? Ans. Because, next to the blood of Christ, the blood of the just is the most precious blood in all the world. Mark, There are these nine things that speak out the preciousness of the blood of the just:—

[1.] First, Clear and plain scriptures speak out the blood of the saints to be precious: 'He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight.' And so Psa 116:15, 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;' Psa 109:16, Psa 109:31, and Psa 72:14. But,

[2.] Secondly, The cry of their blood reaches as high as heaven, and this speaks it out to be precious blood, Gen 4:10-11. The blood of one Abel had so many tongues as drops, and every drop a voice to cry for vengeance, and the cry of his blood did strongly engage the justice of God to punish it: Rev 16:6, 'Give them blood to drink, for they are worthy.' But,

[3.] Thirdly, God's cursing their blessings, who have shed the blood of his saints, speaks out their blood to be precious blood: Gen 4:10-11, 'And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand.' Now this is added by the way—1. To aggravate the sin of Cain; 2. To shew the fitness of the punishment: it is as if he had said the earth did, as it were, in compassion receive into her bosom that blood which thou didst cruelly and wickedly shed; and therefore out of the earth, which hath sucked in by the pores thereof thy brother's blood, shall spring a curse that shall plague thee for shedding that blood. The earth, which was created for thy blessing and service, shall execute this curse against thee in vengeance, not yielding thee the fruits which otherwise it would have done. As is expressed in Gen 4:12, 'When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength'—Heb., 'It shall not go on to give thee its ability.' This was a second curse, whereby the earth became worse for Cain's sin than it was for Adam's. Now if this curse were not general, yet doubtless it was a particular curse upon Cain's portion, so that wheresoever or whensoever he should till the earth as a husbandman, the earth by its barrenness should upbraid him as a murderer. But,

[4.] Fourthly, God's pouring out of the blood of the wicked as water is poured out upon the ground, to prevent the effusion of his children's blood, speaks out their blood to be precious blood, Isa 43:4-5. At the Red Sea, God made way not only through the sea, but also through the blood of the Egyptians, to preserve the blood and lives of his poor people, Exo 14:1-31. God, to preserve the lives and blood of his people, destroys a hundred fourscore and five thousand of Sennacherib's army by the hand of his angel in one night, Isa 37:36. And you know in Esther's time, Est 9:1-32, how God made way for the preservation of the lives and blood of his people through the blood of Haman, his sons, and the rest of their enemies that hated them. I might give you twenty other scriptures to the same purpose, but enough is as good as a feast. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The strict inquisition that God has made after the blood of the just in all ages of the world, argues the preciousness of their blood: Psa 9:12, 'When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them, he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.' Did not Pharaoh, Ahab, Jezebel, Haman, Herod, Amalek, Moab, Ammon, Sennacherib, &c., find by woeful experience that God did make a strict inquisition after the blood of the just? And so did those men of violence who shed the blood of the just in the primitive times, &c. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The speedy and dreadful vengeance of God upon such as have shed the blood of the just, speaks out their blood to be precious in his eyes: Psa 55:23, 'But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days;' Psa 94:21, Psa 94:23, 'They gather themselves together'—Heb., 'run by troops, as thieves do'—'against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness: yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.' Richard III. and Queen Mary were cruel princes, and shed the blood of the just, and they had the shortest reign of any since the Conquest.

Charles IX. was a great shedder of the blood of the just. He had a deep hand in the massacre of the protestants in Paris, and in other parts of his kingdom he glutted himself with the blood of the just, and gloried greatly in their ruins. In his latter days he was surprised with a great debility and tormenting pains in his body; after a great effusion of blood, which issued out by all the passages of his body, he breathed forth his wretched soul.² Oh the horrid butcheries that were committed

and commanded by this bloody prince his reign, throughout his whole realm! But at last divine vengeance overtook him, and he died wallowing in his own blood, &c. The Duke of Guise, next to the king, had the greatest hand in the massacre of the protestants. He was a most barbarous prince, and at last he falls by barbarous hands; for he being called by [Louis] Revol, secretary to Henry III., to come to the king into his cabinet, as he lifted up the tapestry with one hand to enter, he was charged with swords, daggers, and partisans,⁴ and so died by the hands of murderers. He that had murdered many thousands of the protestants was at last murdered by men of his own religion.

Henry III., king of France, was a most cruel enemy to the protestants, and he was by James Clemmont, a monk, stabbed in the same chamber, and on the same day wherein he had helped to contrive the French massacre. Doubtless God will one day reckon with France for all that protestant blood that they have shed.

Maximinus was a great persecutor of the people of God; he set forth a proclamation, engraven in brass, for the utter abolishing of Christ and his religion; he was at last eaten up of lice. The same judgment befell Philip king of Spain, who swore he had rather have no subjects than Lutheran subjects; and when he had narrowly escaped drowning in a shipwreck, he said he was delivered of God to rout off Lutheranism, which he presently began to do, but God soon cut him off.

Thomas Blavar, one of the privy counsellors of the king of Scots, was a sore persecutor of the people of God in that land; when he lay on his dying-bed he fell into despair, and cried out that he was damned, he was damned: and when the monks came about him to comfort him, he cried out upon them, saying, 'that their masses and other trash would do him no good; for he never believed them, but all that he did was for love of money, and not of religion, not respecting or believing that there was either a God or a devil, a hell or a heaven; and therefore he was damned, there was no remedy but he must go to hell, and in this case without a sign of repentance he died.' A popish magistrate having condemned a poor protestant to death, before his execution he caused his tongue to be cut out, because he should not confess the truth: but the Lord did retaliate it upon him; for the next child he had was born without a tongue.

Cardinal Crescentius [Anno 1552] was a most desperate persecutor of the people of God. He was the pope's ambassador to the Council of Trent, and being one night busy in writing to his master the pope, a huge black dog, with great flaming eyes, and long ears dangling down to the ground, appeared to him in his chamber, and went under the table where he sat. Upon which the cardinal was amazed; but as soon as he had recovered himself, he called his servants to put out the black dog that was come into his chamber; but they looked round about his chambers, and the next chambers, but could find no black dog: upon which the cardinal fell presently sick with a strong conceit, which never left him till his death, still crying out, Drive away the black dog, drive away the black dog, which seemed to him to be climbing up his bed; and in that humour he died.

After the martyrdom of Gregory, the bishop of Spoleta, Flaccus the governor, who was the author thereof, was struck with an angel, and vomited up his entrails at his mouth, and died.³

Mammea Agrippitus, when he was fifteen years old, because he would not sacrifice to their idols, was apprehended at Preneste, and whipped with scourges, and hanged up by the heels, and at last slain with the sword; in the midst of whose torments the governor of the city fell down dead

from the tribunal-seat.

Gensericus, king of the Vandals, an Arian, was a most cruel persecutor of the orthodox Christians; he was possessed of the devil, and died a most miserable death in the year 477.

Herod the Great, who caused the babes of Bethlehem to be slain, hoping thereby to have destroyed Christ, shortly after was plagued by God with an incurable disease, having a slow and slack fire continually tormenting of his inward parts; he had a vehement and greedy desire to eat, and yet nothing would satisfy him; his inward bowels rotted, his breath was short and stinking, some of his members rotted, and in all his members he had so violent a cramp, that nature was not able to bear it, and so, growing mad with pain, he died miserably.

Herod Antipas, who beheaded John Baptist, not long after, falling into disgrace with the Roman emperor, with his incestuous Herodias, the suggester of that murder, they were banished, and fell into such misery and penury that they ended their wretched lives with much shame and misery.

Herod Agrippa was a great persecutor of the saints, Acts 12:1-25; he was eaten up of worms in the third year of his reign, as Josephus observes. He went to Cæsarea to keep certain plays in the honour of Cæsar; the gown he was in, as the same author relates, was a gown of silver wonderfully wrought, and the beams of the sun reflecting upon it, made it so glisten, that it dazzled the eyes of the beholders; and when he had made an end of his starched oration in this his bravery, his flatterers extolled him as a god, crying out, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man, Acts 12:21-23 : whereupon he was presently smitten by the angel of the Lord, and so died with worms that ate up his entrails. The blow the angel gave him was an inward blow, and not so visible to others; and his torments more and more increasing upon him, the people put on sackcloth, and made supplication for him, but all in vain; for his pains and torments growing stronger and stronger every day upon him, they separated his wretched soul from his loathsome body within the compass of five days.²

Caiaphas the high priest, who gathered the council, and suborned false witness against the Lord Christ, was shortly after put out of his office, and one Jonathan substituted in his room, whereupon he killed himself. Not long after Pontius Pilate had condemned our Lord Christ, he lost his deputyship and Cæsar's favour; and being fallen into disgrace with the Roman emperor, and banished by him, he fell into such misery that he hanged himself.

Oh the dreadful judgments that were inflicted upon the chief actors in the ten persecutions! Shall I give you a brief account of what befell them?

Nero, that monster of men, who raised the first bloody persecution, to pick a quarrel with the Christians, he set the city of Rome on fire, and then charged it upon them; under which pretence he exposes them to the fury of the people, who cruelly tormented them, as if they had been common burners and destroyers of cities, and the deadly enemies of mankind; yea, Nero himself caused them to be apprehended and clad in wild beasts' skins, and torn in pieces with dogs; others were crucified, some he made bonfires of to light him in his night-sports. To be short, such horrid cruelty he used towards them, as caused many of their enemies to pity them. But God found out this wretched persecutor at last; for being adjudged by the senate an enemy to mankind, he was condemned to be whipped to death, for the prevention whereof he cut his own throat.

Domitian, the author of the second persecution against the Christians, having drawn a catalogue of such as he was to kill, in which was the name of his own wife and other friends; upon which he was, by the consent of his wife, slain by his own household servants with daggers in his privy-chamber; his body was buried without honour, his memory cursed to posterity, and his arms and ensigns were thrown down and defaced.

Trajan raised the third persecution against the church; he was continually vexed with seditions, and the vengeance of God followed him close. For, first, he fell into a palsy, then lost the use of his senses; afterwards he fell into a dropsy, and died in great anguish.

Adrian being vexed with great and perpetual commotions in his life, died with much anxiety.

Maximinus being declared an enemy by the senate, was killed in his own tent.

Decius, by the Goths, in their first invasion of the empire, with his whole army was cut off.

Valerianus was overcome by the Persians, and made use of by Sapor as a stirrup for his foot when he went to take horse.

Julian, in his height of contempt against Christ, was deadly wounded in battle against the Persians, and throwing his blood in the air, died with that desperate expression in his mouth, *Vicisti tandem Galilæe*.

Valentius, being a great favourer of the Arians, and a great persecutor of the orthodox—the Arians exceeding the heathens in cruelty—was in battle against the Goths in Thracia wounded, and being carried to a house that was near, it was set on fire by the enemy, in which he miserably perished.

Maxentius and his chief officers being put to flight on the other side of the river Tiber, by Constantine, was necessitated to return by a bridge, whereupon he had made devices in a secret way to have drowned Constantine, by which he and those that were with him were drowned in the river; upon which occasion the Christians took occasion to sing that word, Psa 9:16, 'The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hand.' and that word, Psa 7:15, 'He made a pit and digged it, and he himself is fallen into it.'

Dioclesian being sent for by Constantine, upon suspicion, chose rather to poison himself than to see him.

Maximianus Herculeus, endeavouring again to recover his authority, was discovered in his design by his daughter, Constantine's wife: whereupon he was pursued and besieged by Constantine, and was either killed, or during the siege hanged himself, as is diversely reported by several writers.

Maximinus Jovius, through intemperance, becoming corpulent, was smitten with boils in the secret parts, out of which issued abundance of vermin; his physicians were either suffocated by the odious smell of his loathsome disease, or else they were killed by him because they could not cure him. One of his physicians told him that it was God's judgment on him for persecuting the Christians, which no man could cure. At last he fell under such convictions, as forced him to confess that the wrongs and injuries that he had done to the people of God were the cause of that plague; and therefore being struck with terror and horror, gave out edicts that the persecution

should cease, and that churches should be builded, and that in their meetings prayers should be put up for him, as formerly used to be: which edict is to be found in Eusebius. The other tyrant in the east, to wit, Maximinus, who was called Cæsar, had been industrious to invent cruel tortures for the Christians, especially to pull out their eyes; but at last he was defeated, and in a base habit made to hide himself, and afterwards he was pursued by such a sickness which made both his eyes to drop out of his head, by which judgment he was necessitated to confess that the God of the Christians was the only true God, and that he had been mistaken concerning the gods whom he chose to worship; which words were uttered by him when he was even expiring, as Eusebius testifies. By all these dreadful instances, you may run and read that heavy vengeance that has been inflicted upon those who have shed the blood of the just.

Fœlix, Earl of Wurtemberg, was a great persecutor of the saints, and did swear that are he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans: but the very same night wherein he had thus sworn and vowed, he was choked with his own blood. The judgments of God were so famous and frequent upon those that did shed the blood of the saints in Bohemia, that it was used as a proverb among the adversaries themselves, That if any man be weary of his life, let him but attempt against the Picardines—so they called the Christians—and he should not live a year to an end.

Sir Thomas More, once Lord Chancellor of England, was a sworn enemy to the gospel, and persecuted the saints with fire and faggot; and among all his praises he reckons this as the chiefest—that he had been a persecutor of the Lutherans, i.e., the saints. But what became of him? he was first accused of treason, and then condemned, and at last beheaded.

Judge Morgan was a great persecutor of the people of God; but shortly after he had passed the sentence of condemnation upon that virtuous lady, the Lady Jane Grey, he fell mad, and in his mad raving fits, he would continually cry out, 'Take away the Lady Jane, take away the Lady Jane from me!' and in that horror he ended his wretched life.

Drahomiza, after the death of her husband, usurped the government of Bohemia, and was a cruel persecutor of the people of God; but by a righteous hand of God it so fell out, that on that very place where the ministers' bones lay unburied, the earth opened of itself, and swallowed her up alive with her chariot, and those that were in it; which place is now to be seen before the castle of Prague. There is no end of instances of a later date. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The strange, miraculous, and wonderful preservation of the lives and blood of the just, speaks out their blood to be precious blood. Who can sum up the many miracles of divine love, power, wisdom, and care, &c., that God manifested in the preservation of Joseph in the prison, Jeremiah in the dungeon, Daniel in the den, and the three children in the fiery furnace, and not say, Surely the blood of the saints is very precious in the eyes of the Lord? I have read of a certain witch that sent her spirits to kill Ambrose; but they returned her this answer, that God had hedged him in, as he did Job, and therefore they could not touch him, they could not hurt him. Another came with a drawn sword to his bedside to have killed him, but he could not stir his hand, till, repenting, he was by the prayer of Ambrose restored to the use of his hand again. For Luther, saith my author, a poor friar, to stand it out against the pope and all the power of Rome, was a great miracle; and that he should prevail against all that power, was greater; and that after all he should die in his bed, was the greatest of all. There are many thousand instances more of the like

nature, but enough is as good as a feast.

[8.] Eighthly, The spiritual judgments that God hath given such up to, who have shed the blood of the just, speaks out their blood to be precious blood. Oh the dreadful horrors and amazing terrors of conscience that such have been given up to! Take a few instances among the many that might be given. The Vaivod that had betrayed Zegedine, a godly man, professed to Zegedine that he was so haunted with apparitions and the furies of his own conscience, that he could not rest day nor night. Dionysius, a cruel tyrant, a bitter enemy to all good men and good things, was so troubled with fear and horror of conscience, that, not daring to trust his best friends with a razor, he used to singe his beard with burning coals [Cicero.] A sleepy conscience, when awakened, is like a sleepy lion; when he awakes he roars and tears his prey. It is like Prometheus' vulture, it lies ever gnawing. Sin brings a stain and a sting. Horror of conscience meets a man in the dark, and makes him leap in the night, and makes him quake in his sleep, and makes him start in every corner, and makes him think every bush is a man, every man a devil, and every devil a messenger to fetch him quick to hell. By this Theodoric saw the face of a man in the mouth of a fish; Nessus heard the noise of murder in the voice of birds; Saundes(?) ran distracted over the Irish mountains. This made Cain wander, Saul stab himself, Judas hang himself, Arius empty his bowels at the stool, Latomus cry desperately, he was damned, he was damned, and Julian confess that he was conquered. It makes man, the lord of all, to be slave to all. Lord, what is man? Certainly it is better with Evagrius to lie secure on a bed of straw, than to have a turbulent conscience on a bed of down, having curtains embossed with gold and pearl. But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, The shedding of the blood of the just is a sin of so high a cry, and so deep a dye, that for it God is resolved, except men repent, that he will shut them out of the highest heaven, and cast them down to the lowest hell; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together; and therefore certainly the blood of the just is most precious blood. Now, seeing that the blood of the just is such precious blood, who will wonder if God sets such cities and towns and countries into a flame about their ears, upon whose skirts the blood of the just is to be found? Josephus, speaking of the desolation of Jerusalem, saith, Because they have sinned against the Lord God of their fathers, in shedding the blood of just men and innocents that were within thee, even in the temple of the Lord, therefore are our sorrowful sighings multiplied, and our weapons³ daily increased. It was the blood of the just, the blood of the innocents, that turned Jerusalem into ashes.

I have read of one Rabbi Samuel, who six hundred years since writ a tract in form of an epistle to Rabbi Isaac, master of the synagogue of the Jews, wherein he doth excellently discuss the cause of their long captivity and extreme misery, and after that he had proved that it was inflicted for some grievous sin, he sheweth that sin to be the same which Amos speaks of: 'For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes.' The selling of Joseph he makes the first sin; the worshipping of the calf in Horeb, the second sin; the abusing of God's prophets, the third sin; and the selling of Jesus Christ, the fourth sin. For the first, they served four hundred years in Egypt; for the second, they wandered forty years in the wilderness; for the third, they were captives seventy years in Babylon; and for the fourth, they are held in pitiful captivity even till this day. When Phocas, that bloody cut-throat, sought to secure himself by building high walls, he heard a voice from heaven telling him, that though he built his bulwarks never so high, yet sin

within, blood within, would soon undermine all. Shedding the blood of the just is a sin that hath undermined the strongest bulwarks, and that hath blown up, and burnt up, the most glorious cities that have been in the world. And who can tell but that the blood of the just that was shed in the Marian days, might now come up into remembrance before the Lord? For in four years of her reign there were consumed in the heat of those flames two hundred and seventy-seven persons—viz., five bishops, one-and-twenty ministers, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artificers, one hundred husbandmen, servants, and labourers, six-and-twenty wives, twenty widows, nine virgins, two boys, and two infants. I say, who can tell but that the blood of these precious servants of the Lord hath cried aloud in the ears of the Lord for vengeance against that once glorious, but now desolate city? Men of brutish spirits, and that are skilful to destroy, make no more of shedding the blood of the just, than they do of shedding the blood of a swine; but yet this hideous sin makes so great a noise in the ears of the Lord of hosts, that many times he tells the world by his fiery dispensations that it cannot be purged away but by fire. And thus much for the sins that bring the fiery judgment: our way now to the application is plain. THE FIRST PART OF THE APPLICATION 1. To see the hand of the Lord in it. Ten considerations to work to this.

2. To mourn under the sense of so great a judgment.

We come now to the use and application of this important point. The explication of a doctrine is but the drawing of the bow: the application is the hitting of the mark, the white, &c. Is it so, that God is the author or efficient cause of all the great calamities and dreadful judgments that are inflicted upon cities and countries, and, in particular, of that of fire? Then,

Use 1. First, Let us see the hand of the Lord in this late dreadful fire that hath been upon us; for certainly God is the author, permissively at least, he is the great agent in all those terrible judgments that befall persons, cities, and kingdoms, Ruth 1:13, Ruth 1:21; Psa 39:9; 1Sa 3:18. Whosoever or whatsoever be the rod, it is his hand that gives the stroke. The power of bringing judgments upon cities God challengeth to himself: Amo 3:6, 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Whatever the judgment be that falls upon a city, God is the author of it; he acts in it and orders it according to his own good pleasure. There is no judgment that casually falls upon any person, city, or country. Every judgment is inflicted by a divine power and providence. The Chaldeans could never have burned Jerusalem, if the Lord had not granted them a commission. Hence saith the prophet, 'Evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem,' Mic 1:12. It was a sore evil that Jerusalem, which was one of the world's wonders, should be destroyed by fire; but this evil was determined at the council-board in heaven. Jerusalem was burned by a commission signed in heaven, both when the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, and when the Romans under Titus Vespasian, laid it in ashes. All sorts of judgments are more at the beck of God, and under the command of God, than servants are under the commands of their masters, or soldiers under the commands of their general, or children under the command of their parents, Mat 8:5, Mat 8:11. Whatever judgment God commands to destroy a person, a city, or country, that judgment shall certainly and effectually accomplish the command of God, in spite of all that creatures can do. God, as he is our Creator, Preserver, and sovereign Lord, has an absolute power both over our persons, lives, estates, and habitations: and when we have transgressed his righteous laws, he may do with us, and all we have, as he pleases; he may turn us out of house and home, and burn up all our comforts round about us, and yet do us no wrong. Those things which seem accidental and casual unto us are ordered by the wise counsel, power,

and providence of God. Instruments can no more stir till God gives them a commission, than the axe or the knife can cut of itself, without a hand. Job eyed God in the fire that fell from heaven, and in all the fiery trials that befell him. And therefore, as one observes, [Austin,] he doth not say, the Lord gave, and the devil took away; nor the Lord gave, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans took away; but 'the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken; and blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job 1:20-21. Certainly without the cognisance and concurrence of a wise, omniscient, and omnipotent God, no creatures can move; nor without his foresight and permission no event can befall any person, city, or country: Acts 17:28, 'For in him we live, move, and have our being.' No man can put forth a natural action without him. Whatever the means or instruments of our misery be, the hand is God's; and this the saints in all the ages of the world have confessed. It becomes us, in every judgment, to see the hand of the Lord, and to look through visible means to an invisible God, Lev 10:1-4, and Heb 11:25-26; for though the Lord may, and many times does, make use of Satan and his instruments to scourge his dearest children, yet it is but one hand, and many instruments, that he smites us with. God makes use of what second causes he pleases for the execution of his pleasure. And many times he makes the worst of men the rod of his indignation to chastise his people with, Isa 10:5-20. Witness Pharaoh, Ahab, Haman, Herod, and the Assyrian kings, with scores of other instances that the Scripture affords. And all histories abound in nothing more than in instances of this nature, as all know that have read anything of history. The conclave of Rome, and the conclave of hell can do nothing without a commission from heaven. They cannot make a louse, nor burn a house, nor drown a pig, without a commission under the broad seal of heaven. A sparrow lights not upon the ground, nor a hair falls not from our heads, no, nor a bristle from a sow's back, saith Tertullian, but by a divine providence. All created creatures, both in that upper and in this lower world, depend upon God for their being, motion, and several activities. Now in that God did not exert his power, neither to prevent nor check those furious flames, which he knew, without his interposure, would lay all in ashes; it is evident that it was his divine pleasure that London should be turned into a ruinous heap. God's not hindering the desolation of London was a tacit commissioning of the flames to burn down all that stood in their way. That such are under a high mistake that ascribe the burning of London so to second causes as that they will allow no more judgment of God in it than that which accompanies common casualty, I shall sufficiently evidence before I have finished this first use. But I hope the prudent reader will make it his business to see the signal hand of God in this late fiery dispensation, and to remember that the scribe is more properly said to write than the pen; and he that maketh and keepeth the clock is more properly said to make it go and strike than the wheels and poises that hang upon it; and every workman to effect his work, rather than the tools which he useth as instruments. So the Lord of hosts, who is the chief agent and mover in all things, and in all actions, may more fitly and properly be said to effect and bring to pass all judgments, yea, all things that are done in the earth, than any inferior or subordinate causes—seeing they are but his tools and instruments, which he rules and guides according to his own will, power, and providence. At this some of the more civilised heathen hath long since hammered, viz., that the same power dispenseth both comforts and crosses, when they painted Fortune in two forms, with two faces of contrary colours, the foremost white, the hindermost black, to signify that both good and evil came from the goddess Fortune. When it was told prince Henry, that *delicia generis humani*, that darling of mankind, 'that the sins of the people caused that affliction that was upon him;' 'Oh no,' said he, 'I have sins enough of mine own to cause that.' So should we all confess, that though God take

occasion by another man's sin, or by another man's hand, to fire my house, yet the cause is just that it should be so, and that I myself have deserved it, whatsoever the occasion or the instrument be. God had matter enough against the seventy thousand that died of the plague; though David's sin were the occasion, yet the meritorious cause was in them. Certainly there is no man that hath been a sufferer by this late dreadful fire, but upon an easy search into his own heart and life, he may find matter enough to silence himself, and to satisfy himself that, though God has turned him out of his habitation, and burnt up all his comforts round about him, yet he has done him no wrong. Surely in the burning of the city of London there was more of the extraordinary hand of God than there was of the hand of papist or atheist, Eze 21:31. God, if he had pleased, could have prevented brutish and skilful men to destroy and burn, by discovering of their hellish plots before they had taken effect, as he did Ahithophel's, 2Sa 17:10-24; and as he did Tobiah's and Sanballat's, Neh 4:7-16; and as he did the Jews' who took counsel to kill Paul, Acts 9:23-25, and Acts 23:12-25; and as he did that of the Gunpowder treason. And God could have directed and spirited men to the use of the means, and then have given such a blessing to the means, as should have been effectual to the quenching of it when it was first kindled; but he would not, which is a clear evidence that he had given from heaven a commission to the fire to burn with that force and violence as it did, till all was laid in ashes.

Now that you may the better see and acknowledge the hand of the Lord in the late dreadful fire that has been amongst us, consider seriously with me these ten following particulars:—

[1.] First, Consider the intemperate heat, the drought of the season. Such a hot and dry summer as that was has not been known for many years; how by this means every man's habitation was as stubble, fully dry, prepared and fitted for the burning flames. Before God would strike fire he made our houses like tinder. When fuel is wet and green, what puffing and blowing must there be to kindle a fire, and to make it burn! but when fuel is light and dry, it is so conceptive of fire, that even the very smell of fire puts it into a flame. And this was poor London's case; for every man's house had lain long a-sunning under the scorching beams of the sun and much brightness of weather, which made everything so dry and combustible that sparks and flakes of fire were sufficient to set men's houses all in a flame about their ears. Now this finger of God we are neither to overlook nor yet deny; it is our wisdom, as well as our work, to see not only the finger, but the hand of the Lord in every circumstance that relates to that sore judgment of fire that we are still sighing under, Exo 8:19. It is God that withholds seasonable showers, and that causeth it to rain upon one city and not upon another, Amo 4:7. The earth cannot open her bowels, and yield seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, if not watered from above, 1Ki 17:1-2; nor the heaven cannot drop down fatness upon the earth if God close it up, and withhold the seasonable showers. This the very heathens acknowledged in their fictions of Jupiter and Juno. God only can make the heavens as brass, and the earth as iron, and restrain the celestial influences. 'Can man bind the sweet influences of Pleiades? or loose the bonds of Orion?' Job 38:31. Can any but God forbid the clouds to drop fatness? Surely no. Beloved, drought and scantness of water upon a land, a city, &c., is a judgment of God. It is no small misery to have the streams dried up, when the fire is at our doors: Jer 50:38, 'A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols:' Jer 51:35-36, 'The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say. Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will plead my cause, and

take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry.' Now mark what follows: ver. 37, 'And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant.' When God comes to plead the cause of Zion against Babylon, not by words but by deeds, by blows, by terrible judgments—when he comes to burn up the inhabitants of Babylon, and to turn them out of house and home, he first dries up her sea, and makes her springs dry: Hag 1:11, 'And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.' It is God that brings droughts and rain, and that opens and stops the clouds, the bottles of heaven, at his pleasure: Jer 14:2-4, 'Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up. And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty: they were ashamed and confounded, they covered their heads'—they muffled up their heads and faces as a token of great grief and sorrow, as close mourners do with us. 'Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.' There are many calamities that are brought upon us by human means, that are also avoidable by human helps; but drought and want of water, especially when a devouring fire is kindled in the midst of a people, is no small judgment of heaven upon that people. To want water when the house is all in flames, is a high evidence of divine displeasure. We had no rain a long time before the fire, and the springs were low, and the waterworks at the Bridge-foot, which carried water into that part of the city that was first in flames, were burnt down the first day of the fire. And was there not wrath from heaven in this? Surely yes. Look, as it is a choice mercy to have God at hand, and the creatures at hand, when we most need them, so it is a sore judgment to have God at a distance, and the creatures remote, when they should be of most service and use unto us. Certainly God's arming of the elements of fire against us, and his denying at the same time water unto us, cannot but be a signal of his great indignation against us; and therefore it highly concerns us to see the hand of the Lord in that late lamentable fire that has been amongst us. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider the suddenness and unexpectedness of this judgment. Who among all the burnt citizens did ever expect to see London laid in ashes in four days' time? God's judgments many times seize upon men's persons, houses, and estates, as the soldiers did Archimedes whilst he was busy in drawing lines in the dust. Isa 64:3, 'When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for.' When the citizens saw London in flames, they might truly have said, This is a terrible thing, which we looked not for; we were minding our business, our shops, our trades, our profits, our pleasures, our delights; we were studying, and plotting, and contriving how to make ourselves and our children great and rich, and high and honourable in the earth, and it never entered into our thoughts that the destruction of London by fire was so near at hand as now we have found it to be. Isa 47:7-9, Isa 47:11, 'Thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,' (which things were the judgments of God that were threatened:) 'neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly; that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection. Evil shall come upon thee; and thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee

suddenly, which thou shalt not know.' Was not London the lady-city of our land? Did the inhabitants of London lay those judgments of God to heart that they either felt or feared? Did London remember her latter end? Were not most of the inhabitants of London given to sinful pleasures and delights? Did they not live carelessly and securely? Were they ever so secure and inapprehensive of their danger than at this very time when the flames broke forth in the midst of them? They had newly escaped the most sweeping plague that ever was in the city and suburbs, but instead of finding out the plague of their hearts, and mourning over the plague of their hearts, and repenting of the evil of their doings, and returning to the Most High, 1Ki 8:37-38; Isa 9:13-15; Jer 8:6, they returned to their sins and their trades together, from both which for a time the plague had frightened them, concluding in themselves that surely the bitterness of death was past, 1Sa 15:32. They thought that the worst was past, and that after so dreadful a storm they should have a blessed calm; and dreamed of nothing but peace, and quiet, and safety, and trade, striving with all their might to make up those losses that they had sustained by the pestilence. They having escaped the grave when so many score thousands were carried to their long homes, were very secure; they never thought that the city, which had been so lately infected by a contagious plague, was so near being buried in its own ruins; they never imagined that the whole city should be put in flames to purge that air that their sins had infected. And therefore no wonder if desolation came upon them suddenly, in a moment, in one day. No marvel that so great a fire was kindled in the very heart of the city, and they not see the hand that kindled it, nor have no hands nor hearts to quench it. Judgments are never so near as when men are most secure, 1Th 5:3. The old world was very secure until the very day that Noah entered into the ark: Luk 17:27, 'They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.' Luther observeth that it was in the spring that the flood came, when everything was in its prime and pride, and nothing less looked for than a flood. They neither believed nor regarded Noah's preaching, nor his preparations for his own and his children's security, but merrily passed without intermission from eating to drinking, and from drinking to marriage, till the very day that the flood came and swept them all away. Their destruction was foretold them to a day, but they were drowned in security, and would take no notice of Noah's predictions nor their own peril. They had made their guts their god; they had buried their wits in their guts, and their brains in their bellies, and so were neither awakened nor bettered by anything that either Noah said or did; and so they perished suddenly and unexpectedly. So Sodom was very secure till the very day that fire and brimstone was rained from heaven about their ears, Luk 17:28-29. 'Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all,' Gen 19:23-24. Lot was no sooner taken out of Sodom, but Sodom was as soon taken out of the world. Their fair sunshine morning had a foul dismal evening; they had a handsel of hell on this side hell. They passed through fire and brimstone here to an eternal fire in hell, as Jude speaks, ver. 7. So the Jews were deadly secure before the first and latter destruction both of their city and country by sword and fire. All the world could not persuade them that their temple and city should be laid in ashes, till the Chaldeans at one time, and the Romans at another, had set both their city and temple in a flame before their eyes. Compare these together: Amo 6:3; Lam 4:11-12; Eze 12:22, Eze 12:27-28; Hab 1:7; Luk 2:19, Luk 2:41-44. Now mark, sudden and unexpected judgments do always carry a great deal of the anger and severity of God in them: Deu 7:4, 'So will the anger of

the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.' God being greatly angry with Jerusalem, Isa 29:1-4, he tells her that her judgment should be at an instant, suddenly, Isa 29:5, Psa 64:7, 'But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded;' Hab 2:7, 'Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?' Pro 6:14-15, 'Frowardness is in his heart; he deviseth mischief continually, he soweth discord. Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be broken without remedy.' Here is a dismal doom; not bruised, but broken—yea, suddenly broken, when they least dream or dread the danger. And this without remedy; there shall be no possibility of piecing them up again, or putting them into a better condition: Pro 24:22, 'Their calamity shall rise suddenly.' When they think that they have made all cock-sure, then ruin and desolation lies at their door. Certainly there are no judgments so dreadful and amazing as those which come most suddenly and unexpectedly upon the sons of men; for these cut off all hope, they hinder the exercise of reason, they cloud men's minds, they distress men's spirits, they mar men's counsels, and they weaken men's courage, and they daunt men's hearts so, that they can neither be serviceable to themselves, nor their friends, nor the public. All this was evidently seen upon the body of the citizens when London was in flames. The more eminent cause have we to take notice of the hand of the Lord in that late fiery dispensation that has passed upon us. The year 1666, according to the computation of several sober, wise, learned men, should have been the Christian's jubilee. Many men's expectations were high that Rome that year should be laid in ashes; but it never entered into any of our hearts or thoughts that this very year London should be laid in ashes. O unexpected blow! Berlin in Germany [Scultet. Annal.] who in the pulpit charged the apostle Paul with a lie, was suddenly smitten with an apoplexy, while the words were yet in his mouth, and fell down dead in the place. The parson of Chroddall (?) in Kent, having got a pardon from Cardinal Pole, as the pope's substitute in that work, the next Lord's day in his own parish presses all his people to do the like, with this argument, that he was now so free from all his sins, that he could die presently; and God presently so struck him in his pulpit, that he died, and never spoke more. As Bibulus, a Roman general, was riding in triumph in all his glory, a tile fell from the house in the street, and knocked out his brains. Otho the emperor slew himself with his own hands, but slept so soundly the night before, that the grooms of his chamber heard him snort. And Plutarch reporteth the like of Cato. Lepidus and Aufidius stumbled at the very threshold of the senate and died; the blow came in a cloud from heaven. Sophocles died suddenly by excessive joy, and Homer by immoderate grief. Mr Perkins speaks of one who, when it thundered, scoffingly said it was nothing but Tom Tumbrel a-hooping his tubs, and presently he was struck dead with a thunderbolt. Olympus, the Arian heretic, bathing himself, uttered sad words against the blessed Trinity, but suddenly a threefold thunderbolt struck him dead in the same place. Attilus, king of the Huns, proudly gave out that the stars fell before him, and the earth trembled at his presence, and how he would be the scourge of all nations; but soon after he died by a flux of blood breaking out of his mouth, which choked him on his wedding-day. King Henry the Second of France, upon the marriage of his sister with the king of Spain, was so puffed up, that he called himself by a new title, Tres heureux roi, The thrice happy king; but, to confute him, in solemnising that marriage, he was slain at tilt by the captain of his guard, though against his will, but not without God's determinate counsel, in the very beginning of his supposed happiness. Now every one that is a man either of reason or religion, will certainly say that in these sudden judgments that befell these persons there was the angry and displeased hand of God to be seen. Oh how much more, then, should we see

the angry and displeased hand of the Lord in that sudden, dreadful fire, that has turned our once renowned city into a ruinous heap, Jer 8:15. In this year 1666 many thought that there had been many great and glorious things in the womb of providence that would have been now brought forth, but they were mistaken; for unexpectedly London is laid in ashes. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider the force, violence, vehemency, and irresistibleness of it, despising and triumphing over all those weak endeavours that were used. This fire broke forth with that violence, and raged with that fury, and appeared in that dreadfulness, and spread itself with that dismalness, and continued for so long a time with that irresistibleness, that discouraged hearts and weak hands, with their buckets, engines, ladders, hooks, opening of pipes, and sweeping of channels, could give no check to it. This fire broke in upon the inhabitants like an arm of the sea, and roared and raged like a bear robbed of her whelps, until it had laid our glory in ashes. When the fire was here and there a little allayed or beaten down, or put to a stand, how soon did it recover its force and violence, and make the more furious onsets, burning down water-houses, engines, churches, and the more strong, pleasant, and stately houses, nothing being able to stand before its rage! How soon did the flames mount up to the tops of the highest houses, and as soon descend down to the bottom of the lowest vaults and cellars! How did they march along, Jehu-like, on both sides of the streets, with such a roaring, dreadful, and astonishing noise, as never was heard in the city of London before! London's sins were now so great, and God's wrath was now so hot, that there was no quenching of the furious flames. The decree for the burning of London was now gone forth, and none could reverse it. The time of London's fall was now come. The fire had now received its commission under the broad seal of heaven, to burn down the city and to turn it into a ruinous heap; and therefore it defied and contemned all remedies, and scorned to be suppressed by human attempts. Whoever kindled this fire, God blew the coal; and therefore no arts, counsels, or endeavours of men were able to quench it. If God commission the sword to walk abroad, and to glut itself with blood, who can command it into the scabbard again? No art, power, or policy can cause that sword to lie still that God has drawn in the nations round us, until it hath accomplished the ends for which he has drawn it. As to our present case, when I weigh things in the balance of right reason, I cannot but be of opinion that, had magistrates and people vigorously and conscientiously discharged their duties, much of London, by the blessing of God upon their endeavours, that is now ruined, might happily have been preserved. When in a storm, the ship and all the vast treasure that is in it, is in danger to be lost, it is sad to see every officer and mariner to mind more, and endeavour more the preservation of their chests, cabins, and particular interests, than the preservation of the ship, and the vast treasure that is in it. Now this was just our case. Cicero in his time laughed at the folly of those men, who conceived that their fish-ponds and places of pleasure should be safe when the commonwealth was lost. And we may well mourn over the folly and vanity of those men who were so amazed, confounded, distracted, besotted and infatuated, if not worse, as not to improve all heads, hands, hearts, counsels, and offers that were made for the preservation of the city. This is, and this must be for a lamentation, that in the midst of public dangers, all ranks and sorts of men should take more care for the preservation of their trifling fardels—for so is any particular man's estate, though never so great, when compared with the riches of a rich, trading, populous city—than they do for the preservation of the public good. That there might have been rational and probable anticipations of those dreadful conflagrating progresses, I suppose all sober men will grant: that these were either hid from some men's eyes, and seen by others and not improved, was London's woe. When London was almost destroyed,

then some began to blow up some houses for the preservation of that little that was left, and God blessed their endeavours; but had some had encouragement, who long before were ready for that work, and who offered themselves in the case, it is very probable that a great part of London might have been preserved. But what shall I say, divine justice does as eminently sparkle and shine in the shutting of men's eyes, and in the stopping of men's ears, and in the hardening men's hearts against the visible and probable means of their outward preservation, as in any one thing. This we must seriously consider, and then lay our hands upon our mouths, and be silent before the Lord. The force and violence of this fire was so great, that many that removed their goods once, twice, thrice, yea, and some oftener, yet lost all at last. The fire followed them so close from place to place, that some saved but little, and others lost all. Now how well does it become us, in the rage and fury of the flames, to see the hand of the Lord, and to bow before him, as this fire being like time, which devours all before it. Jerusalem was the glory and beauty of the whole earth; and the temple was one of the world's wonders; but when Titus Vespasian's soldiers had set it on fire, it burnt with that rage and fury that all the industry and skill that ever could be used, imagined, or thought on, could not quench it, though Titus would gladly have preserved it as a matchless monument. They threw both the water and the blood of the slain into it, but it burnt with that violence that nothing could extinguish it. King Herod, for eight years together, before the ruin of it, had employed ten thousand men at work to beautify it; but when once it was on fire, it burnt with that fierceness, that there was no preserving of it, the decree of heaven being gone out against it, &c. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider the swiftness of it. It flew upon the wings of the wind, that it might the sooner come to its journey's end. It ran along like the fire and hail in Egypt, destroying and consuming all before it, Psa 18:10; Exo 9:23-24. The apostle James speaks of fierce winds, Jas 3:6, Jas 3:2. The wind was so boisterous, that it scattered and carried the fire, the flames, sometimes one way, sometimes another, in despite of all the restraints, resistances, and limits that the amazed citizens could have set to it. I shall not trouble you with the various notions of philosophers concerning the wind, partly because they will do no service in the present case, and partly because our work is to look higher than all natural causes. All that either is or can be said of the wind, I suppose, may be thus summed up: that it is a creature that maybe (1.) Felt; (2.) Heard; and (3.) Little understood. Very wonderful is the rise of the winds; when it is so calm and still upon the seas, that scarce a breath of air is perceivable, upon a sudden the wind is here and there, and everywhere: Ecc 1:6, 'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north: it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.' Psa 135:7, 'He bringeth the wind out of his treasures.' But what those treasures are, and where they are, no man on earth can certainly tell us. The wind is one of the great wonders of the Lord, in which, and by which the Lord's name is wonderfully magnified: Psa 107:24-25, 'They that go down to the sea, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.' What wonders? 'He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind.' Although something may be known of this creature in the natural causes of it; yet it is a wonder above all that we can know of it, John 3:8. What the wind is, and from whence it comes, and whither it goes, none can tell.

God is the great generalissimo and sovereign commander of the winds, so that a blast of wind cannot pass without his leave, licence, and cognizance: Jon 1:4, 'But the Lord sent a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea.' The winds are God's post—they are

sometimes messengers of mercy, and sometimes messengers of wrath: Psa 147:18, 'He causeth his wind to blow'. The winds are at God's command, to come and go, and go and come at his pleasure. When there is nothing but a sweet, smooth, and silver calm on the seas, if God does but give forth a word of command, how soon are they thrown into hills and mountains, and how dreadfully do the waves dash and clash one against another! Psa 148:8, 'Fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling his word.' Sometimes the word that God has to fulfil is a saving word, and sometimes it is a destroying word, a drowning word, a sinking word. Now according to the word that God has to fulfil, so do the winds always blow. The Lord hath the winds at command, to be his executioners and administrators, either of destruction or preservation. What are stormy winds at sea or ashore but the utterings of God's voice in wrath and judgment? Sometimes God is said to 'fly upon the wings of the wind,' Psa 18:10; and sometimes he is said to 'ride upon the wings of the wind,' 2Sa 22:11; and sometimes he is said to 'walk upon the wings of the wind,' Psa 104:3. Now these things are spoken after the manner of men, to shew that the winds are continually acted and governed by a divine power. God flies upon the wings of the tempestuous winds, speedily to execute the vengeance written: and he rides and walks upon the wings of the more soft, easy, and gentle gales of the wind, that he may make good the mercies promised, Exo 15:10, and Exo 14:21. No creatures in heaven or on earth hath the winds at command but God solely and properly. Every wind that blows has a commission under the great seal of heaven to bear it out in all it does. If the winds should be examined, questioned, and required to give in a full and exact account of the many thousand mariners that they have drowned, and of the many thousand ships that they have spoiled and destroyed, and of the many ten thousand houses that they have blown down at some times, and of the many score thousand houses that, when the fire has been kindled, they have helped to consume and reduce to ashes at other times, they would shew you the hand and seal of heaven for all they have done. The sovereignty and greatness of God doth eminently shine and sparkle in this, that the winds are originally in his hand. 'He gathereth the wind in his fist,' Pro 30:4. God keeps the royalty of all the creatures in his own hand. The winds are greater or lesser, of a longer or shorter continuance, according to the will and pleasure of the great God, and not according to the workings of second causes. The more civilised heathens had this notion amongst them, 'that the winds were under the dominion of one supreme power,' and therefore, dividing the world among sundry gods, they gave the honour of the winds to Æolus, whom they ignorantly suppose had a power to lock them fast, or to let them loose at his pleasure. These poor besotted heathens thought that their feigned god Æolus had power to govern and bridle the winds, and to turn them this way and that way, as a man governs the chariot in which he rideth. And many ignorant atheistical wretches, when the winds are boisterous and violent, they are ready to say, that there is conjuring abroad, and that the devil is at work; but they must know that the devil has not power of himself to raise one blast of wind, no, nor so much wind as will stir a feather. I know that the devil is 'the prince of the power of the air,' Eph 2:2, and that when God will give him leave to play rex for ends best known to himself, he can then raise such storms and tempests, both at sea and ashore, as shall dash the stoutest ships in pieces, and remove mountains, and make the most glorious cities in the world a ruinous heap; he can easily and quickly raze the foundations of the fairest, the richest, the strongest, and the renownest, and the oldest buildings in the world, if God will but permit him, Job 1:19. But without divine permission, no angel in heaven, no devil in hell, nor no witch on earth, can raise or continue the winds one moment. Satan's power over the wind is only a derivative power, a permissive power; but the

Lord's power over the wind is a supreme power, an absolute power, an independent power. Now, oh what eminent cause have we to see the hand of the Lord in that boisterous wind that continued four days and nights, and that carried the fire to all points of the compass, to all parts of the city, if I may so speak, till our glorious city was laid in ashes! Oh how great were the sins of that people! Oh how great was the anger of that God, who united two of the most dreadfullest elements, fire and wind, to destroy our city, and lay our glory in the dust! When the Romans put fire to the walls of Jerusalem, at first the north wind blew it furiously upon the Romans themselves, but suddenly the wind changing and blowing from the south, as it were by God's providence, saith my author, it turned the fire again upon the wall, and so all was consumed and turned into ashes. And this Eleazar, in his oration to his companions, takes special notice of, where he saith, 'Neither hath our castle, by nature inexpugnable, anything profited us to our preservation; but we having store of victuals and armour, and all other necessities, have lost all hope of safety, God himself openly taking it from us. For the fire that once was carried against our enemies, did not of itself² return against us, and unto the wall we built.' Suppose the Romans, or some set on by the conclave of Rome, did at first set our city on fire, by casting their firebrands, for by that means Jerusalem was set on fire, or fire-balls here and there; yet how highly does it concern us, when we consider the furious wind that helped on the fury of the fire, to lay our hands upon our loins, and to say, The Lord is righteous; and that our present ruin is but the product of incensed justice, &c. When the Lord hath any service for the wind to do, it is presently upon the march, to run and despatch his errands, whether of indignation or of mercy. If the Lord-General of heaven and earth, the great, the supreme commander of the winds, will have them to destroy a people, and to help on the destruction of their houses, when the flames are kindled, or to break and dash in pieces their ships at sea, it shall soon be accomplished: 2Ch 20:37, 'Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.' Boisterous winds at sea or ashore are the arrows of God shot out of the bended bow of his displeasure; they are one of the lower tier of his indignation that is fired upon the children of men: Nah 1:3, 'The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and in the clouds are the dust of his feet.' The great Spanish Armada that came to invade our land in [15]88, were broken and scattered by the winds: so that their dice-games were frustrated, and they sent into the bottom of the sea, if not into a worse bottom. And when Charles V. had besieged Algiers, that pen of thieves, both by sea and by land, and had almost taken it, by two terrible tempests the greatest part of his great fleet were destroyed, as they did lie in the harbour at anchor. Ships, houses, trees, steeples, rocks, mountains, monuments cannot stand before a tempestuous wind: 1Ki 19:11, 'A great strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks.' What more strong than rocks and mountains? and yet they were too weak to stand before the strength of a tempestuous wind. Oh the terrible execution that God doth many times by the winds both at sea and ashore! Psa 18:7, 'The earth shook and trembled; the foundations of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth;' Psa 18:8, 'There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it;' Psa 18:10, 'He rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind;' Psa 18:12, 'His thick clouds passed; hailstones and coals of fire;' Psa 18:13, 'The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire,' &c. The fire in London carried the noise of a whirlwind in it: and that made it so formidable and terrible to all that beheld it, especially those that looked upon it as a fruit of God's displeasure. The wind was commissioned by God to join issue with the raging fire, to

lay the city desolate. I think the like dreadful instance cannot be given in any age of the world. We cannot say of the wind that blew when London was in flames, that God was not in the wind, as it is said in that 1Ki 19:11. For assuredly, if ever God was in any wind, he was remarkably in this wind. Witness the dismal effects of it amongst us to this very day! Had God been pleased to have hindered the conjunction of these two elements, much of London might have been standing which now lies buried in its own ruins. I grant that it is probable enough that those that did so long before prophesy and predict the burning of London, before it was laid in ashes, were the prime contrivers and furtherers of the firing of it: but yet when they had kindled the fire, that God by the bellows of heaven should so blow upon it as to make it spread, and turn, like the flaming sword in paradise, every way, Gen 3:24, till by its force and fury it had destroyed above two third parts in the midst of the city, as the phrase is, Eze 5:2, 'This is, and this must be for a sore lamentation.' God, who holds the winds in his fist, who is the true Æolus, could either have locked them up in his treasures, or have commanded them to be still; or else have turned them to have been a defence to the city, Psa 13:5; Mark 4:39. God, who holds the bottles of heaven in his hand, Gen 7:11, could easily have unstopped them; he could with a word of his mouth have opened the windows of heaven, and have poured down such an abundance of rain upon the city, as would quickly have quenched the violence of the flames, and so have made the conquest of the fire more easy. But the Lord was angry, and the decree was gone out that London should be burnt; and who could prevent it? To close up this particular, consider much of the wisdom, power, and justice of God shines in the variety of the motions of the wind: Ecc 1:6, 'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.' The wind hath its various circuits appointed by God. When the wind blows southward, northward, westward, or eastward, it blows according to the orders that are issued out from the court of heaven. Sometimes the wind begins to blow at one point of the compass, and in a short time whirls about to every point of the compass, till it comes again to the same point where it blew at the first; yet in all this they observe their circuits, and run their compass, according to the divine appointment. As the sun, so the winds have their courses ordered out by the wise providence of God. Divine wisdom much sparkles and shines in the circuits of the winds; which the Lord brings out of his treasure, and makes them serviceable, sometimes to one part of the world, and at other times to other parts of the world. It is the great God that appoints where the winds shall blow, Exo 14:24; Jon 1:4, and Jon 4:8, and when the winds shall blow, and how long the winds shall blow, and with what force and violence the winds shall blow. The winds in some parts of the world have a very regular and uniform motion, in some months of the year blowing constantly out of one quarter, and in others out of another. In some places of the world where I have been, the motions of the wind are steady and constant, which mariners call their trade-wind. Now by these stated or settled winds, divine providence does very greatly serve the interest of the children of men. But now in other parts of the world, the winds are as changeable as men's minds. The laws that God lays upon the winds in most parts of the world are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'which alter not,' Dan 6:8. One day God lays a law upon the winds to blow full east, the next day to blow full west, the third to blow full south, the fourth to blow full north; yea, in several parts of the world I have known the winds to change their motions several times in a day. Now in all these various motions of the winds, the providence of God is at work for the good of mankind. That there is a dreadful storm in one place, and at the same time a sweet calm in another,—that a tempestuous storm should destroy and dash in pieces one fleet, and that at the

same instant, and in one and the same sea, a prosperous gale should blow another fleet into a safe harbour,—that some at sea should have a stiff gale of wind, and others within sight of them should lie becalmed,—that some ships should come into harbour top and top-gallant, and that others should sink down at the same harbour's mouth before they should be able to get in, is all from the decree of God, and that law that he has laid upon the winds. That terrible tempestuous wind that affrighted the disciples, and that put them not only to their wits' end, but also to their faith's end, was allayed by a word of Christ's mouth: Mat 8:26, 'He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.' O sirs! when London was in flames, and when the winds were high and went their circuits, roaring and making a most hideous noise, how easy a thing had it been with Jesus by a word of his mouth to have allayed them! but he was more angry with us than he was with his disciples who were in danger of drowning, or else he would as certainly have saved our city from burning by rebuking the winds and the flames, as he did his disciples from drowning by rebuking the winds and the seas. I have been the longer upon this fourth particular, that you may the more easily run and read the anger of the Lord in those furious flames, and in that violent wind that has laid our city desolate. It is true astrologers ascribe the motions of the winds to special planets. The east wind they ascribe to the sun, the west wind to the moon, the south wind to Mars, and the north wind to Jupiter; but those that are wise in heart, by what I have said concerning the winds, may safely and groundedly conclude that God alone hath the supreme power of the winds in his own hand, and that he alone orders, directs, and commands all the motions of the winds. And therefore let us look to that terrible hand of the Lord that was lifted up in that fierce wind, that did so exceedingly contribute to the turning of our city into a ruinous heap. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider the extensiveness of it. How did this dreadful fire spread itself, both with and against the wind, till it had gained so great a force as that it despised all men's attempts! It quickly spread itself from the east to the west, to the destruction of houses of state, of trade, of public magistracy, besides mines of charity. It spread itself with that violence that it soon crumbled into ashes our most stately habitations, halls, chapels, churches, and famous monuments. Those magnificent structures of the city that formerly had put stops and given checks to the furious flames, falls now like stubble before the violence of a spreading fire. This fire like an arm of the sea, or like a land-flood, broke in suddenly upon us, and soon spread itself all manner of ways amongst us. It ran from place to place like the fire and hail in Egypt, Exo 9:23: now it was in this street, and anon in that; now this steeple is on fire, and then that; now this place of judicature is laid in ashes, and then that; now this hall is in flames, and then that; now this parish is burnt down to the ground, and then that; now this ward is turned into a ruinous heap, and then that; now this quarter of the city is level with the ground, and then that; now this gate of the city is demolished and consumed, and then that. 'The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things,' saith the prophet lamentingly, Lam 1:10; and we may say sighingly, the fire hath spread out its hand upon all our pleasant things, upon all our pleasant houses, shops, trades, gardens, walks, temples, &c. The plague, the year before, did so rage and spread, that it emptied many thousand houses of persons; and now this dreadful fire hath so spread itself that it has not left houses enough for many thousands of persons to dwell in, there being more than thirteen thousand houses destroyed by the furious flames. Sin is of a spreading nature, and accordingly it had spread itself over all parts of the city; and therefore the Lord, who delights to suit his judgments to men's sins, sent a spreading fire in the midst of us. The merciless flames spreading

themselves every way, in four days' time laid the main of our once glorious city in ashes: a judgment so remarkable and past precedent, that he that will not see the hand of the Lord in it, may well be reckoned amongst the worst of atheists. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Consider the impartiality of it. It spared neither sinners nor saints, young nor old, rich nor poor, honourable nor base, bond nor free, male nor female, buyer nor seller, borrower nor lender. God making good that word, Isa 24:1-2, 'Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be as with the people, so with the priest,'—or with the prince, for the Hebrew word signifies both;—'as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with the mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.' In the day of the Lord's wrath that was lately upon us, all orders, ranks, and degrees of men suffered alike, and were abased alike; the furious flames made no difference, they put no distinction between the russet coat and the scarlet gown, the leathern jacket and the gold chain, the merchant and the tradesman, the landlord and the tenant, the giver and the receiver.

'There is no difference: fire hath made Equal the sceptre and the spade.'

Eze 20:47, 'Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched, and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein.' I have, in the former part of this treatise, given some light into these words. The fire, the flames in the text, takes hold of all sorts of people, rich and poor, lord and lad, high and low, great and small, strong and weak, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant, commanders and soldiers, rulers and ruled. So did the late lamentable fire in London take hold of all sorts and degrees of men, as the citizens have found by sad experience. The fire, like the duke of Parma's sword, knew no difference betwixt robes and rags, betwixt prince and peasant, betwixt honourable and vile, betwixt the righteous and the wicked, the clean and the unclean, betwixt him that sacrificed and him that sacrificed not, betwixt him that sweareth and him that feareth an oath, Ecc 9:1-2. The judgment was universal, the blow reached us all, the flames brake into every man's house; such a dreadful, impartial, universal fire, eyes never saw before, nor ears never heard of before, nor tongues never discoursed of before, nor pens never writ of before. Beloved, you know that it is our duty to take serious notice of the hand of the Lord in the least judgment, and in every particular judgment. Oh how much more then does it highly concern us to take serious notice of the hand of the Lord that has been lifted up against us, in that late dreadful, impartial, universal fire, that has burnt us all out of our habitations, and laid our city desolate! But,

[7.] Seventhly, Consider the greatness of it, the destructiveness of it. Oh the many thousand families that were destroyed and impoverished in four days' time! Of many it might have been said the day before the fire, who so rich as these? and the very next day it might have been said of the same persons, who so poor as these? as poor as Job; yea, poor to a proverb: Jer 21:13-14, 'Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the Lord; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the Lord: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.' Some by the forest understand the fair and sumptuous buildings in Jerusalem, that were built with wood that was hewn out of the forest of Lebanon, and

stood as thick as trees in the forest. Others by the forest understand the whole city of Jerusalem with the country round about it, that was as full of people as a forest is full of trees. Others by forest understand the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and the houses of the great princes, which were built with excellent matter from the wood of Lebanon. Jerusalem was so strongly defended by nature that they thought themselves invincible, as once the Jebusites did, 2Sa 5:6: they were so confident of the strength of their city, that they scorned the proudest and the strongest enemies about them. But sin had brought them low in the eye of God, so that he could see nothing eminent or excellent among them; and therefore the Lord resolves by the Chaldeans to fire their magnificent buildings in which they gloried, and to turn their strong and stately city into a ruinous heap. Though Jerusalem stood in a vale, and was environed with mountains, yet the upper part of it stood high, as it were upon a rocky rising hill, Psa 125:2. Now the citizens of Jerusalem trusted very much in the situation of their city; they did not fear their being besieged, straitened, conquered, or fired; and therefore they say, 'Who shall come down against us? Who shall enter into our habitation? Where is the enemy that has courage or confidence enough to assault our city, or to enter into our habitations?' but God tells them that they were as barren of good fruit as the trees of the forest were barren of good fruit; and therefore he was resolved by the hand of the Chaldeans to hew them down, and to fire their most stately structure, and to turn their glorious city, in which they greatly trusted and gloried, into a ruinous heap. All which accordingly was done, not long after, by Nebuzar-adan and his army; as you may see in Jer 52:12-15. How often hath the citizens of London been alarmed with the cry of fire; which hath been as often extinguished before they could well know where it was, and how it began! but all former fires were but small fires, but bonfires, to this dreadful fire that has been lately amongst us. In the twentieth year of the reign of William the First, so great a fire happened in London, that from the West gate to the East gate it consumed houses and churches all the way. This was the most grievous fire that ever happened in that city, saith my author. And in the reign of King Henry the First, a long tract of buildings, from West Cheap in London to Aldgate, was consumed with fire. And in King Stephen's reign, there was a fire that began at London Stone, and consumed all unto Aldgate. These have been the most remarkable fires in London. But what were any of these, or all these, to that late dreadful fire that has been amongst us? London in those former times was but a little city, and had but a few men in it, Ecc 9:14, in comparison of what it was now. London was then but as a great banqueting-house, to what it was now, Song of Solomon 2:4. Nor the consumption of London by fire then was nothing proportionable to the consumption of it by fire now. For this late lamentable devouring fire hath laid waste the greatest part of the city of London within the walls by far, and some part of the suburbs also. More than fourscore parishes, and all the houses, churches, chapels, hospitals, and other the great and magnificent buildings of pious or public use, which were within that circuit, are now brought into ashes, and become one ruinous heap. This furious raging fire burnt many stately monuments to powder; it melted the bells in the steeples, it much weakened and shattered the strongest vaults under ground. Oh, what age or nation hath ever seen or felt such a dreadful visitation as this hath been! Nebuzar-adan, general to the king of Babylon, first sets the temple of Jerusalem on fire, and then the king's royal palace on fire, and then by fire he levels all the houses of the great men; yea, and all the houses of Jerusalem are by fire turned into a ruinous heap, according to what the Lord had before foretold by his prophet Jeremiah, Jer 52:12-14. Now this was a lamentable fire. Some hundred years after the Roman soldiers sacked the city, and set it on fire, and laid it desolate, with their temple, and all their stately

buildings and glorious monuments. Three or four towers and the wall that was on the west side they left standing as monuments of the Romans' valour, who had surprised a city so strongly fortified. All the rest of the city they so plained, that they who had not seen it before, would not believe that it had ever been inhabited.⁴ Thus was Jerusalem, one of the world's wonders, and a city famous amongst all nations, made desolate by fire, according to the prediction of Christ some years before, Luk 19:41-44 . There was a great fire in Rome in Nero's time; it spread itself with that speed, and burnt with that violence, till of fourteen regions in Rome, there were but four left entire. I know there are some who would make the world believe that this fire began casually,—as many now would persuade us that the late fire in London did,—but I rather join issue with them who conclude that Nero set Rome on fire, and when he had done, he laid it upon the Christians, and thereupon grounded his persecution—as all know that have read the history of those times, [anno 64.] Anno 80, Rome was set on fire by fire from heaven, say some: it burned three days and nights, and consumed the capitol, with many other stately buildings and glorious monuments; it burnt with that irresistible fury, that the historian concludes that it was more than an ordinary fire. And in the time of Commodus the emperor, there happened such a dreadful fire in Rome, as consumed the temple of Peace, and all the most stately houses, princely palaces, glorious structures, and rare monuments that were in the city. In the reign of Achmat, the eighth emperor of the Turks, about the beginning of November, a great fire arose at Constantinople, wherein almost five hundred shops of wares, with many other fair buildings, were destroyed by fire; so that the harm that was then done by fire was esteemed to amount to above two millions of gold. But alas! what was this fire and loss to the fire of London, and the loss of the citizens in our day? In Constantinople in a.d. 465, in the beginning of September, there brake forth such a fire by the water-side, as raged with that dread force, and fury, and violence, four days and nights together, that it burnt down the greatest part of the city, the strongest and the stateliest houses being but as dried stubble before it. It bid defiance to all means of resistance; it went on triumphing and scorning all human helps, till it had turned that great and populous city, once counted by some the wonder of the world, into a ruinous heap. This of all fires comes nearest to the late fire of London: but what is the burning of a thousand Romes, and a thousand Constantinoples, or the burning of ten thousand barbarous cities, to the burning of one London, where God was as greatly known, and as dearly loved, and as highly prized, and as purely served, as he was in any one place under the whole heavens? O sirs, it is our duty and our high concernment to see the hand of the Lord, and to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in the least fires: how much more then does it become us to see the hand of the Lord lifted up in that late dreadful fire that has laid our city desolate? But,

[8.] Eighthly, Consider how all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men were terrified, amused, amazed, astonished, and dispirited in the late dreadful fire that was kindled in the midst of us. When men should have been a-strengthening of one another's hands, and encouraging of one another's hearts, to pull down and blow up such houses as gave life and strength to the furious flames, how were their hearts in their heels, every one flying before the fire, as men fly before a victorious enemy! What a palsy, what a great trembling had seized upon the heads, hands, and hearts of most citizens, as if they had been under Cain's curse! Most men were unmanned and amazed; and therefore no wonder if the furious flames received no check. In former fires, when magistrates and people had resolved hearts and active hands, how easily, how quickly were those fires quenched! But now our rulers' minds were darkened and confused, their judgments infatuated, their souls dispirited, and their ears stopped, so that their authority did only accent their misery:

and this filled many citizens' hearts with fear, terror, amazement, and discontent. These things being done, the city quickly was undone. Had the care and diligence both of magistrates and people been more for the securing of the public good than it was for securing their own private interest, much of London, by a good hand of providence upon their endeavours, might have been standing, that is now turned into a ruinous heap. Troy was lost by the sloth and carelessness of her inhabitants; and may I not say that much of London was lost by the sloth and carelessness of some, and by the fears, frights, and amazement of others, and by others endeavouring more to secure their own packs and patrimonies than the safety of the whole? When London was in flames, men's courage did flag, and their spirits did fail, the strong helpers stood helpless. Some stood looking on, others stood weeping, and shaking their heads, and wringing their hands, and others walked up and down the streets like so many ghosts: Psa 76:5, 'The stout-hearted are spoiled,'—or as the Hebrew runs, 'The stout-hearted have yielded themselves up for a prey,' which the Rabbins thus expound, 'They are spoiled of their understandings and infatuated,'—'and none of the men of might have found their hands;' or as some read the words, 'None of the men of riches,' that is, rich men, 'have found their hands;' or as others carry the words, 'God took away their courage, and their wonted strength failed them.' So when London was in flames, how were high and low, rich and poor, honourable and base, spoiled of their understanding and infatuated! The Lord took away all wisdom, courage, counsel, and strength from them. So Jdg 20:40, 'But when the flames began to arise out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of their city ascended up to heaven. And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed; for they saw that evil was come upon them.' These Benjamites were the very picture of our citizens; for when they saw the flame begin to arise out of the city with a pillar of smoke, when they saw the flame of the city ascend up to heaven, oh how amazed and confounded were they! All wisdom, courage, and counsel was taken away, both from magistrate and people, and none of them could find either heads, hands, or hearts to prevent London's desolation, Job 34:19-20, Job 34:24. In Psa 76:12, God is said 'to cut off the spirits of princes;' or as the Hebrew runs, 'He shall slip off the spirits of princes,' as men slip off a bunch of grapes, or a flower between their fingers, easily, suddenly, unexpectedly, as he did by Sennacherib's princes, 2Ki 19:36. Princes usually are men of the greatest spirits, and yet sometimes God does dispirit them; he slips off their spirits, as men do a flower, which soon withereth in their hand. How soon did God slip off the spirit of that great, proud, debauched monarch Belshazzar, who, when he was in the midst of his cups, bravery, and jollity, with all his great princes, lords, ladies, and concubines about him, saw a hand writing upon the wall, which did so amaze him and terrify him that his 'countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled, and the joints of his loins loosed, and his knees dashed one against another,' Dan 5:1-6. But you may say, What was the reason that so great a prince should be so greatly astonished? Ans. The text tells you, 'he saw a hand.' What hand? even the hand of a man. What! could one hand of a man, saith one, terrify and startle so great a monarch? Had he seen the paws of a lion, or the paws of a bear, or the paws of a dragon, there had been some cause of terror. But what need such a puissant prince fear the hand of a man so much, at whose command and beck a hundred troops of armed horse would presently fly to his assistance? What terrible weapons could that one hand wield or manage? none but a pen, with which it wrote. But will any man, much less a king, be afraid of a writing pen? Had he beheld the three darts of Joab, 2Sa 18:14, or the fiery flaming sword of the cherub, Gen 3:24, brandished directly against him, he had then had some argument

of astonishment; but one hand, one pen, one piece of writing which he understood not: this was that which daunted him. Many citizens were as much amazed, astonished, terrified, and startled when they saw London in flames, as Belshazzar was when he saw the hand writing upon the wall. Ahab trembled like a shaken leaf, and so did his grandson Manasseh, he that faced the heavens, and that dared God in the day of his prosperity; when troubles came thick, and his fears rise high, he hides his head among the bushes, Isa 7:1-2; 2Ch 33:11-12. Such a fear and trembling was upon many citizens when London was in flames. Though Tullius Hostilius, the third king of the Romans, had a great warlike spirit, as Lactantius notes, yet he carried in his bosom two new gods, Pavorem and Pallorem, fear and paleness, which he could not possibly shake off. Oh the fear that was in the citizens' hearts, and the paleness that was upon the citizens' cheeks, when London was in flames! Now excessive fear fills the heart with all confusion; they strip a man of his reason and understanding, they weaken his hands, and they do so suddenly and totally dispirit and unman a man, that he is not able to encounter with those visible dangers that threaten his utter ruin; and this the poor citizens found by woeful experience when London was in flames. At the sight of this fire, how were the citizens' hearts melted, their hands feeble, their spirits faint, and their knees weak! Oh the horror, the terror, the amazement, the confusion that had now seized upon the spirits of all sorts of citizens! How were the thoughts of men now distracted, their countenances changed, and their hearts overwhelmed! Oh the sad looks, the pale cheeks, the weeping eyes, the smiting of breasts, and the wringing of hands that were now to be seen in every street and in every corner! What a universal consternation did my eyes behold upon the minds of all men in that day of the Lord's wrath! There is no expressing of the sighs, the tears, the fears, the frights, and the amazement of the citizens, who were now compassed about with flames of fire! Oh the cries, the tumults, the hurries, and the hindrances of one another that was now in every street, every one striving, with his pack at his back, to secure what he could from the rage and fury of the flames! Now one cries out, Five pound for a cart, another cries out, Ten pound for a dray; in one street one cries out, Twenty pound for a cart, and another in the next street cries out, Thirty pound for a cart; here one cries out, Forty pound for a cart, and there another cries out, Fifty pound for a cart. Many rich men, that had time enough to have removed their goods, their wares, their commodities, flattered themselves that the fire would not reach their habitations. They thought they should be safe and secure; but when the flames broke in upon them, oh then any money for a cart, a coach, a dray, to save some of their richest and choicest goods! Oh what fear were many parents now in that their children would either be now trod down in the press, or lost in the crowd, or be destroyed by the flames! And what fear were many husbands now in concerning their wives, who were either weak, or sick, or aged, or newly delivered! Words are too weak to express that distraction that all men were under when the fire went on raging and devouring all before it. And this was an evident token to me that the hand of the Lord was eminent in the fire, and that the decree was gone forth that dear London must now fall. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Consider the time that the fire began. It began on the Lord's day, being the second of September, about one or two of the clock in the morning. Our fears fell upon us on the Lord's day, Rev 1:10; on that day that should have been a day of joy and delight unto us, Isa 58:13, 14. On this day our singing was turned into sighing, our rejoicing into mourning, and all our praisings into tremblings. Oh the fears, the frights, the distresses that men were now under! Oh the amazed spirits, the bedewed cheeks, the faint hearts, the feeble knees, the weak hands, and the dejected countenances that were now to be seen everywhere! O sirs! the time when this fatal fire first

began was very ominous, it being at a time when most citizens were but newly fallen into a dead sleep, being wearied out in their several employments, several days before, but especially on Saturday, or the last day of the week, that being with very many the most busiest day in all the week. And of all mornings, most citizens did usually lie longest in bed Sabbath-day mornings. Such as used to rise early every morning in the week to gain the meat that perisheth, to make sure and to treasure up for themselves and theirs the things of this world, Psa 127:1-2, and John 6:27; such commonly made most bold with the Lord's day, and would frequently be in their beds when they should have been either instructing of their families, or at prayers in their closets, or else awaiting upon the Lord in his public ordinances. Fire in the night is terrible to all, but mostly to such whose spirits and bodies were tired out in the preceding day. Wasting and destroying judgments are sad any day, but saddest when they fall on the Lord's day. For how do they disturb, distress, and distract the thoughts, the minds, the hearts, and the spirits of men! so that they can neither wait on God, nor wrestle with God, nor act for God, nor receive from God, in any of the duties or services of his day. And this the poor citizens found by sad experience, when London was in flames about their ears. Certainly the anger and wrath of God was very high and very hot when he made his day of rest to be a day of labour and disquiet—when his people should have been a-meeting, hearing, reading, praising, praying. For the Lord now to scatter them, and to deliver them, their substance and habitations, as a prey to the devouring fire, what does this speak out but high displeasure? That the fire of God's wrath should begin on the day of his rest and solemn worship, is and must be for a lamentation. In several of those churches where some might not preach, there God himself preached to the parishioners in flames of fire. And such who 'loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil,' John 3:19, might now see their churches all in a flaming fire. What a terrifying and an amazing sermon did God preach to his people of old in mount Sinai, when the mount burned with fire! Exo 19:16-18. And so what terrifying and amazing sermons did God preach to the citizens on his own day, when their temples and their habitations were all in flames! Instead of holy rest, what hurries were there in every street, yea, in the spirits of men! Now instead of taking up of buckets, men in every street take up arms, fearing a worse thing than fire. The jealousies and rumours that fire-balls were thrown into several houses and churches, by such that had no English tongues but outlandish hands, to make the furious flames flame more furiously, were so great, that many were at a stand, and others even at their wits' end. Now relations, friends, and neighbours hastened one another out of their houses, as the angels hastened Lot out of Sodom, Gen 19:15–17. Such were the fears and frights and sad apprehensions that had generally seized upon the citizens. Not many Sabbaths before, when men should have been instructing of their families, what bonfires, what ringing of bells, and what joy and rejoicing was there in our streets, for burning the Dutch ships in their harbour, where many English and others were highly concerned as well as the Dutch! Little did they think, who were pleasing and warming themselves at those lesser fires, that the great God would in so short a time after kindle so great a fire in the midst of their streets as should melt their bells, lay their habitations in ashes, and make their streets desolate, so that those that were so jolly before might well take up that sad lamentation of weeping Jeremiah, Lam 2:2-3, 'The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied; he hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground. He burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about.' May we not soberly guess that there were as many strict observers and sanctifiers of the Lord's day who did turn away their feet from doing their

pleasure on God's holy day, and that did call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable, Isa 58:13, within the walls of London, as in a great part of the nation besides? Now for the Lord of the Sabbath to kindle such a devouring fire in such a city, and that on his own day, oh what extraordinary wrath and displeasure does this speak out! When God by his royal law had bound the hands of his people from doing their own works, for him now to fall upon his strange work, and by a flaming, consuming fire to turn a populous city, a pious city, an honourable city, and an ancient city into a ruinous heap, what indignation to this indignation! O sirs! it highly concerns us to take notice of the judgments of the Lord that fall upon us on any day, but especially those that fall upon us on his own day, because they carry with them more than a tincture of God's deep displeasure. In the Council of Paris, every one labouring to persuade unto a more religious keeping of the Sabbath-day, when they had justly complained that as many other things, so also the observation of the Sabbath was greatly decayed, through the abuse of Christian liberty, in that men too much followed the delights of the world, and their own worldly pleasures, both wicked and dangerous, they further add, 'For many of us have been eyewitnesses, many have intelligence of it by the relation of others, that some men upon this day being about their husbandry have been stricken with thunder, some have been maimed and made lame, some have had their bodies, even bones and all, burned in a moment with visible fire, and have consumed to ashes; and many other judgments of God have been and are daily inflicted upon Sabbath-breakers.'

Stratford-upon-Avon was twice on the same day twelvemonth, being the Lord's day, almost consumed with fire, chiefly for profaning the Lord's day, and contemning his word in the mouth of his faithful minister. Feverton³ in Devonshire, whose remembrance makes my heart bleed, saith my author, was oftentimes admonished by her godly preachers, that God would bring some heavy judgment on the town for their horrible profanation of the Lord's day, occasioned chiefly by their market on the day following. Not long after his death, on the third of April 1598, God, in less than half an hour, consumed with a sudden and fearful fire the whole town, except only the church, the court-house, and the alms-houses, or a few poor people's dwellings, where a man might have seen four hundred dwelling-houses all at once on fire, and above fifty persons consumed with the flames. And on the fifth of August 1612, fourteen years since the former fire, the whole town was again fired and consumed, except some thirty houses of poor people, with the school-house and alms-houses. Now certainly they must be much left of God, hardened in sin, and blinded by Satan, who do not, nor will not see the dreadful hand of God that is lifted up in his fiery dispensations upon his own day. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Consider that the burning of London is a national judgment. God, in smiting of London, has smitten England round: the stroke of God upon London was a universal stroke. The sore strokes of God, which have lately fallen upon the head city, London, are doubtless designed by heaven for the punishment of the whole body. In the sufferings of London the whole land suffers. For what city, county, or town in England was there that was not one way or other refreshed and advantaged, if not enriched, with the silver streams of London that overflowed the land, as the river Nilus doth the land of Egypt? Doubtless there are but few in the land but are more or less concerned in the burning of London. There are many thousands that are highly concerned in their own particulars; there are many thousands concerned upon the account of their inward friends and acquaintance: and who can number up the many score thousands employed in the manufactures of the land, whose whole dependence, under God, was upon

London? What lamentation, mourning, and woe is there in all places of the land for the burning of London, especially among poor tradesmen, innkeepers, and others, whose livelihoods depended upon the safety and prosperity of London! Certainly he is no Englishman, but one who writes a Roman hand, and carries about him a Romish heart, who feels not, who trembles not under this universal blow! Many years' labour will not make up the citizens' losses to them. Yea, what below the riches of the Indies will effectually make up every man's losses to him? He shall be an Apollo to me, that can justly sum up the full value of all that have been destroyed by those furious flames, that has turned the best, if not the richest, city in the world into a ruinous heap. Now their loss is a loss to the whole nation; and this the nation already feels, and may yet feel more and more, if God in mercy does not prevent the things that we have cause to fear. It is true, London is the back that is smitten; but what corner is there in all the land that hath not more or less, one way or another, contributed to the burning of London. Not only those that lived in Jerusalem, but also those that came up to Jerusalem, and that traded with Jerusalem, they, even they did by their sins contribute to Jerusalem's ruin. They are under a high mistake that think it was only the sins of the city which brought this sore desolation upon her: doubtless, as far as the judgment extends and reaches, so far the sins extend and reach which have provoked the Lord to make poor London such an astonishing example of his justice. How are the effects of London's ruin already felt and sighed under all the nation over! The blood and spirits which this whole nation hath already lost by this late lamentable fire will not be easily nor suddenly recovered. The burning of London is the herald of God to the whole nation, calling it to repentance and reformation; for the very same sins that have laid London in ashes are rampant in all parts of the nation, as you may easily perceive, if you please but to compare that catalogue that in this book I put into your hands with those sins that are most reigning and raging in all places of the land; by which you may also see that they were not the greatest sinners in England upon whom the fire of London fell, no more than they were the greatest sinners in Jerusalem upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, Luk 13:4, 5. That the burning of London is a national judgment, is evident enough to every man that has but half an eye. But if any should doubt of it, or dispute it, the king's proclamation for a general fast on that account puts it beyond all dispute. The words of the proclamation that are proper to my purpose are these, 'A visitation so dreadful,' speaking of the burning of London, 'that scarce any age or nation hath ever seen or felt the like; wherein although the afflicting hand of God fell more immediately upon the inhabitants of this city, and the parts adjacent, yet all men ought to look upon it as a judgment upon the whole nation, and to humble themselves accordingly.' O sirs, you are to see and observe and acknowledge the hand of the Lord in every personal judgment, and in every domestical judgment. Oh how much more then in every national judgment that is inflicted upon us! And thus I have done with those ten considerations, that should not only provoke us, but also prevail with us, to see and acknowledge the hand of the Lord in that late dreadful fire that has laid our city desolate.

Use 2. The second use is a use of lamentation and mourning. Is London laid in ashes? Then let us all lament and mourn that London is laid desolate. Shall Christ weep over Jerusalem, Luk 19:41-44, when it was standing in all its glory, knowing that it would not be long before it was laid even with the ground; and shall not we weep over London, whose glory is now laid in the dust? Who can look upon London as the ancient and noble metropolis of England, and not lament and mourn to see it laid in ashes? It might have been said not long since, 'Walk about Sion,' Psa 48:12-13,—walk about London,—and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her

bulwarks, consider her palaces:’ look upon her stately houses, halls, and hospitals, take notice of her shops, and fair warehouses, and Royal Exchange, &c., and lo, the glory of all these things is now buried in a common ruin! Oh the incredible change that a devouring fire hath made in four days’ time within thy walls, O London! so that now we may [say] lamentingly, Alas, poor London! ‘Is this the joyous city whose antiquity is of ancient days?’ Isa 23:7-8. Is this the crowning city, whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth? Who can but weep to see how the Lord ‘hath made a city an heap, and a ruin of a defenced city, and a palace to be no city?’ Isa 25:2. Who can look upon naked steeples, and useless chimneys, and pitiful fragments of ragged walls—who can behold stately structures, and noble halls, and fair houses, and see them all laid in ashes, or turned into a heap of rubbish, without paying some tears as due to the sadness of so dreadful a spectacle? Who can with dry eyes hear London thus speaking out of its ruins: ‘Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?’ Lam 1:12. Who can look upon the Lord as making London empty, as laying it waste, as turning it upside down, and as scattering abroad the inhabitants thereof, and not mourn? Isa 24:1. Beloved, under desolating judgments God does expect and look that his people should lament and mourn: Jer 4:7-8, ‘The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy city shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant. For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us.’ Under wasting judgments God expecteth not only inward, but also outward, expressions and demonstrations of sorrow and grief. Shall our enemies rejoice over the ruins of London, and shall not we mourn over the ruins of London? Shall they that are afar off lament over London’s desolation; and shall not we lament over London’s desolation, who are every day a-walking up and down in London’s ruins and rubbish? O sirs! as ever you would see London’s breaches repaired, her trading recovered, her beauty restored, her riches augmented, her glory advanced, and her inhabitants rejoiced, make conscience of mourning over London’s ruins. After Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, many of the Jews obtained leave of the Roman emperors, once a year—viz., on the 10th of August, which was the day whereon their city was taken—to enter into Jerusalem, and bewail the destruction of their city, temple, and people, bargaining with the soldiers who waited on them to give so much for so long abiding there, and if they exceeded the time they conditioned for, they were to stretch their purses to a higher rate, which occasioned Jerome to say, ‘that they who bought Christ’s blood were then glad to buy their own tears.’ O sirs, what cause have we once a year, yea, often in a year, to bewail the desolation of London! The statue of Apollo is said to shed tears for the afflictions of the Grecians, though he could not help them. Though we could not prevent the burning of London, yet let us weep over the ruins of London. The leprosy of the citizens’ sins had so fretted into London’s walls, that there was no cleansing of them but by the furious flames of a consuming fire, Lev 14:35-46. In the law you know that when the old fretting plague of leprosy was so got into the house, and spread in the walls, that no scraping within or without could cleanse it away, then the house was to be pulled down. This seems to be London’s case. God by former judgments laboured to scrape away the leprosy of sin out of London, but that deadly leprosy was so got into men’s hearts and houses that there was no getting of it out but by pulling them down. This is, and this must be for a lamentation. Now the better to work you to lament and mourn over the ruins of London, consider with me these ten following particulars:—

[1.] First, Who can look upon the burning of London, as ushered in by such sad prodigies and dreadful forerunners as it was, and not lament and mourn over its ruins? By what a bloody sword, and by what a dreadful plague, was this late judgment of fire ushered in! First, God sends his red horse amongst us, Rev 6:4, Rev 6:8—viz., a cruel, bloody war; and then he sends his pale horse amongst us—viz., a noisome, sweeping pestilence. Oh the garments that were rolled in blood! Oh the scores of thousands that were by the hand of the destroying angel sent to their long homes, to their eternal homes! Now in the rear of these judgments follows such a devouring fire, as hath not been known in any ages past. Not long before Vespasian came against Jerusalem, there happened divers prodigies: (1.) There was a comet in form of a fiery sword, which for a year together did hang over the city. (2.) There was seen a star on the temple so bright, as if a man had so many drawn swords in his hands. (3.) At the same time that this star appeared, which was the solemn passover, that whole night the temple was light and clear as mid-day, and continued so seven days together. (4.) At the same time also they brought a heifer for a sacrifice, which when she was knocked down, she calved a lamb. (5.) The inner gate of the temple, on the east side, being of massive brass, that was never opened nor shut but twenty men had enough to do about it, this gate was seen at the first hour of the night to open of its own accord, and they could not shut it till a great number joined their strength together. (6.) There was discerned on the sanctum sanctorum, a whole night long, the face of a man very terrible. (7.) At the same time, before the sunset, there were seen in the air iron chariots, all over the country, and an army in battle array, passing along the clouds, and begirting the city. (8.) Upon the feast day, called pentecost, at night the priests going into the inner temple, to offer their wonted sacrifice, at first they felt the place to move and tremble, and afterward they heard a man walking in the temple, and saying with a great and wonderful terrible voice, 'Come let us go away out of this temple, let us depart hence.' But (9.) Ninthly and lastly, that which was most wonderful of all, was this, that there was one Jesus the son of Ananus, a countryman, of the common people, who four years before the wars began, when the city flourished in peace and riches, coming to the celebration of the feast to Jerusalem, which we call the feast of tabernacles, suddenly began to cry out thus, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds of the heavens, a voice against Jerusalem, a voice against the temple, a voice against the bridegroom, a voice against the bride, and a voice against the whole people:' and thus crying day and night, he went about all the streets of the city. The nobility scourged him, yet still he cried, 'Woe, woe unto Jerusalem:' he did never curse any one, though every day he was beaten by one or other: neither did he thank any one that offered him meat. All that he spake to any man, was this heavy prophecy, 'Woe, woe unto Jerusalem.' He never went to any citizens, neither was he seen to speak to any one, but still, as it were, studying of some speech, he cried 'Woe, woe unto Jerusalem.' Thus for four years space, say some—for seven years and five months, saith Josephus—his voice never waxed hoarse nor weary, till in the time of the siege, beholding what he foretold them, as he was walking upon the walls, crying 'Woe to Jerusalem, woe to the temple, woe to all the people,' he added, 'and woe to myself;' and as soon as the words were out of his mouth, a stone came out of an engine from the camp, that dashed out his brains. These prodigies were forerunners of Jerusalem's desolation. What comets, what blazing stars, what sheets of fire have been seen fly over London, and what flames of fire have been seen over the city, a little before it was laid in ashes, I shall not now insist upon. Certainly when a consuming fire shall be ushered in by other dreadful judgments and amazing prodigies, it highly concerns us to sit down and mourn. But,

[2.] Secondly, Who can look upon London as an ancient city, as a city of great antiquity, and not mourn over the ruins of it? Isa 23:7; Jer 5:15. Our chronologers affirm that the city hath stood two thousand seven hundred and seventy odd years. It is recorded by some, that the foundation of London was laid in the year of the world 2862. London by some antiquaries is called Troynovant, as having been first founded by the Trojans. London is thought by some to be ancients than Rome. That London was a very ancient city, might several ways be made good; but what should I spend time to prove that which every one is ready to grant? Josephus, speaking of Jerusalem, saith, 'That David the king of the Jews having driven out the Canaanites, gave it unto his people to be inhabited, and after four hundred threescore and four years and three months, it was destroyed by the Babylonians. And from King David, who was the first Jew that reigned there, until the time that Titus destroyed it, were a thousand one hundred seventy and nine years; and from the time that it was first erected until it was by him destroyed, were two thousand one hundred and seventy-seven years; yet neither the antiquity, nor riches, nor the fame thereof, now spread all over the world, nor the glory of religion, did anything profit or hinder it from being destroyed.' So it was neither the antiquity, nor the riches, nor the fame, nor the greatness, nor the beauty, nor the glory, nor the religion that was there professed, that could prevent London's being turned into a chaos in four days' time. London, that had been climbing up to its meridian of worldly greatness and glory above two thousand years, how is she made desolate in a few days, and of a glorious city become a ruinous heap! Physicians make the threescore and third year of a man's life a dangerous climacterical year to the body natural; and statisticians make the five hundredth year of a city or kingdom as dangerous to the body politic, 'beyond which,' say they, 'cities and kingdoms cannot stand.' But Jerusalem and London, and many other cities, have stood much longer, and yet in the end have been laid desolate! Now what true Englishman can look upon London's antiquity, and not mourn to see so ancient a city turned into a ruinous heap? But,

[3.] Thirdly, What true Englishman did ever look upon London, as an honourable city, as a renowned city, as a glorious city, that will not now mourn to see London laid in ashes? London was one of the wonders of the world; London was the queen city, the crowning city of the land, a city as famous as most cities for worldly grandeur and glory, Isa 23:8; yea, a city more famous and glorious than any city under heaven for gospel light, and for the power of religion and real holiness: Psa 76:1-2, 'In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion.' In London was God known, his name was great in London; and in London also was his tabernacle and his dwelling-place. And as God was known in Judah, not only by his word, but also by his glorious works; so God was known in London, not only by his word, but also by his glorious works. And as God was known in Judah, first by the multitude of his mercies, but afterwards by the severity of his judgments; so God was known in London, first by the multitude of his mercies, but afterwards by the severity of his judgments: witness the sweeping pestilence and the devouring fire that he sent amongst us! And as God was known in Judah, first by lesser judgments and then by greater—for he first lashed them with rods, and then with scourges, and at last with scorpions; so God was first known in London by lesser judgments: witness the violent agues, strange fevers, small-pox, and small fires that broke forth in several places of the city and suburbs; but these having no kind, no effectual operation upon us, God at last made himself known in the midst of us by such a pestilence, and by such a fire, that the like was never known in that city before. We were once the objects of his noble favours, but we made ourselves at last the subjects of his fury. And as the philosopher tells us, corruptio optimi, est

pessima; or as we find that the sweetest wines become the tartest vinegar, so God's heavenly favours and indulgences being long abused, they at last turned into storms of wrath and vengeance. What Englishman did look upon London as the city of the great God, as a holy city, as that city wherein God was as gloriously made known, and wherein Christ was as much exalted, and religion was as highly prized, as in any part of the world beside, and not mourn over it, now it is laid desolate? It was long since said of Athens and Sparta, that they were the eyes of Greece. Was not London the eyes of England? And who then can but weep to see those eyes put out? Great and populous cities are, as it were, the eyes of the earth; and when these eyes are lost, who can but sit down and sigh and mourn? London was the joyous city of our solemnities, it was the royal chamber of the King of kings, it was the mart of nations, it was the lofty city, it was the top-gallant of all our glory. Now, who can but shed tears to see this city laid even to the ground—to see this city sit like a desolate widow in the dust? Such a sight made Jeremiah to lament: Lam 1:1, 'How doth the city sit solitary,' speaking of Jerusalem's ruin, 'that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!' Let profane, ignorant, superstitious, and popish defamers of London say what they please, yet doubtless God had more of his mourning ones, and of his marked ones in that city, than he had in a great part of the nation beside, Jer 9:1-3; Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6. There was a time when London was a faithful city, a city of righteousness, a city of renown, a city of praise, a city of joy; yea, the paradise of the world, in respect of the power and purity of gospel ordinances, and that glorious light shined in the midst of her. Who can remember those days of old, and not mourn to see such a city buried in its own ruins? Under the whole heavens there were not so many thousands to be found that truly feared the Lord, in so narrow a compass of ground, as was to be found in London; and yet, lo, London is laid in the dust, and the nations round gaze and wonder at her desolation! Who can but hang down his head and weep in secret for these things? But,

[4.] Fourthly, Who did look upon London as the bulwark, as the stronghold of the nation, that cannot mourn to see their bulwark, their stronghold, turned into a ruinous heap? Psa 48:12-13, 'Walk about Zion, and tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.' Zion had her bulwarks, her towers, her palaces; but at last the Chaldeans at one time, and the Romans at another, laid them all waste, Jer 52:12-13; Luk 19:41, Luk 19:45. So London had her bulwarks, her towers, her palaces, but they are now laid desolate, and many fear, and others say, by malcontent villains and mischievous foreigners of a Romish faith. London was once terrible as an army with banners, Song of Solomon 6:10. How terrible were the Israelites, encamped and bannered in the wilderness, unto the Moabites, Canaanites, &c.! Exo 15:14-16. So was London more than once terrible to all those Moabites, Canaanites, that have had thoughts to swallow her up, and to divide the prey among themselves. How terrible were the Hussites in Bohemia to the Germans, when all Germany were up in arms against them, and worsted by them! London hath been as terrible to those that have been cousin-Germans to the Germans. London was once a battle-axe and battle-bow in the hand of the Almighty, which he has wielded against her proudest, strongest, and subtlest enemies, Jer 51:20; Zec 9:10, and Zec 10:4; Eze 21:31. Was not London the head city, the royal chamber, the glory of England, the magazine of trade and wealth, the city that had the strength and treasure of the nation in it? Were there not many thousands in London that were men of fair estates, of exemplary piety, of tried valour, of great prudence, and of unspotted reputation? and therefore why should it seem impossible that the fire in London should be the effect of desperate designs and

complotments from abroad, seconded and encouraged by malcontents at home? London was the great bulwark of the Reformed religion, against all the batteries of popery, atheism, and profaneness; and therefore why should any Englishman wonder if these uncircumcised ones should have their heads and their hands and their hearts engaged in the burning of London? Such whose very principles leads them by the hand to blow up kings, princes, parliaments, and reformed religion, to make way for their own religion, or for the good old religion, as some are pleased to call it; such will never scruple to turn such cities, such bulwarks, into a ruinous heap, that either stands in their way, or that might probably hinder their game, Dan 11:24, Dan 11:39. In all the ages of the world wicked men have designed the ruin and laying waste of Christians' bulwarks and strongholds, in order to the rooting out of the very name of Christians, as all know that have read anything of Scripture or history; and therefore why should any men think it strange if that spirit should still be at work? Was ever England in such imminent danger of being made a prey to foreign power, or of being rid by men of a foreign religion, and whose principles in civil policy are very dangerous both to prince and people, as it hath been since the firing of London, or since that bulwark has been turned into a ruinous heap? Had not the great God, who laid a law of restraint upon churlish Laban, and upon bloody Esau and his four hundred bloody cut-throats, and upon proud, blasphemous Sennacherib, Gen 31:24, Gen 31:29, and Gen 33:1, Gen 33:4; 2Ki 19:27-28, 2Ki 19:32, laid also a law of restraint upon ill-minded men, what mischief might they not then have done, when many were amazed and astonished, and many did hang down their heads, and fold their hands, crying, Alas! alas! London is fallen! and when many had sorrow in their hearts, paleness upon their cheeks, and trembling in all their joints! yea, when the flames of London were as terrible to most as the hand writing upon the wall was to Belshazzar! Dan 5:5-6. How mightily the burning of London would have retarded the supplies of men, money, and necessities which would have been needful to have made opposition against an invading enemy, had we been put to it, I shall not here stand to dispute. Whilst London was standing, it could raise an army, and pay it when it had done. London was the sword and sinews of war; but when London was laid in ashes, the citizens were like Samson when his hair was cut off, Jdg 16:18-20, and like the Shechemites when they were sore, Gen 34:25. Beloved, the people of God have formerly made the firing of their strongholds matter of bitter lamentation, as you may see in 2Ki 8:11-12, 'And he settled his countenance steadfastly, until he was ashamed;' (till Hazael blushed to see the prophet look so earnestly upon him,) 'and the man of God wept. And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strongholds wilt thou set on fire,'—[Well! and what will he do when their strongholds are in flames or turned into a ruinous heap? Why, this you may see in the following words,]—'and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.' Other kings of Syria had borne an immortal hatred against the children of Israel, and the prophet knew by revelation from heaven that he should be king over Syria, and that he had as cruel and as bloody a mind against God's Israel as any of the former kings of Syria had. Now to evidence this, the prophet instances in those particular excessive acts of cruelty that he should practise upon the children of Israel—'their strongholds wilt thou set on fire.' Hazael would not think it enough to enter into their strong towns, and cities, and forts, and castles, and other strongholds, and spoil and plunder them of their treasure and goods, but he would burn all down to the ground, that so he might daunt them, and weaken them, and render them the more incapable of making any resistance against him. But now mark what follows burning work—'their young men wilt thou

slay with the sword.' Such as make no conscience of burning Israel's strongholds, such will never scruple the slaying of Israel's young men with the sword. When their strongholds were set on fire, Hazael would give them no quarter for their lives,—such as had escaped the furious flames should be sure to fall by the bloody sword. 'And wilt dash their children,'—their poor, innocent, harmless children, that never thought amiss nor never spoke amiss of Hazael, these must have their brains dashed out against the stones, Psa 137:9. Men that are set upon burning work are men of no bowels, of no compassion. 'And rip up their women with child.' He would destroy the very infants in the womb, that so he might cause to cease the very name of Israel. Such Hazael's as are resolute by fire to lay our cities and strong bulwarks desolate, such will be ready enough to practise the most barbarous cruelties imaginable upon our persons and relations when a fit opportunity shall present. When Israel was weary, and faint, and feeble, then Amalek fell upon them, Deu 25:17-19. It was infinite mercy that the Amalekites of our day did not fall upon the amazed and astonished citizens when they were feeble, and faint, and weary, and tired out with hard labour and want of rest. O sirs! shall the prophet Elisha weep, foreseeing that Hazael would set Israel's strongholds on fire; and shall not we weep to see London, our stronghold, our noblest bulwark, turned into a ruinous heap? So Lam 2:2, Lam 2:5, 'The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitation of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground. The Lord was an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces; he hath destroyed his strongholds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mournings and lamentation.' These two words, 'mourning and lamentation,' are joined together to note the great and eminent lamentation of the daughter of Judah upon the sight and sense of God's destroying, razing, and levelling to the ground, by the hand of the Chaldeans, &c., all the strongholds and fortresses that were built for the defence of the Israelites. Now shall the daughter of Judah greatly lament to see her strongholds laid desolate; and shall not we at all lament to see London, to see our strongholds, turned into a ruinous heap? But,

[5.] Fifthly, Who did ever look upon London as a fountain, as a sanctuary, and as a city of refuge to the poor, afflicted, distressed, and impoverished people of God, that is not now free to weep to see such a city laid in ashes? Who can number up the distressed strangers that have been there courteously entertained and civilly treated? Exo 22:12; 2Sa 16:14. Who can number up the many thousand families that have been preserved, relieved, revived, and refreshed with the silver streams that has issued from that fountain London, and not mourn to see it laid desolate? Psa 46:4, 'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God;' Isa 8:6. It is an allusion to the river Siloah, which ran sweetly, softly, quietly, pleasantly, constantly, to the refreshing of all that were in need. London was a river, a fountain, whose silver streams ran sweetly, quietly, pleasantly, constantly, to the refreshing of many thousand needy ones in the land. Now who can but weep to see such a fountain, such a river, not only stopped, but dried up by a devouring fire? But,

[6.] Sixthly, Who did ever look upon London as a city compact, a city advantageously situated for trade and commerce, yea, as the great mart town of the nation, that has not a heart to weep over it, now it lies in ashes? Isa 23:3; Eze 27:1; Rev 8:11. London was the mart of the nation's trade, and the magazine of the nation's wealth. London was that great storehouse, in which was laid up very much of the riches and glory of the land. London was the very heart of England; it was as useful every way to England's security and felicity, as the heart is useful in the natural body: and

therefore no wonder if such as envy at England's greatness, grandeur, and glory, have made London, England's mart-town, to bear the marks of their displeasure. Who is so great a stranger in our English Israel, as not to know how rarely well London was situated as to trade, and as not to know how London was surrounded with plentiful store of all creature-comforts? If London had not been so nobly situated and surrounded, its desolation had not been so great a judgment; nor, it may be, the designs of men so deeply laid, as to its ruin. They that did look upon England as rich, could not but look on London as the exchequer of it. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Who are they that have looked upon London as a city, that hath for many hundred, yea, some thousands of years, been very strangely and wonderfully preserved by the admirable wisdom, constant care, and almighty power of God—notwithstanding all the wrath, rage, malice, plots, and designs of wicked men to lay it waste, and to turn it into a ruinous heap—and not have a heart to weep over its desolation? Isa 27:3-4; Psa 121:4-5. The great preservations, the singular salvations, that God hath wrought for London, many hundred years together, renders the desolation of London the more terrible. And accordingly it concerns all that are well affected to weep over its ashes. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Who can look upon the ashes of London, as those ashes in which England's worst enemies, both abroad and at home, do daily triumph and rejoice, and not weep over London's desolation? Obadiah 1:10-16. Shall the vilest of men glory that England's glory is laid in the dust; and shall not we lament, when our crown is fallen from our head? Lam 5:16. The more wicked men rejoice in our misery, the greater obligation lies upon us to lie low and mourn at the foot of God. London, like Job, lies on its dunghill, Job 2:8. London, like the Jews, lies in its ashes, Est 4:3. And therefore it highly concerns all Londoners to put on sackcloth and ashes. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Surely such as have looked upon London as the city of their solemnities—such cannot but weep to see the city of their solemnities laid desolate: Isa 33:20, 'Look upon Zion the city of our solemnities,' or meetings. Zion is here called a city, because it stood in the midst of the city. The city of Jerusalem was very large, and Zion stood in the midst of it; and it is called a 'city of solemnities,' because the people flocked thither to hear the law, to renew their covenant with God, to call upon his name, and to offer sacrifices. O sirs! was not London the city of our solemnities? the city where we solemnly met to wait upon the Lord, in the beauty of holiness? 1Ch 16:29; the city where we offered prayers and praises? the city where we worshipped the Lord in spirit and in truth? Psa 29:2; the city wherein God, and Christ, and the great things of eternity, were revealed to us? the city wherein many thousands were converted and edified; walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost? Acts 9:31; the city where we had the clearest, the choicest, and the highest enjoyments of God that ever we had in all our days? the city wherein we have sat down under Christ's 'shadow with great delight; his fruit has been sweet unto our taste'? the city in which Christ has 'brought us to his banqueting-house, and his banner over us has been love'? the city in which Christ has 'staid us with flagons, and comforted us with apples'? the city in which Christ's 'left hand hath been under our heads, and his right hand hath embraced us'? Song of Solomon 2:3-6; the city wherein the Lord of hosts hath 'made unto his people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined'? Isa 25:6. London, the city of our solemnities, is now laid desolate: and therefore for this why should not we be disconsolate, and mourn in secret before the Lord? This frame of spirit hath been upon the people of God of old: Zep 3:18, 'I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly,

who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.' By 'solemn assemblies' are meant their several conventions, at those set times which God had appointed them, viz., on the weekly Sabbath, the new moons, the stated feasts and fasts, which they were bound to observe, Deu 16:1-22. Now for the want, the lack, the loss of those solemn assemblies, such as did truly fear the Lord were solemnly sorrowful. Of all losses, spiritual losses are most sadly resented by gracious souls. When they had lost their houses, their estates, their trades, their relations, their liberties, and were led captive to Babylon, which was an iron furnace, a second Egypt to them, then the loss of their solemn assemblies made deeper impressions upon their hearts than all their outward losses did. The Jews were famous artists. They stand upon record for their skill, especially in poetry, mathematics, and music: but when their city was burnt, and their land laid desolate, and their solemn assemblies broken in pieces, then they could sing none of the songs of Zion, Psa 137:1-5; then they were more for mourning than for music, for sighing than for singing, for lamenting than for laughing. Nothing goes so near gracious hearts as the loss of their solemn assemblies, as the loss of holy ordinances. Health, and wealth, and friends, and trade, are but mere Ichabods to the saints' solemn assemblies, and to pure ordinances. When the ark was taken, Eli could live no longer: but whether his heart or his neck was first broken upon that sad tidings, is not easy to determine, 1Sa 4:17-18. When Nehemiah understood that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and that the gates thereof were burnt with fire, and that the whole city was laid desolate by Nebuzar-adan and his Chaldean army, he sits down and weeps and mourns, and fasts and prays, 2Ki 25:8-10; he did so lay the burning of the city of their solemnities to heart, that all the smiles of King Artaxerxes could not raise him nor rejoice him, Neh 1:3-4, and Neh 2:1-20. It was on the tenth day of the fifth month that Jerusalem was burnt with fire; and upon that account the Jews fasted upon every tenth day of the fifth month, Jer 52:12-14. Now shall the Jews solemnly fast and mourn on the tenth day of the fifth month during their captivity, Zec 7:3, because their city and temple and solemn assemblies were on that day buried in ashes, and turned into a ruinous heap; and shall not we fast and mourn to see the city of our solemnities buried in its own ruins? But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, That incendiary, that mischievous villain Hubert, confessed the fact of firing the first house in Pudding Lane, though he would not confess who set him at work, and accordingly was executed at Tyburn for it. Now who can look upon the dreadful consequences, the burning of a renowned city, that followed upon the firing of the first house, and not mourn over London's desolations? Hubert did confess to several persons of note and repute that he was a Catholic; and did further declare that he believed confession to a priest was necessary to his salvation. And being advised, by a chaplain to a person of honour, to call upon God, he repeated his Ave Mary, which he confessed was his usual prayer. Father Harvey confessed him, and instructed him, and we need not doubt but that he absolved him also, according to the custom of the Romish Church. Hubert died in the profession of the Romish faith, stoutly asserting that he was no Hugonite. I know that men of the Romish religion, and such who are one in spirit with them, would make the world believe that this Hubert, who, by order of law, was executed upon the account of his own public and private confessions, was mad, distracted, and what not. But what madmen do these make the judge and jury to be? for who but madmen would condemn to such a shameful death a madman, for confessing himself guilty of such a heinous and horrid fact, which he had never committed? Doubtless both judge and jury were men of more wisdom, justice, and conscience, than to hang a madman upon his own bare confession. The German histories tell us3

what encouragement men of a Romish faith have had from Rome to make way for their religion throughout Germany, by fire and sword; and when some of those incendiaries have been taken in setting houses on fire, they have confessed that there have been many more in combination with them, who, by all the ways they could, were to consume Silesia and other parts with firings. When the Spanish Armada came against this nation in 1588 with an invincible navy, as they counted it, they had two thousand eight hundred and forty-three great ordnance, twenty-eight thousand eight hundred and forty mariners, soldiers, and slaves, rowing in galleys, with innumerable fire-balls and granadoes, in order to the making of England desolate by fire and sword. Did not F. Parsons, Doleman, and Holt the Jesuit draw other incendiaries into a combination to fire the royal navy with wildfire in Queen Elizabeth's reign, for which they were stretched at Tyburn, a.d. 1595? On that very day when King James was crowned, when the generality of the people were intent upon that noble spectacle, five were suborned by the Jesuits to set London on fire in several places, but were frustrated, as is evident upon record.⁶ Mr Waddesworth did depose, both in writing and viva voce at the Lords' bar, that one Henry, alias Francis Smith, alias Lloyd, alias Rivers, alias Simons, before the beginning of the Scotch wars, did tell him in Norfolk, where he met him, 'That the popish religion was not to be brought in here by disputing, or books of controversy, but with an army, and with fire and sword.' Pope Martin the Fifth sent Cardinal Julian, who was namesake and near of kin to Julian the apostate, with an army of fourscore thousand, to root out Hussites or protestants in Bohemia, where they burnt up their towns; and at the same time Albertus, his assistant, burnt up five hundred of their villages. It was Philip the Second of Spain who said, [Thuanus,] 'That he had rather lose all his provinces than seem to grant or favour anything which might be prejudicial to the Catholic religion.' It was Cardinal Granveilanus² who was wont to say, [Gasper,] 'That he would reduce the Catholic religion in all places, though one hundred thousand men were to be burned in an hour.' It was the Spanish ministers of state who declared openly in the pacifica of Colen, [Anno 1586,] 'That the Protestants would be very well served if they were stripped of all their goods, and forced to go seek new countries like Jews and Egyptians, who wander up and down like rogues and vagabonds.' The Duke of Alba, a bloody papist,⁴ sitting at his table, said, 'That he had taken diligent pains in rooting out the tares of heresies, having delivered eighteen thousand men in the space of six years only to the hands of the hangman.' From the beginning of the Jesuits to 1580, being the space of thirty years, there were almost nine hundred thousand protestants put to death in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, England, and other parts of Christendom. Men of that religion, that burnt the martyrs in Queen Mary's days, are men of such bloody, desperate principles, that they will stick at nothing that may be a means to advance the Romish religion. Some men, besides the Romans, have practised most prodigious things, and all to raise themselves a name in the world. Servetus,⁶ at Geneva, gave all his goods to the poor, and his body to be burnt, and all for a name, for a little glory among men. The temple of the great goddess Diana, which was one of the world's wonders, was set on fire when Alexander was born, by Erostratus, a base fellow; and this he did, 'that he might be talked of when he was dead.' So Judas and Sadoc, with their seditious sect, burnt down the temple of Jerusalem, and all the beautiful buildings in the city. And at another time, when the Romans had set the temple on fire, Titus, by entreaties and threatenings, did all he could to persuade the soldiers to extinguish the fire, but could not prevail with them. They, seeing the gates of the inward temple to be gates of gold, thought that the temple was full of money, and that they might have a rich booty, and therefore regarded not their general's commands. Titus did all he could to quench the flames; but a certain soldier fired the posts about the doors of the inward

temple, and presently the flame appearing within, Titus and his captains departed; and so every one stood looking upon it, and no man sought to extinguish it. Thus the temple was burnt by the hand of a single soldier, against Titus his mind. One man that is of a cruel spirit, and of cruel principles, may do a world of mischief. Take that instance of Nero, who maliciously raised the first persecution against the Christians, pretending that they were incendiaries, and authors of the burning of Rome; whereas he himself had most wickedly done it. But this barbarous act of his was fathered upon the Christians; and accordingly they suffered severely for it.² Another author saith, Nero succeeded Caligula in the government, and in no less fierceness and cruelty, because he was a man in whom, if possible it might be, all the other cruelties were enclosed, and all else that could by men be imagined; for, without any regard of sanctified things, or persons of like quality, private or public, he caused the city of Rome to be set on fire, with express prohibition not to quench it, or any man to make safety of his own goods: so the fire continued seven days and seven nights burning the city; and he being on a high tower some small distance off, clapped his hands, and joyed to behold this dismal spectacle, so far exceeding all humanity. The wisest prince that ever swayed a sceptre hath told us, 'That one sinner destroyeth much good,' Ecc 9:18. Who can sum up the mischief that a few ill-minded men may do in a little time? The same devil, the same lusts, the same wrath, the same rage, the same revenge, the same ends, the same motives that have put others upon burning work in former times, may probably have put some upon the same work in our time. Burning work is so odious and abominable, so destructive, hateful, and hurtful a thing in the eyes of all true Englishmen who have any sense of honour or conscience, that I shall never wonder to see such who have either had a head, or a hand, or a heart in it, of arts and crafts, to bury for ever the remembrance of it. Was not London the glory of England? Was not London England's treasury, and the protestants' sanctuary? Was not London as terrible to her enemies abroad, as she was joyous to her friends at home? Has not London been as dreadful to her foreign foes, as the hand-writing upon the wall was to Belshazzar? Dan 5:5-6. Was not London the great mountain that her enemies feared would be most prejudicial to their pernicious designs? Zec 4:7. Was not London that great rock against which many have dashed themselves in pieces? Was not London as briars and thorns, as goads and gulfs and two-edged swords, to all her enemies, more remote and nearer home? Had the French invaded us when London was in flames, as many feared they would, or had such risen up at that time, in the bowels of the nation, whose very principles lead them by fire and sword to make way for their religion, what doleful days had we seen, and to what a low ebb might the protestant interest have then been brought! What greater encouragement could be given to French, Dutch, Dane, and all of the old religion, as they call it, to make desperate attempts upon us, than the laying of the city desolate by fire? But it is the glory of divine power to daunt and overrule all hearts and counsels, and to turn that to his people's greatest good which their enemies design to be their utter ruin, Psa 76:5, Psa 76:10; Gen 31:24, Gen 31:29, and Gen 33:3-4. We know papists are no changelings; their cruel, bloody, fiery spirits and principles are still the same. Both king and parliament have taken notice how vigilant and active they have been of late, by what hath been discovered, confessed, proved, printed, &c. Is it not more than probable that some influenced from Rome have kindled and promoted that dreadful fire that hath laid our city desolate? The statue of Apollo is said to shed tears for the afflictions of the Grecians, though he could not help them. Though none of us could prevent the desolation of London, yet let us all be so ingenuous as to weep over the ashes of London. Who can look upon London's glory, as now sacrificed to the flames, and made a burnt-offering to appease the wrath

and fury, as many say, of a papist conclave, and not mourn?

Obj. Sir, we readily grant that it is our duty to lament and mourn over the ruins and desolations of London; yea, some of us have so lamented and mourned over London's dust and ashes, that we have almost reduced ourselves to dust and ashes; and therefore, what cordials, what comforts, what supports can you hand out to us that may help to cheer up our spirits, and to bear up our hearts, so as that we may not utterly faint and sink, neither under the sight of London's ruins, nor yet under a deep sense of our many great and sore losses?

Now that I may be a little serviceable and useful to you in the present case, give me leave to offer to your most serious consideration these following particulars by way of support:—

(1.) First, Consider, for your support and comfort, That the great God might have burned up all; he might not have left one house standing, nor one stone upon another. It is true the greatest part of the city is fallen; but it is rich mercy that the whole is not consumed, Luk 19:41, Luk 19:44. Though most of the city within the walls be destroyed, yet it is grace upon the throne that the suburbs are standing. Had not God spared some houses in the city, and the main of the suburbs, where would thousands have had a livelihood? How would any trade have been maintained? yea, how would the lives of many thousands have been preserved? It is true the fire was very dreadful, but God might have made it more dreadful; he might have laid every house level; he might have consumed all the goods and wealth that was there treasured up; and he might have refused to have plucked one man 'as a brand out of the fire,' Zec 3:2. He might have suffered London to have been as totally destroyed as Jerusalem was: Mat 24:1-2, 'And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.' In these words Christ doth foretell the utter destruction and devastation of Jerusalem, which came to pass by Titus and the Roman army; wasting all with fire and sword, and evening with the ground that magnificent temple and city, which was the glory of the world. Though Titus, by a strict edict at first storming of the city, forbade the defacing of the temple, yet the soldiers burned it and the city. The temple was burned, say some, August 10th, when it had stood five hundred [and] eighty-nine years; and the city was burned September 8th, in the year of our Lord seventy-one.

Quest. But why did Christ's disciples shew him the buildings of the temple, which they knew were not unknown unto him?

Ans. To move him to mercy, and to moderate the severity of that former sentence, of leaving their houses desolate unto them, Mat 23:38. Herod had been at a wonderful charge in building and beautifying the temple. Josephus tells us, that for eight whole years together he kept ten thousand men at work about it: and that for magnificence and stateliness it exceeded Solomon's temple. The disciples might very well wonder at these stately buildings, at these goodly, stately, fair stones, which were, as Josephus writeth, fifteen cubits long, twelve high, and eight broad. Now the disciples fondly thought that Christ, upon the full sight of these stately, glorious buildings, which to see laid waste was pity, might have been so worked upon as to reverse his former sentence of laying all desolate. But here they were mistaken; for 'his thoughts were not as their thoughts.' Others think that the disciples shewed Christ the stately buildings of the temple, that upon a serious consideration of the strength, pomp, stateliness, greatness, and magnificence of the

buildings, he might be the more careful to preserve them from destruction. Others think that the disciples shewed him these strong and stately buildings, to insinuate secretly thereby how difficult, yea, impossible, it was for them to be destroyed, especially considering the strength of the city also. And hence our Saviour seems to answer, 'See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,' &c.

Quest. But when was this prediction fulfilled, that not one stone should be left upon another, which should not be thrown down, &c.?

Ans. This was fulfilled forty years after Christ's ascension, by Vespasian the emperor, and his son Titus, as Eusebius and Josephus do declare. Yea, this prophecy was not only accomplished in the destruction of the old temple, but then also, when in Julian the apostate's time, the Jews, to spite the Christians, were by him encouraged to build the temple at his charge; and they attempting it accordingly, were hindered from heaven by a mighty earthquake, which cast down that in the night which was built in the day: and besides, a fire from heaven, that consumed the work and workmen's instruments; which Cyrillus, bishop of Jerusalem, then seeing, applied unto that event this prediction of our Saviour, 'There shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' Ah London, London! this might have been thy doom, that there should not have been one house standing, neither within nor without thy walls; yea, this might have been thy doom, that there should not have been 'one stone left upon another that should not have been thrown down.' In that it is otherwise with thee, thou hast cause, O London, to cry, Grace, grace, to him that sits upon the throne, and is blessed for ever, &c.

Carthage was a noble city, mistress of Africa, and paragon to Rome. She made her part good against Rome for many years, but at length, by means of her own inward civil jars, she was utterly destroyed by them, [Oros. Eutrop.] For the inhabitants being not able to stand any longer in their own defence, were constrained to yield themselves to the mercy of their enemies—the women, to the number of five and twenty thousand, marching first forth, and after them the men, in number thirty thousand, following, all which poor captives were sold for bond-slaves, a few only of the principal excepted: and then fire was put to the city, which burnt seventeen days without ceasing, even till it was clean consumed. This might have been thy doom, O London, but God in the midst of judgment hath remembered mercy.

Athens was once the most famous flourishing city of Greece, for her fair buildings, large precincts, and multitude of inhabitants; but especially for her philosophy, by means whereof recourse was made from all parts to her, as the fountain and well-spring of arts, and the school and university of the whole world: whose policy and manner of government was so much esteemed by the Romans, that they drew from thence their laws: but now she lies dead and buried in the ashes of forgetfulness, not carrying any of her former proportion or appearance. If this had been thy doom, O London, we must all have set to our seals that the Lord had been righteous; but blessed be the Lord, London is not, and I hope never shall, let Rome and hell do their worst, be buried in the ashes of forgetfulness, &c. But,

(2.) The second support to bear up the hearts and to cheer up the spirits of all that has smarted by the late fiery dispensation, is this, viz., That God has given them their lives for a prey. O sirs, what a mercy is it, that though the fire has reached your houses, your shops, your goods, your commodities, your warehouses, your treasure, that yet it has not reached your lives, nor the lives

of your relations or friends! though your habitations are consumed, and your losses have been great, yet that in the midst of so many deaths and dangers by the flames, and by the press of the people, and notwithstanding all the confusions that was in all parts of the city, you should have your lives for a prey, and be snatched as so many 'firebrands out of the burning'! Oh how should this miraculous providence of God be owned and admired by you! The devil hit the mark when he said, 'Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life,' Job 2:4. Men's estates in those times did lie mostly in cattle. Now, saith Satan, Job is a very great life-lover, he is fond of life, and afraid of death; and therefore he will give skin upon skin to save his life: he will give many skins, abundance of skins, yea, all his skins, to save his life: he will give his cattle's skins, and his servants' skins, and his sons' skins, to save himself in a whole skin.² By this proverbial speech, 'Skin for skin,' &c., Satan intimates that Job cared not for the loss of his cattle, nor for the loss of his servants, nor for the loss of his children, so he might secure his own life. Job set a higher price upon his own life than he did upon all other lives: let others sink or swim, so he might escape, all was well. Natural life is a precious jewel; a man will cast all overboard, when he is in danger of drowning, to save his life. A man will hold up his arms to save his head, or suffer the loss of a limb to save his life. Men will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with some of their limbs, to preserve their lives. As he who cried out, 'Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life.' 'Wherefore doth a living man complain,' or murmur, 'a man for the punishment of his sin?' Lam 3:39. Oh what a simple, senseless, brutish, blockish thing is it for a man, a mortal man, a sinful man, a man on this side the grave, on this side hell, to complain or murmur against a holy and righteous God! He that is alive on this side everlasting burnings, Isa 33:14, on this side a devouring fire, has no just cause to complain, whatever his losses, crosses, or sufferings are. He that has deserved a hanging, if he escape with a whipping, has no cause to complain or murmur. Men that have deserved a damning, if they escape with the loss of house, goods, estates, &c., they have no cause to complain or murmur. Mark, at this time Jerusalem was burnt, city and temple was laid in ashes, the citizens were turned out of house and home, and stripped of all their comforts and contentments. 'They that did feed delicately, were desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet, embraced dunghills.' 'They were scattered among the heathen, who did mock at their Sabbaths, and who trod their mighty men under foot; yea, they sought their bread with the peril of their lives.' And yet, saith the prophet, 'Why doth the living man complain?' Lam 4:5, and Lam 5:9. Though city, and temple, and goods, and estates were all consumed in the flames, yet some had their lives for a prey; and upon that very account they ought not to complain. God might have turned them into ashes, as he had turned their houses into ashes, and it was mere grace that he did not; which the church wisely and ingenuously observes, when she saith, 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed,' Lam 3:22. She doth not say, it is of the Lord's mercy that our houses are not consumed; but it is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed: nor she does not say, it is of the Lord's mercy that our goods are not consumed; but it is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed. The church saw mercy, much mercy, tender mercy, yea, bowels of mercy, as the word there imports, that a remnant had their lives given them, when their city and substance was turned into ashes. O sirs! others have lost their goods and their lives together, and it is miraculous mercy that you have not; when men's wits were puzzled, their hearts discouraged, and their industry tired out; when the wind was at the highest, and the fire at the hottest, and the hopes of most at the lowest, that then you should be as brands plucked out of the fire, was glorious mercy, &c. In the reign of Achmat, the eighth emperor of the

Turks, a great fire arose in the city of Constantinople, wherein many, both men and women, perished, with above five hundred shops and warehouses full of rich merchandise, most of which belonged unto the Jews, of whom almost two hundred were said to be burned. These lost their goods and their lives together, but so have not you; the greater obligation lies upon you, both to think well of God, and to speak well of God, and to lay out your lives to the uttermost for God.

Certain Tartars at Constantinople in their insolency set fire upon a certain Jew's house, whereof arose such a terrible fire, as burned not only many houses, but a great many of the Jews themselves. Here lives and estates went together. Though outlandish hands have set our city, our houses on fire, yet God has preserved our lives in the midst of the flames; and this is a mercy more worth than all we have lost, &c.

There was a stately palace in Jerusalem that Solomon had built, which joined near to the temple. This palace the Jews abundantly anointed all over with brimstone and pitch, so that when the Romans pursued the Jews unto this palace, they entered the palace after the Jews, who went out again another way, and shut up the palace, and set fire on the gates, which they had before anointed with brimstone and pitch; and straightway the side walls of the house, and the whole building, began to be on a-light fire, so that the Romans had no way to escape, because the fire compassed the house on every side. The Jews also stood round about the palace, with their drawn swords, to cut off any that should attempt to escape the flames. Now there was two and twenty thousand of the Romans destroyed in this fire. Titus, hearing the lamentable cry of the Romans that were compassed about in flames of fire, made speed with all his army to come and rescue them; but the fire burned so vehemently that he could save none of them. Upon which Titus and his army wept bitterly, [Josephus.] O sirs! when London was in flames, if men of a Romish faith had compassed the city round about with their drawn swords that none should have escaped the furious flames, how dreadful would such a day have been! Whether such a thing was intended or designed, and by any strange providence prevented, we shall know in the fittest season.

Numantium, a city in Spain, being besieged by the Romans, and after it had borne the brunt of war a long time, and made many desperate sallies upon their enemies, and were almost consumed with famine, rather than they would bow their necks to the Roman yoke, they barred their gates, and set all on fire, and so burned themselves in the flames of their city, that so they might leave the enemy nothing but ashes for his prey and triumph. Here city and citizens are destroyed together; and it is infinite mercy that this was not the fate, the doom of the citizens of London. They and their city might have fallen together; 'but God was good, and a very present help in time of trouble,' Psa 46:1. O sirs! if not only your houses, your shops, your goods, your wares, but also your persons, had been enclosed with flames, and no possibility of escape, how dreadful would the fire have been then! Oh, what tongue can express, or heart conceive, the sighs, the groans, the cries, the tears, the gashful looks, the horrible shrieks, the dreadful amazement, and the matchless astonishment that would have been upon all sorts and ranks of people, that had been compassed round about with flames, and could see no door of deliverance open to them! Oh what a mercy is it that we are yet alive, though we are stripped of many comforts and contentments which formerly we have enjoyed! Now here give me leave to open myself a little in these following particulars:—

[1.] First, What a mercy was this to all unregenerate and unconverted persons, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames! Had God by the flames or any other accident put an end to their natural days, they might at this time have been arolling up and down in unquenchable flames. Sinners, sinners, the greatest weights hang upon the smallest wires. Eternity, eternity depends upon your improvement of that time, that life, and those seasons and opportunities of grace that yet you do enjoy. That Rabbi hit it who said, *Nemo est cui non sit hora sua*, Every man hath his hour. He who overslips that season, may never meet with the like again all his days. O sirs! to have a little more time to believe, to repent, to secure your interest in Christ, a changed nature, a sanctified frame of heart, a pardon in the bosom, is a mercy more worth than ten thousand worlds. To have a little more time to make your calling and election sure, and to get the new name and white stone that none knows but those that are the favourites of heaven; to have time to make sure a city that hath foundations, a kingdom that shakes not, riches that corrupt not, an inheritance that fadeth not away, a house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens; to have time to make sure to yourselves a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, a crown of glory, a crown of immortality, are mercies beyond all the expressions, and above all the valuations of the sons of men. The poets paint time with wings, to shew the volubility and swiftness of it. *Sumptus pretiosissimus tempus*, Time is of precious cost, saith Theophrastus. Know time, lose not a minute, saith Psittacus. Ælian gives this testimony of the Lacedæmonians, 'That they were hugely covetous of their time, spending it all about necessary things, and suffering no citizen either to be idle or play.' Titus Vespasian having spent a day without doing any man any good, as he sat at supper he uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, *Amici, diem peridi*, My friends, I have lost a day, [Suetonius.] O sirs! will not these poor heathens rise in judgment against all those that trifle and fool and sin away their precious time? Take heed of crying *Cras, cras*, To-morrow, to-morrow. Oh play not the courtier with your precious souls! The courtier doth all things late: he rises late, and dines late, and sups late, and goes to bed late, and repents late. Remember that manna must be gathered in the morning. The orient pearl is generated of the morning dew. There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit than to know the worth of his time. It is very dangerous putting off that to another day which must be done to-day, or else undone to-morrow. *Nunc aut nunquam*, Now or never, was the saying of old. If not done now, it may never be done, and then undone for ever. Eternity depends on this moment of time. What would not many a man give for a day when it is a day too late? Whilst many blind Sodomites have been groping to find a door of hope, God has rained hell out of heaven upon them. The seasons of grace are not under your locks and keys. Many thousand poor sinners have lost their seasons and their souls together. Judas repented and Esau mourned, but neither timely nor truly; and therefore they perished to all eternity. The damned in hell may weep their eyes out of their heads, but they can never weep sin out of their souls, nor their souls out of hell, &c.

Oh that the flames of London might be so sanctified to every poor sinner, who have had their lives for a prey, in that doleful day, that they may no longer neglect those precious seasons and opportunities of grace that yet are continued to them, lest God should swear in his wrath, 'that they should never enter into his rest!' Heb 2:3, and Heb 3:18. O sirs! yet you have a world of gracious opportunities, and oh that God would give you that heavenly wisdom, that you may never neglect one gracious opportunity, though it were to gain a whole world! God by giving you your lives in the midst of those furious and amazing flames, has given you time and opportunity to secure the internal and the eternal welfare of your precious and immortal souls, which is a mercy that can

never be sufficiently prized or improved. But,

[2.] Secondly, What a mercy was this to poor doubting, staggering Christians, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames! For by this means they have gained time to pray down their doubts, and to argue down their doubts, and to wrestle and weep down their doubts, &c. Christ ascended to heaven in a cloud, and the angel ascended to heaven in the flame of the altar, Acts 1:9-10; Jdg 14:20. It is ten to one but this had been the case of many doubting, trembling Christians, had they died when London was in flames. I know it is good getting to heaven any way, though it be in a whirlwind of affliction, or in a fiery chariot of temptation, or in the flames of persecution, or in a cloud of fears, doubts, and darkness; but yet that man is more happy that gets to heaven in a quiet calm of inward peace, and in the fair sunshine of joy and assurance. It is a good thing for a man to get into a safe harbour, though it be in a winter night, and through many storms and tempests, hazards, dangers, and deaths, with the loss of masts, cables, and anchors; but yet he is more happy that gets into a safe harbour in a clear, calm, fair, sunshiny day, top and top-gallant, and with colours flying and trumpets sounding. The prudent reader knows how to apply it. Oh that all poor doubting Christians would seriously lay this to heart, viz., That for them to have time, to have their judgments and understandings enlightened, their doubts resolved, their objections answered, their consciences settled, and their souls assured that all is well, and shall be for ever well between God and them, is a mercy more worth than all the world. But,

[3.] Thirdly, What a mercy was this to poor languishing, declining, and decaying Christians, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames! There were a great many in London who were 'fallen from their first love,' and whose sun was set in a cloud. There were many whose graces were languishing, whose comforts were declining, whose souls were withered, and whose communion with God was greatly impaired, Rev 2:4. Many within and without the walls of London had a worm gnawing at the root of their graces. They had lost their spiritual relish of God, of Christ, of ordinances, as dying men lose their relish. Dying men can relish nothing they sip, or eat, or drink. They had lost their spiritual strength, and they knew it not, as Samson had lost his natural strength and knew it not, Jdg 16:20. Oh what an image of death was upon their highest professions! Now for these men to live, for these men to have time to get their graces repaired, their comforts revived, their spiritual strength restored, their souls fattened, and their communion with God raised, oh what a matchless, what an incomparable mercy is this! But,

[4.] Fourthly, What a mercy was this to poor clouded, deserted, and benighted Christians, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames! Beloved, it is sad dying under a cloud; it is sad dying, when he who should comfort a man's soul stands afar off, Lam 1:16. Some think that the face of God was clouded when David thus prayed, 'O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more,' Psa 39:13. And some think Hezekiah's sun was set in a cloud, and God had drawn a curtain between Hezekiah and himself, when, being under the sentence of death, Isa 38:1-3, 'He turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore;' or with great weeping, as the Hebrew runs. It is with clouded and deserted Christians as it was with Samson when his locks were cut off, 'his strength was gone;' and therefore, though he thought to go out and do wonders, as he had formerly done, yet by sad experience he found himself to be but as another man, Jdg 16:18-21. So when God does but withdraw, the best of saints have their locks

cut; their strength, which lieth not in their hair, but in their head Christ Jesus, Php 1:22-23, is gone, and they are but like other men. They think, they speak, they act, they walk like other men. Christians under real desertions commonly fall under sore temptations, great indispositions, barrenness, flatness, dulness, and deadness of spirit. And is this a fit season for such to die in? Christians under a cloud usually have their joys eclipsed, their comforts damped, their evidences for heaven blotted, their communion with God impaired, and their title to heaven is by themselves, in such a day, much questioned. And is this a case for them to die in? O clouded and deserted Christians, who have had your lives for a prey in the midst of London's flames! and ever since those flames, what a great, what a glorious obligation has the blessed God put upon you, to labour to recover yourselves from under all clouds and desertions, and to spend your days in a serious and deep admiration of that free, that rich, that infinite, and that sovereign grace that spared you, and that was active for you, in that day when you were compassed about with flames of fire on every hand! But,

[5.] Fifthly, What a mercy was this to poor solicited, tempted Christians, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames! For by this means they have gained time to strengthen themselves against all Satan's temptations. The daily bills that were given in, to pray for poor tempted Christians, did sufficiently evidence how active Satan was to distress and perplex poor Christians with all sorts of hideous and blasphemous temptations. Were there not many tempted to distrust the power of God, the goodness of God, the faithfulness of God? Were there not many tempted to deny God, to blaspheme God, and to turn their backs upon God? Were there not many tempted to slight the Scriptures, to deny the Scriptures, and to prefer their own fancies, notions, and delusions above the Scriptures? Were there not many tempted to have low thoughts of ordinances, and then to leave ordinances, and then to vilify ordinances, and all under a pretence of living above ordinances? Were there not many tempted to presume upon the mercies of God; and others tempted to despair of the grace of God? Were there not many tempted to destroy themselves, and others tempted to destroy their relations? Were there not many tempted to draw others to sin, and to uphold others in sin, and to encourage others in sin, and to be partners with others in sin? Were there not many tempted to have hard thoughts of Christ, and others to have low thoughts of Christ, and others to have no thoughts of Christ? Now for these poor tempted souls to have their lives for a prey, and to have precious seasons and opportunities to recover themselves out of the snares of the devil, and to arm themselves against all his fiery darts, is a comprehensive mercy, a big-bellied mercy, a mercy that has many thousand mercies in the womb of it. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, What a mercy was this to all slumbering, slothful, sluggish, lazy Christians, who had blotted and blurred their evidences for heaven, and who, instead of running their Christian race, Heb 12:1, were either at a stand, or else did but half in the way to heaven, that they have had their lives for a prey when London was in flames; and that they have had time to clear up their evidences for heaven, and to quicken up their hearts, to run the ways of God's commands! Psa 119:32. Surely, had all the world been a lump of gold, and in their hands to have been disposed of, they would have given it for a little time to have brightened their evidences, to have got out of their sinful slumber, and to have set all reckonings even between God and their poor souls. And let thus much suffice for this second support.

(3.) The third support to bear up the hearts and to cheer up the spirits of all that have suffered by the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That this has been the common lot, the common case, both of saints and sinners. God has dealt no more severely with you than he has with many others. Have you lost much? so have many others. Have you lost half? so have many others. Have you lost all? so have many others. Have you lost your trade? so have many others. Have you lost your goods? so have many others. Have you lost your credits? so have many others. Have you lost many friends, who before the fire were very helpful to you and yours? so have many others. Have you lost more than your all? so have many others. This very cordial the apostle hands out to the suffering saints in his time: 1Co 10:13, 'There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.' By temptation, he means affliction; as the word is used, Jas 1:2; 1Pe 1:6—that is, there hath no affliction befallen you but that which is incident either to men as men, or to saints as saints: or thus, there hath no affliction befallen you but such as is common to man—that is, there is no affliction that hath befallen you but such as men may very well bear without murmuring or buckling under it. So 1Pe 5:9, 'Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished,' or finished, 'in your brethren, that are in the world': or in your brotherhood, that is, in the world. Afflictions are the common lot of the saints; and who shrugs, repines, complains, murmurs, or faints under a common lot, it is at the sun because it scorches, &c., John 16:33; Acts 14:22. There are none of the brotherhood but, first or last, they shall know what the fiery trial, what the fiery furnace means. Jerome, writing to a sick friend, hath this expression, 'I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity. I judge you to be the more miserable, because you have not been miserable:' it being the common lot of the people of God to be exercised with adversity and misery. I think he hit it who said, [Bernard.] Impunitas securitatis mater, virtutum noverca, religionis virus, tinea sanctitatis: i.e., Freedom from punishment is the mother of security, the stepmother of virtue, the poison of religion, the moth of holiness. Nihil est infelicius eo, cui nil unquam contigit adversi, There is nothing more unhappy than he who never felt adversity, said the refined heathen [Seneca]; and shall not grace rise as high as nature? The calamity has been common, therefore wipe your eyes, and do not say, There is no sorrow to my sorrow, no loss to my loss, no ruin to my ruin, Lam 1:12. Under common calamities, men should neither groan nor grumble. Look, as no man may conclude, upon the account of common mercies, that he is really beloved of God; so no man may conclude, upon the account of common calamities, that he is really hated of God, Ecc 9:1-2. And therefore bear up sweetly, bear up cheerfully, under your present trials. In the common calamity of the plague, the destroying angel, perceiving the blood of sprinkling upon the posts of your doors, and upon the doors of your hearts, passed you by, and said unto you, 'Live', Exo 12:7, Exo 12:13. But by the common calamity of the fire, the Lord has turned you out of house and home, and burnt up your substance before your eyes. Now do but lay your hands seriously upon your hearts, and tell me whether you have not more cause to admire at the mercy of God towards you in' 65, than you have cause to complain of the severities of God towards you in' 66.

(4.) The fourth support to bear up the hearts and to cheer up the spirits of the people of God who have been sufferers, deep sufferers, under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That though they have lost much as they are men, as they are citizens, merchants, tradesmen; yet they have lost nothing as they are Christians, as they are saints, as they are the called and chosen of God. Though they have lost their goods, yet they have not lost their God, Rev 17:14. Though they have lost their shops and chests, yet they have not lost their Christ. Though they have lost their outward comforts, yet they have not lost the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Though they have lost their

houses made with hands, yet they have not lost their 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,' John 14:16, John 14:26; 2Co 5:1. Though they have lost their earthly inheritance, yet they have not lost their heavenly inheritance, 1Pe 1:4. Though they have lost their temporal portions, yet they have not lost their eternal portions, Psa 73:25. Though they have lost their open public trade, yet they have not lost their secret trade, their private trade to heaven, Mat 6:6. I readily grant that your stately houses and your well-furnished shops are turned into ashes, and that your credit is gone, and your trading gone, and your money gone, and you utterly undone as to this world; and yet in all this God has done you no hurt, he has done you no wrong, Gen 18:25: and though this at first sight may seem to be a great paradox, a very strange assertion, yet I shall thus evidence it to be an unquestionable truth. The happiness of man in this life consists, (1.) In his union with God; (2.) In his communion with God; (3.) In his conformity to God; and (4.) fourthly and lastly, In his spiritual fruition and enjoyment of God. Now none of those losses, crosses, and afflictive dispensations that have passed upon you, have or can make any breach upon your happiness, or upon any one of those four things of which your happiness is made up. The top of man's happiness in heaven lies in his near union with God, and in the beatifical vision of God, and in his full communion with God, and in his exact and perfect conformity to God, and in his everlasting fruition and enjoyment of God. Now the more of these things any Christian enjoys in this world, the more of heaven he enjoys on this side heaven, the more happiness he has on this side happiness; and therefore I would willingly know how it is possible for any outward troubles or trials to make a breach upon a Christian's happiness. Doubtless Job was as happy when he sat upon the dunghill, Job 2:1-13, without a rag on his back or a penny in his purse, as he was when he sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, Job 29:25. If God be the most perfect being, then to enjoy him and resemble him is our greatest perfection. If God be the best of beings, then our communion with him and fruition of him must be our greatest glory and highest felicity, omne bonum in summo bono. Let what will befall our outward man, as long as our union and communion with God holds good, as long as our precious and immortal souls are in a safe and flourishing condition, as long as the springs of grace, of holiness, of comfort, of assurance rises in our souls, we are happy, and no outward miseries can make us miserable. There is, saith one, [Augustine,] bona throni, and there is bona scabelli, There is goods of the throne, as God, Christ, the Spirit, grace, the favour of God, pardon of sin, peace of conscience, &c.; and there is goods of the footstool, as food, raiment, house, honours, riches, trade, credit, and all bodily conveniences and accommodations. Now it was not in the power of the flames to burn up the goods of the throne; they still remain safe and secure to you. All that the flames could reach to, was only the goods of the footstool, the lumber of this world. And therefore what cause have you to bear up cheerfully, quietly, sweetly, and contentedly under all your crosses and losses, trials and troubles! 'They which adorn themselves with gold,' saith one, [Clemens Alexandrinus,] 'and think themselves bettered thereby, are worse than gold, and no lords of it, as all should be.' 'He is poor,' saith another, [Gregory the Great,] 'whose soul is void of grace, not whose coffers are empty of money. By these short hints, you may clearly see that the people of God are never the worse for all their losses. They are as happy now they are houseless, moneyless, breadless, friendless, tradeless, as ever they were when they were most surrounded with all the comforts of this life. Woe, woe would be to the people of God, if their happiness should hang upon the comforts of this world, which like a ball are tossed from man to man. A ball of fire, a storm at sea, a false oath, a subtle enemy, a treacherous friend may easily deprive a man of all his earthly blessings at a clap. Now

who so miserable as that man whose blessedness lies in earthly blessings? But,

(5.) The fifth support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That the Lord will certainly, one way or another, make up all their losses to them. Sometimes God makes up his people's outward losses by giving them more of himself, more of his Son, more of his Spirit, more of his favour, more of his grace, as he did by the disciples of Christ, John 16:1-33. When God takes away your carnals and gives you more spirituals, your temporals, and gives you more eternal, your outward losses are made up to you. Now this was the very case of those believing Hebrews, who were turned out of house and home; and who were driven to live in holes and caves and dens of the earth, and who had lost all their goods; not having a bed to lie on, or a stool to sit on, nor a dish to drink in, and who had lost all their apparel, not having a rag to hang on their backs, and therefore clothed themselves in sheep-skins and goat-skins. 'They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance,' Heb 10:34. When under outward losses, God shall seal to his people a bill of exchange of better and greater things than any they have lost; their losses then are made up to them. If a man should lose several bags of counters, and have a bill of exchange sealed to him for the receiving of so many bags of gold, would not his loss be abundantly made up to him? When God takes away our earthly treasures, and seals up in our hearts a bill of exchange, to receive all again with interest upon interest in eternal treasures, then certainly our losses are abundantly made up to us. If men should take away your old clothes, and give you new; your rags, and give you robes; your chaff, and give you wheat; your water, and give you wine; your tin, and give you silver; your brass, and give you gold; your pebbles, and give you pearls; your cottages, and give you royal palaces, certainly you would have no cause to complain, you would have no cause to cry out, Undone! undone! If God takes away your houses, your goods, your trades, your honours, and gives you more of himself, and more grace, and more assurance of glory, he does you no injury. It is an excellent change, to get eternal for temporal. If God takes away your earthly riches, and makes you more rich in grace, in spiritual comforts, in holy experiences, in divine employments, then you are no losers, but great gainers. What are all the necessary comforts of this life to union and communion with God, to interest in Christ, to pardon of sin, to peace of conscience, and to that loving-kindness that is better than life, or better, Chaiim, than lives, as the Hebrew runs? Psa 63:3. If you put many lives together, there is more excellency and glory in the least discovery of divine love than in them all. Many a man has been weary of his life, but never was any man yet weary of the love and favour of God. The least drop of grace, the least smile from heaven, the least cast of Christ's countenance, the least kiss of his mouth, the least embrace of his arm, the least hint of his favour, is more worth than ten thousand worlds, Song of Solomon 2:3-7. That Christian cannot be poor that is rich in grace; nor that Christian cannot be miserable that has God for his portion. That Christian cannot be unhappy who hath a mansion prepared for him in heaven, though he hath not a cottage to hide his head in, in this world; nor that Christian has no cause to complain of want of food for his body whose soul is feasted with manna, with the dainties of heaven, with those rarities that are better than angels' food. He that hath but rags to cover his nakedness, if his soul be clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, he has no reason to complain, Isa 61:10. When Stilpo the philosopher had his wife, and children, and country all burnt up before him, and was asked by Demetrius what loss he had sustained, answered, 'That he had lost nothing; for he counted that only his own which none could take from him—to wit, his virtues. Shall blind nature do more than grace? Shall the

heathen put the Christian to a blush?

Again, sometimes God makes up his people's outward losses, by giving in greater outward mercies than those were that he took from them; as you may see by comparing the first chapter of Job and the last chapter of Job together: Job had all doubled to him. I have read of Dionysius, [Plutarch,] how he took away from one of his nobles almost his whole estate, and seeing him as cheerful and contented as ever, he gave him all that he had taken from him again, and as much more. God many times takes away a little, that he may give more; and sometimes he takes away all, to shew his sovereignty, and then he gives them all back again with interest upon interest, to shew his great liberality and noble bounty. That is a lovely loss, that is made up with so great gain.

Quest. But, sir, how shall we know, or probably conjecture, whether in this world God will make up our worldly losses to us or not? If you please to speak a little to this question, it may be many ways of use unto us.

Now that I may give you a little light to the question, give me leave to put a few questions to such who have been sufferers by the late fiery dispensation:—

[1.] First, Did you make conscience of improving your estates to the glory of God, and the good of others, when you did enjoy them; or did you only make them subservient to your lusts? If you have laid out your estates for God, and for his children's good, it is ten to one but that the Lord, even in this world, will make up your losses to you, Deu 32:15-16; Hos 4:7; Jas 4:3. But if you mis-improved your estates, and turned your mercies into encouragements to sin, then you have more cause to fear that the Lord may further blast you, than you have to hope that God will make up your losses to you. But,

[2.] Secondly, Did you daily and seriously labour to enjoy much of God in all those worldly enjoyments which formerly you were blest withal? If so, it is very probable that the Lord may make up all your losses to you; but if you made a god of your worldly enjoyments—if they had more of your thoughts, and hearts, and time, than God himself had, then you have more cause to fear a further curse, than to expect a future blessing, Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Did your hearts commonly, ordinarily, habitually lie low under your worldly enjoyments? Abraham, under all his worldly enjoyments, was but 'dust and ashes;' and Jacob under his was 'less than the least of all mercies,' Gen 18:27, and Gen 32:10; and so David, under all God's royal favours, his heart lies low: Psa 22:6, 'But I am a worm, and no man.' David in the Arabic tongue signifies a worm, to which he seems to allude. The word in the Hebrew for worm is *tolagnath*, which signifies such a very little worm that a man can very hardly see it or perceive it. Though David was high in the world, yet he was little, yea, very little, in his own eyes. Was it commonly, mostly thus with you when your comforts compassed you round about? If so, then it is very probable that the Lord in this world will make up all your losses to you. But if your blood did commonly rise with your outward goods, and if your hearts did usually so swell under your worldly enjoyments as to say with Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?' Exo 5:2; or to say with Nebuchadnezzar, 'Who is that God that can deliver you out of my hands?' Dan 3:15; or to say with those proud atheists, 'Who is Lord over us?' Psa 12:4; or to say with those proud monsters, 'We are lords, we will come no more unto thee,' &c., Jer 2:31, then you have great cause to fear that God that hath yet some further controversy with you, and, 'except you repent,'

will rather strip you of what you enjoy, than multiply further favours or blessings upon you. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Since God has burnt up your worldly goods, have you been fervent and frequent with God that he would burn up those lusts that have burnt up your comforts before your eyes? Have you pleaded hard with God that a spirit of burning might rest upon you, even that spirit of burning which alone can burn up your sins, your dross? Isa 9:2, and Isa 4:4. Since London hath been laid in ashes, have you made it your great business to treat and trade with God about the destruction of those sins that have laid all desolate? If so, then you have cause to hope that God will turn your captivity, and make up all your losses to you, Job 42:10. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Since God has turned you out of all, are you turned nearer and closer to himself? Though you have been prodigals, yet have you in the light of London's flames seen and found your way to your Father's house? Luk 15:1-32. Then God will make up all your losses to you. When judgments are so sanctified as to bring a people nearer to himself, then God will drop down mercies upon them, Hos 2:18, Hos 2:20. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Has the fire of London been as a pillar of fire to lead you Canaan-wards, heaven-wards? Exo 13:21-22. Has God, by burning up the good things of this world, caused you to set your hearts and affections more than ever upon the great things of another world? If so, then it is a hundred to ten but that the Lord will make up all your losses to you. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Are your hearts, under this fiery dispensation, brought into such a quiet submission to the good will and pleasure of God, as that you can now be contented to be at God's finding, at God's allowance? Php 4:12-14. Can you now be contented to be rich or poor, to have much or little, to be high or low, to be something or nothing, to have all again or to have nothing but necessities again? Are you now willing that God shall choose for you? Can you sit down satisfied with God's allowance, though it be far short of what once you had? Content is the deputy of outward felicity, and supplies the place where it is absent. A contented frame of heart, as to all outward occurrences, is like ballast to a ship, which will help it to sail boldly and safely in all waters. When a man's mind is conformable to his means, all is well. One [Augustine upon Psa 12:1-8] brings in God rebuking a discontented Christian thus: 'What is thy faith? Have I promised thee these things? What! wert thou made a Christian that thou shouldst flourish here in this world?' It is an excellent expression that Bellarmine hath in his Catechism: 'Suppose,' saith he, 'a king, having many children of several ages, should apparel them in cloth of gold: now he that is sixteen years old hath more gold in his robe than the child that is but five or six years old, yet the child would rather have his own garment than his elder brother's, because it is fitter for him.' Surely the fittest estate is the best estate for us. Look, as a great shoe fits not a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger, so a great estate is not always the fittest for us. He that hath most, wants something; and he that hath least, wants nothing, if he wants not a contented spirit. O sirs! let not heathens put you to a blush.

'He that can be content to be at God's finding, as a guest at a table, that takes what is carved for him, and no more, he needs not fawn upon any man, much less violate his conscience for the great things of the world.' When a man's heart is brought down to his condition, he is then temptation-proof. When one told the philosopher, that if he would but please Dionysius, he need not feed upon green herbs; the philosopher replied, 'If thou wert but content to feed upon herbs, thou needest not flatter Dionysius.' A man that can be contented with a little, will keep his ground

in an hour of temptation.

Diogenes the cynic, housed in his tub, and making even with his victuals and the day together, being invited to a great feast, could say, 'I had rather lick salt at Athens, than feast with Craterus.' Diogenes had more content with his tub to shelter him from the injuries of the weather, and with his wooden dish to eat and drink in, than Alexander had with the conquest of half the world, and the fruition of all the honours, pomps, treasures, and pleasures of Asia.

'The way to true riches,' saith Plato, 'is not to increase our heaps, but to diminish the covetousness of our hearts.' And saith Seneca, *Cui cum paupertate bene convenit, pauper non est*, A contented man cannot be a poor man.

I have read of another philosopher, who seeing a prince going by, with the greatest pomp and state imaginable, he said to some about him, 'See how many things I have no need of.' And saith another, 'It were well for the world if there were no gold in it.' But since it is the fountain whence all things flow, it is to be desired, but only as a pass, to travel to our journey's end without begging. When Cræsus, king of Lydia, asked Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, who in the whole world was more happy than he? Solon answered, 'Tellus, who though he was a poor man, yet he was a good man, and content with that which he had.' So Cato could say, as Aulus Gellius reports of him, 'I have neither house, nor plate, nor garments of price, in my hands; what I have, I can use: if not, I can want it. Some blame me because I want many things; and I blame them because they cannot want.' Now shall nature do more than grace? Shall the poor blinded heathen outstrip the knowing Christian? O sirs, he that can lose his will in the will of God, as to the things of this world; he that is willing to be at God's allowance; he that has had much, but can now be satisfied with a little; he that can be contented to be at God's finding—he is of all men the most likely man to have all his losses made up to him. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Are your hearts more drawn out to have this fiery dispensation sanctified to you, than to have your losses made up to you? Do you strive more with God to get good by this dreadful judgment, than to recover your lost goods, and your lost estates? Is this the daily language of your souls, Lord, let this fiery calamity be so sanctified as that it may eminently issue in the mortifying of our sins, in the increase of our graces, in the mending of our hearts, in the reforming of our lives, and in the weaning of our souls from everything below thee; and in the fixing of them upon the great things of eternity! If it be thus with you, it is ten to one but God even in this world will make up your losses to you. But,

(6.) The sixth support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That by fiery dispensations, the Lord will make way for the new heavens and the new earth: he will make way for the glorious deliverance of his people, Isa 9:5, 6; Psa 66:12, Isa 66:15-16, Isa 66:22, 'For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For 'by fire and by his sword,' or by his sword of fire, 'will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.' The great and the glorious things that God will do for his people in the last days are set forth by new heavens and new earth; and these God will bring in by fiery dispensations. The glorious estate of the universal church of Jews and Gentiles on earth is no lower an estate than that of a new heaven and a new earth. Now this

blessed church-state is ushered into the world by fiery judgments. By fiery dispensations God will put an end to the glory of this old world, and bring in the new. Look, as God by a watery deluge made way for one new world, so by a fiery deluge, in the last of the last days, he will make way for another new world, wherein 'shall dwell righteousness,' as Peter speaks, 2Pe 3:10-13. All men in common speech call a new great change a new world. By fiery dispensations God will bring great changes upon the world, and make way for his Son's reign in a more glorious manner than ever he has yet reigned in the world, Rev 18:1-24; Rev 19:1-21, Rev 20:1-15, and Rev 21:1-27. The sum of that I have, in short, to offer to your consideration out of these chapters is this:—'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen. How much she hath glorified herself, so much sorrow and torment shall be given her. Her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And after these things, I heard a great voice of much people, &c., saying, Alleluiah; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are thy judgments; for he hath judged the great whore that hath corrupted the earth, and hath avenged the blood of his saints. And again they said, Alleluiah. And the four and twenty elders said Amen; Alleluiah. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluiah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. And the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire. And the rest were slain with the sword. But the saints reigned with Christ a thousand years in the new heavens and new earth, to whom the kings of the earth and nations of the world bring their honour.' God, by his fiery dispensation upon Babylon, makes way for Christ's reign, and the saints' reign in the new heavens and new earth. But,

(7.) The seventh support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That by fiery dispensations God will bring about the ruin and destruction of his and his people's enemies, Psalms 50:3. Psalm 97:3, 'A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.' Habakkuk 3:5, 'Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet.' Habakkuk 3:7, 'I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble.' Habakkuk 3:12, 'Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger.' Habakkuk 3:13, 'Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed; thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked, by discovering the foundation even to the neck. Selah.' Jeremiah 50:31-32, 'Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him.' There is nothing more fearful or formidable, either to man or beast, than fire: and therefore by fiery dispensations God will take vengeance on the wicked. This will be the more evident, if you please but to consider to what the wicked are compared in Scripture.

[1.] First, They are compared to stubble and chaff, which the fire doth easily consume: Isaiah 5:24, 'Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.' Nah 1:10, 'For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.' Mark that word 'fully dry,' and so as it were prepared and fitted for the flame.

[2.] Secondly, The wicked are compared to thorns: and how easily doth the flaming fire consume them! Isaiah 27:4, 'Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I

would go through them, I would burn them together.' Isa 33:12, 'And the people shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire.' Mark, it is not said as thorns standing and rooted in the earth, and growing with their moisture about them; but as thorns cut up, as dead and dry thorns, which are easily kindled and consumed, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, The wicked are compared to the melting of wax before the fire, and to the passing away of smoke before the wind, Mic 1:4; Psa 8:2.

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, The sudden and certain ruin of the wicked is set forth by the melting of the fat of lambs before the fire: Psa 37:20, 'But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs,' (which of all fat is the most easiest melted before the fire:) 'they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.' The fat of lambs in the sacrifices was wholly to be burnt and consumed, Lev 3:15-17. Thus you see, by the several things to which wicked men are compared, that God by fiery calamities will bring ruin and destruction upon his and his people's enemies. Such as have burnt the people of God out of house and home, may in this world have burning for burning. God loves to retaliate upon his people's enemies, Jdg 1:6, 7. Such as have clapped their hands at the sight of London's flames, may one day lay their hands upon their loins, when they shall find divine justice appearing in flames of fire against them. But,

(8.) The eighth support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That all shall end well, all shall work for good. God, by this fiery dispensation, will do his people a great deal of good. God cast Judah into an iron furnace, into a fiery furnace, but it was for their good. Jer 24:5, 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.' Psa 119:71, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' Though afflictions are naturally evil, yet they are morally good; for by the wise, sanctifying, overruling providence of God, they shall either cure the saints of their spiritual evils, or preserve them from spiritual evils. Though the elements are of contrary qualities, yet divine power and wisdom hath so tempered them, that they all work in a harmonious manner for the good of the universe. So, though sore afflictions, though fiery trials seem to work quite cross and contrary to the saints' prayers and desires, yet they shall be so ordered and tempered by a skilful and omnipotent hand, as that they shall all issue in the saints' good. At the long run, by all sorts of fiery trials, the saints shall have their sins more weakened, their graces more improved, and their experiences more multiplied, their evidences for heaven more cleared, their communion with God more raised, and their hearts and lives more amended. God, by fiery trials, will keep off from his people more trials. God loves by the cross to secure his people from the curse; and certainly it is no bad exchange, to have a cross instead of a curse. God led the Israelites about and about in the wilderness forty years together, but it was to humble them, and prove them, and do them good in their latter end, Deu 8:2, Deu 8:16. God led them through fire and water, Psa 66:12; that is, through variety of sore and sharp afflictions, but all was in order to his bringing them forth into a wealthy place. God stripped Job to his shift, but it was in order to his clothing of him in scarlet: he brought him low, but it was in order to his raising him higher than ever: he set him upon a dunghill, that he might the better fit him to sit upon a throne. 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me,' saith old Jacob, Gen 42:36; but yet as old as he was, he lived to see all working for his good, before he went to his long home. Under all fiery dispensations, God will make good that golden promise, Rom 8:28, 'And we know that all things

work together for good to them that love God.' Mark, the apostle doth not say, we suppose, or we hope, or we conjecture, but we know, I know, and you know, and all the saints know by daily experience, that all their sufferings and afflictions work together for their good: the apostle doth not say *de futuro*, they shall work, but *de præsenti*, they do work. All second causes work together with the first cause for their good who love God, and who are called according to his purpose. The Greek word συνεργεῖν, 'work together,' is a physical expression. Look, as several poisonous ingredients put together, being well tempered and mixed by the skill and care of the prudent apothecary, makes a sovereign medicine, and work together for the good of the patient; so all the afflictions and sufferings that befall the saints, they shall be so wisely, so divinely tempered, ordered, and sanctified by a hand of heaven, as that they shall really and signally work for their good. Those dreadful providences which seem to be most prejudicial to us, shall in the issue prove most beneficial to us, Gen 50:20. Look, as vessels of gold are made by fire, so by fiery dispensations God will make his people vessels of gold, vessels of honour, 2Ti 2:20-21. Commonly the most afflicted Christians are the most golden Christians: Zec 13:9, 'And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.' The fire of London was rather physic than poison. There was more of a paternal chastisement, than there was of an extirpating vengeance in it; and therefore certainly it shall work well, it shall issue well.

(9.) The ninth support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That there was a great mixture of mercy in that dreadful judgment of fire that has turned London into a ruinous heap. At the final destruction of Jerusalem there was not one stone left upon another, Luk 19:41, Luk 19:45. This might have been thy case, O London, had not mercy triumphed over justice, and over all the plots and designs of men. Though many thousand houses are destroyed, yet to the praise of free grace, many thousand houses in the city and suburbs have been preserved from the rage and violence of the flames. What a mercy was that, that Zoar should be standing, when Sodom was laid in ashes! Gen 19:1-38. And what a mercy was this, that your houses should be standing, when so many thousand houses have been laid desolate! Is more than a third part of the city destroyed by fire? Why, the whole city might have been destroyed by fire, and all the suburbs round about it. But in the midst of wrath, God has remembered mercy, Psa 136:23: in the midst of great severity, God has exercised great clemency. Had the fire come on with that rage, fury, and triumph, as to have laid both city and suburbs level, we must have said with the church, 'The Lord is righteous,' Lam 1:18. Had the three children their songs in the midst of the fiery furnace; and why should not they have their songs of praise, whose houses, by a miraculous providence, were preserved in the midst of London's flames? O sirs, what a mixture of mercy was there in this fiery calamity, that all your lives should be spared, and that many of your houses should be preserved, and that much of your goods, your wares, your commodities, should be snatched as so many firebrands out of the fire! If ever there were an obligation put upon a people to cry, Grace, grace, grace! the Lord has put one upon you, who have been sharers in that mixture of mercy that God has extended to the many thousand sufferers by London's flames. Had this judgment of fire been inflicted when the raging pestilence swept away some thousands every week, and when the city was even left naked as to her inhabitants, and when the whole nation was under a dreadful fear, trembling, and dismayedness of spirit, Jos 2:9-11, might there not have been far greater desolations, both of houses, goods, and lives, in the midst of us? Had God

contended with London by pestilence and fire at once, who would have lodged your persons in their beds, or your goods in their barns? Had these two dreadful judgments met, Londoners would have met with but few friends in the world. Well, when I look upon London's sins and deserts on the one hand, and upon the principles, old hatred, plots, designs, rage, and wrath of some malicious persons, on the other hand, Eze 25:15, instead of wondering that so much of the city and suburbs is destroyed, I rather wonder that any one house in the city or suburbs is preserved. Whilst London was in flames, and all men under a high distraction, and all things in a sad confusion, a secret, subtle, designing, powerful enemy might have risen up in the midst of you, that might have spoiled your goods, ravished your wives, deflowered your daughters, and after all this have sheathed their swords in all your bowels: and in that it fell not out thus, what cause have Londoners to bow for ever before preventing and restraining grace! Since the creation of the world, God has never been so severe in the execution of his most dreadful judgments as not to remember mercy in the midst of wrath. When he drowned the old world, who before were drowned in lusts and pleasures, he extended mercy to Noah and his family. When he rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, turning those rich and pleasant cities into ruinous heaps, he gave Lot and his daughters their lives for a prey. And when by fire and sword he had made Jerusalem a dreadful spectacle of his wrath and vengeance, yet then a remnant did escape, Isa 6:11-13; Jer 5:10, Jer 5:18. This truth we citizens have experienced, or else we and our all before this day had been destroyed. Every citizen should have this motto written in characters of gold on his forehead, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,' Lam 3:22. God might have made London like Sodom and Gomorrah; but in the day of his anger some beams of his favour darted forth upon your London. By which means the hopes of some are so far revived as to expect that London yet may be rebuilt and blessed. That is a dreadful word, 'When he begins he will make an end; and the fire of his wrath shall burn, and none shall quench it,' 1Sa 3:12; Jer 4:4, and Jer 21:12. These eradicating judgments had certainly fallen upon London, had not the Lord in the midst of his fury remembered mercy. 'If the Lord had not been on our side,' Psa 124:1-3, may London now say, 'if the Lord had not been on our side when the fire rose up against us, then the fire had swallowed us up quick, when its rage was kindled against us.' Doubtless God never mingled a cup of wrath with more mercy than this.

Though the fire of London was a very great and dreadful fire, yet it was not so great nor so dreadful a fire as that of Sodom and Gomorrah was: for that fire of Sodom and Gomorrah,

[1.] First, It was a miraculous fire—a fire that was, besides, beyond and against the course of nature. Gen 19:24, 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.' Fire mingled with brimstone hath been found, (1.) Most obnoxious to the eyes; (2.) Most loathsome to the smell; and (3.) Most fierce in burning. He hit the mark who, speaking of fire and brimstone, said, *Facillime incenditur, pertinacissime fervet, et difficillime extinguitur*, It is easily kindled, violently swelled, and hardly extinguished. Brimstone and all that vast quantity of sulphureous fiery matter, by which those rich and populous cities were turned into ruinous heaps, were never produced by natural causes, nor after a natural manner, no culinary fire being so speedy in its consumptions, but immediately by God's own miraculous power and almighty arm. But the fire that has laid London in ashes was no such miraculous or extraordinary fire, but such a fire which divine providence permitted and suffered to be kindled and carried on, by such means, instruments, and concurring circumstances as hath buried our glory under heaps of ashes. But,

[2.] Secondly, The fire that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah consumed not only the greater part of those cities, but the whole cities: yea, and not only Sodom and Gomorrah, but all the cities of the plain, except Zoar, which was to be a sanctuary to Lot. But the fire of London has not destroyed the whole city of London; many hundred—may I not say thousands?—houses are yet standing, as monuments of divine power, wisdom, and goodness: and the greatest part of the suburbs are yet preserved; and all the rest of the cities of England are yet compassed about with loving-kindness and mercy; and I hope will be reserved, by a gracious providence, as shelters, as sanctuaries, and as hiding-places to poor England's distressed inhabitants. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The fire that fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah did consume not only places but persons, not only houses but inhabitants. But in the midst of London's flames, God was a wall of fire about the citizens, Zec 2:5; in that day of his fiery indignation, he was very tender of the lives of his people. Though the lumber was burnt, yet God took care of his treasure, of his jewels—to wit, the lives of his people. But having spoken before more largely of this particular, let this touch now suffice.

[4.] Fourthly, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire suddenly and unexpectedly—they were destroyed by fire in a moment: Lam 4:6, 'For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.' Sodom and Gomorrah sustained no long siege from foreign forces, neither were they kept long in sorrows and sufferings, in pains and misery, but they were quickly and suddenly and instantly despatched out of this world into another world. Men had no hand in the destroying of Sodom; no mortal instrument did co-operate in that work. God by his own immediate power overthrew them in a moment. Sodom was very strangely, suddenly, and unexpectedly turned upside down, as in a moment, by God's own hand, without the help of armed soldiers: whereas the Chaldeans' armies continued for a long time in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem, vexing and plaguing the poor people of God. Now in this respect, the punishment of the Jews was a greater punishment than the punishment of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment. But that fire that has turned London into a heap of ashes, was such a fire that was carried on gradually, and that lasted four days, God giving the citizens time to mourn over their sins, to repent, to lay hold on everlasting strength, and to make peace with God. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Sodom's and Gomorrah's judgment is termed eternal fire, Jude 1:7, which expression, as it refers to the places themselves, do import that they were irrecoverably destroyed by fire; so as that they shall lie eternally waste. Those monstrous sinners of Sodom had turned the glory of God into shame, and therefore God will turn them both into a hell here, and a hell hereafter. God will punish unusual sinners with unusual judgments. The punishment by this fire is lasting, yea, everlasting: it is a standing monument of God's high displeasure, Deu 29:23. We never read that ever God repented himself of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. Those cities are under a perpetual destruction, and so shall continue to the end of the world, if we will give credit to authors of great credit and reputation. It well becomes the wisest and best of Christians seriously to consider how God setteth forth the destruction of his church's enemies: Isa 34:8-11, 'For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass

through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.' In these words you have a rhetorical description of that extreme devastation that God will bring upon the enemies of the church, in way of allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But I hope London's doom is not such; for God has given to thousands of her inhabitants a spirit of grace and supplication, Zec 12:10; which is a clear evidence that at the long run they shall certainly carry the day with God. I have faith enough to believe that God will give London's mourners 'beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,' Isa 61:3. And that London may yet be called 'a city of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.' I hope that God will one day say to London, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee,' Isa 60:1-2. By what has been said, it is evident enough that there has been a great mixture of mercy in that fiery dispensation that has passed upon London. And therefore why should not this consideration bear up the hearts of the people of God from fainting and sinking under their present calamity and misery? But,

(10.) The tenth support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the late fiery dispensation, is this—viz., That there are worse judgments than the judgment of fire which God might, but has not, inflicted upon you. Let me evidence the truth of this in these five particulars:—

[1.] First, The bloody sword is a more dreadful judgment than that of fire. Fire may consume a man's house and his estate, but the sword cuts off a man's life. Now at what a poor rate do men value the whole world, when it stands in competition with their lives. He very well knew that man was a very great life-lover, who said, 'Skin for skin,' or skin upon skin, 'and all that a man hath will he give for his life,' Job 2:4. God might have brought upon England, ay, and upon London too, the sword of a foreign enemy, as he did upon Jerusalem and the land of Judea. In that one only city of Jerusalem, during the time of the siege by Vespasian's armies, which were made up of Romans, Syrians, and Arabians, there died and were killed a thousand thousand. At this time there were slain in all Judea in several places to the number of twelve hundred and forty thousand Jews. The whole city of Jerusalem flowed with blood, insomuch that many parts of the city that were set on fire were quenched by the blood of them that were slain. In seventeen years' time the Carthaginian war only in Italy, Spain, and Sicily, consumed and wasted fifteen hundred thousand men. The civil wars between Pompey and Cæsar swallowed down three hundred thousand men. Caius Cæsar did confess it, and gloried in it, that eleven hundred ninety and two thousand men were killed by him in wars. Pompey the Great writ upon Minerva's temple that he had scattered, chased, and killed twenty hundred eighty and three thousand men. Q. Fabius killed a hundred and ten thousand of the Gauls. C. Marius put to the sword two hundred thousand of the Cimbrians. Ætius, in that memorable battle of Catalonia,² slew a hundred sixty and two thousand Huns. Who can number up the many thousands that have fallen by the bloody sword in Europe, from the year 1620 to this year 1667? Ah London! London! thy streets might have flowed with the blood of the slain, as once the streets of Jerusalem, Paris, and others have done. Whilst the fire was a-devouring thy stately houses and palaces, a foreign sword might have been a-destroying thine inhabitants. Whilst the furious flames were a-consuming thy goods, thy wares, thy substance, thy riches, a close and secret enemy, spirited, counselled, and animated from Rome and hell, might have risen up in the midst of thee, that might have mingled together the blood of husbands and

wives, and the blood of parents and children, and the blood of masters and servants, and the blood of rich and poor, and the blood of the honourable with the blood of the vile. Now had this been thy doom, O London! which many feared, and others expected, what a dreadful day would that have been! It is better to see our houses on fire than to see our streets running down with the blood of the slain. But,

[2.] Secondly, God might have inflicted the judgment of famine upon London, which is a more dreadful judgment than that of fire. How sad would that day have been, O London! if thou hadst been so sorely put to it, as to have taken up that sad lamentation of weeping Jeremiah: Lam 2:11-12, Lam 2:19-20, Lam 4:4-5, Lam 4:7-10, and Lam 5:4, Lam 5:6, Lam 5:9-10, 'Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets. They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured into their mother's bosom. Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands towards him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street. Shall the woman eat her fruit, and children of a span long? The tongue of the suckling child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them. They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dunghills. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in the body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire. Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets: their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick. They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people. We have drunken our water for money; our wood is sold unto us. We have given the hand to the Egyptians and Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread. We gat our bread with the peril of our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness. Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine.' So great was the famine in Jerusalem, that a bushel of wheat was sold for a talent, which is six hundred crowns, and the dung and raking of the city sinks was held good commons; and such pinching necessities were they under, that they acted against all piety, honesty, humanity, &c. Women did eat their children of a span long; yea, the hands of pitiful women did boil their own children, and men eat one another; yea, many did eat the flesh of their own arms, according to what the Lord had long before threatened: Isa 9:19-20, 'Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm.' In the reign of William the First there was so great a dearth and famine, especially in Northumberland, that men were glad to eat horses, dogs, cats, and rats, and what else is most abhorrent to nature. In Honorius's reign there was such a scarcity of all manner of provision in Rome, that men were even afraid of one another; and the common voice that was heard in the kirk was *Pone pretium, humanæ carni*, Set a price on man's flesh. In Italy, when it was wasted by the Goths under Justinian, the famine was so great, that in Picene only, fifty thousand persons died with hunger, and not only man's flesh was made meat of, but the very excrements of men also. In the reign of Hubid, king of Spain, there was no rain for six and twenty years together, so that the

drought was so great that all the fountains and rivers, except Iber and Betis, [Baetis,] were dried up; so that the earth gaped in several places, that whole fields were parted, and that many who had thought to have fled into other parts were hindered, and could not get passage over these fearful openings of the earth. Hereby Spain, especially those places nearest the Mediterranean Sea, being stripped naked of all herbs, and the glory of trees being dried up, except a few trees which were preserved upon the banks of the river Betis, men and beasts being consumed with thirst and famine, was turned by this judgment into a miserable solitude and wilderness. The royal line of the kings was by this means extinct; and the poorer sort of men, whose means were short and provision small, went into other places as they could conveniently and with all speed, not being able to stand or stay out this six and twenty years' misery.³ In the Peloponnesian war, at Potidæa, men ate one another, [Thucydides.] When Utica was besieged by Hamilcar, the father of Hannibal, men ate one another, the famine was so great amongst them, [Polybius.] At Antioch in Syria many of the Christians, in the holy war, through famine devoured the dead bodies of the late slain enemies. At the siege of Scodra, horses were dainty meat; yea, they were glad to eat dogs, cats, rats, and the skins of beasts sod. A little mouse, and puddings made of dogs' guts, was sold at so great a price as exceeds all credit. When Hannibal besieged Casilinum, the famine was so great, that a mouse was sold for two hundred groats, that is, for three pounds eighteen shillings and eight pence.⁵ That was a sore famine in Samaria when an ass's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver—that is, say some, for four or five pound, 2Ki 4:25; others say ten, for a shekel of silver was with the Jews as much as two shillings and sixpence with us. By this account an ass's head was sold for ten pounds sterling. In Edward the Second's time, anno 1316, there was so great a famine, that horses, dogs, yea, men and children, were stolen for food; and the thieves newly brought into the jails were torn in pieces and eaten presently, half alive, by such as had been longer there. In war, oppression, captivity, and many other calamities, much of the hand of man is to be seen; but famine is a deep, evident, and apparent judgment, which God himself brings upon the sons of men by his own high hand. Many or most of those calamities that are brought upon us by human means are avoidable by human helps; but famine is that comprehensive judgment, that the highest power on earth cannot help against: 'If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the winepress?' said the king of Israel in the famine of Samaria, 2Ki 6:27. Ah London, London! if the Lord had inflicted upon thy inhabitants this sore judgment of famine, making 'the heavens as iron, and the earth as brass;' if the Lord had cut off all thy delightful and necessary provisions, and thy citizens had been forced to eat one another, or every one to eat the flesh of his own arms, and the fruit of his own body, how dismal would thy condition have been! Lev 26:19; Hab 3:17; Deu 28:23. Certainly such as have been swept away by the raging pestilence ashore, and such as have been slain by the bloody sword at sea, might very well be counted happy, in comparison of those who should live and die under that lingering judgment of a famine. Doubtless famine is a sorer judgment than either sword, fire, or pestilence. There be many deaths in a dearth. Famine is the top of all human calamities, as Basil termeth it. Extreme hunger hath made mothers murderers, and so turned the sanctuary of life into the shambles of death.

[3.] Thirdly, God might have overturned London and her inhabitants in a moment by some great and dreadful earthquake, as he hath done several great, rich, strong, and populous cities and towns in former times, Isa 13:13, and Psalms 18:7. Under Tiberius the emperor thirteen cities of Asia fell down with an earthquake, and six under Trajan, and twelve under Constantine. In Campania,

Ferrara in Italy, 1569, in the space of forty hours, by reason of an earthquake, many palaces, temples, and houses were overthrown, with the loss of many a man, the loss amounting to forty hundred thousand pounds. In the year 1171, there was such a mighty earthquake that the city Tripoli, and a great part of Damascus in Antiochia, and Hulcipre (?), the chief city in the kingdom of Loradin (?), and other cities of the Saracens, either perished utterly or were wonderfully defaced. In the year 1509, [Bodin,] in the month of September, there was so great an earthquake at Constantinople, that there were thirteen thousand men destroyed by it, and the city miserably shattered and ruined by it. In the reign of Henry the First,² the earth moved with so great a violence, that many buildings were shaken down; and Malmesbury saith, 'That the house wherein he sat was lifted up with a double remove, and at the third time settled again in the proper place.' Also in divers places it yielded forth a hideous noise, and cast forth flames. In Lombardy [Hoveden] there was an earthquake that continued forty days, and removed a town from the place where it stood a great way off. In the eleventh year of the reign of King Henry the Second, on the six and twentieth day of January, was so great an earthquake in Ely, Norfolk, and Suffolk, that it overthrew them that stood upon their feet, and made the bells to ring in the steeples. In the four and twentieth year of his reign, in the territory of Darlington, in the bishopric of Durham, the earth lifted up herself in the manner of a high tower, and so remained unmovable from morning till evening, and then fell with so horrible a noise, that it frightened the inhabitants thereabouts, and the earth, swallowing it up, made there a deep pit, which is seen at this day; for a testimony whereof, Leland saith he saw the pits there, commonly called hell-kettles. In the year 1666, the city of Ragusa was overthrown by a most dreadful earthquake, and all the inhabitants, which were many thousands, except a few hundred, were destroyed, and buried in the ruins of that city. At Berne, anno 1584,² near unto which city a certain hill, carried violently beyond and over other hills, is reported by Polanus, who lived in those parts, to have covered a whole village, that had ninety families in it, one half house only excepted, wherein the master of the family, with his wife and children, were earnestly calling upon God. Oh the terror of the Lord! and oh the power of fervent prayer! At Pleures (?) in Rhetia, anno 1618, Aug. 25, the whole town was over-covered with a mountain, which with its most swift motion oppressed fifteen hundred. In the days of Uzziah king of Judah, there was such a terrible earthquake, that the people with fear and horror fled from it: Zec 14:5, 'Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah,' Amo 1:1. The Jewish doctors affirm that this amazing earthquake fell out just at that instant time when Uzziah offered incense, and was therefore smitten with a leprosy: but this is but their conjecture. However, this dreadful earthquake was a horrible sign and presage of God's wrath to that sinful people. Josephus tells us that by it half a great hill was removed out of its place, and carried four furlongs another way, so that the highway was obstructed, and the king's gardens utterly marred. The same author further tells us,⁵ that at that time that Cæsar and Anthony made trial of their titles in the Actian war, and in the seventh year of the reign of king Herod, there happened such an earthquake in the country of Judea, that never the like was seen in any other place; so that divers beasts were slain thereby, and that ten thousand men were overwhelmed and destroyed in the ruins of their houses. The same author saith that in the midst of the Actian war, about the beginning of the spring time, there happened so great an earthquake, as slew an infinite multitude of beasts, and thirty thousand people; yet the army had no harm, for it lay in the open field. Upon the report of this dreadful earthquake, and the effects of it, the Arabians were so highly encouraged, that they entered into Judea, supposing that there were no men left alive to resist

them, and that they should certainly conquer the country; and before their coming, they slew the ambassadors of the Jews that were sent unto them. Ah London, London! if the Lord had by some terrible earthquake utterly overthrown thee, and buried all thy inhabitants under thy ruins, as he hath dealt by many cities and citizens, both in former and in these latter times, how dreadful would thy case then have been over what now it is! Certainly such earthquakes as overwhelm both cities and citizens are far greater judgments than such a fire or fires, that only consumes men's houses, but never hurts their persons. God might have inflicted this sore judgment upon thee, O London, but he has not; therefore it concerns thee to be still a-crying, Grace, grace! But,

[4.] Fourthly, God might have inflicted that judgment, both upon city and citizens, that he did upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that appertained to them: Num 16:31–34, 'And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.' Whilst Moses spake these words, saith Josephus,² and intermixed them with tears, the earth trembled, and, shaking, began to remove, after such a manner as when, by the violence of the wind, a great billow of the sea floateth and is tossed hither and thither; hereat all the people were amazed, but after that a horrible and shattering noise was made about their tents, and the earth opened and swallowed up both them and all that which they esteemed dear, which was after a manner so exterminate as nothing remained of theirs to be beheld. Whereupon in a moment the earth closed again, and the vast gaping was fast shut, so as there appeared not any sign of that which had happened. Thus perished they all, leaving behind them an example of God's power and judgments. And this accident was the more miserable, in that there were no one, no, not of their kinsfolks or allies, that had compassion of them; so that all the people whatsoever, forgetting those things which were past, did allow God's justice with joyful acclamations, esteeming them unworthy to be bemoaned, but to be held as the plague and perverters of the people. Oh what a dreadful judgment was this, for persons to be buried alive; for houses and inhabitants, and all their goods, to be swallowed up in a moment! What tongue can express, or heart conceive, the terror and astonishment that fell upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, when the earth, which God had made firm, and established by a perpetual decree to stand fast under men's feet, was weary of bearing them, and therefore opened her mouth and swallowed them and all their concerns up! Ah London, London! if the earth had opened her mouth and swallowed up all thy houses and inhabitants, with all thy goods and riches in a moment; would not this have been ten thousand thousand times a greater judgment than that fiery dispensation that has passed upon thee? But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, God might have rained hell out of heaven upon you, as he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and this would have been a sorer judgment than what he has inflicted upon you, Gen 19:1-38. If God, by raining fire and brimstone from heaven, had consumed your persons, houses, riches, and relations, would not this have been the height of judgment, and infinitely more terrible and dreadful to you than that fiery dispensation that has consumed part of your estates, and turned your houses into ashes? Now by these five things it is most evident that there are worse judgments than the judgment of fire, which God in justice might have inflicted upon you. But

free mercy has so interposed, that God has not stirred up all his wrath; and though he has severely punished you, yet it is less than your iniquities have deserved, Ezr 9:13; and therefore let this consideration support and bear up your hearts under all your present sorrows and sufferings. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, Though your houses are burnt, and your habitations laid desolate, yet your outward condition is not worse than Christ's was when he was in the world. The estate and condition of Christ was low, yea, very low and mean in this world. Witness his own relation when he was upon the earth: 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests,' Mat 8:20,—or resting-places where they go to rest, as under a tent, like as the Greek word properly imports,—'but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' He doth not say, Kings have palaces, but I have none; nor he does not say that rich men have houses and lands and lordships to entertain their followers, but I have none; but, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' Christ was willing to undeceive the scribe, and to shew him his mistake. Thou thinkest, O scribe, by following of me to get riches, and honour, and preferment, and to be somebody in the world, but thou art highly mistaken; for I have neither silver nor gold, lands nor lordships, no, not so much as a house to put my head in. When I was born, I was born in a stable and laid in a manger, Luk 2:17; and now I live upon others, and am maintained by others, Luk 8:3. I am not rich enough to pay my tribute, and therefore do not deceive thyself, Mat 17:27. The great Architect of the world had not a house to put his head in, but emptied himself of all, and became poor to make us rich, not in goods, but in grace, not in worldly wealth, but in the treasures of another world, Php 2:7; 2Co 8:9. He that was heir of both worlds had not a house of his own to put his head in. Christ lived poor and died poor. As he was born in another man's house, so he was buried in another man's tomb. Austin observes, when Christ died he made no will, he had no crown-lands, only his coat was left, and that the soldiers parted amongst themselves. Are you houseless, are you penniless, are you poor, and low, and mean in this world? So was Christ. Remember 'the servant is not greater than his lord,' John 13:16. It is good seriously to ponder upon that saying of Christ, 'The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord,' Mat 10:24-25. If Joab the lord-general be in tents, it is a shame for Uriah to take his ease at home in a soft bed. It is unseemly to see the head all begored with blood and crowned with thorns, and the members to be decked with roses and jewels, and to smell of rich odours, spices, and perfumes. Art thou in a worse condition than Christ was in this world? Oh no, no! Why then dost thou murmur and complain? Why dost thou say there is no sorrow to thy sorrow, nor no suffering to thy suffering? O sirs! it is honour enough for the disciples of Christ to fare as Christ fared in this world. Why should the servant be in a better condition than his lord? Is not that servant happy enough that is equal with his lord? Did the burnt citizens but seriously and frequently meditate and ponder upon the poverty and low estate of Christ whilst he was in this world, their hearts would be more calm and quiet under all their crosses and losses than now they are. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, Though your houses are burnt, and your habitations laid desolate, and you have no certain dwelling-place, &c., yet your outward condition in this world is not worse than theirs was 'of whom this world was not worthy:' Lam 5:2, 'Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens;' Psa 107:4-5, 'They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted in them;' 1Co 4:11, 'Even unto this present hour we both

hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;’ Heb 11:37-38, ‘They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth.’ Some of the learned, by their wandering up and down in sheep-skins and goat-skins, do understand their disguising of themselves for their better security. One well observes from the words, [Chrysostom,] that they did not only wander and were removed from their own habitation, but that they were not quiet even in the woods, deserts, mountains, dens, and caves of the earth, but were hunted by their persecutors from desert to desert, and from mountain to mountain, and from den to den, and from one cave to another. But hereupon some might be ready to object and reply,

Obj. These were the very worst of the worst of men. Surely these were very vile, base, and unworthy wretches, these were the greatest of sinners, &c.

Ans. Oh no; they were such, saith the Holy Ghost, ‘of whom the world was not worthy.’ The heathenish world, the poor, blind, ignorant, atheistical world, the profane, superstitious, idolatrous, oppressing, and persecuting world was not worthy of them—that is, they were not worthy, (1.) Of their presence and company. (2.) They were not worthy of their prayers and tears. (3.) They were not worthy of their counsel and advice. (4.) They were not worthy of their gracious lives and examples. In this scripture you may plainly see that their wandering up and down in deserts, and on the mountains, and in dens, and in the caves of the earth, is reckoned up amongst those great and dreadful things that the saints suffered in that woeful day. Those precious souls that dwelt in caves and dens, and wandered up and down in sheep-skins and goat-skins, might have rustled in their silks, satins, and velvets; they might, Nebuchadnezzar-like, have vaunted themselves on their stately turrets and palaces, if they would have wounded their consciences and have turned their backs upon Christ and religion. Now if the burnt-up citizens of London would but seriously lay to heart the sad dispensations of God towards his choicest worthies, then their hearts would neither faint nor sink under their present losses, crosses, and sufferings. But,

(13.) Thirteenthly and lastly, There is a worse fire than that which has turned London into a ruinous heap—viz., the fire of hell, which Christ has freed believers from. There is ‘unquenchable fire:’ Mat 3:12, ‘He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ There is ‘everlasting burnings:’ Isa 33:14, ‘The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Luk 3:17; Mat 18:8. Wicked men, who are now the only burning jolly fellows of the time, shall one day go from burning to burning; from burning in sin, to burning in hell; from burning in flames of lusts, to burning in flames of torment, except there be found repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on God’s. O sirs! in this devouring fire, in these everlasting burnings, Cain shall find no cities to build, nor his posterity shall have no instruments of music to invent there; none shall take up the timbrel or harp, or rejoice at the sound of the organ. There Belshazzar cannot drink wine in bowls, nor eat the lambs out of the flock, nor the calves out of the midst of the stall. In everlasting burnings there will be no merry company to pass time away; nor no dice to cast care away; nor no cellars of wine wherein to drown the sinner’s grief, Gen 4:17; Amo 6:5; Job 21:12; Dan 5:23; Amo 6:4. There is everlasting fire: Mat 25:41, ‘Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’ This terrible sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe. The last words that ever

Christ will speak in this world will be the most tormenting and amazing, the most killing and damning, the most stinging and wounding, 'Depart from me.' There is rejection: pack, begone, get you out of my sight, let me never see your faces more! It was a heavy doom that was passed upon Nebuchadnezzar, Dan 4:25, that he should be driven from the society of men, and, in an extremity of a sottish melancholy, spend his time among the beasts of the field; but that was nothing to this soul-killing word, 'Depart from me.' It was nothing to men's being cast out of the presence of Christ for ever. The remembrance of which made one to pray thus, 'O Lord, deliver me at the great day from that killing word depart. And what saith another?—

'This word depart, the goats with horror hears; But this word come, the sheep to joy appears.'

Basil saith, 'That an alienation and utter separation from God is more grievous than the pains of hell.' Chrysostom saith,⁵ 'That the torments of a thousand hells, if there were so many, comes far short of this one—to wit, to be turned out of God's presence with a Non novi vos, I know you not.' What a grief were it here to be banished from the king's court with Absalom, or to be turned out of doors with Hagar and Ishmael, or to be cast out of God's presence with cursed Cain! But what is all this to a man's being excommunicated, and cast out of the presence of God, of Christ, of the angels, and out of the general assembly of the saints and congregation of the firstborn? To be secluded from the presence of God is of all miseries the greatest, Heb 12:22-23. The serious thoughts of this made one say, 'Many do abhor hell, but I esteem the fall from that glory to be a greater punishment than hell itself; it is better to endure ten thousand thunder-claps than be deprived of the beatifical vision.' Certainly the tears of hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven. If those precious souls wept because they should see Paul's face no more, Acts 20:38, how deplorable is the eternal deprivation of the beatifical vision! 'Depart from me,' is the first and worst of that dreadful sentence which Christ shall pass upon sinners at last. Every syllable sounds horror and terror, grief and sorrow, amazement and astonishment to all whom it doth concern.

'Ye cursed:' there is the malediction. But Lord, if we must depart, let us depart blessed. No, 'depart ye cursed:' you have cursed others, and now you shall be cursed yourselves; you shall be cursed in your bodies, and cursed in your souls; you shall be cursed of God, and cursed of Christ, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions. Yea, you shall now curse your very selves, your very souls, that ever you have despised the gospel, refused the offers of grace, scorned Christ, and neglected the means of your salvation. O sinners, sinners, all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls! Now thou cursest every man and thing that stands in the way of thy lusts, and that crosses thy designs; but at last all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon thee. Surely that man is cursed with a witness that is cursed by Christ himself!

But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place! No, 'Depart ye into everlasting fire.' There is the vengeance and continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, that shall neither consume itself, nor consume you. Eternity of extremity is the hell of hell. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled, could never be quenched. If all the fires that ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as painted fire upon the wall to the fire of hell. If it be so sad a spectacle to behold a malefactor's flesh consumed by piecemeals in a lingering fire, ah, how sad, how dreadful, would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire, not for a day, a

month, or a year, or a hundred or a thousand years, but for ever and ever! If it were, saith one, [Cyril.] but for a thousand years, I could bear it; but seeing it is for eternity, this amazeth and affrighteth me! I am afraid of hell, saith another, [Isidore.] because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goes out. For to be tormented without end, this is that which goes beyond all the bounds of desperation. Grievous is the torment of the damned for the bitterness of the punishments, but it is more grievous for the diversity of the punishments, but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments.² To lie in everlasting torments, to roar for ever for disquietness of heart, to rage for ever for madness of soul, to weep, and grieve, and gnash the teeth for ever, is a misery beyond all expression, Mat 25:46. Bellarmine out of Barocius tells of a learned man who, after his death, appeared to his friend complaining that he was adjudged to hell-torments, which, saith he, were they to last but a thousand thousand years, I should think it tolerable, but, alas, they are eternal! And it is called 'eternal fire,' Jude 1:7. I have read of a prison among the Persians which was deep, and wide, and dark, and out of which the prisoners could never get, and therefore it was called by them Lethe, Forgetfulness: this prison was a paradise to hell. Mark, everything that is conducive to the torments of the damned is eternal. (1.) God that damns them is eternal, Isa 33:14; Rom 16:26. (2.) The fire that torments them is eternal, Isa 30:33, and 66:24; Jude 1:7. (3.) The prison and chains that holds them are eternal, Jude 1:6-7, Jude 1:13; 2Pe 2:17. (4.) The worm that gnaws them is eternal, Mark 9:44. Melanchthon calls it a hellish fury. (5.) The sentence that shall be passed upon them shall be eternal, Mat 25:41-42. The fire of hell is called a burning lake: Rev 20:15, 'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.' You shall know that fire is the most tormenting element. Oh the most dreadful impressions that it makes upon the flesh! The schoolmen distinguish thus of fire—they say there is ignis ardoris, fætoris, et terroris, fire of heat, of stench, and of terror: of heat, as in Mount Etna; of stench, as in Mount Heda; of terror and fear, as ignis fulguris, the fire of lightning in America: all these fires they say are in hell. But to let the schoolmen pass. It is disputed among many of the learned whether there be material fire in hell or no. That it is very probable that there is material fire in hell, or that which is full as terrible, or more terrible, may, I suppose, be thus evidenced:—

[1.] First, The fire of hell is frequently mentioned in the blessed Scripture. 'Who shall say to his brother, Thou fool! shall be in danger of hell-fire.' At the day of judgment the tares are burnt in the fire, Mat 13:40. Into this fire offending members are cast, Mat 18:18-19. To this everlasting fire the goats are adjudged, Mat 25:41. In this fire those that worship the beast are tormented, Rev 14:10. And the Sodomites at this very day suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 1:7. Into this fire shall all barren and unfruitful Christians be cast: Mat 3:10, 'And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees, therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.' Negative goodness will never secure a man either from the axe or from the fire. Yea, every man and woman under heaven that keeps off from Christ, and that lives and dies out of Christ, and that are never entered into a marriage union with Christ, they shall all be cast into this fire: John 15:6, 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch that is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.' Thus you see how the Scripture runs. Now you know that it is safest for us to adhere to the very letter of the Scripture, unless evident and necessary occasion draw us from a literal interpretation of it. But,

[2.] Secondly, To this fire is ascribed sulphur, flames, wood: Isa 30:33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old,' that is, hell; those terrible allusions to Tophet, to the shrieks and yellings of those children that

were sacrificed there, are but dark representations of the pain and miseries of the damned: 'yea, for the king it is prepared;' if princes be wicked, it is neither their power nor their policy, their dignity or worldly glory, that can secure them from Tophet. 'He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it;' 2Ki 23:18. Now he shall be an Apollo to me that can shew me where the Lord in his word gives such properties to immaterial fire that are here given in the text. But yet remember this, that that God that makes the damned live without food, is able to maintain this fire without wood. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Fire is the most furious of all elements, and therefore the bodies of men cannot be more exquisitely tormented than with fire. The bodies that sinned on earth shall be punished and tormented in hell. Now what can be more grievous and vexatious, more afflicting and tormenting to the bodies of men, than material fire? Bilney the martyr could not endure to hold his finger in the flame of a candle for a little while, for a quarter of an hour, though he tried to do it before he burnt at the stake. Oh, then, how will the bodies of men endure to dwell in unquenchable fire, to dwell in everlasting burnings! The brick-kilns of Egypt, the furnace of Babel, are but as the glowing sparkle, or as the blaze of a brush-faggot, to this tormenting Tophet, that has been prepared of old to punish the bodies of sinners with. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Several of the fathers and schools generally agree that the fire which shall torment the wicked in hell shall be material fire; but yet they say that this material fire shall wonderfully exceed ours, both in degree of heat and fierceness of burning. Our elementary or culinary fire is no more to be compared with the fire of hell, than fire painted upon the wall is to be compared with fire burning in our chimneys. Si igne damnabit reprobos, quare non in igne cruciabit damnatos, says one of the ancients, If he will judge the reprobates in fire, why not condemn them to fire?

Obj. But if it be material fire, then it may be quenched; besides, we see by common experience that material fire in a short time will consume and spend itself. Neither can we see how material fire can make impressions upon spirits, as the devils and souls of men are.

Ans. [1.] First, Do not we find that the bush burned and was not consumed? Exo 3:2-3. Though all clothes by daily experience wax old, yet when the Israelites were in their wilderness-condition their clothes did not wax old: Deu 8:4, 'Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years': Neh 9:21, 'Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.' Their clothes were never the worse for wearing. God by his almighty power kept their clothes from waxing old; and so God by his almighty power can keep the fire of hell unquenchable. But,

[2.] Secondly, Such as thus object, draw things to the scantling of their own reason, which may be many ways of a dangerous consequence both to themselves and others. Certainly such as go about to make the fire of hell only spiritual fire, they go about to make it no fire at all; for it passeth the natural fire to be spiritual. But,

[3.] Thirdly, We see in this life that bodily tortures work upon the spirits in the same bodies: and why may it not be so in hell? Do not men by their daily experience find that their souls are frequently afflicted in and under corporeal distempers, diseases, and weaknesses? Doubtless God can by his almighty power infuse such power into material fire as to make it the instrument of his dreadful wrath and vengeance, to plague, punish, scorch, and burn the souls of damned sinners.

Bodies and souls are co-partners in the same sins, and therefore God may make them co-partners in the same punishments. Every creature is such as the great God will have it to be, and commands it to be; and therefore if the Lord shall lay a command upon the fire of hell to reach and burn the souls of damned sinners, it shall certainly do it. God is the God of nature as well as the God of grace; and therefore I cannot see how the fire of hell can be said now to act against its own nature, when it does but act according to the will and command of the God of nature. I readily grant that if you consider infernal fire in itself, or in its own nature, and so it cannot have any power on such a spiritual substance as the soul of man is; but if you consider infernal fire as an instrument in an almighty hand, and so it can act upon such spiritual beings as devils and damned souls are, and make the same dreadful and painful impressions upon them as it would do upon corporeal beings. Though spirits have nothing material in their nature which that infernal fire should work upon, yet such is the almighty power of God that he can make spirits most sensible of those fiery tortures and torments which he has declared and appointed for them to undergo. Let them tell us, saith one, [Dr Jackson,] how it is possible that the soul of man, which is an immortal substance, should be truly wedded to the body or material substance: and I shall as easily answer them, that it is as possible for the same soul to be as easily wrought upon by a material fire. It is much disputed and controverted among the schoolmen how the devils can be tormented with corporeal fire, seeing they are spirits; and, as I suppose, it is well concluded of them thus—1. First, That in hell there is corporeal fire, as appears thus: (1.) Because the Scripture affirms it, Mat 3:10, Mat 5:22, and Mat 25:41: (2.) Because the bodies sinning against God are to be vexed and tormented with corporeal pains. 2. Secondly, They conclude that the devils are tormented in that fire because Christ saith so: Mat 25:41, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' 3. Thirdly, It being demanded, How the devils are tormented in that fire? they answer, They are tormented, not only, First, With the sight of it; or Secondly, With an imaginary apprehension thereof; but Thirdly, As an instrument ordained of God for that very end; and Fourthly, Ut locus locatum continens et cogens. Hell is a fiery region, or a region of fire; and therefore the devils being contained and included therein, must needs be tormented thereby. Cum Dives ab igne patiatur, quis neget, animas ignibus puniri. None must question this truth, saith my author, that souls and spirits are punished by fire, seeing our Saviour himself telleth us that Dives, who was in hell but in soul, was tormented in the flames, Luk 16:24. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is not safe to leave the plain letter of the Scripture to allegorise; and whether the opinion of metaphorical fire in hell, hath not been an introduction to that opinion that many have taken up in these days—viz., that there is no other hell but what is within us, I shall not now stand to determine. I know Calvin, and some others, are for the allegory; and they give this for a reason, that there is mention made of wood, and of a worm, as well as fire. Now these are allegorical, and therefore the fire is allegorical also. But by their favour, we find in the Scripture that those things which are spoken together are not always taken in the same nature and manner. As, for example, Christ is called, 'the rock of our salvation,' Deu 32:15, Deu 32:18, Deu 32:30-31; 2Sa 22:47; 1Co 10:4. Now the rock is allegorical; is our salvation therefore allegorical? So likewise Luk 22:30, 'Ye shall eat and drink,' saith our Saviour, 'at my table in my kingdom.' Eating and drinking is allegorical: is therefore the kingdom allegorical too? Allegories are not to be admitted but where the Scripture itself doth warrant them; and commonly where an allegory is propounded, there it is also expounded. As in Gal 4:24, 'Which things are an allegory; for these are the two testaments.' Many men have been too wanton with allegories. Origen, Ambrose, Jerome, and several others of

the ancients, have been blamed for it by learned men. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I cannot tell but that the fire by which the damned shall be punished, may be partly material, and partly spiritual; partly material, to work upon the body, and partly spiritual, to torment the soul. Dr Gouge puts this question, Is it a material fire wherewith the damned in hell are tormented? and gives this answer—viz., This is too curious a point to resolve to the full; but yet this answer may safely be returned, It is no wasting or consuming fire, but a torturing; and so far corporeal, as it tormenteth the body; and so far incorporeal, as it tormenteth the soul. Socrates, speaking of hell, saith, I was never there myself, neither have I ever spoke with any that came from thence. Suppose, saith one, [Mr Bolton,] there be no fire in hell, yet I assure thee this, that thou shalt be scorched with fire; the fire of God's wrath shall torment thee more than bodily fire can do, and therefore it will be your wisdom not so much to question this or that about hell-fire, as to make it your work, your business, not to come there. He gave good counsel who said, [Bernard,] Let us go down to hell while we are alive, that we may not go to hell when we are dead. And so did he who, speaking of hell, said, [Chrysostom,] *Ne quæramus ubi sit, sed quomodo illam fugiamus*, Let us not seek where it is, but how we shall avoid it. The same author gives this further counsel—viz., That at all banquets, feasts, and public meetings, men should talk of hellish pains and torments, that so their hearts may be overawed, and they provoked to avoid them and secure themselves against them. Doubtless, the serious thoughts of hellish pain while men live, is one blessed way to keep them from those torments when they come to die. Another gives this pious counsel, Let us earnestly importune the Lord, that this knowledge, whether the fire of hell be material or not, be never manifested to us by experience. It is infinitely better to endeavour the avoiding hell-fire, than curiously to dispute about it. Look, as there is nothing more grievous than hell, so there is nothing more profitable than the fear of it.

Obj. But what difference is there between our common fire and hell-fire?

I answer, a mighty difference, a vast difference. Take it in these six particulars:—

[1.] First, They differ in their heat. No heart can conceive, nor no tongue can express the exquisite heat of infernal fire. Were all the fires under heaven contracted into one fire; yea, were all the coals, wood, oil, hemp, flax, pitch, tar, brimstone, and all other combustibles in the world contracted into one flame, into one fire, yet one spark of infernal fire would be more hot, violent, dreadful, amazing, astonishing, raging, and tormenting, than all that fire that is supposedly made up of all the combustibles the earth affords. To man's sense, there is nothing more terrible and afflictive than fire; and of all fires, there is none so scalding and tormenting as that of brimstone. Now in that lake which burns with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, shall the wicked of the earth be cast. Infernal fire far exceeds ours—that are on our hearths and in our chimneys—in degree of heat and fierceness of burning. Our fire hath not that terrible power to scorch, burn, torment, as the fire of hell hath. Our fire, as Polycarpus and others say, compared to hell-fire, is but like painted fire upon the wall. Now you know a painted fire upon the wall will not hurt you, nor burn, nor affright you, nor torment you; but the fire of hell will, beyond all your conception and expression, hurt, burn, affright, and torment you. The fire of hell, for degrees of heat, and fierceness of burning, must wonderfully surpass our most furious fires, because it is purposely created by God to torment the creature, whereas our ordinary fire was created by God only for the comfort of the creature. The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth, are but ice in

comparison of the fire of hell, [Alsted.]

[2.] Secondly, There are unexpressible torments in hell, as well as unspeakable joys in heaven. Some who write of purgatory, tell us that the pains thereof are more exquisite, though of shorter continuance, than the united torments that the earth can invent, though of longer duration. If the pope's kitchen be so warm, how hot is the devil's furnace? A poetical fiction is but a meiosis, when brought to shew the nature of these real torments: the lashes of furies are but petty scourgings, when compared to the stripes of a wounded conscience. Tytius his vulture, though feeding on his liver, is but a flea-biting to that worm which gnaweth their hearts and dieth not. Ixion his wheel is a place of rest, if compared with those billows of wrath, and that wheel of justice, which is in hell brought over the ungodly. The task of Danaüs his daughter is but a sport, compared to the tortures of those whose souls are filled with bitterness, and within whom are the arrows of the Almighty, the poison whereof doth drink up their spirits. Hell is called a furnace of fire, which speaketh intolerable heat; a place of torment, which speaketh a total privation of ease; a prison, which speaketh restraint, Mat 13:42; Luk 16:28; Mat 5:22-25 : Gehenna, from the valley of Hinnom, where the unnatural parents did sacrifice the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls to their merciless idols,—the which word, by a neighbour nation, is retained to signify a rock,—than the torture of which what more exquisite? It is called a lake of fire and brimstone; than the torment of the former, what more acute? than the smell of the latter, what more noisome? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Our fire is made by the hand of man, and must be maintained by continual supplies of fuel. Take away the coals, the wood, the combustible matter, and the fire goes out; but the infernal fire is created, and tempered, and blown by the hand of an angry, sin-revenging God: Isa 30:33, 'For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it;' and therefore the breath of all the reprobates in hell shall never be able to blow it out. Our fire is blown by an airy breath, but the infernal fire is blown by the angry breath of the great God, which burns far hotter than ten thousand thousand rivers of brimstone. The breath of God's mouth shall be both bellows and fuel to the infernal fire; and therefore, oh how terrible and torturing, how fierce and raging will that fire be! If but three drops of brimstone should fall upon any part of the flesh of a man, it would fill him so full of torment, that he would not be able to forbear roaring out for pain and anguish. Oh how dreadful and painful will it be then for damned sinners to swim up and down in a lake or river of fire and brimstone for ever and ever! There is no proportion between the heat of our breath and the fire that it blows. Oh then, what a dreadful, what an amazing, what an astonishing fire must that needs be which is blown by a breath dissolved into brimstone! God's wrath and indignation shall be an everlasting supply to hell's conflagration. Ah sinners, how fearful, how formidable, how unconceivable will this infernal fire prove! Surely there is no misery, no torment to that of lying in a torrent of burning brimstone for ever and ever! Mark, this infernal fire is a fire prepared by God himself, to punish and torment all impenitent persons and reprobate rebels, who scorned to submit to the sceptre of Christ. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat 25:41. The wisdom of God hath been much exercised in preparing and devising the most tormenting temper for that formidable fire, in which the devil and his angels shall be punished for ever and ever. Not as if it were not prepared also for wicked and ungodly men; but it is said to be prepared for the devil and his angels, because it was firstly and chiefly prepared for them. All impenitent sinners shall have the devil and his angels for their

constant companions; and therefore they shall be sure to share with them in the extremity and inevitableness of their torments. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Our fire when it burneth it shineth, it casts a light. Our fire burns, and in burning shines; light is a natural property of our common fire. It is true, the elementary fire in its own sphere shineth not, because of its subtleness, and the infernal fire of hell shineth not, because of its grossness; yet our ordinary fire, being of a mixed nature, hath light as well as heat in it, and that is our comfort. It hath light to shew itself to us, and to ourselves, and it hath light to shew others to us, and us to others, &c. Some men can work as well as talk by the light of the fire. Our fires have their beams and rays as well as the sun: but the fire of hell burns, but it does not shine, it gives no light at all. Infernal fire hath no light or brightness attending of it, and therefore Christ calls it 'utter darkness,' or outer darkness, that is, darkness beyond a darkness, Mat 25:30, and Mat 8:12. I have read of a young man who was very loose and vain in his life, and was very fearful of being in the dark, who, after falling sick and could not sleep, cried out, Oh, if this darkness be so terrible, what is eternal darkness? Hell would not be so uncomfortable a prison if it were not so dark a prison. Light is a blessing that shall never shine into that infernal prison. In Jude (ver. 6) you read of 'chains of darkness.' It would be a little ease, a little comfort, to the damned in hell, if they might have but light and liberty to walk up and down the infernal coasts; but this is too high a favour for them to enjoy, and therefore they shall be chained and staked down in chains of darkness, and in blackness of darkness, that so they may fully undergo the scorchings and burnings of divine wrath and fury for ever and ever. In ver. 13 you thus read, 'To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.' The words are a Hebraism, and signify exceeding great darkness. Hell is a very dark and dismal region, and extreme are the miseries, horrors, and torments which are there. The poets described the darkness of hell by the Cimmerian darkness. There was a territory in Italy betwixt Baiæ and Cumæ, where the Cimmerii inhabit, which was so environed with hills, and overshadowed with such hanging promontories, that the sun never comes at it. The darkness of Egypt was such a strong and horrid thick darkness, that it was palpable, it might be felt. 'Even darkness which may be felt,' Exo 10:21. The darkness that is here threatened is called 'darkness that may be felt,' either by way of a hyperbole, to signify what an exceeding great darkness it should be; or else because the air should be so thickened with gross mists and thick foggy vapours, that it might be felt; or else because this extraordinary darkness should be caused by a withdrawment of the light of the celestial bodies, or by drawing a thick curtain of very black clouds betwixt men's eyes and them. Yet this horrid darkness was nothing to the darkness of hell. The darkness of Egypt was but as an overcasting for three days: Exo 10:22-23, 'And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place three days.' For three days they were deprived not only of the natural lights and lamps of heaven, but of all artificial light also. It is possible that the vapours might be so thick and moist as to put out their candles, and all other lights that were kindled by them. It is probable that they had neither light from sun, moon, or stars above, nor yet from fire or candle below; so that they were as blind men that could not see at all, and as lame men that could not move from their places; and so they sate still as under the arrest of this darkness, because they could not see what to do, nor whither to go. God would teach them the worth of light, by the want of it. Some think that by that dreadful judgment of thick darkness, they were filled with that terror and horror, that they durst not so much as move from the places where they sate down. But after these three days of darkness were over, the Egyptians enjoyed the glorious light of the sun again. Oh, but sinners [when they]

are in hell, when they are in chains of darkness, when they are in blackness of darkness, they shall never see light more! Hell is a house without light. Gregory, and all other authors that I have cast my eye upon, agree in this, that though our fire hath light as well as heat, yet the infernal fire hath only heat to burn sinners; it has no light to refresh sinners; and this will be no small addition to their torment. A philosopher being asked, whether it were not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? answered, that that was a blind man's question. Surely life without light is but a lifeless life. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Our fire burns and consumes only the body, it reaches not, it torments not the precious and immortal soul; but infernal fire burns and torments both body and soul. Now the soul of pain is the pain of the soul: Mat 10:28, 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' If the glutton in the historical parable, who had but one half of himself in hell, viz., his soul, Luk 16:24, cried out that he was horribly tormented in that flame; what tongue can express or heart conceive how great the damned's torments shall be in hell, when their bodies and souls in the great day shall be reunited for torture? Beloved, it is a just and righteous thing with God, that such bodies and souls that have sinned impenitently together should be tormented everlastingly together. To this purpose, the Hebrew doctors have a very pretty parable, [Pet. Martyr,]—viz., That a man planted an orchard, and, going from home, was careful to leave such watchmen as might both keep it from strangers and not deceive him themselves; therefore he appointed one blind, but strong of his limbs, and the other seeing, but a cripple. These two in their master's absence conspired together, and the blind took the lame on his shoulders, and so gathered the fruit; their master returning and finding out this subtlety, punished them both together. Now so shall it be with those two sinful companions, the soul and the body, in the great day of our Lord, 2Co 5:10; 2Th 1:7-10. With Simeon and Levi they have been brethren in iniquity, and so shall be in eternal misery. As body and soul have been one in sinning, so they shall be one in suffering; only remember this, that as the soul has been chief in sin, so it shall be chief in suffering. But, O sirs! if a consumable body be not able to endure burning flames for a day, how will an unconsumable soul and body be able to endure the scorching flames of hell for ever? But,

[6.] Sixthly, Our fire wasteth and consumeth whatsoever is cast into it. It turns flesh into ashes, it turns all combustibles into ashes; but the fire of hell is not of that nature. The fire of hell consumes nothing that is cast into it; it rages, but it does not waste either bodies or souls. Look, as the salamander liveth in the fire, so shall the wicked live in the fire of hell for ever. 'They shall seek for death, but they shall not find it,' Rev 9:6. They shall desire to die, and death shall fly from them. They shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them and to crush them to nothing, Rev 6:16-17. They shall desire that the fire that burns them would consume them to nothing; that the worm that feeds on them would gnaw them to nothing; that the devils which torment them would tear them to nothing, Mark 9:44, Mark 9:46, Mark 9:48. They shall cry to God, who first made them out of nothing, Gen 1:26, to reduce them to that first nothing from whence they came; 'but he that made them will not have mercy on them, he that formed them will not shew them so much favour,' Isa 27:11. Semper comburentur, nunquam consumentur, They shall always be burned, but never consumed. Ah, how well would it be with the damned if in the fire of hell they might be consumed to ashes! But this is their misery, they shall be ever dying, and yet never die; their bodies shall be always a-burning, but never a-consuming. It is dreadful to be perpetual fuel to the flames of hell! What misery to this? for infernal fire to be still a-preying upon damned sinners, and yet never

making an end of them! The two hundred and fifty men that usurped the priest's office were consumed by the fire that came out armed from the Lord against them, Num 16:35. And the fire that Elijah, by an extraordinary spirit of prayer, brought down from heaven upon the two captains and their fifties, consumed them, 2Ki 1:10, 2Ki 1:12. The fierce and furious flames of hell shall burn, but never annihilate, the bodies of the damned. In hell there is no cessation of fire burning, nor of matter burned. Neither flames nor smoke shall consume or choke the impenitent; both the infernal fire, and the burning of the bodies of reprobates in that fire, shall be preserved by the miraculous power and providence of God. The soul through pain and corruption will lose its beate vivere, its happy being; but it will not lose its essentialiter vivere, its essential life or being. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, Our fire may be quenched and extinguished. The hottest flames, the greatest conflagrations have been quenched and extinguished by water. Fires on our hearths and in our chimneys are sometimes put out by the sun's beams, and often they die and go out of themselves. Our fire is maintained with wood, and put out with water; but the fire of hell never goes out, it can never be quenched. It is an everlasting fire, an eternal fire, an unquenchable fire. In Mark 9:43-49, this fire is no less than five times said to be unquenchable, as if the Lord could never speak enough of it. Beloved, the Holy Ghost is never guilty of idle repetitions; but by these frequent repetitions the Holy Ghost would teach men to look about them, and to look upon it as a real thing, and as a serious thing, and not sport themselves with unquenchable flames, nor go to hell in a dream. Certainly the fire into which the damned shall be cast shall be without all intermission of time or punishment. No tears, nor blood, nor time, can extinguish the fire of hell. Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of infernal fire. The damned are in everlasting chains of darkness; they are under the 'vengeance of eternal fire,' Jude 1:7; they are 'in blackness of darkness for ever.' 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever, and they shall have no rest day nor night,' Rev 14:11. The damned in hell would fain die, but they cannot. Mors sine morte, they shall be always dying, yet never dead; they shall be always a-consuming, yet never consumed. 'The smoke of their furnace ascends for ever and ever.' *Æternis punientur pœnis*, they shall be everlastingly punished, saith Mollerus on Psa 9:17. And Musculus on the same text saith, *Animi impiorum cruciatibus debitis apud inferos punientur*, The souls of the ungodly shall be punished in hell with deserved torments. *Ubi per millia millia annorum cruciandi, nec in secula seculorum liberandi*, Myriads of years shall not determine or put a period to their sufferings, saith Augustine. Plato could say that whoever are not expiated, but profane, shall go into hell to be tormented for their wickedness with the greatest, the most bitter, and terrible punishments for ever in that prison of hell. And Trismegistus could say, That souls going out of the body defiled were tossed to and fro with eternal punishments. Yea, the very Turks, speaking of the house of perdition, do affirm, That they who have turned God's grace into wantonness, shall abide eternally in the fire of hell, and there be eternally tormented. A certain religious man going to visit Olympius, who lived cloistered up in a monastery near Jordan, and finding him cloistered up in a dark cell, which he thought uninhabitable by reason of heat and swarms of gnats and flies, and asking him how he could endure to live in such a place, he answered, 'All this is but a light matter, that I may escape eternal torments. I can endure the stinging of gnats, that I might not endure the stinging of conscience and the gnawing of that worm that never dies. This heat thou thinkest grievous, I can easily endure when I think of the eternal fire of hell; these sufferings are but short, but the sufferings of hell are eternal.' Certainly infernal fire is neither tolerable nor terminable. The extremity and eternity of

hellish torments is set forth by the worm that never dieth. Christ at the close of his sermon makes a threefold repetition of this worm: Mark 9:44, 'Where their worm dieth not;' and again, ver. 46, 'Where their worm dieth not;' and again, ver. 48, 'Where their worm dieth not, and their fire goeth not out.' Certainly those punishments are beyond all conception and expression which our Lord Jesus doth so often inculcate within so small a space.

'In hell there's nothing heard but yells and cries; In hell the fire never slacks, nor worm never dies. But where this hell is placed, my muse, stop there.

Lord, shew me what it is, but never where. To worm and fire, to torments there No term he gave; they cannot wear.'

If after so many millions of years as there be drops in the ocean, there might be a deliverance out of hell, this would yield a little ease, a little comfort to the damned. Oh but this word eternity, eternity, eternity, this word everlasting, everlasting, everlasting, will even break the hearts of the damned in ten thousand pieces! There is scarce any pain or torment here on earth but there is ever some hope of ease, mitigation, or intermission, there is some hope of relief or delivery; but in hell the torments there are all easeless, remediless, and endless. Here if one fall into the fire, he may like a brand be pulled out of it and saved; but out of that fiery lake there is no redemption. That majesty that the sinner hath offended and provoked is an infinite majesty. Now there must be some proportion betwixt the sinner's sin, and his punishment and torment. Now the sinner being a finite creature, he is not capable of bearing the weight of that punishment or torment that is intensively infinite, because it would be his abolishing or annihilating; and therefore he must bear the weight of that punishment or torment that is extensively infinite—namely, *duracione infinita*, infinite in the continuance and endurance. What is wanting in torment must be made up in time. Everlasting fire and everlasting punishment in the New Testament is directly opposed to eternal life, to that blessed state of the righteous which will never have an end; and therefore, according to the rules and maxims of right reason, doth necessarily import a punishment of the same duration that the reward is. Now the reward of the saints in that other world is granted on all hands to be everlasting, to be eternal; and therefore the punishment of the damned cannot be but everlasting and eternal too. The rewards of the elect shall never be ended, therefore the punishment of the damned shall never be ended, because as the mercy of God is infinite towards the elect, so the justice of God is infinite towards the reprobate in hell. The reprobate shall have punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without succour, crying without compassion, mischief without measure, and torment without end, [Drexelius.] All men in misery comfort themselves with hope of an end. The prisoner with hope of a jail-delivery; the mariner with the hope of his arrival in a safe harbour; the soldier with hope of victory; the prentice with hope of liberty; the galley-slave with the hope of ransom: only the impenitent sinner hath no hope in hell. He shall have end without end, death without death, night without day, mourning without mirth, sorrow without solace, and bondage without liberty. The damned shall live as long in hell as God himself shall live in heaven. Their imprisonment in that land of darkness, in that bottomless pit, is not an imprisonment during the king's pleasure, but an imprisonment during the everlasting displeasure of the King of kings. Suppose, say some, that the whole world were turned to a mountain of sand, and that a little wren should come every thousandth year and carry away from that heap one grain of sand, what an infinite number of years, not to be numbered by all finite beings, would be spent and expired before this supposed mountain could be fetched away! Now if a man should lie in everlasting

burnings so long a time, and then have an end of his woe, it would administer some ease, refreshment, and comfort to him. But when that immortal bird shall have carried away this supposed mountain a thousand times over and over; alas! alas! man shall be as far from the end of his anguish and torment as ever he was.² He shall be no nearer coming out of hell than he was the very first moment that he entered into hell. Suppose, say others, that a man were to endure the torments of hell as many years, and no more, as there be sands on the sea-shore, drops of water in the sea, stars in heaven, leaves on the trees, piles of grass on the ground, hairs on his head, yea, upon the heads of all the sons of Adam that ever were, or are, or shall be in the world, from the beginning of it to the end of it; yet he would comfort himself with this poor thought, Well, there will come a day when my misery and torment shall certainly have an end! But woe and alas! this word never, never, never, will fill the hearts of the damned with the greatest horror and terror, wrath and rage, amazement and astonishment. Suppose, say others, that the torments of hell were to end after a little bird should have emptied the sea, and only carry out her billful once in a thousand years;—suppose, say others, that the whole world, from the lowest earth to the highest heavens, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain, and so continue till the whole heap were spent;—suppose, say others, if one of the damned in hell should weep after this manner—viz., that he should only let fall one tear in a hundred years, and these should be kept together till such time as they should equal the drops of water in the sea: how many millions of ages would pass before they could make up one river, much more a whole; and when that were done, should he weep again after the same manner till he had filled a second, a third, a fourth sea, if then there should be an end of their miseries, there would be some hope, some comfort that they would end at last: but that shall never, never, never end. This is that which sinks them under the most tormenting terrors and horrors.

Drexelius makes this observation from the words of our Saviour, John 15:6, 'If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and it is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned,' where he observeth that the words do not run in the future tense,—he shall be cast forth, and shall be cast into the fire, and burned; but all in the present tense—he is cast forth, is withered; men cast them into the fire, and they are burned. This, saith he, is the state and condition of the damned; they are burned—that is, they are always burning. When a thousand years are past, as it was at first, so it is still, they are burned; after a thousand thousand years more, as it was before, so it is still, they are burned. If after millions of years the question was asked, What is now their state and condition? what do they? what suffer they? how doth it fare with them? there can be no other answer returned but they are burned, continually and eternally burning. Socinians say there will come a time when the fallen angels and the wickedest men shall be freed from infernal torments; and Augustine speaks of some such merciful men in his time; and Origen held and taught that not only impenitent Christians, but even pagans and devils, after the term of a thousand years, should be released out of hell, and become as bright angels in heaven as they were before. But these dangerous fancies and ungrounded opinions fall flat before the clear evidence of those sad and serious truths that I have now tendered to your consideration. And thus I have shewed you the difference between our fire and hell-fire.

Now, O ye citizens of London who truly fear the Lord, and who are united to Christ by faith, know for your everlasting comfort and support, that Christ hath secured you from infernal fire, from everlasting fire, from unquenchable fire, from eternal fire, and from the worm that never dieth, as

you may see clearly and fully by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Christ by his blood hath quenched the violence of infernal flames, so that they shall never scorch you nor burn you, hurt you nor harm you. Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of hell, say some. Now look, as the three children, or rather champions, had not one hair of their heads singed in that fiery furnace, so hell-fire shall never singe one hair of your heads. Your interest in Christ is a noble and sufficient security to you against the flames of hell. Pliny saith, that nothing in the world will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; and therefore in many countries where they can get plenty of blood, they will use salt and blood rather than water to quench the fire. If you cast water on the fire, the fire will quickly work it out; but if you cast blood upon it, it will damp it in a moment. O sirs, Christ's blood has so quenched the flames of hell, that they shall never be able to scorch or burn those souls that are interested in him. The effusion of Christ's blood is so rich and available, saith my author, that if the whole multitude of captive sinners would believe in their Redeemer, not one should be detained in the tyrant's chains. All those spots that a Christian finds in his own heart, shall first or last be washed out in the Lamb: 1Jn 1:7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all our sins.' Now such as are washed and cleansed from their sins in the blood of Jesus, such shall never experimentally know what everlasting burnings or a devouring fire means. Such as are washed in Christ's blood needs no purifying by hell's flames. Pliny saith of polium that it is a preservative against serpents. Sure I am that the blood of Christ is an effectual preservative against all infernal serpents and infernal torments.

You believing citizens, who have set up God as the object of your fear, and whose hearts are inflamed with love to Christ, know, for your everlasting refreshment, that Christ has freed you, and secured you from everlasting fire, from unquenchable fire, from eternal fire; and therefore bear up sweetly, bear up cheerfully under that fiery dispensation that has passed upon you. What is the burning of your houses and substance, to the burning of bodies and souls in hell? What was the fire of London, to infernal fire? What is a fire of four or five days' continuance, to that everlasting fire, to that unquenchable fire, to that eternal fire that you have deserved, and that free grace hath preserved you from? A frequent and serious consideration of hell-fire, as I have opened it unto you, and of your happy deliverance from it, may very well bear and cheer up your hearts under all your greatest sufferings by that dreadful fire, that has turned beloved London into a ruinous heap.

Sir, you have been a-discoursing about hellish torments; but, for the further clearing up of the truth, we desire your serious answer to this sad question—viz.,

Obj. How will it stand with the unspotted holiness, justice, and righteousness of God, to punish a temporary offence with eternal punishments? for the evil of punishment should be but commensurate to the evil of sin. Now what proportion is there betwixt finite and infinite? Why should the sinner lie in hellish torments for ever and ever for sinning but a short time, a few years in this world?

Ans. I judge it very necessary to say something to this important question, before I come to discourse of those duties that are incumbent upon those citizens whose houses are turned into a ruinous heap; and therefore take me thus:—

[1.] First, God's will is the rule of righteousness, and therefore what he doth, or shall do, must needs be righteous. He is Lord of all; he hath a sovereign right and an absolute supremacy over the creature. He is the only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords; he is the Judge of the

whole world; 'And shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' 1Ti 1:15; Gen 18:25. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, There is a principle in man to sin eternally; and therefore it is but just with God if he punish him eternally. The duration of torment respects the disposition of the delinquent. *Poenæ singulorum inæquales intentione, poenæ omnium æquales duratione*, [Aquinas.] If the sinner should live ever, he would dishonour God ever, and crucify the Lord of glory ever, and grieve the Spirit of grace ever, and transgress a righteous law ever; and therefore it is just with God to punish such sinners for ever. *Etsi peccator in æternum viveret, in æternum peccaret*, If the sinner might live eternally, he would sin eternally; if he might live still, he would sin still. Though the sinner loses his life, yet he does not lose his will to sin. Sinners sin as much as they can, and as long as they can, and did not the grave put a stop to their lusts, their hearts would never put a stop to their lusts. *Peccare si velis tu in æterno tuo, punire æquum est te Deum in æterno suo*, The sinner sins in his eternity, and God punishes in his eternity. The sinner never loses his will to sin. His will to sin is everlasting; and therefore it is but just with God that his punishment should be everlasting. A will to sin is sin in God's account. God looks more at the will than at the deed; and therefore that being lasting, the punishment must be so. The mind and intention of the sinner is to sin everlastingly, eternally. If the sinner should live always, he would sin always; and therefore as one saith, [Gregory,] *Quia mens in hac vita nunquam voluit carere peccato, justum est ut nunquam careat supplicio*, Because the mind of man in this life would never be without sin, it is just that it should never be without punishment in the life to come. Many of the men of the old world lived eight or nine hundred years, and yet faith and repentance was hid from their eyes: that patience, forbearance, long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness, which should have led them to a speedy repentance, 1Pe 3:20, to a serious repentance, to a thorough repentance, to that repentance that was never to be repented of, was only made use of to patronise their lewdness and wickedness. This is certain: wicked men left to themselves will never be weary of their sins, nor never repent of their sins; and therefore God will never be weary of plaguing them, nor never repent of punishing them. The sinner never leaves his sin till sin first leaves him: did not death put a stop to his sin, he would never cease from sin. This may be illustrated by a similitude thus, A company of gamesters resolve to play all night, and accordingly they sit down to chess, tables, or some other game; their candle accidentally or unexpectedly goes out, or is put out, or burnt out; their candle being out, they are forced to give over their game, and go to bed in the dark; but had the candle lasted all night they would have played all night. This is every sinner's case in regard of sin: did not death put out the candle of life the sinner would sin still. Should the sinner live for ever, he would sin for ever; and therefore it is a righteous thing with God to punish him for ever in hellish torments. Every impenitent sinner would sin to the days of eternity, if he might but live to the days of eternity: *Psa 74:10*, 'O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?' For ever and evermore; or for ever and yet—for so the Hebrew loves to exaggerate: as if the sinner, the blasphemer, would set a term of duration longer than eternity to sin in. The psalmist implicitly saith, Lord, if thou dost but let them alone for ever, they will certainly blaspheme thy name for ever and ever. I have read of the crocodile, that he knows no maximum quod sic, he is always growing bigger and bigger, and never comes to a certain pitch of monstrosity so long as he lives. *Quamdiu vivit crescit*. Every habituated sinner would, if he were let alone, be such a monster, perpetually growing worser and worser. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That God against whom they have sinned is an infinite and eternal good. Now a finite creature cannot bear an infinite punishment intensively, and therefore he must bear it extensively. They have sinned impenitently against an infinite majesty, and accordingly their punishment must be infinite. Now because it cannot be infinite, in regard of the degree, men being but finite creatures, and so not capable of infinite torments at one time; therefore their punishment must be infinite in the length and continuance of it. What is wanting in torment must be made up in time. Every sin is of an infinite nature, because of the infinite dignity of the person against whom it is committed; and therefore it deserveth an infinite punishment; which because it cannot be infinite *secundum intensionem*, in the inattention and greatness of it, it remaineth that it should be infinite *secundum durationem*, in respect of the duration and continuance of the same. Mark, all punishments ought to be levied according to the dignity of him against whom the offence is committed. Words against common persons bear but common actions; words against noblemen are *scandala magnatum*, great scandals; but words against princes are treason. So the dignity of the person against whom sin is committed, does exceedingly aggravate the sin. To strike an inferior man is matter of arrest, but to strike a king is matter of death. Now what an infinite distance and disproportion is there between the Lord of hosts and such poor crawling worms as we are! he being holiness, and we sinfulness; he fulness, and we emptiness; he omnipotency, and we impotency; he majesty, and we vanity; he *instar omnium*, all in all, and we nothing at all. Now to sin against such an infinite glorious majesty, deserves infinite punishment. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, Though the act of sin be transient, yet it leaveth such a stain upon the soul as is permanent, and continueth in it evermore, and evermore it disposeth the sinner unto sin, if it be not pardoned and purged out by mercy and grace, and therefore it is but just that this perpetual purpose of sinning should be punished with perpetuity of pain. The guilt and stain of sin, of its own nature and unpardoned, endures eternally upon the soul; and therefore what can follow but eternal torments? The lasting continuance of sin is remarkably described by the prophet Jeremiah, Jer 17:1, 'The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their hearts:' not only written, but engraven, that no hand can deface it. Slight not the commission of any sin; it perishes not with the acting. The least vanity hath a perpetuity, nay, an eternity of guilt upon it. Sin leaving a blot in the soul brings the matter of hell-fire, is eternally punished, because there is still matter for that everlasting fire to work upon. But,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, Though death put an end to men's lives, yet not to sins. Hell is as full of sin as it is of punishment or torment. Though the schoolmen determine that after this life men are capable neither of merit nor demerit, and therefore by their sins do not incur a greater measure of punishment, yet they grant that they sin still. Though when the creature is actually under the sentence of condemnation, the law ceases to any further punishment, yet there is an obligation to the precepts of the law still. Though a man be bound only to the curse of the law, as he is a sinner, yet he is bound to the precept of the law, as he is a creature: so that though the demerit of sin ceaseth after death, yet the nature of sin remaineth: though by sinning they do not incur a higher and a greater degree of punishment, yet as they continue sinning, so it is just with God there should be a continuation of the punishment already inflicted. But,

[6.] Sixthly, I answer, It is no injustice in God to punish temporal offences with perpetual torments. God measureth the punishment by the greatness of the offence, and not by the time wherein the sin was acted. Murder, adultery, sacrilege, treason, and the like capital crimes, are doomed in the

judicatories of men to death without mercy, and sometimes to perpetual imprisonment, or to perpetual banishment; and yet these high offences were committed and done in a short time. Now this bears a proportion with eternal torments. O sirs, if the offences committed against God be infinitely heinous, why may not the punishment be infinitely lasting? Sinners' offences, as Austin well observes, are not to be measured temporis longitudine, by the length of time wherein they were done: but iniquitatis magnitudine, by the foulness of the crime: and if so, then God is just in binding the sinner in everlasting chains. We must remember that God is a great and a glorious God, and that he is an omniscient and an omnipotent God, and that he is a mighty, yea, an almighty God, and that he is a holy and a just God, and that he is out of Christ an incomprehensible, incommunicable, and very terrible God, and that he is an infinite, eternal, and independent God, Heb 12:28-29. And we must remember that man is a shadow, a bubble, a vapour, a dream, a base, vile, sinful, worthless worm. Now these things being considered, must we not confess that eternity itself is too short a space for God to revenge himself on sinners in? But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, I answer, Such sinners have but what they chose. Whilst they lived under the means of grace, the God of grace set before them heaven and hell, glory and misery, eternal life and eternal death, so that if they eternally miscarry, they have none to blame but themselves, for choosing hell rather than heaven, misery rather than glory, and eternal death rather than eternal life. Ah, how freely, how fully, how frequently, how graciously, how gloriously, hath Christ been offered in the gospel to poor sinners, and yet they would not choose him, they would not close with him, they would not embrace him, nor accept of him, nor enter into a marriage covenant with him, nor resign themselves up to him, nor part with their lusts to enjoy him: they would not come to Christ that they might have life; they slighted infinite mercy, and despised the riches of grace, and trod under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant, and scorned the offers of eternal salvation; and therefore it is but just that they should lie down in everlasting sorrows, John 5:40; Mat 22:2-5; 2Co 4:3-4. How can that sinner be saved that still refuses salvation? How can mercy save him that will not be saved by mercy? yea, how can Christ save such a man, that will not be saved by him? All the world cannot save that man from going to hell, who is peremptorily resolved that he will not go to heaven. Sinners have boldly and daily refused eternal life, eternal mercy, eternal glory, and therefore it is but just that they should endure eternal misery. And let thus much suffice for answer to the objection.

Quest. But, sir, pray what are those duties that are incumbent upon those that have been burnt up, and whose habitations are now laid in its ashes?

I answer, They are these that follow:—

1. First, See the hand of the Lord in this late dreadful fire, acknowledge the Lord to be the author of all judgments, and of this in particular, Lev 26:41, and Mic 7:9. It is a high point of Christian prudence and piety to acknowledge the Lord to be the author of all personal or national sufferings that befall us: Jer 9:12, 'Who is the wise man, that may understand this? for what the land perisheth, and is burnt up like a wilderness, that none passeth through.' It is very great wisdom to know from whom all our afflictions come, and for what all our afflictions come upon us. God looks that we should observe his hand in all our sufferings. 'Hear the rod, and who hath appointed it,' Mic 6:9. God challenges all sorts of afflictions as his own special administration: Amo 3:6, 'Is there

any evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it? I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil, I the Lord do all these things, Isa 45:7. God takes it very heinously, and looks upon it as a very great indignity that is put upon his power, providence, and justice, when men will neither see nor acknowledge his hand in those sore afflictions and sad sufferings that he brings upon them. Of such the prophet Isaiah complains, Isa 26:11, 'Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see.' The hand, the power of the Lord was so remarkable and conspicuous in the judgments that were inflicted upon them, as might very well wring an acknowledgment out of them that it was the Lord that had stirred his wrath and indignation against them; and yet they wilfully and desperately shut their eyes against all the severities of God, and would not behold that dreadful hand of his that was stretched out against them. O sirs, God looks upon himself as reproached and slandered by such who will not see his hand in the amazing judgments that he inflicts upon them: Jer 5:12, 'They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he'—or, as the Hebrew runs, 'he is not.' Such was the atheism of the Jews, that they slighted divine warnings, and despised all those dreadful threatenings of the sword, famine, and fire, which should have led them to repentance, and so tacitly said, The Lord is not God. Such who either say, that God is not omniscient, or that he is not omnipotent, or that he is not so just as to execute the judgments that he has threatened; such belie the Lord, such deny him to be God. Many feel the rod, that cannot hear it; and many experience the smart of the rod, that do not see the hand that holds the rod; and this is sad. How can the natural man, without faith's prospective, look so high as to see the hand of the Lord in wasting and destroying judgments? By common experience we find that natural men are mightily apt to father the evil of all their sufferings upon secondary causes. Sometimes they cry out, This is from a distemper in nature; and at other times they cry out, This is from a bad air. Sometimes they cry out of the malice, plots, envy, and rage of men; and at other times they cry out of stars, chance, and fortune, and so fix upon anything rather than the hand of God. But now a gracious Christian under all his sufferings, he overlooks all secondary causes, and fixes his eye upon the hand of God. You know what Joseph said to his unnatural brethren, who sold him for a slave: Non vos, sed Deus: 'It was not you, but God that sent me into Egypt,' Gen 45:7. Job met with many sore losses and sad crosses, but under them all he overlooked all instruments, all secondary causes; he overlooks the Sabeans, and the Chaldeans, and Satan, and fixes his eye upon the hand of God: 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job 1:21. Judas, and Annas, and Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Herod, and the bloody soldiers, had all a deep hand in the sufferings of Christ, but yet he overlooks them all, and fixes his eye upon his Father's hand. 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it,' John 18:11. This cup was the cup of his sufferings. Now in all his sad sufferings he had still an eye to his Father's hand. Let us in all our sufferings write after this copy that Christ has set before us. But of this I have spoken very largely already, and therefore let this touch suffice here.

2. Secondly, Labour to justify the Lord in all that he has done; say, the Lord is righteous, though he hath laid your city desolate. When Jerusalem was laid desolate, and the wall thereof broken down, and the gates thereof were burned with fire, Nehemiah justifies the Lord: chap. 9:33, 'Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.' The same spirit was upon Jeremiah: Lam 1:1, Lam 1:4, Lam 1:18, 'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh, her virgins are

afflicted, and she is in bitterness. The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment.' The same spirit was upon David: Psa 119:75, 'I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.' So Psa 145:17, 'The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' This maxim we must live and die by, though we do not always see the reason of his proceedings. It is granted on all hands that *voluntas Dei est summa, perfectissima, et infallibilis regula divinæ justitiæ, et Deus sibi ipsi lex est*, The will of God is the chiefest, the most perfect and infallible rule of divine justice, and that God is a judge to himself: 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' Gen 18:25. In this negative question is emphatically implied an affirmative position, which is, that God, above all others, must and will do right; because from his judgment there is no appeal. Abraham, considering the nature and justice of God, was confidently assured that God could not do otherwise but right. Hath God turned you out of house and home, and marred all your pleasant things, and stripped you naked as the day wherein you were born? Yes. Why, if he hath, he hath done you no wrong; he can do you no wrong; he is a law to himself, and his righteous will is the rule of all justice. God can as soon cease to be as he can cease to do that which is just and right. So Psa 97:2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' Clouds and darkness notes the terribleness of God's administrations. Though God be very terrible in his administrations, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. It hath been a day of God's wrath in London, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasting and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as it was once in Jerusalem, Zep 1:15; yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; or, as it may be translated, are 'the foundation of his throne.' God's seat of judgment is always founded in righteousness. So Dan 9:12, 'And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem;' ver. 14, 'The Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth; for we obeyed not his voice.' God is only righteous, he is perfectly righteous, he is exemplarily righteous, he is everlastingly righteous, he is infinitely righteous, and no unrighteousness dwells in him, Psa 92:15; Job 36:23. There are four things that God cannot do: (1.) He cannot lie; (2.) He cannot die; (3.) He cannot deny himself; nor (4.) He cannot look upon iniquity and not loathe it; he cannot behold iniquity and approve of it or delight in it. God has a sovereignty over all your persons and concerns in this world, and therefore he may do with you and all that is yours as he pleaseth. Upon this account you ought to say, The Lord is righteous, though he hath laid your habitations desolate, and burned up your houses before your eyes. It is true, God has dealt severely with London; but he might have dealt more severely with it, Lam 3:22. He might have burnt up every house, and he might have consumed every inhabitant in London's flames. He might have made good that sad word upon them, 'They shall go from one fire, and another fire shall devour them,' Eze 15:7. The citizens of London may say with good Ezra, God hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve; and therefore it highly concerns them to say, 'The Lord is righteous.' All that God doth is good. You know what Hezekiah said: 2Ki 20:19, 'Good is the word of the Lord.' This was a hard word, a sad word, that all his treasure should be carried into Babylon, and his sons also, and made servants there, and yet he saith, 'Good is the word of the Lord.' Whatever God doth is good. God, in that he is good, saith one—Luther in Psa 120:1-7—can give nothing, do nothing, but that which is good; others do frequently, he cannot possibly. Upon this account also it concerns us to say, The Lord is righteous, though our city be

laid desolate. It is better to be under a fiery rod, than to be wallowing in the mire of sin. It is better that London should be laid desolate, than that God should say, England, farewell. That is a Christian worth gold who can seriously, heartily, and habitually say, The Lord is righteous, though all our pleasant things are laid desolate.

Objec. I would say, The Lord is righteous; but by this fiery dispensation I am turned out of house and home.

Now, in answer to this objection, give me leave to inquire:—

[1.] First, Whether your house was dedicated to the Lord by fasting and prayer or not? Deu 20:5. If it were only dedicated to the service of sin, Satan, or the world, no wonder if the Lord has turned it into a heap. But,

[2.] Secondly, Give me leave to inquire, Whether you had set up Christ and holiness and holy orders in your house or no? See Psa 101:1-8. Did you in good earnest resolve with Joshua, 'That you and your house would serve the Lord,' Jos 24:15. If not, no wonder if the Lord has laid your habitations desolate. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Give me leave to inquire, Whether you did labour and endeavour to the utmost of what you were able, that Christ might have a church in your house or no? Col 4:15, 'Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house'; that is, saith Dr Hammond, which meets together in his house. 1Co 16:19, 'The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.' Php 2:1-30, 'And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house.' Philemon's house was a public meeting-house, where the faithful had their assemblies; and so continued for many years after, as Theodoret and others witnesseth. Some understand this last scripture of the church which kept their assemblies in Philemon's house. Others understand it of his household, which was as a little church in his house: Rom 16:5, 'Likewise greet the church that is in their house.' Chrysostom by the church in their house understands their Christian family, who, saith he, were so godly, as to make their whole house the church. Origen interpreteth it of the faithful and ready ministry of these servants of the Lord, in entertaining of the saints in their house. Theophylact thinketh it to be called the church in their house, because the faithful were entertained there. But beside this, it seemeth that their house was a place for the saints to assemble in; there the congregation used to come together, [Martyr.] The last thing in their praise was, that they had a church in their house; either for that their family, for their godly order observed in it, seemed to be a church, or else for the faithful gathered together in their house to celebrate their assemblies; for they might not have in most places the free use of their Christian religion, through the malice of the Jews on the one hand, and the rage of the Gentiles on the other hand. Consult Acts 13:1-52 and Acts 14:1-28, [Wilson.] In this great city of Rome there were divers assemblies of believers, which were held in some private men's houses, where they might meet safest—the state then, and some hundred years after, not permitting them any public temples or auditories to meet in, as our English Annotators observe upon the place. In each particular family last cited, there was a church of Christ. Now have you burnt citizens made it your business to erect a church of Christ in your particular families? if so, well it is with you, though you have lost all. If not, do not wonder that God has laid your houses desolate. Adam had a church in his house, so had Abraham, and Jacob, and Joshua, and David, and Cornelius. Well governed families may in some sense be well reputed

churches. The house of George, Prince of Anhalt, for the good orders therein observed, is said to have been, Ecclesia, academia, curia. Ah London, London! it may be there might have been more houses standing within thy walls than now there is, if every particular house had been as a particular church to Christ. As for such houses where there were no exercises of religion; as for such houses where idleness, cheating, lying, cursing, swearing, slandering, gaming, drunkenness, uncleanness, and riotousness were rampant, they were rather the devil's chapel than Christ's church; and therefore it was just with God to lay such habitations desolate. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Give me leave to inquire, Whether you were friends or enemies to God's house, 2Ti 2:20; Num 12:7; Jos 1:2. Now God's house is his church, and his church is his house: Heb 3:5-6, 'And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant; but Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house are we;' 1Pe 2:5, 'Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;' so 1Ti 3:15, 'That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;' Pro 9:1, 'Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.' Wisdom—■■■■■, chakmoth, the Hebrew word is plural, wisdoms: wisdoms hath built her a house. By wisdoms some understand the trinity of persons; but most conclude that by wisdoms is meant our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col 2:3. The word is plural for honour's sake. As princes write, We command, the Lord Jesus Christ is said to be wisdoms in the plural number, to note that he is the sovereign and supreme wisdom, and that he is instead of all wisdoms, and comprehends all wisdoms in himself, all the world being fools in comparison of him. Wisdoms hath built her a house—(1.) Some take this house to be the human nature of Christ, but that was not then built; (2.) Others understand it of the work of grace in man's soul, but this the Spirit commonly works in this house by the ministry of the word, Gal 5:22-23; (3.) Others by this house understand heaven, that upper house, that house of state in which Christ saith there are many mansions, but this cannot [be it], because the house in the text is such a house to which wisdom doth immediately invite and call all her guests; but (4.) and lastly, Others by house understand the church of Christ on earth, for the church militant is a house built up of many lively stones, 1Pe 2:5; and with these I close. Now by these scriptures it is very plain that God's house is his church, and his church his house. Now if you were enemies to God's house, if you hated his house, and designed and endeavoured to pull down his house, no wonder that the Lord has laid your houses desolate, Mat 23:37-38; Zec 12:2-3, Zec 12:6, Zec 12:9. Such who cry out concerning his house, Raze it, raze it even to the foundation thereof, Psal 137:7, may one day want a house to live in.

It is observable that in private houses Christ his apostles, and particular churches, and primitive Christians, frequently used to meet when the times were dangerous: John 20:19, 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you;' John 20:26, 'And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you,' Luk 24:33. This was the usual manner of salutation among the Jews, whereby they wished one another all happiness and prosperity. The doors of the room where they were together were shut for the more secrecy and security, to avoid danger from the Jews, saith Dr Hammond on the words: Acts 1:13-14, 'And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where

abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.’ Acts 20:7, ‘And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight;’ ver. 8, ‘And here were many lights’ (Gr. many lamps) ‘in the upper chamber, whither they were gathered together;’ ver. 9, ‘And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead;’ ver. 10, ‘And Paul went down, and fell on him, and, embracing him, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him;’ ver. 11, ‘When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed;’ ver. 12, And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted;’ Acts 5:42, ‘And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ;’ Acts 12:12, ‘And when he had considered the things, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying’—or where many thronged to pray, as it runs in the original; Acts 20:20, ‘And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house;’ Acts 28:30-31, ‘And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him: preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him;’ Luk 10:38-39, ‘Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word.’ Beloved, by these scriptures it is most evident and clear that our Lord Jesus Christ, and his disciples and apostles, and those Christians that lived in their times, did frequently meet in private houses, and there performed acts of public worship—viz., such as preaching, hearing, praying, breaking of bread, &c. How the primitive Christians in those hot times of persecution met in the nights, and in woods, and houses, and obscure places, they best understand who have read the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Austin, Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Pliny, &c. But this to some being an unpleasing theme, I shall not enlarge myself upon it. Only remember this, that there was never yet any town, city, or country, kingdom or commonwealth, that did ever fare the worse for a holy praying people. Frequent and fervent prayer, be it in public or in private, in a synagogue or in an upper room, never did, nor never will, bring misery or mischief upon those places where such exercises are kept up, Jas 5:17-18. Such conventicles of good fellowship, as some call them, where there is nothing but swearing and cursing, and carousing and gaming, and all manner of filthiness and profaneness, are the only conventicles that bring desolating judgments upon princes, people, and nations, as is most evident throughout the scriptures. Take two texts for all: 1Sa 1:12, 1Sa 1:25, ‘But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your kings.’ When princes and people continue to do wickedly together, then they shall be consumed together. Zep 1:12, ‘I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;’ Zep 1:13, ‘Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation;’ Zep 1:17, ‘And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung;’ Zep 1:18, ‘Neither their

silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath: but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.' Now, if any of you whose houses are laid desolate, have had your spirits imbittered and engaged against the poor people of God, for practising as Christ and his apostles did, then lay your hands upon your mouths, and say, The Lord is righteous, though he has turned us out of house and home, and laid all our pleasant things desolate. Certainly all that legal and ceremonial holiness of places which we read of in the Old Testament did quite vanish and expire with the types, when Christ, who is the substance at which all those shadows pointed, came into the world. I have neither faith to believe, nor any reason to see that there is in any separated or consecrated places for divine worship, any such legal or ceremonial kind of holiness which renders duties performed there more acceptable unto God, than if performed by the same persons and in the like manner in any other places. Doubtless Christ by his coming in the flesh hath removed all distinction of places through legal holiness. This is clear by the speech of our Saviour to the Samaritan woman, concerning the abolishing of all distinction of places for worship through a ceremonial holiness: John 4:21, 'Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.' The public worship of God was now to be restrained to no place, as formerly it was to the temple at Jerusalem—that is, to no place for its ceremonial holiness, which may render the parts of divine worship more acceptable to God than if performed elsewhere; because those types which sanctioned the places formerly, were now to be taken away, when Christ the substance was come; and the body of the ceremonial worship being now to expire, and the partition-wall taken down, that the Gentiles might be admitted to worship God in spirit and in truth. It could not possibly be, for these reasons, that the true worship of God should be tied and fixed to any one such temple as was at Jerusalem, any more. The temple at Jerusalem was a mean of God's worship, and part of their ceremonial service, and a type of Christ; but our temples, saith my author, are not a part of the worship of God, nor types of the body of Christ. Neither are we bound when we pray to set our faces towards them. They are called places of prayer only, because the saints meet there; and if the saints' meeting were not in them, they were but like other common places. The temple of Jerusalem sanctified the meetings of the saints, but the meeting of the saints sanctifies our temples. Herod's temple at Jerusalem was so set on fire by Titus his soldiers, that it could not be quenched by the industry of man; and at the same time Apollo's temple at Delphi was utterly overthrown by earthquakes and thunderbolts, and neither of them could ever since be repaired. The concurrence of which two miracles, saith mine author, evidently sheweth that the time was then come when God would put an end both to Jewish ceremonies and heathenish idolatry, that the kingdom of his Son might be the better established. The time of Christ's death and passion was the very time that God, in his eternal counsel, had set for the abrogation of the ceremonial law, and all ceremonial holiness of places. As soon as ever Christ had said, 'It is finished, and had given up the ghost,' John 19:30, immediately the vail of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, Mat 27:51; and from that very hour there was no more holiness in the temple than in any other place. By the death of Christ all religious differences of places is taken away, so that no one place is holier than another. Before the coming of Christ the whole land of Canaan, because it was a type of the church of Christ, and of the kingdom of heaven, was esteemed by God's people a better and holier place than any other in the world. And upon that ground among others, Jacob and Joseph were so desirous to be buried there, Gen 47:29, Gen 47:31, and Gen 49:29. And in

the land of Canaan some places are said to have been more holy than others—viz., such as wherein God did manifest himself in a special and sensible manner. So the place where Christ appeared to Moses in the fiery bush is called holy ground; and so was that wherein he appeared to Joshua, Exo 3:5; Jos 5:15. And the mount whereon Christ was transfigured is called by Peter the holy mount, 1Pe 1:18. But these places were no longer accounted holy than during the time of this special presence of the Lord in them. So Jerusalem was called the holy city, Mat 4:5; yea, at the very moment of Christ's death, it is called the holy city, chap. 27:53, because it was a city set apart by God for a holy use, a city where he was daily worshipped, a city that he had chosen to put his name upon. Though Jerusalem was a very wicked city, yea, the wickedest city in all the world, counting the means they enjoyed, yet it is called the holy city; and so doubtless, in respect of separation and dedication, it was holier than any other city or place in the world besides. So the temple in Jerusalem is nine times called the holy temple, because it was a more holy place than any other place in Jerusalem. Now mark, though all the parts of the temple were holy, yet some places in it were holier than other some. This may be made evident three ways. First, There was a place where the people stood separated from the priests, Luk 1:10. And this was so holy a place that Christ would not suffer any to carry any vessel through it, Mark 16:11. And secondly, There was a place where the priests executed their ministry, which was holier than that that the people stood in, and is therefore called the holy place, Lev 16:30, seq. And thirdly, There was a place which the high-priest might only enter into, and that but once a year, and that is called the holy of holies, the holiest place of all, Heb 9:3. But now since the death of Christ, there is no place in the world that is holier than other. The prayer of faith is as powerful and as prevalent with God in one place as in another. Paul describes the faithful to be such as call upon God in every place, 1Co 1:2. 'And I will,' saith he, 'that men pray everywhere,' 1Ti 2:8. 'And where two or three,' saith Christ, 'are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,' Mat 18:20. That every place should be free for the people of God to worship the Lord in, was foretold by the prophets, as a singular privilege that should come to the church in the days of the gospel: Zep 2:11, 'And men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen;' that is, all countries, though not encompassed with the sea, for the Jews called all lands islands whither they could not come but by water. Men should worship, not only at Jerusalem, as once, but in all places; they should lift up 'pure hands and hearts without wrath or doubting,' 1Ti 2:8, both in church and chamber. Any place whatsoever shall be a sufficient oratory, so that God be worshipped in spirit and in truth: Mal 1:11, 'For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place,' not in Judea only, 'incense shall be offered unto my name,'—here the prophet frames his words to the capacity of the people, and by the altar and sacrifices he meaneth the spiritual service of God, which should be under the gospel, when an end shall be put to all these legal ceremonies by Christ's only sacrifice—'and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.' The poor blind besotted Jews thought that God was so tied to them, that if they did not worship him at Jerusalem, he would have no service nor worship in the world. But God tells them that they were under a very high mistake, for he would take care of his own name and glory. 'For from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great'—that is, the knowledge of it, and of the right worship of it—'among the Gentiles,' [this is an excellent prophecy of the cutting off the Gentiles;]—'and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name.' My worship, saith God, shall not be confined to Judea or Jerusalem, or the temple, but in every place I will have a people

that shall worship me, and that shall be still offering of prayers and praises and thanksgivings to me.² Christ, by his death, hath taken away all difference of places. And indeed it was but necessary that, when the body was come, the shadow should cease. Yea, since Christ's death, all difference of persons is taken away: 'For in every nation under heaven, such as fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted of him.' 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus,' Acts 10:34-35; Gal 3:28. And therefore all difference of places must needs also be taken away, for this difference of places was as a partition-wall between the Jews and the Gentiles, Eph 2:14-15. Now mark, since the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, the Lord hath not sanctified any other place in the world, or consecrated it to a more holy use than the rest, and it is only God's institution and word that can make any thing or any place holy, 1Ti 4:4-5. Nothing can make any place or any thing else holy, but the ordinance and institution of God. It is Judaism, it is a denying of Christ to be come in the flesh, to hold or affirm that one place is holier than another. I know the papists put more holiness in some places than they do in others; for they hold that it is more advantageous to the dead to be buried in the churchyard than out of it; and in the church, more than in the churchyard; and in chancel, more than in the church; and near the high altar, more than in any other place of the chancel; and all out of a superstitious conceit, that these places are consecrated and hallowed, that they are holier than other places are. But Christians that live under a bright shining gospel understand the folly and vanity of these men's spirits, principles, and practices. Such as are wise in heart know that since Christ by his death hath taken away all religious difference of places, England is as holy as Canaan, and London as Jerusalem, and our houses as the temple.

Under the law they were wont to dedicate their houses, and consecrate them to God, before they dwelt in them: Deu 20:5, 'And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it?'—by prayers, hymns, and other holy solemnities;—'let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.' Now though this were done in those times, with sundry ceremonies which are now abolished, yet the equity of the duty still remains. And doubtless the best way for a man to bring down a blessing upon himself and his house, is to dedicate himself and his house to God: 2Sa 6:11, 'And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom the Hittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.' 2Sa 6:12, 'And it was told king David, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth to him, because of the ark of God.' In this scripture you see that when men do anything to the advancement of religion, or to the furtherance of God's worship and service, he takes it kindly at their hands. The meanest service that is done to Christ or his church hath a patent of eternity. Again, in this scripture you may run and read a real retribution and remuneration. God does not put off Obed-edom with a fine feather, or with empty favours, or court-compliments, but he really blesses him and all his household. Obed-edom had been at some cost and charge in giving entertainment to God's ark; but God defrays all the charges, and pays him abundantly for his kind entertainment, with interest upon interest. No man ever gave the gospel a night's lodging, that hath been a loser by it. God will pay all such with use and principal, who do anything to the furtherance of his worship and service. Hiram shall have corn and oil, for affording materials to the building of the temple. Cyrus shall prosper and be victorious, for breaking off the yokes that were about his people's necks, and restoring of them to their Christian liberty. Egypt fared the better for entertaining the patriarchs;

God stored that country with great plenty and variety of outward blessings, because his church was to sojourn there. God blessed Obed-edom's person and possession and family for the ark's sake. The blessings that was upon Obed-edom was like the precious ointment that was shed upon Aaron's head, and that ran down to the lowest skirts of his garments. Every servant in Obed-edom's family tasted of God's noble bounty, and fared the better for the ark's sake. Let men and devils do their worst, God will certainly bless their dwellings who give entertainment to his ark, to his people that desire to worship him in spirit and in truth.

O sirs, this is and this must be for a lamentation, that there are so many ale-houses, and gaming-houses, and whore-houses, that are usually stuffed with vain persons, yea, with the very worst of the worst of men, both on the Lord's day, and on other days. Certainly these houses are the very suburbs and seminaries of hell. Ubi fuisti? Where hast thou been? apud inferos, in hell, said Erasmus merrily: comparing tippling-houses to hell. Doubtless they are the nurseries of all sin, and the synagogue of devils incarnate. In the above-mentioned houses, how notoriously is the name of God blasphemed, and how shamefully are the precious fruits of the earth abused! and how many hundred families are there impoverished! and how many thousand children and servants are there impoisoned! and how is all manner of wickedness and lewdness there encouraged and increased! But when, oh when shall the sword of the magistrate be turned against these conventicles of hell? Certainly the horrid wickednesses that are daily committed in such houses, if not prevented by a faithful, zealous, and constant execution of the laws in force, will arm divine vengeance against the land. Magistrates should not bear the sword of justice in vain; for they are ministers of God to revenge and execute wrath upon them that do evil. By their office they are bound to be a terror to evil-doers, and encouragers of them that do well; and oh that all in power and authority would for ever resolve against being Satan's drudges: Rev 2:10, 'Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' The devil by his imps and instruments whom he acts and agitates, the devil by engaging the civil and the military power of the world against the people of God, should so far prevail as to clap them up in prison. The prison in this text notes, by a synecdoche, the adjuncts and consequences—as namely, torments, punishments, and all sorts of martyrdom. This one punishment, imprisonment, saith Brightman, doth contain prescribings, confiscation of goods, banishments, slaughters, fires, rackings, or whatsoever exquisite torment beside, as the story teacheth. The heathen emperors, with those wicked governors, officers, and soldiers that were under them, were the great instruments in Satan's hand, to practise the greatest cruelties upon the saints in those days. Some they cast into prisons, some they banished, multitudes they slew with the sword; some of the precious servants of Christ they beat with stripes to death, others they branded in their foreheads, others were tortured and racked. Yea, and many holy women in that day had their breasts cut off, and others of them had their breasts burnt with a hot iron, and sometimes with eggs roasted as hot as could be. These, with many other torments, the people of God were exercised with, as all know that have read the lamentable stories of those sad times.

Obj. But you may say, Why then is the imprisonment of the saints so ascribed to the devil, as if it were immediately acted by him? 'Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison.'

Ans. [1.] To shew what influence the devil hath in the acting of wicked men, so that in effect their deed is his deed, they are so subservient to him.

[2.] It is to shew us that the author, original, and fountain from whence all the persecutions of the saints do flow, is the devil, who was a murderer and a liar from the beginning, John 8:44.

[3.] It is to aggravate the horribleness of this sin of persecution, as being a main piece of the devil's business, whatever the instruments are.

[4.] It is to comfort and encourage the people of God to patience and constancy in all their sufferings for Christ, seeing that it is the devil that is their grand enemy, and that makes, in his instruments, the highest opposition against them. A gracious man in the midst of all oppositions, as Chrysostom said of Peter, is as a man made all of fire walking in stubble, he overcomes and consumes all oppositions; all difficulties are but whet-stones to his fortitude. When Christians meet with great opposers and great oppositions, they should say as that noble soldier, Pædarelus, in Erasmus, did to him that told him of a numerous and mighty army which was coming against him, *Tanto plus gloriæ referemus quoniam eo plures superabimus*: The number of opposers makes the Christian's conquest the more illustrious. It is very observable, that in Dioclesian's time, under whom was the last and worst of the ten persecutions, when Christian religion was more desperately opposed than ever, yet then it prospered and prevailed more than ever [Ruffinus.] So that Dioclesian himself observing that the more he sought to blot out the name of Christ, the more legible it became, and the more he laboured to block up the way of Christ, the more passable it became. And whatever of Christ he thought to root out, it rooted the deeper and rose the higher: thereupon he resolved to engage no further, but retired to a private life. All the oppositions that the devil and his instruments hath raised against the saints in all the ages of the world, hath not diminished, but increased their number. For the first three hundred years after Christ there was a most terrible persecution. Historians tell us that by seven and twenty several sorts of deaths they tormented the poor people of God. In these hot times of persecution many millions of Christians were destroyed. And yet this was so far from diminishing of their number, that it increased their number; for the more they were oppressed and persecuted, the more they were increased. And therefore some have well observed, that though Julian used all means imaginable to suppress them, yet he could never do it. He shut up all their schools, that they might not have learning, and yet never did learning more flourish than then. He devised all manner of cruel torments to terrify the Christians, and to draw them from their holy faith; and yet he saw that they increased and multiplied so fast, that he thought it his best course at last to give over his persecuting of the saints, not out of love, but out of envy, because that through his persecution they increased. This was represented unto Daniel in a vision, Dan 2:34-35. The kingdom of Christ is set forth there by a little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, without art or industry, without engines and human helps. The stone was a growing stone, and although in all the ages of the world there have been many hammers at work to break this stone in pieces, yet they have not nor shall not prevail; but the little stone shall grow more and more, till it becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. And let this suffice for answer to the first objection.

Obj. 2. I would justify the Lord, I would say he is righteous, though my house be burnt up: but I have lost my goods, I have lost my estate, yea, I have lost my all as to this world; and how then can I say the Lord is righteous? how can I justify that God which has even stripped me as naked as the day wherein I was born? &c. To this I answer.

[1.] First, Didst thou gain thy estate by just or unjust ways and means? If by unjust ways and means, then be silent before the Lord. If by just ways and means, then know that the Lord will lay in that of himself, and of his Son, and of his Spirit, and of his grace, and of heaven's glory, that shall make up all thy losses to thee. But,

[2.] Secondly, Did you improve your estates for the glory of God, and the good of others, or did you not? If not, why do you complain? If you did, the reward that shall attend you at the long run, may very well bear up your spirits under all your losses. Consult these scriptures: 1Co 1:15; 2Co 9:6; Ecc 11:1; Gal 6:7-8; Isa 32:20, and Isa 55:10; Pro 11:18; Rev 22:12. But,

[3.] Thirdly, What trade did you drive Christ-wards, and heavenwards, and holiness-wards? If you did drive either no trade heavenwards, or but a slender or inconstant trade heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, never wonder that God by a fiery dispensation has spoiled your civil trade. Doubtless there were many citizens who did drive a close, secret, sinful trade, who had their by-ways and back-doors—some to uncleanness, others to merry-meetings, and others to secret gaming. Now if thou wert one of them that didst drive a secret trade of sin, never murmur because thy house is burnt, and thy trade destroyed, but rather repent of thy secret trade of sin, and wonder that thy body is not in the grave, and that thy soul is not a-burning in everlasting flames. Many there were in London, who had so great a trade, so full a trade, so constant a trade, that they had no time to mind the everlasting concernments of their precious souls and the great things of eternity. They had so much to do on earth, that they had no time to look up to heaven, as once the Duke of Alva told the king of France. Sir Thomas More saith, There is a devil called negotium, business, that carrieth more souls to hell than all the devils in hell beside. Many citizens had so many irons in the fire, and were cumbered about with so many things, that they wholly neglected the one thing necessary; and therefore it was but just with God to visit them with a fiery rod. Look, as much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections. Look, as the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, so much worldly business swallows up so much precious time, that many men have no leisure to secure their interest in Christ, to make their calling and election sure, to lay up treasure in heaven, to provide for eternity; and if this have been any of your cases who are now burnt up, it highly concerns you to justify the Lord, and to say he is righteous, though he has burnt up your habitations, and destroyed your trade, Num 22:32, and 2Pe 1:10. It is sad when a crowd of worldly business shall crowd God and Christ and duty out of doors. Many citizens did drive so great a public trade in their shops, that their private trade to heaven was quite laid by. Such who were so busy about their farm and their merchandise, see Luk 14:16, Luk 14:22, that they had no leisure to attend their souls' concernments, had their city set on fire about their ears: Mat 22:5, 'But they made light of it'—that is, of all the free, rich, and noble offers of grace and mercy that God had made to them—'and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.' Mat 22:7, 'But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies'—that is, the Romans—'and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.' It is observable that the Jews, who were commanded six days to labour, were also commanded to offer morning and evening sacrifice daily, Exo 20:9. Vide Exo 29:38-39; Num 28:3; Deu 6:6-8. They had their morning sacrifice when they entered upon their work, and they had their evening sacrifice when they ended their work. Their particular callings did not steal away their hearts from their general callings. The Jews divided the day into three parts, the first, ad Tephilla, orationem, to prayer; the second, ad Torah, legem, for the reading of the law; the third, ad

Malacha, opus, for the works of their lawful callings. Although they were days appointed for work, yet they gave God his part, they gave God a share of them every day. God, who is the Lord of all time, hath reserved to himself a part of our time every day. And therefore men's particular callings ought to give way to their general calling. But alas! before London was in flames, many men's—Oh that I could not say most men's!—particular callings swallowed up their general calling. The noise is such in a mill as hinders all intercourse between man and man: so many of the burnt citizens had such a multitude of worldly businesses lying upon their hands, and that made such a noise, as that all intercourse between God and them was hindered. Seneca, one of the most refined heathens, could say, 'I do not give, but only lend myself to my business.' I am afraid this heathen will one day rise in judgment against those burnt citizens who have not lended themselves to their business, but wholly given up themselves to their business, as if they had no God to honour, no souls to save, no hell to escape, nor no heaven to make sure. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Job lost all, and recovered all again: he lost a fair estate, and God doubles his estate to him. So David lost all, and recovered all again: 1Sa 30:18, 'And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives.' 1Sa 30:19, 'And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them.' David recovered all. Here the end was better than the beginning; but the contrary befell the Amalekites, who a little before had framed comedies out of poor Ziklag's tragedies. In the beginning of the chapter you may see that David had lost all that ever he had in the world, 1Sa 30:1-5. All the spoil that he had taken from others were gone—his corn gone, his cattle gone, his wives gone, and his city burnt with fire, and turned into a ruinous heap, so that he had not a house, a habitation in all the world to put his head in; he had nothing left him but a poor, grieved, madded, and enraged army. The people spake of stoning of him, 1Sa 30:6: but what was the event now? Why, David recovers all again. O sirs, when a Christian is in greatest distress, when he hath lost all, when he is not worth one penny in all the world, yet then he hath a God to go to at last. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. A Christian's case is never so desperate but he hath still a God to go to. When a Christian has lost all, the best way to recover all again is to encourage himself in the Lord his God. God sometimes strips his people of outward mercies, and then restores to them again those very mercies that he had stripped them of. I have read a story of a poor man that God served³ faithfully, and yet was oppressed cruelly, having all his goods taken from him by an exacting knight; whereupon, in a melancholy humour, he persuaded himself that God was dead, who had formerly been so faithful to him, and now, as he thought, had left him. It so fell out that an old man met him, and desired him to deliver a letter into the hands of his oppressor; upon the receipt and perusal of which, the knight was so convinced, that immediately he confessed his fault, and restored the poor man his goods; which made the poor man say, Now I see that God may seem to sleep, but can never die. If God has taken away all, yet remember that God has a thousand thousand ways to make up all thy losses to thee, which thou knowest not of; therefore do not murmur, do not fret, do not faint, nor do not limit the Holy One of Israel. If thou madest no improvement of thy house, thy estate, thy trade, then it is thy wisdom and thy work rather to be displeased with thyself for thy non-improvement of mercies, than to be discontented at that hand of heaven that hath deprived thee of thy mercies. Remember, O ye burnt citizens of London, that you are not the first that have lost your all. Besides the instances already cited, you must remember what they suffered in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Hebrews; and you must remember that in the ten persecutions many thousands of the

people of God were stripped of their all; and so were very many also in the Marian days. Who shrugs or complains of a common lot? It was grace upon the throne that thou enjoyedst thy house, thy estate, thy trade so long; and therefore it concerns thee to be rather thankful that thy mercies were continued so long unto thee, than to murmur because thou art now stripped of all. But,

[5.] Fifthly, When all is gone, yet mercy may be near, and thou not see it. When Hagar's bottle was empty, the well of water was near, though she saw it not, Gen 21:19. Mercies many times are never nearer to us than when, with Hagar, we sit down and weep because our bottle is empty, because our streams of mercy are dried up. The well was there before, but she saw it not till her eyes were opened. Though mercy be near, though it be even at the door, yet till the great God shall irradiate both the organ and the object, we can neither see our mercies, nor suck the breasts of mercy. Christ, the spring of mercy, the fountain of mercy, was near the disciples, yea, he talked with the disciples, and yet they knew him not, Luk 24:15. Look, as dangers are nearest to wicked men when they see them not, when they fear them not:—As Haman was nearest the gallows when he thought himself the only man that the king would honour, Est 6:1-14. And so when Sisera dreamed of a kingdom, Jael was near with her hammer and her nail, ready to fasten him to the ground, Jdg 4:1-24. And so when Agag said, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past, Samuel stood ready with his drawn sword to cut him in pieces in Gilgal before the Lord, 1Sa 15:32-33. So when Pharaoh said, 'They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them,' Exo 14:3, and 15:9, 10; but presently God blows with his wind, and the sea covered them, and they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Soon after Sennacherib had sent a blasphemous letter to king Hezekiah, 'the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses,' Isa 37:1-38: and within five and fifty days after, Sennacherib himself was butchered by his own sons, Tob 1:21. No sooner had the people, as profane sycophants, applauded Herod, and given him the honour due to God, but he was smitten by the angel of the Lord, or eaten up of worms, or with vermin—with lice, as his grandfather Herod had been before him, Acts 12:22-23. Roffensis had a cardinal's hat sent him; but his head was cut off before it came: the axe was nearer his head than his hat. The heathen historian could not but observe, that as soon as Alexander the Great had summoned a parliament before him of the world, he was summoned himself by death to appear before God in the other world.—Now as you see by these instances that dangers are nearest the wicked when they see them not, when they fear them not; so mercies are very near to the people of God when they see them not, when they expect them not. The Israelites found it so in Asa his time, and in Jehoshaphat's time, and in Pharaoh's time, and in Hezekiah's time, and in Esther's time, and in the time of the judges, as is evident throughout the book of Judges. When there was but a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, supply was at hand. Her barrel and cruse had no bottom, who out of a little gave a little. In all the ages of the world God has made that word good: Isa 41:17, 'When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.' Isa 41:18, 'I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.' Chrysostom observes, That it is very delightful to the mother to have her breasts drawn. Oh how much more, then, is it delightful to God to have his breasts of mercy drawn! O sirs, look, as many times the mother's breasts are drawn, and near the child, though the child sees

them not; so God's breasts of mercy are many times drawn, and near his people, and yet they see them not. Geographers write that the city of Syracuse, in Sicily, is so curiously situated, that the sun is never out of sight. Certainly the mercies of God are never out of sight, though sometimes the people of God are so clouded and benighted that they cannot see their mercies, though they are near them, yea, though they stand before them. But,

[6.] Sixthly, I answer, That God many times, by taking away some outward mercies, comforts, and contentments, does but make way for greater and better mercies to come in the room of those he has taken away. He took from David an Absalom, and gave him a Solomon, Psa 71:20-21; he took from him a scoffing Michal, and gave him a prudent Abigail, 1Sa 25:1-44; he took away from Isaac his mother Sarah, and made up his loss by giving of him Rebekah to wife, Gen 24:67; he took away much from Job, but laid twice as much in the room of all the mercies that he had stripped him of. The Lord many times takes away small mercies to make room for greater mercies, and many times takes away great mercies to make room for greater mercies, yea, the greatest of mercies. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, Though thou hast lost all thy outward comforts in this world, yet if thou art a believer, there are ten choice jewels that thou shalt never, that thou canst never lose:—

[1.] That thou shalt never totally or finally lose thy God, Hos 2:19-20.

[2.] Thou shalt never lose thy interest in Christ. Whatever thy outward losses are, yet thy interest in Christ still holds good, Rom 8:33, seq.

[3.] Thou shalt never lose the Spirit of grace: John 14:16, 'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.'

[4.] Thou shalt never lose the seed of grace, the habits of grace: 1Jn 3:9, 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin'—that is, doth not give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin; he does not make a trade of sin; he sins not totally, finally, maliciously, habitually, studiously, resolutely, wilfully, delightfully, deadly, ■μᾶρτ■αν ο■ ποιε■, he does not make it his work to sin, he cannot follow his lusts as a workman follows his trade, 'for his seed remaineth in him.' The seed of God, the seed of grace, is an abiding seed, 1Co 1:8; Luk 22:32.

[5.] Thou shalt never lose the forgiveness of thy sins, though thou mayest lose the sense and assurance of thy forgiveness: Jer 31:34, 'For I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more;' Mic 7:19.

[6.] Thou shalt never lose thy interest in the covenant of grace, Psa 89:30, Psa 89:35; Jer 31:31, Jer 31:38; Isa 54:10. Once in covenant, and for ever in covenant.

[7.] Thou shalt never lose thy union with Christ, John 15:1, John 15:6. In John 17:1-26, Christ prayed that we 'might be one, as he and his Father are one;' not essentially, nor personally, but spiritually, so as no other creature is united to God. There can be no divorce between Christ and the believing soul. Christ hates putting away, Mal 2:16. Sin may for a time seemingly separate between Christ and the believer, but it can never finally separate between Christ and the believer. Look, as it is impossible for the leaven that is in the dough to be separated from the dough after it is once mixed; for it turneth the nature of the dough into itself: so it is impossible for the saints ever to be separated from Christ; for Christ is in the saints, as nearly and as really as the leaven is in

the very dough, [Luther.] Christ and believers are so incorporated as if Christ and they were one lump. Our nature is now joined to God by the indissoluble tie of the hypostatical union in the second person; and we in our persons are joined to God by the mystical indissoluble bond of the Spirit, the third person. Our union with the Lord is so near and so glorious, that it makes us one spirit with him. In this blessed union, the saints are not only joined to the graces and benefits which flow from Christ, but to the person of Christ, to Christ himself, who is first given for us and to us, and then with him we receive all other spiritual blessings and favours, 1Co 6:17; Rom 8:32; 1Co 3:21-23.

[8.] Thou shalt never lose thy inward peace, either totally or finally. It is true, by sin, and Satan, and the world, and divine withdrawings, thy peace may be somewhat interrupted, but it shall never be finally lost. The greatest storms in this life that beats upon a believer will in time blow over, and the Sun of righteousness, the Prince of peace, will shine as gloriously upon him as ever: John 14:27, 'Peace I leave with you,'—it is bonum hæreditamentum, a good inheritance,—'my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' 'My peace I give unto you'—that is, that peace with God and peace with conscience that I have purchased with my blood I give unto you. Men may wish me peace, but it is only Christ that can give me peace. The peace that Christ gives is bottomed upon his blood, upon his imputed righteousness, upon his intercession, and upon a covenant of peace; and therefore it must needs be a lasting peace, an abiding peace. When a tyrant thus threatened a Christian, I will take away thy house, the Christian replied, Thou canst not take away my peace. When the tyrant threatened to break up his school, the Christian answered, I shall still keep whole my peace. When the tyrant threatened to confiscate all his goods, the Christian answered, Yet there is no premunire against my peace. When the tyrant threatened to banish him out of his own country, the Christian replied, Yet I shall carry my peace with me.

[9.] Thou shalt never lose thy title to heaven: Luk 12:32, 'Fear not, little flock,'—μικρὴν πομπήν—here are two diminutives in the original; the word translated flock signifieth a little flock; but that the exceeding littleness of it might appear, Christ adds another word, so that the words in the fountain run thus, 'Fear not, little little-flock.' And indeed in all the ages of the world the flock of Christ have been but little in their own eyes, and little in the world's eyes, and little in their enemies' eyes, and but little in comparison of that world of wolves that has still surrounded them,—'for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' You need neither fear the loss of earthly things or the want of earthly things, for you have a kind, a tender, a loving Father, whose pleasure it is to give you the kingdom—that is, the heavenly kingdom that is prepared and reserved for you.

[10. and lastly], Thou shalt never lose thy crown of life, thy crown of glory, thy incorruptible crown, thy crown of righteousness, Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4; 1Co 9:25, 2Ti 4:8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearance.' A crown is the top of royalty. Here it notes that everlasting glory that is laid up for the saints. Now this crown is called a crown of righteousness: partly because it is purchased by the righteousness of Christ; and partly because he is righteous that hath promised it; and partly because it is a just and righteous thing with God to crown them with glory at last, who have for his honour been crowned with shame and reproach in this world; and partly because they come to this crown in the use of righteous ways and means. And this crown is said to be laid up, to note our sure and certain enjoyment of it, as the Greek word ποικίλον does import. And let thus much suffice for answer to this second objection.

Obj. 3. I would justify the Lord, I would say he is righteous, though my house be burnt up, and I am turned out of all; but this troubles me, I have not an estate to do that good that formerly I have done. I was once full, but the Lord hath made me empty: I was once Naomi, i.e., beautiful, but now God has made me Marah, i.e., bitter, Ruth 1:20-21; the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me, and consumed me on every hand. I have fed the poor, I have clothed the naked, I have received them that were in bonds: the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me. But now I can do little or nothing for others; and this troubles me, Job 29:13.

[1.] I answer, Thy condition is no lower than was the condition of Christ and his apostles in this world. 'Silver and gold have we none,' Acts 3:6. Salvian saith that Christ is mendicorum maximus, the greatest beggar in the world, as one that shareth in all his saints' necessities. Both Christ and his followers, when they were in this world, they were maintained by others. They had no lands nor lordships, but lived upon others' costs. But of this before; therefore let this touch suffice here. But,

[2.] Secondly, God many times in this life repairs his people's charity with interest upon interest, Mat 19:27-30; 2Co 9:6-14; Heb 6:10. Their scattering is their increasing, their spending is their lending, their layings out are but layings up for themselves: Pro 11:24, 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;' Pro 11:25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.' It is fabled of Midas, that whatever he touched he turned it into gold. This is most true of charity; whatever the hand of charity toucheth it turneth it into gold, be it but a cup of cold water, Mat 10:42; nay, into heaven itself. I have read of one who, having given somewhat to a poor man, and considering with himself whether he had not injured himself by giving beyond his ability, presently corrected himself with those thoughts, that he had lent it to one that would pay well again; and within an hour after he had it restored above sevenfold, in a way which he never thought of. However God may carry it towards his people in this world, yet he will be sure to repay their charity in that other world. It is storied of one Evagrius, in Cedrenus, a rich man, who, lying upon his deathbed, and being importuned by Synesius the bishop to give something to charitable uses, he yielded at last to give three hundred pounds; but first took bond of the bishop that it should be paid him in another world, according to the promise of our Saviour, with a hundredfold advantage, and the very next night after his departure he appeared to the bishop, delivering the bond cancelled and fully discharged, thereby acknowledging that what was promised was made good. It is probable that the relation is fabulous; but this is certain, viz., that one day's being in heaven will make us a sufficient recompense for whatsoever we have given, or do give, or shall give in this world. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If the constant frame and disposition of your hearts be to do as much good as ever you did, or more good than ever you did, then you may be confident that the Lord accepts of your will for the deed: 2Co 8:12, 'For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.' God prefers a willing mind before a worthy work. God measures all his people, not by their works, but by their wills. When the will is strongly inclined and biassed to works of charity, so that a man would fain be a-giving to the poor and a-supplying the wants and necessities of the needy, but cannot for want of an estate; in this case God accepts of the will for the deed. David had a purpose and a will to build God a house, and God took it so kindly at his hands, that he despatches an ambassador to him to tell him how highly he resented his purpose and good-will to build him a house, 2Ch 6:8. The widow's will was in her two mites which she cast into God's treasury, and therefore Christ sets a more honourable value upon them

than he does upon all the vast sums that others cast in, Mark 12:41-44. Many princes and queens, lords and ladies are forgotten, when this poor widow, who had a will to be nobly charitable, has her name written in letters of gold, and her charity put upon record for all eternity. The king of Persia did lovingly accept of the poor man's handful of water, because his good-will was in it, and put it into a golden vessel, and gave the poor man the vessel of gold. And do you think that the King of kings will be outdone by the king of Persia? Surely no. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, As there are more ways to the wood than one, so there are more ways of doing good to others than one. If thou canst not do so much good to others as formerly thou hast done by thy purse, yet thou mayest do more good to others than ever yet thou hast done by thy pen, thy parts, thy prayers, thy gifts, thy graces, thy examples. Though thou art less serviceable to their bodies, yet if thou art more serviceable than ever to their souls, thou hast no reason to complain. There is no love, no compassion, no pity, no charity, no mercy to that which reaches immortal souls, and which will turn most to a man's account in the great day of our Lord Jesus.

Obj. 4. I would justify the Lord, I would say he is righteous, though my house be burned up, and I am turned out of all; but God has punished the righteous with the wicked, if not more than the wicked. This fiery rod has fallen heavier upon many saints than upon many sinners, &c. How, then, can I justify God? How, then, can I say that the Lord is righteous? &c.

Ans. [1.] In all ages of the world God's dearest children have been deep sharers with the wicked in all common calamities. Abraham and his family were by famine driven into Egypt as well as others, and Isaac and his family were by famine driven into the Philistines' country as well as others, and Jacob and his family by famine were driven into Egypt as well as others, and in David's time there was a famine for three years, and in Elijah's time there was a sore famine in Samaria, Gen 26:1-35, and Gen 42:1-38; 2Sa 21:1; 1Ki 18:2; Mat 5:4-5. The difference that God puts between his own and others are not seen in the administration of these outward things: Ecc 9:2, 'All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath.' The privileges of the saints lie [not] in temporals, but in spirituals and eternals, else religion would not be a matter of faith, but sense: and men would serve God not for himself, but for the gay and gallant things of this world. But,

[2.] Secondly, There are as many mysteries in providences as there are in prophecies; and many texts of providence are as hard to understand as many texts of Scriptures are. God's 'way is in the sea, his paths are in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known;' 'His judgments are unsearchable, and his ways are past finding out.' And yet when clouds and darkness are round about him, 'righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne,' Psa 77:19; Rom 11:33; Psa 97:2, and 36:6. When his judgments are a great deep, yet then his righteousness is like the great mountains. There are many mysteries in nature, and many mysteries of state which we are ignorant of; and why, then, should we wonder that there are many mysteries in providence that we do not understand? Let a man but seriously consider how many possible deaths lurk in his own bowels, and the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleaguers him on every side; how many invisible arrows fly about his ears continually, and yet how few have hit him, and that none hitherto have mortally wounded him; and it will doubtless so far affect his heart, as to work him to conclude, that great, and many, and mysterious are the providences that daily attend upon him.

Vives reports of a Jew, that having gone over a deep river on a narrow plank in a dark night, and coming the next day to see what danger he had escaped, fell down dead with astonishment. Should God many times but open to us the mysteriousness of his providences, they would be matter of amazement and astonishment to us. I have read that Marcia, a Roman princess, being great with child, had the babe in her killed with lightning, she herself escaping the danger.³ What a mysterious providence was this! God's providence towards his servants is as a wheel in the midst of a wheel, whose motion, and work, and end in working, is not discerned by a common eye, Eze 1:16. The actings of divine providence are many times so dark, intricate, and mysterious, that it will pose men of the most raised parts, and of the choicest experiences, and of the greatest graces, to be able to discern the ways of God in them. There are many mysteries in the works of God as well as in the word of God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Sometimes God's own people sin with others, and therefore they smart with others. Thus Moses and Aaron sinned with others, and therefore they were shut out of Canaan, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness as well as others, Num 20:1-29. Psa 106:35, 'They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works;' ver. 40, 'Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his inheritance;' Jer 9:25-26, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in their heart;' vide Rom 2:28-29. Such as were outwardly, but not inwardly, circumcised, should be sure to be punished in the day of God's wrath, with those who were neither inwardly nor outwardly circumcised. When the good and the bad join in common provocations, no wonder if they suffer in common desolations, Eze 9:6; Rev 18:4; 1Pe 4:17. Though gross impieties, like pitch or gunpowder, enrages the fire, yet the sins, the infirmities of God's people add to the flame. Not only Manasseh his bloodshed, but also good Hezekiah's pride and vanity of spirit, boasting and glorying in his worldly riches, brought on the Babylonish captivity upon the Jews, 2Ch 32:1-33. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The people of God many times suffer in common calamities, as they are parts and members of that politic body that is punished, 2Sa 24:10-18. The sins of a city, a society, a company, or a nation, may involve all the members in the same judgment. Though Lot was not guilty of the sins of Sodom, yet Lot was carried away in the captivity of Sodom, as cohabiting with them, Gen 14:12, Gen 14:16. And so though many of the precious servants of the Lord in London were not guilty of those gross impieties that their neighbours were guilty of, yet, cohabiting either with them or near them, they were burnt up and destroyed with them. Achan's family were not guilty of Achan's sacrilege, and yet Achan's family were destroyed for Achan's sacrilege. The burning of London was a national judgment, and this national judgment was a product of national sins, as I have formerly proved. Now mark, though the people of God may be personally innocent, yet because they are members of a nocent body, they are liable to undergo the temporal smart of national judgments. Doubtless a whole city may be laid desolate for the wickedness of one man, or of a few men, that dwelleth in it: Ecc 9:18, 'One sinner destroyeth much good.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, When good men who cannot be justly charged with public sins, do yet fall with wicked men by public judgments, you must remember that God has several different ends in inflicting one and the same judgments, both upon the good and upon the bad. The metal and the dross go both

into the fire together, but the dross is consumed, and the metal refined, Zec 13:9; Ecc 8:12-13. The stalk and the ear of corn fall upon the threshing-floor under one and the same flail; but the one is shattered in pieces, the other is preserved. From one and the same olive, and from under one and the same press is crushed out both oil and dregs, but the one is tunned up for use, the other thrown out as unserviceable. The same judgments that befall the wicked may befall the righteous, but not upon the same account. The righteous are cast into the furnace for trial, but the wicked for their ruin. The righteous are signally sanctified by fiery dispensations, but the wicked are signally worsened by the same dispensations, Jer 24:1-3, Jer 24:5. The very self-same judgment that is as a loadstone to draw the righteous towards heaven, will be as a millstone to sink the wicked down to hell. The pillar of fire that went before Israel had a light side and a dark side; the light side was towards God's people, and the dark side was towards the Egyptians, Exo 14:20. The flames of London will prove such a pillar both to the righteous and the wicked. That will certainly be made good upon the righteous and the wicked, whose habitations have been destroyed by London's flames, that the Greek epigram speaks of the silver axe, the ensign of justice:—

'That sword that cuts the bad in twain, The good doth wound and heal again.'

Those dreadful judgments that have been the axe of God's revenging justice, to wound and break the wicked in pieces, shall be righteous men's cures and their golden restoratives. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, God sometimes wraps up his own people with the wicked in desolating judgments, that he may before all the world wipe off that reproach which atheists and wicked men are apt to cast upon him, as if he were partial, as if he were a respecter of persons, and as if his ways were not just and equal, Eze 18:25, Eze 18:29, and Eze 33:20. God, to stop the mouth of iniquity, the mouth of blasphemy, hath made his own people as desolate as others by that fiery calamity that has passed upon them. Such men that have been eye-witnesses of God's impartial dealing with his own people in those days when London was in flames, must say that God is neither partial nor fond. And let thus much suffice, by way of answer to this objection.

3. The third duty that lies upon those that have been burnt up, is for them in patience to possess their own souls, and quietly to acquiesce in what the Lord has done, Luk 21:19. O sirs! hold your peace, and bridle your passions, and quietly submit to the stroke of divine justice. When Aaron's sons were devoured by fire, Aaron held his peace. And will not you hold your peace, now your houses are devoured by fire? What were your houses to Aaron's sons? All the houses in the world are not so near and dear to a man as his children are. In this story concerning Aaron and his sons, there are many things remarkable. As, [1.] That he had lost two of his sons, yea, two of his eldest sons, together at a clap.

[2.] These two were the most honourable of the sons of Aaron: as we may see, Exo 24:1, in that they only with their father and the seventy elders are appointed to come up to the Lord.

[3.] They were cut off by a sudden and unexpected death, when neither themselves nor their father thought their ruin had been so near. What misery to that of being suddenly surprised by a doleful death?

[4.] They were cut off by a way which might seem to testify God's hot displeasure against them; for they were devoured by fire from God. They sinned by fire, and they perished by fire. Look, as fire came from the Lord before in mercy, so now fire is sent from the Lord in judgment. Certainly the

manner of their death pointed out the sin for which they were smitten. Now what father had not rather lose all his children at once, by an ordinary stroke of death, than to see one of them destroyed by God's immediate hand in such a terrible manner?

[5.] They were thus smitten by the Lord on the very first day of their entering upon that high honour of their priestly function, and when their hearts were doubtless full of joy. Now to be suddenly thunderstruck in such a sunshine day of mercy as this seemed to be, must needs add weight to their calamity and misery.

[6.] They were cut off with such great severity for a very small offence, if reason may be permitted to sit as judge in the case. They were made monuments of divine vengeance, only for taking fire to burn the incense from one place, when they should have taken it from another. And this they did, say some, not purposely, but through mistake, and at such a time when they had much work lying upon their hands, and were but newly entered upon their new employment. Now notwithstanding all this, Aaron held his peace. It may be, at first, when he saw his sons devoured by fire, his heart began to wrangle, and his passions began to work; but when he considered the righteousness of God on the one hand, and the glory that God would get to himself on the other hand, he presently checks himself, and lays his hand upon his mouth, and stands still and silent before the Lord. Though it be not easy in great afflictions, with Aaron, to hold our peace, yet it is very advantageous; which the heathens seemed to intimate in placing the image of Angeronia, with the mouth bound, upon the altar of Volupia, to shew that they [who] do prudently and patiently bear and conceal their troubles, sorrows, and anxieties, they shall attain to comfort at last. What the apostle saith of the distressed Hebrews, after the spoiling of their goods, 'Ye have need of patience,' Heb 10:34, Heb 10:36, the same I may say to you, who have lost your houses, your shops, your trades, your all—You have need, yea, you have great need of patience. Though thy mercies are few, and thy miseries are many, though thy mercies are small, and thy miseries are great, yet look that thy spirit be quiet, and that thou dost sweetly acquiesce in the will of God. Now God hath laid his fiery rod upon your backs, it will be your greatest wisdom to lay your hands upon your mouths, and to say with David, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it,' Psa 39:9. To be patient and silent under the sharpest providences and the sorest judgments, is as much a Christian's glory as it is his duty. The patient Christian feels the want of nothing. Patience will give contentment in the midst of want. No loss, no cross, no affliction will sit heavy upon a patient soul. Dionysius saith that this benefit he had by the study of philosophy—viz., that he bore with patience all those alterations and changes that he met with in his outward condition. Now shall nature do more than grace? shall the study of philosophy do more than the study of Christ, Scripture, and a man's own heart? But,

4. The fourth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to set up the Lord in a more eminent degree than ever, as the great object of their fear. Oh how should we fear and tremble before the great God, who is able to turn the most serviceable and useful creatures to us to be the means of destroying of us! Heb 12:28, 'Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear;' Heb 12:29, 'For our God is a consuming fire.' Here are two arguments to work the saints to set up God as the great object of their fear. The first is drawn from the terribleness of God's majesty, 'He is a consuming fire.' The second is drawn from the relation which is between God and his people, 'Our God.' What a strange title is this of the great God, that we meet with in this place! and yet this is one of the titles of God, expressing his nature, and in

which he glories, that he is called 'a consuming fire.' These words, 'God is a consuming fire,' are not to be taken properly, but metaphorically. Fire, we know, is a very terrible and dreadful creature; and so may very well serve to set forth to us the terribleness and dreadfulness of God. Now God is here said to be a consuming or devouring fire. The word in the original, Καταναλ■σκον, is doubly compounded, and so the signification is augmented and increased, to note to us the exceeding terribleness of the fire that is here meant. When God would set forth himself to be most terrible and dreadful to the sons of men, he does it by this resemblance of fire, which of all things is most terrible and intolerable: Deu 4:24, 'For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.' The Hebrew word, ■■■■, that is here rendered consuming, doth properly signify devouring or eating; it comes from ■■■■, which signifies to devour and eat; and by a metaphor, it signifieth to consume or destroy. God is a devouring fire, an eating fire; and sinners, and all they have, is but bread and meat for divine wrath to feed upon: Deu 9:3, 'Understand therefore this day, that the Lord thy God is he which goeth before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee.' See Psa 50:3; Isa 33:14; Deu 28:58. What more violent, what more irresistible, what more terrible than fire! Oh how much therefore does it concern us to set up that God as the great object of our fear, who hath armed and commanded this dreadful creature, the fire, to destroy us in many or in most of our outward concernments as to this world! Jer 10:11, 'At his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation:' Job 13:11, 'Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?' Psa 119:120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments:' Hab 3:5, 'Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet;' Hab 3:16, 'When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble.' Ah London, London! it highly concerns thee to tremble and quiver, and stand in awe of that great and glorious God who hath sent so many thousands to their long homes by a sweeping pestilence, and who hath by a dreadful fire turned thy ancient monuments and thy stately buildings into a ruinous heap. That Christian is more worth than the gold of Ophir, who fears more the hand that hath laid on the fiery rod than the rod itself. That prudent and faithful counsel which the prophet Isaiah gives, should always lie warm upon every burnt citizen's heart: Isa 8:13, 'Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.' But,

5. The fifth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to be contented with their present condition. When a man's mind is brought down to his means, all is well. Contentation of mind under all the turns and changes of this life, makes a believer master both of the little and great world of unruly desires within himself, and of temptations in the world without. Contentment in a man's present condition, will yield him a little heaven in the midst of all the great hells that he meets with in this world. Contentation is a hidden treasure, that the believer will carry with him to the third heaven, where an exceeding weight of glory and contentation, with full satisfaction to his desires, will be added to that little stock of contentment that he has obtained in this world. Contentation in every condition, is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven, as Jacob once speaks of that gracious manifestation of God, Gen 28:1-22. God dwells in a contented heart, and a contented heart dwells in God. Contentment is that porch wherein the believer waits for an entrance into a house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heaven, 2Co 5:1. Oh labour much with God, that your hearts may be brought fully under the power of these divine

commands:—1Ti 6:8, 'Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.' Heb 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness'—or without the love of silver, as the Greek word signifies,—'and be content with such things as you have.' Contenti præsentiis: so Beza and others, 'Be content with things present.' The believing Hebrews had been plundered of all they had in this world, Heb 10:34, when the apostle gave forth this royal command; and yet the apostle requires them to be content. It is as much the duty of a Christian to be content when he has nothing, as when all the world smiles upon him. Christians are soldiers, strangers, travellers, pilgrims, and therefore it concerns them to make shift with little things, yea, with anything in this world. The Israelites had no gay clothes, nor no new clothes in their wilderness condition; but God made their old clothes to be all clothes to them, and that was enough. Jacob did not indent with God for junkets or ornaments, but for food and raiment: Gen 28:20, 'If God will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.' Nature is content with a little, grace with less; though nothing will satisfy those men's hearts whose lusts are their lords. We shall never want a penny in our purses to bear our charges till we get to heaven; and therefore let us be content with our present portion in this world. Php 4:12, 'I have learned, in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.' In these words you have first the vicissitude of Paul's outward condition: at one time he abounds, at another he is abased: at one time he is full, and at another time he suffers need. You have the sweet and gracious composure of his spirit, and this is expressed in two singular acts. The first is his contentation of mind in all conditions: 'I have learned, in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be content.' The second is his prudent and pertinent comportment with his present condition: 'I know both how to be abased, and how to abound.' You have the way how he attained this contentation of mind in all conditions: 'I have learned,' saith he, 'I am instructed;' this lesson of contentment he did not learn at the feet of Dr Gamaliel, but in the school of Jesus Christ. Contentment in every condition is too high a lesson for any effectually to teach, but Jesus Christ. O sirs! in the grave it is all one who hath [had] all, and who hath had none. What folly is it to lay up goods for many years, when we cannot lay up one day for the enjoyment of our goods! Christ, who never miscalled any, calls him 'fool' who had much of the world under his hands, but nothing of God or heaven in his heart. Zopirus the Persian was contented to sustain the cutting off his nose, and ears, and lips, to further the enterprise of his lord, Darius, against proud Babylon. So Christians should be contented to be anything, to do anything, or to suffer anything, to further or promote the glory of God in this world. All this whole world is not proportionable to the precious soul. All the riches of the Indies cannot pacify conscience, nor secure eternity, nor prevent death, nor bring you off in the day of judgment; and therefore be contented with a little. All the good things of this world are but cold comforts: they cannot stretch to eternity, they will not go with us into another world; and therefore why should the want of such things either trouble our thoughts, or break our hearts? The whole world is but a paradise for fools; it is a beautiful but deceitful harlot; it is a dreamed sweetness, and a very ocean of gall. There is nothing to be found in it that has not mutability and uncertainty, vanity and vexation stamped upon it. And therefore he cannot be happy that enjoys it, nor he miserable that wants it. And why then should not he be contented that has but a little of it? The greatest outward happiness is but honeyed poison; and therefore do not shrug nor faint because thou hast but little of the world. All thy crosses and losses shall be so tempered by a hand of heaven, as that they shall become wholesome medicines; they shall be steps to thy

future glory, they are thy only hell, thy heaven is to come. And therefore be contented in the midst of all thy sorrows and sufferings. Remember that many times they who have most of the world in their hands, have least of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of grace, of heaven in their hearts. And remember, that a man were better to have much of God with a little of the world, than to have much of the world with a little of God. God alone is a thousand thousand felicities, and a world of happiness, the only life and light. Algerius the martyr, being swallowed up in a sweet fruition of God, found more light in his dungeon than was without in all the world. O sirs! if upon casting up of your accounts for another world, you find that heaven is your home, the world your footstool, the angels your attendants, your Creator your father, your Judge your brother, the Holy Spirit your comforter; if you find that God is ever with you, ever before you, ever within you, ever round about you, and ever a-making of provision more or less for you, why should you not be contented with your present condition, with your present proportion, be it more or be it less? But,

6. The sixth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to mourn, to lie low, to keep humble under this dreadful judgment of fire, under this mighty hand of God. When Ziklag was burnt by the Amalekites, 'David and the people lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no power to weep,' 1Sa 30:1-4. They wept their utmost; they wept themselves even blind. They did not stoically slight that fiery rod, but prudently laid it to heart. Tears are called the blood of the soul. Now a shower of tears, a shower of blood, they poured out to quench those flames that the Amalekites had kindled. When they saw their city laid desolate by fire, their sorrow was so great that they were overburthened with the weight of it; and therefore they sought ease in venting their sorrow in a shower of tears. And so when Nehemiah understood that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and the gates thereof were burnt with fire, he sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, Neh 1:3-4. Some authors report [Nazianzen and Jerome, &c.] that the Jews to this day come yearly to the place where Jerusalem, the city of their fathers, stood, which was by Titus and Adrian destroyed by fire and sword, and upon the day of the destruction of it weep over it. Oh how well does it become all burnt citizens to stand and weep over the ashes of London, and greatly to abase themselves under that mighty hand of God that has been lifted up against them! 1Pe 5:6, 'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.' Ah London, London! how hath the mighty hand of the Lord been lifted up against thee! how hath he by flames of fire laid all thy glory in the dust! The Lord, by fire, sword, and pestilence, hath greatly humbled thee. And oh, when shall it once be that thou wilt be humble under the mighty hand of God! It is one thing to be humbled by judgments; it is another thing to be humble under judgments. There have been many nations, cities, and particular persons who have been greatly humbled by amazing and astonishing judgments, who yet never had so much grace as to lie humble under those judgments. When God's hand is lifted up very high, he expects that our hearts should fall very low. To be poor and proud is to be doubly miserable. If men's spirits are high when their estates are low, the next blow will be more dreadful. God has laid our habitations in dust and ashes, and he expects that we should even humble ourselves in dust and ashes. The only way to avoid cannon-shot, is to fall down flat on the ground: the application is easy. Humility exalteth: he that is most humble shall be most honourable. Moses in his wilderness-condition was the meekest man on earth, and God made him the most honourablest, calling him up unto himself in the mount, and making of him the leader of his people Israel. Gideon was very little in his own eyes, 'the least in his father's house' in his own apprehension; and God exalted him, making him the deliverer of his Israel. He that is little in his own account, is always high in God's esteem. When one asked the

philosopher what God was a-doing? he answered, that his whole work was to lift up the humble and cast down the proud. Those brave creatures, the lion and the eagle, were not offered in sacrifice unto God, but the poor lamb and dove was offered in sacrifice: to note to us, that God regards not your brave, high, lofty spirits, and that he is all for such that are of a dove-like and a lamb-like spirit. They say if dust be sprinkled upon the wings of bees, their noises, humming, and risings will quickly cease. The Lord, in the late fiery dispensation, has sprinkled dust and ashes upon us all. And oh that our proud noises, hummings, and risings of heart might cease from before the Lord, who is risen out of his holy place! Ah London, London! thou hast been proud of thy trade, and proud of thy strength, and proud of thy riches, and proud of thy stately buildings and edifices, but God has now laid all thy glory in dust and ashes; and therefore it highly concerns thee to humble thyself under the mighty hand of God. God has abased thee, and therefore make it thy work to be base in thine own eyes. When Nehemiah understood that the Chaldeans, who were a generation of idolaters, had made Jerusalem desolate by fire, he greatly humbled himself under the mighty hand of God. He looked through all active causes to the efficient cause, and accordingly he abased himself before the Lord: as you may see Neh 1:3-4, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven.' When Nehemiah heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, and that the gates thereof were burnt with fire, his grief was so great that he could not stand under it, and therefore he sits down and weeps. Who is there that is a man, that is an Englishman, that is a Christian, that is a protestant, that can behold the ruins of London, and not—at least the frame of his spirit—sit down and weep over those ruins? The way of ways to be truly, yea, highly exalted, is to be thoroughly humbled. The highest heavens and the lowest hearts do both alike please the most high God, Isa 57:15. God will certainly make it his work to exalt them who make it their great work to abase themselves. Such who are low in their own eyes, and can be content to be low in the eyes of others, such are most high and honourable in the eye of God, in the esteem and account of God. The lowly Christian is always the most lovely Christian. Now God hath laid your city low, your all low, he expects that your hearts should lie low under his mighty hand. All the world cannot long keep up those men who do not labour to keep down their hearts under judgments inflicted or judgments feared. Remember the sad catastrophe of Herod the Great, of Agrippa the Great, of Pompey the Great, and of Alexander the Great. If your spirits remain great under great judgments, it is an evident sign that more reigning judgments lie at your doors. But,

7. The seventh duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to bless a taking God as well as a giving God; it is to encourage themselves in the Lord their God, though he has stripped them of all their worldly goods. Thus did Job when he had lost his all: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job 1:21. One brings in holy Job standing by the ruined house, under whose walls his ten children lay dead and buried, and lifting up his heart and hands towards heaven, saying, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Ecce spectaculum, says he, dignum ad quod respiciat intentus operi suo Deus! Behold a spectacle—a spectacle worthy of God himself, were he never so intent upon his work in heaven, yet worthy of his cognisance! When Ziklag was burnt with fire, and David plundered by the Amalekites, and his

wives carried captive, yet then he 'encouraged himself in the Lord his God,' 1Sa 30:1-3, 1Sa 30:6. 'His God' notes [1.] His nearness and dearness to God. Saints are very near and dear to God. [2.] 'His God' notes his relation to God. God is the saint's Father. [3.] 'His God' notes his rights to God. Whole God is the believer's. All he has, and all he can do, is the believer's, Psa 148:14; Eph 2:13; 2Co 6:18. From these, and such other like considerations, David encouraged himself in the Lord his God when all was gone; and so should we. So the believing Hebrews 'took joyfully the spoiling of their goods'—whether by fire, or plundering, or otherwise, is not said—'knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance,' Heb 10:34. And to this duty James exhorts: Jas 1:2, 'Count it all joy, my brethren, when you fall into divers temptations,' or tribulations, or afflictions. A Christian in his choicest deliberation ought to count it all joy when he falls into divers tribulations. The words are emphatical; the apostle doth not say, be patient or quiet when you fall into divers temptations or afflictions, but 'be joyful.' Nor the apostle doth not say, be joyful with a little joy, but be 'joyful with exceeding great joy;' the words are a Hebraism. All joy is full joy; all joy is perfect joy. And this becomes the saints when they fall, or are begirt round, not with some, but with divers, that is, with any kind of affliction or tribulation. An omnipotent God will certainly turn his people's misery into felicity; and therefore it concerns them to be divinely merry in the midst of their greatest misery. Oh that all burnt citizens would seriously consider of these three things:—

[1.] That this fiery rod has been a rod in a father's hand.

[2.] That this fiery rod shall sooner or later be like Aaron's rod, a blooming rod. Choice fruit will one day grow upon this burnt tree, London. No man can tell what good God may do England by that fiery rod that he has laid upon London.

[3.] That this fiery rod that has been laid upon London has not been laid on, 1. According to the greatness of God's anger; nor 2. According to the greatness of his power; nor 3. According to the strictness of his justice; nor 4. According to the demerits of our sins; nor 5. According to the expectations of men of a Romish faith; who, it is to be feared, did hope to see every house laid desolate, and London made an Aceldama, a field of blood, Acts 1:19; nor 6. According to the extensiveness of many of your fears; for many of you have feared worse things than yet you feel. Now, upon all these considerations, how highly does it concern the people of God to be thankful and cheerful; yea, and to encourage themselves in the Lord under that fiery dispensation that has lately passed upon them!

Quest. But what is there considerable in God to encourage the soul under heavy crosses, and great losses, and fiery trials?

Ans. [1.] First, There is his gracious, his special, and peculiar presence, Dan 3:24-25. Psa 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' Psa 91:15. 'He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble.' Oh, the precious presence of God with a man's spirit will sweeten every fiery dispensation, and take off much of the bitterness and terribleness of it. In the gracious presence of God with our spirits lies, (1.) Our greatest happiness. (2.) Our greatest honour. (3.) Our greatest profit and advantage. (4.) Our greatest joy and delight. (5.) Our greatest safety and security. The bush, which was a type of the church, consumed not all the while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst of it. The gracious presence of God with a man's spirit will make

heavy afflictions light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, 2Co 4:16-18. God's gracious presence makes every burden light, Psa 55:22. He that has the presence of God with his spirit can bear a burden without a burden, Deu 33:27, Deu 33:29. What burden can sink that man that hath everlasting arms under him, and over him, and round about him? But,

[2.] Secondly, There is wisdom in God to encourage them under all their trials, Jer 24:5; Rom 8:28. There is wisdom in God so to temper and order all judgments, afflictions, crosses, and losses, as to make them work kindly and sweetly for their good. Whilst God is near us, wisdom and counsel is at hand. God is that wise and skilful physician that can turn poison into cordials, diseases into remedies, crosses into crowns, and the greatest losses into the greatest gains. What can hurt us, whilst an infinite wise God stands by us? But,

[3.] Thirdly, There is strength, power, and omnipotency in God to encourage them, Pro 18:10; Psa 46:1-2; Isa 26:4; Psa 3:7. There is nothing too high for him, nor nothing too hard for him: he is able easily and speedily to bring to pass all contrivances. You read of many who have been mighty, but you read but of one Almighty: Rev 4:8, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.' Rev 11:17, 'We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty.' Rev 15:3, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty.' Rev 16:7, 'And I heard another out of the altar say, &c., even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.' Under all your fiery trials an almighty God can do mighty things for you. And therefore it concerns you to encourage yourselves in him, even when you are stripped of all.

O Christians, it highly concerns you to bear all your losses cheerfully and thankfully, 'In everything give thanks,' saith the apostle; 'for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you,' 1Th 5:18. Chrysostom speaks excellently: 'This,' saith he, 'is the very will of God, to give thanks always;' this argues a soul rightly instructed. Hast thou suffered any evil? if thou wilt, it is no evil. Give thanks to God, and then thou hast turned the evil into good. Say thou as Job said when he had lost all, 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' What evil hast thou suffered? What! is it a disease? This is no strange thing to us, seeing our bodies are mortal and naturally born to suffer. What! dost thou want money? this may be gotten here, and lost here. Whatsoever evils or losses therefore do oppress thee, give thou thanks, and thou hast changed the nature of them. Job then did more deeply wound the devil, when, being stripped out of all, he gave thanks to God, than if he had distributed all to the poor and needy. For it is much more to be stripped of all, and yet to bear it patiently, generously, and thankfully, than for a rich man to give alms, as it here happened to righteous Job. But hath fire suddenly taken hold upon thy house, destroyed thy house, and consumed thy whole substance? Remember the sufferings of Job. Give thanks to God, who could, though he did not, have hindered that mischance; and thou shalt be sure to receive as equal a reward, as if thou hadst put all into the bosom of the indigent. This he repeateth over again, and saith thy reward, being thankful, is equal to his who gave all he had to the poor. To wind up your hearts to thankfulness and cheerfulness under this late desolating judgment, consider (1.) God might have taken away all.² It is good to bless him for what he has left. (2.) He has taken away more from others than he has taken away from you—ergo, be thankful. (3.) You are unworthy of the least mercy, you deserve to be stripped of every mercy; and therefore be thankful for anything that is left. God has a sovereign right over all you have, and might have stripped you as naked as the day wherein you were born. (4.) God has left you better and greater mercies than any those were that he has stripped you of—viz., your lives, your limbs,

your friends, your relations, yea, and the means of grace, which is better than all, and more than all other mercies—ergo, be thankful. (5.) The Lord has given those choice things to you, as shall never be taken from you—viz., himself, his Son, his Spirit, which shall abide with you for ever; his grace, which is an abiding seed; and his peace, which none can give to you nor take from you—ergo, be thankful, though God has laid all your pleasant things desolate, John 16:1-33; 1Jn 3:9. (6.) Thankfulness under crosses and losses, speak out much integrity and ingenuity of spirit. Hypocrites and profane persons are more apt to blaspheme than to bless a taking God—ergo, be thankful. The ancients say, *Ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris*, Say a man is unthankful, and say he is anything. Ingratitude is a monster in nature, say some, a solecism in manners, a paradox in grace, damming up the course of donations divine and human. If there be any sin in the world against the Holy Ghost, said Queen Elizabeth in a letter to Henry the Fourth of France, it is ingratitude. The laws of Persia, Macedonia, and Athens, condemned the ungrateful to death; and unthankfulness may well be styled the epitome of vices. Ingratitude was so hateful to the Egyptians, that they used to make eunuchs of ungrateful persons, that no posterity of theirs might remain. Well, sirs, remember this, the best way to get much, is to be thankful for a little. God loves to sow much where he reaps much. Thankfulness for one mercy makes way for another mercy, as many thousand Christians have experienced. The Lord's impost for all his blessings is our thankfulness; if we neglect to pay this impost, the commodity is forfeit, and so will take it back. Our returns must be according to our receipts. Good men should be like the bells, that ring as pleasantly at a funeral as at a wedding. They should be as thankful when it goes ill with them, as when it goes well with them. Cicero complained of old that it was a hard thing to find a thankful man. Oh how hard a thing is it to find burnt citizens really, cordially, frequently, and practically thankful that they are alive, that they are out of the grave, out of hell, and that yet they have bread to eat, and clothes to wear, though their habitations are laid in ashes, and all their pleasant things destroyed! But,

8. The eighth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to keep in their hearts a constant remembrance of the late dreadful conflagration. God expects that his children should commemorate his judgments as well as his mercies. The sore judgment that God inflicted upon Sodom is mentioned thirteen times in the blessed Scripture, and all to work us to mind it, and to abhor those sins that laid that city desolate, Isa 26:8-9; Psa 119:30, Psa 119:120. The Lord looks that his people should keep up fresh in their memories such judgments that have been long before executed: Jer 7:12, 'Go to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people.' The ark of old stood at Shiloh, but after it was taken and carried away by the Philistines it was never brought back, and from that time Shiloh lay ever after desolate, 1Sa 4:10-11. And this the Lord would have engraven upon their memories, and upon their hearts. Though stony hearts are bad, yet iron memories are good: Luk 17:32, 'Remember Lot's wife.' Consider her sin and her punishment; that so fearing the one, you may learn to take heed of the other: 2Pe 2:6, 'And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.' There is much in those words, 'that after should live ungodly.' Why hath God turned those rich and populous cities into ashes, and set them up as burning beacons, but to warn all the world that they live not ungodly, and to work them to keep alive in their memories the desolating judgments of God? The Rabbins say that the Jews at this day, when they are to build a house, they are to leave one part of it unfinished and lying rude, in remembrance that Jerusalem and the temple are at present desolate. Oh let the remembrance of London's desolation by fire be for ever

kept up in all your hearts. To this purpose consider,

[1.] That the burning of London is a very great judgment, as I have formerly proved. Now great judgments, like great mercies, should be always kept up fresh in our memories.

[2.] The burning of London is a national judgment, as I have formerly proved. Now national judgments should be always fresh in our memories.

[3.] It is a judgment that carries much of the wrath and anger of the Lord in it: Amo 3:6, 'Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' Amo 3:8, 'The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?' Now the more anger and wrath we read in any judgment, the more highly it concerns us to remember that judgment.

[4.] A serious commemoration of God's judgments is a thing that is highly pleasing to the Lord. God delights as much in the glory of his justice as he does in the glory of his mercy or grace. Now when we commemorate his judgments, we glorify his justice that has inflicted them.

[5.] Severe judgments contribute much to the enlightening of men's understandings, and to the awakening of their consciences, and the reforming of their lives, and to work men to judge them, and justify the Lord. And therefore it highly concerns you to keep up the remembrance of London's desolation by fire always fresh and flourishing in your souls, Hos 5:14-15, and Hos 6:1-3; Jer 24:1-6, and Jer 22:8-9.

[6.] Smart judgments are teaching things. All God's rods have a voice. 'Hear ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it,' Mic 6:9. Look, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth by thorns and briers, so God, by piercing judgments, teaches both sinners and saints to take heed of despising his patience and long-suffering, and to cease from doing evil and to learn to do well, Isa 1:16-17; and to fear and fly from all such sinful courses or practices that bring destructive judgments upon the most glorious cities in the world. And upon this account, how deeply does it concern us to have always the late fiery dispensation in our thoughts and upon our hearts!

[7.] All God's judgments are his messengers; they are all at his command. The centurion had not such a sovereign power over his servants, as the great God hath over all sorts of judgments. If the Lord do but hiss for the fly of Egypt and the bee of Assyria, they shall come and do their office, Eze 14:13, Eze 14:15, Eze 14:17, Eze 14:19; Mat 21:8; Isa 7:18-19. Now all God's messengers, as well as his mercies, should still be kept in our eye. But,

[8.] and lastly, Consider a serious commemoration of the judgments of God will difference and distinguish you from all profane persons and unsound professors: Psa 10:5, 'Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.' Thy judgments, that is, the plagues and punishments that thou layest upon the ungodly, are high above his sight; that is, he fears them not, he thinks not of them, he minds them not, he does not seriously consider of them, he is not kindly or deeply affected with them, he regards them no more than a tale that is told, or than foreign wars wherein he is not concerned. Others carry the words thus: He casteth thy judgments out of his sight, he will not so much as once mind them; they are too high for him to set them before him; they are hidden before him; they are above the reach of his understanding and apprehension. Both mercies and judgments have much of God in them. They speak, and speak aloud; but wicked men can neither

see, nor hear, nor understand the voice of God either in the one or in the other. I have read of such a pestilential disease once at Athens, as took away the memories of those who were infected with it, so that they forgot even their own names. One pestilential disease or another usually so seizeth upon wicked men, that they easily and usually forget the judgments of God. If God set in with these eight arguments, they will contribute more to the enabling of you to keep the late fiery dispensations of God fresh in your memories, than all the pillars of brass or stone in the world. Yet I am far from questioning the lawfulness of erecting a pillar of brass or stone to commemorate the late dreadful fire, according to an act of parliament [p. 108] that is now before us. But,

9. The ninth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to see the vanity, mutability, and uncertainty of all worldly comforts and enjoyments, and accordingly to sit loose from them, and to get their affections weaned from, them, 1Ti 6:17; 1Jn 2:17; Heb 11:25. Behold, in four days' time a glorious city is turned into a ruinous heap, and a little world of wealth is laid in ashes, and many hundreds of families almost reduced to beggary. And are not these loud sermons of the vanity, mutability, and uncertainty of all earthly things? That is good advice Solomon gives: Pro 23:4-5, 'Labour not to be rich. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven.' All certainty that is in riches is that they are uncertain. Riches, like bad servants, never stay long with one master. Did not the citizens of London see their riches flying away from them upon the wings of the fire and of the wind, when their own and their neighbours' habitations were all in flames? O sirs, what certainty can there be in those things which balls of fire, storms at sea, false oaths, or treacherous friends may in a few days, yea, in a day, an hour, deprive us of? God can soon clap a pair of wings upon all a man has in this world. And therefore he acts safest and wisest who sits most loose from the things of the world. 'Riches are not for ever; and the crown doth not endure to every generation,' Pro 27:4. This Adoni-bezek, Belshazzar, and many other great princes have found by experience, as Scripture and histories do sufficiently testify. In all the ages of the world the testimony of Solomon holds good: Ecc 1:2, 'Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.' The things of this world are not only vain, but vanity in the abstract. They are excessive vanity; vanity of vanities; yea, they are a heap of vanity; vanity of vanities. And this the burnt citizens have found by sad experience. The world is all shadow and vanity: it is like Jonah's gourd, a man may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon withers, decays, and dies. He that shall but weigh man's pains with his pay, his miseries with his mercies, his sorrows with his joys, his crosses with his comforts, his wants with his enjoyments, &c., may well cry out, Oh the vanity and uncertainty of all these earthly things! Thus² the world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is, displeasing or dirty. All the great, the gay, the glorious things of the world may fitly be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in operation. A man may be happy that is not wealthy; witness Lazarus, and those worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Heb 11:1-40. But how hard a thing is it for a man to be happy that is wealthy: Mat 19:24, 'It is easier for a camel,'—or cable-rope, as some render it—'to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.' There are several expositions upon these words.

[1.] First, Some say that there was a little gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's-eye, which was so low and little that it was impossible for a camel to enter in at it with his burden, and therefore when camels came that way they took off their loads, and the camels themselves were forced to stoop

before they could pass through the gate. Some think that our Saviour alludes to this. But,

[2.] Secondly, Others interpret it of a cable-rope or cord, and then thus they expound the words: A man cannot by any means possible put a cable through a needle's eye, but if he untwist it, he may by thread and thread put it through.

[3.] Thirdly, Others say these words are a proverbial speech, for the Talmud had a proverb, 'Are ye of Pambeditha, who can cause an elephant to go through a needle's eye?' Those of Pambeditha were great braggers; they would boast to others that they could do very great things and very strange things. Hence came that proverb amongst them, It is easier to cause an elephant to go through a needle's eye, than to do thus or thus. Now our Saviour useth the word camel because he was better known to them. It was usual, say others, with the Jews to say, when difficult matters were promised, Hast thou been at Pambeditha, where camels go through the eyes of needles? But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, The plain and simple meaning of this proverbial speech is doubtless this—viz., that it is as impossible for such a rich man to be saved, that trusteth in his riches, and that sets a higher price upon his riches than upon Christ, and that will rather part with Christ than part with his riches, and that will rather go to hell rich than to heaven poor—as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The proverbial speech, say others, notes the difficulty of rich men's being saved: Hab 2:6, 'Woe to him that ladeth himself with thick clay.' Thick clay will sooner break a man's back than satisfy his heart. And oh what a folly and madness is it for a man to be still a-loading of himself with the clay of this world! In Gen 13:2, it is said that Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; the word is ■■■■, gravis fuit; he was very heavy, to shew that riches, that gold and silver—which is the great god of the world, the paradise, the all in all, the great Diana that all the world magnifies and worships—are but heavy burdens, and rather a hindrance than a help to heaven and happiness. Though the rich man in the Gospel fared and lived like a gentleman, a gallant, a knight, a lord; yet when he died he went to hell, Luk 16:1-31. Though mammon, as Aretius and many others observe, is a Syriac word, and signifies riches, yet Irenæus derives mammon of mum, that signifies a spot, and hon, that signifies riches; to shew that riches have their spots: and yet, oh how in love are men with these spots! how laborious, how industrious are men to add spots to spots, bags to bags, houses to houses, and lands to lands, and lordships to lordships, as if there were no hell to escape, nor no heaven to make sure! Isa 5:8.

O sirs, the voice of God in that fiery dispensation that has lately passed upon us seems to be this, O ye citizens of London, whose habitations and glory I have laid in dust and ashes, sit loose from this world, and set your affections upon things above! Live in this world as pilgrims and strangers. Remember this is not your resting-place; never be inordinate in your love to the world, nor in your delight in the world, nor in your pursuit of the world any more, Col 3:1; Heb 11:13; Jer 1:6; Mic 2:10. Never spend so many thoughts upon the world, nor never send forth so many wishes after the world, nor never spend so much precious time to gain the world, as you have formerly done. Take off your thoughts, take off your hearts, take off your hands from all these uncertain things. Remember it will not be long before you must all go to your long home, and a little of the world will serve to bear your charges till you get to heaven. Remember I have burnt up your city, I have poured contempt upon your city, I have stained the pride and glory of your city; that so seeing you have here no continuing city, you may seek one to come, Heb 13:14. Remember I have destroyed

your houses, that so you may make sure a house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens, 2Co 5:1. I have taken away your uncertain riches, that so you may make sure more durable riches, Pro 8:18. I have spoiled many of your brave full trades, that so you might drive a more brave full trade towards heaven, Php 3:20. Oh that I had no just grounds to be jealous that many who have been great losers by the fire are now more mad upon the world, and more eagerly carried after the world, than ever they have been! as if the great design of God in setting them on fire round about was only to enlarge their desires more after the world, and more effectually to engage them to moil and toil as in the fire, to lay up treasure for another fire to consume. Before I close up this particular, let me offer a few things to your consideration:—

[1.] First, Are there none of the burnt citizens who seek the world in the first place, and Christ and heaven in the last place? that are first for earth, and then for heaven? first for the world, and then for Christ? Mat 6:33; John 6:27; first for the meat that perisheth, and then for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life? The old poet's note was, first for money and then for Christ. But,

[2.] Secondly, Are there none of the burnt citizens whose love, and hearts, and affections are running more out after the world than they are after God, and Christ, and the great things of eternity? 1Ti 6:9, and Jer 17:11. Are there none of the burnt citizens that are peremptorily resolved to gain the world whatever it costs them? The Gnostics were a sort of professors that made no use of their religion but to their secular advantages, and therefore when the world and their religion stood in competition, they made no scruple, no bones of renouncing their profession to enjoy the world. Oh the deadness, the barrenness, the listlessness, the heartlessness to anything that is divine and heavenly, that does always attend such Christians who are resolved to be rich, or great, or somebody in the world, whatever comes on it! Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits that these men spend upon the world, whilst their souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity is posting on upon them! Men that are highly and fully resolved to be rich by hook or by crook, will certainly forget God, undervalue Christ, grieve the Spirit, despise Sabbaths, slight ordinances, and neglect such gracious opportunities as might make them happy for ever. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, Acts 24:24, seq. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Are there none of the burnt citizens who spend the first of their time, and the best of their time, and the most of their time about the things of the world, and who ordinarily put off Christ and their souls with the least, and last, and worst of their time? The world shall freely have many hours, when Christ can hardly get one. Are there none who will have their eating times, and their drinking times, and their sleeping times, and their buying times, and their selling times, and their feasting times, and their sporting times, yea, and their sinning times, who yet can spare no time to hear, or read, or pray, or mourn, or repent, or reform, or to set up Christ in their families, or to wait upon him in their closets? Are there not many who will have time for everything but to honour the Lord, and to secure their interest in Christ, and to make themselves happy for ever?

Look, as Pharaoh's lean kine ate up the fat, so many now are fallen into such a crowd of worldly business, as eats up all that precious time which should be spent in holy and heavenly exercises.

[4.] Fourthly, Are there none of the burnt citizens who daily prefer the world before Christ; yea, the worst of the world before the best of Christ? The Gergesenes preferred their swine before a Saviour; they had rather lose Christ than lose their hogs, Mat 8:28, seq. They had rather that the devil should still possess their souls, than that he should drown their pigs. They preferred their

swine before their salvation, and presented a wretched petition for their own damnation. 'For they besought him'—who had all love, and life, and light, and grace, and glory, and fulness in himself, Col 1:19, and Col 2:3—'that he would depart out of their coasts.' Though there be no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell to Christ's departure from a people, yet men that are mad upon the world will desire this. Bernard had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him, at so high a rate he valued Christ. There was a good man who once cried out, I had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds. Another mourned because he could not prize Christ enough. But how few burnt citizens are of these men's minds! It was a sweet prayer of one, 'Make thy Son dear, very dear, exceeding dear, only dear and precious to me, or not at all.' But do all burnt citizens lift up such a prayer? I suppose you have either read or heard of that rich and wretched cardinal who professed that he would not leave his part in Paris for a part in paradise.² But,

[5.] Fifthly, Are there no burnt citizens who follow the world so close, that they gain no good by the word? like Ezekiel's hearers, and like the stony ground, Eze 33:31-33, and Mat 13:22. Some writers say that nothing will grow where gold grows. Certainly, where an inordinate love of the world grows, there nothing will grow that is good. A heart filled either with the love of the world, or with the profits of the world, or with the pleasures of the world, or with the honours of the world, or with the cares of the world, or with the business of the world, is a heart incapacitated to receive any divine counsel or comfort from the word. The poets tells us of Lycaon's being turned into a wolf; but when a worldling is wrought upon by the word, there is a wolf turned into a man; yea, an incarnate devil turned into a glorious saint. Therefore the Holy Ghost, speaking of Zaccheus, whose soul was set upon the world, brings him in with an Ecce, behold, Luk 19:2, as if it were a wonder of wonders that ever such a worldling should be subdued by grace, and brought in to Christ. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Are there no burnt citizens that are very angry and impatient when they meet with opposition, disappointments, or procrastination in their earnest pursuing after the things of the world? Balaam was so intent and mad upon the world, that he desperately puts on upon the drawn sword of the angel, Num 22:21-35. Are there no burnt citizens who are so intent and mad upon the world, that they will put warmly on for the world, though the Lord draws, and conscience draws, and the Scriptures draw their swords upon them? But,

[7.] Seventhly, Are there no burnt citizens who are grown cold, very cold, yea, even stark cold, in their pursuit after God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, who once were for taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, who were so eagerly and earnestly set upon making a prey or a prize of the great things of that upper world, that they were highly and fully resolved to make sure of them, whatever pains or perils they run through? Aristotle observes, that dogs cannot hunt where the smell of sweet flowers is, because the sweet scent diverteth the smell. Ah, how has the scent of the sweet flowers of this world hindered many a forward professor from hunting after God and Christ and the great things of eternity! The Arabic proverb saith, 'That the world is a carcase, and they that hunt after it are dogs.' Ah, how many are there who once set their faces towards heaven, who now hunt more after earth than heaven; who hunt more after terrestrial than celestial things; who hunt more after nothingnesses and emptinesses, than they do after those fulnesses and sweetnesses that be in God, in Christ, in the covenant, in heaven, and in those paths that lead to happiness! When one desired to know what kind of man Basil was, there was presented to him

in a dream, saith the history, a pillar of fire, with this motto, Talis est Basilius, Basil is such a one, all on a-light fire for God. Before London was in flames, there were some who for a time were all on a-light fire for God, who now are grown either cold, or lukewarm, like the lukewarm Laodiceans, Rev 3:14, Rev 3:19. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Are there no burnt citizens whose hearts are filled with solicitous cares, and who are inordinately troubled, grieved, dejected, and overwhelmed upon the account of their late losses? And what does this speak out but an inordinate love of these earthly things? 2Co 7:10. When Jonah's gourd withered, Jonah was much enraged and dejected, Jon 4:6, seq. It is said of Adam that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart lamented his fall. Ah, how many are there in this day who, turning their faces towards their late lost mercies, their lost shops, trades, houses, riches, do so bitterly and excessively lament and mourn, that with Rachel, they refuse to be comforted, Jer 31:15, and with Jacob, they will go down into the grave mourning! Gen 37:35. Heraclitus the philosopher was always weeping; but such a frame of spirit is no honour to God, nor no ornament to religion. (1.) There is a holy sadness, which arises from the sense of our sins and our Saviour's sufferings: this is commendable. (2.) There is a natural sadness, which sometimes rises from sickness, weakness, and indisposition of body: this is to be pitied and cured. (3.) There is a sinful sadness, which usually is very furious, and hath no ears, and is rather cured by miracle than precept. This usually flows from the loss of such near and dear comforts upon which men have inordinately set their hearts, and in the enjoyment of which they have promised themselves no small felicity. Oh that such sad souls would seriously remember that there is nothing beyond remedy, but the tears of the damned! A man who may, notwithstanding all his losses and crosses, be found walking in the way to paradise, should never place himself in the condition of a little hell. And he that may or can hope for that great-all, ought not to be excessively sad for any losses or crosses that he meets with in this world. But,

[9.] Ninthly, Are there no burnt citizens who, to gain the world, do very easily and frequently fall down before the temptations of the world? And what does this speak out, but their inordinate love to the world? That man who is as soon conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted by the world, that man is doubtless in love with the world, yea, bewitched by the world, Num 22:15-23; Jos 7:20-22; Jude 1:11. The champions could not wring an apple out of Milo's hand by strong hand, but a fair maid by fair means got it presently. The easy conquests that the temptations of the world make upon many men, is a fair and a full evidence that their hearts are greatly endeared to it. Luther was a man weaned from the world; and therefore when honours, preferments, and riches were offered to him, he despised them. So when Basil was tempted with money and preferment, he answered, 'The fashion of this world passeth away, as the waters of a river that runs by a city, or as a fair picture drawn upon the ice, that melts away with it.' Pecuniam da quæ permaneat, &c., Give money, said he, that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish. I have read of a mortified Christian, who being tempted with offers of money to desert his religion, gave this excellent answer, 'Let not any think that he will embrace other men's goods to forsake Christ, who hath forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ.' It was an excellent answer of one of the martyrs, when he was offered riches and honours if he would recant, 'Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you.' Thus you see that men that are crucified to this world do not only resist, but also triumph over all the glittering temptations of a tempting and enticing world. And oh that such a spirit might rest upon all those

whose habitations are laid desolate! But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Are there no burnt citizens who go to the utmost of their line and liberty for the gaining of the things of this world? Ah, how near the pit's brink, how near the borders of sin, how near the flames of vengeance, how near the infernal fire, do many venture to gain the things of this world! And what does this speak out, but an inordinate love of this world? O sirs, what do all these things evidence, but this, that though God has fired many men out of their houses, yet the inordinate love of this world is not fired out of their hearts!

O sirs, to moderate your affections to the things of this world, and to put a stop to your too eager pursuit after earthly things, seriously and frequently dwell upon these ten maxims:—

[1.] First, That the shortest, surest, and safest way to be rich, is to be content with your present portion, Ecc 5:12. The philosopher could say, 'He that is content wants nothing; and he that wants content enjoys nothing.'

'One might have riches, yet be very poor;

One might have little, yet have all and more.'

[2.] Secondly, He who is [not] contented with a little, will never be satisfied with much. He who is not content with pounds, will never be satisfied with hundreds; and he who is not content with a few hundreds, will never be satisfied with many thousands: Ecc 5:10, 'He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase.' Money of itself cannot satisfy any desire of nature. If a man be hungry, it cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him. A circle cannot fill a triangle; no more can the whole world fill the heart of man. A man may as soon fill a chest with grace, as a heart with wealth. The soul of man may be busied about earthly things, but it can never be filled nor satisfied with earthly things. Air shall as soon fill the body, as money shall satisfy the mind. There is many a worldling who hath enough of the world to sink him, who will never have enough of the world to satisfy him. The more a hydropical man drinketh, the more he thirsteth. So the more money is increased, the more the love of money is increased; and the more the love of money is increased, the more the soul is unsatisfied. It is only an infinite God, and an infinite good, that can fill and satisfy the precious and immortal soul of man, Gen 15:1. Look, as nothing fits the ear but sounds, and as nothing fits the smell but odours, so nothing fits the soul but God. Nothing below the great God can fit and fill an immortal soul. Nothing can content the soul of man but the fruition of God. Nature hath taught all men to seek after a summum bonum. God never rested till he made man; and man can never rest till he enjoys his God. Every man has a soul within him of a vast capacity, and nothing can fill it to the brim but he that is fulness itself. Should we knock at every creature's door for happiness, they would all answer us round, that it is not in them. The man in Plutarch that heard the philosophers wrangle about summum bonum, one placing of it in this, and another in that, went to the market and bought up all that was good, hoping among all he should not miss of happiness; and yet he missed of it. The soul of man is of so glorious a make, that nothing below him that made it can satisfy it. The sum of all that the creatures amount to, according to Solomon's reckoning, is vanity and vexation of spirit. Vanity and vexation is the very quintessence of the creature, and all that can possibly be extracted out of it. Now if vanity can satisfy, or if vexation can give content; if you can gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, then go on and dote upon the

world still, and be always enamoured with a shadow of perishing beauty. Oramuzes the enchanter boasted that in his egg all the happiness in the world was included; but being broken, there was nothing in it but wind and emptiness. But,

[3.] Thirdly, It is infinitely better to have much of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of holiness and of heaven in our hearts, with a little of the world in our hands, than to have much of the world in our hands, and but a little of God and Christ in our hearts, 2Co 6:10. It is infinitely better to be rich towards God, and poor towards the world, than to be poor towards God, and to be rich towards the world. There are some very rich, who yet are very poor; there are others who are very poor, and yet are very rich, Ecc 5:12; Pro 11:24. It is infinitely better to be poor men and rich Christians, than to be rich men and poor Christians. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The best and surest way under heaven to gain much of the world, is to mind the world less, and God, and Christ, and grace, and heaven more: 1Ki 3:9, 'Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?' 1Ki 3:10, 'And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.' 1Ki 3:11, 'And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;' 1Ki 3:12, 'behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.' 1Ki 3:13, 'And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honours: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.' This is more generally and fully expressed in 2Ch 1:12, 'Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee: and I will give thee riches and wealth and honour, such as none of the kings have had before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.' Solomon desired wisdom of the Lord, and the Lord granted him his desire, and cast in riches, and wealth, and honour as an overplus, which he did not so much as once desire. God won't be wanting to them in temporals, who in their desires and prayers are most carried out after spirituals: Mat 6:33, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you,' or over-added. He who before all, and above all other things, seeks grace and glory, shall have the things of this world cast in as an overplus, as a handful to the sack of grain, or as [an] inch of measure to an ell of cloth, or as paper and packthread is given into the bargain: 1Ti 4:8, 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' There is earth as well as heaven; bread as well as grace; and raiment as well as righteousness; and the lower springs as well as the upper springs to be found in the precious promises, 2Pe 1:4. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Job, and Nehemiah, and Mordecai, and David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, and Daniel, and the three children, or rather champions, made it their business to be holy, to walk with God, to maintain communion with God, and to exalt and glorify God: and you know how the Lord heaped up the good things and the great things of this world upon them. I verily believe if men were more holy, they would be more outwardly happy; if they did but more seriously and earnestly press after the great things of that upper world, the Lord would more abundantly cast in the things of this lower world upon them. But when men are immoderately carried out in seeking after the great things of this world, it is just with God to blast their endeavours, and to curse their mercies to them, Jer 45:5; Mal 2:2. But,

[5.] Fifthly, It is better to get a little of the world, than to get much of the world; it is better to get a little of the world justly and honestly, than to get much of the world unjustly and dishonestly. A little of the world blessed, is better than much of the world cursed. Solomon's dinner of green herbs, Daniel's pulse, barley loaves, and a few fishes, and John's rough garment blessed, are better and greater mercies than Dives his riches, purple robes, and dainty fare cursed, Gen 22:1-24; Pro 3:33, and Pro 15:17; Dan 1:1-21. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The greatest outward gain cannot countervail the least spiritual loss, Psa 30:6-7; be it but a drachm of grace, or a cast of God's countenance, or an hour's communion with him, &c. Suppose a man could heap up silver as the dust, and gold as the streams of the brook, that he could gain as much as the devil promised Christ—viz., all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; yet all these could not make up the least spiritual loss, Job 22:24, and Job 27:16; Mat 4:1-11. He that shall exchange the least spiritual favour for the greatest outward good, shall but, with Glaucus and Diomedes, exchange gold for copper; he shall, with the cock in the fable, part with a pearl for a barley-corn. Chrysostom compareth such to workers in mines, who, for a little wages, do always hazard, and sometimes lose their lives. Menot, a French preacher, compareth them to a huntsman, that spoileth a horse worth many pounds, in pursuit of a hare not worth so many pence. Pareus compares them to a man that with much ado winneth Venice, and as soon as it is won, is hanged up at the gates of the city. When such a one shall at last compute what he hath gained and what he hath lost, he will certainly conclude that he hath but a miserable bargain of it. But,

[7.] The seventh maxim is this—viz., A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked, Psa 37:16. The righteous man's mite is better than the wicked man's millions. 'A little,' that is, a competent and mean portion, though yet but very little; one little piece of gold is more worth than a bag of counters; one little box of pearls is more worth than many loads of pebbles. And so a little that a righteous man hath is better than the abundance of the wicked—is better than the riches of many wicked. Hamon, which is the word here used, is from Hamah, which signifies multitude of riches, or great plenty, or store of riches; from this Hebrew word Hamon, riches are called mammon, Luk 16:9, Luk 16:11, Luk 16:13. The little that the righteous man hath is better than the multitude or store of riches that the wicked have. Out of these words you may observe these following particulars:—

(1.) Here is the righteous man's portion, and the wicked man's portion, as to this world; the righteous man hath but little, the wicked has much.

(2.) The righteous man hath but little, but the wicked has riches.

(3.) The righteous man's little is a better portion than the riches of the wicked.

(4.) The righteous man's little is better than the multitude of riches that the wicked have.

(5.) The righteous man's little is better than the multitude of riches that many wicked men enjoy. Now, for their sakes who have been burnt up, and have but little of the world left them, I shall make good this blessed truth by an induction of these eleven particulars:—

[1.] First, The righteous man hath a better tenure to his little than wicked men have to their multitude of riches. The righteous man holds his tenure by virtue of his marriage-union with Christ,

who is the heir of all things, Heb 1:2. We had an equal right in the first Adam to all the good things of this world; but, in his fall, we lost our original right to the good things of this world. But now the righteous man, by the second Adam, has recovered his right to all he enjoys: Rom 8:32, 'How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' 1Co 3:21, 'All things are yours:' 1Co 3:22, 'Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours.' But how come they to be interested in this large charter? the apostle answers it in 1Co 3:23, 'Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.' All comes to us by Jesus Christ. All the corn in Egypt came through Joseph's hands, Gen 41:1-57. So all we have, be it little or much, we have it through Christ's hands, upon the account of our marriage-union with Christ. We may say, as Hamor and Shechem said to their people, 'Shall not all their cattle, and substance, and every beast of the field, be ours?' Gen 34:23. So being married to Christ, and become one with him, all comes to be ours, through him who is the heir of all. By virtue of our marriage-union with Christ, our title to the creatures is not only restored, but strengthened. That little we have is entailed upon us by Christ, in a more firm and better way than ever. In the first Adam our tenure was lower, and meaner, and baser, and uncertainer than now it is; for our title, our tenure by Christ, is more honourable, and stronger, and sweeter, and lasting than ever it was before. For now we hold all we have in capite; Christ is our head and husband, and by him we hold all we have. But now wicked men, by the fall of Adam, have lost their original patent and charter which once they had to shew for the things of this life. By Adam's fall they have forfeited God's primitive donation of all right in the creatures. Every wicked man in the world has forfeited his right to the creatures in Adam, and lies under that forfeiture. But to the glory of divine patience be it spoken, God has not sued out his forfeiture, God has not brought a writ of ejection against him; and by this means he comes to be lawfully possessed of those earthly blessings he does enjoy; as a felon, though he hath forfeited his life and estate to the king's justice, and is still subject to ejection at the king's pleasure, yet while the king forbears him, his possession is good and lawful, and no man may disturb him. Wicked men are lawful owners and possessors of the good things God hath given them: Num 22:30, 'Am not I thine ass?' whence you may observe:—

- (1.) That the silliest and simplest being wronged, may justly speak in their own defence.
- (2.) That they who have done many good offices and fail in one, are often not only unrewarded for former services, but punished for that one offence.
- (3.) That when the creatures formerly officious to serve us start from their former obedience, man ought to reflect upon his own sin as the sole cause thereof.
- (4.) That the worst men have good title to their own goods. For though Balaam was a sorcerer, yet the ass confesseth twice that he was his ass. Luk 12:33, 'sell' and 'give' are words of propriety. And God hath set the eighth commandment as a hedge, as a fence to every man's possession: Dan 4:17, 'This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.' He that gave Canaan to Jacob, gave mount Seir to Esau. And did not Jacob buy a burying-place of the sons of Heth? and did he not buy corn of the Egyptians? Gen 23:3-5, Gen 23:9, and Gen 42:3, Gen 42:5. By all which they did acknowledge that those wicked men and idolaters had a lawful title to those temporal blessings that they did enjoy. Now mark, God, as he is the God of nature by common providence,

allots to wicked men their lawful possessions, and this is the best tenure they hold by. Oh, but now that little that a child of God has, he holds it by a more glorious tenure and honourable title, and therefore his mite is better than a wicked man's millions. But,

[2] Secondly, That little a righteous man hath, he hath through the covenant and through precious promises, 2Pe 1:4. Now a little mercy reached out to a man through the covenant, and as a fruit of the promise, is more worth than a world of blessings that flow in upon a man merely by a general providence. There are no mercies so sweet, so sure, so firm, so lasting, as those that flow in upon us through the covenant of grace. Oh, this sweetens every drop, and sip, and crust, and crumb of mercy that a godly man enjoys: 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to such as keep his covenant,' Psa 25:10. This is a sweet promise, a precious promise, a soul-satisfying promise, a promise more worth than all the riches of the Indies. Mark, all the paths of the Lord to his people are not only mercy, but they are mercy and truth; that is, they are sure mercies that stream in upon them through the covenant. Well, sirs, you must remember this, viz., that the least mercy, the least blessing flowing in upon us through the promise, is more worth than a thousand blessings that flow in upon us from a general providence. The least blessing flowing in upon us through the covenant, is better than ten thousand talents that are the mere products of a general providence. For,

First, Such as enjoy all they have only from a general providence, they enjoy their mercies from that common source or spring that feeds the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, Psa 145:15-16. The same common bounty of God that feeds and clothes the wicked, feeds the birds and beasts that perish. But,

Secondly, There is no certainty of the continuance of such mercies that are only the product of a common providence, Isa 33:16; but now the mercies that flow in upon the saints through the covenant of grace, they shall be sure to us so long as the continuance of them may be for our good and God's glory, Isa 55:3. Now the least mercies held by covenant are infinitely better than the greatest riches in the world, that only drop upon us out of the hand of a common providence.

Thirdly, The righteous man hath his little from the special love and favour of God. All his little flows in upon him from that very same love which moved the Lord to bestow Christ upon him, Psa 146:8, and Pro 15:17. All the righteous man's little is from the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, Deu 33:16. His little comes from, a reconciled God as well as a bountiful God; from a tender Father as well as a merciful Creator. A dinner of green herbs, Daniel's pulse, barley loaves, a few fishes, yea, Lazarus his scraps, crusts, and rags, and John's garment of camel's hair, from reconciled love, is infinitely better than all the riches and dainties of the wicked, which are all mixed and mingled with crosses and curses. All the mercies and abundance that wicked men have, is in wrath and from wrath; there is wrath in every cup they drink in, and in every dish they eat in, and in every bed they lie on, and in every stool they sit on, Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2; Psa 78:30, 31. But the little the righteous man hath flows from the sweetest springs of divine love; so that they may well say as Gideon did, 'The gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim, is it not better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?' Jdg 8:2. The very gleanings of the righteous are better than the greatest vintages of the wicked. The abundance of the wicked still flows in upon them from the bitter streams of divine wrath. A little water flowing from a sweet spring is much better than a great deal that flows from the salt sea. The loving-kindness of God does raise the least estate above the greatest estate in the world; yea, it raiseth it above life itself—or lives, chajim—which is the best of all temporal blessings, Psa 63:3.

Ten pounds given by a king out of favour and respect, is a better gift than a thousand given in wrath and displeasure. But,

Fourthly, The little that the righteous man hath is blessed and sanctified to him, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. A little blessed unto a man is better than all the world cursed. Now all the blessings and mercies that the wicked do enjoy, though they are materially blessings, yet they are formally curses; as all the crosses that befalls a righteous man, though they are materially crosses, yet they are formally blessings. The habitations, relations, honours, riches, &c., of the wicked are all cursed unto them. There is poison in every cup the wicked man drinks, and snares in every dish he puts his fingers in, the plague in all the clothes he wears, and a curse upon the house in which he dwells: Zec 5:3-4, 'Then he said unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side, according to it. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.' So Job 24:18, 'Their portion is cursed in the earth.' A fat purse and a fat heart, a whole estate and a whole heart, a fat body and a lean soul: Psa 106:15, 'He sent leanness into their souls.' All the blessings of the wicked have their but, as the cup in Benjamin's sack, which proved a snare to him rather than a mercy. Oh the curses and vexations that attend all the blessings of the wicked! It may be said of 'the little that a righteous man hath,' Pro 3:33, as it was once said of Jacob's garment, 'It is like a field which the Lord hath blessed. He blesseth the habitations of the just.' Esau had a fair estate left him, and Jacob a less; yet Jacob's was a better estate than Esau's, because his little was blessed to him, when Esau's much was cursed to him. One little draught of clear water is better than a sea of brackish salt water. The application is easy. But,

Fifthly, A little improved and well husbanded, is better than a great deal that is either not improved or but ill improved. Every estate is as it is improved. A little farm well improved, is much better than a great farm that is either not improved or ill improved. A little money, a little stock in a shop well improved, is better than a great deal of money, a great stock, that is either not improved or ill improved. Now here give me leave to shew you briefly how a godly man improves his little. Take me thus—

First, A godly man improves his little to the stirring up of his heart to thankfulness, and to be much in admiring and blessing of God for a little. Every drop the dove drinks he lifts up his head to heaven. Every bird in his kind, saith Ambrose, doth chirp forth thankfulness to his Maker. So the righteous man will bless God much for a little; yea, he will bless God very much for a very little, Psa 103:1-3, and Psa 116:12-13. But,

Secondly, A righteous man improves his little to the humbling and abasing of himself before the Lord, as one that is much below the least of mercies: Gen 32:10, 'I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,' 2Sa 7:18. A righteous man labours to have his heart lie low under the sense of the least sin, and under the smart of the least rod, and under the sight of the least mercy. But,

Thirdly, A righteous man improves his little to the arming and fencing of himself against sinful temptations. Little mercies are many times great arguments to keep a gracious soul from sin, Gen

39:7-10. But,

Fourthly, A righteous man improves his little to the relief and refreshing of the bowels of others that are in want, and whose pinching necessities call for supplies, 2Co 8:1-4; Heb 6:10. A poor man begging at a Christian's door who was very poor, he spoke to his wife to give him something; she answered that she had but three-pence in the house; saith he, give him that, for if we never sow, we shall never reap. There was another Christian who having given a little of his little to a man, began to think whether he had injured himself; but presently he corrected himself with these thoughts, that he had lent it one that would pay all again with advantage, with interest upon interest; within an hour after he had it restored above sevenfold, in a way which he never thought of. The Italian form of begging is, Do good for yourselves. But,

Fifthly, A righteous man improves his little to the stirring up and provoking of his own heart to look after better and greater mercies—viz., spiritual and eternal favours. Oh, saith the righteous man, if there be so much sweetness in a few drops, and sips, and small draughts, and crusts, and scraps, what is in those everlasting springs of pleasure and delight that be at God's right hand! Psa 16:11; John 4:10-11, John 4:14, and John 6:4; Rev 19:8. If there be so much pleasantness in a piece of bread, and so much warmth in a coarse suit of clothes, what sweetness is there in the waters of life! and what pleasantness is there in that bread of life that came down from heaven! and what warmth is there in that fine linen that is the righteousness of the saints! &c. A righteous man looks upon his least temporals to be a strong engagement upon him to seek after eternals. But now wicked men are so far from improving their much, their riches, their great riches, that they either hide their talents, as that evil servant did his, Mat 25:1-46, or else they prove jailers to their mercies, and make them servants to their lusts, as pride, drunkenness, uncleanness, &c. Compare these scriptures together: Job 21:1-10; Amo 6:1-7; Psa 73:1-28; Hos 4:7; Jer 2:31, and Jer 5:7-9; Deu 32:13-18; Jas 5:1-6. But,

Sixthly, The few mercies, the least mercies that the righteous man hath, are pledges and pawns and an earnest of more mercies, of better mercies, and of greater mercies than any yet they do enjoy. Now a farthing given as an earnest of a thousand a year is better than many pounds given as a present reward. Wicked men have outward blessings as their portion, their heaven, their all: 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,' Psa 17:14; Luk 16:25. But now that little that a godly man hath, he has it as a pledge of heaven, and as an earnest of eternal favours and mercies. The little mercies the saints enjoy are doors of hope to let in greater and better mercies; those mercies a righteous man has are but inlets to further mercies. When Rachel had a son, she called his name Joseph, saying, 'The Lord shall add to me another son,' Gen 30:24. Every mercy that a righteous man enjoys may well be called Joseph, because it is a certain pledge of some further and greater mercy that is to be added to those the righteous man already enjoys. But,

Seventhly, The righteous man enjoys his little with a great deal of comfort, peace, quiet, and contentment. The righteous man with his little, sits Noah-like, quiet and still in the midst of all the hurries, distractions, combustions, and confusions that be in the world, Php 4:12-13; Pro 10:22, and Pro 15:16-17. Though the righteous man has but from hand to mouth, yet seeing that God feeds him from heaven as it were with manna, he is quiet and cheerful: but now wicked men have abundance of vexation with their worldly abundance: as you see in Haman, Est 5:9, Est 5:11-13,

'Then went Haman forth that day joyfully and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and tomorrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' It is seldom seen that God allows unto the greatest darlings of the world a perfect contentment. Something they must have to complain of, that shall give an unsavoury verdure² to their sweetest morsels, and make their felicity miserable. It was not simply Mordecai's sitting at the king's gate, but Mordecai's refusing to stand up, or to move either hat, head, or hand, or to bow any part of his body, that damped all Haman's joy, and that filled him with rage and vexation of spirit. The want of little things—viz., a knee, a hat—will exceedingly vex and discompose an ambitious spirit. So Ahab, though a king, yet when he was sick for Naboth's vineyard, his heart did more afflict and vex itself with greedy longing for that bit of earth, than the vast and spacious compass of a kingdom could counter-comfort, 1Ki 21:4. And so Alexander the Great, in the midst of all his glory, he was exceedingly vexed and discontented, because he could not make ivy to grow in his garden in Babylon. Contentment is a flower that does not grow in nature's garden. All the honours, riches, pleasures, profits, and preferments of this world cannot yield a man one day's contentment; they are all surrounded with briars and thorns. You look upon my crown and my purple robes, said that great king, Cyrus, but did you but know how they were lined with thorns, you would never stoop to take them up.⁴ Charles the Fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out at last with grief and detestation to all his honours, pleasures, trophies, riches. Abite hinc, abite longe: Get you hence; let me hear no more of you! Who can sum up the many grievances, fears, jealousies, disgraces, interruptions, temptations, and vexations that men meet with in their very pursuit after the things of this world! Oh how sweet is it to want these bitter-sweets! Riches are compared to thorns; and indeed all the comforts the wicked enjoy, they have more or less of the thorn in them. And indeed riches may well be called thorns; because they pierce both head and heart—the one with care of getting, and the other with grief in parting with them. The world and all the glory thereof is like a beautiful harlot: a paradise to the eye, but a purgatory to the soul. A wicked man under all his enjoyments, (1.) Enjoys not the peace of his conscience upon any just or solid grounds.

(2.) He enjoys not the peace of contentment upon any sober or righteous grounds. But now a righteous man, with his little, enjoys both peace of conscience and peace of contentment; and this makes every bitter sweet, and every little sweet to be exceeding sweet. A dish of green herbs, with peace of conscience and peace of contentment, is a noble feast, a continual feast to a gracious soul. But,

Eighthly, The righteous man sees God, and acknowledges God, and enjoys God in his little, Job 1:21; Gen 27:28, and Gen 33:10-11. Look, as he that cannot see God in the least affliction, in the least judgment, will never be truly humbled; so he that cannot see God in the least mercy will never be truly thankful nor cheerful. In every crust, crumb, drop, and sip of mercy that a righteous man enjoys, he sees much of the love of his God, and the care of his God, and the wisdom of his God, and the power of his God, and the faithfulness of his God, and the goodness of his God, in

making the least provision for him. I have read of the Jews, how that when they read the little book of Esther they let fall the book on the ground, and they give this reason for that ceremony, 'because the name of God is not to be found in all that history.' So a righteous man is ready to let that mercy drop out of his hand, out of his mouth, wherein he cannot read his God, and see his God, and taste his God, and enjoy his God. But now wicked men may say, as Elisha did in another case, 'Here is the mantle of Elijah, but where is the God of Elijah? Here is abundance of riches and honours and dignities, &c., but where is the God of all these comforts?' 2Ki 2:14. But alas! they mind not God, they see not God, they acknowledge not God in all they have, in all they enjoy; as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Wicked men are like the horse and the mule that drinks of the brook, but never think of the spring. They are like to the swine that eats up the mast, but never looks to the tree from whence the mast falls. They are like such barren ground that swallows up the seed, but returns nothing to the sower. A dunghill-spirited fellow in our days, being by a neighbour excited to bless God for a rich crop of corn he had standing on his ground, atheistically replied, 'Thank God! Nay, rather thank my dung-cart!' I have read of a great cardinal, who, writing down in his diary what such a lord did for him, and how far such a prince favoured him, and what encouragement he had from such a king, and how such a pope preferred him, but not one word of God in all: one reading of it, took his pen and wrote underneath, here God did nothing. But,

Ninthly, The little the righteous man hath is enough; enough to satisfy him, enough to content him, enough to bear his charges till he gets to heaven, Psa 23:1-2: Php 4:12-13; 1Ti 6:6: Gen 33:11, 'I have enough,' saith Jacob to Esau: Gen 45:28, 'And Israel said, it is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. Though the righteous man hath but little, yet he hath enough for his place and calling in which God has placed him, and enough for his charge, whether it be great or small; he has enough to satisfy nature, enough to preserve natural life, Pro 30:8. Agur is but for food convenient, convenient for his life, not for his lusts; he prays for enough to satisfy necessity, convenience, not concupiscence; he begs for bread, not for quails; he begs that nature may be sustained, not pampered. Though it be true that nothing will satisfy a wicked man's lusts, yet it is as true that a little will satisfy nature, and less will satisfy grace. Jacob vows that the Lord should be his God, if he would but give him bread to eat, and raiment to put on. This was the first holy vow that ever we read of; hence Jacob is called the father of vows, Gen 28:20-21. He begs not dainties to feed him, nor silks nor satins to clothe him; but bread to feed him, though never so coarse, and clothes to cover him, though never so mean. Job is only for necessary food, Job 23:12. A little will satisfy a temperate Christian. Luther made many a meal of bread and a red herring; and Junius made many a meal of bread and an egg. Nature laps only, like those three hundred soldiers, Jdg 7:6. When Christ fed the people graciously, miraculously, he fed them not with manchets and quails, or pheasants, &c., but with barley loaves and fishes, a frugal, temperate, sober diet. If the handful of meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse fail not, and if the brook and the running water fail not, Elijah can be well enough contented. But now wicked men never have enough, they are never satisfied. They are like those four things that Solomon speaks of, that are never satisfied—viz., the grave, the barren womb, the earth, and the fire. That is an observable passage of the psalmist, 'Thou fillest their bellies with thy hid treasures.' To a worldly wicked man all these outward things are but a bellyful; and how soon is the belly emptied after it is once filled! Though many rich men have riches enough to sink them, yet they have never enough to satisfy them. Like him that wished for a thousand sheep in his flock, and when he had them, he wished for other cattle without

number. When Alexander had all the crowns and sceptres of the princes of the world piled up at his gates, he wishes for another world to conquer: 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing.' 'He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase,' Ecc 1:8, and Ecc 5:10. There is enough and enough in silver, in abundance of silver, to vex and fret the soul of man, but not to satisfy the soul of man. God himself is the only centre of centres, and as the soul can never rest till it return to him, as the dove to the ark, so it can never be filled, stilled, or satisfied, but in the enjoyment of him. All the beauty of the world is but deformity, all the brightness of the world is but blackness, all the light of the world is but bitterness; and therefore it is impossible for all the bravery and glory of this world to give absolute satisfaction to the soul of man. Solomon, the wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne, after his most diligent, curious, critical, and impartial search into all the creatures, gives this as the summa totalis, and product of his inquiries, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' And how then can any of these things, yea, all these things heaped up together, satisfy the soul of man! Hab 2:5, 'He enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.' This is spoken of the king of Babylon, who though he had gathered to him all nations and people, yea, and all their vast treasures also—Isa 10:13, 'I have robbed their treasures:' ver. 14, 'And my hand hath found as a nest, the riches of his people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped'—and yet for all this was his desire enlarged as hell, and could not be satisfied. The desires of worldlings are boundless and endless, and there is no satisfying of them. It is not all the gold of Ophir, or Peru, nor all the pearls or mines of India; it is not Joseph's chains, nor David's crowns, nor Haman's honours, nor Daniel's dignities, nor Dives his riches, that can satisfy an immortal soul.

Tenthly, The little that the righteous man hath is more stable, durable, and lasting, than the riches of the wicked; and therefore his little is better than their much, his mite is better than their millions, Job 5:20-22. Psa 34:9-10, 'Oh fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' Such as are separated from the world's lusts, can live with a little. Such as set up God as the object of their fear, have no cause to fear the want of anything. When David was a captive amongst the Philistines, he wanted nothing. Paul had nothing, and yet possessed all things, 2Co 6:10. A godly man may want many good things that he thinks to be good for him, but he shall never want any good thing that the Lord knows to be good for him, Heb 13:5-6; Pro 10:3. We do not esteem of tenure for life as we do of freehold, because life is a most uncertain thing. Ten pound a year for ever is better than a hundred in hand. All the promises are God's bonds, and a Christian may put them in suit when he will, and hold God to his word; and that not only for his spiritual and eternal life, but also for his natural life, his temporal life; but so cannot the wicked. The temporal estate of the wicked is seldom long-lived, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. Alexander the Great, conqueror of the world, caused to be painted on a table a sword in the compass of a wheel, shewing thereby that what he had gotten by the sword was subject to be turned about the wheel of providence. There is no more hold to be had of riches, honours, or preferments, than Saul had of Samuel's lap. They do but like the rainbow shew themselves in all their dainty colours, and then vanish away. There are so many sins, and so many crosses, and so many curses that usually attend the riches of the wicked, that it is very rare to see their estates long-lived. Hence their great estates are compared to the chaff, which a puff of wind

disperseth; to the grass, which the scorching sun quickly withers; to the tops of corn, which are soon cut off; and to the unripe grape: Job 15:33, 'He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.' Every day's experience confirms us in this truth. But,

Eleventhly and lastly, The little that the righteous man hath is better than the riches of the wicked, in respect of his last reckoning, in respect of his last accounts. God will never call his children in the great day, either to the book or to the bar, for the mercies that he has given them, be they few or be they many, be they great or be they small. Though the mercer brings his customer to the book for what he has, and for what he wears, yet he never brings his child to the book for what he has and for what he wears. Though the vintner or innkeeper brings their guests to the bar for the provisions they have, yet they never bring their children to the bar for the provisions they make for them. In the great day the Lord will take an exact account of all the good that his children have done for others, Mat 25:1-46, but he will never bring them to an account for what he has done for them. Christ in this great day will, (1.) Remember all the individual offices of love and friendship that hath been shewed to any of his members.

(2.) He will mention many good things which his children did, which they themselves never minded, Mat 25:37.

(3.) The least and lowest acts of love and pity that have been shewed to Christ's suffering servants, shall be interpreted as a special kindness shewed to himself, Mat 25:40.

(4.) The recompense that Christ will give to his people in that day shall be exceeding great, ver. 44, 46. Here is no calling of them to the book or to the bar for the mercies that they were entrusted with. But oh the sad, the great accounts that the wicked have to give up for all their lands and lordships, for all their honours, offices, dignities, and riches! 'To whom much is given, much shall be required,' Luk 12:48. Christ in the great day will reckon with all the grandees of the world for every thousand, for every hundred, for every pound, yea, for every penny that he has entrusted them with. All princes, nobles, and people that are not interested in the Lord Jesus, shall be brought to the book, to the bar, in the great day, to give an account of all they have received and done in the flesh, Rev 6:5-17; Luk 16:2; Ecc 12:14. But Christ's darlings shall then be the only welcome guests: Mat 25:34, 'Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Before the world was founded the saints were crowned in God's eternal counsel. Here is no mention made of the book or the bar, but of a kingdom, a crown, a diadem. Now by these eleven arguments it is most evident that the little that the righteous man hath is better than the riches of the wicked. The righteous man's mite is better than the wicked man's millions. But,

[8.] The eighth maxim that I shall lay down, to put a stop to your too eager pursuit after the things of this world, is this, viz., That the life of man consists not in the enjoyment of these earthly things, which he is so apt inordinately to affect: Luk 12:15, 'And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness. For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' Whether we consider man's life in the length and continuance of it, or in the comfort of it, it consists not in riches; for no man lives a day longer or merrier for his riches. Though possessions are useful to sustain life, yet no man is able to prolong his life, or to make it anything more happy or comfortable to him, by possessing more than he needs or uses. It is not the golden crown that can cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper that can ease a man of the gout, nor the

purple robe that can fray away a burning fever. Mark, the life of man is so far from consisting in the enjoyment of these earthly things, that many times they hasten a man to his long home, Jer 17:11. Many a man's coffer has hastened him to his coffin; and as many a man has lost his finger for his ring's sake, so many a man has lost his life for his purse's sake. In all the ages of the world many a man has deeply suffered for his means. Naboth lost his life for his vineyard's sake, 1Ki 21:1-29. Quintus Aurelius, in the days of Sylla, lost his life by reason of his lands. Many a man's means has hanged him. Many a man has deeply suffered for his means' sake. The Romans ripped up the bellies and bowels of the Jews to search for gold.³ The Americans had been more safe had they had less gold: they thought gold was the Spaniards' god. But how the Spaniards played the devil to get their gold, I shall not at this time take pleasure to relate. Now if our temporal life consists not in any of these earthly things, then certainly our spiritual life consists not in any of these earthly things. For what religious duty is there that a believer cannot do, though he has neither money in his bag nor dainties on his table. And as our spiritual life consists not in any of these earthly things, so our eternal life consists not in any of these earthly things: for as all the treasures of this world cannot bring a soul to heaven, so they cannot keep a soul from dropping down to hell.

'This world's wealth that men so much desire, May well be likened to a burning fire, Whereof a little can do little harm But profit much our bodies well to warm: But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn. So too much wealth to too much woe does turn.'

But,

[9.] The ninth maxim that I shall lay down to put a stop to your too eager pursuit after the things of this world, is this—viz., That there is no rest to be found in any earthly enjoyments. Rest is the centre at which all intellectual natures, as well as natural bodies, aim at. A man that is inordinately in love with the world can never be at rest. The drunkard sometimes rests from his cups, and the unclean person from his filthiness, and the swearer from his oaths, and the idolater from his idols, but the worldling is never at rest; his head and heart are still a-plodding and a-plotting how to get, and how to keep, the things of this world: Ecc 5:12, 'The sleep of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.' These three vultures—care of getting, fear of keeping, and grief of losing—feed day and night upon the heart of a rich and wretched worldling, so that his sleep departs from him. Sometimes his abundance lies like a lump of lead heavy upon his heart, so that he cannot rest. Sometimes his conscience does so lash, and lance, and gall him for what he has got by indirect ways and means, that he cannot sleep. Sometimes God himself will not suffer him to sleep. Sometimes God shews him the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:5-6; sometimes he terrifies him with dreams, and sometimes he throws handfuls of hell-fire in his face, as once he did into Judas's, Mat 26:24; and this hinders his rest. Sometimes by their excessive eating and drinking, their gluttony, their delicious fare, they overcharge nature, which causeth indigestion and malignant vapours, whereby sleep is wholly removed, or else much disturbed. Earthly riches are an evil master, a treacherous servant, fathers of flattery, sons of grief, a cause of fear to those that have them, and a cause of sorrow to those that want them; and therefore what rest is there to be found in the enjoyment of them? [Augustine.] The prior in Melanchthon rolled his hands up and down in a basin full of angels, thinking to have charmed his gout, but this could give him no ease, no rest. Latimer, in a sermon before King Edward the Sixth, tells a story of a rich man, who, when he lay upon his sick-bed, one came to him and told him that he was a dead man, that he was no man for this

world. As soon as ever the sick man heard these words, saith Latimer, he cried out, Must I die? Send for a physician! Wounds, side, heart—must I die? Wounds, side, heart—must I die? and thus he continued crying out, Wounds, side, heart—must I die? Must I die and leave these riches behind me? All the riches that he had heaped together could give him no rest nor quiet when the king of terrors knocked at his doors. All the good things of this world have more or less of the thorn in them; and therefore what rest can they give? Achan's golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his garment a garment to shroud him. In Spain they lived happily until fire made some mountains vomit gold; hut what miserable discords have followed ever since! It is only heaven that is above all winds and storms and tempests, neither hath God cast man out of one paradise for him to think to find out another paradise in this world. But,

[10.] The tenth and last maxim that I shall lay down to put a stop to your too eager pursuit after the things of this world, is this—viz., That it is a very high point of Christian wisdom and prudence, always to look upon the good things and the great things of this world as a man will certainly look upon them when he comes to die. Oh, with what a disdainful eye, with what a contemptible eye, with what a scornful eye, and with what a weaned heart and cold affections do men look upon all the pomp, state, bravery, and glory of the world, when their soul sits upon their trembling lips, and there is but a short step between them and eternity! He that looks upon the world whilst he has it under his hand, as he will assuredly look upon it when he is to take his leave of it, he will, (1.) Never sin to get the world. Nor, (2.) He will never grieve inordinately to part with the world. Nor, (3.) He will never envy those who enjoy much of the world. Nor,

(4.) He will never dote upon the world, he will never be enamoured with the world. I have read of a man, who, lying in a burning fever, professed that if he had all the world at his dispose, he would give it all for one draught of beer; at so low a rate do men value the world at such a time as that is. King Lysimachus lost his kingdom for one draught of water to quench his thirst. If men were but so wise to value the world at no higher a rate in health than they do in sickness, in the day of life than they do at the hour of death, they would never be fond of it, they would never be so deeply in love with it. Now, oh that these ten maxims may be so blest to the reader as to crucify the world to him, and him unto the world! Gal 6:14. He gave good counsel who said, [Austin,] O man, if thou be wise, let the world pass, lest thou pass away with the world. Fix thy heart on God, let him be thy portion; fix thy affections upon Christ, he is thy redemption; on heaven, let that be thy mansion. Oh take that counsel, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world.' John 2:15. Mark, he doth not say, have not the world, nor the things of the world, but 'love not the world, nor the things of the world:' nor he doth not say, use not the world, nor the things of the world, but 'love not the world, nor the things of the world:' nor he doth not say, take no moderate care for the world, nor the things of the world, but 'love not the world, nor the things of the world.' But to prevent all mistakes, give me leave to premise these three things:—

[1.] First, It is lawful to desire earthly things, so far as they may be furtherances of us in our journey to heaven. As a passenger when he comes to a deep river desires a boat, but not for the boat's sake, but that he may pass over the river; for could he pass over the river without a boat, he would never cry out, A boat, a boat; or as the traveller desires his inn, not for the inn's sake, but as it is a help, a furtherance to him in his journey homewards; or as the patient desires physic, not for physic's sake, but in order to his health: so a Christian may lawfully desire earthly things in order to his glorifying of God; and as they may be a help to him in his Christian course, and a furtherance

to him in his heavenly race, Heb 12:1. But,

[2.] Secondly, We may desire earthly things in subordination to the will of God. Lord, if it be thy pleasure, give me this and that earthly comfort; yet not my will, but thy will be done. Lord, thou art the wise physician of bodies, souls, and nations: if it may stand with thy glory, give thy sick patient life, health, and strength; yet not my will, but thy will be done. But,

[3.] Thirdly, We may desire such a measure of earthly things, and such a number of earthly things, as may be suitable to the place, calling, relation, and condition wherein the providence of God has set us, Pro 30:8-9, and 1Ti 6:8: as a master, magistrate, prince, lord, gentleman, &c. A little of these earthly things, and a few of these earthly things, may be sufficient to the order, place, calling, and condition of life wherein some men are placed, but not sufficient for a king, a lord, a magistrate, a general, &c. These must have their counsellors, their guards, variety of attendance, and variety of the creatures, &c. A little portion of these earthly things is sufficient for some, and a great and large portion of these earthly things is but sufficient for others. Less may serve the servant than the master, the child than the father, the peasant than the prince, &c. The too eager pursuit of most men after the things of this world, to make up the losses that they sustained by the fire, hath been the true cause why I have insisted so largely upon this ninth duty that we are to learn by that fiery dispensation that hath passed upon us.

10. The tenth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to be very importunate with God to take away those sins that have laid our city desolate, and to keep off from sin for the time to come, and to look narrowly to your spirits, that you do not charge the Lord foolishly, because he has brought you under his fiery rod, Mal 2:15; Job 1:16, 'While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee;' ver. 22, 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.' The fire of God, that is, a great, fierce, and terrible fire that fell from heaven and consumed Job's sheep and servants, was a more terrible judgment than all the former judgments that befell them, because God seemed to fight against Job with his own bare hand by fire from heaven, as once he did against Sodom. 'In all this Job sinned not;' that is, in all this that Job suffered, acted, and uttered, there was not anything that was materially sinful. Satan he said, that if God would but touch all that he had, Job would curse him to his face; but when it came to the proof, there was no such thing. For Job had a fair and full victory over him, and Satan was proved a loud liar. For Job sinned not in thought, word, or deed; Job did neither speak nor do anything that was dishonourable to God, or a reproach to his religion, or a wound to his conscience. Under this fiery trial Job did not so much as entertain one hard thought concerning God, nor let fall one hard word concerning God. Under all the evils that befell Job, Job still thinks well of God, and speaks well of God, and carries it well towards God. Certainly Job had a great deal of God within him, which kept him from sinning under such great and grievous sufferings. O sirs, it is a far greater mercy to be kept from sinnings under our sufferings, than it is to be delivered from the greatest sufferings. Job's heart was so well seasoned with grace, that he would admit of no insolent or unsavoury thoughts of God, or of his severest providences: 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly,' or with folly. Some refer the former part of this verse to the mind, and the latter to the mouth; shewing that Job, though he had lost all, neither thought in his heart, nor uttered with his mouth, anything unmeet and unworthy of God. The meek, humble, patient, and gracious behaviour of Job under all his sore losses and crosses is here owned, renowned,

crowned, and chronicled by God himself. O sirs, sinning is worse than suffering; it is better to see a people bleeding than blaspheming, burning than cursing; for by men's sins God is dishonoured, but by their sufferings God is glorified. Oh that the Christian reader would seriously consider of these twelve things:—

- (1.) That there is nothing that the great God hates, but sin.
- (2.) That there is nothing that he has revealed his wrath from heaven against, but sin.
- (3.) That there is nothing that crucifies the Lord of glory afresh, but sin.
- (4.) That there is nothing that grieves the Spirit of grace, but sin.
- (5.) That there is nothing that wounds the conscience, but sin.
- (6.) That there is nothing that clouds the face of God, but sin.
- (7.) That there is nothing that hinders the return of prayer, but sin.
- (8.) That there is nothing that interrupts our communion with God, but sin.
- (9.) That there is nothing that embitters our mercies, but sin.
- (10.) That there is nothing that puts a sting into all our troubles and trials, but sin.
- (11.) That there is nothing that renders us unserviceable in our places, stations, and conditions, but sin.
- (12.) That there is nothing that makes death the king of terrors, and the terror of kings, to be so formidable and terrible to the sons of men, as sin. And therefore under all your sorrows and sufferings, crosses and losses, make it your great business to arm yourselves against sin, and to pray against sin, and to watch against sin, and to turn from sin, and to cease from sin, and to get rid of sin, and to stand for ever in defiance of sin, 2Ch 7:14; Isa 16:11, and Isa 55:7; Hos 14:8; Isa 30:22. Assuredly every gracious heart had rather be rid of his sins than of his sufferings: Job 7:21, 'And why dost thou not take away mine iniquity?'—or lift up, as the Hebrew runs, to note that though Job had many loads, many burdens upon him, yet none lay so heavy upon him as his sin; Hos 14:2, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' It is not, take away our captivity, and receive us graciously, but take away our iniquity, and receive us graciously; nor is it to take away this or that particular iniquity, and receive us graciously, but take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; take away stain and sting, crime and curse, power and punishment, that we may never hear more of it, nor never feel more of it, nor never be troubled any more with it. Though their bondage was great, very great, yea, greater than any people under heaven were exercised with, yet their sins were a more unsupportable burden to their spirits than their bondage was, Dan 9:11-13. And therefore they cry out, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.' And this was the usual method of David; when he was under sore troubles and trials, he was more importunate with God to be purged and pardoned, than he was to be eased under his troubles, or delivered from his troubles: Psalms 51:2, 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin;' Psalms 51:7, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;' Psalms 51:9, 'Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities;' Psalms 51:14, 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God.' When Pharaoh was under the hand of the Lord, he was all for

removing of the plagues, the frogs, the locusts, &c., Exo 10:1-29. But when David was under the hand of the Lord, he was all for the removing of his sins, and for the cleansing, purging, and washing away of his sins. Oh that all the burnt citizens of London would be more earnest and importunate with God to pardon, and purge, and take away all those iniquities that have brought the fiery rod upon them, than they are studious and industrious to have their credits repaired, their houses rebuilt, their trades restored, and all their losses made up to them! Oh that they might all be driven by what they have felt, seriously to consider what they have done! 'No man saith, What have I done?' Jer 8:6; Hos 6:1-3; Isa 56:6; Eze 36:33, Eze 36:37. Oh that they would all blame themselves more, and their sins more, and turn to him who has so sorely smitten them, and lay hold on his strength, and make peace with him, that so he may yet build up their waste places, and make up their breaches, and repair their losses, and never turn away from doing of them good! Jer 32:41-44. But,

11. The eleventh duty that they are to learn that have been burnt up, is to prepare and fit for greater troubles and trials. The anger of the Lord is not yet turned away, but his hand is stretched out still, Isa 9:12; Rev 11:18. The nations are angry, the face of the times seems sorely to threaten us with greater troubles than any yet we have encountered with. Ah London, London! ah England, England! the clouds that hang over thee seem every day to be blacker and blacker, and thicker and thicker: thou hast suffered much, and thou hast cause to fear that thou mayest suffer more; thou hast been brought low, yea, thou art this day brought very low in the eyes of the nations round about thee, and yet thou mayest be brought lower before the day of thy exaltation comes. When God intends to raise a person, a city, a nation high, very high, he then usually brings them low, very low; and when they are at lowest, then the day of their exaltation is nearest. It is commonly darkest a little before break of day. The hand of the Lord has been lifted up high, yea, very high, over us and against us; but who repents? who reforms? who returns to the Most High? who smites upon his thigh? who says, What have I done? Jer 8:6; who finds out the plague of his own heart? who ceaseth from doing evil? who learns to do well? who stirs up himself to take hold of God? who stands in the gap? who wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles to turn away those judgments that this day threaten us? Isa 1:16-18; Psa 106:1-48; Hos 12:4. So long as sin remains rampant, and men continue impenitent, there is reason to fear a worse scourge than any yet we have been under. Pharaoh's stubbornness did but increase his plagues, Exo 9:17; the more stout and unyielding we are under judgments, the more chains God will still put on, Ecc 5:8. When his hand is lifted up, we must either bow or break. Such as have been under the smart rebukes of God, and will not take Christ's warning to go their way and sin no more, John 5:14, have reason to fear his inference, that a worse thing will come upon them. The face of present providences looks dismal; dreadful sufferings seem to be near, very near, even at our very doors. Yet to prevent fainting, we must remember that God never wants chambers to hide his people in till his indignation be overpast, Isa 26:20. God hath ways enough to preserve his wheat, even when the whirlwind carries away the chaff. God can find an ark for his Noahs, when a flood of wrath sweeps away sinners on every hand; and God can provide a Zoar for his Lots, when he rains fire and brimstone upon all round about them. Look, as God many times by lesser mercies fits his people for greater mercies; so God many times by lesser judgments fits his people for greater judgments: and who can tell, but that the design of God by the late judgments of fire, sword, and pestilence, is to prepare and fit his people for greater judgments? That God might have inflicted greater judgments than any yet he has inflicted upon us, I have already proved by an

induction of particulars. That greater judgments may be prevented, and our present mercies continued and increased, it highly concerns us to repent, and to turn to the Most High. There are seven sorts of men who have high cause to fear worser judgments than any yet have been inflicted upon them:—

(1.) Such who scorn and deride at the judgments of God, Isa 5:19; Jer 17:15, and Jer 20:8; 2Pe 3:3-5.

(2.) Such who put off the judgments of God to others, who cry out, Oh! these judgments concern such and such, but not us.

(3.) Such who are no ways bettered nor reclaimed by judgments.

(4.) Such as grow worser and worser under all the warnings and judgments, as Pharaoh and Ahaz did, Isa 1:5; Jer 5:3; 2Ch 28:22-23.

(5.) Such as make no preparations to meet God when he is in the way of his judgments, Amo 4:12.

(6.) Such who are careless Gallios, that do not so much as mind or regard the warnings of God, the judgments of God, Isa 5:12-13.

(7.) Such as put the evil day far from them, as they did in Isa 22:12-13, and as they did in Amo 6:3, and as the inhabitants of Jerusalem did a little before their city was laid desolate. Some writers tell us, [Hegesippus, Josephus, &c.,] that though the Jews had a great many warnings, by prodigious signs and fearful apparitions, before Jerusalem was besieged and the city destroyed, yet most of them expounded the meaning of them in a more favourable sense to themselves than ever God intended, till the dreadful vengeance of God overtook them to the utmost. It is the greatest wisdom and prudence in the world to prepare and fit for the worst. The best way on earth to prevent judgments from falling upon us, or if they do fall, to sweeten them to us, is to prepare for them. But,

12. The twelfth duty that lies upon those who have been burnt up, is to secure the everlasting welfare of their precious and immortal souls. O sirs, London's ashes tell you to your faces that you cannot secure your houses, your shops, your estates, your trades; but the eternal well-being of your souls may be secured. Every burnt citizen carries a jewel, a pearl of price, a rich treasure about him—viz., a divine soul, which is more worth than all the world, Mat 16:26. As Christ, who only went to the price of souls, has told us, there is much of the power, wisdom, majesty, and glory of God stamped upon the stately fabric of this world, Psa 19:1-2; but there is more of the power, wisdom, majesty, and glory of God stamped upon an immortal soul. The soul is the glory of the creation. What Job speaks of wisdom is very applicable to the precious soul of man, Job 28:13, Job 28:16-17. 'Man knows not the price thereof: it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.' The soul is a beam of God, a heavenly spark, a celestial plant; it is the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, the envy of devils, and the glory of God. Oh how richly and gloriously hath God embroidered the soul. 'The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold,' Psa 45:13. The soul is divinely inlaid and enamelled by God's own hand. The soul is of an angelical nature, it is of a divine offspring; it is a spiritual substance, capable of the knowledge of God, and of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. The soul is an immortal substance, and that not only per gratiam, by the

grace and favour of God, as the body of Adam was in the state of innocency, and as the bodies of saints shall be at the resurrection, but per naturam, by its own nature, having no internal principle of corruption, so as it cannot by anything from within itself cease to be; neither can it be annihilated by anything from without. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' Mat 10:28. Some [Gregory, &c.] have observed to my hand, that there are three sorts of created spirits: the first, of those whose dwellings is not with flesh, or in fleshly bodies; they are the angels; the second, of those which are wholly immersed in flesh, the souls of beasts, which rise out of the power of the flesh, and perish together with it; the third is of those which inhabit bodies of flesh, but rise out of the power of the flesh, nor die when the body dieth; and these are the souls of men, Ecc 12:7, 'When the body returneth to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return to God who gave it.' O sirs, the soul being immortal, it must be immortally happy, or immortally miserable. Certainly there is no wisdom nor policy to that of securing the everlasting welfare of your souls. All the honours, riches, greatness, and glory of this world are but chips, feathers, trifles, pebbles, to your precious and immortal souls; and therefore before all, and above all other things, make sure work for your souls. If they are safe, all is safe; but if they are lost, all is lost, and you cast and undone in both worlds. Chrysostom observeth, that whereas God hath given many other things double, two eyes to see with, two ears to hear with, two hands to work with, and two feet to walk with, to the intent that the failing of the one might be supplied by the other, he hath given us but one soul; if that be lost, hast thou another soul to give in recompense for it? If you save your souls, though you should lose all you have in this world, your loss would be a gainful loss; but if you lose your precious souls, though you should gain all the world, yet your very gains will undo you for ever. You have found, by the late dreadful fire, that there is no securing of the things of this world; and therefore make it your business, your work, to get a Christ for your souls, grace for your souls, and a heaven for your souls, that so, though all go to wreck here, yet your souls may be saved in the day of Christ. What desperate madness and folly would it have been in any, when London was in flames, to mind more and endeavour more to save their lumber than their jewels; their goods in their shops, than their children in their cradles, or their wives in their beds! But it is a thousand times greater madness and folly for men to mind more and endeavour more to secure their temporal estates, than they do to secure their eternal estates. But,

13. The thirteenth duty that is incumbent upon those who have been burnt up, is to get a God for their portion, Psa 16:5, and Psa 73:26. You have lost your earthly portion, your earthly possessions; oh that you would now labour with all your might to get God for your portion! Psa 119:57; Jer 10:16; Lam 3:24. If the loss of your earthly portions shall be so sanctified to you as to work you to make God your portion, then your unspeakable losses will prove inconceivable gain unto you. O sirs, God is the most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. The want or the loss of earthly portions may afflict and trouble you, but the want of God for your portion will certainly damn you. It is not absolutely necessary that you should have a portion in gold, or silver, or jewels, or goods, or houses, or lands, or lordships; but it is absolutely necessary that you should have God for your portion. Suppose that, with the apostles, you have no certain dwelling-place, nor no gold nor silver in your purses, 1Co 4:11; Acts 3:6; suppose, with Lazarus, you have never a rag to hang on your backs, nor never a dry crust to put in your bellies, Luk 16:20-21; suppose, with Job, you should be stripped of all your worldly comforts in a day; yet if God be your portion, you are happy, you are really happy, you are signally happy, you are greatly happy, you are unspeakably happy, you are eternally happy. However it may go with you in this world, yet you shall be sure to be

glorious in that other world. To have God for thy portion, O man, is the one thing necessary; for without it thou art for ever and ever undone. If God be not thy portion, thou canst never enjoy communion with God in this world; if God be not thy portion, thou canst never be saved by him in the other world. Will you consider a little what an excellent transcendent portion God is:—

(1.) He is a present portion; he is a portion in hand, he is a portion in possession.

(2.) God is an immense portion; he is a vast large portion, he is the greatest portion of all portions.

(3.) God is an all-sufficient portion.

(4.) God is a pure and unmixed portion; God is an unmixed good, he hath nothing in him but goodness.

(5.) God is a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion; he is so in himself, and he makes them so too who enjoy him for their portion.

(6.) God is a peculiar portion—a portion peculiar to his people.

(7.) God is a universal portion, he is a portion that includes all other portions.

(8.) God is a safe portion, a secure portion, a portion that none can rob a believer of.

(9.) God is a suitable portion; no object is so suitable and adequate to the heart as he is.

(10.) God is an incomprehensible portion.

(11.) God is an inexhaustible portion; a portion that can never be spent, a spring that can never be drawn dry.

(12.) God is a soul-satisfying portion; he is a portion that gives the soul full satisfaction and content.

(13.) God is a permanent portion, an indeficient portion, a never-failing portion, a lasting, yea, an everlasting portion.

(14 and lastly.) God is an incomparable portion, God is a portion more precious than all those things which are esteemed most precious. Nothing can make that man miserable that has God for his portion; nor nothing can make that man happy that hath not God for his portion. O sirs, why do you think that God, by his late fiery dispensations, has stripped you of your earthly portions, but effectually to stir you up to make him your only portion? &c. But,

14. The fourteenth duty that is incumbent upon them that have been burnt up, is to make God their habitation, to make God their dwelling-place: Psa 90:1, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place'—or place of retreat—'in all generations'—or in generation and generation, as the Hebrew runs. It is a Hebraism, setting forth God to be the dwelling-place of his people in all generations, before the flood and after the flood. The Israel of God, in all their troubles and travels in their wilderness condition, were not houseless nor harbourless. God was both their hiding-place and their dwelling-place. He that dwelleth in God cannot be unhoused, because God is stronger than all. It is brave for a Christian to take up in God as in his mansion-house. It was a witty saying of that learned man, Picus Mirandola, viz., that God created the earth for beasts to inhabit, the sea

for fishes, the air for fowls, the heavens for angels and stars; and therefore man hath no place to dwell and abide in, but God alone. Now the great God has burnt up your dwelling-places, make him your dwelling-place, your habitation, your shelter, your place of retreat, your city of refuge. Certainly they dwell most safely, most securely, most nobly, most contentedly, most delightfully, and most happily, who dwell in God, who live under the wing of God, and whose constant abode is under the shadow of the Almighty. Let the loss of your habitations lead you by the hand to make choice of God for your habitation. There is no security against temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments, but by making God your dwelling-place. How deplorable is the condition of that man that hath neither a house to dwell in, nor a God to dwell in! that can neither say, This house is mine, nor, This God is mine! that hath neither a house made with hands, nor yet one eternal in the heavens! It is a very great mercy for God to dwell with us, but it is a far greater mercy for God to dwell in us, and for we to dwell in God, 2Co 5:1-2; 1Jn 4:13, and 1Jn 3:24. For God to dwell with us, argues much happiness, but for we to dwell in God, this argues more happiness, yea, the top of happiness. There is no study, no care, no wisdom, no prudence, no understanding, to that which works men to make God their habitation. No storms, no tempests, no afflictions, no sufferings, no judgments can reach that man, or hurt that man, who has made God his dwelling-place. He that hath God for his habitation can never be miserable; and he that hath not God for his habitation can never be happy. That God that has once burnt you out of your habitations can again burn you out of your habitations; and if he should, how sad would it be that God has once and again burnt you out of your habitations, and yet you have not made him your habitation! &c. But,

15. The fifteenth duty that is incumbent upon those who have been burnt up, is to make sure an abiding city, a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: Heb 13:14, 'For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' These words are a reason of his former exhortation to the believing Hebrews to renounce the world, Heb 13:13, and to take up Christ's cross and follow him; as is clear by this causal particle 'for,' [γὰρ.] It is a probable conjecture made by some, as Estius observeth, that St Paul speaks prophetically of the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which was then at hand, and that in a short time neither that city, nor the country about it, would be an abiding place for them; but driven from thence they should be, and be forced to wander up and down; and therefore they were to look for no other abiding place but heaven; 'Here we have no continuing city.' The adverb translated 'here,' [ἔτις,] is sometimes used for place, and this more strictly for the particular place where one is—as for that place where Peter was, when he said, 'It is good for us to be here,' Mat 17:4,—or more largely for the whole earth, and so it is taken here, for it is opposed to heaven. For the present we have no abiding city, but there is an abiding city to come, and that is the city which we seek after. This earthly Jerusalem is no abiding city for us; this old world, the glory of which is wearing off, is no abiding city for us; but Jerusalem that is above, the heavenly city, the city of the great King, the city of the King of kings, Rev 21:2, and Rev 1:5-6. This world is a wilderness, and believers, as pilgrims and strangers, must pass through it to their heavenly Canaan. This world is no place for believers to continue in; they must pass through it to an abiding city, to a continuing city, to a city that hath foundations: Heb 11:10, 'For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' The plural number is here used, foundations, [θεμελίους,] for emphasis sake; this city is said to have foundations, to shew that it is a firm, stable, immovable, and enduring city, which the apostle opposeth to the tabernacles or tents wherein Abraham and the other patriarchs dwelt while they were on earth,

which had no foundations, but were movable, and carried from place to place, and easily pulled down, or overthrown, or burnt up; but heaven is an immovable, firm, stable, and everlasting city. Heaven is a city that is built, (1.) Upon the foundation of God's eternal good-will and pleasure.

(2.) That is built upon God's election to eternal glory.

(3.) That is built upon the foundation of Christ's eternal merits and purchase.

(4.) That is built upon the foundation of God's everlasting covenant of free, rich, infinite, sovereign, and glorious grace.

(5.) That is built upon the immutable stability of God's promise and oath. Heaven is built upon the foundation of great and precious promises, and upon his oath who is faithfulness itself and cannot lie. Now, oh what a strong city, what a glorious city, what a continuing city, what a lasting, yea, what an everlasting city must heaven needs be, that is founded upon such strong and immovable foundations as they are! Heaven hath foundations, but the earth hath none: the earth hangs upon nothing, as Job speaks, Job 26:7; Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Corinth, Troy, and those famous cities of Asia, were strong and stately cities in their times; but where are they now? Both Scripture and history doth sufficiently evidence that in all the ages of the world there hath been no firm, stable, or continuing city to be found: and the divine wisdom and providence hath [so] ordered, and that partly to work the sons of men to put a difference betwixt the things of this world and the things of the world to come; and partly to wean them from the world, and all the bravery and glory thereof; and partly to awaken them and stir them up to make sure a kingdom that shakes not, riches that corrupt not, an inheritance that fadeth not away, a house not made with hands, but one eternal in the heavens; and a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb 2:5; Col 3:1; Heb 12:28; 1Pe 1:4; 2Co 5:1-2. Heaven is styled a city, to set out the excellency, glory, and benefits thereof. The resemblance betwixt heaven and a city holds in these respects among others:—

[1.] First, A city is a place of safety and security; so is heaven a place of the greatest safety and security, Neh 3:1; Jer 35:11. A soul in heaven is a soul out of gun-shot. No devil shall there tempt, no wicked men shall there assault, no fire-balls shall be there cast about to disturb the peace of the heavenly inhabitants.

[2.] Secondly, A city is compact, it is made up of many habitations; so in heaven there are many habitations, many mansions, John 14:2. In our common cities many times the inhabitants are much shut up and straitened for want of room; but in heaven there is elbow-room enough, not only for God and Christ and the angels, those glistening and shining courtiers, but also for all believers, for all the elect of God.

[3.] Thirdly, A city hath sundry degrees of persons appertaining unto it, as chief magistrates and other officers of sundry sorts, with a multitude of commoners; so in heaven there is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and an innumerable company of angels and saints, Heb 12:22-23.

[4.] Fourthly, In a city you have all manner of provisions and useful commodities; so in heaven there is nothing wanting that is needful or useful.

[5.] Fifthly, A city hath laws, statutes, and orders for the better government thereof. It is so in heaven; and indeed there is no government to the government that is in heaven. Certainly there is no government that is managed with that love, wisdom, prudence, holiness, and righteousness, &c., as the government of heaven is managed with.

[6.] Sixthly, Every city hath its peculiar privileges and immunities; so it is in heaven. Heaven is a place of the greatest privileges and immunities, Rev 3:12.

[7.] Seventhly, Cities are commonly very populous; and so is heaven a very populous city, Dan 7:10; Rev 5:11, and Rev 7:9.

[8.] Eighthly, None but freemen may trade, and keep open shop in a city; so none shall have anything to do in heaven, but such whose name are written in the Lamb's book of life, Rev 21:27. Believers are the only persons that are enrolled as freemen in the records of the heavenly city.

[9.] Ninthly, Cities are full of earthly riches; and so is heaven of glorious riches: there are no riches to the riches of the heavenly Jerusalem, Isa 23:8; Rev 21:1-27. All the riches of the most famous cities in the world are but dross, brass, copper, tin, &c., to the riches of heaven.

O sirs, how should the consideration of these things work us all to look and long, and to prepare and fit for this heavenly city, this continuing city, this city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God! The Holy Ghost frequently calling believers pilgrims, sojourners, strangers, doth sufficiently evidence that there is no abiding for them in this world, Heb 11:13; 1Pe 2:11; Psa 119:54. This world is not their country, their city, their home, their habitation; and therefore they are not to place their hopes or hearts or affections upon things below, Col 3:1-2. Heaven is their chief city, their best country, their most desirable home, and their everlasting habitation; and therefore the hopes, desires, breathings, longings, and workings of their souls should still be heaven-ward, glory-ward, Luk 16:9; Rev 22:17. Oh when shall grace be swallowed up in glory? when shall we take possession of our eternal mansions? John 14:2-4; when shall we be with Christ, which for us is best of all? Php 1:23. The late fire hath turned all ranks and sorts of men out of the houses where they once dwelt, and it will not be long before death will turn the same persons out of their present habitations, and carry them to their long homes. Death will turn princes out of their most stately palaces, and great men out of their most sumptuous edifices, and rich men out of their most pleasant houses, and warlike men out of their strongest castles, and poor men out of their meanest cottages, Ecc 12:5. The prince's palace, the great man's edifice, the rich man's house, the warlike man's castle, and the poor man's cottage, are of no long continuance. Oh how should this awaken and alarm all sorts and ranks of men to seek after a city which hath foundations, to make sure their interest in the new Jerusalem which is above, in those heavenly mansions that no time can wear nor flames consume! But,

16. Sixteenthly and lastly, Was London in flames on the Lord's day? and was the profanation of that day one of those great sins that brought that dreadful judgment of fire upon. London, that hath turned that glorious city into a ruinous heap? then oh that all that have been sufferers by that lamentable fire, and all others also, would make it their business, their work, their heaven, to sanctify the Sabbath and to keep it holy all their days, that the Lord may be no more provoked to lay London more desolate than it is laid this day. Let it be enough that this day of the Lord hath been so greatly profaned by sinful omissions and by sinful commissions, by the immorality,

debauchery, gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, filthiness, uncleanness, rioting, revelling, and chambering that multitudes were given up to before the Lord appeared against them in that flaming fire that hath laid our renowned city in ashes. Let it be enough that the Lord has been more dishonoured and blasphemed, that Christ hath been more reproached, despised, and refused, and that the Spirit hath been more grieved, vexed, provoked, and quenched on the Lord's day, than on all the other days of the week. Let it be enough that on this day of the Lord many have been a-playing, when they should have been a-praying; and that many have been a-sporting, when they should have been a-mourning for the afflictions of Joseph, Amo 6:6; and that many have been a-courting of their mistresses, when they should have been a-waiting on the ordinances; and that many have been sitting at their doors, when they should have been instructing of their families; and that many have been walking in the fields, when they should have been a-sighing and expostulating with God in their closets; and that many have made that a day of common labour, which God hath made to be a day of special rest from sin, from the world, and from their particular callings. Oh that all men who have paid so dear for profaning of Sabbaths would now bend all their force, strength, power, and might to sanctify those Sabbaths that yet they may enjoy on this side eternity! &c.

Quest. But you will reply upon me, How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

Ans. I shall endeavour to give a clear, full, and satisfactory answer to this necessary and noble question. And therefore take me thus:—

1. First, We are to sanctify the Sabbath by resting from all servile labour and work on that day, Exo 16:29-30; Neh 13:15-18. Exo 20:10, 'But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.' Jer 17:22, 'Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath-day, neither do ye any work; but hallow ye the sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers.' Isa 58:13, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking of thine own words.' Here are three things distinctly observable in the words:—

(1.) Words.

(2.) Works.

(3.) Pleasure. Not doing thine own ways, that is works; not speaking thine own words; not finding thine own pleasure. Now mark, we have stronger reasons to engage us to a stricter observation and sanctification of the Lord's day than they had for their Sabbath; which may be thus evinced:—

(Not to speak of their double sacrifices, Num 28:9-10, upon their Sabbath, which, as some think, might typify our double devotion on the Lord's day; nor yet to speak of those six lambs whereby others conjecture was fore-prophesied the abundant services in the time of the gospel, Eze 46:1-5.) (1.) First, Our motives are far greater, and more efficacious; for,

[1.] First, Our day hath many privileges above theirs. Witness the honourable titles given to it by holy and learned men—as the queen of days, princess, principal, primate, a royal day, higher than the highest, the first-fruits of the days; yea, saith Jerome, the Lord's day is better than any other

common day, than all festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths of Moses. By these titles it is evident that the ancients had the Lord's day in very high esteem and veneration. Sirs, look, what gold is among inferior metals, and wheat among other grain, &c., the same is the Lord's day above all other days of the week.

[2.] Secondly, Their Sabbath was celebrated for the memorial of the creation; ours for the great work of redemption. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Theirs was celebrated for their deliverance out of Egypt; ours for our deliverance from hell. Now if the Jews were bound, and that for a whole day, not to do their own works, nor speak their own words, nor find their own pleasure; how much more solemnity belongs to our Lord's day! Oh, what a day is the Lord's-day! and how solemnly and devoutly ought it to be observed and sanctified! But,

(2.) Secondly, We have greater means and helps for the sanctification of the Sabbath than the Jews had for a long time, or than the primitive Christians had for three hundred years. Mark, the holy observation of the Sabbath among them came in by degrees, long after the day was settled; and the reason was this, because for a good while they had no word written to be read, nor no synagogues built to read it in. It was well-nigh a thousand years, or above a thousand years, after the giving of the law, before the reading of the law in synagogues came up. For a long time they had no books among them but the five books of Moses; and those books neither were not well understood by the common people. And it is further observable that the children of Israel being in Egypt under sore pressures, afflictions, and cruel bondage, &c., neither did nor could keep the Sabbath in any solemn manner, not being permitted either to rest or enjoy any solemn assemblies. And when they were in their wilderness condition, they had many stations, diversions, and incursions of enemies, so that they could not keep the Sabbath in any solemn public manner, as afterwards they did when they were settled in peace and safety in the land of Canaan. And so the primitive Christians, for three hundred years, living under very great and violent persecutions, they neither did nor could keep the Lord's day with that solemnity that they should or would; but as for place, they met not openly, but secretly in woods and deserts, and holes and caves, and dens of the earth; and so for time, sometimes they met in the day, and often they met in the night. But as for us, who have lived and do live in these days of the Son of man, what rare means and helps, what abundance of means and helps, what choice and precious means and helps have we had, and still have, in spite of all oppositions from high or low, to enable us to sanctify the Sabbath! And oh that all the means and helps that we yet enjoy may be signally blessed to that purpose! But,

(3.) Thirdly, The heathens, by the very light of nature, held it but reasonable that the days consecrated to their gods should totally be observed with rest and sanctity. The flamens, which were their priests, affirmed that the holy days were polluted if any work were done upon the solemn days; besides, it was not lawful for the king of the sacrifices, and the flamens, their priests, to see a work done on the holy days; and therefore by a crier it was proclaimed that no such things should be done; and he that neglected the precept was fined; and besides the fine, he which did aught unawares on such days was to offer sacrifices for expiation. And Scaevola, the high priest, affirmed that the wilful offender could have no expiation. Now shall heathens be so strict in the observation of their holy days, and shall not Christians be as strict in their observation of the Lord's day? These heathens will one day rise in judgment against the slight observers and the gross

profaners of the Lord's day. But,

2. Secondly, We must sanctify the Sabbath by preparing ourselves beforehand for that day, and all the duties of that day, Ecc 5:1-2. Hence it is that God hath fixed a memorandum upon this command, more than he hath upon any other command: Exo 20:8, 'Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy.' Sabbath-days are our market-days. Now men that are worldly wise, they consider beforehand what to buy and what to sell. The husbandman dungs, dresses, ploughs, harrows, and all to prepare it for seed. 'I will,' saith holy David, 'wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord,' Psa 26:6; signifying that to holy performances there ought to be holy preparations. When the temple was to be built, the stones were hewn, and the timber squared and fitted, before they were brought to the place where the temple stood. The application is easy.

[1.] First, The Jews had their preparations: Mark 15:42, 'And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation,' that is, the day before the Sabbath, &c. Their preparation began at three o'clock in the afternoon, which the Hebrews called the Sabbath eve. The Jews, as I have read, were so careful in their preparation for the Sabbath, that to further it, the best and wealthiest of them, even those that had many servants, and were masters of families, would chop herbs, sweep the house, cleave wood, and kindle the fire, and do such like things, &c.

[2.] Secondly, The heathens did use to prepare themselves by a strict kind of holiness, before they would offer sacrifices to several of their gods. They had, as authors write, their stone pots of water set at the doors of their temples, where they used to wash before they went to sacrifice.

[3.] Thirdly, The works of the day are great and glorious: and what excellent works are there in nature, but requires some previous preparation? &c.

[4.] Fourthly, Consider the dignity, majesty, authority, and purity of that God with whom you have to do in all the duties of the day. When men are to converse and treat with earthly princes, or to give them entertainment, how do they prepare and make ready! And will you carry it worse towards the King of kings and Lord of lords, than men do carry it towards mortal princes, whose breath is in their nostrils, and whose glory shall assuredly be laid in the dust? &c., 1Ti 6:15-16.

[5.] Fifthly, Consider, if you do not prepare yourselves beforehand for that day of the Lord, and all the duties of that day, what difference will there be between you and the worst of hypocrites, formalists, superstitious, or profane persons, who rush upon holy duties as the horse rusheth into the battle? Dost thou dress up thy house, thy husband, thyself, thy children? so do the worst of persons. If you do not prepare for the duties of the day, and to meet with God in those duties, what singular thing do ye? Mat 5:27.

[6.] Sixthly, Consider what blessed earnings you have made on those Sabbaths wherein you have been prepared to meet with the Lord, and to manage the duties of those days. Oh the joy, the peace, the comfort, the communion, the satisfaction, the enlargements, that you have then met with! And, on the other hand, consider what poor earnings you have made of it, when you have been careless and rash, and have not prepared yourselves for the duties of the day, and for the enjoyment of God in those duties. Oh how flat, how cold, how dull, how dead, how straitened, have you been on those Sabbaths wherein you have not prepared to meet with the Lord! &c.

Quest. But you may say, Wherein doth our preparation for the Sabbath consist?

Ans. In these three things:—

[1.] First, In a holy care, so to order all our worldly business and affairs on the day before, that they may not increase upon us on the Lord's day, to trouble us or distract us in the duties of that day.

[2.] Secondly, In putting iniquity far from you, in 'laying aside all superfluity of naughtiness, that you may receive the engrafted word with meekness, which is able to save your souls:' Job 11:14-15; Jas 1:21. When the vessel is unclean, it sours quickly the sweetest liquors that are poured into it. And so when the heart is filthy and unclean, it loses all the good it might otherwise gain by ordinances. If the stomach be foul, it must be purged before it be fed, or else the meat will never nourish and strengthen nature, but increase ill humours. So the souls of men must be purged from foul enormities and gross impieties, or else they will never gain any saving good by ordinances: 2Ti 2:21, 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work,' &c.

[3.] Thirdly, In acting your graces in all the duties of the day. Sleepy habits will do you no good, nor bring God no glory: all the honour he hath, and all the comfort and advantage you have, is from the active part of grace, Isa 50:10, and therefore you must still be a-stirring up the grace of God that is in you: 2Ti 1:6, 'Stir up the gift of God that is in thee.' I know the apostle speaks of the ministerial gift; but it is as true of the work of grace: for the Greek word χάρισμα signifies grace, as well as gift. 'Stir up the grace of God in thee.' Mark the phrase, it is a remarkable phrase; for in the original it is to blow up thy grace, πνεύω τὴν χάριν, just as a man blows up a fire that grows dull, or is hid under the ashes: blow up the grace of God in thee. Some think—Calvin and others—that it is a metaphor taken from a spark kept in ashes, which by gentle blowing is stirred up till it take a flame. Others say it is an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. Look, as the fire is increased and preserved by blowing, so are our graces preserved and increased by our acting of them. We get nothing by dead and useless habits. Talents hid in a napkin gather rust. Look, as the noblest faculties are imbrued when they are not improved, when they are not exercised; so the noblest graces are imbrued when they are not improved, when they are not exercised. Grace is bettered and made more perfect by acting. Neglect of our graces is the ground of their decrease and decay. Wells are the sweeter for drawing, and so are our graces for acting. We had need pray hard with the spouse, Song of Solomon 4:16, 'Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit.' Satan's grand design is not to keep men from going the round of duties, nor yet to keep men from attending on ordinances, but his grand design is to hinder the exercise of grace. All other exercises without the exercise of grace will do a Christian no good, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. The more grace is exercised, the more corruptions will be weakened and mortified. As one bucket in the well rises up, the other goes down; so as grace rises higher and higher, corruptions fall lower and lower. There was two laurels at Rome, and when the one flourished, the other withered; so where grace flourishes, corruptions wither. As the house of David grew stronger and stronger, so the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, 2Sa 3:1. So as grace in its exercise grows stronger and stronger, so sin, like the house of Saul, will every day grow weaker and weaker. If you keep not grace in exercise, it may most fail you when it should stand you most in stead, Mark 4:40. If a man uses a knife but now and then, he may have his knife to seek when he should use it. That sword grows rusty in the scabbard that is used but now and then. You know how to apply it. But,

3. Thirdly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by looking upon the enjoyment of Sabbaths and ordinances as your great happiness, by looking upon every duty as your dignity, and by looking upon every work of that day as carrying a reward with it, Pro 8:34-35; Psa 27:4, Psa 42:1-5, and Psa 63:1-3. Psa 19:11, 'And in keeping of them there is great reward:' not only for keeping, but also in keeping of God's commands there is great reward. A gracious soul would not exchange the joy, the peace, the comfort, the assurance, the communion, the delight, the satisfaction that it enjoys in the ways of obedience, before pay-day comes, before the crown be put on, before the full reward is given out, for all the crowns and kingdoms of this world. David was a king, a great and glorious king, yea, the best king in all the world, and yet he esteemed it as a very high honour to be the lowest officer, a door-keeper in God's house: Psa 84:10, 'A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God'—or I had rather sit at the threshold, as the Hebrew runs—'than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.' 1Ki 10:8, 'Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,' said the queen of Sheba concerning Solomon's servants. Oh, then, how many thousand times more happy are they who hear Christ in his ordinances, who see Christ in his ordinances, and who enjoy Christ in his ordinances on his own day! Of all days the Sabbath-day is the day wherein Christ carries his people into his wine-cellar, wherein he brings them to his banqueting-house, and his banner over them is love. This is the day wherein he stays his people with flagons, and comforts them with apples, and wherein his left hand is under their head, and his right hand doth embrace them, Song of Solomon 2:4-6. Oh the sweet communion, the sweet discoveries, the sweet incomes, and that blessed presence, and those glorious answers and returns of prayer that the saints have had on Sabbath-days! Christ in his ordinances on the Sabbath-day doth, as Mary, open a box of precious ointment, which diffuseth a spiritual savour among them that fear him. Though many slight ordinances, and many deny ordinances, and many oppose ordinances, and many fall off from ordinances, and many pretend to live above ordinances, and under that pretence vilify the ordinances as poor, low, weak things, yet the beauty and glory of God's ordinances will one day convince the world of the excellency of the saints: Eze 37:26-28, 'I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.' I doubt not but there are many thousands of the precious servants of the Lord who are able to tell this poor, blind, dark world, from their experience, that they have seen, and felt, and tasted, and enjoyed more of God in his ordinances on this day than ever they have enjoyed on any other day. But,

4. Fourthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by rising as early in the morning as your age, strength, health, and ability, and bodily infirmities will permit, Psa 139:18; Gen 22:3; Job 1:5. Abraham rose up early in the morning to offer up his only son; and Job rose up early in the morning to offer up burnt-offerings. So David, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning. O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee'—or marshal my prayer, as the Hebrew runs—'and will look up'—or will look out as a watchman looks out of his watch-tower to discover an approaching enemy. So Psa 130:6, 'My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.' Psa 88:13, 'In the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.' That this may the more work, and the better stick, seriously consider of these hints, &c.:—

[1.] First, God is the first being, and therefore of right deserveth to be served first, Dan 7:22, and Dan 2:20-22. If you can find any being before the being of that God, who is blessed for ever, let that being be served first: if not—as I am sure you cannot—then let the first being be first served. But,

[2.] Secondly, As God is the first being, so he is the best being: he is the choicest and chiefest good; and therefore ought to be first minded and served, Psa 4:6, Psa 73:25, and Psa 144:15. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As God is the best being, so he is the greatest being: as he is the choicest and chiefest good, so he is the greatest good, the greatest majesty, the greatest authority; and therefore he ought to be first served, Mal 1:14. But,

[4.] Fourthly, God gives the greatest rewards, and the fullest rewards, and therefore he ought to be served first, Psa 19:11; Mat 5:12; 2Jn 1:8. He gives 'a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:8; 'a crown of life,' Rev 2:10; 'a crown of glory,' Jas 1:12; 'a crown of immortality.' What have not men done, what won't men do, what don't men do for earthly crowns? A crown is the top of royalty; and how many princes have swam through the blood of thousands to their earthly crowns! Oh how much more active for God should that glorious crown make us, which he has laid up for all that love him! But,

[5.] Fifthly, Christ rose early in the morning before day, and went into a solitary place to pray; and why should not we make it our business, our work, our heaven, to write after so noble a copy? Mark 1:35-36. We cannot glorify Christ more than by our conformity to him, than by imitating of those blessed patterns that he hath set before us. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, The children of Israel rose up early in the morning on the Sabbath-day, to offer up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to an idol, Exo 32:4-6. So papists, Turks, and heathens are early in the mornings at their devotions; and the harlot rises early in the morning to trepan the lustful youth: Pro 7:15, 'Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thee'—or, as it runs in the Hebrew, 'In the morning came I forth to meet thee.' Now how should this put Christians to a holy blush, to see the very basest and worst of people to take more pains to go to hell than themselves do to go to heaven. Shall they rise early to serve their idols; and shall not we rise early to serve our God, and save our souls? O sirs, did you but love Christ more, and Sabbaths more, and duties more, you would then be more early in your communion with God, as the spouse was, Song of Solomon 7:11-12. Mary Magdalene loved Christ much: Luk 7:47, and she came early to the sepulchre to seek him. She came to look after Christ as soon as it began to dawn, Mat 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luk 24:1; John 20:1. Men that love the world can rise early to gain the world. Now shall nature do more than grace? Shall the love of the world outdo the love of Christ? The Lord forbid. And thus I have done with those considerations that should quicken you up to sanctify the Sabbath, by rising as early in the morning as your age, health, strength, ability, and bodily infirmities will permit. But, 5. Fifthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by a religious performance of all the duties of the day.

Quest. What are they?

Ans. (1.) Public.

(2.) Private.

Quest. What are the public duties that are to be performed on that day?

[1.] First, To assemble yourselves with the people of God to hear his word, Neh 8:1-9; Mat 13:54; Joe 1:13-14; Luk 4:16-17; John 20:19, John 20:26; Acts 2:1, Acts 2:44, Acts 2:46, and Acts 5:12; 1Co 11:20.

[2.] Secondly, Prayer, Psa 5:7, Psa 42:4, and Psa 118:24-26; Isa 56:7; Mat 21:13; Acts 1:13-14, Acts 2:46-47, and Acts 16:13; Heb 13:15.

[3.] Thirdly, The administrations of the seals, Acts 2:46, and Acts 20:7; 1Co 11:20, 1Co 11:33.

[4.] Fourthly, Singing of psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs, Psa 92:1; Mat 26:30; 1Co 14:15; Jas 5:13; Heb 2:12.

[5.] Fifthly, Works of mercy and charity, Neh 8:9-12; 1Co 16:1-2.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, The censures of the Church, as casting out of communion the obstinate, and in receiving such into communion as the Lord hath received into communion and fellowship with himself, 1Ti 5:20-21; 1Co 5:4; 2Co 2:6-7; Rom 14:1, and Rom 15:7, &c.

Quest. What are the private duties that are to be performed on that day?

Ans. [1.] First, Prayer in our families and closets, Col 3:17; Luk 18:1-2; 1Th 5:18; Eph 6:18. See my treatise on Closet Prayer, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Reading of the word, Jos 1:8; Deu 6:6, Deu 6:8-10, Deu 11:19, and Deu 4:10; John 5:35; Col 3:16; Rev 1:3.

[3.] Thirdly, Meditation, Psa 1:2, and Psa 119:97; 1Co 14:5; 1Ti 2:11, 1Ti 4:15.

Quest. But on what must we meditate?

Ans. (1.) Upon the holiness, greatness, and graciousness of God.

(2.) Upon the person, natures, offices, excellencies, beauties, glories, riches, fulness, and sweetness of Christ.

(3.) Upon the blessed truths that we either hear or read.

(4.) Upon our own emptiness, nothingness, baseness, vileness, and unworthiness.

(5.) Upon the works of creation and redemption.

(6.) Upon our spiritual and internal wants.

(7.) Upon that eternal rest that is reserved for the people of God, Heb 4:9.

[4.] Fourthly, Instructing, examining, and preparing of your families, according to the measures of grace you have received, Deu 6:7, and Deu 11:18, Deu 11:20; Gen 18:19-20; Jos 24:15.

[5.] Fifthly, Singing of psalms, Jas 5:13; Col 3:16; Eph 5:19.

[6.] Sixthly, Holy conference upon the word, Luk 14:8-12, Luk 14:15-16, and Luk 24:14, Luk 24:17-18; Col 4:6; Mal 3:16-17, &c.

[7.] Seventhly, Visiting and relieving the sick, the poor, the distressed, afflicted, and imprisoned saints of God, Mat 15:34-39; Jas 1:27, &c.

Now mark, when the public ordinances may be enjoyed in Christ's way, and in their liberty, purity, and glory, it will be your wisdom so to manage all your family duties and closet duties, as that you do not shut out more public worship. It is more observable that the Sabbaths and public service are joined together: Lev 19:30, 'Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.' Now what God hath solemnly 'joined together, let no man put asunder.' Every Christian should make it his great care that private duties do not eat up public ordinances, and that public ordinances do not shut out private duties. More of this you may see in my discourse on Closet Prayer. But,

6. Sixthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by managing all the duties of that day as under the eye of God. God's eye is very much upon his people whilst they are in religious duties and services. Therefore, in the tabernacle, the place of God's public worship, it was thus commanded, Exo 25:37, 'Thou shalt make seven lamps, and they shall light the lamps, that they may give light:' to teach us that nothing there escapes his sight; for in his house there is always light: and so when the temple was built, 'Mine eyes,' saith God, 'shall be there perpetually,' 1Ki 9:3. It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!' Subjects will carry themselves sweetly and loyally when they are under their sovereign's eye; and children will carry themselves dutifully when they are under their parents' eye; and servants will carry themselves wisely and prudently when they are under their minister's eye. God's eye is the best tutor to keep the soul in a gracious frame. It is good to have a fixed eye on him whose eye is always fixed on thee, Job 31:5-6; Pro 15:9, and Pro 5:21. The best way on earth to keep close to God's precepts, is always to walk as in his presence. No man on earth, by day or night, can draw a curtain between God and him. There is a threefold eye of God that is present in the assemblies of his people. As,

[1.] First, There is the eye of observation and inspection. God seeth what uprightness and seriousness, what integrity, ingenuity, and fervency you have in his services. 'Mine eyes are upon all their ways,' Jer 16:17. Psa 16:8, 'I have set the Lord always before me.' Psa 119:168, 'I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.' Job 31:4, 'Doth not he see all my ways, and count all my steps?' O sirs, whether you are praying, or hearing, or reading, or meditating, or singing, or receiving the Lord's supper, or conferring one with another, the eye of the Lord is still upon you, Mal 3:17. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is an eye of favour and benediction: Amo 9:4, 'I will set mine eyes upon them for good.' 2Ch 7:16, 'Mine eye and my heart shall be there;' that is, in my house. God's eye is here to approve, and to bless, and to increase the graces, the comforts, the communions, and the enjoyments of his people. But,

[3.] Thirdly, There is the eye of fury and indignation. God's looks can speak his anger, as well as his blows. His fury is visible by his frowns. 'Mine eyes shall be upon them for evil.' God's sight can wound as deeply as his sword. 'He sharpeneth his eyes upon me,' saith Job, chap. 16:9. Wild beasts, when they fight, whet their eyes as well as their teeth. 'He sharpeneth his eyes upon me,' as if he would stab me to the heart with a glance of his eye. He that waits on God irreverently, or

worships him carelessly, or that profaneth his day, either by corporal labour or spiritual idleness, may well expect an eye of fury to be fixed upon him, Jer 17:27; Eze 22:26. But,

7. Seventhly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by pressing after immediate communion with God and Christ in all the duties of the day, Psa 27:4, Psa 42:1-2, Psa 43:4, Psa 63:1-2, and Psa 84:1-2. Oh do not take up in duties, or ordinances, or privileges, or enlargements, or meltings, but press hard after intimate communion with God in all you do. Let no duty satisfy thy soul without communion with God in it: Song of Solomon 7:5, 'The king is held in the galleries,' that is, in his ordinances. The galleries, the ordinances, without King Jesus be enjoyed in them, will never satisfy the spouse of Christ, Song of Solomon 3:1-4. What is a purse without money, or a table without meat, or a ship without a pilot, or a fountain without water, or the body without the soul, or the sun without light, or the cabinet without the jewels? no more are all ordinances and duties to a gracious soul without the enjoyment of God in them, 2Ki 2:13-14. Moses had choice communion with God in the mount, and that satisfied him. The disciples had been with Jesus, and this was a spring of joy and life unto them: John 20:20, 'Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.' 'Here is the mantle of Elijah, but where is the God of Elijah?' said Elisha. So saith a gracious soul, here is this ordinance and that ordinance, but where is the God of the ordinance? Psa 101:2, 'Oh when wilt thou come unto me?' O Lord, I come to one ordinance and another ordinance, but when wilt thou come to me in the ordinance? when shall I be so happy as to enjoy thyself in the ordinances that I enjoy? The waggons that Joseph sent to fetch his father were the means of bringing Joseph and his father together. All the ordinances should be as so many waggons, to bring Christ and our souls nearer together. Man's summum bonum stands in his communion with God, as Scripture and experience evidences.

8. Eighthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by labouring after the highest pitches of grace and holiness on this day. Every Christian should labour after an angelical holiness on this day; on this day every saint should walk like an earthly angel, Isa 58:13. Mark, the Sabbath is not only called holy, but holiness to the Lord: Exo 31:15, 'Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord'—or as the Hebrew runs, 'holiness to the Lord;' which shews that the day is exceeding holy, and ought to be kept accordingly. The sacrifices on this day was to be double: Num 28:9, 'And on the sabbath-day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof.' The sacrifices here appointed for every Sabbath-day are full double to those appointed for every day, Num 28:3; and yet the daily sacrifices, the continual burnt-offering, Num 28:10, was not omitted on the Sabbath-day neither. So that every Sabbath, in the morning, there was offered one lamb for the daily sacrifice, and then two lambs more for the Sabbath: and this was appointed,

[1.] To shew the holiness of that day above other days; and that God required more service from them on that day than he did on any other day.

[2.] Secondly, To testify their thankfulness for the world's creation, Exo 20:11.

[3.] Thirdly, To put them in remembrance of God's bringing them out of Egypt by a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm, Deu 5:15.

[4.] Fourthly, For a sign of their sanctification by the Lord, Eze 20:12; Heb 4:1-16.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, For to be a figure of grace, and a sign of that rest in heaven that Christ hath purchased for his people with his dearest blood. Now mark, as this day was a sign of more than ordinary favours from the Lord, so he required greater testimonies of their thankfulness and holiness on this day than he did on any other day. Every day should be a Sabbath to the saints, in regard of their ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, but on the seventh-day-Sabbath, our duties and services should be doubled. In Psa 92:1-15, which psalm is titled a Psalm for the Sabbath, there is mention made of morning and evening performances. The variety of duties that are to be performed on this day may very well take up the whole day with delight and pleasure. On this day, in a more especial manner, we should labour to do the will of God on earth, as the angels and spirits of just men made perfect do it now in heaven, Heb 12:22-23—viz., wisely, freely, readily, cheerfully, faithfully, seriously, universally, and unweariedly. If we are not wanting to ourselves, God on this day will give out much of himself, and much of his Christ, and much of his Spirit, and much of his grace into our souls. But,

9. Ninthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by managing all the duties of the day with inward reverence, seriousness, and spiritualness, John 4:23-24. It is the pleasure of God that we reverence his sanctuary: Lev 19:30, 'Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.' Twice in this chapter the observation of the Sabbath is commanded, that it may be the better remembered, and that men may know that it is not enough to rest on that day, but that rest must be sanctified by a reverent management of all their soul-concernments in all our drawings nigh to God. We must look that our hearts lie under a holy awe and dread of his presence. To the commandment of sanctifying God's Sabbath, this of reverencing his sanctuary is joined, because the Sabbaths were the chief times whereon they resorted to the sanctuary, Gen 28:16-17. The Jews made a great stir about reverencing the temple. They tell us that they were not to go in with a staff, nor shoes, not to spit in it, nor, when they went away, to turn their backs upon it, but go sidelong. But doubtless the great thing God points at and expects from his people's hands on this day is, that they do worship him with inward reverence, seriousness, and spiritualness. All other worship abstracted from this, will neither pleasure God nor profit us: 1Ti 4:8, 'For bodily exercise profiteth little.' Oh labour to be very spiritual in all the duties of this day! Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, was spiritual in his conception, in his life and conversation, in his death and passion, in his resurrection and ascension. He was spiritual in his words, in his works, in his ways, and in his worship; and therefore let us labour to be very spiritual in all we do on that day, Luk 1:35-36; Mat 3:16; John 1:32, and John 6:36; Heb 7:26, and Heb 9:14; 1Ti 3:16. Again, all the ordinances of the day are spiritual, viz., the word, prayer, sacraments, singing of psalms, &c.; and therefore we had need to be spiritual in all the services of that day. Again, the ends for which the Lord's day was appointed are all spiritual, viz., the glory of God, the illumination, conversion, and salvation of sinners, and the edification, confirmation, consolation of saints; and therefore we had need be spiritual in all the duties of the day, Eph 6:12. Again, the grand enemies that we are to encounter with on this day are spiritual, sin within and Satan without; and therefore we had need be spiritual in all we do. For there is no way to conquer spiritual enemies but by spiritual weapons and by spiritual exercises, 1Co 10:13. Again, grace thrives most and flourishes best in their souls who are most spiritual in their duties on the Lord's day. Again, the more spiritual any man is in his duties on the Lord's days, the more secured and armed he will be against all spiritual judgments, which are the sorest and dreadfulest of all judgments. Again, the more spiritual any man is in the duties of the Lord's day, the more that man acts like the angels in heaven, and like the spirits of

just men made perfect, Heb 12:22-23. Again, this will difference you from hypocrites, formalists, and all profane persons. An external observation of the Sabbath will difference you from heathens; but a spiritual spending of the Sabbath will difference you from hypocrites. A hypocrite never rises so high as to be spiritual in the Sabbaths of God, Luk 13:14-15. Mark, Sabbaths spiritually spent are a sure sign of a sincere heart and of a saving estate, Exo 31:13. Now, oh that all these considerations might greatly provoke you, and mightily encourage you to be very spiritual on the Lord's day, and in all the duties of that day! But,

10. Tenthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by being spiritual in all natural actions, and holy and heavenly in all earthly enjoyments, 1Co 10:13. It is reported of a Scotch minister, that he did eat, drink, and sleep eternal life. Luther tells us that though he did not always pray and meditate, but did sometimes eat and drink, and sometime sleep, yet all should further his account. That is a Christian worth gold that hath learned that heavenly art, so to spiritualise all his natural actions as that they shall turn to his account in the great day: Zec 14:20-21, 'In that day shall there be upon the bells,' or bridles, 'of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord. And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.' Here is holiness written upon the bridles of the horses they ride on, and holiness written upon the cups and pots they drink in. A holy and heavenly heart will be holy in the use of the meanest things that are for common use. Something of sanctity should run through every piece of your civility. Something of the spirit, life, and power of religion you should shew in all parts of your common conversation on every day, but especially on the Lord's day. Tertullian, [Apolog.,] speaking of the carriage of the primitive Christians at their meals, saith, [1.] Our table resembleth an altar, and our supper a sacrifice.

[2.] Our table hath nothing savouring of baseness, sensuality, or immodesty. We feed by measure, we drink by the rules of temperance.

[3.] We speak and converse as in the presence of God. Every one repeateth what he knoweth out of the Holy Scriptures, and his own invention, to the praise of God.

[4.] As prayer began the banquet, so prayer concludes it. If you beheld us, you would say that we were not at supper, but at a lecture of holiness. Should not the practice of these primitive Christians put all such Christians to a blush in our day, who on the Lord's day are so carnal in the use of spiritual things, and so earthly in the use of heavenly things? That is a memorable expression that you have in Exo 18:12, 'And Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses father-in-law before God.' See Deu 12:5, Deu 12:7; 1Ch 29:21-22. The word bread is used for all meat, Gen 3:19, and Gen 31:14. Now mark, in these words you have,

[1.] The greatness of their courtesy: for though Jethro was a stranger and no Israelite, yet the elders honoured him with their company. 'And Aaron and all the elders came to eat bread with Moses his father-in-law.'

[2.] The graciousness of their carriage: 'They came to eat bread with him before the Lord.' That is, saith Calvin on the text, in gloriam et honorem Dei, To the honour and glory of God. Grace must spice every cup, and be sauce to every dish, or nothing will relish well with him whose heart is set to sanctify the Sabbath. 'Aaron and all the elders of Israel ate bread before the Lord,' that is, they ate bread as in the presence of God. Whilst they were eating of bread, their hearts were under a

reverential awe of God. Diana's temple was burnt down, when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places together. But God is present both in paradise and in the wilderness at the same time: he is present both at board and bed, both in the family and in the closet at the same time. Oh that in all your natural, civil, and common actions you would carry it as becomes his eye, his presence, that fills heaven and earth with his glory, Psa 139:1-24. But,

11. Eleventhly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by managing all the duties of the Sabbath with a spirit of holy joy and delight, Psa 33:1, and Psa 32:11; Php 4:4; 1Th 5:16, 1Th 5:18. There is no garment that so well becomes the upright as the garment of gladness. God hath laid his royal command upon us to rejoice on this day: Isa 58:13-14, 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight'—or as the Hebrew runs, 'delights:' and so Tremelius reads it—'the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him,' &c.: 'then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,' &c.: Psa 118:24, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoice therein.' Now if you compare this text with Mat 21:22-23, and Acts 4:11, you will find that the precedent verses are a prophetic prediction of Christ's resurrection; and so this verse foretells the church's joy upon that memorable and glorious day. 'A feast,' saith Solomon, 'is made for laughter,' Ecc 10:19. Now on this day the Lord of hosts is pleased more especially and more abundantly to make for his people 'a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined,' Isa 25:6. On this day we enjoy the freest, and the fullest, and the sweetest, and the choicest, and the nearest communion of saints: and what doth this call for, but a spirit of holy joy? On this day we enjoy all the precious ordinances in a most solemn manner; and why then should we not be joyful in God's house of prayer? Isa 56:7. The heavenly host sung at his birth, Luk 2:10-14; and why should not we sing and rejoice at his second birth, his resurrection from the dead? O sirs, Sabbaths are the very suburbs of heaven; and who can be in the suburbs of heaven and not rejoice? A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful; it puts a lustre upon beauty. And so doth holy joy put a lustre upon the day of God, the ways of God, and the people of God. It is the duty and glory of a Christian to rejoice in the Lord every day, but especially on the Lord's day. God reserves the best wine, the best comforts, and the choicest discoveries of himself, and of his love, and of his Christ, and of his glory for that day; and all to make his people 'joyful in the house of prayer,' Isa 56:7. The Manichees were wont to keep their fasts upon the Lord's day, which made Tertullian say that that practice of theirs was a detestable wickedness. To fast on the Lord's day, saith Ignatius, is to kill Christ; but to rejoice in the Lord this day, and to rejoice in all the duties of this day, and to rejoice in that redemption that was wrought for us on this day, this is to crown Christ, this is to lift up Christ. But,

12. Twelfthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by sanctifying of the whole day to God's service, and not by fits, and flashes, and sudden pangs. O sirs, if the Lord was so strict that he would not lose a moment's honour in a ceremonial day of rest—Lev 23:32, 'It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls in the ninth day of the month at even: from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath'—what shall we think the Lord expects upon this day, which is more? Psa 92:1-2, 'It is good to sing of his loving-kindness in the morning, and of his faithfulness every night.' Jer 17:22, 'You shall do no work, but sanctify my sabbath.' Now that this may the better stick,

consider,

[1.] First, God hath given you six whole days that you may provide for yourselves and families, and therefore do not deny him one day in seven, Exo 20:9, and Exo 23:12. What an unrighteous thing is it to buy by one measure which is greater, and sell by another which is lesser! Do not rob God of his time, who hath been so noble as to give you six in seven. But,

[2.] Secondly, God rested all the seventh day: he had finished the creation in six days, Gen 2:1-3. God did not rest on one part of the seventh day and work on the other part of the seventh day, but he rested all the seventh day. And doubtless it is your wisdom, duty, and glory to write after the copy that God has laid before you. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The Sabbath is not to be an artificial day, but a natural day, viz., twenty-four hours together: as you may see in Lev 23:32, 'From even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath.' The days then were so reckoned. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You would not take it well at your servants' hands if they should only work three or four hours in a day, and either trifle away the rest of the time, or else spend it in doing their own work when they should be a-doing of yours; and do you think that the great God will take it well at your hands, that when you have spent three or four hours in the duties of his day, that then you should either trifle away, or fool away, or play away, or sleep away, or sin away the remaining part of his day? But,

[5.] Fifthly, This hath been the judgment of most judicious divines in all ages. In the Council of Mexicon there was an assembly of ministers out of all nations in Christendom, and they ordained a canon concerning the Lord's day. The canon runs thus: 'We ordain that people keep the whole Lord's day holy, and that they set themselves the whole day to pray to God, and delight in God, and hear his word; and if a country man's servant break this day, his punishment shall be to be beaten with severe blows,' [ictibus gravioribus, are the very words of the council;] 'and if a lawyer offer to plead this day, he shall not have the benefit of his pleading or case; and if a minister break this day, he shall be excommunicated half a year, and thrown out of the church, and shall not be received into the church again but upon great humiliation.' It is a good observation of Musculus upon Exo 20:8: God doth not say, saith he, 'remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy;' for he that keeps it an hour or two keeps it holy; but 'remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy:' he will have not a part of a day only, but a whole day kept holy. And Calvin, upon the words, 'Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy,' saith, we are to keep this day holy, and not a part of it, but all of it. I might produce a cloud of witnesses in the case; but let these suffice. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Consider that the very heathen have kept the whole day to their idol-gods, and not a part. And shall we then put off God with a part of a day? Shall we be worse than the heathens? Shall we act below heathens? Shall nature, shall blind devotion do more than grace? The Lord forbid! But,

13. Thirteenthly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by such an abstinence or moderate use of all your lawful comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, as may render you most apt and fit for the sanctification of the Sabbath. 'Let your moderation be known among all men' always, Php 4:5; but especially on the Lord's day, be moderate in your eating, drinking, entertainments, &c. Oh how do many by their immoderate use of lawful comforts on this day, indispose and unfit themselves for

the duties of the day! It is a Christian's duty every day to eat and drink soberly: Tit 2:11-12, 'The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to us, teaching us to live soberly in this present world.' It is both the duty and the glory of a Christian to be temperate in his diet. A little will satisfy nature, less will satisfy grace, though nothing will satisfy men's lusts. Sobriety is a gift of God, whereby we keep a holy moderation in the use of our diet: Pro 23:1-2, 'When thou sittest to eat,' &c., 'consider diligently what is before thee, and put the knife to thy throat;' that is, be very careful and circumspect in taking thy food, bridle thine appetite, take heed thou dost not exceed measure. He may endanger his health, his life, his soul, that gives way to his greedy appetite. Some read the words thus: 'For thou puttest a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.' Thou shortenest thy life, and diggest as it were thine own grave with thine own teeth. Meat kills as many as the musket; the board as the sword, [Chrysostom.] I know that the bodies, stomachs, callings, constitutions, and climates wherein men live, differ; and therefore no such particular rules, as to eating and drinking, can be laid down as shall be binding to every one: yet this is certain, that a man that eats or drinks so much on the Lord's day as oppresses nature, and as unfits him for praying, working, or hearing work, or reading work, or closet work, that man is guilty of intemperance.² Such who feed till they unfit themselves for service are belly-gods. Paul wept over such in his day, and so should we in ours, Php 3:18-19. Thou shouldst use thy food, O Christian, as a help, and not as a hindrance to thee in thy Christian course. A full belly never studies well, nor never prays well, nor never hears well, nor never reads well, nor never repeats well, nor never doth anything well, either on the Lord's day or any other day. What a shame is it to see a Christian a slave to his palate on any day, but especially on the Lord's day. I may use the creatures so as to support sheer nature, but not so as to clog it, and weaken it, and debase it. I may use the creatures as my servants, but I must never suffer them to be my lord. Daniel was very temperate in his diet, Dan 1:8. Though there was not a greater born of a woman than John the Baptist, yet his fare was but locusts and wild honey, Mat 11:11. A little bread was Basil's provision. Hilarion did seldom eat anything till the sun went down, and then that which he did eat was very mean. Jerome lived with cold water and a few dried figs; and Augustine hath this expression concerning himself, Hoc me docuisti, Domine, &c., Thou Lord hast taught me this, that I should go to my meat as to a medicine. His meaning was, that he went to his meat, not to satisfy his appetite, but to repair nature. And Luther made many a meal with bread and a herring. Socrates, Anacharsis, Cyrus, Cæsar, Herodicus, Augustus, and many other heathens were very temperate in their diet. The old Gauls were very sparing in their diet, and used to fine them that outgrew their girdles. These heathens will one day rise in judgment against those nominal Christians who are intemperate, both upon the Lord's day, and other days also. But,

14. Fourteenthly and lastly, You must sanctify the Sabbath, by abstaining from speaking your own words. The spouse's lips are like a thread of scarlet, Song of Solomon 4:3. They are red like a thread of scarlet in discoursing of a crucified Christ, and they are thin like a thread of scarlet, and not swelled with frothy, empty, worldly discourses, on the Lord's days or on other days. Such words as will neither profit a man's own soul, nor better others, are not to be spoken on the Lord's day. It is God's express pleasure that we should not speak our own words on his day: Isa 58:13, 'Nor speaking thine own words.' Cæsar passing through the streets of Rome, and seeing many of the ladies playing with little dogs, monkeys, and baboons, asked them if the women in that country had no children? So when men spend the Lord's day in playing, sporting, toying, or talking of this or that trifle, of this or that person, of this or that fashion, of this or that vanity, we may ask them

whether they have no God, no Christ, no heaven, no promises, no experiences, no evidences to talk of? There are many idle talkers: of every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account at the day of judgment, Mat 12:36. An idle word is a profuse or needless word, used rashly or unadvisedly, wanting a reason of just necessity, bringing neither honour to God nor edification to others, nor conducing to any profitable end. And as there are many idle talkers, so there are many over-talkers; and they are such who spend a hundred words when ten will serve the turn, Ecc 5:2, 3. And as there are many over-talkers, so there are many that are only talkers, that can do nothing but talk, Pro 14:23. To fall under the power or scourge of these men's tongues is to fall under no easy persecution. And as there are many that are only talkers, so there are many that are unprofitable talkers. 'The beginning of the words of their mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness,' Ecc 10:13. And as there are many unprofitable talkers, so there are many unseasonable talkers, that place one word where another should stand. 'A wise man discerneth time and judgment,' Ecc 8:4. And as there are many unseasonable talkers, so there are many rash talkers, who speak first and think afterwards, Ecc 5:2. God hath set a double bar about the tongue—the teeth and the lips,—that men should not speak rashly. Words once spoken cannot return. A man that thinks before he speaks, seldom repents of what he speaks. Silence is far better than rash speaking, or than vain speaking, &c.

O sirs, the tongue is the nimble interpreter of the heart. If there be piety or iniquity at the bottom of your hearts, your tongues will discover it, Mat 12:43-44. The stream riseth not above the fountain. We know not what metal the bell is made of by the clapper. What is in the well will be in the bucket. What is in the warehouse will be in the shop. So what is in the heart will be in the mouth. If there be anything of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of hell, of sin, of the world, of self in the bottom of your souls, your tongues will discover it. Man, saith one, is like a bell, and his tongue like the clapper, [Plutarch.] So long as this standeth still, he may be thought to be without any flaw, craze, or crack in him; but let it once stir, and then he discovers himself presently. No man can so change himself, but his heart may sometimes be seen at his tongue's end. Men watch interpreters. Oh that, on the Lord's day especially, you would make more conscience of watching your tongues! If the tongue be not watched, it will be sin's solicitor-general; it will be a bawd to all lusts: it will plead for sin, and defend sin, and lessen sin, and provoke to sin, and shew the pleasure of the heart in sin. There are but five virtues of the tongue reckoned up by philosophers; but there are twenty several sins of the tongue reckoned up by Peraldus. The Arabians have a proverb, 'Take heed thy tongue cut not thy throat.' Many a man's tongue has cut his throat; that is, it hath been his ruin.² Our Chronicles make mention of one Burdet, a merchant, who, living at the sign of the Crown in Cheapside, in the days of King Edward the Fourth, in the year 1483, jestingly said to his son that he would leave him heir of the crown, meaning the sign of the crown where he lived; for which he was apprehended, and within four hours hanged, drawn, and quartered. The tongue is often like a sharp razor, that, instead of shaving the hair, cuts the throat. If a man do not look well about him, he may every day be in danger of dying by his tongue. 'Life and death,' saith Solomon, 'are in the power of the tongue,' Pro 18:21. Gaping-mouthed men are noted for fools by Lucian; and a better and a wiser man than Lucian hath told us that 'the lips of a fool will swallow up himself,' Ecc 10:12. Ah, how good had it been for many that they had been born dumb! The tongue can easily travel all the world over, and wound men's names and credits in this country; and that in this city and that in this town, and that in this family, and that in a trice run from one place to another: here it bites, and there it tears: in this place it leaves a blot, and in that it gives a

wound; and therefore you have cause to watch your tongues on every day, but especially on the Lord's day. There are many whose tongues do more mischief, and travel further on the Sabbath-day, than they do on all the other days of the week. You ought to keep a strict guard upon your tongues every day, but on the Lord's day you should double your guard. Satan without you, and that strong party that he hath within you, will do all they can so to oil your tongues on that day as to make you miscarry more ways than one, if you do not carefully look about you. Are there none on that day that do watch your words, to deride you and jeer you? Jer 20:10. Yes. Are there none on that day that do watch your words, either to ensnare you or trepan you? Yes. Are there none on that day that do watch your words, that they may find matter, if possible, either to reprove you or to reproach you? Yes. Are there none on that day that do watch your words, that do hang upon your lips, expecting to be instructed, edified, confirmed, comforted, and strengthened by you? Yes. Well, then, if this be your case, how highly it doth concern you on this day to watch your words, I shall leave you to judge. O sirs, all your words, whether good or bad, are all noted and observed by God, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together.⁴ If a person were by us that should book all our words from Sabbath-day morning to Sabbath-day night, and the like on other days, would we not be very careful what we spoke? Why, God is by and hears all. Athenodorus, a heathen, used to say, that all men ought to be very careful of their actions and words, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done and said. And Zeno, a wise heathen, affirmeth that God seeth and taketh notice of our very thoughts; how much more then of our words! O sirs, how many men and women are there that are choice of what they eat, that are not choice of what they speak—that are curious about the food which goes into their mouths, lest it should hurt or poison them, who are nowise curious about the words that go out of their mouths, lest they should hurt or poison others! Of all the members in the body, there is none so serviceable to Satan as the tongue. And therefore Satan spares Job's tongue; his grand design being not to make Job a beggar, but a blasphemer. Job was blistered all over by Satan, only his tongue was not blistered. Satan thought by that member to work Job to fight against God, and the peace of his own soul. It is queried in the schools what was the first sin of the first angel that fell; for they assert that one fell first, then the rest. Now there are very many opinions about it. Some say it was envy, others discontent; and some say it was their refusing to undertake the charge that was given to them to minister unto man. Others think it was a spiritual luxury; others ingratitude. The most and best say pride, but wherein that pride consisted is not easily determined, nor by them unanimously resolved; and by some it is as confidently observed that it was a sin of the tongue. Now if these last have hit the mark, how highly doth it concern us all to set a watch before the door of our lips at all times, but especially on the Lord's day! Now considering how wonderful apt and prone Christians are to be speaking their own words, yea, foolish, vain, worldly, and unprofitable words on the Lord's day, give me leave to offer to your serious consideration these four things:—

[1.] First, Where the Lord hath commanded the whole man to rest from servile works, there he commands the hand to rest from working, the foot from walking, and the tongue from talking. But in the fourth commandment, 'Thou shalt do no manner of work,' Exo 4:10, the Lord hath commanded the whole man to rest from servile works. And therefore the tongue from talking of this or that worldly business. But,

[2.] Secondly, Those things which as lets hinder the duties of the Lord's day are forbidden: but worldly words as lets hinder the duties of the Lord's day; therefore worldly words are forbidden.

But,

[3.] Thirdly, Where bodily works are forbidden, there those things are forbidden which hinder the sanctifying of the Sabbath, as much or more than bodily works do: but bodily works are forbidden in the fourth commandment; therefore worldly words, which hinder more the sanctifying of the Sabbath than bodily works do, are forbidden in the same commandment. That worldly words do hinder the sanctifying of the Sabbath, as much or more than bodily works, is evident by this, among other arguments that might be produced, that a man may work alone, but he cannot talk alone. But,

[4.] Fourthly, That commandment which ties the outward man from the deed done, that commandment ties the tongue from talking of the same: but the fourth commandment ties the outward man from worldly works; and therefore that command ties the tongue from worldly words. Certainly all those persons that make the Lord's day a reckoning-day with workmen, as some do, or a directing-day, what shall be done the next week, as others do; or a day of idle talk about this worldly business or that, or about this person or that, or about this fashion or that, or about this man's matters or that, or about this pleasure or that, or about this profit or that, or about this man's calling or that, or about this gossip's tale or that, &c., all such persons are profaners and no sanctifiers of the Lord's day.

I have been the longer upon this particular, to confute and recover those Christians who give their tongues too great a liberty on the Lord's day.

Now in these fourteen particulars I have shewed you how the Sabbath is to be sanctified. O sirs, as you desire to see London rebuilt; as you desire to see London in as great, or greater, prosperity and glory as she hath been in; as you desire to see her once more the bulwark of the nation; as you desire to see her a shield and shelter to her faithful friends at home, and a terror and dread to her proudest enemies abroad; as you desire that she may be an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations; as you desire the Lord to be for ever a wall of fire about her, and a glory in the midst of her, make conscience of sanctifying the Sabbath in a right manner; make it your business and work to sanctify the Sabbath according to those fourteen rules which I have now laid down, Psa 48:12-13; Song of Solomon 6:4; Isa 60:15; Zec 2:5.

I know there is a desperate opposition and contrariety in the hearts of carnal men to the strict observation of the Sabbath. When Moses had first received a commandment concerning the observation of the Sabbath, his authority could not so prevail with the Jews, but that some of them would be gadding abroad to seek manna on the Sabbath-day, contrary to an express prohibition, Exo 16:25, Exo 16:31; yea, when it was death to gather sticks on that day, chap. 31:13-16, yet in contempt of heaven itself one ventures upon the breach of the law. How sadly and frequently the prophets have lamented and complained of the breach of the Sabbath, I have in this treatise already discovered, and therefore need say no more of it in this place. The horrid profanation of this day in France, Holland, Germany, Sweden, and in these three nations, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and among all protestants everywhere else, is and must be for a sore lamentation. The Sabbath in all ages hath been more or less crucified between profaneness and superstition, as Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, was crucified between two thieves. When the observation of the Sabbath came to be more sacred and solemn in public performances, which was about Nehemiah's time, as is conceived, presently after Satan stirred up some hypocrites, who run into

such an extreme of superstition, that they held that they might not stir out of their places, nor kill a flea, and a thousand such like fooleries. Yea, some dangerous fooleries they laboured to distil into the people; as that they might not draw a sword to defend themselves in a common invasion, &c. For a close, remember this, that there are no Christians in all the world comparable to those, for the power of godliness and heights of grace, holiness, and communion with God, who are most strict, serious, studious, and conscientious in sanctifying of the Lord's day. Such as are careless, remiss, light, slight, formal, and carnal upon the Sabbath-day, they will be as bad, if not worse, on every other day in the week. The true reason why the power of godliness is fallen to so low an ebb, both in this and in other countries also, is because the Sabbath is no more strictly and conscientiously observed in this land, and in those other countries where the name of the Lord is made known. The Jews were never serious in the observation of their Sabbaths, till they smarted seventy years in Babylon for their former profanation of it. And who can look upon the ashes of London, and not see how dearly the citizens have paid for their profaning of the Lord's day? And oh that all these short hints might be so blessed from heaven, as to work us all to a more strict, serious, and conscientious sanctifying of the Lord's day, according to those directions or rules that I have in this treatise laid before you. And thus I have done with those duties that are incumbent upon those who have been burnt up by that late dreadful fire that hath turned London into a ruinous heap.

I come now to those duties that are incumbent upon those whose habitations are yet standing, as monuments of divine wisdom, power, and grace. O sirs, the flames have been near you, a devouring fire hath consumed many thousand habitations round about you, and you and your habitations have been as so many brands plucked out of the fire! Oh how highly doth it concern you seriously and frequently to lay to heart the singular goodness and kindness of God towards you, manifested in the mighty preservations, protections, and salvations that he has vouchsafed to you when you were surrounded with all manner of hazards and dangers! Oh that you would strive, as for life, to come up to duties which are certainly incumbent upon all those who have escaped the burning flames!

Quest. But you will say, What are they?

Ans. These that follow:—

[1.] First, It highly concerns you who have escaped the fiery dispensation, to take heed of those sins which bring the fiery rod, and which have turned many of your neighbours out of house and home, 2Pe 2:6; Luk 17:32; Jer 7:12; 1Sa 4:11; Psa 78:60. What they are, I have already declared at large. If those sins that have brought the fiery judgment upon your neighbours are to be found among you, you have cause to fear the fiery rod, or else some other judgment that shall be equivalent to it. If you sin with others, you shall suffer with others, except there be found repentance on your side, and pardoning grace on God's. The Lord hath punished your neighbours with that judgment of judgments,—the fire; and he expects that you should take notice thereof, and be instructed thereby, to take heed of those sins that they have been judged for, else the same or worser judgments will certainly befall you. Because Edom made no good use of Jerusalem's sufferings, therefore the Lord threatens her that shame should cover her, and that she should be cut off for ever, Jer 3:8; Obadiah 1:11-14. God expects that the judgments that he hath executed upon all round about you should awaken you out of security, and work in you a holy dread of his

name, and provoke you to repentance for what is past, and engage you to a more exact walking with him for the time to come. But,

[2.] Secondly, It highly concerns you not to think those who are burnt up to be greater sinners than yourselves who have escaped the consuming flames, Isa 5:22-24, and Isa 51:17, Isa 51:22-23; Jer 25:15, Jer 25:30. Some there were that told Christ of certain Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices—an argument of God's sore displeasure in the eye of man, to be surprised with a bloody death even in the act of God's service—'But Jesus answered, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,' Luk 13:1-3. And Christ confirmeth it by another parallel to it, of the men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell: Luk 13:4-5, 'Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Doubtless there are many fifties in London whose habitations are laid desolate, who were more righteous than many of those whose houses have escaped the consuming flames. Judgments many times begin at the house of God: the hand of God is many times heaviest upon the holiest of people, 1Pe 4:17; Eze 9:6. Job was stripped of all his earthly comforts, and set upon a dunghill to scrape his sores with potsherds, Job 1:1-22; and yet Job had not at that time his fellow in all the east country for a man fearing God and eschewing evil. Job was a perfect, peerless man, and yet had his habitation laid in ashes, and his substance destroyed, when his neighbours round about him enjoyed their all without disturbance. Doubtless many of them whose houses are turned into a ruinous heap were good people—people of unblamable lives, people of exemplary lives, yea, earthly angels, if compared with many of those who have escaped the fiery rod. Many have drunk deep of this cup of wrath, who are a people of his choicest love; and therefore do not judge all them to be greater sinners than yourselves that have not escaped the fiery rod as well as yourselves. You who have escaped the consuming flames should make other men's lashes your lessons, and their burnings your warnings. You should not so much eye what others have suffered, as what yourselves have deserved. But,

[3.] Thirdly, It concerns you to be much in blessing of God that your habitations are standing, when others' habitations are laid desolate round about you. But here look that your thankfulness is, (1.) Real; (2.) Great; (3.) Cordial; (4.) Practical; and, (5.) Constant. No thankfulness below such a thankfulness will become such whose habitations are standing monuments of God's free mercy. I have largely pressed this duty before, and therefore a touch here must suffice. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Be not secure: do not say, 'The bitterness of death is past,' as Agag did when he came before Samuel, stately and haughtily, with the garb and gait of a king, 1Sa 15:32. Many times, when wicked men are in the greatest security, they are then nearest the highest pitch of misery. Is there not guilt enough upon all your hearts, and upon all your habitations, to expose them to as great a desolation as London lies under? Ans. Yes, yes. Why, then, do not you get off this guilt by frequent exercises of faith in the blood of Christ, or else prepare to drink of the same cup that London hath drunk of, or of a worse? Ponder seriously and frequently upon these scriptures: Isa 51:17, 'Awake, awake, stand, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury: thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.' Isa 51:22, 'Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury;

thou shalt no more drink it again.' Isa 51:23, 'But I will put it into the hands of them that afflict thee: which have said to thy soul, Bow down that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.' Jer 25:15, 'For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me, Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.' Jer 25:17, 'Then took I the cup at the Lord's hands, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me.' Jer 25:18, 'To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse, as it is this day.' Jer 25:28, 'And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink.' Jer 25:29, 'For lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts.' When Jerusalem hath drunk of the cup, if God be God, the nations round shall certainly drink of it. God hath begun with London: poor London hath drunk deeply of the cup of God's fury; and therefore let the nations round repent, or prepare to drink of London's cup. Most of those sins that bring the fiery rod, if not all, are to be found in all the great cities of the world. And therefore let all the great cities in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, England, Ireland, Scotland, &c., take warning by London's desolation, and prepare to meet the Lord in the way of his fury: let them cease from doing evil, and learn to do well: let them repent in dust and ashes, lest they are laid in dust and ashes. Let them break off their sins, lest God throws down their walls and habitations by furious and devouring flames. Let all those whose habitations are still standing remember that the same sins, the same wrath, and the same malicious hands that has laid so many thousand habitations desolate, can lay theirs also desolate, except they reform and turn to the Most High.

[5.] Fifthly, It highly concerns you whose houses are standing monuments of God's mercy, to shew much love, bowels, pity, and compassion to those who are burnt up and turned out of all: who are houseless, harbourless, and penniless this day, Gen 18:1-33; Psa 102:13; 2Co 11:29. God takes it well at our hands when we pity those whom he thinks meet to punish. One of God's great ends in punishing of some is to stir up pity and compassion in others towards them. It should melt your hearts to see other men's substances melted in the flames. God hath threatened an evil, an only evil, without the least mixture of mercy, to such as shew no mercy to those in misery, Obadiah 1:12-13; Jas 2:13. Who ever have beheld London in its former prosperity and glory, that cannot lament to see London laid desolate? The ashes of London seems to cry out, Have pity upon me, O my friends! Job 6:14. They that will not lament upon the burnt citizens as the greatest objects of their pity, may one day be engulfed under the greatest misery. He was a Nabal, a sapless fellow, who shut up all bowels of pity against David in his misery, 1Sa 25:10-11. They were cursed Edomites who did behold the ruin of Zion and not mourn over it, Psa 137:6-8. Let all burnt citizens remember, that usually God pities them most whom men pities least; but burnt citizens are not to be mocked or menaced, but mourned over.

[6.] Sixthly, It highly concerns you whose houses are standing monuments of God's mercy, to lift up a prayer for all those as are fallen under this heavy judgment of fire, Num 11:1-3; 2Ki 19:4. When you are in the mount, be sure you bear the sad condition of the burnt citizens upon your hearts: Neh 1:3, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the

gates thereof are burnt with fire.' Well, what doth Nehemiah do? Ans. He lifts up a prayer for them, Neh 1:5-11. O sirs, your prayers must not be pent or confined to your own private interests, but extended to the benefit of all God's suffering servants. Philo the Jew, discoursing of Aaron's ephod, which he put on when he went to pray, saith it was a representation of the whole world, having in it all colours, to represent the condition of all states of all people whatsoever. It is brave, when we are in the mount, to bear the conditions of others upon our hearts, as well as our own, especially theirs whom the hand of the Lord hath severely reached. The best of men have been much in prayer for others; witness Moses, David, Job, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, Rom 1:9; 2Ti 1:3. And it is very observable that our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our great pattern, was very much in this noble work, for you shall find in John 17:1-26 that he puts up but one petition for himself, in ver. 1, which petition is repeated again in John 17:5. And all the rest of his time he spent in praying both for the converted and unconverted. Now shall our Lord Jesus Christ put up many requests for others and but one for himself, and shall we put up all our requests for ourselves and not one for others? Among the Persians, he that offered sacrifice prayed for all his countrymen. These Persians will one day rise in judgment against many who are called Christians, and yet make no conscience of lifting up a prayer for those that are under the afflicting hand of God. He that prayeth for himself and not for others, is fitly compared by some to a hedgehog, who laps himself within his own soft down, and turns his bristles to all the world besides. The Jews have a saying, 'That since the destruction of Jerusalem, the door of prayer hath been shut up.' Oh that we had not cause to fear that, since the burning of London, the door of prayer both for ourselves and one another hath been too much shut amongst us! Oh that all you whose habitations are standing, would seriously consider—

(1.) That none need prayer more than the burnt citizens.

(2.) You do not know how soon their case may be yours; the same hand or hands that hath made them desolate, may make you desolate also.

(3.) Else what do you more than others? Mat 5:47.

(4.) To pity and pray for those that are in misery, is honourable and commendable.

(5.) It is one of the most compendious ways in the world to prevent all those calamities and miseries that now you fear, and that you think you shall shortly feel.

(6.) To lift up a prayer for those whose sufferings have been sore, is no costly nor chargeable duty, and therefore buckle to it. But,

[7.] Seventhly, It highly concerns you whose houses are standing monuments of God's mercy, seriously to consider that some men's escaping of very great judgments is not properly a preservation, but a reservation to some greater destruction, Gen 14:1-24 and Gen 19:1-38 compared; Exo 14:28; 1Ki 19:1-21. Witness those kings who escaped the edge of the sword, and were afterwards destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven; and witness Pharaoh, who escaped all the ten plagues of Egypt in order to his being buried with his host in the Red Sea. And witness Sennacherib, who escaped the sword of the destroying angel in order to his falling by the swords of his own sons. Upon what discontentment his sons rose up to slay him is uncertain. Some say, [Castalion,] it was because he preferred their younger brother Esharhaddon to the kingdom, who was the last of the Assyrian monarchs; for after him the monarchy was translated from the

Assyrians to the Babylonians. R. Solomon, as Lyra cites him, saith that the great men of the country having lost each one his son, brother, or friend, in that expedition against Jerusalem, were so provoked that they meant to destroy him, which he hearing, fled to the idol's temple, and prayed and vowed that if his god would deliver him from this danger, he would give these two sons for sacrifice to him; then they hearing of this came and slew him there. I shall leave you to your choice whether you will give credit to this relation, or look upon it as a rabbinical invention. In this judgment that fell upon Sennacherib there are these things remarkable:—

[1.] That he should see so great and well prepared an army so suddenly destroyed, Isa 37:36.

[2.] That the storm should mainly fall upon the great ones of his army: 2Ch 32:22, 'And the Lord sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria.' From whence we may easily gather that some of the weaker sort, some of the refuse of the army, were spared—the prime men and great officers of his army being only smitten; upon which account the king and his ragged regiments became contemptible.

[3.] That he should be forced to fly into his own country with shame and contempt; his general and great officers being destroyed, he had no heart to keep the field, having none to order the battle; and the dread and terror of the Lord and his judgments abiding upon him and his army, he provides for his own safety by fleeing home with his routed, scattered troops.

[4.] That himself should be slain, and that in the temple of his idol, and in the very act of his idolatry, and that by his own sons that came out of his own bowels, as the Holy Ghost observes, 2Ch 32:21, 'And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.' Certainly this was a far greater judgment than if he had fallen by the sword of the destroying angel. And witness those very persons who escaped pestilence, were now burnt in the very flames, as well as their houses and estates. O sirs, though you have escaped the burning flames, yet you do not know what other judgments you may be reserved to; and therefore be not secure, but be wakeful and watchful, and provide for the worst. Unexpected judgments many times seize upon persons, and slay them, as the soldier slew Archimedes, whilst he was busy in drawing lines in the dust. Take heed of saying, surely the worst is past.

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Do not rejoice in the fiery calamity that hath passed upon others: do not glory in your neighbours' ruins. The fire-fly leaps and dances in the fire; and so do many wicked men rejoice in the sufferings of others, Pro 24:17-18. Such as rejoice in the sufferings of others, are sick of the devil's disease; but from that disease the Lord deliver all your souls! It is sad to insult over those whom God hath humbled; it is high wickedness to triumph over those to whom God hath given a cup of astonishment to drink. Such as make the desolations of their neighbours to be the matter either of their secret repast or open exultation, such may fear that the very dregs of divine wrath is reserved for them. It is bad playing upon the harp, because others have been put to hang their harps upon the willows. We must not pray with him in the tragedy, that it may rain calamities; nor with Clemens his Gnostic, 'Give me calamities that I may glory in them.' There cannot be a greater evidence of a wicked heart than for a man to be merry because others are in misery. So without repentance such may one day dance in infernal flames, who have sung and danced at the remembrance of London's flames: Pro 17:5, 'He that is glad at calamities,' that is, at the calamities of others, 'shall not be unpunished.' If God be God, such as congratulate our

miseries, instead of condoling them, shall be sure to be punished with the worst of punishments; for such do not only sin against the law of grace, but also against the very law of nature—the law of nature teaching men to sympathise with those that are in misery, and not to rejoice over them because of their miseries. O sirs, do not make others' mourning your music, do not make others' tears your wine, as you would not be made drunk at last with the wine of astonishment.

the

GLORIOUS DAY of the SAINTS' APPEARANCE

NOTE For notices of Rainsborough—whose 'Funeral Sermon' composes the 'Glorious Day of the Saints' Appearance'—see our Memoir, Vol. I. pp. 30, 31. We there state that certain contemporary broad-sheets might be given here; but on re-examining them, they prove such poor doggerel as to be unworthy of reprint. The curious in such out-of-the-way literature will find them in the British Museum. In that posthumous tractate of John Vicars, 'Dagon Demolished: or, Twenty Admirable Examples of God's severe Justice and Displeasure against the subscribers of the late Engagement against our Lawfull Sovereign, King Charles the Second, and the whole House of Peers,'.... [1660, 4to,] we have Rainsborough as one of the 'Examples,' as follows:—'Collonel Rainsborow, a mighty engager, and prime stickler for the power at Westminster, a desperate header of the Levellers, and Admiral of the Navy at Sea, was suddenly also assaulted by a company of cavaliers at Pomfract town, in Yorkshire, in an inne, and there murdered by them,' [p. 10.] The mistake as to the scene of the crime is only one of many blunders of all sorts; 'Pontefract' was the town whence the royalist murderers came. The item concerning Rainsborough as 'Admiral at Sea' confirms our conjecture that Brooks's sea-services were probably under him. See Memoir, as above. The title-page is given below.*—G.

* THE Glorious day of the SAINTS Appearance;

Calling for A glorious conversation from all Believers.

Delivered in a Sermon By THOMAS BROOKS, Preacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles at the interment of the Corps of that renowned Commander, Colonell Thomas Rainsborough Who was treacherously murdered on the Lords day in the morning at Doncaster, October 29. 1648. and honourably interred the 14th of November following, in the Chappell at Wapping neare London.

Isa 26:19.

Thy dead men shall live (together with) my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing yee that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth her dead.

2Pe 3:14.

Wherefore (beloved) seeing that yee look for such things, be diligent that yee may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

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[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Right Honourable Thomas, Lord Fairfax, Lord General of all the Parliament's Forces in England; such honour and happiness as is promised to all that love and honour the Lord Jesus.

I purpose not, Right Honourable, to insinuate myself or my poor endeavours into your favour by fine words and feigned commendations of your virtues. A sincere heart abhors it, and a wise heart doth both suspect that art, and account it base. Right Honourable, when I preached upon this subject of the saints glorious appearance at the last, He that knows all hearts and thoughts, knows that I had not the least thought to put it to the press. And that partly because the meditations following were not the meditations of a week, no, nor of two days, but of some few hours—I having but short warning to provide, and other things falling in within the compass of that short time that did divert my thoughts some other ways; but mainly because of that little little worth that is in it. And yet, Right Honourable, the intentions of some to put it to the press, in case I would not consent to have it printed—by which means truth and myself might have been co-partners in suffering—and the strong importunity of many precious souls, hath borne me down and subdued me to them. They besieged me so strongly that they have taken away this little thing, which they are pleased to call [a] good prize; but it will be well if they be not mistaken. I shall look upon it as free grace and mercy to them and me, if they, having made a prey of it, find it worth their having. I stood out against them, not because I prized it, but because I thought it not good enough for them. But since it is fallen into their hands, my desire is, that the rich blessing of God may so accompany it, as that it may reach their hearts, and be better to them than the choicest riches of this world.

Now may it please your Excellency, the reasons why I have gladly taken the occasion to make honourable mention of your name, are three:—

First, Because the sense of your great worth has wheeled my thoughts in this kind towards you.

Secondly, That I might testify not only to your Honour, but to all the world, my thankful remembrance and due acknowledgment of your Lordship's undeserved respect towards me.

Thirdly, Because the matter doth relate to the glorious appearing of one of England's worthies, with the rest of the saints, to one whom your Excellency did dearly love, highly prize, and greatly honour. My noble Lord, I shall much rejoice if this poor mite may in any measure help forward your faith and joy in the Lord Jesus: which that it may, I shall humbly supplicate the throne of grace. My Lord, this is your greatest honour, that you account the opportunities of service for God and his people your greatest honour upon earth: that your Honour hath appeared, in the darkest night and in the greatest storms, for the honour, the safety, the sound peace and liberty of the saints and this kingdom—and that notwithstanding all the discouragements your Excellency hath met with, through the neutrality, apostasy, and treachery of men, high and low, in this kingdom. Ah! my Lord, what a mercy is this, that the true nobility of your Lordship's spirit, scorning such baseness, hath delivered you from those checks, wounds, and lashes of conscience which those forenamed wretches lie under, and from that shame and confusion of face which hath already begun to seize upon them here, but shall more fully and dreadfully seize on them in the great day of account, when the books shall be opened, and all the treachery and baseness to enslave the saints and this kingdom shall be discovered! My noble Lord, through the glorious presence of God with you, you

have done gloriously in endeavouring the full rescue of the people of God from the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, who have left no stone unturned, that their lusts and will upon the people of God might be satisfied. My Lord, as you have pleaded the cause of the people of God, and as you have appeared for them, do so still: for the Lord will side with those that side with his saints, and they that seek their lives seek yours also. But the comfort is, God will make Jerusalem 'a cup of poison unto all the people round about:' he will make Jerusalem 'a burdensome stone: and all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth gather together against it,' Zec 12:2-3. My noble Lord, for the great things you have already done for this kingdom, the high praises of God are in the mouths of the saints, and the children unborn shall bless you, and bless God for you. And when the name of tyrants, malignants, neuters, and apostates shall rot, the memorial of your name shall be for ever precious among the 'precious sons of Zion.' And that your Excellency may do yet more and more gloriously, the breathing and desire of my soul to God for your Lordship is, that the Lord would take up your spirit into such sweet and full enjoyment of himself and of that glory above, that may enable you divinely to trample upon all those things that may anyway hinder you from solacing and delighting your soul in the love, light, and sweetness that is in the bosom of Christ; that the Lord will take you by the hand, whenever you are in the dark, and lead out your spirit in such ways that may be for the honour of his name, for the joy of his people, and for the real happiness and welfare of this kingdom. That in all your hours of temptation you may find the power of the lively prayers of the saints—in which and in whose affection you have as great a share as any mortal that breathes—strengthening and raising you above them all. That no weapon nor device nor counsel that is formed against you may prosper; that the eternal God will be your refuge, and that under you may be his everlasting arms; that your soul may be swallowed up in the sweet enjoyment of God, that so every bitter may be made sweet unto you, and that your last days may be your best; that the longer you live, the more glorious for God and his people you may act; that God will 'guide you by his counsel here, and after all receive you to glory.' My Lord, you know that God doth not 'despise the day of small things;' and I believe that the fear of the great God is so strong upon your Lordship's spirit that your Honour will not. I humbly crave your Excellency, and all others that shall read this sermon, to overlook the mistakes of the printer, I having no time to wait upon the press to correct what haply may be found amiss. The perusal and acceptance of what I here present in love and out of a due respect unto your Excellency, I submit to your wisdom, and humbly take my leave, remaining your Lordship's, in all humble and due observance,

Thomas Brooks.

CHRIST IS THE LIFE OF BELIEVERS When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.—Col 3:4. The apostle, in the verse before, tells them that their 'life is hid with Christ in God.' These saints might object: but when shall that hidden life be discovered? when shall that life of glory be manifested? He answers in the text: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' The words do speak out the time when the glorious life of believers shall be manifested, and that is, when Christ shall appear in glory. I have in some other place observed from these words this point—namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the life of believers.

'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear.' Life here is, by a metonymy, put for the author of life.

We have shewed that Jesus Christ, he is first the author of a believer's spiritual life. In the 14th of John, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' (John 14:6.)

Secondly, Jesus Christ, he is the matter of a believer's spiritual life: in John 6:48, 'I am the bread of life.' The original hath it more elegantly, ἄγω ἐμὶ μέτρος τῆς ζωῆς, 'I am the bread of that life,' that is, of that spiritual life of which before the Lord Jesus Christ had spoken.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is the exerciser and actor of the spiritual life of believers: John 15:5, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' The original is, χωρὶς μου, seorsim a me; [Calvin, Cameron, &c.] separate from me, or apart from me, ye can do, &c.

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus Christ, he is the strengthener and the cherisher of a believer's spiritual life, Psa 138:3, 'In the day when I cried, thou didst answer me, and strengthen me with strength in my soul.'

Lastly, The Lord Jesus Christ, he is the completer, he is the finisher of the spiritual life of a saint, Heb 12:2; Php 1:6. We have opened this point, and have made several uses of it. There were one or two things that we could not reach nor speak to when we treated upon this subject; I will only mention them, and so I pass to that special point that I intend to speak to at this time. Is the Lord Jesus Christ a believer's life? To pass by what we have further spoken upon this point—this same, by way of use, doth serve to bespeak all believers not to repent of anything they have done, or suffered, or lost, for the Lord Jesus. Oh, is the Lord Jesus Christ a believer's life? Why, then, let no believer be disquieted, nor overwhelmed and dejected, for any loss or for any sorrow or suffering that he meets with for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. What a base and unworthy spirit is it for a man to be troubled and disquieted in himself for anything that he shall do or suffer for his own natural life! Oh, Jesus Christ is thy life; do not say this mercy is too dear for Christ, nor that comfort is too great for Christ. Christ is the life of a believer: what wilt thou not do for thy life? The devil hit right when he said, 'Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.' Oh, what should a man then do for Jesus Christ, who is his life! You noble hearts whose particular God hath come near in this sad loss, remember this, that Christ is a believer's life; Christ is that glorious champion's life. Therefore be not overwhelmed, for doubtless he is now triumphing in the love, in the light, in the goodness, and in the glory of him who is his life. Let the sense of this sad loss kindly affect you, but let it not discourage you.

But, secondly, If the Lord Jesus Christ be a believer's life, then this serves to bespeak all believers highly to prize the Lord Jesus. Oh, it is this Christ that is thy life; it is not thy husband, it is not thy child, it is not this or that thing; neither is it this ordinance or that that is a believer's life. No; it is the Lord Jesus Christ that is the author, that is the matter, that is the exerciser, that is the strengthener that is the completer, of a believer's life. You prize great ones; the Lord Jesus Christ is great—he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. You prize others for their wisdom and knowledge: the Lord Jesus hath in himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col 2:3. You prize others for their beauty: the Lord Jesus Christ is the beautifulest of ten thousand, Song of Solomon 5:10. You prize others for their usefulness: the Lord Jesus Christ is the right hand of a believer, without which he can do nothing. The believer may say of Christ as the philosopher said of the heavens, Tolle cœlum, nullus ero—Take away the heavens, and I shall be nobody; so take away Jesus Christ, and a believer is nobody—nobody to perform any action, nobody to bear any affliction, nobody to conquer corruption, nobody to withstand temptation, nobody to improve mercies, nor nobody to joy

in others' grace. Oh, prize Jesus Christ!

Again, Consider the Lord Jesus Christ doth highly prize you; you are as the apple of his eye; he accounts you his fulness; you are his jewels; therefore prize him who sets such a high price on you. But I hasten to what I intend— In the last place, Remember a Christ highly prized will be Christ gloriously obeyed. As men prize the Lord Jesus Christ, so they will obey him. The great reason why Jesus Christ is no more obeyed, is because he is no more prized. Men look upon him as a person of no worth, no dignity, no glory; they make slight of him, and that is the reason they are so poor in their obedience to him. Oh, if the sons of men did but more divinely prize Christ, they would more purely, and more fully, and more constantly obey him. Let this bespeak all your hearts highly to prize the Lord Jesus, who is your life. But I shall pass from this, to that point that in order to this occasion I shall now speak to: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye appear also with him in glory.' The observation that I shall speak to at this time is, that believers shall at last appear glorious.

It is a very choice point, and a useful point, in order to the present providence. I shall not be long in the doctrinal part, because the application is that that I have my eye most upon. The scriptures that speak of this truth I will but name them; at your leisure you may read them: Jdg 15:14; 1Co 15:43-44, 1Co 15:51-55; 1Th 4:13, seq.; Mat 19:26-28. These scriptures clearly speak out this truth, that the people of God shall at last appear glorious. The reasons of this point, why they shall appear glorious, are these as follow. They shall appear glorious;—

1. First of all, because that day is a day of solemnity; it is the marriage-day of the Lamb. I may allude to that Rev 19:6-8. It is true, believers in this life, they are spiritually married to the Lord Jesus; but this marriage is not celebrated till this day, when the saints shall appear in their glory. God the Father hath put off the celebration of this glorious marriage to this last day, when believers' mourning weeds shall be taken off, and their glorious robes shall be put on; when God himself shall, as a Father, be more fully and gloriously present among all his children; whenas he shall have all his attendants visible, I mean his angels, which now are not visible, in that spiritual marriage between his Son and believers.

2. A second reason that believers at last shall appear glorious, is this, because they shall all appear at the last as kings crowned. Here believers are kings elected, but at that last day they shall all appear as kings crowned. Here believers have a crown in reversion, but at the last they shall have a crown in possession; the Lord will set it upon their heads: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me'—the Greek word **■ποκειται**, is 'safely laid up'—'a crown of glory which he shall give me at that day.' I have now, saith he, a crown in reversion; but at that day I shall have it in possession; then it shall be set upon my head, and then angels and devils and murderers shall say, 'Lo! here is the man that God is pleased to honour.'

3. Then a third reason why believers at the last shall appear glorious, is for the terror and the horror of all ungodly wretches that have opposed, persecuted, and murdered them. They shall appear glorious for the greater torment of such ungodly souls. Oh, there is nothing that will make sinners in that great day more to tear their hair, to beat their breasts, to wring their hands, and to gnaw their own hearts, than this, when they shall behold those advanced and those appearing in their glory, whom they have slighted, and despised, and most treacherously murdered, here

below. I doubt not but there are some base, unworthy spirits here; but let them know that there is a day coming when the saints shall appear in glory, and then the mangled ones and this thrice-worthy champion shall appear among the rest, to the terror, horror, and confusion of these murderous wretches that have brought the guilt of his blood upon them. It will be with you and with all ungodly wretches as it was with Haman: he, like an ungodly wretch, had plotted and contrived the destruction of the Jews; he had sold them, as it were, to bondage, tyranny, and slavery; but the Lord wheels things gloriously about, and Haman comes to the king, (Est 6:1-14.): saith the king to him, 'What shall be done to the man whom the king is pleased to honour?' Saith he, 'Let the king's horse be brought, and glorious robes put on him, and let the chief nobles of the kingdom lead him and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king is pleased to honour.' 'Go,' saith the king, 'and do thus to Mordecai.' But mark, (Est 6:11), 'Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour; but Haman hasted to his house, mourning and having his head covered.' This is but an emblem of the carriage of wicked men, when they shall behold the saints of God, his glorious worthy ones, in their glory at this great day. Then shall they, with Haman, have their heads covered, which was a sign of shame and confusion of face. And it will be with all such ungodly wretches as it was with Belshazzar: Dan 5:5-6, 'In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.' Just thus shall it be with ungodly wretches, that oppose and murder and destroy the righteous ones. Oh! when they shall see them in glory—as when he saw the handwriting, his countenance was changed, his thoughts were troubled, his loins were loosed, and his knees dashed against one another—thus shall it be when the saints shall appear in glory: therefore they at last shall appear glorious, to the terror, horror, and inexpressible confusion of all ungodly, bloody wretches.

4. A fourth reason why they shall appear glorious at last, is, because their glorious appearance at the last will make much for the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus. The more glorious the body is, the more it makes for the glory of the head: the more glorious the bride is, the more it makes for the glory of the bridegroom: for the glory of his power, wisdom, fulness, and goodness; and therefore they shall appear glorious.

5. Then, again, they shall appear glorious at the last day, that there may be some suitableness between the head and the members. Oh, what an uncomely thing would it be to see the head to be all of fine gold, and the hands of iron, and the feet of clay! What an uncomely thing would it be to see the bridegroom in all his glorious apparel, and the bride in her rags, or her mourning weeds! The Lord will have it so, that his people at last shall appear glorious, that they may be suitable to their glorious head, unto their precious bridegroom.

It is true, when Christ came first, he came clothed with flesh, and was looked upon as one that had no form nor comeliness nor beauty, that men should desire him, Isa 53:2-3. And such a state was the church in to whom he came. Oh! but now when he shall appear 'the second time, without sin, to salvation,' then he shall appear glorious; and so shall all his saints, that there may be a suitableness between the members and the head, between the bride and bridegroom.

6. And then, again, another reason why believers shall appear glorious, is, because that is the very time wherein the most wicked shall justify the goodness and mercy of God in his dealings towards his own people. Oh, here many say with those in Job 21:15, 'What profit is there in serving of God?' Who would be as those men are, to carry their lives in their hands? Who would run through so many miseries; and all for others? 'What profit is there in honouring of God?' Mal 3:14. It is a strong affirmation that there is no profit. They are ready to say, when they look upon the sorrows, miseries, and evils that attend the saints in this wilderness, that it is madness and folly to walk holily as they walk, and to do righteously as they do. Isa 59:15, 'Truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey,' or a proverb, as the original hath it. Oh, the world accounts them a company of mad, foolish people that refrain from evil. But God will have his people at last appear glorious, that the mouths of ungodly wretches may be stopped, that they may justify God in his goodness and mercy towards his own people. When they shall see those that they accounted monsters and wonders of the world, men not worthy to live in the world, when they shall see crowns set on their heads, and glorious robes put on their backs, oh how will ungodly men gnash teeth, and say, Oh! we thought them fools and madmen, that thus waited on God, and walked with God; but now we see ourselves the only fools, the only mad ones, that have turned our backs on God, and kicked at God, and that have said, 'There is no profit in serving of God.' Therefore the saints shall appear glorious at the last.

7. Then, the last reason why they shall appear glorious, is, because they shall be employed about glorious work: 1Co 6:2-3, 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' Nay, he goes higher, 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the angels?' There is a day coming when the saints shall judge the world. They shall be employed in a glorious work. Therefore they shall appear glorious; for the work in which they shall be employed shall be glorious. They shall sit as so many fellow-judges with the Lord Jesus Christ, to say Amen to the righteous sentence that Christ shall pass upon all treacherous and bloody murderers. O ungodly souls, the day is coming when those that now you have persecuted, murdered, and destroyed, they shall sit upon thrones and shall judge you; they shall say Amen to that glorious sentence that Christ at the last day shall pass upon you. There is a day coming when all those that have rejoiced in the fall of this worthy, and those treacherous wretches that had a hand in this unparalleled butchery, when they shall hold up their hands at the bar of God's tribunal. There is a day a-coming when the saints shall appear glorious, and this worthy among the rest, to pass a righteous sentence upon such unrighteous, bloody wretches. That is another reason why they shall appear in glory, because they shall be employed in a glorious service, in judging the wicked world, however they have been scoffed at and despised here. The use of the point is the main thing I shall speak to. Is it so that the saints at last shall appear glorious?

1. First, This serves to bespeak the people of God to be glorious. Oh that you would strive to be glorious now, who at last shall appear so glorious! Oh that your words might be more glorious, that your thoughts of God might be more glorious, that your conversations might be more glorious, that your actings towards God and man might be more glorious! The day is coming, O blessed souls, when as you shall appear glorious! Oh that you would labour now to shine in glory, who at the last shall transcend the sun in glory! But I shall hasten to that which I chiefly intend, and that is this: Is it so that believers at last shall appear glorious? Then,

2. Second, This serves to bespeak all believers to do gloriously whiles you are here, for you shall appear glorious. In this I shall endeavour these three things:—

First, To lay down some motives to move you to do gloriously here, who shall appear glorious in heaven.

Secondly, We shall shew when a man may be said to do gloriously.

Thirdly, I shall lay down some directions and helps to enable you while you are here to do gloriously; and so proceed to other things that remain.

1. For the first, to move you to do gloriously, methinks here is a motive, that at last you shall be glorious. But to engage you a little, consider these four or five things to move you to do gloriously:—

[1.] First, Consider the Lord hath done already very gloriously for you; therefore do you gloriously for God. God hath done very gloriously for you. He hath made your ugly inside glorious, and he hath made your ugly outside glorious: Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her raiment is of embroidered gold.' God hath pardoned you gloriously, God hath justified you gloriously, God hath fenced you against corruption gloriously, God hath strengthened you against temptations gloriously, God hath supported you under afflictions gloriously, God hath delivered you from the designs and plots of treacherous, murderous wretches, gloriously and frequently. Oh, how should this engage all Christians to do gloriously for God, that hath already done gloriously for them!

[2.] But then, in the second place, To move you to do gloriously, consider that the greatest part of the world doth basely and wickedly against God; therefore you have the more cause to do gloriously for God: 1Jn 5:19, 'The whole world,' saith he, 'lies in wickedness,' in malignity. The world lies in troublesomeness. The word *πονηρ* signifies a desire, a study and endeavour to work wickedness, a working wickedness; and in such a wickedness the world lies, and the greatest part of the great ones of this world do basely and wickedly against God. Oh the treachery and apostasy, oh the neutrality and impiety, oh the facing about of the great ones of this age! O believers, you had need to do gloriously, for great and small, honourable and base, do treacherously; and therefore this should engage you to do more gloriously. Oh, the more base and vile any are, the more glorious should the saints be!

[3.] Then, in the third place, Consider this, the more gloriously you do for God here, the more glorious you shall be hereafter. Suffering saints for Christ shall have weighty crowns set upon their heads. Murdered saints for Christ shall have double crowns set upon their heads. The more gloriously any man doth for Christ here, the more glorious that man shall be hereafter: 2Co 9:6, 'As a man soweth, so shall he reap. He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth liberally shall reap liberally;' 2Jn 1:8, 'Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.' There is a reward in Scripture, and a full reward. The more glorious any soul is in doing for God here, the more glorious that soul shall be hereafter: Mat 19:27-28, 'We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have? Verily,' saith Christ, 'you that have done this, shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Look, Christians, the more gloriously any man doth for God here, the more comfort and peace and joy that man hath on this side heaven, which is but an earnest of that happiness, of that glorious good

and sweetness that the soul shall have when he shall appear in his glory. It is not the slight Christian, the light, loose, talking Christian, that hath much joy and peace, and the most full discoveries of God here, but the most glorious-doing Christian, the most acting soul; and the more gloriously any man doth for God here, the more joy and peace and comfort he shall have, which is but a pawn of that glorious joy and goodness which at last he shall receive.

[4.] And then, fourthly, To move you to do gloriously for God, you that shall be glorious at the last, consider this, the greatest part of your time you have spent foolishly and in ways of vanity against God. Oh, that time that is behind to spend gloriously, it is very, very little; which should bespeak you to do gloriously for God that little, little time that is allotted you. The apostle hath one argument—1Pe 4:3, 1Pe 4:6-7 compared, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,' &c. 'For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.' He tells them that the greatest part of their time was spent vainly; and in 1Pe 4:7 he tells them that the time behind was short. Upon this consideration he presseth them to do glorious things in the latter part of 1Pe 4:6. But 'live according to God in the spirit,' oh what is that but to live gloriously, to do gloriously?

[5.] Then, lastly, Consider this to move you to do gloriously for God: if you do not gloriously for God, none in the world can do gloriously for God; if you do not, none in the world will. Consider this, you that are believers. Of all persons in the world, you have the greatest cause to do gloriously for God; for God hath done more for you than for all the world besides. You have not only the greatest cause to do gloriously for God, but you have the choicest principles to enable you to do gloriously for God—as knowledge, and wisdom, and power, and faith, and zeal. And as you have the choicest principles, so you have the sweetest experience to engage you to do gloriously for God. How hath God knocked at your doors when he hath passed by the doors of thousands! How hath free grace saluted you, when wrath hath broken forth upon thousands! How hath God dandled you on his knee, when he hath trampled others under his feet! What is this but to engage you to do gloriously for God? If you do not, none in the world will do gloriously. And what a sad thing it is that God should make a world, and not a soul in the world to do gloriously for God, that hath made such a glorious world! So much by way of motive to move you to do gloriously.

2. The second thing I am to speak of is, When a man may be said to do gloriously. Haply some soul may say, We are satisfied that we shall appear glorious at last, and we would do gloriously; but when may a soul be said to do gloriously?

I answer: A soul may be said to do gloriously, first, when their doing lies level with the glorious rule; when men do suitable to a glorious rule. Those thoughts are glorious thoughts that are suitable to a glorious rule, and those words are glorious words that are suitable to a glorious rule, and those actions towards God and man are glorious actions that are suitable to a glorious rule. But this is too general. Therefore, secondly, and more particularly, men do gloriously whenas they do such things that others refuse to do, that others have no heart to do, that others are afraid to do for God. Oh, to do this is to do gloriously. As David, when he engaged with Goliath, he did gloriously; others were afraid to do it, others had no heart to do it. So when men engage for God when others are

afraid to engage, when others dare not engage, they shall lose the smiles of this man, and procure the frowns of that; there is a lion in the way. So men turn off the work. It is too hard, saith one; it is too high, it is too rough, it is too dangerous, say others. Now to do gloriously is to do that that others refuse to do, and that others have not hearts to do. And in this respect this thrice-honoured champion hath done gloriously. The mountains that he hath gone over, the difficulties that he was engaged in, were known to thousands in this kingdom. Many worthies have done worthily for this unworthy kingdom, and this worthy hath excelled many of them. And then, in the third place, men do gloriously when they hold on in the way of God, and in the work of God, notwithstanding all discouragements that befall them. When men serve their generation, notwithstanding the discouragements that do or may befall them, blow high or blow low, rain or shine, let men smile or frown, do what they will against their persons or actions, yet for a soul to hold on and to serve his generation, against all and notwithstanding all the reproaches and dirt and scorn and contempt that is thrown on them, is to hold on in the way of God; this is to do gloriously. Thus God enabled this worthy, and many other worthies in the kingdom, in the House, and in the army, to do gloriously against all discouragements and storms and projects of ungodly wretches. It was the glory of the church: Psa 44:17-19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet we have not dealt falsely with thee; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.' Oh, you have a generation that pretend much for God while they may gain by the bargain honour and riches and great places and the like; but when God brings them through the valley of darkness, that they meet with discouragements and difficulties, they throw away the bucklers, and will be no more for God, but fire about, and prove treacherous to church and kingdom. It was the glory of David, and it was a glorious speech of his in Psa 57:1-11. Saith David, Psa 57:4, 'My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have digged a pit before me.' Mark, what was the courage of this worthy one? He met with discouragements. Doth he grow treacherous, and give back? No: 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.' Macon, that is here rendered 'fixed,' is a Hebrew participle that signifies firm, constant, and established; and he geminates it, 'my heart is firm, constant, and established,' even then when his soul was among lions. He doth not now play the apostate and shake hands with the ways of God. No. But 'my heart is fixed.' Now a man doth gloriously when he keeps to God and his truth, and serves his generation, notwithstanding all discouragements that are thrown upon him.

I need not tell you what discouragements this noble champion met with from malignant pens, spirits, and tongues; but through all God carried out his spirit that he was able to do his master's work and to serve his generation, till he had finished that work that God had for him to do.

It is nothing for a man to serve his generation when he hath wind and tide on his side, and all the encouragements that the heart of man can desire; but it is the glory of a Christian, and then he doth gloriously, to be faithful in his generation against all discouragements. Therefore, honoured commanders and worthy members of the House of Commons, for you to do gloriously is to hold out against discouragements and to serve your generation. Though your soul may be amongst lions, and you live among them that are set on fire, as the psalmist speaks, yet say as he saith in that psalm, 'Our heart is fixed, our heart is fixed in God, we will sing and give praise.' Fixed stars are most useful, and so are fixed souls to church and state.

Then in the fourth place, Men may be said to do gloriously, when the end of their doings is the glory of God and the general good. O Christians, now you do gloriously. Those spirits will never do gloriously that make themselves the end of their actions, that make the advancing of any particular interest the end of their actions. This is not to do gloriously. Parliament-men, and soldiers, and Christians, then do gloriously, when the glory of God and the general good is the end of all their doings. But if it be yourselves, to save your own necks, and to advance your own designs, and to bring in this and that, these are base, unworthy actions, and God will so demonstrate them before angels and men. To do gloriously is to make the glory of God and the general good the end of all your doings. Then you do gloriously indeed, when you can centre and rest in the glory of God and the general good. It is a base and unworthy spirit when men make themselves the end of their actions, and the advancing of such or such a particular interest the end of their actions, and not the glory of God and the general good of his people. And then again, fifthly, Men do gloriously when they rejoice under the sufferings that befall them for Christ: not only to bear sufferings, but to joy under sufferings, to rejoice under all afflictions and troubles that may befall them for Jesus Christ. So the apostle, 2Co 12:10, saith he there, 'I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in afflictions, for Christ.' The original word, $\delta\iota\ \epsilon\delta\omicron\kappa$, that is rendered 'I take pleasure,' is an emphatical word. It signifies the infinite delight and contentment he did take in the afflictions and persecutions that befell him. It is the same word that God the Father useth to express his unexpressible delight in his Son: Mat 3:17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—or rather, as the original has it more elegantly, 'This is that, my Son, that my beloved, in whom I am infinitely delighted and contented.' The same word the apostle useth to express his delight in afflictions and persecutions for Christ. So those in Acts 5:41, 'They went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ.' O Christians, this is to do gloriously, for a man to rejoice that he hath an estate to lay out for Christ, that he hath a life to lay down for Christ, that he hath a tongue to speak for Christ, that he hath a hand to fight for Christ. This is to do gloriously, to rejoice in anything we suffer for Christ, and in all sorts of sufferings and doings for Christ.

Then again, Men do gloriously, mark this, when they appear for the people of God, and side with the people of God, notwithstanding any evil and danger that may befall. Come what come can, yet they will appear for the people of God, and side with the people of God. This is to do gloriously, when come what come can, I will fall in with the saints, and be one with them that are one with God. As Esther, when they were in a sad condition, and Haman had sold them to be butchered and mangled by ungodly wretches: 'Well, I will go to the king,' saith she, though there was a command that none should, 'I will venture my life; if I perish, I perish.' Now she did gloriously. So Nehemiah: 'Shall such a man as I flee?' Shall I desert the saints, and turn my back on the saints? No; I will appear for them, and side with them, I will not desert them. So David's father and his brethren: 1Sa 22:1, 'David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and his father's house heard it, they went thither to him.' They did not stand disputing: we have estates to lose, and if Saul know that we join with David, and have taken part with him, we shall lose our heads, and lose our estates. The politicians of our times are wise: they will say they wish the saints well, but they dare not, they will not side with them. Ah, wretches! God will save his glory and the honour of his name, and will deliver the righteous, and leave such to deliver themselves. God can shift well enough for his honour and for his people, and leave such wretches in a shiftless condition. So good Onesiphorus: Paul speaks of some, 2Ti 1:13-14, &c.,

that played the apostates; 2Ti 1:15, 'This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia are turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.' They played the apostates, and when he was to answer, left him to shift for himself. They would own him when all was clear overhead; but when he was in trouble they fall off. But Onesiphorus, he stands by him, and the apostle commends it for a glorious cause, and commends him in a particular manner to God: 'Oh that God would double his mercy on him; the Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me thou knowest; and he was not ashamed of my chain.' There were base spirits that were ashamed of his chain, that were ashamed to side with and to own Paul; and this world is full of such base spirits. Now this is to do gloriously—for a man to appear and side with the saints, let what will come of it. Thus Moses did very gloriously: Heb 11:25, 'He chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' But ah! Lord, in how few hearts does this brave spirit of Moses breathe!

O noble hearts, would you do gloriously? To do gloriously is to appear for the saints, and to side with the saints, let the issue be what it will. Oh, it is a sad and a base thing in those that have appeared for and sided with the saints, but now face about and prove treacherous, and leave the poor saints to shift for themselves! But it is their comfort that they have a God that will shift for his people and his own glory. And as Mordecai said to Esther, Est 4:14, 'If thou wilt not stir, the Lord will bring deliverance to his people some other way.' So if parliament-men, and those that have power, do not appear and side with the saints, deliverance will come another way; but they and their father's house may perish. And therefore remember to do gloriously is to appear for them; and not to appear for the saints is to betray them, and so it shall be brought in on the day of account.

Then again, in the next place, To do gloriously is to do justice, and that impartially. Then men do gloriously when they do justice impartially upon high and low, honourable and base, father and son, kinsman and brother; and not to dispute, this is a near kinsman, and that is my father, and the other is my brother, and that the one is too great and the other is too mean for justice, this is inglorious. The basest and unworthiest spirits on earth cannot do more basely; there is nothing of the power of the Spirit or heavenly gallantry in such. It is said, Psa 106:30-31, 'Then stood Phinehas, and executed judgment: so the plague was stayed. And that was accounted to him for righteousness to all generations for ever.' Oh this executing of justice impartially, how it makes the names of persons to live from generation to generation! If so be that the powers of this world would have their names immortal, so graven that they should never be wiped out, let them do justice. This is that Phinehas was admired for; it was 'accounted to him for righteousness, to all generations for evermore.' And then, lastly, Men do gloriously when they believe the promise and rest on the promise, notwithstanding that providence seems to cross the promise. It is nothing, it is not to do gloriously, for a man to believe, and to love, and the like, when the promise is made good, when God is a-smiling and in a giving way; but to do gloriously is to believe the promise, to stay upon the promise, when providence in our apprehension crosseth the promise. In this respect, Abraham did very gloriously; he believed the promise though providence seemed to cross the promise. 'I will give thee a son,' saith God. Abraham was old, and Sarah was stricken in years; and yet Abraham believed, and this was such a glorious piety as God hath put it upon record. This faith of Abraham so takes God that he swears with joy, Gen 13:16-17, 'That in blessing I will bless thee.' So it was with Moses: Num 10:29, 'And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the

Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.' Mark, what could he promise in the wilderness, where the Lord exercised those poor wretches with judgment upon judgment, with misery upon misery, and one calamity upon the neck of another? Moses was confident in the promise of God, that God would do Israel good, and he adventured to engage Hobab on that consideration; 'Come, go along with us; the Lord hath spoken good, and we will do thee good.' I am confident, though providence cross the promise, and God seems to be angry, and to chide, and frown, and strike, and destroy, yet he will make good his promise, and 'we will do thee good.' Oh, this is to do gloriously, to believe the promise when providence crosseth it. Do you see heaven frown, and things to work cross to those promises that respects the joy, glory, liberty, and the exaltation of the saints? Doth providence work cross to the promise? now do gloriously, believe the promise, rest in the promise; let heaven and earth meet, devils and men combine; let men play the apostates, and turn neuters, and prove treacherous, I will rest on the promise, suck sweetness from the promise. Though all providences seem to cross it, and heaven seem to work contrary to it, I will say, I will stay upon the promise; this is to do gloriously. So much for the second thing.

Ay, but some souls will say, we see we shall be glorious, and we are willing to do gloriously; and we see reasons why we should do gloriously; but what directions and helps are there that we may do gloriously?

First, If you will do gloriously, there are some things that you must be careful to take heed of.

Secondly, There are others which you must labour to practise.

[1.] If you will do gloriously, seeing hereafter you shall be glorious, in the first place, whatever you do, take heed of unbelief. There is nothing in the world that more hinders men from doing gloriously, than unbelief. All other miscarriages and weaknesses have not such an influence upon the heart, to hinder it from doing gloriously, as unbelief. As it is said of Christ concerning them in Mat 13:58, 'He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.' Unbelief, as it were, tied the hands of Christ—'He could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief.' If men would do glorious things, take heed of that: unbelief ties the tongue; it causeth a damp to fall upon the heart, and binds the hands, that a man hath no tongue to speak for Christ, nor heart to act for Christ, nor hand to strike for Christ. Unbelief spoils all the strength and power by which we should be serviceable to God. What water is to fire, that unbelief is to the soul; therefore as you would do gloriously, take heed of unbelief.

[2.] Secondly, As you must take heed of unbelief, so, if you would do gloriously, consult neither with the tempting nor with the persecuting world. What hinders many men from doing gloriously, but consulting with the tempting or the persecuting world? This hath overthrown many. Nay, what hinders men in our age from doing gloriously? They are consulting with flesh and blood, with the tempting world and the frowning world. This binders men from doing gloriously. I cannot believe but if parliament-men, and others in power and authority, did not look too much upon the tempting world when it smiles and holds forth her beautiful breasts, upon the ugly face of the world when it frowns and threatens, but that they would act more gloriously for God, and for the general good, and for the advancing of the name of the Most High in these days we live in.

[3.] If you would do gloriously, look off from the tempting world: it is a plague and a snare; and look off from the frowning world, it will discourage you; consult not with flesh and blood, with carnal reason. Looking upon the tempting or the frowning world will damp the most gallant spirits in the world, and hinder them from doing any noble service for God or his saints. And therefore, as ever you would do gloriously, look not on the tempting or on the persecuting world; look not upon it when it smiles or when it frowns; but remember you have a God to look at, a Christ to look at, and a crown to look at; that is better than all, that is more than all other things to your souls.

[4.] Then, again, If you would do gloriously, whatever you do, take heed of base, selfish ends, take heed of self-love. There is nothing under heaven that will disable a man more from doing gloriously, than a base spirit of self-love; such a man will never do gloriously. It may be, when he hath the wind and tide on his side, he may do something that vain men may account glorious; but this man will never do that which God and the saints call glorious, and count glorious. That base, selfish spirit, that looks no higher nor no further than self, it will never do gloriously. It may be fit for treachery, neutrality, and apostasy, but never to do gloriously.

Now as you must avoid these things so that you may do gloriously, in the next place,

[1.] First, Labour for internal spiritual knowledge of God. Oh, there is a great deal of notional light in the world! but if men did know God internally, if they did know God more in the mystery and light of the Spirit, if they did know God more from union and communion with God, it were impossible but they should do more gloriously. That is a brave text: Dan 11:32, 'And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupted by flatteries.' Mark the latter words, 'but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.' Oh! take one that knows God internally, mystically, and spiritually, from union, and from being taken into heavenly communion with God, and he will act bravely and strongly for God. Alas! take a Christian that hath merely sucked in notions, and is only able for discourse, but hath no internal experimental knowledge of God, you shall never find him guilty of doing exploits, of doing glorious things for God and his saints. No! 'the people that know God,'—he speaks of the internal, spiritual knowledge of God, of knowledge in the mystery;—and thus to know him will enable a man to do exploits, to do glorious things. Oh, if God would raise up parliament-men, and men in the army, and in the city, and round the kingdom, to more internal knowledge, to more spiritual acquaintance with himself, we should find that they would do abundantly more gloriously. But it is for want of an internal, spiritual knowledge of God that men are treacherous, and base, and unfaithful, and prove apostates, and neuters, and anything. As you would do glorious and honourable things, look to this, that you have an internal knowledge and spiritual acquaintance with God, and this will enable you to do exploits.

And, then, If you would be enabled to do gloriously, in the second place, you should look upon those examples and worthies that have gone before you, and have done gloriously. So the apostle, Heb 12:1, when he would press them to do gloriously, he presseth them into this consideration of those glorious worthies that had gone before: 'Having therefore such a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us,' Heb 12:1. Look to the cloud of witnesses, in Heb 11:1-40; that is another means to help us to do gloriously.

Another is this, If you would do gloriously, then keep your evidences for glory always bright and shining; do not soil your evidences for glory. What made them take joyfully the 'spoiling of their goods,' Heb 10:34, but this, that they knew in themselves that they had in heaven a better and

more enduring substance? When a man's evidence is bright, that he can run and read his title to heaven, his interest in God, and the glory above, then will he be strong to do exploits; this will enable a man to do gloriously.

Then, again, If you would do gloriously, look to faith; give faith scope, give it elbow-room to work. Faith is a noble grace, and will ennoble the soul to do gloriously for God. Faith is that that will carry a man over all difficulties; faith will untie all knots; it will carry a man through the valley of darkness, though it be never so long; and over mountains of difficulties, though they be never so high. Faith will not plead 'there is a lion in the way,' and that such and such men will frown if I do this or that for God and the general good. Faith will carry a man bravely over all. You know that story in Heb 11:1-40; you have several instances of the saints doing gloriously. But what enabled them? It is all along attributed to faith. By the power of faith they did gloriously: they stopped the mouths of lions; they turned to flight the armies of the aliens; they waxed valiant in fight; they refused to be delivered,—and all by the power of faith. Oh! faith will enable men to do gloriously. If parliament-men, and men in the army, and in the city, and round the kingdom, did believe more gloriously, they would do more gloriously for God, in their relations and places, than now they do. It springs from want of faith that things work thus basely. Did men believe more gloriously, things would work more gloriously. Therefore, when things work crossly, blame not so much this or that instrument, but blame thy own unbelieving heart; for glorious faith will see a smiling Father beyond a dark cloud. Though men are at a loss, yet God is not at a loss, says faith; and though the arm of man be weak, His arm is strong, says faith; and though the work be too hard for the arm of flesh, too hard for an army or parliament, it is not too hard for God, says faith. Faith carries a man gloriously through all. If you would do gloriously, abound in faith, let faith have elbow-room. I shall say no more of this. Though there be other directions, I will rather leave them. Is it so, that the saints shall be glorious? Then this serves, in the next place, by way of use, for singular comfort and consolation. Shall the saints at last appear glorious? It speaks singular comfort to all believers, against all the reproaches, and contempt, and scorn that they may meet with in this world. What though you be scorned, and one saith this, and another saith that? Here is your comfort: you shall appear glorious. What though this worthy's body be mangled here and there by bloody butchers? yet this body shall appear glorious at the last. What a singular comfort is it! The apostle makes the same use from the same consideration: 1Th 4:15, 'We that are alive and remain shall not prevent them that sleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. Let the wife comfort herself with these, the brother, the kinsman, the friends of this worthy that now lies in the dust mangled. Oh, comfort yourselves with this consideration, that he shall appear glorious at last, with the rest of the glorious renowned saints! And so this may comfort us against all reproaches, and scorns, and contempts that men throw upon us: and what though the glory of the saints is now hid by prevailing distempers, and afflictions, and poverty? yet here is your comfort, the day is coming when your glory will break out, when your rags shall be taken off, and your glorious robes put on, when God will wipe away all the dirt and filth that hath been thrown on you by vain spirits. Therefore bear up, brave hearts! There is a day coming when you shall appear glorious, and it will be but as a day before that day overtake you.

Then, again, If the saints at the last shall appear glorious, then it bespeaks all, in the last place, to long for that day. You shall at the last appear in glory. Oh then long for that day; cry out with the church, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly:' cry out again with the church in Solomon's Song, 8:14, 'Make haste, my beloved;' or as the original has it, ■■■■ ■■■■■, 'Flee away speedily, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' Will you remember these two things, to engage you to be much in longing for this day, wherein the saints shall appear in glory. Divers things might be said, but I shall reduce all to two things.

Till this day your happiness will not be complete, therefore long for it. Till the saints shall appear glorious, all will be incomplete; your comforts, your graces, your enjoyment of God, and of that glory that he hath provided. Till this glorious day your glory will be incomplete; therefore long for the day wherein all shall be complete.

Secondly, Till then the innocency of the saints shall not be fully cleared: that is another thing. Oh long for that day wherein the saints shall appear in glory, for till then the innocency of the saints shall not be fully cleared. Now I say, the devil and wicked men throw much dirt on them, and reproach and revile them, and what not, and something of that will stick; but let this bespeak all such to long for that day wherein all dirt, scorn, and filth shall be wiped off, wherein God will clear the righteousness, integrity, and innocency of his saints. Therefore seeing the saints shall appear glorious, be not discouraged, however you appear in the world to the eye of men. Now you are strangers, far from your Father's house; but it will be but as a day before the trumpet sound and the angels shall gather you, before the robes of glory shall be put on, and your mourning weeds shall be taken off, and the glorious crowns put on your heads, and your happiness shall be complete. Long for this day; for this will be a day indeed of refreshing from the Lord. I shall say no more to this point, but earnestly desire that God would please to make it take impression on your spirits. The saints shall appear glorious. Oh let it be our glory, while we are here, so to walk as they that expect to appear glorious another day! As for this thrice-honoured champion now in the dust: for his enjoyment of God, from my own experience, being with him both at sea and land, I have abundance of sweetness and satisfaction in my own spirit, which to me exceedingly sweetens so great a loss. I shall not speak of the wife's loss, nor the brother's loss, nor the army's loss; for the loss of this worthy is a loss to the kingdom, and if they are not in a sad, sinful sleep, they will say so. And, indeed, it is with me, I ingenuously confess, as it was with him who, when he was demanded what God was; he desired three days' consideration to give an answer, and when those days were expired, three more; and then he gives this answer, 'That the more he thought of him, the further he was from discovering of him.' The more I think of the gallantry and worth of this champion, the further off I am from discovering his worth. I think he was one of whom this sinful nation was not worthy; he was one of whom this declining parliament was not worthy; he was one of whom those divided, formal, carnal, gospellers was not worthy. He served his generation faithfully, though he died by the hand of treachery. I am fully satisfied, with many more, that he is now triumphing in glory; and it will be but as a day before he shall see his enemies stand at the bar. For my own part, I can truly say that, to the best of my memory and understanding, I have not observed that the hearts of the people of God have been so generally and eminently affected with the loss of any worthy, as with the loss of this worthy; no, not for any worthy that hath fallen since the sword was drawn, though many precious worthies have fallen upon the ground; which strongly speaks out the love of the people of God to him, and their honourable esteem of him. They

honoured him in his life, and they shewed no small respect to him in death. He was a joy to the best, and a terror to the worst of men. But for my part I should rather choose, I ingenuously confess, if it were possible, to weep over him with tears of blood, than to trouble you further with relating his gallant service for the good of this sinful kingdom.

We will cease from saying anything more of him, and sit down satisfied and joying in this, that the day is coming when the saints shall appear glorious; and with that we will refresh and cheer our spirits as with a cordial, that there is a day coming when we with this deceased worthy shall appear glorious. And it will be but as a day before our robes shall be put on our backs, and crowns set on our heads. I have now done; and so shall commend you 'to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified,' [Acts 20:32.] GOD'S DELIGHT in the PROGRESS OF THE UPRIGHT

NOTE The title-page of 'God's Delight' will be found below.* The usual 'order' is prefixed as follows:—'Die Mercurii 30mo Decem. 1648. Ordered by the Commons assembled in Parliament that Sir John Bouchier do from this House give thanks to Mr Brooks for the great pains he took in his sermon preached at Margarets, Westminster, before the House of Commons, upon the day of their public Humiliation last preceding: and that he be desired to print his sermon, wherein he is to have the like privilege in printing of it, as others in the like kind usually have had.

'Henry Elsyng, Cer. Dom. Com.

'I appoint Rapha Harford and Thomas Brewster to print this sermon, 'Thomas Brooks.'

* GOD'S DELIGHT IN THE PROGRESSE OF THE UPRIGHT.

Especially In Magistrates Uprightnesse and constancy in wayes of justice and righteousness in these Apostatizing Times, notwithstanding all discouragements, oppositions, &c.

Presented in a Sermon before the Honorable House of Commons at their last monethly Fast, December 26. 1648. By Thomas Brooks, Preacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles.

Job 17:8-9. The righteous shall hold on in his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Upright men shall be astonished at this, for the innocent shall stirre up himselfe against the Hypocrite.

Num 35:33.

Yee shall not pollute the Land wherein yee are; for blood, it defileth the Land, and the Land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

London,

Printed by M. S. for R. Harford at the Bible in Queen's-head-alley in Paternoster-row, and Thomas Brewster at the West end of Pauls, 1649.

[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Honourable House of Commons in Parliament assembled. This work was too high for me; and, as it is now done by so weak a hand, is too low for so many judicious eyes to look down to. Yet, according to your command, I have published these

notes, which I humbly present to your Honours. They were once in your ear, they are now in your eye, and the Lord ever keep them in your hearts! Solomon bids us 'buy the truth,' but doth not tell us what it must cost, because we must get it though it be never so dear. Multi amant veritatem lucentem, oderunt redarguentem, We should love it both shining and scorching. The desire of my soul is, that you may deal so with those truths which here in all humbleness is presented to you. Oh that we may be all doers of the word, and not hearers only, lest we deceive our own souls! When I stood upon my watch to see what the Lord would say unto me, that I might speak unto you a word in season—or as the Hebrew has it, Pro 25:11, **גנל אפנהו**, gnal ophnau, upon the wheels, i.e., with a due concurrence and observation of all circumstances, of time, place, persons, &c., which are as the wheels upon which our words and speeches should run—He directed me to make this discovery of upright hearts' progress in the ways of God, notwithstanding all afflictions, &c., that do befall them; which gives me hope that God intended to send home into your hearts some light and influence from this truth, to encourage and keep up your spirits against all the opposition which you may find in the cause of God and the kingdom, and to maintain your zeal and forwardness therein, that justice and judgment may run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. If justice do not work the salvation of sinners' souls, yet it will work to the restraining of their sin—the measure of their wickedness will be less. That is a grave speech of Seneca's, Ut nemo pereat, nisi quem perire etiam pereuntis intersit, That none perish but those to whom it is an advantage to perish. And yet, Right Honourable, I desire that justice and clemency may go together. Nero's speech has great praise, who, when he was to subscribe to the death of a man condemned, would say, Utinam nescirem literas, I wish I did not know how to write. Right Honourable, you have the largest opportunities to honour God and to do good to his saints that ever any men had since the world began. God hath laid out works for you, fit for truly noble spirits. You have many precious saints to take care of; use them kindly, and 'the good-will of him that did dwell in the bush shall rest upon you.' Be not exasperated against any of them, by those who are so enraged, that they would have fire to come down from heaven and consume them. I hope there be a generation that will not abuse that liberty that shall be granted them according to the word, but will, in the midst of all their liberties, be faithful servants to peace and concord, according to that which Master Calvin writes to Farel, Nos liberi servi sumus pacis et concordiae. I hope God will arise in you, and cause you to do his work his own way. The Lord God guide your Honours, and give every one of you to act like the angels of God, cheerfully, freely, readily, sincerely, and unweariedly in your generation, that in all your ways Christ may own you, and that all the godly of the land may rise up and call you blessed; and let the blessing of him that was in the bush be upon you and yours for ever; and let all the precious sons of Zion that loves the God of heaven, who is the Saviour of this nation, say Amen.—Honoured and worthy Senators, I am, your Honours' in all humble service for Christ,

Thomas Brooks.

GOD'S DELIGHT IN THE PROGRESS OF THE UPRIGHT Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.—Psa 44:18.

Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curious divisions do rather affect the ear than warm the heart: they do but rack and disjoint the sense of Scripture. And therefore, as he speaks, 2Sa 18:23, 'We will run by the way of the plain.'

‘Our heart is not turned back,’ &c.

These words look to the front and to the rear; they look forward and backward. They look forwards upon the tossed and afflicted estate in which the church was, as you may read from Psa 44:9-17; and they look backward to the broken and persecuted estate of the church, expressed in Psa 44:19-24, ‘Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, and though we be every day as sheep accounted for the slaughter; yet we have not forsaken thee, neither have we dealt falsely in the covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.’

‘Our heart,’ Libbenu. The Hebrew word, לֵב, or Greek, καρδιά, that is rendered ‘heart,’ both in the Old and New Testament, doth signify the understanding, mind, will, affections, conscience, the whole soul. ‘Our heart is not turned back.’ Our understandings and minds are the same as they were in a summer’s day, though now we be in a winter’s storm—though now we be afflicted, tossed, broken, and persecuted; yet notwithstanding, ‘our heart is not turned back’—our mind, will, affections, and conscience, our whole soul, is the same now as before. ‘Our heart is not turned backward, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.’

‘Our heart is not turned back.’ This notes their progress in the ways of well-doing; for the old saying is, Non progredi est regredi, Not to go forward is to go backward. ‘Neither have our steps or our goings declined from thy ways.’ It notes their settled course of walking in the ways of God; and, in short, the sum of all is, though we have been afflicted, tossed, broken and persecuted, yet our hearts have held on in the ways of the Lord, and we have not departed from our God. ‘Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.’

Right Honourable, there is but one observation that I shall speak to this day, and that is this: that doctrine—

Upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal. That is the sum and the scope of this verse here. The church was afflicted, tossed, broken, and persecuted; and yet this is still the burden of the song, ‘Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.’

I judge it a point seasonable in every respect. I shall only eye the scriptures that prove it, and then open it to you. The scriptures that prove it are these: Psa 119:23-24; Jos 24:15; Neh 4:13, Neh 4:17 compared; Mal 3:13-17; 2Co 11:23-30. These scriptures speak out this truth, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal. For the opening of the point, I shall premise these three things:—

First, I shall premise something concerning upright hearts.

Secondly, I shall premise something concerning the ways of God. And,

Thirdly, The reasons why upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements they meet withal.

Concerning upright hearts, I shall only premise these four things:—

1. First, An upright heart hates all sins, even those which he cannot conquer; and he loves all divine truths, even those which he cannot practise. An upright heart, he hates all sin. All sin strikes at God, at his holiness, as well as at an upright man's happiness. It strikes at God's glory, as well as at the soul's comfort; therefore the soul strikes at all. All sins, in the eye of an upright heart, are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus; therefore the soul riseth in arms against all. An upright heart, he looks upon sin to be malum catholicum—A catholic evil. An upright heart, he looks upon sin as that which hath thrown down the most righteous man in the world, as Noah; as that which hath thrown down the best believer in the world, as Abraham; as that which hath thrown down the best king in the world, as David; as that which hath thrown down the best apostle in the world, as Paul. It looks upon sin as that which hath thrown down the strongest, as Samson; and the wisest, as Solomon; and the meekest, as Moses; and the patientest, as Job; and so his soul riseth against it. In Psa 119:104, 'Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.' 'Therefore I hate every false way:' sanethi, from sane. The original word, שָׂנֵא, signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred; to hate so as that nothing will satisfy but the destruction of the thing hated. It is the same Hebrew word that is used to express Absalom's hatred of Amnon for defiling of his sister Tamar, 'My soul hates him.' An unsound heart, a rotten heart, strikes at some sins, and yet falls in with others; he cries down pride and ignorance, and yet falls in with oppression and cruelty; he cries down tyranny and injustice in others, and yet plays the tyrant and unjust one himself. There are men who are blinded by Satan, and he hath them by the hand, and the Lord knows whither he will lead them. And as an upright heart hates all sins, even those he cannot conquer, so an upright soul loves all truths, even those that he cannot practise. Every word of the Lord is just and righteous in the eye of an upright soul; he loves all truth strongly, though he can practise no truth but very weakly. Every word of grace is glorious, every line of grace is very glorious. Truth is homogeneal; where one truth is sweet, there every truth is sweet to an upright soul. In Psa 119:127-128, saith David there, 'I have loved thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold: I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' That is the first thing.

2. Secondly, Concerning upright hearts, I shall premise this: Upright hearts, they serve God, and seek God more for that internal worth and that eternal good that is in him, than for any external good they receive from him. So it was with upright Job. The devil, in Job 1:1-22, would fain charge Job that his heart was not right with God, that God had made a hedge about him, and therefore Job served him. The Lord therefore gives Satan liberty to break down that hedge, that Job's uprightness might appear, and that it might appear to all the world, that Job served God for that internal and eternal worth that was in him—viz., holiness, wisdom, and goodness. Therefore, when that hedge was down, and Job was stripped of all, yet in ver. 21, 'The Lord hath given,' saith he, 'and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.' Oh, upright Job served God for that internal and eternal worth that is in him; and therefore, though all his outward goods were lost, his soul could bless God. But an unsound heart, a rotten heart, serves God and seeks good merely for some external good it hath from him, or expects to receive by him. That is a true saying, *Pauci quærun Deum propter se, sed propter aliud*, Few men seek God for himself, but for some other thing. Like those in Hos 7:14, 'When they howled,' saith God, 'upon their beds, it was for corn, and wine, and oil, and they rebelled against me.' It was not for any internal or eternal worth in me, it was not for that holiness, wisdom, faithfulness, purity, and glory that is in me; but they seek me for loaves, for corn, and wine, and oil, and they rebelled against me.

3. A third thing I shall premise is this, Upright hearts are most exercised and most busied and taken up about the inward man, about the inside, observing that, reforming that, examining that, watching that. An upright heart knows that his soul is Christ's throne, his chamber of presence; and therefore, above all, the upright heart is most diligent to observe that none sit upon that throne but Christ, and that none come into that chamber of presence but Christ, that no sceptre be advanced there but the sceptre of Christ; he is most careful of the inside. In Psa 86:11, 'Incline my heart to fear thy name;' Psa 119:36, 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes;' and so Psa 119:80 and Psa 119:112 of the same psalm.

Now an unsound heart, a rotten heart, is most taken up about the outside,—informing that, and reforming that, and watching of that; but as for the inside, there is no eye cast to see how all stands there. The devil may bear rule; any may come into the soul and domineer and oppose the sceptre of Christ. So an unsound soul is taken up merely about the outside. That same exhortation of Solomon is strong upon an upright heart: Pro 4:23, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.' The original hath it more elegantly, 'Before all, or above all keeping, keep thy heart; for out of it is the goings forth of lives.' This duty that Solomon presseth, is a duty that an upright heart above all endeavours to practise. Above all and before all, he guards his soul; he looks to his inward parts, how he thrives and grows, how he stands God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, and holiness-ward.

4. The last thing I shall premise is, Upright hearts in their constant course are even-carriaged hearts. An upright heart in his constant course is an even-carriaged heart. All the ways of an upright soul are as commentaries one upon another; and look, 'as face answereth face,' as Solomon speaketh, so the ways of an upright heart do one answer another. Christ sits at the stern of the soul, and guides the soul into those ways that are most like to himself: 2Ch 34:2, 'Josiah, he walked in all the ways of the Lord, as his father David did; he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left.' In all his ways he carried himself evenly. But an unsound heart, a rotten heart, is a very uneven-carriaged heart. You shall have one way wherein he walks to speak him out an angel, another to speak him a very sinful man, and a third to speak him a devil. Now he is for God, anon against God; now for justice and righteousness, anon for injustice and unrighteousness. But an upright heart is an even-carriaged heart. Let heaven and earth meet, let trials come, temptations and afflictions come, he keeps his ground, he is an even-carriaged heart. So much concerning the first thing. For the second, concerning the ways of God, I shall briefly premise these five things:—

1. First, The ways of God are righteous ways, the ways of God are blessed ways: Pro 8:20, 'I lead in the way of righteousness, and in the midst of the paths of judgment;' and in the 33d verse of that same chapter, 'Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep thy ways.' The ways of God are blessed ways; they bring in temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings upon all that walk in them. They are righteous ways; they lead to righteousness, to the love of righteousness, to the practice of righteousness, to a delight in righteousness. As for the ways of profaneness, pride, hypocrisy, neutrality, formality, and apostasy, these are none of the ways of God; they are unrighteous ways, cursed ways, and they bring nothing but curses and crosses upon all that walk in them. Those that walk in these ways are nowhere secure, but are every moment liable to the thunderbolts of divine displeasure.

2. And secondly, The ways of God are soul-refreshing ways. Oh, they yield the soul abundance of refreshing and sweetness that walks in them. In Jer 6:16, 'Ask for the old way, the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest,'—■■■■■, margoang, 'ye shall find refreshing to your souls,' as the original hath it. If a man's soul be tired and weary, the ways of the Lord will refresh it; if it be dead and dull, the ways of the Lord will quicken it; if he be fainting, the ways of the Lord will be as a cordial to him.

3. And then, thirdly, The ways of the Lord, as they are soul-refreshing ways, so they are transcendent ways, ways that transcend all other ways. What is darkness to light? What are pebbles to pearls? What is dross to gold? No more are the choicest ways of the creature to the ways of God: Isa 55:8-9, 'My ways are not as your ways, nor my thoughts as your thoughts; but as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my ways above your ways.' What is said of wisdom, Pro 3:15, 'that she is more precious than rubies, and that all the things we can desire are not to be compared to her,' the same may be affirmed of the ways of God. Oh! they are more precious than rubies, and all other ways are not to be compared to them.

4. And then, fourthly, The ways of God are soul-strengthening ways, ways that yield strength to the soul. In Pro 10:29, 'The way of the Lord is strength to the upright,' ('magnos'): from gnazaz, the way of the Lord maketh strong. The original word, ■■■■ signifies to confirm, to make strong. Oh, the ways of the Lord confirm upright hearts, they make upright hearts strong, strong to withstand temptations, strong to conquer corruptions, strong to rejoice under afflictions, strong to perform the most heavenly duties, strong to improve the most spiritual mercies. The ways of the Lord make strong, they confirm such hearts as walk in them.

5. Then, fifthly and lastly, As the ways of the Lord are soul-strengthening ways, so they are afflicted, perplexed, and persecuted ways. Mat 7:14, 'Strait is the gate,' &c. The original word, τεθλιμμένη, signifies perplexed, afflicted, persecuted; and the way is made strait by afflictions and troubles and persecutions. And so in Acts 19:9, 'This way is everywhere evil spoken of;' and in Acts 24:14, 'In the way that you call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.' The ways of God are afflicted, persecuted, and perplexed ways. And so much for the second thing. The third—to make haste to what I chiefly intend—for the reasons why upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that do befall them, are these:—

1. The first is drawn from the nature of a Christian's life, which is a race; and as he that runs a race, if he holds not out, notwithstanding all discouragements, till he comes to the goal, loseth the garland; and as he that faints in wrestling loseth the crown, so do those that hold not out to the end; therefore upright hearts will hold out to the end, notwithstanding all the discouragements they meet with in the ways of God: 1Co 9:24, 'Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the crown? So run, that ye may obtain.' So in Heb 12:1, 'Let us with patience run the race that is set before us.'

2. A second ground of their holding out, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements they meet with in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, is drawn from the glorious promises of reward. For mark, as there is a comforting virtue in the promises, so there is a quickening and an encouraging virtue in all the glorious promises, as to warm the heart, so to raise

and encourage the heart to run the ways of God's commandments, especially such promises as these:—Rev 2:10, 'Satan shall cast some of you into prison: but fear not, but be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life.' That crown is a sure crown, a matchless crown, a glorious crown, a lasting crown: 'I will give you a crown of life;' I that am faithfulness itself, I that am truth itself, I that am goodness itself, I that am power itself, I that have all in heaven and earth at my disposing, I will give thee a crown of life. And Paul, 2Ti 4:8, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' The word that is rendered laid up [■π■κεῖται] signifies safely to lay up: it notes both a designation and a reservation. There is a crown designed and safely kept for me. And so such a promise as that, Rev 3:5, 'He that overcometh shall be arrayed in white: and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess him before my Father, and before his angels.' And in Rev 3:21 of the same chapter, 'He that overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne, as I overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne.' That is another reason from the promises of reward. Promises of reward to the master and mariners, oh, how do they raise up their spirits to go through any storms, to go through many dangers! and so doth the glorious promises of reward that God makes to his; they carry them bravely through all storms.

3. A third reason is, Because of all ways the ways of God are the most honourable ways; therefore upright hearts will hold on in them, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements they meet with. The most renowned and honoured saints that ever breathed on earth, and that are now triumphant in heaven, have walked in those ways of God. The ways of sin are base, reproachful ways; but the ways of God are honourable ways. When a man doth but fancy that the way he walks in is an honourable way, alas! how is his spirit carried on in that way against all opposition that he meets with! Oh, how much more doth the testimony that God gives of his ways, and the encouragements that he gives to his people to hold on in his ways, raise up their spirits to hold on against all discouragements.

4. But fourthly, The principal reason of upright hearts holding on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, is, because they are carried on in the ways of well-doing, and in the ways of God, from spiritual and internal causes, from spiritual principles, from a principle of inward life and spiritual power. It is true, if upright hearts were only carried on from fleshly, carnal, and external causes, they would wheel about, and turn apostates, and be base, and what not. But upright hearts are carried on in the ways of God from inward principles, as in Jer 32:40, 'I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall never depart from me;' and in Eze 36:26-27, 'I will take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in them, and cause them to observe my statutes, and to walk in my ways.' Upright hearts are carried on by an inward principle of fear, faith, and love, and this carries them bravely on against all the discouragements they meet with. In Isa 40:31, 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength like the eagle; they shall run and not be weary,' because they run upon another's legs—viz., the Lord Christ's; 'and they shall walk and not faint,' because they walk in the strength of Christ. That is another reason.

5. The fifth and last reason of their holding on in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the discouragements that befall them, is drawn from the former profit and sweetness that they have found in the ways of God. Oh! upright souls have found by experience the ways of God to be profitable ways indeed, to be the most gainful way that ever souls walked in. Upright hearts can say, We went to prayer at such a time, and we met with Christ answering us. Oh! what a mercy was that! And another time, We went to the word, and we met with Jesus Christ embracing us. Oh!

what a favour was that! And another time, We went to the communion of saints, and we met with Christ warming and inflaming our hearts; and oh, what a heaven was that! as they in Luk 24:32, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us?' Oh! the remembrance of that former sweetness they have found carries them aloft against all discouragements! The kiss that the king gave one, as the story speaks, was more than the golden cup he gave to the other. Oh, the spiritual kisses that the King of kings gives upright souls when he meets them in his ways, carries their souls an-end against all afflictions and oppositions that they meet withal. David saith, in Psa 116:2, 'Because thou hast inclined thine ear to me, therefore will I call on thee as long as I live.' Therefore—wherefore? 'Because thou hast inclined thine ear to me, I will call on thee as long as I live.' In summer season and in winter season, let men smile or frown, I will call upon thee as long as I live. The sweet gain and profit that usurers and mariners have found in such and such ways, doth exceedingly carry their spirits on in those ways, notwithstanding all discouragements, reproaches, and scorns; and so doth the sweetness that upright souls have found in the ways of God. And thus much for the reasons of the point, and for the doctrinal part.

We come now to the use, which is the main thing I have my eye upon at this time.

1. And first, Is it so, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of God and the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that may befall them? Then this, in the first place, serves to shew us that the number of upright hearts are very few; for ah! how few be there that keep close to the ways of God, and hold on in the ways of well-doing, when storms begin to rise! Right Honourable, it is nothing for a man when he hath wind and tide on his side, when there is concurrence of all secondary causes to lift a man up and carry him bravely on; it is nothing to hold on now in the ways of God and the ways of well-doing. Oh, but when a man is tossed and afflicted, broken and persecuted, now to hold on in the ways of well-doing, this is the glory of a Christian; but how few are there that hold out in these seasons! Oh! witness the treachery, witness the apostasy, witness the neutrality of men in our days, that, when storms begins, for fleshly ends wheel about. It shews that the number of upright hearts are very few: but I will not stand on this.

2. Secondly, Is it so, that upright hearts will hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements that befall them? Right Honourable, let me then exhort you first more particularly, and then more generally, to hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements you may meet with. You have begun to fall upon the execution of justice, which is a way wherein God delights to walk, and wherein he delights to see those that are in authority to walk impartially. I shall press this particularly, and then press the point more generally, both upon yourselves and all that hear me.

Now, Right Honourable, in this labour to hold on, you have begun in the Spirit—as to that point—do not end in the flesh, but hold on in the way of well-doing. Justice is called by Aristotle, Hesperus, the glorious star: by another, the sun of the world. Oh let this glorious sun so shine forth, that the best of men may rejoice, and the worst of men may tremble. Take to yourselves, Right Honourable, the glorious resolution of Jerome, who once expressed himself thus: 'If my father should stand before me, and my brethren press about me, and my mother hang upon me, I would throw down my father, and break through my brethren, and trample upon my mother, to cleave to Jesus Christ.' O Right Honourable, take glorious resolutions to yourselves. Though your

fathers may stand before you, and your brethren and friends press about you, though your mothers should hang on you, I mean the nearest relations, throw down the one, and break through the other, and trample upon the third, that your souls may cleave to the way of God, to the ways of justice and righteousness. You know the rule is, *Fiat justitia et ruat mundus*, Let justice be done, though the world be ruined. And that is a true saying, *Odia qui nimium timet regnare nescit*. Oh that upon every worthy member's heart and forehead that which once Chrysostom spake of himself might be written, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin. Oh that this were every member's motto, I fear nothing but sin. I fear not the threats, the rage, the fury, nor the designs and plots of men that are turned into devils: I fear nothing but sin.

Right Honourable, that this may stick, give me leave to propound to your serious thoughts these few considerations:—

1. First, Consider this, when men do execute their just judgment, then God will divert and turn away his judgment from a nation. In *Psa 106:30-31*, 'Then Phinehas stood up and executed judgment, and the plague was stayed,' that not a man died after. When men stand up to execute their just judgment, the Lord will divert and turn away his. There are a company of ignorant sottish people that think that the doing of justice will undo a land, and bring all calamities upon it; whereas there is nothing of more power to divert the judgment of God from a nation than the execution of justice and judgment: *Jer 5:1*, 'Go,' saith God, 'run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see and know and seek in the broad places thereof if you can find a man'—ay, but it is not every man that will do it, but such a man—'that will execute judgment and seek truth,' and I will pardon you. 'If there be but a man that executes judgment and seeks truth, I will pardon you,' saith God, 'I will turn away my wrath.' So in *Eze 22:29-31*, 'The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and vexed the poor and needy; they oppress the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among you' [mark!] 'that might make up the hedge,' alluding to Moses that magistrate—'I sought for a man among you that might make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I might not destroy it; but he could not be found.' And what follows? 'Therefore I poured out my indignation on them, and consumed them with the fire of my wrath; their own way have I recompensed upon their heads,' saith the Lord.

2. Secondly, Your neglect of justice will provoke God to throw all your religious services as dung in your faces: *Isa 1:11*, 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? I am weary of your new moons and your burnt-offerings and your sabbaths; my soul loathes them, they are an abomination to me.' What is the reason? 'Your hands are full of blood,' ver. 15—or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, ■■■■ ■■■■, 'your hands are full of bloods.' The Hebrew word is taken from a ship under full sail: your hands are full of bloods, as the sails of a ship is full of wind. There is the father's blood and the children's blood, and there is the master's blood and the servant's blood, and there is the bond-man's blood and the free-man's blood, and the wife's blood and the widow's blood; your hands are full of blood. Therefore to what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? God throws them as dung in their faces, because they neglected justice. You have a parallel text, *Amo 5:21-24*, 'I hate, I despise your feast-days, I will not smell in your solemn assemblies,' &c. What was the reason? 'Let judgment run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream.' Judgment did not run down, and therefore, saith God, 'I hate, I despise your fasting and prayer, and your feast-days.' Ah, Right Honourable, as you would not have your services thrown as dung in your faces, look that justice and judgment run down as a mighty stream.

3. Thirdly, Consider this, that your execution of justice and judgment will free you from the guilt of other men's sins, and the neglect of justice and judgment will wrap you up in the guilt of other men's sins. When those that are guilty shall be by you sinfully or wilfully acquitted, that shall be charged on your score. When justice is not executed, a land is defiled: Num 35:33-34, 'So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. Defile not, therefore, the land that ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell; for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel.' Oh! Right Honourable, have you not sins enough of your own to awaken you, to startle you, to trouble you, to amaze you, to afflict you, and to humble you? Have you not sins enough of your own to provoke God against you to strike you, to chide you, to wound you, and to lay you low; but will you wrap yourselves up in the guilt of other men's sins? Will you wrap yourselves up in the treachery, and murder, and blood, and cruelty, and tyranny of others? The Lord forbid!

It was an ingenuous acknowledgment of an emperor, who, when one had committed murder, and he was importuned to spare his life, and he did it; suddenly after the same person committed wilful murder again; then there was complaint made to the emperor that he had committed murder twice,—No, saith the emperor, he is guilty of the former only; I am guilty of the latter.

Right Honourable, guilty persons that be by you sinfully acquitted, their sin God will charge upon your account. And therefore as you would not have the guilt of other men's sins upon you, hold on in the way of well-doing: let justice and judgment run down as mighty streams.

4. Fourthly, Right Honourable, consider this, those persons that have neglected the execution of justice upon their implacable enemies, when God has given them into their hands, those God hath left to perish basely and miserably. See it in Ahab, 1Ki 21:1-29 compared with 1Ki 22:23-37. God gives Benhadad into Ahab's hand, in 1Ki 22:40-41, 'Because thou hast let a man go that I had appointed to destruction'—which was not signified to him by any extraordinary revelation, but by that ordinary dispensation,—'Therefore,' saith God, 'thy life shall go for his:' 1Ki 22:31, 'Fight neither against small nor great, but against the king of Israel.' In which fight he lost his life at that time, and so perished miserably. So concerning Saul in 1Sa 15:19, compared with the last of [first] 1Sa 31:3-4. Saul, he spares Agag, and he would shift off the command of the Lord; but for that God shifted him out of his kingdom. When he neglected to do justice upon an implacable enemy, when God had given him into his hands, God left him to perish and fall basely: ver. 26, 'Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee from being king.' The Hebrew word, **וַיִּשְׁמָד**, signifies to reject, to disdain, to cast off. The Lord rejected Saul, and he rejected the Lord; Saul disdained the Lord, and the Lord disdained Saul; he cast off the Lord, and the Lord cast off him. Saul did not do justice, therefore he shall die basely, and perish miserably upon his own sword: as he did, in 1Sa 31:4.

5. Fifthly and lastly, Right Honourable, consider this, that your neglect of justice will exceedingly encourage wicked persons in ways of impiety, Ecc 8:11; and discourage the godly of the nation from doing their duty. Your neglect of justice will encourage wicked persons in the ways of impiety, and hinder the saints from a cheerful and sweet discharge of their duty.

Right Honourable, if you would sit down and study which way you might most encourage the worst of men, and discourage the best, you could not fall upon such another way, as to neglect what God and the nation calls for at your hands. Right Honourable, it is cruelty to the good to spare the

bad: it is cruelty to the sheep and lambs to spare the wolves and lions. You were better a thousand times to set some of those grand malefactors a-mourning, that have caused the kingdom to mourn so many years in garments rolled in blood, by the execution of justice, than by the neglect of justice to keep a kingdom still mourning in garments of blood. I shall say no more as to that particular. But now I shall endeavour to apply the point more generally, both to your Honours and all that hears me at this time, knowing that it is a useful point for us all, especially in these times and seasons wherein God doth exercise us with afflictions and discouragements, while we are in his own ways. The exhortation that I shall press upon you all is, that you will hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that may befall you.

Now that you may, I shall endeavour to do these two things:—

First, To lay down some motives to encourage you.

Secondly, To premise some directions to further you.

1. For the first, by way of motive to move you to hold on against all discouragements that possibly may befall you, consider, Right Honourable, these few things, and all you that hear me this day:—

(1.) First of all, Consider this, that all the afflictions and troubles that you meet withal shall never hurt nor harm you, but be very advantageous to you. All the arrows that wicked men shoot at your heads shall stick fast in their own hearts: 1Pe 3:13, 'And who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?' Interrogations are strong affirmations. It is a strong affirmation, 'none shall harm you:' devils nor men, let them roar and rage, none shall harm you. For as one speaks truly, *Nemo proprie læditur, nisi a seipso*, No man is properly hurt but by himself and his own fault. All the afflictions and troubles that you shall meet with in the ways of well-doing, they shall be advantageous to you; they shall be a means by which God will convey more of his grace and mercy, more of himself and his glory into your souls: Hos 2:14, 'I will allure her into the wilderness, and then I will speak friendly to her'—or as the Hebrew has it, **וְדִבַּרְתִּי לִבָּהּ**, *uedibbarti gnal-libbah*, I will earnestly speak to her heart. God will make all afflictions, even a wilderness, to be an inlet to more of his own self. All the discouragements that you meet with in the ways of well-doing shall but rub off your dross, and empty out that filth that is in you, and so make more room for more of himself and of his glory to be communicated to you. In Heb 12:10, 'But he afflicts us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.' They were before partakers of his holiness. Oh, but God will make afflictions conduit-pipes, through which he will convey more of himself and of his holiness to his children's souls. That is the first thing. All the afflictions that befall you shall not harm you, but be very advantageous to you. Who would not then hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding any trouble or affliction that may befall them?

2. Secondly, Right Honourable and beloved, let all gracious and upright hearts consider this, that Jesus Christ hath held on in a way of mercy and sweetness towards you, notwithstanding all the discouragements and all the lets that have been in his way; and will not you hold on in ways of duty to Christ, who hath held on, notwithstanding all discouragements, in a way of mercy towards you? Oh consider, consider what difficulties the Lord Jesus Christ hath gone over to come to your souls. In Song of Solomon 2:8, it is said there, 'It is my beloved that comes leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills.' Oh, the Lord Jesus Christ is come over mountains of wrath, and mountains of sin, and mountains of sorrow, and all that he might come to your souls. In Isa

63:3, 'I have trod the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me'—or as the Hebrew has it, Umegnamium en ish itti, ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■, 'and of the nations, or of the peoples, there was not a man with me.' He trod the wine-press of the wrath of his Father alone. And so in Isa 1:5-6, 'The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned my back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheek to them that pluck off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.' Oh, the Lord, in a way of mercy towards you, hath come over all difficulties. Jesus Christ never pleaded, Oh this mountain of wrath, of sin, and sorrow is too high for me to go over: and these valleys of darkness are too long and too terrible for me to walk through. Oh no! but the Lord came skipping over all mountains, and all for the good of your souls. And will not you, upright hearts, hold on in ways of duty to him that hath thus carried himself in ways of mercy to you? And as he hath, so he doth still hold on in ways of mercy to you, notwithstanding all your provocations and unworthy walking of former mercies. Yet still he holds on in ways of mercy and kindness to you. Witness all those mercies that now you enjoy, the clothes that thou wearest, and the bread that thou eatest, and the house that thou lodgest in, and the bed that thou liest on, when thousands lie down in everlasting sorrow. He hath held on in ways of mercy, and he doth. Oh, this should bespeak you to hold on in his ways, notwithstanding any difficulties that you may meet withal.

3. But then, in the third place, Let all upright hearts seriously consider this, that wicked and ungodly men do hold on in ways of impiety, notwithstanding all the discouragements that they meet with from God; and will not you that are upright, hold on in ways of piety, notwithstanding all the discouragements and afflictions that you may meet with from men? Wicked and ungodly men, they hold on in ways of wickedness, notwithstanding all the afflictions, and troubles, and discouragements that God exerciseth them with. God lasheth their consciences, and passes the sentence of death upon all their comforts. Afflictions comes upon them as Job's messengers, one upon the neck of another; and yet they remain proud still, and formal still, and treacherous still, and apostates still, and profane still. O upright hearts, will not you hold on in the ways of piety, notwithstanding the discouragements that you meet with from men? Shall wicked men hold on in the ways of wickedness, notwithstanding all discouragements, though God chide them and set his angel in the way to draw a sword upon them, and crushes their bones against the wall, as he dealt with Balaam, Num 22:25; shall wicked men, Balaam-like, ride on though the angel of the Lord draw his sword; and will not you, when men draw their swords, hold on in the ways of well-doing?

4. Fourthly, Consider solemnly of that agreement that you made with Jesus Christ, when you first took Jesus Christ upon the day of your marriage with Christ. Oh, there is enough in that to engage you to hold on against all the discouragements you shall meet with! Oh remember, upright souls, in the day of your marriage with Jesus Christ, you indented with the Lord Jesus Christ to keep close to him, to hold on in his ways. Then you did say in effect to Christ what Ruth said to Naomi, Ruth 1:14–16, 'Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy God shall be my God; and nothing but death shall part between thee and me.' When you first gave your names to Jesus Christ, in that day your souls were really married to Christ, then you indented with the Lord Jesus Christ, and in effect said thus, 'O blessed Lord! I will follow thee wheresoever thou goest; where thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; and thy God shall be my God; and nothing shall part between thee and my soul, between thy ways and my heart;' therefore let that bespeak you to hold on in ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all afflictions and discouragements

you meet withal.

5. And then again, in the next place, Let upright hearts consider this, that God knows how to deliver from troubles by troubles; he knows how to deliver from afflictions by afflictions; and God will by lesser afflictions that befall his people deliver them from greater afflictions; and by those troubles that befall them, he will deliver them from greater troubles. That saying shall be found true, *Periissem nisi periissem*, I had perished, if I had not perished; I had been undone, if I had not been undone; I had been ruined, if I had not been ruined; I had been broken in pieces, if I had not been broken in pieces. I remember a saying of a philosopher, [Anaxagoras,] who seeing great possessions which he had lost, speaks thus, *Non essem ego salvus nisi istœ periissent*, Had not those things perished, saith he, I could not have been safe. God will so order all the afflictions and troubles that befall you in the ways of the Lord, that your soul shall say, Oh, had I not met with this affliction, I had been afflicted with a witness indeed; had I not been undone, I had been undone; had not these troubles and sorrows and discouragements befallen me, it had been worse with me. God will deliver his people, mark it, from spiritual afflictions and spiritual judgments, by the temporal afflictions and troubles that befall them. By those afflictions that you meet with in the ways of well-doing, God will deliver you from that security, pride, formality, dead-heartedness, lukewarmness, and censoriousness that otherwise might fall upon you.

I remember a story of a godly man, that as he was going to take shipping for France, he broke his leg; and it pleased providence so to order it, that the ship that he should have gone in at that very time was cast away, and not a man saved; so by breaking a bone his life was saved. Thus is the dealing of the Lord with his; sometimes he exerciseth them with afflictions—it may be he breaks their bones; ay, but it is in order to the saving of their lives.

6. And then again consider, that all the afflictions, troubles, and discouragements that befall you shall never rob you of your treasure, of your jewels. They may rob you of some slight, light things; as the sword that is by your side, the stick that is in your hand, and the flower that is in your hats; but they cannot rob you, they cannot strip you of your choice jewels and treasures. The jewels and treasures of an upright heart is the spiritual presence of God, union with Christ, communion with Christ, joy that is unspeakable and glorious, peace that passeth understanding, spiritual comfort, the least drop of which is more worth than a world. Now all the afflictions and troubles that befalls you can never rob you of your jewels; your treasure is safe. They may rob you of your sword, of your stick, of your flower; but your jewel is safe. Some slight, poor, outward comforts they may rob you of. Oh, but your jewels is safe, your treasure is still safe. What an encouragement it is to a poor traveller to hold on his way, notwithstanding there be thieves and enemies, when he remembereth that all the thieves and enemies that he meets with cannot rob him of his treasures, of his jewels, that is about him! they may take away his sword, or his stick, or his hat; but his jewel is safe. O upright hearts! your jewel is safe, your treasure is safe, and all the powers of darkness can never rob you of your God, of your Christ, of your comfort, of your inward peace; therefore hold on against all discouragements and afflictions that you shall meet with.

7. Then again, in the next place, consider that your holding on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements and afflictions that may befall you, is very acceptable to God; and [it] tends much to the glory and honour of God, for his people to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements that may befall them. The church of Pergamos did, and the

Lord was taken with it: Rev 2:13, 'I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou hast held fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among them where Satan dwelleth.' The Lord here was much affected and taken with the constancy of the church, that it held on in his worship and ways, notwithstanding the discouragements and troubles that she met with. It is very honourable to God. Oh! it is an honour to the power of God, to the wisdom of God, to the goodness of God, by holding on in his ways against all oppositions; you declare to the world that there is no God like your God, and no ways like his ways; nor no encouragements like those that he gives; therefore hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements.

8. But in the eighth and last place, do but consider the dangerous nature of apostasy; and if there were no other argument to move men to hold on in the ways of God, in the ways of well-doing, against all discouragements and troubles that may befall them, yet this alone may carry their hearts bravely on against all troubles and afflictions. Consider the dangerous nature of apostasy. If you would judge of the dangerous nature of apostasy aright, you may do it by these few things:—

[1.] First, Consider what you fall from by apostatising from God, from his truth, and from his ways. Oh! consider that of all falls, the falls of such apostates are the most dangerous falls. Thou that playest the apostate, and turnest from the ways of God, and from the ways of well-doing, thou fallest from God, who is the greatest good; thou fallest from his ways, that are the crown and the glory of the soul; and from his truth, the least tittle of which is more worth than heaven and earth. Alas! what are the falls of others to your falls! Alexander the Third, he fell from a pope to be a gardener in Venice; and Valerian fell from a golden chair to an iron cage; and Dionysius fell from a king to be a schoolmaster; and Nebuchadnezzar fell from a mighty prince to be a beast; but what are these falls to thy falls, O apostate! who fallest from heaven to hell—from the greatest good to the greatest evil!

We live in an apostatising age; men wheel and turn about as second causes work, and are not steadfast with their God. These are days wherein grapes are turned into thorns, and figs into thistles; wherein men that were persecuted by others, turn persecutors of others; and men that were smitten by others, now by their pens and tongues bitterly smite others, even their fellow-brethren. These are days wherein lambs are turned into lions, and doves are turned into serpents; and men that have acted like angels for God and his people, are turned to act like devils in respect of their rage and malice against God and his children, and against those ways wherein his people do walk. They are like the taxus of India, which the first year bears fruit, the second year leaves, and the third year poison. Thus it is with apostates of our time. For a time they bear fruit, a little after leaves, and now at last poison, the worst of all. Oh, consider the danger of apostasy! By apostasy you fall from the greatest good, and from the present hope of mercy, and from the future hope of glory; for there is no sin that doth so strip a man of the present hope of mercy, and the future hope of glory, as the sin of apostasy: witness Spira, Judas, &c.

[2.] Then again, in the second place, judge of the dangerous nature of apostasy by the judgments of God that have fallen upon apostates, as upon Julian, Judas, Spira, &c. I remember Mr Foxe makes mention of a smith in King Edward the Sixth's days, who was instrumental to convert a young man; the young man being clapped in prison for the gospel's sake, sent for the smith, and asked him whether he would encourage him to stand for the truth, and to burn for religion; he

answered, his cause was good, and he should do well to suffer for his religion; but for his part he could not bring his heart over to burn for religion. But a little time after his shop was set on fire, and he was burned in the midst of it. Oh! it would take up more time than is now allotted to me to set out the judgments of God that have befallen apostates that have been treacherous and base to God, to his ways, to his saints, and to the trust reposed in them.

[3.] Again, you may judge of the danger of apostasy by its near bordering upon the sin against the Holy Ghost, and by the exceeding difficulty of a man's recovering his ground, when he hath once played the apostate, and turned his back upon God and his ways. Of all sins, the sin of apostasy comes nearest the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. That soul that hath turned his back upon God and his truth, and the ways of well-doing, because of discouragements, is now upon the borders of that sin, that if God leave him but a little, he may fall into, and then he shall never rise again; which speaks out the dangerous nature of it.

[4.] And to shut up all, judge of the dangerous nature and evil of apostasy by this, that it renders all a man's former righteousness, doings, and sufferings invalid and lost: Eze 18:24, 'If a man forsake his righteousness, shall he live?' 'No,' saith God, 'he shall die'—ay, die with a witness: 'in his iniquity which he hath committed he shall die, and his righteousness shall be mentioned no more.' There shall be no more talk—This was a gallant man for God, and this man stood bravely up for his people and his ways, and for the liberty of the nation, suitable to the trust reposed in him. There shall be no mention of this if a man play the apostate. There shall be no pleading—This was once a worthy man, and stood gloriously to it. But now he is turned an apostate: he is turned away from God and his ways. All his righteousness, all his former actings and doings and sufferings shall be lost, and they shall never go to the grave with him, nor follow him to the judgment-seat of Christ: his apostasy shall follow him indeed, but for his former works of piety, they are all lost. As a soldier when he forsakes his colours and runs to the enemy, all his former good service is lost and buried in oblivion; so men that profess love to God and his people, and at last meet with difficulties and play the apostate, this their apostasy renders all their former service lost.

Thus much by way of motive to move you, Right Honourable, and all you that hear me this day, to hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the afflictions and discouragements that you may meet with in the ways of well-doing.

I shall now lay down a few directions. I shall be brief in them, and so draw towards a close.

1. First, Right Honourable, if you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all discouragements and afflictions, in which you must expect to have your share as well as others, and haply the greatest, therefore it stands you the more upon to consider of those things that may be of use to bear up your spirits bravely, to carry you through all the trials and troubles you may meet with. To that purpose, (1.) There are some things that you must carefully decline.

(2.) There are other things that you must carefully practise.

If you will hold on in the ways of well-doing against all oppositions, and notwithstanding all the afflictions and troubles that you may meet with, then,

[1.] First, Take heed of unbelief. There is nothing in the world that doth more damp the heart, that ties the tongue, that binds the hands, that puts fetters on the feet, that puts out the eyes, than

unbelief. Unbelief, it blinds the eyes, it ties a man's hands, and causeth a sad and fearful damp to fall upon his heart. It renders the man utterly unfit to walk in the ways of God, especially when there is a lion in the way, and when the storm begins to rise: Heb 3:13, 'Take heed lest there be found in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, to depart from the living God.' Unbelief will carry a man to apostasy. It hath been the great reason of many men's apostasy and backsliding from God and his ways, and that trust the nation hath put in them, that they could not hang on God and trust in God by faith; but unbelief was prevalent, and hath carried them from God and all just ways. Therefore take heed of unbelief.

[2.] Secondly, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, notwithstanding all the discouragements you may meet with, take heed of an inordinate love to the things of this life. This made Judas play and Demas play the apostate, and Spira play the apostate. 'Demas hath forsaken us' to embrace this present world. He looked upon the world in its pomp, beauty, and glory; and his heart falls off from God and his ways. I remember it is storied of Henry the Fourth of France asking the Duke of Alva whether he had seen the eclipses; he answered, he had so much business to do on earth, that he had no time to look up to heaven. A man whose heart is engaged to the love of the world, will find so much to do in the world, that, with that wicked duke, he will have no time to look up to heaven for strength, to walk in heavenly and holy ways against opposition. It was a good saying of Augustine, *Certe non amant illi Christum qui aliquid plusquam Christum amant*, Surely they do not love Christ who love anything more than Christ. If your hearts are pitched more upon the world, and are engaged more to it than to Christ, you will never be able to hold on in the ways of well-doing.

[3.] Thirdly, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, take heed of consulting with flesh and blood: take heed of listening and hearkening to carnal reason and carnal counsel; that is that that hath turned many a man out of the ways of God. When Paul was brought in to Christ—Gal 1:14-16, 'When it pleased God, that separated me from my mother's womb, to call me by his grace,' as to send me to preach the gospel among the heathen, 'immediately I consulted not with flesh and blood.' If he had consulted with flesh and blood, he might have made several objections to have kept him off; 'but I consulted not with flesh and blood:' flesh would have told him that the work was too high, too hard, too dangerous for him. 'Oh but,' saith he, 'I consulted not with flesh and blood.'

[4.] Lastly, If you would hold on, notwithstanding all discouragements that may befall you, then take heed of judging of the ways of God, and of the ways of well-doing, by the opinion that wicked men have of them. Alas! wicked men are blind, and see not the beauty and loveliness that is in the ways of God. Wicked men are malicious against the ways of God, and ill-will will never suffer them to speak well of them. But again, If you would walk in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, then as you must labour carefully to decline all those things, so you must labour to put in practice these things:—

[1.] Frequently and solemnly cast up what you have gained by walking in the ways of God. Frequently and solemnly cast up your accounts, and see what you have gained by walking in the ways of God. Look over that power against corruptions, that strength to withstand temptations, that power to rejoice in afflictions, that you have gained in the ways of God. Look often over that 'peace that passeth understanding,' and that heavenly joy and those blessed consolations that you have

gained in the ways of God and in the ways of well-doing. When the mariner and the shopkeeper cast their eye upon their former gains, it encourageth and enableth their spirits to hold on against all the discouragements and troubles they may meet with in their way; and so it will do with you.

[2.] In the second place, Look that you act and walk in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, from internal and spiritual principles. Oh, I beseech you, Right Honourable, and all that hear me this day, as you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, look to your principles, that you move from spiritual and internal principles, from the power of the Spirit and the breathings of the Spirit, from love to God and a holy fear of God; and this will carry you bravely on against all discouragements you shall meet with. If you act from carnal and fleshly principles, and for carnal ends, as for honour or favour or profit, &c., you will never be constant in the ways of God; but when these ends cannot be answered, you will turn apostates, and turn back from God. Therefore, as you would hold on, look to your principles that they may be sound.

[3.] Then, in the third place, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing and in the ways of God, notwithstanding all the afflictions and troubles that may befall you, labour to exercise faith. Faith is a singular means to enable us to walk in the ways of God against all the discouragements that may befall us. I shall open it in those two things, that are worthy of your consideration. Faith will carry the soul through all discouragements and difficulties that the soul can meet with in the ways of God. Thus:—

First, By being conversant about soul-greatening objects. Mark, this is one way by which faith enables the soul to hold on against all discouragements, by raising the soul to converse with soul-greatening objects, as God and Christ, and those treasures, pleasures, and sweetnesses that are in the Lord Jesus Christ. So in 2Co 4:1-18 the last three verses, 'Our outward man decays, but our inward man is renewed day by day.' How comes this? 'While we look not at things that are seen, but at things which are not seen.' 'While faith is conversant about things which are not seen:' the word [σκοποῦντων] signifies to look as a man looks at a mark. While we keep a fixed eye upon future glory—while our faith is conversant upon that crown that fades not, upon those robes that wither not, upon that kingdom that shakes not, 'the inward man is renewed day by day,' and heavy afflictions are made light, and long afflictions are made short. Thus faith enables the soul, and carries it bravely on against all discouragements, by conversing with soul-greatening objects. There is nothing so enables the soul, and so divinely greatens the soul and makes it too large, too wide, and too big for troubles and afflictions to bring under, than faith's conversing with those high and glorious objects.

Second, Then faith doth this, in the second place, by appropriating all to itself that it lays hands upon. Faith looks on God, and saith with the psalmist, 'This God is my God for ever and ever; and he shall be my guide unto death.' Faith looks on Christ, and saith with Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.' Faith looks on the promises, and saith, 'These precious promises are mine.' It casts an eye upon the crown of righteousness, and saith with Paul, 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' It looks upon all treasures, pleasures, and sweetness that is in Christ, and that are by Christ prepared for the soul, and saith faith, 'Those treasures are mine, those pleasures are mine, and all that sweetness that is in him is mine.' Thus faith carries on the soul against all discouragements that the soul can meet with.

Third, Then again, in the next place, If you would hold on in the ways of well-doing, labour to increase and abound in love. Oh let your love to God and love to his ways be augmented and increased! Oh look that love do its part, and then the soul will hold on! Song of Solomon 8:6-7, 'Love is stronger than death: many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it.' If a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be contemned. ■■■■ ■■■■■■, boz jabuzu, contemning it would be contemned, loathing it would be loathed, as the original hath it.

Now I shall shew you how love will enable the soul to hold out in the ways of God, and in the ways of well-doing, against all discouragements: and that it will do thus,

[1.] First, By egging all other graces on to act and operate. Love is a very active grace. It is the great wheel in the soul that sets all other graces on work. Love is like to the virtuous woman, Pro 9:3, that sets all her maidens at work. Where love is strong in the soul, there no grace shall be idle in the soul. There love will call upon faith, Faith, do you lay hold on that God and on that crown that is set before you; and, Patience, do you wait on God, &c. It calls on all, and sets all on work. And now the more grace is acted, the more its strength is increased; and the more its strength is increased, the more the soul is enabled to walk in the ways of God, against all discouragements that doth or can befall the soul. And,

[2.] Secondly, Love will enable you to hold on in the ways of God against all discouragements, by rendering all the ways of God sweet and pleasant to the soul. Love renders those ways sweet, that men that have no love to Christ look on as bitter ways. Every way is sweet and pleasant, saith love: his yoke is easy and his way is pleasant. As it is in Pro 3:17, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace:' in the abstract Love saith, This way is a precious way, and the other way of God, oh! it is a heavenly way: I find much sweetness in it, saith Love; and thus it encourageth the soul to hold on in the ways of well-doing. For the more sweet and lovely the ways of God are presented to the soul, the more the soul is raised and encouraged to hold on in those ways of God, notwithstanding any affliction and trouble that the soul meets withal. I remember I have read a story of a Dutch schoolmaster, who, when he was asked whether he loved not his wife and children, thus answered: Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hand to dispose of, I would lay it down at my enemy's feet, that with freedom and liberty I might live and walk in the ways of God, they are so lovely to my soul.

[3.] And then, thirdly, Love, it will enable the soul to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements, by making a blessed interpretation and a heavenly construction of the afflictions, sorrows, and discouragements that an upright heart can meet with in the ways of God. All the afflictions and discouragements that upright hearts meets with, love will thus interpret and expound: Oh! saith the upright heart, all those afflictions are but means that God will use to rub off my dross and filth, to convey more of himself: they are all my friends, and shall work for my good, saith Love. All those cursings God will turn to blessings, saith Love. All these afflictions that befall me are but out of some noble design that God hath to reveal more of himself and of his glory to me. It is but that he may empty me more of myself and of the creature, that so he may communicate more of his own sweetness and fulness to my soul, saith Love. I know, though for the present it be bitter, yet, saith Love, it will be sweet in the end; I know the way to the crown by the cross, saith Love, and I know all those afflictions shall lead me to more heavenly enjoyments of God. This construction David made concerning Shimei's cursing of him, 2Sa 16:12 : when Shimei

cursed him, David expounds it sweetly: 2Sa 16:12er. 12: 'The Lord,' saith he, 'will look on mine affliction, and requite good for his cursing this day.' This interpretation carries David along on his way, notwithstanding Shimei's cursing of him. Oh! the Lord will turn the curse into a blessing, saith Love; and this carries him on bravely. So in that standing Shimei's 'Love thinketh no evil.' It will make a sweet interpretation a blessing, the afflictions that befalls the soul; and the more sweet and 1Co 13:5, interpretation Love makes of afflictions that befall the soul on of all ways of God, the more the soul is raised and encouraged. Wevenly saith the soul, if it be so, I will go on though the lions roar, &c. That is another means; if you will hold on in the ways of well-do ell! then look that Love do its part: let Love be operative and working &c. your souls.

[4.] Lastly, I have but one thing more that I will press as to thins, and so draw towards a close, and that is this, Look frequently and solemnly upon that 'cloud of witnesses' that have gone before you. It is the apostle's own argument, Heb 12:1-2,—he brings down all those instances in the 11th chapter, and sets them before their eyes, and encourageth them from that very consideration—'To run the all race that was set before them with patience, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set be fix he him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.' Oh, look upon those glorious worthies go fore held on in the ways of well-doing. Look upon Nehemiah, that held on bravely, and David, who though princes scorned him and persecuted him, yet he held on in the ways of well-doing. So Paul and Jeremiah, &c., notwithstanding all their tossings, afflictions, are is sufferings, yet held on in the ways of well-doing. Oh, why shoul and you degenerate basely from those examples that are your crown and glory to follow? So much by way of direction, as to enable you to hold on in the ways of well-doing against all discouragements that may befall you.

Now, Right Honourable, give me only leave to premise a few things to your considerations, desiring that those considerations may be your daily meditations; and so I shall close at this time.

[1.] The first thing I desire to present to your Honourable considerations is this, The doing of great things is most worthy of great men. Great men should do great things, and account themselves little. Oh, Right Honourable, that by your means 'the angel with the everlasting gospel in his hand might fly through our heavens,' Rev 14:6; especially that he might fly through those dark corners of the kingdom where you will have thousands that sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, that scarce know whether there be a Holy Ghost or no! O Right Honourable, God is now about a glorious design to exalt his Son, and the children unborn shall rise and call you blessed if you will be instrumental to further this design; and it were better that you had never been born, than that you should be instrumental to hinder those poor souls from enjoying the means of grace, that cry out, 'Bread, bread for our souls,' that say, 'Look upon us, and see if there be any sorrow like our souls' sorrow; if any darkness be like that darkness that is upon us; if any grievance be like that that is in us.' O Right Honourable, the doing of great things is most worthy of great men. The Lord stir up your hearts that you may further that glorious work; and the Lord direct you that you may pitch on some way or other whereby those that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, may be enlightened, and Christ revealed, and his kingdom exalted in this kingdom! Oh, if you do not labour to keep by the word that you have war by the sword, how long will it be before the sword be sheathed!

[2.] A second consideration that I premise for your honours' meditation is this, That the saints are very dear and precious to the Lord Jesus Christ, and they that shelter them he will shelter. They are his jewels, Mal 3:17. The word there rendered jewels, **segulla**, signifies such particular treasures that he loves and lays up for himself, and for special use. They are 'the apple of his eye,' Zec 2:8; their service is precious to him, Pro 15:8; their voice is precious, Song of Solomon 2:14, 'Let me hear thy voice, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is lovely;' their tears are precious, Psa 56:8, 'He puts them in his bottle;' and their names are precious, for he 'writes them in his book,' Luk 10:20; their very thoughts are precious, Mal 3:16; and their blood is precious, Psa 116:15, 'Right dear and precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints,' and they that shelter them God will shelter. Ebed-melech sheltered Jeremiah in the day of the king's wrath, and God sheltered him in the day of God's wrath; Rahab sheltered the spies, and the Lord sheltered Rahab; Obadiah sheltered the prophets, and the Lord sheltered him. Right Honourable, God hath made you in some blessed measure instrumental to shelter his people; and certainly that hath been one great reason that God hath sheltered you, notwithstanding all the designs, plots, and treacheries of men to destroy you. You have sheltered the saints, and God hath sheltered you. They are always precious to him, and they should be always precious to you.

[3.] A third consideration for every day's meditation is, That it is very destructive and dangerous for the powers of this world to engage against the saints of God. Right Honourable, I abhor pleading for any particular interests; I plead for all saints which Jesus Christ hath stamped his image upon, that he hath taken into union and communion with himself; I plead for them all; for your Honours, and thousands more do know, that those men that go under different names, yet for abilities and holiness they are as precious as any that breathes: for those I plead. And I say it hath been an old design of the devil to dash the powers of this world in pieces, by engaging them against the saints and servants of Christ. Little did Pharaoh know that the devil was in that design when he pursued Israel, 'I will rise and pursue and overtake, my lust shall be satisfied;' but this was Pharaoh's destruction. His engaging against Israel was his overthrow. Haman engaged against the Jews, but this engagement against them was Haman's destruction, as you know.

Those princes (Dan 6:1-28) that engaged against Daniel, and found nothing against him but in the matter of his God, you know their very engagement against him was their destruction. It is dangerous and destructive to the powers of this world for them to engage against the saints of God. I will only point at two or three scriptures: Isa 8:8-10, 'Associate yourselves together, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces.' Rognu, **rognu**, from roang, it signifies 'to be broken in pieces, as an army is shattered and broken in pieces with fear.' The word 'broken' in your English Books is twice more repeated, 'You shall be broken in pieces, you shall be broken in pieces;' but in the Hebrew it is three times more repeated, Vahottu, vahottu, vahottu, 'Ye shall be thrown down, ye shall be thrown down, ye shall be thrown down;' or 'Ye shall be confounded, ye shall be confounded, ye shall be confounded,'—Why? 'For God is with us,' ver. 10. So in Zec 12:2-3, 'Jerusalem shall be a cup of trembling;' or 'a cup of poison to all the nations round about; and though all the people of the earth should gather together against her, they shall be dashed in pieces;' Isa 54:17, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that riseth in judgment against thee shalt thou condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.'

[4.] Again, Right Honourable, a fourth consideration for your daily meditation is this, That the power of godliness infinitely transcends and excels all forms of godliness. Alas! what is the shadow to the substance? what is the shell to the kernel? what is the box to the jewel that is in it? No more are forms of godliness to the power of godliness. What is darkness to light? what are counters to gold? what is earth to heaven? No more are forms of godliness to the power of godliness; which doth bespeak you to cherish, nourish, and countenance the power of godliness, and not so to advance forms of godliness as to throw down the power and the glory of holiness.

Right Honourable, it is the power of godliness that is the honour of a nation, it is the power of godliness that is the beauty of a nation, it is the power of godliness that is the safety of a nation. Right Honourable, as you would have joy in life, and peace in death, and boldness before Christ's judgment-seat, oh look to this, that you advance the power of godliness, that you countenance the power of godliness, that you cherish and nourish the power of godliness. Take heed, Right Honourable, of stamping *jus divinum* on anything that Christ hath not in capital letters stamped *jus divinum* upon. Oh take heed of giving a two-edged sword into the hands of any that are hot for forms of godliness, and that love to lord it over the faith and consciences of the saints, lest they, like the giant, cut off all that are higher than themselves in spiritual enjoyments of God, and stretch out all that are shorter than themselves in forms of godliness. I am apt to think that if such men were more careful and skilful in using the sword of the Spirit, they would not be so hot for a temporal sword, neither would they be so angry for the want of it, as they are. A spiritual sword is most suitable to spiritual men, and most suitable to all that spiritual work that God requires of them.

Right Honourable, God is most exalted, Christ is most honoured, the Spirit is most rejoiced, the mouths of the wicked are most stopped, and the saints are most gladdened by the power of godliness, by countenancing, advancing, and cherishing of that. Therefore, as you would have the Lord exalted and lifted up, and made famous and glorious, oh let the power of godliness be countenanced and cherished throughout the kingdom! The way of instructing the people of the nation, I leave it with you whom it most concerns, desiring the Lord to direct you into such ways as may be most for the honour of his name, and for the happiness and comfort of the land we live in. That is another consideration.

[5.] One thing more, beloved, and so I shall draw to a close. In the next place, consider this, God hath, and God will save his people and ruin their enemies, by very weak, unlikely, and contemptible means, and by very hidden and mysterious ways. He hath done it: witness his leading of Israel by the hand through the Red Sea, and overthrowing their enemies in a mysterious way. Witness his destroying of that mighty army of the Midianites—which were as grasshoppers, and for multitude without number—by Gideon's three hundred that lapped water like a dog. The story you have in Jdg 6:1-40 and Jdg 7:1-25, compared. Witness his delivering his people and ruining their grand enemy, Haman, by Esther's attempting that which was directly against the law of the land, Est 4:10, Est 4:16. Haman had plotted the ruin of the Jews; all was agreed on; the writings were signed; there was but a step between death and the Jews. Esther adventures and throws herself upon God's providence, and comes to the court, directly cross to the law of the land, to the letter of the law; and by this untrodden way, which one would have thought might have enraged the king to have cut her and her people off, yet, by this untrodden way, God delivered his poor people. And whether he hath not done the same for his people who were sold to slavery, by

poor, despised instruments, in our own land, I leave your Honours to judge. I will give you but only two or three texts: Isa 41:14-15, 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel.' 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob.' The original, *tolagnath*, signifies a little worm that springs out of a grave or kernel. 'And ye men of Israel:' *methe*, 'ye dead men of Israel.' What follows? 'Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.'

Mountains are high, you know, and mountains are mighty, and mountains are strong; and so are the powers of the world; and yet little worms and dead men shall thresh these mountains, they shall overthrow and bring under even the powers that are high and strong and mighty against Jesus Christ and his ways, as we see this day. He will save his people, and destroy his enemies, though they be mighty and powerful, and in very untrodden and mysterious ways, by little worms, by dead men. So likewise Dan 2:33-34, compared with Dan 2:44-45, 'Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, which were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.' Compare those verses with the 44th and 45th verses, 'And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and that kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.' All the kingdoms that are against the kingdom of Christ shall be broken in pieces by this little kingdom. And so likewise in Mic 4:1-13, the three last verses, 'Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many people'—or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, 'thou shalt stamp to powder multitudes of peoples or nations,'—'and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.' Many nations are gathered together against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, let her be polluted and profaned, and let our eyes look upon Zion. Oh, but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, what a design God is about, and what a project he hath in hand to advance his name, and to deliver his people and ruin their enemies, and that by the most unlikely and contemptible means that can be!

Therefore, let not men wonder at such and such strange providences as sometimes fall out, but rather consider that God hath, and he will save his people, and ruin their enemies, by very dark and mysterious ways, and by contemptible and unlikely means; and this he will do that no flesh may boast, and that his people may live a life of faith, and that their enemies may be the more dreadfully ashamed and confounded; and mainly that his own name may be alone exalted and magnified.

[6.] Lastly, Right Honourable, it is the earnest desires of the people of God generally, that your hands may further be strengthened, and that your souls may be lifted up in the ways of the Lord, that justice and righteousness may run down now at the last among us as mighty streams. Now,

as to this, give me only leave to premise these two cautions, and so I shall have done:—

First, Right Honourable, do justice, but do it with much pity and mercy. Oh! weep over those wounds that the sword of justice makes; mourn over those bones that the sword of justice breaks; lament over those members that the sword of justice cuts off. Look, as justice and mercy meet in God, and kiss in God, and act harmoniously in God; so let justice and mercy meet, and kiss, and act harmoniously in you.

Secondly, Right Honourable, look to this, that you do justice from principles of uprightness, and from the love of justice and righteousness. Otherwise, remember this, that God may revenge that blood that may be shed upon you, if you do not justice out of a love of righteousness, and from principles of uprightness. It is very considerable in Hos 1:4-5, 'And the Lord said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.' Right Honourable, consider this, that which Jehu did, God himself bears witness to it: 2Ki 10:30, 'And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy children to the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.' Observe, Right Honourable, Jehu, for the matter of justice, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. God here approves of it; but Jehu did not do justice from a love of justice, and a principle of uprightness. The matter was good, but his principles were bad. Therefore God tells him that he will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu. The Lord make your Honours wise to consider of these things!

What I have here delivered, Right Honourable, hath been in the discharge of my conscience, that I may give up my account at last with joy, and not with grief; and so I shall conclude with that saying of Augustine, 'Not every one that spareth us is a friend, nor every one that striketh us is an enemy.'

HYPOCRITES DETECTED a thanksgiving sermon

NOTE

Prefixed to this Sermon is the usual form of Thanks and license to print. It will be found below *: also the title-page.† Historically the Sermon is valuable as shewing the intense feeling against Scotland at the time on occasion of the 'crowning victory' at Dunbar.—G.

* Die Mercurii, ix. Octo. 1650.

Ordered by the Parliament, that the thanks of this House be given to Mr Brooks for his great pains taken in his Sermon preached yesterday at Margarets, Westminster, being a day set apart for publick thanksgiving; and that he have the like privilege in printing as others in like case have usually had, and that Collonel Jones do give Mr Brooks the thanks of this House accordingly.

Hen: Scobell: cler: Parliament.

I appoint Hanna Allen to print this sermon.

Tho: Brooks.

† THE

HYPOCRITE DETECTED, ANATOMIZED, Impeached, Arraigned, and Condemned before the Parliament of England. or, A WORD IN SEASON.

Shewing Hypocrites to be the prime objects of God's wrath: and the Grounds of it: with the Special Lessons that we are to learn from it.

EXPRESSED In a Sermon Preached before the Parliament of ENGLAND; upon their last thanksgiving Day, being the 8th of Octo. 1650. for that late great Victory that the Lord of Hosts gave our Army over the Scots Army in a battell at Dunbarr Septemb. 3. 1650. By Thomas Brooks, a weak and unworthy Teacher of the Gospel at Thomas Apostles, London. The Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Isa 33:14.

Simulata sanctitas est duplex iniquitas. Aug. Multi sunt oves habitu, vulpes actu, crudelitate lupi. Bernard Hypocrita aut esto quod appares, aut appare quod es. Gregory.

Hypocritis nihil est crudelius, impatientius & vindicta cupidius, plane sunt serpentes, &c. Luther.

London, Printed by Fr: Neile for Hanna Allen at the Crown in Popes-Head-Alley, 1650.

[4to.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To the Honourable Parliament of England, assembled at Westminster.

Honourable Senators,—The glorious appearances of God in these late times do with open mouth speak out God to be about to manifest himself in some more choice and remarkable way than heretofore. When little worms and dead men do thresh the mountains, and make them smoke and quake, then surely God is a-coming down to 'judge the earth with righteousness and the people with equity,' and to set his mountains high upon the top of all the mountains in the world, and 'to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth,' Isa 23:9. This design he is driving on for certain, and will, in spite of all opposition, accomplish it. The wheel of providence runs swiftly, and one glorious providence does but make way for another; which should heighten our hopes, and strengthen our faith, and raise up our souls to lay out all that we have received from God for the helping forward the design of God. Right Honourable, never had any men on earth such glorious advantages and opportunities to act high for God and his saints as you have. Ah, how many be there now triumphing in heaven, that, when they were on earth, would have thought it a heaven to have enjoyed the least of those advantages and opportunities that you enjoy, that so they might have put out themselves for God and his people to the uttermost! Ah, sirs, 'what your hand findeth to do, do it with all your might; for there is no working in the grave,' Ecc 9:10. Your time is short, your task is great, your Master is urgent, and your reward is sure. The devil makes all the haste he can to outwork the children of light, in a quick despatch of deeds of darkness, because he knows his time is short. He will not let slip any opportunity whereby he may do mischief. Oh do not you let slip any opportunity wherein you may honour a good God, and be serviceable to your generation. Suetonius reports of Julius Cæsar, that seeing Alexander's statue, he fetched a deep sigh because he at that age had done so little. Ah that none of you had cause to sigh, that you have done no more for God, his truth, his ways, his people! Yet let me say, *Beati sunt qui præcepta faciunt, etiam si non perficiunt*, They are blessed that do what they can, though they cannot but underdo, [Aug.] *In libro tuo scribuntur omnes qui quod possunt faciunt*, saith Bernard—They are surely written all in God's book that do what they can, though they cannot but

underdo. Oh that you would arise in Christ's strength, and do what possibly you can for God, though you cannot do what you would and what you should!

Worthy Senators, give me leave to breathe forth a few desires before you:—

First, Oh that you would look to your communion with God! Keep up that, increase in that, and that will more and more fit you for all that high and hard service that you are and may be put upon. The communion with God, that is the life of your graces, the sweetener of all ordinances, providences, and mercies, the strengthener of your hearts and hands, the soul of your comforts, and the crown of your souls. Nothing like this to fence you against temptations, to sweeten all afflictions, and to make you own God, and stand for God, and cleave to God, in the face of all troubles and oppositions. A man high in communion with God, is a man too big for temptations to conquer, or troubles to bring under. Communion with God, it makes bitter things sweet, and massive things light. Souls that have no communion, or but little communion, with God, they are usually as soon conquered as tempted, as soon vanquished as assaulted.

Secondly, Oh that you would make more quick despatch of businesses that are before you! Julius Cæsar's quick despatch is noted in three words, *Veni, vidi, vici*, I came, I saw, I overcame. The more quick you are in despatch of business, the more angelical you are; and is it not your highest honour to be like those glistening courtiers that attend the King of kings? Pro 3:12, 'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.' The word that is here rendered 'deferred,' signifies to draw out at length. Men are short breathed and short spirited, and when their hopes are drawn out at length, this makes their heart sick. Oh that there were no such sick souls that lie languishing at hope's hospital! It was the saying of Antoni[n]us the emperor, Clemency is a kingdom's best preserver, *Regni clementia custos*.

Thirdly, Oh that you would do good to them that have rendered you evil for good! Such a spirit as this is, is most suitable to the commands of Christ, Rom 12:21; Mat 5:44; and most suitable to the example of Christ, Mat 27:23. In revenge of injuries, he is the loser that gets the better, saith Basil. Christ weeps over Jerusalem, though it was his and his saints' slaughter-house; and he receives to mercy those three thousand bloody souls that had embued their villainous hands in his innocent blood, Acts 2:1-47. Joseph weeps over those malicious and bloody brethren that would have slain him, and that did sell him for a slave. Moses stands up in the gap for those that called and counted him a murderer and a destroyer, though he was their saviour and deliverer. Elisha provided a table for them that had provided a grave for him. Though the Scots had provided graves for you, yet, Honoured Senators, shew bowels of mercy to them, so far as it will stand with the duty of your places, and with the safety of this commonwealth. Though Rome was most unthankful to Camillus for his conquest of the Veii, yet he buried that wrong, and freed it the second time from the Gauls. Thrasybulus, after his return to Athens, from whence he was banished by tyrants, he, with the aid of Lysander, having expelled thirty tyrants out of Athens, called those home that they had banished, and made a law that no man should remember any former injuries done unto him.

Fourthly, Oh that you may rule more for God, and govern more for God! God is all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve—he is *omnia super omnia*—and all grace to pardon. Is not God optimum, maximum?—the best, and the greatest. He is the horn of plenty, and the ocean of beauty, without the least spot of injustice. Oh

that you may govern so sweetly and so prudently, that you may be termed *deliciæ humani generis*—The delight of mankind. Nothing is more difficult than to rule for God, nor nothing is more excellent than to rule for God. *Nil difficilius est quam bene imperare*, was Dioclesian's motto. He that rules, but not for God, has his reward here; but he that rules for God shall have a glorious reward at last. 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' Mat 25:21: a joy too big to enter into us; we must enter into it; a joy more meet for the Lord than the servant; and yet the faithful servant shall have the honour and the happiness to enter into it—even, into thy Master's joy.

Fifthly, Oh stand constantly upon your watch to avoid evil! Watch to do good, watch to discover your enemies, watch to prevent your enemies, watch to suppress your enemies, watch to countenance and watch to encourage all those that hold to Christ the head, and that walk according to the law of the new creature; watch to discountenance and watch to suppress profaneness and wickedness, watch to heal the wounded, and watch to bind up the broken, and watch to relieve the oppressed, and watch to raise the dejected; watch to do good to all them that are good, and watch to be good among them that are bad, and watch to do good even to them that are bad. Oh watch your eyes that they behold no vanity, and watch your ears that they hearken not to unjust and unrighteous causes, and watch your hands that they touch not the golden wedge, and watch your lives that they cause not God's laws and your own to be slighted and despised; but, above all, watch your souls, that in the day of Christ they may be saved. The soul is a jewel more worth than heaven. Oh watch it! If that be lost, you are eternally lost; if that be lost, all is lost. Of all loss, the loss of the soul is the most incomparable, irreparable, and irrecoverable loss. It is the greatest folly in the world to watch to save a state, and not to watch to save your souls. John the Third, king of Portugal, was advised by one, every day to spend a quarter of an hour's time in meditating upon that scripture, Mat 16:26, 'What shall it profit a man to gain the world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' It is and shall be my desire and prayer, that you may watch to save the state, but above all, that you may watch to save your souls.

Honoured Senators, I had other desires to have breathed out before you; but having made too bold, I fear, with your patience, I shall send them up to heaven, hoping and waiting for a comfortable answer from thence. I humbly crave your Honours, and all others that shall read this sermon, to cast a covering of love over all the mistakes of the printer; I having not the least time to wait upon the press to correct what haply may be found amiss. Now, honoured worthies, that you may do gloriously in your generation, that you may prize Christ above all, and live in him as in your all, and triumph through him over all enemies within you and without you, and eternally reign with Christ after all, is and shall be the earnest desire and prayer of him who is, honoured and worthy Senators, your most humble and devout servant in all humble service for Christ,

Thomas Brooks. A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND ON THEIR LATE DAY OF THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR VICTORY OVER THE SCOTS

I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the street.—Isa 10:6.

I will not spend that short time that is left me about that which will turn least to your souls' account, therefore I will very briefly open the words of my text: 'I will send thee against an hypocritical

nation.' The word that is rendered 'hypocritical' signifies to pollute, or defile. Of all sins, the sin of hypocrisy is the most defiling sin. It defiles men's prayers and praises; it defiles all duties and ordinances. 'I will give him in charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey.' The word that is rendered 'charge' signifies to give command with authority and power, to bind, and to tread them down 'like the mire of the streets,' or rather, as the Hebrew has it, 'to lay there a-treading.' The main thing the words hold forth is this,—That of all sorts of sinners God will be most severe in his judgments against hypocrites. Or thus: Hypocrites are the proper objects of God's wrath, and such as he will most severely punish.

I shall, in the handling of this point, briefly point out to you those scriptures that speak out this truth, and then open it to you. The scriptures that speak out this truth are these, Job 15:34; Isa 33:14, and Isa 9:17; Mat 23:1-39, and Mat 24:51. For the opening of the point, I shall endeavour these two things: First, to give you the reasons of God's severity against hypocrites; and secondly, discover to you who these hypocrites be that are the objects of God's wrath; and thirdly, give you the uses of the point, which is the main thing I intend.

1. Now, first, for the reasons of the point, I shall give you only these six:—

Reason 1. First, Because of all sorts of sinners, hypocrites are most dangerous to human society. There are no sorts of sinners upon earth so dangerous to human society as hypocrites are: Job 34:30, 'That the hypocrites reign not, lest the people be ensnared,'—mimloch, from malach, [מלך], 'that the hypocrite king it not.' There are no sorts of men on earth that delight to king it as hypocrites do. 'That the hypocrite king it not, lest the people be ensnared.' There are no men in the world so skilful and careful to lay snares and traps to ensnare the silly birds, as hypocrites are to ensnare the children of men: Pro 11:9, 'An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour.' The breath of the hypocrite is poisonous; he breathes out nothing but poison. The word that is rendered 'destroy' signifies utterly to destroy. It is used for corruption both in religion and manners. Hypocrites destroy persons by their vices and corruptions: Mat 23:13, 'But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' The great mischief that a hypocrite may do, will sufficiently appear by this history.

Constantia, the widow of Licinius, sister of the emperor Constantine the Great, entertained in [her] house a certain presbyter, who professed the orthodox religion for fear of Constantine, but was in secret an Arian. Several bishops of the Arian sect made use of this man to promote their cause by his sly dissimulation. At length, Constantia, lying sick upon her death-bed, her brother, the emperor, came to visit her. She soon prevailed with him to entertain the presbyter into his court. He soon grew into great credit and favour with Constantine, so that when he died he intrusted him with his last will, whereby he had an opportunity to make himself gracious with Constantius, the emperor's son and successor, which opportunity he did improve. First, he corrupts one Eusebius, a eunuch, the new emperor's chief chamberlain, and by this means other courtiers, and then the empress, and at length the emperor himself, and by degrees brought him to be [a] defender of Arianism, and a great persecutor of the truth which his father had professed, and which himself had been brought up in.

Reason 2. The second reason is this: Because, of all sorts of sinners, there is none so hardened against the Lord Jesus Christ as hypocrites are. None stout it against Jesus Christ as hypocrites

do. If that Christ call upon the profane man, he hearkens; if he entreats, he yields; if he knock, he opens. But as for the hypocrite, Christ may call and cry, entreat and beseech, and yet the hypocrite will not hear, nor yield, nor open to him: Mat 21:31-32, 'Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you; for John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and yet ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him.' Christ comes to the harlot's door, and to the profane man's door, and knocks, and they open to him, and kiss him, and embrace him, and receive him; but as for the hypocrite, though Christ does knock, and call, and cry out to him, yet he will not hear; nay, though he take his soul and hang it over the scorching flames of hell, and say to him, Ah hypocrite! 'is it good to dwell in everlasting burnings?' yet he will not yield; and though he take him and shew him the glory of heaven, and the happiness of sincere souls, yet he will not yield nor open to Christ, though he miss of heaven, and be cast into the hottest and the lowest place in hell.

Reason 3. Because hypocrites yield the greatest assistance to Christ's grand enemy, to wit, Satan. One hardened and seared hypocrite is more advantage to carry out Satan's design, than a thousand loose profane persons. A hypocrite is Satan's firstborn; he is Satan's darling; he leans upon the devil's breast, as John did upon Christ's. There are none so active for Satan, nor none have those advantages to carry on his work, as the hypocrite hath, Mat 23:15. They 'compass sea and land to make a proselyte.' They are very active to enlarge the dominion of Satan, and therefore no wonder God is so severe in his judgments against them.

Reason 4. A fourth reason is, Because hypocrites are false to the marriage-bed; and therefore God is so severe against them. They pretend love to Christ, and yet they give up their hearts to other lovers besides Christ, Eze 33:31; Isa 29:13. You know in law nothing gives a man that advantage to put away his wife as falseness to the marriage-bed; and Christ will take that advantage to cast off hypocrites for ever.

Reason 5. Because they are the very worst of sinners. They are often in Scripture compared to the very worst of things, to vipers, serpents, wolves, &c., which speaks them out to be the worst of men. They are secret enemies, which are of all enemies the worst; as Leo the emperor said, *Occulti inimici pessimi*, A close enemy is far worse than an open; a close enemy kisses and kills, but an open enemy shoots off his warning-piece before he shoots off his murdering-piece. Again, hypocrites are doomed to the worst of judgments, as that they shall not come before God: Job 13:16, 'An hypocrite shall not come before God;' he shall not be taken up into spiritual enjoyment of God on earth, nor into glorious communion with God in heaven. Hypocrites, they are doomed by Christ to the greatest torments in hell: Mat 23:14, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shall receive the greater damnation.' The darkest and the lowest place in hell is theirs. Hypocrites are hell's free-holders; all other sinners are but inmates to hypocrites. Of all sinners, hypocrites sin against the greatest light, and against the greatest knowledge, against the greatest discovery of God, which speaks them out to be the worst of sinners; yea, though they do know sins against knowledge to be very dangerous, though they know them to be wounding and wasting sins—*peccata vulnerantia et devastantia*—yet hypocrites will hold on in their sin. The hypocrite will rather go to hell with his lusts, than to heaven without his lusts. Though he be convinced that he and his beloved sins must part, or Christ and his soul will never meet, yet the hypocrite will say, Farewell Christ, and welcome sin! A hypocrite will hold on in religious duties, and yet hold on in a resolved way of wickedness, Jer 7:9; Eze 33:30-32. A hypocrite will sin and

pray, and he will hear and swear, &c.; like Louis the Eleventh, king of France, he would swear, and then kiss the cross, and swear again, and then kiss the cross. And is there any people on earth who are more infamous for this than the Scots, against whose hypocrisy God has given so great a testimony? A hypocrite hath two hands, the one to embrace, and the other to stab with, as Joab; he hath two tongues, with Judas, the one to salute Christ, and another to betray Christ; he hath two faces, with Janus, one looks backward, and the other forward. A hypocrite hath two hearts, with the Israelites, he can cry, 'Hail king Solomon, hail king Adonijah;' like Apuleius' parrot, 'Hail Augustus the emperor, hail Antony,' Ave Auguste imperator, ave Antoni; all which speaks them out to be the worst of sinners.

Reason 6. The sixth and last reason is this, Because hypocrites fight against Christ with his own weapons. They fight against God with his own gifts that he hath bestowed upon them, as David fought against Goliath with his own sword; or as Jehu fought against Jehoram with his own men. Thus did the scribes and Pharisees, Spira and Judas, fight against Christ to their own eternal overthrow. The hypocrite will fight against God with that knowledge, wisdom, light, and understanding which God hath given him, though he dies eternally for it. Julian the apostate fought against Christ with his own weapons; and through the strength of his parts he prevailed more by persuading than by enforcing, and by enticements than by torments, to the ruin of Christians. Hypocrites fight against God with his own weapons, and dare heaven, and therefore God will cast them to hell.

2. The second thing that I am to do, is to discover to you what hypocrites are that God is so severe in his judgment against. The Greek word **■ποκριτης**, signifies stage-players. A hypocrite is a slave in king's robes; he is a devil in angel's apparel; he is a wolf in a sheep's skin. As Cicero saith of Epicurus, that he was no philosopher in truth, but put on the bare name of a philosopher; so I may say, a hypocrite is no saint, no holy man in truth, but one that puts on the name of a saint, and outwardly appears to be a saint, though inwardly he is a devil incarnate. The Hebrew word **■ ■ ■**, that is rendered a hypocrite, signifies to dissemble, and defile, or pollute: Hypocrites are the greatest dissemblers in the world; they dissemble with God, with men, and with their own souls; and as they are the greatest dissemblers, so they are the greatest defilers in the world; they defile all places and company where they come; they defile all duties, mercies, and ordinances they touch. But I shall shew you more fully what he is in these six following things:—

[1.] First, Hypocritical hearts are proud, vain-glorious hearts. Every man's silver is but brass to theirs, and every man's light is but darkness to theirs; and no men's duties and abilities are comparable to theirs. The proud and vain-glorious hypocrite, Jehu-like, says, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,' 2Ki 10:16. A sincere heart loves to do much for Christ, and not to be seen by any but Christ. Jehu's zeal is but the shadow of zeal, as all hypocrites' virtues are but the shadows of virtues, and yet the hypocrite, Narcissuslike, falls in love with his own shadow. The hypocrite loves to see the hat move, and the knee to bow, and men to cry, Rabbi, rabbi, in the market-place, Mat 23:5-7. Charis, a soldier, was so proud because of the wound he gave Cyrus, that shortly after he went mad, saith Plutarch; and Menecrates was so proud because he cured many patients which others could not, that he called himself Jupiter; so hypocrites are proud, and swell with the thoughts of their own worth and doings, that they cry up and set up themselves above others: Luk 18:11-12, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,' &c. 'I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess;' Isa 65:5, which say, 'Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am

holier than thou.'

[2.] Secondly, Hypocrites, they do always cover their cruel and bloody intentions with specious and religious pretences. Herod, a notorious hypocrite, covers his intentions of murdering Christ, with pretences of worshipping Christ; and those in Ezr 4:1-24 cover their intentions of pulling down the temple, with pretences of help [in] building the temple. They pretend to build the temple, and yet they intended to pull down the temple; and so did Jezebel, in that 1Ki 21:1-29; and so Ishmael covers his bloody intention of murdering, with weeping, Jer 41:1-18. A hypocrite will draw a fair glove upon a foul hand; he is like the serpent that stings without hissing; they will kiss, and kill you; they will kiss, and betray you; they will stroke you, and cut your throat. There is nothing more evident in experience and Scripture than that hypocrites have all along covered their bloody and cruel designs with religious pretences. Parsons, when he had plotted that matchless villainy the Powder-plot, he sets out his book of resolutions as if he had been made up all of devotions. Hypocrites are like the Italians, that will hug and embrace you in those arms they intend to imbrue in your dearest blood.

[3.] A hypocritical heart is a subtle heart, a deceitful heart. What is said of Jonadab, 2Sa 13:2, that he was a very subtle man, that may I say of all hypocrites; they are very subtle men; by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple, drawing them unawares into the lion's paw, as Mohammed did. The hypocrite is a cloud without rain, a blossoming tree without fruit, a star without light, a shell without a kernel. The hypocrite is like the fruit of Sodom, that without is very fair, but within is nothing but dust. The hypocrite is like the images Lucian speaks of, that were bravely wrought over with silver and pearl, but within are filled up with the meanest and basest things, as pieces of wood, pitch, mortar, &c; whereas a sincere heart is like Brutus his staff, thorn without and gold within; or like that ark, gold within and goat's hair without.

[4.] Fourthly, again, Hypocrites never do good out of love to God, but out of designs to advantage themselves, Mat 23:14, and Mat 6:1-3. The hypocrite very seldom follows Maximilian's counsel, Tene mensuram et respice finem, Keep thyself within compass, and always have an eye to the end of thy life and actions. Jehu makes a great deal of stir; he pretends to be very zealous for God; he destroys idolaters, but not idolatry; and all this was only that he might come to the crown. Mr Knox reports of some noblemen in Scotland who seemed very forward for Reformation, but their design was merely for spoil, and for their private commodity; but, saith he, they were very licentious, they greedily griped the possessions of the church, and would not lack their part of Christ's coat. And Mr Blair, a great counsellor of Scotland, being under great horrors of conscience, professed that he pretended to religion only to get wealth. I have read of a prince that was of no religion but that which was for his own advantage, and that would advance his own interest. Truly there is no hypocrite that breathes, that doth any good, but he hath some carnal design in it.

[5.] Fifthly, A hypocrite will not acknowledge: Job 36:13, 'The hypocrite crieth not when God bindeth him.' The Hebrew word, annegun, that is here rendered 'cry,' comes from a Hebrew root, which signifies to make no noise. A hypocrite will not acknowledge the justice and the righteousness of God against him; he will not cry, he will make no noise. Although God's hand be sore upon him and against him, he will not say, This is the justice and the righteousness of God; though God's hand be lifted up against him, yet he makes no noise; though God binds him and

deals with him as prisoners are bound and dealt with—for so the Hebrew signifies—yet they will make no noise. In Isa 26:11, ‘When thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see and be ashamed.’ The word, רָאָה, signifies to ‘see’ with the greatest exactness and curiosity that can be, to see with the eye and contemplate with the mind: he will not see. Ay, but, saith God, before I have done with him, I will make him see with his eye, and contemplate on my judgments with his mind. He shall see: Jer 5:10-12, ‘Go ye up upon the walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: and take away her battlements; for they are not the Lord’s.’ The Hebrew word, בָּתִּיּוֹת, natash, that is rendered ‘battlements,’ signifies the young suckers that grow up about a plant; and by a similitude here may be understood the counter-scarf towers and leaning places. The battlements were to compass the house round about, to keep men from falling off; for among the Jews their houses had flat roofs, on which men walked, and from thence they called and spake to the people: to which Christ alludes in Mat 10:27. The height of the battlement was not to be less than ten hands’-breadths, and it was to be strong, that men might lean thereon, and not fall to maim any. Take away her battlements, take away her succours, her towers, her leaning-places, for they are not the Lord’s. But why will God strip them of their strength, and succours, and leaning or resting-places? Mat 10:11, ‘For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the Lord.’ ‘They have deceived me, they have deceived me;’ so it is in the Hebrew, to shew that they have most notoriously and frequently dealt guiltfully, deceitfully, and fraudulently with God. But how does this appear, that they have dealt thus with God? It is answered in Mat 10:12, ‘They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine.’ The Hebrew word that is rendered here ‘belied,’ ‘they have belied the Lord,’ [שָׁקַרְתִּים,] signifies ‘to deny.’ So it is used in Gen 18:15, ‘Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not.’ It is the same word that is here rendered belied. ‘They have denied the Lord, and said, It is not he;’ they have denied the justice and righteousness and severity of God in his judgments against them; and this is evident in the third verse of this chapter, ‘O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them.’ The Hebrew word signifies ‘to smite,’ [נָחָה, nacha,] ‘to wound,’ ‘to kill.’ Lord, thou hast smitten them, thou hast wounded them, thou hast killed some of them, but they have not grieved. The Hebrew word signifies [חָלָה, halu a hol] ‘to pain,’ ‘to make sick.’ Though I have dealt thus severely with them, yet they are not pained, they are not sick, but bear up hard against all the blows and wounds I have given them. ‘Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.’ The Hebrew word that is here rendered ‘refused,’ signifies to refuse with the greatest pride, disdain, and scorn that may be, Eze 17:14. Oh! says God, though I have consumed them, yet they proudly, disdainfully, and scornfully refuse to receive correction. The word that is here rendered ‘correction’ signifies both chastening and teaching, the one being the end of the other. Though my rod has been heavy upon them, yet they have proudly and scornfully refused to be taught by my rod; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

[6.] Sixthly, Hypocrites despise those that, in their apprehension, are in outward form below them, and envy those that, in the spirit and power of holiness and godliness, do excel them: Luk 18:11-12, ‘God, I bless thee that I am not as this publican: I fast twice in the week.’ He pleads his negative righteousness, and he stands on his comparative goodness, ‘I am not as this publican: I fast twice in the week,’—on Thursdays, because on that day Moses went up to mount Sinai; and on Mondays, because on that day he came down, saith Drusius. Hypocrites are better at shewing their worth than their wants; they are as notable at discommending others, as they are at

commending themselves; at abasing others, as at exalting themselves; at lessening others, as at greatening themselves. They envy every sun that outshines their own. Let a man excel them in his enjoyments of God, in his communion with God, in acting for God, &c., he shall be envied and hated to the death, John 11:47-48. Androgeus, son of Minos, king of Crete, was slain by the Athenians, and Megarenes, for envy, because he overcame all in exercises of arms. So Socrates, that in the judgment of Apollo was the wisest man on earth, and in many moral excellencies did outshine all others, which the eye of envy could not endure, which occasioned him to say, 'My accusers nor my crime cannot kill me, but envy only, which hath and will destroy the worthiest ever.' The emperor Adrian oppressed some, and slew others, that excelled in any art or faculty, that he might be held the only skilful artist. Aristotle is said to have burnt and abolished the books of many philosophers, that he might be the more admired: even so do hypocrites envy all that do excel them in any spiritual or moral excellencies.

There are divers other characters that I might give of those hypocrites that God is so severe in his judgments against: as (1) that they are most zealous about the external part of duties, and regard not the spiritual part of duties, Isa 1:11-18; Mat 23:25-27; John 18:28. And (2) that they are seemingly for one thing and really for another, as Herod, Pilate, and Judas were. And (3) that they are uneven-carried hearts; they do not carry themselves evenly in all places, nor in all companies, nor at all times. Witness the scribes and pharisees. A sincere heart is like a die, which is every way even, and, like itself, turn it or throw it how you will: but the hypocrite is like the cameleon, that changes his colours—now he is this, and now he is that; sometimes you shall have him an angel at home and a devil abroad, and sometimes a devil at home and an angel abroad. Hypocrites are like Cicero: they will speak to please Pompey and Cæsar too.

(5.) Hypocrites will rather use spectacles to behold other men's sins, than looking-glasses to behold their own, Mat 7:3-5. Hypocrites mind not Conradus' motto, *Omnium mores, tuos imprimis, observato*, Observe all men's carriages, but especially thy own.

(6.) Hypocrites trade not with God upon the credit of Christ's love, blood, righteousness, and intercession, but upon the credit of their own prayers, tears, desires, and endeavours, Isa 58:3.

(7.) Hypocrites usually hold not on in religious duties under the want of outward encouragements, and against outward discouragements, John 6:66; Job 27:10.

(8.) Hypocrites are heartless in all religious duties, Isa 29:13; Hos 7:14; Eze 33:31-32.

(9.) Hypocrites are not only heartless in duties, but they are also partial in duties. The less they will do, the greater they will not do, Mat 23:23. So Saul, Herod, Judas, and Pilate, &c. It shall suffice that I have named these things. Let us now come to the uses of the point, which is the main thing that I have in my eye.

Beloved, God hath in a very eminent manner made good this truth to a dissembling nation before all the world, even upon them that in the pride of their hearts did say, We have them in Essex's pound, and that did debate what terms to offer to your army for the delivery up of your arms. I confess, God hath all along made my soul tender of them that fear his name in that nation, so that I have improved that interest that I have in heaven for their good; yet I say for the generality of that nation, they are known round about to be a dissembling nation. And truly what I have seen them lately act, is but suitable to that character that is given of them in those parts where I have

travelled. But the main thing that my heart is most upon is to present unto you those choice things that the great and glorious appearance of God against the hypocritical nation, and for your safety, does bespeak of you; and they are these:—

[1.] First, Thankfulness. Oh bless that God that hath given you life, when your enemies had passed upon you the sentence of death. Of all the mercies that you have had, is not this the most big-bellied mercy? Ah, the mercies that are in the belly of this mercy, the city mercy, the country's mercy, the family mercies, the soul mercies, that are in the belly of this mercy! Are not all your former mercies, and all future desired mercies, to be found in the belly of this mercy? Besides, is it not an unexpected mercy? Your army at that time did not expect it till they were engaged; many of your friends here did not at that time look for it; and most men, when the first news of it came, could not believe it. And will not you be thankful for it? Was it not a mercy that came in after solemn appeals and prayers made to the God of your mercies, that he would deal with you according to the righteousness of your cause, and according to the uprightness of his people, that were in their sincere desires and endeavours tender of his glory? And will you not be thankful for it? Was it not a mercy given in upon the account of Christ pleading at the right hand of his Father, for them that were as sheep appointed for the slaughter? And will you not be thankful for it? Has not his giving in of this mercy been a means to weaken the hands, the hopes, the counsels, the strength of your enemies? And will you not be thankful for it? Has not the giving in of this mercy given you a further and a greater advantage to honour God, and lift up Christ, and make sure the things that belong to your peace, and to do good to the saints, and to serve your generation? And will you not be thankful for it? Can you look upon it as clothed with all its glorious circumstances, and not be thankful for it? As God looks upon his people's sins, so they should look upon his mercies: he looks upon their sins as clothed with their circumstances; they sinned at the sea, even at the Red Sea, Psa 106:7. In the Hebrew it is at the sea, in the sea, when the waters were as walls, on their right hand and on their left. Now as God looks upon his people's sins as clothed with circumstances, so should you look upon all his mercies as they are clothed with circumstances. O beloved, to have so great a mercy at such a time, when your enemies were strongest, and your army weakest, and under many wants, and temptations, and weaknesses, &c., this should engage you to everlasting thankfulness. That worms and dead men should thresh the mountains, is a mercy that bespeaks the greatest thankfulness; and yet, oh how few are there that return thanks to God for this mercy! Amongst the ten lepers that were cleansed, one returned to give thanks; but were it not well if there were one out of twenty that in good earnest did return thanks for this so great a mercy? A thankful man is worth his weight in gold. Most men are like the philosopher that forgot his own name; so most men in our days forget their own mercies. Too many are like Pythagoras' scholars, that speak not in five years, or rather, like the dumb man in the Gospel, they speak not at all. Many men in our days have a spiritual palsy in their tongues, so as they cannot call mercies mercy; but, with the murmuring Israelites, they call mercies miseries, and saviours destroyers, and deliverers murderers. When the Jews would not be thankful for mercies, the prophet calls out, 'Hear, O heavens, and hearken, O earth,' Isa 1:2; and Jeremiah calls out, 'O earth, earth, earth,' Jer 22:29; and Micah calls out to the mountains, and the foundations of the earth, Mic 6:2. And truly if for this mercy you will not be thankful, I think the heavens and the earth, and the foundations thereof, will another day be witness against you. The manifestations of God in his providence are the most precious things in the world; and had we as many tongues as Argus had eyes, they were all too little to set forth the goodness of God for his mercy. It was a good

saying of Augustine, 'If God give prosperity, praise him, and it shall be increased; if adversity, praise him, and it shall be removed, or at least sanctified.' It is sad to think that among so many that pretend to the Spirit, there should be so many that have such a spiritual palsy on their tongues, as that they cannot be thankful for the works of the Spirit. The stork is said to leave one of her young ones where she hatcheth them, and the elephant to turn up the first twig toward heaven when she comes to food, and both do this out of some instinct of gratitude: and shall not Christians be thankful for greater mercies? When Tamerlane had taken Bajazet, amongst other questions he asked him whether ever he had given God thanks for making him so great an emperor. He confessed ingenuously he had never thought of it. Ah, it were well if we had none such among us, that do never think of the great things that God has done for them!

[2.] The second thing that the glorious appearances of God for you does bespeak of you, is to be greatly magnanimous for God. Right Honourable and beloved, God does expect that you, and all his people in the land, should appear magnanimous for him. God does now expect that all his people should be taken up with those things that have most of God, and most of Christ, and most of heaven in them, and for these his people should be most magnanimous. Your feet should be where other men's heads are. It was a good saying of one, Vere magnum est magna facere, et teipsum putare nihil, Great men should do great things, and count themselves nothing, [Euseb.] As Cleopatra said to Mark Antony, It is not for you to be a-fishing for gudgeons, but for towns, and forts, and castles: so I say, It is not for you, for whom God has done such great things, to exercise yourselves about poor, low things, but about high, noble, and honourable things, that may answer to those great things God has done for you. You must not be like the king of Navarre, who told Beza that he would launch no further into the sea, than he might return at pleasure to the shore, though he did shew some countenance to religion. It was an excellent saying of Pacunius, 'I hate the men that are idle in deed and philosophical in word.' God loves, saith Luther, curistas, not quæristas. When Demosthenes was asked what was the first part of an orator, he answered, Action; what the second, he answered, Action; what the third, he answered, Action. Oh that Severus the emperor's motto might be still in your eye, and still upon your hearts, Laboremus, Let us be doing.

[3.] The third thing that the glorious appearance of God for you does bespeak of you, is to take heed of great sins after these great mercies, Ezr 9:13-14. David, Lot, Solomon, and Noah, fell foulest after great mercies. Of all sins, sin after great mercies are most provoking to the God of mercy: 1Ki 11:9, 'The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned back from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared to him twice.' The Hebrew word that is rendered 'angry' is from a root that signifies to snuff and look pale—שָׁחַח, anaph—with anger, to shew how greatly God was angry with him. O beloved, if God snuff with anger against Solomon, because his heart was turned back from that God who had appeared gloriously to him twice, what tongue can express how the anger of the Lord will burn against you, if your hearts should be turned back from him that hath appeared gloriously, not only twice, but many hundred times to you, and for you? I beseech you seriously consider that great sins after great mercies will cloud the face of God, and make the greatest wounds in conscience, and imbitter present mercies, and prevent future mercies, and cloud your evidences, and weaken your graces, and raise your fears, and heighten your enemies' hopes, and strengthen their hands; and therefore take heed of great sins after great mercies. Boleslaus, king of Poland, when he was to speak or do anything of importance, he would

take out a little picture of his father that he carried about him, and kiss it, and say, Dear father, I wish I may do nothing unworthy of thy name. Ah souls! this should be your constant wishes and endeavours, that you may do nothing unworthy of that glorious name that has done such glorious things for you.

[4.] The fourth thing that the glorious appearance of God for you does bespeak of you, is to own God, and cleave to God in the face of all discouragements, who has owned you in the face of all your weakness and unworthiness and unrighteousness before the whole world. God, by his owning of you, does with open mouth bespeak you to own him. Caleb owns God, and follows God in the face of all discouragements; and this was to him a praise and an honour, Num 14:24. The word that is rendered 'followed' is taken from a ship under sail—, male—which is carried strongly with the wind, as if it feared neither rocks nor sands. So Caleb followed the Lord in the face of all discouragements, without any slavish fears; and this was his crown, and for this he shall enjoy that mercy that most were shut out from. You for whom God has done such great things, must be resolved with Dionysius, come life, come death, to worship none but the God of heaven and earth. Thus did those worthies in Dan 3:1-30 and those in Heb 11:1-40. And thus did Chrysostom, Luther, Calvin, Galeacius [Carraciolus,] and Basil the Great, with many more, own Christ and cleave to Christ in the face of all discouragements. And why should you degenerate from their examples, which is your highest honour to follow? Oh, shall Cleombrotus, in hope of immortality, tumble himself down a hill, and Socrates smile upon his hemlock, and Scævola burn his own hand without ever gnashing his teeth at it, and Marcus Cato scorn his own life because given him by his enemy, and tear off the salve from his bleeding side; and will not you do as much, yea, more, for that glorious God who has wrought so many wonders for you? Oh let not God have cause to say, Lo, here is a parliament, here is a commonwealth, that I have owned in the face of all their sins, unworthiness, and unrighteousness; and they have disowned me when troubles and trials have been upon them. There is nothing that takes God more than men's owning of him in the face of all discouragements: Jer 2:2, 'Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.' It is nothing to follow God in a paradise; but it is a glorious, God-taking thing to follow him in a wilderness.

[5.] Fifthly, The glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak you to set some character of favour and love upon the instruments of your mercy. I need not tell you that it was the custom of the Romans to reward and crown their soldiers for their good services, but because I understand your hearts have been and are drawn out this way, I shall say no more to this, but sit down satisfied, that you will honour them whom God has honoured, and bless them whom God has blessed, though all the world should slight and curse them.

[6.] Sixthly, The glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak you to improve your time and opportunities for the honour and advancement of the glory of that God that hath taken all opportunities to set all his golden wheels, his glorious attributes, at work for your good, and for all our safety and security. Oh do much for that God in a little time, who hath done exceedingly much for you in so short a time. Time is a jewel more worth than a world. Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent that men must be accountable for as well as any other talent. Cato, a heathen, held that an account must be given not only of our labour, but also of our leisure. You have no lease of your lives, and death is not bound to give you warning before it gives you

that deadly blow that will send you to everlasting misery or everlasting felicity. Of all talents, time is the hardest well to improve. Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, To use and employ a man's time well. It was a notorious reproach to Domitian the Roman emperor, that he spent much of his time in killing of flies. And it was a reproach to Artaxerxes, that he spent his time in making hafts for knives, and to Solyman the great Turk that he spent his time in making notches of horn for bows, and to Archimedes that he spent his time in drawing lines in the dust, when he should have been fighting for his life with his sword. Ah, Right Honourable, was their spending their time so vainly such a reproach to them, and will your misspending your time be an honour to you? Oh spend your time so as God may have much honour, the commonwealth much good, and your souls much comfort and boldness when you shall stand before the judgment-seat, where princes must lay their crowns, and parliament-men must put off their robes. Oh, when you have spent your time in the parliament, or in the committees, in shewing your wit and the strength of your parts to oppose and cross one another, when you should have all readily, cheerfully, and willingly agreed together for common justice and righteousness towards all men,—oh then cry out with Titus Vespasian, 'O my friends, I have lost a day! I have lost a day!' Bernard brings in the vain person thus lamenting himself: Oh what a wretch! what a beast! what a mad devil was I! so woefully to waste the marrow and fat of my precious time in sinful pleasures and delights! I have read of one that, upon his dying-bed, would have given a world for time, he crying out day and night, Call time again! oh, call time again! The desires of my soul to God for you shall be, that you may so improve your time, that you may never have cause lamentingly to cry out, 'Call time again! oh, call time again!' Ah, beloved, have not you need to improve your time, who have much work to do in a short time: your souls to save, a God to honour, a Christ to exalt, a hell to escape, a race to run, a crown to win, temptations to withstand, corruptions to conquer, afflictions to bear, mercies to improve, and your generation to serve.

[7.] The glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak you to rest and rely upon God in future distress, notwithstanding all your unrighteousnesses, weaknesses, and disadvantages. O beloved, this glorious appearance of God in the mount for you, does for ever bespeak you to rest and rely upon him in your longest day of trouble, and in your darkest night of sorrow. David, in the day of sore distress, does heighten his confidence by former experiences; and so do those worthies in 2Co 1:8-10. There is nothing that engages God to act high for his people when they are low, like resting and relying upon him; as you may see in that 2Ch 13:16-18 verses compared. It is a scripture worthy to be writ in letters of gold. Abijah and his people slew five hundred thousand chosen men, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. The Hebrew word that is rendered 'relied,' **שָׁכַן**, is from a root that signifies to 'lean' or 'rest' upon the Lord, as a man does upon a staff or rest. Oh, nothing does engage God to act for a people like leaning upon God, 2Ch 14:8-15 compared with 2Ch 16:7-9. Now if you would lean upon God in your distress, then keep open the eye of your faith. So long as faith sees in God a fulness of abundance—in [Deo] plenitudo abundantiae et plenitudo redundantiae—and a fulness of redundancy, the soul cannot but lean on God.

[8.] Eighthly, Another thing that the glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak of you and the whole nation, is to set light by all worldly glory. You are not ignorant how that hypocritical nation began to pride themselves, and to exalt themselves, and glory in their arm of flesh; but in

the things wherein they did deal proudly, the Lord was above them, and has laid their glory in the dust. Oh it is high time to set light by all earthly glory, when God hath taken counsel to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth, Isa 23:9. The word that is rendered 'purposed' may be read counselled: the Lord has agreed upon it in counsel, to stain. In the Hebrew it is 'to pollute' the pride of all glory, &c.

Severus the emperor, finding the emptiness and insufficiency of all earthly happiness, cries out at last, *Omnia expertus fui et nihil expedit*, I have tried all things, and find no solid content in anything. Charles the Fifth, in his old age, he curses his honours, and curses his victories, &c., saying, *Abite hinc, abite longe*, Get you hence, get you far away! Severus his soldier could say, when one asked him why he did not wear his crown as the other soldiers did, A Christian ought not to wear his crown in this life; *Non decet Christianum in hac vita coronari*.

[9.] The ninth thing that the glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak of you, is to live to him that has given you your lives as a prey. God calls with open mouth upon you, and upon all the saints in England, to live to him who hath with his glorious arm saved you, when your proud enemies had passed the sentence of death upon you. God has therefore given you your lives for a prey, that you may no longer live to yourselves, nor to the lusts of the flesh, but to him who lives for ever, as the apostle speaks in that 2Co 1:8-12; Deu 10:12, 'And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul?' The Hebrew word that is rendered 'require,' 'What does the Lord thy God require of thee,' signifies to ask, to request, to petition. Oh! God does ask, and request, and as it were petition men that they would live out all his goodness, and live up to all those glorious things that he has done for them. Cyprian, Jerome, and others, complained of the Christians in their time, that they were angels to see to, but wolves in their conversation. *Non in verbis sed in factis res nostra religionis consistunt*, saith Peter Martyr. Oh that we had no cause to complain of such in our days! Noble Mirandola said, it were great madness not to believe the gospel, now it is everywhere believed; yet a greater matter it is not to doubt of the truth of the gospel, and yet to live so as if without all doubt it were false. Plutarch laughed at the folly of such in his time as would be accounted as wise as Plato, and yet would be drunk in the company of Alexander. But oh that our eyes were a fountain of tears, that we might weep for those that pretend to be Christians, and yet live like heathens. Seneca, a heathen, gave this advice to his friend Lucilius, that he should live with men as if God saw him, and pray to God as if men heard him. He liked not such as are always about to live better, but never begin to live better. I shall conclude this with that counsel Periander king of Corinth gave: Live in such sort, saith he, that thou mayest have honour by thy life, and that men may count thee happy after death: *Semper victuri*.

[10.] The tenth thing that the glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak of you, and that is that you be constantly careful to decline those sins which was the Scots' overthrow and ruin; and I think that all those that are got above their pride, and passions, and envy, &c., will judge the sins that did usher in their ruin to be these:—(1.) Hypocrisy; (2.) Resting and boasting in an arm of flesh; (3.) Their sinful compliances with those against whom wrath is gone forth: as Isa 14:19-22; Jer 31:2; (4.) Their hatred and malice against those that in an outward form did differ from them, though they were never so precious to Christ, and eminent in the power and practice of godliness, which sin shall not go unpunished, Isa 60:14, Isa 66:5, and Isa 36:10-11; (5.) Their self-love and

covetous desires to enrich themselves, and make themselves great in others' ruins, and under the pretence of being the king and covenant; (6.) Their ingratitude to God, and to the parliament and commonwealth of England, who have so many ways shewed their love to them in the days of their distress, and to that army who was formerly instrumental to pull them as brands out of the fire. As you would avoid their judgments, take heed of their sins. I hope that none of you that hear me this day are of Radbode (?) king of Phrisia's mind, who, coming to the font to be baptized, asked what was to become of all his ancestors? Answer was made, that they died in a fearful state, unbaptized. He replied, that he would rather perish with the multitude, than go to heaven with a few. You are wise, and know how to apply it.

[11.] The next thing that the glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak of you, is to endeavour with all your might to make a conquest of all those enemies that be within you. Now the Lord has made so glorious a conquest over those proud enemies that rose up against you, I beseech you consider, of all conquests the conquest of enemies within is the most honourable and the most noble conquest; for in conquering of those enemies that be within, you make a conquest over the devil and hell itself. Of all conquests that is the highest and the greatest that is over enemies within you: Pro 16:32, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' The word that is rendered 'ruleth,' signifies to 'conquer, and overcome,' (מָשַׁל, mashal.) It is this conquest that lifts a man up above all other men in the world. And as this is the most noble conquest, so it is the most necessary conquest. You must be the death of your sins, or they will be the death of your souls. Sin is a viper, that does always kill where it is not killed. There is nothing gained by making peace with sin, but repentance here, and hell hereafter. Every yielding to sin is a welcoming of Satan into our very bosoms. Alexander and many of the Persian kings conquered and commanded the whole world, and yet were commanded by their concubines, and by enemies within, which was the ruin of their souls. Valentinian the emperor said upon his death-bed, that among all his victories, one only comforted him; and being asked what that was, he answered, 'I have overcome my worst enemy, mine own naughty heart.' Ah! Right Honourable, when you shall lie upon a dying-bed, then no conquest will thoroughly comfort, but the conquest of your own sinful hearts. None were to triumph in Rome that had not got five victories; and he shall never triumph in heaven that subdueth not his five senses, saith Isidorus. Ah, souls! what mercy is it to be delivered from an enemy without, and to be eternally destroyed by an enemy within?

[12.] The next thing that the glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak of you, is to persevere and hold on in well-doing. As God holds on in doing you good, so you must hold on in well-doing for his glory: 'Be faithful to the death, and you shall have a crown of life,' Rev 2:10. Vincenti dabo. 'To him that overcometh will I give to sit down with me in my kingdom: as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his kingdom,' Rev 3:21. It is said of Sceva, that he so long resisted Pompey's army, that he had two hundred and twenty darts sticking in his shield, and lost one of his eyes, and yet gave not over till Cæsar came to his rescue. So, beloved, you must never leave standing for God, and contending for God, and acting for God, who still stands and contends and acts for you against all those that rise up against you. It was a good saying of Mr Bucer, Pietas quæ finem novit, non est vera pietas, That piety that has an end is no true piety. He that in a golden game, or in a golden race, shall run after flies or feathers, or faint before he comes to the goal, will lose not only his pains, but also the crown for which he runs. My desires to

the Lord shall be, that we may all so run as that we may obtain the crown.

[13.] Lastly, The glorious appearances of God for you do bespeak you to shew mercy to others. Now God has shewed such great mercy towards you, oh let 'the sighing of the prisoner' come before you, and the desires, the tears, the cries, the wounds, and the blood of poor distressed souls move your compassion towards them, that so you may do for all to the uttermost what you are able, that so their sorrows may be turned into joy, and sighing and mourning may flee away, and their souls may arise and call you blessed. The only way to have full barns, is to have charitable hands. The gainfullest art is almsgiving, saith Chrysostom. Whatsoever we lay out for them, we do but lay up for ourselves. Whatsoever we scatter to the poor, we gather for ourselves. Not getting, but giving, is the way to wealth. The poor man's hand is Christ's treasury, Christ's bank. Oh let not Christ's hand and Christ's treasury be empty! and yet be careful that what you cast into Christ's treasury be got in Christ's wages. It is better to gratify none, than to grate upon any one, saith Augustine. The Hebrew words signifying 'alms,' ■■■■■, (tsedakah,) properly signifies justice; to intimate to us that the matter of our alms should be goods justly gotten. Hence also the Jews call their alms-box, [Kuph ashel tsedaka,] the chest-behest of justice. O Right Honourable, shall the Persians, and many Indians, erect hospitals, not only for lame and diseased men, but also for aged, starved, or hurt birds, beasts, and such like creatures; and will not you do much more for those that have ventured their blood to save yours, and that are the price of the blood of Christ? It is storied up of Stephen, king of Hungary, and of Oswald, sometime king of England, that their right hands, though dead, never putrified, because much exercised in giving and relieving the poor and afflicted. Surely the names and souls of such that do look to quoad fontem, and to quoad finem, to do this duty from a right principle, to a right end, shall never die, but live for ever; which that all your names and souls may do, shall be my constant desire and prayer at the throne of grace. A BELIEVER'S LAST DAY IS HIS BEST DAY

NOTE The 'Believer's Last Day his Best Day,' originally published in 1651–52, passed through a great number of editions during the ten subsequent years and onward, though the various reprints are not designated in the title-pages. Our text is that of 1657, compared with another of 1660. The title-page is given below.* Appended to the Sermon was this Notice:—'Christian Reader,—Be pleased to pass by, or to correct with thy pen, the faults that have escaped by reason of the author's absence from the press.' The 'Believer's Last Day' is often found as an appendix to 'Heaven on Earth;' and perhaps nothing proves more completely the popularity of Brooks, than the large circulation and sustained vitality of such merely local and fugitive publications as the 'String of Pearls' and 'Believer's Last Day'—both funeral Sermons. With reference to the former,—'String of Pearls,'—I take this opportunity to give a curious 'Advertisement' concerning it, by Brooks's publisher, which is appended to the seventh edition of the 'Apples of Gold,' (1667.) It is as follows:—

'The Stationer to the Reader.

'This is to give notice that some dishonest booksellers, called land-pirates, who make it their practice to steal impressions of other men's copies—whose sin will surely find them out—have lately printed a false and imperfect impression of Mr Brooks his 'String of Pearls,' and have wronged both the author and me by false printing many words, and leaving out all the table of the chief heads, and of a bad paper and print, and crammed it into eight sheets, the true sort being

fifteen sheets, sold by John Hancock, in Broad-street, over against the Church.’—G.

* a

BELIEVERS Last Day is his Best Day. a

SERMON Preached at the Funerall of Mrs Martha Randoll, At Christs Church, London, June 28. 1651. By Thomas Brooks, Minister of the Gospel at Margarets Fish-street-hill.

Thou wilt guide me by thy Counsell, and after receive me to glory. Psa 73:24.

Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart. Psa 97:11.

Ejus est timere mortem, qui ad Christum nolit ire. Cyp.

Timor mortis peior, quam ipsa mors. Eras.

Senibus mors in januis, adolescentibus in insidiis. Ber.

LONDON:

Printed, and are to be sould by John Hancock at the first Shop in Popes-head-Alley, next to Cornhill. 1657. THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To my worthy and beloved Friends, Mr John Russel, and Mrs Martha, his wife; and to Mr Thomas Randoll; all happiness in this world and that which is to come. My dear and worthy Friends,—The ensuing sermon was preached upon your importunity, and printed also upon the same account. You know nothing would satisfy your spirits but the printing of it, which at last made me unwillingly willing to answer your desires; not that I did delight to deny your desires, nor because I prized it, but because I thought it not good enough for you, nor worthy of that weight that you laid upon it, it being but the fruit of some short broken meditations. I have now published these notes, which in all love I present to you. They were once in your ear, they are now in your eye, and the Lord keep them ever in your hearts! If there be anything in this sermon worth the having, it is not mine but the Lord's, through grace. I know that my best actions stand in need of sweet sweet odours, a golden censer.

Dear Friends, You know we must all fall in the wilderness of this world, be gathered to our fathers, go hence and be no more seen. Abraham and Sarah must part, Jacob and Rachel must be separated, David and his child must be severed. Our days are numbered, our period of time appointed, and our bounds we cannot pass. 'All flesh is as grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of the field,' Psa 103:15; therefore do not mourn as persons 'without hope,' neither be like Rachel that would 'not be comforted.' To that purpose take this counsel.

1. First, Dwell much upon the sweet behaviour of others under the loss of their near and dear relations. When God had passed the sentence of death upon David's child, 2Sa 12:20, he 'arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped; then he came to his own house, and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.' When his servants questioned this action, he answers, 'Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,' 2Sa 12:23. So when Aaron's sons were destroyed by fire for their offering up strange fire, Lev 10:1-2, Aaron holds his peace; he bridled his passions, and submitted sweetly and quietly to divine justice. So when it was told Anaxagoras that both his sons, which were all he had, were

dead, being nothing terrified therewith, he answered, Sciebam me genuisse mortales, I knew I begat mortal creatures. Dransi, people in Thrace, bury their children with great joy, but at their birth lament grievously, in regard of the miseries that are like to befall them while they live.

2. Secondly, In time of crosses, losses, and miseries, it is the wisdom of believers to look more upon the crown than upon the cross, to dwell more upon glory than upon misery, to eye more the brazen serpent that is lifted up, than the fiery serpent that bites and stings. Basil speaketh of some martyrs that were cast out all night naked in a cold frosty time, and were to be burned the next day, how they comforted themselves in this manner: 'The winter is sharp, but paradise is sweet; here we shiver for cold, but the bosom of Abraham will make amends for all.'³ Galen writes of a fish called Uranoscopos, that hath but one eye, and yet looks continually up to heaven. A Christian under the cross should always have an eye looking up to heaven, that so his soul may not faint, and he may give glory to God in the day of visitation. It is recorded of Lazarus, that after his resurrection from the dead he was never seen to laugh; his thoughts and affections were so fixed in heaven, though his body was on earth, that he could not but slight temporal things, his heart being set upon eternal things. A man, saith one, [Chrysostom,] would dwell in this contemplation of heaven, and be loath to come out of it. Nay, saith another, [Augustine,] a man might age himself in it, and sooner grow old than weary.

3. Thirdly, Compare your mercies and your losses together, and you shall find that your mercies will wonderfully outweigh your losses. You have lost one mercy, you enjoy many mercies. What is the loss of a wife, a child, or any other temporal mercy, to a soul's enjoyment of the favour of God, pardon of sin, peace of conscience, hopes of heaven, &c.? Besides, you enjoy many temporal mercies that many of the precious sons of Zion want, &c.

4. Fourthly, Consider seriously of the reasons of God's stripping his people of their nearest and their dearest mercies; and they are these:—

[1.] For a trial of the strength and power of their graces. It is not every cross nor every loss that tries the strength of a Christian's graces. Job held bravely in the face of many afflictions for a time, but when he was thoroughly wet to the skin, then he acts like a man rather void of grace, than like a man that did excel all others in grace. When God burns up the out-houses but leaves the palace standing, when he takes away the servant but leaves the child, when he gathers here a flower and there a flower out of men's gardens, but leaves the flowers that are the delight of their eyes and the joy of their hearts, they bear it patiently and sweetly; but when he burns up the palace, and takes away the child, and gathers the fairest flower in all our garden, then we usually shew ourselves to be but men, yea, to be weak men, passionately crying out, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!' 2Sa 18:33.

[2.] God passes the sentence of death upon men's dearest mercies, that himself may be more dreaded, and that his precious servants and their counsel may be the better minded and regarded. The Egyptians trembled not under several judgments, nor minded not what Moses and Aaron said, till God smote their firstborn, and then they tremble, and then the servants of the Lord and their counsel found better quarter with them than formerly they had done. Ah, friends! has the Lord smitten your firstborn, as I may say? then look to it, as you tender the honour of God, the advancement of the gospel, the peace of your own consciences, the stopping of the mouths of the wicked, and the gladding of those hearts that God would not have sadded, that God be more

dreaded, and that his servants and his services be more owned, loved, and regarded. The people of God, and the ordinances of God, are to God as his firstborn; and they that make light of God's firstborn, God will make as light of their firstborn. These Egyptians had slain Israel, God's firstborn, and therefore God smites their firstborn. My desire and prayer shall be that God's removing and taking away your firstborn, as I may say, may be the making of more room in your bosoms for God, Christ, saints, and ordinances, that so your great loss may be turned into the greatest gain. And certainly, if this physic, this potion that is given you by an outstretched hand from heaven do not work this, the next potion will be far more bitter, John 5:14.

[3.] God passes the sentence of death upon men's nearest and dearest mercies, that he may win them to a more complete and full dependence upon his blessed self. Man is a creature apt to hang and rest upon creature props: 'I looked on my right hand, and beheld,' saith the psalmist, 'but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul,' Psa 142:4. Well, what does he do now all props fail him? why, now he sweetly leans upon God: Psa 142:5, 'I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.' Cynægeirus, an Athenian captain, used great valour in the Persian war, pursuing his enemies that were laden with the rich spoil of his country, and were ready to set sail and be gone; he held the ship with his right hand, and when that was cut off, he held it with the left, that also being cut off, he held it with the stumps till his arms were cut off, and then he held it with his teeth till his head was cut off. It is the very temper of most men and women in the world—they will hold upon one prop, and if God cut off that, then they will catch hold on another, &c., till God cut off all their props, and then they will come and rest and centre in God, in whom are all their well-springs, Psa 87:7.

[4.] God strips his people of their dearest mercies, that he may work their hearts to a more strict and diligent search and examination of their own hearts and ways, that they may say with the church, 'Let us search and try our ways, and turn to the Lord our God,' Lam 3:39-40, Lam 3:48. The Hebrew word, **חַשַּׁב**, that is rendered 'search,' signifies to search as you would do to find out a disguised person that puts himself into a strange habit that he might not be discovered. When God's hand, when God's rod is upon our backs, our hands must be upon our hearts, and we must cry out, What evil have we done! what evil have we done! Seneca reports of one Sexius, who would every night ask himself three questions—(1.) What evil hast thou healed to-day? (2.) What vice hast thou stood against this day? (3.) In what part art thou bettered this day? When the storm beats strong upon you, you had need to see what Jonah is asleep at the bottom of your souls, that so, he being discovered and cast overboard, your souls may be safe, for in the drowning of your sins lies the security of your soul.

[5.] He strips his people of their dearest outward mercies, that they may be more compassionate toward those that are or shall be in the same condition with themselves. The Jews at this day, in their very nuptial feasts and mirth, break a glass with wine in remembrance of Jerusalem, saying, when they throw it down, Thus was Jerusalem broken; and what they spill in wine they fill with tears. Is it not a shame to have the same name, the same faith, the same Christ, the same profession, &c., and to desire always to tread on roses, to be embarked in this great ship of Christianity with so many brave spirits, and to go under hatches, to sleep like the outcasts and scorn of human nature? Saints should be like two lute strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck but the other trembles.

[6.] God strips his people of their nearest and dearest outward mercies, that they may the more prize and the better taste spiritual and heavenly mercies. He takes away uncertain riches, that they may the more prize certain riches; he takes away natural strength, that they may the more prize spiritual strength; he takes away the creature, that they may more prize their Saviour. Spiritual and heavenly things are of nearest and greatest concernment to you. Spirituals will only abide with you in all changes; spirituals can only satisfy your souls. The language of a gracious spirit is this, Ah, Lord! as what I have if offered to thee pleaseth not thee without myself, so the good things I have from thee, though they may refresh me, yet they cannot satisfy me without thyself, John 14:8.

5. The fifth and last word of counsel that I shall give you is this, Consider seriously and frequently, that God's taking away or removing of one mercy is but his making of way for another, and usually for a better mercy. He took from David a Michal, and gave him a wise Abigail; an Absalom, and gave him a Solomon. He took away the bodily presence of Christ from his disciples, but gave them more abundantly of his spiritual presence, which was far the choicer and the sweeter mercy. God will always make that word good, 'I will not leave you comfortless,' or as the Greek hath it, John 14:18, ■ρφ■vous ab ■ρφv■ 'I will not leave you as orphans, or fatherless children;' no, I will come and comfort you on every side, and I will make up all your wants, and be better to you than all your mercies: 'For your brass I will give you silver, and for your iron you shall have gold,' &c., Isa 60:17. To draw to a close, let that dead man or dead woman be lamented whom hell harboureth, whom the devil devoureth, whom divine justice tormenteth; but let those whose departed souls angels accompany, Christ embosometh, and all the court of heaven comes forth to welcome, account immortality a mercy, and be grieved that they are so long detained from the sweet company of Christ, &c.

I desire you, and all others that shall read what is here written, to overlook the mistakes of the printer, if you meet with any, I having no time to wait upon the press to correct what may be found amiss. The perusal and acceptance of what I here present in love, I shall leave [to] your judgments, and rest yours to love and serve in our dearest Lord,

Thomas Brooks. A SAINT'S LAST DAY IS HIS BEST DAY

Beloved, I am here at this time to speak a word to the living, my business being not to speak anything of the dead. Be pleased, therefore, to cast your eye upon

Ecc 7:1.

'A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth'.

I shall stand upon the latter part of this verse at this time:

'And the day of death than the day of one's birth.' The Greeks say, 'that the beginning of a man's nativity is the begetting of his misery.' In Job 14:1, 'Man that is born of a woman is born to trouble' and sorrow. The Hebrew word that is there rendered 'born,' ■■■■■, *jeludh*, signifieth also generated or conceived; to note to us that man is miserable as soon as he is warm in the womb; he comes crying into the world. Before ever the child speaks, he prophesies by his tears of his ensuing sorrows. And this made Solomon to prefer his coffin before his crown, the day of his dissolution before the day of his coronation. A *fletu vitam auspicatur*, saith Seneca. But not to hold you longer from what is mainly intended, the observation that I shall speak to at this time is this:—

That a believer's last day is his best day; his dying-day is better than his birthday. This will be a very sweet and useful point to all believers. I shall first demonstrate the truth that it is so, and then make some use of this point to ourselves.

1. The first thing that doth with open mouth speak out this truth is this, That death is a change of place. A believer when he dieth, he doth but change his place; he changeth earth for heaven, a wilderness for a Canaan, an Egypt for a land of Goshen, a dunghill for a palace: as it is said of Judas, that 'he went to his place,' Acts 1:25. A soul out of Christ is not in his place, beneath is his place. So when a believer dieth he goes to his place. Heaven, the bosom of Christ, is his place. And that speaks out the truth asserted, that a believer's dying day is his best day. A believer now is not in his place, 2Co 5:6, but his soul is still working and warring, and he cannot rest till he comes to centre in the bosom of Christ. This Paul well understood when he said, 'I long to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,' Php 1:23. I would fain weigh anchor, hoise sail, and away home. And upon this account those precious souls groaned for deliverance, 2Co 5:2, 'For this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed with our house which is from heaven.' What is the ground? Why, it is this, 'While we are in the body we are absent from the Lord,' 2Co 5:6. We be not in our place, and therefore we groan to be at home—that is, to be in heaven, to be in the bosom of Christ, which is our proper place, our most desirable home.

2. The second thing which doth demonstrate the truth asserted, is this, That death is a change of company. The best that breatheth in this world must live with the wicked, and converse with the wicked, &c.; and this is a part of their misery; it is their hell on this side heaven. This stuck upon the spirit of David: Psa 12:5, 'Woe is me that I am constrained to be in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar,' &c. And so Jer 9:2, 'Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them, for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.' And this was that that did vex and tear Lot's righteous soul: 2Pe 2:7-8, 'His soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' The word βαστάνιζεν—vide Bezam—signifies to 'rack;' he was racked to see their unlawful deeds. Oh, but death is a change of company. A man doth change the company of profane persons, of vile persons, &c, for the company of angels, and the company of weak Christians for the company of just men made perfect. That is a remarkable place, Heb 12:22-23, 'We are come to mount Sion,' saith the apostle, 'and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.' Here is a change indeed. Death is a change of company as well as a change of place. And if this be but well weighed, it must needs be granted that a believer's dying day is better than his birthday.

3. Death is a change of employment. A believing soul when he dies, changeth his work and employment. I open it thus: The work of a believer in this world lies in praying, groaning, sighing, mourning, wrestling, and fighting, &c. And we see throughout the Scripture that the choicest saints, that have had the highest visions of God, have driven this trade; they have spent their time in praying, groaning, mourning, wrestling, and fighting: Eph 6:12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' The truth is, the very life of a believer is a continual warfare, and his business is to be in the field always. They have to deal with subtle enemies, malicious enemies, wakeful enemies, and watchful enemies; with such enemies that threw down

Adam in paradise, the most innocent man in the world, and that threw down Moses, the meekest man in the world, and Job, the patientest man in the world, and Joshua, the most courageous man in the world, and Paul, the best apostle in the world, &c. A Christian's life is a warfare. Job saith, 'All the time of my warfare (■■■■) will I wait till my change come,' Job 14:14,—I am still a-fighting, saith Job, with lusts and corruptions within, and with devils and men abroad; 'All the time of my warfare will I wait till my change come.' So in the 2Ti 4:8, 'I have fought the good fight of faith,' &c. And so in the 2Ti 2:4, 'No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life,' &c. Death is a change of employment. It changeth this hard service, this work that lies in mourning, wrestling, and fighting, for joying and singing hallelujahs to the Almighty. Now no prayers, but praises; no fighting and wrestling, but dancing and triumphing. Can a believing soul look upon this glorious change, and not say, Surely 'better is the day of a believer's death than the day of his birth'? Death is the winding-sheet that wipes away all tears from the believer's eyes, Rev 7:9.

4. Death is a change of enjoyments, as well as a change of employments. I shall express this in three considerable things:—

(1.) It is a change of our more dark and obscure enjoyment of God, for a more clear and sweet enjoyment of God. I say, the best believer that breathes in this world, that doth see and enjoy most of God, and the visions of his glory, yet he enjoys not God so clearly, but that he is much in the dark. The apostle Paul was a man that was high in his enjoyments of God, yet while he was here in the flesh, he did but see as through a glass. 'We see through a glass darkly'—1Co 13:12, ■τιν■γματι, in a riddle—but then face to face; then we shall know even as we are known. God told Moses that he could not see his face and live. The truth is, we are able to bear but little of the discoveries of God, there being such a mighty majesty and glory in all the spiritual discoveries of God. We are weak, and able to take in little of God. We have but dark apprehensions of God. Witness our tears, sighs, groans, and complaints, because we go forward and backward. We look on the right hand and on the left, as Job speaks, Job 23:8-9, and God hideth himself that we cannot see him. Plutarch tells of Eudoxus, that he would be willing to be burnt up presently by the sun, so he might be admitted to come so near it as to learn the nature of it. This is upon the heart of believers, Lord, let us be burnt up, so we may see thee more in all thy glorious manifestations; let us be poor, let us be anything, so that we may be taken up into a more clear enjoyment of thyself. Ask them that live highest in the enjoyment of God, What is your greatest burden? and they will tell you, This is our greatest burden, that our apprehensions of God are no more clear, that we cannot see him face to face whom our souls do dearly love. Oh, but now in heaven saints shall have a clear vision of God: there be no clouds nor mists in heaven.

(2.) It is a change of our imperfect and incomplete enjoyments of God, for a more complete and perfect enjoyment of him. As no believer hath a clear sight of God here, so no believer hath a full and perfect sight of God here. In Job 26:14, how little a portion is heard of him—speaking of God—and of that is heard, ah how little a portion is understood! So in 1Co 13:12, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' 'Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.' The soul, while it is here, dares not but say, I enjoy something of God, and that I would not want for a thousand worlds; yet my enjoyment is not full. If you should say, Souls, why do you wait upon God in this ordinance and that ordinance? they will answer, That we may enjoy God more fully. 'Fly away speedily, my beloved.' What is the meaning of this language but this: 'Oh that I might be filled with the fulness of God!' There is no complaints in heaven, because there

is no wants. Oh, when death shall give the fatal stroke, there shall be an exchange of earth for heaven, of imperfect enjoyments for perfect enjoyments of God; then the soul shall be swallowed up with a full enjoyment of God; no corner of the soul shall be left empty, but all shall be filled up with the fulness of God. Here they receive grace for grace, but in heaven they shall receive glory for glory. God keeps the best wine till last; the best of God, Christ, and heaven, is behind. Here we have but some sips, some tastes of God; fulness is reserved for a glorious state. He that sees most of God here sees but his back parts; his face is a jewel of that splendour and glory that no eye can behold but a glorified eye. Our hearts are like a vial-glass, which will not fill on a sudden, though it lie in the midst of the sea, where all fulness is. The best Christian is able to take in but little of God; their hearts are like the widow's vessel, that could receive but a little oil. Sin, the world, and creatures do take up so much room in the best hearts, that God is put upon giving out himself by a little and little, as parents do to their children; but in heaven God will communicate himself fully at once to the soul; grace shall then be swallowed up of glory.

(3.) It is a change of a more inconstant and transient enjoyment of God, for a more constant and permanent enjoyment of God. Here the saints' enjoyment of God is inconstant. One day they enjoy God, and another day the soul sits and complains in anguish of spirit. He that should 'comfort my soul stands afar off;' my glass is out, my sun is set, and what can make up the want of this sun? As all candle-light, star-light, and torch-light, cannot make up the want of the light of the sun; so when the Sun of righteousness hides his face, it is not all creature-comforts that can make up the want of his countenance. David sometimes could say that 'God was his portion, and his salvation, and his strong tower,' Psa 61:3, and what not; and yet presently cries out, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?' Psa 42:5. In one place he saith, 'I shall never be moved,' Psa 30:6; and yet presently it follows, 'Thou hiddest thy face from me, and I was troubled,' Psa 30:7. And this is the state of a believer in this world. But in heaven there shall no clouds arise between the Lord and a believing heart. God will not one day smile, and another day frown; one day take a soul in his arms, and another day lay that soul at his feet. This is his dealing with his people here. But in heaven there is nothing but kisses and embraces, nothing but a perpetual enjoyment of God. When once God takes the soul unto himself, it shall never be night with it any more—never dark with that soul more, &c.; all tears shall then be wiped away. That is a sweet word in the 1Th 4:17-18, 'And so shall we be ever with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words.' There are, saith Musculus, angels and archangels in heaven. Ay, but they do not make heaven; Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. It is heaven and happiness enough to see Christ, and to be for ever with Christ. Now, oh what a glorious change is this! Methinks these things should make us long for our dying-day, and account this life but a lingering death.

5. Consider this: Death is a change that puts an end to all external and internal changes. What is the whole life of a man, but a life of changes? Death is a change that puts an end to all external changes. Here you change your joy for sorrow, your health for sickness, your strength for weakness, your honour for dishonour, your plenty for poverty, your beauty for deformity, your friends for foes, your silver for brass, and your gold for copper. Now the comforts of a man are smiling, the next hour they are dying, &c. All temporals are as transitory as a hasty, headlong torrent, a ship, a bird, an arrow, a post, that passeth by. Man himself—the king of these outward comforts—what is he, but a mere nothing?—the dream of a dream, a shadow, a bubble, a flash, a

blast. Now death puts an end to all external changes: there shall be no more sickness, no more complaints, no more wants, &c. And then it puts an end to all internal changes. Now the Lord smiles upon the soul, and anon he frowns upon the soul. Now God gives assistance to conquer sin, anon the man is carried captive by his sin; now he is strengthened against the temptation, anon he falls before the temptation, &c. Job carried it out bravely in the midst of storms, and speaks like an angel; but when Job was wet to the skin, and the arrows of the Almighty stuck in him, and his day was turned into night, and his rejoicing into mourning, &c., then a man would have thought him a devil incarnate by his cursing. But death puts an end to internal changes, as well as external changes. Now the soul shall be tempted no more, sin no more, be foiled no more. Now ye may judge by this that a Christian's dying-day is his best day. Death is another Moses: it delivers believers out of bondage, and from making brick in Egypt. It is a day or year of jubilee to a gracious spirit—the year wherein he goes out free from all those cruel taskmasters which it had long groaned under. The heathen gods held death to be man's summum bonum, his chiefest good; therefore, when one of them had built and dedicated the temple at Delphos, he asked of Apollo for his recompense the thing that was best for man: the oracle told him that he should go home, and within three days he should have it—within which time he died. Thus the very heathens themselves have consented to this truth, that a man's dying-day is his best day.

6. Death is a change that brings the soul to an unchangeable rest. It is the bringing of the soul to bed—to a state of eternal rest. That is the last demonstration of the point, that a believer's dying-day is his best day. Now while we are here the soul is in a-toss. The best man in the world—that is highest and clearest in his enjoyments of God—is too often like to Noah's dove that found no rest: either he wants some external mercy or internal mercy, and will do so till the soul be swallowed up in the everlasting enjoyments of God; but death brings a man to an unchangeable rest. In Rev 14:13, 'I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead that died in the Lord.' Why? 'For they rest from their labours,' &c. Oh, saith he, write it down as a thing of worth and weight, 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours,' &c. Death brings the soul to unchangeable rest. In Isa 57:1-2, 'The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart, &c. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.' Oh, death is a change that brings a soul to unchangeable rest; it brings a soul a-bed. This was that that made Paul long 'to be dissolved, and to be with Christ;' and the Corinthians to groan for deliverance. It was a notable saying of blessed Cooper, 'Many a day have I sought death with tears; not out of impatience or distrust,' saith he, 'but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it.' You know how the martyrs hugged the stake, and welcomed every messenger of death that came to them, and clapped their hands in the midst of the flames. Death is a believer's coronation-day, it is his marriage-day. It is a rest from sin, a rest from sorrow, a rest from afflictions and temptations, &c. Death to a believer is an entrance into Abraham's bosom, into paradise, into the 'New Jerusalem,' into the joy of his Lord. And thus much for the doctrinal part. You see that it is clear, by these six things, that a believer's dying-day is his best day, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth.

I might by many other arguments demonstrate this truth to you, but let these suffice; because I would not unwillingly keep you longer from the use and application of the point—application being the life of all teaching. Now the

1. First use shall be this, Then never mourn immoderately at the death of any believer, let them be the most excellent and useful that ever lived. Death is to them the greatest gain; and it speaks out much selfishness in us to be more taken with the gain and benefit that redounds to us by their lives, than with the happiness and glory that redounds to them by their deaths. In the primitive times, when God had passed the sentence of death upon their dearest comforts, Christians did carry it at a more high, sweet, and noble rate than now-a-days they do. Remember this, death doth that, I say, in a moment, that no graces, no duties, nor no ordinances could do for a man all his lifetime; it frees a man from those diseases, corruptions, temptations, &c., that no duties, nor graces, nor ordinances could do. When Abraham came to mourn for his deceased Sarah, he mourned moderately for her, Gen 23:2, as is imported by a small caph in the word Libcothath, that signifies to weep; in that Hebrew word there is one little letter extraordinary, to note that Abraham wept but a little for her, not because she was old and overworn, as some Rabbins say, but because her dying-day was her best day. When Luther, that famous instrument of God, buried his daughter, he was not seen to shed a tear. So Mr Whately, who was famous in his time, whenas he had preached his own child's funeral sermon upon this subject, 'The will of the Lord be done,' he and his wife laid their own child in the grave. That is the first use, let us not mourn immoderately for any believer's death.

2. Then, in the next place, Fear not death. Compose your spirits; say not of death as that wicked prince said to the prophet, 'Hast thou found me, O my enemy?' 1Ki 21:20; but rather long for it, not to be rid of troubles, but that the soul may be taken up to a more clear and full enjoyment of God. Your dying-day is your best day. Good Jacob dies with a sweet composed spirit; he calls for his children, and blesseth and kisseth them, and gathers up his feet into his bed, and dies. Moses, that morning that the messenger came to him, and told him he must die, he goes up the hill, sees the land of Canaan at a distance, and dies. Cato, a heathen man, told Cæsar that he feared his pardon more than the pain that he threatened. Joseph built his sepulchre in his own garden. And some philosophers had their graves always open before their gates, that going out and coming in they might always think of death, for in life they found comforts to be rare, crosses frequent, pleasures momentary, and pains permanent. Believers, your dying-day is your best day. Oh, then, be not afraid of death, and that you may not, remember that it is not such a slight matter as some make it, to be unwilling to die. There is much reproach cast upon God by believers being unwilling to die. You talk much of God, heaven, and glory, &c., and yet when you should come to go and share in this glory, you shrug and say, Spare me a little. Is not this a reproach to the God of glory? But that this counsel may stick upon you, remember these five things:—

[1.] Christ's death is a meritorious death. Can a believer think upon the death of Christ as meriting peace with God, pardon of sin, justification, glorification, and yet be afraid to die? What! is the death of Christ thus meritorious, and shall we still be unwilling to depart?

[2.] Is not death a sword in your Father's hand? It is true, a sword in a madman's hand, or in an enemy's hand, might make one tremble; but when the sword is in the father's hands, the child doth not fear. Grant that death is a sword, yet why should the child fear and be afraid, when it is in the father's hand, that will be sure to handle it so as he shall not be hurt or cut by it.

[3.] Remember that Christ's death is a death-conquering death. He hath taken away the sting of death, that it cannot hurt you; and his death is a death-sanctifying and a death-sweetening death.

He hath by his death sanctified and sweetened death to us.

Death is a fall that came by a fall. To die is to be no more unhappy, if we consider death aright. Oh, saith one, that I could see death, not as it was, but as thou, Lord, hast now made it! It is the greatest monarch and the ancientest king of the world. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, saith St Paul. Oh! but the Lord Jesus hath, as it were, disarmed death, and triumphed over death. He hath taken away its sting, so that it cannot sting us, and we may play with it, and put it into our bosoms, as we may a snake whose sting is pulled out. The apostle, upon this consideration, challengeth death, and out-braves death, and bids death do his worst, in that 1Co 15:56-57.

[4.] Did not Christ willingly leave his Father's bosom for your sake? Did he not willingly die for you? Did Christ plead thus, These robes are too good for me to leave off, this crown too glorious for me to lay aside, I am too great to suffer for such a people? No, but he readily leaves his Father's bosom, he lays down his crown, and puts off his robes, and suffers a cursed, cruel, and ignominious death. Ah, souls, you should reason thus, Did Christ die for me that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love; and shall I be unwilling to die, that I may see him whom my soul loves? Shall Christ lay by all his glory and pomp, and marry a poor soul that had neither portion nor proportion; and shall this soul be unwilling to go home to such a husband? Oh think of it, you souls that are unwilling to die!

Present life is not vita, sed via ad vitam, life, but the way to life; for when we cease to be men, we begin to be as angels. They are only creatures of inferior nature that are pleased with the present. Man is a future creature. The eye of his soul looks back. The labourer hastens from his work to his bed, the mariner rows hard to gain the port, the traveller is glad when he is near his inn; so should saints when they are near death, because then they are near heaven, they are near their inn.

[5.] Are you not complete in Christ? Why should a believer be afraid to die that stands complete before God in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus? If we should appear in our own righteousness, in our own duties, it would be dreadful to think of dying, but a believer is complete in him, &c. 'Ye are complete in him,' Col 2:10. In Rev 14:4-5, they are said to be 'without fault before the throne of God;' and in Song of Solomon 4:7, 'Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee.' A believer, when he dies, he appears before God in the righteousness of Christ. All the spots and blemishes of his soul are covered with the righteousness of Christ, which is a matchless, spotless, peerless righteousness. Christ's spouse hath perfection of beauty; she is all 'glorious within' and without, she is spotless and blameless, she is the fairest among women, that she may be a meet mate for him that is fairer than all the children of men, Psa 45:2. The saints are as that tree of paradise, Gen 3:1-24, fair to his eye, and pleasant to his palate, or as Absalom, in whom there was no blemish from head to foot. Think of these things to sweeten your last changes, and to make you long to be in the bosom of Christ.

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that the saints' dying-day is to them the Lord's pay-day. Every prayer shall then have its answer; all hungerings and thirstings shall be filled and satisfied; every sigh, groan, and tear that hath fallen from the saints' eyes shall then be recompensed. Then they shall be paid and recompensed for all public service, and all family service, and all closet service. Now a crown shall be set upon their heads, and glorious robes put upon their backs, and golden sceptres put into their hands; their dying-day being the Lord's payday, they shall hear the Lord saying to them. 'Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy,' Mat 25:21. In that day they

shall find that God is not like Antiochus, who promised often but seldom gave; no! Then God will make good all those golden and glorious promises that he hath made to them, especially those that are cited in the margin. Now God will give them gold for brass, and silver for iron, felicity for misery, plenty for poverty, honour for dishonour, freedom for bondage, heaven for earth, an immortal crown for a mortal crown.

[7.] Seventhly, Consider this, the way to glory is by misery; the way to life is by death. In this world we are all Benonis, the sons of sorrow. The way to heaven is by Weeping-cross. Christ's passion-week was before his ascension-day; none passeth to paradise but by burning seraphims; we cannot go out of Egypt but through the Red Sea; the children of Israel came to Jerusalem through the valley of tears, and crossed the swift river of Jordan before they came to the sweet waters of Siloam. There is no passing into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel, death; there is no coming to that glorious city above but through this strait, dark, dirty lane. No wiping all tears from your eyes but with your winding-sheet, which should make you entertain death non ut hostis, sed ut hospes, not as a foe, but as a friend, not as a stranger, but as a guest that you had long looked for, and bid welcome death more blessed than your birth. Every man is willing to go to his home, though the way that leads to it be never so dark, dirty, or dangerous; and shall believers be unwilling to go to their homes, because they are to go through a dark entry to those glorious, lightsome, and eternal mansions that Christ hath prepared for them? surely no.

[8.] Eighthly, Consider that while we are in this world, our weak and imperfect and diseased bodies cast chains, and fetters, restraints, hindrances, and impediments upon the soul, that the soul is hindered from many high and noble actings, which in a state of separation it is free to. In a state of separation the soul works clearer, and understands better, and discourses wiser, and rejoices louder, and loves nobler, and desires purer, and hopes stronger than it can do here.

It is reported of Apollonius, that he had a familiar spirit engaged in a jewel. Such is the soul of man in the body: the soul, while it is in this body of clay, cannot act like herself, like a spirit whose nature is to soar aloft towards the place whence she came. When the soul is upon the wings for heaven, the body like a lump of lead pulls it down to the earth, &c.

Now the soul cannot look out at the eyes but it will be infected, nor hear by the ears but it will be distracted, nor smell at the nostrils and not be tainted, taste by the tongue and not be allured, and touch by the hand and not be defiled. Every sense and member is too ready upon every occasion and temptation to betray the soul; which should make us willing to die and to long for that day wherein our bodies shall be glorified.

Ah, believers! it will be but as a day before those bodies of yours, that are now like a picture out of frame, or a house out of repair, that are now deformed and diseased, &c., shall be agile and nimble, swift and facile in their motion. For clarity and brightness they shall be like Christ's body when it was transfigured, Mat 17:2; they shall be very amiable and beautiful, they shall be impassible and immortal. Here our bodies are still dying. It is more proper to ask when we shall make an end of dying, than to ask when we shall die. Death is a worm that is always feeding at the root of our lives, which should make death more desirable than life.

[9.] Ninthly, Dwell much upon the readiness and willingness of other saints to die. Good old Simeon having first laid Christ in his heart, and then taking him up in his arms, he sings, 'Lord, now

lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' Luk 2:28-30. I have lived enough, I have my life; I have longed enough, I have my love; I have seen enough, I have my sight; I have served enough, I have my reward; I have sorrowed enough, I have my joy. So the believing Corinthians, 2Co 5:4, 2Co 5:8, they groaned earnestly to be clothed upon with their house which is from heaven, they groaned that mortality might be swallowed up of life, and 'that they might be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.' So Paul desires earnestly 'to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all,' Php 1:23. So those in Peter, 'they look for and hasten the coming of the day of God,' 2Pe 3:12. They are said to hasten the day of God, in respect of their earnest desires after it, and in respect of their preparations for it. So the souls under the altar cry, 'How long, Lord, how long?' &c., Rev 6:9-10. So Paula, that noble lady, when one did read to her Song of Solomon 2:11, 'The winter is past, and the singing of birds is come,' Yea, she replied, 'the singing of birds is come,' and so she went singing into heaven. So Jewel, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace; break off all delays; Lord, receive my spirit.' Further he said, 'I have not so lived that I am ashamed to live longer; neither do I fear to die,—because we have a merciful Lord. A crown of righteousness is laid up for me; Christ is my righteousness.' So another being in a swoon, as her friends thought, a little before her end they cried, Give her some *rosa solis*; but she put it back, saying, 'I have *rosa solis* you know not of.' So Mr Pearing, a little before his death, said, 'I find and feel so much inward joy and comfort in my soul, that if I were put to my choice whether to die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life, if it might stand with the holy will of God.² So Mr Bolton, lying on his death-bed, said, 'I am by the wonderful mercies of God as full of comfort as my heart can hold, and feel nothing in my soul but Christ, with whom I heartily desire to be.' Ah, Christians! if the exceeding willingness of the saints to die will not make you willing to die, what will?

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Consider this, that the Lord will not leave thee but be with thee in that hour: 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,' saith the psalmist, Psa 23:4. So the apostle, Heb 13:5, 'Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' There are five negatives in the Greek, to assure God's people that he will never forsake them; five times in Scripture is this precious promise renewed, that we may press it till we have pressed the sweetness out of it. Though God may seem to leave thee, thou mayest be confident he will never forsake thee. Why should that man be afraid of death, that may be always confident of the presence of the Lord of life?

3. The next use shall be to stir you all up to prepare and fit for your dying-day. Ah, Christians! what is your whole life, but a day to fit for the hour of death? what is your great business in this world, but to prepare and fit for another world? It was a sad speech of Cæsar Borgia, who being sick to death, said, 'When I lived, I provided for everything but death; now I must die, and am unprovided to die.' Ah, Christians! you have need every day to pray with Moses, 'Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom,' Psa 90:13, and to follow the counsel of the prophet Jeremiah, 'Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness,' Jer 13:16. Old age is the dark mountain which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way cragged. It is a high point of heavenly wisdom to consider our latter end: 'Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!' Deu

23:19. Jerusalem paid dear for forgetting her latter end. Jerusalem's filthiness was in her skirts, because she remembered not her latter end, therefore also she came down wonderfully. To provoke you to prepare and fit for a dying-day, consider seriously these following things:—

(1.) He that prepares not for his dying-day, runs the hazard of losing his immortal soul. Though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true, aut poenitendum aut pereundum. The heathen man could say, 'He that is not ready to repent to-day, will be less ready to-morrow; his understanding will be more dark, his heart more hard, his will more crooked, his affections more distempered, his conscience more benumbed,' &c. Bede tells a story of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered, 'That he would not yet, for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him;' but, growing sicker and sicker, his friends pressed him again to repent, but then he told them it was too late, 'Quia jam judicatus sum et condemnatus;' 'For now,' said he, 'I am judged and condemned.' It is the greatest wisdom in the world to do that every day that a man would do on a dying-day, and to be afraid to live in such an estate as a man would be afraid to die in. Ah, souls! you are afraid to die in such and such sins; and will you not be afraid to live in those sins?

(2.) Again, The certainty of death should bespeak you to prepare for death. When we would affirm anything to be infallibly true, we say, 'As sure as death.' 'It is appointed,' saith the apostle, 'unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,' Heb 9:27. The Greek word that is translated 'It is appointed,' signifieth, it lieth as a man's lot. 'Once,' implies two things—[1.] A certainty, it shall once be; [2.] A singularity, it will be but once. 'What man lives and shall not see death?' saith the psalmist,—that is, no man lives and shall not see death. In Job the grave is called 'the house appointed for all the living.' Solomon calls the grave Baiith Gnolam, (■ ■ ■ ■ ■)—i.e., Domum seculi, the house of age. The learned translate it 'Long home,' where men must abide for a long time, even till the resurrection. To live without fear of death, is to die living; to labour not to die, is labour in vain. Death hath for its motto, Nulli cedo, I yield to none. It is decreed that all must die. Every man's death-day is his doom's-day. The French have a proverb, 'Three things,' say they, 'agree in the world—the priest, the lawyer, and death.' The priest takes the living and the dead, the lawyer right and wrong, and death the weak and strong. But the Jews have a better: 'In Golgotha are to be seen skulls of all sizes;' that is, death comes on the young as well as the old; the lot is fallen upon all, and therefore all must die. All men are made of one mould and matter, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return,' Gen 3:19. 'All have sinned, are fallen short of the glory of God,' Rom 5:12; and therefore death must pass upon all.

(3.) The uncertainty of the time of your death does bespeak you with open mouth to be in a constant readiness and preparedness for death. No man knows when he shall die, nor what kind of death he shall die, whether a natural or a violent death. Augustus died in a compliment, Tiberius in dissimulation, Galba with a sentence, Vespasian with a jest; Zeuxes died laughing at the picture of an old woman which he drew with his own hand; Sophocles was choked with the stone in a grape; Diodorus the logician died for shame that he could not answer a jocular question propounded at the table by Stilpo; Joannes Masius preaching upon the raising of the woman of Naomi's son from the dead, within three hours after died himself; Felix, Earl of Wurtemburgh, sitting at supper with many of his friends, some at the table fell into discourse about Luther, and the people's general receiving [of] his doctrine, upon which the Earl swore a great oath, 'that before he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of Lutherans;' but the very same night

God stretched out his hand so against him, that he was choked with his own blood.

Consider, in the last place, That it is a solemn thing to die. Death is a solemn parting of two near friends, soul and body. Remember, all other preparations are to no purpose, if a man be not prepared to die. What will it avail a man to prepare this and that for his children, kindred, or friends, &c., when he hath made no preparations for his soul, for his eternal well-being? As death leaves you, so judgment shall find you. If death take you before you expect it, and are prepared for it, it will be the more terrible to you; it will cause your countenance to be changed, your thoughts to be troubled, your loins to be loosed, and your knees to be dashed one against another. Oh the hell of horrors and terrors that attends those souls that have their greatest work to do when they come to die! therefore, as you love your souls, and as you would be happy in death, and everlastingly blessed after death, prepare and fit for death.² Look that you build upon nothing below Christ; look that you have a real interest in Christ; look that you die daily to sin, to the world, and to your own righteousness. Look that conscience be always waking, speaking, and tender; look that Christ be your Lord and Master; look that all reckonings stand right betwixt the Lord and your souls; look that you be fruitful, faithful, and watchful, and then your dying-day shall be to you as the day of harvest to the husbandman, as the day of deliverance to the prisoner, as the day of coronation to the king, and as the day of marriage to the bride. Your dying-day shall be a day of triumph and exaltation, a day of freedom and consolation, a day of rest and satisfaction. Then the Lord Jesus shall be as honey in the mouth, ointment in the nostrils, music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. The last use then is this, If a believer's last day be his best day, then by the rule of contraries, a wicked man's last day must be his worst day, for he must there lie down with the sins of his youth. Death shall put an end to all the benefits and comforts that now thou enjoyest. Now thou must say, Honours, friends, pleasures, riches, credit, &c., farewell for ever; I shall never have good day more; I shall never be merry more; my sun is set, my glass is out, my hopes fail, my heart fails; all offers of grace are past, the Spirit will never strive with me more, free grace will never move me more, the golden⁴ serpent shall never be held forth more; death will be an inlet to judgment, yea, to an eternity of misery. What the voice was of God to Adam upon eating the forbidden fruit; what the coming of the flood was to the profane men of the old world; what the waters of the Red Sea were to Pharaoh and his army; what the fire from heaven was to the captains that came up against Elijah; what the burning furnace was to them that cast in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the same will be the day of death to profane wicked souls. Ah, sinners, my prayer for you shall be, that the Lord would awaken you, and set up a choice light in your souls, that you may see where you are, and what you are; that he would give you to break off your sins by repentance, and give you an interest in himself; that so 'for you to live may be Christ, and to die may be gain,' Php 1:21; that in life and death Christ may be advantage to you; and that death may be the funeral of all your sins and sorrows, and an inlet to all that joy and pleasure, that blessedness and happiness that is at God's right hand. A HEAVENLY CORDIAL

NOTE

Published in the year of the 'Plague,' (1665,) immediately preceding the 'Fire' of 1666—which destroyed the entire stock of so many books—the 'Heavenly Cordial,' like the 'Experiences' of Mrs Bell, is unknown to Bibliographers, not being found in any of our great libraries. Our own copy seems to have been carefully preserved, along with Brooks's other writings, by some ardent admirer. It would fetch in the market treble the cost of our entire edition of Brooks. The title-page is

given below.*—G.

* a

HEAVENLY

CORDIAL. For all those Servants of the Lord that have had the PLAGUE (and are recovered) or that now have it; also for those that have escaped it, though their Relations and Friends have been either visited, or swept away by it. or

Thirteen DIVINE MAXIMES or CONCLUSIONS in respect of the PESTILENCE, which may be as so many supports, comforts, and refreshing springs, both to the visited and preserved people of God in this present day. also

Ten Arguments to prove that in Times of Common Calamity, the people of God do stand upon the advantage ground, as to their outward preservation and protection above all other people under Heaven. also

Eight Reasons why some of the precious Servants of the Lord have fallen by the Pestilence in this Day of the Lord's Anger. By Thomas Brooks, late Minister of the Gospel in London.

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[12mo.—G.] A HEAVENLY CORDIAL

1. The first divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., When the pestilence is among a people, it is the Lord alone that sends it.

2Sa 24:15, 'So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel, from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, seventy thousand men.' Num 16:46, 'Wrath is gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.' Num 14:12, 'I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them.' Deu 28:21, 'The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he hath consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.' Eze 14:19, 'Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast;' Eze 14:21, 'For thus saith the Lord God, How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?' Amo 4:10, 'I have sent among you the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt.' Hence it is called, God's arrow, Psa 91:5; and when God shoots those arrows into kingdoms, cities, towns, families, Psa 38:2, none can pull them out but God himself. The plague is more immediately from God than any other sickness or disease, for it is the immediate stroke of God. The scribe is more properly said to write than the pen, and he that maketh and keepeth the clock is more properly said to make it go and strike than the wheels and poises that hang upon it, and every workman to effect his work, rather than the tools which he useth as instruments. So the Lord of hosts, who is the chief agent and mover in all things and in all actions, may more fitly and properly be said to effect and bring to pass all judgments, yea, all things which are done in the earth, than any inferior or subordinate causes: seeing they are but his tools and instruments, which he rules or guides according to his own will, power, and providence. I know some physicians ascribe it to the heat of the air, and sometimes to the dryness of the air,

and sometimes to the corruption of the air, and sometimes to the corruption of men's blood, and sometimes to Satan, and sometimes to the malignancy of the planets; but certainly those are 'physicians of no value' that cannot look above second causes to the First Cause, that cannot look to the 'wheel within the wheel,' Eze 1:1-28. The plague is a hidden thing, a secret thing; it is a sickness, a disease, that more immediately comes from God than any other sickness or disease doth. Exo 9:3, 'Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.' The word here translated 'murrain' is in Exo 5:3 termed 'pestilence;' and it is one and the same disease. Though when it is applied to cattle it be usually rendered by 'murrain,' yet when it is applied to men, as in the scripture last cited, it is commonly called the 'pestilence.' 'Behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle,' &c. That is the extraordinary, immediate power and work of God, without the intervening of any second cause or human operation. This open plague, this plague without-doors, that principally fell upon the cattle, was from the immediate hand of God. It is God alone that singles out the nation, the city, the town, the parish, the family, the person that he will strike with the plague; for all second causes are ordered by the First Cause, as every instrument is ruled or overruled by the will and hand of him that holdeth it. When a man goes with his axe to cut down trees in the wood, there is an equal aptness in the axe to cut down one tree as well as another, an oak as well as an ash, &c.; but it is still ruled by the will of him that handles it. So it is here: the noisome pestilence, or the pestilence of grass, as the Hebrew runs in that Psa 91:3, hath an equal aptness to cut down one man as well as another, the rich as well as the poor, the honourable as well as the base, the strong as well as the weak, the prince as well as the peasant, the emperor as well as the carter; but it is still overruled by the Lord himself, who gives it a commission to cut off such and such, in this kingdom and that, in this city and that, in this town and that, in this family and that, and to spare, save, and pass by all the rest. In Rev 6:1-17 you shall read of four horses, when the four seals were opened, (1.) a white horse, (2.) a red horse, (3.) a black horse, (4.) a pale horse. After Christ had ridden upon the white horse, propagating the gospel, then follows the red horse, a type of war; then the black horse, a hieroglyphic of famine; and then the pale horse, the emblem of pestilence. Now all these horses, these plagues, were of Christ's sending. From those words, Jdg 3:20, 'I have a message from God unto thee, O king,' said Ehud; lo, his poniard was God's message; from whence one well observeth, that not only the vocal admonitions but the real judgments of God are his errands and instructions to the world, Isa 26:8-10. It was a mad principle among the Manichees, who referred all the judgments, calamities, and miseries that came upon them to the devil for their author, as if there could be 'any evil in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it,' Amo 3:6. Now in that it is the Lord alone that sends the pestilence amongst a people, how should this comfort us and quiet us! how should this cool us and calm us! how should this satisfy us and silence us before the Lord, and cause us to lay our hands upon our mouths, as David did, Psa 39:9, and as Aaron did, Lev 10:1-3, and as Eli did, 1Sa 3:18, and as the church did, Lam 3:26-29.

Solinus (cap. 20) writeth of Hypanis, a Scythian river, that the water thereof is very bitter as it passeth through Exampius, yet very sweet in the spring. So the cup of trembling which is this day offered to the children of God, is often very bitter at the second hand, or as it appears in second causes; and yet it is sweet at the first hand, yea, it is very sweet as it is reached to them by a hand from heaven; and therefore they may well say, as their head and husband hath done before them, 'Shall we not drink of the cup that our Father hath given us to drink of?' &c., John 18:11.

II. The second divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., The pestilence and all other judgments of God are limited as to places.

Hence it comes to pass that God shoots his arrows of pestilence into one city, and not into another; into one town, and not into another; into one family, and not into another; into one kingdom and country, and not into another, Exo 8:20-23, and Exo 9:22-26; 2Sa 24:15. Turn to all these scriptures and ponder upon them.

III. The third divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., All the judgments of God are limited, not only to places, but also to persons. And therefore such and such must fall, when such and such must escape; and such and such must be infected, when such and such are preserved. Hence it is that one is taken in the bed, and the other left; one smitten at the table or in the house, and all the rest preserved in perfect health, &c. God hath numbered so many to the sword, and so many to the famine, and so many to the pestilence, so many to this disease, and so many to that, 2Sa 24:15-16; Eze 11:5-7, Eze 5:12, and Eze 6:11-12; Exo 12:13; Psa 91:3-9; Isa 65:12; Jer 15:2; Eze 33:27. Turn to all those scriptures and ponder upon them. God marks out those persons that he intends to shoot the arrow of pestilence amongst. God never shoots at rovers; he never draws his bow at a venture, but he singles out the persons that he purposes to hit, and his arrows fly swiftly and suddenly, yet they hit none but those that God hath set up as a mark to shoot at—as Job speaks, Job 7:20.

IV. The fourth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., No man knows divine love or hatred by outward dispensation, Ecc 9:1-2; Luk 13:4, Luk 13:16; Lam 4:6; Dan 9:12; Psa 73:12-22. In times of great judgments God sometimes spares those whom his soul hates and abhors, Isa 1:5; Hos 4:14, Hos 4:17. God sometimes preserves wicked men from great judgments, that they may fall by greater judgments; as you may see in Sodom and her sisters, which were preserved from the slaughter of the four kings, that God might rain down hell out of heaven upon them. And so Sennacherib escapes the stroke of the destroying angel, that he might fall by the sword of his own sons, Isa 37:37-38. And as in times of great judgments God sometimes spares those sinners that his soul hates, so in times of great judgments God takes away those whom his soul dearly loves, 2Ch 34:27-28. Turn to it. In all the considerable plagues that have been in this nation, how many precious Christians have fallen by the sword, and by the hand of the destroying angel, when many thousands of Balaks and Balaams, I mean the worst of men, have escaped the sword, the plague, &c.! And is there anything more obvious and notorious this day than this? Surely not.

V. The fifth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., The Lord sometimes takes away his dearest people by some one judgment, that so he may by that means deliver them from many judgments; and sometimes he takes away his people by one great judgment, that so they may escape many other greater judgments that he intends to bring upon the earth. And thus good Josiah was slain in battle; yet because he lived not to see the woeful miseries of succeeding times, he is said to go to his grave in peace, 2Ch 34:27-28. Turn to it. Enoch lived long in a little time, and God took him to heaven before he brought a sweeping flood upon the world; but he foreseeing the flood, named his son Methuselah, that is to say, 'he dieth,' and the dart or flood cometh, and so it fell out; for no sooner was his head laid, but in came the flood. And so Augustine was taken out of the world before Hippo was taken by the Vandals. And so Pareus was gotten to his better country before Heidelberg and the Palatinate was delivered into the power of the enemies. Ambrose is said to

have been the walls of Italy, and when he died the Earl Stilico said, 'that his death did threaten destruction to that country;' and when Luther was laid in his grave, then troubles, wars, desolations, and confusions came in upon Germany like a flood. 'The righteous are taken away from the evil to come,' Isa 57:1; and their death is a sad presage of sore and signal calamities that are hastening upon the world. Of late many precious servants of Christ are fallen asleep; but who knows what a day of wrath is coming? When a man cuts down his chiefest timber trees, it is an argument that he intends to part with his land; and how many tall cedars in this our Lebanon hath God lately cut down in the midst of us! Therefore we have eminent cause to be importunate with God, that he would neither part with this nation, nor depart from this nation. When some fatal judgment hovers like a flying fiery scroll over a nation, God many times gathers many of his choice servants unto himself, that he may preserve them from the evil to come.

VI. The sixth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., None of God's judgments upon his people ever make any change or alteration of God's affections towards his people.

However his hand may be against them, yet his love, his heart, his favour, his affections in Jesus, is still one and the same to them, Isa 54:7-10, and Isa 49:14-16; Psalms 89:31-34; Jer 31:34-37, compared; Mal 3:6; John 13:3; Jas 1:17. Ponder seriously upon all those scriptures. So when God sent the plague upon David's people, and that for David's sin too, yet how sweetly, how lovingly, how tenderly, how compassionately, how indulgently, doth the Lord carry it towards David himself! 2Sa 24:11-13, 2Sa 24:18-19, and 2Sa 24:25 compared. And some learned men are of opinion that Lazarus died of the plague; and yet the text tells us that he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. Æcolampadius and many other worthies also died of it. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself? he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, 'These are God's gems and jewels wherewith he decketh his best friends; and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world.' God's dear love to his people is not founded upon anything in his people, nor upon anything that is done by his people, but only upon his own free grace and goodness, Deu 7:7-8. The ethnics feign that their gods and goddesses loved certain trees for some lovely good that was in them: as Jupiter, the oak, for durance; Neptune, the cedar, for stature; Apollo, the laurel, for greenness; Venus, the poplar, for whiteness; Pallas, the vine, for fruitfulness. But what should move the God of gods and the Lord of lords to love us, who are poor, worthless, fruitless fruit-trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots, Jude 1:12; Eze 16:1-63. This question is best resolved in three words, *amat quia amat*, he loves us because he loves us. The root of his love to us lieth in himself, and by his communicative goodness the fruit is ours. God's love to his people is a lasting love, yea, an everlasting love, Jer 31:35-37; it is a love that never decays nor waxes cold. It is like the stone asbestos, of which Solinus writes, that being once hot, it can never be cooled again.

VII. The seventh divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., Many times when the poor people of God cannot carry it with God for the preservation of a whole land or nation, yet they shall then be sure to have the honour and the happiness to be so potent and so prevalent with God as to prevail with him for their own personal preservation and protection. Jer 15:1; Eze 14:14-21, compared. So Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6.

VIII. The eighth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., Sword, famine, and pestilence can only reach our outward man—they only reach our bodies and our bodily concernments, they cannot

reach our souls, nor our internal nor our eternal concerns. No outward judgments can reach the favour of God, or the light of his countenance, or our communion with him, or our spiritual enjoyments of him, or the joys of the Spirit, or the teachings of the Spirit, or the leadings of the Spirit, or the earnest of the Spirit, or the witness of the Spirit, or the seekings of the Spirit, or the quickenings of the Spirit, or the peace that passeth understanding, or our secret trade with heaven.

IX. The ninth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., There are no people upon the earth that in times of common calamity stand upon such fair grounds for their preservation and protection, as the people of God do. And this I shall make evident by an induction of ten particulars:—

[1.] First, They are the only people in all the world that are under divine promises of protection and preservation, Exo 15:26; Job 5:20-21; Isa 4:5-6, Isa 8:13-14, Isa 26:20-21, Isa 31:5, and Isa 32:1-2; Psa 91:1-16 throughout. Turn to those sweet promises, and remember that there are no men on earth that can or may lay their hands on these precious promises, and say, these promises are mine, but only the godly man. Those promises are God's bonds, which the godly man may put in suit, and urge God with, and plead hard in prayer, which no other men may. The promises of God are a Christian's Magna Charta, his chief evidences that he hath to shew for his preservation, for his protection, for his salvation. Divine promises are God's deed of gift; they are the only assurance which the saints have to shew for their right and title to Christ, to heaven, and to all the glory and happiness of another world. Oh how highly do men prize their charters and privileges! and how carefully do they keep and lay up the conveyances and assurances of their lands! Oh how should saints then treasure up those precious promises, which are to them instead of all conveyances and assurances for their preservation, protection, maintenance, deliverance, comfort, and everlasting happiness! The promises are a mine of rich treasures; they are a garden full of the choicest and sweetest flowers of paradise; in them are wrapped up all celestial contentments and enjoyments; and therefore study them more than ever, and prize them more than ever, and improve them more than ever.

[2.] Secondly, If you consider their near and dear relations to God. They are his servants, his friends, his children, his members, his spouse, &c. By all which it is evident that they stand upon the advantage-ground, for preservation and protection, above all others in the world.

[3.] Thirdly, If you consider that high value and esteem and price that the Lord puts upon them. He esteems them as the apple of his eye, Zec 2:8; he accounts them as his jewels, Mal 3:17; he prizes them as his portion, Deu 32:9—yea, as his pleasant portion, Jer 12:10; he accounts them his crown, yea, his crown of glory, and his royal diadem: Isa 62:3, 'Thou'—speaking of his church—'shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.' Yea, he prizes one saint above all the world, Heb 11:38. By all which it is most evident that they stand upon the advantage-ground, as to their preservation and protection, above all other people in the world; for God accounts all the world besides to be but as dirt, as dust, as chaff, as thorns and briers, that are only fit to be cast into the fire to be consumed and destroyed. When pearls grew common at Rome, they began to be slighted; but saints are such pearls of price, that God will never slight.

[4.] Fourthly, If you consider that they are the only people in the world that are in covenant with God, Psa 89:30-34; Jer 32:38-40; Eze 20:37; Deu 29:12; Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:6-12. Some do

derive the word *berith*, which signifies the covenant, from a root which signifies to 'purify,' to 'separate,' and to 'select;' and verily, when the Lord makes a covenant with any, he doth separate them from others, he honours them above all others, and he looks on them and owns them for his peculiar people, and delights in them as the chosen and choicest of all others: 'The whole world lies in wickedness,' 1Jn 5:19. By this also it is evident that the people of God stand upon the advantage-ground, for their preservation and protection, above all others in the world.

[5.] Fifthly, If you consider the common carriage and deportment of God towards his people in former times of calamities and great judgments. Did he not provide an ark for righteous Noah, so that Noah was safer in his ark of three storeys high than Nimrod and his crew were in their tower of Babel, raised to the height of five thousand one hundred and forty-six paces, as is reported? And did he not provide a Zoar for righteous Lot? Hesiod speaks of thirty thousand demi-gods that were keepers of men. But what are so many thousand gods to that one God that neither slumbers nor sleeps, but day and night keeps his people as his jewels, as the apple of his eye; that keepeth them in his pavilion, as a prince keeps his favourite, Psa 121:3-5; Isa 27:3; Psa 31:20. Princes have their retiring rooms and withdrawing chambers, which are sacred places; and so hath God his, and there he shelters the favourites of heaven. God's gracious providence is his golden cabinet, where his children are as safe as if they were in heaven. See Isa 49:2, and Isa 26:20-21; Jer 36:26; Psa 83:3: 'They have consulted against thy hidden ones,'—hidden under the hollow of thy hand, and under the shadow of thy wing, and therefore safe from dangers in the midst of dangers, Jer 39:16-18. How wonderfully did he preserve the three children, or rather the three non-conformable champions, from burning in the midst of the flames! Dan 3:1-30; and Daniel from being devoured in the lion's den! Dan 6:1-28. And so God's mourning ones were his marked ones, and his saved and preserved ones, when the destroying angel slew old and young, &c., Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6. And reverend Beza and his family was four several times visited with the plague, and yet as often preserved as they were visited; and this good man was very much refreshed and comforted, under that and other sore afflictions that befell him, by that Psa 91:1-16, which made him the more highly to prize it, and the more dearly to hug it all his days, as himself witnesseth in his writings on this psalm. There is a dialogue between a heathen and a Jew, after the Jews' return from captivity—all nations round about them being enemies to them. The heathen asked the Jew how he and his countrymen could hope for any safety, because, saith he, every one of you is a silly sheep, compassed about with fifty wolves. Ay, but, saith the Jew, we are kept by such a shepherd as can kill all those wolves when he pleaseth. Now by all this, also, it is evident that the people of God stand upon the advantage-ground, as to their preservation and protection, above all other people in the world.

[6.] Sixthly, If you consider the life-guard of the saints, the ministry of the blessed angels that always attend them: Psa 91:11, 'For he shall give his angels charge over thee in all thy ways;' ver. 12, 'They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.' Psa 34:7, 'The angels of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' Mat 18:10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Heb 1:14, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' The world may deprive us of many outward comforts, but they can never deprive us of the ministry of the angels. When the servants of God are hated by all men, persecuted by men, and forsaken of men, yet

they are then visited and attended by angels. Princes have their guards; but what poor, what weak, what contemptible guards are theirs to those legions of angels that daily guard the saints! When men can clip the wings of angels, and imprison or pinion these heavenly soldiers, then, and not till then, shall they be able to have their wills upon the poor people of God! Oh the honour, the dignity, the safety and security of the saints, in a life-guard so full of state and strength! Well may we say, 'Come and taste and see how gracious the Lord is' in affording his children so glorious an attendance! Now by this argument as well as the rest, it is evident that the people of God stand upon the advantage-ground of their outward preservation and protection above all other people in the world.

[7.] Seventhly, If you consider that they are the only people that do bear up the name and glory of God in the world, Deu 4:6-9; John 4:23-24. They are the only people that worship God in spirit and in truth; and from such worshippers it is that God hath the incomes of his glory. The holy hearts, the holy lives, the holy examples, the holy ways, the holy walkings, and the holy worship that is performed by the saints, are the springs from whence all divine honour rises to the Lord in this world. The people of God are the only people in the world that have chosen him for their God, and that have given themselves up to his service, and thus they honour his goodness, Deu 26:17-18; Psa 116:16; Psa 22:30. The people of God are the only people in the world who, in the times of their fears, doubts, darkneses, distresses, straits, trials, dangers, &c., do consult with God as their great counsellor, as their only counsellor; and thus they honour his admirable wisdom and infinite knowledge, Gen 24:12; Psa 48:14. The people of God are the only people in the world that do make God their refuge, their strong tower, their shelter, their hiding-place, in stormy and tempestuous days; and thus they honour the power, all-sufficiency, sovereignty, and authority of God, Psa 46:1, Psa 46:7, Psa 46:11; Pro 18:10; Psa 32:7, Psa 119:114, and Psa 20:7. Wicked men trust in their chariots and horses, and armies and navies, and revenues and carnal policies, and sinful shifts, devices, and fetches; when the poor people of God do not dare to trust in their swords nor in their bows, nor in their wealth, nor in their wit, nor in their friends, nor in any arm of flesh, as carnal refuges, but in the Lord alone: Isa 26:3-4, 'For in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' The people of God are the only people in the world that do give God the supremacy in their hearts, that do set up God and Christ above themselves and above all their duties, services, privileges, graces, comforts, communions, spiritual enjoyments, and worldly contentments; and thus they honour all the excellencies and perfections of God at once, Psa 73:25-26; Php 3:6-9; Rev 4:10-11. And do you think that God will not have a special care of such that are the only promoters of his honour and glory in this world? Doubtless he will. Now by this argument, it is further evident that the people of God do stand upon the advantage-ground, as to their outward preservation and protection, above all other people in the world.

[8.] Eighthly, If you do but seriously consider what a mighty interest the people of God have in the grand favourite of heaven—viz., the Lord Jesus, who lies in the bosom of the Father, and who is so near and dear unto him, and so potent and prevalent with him, that he can do what he pleaseth with the Father, and have what he will of the Father, John 1:18; Heb 7:25; 1Jn 2:1-2. Now look, what interest the wife hath in the husband, the child in the father, the members in the head, the subject in his prince, the servant in his lord, the branches in the root, the building in the foundation, that the believer hath in Christ, and much more. Christ is not like the bramble, that receives good but yields none; but he is like the fig-tree, the vine, the olive. All that are interested in him, that

pertain to him, are the better for him; they 'all receive of his fulness grace for grace,' John 1:16; Col 1:19. Now, doubtless, all that interest that Jesus Christ hath in God the Father, he will improve to the utmost for their good that have an interest in him. Now, by this argument, it is also evident that the people of God do stand upon the advantage-ground, above all others in the world, as to their outward preservation and protection.

[9.] Ninthly, If you consider God's tender and fatherly care of his people, and his singular indulgence towards them, of which you may read much in the blessed Scripture. Among the many choice scriptures which might be produced, take these as a taste: Psa 103:13-14, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.' There is an ocean of love and pity in the father's heart towards his children; but it is but a drop to that which is in God. He hit the mark [Bernard] that said, *Tam pius nemo, tam pater nemo*, No father is like our Father. God is *pater miserationum*, He is all bowels. Let God carry it how he pleaseth towards us, yet we must still acknowledge that he is a propitious Father, and say with him, [Augustine,] 'Lord, thou art a Father both when thou strokest and when thou strikest; thou strikest that we may not perish, and thou strokest that we may not faint.' Pity is as essential to God as light is to the sun, or as heat is to the fire. Hence he is called the Father by an eminency, as if there were no father to him, none like him, nor none besides him, as indeed there is not originally and properly, Jas 1:27. So Exo 19:4, 'Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.' It is an elegant expression to set forth God's admirable care over his people. The eagle fears no bird from above to hurt her young, only the arrow from beneath; therefore she carries them up upon her wings: Deu 32:9-11, 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:' Deu 32:12, 'So the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.' The eagle carries her young ones upon her wings—not in her talons, for fear of hurting them—openly, safely, choicely, charily, speedily; and so did God his Israel, of whom he was exceeding choice and chary. The care that God exercises towards his people is,

(1.) An extensive care: a care that reaches, that extends itself to all the saints, whether rich or poor, high or low, bond or free, &c., 2Ch 16:9; Zec 1:10-11.

(2.) It is an intensive care: he cares for all as if he had but one to care for, Zec 1:14.

(3.) It is a pleasant and delightful care, Isa 31:5; and not a wearying, tearing, tormenting care. It is such a pleasant care as an indulgent father exercises towards a son, an only son, a son that serves him, Mal 3:17.

(4.) It is an effectual care, a prosperous care, a successful care, a flourishing care. Men many times rise early and go to bed late, and take a great deal of care at home and abroad, and all to no purpose; but the care of God is always successful, Deu 11:12.

(5.) It is a singular care, a peculiar care. God cares more for them than he doth for all the world besides. The father's care over the child is a peculiar care, and the husband's care over the wife is a peculiar care, and the head's care over the members is a peculiar care, and so is the Lord's care

over his people a peculiar care. God's general care extends to the whole creation; but his special care centres in his saints Zep 3:16-20; Psa 36:6; Isa 40:31.

(6.) It is a very tender care: Isa 40:11, 'He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.' Zep 2:8, 'He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye,' or the 'little man' that is in the eye, or the black of the eye, which is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part, to express the inexpressible tenderness of God's care and love towards his people.

(7.) It is an abiding care, a lasting care; and not a transient care, a momentary care: Psa 125:1-2, 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever.' Jerusalem was surrounded with many great high mountains, which were a great safeguard to it against all winds and storms. Such a shelter, such a safeguard, yea, and a better, will God be to mystical mount Zion, the church, Zec 2:5, against all winds and storms of affliction or persecution: Psa 121:3-4, 'He that keepeth thee will not slumber: behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.' He repeats the promise, and sets it forth with a 'behold,' that it may stick the closer, and warm our hearts the better. The phrase is taken from watchmen, who stand on the walls in time of war to discover the approaching enemies, and accordingly give warning. Now though they may be careless, treacherous, or sleepy; yet the Lord will be so far from sleeping, that he will not so much as slumber, no, he will not so much as fetch one wink of sleep. It hath been a tradition that lions sleep not, yet to think or say that they sleep not at all were absurd; indeed, their eyelids being too little to cover their great eyes, they do sleep with their eyes somewhat open and shining, which hath occasioned some to think that they sleep not at all. But sure I am that the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is the keeper of Israel, doth neither slumber nor sleep. He never shuts his eyes, but hath them always open upon his people for good; he winks not so much as the twinkling of an eye; he always stands sentinel for his people's safety: Isa 27:2-3, 'In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine; I, the Lord, do keep it, I will water it every moment'—or, as the Hebrew runs, 'at moments,' or 'by moments'—'lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day,' that is, constantly, continually, without intermission. And this constant care of God over his people was signified by those two types, the pillar of fire and the pillar of a cloud, that left not Israel till they were in the possession of the land of Canaan, which was a type of heaven, Exo 13:21-22.

(8.) And lastly, It is an active care; a care that puts the Lord upon preserving his people, and protecting of his people, and making provision for his people, and standing by his people, and pleading the cause of his people, and clearing the innocency of his people. God is above his people and beneath them, Deu 33:26-27; he is under them and over them, Song of Solomon 2:6; he is before them and behind them, Exo 33:1-2; Isa 52:12, and Isa 58:8, God is in the front of his people, and God is in the rear of his people, he is on the right hand of his people and he is on the left hand of his people, Psa 16:8, Psa 121:5, and Psa 118:15-16; Exo 14:22. God made the waters as a wall on their right hand and on their left. God is round about his people, Psa 34:7, and Psa 125:1-2; and in the midst of his people, Zec 2:5; Psa 46:5; 'God is in the midst of her,' Isa 12:6, Oh how safe are they that are under such a glorious care! God is above his people and beneath them, he is under them and over them, he is before them and behind them he is in the front and in the rear, he is round about them and in the midst of them. Now what doth all this speak out, but that

the care of God toward his people is an active care? If the philosopher could say, being in danger of shipwreck in a light, starry night, 'Surely I shall not perish, there are so many eyes of providence over me,' oh, then, what may the saints say! Now by this argument it is evident that the people of God stand upon the advantage-ground, as to their outward preservation and protection, above all other people in the world.

[10.] Tenthly, and lastly, If you do but consider God's great anger and deep displeasure against those that afflict, oppose, or oppress his people. God sent his people into Babylon, and their enemies added to all their sorrows and sufferings; but will God put this up at their hands? No: Zec 1:15, 'And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction.' 'I am very sorely displeased,' &c., or, as the Hebrew runs, 'I am in such a heat as causeth fuming and foaming.' I am boiling hot, and even ready to draw upon them, and to cut them off from the land of the living. For the original word here used hath great affinity with another word that signifieth 'to cut down and to destroy,' 2Ki 6:6, and importeth a higher degree of displeasure, a greater height of heat than either anger or wrath, as may be seen in that signal gradation, Deu 29:28, 'The Lord rooted them out of their land,' beaph, 'in anger,' ubechemah, 'and in wrath,' ubeketseph, 'and in great indignation.' The last of these three is the word in the text, and notes a higher degree of anger than the two former. So Mal 1:4, 'Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.' The Edomites were very great enemies to the Israelites; they stood looking on, laughing and rejoicing at Israel's destruction. God saw this, and it greatly displeased him, he being highly sensible of the least indignity done to his people; and therefore he is resolved to pay them home in their own coin, Obadiah 1:8-19. The very name and memory of the Edomites have long since been extinct and blotted out from under heaven; they were a people of his wrath, Isa 10:6; and of his curse, Isa 34:5. So Amalek was a bitter enemy to God's Israel, but God utterly blots out his remembrance from under heaven; and laying his hand upon his throne, he swears that he would have war with Amalek for ever, Exo 17:14-16; Nah 1:2, 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.' The people of God ought to rest satisfied and assured that God sees and smiles, and looks and laughs, at all the counsels and combinations of wicked men against his Son and against his saints, Psa 2:2; and when they have done their worst, the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and Christ shall reign in the midst of his enemies, Pro 19:21. And that the stone cut out of the mountains without hands shall bring down the golden image with a vengeance, and make it like the chaff of the summer-floor: Dan 2:35. Some write of lions, that as they are mindful of courtesies received—witness the story of Androcles, that fugitive servant of Rome—so they will be sure to revenge injuries done to them; they will prey on them that would make a prey of them. When Juba, king of the Moors, marched through the desert of Africa, a young man of his company wounded a lion; but the year following, when Juba returned, the lion again meets the army, and from among them all singles out the man that hurt him, and tears him in pieces, suffering the rest to pass by in peace and safety. And thus the Lord Jesus, who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Rev 5:5, is always ready to revenge the cause of his people, and to take vengeance on all that have wounded his people or made a prey of his people, as you may clearly and fully see in Eze 25:1-17 and Eze 35:1-15. Now by this argument, as well as by all the rest, it is evident that the people of

God stand upon the advantage-ground, as to their outward preservation and protection, above all other people in the world.

Quest. But, if this be so, how comes it to pass that in this time of great mortality, many of the precious people of the Lord have been taken away as well as others, the raging pestilence having carried many pious souls out of this world, 'of whom the world was not worthy'? Heb 11:38. The saint as well as the sinner hath fallen by the hand of the destroying angel. In this day we have seen that word made good in Ecc 9:2, 'That all things come alike to all; there is One event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean, to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath.' To this question I shall give these eight short answers:—

(1.) First, God hath smitten some good men of all persuasions, that none might be proud, secure, or censorious, and that all might take the alarm and prepare to meet their God, and that all may keep humble and tremble, because of his righteous judgments: Psa 119:120, 'My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.'

(2.) Secondly, The number of those that feared the Lord that have been taken away by the pestilence are but few, very few, if compared with the many thousands of others that never knew what it was to set up God as the main object of their fear, and that never knew experimentally what a changed nature, a sanctified frame of heart, an interest in Christ, or a title to heaven, meant. Oh that we had not cause to fear that hell hath had a very large harvest within these few last months!

(3.) Thirdly, Sometimes God's own people sin with others, and therefore they smart with others when God takes the rod into his own hand. Thus Moses and Aaron sinned with others, and therefore their carcasses fell in the wilderness as well as others, Num 20:1-29. This may sometimes be the reason why some good men fall in a common calamity; but I dare not say that it is always the reason why some good men fall in a common calamity. I believe there are several choice Christians that have been swept away in this day of the Lord's wrath, who have not sinned with the wicked, though they have fallen with the wicked. Many have fallen by this dispensation who yet have kept their garments pure and clean, and are now walking with Christ in white, Rev 3:4. I do not think that those saints that have died by the plague were greater sinners than those that have escaped the plague; yea, I have several reasons to persuade me that several of those precious servants of the Lord that have died of the plague, had more grace in their hearts, and less sin in their lives, than many other saints that have been pitied and spared in this day of the Lord's anger, &c.

(4.) Fourthly, No godly man dies in any common calamity till his glass be run, and his work done, and he prepared and fitted for another world: Job 14:5, 'Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass,' Job 5:26; Rev 11:6-7; Acts 13:25, Acts 13:36. God hath set every man both his time and his task. In this scripture, as in a glass, you may see the true reason why some likely to live long die soon, even whilst their bones are 'full of marrow, and their breasts are full of milk;' and others that are more weak and infirm live long, yea, very long. The reason is, because God hath set bounds to every man's life, to a very day, ay, to a very hour: Acts 13:14, 'All the days of my appointed time of warfare will I wait till my change come,' i.e., till my death. Job calls death a 'change.' Death is not an annihilation or extinction, but a mutation.

[1.] It is the last change that we shall meet with till the resurrection.

[2.] It is a lasting, yea, an everlasting change. It puts every one into an eternal condition of happiness or misery.

[3.] It is a universal change—1. In respect of persons; all must meet with it: 'it is appointed for all men once to die,' Heb 9:27. 2. In respect of the whole man, body and soul. Death lodges the body in the grave, and puts the soul into heaven or hell.

[4.] It is a different change according to the quality of the person changed. It is terrible to a sinner: for,

First, It will put a full period to all his outward mercies, comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, Job 1:21. Saladin, a Turkish emperor, the first of that nation that conquered Jerusalem, lying at the point of death, after many glorious victories, commanded that a white sheet should be borne, before him to his grave upon the point of a spear, with this proclamation, 'These are the rich spoils which Saladin carrieth away with him; of all his triumphs and victories, of all the riches and realms that he had, now nothing at all is left him but this sheet.'

Secondly, It will put a full period to all his hopes. Now he shall never hope for mercy more, nor never hope for pardon more, nor never hope for heaven more.

Thirdly, It will put a full period to all the means of grace. Now he shall never hear sermons more, nor never read the word more, nor never enjoy the prayers of the people of God more, nor never taste any of the dainties of God's store more, &c.

Fourthly, It will put a full period to the patience, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, Rom 2:4-5.

Fifthly, It will put a full period to all the pleasures of sin. Now the sinner shall never have one merry day more. In hell there is no singing, but howling; no music, but madness; no sporting, but sighing; no dancing, but wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth for evermore, &c.

Sixthly, It will put a full period to all gracious reprieves. The sinner in his lifetime hath had many a reprieve, from many executions of wrath and judgment. Oh! but now he shall never have one reprieve more.

Seventhly, It will put a full period to all the strivings of the Holy Spirit. Now the Spirit shall never strive with the sinner more, 1Sa 6:3; nor Christ will never knock at the sinner's door, at the sinner's heart, more, &c.

Eighthly, and lastly, It will put a full period to all gracious examples. Now the sinner shall never cast his eye upon one gracious example more. The sinner in his lifetime hath had many gracious examples before his eyes, which it may be at times have had an awakening, convincing, silencing, and restraining power in them. Oh! but now he shall never have his eye upon one pious example more. All hell will not afford one good example. In a word, now the sinner shall find by woeful experience that death will be an inlet to three dreadful things: 1. To judgment, Heb 9:27; 2. To an irreversible sentence of condemnation, Mat 25:41; 3. To endless, ceaseless, and remediless sufferings. Not many years since, in the town of Yarmouth, there was a young man, who, being very weak and nigh to the grave, and under the apprehensions of the wrath of God, and supposing

that he was presently going down to the pit, to hell, he cried out, 'Oh that God would spare me but two days! Oh that God would spare me but two days! Oh that God would spare me but two days!' This poor creature trembled at the very thoughts of wrath to come. Oh who can dwell with everlasting burnings! who can dwell with a devouring fire! Isa 33:14. And as death is terrible to the sinner, so it is desirable, comfortable, and joyful to a child of God: Song of Solomon 8:14; Luk 2:27-32; 2Co 5:1-8; Php 1:23; Rev 22:20. 'I desire death,' saith Melanchthon, 'that I may enjoy the desirable sight of Christ.' And 'when will that blessed hour come? when shall I be dissolved? when shall I be with Christ?' said holy Mr Bolton when he lay on his dying-bed. Jewel was offended at one that in his sickness prayed for his life. One whom I knew well, a little before his death, after a sharp conflict, cried out three times, Victory! victory! victory! He breathed out his soul and his doxology together, 'Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ,' and so conquered Satan in his last encounter. The dying words of my young Lord Harrington were these: 'O my God, when shall I be with thee?' '2 'Shall I die ever?' saith Austin; 'Yes; or shall I die at all? Yes,' says he: 'Lord, if ever, why not now?' When Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, 'If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending of me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten.' Mr Dereing, a little before his death, being raised up in his bed, and seeing the sun shine, was desired to speak his mind; upon which he said, 'There is but one sun that giveth light to the whole world, but one righteousness, one communion of saints. As concerning death, I see such joy of spirit, that if I should have pardon of life on the one side, and sentence of death on the other, I had rather choose a thousand times to die than to live.' So Mr John Holland, lying at the point of death, said, 'What brightness do I see?' and being told it was the sunshine; 'No,' saith he 'my Saviour shines. Now farewell world, welcome heaven; the day-star from on high hath visited me. Preach at my funeral. God dealeth comfortably and familiarly with man: I feel his mercy! I see his majesty! whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I see things that are unutterable.' Mr Knox found so much comfort from the Scriptures upon his death-bed, that he would have risen and have gone into the pulpit to tell others what he had felt in his soul. And by that information that I have had from some good hands, several precious Christians that have lately died of the plague have gone to heaven under as high a spirit of joy, of comfort, of assurance, and of a holy triumph, as any of the last-mentioned worthies, or as any other that ever I heard of or read of: the remembrance of which hath been, and still is, a singular cordial to all their relations and friends that yet survive them. But as I was saying, no godly man falls in any common calamity till his glass be run and his work done; so I say of all those dear servants of the Lord that have fallen by the pestilence in the midst of us, their hour was come, and their course was finished, John 7:30, and John 8:19-20; 2Ti 4:6-7. Had God had any further doing-work, or suffering-work, or bearing-work, or witnessing-work for them in this world, it was not all the angels in heaven, nor all the malignant diseases in the world, that could ever have cut them off from 'the land of the living.' When Lazarus was dead, his two sisters, Martha and Mary, came to Christ with tears in their eyes and sad complaints in their mouths: John 11:21-32, 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,' said Martha: and 'Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died,' said Mary. And is not this the common language of many this day, when such and such precious Christians have fallen by the pestilence? Oh! if such a physician had been here they had not died; or if they had been let blood they had not died; or if they had taken such a potion they had not died; or if they had ate but of such or such meats they had not died; or if they had not lived

in such a foggy air they had not died; or if they had not been shut up in such close, narrow, nasty rooms and places they had not died; or had they been but so wise and happy as to have applied such or such a remedy, they might have been alive to this day! not considering with Job that 'the days of man are determined, and his bounds appointed, which he cannot pass,' Job 14:5. The time and place, and every circumstance of his dissolution, is decreed from all eternity. That one man dies in the field, another in his bed, one at sea, another on the shore, one of an apoplexy in the head, another of a struma in the neck, one of a squinacy in the throat, another of a cough and consumption of the lungs; that so many thousands dies of obstructions, inflammations, dropsies, gouts, pestilence, it is foreordained in heaven. The hand of the Lord is in all, and he it is that, having brought us into the world at his pleasure, will take us hence at his appointment. The Jews have a saying that 'God hath four keys under his own girdle: 1. The key of the clouds; 2. The key of the womb; 3. The key of the heart; and 4. The key of death, the key of the grave.

(5.) Fifthly, God sometimes takes away his dearest children in the common calamity in judgment to wicked men. Because the hand of the Lord hath touched some of his dearest servants in this sore visitation, how do the wicked insult, rejoice, and triumph! They say, Aha! so would we have it! As the fire-fly leaps and dances in the fire, so do wicked men rejoice in the sufferings and death of the people of God. How do many wicked men bless themselves because they have escaped the hand of the destroying angel, when such and such have fallen by it! Oh, how proud, how obdurate, how impudent, are many grown, because they have escaped the present judgment, when many others that have been a thousand times better than themselves have been sent to their graves! Ecc 8:11. The Alcoran saith, God created the angels of light, and the devils of the flame. Certainly God's children are of the light, but Satan's children are furious, wrathful children; they are children of the flame. Oh, in what a flame now are many wicked men against the people of God—since the hand of the destroying angel hath not yet reached them—over what they were in when the destroying angel first drew his sword in the midst of us! as if they were spared on purpose to oppress, persecute, and scatter the people of God more than ever. Oh that all such would be but so favourable to their own souls, as seriously to ponder upon Eze 25:1-17 and Eze 35:1-15.! Obadiah 1:8-19; Nah 1:9-15.

Felix, earl of Wurtemberg, one of the captains of Charles the Fifth, burning in rage and anger against the people of God, he swore, in the presence of divers at supper, that 'before he died he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans;' but God soon cooled his courage, for that very night he was choked and strangled in his own blood. Paul prayeth that he might be delivered from 'unreasonable and wicked men,' 2Th 3:2. The word is **■τ■ποι**, absurd men, such as put themselves upon ways of opposition against all reason and common sense; yea, such who in their rage and bitterness of spirit make no bones of breaking all the laws both of God and men, so they may but have their wills and lusts satisfied in afflicting, scattering, and tormenting of the people of God. 'Absurd' men, with Judas, kiss Christ, and betray him. They kiss the head and stab the body; or, as one wittily expresseth it, they kiss the mouth and tread upon the toes. Reader, remember this, when the people of the Jews made use of Philo to apologise for them unto Caius the emperor, Caius used him very ruggedly; but when he was come out of his presence the Jews came round about him. 'Well,' saith he, to encourage them, 'surely Caius will arm God against himself for us.' Let the reader apply it as he pleaseth.

(6.) Sixthly, God sometimes takes away some of his dearest children in the common calamity, that he may deliver them from greater calamities that are coming upon the world. The Jews have a saying that, 'When good men die it is an ill sign to the world.' When the luminaries of heaven are eclipsed, Deus avertat omen! Paulinus reports of Ambrose that he would weep bitterly when he heard of any godly minister's death. Whilst Calvin lives, Beza's life is sweet; but when Calvin dies, death is the more acceptable unto Beza. It is dark night when the lights are put out, and when the curtains are drawn, and the windows close shut. Ah, England, England! if this is not thy present case, I know nothing! The clouds gather more and more, and every day they look blacker and blacker, and bloodier and bloodier! Happy are those souls that are now in heaven, and blessed are those souls that are now waiting for the redemption of Israel.

(7.) Seventhly, Notwithstanding any outward promises that the Lord hath made concerning the protection and preservation of his children, yet he still reserves a liberty to himself to chastise his children with what rod he pleaseth, Psa 89:30-34; Heb 12:6-9; Rev 3:19. Notwithstanding all the gracious engagements that are upon the Lord to his people, yet he reserves a freedom to himself to make use of the very lives of his people in such ways as may make best for the bringing about of his own ends, and as may make most for the advance of his own glory; and hence it comes to pass that God delights so to carry it towards his dearest people, as that sinners and saints shall be forced to say that 'his judgments are unsearchable,' and that his 'ways are past finding out,' Rom 11:33. 'And that his way is in the sea, and that his paths are in the great waters, and that his footsteps are not known,' Psa 77:19. If you take a straight stick and put it into the water, it will seem crooked. Why? Because we look upon it through two mediums, air and water. There lies the *deceptio visus*; thence it is that we cannot discern aright. Thus all the proceedings of God in his righteous judgments, which in themselves are just, righteous, and straight, without the least obliquity, seem to us strange and crooked. That the wicked should prosper, and the righteous be afflicted; that good men should be in bonds, when bad men walk at large; that the Israelites should make the bricks, and the Egyptians dwell in the houses; that some of the best of Christians should fall by the pestilence, when many of the worst of sinners have their lives for a prey—these are some of those mysterious providences that many times make some of the best of Christians to stagger in their judgments and why so, but because they look upon God's proceedings through a double medium, of flesh and spirit; and hence it comes to pass that all things seem to run cross, and that God's most just and righteous proceedings are not so clearly and fully discerned as otherwise they might be. The wheels in a watch or in a clock move contrary one to another—some one way, some another; yet all shew the skill and intent of the workman, to shew the time, or to make the clock to strike; so in this world divine providences seem to run cross to divine promises; the wicked are spared, and the righteous are taken away; yet, in the conclusion, all issues in the will, purpose, and glory of God.

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, God hath taken several of his own dear children away by the pestilence, to wipe off that reproach which atheists and wicked men are apt to cast upon the Lord, as if he were partial, and his ways not equal, Eze 18:25, Eze 18:29. God, to stop the mouth of iniquity, the mouth of blasphemy, hath taken away several of his dear servants by the raging pestilence, when the wicked walk on every side, yea, when hell seems to be broke loose, and men turned into incarnate devils; and all because they have not been plagued as other men, nor visited as God hath visited some of his dearest children, Psa 73:5; 2Pe 2:9; Job 24:12; Psa 50:21.

Sometimes God's manner is to begin with his own people: 1Pe 4:17, 'Judgment must begin at the house of God;' and the Lord commands his destroying angel to begin at the sanctuary, Eze 9:6. Sometimes when God intends to bring a common and general destruction upon the enemies, oppressors, haters, and persecutors of his people, he is wont first to scourge his own till the blood comes. 'I took the cup at the Lord's hands'—he means the cup of God's fury, Jer 25:17—'and made all the nations to drink'—that is, prophesied that they should certainly drink of it—'unto whom the Lord hath sent me.' But who were to drink first of this cup? Mark, he tells us, Jer 25:18, 'Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof.' These were to begin in this cup to Egypt and the Philistines, to Edom, and Moab, and the Ammonites, as he shews in the verses following. Now all these were bitter and implacable enemies to the Israel of God. Ah, sinners, sinners! do not insult over the poor people of God because here and there the hand of the Lord hath touched them, and God hath given the cup into their hands; for if God be God, the cup must go round, and he will make good that word, Isa 5:22-23, [see Isa 5:17,] 'Thus saith the Lord, the Lord and thy God, that pleadeth the cause of his people: Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again; but I will put it into the hands of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over.' And that word, Jer 49:12, 'For thus saith the Lord, Behold, they'—meaning his own peculiar people—'whose judgment was not to drink of the cup'—that is, the cup of my wrath—'have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shalt altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it,' or 'drinking drink,' as the Hebrew runs. I have not spared my own dear people, saith God, who might have expected this favour at my hands before any people under heaven, upon the account of my relation to them, my affections for them, and my covenant with them all; and do you think that I will spare you? No! drinking you shall drink—that is, you shall certainly drink of this cup of my wrath; and you shall signally and visibly drink of this cup of my wrath. And that word, Isa 49:25-26, 'But thus saith the Lord, Even the captains of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children; and I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that the Lord is thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.' Oh that those men would lay these scriptures to heart, who rejoice and glory in the sufferings of the poor people of God, and because some of them have fallen by the hand of the destroying angel, considering that the design of God herein is to stop the mouth of iniquity, and that none may say that he is either partial or fond! Such men that have been eye-witnesses of God's impartial dealing with his own people in this day of his wrath should rather be down-in-the-mouth than up in their spirits; they should rather be silent than raving against the people of the Lord; they should rather tremble than rejoice—for if God deal thus with his green trees, how will he deal with the dry? When God cuts down his best timber, will he not either grub up or burn up the old stumps? Surely he will, Luk 23:31. 'If judgment begin at the house of God, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?' 1Pe 4:17-18. If God deal thus with his best friends, how will he deal with his enemies? If God deal thus with his dearest children, servants and slaves have cause to tremble. And thus much for the reasons why some of God's dearest children have fallen by the pestilence in this day of the Lord's anger.

X. The tenth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., That such saints as do fall by the sword or by the pestilence, they receive no loss, no wrong, no injury, by these sad dispensations; they gain much, but they lose nothing; for by these sad providences they are but hastened to heaven, to their Father's house, to their eternal homes, and to those blessed mansions that Christ hath prepared for them, John 14:1-4.

Elijah went to heaven in a fiery chariot, 2Ki 11:12; and many thousand of the martyrs went to heaven in fiery chariots, and in bloody chariots; and doubtless many worthies in this day are gone to heaven in a pestilential chariot, as in a chair of state. Heaven is a place of so much pleasure and delight that they are happy that can get thither anyhow. There is laid up in heaven 'an incorruptible crown,' a 'crown of life,' a 'crown of righteousness, a 'crown of immortality,' a 'crown of glory,' 1Co 9:25; 2Ti 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4; Rev 2:10; and who would not shoot any gulf to come to these crowns? Nec Christus, nec cœlum patitur hyperbolem—Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolised. The good things of heaven are so many that they exceed number, and so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation. What will that life be, or rather what will not that life be, since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? Here is light which place cannot comprehend, voices and music which time cannot ravish away, odours which are never dissipated, a feast which is never consumed, a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall never see at an end; and who would not wade through a Red Sea to come to this heavenly Canaan? What are all the silks of Persia, and all the spices of Egypt, and all the gold of Ophir, and all the treasures of both Indies; yea, what is the glory of ten thousand worlds, to that glory that those saints are now enjoying who have died by the pestilence in the midst of us? When Cyneas, the ambassador of Pyrrhus, after his return from Rome, was asked by his master what he thought of the city and state, he answered that 'it seemed to him to be *respublica regum*—a state of none but great statesmen, and a commonwealth of kings.' Such is heaven—no other than a commonwealth of kings. Every saint in that kingdom is co-heir with Christ, and hath a robe of honour, and a sceptre of power, and a throne of majesty, and a crown of glory, Rom 8:17. Now what doth that Christian lose who dies of the pestilence, and by that means is brought to the fruition of all this glory? 'Death,' saith Mr Brightman, 'that was before the devil's sergeant to drag us to hell, is now the Lord's gentleman-usher to conduct us to heaven.' In the ceremonial law (Lev 25:1-55) there was a year they accounted the year of jubilee, and this was with the poor Jews a very delightful and acceptable year, because that every man that had lost or sold his lands, upon the blowing of a trumpet, returned, and had possession of his estate again; and so he was recovered out of all those miseries and extremities in which he lived before. Now our whole life in this world is made up of troubles and trials, of calamities and miseries, of crosses and losses, of reproaches and disgraces; but death is the Christian's jubilee; it wipes away all tears from his eyes, it turns his miseries into mercies, his crosses into crowns, and his earthly hell into a glorious heaven. Though death, though the pestilence be to the wicked as the rod in Moses' hand that was turned into a serpent, yet to the godly, death, the pestilence, is like to the wand in Elijah's hand, a means to waft them over into a better life. The heathen gods held death to be man's summum bonum, his chiefest good. Solomon upon his throne extolled his coffin above his crown. Death is a fall that came in by a fall. For a saint to die is for a saint to be no more unhappy. By death the saints come to a fixed and invariable eternity. Death is but an entrance into life. That is not death but life, which joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not life but death, which separates the living man from Christ. Death will blow the bud of grace into the flower of glory. Death is a saint's

quietus est. All fearful disasters, saith Gregory, which rob the saints of life, do but serve as a rough wind to blow them suddenly into their desired haven—I mean heaven. It matters not, saith Austin, whether a burning fever or flash of lightning, or whether a stone in the bladder, or a thunder-stone in thy head, sends thee out of this miserable world; for God minds not, saith he, the immediate occasion of thy coming to him, but the condition and posture that thy soul is in when it cometh before him. The great thing that God will look at is, whether thou art a sheep or a goat, a sinner or a saint, a friend or an enemy, a son or a slave, a believer or an infidel; whether thou art growing on the crab-stock of old Adam, or art engrafted into Christ; whether thou art clothed with the righteousness of his Son, or whether thou standest before him in the ragged righteousness of thine own duties.

XI. The eleventh divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., Though a godly man should die of the plague, yet he shall be certainly delivered from the evil of the plague. The smartest rod that God lays upon his own people is from a principle of love. Though he be angry with his people's sins, yet he loves their persons, Rev 3:19; Pro 3:11-12; Heb 12:5-6. Though the pestilence comes as a judgment upon wicked men, yet it comes only as a chastisement upon the people of God. When the plague comes upon wicked men, it comes upon them by virtue of the first covenant, and as a fruit of the curse; but when it comes upon the godly, it comes upon them by virtue of the second covenant—I mean the covenant of grace—and as a fruit of his love, Psa 89:30-34. Hence God is called 'The great and terrible God that keepeth covenant,' Neh 1:5. But why is he called 'the terrible God that keepeth covenant,' but because as he hath covenanted to keep them from the evil of the world, and to purge away their sins, and to save their souls, and to preserve them to his heavenly kingdom, Psa 119:75; John 17:1-26; 2Ti 4:17-18; so he stands bound by his covenant to make use of any terrible dispensations to effect those great and glorious things. As we sometimes preserve those things in salt that we cannot preserve in sugar; so sometimes God preserves his poor people in the salt of afflictions, in the salt of terrible dispensations, when they would not, when they could not, be preserved in the sugar of mercies, &c. Though the plague should come into a godly family, yet God will deliver that family from the evil of the plague: Psa 91:10, 'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' Beloved, though the plague should come into a godly man's house, yet there shall not be any evil in it to the godly man. When the plague comes into a wicked man's family, it always comes in the quality of a curse, Lev 26:1-46; but it never comes into a godly man's family in the quality of a curse, for Christ was made a curse for them, Gal 3:13. It never enters into a godly man's family as a fruit of God's revenging justice or wrath, Rom 8:18; Jer 24:5; Isa 54:7-10; Jer 31:3, and Jer 33:3-7. When the plague comes upon the wicked, it comes upon them as a fruit of God's judicial wrath; but when it comes upon the godly, it only comes upon them as a fruit of God's fatherly anger. When it comes upon the wicked, it comes upon them as a fruit of God's everlasting wrath; and therefore where it proves fatal, it is but an inlet to eternal torments. But when it comes upon a child of God, it comes upon him but as a fruit of God's momentary wrath, Isa 54:7-10. Look, as David gave charge to his soldiers, that they should not kill Absalom, his son, but only restrain his unnatural rebellion, and reduce him to his former obedience; so when God sends the pestilence amongst his people, he lays a law of restraint upon it that it shall not hurt his people, that it shall not destroy their graces, nor ruin their souls. The full commission that God gives to the pestilence is to restrain the sins of his people, and to destroy the soul-rebellions of his people. I have read of a loadstone in Æthiopia which hath two corners; with the one it draws the iron to it, with the other it puts the iron from it; so

God hath two arms, the one of mercy, and the other of judgment; two hands, the one of love, the other of wrath; with the one he draweth, with the other he driveth; the one stroketh, the other striketh; and as he hath a right hand of favour wherewith to lead the saints, so he wants not a left hand of fury wherewith to dash the wicked in pieces.

XII. The twelfth divine maxim or conclusion is this—viz., That God knows how to distinguish his people, and how to difference his people from others, when the pestilence rages in the midst of them: as he did between the Israelites and the Egyptians, Exo 8:21-23, Exo 9:22-26, and Exo 11:7. That of the apostle is a great truth: 2Ti 2:19, 'The Lord knoweth them that are his.' The Lord knows all his people by name; he doth not only know how many be elected, but he also knoweth who they are. He knows the very numerical persons upon whom he hath set his electing love. Though the pestilence doth not know a saint from a sinner, yet the Lord knows a saint from a sinner; though the pestilence doth not know the righteous from the wicked, yet the Lord knows the righteous from the wicked; though the pestilence doth not know him that feareth an oath from him that sweareth, yet the Lord knows him that feareth an oath from him that sweareth; though the pestilence doth not know the clean from the unclean, yet the Lord knows the clean from the unclean; though the pestilence doth not know him that sacrificeth from him that sacrificeth not, yet the Lord knows him that sacrificeth from him that sacrificeth not; though the pestilence doth not know the oppressed from the oppressor, yet the Lord knows the oppressed from the oppressor; though the pestilence doth not know the persecuted from the persecutor, yet the Lord knows the persecuted from the persecutor: 2Pe 2:9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation,' that is, afflictions. Though the godly man do not know how to deliver himself out of temptations, though others do not know how the godly man should be delivered out of temptations, yet the Lord knows how to deliver the godly man out of temptations; and his time is always the best. The physician turns the hour-glass, and resolves the physic shall work so long; the impatient patient cries out, Oh, I am in pain! oh, how I am tormented! oh, what would I not give for a little ease! oh, methinks every hour is a year! but the wise physician, knowing the fittest time, will not suffer him to have any rest or comfort till the physic hath had its proper operation. Thus many times God's dear children, when they are under sore trials, they cry out, How long, Lord, how long shall this rod lie upon our backs? how long shall thy anger smoke? how long shall the judgment continue? but God will turn a deaf ear, and make them wait his time, which is always the best time. And therefore though God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, yet he will take his own time to deliver them out of temptations, &c.

XIII. The thirteenth, and last divine maxim or conclusion, is this—viz., That though the godly are not delivered from the plague, yet they are still delivered by the plague; by it they shall be delivered from all their sins.

Death is not mors hominis, but mors peccati, not the death of the man, but the death of his sin. When Samson died, the Philistines died together with him; so when a believer dies, be it the pestilence or any other disease, his sin dies with him. As death came in by sin, so sin goes out by death. As the worm kills the worm that bred it, so death kills sin that bred it. The Persians had a certain day in the year wherein they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures; such a day as that will the day of death be to every believer. When the pestilence hath put a period to a Christian's days, then he shall never be proud more, nor passionate more, nor unbelieving more, nor worldly more, nor neglective of duty more, nor grieve the Spirit of God more, nor wound

conscience more, nor break the peace with God more, nor sad the hearts of the righteous more, nor open the mouth of blasphemy more. The death of the body shall quite destroy the body of death; so that as sin was the midwife that brought death into the world, so death shall be the grave that shall bury sin in. When the pestilence takes away a godly man, it doth not take him away in his sins, but it takes him away from his sins; and as death, as the pestilence when it kills, rids the believer of all his sins, so it will rid him of all his troubles. Death cures all diseases, the aching head and the unbelieving heart; ultimus morborum medicus mors. At Stratford-Bow were burned in Queen Mary's days at one stake a lame man and a blind man; the lame man, after he was chained, casting away his crutch, bade the blind man be of good comfort, for death would cure them both. It will cure thee, saith he, of thy blindness, and me of my lameness. The way to glory is by misery. In this world we are all Benonis, the sons of sorrow. The way to heaven is by Weeping-cross. Christ's passion-week was before his ascension-day. None passes to paradise but by burning seraphims. We cannot go out of Egypt but through the Red Sea. The children of Israel came to Jerusalem through the valley of tears, and crossed the swift river of Jordan before they came to the sweet waters of Siloam. If a godly man die of the pestilence, he shall never be haunted, tempted, and buffeted by Satan more; he shall never see a cloud, a frown, a wrinkle in the face of God more. The chair of pestilence shall be to him a chair of state, by which he shall be brought into the presence of the King of kings. If the plague prove mortal to a godly man or woman, it shall do that for them which all ordinances could never do, and which all their duties could never do, and which all their graces could never do, and which all their experiences could never do for them, and which all the assistances, influences, and incomes of the Holy Spirit could never do for them, &c. It shall at once free them from all their sins, sorrows, tears, temptations, oppressions, oppositions, vexations, and persecutions. Death will cure the believer of all his bodily diseases and distempers at once. And thus I have done with these divine maxims and conclusions: the Lord make them as so many heavenly cordials to the Christian reader!

Reader,

If thou art so ingenuous as to be desirous to know what those special lessons are that thou art to learn by that severe rod, the pestilence, that hath been so long amongst us, I must refer thee to my first Epistle before my Treatise on 'Closet Prayer,' where thou wilt find twenty lessons that we are to learn by the smarting rod. the LEGACY OF A DYING MOTHER

NOTE

I have not been able to trace another copy besides my own of this interesting and touching little volume. It appears to be wholly unknown to bibliographers. The original title-page will be found below.* The 'Epistle Dedicatory' of Brooks forms a pungent and quickening little treatise on the duty of children to walk in the footsteps of their godly parents. The 'Legacy' or 'Experiences' itself occupies only eighteen out of the sixty-two pages; and as it is experimental, and also furnishes glimpses of 'good men' in America—e.g., Cotton, Shephard, Eliot—of whom very little is known, we have decided to reprint it along with Brooks's 'Epistle Dedicatory.'—G.

* the

LEGACY of a

DYING MOTHER To Her Mourning CHILDREN, Being the EXPERIENCES of Mrs Susanna Bell, Who died March 13. 1672. With an EPISTLE DEDICATORY By THOMAS BROOKS Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON, Printed and are to be sold by John Hancock Senior and Junior at the three Bibles in Popes-Head Alley in Cornhill. 1673.

[12mo.—G.] THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY To his Honoured Friends, Mr T. B., I. B., S. B., I. T., Merchants, and to their Wives, and to the rest of the Children of Mrs Susanna Bell, deceased: the Author wisheth all grace, mercy, and peace.

Honoured Friends,—My design in this epistle is not to compliment you, but to benefit you; it is not to tickle your ears, but to better your hearts; nor it is not to blazon her name or fame to the world whose heaven-born soul is now at rest with God, and who is swallowed up in those transcendent enjoyments of that other world which are above the comprehensions of my mind and the expressions and praises of my pen; but it is to allure and draw you to an imitation of what was praiseworthy in her. Shall I hint at a few things?

1. First, Imitate her in that sincerity and plain-heartedness which was transparent in her. Sincerity is not a single grace, but the source of all graces, and the interlineary that must run through every grace; for what is faith, if it be not unfeigned? and what is love, if it be not without dissimulation? and what is repentance, if it be not in truth? Sincerity is the soul of all grace; it is the grace of all our graces. What advantage is it to have 'the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope,' Eph 6:13-17, if they be but painted things? It is the 'girdle of sincerity' that makes all the other parts of our armour useful. Was she not a true Nathanael, John 1:47, a person in whom there was no guile—I mean no allowed hypocrisy? and was not this that which carried her through the pangs of death with a great deal of comfort, as it had done Hezekiah, Paul, and other saints before? Isa 38:3; 2Co 1:12. A sincere Christian is like the violet, which grows low, and hides itself and its own sweetness as much as may be with its own leaves; or like Brutus' staff, gold within and thorn without; or like the ark, gold within and goats' hair without. The very heathen loved a candid and sincere spirit, as he that wished 'that there was a glass window in his breast, that all the world might see what was in his heart. But,

2. Secondly, Imitate her in that humility which was a grace she was clothed withal, 1Pe 5:5. I ever found her low and little in her own eyes, much in debasing herself upon all occasions, looking upon herself as below 'the least of mercies,' with Jacob, Gen 32:10; and as 'dust and ashes,' with Abraham, Gen 18:27; and as 'a poor worm,' with David, Psa 22:6; and 'less than the least of all saints,' with Paul, Eph 3:8. And commonly the more high in spiritual worth, the more humble in heart. God delights to pour in grace into humble souls, as men pour in liquor into empty vessels. Humility makes a person peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking. Humility makes a man precious in the eyes of God. Who is little in his own account is always great in God's esteem. It is well observed by some, that those brave creatures, the eagle and the lion, were not offered in sacrifice unto God, but the poor lambs and doves were; to note that God regards not your brave, high, lofty spirits, but poor, meek, and contemptible spirits. Humility is a rare grace. Many, saith Augustine, can more easily give all they have to the poor, than themselves become poor in spirit. Be low in your own eyes, and be content to be low in the eyes of others; and think not of yourselves above what is meet, as ever you would

write after your mother's copy, and affect more to be amongst God's 'little ones,' Mat 18:10, than the 'great ones of this world.' Be humble Christians; as ever you would be holy, be humble. Humility is of the essence of the 'new creature.' He is not a Christian that is not humble. The more grace the more humble. Those that have been most high in spiritual worth have always been most humble in heart. Ignatius could say of himself, *Non sum dignus dici minimus*, I am not worthy to be called the least. Lord, I am hell, but thou art heaven, said blessed Hooper. I am a most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that the earth should bear me, said holy Bradford. I have no other name, saith Luther, than 'sinner;' sinner is my name, sinner is my surname. This is the name by which I shall be always known. I have sinned, I do sin, I shall sin in infinitum. Ruth was the daughter of the king of Moab, if we may give credit to the general opinion of the Rabbins; or if that be not so probable, yet she was one that we may well suppose to have been one of good quality in her own country, as being wife of Mahlon, the elder brother of the family of the prince Naasson: yet she accounts herself scarce equal to one of the maid-servants in the house of Boaz, Ruth 2:13. So Abigail, the wit of the time, 1Sa 25:41. So Elizabeth, though she was the elder and the better woman for outward quality, yet how confounded was she with Mary's visit, as being too great a weight of honour for her to bear, Luk 1:43. So Mary, Luk 1:38. 'If I were asked,' said Austin, 'what is the readiest way to attain true happiness, I would answer, the first, the second, the third thing is humility.' Humility doth not only entitle to happiness, but to the highest degree of happiness, Mat 18:4. Humility is that Jacob's ladder which reaches from earth to heaven.

3. Thirdly, Imitate her in her charity and mercy towards suffering, needy, and wanting ones. How seldom did you find her ear or hand shut against charitable motions! She knew that those that did good to the poor and needy for Christ's sake, God would do good to them for the poor's sake, most sure for his Son's sake. She knew that he who promised they 'should have that asked,' had first commanded such to give unto them that asked; she knew that unmercifulness is a sin which least becomes and worse beseems one that had so largely tasted of the mercies of God, as she had done both in New and Old England. She was much made up of pity and mercy to the poor; the bellies of the hungry, and the back of the naked, did often proclaim her pity and charity. Many ministers, widows, and fatherless ones, have tasted not only of her husband's bounty, but of hers also. Vain persons, when they give, they will cause their kindness to run in a visible channel, they will sound a trumpet, to be seen of men, Mat 6:1-2; but was she not a secret and hidden reliever of God's distressed ones? Did she not refresh the bowels of many with her hid treasures? Will you all learn to write after this copy? Of Midas it is fabled, 'that whatever he touched he turned into gold.' It is most sure that whatever the hand of charity toucheth it turneth into gold,—be it but a cup of cold water,—nay, into heaven itself; cold water, having not fuel to heat it: cold water, which costs not the charge of fire to warm it. Salvian saith that Christ is *mendicorum maximus*, the greatest beggar in the world, as one that shareth in all his saints' necessities, Heb 6:10; and will never forget the charitable person, the merciful person. Cicero could say, 'That to be rich is not to possess much, but to use much;' and Seneca could rebuke them that so studied to increase their wealth that they forgot to use it. I have read of one Evagrius, a rich man, that lying upon his death-bed, being importuned by Synesius, a pious bishop, to give something to charitable uses, he yielded at last to give three hundred pounds; but first took bond of the bishop that it should be repaid him in another world before he had been one day dead. He is said to have appeared to the bishop, delivering in the bond cancelled, as thereby acknowledging what was promised was made good, according to that promise: Mat 19:29, 'And every one that hath forsaken houses,' &c.

4. Fourthly, Imitate her in keeping off from the sins and pollutions of the day wherein you live. Was she not one of God's mourning one's for the abominations of the time? Did not men's abomination in worship and practice vex, grieve, and wound her poor soul? Was it not her great work to live by no rule, to walk by no rule, to worship God by no rule, but by that which she dared to die by, and to stand by in the great day of our Lord Jesus? Eze 9:4, Eze 9:6; Jer 9:1-2; 2Pe 2:7-8; Psa 119:53, Psa 119:136, Psa 119:158. She knew that worshipping of God in spirit and in truth was the great worship, the only worship that God stood upon, John 4:23-24. She did not, she durst not, worship God according to the customs of the world, or the traditions of the elders, Php 3:3, or the examples of great men. She knew that that worship that is not according to the word, is (1.) Worshipping of devils and not God. Those that depart from the true worship of God, and set upon false worship forbidden by God, do not serve God by it, but the devil, what boasting soever they make, as you may evidently see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. She knew, (2.) That that worship that is not according to the word, is an image of idolatry, which of all sins is most provoking to a holy, jealous God. 'The devil,' saith Synesius, 'is as glad to be worshipped in an idol, as he was by Israel in a calf,' Exo 32:4: there being nothing that provokes God to destroy poor sinners more than this. The learned Jews have a saying, 'That no punishment ever happened to them in which there was not an ounce of the golden calf,' grounding it on Exo 32:34, 'Nevertheless I will remember to visit this sin upon them.' The Egyptians worshipped a pied bull, and whereas some thought it strange that when one died, they should have another of the same colour, Austin thinks that the devil, to keep them in idolatry, might do with their cows as Jacob did with the ewes, present to them when they conceived the likeness of such a bull. Certainly Satan will use all the art he can to keep poor sinners in ways of false worship, it being the most compendious way that can be to engage God to destroy them. She knew, (3.) That that worship that is not according to the word hath destroyed the most flourishing churches and nations; witness the church and nation of the Jews, the seven churches of Asia, and the whole eastern parts of the empire: see Hos 8:5-7; Rev 9:20; Eze 10:2; 2Ch 7:20. She knew, (4.) That that worship that is not according to the word is a cursed worship. It is the observation of one well skilled in the Jewish learning, that there is only one verse in the prophecy of the prophet Jeremiah which is written in the Chaldee tongue, all the rest being in Hebrew: and that is Jer 10:11, 'So shalt thou say, Cursed be the gods who made neither heaven nor earth;' and this is done by the Holy Ghost, on purpose that the Jews, when they were in captivity, and exhorted by the Chaldeans to worship false gods, might be able to answer them in their own language, 'Cursed be your gods; we will not worship them, for they made neither heaven nor earth.' That God that made heaven and earth is only to be worshipped according to his own word; for he will own no worship but what he will accept of, no worship but that; he will bless no worship but that, nor he will reward no worship but that. Your glorified mother kept close to instituted worship when she had health and strength; in this it will be your wisdom to write after her fair copy. But,

5. Fifthly, Imitate her in justifying of the Lord under the sharpest, bitterest, and most afflictive providences and dispensations. How often have I heard her to justify the Lord, even whilst he has been a-writing bitter things against her; when gall and wormwood hath been put into her cup, hath she not said with Ezra, Ezr 9:13, 'God hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve;' and with Nehemiah, Neh 9:33, 'Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly;' and with Job, Job 1:21, 'Oh! the Lord gives, and the Lord takes, and blessed be the name of the Lord;' and with Daniel, Dan 9:14, 'The Lord our God is righteous in all

his works which he doth.' You know what afflictive providences she has been under, both in respect of her person, and in the loss of her husband, and in those variety of weaknesses that attended her body, and in the great losses that some of you have met with in the world, besides several other exercises; yet how has she commonly been taken up in blessing of God, and in justifying of God, and also in admiring the goodness of God, that it has been no worse with her; and here I am satisfied she would not have exchanged her gains by afflictions for all the gains of the world. Stars shine brightest in the darkest night. Torches are better for the beating. Grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press. Spices smell sweetest when pounded. Young trees root the faster for shaking. Vines are the better for bleeding. Gold looks the brighter for scouring. Glow-worms glister best in the dark. Juniper smells sweetest in the fire. Pomander becomes most fragrant for chafing. The palm-tree proves the better for pressing. Camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Such is the condition of God's children; they are the most triumphant when most distressed, most glorious when most afflicted; as their conflicts, so their conquests; as their tribulations, so their triumphs. God's people are true salamanders, that live best in the furnace of afflictions; so that heavy afflictions are the best benefactors to heavenly affections. When afflictions hang heaviest, then corruptions hang loosest. And grace that is hid in nature, as sweet-water in rose-leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out. But,

6. Sixthly, Imitate her in the standing, bent, and course of her life and conversation. No man is to judge of the soundness or sincerity of his spirit by some particular acts, but by the constant frame and bent of his spirit, and by his general conversation in this world. *Una actio non denominat*. If particular actions might determine whether a man had grace or no grace, whether he were in Christ or not in Christ, whether he were a saint or no saint, whether he were sincere or unsound, we should many times conclude that those have no grace who indeed have, and that they were not in Christ who indeed are, and that they are no saints who indeed are, and that they are not sincere who certainly are true Nathanaels. The best saints on this side heaven have had their extravagant motions, and have very foully and sadly miscarried as to particular actions, even then when the constant course and bent of their spirits and main of their conversations have been God-wards, and Christ-wards, and holiness-wards, and heaven-wards, &c. Witness David's murder and adultery, Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Joseph's swearing, Job's cursing, Jonah's vexing, Peter's denying, and Thomas his not believing. Such twinklings do and will accompany the highest and fairest stars. As he that foots it best may be sometimes found all along, and the neatest² person may sometimes slip into a slough; he that cannot endure to see a spot upon his clothes, may yet sometimes fall into a quagmire; so the holiest and exactest Christians may sometimes be surprised with many infirmities and unevennesses and sad miscarriages. Certainly particular sinnings are compatible with a gracious frame, though none are with a glorified condition. Our best estate on earth is mixed, and not absolute. Glory annihilates all sinful practices, but grace only weakens them. The most sincere Christian is but an imperfect Christian, and hath daily cause to mourn over his infirmities, as well as he has cause to bless God for his graces and mercies. Look, as every particular stain doth not blemish the universal fineness of the cloth, so neither doth this or that particular fact disprove and deny the general bent of a person's heart or life. Particulars may not decide the estate either way. It is true, a man by a particular sinning is denominated guilty, but by no one particular can a man's estate be challenged either to be good or bad. He that shall judge of a Christian's estate by particular acts, though very bad, will

certainly condemn 'the generation of the righteous,' Psa 73:15. We must always distinguish betwixt some single good actions and a series of good actions. It is not this or that particular good action, but a continued course of holy actions, that denominates a person holy. Certainly as there is no man so holy but sometimes he falls into this or that particular sin, so there is no man so wicked but he falls in with this or that particular duty, as you may see in Pharaoh, Balaam, Saul, the Ninevites, Felix, Herod, Judas, yea, and the very scribes and pharisees. Now look, as every sin which a godly man falls into, through infirmity, doth not presently denominate him ungodly, so neither will a few good actions done by a wicked man prove him godly. It is what the course and tenor of the life is that must be most diligently and wisely observed; for every man is as his course is. If his course be holy, the man is so; if his course be wicked, the man is so. There is a maxim in logic, viz., that no general rule can be established upon a particular instance; and there is another maxim in logic, viz., that no particular instance can overthrow a general rule. We are never to make a judgment of our estates and conditions by some particular actions, whether they are good or evil, but we are still to make a judgment of our estates and conditions by the general frame, bent, and disposition of our hearts, and by the constant tenor of our lives. Now, I dare appeal to you, and all others that have observed the constant tenor of her life and conversation, whether it has not been such as becomes the gospel, and as hath adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour—human infirmities excepted, Php 1:27; Tit 2:10; Gen 6:9. And oh that this might be the mercy of all her children, to walk with God as she hath done, and then I should not doubt but that they would all meet in heaven at last. But,

7. Seventhly, Imitate her in her love to the saints, to all the saints, in whom she could discern aliquid Christi, anything of Christ. Did she not love, delight, and take pleasure to see the graces of the Holy Spirit sparkling and shining in the hearts, lives, and lips of the saints? 1Jn 3:10, 1Jn 3:14; secretly wishing in herself that her soul were but in so noble a case. Were there any men in all the world that were so precious, so lovely, so comely, so excellent, and so honourable in her account, in her eye, as those that had the image of God, of Christ, of grace, of holiness, most clearly, most fairly, and most fully stamped upon them? Psa 15:1, Psa 15:4, and Psa 16:3; 1Jn 5:1. Did she not love saints as saints? Was it not the image of God that drew out her affection to the people of God? Many, like the Bohemian cur, can fawn upon a good suit; but grace was lovely in her eye, though clothed with rags. Many love godly men, as they are politicians, or potent, or learned, or of a sweet nature, or affable, or related, or as they have been kind to them; but all this is but natural love; but to love them because they are spiritually lovely, because of the seed of God in them, 1Jn 3:9, because they are all glorious within, Psa 45:13, is to love them as becometh saints, it is to love them at a higher and nobler rate than any hypocrite in the world can reach to. Did she not set the highest price and the greatest value and esteem upon those that were gracious? Had she not an honour in her heart for them that feared the Lord? Did she not value persons according to their worth for another world, and not according to their worldly greatness or grandeur? Pro 12:26, and Pro 28:6. Did she not prefer a holy Job upon a dunghill, before a wicked Ahab upon the throne? Did she not set a higher price upon a gracious Lazarus, though clothed with rags and full of sores, than upon a rich and wretched Dives, though he were clothed gloriously, and fared sumptuously every day? Was not her love to the saints universal? to one Christian as well as another, to all as well as any, to poor Lazarus as well as to rich Abraham, to a despised Job as well as to an admired David, to an afflicted Joseph as well as to a raised Jacob, to a despised disciple as well as to an exalted apostle? Php 1:21; 1Pe 2:17. Did she not love to see the image and picture of her

heavenly Father, though hung in never so poor a frame, and in never so mean a cottage? Without peradventure, he that loves one saint for the image of God that is stamped upon him, he cannot but fall in love with every saint that bears the lovely image of the Father upon him. And oh that this might be all your mercy, to write after this copy that she has set before you! But,

8. Eighthly, Imitate her in her constancy in the ways of God, with or notwithstanding all the hazards, storms, dangers, and troubles that has attended those ways, especially in those latter days of apostasy, wherein God had cast her lot. She was not a reed shaken with every wind; she was unchangeable in changeable times. Whatever storms beat upon the ways of God, or the people of God, she remained firm and immovable in the ways of the Lord, Psa 44:1-26, and Psa 119:112; and doubtless such souls as are truly good, they will be good in the worst of times, and in the worst of places, and amongst the worst of persons. Principles of grace and holiness, they are lasting, yea, everlasting. They are not like the morning cloud nor the early dew, 1Jn 3:9; Hos 6:4. Let times and places and persons be what they will, a sincere Christian will not dishonour his God, nor change his Master, nor quit his ways, nor blemish his profession, nor wound his conscience to sleep in a whole skin, or to preserve his safety, or to secure his liberty; and was it not thus with her in the most trying times? An upright man is a right man. So ■■■■, jashar, is rendered by the Septuagint, Jdg 17:6. He is one that won't be bowed or bent by the sinful customs or examples of the times and places where he lives, Gen 6:9; Rev 14:4, and Rev 3:4; Job 17:9. Let the times be never so dangerous, licentious, superstitious, idolatrous, and erroneous, yet a sincere, plain-hearted Christian will keep his ground, and hold on in his way; as might be made evident by a cloud of witnesses, Heb 12:1; Psa 125:1-2. The laurel keeps its freshness and greenness in the winter season; a sincere Christian is semper eadem; let the wind and the world and the times turn which way they will, a sincere soul, for the main, will still be the same. He will be like mount Zion, which cannot be removed; he will stand his ground and hold his own under all changes; he is like the philosopher's good man, τετραγωνος, four-square; cast him where you will, like a die, he falls always square and sure; so cast a plain-hearted Christian where you will, into what company you will, and into what condition you will, yet still he will fall sure and square for God and godliness. Let the times be never so sad, nor never so bad, yet a plain-hearted Christian will still keep close to God and his ways, and will rather let all go than let his God go, or his religion go, or his integrity go, or ordinances go. Lapidaries tell us of the Chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue and lustre no longer than it is enclosed in gold—a fit emblem of an unsound heart, who is only good while he is enclosed in golden prosperity, safety, and felicity. An unsound Christian, like green timber, shrinks when the sun of persecution shines hot upon him. The heat of fiery trials cools the courage of unsound Christians; but a sincere, plain-hearted Christian is like a massive vessel of gold, that keeps its own shape and figure at all times, in all places, and in all companies. When one of the ancient martyrs was greatly threatened by his persecutors, he replied, 'There is nothing,' saith he, 'of things visible, nothing of things invisible, that I fear; I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, come on it what will, in these evil days wherein multitudes have turned aside into crooked paths.' She kept close and constant to the ways of the Lord so long as her natural strength lasted. And oh that all you, her children, would make it your business in this, as well as in other things, to write after your mother's copy! remembering that if you are not faithful unto death, you shall never receive a crown of life, Rev 2:10; and that if you do not continue to the end, that is, in well-doing, you shall never be saved, Mat 24:13. But,

9. Ninthly, Imitate her in her high valuations of Jesus Christ. What low and little things were her own graces, duties, services, and mercies, when she cast her eye upon Christ, when she fell into discourses of Christ! Php 3:8-10; Mat 13:44. Christ was her summum bonum, chiefest good. What was all the world to a sight of Christ, to a day, yea, to an hour's communion with Christ! They are no believers that do not value Jesus Christ above all the world and all things in the world; 'for unto every one that believes he is precious,' 1Pe 2:7—most precious, only precious, and for ever precious. They value him (1.) Above their lusts, Gal 5:24. They can pluck out right eyes for Christ, and cut off right hands for Christ. They value him (2.) Above the world. Witness David, Psa 73:25, and Dan 6:1-28; and the disciples, Mat 19:27; and Moses, Heb 11:25-26; and the primitive Christians, and the martyrs of a later date. They value him (3.) Above their lives: Rev 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death.' So Paul, Acts 20:22-24, and Acts 21:13. So the martyrs. They value him (4.) Above all their relations. 'If all the world were a lump of gold,' said the Dutch martyr, 'and in my hands to dispose of, I would give it to live all my days with my wife and children in a prison; but Christ and his truth is dearer to me than all.' You have thousands of such instances upon record. They value him (5.) Above their goods: Heb 10:34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.' So has many thousands since under sharp persecutions. They value him (6.) Above all natural, spiritual, and acquired excellencies, Php 3:7-8. In all my serious discourses with her about our Lord Jesus Christ, she would still set the crown upon Christ's head. She would lay herself low, very low, that he alone might be exalted. The thoughts of Christ was precious to her, the discourses of Christ were precious to her, the image of Christ was precious to her, the ordinances of Christ were precious to her, the discoveries of Christ were precious to her, the day of Christ was precious to her, the offices of Christ were precious to her, and the rebukes of Christ—whilst she enjoyed his presence under them—was precious to her; but, above all, the person of Christ was most precious to her. In her eye he was 'the chiefest of ten thousand, fairer than the children of men,' Song of Solomon 5:10; Psa 45:1; and all the riches, honours, pleasures, and delights of the world were but dung in comparison of him, Php 3:7-8. Oh at what a rate has the saints of old prized our Lord Jesus! Malleus, said one, ruere cum Christo quam regnare cum Cæsare: Luther had rather fall with Christ than stand with Cæsar. The same author elsewhere saith that he had rather be Christianus rusticus than Ethnicus Alexander, A Christian clown than a pagan emperor. Theodosius, emperor, preferred the title of Membrum Ecclesiæ before that of Caput Imperii, professing that he had rather be a saint and no king, than a king and no saint. And godly Constantine rejoiced more in being the servant of Christ, than in being the emperor of the world. Bernard saith 'that he had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him.' It was an excellent answer of one of the martyrs when he was offered riches and honours if he would recant, said, 'Do but offer me somewhat that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you.' It was a sweet prayer of one, 'Make thy Son dear, very dear, exceeding dear, only dear and precious, or not at all.' Another good man cried out, 'I had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds.' I have read of Johannes Mollius, 'that whensoever he spake of the name of Jesus, his eyes dropped tears;' and of another reverend divine, who, being in a deep muse after some discourse that passed of dear Jesus, and tears trickling down his cheeks before he was aware, and being asked the reason of it, he confessed ingenuously, 'It was because he could not draw his dull heart to prize Jesus Christ at that rate he should and fain would.'² Christ lay near your mother's heart, and oh that he may be near all your hearts, that so you may be safe and saved for ever! But,

10. Tenthly, Imitate her in the casting a mantle of love over the infirmities and weaknesses of poor, weak, miscarrying Christians, in the burying of Christians' weaknesses under their graces. Much I know of this, but some know much more. She was not for blazoning of others' weaknesses, whether they were nearer to her or more remote from her. She commonly carried a mantle of love about her to cast over other men's sins; she seemed to live under the power of that word: Pro 10:12, 'Love covereth all sins:' and that 1Pe 4:8, 'Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.' By covering must be meant (1.) A favourable construction of all things, which in right reason might well be construed; (2.) A passing by smaller infirmities and private offences; (3.) Such a covering as might cure also, for love is wise. Love hath a large mantle, and covers all sins—that is, all private sins, and all such sins as may be concealed with a good conscience both towards God and towards men. Again, it must be understood, not of our own transgressions committed against God, but of other men's sins and transgressions committed against us. Love is not suspicious, but interprets all things in the best sense, Pro 17:9. Love will not publish private injuries, to the dishonour or shame of the party offending: Pro 12:6, 'A prudent man covereth shame.' It is recorded to Vespasian's honour, 'that he was more ready to conceal the vices than the virtues of his friends.' To observe and take notice of other men's faults, but not of our own, is the easiest thing in the world, said Thales. Such commonly are best acquainted with other men's infirmities, who are least observant of their own iniquities and irregularities. 'The nature of man is very apt,' saith Seneca, *Utimur perspicillis magis quam speculis*, to use spectacles to behold other men's faults, rather than looking-glasses to behold their own.' Erasmus speaks of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homer's works, but passed over all that was excellent. The Donatists of old were more glad to find a fault than to see it amended, and to proclaim it than to cover it; to carp at it than to cure it. 'If I should find a bishop committing adultery,' saith Constantine the Great, 'I would cover that foul fact with mine imperial robe rather than it should come abroad to the scandal of the weak and the scorn of the wicked.' Seneca, unmasking the face of their corrupt state, hath this notable passage, 'The news from Rome take thus: the walls are ruined, the temples are not visited, the priests are fled, the treasuries robbed, old men are dead, young men are mad, vices are lords over all. The dictator blames the consul, the consul checks the censor, the censor chides the prætor, the prætor falls foul upon the ædile, and he casts all the fault upon the quæstor, and because no man will acknowledge himself in fault, we have no hopes of better times.' How applicable this is to our present times, I shall leave others to judge; but by the whole you see that all sorts and ranks of men are more apt to shame and quarrel at other men's faults than with their own. Observable is that of our blessed Saviour: Luk 7:37, 'There was a woman in the city which was a sinner.' No wonder! what woman is not? We may guess both who the woman was, and what the sin was, and which city it was; but he neither names the city, nor the sin, nor the sinner. Seeing her reformation, he consults her reputation. Oh that you would all labour to write after this copy. When Alexander was painted, the painter laid his finger on his wart, and Apelles covered Venus' mole with his finger, that it might not be spied. As you stand in a near relation one to another, so I could wish that you would lay your fingers upon one another's warts and moles, and not blazon one another's human frailties and infirmities to the world; but love and live as brethren and sisters who are never without a mantle of love to cover infirmities—I say not enormities; to cover weaknesses—I say not wickedness; to cover from the world—I say not from God nor from one another. But,

11. Eleventhly, Imitate her in her earnest desires and endeavours that others, especially that her nearest and dearest relations, might taste that the Lord is gracious; that they might all be holy and happy, gracious and glorious; that they might all have changed hearts, renewed natures, and sanctified souls; that they might all be born again, adorned with grace, filled with the Spirit, and fitted for heaven. You know that upon her dying-bed she desired me that when she was asleep in Jesus, 1Th 4:14, that I would, for the advantage of the living, especially for your sakes, who lay nearest her heart, preach on that Psa 34:8, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is gracious,' which accordingly I did once and again. Now what was her design in this, but that every one of you might share with her in the same favour, love, spirit, grace, merit, righteousness, and goodness that her soul had long tasted of? There is not a soul that ever has had any saving taste of the Lord and of his goodness, but is mighty desirous that others should taste of the same grace and goodness. 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good;' as if David should have said, I for my part have seen, tasted, and experienced much of God and his goodness, and never more than in my greatest straits. I am loath to eat these heavenly viands and soul-ravishing morsels of contentment alone. 'Come hither, all you that fear God, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul.'² Come, oh come, poor souls! taste and see with me how good the Lord is; how comfortable the embraces of Christ are, and how sweet communion with heaven is. We cannot advantage others more than by declaring and communicating unto them our soul-secrets, our soul-experiments. All the saints own it as their duty to glorify God in their generation: and wherein can they bring more glory to God than in helping souls to heaven? and how can they find out a readier way to effect this great business, than by telling them what God has done for their souls, than by making a faithful narrative of their own conditions by nature and by grace, when and how the goodness of the Lord was made known unto them upon a saving account. Oh tell poor wounded sinners what methods of mercy the Lord used to the healing of your wounds and to the quieting of your consciences, that so they may be encouraged to a serious use of all gospel means, and to a hope of the same grace and goodness of the Lord towards them. Oh labour more and more to convince others by your experiences that grace is the only way to glory, and that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb 12:14. Paul had tasted that the Lord was good, and he wished that both Agrippa and all that heard him were altogether such as he was, except his bonds,' Acts 26:29. As soon as Matthew had tasted that the Lord was good, Luk 5:29, he called together a huge multitude of publicans and others to meet at his house. As soon as Philip had tasted of the sweetness of communion with Christ, he runs to Nathanael to invite him to Christ, saying, 'Come and see,' John 1:45-46. No sooner had the woman of Samaria tasted of Christ's living waters, but she leaves her water-pot, and posts into the city to call out her friends and neighbours to see and taste how good dear Jesus was, John 4:28. So those young converts, Zec 8:21, 'And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also: Mic 4:2, 'And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Those blessed converts would not come alone, but draw others along in company with them to worship the Lord, which is lively expressed in a mimesis or imitation of the encouragements and invitations they should use one to another, 'I will go also.' Every one was as forward for himself, as zealous for another. Oh blessed frame of spirit! O my friends, it is the nature of true grace to be diffusive and communicative. Grace cannot be concealed. They that

have tasted of divine sweetness cannot choose but speak of it to others; their hearts, like bottles of new wine, would be ready to burst if they had not vent. Grace is like fire in the bones. They that have it cannot hide it. All the faculties of the soul, and all the members of the body will still be a-telling of others that there is a treasure of grace in the soul. The blind men that were cured were charged to be silent, but they could not hold their peace. So here, Lilmor belammed, we therefore learn that we may teach, is a proverb among the Rabbins: and I do therefore lay in and lay up, saith the heathen, that I may draw forth again and lay out for the good of many. And shall not grace do as much as nature? shall not grace do more than nature? Well, friends, this I shall only say, that the frequent counsels that your glorified mother has given you to taste of divine goodness, and the experiences that she has communicated to you of her taste of divine goodness, both in her health and sickness, both in her living and dying, will certainly either be for you, or else be a dreadful witness against you in the great day of our Lord Jesus. Oh remember not only those experiences of hers that are now presented to your eyes, but those other experiences of hers as to her inward man that has often sounded in your ears. But,

12. Lastly, Labour to imitate her in her comfortable passage out of this world. Those words were more worth than a world which she uttered a little before she fell asleep in the Lord, viz., 'Lord, take my aching head, and lay it in thy bosom.' How often did she express her longings to be with Christ, that she might sin nor sorrow no more! Her outward man was full of pain, weakness, and trouble; yet how was her inward man refreshed and quieted in a way of believing, according to that blessed word, Isa 26:3, 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace;'—the Hebrew runs, ■■■■, ■■■■, shalom, shalom, peace, peace:—'whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' Never did the espoused maid long more for the marriage-day, nor the apprentice for his freedom, nor the captive for his ransom, nor the condemned man for his pardon, nor the traveller for his inn, nor the mariner for his haven, nor the sick man for his health, nor the wounded man for his cure, nor the hungry man for his bread, nor the naked for clothes, than she did long to die, and to be with Christ, which for her was best of all, Php 1:23. How often were those words in her mouth, Rev 22:20, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' The face of none is so comely to the saint's eye, the voice of none so lovely to his ears, the taste of none so pleasant in his mouth, as Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it, saith Chrysostom; and is therefore used by Paul five hundred times, as some have reckoned. The name of a Saviour, saith one, [Bernard,] is honey in the mouth, music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. And how often was that blessed word in her mouth, 'Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in thy sight,' Isa 38:3. A serious sense of her uprightness in the main, of her walking with God, did yield her more than a little sweetness and comfort when she was upon her bed of pain. One of the last speeches of a dying upright Christian was this, 'Satan may as well pluck God out of heaven, as pluck my soul out of his keeping,' John 10:28-30; 2Ti 2:12. She 'knew him in whom she had believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that soul she had committed to him against that day.' A child that hath any precious jewel given him cannot better secure it than by putting it into his father's hands to keep; so neither can we better provide for our souls' safety than by committing them to God. 'Keep that which I have committed;' that is, either my precious soul, which I have committed to his care and custody, to bring it forth glorious at that day of his appearing; or my eternal life, happiness, and crown of glory, which I have, as it were, deposited with him by faith and hope. And thus it was with her. The apostle saith he committed to God's custody a pawn or

pledge; but about this pawn or pledge interpreters differ. One saith it is his soul; another saith it is himself; and a third saith it is his works; and a fourth saith it is his sufferings; and a fifth saith it is his salvation. In short, he committed to God his soul, himself, his doings, his sufferings, to be rewarded with life and salvation; and so did she who is now at rest in the Lord. Lord, saith Austin, I will die that I may enjoy thee; I will not live, but I will die; I desire to die that I may see Christ, and refuse to live, that I may live with Christ. The broken rings, contracts, and espousals contents not the true lover, but he longs for the marriage-day; and so did she who has now exchanged a sickbed for a royal throne, and the company of poor mortals for the presence of God, Christ, angels, and the 'spirits of just men made perfect.' It was well said of [by] one, 'So far as we tremble at death, so far we want love.' It is sad, when the contract is made between Christ and a Christian, to see a Christian afraid of the making-up of the marriage. But your deceased relation was no such Christian. I know nothing in this world that her heart was so much set upon as the completing of the marriage between Christ and her soul. My eye is upon that text, Isa 57:1, 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.' I have read of one Philo, a Jew, and another, that when they came to any city or town, and heard of the death of any godly man, though never so poor, they would both of them mourn exceedingly, because of the great loss that place had by the death of that godly man, and because it was a warning piece from God of evil approaching. But ah, how many famous, godly ministers, and how many choice Christians, hath the Lord of hosts taken away from us, and yet who lays it to heart! There is no greater prognostic of an approaching storm, than God's calling home so many worthies, 'of whom the world was not worthy,' as he has lately done. Now oh that God would beautify all your souls with all these twelve jewels, with which your mother was adorned in life and death!

Sir[s], your having signified to me that it was your mother's mind and your desires that her following experiences should be printed, I did think it might be somewhat reasonable to put you all in mind of such things as I had, among many others, observed, and which should be all your ambition to imitate, as you would give up your accounts at last with joy, and be happy with her for ever in the other world.

Considering that these Experiences may fall into other hands besides your own, I thought it meet to let such readers know that these were taken from her by one of you, when she was in a very weakly condition, and had little more strength than to speak; and they are but some of those that lay most warm upon her heart at that time. God began to work upon her in the morning of her days, and had there been a collection of all her most close, inward, spiritual experiences, they would have been greatly multiplied beyond what is now presented to the reader's eye; but that was a task too hard for her under those variety of weaknesses that she was every day contending with. The experiences of old disciples commonly rise high; but the ingenuous reader may easily discern by the twelve jewels with which she was adorned, that she was a woman both of choice and great experiences. Austin observes on Psa 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul;' 'he doth not call them,' saith he, 'to acquaint them with speculations—how wide the earth is, and how far the heavens are stretched out, or what the number of the stars are, or what is the course of the sun;—but come and I will tell you the wonders of his grace, the faithfulness of his promises, and the riches of his mercy to my soul.' Now all ministers and Christians that had any inward acquaintance with her soul concernments, do very

well know that she was most taken up with the wonders of God's free, rich, and sovereign grace, and with the sweetness, the freeness, the riches, and the faithfulness of his promises, and with the riches of his mercy in Christ to her soul. To draw to a close, it is observable that even the holy apostles in their canonical epistles, have spent some good part of their holy lives in the ample commendations of those eminent saints to whom they wrote; as Paul in his to Philemon, and John in that of his to an honourable lady, and that other to a meaner person—viz., Gaius; and that they went not behind the door, as we say, to whisper, but as on the house-top did proclaim the religious and pious practices of those more choice Christians to the imitation of others. And further, when I consider that which the apostle speaketh of Demetrius, a rare and not ordinary testimony: 'Demetrius hath a good report of all men, and of the truth itself: and we also bear record; and we know that our record is true,' 3Jn 1:12. And yet further, when I consider what is recorded of Hezekiah, 'Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought what was good, and right, and true before his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law and commandments, he did it with all his heart, and prospered,' 2Ch 31:20-21. And when I consider what high commendations the apostle bestows upon the churches of Macedonia, 2Co 8:1-11; and upon the church of Thessalonica, 1Th 1:1-9; and also 2Th 1:3-5. And when I consider that it was the Holy Ghost who writ Jehoiada's epitaph, 'They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God and toward his house,' 2Ch 24:16. It is said also of Josiah, in his commendations by the same Spirit, 'Like unto him there was no king,' 2Ki 23:25. Moses and Mordecai, Sarah, Deborah, Esther, Elizabeth, and others, after their deaths, have had their due praises. When I consider of these things, I am very well satisfied in what I have said concerning this deceased sister and friend. I do no ways doubt but that we may very safely say good of such when dead, whose ordinary course and practice it was to do good while they lived; but in this censorious age, no sooner is dust cast upon some Christians' heads, but there are those that will do what they can to throw dirt in their faces. Augustine doth very fitly compare those to Dives his dogs; they lay licking and sucking Lazarus his sores, but his sounder parts they never meddled with. To trample upon the reputation and stain the glory of them that 'die in the Lord,' argues such persons to be akin to fleas, who bite most when men are asleep. It was one of Solon's laws, that none should dare to speak evil of the dead; and Plutarch tells us, that that was highly commended and duly observed. But is it so now? This I am sure, that it well becomes Christians not to dare to speak evil, if they could, of those who for the main have lived holily and died graciously, as this deceased friend hath done. Let this satisfy us, that she is above the praises and envies of men. It is the good, the profit, the advantage of all your souls and theirs into whose hands this little piece may fall, that has drawn me out to write so large an epistle. If I had only the dead in my eye, a few lines should have served my turn. I doubt not but that you will kindly accept of my endeavours to be serviceable to your immortal souls; and who can tell what fruit may grow upon this tree? I shall improve all the interest I have in heaven, that both the Epistle and your glorified mother's Experiences may be blest to the furtherance of the internal and eternal welfare of all your souls. The 'good-will of him that dwelt in the bush' rest upon you and yours. So I rest, honoured friends, your souls' servant,

Thomas Brooks. A TRUE RELATION of some of the EXPERIENCES OF MRS SUSANNA BELL, taken from her own mouth by a near relation of hers, a little before her death.

Left as a legacy to her mourning children.

It pleased the Lord to order it so that in my young days I was cast into a family that feared the Lord; and going to hear Mr White preaching from these words, Pro 15:15, 'But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast;' from these words he did shew how happy a thing a good conscience was, and what a sad thing it was, with Judas, to have a bad conscience. And what a blessed thing it was to have a good conscience from that of Hezekiah: Isa 38:3, 'And he said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.' This sermon God made useful to me; and after this it pleased the Lord to order it so that I changed my condition, and the Lord provided for me a good husband, 'one that feared him'. And some troubles being here, many of the people of God went for New England, and among them my husband desired to go; but I and my friends were very averse unto it. I having one child, and being big with another, thought it to be very difficult to cross the seas with two small children; some of my neighbours advising me to the contrary, living so well as I did. But I told them that what the Lord would have me to do that I would willingly do; and then it pleased the Lord to bring that scripture to my mind: Eph 5:22, 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord'—and then my heart was brought off to a quiet submission. But after this, I being well-delivered, and the child well, it pleased the Lord soon after to take my child to himself. Now upon this, so far as it pleased the Lord to help a poor wretch, I begged earnestly of him to know why he took away my child, and it was given in to me that it was because I would not go to New England. Upon this the Lord took away all fears from my spirit, and then I told my husband I was willing to go with him; for the Lord had made my way clear to me against any that should oppose. And then my husband went presently upon the work to fit to go. And the Lord was pleased to carry us as upon eagle's wings, according to that Deu 32:10-11. We were eight weeks in our passage, and saw nothing but the heavens and waters. I knew that the Lord was a great God upon the shore; but when I was upon the sea I did then see more of his glorious power than ever I had done before, according to that of the psalmist, Psa 107:23-24. And when the Lord was pleased to bring us in safety on shore, his people gave us the best entertainment they could; and then I thought I could never be thankful enough to the Lord for his goodness in preserving us upon the sea, I being big with child, and my husband sick almost all the voyage. After this my husband would have gone by water higher into the country; but I told him the Lord having been so good in bringing us safe ashore amongst his people, I was not willing to go again to sea. And it was a good providence of God we did not; for most of them that went were undone by it. The first sermon that I heard after I came ashore was out of Jer 2:13, 'For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' Now the minister did shew that whatever we did build on short of Christ would prove but a broken cistern; and by that sermon the Lord was pleased to shake my foundation. But I being a poor, ignorant creature, thought if I could but get into the fellowship of the people of God, that that would quiet my spirit and answer all my objections; and I did accordingly attempt to join with the church; but they were very faithful to the Lord and my soul, and asked me what promise the Lord had made home in power upon me. And I answered them, Jer 31:3, 'Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee:' but they told me that that was a general promise, that I must look to get some particular promise made home in power upon me; and persuaded me to wait a little longer to see what God would further do for my poor soul, which accordingly I did. And going to hear Mr Cotton, who did preach out of Rev 2:28, 'To him that overcometh I will give the morning star;' from which words he did observe that that

star was Christ. And [from] this he came to shew how a soul might know whether it had an interest in Christ or no, and that was by the Lord's giving out such precious promises as these to the poor soul—viz., that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,' 2Co 5:19; and that John 16:21, 'And your joy shall no man take from you:' and Isa 44:22, 'I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins;' and that Isa 43:25; which promises afterwards God made sweet to my soul. After this I went to hear Mr Shepherd, and he was preaching out of the parable of the ten virgins, Mat 25:1-13. In his discourse he shewed that all were professors, but the foolish had nothing but lamps without oil, a profession without grace in their hearts; but that the wise had got grace in their hearts, and so were ready-prepared to meet the Bridegroom when he came. Now by that discourse of his the Lord was pleased to convince me that I was a foolish virgin, and that I made a profession, but wanted the oil of grace in my heart, and by this means I was brought into a very sad condition. For I did not experimentally know what it was to have oil in my lamp, grace in my heart, nor what it was to have union with Christ, that being a mystery to me. And then I did think myself guilty of breaking all the commandments of God except the sixth. For I thought I had never desired, wished, or endeavoured any man's death. But then the Lord shewed me that if I were saved by Christ my sins had murdered him, according to that Acts 3:15, and 4:10. And that did greatly aggravate my sin the more unto me. Now one of my neighbours, observing that I was in a distressed condition, told me that she had been a-hearing, and that the minister she heard was a-shewing that the Lord had more glory in the salvation than in the damnation of sinners. For in their salvation his mercy and his justice were both glorified, but in their destruction only his justice was glorified. Hearing of this the Lord was pleased to draw out my heart to plead with him, that if he might receive more glory in my salvation than in my destruction, that then his mercy might be manifested to me. For I thought, although I had many worldly comforts, yet I had no interest in Christ, and that if I should die presently, hell would be my portion; and in this sad and sore distress the Lord was pleased to imprint that scripture upon my mind: Job 10:2, 'I will say unto God, Do not condemn me: shew me wherefore thou contendest with me:' Job 40:2, 'Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it;' and that word of the apostle's: Rom 9:20-21, 'Nay but thou, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?' After this it pleased God that Mr Eliot and some other of the people of God, seeing me in this sad condition, [sent to] tell me the church would have me come in to be a member with them; but I did reply that all church-fellowship would do me no good. Then Mr Eliot asked me, what would do me good? and I told him, nothing but an interest in Christ. His answer was, that I was already in the pangs of the new birth, and he did believe it would not be long before the Lord spoke peace to my poor soul. After that, reading a book of Dr Preston's,² where he did shew 'that when the Lord joined himself to a believer, he did first comprehend the soul, and then enabling [enable] the soul by faith to apprehend him,' which double act of faith I then knew not. About fourteen days after, considering I what a distressed condition I was in, I was bemoaning myself before the Lord, and the Lord was pleased to bring that scripture to my remembrance in John 16:1-33, 'I will give you that joy that no man taketh from you.' And then I thought with myself that it was Christ that I did want, and not joy. But the Lord brought that scripture to me that Christ was tidings of great joy, Luk 2:10-11; and I thought, how could this be to such a poor wretch as I was, and the Lord was pleased to bring that scripture to my mind, that he looked not as man looked, 1Sa 16:7, and that

he was God and not man, Hos 11:9; and by this means he took away all my fears. And then the Lord did help me to discern that this was a mystery indeed, and did so quiet my heart that all the world seemed as nothing unto me. For I never heard such a voice before, blessed be his name. And then the people of God would have me come into fellowship with them, and soon after I was admitted a babe in Christ among them. Afterwards being to hear Mr Cotton on 1Pe 2:2, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby;' and from thence he shewed that if it were a living babe it would cry out for nourishment, and that the soul that did once really taste of Christ was never satisfied, but would still be crying out for more and more of Christ. When such a soul came to any ordinance as hearing, prayer, the Lord's supper, and did get nothing of Christ, they were all as lost ordinances to it.

It so fell out that the next Lord's day was the day of sitting down at the Lord's table, and the Lord did put it into my thoughts that if we received nothing but a piece of bread and a sip of wine, it would be but a poor empty thing; and so the Lord did help me to beg that if what he had been pleased to speak to my soul before were a true manifestation of himself, that he would be pleased to speak again unto my soul, for a threefold cord is not easily broken, Ecc 4:12. Being at the ordinance, the bread and wine coming about, I was thus sighing unto the Lord, What! shall I have nothing but a bit of bread and a sip of wine this day? and the Lord was pleased to bring that scripture to my mind: John 6:55, 'For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' And so the Lord was pleased to give something more of himself to my poor soul at that time. After this, a sad providence attended one of my neighbours. I was full of fears that her condition might be mine; but the Lord brought that scripture to my mind: Jer 29:11, 'For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end;' and thereby the Lord stayed my heart in trusting upon himself, and giving me a safe delivery. And being up again, I went to hear Mr Cotton, and he was shewing what assurance was, and how happy that soul was that could say as Job did, Job 19:25; and with David, Psa 119:89, 'For ever, Lord, thy word is settled in the heavens;' and so the Lord was pleased to shew me what a mercy I had that had assurance. Then I went to speak to Mr Cotton, to ask him what he thought of the work of God upon my poor soul, and he told me that he was satisfied that it was a real work of God. And he did counsel me to walk humbly and thankfully, and to take heed of grieving that Spirit of God by which I was sealed up to the day of redemption, and to walk humbly towards those that God had not revealed so much of himself to as he had to me. And then the Lord was pleased by his providence to call my husband to come for England, and he did tell me that he should so order business that I should have less of the world to trouble me. I was glad to hear it from him, and desired him to go. And then the Lord was pleased to help me to consider whether I had not got a better husband, and the Lord did quiet my heart in himself; my soul being espoused to him, 2Co 11:2. After he was gone from me, we did hear of a war broke forth in England, and friends told me my husband would be in danger of his life if taken. I told them the best I knew, and the worst I knew; and that if God should take my husband out of the world, I should have a husband in heaven, which was best of all. And Mr John Eliot did visit me in his absence, and asked me how the Lord did bear up my heart in my husband's absence; and I did tell him that the Lord was as well able to bring him to me in safety as he did to carry him out. And he answered me, I believe the Lord will say unto thee as he did to the Canaanitish woman, Mat 15:28, 'Be it unto thee according to thy faith.' And the Lord was pleased to keep me, and all that I had, and to preserve him, and to bring him home in safety unto me. And then, instead of having less of the world, which I desired,

the Lord did cast in more of it. After this, my husband told me that he must go again to England, and I was very unwilling to it; but he told me if he did not, the name of God would suffer. To prevent which, I consented, and it pleased God to bring him home in safety to me; and in a few years after he brought me over to England, and God shewed much of his goodness to me. At my coming ashore, he brought that scripture to my remembrance, Deu 33:26-27, 'There is none like unto thee, O God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

After it had pleased God to bring me back to my native country, I was much troubled that there was no better observation of the Lord's day—it being our practice in New England to begin it at sunset the evening before, as it is recorded in Genesis 'that the evening and the morning was the first day;' and that scripture was brought to my memory, Pro 14:10, 'The heart knows its own bitterness, but no man intermeddles with its joy.' Many trials the Lord hath been pleased to exercise me with, but in the midst of all God hath made that word sweet to my soul, Isa 54:10, 'For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.' It pleased the Lord after a year or two to exercise me with much weakness; but then he made that word sweet unto me, Isa 50:8, 'He is near that justifies me: who will contend with me?' and that word, Job 15:11, 'Are the consolations of God small unto thee?' After these things, when I was in a very great strait upon the apprehension of some public dangers that seemed to threaten us, the Lord was pleased to bring to my mind that scripture, Zec 9:12, 'Turn to your strongholds, you prisoners of hope.' And since, in the midst of my many bodily infirmities, God hath made that word sweet to my soul, Psa 116:7, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee;' and that word, Psa 23:4, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' I still remain as a 'prisoner of hope,' waiting for a fruition of that happiness which the Lord Jesus Christ hath prepared for me, 'for I know that he that hath the Son hath life,' 1Jn 5:12. 'And if the Son make us free, then are we free indeed,' John 8:36. And 'blessed is that people that knows the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance,' Psa 89:15. I find the Lord Jesus very free in the tenders of his love to poor sinners; and that love hath in a great measure been manifested to my poor soul.

After this it pleased the Lord to visit one of my daughters with a great sickness, upon which my heart was drawn out to seek the Lord on her behalf; then that scripture was brought to my mind, John 11:21, 'Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: and he that believeth in me shall never die.' And it pleased the Lord to give me her life as an answer of prayer.

It pleased the Lord after this to visit this land with the pestilence; a severe stroke of his that swept away many thousands; and under that sad providence of his, the Lord did help me to rely alone upon himself from that scripture, Psa 91:7, 'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.' And according to my faith, it pleased the Lord to preserve both myself and all my relations from that sad stroke, though some of them were often in the midst of danger; blessed be his name. The next year after the Lord did again, for our sins, visit us, and that by a dreadful fire, which reduced to ashes many thousand houses; and yet his love

was then manifested to me in the preservation of my habitation, when many better than myself were burned out. Therefore unto my God shall I, who am less than the least of all his mercies, render that praise which is due unto his name.

Since that, whilst I was upon a languishing bed, and death even knocking at the door, it pleased the Lord once again to alarm me in that weak condition, by a dreadful fire which broke out very near us; and at that time it pleased my good God to support and strengthen my spirit with that scripture, Isa 43:2, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee;' and that scripture, Isa 54:5, 'For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.' And this second time also the Lord was graciously pleased to preserve me and my house from that amazing stroke which did so much threaten us. And oh that all those new and old experiences might be high obligations upon me and mine to holiness and fruitfulness all our days!

Whilst I remained in New England there happened a great earthquake, which did shake all in the house, and my son being by me, asked me what it was; I told him our neighbours were all amazed at it, and knew not but that the world might then be at an end, and did run up and down very much affrighted at it, but I sat still, and did think with myself what a Christ was worth to my poor soul at that time. And then God made these scriptures sweet refreshings, supporting and quieting my soul: Psa 18:46, 'The Lord liveth: and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted;' Heb 11:13, 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' Rev 7:9, 'After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;' ver. 11, 'And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

INDEXES, &c

I.—TEXTS

Note.—In this Index will be found the whole of those Texts of Scripture which are discussed fully in Treatise or Sermon, together with all such as are incidentally explained; but as in Sibbes, there are thousands of others adduced in proof of given points, which it was impossible to include. These will be readily traced under the Index of Subjects. It has been our endeavour to give every Text on which anything considerable or noticeable is said by Brooks.—G.

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02.00. Choice Excerpts from Thomas Brook;s Work

Choice excerpts from Thomas Brooks The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod The Necessity, Excellency, Rarity, and Beauty of Holiness Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices A Word in Season to Suffering Saints A Cabinet of Choice Jewels The Unsearchable Riches of Christ The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion The Privy Key of Heaven

Heaven on Earth

Apples of Gold The Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures

Paradise Opened A String of Pearls London's Lamentations Miscellaneous quotes

02.01. A Cabinet of Choice Jewels

A Cabinet of Choice Jewels, or, A Box of Precious Ointment By Thomas Brooks, 1669

CHOICE EXCERPTS

Blessed are the poor in spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mat 5:3

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;" that is—the broken and humble in heart, who has no high thoughts or conceits of himself—but is lowly in his own eyes, like a young child.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;" that is—he who has no lofty or puffed up spirit. The poor in spirit are those who are lowly, being truly conscious of their own unworthiness. None are poor in spirit—but the humble.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;" that is—blessed are those whose spirits are brought into such a humble gracious frame, as willingly, quietly, and contentedly to lie down in a poor lowcondition—when it is the pleasure of the Lord to bring them into such a condition.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit;" that is—blessed are those who are truly and sincerely sensible of their spiritual needs, poverty, and misery. They see an utter inability and insufficiency in themselves, and in all other creatures—to deliver them out of their sinful and miserable estate.

They see nothing in themselves upon which they dare venture their everlasting estates—and therefore fly to the free, rich, sovereign, and glorious grace of God in Christ, as to their sure and only sanctuary!

They see their need of God's free grace to pardon them.

They see their need of Christ's righteousness to clothe them.

They see their need of the Spirit of Christ to purge, change, and sanctify them.

They see their need of more heavenly wisdom to counsel them.

They see their need of more . . . of the power of God—to support them,

of the goodness of God—to supply them,

of the mercy of God—to comfort them,

of the presence of God—to refresh them,

of the patience of God—to bear with them, etc.

They see their need of greater measures of faith—to conquer their fears.

They see their need of greater measures of wisdom—to walk holily, harmlessly, blamelessly, and exemplary in the midst of temptations, snares, and dangers.

They see their need of greater measures of patience—to bear their burdens without fretting or fainting.

They see their need of greater measures of zeal and courage—to bear up bravely against all sorts of opposition, both from within and from without.

They see their need of greater measures of love—to cleave to the Lamb, and to follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

They see their need of living in a continual dependence upon God and Christ—for fresh influences, incomes, and supplies of grace, of comfort, of strength—by which they may be enabled . . . to live for God, to walk with God, to glorify God, to bring forth fruit to God, to withstand all temptations which tend to lead the heart away from God.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Mat 5:3

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His tender mercies

"His tender mercies." Psa 145:9

"The multitude of His mercies." Psa 106:45

It is God's free mercy which every day keeps hell and my soul asunder.

It is God's free mercy which daily pardons my sins.

It is God's free mercy which supplies all my inward and outward needs.

It is God's free mercy which preserves, and feeds, and clothes my outward man.

It is God's free mercy which renews, strengthens, and prospers my inward man.

It is God's free mercy which has kept me many times from committing such and such sins.

It is God's free mercy which has kept me many a time from falling before such and such temptations.

It is God's free mercy which has many a time preserved me from being swallowed up by such and such inward and outward afflictions.

"Great are Your tender mercies, O Lord." Psa 119:156

"I will sing of the tender mercies of the Lord forever!" Psa 89:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The devil's brat!

"That sin might become utterly sinful." Rom 7:13

Paul, to set forth the formidable evil that is in sin, expresses it thus. He could find nothing more evil and odious to express sin by—than itself. Sin is so great an evil, that it cannot have a worse epithet given it. Paul can call it no worse than by its own name—sinful sin. Had he said that sin was a snare, a serpent, a viper, a toad, a plague, a devil, a hell, etc.—he would have said much—but yet not enough to set forth the transcendent evil which is in sin. Therefore he calls it sinful sin.

All other evils are but outward, they only reach the name, the body, the estate, the life—but sin is an inward evil, a spiritual evil, an evil that reaches the precious and immortal soul—and therefore is the greatest evil.

Death puts an end to all other troubles; namely, poverty, sickness, disgrace, scorn, contempt, afflictions, losses, etc. But sin is so great an evil, that death itself cannot put an end to it! Eternity itself shall never put a stop, an end—to this evil of evils!

All other evils can never make a man the object of God's wrath and hatred. A man may be poor—and yet precious in the eyes of God; he may be greatly abhorred by the world —and yet highly honored by God; he may be debased by men—and yet exalted by God. But sin is so great an evil, that it subjects the sinner's soul to the wrath and hatred of God!

All other evils do but strike at a man's present well-being —but sin strikes at a man's eternal well-being! All other evils can never hinder a man's communion with God. A man may have communion with God in poverty, in sickness, in prison, in banishment. But sin is so great an evil, that it interrupts communion with God, it cuts off communion with God.

All outward evils are God's creatures: "Is there any evil in the city—which the Lord has not done?" But sin is the devil's brat—it is a creature of his own begetting! Yes, sin is worse than the devil! It is that which has turned glorious angels into infernal devils!

All other evils do not fight against the greatest good—but sin is that grand evil that fights against the greatest good. Sin fights against the being of God, the essence of God, the glory of God. Sin is a killing of God—it is a murdering of God.

Sin is a universal evil, it is all evil, it is nothing but evil; there is not one drop, one spark of good to be found in any sin. In all outward evils there is some good; there is some good in poverty, in sickness, in war, in death—but there is not the least good in sin.

Sin is the sole object of God's hatred!

He hates nothing but sin!

He is angry with nothing but sin!

He has forbid nothing but sin!

He has revealed his wrath against nothing but sin! So great an evil is sin!

Sin is that grand evil which has midwived all other evils into the world. It was sin which drowned the old world with water. It was sin which destroyed Sodom with fire and brimstone. It was sin which

laid Jerusalem in heaps. It was sin which has midwived sword, famine, and pestilence into the world. It was sin which laid the foundation of hell—for before sin there was no hell.

It was sin which crucified the Lord of glory!

Now, oh how great must that evil be—which has ushered in all these great evils into the world!

Sin is enmity against God. God has no enemy in the world but sin, and those whom sin has made enemies. Sin has set all the world against the Lord of glory. It is sin which has turned men into incarnate devils, and which has drawn them out to fight against God, and Christ, and their own souls, and their everlasting peace.

A Christian looks upon sin as the greatest evil in the world, and his heart rises and is enraged against it, because of the vile, filthy, odious, and heinous nature of it!

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O friends! remember this once for all

"Cleanse me from my hidden faults." Psa 19:12

"I hate vain thoughts." Psa 119:113

A gracious soul conflicts most with heart-sins, and is most affected with spiritual sins, and laments and mourns most over secret sins—invisible sins—sins which lie most hidden and remote from the eyes of the world. He is most affected and afflicted by inward pollutions and defilements.

Grace will rise and conflict against the most inward and secret vanities of the soul, such as—secret self-love; secret hardness of heart; secret unbelief; secret carnal confidence; secret hypocrisy; secret envy; secret malice; secret vain-glory; secret fretting and murmuring; secret lustings; secret runnings-out of the soul after worldly vanities; and secret pride.

True grace makes opposition as well against the being of sin in a man's nature—as against the breakings out of sin in a man's life!

True grace will make war against the corruptions of the heart—as well as against the excursions of the feet!

True grace is as willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted heart—as it is willing and desirous to be rid of a polluted hand.

True grace would gladly have, not only sinful acts—but also sinful dispositions; and not only irregular actions—but also inordinate affections—mortified and subdued.

O friends! heart sins are root sins! Certainly a proud heart has more of Satan in it than a proud look! And a lustful heart is more vile than a lustful eye! Therefore true grace makes war against heart sins, against spiritual sins, against the most inward secret sins—against those very sins which do not lie within the reach of the piercing eye of the most knowing or observing man in the world—but are only obvious to an Omniscent eye!

Spiritual convictions can reach to the most inward, secret, spiritual, and undiscernible sins. Certainly that is a sincere heart, a heart more worth than gold—which smites a man: for inward

sins—as well as for outward sins; for sins done in secret—as well as for sins done in public; for spiritual sins—as well as for fleshly sins; for sins against the soul—as well as for sins against the body.

O friends! remember this once for all—that the main battle, the main warfare of a Christian lies not in the open field, it lies not in visible skirmishes. But his main quarrels and conflicts are most within, and his worst and greatest enemies are those of his own house—those of his own heart. A little grace may reform an evil life—but it must be a great deal of grace that reforms an evil heart! A little grace may make a man victorious over outward gross sins—but it must be a great deal of grace that makes a man victorious over inward sins, secret sins, spiritual sins, heart sins!

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends You, and lead me along the path of everlasting life." Psa 139:23-24

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Devils in their homes!

A true Christian will endeavor to obey God in relative duties. He will not only hear, and pray, and read, and meditate, and fast, and mourn—but he will labor to be godly in domestic relationships.

Remember this forever—everyone is that in reality, which he is at home. Many make a great profession, and have great abilities and gifts, and can discourse well on any pious subject—whose homes are not little heavens, but little hells. Some are very much like angels in public, saints in the church, and devils in their homes!

Domestic graces and duties do better demonstrate true piety and godliness, than public or general duties do. For pride, vain-glory, self-ends, and a hundred other outward carnal considerations, may put a man upon the general duties of religion. But it argues both truth and strength of grace, to be diligent and conscientious in the discharge of domestic duties.

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Glued to their lusts

Sinners' hearts are so glued to their lusts, that they will rather part with their nearest, dearest, and choicest enjoyments—than part with their sins! Yes, they will rather part with God, Christ, and all the glory of heaven—than they will part with some darling lust.

"When He comes, He will convict the world about sin." John 16:8

The first work of the Spirit upon the soul, is to make a man . . . look upon sin as an enemy, to deal with sin as an enemy, to hate sin as an enemy, to loathe sin as an enemy, to fear sin as an enemy, and to arm against sin as an enemy.

Of all the vile things in the world, sin is the most defiling thing; it makes us red with guilt and black with filth.

Inward corruptions grieve the gracious soul.

"Oh," says the gracious soul, "that I were but rid of . . .this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this froward heart, this earthly heart of mine!"

The Christian has a universal willingness to be rid of all sin. The enmity which grace works in the heart, is against all sin: profitable sins, pleasurable sins, disparaging sins, disgracing sins, small sins, great sins.

A gracious heart had much rather, if it were put to his choice, live without all sin—than to have allowance to wallow in any sin. He had rather live without the least sin—than to have liberty to live in the most flesh-pleasing sin. It is certain that sin is more afflictive to a gracious soul, than all the losses, crosses, troubles, and trials that he meets with in the world.

True grace would not have one Canaanite left in the holy land; he would have every Egyptian drowned in the red sea of Christ's blood!

"I hate every false way." Psa 139:24

Saving grace makes a man as willing to leave his lusts, as a slave is willing to leave his chains, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a beggar his rags.

A sincere heart had much rather be rid of his sins than of his sufferings; yes, of the least sins than of the greatest sufferings.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The hypocrite's only care The hypocrite's only care is to keep his outward life from defilement. But the sincere Christian's care is mainly to keep his heart from defilement; for he very well knows, that if he can but keep his heart clean—he shall with more ease keep his life clean. If the fountain is kept pure—the streams will run pure. The heart is the spring of all actions, and therefore every action is as the spring is, from whence it flows; if the spring is good—the action is good which flows from it; if the spring is evil, the action is evil which flows from it.

Hypocrites are all for the outside; they wash the platters and the cups, and beautify the tombs—like an adulteress whose care is to paint a fair face upon a foul heart.

But a sincere Christian, though he has a great concern for the well-ordering of his outward life—yet his main business and work is about his heart—

"Oh that this ignorant heart were but more enlightened!

Oh that this proud heart were but more humble!

Oh that this profane heart were but more holy!

Oh that this earthly heart were but more heavenly!

Oh that this unbelieving heart were but more believing!

Oh that this passionate heart were but more meek!

Oh that this carnal heart were but more spiritual!

Oh that this vain heart were but more serious!

Oh that this dull heart were but more quickened!

Oh that this dead heart were but more enlivened!

Oh that this lukewarm heart were but more zealous for God, and Christ, and the gospel, and the great concerns of eternity!"

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All tears of godly sorrow drop from the eye of faith

"They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced—and shall mourn." Zec 12:10

All godly sorrow is the fruit and effect of evangelical faith. Godly sorrow flows from faith—as the stream from the fountain, the branch from the root, and the effect from the cause. All gracious mourning flows from looking, from believing. Nothing breaks the heart of a sinner like a look of faith. All tears of godly sorrow drop from the eye of faith. Godly sorrow rises and falls—as faith rises and falls. The more a man is able by faith to look upon a pierced Christ—the more his heart will mourn over all the dishonors which he has done to Christ. The more deep and wide the wounds are, which faith shows me in the heart and sides of Christ—the more my heart will be wounded for sinning against Christ.

The free love and favor of God, and His unspeakable goodness and mercy manifested in Jesus Christ to poor sinners—is the very spring and fountain of all evangelical sorrow. Nothing breaks the heart of a poor sinner like the sight of God's free love in Christ, the Redeemer. A man cannot seriously look upon the firstness, the freeness, the greatness, the unchangeableness, the everlastingness, and the matchlessness of God's free favor and love in Christ—with a hard heart, or with dry eyes! It is only such a love as this, which sets the soul a-mourning and a-lamenting over a crucified Christ.

The fears of wrath, of hell, and of condemnation—works unsound hearts to mourn. But it is the sight of a bleeding, dying Savior—which sets sincere, gracious souls a-mourning.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

That golden devil

"Covetousness, which is idolatry." Col 3:5

Judas' life was as fair and as free from spots and blots as the lives of any of the apostles; no scandalous sin was to be found upon him. But that golden devil 'covetousness' was his sin—and his everlasting ruin. His apostleship, preaching, working of miracles, hearing of Christ, and conversing with Him, etc., was to no purpose, because of that serpent he kept in his bosom—which at last stung him to death!

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1Ti 6:9-10

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An angel on the outside—and a devil within

"Hypocrites! You are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish; but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence!" Mat 23:25

A hypocrite's outside never corresponds with his inside.

A hypocrite's outside is one thing—and his inside another.

A hypocrite's outside is religious—but his inside is wicked.

Hypocrites are like the Egyptian temples, which were beautiful outside—but within there was nothing to be found but serpents and crocodiles, and other venomous creatures. They are like white silver—but they draw black lines. They have a seeming sanctified outside—but are stuffed within with malice, pride, worldliness, envy, etc. They are like window cushions, made up of velvet and richly embroidered—but stuffed within with hay.

A hypocrite . . .

may offer sacrifice with Cain,

and fast with Jezebel,

and humble himself with Ahab,

and lament with the tears of Esau,

and kiss Christ with Judas,

and follow Christ with Demas,

and be baptized with Simon Magus;

and yet for all this, his inside is as bad as any of theirs!

A hypocrite is . . .

a Jacob on the outside—and an Esau within;

a David on the outside—and a Saul within;

a John on the outside—and a Judas within;

a saint on the outside—and a Satan within;

an angel on the outside—and a devil within.

But let all such hypocrites know, that pretend sanctity is double iniquity—and accordingly at last they shall be dealt with. "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" Mat 23:33

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Broke her heart all in pieces

The more a man apprehends of the love of God, and of the love of Christ—the more that person will grieve and mourn that he has offended, provoked, and grieved such a Father, and such a Son.

The more clear and certain evidences a man has of the love and favor of God to his soul, the more that

man will grieve and mourn for sinning against such a God.

There is nothing which thaws and melts the heart, which softens and breaks the heart—like the warm beams of divine love—as you may see in the case of Mary Magdalene. She loved much, and she wept much—for much was forgiven her. A sight of the free grace and love of Christ towards her, in an act of forgiveness, broke her heart all in pieces. A man cannot stand under the shinings of divine love with a frozen heart, nor with dry eyes. The more a man sees of the love of Christ, and the more a man tastes and enjoys of the love of Christ—the more that man will grieve and mourn for all the dishonors that he has done to Christ.

"Then she knelt behind Him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on His feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing His feet and putting perfume on them." Luk 7:38

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One dead fly

No hypocrite is totally divorced from the love and liking of every known sin. There is still some secret lust, which as a sweet morsel he rolls under his tongue, and will not spit it out. Every hypocrite lives under the dominion and reign of one base lust or another—and will do what he can to save the life of his sin—though it be with the loss of his soul. A hypocrite always reserves one nest-egg or another in his heart or life, for Satan to sit and brood on.

O sirs! Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one claw. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly damn a man as many sins; just as one disease, one ulcerous part, may as certainly kill a man as many. One dead fly will mar the whole box of precious ointment. One jarring string will bring the sweetest music out of tune.

If the leper in the law had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body, he was accounted a leper; although all the rest of his body was sound and whole, Lev 14:1-57. Just so, he who has the spot of the leprosy of sin allowed in any one part of his soul, he is a spiritual leper in the eye of God; he is unclean, though in other parts he may not be unclean.

If a swine does but wallow in one miry or dirty hole—it is filthy; and certainly, that soul which does but wallow in any one sin—he is filthy in the eye of God.

O sirs! remember that . . . as one hole in a ship will sink it, and as one stab at the heart will kill a man, and as one glass of poison will poison a man, and as one act of treason will make a man a traitor, so one sin lived in and allowed, will damn a man forever!

One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea as well as a hundred. Just so, one sin lived in and indulged, will sink a man to the bottom of hell as well as a hundred.

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A cleaner way to hell

It was the saying of a precious saint—that he was more afraid of his duties than of his sins; for his duties often made him proud—but his sins always made him humble.

It was good counsel Luther gave, "We must take heed not only of our sins—but of our good works."

Duties can never have too much diligence used about them—nor too little confidence placed in them. They are good helps—but bad saviors. It is necessary we do them—but it is dangerous to rely upon them. If the devil cannot dissuade us from performing pious duties—then his next work will be to persuade us to rely upon them, to make saviors of them; because this will as certainly ruin our

souls, as if we had wholly neglected them.

Resting in your own righteousness, will as certainly and eternally undo you—as the greatest and foulest atrocities!

Open wickedness slays her thousands—but a secret resting upon duties, slays her ten thousands!

Open profaneness is the broad dirty way which leads to hell; but trusting in pious duties is as sure a way, though a cleaner way to hell. Ungodly people and formal professors shall meet at last in the same hell.

Now, let all these things work you to renounce your own righteousness—and to take sanctuary alone in the pure, perfect, and most glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, and in the free grace of God.

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A worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a seed of a raisin, a skin of a grape

"Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth." Pro 27:1

Who can sum up the many possible deaths which are still lurking in his own body; or the innumerable hosts of external dangers which beleague him on every side; or the invisible arrows which fly about his ears continually! How soon he may have his mortal wound given him by one or another of them—who can tell? Now, how sad would it be for a man to have a summons to appear before God in that eternal world, before his heart and life are savingly changed!

The life of a man is but a shadow, a runner, a span, a vapor, a flower, etc. Though there is but one way to come into the world—yet there are many thousand ways to be sent out of the world!

We carry about in our bodies, the material for a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand different ways in several hours. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body—so many windows there are, for death to enter in at!

Death needs not spend all his arrows upon us. A worm, a gnat, a fly, a hair, a seed of a raisin, a skin of a grape, the stumbling of a horse, the trip of a foot, the prick of a pin, the cutting of a fingernail, the cutting out of a corn; all these have been to others, and any of them may be to us—the means of our death within the space of a few days; nay, of a few hours; nay, of a few moments!

I am sure that the worst of deaths, shall but translate true believers . . . from earth—to heaven, from a wilderness—to a paradise, from misery—to glory, and from mixed and mutable enjoyments—to the pure and everlasting enjoyments of God!

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God judges His people

God judges His people by their sincerity and the general bent and frame of their hearts—and not by what they are under some pangs of passion, or in an hour of temptation. His eye is more upon His people's inward disposition, than it is upon their outward actions—more upon their will than it is upon their work. The Lord will not forsake His people, nor cast off His people—because of those failings and weaknesses that may, and do, attend them. God pities His people under their weakness; He will not reject them for their weakness.

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All the links of the golden chain of salvation

All the links of the golden chain of salvation are made up of free grace! The people of God are . . .

freely loved, Deu 7:6-8;

freely chosen, John 15:16-19, Eph 1:4;

freely accepted, Eph 1:6;

freely adopted, Eph 1:5, Gal 4:5-6;

freely reconciled, 2Co 5:18-20;

freely justified, Rom 3:24;

freely saved, Eph 2:5, Eph 2:8.

All the golden rounds in Jacob's ladder—which reaches from heaven to earth—are all made up of free grace.

Free grace is the foundation of all spiritual and eternal mercies. Free grace is the solid bottom and foundation of all a Christian's comfort in this world. Were we to measure the love of God to us by . . . our fruitfulness, our holiness, our humbleness, our spiritualness, our heavenly-mindedness, or our gracious behavior towards Him —how would our hope, our confidence every moment be staggered—if not vanquished!

But all is of grace, of free grace. O sirs! it is free grace . . . which will strengthen you in all your duties, which will sweeten all your mercies, which will support you under all your changes, which will arm you against all temptations.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The sparkling diamond in the ring of glory

"His mouth is most sweet, and He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend."
Song of Solomon 5:16

That is, His mouth is sweetnesses, and He is altogether desirablenesses, or He is wholly desirable. Alas! says the spouse, I lack words to express how sweet, how lovely, how adorable, how desirable, how eminent, and how excellent Christ is in my eye—and to my soul! All that is perfect in heaven or earth, is but a dim shadow of His excellency and glory. Where Christ is—there is heaven. Heaven itself, in the spouse's eyes, without Christ, would be but a poor little thing. The spouse looks upon Christ as the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory.

"His mouth is most sweet, and He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend."
Song of Solomon 5:16

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A Christian's graces

"What do you have—that you have not received?" 1Co 4:7

What grace do you have—that you have not received? All the light, and all the life, and all the love, and all the joy, and all the fear, and all the faith, and all the hope, and all the patience, and all the humility, etc., that you have—are all grace gifts—they are all from God. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights." Jas 1:17

A man should never look upon his graces—but should be ready to say, "These are the jewels of glory with which God has bespangled my soul!"

Look! as all light flows from the sun, and all water from the sea—so all temporal, spiritual, and eternal good flows from God. All your graces, and the greatest excellencies which are in you, do as much depend upon God, as the light does upon the sun, or as the rivers do upon the sea, or as the branches do upon the root, John 15:1-5.

All the springs of comfort that I have communicated to my soul, and all the springs of grace that I have to quicken me, they are all from God. A Christian's graces are all such flowers of paradise as never grew in nature's garden. Now, when a Christian looks thus upon all those costly diamonds of grace, with which his soul is bedecked, he keeps humble, though his graces are high.

Dear hearts, when you look upon the stream, remember the fountain; when you look upon the flower, remember the root; and whenever you look upon your graces, then be sure to remember Christ the fountain of grace. When one of your eyes is fixed upon your graces—let the other be always fixed upon Christ the fountain of grace. "Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness." John 1:16

Grace is strengthened, maintained, nourished, and upheld in your souls—in life and power, in beauty and glory—by the spiritual, powerful, and glorious operations of Christ!

Christians, your graces are holy and heavenly plants of Christ's own planting and watering! It is Christ alone who can cause your graces to blossom, and your souls to be like a watered garden—green and flourishing! Therefore let the eye of your souls be firstly, mostly, and chiefly

fixed upon Christ.

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Holy hatred

"Through your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." Psa 119:104

There is in every penitent a sincere hatred of sin, a universal hatred of sin.

True hatred is universal—it is to the whole kind. He who hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin, and therefore he cannot but turn from it, and labor to be the death and ruin of it. Holy hatred is an implacable and an irreconcilable principle. You shall as soon reconcile God and Satan together; Christ and antichrist together; heaven and hell together—as you shall be able to reconcile a penitent soul and his sin together. A true penitent looks upon every sin as contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, the glory of God—and accordingly his heart rises against it. He looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth—which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling and polluting—and this turns his heart against every sin.

He looks upon every sin as having a hand in apprehending, betraying, binding, scourging, condemning and murdering his Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and this works him not only to refrain from sin—but to forsake it, and not only to forsake it—but also to abhor it, and to loathe it more than hell itself! The penitent soul will do all he can to be the death of every sin that has a hand in the death of his Lord and Master.

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Horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and astonishing impudency!

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Pro 28:13

The true penitent would have God to forgive him, not only some of his sins—but all his sins; and therefore it is but just and equal that he should turn from all his sins. The plaster must be as broad as the sore. It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and astonishing impudency—for a man to beg the pardon for those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake! Look! He who has not repented of all known sin, he has not yet sincerely repented of any known sin, nor as yet experienced the sweetness of forgiveness of sin.

Of all fools, there is none compared to him who is importunate with God to forgive those sins which he is resolved beforehand to commit! What prince, in his wits, will pardon the treasons of a person who is resolved to continue a traitor? Or what judge will forgive thievery of a person who is decidedly determined to continue as a thief? Such as continue in the practice of those very sins, which they beg God to pardon—shall certainly go without their pardon!

Pardon of sin is for that man, and that man is for pardon of sin—who is as truly willing to forsake his sins as he is to receive the pardon of his sins. Who would not look upon that man as a madman—who would earnestly beg his pardon, and yet continue to steal purses, and murder people before the eyes of the judge?

The pardoned soul is the repenting soul—and the repenting soul is the pardoned soul! He who begs pardon of sin—yet is resolved not to turn from sin—shall find no more pardon than devils or

damned spirits do! Look! as one sin unforgiven will as certainly undo a man as a thousand—just so, one sin unforsaken will us certainly undo and damn a man as a thousand! The true penitent is as willing to turn from all his sins—as he is willing that God should pardon all his sins!

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Divine leaven

The principle of regeneration, and seed of grace, which God lays into the soul of every penitent person at first conversion —is a universal principle, a principle which spreads itself over all the faculties of the soul. In regeneration there is infused the habits or principles of all grace, which like a divine leaven spreads itself over the whole man.

Look! as heaven is contrary to all of hell, and as light is contrary to all darkness, and heat to all cold—just so, that divine, that noble, that universal principle of grace, which God at first conversion infuses into the penitent's soul, is contrary to all sin; and therefore the penitent turns from all sin.

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One sin allowed, wallowed and tumbled in

To turn from some sins—but not from all, is gross hypocrisy.

One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory! One sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency! One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box. One thief may rob a man of all his treasure. One disease may deprive a man of all his health. One strong wind may blow down and blow away all a man's comforts. Just so—one sin delighted and wallowed in, will make a man miserable forever!

One sin allowed, wallowed and tumbled in, is sufficient to deprive a man forever of the glorious presence of God. In the law, the person who had but one spot of leprosy in any one part of his body was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body was sound and whole; and accordingly he was to be shut up, and shut out from the society of the people of God, Lev 13:1-59. Just so—one sin, one leprous spot, allowed and beloved—will forever shut a man out from the glorious presence of God!

One sin wallowed in, will as certainly deprive a man of the blessed vision of God, and of all the treasures, pleasures, and delights which are at God's right hand—as a thousand sins! What can be the outcome of this, but ruin and damnation?

It was a sore vexation to king Lysimachus, that he lost his earthly kingdom for one draught of water. O sirs! it will be an everlasting vexation to such, who for one lust shall at last lose not an earthly kingdom—but a heavenly kingdom!

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Whores' foreheads

"Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush!" Jer 6:15

Most sinners in these days have brows of brass, and whores' foreheads—which cannot blush. They are so far from being ashamed of their sins, that they think it a shame and disgrace not to sin, not to swear, and whore, and curse, and be drunk! Yes, there are many who are so far from being ashamed of their abominations—that they even glory in them. They flaunt their sins as Sodom, and make a sport of sinning!

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Tears have a voice

"The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping. "Psa 6:8

Sometimes a penitent man's eyes will in some way tell what his tongue can in no way utter. Many times the penitent is better at weeping, than he is at speaking. Tears have a voice, and are very prevalent orators with God. Penitential tears are undeniable ambassadors, and they never return from the throne of grace without an answer of grace.

Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which though they say nothing—yet they obtain pardon; they prevail for mercy, as you may see in that great and clear instance of Peter. He said nothing, he confessed nothing that we read of—but "went out and wept bitterly"—and obtained mercy.

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Keep your heart with all diligence

"Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Pro 4:23

God's eye is mainly upon the heart. The heart is the fountain, the root, the store-house, the great wheel which sets all a-going; so therefore, above all keepings, keep your hearts.

The highest and hardest work of a Christian lies with his heart. To reform the heart, to keep the heart in a gracious frame, is one of the best and hardest works in the world. Oh what guards and double guards! Oh what watches and double watches, should men put upon their hearts! A man is to keep his eye, and keep his mouth, and keep his feet—but above all keeping, he is to keep his heart. A gracious heart is Christ's fort-royal. Now, against this fort Satan will employ the utmost of his strength, art, and craft. And therefore how highly does it concern every Christian to keep a strong guard, a constant guard about his heart!

Men should keep their hearts, as they keep a rich treasure of money or jewels. Now, to preserve a rich treasure, what locks, what bolts, what bars, what chains are made use of! Our hearts are jewels more worth than all the kingdoms, crowns, and scepters of this world. There are few men who know how to value their own hearts as they should. What are mountains of gold, and rocks of pearl—compared to the heart, the soul of man! All our spiritual riches are in our hearts. Oh then, what a guard, what a watch should a man continually keep upon his heart!

It is one of the greatest and clearest evidences of grace, for a man to make it his greatest business, work, and concern—to keep his heart always . . . in a gracious frame, in a wakeful frame, in a watchful frame, in a tender frame, in a believing frame, in a repenting frame, in a humble frame, in a patient frame, in a serious frame, in a heavenly frame, in a jealous frame. "O Lord, my memory is weak, and my utterance is bad, and my understanding is dark, and my gifts are low,

and my affections are flat, and my temptations are strong, and my corruptions are prevalent. But You, who are the great heart-searcher, You know that I would sincerely have my heart in a better temper. I had rather have my heart brought into a gracious frame, and kept in a gracious frame, than to have all the riches of the Indies, than to be an emperor, yes, than to be king over all the earth."

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More ugly and horrid than the devil himself!

What bosom sin is there so sweet or profitable that is worth a-burning in hell for, or worth a-shutting out of heaven for? Surely none! This a gracious soul seriously weighs, and accordingly he sets himself against the toad in his bosom—against his darling sins, against his complexion sins.

But now, unsound hearts are very favorable to bosom sins, to complexion sins. They say of them, as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" Gen 19:20; and as David once said concerning Absalom, 2Sa 18:5, "Deal gently with the young man."

An unsound heart is as fond of his bosom sins, of his darling sins—as Jacob was of his Benjamin; or as Naaman was of his idol Rimmon; or as Judas was of his money-bag; or as Herod was of his Herodias; or as Demetrius was of his Diana.

The besotted sinner is most engaged to his bosom sins, his darling sins; and therefore it is as bitter a thing as death for him to part with them. He had rather part with thousands of rams, and with ten thousand rivers of oil; than with his bosom sin. Let God frown or smile, stroke or strike, lift up or cast down, promise or threaten—yet he will hide and hold fast his bosom sin! Let God set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery before him—yet he will not part with his bosom sins! Let God wound his conscience, blow upon his estate, leave a blot upon his name, crack his credit, afflict his body, write death upon his relations, and be a terror to his soul—yet will he not let his darling sins go! An unsound heart will rather let God go, and Christ go, and heaven go, and all go—than

he will let his darling lusts go!

But now a sound Christian, a thorough Christian, he sets himself most against the Delilah in his bosom, against the Benjamin, the son, the sin of his right hand. A sincere Christian looks upon bosom sins, upon complexion sins, as the most God-provoking sins. There are no sins so provoking to God's jealousies and justice as bosom sins! He looks upon bosom sins as the most dangerous sins! He looks upon bosom sins as the worst thing in all the world! He looks upon bosom sins as more ugly and horrid than the devil himself, or than hell itself! He looks upon bosom sins as the great hindrance between God and his soul, and between his conscience and his comfort. He looks upon bosom sins as those enemies that have provoked God often to turn a deaf ear to all his prayers! He looks upon his bosom sins as so many Judases that have often betrayed him into the hands of the devil! He looks upon his bosom sins as the waters of Marah, which have embittered all his mercies! He looks upon his bosom sins as the only things that have often clouded the face of God! He looks upon his bosom sins as dead flies in the box of precious ointment—which spoils all; and accordingly with all his might he sets himself against them.

He fights most against these; he weeps most over these; he watches and arms most against these; he prays most against these; he resolves most against these; he lays the axe of repentance most to these.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ To the moles and to the bats!

"In that day, a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats!" Isa 2:20

In the day when God shall exalt Himself in the souls of His people, and before the eyes of His people, they shall express such disdain and indignation against their idols, that they would not take only those made of trees and stones—but even their most precious and costly idols, those which were made of silver and gold—and cast them to the moles and to the bats; that is, they should cast them into such blind holes, and into such dark, filthy, nasty, and dusty corners, as moles make underground, and as bats roost in.

So when Christ, and grace, and holiness comes to be set up in men's hearts and lives, then all their darling sins, their bosom lusts—which are their idols of silver and their idols of gold—these are with a holy indignation cast to the moles and to the bats! They are so loathed, abhorred, abandoned, and dismissed, that they desire they may be forever buried in oblivion, and never more see the light!

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It mightily alters and changes a man

"Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted." Rom 6:17

Certainly, gospel-obedience is a grace of much worth, and of great force upon the whole man; for when it is once wrought in the heart, it works a conformity to all God's holy will.

That obedience which springs from saving faith is a transforming obedience. It mightily alters and changes a man: from impurity to purity, from sin to sanctity, from unrighteousness to righteousness, from earthly-mindedness to heavenly-mindedness, from pride to humility, from hypocrisy to sincerity, etc.

Those who are not savingly changed, are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity.

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If a Christian could have his choice

If a Christian could have his choice, he would be . . . the most humble, the most holy, the most heavenly, the most mortified, the most patient, the most contented, the most thankful, the most fruitful, the most active, the most zealous, and the most self-denying Christian in the world.

If he could have his choice, he would be as holy as God is holy; and as perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect; he would do the will of God on earth, as the angels do it now in heaven, namely—freely, readily, cheerfully, delightfully, universally, reverentially, and unweariedly, etc.

If he could have his choice, he would exercise every grace, and perform every duty, with all his might.

He sees so much excellency and beauty in God and Christ, that he cannot be at rest until he is swallowed up in the enjoyment of them. He sees so much excellency in grace, that nothing but perfection of grace will satisfy him. He makes perfection not only his utmost end—but he also labors after perfection with his utmost strength and endeavors.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Ask what you will, O Christian

"Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." Psa 51:2

If the Lord should say to a gracious Christian, "Ask what you will, O Christian—and it shall be granted to you." The answer would be: "Lord, rid me of my sins! Lord, take away my iniquities! Lord, mortify my corruptions! Lord, whoever lives, let these lusts die! Lord, drown these Egyptians in the sea of your Son's blood, who have so violently and unweariedly pursued after the blood of my precious soul! Lord, kill and crucify all these sinful evils that have killed and crucified the Lord of life and glory! Lord, my carnal reason, and flesh and blood, would gladly have such and such pleasurable sins, and such and such profitable sins, indulged and spared. But, Lord, the earnest, the ardent desires of my soul are that I may be rid of them!" And thus every gracious soul is more willing to be rid of his sins—than he is to keep his sins. A sick man is not more willing to be rid of his disease, nor a beggar of his nasty lousy rags, nor a prisoner of his chains—than a gracious soul is willing to be rid of his lusts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The righteousness of sanctification

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Gal 5:22-23 The righteousness of sanctification, or imparted righteousness, lies in the Spirit's infusing into the soul those holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces, that the apostle mentions in Gal 5:22-23. These habits of grace, are nothing else but the new nature or new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph 4:24.

He who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, out of a deep serious sense of his own unrighteousness; he who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, as earnestly as hungry men do for food, or as thirsty men do for drink, or as the hunted deer does after the water brooks—he is the blessed soul, and shall at last be filled.

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How do you know that?

A sincere willingness to part with every sin, and to mortify every sin—is a sure sign of saving grace. When a man is sincerely willing to leave every sin, and to indulge himself in none, no, not even his darling sin—it is a most certain sign of his integrity and saving faith.

"I am upright before God; I have kept myself from sin." Psa 18:23

"I am upright before God." Oh! but how do you know that? How do you prove that? How are you assured of that? Why, by this—that "I have kept myself from sin."

Doubtless there is as much of the power of God required, and as much strength of grace required, and as much of the presence and assistance of the Spirit required—to work a man off from his bosom sins, from his darling sins, from his beloved sins. A conquest here clearly speaks out uprightness of heart before God.

The godly man . . . does not give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin; does not make a trade of sin; does not allow of himself in any settled course of sin; does not indulge, connive or wink at any known sin; does not sin as wicked men sin—who sin studiously, resolutely, ardently, delightfully, customarily, willfully. The ungodly sin with their whole will, and with the full consent and sway of their souls.

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Drones and ciphers

Does the bee gather honey for itself?

Does the sheep yield wool for itself?

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Php 2:4-5

Every Christian is bound to serve others. A narrow, a selfish-spirited man is a shame to his creation, because he walks so contrary to the great intendment of God in it. It is base and unworthy—for a man to make himself the center of all his actions. That man sins against the very law of his being—who is swallowed up in his own private interests.

This age is full of drones and ciphers, and of selfish, lifeless men—who look at nothing, who design nothing, who aim at nothing, and who endeavor nothing—but how to elevate themselves, and greaten themselves, and enrich themselves, and build up themselves—though it be upon other's ruins! How many are there who are so swallowed up in their own interests and private concerns,

that they care not whether others sink or swim! "What!" they say, "Shall we leave our ease, our pleasure, our profits—to serve others? We cannot do it! We will never do it!"

"All of you, serve each other in humility." 1Pe 5:5

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They trample that matchless jewel

The soul is that spiritual and immortal substance, which is capable of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. There are none but bear about with them, precious and immortal souls, which are more worth than ten thousand thousand worlds. The first great work that men are to attend in this world—is the eternal safety and security of their souls.

If the soul is safe—all is safe. If the soul is well—all is well. If the soul is lost—all is lost.

I have read that there was a time when the Romans wore their jewels on their shoes. Most men in this day do worse, for they trample that matchless jewel of their souls under feet!

Many at last will cry out, "Oh, what have I lost! I have lost God, and Christ, and heaven; and have betrayed my precious and immortal soul into the hands of divine justice, and into the hands of Satan!"

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The covenant of grace

"I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear Me, so that they will never turn away from Me." Jer 32:40

The covenant of grace is that agreement which God has made with sinful man out of His own free mercy and grace, wherein He undertakes to save fallen man. All mankind would have been eternally lost—had He not of his own free grace and mercy made such an agreement with sinful man. This covenant is called a covenant of grace, because it flows from the free grace and mercy of God. There was nothing outside of God, nor anything in God—but His free mercy and grace—which moved Him to enter into covenant with poor sinners.

The covenant of grace consists in these things:

- (1.) that God will be our God;
- (2.) that He will give us a new heart, a new spirit;
- (3.) that He will not turn away His face from doing of us good;
- (4.) that He will put His fear into our hearts;
- (5.) that He will cleanse us from all our filthiness and idols;
- (6.) that He will rejoice over us to do us good;
- (7.) that we shall be His people;
- (8.) that we shall fear Him forever;
- (9.) that we shall walk in His statutes;
- (10.) that we shall not depart from Him.

Oh what head can conceive, or what tongue can express that infinite counsel, wisdom, love, care and tenderness, which is in the covenant of grace—so as it may best suit to all the needs, and straits, and necessities, and miseries, and desires, and longings of poor sinners' souls.

The covenant of grace is so well ordered by the unsearchable wisdom of God, that you may find in it . . . remedies to cure all your diseases, and cordials to comfort you against all your faintings, and a spiritual armory to arm you against all your enemies, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Do you, O distressed sinner, need a loving God, a compassionate God, a reconciled God, a sin-pardoning God? Here you may find Him, in the covenant of grace.

Do you need a Christ to counsel you by His wisdom, and to clothe you with His righteousness, and to adorn you with His grace? Here you may find Him in the covenant of grace.

Do you need the Spirit to enlighten you, to teach you, to convince you, to awaken you, to lead you, to cleanse you, to cheer you? Here you may find Him in the covenant of grace.

Do you need grace, or peace, or rest, or quiet, or contentment, or comfort, or satisfaction? Here you may find it in the covenant of grace. God has laid into the covenant of grace, as into a storehouse, all those things that sinners or saints can need.

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Troubled for sin

A hypocrite may be troubled for sin—as it . . . blots his name, and wounds his conscience, and brings a scourge, and destroys his soul, and shuts him out of heaven, and throws him to hell. But he is never troubled for sin, he never mourns for sin, he never hates sin—because it is contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the law of God, the glory of God, the design of God; or because of the evil that is in the nature of sin, or because of the defiling and polluting power of sin.

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Below the ox and the donkey

"The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's feeding-trough, but Israel does not know; My people do not understand." Isa 1:3

Ignorance is the source of all sin, the very well-spring from which all wickedness does issue. Ignorance . . . enslaves a soul to Satan; lets in sin by troops; locks them up in the heart; shuts out the means of recovery; and so plasters up a man's eyes, that he cannot see the things which belong to his own eternal peace.

The Scripture sets ignorant people below the ox and the donkey. Did men either see the deformity of sin, or the beauty and excellency of holiness—they would never delight in the one—nor cry down the other!

Ignorance is a breeding sin, a mother sin; all sins are seminally in ignorance. Ignorance is the mother of all the mistakes, and of all the misrule in the world.

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Fair professors who are foul sinners

There are many fair professors who are foul sinners—who have much of God on their lips—when they have nothing but sin and hell in their hearts and lives. These men's lives shame their profession. Such professors . . . live in a course of sin, make a trade of sin, indulge their sins, take up arms in defense of sin, make provision for sin, make a sport of sin, take pleasure in sin, and have set their hearts upon their sin. These are yet in their sins, under wrath, and on the way to eternal ruin!

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The best armor against evil lusts

"Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You." Psa 119:11

David hides the word in his heart as a treasure—that he might not lose it; and as a rule—that he might not transgress against it. The law of God kept close in the heart is the best armor against evil lusts. David locks up the law of God in his heart, as in a chest or cabinet—to secure him against Satan's ambushes and assaults on the one hand, and to preserve him from sin on the other hand.

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The devil's logic

"What should we say then? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may multiply? Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?" Rom 6:1-2

Certainly to argue from gospel mercy to sinful liberty, is the devil's logic. The more a man lives in the sight of gospel grace, the more sin will be discountenanced, resisted, hated, and displaced. A man may as truly assert that water burns, or that fire cools, or that the sun darkens the air—as he may assert that the sight, sense, or sweet of gospel grace—will breed carnality, looseness or wickedness, in a gracious heart.

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The greatest evil in all the world

Sin is the greatest evil in all the world. Sin is the only thing—which God abhors, which has brought Jesus Christ to the cross, which damns souls, which shuts heaven, and which has laid the foundations of hell.

Oh, sin is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that has wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh, sin is that which has . . . hindered my prayers, embittered my mercies, put a sting into all my crosses. Therefore I cannot but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death, yes, to hell, from whence it came.

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One sin never goes alone

Little sins make way for greater sins.

Cain's anger is seconded with murder.

Ahab's covetousness is attended with bloody cruelty.

Jeroboam's rebellion is attended with idolatry.

Judas' thievery is attended with treason.

One sin commonly disposes the heart to another sin.

Yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the commission of greater sins.

Oh there is a prodigious evil in the least of sins; it will quickly multiply itself into all manner of evils. Unless sin be cut off in the first motion, it will proceed to action, and from action to delight, and from delight to custom, and from custom to a habit—and then the soul will be undone forever!

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So exceeding angry with himself

"Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" Isa 30:22

The true penitent is not so exceeding angry with himself for anything—as he is angry with himself for his sins. There are none who fret, and fume, and chafe at themselves for sin, as penitent souls do. There are none who loathe themselves, who abhor themselves, and who are weary of themselves, upon the account of their sins—like penitent souls. It is not this thing nor that, nor this enemy nor that, nor this party nor that, nor this design nor that—but sin, which is the main—the grand object of a penitent's hatred, scorn, wrath, rage, reproach, disgrace, and contempt!

He who would be angry and sin not—must be angry at nothing but sin. If some men would but spend more of their anger and indignation against their sins, they would not be so angry as they are with their brethren, that in disputable things differ from them.

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Holy joy and godly sorrow

Holy joy and godly sorrow are in no way inconsistent. Yes, a godly man's eyes are always fullest of tears—when his heart is fullest of holy joy. A man may go joying and mourning to his grave, yes, to heaven, at the same time.

Grace always thrives best in that garden, that heart, which is watered most with the tears of godly sorrow. He who grieves most for sin, will rejoice most in God. And he who rejoices most in God, will grieve most for sin.

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As long as a Christian continues sinning

Godly sorrow is a lasting sorrow, it is a durable sorrow. As long as a Christian continues sinning, he cannot but continue mourning.

Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces. Certainly a true penitent can no more satisfy himself with one act of repentance, than he can satisfy himself with one act of faith, or with one act of hope, or with one act of love, or with one act of humility, or with one act of patience, or with one act of self-denial. Godly sorrow is a gospel grace which will live and last as well and as long as other graces; it is a spring which in this life, can never be drawn dry.

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Such gnats as these

"Oh cleanse me from secret faults." Psa 19:12

An unsound heart may mourn for great sins—which make great wounds in his conscience and credit, and which leave a great blot upon his name, or that waste or rot his body, or destroy his estate, or which expose him to public scorn and shame, etc. But for sins of omission, for wandering thoughts, idle words, deadness, coldness, slightness in pious duties and services, unbelief, secret pride, self-confidence, and a thousand more—such gnats as these he can swallow without any remorse, Pro 5:8-14.

But godly sorrow is of a general extent, it mourns as well for small sins as for great. A gracious soul weeps over many sins which none can charge upon him but God and his own conscience.

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No hand but a divine hand

"God makes my heart soft." Job 23:16

Sorrow for sin is one part of true repentance.

A sincere mourning is a deep mourning; it springs from serious and deep apprehensions of the great anger and deep displeasure of God, and of the woeful nature, demerit, burden, bitterness, vileness, and filthiness of sin. Oh the sighs, the groans, the sobs, the tears, which are to be found among repenting sinners.

No man is born with godly sorrow in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Godly sorrow is a plant of God's own planting; it is from God, and God alone. The spirit of mourning is from above; it is from a supernatural power and principle. There is nothing that can turn a heart of stone into flesh, but the Spirit of God, Eze 36:25-26. Godly sorrow is a gift from God. No hand but a divine hand can make the heart soft and tender under the sight and sense of sin. Nature may easily work a man to mourn, and melt, and weep, under worldly losses, crosses, and miseries; but it must be grace, it must be a supernatural principle, which must work the heart to mourn for sin.

"God makes my heart soft." Job 23:16

Godly sorrow is a sorrow for sin as sin. Godly sorrow is a mourning rather for sin—than for the trouble which sin brings; it is not so much for loss of goods, lands, wife, child, credit, name, etc., but for that a holy God is offended, a righteous law violated, Christ dishonored, the Spirit grieved, and the gospel blemished, etc. Peter's sorrow was godly, but Judas' sorrow was worldly; Peter mourns over the evil of sin, but Judas mourns over the evil of punishment.

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Dirt handsomely fashioned

"The Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground." Gen 2:7

Our bodies are but dirt handsomely fashioned. We derive our pedigree from the dust, and are akin to clay.

Such as have most pampered their bodies—have been the greatest enemies to their own souls. And how many are there this day who pamper their bodies—but starve their souls; who adorn their bodies—but defile their souls; who dress and trim up their bodies with gold, and silver, and silks—while their souls are naked of all grace, holiness, and goodness.

"I discipline my body and bring it under strict control." 1Co 9:27

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02.01a. A Cabinet of Choice Jewels, cont'd

A new heart and a new spirit

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances." Eze 36:26-27

A true child of God has the law of God written, not only in his understanding—but also in his heart and affections. And this is that which makes his obedience to be pleasing and delightful to him.

If he might be free from the injunctions and directions of the word—he would not value such a liberty. He would not swear, nor lie, nor be drunk, nor whore, nor dissemble, nor cheat, nor run into all excess of riot if he could—because in his soul he has a principle of grace, and an inward contrariety and antipathy against evil. He would not cease to hear, to read, to pray, to meditate if he could—because his soul takes a pleasure and sweet delight in these things.

There is a principle within him agreeable to the precepts of Scripture, which makes all pious performances to be easy and pleasurable to him.

Look! as the eye delights in seeing, and the ear in hearing, so a gracious heart (except when it is under a cloud of desertion, or in the school of temptation, or under some grievous tormenting afflictions, or sadly worsted by some prevalent corruption) delights in obedience.

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One continued web of wickedness

"No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God." 1Jn 3:9

That is, they do not allow themselves in the practice of any iniquity. Gracious souls do not live in the service of sin, they do not live in an ordinary practice of any iniquity. He who has the seed of God, the seed of grace and regeneration in him—he cannot allow himself in a way of sin, he cannot give himself over to a voluntary serving of sin, he cannot make a trade of sin.

But now the whole trade, the whole life of formal and carnal professors, is nothing else but one continued web of wickedness; there is no wicked unregenerate person in the world—but lives in the daily practice of some known sin or other—but allows himself in some trade or way of wickedness or other.

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Sin and they would never part

Carnal men, in times of sickness and distress, or in times of horror and terror of conscience, or when death, the king of terrors, knocks at their doors, or when they see hell gaping to devour

them, and God as a solemn judge standing ready to pass an eternal doom upon them—only then they are willing to cast overboard their pleasures, their drunkenness, their swearing, their cursing, their lying, their flesh-pleasing, etc. But not out of any hatred to their lusts—but out of love to themselves, and out of fear of being damned, etc.; for could they but enjoy their sins and heaven too—sin and they would never part.

A graceless heart is more abundantly willing to be freed from punishment—the effect of sin; than it is willing to be freed from sin—the cause of punishment.

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What sin is so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for—or worth being shut out of heaven for?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Whom God loves once

"I have loved you with an everlasting love!" Jer 31:3

O sirs! the covenant of grace is founded upon God's everlasting love, upon God's unchangeable love, upon God's free love. John 13:1, "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Whom God loves once—He loves forever. God can as well cease to be—as He can cease to love those whom He has taken into covenant with Himself.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ No man can subdue his sins—but by the power of the Holy Spirit!

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Spiritual vomit

"He who covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." Pro 28:13

True penitential confession is joined with reformation. That confession of sin which carries forgiveness of sin with it, is attended with serious desires, and earnest endeavors of reformation. Confession of sin must be joined with forsaking of sin—or all is lost. God will never cross the book, He will never draw the red lines of Christ's blood over the black lines of our transgressions—unless confessing and forsaking of sin, goes hand in hand. He who does not forsake his sin, as well as confess it, forsakes the benefit of his confession.

Indeed, there is no real confession of sin, where there is no real forsaking of sin. It is not enough for us to confess the sins we have committed—but we must peremptorily resolve against the committing again the sins we have confessed. We must desire as freely to forego our sins, as we do desire God to forgive us our sins.

Confession of sin is a spiritual vomit. Now you know, a man who is sick in his stomach, is heartily willing to be rid of that load on his stomach; and so a man who is real in his confession of sin, is as heartily willing to be rid of his sin, that lies as a load upon his conscience, as any sick man can be heartily willing to be rid of that load that lies upon his stomach.

The penitential confessor does as heartily desire to be delivered from the power of his sins—as he does desire to be delivered from the sting and punishment of his sins.

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Saving repentance

Saving repentance includes contrition or grief of heart for sins committed. Now this is sometimes called—godly sorrow, 2Co 7:10; a contrite spirit, Isa 66:2; a broken and contrite heart, Psa 51:17; the afflicting of our souls, Lev 16:29; the humbling of the heart, 2Ch 7:14, Lam 3:20; a mourning, Zec 12:10; a weeping, Mark 14:72.

All repenting sinners are mourning sinners. David repents—and waters his couch with his tears. Hezekiah repents—and humbles himself for the pride of his heart. Ephraim repents—and Ephraim bemoans himself. Mary Magdalene repents—and weeps, and washes Christ's feet with her tears. The Corinthians repented—and were made sorrowful after a godly manner.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A hound, a hawk, a horse, a harlot

Every man on earth whose heart is void and empty of grace—sets a higher value and price upon his lusts, or upon his relations, or upon his honors, or riches, or pleasures, or upon this or that worldly enjoyment—than he does upon grace. Yes, how many thousands are there who set a higher price or value upon a hound, a hawk, a horse, a harlot, a good trade, a fair estate, a rich inheritance; yes, upon the very toys and trifles of this world—than they do upon God, or Christ, or grace!

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They are not quite slain

Though pride and envy have received their death's wound at the soul's first conversion—yet they are not quite slain in a believer. The best of men are but men at the best, and there are still those bitter roots of pride, vain-glory, self-love, envy, etc., remaining in the godliest believer.

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Beautiful abominations

Let a man's profession be ever so glorious, let him be ever so abundant in the performance of duties, let his desires after this and that holy thing be ever so strong—yet if his ends and aims are wrong, all his pretensions and performances are but beautiful abominations.

Did David pray three times a day? So did the pharisees. Did David and Daniel fast? So did the pharisees—and that twice in the week. Did Cornelius give alms? So did the pharisees. Did Abraham pay tithes? So did the pharisees; they tithed their very mint and rue. But their ends and aims being wrong—their time was lost, and their pains were lost, and their duties were lost, and their alms were lost, and their souls were lost—and that forever. God writes a zero upon all those services wherein men's ends are not right.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The devil's donkey

The devil makes the proud person his donkey, to ride in triumph upon.

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Stone him to death!

"If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him. You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'" Deu 13:6-10

This Scripture tells us, that if father, or mother, or brother, or sister, or kinsman, or friend, should go about to draw a man from God, his hand should be first upon him to put him to death. Now, bosom sins, darling sins—they seek to draw a man's heart from God, and therefore a gracious soul can't but rise up against them, and do his best to stone them, and to be the death of them!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The choicest saints

Such is the universal corruption of human nature, that the souls of the best, of the purest, and of the holiest men in the world—do from day to day, yes, from moment to moment, contract some filth and uncleanness. The choicest saints can never acquit themselves from sins of infirmity—which do inevitably and inseparably cleave unto the best of men, who still carry with about them, corrupt flesh and blood.

Godly men may fall again and again into the same sin; and no wonder, for though their repentance be ever so sincere and sound—yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification but imperfect in this life, and therefore it is possible for a gracious soul to fall again and again into the same sin.

Grace may be prevailed against by Satan's temptations, and by the strong, secret, and subtle workings of sin in our hearts.

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Common grace

Common grace never works a man thus to fear sin—but renewing grace does. Common convictions carry the soul out to look more on the evil which follows sin, rather than on the evil which is in sin. And hence it comes to pass, that souls under common convictions are more affected and afflicted at the fear of hell and dread of wrath and damnation—than they are affected or afflicted at the vileness, odiousness, and heinous nature of sin.

When an unsanctified person is angry with sin, and chides sin, and fights with sin, and makes some headway against sin—it is either because it has cracked his credit, or clouded his honor, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or provoked his friends, or incensed the magistrate, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame, disgrace, or contempt here—and hell hereafter. But never because a holy God is dishonored, a righteous law transgressed, a blessed Savior crucified, or the blessed Spirit greatly grieved. The child will not touch the coal because it will burn him, and the prudent man will not touch the coal because it will smut him. A gracious heart rises against sin because of its defiling and polluting nature—but an unsanctified heart rises against sin because of its burning and damning nature. A sanctified person hates sin, because it

pollutes his soul—but an unsanctified person hates it because it destroys his soul. A sanctified person loathes sin, and abhors sin—because it fights against God's holiness. But an unsanctified person loathes sin, and abhors it, because it provokes and stirs up God's justice. A sanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that is in sin. But an unsanctified person detests sin, because of the hell that follows sin, etc.

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Sin in a saint

It is one thing for a man to sin, it is another thing for a man to allow himself in sin. It is one thing for a godly man to step into a sin, and it is another thing to keep the road of sin. A real saint can neither allow of sin, nor wallow in sin, nor be transformed into the image of sin, nor mix itself with sin. It is possible for a sincere Christian to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts, and now and then in an hour of temptation, to slide, to trip, and to be overtaken unawares. But his main way, his principal work, is to depart from iniquity; as a true traveler may now and then step a few steps out of his way—who yet for the main keeps his way, keeps the road. Or as a bee may now and then light upon a thistle—but her main work is to be gathering at the flowers. Or as a sheep may now and then slip into the dirt, or into a slough—but its main work is to be grazing upon the mountains.

Certainly, O soul, if sin is now your greatest burden, it shall never hereafter prove your eternal bane. God never yet sent any man to hell for sin, to whom sin has commonly been the greatest hell in this world. God has but one hell, and that is for those to whom sin has been commonly a heaven in this world. That man who hates sin, and who daily enters his protest against sin—that man shall never be made miserable by sin.

Sin in a wicked man is like poison in a serpent; it is in its natural place, it is delightful to a sinner. But sin in a saint is like poison in a man's body, it is offensive, and the heart rises against it, and uses all divine antidotes whereby it may be expelled and destroyed. Nothing will satisfy a gracious soul—but the heart blood of his lusts. Now, he shall never be damned for his sins, whose heart is set upon killing his sins.

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Sin shall not have dominion over you

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under grace." Rom 6:14

What does the dominion of sin import, and wherein does it consist?

Sin is in dominion, when it has the universal and sovereign command of the soul, when it has an absolute power, when it has such an authority in the soul to command it as a king does his subjects, or as the centurion did his servants: Mat 8:9, "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." Now when sin has such a universal and easy authority and command over the whole man, body and soul, as that it can use them in the service of sin, when and where and how it pleases, then sin is in dominion. Where there is a peaceable, uncontrolled, willing, universal subjection of the whole man unto the commands of sin, there sin

reigns.

Sin is in dominion, when in a course, when ordinarily, there is a quiet, free, willing, and total yielding of subjection to the authority, law, and command of sin. Mark, it is a full possession, a complete delight, and a constant contentment in sin, that speaks out the reign and dominion of sin, Rom 6:13-16. Dominion of sin imports a complete and universal resignation of the whole will and man to the obedience of it. That man who is wholly addicted and devoted to the ways of sin, that man is under the reign of sin—that man whose whole heart is universally married to his lusts—that man is under the dominion of his lusts. When a man does as freely, cheerfully, universally, and readily obey his lusts, as a child does his father—then sin is in dominion. When a man sins with greediness, when with Ahab he "sells himself to work wickedness," 1Ki 21:25, when he commits "wickedness with both hands," Mic 7:3, when he gives himself up or over "to all uncleanness and filthiness," Eph 2:3, when he freely and voluntarily resigns and surrenders up his body and soul to the obedience of sin—then sin reigns, then it keeps the throne.

Where the dominion of sin is erected, there it sits in the heart, as a king in his throne, and gives forth its laws and commands to the soul and body, and those commands are listened to, and consented to, approved and delighted in. A subject cannot in a course more freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his prince, than a sinner does in a course freely, willingly, universally, and cheerfully obey the commands of his lusts; and wherever this sad temper of spirit is—there is sin in dominion.

Sin is in dominion, when it commands in the heart as a king in his throne, or as a Lord in his house, or as a general in his army—freely, boldly, universally, cheerfully; and when the soul does as freely, boldly, universally, and cheerfully subject itself to sin's commands. Where men commonly yield up their wills and affections to the commands of sin, there sin reigns; and this is the case of every unregenerate man.

When a man is usually insistent in his sinnings, in the face of all reprehensions and arguments which tend to dissuade him from sin—then sin is in dominion, Pro 29:1; Jer 5:3-4; and Jer 44:15-17. When the constant bent of the heart is inflamed towards sin, and when the desires of the soul are insatiably carried after sin, and when the resolutions of the soul are strongly and habitually set upon sin—then sin is in the throne, and then it reigns as a king. When God hedges up the sinner's way with thorns—yet the sinner will break through all to his sin, Hos 2:6-7; when life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, are set before the sinner—yet the sinner will be insistent in his sinnings, though he loses his life, his soul, and all the glory of another world, then sin reigns, Deu 30:15-19; Deu 11:26-29.

When men ordinarily, habitually, commonly are very careful, studious, and laborious to make provision for sin, then sin reigns: Rom 13:14, "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof;" or, as the Greek has it, "Make no projects for the flesh," or "cater not for the flesh." When a man's head and heart is full of projects how to gratify this lust, and how to satisfy that lust, and how to fulfill the other lust, then sin reigns, then it is in its throne. [David, in an hour of temptation, once made provision for his lusts, 2Sa 11:14-15. But this was not his course, his trade, etc.]

When sin is commonly, habitually sweet, and the soul takes a daily pleasure and delight in it, then it reigns; as you may see by comparing these scriptures. [Job 20:12-13; Pro 2:14; Amo 6:13; Zep

3:11; 2Th 2:12-13 Plutarch.] When a man daily takes as joyful contentment and satisfaction in his lusts, and in walking after the ways of his own heart, as he does in his highest outward enjoyments, or in his nearest and dearest relations, then certainly sin is in dominion. Such men as can go constantly on in a way of wickedness, merely to delight and please the flesh—such men are certainly under the power and reign of sin.

When men commonly take part with sin, when they take up arms in the defense of sin, and in defiance of the commands of God, the motions of the Spirit, and the checks of conscience—then sin is in dominion. He who readily, resolvedly, and habitually fights sin's battles—is sin's servant, and without all question under the reign and dominion of sin. When the inward faculties of the soul, and the outward members of the body, do readily resolve, and habitually take up arms to fight for sin—then and there sin is in dominion, as you may plainly see by consulting these scriptures. [Rom 6:19-20; Eph 2:2-3; Tit 3:3.]

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Blessed are those who mourn

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Mat 5:4

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—such as who mourn for sin with an exceeding great mourning.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for sin with a funeral sorrow, as the word signifies.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for sin as a man mourns for the loss of his only son, Zec 12:10, or as Jacob mourned for Joseph, or as David mourned for Absalom, or as the people mourned for the loss of good Josiah, 2Ch 35:24-25.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for secret sins as well as open sins.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for sins against grace as well as for sins against the law.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for sin as the greatest evil in the world.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for his own sins, Eze 7:16; as David did, Psa 51:1-19; or as Ephraim did, Jer 31:18-19; or as Peter did, Mat 26:75; or as Mary Magdalene did, Luk 7:38

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn for the sins of others as well as for his own, as David did, Psa 119:136; Psa 119:158; or as Jeremiah did, Jer 13:17; or as Lot did, 2Pe 2:7-8; or as they did in that Eze 9:4.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn under the sense of their spiritual needs.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn under the sense of their spiritual losses—such as loss of communion with God, loss of the favor of God, loss of the presence of God, loss of the exercise of grace, loss of the joys of the Spirit, loss of inward peace, etc.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn not only for their own afflictions and miseries—but also for the afflictions and miseries of other believers, as Nehemiah did, Neh 1:2-4; or as Jeremiah did, Jer 9:1-2; or as Christ did when he wept over Jerusalem, Luk 19:41-42.

"Blessed are those who mourn;" that is—those who mourn because they cannot mourn for these things; or who mourn because they can mourn no more; or who mourn because God has so little honor in their hearts, or in their house, or in their life, or in the world, or in the churches.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The old man

In every regenerate man, there are two men—an old man and a new man; or if you please, flesh and spirit. Rom 7:1-25.

The old man, the fleshly part, will incline the soul, and bias the soul, as well to sins against the gospel, as to sins against the law, and to great sins as well as small sins; witness Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, Asa's oppression, David's murder and adultery, Solomon's idolatry, and Peter's blasphemy.

The old man, the fleshly part, is as much in the will as in any other part of the regenerate man; and therefore, when he falls into heinous sins, he may fall into them with consent, delight, and willingness, so far as his will is unrenewed. Though a real Christian is changed in every part—yet it is but in part and imperfect.

The old man, the fleshly part, is in a regenerate man's members, as well as in his will, and therefore they may be exercised and employed in and about those sins they have consented unto.

High sinnings injure and wound the conscience of a regenerate man, and lay him open to the sore rebukes of God, and call for great repentance, and fresh and frequent applications of the blood of Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The pure in heart

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." Mat 5:8

Dear hearts! As we truly say, that gold is pure gold, though much dross may hang about it; and as we truly say, that such and such an air is pure air, though at times there are many fogs and mists within it; and as we truly say, that such and such springs are pure springs, though mud, and dirt, and filth may be lying at the bottom of those springs; and as we truly say, that face is a fair face, though it has some freckles in it; so we may as truly say, that such and such a heart is a "pure heart," though there may be much sinful dross and filth cleaving to it.

Beloved! the best, the wisest, the holiest, and the most mortified Christians on earth, do carry about with them a body of sin and death, Rom 7:22-23; they have in them a fountain of original corruption, and from this fountain sin will still be arising, a-bubbling and a-boiling up as the scum in a pot over the fire.

But mark, as in wine, or honey, or water, though scum and filth may arise—yet the wine, the honey, the water, will be still a-purging and purifying itself, and a-working and casting it out. So though sin, though corruption, though spiritual filth may, and too often does, arise in a gracious heart—yet there is a spring of grace, a spring of living water in him; there is a holy cleansing and

purifying disposition in a regenerate person, which will still be a-working and casting it out.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ He is the blessed soul!

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness." Mat 5:6

He who sees an absolute necessity of the righteousness of Christ to justify him, and to enable him to stand boldly before the throne of God; he who sees his own righteousness to be but as filthy rags, Isa 64:4; to be but as dross and dung, Php 3:7-8; he who sees the Lord Jesus Christ, with all his riches and righteousness, clearly and freely offered to poor sinners in the everlasting gospel; he who in the gospel-mirror sees Christ, who knew no sin, to be made sin for him, that that he may be made the righteousness of God in Christ, 2Co 5:21; he who in the same mirror sees Christ to be made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, to all who are sincerely willing to make a venture of their immortal souls and eternal estates upon him and his righteousness; and he who sees the righteousness of Christ to be a most perfect, pure, complete, spotless, matchless, infinite righteousness; and under these apprehensions and persuasions is carried out in earnest and unsatisfied hungerings and thirstings, to be made a partaker of Christ's righteousness, and to be assured of his righteousness, and to put on his righteousness as a royal robe, Isa 61:10—he is the blessed soul! And he who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of Christ imparted, as well as after the righteousness of Christ imputed; after the righteousness of sanctification, as well as after the righteousness of justification—he is the blessed soul!, and shall at last be filled. The righteousness of sanctification, or imparted righteousness, lies in the Spirit's infusing into the soul those holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces, that the apostle mentions in that Gal 5:22-23. These habits of grace, which are distinguished by the names of faith, love, hope, meekness, etc., are nothing else but the new nature or new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph 4:24. He who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, out of a deep serious sense of his own unrighteousness; he who hungers and thirsts after the righteousness of sanctification, as earnestly as hungry men do for food, or as thirsty men do for drink, or as the hunted deer does after the water brooks—he is the blessed soul, and shall at last be filled.

02.02. A String of Pearls

A String of Pearls

The Best Things Reserved Until Last A sermon preached in London, June 8, 1657, at the funeral of

that triumphant saint Mrs. Mary Blake, by Thomas Brooks,

her much endeared friend, spiritual father, pastor, and

brother, in the fellowship of the Gospel.

CHOICE EXCERPTS

We have but added fuel to those burning coals!

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life." Mat 25:46

Oh! what trouble of mind, what horror of conscience, what distraction and vexation, what terror and torment, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, what dashing of knees, what gnashing of teeth will there be among the wicked—when they shall see the saints in all their splendor, dignity, and glory—and themselves forever shut out of heaven!

Then shall the wicked lamentingly say, "Lo! these are the men whom we counted fools, madmen, and miserable! Oh but now we see that we were deceived and deluded! Oh that we had never despised them! Oh that we had never reproached them! Oh that we had never trampled upon them! Oh that we had been one with them! Oh that we had imitated them! Oh that we had walked as they, and done as they—that so we might now have been as happy as they! Oh but this cannot be! Oh this may not be! Oh this shall never be! Oh that we had never been born! Oh that now we might be unborn! Oh that we might be turned into a bird, a beast, a toad, a stone! Oh that we were anything but what we are! Oh that we were nothing! Oh that now our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we might die—so that we may not eternally exist! But it is now too late! Oh we see that there is a reward for the righteous! And we see, that by all the contempt which we have cast upon these glorious shining saints, whose splendor and glory does now darken the very glory of the sun, that we have but treasured up wrath against the day of wrath! We have but added fuel to those burning coals, to those everlasting flames—in which we must now lie forever! "And they cried to the mountains and the rocks—Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

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No mind has imagined

Surely there is no believer but who finds that sometimes sin interrupts his joy, and sometimes Satan disturbs his joy, and sometimes afflictions eclipse his joy. Sometimes the cares of the world, and sometimes the snares of the world, and sometimes the fears of the world—mar his joy.

Here on earth, our joy is mixed with sorrow; our rejoicing with trembling. The most godly have . . . sorrow mixed with their joy, water mixed with their wine, vinegar mixed with their oil, pain mixed with their ease, winter mixed with their summer, etc.

But in heaven, they shall have . . . joy without sorrow, light without darkness, sweetness without bitterness, summer without winter, health without sickness, honor without disgrace, glory without shame, and life without death.

"In His presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore." Psa 16:11

Mark—for quality—there are pleasures; for quantity—fullness; for dignity—at God's right hand; for duration—forevermore. And millions of years multiplied by millions, do not make up one minute of this eternity of joy which the saints shall have in heaven! In heaven there shall be no sin to take away your joy, nor any devil to take away your joy, nor any man to take away your joy!

As they shall have in heaven pure joy, so they shall have in heaven fullness of joy. Here on earth all joy is at an ebb—but in heaven is the flood of joy! Here shall be joy above joy, joy surmounting all joy. Here shall be such great joys—as no geometrician can measure; so many joys—as no arithmetician can number; and such wonderful joys—as no rhetorician can utter, had he the tongue of men and angels!

Sometimes great crosses, sometimes hard losses, and sometimes unexpected changes—turn a Christian's harping into mourning.

Here shall be joy within you, and joy without you, and joy above you, and joy beneath you, and joy about you. Joy shall spread itself over all the members of your bodies, and over all the faculties of your souls.

In heaven, your knowledge shall be full, your love full, your visions of God full, your communion with God full, your enjoyment of God full, and your conformity to God full; and from thence will arise fullness of joy.

If all the earth were paper, and all the plants of the earth were pens, and all the sea were ink, and if every man, woman, and child, had the pen of a ready writer; yet they would not be able to express the thousandth part of those joys which saints shall have in heaven!

All the joy which we have here in this world is but pensiveness—compared to that joy which we shall have in heaven. All the pleasure which we have here in this world is but heaviness—compared to that joy which we shall have in heaven. All sweetness which we have here in this world is but bitterness—compared to that joy which we shall have in heaven.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him." 1Co 2:9

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This is not your resting-place

This life is full of trials, full of troubles, and full of changes. Sin within, and Satan and the world without, will keep a Christian from rest, until he comes to rest in the bosom of Christ. The life of a Christian is a race—and what rest have those who are still a-running their race? The life of a Christian is a warfare—and what rest have those who are still engaged in a constant warfare? The life of a Christian is the life of a pilgrim—and what rest has a pilgrim, who is still a-traveling from place to place? The fears, the snares, the cares, the changes, etc., which attend believers in this world, are such that will keep them from taking up their rest here. A Christian hears that word always sounding in his ears, "Arise, for this is

not your resting-place, because it is polluted." Mic 2:10. A man may as well expect to find heaven in hell—as expect to find rest in this world! Rest is a jewel very desirable on earth; but we shall not wear it in our bosoms until we come to heaven.

Man's sorrows begin when his days begin, and his sorrows are multiplied as his days are multiplied; his whole life is but one continued grief: labor wears him, care tears him, fears toss him, losses vex him, dangers trouble him, crosses disquiet him, nothing pleases him.

The rest reserved in heaven for believers is a universal rest— a rest from all sin; a rest from all sorrow; a rest from all afflictions; a rest from all temptations; a rest from all oppression; a rest from all vexations; a rest from all labor and pains; a rest from all trouble and travail; a rest from all aches, weaknesses, and diseases.

"Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they are blessed indeed, for they will rest from all their toils and trials!" Rev 14:13

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The saints' hell—and the sinners' heaven

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

Mat 25:46

This present life is the saints' hell—and the sinners' heaven.

The next life will be the saints' heaven —and the sinners' hell.

Here on earth wicked men have their heaven, hereafter they shall have their hell. The time of this life is the day of their joy and triumph; and when this short day is ended—then eternal lamentations, mournings, and woes follow!

Ah sinners! sinners! that day is hastening upon you, wherein you shall have . . .punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without support, pain without pleasure, and torments without end!

Ah, sinners! sinners! Ah! your portion is below, and you are already adjudged to those torments which are endless, easeless, and remediless; where the worm never dies, and the fire never goes out! The day is coming upon you, sinners, when . . .all your sweet shall be turned into bitter; all your glory into shame; all your plenty into scarcity; all your joys into sorrows; all your recreations

into vexations; and all your momentary comforts into everlasting torments!

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The secret of being content

A man needs very little of this world's goods to carry him through his pilgrimage, until he comes to his home—until he comes to heaven.

A little will satisfy the demands of nature; though nothing will satisfy a man's lusts!

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know both how to have a little, and I know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content—whether well-fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need." Php 4:11-12

A Christian, in the midst of all his worldly delights, comforts, and entertainments, says, "Oh these are not the delights, the comforts, the contentments which my soul looks for, which my soul expects and hopes to enjoy. I look and hope . . . for choicer delights, for sweeter comforts, for more satisfying contentments, for more durable riches!

A Christian's motto always is, or always should be, "I hope for better things! I hope for better things than any the world can give to me, or than any that Satan can take from me!"

"They admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one." Heb 11:13, Heb 11:16

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The happy exchange

I heartily wish that all who are concerned in this sad loss, were more taken up in minding the happy exchange which Mary has made, than with your present loss.

She has exchanged:earth—for heaven, a wilderness—for a paradise, a prison—for a palace, a house made with hands—for one eternal in the heavens, imperfection—for perfection, sighing—for singing, mourning—for rejoicing, petitions—for praises, the society of sinful mortals—for the company of God, pain—for ease, sickness—for health, a bed of weakness—for a bed of spices, her brass—for silver, her pennies—for gold, her earthly contentments—for heavenly enjoyments, an imperfect, transient enjoyment of God—for a more clear, full, perfect, and permanent enjoyment of God.

And as I desire that one of your eyes may be fixed upon her happiness—so I desire that your other eye may be fixed upon Christ's fullness. Though your brook be dried up, yet Christ the fountain of light, life, love, grace, glory, comfort, joy, goodness, sweetness and satisfaction—is still at hand—and always full and flowing—yes, overflowing!

As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is contracted in one piece of gold—so all the sweetness, all the goodness, all the excellencies which are in husbands, wives, children, friends, etc., are concentrated in Christ! Yes, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth—is epitomized in Christ!

Oh, that your hearts and thoughts were thus busied about Christ, and taken up with Christ, and with those treasures of wisdom, knowledge, grace, goodness, sweetness, etc., which are in Him! This would very much allay your grief and sorrow, and keep your hearts quiet and silent before the Lord.

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A smooth silken way to hell

In duty, Mary had learned the holy art of living above duty; in the business of acceptance with God, and justification before God, and reconciliation to God, and salvation by God; she knew no duty but Jesus. She was as happy in denying religious self as she was resolute in denying of sinful self.

Duties trusted to will undo you. When trusted to, duties are but a smooth silken way to hell.

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A poor, despised, contemptible thing

Most professors live as if there were no heaven, or else as if heaven were not worth a seeking, worth a desiring; as if heaven were a poor, despised, contemptible thing.

But ah, Christians! be much in desiring and longing to get into that glorious city, where streets, walls, and gates are all gold—yes, where pearl is but as mire and dirt; and where are . . . all pleasures, all treasures, all delights, all comforts, all contentments, and that forever!

This word "forever" is a bottomless depth, a conception without end; it is a word which sweetens all the glory above, and that indeed makes heaven to be heaven!

02.03. A Word in Season to Suffering Saints

A Word in Season to Suffering Saints The special presence of God with His people, in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers. By Thomas Brooks, London, 1675

CHOICE EXCERPTS

Look upon death

Look upon death as that which is best.

"Better is the day of death, than the day of one's birth." Ecc 7:1

"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far." Php 1:23

The Greek is very significant—"far, far the better!" A saint's dying day is the daybreak of eternal glory! In respect of pleasure, peace, safety, company and

glory—a believer's dying day is his best day.

Look upon death as a remedy, as a cure. Death will perfectly cure you of all bodily and spiritual diseases at once: the infirm body and the defiled soul, the aching head and the unbelieving heart. Death will cure you of all your ailments, aches, diseases, and distempers.

In Queen Mary's days, there was a lame Christian, and a blind Christian—both burned at one stake. The lame man, after he was chained, casting away

his crutch, bade the blind man to be of good cheer; "For death," says he, "will cure us both; you of your blindness, and me of my lameness!"

As death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will cure all your soul distempers also. Death is not the death of the man—but the death of his sin! Death will at once free you fully, perfectly, and perpetually from all sin; yes, from all possibility of ever sinning! Sin was the midwife which brought death into the world—and death shall be the grave to bury sin.

Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die, unwilling to die—seeing death gives him an eternal separation . . . from infirmities and weaknesses, from all aches and pains, from griefs and gripings, from distempers and diseases, both of body and soul?

When Samson died, the Philistines died together with him. Just so, when a saint dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goes out by death! Death kills sin which bred it.

Look upon death as a rest, a full rest. A believer's dying day is his resting day . . . from sin, from sorrow, from afflictions, from temptations, from desertions, from dissensions, from vexations, from oppositions, from persecutions.

This world was never made to be the saints' rest. Arise and depart, for this is not your resting place, because it is polluted! (Mic 2:10)

Death brings the saints . . . to a full rest, to a pleasant rest, to a matchless rest, to an eternal rest!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The dirty lane

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Php 1:21

Look upon your dying day as a gainful day. There is no gain compared to that which comes in by death. A Christian gets more by death, than he does by life.

To be in Christ is very good—but to be with Christ is best of all, "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" Php 1:23. It was a mighty

blessing for Christ to be with Paul on earth—but it was the top of blessings for Paul to be with Christ in heaven! Seriously consider these things—

By death you shall gain incomparable crowns! A crown of life, Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12; A crown of righteousness, 2Ti 4:8; An incorruptible crown, 1Co 9:24-25; A crown of glory, 1Pe 5:4. There are no crowns compared to these crowns!

By death you shall gain a glorious kingdom! "It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom!" We must put off our rags of mortality—that we may put on our robes of glory. There is no entering into paradise—but under the flaming sword of this angel, death—who stands at the gate. Death is the dirty lane through which the saint passes . . . to a kingdom, to a great kingdom, to a glorious kingdom, to a peaceful kingdom, to an unshaken kingdom, to a durable kingdom, to a lasting kingdom, yes, to an everlasting kingdom!

Death is the dark, short way, through which the saints pass to the marriage-supper of the Lamb!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The funeral of all your sorrows!

At death, you shall gain full freedom and liberty from all your enemies within and without—namely, sin, Satan, and the world!

Death will free you from the indwelling power of sin. In this present world, sin plays the tyrant; but in heaven there is no tyranny—but perfect felicity. As in hell there is nothing but wickedness, so in heaven there is nothing but holiness.

Death will free you from all provocations, temptations, and suggestions to sin. You shall be above all Satan's assaults. The old serpent is cast out, and shall be forever kept out of the new Jerusalem above!

Death will free you from all the effects and consequences of sin—namely, losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, disgraces, sufferings, etc. When the cause is taken away, the effect ceases. When the fountain of sin is dried up, the streams of afflictions, of sufferings, must be dried up. Sin and sorrow were born together, live together, and shall die together. Death will free you from all bodily infirmities and diseases.

Death will free you from all your sorrows, whether inward or outward, whether for your own sins or the sins of others, whether for your own sufferings or the sufferings of others. Now, it may be, you are seldom without tears in your eyes, or sorrow in your heart. Oh, but death will be the funeral of all your sorrows! Death will wipe all tears from your eyes, "and sorrow and mourning shall flee away!"

Dear friend, death shall do that for you, which all your physicians could never do for you. It shall both instantly and perfectly cure you of all sorts of weaknesses and maladies, both inward and outward, of both your body and your soul! O my dear friend, is it not better to die, and be rid of all sin; and be rid of all temptations; and be rid of all sorts of miseries; than to live, and still carry about with us our sins, our sorrows, our burdens, and our constant ailments?

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You have afflicted me

"I know, O Lord, that Your laws are righteous, and in faithfulness You have afflicted me." Psa 119:75

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your word." Psa 119:67

God's corrections are our instructions, His lashes are our lessons, His scourges are our schoolmasters, His chastisements are our admonishments. By afflictions, troubles, distresses and dangers—the Lord teaches His people to look upon sin as the most loathsome thing in the world; and to look upon holiness as the most lovely thing in the world. Sin is never so bitter, and holiness is never so sweet—as when our troubles are greatest and our dangers highest.

By affliction, the Lord teaches His people to sit loose from this world, and to be prepared for eternity.

By affliction, God shows His people the vanity, vexation, emptiness, weakness, and nothingness of all created things; and the choiceness, preciousness and sweetness of communion with Himself.

It has been the lot and portion of God's dearest children, to be exercised with very great and grievous afflictions; in order . . .to the discovery of sin, to the embittering of sin, to the preventing of sin, to the purging away of sin; and to the discovery of grace, to the trial of grace, to the exercise of grace, to the increase of grace; and to the weaning of them from this world; and to the ripening of them for heaven; and to the completing of their conformity to Christ, the captain of their salvation, "who was made perfect through sufferings," Heb 2:10; and to work in them more pity and compassion to those who are in misery, and who sigh and groan under their Egyptian taskmasters.

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They poured out a prayer

The greatest antidote against all the troubles of this life, is fervent prayer.

"Lord, in trouble have they visited You; they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them." Isa 26:16

"They poured out a prayer." Before, they would say a prayer—but now, they poured out a prayer.

Saints never visit God more with their prayers—than when He visits them most with His rod. Saints never pray with . . .that seriousness, that spiritualness, that heavenliness, that humbleness, that brokenness, that fervency, that frequency—as they do, when they are under the mighty chastening hand of God!

A sincere Christian never prays so sweetly—as when under God's rod. When a Christian is in trouble—then prayer is his food and drink.

Oh, what a spirit of prayer was . . .upon Jonah—when he was in the whale's belly; and upon Daniel—when he was among the lions; and upon David—when fleeing in the wilderness; and upon the dying thief—when he was on the cross; and upon Jacob—when his brother Esau came to meet him with four hundred bloody cut-throats at his heels!

When a Christian is under great troubles, deep distresses, and most extreme dangers; he should pray . . .more for the sanctification of affliction—than its removal; more to get off his sins—than to get off his chains; more to get good by the rod—than to get free from the rod; that his afflictions may be a purifying and refining fire, that his heart may be low and his graces high, that he may be more weaned from this world, that he be more ripe for eternal glory.

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Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized!

What are all . . .the silks of Persia, the spices of Egypt, the gold of Ophir, and the treasures of both Indies— compared to the glory of heaven?

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him!" 1Co 2:9

One of the ancients says, "Our conception of heaven, is as a little drop from the sea. For those glorious things of heaven are . . .so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, so precious that they are above all estimation!"

Says another, "Do you ask me what heaven is? When I meet you there, I will tell you!"

Says Jerome, "Are you able to put the whole earth, and all the waters of the sea—into a little pot? Can you hold the oceans in your hand? Can you measure

the heavens with your fingers—or weigh the hills and mountains with a scale? Just so, it is impossible that you can comprehend the least of the joys of

heaven! Certainly, the least of the joys of heaven are inconceivable and inexpressible!"

Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized!

"You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand!" Psa 16:11

"They feast on the abundance of Your house; You give them drink from Your river of delights!" Psa 36:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Land of Cabul

"An incorruptible inheritance." 1Pe 1:4

All earthly inheritances are liable to corruption; they are true gardens of Adonis—where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars, thorns and thistles.

Oh, the hands, the hearts, the thoughts, the lives—which have been corrupted by earthly inheritances! Oh, the impure love, the carnal confidence, the vain

boastings, the sensual joys—which have been the products of earthly inheritances!

If a man's estate lies in money—that may rust, or thieves may break in and steal it. If a man's estate lies in cattle—they may die, or fall into the hands of the Sabeans and Chaldeans. If a man's estate lies in houses—they may be burnt. Witness the recent dreadful fire that turned London into a ruinous heap! If a man's estate lies in lands—a foreign enemy may invade them and conquer them.

All earthly inheritances are no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called Cabul, that is, 'worthless, good-for-nothing, displeasing, dirty.'

"But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. 'What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?' he asked. And he called them the Land of Cabul, a name they have to this day." 1Ki 9:12-13

Earthly inheritances do but dirt, daub, and dust people. It is only the heavenly inheritance which is incorruptible.

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They chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post

"Moses said unto God—If Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here!" Exo 33:15

Nothing would satisfy Moses, below the presence of God, because he knew that it would be better that they should never move a foot farther—as to go on without God's favorable presence.

God promised that His angel would drive all their enemies out of the land. "Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring the necks of all your proud, stout, strong, and subtle enemies under your feet!" "Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring you to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will make you to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; and you shall drink the finest wine!" "Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up from here!"

"Yes, but I will bring you to the paradise of the world—to a place of pleasure and delight, to Canaan, a type of heaven!" "Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us—do not send us up from here! O Lord, if I might have my wish, my desire, my choice—I had infinitely rather to live in a barren, howling wilderness with Your presence—than in Canaan without it! It is a mercy to have an angel to guard us, it is a mercy to have our enemies sprawling under our feet, it is a mercy to be brought into a pleasant land. Oh, but if Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here! Lord, nothing will please us, nothing will profit us, nothing will secure us, nothing will satisfy us—without Your presence!"

I have read of the Tyrians, that they bound their gods with chains—that they might secure them, and not be conquered by their enemies. And among the rest, they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post—that they might be sure to keep their idol, because they thought their safety was in it.

I am sure of this—that our safety, our comfort, our all—lies in the special presence of God with us! Therefore let us, by faith and prayer—chain God to our self! If we let Him go, a thousand worlds cannot make up His absence!

The heathens in Troy imagined that so long as their idol was kept safe, they were unconquerable; all the strength and power of Greece would never be able to prevail against them. Therefore the Grecians sought by all the means they

could—to get this idol from them.

O my friends, so long as you keep the presence of God with you—I am sure you are unconquerable! But if God withdraws His special presence—the weakest enemy will be too hard for you; yes, wounded men will prevail over you!

The burning bush, which was a type of the Church, was not consumed—because God was in the midst of it. Oh, do but keep God's special presence with you—and nothing shall hurt you, nothing shall burn you! But if God's special presence departs—nothing can secure you!

"Moses said unto God—If Your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here!" Exo 33:15

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I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil

"Covetousness, which is idolatry." Col 3:5

Covetousness is explicit idolatry.

Covetousness is the darling sin of our nation.

This leprosy has infected all sorts and ranks of men.

Covetousness being idolatry, and the root of all evil, is highly provoking to God.

Whatever a man loves most and best—that is his god. The covetous man looks upon the riches of the world as his heaven—his happiness—his great all. His heart is most upon the world, his

thoughts are most upon the world, his affections are most upon the world, his discourse is most about the world.

He who has his mind taken up with the world, and chiefly delighted with the world's music—he has also his tongue tuned to the same key, and takes his joy and comfort in speaking of nothing else but the world and worldly things. If the world is in the heart—it will break out at the lips. A worldly-minded man speaks of nothing but worldly things. "They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world," 1Jn 4:5. The love of this world oils the tongue for worldly discourses, and makes men . . . forget God, neglect Christ, despise holiness, forfeit heaven.

Ah! the time, the thoughts, the strength, the efforts, which are spent upon the world, and the things of the world; while sinners' souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity is hastening upon them!

I have read of a greedy banker, who was always best when he was most in talking of money and the world. Being near his death, he was much pressed to make his will. Finally he dictates:

First, I bequeath my own soul to the devil—for being so greedy for the muck of this world!

Secondly, I bequeath my wife's soul to the devil—for persuading me to this worldly course of life.

Thirdly, I bequeath my pastor's soul to the devil—because he did not show me the danger I lived in, nor reprove me for it.

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction." 1Ti 6:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Scriptures are sufficient

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2Ti 3:16-17

The Scriptures are sufficient . . .to inform the ignorant, to confute the erroneous, to reform the wicked, and to guide and direct, support and comfort, the godly.

Here a lamb may wade, and here an elephant may swim!

Here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men!

Here is . . .comfort for the afflicted, and support for the tempted, and ease for the troubled, and light for the clouded, and enlargement for the straitened, etc.

Oh, how full of light, how full of life, how full of love, how full of sweetness, how full of goodness, how full of righteousness, how full of holiness, etc., is every chapter, and every verse in every chapter, yes, and every line in every verse!

No human writings are comparable to Scripture:

1. for antiquity;
2. for rarity;
3. for variety;

4. for brevity;
5. for plainness;
6. for harmony;
7. for verity.

All which should greatly encourage Christians to a serious perusal of them. "Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long." Psa 119:97

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Secret prayer

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." Col 4:2

A Christian can as well . . . hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet—as he is able to live without secret prayer.

Secret prayer is the life of our lives, the soul, the sweet, the heaven of all our earthly enjoyments. Of all the duties of piety, secret prayer is the most . . .

soul-sweetening, soul-strengthening, soul-nourishing, soul-fattening, soul-refreshing, soul-satisfying, and soul-encouraging duty.

In all the ages of the world, the saints have kept up secret prayer. In spite of all opposers and persecutors, in prisons, in dungeons, in dens, in chains, on racks, in banishments, and in the very flames—the saints have still kept up this secret prayer.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He has all comforts at His disposal

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles."

2Co 1:3-4

God is the God of all sorts and degrees of comfort. He has all comforts at His disposal. This phrase, "The God of all comforts," intimates to us:

1. That no comfort can be found anywhere else; God has the sole gift of comfort.
2. God has not only some—but all comfort! No imaginable comfort is lacking in Him, nor to be found outside of Him. Nothing can soundly comfort us without God.
3. All degrees of comfort are to be found in Him—in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses. The deeper the distress—the greater the comforts.

"God, who comforts the downcast." 2Co 7:6

When we are in a very low condition, when we are spent with grief and swallowed up in sorrows, when we are destitute of all relief and comfort—then the God of all comforts comes to console us!

No tribulations, no persecutions, no grievances, no prison doors, no bolts, no bars—can keep the consolations of God from flowing in upon His people. God loves to comfort His people—when all their outward comforts fail them. God's comforts are not only sweet, but seasonable; He never comes too soon, nor ever stays too long.

The comfort of God is His most sweet attribute; it is a breast which we should be always sucking at.

~ ~ ~ ~ No sin, no sinner, no devil!

"An undefiled inheritance." 1Pe 1:4

There are few earthly inheritances—but some defilement or other sticks close to them. Many times they are gotten by fraud, oppression, violence, injustice, etc. And as they are often wickedly gotten—so they are as often wickedly kept!

The heavenly inheritance is the only undefiled inheritance. No sin, no sinner, no devil—can enter to defile or pollute the heavenly inheritance, the incorruptible crown. The Greek word signifies a precious stone, which though it be ever so much soiled—yet it cannot be blemished nor defiled. Yes, the oftener you cast it into the fire and take it out—the more clear, bright, and shining it is!

No unclean thing shall enter into heaven to defile this crown, this inheritance! The serpent got into the earthly paradise, and defiled Adam's crown—yes, he robbed him of his crown! But the subtle serpent can never enter into the heavenly paradise!

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev 21:27

~ ~ ~ ~

Fading glory!

"An inheritance which does not fade away." 1Pe 1:4

This is a metaphor taken from flowers. The beauty of flowers, and the sweetness of flowers—wither in a moment, and are quickly gone. And then they are good for nothing but to be cast upon the ash-heap!

So it is with all earthly inheritances—they soon lose their glory and fragrancy. Where is the glory of the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms?

Fading glory! has been long since, written upon them all! Yes, all the glory of the world is like the flower of the field—which soon fades away!

How many great men and great kingdoms have for a time shined in great glory, even like so many suns in the sky—but are now vanished away like so many blazing comets! How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed—if his prince does but frown upon him! And how soon does the prince become a peasant—if God does but frown upon him!

Indeed the excellency of the heavenly inheritance, is that it will never fade or wither away. All the glory of heaven is like God Himself—lasting, yes, everlasting! This never-fading inheritance of

believers is always fresh and resplendent. The glory of believers shall never fade nor wither, nor grow old nor rusty. Thrice happy are those who have a share in this incorruptible inheritance!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An ever-present help in trouble

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isa 43:1-3

This divine presence is the greatest good in the world.

The people of the Lord should be very thankful for His presence with them in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses. O Sirs! this divine presence is a great mercy. It is a special mercy, it is a distinguishing mercy, it is a big-bellied mercy—which has many mercies in its womb. It is a mercy-greatening mercy; it greatens all the mercies we enjoy. It is a mercy-sweetening mercy; it sweetens health, strength, riches, honors, trade, relations, etc. It is a soul-mercy, a mercy which reaches the soul, which cheers the soul, which lifts up the soul, which quiets the soul, which satisfies the soul, and which will go to heaven with the soul. Will you not be thankful for such a mercy? Will you be thankful for temporal mercies—and will you not be thankful for spiritual mercies? To enjoy the presence of God when we most need it, is a mercy which deserves perpetual praises. It is the greatest mercy in this world, to enjoy the gracious presence of God in our great troubles and desperate dangers. Therefore be much in blessing God, and in admiring God—for His presence with you in a dark and trying day.

"I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you." Jos 1:5

"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress!" Psa 46:7

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psa 46:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A most sovereign antidote

God is with His people to counsel them in all doubtful and difficult cases, and to defend and secure them against all their enemies and opposers. God's presence is infinitely better than the presence of all outward comforts.

A sound sincere Christian can . . . never have enough power against sin, nor ever enough strength against temptation, nor ever enough weanedness from this world, nor ever enough ripeness for heaven, nor ever enough of the presence of the Lord.

The special presence of God with His people is a most sovereign antidote.

Troubles will be no troubles, distresses will be no distresses, dangers will be no dangers,—if the divine presence is with you.

Mountains will be molehills, stabs at the heart will be but as scratches upon the hand—if the divine presence is with you.

God's special presence will turn . . . storms into calms, winter nights into summer days, prisons into palaces, banishments into enlargements, weakness into strength, poverty into plenty, death into

life.

Just so, while a Christian enjoys the singular presence of God with him, he will make nothing of this affliction and that affliction, of this trouble and that trouble, of this loss and that loss. God's presence makes . . . heavy afflictions light, and long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet.

A man in misery, without this gracious presence of God, is in a very hell on this side of hell. God's gracious presence makes every condition to be a little heaven to the believing soul. There is nothing, there can be nothing, but heaven—where God is specially present.

"The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress!" Psalms 46:7

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Psalms 46:1

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The great master-scar of the soul

"I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13

Take heed of pride and haughtiness of spirit. Pride is the great master-scar of the soul; it will bud and blossom—it cannot be hidden. Pride is the leprosy of the soul, which breaks forth in the very forehead! Pride is . . . the sum of all vileness, a sea of sin, a mother sin, a breeding sin—a sin which has all sorts of sin in its womb! In pride, all vices are wrapped up together in a bundle!

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished!" Proverbs 16:5

God will have nothing to do with proud people.

He won't come near such loathsome lepers!

Therefore as ever you would enjoy God's presence, arm yourself against pride,
watch against pride, and pray hard against pride!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The presence of a loving God!

"Since you were precious in My sight, and I have loved you." Isaiah 43:4

God loves His people with a first love! 1 John 4:19 "We love Him because He first loved us." By nature we were without God, and afar off from God; we were strangers to God, and enemies to God, yes, haters of God! Therefore if God had not loved us first—we would have been everlastingly undone!

God loves His people with a free love! Hosea 14:4, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." I know they are backslidden—but I will heal their

backslidings. I know there is nothing at all in them, which is excellent or eminent, which is honorable or acceptable, which is laudable or lovely—yet "I will love them freely"—of My own, free, rich, absolute, and sovereign grace!

God loves His people with an everlasting love! Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn you." That is, "I love you with the love of perpetuity, or with the love of eternity. My love and My affections to you shall continue forever!"

God loves His people with an unchangeable love! Mal 3:6, "I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed." Men change, and counsels change, and occurrences change, and friends change, and relations change, and kingdoms change; but God never changes! "He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man, that He should change His mind," 1Sa 15:29. God is immutable in His nature, in His essence, in His counsels, in His attributes, in His decrees, in His promises, etc. He is Omnia immutabilis, "Altogether immutable!"

God loves His people . . .with a special love, with a peculiar love, with a distinguishing love, with a superlative love!

God loves His people with the greatest love, with a matchless love! John 3:16, "God so loved," etc. This signifies . . .the greatness of God's love, the vehemency of His love, and the admirableness of His love

What an unspeakable comfort must this be to God's people—to have the presence of a loving God, to have the presence of such a loving God with them in all their troubles and deep distresses! If the presence of a loving friend, a loving relation in our troubles and distresses, is such a mercy—oh, what then is the presence of a loving God!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The presence of a compassionate God!

"His compassions never fail!" Lam 3:22

Each believer has the presence of . . .a God of mercy, a God of tenderness,
a God of compassion.

Mercy is as essential to God—as light is to the sun, or as heat is to the fire. He delights in mercy. Patience, and mildness, and mercy, and compassion, and peace are the fruits of His heart. God's compassions are . . .fatherly compassions, Psa 103:13; motherly compassions, Isa 49:15; brotherly compassions, Heb 2:12; friendly compassions, Song of Solomon 5:1-2.

Oh, how sweet must the presence of a God of mercy, a God of compassion—be to the saints in a day of trouble! The presence of a compassionate friend in a day of distress is very desirable and comfortable; what then is the presence of a compassionate God!

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Have you seen the One my heart loves?

"All night long on my bed I looked for the One my heart loves; I looked for Him but did not find Him." Song of Solomon 3:1

"Have you seen the One my heart loves?" Song of Solomon 3:3

"I opened for my lover, but my lover had left; He was gone! My heart sank at His departure. I looked for Him but did not find Him. I called Him but He did not answer." Song of Solomon 5:6

Let your hearts lie humble and low under the loss of God's gracious presence.

The loss of God's gracious presence is the greatest loss.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss-embittering loss; it is a loss that will greatly embitter all your worldly losses. "I have lost my health, I have lost a precious child, I have lost a gracious spouse, who was the delight of my eyes and the joy of my heart; I have lost a costly estate, I have lost an intimate friend, I have lost a thriving trade. Oh, but that which embitters all my losses, and puts a sting into them, is this—that I have lost the gracious presence of God that once I enjoyed!"

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss that all outward comforts can never make up. When the sun is set, nothing can make it day with us.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a soul loss; and no losses can be compared to soul losses. As there are no mercies compared to soul mercies, so there are no losses to soul losses.

The loss of God's gracious presence is a loss which will cost a man dearly, before it will be made up again. Oh the sighs, the groans, the strong cries, the earnest prayers, the bottles of tears that the recovery of the divine presence will cost!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I cried

The child has got many a kiss, and many a hug—by crying.

"In my distress I called to the Lord; I cried to my God for help. From His temple He heard my voice; my cry came before Him, into His ears." Psa 18:6

Prayer is the only means to supply all defects; prayer gets all, and makes up the loss of all.

It is not the length—but the strength of prayer; it is not the labor of the lip—but the travail of the heart—which prevails with God. It is not . . .the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet they are; nor the logic of our prayers, how methodical they are —which will prevail with God. It is only fervency in prayer, which will make a man prevalent with God. Fervent prayer hits the mark, and pierces the walls of heaven!

"In my anguish I cried to the Lord, and He answered by setting me free." Psa 118:5

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Enthralled with the doll or the rattle

"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You, my body longs for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory. Because Your love is better than life, my lips will glorify You!" Psa 63:1-3

Be sure you don't take up your greatest delight . . .in any creature, in any comfort, in any contentment, in any worldly enjoyment.

When the mother sees that the child is enthralled with the doll or the rattle—she comes not in sight. If you take up your rest in any of the dolls and rattles—in any of the poor things of this world, God will certainly keep out of sight. He will never honor them with His gracious presence—who are

enthralled with anything below Himself, below His presence.

When you begin to be tickled and enthralled with this and that worldly enjoyment, reason thus—"Here is a gracious spouse, here are precious children, here is a pleasant home, here is a wonderful climate, here is a gainful trade, etc. But what are all these to me, so long as God has withdrawn His presence from me?"

Remember this once for all—that the whole world is but a barren wilderness—without the gracious presence of God!

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The eye of heaven

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Heb 4:13

Each believer has the presence of a WISE God, of an omniscient God. God fills all things, He encompasses all things, and He sustains all things—and therefore He must need know all things! The whole world is to Him, as a sea of glass—clear and transparent. There is nothing hidden from His eyes!

The eye of heaven sees all, and knows all of . . . your troubles and trials, your sorrows and sufferings, your losses and crosses!

Is it such a comfort to have the presence of a wise and knowing friend with us in our greatest troubles and deepest distresses? What a transcendent comfort must it be then to enjoy the presence of an all-seeing and an all-knowing God in all our troubles and distresses!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I am with you

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isa 41:10

Oh! this special, this favorable presence of the Lord with His people, in their greatest troubles and deepest distresses, is a sweet presence, a comfortable presence, a delightful presence, a blessed presence!

O Christian, be in whatever place you will, and with whatever company you will, and in whatever condition you will—yet your loving God, your kind Father, your bosom Friend, will be still with you! He will never leave you, nor forsake you! Oh what a spring of comfort this should be to you!

O Christian! are your troubles . . . many in number, strange in nature, heavy in measure, much in burden, and long in continuance? Remember that your God is near . . . whose mercies are numerous, whose wisdom is wondrous, and whose power is miraculous!

O my friends, how can you lack comfort—who have the God of all consolation present with you?

How can you lack counsel—who have the wonderful Counselor so near unto you?

How can you lack grace—who have the God of all grace standing by you?

How can you lack peace—who have always the presence of the Prince of peace with you?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The highest heavens and the lowest hearts

"For this is what the high and lofty One says—He who lives forever, whose name is holy—I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isa 57:15

The highest heavens and the lowest hearts, are the habitation of God's glorious presence. He who would in good earnest enjoy the gracious presence of God with him in his great troubles, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers, he must keep humble, and walk humbly with his God. God will keep house with none but humble souls.

There are none who feel so great a need of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so prize the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so love the divine presence, and who are so enamored with the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so thirst and long for much of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who so lament and bewail the loss of the divine presence as humble souls.

There are none who make such a singular and thorough improvement of the divine presence as humble souls.

Therefore, it is no wonder that of all the men in the world, God singles out the humble Christian, to make his heart the habitation where His honor delights to dwell.

He who is little in his own account, is great in God's esteem, and shall be sure to enjoy most of His presence. God can dwell, God will dwell with none but those who are lowly in heart; and therefore as ever you would enjoy the special presence of God with you in your greatest troubles and deepest distresses—be sure that you walk humbly with your God. Many may talk much of God, and many may profess much of God, and many may boast much of God; but he only enjoys much of God who makes conscience of walking humbly with God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God's gracious presence and assistance

"Lo, I am with you always," Mat 28:20

This is a promise of God's gracious presence and assistance.

Lo, I am with you, to own you!

Lo, I am with you, to counsel and direct you!

Lo, I am with you, to cheer and comfort you!

Lo, I am with you, to assist and strengthen you!

Lo, I am with you, to shelter you and protect you!

Lo, I am with you, to strengthen your graces!

Lo, I am with you, to weaken your sins!

Lo, I am with you, to scatter your fears and answer your doubts!

Lo, I am with you, to better your hearts and to mend your lives!

Lo, I am with you, to bless you and crown you with immortality and glory!

What can the soul desire more?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Earthly crowns are like tennis-balls

1Pe 5:4 "You will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away,"—as the garlands faded, with which the conquerors at games, races, and combats were crowned—which were made of herbs, leaves, and flowers.

A crown imports perpetuity, plenty, dignity.

A crown is the height of human ambition.

A believer's crown, his inheritance, his glory, his happiness, his blessedness—shall be as fresh and flourishing after he has been many millions of years in heaven—as it was at his first entrance into it.

Earthly crowns are like tennis-balls, which are bandied up and down from one to another, and in time wear out. When time shall be no more, when earthly crowns and kingdoms shall be no more, yes, when the world shall be no more—a Christian's crown of glory shall be fresh, flourishing, and continuing.

All the devils in hell shall never wrangle a believer out of his heavenly inheritance, nor deprive him of his crown of glory. The least thing in heaven, is

better than the greatest things in this world. All things on earth are fading—but the crown of glory never fades away.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Growth in grace

Commonly the Christian's spiritual growth in grace, is carried on by such divine methods, and in such ways as might seem to deaden grace, and weaken

it—rather than any ways to augment and increase it.

We know that winter is as necessary to bring on harvest, as the spring; and so fiery trials are as necessary to bring on the harvest of grace, as the spring of mercy is. Though fiery trials are grievous; yet they shall make the saints more gracious. God usually, by sharp sufferings, turns His people's . . . sparks of grace into a mighty flame; their mites into millions; their drops into seas.

All the devils in hell, and all the sinners on earth, cannot hinder the Lord from carrying on the growth of grace in His people's souls. When men and devils

have done their worst, God will, by all sorts of providences, and all sorts of changes—make His people more and more holy, and more and more humble, and more and more meek and lowly, and more and more heavenly, wise, faithful, fruitful, sincere, courageous, etc.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Not all the powers of hell

The covenant of grace is founded . . . upon God's free love, upon God's everlasting love, upon God's special and peculiar love, upon God's unchangeable love—so that God can as soon cease to be, as He can cease to love those whom He has taken into covenant with Himself, or cease to keep covenant with them.

The covenant of grace is also founded upon God's immutable counsel and purpose. The decree and purpose of God's election stands firm and sure.

The covenant of grace is also founded . . . upon God's glorious power, upon God's infinite power, upon God's supreme power, upon God's invincible power, upon God's independent power, upon God's incomparable power; and until you can find a power that can overmatch this divine power, the saints' covenant-relation holds good.

It is not the indwelling power of sin, nor violent temptations, nor heavy afflictions—which can dissolve our covenant-relation with God. Though sin may work, and Satan may tempt, and fears may be high—yet God will still maintain His covenant interest in His people, and His people's relation to Himself.

"I will betroth you unto Me forever." Hos 2:19

"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Heb 13:5

It is not all the powers of hell, nor all the powers on earth, which can make null or void our covenant-relation.

Those whom free grace has brought into covenant, shall continue in covenant forever and ever. Once in covenant with God—forever in covenant with God.

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Never will I leave you

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said —Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb 13:5

These Hebrew Christians had been plundered of all they had (Heb 10:34). Though they had nothing they must be content. If men cannot bring their means to their minds, let them bring their minds to their means; a little will serve our turn until we get to heaven, until we come to our Father's house.

"Never will I leave you." This promise includes all times, all places, all states, all needs, all dangers, all distresses, all necessities, all calamities, all miseries, which can befall us in this world.

These two phrases, "God's not leaving, God's not forsaking," imply all needful assistance. I will supply all your needs, I will heal all your diseases, I will secure you against all sorts of dangers, I will ease you of all your pains, I will free you of all your oppressors, I will break all your bonds, I will bring you out of prison, I will vanquish all your enemies, I will knock off all your chains, and I will make you triumph over all your sufferings!

God being with us, and for us, and on our side, we may boldly, safely, and confidently, rest upon it—that He will freely, readily, graciously, give all needful help, assistance, and support—when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest

distresses, and most deadly dangers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

When all human help fails!

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Heb 13:5-6

Assurance of God's presence to help at all times and circumstances, should raise us up above all base and slavish fears of the power of men, of the harmings of men, of the evil designs of men, etc. God being with us, and for us, and on our side—we may boldly, safely, and confidently, rest upon it—that He will freely, readily, graciously, give all needful help, assistance, and support, when we are in the greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers.

The Greek word "helper," according to the notation of it, signifies one who is ready to run at the cry of another. This notation implies a willing readiness, and a ready willingness in God—to help and support His people when they are in deep distress. You know the tender father, the indulgent mother—they immediately run when they hear the child cry, or see the child in any danger or distress. Just so, when God sees His poor children in any danger or distress, when He hears them complain and cry out of their sufferings, their bonds, their burdens, their oppressions, their dangers, etc., He immediately runs to their relief and support!

Who is like Him in all the world—to help His people in each and every direful circumstance? When friends cannot help, when power cannot help, when human wisdom cannot help, when riches cannot help, when princes cannot help, when governments cannot help; yet then God can and will help His people—when all human help fails!

"The Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants when He sees their strength is gone and no one is left," Deu 32:36. When God's people are at the very brink of ruin, then God will come in seasonably to their help. Their extremity shall be His opportunity, to support His people, and to judge their enemies. No men, no devils, no power, no policy, can hinder God from helping, aiding, assisting, and supporting of His people in any needful circumstance!

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All the afflictions, troubles and evils

As the apothecary makes one poison to drive out another poison—so can God make the poison of afflictions, to drive out the poison of sin. All the afflictions, troubles and evils which befall the people of God, work together for their good; for God uses these afflictions . . . to reveal sin; to prevent sin; to embitter sin; to mortify sin; to revive His children's decayed graces; to exercise His children's graces; to increase His children's graces.

I have read a story of Pereus, who, attempting to kill another with a thrust of a sword, only pierced and opened his abscess; and so he was instrumental to save him, whom he designed to have killed!

Just so, all the afflictions and troubles which the righteous meet with—they do but serve to cure them . . . of the abscess of pride, or of the abscess of earthly-mindedness, or of the abscess of self-love, or of the abscess of hypocrisy.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28

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He may murmur and struggle at first

"Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey Your word." Psa 119:67

Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine. Affliction is the remedy which cures all our spiritual diseases.

By afflictions, God humbles the hearts of His people, and betters the hearts of His people, and draws the hearts of His people nearer and closer to Himself.

"It was good for me to be afflicted." Psa 119:71

The saints gain by their crosses, troubles, and distresses. Their graces are more raised, their fellowship with God is more multiplied, their comforts are more augmented, their communion with God is more heightened. The grand design of God in all the afflictions which befall His people—is to bring them nearer and closer to Himself.

When a great affliction arrests a sincere Christian, he may murmur and struggle at first; but when he considers it as sent from God, to bring him to God, the King of glory—he willingly and readily submits to the rod, and kisses the rod, saying, "It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psa 119:71

The power of God, the love of God, and the grace of God—are most gloriously manifested by bringing the hearts of His people nearer and closer to Himself

by all the troubles, distresses, and dangers which attend them. In the winter season, all the sap of the tree runs down to the root; just so—in the winter of

affliction, the soul runs out more and more to God, and gets closer and nearer to God!

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Precious promises

There are many precious promises of God's . . .defending His church, hearing the cries of His people, arising for their relief and support. These precious promises are grounded upon all the glorious attributes of God, namely, His power, love, wisdom, goodness, and all-sufficiency, etc., all which are engaged in the covenant of grace—to save, protect, and secure His people in their greatest troubles and most deadly dangers.

The Lord manifests His favorable, His special presence with His people—in their greatest troubles, deepest distresses, and most deadly dangers!

"But now, this is what the LORD says—He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior!" Isa 43:1-3

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A tender heart, a soft hand, an iron memory

Look upon your dying day as your reaping day. Now you shall reap the fruit of . . .all the prayers that ever you have made, and of all the tears that ever you have shed, and of all the sighs and groans that ever you have fetched, and of all the good words that ever you have spoken, and of all the good works that ever you have done, and of all the great things that ever you have suffered.

When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then reap a plentiful crop, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, which for a time, has seemed to be buried and lost.

As Christ has a tender heart and a soft hand, so He has an iron memory. He precisely remembers . . .all the sorrows, and all the services, and all the sufferings of His people, to reward them and crown them.

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Rev 22:12

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Great is your reward in heaven!

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Rev 22:12

Though God does not reward men simply for their works, namely, for the merit of them—yet He rewards according to their works.

"He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Heb 11:25-26.

Keep your eye upon the recompense of reward, as Moses did. This will work you—

- (1.) To walk more holily, humbly, thankfully;
- (2.) To live more cheerfully and comfortably;

- (3.) To suffer more patiently, freely, resolutely;
- (4.) To fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil more valiantly;
- (5.) To withstand temptations more steadfastly and strongly;
- (6.) To be contented with a little;
- (7.) To leave the world, relations, and friends more willingly;
- (8.) And to embrace death more joyfully.

A Christian will never repent of all the hard things that he has suffered for Christ or His truth. Every one of his sufferings shall be a sparkling jewel to give a luster to his crown of glory.

"Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven!" Luk 6:22-23

O Christians, all your sufferings will certainly increase your future glory! Every affliction, every persecution, will add to your heavenly glory! God will richly reward you for every tear, for every sigh, for every groan, for every hazard, and for every hardship that you have met with, in the way of your duty.

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El-Shaddai

"I am God Almighty" Gen 35:11 In Hebrew, it is "I am El-Shaddai."

El-Shaddai signifies omnipotence and sufficiency. God is . . . an all-sufficient good, a self-sufficient good, an independent good, an absolute good, an original good, a universal good, the only satisfactory good, a suitable good to our souls!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A strong tower

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe." Pro 18:10

God is . . . so strong a tower that no cannon can pierce it, so high a tower that no ladder can scale it, so deep a tower that no subverter can undermine it. Therefore they must needs be safe and secure—who lodge within a tower so impregnable, so indomitable.

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You are Mine!

"But now, this is what the Lord says—He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel—Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are Mine!" Isa 43:1

"You are Mine—for I have made you. You are Mine—for I have chosen you. You are Mine—for I have bought you, purchased you. You are Mine—for I have called you. You are Mine—for I have redeemed you. You are Mine—for I have stamped My image upon you. You are Mine—for I have

put My Spirit into you!"

"You are precious and honored in My sight," Isa 43:4 God prizes His people . . . as His "peculiar treasure;" Exo 19:5, as His "portion;" Deu 32:9, as His "pleasant portion;" Jer 12:10, as His "jewels;" Mal 3:17, as His "glory;" Isa 4:5, as His "crown and royal diadem." Yes, God prizes the poorest, the lowest, and the weakest saint in the world—above a multitude, yes, above a world of unforgiven sinners.

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Those who strike at God's eyes

"Whoever touches you, touches the apple of His eye." Zec 2:8

The apple (or pupil) of the eye is the tenderest piece of the tenderest part. The eye is kept most diligently, and strongly guarded by nature. A man can better bear a thump on the back, the biting of his finger, the cutting of his hand, the pricking of his leg, or a blow upon his arm—than a touch on the eye.

Oh, that persecutors would be quiet, and let God's people alone, and take heed how they meddle with God's eyes! There is no touching of them, to wrong or injure them, but you wrong and injure the Holy One of Israel, who will certainly revenge Himself upon you. Those who strike at God's eyes, do through them strike at God Himself, which He will never put up with. It is a dangerous thing to molest and trouble, to afflict or annoy the people of God; for God Himself is very sensible of it, and accordingly He will certainly requite it. Acts 9:4, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?" Those who persecute the servants of Christ—they persecute Christ Himself, who lives in them, and is mystically united to them.

Look! as there is by virtue of the natural union a mutual sympathy between the head and the members, the husband and the wife—so it is here between Christ and His saints, for He is a most sympathizing, compassionate, tender-hearted

Savior. Those who shoot at the saints, hit Christ; their sufferings and their reproaches are counted His. He who bore the saints' griefs when He was on earth, really and properly, He bears them still now He is in heaven, in a way of sympathy. Christ in His glorified state, has a very tender sense of all the evil that is done to His children, His members, His spouse—and looks upon it as done to Himself!

I say to the persecutors of Christians, "Let the people of God alone, for if you do but make their finger ache, God will make your heads and hearts ache for it before He has done with you!"

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Neither the devil nor his imps

"The LORD foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He chose for His inheritance." Psa 33:10-12

Consult, conclude, determine, resolve upon whatever you please—you shall never be able, by all your power and policy, to prevail against the people of God! His favorable, special, and eminent presence is constantly with them—to assist, counsel, and protect them against all oppositions and assaults.

God brings to nothing, the counsel of the nations. Neither the devil nor his imps, nor any of their counsels, or enchantments, shall ever be able to stand before the presence of the Lord with His people! Let men and devils conspire, let them plot, consult, and determine—all shall be in vain, because there is no counsel against the Lord, there is no possibility of prevailing against the presence of the Lord with His people. His special presence will be their greatest safety and security in the midst of all plots, designs, dangers, etc. The special presence of God with His people mars and frustrates all the plots, counsels, and intricate contrivances of the world's wizards—as might be showed in those instances of Balaam, Pharaoh, Saul, Herod, with many others.

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Sitting at the table with King Jesus

"While the King was at His table, my perfume spread its fragrance." Song of Solomon 1:12

That is, let Jesus Christ be but present with us, and then our graces, which are compared to perfume, will send forth its fragrance. Sitting at the table with

King Jesus intimates the sweetest friendship and fellowship with Him.

"My perfume spread its fragrance," that is, my faith is actuated, and all my other graces are exercised and increased. Christ's presence puts life into all our graces.

If the sun shines upon the flower—how soon does the flower open. Just so, when the Sun of righteousness does but shine upon a Christian's graces—how do they open and act!

02.04. Apples of Gold

Choice selections from Thomas Brooks,

"Apples of Gold" 1660

A bubble, a shadow, a dream!

"My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It flees away." Job 9:25

TIME is a precious talent which we are accountable for.

Cato and other heathen held that account must be given, not only of our labor—but also of our leisure. At the great day, it will appear that those who have spent their time in mourning over sin—have done better than those who have spent their time in dancing; and those who have spent many days in pious humiliation—better than those who have spent many days in idle recreations.

I have read of a devout man who, when he heard a clock strike, he would say, "Here is one more hour past, which I have to answer for!" Ah! as time is very precious—so it is very short. Time is very swift; it is suddenly gone.

The ancients emblemed time with wings, as it were, not running—but flying! Time is like the sun, which never stands still—but is continually a-running his race. The sun did once stand still—but time never did. Time is still running and flying! It is a bubble, a shadow, a dream!

Sirs! if the whole earth whereupon we tread were turned into a lump of gold—it would not be able to purchase one minute of time! Oh! the regrettings of the damned for misspending precious time! Oh! what would they not give to be free, and to enjoy the means of grace one hour! Ah! with what attention, with what intention, with what trembling and melting of heart, with what hungering and thirsting—would they hear the Word!

Time, says Bernard, would be a precious commodity in hell, and the selling of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds, if he had them.

Ah! as you love your precious immortal souls, as you would escape hell—and come to heaven; as you would be happy in life—and blessed in death, and glorious after death; don't spend any more of your precious time in drinking and gabbing, in carding, dicing, and dancing! Don't trifle away your time, because time is a talent that God will reckon with you for.

Ah! you may reckon upon years, many years yet to come; when possibly you have not so many hours to live! It may be this night you will have your final summons—and then, in what a sad case will you be! Will you not wish that you had never been born?

Sirs! Time let slip—cannot be recalled!

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All the whole volume of perfections

"Whom do I have in heaven but You? And I desire nothing on earth but You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever." Psa 73:25-26

The true Christian seeks God as his choicest and chief good. God is a perfect good, a solid good. That is a perfect good—to which nothing can be added; that is a solid good—from which nothing can be spared. Such a good, God is, and therefore He is chiefly to be sought.

God is a pure and simple good; He is a light in whom there is no darkness, a good in whom there is no evil. The goodness of the creature is mixed, yes, that little goodness which is in the creature is mixed with much evil; but God is an unmixed good. He is good, He is pure good. He is all over good. He is nothing but good.

God is an all-sufficient good. Augustine said, "He has all—who has the Haver of all."

God has in Himself . . . all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, all happiness to crown you.

God is a satisfying good, a good that fills the heart and quiets the soul. In Him, I have all. I have all comforts, all delights, all contentments. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies which are scattered abroad in the creatures—are to be found in God. Yes, all the whole volume of perfections, which is spread through heaven and earth—is epitomized in Him. No good below Him who is the greatest good, can satisfy the soul. A good wife, a good child, a good name, a good estate, a good friend—cannot satisfy the soul. These may please—but they cannot satisfy.

Ah! that we should seek early, seek earnestly, seek affectionately, seek diligently, seek primarily, and seek unweariedly—this God, who is the greatest good, the best good, the most desirable good, who is—a suitable good, a pure good, a satisfying good, a total good, and an eternal good.

"Whom do I have in heaven but You? And I desire nothing on earth but You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart, my portion forever." Psa 73:25-26

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman As the life of man is very short, so it is very uncertain.

Now healthy—now sick! Alive this hour—and dead the next!

Death does not always give warning beforehand; sometimes he gives the mortal blow suddenly; he comes behind with his dart, and strikes a man at the heart, before he says, "Have I found you, O my enemy?"

Eutychus fell down dead suddenly, Acts 20:9.

Death suddenly arrested David's sons and Job's sons.

Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman which he drew with his own hand!

Sophocles choked to death on the seed of a grape!

Diodorus the logician died for shame that he could not answer a witty question.

Joannes Measius, preaching upon the raising of the woman of Nain's son from the dead, within three hours after died himself!

Ah! death is sudden in his approaches.

Nothing more sure than death!

Nothing more uncertain than life!

Though there is but one way to come into this world—yet there are a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of this world!

"Prepare to meet your God!" Amo 4:12

~~~~~ A beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot

"I thought in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. "Laughter," I said, "is foolish. And what does pleasure accomplish?" Ecc 2:1-2.

Solomon's question bids a challenge to all the masters of mirth, to produce any one satisfactory fruit which it affords, if they could.

The hearts of young men usually are much given up to pleasure. Sensual pleasures are only seeming and apparent pleasures—but the pains which attend them are true and real. He who delights in sensual pleasures, shall find his greatest pleasures become his bitterest pains. Pleasures pass away as soon as they have wearied out the body, and leave it as a bunch of grapes whose juice has been pressed out.

Xerxes, being weary of all pleasures, promised rewards to the inventors of new pleasures, which being invented, he nevertheless remained unsatisfied.

As a bee flies from flower to flower and is not satisfied, and as a sick man moves from one bed to another for ease, and finds none; so men given up to sensual pleasures go from one pleasure to another, but can find no contentment, no satisfaction in their pleasures. "Everything is so weary and tiresome! No matter how much we see, we are never satisfied. No matter how much we hear, we are not content!" Ecc 1:8.

There is a curse of unsatisfiability, which lies upon the creature. Honors cannot satisfy the ambitious man, nor riches the covetous man, nor pleasures the voluptuous man. Man cannot take off the weariness of one pleasure, by engaging in another pleasure.

Pleasures seem solid in their pursuit; but are mere clouds in the enjoyment.

Pleasure is a beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot—The four wheels are pride, gluttony, lust and foolishness. The two horses are prosperity and abundance. The two drivers are idleness and security. Her attendants and followers are guilt, grief, shame, and often death and damnation!

Many great men, and many strong men, and many rich men, and many hopeful men, and many young men—have come to their damnation by her; but never any enjoyed full satisfaction and

contentment in her.

Ah! Avoid this harlot—'pleasure', and come not near the door of her house!

Augustine, before his conversion, could not live without those pleasures which he much delighted in. But after his nature was changed, and his heart graciously turned to the Lord, he said, "Oh! how sweet it is—to be without those sweet delights!"

And as for lawful pleasures, let me only say this—it is your wisdom only to touch them, to taste them, and to use them as you use medicines—to occasionally fortify yourselves against maladies.

There are no pleasures so delighting, so satisfying, so ravishing, so engaging, and so abiding—as those which spring from union and communion with God—as those which flow from a humble and holy walking with God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ When Satan has sucked out all the marrow

God usually begins with such early in life—whom He has had thoughts of love and mercy towards, from everlasting.

If, in the spring and morning of your days, you do not bring forth fruit to God—it is a hundred to one that you never shall bring forth fruit to God when the days of old age shall overtake you. It is rare, very rare—that God sows and reaps in old age. Usually God sows the seed of grace in youth—which yields the harvest of joy in old age.

Though true repentance is never too late—yet late repentance is seldom true. Millions are now in hell, who have flattered themselves with the thought of repenting in old age! Yes, what can be more just and equal, that such should seek and not find—who might have found when young, but would not seek; and that God should shut His ears against their late prayers—who have stopped their ears against His early calls?

The ancient warriors would not accept an old man into their army, as being unfit for service; and do you think that God will accept of your dry bones—when Satan has sucked out all the marrow? What king will take into his service—those who have served his enemies all their days? And will God? will God?

The Circassians, a kind of mongrel Christians, are said to divide their life between sin and devotion—dedicating their youth to rapine, and their old age to repentance. If this is your case, I would not be in your case for ten thousand worlds!

"But since you rejected Me when I called, and no one gave heed when I stretched out My hand, since you ignored all My advice and would not accept My rebuke—I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you—when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to Me but I will not answer; they will look for Me but will not find Me. Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, since they would not accept My advice and spurned My rebuke—they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes." Pro 1:24-31 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Rich in spiritual experiences

The mature Christian is rich in spiritual experiences.

Oh! the experiences that he has . . .of the ways of God, of the workings of God, of the word of God, of the love of God!

Oh! the divine stories that old Christians can tell . . .of the power of the word,

of the sweetness of the word, of the usefulness of the word—as a light to lead the soul, as a staff to support the soul, as a spur to quicken the soul, as an anchor to stay the soul, and as a cordial to comfort and strengthen the soul!

Oh! the stories that he can tell concerning . . .the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the offices of Christ, the merits of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the graces of Christ, and the influence of Christ!

Oh! the stories that an old disciple can tell . . .of the indwellings of the Spirit, of the operations of the Spirit, of the teachings of the Spirit, of the leadings of the Spirit, of the sealings of the Spirit, of the witnessings of the Spirit, and of the comforts and joys of the Spirit!

Oh the stories that an old Christian can tell . . .of the evil of sin, of the the bitterness of sin, of the the deceitfulness of sin, of the prevalence of sin, and

of the the happiness of conquest over sin!

Oh! the stories that he can tell you . . .of the snares of Satan, of the devices of Satan, of the temptations of Satan, of the rage of Satan, of the malice of Satan,

of the watchfulness of Satan, and of the ways of triumphing over Satan!

As an old soldier can tell you of many battles, many scars, many wounds, many losses, and many victories—even to admiration; so an old saint is able to tell you of many spiritual battles, many scars, many wounds, many losses, and many victories—even to admiration.

Experimental religion is far beyond mere notions and impressions. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. No man so rich, so honorable, so

happy—as the old disciple, who is rich in spiritual experiences.

"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green." Psa 92:12-14.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The best way to be preserved from falling into hell

"Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!"  
Mat 25:41

The sinner's delight here is momentary; that which torments hereafter is perpetual.

The best way to be preserved from falling into hell, is to think often of hell. Ah! that you would often consider . . .the bitterness of the damned's torments, the pitilessness of their torments, the diversity of their torments, the easelessness of their torments, the remedilessness of their

torments, the eternity of their torments.

Ah! may these thoughts of hell be a means to preserve you from lying in those everlasting flames!

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He would be double damned

"Then I beg you—send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Luk 16:27-28

Dives knew that if his brethren were damned—that he would be double damned, because he had largely contributed to the bringing of them to hell

by his wicked example. Therefore he desires that they might be kept out of hell—not out of any love or goodwill to them—but because their coming there would have made his hell more hot, his torments more insufferable.

The lowest, the darkest, the hottest place in hell, will be for those who have drawn others there by their example. "It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck—than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin." Luk 17:2

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The first step towards heaven

"It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick." Mat 9:12

If you would be truly godly, then you must see how bad you are, how vile, how sinful, how wretched you are. No man begins to be good until he sees

himself to be bad. Ah! You must see yourselves . . .to be children of wrath, to be enemies of God, to be strangers from God, to be afar off from God, to be afar from heaven, to be sin's servants, to be Satan's bond-slaves.

The first step to mercy, is to see your misery.

The first step towards heaven, is to see yourselves near to hell.

You won't look after the physician of souls, you won't prize the physician of souls, you won't desire the physician of souls, you won't fall in love with the physician of souls, you won't resign yourselves to the physician of souls —until you come to see your wounds, until you come to feel your diseases, until you see the symptoms, the plague-sores of divine wrath and displeasure upon you. As the whole do not need the physician, so they do not desire, they do not care for the physician. Acquaint yourselves with your natural and undone condition.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christ's love-letter

The whole of Scripture is but one entire love-letter, dispatched from the Lord Christ to His beloved spouse.

Caecilia, a Roman maiden of noble parentage, always carried the New Testament with her, that she might still be a-reading in Christ's love-letter, and behold the sweet workings of His love and heart towards His dear and precious ones.

Augustine professes that the sacred Scriptures were his whole delight.

Jerome tells us of one Nepotianus, who, by long and assiduous meditation on the holy Scriptures, had made his heart the library of Jesus Christ.

Oh! the mysteries, the excellencies, the glories which are in the Word! Ah! no book to this book; none so useful, none so needful, none so delightful, none so necessary to make you happy and to keep you happy as this!

Ah! the Word of the Lord is . . . a light to guide you, a Counselor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you.

The Word is . . . a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, a crown to crown you, bread to strengthen you, wine to cheer you, a honeycomb to feast you, music to delight you, a paradise to entertain you!

Oh! therefore, before all and above all: search the Scripture, study the Scripture, dwell on the Scripture, delight in the Scripture, treasure up the Scripture!

There is . . . no wisdom like Scripture wisdom, no knowledge like Scripture knowledge, no experience like Scripture experience, no comforts like Scripture comforts, no delights like Scripture delights, no convictions like Scripture convictions, no conversion like Scripture conversion!

I exhort you to a speedy, serious, diligent, and constant study of the Scripture.

Ah! you do not know how soon . . . your blind minds may be enlightened, your hard hearts softened, your proud spirits humbled, your sinful natures changed,

your defiled consciences purged, your distempered affections regulated, and your poor souls saved . . . by searching into the Scriptures, by reading the Scripture, and by pondering upon the Scripture.

Ah! if you do not in good earnest give up yourselves to the reading, to the studying, to the pondering, to the believing, to the practicing, to the applying, and to the living up to the Scripture—Satan will be too hard for you, the world will be too hard for you, your lusts will be too hard for you, temptations will be too hard for you, deceivers will be too hard for you, and in the end you will be miserable.

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His people's scars and warts

When Caesar was painted, he put his finger upon his scar, his wart. God puts His fingers upon all His people's scars and warts—upon all their weaknesses and infirmities, that nothing can be seen



but what's fair and lovely.

"You are all fair, my love; there is no spot in you." Song of Solomon 4:7.

The Lord will not look, He will not see, He will not take notice of the sins He has pardoned—to call them any more to a judicial account.

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The more vile Christ made Himself for us

"Let the thoughts of a crucified Christ," says one, "be never out of your mind, let them be food and drink unto you, let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation."

Ah! remember this, His wounds were deep, His burden weighty, His cup bitter,

His suffering painful, His agony and torment above conception, beyond expression.

That blessed head of His—was crowned with thorns.

Those eyes of His, which were purer than the sun —were put out by the darkness of death.

Those ears of His which now hear nothing but hallelujahs —were filled with the blasphemies of the multitude.

That blessed beautiful face of His, which was fairer than the sons of men—was spit on by beastly filthy wretches.

That gracious mouth and tongue, which spoke as never any man spoke—was slandered and accused of blasphemy.

Those hands of His, which healed the sick, which gave out pardons, which swayed a scepter in heaven—were nailed to the cross.

Those feet, which brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation into the world—were also nailed to the cross.

All these great and sad things, did Jesus Christ suffer for His people! Oh! The more vile Christ made Himself for us—the more dear He ought to be unto us.

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He gives kingdoms, crowns, thrones!

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Rev 22:12

The more any man does or suffers for Christ here—the more glory he shall have hereafter. It was the saying of an old disciple upon his dying bed, "He is come, He is come—with a great reward for a little work!"

Agrippa having suffered imprisonment for wishing Caius emperor, the first thing Caius did when he came to the throne, was to advance Agrippa to a kingdom; he gave him also a chain of gold, as

heavy as the chain of iron which was upon him in prison.

And will not Christ richly reward all His suffering saints? Surely He will! Christ will at last pay a Christian . . . for every prayer he has made, for every sermon he has heard, for every tear he has shed, for every morsel he has given, for every burden he has borne, for every battle he has fought, for every enemy he has slain, and for every temptation that he has overcome!

As there is no king compared to Christ—so there are no rewards compared to Christ's rewards. His rewards are the greatest rewards. He gives kingdoms, crowns, thrones! He gives grace—and glory!

It is said of Araunab, renowned for his bounty, that he had only a subject's purse—but a king's heart. But Jesus Christ has a king's purse as well as a king's heart—and accordingly He gives!

And as Christ's rewards are the greatest rewards, so His rewards are the surest rewards: "He is faithful, who has promised," 1Th 5:24.

Antiochus promised often—but seldom gave. But Jesus Christ never made any promise—but He has or will perform it. Nay, He is often better than His word. He gives many times more than we ask. The man sick of the palsy asked but health—and Christ gave him health and a pardon to boot! Solomon desired but wisdom, and the Lord gave him wisdom, and honor, and riches, and the favor of creatures, into the bargain. Jacob asked Him but clothes to wear, and bread to eat—and the Lord gave him these things, and riches, and other mercies into the bargain.

Christ does not measure His gifts by our petitions—but by His own riches and mercies. Gracious souls many times receive many gifts and favors from God that they never dreamt of, nor dared presume to beg!

The rewards which men give are like themselves—fickle and inconstant, they are withering and fading. Xerxes crowned his statesman in the morning—and beheaded him in the evening of the same day! And Andronicus, the Greek emperor, crowned his admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon!

As Christ's rewards are greater and surer than other rewards—so they are more durable and lasting than other rewards. The kingdom which He gives is a kingdom that can never be shaken; the treasures which He gives are incorruptible treasures; and the glory which He gives is glory which never fades away!

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The hoary head

"The hoary head is a crown of glory—if it is found in the way of righteousness." Pro 16:31

A white head, accompanied with a holy heart, makes a man truly honorable.

There are two glorious sights in the world: the one is, a young man walking in his uprightness; and the other is, an old man walking in ways of righteousness.

A hoary head, when coupled with an unsanctified heart, is rather a curse than a blessing. When the head is as white as snow, and the soul as black as hell, God usually gives up such to the greatest scorn and contempt.

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Such a friend

"There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Pro 18:24

Such a friend is Christ. He is so a friend to every one of His people—as if He were a friend to none besides. Christ is . . . an omnipotent friend; an omniscient friend; an omnipresent friend; an indeficient friend; a sovereign friend; an immutable friend; a watchful friend; a loving friend; a faithful friend; a compassionate friend; a close friend, a universal friend—a friend in

all cases and in all places, our first friend, a constant friend—"Whom He loves, He loves to the end." John 13:1

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It pierces and winds itself into every corner and chink

SIN is of a penetrating nature. It pierces and winds itself into every corner and chink—into our thoughts, words, and works. It will wind itself . . . into our understandings to darken them, and into our judgments to pervert them, and into our wills to poison them, and into our affections to disorder them, and into our consciences to corrupt them, and into our lives to debase them.

Sin will wind itself into every duty and every mercy; it will wind itself into every one of our enjoyments and concernments.

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He has no memory

"I will not remember your sins." Isa 43:25

"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer 31:34.

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb 8:12.

"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Heb 10:17.

Though God has an iron memory to remember the sins of the wicked; yet He has no memory to remember the sins of the righteous.

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For toys and trifles

If they deserve a hanging, who feast their slaves, and starve their wives; who make provision for their enemies—but none for their friend; how will you

escape hanging in hell, who make provision for everything, yes, for all your lusts—but make no provision for your immortal souls? What shall we think of those who sell their precious souls—for toys and trifles which cannot profit?

Ah! do not pawn your souls, do not sell your souls, do not exchange away your souls, do not trifle and fool away your precious souls! They are jewels, more

worth than a thousand worlds! If they are safe—all is safe; but if they are lost—all is lost: God lost, and Christ lost, and heaven lost—and that forever!

Now if you are resolved to spend your strength in the service of sin and the world; then know that no tongue can express, no heart can conceive that trouble of mind, that terror of soul, that horror of conscience, that fear and amazement, that weeping and wailing, that crying and roaring, that sighing and groaning, that cursing and howling, that stamping and tearing, that wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth—which shall certainly attend you, when God shall bring you into judgment—for all your looseness and lightness, for all your wickedness and wantonness, for all your profaneness and baseness, for all your neglect of God, your grieving the Comforter, your trampling under foot the blood of a Savior, for your prizing earth above heaven, and the pleasures of this world above the pleasures which are at God's right hand.

Oh! how will you wish in that day when your sins shall be charged on you—when justice shall be armed against you—when conscience shall be gnawing within you—when the world shall be a flaming fire about you—when the gates of heaven shall be shut against you—and the flame of hell ready to take hold of you—when angels and saints shall sit in judgment upon you, and forever turn their faces from you—when evil spirits shall be terrifying you—and Jesus Christ forever disowning you; how will you, I say, wish in that day—that you had never been born, or that you might now be unborn, or that your mothers' wombs had been your tombs! Oh, how will you then wish to be turned into a bird, a beast, a stock, a stone, a toad, a tree! How you will say, Oh that our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we were nothing! Oh that we were anything but what we are!

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### Splendida peccata

It must not be forgotten that the best actions, the best works of all unbelievers—are but splendida peccata—splendid sins, beautiful abominations!

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### Hangmen

As for worldly riches, the godly have always despised them, and preferred a contemplative life above them! The prophet calls them "thick clay," which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart. Worldly riches cannot better the soul, they cannot enrich the soul. Ah! how many threadbare souls are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns!

How often are worldly riches like hangmen, they hide men's faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them! And if they do not hang you—they will shortly leave you! They will "make themselves wings and fly away!" Pro 23:5

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Remember—you are but mortal!

"You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before You. Each man's life is but a breath!" Psa 39:5.

Ah! Can you seriously consider of the brevity of man's life—and trifle away your time, the offers of grace, your precious souls, and eternity? Surely you cannot; surely you dare not—if you do but in good earnest ponder upon the shortness of man's life.

Philip, king of Macedon, gave a pension to one, to come to him every day at dinner, and to cry to him, "Remember—you are but mortal!"

Ah! We have need be often put in mind of our mortality! I have read of three that could not endure to hear that bitter word 'death' mentioned in their ears. Surely this age is full of such monsters.

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It was a good question

It was a good question, which the young man proposed, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Luk 10:25. I know I shall be eternally happy—or eternally miserable; eternally blessed—or eternally cursed; eternally saved—or eternally damned!

"Oh! what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" My cares, my fears, my troubles—are all about eternity! No time can reach eternity, no age can extend to eternity, no tongue can express eternity. Eternity is that one perpetual day which shall never have end; what shall I do, what shall I not do—that I may be happy to all eternity? Eternity depends upon those few hours I am to breathe in this world.

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The most glittering services

The most glittering services of unregenerate people are but dead works, because they proceed not from a principle of spiritual life, and they lead to death, Rom 6:23, and leave a sentence of death upon the soul, until it is washed off by the blood of the Lamb.

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A very sad and dangerous thing

It is a very sad and dangerous thing to trifle and dally with . . . God, His word, our own souls, and eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ So foul a hag

There are very many who lie in wait to deceive, corrupt, and poison your minds with God-dishonoring, Christ-denying, conscience-wasting, and soul-damning opinions, principles, and blasphemies.

I have read of one who boasted and gloried in this, that he had spent thirty years in corrupting and poisoning of youth. Doubtless, many wretches, many monsters there are among us, who make it

their business, their glory, their all—to delude and draw people to those dangerous errors and blasphemies which lead to destruction. Error and folly, says one very well, are the knots of Satan wherewith he ties children to the stake to be burned in hell.

There is a truth in what the tragedian said long since, "poison is commonly drunk out of a cup of gold." So is an error soonest taken into the judgment and conscience, from people of the fairest carriage and smoothest conversations.

Error is so foul a hag, that if it should come in its own shape, a man would loathe it, and fly from it as from hell.

If Jezebel had not painted her face, she would not have gotten so many young doating adulterers to have followed her to their own ruin.

Ah! young men, young men—the blessing of the Lord upon your serious and diligent perusal of this treatise may be a happy means to preserve you from being ensnared and deluded by those monsters "who compass sea and land to make proselytes for hell!"

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Beyond remedy

There is nothing beyond remedy—but the tears of the damned.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The worst and greatest tyrant in the world

"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another." Tit 3:3.

Sin is the worst and greatest tyrant in the world. Other tyrants can but tyrannize over our bodies—but sin is a tyrant which tyrannizes over both body and soul.

None have been able to tame the tyrants, the sins, the lusts—which have been in their own bosoms.

Sin is a tyrant which has a kind of jurisdiction in most men's hearts; it sets up . . . the law of pride, the law of lust, the law of oppression, the law of formality, the law of hypocrisy, the law of carnality, the law of self-love, the law of carnal reason, the law of unbelief—and strictly commands subjection to them, and proclaims fire and sword to all who will not bow down.

Sin is a tyrant of many thousand years' standing, and though it has had many a wound, and received much opposition—yet still it plays the tyrant all the world over! Oh, the hearts that this tyrant makes to ache! the souls that this tyrant makes to bleed!

Other tyrants have been brought down and brought under control by a human power—but this tyrant, sin, cannot be controlled, but by a divine power. Only the power of Christ can bring down this tyrant, and cast down his strongholds. Therefore, engage Christ in the conflict, draw Him into the battle, and in the end the conquest will be yours.

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The heaviest burden in all the world!

"My sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me." Psa 40:12

"For my sins have flooded over my head; they are a burden too heavy for me to bear." Psa 38:4.

Of all burdens—sin is the heaviest burden in all the world!

Poor souls; sin is a burden that so troubles them and puzzles them, that so presses and oppresses them, as that it wrings many bitter tears from their eyes, and many sad and grievous sighs and groans from their hearts. "Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin?" Rom 7:24

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The greatest thief

Sin is the greatest thief, the greatest robber in the world. It robbed the angels of all their glory. It robbed Adam of his paradise and felicity. Sin has robbed all mankind of five precious jewels, the least of which was more worth than heaven and earth.

1. Sin has robbed them of the holy and glorious image of God, which would have been engraved upon them, had Adam not fallen into sin.
2. Sin has robbed them of divine sonship—and has made them slaves of Satan.
3. Sin has robbed them of divine friendship—and made them enemies to God.
4. Sin has robbed them of communion and fellowship with God—and made them strangers and aliens to Him.
5. Sin has robbed them of their glory—and made them vile and miserable.

Oh! the health, the wealth, the honor, the friends, the relations—which sin has robbed thousands of!

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A wolf that eats up all

Sin is a devouring, a consuming element. Sin is a fire which devours and consumes all; it turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes; it has destroyed the Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian kingdoms, and will at last destroy the Roman kingdom also.

Sin is a wolf that eats up all. This wolf ate up . . . Samson's strength, Absalom's beauty, Ahithophel's policy, and Herod's glory, etc.

Sin has drowned one world already, and will at last burn our present world up. Oh the hopes, the hearts, the happiness, the joys, the comforts, the souls—that

this fire, sin, has consumed and destroyed!

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Cut off one head

We may say of sin as some say of cats, that they have many lives. Just so—kill sin once and it will live again, kill it again and it will live again, etc. Sin oftentimes is like that monster Hydra—cut off one head and many will rise up in its place.

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The occasions and allurements of sin

He who ventures upon the occasion of sin and then prays, "Lord, lead me not into temptation," is like him who thrusts his finger into the fire, and then prays that it may not be burnt.

He who will not fly from the occasions and allurements of sin, though they may seem ever so pleasant to the eye, or sweet to the taste—shall find them in the end more sharp than vinegar, more bitter than wormwood, more deadly than poison.

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The bond of iniquity

"I perceive that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Acts 8:23

If you would arm and fence yourselves against sin, then look upon sin as the soul's bonds.

Iniquity is a chain, a bond. Now, bonds and chains gall the body, and so does sin the soul. As poor captives are held fast in their chains, so are sinners in their sins.

For as bonds tie things together, so does sin tie the sinner and the curse together. Sin binds the sinner and wrath together. Sin links the sinner and hell together.

Ah! There is no bondage like soul bondage, no slavery like soul slavery.

Ah, friends! you should never look upon your sins—but you should look upon them as your bonds; yes, as the worst bonds that ever were! All other chains are golden chains, chains of pearl, compared to those chains of iron and brass, those chains of lust, with which you are bound. Ah! who can thus look upon his chains—his sins—and not loathe them, and not labor for freedom from them?

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Fool away their souls

Christ made a very fair offer to the young man in the Gospel, "Go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven," Mat 19:21. Here Christ offers . . . heavenly treasures for earthly treasures, unmixed treasures for mixed treasures, perfect treasures for imperfect treasures, satisfying treasures for unsatisfying treasures, lasting treasures for fading treasures; but the young man slips his opportunity, his season, and goes away sorrowful, and we never read more of him. Just so, there are many who trifle away their time, and fool away their souls and their eternal salvation.

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A greater honor



It is a greater honor for a man to outwrestle sin, Satan, temptation, the world, and lust—than ever Alexander the Great could attain unto.

The Romans built Virtue's and Honor's temple close together—to show that the way to honor was by virtue; and, indeed, there is no crown compared to

that which godliness sets upon a man's head: all other honor is fading and withering.

## 02.05. Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures

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Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures By Thomas Brooks, 1675

### CHOICE EXCERPTS

It was the golden link of love!

"May you have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge." Eph 3:18-19

Oh, such was Christ's transcendent love—that man's extreme misery could not abate it. The deploredness of man's condition did but heighten the holy flame of Christ's love. It is as high as heaven, who can reach it? It is as low as hell, who can understand it?

Heaven, with all its glory, could not contain Him. Neither could all hell's torments make Him refrain! Such was His perfect matchless love to fallen and miserable man. That Christ's love should extend to the ungodly, to sinners, to enemies who were in rebellion against Him; yes, not only so—but that He should hug them in His arms, lodge them in His bosom—is the highest degree of love!

It is astonishing . . . that Christ should come from the eternal bosom of His Father—to a region of sorrow and death; that God—should be manifested in the flesh; that the Creator—should be made a creature; that He who was clothed with glory—should be wrapped with rags of flesh; that He who filled heaven—should be cradled in a feeding trough; that the God of strength—should be weary; that the Judge of all men—should be condemned; that the God of life—should be put to death.

That He would do all this for man, for fallen man, for miserable man, for worthless man—is beyond all conception!

The sharp sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the cradle to the cross, does above all other things, speak out the transcendent love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners.

That wrath, that great wrath, that fierce wrath, that pure wrath, that infinite wrath, that matchless wrath of an angry God—which was so terribly impressed upon the soul of Christ—all this wrath He patiently underwent, that sinners might be saved, and that "He might bring many sons unto glory."

Oh wonder at the greatness of His love—which made our dear Lord Jesus lay down His life—to save us from hell, and to bring us to heaven! Oh unspeakable love!

It was the golden link of love, which alone fastened Christ to the cross, and made Him die freely for us!

Christ's love is beyond all measure, for . . . time did not begin it, and time shall never end it; place does not bound it; sin does not exceed it; tongues cannot express it; minds cannot conceive it.

Well may we spend all our days in admiring and adoring of Christ's wonderful love—and be always ravished with the thoughts of it.

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it." Eph 3:19

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The prosperity of the wicked

"For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; the evil conceits of their minds know no limits. They say, 'How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?' This is what the wicked are like—always carefree, they increase in wealth. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me—until I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely You place them on slippery ground; You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!" Psa 73:1-28

Oh, how little is that man's condition to be envied, who for these short pleasures of sin—must endure an eternity of torments!

O sirs! Do wicked men purchase their present pleasures at so dear a rate—as eternal torments? And do we envy their enjoyment of them so short a time? Would we envy a man going to execution, because we saw him go up the ladder with a gold chain around his neck and a scarlet gown on his back? Surely not! Oh, no more should we envy the grandeur of worldly men, for every step they take, is but a step to an eternal execution!

Oh, how much more worthy of our pity, than envy—is that man's condition, who has all his happiness confined to the narrow compass of this present life—but his misery extended to the uttermost bounds of an everlasting duration!

"The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him—Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire!" Luk 16:22-24

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All to save you from wrath to come!

Christians, spend your days in admiring the transcendent love of Christ—in undergoing hellish punishments in your stead! Oh pray, pray hard that you "may be able to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of that love of Christ, which passes knowledge!" Eph 3:18-19

The love of Christ put Him upon these bodily and spiritual sufferings—which were so exceeding great, acute, extreme, and universal—and all to save you from wrath to come! His miseries, sorrows, and sufferings are unparalleled, and therefore Christians have the more cause to lose themselves in the contemplation of His matchless love. Oh, bless Christ! Oh, kiss Christ! Oh, embrace Christ! Oh, cleave to Christ! Oh, follow Christ! Oh, walk with Christ! Oh, long for Christ—who for your sakes has undergone insupportable wrath and most hellish torments!

Oh, look up to dear Jesus, and say, "O blessed Jesus, You were accursed—that I might be blessed! You were condemned—that I might be justified! You underwent the very torments of

hell—that I might forever enjoy the pleasures of heaven! Therefore I cannot but dearly love You, and highly esteem You, and greatly honor You, and earnestly long after You!"

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They will not believe it until they feel it!

"Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?" Luk 3:7

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath." 1Th 1:10

1. The coming wrath is the greatest wrath. It is the greatest evil which can befall a soul. "Who knows the power of Your wrath?" Psa 19:11. The coming wrath is such wrath as no unsaved man can either avoid or abide. And yet such is most men's stupidity, that they will not believe it until they feel it!

As God is a great God—so His wrath is a great wrath. If the wrath of an earthly king is so terrible—oh how dreadful must the wrath of the King of kings then be!

The greater the evil is, the more cause we have to flee from it. Now the coming wrath is the greatest evil, and therefore the more it concerns us to flee from it!

2. The coming wrath is treasured-up wrath. Sinners are still "a-treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath," Rom 2:5. While wicked men are following their own lusts, they think that they are still adding to their own happiness. But alas, they do but add wrath to wrath! They do but heap up judgment upon judgment, and punishment upon punishment! Look! as men are daily adding to their treasure more and more, so impenitent sinners are daily increasing the treasury of wrath against their own souls.

3. The coming wrath is pure wrath. It is "judgment without mercy." The cup of wrath which God will put into sinners' hands at last, will be a cup of pure wrath—all wrath—nothing but wrath. "They must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb." Rev 14:10.

Look! as there is nothing but the pure glory of God—which can make a man perfectly and fully happy; just so, there is nothing but the pure wrath of God—which can make a man fully and perfectly miserable. Reprobates shall not only sip of the top of God's cup—but they shall drink the dregs of His cup! They shall not have one drop of mercy, nor one crumb of comfort! They have filled up their lifetime with sin—and God will fill up their eternity with torments!

4. The coming wrath is everlasting wrath. "And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever!" Rev 14:11. "They shall have . . . punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without support, crying without comfort, mischief without measure, torment without ease—where the worm dies not, and the fire is never quenched."

The torments of the damned shall continue as many eternities—as there are stars in the skies, as there are grains of sand on the sea-shore, and as there are drops of water found in the sea! When the present worlds are ended, the pains and torments of hell shall not cease—but begin afresh, and thus this wheel shall turn round and round, without end.

Oh the folly and vanity, the madness and baseness of poor wretched sinners—who expose themselves to everlasting torments—for a few fleshly momentary pleasures!

O sirs! "Who can stand before His fierce anger? Who can survive His burning fury? His rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in His presence!" Nah 1:6.

How should these things work poor sinners to flee to Christ, who alone is able to save them from the coming wrath. 1Th 1:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The hell of hell

And as there are a diversity of torments in hell, so the torments of hell are everlasting.

"Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!" Mat 25:41 The sentence which shall be passed upon them, is eternal.

God Himself, who damns them, is eternal.

The prison and chains which hold them, are eternal.

The worm which gnaws them, is eternal.

The fire which torments them, is eternal.

Grievous is the torment of the damned—for the bitterness of the punishments. It is more grievous—for the diversity of the punishments. But it is most grievous—for the eternity of the punishments!

If, after so many millions of years as there are drops in the ocean, there might be a deliverance out of hell—this would yield a little ease, a little comfort to the damned. Oh, but this word Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! this word Everlasting! Everlasting! Everlasting! this word Forever! Forever! Forever! will even break the hearts of the damned in ten thousand pieces!

Suppose that the whole world were turned into a mountain of sand, and that a little bird should come once every thousand years and carry away from that heap, one grain of sand. What an infinite number of years would be spent before this great mountain of sand would be fetched away! Just so—if a man should lie in everlasting burnings so long a time as this, and then have an end of his woe—it would give some ease, some hope, and some comfort to him. But when that immortal bird shall have carried away this great mountain of sand—a thousand times over and over—alas, alas, sinful man shall be as far from the end of his anguish and torment as ever he was! He shall be no nearer coming out of hell, than he was the very first moment that he entered into hell!

Suppose, say others, that a man were to endure the torments of hell as many years—as there are . . . sands on the sea-shore, drops of water in the sea, stars in the heavens, leaves on the trees, blades of grass on the ground—yet he would comfort himself with this poor thought, "Well, there will come a day when my misery and torment shall certainly have an end." But woe and alas! this word, "Forever! Forever! Forever!" will fill the hearts of the damned with the greatest . . . horror and terror, anger and rage, bewilderment and astonishment!

If the fire of hell were terminable, it might be tolerable. But being endless, it must needs be easeless, and remediless.

The eternity of hell—is the hell of hell.

The damned shall live as long in hell—as long as God Himself shall live in heaven!

"The reprobate shall have . . . punishment without pity; misery without mercy,

sorrow without support, crying without compassion, mischief without measure, and torment without end!"

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Mat 25:46

All the pains, torments, curse, and wrath which were due to the elect—fell on Christ, until divine justice was fully satisfied. "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:9. Oh, exalt that Christ! Oh, extol that Savior, who has saved you from that eternal wrath!

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From burning to burning!

The Spirit of God, in Scripture, by metaphors of all sorts of things which are dreadful unto sense—sets forth the condition of the damned, and the torments which He has reserved for them in the life to come. Hell's punishments do infinitely exceed all other punishments, that there is no pain so extreme—as that of the damned.

Look! As there are no joys which can compare to the joys of heaven—so there are no pains which can compare to the pains of hell. All the cruelties in the world cannot possibly make up any horror comparable to the horrors of hell. The brick-kilns of Egypt, the fiery furnace of Babylon—are but as a fleeting spark—compared to this tormenting Tophet which has been prepared of old to punish the bodies and souls of sinners with. Hanging, racking, burning, scourging, stoning, sawing asunder, flaying of the skin, etc., are not to be compared with the tortures of hell.

If all the pains, sorrows, miseries, and calamities which have been inflicted upon all men, since Adam fell in Paradise, should meet together and center in one man—they would not so much as amount to one of the least of the pains of hell.

Who can sum up the diversity of torments which are in hell!

1. In hell there is darkness; hell is a dark region!
2. In hell there are sorrows!
3. In hell there are bonds and chains!
4. In hell there are pains and pangs!
5. In hell there is the worm which never dies!
6. In hell there is the lake of fire!
7. In hell there is the furnace of fire!

8. In hell there are the devil and his demons! And oh, how dreadful must it be to be shut up forever with those roaring lions!

9. In hell there is weeping and gnashing of teeth!

10. In hell there is unquenchable fire—everlasting burnings!

"The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless—Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" Isa 33:14

O sirs, the torments of hell will be exceeding great and dreadful—such as will make the stoutest sinners to quake and tremble!

Wicked men, who are now such jolly fellows, shall one day go from burning to burning! They shall go . . . from burning in sin—to burning in hell; from burning in flames of lusts—to burning in flames of torment!

O sirs! in this devouring fire, in these everlasting burnings, there will be no music or merry company to pass time away, nor any dice or cards to pass care away; nor any bottles of wine wherein to drown the sinner's grief! As in heaven there shall be all bodily perfection, so there shall be also in hell all bodily miseries. Whatever may make a man perfectly miserable—shall be in hell. Out of this fiery bed there is no deliverance!

Oh, how terrible will the torments of hell be to the damned! The torments of hell will be universal torments. All torments meet together in that place of torment. Hell is the center . . . of all punishments, of all sorrows, of all pains, of all wrath, of all vengeance, etc.

All the pains, torments, curse, and wrath which were due to the elect—fell on Christ, until divine justice was fully satisfied. "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:9. Oh, exalt that Christ! Oh, extol that Savior, who has saved you from that eternal wrath!

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The devil's best customers!

"God will surely judge people who are immoral." Heb 13:4

If men will not judge them, God Himself will, and give them a portion of misery answerable to their transgression. Sometimes He judges them in this life—by pouring forth of His wrath upon their bodies, souls, consciences, names and estates. But if He does not thus judge them in this life, He will be sure to judge them in the life to come! Yes, He has already adjudged them "to the fiery lake of burning sulfur," Rev 21:8

The unchaste are the devil's best customers! Oh, the thousands of men and women who are sent to hell for immorality! Other sins are toilsome and troublesome, but sexual immorality is pleasant, and sends men and women merrily to hell!

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He drank it up—every drop!

"Who can comprehend the power of Your wrath?" Psa 90:11

Jesus Christ comprehends it, for He underwent it! His whole life was made up of suffering. From His birth to His death, from His cradle to the cross, from the womb to the tomb, —He was a man of sorrows!

Behold His bodily sufferings—the crown of thorns on His head, the smiting of His cheeks, the spitting on His face, the scourging of His body, the cross on His back, the vinegar in His mouth, the nails in His hands and feet, the spear in His side, His crucifixion and death on the cross—might well astonish us!

Behold that head, before which angels cast down themselves and worshiped—crowned with thorns!

Behold those eyes, which were purer than the sun—put out by the darkness of death!

Behold those ears which heard nothing but halleluiahs—hearing the blasphemies of the multitude!

Behold that lovely face—spit on by such beastly wretches!

Behold that mouth and tongue, which "spoke as never any man spoke"—accused of blasphemy!

Behold those hands, which freely swayed the scepter of heaven—nailed to the cross!

Behold those feet, "like unto fine brass"—nailed to the cross for man's sins!

Who can behold Christ thus suffering—and not be struck with astonishment?

1Pe 3:18, "Christ has suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous." This is . . . the wonderment of angels, the happiness of fallen man, and the torment of devils—that Christ has suffered. The doleful tragedy of His sufferings is unutterable!

The sufferings of Jesus Christ were very great and heinous. What agony, what torment was our Savior racked with! "He was despised and rejected—a man

of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief!" Isa 53:3 He was a man of sorrows—as if He were a man made up of sorrows! He knew more sorrows than any man, yes, than all men ever did! We never read that Jesus laughed at all, when He was in the world. His whole life was filled up with sufferings.

How deep were His wounds!

How weighty His burden!

How full of trembling His cup, when He lay under the mountains of the guilt of all the elect!

How bitter were His tears!

How painful His bloody sweat!

How dreadful His death!

Lam 1:12 is very applicable to Christ— "Look and see! Is there any pain like Mine, which was dealt out to Me, which the Lord made Me suffer on the day of His burning anger?" What sufferings can



you think of, which Christ did not suffer? Christ suffered in His birth, and He suffered in His life, and He suffered in His death. He suffered in His body, for He was diversely tormented. He suffered in His soul, for His soul was exceedingly sorrowful. He suffered in His estate, they parted His clothing, and He had nowhere to rest His head. He suffered in His reputation, for He was called a Samaritan, a devilish sorcerer, a drunkard, an enemy to Caesar, etc. He suffered from heaven, when He cried out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" He suffered from the earth, being hungry. He suffered from hell, Satan assaulting and encountering Him with his most black and horrid temptations. He began His life lowly and basely, and was sharply persecuted. He continued His life poorly and distressedly, and was cruelly hated. He ended His life woefully and miserably, and was most grievously tormented with whips, thorns, nails; and, above all, with the terrors of His Father's wrath and horrors of hellish agonies! Who can compute how many vials of God's inexpressible, insupportable wrath, which Christ drank? Yet, He drank it up—every drop, leaving nothing behind for His redeemed people—but large draughts of love and salvation!

The death of Christ on the cross was . . . a bitter death, a sorrowful death, a bloody death. The bitter thoughts of His sufferings put Him into a most dreadful agony: "Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground." Luk 22:44

Nothing could fasten Christ to the cross—but the golden link of His free love! Oh, what a wonder of love is this—that Jesus Christ, who is the author of life, the fountain of life, the Lord of life—that He should so freely, so readily, so cheerfully lay down His life for us!

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One puddle, if we wallow in it

One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory.

One sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency.

One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box.

One thief may rob a man of all his treasure.

One disease may deprive a man of all his health.

One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea, as well as a hundred.

One puddle, if we wallow in it—will defile us. Just so, one sin allowed and lived in—will make a man miserable forever.

Some will leave all their sins but one. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin which he allows and lives in—as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one wing or by one claw.

Satan is content that men should yield to God in many things—provided that they will be but true to Satan in some one thing. The devil knows very well, that as one grain of poison may poison a man, and one stab at the heart may kill a man—just so, one sin unrepented of, one sin allowed, retained, cherished, and practiced—will certainly damn a man.

Though all the parts of a man's body are healthy, except only one part—that one diseased and ulcerous part may be deadly to you. Just so, one sin allowed,

indulged, and lived in—will prove killing and damning to you.

It is horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and astonishing impudency—for a man to beg the pardon of those very sins which he is resolved never to forsake.

These things should be frequently and seriously thought of, by such poor fools as are entangled by any lust.

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Joseph saw God in the room!

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Pro 15:9

The harboring of any known sin, either in heart or life, is a high contempt of the all-seeing eye of God—of the omnipresence of God.

It is well known what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when he found him cast upon the queen's couch on which she sat: "What!" says he, "Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes!" What! will he dare to commit such a villainy—as I stand and look on?

O sirs! to do wickedly in the sight of God, is a thing which He looks upon as the greatest affront and indignity that can possibly be done unto Him. "What!" says He, "Will you be drunk before Me, and swear and blaspheme before Me, and be wanton and immoral before Me, and break My laws before My eyes!"

This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin—that is done before the face of God—in the presence of God! The consideration of God's omnipresence—that He stands and looks on, should be as a bar, to stop the proceedings of all wicked intentions; and a great dissuasive from sin.

It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light—how impossible will it be to hide yourself from Him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!"

There is no drawing of a curtain between God and you.

When you are in secret—consider that God is present.

God is all eye. He sees . . . all things, in all places, at all times.

The godly are dissuaded from wickedness, upon the consideration of God's eye and omniscience. Joseph saw God in the room—and therefore dared not yield to lust. But Potiphar's wife saw none but Joseph—and so was impudently alluring and tempting him to sin.

I have read of two godly men, who took contrary courses with two harlots—whom they desired to reclaim from their wicked course of life.

One of the men told one of the women, that he was desirous to enjoy her company in secret. After she had brought him into a private room, and locked the door, he told her, "All your bars and bolts cannot keep God out!"

The other godly man asked the other harlot to be unchaste with him openly in the streets—which she rejected as an insane request. He then told her, "It was better to do it before the eyes of a crowd—than before the eyes of the all-seeing God!"

Oh, why shall not the presence of that God who hates sin, and who is resolved to punish it with hell-flames, make us ashamed or afraid to sin, and dare Him to His face! Let your eye be ever on Him—whose eye is always on you!

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First place in your thoughts

Friends, these things must have first place in your thoughts:

1. Your sins—to humble you and abase you before God.
2. God's free and rich and sovereign grace—to soften and melt you down into submission to His holy will.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ—to assist, help, strengthen, and influence you in all your duties and services.
4. The blessed Scriptures—to guide you and lead you, "and to be a lamp unto your feet, and a light unto your paths."
5. The afflictions of the godly—to draw out your charity, mercy, pity, sympathy and compassion to men in misery.
6. The glory and happiness of the eternal world—to arm you and steel you against all your sins, snares and temptations.

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The best of saints are sinners

A child of God may slip into a sin—as a sheep may slip into the mire. But he does not, and cannot wallow in sin—as the swine wallows in the mire.

The best of saints are sinners, though the worst and weakest of saints do not indulge sin or cherish it; or make daily provision for it; or take daily pleasure

and delight in sin; or habitually yield a willing and total subjection to the authority and commands of sin.

There is as much difference between sin in a regenerate person—and sin in an unregenerate person, as there is between poison in a man—and poison in a serpent. Poison in a man is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all remedies and antidotes to expel it and get rid of it. But poison in a serpent, is in its natural place, and is most pleasing and delightful.

Just so, sin in a regenerate man is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all holy means and antidotes to expel it and to get rid of it. But sin in an unregenerate man is most pleasing and delightful, it being in its natural place.

A godly man may have many sins—yet he has not one beloved sin, one bosom sin, one darling sin. His sins are his greatest grief and torment.

Every godly man . . . hates all known sin, would sincerely have his sins not only pardoned, but destroyed, groans under the burden of sin, combats and conflicts with all known sin, has fixed purposes and designs not to sin, has a sincere willingness to be rid of all sin.

No sincere Christian indulges himself in any trade, course, or way of sin. "Oh," says the gracious soul, "that I could be rid of . . . this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this earthly heart, this froward heart of mine!"

O sirs, this is most certain—whoever gives up himself freely, willingly, cheerfully, habitually—to the service of any one particular lust or sin—he is in the state of nature, under wrath, and in the way to eternal ruin!

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The most powerful charm of Satan

Honors, riches, and pleasures are the three deities, which all people adore, and to whom they continually sacrifice their best thoughts and energies. These, for their unparalleled vanity, may well be called "the vanity of vanities!"

Honors, riches, and pleasures are but . . . a mere shadow, a vapor, a feather in the cap, a breath, a froth, a dream, a nothing. They are without true substance. Like in a dream, you imagine they have substance—you grasp at them and awake—and they are nothing!

And yet, they are the most powerful charm of Satan, whereby he lulls men to sleep in the paradise of fools; to cast them, after they die, into the bottomless pit of eternal woe!

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I was that soldier who murdered You!

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed." Isa 53:5

Our sins were the cause of Christ's sufferings!

It was our transgressions which gave Christ His deadly wounds! It was our sins which smote Him, and bruised Him! Every Christian may look upon Christ and say, "I was that Judas who betrayed You! I was that soldier who murdered You! It was my sins which brought all those sorrows, and sufferings, and evils upon You! I have sinned—and You have suffered! I have sinned—and You have died! I have wounded You—and You have healed me!"

Oh, that we might look upon . . . a humble Christ—with a humble heart, a broken Christ—with a broken heart, a bleeding Christ—with a bleeding heart, a wounded Christ—with a wounded heart!

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree; by His wounds you have been healed." 1Pe 2:24

Here you see that the physician's blood became the sick man's salve! Here is the gospel mystery—that the wounding of one, should be the cure of another!

Oh, what an odious thing is sin to God—that He will pardon none without blood, yes, without the precious blood of His dearest Son! Oh, what a hell of wickedness must there be in sin—that nothing can expiate it but the best, the purest, the noblest blood of Christ! Oh, what a transcendent evil must sin be—that nothing can purge it away but death—the accursed death of the cross! Oh, what a leprosy is sin—that it must have blood, yes, the blood of God, to take it away!

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Keep a fixed eye upon a bleeding Christ

Has Jesus Christ suffered such great and grievous things for you? Oh then, in all your fears, doubts, and conflicts with enemies, within or without—fly to the sufferings of Christ as your city of refuge!

In every temptation let us look up to a crucified Christ, who is fitted and qualified to support tempted souls. Oh my soul, whenever you are assaulted, let the wounds of Christ be your city of refuge where you may fly and live! Let us learn, in every trouble which presses us—whether it be sin, temptation, or any other evil—to translate it from ourselves to Christ! And all the good in Christ—let us learn to translate it from Christ to ourselves!

Do your sins terrify you? Oh then, look up to a crucified Savior, who bore your sins in His own body on the tree! When sin stares you in the face, oh then turn your face to a dying Jesus, and behold Him . . . with a spear in His side, with thorns in His head, with nails in His feet, and a pardon in His hands! Oh, remember that there is nothing in heaven or earth more efficacious to cure the wounds of conscience, than a frequent and serious meditation on the wounds of Christ!

Ah, Christians, under all your temptations, afflictions, fears, doubts, conflicts, and trials—be persuaded to keep a fixed eye upon a crucified Jesus! And remember that all He did—He did for you; and that all He suffered—He suffered for you! This will be a strong cordial to keep you from fainting under all your distresses. Oh, that Christians would labor, under all their soul-troubles, to keep a fixed eye upon a bleeding Christ; for there is nothing which will ease them, quiet them, settle them, and satisfy them like this!

Many, may I not say most, Christians are more apt to eye their sins, their sorrows, their prayers, their tears, their resolves, their complaints—than they are to eye a suffering Christ. And from hence springs their greatest woes, wounds, miseries, and dejection of spirit. Oh, that a crucified Christ might be forever in your eye—and always upon your hearts!

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He left heaven for us

"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." Mat 16:24

Let the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, work us into a gracious willingness to embrace sufferings for His sake, and cheerfully and resolutely to take up His cross and follow Him. Did Christ suffer—who knew no sin; and shall we think it strange to suffer—who know nothing but sin? Shall He lie sweltering under His Father's wrath—and shall we cry out under men's anger? Was

He crowned with thorns—and must we be crowned with rose-buds? Was His whole life, from the cradle to the cross, made up of nothing but sorrows and sufferings—and must our lives, from the cradle to the grave, be filled up with nothing but pleasures and delights?

Was He despised—and must we be admired?

Was He debased—and must we be exalted?

Was He poor—and must we be rich?

Was He low—and must we be high?

Did He drink of a bitter cup, a bloody cup—and must we have only cups of consolation?

Let us not think anything too much to do for Christ, nor anything too great to suffer for Christ, nor anything too dear to part with for such a Christ, such a Savior—who thought nothing too much to do, or too grievous to suffer—so that He might accomplish the work of our redemption. He left heaven for us—and shall not we let go this world for Him? He left his Father's bosom for

us—and shall not we leave the bosoms of our dearest relations for him? He underwent all sorts of sufferings for us—let us as readily encounter with all sorts of sufferings for Him.

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What more can any Christian desire?

There is enough in a suffering Christ to fill us and satisfy us to the full. He has the greatest worth and wealth in Him. Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold; just so, all the petty excellencies which are scattered abroad in the creatures—are to be found in a bleeding, dying Christ! Yes, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth—is epitomized in Him who suffered on the cross! A man cannot hyperbolize in speaking of the glories of Christ. Certainly it is as easy to contain the sea in a sea-shell—as to fully relate the excellencies of a suffering Christ!

O sirs! there is in a crucified Jesus, something proportionable to all the straits, needs, necessities, and desires of His poor people. He is . . . bread to nourish them, a garment to cover and adorn them, a physician to heal them, a Counselor to advise them, a captain to defend them, a prince to rule them, a prophet to teach them, a priest to make atonement for them; a husband to protect them, a father to provide for them, a brother to relieve them, a foundation to support them, a head to guide them, a treasure to enrich them, a sun to enlighten them, and a fountain to cleanse them.

What more can any Christian desire—to satisfy him and save him; and to make him holy and happy, in time and eternity?

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He leaps into a sea of wrath!

Christ went through heaven and hell, life and death, sorrow and suffering, misery and cruelty—and all to bring us to glory! And shall we not prize Him?

When in a storm, the nobles of Xerxes had to lighten the ship to preserve their king's life—they leaped into the sea! But our Lord Jesus Christ, to preserve our lives, our souls—He leaps into a sea of wrath! Oh, let us prize a suffering Christ!

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The sword of His pure, infinite, and incensed wrath

To see God thrust the sword of His pure, infinite, and incensed wrath through the very heart of His dearest Son, notwithstanding all His supplications, prayers, tears, and strong cries—is the highest manifestation of the Lord's hatred and indignation of sin—which ever was, or ever will be!

It is true God revealed his great hatred against sin . . . by turning Adam out of paradise, and by casting the angels down to hell, and by drowning the old world, and by raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and by the various and dreadful judgments which He has been a-pouring forth upon the world in all ages. But all this hatred is but an emblem of hatred, compared to that hatred which God manifested against sin in causing the whole curse to meet upon our crucified Lord. It is true God reveals His hatred of sin by those endless, easeless, and remediless torments, which He inflicts upon devils and damned spirits. But this is no hatred—compared to that hatred against sin, which God revealed when He opened all the floodgates of His envenomed wrath upon His Son—His own Son, His only Son, His Son who always pleased Him, His Son who never offended Him.

Suppose you saw a father who had but one son—such a son in whom he always delighted, and by whom he had never been provoked. Now suppose you should you see this father inflicting the most intensified pains and punishments, tortures and torments, calamities and miseries upon this, his dearest son. Would you not wonder at the cause of the father's exercising such amazing, such matchless severity, fury and cruelty upon his only beloved son?

Now cast your eye upon the actings of God the Father towards Jesus Christ, and you will find that He has inflicted more and greater torments upon the Son of His dearest love, than all mortals ever have or could inflict upon others. God made all the penalties and sufferings that were due to us—to fall upon Jesus Christ. God Himself inflicted upon dear Jesus whatever was requisite to the satisfying of His justice, to the obtaining of pardon, and to the saving of all His elect!

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This is the very knife that cut the throat of your child!

Suppose a man should come to his dinner table, and there should be a knife laid down, and it should be told him, "This is the very knife that cut the throat of your child!" If the man would use this knife as a common knife, would not everyone say, "Surely this man had but very little love to his child, who can use this bloody knife as a common knife!"

Just so, when you meet with any temptation to sin, oh, then say, "This is the very knife which cut the throat of Jesus, and pierced His sides! This very knife was the cause of His sufferings, and made Christ to be a curse!" Ah, how should Christians look upon sin as that accursed thing, which made Christ a curse—and accordingly to abhor it! Oh, with what detestation should every Christian fling away his sins! "Sin, you have slain my Lord—and poured out His heart's blood! You

have been the only cause of the death of my Savior!"

Look upon the cross on which Christ was crucified, and the pains He suffered thereon—and the seeming sweetness which is in sin, will quickly vanish. When you are solicited to sin, cast your eye upon Christ's cross; remember His astonishing sufferings for your sin, and sin will soon grow distasteful to your soul. How can sin not be hateful to us—if we seriously consider how hurtful it was to Jesus Christ?

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Would he not stab it with a thousand wounds?

Sin never appears so odious, as when we behold it in the red glass of Christ's sufferings. Can we look upon sin as the occasion of all Christ's sufferings; can we look upon sin as that which made Christ a curse, and which made Him forsaken of His Father, and which made Him live such a miserable life, and which brought Him to die such a shameful, painful, and cruel death—and our hearts not rise against it?

Shall our sins be grievous unto Christ—and shall they not be odious unto us? Shall He die for our sins—and shall not we die to our sins? Did not He suffer for sin—that we might cease from sin?

If one would kill our father—would we hug and embrace him? Surely not! We would be revenged on him. Sin has killed our Savior—and shall we not be revenged on it?

Can a man look upon that snake which has stung his dearly-loved wife to death—and preserve it alive, warm it at the fire, and hug it in his bosom? Would he not stab it with a thousand wounds? It is sin which has stung our dear Jesus to death, which has crucified our Lord, clouded His glory, and shed His precious blood! Oh, how should this stir up our indignation against sin!

Ah, how can a Christian make much of those sins, which have killed his dearest Lord! how can he cherish those sins which betrayed Christ, and bound Christ, and condemned Christ, and scourged Christ, and which violently nailed Him to the cross, and there murdered Him!

It was neither Judas, nor Pilate, nor the Jews, nor the soldiers—which could have done our Lord Jesus the least hurt—had not our sins, like so many butchers and hangmen, come in to their assistance!

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The more Christ has suffered for us

The more Christ has suffered for us—the dearer Christ should be unto us. The greater and the bitterer Christ's sufferings have been for us—the greater and the sweeter should our love be to Him. O my friends! there is no love but a superlative love, which is any way suitable to the transcendent sufferings of dear Jesus. Oh, love Him above your lusts, love Him above your relations, love Him above the world, love Him above all your contentments and enjoyments; yes, love Him above your very lives!

Certainly the more Christ has suffered for us, the more dear Christ should be unto us. The more bitter His sufferings have been for us, the more eminent should be our love to him. Oh, let a



suffering Christ lie nearest your hearts!

Christ is that golden pipe through which the golden oil of salvation runs! Oh, how should this inflame our love to Christ! Oh, that our hearts were more affected with the sufferings of Christ! Who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to Christ?

Oh, the infinite love of Christ—that He should leave His Father's bosom, and come down from heaven—that He might carry you up to heaven; that he who was a Son should take upon Him the form of a servant; that you slaves should be made sons; that you enemies should be made friends, that you heirs of wrath should be made heirs of God; that to save us from everlasting ruin, Christ should be willing to be made flesh, to lie in a manger, to be tempted, deserted, persecuted, and to die upon a cross! Oh what flames of love to Christ, should these things kindle in all our hearts.

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The envy of devils

"For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham's descendants." Heb 2:16

Stand still, and admire and wonder at the love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners—that He should rather die for us, than the fallen angels! They were creatures of a more noble extract, and in all probability might have brought

greater revenues of glory to God. Yet that Christ should pass by those golden vessels, and make us vessels of glory—Oh, what amazing and astonishing love is this!

Why didn't Christ suffer for their sins—as well as for ours? Why, if He suffered for any sins—why not for theirs, rather than ours? This is the envy of devils, and the astonishment of saints.

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Sell their souls to Satan

"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mat 16:26

We laugh at little children to see them part with rich jewels for silly trifles; and yet daily experience tells us that multitudes are so childish as to part with such rich and precious jewels as their immortal souls for a lust, or for base and unworthy trifles. Ah, for what a trifle do many thousands sell their souls to Satan every day! Oh, they trample under feet, that matchless jewel—their precious and immortal souls!

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Contentedly ignorant

Curiosity is one of the most dangerous engines, which the devil uses to undo souls with. When Satan observes that men do in good earnest set themselves to the obtaining of knowledge, then he strives to turn them to vain inquiries and curious speculations; so that he may keep them busied about unprofitable curiosities.

The way to make us mere fools, is to attempt to know more than God would have us to know. Adam's tree of knowledge made him and his posterity fools, Gen 3:5-6. Curiosity was the bait whereby the devil caught our first parents—and undid us all! Adam had a mind to know as much of God as God Himself; and by this means he came to know nothing. Curiosity is that sickness of the soul, whereby it longs for novelties, and loathes sound and wholesome truths; it is the epidemic distemper of this age. (Basil says that multitudes of questions may be made about 'a fly'—which no philosopher is ever able to answer; how much more about heaven, hell, or the work of grace!)

Ah! how many are there who spend their precious time in inscrutable and curious questions! Ah, what did Christ dispute of, among the doctors? Where did Paradise stand? In what part of the world is local hell? What fruit was it that Adam ate, and ruined us all? What became of Moses' body? How many orders and degrees of elect angels are there? etc.

Oh, that we could learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have us knowing! Let us not account it any disparagement to acknowledge some depths in God's counsels, purposes, decrees, and judgments—which our shallow reason cannot fathom, Rom 11:33.

It is sad when men will be wise above what is written, and love to pry into God's secrets, and scan the mysteries of religion by carnal reason. God often plagues such pride and curiosity by leaving that sort of men to strange and fearful falls.

When a curious inquisitor asked Austin what God did before He created the world, Austin told him that "God was making hell for such busy questionists, for such curious inquirers into God's secrets!" Such sharp replies are the best answers to men of curious minds.

Though I ought piously to reverence the wonderful wisdom of God, and to wonder at his unsearchable judgments—yet I ought not curiously and profanely to search beyond the compass of that which God has revealed to us in His word.

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To think of hell

"To think of hell," says one, "preserves a man from falling into it!" Says another, "He who does but hear of hell is, without any further labor or study, taken off from sinful pleasures."

Surely men's hearts are grown stupid, for how do most men run headlong to hell, and take a pleasure to dance hoodwinked into everlasting burnings!

Oh, had but the sinners of this day who swear and curse, drink and party, and drown themselves in fleshly pleasures, but one sight of this hell—how would it shut their mouths, appall their spirits, and strike fear and astonishment into

their hearts!

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." Mat 10:28

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The common inn of all mankind

"None of us has the power to prevent the day of our death." Ecc 8:8

Death is the common inn of all mankind.

Death knows no difference between robes and rags, between prince and peasant. "All flesh is grass." The flesh of princes, nobles, counselors, generals, etc., is grass, as well as the flesh of the lowest beggar who walks the streets. Never was there orator so eloquent, nor monarch so potent, who could either persuade or withstand the stroke of death when it came! Death comes into royal palaces, and into the poorest cottages, and there is not a man to be found, who can make resistance against this king of terrors, and terror of kings.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after that to face judgment." Heb 9:27

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The very place in which the wicked shall lodge

"The wicked shall be turned into hell." Psa 9:17

That is, "The wicked shall certainly be turned into the nethermost hell!" Yes, they shall forcibly be turned into the lowest and darkest place in hell. God will, as it were, with both hands thrust them into hell—into that prison of torment where divine justice eternally detains them.

Certainly, the very place in which the wicked shall lodge and be tormented to all eternity, namely—hell, the bottomless pit, the dungeon of darkness, the lake of fire and brimstone, the fiery furnace—will extremely aggravate the dolefulness of their condition.

O sirs, were all the water in the sea ink, and every blade of grass a pen—all would be too short to delineate the nature of this dungeon, where all lost souls must lodge forever!

Where is the man who, to gain a world, would lodge one night in a room that is haunted with devils? Is it nothing to dwell in hell with them forever?

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" 1Th 1:10

Oh, what infinite cause have we to exalt our dear Lord Jesus, who by the hellish sorrows which He suffered for us, has freed us from the dreadful bondage of sin, Satan, and wrath that we lay under! Oh, prize that Jesus! Oh, exalt that Christ! Oh, extol that Savior, who has saved you from that eternal wrath!

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:9

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He has become the worst of creatures

Man before his fall was the best of creatures—but since his fall he has become the worst of creatures. He who was once the image of God, the glory of Paradise, the world's master, and the Lord's darling—has now become . . . an abomination to God, a burden to heaven, a plague to the world, and a slave to Satan.

When man first came out of God's mint, he did shine most gloriously, as being bespangled with holiness and clad with the royal robe of righteousness. His understanding was filled with knowledge; his will with uprightness; his affections with holiness, etc. But yet, being a mutable creature, and subject to temptations, Satan quickly stripped him of his happiness, and cheated and cozened him out of his imperial crown—with an apple!

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Merrily on in the way to hell

"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Mat 25:46

Certainly there is a hell, a place of torment provided and prepared for all wicked and ungodly people.

Ah, how many are there that rejoice to do evil, and delight in their abominations, and take pleasure in unrighteousness! But could men do thus, dared men do thus—did they really believe that hell was prepared and fitted for them, and that the fiery lake was but a little before them?

Heaven is a place where all is joyful—and hell is a place where all is doleful. In heaven there is nothing but happiness—and in hell there is nothing but heaviness, nothing but endless, easeless, and remediless torments. Did men really believe this, how could they go so merrily on in the way to hell?

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Despair

Continual imprisonment in hell, arises from man's not being able to pay the price. The wicked go to hell as their prison, because they can never pay their debts. The damned must bear the wrath of God to all eternity, because they can never satisfy the justice of God for sin. Therefore they must lie in hell, world without end.

Despair is an unavoidable companion, attending the pains of the second death—as all reprobates do experience. Desperation is an utter hopelessness of any good, and a certain expectation and waiting on the worst that can befall; and this is the lot and portion of the damned in hell. The wretched sinner in hell, seeing the sentence passed against him; God's purpose fulfilled, never to be reversed; the gates of hell made fast upon him; and a great gulf fixed between hell and heaven, which renders his escape impossible—he now gives up all, and reckons on nothing but uttermost misery in his remediless, woeful condition.

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Christ, by His death

"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree." 1Pe 2:24

Certainly the whole punishment of body and soul which was due unto us—Christ our Redeemer suffered. Our blessed Savior bore all the sins of the elect. He suffered the whole punishment which was due unto us—which we would have endured, if He had not atoned for our sins. He felt the anguish of soul, and horror of God's wrath, and in soul experienced the torments of hell for

us—and sustained them and vanquished them.

All the pains, torments, curse, and wrath which were due to the elect—fell on Christ, until divine justice was fully satisfied. Though Christ did not suffer eternal death for sinners—yet He suffered that which was equivalent, and therefore the justice of God is by His death wholly appeased. Christ's infinite excellency and glory, made His short sufferings to be of infinite worth, and equivalent to our everlasting sufferings.

Jesus suffered that which was necessary for our redemption, namely, that torment of hell which we had deserved, and which the justice of God required that He should endure for our redemption. He endured that bitter pain which we deserved to suffer eternally.

Christ, by His death . . .satisfied divine justice, pacified divine wrath, brought in an everlasting righteousness, accomplished the eternal salvation of His people.

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Two great things which Jesus Christ undertook

Our Lord Jesus Christ, by once suffering, suffered for all the sins of the elect—past, present, and to come. The infinite wrath of God the Father fell on Him, for all the sins of the chosen ones. The wrath of God was infinite wrath, and the sufferings of Christ were infinite sufferings.

All the sins of God's people, in their absolute number, from first to last, were laid upon Christ; who meritoriously purchased perfect remission of all their sins.

There are two great things which Jesus Christ undertook for His redeemed ones. The one was to make full satisfaction to divine justice for all their sins—this He did by His suffering and death. The other was to yield most absolute conformity to the law of God, both in nature and life. By His suffering and death, He has freed all His redeemed ones from hell. By the imputation of His absolute conformity to the law of God, He has qualified all the redeemed ones for heaven.

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Sweetened with three ingredients

"The cup which My Father has given Me—shall I not drink it?" John 18:11

Never did bridegroom go with more cheerfulness to be married to his bride—than our Lord Jesus went to His cross! Though the cup which the Father put into Christ's hand was bitter, very bitter—yes, the bitterest which ever was put into any hand—yet He found it sweetened with three ingredients:

1. It was but a cup; it was not a sea.
2. It was His Father, and not Satan, who mingled it, and who put in all the bitter ingredients in it.
3. It was a gift, not a curse, as to Himself. "The cup which my Father gives me."

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God has an iron memory

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws on their hearts, and I will write them on their minds, I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts." Heb 10:16-17

The meaning is, their iniquities shall be quite forgotten: I will never more mention them, I will never more take notice of them, they shall never hear more of them from Me. Though God has an iron memory to remember the sins of the wicked—yet He has no memory to remember the sins of the righteous.

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Who can show us any good?

"Many are asking—Who can show us any good?" Psa 4:6

The Lord Jesus Christ is . . .the greatest good, a universal good, a matchless good, an incomparable good, an infinite good, an eternal good, the most suitable good for my poor soul. There is everything in Christ which suits the state, necessities, and needs of my poor soul. There is . . .mercy in Him to pardon me, and power in Him to save me, and wisdom in Him to counsel me, and grace in Him to enrich me, and righteousness in Him to clothe me, etc.

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God's preacher in the heart

"I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man." Acts 24:16

Conscience is God's preacher in the heart. Conscience is a thousand witnesses for or against a man. Those who dally and tamper with this sin or that sin, develop a guilty conscience—which clouds, clogs, and distracts the soul with many fears, doubts, and scruples. God will have no communion with those who, against light and checks of conscience—dally and tamper with this sin or that sin.

The harboring of some unmortified lust, some secret, special, peculiar sin—is the greatest and most common cause of the lack of assurance, comfort, and peace.

How should it be otherwise, seeing God, who is infinitely wise, holy, and righteous—will not reveal the secrets of His love to those who harbor His known enemies in their bosoms?

The great God will not regard the prayers of those who play and dally with that very sin, or that very lust—for which He hides His face from them.

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Lord, You know

The true child of God is able to say, "Lord, You know, that though I have had many and great failings—yet there are no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins, which are chargeable upon me! Lord, You know . . .

1. That there is no known sin which I don't hate and abhor.

2. That there is no known sin which I don't combat and conflict with.
3. That there is no known sin which I don't grieve and mourn over.
4. That there is no known sin which I would not heartily be rid of.
5. That there is no known sin which I don't in some measure, endeavor in the use of holy means—to be delivered from.
6. That there is no known sin, the effectual subduing and mortifying of which would not administer matter of the greatest joy and comfort to me!"

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#### Enemies!

One of the first works of the Spirit is to make a man to look upon all his sins as enemies; yes, as his greatest enemies, and to deal with his sins as enemies, and to hate and loathe them as enemies, and to fear them as enemies, and to arm against them as enemies. He has earnest and sincere desires, and makes careful endeavors—to abandon all sin, to forsake all sin, and to be rid of all sin.

Says the sincere Christian, "Sin is the greatest evil in all the world! Sin is the only thing which God abhors! Sin brought Jesus Christ to the cross! Sin damns souls! Sin shuts heaven! Sin has laid the foundations of hell! Oh, sin is . . . the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the sharp sword which has . . . wounded my conscience, slain my comforts, hindered my prayers, embittered my mercies, put a sting into all my crosses! Therefore I condemn it to death, yes, to hell, from whence it came!"

Certainly, a sick man is not more desirous to be rid of all his diseases, nor a prisoner to be freed from all his bolts and chains—than the true penitent is desirous to be rid of all his sins!

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#### The worth and preciousness of time

There is nothing which puts a more serious frame into a man's heart, than to know the worth and preciousness of time.

"Time," says Bernard, "would be a good commodity in hell, and the selling of it most gainful; where, for one day, a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them."

One called his friends, "Thieves!" because they stole time from him.

Certainly time is infinitely precious, in regard of what depends upon it. What can there be of more worth, and weight, and importance—than eternity?

Eternity is the heaven of heaven—and the hell of hell. Without eternity, heaven would not be so desirable—nor hell be so formidable.

Eternity depends upon time. Time is the prologue to eternity. The great weight of eternity—hangs upon the small wire of time. Upon the spending of our time, depends either the bliss or the bane of body and soul to all eternity! Now is our seed-time, eternity is the harvest. Whatever seed we now sow, whether of sin or grace—it comes up in eternity!

Now is our market-time, in which, if we are wise merchants, we may make a happy exchange of earth—for heaven; of a valley of tears—for a paradise of delights.

Though time itself does not last—yet whatever is everlasting, depends upon time.

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The eyes of the Lord

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Heb 4:13

God is . . . all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve, all grace to pardon, all eye to observe the . . .

thoughts, hearts, words, ways, and walkings of men.

As the eyes of a well-drawn picture are fastened on us, whichever way we turn—so are the eyes of the Lord.

"For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and He examines all his paths." Pro 5:21



## 02.06. Heaven on Earth

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Choice selections from Thomas Brooks,

"Heaven on Earth" 1667

The trifles which God gives

The emperor Augustus, in his great feasts, gave trifles to some—but gold to his favorites.

Just so—honors, riches and worldly pleasures are the trifles which God gives to the worst of men.

God gives His gold—His special love and grace—only to His people.

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A transforming knowledge

"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory." 2Co 3:18

Saving knowledge is a transforming knowledge, which metamorphoses the soul. Divine light beating on the heart, warms it and betters it; transforms and changes it; moulds and fashions it into the very likeness of Christ!

The naturalists observe that the pearl, by the often beating of the sunbeams upon it, becomes radiant. Just so, the often beating and shining of the Sun of righteousness, with His divine beams, upon the saints, causes them to glisten and shine in . . . holiness, righteousness, heavenly-mindedness, humbleness, etc. Divine light casts a general beauty and glory upon the soul; it transforms a man more and more into the glorious image of Christ!

Look! as the child receives his features from his parents; just so, the beams of divine light and knowledge shining into the soul, stamp the living image of Christ upon the soul.

Mere notional knowledge may make a man excellent at praising the glorious and worthy acts and virtues of Christ; but that transforming knowledge which accompanies salvation, will work a man divinely to imitate the glorious acts and virtues of Christ.

When a beam of divine light shined from heaven upon Paul, ah, how did it change and metamorphose him! How did it alter and transform him! It made his rebellious soul, obedient: "Lord, what will You have me to do?" Acts 9:6. Divine light lays upon a man a happy necessity of obeying God. Divine light makes . . . this lion—into a lamb, this persecutor—into a preacher, this destroyer of the saints—into a strengthener of the saints, this tormenter—into a comforter, this monster—into an angel, this notorious blasphemer—into a very great admirer of God, and the actings of His free grace.

Just so, when a spark of this heavenly fire fell upon the heart of Mary Magdalene, oh what a change, what a transformation does it make in her! Now she loves much, and believes much, and repents much, and weeps much. Oh what a change did divine light make in Zacchaeus, and in the jailor!

Truly, if your light, your Biblical knowledge does not better you, if it does not change and transform you, if, under all your light and knowledge you remain as vile and base as ever; your light, your knowledge, your notions, your speculations, will be like fire! That knowledge which is not a transforming knowledge—will torment a man at last more than all the devils in hell; it will be . . . a sword to cut him, a rod to lash him, a serpent to bite him, a scorpion to sting him, and a vulture, a worm eternally gnawing him!

God at last will own no knowledge, but that which leaves the stamp of Christ, the print of Christ, the image of Christ upon the heart; but that which changes and transforms the soul, which makes a man a new man, another man than what he was before divine light shined upon him.

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The hypocrite's hope

"For what hope do the godless have, when God cuts them off and takes away their life?" Job 27:8

"When the wicked die, their hopes all perish." Pro 11:7

That assurance is but presumption, which allows men . . . to play with sin, to be bold with sin, to make light of sin, to walk on in ways of sin.

Such 'assurance' will never bring a man to heaven; it will never keep him from dropping into hell; yes, it will double his damnation, and make him the most miserable among all damned, wretched, forlorn spirits.

"So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish." Job 8:13

Ah, Lord! from such false hopes deliver my soul; and give me more and more of that divine hope which makes sin to be more hateful than hell.

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Kisses

"Oh, that He would kiss me with the kisses of His mouth! For Your love is more delightful than wine." Song of Solomon 1:2

Not with a kiss—but with the kisses of His mouth. A soul once kissed by Christ, can never have enough of the kisses of Christ; His lips drop myrrh and mercy. No kisses, compared to the kisses of Christ. The more any soul loves Christ, the more serious, studious, and industrious will that soul be, to have the love of Christ discovered, confirmed, witnessed, and sealed to it.

A soul once kissed by Christ, would gladly have . . . her drop turned into an ocean; her spark into a flame; her penny into a pound; her mite into a million.

A soul who truly loves Christ . . . can never see enough, nor ever taste enough, nor ever feel enough, nor ever enjoy enough of the love of Christ. When once they have found His love to be better than wine, then nothing will satisfy them but the kisses of His mouth.

"May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it." Eph 3:19 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears

Sin is a turning the back upon God—and the face towards hell. Repentance is a turning the back upon sin—and a setting the face towards God!

True repentance is a sorrowing for sin because it is offensive to God. Peter was sorry for his sin; Judas was sorry his for punishment. Peter grieves because Christ was grieved; Judas grieved because he would be damned.

As Noah's flood drowned his nearest and his dearest friends, so the flood of penitent tears drowns men's nearest and their dearest lusts! Be they Isaacs or Benjamins, be they right eyes or right hands, true repentance puts all to the sword; it spares neither father nor mother, neither Agag nor Achan.

Repentance is a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. One stab at the heart kills, one hole in the ship sinks her, one act of treason makes a traitor. Just so, one sin not forsaken, not turned from, will undo a soul forever.

A true penitent looks upon every sin as poison, as the vomit of a dog, as the mire of the street, as the menstruous cloth, which of all things in the law was most unclean, defiling, and polluting. He looks thus upon every sin, turns his heart against every sin, and makes him not only to refrain from sin—but to forsake it, and to loathe it more than hell.

True repentance breaks the heart with sighs, sobs, and groans—that . . .

a loving Father is offended, a blessed Savior crucified, and the sweet Comforter grieved.

Penitent Mary Magdalene weeps much, as well as loves much. Tears, instead of jewels, were the ornaments of penitent David's bed. Surely that sweet singer never sang more melodiously, than when his heart was broken most penitentially.

The sweetest joys are from the sourest tears; penitent tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. The bee gathers the best honey off the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water; the strongest, the purest, the truest, the most permanent, and the most excellent joy is made of the waters of repentance.

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy." Psa 126:5 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Loathsome thoughts

"You will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done." Eze 20:43

True repentance includes a loathing and abhorring of sin, and of ourselves for sin.

The sincere penitent loathes his sins, and he loathes himself also because of his sins. He cries out, "Oh these wanton eyes! Oh these wicked hands! Oh this deceitful tongue! Oh this crooked will! Oh this corrupt heart! Oh how do I loathe my sins, how do I loathe myself! My sins are a burden to me, and they make me a burden to myself! My sins are abhorrent to me, and they make me abhor myself in dust and ashes!"

A true penitent has not only low thoughts of himself, but loathsome thoughts of himself. None can think or speak so vilely of a Christian—as he thinks and speaks so vilely of himself. "Behold, I am vile!" Job 40:4

"They will loathe themselves for the evil they have done and for all their detestable practices." Eze 6:9 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ To sin and not to blush!

Only those things which are sinful, are shameful.

"Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign Lord." Eze 16:63

When the penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, and divine justice satisfied, then he sits down ashamed.

Sin and shame are inseparable companions.

A Christian cannot have the seeming sweet of sin, but he shall have the real shame which accompanies sin. These two God has joined together, and all the world cannot put them asunder.

It was the vile and impenitent Caligula who said of himself, "that he loved nothing better in himself, than that he could not be ashamed."

A soul who has sinned away all shame, is a soul ripe for hell—and given up to Satan! A greater plague cannot befall a man in this life, than to sin and not to blush!

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Soul-mollifying

Saving faith is soul-softening, it is soul-mollifying. Peter believes soundly—and weeps bitterly. Mary Magdalene believes much—and weeps much.

Faith sets . . . a wounded Christ, a bruised Christ, a despised Christ, a pierced Christ, a bleeding Christ—before the soul, and this makes the soul sit down and weep bitterly: "They will look on Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him (all gospel-mourning flows from believing), as for an only son. They will grieve bitterly for Him as for a firstborn son who has died." Zec 12:10.

Oh! the sight of those wounds which their sins have made—will wound their hearts through and through! It will make them lament over Christ with a bitter lamentation. Ah! nothing will kindly, sweetly, and effectually break the hardened heart of a sinner, but faith's beholding the blood of Christ trickling down His sides!

That Christ should love man when he was most unlovely; that man's extreme misery should but inflame Christ's affections of love and mercy—this melts the believing soul.

That Christ should leave the eternal bosom of His Father; that He who was equal with God—should come in the form of a servant; that He who was clothed with glory—should be wrapped in rags; that He whom the heaven of heavens could not contain—should be cradled in a manger; that from His cradle to His cross—His whole life should be a life of sorrows and sufferings; that the Judge of all flesh should be condemned; that the Lord of life should be put to death; that He who was His Father's joy—should in anguish of spirit cry out, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' that that head which was crowned with honor—should be crowned with thorns; that those eyes which were as a flame of fire, which were clearer than the sun—should be closed up by the darkness of death; that those ears which were used to hear nothing but hallelujahs—should hear nothing but blasphemies; that that face which was white and ruddy—should be spit upon by the beastly Jews; that that tongue which spoke as never any man spoke, yes, as never any angel spoke—should be accused of blasphemy; that those hands which swayed both a golden scepter and an iron rod, and those feet which were as fine brass—should be nailed to the cross—and all this for man's transgression, for man's rebellion! Oh! the sight of these things, the believing of these things, makes a gracious soul to break and bleed, to sigh and groan, to mourn and lament!

True faith is a heart-breaking, a heart-melting faith.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A heaven unto me! That knowledge which accompanies salvation, is a heart-affecting knowledge. It affects the heart with Christ, and all spiritual things. Oh, it does wonderfully endear Christ and the things of Christ to the soul.

"Oh, feed me with Your love—Your 'raisins' and Your 'apples'—for I am utterly lovesick!" Song of Solomon 2:5 "Oh," says the spouse, "my heart is taken with Christ, it is ravished with His love; my soul is burning, my soul is beating towards Christ. Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ! I cannot live in myself, I cannot live in my duties, I cannot live in external privileges, I cannot live in outward mercies; I can live only in Christ, who is . . . my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my all in all. Oh, the more I come to know Him . . . in His natures, in His names, in His offices, in His discoveries, in His visits, in His beauties, the more I find my heart and affections to prize Christ, to run after Christ, to be affected with Christ, and to be wonderfully endeared to Christ!

Oh, God forbid that my heart should be affected or taken with anything in comparison with Christ. The more I know Him, the more I love Him;

the more I know Him, the more I desire Him; the more I know Him, the more my heart is knit unto Him. His beauty is captivating, His love is ravishing, His goodness is attracting, His manifestations are enticing, His person is enamoring, His lovely looks please me, His pleasant voice delights me, His precious Spirit comforts me, His holy word rules me; All these things make Christ to be a heaven unto me!

Oh, but all that mere notional knowledge, that speculative knowledge, which leaves a man short of salvation—never affects the heart; it never draws it, it never endears the heart to Christ, or to the precious things of Christ. Hence it is that such men, under all their notions, under all their light and knowledge, have . . . no affection to Christ, no delight in Christ, no workings of heart after Christ.

"If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed." 1Co 16:22 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~  
When Brutus went to stab Julius Caesar

"For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." Psa 51:3

Sin most afflicts a gracious soul.

The deer feeling within her the working of the serpent's poison—runs through the thorns and thickets, and runs over the green and pleasant pastures—that she may drink of the fountain and be cured.

Just so, gracious souls, being sensible of the poison and venom of sin, run from the creatures, which are but as thorns and thickets; and run over their own duties and righteousness, which are but as pleasant pastures—to come to Christ the fountain of life—that they may drink of those waters of consolation, of those wells of salvation which are in Him, and cast up and cast out their spiritual poison, and be cured forever.

Believers know that their sins do most pierce and grieve the Lord. The sins of God's people, provoke Him most, and sadden Him most—and this makes them sigh and groan it out, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Rom 7:24

If a snake were to sting your dearly beloved spouse to death—would you preserve it alive, warm it by the fire, and hug it in your bosom? Would you not rather stab it with a thousand wounds?

When Brutus went to stab Julius Caesar, he cried out, "What, you my son Brutus!" So may God well cry out, "What, you My son! What, will you stab Me with your sins! Is it not enough that others stab My honor? but will you, My son?"

You are wise, and know how to apply it.

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Grace, grace!

"That no flesh should glory in His presence." 1Co 1:29

God does not look for any goodness or merit in the creature to draw His love—but He will justify, pardon, and save for His name's sake. All the motives which move God to show mercy are in His own bosom.

Salvation is only from free grace, and not from anything good in us, or done by us.

God is free to bestow His promises upon whomever He pleases. He often steps over the rich, and chooses the poor; He often steps over the learned, and chooses the ignorant; He often steps over the strong, and chooses the weak; He often steps over the sweet nature, and chooses the wicked nature; He often steps over the noble, and chooses the vile; etc., that no flesh may glory, and that all may shout out "Grace, grace!"

"By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1Co 15:10 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Devour me, devour me!

Assurance will sweeten the thoughts of death—and all the aches, pains, weaknesses, sicknesses, and diseases—which are the forerunners of death; yes, it will make a man look and long for death.

Nazianzen said to the king of terrors, "Devour me, devour me! Death cures all diseases, the aching head, and the unbelieving heart!"

Assurance makes a man smile upon the king of terrors. The assured soul knows that death shall be the funeral of . . . all his sins, all his sorrows, all his afflictions, all his temptations.

He knows that death shall be the resurrection of his joys. He knows that death is both an outlet and an inlet; an outlet to sin; and an inlet to the soul's clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God! And this makes the assured soul to sing it sweetly out, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? "I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!" "Make haste, my beloved." "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

Now death is more desirable than life. Now says the soul, "let him fear death, who is averse to go to Christ."

The Persians had a certain day in the year, in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures. The assured Christian knows that the day of death will be such a day to him—and that makes death lovely and desirable. He knows that sin was the midwife which brought death into the world; and that death shall be the grave to bury sin. And therefore death is not a terror—but a delight unto him. He fears it not as an enemy—but welcomes it as a friend.

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Pambus wept when he saw a harlot

What labor and pains worldlings take to obtain the vain things of this life—to obtain the poor things of this world, which are but shadows and dreams, and mere nothings!

Oh! how should this stir and provoke Christians to be up and doing, to labor as for life—to make sure of spiritual and eternal things! Is earth better than heaven? No! Oh then be ashamed, Christians, that worldlings are more studious and industrious to obtain pebbles, than you are to obtain pearls! They labor to obtain those things which at last will be their burden, their bane, their plague, their hell. You are to labor to obtain those things which will be your joy and crown in life, in death, and in the day of judgment.

Pambus wept when he saw a harlot dressed with much care and cost—partly to see one take so much pains to go to hell; and partly because he had not been so careful to please God, as she had been to please her sluttish lovers.

Ah, Christians! what great reason have you to sit down and weep bitterly—that worldlings take so much pains to make themselves miserable—and that you have taken no more pains to get more of Christ into your hearts!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The mortifying of your darling sins

Most professing Christians have not the right art of mortifying sin. All their attempts are to hide a lust, not to quench it.

A great motive to provoke you to the mortifying of your darling sins, is solemnly to consider, that the conquest and effectual mortifying of one bosom sin, will yield a Christian more glorious joy, comfort, and peace—than ever he has found in the gratifying and committing of all other sins.

The pleasure and sweetness which follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness which is in the gratifying of sin. The joy which attends the subduing of sin—is a noble joy, a pure joy, a special joy, an increasing joy, and a lasting joy. But that joy which attends the committing of sin—is an ignoble joy, a corrupt joy, a decreasing joy, a dying joy.

The truth is—if there were the least real joy in sin, there could be no hell-torments, where men shall most totally sin, and be most totally tormented with their sin.

Ah! Christians, be restless, until, in the spirit and power of Jesus, you have brought under control, that sin which sticks so close unto you!

Remember this, nothing below the conquest of bosom sins can make a jubilee in the heart. It is not a man's whining and complaining over sin—but his mortifying of sin, which will make his life a paradise of pleasure!

If, notwithstanding all that has been said, you are still resolved to dally with sin, then you must resolve to live as a stranger to God; you must expect sad trials without, and sore troubles within; this shall be your just wages for playing with sin! If you like the wages, then dally with sin still; if otherwise, then sacrifice your Isaac!

Ah! souls, of all unpardoned sins, your bosom sins will be presented by God, conscience, and Satan at last—as the most filthy and ugly, as the most terrible and dreadful. Your bosom sins at last will appear to be those monsters, those fiends of hell—which have most provoked God against you, which have shut up Christ's affections of love and compassion from you, which have armed conscience against you, which have barred the gates of glory against you, which have prepared the hottest place in hell for you, and which have given Satan the greatest advantage eternally to triumph over you!

~~~~~ The unsearchable riches of Christ!

There is everything in Christ to encourage the greatest sinners to believe on Him, to rest and lean upon Him for all happiness and blessedness. Christ is . . .the greatest good, the choicest good, the chief good, the most suitable good, the most necessary good; a pure good, a real good, a total good, an eternal good, a soul-satisfying good!

Sinners, are you poor? Christ has gold to enrich you.

Are you naked? Christ has royal robes, and white clothing to clothe you.

Are you blind? Christ has eye-salve to enlighten you.

Are you hungry? Christ will be manna to feed you.

Are you thirsty? He will be a well of living water to refresh you.

Are you wounded? He has a balm under his wings to heal you.

Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you.

Are you prisoners? He has laid down a ransom for you.

"The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Eph 3:8 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Peccatum est Deicidium

"The deceitfulness of sin." Heb 3:13

Sin . . . has its original from a deceitful subtle serpent, is the ground of all the deceit in the world, is the great deceiver of souls.

Sin . . . debases the soul of man, defiles and pollutes the soul of man, renders the soul most unlike to God, who is the best and greatest; renders the soul most like to Satan, who is a very sea and sink of sin!

Sin robs the soul of . . . the image of God, the holiness of God, the beauty of God, the glory of God, the righteousness of God.

Sin is peccatum est Deicidium—a killing of God!

"But they kept shouting—Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Luk 23:21 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Whining and whimpering?

"My Beloved is mine, and I am His!" Song of Solomon 2:16

"I know," says the spouse, "that Jesus Christ is mine! I can with the greatest confidence and boldness affirm it. He is . . . my Head, my Husband, my Lord, my Redeemer, my Justifier, my Savior. And I am His! I am sure that I am His. I am His by purchase; I am His by conquest; I am His by election; I am His by covenant; I am His by marriage; I am wholly His; I am specially His; I am universally His; I am eternally His!"

A well-grounded assurance will make a man . . . patient in waiting, courageous in doing, cheerful in suffering. It will make a heaven in a man's heart—on this side heaven; and make him go singing into paradise, despite all of life's calamities and miseries—as he realizes that he is . . . everlastingly chosen and beloved of God, that God's heart is set upon him, that his name is written in the book of life, that there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, and that nothing shall be able to separate him from Him who is his light, his life, his crown, his all in all.

Ah, Christians! only remember what Christ has done for you, and what He is still a-doing for you in heaven, and what He will do for you to all eternity—and you will not be able to spend your days in whining and whimpering.

Christians, your mercies are greater than your miseries! One hour's being in the bosom of Christ, will recompense you for all your trouble and travail on earth! Why, then, do you spend more time in sighing, than in rejoicing?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A precious commodity in hell

Most men spend the greatest part of their time on things that are that are of little or no value; as Domitian, the Roman emperor, who spent his time in catching of flies.

Make a speedy and a thorough improvement of all opportunities of grace and mercy. Do not trifle away your golden seasons. You have much work to do in a short time. You have . . . a God to honor, a race to run, a crown to win, a hell to escape, a heaven to obtain, weak graces to strengthen, strong corruptions to weaken, many temptations to withstand, afflictions to bear, many mercies to improve, and many services to perform, etc.

He who neglects a golden opportunity, does but create to himself a great deal of misery.

"Time," says Bernard, "would be a precious commodity in hell, and the use of it most gainful; where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds if he had them."

When men trifle away their precious time, and golden opportunities, playing and toying with this vanity and that vanity; we may ask whether these men have—no Christ, no Scripture, no promises, no blessed experiences, no hopes of heavenly glories—to enjoy and take delight in?

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A very little worm

A well-grounded assurance is always attended with humility.

David, under assurance, cries out, "I am a worm and no man!" The Hebrew word which is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, which a man can hardly see or perceive. Psa 22:6. Abraham, under assurance, cries out, that he is but "dust and ashes!" Jacob, under assurance, cries out, "I am not worthy of all the faithfulness and unfailing love You have shown to me!" Job, under assurance, "abhors himself in dust and ashes!" Moses had the honor and the happiness to speak with God "face to face;" and yet "Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth." Num 12:3. The great apostle Paul, under all the revelations and glorious manifestations of God to him, counts himself "less than the least of God's people." Eph 3:8.

That is mere presumption, that is a delusion of the devil, and no sound assurance—which puffs and swells the souls of men with pride; which makes men prize themselves above others, above the value which God has put upon them.

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The regal gate

"Pray without ceasing." 1Th 5:17

A man may always pray habitually; he may have his heart in a praying disposition in all estates and conditions, in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, in wealth and wants, in life and death. The Christian needs . . . mercy to pardon him, grace to purify him, balm to heal him, divine favor to comfort him, power to support him, wisdom to counsel him, goodness to satisfy him.

Our daily weaknesses, our daily wants, our daily fears, our daily dangers, our daily temptations, etc., call for our daily prayers.

Prayer is the regal gate by which the Lord enters into the heart, comforting, quieting, strengthening, quickening, and raising of it. By it, faith is increased, hope strengthened, the spirit exhilarated, the heart pacified, the conscience purified, temptations vanquished, corruptions weakened, the affections inflamed, the will more renewed, and the whole man more advantaged.

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Birds' nests

Saving faith will make a man set his feet, where other men sets their hearts. Faith looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon the things of this world. "What," says faith, "are earthly treasures, compared to the treasures of heaven? What are stones compared to silver; dross compared to gold; darkness compared to light; hell compared to heaven? No more," says faith, "What are all the treasures, pleasures, and delights of this world—compared to the influences of God's grace?"

Faith will make a man write 'worthless' upon the best of worldly things; it will make a man trample upon the pearls of this world, as upon dross and dirt, Heb 11:24-26. Faith deadens a man's heart to the things of this world: "I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me," says Paul, Php 3:8; Gal 6:14. "This world," says faith, "is not my house, my habitation, my home; I look for a better country, for a better city, for a better home," 2Co 5:1-2. He who is the heir to a crown, a kingdom—looks with an eye of scorn and disdain upon everything below a kingdom, below a crown. Faith tells the soul that it has a crown, a kingdom in reversion; and this makes the soul to scorn the things of this world, 2Ti 4:8.

The view of Lucian is very interesting, who, going to the top of a high mountain, saw all the affairs of men, and looked on their greatest, richest, and most glorious cities, as little birds' nests! Faith sets the soul upon the hill of God, the mountain of God, which is a high mountain; and from thence, faith gives the soul a sight, a prospect of all things here below. And, ah! how like birds' nests do all the riches, honors, and glories of this world look and appear to those whom faith has set upon God's high hill. Faith set Moses high, it set him among invisibles; and that made him look upon all the treasures, pleasures, riches, and glories of Egypt, as little birds' nests, as molehills, as dross and dirt, as things that were too little and too low for him to set his heart upon. Truly, when once faith has given a man a sight, a prospect of heaven, all things on earth will be looked upon as little and despised.

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In the beams of this heavenly light

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—and I am the worst of them." 1Ti 1:15

Divine and heavenly knowledge brings a man near to God; it gives a man the clearest and fullest sight of God; and the nearer any man comes to God, and the clearer visions he has of God, the more low and humble will that man lie before God. None so humble as those who have nearest communion with God. The angels that are near unto Him cover their faces with their wings, in token of humility. Divine knowledge makes a man look inwards; it anatomizes a man to himself; it is a mirror which shows a man the spots of his own soul, and this makes him little and low in his own eyes.

In the beams of this heavenly light, a Christian comes to see his own . . . pride, ignorance, impatience, unworthiness, conceitedness, worthlessness, frowardness nothingness.

That knowledge which swells you with self importance, will undo you. That knowledge which puffs you with pride, will sink you. That knowledge which makes you delightful in your own eyes, will make you despicable in God's eyes.

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The scholar's knowledge

What is the scholar's knowledge of the strength, riches, glories, and sweetness of far countries, obtained by maps and books—compared to their knowledge, who daily see and enjoy those things?

Truly, that knowledge which is only notional, speculative, and general; which is gathered out of books, discourses, and other outward advantages, is such a knowledge that will make men sit down in hell, as it did Judas, Demas, the scribes and pharisees, etc.

A man who has that experimental knowledge which accompanies salvation, will from his experience tell you, that sin is the greatest evil in the world—for he has found it so, Rom 7:1-25; that Christ is the one thing necessary—for he has found Him so, Psa 27:4; that the favor of God is better than life—for he has found it so, Psa 63:3; that pardoning mercy alone makes a man happy—for he has found it so, Psa 32:1-2; that a wounded spirit is such a burden that none can bear—for he has found it so, Pro 18:14; that a humble and a broken heart is an acceptable sacrifice to God—for he has found it so, Psa 51:17; that the promises are precious pearls—for he has found them so, 2Pe 1:4; that the smiles of God will make up the lack of any outward mercies—for he has found it so, Psa 4:6-7; that only communion with God can make a heaven in a believer's heart—for he has found it so, Psa 48:10; that if the Spirit is pleased and obeyed, He will be a comforter to the soul—for he has found it so, John 16:7; but if His motions and laws are slighted and neglected, He will stand far off from the soul, He will vex and gall the soul—for he has found it so, Lam 1:16; Isa 63:10-11.

That knowledge which is not experimental, will only increase your guilt and torment, as it did the Scribes' and Pharisees'.

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I am about to desecrate My sanctuary

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am about to desecrate My sanctuary—the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection." Eze 24:21 Many are much in and for church ordinances and activities, whose hearts are very carnal, and whose lives are very vain.

It is nothing to be much in those religious duties and performances wherein the worst of sinners may go beyond the best of saints. The most refined hypocrites labor only to be seen by others in their praying, fasting, talking, hearing, giving, etc. Let them have but man's eye to see them, and man's ear to hear them, and man's tongue to commend them, and man's hand to reward

them—and they will sit down and bless themselves.

They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her melody. But when she perceives that she has any auditors, or is near houses, then she composes herself more harmoniously and elegantly. Truly, this is the frame and temper of the best of hypocrites.

"My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice! With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice." Eze 33:31-32.

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Because you ate the loaves

"Unto you therefore who believe, He is precious." 1Pe 2:7

Christ is only precious to those who believe.

As Christ is the Father's chief jewel, so He is your choicest jewel, is He not? Yes!

The true Christian prizes Christ . . . above all duties, above all privileges, above all mercies, above all graces, above all contentments, above all his enjoyments.

The true believer loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for His personal excellencies.

What Alexander said of his two friends, is applicable to many in our day; says he, "Hæhestion loves me as I am Alexander; but Craterus loves me as I am King Alexander." One loved him for his person, the other for the benefits he received from him.

So true Christians love Christ for His person, for His personal excellency, for His personal beauty, for His personal glory. They see those perfections of grace and holiness in Christ, which render Him very lovely and desirable in their eyes; though they should never get a kingdom, nor a crown by it. But most of those who profess to belong to Christ, do it only in respect of the benefits they hope to receive from Him. When one asked Cato's daughter why she would not marry again, she being young when her husband died, answered, 'Because she could not find a man that loved her more than her goods.' Few there are, who love Christ more than His benefits.

"I tell you the truth, you are looking for Me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill." John 6:26

It was Augustine's complaint of old, that 'scarcely any love Christ, but for His benefits.' Few follow Him for love; but many follow Him for loaves. Few follow Him for His inward excellencies, many follow Him for their outward advantages. Few follow him that they may be made godly by him; but many follow him that they may be great by him.

Certainly, you are the bosom friends of Christ, you are in the very heart of Christ—who prize Christ above all. This is a work too high and too hard, too great and too noble, for all who are not true Christians, who are not twice born, who are not of the blood-royal, who are not partakers of the divine nature.

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Totes oculus

They say of the nightingale, that when she is solitary in the woods, she is careless of her melody; but when she perceives that she has any auditors, or is near houses—then she composes herself more harmoniously and elegantly. Truly, this is the frame and temper of the best of hypocrites.

Oh! but a sincere Christian labors in all places, and in all times, to approve himself to God. He labors as much to approve himself to God in a forest, where no eye sees him—as he does when the eyes of thousands are fixed upon him.

The sun would shine bright, though all men were asleep at high noon, and no eyes open to see the glory of his beams. Just so, a sincere heart will shine, he will labor to do good; though all the world should shut their eyes; yet he will eye his work, and eye his God. He knows that God is totes oculus—all eye, and therefore he cares not though others have never an eye to observe him, to applaud him. Let God but secretly whisper to him in the ear, and say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" and it is enough to his soul, enough to satisfy him, enough to cheer him, and enough to encourage him in the ways and the work of his God.

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You take the goods

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" Psa 42:1-2

The rattle without the breast, will not satisfy the child, the house without the husband, will not satisfy the wife, the cabinet without the jewel, will not satisfy the maiden, nor will the world without Christ, satisfy the soul.

The hungry soul will not be put off with any bread but with the bread of life; the thirsty soul will not be put off with any water but with the wellsprings of life.

As the king of Sodom said once, "You take the goods, give me the people," Gen 14:21. Just so, says the hungry soul, "You take the goods—take your honors, and riches, and the favor of creatures, take the grain, the oil, and the wine; give me Christ, give me the light of His countenance, give me the joy of His Spirit, etc."

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The world and I am well agreed

Assurance will keep the heart from an inordinate running out after the world, and the glory thereof. Moses, having an assurance of the recompense of reward, and of God's love and favor, could not be drawn by all the honors, pleasures, and treasures of Egypt. He slights all, and tramples upon all the glory of the world, as men trample upon things of no worth, Heb 11:24-27.

So after Paul had been in the third heaven, and had assurance that nothing should separate him from the love of God in Christ, he looks upon the world as a crucified thing: "The world is crucified to me," says he, 2Co 12:1-3, and Rom 8:38; "and I am crucified unto the world," Gal 6:14. The

world is dead to me, and I am dead to it: the world and I am well agreed—the world cares not a pin for me, and I care not a pin for the world.

I have read of Lazarus, that after he was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile. The assurance that he had of more glorious things, deadened his heart to the things of this world; he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. Ah! were there more assurance among Christians, there would not be such tugging for the world, and such greedy hunting and pursuing after it, as is in these days, to the dishonor of God, the reproach of Christ, and the shame of the gospel.

So when God gave Galeacius, that Italian marquis, an assurance of everlasting happiness, he withstood many golden temptations, and cried out, 'Cursed be he who prefers all the glory of the world to one day's communion with Christ!'

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He strives to make all as miserable and unhappy as himself

Satan knows that assurance is the Christian's . . . manna in a wilderness, water out of a rock, a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He knows that assurance is . . . a salve for all sores, a medicine for all diseases, a remedy against every malady. He knows that assurance is the Christian's . . . anchor at sea, shield upon land; staff to support him, sword to defend him, pavilion to hide him, cordial to cheer him. And therefore it is that he labors, both as a lion and as a serpent, to keep poor souls from a well-grounded assurance.

This son of the morning has fallen from the top of glory to the bottom of misery, and therefore he strives to make all as miserable and unhappy as himself.

Ah! Christians, have not you need to seek assurance with all your might, who have to do with so mighty an adversary, who cares not what torments he heaps upon himself, so that he may prove your tormentor, by keeping your souls and assurance asunder? Oh that this very consideration might make you restless, until you have got this "white stone" in your bosoms!

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Be strong and courageous

God is glorious in power, and wonderful in counsel, and infinite in mercy, and admirable in goodness, and rich in grace, and unsearchable in understanding.

"I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous." Jos 1:5-6

When God puts His people upon weighty services, He assures them of His presence, and of His assistance. He assures them that He will stand by them, and strengthen them, and support them, and uphold them. He assures them that . . . His power should be theirs to defend them, His wisdom should be theirs to direct them, His goodness should be theirs to supply them, His grace should be theirs to heal them, His mercy should be theirs to pardon them, His joy should be theirs to strengthen them, His promise should be theirs to cheer them, His Spirit should be theirs to lead them.

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The chief

"My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand." Song of Solomon 5:10

Christ is the chief good.

All good is in the chief good.

Christ is all things to Christians. He is . . . bread to feed them, a fountain to refresh them, a physician to heal them, a rock to shelter them, a light to guide them, and a crown to crown them!

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A kind of omnipotency in it

Faith is an appropriating grace.

Faith looks upon God, and says with David, "This God is my God forever and ever, and He shall be my guide unto the death."

Faith looks upon Christ, and says with the spouse, "I am my beloved's, and His desire is towards me."

Faith looks upon an immortal crown, and says "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of glory."

Faith looks upon the righteousness of Christ, and says, "This righteousness is mine to cover me."

Faith looks upon the mercy of Christ, and says, "This mercy is mine to pardon me."

Faith looks upon the power of Christ, and says, "This power is mine to support me."

Faith looks upon the wisdom of Christ, and says, "This wisdom is mine to direct me."

Faith looks upon the blood of Christ, and says, "This blood is mine to save me."

Faith has a kind of omnipotency in it; it is able to do all things.

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Books may preach . . . when the author cannot, when the author may not, when the author dares not, yes, and which is more, when the author is not.

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A heaven here and a heaven hereafter

To be in a state of true grace, is to be miserable no more; it is to be happy forever. A soul in this state is a soul near and dear to God. It is a soul much beloved, and very highly valued by God. It is a soul housed in God. It is a soul safe in God's everlasting arms. The being in a state of grace makes a man's condition happy, safe, and sure.

But the seeing, the knowing of himself to be in such a state, is that which renders his life sweet and comfortable. The being in a state of grace will yield a man a heaven hereafter; but the seeing of himself in this state will yield him both a heaven here and a heaven hereafter. It will render him doubly blessed—blessed in heaven, and blessed in his own conscience.

Assurance is the beauty and apex of a Christian's happiness in this life. It is usually attended with the strongest joy, with the sweetest comforts, and with the greatest peace. It is a pearl that most want—a crown that few wear. His state is safe and happy, whose soul is adorned with grace, though he sees it not, though he knows it not. To have grace, and to be sure that we have grace, is heaven on this side heaven.

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A commentary upon Christ's life

"Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Mat 5:16

Christians are distinguished from all others, by their lives and by their examples.

Be exemplary to those among whom you live.

Precepts may instruct, but examples persuade.

Truly, your examples will have a very great influence upon those who are under you. Therefore you had need be angelic in your walkings and actings. You are lights upon a hill, and therefore every eye will be upon you. Those who can find no ears to hear what you say, will find many eyes to see what you do. Oh therefore, be exemplary both in lip and life, in word and work. Oh see that your lives are a commentary upon Christ's life.

"Leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps." 1Pe 2:21

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Feast the slave, and starve the wife?

Make it more and more your chief work to make plentiful provisions for the eternal welfare of your souls. Your souls are more worth than ten thousand worlds. All is well—if your soul is well. If that is safe, all is safe. If that is lost, all is lost—God, Christ, and glory is lost—if the soul is lost.

Is it madness to feast the slave, and starve the wife? and is it not greater madness to feast the body and starve the soul? to make liberal provision for the body, and none for the soul? Do not they deserve double damnation, who prefer their bodies above their souls? Before all, and above all—look to your souls, watch your souls, make provision for your souls. When this is done—all is done. Until this is done, there is nothing done which will yield a man comfort in life, joy in death, and boldness before the judgment.

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Two heavens

Communion with God is that which will make you stand fast, and triumph over all enemies, difficulties, dangers, and deaths. Communion with God will make a man as courageous and bold as a lion, yes, as a young lion which is fearless of any creature.

Communion is a reciprocal exchange between Christ and a gracious soul. Communion is Jacob's ladder, where you have Christ sweetly descending down into the soul—and the soul by divine

influences sweetly ascending up to Christ.

Communion with God is . . . a shield upon land, an anchor at sea, a sword to defend you, a staff to support you, balm to heal you, a cordial to strengthen you.

High communion with Christ will yield you two heavens, a heaven upon earth, and a heaven after death.

He enjoys nothing, who lacks communion with God. He lacks nothing, who enjoys communion with God. Therefore above all gettings, get communion with Christ; and above all keepings, keep communion with Christ. All other losses are not comparable to the loss of communion with Christ. He who has lost his communion, has lost his comfort, his strength, his all, and it will not be long before the Philistines capture him, and put out his eyes, and bind him with fetters of brass, and make him grind in a prison, as they did Samson, in Jdg 16:20-21.

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Take heed of tasting forbidden fruit! Remember what Adam lost by a taste!

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'God' stamped and printed upon the soul

Christians! Your happiness on earth is your holiness; and in heaven your highest happiness will be your perfect holiness.

Holiness differs nothing from happiness—but in name. Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full.

Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness.

Holiness is the very marrow and quintessence of all true religion.

Holiness is 'God' stamped and printed upon the soul.

Holiness is Christ formed in the heart.

Holiness is our light, our life, our beauty, our glory, our joy, our crown, our heaven, our all. The holy soul is happy in life, and blessed in death, and shall be transcendently glorious in the morning of the resurrection, when Christ shall say, "Lo, here am I, and My holy ones, who are My joy! Lo, here am I, and My holy ones, who are My crown! Upon the heads of these holy ones will I set an immortal crown!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ No sins of God's children, make any alteration in His love to them. Just so—none, no, not even God's sharpest dispensations, should make any alteration in our thoughts and affections towards Him.

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I have seen your tears

"This is what the Lord says—Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die. You will not recover from this illness." 2Ki 20:1

The tears of God's people have such a kind of omnipotency in them, that God Himself cannot withstand them. "I have seen your tears. I will heal you, and three days from now you will get out of bed and go to the Temple of the Lord." 2Ki 20:5

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The humble man's heart

"For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy—I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isa 57:15

God makes the humble man's heart his house to dwell in. The highest heavens and the lowest hearts are the habitations wherein the Holy One delights to dwell. Now this phrase, "I will dwell with the humble," includes several things:

1. It includes God's superintending the humble.
2. It includes God's assisting and strengthening of the humble.
3. It includes God's protection; I will dwell with the humble, that is, I will protect him and secure him, Job 22:29.
4. It includes God's sympathizing with the humble.
5. It includes God's applying all suitable good to the humble, Isa 57:18, and Isa 63:9.
6. It includes God's ruling and overruling the heart and the affections of the humble.
7. It includes God's teaching and instructing of the humble.
8. Lastly, it includes and takes in a clearer, a fuller, and a larger manifestation and communication of God to humble souls.

"Ah!" says God, "I will dwell with the humble; that is, I will more richly, more abundantly, and more gloriously manifest and make known My grace and glory, My goodness and sweetness, My loving-kindness and tenderness—to humble souls!"

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What He has done for my soul

"Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what He has done for my soul." Psa 66:16

I will acquaint you with the soul blessings, with the soul favors, which God has crowned me with.

I was darkness—but He has made me light.

I was unrighteousness—but He has made me righteous.

I was deformed—but He has made me complete.

I was full of sores, and spots, and blemishes—but He has washed me, and made me all fair, without spot or wrinkle.

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Soul-purifying

"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure." 1Jn 3:3

True hope is soul-purifying. It runs out into holiness. He who has the purest and strongest hopes of being saved, is most studious and laborious to be sanctified.

Now hope purifies the heart and life thus—by keeping the purest objects, as God, Christ, the word, and the soul together; and by making the soul serious and conscientious in the use of all soul-purifying means; and by being a fire in the soul to burn up all those corruptions and principles of darkness which are contrary to that purity and glory, which hope has in her eye; and by working the soul to lean upon Christ, to live in Christ, and to draw purifying virtue from Christ—who is the spring and fountain of all purity and sanctity. And thus hope purifies those who expect to be like Christ in glory.

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That rich and royal robe

"I desire to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." Php 3:9

Paul would not be found in a legal righteousness, for he knew all his legal righteousness was but as "filthy rags." All his legal righteousness, sewed together, would but make up a coat of patches, a beggar's coat, which is good for nothing but to be cast away; therefore he desired to be found in the righteousness of Christ by faith. He knew that Christ's righteousness was . . . a pure righteousness, a spotless righteousness, a matchless righteousness, a complete righteousness, a perfect righteousness, an absolute righteousness, a glorious righteousness.

Faith loves to fix her eye upon that rich and royal robe, that blameless and spotless righteousness of Christ, with which the soul stands gloriously clothed before God, as being all beautiful, as being without spot or wrinkle in the divine account.

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Divine knowledge

"The discerning heart seeks knowledge." Pro 15:14

Saving knowledge is always attended with holy endeavors, and with heavenly desires, thirstings, and pantings after a further knowledge of God, after clearer visions of God. The Hebrew word that is here rendered "seeks" signifies an earnest and diligent seeking; to seek as a hungry man seeks for food; or as a covetous man for gold—the more he has, the more he desires; or as a condemned man seeks for his pardon; or as the diseased man seeks for his cure. The word signifies to seek studiously, laboriously, industriously; to seek by pleading, praying, inquiring, and

searching up and down, that we may find what we seek; to seek as men do for hidden treasure. A man who is divinely taught, will set his heart and his ear, his inward and outward man, to know more and more.

Divine knowledge is marvelous, sweet, pleasing, comforting, satisfying, refreshing, strengthening, and supporting; and souls who have found the sweetness and usefulness of it, cannot but look and long, breathe and pant after more and more of it. The newborn babe does not more naturally and more earnestly long for the breasts, than a soul who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, does long for more and more tastes of God.

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Preach forth the virtues of Christ

"For you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, His very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness (or virtues) of God, for He called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light." 1Pe 2:9

When God causes His divine light, His marvelous light, to shine in upon the soul, then a Christian will preach forth the virtues of Christ in an imitable practice; and until then a man, under all other knowledge, will remain an incarnate devil.

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Oh dash these brats of Babylon in pieces!

"Cleanse me from secret faults." Psa 19:12

The Christian's greatest and hottest conflicts, are against those inward pollutions, and secret sins, which are only obvious to the eye of God and their own souls.

The hypocrite combats with those sins which are obvious to every eye. But it must be a supernatural power and principle, which puts men upon conflicting with the inward motions and secret operations of sin.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom 7:24. A sincere heart weeps and laments bitterly over those secret and inward corruptions, which others will scarcely acknowledge to be sins.

The Persian kings reign powerfully, and yet are seldom seen in public. Secret sins reign in many men's souls powerfully and dangerously, when least apparently.

Oh! but a true Christian mourns over the inward motions and first risings of sin in his soul, and so prevents an eternal danger. Upon every stirring of sin in the soul, the believer cries out, "O Lord, help! O Lord, undertake for me! Oh dash these brats of Babylon in pieces! Oh stifle the first motions of sin, that they may never conceive and bring forth!"

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His angelic robes

A hidden enemy is far worse than an open enemy.

The devil has put his angelic robes upon many of his chief agents, that they may the more easily and the more effectually deceive and delude the souls of men.

Ah! what multitudes are there, that to some bleary eyes appear as angels of light, and yet in their principles and practices are but servants to the prince of darkness, laboring with all their might to make proselytes for hell, Mat 23:15, and to draw men to those wild notions, opinions, and conceits which will leave them short of heaven, yes, bring them down to the hottest, darkest, and lowest place in hell, if God does not prevent it by a miracle of grace.

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Vincentius

Vincentius, by his patience and constancy in suffering, angered his tormentors. Therefore they stripped him stark naked, whipped his body all over to a bloody gore, sprinkled salt and vinegar over all his wounds, set his feet on burning coals, then cast him naked into a loathsome dungeon, the pavement whereof was sharp shells, and his bed to lie on a bundle of thorns. All which this blessed martyr received, without so much as a groan!

Persecution brings death in one hand and life in the other; for while it kills the body it crowns the soul.

The most cruel martyrdom is but a detour to escape death, to pass from life to life, from the prison to paradise, from the cross to the crown!

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Such a smoke in the soul

A man may have true grace and yet lack assurance, and this may arise from that smoke and clouds, those fears and doubts which corruption raises in the soul. Just so, that the soul cannot see those excellent graces which otherwise might be discerned. Though there may be many precious gems and jewels in the house, yet the smoke may hinder a man from seeing them sparkle and shine. So though there may be many precious graces in the souls of saints, yet corruption may raise such a dust, such a smoke in the soul, that the soul is not able to see them in the beauty and glory.

The well of water was near Hagar—but she saw it not until her eyes were opened by the Lord, Gen 21:19-20. So grace is near the soul, yes, in the soul sometimes, and yet the soul does not see it, until God opens the eye and shows it. "The Lord was in this place," says Jacob, "and I knew it not." So many a precious soul may say, grace was in my heart, and I knew it not, I saw it not.

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Satan promises the best

Satan promises the best—but pays with the worst!

He promises honor—and pays with disgrace!

He promises pleasure—and pays with pain!

He promises profit—and pays with loss!

He promises life—and pays with death!

But God pays as he promises, all His payments are made in pure gold.

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As the bee does upon the flower

Let your hearts dwell on truth, as the bee does upon the flower; every Scriptural truth being a flower of paradise, which is more worth than a world.

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Suffering times

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven!" Mat 5:11-12.

Suffering times are times wherein the Lord is pleased to give His people some sense of His favor. When they are in sufferings for righteousness' sake, for the gospel's sake—then usually God causes His face to shine upon them. Now they shall hear best news from heaven—when they hear worst from earth. God loves to smile most upon His people when the world frowns most. When the world puts their iron chains upon their legs, then God puts His golden chains about their necks. When the world puts a bitter cup into their hands, then God drops some of His honey, some of His goodness and sweetness into it. When the world is ready to stone them, then God gives them the white stone. When the world is a-tearing their good names, then He gives them a new name, that none knows but he who has it, a name that is better than that of sons and daughters. When the world cries out, "Crucify them, crucify them," then they hear that sweet voice from heaven, "These are My beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased." When the world clothes them with rags, then the Lord puts on His royal robes, and makes a secret proclamation to their spirits, "Thus shall it be done to the men whom the King is pleased to honor." When the world gives into one hand a cup of water, God gives into the other a cup of nectar, a cup of ambrosia. When the world gnashes upon them, and presents all tortures before them, then the Lord opens paradise to them, as He did to Stephen.

When Paul and Silas were in prison for the gospel's sake, then God fills them with such unspeakable joy, that they cannot but be singing when others were sleeping, Acts 16:23-24. God turns their prison into a palace, a paradise; and they turn His mercies into praises. Paul and Silas found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more sweet than bitter, more day than night—in the prison.

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It will suck sweetness out of every flower

Faith is the key which unlocks paradise, and lets in a flood of joy into the soul. Faith is an appropriating grace, it appropriates all to itself; it looks upon God, and says with the psalmist, "This God is my God forever and ever," Psa 63:1, and Psa 48:14. It looks upon Christ and says, "My

beloved is mine, and His desires are towards me," Song of Solomon 7:10. It looks upon the precious promises and says, These "precious promises" are mine, 2Pe 1:4. It looks upon heaven and says, "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," 2Ti 4:8; and this fills the soul with joy and peace.

Faith has an influence upon other graces, it is like a silver thread that runs through a chain of pearl, it puts strength and vivacity into all other virtues. It made Abraham to rejoice; and it made Noah sit still and quiet in the midst of a deluge.

Faith is the first pin which moves the soul; it is the spring in the watch which sets all the golden wheels of love, joy, comfort, and peace a-going. Faith is a root-grace, from whence springs all the sweet flowers of joy and peace.

Faith is like the bee, it will suck sweetness out of every flower; it will extract . . . light out of darkness, comforts out of distresses, mercies out of miseries, wine out of water, honey out of the rock, meat out of the eater, Jdg 14:14.

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02.07. Holiness

HOLINESS, the Only Way to Happiness The Necessity, Excellency, Rarity, and Beauty of Holiness Thomas Brooks, 1662

CHOICE QUOTES

All the sins of the saints

"We know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28

All the afflictions, and all the temptations, and all the desertions, and all the oppressions, and all the oppositions, and all the persecutions—which befall a godly man, shall work for his good.

Every cross, and every loss, and every disease—which befall the holy man, shall work for his good.

Every device, every snare, every deceit, every depth, every stratagem, and every enterprise of Satan against the holy man, shall work for his good.

They shall all help to make him . . . more humble, more holy, more heavenly,
more spiritual, more faithful, more fruitful, more watchful.

Every prosperity and every adversity; every storm and every calm; every bitter and every sweet; every cross and every comfort— shall work for the holy man's good.

When God gives a mercy—that shall work for his good. When God takes away a mercy—that shall work for his good.

Yes, even all the falls and all the sins of the saints shall work for their good. Oh . . . the care, the fear, the watchfulness, the tenderness, the zeal—which God raises in the souls of His saints by their very falls! Oh the hatred, the indignation, and the detestation—which God raises in the hearts of His children against sin—by their very falling into sin!

Oh what love to Christ, what thankfulness for Christ, what admiration of Christ, what cleaving to Christ, what exalting of Christ, what drawings from Christ's grace—are saints led to, by their very falls!

It is the glory of God's holiness, that . . . He can turn spiritual diseases—into holy remedies! He can turn soul poisons—into heavenly cordials! He can prevent sin by sin, and cure falling by falling!

O Christian! What though friends and relations frown upon you, what though enemies are plotting and conspiring against you, what though needs, like armed men, are breaking in upon you, what though men rage, and devils roar against you, what though sickness is devastating your family, what though death stands every day at your elbow—yet there is no reason for you to fear nor faint,

because all these things shall work for your good! Yes, there is wonderful cause of joy and rejoicing in all the afflictions and tribulations which come upon you—considering that they shall all work for your good.

O Christians! I am afraid, I am afraid—that you do not run so often as you should—to the breasts of this promise, nor draw that sweetness and comfort from it, that it would yield, and that your several cases may require. "We know that all things work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." I have been the longer upon this verse, because the condition of God's people calls for the strongest cordials, and the choicest and the sweetest comforts.

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I am not the man that I was!

All true holiness is the immediate fruit of genuine union with Christ. Christ is made not only wisdom, righteousness, and redemption—but He is also made

sanctification to us, 1Co 1:30. He who is in Christ is a new creature. He has . . . a new head, a new heart, a new lip, a new life, a new spirit, new principles, new ends. He can truly say, "I am not the man that I was! I was a lion—yet holiness has made me a lamb! I was a wolf—yet holiness has made me a sheep! I was a raven—yet holiness has made me a dove!"

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Pleasure, delight, contentment and satisfaction in God

There are no people under heaven, who take any real pleasure, delight, contentment and satisfaction in God—but those who are genuinely holy.

"How is your Beloved better than others, most beautiful of women? How is your Beloved better than others, that you charge us so?" Song of Solomon 5:9

The covetous man takes pleasure and delight in his money-bags.

The ambitious man takes pleasure and delight in his honors.

The voluptuous man takes pleasure and delight in his lusts.

The malicious man takes pleasure and delight in his revenge.

The envious man takes pleasure in the harms which befall others.

The drunkard takes pleasure and delight in his cups.

The adulterer takes pleasure and delight in his harlots.

The gamester takes pleasure and delight in his shifts and tricks.

The worldling takes pleasure in his fopperies and fooleries.

It is only the holy man who takes pleasure and delight in God. To delight and take pleasure in God, is a work too high, too hard, too spiritual, and too noble—for any but holy people!

"My Beloved is dark and dazzling, better than ten thousand others! Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Song of Solomon 5:10, Song of Solomon 5:16

"I delight greatly in the Lord! My soul rejoices in my God!" Isa 61:10

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Oh stand and wonder!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" 1Jn 3:1

O sirs! what matter of admiration is this—that the great and glorious God, who has many millions of glorious angels attending Him—that He should . . . look upon all holy people as His sons, and love them as His sons, and delight in them as His sons, and clothe them as His sons, and feed them as His sons, and

protect them as His sons!

What great love is this—that those who have . . . so highly provoked God, walked so cross and contrary to God, were so exceeding unlike God, preferred every lust, and every toy and vanity before God, fought many years under Satan's banner against God, refused all the kind offers of mercy from God; that those who have deserved to be . . . reprobated by God, damned by God, and to be thrown to hell by God—that these should be made the sons of God!

Oh stand and wonder! Oh stand and admire the freeness of His grace, and the riches of His grace!

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" 1Jn 3:1

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So blind, so deaf, so dumb, so lame, so dead

The holy Christian is the greatest miracle.

He can tell you that he was so blind—but now God has given him eyes to see sin to be the greatest evil; and Christ to be the choicest good.

He can tell you that once he was so deaf—that though God called very often and very loudly to him—by His word and by His works, by His rods at home and by His judgments abroad, and by his Spirit and conscience, which were still a-preaching in his bosom—sometimes life, sometimes death, sometimes heaven, and sometimes hell—yet he could not hear! But now God has given him a hearing ear, so that now he can with delight hear the sweet music of the promises on the one hand; and with a holy trembling listen to the voice of divine threatenings on the other hand.

He can tell you that once he was so dumb—that if he might have had the whole world, he could not have spoken a good word for God, nor for His ways, nor for His people, nor for any of His concernments. Oh! but now his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer—and he is never better, than when he is a-speaking either of God, or for God and His concerns. Now he can contend for the faith, and speak for saints. And though in some cases he may lack power to act for God—yet

he never lacks a tongue to speak for God. The spouse's lips drop honeycombs in Song of Solomon 4:11. Yes, his tongue now becomes a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinal.

He can tell you that once he was so lame—that he was not able to move one foot heaven-wards, nor Christ-wards, nor holiness-wards, etc. But now his feet delight, not only to go—but to run in all the ways of God's commands!

Yes, he can tell you that once he was so dead—as to all his soul-concerns. But now he is alive, and the life that he leads in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God, who has loved him and given Himself for him, Gal 2:20.

It was by a miracle that the Red Sea was driven back; and it is no less a miracle—to see a sinner who was accustomed to do evil—now habituated to do good.

That the tide of sin, which before did run so strong —should be so easily turned; that the sinner who, a little before was sailing hellward, and lacked neither wind nor tide to carry him there—should now suddenly alter his course, and tack about for heaven—what a miracle is this! To see . . . an earthly man become heavenly, a carnal man become spiritual, a loose man become precise, a proud man become humble, a covetous man become liberal, and a harsh man become meek, etc., is to behold the greatest of miracles!

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Worse than sodomy!

"If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town. I assure you: It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." Mat 10:14-15

Sodom and Gomorrah shall have an easier and cooler hell than such shall have—who have despised the offers of His grace, and the offers of His mercy. Contempt of Christ and His gospel—is worse than sodomy!

"Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the heavens on Sodom and Gomorrah!" Gen 19:24

The punishments of Sodom and Gomorrah, are but scratches on the hand, and flea-bitings—compared to those dreadful and astonishing judgments which God, in the great day of account, will inflict upon all Christ-refusers and gospel-despisers!

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36

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Holy, holy, holy

"Who is like You, glorious in holiness?" Exo 15:11

God is . . . infinitely holy, transcendently holy, superlatively holy, constantly holy, unchangeably holy, exemplary holy, gloriously holy.

All the holiness that is in the best and choicest Christians is but a mixed holiness, a weak and imperfect holiness. Their unholiness is always more than their holiness. Ah, what a great deal . . . of pride is mixed with a little humility, of unbelief is mixed with a little faith, of peevishness is mixed with a little meekness, of earthliness is mixed with a little heavenliness, of carnality is mixed with a little spirituality, of harshness is mixed with a little tenderness!

Oh, but the holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is a holiness without mixture; there is not the least drop or the least dreg of unholiness in God! "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." 1Jn 1:5

In God there is . . . all wisdom without any folly, all truth without any falsehood, all light without any darkness, and all holiness without any sinfulness.

God is universally holy. He is holy in all His ways, and holy in all His works.

His precepts are holy precepts, His promises are holy promises, His threatenings are holy threatenings, His love is a holy love, His anger is a holy anger, His hatred is a holy hatred, etc.

His nature is holy, His attributes are holy, His actions are all holy.

He is holy in sparing; and holy in punishing. He is holy in justifying of some;

and holy in condemning of others. He is holy in bringing some to heaven; and holy in throwing others to hell.

God is holy . . . in all His sayings, in all His doings, in whatever He puts His hand to, in whatever He sets His heart to. His frowns are holy, His smiles are holy. When He gives, His givings are holy giving; when He takes away, His takings are holy takings, etc.

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty!" Isa 6:3

God is eminently holy. He is transcendently holy. He is superlatively holy. He is glorious in holiness.

There is no fathoming, there is no measuring, there is no comprehending, there is no searching, of that infinite sea of holiness, which is in God. O sirs! you shall as soon . . . stop the sun in its course, and change the day into night, and raise the dead, and make a world, and count the stars of heaven, and empty the sea with a cockle-shell, as you shall be able either to conceive or express that transcendent holiness which is in God!

God's holiness is infinite. It can neither be . . . limited, nor lessened, nor increased.

God is the spring of all holiness and purity. All that holiness which is in angels and men flows from God, as the streams from the fountain, as the beams from the sun, as the branches from the root, as the effect from the cause. Ministers may pray that their people may be holy, parents may pray that their children may be holy; but they cannot give holiness, nor communicate holiness to their nearest and dearest relations. God alone is the giver and the author of all holiness. It is only the Holy One who can cause holiness to flow into sinners' hearts; it is only He who can form, and frame, and infuse holiness into the souls of men. A man shall sooner make a world—than he shall make another holy. It is only a holy God, who can . . . enlighten the mind, and bow the will, and melt the heart, and raise the affections, and purge the conscience, and reform the life, and put

the whole man into a holy gracious temper.

God is exemplary holy. He is the rule, example, and pattern of holiness. "Be holy, as I am holy." 1Pe 1:15. God's holiness is the copy which we must always have in our eye, and endeavor most exactly to write after.

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The best means to mortify sin

"Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry." Col 3:5

While a darling sin lives and keeps the throne in the heart, grace and holiness will be kept exceeding weak and low. But when your darling sin is dethroned and slain by the power and the sword of the Spirit—grace and holiness will quickly grow stronger and stronger, and rise higher and higher.

When a man has eaten poison, nothing will make him thrive, until he has vomited up the poison. Beloved sins—they are the poison of the soul, and until these are vomited up, and cast out by sound repentance, and the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ, the soul will never thrive in grace and holiness!

If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then fall with all your might, upon subduing and crucifying your most raging corruptions, and your most daring lusts!

Oh do not think that your golden and your silver idols will lay down their weapons, and yield the battle, and lie at your feet, and let you trample them to death—without striking a blow! Oh remember that besetting-sins will do all they can to keep their ground, and therefore you must arise with all your strength against them, and crush them to powder, and burn them to ashes!

Oh deal with your most enraged lusts, as the Philistines dealt with Samson—pluck out their eyes, and force them to grind in the mill of mortification, until their strength is utterly consumed and wasted.

I have read of five men, who being asked what was the best means to mortify sin, gave these answers.

Said the first, "The best means to mortify sin, is to meditate on death."

Said the second, "The best means to mortify sin, is to meditate on the judgment-day."

Said the third, "The best means to mortify sin, is to meditate on the joys of heaven."

Said the fourth, "The best means to mortify sin, is to meditate on the torments of hell."

Said the fifth, "The best means to mortify sin, is to meditate on the death and sufferings of Christ."

Doubtless the last man hit the nail on the head!

The daily sight of a bleeding, groaning, dying Savior—is the only thing which will subdue and mortify darling sins!

O friends! Never leave looking up to a crucified Christ, until virtue flows from Him to the crucifying of those special besetting sins which do most obstruct and hinder the growth and increase of holiness.

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Yellow and white guts and garbage

"You cannot serve both God and Money." Luk 16:13

Riches are the great god of the world, and are rather a hindrance, than a help to heaven and happiness. Gold and silver, which are but the yellow and white guts and garbage of the earth, is fitly called by the prophet, "thick clay," which will sooner break a man's back than satisfy his heart! Oh, what folly and madness is it for a man to be still a-loading of himself with the clay of this world!

The horse is loaded with rich treasure all the day long—yet when night comes he is turned into the dark stinking stable, with an empty belly, and with his back full of galls, sores, and bruises.

Just so, though vain muckworms are loaded with the treasures of this world during the day of their life—yet when the night of death comes, then they shall be turned into a dark stinking hell, with consciences full of guilt and galls, and with souls full of sores and bruises; and then what good will all their treasures do them?

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1Ti 6:9-10

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A sea of grace—or but a drop of grace

"Those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified." Rom 8:30

God's love is equal to all His saints, whether they are rich or poor, high or low, slave or free; whether they have a sea of grace—or but a drop of grace. God's love runs as much out to the weakest Christian, as it does to the strongest; as much to a babe in grace as to a giant in grace.

All saints are equally ELECTED. God never chose one man to be more a vessel of glory than another; the weakest saint is as much elected as the strongest.

All saints are equally REDEEMED by Jesus Christ. Christ bled as much for one saint as another, and He sweat as much for one saint as another, and He sighed and groaned as much for one saint as another, and He trod the wine-press of His Father's wrath as much for one saint as another. Christ paid as great a price for His lambs—as for His sheep. Christ paid as great a price for Lazarus in his rags—as for David in his royal robes.

All saints are equally EFFECTUALLY CALLED. One saint is as much called out of the kingdom of darkness as another; and one saint is as much called to Jesus Christ as another. In effectual calling, God looks with as favorable an eye upon one, as He does upon another.

All saints are equally JUSTIFIED. Though one saint may be more sanctified than another—yet no saint is more justified than another. The weakest believer is as much justified and pardoned before the throne of God as the strongest is. That pure, perfect, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ, is as much imputed to one saint as it is to another.

All saints are equally ADOPTED. The weakest believer is as much an adopted son of God, as the strongest believer in the world is. God is no more a father to one than He is to another. In human families, the babe in the mother's arms is as much a son—as he who is of riper years.

Thus you see that God's love is equal to all His saints.

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The foolish Indians

The foolish Indians preferred every toy and trifle, before their mines of gold. Just so, many foolish professors prefer the trifling vanities of this world, before the glorious treasures and endless pleasures which are at God's right hand. Witness that high price which they set upon . . . the toys, the trifles, the vanities, the empty honors, the fading riches, and the fleeting pleasures of this world!

How severely are they to be censured—who prefer the poor, base, empty nothings of this world—before all the glory and happiness of the eternal world!

Were there but more holiness in your hearts—all the mirthful and gallant things of this world, would be more contemptible in your eyes.

"Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ." Php 3:8

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A self-loather

True repentance is a daily turning of the soul further and further from sin—and a daily turning of the soul nearer and nearer to God.

True repentance includes . . . a true sense of sin, a deep sorrow for sin, a hearty loathing of sin, and a holy shame and blushing for sin.

To repent is to make . . . a clean head and a clean heart; a clean lip and a clean life.

To repent is for a man to loathe himself, as well as his sin. Is this easy for man, who is so great a self-lover, and so great a self-exalter, and so great a self-admirer—to become a self-loather? To repent is to cross sinful self, it is to walk contrary to sinful self, yes, it is to revenge a man's self upon himself.

True repentance lies in a daily dying to sin, and in a daily living to Him who lives forever.

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Hell would be the place of greatest pleasure

"They delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil." Pro 2:14

Unsanctified people . . . take pleasure in unrighteousness, rejoice to do evil,
make a sport of sin, delight to dishonor God, damn their own immortal souls.

Holiness only debars men from the sinful joys, delights, and pleasures of life.

What a mercy it is, to be taken off from that carnal mirth which ends in mourning—and from those vain delights which end in unspeakable torments—and from that foolish jollity which leads to everlasting misery!

Ah, what folly and madness it is, for men to run the hazard of losing the kingdom of heaven, and the eternal pleasures which are at God's right hand—for those short-lived pleasures which are like the early dew which soon passes away! Ah, who would endure an ocean of torture—for a drop of sensual pleasure?

All sensual pleasures . . . defile the soul, debase the soul, debauch the soul, take off the heart from God, deaden the heart towards God.

Sensual pleasures and delights cannot satisfy the soul of man; they are but frothy and flashy. They only wet the mouth—they never warm the heart. Sensual pleasures seem substantial in the pursuit—but are mere clouds in the enjoyment.

There is nothing in carnal delights, but imagination and expectation. For they can neither fill the heart, nor satisfy the heart.

O sirs, there is no real pleasure in sin! All the pleasures of sin are counterfeit pleasures; they are but the shapes and shadows of pleasure. They are the seeds of future grief; they are but a pledge laid down for sorrow or ruin. Certainly if there were the least real delight in sin—hell could never be hell. Yes, then it would follow that hell would be the place of greatest pleasure—for doubtless hell is the place of greatest sin.

Oh, don't deceive your own souls! There can be no real joy in sensual pleasures. What real delight or pleasure can there be in fooling and staggering in an ale-house or tavern; in swaggering and swearing; in dicing and carding; in dancing, partying, and whoring; in pursuing after lying vanities? Surely none! As for those seeming pleasures which attend the ways of sin—ah, how soon do they vanish and leave a sting behind them!

Look! all the pleasures which manhood takes a person off from—are babyish and toyish pleasures; such as from delighting in a rattle, a doll, a feather, a hobby-horse, a wooden sword, etc. Just so, all the pleasures and delights which holiness takes a man off from—they are babyish and foolish; yes, they are vile, dangerous, and devilish!

Holiness is only an exchange . . . of sinful delights—for those which are holy;

of carnal delights—for those which are spiritual; of earthly delights—for those which are heavenly.

He who delights in sensual pleasures shall find at last—that his greatest pleasures will become his bitterest pains!

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Head, hand, heart, lip, and life

True holiness is diffusive. It extends, diffuses, and spreads itself all over the whole person . . . the head and the heart; the lip and the life; the inside and the outside. The understanding is nourished on holiness, the mind is adorned with holiness, the will is bowed to holiness, and all the affections are sprinkled, yes, clothed with holiness— love is holy love, grief is holy grief, joy is holy joy, sorrow is holy sorrow, fear is holy fear, care is holy care, zeal is holy zeal.

Real holiness spreads itself over head, hand, heart, lip, and life.

"May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:23

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The plague of unsatisfiedness

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of covetousness; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luk 12:15

Covetousness is . . . a very great and grievous sin; a mother-sin; a breeding sin; a sin which has all sin in its womb; a very vile and heinous sin; the root of all evil.

Covetousness makes the soul earthly—which should be celestial.

Covetousness is an evil which subjects men to the basest and vilest evils.

Covetousness makes a man a fool! "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" Luk 12:20

Covetousness robs a man of all true peace, comfort, contentment and quiet.

Covetousness brings men into snares which drown their souls in perdition.

Covetousness renders men unsatisfied under all their outward enjoyments. Though a covetous wretch has enough to sink him—yet he can never have enough to satisfy him. First he wishes for a bag full, and then a chest full, and then a room full, and then a house full, etc.

The plague of unsatisfiedness—is the great plague which covetous men are under. Certainly you shall as soon fill a triangle with a circle, and a chest with grace—as you shall be able to fill and satisfy a covetous mind with money.

A covetous man is like a swine—which is good for nothing while it lives. The horse is good to carry, the ox is good to draw, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, and the dog is good to guard the house—but the hog is good for nothing while he lives! Just so, a covetous man is only serviceable when he is dead. That scripture often proves true, "the riches of a sinner are laid up for the just." Job 27:17

No sin lays men under greater woes!

"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1Ti 6:9-10

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Tears have a voice

"The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." Psa 6:8

Tears have a voice. God has an eye as well upon a man's tears—as upon his prayers. Penitent tears are divine ambassadors, which never return from the throne of grace without answers of grace. Peter said nothing, but went out and wept bitterly—and obtained mercy. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which will at last prevail for mercy.

"I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears." Isa 38:5

A sinner's face never shines so beautiful, as when it is bedewed with penitential tears.

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God's love-letter

The Scripture is God's love-letter to men. Here the lamb may wade—and here the elephant may swim!

The blessed Scriptures are of infinite worth and value! Here you may find . . .

a remedy for every disease, balm for every wound, a plaster for every sore, milk for babes, meat for strong men, comfort for the afflicted, support for the tempted, solace for the distressed, ease for the wearied, a staff to support the feeble, a sword to defend the weak.

The holy Scriptures are . . . the map of God's mercy—and man's misery, the touchstone of truth, the shop of remedies against all maladies, the hammer of vices, the treasury of virtues, the expositor of all sensual and worldly vanities, the balance of equity, the most perfect rule of all justice and honesty.

Ah, friends, no book befits your hands like the Bible!

The Bible is the best preacher. This book, this preacher will preach to you . . .

in your shops, in your chambers, in your closets, yes, in your own bosoms! This book will preach to you at home and abroad; it will preach to you in all companies; and it will preach to you in all conditions.

By this book you shall be saved—or by this book you shall be damned! By this book you must live. By this book you must die. By this book you shall be judged in the great day!

Oh, therefore . . . love this book above all other books, prize this book above all other books, read this book before all other books, study this book more than all other books! For he who reads much—and understands nothing, is like him who hunts much—and catches nothing.

"Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long!" Psa 119:97

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Spit out the sweet morsels of sin

"When He comes, He will convict the world about sin." John 16:8

A man never comes . . .to see his sins, nor to be sick of his sins, nor to loathe his sins, nor to arraign his sins, nor to condemn his sins, nor to judge himself for his sins—until he comes to be possessed by the Holy Spirit.

A man never comes . . .to spit out the sweet morsels of sin, to make a sacrifice of his only Isaac, to hack his trembling Agag in pieces, to strangle his Delilah, and in good earnest to set upon an utter extirpation of his most cherished sins—until the Spirit of holiness comes upon him. Until the Holy Spirit falls upon the hearts of sinners, they will never be turned out of . . .their pride, their formality, their carnality, their sensuality, their security.

To make a man holy—is greater than to create a world; it can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. It is the great work of the Spirit—to shape and form holiness, in all the vessels of glory.

The Spirit sweetly and strongly moves His people . . .to mind holiness, to fall in love with holiness, to press after holiness; to leave off their sins, to turn to God, to embrace Christ, to tremble at threatenings, to embrace promises.

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Murder all his hearers at once!

"The leaders of the people have led them down the path of destruction." Isa 9:16

Take heed of settling yourselves under an unholy minister—of one whose life gives the lie to his doctrine. An unholy preacher is the greatest destroyer of the souls of men! He who preaches well—but lives bad—does what he can, to

murder all his hearers at once! There is no greater bar to holiness, than ministers' unholy lives. An unholy life mars the soundest and the sweetest doctrine. The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins!

An unholy minister is the greatest pest, the worst plague, and the greatest mischief—that can be to a people; for his enormities, his wickednesses, will

have the strongest influences upon the souls and lives of men—to make them eternally miserable. His falls will be the fall and ruin of many; for people are prone to . . .live more by examples—than by precepts; mind more what the minister does—than what he says; eye more how he walks—than how he talks.

Let a minister be ever so learned, solid, quaint, elegant, zealous, judicious, sententious, etc.—yet if he is carnal, covetous, worldly, vain, and loose in his life and walk, his hearers will rather slight and abhor the holy things of God.

When the preacher departs out of the way of holiness, the people will quickly wander from all that is good. He whose life is not a standing reproof to sin, will, by his life, encourage sinners more and more in a way of sin. There is nothing which keeps men so off from the love of holiness, and from the pursuing after holiness—than the unholy lives of their ministers.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely." 1Ti 4:16

"Set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." 1Ti 4:12

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good." Tit 2:7

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Those who hunt after it are dogs!

Though of all losses, the loss of the soul is the greatest, the saddest, the sorest, the heaviest, and the most intolerable, inconceivable, and irrecoverable loss—yet a man bewitched with the world will run the hazard of losing his eternal soul, of damning it—to enjoy the world.

Men who are bewitched with this world in these days, oh, how do they prefer their sensual delights, their brutish contentments, and their carnal enjoyments—before the beauties of holiness, and before heavenly glory, where holiness sparkles and shines in all its refulgence, and where their souls might be abundantly satisfied and delighted with the most ravishing joys, the most surpassing delights, and the most transcendent pleasures which are at God's

right hand!

The Arabic proverb says that "the world is a carcass—and those who hunt after it are dogs!" If this proverb is true, what a multitude of professors will be found to be dogs—who hunt more after earth—than heaven; who hunt more after terrestrial things—than celestial things; who hunt more after worldly nothingnesses and emptinesses—than they do after those fullnesses and sweetnesses which are in God, Christ, heaven, and holiness!

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Painted holiness

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you shall receive the greater damnation." Mat 23:14

Who had a greater name for holiness, and who made a greater show of holiness, and who did more despise and insult other men for the lack of holiness—than the Scribes and Pharisees? And who so miserable now—as they?

Pretended holiness will double-damn souls at last!

None have so large a portion in hell as hypocrites have. No man at last will be found so miserable, as he who has the name of a saint upon him—but not the divine nature in him; who has a profession of holiness upon him—but no

principles of holiness in him; who has a form of godliness—but not the power; who can cry up godliness—but in practice denies it; who is a professor outwardly—but an atheist, a pagan, a devil

inwardly.

Artificial sanctity is double iniquity. He who professes piety without being pious, and godliness without being godly; he who makes counterfeit holiness a cloak to impiety, and a midwife to iniquity; he who is . . . a Jacob without—and an Esau within, a David without—and a Saul within, a John without—and a Judas within, a saint without—and a Satan within, an angel without—and a devil within, is ripened for the worst of torments!

Sirs, do not deceive your own souls! A painted sword shall as soon defend a man, and a painted mint shall as soon enrich a man, and a painted fire shall as soon warm a man, and a painted friend shall as soon counsel a man, and a painted horse shall as soon carry a man, and a painted feast shall as soon nourish a man, and a painted house shall as soon shelter a man—as a painted holiness shall save a man! He who now thinks to put off God with a painted holiness, shall not fare so well at last—as to be put off with a painted happiness. The lowest, the hottest, and the darkest habitation in hell will be his portion, whose religion lies all in shows and shadows.

Well, spiritual counterfeits, remember this—it will not be long before Christ will unmask you; before He will uncloak you; before He will disrobe you; before He will take off your masks, your cloaks, and turn your rotten insides outward—to your eternal shame and reproach before all the world!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ These Gergesites had rather lose Christ, than lose their porkers

"When they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region." Mat 8:34

A man bewitched with the world will prefer the most base and contemptible things, before the Lord Jesus Christ. He will, with the Gergesenes, prefer his swine before a Savior, Mat 8:28-34. When they saw what a sad market their

hogs were brought to, they desired Christ to depart out of their country. These Gergesites had rather lose Christ, than lose their porkers. They had rather that the devil should possess their souls—than that Jesus should drown their pigs. They prefer their swine, before their salvation! They present a wretched petition for their own damnation; they pleaded with Him to leave their region. Though there is no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell—compared to Christ's departure from a people; yet men bewitched with the world will desire this. "When they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region." Mat 8:34

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Turned into beasts, birds, stones, trees, or air

"Our God is a consuming fire." Heb 12:29

Chaff and stubble cannot stand before that God, who is a consuming fire. Oh, how will the ungodly tremble and quake when the whole frame of heaven and earth shall break in pieces, and be set in a flame about their ears! Oh, what trouble of mind, what horror and terror of conscience, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, and what gnashing of teeth, will there be among the ungodly in this day—when they shall see their sins charged upon them on the one side—and divine justice terrifying them on the other side! When they shall look upward, and there see an angry God frowning upon them; and look downward, and there see hell gaping ready to receive them; and look inward, and there find conscience accusing and gnawing of them! When they shall look on their right hand, and there behold the holy angels

standing with so many flaming swords to keep them out of heaven; and look on their left hand, and there behold the devil and his demons ready to drag them down to the lowest hell! Oh, now how will they wish for the rocks to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them! How will they wish that they had never been born; or that they might now be unborn! How will they now wish that their immortal souls were mortal; or that they might be turned into beasts, birds, stones, trees, or air—or anything rather than what they are!

Alas! what heart is able to conceive, or what tongue is able to express—the fear and dread, the horror and terror, the astonishment and amazement, which will fall upon all ungodly people in that day!

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1Th 5:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The dregs of old age!

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!" Num 23:10

Many desire to repent when old age comes—when . . . their wits are cracked, their souls distracted, their senses stupefied, their hearts astonished, their minds darkened, and their bodies diseased and distempered. Oh, then they think that they will be able to leap into heaven, with a "Lord have mercy upon me" in their mouths. Even though they have lived like devils—yet they hope they shall die like saints!

Do you think, O vain man—that after you have spent your time, and wasted your strength, and exhausted your energies in the work of Satan, and in the service of your lusts—that God will receive you to His grace and favor? If you do thus flatter yourself—it is ten thousand to one—that you will deceive yourself! Though true repentance is never too late—yet late repentance is seldom true. Ah, how many millions are now in hell—who have thought, and resolved, and said that they would repent hereafter—but that hereafter never came!

You say "Tomorrow, tomorrow I will repent," when you know not what a tomorrow will bring forth. Alas! how many thousand ways may death surprise you before tomorrow comes! Though there is but one way to come into the world—yet there are a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of the world. Oh, the diseases, the hazards, the dangers, the accidents, the deaths—which daily—which hourly attend the life of man!

Ah friends! it is a dangerous thing to make repentance to be the task of old age. The longer any man defers his repentance, the more difficult it will be for him to repent: his heart will every day grow more and more hard, and his will more and more perverse, and his judgment more and more corrupted, and his affections more and more disordered, and his conscience more and more benumbed or enraged, and his whole life more and more defiled and debauched.

Friends, do not deceive yourselves! Old age is but a tottering and sinking foundation for you to build your eternal hopes and happiness upon—your eternal making or marring upon! Are the dog-days of old age—are the trembling hands, the wrinkled face, the failing eyes, the gasping lungs, the fainting heart, the feeble knees, and the broken down legs—are these a sacrifice worthy of a majestic God? Is a body full of sores, aches, and diseases—and a soul full of sin—an offering worthy of a holy God? Surely not!

Oh, what madness, what wickedness is this—to serve Satan, your lusts, and this world with full dishes—and to put off God with scraps! To serve Satan, your lusts, and this world in the flower, in the prime and primrose of your days—and to put off God with the dregs of old age! Oh, do not let Satan deceive you, do not let your own hearts delude you!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The beauty and glory of a Christian

Holiness will render you most beautiful and amiable. As holiness is the beauty of God, and the beauty of angels—so it is the beauty and glory of a Christian also. Holiness casts such a beauty upon man, as makes him very amiable and desirable.

The redness of the rose, the whiteness of the lily, and all the beauties of the natural universe—are but deformities, compared to that beauty which holiness puts upon us. If all natural beauty were contracted into one beauty—yet it would be but an obscure and an unlovely beauty, compared to that beauty which holiness puts upon us!

Holiness is lovely, yes—loveliness itself. Purity is a Christian's splendor and glory. There is no beauty compared to that of sanctity; nothing beautifies and bespangles a man like holiness. Holiness is so attractive and so lovely a thing—that it draws all eyes and hearts to an admiration of it. Holiness is so great a beauty—that it puts a beauty upon all other excellencies in a man. That holiness is a very beautiful thing, and that it makes all those beautiful who have it—is a truth that no devil can deny!

"Demetrius," says Plutarch, "was so lovely of face, that no painter was able to draw him." Just so, holiness puts so rare a beauty upon man—that no painter under heaven is able to draw him! Scipio Africanus was so lovely a person, that the Spaniards stood amazed at his loveliness. Holiness puts such a loveliness, and such an amiableness upon a person—that many admire it, and stand amazed at it.

O sirs, as ever you would be amiable and desirable—be holy!

As ever you would be attractive and lovely—be holy!

As ever you would outshine the sun in splendor and glory—labor to be holy!

Many have ventured their names, their estates, their liberties, their lives, yes, their very souls—to enjoy a lovely Bathsheba, an attractive Helena, a beautiful Diana, a lovely Cleopatra, etc., whose beauties have been but clay, well-colored. Oh, how much more, then, should you be provoked to labor and venture your all for holiness—which will imprint upon you that most excellent and most exquisite beauty—which will go to the grave and to glory with you; yes, which will render you not only amiable and excellent in the eyes of men—but also lovely in the eyes of God!

Unholy souls are . . .foul souls, ugly souls, deformed souls, withered souls, wrinkled souls, altogether unlovely souls.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The richest man in the world

"Having nothing—and yet possessing all things." 2Co 6:10

This is a riddle the world cannot understand. A holy man cannot be a poor man. A holy man is always the richest man. The riches of a Christian have no bottom. All a saint's bags, are bottomless bags.

Experience tells us that unholy men's bags, purses, coffers, and mints—may be drawn dry. But the treasury, the riches of a saint—can never be exhausted, for he possesses all things in Christ and with Christ! The Christian has the God of all—he has Him who has all.

Though he has nothing in hand—yet he has all things in hope. A holy man is the richest man in the world, for he has the great and glorious God engaged by many thousand promises to own him, to bless him, to stand by him, to give grace and glory to him, and to withhold nothing from him that may be good for him.

When wicked men brag of their great possessions and riches, a holy man may make his boast of God, and say, "God is mine! God is mine! He is my great all; He is my all in all; and therefore I am richer and a greater possessor than any wicked man in the world—yes, than all wicked men in the world put together!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Without holiness "Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14 To 'see' implies both vision and fruition. Without holiness, no man—be he high or low, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, etc., shall ever come to a blessed acquaintance with God here, or to a glorious fruition and enjoyment of God hereafter.

Oh, how great a misery, how great a punishment, how great an affliction, how great a trouble and torment, how great a tribulation, how great a hell—will it be for all unholy people to be forever and ever banished the court of heaven, and to be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power—and to be everlastingly confined to the prison of hell, and to the society and company of that damned crew who will be still a-cursing and a-blaspheming God, and adding to one another's torments!

Ah, friends! without holiness all is lost . . . your soul is lost, Christ is lost, God is lost, heaven is lost, glory is lost! What are all other losses, compared to these losses?

Well, sirs, if none of these arguments can prevail with you to labor after holiness, I must conclude . . . that divine justice has hardened you, that Satan has blinded you, that your lusts have besotted you, that this world has bewitched you, and that it would have been ten thousand thousand times better for you, to have never been born, than to live without holiness, and to die without holiness, and to be everlastingly damned for lack of holiness.

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

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You should follow in His steps

"He who says he abides in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." 1Jn 2:6

Christians are to set all Christ's moral actions before them as a pattern for their imitation. In Christ's life, a Christian may behold the picture or lineaments of all virtues—and accordingly he ought to order his life in this world.

To walk as Christ walked is to walk . . .humbly, holily, justly, meekly, lovingly, fruitfully, faithfully, uprightly.

To walk as Christ walked is to . . .slight the world, despise the world, make a footstool of the world, to live above the world, and to triumph over the world as Christ did.

To walk as Christ walked is . . .to love those who hate us, to pray for those who persecute us, to bless those who curse us, and to do good to those who do evil to us.

To walk as Christ walked is to be patient, and silent, and submissive, and thankful, under the vilest reproaches, the heaviest afflictions, and the greatest sufferings.

"Leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." 1Pe 2:21

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An outlet and an inlet

"Death has been swallowed up in victory!" 1Co 15:54

DEATH is an outlet and an inlet to a holy man.

Death is an eternal outlet . . . to all sins, to all sorrows, to all shame, to all sufferings, to all afflictions, to all temptations, to all oppressions, to all confusions, and to all vexations.

Death is an eternal inlet into . . .the clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God,

the sweetest pleasures, the purest joys, the highest delights, the strongest comforts, and the most satisfying contentments.

Death is the funeral of all a holy man's sins and miseries—and the perfection of all his joys, graces, and spiritual excellencies.

Death is not the death of the man—but the death of his sin.

Death is a Christian's discharge from all trouble and misery!

Death came in by sin—and sin goes out by death.

Death cures all diseases—the aching head and the unbelieving heart; the diseased body and the defiled soul. Death will cure the holy man of all natural and spiritual distempers.

Death is God's gentle usher to conduct us to heaven.

Death to a holy man, is nothing but the changing of . . .his grace—into glory, his faith—into vision, his hope—into fruition, and his love—into eternal rapture!

Oh, who would not go through death . . .to heaven! to eternal life! to immortality and glory!

Death, to a Christian, is . . .a welcome guest, a happy friend, a joyful messenger!

"Death has been swallowed up in victory!" 1Co 15:54

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Such guilty, filthy, and polluted souls!

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." 1Co 6:9-10

What a sad roster of vile people! These monstrous sinners and prodigious sins were enough to have brought another flood upon the world; or to have provoked the Lord to rain hell out of heaven upon them—as once he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah; or to have caused the ground to open and swallow them up—as once it did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram!

And yet behold! some of these are changed and sanctified! "And that is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1Co 6:11.

Oh, the infinite goodness!

Oh, the infinite grace!

Oh, the infinite wisdom and power of God—which has pardoned, washed, sanctified, and cleansed such guilty, filthy, and polluted souls! The worst of sinners should never despair of being made saints—considering what notorious sinners have been made holy. There is no heart so wicked—but grace can make it holy.

Well! sinners, remember this—it is possible that those . . . proud hearts of yours may be humbled; hard hearts of yours may be softened; unclean hearts of yours may be sanctified; blind minds of yours may be enlightened; stubborn wills of yours may be tamed; disordered affections of yours may be regulated;

defiled consciences of yours may be awakened and purged; vile and polluted natures of yours may be changed and purified.

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Other men's sins

By other men's sins, a holy man is put in mind of the badness of his own heart. Bernard makes mention of an old man, who, when he saw any man sin, lamented and wept for him; and being asked why he grieved so, for other men's sins, answered, "He fell today—and I may fall tomorrow!" The falls of others puts a holy man in mind of the roots of sinfulness which are in himself. Other men's actual sins are as so many glasses, through which a holy man comes to see the manifold seeds of sin which are in his own heart—and such a sight as this cannot but melt him and break him.

A holy heart knows that the best way to keep himself pure from other men's sins, is to mourn for other men's sins. He who makes conscience of weeping over other men's sins—will rarely be defiled with other men's sins.

A holy heart looks upon other men's sins as their bonds and chains—and this makes him mourn. Ah, how can tears but trickle down a Christian's cheeks, when he sees multitudes, fast bound with the cords of their iniquity, trooping to hell? Who can look upon a sinner as a bound prisoner to the prince of darkness—and not bemoan him?

If holy people thus mourn for the wickedness of others, then certainly those who take pleasure in the wickedness of others—who laugh and joy, who can make a sport of other men's sins—are rather monsters than men! There are none so nearly allied to Satan as these—nor any so resemble Satan as much as these! (The devil always joys most—when sinners sin most!) To applaud them, and take pleasure in those who take pleasure in sin—is the highest degree of ungodliness!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The diamond in that ring!

The whole Scripture is but one entire love-letter, all written in golden letters, dispatched from the Lord Christ to His beloved spouse on earth. In it, there is so much to be read of . . . the love of Christ, the heart of Christ, the kindness of Christ, the grace of Christ, and the glory of Christ, that a holy heart cannot but love, and embrace, and endeavor to conform to every line.

The whole word of God is a field—and Christ is the treasure which is hidden in that field!

The whole word of God is a ring of gold—and Christ is the diamond in that ring!

"The Scriptures point to Me!" John 5:39

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A silver vein of sanctity

"In that day shall there be upon the bridles of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be Holiness unto the Lord Almighty." Zec 14:20-21

Here is holiness written upon the bridles of the horses they ride on, and upon the cups and pots they drink with. A holy heart will be holy in the use of common things. Every piece of his life shall savor of sanctity; and in all the parts of his every-day life, you shall be able to discern something of the power of true religion.

He who is truly holy—will be holy in the use of earthly and common things, as well as in the use of spiritual and heavenly things. He will be spiritual in the use of mundane things; and heavenly in the use of earthly things. There is a silver vein of sanctity which runs through all his worldly concerns. If you look upon him in his eating and drinking—you shall find him holy. If you look upon him in his buying and selling—you shall find him holy. He is holy in his commerce, and holy in his converse. Holiness is written upon his dealings with others, and upon his behavior towards his family and friends. Whatever he puts his hand to in his home—has holiness written upon it.

A holy man makes a Jacob's ladder of all his earthly enjoyments. All the comforts in his home, lead him on in a way of holiness, and lead him up to a holy God. Look upon a holy man in his vocation—and you shall find him holy. Look upon him in the use of earthly things—and you shall find him holy. Look upon him in his recreations—and you shall find him holy. The habitual frame and bent of his heart is to be holy in every earthly thing which he puts his hand unto. A spirit of holiness runs and shines in all the common actions of his life.

But for the false professor—all his religion, all his holiness, lies in a few religious duties! Take him out of these, and you shall find him as carnal, as vain, as foolish, as filthy and as frothy, as light and as slight—as those who have not so much as a cloak of holiness upon them!

Look! as an unholy heart is carnal in spiritual things, and earthly in heavenly things, and unholy in holy things—just so, a man who is truly holy—he is as well holy in the ordinary affairs and actions of this life, as he is holy in any of the exercises of piety.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do—do it all for the glory of God." 1Co 10:31

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Heaven would be a very hell

"Yet they say to God—Leave us alone! We have no desire to know Your ways." Job 21:14

Heaven would be a very hell to an unholy heart. If now—the presence of God in His servants, and the presence of God in His ordinances—is such a hell to unholy souls; ah, what a hell would the presence of God in heaven be—to unholy hearts!

It is true, an unholy heart may desire heaven—as it is a place of freedom from troubles, afflictions, oppressions, vexations, etc., and as it is a place of peace, rest, ease, safety, etc. But this is the least and lowest part of heaven.

To desire heaven as it is . . . a place of purity, a place of grace, a place of holiness, a place of enjoying God, etc.—is above the reach of an unholy heart.

The company of heaven are all holy, the employments of heaven are all holy,

the enjoyments of heaven are all holy—therefore heaven would be a most undesirable thing to unholy hearts.

An unholy heart is no way desirous nor ambitious of such a heaven . . . as will rid him of his darling sins, as will make him conformable to a holy God, as will everlastingly divorce him from his precious lusts, as will link him forever to those gracious souls whom he has scorned, despised, and persecuted in this world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Holy hatred

"I hate every false way." Psa 119:104

Where there is real holiness, there is a holy hatred, detestation, and indignation—against all ungodliness and wickedness.

A holy man knows that all sin strikes . . . at the holiness of God, at the glory of God, at the nature of God, at the being of God, at the law of God—and therefore his heart rises against all sin.

He looks upon every sin as a grieving of the Spirit, as a vexing of the Spirit, and as a quenching of the Spirit; and so nothing will satisfy him but the ruin of them all. He looks upon every sin—as a dishonor to God, as an enemy to Christ, as a wound to the Spirit, as a reproach to the gospel, as a moth to his holiness—and therefore his heart and his hand are against every sin.

He looks upon every sin . . . as that Judas who betrayed Christ; as that Pilate who condemned Christ; as those soldiers who scourged Christ; as those spears which pierced Christ. He looks upon every sin as having a hand in the death of his Savior—and therefore he cries out, "Crucify them all, crucify them all!"

Look! as every lion has his den, every dog his kennel, every swine his sty, and every crow his nest—just so, every unholy person has one sin or another, to which his heart is engaged and married; and that sin will undo him forever!

As Lysimachus lost his earthly kingdom by drinking one draught of water—just so, many lose a heavenly kingdom by indulging some one sin or another. One flaw spoils the diamond, one treason makes a traitor, one wrong turn brings a man quite out of the way, one leak sinks the ship, one wound strikes Goliath dead, one Delilah betrays Samson, one broken wheel spoils the whole clock, one dead fly spoils the whole box of ointment.

And as one bastard son destroyed Gideon's seventy sons, (Jdg 8:1-35,)—just so, one predominant sin is enough to destroy the soul forever. As by taking one nap Samson lost his strength, and by eating one apple Adam lost his paradise—just so, many men, by favoring one sin—lose God, heaven, and their souls forever! He who favors any sin, though he frowns upon many—does but as Benhadad —recover of one disease and die of another; yes, he takes pains to go to hell. Sin favored—always ends tragically.

Sometimes you shall have an unholy person angry with sin, because it has . . .

cracked his credit, or clouded his honor, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame here and hell hereafter; but never because . . . a righteous law is transgressed, a holy God is dishonored, a loving Savior is afresh crucified, or the blessed Spirit grieved.

A holy heart rises against sin because of its defiling nature. An unholy heart rises against sin because of its damning nature.

A holy man is most afflicted with the evil which is in sin. An unholy heart is most afflicted with the punishment which is due to sin.

A holy person hates sin because it pollutes his soul. An unholy person hates it because it destroys his soul.

A holy person loathes sin because it makes against God's holiness. An unholy person loathes it because it provokes God's justice.

A holy person detests sin because of the hell which is in sin. An unholy person detests sin because of the hell which follows sin.

A holy heart abhors all sin. An unholy heart is still in league with some sin.

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Many divine miracles

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!" 2Co 5:17

In every saved person, there are many divine miracles; there is . . . a dead man—restored to life, a dumb man—restored to speech, a blind man—restored to sight, a deaf man—restored to hearing, a lame man—restored to walking, a man possessed with devils—possessed with grace, a heart of stone—turned into a heart of flesh, and a life of wickedness—turned into a life of holiness.

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Genuine assurance

Genuine holiness will yield you a heaven hereafter; but genuine assurance will yield you a heaven here. He who has holiness and knows it, shall have two heavens—a heaven of joy, comfort, peace, contentment, and assurance here—and a heaven of happiness and blessedness hereafter.

Genuine assurance will be a spring of joy and comfort in you. It will make heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet. It will make you frequent, fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord. It will strengthen your faith, raise your hope, inflame your love, increase your patience, and brighten your zeal. It will make every mercy sweet, every duty sweet, every ordinance sweet, and every providence sweet. It will rid you of all your sinful fears and cares. It will give you ease under every burden, and make death more desirable than life. It will make you more strong to resist temptation, more victorious over opposition, and more silent in every difficult condition.

Genuine assurance will turn . . . every winter night into a summer's day, every cross into a crown, and every wilderness into a paradise.

Genuine assurance will be . . . a sword to defend you, a staff to support you, a cordial to strengthen you, a medicine to heal you, and a star to lead you.

Well, remember this—next to a man's being saved, it is the greatest mercy in this world—to know that he is saved.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A cooler hell

"God, I thank You that I'm not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get." Luk 18:11-12

Many please and satisfy themselves with mere civility and common morality. They bless themselves that they are not swearers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor adulterers, etc. Their behavior is civil, sincere, harmless, and blameless. But civility is not sanctity. Civility rested in—is but a beautiful abomination—a smooth way to hell and destruction.

Civility is very often . . . the nurse of impiety, the mother of flattery, and an enemy to real sanctity. There are those who are so blinded with the fair shows of civility—that they can neither see the necessity nor beauty of sanctity. There are those who now bless themselves in their common morality, whom at last God will scorn and cast off for lack of real holiness and purity. A moral man may be an utter stranger . . . to God, to Christ, to Scripture, to the filthiness of sin, to the depths and devices of Satan, to their own hearts, to the new birth, to the great concerns of eternity, to

communion with Christ, to the secret and inward ways and workings of the Spirit.

Well, sirs, remember this—though the moral man is good for many things—yet he is not good enough to go to heaven! He who rises to no higher pitch than civility and morality—shall never have communion with God in glory. The most moral man in the world, may be both Christless and graceless.

Morality is not sufficient to keep a man out of eternal misery. All morality can do, is to help a man to one of the best rooms and easiest beds which hell affords! For, as the moral man's sins are not so great as others—so his punishments shall not be so great as others. This is all the comfort that can be given to a moral man—that he shall have a cooler hell than others have. But this is but cold comfort.

Morality without piety is as a body without a soul. Will God ever accept of such a stinking sacrifice? Surely not!

"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God." Luk 18:13-14

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02.07a. Holiness contd

A house of fools!

"The heart of fools is in the house of pleasure." Ecc 7:4

A fool prefers toys and trifles—above things of greatest worth. Just so, wicked and ungodly men prefer their lusts before the Lord. Upon choice, they prefer the honors, the riches and glory of the world—above their own souls and the great concerns of eternity.

I have read of the foolish people of Ceylon, who preferred a consecrated ape's tooth—above an incredible mass of treasure. Such fools are all unholy people, who prefer the toys, the trifles of this world—above the pleasures and treasures which are at God's right hand. The world is full of such fools.

Says one—"If you behold the lives of men, you will judge the whole world to be a house of fools!" Ah, friends! What folly can be compared to that of men's spending their time, their strength, their lives, their souls—in getting the great things of this world, and neglecting that one thing necessary—the salvation of their souls! Oh, what vanity is it to prefer . . . a smoke of honor, a blast of fame,

a dream of pleasure, a wedge of gold, a Babylonish garment, and such like transitory trifles and trash—before a blessed eternity!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ No dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement

Throughout the Scriptures, unholy people are branded, to their everlasting contempt—with the worst appellations. They are the most dangerous, and the most harmful beings in the world, and therefore are emblemized . . . by lions—for they are cruel, Psa 22:21; by bears—for they are savage, Isa 11:7;

by dragons—for they are hideous, Eze 29:3; by wolves—for they are ravenous, Eze 22:27; by dogs—for they are snarling, Rev 22:15; by vipers and scorpions—for they are stinging, Mat 12:34, Eze 2:6; by spiders and cockatrices—for they are poisoning, Isa 59:5; by swine—for they are intemperate, Mat 7:6.

Remember this—that all these stinging expressions and appellations which disgrace and vilify unholy people, were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and published in His holy Word.

The glutton is depicted as a swine; the fraudulent person is depicted as a fox; the lustful person is depicted as a goat; the backbiter is depicted as a barking cur; the slanderer is depicted as an asp; the oppressor is depicted as a wolf; the persecutor is depicted as a tiger; the seducer is depicted as a serpent.

Do you think that God will admit such vermin as unholy people are—to eternally inhabit His holy heaven? Surely not! God has long since resolved upon it—that no unclean beasts shall enter into

heaven—that no dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement. Certainly God will not allow such beasts and toads and snakes and serpents—to forever live with Him! Heaven is a too holy place to admit such vermin to inhabit!

"Nothing impure will ever enter it." Rev 21:27

"Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." Rev 22:15

All in heaven are holy: the angels holy, the saints holy—but the Lord Himself above all, is most glorious in holiness. Now certainly it would be a hell to these holy ones to have unholy wretches to be their eternal companions! When the holy angels fell from their holiness—heaven was so holy that it spewed them out! Certainly there will be no room in heaven for such filthy beasts as unholy people are! 'Jerusalem above' is too glorious a habitation for beasts—or for men of beastly spirits, or beastly principles, or beastly practices. The city of the great God was never built for beasts. A wilderness and not a paradise—is fittest for beasts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An ignorant, profane, and soul-flattering clergy

A preacher's life should be a commentary upon his doctrine; his practice should be the counterpart of his sermons. Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.

An ignorant, profane, and soul-flattering clergy, are the greatest pest, plague, affliction and judgment, which can befall a people! There is no rank nor order of men on earth, who have so enriched hell, who have been such benefactors to hell—as the ignorant and profane clergy! How many are there in these days, who are more ready and willing to make a sacrifice of the gospel—for profit's sake, and preferment's sake, and honor's sake, and lust's sake!

Where there is no serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching—there the people grow abominably wicked, and will certainly perish, and go tumbling to hell.

Pastors! Either preach as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to preach—plainly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, fervently, frequently; and live as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to live—heavenly, graciously, holily, humbly, righteously, harmlessly, exemplary—or else lay down your names of being the ministers of Jesus Christ. Do not any longer cheat upon yourselves, nor upon the people—by making them believe that you are ministers of Jesus Christ, when you have nothing of the spirit of Christ, nor of the anointings of Christ, nor of the grace of Christ, nor of the life of Christ in you.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle

"The wicked freely strut about, when what is vile is honored among men." Psa 12:8

"They love to indulge in evil pleasures." 2Pe 2:13.

"Their souls delight in their abominations." Isa 66:3

Pro 10:23, "A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct." Evil conduct is the fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle. Fools take great delight and pleasure in doing evil.

Sin and wickedness are a sport or recreation to a fool. It is a great pleasure and merriment to a fool—to do wickedness.

Pro 14:9, "Fools make a mock of sin." They make a jeer of sin—which they should fear more than hell itself! They make a sport of sin—which will prove a matter of damnation to them. They make a pastime, a game of sin—which will make them miserable to all eternity. They make a mock of sin on earth—for which the devil will mock and flout them forever in hell.

Justice will at last turn over such fools to Satan, who will be sure to return mock for mock, jeer for jeer, and flout for flout. Those who love such kind of pastime, shall have enough of it in hell. All unbelievers are such fools—for they delight and take pleasure in sin, which is the most corrupting and dangerous thing in the world. "And so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth, but have delighted in wickedness." 2Th 2:12

Well, sirs! Sin is the poison of the soul, the nakedness of the soul, the disease of the soul, the burden of the soul—and if God in mercy does not prevent it—sin will prove the eternal bane of the soul. Oh, then, how great is their folly, who delight in sin, and who make a sport of it!

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Righteousness exalts a nation

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people." Pro 14:34

It is not valor in war—but righteousness; it is not policy in government—but righteousness; it is not wittiness of invention—but righteousness; it is not civility in behavior—but righteousness; it is not antiquity of laws—but righteousness; it is not largeness of dominion—but righteousness; it is not greatness of command—but righteousness—which is the honor and the safety, the renown and the security of a nation.

It is not rich mines of gold and silver, nor armies, nor councils, nor fleets, nor forts—but justice and righteousness which exalts a nation; and which will make a lowly people to become a great, a glorious, and a famous people in the world. That nation which exalts righteousness—that nation shall be certainly exalted by righteousness.

Ah! England, England! If injustice shall grow rampant, and you shall brandish the sword of protection to the desperate swearer, and to the cruel oppressor, and to the roaring drunkard, and to the cursing monster; and shall be a devouring sword to the upright and godly in the land—divine vengeance will dig your grave, and divine justice will tumble you into it!

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Well, Ladies and Gentlemen

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen—Do you think that it is good to be going to hell—that it is good to be dwelling with everlasting burnings—that it is good to be forever separated from the glorious presence of God? Do you think that it is good to forever lie a-sweltering under the wrath of an infinitely just God, and to abide forever and ever under those pains and torments which are

endless, easeless, hopeless, and remediless? Do you think that it is good to be fettered with devils and damned spirits for all eternity?

"Oh no! this cannot be good! for the very thoughts of these things are enough to raise a hell on this side hell—in our hearts!"

Oh then, with all your might press after holiness, and pursue hard after holiness—as after the one thing necessary; for without holiness you shall as certainly go to hell—as holy people shall certainly go to heaven! Oh that you would forever remember this—that without all question, you shall never be saved, unless you are sanctified; you shall never be truly and eternally happy, unless you are truly holy!

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

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Oh stand and wonder!

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us—that we should be called the sons of God." 1Jn 3:1

It is an infinite condescension in God, to honor us with the title of sons, and therefore we should never think of it, nor ever speak of it—but with much admiration. O sirs! what matter of admiration is this—that the great and glorious God, who has many millions of glorious angels attending Him—that He should . . . look upon all holy people as His sons, and love them as His sons, and delight in them as His sons, and clothe them as His sons, and feed them as His sons, and protect them as His sons, and stand by them as His sons, and lay up for them as His sons, and lay out Himself for them as His sons; that those who have not deserved . . . a smile from God, a good word from God, a bit of bread from God, or a good look from God, should be made the sons of God!

What manner of love is this—that those who have . . . so highly provoked God,

walked so cross and contrary to God, were so exceedingly unlike God, preferred every lust, and every toy and vanity before God, fought many years under Satan's banner against God, refused all the offers of mercy that have been made by God,—that those who have deserved to be reprobated by God, damned by God, and to be thrown to hell by God—that these should be made the sons of God!

Oh stand and wonder! Oh stand and admire the freeness of His grace, and the riches of His grace!

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Splendida peccata

O sirs, all our pious works and services must be wrought . . . from God, for God, in God, and according to God—or else they will be but splendida peccata—splendid sins!

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Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!

"And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire!" Rev 20:15

"Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!" Luk 10:20

It is matter of the greatest joy in the world, for a man to have his name enrolled in heaven. Look! as it is the sinner's hell that his name is engraved in the book of damnation; just so, it is the believer's heaven that his name is engraved in the book of election.

There are many who are exceedingly inquisitive to know whether their names are written in heaven or not. I would say to such—there is no such way to know this—as by your holiness. Have you broken off your sins by sound repentance? Has the gospel changed your inside and your outside? Has it made you a new creature, and turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ? etc. Then, without all question, your name is written in heaven, and you are the person who has the greatest cause in the world to rejoice!

"Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!" Luk 10:20

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ But the truth is

Many there are, who are accounted . . . deep scholars, great linguists, profound philosophers, good grammarians, excellent mathematicians, sharp logicians, cunning politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, etc.

But the truth is, he is the best grammarian—who has learned to speak the truth from his heart; and he is the best astronomer—who has his thoughts in heaven; and he is the best musician—who has learned practically to sing out the praises of God; and he is the best arithmetician—who knows how to number his days; and he is the best philosopher—who every day grows holier and holier; and he is the best skilled in economics—who trains up his family in the fear of the Lord; and he is the best politician—who is as good at taking and giving Scriptural counsel; and he is the best linguist—who speaks the language of Canaan.

The holy Christian is the best man in the world, nay, he is such a one "of whom this world is not worthy," and therefore God cannot but take singular pleasure and delight in him.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ His window in all our hearts

"Does He not see my ways and number all my steps?" Job 31:4

The eye of God had so strong an influence upon Job's heart and life, that it wrought him up to a very high pitch of holiness. The scholar writes most exactly while his teacher's eye is upon him; and the child walks most exactly while his father's eye is upon him; and the servant works most exactly while his master's eye is upon him; and so certainly all the sons and servants of the most high God do hear most exactly, and pray most exactly, and walk most exactly—when they see themselves as in the presence of the great God—who is all sight, who is all eye!

Ah friends! as ever you would be high in holiness, have a serious apprehension of God's presence; set yourselves daily as in His sight, as under His eye. Remember, though a man may easily baffle his conscience, and deceive the world—yet he shall never be able to baffle or deceive God's omniscient eye! God has His window in all our hearts, and exactly and narrowly observes all

that is done within us, and all that is done by us!

If the serious consideration of His sharp, piercing, all-seeing eye will not influence us to labor after the highest degrees of holiness, I know not what will.

"I have kept Your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before You." Psa 119:168

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More comforts, sweetness, and pleasantness

A holy life affords the greatest ground of rejoicing. There is no pleasure nor felicity compared to that which flows from the ways of sanctity.

The sweetest roses, the strongest comforts, and the greatest pleasantness—is to be found in the ways of holiness. Oh the joy, the peace, the tranquility, the

serenity—which attends the ways of purity! Christians have more comforts, sweetness, and pleasantness, in one hour's communion with God, in one hour's walking with God—than ever they have found in all their former ways of ungodliness and wickedness.

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Mourning for sin and holy joy

"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2Co 6:10

Godly sorrow is the parent of holy joy; a godly man's mourning time is his most joyful time. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. A holy man's heart is usually fullest of joy—when his eyes are fullest of tears. The bee gathers the best honey from the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine from water; the best, the purest, the strongest, and the sweetest joys—are made from the purified waters of evangelical repentance.

Mourning for sin and holy joy are consistent in one and the same heart. The same eye of faith which drops tears of sorrow—also drops tears of joy. A clear sight of free grace, of pardoning mercy, and of a bleeding dying Savior—will fill the soul both with sorrow and joy at the same time. A Christian always joys most, and mourns most—when he is most under the sense of divine love and mercy, the influences of heaven, the hopes of glory, and the precious fillings of the blessed Spirit.

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The best way to be holy

"Turn to the Lord with weeping and with mourning." Joe 2:12

The best way to be holy is to accuse, indict, arraign, and condemn yourself for your unholiness. Greatly lament and mourn over your own unholiness, over your own wickedness. The first step to holiness, is melting and mourning over a man's own unholiness. Go to your closet, and fall down before the most high and holy God, and mourn bitterly over . . .the unholiness of your nature, the unholiness of your heart, the unholiness of your affections, the unholiness of your intentions, the unholiness of your resolutions, the unholiness of your expressions, the unholiness of your life.

Oh, who can look upon sin . . .as an offence against a holy God, as the breach of a holy law, as the wounding and crucifying of a holy Savior, as the grieving and saddening of a holy Sanctifier, as an eternal loss and undoing of his own soul—and not mourn over it?

Oh, who can cast a serious eye . . .upon the nature of sin, upon the exceeding sinfulness of sin, upon the aggravations of sin—and not have . . . his heart humbled, his soul grieved, and his spirit melted for sin?

Oh, who can look upon sin as it strikes at . . .the honor of God, the name of God, the being of God, the glory of God, the design of God—and not have . . .

his mouth full of penitential confessions, his eyes full of penitential tears, and

his heart full of penitential sorrow?

The Christian mourns that he has sinned against . . .a God so great, a God so gracious, a God so bountiful, a God so merciful.

Oh, how should a sinner fall a-weeping when he looks upon the greatness of his wickedness and his lack of holiness! As ever you would be holy, mourn over your own unholiness.

Those who weep not for sin here—shall weep out their eyes in hell hereafter. It is better to weep bitterly for your sins on earth, than to weep eternally for your folly in hell.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Mat 5:4

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The graces which are in Christians

"As He is—so are we in this world." 1Jn 4:17

To be a holy person is to know a holy Christ, to be in love with a holy Christ, and to imitate the virtues of a holy Christ.

"Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness." John 1:16

There is no grace in Christ—which is not in some degree formed in a holy heart, and therefore the work of grace and holiness is called a forming of

Christ in the soul, Gal 4:19. Holy hearts have the very prints, stamps, and impressions of the graces of Jesus Christ upon them!

The graces which are in Christians correspond to the graces which are in Jesus—in truth and reality, though not in degree and quantity. It is the height

of a Christian's glory to tread in the virtuous steps of his dearest Lord.

The Christian labors to resemble Christ in all things, especially in those holy virtues which were most shining in the heart and life of Christ.

"Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did." 1Jn 2:6

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To fill heaven with hells

"Man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up evil like water!" Job 15:16

A wicked man is a sin-lover; he is a sin-maker, he lives in sin upon choice.

All profane people . . . give up themselves to wickedness, wallow in all ungodliness, delight themselves in all manner of filthiness, commit wickedness with greediness, draw iniquity and sin with cords of vanity, weary themselves to commit iniquity, are so desperately set upon wickedness, that neither the rod of God, the lashes and checks of their own consciences, nor the flashes of hell upon their souls—can stop them. They are resolved that they will gratify their lusts—though they damn their souls; and that will live wickedly—though they perish eternally!

By custom in sin, they have destroyed all conscience of sin, and contracted such desperate hardness upon their own hearts, as neither . . . God's smiles nor frowns, God's promises nor threatenings, life nor death, heaven nor hell, can possibly hinder them.

The hearts and ways of wicked men are full of hells; and therefore to fill heaven with such, would be to fill heaven with hells.

Certainly God will shut the gates of glory upon such workers of iniquity. These souls are . . . sadly abandoned by God, and woefully blinded by Satan, and fully ripened for ruin.

"All will be damned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." 2Th 2:12

"Unless you are converted . . . you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Mat 18:3

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For the toys and trifles of this world

Natural fools make the most stupid and injurious exchanges. They will exchange a pearl—for a pin; things of greatest worth and value—for a feather, a ribbon, a toy, a trifle. The foolish Indians prefer every toy and trifle—above their mines of gold.

All unholy people are spiritual fools. They will exchange spirituals—for carnals; and eternal—for temporals. They will exchange God, Christ, the gospel, heaven, and their souls—for a lust, for a little of the world's smiles, pleasures, or profits. They will exchange their eternal soul—for the toys and trifles of this world.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mat 16:26

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His treasured possession

"For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession." Deu 7:6

God makes . . . many rich, and many great, and many honorable, and many mighty, and many wise, and many noble, and many beautiful, and many successful—whom He will never make holy.

But in making you holy—God has made you spiritually great, rich, honorable, wise, and beautiful, etc. Holiness is a singular fruit of God's special favor and love.

God has a common favor and love for all men, yes, for the worst of men; witness that common preservation, and common protection, and common provision—which He grants to them. But God has a special love and favor—and this runs out only to His holy ones.

Holiness is a divine beam, a heavenly drop, a choice pledge of God's special favor and love.

O sirs! though the world may slight you, and enemies revile you, and friends disfavor you—yet let this support you, let this rejoice you—that you are God's treasured possession!

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Halifax nuts

A man may be visibly holy—who is not inwardly holy. A man may have an outward dress of holiness upon him—who has not the spirit and vitality of holiness in him.

They say of Halifax nuts, that they are all shells—with no kernels. Just so, there are many who make a glorious show before men—who are abominable in the sight of God, who are gold in man's eyes—but dirt in God's sight.

"In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous; but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." Mat 23:28

They were outwardly religious—but inwardly wicked; they had the semblance of sanctity—but inwardly very full of impurity; they were fair professors—but foul sinners; they were gracious without—but impious within. Look! as those are the worst of vices which are covered over with the show of virtue; so they are the worst of sinners, who cover over their inward filthiness with the disguises of outward holiness.

The Egyptian temples were fair on the outside—but foul and filthy within. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's days—and such are many professors in our days.

God will at last hate that man to hell, yes, cast him into the hottest place in hell—who has a form of godliness upon him; but nothing of the reality and power of holiness in him.

"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?" Mat 23:33

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A holy heart

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Gal 5:22-23

A holy heart is always attended with a holy life.

All holy habits must be brought forth into holy acts. All gracious habits must be attended with gracious motions, gracious operations, and a gracious life. Outward works must be suitable to inward habits. It is with spiritual habits as it is with natural habits—the more they are acted and

exercised—the more they are increased and strengthened. Holy habits are golden talents that must be employed and improved. Where there is holiness of disposition, there must be, there will be—holiness of living.

Where there are the seeds of holiness, there will be the flowers of holiness.

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An epitome of all vanity

"Truly, every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psa 39:5

By Adam's fall, man has become a pile of dust, a puff of wind; a dream; a shadow; a puff of smoke; a poor silly flea, a worm, a debased soul, a curious nothing. Yes, man having fallen from his primitive glory, has become altogether vanity, says the prophet in Psa 39:5, "Truly, every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Truly, every man—not some man, but every man at his best state, when he is in the height and perfection of all creature comforts and contentments, is altogether, not in some measure—but altogether, vanity—all vanity. Since the fall of Adam every natural man in his best estate is vanity; nay, every man is every vanity. Imagine whatever vanity you will—fallen man is that. He is a comprehensive vanity—he is an epitome of all vanity.

Man in honor, before his fall, was the best of creatures; but since his fall, he has become the worst of creatures. By his fall he is fallen below the very beasts which perish. He who was once the image of God, the glory of paradise, the world's ruler, and the Lord's darling—has now become a burden to heaven, a burden to himself.

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The ungodly flatter themselves

The ungodly flatter themselves that God is made up all of mercy, and believe that they shall go to heaven—until they awake with everlasting flames about their ears—as you may see in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

God suddenly casts sinners to hell—He suddenly sweeps them away—He cuts them off suddenly. When they say, "Surely the bitterness of death is past, and everlasting wrath is past, and hell is past, and eternal ruin is past," then suddenly God cuts them off, and gives them their portion with devils and damned spirits!

"Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy." Pro 6:15

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Where will all these men be within a hundred years?

Xerxes, when he viewed his almost innumerable army of men, fell a-weeping, saying, "Where will all these men be within a hundred years?" He wept to think that all that mighty army would be in their graves within a hundred years.

Ah, what cause of weeping is there, when we behold the multitudes in the world, considering that within a few years—most of them may be in hell!

"As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it." Luk 19:41

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Different measures and degrees of holiness

All saints are not alike holy. Some are more holy, and others are less holy; in some saints the springs of holiness runs low, in others the springs of holiness rise very high. Holiness thrives not alike in all saints. God never distributes holiness alike to all. To some He gives more, to others less, according to the good pleasure of His grace.

All saints are equally justified, and equally pardoned, and equally reconciled, and equally accepted—but all saints are not equally sanctified.

Christ has not work alike for all saints to do, nor burdens alike for all saints to bear, nor mercies alike for all saints to improve, nor temptations alike for all saints to resist, nor difficulties alike for saints to grapple with, nor dangers alike for all saints to encounter with, therefore He gives not a like measure of holiness to all—but to some more, to others less, according as their condition requires. Some saints stand in need of a great deal more grace and holiness than others do.

God gives different measures and degrees of holiness among His people as their needs require.

All that holiness which any man has, whether it is little, or whether it is much—is all of grace, it is all of free-grace. Therefore let every Christian . . . improve it, be thankful for it, and walk humbly under it.

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Sweeten all your bitters

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28.

When a man's heart is once sanctified, then all things are sanctified to him. O sirs! this is so great and so glorious a privilege, that it is more worth than a world, yes, than many worlds. It is a great mercy—that all things may be sanctified to him—that is, that all things may so work, as to make him more and more holy: that every cross may make him more holy, and that every comfort may make him more holy; that every mercy may make him more holy, and that every misery may make him more holy; that every ordinance may make him more holy, and that every providence may make him more holy; that every affliction at home may make him more holy, and that every judgment abroad may make him more holy.

Every condition is sweet when it is sanctified to us: sickness is as sweet as health when it is sanctified to us: weakness is as sweet as strength when it is sanctified to us; poverty is as sweet as riches when it is sanctified to us; disgrace is as sweet as honor when it is sanctified to us; bonds are as sweet as liberty when they are sanctified to us; death is as sweet as life when it is sanctified to us.

Look! as no condition can be a happy condition which is not a sanctified condition—just so, no condition can be a miserable condition, which is a sanctified condition. Now this is only the holy man's privilege, the holy man's mercy—to have every estate and every condition sanctified unto him; and this indeed is the cream and crown of all our mercies—to have them sanctified unto us, ay, and every bitter will be sweet, yes very sweet, when it is sanctified unto us.

What though your mercies, O Christian, are fewer than others', and lesser than others', and leaner than others', and shorter than others'—yet you have no reason to complain, as long as your mercies are sanctified mercies.

What though . . . your trials are greater than others', and your burden is heavier than others', and your sorrows are deeper than others', and your crosses comes thicker than others'—yet you have no cause to complain, as long as they are sanctified.

Are you a holy person? Oh then remember for your comfort, that . . . every bit of bread you eat is sanctified, and every draught you drink is sanctified, and every suit of clothes you wear is sanctified; the beds you lie on are sanctified, and the stools you sit on are sanctified; the very air you breathe in is sanctified, and the very ground you tread on is sanctified; every penny in your purse is sanctified, and every dollar in your shop is sanctified; whatever you have at home is sanctified, and whatever you have abroad is sanctified.

Oh! how should the sense of these things . . . sweeten all your bitters, and

turn your hell into heaven, and wipe all tears from your eyes, and turn your sighing into singing, and your mourning into rejoicing, etc.

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Inward and spiritual duties of religion

Christians who have but small measures of grace and holiness; and hypocrites and formalists who have not the least measure of true grace and holiness—these are most commonly exercised and busied about the external duties and services of religion; but very seldom, very rare, shall you find them in the more inward and spiritual duties of religion.

The external duties of religion are . . . hearing the word preached, reading the word, fasting, singing of psalms, Christian fellowship, and receiving the Lord's supper.

The internal and spiritual duties of religion are . . . self-examination, self-resignation to God, self-loathing, self-judging, divine meditation, praying in the Spirit, watchfulness over the heart, making application of . . . the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the grace of Christ, the love of Christ, the word of Christ—to one's own soul.

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Out of pious duties!

Ah, how lively, how warm, how enlarged, how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how spiritual, how serious, how zealous, how pious, how gracious are many—in pious duties; but ah! how dead, how cold, how straitened, how unholy, how proud, how worldly, how carnal, how slight, and how

irreligious are they out of pious duties! Now, certainly, these have either no holiness at all—or else they have attained to but a very little measure of holiness.

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A great degree of holiness

The more a man conflicts with heart sins, with spiritual sins, with invisible sins—with sins which lie most hidden and obscure from the eyes of the world—and the more spiritual victories and conquests a man obtains over

them—the greater measure of holiness that person has certainly attained to.

A little grace, a little holiness, will work a man to conflict with gross sins, with outward sins, with bodily sins, with open sins, which everyone may set their eyes on.

Yes, where there is no grace, no holiness at all, the light of nature, the common convictions of the Spirit, the laws of men, the eyes of men, the threats of men, the examples of men, the smarting rod, or a good education, may work men to conflict with such sins.

Oh, but when all the strength and might of the soul is engaged against those very sins that lie not within the sight or reach of the most sharp and piercing men in the world—but in the heart, and about the heart, and are only obvious to God's omniscient eye—this argues a great degree of holiness.

When the heart rises with all its strength and might against . . .secret pride, secret self-love, secret bubblings of lusts, secret carnal confidence, secret murmuring, secret hypocrisy, secret envy, secret self-applause, secret malice, secret hatred, secret snares, secret temptations, etc., it is an evidence that holiness has grown up to some considerable height there! It is not an easy thing, to overcome those flaming lusts and corruptions which are in our own hearts. Only grace, only holiness, can enable us to overcome our lusts—our heart lusts.

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Most of hell in their souls

That those who have . . .most of hell in their mouths, and most of hell in their hearts, and most of hell in their lives—should have most of hell in their souls

at last, is but justice.

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The hottest and the darkest place in hell

"Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you shall receive the greater damnation." Mat 23:14

Hypocrites shall be double damned! The hottest and the darkest place in hell is reserved for them!

For number and weight, there are no torments in hell, compared to the torments of hypocrites. Counterfeit sanctity is double iniquity—and therefore it is but justice that the hypocrite should have

double torment.

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Pursue after holiness

"Pursue . . . holiness—without it no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

O sirs, shall the ambitious person pursue after his honors, and the voluptuous person after his pleasures, and the worldling pursue after his gain, and the wanton pursue after his harlots, and the drunkard pursue after his full cups, etc.; and shall not Christians much more pursue after holiness?

O sirs, the way of holiness is . . . the safest way, the noblest way, the sweetest way, the cleanest way, the pleasantest way, the happiest way; therefore hold on, and hold up in that way. "Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace." Pro 3:17

We hold on in a way of holiness, notwithstanding all the rocks and obstacles and difficulties that we meet with in that way.

O sirs, in the face of all your sins and unworthiness, God holds on in ways of mercy towards you; and why then should not you hold on in ways of sanctity towards Him? Shall Satan persevere in his enmity against holiness? And shall wicked men persevere in their opposition to holiness? And shall formalists persevere in their neglect of holiness? And will not you persevere in your pursuit of holiness?

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A mixed condition

The condition of God's people in this life is a mixed condition. In this life they have . . . their rejoicing times and their mourning times, their laughing times and their weeping times, their singing times and their sorrowing times, etc.

It is true, in heaven there is . . . all joy and no sorrow, all gladness and no sadness; and in hell there is . . . all sorrow and no joy, all grief and no gladness, all howling and no singing, all madness and no mirth.

But in this present life it is otherwise, for if there would be nothing but joy, many would look for no other heaven; and if there should be nothing but sorrow, most would look for no other hell. If men should have nothing but joy—how sadly would they be puffed up! And if they should have nothing but sorrow—how easily would they be cast down! But now, by a divine hand, our sorrows being mixed with our joys—our hearts come to be the more effectually weaned from the vanities of this life, and to long more earnestly after the pure and unmixed joys in the world of glory.

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They play and fool away their precious time

Think on the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of time.

Time is so precious a thing, that mountains of gold and rocks of pearl, cannot redeem one lost moment!

Ah, what a precious commodity would time be in hell, where for one day to repent, yes, for one hour to seek after holiness—a man would give ten thousand worlds, were they in his hands to dispose of.

Time is so costly a jewel that few know how to value it and prize it at a due rate. Most are lavishly and profusely wasteful of that precious time which is their greatest interest to redeem! Time is a precious talent, yet most trifle away, play away, idle away, yes, grossly sin away their precious time! They play and fool away their precious time, until the candle of life goes out, and then they go to their graves in sorrow, yes, then go to hell in the dark!

He who makes no conscience of trifling away his precious time, shall one day experience the terribleness of eternal darkness.

The poets paint time with wings—to show the rapidity and swiftness of it. O sirs, if the sense of the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of time did but lie in its full weight upon your spirits, it would certainly put you upon a speedy and earnest pursuit after holiness!

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Ah, sirs!

Ah, sirs! It may be that there are but a few weeks, nay, a few days, nay, perhaps but a few hours—between your souls and eternity, between your souls and everlasting burnings, between your souls and a devouring fire, between your souls and damnation! Will you not then pray and mourn, and mourn and

pray, for that holiness, without which there is no happiness, yes, without which hell and destruction will be forever your portion?

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A sinner never looks so sweetly

"She stood behind Him at His feet, weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears. She wiped His feet with the hair of her head, kissing them and anointing them with the fragrant oil." Luk 7:38

A sinner never looks so sweetly, as when he weeps most penitentially. Though God is displeased with a sinner's sins—yet He is very well pleased with a sinner's tears, and therefore has a bottle for them. It is a great pleasure to God—to see a sinner drown his sins in a deluge of penitential tears.

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A wolf turned into a man!

The myth tells of Lycaon being turned into a wolf; but when a worldling is made holy, there is a wolf turned into a man! Yes, a devil is turned into a saint!

Therefore the Holy Spirit, speaking of Zaccheus, who had long been bewitched by the world, brings him in with a "Behold!"—as if it were a wonder of wonders that ever such a worldling should be made holy.

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Let Christ be hanged!

Men bewitched with the world will prefer a Barabbas before a Jesus. They will with Judas betray Christ, and with Pilate condemn Christ, and with the Scribes and Pharisees they will cry out, "Crucify him! crucify him! Away with this Jesus! Away with this Jesus! Let Barabbas live—but let Jesus die! Let Barabbas be saved—but let Christ be hanged!"

Ah, what incarnate devils will such men prove, who are bewitched with this world!

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Take heed of the witch

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame—who mind earthly things." Php 3:18-19

Who were those who walked disorderly? why, those who minded earthly things.

Who were those who fetched tears from the apostle's eyes? why, those who minded earthly things.

Who were those who were enemies to the cross of Christ? why, those who minded earthly things.

Who were those whose end is destruction? why, those who minded earthly things.

Who were those whose God was their belly? why, those who minded earthly things.

Who were those whose glory was their shame? why, those who minded earthly things.

The world proves silken halters to some, and golden fetters to others.

If ever you would be holy—oh, then take heed of the witch—take heed of the world! The world often swells the heart with pride; it makes men forget God, neglect Christ, slight ordinances, and despise holiness. Ah, the time, the thoughts, the strength, the energies—which this enticing world has made many to spend and consume, while their souls have lain a-bleeding, and eternity has been hastening upon them! Oh, the deadness, the barrenness, the listlessness, the heartlessness to anything which is holy—which attends a worldly temper!

Many are so bewitched with the profits, pleasures, and honors of the world, that they mind not holiness, they regard not holiness, they care not for holiness.

The flowers of this world, are surrounded with many briars. The world is all shadow and vanity; it is like Jonah's gourd—you may sit under its shadow for a while, but it soon decays and dies. He who shall but weigh . . . man's pains with his pay, his miseries with his pleasures, his sorrows with his joys, his crosses with his comforts, his needs with his enjoyments, etc., may well cry out, "Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity."

The whole world is circular, the heart of man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle. If the whole earth were changed into a globe of gold, it could not fill your heart.

O sirs, if your hearts are not filled with holiness—they will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Either holiness or Satan must possess you.

Is it not infinitely better to have holiness without the world, and so be happy forever—than to have much of the world without holiness, and so be damned forever?

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A devil in an angel's dress

"Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall." Eze 18:30

True repentance is a turning, not from some sin—but from every sin. Every sin strikes at the law of God, the honor of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore the penitent must strike at all. Every sin fetches blood from the heart of Christ, and every sin is a grief and vexation to the Holy Spirit—and therefore the penitent must set upon crucifying of all.

Herod turned from many sins—but not from his Delilah, his Herodias, which was his ruin! Judas, you know, was a devil in an angel's dress; he seemed to be turned from every sin—but he was a secret thief, he loved the money bag; and that golden devil, covetousness, choked him, and hanged him at last! Saul for a time turned from several evils—but his sparing one, Agag, cost him his soul and his kingdom at once!

He who had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, Lev 13:1-59. Just so, he who has but one spot, one sin which he does not endeavor to wash out in the blood of Christ, and in the tears of true repentance—he is a leper in the account of God.

The true penitent is for the mortifying of every lust which has had a hand in crucifying of his dearest Savior.

The sin-sick soul must break, not some—but all its idols in pieces, before a cure will follow. It must deface its golden idols, its most costly idols, its most darling idols! The returning sinner must make headway against all his sins, and trample upon all his lusts—or else he will die and be undone forever!

"Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" Isa 30:22

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A great nothing

"The next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp." Acts 25:23. That is, with great phantasy or vain show. All the honor, pomp, and accolade of this world is but a phantasy. Worldly honor is but a great nothing—a glorious illusion, a shadow, a dream.

Great swelling titles are but as so many rattles, or as so many feathers in men's caps. Worldly honor is but a wind, which will blow a man the sooner to hell.

Adonibezek, a mighty prince, is quickly made to eat scraps from under the table with the dogs. Jdg 1:7.

Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen. Dan 4:28.

Herod is reduced from a conceited god—to be the most loathsome of men, a living carrion attacked by worms, the vilest of creatures. Acts 12:23.

Great Haman feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next day. Est 7:10.

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Not one unholy one among them all!

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

O, do not deceive your own souls! Holiness is of absolute necessity; without it you shall never see the Lord!

There are many thousand thousands now in heaven—but not one unholy one among them all! There is . . . not one sinner among all those saints; not one goat among all those sheep; not one weed among all those flowers; not one thorn or prickly among all those roses; not one pebble among all those glistening diamonds; not one Cain among all those Abels; not one Judas among all the apostles; nor one Demas among all the preachers; not one Simon Magus among all the professors.

Heaven is only for the holy man—and the holy man alone, is for heaven.

Without holiness here—no heaven hereafter! "And there shall never enter into it, anything that defiles." Rev 21:27. God will at last shut the gates of glory against every person who is without heart-purity.

If a man had . . . the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the courage of Joshua, the policy of Ahithophel, the power of Ahasuerus, and the eloquence of Apollos; yet all these without holiness would never save him.

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A golden Christian

A true Christian will be holy among the unholy. He will retain and keep his holiness, let the times be ever so unholy.

If you take him among unholy friends—you shall find him holy.

If you take him at his table—you shall find him holy.

If you take him in his shop—you shall find him holy.

If you take him in his family—you shall find him holy.

If you take him in his closet—you shall find him holy.

If you take him in his journeyings—you shall find him holy.

If you take him in his recreations—you shall find him holy.

A holy Christian is like gold. Cast gold into the fire, or into the water; cast it upon the ash-heap, or into the pleasant garden; cast it among the poor or among the rich, among the religious or among the licentious—yet still it is gold, still it retains its purity and excellency. Just so, cast a holy Christian—a golden Christian—into whatever condition you will, and into what company you will—and still he will retain his purity, his sanctity! Yes, the worse the times are, the more a holy man studies holiness, and prefers holiness, and prizes holiness, and practices holiness.

The godly man is four square. Cast him where you will, like a dice, he always falls sure and square. Just so, cast a holy man where you will, and into what company you will—yet still he falls sure and square for holiness. True holiness is a part of the divine nature; it is of such a heavenly complexion, that it will never alter.

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Greek and Hebrew

A holy minister aims at the glory of God in all that he does. He labors to hide and conceal all his human excellencies, which may in any way tend to obscure, eclipse, or darken the glory of God.

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." 1Co 2:4-5

Mr. Dod was accustomed to say that "so much Greek and Hebrew in a sermon—was so much fleshly ostentation in a sermon!" When men come to pulpit-work, all plainness must be used. Starched oratory may tickle the brain—but it is plain doctrine . . . which informs the judgment, which convinces the conscience, which bows the will, and which wins the heart. That sermon has most learning in it—which has most plainness in it. And therefore a great scholar was accustomed to say, "Lord, give me learning enough that I may preach plain enough."

Silly, ignorant people are very apt to dote upon that most, and admire that most—which they understand least! But prudent Christians judge of ministers . . . not by their throats—but by their hearts and lives; not by their voices and tones—but by the plainness, spiritualness, suitableness, and usefulness of their matter.

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The baits which these men bite at

There are three things in a holy heart, which strongly incline it to persevere when all outward encouragements fail.

The first is a forcible principle—divine love.

The second is a mighty aid—the Spirit of God.

The third is a high aim—the glory of God.

But it is otherwise with those who have only a show of godliness. Let but their outward encouragements fail them; let but the eye, the ear, the applause of the creature fail them; if they cannot make some gain of their godliness, some profit of their profession, some advantage of their religion—they are ready, with Demas, to throw off all! Profit and applause are usually the baits which these men bite at; and if they miss these baits—then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all!

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The bulls-eye

"For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." Rom 14:7-8.

A genuine Christian ordinarily has holy aims and ends in his actings and undertakings. The glory of God is the mark—the bulls-eye which holy men have in their eyes. They live not to themselves—but they live to Him who lives forever. They live not to their own wills, lusts, greatness, and glory in this world—but they live to His glory, whose glory is dearer to them than their very lives. They make God's glory their ultimate end. The daily language of their souls is, "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord—but to Your name be all the glory!"

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do—do it all for the glory of God." 1Co 10:31

Holy hearts habitually eye the glory of Christ in all things. When they eat—they eat to His glory; when they drink—they drink to His glory; when they sleep—they sleep to His glory; when they buy—they buy for His glory; when they sell—they sell for His glory; when they give—they give for His glory; when they recreate themselves—they recreate for His glory; when they hear preaching—they hear for His glory; when they pray—they pray for His glory; when they fast—they fast for His glory; when they read Scripture—they read for His glory; when they come to the Lord's table—they come to His glory.

In all secular and pious actions—holy hearts have a habitual eye to divine glory. Selfish and base ends and aims, will too often creep into the holiest hearts, but holy hearts sigh and groan under them; and it is the strong and earnest desires of their souls to be rid of them. But take a holy Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course—and he will have holy aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings.

"To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever! Amen." 1Pe 4:11

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I hate vain thoughts

"I hate vain thoughts." Psa 119:113

The heart of a holy man rises against secret sins, against such as lie furthest off from the eye of man. What is more secret than vain thoughts? And yet

against these, the heart of a holy man rises.

Hezekiah humbled himself for "the pride of his heart." Heart-sins lie most hidden and secret; and yet for these, a holy man humbles himself.

A holy man knows that secret sins are sins—as well as those which are open. He knows that secret sins must be repented of—as well as others. He knows that God takes notice of secret sins—as well as of open sins. He knows that secret sins—like secret diseases and secret wounds—do oftentimes prove most dangerous and pernicious. He knows that secret sins are the price of Christ's blood—as well as open sinnings. He knows that secret sins are a grief to the Spirit—as well as those which are manifest. Upon all which accounts—a holy

heart rises in a detestation of secret sins.

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Divinely covetous

He who is truly holy will be still a-reaching and stretching himself out after higher degrees of holiness. Yes, a man who is truly holy can never be holy enough; he sets no bounds nor limits to his holiness; the perfection of holiness

is the mark that he has in his eye; he hears, and prays, and mourns, and studies, and strives—that he may come up to the highest pitch of holiness.

Received measures of holiness will not satisfy a holy soul; so much holiness as will keep hell and his soul asunder—will not satisfy him; nor will so much holiness as will bring him to eternal happiness satisfy him. He will be still reaching and stretching out after the highest measures of holiness; his desires are for more holiness. The beauties of holiness do so affect him and inflame him, that he cannot but desire to be more and more holy. "Lord," says the soul, "I desire to be more holy, that I may glorify Your name more. Lord, I desire to be more holy, that I may sin less against You, and that I may enjoy more of You! I would be more holy, that I may be more victorious over all earthly vanities."

A holy man earnestly prays for more holiness. He prays that his spark of holiness may be turned into a flame, his drop of holiness into a sea, and his mite of holiness into a rich treasury.

I dare boldly to say, that that man was never truly holy, who does not endeavor to get up to the highest pitches of holiness. True holiness knows no restrictions nor limitation. True holiness makes a man divinely covetous. Look! as the victorious man can never make enough conquests, nor can the ambitious man ever have enough honor, nor can the voluptuous man ever have enough pleasure, nor can the worldling ever have enough mammon—no more can a man of holiness have ever have enough holiness. As the grave and the barren womb are never satisfied, they never say "it is enough," Pro 30:15-16—just so, a holy man, while he is on this side eternity, he is never satisfied, he can never say that he has holiness enough.

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Stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty!" Isa 6:3

Certainly there is nothing which renders God so formidable and dreadful to unholy people—as His holiness does. "Leave this way, get off this path—and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!" Isa 30:11.

"Oh that you would not preach so much, nor talk so much to us—of the Holy One of Israel! Oh that you would cease from molesting and vexing us with message upon message from the Holy One! Why can't you talk and preach to us of the merciful One, the compassionate One, the affectionate One, the pitiful One, etc., and not be still a-talking to us of the Holy One, the Holy One! Oh, we do not like to hear it! Oh, we cannot bear it!"

Nothing strikes the sinner into such a terror as a discourse on the holiness of God; it is as the handwriting upon the wall, Dan 5:4-6. Nothing makes the head and heart of a sinner to ache like a sermon upon the Holy One. Nothing galls and gripes, nothing stings and terrifies unsanctified ones—like a lively setting forth of the holiness of God, Hab 1:13.

But to holy souls, there are no discourses which more suit them and satisfy them, which more delight and content them, which more please and profit them—than those do, which most fully and powerfully reveal God to be glorious in holiness. Well, this is an everlasting truth—he who truly loves the holiness of God, and loves God for His holiness—is certainly made partaker of His holiness.

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The sparkling diamond in the ring of glory

"And they were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty! The whole earth is full of His glory." Isa 6:3

The more holy any are, the more deeply are they affected and captivated with the holiness of God. The holy seraphim, by trebling the acclamation of His holiness, "Holy, holy, holy," denote not only the superlative eminency, glory, and excellency of God's holiness—but also they reveal how greatly, how abundantly they are affected and captivated with the holiness of God. To the holy angels, the holiness of God is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

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Better than a golden head

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." Mat 5:8

A pure heart is better than a golden head. A heart full of holy affections is infinitely beyond a head full of curious notions. There is no jewel like that of holiness. He who has holiness has all—and he who lacks that has nothing at all. Heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, who has clean hands and a pure heart, whose holy life is attended with heart purification.

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A devil in an angel's garb!

"Having a form of godliness but denying its power." 2Ti 3:5

All formalists have only a form, a show, a profession of holiness—but have nothing of the reality, spirit, life, or power of holiness in them. They have a face, a cloak, a mask, a show of godliness—but they have nothing of the pith, sap, life, or marrow of godliness. Their devotion, their godliness, lies in good words. If you hearken to their voice, you would think that they were men of much godliness; but if you look into their hearts and lives, you will find them to be great renouncers and deniers of godliness. They have . . . the semblance of godliness—but not the substance; the lineaments of godliness—but not the life; the face of godliness—but not the heart; the form, the shadow of godliness—but not the power.

They are like a well-drawn picture, which has all the lineaments of a man—but lacks life, lacks a principle of motion and operation.

The form of godliness is common—but the power of godliness is rare. The form of godliness is easy—but the power of godliness is difficult. The form of godliness exists with secret and with open wickedness—as you see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Simon Magus, Demas, and the Scribes and Pharisees—but the power of godliness will not. The power of godliness lays the axe to the very root of all sin, both secret and open.

Rachel was very fair and beautiful to the eye—but she was barren—and that marred all. Just so, the formalist, he is a very fair and beautiful professor to the eye—but he is barren Godwards, and Christwards, and heavenwards; he is fruitless, sapless, and lifeless—and that mars all.

A formalist is . . . more light than life, more notion than motion, more head than heart, more outside than inside, more leaves than fruit, more shadow than substance.

A formalist is . . . a blazing comet, a painted tomb, a stage-player, a white devil, or a devil in an angel's garb! What would such devils do in heaven? God has a thunderbolt for every formalist, by which He will at last certainly strike them down to the lowest hell. A formalist is too loathsome a thing, too heavy a burden, for heaven to bear.

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Guilt or grief is all you shall gain

"Do not be misled—Bad company corrupts good character." 1Co 15:33

As he who walks in the sun will be tanned, and he who touches pitch will be defiled; so he who associates himself with the wicked will be tainted and polluted.

Guilt or grief is all you shall gain by bad company—witness Lot, David, Joseph, and Peter.

By bad company Christians come to lose much of the sweetness, seriousness, goodness, and graciousness of their spirits. Familiarity with vain people has much worn off the spiritual luster, beauty, and glory—which has been upon many Christians. Bad company will prove a very great hindrance to you in your Christian course.

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The devil's tennis-ball

"We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle!" 1Th 5:14

The hour of idleness is the hour of temptation. An idle person is the devil's tennis-ball—tossed by him at his pleasure.

Among the Egyptians idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans, he who lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians idle people were delivered to the prison. By Solon's law idle people were to suffer death. The ancients call idleness the burial of a living man. Seneca had rather be sick than idle.

Now shall nature do more than grace? Shall poor blind heathens be so severe against idle people—and shall Christians embrace them? Shall they not rather turn their backs upon them, and have no communion with those who think themselves too great or too good to hold the plough?

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Golden fools

And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry!" But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God. Luk 12:19-21

Every man in the world is a fool—who heaps up treasure to himself—and is not rich towards God. This age is full of such golden fools, who pamper their bodies—but starve their souls: who primp and trim up their bodies with gold, silver, and silks—while their souls are naked, and ragged, and destitute of all grace and goodness.

Such fools only mind and care for the things of this life—as what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and what they shall put on. They are all for their bodies, their bellies, their backs. They take no care, they make no provision for their immortal souls. So fools look only to their bodies; and have no concern for their souls. Only let them have but food for their bodies—and they care

not what becomes of their souls! Surely no fools like these fools!

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02.07b. Holiness contd1

Wallowed in sin like swine in the mire

The worst men are commonly best conceited of themselves.

"There is a generation which is pure in their own eyes—and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Pro 30:12

They were very bad—and yet they had a great opinion of their own goodness. They were very filthy, and yet they stood very much upon their own purity. Their hands were black, their hearts were black, their works were black, and their ways were as black as hell—and yet they were pure in their own eye. They were filthy within, and filthy without; filthy in body, and filthy in soul, and filthy in spirit. Filthiness had quite overspread them, and yet they thought to cover their filthiness with a mask of holiness. There has always been such a generation of men, who have wallowed in sin like swine in the mire—and yet have kept up in themselves a strong opinion of their own goodness and holiness.

There are many who are shining Christians, who are pure golden Christians in their own eyes—who are vile in God's eyes!

Those who pretend their hearts are as good as the best, when their lives are as bad as the worst—shall experience this truth at last to their shame and cost—that without visible holiness here, there can be no fruition of God hereafter.

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The great work of the ministry

I have always looked upon the great work of the ministry to consist in two things: first, in making unholy men holy; and, secondly, in making those who are already holy to be more and more holy. First to beget holiness, and then to nurse up holiness. First to bring souls to Christ, and then to build up souls in Christ, is without all question the greatest work which should be most in every minister's eye, and which should always lie nearest and warmest upon every minister's heart.

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A sad story of a woman named Bochna

I have read a sad story of a woman named Bochna, who had but two sons in all the world. One day, when she was walking with the one son by the river, she heard the other cry out, and hastening to him, she found a knife sticking in his side, which killed him immediately. Then she made haste back to the other child—but in her absence, he had fallen into the river and drowned—and so she lost both her sons at once!

Now, this is your very case. Everyone of you have two children, as I may say—a soul and a body—an eternal life and a temporal life; and oh, what a dreadful and unspeakable loss would it be to lose both these at once! And yet, as certain as there is a God in heaven, you will lose them both without holiness.

"Without holiness no one will see the Lord." Heb 12:14

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Ignorance is the mother of destruction

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Hos 4:6

The Chaldee renders it, they are besotted—and so fitted for destruction. The Papists teach that ignorance is the mother of devotion; but this text tells us that ignorance is the mother of destruction.

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Rather be Satan's bond-slaves

Most shall continue obstinate and impenitent in their ungodly courses and practices, as men resolved rather to go to hell than to heaven, and to be forever unhappy rather than they will be holy, Isa 43:10, Isa 43:12, and Isa 44:8. Woe, woe to them forever, who had rather be Satan's bond-slaves than Christ's free-men, that had rather be "vessels of wrath" than vessels of honor, and that had rather be firebrands of hell than glorious saints in heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Get out of My sight!

Many now-a-days say there is no hell. Multitudes think that all that is spoken of hell in Scripture—is false and mythical. They will not believe that there is a hell—until they come to feel themselves in hell—until they find everlasting flames about their ears—until they are sentenced to the fire—until they are doomed to everlasting fire!

The last words that Christ will ever speak to the ungodly, will be the most tormenting, and horrifying, the most killing and damning, the most stinging and wounding! "Then He will also say to those on the left—Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!" Mat 25:41. This terrible sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe!

"Depart from Me!" Here is utter rejection—"Pack! Begone! Get out of My sight! Let Me never see your face again!"

"You who are cursed!" Here is malediction. You shall be cursed in your bodies and cursed in your souls! You shall be cursed of God, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions! Yes, you shall curse your very selves, your very souls. All your former curses, all your maledictions—shall at last recoil upon your own souls! Now you curse every man and thing which stands in the way of your lusts, and which cross your designs! But at last all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon you!

"But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place!" "No! Depart into the eternal fire!" There is the vengeance and everlasting continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, which will neither consume itself, nor consume you! Eternity of extreme punishment is the hell of hell. If all the fires which ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as a 'painted fire'—compared to the fire of hell. The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth—are but ice in comparison to the fire of hell. Ah! how sad, how dreadful would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire—not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred, or a thousand years—but forever and ever!

"If it were," says one, "but for a thousand years, I could bear it—but seeing it is for eternity—this astonishes and affrights me!" "I am afraid of hell," says another, "because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goes out!"

It is called "unquenchable fire," and "eternal fire." The torments of the damned are very grievous for the bitterness of them—and more grievous for the diversity of them—but most of all grievous for the eternity of them!

Wronged justice can never be satisfied, and therefore the sinner must be forever tormented. The sinner in hell will sin forever, and therefore he must be punished forever. It will not stand with the unspotted justice and righteousness of God to cease punishing—while the sinner ceases not sinning.

"But, Lord, if I must go into fire, into everlasting fire, oh let me have some good company in my misery!" "No! The devil and his demons shall be your companions!" Ah! who can conceive or express the misery of living with devils and damned spirits and hellish fiends and furies forever!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ But as flea-bitings

"Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze." Isa 30:33

Alas! the brick-kilns of Egypt, and the furnace of Babylon, were but as a blaze of straw, compared to this tormenting Tophet, which has long been prepared for the great and mighty ones of the earth!

Oh, how dreadful must that fire be—which is prepared by God Himself, and which is kindled by the breath of the Lord, and which shall never be quenched! Such is the fire which is prepared for the great and mighty ones of the world! Oh, the easeless, the endless, the remediless, the inevitable torments which are prepared for those who are graceless!

In hell their wanton eyes shall be tormented with ugly and fearful sights of ghastly spirits! In hell their ears, which used to be delighted with all delightful music, shall now be filled with the hideous cries, howlings, and yellings of devils and damned spirits! In hell their tongues of blasphemy shall now be tormented with drought and thirst; and though with the rich glutton, they cry out for a drop to cool their tongues—yet justice will deny them drops, who have denied others crumbs! In hell their hands of bribery, cruelty, and tyranny shall now be bound with everlasting chains, and so shall their feet, which were once swift to shed innocent blood.

In a word, their torments shall be universal—they shall extend to every member of the body, and to every faculty of the soul.

Ah, sirs! Fire, sword, famine, prisons, racks, and all other torments which men can invent—are but as flea-bitings, compared to those scorpions! They are but as drops, compared to those vials of wrath! They are but as sparks, compared to those eternal flames that all unsanctified people shall lie under.

Look! as the least joy in heaven infinitely surpasses the greatest comforts on earth, so the least torments in hell do infinitely exceed the greatest that can be devised here on earth.

Ah, sirs! Remember this—as there are degrees of glory in heaven—just so, there are degrees of torment in hell. As those who are most eminent in grace and holiness shall have the greatest degrees of glory in heaven—just so, those who are most vile and wicked on earth shall have the greatest degrees of torments and punishments in hell.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ You are not sick—but dead!

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath." Eph 2:1-3

Sin is the plague of the heart—and there is no plague so deadly as the plague of the heart. Oh, this is a disease which none can cure, but he who is the physician of souls. As to spiritual realities, an unsanctified person is not half-dead—but he is stark dead!

You are as well able to make a world, to command the winds, and to raise the dead—as you are able to cleanse your own hearts, or change your own natures, or sanctify your own souls. You have no power to perform any supernatural act—such as to believe or love God, or repent, or to change your own heart, or to sanctify or make yourself holy. You are dead in trespasses and sins, and have lost all your spiritual senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling. It is certain that your nature is so corrupted that you can not think a good thought, nor speak a good word, nor do a good work. You are not sick—but dead! Dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards!

Since the creation of the world, no dead man ever made himself alive. It is God alone, who can quicken the dead.

"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Eph 2:4-7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep?

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve!" Eze 34:2-3

Many preachers in these days, have good lungs for speaking—but bad brains—and worse hearts and lives!

Unholy ministers are such as who preach to please the people—rather than to profit their souls; to tickle the ear—rather than to awaken the conscience; who are better at fleecing of their flocks—rather than they are at feeding of their flocks; who seek more men's goods—rather than their good; who mind more the humoring of their hearers' fancies—than the saving of their souls.

Unholy ministers set up men's traditions above God's own institutions; prefer human commands before divine commands; are very zealous and warm for mint, anise, and cummin—but are very cold, careless, and negligent in the great and weighty matters of the law, namely, judgment, mercy, and faith; prefer a fat salary before an interest in a heavenly inheritance; pretend a great deal of reverence to the name of Jesus, and yet in their lives do daily crucify the Lord Jesus; with Judas can kiss Christ and betray Christ in a breath; preach as if they had a mind to go to heaven, and live as if they were resolved to go to hell; feast their own bodies—but starve their people's souls; speak ten words to elevate themselves, and hardly two for Christ.

02.08. London's Lamentations

London's Lamentations By Thomas Brooks, 1670 A serious discourse concerning "The Great Fire of London" which recently turned our once renowned City into a ruinous heap. Also the several lessons that are incumbent upon those whose houses have escaped the consuming flames.

CHOICE EXCERPTS

Worshippers of the golden calf!

There is a great deal of worldliness, and earthly-mindedness, and covetousness among the professing Christians of our day. They are worshippers of the golden calf! O sirs! the world is all shadow and vanity. The world is like Jonah's gourd—a man may sit under its shadow for a time, but it soon decays and dies.

The main reason why many professors dote upon the world, is because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. If the heart of man is not filled with God—it will be filled with the world, the flesh and the devil.

The world may well be resembled to the fruit which undid us all—which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste—but deadly in effect and operation!

O sirs! if you can gather grapes off thorns, and figs off thistles, then go on, and dote upon the world still. All the things of this world are vain things—they are vanity of vanities, Ecc 1:2. All in heaven count them vain, and all in hell count them vain; pearls are but as pebbles in their eyes. Lazarus in heaven is now rich enough, and happy enough; and Dives in hell is now poor enough, and miserable enough. He who makes the world his god while he is in the world—what will he do for a god when he goes out of this world?

Well, sirs, remember this—an inordinate love of the world will eat out all a man's communion with God. A man cannot look up to heaven and look down upon the earth—at the same time.

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The bent of the needle

"No one who lives in Him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen Him or known Him." 1Jn 3:6

A trade, a course of sin—is inconsistent with a state of grace. The best saints have sadly miscarried as to particular actions; but he who shall judge of a man's spiritual state by particular acts, though notoriously bad, will certainly condemn, where God acquits. We must always distinguish between some single evil actions, and a serious course of evil actions. It is not this or that particular evil action—but a continued course of evil actions—which denominates a man wicked. Just so, it is not this or that particular holy act—but a continued course of holy actions—which denominates a man holy.

Every man is—as his course is. If his course is holy—the man is holy. If his course is wicked—the man is wicked.

No man ought to conclude, because of some particular good actions—that his spiritual state is good.

No man ought to conclude, because of some particular sinful actions—that his spiritual state is bad.

A course of sinning is not consistent with a course of godliness. Though the needle of the seaman's compass may jog this way and that way—yet the bent of the needle will still be northward. Just so, though a Christian may have his particular sinful joggings this way or that way—yet the bent of his heart will still be . . . God-wards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, holiness-wards.

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Unfreeze the frozen graces

God loves to see the graces of His children in continual exercise. All the glory which God has from us in this life, is from the actings of our graces. Sleepy graces bring God no glory—nor do us any good. There is little difference

—as to the comfort and sweet of grace—between sleepy grace, and no grace at all.

The strongest creature, the lion; and the subtlest creature, the serpent—if they are asleep, are as easily surprised and destroyed as the weakest worm!

Just so, the strongest saints, if grace is not in exercise, are as easily surprised and captivated by sin, Satan, and the world—as the weakest saints are! O sirs! God, by some severe providence or other, by some fiery dispensation or other—will stir up your sleepy graces!

There are several cases wherein the graces in a Christian's heart may seem to be hidden, cold, dead and covered over; as sparks of fire are hidden in the ashes; or as bits of gold are hidden in a dust heap, or as pearls may be hidden in the mire. The sparks of divine grace, by the prevalency of some strong corruption, or by the violence of some dreadful temptation—may burn low, as to their lively operations. But God, by one severe providence or another, by one fiery trial or another—will blow that heavenly grace, that divine fire, into a flame—and cause their hidden graces to revive!

By severe providences and fiery trials, God designs the reviving, quickening, and recovering of our decayed graces. By fiery trials, He will . . . inflame that love which was ice-cold, raise that faith which had fallen asleep, quicken up those hopes which were languishing, put life and spirit into those spiritual joys and comforts which were withering and dying!

God, by fiery trials, will unfreeze the frozen graces of His people, and put new life and spirit into them!

God may have burnt up your outward comforts, so that He might lead you forth to live in a daily exercise of grace . . . upon Himself, upon His power, upon His all-sufficiency, upon His goodness,

upon His faithfulness, upon His fullness, upon His graciousness, upon His unchangeableness, upon His promises.

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Who sees us? Who will know?

Atheism reigns in the hearts and lives of sinners.

The covetous make their gold their god.

The drunkard and glutton make their bellies their god.

The ambitious make honors their god.

The voluptuous make pleasures their god.

The religionists make pious duties their god.

The moral make virtue their god.

"The fool says in his heart—There is no God!" Psa 14:1

Atheism denies God either: in opinion—saying there is no God; or in affection—wishing there were no God; or in practice—living as if there were no God.

What abundance of atheists there are in the land!

"He says to himself—God has forgotten; He covers His face and never sees." Psa 10:11

"They say—How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?" Psa 73:11 "They say—The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob pays no heed." Psa 94:7

What horrid blasphemy, what gross atheism is here! How do these atheists ungod the great God! How do they deny His omnipotence and omniscience! What an idol-god do they make the great God to be!

There are many who sin freely in secret, who can be drunk and filthy in the dark, when the eye of man is not upon them. Certainly those men's hearts are

very atheistic, who dare do that in the sight of God—which they tremble to do before the eyes of men!

How many are there who flatter themselves in their sins, and conclude that surely the bitterness of hell and wrath is past, and that they are in a fair way for heaven—when every step they take is towards the bottomless pit, and divine vengeance hangs over their heads, ready every moment to fall upon them!

"On earth are atheists many, In hell there are not any."

"Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their work in darkness and think—Who sees us? Who will know?" Isa 29:15

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Fetch out the dirt and spots

"I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities." Isa 1:25

By severe providences and by fiery trials, God designs the growth of His people in grace. Usually the graces of the saints thrive best—when they are under a smarting rod. Grace usually is in the greatest flourish—when the saints are under the greatest trials. The trimming of the candle—makes it burn the brighter. God bruises His spices—to make them send forth the sweeter fragrance. Fiery trials are like the brush, which, though it is sharp and scratching—it makes the cloth more pure and clean. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots which are in His people.

Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights; and so do the graces of the saints shine brightest in the darkest nights of affliction and tribulation. God will sometimes more carry on the growth of grace by a cross than by a mercy. Yes, the Lord will, sooner or later, more or less—turn all fiery trials into blessings for the helping on the growth of grace in His people's souls. Though fiery trials are grievous—yet they shall make us more gracious. Though for the present they appear to harm and damage us; yet in the outcome we shall find that God will turn them into the spiritual and eternal advantage of our precious souls.

Thrice happy will afflicted Christians be, if under all their crosses and losses they grow into a more deep acquaintance with God and His holiness; with the

vanity, mutability, impotency, and uncertainty of the world; and with the deceitfulness, vileness, baseness, and wretchedness of their own hearts!

If under fiery dispensations, we grow . . . more holy than ever, more humble than ever, more heavenly than ever, more meek and lowly than ever, more tender and compassionate than ever, more faithful and fruitful than ever, more patient and contented than ever, then we may be confident that the grand design of God in bringing all those fiery trials upon us, was for His glory, and our own spiritual and eternal good.

"God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Heb 12:10

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God's tools and instruments

"I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things." Isa 45:7

Let us see the hand of the Lord in this recent dreadful fire which has turned our once renowned London into a ruinous heap! London's sins were now so great, and God's wrath was now so hot—that there was no quenching of the furious flames. The decree for the burning of London was now gone forth, and nothing could reverse it. The time of London's fall was now come. The fire had now received its commission from God—to burn down the city and to turn it into a ruinous heap!

Certainly God is the great agent in all those dreadful judgments which befall people, cities, and kingdoms. Whoever or whatever be the rod—it is God's hand which gives the stroke! The power of

bringing judgments upon cities, God takes to Himself, "When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" Amo 3:6. Whatever that judgment is, which falls upon a city—God is the author of it; He acts in it and orders it according to His own good pleasure. There is no judgment which accidentally falls upon any person, city, or country. Every judgment is inflicted by a divine power and providence. God had given a commission to the fire—to burn with that force and violence as it did—until London was laid in ashes! Whoever kindled this fire—God blew the coal! And therefore no arts, counsels, or endeavors of men were able to quench it.

All judgments are at the beck of God, and under the command of God. Whatever judgment God commands to destroy a person, a city, or country—that judgment shall certainly and effectually accomplish the command of God—in spite of all that creatures can do. If God commissions the sword of war to walk abroad, and to glut itself with blood—who can command it into the scabbard again? No art, power, or policy can cause that sword to lie still!

God, as He is our Creator, Preserver, and sovereign Lord—has an absolute power both over our persons, lives, estates, and habitations: and when we have transgressed His righteous laws, He may do with us, and all we have—as He pleases. He may turn us out of house and home, and burn up all our comforts round about us—and yet do us no wrong. "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him." Psa 115:3. "The Lord does whatever pleases Him—in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths." Psa 135:6

Those things which seem accidental and chance to us—are ordered by the wise counsel, power, and providence of God. Instruments can no more stir

until God gives them a commission—than the axe or the knife can cut by itself, without a hand. God makes use of whatever second causes He pleases,

for the execution of His pleasure. And many times He makes the worst of men the rod of His indignation to chastise His people with! All inferior or subordinate causes—are but God's tools and instruments, which He rules and guides according to His own will, power, and providence.

Job eyed God in the fire which fell from heaven, and in all the fiery trials which befell him. And therefore, he does not say, "The Lord gave—and the devil took away!" Nor, "The Lord gave—and the Chaldeans and Sabeans took away!" But "The Lord gave—and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised!" Job 1:20-21

Certainly without the cognizance and concurrence of a wise, omniscient, and omnipotent God—no creatures can move. Without His foresight and permission—no event can befall any person, city or country. Whatever the means or instruments of our misery are—the hand is God's! It behooves us, in every judgment, to see the hand of the Lord, and to look through visible means to an invisible God! "The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me!" Ruth 1:21

"The Lord brings death and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; He humbles and He exalts!" 1Sa 2:6-7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Their dregs and dross

"Therefore this is what the Lord Almighty says—See, I will refine and test them, for what else can I do because of the sin of My people?" Jer 9:7

By severe providences and fiery trials—God designs the mortifying and purging away of His people's sins.

"This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold." Zec 13:9

The best of men are but men at the best; they have much corruption and dross in them, and they need refining; and therefore God by fiery trials will refine

them—as silver and gold which are purified in the fire. He will so refine them, as that they shall leave their dregs and dross behind them. Look! What the fire is to the gold, what the file is to the iron, what the winnowing fan is to the wheat, what the soap is to the clothes—that shall fiery trials be to the saints.

All the fiery trials which befall the saints, shall be as a medicinal potion to purge away our soul diseases! May our trials be so sanctified, as to issue in the burning up of our lusts, and in the purging away of our filth!

O sirs! If God, by fiery trials, shall make you more victorious over your strong lusts, and help you to live more virtuous lives—you will have cause to bless Him all your days, though He has turned you out of house and home, and burnt up all your comforts round about you!

"He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver." Mal 3:3

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Fuel to your lusts, and quenchers of your graces

By severe providences and fiery trials—God designs the preventing of sin. Prudent physicians sometimes give harsh medicines to prevent diseases; and so does the Physician of souls. Sharp trials preserve the saints from spiritual putrefying, and from spiritual rotting.

Wealth lays men most open to . . .the greatest sins, the worst of snares, and the deadliest temptations. The best of men have fallen the foulest—under their highest worldly enjoyments. Witness David, Solomon, Hezekiah, etc. Under your outward fullness . . .how low was your communion with God! how languishing were your graces! how lean were your souls! how little God had of . . .your thoughts, your hearts, your time, your strength!

O sirs! how bad would you have been by this time, if God had not removed those things, which were but fuel to your lusts, and quenchers of your graces! Well, often think of this: it is a greater mercy to be preserved from sin, yes, from the least sin—than it is to enjoy the whole world!

"Lord, let this fiery trial be so sanctified to me, as that it may eminently issue in . . .the mortifying of my sins, the increase of my graces, the mending of my affections, the reforming of my life, the weaning of my soul from everything below You, and the fixing of my heart upon eternal realities!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A misery beyond all expression!

"Then He will say to those on His left—Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" Mat 25:41

This solemn sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe! The last words that Christ will ever speak to the ungodly, will be: the most tormenting and dreadful, the most stinging and wounding, the most killing and damning!

Here is utter rejection: "Depart from Me—Pack! Begone! Get out of My sight! Let Me never more see your faces!"

"Depart from Me!" is the first and worst of that dreadful sentence which Christ shall pass upon the ungodly at last. Every syllable sounds horror and terror, grief and sorrow, dread and astonishment—to all whom it concerns. Certainly, the tears of hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of heaven!

Here is imprecation: "You who are cursed!" "But Lord, if we must depart, let us depart blessed!" "No! Depart—you who are cursed!" You shall be . . . cursed in your bodies, and cursed in your souls, and cursed by God, and cursed by Christ, and cursed by angels, and cursed by saints, and cursed by devils, and cursed by your wicked companions! Yes, you shall now curse your very selves, your very souls—that ever you have . . . despised the gospel, refused the offers of grace, scorned Christ, and neglected the means of your salvation!

O sinners, sinners—all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls! Now you curse every person and thing which stand in the way of your lusts, and which cross your designs. But at last, all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon you! Surely that man is eternally cursed—who is cursed by Christ Himself!

"But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place!" "No! Depart into the eternal fire!" Here is vengeance and continuance of it. You shall go into fire, into eternal fire! The eternity of hell—is the hell of hell. If all the fires that ever were in the world, were contracted into one fire—how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as 'painted fire' upon the wall—compared to the fire of hell. It is a very sad spectacle to behold a malefactor's body consumed little by little in a lingering fire. But ah, how sad, how dreadful, would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire—not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred or a thousand years—but forever and ever!

"If it were," says Cyril, "but for a thousand years, I could bear it; but seeing it is for eternity—this frightens and horrifies me!" "I am afraid of hell," says Isidore, "because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goes out!"

To be tormented without end—this is that which goes beyond all the bounds of desperation.

Grievous is the torment of the damned . . . for the bitterness of the punishments; but more grievous for the diversity of the punishments; but most grievous for the eternity of the punishments!

To lie in everlasting torments, to roar forever in anguish of heart, to rage forever for madness of soul, to weep, and grieve, and gnash the teeth forever —is a misery beyond all expression!

Mark, everything that is conducive to the torments of the damned, is eternal:

God who damns them is eternal!

The fire which torments them is eternal!

The prison and chains which hold them are eternal!

The worm which gnaws them is eternal!

The sentence which is upon them, shall be eternal!

Fire is the most furious of all elements, and therefore the bodies of men cannot be more exquisitely tormented than with fire. The bodies which sinned on earth, shall be punished and tormented in hell. What can be more grievous and vexatious, more afflicting and tormenting to the bodies of men—than eternal fire? Oh, then, how will the bodies of men endure to dwell in unquenchable fire, to dwell in everlasting burnings! The brick-kilns of Egypt, the fiery furnace of Babylon, are but as a spark, compared to this tormenting hell, which has been prepared of old to punish the bodies of sinners with.

"The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless! Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" Isa 33:14

Wicked men, who are now the jolly fellows of the times, shall one day go from burning—to burning; from burning in sin—to burning in hell; from burning in flames of lusts—to burning in flames of torment; except there be found repentance on their side, and pardoning grace on God's side.

Surely, the serious thoughts of the agonies of hell while people live—is one blessed way to keep them from going into those torments after they die! Look!

as there is nothing more grievous than hell—so there is nothing more profitable than the fear of hell.

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" 1Th 1:10

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A house without light!

"Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Mat 25:30

Our earthly fire, when it burns it shines, it casts a light. It has light as well as heat in it. But the fire of hell burns—but it does not shine, it gives no light at all. It retains the property of burning—but it has lost the property of shining. Christ calls it "outer darkness," or utter darkness—that is, darkness beyond a darkness.

Light is a blessing that shall never shine into that infernal prison. In Jude verse 6, you read of "chains of darkness." It would be a little ease, a little comfort, to the damned in hell—if they might have but light and liberty to walk up and down the infernal coasts; but this is too high a favor for them to enjoy; and therefore they shall be shackled and fettered down in chains of darkness, and in blackness of darkness—so that they may fully undergo the scorplings and burnings of divine wrath and fury forever and ever.

In Jude 1:13 you thus read, "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The words signify exceeding great darkness. Hell is a very dark and dismal region, and extreme are the

miseries, horrors, and torments which are there. Sinners, when they are in hell, when they are in chains of darkness, when they are in blackness of darkness—they shall never more see light! Hell is a house without light!

Though our earthly fires have light as well as heat—yet the infernal fire has only heat to burn sinners; it has no light to refresh sinners; and this will be no small addition to their torment.

"He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves!" Col 1:13

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Perpetual fuel to the flames of hell!

Our earthly fire destroys and consumes whatever is cast into it. It turns all combustibles into ashes. But the fire of hell is not of that nature. The fire of hell consumes nothing which is cast into it. It rages—but it does not consume or destroy either bodies or souls.

"Men will seek death, but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them." Rev 9:6

They shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. They shall cry to the mountains to fall upon them and to crush them to nothing! They shall desire that . . . the fire which burns them—would consume them to nothing, the worm which feeds on them—would gnaw them to nothing, the devils which torment them—would tear them to nothing! They shall cry to God, who first made them out of nothing, to reduce them to that first nothing from whence they came! But "their Maker has no compassion on them, and their Creator shows them no favor." Isa 27:11

They shall always be burned—but never consumed.

Ah, how well would it be with the damned, if in the fire of hell, they might be consumed to ashes! But this is their misery—they shall be ever dying, and yet never die; their bodies shall be always a-burning—but never a-consuming! It is dreadful to be perpetual fuel to the flames of hell! What misery can compare to this—for infernal fire to be still a-preying upon damned sinners, and yet never making an end of them! The fierce and furious flames of hell shall burn—but never annihilate, the bodies of the damned. In hell there is no cessation of fire burning, nor of matter burned. Neither flames nor smoke shall consume or choke the impenitent. Both the infernal fire, and the burning of the bodies of reprobates in that fire—shall be preserved by the miraculous power of God!

"Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath!" 1Th 1:10

"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Th 5:9

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean!

"They will be tormented day and night forever and ever!" Rev 20:10

Our earthly fires may be quenched and extinguished. The hottest flames, the greatest conflagrations have been quenched and extinguished by water. Fires on our hearths and in our chimneys often die and go out by themselves. Our fire is maintained with wood—and put out with

water. But the fire of hell never goes out; it can never be quenched. It is . . .an everlasting fire, an eternal fire, an unquenchable fire!

In Mark 9:1-50 from Mark 9:43-49, this fire is five times said to be unquenchable—as if the Lord could never speak enough of it. Beloved, the Holy Spirit is never guilty of idle repetitions; but by these frequent repetitions, the Holy Spirit would awaken men, and teach them to look upon hell as a real thing, and as a serious thing, and not sport with unquenchable flames—nor go to hell in a dream!

Certainly the fire into which the damned shall be cast shall be without all intermission of time or punishment. No tears, nor blood, nor time—can extinguish the fire of hell. Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean—yet all those oceans of tears together, would never extinguish one spark of infernal fire!

The damned are in "everlasting chains of darkness;" they are under the "vengeance of eternal fire;" "they are "in blackness of darkness forever."

Said a poor despairing creature on his deathbed, "Oh, that word 'forever'—breaks my heart!"

The damned in hell would gladly die—but they cannot. They shall be always a-dying—yet never dead. They shall be always a-consuming—yet never consumed.

"The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever!" Rev 14:11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ That immortal bird!

As the mercy of God is infinite towards the elect—so the justice of God is infinite towards the reprobate in hell. The reprobate shall have . . .punishment without pity, misery without mercy, sorrow without support, crying without compassion, mischief without measure, and torment without end!

All men in misery comfort themselves with the hope of an ending to their misery. The prisoner comforts himself with hope of a deliverance. The mariner comforts himself with hope of a safe harbor. The soldier comforts himself with hope of victory. The slave comforts himself with hope of liberty.

But the impenitent sinner has no hope in hell! He shall have . . .death without death, night without day, mourning without mirth, sorrow without solace, bondage without liberty!

The damned shall live as long in hell, as God Himself shall live in heaven!

Suppose, say some—that the whole world were turned to a mountain of sand, and that a little bird should come every thousandth year and carry away one grain of sand from that heap. What an infinite number of years—not to be numbered by all finite beings—would be spent and expired before this supposed mountain would be fetched away!

Now if a man should lie in everlasting burnings so long a time as this—and then have an end of his woe—it would administer some ease, refreshment, and comfort to him. But when that immortal bird shall have carried away this supposed mountain a thousand times over and over; alas! alas! man shall be as far from the end of his anguish and torment as ever he was! He shall be no nearer

coming out of hell, than he was the very first moment that he entered into hell.

If the fire of hell were terminable, it might then be tolerable; but being endless, it must needs be easeless and remediless!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The true salamander's skin!

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins." 1Jn 1:7

O you who truly fear the Lord, and who are united to Christ by faith, know for your everlasting comfort and support—that Christ has secured you . . . from infernal fire, from everlasting fire, from unquenchable fire, from eternal fire, and from the worm which never dies!

Christ by His blood has quenched the violence of infernal flames—so that they shall never . . . scorch you nor burn you, hurt you nor harm you!

Some say that Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of hell. Now look! As the three Hebrew children, or rather champions, had not one hair of their heads singed in that fiery furnace—just so, hell-fire shall never singe one hair of your heads! O sirs, Christ's blood has so quenched the flames of hell—that they shall never be able to scorch or burn those souls who are saved by Him! Such as are washed and cleansed from their sins in the blood of Jesus, such shall never experimentally know what everlasting burnings or a devouring fire means. Such as are washed in Christ's blood—need no purifying by hell's flames!

The fable says that a salamander cannot burn. Nero had a shirt made of a salamander's skin, so that if he walked through the fire in it—it would keep him from burning. O sirs! Christ is the true salamander's skin—which will certainly keep every gracious soul from burning in everlasting flames!

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins." 1Jn 1:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ But woe and alas!

Suppose, say some, that a man were to endure the torments of hell as many years, and no more, as there are . . . sands on the sea-shore, drops of water in the sea, stars in heaven, leaves on the trees, blades of grass on the ground; yet he would comfort himself with this poor thought, "Well, there will come a day when my misery and torment shall certainly have an end!" But woe and alas! this word "Forever! Forever! Forever!" will fill the hearts of the damned with the greatest . . . horror and terror, wrath and rage, dread and astonishment!

Suppose, say others, that the torments of hell were to end after a little bird should have emptied the sea, and only carry out in her bill, but one drop once in a thousand years—and so continue until the whole ocean was taken away.

Suppose, say others, that the whole world, from the lowest earth to the highest heavens, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain of sand—and so continue until the whole heap were taken away.

Suppose, say others, if one of the damned in hell should weep after this manner—namely, that he should only weep one tear in a hundred years, and

these should be kept together until such time as they should equal the drops of water in the sea. How many millions of ages would pass, before they could make up one river, much more a whole sea! And when that were done, should he weep again after the same manner until he had filled a second sea, a third sea, a fourth sea—if then there should be an end of their miseries—there would be some hope, some comfort that they would end at last! But hell shall never, never, never end! The eternity of hell—is that which sinks them under the most tormenting terrors and horrors!

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Oh how sweet is!

"Better the little that the righteous have, than the wealth of many wicked." Psa 37:16

The righteous man's mite, is better than the wicked man's millions.

The righteous man has his little, from the special love and favor of God. Lazarus' scraps, crusts and rags —are better and greater mercies than Dives' riches, purple robes, and dainty fare!

A godly man improves his little, to the stirring up of his heart to thankfulness, and to be much in admiring and blessing of God for his little. The least mercies which the righteous man has, make him humble, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies which You have showed unto Your servant." Gen 32:10

The righteous man enjoys his little, with a great deal of comfort, peace, quiet and contentment. Though he has but necessities from hand to mouth—yet seeing that God feeds him from heaven, as it were with manna—he is content, quiet and cheerful.

All the honors, riches, pleasures, and profits of this world, cannot yield contentment to a worldly man—they are all surrounded with briars and thorns. Who can sum up the many grievances, fears, jealousies, disgraces, temptations

and vexations—which men meet with in their vain pursuit after the things of this world! Oh how sweet is, it to lack these bitter-sweets!

Riches may well be called thorns; because they pierce both head and heart—the one with care of getting, and the other with grief in parting with them. The world and all its enchantments, are a paradise to the eye—but painfulness to the soul.

But a righteous man, with his little, enjoys both peace of conscience and peace of contentment; and this makes every bitter—sweet; and every little sweet—to be exceedingly sweet. A dish of green herbs, with peace of conscience and peace of contentment, is a noble feast, a continual feast to a gracious soul. In every crust, crumb, drop, and sip of mercy which a righteous man enjoys, he sees much of the love of his God, and the care of his God, and the wisdom of his God, and the power of his God, and the faithfulness of his God, and the goodness of his God—in making the least provision for him.

In contrast, wicked men are like the the mule which drinks from the brook—but never thinks of the spring. They are like the swine which eats up the fruit—but never looks up to the tree from whence the fruit falls.

A little will satisfy a temperate Christian. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread." Pro 30:8. Agur asks only for daily bread, necessary for his life—not for his lusts. He prays for enough to satisfy necessity—not luxury. He asks for bread—not for delicacies. He begs that his body may be sustained—not pampered.

A little will satisfy nature, and less will satisfy grace; yet nothing will satisfy a wicked man's lusts! Wicked men never have enough—they are never satisfied! Those who are separated from the world's lusts, can live with a little.

Solomon, the wisest prince who ever sat upon a throne, after his most diligent, critical, and impartial search into all the creatures, gives this as the sum total of his inquiries, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" And how then can any of

these things, yes, all these things heaped up together, satisfy the soul of man!

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Strangers and pilgrims

"To God's elect, strangers in the world," 1Pe 1:1

This world is a wilderness, and believers, as pilgrims and strangers, must pass through it to their heavenly Canaan. "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." Heb 11:10

"And they admitted that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth." Heb 11:13

"Dear friends, I urge you, as strangers and pilgrims in the world," 1Pe 2:11

The Scriptures, by frequently calling believers pilgrims, sojourners, strangers, does sufficiently evidence that there is no abiding for them in this world. This world is not their country, their city, their home, their habitation; and therefore they are not to place their hopes or hearts or affections upon things below. Heaven is their chief city, their best country, their most desirable home, and their everlasting habitation; and therefore the hopes, desires, breathings, longings should be heaven-ward, glory-ward!

Oh, when shall grace be swallowed up in glory? When shall we take possession of our eternal mansions? When shall we be with Christ, who is best of all?

"Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear." 1Pe 1:17

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Sinning is worse than suffering

Sinning is worse than suffering; for by men's sins God is dishonored—but by their sufferings God is glorified. Oh, that the Christian reader would seriously consider of these things:

There is nothing that the great God hates—but sin.

There is nothing that God has revealed His wrath from heaven against—but sin.

There is nothing that grieves the Spirit of grace—but sin.

There is nothing that wounds the conscience—but sin.

There is nothing that clouds the face of God—but sin.

There is nothing that interrupts our communion with God—but sin.

There is nothing that embitters our mercies—but sin.

There is nothing that puts a sting into all our troubles and trials—but sin.

And therefore under all your sorrows and sufferings, crosses and losses—make it your great business . . . to arm yourselves against sin, and to pray against sin, and to watch against sin, and to turn from sin, and to cease from sin, and to get rid of sin, and to stand forever in defiance of sin! Assuredly every gracious heart had rather be rid of his sins than of his sufferings!

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Those who hunt after it are dogs

The Arabic proverb says, "That the world is a carcass, and those who hunt after it are dogs." Ah, how many professors are there, who hunt more after earth than heaven; who hunt more after terrestrial than celestial things; who hunt more after nothingnesses and emptinesses, than they do after those fullnesses and sweetnesses which are in God, in Christ, in the covenant, in heaven, and in those paths which lead to eternal happiness!

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1Jn 5:4

Those who live by faith, do not only resist, but also triumph over all the glittering temptations of a tempting and enticing world.

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Oramuzes' happiness egg

"Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income." Ecc 5:10

He who is not contented with a little, will never be satisfied with much. Money of itself, cannot satisfy any desire of nature. If a man is hungry, money cannot feed him; if naked, money cannot clothe him; if cold, money cannot warm him; if sick, money cannot cure him.

A circle cannot fill a triangle; no more can the whole world fill the heart of man. A man may as soon fill a chest with grace—as a heart with wealth. The soul of man may be busied about earthly things—but it can never be filled nor satisfied with earthly things. There is many a worldling who has enough of the world to sink him, who will never have enough of the world to satisfy him. The more money is increased—the more the love of money is increased; and the more the love of money is increased—the more the soul is unsatisfied.

It is only an infinite God, and an infinite good, which can fill and satisfy the precious and immortal soul of man.

The sum of all that the creatures amount to, according to Solomon's reckoning, is vanity and vexation of spirit. Vanity and vexation is the very quintessence of the creature, and all that can possibly be extracted out of it. Now if vanity can satisfy, or if vexation can give contentment; if you can gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles—then go on and dote upon the world still, and be always enamored with a shadow of perishing beauty.

Oramuzes the enchanter boasted that in his egg all the happiness in the world was included; but being broken, there was nothing in it but wind and emptiness.

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Nothing will grow where gold grows

"Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they pleaded with Him to leave their region." Mat 8:34

Many prefer the world before Christ; yes, the worst of the world before the best of Christ! The Gergesenes preferred their swine before a Savior; they had rather lose Christ than lose their hogs! They had rather that the devil should still possess their souls, than that Jesus should drown their pigs. They preferred their swine before their salvation, and presented a wretched petition for their own damnation.

Though there is no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell, compared to Christ's departure from a people—yet men who are mad upon the world will

desire this.

Some say that nothing will grow where gold grows. Certainly, where an inordinate love of the world grows, there nothing will grow that is good. A heart filled . . . either with the love of the world, or with the profits of the world, or with the pleasures of the world, or with the honors of the world, or with the cares of the world, or with the business of the world—is a heart incapacitated to receive any divine counsel or comfort from the word!

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Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul

"Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." Pro 23:4-5

The only thing certain about riches—is that they are uncertain.

Oh the deadness, the barrenness, the listlessness, the heartlessness to anything that is divine and heavenly—which always attends such professors who are resolved to be rich, or great, or somebody in the world! Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the spirits that these men spend upon the world—while their souls lie a-bleeding, and eternity is hastening upon them! Men who are highly and fully resolved to be rich—will certainly forget God, undervalue Christ, grieve the Spirit, slight ordinances, and neglect such gracious opportunities as might make them happy forever. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his

soul. "As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said—That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." Acts 24:24-25

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All shadow and vanity

"Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Ecc 1:2

In all the ages of the world, this testimony of Solomon holds good. The things of this world are not only vain; but vanity in the abstract. They are excessive vanity; vanity of vanities; yes, they are a heap of vanity; vanity of vanities.

All in heaven write 'vanity of vanities' upon all worldly things; and all in hell write 'vanity of vanities' upon all worldly things: and why should not all on earth write 'vanity of vanities' upon all worldly things?

The world is all shadow and vanity. The world is like Jonah's gourd—a man may sit under its shadow for a while—but it soon withers, decays, and dies.

He who shall but weigh . . . man's pains with his pay, his miseries with his mercies, his sorrows with his joys, his crosses with his comforts, his needs with his enjoyments, etc., may well cry out, "Oh the vanity and uncertainty of all these earthly things!"

All the great, the mirthful, the glorious things of the world, may fitly be resembled to the fruit which undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste—but deadly in operation!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ That wise and skillful physician

God's wisdom so tempers and orders all afflictions, crosses, and losses—as to make them work kindly and sweetly for our good. God is that wise and skillful physician, who can turn . . . poison into cordials, diseases into remedies, crosses into crowns, and the greatest losses into the greatest gains.

What can hurt us, while an infinite wise God stands by us?

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I will be with him in trouble

"He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble." Psa 91:15

Oh, the precious presence of God with a man, will sweeten every fiery dispensation, and take off much of the bitterness and dreadfulness of it.

In the gracious presence of God with us lies, our greatest happiness,

our greatest honor, our greatest profit and advantage, our greatest joy and delight, our greatest safety and security.

The gracious presence of God with us, will make our heavy afflictions light,

our long afflictions short, our bitter afflictions sweet.

He who has the presence of God with his spirit, can bear a burden without a burden. What burden can sink that man, who has everlasting arms under him,

and over him, and round about him?

"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall." Psa 55:22

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Soldiers, strangers, travelers, pilgrims

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said—Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb 13:5

The believing Hebrews had been plundered of all they had in this world, Heb 10:34, when the apostle gave forth this royal command; and yet the apostle requires them to be content. It is as much the duty of a Christian to be content when he has nothing, as when all the world smiles upon him.

Christians are soldiers, strangers, travelers, pilgrims; and therefore it concerns them to make do with little things, yes, with anything in this world.

Nature is content with a little, grace with less; though nothing will satisfy those men's hearts, whose lusts are their masters.

The Israelites had no mirthful clothes, nor no new clothes in their wilderness condition; but God made their old clothes to be all clothes to them, and that was enough.

Jacob did not ask God for dainties or ornaments—but for food and clothing. Gen 28:20, "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear, then shall the Lord be my God."

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Honeyed poison

O Sirs! in the grave it is all the same—to one who has had all, and to another who has had none. What folly is it to lay up goods for many years, when we cannot lay up one day for the enjoyment of our goods! Christ, who never miscalled any, calls him "fool!" who had much of the world under his hands—but nothing of God or heaven in his heart.

All this whole world is not proportionable to the precious soul. All the riches of the Indies cannot pacify conscience, nor secure eternity, nor prevent death, nor bring you off victorious in the day of judgment; and therefore be contented with a little.

All the good things of this world, are but cold comforts: they cannot stretch to eternity, they will not go with us into the eternal world; and therefore why should the lack of such things either trouble our thoughts, or break our hearts?

The whole world is but . . . a paradise for fools; a beautiful but deceitful harlot; a dreamed sweetness, a very ocean of gall. There is nothing to be found in it, which has not mutability and uncertainty, vanity and vexation stamped upon it. And therefore he cannot be truly happy who enjoys it; nor can he be miserable who lacks it. And why then should not he be contented, who has but a little of it? The greatest outward happiness is but honeyed poison; and therefore do not mutter or murmur because you have but little of the world.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Your only hell

All your crosses and losses shall be so tempered by a hand of heaven, as that they shall become wholesome medicines. They shall be steps to your future glory. All your present trials are your only hell; your heaven is to come. And therefore be contented in the midst of all your sorrows and sufferings.

Remember that many times those who have most of the world in their hands, have least of God, of Christ, of the Spirit, of grace, of heaven in their hearts. It is only an infinite good and infinite God, which can fill and satisfy the soul of man.

Remember, that a man were better to have much of God—with a little of the world; than to have much of the world—with a little of God. God alone is a thousand thousand felicities, and a world of happiness, the only life and light.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The synagogue of incarnate devils!

O sirs, this is and this must be for a lamentation, that there are so many ale-houses, and gaming-houses, and whore-houses, which are usually stuffed with vain people, yes, with the very worst of the worst of men. Certainly these houses are the very suburbs and seminaries of hell. "Where have you been?" "In hell," said Erasmus, merrily comparing ale-houses to hell. Doubtless, they are the nurseries of all sin, and the synagogue of incarnate devils! In the above-mentioned houses, how notoriously is the name of God blasphemed, and how shamefully are the precious fruits of the earth abused! and how many

hundred families, are there impoverished! and how many thousand children, are there impoisoned! and how is all manner of wickedness and lewdness, are there encouraged and increased!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A frequent and serious consideration of hell-fire, and of your happy deliverance from it, may very well bear and cheer up your hearts under all your greatest sufferings.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A threefold repetition of this worm

Certainly, hell-fire is neither tolerable nor terminable.

The extremity and eternity of hellish torments is set forth by the worm which never dies. Christ makes a threefold repetition of this worm in Mark 9:44, Mark 9:46, and Mark 9:48—"Their worm does not die—and the fire is not quenched!" "Their worm does not die—and the fire is not quenched!" "Their worm does not die—and the fire is not quenched!"

Certainly those punishments are beyond all conception and expression—which our Lord Jesus does so often inculcate within so small a space!

If after so many millions of years as there are drops in the ocean, there might be a deliverance out of hell, this would yield a little ease, a little comfort to the damned. Oh but this word, "Eternity! Eternity! Eternity!" This word, "Everlasting! Everlasting! Everlasting!" will break the hearts of the damned in ten thousand pieces!

There is scarcely any pain or torment here on earth—but there is ever some hope of ease, mitigation, or intermission, there is some hope of relief or delivery. But in hell, the torments there are all easeless, remediless, and endless!

Here on earth, if one falls into the fire, he may like a brand be pulled out of it and be saved; but out of that fiery lake of hell-fire, there is no redemption. That majesty of God, which the sinner has offended and provoked—is an infinite majesty. Now, there must be some proportion between the sinner's sin—and his punishment and torment. Now the sinner being a finite creature, he is not capable of bearing the weight of that punishment or torment which is intensively infinite, because it would be his abolishing or annihilating; and therefore he must bear the weight of that punishment or torment, which is extensively infinite—that is, infinite in the continuance and endurance. What is lacking in torment, must be made up in time.

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He lived poor and died poor

"Jesus replied—Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head." Mat 8:20

Jesus does not say, Kings have palaces—but I have none. Nor He does say that rich men have houses and lands and mansions to entertain their followers—but I have none; but, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but I have no place to lay My head."

Your outward condition is not worse than Christ's was when he was in the world. Christ's condition was low, yes, very low and humble in this world. He was born in a feeding trough, lived on the charity of others, and did not have enough money to pay His taxes. The great Architect of the world had no place to lay his head—but emptied Himself of all, and became poor to make us rich, not in goods—but in grace; not in worldly wealth—but in the treasures of the eternal world. He lived poor and died poor.

Are you houseless, are you penniless, are you poor, and low, and base in this world? So was Christ! Remember "the servant is not greater than his Lord!"

It is unfitting to see the Head all begored with blood and crowned with thorns—and the members to be decked with roses and jewels, and to smell of rich spices, and perfumes!

Are you in a worse condition than Christ was in this world? Oh no, no! Why then do you murmur and complain? Why do you say there is no sorrow compared to your sorrow, nor any suffering compared to your suffering? O sirs! it is honor enough for the disciples of Christ to fare as Christ fared in this world. Why should the servant be in a better condition than his Lord? Did you but seriously and frequently meditate and ponder upon the poverty and low estate of Christ while He was in this world, your hearts would be more calm and quiet under all their crosses and losses!

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The most golden Christians

Under all fiery trials, God will make good that golden promise, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God." Rom 8:28.

Mark, the apostle does not say, we suppose, or we hope, or we conjecture—but we know! We know that all our sufferings and afflictions work together for our good! The apostle does not say they shall work—but they do work.

Look! as several poisonous ingredients put together, being well tempered and mixed by the skill and care of the prudent apothecary, makes a sovereign medicine, and work together for the good of the patient; just so, all the afflictions and sufferings which befall the saints—they shall be so wisely, so divinely tempered, ordered, and sanctified by the hand of God—as that they shall really and remarkably work for their good. Those dreadful providences which seem to be most harmful to us, shall in the outcome prove most beneficial to us!

Look! as vessels of gold are made by fire, so by fiery trials God will make His people vessels of gold! Ususally, the most afflicted Christians are the most golden Christians.

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The secret of being content

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Php 4:11-12

"Christian contentment is that sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit, which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition." (Jeremiah Burroughs)

"The way to true riches," says one, "is not to increase our heaps; but to diminish the covetousness of our hearts."

"He who is satisfied with a little; he who is contented with God's allowance—he is the happy man. (Brooks)

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said—Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb 13:5

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that." 1Ti 6:6-8

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He has no reason to complain!

The least drop of grace, the least smile from Christ's face, the least kiss of His mouth, the least embrace of His arm, the least hint of His favor—is worth more than ten thousand worlds!

That Christian cannot be poor—who is rich in grace.

That Christian cannot be miserable—who has God for his portion.

That Christian cannot be unhappy—who has a mansion prepared for him in heaven, though he has not a cottage to hide his head in, in this world.

That Christian has no cause to complain of lack of food for his body—whose soul is feasted with manna, with the dainties of heaven, with those rarities which are better than angels' food!

He who has but rags to cover his back, if his soul is clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness, he has no reason to complain!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ When God takes away your carnals

One support to bear up the hearts of the people of God under the recent fiery dispensation, is this—That the Lord will certainly, one way or another, make up all their losses to them. Sometimes God makes up His people's outward losses by giving them . . . more of Himself, more of His Son, more of His Spirit, more of His favor, more of His grace.

When God takes away your carnals, and gives you more spirituals; when God takes away your temporals, and gives you more eternal—your outward losses are made up to you. When God takes away a Christian's estate in this world, he looks for a better and enduring estate in heaven.

If men should . . . take away your old clothes, and give you new clothes; take away your rags, and give you robes; take away your chaff, and give you wheat;

take away your water, and give you wine; take away your tin, and give you silver; take away your brass, and give you gold; take away your pebbles, and give you pearls; take away your cottages, and give you royal palaces—certainly you would have no cause to complain!

If God takes away your houses, your goods, your trades, your honors—and gives you more of himself, and more grace—He does you no injury. It is an

excellent exchange, to get eternal for temporal.

If God takes away your earthly riches, and makes you more . . . rich in grace, rich in spiritual comforts, rich in holy experiences, rich in divine enjoyments, then you are no losers—but great gainers!

What are all the necessary comforts of this life, compared to union and communion with God, to a saving interest in Christ, to pardon of sin, to peace of conscience, and to that loving-kindness which is better than life?

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Time

There is nothing that puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit than to know the worth of his time. Eternity, eternity depends upon your improvement of that time! The damned in hell may weep their eyes out of their heads—but they can never weep sin out of their souls, nor their souls out of hell.

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Why should any living man complain

"Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?" Lam 3:39

Oh what a foolish, senseless, brutish, blockish thing it is, for a man, a mortal man, a sinful man, a man on this side hell—to complain or murmur against a holy and righteous God! He who is on this side everlasting burnings, on this side a devouring fire, has no just cause to complain, whatever his losses, crosses, or sufferings are. He who has deserved a hanging, if he escapes with a whipping—has no cause to complain or murmur. Men who have deserved a

damning, if they escape with the loss of house, goods, etc., they have no cause to complain or murmur.

Oh sirs! Spend your days in a serious and deep admiration of that free, that rich, that infinite, and that sovereign grace that spared you, in that day when you were compassed about with flames of fire on every hand!

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From belly to cards or dice

"Those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces." Luk 7:25

"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day." Luk 16:19

"The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment," Luk 16:22-23

Luxury is one of the great darling sins of our age and day! It is a very God-dishonoring sin, and a God-provoking sin, and a soul-damning sin! It shuts them out from all the glory of heaven—and tumbles them down to the lowest hell!

Look! no luxurious person shall enter into heaven. Of all sorts of sinners—the luxurious sinner is most rarely reformed. The adulterer may become chaste, the thief may become an honest man, the swearer may obtain a sanctified tongue; but how rare is it to see a luxurious person repent, break off his sins, close with Christ, and walk to heaven!

Of such professors who live and wallow in luxury and intemperance, if we compare Christ's laws and their lives together, I think we may confidently conclude, that they are not Christians. Panormitan, a heathen, having read the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of Matthew, and comparing those rules of Christ with the loose and luxurious lives of professing Christians; concluded that those people were not Christians.

Chrysostom preferred brute beasts before luxurious people; for the beast goes from belly to labor; when the luxurious person goes from belly to bed, or from

belly to cards or dice, if not to something worse!

"You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter." Jas 5:5

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All belly-gods shall at last be found in the belly of hell!

"Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach." Php 3:18-19

Intemperance robs men of everlasting happiness and blessedness. It shuts them out from all the glory of heaven, and tumbles them down to the lowest hell, as you may see in that great instance of luxurious Dives, who was "dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day." The intemperate man's table proves a snare to his soul.

Intemperant people eat and drink away their Christ; they eat and drink away their souls; they eat and drink away their own salvation! Those who serve their own bellies, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall never reign with Him in heaven. Certainly that man who makes his belly his god, shall be forever separated from God.

All belly-gods shall at last be found in the belly of hell! The intemperate person has his heaven here; his hell is to come. Now he has his sweet cups, his merry cups, his pleasant cups. Oh, but there is a cup of shame and sorrow to come! "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup." Psa 11:6.

The intemperate person has been a gulf to devour many mercies, and therefore he shall at last be cast into a gulf of endless miseries.

How many make their belly their god, and their kitchen their altar; whose whole felicity lay in eating and drinking, whose bodies were as sponges, and whose throats were as open sepulchers to take in all precious liquors, and whose bellies were as graves to bury God's creatures in!

Augustine well observes that God has not given to man: claws to tear in pieces—like bears and leopards; nor horns to push—like bulls and rams; nor a sting to prick—like wasps, and bees, and serpents; nor a bill to strike—like eagles and ostriches; nor a wide mouth to devour—like dogs and lions; but a little mouth, to show that man should be very temperate both in his eating and drinking.

How applicable these things are to the luxurious people who lived within the walls of London before it was turned into ashes—I shall leave the wise in heart to judge.

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02.08.a. London's Lamentations contd

Then the mud appears

God inflicts great and severe judgments upon men, and upon cities and countries—that they may cease from sin, receive instruction, and reform and return to Him.

God's corrections should be our instructions, His lashes should be our lessons, His scourges should be our schoolmasters, His chastisements should be our admonishments.

God, by fiery afflictions, and by burning up our comforts round about us—awakens us, and brings us to Himself. When iron grows rusty, we put it into the fire to purify it; and so when the people of God grow rusty, then the

Lord brings them under fiery trials to awaken them, and to purify them.

God has several special ends that he aims at by all the fiery trials and sharp providences that He exercises His people with. He intends a further and a fuller discovery of their sins. In standing waters you cannot see the mud which lies at the bottom of the pond; but when once the water is drawn away—then it appears. Just so, in times of prosperity there is a great deal of mud—a great deal of unbelief, discontent, murmuring, impatience, passion, pride, etc.—which lies at the bottom of men's hearts, undiscovered. Oh, but when God shall once empty them of their estates, and burn up all their outward comforts, and set them with Job upon the ash-heap—then the mud appears, then a whole army of lusts reveal themselves!

In times of fiery trials, you may say with the psalmist, "My sins are ever before me!" My pride is ever before me, my unbelief is ever before me, my frowardness is ever before me, my murmuring is ever before me, my discontent is ever before me, my impatience is ever before me, etc.

Godly men never come to know how bad they are, until they come to be exercised with severe and sharp trials. It was the speech of a holy man in a great sickness, "In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is!" Afflictions are a Christian's mirror, in which they may run and read the greatness of God, and the vileness of sin!

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The sovereignty of God

The sovereignty of God is that golden scepter in His hand which He will make all bow to, either . . . by His word or by His works, by His mercies or by His judgments.

This scepter must be kissed and submitted to, or else fire and sword, desolation and destruction, will certainly follow.

Many times judgments work—where mercies do not win. The world is so intractable, that God's frowns will do more with them than God's smiles.

The the power, justice, and sovereignty of God shines most gloriously in the execution of His judgments upon the world.

God's greatest severity is to prevent utter ruin and misery!

There is a knowledge of God by His works as well as by His word; and by His judgments as well as by His mercies. In His dreadful judgments everyone may run and read—His power, His justice, His anger, His severity and indignation against sin and sinners.

It is the highway to atheism and profaneness, to imagine to ourselves, a God made up all of mercy, to think that God cannot be angry and wrathful with sinful men.

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The Jews

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify Him!" "Why? What crime has He committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify Him!" Mat 27:22-23

"Him . . . you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain!" Acts 2:23

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ!" Acts 2:36

O, since their crucifying of the Lord of glory—the Jews have never laid their finger upon the right sore; to this very day they won't acknowledge their sin in crucifying of the Lord of glory. They realize that God has sorely afflicted them; but their cruelty to Christ, their crucifying of Christ, which ushered in the total ruin of their city and country—they cannot be brought to acknowledge to this very day, though the Lord has burnt them up on every hand, and has scattered them as dung all over the earth to this very day!

A learned writer tells us that the Jews call Christ, "a bastard;" and his Gospel, "the Volume of Lies," or "the Volume of Iniquity;" and us Christians "heathen". When they greet a Christian, they call him, "Devil". They hate all Christians—but none so much as those who are converted from Judaism to Christianity, and all this after so great a burning and desolation that the Lord has made in the midst of them!

"As He approached Jerusalem and saw the city, He wept over it and said—If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you." Luk 19:41-44

It is certain that the majority of the Jews are under woeful blindness and hardness to this very day!

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What is in the well, will be in the bucket

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Mat 12:36

There are many idle talkers. An idle word is a profuse or needless word, used rashly or unadvisedly, lacking a reason of just necessity, bringing neither honor to God nor edification to others, nor conducing to any profitable end.

And as there are many idle talkers, so there are many over-talkers; and they are such who spend a hundred words when ten will serve the turn.

And as there are many over-talkers, so there are many who are only-talkers, who can do nothing but talk.

And as there are many who are only talkers, so there are many who are unprofitable talkers. "The beginning of the words of their mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness," Ecc 10:13.

And as there are many unprofitable talkers, so there are many unseasonable talkers, who place one word where another should stand. "A wise man discerns time and judgment," Ecc 8:4.

And as there are many unseasonable talkers, so there are many rash talkers, who speak first and think afterwards, Ecc 5:2.

God has set a double bar about the tongue—the teeth and the lips—that men should not speak rashly. Words once spoken cannot return. A man who thinks before he speaks, seldom repents of what he speaks. Silence is far better than rash speaking, or than vain speaking, etc.

O sirs, the tongue is the true revealer of the heart. If there is piety or iniquity at the bottom of your hearts, your tongues will reveal it. What is in the well, will be in the bucket. Just so, what is in the heart, will be in the mouth. If there is anything of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of hell, of sin, of the world, of self in the bottom of your souls, your tongues will reveal it.

A man's heart may sometimes be seen at his tongue's end.

Many a man's tongue has cut his throat; that is, it has been his ruin.

The Holy Spirit shows the mischief of the tongue, by the several characters by which he brands it. He calls it the flattering tongue, the double tongue, the deceitful tongue, the lying tongue, the perverse tongue, etc., Psa 52:2; Pro 18:21; Ecc 10:12; Psa 19:4, and Psa 73:9; Mat 28:13, Mat 28:15.

The tongue is often like a sharp razor, that, instead of shaving the hair, cuts the throat. If a man does not look well about him, he may every day be in danger of dying by his tongue. "Life and death," says Solomon, "are in the power of the tongue," Pro 18:21.

Ah, how good had it been for many that they had been born dumb! The tongue can easily travel all the world over, and wound men's names and credits in this country; and that in this city and that in this town, and that in this family, and that in an instant run from one place to another: here it bites, and there it tears: in this place it leaves a blot, and in that it gives a wound; and therefore you have cause to watch your tongues on every day.

O sirs, how many men and women are there who are discriminating about what they eat, who are not discriminating about what they speak; who are particular about the food which goes into their mouths, lest it should hurt or poison them, who are not particular about the words that go out of their mouths, lest they should hurt or poison others!

Of all the members in the body, there is none so serviceable to Satan as the tongue.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

I meditate on it all day long

"Oh, how I love Your law! I meditate on it all day long." Psa 119:97

We are to meditate upon blessed truths that we read in Scripture, such as . . .

the holiness, greatness, and graciousness of God; the person, natures, offices, excellencies, beauties, glories, riches, fullness, and sweetness of Christ; our own emptiness, nothingness, baseness, vileness and unworthiness; the works of God—creation, providence and redemption; our spiritual needs; that eternal rest which is reserved for the people of God.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Satan's grand design

Satan's grand design is not to keep men from going the round of holy duties—but to hinder the exercise of grace. All other exercises without the exercise of grace will do a Christian no good. The more grace is exercised—the more corruptions will be weakened and mortified. As one bucket in the well rises up, the other goes down; so as grace rises higher and higher, corruptions fall lower and lower. As grace in its exercise grows stronger and stronger—so sin will every day grow weaker and weaker.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Contentment in every condition

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Php 4:11-12.

In these words you have first the vicissitude of Paul's outward condition: at one time he abounds, at another he is abased: at one time he is full, and at another time he suffers need.

You have the sweet and gracious composure of his spirit, and this is expressed in two singular acts. The first is his contentment of mind in all conditions. The second is his prudent and pertinent behavior with his present condition.

You have the way how he attained this contentment of mind in all conditions: "I have learned," says he, "I am instructed;" this lesson of contentment he did not learn at the feet of Dr. Gamaliel—but in the school of Jesus Christ. Contentment in every condition is too high a lesson for any effectually to teach—but Jesus Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The secret of being content

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." Php 4:11-12

Those whose houses have been burnt up in the great fire of London, must be contented with their present condition. When a man's mind is brought down to his means—all is well. Contentment in a man's present condition—will yield him a little heaven in the midst of all the great hells which he meets with in this world. Contentment is a hidden treasure, which the believer will carry with him to the eternal heaven, where an exceeding weight of glory and contentment, with full satisfaction to his desires, will be added to that little stock of contentment that he has obtained in this world. Contentment in every condition, is no other but the house of God! God dwells in a contented heart, and a contented heart dwells in God. Contentment is that porch wherein the believer waits for an entrance into a house not made with hands—but one eternal in the heavens!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The sweetest wines become the tartest vinegar

As the sweetest wines become the tartest vinegar; just so, God's heavenly favors and indulgences being long abused, they at last turned into storms of wrath and vengeance!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A detestable, stinking weed

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John 8:44

Satan is the father of all sins, as well as the father of lies. By lying, he first brought sin into the world. Satan began his kingdom by a lie, and by lies he still labors to uphold it. He is the inventor and author of all the lies which are in the world. "The devil's breasts," says Luther, "are very fruitful with lies." Liars are the devil's children by imitation. There are none who resemble him so much to the life, as liars do! They are as like him as if they were spit out of the his very mouth. Lying is a part of the devil's image. Other sins make men like beasts; but this sin of lying makes men like devils.

Such as truly fear the Lord, they hate lying. Psa 119:163, "I hate and abhor lying." Pro 13:5, "A righteous man hates lying." Lying is a detestable, stinking weed, and therefore a righteous man abhors to touch it, he hates to come near it, and can by no means endure the scent of it in others—least of all in himself!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Inseparable companions

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." Gal 6:7

Sin and punishment are inseparable companions.

"When the time comes for Me to punish, I will punish them for their sin." Exo 32:34

"I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging." Psa 89:32

"He will punish your sin and expose your wickedness." Lam 4:22

02.09. Miscellaneous Quotes

Miscellaneous Quotes The choicest, sweetest, wisest, strongest Christian

Remember that it is not hasty reading—but serious meditation on holy and heavenly truths, which makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul.

It is not the mere touching of the flower by the bee which gathers honey—but her abiding for a time on the flower which draws out the sweet.

It is not he who reads most, but he who meditates most—who will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest, and strongest Christian.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The golden link of love!

It was the golden link of love that fastened Christ to the cross!

Certainly the more Christ has suffered for us, the more dear Christ should be unto us. The more bitter His sufferings have been for us, the more sweet His love should be to us, and the more eminent should be our love to Him. Oh, let a suffering Christ lie nearest your hearts; let Him be your manna, your tree of life, your morning star. It is better to part with all than with this pearl of great price.

Christ is that golden pipe through which the golden oil of salvation runs.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The highest, choicest, safest and sweetest life

Everything that a man leans upon but God—will be a dart which will certainly pierce his heart through and through. He who leans only upon Christ—lives the highest, choicest, safest and sweetest life.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God eyes them

Though our private desires are ever so confused, though our private requests are ever so broken, and though our private groanings are ever so hidden from men, yet God eyes them, records them, and puts them upon the file of heaven, and will one day crown them with glorious answers and returns.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

There are three things which earthly riches can never do: they can never satisfy divine justice, they can never pacify divine wrath, nor can they ever quiet a guilty conscience. And until these things are done—man is undone!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The gate of heaven!

The best and sweetest flowers of Paradise God gives to His people when they are upon their knees.

Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into Paradise. God hears no more than the heart speaks; and if the heart be dumb—God will certainly be deaf.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Crocodile sinners

The unbeliever never leaves his sin till sin first leaves him. Did not death put a stop to his sin—he would never cease from sin.

This may be illustrated by a similitude thus—a company of gamesters resolve to play all night; their candle, accidentally or unexpectedly, goes out, or is put out, or burns out. Their candle being out, they are forced to give over their game, and go to bed in the dark. But had the candle lasted all night, they would have played all night.

This is every sinner's case in regard of sin—did not death put out the candle of life, the sinner would sin still.

Should the sinner live forever, he would sin forever; and, therefore, it is a righteous thing with God to punish him forever in hellish torments.

Every impenitent sinner would sin to the days of eternity, if he might live to the days of eternity.

I have read of the crocodile, that he knows no maximum size, he is always growing bigger and bigger, and never comes to a certain pitch of monstrosity so long as he lives.

Likewise, every habituated sinner would, if he were let alone, be a monster, perpetually growing worse and worse.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A tender heart, a soft hand, an iron memory

("Words of counsel to a dear dying friend")

Look upon your dying day as your reaping day. Now you shall reap the fruit of . . . all the prayers that you have ever made, and of all the tears that you have ever shed, and of all the sighs and groans that you have ever fetched, and of all the good words that you have ever spoken, and of all the good works that you have ever done, and of all the great things that you have ever suffered.

When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then reap a plentiful crop, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed, which for a time, has seemed to be buried and lost.

As Christ has a tender heart and a soft hand, so He has an iron memory. He precisely remembers . . . all the sorrows, and all the services, and all the sufferings of His people, to reward them and crown them.

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Rev 22:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

However harsh His hand may be

("A Heavenly Cordial" 1665)

None of God's afflictions upon His people ever make any change or alteration of God's affections towards His people.

However harsh His hand may be against them—yet His love, His heart, His favor, His affections—are still one and the same to them.

When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he felt? He pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, "These are God's gems and jewels with which he decks His best friends; and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world!"

God's dear love to His people is not founded upon anything good in His people, nor upon anything good which is done by His people—but only upon His own free grace and goodness!

What could move the holy God to love us, who are poor, worthless, fruitless sinners? This question is best resolved in these words, "He loves us because He loves us!" The root of His love to us lies in Himself! God's love to His people is a lasting love, yes, an everlasting love! It is a love which never decays nor waxes cold. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." Jer 31:3

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Death is a change of company

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

A believer's last day is his best day! Death is a change of company. In this world, the godliest man must live with the wicked, and converse with the wicked, etc.; and this is a part of their misery; it is their hell on this side heaven. This stuck upon the heart of David: "Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech, that I live among the tents of Kedar!" Psa 120:5

I have read of a godly woman, who, being near death, cried out, "O Lord, let me not go to hell where the wicked are, for You know that I never loved their company while in this life!"

"Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers, so that I might leave my people and go away from them; for they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people!" Jer 9:2

And this was that which did vex and tear Lot's righteous soul—"Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the filthy lives of lawless men (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard." 2Pe 2:7-8

Oh, but death is a change of company. A godly man does but change the company of profane people, of vile people, etc.—for the company of angels; and the company of weak Christians—for the company of just men made perfect.

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev 21:27

"Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." Rev 22:15

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Death is a change of enjoyments

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

A believer's last day is his best day! Death is a change of enjoyments. Death is a change of our more dark and obscure enjoyment of God—for a more clear and sweet enjoyment of God. The best believer in this world, who enjoys most of God, and the visions of His glory—still he does not enjoy God clearly; but he is much in the dark.

We are weak, and able to take in little of God. We have but dark apprehensions of God. Witness our tears, sighs, groans, and complaints, because we go forward and backward. God hides Himself that we cannot see Him.

Ask those who live highest in the enjoyment of God, "What is your greatest burden?" They will tell you, "This is our greatest burden, that our apprehensions of God are no more clear, that we cannot see Him whom our souls do dearly love, face to face."

Oh—but now in heaven saints shall have a clear vision of God! There are no clouds or mists in heaven!

Death is a change of our imperfect and incomplete enjoyments of God, for a more complete and perfect enjoyment of Him. It is an excellent expression that Augustine has: "The glorious things of heaven are . . .so many—that they exceed number; so precious—that they exceed estimation; so great—that they exceed measure!"

Bernard says, "For Christ to be with Paul was the greatest security—but for Paul to be with Christ was the chief happiness!"

There are no complaints in heaven, because there are no needs. Oh, when death shall give the fatal stroke, there shall be an exchange . . .of earth—for heaven; of imperfect enjoyments—for perfect enjoyments of God! Then the soul shall be swallowed up with a full enjoyment of God; no corner of the soul shall be left empty—but all shall be filled up with the fullness of God.

Here in this present world, the saints receive grace; but in heaven they shall receive glory. God keeps the best wine until last; the best of God, Christ, and heaven—is beyond this present world. Here we have but some sips, some tastes of God; the fullness is reserved for the glorious state. He who sees most of God here on earth, sees but His back parts; His face is a jewel of that splendor and glory, which no eye can behold but a glorified eye.

The best of Christians are able to take in but little of God; their hearts are like the widow's vessel, which could receive but a little oil. Sin, the world, and creatures take up so much room in the best hearts—that God gives out Himself little by little, as parents give sweets to their children. But in heaven God will communicate Himself fully at once to the soul! Grace shall then be swallowed up in glory!

Death is a change of a more inconstant and transient enjoyment of God—for a more constant and permanent enjoyment of God. Here on earth, the saints' enjoyment of God is inconstant. One day they enjoy God, and another day the soul sits and complains in anguish of spirit. But in heaven there shall no clouds arise between the Lord and a believing heart. God will not one day smile, and another day frown; one day take a soul in His arms, and another day lay that soul at His feet. In heaven there are nothing but kisses and embraces, nothing but a perpetual enjoyment of God! When once God takes the soul unto Himself, all tears shall then be wiped away.

There are angels and archangels in heaven. Yes, but they do not make heaven; Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory! It is heaven and happiness enough to see Christ, and to be forever with Christ.

Now, oh what a glorious change is this! Methinks these things should make us long for our dying-day, and account this present life but a lingering death. "And so we will be with the Lord forever! Therefore encourage each other

with these words." 1Th 4:17-18

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Death brings the soul to a state of eternal rest

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

Rev 14:13, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Why? "They will rest from their labor."

A believer's last day is his best day! Death brings the soul to a state of eternal rest. Death is . . . a rest from the trouble of our labors, a rest from afflictions, a rest from persecutions, a rest from temptation, a rest from sin, and a rest from sorrow.

Now while we are here in this present world, the soul is in a perpetual agitation. The godliest man in the world, who is highest and clearest in his enjoyments of God—either lacks some temporal mercy or spiritual mercy—and will do so until his soul is swallowed up in the everlasting enjoyments of God!

Death brings a man to an unchangeable rest!

Death is a believer's coronation-day, it is his marriage-day. Death is an eternal rest . . . from sin, from sorrow, from afflictions, from temptations.

Death to a believer is an entrance into paradise—into the joy of his Lord.

A believer's dying-day is his best day. The day of his death, is better than the day of his birth.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Death puts an end to all changes

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

A believer's last day is his best day! Death puts an end to all changes. What is the whole life of a man—but a life of changes?

Here on earth, you often change . . . your joy for sorrow, your health for sickness, your strength for weakness, your honor for dishonor, your plenty for poverty, your beauty for deformity, your friends for foes, your silver for brass, your gold for copper.

All temporal things are transitory. Man himself—what is he—but a mere nothing—the dream of a dream, a shadow, a bubble, a flash, a puff!

Now the comforts of a man are smiling—but the next hour they are dying.

Now the Lord smiles upon the soul—and at another time He frowns upon the soul.

Now God gives assistance to conquer sin—but before long the man is carried captive by his sin.

Now he is strengthened against the temptation, in a short while he falls before the temptation, etc.

But death puts an end to all changes. Now the soul shall be tempted no more, sin no more, be foiled no more. Now you may judge by this, that a Christian's dying-day is his best day.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ That dead man or dead woman

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

"When calamity comes, the wicked are brought down, but even in death the righteous have a refuge!" Pro 14:32

We should lament over that dead man or dead woman . . . whom hell harbors, whom the devil devours, whom divine justice torments!

But let rejoice over those departed believers whom Christ embosoms, and whom all the court of heaven comes forth to welcome!

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!" Num 23:10

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints!" Psa 116:15

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Do not fear death

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

Death is not such as some would paint it.

Never mourn immoderately at the death of any believer. Death is not the death of the man—but the death of his sin. Death is to them the greatest gain.

Remember this—death does that in a moment, which no graces or duties could do for a man all his lifetime! Death frees a man from those diseases, corruptions, temptations, etc., which no duties or graces could do.

Do not fear death. Do not say of death, what that wicked prince said to the prophet, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" But rather long for death, not to be rid of troubles—but that your soul may be taken up to a more clear and full enjoyment of God.

In life, we often find . . . our comforts to be rare, our crosses to be frequent, our pleasures to be momentary, our pains to be permanent. Believers, your dying-day is your best day. Oh, then, be

not afraid of death!

The Lord Jesus has, as it were, disarmed death, and triumphed over death. He has taken away its sting, so that it cannot sting us! We may play with it, and put it into our bosoms, as we may a snake whose sting is pulled out. Paul, upon this consideration, challenges death, and out-braves death, and bids death do his worst, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1Co 15:55-57

Apt to hang and rest upon creature props

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

God sometimes strips His people of their dearest mercies, that He may win them to a more complete and full dependence upon His blessed self. Man is a creature apt to hang and rest upon creature props. "Look to my right and see;" says the psalmist, "no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life." Psa 142:4. Well, what does he do, now that all props fail him? Why, now he sweetly leans upon God—"I cry to You, O Lord; I say—You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." Psa 142:5. Men will hold upon one prop, and if God cuts off that—then they will catch hold on another, etc., until God cuts off all their props—and then they will come and rest and center in God, and say, "All my fountains are in You!" Psa 87:7

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

God takes away the creature

("A Believer's Last Day, His Best Day")

Diogenes noted the folly of the men of his time—that they undervalued the best things—but overvalued the worst things. Ah, that this were not the sin and shame of professors in these days!

God sometimes strips His people of their nearest and dearest outward mercies—that they may the more prize, and the better taste—of spiritual and heavenly mercies.

God takes away uncertain riches—that His people may the more prize certain riches!

God takes away natural strength—that His people may the more prize spiritual strength!

God takes away the creature—that His people may more prize their Savior.

Spiritual and heavenly things can alone satisfy the soul. The language of a godly man is this, "Ah, Lord! the good things which I have from You, though they may refresh me—yet they cannot satisfy me without Yourself!"

"Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever!" Psa 73:25-26

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Christians or heathens?

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

Many pretend to be Christians—and yet live like heathens.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Misery here—and hell hereafter

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." Col 3:5.

You must be the death of your sins—or they will be the death of your souls.

Sin is a viper, which always kills where it is not killed. There is nothing gained by making peace with sin—but misery here—and hell hereafter. Every yielding to sin is a welcoming of Satan into our very bosoms!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A jewel of more worth than a world

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

Time is a jewel more of worth than a world. Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent which men must be accountable for, as well as any other talent. Of all talents, time is the hardest to use well.

Ah, beloved, have not you need to improve your time, who have much work to do in a short time: your souls to save, a God to honor, a Christ to exalt, a hell to escape, a race to run, a crown to win, temptations to withstand, corruptions to conquer, afflictions to bear, mercies to improve, and your generation to serve.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Optimum maximum

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

God is optimum maximum—the best, and the greatest.

God is . . . all ear to hear, all hand to punish, all power to protect, all wisdom to direct, all goodness to relieve, all grace to pardon, the horn of plenty, the ocean of beauty, without the least spot of injustice!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A jewel worth more than heaven!

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

"Above all else, guard your heart!" Pro 4:23

Oh guard your eyes—that they behold no vanity!

Watch your hands—that they touch not the golden wedge!

But, above all, guard your souls! The soul is a jewel worth more than heaven! Oh guard it! If that is lost—all is lost. If that is lost—you are eternally lost! Of all losses—the loss of the soul is the most

incomparable, irreparable, and irrecoverable loss!

It is the greatest folly in the world, to lose your soul. "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mat 16:26

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Soberly, righteously, and godly

("Touchstone of Sincerity")

"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Tit 2:12

These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty. To live soberly toward ourselves, righteously toward our neighbors, and godly toward God—is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

True hatred of sin

("Touchstone of Sincerity")

To hate sin is not merely to refrain from sin, for so Balaam did. To hate sin is not merely to confess sin, for so Pharaoh and Judas did. To hate sin is not merely to be afraid to sin, for this may be where there is no hatred of sin. To hate sin is not merely to mourn because of the dreadful effects and fruits that sin may produce, for so Ahab did, and the Ninevites did, etc. He who fears sin for hell, fears not to sin—but to burn. He hates sin indeed—who hates sin as hell itself. It was a saying of one of the ancients, that if hell and sin were before him, he would rather fall into hell than fall into sin. Here was a true hatred of sin indeed.

A hypocrite may be troubled for sin, as it blots his reputation, and wounds his conscience, and brings a scourge, and destroys his soul, and shuts him out of heaven, and throws him to hell! But he is never troubled for sin, he never mourns for sin, he never hates sin because it is contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the law of God, the glory of God, the design of God; or because of the evil which is in the nature of sin, or because of the defiling and polluting power of sin.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The hypocrite's bane

("Touchstone of Sincerity")

"The Pharisee took his stand and was praying like this: God, I thank You that I'm not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get." Luk 18:11-12

A hypocrite . . . may know much, and pray much, and hear much, and fast much, and give much, and obey much—and all to no purpose, because he never does anything in a right manner; he never carries on his work from inward principles of faith, fervency, love, delight, etc.

The scribes and pharisees fasted, prayed and gave alms—but their hearts were not changed, renewed, nor sanctified—and this proved their eternal bane.

A hypocrite never performs religious duties from spiritual principles, nor in a spiritual manner. A hypocrite is never inclined, moved, and carried to God, to Christ, to holy duties—by the power of a new and inward principle of grace working a suitableness between his heart and the things of God. A hypocrite rests satisfied in the mere external acts of religion, though he never feels anything of the power of religion in his own soul. A hypocrite looks to his words in prayer, and to his voice in prayer, and to his gestures in prayer—but he never looks to the frame of his heart in prayer. A hypocrite's heart is never touched with the words his tongue utters; a hypocrite's soul is never divinely affected, delighted, or graciously warmed with any duty he performs.

A hypocrite's spiritual performances never flow from spiritual principles, nor from a sanctified heart. Though his works may be new, yet his heart remains old; his new practices always spring from old principles; and this will prove the hypocrite's bane, as you may see in Isa 1:15, "When you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood." These were unsanctified ones; their practices were new—but their hearts were old still.

A hypocrite has no . . . inward, saving, transforming, experimental, affectionate, practical knowledge of God.

A sincere Christian is enamored with Christ above all. He cannot be satisfied nor contented with duties or ordinances, without enjoying Christ in them, who is the life, soul, and substance of them. But when hypocrites do duties—all they do is from common principles, from natural principles, and from an unsanctified heart—and that mars all. Hypocrites make a great profession and are much in the outward actions of religion; they make a very fair show, they hear, they read, they pray, they fast, they sing psalms, and they give alms; but these duties being not performed from a principle of divine love, nor from a principle of spiritual life, nor from a sanctified frame of heart—are all lost, and the authors of them are undone forever and ever. "If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed!" 1Co 16:22

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ This great doctor was so great a dunce

("Touchstone of Sincerity")

Nicodemus was a man of great note, name, and fame among the pharisees, and he fasted, and prayed, and gave alms, and paid tithes, etc., and yet was a total

stranger to the new birth. Regeneration was a paradox to him. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" This great doctor was so great a dunce, that he understood no more of the doctrine of regeneration, than a mere child does the highest precepts of astronomy!

As water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it came, so the natural man can rise no higher than nature.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

If you would live gloriously

("The Glorious Day of the Saints Appearance")

Professors look far too much upon the tempting world, when she smiles and holds forth her beautiful breasts! If you would live gloriously, look away from the tempting world: it is a plague and a snare! Look away from it—whether it smiles or whether it frowns.

Remember you have a God to look at, a Christ to look at, and an unfading crown of glory to look at; which is better than all—which is more than all other things to your souls.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The true Christian hates all sin

("The Glorious Day of the Saints Appearance")

"I hate every wrong path." Psa 119:104

The original word signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred; to hate so as that nothing will satisfy but the destruction of the thing hated.

The true Christian hates all sin. All sin strikes at God, at His holiness, as well as at an upright man's happiness. All sin strikes at God's glory, as well as at the soul's comfort; therefore the soul strikes at all sin. All sins, in the eye of an upright heart, are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus; therefore the soul rises in arms against all. An upright heart looks upon sin to be a universal evil. An upright heart looks upon sin as that which has thrown down: the most righteous man in the world, as Noah; the best believer in the world, as Abraham; the best king in the world, as David; the best apostle in the world, as Paul; the strongest man in the world, as Samson; the wisest man in the world, as Solomon; the meekest man in the world, as Moses; the patientest man in the world, as Job; and so his soul rises against it.

An upright heart hates all sins, even those he cannot conquer. An unsound heart, a rotten heart, strikes at some sins—and yet loves and retains other sins.

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They run on another's legs

("The Glorious Day of the Saints Appearance")

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and move you to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws." Eze 36:25-27

The principal reason why Christians persevere in the ways of God against all discouragements, is because they are preserved in the ways of God—from spiritual principles, from a principle of inward life and spiritual power. It is

true, if Christians only persevered from fleshly, carnal, and external causes—they would soon wheel about, and turn apostates, and be base, and what not. But they persevere in the ways of God, from inward principles, as in Jer 32:40, "I will put My fear in their hearts—and they shall never depart from Me." Christians persevere by an inward principle of fear, faith, and love.

Isa 40:31, "Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength like the eagle; they shall run and not be weary," because they run on another's legs—namely, the Lord Christ's; "and they shall walk and not faint," because they walk in the strength of Christ.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A sweet interpretation

("The Glorious Day of the Saints Appearance")

Love will enable the soul to persevere in the ways of godliness against all discouragements, by putting a blessed interpretation, and a heavenly construction upon all the afflictions, sorrows, and discouragements which an upright heart can meet with in the ways of God. All the afflictions and discouragements which upright hearts meet with, love will thus interpret and expound: "Oh! all these afflictions are but means that God will use to rub off my dross and filth, to convey more of Himself! They are all my friends, and shall work for my good! All these cursings, God will turn to blessings," says Love. "All these afflictions which befall me, are but out of some noble designs that God has to reveal more of Himself and of His glory to me. It is but that He may empty me more of myself and of the creature, so that he may communicate more of His own sweetness and fullness to my soul," says Love. "I know, though for the present it is bitter—yet," says Love, "it will be sweet in the end. I know the way to the crown is by the cross, and I know all those afflictions shall lead me to more heavenly enjoyments of God!" Love thus puts a sweet interpretation on all the afflictions which befall the soul.

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Too big for troubles and afflictions

("The Glorious Day of the Saints Appearance")

One way by which faith enables the soul to persevere against all discouragements, is by raising the soul to converse with soul-greatening objects, such as God and Christ, and those treasures, pleasures, and sweetnesses which are in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." 2Co 4:16-18

There is nothing which so enables the soul, and which so divinely greatens the soul and makes it too large, too wide, and too big for troubles and afflictions to discourage—than faith's conversing with those high and glorious eternal

realities.

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Those treasures are mine!

("God's Delight in the Progress of the Upright")

Faith enables us to walk in the ways of God, against all the discouragements which may befall us. Faith looks on God, and says with the psalmist, "This God is my God forever and ever! He shall be

my guide unto death!" Faith looks on Christ, and says with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" Faith looks on the promises, and says, "These precious promises are mine!" Faith casts an eye upon the crown of righteousness, and says with Paul, "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!" It looks upon all treasures, pleasures, and sweetnesses which are in Christ, and which are by Christ prepared for the soul, and says faith, "Those treasures are mine! Those pleasures are mine! All that sweetness which is in Christ, is mine!"

Thus faith enables the soul to persevere against all discouragements which it meets with.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The sweetener

("Hypocrites Detected, Anatomized, Impeached, Arraigned and Condemned" 1650)

Communion with God is . . .the life of all your graces; the sweetener of all providences and mercies; the strengthener of your hearts and hands; the soul of your comforts; the crown of your souls.

Nothing can compare with communion with God—to fence you against temptations, to sweeten all afflictions, and to make you own God, and stand for God, and cleave to God—in the face of all troubles and oppositions. Communion with God makes bitter things—sweet, and massive things—light.

A man high in communion with God, is a man too big for temptations to conquer—or troubles to subdue! Those who have but little communion with God—are usually as soon conquered as tempted—as soon vanquished as assaulted.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ An inlet to three dreadful things

("A Heavenly Cordial" 1665)

Death is dreadful to the unbelieving sinner, for it puts an everlasting end to all his temporal . . .mercies, comforts, contentments, and enjoyments.

Death will put an everlasting end to all his pleasures of sin. Now the sinner shall never more have one merry day. In hell there is . . .no singing—but howling; no music—but madness; no sporting—but sighing; no dancing—but wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth for evermore!

In a word, now the sinner shall find by woeful experience that death will be an inlet to three dreadful things:

1. To judgment, Heb 9:27;
2. To an irreversible sentence of condemnation, Mat 25:41;
3. To endless, ceaseless, and remediless sufferings.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A mine of rich treasures!

("A Heavenly Cordial" 1665)

"He has given us his very great and precious promises." 2Pe 1:4

Oh how should saints then treasure up those precious promises, which assure their preservation, protection, maintenance, deliverance, comfort, and everlasting happiness!

The promises are a mine of rich treasures! They are a garden full of the choicest and sweetest flowers of paradise! In them are wrapped up all celestial

contentments and enjoyments! Therefore study them more than ever, and prize them more than ever, and improve them more than ever.

02.10. Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod

Choice selections from Thomas Brooks,

The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod

When He shows no anger!

"The Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives." Heb 12:6

There cannot be a greater evidence of God's hatred and wrath—than His refusing to correct men for their sinful courses and vanities!

Where God refuses to correct—there God resolves to destroy! There is no man so near God's axe—so near the flames—so near hell—as he whom God will not so much as spend a rod upon!

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline." Rev 3:19

God is most angry—when He shows no anger!

Who can seriously meditate upon this, and not be silent under God's most smarting rod?

All the hell that you shall ever have!

Consider Christian, that all your . . . trials and troubles, calamities and miseries, crosses and losses, which you meet with in this world—is all the hell that you shall ever have!

Here and now you have your hell. Hereafter you shall have your heaven!

This is the worst of your condition; the best is yet to come!

Lazarus had his hell first, his heaven last; but Dives had his heaven first, and his hell at last.

You have all your pangs, and pains, and throes here—that you shall ever have! Your ease, and rest, and pleasure—is yet to come!

Here you have all your bitters; your sweets are yet to come!

Here you have your sorrows; your joys are yet to come!

Here you have all your winter nights; your summer days are yet to come!

Here you have your evil things; your good things are yet to come!

Death will put an end to all your sins—and to all your sufferings!

Death will be an inlet to those joys, delights, and comforts—which shall never have an end!

Who can seriously meditate upon this, and not be silent under God's most smarting rod?

Then the scum appears!

Few Christians see themselves and understand themselves rightfully. By trials, God reveals much of a man's sinful self to his pious self.

When the fire is put under the pot—then the scum appears; so when God tries a poor soul, Oh! how does . . .the scum of pride, the scum of murmuring, the scum of distrust, the scum of impatience, the scum of worldliness, the scum of carnality, the scum of foolishness, the scum of willfulness—reveal itself in the heart of the poor creature?

Trials are God's looking-glass, in which His people see their own faults. Oh! . . .

that looseness, that vileness, that wretchedness, that sink of filthiness, that gulf of wickedness, which trials show to be in their hearts!

"I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Isa 48:10

When Munster lay sick

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline." Rev 3:19

"The Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives." Heb 12:6 All the afflictions which come upon the saints, are the fruits of divine love. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt; he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, "These are God's gems and jewels with which He decks his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world!"

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psa 119:71

God afflicts you, O Christian, in love! Therefore Luther cries out, 'Strike, Lord, strike, Lord! and spare not!'

Father knows best!

"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Heb 12:10.

What God, our Father wills, is best.

When He wills sickness, sickness is better than health.

When He wills weakness, weakness is better than strength.

When He wills poverty, poverty is better than wealth.

When He wills reproach, reproach is better than honor.

When He wills death, death is better than life.

As God is wisdom itself, and so knows that which is best; so He is goodness itself, and therefore cannot do anything but that which is best—therefore remain silent before the Lord.

Everything on this side hell is mercy

Oh! labor every day to be more humble and more low and little in your own eyes. 'Who am I,' says the humble soul—but that God should cross me in this mercy, and take away that mercy, and

pass a sentence of death upon every mercy? I am not worthy of the least mercy, I deserve not a crumb of mercy, I have forfeited every mercy.'

Only by pride comes contention. It is only pride that puts men upon contending with God and men.

A humble soul will lie quiet at the foot of God, it will be contented with bare necessities. A dinner of green herbs relishes well with the humble man's palate; whereas a stalled ox is but a coarse dish to a proud man's stomach.

A humble heart thinks none less than himself, nor none worse than himself.

A humble heart looks upon small mercies as great mercies; and great afflictions as small afflictions; and small afflictions as no afflictions; and therefore sits mute and quiet under all. Do but keep humble, and you will keep silent before the Lord.

Pride kicks, and flings, and frets; but a humble man has still his hand upon his mouth. Everything on this side hell is mercy—much mercy, rich mercy to a humble soul; and therefore he remains mute under the smarting rod.

One unmortified lust!

It is not your strongest resolutions or purposes, without the grace of the Spirit, which can overmaster a lust. A soul-sore will continue to run—though we resolve and say it shall not. It was the blood of the sacrifice, and the oil, which cleansed the leper in the law. And by them is meant the blood of Christ and the grace of His Spirit. Lev 14:14-16. It was a touch of Christ's garment which cured the woman of her bloody issue.

Your strongest resolutions or purposes may hide a sin, but cannot quench it. They may cover a sin, but cannot cut off a sin. A black patch may cover a sore—but it

does not cure it! Neither is it the papists' purgatories, watchings, whippings, nor the kissing of the statue of St. Francis, or licking of lepers' sores—which will cleanse the fretting leprosy of sin!

In the strength of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit—set soundly upon the mortifying of every lust! Oh, hug none, indulge none—but resolutely set upon the ruin of every lust!

One leak in a ship will sink it!

One stab strikes Goliath just as dead—as twenty-three did Caesar!

One Delilah may do Samson as much mischief as all the Philistines!

One broken wheel spoils the whole clock!

One vein bleeding will let out all the vitals!

One fly will spoil a whole box of ointment!

One bitter herb will spoil all the pottage!

By eating one apple, Adam lost paradise!

One lick of honey endangered Jonathan's life!

One Achan was a trouble to all Israel!

One Jonah raises a storm and becomes load too heavy for the whole ship! Just so—one unmortified lust will raise very strong storms and tempests in the soul! And therefore, as you would have a blessed calm and quietness in your own spirits under your sharpest trials, set thoroughly upon the work of mortification.

Gideon had seventy sons, and but one bastard child, yet that bastard child destroyed all his seventy sons!

Ah, Christian! do you not know what a world of mischief one unmortified lust may do? And therefore let nothing satisfy you but the blood of all your lusts!

You have been long a-gathering rust

Oh! but my afflictions are greater than other men's afflictions are! Oh! there is no affliction like my affliction! How can I not murmur?

It may be your sins are greater than other men's sins. If you have sinned against . . .

more light, more love, more mercies, more promises, than others—no wonder if your afflictions are greater than others! If this be your case, you have more cause to be mute than to murmur!

It may be that the Lord sees that it is very needful that your afflictions should be greater than others.

It may be your heart is harder than other men's hearts, and prouder and stouter than other men's hearts, it may be your heart is more impure than others, and more carnal than others, or else more selfish and more worldly than others, or else more deceitful and more hypocritical than others, or else more cold and careless than others, or more formal and lukewarm than others.

Now, if this is your case, certainly God sees it very necessary, for . . .the breaking of your hard heart, and the humbling of your proud heart, and the cleansing of your foul heart, and the spiritualizing of your carnal heart, etc., that your afflictions should be greater than others; and therefore do not murmur!

Where the disease is strong, the remedy must be strong—else the cure will never be wrought! God is a wise physician, and He would never give strong medicine—if a weaker one could effect the cure!

The more rusty the NAIL is, the oftener we put it into the fire to purify it; and the more crooked it is, the more blows and the harder blows we give to straighten it.

You have been long a-gathering rust; and therefore, if God deal thus with you, you have no cause to complain.

"For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and punishes every son whom He receives." Heb 12:6

If you attempt to enthrone the creature!

O Christian! God has removed one of your sweetest mercies, comforts, or enjoyments! It may be you have over-loved them, and over-prized them, and over-much delighted yourself in them. It

may be they have often had your heart—when they should have had but your hand. It may be that care, that concern, that confidence, that joy—which should have been expended upon more noble objects—has been expended upon them!

Your heart is Christ's bed of spices—and it may be you have bedded your mercies with you—when Christ has been made to lie outside! You have had room for them—when you have had none for Him! They have had the best—when the worst have been counted good enough for Christ!

It is said of Reuben, that he went up to his father's bed, Gen 49:4. Ah! how often has one creature comfort, and sometimes another—been put in between Christ and your souls! How often have your dear enjoyments gone up to Christ's bed! Your near and dear mercies have come into Christ's bed of love—your hearts!

Now, if you take a husband, a child, a friend—into that room in your soul which only belongs to God—He will either embitter it, remove it, or be the death of it.

If once the love of a wife runs out more to a servant, than to her husband—the husband will remove that servant; though otherwise he was a servant worth gold.

Now, if God has stripped you of that very mercy with which you have often committed spiritual adultery and idolatry—have you any cause to murmur?

There are those who love their mercies into their graves—who hug their mercies to death—who kiss them until they kill them! Many a man has slain his mercies—by setting too great a value upon them! Many a man has sunk his ship of mercy—by overloading it. Over-loved mercies are seldom long-lived. The way to lose your mercies is to indulge them! The way to destroy them is to fix your minds and hearts upon them. You may write bitterness and death upon that mercy first—which has first taken away your heart from God.

Christian! Your heart is Christ's royal throne, and in this throne Christ will be chief! He will endure no competitor! If you attempt to enthrone the creature—be it ever so near and dear unto you—Christ will dethrone it! He will destroy it! He will quickly lay them in a bed of dust—who shall aspire to His royal throne!

"This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary—the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword!" Eze 24:21

You are the one who has done this!

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for You are the one who has done this!" Psa 39:9

In the words you may observe three things:

1. The person speaking, and that is, David. David a king, David a saint, David 'a man after God's own heart,' David a Christian. And here we are to look upon David, not as a king, but as a Christian, as a man whose heart was right with God.

2. The action and carriage of David under the hand of God, in these words—'I was silent; I would not open my mouth.'

3. The reason of this humble and sweet carriage of his, in these words—'for You are the one who has done this!'

The proposition is this: That it is the great duty and concern of gracious souls to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world.

David's silence is an acknowledgment of God as the author of all the afflictions that come upon us. There is no sickness so little, but God has a finger in it; though it be but the aching of the little finger.

David looks through all secondary causes to the first cause, and is silent. He sees a hand of God in all, and so sits mute and quiet. The sight of God in an affliction is of an irresistible efficacy to silence the heart, and to stop the mouth of a godly man.

Men who don't see God in an affliction, are easily cast into a feverish fit, they will quickly be in a flame; and when their passions are up, and their hearts on fire, they will begin to be saucy, and make no bones of telling God to His teeth, that they do well to be angry. Those who will not acknowledge God to be the author of all their afflictions, will be ready enough to fall in with that mad principle of the Manichees, who maintained the devil to be the author of all calamities; as if there could be any evil or affliction in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it, Amo 3:6.

If God's hand be not seen in the affliction, the heart will do nothing but fret and rage under affliction.

Those who can see the ordering hand of God in all their afflictions, will, with David, lay their hands upon their mouths, when the rod of God is upon their backs!

They see that it was a Father who put those bitter cups in their hands; and love that laid those heavy crosses upon their shoulders; and grace that put those yokes around their necks—and this caused much quietness and calmness in their spirits.

When God's people are under the rod, He makes by His Spirit and word, such sweet music in their souls, as allays all tumultuous motions, passions, and perturbations.

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for You are the one who has done this!" Psa 39:9

All honey would harm us

"Weeping may endure for a night—but joy comes in the morning." Psa 30:5

Their mourning shall last but until morning.

God will turn . . . their winter's night into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise.

The life of a Christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honor, crosses and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and

sorrows, mirth and mourning.

All honey would harm us; all wormwood would undo us—a composition of both is the best way to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best and most for the health of the soul—that the warm south wind of mercy, and the cold north wind of adversity—do both blow upon it. And though every wind which blows, shall blow good to the saints; yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the frigid, drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, nourishing south wind of mercy and prosperity.

The more a Christian is tempted

God had but one Son without corruption—but He had none without temptation!

By temptations the Lord will make His people more and more conformable to the image of His Son.

Christ was much tempted—He was often in the school of temptation; and the more a Christian is tempted, the more into the likeness of Christ he will be transformed. The most tempted Christians do most resemble Christ in meekness, lowliness, holiness, heavenliness, etc. The image of Christ is most fairly stamped upon tempted souls. Tempted souls are much in looking up to Jesus—and every gracious look upon Christ changes the soul more and more into the image of Christ. Tempted souls experience much of the succouring of Christ, and the more they experience the sweet of the succourings of Christ—the more they grow up into the likeness of Christ.

Temptations are the tools by which the Father does more and more carve, form, and fashion His precious saints into the similitude and likeness of His dearest Son.

By temptations, God makes . . . sin more hateful, and the world less delightful, and relations less hurtful.

Distasteful temptations

No man is the less loved by God, because he is tempted. Those whom God loves best—are usually tempted most. Witness David, Job, Joshua, Peter, Paul, yes, Christ Himself—who, as He was beloved above all others, so He was tempted above all others! He was tempted to question His Sonship; He was tempted to the worst idolatry, even to worship the devil himself; to the greatest infidelity, to distrust His Father's providence, and to use unlawful means for necessary supplies; and to self-murder, 'Cast yourself down!' etc.

God had but one Son without corruption—but He had none without temptation!

Those who were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven—have been severely tempted and assaulted by Satan. It is as natural and common for the choicest saints to be tempted—as it is for the sun to shine, the bird to fly, the fire to burn. The eagle complains not of her wings, nor the peacock of her train of feathers, nor the nightingale of her voice—because these are natural to them. No more should saints of their temptations, because they are natural to them.

"Our whole life is nothing but a temptation!"

The best men have been the worst tempted!

Temptations which are resisted and bewailed, will never hurt you, nor harm you.

Distasteful temptations seldom or never prevail. So long as the soul distastes them and the will remains firmly averse against them—they can do no hurt. So long as the language of the soul is, 'Get behind me, Satan!' the soul is safe.

It is not Satan tempting—but my assenting; it is not his enticing—but my yielding; which undoes me!

Temptations may be troubles to my mind—but they are not sins upon my soul—while I am in arms against them. If your heart trembles and your flesh quakes when Satan tempts—your condition is safe enough. If Satan's temptations are your greatest afflictions—his temptations shall never conquer you nor harm you!

But a flea-bite!

Christian! Your present afflictions are not great—if compared with the afflictions and torments of many of the damned, who when they were in this world, never sinned at so high a rate as you have done! There are many now in hell, who never

sinned against such clear light as you have done, nor against such special love as you have done, nor against such precious mercies as you have done! Certainly there are many now a-roaring in everlasting burnings, who never sinned as you have done!

What are your afflictions, your present torments—compared to the torments of the damned, whose torments are . . . numberless, bottomless, remediless, and endless! Whose pains are without intermission of mitigation; who have: weeping served for the first course, and gnashing of teeth for the second course, and the gnawing worm for the third course, and intolerable pain for the fourth course! Yet the pain of the body is least part of pain. The very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's sorrow and pain! The everlasting alienation and separation from God is served for the fifth course!

Ah, Christian! how can you seriously think on these things and not lay your hand upon your mouth—even when you are under the greatest temporal sufferings? Your sins have been far greater than many of those who are now in hell, and your 'great' afflictions are but a flea-bite! compared to theirs! Therefore hush your murmuring, and be silent before the Lord!

Our present sufferings

Such is the splendor, the brightness, the glory, the happiness, and blessedness—which is reserved for the saints in heaven—that had I all the tongues of men on earth, and all the excellencies of the angels in heaven—yet I would not be able to conceive, nor to express that vision of glory to you! That glory is inconceivable and inexpressible! It is best to be hastening there, that we may feel and enjoy that which we shall never be able to declare!

All the troubles, afflictions, and sorrows of this life, in comparison with eternal happiness and blessedness, are to be considered as nothing; they are but as the point of a pin—compared to the starry heavens.

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us!" Rom 8:18

And will you murmur? Is not Christ your treasure? Is not heaven your inheritance— and will you murmur? Have you not much in hand, and more in hope? Have you not much in possession, but much more reserved in heaven— and will you murmur? Has not God given you. . . a changed heart, a renewed nature, and a sanctified soul— and will you murmur? Has He not given you. . .

Himself to satisfy you, His Son to save you, His Spirit to lead you, His grace to adorn you, His covenant to assure you, His mercy to pardon you, His righteousness to clothe you— and will you murmur? Has He not made you. . . a friend, a son, a brother, a bride, an heir— and will you murmur? Has not God often turned. . . your water into wine, your brass into silver, and your silver into gold— and will you murmur? When you were dead, did not He quicken you? When you were lost, did not He seek you? When you were wounded, did not He heal you? When you were falling, did not He support you? When you were down, did not He raise you? When you were staggering, did not He establish you? When you were erring, did not He correct you? When you were tempted, did not He support you? and When you went in dangers, did not He deliver you?— and will you murmur?

What! you who are so highly advanced and exalted above many thousands in the world?

Murmuring suits none so badly as saints.

Some Delilah

God cures David of adultery, by killing his endeared child.

There is some Delilah—some darling, some beloved sin or other—that a Christian's calling, condition, constitution, or temptations—leads him to play with, and to hug in his own bosom. As in a plot of ground that lies untilled, among the great variety of weeds there is usually some master-weed, which is more plenteous and more repulsive than all the rest.

So it is also in the souls of men—though there be a general mixture and medley of all evil and corrupt qualities, yet there is some one sin which is usually paramount, which is most powerful and prevalent—which sways and manifests itself more eminently and evidently than any other of them do.

So, though the root of sin and bitterness has spread itself over all, yet every man has his inclination to one kind of sin—rather than another. And this may be called a man's besetting sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin.

Now, it is one of the hardest works in this world to subdue and bring under control, this bosom sin! Oh! the prayers, the tears, the sighs, the sobs, the groans, the distress that it will cost a Christian before he subdues this darling sin!

A man may easily subdue and mortify such and such sins—but when it comes to the master-sin, to the bosom-sin, oh! what tugging and pulling is there! what striving and struggling is there to get off that sin, to get down that sin!

Now, if the Lord, by smiting you in some near and dear enjoyment, shall draw out your heart to fall upon the smiting of your master-sin; and shall so sanctify the affliction, as to make it issue in the mortification of your bosom corruption; what eminent cause will you have rather to bless Him, than to sit down and murmur against Him! And doubtless if you are dear to God—God will, by striking your dearest mercy, put you upon striking at your darling sin! Therefore do not murmur, even when God touches the apple of your eye; even when He has snatched the fairest and the sweetest flower out of your bosom.

Paulinus Nolanus

Paulinus Nolanus, when his city was taken from him, prayed thus, "Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honor—for You are all, and much more than all these unto me!"

Christian! In the absence of all your sweetest enjoyments, Christ will be all in all unto you!

"My jewels are my husband," said one.

"My ornaments are my two sons," said another.

"My treasures are my friends," said yet another.

And so may a Christian, under his greatest losses say—"Christ is my richest jewel, my chief treasure, my best ornament, my sweetest delight! What all these things are to a carnal heart, to a worldly heart—that and more—is Christ to me!"

"Christ is all!" Col 3:11 A jewel more worth than a world!

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Eph 5:16

Time is a jewel more worth than a world!

Time is not yours to dispose of as you please; it is a glorious talent that men must be accountable for, as well as any other talent. Of all talents, time is the hardest well to improve. Ah, beloved, have not you need to improve your time—who have much work to do in a short time: your souls to save, a God to honor, a Christ to exalt, a hell to escape, a race to run, a crown to win, temptations to withstand, corruptions to conquer, afflictions to bear, mercies to improve, and your generation to serve. A man too big for temptations to conquer!

Communion with God is . . . the life of your graces, the sweetener of all ordinances, providences, and mercies, the strengthener of your hearts and hands, the soul of your comforts, and the crown of your souls.

Communion with God makes the bitter things sweet; and massive things light.

Nothing like communion with God to fence you against temptations, to sweeten all afflictions, and to make you cleave to God in the face of all troubles and oppositions.

A man high in communion with God, is a man too big for temptations to conquer, or troubles to overcome. Souls that have no communion, or but little communion, with God—they are usually as soon conquered as tempted, as soon vanquished as assaulted.

Such lessons!

"Blessed is the man You chasten, O Lord, the man You teach from Your law." Psa 94:12

All the chastening in the world, without divine teaching, will never make a man blessed. That man who finds correction attended with instruction, and lashing with lessoning—is a happy man.

If God, by the affliction which is upon you, shall teach you: how to loathe sin more, and how to trample upon the world more, and how to walk with God more—your afflictions are in love.

If God shall teach you by afflictions: how to die to sin more, and how to die to your relations more, and how to die to your self-interest more—your afflictions are in love.

If God shall teach you by afflictions: how to live to Christ more, how to lift up Christ more, and how to long for Christ more—your afflictions are in love.

If God shall teach you by afflictions: how to mind heaven more, how to live in heaven more, and how to fit for heaven more—your afflictions are in love.

If God by afflictions shall teach: your proud heart how to lie more low, your hard heart how to grow more tender, your censorious heart how to grow more charitable, your carnal heart how to grow more spiritual, your froward heart how to grow more quiet—your afflictions are in love.

When God teaches your thoughts as well as your brains, your heart as well as your head, any of these lessons—your afflictions are in love. Where God loves, He afflicts in love; and wherever God afflicts in love, there He will, sooner or later, teach such souls such lessons as shall do them good to all eternity.

If our afflictions are so sanctified

If our afflictions are so sanctified as that they draw out our soul . . . to love the Lord more, and to fear the Lord more, and to please the Lord more, and to cleave to the Lord more, and to wait on the Lord more, and to walk with the Lord more—then they are sent in love. Oh, then they are the wounds of a friend indeed!

If the afflictions that are upon us do . . . increase our courage, strengthen our patience, raise our faith, inflame our love, and enliven our hopes— certainly they are sent in love, and all our wounds are the wounds of a friend.

If this cockatrice be not crushed in the egg!

There is infinitely more evil in the least sin—than there is in the greatest miseries and afflictions that can possibly come upon you! Yes, there is more evil in the least sin—than there is in all the troubles that ever come upon the world; yes, than there is in all the miseries and torments of hell! The least sin . . . is an offense to the great God; is a wrong to the immortal soul; is a breach of God's righteous law; cannot be washed away but by the blood of Jesus; will shut the soul out of heaven, and shut the soul up as a prisoner in hell forever and ever!

The least sin is rather to be avoided and prevented—than the greatest sufferings. If this cockatrice be not crushed in the egg—it will soon become a serpent!

Sin, if but thought on and pondered—will break out into action—action into custom—custom into habit—and then both body and soul are lost irrecoverably to all eternity!

The least sin is very dangerous! Caesar was stabbed to death with a small needle; Herod was eaten up by small worms; Pope Adrian was choked with a gnat; a mouse is but little, yet kills an elephant if he gets up into his trunk; a scorpion is little, yet able to sting a lion to death; though the leopard be great, yet he is poisoned with a head of garlic; the least spark may consume the greatest house; the least leak will sink the greatest ship; a whole arm has been gangrened by a pick of the little finger; a little opened door may betray the greatest city; a pinch of poison diffuses itself into all parts, until it strangles the vital spirits, and turns out the soul from the body.

If the serpent can but wriggle in his tail by an evil thought, he will soon make a surprise of the soul—as you see in that sad instance of Adam and Eve.

He who has deserved a hanging

"Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?" Lam 3:39

He who has deserved a hanging has no reason to charge the judge with cruelty—if he escapes with a whipping!

And we who have deserved a damning have no reason to charge God for being too severe—if we escape with a fatherly lashing!

He never lacks an apple for an Eve

It is ten thousand times a greater judgment and affliction—to be given to a fretful spirit, a froward spirit, a muttering spirit under an affliction—than it is to be afflicted. This is both the devil's sin, and the devil's punishment. God is still afflicting, crossing and vexing him; and he is still a-fretting, repining, vexing, and rising up against God. No sin like the devil's sin; no punishment like the devil's punishment.

A man were better to have all the afflictions of all the afflicted throughout the world at once upon him—than to be given up to a froward spirit—to a muttering, murmuring heart under the least affliction. When you see a soul fretting, vexing, and stamping under the mighty hand of God, you see one of Satan's first-born, one who resembles him to the life. No child can be so much like the father, as this froward soul is like to the father of lies.

Though he has been in chains almost this six thousand years, yet he has never lain still one day, nor one night, no, nor one hour in all this time—but is still a-fretting, vexing, tossing and tumbling in his chains—like a princely bedlam.

He is a lion—not a lamb; a roaring lion—not a sleepy lion; not a lion standing still—but a lion going up and down. He is not satisfied with the prey he has already gotten—but is restless in his designs to fill hell with souls. He never lacks . . . an apple for an Eve, nor a grape for a Noah, nor a change of clothing for a Gehazi, nor a wedge of gold for an Achan, nor a crown for an Absalom, nor a bag of silver for a Judas, nor a world for a Demas!

If you look into one company, there you shall find Satan dishing out his meat to every palate. If you look into another company, there you shall find him fitting a lace to every shoe. If you look into a third company, there you shall find him suiting a garment to every back. He is under wrath, and cannot but be restless. Here, with Jael, he allures poor souls in with milk—and murders them with

a nail! There, with Joab, he embraces with one hand—and stabs with another! Here with Judas, he kisses—and betrays! And there, with the whore of Babylon, he presents a golden cup—with poison in it! He cannot be quiet, though his chains be always on!

And the more unquiet any are under the rebukes of God, the more they resemble Satan—whose whole life is filled up with vexing and fretting against the Lord.

Let not any think, says Luther, that the devil is now dead, nor yet asleep; for as he who keeps Israel, so he who hates Israel, neither slumbers nor sleeps!

He has a mint constantly going in hell

Christians should be mute and silent under their afflictions, because hereby they shall cross and frustrate Satan's great design and expectation. In all the afflictions he brought upon Job, Satan's design was not so much to make Job a beggar—as it was to make him a blasphemer; it was not so much to make Job outwardly miserable—as it was to make Job inwardly miserable, by occasioning him to mutter and murmur against the righteous hand of God, that so he might have had some matter of accusation against him to the Lord.

Satan is the unwearied accuser of the brethren. Rev 12:10, "The accuser of the brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night." Satan is the great tempter and accuser between God and His children. He has a mint constantly going in hell, where, as an untiring mint-master, he is still coming and hammering out of accusations against the saints! First, he tempts and allures souls to sin—and then accuses them of those very sins he has tempted them to—so that he may disgrace them before God, and bring them, if it were possible, out of favor with God. And though he knows beforehand that God and His people are, by the bond of the covenant, and by the blood of the Redeemer—so closely united that they can never be severed—yet such is his rage and wrath, envy and malice, that he will endeavor that which he knows he shall never effect!

Could he but have made Job froward or fretting under the rod, he would have quickly carried the tidings to heaven, and have been so bold as to have asked God whether this was a posture befitting such a person, of whom God Himself had given so glorious a character! Satan knows that there is more evil in the least sin—than there is in all the afflictions that can be inflicted upon a person; and if he could have but made a breach upon Job's patience, ah, how would he have insulted over God himself! But Job, by remaining mute and silent under all his trials, puts Satan to a blush, and spoils all his projects at once. The best way to outwit the devil, is to be silent under the hand of God. He who mutters is foiled by Satan—but he who is silent overcomes him; and to conquer a devil is more than to conquer a world!

Can a worm ward off the blow of the Almighty?

It is fruitless and futile to strive, to contest or contend with God. No man has ever got anything, by muttering or murmuring under the hand of God—except it has been more frowns, blows, and wounds. Those who will not lie quiet and still, when mercy has tied them with silken cords—justice will put them in iron chains! If golden fetters will not hold you, iron fetters shall! If Jonah will vex and fret and fling; justice will fling him overboard, to cool him, and quell him, and keep him prisoner in the whale's belly until he is vomited up, and his spirit made quiet before the Lord.

What you get by struggling and grumbling—you may put in your eye, and weep it out when you are done— "But am I the one they are provoking? declares the Lord. Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame? Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord says: My anger and My wrath will be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground, and it will burn and not be quenched." Jer 7:19-20. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" 1Co 10:22.

Zanchy observes these two things from these words:

1. That it is foolish to be provoking God to wrath, because He is stronger than we.
2. That though God be stronger than we, yet there are those who do provoke Him to wrath. And certainly there are none who do more to provoke Him than those who fume and fret when His hand is upon them!

Though the cup be bitter—yet it is put into your hand by your Father! Though the cross be heavy—yet He who has laid it on your shoulders will bear the heaviest end of it Himself! Why, then, should you mutter? Shall bears and lions take blows and knocks from their keepers; and will you not take a few blows and knocks from the keeper of Israel? Why should the clay contend with the potter, or the creature with his Creator, or the servant with his master, or weakness with strength, or a poor nothing creature with an omnipotent God? Can stubble stand before the fire? Can chaff abide before the whirlwind? Can a worm ward off the blow of the Almighty?

A froward and impatient spirit under the hand of God will but add chain to chain, cross to cross, yoke to yoke, and burden to burden. The more men tumble and toss in their feverish fits, the worse they distemper; and the longer it will be before the cure be effected. The easiest and the surest way of cure, is to lie still and quiet until the poison of the distemper be sweat out. Where patience has its perfect work, there the cure will be certain and easy.

When a man has his broken leg set, he lies still and quiet, and so his cure is easily and speedily wrought. But when a horse's leg is set, he frets and flings, he flounces and flies out, unjointing it again and again, and so his cure is the more difficult and tedious. Those Christians who, under the hand of God, are like the horse or mule—fretting and flinging—will but add to their own sorrows and sufferings, and put the day of their deliverance further off.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous

The choicest saints are "born to troubles as the sparks fly upwards", Job 5:7. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." Psa 34:19. God, who is infinite in wisdom and matchless in goodness, has ordered troubles, yes, many troubles to come trooping in upon us on every side. Our crosses seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another; they are like April showers, no sooner is one over but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not a damnation.

It was good for me to be afflicted!

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psa 119:71

A gracious soul secretly concludes—as stars shine brightest in the night, so God will make my soul shine and glisten like gold, while I am in this furnace—and

when I come out of the furnace of affliction. 'He knows the way that I take; and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold!' Job 23:10.

Surely, as the taste of honey opened Jonathan's eyes; so this cross, this affliction—shall open my eyes. By this stroke I shall come to have a clearer sight of my sins and of my self, and a fuller sight of my God! Job 33:27-28; Job 40:4-5; Job 13:1-7.

Surely this affliction shall proceed in the purging away of my dross! Isa 1:25.

Surely as ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and harrowing breaks hard clods; so these afflictions shall kill my sins, and soften my heart! Hos 5:15, Hos 6:1-3.

Surely as the plaster draws out the infectious core; so the afflictions which are upon me shall draw out the core of pride, the core of self-love, the core of envy, the core of earthliness, the core of formality, the core of hypocrisy! Psa 119:67, Psa 119:71.

Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will crucify my heart more and more to the world; and the world to my heart! Gal 6:14; Psa 131:1-3.

Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will keep pride from my soul! Job 33:14-21.

Surely these afflictions are but the Lord's pruning-knives, by which He will bleed my sins, and prune my heart, and make it more fertile and fruitful! They are but the Lord's potion, by which He will clear me, and rid me of those spiritual diseases and maladies, which are most deadly and dangerous to my soul!

Affliction is such a healing potion, as will carry away all soul-diseases, better than all other remedies! Zec 13:8-9.

Surely these afflictions shall increase my spiritual communion with God! Rom 5:3-4.

Surely by these afflictions, I shall be made to partake more of God's holiness! Heb 12:10. As black soap makes white clothes—so do sharp afflictions make holy hearts!

Surely by these afflictions, the Lord will draw out my heart more and more to seek Him! 'In their afflictions they will seek Me early.' Hos 5:15. In times of affliction, Christians will industriously, speedily, early seek unto their Lord!

Surely by these trials and troubles, the Lord will fix my soul more than ever upon the great concerns of the eternal world! John 14:1-3; Rom 8:17-18; 2Co 4:16-18.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will work in me more tenderness and compassion towards those who are afflicted! Heb 10:34, Heb 13:3.

Surely these afflictions are but God's love-tokens! 'As many as I love—I rebuke and chasten,' Rev 3:19. So says the holy Christian—'O my soul! be quiet, be still. All is sent in love, all is a fruit of divine favor. I see honey upon the top of every twig; I see the rod is but a rosemary branch; I have sugar with my gall, and wine with my wormwood; therefore be silent, O my soul!'

Afflictions abase the carnal attractions of the world outside us—which might entice us! Affliction abates the lustiness of the flesh within us—which might otherwise ensnare us!

Afflictions humble us and keep us low! Holy hearts will be humble under the afflicting hand of God. When God's rod is upon their backs—their mouths shall be in the dust! Agodly heart will lie lowest, when the hand of God is lifted highest.

All this proves that affliction is a mighty advantage to us!

"It was good for me to be afflicted!" Psa 119:71

The honey and the sting!

"For He does not willingly (or as the Hebrew has it, 'from His heart') bring affliction or grief to the children of men." Lam 3:33

Christians conclude that God's heart was not in their afflictions, though His hand was. He takes no delight to afflict His children; it goes against His heart. It is . . . a grief to Him to be grievous to them, a pain to Him to be punishing of them, a sorrow to Him to be striking them.

He has no will, no desire, no inclination, no disposition, to that work of afflicting of His people. And therefore He calls it 'His strange work.' Isa 28:21.

Mercy and punishment—they flow from God, as the honey and the sting from the bee. The bee yields honey of her own nature—but she does not sting but when she is provoked.

God takes delight in showing of mercy. Mic 7:18. He takes no pleasure in giving His people up to adversity. Hos 11:8.

Mercy and kindness flows from Him freely, naturally. He is never severe, never harsh. He never stings, He never terrifies us—but when He is sadly provoked by us.

God's hand sometimes may lie very hard upon His people, when His heart, His affections, at those very times may be yearning towards them. Jer 31:18-20.

No man can tell the heart of God—by His hand. God's hand of mercy may be open to those against whom His heart is set—as you see in the rich poor fool, and Dives, in the Gospel. And His hand of severity may lie hard upon those on whom He has set His heart—as you may see in Job and Lazarus.

You have a greater interest in me, than I have in myself

The godly man gives himself up to God. The secret language of the soul is this—'Lord, here am I; do with me what You please, I give up myself to be at Your disposal.'

There was a good woman, who, when she was sick, being asked whether she were willing to live or die, answered, 'Whichever God pleases.' But, said one who stood by, 'If God would refer it to you, which would you choose?' 'Truly,' said she, 'if God would refer it to me, I would even refer it right back to Him again.' This was a soul worth gold.

'Well,' says a gracious soul, 'The ambitious man gives himself up to his honors, but I give up myself unto God. The voluptuous man gives himself up to his pleasures, but I give up myself to

God. The covetous man gives himself up to his bags of money, but I give up myself to God. The wanton man gives himself up to his lust, but I give up myself to God. The drunkard gives himself up to his cups, but I give up myself to God. The papist gives up himself to his idols, but I give myself to God. The Turk gives up himself to his Mahomet, but I give up myself to God. The heretic gives up himself to his heretical opinions, but I give up myself to God. Lord! lay what burden You will upon me—only let Your everlasting arms be under me!

Strike, Lord, strike, and spare not, for I submit to Your will. You have a greater interest in me, than I have in myself; and therefore I give up myself unto You, and am willing to be at Your disposal, and am ready to receive whatever impression You shall stamp upon me.

O blessed Lord! have You not again and again said unto me, as once the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, 'I am yours, and all that I have is yours,' 1Ki 20:4.

God says, "I am yours, O soul! to save you! My mercy is yours to pardon you! My blood is yours to cleanse you! My merits are yours to justify you! My righteousness is yours to clothe you! My Spirit is yours to lead you! My grace is yours to enrich you! My glory is yours to reward you!"

"And therefore," says a gracious soul, "I cannot but make a resignation of myself unto You. Lord! here I am, do with me as seems good in Your own eyes. I resign up myself to your will."

Whatever weather pleases God—pleases me!

I have read of a gentleman, who, meeting with a shepherd in a misty morning, asked him what weather it would be? 'It will be,' said the shepherd, 'that weather which pleases me.' And being courteously requested to express his meaning, replied, 'Sir, it shall be whatever weather pleases God; and whatever weather pleases God—pleases me!'

Lay your hand upon your mouth, and be silent

"Be silent before the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Psa 37:7

I charge you, O my soul, not to mutter, nor to murmur. I command you, O my soul, to be silent under the afflicting hand of God. Peace, O my soul! be still, leave your muttering, leave your murmuring, leave your complaining, leave your chafing, and vexing—and lay your hand upon your mouth, and be silent. O my soul! be quiet, be silent, else you will one day be called in question for all those inward mutterings, uproars, and passions that are in you, seeing no sufficient cause can be produced why you should murmur, quarrel, or wrangle—under the righteous hand of God.

The meritorious cause of all our sorrows and sufferings

"Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins? Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord." Lam 3:39-40

"I will be patient as the Lord punishes me, for I have sinned against Him." Mic 7:9

Sins is the meritorious cause of all our sorrows and sufferings. In all our sorrows we should read our sins! When God's hand is upon our backs, our hands should be upon our sins.

When a Christian is under the afflicting hand of God, he may well say, 'I may thank . . .this proud heart of mine, this worldly heart of mine, this froward heart of mine, this formal heart of mine, this

dull heart of mine, this backsliding heart of mine, this self-seeking heart of mine—for . . .this cup so bitter, this pain so grievous, this loss so great, this disease so desperate, this wound so incurable!

It is my own self, my own sin—which has caused these floods of sorrows to break in upon me!

Diseases, aches, sicknesses, pains

Diseases, aches, sicknesses, pains—they are all the daughters of sin, and he who is not sensible of them as the births and products of sin, does but add to his sin, and provokes the Lord to add to his sufferings. Isa 26:9-11

No man shall ever be charged by God for feeling his burden, if he neither frets nor faints under it. Grace does not destroy nature—but rather perfects it. Grace is of a noble offspring; it neither turns men into stocks nor to stoics. The more grace—the more sensible of the tokens, frowns, blows, and lashes—of a displeased Father.

Though Calvin, under his greatest pains, was never heard to mutter nor murmur—yet he was heard often to say 'How long, Lord, how long?'

A pious commander being shot in battle, when the wound was searched, and the bullet cut out, some standing by, pitying his pain, he replied, 'Though I groan, yet I bless God I do not grumble.' God allows His people to groan, though not to grumble. It is a God-provoking sin to lie stupid and senseless under the afflicting hand of God. God will heat that man's furnace of affliction sevenfold hotter, who is in the furnace but feels it not.

Every twig has a voice!

"The voice of the Lord calls out to the city (and it is wise to fear Your name,) "Pay attention to the rod and the One who ordained it." Mic 6:9

Christians should hear the rod, and kiss the rod, and sit mute and silent under God's rod.

Christians should be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials which they meet with in this world, that they may the better hear and understand the voice of God's rod.

As the word has a voice, the Spirit a voice, and conscience a voice—so God's rod has a voice. Afflictions are the rod of God's anger, the rod of His displeasure, and His rod of revenge.

God's rods are not mutes. They are all vocal, they are all speaking as well as smiting. Every twig has a voice!

'Ah! soul,' says one twig, 'you say it smarts. Well! tell me, is it good to provoke a jealous God?' Jer 4:18.

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'you say it is bitter, it reaches to your heart; but have not your own doings procured these things?' Rom 6:20-21.

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'where is the profit, the pleasure, the sweet that you have found in wandering from God?' Hos 2:7.

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'was it not best with you, when you were high in your communion with God, and when you were humble and close in your walking with God?' Mic 6:8.

'Ah! Christian,' says another twig, 'will you search your heart, and try your ways, and turn to the Lord your God?' Lam 3:40.

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'will you die to sin more than ever, and to the world more than ever, and to relations more than ever, and to yourself more than ever?' Rom 14:6-8; Gal 6:18.

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'will you live more to Christ than ever, and cleave closer to Christ than ever, and prize Christ more than ever, and venture

further for Christ than ever?'

'Ah! soul,' says another twig, 'will you love Christ with a more inflamed love, and hope in Christ with a more raised hope, and depend upon Christ with a greater confidence, and wait upon Christ with more invincible patience?'

Now, if the soul is not mute and silent under the rod, how is it possible that it should ever hear the voice of God's rod, or that it should ever hearken to the voice of every twig of God's rod?

The rod that is in the hands of earthly fathers has a voice—but children hear it not, they understand it not, until they are hushed and quiet, and brought to kiss it, and sit silently under it. No more shall we hear or understand the voice of the rod that is in our heavenly Father's hand, until we come to kiss it, and sit silently under it.

Living by faith

"We live by faith, not by sight." 2Co 5:7

Living by faith brings the soul to sit down satisfied in the naked enjoyments of God.

Living by faith dries up the springs of . . . pride, self-love, impatience, murmuring, unbelief, and the carnal delights of this world.

Living by faith presents to the soul greater, sweeter, and better things in Christ—than anything this world can afford.

Living by faith lessens the soul's esteem of all outward vanities.

All your former troubles and afflictions

"In the day of adversity, consider." Ecc 7:14

If you would be quiet and silent under your present troubles and trials, then dwell much upon the benefit, the profit, the advantage that has redounded to your souls by all your former troubles and afflictions.

Oh! consider, how by former afflictions the Lord has revealed sin, prevented sin, and mortified sin!

Consider how the Lord by former afflictions has revealed to you the impotency, the mutability, the insufficiency, and the vanity of the world, and all worldly concerns!

Consider how the Lord by former afflictions has melted your heart, and broken your heart, and humbled your heart, and prepared your heart for clearer, fuller, and sweeter enjoyments of Himself!

Consider what pity, what compassion, what affections, what tenderness, and what sweetness former afflictions have wrought in you, towards others in misery!

Consider what room former afflictions have made in your soul for God, for His word, for good counsel, and for divine comfort!

Consider how by former afflictions the Lord has made you more partaker of His Christ, His Spirit, His holiness, His goodness, etc.

Consider how by former afflictions the Lord has made you to look towards heaven more, to mind heaven more, to prize heaven more, and to long for heaven more, etc.

Now, who can seriously consider all the good that he has gotten by former afflictions—and not be silent under present afflictions? Who can remember those choice, those great, and those precious profits that his soul has made of former afflictions, and not reason himself into a holy silence under present afflictions thusly, "O my soul! has not God done you much good, great good, special good—by former afflictions? Yes! O my soul! has not God done that for you by former afflictions—which you would not undo for ten thousand worlds? Yes! And is not God, O my soul! as powerful as ever, as faithful as ever, as gracious as ever, and as ready and willing as ever—to do you good by present afflictions, as he has been to do you good by former afflictions? Yes! Yes! Why, why then do you not sit silent and mute before Him, under your present troubles, O my soul?"

A fool to his schoolmaster

He who goes to school to his own carnal reason, has a fool to his schoolmaster; and he who allows his faith to be overruled by his reason, shall never lack woe.

No man lives so free a life, so holy a life, so heavenly a life, so happy a life—as he who lives a life of faith. Now the soul is put upon the highest and the purest acts of faith, that is, to cleave to God, to hang upon God, and to carry it sweetly and obediently towards God, though He frowns, though He chides, though He strikes, yes, though He kills! 'For we walk by faith, and not by sight.' 2Co 5:7

The sharpest dealings of God with you

"Why should any living man complain when punished for his sins?" Lam 3:39

To move you to silence under your sorest and your sharpest trials, consider, that you have deserved greater and heavier afflictions than those you are under.

Has God taken away one mercy? You have deserved to be stripped of all.

Has he taken away the delight of your eyes? He might have taken away the delight of your soul.

Are you under outward wants? You have deserved to be under outward and inward wants together.

Are you cast upon a sick bed? You have deserved a bed in hell.

Are you under that ache and that pain? You have deserved to be under all aches and pains at once.

Has God chastised you with whips? You have deserved to be chastised with scorpions. 1Ki 12:14.

Have you fallen from the highest pinnacle of honor to be the scorn and contempt of men? You have deserved to be scorned and condemned by God and angels.

Are you under a severe whipping? You have deserved an utter damning.

Ah Christian! let but your eyes be fixed upon your demerits—and your hands will be quickly upon your mouths! Whatever is less than a final separation from God, whatever is less than hell—is mercy! Therefore you have cause to be silent under the sharpest dealings of God with you.

Sweet honey out of the bitterest herbs

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28

Consider that all your afflictions, troubles, and trials shall work for your good. Why then should you fret, fling, fume—considering God intends you good in all? The bee sucks sweet honey out of the bitterest herbs; so God will by afflictions teach His children to suck sweet knowledge, sweet obedience, and sweet experiences, sweet humility—out of all the bitter afflictions and trials He exercises them with.

That scouring and rubbing, which frets others, shall make them shine the brighter; and that weight which keeps others crushed, shall but make them, like the palm tree, grow better and higher; and that hammer which knocks others all into pieces, shall but knock them the nearer to Christ, the corner stone.

Stars shine brightest in the darkest night; torches give the best light when beaten;

grapes yield most wine when most pressed; spices smell sweetest when pounded; vines are the better for bleeding; gold looks the brighter for scouring; juniper smells sweetest in the fire; chamomile, the more you tread it the more you spread it; the salamander lives best in the fire; the Jews were best, when most afflicted.

Afflictions are the saints' best benefactors to heavenly affections. Where afflictions hang heaviest—corruptions hang loosest. And grace that is hidden in nature, as sweet water in rose leaves, is then most fragrant when the fire of affliction is put under to distill it out. Grace shines the brighter for scouring, and is most glorious when it is most clouded.

Why is my pain unending?

"Why is my pain unending and my wound grievous and incurable?" Jer 15:18

Though God has always reason for what He does—yet He is not bound to show us the reasons of His doings.

It is an evil and a dangerous thing to cavil at, or to question God's proceedings—who may do with His own what He pleases. He is unaccountable and uncontrollable; and therefore none has a right to question Him.

As no man may question God's right to afflict him, nor His righteousness in afflicting him; so no man may question the reasons why He afflicts him. As no man can compel God to give a reason for His doings; so no man may dare to ask Him the particular reasons of His doings.

Kings are not bound to give their subjects a reason of their doings; and shall we bind God to give us a reason of His doings, who is the King of kings and Lord of Lords, and whose will is the true and only rule of justice?

The general grounds and reasons which God has laid down in His word why He afflicts His people, as—that is for their profit; for the purging away of their sins; for the purifying of their lives; and for the saving of their souls—should work them to be silent and satisfied under all their afflictions; though God should never satisfy their curiosity in giving them an account of some more hidden causes which may lie secret in the abysses of His eternal knowledge and infallible will.

Ah, Christian! it is your wisdom and duty to sit silent and mute under the afflicting hand of God upon the account of revealed reasons, without making any curious inquiry into those more secret reasons which are locked up in the golden cabinet of God's own bosom! "The secret things belong to the Lord our God." Deu 29:29

He dares spit in the very face of God Himself!

Many, when they feel the rod to smart—ah, how they do fret and fume! Isa 8:21, 'Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished,

they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God.' Pro 19:3, 'A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.' The heart may be fretful and froward when the tongue does not blaspheme. Folly brings man into misery, and misery makes man to fret. Man in misery is more apt to fret and chafe against the Lord, than to fret and chafe against his sin which has brought him into sufferings. 2Ki 6:33, Psa 37:1, Psa 37:7-8.

A fretful soul dares fly at God himself! When Pharaoh is troubled with the frets, he dares spit in the very face of God himself—"Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" Exo 5:2. And when Jonah is in a fretting humour, he dares tell God to his face, 'that he does well to be angry!' Jonah had done well if he had been angry with his sin—but he did very ill to be angry with his God! God will vex every vein in that man's heart, before He has done with him, who fumes and frets, because he cannot snap in sunder the cords with which he is bound, Eze 16:43. Sometimes good men are sick of the frets—but when they are, it costs them dear, as Job and Jonah found by experience. No man has ever got anything by his fretting and flinging, except it has been harder blows or heavier chains; therefore fret not when God strikes!

02.11. Paradise Opened

Paradise Opened, or the Secrets, Mysteries, and Rarities of Divine Love, of Infinite Wisdom, and of Wonderful Counsel—Laid Open to Public View.

By Thomas Brooks, 1675.

CHOICE EXCERPTS

God's bag and bottle

"My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and You sew up my iniquity." Job 14:17

"You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in Your book." Psa 56:8

God counted all those weary steps that David took in passing through those great forests, when he fled from Saul. While David was hunted up and down like a partridge, and chased out of every bush, and was driven from one country to another—God was all this while, a-noting down and a-numbering of all his sorrows, and a-bottling up all his tears, and a-booking down all his sighs!

Not a single tear of mine is ever lost, but kept safe in God's bottle—as so much sweet water.

God is said in Scripture to have a bag and a bottle: a bag for our sins, and a bottle for our tears. And oh that we would all labor to fill His bottle with our tears of repentance, as we have filled His bag with our sins!

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How so?

All mankind would have been eternally lost, had God not, of His own free grace and mercy, made a covenant of grace with poor sinners.

"They will be My people, and I will be their God." Jer 32:38

This is a comprehensive promise, for God to be our God—it includes all.

The covenant of grace is an agreement, which God has made with sinful man, out of His mere mercy and grace, wherein He undertakes for fallen man, to make him everlastingly happy. God engages that He will be our God; that is, as if He said, "You shall have an interest in all My attributes for your good: My grace shall be yours to pardon you, My power shall be yours to protect you, My wisdom shall be yours to direct you, My goodness shall be yours to relieve you, My mercy shall be yours to supply you, My glory shall be yours to crown you."

"I will make an everlasting covenant with them; that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put My fear into their hearts—that they shall not depart from Me." Jer 32:40

The covenant of grace is everlasting on God's part, and also on our part. On God's part, "I will never turn away from them to do them good." And on our part, "they shall never depart from Me." How so? "I will put My fear into their hearts—that they shall not depart from Me." That they shall persevere, and hold out to the end—I will so deeply rivet a reverent dread of Myself in their souls—as shall cause them to believe, love, repent, obey, cling and cleave, and keep close to Me forever.

O sirs! this is the glory of the covenant of grace—that whatever God requires on man's part, that He undertakes to perform for man!

"I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and

put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances." Eze 36:25-27

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When Adam fell

Adam's first estate was a state of perfect knowledge, wisdom and understanding. It was a perfect state of holiness, righteousness and happiness. There was nothing within him, but what was desirable and delectable; there was nothing without him, but what was amiable and commendable; nor was there anything around him, but what was serviceable and comfortable. Adam, in his innocent estate, was . . .the epitome of wisdom and knowledge, the image of God, the delight of heaven, the glory of the creation, the world's great master, the Lord's great darling.

But when Adam fell—we fell. When he lost all—we lost all. There are five things we lost in our fall:

1. Our holy image—and so became vile;
2. Our divine sonship—and so became children of Satan;
3. Our friendship with God—and so became His enemies;
4. Our communion with God—and so became strangers;
5. Our happiness—and so became miserable.

Sin and death came into the world by Adam's fall.

"For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the

gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." Rom 5:17

O sirs! what a wonder is this—that the great God, who was so transcendently dishonored, despised, provoked, incensed, and injured by poor base sinners; should so freely, so readily, so graciously, condescend to vile forlorn sinners—as to own them, as to love them, and as to enter into a covenant of grace and mercy with them! This may well be the wonder of angels, and the astonishment of men!

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The covenant of grace

"He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. Will He not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire?" 2Sa 23:5

All mankind would have been eternally lost—had God not, of His own free grace and mercy, made a new covenant with sinful man. The fountain from whence His new covenant flows, is the sovereign grace and mercy of God. There was nothing outside of God, nor anything in God, but His mere mercy and grace—which moved Him to enter into covenant with poor sinners, who were miserable and loathsome and polluted; and and were actually in arms against Him!

As there was nothing in fallen man to draw God's favor or affection towards him; just so—there was everything in fallen man which might justly provoke God's wrath and indignation against him! Therefore it must be a very high act of favor and grace—for the great, the glorious, the holy, the wise, and the all-sufficient God—to enter into covenant with such a forlorn creature as fallen man was!

Oh, the admirable counsel, wisdom, love, care and tenderness of the blessed God—which sparkles and shines in the well-ordering of the covenant of grace! Oh, how lovely and beautiful, with what symmetry and proportion, are all things in this covenant ordered and prepared! Oh, what head can conceive, or what tongue can express—that infinite wisdom which God has manifested in ordering the covenant of grace—so as it may most and best suit to all the needs, and straits, and necessities, and miseries, and desires, and longings of poor sinners' souls! Here are fit and full supplies for all our spiritual needs! In the covenant of grace, every poor sinner may find . . . a suitable help, a suitable remedy, a suitable support, a suitable supply!

The covenant of grace, is so well ordered by the unsearchable wisdom of God, that you may find in it . . . remedies to cure all your spiritual diseases, cordials to comfort you under all your soul-faintings, and a spiritual armory to arm you against . . . all sorts of sins, and all sorts of snares, and all sorts of temptations, and all sorts of oppositions, and all sorts of enemies—whether inward or outward, open or secret, subtle or silly.

Do you, O distressed sinner—need . . . a loving God, a compassionate God, a reconciled God, a sin-pardoning God, a tender-hearted God? Here you may find Him in the covenant of grace!

Do you, O sinner—need a Christ . . . to counsel you by His wisdom, to clothe you with His righteousness, to enrich you with His grace, to enlighten you with His eye salve, to justify you from your sins, to reconcile you to God, to secure you from wrath to come, to bring you to heaven? Here you may find Him in a covenant of grace!

Do you, O sinner! need the Holy Spirit . . . to awaken you, to convince you of sin, righteousness and judgment, to enlighten and teach you, to lead and guide you in the everlasting way, to cleanse you, to comfort you? Here you may find Him in the covenant of grace!

O sinner! Do you need grace, all grace, great grace, abundance of grace, multiplied grace? Here you may find it in the covenant of grace!

O sinner! Do you need peace, or ease, or rest, or quiet in your conscience? Here you may find it in the covenant of grace!

O sinner! Do you need contentment, or comfort, or joy, or satisfaction? Here you may have it in the covenant of grace!

O sinner, sinner! whatever your soul needs are—they may all be supplied out of the covenant of grace! God, in His infinite wisdom and love, has laid into the covenant of grace, as into a common storehouse, all those good things, and all those great things, and all those suitable things—that either sinners or saints can either desire or need!

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A man of new principles

"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new!" 2Co 5:17

A new creature has . . . a new judgment, a new will, new affections, new thoughts, new company, new choices, new laws, new ways, new works, etc. A new creature is a changed creature throughout.

The new creature includes a new light, a new sight, a new understanding. The new creature sees sin to be the greatest evil, and Christ and holiness to be the chief good. When a man is a new creature, he has a new judgment and opinion—he looks upon God as his only happiness, and Christ as his all in all, and upon the ways of God as ways of pleasantness. The new man has new cares, new requests, new desires, "Oh that my heart may be adorned with grace!"

The new man is a man of new principles. If you make a serious inspection into his soul, you shall find a principle . . . of faith, of repentance, of holiness, of love, of contentment, of patience, etc.

The new man experiences a new combat and conflict in his soul. "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit lusts against the flesh." He combats with all sorts

of known sins—whether they are great or small, inward or outward, whether they are the sins of the heart or the sins of the life. This conflict in the new man is a daily conflict, a constant conflict. The new creature can never, the new creature will never, be at peace with sin; sin and the new creature will fight it out to the death. The new creature will never be brought into a league of friendship with sin.

The new man is a man of a new life. A new life always attends a new heart. You see it in Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, the jailor, and all the others that are upon Scripture record.

The new man has new society, new company. Holy society is the only society for people with holy hearts, and in that society can no man delight, until God renews his heart by grace.

The new man walks by a new rule, which is the written Word of God. This rule he sets up for all matters of faith, and for all matters of practice.

Well, friends, whatever you do forget, be sure that forever you remember this—that none can or shall be glorious creatures, but such as by grace are made new creatures.

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Fully, completely and perfectly

"I will be their God, and they will be My people. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Heb 8:10, Heb 8:12

God will pardon the sins of His people fully, completely and perfectly. Neither the . . . many kinds of sins, nor many degrees of sin, nor many aggravations of sin, nor even the multitude of sins, can ever harm those souls who are in covenant with God. God has mercy enough, and pardons enough, for all His covenant-people's sins—whether original or actual, whether against the law or against the gospel, whether against the light of nature or the rule of grace, whether against mercies or judgments.

The covenant remedy against all kinds and degrees of sin—ininitely transcends and surpasses . . . all our infirmities and enormities, all our weaknesses and wickednesses, all our follies and unworthinesses, etc.

What is . . . our unrighteousness—compared to Christ's righteousness; our debts—compared to Christ's pardons; our unholiness—compared to Christ's holiness; our emptiness—compared to Christ's fullness; our weakness—compared to Christ's strength; our poverty—compared to Christ's riches; our wounds—compared to Christ's healing balm?

"The Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands; and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin." Exo 34:6-7.

A merciful God, a gracious God—will pardon all kinds of sinners, and all kinds and degrees of sin.

Oh, what astounding mercy, what rich grace is here! that God will not only pardon our light, our small offences; but our great and mighty sins! God will never upbraid His people for . . . their follies, their miscarriages, their unkindness, their unfruitfulness, their unthankfulness, their vileness, their stubbornness, their wickedness.

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His dreadful threatenings!

Sin and sorrow, iniquity and misery—always go hand in hand.

"The wages of sin is death," Rom 6:23. Every sinner is worthy of death. "Those who do such things deserve death," Rom 1:32. If God is a just and righteous God, then sin cannot absolutely escape unpunished; for it is but "a just and righteous thing with God"—to punish the sinner who is worthy of punishment. As God must be just—so He must be faithful. And if He must be faithful—then He must carry out His threatenings against sin and sinners!

Look! As there is not a promise of God but shall surely take place; just so, there is not a threatening of God but shall surely take place. The faithfulness of God, and

the honor of God, are as much concerned in making good of His dreadful threatenings—as they are concerned in making good of His precious promises. God has given it from His own mouth,

that: "He will by no means clear the guilty;" "the soul that sins, shall surely die;" "the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him;" "He will render to every man according to his deeds."

Will God abrogate His own laws—or will He dare men to sport and play with His threatenings? Will not every wise and prudent king look to the execution of their own laws? And shall not that God, who is wonderful in wisdom, and whose understanding is infinite—see all that all His laws are put in execution against offenders? Surely yes!

"He will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the LORD our God will destroy them!" Psa 94:23

"I will not look on you with pity or spare you; I will repay you in accordance with your conduct and the detestable practices among you. Then you will know that it is I the LORD who strikes the blow!" Eze 7:9

"When I sharpen My flashing sword and My hand grasps it in judgment, I will take vengeance on My adversaries and repay those who hate Me." Deu 32:41

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Redeemed

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers." 1Pe 1:18

Christ redeems us from all sin—and from all the consequences of sin. He endured the wrath of God to the uttermost—for everyone who believes on Him.

By this redemption . . . justice is satisfied, wrath is pacified, grace is procured, all spiritual enemies are vanquished.

Each child of God is redeemed from . . . the love of sin, the guilt of sin, the dominion of sin, the damnable power of sin, the power of Satan, the curse of the law, hell and wrath to come!

The work of redemption was a great work. The greatness of the person employed in this work, speaks out the work to be a great work.

The great and invaluable price which was paid down for our redemption, speaks it out to be a great redemption. The price that we are bought with, is a price beyond all computation.

This redemption that we have in Christ, is a free and gracious redemption. All the rounds in this ladder of redemption, are made up of free, rich, and sovereign grace! Though our redemption cost Christ dearly—yet to us it is most free!

Jesus Christ has completely done the work of our redemption. He does not redeem us from some of our sins, and leave us to grapple with the rest. Oh, no! Christ makes a most complete work of it. He redeems us from all our iniquities. He delivers us out of the hands of all our enemies. He pays all debts, He delivers from all wrath, He takes off the whole curse, He saves to the uttermost, and will settle us in a state of full and perfect bliss—when grace shall be turned into glory.

The redemption which we have in Jesus Christ, is an eternal, a permanent, a lasting, yes, an everlasting redemption! "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb 9:12

There are many choice and rare spiritual benefits which flow from redemption:

reconciliation with God, remission of our sins, justification of our persons, adoption into God's family, sanctification, full glorification. Redemption sweetens all the bitterest trials and sharpest afflictions, which we meet with in this world.

Redemption is a rich mine, containing a mass of treasure which cannot be valued. Could we dig into it, could we pry into it—we would find that it contains unsearchable riches . . . riches of grace, of all grace, riches of justification, riches of sanctification, riches of consolation, riches of glorification, the best of riches, the most durable riches, soul riches, heavenly riches!

"They are Your servants and Your people, whom You redeemed by Your great strength and Your mighty hand!" Neh 1:10

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ God so loved the world

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16.

Oh! what kind of love is this, for God to give . . . His Son—not His servant; His begotten Son—not His adopted Son; His only Son—and not one son of many.

We see here . . . the firstness of the Father's love, and the freeness of the Father's love, and the vehemency of the Father's love, and the admirableness of the Father's love, and the matchlessness of the Father's love!

Says God the Father to His Son, "Here is man—fallen from his primitive purity, glory, and excellency—into a most woeful gulf of sin and misery! He who was once a son—has now become a slave; he who was once Our friend—has now become Our enemy; he who was once near Us—is now afar off; he who was once in Our favor—is now cast off; he who was once made in Our image—has now the image of Satan stamped upon him; he who once had sweet communion with Us—has now fellowship with the devil and his demons! Out of this forlorn estate, he can never deliver himself! Neither can all the angels in heaven deliver him! Now this being man's woeful case and state, I make this offer to You, O my Son: If, in the fullness of time, You will assume the nature of man, tread the winepress of My wrath alone, bear the curse, shed your blood, die, suffer, satisfy My justice, fulfill My royal law—then I can, upon the most honorable terms imaginable, save fallen man, and put him into a safer and happier condition than he ever was—and give You a noble reward for all Your sufferings."

Upon this Jesus Christ replies: "O my Father! I am very ready and willing to do, to suffer, to die—to satisfy Your justice, to comply with You in all Your noble and gracious inclinations—that poor sinners may be sanctified and saved, made gracious and glorious, holy and happy; that poor sinners may never perish, that poor sinners may be secured from wrath to come, and be brought into a state of light, life and love! I am willing to make Myself an offering for their sin. Lo, I am come to do Your will, O God."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The book of life

"And another book was opened, which is the book of life." Rev 20:12

The names of the elect are written in the book of life. They do not obtain salvation by chance, but were elected of God to eternal life and happiness before the foundation of the world. Now their names being once written in the book of life, they shall never, never be blotted out of that book! In the book of predestination there is not one blot to be found; the salvation of the elect is most sure and certain!

"I will never blot out his name from the book of life." Rev 3:5

The book of life is the book of all those who were elected and redeemed to life through Christ Jesus. This book of life contains a register of such particular persons in whose salvation, God from all eternity determined to have His mercy glorified; and for whom Christ merited faith, repentance, and perseverance—that they should repent, believe, and be finally saved.

"The book of life shall be opened;" that is to say, the decrees of God will be then published and made known, which now are sealed up in His bosom and locked up

in His archives. Then it will be seen whom are appointed to eternal life, for the glorifying of God's free, rich, and sovereign grace; and whom He purposed to leave in their sins, and to perish forever, for the exaltation of His justice.

"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Rev 21:27

The book of life shall be opened in the great day, because then it shall be shown . . . who were elect—and who were reprobates; who truly believed in Christ—and who did not; who worshiped God in spirit and in truth—and who did not; who walked with God as Noah did—and who did not; who truly revered God—and who did not; who followed the Lamb wherever He went—and who did not; who were sincere—and who were not; who are sheep—and who are goats; who are sons of God—and who are slaves of Satan; who have mourned for their sins—and who have made a sport of sin; who preferred Christ above ten thousand worlds—and who did not; who preferred their farms, and their oxen, and their swine, yes, their very lusts—before a Savior, a Redeemer!

"If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire!" Rev 20:15

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God's preacher in the heart

"They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them." Rom 2:14-15

Conscience is God's preacher in the heart.

In the great day of judgment, the book of every man's conscience shall be opened for their conviction, wherein they shall read their guilt in legible characters; for the conscience is a book of record, wherein men's actions are entered. And although now it is shut up closed, and sinners will

by no means be brought to look into it, and though many things which are written in this book seem to be so greatly obliterated and blotted, that they can hardly be read—yet in that great day of accounts God will refresh and recover the luster of those ancient writings; and sinners, in that day, shall find that conscience has an iron memory!

In the last day, God will bring the book of conscience out of the rubbish, as they did the book of the law in Josiah's time; and the very laying open of this book before sinners will horrify them, and fill them with unspeakable dread and terror, and be a hell on this side hell unto them. In this book they shall find an exact account of every vain thought they have had, and of every idle word they have spoken, and of every evil action they have done; and oh, what amazement and astonishment will this fill them with!

God's omniscience takes in all things past, present, and to come—as if He had kept a diary of every man's thoughts, words, and actions!

The hidden things of the heart are not now known, but then they shall be opened, and manifested to the consciences of every sinner, so as there shall be no place, no room left for any excuse or plea. Oh, what dreadful accusations will every sinner be forced to read out of this book of conscience in the great day! Oh, how in that great day will all wicked men wish that they had followed the dictates of conscience.

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The red sea of Christ's blood

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." Eph 1:7

O Lord! when I look upon my manifold weaknesses and imperfections—I am many times not only grieved, but also staggered! But when I look up to the covenant of redemption—I am cheered, raised, and quieted!

What though my sins have been great and heinous—yet they are not greater than Christ's sacrifice! He bore the curse for great sins as well as small sins; for sins against the gospel as well as for sins against the law; for sinful omissions as well as for sinful commissions. The covenant of redemption is so mighty—that none of my mighty sins can stand before it!

If we look upon Manasseh, in those black and ugly colors which the Holy Spirit paints him out in, (1Ki 21:1-16;) we must conclude that he was a mighty sinner, a monstrous sinner! And yet his mighty sins, his monstrous sins—could not stand before the covenant of redemption!

The greatest sins are finite—but the merit of Christ's redemption is infinite. Though my debts are so many as cannot be tallied—yet Christ has paid them all. Woe had been to me forever—had Christ left but one penny upon the record for me to pay! As I have multiplied my sins, so He has multiplied His pardons!

All the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea—the high and the low, the great and the small, the rich and the poor, the honorable and the base—were all drowned. Just so, the red sea of Christ's blood drowns all our sins—whether they are great or small, high or low, etc., Though my sins are

as scarlet—my Redeemer will make them as white as snow! Though they are as red as crimson, they shall be white as wool! There is not one of my sins, for which Jesus Christ has not suffered, and made atonement for, and purchased pardon for! Though my sins are innumerable, though they are more than the hairs of my head, or the sands on the sea-shore, yet they are not to be named in comparison with the merits of Christ, and the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Be my sins ever so many; yes, though they might fill a scroll which reaches from east to west, from north to south, from earth to heaven—yet they could not bring me under the curse!

"For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Col 1:13-14

"The cross of Christ is the golden key which opens paradise to us!" All Christ's sufferings, were for His people. Oh, the endless and matchless love of Christ!

O blessed Jesus, what manner of love is this—that You should wash away my scarlet sins in Your own blood! That You should die—that I may live! That You should be cursed—that I might be blessed! That You should undergo the pains of hell—that I might enjoy the joys of heaven! That the face of God should be clouded from You—that His everlasting favor might rest upon me! That You should be an everlasting screen between the wrath of God and my immortal soul! That You should suffer for me beyond all expression, and beyond all conception; and gloriously provide for me beyond all expectation! What shall I say, what can I say to all this—but fall down before Your grace, and spend my days in wondering at that matchless, bottomless love, which can never be fathomed by angels or men!

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The sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

Christ can never rest satisfied until His gracious communion with His people here, issues in their perfect and glorious communion with Him in heaven.

"Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory." John 17:24

Christ is very desirous of His people's fellowship and company. It is a part of Christ's joy—that they should be where He is. Christ will not be happy alone. As a tender father, He can enjoy nothing if His children may not have part with Him. Even now—He is always with them . . . to eye their behavior, to hear their prayers, to guide their way, to protect their persons, to cheer their spirits, and to delight with His presence.

The greatest part of our happiness, which we shall have in heaven lies in this—that then we shall be with Christ, and have immediate communion with Him. O sirs! the great end of our being in heaven, is to behold and enjoy the glory of Christ!

Certainly the glory and happiness of heaven to the elect, will consist much in being in Christ's company, in whom they delight so much on earth. To follow the Lamb wherever He goes, to enjoy Him fully, and to be always in His presence—is the heaven of heaven, the glory of glory! This is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

The day is coming wherein believers shall be completely happy in a sight of Christ's glory. When all veils have been laid aside—they shall be fitted for a more full fruition, and shall visibly and immediately behold and enjoy Him!

"Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory." John 17:24

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They shall never perish!

"All that the Father gives Me, will come to Me." John 6:37

"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day." John 6:39

The first fountain and cause of salvation, is the absolute and sovereign will and pleasure of God. Those, whose salvation the Father wills, are given over to Christ in His eternal purpose—to be brought to Him in due time. All whom are elected and given to Christ, will certainly, in due time, come to Him. Their being given to Christ from eternity, produces their coming to Him in time. The power which draws them is invincible and irresistible!

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." John 6:44

"No one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him." John 6:65

"My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand!" John 10:27-29

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I have found a ransom!

"Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom!" Job 33:24

"I have found a ransom, or an atonement, a cover for man's sin. Angels and men could never have found a ransom; but by My deep, infinite, and unsearchable wisdom," says God the Father, "I have found a ransom! I have found out a way, a means for the redeeming of mankind, from going down to the infernal pit, namely—the death and passion of My dearest Son!"

But where, O blessed God, did you find a ransom?

"Not in angels, not in men, not in legal sacrifices, not in gold or silver, not in the tears, humblings and meltings of My people; but in My own bosom. That Jesus, that Son of My love, who has lain in My bosom from all eternity—He is that ransom, who by My own matchless wisdom and singular goodness, I have found. I have not called a council to inquire where to find a ransom, that fallen man might be preserved from falling into the fatal pit of destruction; but I have found a ransom in My own heart, My own bosom! Without advising or consulting with others, I have found out a way how to save sinners without injuring My honor, justice, holiness and truth!"

Had all the angels in heaven, from the first day of their creation, to this very day, sat in serious council—to invent, contrive, or find out a way, a means, whereby lost man might be secured against the curse of the law, hell, condemnation, and wrath to come; and whereby he might have been made happy, and blessed forever; they could never have found out any way or means to have effected those great things.

Our redemption, by a ransom, is God's own invention, and God's only invention. The blessed ransom which the Lord has found out for poor sinners, is the blood of His own dearest Son—a ransom which never entered into the thoughts or hearts of angels and men, until God had revealed it!

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No one can snatch them out of My hand

"My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please." Isa 46:10

"The plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations." Psa 33:11

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Pro 19:21

God's eternal purpose never changes, never alters.

The immutability of God's purpose, springs from . . .the unchangeableness of His essence, the perfection of His wisdom, the infiniteness of His goodness, the absoluteness of His sovereignty, the omnipotency of His power.

The gracious purpose of God is the fountain-head of all our spiritual blessings. It is the foundational cause of our effectual calling, justification, glorification. It is the highest link in the golden chain of salvation.

What is the reason that one man is everlastingly saved—and not another? It is from the eternal purpose of God.

The purpose of God is the sovereign cause of all that eternal good which comes to man. All a believer's present happiness, and all his future happiness—springs from the eternal purpose of God.

"God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done, but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time." 2Ti 1:8-9

"For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy." Rom 9:15-16

There is no man, no power, no devil, no violent temptation—which shall ever be able to overturn those whom God has chosen. "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's

hand." John 10:27-29. (Also, Rom 8:35-39)

If the purpose of God was uncertain, a Christian could never have a good day all his days; his whole life would be filled up with tears, doubts, disputes, distractions, etc. He would be still a-crying out, "Oh, I can never be sure that God will be mine, or that Christ will be mine, or that mercy will be mine, or that pardon of sin will be mine, or that heaven will be mine! Oh, I can never be sure that I shall escape the great damnation, the worm which never dies, the fire which never goes out, or eternal separation from the glorious presence of the Lord!"

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These harsh dispensations of God

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them." Rom 8:28

The godly are able to put a sweet, a loving, and a favorable construction—upon the most sharp, distressing, severe, and dreadful dispensations of God, knowing that all flows from love, and shall work for their spiritual and eternal good, and for the advancement of God's honor and glory in the world. They know that there are no wrath, and curses, and woes wrapped up in these harsh dispensations of God.

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All worldly grandeur

Riches and honors and titles, and all worldly grandeur—won't go with us beyond the grave. Death, as a porter, stands at the gate, and strips men of all their worldly wealth and glory!

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Eternal safety, security and felicity

As long as Jesus Christ has all power to defend His people, and all wisdom and knowledge to guide and govern His people, and all dominion to curb the enemies of His people—we may soundly conclude of their eternal safety, security and felicity.

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Riches, prosperity, and worldly glory

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Mat 19:24

"Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold

and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire!" Jas 5:1-3

Rich men's wealth proves a hindrance to their happiness. There is nothing more clear in Scripture and history, than that riches, prosperity, and worldly glory—have been commonly the portion of

those who don't have God for their portion. Riches are called thick clay, Hab 2:6, which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart.

There is an utter uncertainty in riches, 1Ti 6:17.

"Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!" Pro 23:4-5

02.12. Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices

Soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems & machinations!

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

Christ, the Scripture, your own hearts, and Satan's devices, are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a Watchman, to do my best to discover . . .

the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver.

Satan being fallen . . . from light to darkness, from felicity to misery, from heaven to hell, from an angel to a devil, is so full of malice and envy that he will leave no means unattempted, whereby he may make all others eternally

miserable with himself. He being shut out of heaven, and shut up "under the chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day," makes use of all his power and skill to bring all people into the same condition and condemnation

with himself. Satan has cast such sinful seed into our souls, that now he can no sooner tempt, but we are ready to assent; he can no sooner have a plot upon us, but he makes a conquest of us. If he does but show men a little of the

beauty of the world, how ready are they to fall down and worship him! Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward! Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to suit men's temptations to

their conditions, and inclinations.

From the power, malice and skill of Satan—proceeds all the soul-killing plots, devices, stratagems and machinations, which are in the world. A man may as well count the stars, and number the sands of the sea, as reckon up all the devices of Satan!

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

He hides the hook!

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

Satan has his several devices to deceive, entangle, and undo the souls of men. Satan has . . . snares for the wise, and snares for the simple; snares for hypocrites, and snares for the upright; snares for brave, and snares for the timorous; snares for the rich, and snares for the poor; snares for the aged, and snares for youth. Happy are those souls which are not captured and held in the

snares that he has laid!

Satan's first device to draw the soul into sin is, to present the bait—and hide the hook; to present the golden cup—and hide the poison; to present the sweet, the pleasure, and the profit that may flow in upon the soul by yielding to sin—and to hide from the soul the wrath and misery that will certainly follow the committing of sin!

By this device he deceived our first parents, "And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die—for God knows, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods." Your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods! Here is the bait, the sweet, the pleasure, the profit. Oh—but he hides the hook—the shame, the wrath, and the loss that would certainly follow! So Satan cheats them—giving them an apple in exchange for a paradise!

Satan with ease pawns falsehoods upon us, by his golden baits, and then he leads us and leaves us in a fool's paradise. He promises the soul honor, pleasure, profit—but pays the soul with the greatest contempt, shame, and loss that can be!

Alas! Many have fallen forever by this vile strumpet, the world, who, by showing forth her two fair breasts of PROFIT and PLEASURE, has wounded their souls, and cast them down into utter perdition! She has, by the glistening of her pomp and preferment, slain millions!

The pouring forth of all His wrath

"I will sing of Your love and justice." Psa 101:1

Mercy is God's Alpha—justice is His Omega.

When God's mercy is despised—then His justice takes the throne!

God is like a prince, who first hangs out the white flag of mercy; if this wins men—they are happy forever! But if they remain rebellious, then God will put forth His red flag of justice and judgment.

If His mercy is despised—His justice shall be felt!

God is as just—as He is merciful. As the Scriptures portray Him to be a very merciful God—so they portray Him to be a very just God.

Witness His casting the angels out of heaven and His binding them in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.

Witness His turning Adam out of Paradise.

Witness His drowning of the old world.

Witness His raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom.

Witness all the troubles, losses, sicknesses, and diseases, which are in the world.

Witness His treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath.

But above all, witness the pouring forth of all His wrath upon His bosom Son, when Jesus bore the sins of His people, and cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

As I know not the man who can reckon up his mercies; so I know not the man who can sum up the miseries which are coming upon him for his sins.

God is slow to anger—but He recompenses His slowness with grievousness of punishment. If we abuse His mercy to serve our lust—then He will rain hell out of heaven, rather than not visit for such sins.

Men shall be deeper in hell, because heaven was offered unto them—and they abused God's mercy. Sins against God's mercy, will bring upon the soul the greatest misery!

A soul given up to sin

It is the greatest judgment in the world to be left to sin. O unhappy man—when God leaves you to yourself, and does not resist you in your sins! Woe, woe to him at whose sins God winks at. When God lets the way to hell be a smooth and pleasant way—that is hell on this side hell, and a dreadful sign of God's indignation against a man; a token of his rejection, and that God does not intend good unto him.

That is a sad word, "Ephraim is joined to idols—let him alone!" (Hos 4:17) Ephraim will be unteachable and incorrigible; he has made a match with sin—and he shall have his bellyful of it!

And that is a terrible saying, "So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts, and they walked in their own counsels." (Psa 81:12). A soul given up to sin is a soul ripe for hell—a soul hastening to destruction!

Ah Lord! this mercy I humbly beg—that whatever You give me up to, You will not give me up to the ways of my own heart! If You will give me up to be afflicted, or tempted, or reproached—I will patiently sit down, and say, It is the Lord, let Him do with me what seems good in His own eyes. Do anything with me, lay what burden You will upon me—but do not give me up to the ways of my own heart!

Augustine says, "Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man—myself!"

It is but a little sin!

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

"Ah!" says Satan, "It is but a little sin—a little pride, a little worldliness, a little lust, etc. You may commit it without any danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live."

Consider, that there is great danger, yes, many times most danger—in the smallest sins. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1Co 5:6). If the serpent sneaks in his head—he will draw in his whole body after him. Greater sins do sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul.

Many are eternally killed and betrayed by the 'little sins', as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms.

A little hole in the ship, sinks it.

A small breach in a dyke, carries away all before it.

A little stab at the heart, kills a man.

A little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man!

Sweet poisons!

"I will give You all these things—if You will fall down and worship me." Mat 4:9

Satan presents the world in such a dress, and in such a garb, as to ensnare the soul, and to win the affection of the soul. He represents the world to them in its beauty and finery, which proves a bewitching sight to carnal men. Satan can no sooner cast out his golden bait—but we are ready to play with it, and to nibble at it! He can no sooner throw out his golden ball—but men are apt to run after it—though they lose God and their souls in the pursuit!

Ah! the time, the thoughts, the hearts, the souls—which the inordinate love of this wicked world eats up and destroys! Where one thousand are destroyed by the world's frowns—ten thousand are destroyed by the world's smiles!

The world, siren-like, sings to us—then sinks us!

It kisses us—then betrays us, like Judas!

It kisses us—then stabs us under the rib, like Joab.

The honors, splendor, and all the glory of this world, are but sweet poisons, which will much endanger us, if they do not eternally destroy us. Ah! the multitude of souls that have gluttoned on these sweet baits, and died forever! Such men will sell Christ, heaven, and their souls for a trifle! "How long will you love what is worthless and pursue a lie?" Psa 4:2

Ah, how many thousands are there now on earth, who have found this true by experience; who have spun a lovely rope to strangle themselves, both temporally and eternally, by being bewitched by the beauty and finery of this world!

The main reason why men dote upon the world, and damn their souls to get the world, is, because they are not acquainted with a greater glory! Men ate acorns, until they were acquainted with the use of wheat. Ah, did men but taste more of heaven, and live more in heaven, and had more glorious hopes of going to heaven, ah, how easily would they trample the world under their feet!

"You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." Heb 10:34

Let heaven be a man's object, and earth will soon be his abject. Assurance of more great and glorious things, breed in the soul a holy scorn and contempt of all these poor, base worldly things—which the soul before valued above God, Christ and heaven.

A sea of blood, wrath, sin, sorrow, misery

Ah, what a sea of blood, of wrath, of sin, of sorrow and misery—did the Lord Jesus wade through for your eternal good! Christ did not plead, "This cross is too heavy for Me to bear; this wrath is too great for Me to lie under; this cup of suffering, which has in it all the ingredients of divine wrath, is too bitter for Me to sip of—how much more to drink the very dregs of it!" No! Christ does not plead the difficulty of the service—but resolutely and bravely wades through all! "I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting." Isa 50:6. Christ bears . . . His Father's wrath, the punishment of your sins, the malice of Satan, the rage of the world, and sweetly and triumphantly passes through all.

Christ has freed you from . . . all your enemies, the curse of the law, the damnatory power of sin, the wrath of God, the sting of death, the torments of hell.

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." 2Co 7:1

Sheep or swine?

It is possible for Christians to fall into the same sins of which they have formerly repented—by the secret, subtle, and strong workings of sin in their hearts. And no wonder, for though their repentance is ever so sincere and sound—yet their graces are but weak, and their mortification of sin is imperfect in this life. Though by grace they are freed from the dominion of sin, and from the damnatory power of every sin, and from the love of all sin; yet grace does not free them from the indwelling of any one sin. Therefore it is possible for a Christian to fall again and again into the same sin.

God will graciously pardon those sins to His people, which He will not in this life totally subdue in His people.

I have never seen a promise in Scripture, which says that when our sorrow and grief has been so great, or so much, for this or that sin—that God will then preserve us from ever falling into the same sin. The sight of such a promise

would be as life from the dead to many a precious soul, who desires nothing more than to keep close to Christ, and fears nothing more than backsliding from Christ.

Yet, there is a great difference between a sheep which by weakness falls into the mire—and a swine which delights to wallow in the mire! There is a great difference between a woman who is raped, though she fights and cries out—and an alluring adulteress!

Hell's greatest enrichers!

"The prophets who lead my people astray." Mic 3:5

Satan labors by false teachers, who are his emissaries to deceive, delude, and forever undo the precious souls of men! They seduce them, and carry them out of the right way into by-paths and blind thickets of error and wickedness—where they are lost forever!

As strumpets paint their faces, and deck and perfume their beds, the better to allure and deceive simple souls; so false teachers will put a great deal of paint and garnish upon their most dangerous principles and blasphemies, that they may the better deceive and delude poor ignorant

souls. They know sugared-poison goes down sweetly. They wrap up their pernicious, soul-killing pills in gold! "Peace, peace! they say, when there is no peace." Jer 6:14

"Beware of false prophets, for they come to you in sheep's clothing—but inwardly they are ravening wolves!" These lick and suck the blood of souls! These kiss and kill! They cry, 'Peace, peace!' until souls fall into everlasting flames!

False teachers handle holy things with wit and trifling, rather than with fear and reverence. They are soul-murderers! They are like evil surgeons, who skin over the wound—but never heal it. False teachers are hell's greatest enrichers! Such smooth teachers are sweet soul-poisoners! This age is full of such teachers—such monsters!

They eye your goods more than your good; and mind more the serving of themselves—than the saving of your souls. So they may have your substance—they care not though Satan has your souls! That they may the better pick your purse—they will hold forth such principles as are very indulgent to the flesh.

These are Satan's great benefactors, and such as divine justice will hang up in hell as the greatest malefactors!

The worst & most infectious plague in the world

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

Keep at the greatest distance from sin, and from playing with the golden bait which Satan holds forth to catch you!

It is our wisest and our safest course to stand at the farthest distance from sin; not to go near the house of the harlot—but to fly from all appearance of evil. The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance from it; he who will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit, may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit.

Joseph keeps at a distance from sin, and from playing with Satan's golden baits—and stands. David draws near, and plays with the bait—and falls, and swallows bait and hook! David comes near the snare, and is taken in it, to the breaking of his bones, the wounding of his conscience, and the loss of fellowship with his God.

Sin is a plague, yes, the worst and most infectious plague in the world; and yet, ah! how few are there who tremble at it—who keep at a distance from it! Ah, how does the father's sin infect the child, the husband's infect the wife, the master's the servant! The sin that is in one man's heart is able to infect a whole world, it is of such a spreading and infectious nature!

Dance and dine with the devil

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

Sin is but a bitter sweet. That seeming sweet which is in sin will quickly vanish; and lasting shame, sorrow, horror, and terror will come in the room thereof.

Forbidden profits and pleasures are most pleasing to vain men, who count madness mirth. Many long to be meddling with the murdering morsels of sin, which nourish not—but rend and consume the soul which receives them. Many eat that on earth which they digest in hell. Sin's murdering morsels will deceive those who devour them. Adam's apple was a bitter sweet; Esau's bowl of stew was a bitter sweet; the Israelites' quails a bitter sweet; Jonathan's honey a bitter sweet; Adonijah's dainties a bitter sweet.

After the meal is ended, then comes the reckoning. Men must not think to dance and dine with the devil, and then to sup with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; to feed upon the poison of asps, and yet that the viper's tongue should not slay them!

Nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

". . . the deceitfulness of sin." Heb 3:13

Sin is of a very deceitful and bewitching nature. It will kiss the soul, and look enticing to the soul, and yet betray the soul forever. It will with Delilah smile upon us—that it may betray us into the hands of the devil—as she betrayed Samson into the hands of the Philistines.

Tell the bewitched soul that sin is a viper that will certainly kill; that sin often kills secretly, insensibly, eternally—yet the bewitched soul cannot, and will not, cease from sin.

A man bewitched with sin had rather lose God, Christ, heaven, and his own soul—than part with his sin! Oh, therefore, forever take heed of playing with or nibbling at Satan's golden baits!

Painted and gilded over

"Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2Co 2:11

Satan knows that if he would present sin in its own nature and dress, the soul would rather fly from it than yield to it; and therefore he presents it unto us, not in its own proper colors—but painted and gilded over with the name and show of virtue, that we may the more easily be overcome by it, and take the more pleasure in committing of it.

Consider that sin is never a whit the less filthy, vile, and abominable—by its being colored and painted with virtue's colors. A poisonous pill is never a whit the less poisonous because it is gilded over with gold; nor a wolf is never a whit the less a wolf because he has put on a sheep's skin; nor the devil is never a whit the less a devil because he appears sometimes like an angel of light. So neither is sin any whit the less filthy and abominable by its being painted over with virtue's colors.

The most dangerous vermin is too often to be found under the fairest and sweetest flowers; the fairest glove is often drawn over the foulest hand; and the richest robes are often put upon the filthiest bodies. So are the fairest and sweetest names upon the greatest and the most horrible vices and errors that be in the world.

True repentance

True repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's sinfulness—how opposite and contrary sin is to the blessed God. God is light, sin is darkness; God is life, sin is death; God is heaven, sin is hell; God is beauty, sin is deformity.

Also true repentance includes a sensibleness of sin's destructiveness; how sin cast angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; how sin laid the first cornerstone in hell, and brought in all the curses, crosses, and miseries, which are in the world; and how sin makes men liable to all temporal, spiritual and eternal wrath; how sin has made men Godless, Christless, hopeless and heavenless.

Further, true repentance includes sorrow for sin, contrition of heart. It breaks the heart with sighs, and sobs, and groans—that by sin—a loving God and Father is offended; a blessed Savior afresh crucified, and the sweet Comforter, the Spirit, grieved and vexed.

Again, repentance includes, not only a loathing of sin—but also a loathing of ourselves for sin. As a man does not only loathe poison—but he loathes the very dish or vessel which has the smell of the poison; so a true penitent does not only loathe his sin—but he loathes himself, the vessel which smells of it. So Eze 20:43: 'And there shall you remember your ways and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.' True repentance will work your hearts, not only to loathe your sins—but to loathe yourselves!

Again, true repentance does not only work a man to loathe himself for his sins—but it makes him ashamed of his sin also: 'What fruit had you in those things whereof you are now ashamed?' says the apostle (Rom 6:21). So Ezekiel: 'And you shall be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you for all that you have done, says the Lord God' (Eze 16:63). When a penitent soul sees his sins pardoned, the anger of God pacified, the divine justice satisfied, then he sits down and blushes, as one ashamed.

Yes, true repentance makes a man to deny his sinful self, and to walk contrary to sinful self, to take a holy revenge upon sin, as you may see in Paul, the jailor, Mary Magdalene, and Manasseh. This the apostle shows in 2Co 7:10-11: 'Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.'

True repentance is a continual act. The word repent implies the continuation of it. Anselm confesses, that all his life was either damnable for sin committed, or unprofitable for good omitted; and at last concludes, "Oh, what then remains, but in our whole life—but to lament the sins of our whole life." True repentance inclines a man's heart to perform God's statutes always, even unto the end. A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength; he must never stand still nor turn back. Repentance is a grace, and must have its daily operation as well as other graces. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing: 'My sin is ever before me' (Psa 51:3). A true penitent is often casting his eyes back to the days of his former vanity, and this makes him morning and evening to 'water his couch with his tears.' 'Remember not against me the sins of my youth,' says one blessed penitent; and 'I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man,' says another penitent.

Repentance is a continual act of turning, a repentance never to be repented of, a turning never to turn again to folly. A true penitent has ever something within him to turn from; he can never get

near enough to God; no, not so near him as once he was; and therefore he is still turning and turning that he may get nearer and nearer to him, who is his chief good and his only happiness, optimum maximum, the best and the greatest. They are every day a-crying out, 'O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of death!' (Rom 7:24). They are still sensible of sin, and still conflicting with sin, and still sorrowing for sin, and still loathing of themselves for sin. Repentance is no transient act—but a continued act of the soul.

Those who do not burn now in zeal against sin, must before long burn in hell for sin.

As the flood drowned Noah's own friends and servants, so must the flood of repenting tears drown our sweetest and most darling sins.

Flee from the occasions of sin!

Whatever has the least appearance of evil, shun it, as you would do a serpent in your way, or poison in your food.

To venture upon the occasion of sin, and then to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is as to thrust your finger into the fire, and then to pray that it might not be burnt.

There is no conquest over sin, without the soul turning from the occasion of sin. It is impossible for that man to get the conquest of sin—who plays and sports with the occasions of sin. God will not remove the temptation to sin, except you turn from the occasion of sin. It is a just and righteous thing with God, that he should fall into the pit—who will adventure to dance upon the brink of the pit; and that he should be a slave to sin—who will not flee from the occasions of sin.

As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure. He who has gunpowder about him had need keep far enough away from sparks!

To rush upon the occasions of sin is both to tempt ourselves, and to tempt Satan to tempt our souls!

It is very rare that any soul plays with the occasions of sin—but that soul is then ensnared by sin!

It is seldom that God keeps that soul from the acts of sin, who will not keep off from the occasions of sin. He who adventures upon the occasions of sin, is as he who would quench the fire with gasoline!

Ah, souls, often remember how frequently you have been overcome by sin, when you have boldly gone upon the occasions of sin! Look back, souls, to the days of your vanity, wherein you have been as easily conquered as tempted, vanquished as assaulted—when you have played with the occasions of sin.

As you would for the future be kept from the acting of sin, and be made victorious over sin, oh! flee from the occasions of sin!

The devil's logic

"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom 6:1-2

To argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty—is the devil's logic—and such logicians do ever walk as upon a mine of gunpowder ready to be blown up! No such soul can ever avert or avoid the wrath of God. This is wickedness at the

height—for a man to be very bad, because God is very good! There is not a worse spirit than this in hell. Ah, Lord, does not wrath, yes, the greatest wrath, lie at this man's door? Are not the strongest chains of darkness prepared for such a soul? To sin against mercy is bestial; no, it is worse!

To render good for evil is divine.

To render good for good is human.

To render evil for evil is brutish.

But to render evil for good is devilish!

There is nothing in the world which renders a man more unlike a Christian, and more like Satan—than to argue from God's mercy to sinful liberty; from divine goodness to licentiousness. This is devilish logic, and in whomever you find it, you may write, 'This soul is lost!'

A man may as truly say, 'the sea burns', or 'the fire cools'—as that God's free grace and mercy should make a truly gracious soul to live wickedly.

A flower which does not grow in nature's garden!

"Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth." 2Ti 2:25

Repentance is a turning from sin (the most darling sin) to God. It is mighty work, a difficult work; a work which is above our power. There is no power below that power which raised Christ from the dead, and which made the

world—which can break the heart of a sinner, or turn the heart of a sinner!

You are as well able to melt adamant—as to melt your own heart! You are as well able to turn a flint into flesh—as to turn your own heart to the Lord! You are as well able to raise the dead and to make a world—as to repent!

Repentance is a flower which does not grow in nature's garden!

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good, who are accustomed to doing evil." Jer 13:23

Repentance is a gift that comes down from above.

Men are not born with repentance in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths! It is not in the power of any mortal to repent at pleasure.

Afflictions

All the afflictions which attend the people of God, are such as shall turn to their profit and glorious advantage.

Afflictions discover that filthiness and vileness in sin, which the soul has never yet seen.

Afflictions contribute to the mortifying and purging away of their sins. Afflictions are God's furnace, by which he cleanses His people from their dross. Affliction is a fire to purge out our dross, and to make virtue shine.

Afflictions are medicines which heal soul diseases. Colds and frosts destroy vermin; so do afflictions destroy the corruptions which are in our hearts. The Jews, under all the prophet's thunderings, retained their idols; but after their Babylonish captivity, there have been no idols found among them.

Afflictions are sweet preservatives to keep the saints from sin—which is a greater evil than hell itself.

Afflictions assist to make us more fruitful in holiness. 'But He afflicts us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' The flowers smell sweetest after a shower; vines bear the better fruit, after pruning. Saints spring and thrive most internally when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are called by some 'the mother of virtue.' Manasseh's chain was more profitable to him than his crown. Luther could not understand some Scriptures until he was in affliction.

God's house of correction is his school of instruction. All the stones that hit Stephen's head, did but knock him closer to Christ, the corner-stone.

Afflictions lift up the soul to more rich, clear, and full enjoyments of God. God makes afflictions to be but inlets to the soul's more sweet and full enjoyment of His blessed self. Christians, by their afflictions, gain more experience of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the grace of God refreshing and cheering them, and of the goodness of God quieting and quickening of them to a greater love to holiness, and to a greater delight in holiness, and to a more vehement pursuing after holiness.

Afflictions keep the hearts of the saints humble and tender. Prosperity does not contribute more to the puffing up the soul, than adversity does to the bowing down of the soul. This the saints by experience find; and therefore they can kiss and embrace the cross, as others do the world's crown. The more the purest spices are beaten and bruised—the sweeter scent and fragrance they send abroad. So do saints when they are afflicted.

Afflictions bring the saints nearer to God, and to make them more importunate and earnest in prayer with God.

Afflictions revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love which is cold, and they quicken that faith which is decaying, and they put life into those hopes which are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts which are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it.

Those who are in adversity do better understand Scriptures. The more saints are beaten with the hammer of afflictions, the more they are made the trumpets of God's praises, and the more are their graces revived and quickened. Adversity abases the loveliness of the world which strives to entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which strives to incite us to folly and vanity.

The afflictions which attend the saints in the ways of holiness, are but short and momentary. 'Sorrow may abide for a night—but joy comes in the morning' (Psa 30:5). This short storm will end in an everlasting calm; this short night will end in a glorious day, that shall never have end. It is but a very short time between grace and glory; between our title to the crown and our wearing the crown; between our right to the heavenly inheritance and our possession of the heavenly inheritance. What is our life but a shadow, a bubble, a flower, a runner, a span, a dream?

It will be but as a day before God will give his afflicted ones beauty for ashes, the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness; before he will turn all your sighing into singing, all your lamentations into consolations, your sackcloth into silks, ashes into ointments, and your fasts into everlasting feasts!

There are none of God's afflicted ones, who have not their intermissions and respites while under their short and momentary afflictions. When God's hand is on your back, let your hand be on your mouth, for though the affliction be sharp, it shall be but short.

It is mercy that our affliction is not execution—but a correction. He who has deserved hanging, may be glad if he escapes with a whipping.

God's corrections are our instructions, His lashes are our lessons, His scourges are our schoolmasters, His chastisements are our admonitions.

A house full of gold

Prosperity has been a stumbling-block, at which millions have stumbled and fallen, and broke the neck of their souls forever! Ah, the secret fretting, vexing, and gnawing that daily, yes hourly, attends those men's souls—whose hands are full of worldly goods! It is a heavy plague to have a house full of gold, and a heart full of sin.

"So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1Ti 6:8-10

Names which the Holy Spirit has given them

Always look upon wicked men, under those names and notions which the Scripture describes them, such as: lions for their fierceness, bears for their cruelty, dragons for their hideousness, dogs for their filthiness, wolves for their subtleness, scorpions, vipers, thorns, briars, thistles, brambles, stubble, dirt, chaff, dust, dross, smoke, scum.

You may know well enough what is within them, by the apt names which the Holy Spirit has given them. By looking upon them under those names and notions that the Scripture sets them out by, may preserve the soul from frequenting their company and delighting in their society. Such monsters are wicked men—which should render their company to all who have tasted of the sweetness of divine love, a burden and not a delight.

"Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers." Psa 1:1

A heavy burden

Riches are a heavy burden, and often a hindrance to heaven, and happiness.

All the felicity of this world is MIXED. Our light is mixed with darkness, our joy with sorrow, our pleasures with pain, our honor with dishonor, our riches with wants. If our minds are spiritual, clear and quick, we may see in the felicity of this world—our wine mixed with water, our honey with gall, our sugar with wormwood, and our roses with prickles. Surely all the things of this world are but bitter sweets. Sorrow attends worldly joy, danger attends worldly safety, loss attends worldly labors, tears attend worldly purposes. As to these things, men's hopes are vain, their sorrow certain, and joy feigned. The apostle calls this world 'a sea of glass,' a sea for the trouble of it, and glass for the brittleness and bitterness of it. (Rev 4:6, Rev 15:2, Rev 21:18). The honors, profits, pleasures and delights of the world are like the gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briars.

Tell why do you then neglect your duty towards God—to get the world? Why do you then so eagerly pursue after the world—and are so cold in your pursuing after God, Christ and holiness? Why then are your hearts so exceedingly raised, when the world comes in, and smiles upon you; and so much dejected, and cast down, when the world frowns upon you, and with Jonah's gourd withers before you?

The world is troublesome, and yet it is loved

Worldly things are not able to secure you from the least evil; they are not able to procure you the least desirable good. The crown of gold cannot cure the headache, nor the velvet slipper ease the gout, nor the jewel about the neck take away the pain of the teeth. Our daily experience evidences this, that all the honors and riches which men enjoy, cannot free them from calamities, diseases, or death. Why then should that be a bar to keep you out of heaven—which cannot give you the least ease on earth?

Polycrates gave a large sum of money to Anacreon, who for two nights afterwards, was so troubled with worry how to keep it, and how to spend it; that he took the money back to Polycrates, saying that it was not worth the pains which he had already taken for it.

King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun, which had lately happened. No, said the duke, I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven. Ah, that this were not true of most professors in these days! It is very sad to think, how their hearts and time are so much taken up with earthly things, that they have scarcely any leisure to look up to heaven, or to look after Christ, and the things that belong to their everlasting peace!

It is better to go to heaven alone

Those who walk with the many—shall perish with the many.

Those who do as the many, shall before long suffer with the many.

Those who live as the many, must die with the many, and go to hell with the many.

The way to hell is broad and well beaten.

The way to be undone forever is to do as the most do.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Mat 7:13-14

Surely, it is better to go to heaven alone—than to hell with company!

What wise man would fetch gold out of a fiery crucible; that is, hazard his immortal soul, to gain the world, by following a multitude in those steps that led to the chambers of death and darkness?

Having nothing, yet possessing everything

True grace will enable a soul to sit down satisfied and contented with the naked enjoyments of Christ. The enjoyment of Christ without honor will satisfy the soul. The enjoyment of Christ without riches, the enjoyment of Christ without pleasures, and without the smiles of creatures—will content and satisfy the soul.

'It is enough—Joseph is alive!' (Gen 45:28) So says a gracious soul, though honor is not, and riches are not, and health is not, and friends are not—it is enough that Christ is, that He reigns, conquers, and triumphs!

Christ is a bottomless ocean of all contentment, comfort and satisfaction. He who has Him lacks nothing. He who lacks him enjoys nothing. "Having nothing, yet possessing everything." 2Co 6:10

Let me have Jesus!

"Christ is all that matters!" Col 3:11

So says the saved soul: "Why do you tell me of this and that outward comfort, when I cannot see the face of Him whom my soul loves? Why, honor is not my Christ; riches are not my Christ; the favor of the creature is not my Christ! Let me have Jesus—and let the men of this world take the world, and divide it among themselves! I prize my Christ above all, I would enjoy my Christ above all other things in the world."

His presence will make up the absence of all other comforts.

His absence will darken and embitter all other comforts.

Christ is all and in all, to truly gracious souls.

We have all things in Christ.

Christ is all things to a Christian.

If we are sick, Jesus is a physician.

If we thirst, Jesus is a fountain.

If our sins trouble us, Jesus is our righteousness.

If we stand in need of help, Jesus is mighty to save.

If we fear death, Jesus is life.

If we are in darkness, Jesus is light.

If we are weak, Jesus is strength.

If we are in poverty, Jesus is plenty.

If we desire heaven, Jesus is the way.

The soul cannot say, 'this I would have, and that I would have.' But having Jesus, he has all he needs—eminently, perfectly, eternally.

Luther said he had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without Him.

'None but Christ! none but Christ!' said Lambert the martyr, lifting up his hands and his flaming fingers!

Conflicts against sin

"I hate every false way." Psa 119:104. The Hebrew signifies to hate with a deadly and irreconcilable hatred.

A Christian conflicts against sin universally—the least as well as the greatest; the most profitable and the most pleasing sin, as well as against those which are less pleasing and profitable. He will combat with all sin, though he cannot conquer one as he should, and as he desires. He knows that all sin strikes at God's holiness, as well as his own happiness; at God's glory, as well as at his soul's comfort and peace.

The Christian knows that all sin is hateful to God, and that all sinners are traitors to the crown and dignity of the Lord Jesus. He looks upon one sin, and sees that which threw down Noah, the most righteous man in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which cast down Abraham, the greatest believer in the world; and he looks upon another sin, and sees that which threw down David, the best king in the world. He sees that one sin threw down Samson, the strongest man in the world; another cast down Solomon, the wisest man in the world; and another Moses, the meekest man in the world; and another sin cast down Job, the most patient man in the world. This raises a holy indignation against all sin, so that nothing can satisfy and content his soul, but a destruction of all those lusts and vermin which vex and rack his righteous soul.

It will not suffice a gracious soul to see justice done upon one sin—but he cries out for justice upon all. He would not have some crucified and others spared; but cries out, "Lord, crucify them all, crucify them all! Though there is no one sin mortified and subdued in me, as it should be, and as I would desire; yet every sin is hated and loathed by me."

Oh! but the conflict which is in wicked men is partial. They frown upon one sin and smile upon another; they strike at some sins yet stroke others; they thrust some out of doors but keep others close in their bosoms; as you may see in Jehu, Herod, Judas, Simon Magus, and Demas. Wicked men strike at gross sins, such as are against the laws of society—but make nothing of lesser sins; as vain thoughts and idle words. They fight against those sins which fight against their honor, profits, and pleasures; but make truce with those which are as dear as right hands and as right eyes to them.

Ah! were Christians more humble

Labor to be clothed with humility. Humility makes a man . . . peaceable among brethren, fruitful in well-doing, cheerful in suffering, and constant in holy walking.

Humility fits for the highest services we owe to Christ, and yet will not neglect the lowest service to the lowest saint. Humility can feed upon the lowest dish, and yet it is maintained by the choicest delicacies, as God, Christ, and glory. Humility will make a man bless him who curses him, and pray for those who persecute him.

Humility is the nurse of our graces, the preserver of our mercies, and the great promoter of holy duties. A humble soul always finds three things on this side heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed.

Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and contented in the lowest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition. Humility honors those who are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those who are weak in grace.

Ah, Christian! though faith is the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace; yet humility is the beautifier of grace! It casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah! did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, selfish, and sour. They would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others and low thoughts of himself; it will make a man see much glory and excellency in others, and much baseness and sinfulness in himself; it will make a man see others strong, and himself weak; others wise, and himself foolish.

Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, and at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces. Ah! were Christians more humble, there would be less contention, and more love among them than now is.

The humble soul is like the violet, which grows low, hangs the head downwards, and hides itself with its own leaves; and were it not that the fragrance of his many virtues discovered him to the world, he would choose to live and die in his self-contenting secrecy.

Ignorant people

The Catholic Church says that ignorance is the mother of devotion. But the Scripture says that it is the mother of destruction.

'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.' Hos 4:6

'You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures.' Mat 22:29

Ignorance is the mother of mistake, and the cause of trouble, error, and of terror.

Ignorance is the highway to hell, and it makes a man both a prisoner and a slave to the devil at once.

Ignorance unmans a man; it makes a man a beast, yes, makes him more miserable than the beast which perishes.

There are none so easily nor so frequently captured in Satan's snares—as ignorant people. They are easily drawn to dance with the devil all day—and to dream of supping with Christ at night.

Sin at first was the cause of ignorance—but now ignorance is the cause of all sin.

There are none so frequent, and so impudent in the ways of sin—as ignorant people. They care not, nor mind not what they do, nor what they say against

God, Christ, heaven, holiness, and their own souls.

He loves those who are most unlovely

Ah! sinners, the greatness of your sins does but set off the freeness and riches of Christ's grace, and the immensity of His love! This makes heaven and earth

to ring of his praise, that He loves those who are most unlovely, that he shows most favor to those who have sinned most highly against Him; as might

be showed by several instances in Scripture—as Paul, Mary Magdalene, and others. Who sinned more against Christ than these? And who had sweeter and choicer manifestations of divine love and favor than these?

Until men have faith in Christ, their best services are but splendid sins!

The unsearchable riches of Christ!

There is everything in Christ to encourage the greatest sinners to believe on Him, to rest and lean upon Him for all happiness and blessedness. Christ is . . .the greatest good, the choicest good, the chief good, the most suitable good, the most necessary good a pure good, a real good, a total good, an eternal good, a soul-satisfying good!

Sinners, are you poor? Christ has gold to enrich you.

Are you naked? Christ has royal robes, and white clothing to clothe you.

Are you blind? Christ has eye-salve to enlighten you.

Are you hungry? Christ will be manna to feed you.

Are you thirsty? He will be a well of living water to refresh you.

Are you wounded? He has a balm under his wings to heal you.

Are you sick? He is a physician to cure you.

Are you prisoners? He has laid down a ransom for you.

"The unsearchable riches of Christ!" Eph 3:8

He has the worst names

We may read much of Satan's nature and disposition by the diverse names and epithets that are given him in the Scripture. Sometimes he is called Behemoth, whereby the greatness and brutishness of the devil is figured (Job 40:15). Those evil spirits are sometimes called accusers, for

their calumnies and slanders; and evil ones, for their malice. Satan is Adversarius, an adversary, that troubles and molests (1Pe 5:8). Abaddon is a destroyer (Rev 9:11). They are . . .tempters, for their suggestions; lions, for their devouring; dragons, for their cruelty; serpents, for their subtlety.

As his names are, so is he. Satan's names answer to his nature. He has the worst names and the worst nature of all created creatures.

Should God chain up Satan

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander." Mat 15:19

Man has an evil root within him. Were there no devil to tempt him, nor any wicked men to entice him, yet that cursed sinful nature which is in him, would draw him to sin, though he knows beforehand that 'the wages of sin is eternal death.'

The whole frame of man is out of frame. The understanding is dark, the will cross, the memory slippery, the affections crooked, the conscience corrupted,

the tongue poisoned, the heart wholly evil, only evil, and continually evil.

Should God chain up Satan, and give him no liberty to tempt or entice people to vanity or folly, yet they could not but sin against Him, by reason of that cursed nature that is in them.

Satan can only present the golden cup—but he has no power to force us to drink the poison that is in the cup. He can only present to us the glory of the world, he cannot force us to fall down and worship him, to enjoy the world. He can only spread his snares, he has no power to force us to walk in the midst of his snares.

From the cradle to the cross, His whole life was a life of sufferings. Jesus waded through . . . a sea of trouble, a sea of sin, a sea of blood a sea of wrath,

that sinners might be pardoned, justified, reconciled, and saved! When he was but a young serpent

Satan is full of envy and enmity, and that makes him very studious to suit his snares and plots to the tempers, constitutions, desires, and callings of men—that so he may make them as miserable as himself.

Satan is a spirit of mighty abilities; and his abilities to lay snares before us are mightily increased by that long standing of his. He has had time enough to study all those ways and methods which tend most to ensnare and undo the souls of men. He has made it his whole study, his only study, his constant study—to find out snares, traps, and stratagems, to entangle and overthrow the souls of men. When he was but a young serpent, he easily deceived and outwitted our first parents. But now he is grown into that 'old serpent,' as John speaks (Rev 12:9). He is as old as the world, and has grown very cunning by experience.

Oh! has Satan so many devices to ensnare and undo the souls of men? How should this awaken dull, drowsy souls, and make them stand upon their watch! A Christian should be like the seraphim, beset all over with eyes and lights, that he may avoid Satan's snares, and stand fast in

the hour of temptation.

The Lord has in the Scripture discovered the several snares, plots, and devices that the devil has to undo the souls of men, that so, being forewarned, we may be forearmed; that we may be always upon their watch-tower, and hold our weapons in our hands, as the Jews did in Nehemiah's time.

Ah, friends! you had need of a great deal of heavenly wisdom, to see where and how Satan lays his baits and snares; and wisdom to find out proper remedies against his devices, and wisdom to apply those remedies seasonably, inwardly, and effectually to your own hearts—that so you may avoid the snares which that evil one has laid for your precious souls.

Satan has his snares to capture you in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, in strength and weakness, when you are alone and when you are in company; and if you are not filled with the Spirit, Satan will be too hard and too crafty for you, and will easily and frequently capture you in his snares, and make a prey of you! Therefore labor more to have your hearts filled with the Spirit than to have your heads filled with notions, your shops with wares, your chests with silver, or your bags with gold; so shall you escape the snares of this fowler, and triumph over all his plots.

Your strength to stand and withstand Satan's fiery darts is from your communion with God. A soul in close communion with God may be tempted—but will not easily be conquered. Such a soul will fight it out to the death. Communion with God furnishes the soul with the greatest and the choicest arguments to withstand Satan's temptations.

If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then do not engage Satan in your own strength—but be every day drawing new virtue and strength from the Lord Jesus. Certainly the one engages against any old or new temptation without new strength, new influences from on high—will fall before the power of the temptation. Ah, souls! when the snare is spread, look up to Jesus Christ, and say to him, "Dear Lord! here is a new snare laid to catch my soul, and grace formerly received, without fresh supplies from your blessed heart, will not deliver me from this snare. Oh! give me new strength, new power, new influences, new measures of grace—that so I may escape these snares!"

If you would not be taken in any of Satan's snares, then be much in prayer. Prayer is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil. Prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. There is nothing that renders Satan's plots fruitless like prayer!

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand." Eph 6:11-13

02.13. Privy key of Heaven

THE PRIVY KEY OF HEAVEN

(A Discourse of Closet Prayer, published during the awful plague of London in 1665) The devil's tennis-ball

"Warn those who are idle." 1Th 5:14

Take heed of an idle and slothful spirit. An idle life and a holy heart are far asunder. By doing nothing men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life; yes, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be a active, not to be idle. Idleness is a mother-sin, a breeding-sin; it is the devil's cushion—on which he sits; and the devil's anvil—on which he frames very great and very many sins. Look! as toads and serpents breed most in standing waters, so sin thrives most in idle people. Idleness is that which provokes the Lord to forsake men's bodies, and the devil to possess their souls.

No man has less means to preserve his body, and more temptations to infect his soul, than an idle person. Oh shake off sloth! The sluggish Christian will be sleeping, or idling, or trifling; when he should be in his closet a-praying. Sloth is a fatal sickness of the soul; get it cured—or it will be your eternal bane. Of all devils, it is the 'idle' devil which keeps men most out of their closets. There is nothing that gives the devil so much advantage against us as idleness.

Idleness is the time of temptation. An idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.

The fowler bends his bow and spreads his net for birds when they are roosting, not when they are in flight. So Satan shoots his most fiery darts at men, when

they are most idle and slothful.

Slothful and idle people commonly lie so long a-bed, and spend so much precious time between the comb and the mirror, and in eating, drinking, sporting, and

trifling; that they can find no time for private prayer. Certainly those who would rather go sleeping to hell, than sweating to heaven, will never care much for prayer. And therefore shun sloth and idleness, as you would shun a lion in your way, or poison in your food, or coals in your bosom!

Dirt, handsomely fashioned

"All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and

to the dust you will return." Gen 3:19.

Our bodies are but dirt, handsomely fashioned. We derive our pedigree from the dirt, and are akin to clay. One calls the body "the soul's beast." Another calls it "worms' food". Paul calls it "a body of

vileness".

Secret meals make fat bodies

Secret duties are the most soul-enriching duties. Look! as secret meals make fat bodies—so secret duties make fat souls. And as secret trades brings in great earthly riches, so secret prayers makes many rich in spiritual blessings and in heavenly riches. Private prayer is that secret key of heaven which unlocks all the treasures of glory to the soul. The best riches and the sweetest mercies, God usually gives to His people—when they are in their closets upon their knees.

All the graces of the saints are enlivened, and nourished, and strengthened by the sweet secret influences which their souls fall under, when they are in their closet-communion with God. Certainly there are none so rich in gracious experiences, as those who are most exercised in closet duties.

As the tender dew which falls in the silent night makes the grass and herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain which fall in the day; so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public, and visible duties of religion, which too, too often, are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

The secret kisses

When a Christian is in a wilderness, which is a very solitary place, then God delights to speak friendly and comfortably to him: Hos 2:14, "Behold, I will

allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak friendly or comfortably to her," or as the Hebrew has it, "I will speak to her heart."

"When I have her alone," says God, "in a solitary wilderness, I will speak such things to her heart, as shall exceedingly cheer her, and comfort her, and even make her heart leap and dance within her." Certainly the soul usually enjoys most

communion with God in secret.

A husband imparts his mind most freely and fully to his wife when she is alone; and so does Christ to the believing soul. Oh . . . the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret cheerings, the secret sealings, the secret discoveries, which God gives to His people when in secret prayer.

That white devil!

While the disciples were healing diseases and casting out demons, the proud white devil was a-stirring in their own souls; as is evident by that gentle rebuke

which our Savior gives them in Luk 10:20, "Don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you."

There is no pious duty which a Christian performs, but one white devil or another—one lust or another—will be still dogging and following of him to that duty. There is no public duty, there is no family duty, there is no private duty which a Christian performs—but either that white devil pride, or that white devil hypocrisy, or that white devil vainglory; or else some one or another white devil will

follow the soul, near at heel to it.

Two infamous strumpets

"You have set our iniquities before You, our secret sins in the light of Your presence." Psa 90:8
"Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?" Jer 23:24

"The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good." Pro 15:3

As we are never out of the reach of God's hand, so we are never from under the view of God's eye.

God is privy to our most secret sins. His eye is as much upon secret sins, as it is upon open sins. God has an eye upon our inmost evils. He sees all that is done in the dark.

There is no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness, which can stand between the eyes of God and the ways of men. "For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and He examines all his paths." Pro 5:21. In this scripture Solomon mainly speaks of the ways of the adulterer, which usually are plotted with the most cunning secrecy; yet God sees all those ways. Look! as no boldness can exempt the adulterer from the justice of God, so no secrecy can hide him from the eye of God. Though men labor to hide their ways from others, and from themselves—yet it is but labor in vain to endeavor to hide them from God. Men who labor to hide God from themselves, can never hide themselves from God. Paphnutius turned Thais and Ephron, two infamous strumpets, from their harlotry, with only this argument— "That God sees all things in the dark, when the doors are closed, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn."

Those sins which lie closest and are most secretly lurking in the heart, are as obvious and odious to God as those who are most fairly written upon a man's forehead. God is all eye; so that He sees all—even the most secret turnings

and windings of our hearts.

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened (that is, anatomized) to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Heb 4:13

What is the curtain, or the darkest night, or the double lock, or the secret chamber—to Him who clearly observes all things in a perfect nakedness. God has an eye upon the most inward intentions of the heart, and the most subtle motions of the soul. Certainly there is not a creature, not a thought, not a thing, but lies open to the all-seeing eye of God. The Lord knows all our secret sinnings as exactly as our visible sinnings.

"If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light; how impossible will it be to hide yourself from Him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!" (Ambrose)

"My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from Me, nor is their sin concealed from My eyes." Jer 16:17

This is the killing aggravation of all sin—that it is done before the face of God; that it is committed in the royal presence of the King of kings! The very consideration of God's omnipresence should

bravely arm us against sin! Shall not the strict, the pure, the jealous eye of an all-seeing God—keep you from sinning in the secret chamber, when all curtains are drawn, doors bolted, and everyone in the house sleeping—but you and your Delilah?

Oh! what dreadful atheism is bound up in that man's heart, who is more afraid of the eye of his father, his pastor, his child—than he is of the eye and presence of the eternal God! Those who wallow in secret sins, act as if there were . . . no God to behold them, nor conscience to accuse them, nor judgment-day to arraign them, nor justice to condemn them, nor hell to torment them!

Though they may escape the eyes of men—yet they shall never escape the judgment of God!

The cockatrice must be crushed

"Lust having conceived, brings forth sin." Jas 1:15

First, sin has its conception—which is its delight; and then sin has its birth—which is its action; and then sin has its growth—which is its custom;

and then sin has its end—which is its damnation!

The very thought of sin, if but meditated on, will break forth into action; action into custom; custom into habit; and then both body and soul are irrecoverably lost to all eternity!

If the subtle Serpent can but wriggle in his tail by a sinful thought, he will soon get in his head by a worse action!

The cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent!

It would make him pull his hat over his eyes!

All Christians have their secret sins. Secret not only from other men—but from himself! It is but natural for every man to err, and then to be ignorant of his errors. Every man's sins are beyond his understanding. There is not the best, the wisest, nor the holiest man in the world—who can give a full and entire list of his sins.

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." Psa 19:12

"Who can understand his errors?" This interrogation has the force of an affirmation: "Who can?" No man! No, not the most perfect and innocent man in the world!

O friends! who can reckon up . . . the secret sinful imaginations, the secret sinful inclinations, the secret pride, the secret blasphemies, the secret hypocrisies, the secret atheistical risings, the secret murmurings, the secret repinings, the secret discontents, the secret insolencies, the secret filthinesses, the secret unbelievings,

which God might every day charge upon his soul?

Should the best and holiest man on earth have but his secret sins written on his forehead, it would not only put him to a crimson blush—but it would make him pull his hat over his eyes, or cover his face with a double scarf!

"Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." Psa 19:12

The constant cry of the rod

One lesson that you are to learn by the rod of affliction, is to get more weaned and more mortified affections to all worldly comforts, contentments, and enjoyments.

A man never comes to experience so much of . . .the emptiness, the nothingness,

the uselessness, the vanity, the mutability, the impotency, the insufficiency, the uncertainty of all worldly comforts and enjoyments—as when he falls under the rod of affliction. The constant cry of the rod is, "Be dead to the profits, pleasures, honors, and applauses of the world! Be dead to everything below a living Jesus!"

He was still a-pointing at the toads in their bosoms

How shall we find out that particular sin, for which God corrects us—for which He has brought the rod upon us?

Seriously observe what that sin is, which your soul would have spared above all, which your soul is most unwilling to leave, and bid an everlasting farewell to. Observe what your right-hand sin, your bosom sin, your constitutional sin, your complexion sin, is; for it is a hundred to one that God has sent the rod for the subduing of that very sin! Commonly by the rod, God points at the mortifying of that particular sin to which the heart stands most strongly inclined.

It may be that sin which you cannot endure should be touched, or reproofed, or spoken against. Ah! how proud, how impatient, how passionate, how mad are many—when you come to touch their right-eye sin! When you come to touch them in the tender part, oh! then they fume, and swell, and rage, and carry on like people out of their wits; as you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who were so angry and mad with Christ that they sought His death; and all because He was still a-pointing at the toads in their bosoms; namely, pride, vainglory, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. Oh! they could not endure that the sharp razor of reproof should come near their sorest part!

Certainly that Christian must be under a very bad distemper, who smites a righteous man with reproach—for smiting him with a reproof. Though gracious reproofs are a choice remedy, yet few stomachs can bear them. Who is angry

with the physician for prescribing a bitter medicine? And yet, ah! how angry are many Christians when they fall under holy reproofs. Now, doubtless, the voice of the rod is this, "Soul! take heed of that sin which you cannot endure should be touched. Labor mightily with God to get that particular sin mortified—which you cannot endure should be reproofed." It is very probable that, for the subduing

of that particular sin, the Lord has visited you with His fatherly rod.

A whore's forehead

"You have a whore's forehead, you refuse to be ashamed!" Jer 3:3

"Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all! They do not even know how to blush!" Jer 6:15

They had sinned away shame, instead of being ashamed of sin. Continuance in sin had quite banished all sense of sin and all shame for sin; so that they would not allow nature to draw her veil of blushing before their great abominations. How applicable these scriptures are to the present time, I will leave the prudent reader to judge.

But what does the prophet do, now that they were as bold in sin, and as shameless as so many harlots; now that they were grown up to that height of sin and wickedness; now that they were above all shame and blushing; now that they were grown so proud, so hardened, so obstinate, so rebellious, so bent on self-destruction—that no mercies could melt them or allure them, nor any threatenings or judgments could in any way terrify them or stop them? The prophet goes into a corner, he retires into the most secret places, and there he weeps bitterly; there he weeps as if he were resolved to drown himself in his own tears. "I will weep in secret because of your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears." Jer 13:17

In the times wherein we live, hell seems to be broken loose, and men turned into incarnate devils! Soul-damning wickednesses walk up and down the streets with a whore's forehead, without the least check or restraint.

Ah, England, England! what pride, luxury, lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, drunkenness, cruelties, injustice, oppressions, fornications, adulteries, falsehoods, hypocrisies, atheisms, horrid blasphemies, and hellish impieties—are now to be found rampant in the midst of you! Ah, England!

England! how are the Scriptures rejected, God derided, and wickedness tolerated!

And what is the voice of all these crying abominations—but every Christian to his closet—every Christian to his closet—and there weep, with weeping Jeremiah, bitterly—for all these great abominations whereby God is dishonored openly. Oh weep in secret for their sins—who openly glory in their sins, which should be their greatest shame. Oh blush in secret for those who are past all blushing for their sins; for who knows, but that the whole land may fare the better for the sakes of a few, who are mourners in secret?

Contentedly ignorant

"For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa 55:9

Take heed of curiosity, and of spending too much of your precious time in searching into those dark, concealed, mysterious, and hidden truths and things of God and religion, which lie most remote from the understanding of the best and

wisest of men.

Those who are troubled with the itch of curiosity, will say they can never be satisfied until they come to the bottom of the most deep and profound things of God. They love to pry into God's secrets, and to scan the mysteries of religion—by their weak, shallow reason. Curious searchers into the deep mysterious things of God will make all God's depths to be shallows, rather than they will be thought not able to fathom them by the short line of their own reason.

Oh that men would once learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have them knowing! Oh that men were once so humble, as to account it no disparagement to them, to acknowledge some depths in God, and in the blessed Scripture, which their shallow reason cannot fathom!

They are only a company of fools, who attempt to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's tree of knowledge make him and his posterity mere fools? He who goes to school to his own reason, has a fool for his schoolmaster!

Oh that we were wise to admire those deep mysteries which we cannot understand, and to adore those depths and counsels which we cannot reach! "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!" Rom 11:33

Oh let us restrain our curiosity in the things of God, and sit down satisfied and contented to resolve many of God's actions into some hidden causes which lie secret in the abyss of His eternal knowledge and infallible will.

Curiosity is one of Satan's most dangerous weapons, by which he keeps many souls out of their closets, yes, out of heaven! When many a poor soul begins in good earnest to look towards heaven, and to apply himself to closet duties, then Satan begins to bestir himself, and to labor with all his might, so to busy the

poor soul with vain inquiries, and curious speculations, and unprofitable curiosities. Ah! how well might it have been with many a man, had he but spent one quarter of that time in closet prayer, that he has spent in curious inquiries after things that have not been fundamental to his happiness.

Many are more busy about reconciling difficult scriptures, than about mortifying of unruly lusts! They set more value upon vain speculations, than upon things that make most for edification. Such men of abstracted conceits, are but a company of wise fools! Had many men spent but half that time in secret prayer, that they have spent in seeking after the philosopher's stone, how happy might they have been! Oh how holy, how happy, how heavenly, how humble, how wise, how knowing, might many men have been—had they spent but half that time in closet prayer, which they have spent in searching after those things that are hard to be understood!

"There are secret things which belong to the Lord our God." Deu 29:29

God's spy in the heart

Conscience is God's spy in the heart.

'Conscience,' says Philo, 'is the little tribunal of the soul. Conscience is a thousand witnesses, for or against a man. Conscience is a court of record, and whatever it sees it writes down; and conscience is always as quick in writing as the sinner can be in sinning.' The very heathen could say that conscience was a god to every man.

Conscience, as a scribe, a register—sits in the closet of your hearts, with pen in hand, and makes a journal of all your secret ways and secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of others. Conscience sets down the time when, the place where, the manner how, and the people with

whom—such and such secret wickednesses have been committed; and that so clear and evident, that, go where

you will, and do what you can, the characters of them shall never be cancelled or erased out, until God appears in judgment. Let a man sin in the most hidden seclusion which human policy can contrive, let him take all the ways he can to hide his sins, to cloak and cover his sin, as Adam did—yet conscience will so play the judge, that it will bring in the evidence, produce the law, urge the penalty, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon him.

This perfect pattern

"He who says he abides in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." 1Jn 2:6

Oh that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts. A Christian's whole life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ. It is not only our liberty—but our duty and glory, to follow Christ inviolably in all His moral virtues. Other patterns are imperfect and defective—but Christ is a perfect pattern! Of all His children, they are the happiest, who come nearest to this perfect pattern.

"Leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." 1Pe 2:21

God would not rub so hard

"I will turn My hand against you and will burn away your dross completely; I will remove all your impurities." Isa 1:25

Afflictions cleanse and purge away the dross, the filth, and the scum of the Christian.

All the harm the fire did to the three children, or rather the three champions—was to burn off their cords. Our lusts are cords of vanity, but the fire of affliction shall

burn them up. Sharp afflictions are a fire—to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine; they are a potion—to carry away ill humours; they are cold frosts—to destroy the vermin; they are a tempestuous sea—to purge the wine from its dregs; they are a sharp corrosive—to eat out the dead flesh.

Afflictions are compared to washing—which takes away the filth of the soul, as water does the filth of the body. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots that are in His people's hearts.

The shop, the farm, and the oxen

Take heed of engaging yourselves in a crowd of worldly businesses. Many have so much to do on earth that they have no time to look up to heaven. As much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections. Look! as the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num 22:32; so much worldly business swallows up so much precious time, that many men have no leisure to be with God in their closets. There is nothing that has kept men more from Christ—than the shop, the farm, and the oxen, etc., Luk 14:16-22.

The outward dress and garb of religion

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness." Mat 23:23

Take heed of spending too much of your precious time about circumstantialia, about the minor things of religion, as "mint, dill, and cummin," or in searching into the circumstances of worship, or in standing stoutly for this or that ceremony, or about inquiring what fruit it was which Adam ate in paradise, or in inquiring after things which God in His infinite wisdom has concealed.

It is one of Satan's great designs to hinder men in the great and weighty duties of religion, by busying them most about the lowest and least matters of religion. Satan is never better pleased, than when he sees Christians puzzled and perplexed about those things in religion, which are of no great consequence or importance. Such as are more busied about ceremonies than substances, about the form of godliness than the power. Such are more taken up with the outward dress and garb of religion, than they are with the spirit, power, and life of religion.

There cannot be a surer nor a greater character of a hypocrite, than to make a great deal of stir about little things in religion, and in the meantime neglect the great and main things in religion.

They pierce not, they cut not, they fly not

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Jas 5:16

Cold prayers call for a denial.

Be fervent, be warm, be importunate with God in all your closet duties and performances. Certainly, all those usual phrases of crying, wrestling, and striving with God, which are scattered up and down in Scripture, strongly show that holy importunity and sacred violence which the saints of old have expressed in their addresses to God.

Fervency feathers the wings of prayer, and makes them fly the swifter to heaven. An arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, flies not far; but if it be drawn up to the head, it will fly far, and pierce deeply. Just so, fervent prayer flies as high as heaven, and will certainly bring down blessings from thence.

Look! as in a painted fire there is no heat; so in a cold prayer there is no heat, no warmth, no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are like arrows

without points, as swords without edges, as birds without wings: they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Such prayers as have no heavenly fire in them, do always freeze before they reach as high as heaven. But fervent prayer is very prevalent with God.

The very soul of prayer

"My son, give Me your heart." Pro 23:26

In all your closet-duties God looks first and most to your hearts. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, which will satisfy the Maker of the heart. The

very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God. The heart is a treasure, a bed of spices, a royal throne wherein He delights. God looks not at:

the elegance of your prayers, to see how refined they are; nor at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor at the music of your prayers; nor at the sweetness of your voice; nor at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are.

The reason why so many are so unsuccessful in their closet-duties and services, is because there is no more of their hearts in them. No man can make sure work or

happy work in prayer but he who makes heart work on it. When a man's heart is in his prayers, then great and sweet will be his returns from heaven.

There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God—but that wherein the heart is sincere.

Prayer without the heart is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is . . . not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, nor an affected tone, nor studied motions, nor seraphical expressions; but the stirrings of the heart, which God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks. If the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer is accepted by God—but that which is the travail of the heart.

A dumb devil

Among all God's children, there is not one possessed with a dumb devil. Prayerless people are . . . forsaken of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin,

and every breath they draw, are liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments.

Prayer is that part of natural worship due to God, which none will deny but stark atheists.

I have read of a man who, being sick, and afraid of death, fell to praying. And to move God to hear him, told him "that he had never troubled Him with his prayers before; and if He would but hear him at that time, he would never trouble Him again." This world is full of such profane, blasphemous, atheistical wretches.

Certainly prayerless people are graceless people.

God's eye

"Lord! all my desire is before You; and my groaning is not hidden from You." Psa 38:9

We cannot get into any blind hole, or dark corner, or secret place—but the Lord has an eye there, the Lord will keep us company there. There is not the darkest,

dirtiest hole in the world into which a saint creeps—but God has a favorable eye there. God never lacks . . . an eye to see our secret tears, nor an ear to hear our secret cries and groans, nor a heart to grant our secret requests.

We cannot sigh out a prayer in secret—but He sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to Him at midnight—but He observes us. The eye which God has upon His people when they are in secret, is such a special tender eye of love—as opens His ear, His heart, and His hand, for their good.

"For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer." 1Pe 3:12

God's eye is upon . . . every secret sigh, and every secret groan, and every secret tear, and every secret desire, and every secret pant of love, and every secret breathing of soul, and every secret melting and working of heart.

As a Christian is never out of the reach of God's hand, so he is never out of the view of God's eye.

Tears have tongues

"The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." Psa 6:8

Tears are not mutes. Tears have a voice. Tears have tongues. Tears can speak. There is no prayer compared to those which secret tears make in the ears of God. Tears make the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven.

Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors which never return from the throne of grace without a gracious answer. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which, though they say nothing—yet they obtain pardon; and though they plead not a man's cause—yet they obtain mercy at the hands of God.

Uncovered and laid bare

Ah! how many Christians are there who would blush and be ashamed to walk in the streets, should but their infirmities, enormities, and wickednesses be written on their foreheads, or known to others!

There are many sins which they have fallen into since conversion, which, should they be known to the world, would make themselves to stench in the nostrils of all who know them.

"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Heb 4:13

An atheist at home

He who puts on a religious demeanor abroad to gain himself a great name among men, and at the same time lives like an atheist at home, shall at the last be unmasked by God, and presented before all the world for a most detestable hypocrite.

No cause to murmur or complain

One lesson that you are to learn under the afflictive rod of God, is to humbly to kiss the rod, and patiently and quietly to lie under the rod, until the Lord shall either give you a gracious, or a glorious, deliverance from it.

What is the rod—compared to the horrors of conscience, and to the flames of hell, or to an everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power? Therefore put your mouths in the dust, and be silent before the Lord!

He who has deserved a hanging—if he escapes with a whipping, has no cause to murmur or complain.

We who have deserved a damning—have little cause to murmur or complain of a whipping, yes, though it should be with a pestilential rod.

Then you will kiss it!

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline." Rev 3:19

Christian! Always look on the rod of affliction, in conjunction with the hand which holds it. Thus Jesus did, "Shall I not drink the cup that My Father has given Me to drink?" Though the cup was a bitter cup, a bloody cup—yet seeing

it was put into His hand by His Father, He drinks it off, with a "Father, I thank You."

The rod in itself brings nothing but pain to the child; but the rod in the hand of a father brings nothing but love, kindness, and sweetness. You should never look upon the rod of affliction, but as it is in the hand of your heavenly Father—and then you will kiss it, rather than murmur under it!

He draws out the core

Afflictions are the Lord's drawing-plasters, by which He draws out the core of pride, earthliness, self-love, covetousness, etc. Pride was one of man's first sins,

and is still the root and source of all other sins. Now, to prevent it, God many times chastens man with pain, yes, with strong pain, upon his bed: Job 34:31-32,

"I have endured my punishment; I will no longer act wickedly. Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I won't do it again." The burnt child dreads the

fire. Sin is but a bitter sweet; it is an evil worse than hell itself. Look, as salt brine preserves things from putrefying; so sanctified rods, sanctified afflictions, preserves and keeps the people of God from sinning.

His school of instruction

"The rod is for the back of the one who lacks sense." Pro 10:13

The rod is to make the child sensible of his folly and vanity. So it is here: God takes up the rod, but it is to make His people sensible of their folly and vanity;

it is to make them look up to Him, and to look into conscience, and to look out to their lives. God's house of correction is His school of instruction: His lashes are our lessons, His scourges are our schoolmasters, His chastisements are our corrections.

Hence both the Hebrews and Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, because teaching is the true end of chastening.

Afflictions are a Christian's looking-glass, by which he may see how to dress his own soul, and to mend whatever is amiss.

All the afflictions, troubles, and trials

"Heed the rod and the One who appointed it." Mic 6:9

It is God who appoints the rod, and ordains it to do what service He pleases. It is God who has an active hand, in all the afflictions which come upon His people.

"Heed the rod," that is, "believe the report the rod makes."

The rod reports, that of all evils sin is the greatest evil; and that of all bitters, sin is the greatest bitter. Oh believe the report of the rod! The rod reports, that God is angry, that God is displeased. Oh believe its report! The rod reports the creature to be mere vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh believe its report! The rod reports our nearest and dearest comforts, contentments, and enjoyments to be mixed, mutable, and momentary. Oh believe its report! The rod reports . . . sin to be vile, and the world to be vain, and heaven to be glorious, and Christ to be most precious! Oh believe its report!

All the afflictions, troubles, and trials which God lays upon His people, are His rod. It is their highest and greatest concernment to hear the voice of the rod, and to learn those lessons which God would have them learn by the rod.

He must deny himself

"If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." Mark 8:34

He must deny sinful self, which takes in a man's lusts.

He must deny natural self, which takes in a man's arts, parts, gifts, and reason.

He must deny religious self, which takes in all a man's religious duties and services.

He must deny moral self, which includes a freedom from gross, heinous, enormous wickednesses; and a fair, sweet, harmless behavior towards men.

He must deny relative self, which takes in our nearest and dearest relations in the flesh; as wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters, etc.

One sigh and groan

Some may think that they lack the ability to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret. I answer, You cannot pray; but can you not sigh? can you not groan? There may be the Spirit of adoption in sighs and groans, as well as in vocal prayer. The force, the virtue, the efficacy, the excellency of prayer does not consist in the number and flourish of words; but in the supernatural motions of the Spirit—in sighs, and groans, and pangs, and strong affections of heart, which are unspeakable and unutterable. Certainly, the very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul before the Lord, though it be but in sighs, groans, and tears. One sigh and groan from a broken heart, is more pleasing to God, than all human eloquence.

Remember, that God is no critical observer of the poor expressions which fall from His poor children, when they are in prayer. He is such a Father as is very well pleased with the broken expressions and flawed stammerings of His people when they pray. It is not a flood of words, nor studied notions, nor seraphical expressions, nor elegant phrases in prayer—which takes the ear, or which delights the heart of God, or which opens the gates of glory, or which brings down the

best of blessings upon the soul; but uprightness, holiness, heavenliness, spiritualness, and brokenness of heart. These are the things which make a conquest upon God, and bring most benefit to the soul.

My times

"My times are in Your hands," says David, Psa 31:15.

Not only the times of his sorrows—but also the times of his comforts; not only the times of his miseries—but also the times of his mercies; not only the times of his dangers—but also the times of his duties, were in the hands of God. It is observable the Psalmist does not say time—but times, in the plural, to show that every point and period of time depends upon the hand of God.

A work of absolute necessity

Private prayer is a work of absolute necessity, for the bringing of the heart into a holy frame, for the keeping of the heart in a holy frame, for the discovery of sin,

for the preventing of sin, for the embittering of sin, for the weakening of sin, for the purging away of sin, for a full exercise of grace, for an eminent increase of grace to arm us against temptations, afflictions, and sufferings, to fit us for all other duties and services.

Pray without ceasing

"Persistent in prayer." Rom 12:12

The Greek is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, which never give up the chase until they have got their prey. A Christian must not only pray—but hold on in prayer, until he has got the heavenly prize.

"Pray without ceasing." 1Th 5:17

We are always needing; and therefore we had need be praying always.

The world is always alluring; and therefore we had need be always a-praying.

Satan is always a-tempting; and therefore we had need be always a-praying.

We are always a-sinning; and therefore we had need be always a-praying.

We are in dangers always; and therefore we had need be praying always.

We are dying always; and therefore we had need be praying always. Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live—but he begins to die. Dying Christians had need be praying Christians, and those who are always a-dying had need be always a-praying.

My Friend

Christ is a universal Friend.

He is an omnipotent Friend, an almighty Friend.

He is an omniscient Friend.

He is an omnipresent Friend.

He is an unfailing Friend.

He is an independent Friend.

He is an unchangeable Friend.

He is a watchful Friend.

He is a tender and compassionate Friend.

He is a close and faithful Friend.

"His mouth is most sweet: yes, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend."
Song of Solomon 5:16

He overcomes the Almighty!

"Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." Gen 32:28

Oh the power of private prayer! It has a kind of omnipotence in it; it takes God captive; it holds Him as a prisoner; it binds the hands of the Almighty! Yes, it will wrench a mercy, a blessing, out of the hand of heaven itself! Oh the power of that prayer which makes a man victorious over the greatest, the highest power! Jacob, though a man, a single man, a traveling man, a tired man, yes, though a worm, which is easily crushed and trodden under foot—yet in private prayer he is so potent, that he overcomes the omnipotent God! He is so mighty, that he overcomes the Almighty!

He bruises His spices

"God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness." Heb 12:10

Grace always thrives most when saints are under the rod.

When Christians are under the rod, then their graces do not only bud, but blossom and bring forth fruit, as Aaron's rod did. The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God beats and bruises His children, to make them burn the brighter; He bruises His spices, to make them send forth the greater aromatic fragrance.

The Jews were always best when they were in an afflicted condition.

Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights.

Vines grow the better for bleeding.

Gold shines the better for scouring.

Juniper smells sweetest when in the fire.

By afflictions, God many times revives, quickens, and recovers the decayed graces of His people. By afflictions, God many times inflames that love which is cold; and He strengthens that faith which is failing; and he puts life into those hopes which are languishing; and new spirits into those joys and comforts which are withering and dying. Sharp afflictions recover and revive our decayed

graces.

The smarting rod abases the loveliness of the world, which entices us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which incites us to vanity and folly.

She hugs her young ones to death

"Withhold not correction from the child, for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell."

Pro 23:13-14

God uses the rod to prevent further folly, mischief, and misery. It is said of the ape, that she hugs her young ones to death; so many fond parents, by not correcting their children, they come to slay their children. The best way to prevent their being scourged with scorpions in hell, is to chastise them with the rod here.

So God takes up the rod; He afflicts and chastises His dearest children, but it is to prevent soul-mischief and misery; it is to prevent pride, self-love, worldliness, etc.

The rod is to purge out that vanity and folly that is bound up in the heart of the child. Pro 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." The rod is an ordinance, as well as the word; and such parents who use it as an ordinance—praying and weeping over it—shall find it effectual for the chasing away of evil out of their children's

heart. Eli and David were two very choice men, and yet, by their fondness on one hand, and neglect of this ordinance on the other hand, they ruined their sons; and whether they did not undo their souls, I shall not at this time stand to inquire.

When Moses cast away his rod, it became a serpent; and so, when parents cast away the rod of correction, it is ten to one but that their children become the brood of the serpent: Pro 13:24, "He who spares his rod hates his son; but he who loves him chastens him often." Not only the care, but also the cure of the child—so far as the rod will reach—lies upon the hands of the parent.

The promises of God

The promises of God are as so many rich mines, they are as so many choice flowers of paradise, they are the food, life, and strength of the soul. They are as a staff to support the soul, and they are as jewelry to adorn the soul, and nourishment to enrich the soul; and therefore poor sinners should bring them forth, and lay them before the Lord, and urge God with them.

The promises of God shall certainly be performed, 2Co 1:20, they being all made in and through Christ. They are made first to Christ, and then to all who have union and communion with Him.

Sirtorius, says Plutarch, paid what he promised with mere fair words; but God pays with performance. Men many times say and unsay; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; but God will never eat the words that are gone out of His mouth: Isa 46:10-11, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: yes, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it."

The promises all issue from God's free grace, special love, and divine goodness, Hos 14:4.

The promises of God are all as unchangeable as He is, who made them, Jer 31:3.

The promises of God are all bottomed and founded upon the truth, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency of God, Mal 3:6.

The promises of God are most sure and certain evidences of divine favor, and a declaration of the heart and goodwill of God to His poor people, Heb 6:12; Num 23:19.

The promises of God are the price of Christ's blood.

Now how should all these things encourage poor souls to be still a-pressing of God with His promises.

The dumb sinner

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Mat 7:7-8

The threefold promise annexed to the threefold precept, should encourage all Christians to be instant, fervent, and constant in prayer.

Though prayer is not the ground, nor the cause of obtaining favors and mercies from God—yet it is the means, it is the silver channel, it is the golden pipe, through which the Lord is pleased to convey to His people all temporal, spiritual, and eternal favors. God promises to give them the cream, the choicest, the sweetest of all spiritual, eternal, and temporal blessings; but mark, Eze 36:37, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Though God is very prompt and ready to bestow upon His people the best and the greatest of blessings—yet He will by prayer be sought unto, for the actual enjoyment of them. He who has no heart to pray for a mercy, he has no ground to believe that God will ever give him the mercy. There is no receiving without asking, no finding without seeking, no opening without knocking. The proud beggar gets nothing from men, and the dumb sinner gets nothing of God. As there is no mercy too great for God to give, so there is no mercy too little for us to crave. Certainly that man has little worth in him who thinks any mercy not worth a seeking.

Failings and infirmities

God will never cast off His people for their failings and infirmities.

First, It is the glory of a man to pass by infirmities, Pro 19:11. Oh how much more, then, must it be the glory of God to pass by the infirmities of His people!

Secondly, Saints are children; and what father will cast off his children for their infirmities and weaknesses? Psa 103:13-14; 1Co 12:27.

Thirdly, Saints are members of Christ's body; and what man will cut off a limb because there is a scab or wart upon it?

Fourthly, Saints are Christ's purchase; they are His possession, His inheritance. [Eph 1:22-23; 1Co 6:20; 1Co 7:23; 1Pe 1:18-20] Now what man is there that will cast away, or cast off his purchase, his possession, his inheritance, because of thorns, bushes, or briars that grow upon it?

Fifthly, Saints are in a marriage-covenant with God, Hos 2:19-20. Now what husband is there that will cast off his wife for her failings and infirmities? So long as a man is in covenant with God, his infirmities can't cut him off from God's mercy and grace. Now it is certain a man may have very many infirmities upon him, and yet not break his covenant with God.

In a word, if God should cast off His people for their failings and infirmities, then none of the sons or daughters of Adam could be saved: "For there is not a just man upon the earth that does good and sins not," Ecc 7:20.

Oh remember

Oh remember that at such a time you went into your prayer closets with hard hearts, and dry eyes; but before you came out of your closets, ah, how sweetly, how graciously, how powerfully were you melted, and humbled before the Lord!

Oh remember how that at another time you went into your closets clouded and benighted—but came out of your closets with as glorious a shine of God upon your souls, as Moses had upon his face, when he came down from the mount from communing with God!

Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets with cold, frozen spirits—but before you came out of your closets, what a fire has God kindled in your souls, what a spirit of burning have you found in your hearts!

Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets straitened and shut up—but before you have come out, how have your souls been aflame!

Oh remember what power God has given you against corruptions in your closets, and what strength God has given you against temptations in your closets!

Oh remember the sweet discoveries of divine love that you have had when in your closets! Oh remember the secret visits, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret whispers, the secret love-tokens, that Christ has given you in your closets!

Oh seriously ponder upon these things, and then closet duties will be sweet unto you!

A secret virtue and power

When a man finds such a secret virtue and power running through his closet-duties—as wounds and weakens his beloved corruption, as breaks the strength and the power of his special sin, as sets his heart more fully, resolutely, and constantly against his darling lust, as stirs up a greater rage, and a more bitter hatred, and a more fierce indignation against the toad in the bosom—then certainly he has had communion with God.

Isa 2:20, "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they have made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats." In the day wherein God should take these poor hearts into communion with Himself, their hearts should be filled with such

rage and indignation against their most delectable and desirable idols, that they should take not only those made of trees and stones—but even their most precious and costly idols, those who were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats, to note their horrible hatred and indignation against them. Idolatry was the darling-sin of the Jews; their hearts were so exceedingly affected and delighted with their idols, that they did not care what they spent upon them: j, "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a God: they fall down, yes, they worship it." The word here used for lavish, in the Hebrew, signifies properly to waste, or spend riotously; they set so light by their treasure, that they cared not what they spent upon their idols. God gave them gold and silver as pledges of His favor and bounty, and they lavish it out upon their idols, as if God had hired them to be wicked.

Oh, but when God should come and take these poor wretches into a close and near communion with Himself, then you shall find their wrath and rage to rise against their idols, as you may see in that Isa 30:19-21. Their communion with God is more than hinted; but mark, Isa 30:22, "Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" None defile, deface, detest, and disgrace their idols like those who are taken into communion with God. Fellowship with God will make a man cast away, as a menstruous cloth, those very idols, in which he has most delighted, and with which he has been most pleased and enamored.

Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin. Hos 4:17, "Ephraim is joined," or glued, as the Hebrew has it, "to idols; let him alone." Oh! but when you find Ephraim taken into close communion with God, as you do in that Hos 14:4-7, then you shall find another spirit upon him: Hos 14:8, "Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols?" I have had too much to do with them already, I will never have to do with them any more. Oh! how does my soul detest and abhor them, and rise up against them. Oh! how do I now more loathe and abominate them, than ever I have formerly loved them, or delighted in them. After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols, that in the time of the Romans they chose rather to die, than allow the eagle, which was the imperial insignia, to be set up in their temple.

Though closet-duties are weak in themselves—yet when a man has communion with God in them, then they prove exceedingly powerful to the casting down of strongholds, and vain imaginations, and every high thing and thought, which exalts itself against the knowledge of God, 2Co 10:4-5. When a man comes out of his closet with a heart more fully and steadfastly set against every known sin—but especially against his bosom-sin, his darling-sin, his Delilah which he played and sported himself most with, and which he has hugged with pleasure and delight in his bosom—then certainly he has had private communion with God.

After Moses had enjoyed forty days' private communion with God in the mount, how did his heart rise, and his anger wax hot against the molten calf that his people had made! Exo 32:19-20, "When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it." Moses had never more intimate fellowship with God than now, and he never exhibited so much holy zeal, anger, and indignation against sin as now.

When a man comes off from the mount of closet-duties with a greater hatred, anger, wrath, and indignation against bosom-sins, darling-sins, complexion-sins, which were once as dear to him as right hands or right eyes, or as Delilah was to Samson, or Herodias to Herod, or Isaac to Abraham, or Joseph to Jacob, then certainly he has had communion with God in those duties. When a man finds his beloved sins, his Delilahs, which, like the prince of devils, command all other sins, to fall before his closet-duties, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David—then assuredly he has had fellowship with God in them.

Pliny writes of some families which had secret marks on their bodies, peculiar to those of that line. Certainly, there are no people—but have some sin or sins; some secret marks on their souls, that may in a peculiar way be called theirs. Now when in private duties they find the bent of their hearts, and the purposes, resolutions, and inclinations of their souls more raised, inflamed, and set against these, they may safely and comfortably conclude, that they have had communion with God in them.

O sirs! there is no no bosom-sin so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for; and therefore, in all your private duties and services, labor after that communion with God in them, that may break the neck and heart of your most bosom-sins. When Darius fled before Alexander, that he might run the faster out of danger, he threw away his massive crown from his head. As ever you would be safe from eternal danger, throw away your golden and your silver idols, throw away your bosom-sins, your darling lusts.

Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live—but he begins to die.

Secret prayer sweetly inclines and strongly disposes a Christian to all other pious duties and services.

Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the word unto us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths, are but the returns of private prayer. The Word dwells most richly in their hearts—who are most in pouring out their hearts before God in their closets. Certainly that Christian, who in private prayer lies most at the feet of Jesus Christ—he shall understand most of the mind of Christ in the gospel, and he shall have most of heaven and the things of his own peace brought down into his heart.

There is no service wherein Christians have such a near, familiar, and friendly fellowship with God as in private prayer; neither is there any service wherein God does more delight to make known His truth and faithfulness, His grace and goodness, His mercy and bounty, His beauty and glory to poor souls, than in secret prayer. Private prayer crowns God with the honor and glory which are due to His name; and God crowns private prayer with a revelation of those blessed weighty truths to his servants, that are a sealed book to others.

One hour's communion with God in one's closet, is to be preferred before the greatest and best company in the world.

A man whose soul is conversant with God in a closet, in a hole, behind the door, or in a desert, a den, a dungeon—shall find more real pleasure, more choice

delight, and more full contentment, than in the palace of a prince.

Our heavenly Father hears and observes our private prayers, and bottles up all our secret tears. He is not a stranger to our closet desires, wrestlings, breathings,

hungerings, and thirstings. He loves to lade the wings of private prayer with the sweetest, choicest, and chief blessings. Saints often meet with the best wine and with the strongest cordials—when they are all alone with God.

All tears will never be totally wiped from our eyes, until all sin is totally taken out of our hearts.

The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul into the bosom of God. Prayer is nothing but the breathing out before the Lord, that which was first breathed into us by the Spirit of the Lord. Prayer is nothing but a choice, a free, a sweet, and familiar fellowship of the soul with God.

Some saints have never had so much of heaven brought down into their hearts, as when they have been with God in private prayer. Oh the secret manifestations of divine love, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret influences, the secret communion with God, that many a precious Christian has had in the most solitary places.

02.14. Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion

Choice excerpts from Thomas Brooks' "The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion Above All Earthly Portions"

A shadow, a ship, a bubble, a bird, a dream, an arrow

"Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!" Pro 23:4-5

All earthly portions are very uncertain; now they are—and shortly they are not! Though the foolish world calls riches substance—yet they have no solid subsistence. All earthly portions are as transitory as a shadow, a ship, a bubble,

a bird, a dream, an arrow, a runner who passes swiftly away. Riches were never true to any who have trusted in them. All earthly things are vain and transitory, they are rather phantoms and shadows—than real things themselves. All the glory of this world is rather a matter of shadow, than of substance; it is a body without a soul; it is a golden shell without a kernel; it is a shadow without a substance. There is no firmness, there is no solidness, there is no consistency, there is no constancy in any of the creatures. All the pomp, and state, and glory of the world is but a mere painted pageantry, a mask, a comedy, a fantasy!

Look! As the rainbow shows itself in all its dainty colors, and then vanishes away—so do all worldly honors, riches, and preferments show themselves—and then vanish away!

A storm at sea, a spark of fire, an unfaithful employee, a false oath, or a treacherous friend—may quickly bring a man to sit with Job upon an ash-heap!

Look! As the bird flies from tree to tree—so all the riches, honors, and glory of this world—fly from man to man!

There is nothing but vanity and uncertainty in all earthly portions.

More suitable to swine!

There is no earthly portion which can suit an immortal soul; he is a fool upon record who said, "Soul, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry," Luk 12:18-20. If the man had the soul of a swine, what more could he have said? for those things were more suitable to swine than they were to an immortal soul!

Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, it is capable of union and communion with God; it is capable of a choice enjoyment of God here, and of an eternal fruition of God hereafter. Nothing can suit the soul below God; nor can anything satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that all the riches of the east and west Indies, nor rocks of diamonds, nor mountains of gold—can fill it, or satisfy it, or suit it!

He who can truly say this, is a God

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

God is every believer's portion.

Riches are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion.

Liberty and freedom are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion.

Honor and applause are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion.

Prosperity and success are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion.

God is a universal portion. God is a portion that includes all other portions. God has Himself the good, the sweet, the profit, the pleasure, the delight, the comfort—of all portions. There is no good in wife, child, father, friend, husband, health, wealth, wit, wisdom, learning, honor—but is all found in God.

There is in God an immense fullness, an ocean of goodness, and an overplus of all that graciousness, sweetness, and kindness, that is to be found in all other things or creatures. All the goodlinesses and all the glories of all the creatures are eminently and perfectly to be enjoyed in God. The cream, the good, the sweet, the beauty, and the glory of every creature, and of every thing—centers in God.

God is a universal excellency. All the particular excellencies that are scattered up and down among angels, men, and all other creatures—are virtually and transcendently in Him. He has them all in His own being. All creatures in heaven and earth have only their own particular excellencies; but God has in Himself the very quintessence of all excellencies!

The creatures have but drops of that sea, that ocean, which is in God. They have but their parts of that power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, loveliness, desirableness, sweetness, graciousness, beauty, and glory

—which is in God. One has this part, and another has that; one has this particular excellency, and another has that. But the whole of all these parts and excellencies are to be found in God alone!

There is none but that God, who is the universal good, who can truly say, "All power, all wisdom, all strength, all knowledge, all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, all glory, all excellency, etc., dwells in Me!" He who can truly say this, is a God; and he who cannot, is no God.

All the excellencies that are scattered up and down in the creatures, are united into one excellency in God; but there is not one excellency in God that is fully scattered up and down among all the creatures. There is a glorious union of

all excellencies in God—and only in God.

Now this God, who is such a universal good, and who has all excellencies dwelling in Himself, says to the believer, "I am yours, and all that I have is yours!"

Every believer has the whole God wholly; he has all of God for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense—but in an absolute sense.

God Himself is theirs.

He is wholly theirs.

He is only theirs.

He is always theirs.

Our property reaches to all that God is, and to all that God has. He has all—who has the Possessor of all.

To be able to say, "God is mine!" is more than if I were able to say that ten thousand worlds, yes, and as many heavens, are mine!

Oh what a spring of joy and comfort should this be to all the saints!

"This God is our God forever and ever!" Psa 48:14

The only happy man in the world!

"Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Psa 144:15

All the happiness and blessedness of the people of God consists in this—that God is their God, and that He is their portion, and that they are His inheritance!

Oh, the heaped up happiness of those whose God is the Lord! The happiness of such is so great and so glorious—as cannot be conceived, as cannot be uttered!

Nothing can make that man truly miserable, who has God for his portion; nor can anything make that man truly happy, who lacks God for his portion.

God is the author of all true happiness.

God is the donor of all true happiness.

God is the maintainer of all true happiness.

God is the center of all true happiness and blessedness.

Therefore, he who has Him for his God, for his portion, is the only happy man in the world!

"Happy are the people whose God is the Lord." Psa 144:15

The trifling portions of this world

God gives the trifling portions of this world to the vilest and worst of men; but His gold—His Christ, Himself—He gives only to His saints.

Briers, which are for hogs, grow upon every hedge; but roses, which are for men, they only grow in pleasant gardens. You know how to apply it.

Though many have counterfeit jewels, yet there are but a few who have the true diamond; though many have their earthly portions, yet there are but a few who have God for their portion.

Without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse!

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

Lazarus having God for his portion, when he died he went to heaven without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse! Whereas Dives, who did not have God for his portion when he died—went tumbling down to hell in all his riches, bravery, and glory. Oh! it is infinitely better to go to heaven a beggar—than to go to hell an emperor!

What a pitiful perishing portion is that!

"Men of the world, whose portion is in this life." Psa 17:14

Certainly, men . . . whose hearts are worldly, whose minds are worldly, whose spirits are worldly, whose desires are worldly, whose hopes are worldly, whose main ends are worldly—have only the world for their portion; and what a pitiful perishing portion is that! Such men . . . choose the world as their portion, and

delight in the world as their portion, and trust to the world as their portion, and

in straits run to the world as their portion, and take contentment and satisfaction in the world as their portion.

Doubtless that word was a thunderbolt to Dives— "Remember that during your life you received your ood things, just as Lazarus received bad things; but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony!"

Wicked men have their best here, their worst is to come.

They have their comforts here, their torments are to come.

They have their joys here, their sorrows are to come.

They have their heaven here, their hell is to come.

The funeral A Christian knows that death shall be the funeral of all . . . his sins, his sorrows, his afflictions, his temptations, his vexations, his oppressions, his persecutions.

He knows that death shall be the resurrection of all . . . his hopes, his joys, his delights, his comforts, his contentments.

He knows that death shall bring him to a more clear, full, perfect, and constant enjoyment of God! This makes him sweetly and triumphantly to sing it out, "O death! where is your sting? O grave! where is your victory?" 1Co 15:35-37

Mixed or unmixed?

"God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all." 1Jn 1:5

Light expels darkness, it never mixes nor mingles with it. God is a pure and an unmixed light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him.

Light is the most unmixed substance; it will never mix with darkness—neither will God.

But all worldly portions are mixed with many . . . troubles, sorrows, cares, fears, hazards, dangers, vexations, oppositions, crosses, losses.

All earthly portions are mixed portions!

The goodness of all creatures is a mixed goodness. Every bee has his sting, and every rose has his prickles. And this mixture speaks out all earthly portions to be

"vanity and vexation of spirit," Ecc 1:13.

That great king Xerxes was accustomed to say—"You look upon my crown and my purple robes—but if you knew how they were lined with thorns—you

would not stoop to pick them up!" Great places are not free from great cares. No man knows the weight of a scepter, but he who sways it. Many a sleepless night, many a restless day, many a sad temptation, and many a busy shift, will their ambition cost them—who aspire to such places of eminency. Besides, high places are commonly very slippery; he who stands in them may suddenly fall, and wound his conscience, or easily fall and break his neck.

A drop in a bucket

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

"Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are considered as a speck of dust on the scales; He lifts up the islands like fine dust." Isa 40:15

All nations are but as a drop in a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger—in comparison of God, nay, they are all nothing; but that word is too high, for they are less than nothing. Had a man as many worlds at his command as there are men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms—compared to a saint's portion!

When Alcibiades was proudly boasting of his spacious lands, Socrates wittily rebukes his pride by bringing him a map of the world, and wishing him to show him where his lands did lie; his lands would hardly amount to more than the prick of a pin. England, Scotland, and Ireland are but three little spots compared to the vast continents which are in other parts of the world; and what then is your palace, your lordships, your manors, your farm, your house, your cottage—but a little speck—but a prick of a pin—compared to God, who is so great, so vast a portion!

Oh, sirs! if you had the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint's portion.

Can you count the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or make a new world? Then, and not until then, will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him", oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God has laid up for His people in the eternal world!

An ocean of sweetness—without one drop of bitterness

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

God is a pure and unmixed portion.

God is an unmixed good—He has nothing in Him but goodness.

He is an ocean of sweetness—without one drop of bitterness.

He is a perfect beauty—without the least spot or shadow of deformity.

All other portions are a bittersweet; but God is a rose without prickles.

He is a good, in which there is not the least evil. God is a most clear, bright, shining light; yes, He is all light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

There are no mixtures in God. God is . . . all light, all love, all sweetness, all goodness, all kindness, all graciousness.

There is . . . no impurity, no unloveliness, no bitterness, nor any darkness at all in God.

Four things which God cannot do

"You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Hab 1:13

There are four things which God cannot do:

(1.) He cannot lie.

(2.) He cannot die.

(3.) He cannot deny Himself.

(4.) He cannot look with a favorable eye upon iniquity. He is a God of such infinite purity, that He cannot look upon iniquity but with . . . a hateful eye, an angry eye, a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye.

One infinite perfection

"Every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psa 39:5

Man at his best state is such a great piece of vanity, that he stands in need of a thousand thousand things; he needs . . . the air to breathe in, the earth to bear him,

fire to warm him, clothes to cover him, a house to shelter him, food to nourish him, a bed to ease him, friends to comfort him, etc.

But this is the excellency of God—that He has all excellencies in Himself, and stands in need of nothing!

God has self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency in Himself. Before the world was made, before angels or men had a being, God was as blessed and as glorious in Himself as He now is. God is such an all-sufficient and such an excellent being, that nothing can be added to Him to make Him more excellent.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

O Christians! God is an all-sufficient portion! His power is all-sufficient to protect you; His wisdom is all-sufficient to direct you; His mercy is all-sufficient to pardon you; His goodness is all-sufficient to provide for you; His word is all-sufficient to support you and strengthen you; His grace is all-sufficient to adorn you and enrich you; His Spirit is all-sufficient to lead you and comfort you! What more can you desire?

O sirs! God is one infinite perfection in Himself! God has within Himself . . .

all good, all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all delights,

all comforts, all contentments, all joys, all beatitudes! All are eminently, transcendently, and perfectly in Him!

God is a sufficient portion . . .to secure your souls, to supply all your needs, to satisfy all your desires, to answer all your expectations, to suppress all your enemies, to bring you to glory! What more can you desire?

What can be more just?

Remember this, that as Noah was drunk with his own wine, and as Goliath was beheaded by his own sword, and as the rose is destroyed by the canker that it breeds in itself, and as Agrippina was killed by Nero, to whom she gave breath;

so if ever you are eternally destroyed—you will be destroyed by yourselves! If ever you are undone, you will be undone by yourselves! If ever you are scourged to death, it will be by rods of your own making! And if ever the bitter cup of

damnation be put into your hands, it will be found to be of your own preparing, mingling, and embittering!

Behold, I have set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, before you in this treatise; and therefore, if you will needs choose . . .death rather than life, hell rather than heaven, misery rather than glory, what can be more just—than that you should perish to all eternity? If you will not have God for your portion,

you shall be sure to have His wrath for your portion, and hell for your portion! Every man shall only thank . . . his own folly for his own bane, his own sin for his own everlasting shame, his own iniquity for his own endless misery!

An everlasting portion

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24

A Christian may be stripped of anything but his God; he may be stripped of his estate, his friends, his relations, his liberty, his life—but he can never be stripped of his God! As God is a portion that none can give to a Christian but God himself; so God is a portion that none can take from a Christian but God himself! Therefore, as ever you would have a sure portion, an abiding portion, a lasting portion, yes, an everlasting portion, make sure of God for your portion!

Nothing can make that man miserable, who has God for his portion; nor can anything make that man happy, who lacks God for his portion. The more rich—the more wretched; the more

great—the more graceless; the more honorable—the more miserable that man will be, who has not God for his portion. A sanctified memory

"How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand—when I awake, I am still with You." Psa 139:17-18

The psalmist had very frequent, high, precious, and honorable thoughts of God; he valued nothing at so high a rate as sweet and noble thoughts of God, and of His power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and graciousness.

A sanctified memory is a rich cabinet full of the choicest thoughts of God; it is that rich treasury wherein a Christian is still laying up . . . more and more precious thoughts of God, more and more high and holy thoughts of God, more and more honorable and noble thoughts of God, more and more solemn and reverent thoughts of God, more and more sweet and comfortable thoughts of God, more and more tender and compassionate thoughts of God.

Make a football of Pharaoh's crown!

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin. For he considered reproach for the sake of the Messiah to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since his attention was on the reward. By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king's anger, for he persevered, as one who sees Him who is invisible." Heb 11:24-27 When Moses had seen Him who was invisible, when he had taken a full prospect of the eternal world, and when he had beheld God as his portion—oh, how does he slight, scorn, and trample upon all the honors, preferments, profits, pleasures,

delights, and contentments of Egypt—as things below him, and as things that in no respects were worthy of him!

It is a Rabbinical fable, that as a child, Moses had Pharaoh's crown given him to play with—and he made a football of it, and cast it down to the ground, and kicked it about, as if it were a sign of his future vilifying and despising of temporal things. I shall not much trouble my head about what Moses did when he was a child. But of this I am sure, having the word of God for it, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" that is, he did little less than make a football of Pharaoh's crown! Witness his refusing with a holy scorn and disdain, to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so to succeed Pharaoh in the throne.

The world and Paul were well agreed

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Gal 6:14

Paul scorned, despised, and rejected the world—and the world scorned, despised, and rejected him.

Paul cast off the world—and the world cast off him.

He disregarded the world—and the world disregarded him.

He was dead to the world—and the world was dead to him.

The world and Paul were well agreed: the world cared not a pin for Paul—and Paul cared not a straw for the world.

An earthly-minded man

Then He told them a parable: A rich man's land was very productive. He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to store my crops? I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones and store

all my grain and my goods there. Then I'll say to myself—You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.' Luk 12:16-19

An earthly-minded man has his thoughts and meditations exercised and taken up with the world. Among all his worldly thoughts, there is not one thought of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of holiness, of eternity, to be found. His thoughts were so taken up with his bags, and his barns, and his buildings, and his ease, and his belly, that he had no time to think of providing for another world. Therefore God quickly dispatches him out of this world, and throws him down from the highest pinnacle of prosperity and worldly glory—into the greatest gulf

of wrath and misery!

The sweetest and the most comforting word

The knowledge of a man's property in God is the comfort of comforts. Property makes every comfort, a pleasurable comfort, a delightful comfort. When a man walks . . . in a fair meadow, and can write mine upon it, into a pleasant garden, and can write mine upon it, into a fruitful field, and can write mine upon it, into a stately habitation, and can write mine upon it, into a rich treasury, and can write mine upon it— Oh, how does it please him! How does it delight him! How does it joy and rejoice him!

Of all words, the word mine is the sweetest and the most comforting word. Ah! when a man can look upon God, and write 'Mine!' when he can look upon God, and say, 'This God is my God forever and ever!' when he can look upon God, and say, 'This God is my portion!' when he can look upon God, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"—how will all the springs of joy rise in his soul!

Oh, who can but rejoice to be owner of that God who fills heaven and earth with His fullness? Who can but rejoice to have Him for his portion—in having of whom, he has all things—in having of whom he can lack nothing?

The serious thoughts of our property in God will add much sweet to all our sweets! Yes, it will make every bitter, sweet.

When a man seriously thinks . . . it is my God who cheers me with His presence, it is my God who supports me with His power, it is my God who guides me by His counsel, it is my God who supplies me with His goodness, it is my God who blesses all my blessings to me; it is my God who afflicts me in love, it is my God who has broken me in my estate, it is my God who has sorely visited His child, it is my God who has passed this sentence of death upon a friend, it is my God

who has thus cast me down—how do these thoughts cheer up the spirit of a man, and make every bitter, sweet; and every burden, light unto him.

O Christians! A clear sight of your property in God is . . . a pearl of great price,

your paradise, manna in a wilderness, water out of a rock, a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, Jacob's ladder, a salve for every sore, a cure for every disease, a remedy against every malady, an anchor at sea, and a shield on shore,

a star to guide you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a pavilion to hide you, a fire to warm you, a banquet to refresh you, a city of refuge to secure you, a cordial to cheer you! What more could you desire?

The bridge which leads to the paradise of God

If God is a believer's portion, then never let a believer be afraid to die, or unwilling to die. Let those be afraid to die—who have only this world for their portion here, and hell for their portion hereafter. But let not a saint be afraid of death—who has the Lord of life for his portion. One who has God for his portion should rather invite death—than tremble at it. He should rather sweetly welcome it—than turn his back upon it; for death to such a one is but . . . the way to paradise, the way to all heavenly delights, the way to life, immortality, and glory,

the way to everlasting springs of pleasure, the way to a clear, full, constant, and eternal enjoyment of God.

Death is the bridge which leads to the paradise of God. All the hurt that it can do, is to bring a believer to a full enjoyment of God, his everlasting portion.

He awoke with everlasting flames about his ears!

Earthly riches commonly load the soul with a multitude of cares, fears, griefs, and vexations—which mightily disturb the soul, distract the soul; yes, often rack, torture, and torment the soul.

Earthly riches, for the most part, do a world of mischief and hurt to their owners. Oh the souls which earthly riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds which earthly riches have blinded! Oh the hearts

which earthly riches have hardened! Oh the consciences which earthly riches have benumbed! Oh the wills which earthly riches have perverted! Oh the affections which earthly riches have disordered! Oh the lives which earthly

riches have corrupted!

Dives was so taken up with his riches, pomp, state, and with his royal apparel, royal attendance, and royal fare—that he never minded heaven, nor ever dreaded hell—until he awoke with everlasting flames about his ears!

Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the energy—which rich men spend and consume upon their riches, while their precious souls lie bleeding to death, and an eternity of misery is hastening

upon them!

Will He deny you a crust?

"He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" Rom 8:32.

O Christian! all the attributes of God are so engaged for you, that you cannot lack; and all the promises of God are so engaged to you that you cannot lack; and all the affections of God are so set upon you that you cannot lack; and why then should you fear for your necessities?

O sirs! has God given you His Son, His Spirit, His grace, His glory, yes, Himself—and will He deny you lesser things? Has He given you those things which are more worth than ten thousand worlds—and will He not give you bread to eat, and clothing to put on? Has He given you those spiritual riches that infinitely exceed and excel all the riches, rubies, and pearls in the world—and will He deny you a little money in your purses to afford your necessities until you come to heaven? Has He given you a crown—and will He deny you a crust? Has He given you His royal robes—and will He deny you a few rags? Has He given you a royal palace—and will He deny you a poor cottage to shelter you from the stormy winter and from the scorching summer? Does He feed His

enemies, and clothe His enemies, and protect His enemies, and provide for His enemies—who are under His wrath and curse—and will He not do as much for you, O you of little faith?

Will He do so much for those who hate Him—and will He not do as much for those who love Him? Doubtless He will. Will He feed the ravens, and provide for the ox and the donkey, and clothe the grass of the field; and will He allow you, who are His love, His joy, His delight, to starve at His feet, for lack of necessities? Surely not!

O Christians! if God has given you Himself for a portion, then certainly it is a sinful thing, a shameful thing, an unworthy thing for you to be so troubled, afflicted, and grieved—because you lack this and that worldly contentment and enjoyment—which God bestows upon such whose wickedness has debased them

below the ox and the donkey, I mean, men of beastly spirits, and beastly principles, and beastly practices.

As Benjamin's portion was five times greater than his brethren; so those who have God for their portion have five thousand times a greater portion than the wicked of the world, whose portion only lies in perishing trifles, and in foolish vanities.

I will not, not, not, not, not

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said—Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Heb 13:5

There are five negatives in the Greek, "I will not, not, not, not, not leave you nor forsake you;" to fully assure and fully satisfy the people of God that He will never forsake them, and that He will everlastingly stick close to them. What does this unparalleled repetition—"I will never, never, never, never, never," mean but this, "I will ever, ever, ever, yes and forever and ever take care of you, and look after you, and be mindful of you." Though they had changed . . . their glory for

contempt; their fine raiment for sheepskins and goatskins; their silver for brass,

their plenty for scarcity, their fullness for emptiness, their stately houses for holes and caves, and dens of the earth, yet they are to be contented and satisfied with present things, upon this very ground—that God will always cleave to them, and

that He will never turn his back upon them.

The Hebrew Christians had been stripped and plundered of all their goods that were good for anything; and yet they must be contented, they must sit down satisfied, with their hands upon their mouths, though all were gone, Heb 10:34.

Though men cannot bring their means to their minds, yet they must bring their minds to their means, and then they will sit down in silence, though they have but . . . a rag on their backs, a penny in their purse, and a crust in their cupboards.

Do not be overawed

"This is what the wicked are like—always carefree, they increase in wealth. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me—until I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely You place them on slippery ground; You cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!" Psa 73:1-28

When the bodies of the wicked are rotting in their graves, and their souls are roaring in hell, none of their worldly greatness, pomp, state, glory, gallantry, riches, houses, or revenues, shall descend after them to administer one drop of comfort to them! Therefore never envy their outward prosperity or worldly glory.

"Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases; for he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not

descend with him." Psa 49:16-17

The prosperity of the wicked

Oh you who have God for your portion, do not envy, do not fret and vex, at the prosperity of the wicked; for even though they have more than their heart can wish, even though they live in pleasure and wallow in all carnal and sensual delights—yet they have a sad account to give to God, and they shall pay dearly at last for all their worldly enjoyments! For without sound repentance on their part,

and pardoning grace on God's part, they shall forever lose their immortal souls!

O sirs, remember that Lazarus did not fret nor fume because Dives had robes for his rags; and delicacies for his scraps. Lazarus very well knew that though he was without any earthly good—yet he was not without God. He had a guard of glorious angels to transport his holy, precious, heaven-born soul into Abraham's bosom. He knew that it was better to beg on earth, than to beg in hell.

O sirs, what is . . . darkness compared to light, earth compared to heaven, chaff compared to wheat, tin compared to silver, dross compared to gold, or pebbles compared to pearls? No more

are all earthly portions compared to that God who is the saints' portion; and, therefore, let not the saints, who have such a matchless portion, envy the prosperity and felicity of wicked men.

Envy

It is the justice of envy to torment the envious. Therefore, shun it as you would poison in your food, or a serpent in the way. A man were better off having

a serpent tumbling up and down in his bowels, than to have envy gnawing in his soul.

Envy is as pernicious a wickedness, as it is a foolish and a groundless wickedness. Envy is . . . a scourge to scourge the soul; a serpent to sting the soul;

a poison to swell the soul; a saw to saw the soul; a moth that corrupts the soul,

a canker that eats up the soul. Therefore flee from envy, as you would flee from

the most cruel and destroying adversary!

To be envious, because God is bountiful to others; to frown, because God smiles upon others; to be bitter, because God is sweet in his dealings with others; and to sigh, because God multiplies favors and blessings upon others; what is this but to turn others' good into our own hurt, others' glory and mercy into our own punishment and torment?

What should move God to love us? The free favor and love of God, the good will and pleasure of God—is the true ground and cause of God's bestowing of Himself as a portion upon His people. There was no cause, nor loveliness, nor desirableness in them—which could move God to bestow Himself upon them.

God, for the glory of His own free grace and love, has bestowed Himself as a portion upon those who have deserved to have their portion among devils and damned spirits—in those torments which are endless, ceaseless, and remediless.

But what should move God to love us, who were so unworthy, so filthy, so empty, so beggarly? The question may be resolved in these words—He loves us because He loves us. The root of all divine love to us, lies only in the bosom of God.

The guts and garbage of the earth

God is an incomparable portion.

All the gold of Ophir, and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth, are nothing, yes, less than nothing, compared with God. God is a portion more precious than all those things which are esteemed most precious.

A man may desire just about anything. He may desire that all the mountains in the world may be turned into mountains of gold for his use; he may desire that all the

rocks in the world may be turned into the richest pearls for his use; he may desire that all the treasure that is buried in the sea may be brought into his treasures;

he may desire that all the crowns and scepters of all the princes and emperors of the world, may be piled up at his gate. Yet all these things are not comparable

to a saint's portion, yes, they are not to be named in that day, in which the excellency of a saint's portion is set forth.

02.15. Unsearchable Riches of Christ

"The Unsearchable Riches of Christ

Satan's apes

Pride sets itself against the honor, being, and sovereignty of God. Other sins strike at the word of God, the people of God, and the creatures of God—but pride strikes directly at the very being of God. He bears a special hatred against pride.

It was pride which turned angels into devils. They would be above others in heaven—and therefore God cast them down to hell.

Pride is a sin which of all sins, makes a person most like Satan. Pride is Satan's disease. Pride is so base a disease, that God had rather see His dearest children to be buffeted by Satan, than that in pride they should be like Satan.

Humility makes a man like to angels—and pride makes an angel a devil. Pride is worse than the devil, for the devil cannot hurt you until pride has possessed you.

If you would see the devil portrayed to the life—look upon a proud soul; for as face answers to face, so does a proud soul answer to Satan.

Proud souls are Satan's apes, and none imitate him to the life like these. And oh that they were sensible of it, before it is too late, before the door of darkness be shut upon them!

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished." Pro 16:5

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If this does not humble you

Dwell much upon the greatness of God's mercy and goodness to you. Nothing humbles and breaks the heart, like God's mercy and love. In Luk 7:1-50, the Lord Jesus shows mercy to that notorious sinner, and then she falls down at His feet, and loves much and weeps much, etc.

Oh, if ever you would have your souls kept humble, dwell upon the free grace and love of God to you in Christ! Dwell upon . . . the firstness of His love, the freeness of His love, the greatness of His love, the fullness of His love, the unchangeableness of His love, the everlastingness of His love, and the ardency of His love. If this does not humble you, there is nothing on earth which will do it. Dwell upon what God has undertaken for you. Dwell upon the choice and worthy gifts which He has bestowed on you. Dwell upon that eternal glory and happiness which He has prepared for you—and then be proud if you can.

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If you are not as wicked as others

"By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1Co 15:10

Whatever evil you behold in other men's practices, realize that you have the same evil in your own nature.

There is the seed of all sins, of the vilest and worst of sins—in the best of men. When you see a drunkard—you may see the seed of that sin in your own nature. When you see an immoral man—you may see the seeds of immorality in your own nature. If you are not as wicked as others—it is not because of the goodness of your nature—but from the riches of God's grace!

Remember this—there is not a worse nature in hell than that which is in you, and it would manifest itself accordingly—if the Lord did not restrain it!

There was one who was a long time tempted to three horrid sins: to be drunk, to lie with his mother, and to murder his father. Being a long time followed with these horrid temptations, at last he thought to get rid of them, by yielding to what he judged the least, and that was to be drunk; but when he was drunk, he did both lie with his mother and murdered his father.

Why, such a hellish nature is in every soul that breathes! And did God leave men to act according to their natures, all men would be incarnate devils, and this world a total hell. In your nature you have that that would lead you . . . with the Pharisees—to oppose Christ; and with Judas—to betray Christ; and with Pilate—to condemn Christ; and with the soldiers—to crucify Christ.

Oh, what a monster, what a devil you would be—should God but leave you to act suitable to that sinful and woeful nature of yours!

"By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1Co 15:10

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Meditate, practice, pray

You must meditate and dwell upon what you read; otherwise your pains and mine will be lost. The more any man is in the contemplation of truth, the more deep and firm impression is made upon his heart by truth. Heavenly meditation brings out the sweetness that is in divine truths. Not those who get most—but those who keep most, are richest. So not those who hear most, or read most—but those who meditate most, are most edified and enriched.

You must also practice and live out what you read. To read much and practice nothing—is to hunt much and catch nothing. Ah! what cause have most to sigh, that they have heard so much, and read so much—and yet done so little!

You must also pray over what you read. Many read much, and pray little, and therefore get little by all they read. Galen writes of a fish called Uranoscopos, that has but one eye, which looks continually up to heaven. When a Christian has one eye upon his book—the other should be looking up to heaven for a blessing upon what he reads!

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Optimum maximum

Christians serve a wonderful Master. They serve Him who is . . .all ear to hear them, all hand to uphold them, all power to protect them, all wisdom to direct them, all goodness to relieve them, all mercy to pardon them.

They serve that God who is optimum maximum—the best and greatest. God has within Himself all the good of angels, men, and universal nature. God has . . .all dignity, all glory, all riches, all treasure, all pleasure, all delight, all joy, all beatitudes.

God is . . .goodness, beauty, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, and love itself!

God is one infinite perfection in Himself!

"He has all—who has the Haver of all." Augustine

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The Midas touch

Faith is the most useful grace. It is a Christian's right eye, without which he cannot see for Christ; it is his right hand, without which he cannot do for Christ; it is his tongue, without which he cannot speak for Christ; it is his very vital spirits, without which he cannot act for Christ.

It is fabled of King Midas, that whatever he touched would be turned into gold. I am sure that whatever faith touches, it turns into gold, that is, into our good. If our faith touches the promises, it turns them into our good; whatever faith lays its hand upon, it appropriates to itself, and turns it into the soul's good. If faith looks upon God, it says, "This God is my God forever and ever, and He shall be my guide unto death!" When it looks upon Christ, it says, "My Lord and my God!" When it looks upon the crown of righteousness, it says, "This crown is laid up for me!"

Faith is . . .bread to nourish us, wine to cheer us, a cordial to strengthen us, a sword to defend us, a guide to direct us, a staff to support us, a plaster to heal us, a friend to comfort us, and a golden key to open heaven unto us.

Faith, of all graces, is the most useful grace to the soul of man. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." All those services are lost, wherein faith has not a hand. You may write 'loss' . . .upon all the prayers you make, and upon all the sermons you hear, and upon all the tears you shed, and upon all the alms you give, if all are not managed by a hand of faith.

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We have actually outsinned thousands

Sit down and wonder at the matchless love of God.

Oh! what is in us—that should cause the Lord to give such gifts to us as He has given? We were all equal in sin and misery; nay, doubtless, we have actually outsinned thousands, to whom these precious gifts are denied. Let us therefore sit down and wonder at this condescending love of God. Oh! we were once poor wretches sitting upon the ash-heap, yes, wallowing in our blood—and yet behold! The King of kings, the Lord of lords, has so far condescended in His love, as to bestow Himself, His Spirit, His grace, and all the jewels of His royal crown upon us! Oh! what heart can conceive, what tongue can express, this matchless love!

"I will be yours forever," says Christ, "and My Spirit shall be yours forever, and My grace yours forever, and My glory yours forever, and My righteousness yours forever. All I am and all I have—shall be yours forever!" O what matchless love is this! Oh! what a Christ is this!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Do not judge a minister . . .

"Consider carefully what you hear." Mark 4:24

It is sad to see how many preachers in our days, make it their business to enrich men's heads with high, empty, airy notions; instead of enriching their souls with saving truths.

Fix yourself under that man's ministry, who makes it his business, his work to enrich the soul, to win the soul, and to build up the soul; not to tickle the ear, or please the fancy. This age is full of such light, delirious souls—who dislike everything—but what is empty and airy.

Do not judge a minister . . . by his voice, nor by the multitude who follow him, nor by his affected tone, nor by his rhetoric and flashes of wit; but by the holiness, heavenliness, and spiritualness of his teaching. Many ministers are like empty orators, who have a flood of words—but a drop of matter.

Some preachers affect rhetorical strains; they seek abstrusities, and love to hover and soar aloft in dark and cloudy expressions, and so shoot their arrows over their hearers' heads—instead of bettering their hearers' hearts. Mirthful things in a sermon are only for men to gaze upon and admire. He is the best

preacher, not who tickles the ear—but who breaks the heart.

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." 1Co 2:4-5

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How to conquer the world!

Perhaps the world—the smiling world or the frowning world, the tempting world or the persecuting world—lies as a heavy stone or burden upon your heart, as it does upon the hearts of thousands in these days; (witness their attempting anything to get the favors, honors and riches of this world! Ah! how many have turned their backs upon God, and Christ, and truth, etc., to gain the world!) How will you get this burden off? Only by exercise of faith.

Many men hear sermons much—and yet remain worldly. They may pray like angels—and yet live as if there were no heaven nor hell. They will talk much of heaven—and yet those who are spiritual and wise, smell their breath to stink strong of earth. All their endeavors can never cure them of this soul-killing

disease—until faith breaks forth in its glorious actings. A man may hear sermons and pray many years—and yet remain as carnal, base, and worldly as ever! There is no way under heaven to remove this burden—but the exercise of faith!

"For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." 1Jn 5:4-5

Faith presents the world to the soul under all those notions which the Scripture holds forth the world unto us by. The Scripture holds forth the world as an impotent thing, as a mixed thing, as a mutable thing, as a momentary thing.

Now faith comes and sets this home with power upon the soul—and this takes the soul off from the world.

Faith causes the soul to converse with those more glorious, soul-satisfying, soul-delighting, and soul-contenting objects. Now when faith is busied and exercised about soul-ennobling, soul-greatening, soul-raising, and soul-cheering objects—a Christian tramples the world under his feet! In Heb 11:1-40, it was the exercise of faith and hope upon noble and glorious objects—which carried them above the world—above the smiling world, and above the frowning world, above the tempting world, and above the persecuting world!

Faith conquers the world, by assuring the soul of enjoying of better things. Men may talk much of heaven, and of Christ, and religion, etc.; but give me a man who does really and clearly live under the power of divine faith—and I cannot see how such a one can be carried out in an inordinate love to these poor transitory things.

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Such a wretch you would have been!

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." Jer 31:3

There are but few upon whom God bestows His saving love.

Tell me, are not the gifts which Christ has given you—rare gifts? What would you have been—if Christ had not made a difference between you and others—by those glorious gifts which He has conferred upon you? You look upon some, and see they are very ignorant of spiritual truth. O! What would you have been—if God had not bestowed saving knowledge upon you? You look upon others who are unclean, profane, and filthy. Why! such a wretch you would have been—if the Lord had not made a difference between you and them, by bestowing Himself, His grace, and Spirit upon you.

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1Co 6:9-11

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Your spots and blots

"The Lord our righteousness." Jer 23:6

"They are without fault before the throne of God." Rev 14:5

Weak hearts are apt to sit down troubled and discouraged, when they look upon that body of sin which is in them, and those imperfections which attend their best services. They are ready to say, "We shall one day perish by the strength of our lusts, or by the defects of our services!" Oh but, to strengthen them against all discouragements, they should remember this—that they stand before God, clothed with the righteousness of their Savior. "They are without fault before the throne of God." Rev 14:5

So in Song of Solomon 4:7, "All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you." There is no flaw in God's account. God looks upon weak saints in the Son of His love—and sees them all lovely. Ah, poor souls! you are apt to look upon your spots and blots, and to cry out with the leper not only "Unclean! unclean!" but "Undone! undone!" Well, forever remember this—that you stand before God in the righteousness of Christ; upon which account you always appear before the throne of God without fault; where you are all lovely, and where there is no flaw in you.

"They are without fault before the throne of God." Rev 14:5

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Dolls and rattles

The thoughts and hearts of weak Christians are more taken up with the good things they have from Christ—than with Christ Himself. Oh, their graces, their comforts, their enlargements, their meltings, and their warmings, are the things which most absorb them. Their thoughts and hearts are so exercised about these things—that Christ Himself is much neglected by them.

The child is so absorbed with dolls and rattles, that the mother is not thought of. And such is the behavior of weak Christians towards Christ.

Those who are strong in grace are more taken up with Christ Himself, than they are with His love-tokens. They bless Christ indeed for every grain of grace—but Christ Himself is more to them than all these. Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

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Rattles and baubles

Weak Christians are usually much concerned and taken up with the poor base things of this world. They are much in carking and caring for them, and in pursuing and hunting greedily after them. All which does clearly evidence—that their graces are very weak, and their corruptions very strong.

Certainly there is but little of Christ and grace within, where the heart is so strongly concerned about earthly things. Where there is such strong love and workings of heart after these poor things—it shows the soul's enjoyment of God to be but poor and low. Those who are rich and strong in grace, look upon the world with a holy scorn and disdain.

The greatest bargain which a soul rich in grace will make with God for himself is this, "Give me but bread to eat and clothes to wear—and you shall be my God." So it was with that brave soul in Gen 28:21. Jacob desires but bread and clothing. Mark, he asks bread—not dainties; clothing—not ornaments.

Grown men prefer one piece of gold, above a thousand new pennies. A soul who is strong in grace, who is high in its spiritual enjoyments, prefers one good word from God, above all the dainties of this world. Souls who know by experience what the bosom of Christ is, what spiritual communion is, what the glory of heaven is—will not be put off with things which are mixed, mutable, and momentary. "Lord," he prays, "Warm my heart with the beams of Your love—and then a little of these things will suffice."

It is childish to be concerned more with the rattles and baubles of this world, than with heavenly riches.

A little of this world will satisfy one who is strong in grace, much will not satisfy one who is weak in grace, nothing will satisfy one who is void of grace.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ A faithful minister

"Let the elders who rule well be accounted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine." 1Ti 5:17

The which is here rendered labor, signifies not simply to labor—but to labor with much travail and toil, to labor even to exhaustion, as he does who chops wood, or who toils in harvest, or who goes to battle.

Oh what an honor is it to a faithful minister, when he . . . found the people dark and blind—but left them enlightened; found them dead—but left them alive; found them a proud people—but has left them humble; found the people profane—but has left them holy; found them a carnal people—but has left them spiritual; found them a worldly people—but has left them heavenly; found them a wavering people—but has left them settled and rooted.

Oh, it is an honor to faithful ministers, when their people are like them in . . .

knowledge, wisdom, love, humility, holiness!

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Unholy ministers

"Watch your life and doctrine closely." 1Ti 4:16

Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.

Ministers must preach Christ as well in their life—as in their doctrine. They must not be hot in the pulpit, and cold and careless in their lives. The lives of ministers oftentimes convince more strongly than their words; their tongues may persuade—but their lives command.

What is it, which renders the things of God so contemptuous and odious in the eyes of many people—but the ignorance, looseness, profaneness, and baseness of those who are the dispensers of them. Unholy ministers pull down instead

of building up. Oh the souls who their lives destroy! These, by their loose lives, lead their flocks to hell—where they themselves must lie lowermost!

Wicked ministers do more hurt by their lives—than they do good by their doctrine. Every minister's life should be a commentary upon Christ's life!

"Be an example to all believers in what you teach, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity." 1Ti 4:12

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ The sweet nature of grace

Dwell much upon the sweet nature of grace.

Grace begets the greatest joy and sweetness in the hearts of men, that possibly can be. Grace is a panoply against all troubles—and a paradise of all pleasures.

Grace is compared to the sweetest things; to sweet spices, to wine and milk. Grace is a sweet flower of paradise, a spark of glory, etc. Grace is nourished and maintained by that sweet word, which is sweeter than the honey or the

honey-comb, and by sweet union and communion with the Father and the Son.

Grace is exercised about the sweetest objects, namely—God, Christ, promises, and future glory.

Grace sweetens all your services and duties. Your best religious performances are but stinking sacrifices—if they are not attended with the exercise of grace. Grace is that heavenly salt which makes all our services savory and sweet in the nostrils of God.

Grace is of the greatest and sweetest use to the soul. It is an anchor at sea, and a shield at land. Grace is a staff to uphold the soul, and a sword to defend the soul. Grace is bread to strengthen the soul, and wine to cheer the soul. Grace is medicine to cure all diseases, and a plaster to heal all wounds, and a cordial to strengthen the soul under all faintings, etc. Grace is . . . your eye to see for Christ, your ear to hear for Christ, your head to design for Christ, your tongue to speak for Christ, your hand to do for Christ, and your feet to walk with Christ.

Grace makes men of the harshest, sourest, crabbedest natures—to be of a sweet, lovely, amiable, pleasing temper. Grace turns lions into lambs, wolves into sheep, monsters into men, and men into angels—as you may see in Manasseh, Paul, Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, and others.

Yet sometimes grace, in a rugged unhewn nature, is like . . . a gold ring on a leprous hand, or a diamond set in iron, or a jewel in a swine's snout, etc.

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They heard, and were never the better

"The word did not profit those who heard it, because it was not mixed with faith." Heb 4:2

He does not speak here of unbelievers—but of those who had faith in the soul—but not in the exercise; and therefore the word did not profit them. They heard, and were never the better. And what was the ground of it? Why, it was because they did not exercise faith upon the word. The words which fell from the preacher's lips into their ears, were a sweet potion—but they did not work effectually, because they lacked the ingredient of faith. Faith is one of those glorious ingredients, which makes every sermon, every truth, work for their souls' advantage. Nothing will

work for a believer's good, for his gain—if it is not mixed with faith. Nothing makes a man rich in spirituals, like the frequent and constant actings of faith.

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The right way of mortifying of sin

Those spots which a Christian finds in his own heart can only, by a hand of faith, be washed out in the blood of the Lamb.

Suppose that the power and prevalency of sin hinders the soul's sweet communion with God—so that the soul cannot sport itself, and joy and delight itself in God, as in the days of old; it cannot see God smiling, stroking, and speaking kindly, as in former days. Now, there is nothing in all the world which can ease the soul of this burden of sin, but the exercise of grace.

"Oh," says such a poor soul, "I pray—and yet I sin; I resolve against sin—and yet I sin; I combat against sin—and yet I am carried captive by sin; I have left

no outward means unattempted—and yet after all, my sins are too hard for me; after all my sweating, striving, and weeping—I am carried down the stream."

It is not our strong resolutions or purposes which will be able to overmaster these enemies.

There is nothing now but the actings of faith upon a crucified Christ, which will take off this burden from the soul of man. You must make use of your graces to draw virtue from Christ; now faith must touch the hem of Christ's garment—or you will never be healed.

It is sad to consider how few professors in these days have attained the right way of mortifying of sin. They usually go out against their sins in the strength of their own purposes, prayers, and resolutions, etc., and scarcely look so high as a crucified Christ; they mind not the exercise of their faith upon Christ; and

therefore it is a righteous thing with Christ that after all, that they should be carried captive by their sins.

Nothing eats out sin like the actings of grace; nothing weakens and wastes the strength of sin like the exercise of grace. Oh! did men believe more in Christ—sin would die more!

Then He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." Luk 8:48

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His hand is always in his purse

There is a difference between Christ's giving and the world's giving. The world gives—but they give more rarely. But Christ gives, and He gives frequently. He is every day, every hour, yes, every moment, a-giving of royal favors to His people. "Here is peace for you who are in trouble," says Christ; "and here is pardon for you who groan under guilt," says Christ; "and here is comfort for you who are mourners in Zion," says Christ, etc. His hand is always in his purse, He is still a-scattering pearls of glory, ay, the very jewels of His crown, among the beloved of His soul.

Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave gold to some—and trifles to others. The Lord gives the gold, the best things, to His own; but the trifles of this world to the men of the world.

The gifts which Christ gives are pure gifts. He gives . . . wine without water, light without darkness, gold without dross, and sweet without bitter. There is much dross and poison in the gifts which the world gives—but there is none in the gifts which Christ gives. The streams are as the fountain is; the fountain is pure, and so are the streams.

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We may puff and blow our hearts out

"I can do all things, through Christ who strengthens me." I can be high or low, poor or rich, honorable or base, something or nothing, etc., only through Christ who strengthens me.

Song of Solomon 4:16, "Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may send forth a fragrant smell." We may puff and blow our hearts out, and yet no fragrance will flow forth—if Christ does not blow. Our graces thrive and are upheld in life and power, in beauty and glory only by the internal operation of Christ in our souls.

Psa 138:3, "In the day when I cried, You answered me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul." Your graces, Christians, are heavenly plants of God's own planting and watering; and certainly the heavenly Farmer will never allow such plants of renown to wither, for lack of heavenly sap. He will strengthen, support, and nourish the work of His own hand. He will cause the desires of His people to bud, and their graces to blossom, and their souls to be like a watered garden—green and flourishing. God is eminently and fully engaged to carry on the work of grace in His children's souls.

Therefore do not sit down and say—My light is but dim, and my love but weak, and my joy but a spark which will quickly go out, etc. But always remember, that those weak measures of grace which you have, are a sure evidence of greater measures which God will confer upon you in His own time and in His own ways.

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The true convert

The true convert prizes Christ above all.

Ordinances are sweet—but Christ is more sweet. Saints are precious—but Christ is far more precious. Heaven is glorious—but Christ is infinitely more glorious.

The first thing that I would ask, if I might have it, says the believer—is Christ. And the next thing that I would ask, if I might have it—is more of Christ. And the last thing that I would ask, if I might have it—is that I might be satiated and filled with the fullness of Christ.

Let the ambitious man take the honors of the world—my desire is to have Christ. Let the voluptuous man swim in all the pleasures of the world—my desire is to have Christ. And let the covetous man tumble up and down in all the gold and silver of the world—my desire is to have Christ—and it shall be enough to my soul.

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A tumor and swelling in the mind

"The Lord Almighty has done it to destroy your pride and show his contempt for all human greatness." Isa 23:9

Pride is the original and root of most of those notorious vices that are to be found among men.

Of all sins, pride is most dangerous to the souls of men.

Pride is . . . a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague.

Pride is . . . the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy,
the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts, the turner of medicines into maladies.

Of all sins, spiritual pride is most dangerous, and must be most resisted. Spiritual pride is the lifting up of the mind against God; it is a tumor and swelling in the mind, and lies in despising and slighting of God—and in the lifting up of a man's self, by reason of birth, breeding, wealth, honor, place, relation, gifts or graces—and in despising of others.

Spiritual pride is a white devil, a gilded poison—by which God is robbed of His honor, a man's own soul of his comfort and peace.

Pride is a sure forerunner of a fall. "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty mind before a fall." Herod fell from a throne of gold—to a bed of dust. Nebuchadnezzar fell from a mighty king—to be a beast. Adam fell from innocence to mortality. The angels fell from heaven to hell—from felicity to misery.

"The day is coming when your pride will be brought low and the Lord alone will be exalted. In that day the Lord Almighty will punish the proud, bringing them down to the dust!" Isa 2:11-12

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished." Pro 16:5

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Humble souls

None on earth are so near to God, and so high in their communion with God—as humble souls. And as they have the clearest visions of God, so God gives them the fullest sight and knowledge of their own sinfulness and nothingness.

"I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear—but now my eye has seen you, I abhor myself in dust and ashes." says Job.

In a vision the Lord reveals His glory to the prophet Isaiah, "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Oh, the vision that I have had of the glory of God has given me such a clear and full sight of my own vileness and baseness, that I cannot but loathe and abhor myself.

When Abraham draws near to God, then he accounts himself but dust and ashes, Gen 18:26-27.

"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" That is a man, a sinner—a compound of dirt and sin! When Peter saw that glorious miracle wrought by the Lord Jesus, he cries out as one very sensible of his own weakness and

sinfulness. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Ah! I am not worthy to be near such majesty and glory—who am a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity!

The angels that are near God, that stand before Him, in humility they cover their faces with two wings, as with a double scarf, in Isa 6:2

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I am undone

Isaiah sees the glory of the Lord in a vision, and this makes him cry out, "Woe is me, for I am undone . . . for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!" Isa 6:5

"I am undone." The Hebrew is, "I am cut off," I am a forlorn man! Why? "For I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty!" The clearest sight and vision of God does always give a man the fullest sight of his own emptiness, sinfulness, and nothingness!

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Look to your walking

"The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Psa 84:11

If ever you would be spiritually rich, look to your walking. It is not the knowing soul, nor the talking soul—but the close-walking soul, the obediential soul—who is in spirituals the richest soul. Others may be rich in notions—but none so rich in spiritual experiences, and in all holy and heavenly grace—as close-walking Christians.

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A thread-bare soul

Take hold of all opportunities to enrich your souls with spiritual riches. Men will easily, readily, greedily, and unweariedly grasp all opportunities wherein they may get earthly riches; and why should not you be as diligent in taking hold of all opportunities to enrich your precious souls? Is not the soul worth more than raiment, more than friends, more than relations, more than life—yes, more than all? And why, then, do you not labor to enrich your souls?

It is better have a rich soul under a thread-bare coat; than a thread-bare soul under a silk or golden coat.

If he is a monster among men, who makes liberal provision for his dog—and starves his wife; what a monster is he who makes much provision for his baser part—but none for his noble part!

The neglect of golden, soul-enriching opportunities, has made many a man's life a hell.

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Vexing, defiling, dividing, ruining

"For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1Ti 6:10

Earthly riches have cast down many, they have slain many. If poverty has slain her thousands; riches has slain her ten thousands.

Earthly riches are called thorns, and well they may; for as thorns, they pierce both head and heart; the head with cares in getting them, and the heart with grief in parting with them.

Oh the souls that riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows!

Oh the minds that riches have blinded!

Oh the hearts that riches have hardened!

Oh the consciences that riches have benumbed!

Oh the wills that riches have perverted!

Oh the affections that riches have disordered and destroyed!

Earthly riches are very vexing, very defiling, very dividing—and to multitudes prove very ruining.

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Soul-satisfying

The riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches. Oh those riches of grace and goodness that are in Christ—how do they satisfy the souls of sinners!

A pardon does not more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread the hungry man,
nor drink the thirsty man, nor clothes the naked man, nor health the sick man,
than the riches of Christ do satisfy the gracious man.

In Ecc 5:10, "He who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance with increase. This is also vanity." If a man is hungry, silver cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot cure him—much less then is it able to satisfy him.

Oh! but the riches of Christ are soul-satisfying riches! A soul rich in spirituals, rich in eternal, says, I have enough, though I have not this and that temporal good.

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His purse is always full

The riches of Christ are inexhaustible. Christ can never be drawn dry. Earthly riches are true gardens of Adonis, where we can gather nothing but trivial flowers surrounded with many briars, etc. Men rake together worldly riches as

children do snow—which the next shower washes away, and leaves nothing in the place but dirt; and can dirt satisfy? Surely not! No more can worldly riches.

The Spanish ambassador coming to see the treasury of Venice, which is famous throughout the world, felt a-groping whether it had any bottom, and being asked why, answered, "In this my great master's treasure differs from yours, in that his has no bottom, as I find yours to have," alluding to the mines of Mexico and Potosi, etc.

Certainly Christ's treasures have no bottom—all His bags are bottomless! Scripture, history, and experience, do abundantly testify that men's bags, purses, coffers, and mines—may be exhausted or drawn dry—but Christ's can never. Millions of thousands live upon Christ, and He feels it not. His purse

is always full, though He is always giving.

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Far greater worth

One grain of grace is of far greater worth, than all the gold of Ophir and all the silver of the Indies—which are but the guts and garbage of the earth. The gleanings, the smallest gatherings of the riches of Christ, are far better, more excellent, more satisfying, more contenting, more ravishing—than all the riches of this world. Riches are called thick clay, Hab 2:6, which will sooner break the back, than lighten the heart. The wise merchant, Mat 13:44-45, parts with all to gain this Pearl of great price. The truth is, other riches are but a burden.

Gen 13:2, "Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." The Hebrew is, "He was very heavy in cattle, in silver, and in gold"—to signify, that riches are but heavy burdens.

Pheraulus, a poor man, on whom Cyrus bestowed so much, that he knew not what to do with his riches—being wearied out with care in keeping of them—he desired rather to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent. Therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might supply his necessities.

Let worldly professors think seriously of this story and blush.

A little will satisfy nature, less will satisfy grace, nothing will satisfy men's lusts.

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Will you not trust Him for a crumb?

Believers should trust and lean upon God for lesser gifts.

Has God given you a crown—and will you not trust Him for a crumb? Has He given you a house which has "foundations, whose builder and maker is God?" Has He given you "a kingdom which cannot be shaken?" And will you not trust Him for a cottage, for a little room in this world? Has He given you Himself, His Son, His Spirit, His grace—and will you not trust Him to give you bread, and friends, and clothes, and other necessary mercies which He knows you need? Has He given you the greater—and will deny you for the lesser? Surely not!

Will you trust that man for much—who has given you but a little? And will you not trust that God for a little—who has given you much? Will you not trust Him for pence—who has given you pounds? O sirs! has the Lord given you Himself, the best of favors—and will not you trust Him for the least favors?

Has He given you pearls—and will not you trust Him for pins?

Does not the apostle argue sweetly in Rom 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?" What! says the apostle, has God given us His Son, His only Son, His bosom Son, His beloved Son, the Son of His joy, the Son of His delights? Oh how can He then but cast in all other things into the bargain—such as wrapping paper and packing thread?

Oh! that Christians would learn to reason themselves out of their fears, and out of their distrusts—as the apostle does. Oh! that Christians would no longer rend and rack their precious souls with fears and cares, but rest satisfied in this—that He who has been so kind to them in spirituals, will not be lacking to them in temporals.

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I, even I

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isa 43:25

"I, even I," is a passionate and emphatic expression.

"I, even I," whom you have offended,

"I, even I," whom you have provoked,

"I, even I," whose glorious name you have profaned,

"I, even I," whose righteous law you have violated,

"I, even I," whose holy covenant you have transgressed,

"I, even I," whose mercies you have despised,

"I, even I," whose chastisements you have slighted,

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions, for My own sake, and remembers your sins no more." Isa 43:25

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Big-bellied mercies

"He has given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." 2Pe 1:4

The promises are a precious book; every leaf drops myrrh and mercy. The promises are golden vessels, which are laden with the choicest jewels which heaven can afford, or the soul can desire. All our spiritual, temporal, and

eternal good is to be found in the belly of the promises.

The promises are precious beds of spices; they are bottles filled with those heavenly dewes that will never fail—but will uphold and nourish the soul to life eternal.

Promises are big-bellied mercies. There is nothing you can truly call a mercy—but you will find it in the belly of a promise.

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Pardoning mercy

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him." Psa 32:1-2

A pardoned soul must be a very blessed soul.

Ah, souls! of all mercies, pardoning mercy is the most necessary mercy. I may go to heaven without honors, and without riches, and without the smiles of creatures; but I can never go to heaven without pardoning mercy. A man may be great and graceless, he may be rich and miserable, he may be honorable and damnable.

Pardon entitles souls to all blessedness, it puts the royal crown upon their heads. Of all mercies, pardoning mercy is the most sweetening mercy; it is a choice jewel, and swims to the soul in the blood of Jesus.

Pardon of sin is a voluminous mercy, a mercy which has many, many precious mercies in its womb! It ushers in troops of mercy. When you can number the sands of the sea, and count the stars of heaven, then, and not until then, shall you be able to recount the mercies which attend pardoning mercy.

He who has this mercy cannot be miserable—and he who lacks it cannot be happy! Get this and get all—miss this and miss all.

Pardoning mercy is a gift conferred only upon Christ's favorites: "Son, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you!" Mat 9:2.

No mercy will make a man everlastingly blissful—but pardoning mercy. He has no reason to be sad—who has his pardon in his bosom. Nor has he any reason to be glad—who is upon the last step of the ladder, ready to be turned off without his pardon.

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Heaven's key!

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect." 1Pe 1:18-19

It was His life-blood, His heart-blood which He gave. It was not the blood of His finger—but the blood of His heart; it was precious blood. All your precious mercies swim to you in this precious blood. Your pardon swims to you in blood; your peace swims to you in blood; your reconciliation is

made by blood; your acceptance is wrought by blood,

Christ's blood is heaven's key! Christ's blood is a preservative against the greatest evils.

It was an excellent saying of Luther, speaking of this blood of Christ, One little drop of this blood, is more worth than heaven and earth!

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Man is not born with heavenly light in his heart

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." 2Co 4:6

God gives spiritual light, which is a mercy of mercies. He gives that light whereby His people are enabled to see sin to be the greatest evil, and Himself to be the chief good. He gives that light . . . which melts the soul, which humbles the soul, which warms the soul, which quickens the soul, which quiets the soul, and which gladdens the soul.

Man is not born with heavenly light in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. Until Christ comes and sets up a light in the soul, the soul lives in darkness, and lies in darkness, yes, is darkness in the very abstract. "You were once darkness—but now you are light in the Lord." Eph 5:8

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Dress modestly

"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God." 1Ti 2:9-10

One says, "If women adorn themselves so as to provoke men to lust after them, though no ill follow upon it—yet those women shall suffer eternal damnation, because they offered poison to others, though none would drink of it."

Clothe yourselves with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, and with the purple of modesty—and God Himself will be a suitor to you. Let not the garments upon your backs, speak out the vanity of your hearts.

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Away with it!

A humble person overlooks his own righteousness, and lives upon the righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

The apostle Paul overlooks his own righteousness, and lives wholly upon the righteousness of Christ: "I desire to be found in him," says he, "not having a righteousness of my own."

Away with it! It is dross, it is dung, it is dog's meat! It is . . . a rotten righteousness, an imperfect righteousness, a weak righteousness, which is of the law.

But that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith—that is . . . a spotless righteousness, a pure righteousness, a complete righteousness, an incomparable righteousness!

And, therefore, a humble soul overlooks his own righteousness, and lives upon Christ's righteousness.

Remember this—all the sighing, mourning, sobbing, and complaining in the world, does not so undeniably evidence a man to be humble, as his overlooking his own righteousness, and living really and purely upon the righteousness of Christ.

Men may do much, hear much, pray much, fast much, and give much, etc., and yet be as proud as Lucifer—as you may see in the Scribes and Pharisees.

Oh! but for a man now to trample upon his own righteousness, and to live wholly upon the righteousness of Christ, this speaks out a man to be humble indeed. There is nothing that the heart of man stands more averse to than this—of discarding his own righteousness. Man is a creature apt to warm himself with the sparks of his own fire, though he does lie down for it in eternal sorrow! Man is naturally prone to go about to establish his own righteousness, and to make a savior of it.

But a humble soul disclaims his own righteousness: "All our righteousness is as filthy rags." In Rev 4:1-11, the twenty-four elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ. By their crowns you may understand their gifts, their excellencies, their righteousness; they throw down these before Christ's throne, to note to us, that they did not put confidence in them, and that Christ was the crown of crowns and the top of all their royalty and glory. A humble soul looks upon Christ's righteousness as his only crown.

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Dust and ashes

Gen 18:27, "And Abraham answered and said, Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes." Here you have the father of the faithful, the greatest believer in the world, accounting himself dust and ashes. Solemnly think that you are dust and ashes—and be proud if you can!

Dust notes the baseness of his original; and ashes notes his deserving to be burnt to ashes, if God should deal with him in justice rather than in mercy.

The nearer any soul draws to God, the more humble will that soul lie before God. None so near God as the angels, nor any so humble before God as the angels.

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Less than the least

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints." Eph 3:8

"Less than the least of all saints," is a double diminutive, and signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of

humility. Great Paul is least of saints, last of the apostles, and greatest of sinners.

He who is little in his own account is great in God's esteem. Humility is both the beautifier and preserver of all other graces. If ever there were an age since Christ was on earth, wherein it was needful to preach, press, and print this great doctrine of humility, of self-abasement, of soul-abasement—it is the age

wherein we live. Oh the pride, the loftiness of the professors of this age!

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The voice of mercy

God's mercies make a humble soul glad—but not proud. A humble soul is lowest when his mercies are highest; he is least when he is greatest; he is lowest when he is highest; he is most poor when he is most rich.

Nothing melts like mercy, nothing draws like mercy, nothing humbles like mercy.

The voice of mercy is, "Remember what you once were, and what now you are—and be humble."

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Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep?

"Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve. Eze 34:2-3

Christ wept for souls, and bled for souls, and prayed for souls; and shall not ministers sweat much for souls, and work much for the good of souls?

Idleness is hateful in any—but most abominable and intolerable in ministers.

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The cowardice of the minister

"Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God." Acts 20:26-27

The cowardice of the minister is cruelty; if he fears the faces of men, he is a murderer of the souls of men.

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Conformity to Christ in heart and life

A more full conformity to Christ in heart and life, will make your lives a very heaven. As all good orators endeavor to be like Demosthenes—so all good Christians should endeavor to be like Jesus Christ; for therein lies

their glory and perfection.

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I would trample upon my mother

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My

disciple." Luk 14:26

Surely they do not truly love Christ—who love anything more than Christ.

It was a notable saying of Jerome, "If my father should hang upon me, my brethren should press round about me, and my mother should stand before me—I would throw down my father, I would break through my brethren, and I would trample upon my mother—to come to Christ."

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He fills all, and yet remains full

"It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell." Col 1:19 The sun has not the less light for filling the world with light. A fountain has not the less for filling the lesser vessels.

There is in Christ the fullness of a fountain. The overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet remains full. Why, the Lord Jesus is such an overflowing fountain; He fills all, and yet remains full. Christ has the greatest worth and wealth in Him. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is concentrated in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies scattered abroad in the creature are united to Christ; yes, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomized in Him!

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A never-fading glory

"And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." 1Pe 5:4

The glory which Christ gives, is a never-fading glory.

When a man has been in heaven as many millions of years as there are stars in heaven—his glory shall be as fresh and as green as it was at his first entrance

into heaven! All worldly glory is like the flowers of the field; but the glory which Christ gives, is lasting and durable like Himself.

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Our safety and security

"Though he stumbles, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand." Psa 37:24

The Hebrew particle notes a continued act of God. God has still His everlasting arms under His people, so that they shall never totally nor finally fall. The word signifies to sustain or uphold—as the tender mother does the little babe. The safety and security of the child lies not so much in the child's hanging about the mother's neck—as in the mother's holding it fast in her arms. So our

safety and security lies not so much in our weak holding upon Christ—but in Christ's holding of us fast in His everlasting arms!

"I will never leave you nor forsake you." Heb 13:5

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand."
John 10:28

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Led by the Spirit

"Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." Rom 8:14

The Holy Spirit leads . . . from sin, from wrath, from the curse, to God, to Christ, to the promises, to glory!

02A.00.1. The Secret Key to Heaven

The Secret Key to Heaven by Thomas Brooks The text of this module was taken from a PDF created by Monergism ©For more free books like this, and other theological literature, please visit www.monergism.com

02A.00.2. EPISTLE DEDICATORY

EPISTLE DEDICATORY Beloved in Our Dear Lord Jesus, The Lord at several times, and in several ways, has exercised you all in the furnace of affliction. This book may reach you all, and speak to you all—when I can not, or when I may not, or which is more, when I am not.

Dear friends, many and great have been the breaches that the Lord has made upon your persons, upon your near and dear relations, and upon your sweetest comforts and contentments. There is not one of you but may truly say with Job, "He breaks me with breach upon breach," Job 16:14. God has chastised you all round with various rods; and oh that the Lord would help you all to "hear the rod, and him who has appointed it," Mic 6:9.

Now that you may give me leave a little to open and apply to your particulars, that "The Lord's voice cries unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear your name: hear the rod, and him who has appointed it." Mic 6:9 The matter that I shall offer to your consideration from this scripture, will be not only of special concernment to yourselves, but also of high concernment to all sorts and ranks of men and women, in this sad day, when the sword devours on the one hand, and the pestilence rages on the other hand.

"The Lord's voice cries unto the city." Tremellius turns it thus, "The voice of the Lord does preach unto this city, for what the matter is, you see: hear you the rod," etc. This city, namely, Jerusalem, and so consequently to all the Israelites; for in this city all offices and duties of godliness and humanity were more religiously performed, or to be performed, than in any other place, because of the presence and majesty of God that was among them. "But your Majesty sees what wickedness is practiced among them," as is evident in the verses following.

"Cries." The word is from kara, which signifies,

First, "To cry aloud," or "to make a noise," Isa 58:1; "cry aloud" there is kara. The word signifies, to cry so loud as that all may hear that have ears to hear.

Secondly, The word signifies, "openly to proclaim, preach, or publish a thing." Exo 33:19, "I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you." Here is the word kara.

Thirdly, The word signifies, "to cry out." Gen 39:15, "I lifted up my voice and cried." Here is kara.

"And the man of wisdom shall see your name." Vethushiia properly signifies essence; and, therefore, according to the Hebrew, the words should be read thus, "And the man of essence shall see your name," etc., that is, he who is a man indeed, he who is not a sot, a stock, a stone. Most men are men of folly, and so not worthy of the name of men; but as for such as are truly wise, they "shall see your name." There is a great measure of spiritual art, of holy and heavenly wisdom required, both to enable a man to hear the voice of the rod and to understand the language of the rod. This wisdom is too high for a fool, Pro 24:7.

"Shall see your name." Now the Hebrew word here used, signifies to fear; and so the words will run smoothly thus, "The man of wisdom, or of essence, shall fear your name," considering that, it is majesty itself that cries, and that he is immediately to deal with God himself, and not with a poor, weak, mortal worm.

"Hear the rod." The word hear signifies,

First, "To mark, observe, and attend to what is said." Gen 29:33, "The Lord has heard that I was hated;" that is, "he has marked it, he has observed it." So here, Oh mark the rod! Oh observe the rod! Oh attend to what is spoken by the rod!

Secondly, The word signifies, "to understand what is spoken;" so Gen 42:23, "They knew not that Joseph understood them." In the Hebrew it is, "that Joseph heard them." Now to hear the rod, is to understand what is spoken to us by the rod.

Thirdly, The word signifies, "to believe a thing reported to be true;" so Exo 6:9, "They hearkened not unto Moses," that is, "they did not believe the report that Moses made." "Hear the rod," that is, "believe the report the rod makes." The rod reports, that of all evils sin is the greatest evil; and that of all bitters, sin is the greatest bitter. Oh believe the report of the rod! The rod reports, that God is angry, that God is displeased. Oh believe its report! The rod reports the creatures to be mere vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh believe its report! The rod reports our nearest and dearest comforts, contentments, and enjoyments to be mixed, mutable, and momentary. Oh believe its report! The rod reports sin to be vile, and the world to be vain, and heaven to be glorious, and Christ to be most precious. Oh believe its report!

"The rod." The Hebrew word *matte*, that is here rendered rod, has three significations:

First, It denotes "power and strength:" Psa 2:9, "a rod of iron."

Secondly, It denotes "rigid and harsh government:" Isa 14:5, "The Lord has broken the staff," or rod, "of the wicked;" that is, "their rigorous and cruel government." Nebuchadnezzar had sorely afflicted the children of Judah; he was a rod, that broke them in pieces, and ruled over them with much rigor in Babylon.

Thirdly, It denotes "sore afflictions and heavy judgments:" Psa 89:32, "I will visit your transgressions with a rod." And thus you are to understand the word rod in the text.

"And him who has appointed it." It is God who appoints the rod, and ordains it for the revenge of the quarrel of his covenant. The Hebrew word signifies properly "to appoint" or "constitute." It is God who appoints the rod, and who constitutes it to do what service he pleases. It is God who has not only a permissive—but also an active, hand, in all the afflictions that come upon his people. And let thus much suffice for the opening of the words.

Now, though this choice garden affords many sweet flowers—yet I shall only present you with one, which is this, namely, That all the afflictions, troubles, and trials which God lays upon His people, are his rod. It is their highest and greatest concernment to hear the voice of the rod, and to learn those lessons that God would have them learn by the rod. For the opening and clearing up of this important point, I shall endeavor these two things:

First, To show you in what respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

Secondly, To show you what those special lessons are, that you are to learn by the rod.

Dear friends, The following discourse on closet prayer I heartily recommend to your serious perusal. I have many reasons to hope, that when you have once read it over, you will be more in love with closet prayer than ever, and that you will set a higher price upon closet prayer than ever, and that you will make a better and fuller improvement of closet prayer than ever yet you have done. Consider what I say in my epistle to the reader, and labor so to manage this little treatise, which now I put into your hands, that God may be glorified, your own souls edified, comforted, and encouraged in the ways of the Lord, and that you may be "my crown and joy, in the great day of our Lord Jesus," 1Th 2:19-20.

Christian Reader—The epistle dedicatory being so large, I shall do little more than give you the grounds and reasons of sending forth this little piece into the world, especially in such a day as this is. Now, my reasons are these:

First, Because God by his present dispensations calls more loudly for closet prayer now, than he has done in those last twenty years that are now passed over our heads. See more of this in the 16th argument for closet prayer.

Secondly, Because I have several reasons to fear that many Christians do not clearly nor fully understand the necessity, excellency, and usefulness of this subject, and that many, oh that I could not say any, live in too great a neglect of this indispensable duty; and that more than a few, for lack of light, err in the very practice of it.

Thirdly, For the refreshing, support, and encouragement of all those churches of Christ that walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Spirit, etc., especially that particular church to whom I stand related.

Fourthly, To preserve and keep up the power of religion and godliness both in men's houses, hearts, and lives. The power of religion and godliness lives, thrives, or dies, as closet prayer lives, thrives, or dies. Godliness never rises to a higher pitch than when men keep closest to their closets, etc.

Fifthly, Because closet prayer is a most sovereign remedy, a most precious antidote of God's own prescribing, against the plague that now rages in the midst of us, 1Ki 8:37-39, etc.

Sixthly, Because every man is that really which he is secretly. Never tell me, how handsomely, how neatly, how bravely, this or that man acts his part before others; but tell me, if you can, how he acts his part before God in his closet; for the man is that certainly, which he is secretly. There are many who sweat upon the stage that are cold in their closets.

Seventhly, Though many worthies have done worthily upon all other parts of prayer—yet there are none either of a former or later date, that have fallen under my eye, who have written any treatise on this subject. I have not a little wondered that so many eminent writers should pass over this great and princely duty of closet-prayer, either with a few brief touches, or else in a very great silence. If several Bodies of Divinity are consulted, you will find that all they say clearly and distinctly as to closet-prayer, may be brought into a very narrow compass, if not into a nutshell. I

have also inquired of several old disciples, whether among all the thousand sermons that they have heard in their days, that ever they have heard one sermon on closet-prayer? and they have answered, No. I have also inquired of them, whether ever they had read any treatise on that subject? and they have answered, No. And truly this has been no small encouragement to me, to make an offer of my mite; and if this small attempt of mine shall be so blessed, as to provoke others who have better heads, and hearts, and hands, than any I have, to do Christ and his people more service, in the handling of this choice point in a more copious way than what I have been able to reach unto, I shall therein rejoice.

Eighthly, and lastly, That favor, that good acceptance and fair quarter that my other poor labors have found, not only in this nation—but in other countries also, has put me upon putting pen to paper once more; and I hope that the good will of him who "dwelt in the bush," will rest upon this, as it has to the glory of free grace rested upon my former endeavors. I could add other reasons—but let these suffice.

Good reader, when you are in your closet, pray hard for a poor, weak, worthless worm, that I may be found faithful and fruitful to the death, that so at last I may receive a crown of life. So wishing you all happiness both in this lower and in that upper world, I rest, Yours in our dear Lord Jesus,

Thomas Brooks.

02A.01. In what respects are afflictions like a rod?

In what respects are afflictions like a rod?

"The Lord's voice cries unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear your name: hear the rod, and him who has appointed it." Mic 6:9 I answer, In these seven respects afflictions are like unto a rod.

(1.) First, The rod is never made use of—but when no other means will prevail with the child. It is so here; God never takes up the rod, he never afflicts his people, until he has tried all fair ways and means to humble them and reform them, 2Ch 36:15, seq., Mat 23:37-38. And when none of the offers of grace, the tenders of mercy, the wooings of Christ, the strivings of the Spirit, nor the smart debates of conscience, will awaken them, nor work upon them, then God takes up the rod, and sometimes whips them until the blood comes. But,

(2.) Secondly, Parents choose whatever rods they please, to correct their children with. The child shall not choose what rod he pleases to be corrected with. Oh, no! It is the prerogative of the father to choose the rod. The father may choose and use either a great rod or a little rod, a long rod or a short rod, a rod made of rosemary branches or a rod made up of a green birch. It is so here; God chooses what rod—whatever affliction he pleases, to exercise his people with, Lev 26:1-46; Deu 28:1-68; Lam 3:9-18. You read in the Scriptures of very many rods—but they are all of God's choosing: Amo 3:6, "Is there any evil in the city, and has not the Lord done it?" Though there be many rods to be found in the city—yet there is not one of them but is of God's choosing. Ruth 1:13, "It grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me." Ruth 1:21, "I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty; why then call you me Naomi, seeing the Lord has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?" Isa 45:7, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things." Mic 1:12, "For the inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good—but evil came down from the Lord unto the gates of Jerusalem." David was whipped with many rods—but they were all of God's own choosing, Psa 39:9; and Job was whipped with many rods—but they were all of God's own choosing, Job 1:1-22. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Parents take no pleasure, they take no delight, to use the rod. Every lash the father gives the child, fetches blood from his own heart. The father corrects the child, and sighs over the child; he whips the child, and at the same time weeps over the child. Nothing goes more against the parents' heart, than the bringing of their children under the rod of correction. It is so here, Lam 3:33, "For he does not afflict willingly," or, as the Hebrew runs, "he does not afflict from his heart, nor grieve the children of men." You often read that God delights in mercy, Mic 7:15; but where do you once read that God delights in severity, or in dealing roughly with his people? God very rarely takes up the rod but when our sins have put a force upon him, 2Ch 36:16; Jer 5:19. It is grievous to God to be a-grieving his people; it is a pain unto him to be a-punishing of them: Hos 11:8, "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused."

My justice, says God, calls upon me to rain hell out of heaven upon you, as once I did upon Sodom and Gomorrah; but then mercy interposes her four several hows: how? how? how? how? how shall I give you up? God puts these four piteous interrogations to himself, because none else in heaven or earth could answer them. The prophet brings in God speaking after the manner of men, who, being provoked a thousand thousand ways by the vanities and follies of their children, think to give them up to take their own courses, and to look no more after them; but then their affections begin to work, and their hearts begin to melt, and they begin to interrogate themselves thus: "How shall we give up these children? for though they be disobedient children—yet they are our children; how can we turn them out of doors? how can we disown them? how can we disinherit them? for though they are rebellious children—yet they are our children, etc.

Afflictions are called God's work, yes, his "strange work;" his act, yes, "his strange act;" as if God were out of his element when he is afflicting or chastising his people, Isa 28:21. But,

(4.) Fourthly, The rod is smarting, grievous, and troublesome; and so are afflictions to our natures. Heb 12:11, "Now, no chastening for the present seems to be joyous—but grievous." Flesh and blood startles and is troubled at the least trouble. Affliction is a sort of remedy which makes most sick. Some write that tigers will grow mad, and tear their own flesh, and rend themselves in pieces, if they do but hear drums sound about them. Were not Job and Jeremiah such tigers, who, in the day of their afflictions, did more than curse the day of their birth? Job 3:1-26; Jer 20:1-18. Oh what a bitter cup, what a heavy burden was affliction to them! Job 10:1, "My soul is weary of my life." Job 7:15, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than life." Psa 6:6, "I am weary with my groaning." Psa 69:1-3, "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God." Doubtless many good men have sat under Elijah his juniper, 1Ki 19:4, wishing themselves out of the world, if it might stand with divine pleasure, that they might rest from their sins and sorrows, and be rid of their many burdens and bondages, looking upon life as little better than a hell, were it not for the hopes of a heaven hereafter. But,

(5.) Fifthly, When parents take up the rod into their hands, they will not lay it down until they have subdued the spirits of their children, and brought them to submit and to kiss the rod, and to sit still and quiet before them. It is so here: when God takes up the rod, he will not lay it down until he has brought us to lie quietly at his feet: Lev 26:40-42, "But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers--their treachery against me and their hostility toward me, which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies--then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land." When God takes up the rod, his children must either bow or break; they must say, the Lord is righteous; they must kiss the rod of correction—or else destruction will come like a whirlwind upon them, Isa 5:3; Isa 5:6.

It is reported of the lion, that he spares those creatures that fall down before him, and submit unto him; but as for those that endeavor to run from him, or to contend with him, those he tears in pieces. It is just so with the Lion of the tribe of Judah, as you may see in Hos 5:14-15. "For I will be like a lion to Ephraim, like a great lion to Judah. I will tear them to pieces and go away; I will carry

them off, with no one to rescue them. Then I will go back to my place until they admit their guilt. And they will seek my face; in their misery they will earnestly seek me."

King Edward riding furiously after a servant of his that had highly displeased him, with a drawn sword in his hand as purposing to kill him, seeing him submit, and on bended knee pleading for his life, did not only put up his sword—but also spared him, and received him into his favor. The King of kings will never put up his sword when once he has drawn it—until his people fall on their knees, and submit unto him. God never left chastising of Ephraim until he had brought him to his bow, until he had made him submit, and kiss the rod, Jer 31:18-20. But,

(6.) Sixthly, Afflictions are called a rod, in respect to the hand which lays them on. Though affliction be a rod, it is a rod in a Father's hand. The sword is in the judge's hand, John 18:11, and the cudgel is in the master's hand; but the rod is in the father's hand, Heb 12:6-9. When Balaam's donkey offended him, he wished for a sword to slay him, Num 22:29; but so does not God. When we do most highly provoke him, he does not take up a sword to slay us—but only a rod to scourge us and chastise us, as kind fathers do their dearest children. But,

(7.) Seventhly and lastly, Afflictions are called a rod, in regard of the ends to which they serve. A rod is not to kill—but to cure; it is not for destruction—but for correction. When David gave a full commission to his soldiers against Absalom, it was not to slay him—but to restrain him; it was not to ruin him—but to reduce him to his former obedience. The application is easy. We can as well live without our daily bread—as without our daily rod.

02A.02. God's purpose and end of taking up the rod

God's purpose and end of taking up the rod

"The Lord's voice cries unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear your name: hear the rod, and him who has appointed it." Mic 6:9 Now, God's purpose and end of taking up the rod are these:

[1.] First and more generally, It is for the good of the child, and not for his hurt. It is so here. God takes up the rod—but it is for the good of his people: Gen 50:20, "But as for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive." Divine goodness did so overmaster the plotted malignity of Joseph's brethren as that it made a blessed medicine of a most deadly poison. Jer 24:5, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." When Israel was dismissed out of Egypt, Exo 40:1-38, it was with gold and earrings; and when Judah was dismissed out of Babylon, it was with great gifts, jewels, and all necessary utensils, Ezr 1:1-11. So Rom 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose." This text, like Moses's tree cast into the bitter waters of affliction, may make them sweet and wholesome to drink of. But,

[2.] Secondly, and more particularly, The rod is to make the child sensible of his folly and vanity. Pro 10:13, "In the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found; but the rod is for the back of him who is void of understanding." So it is here: God takes up the rod—but it is to make his people sensible of their folly and vanity; it is to make them look up to him, and to look into conscience, and to look out to their lives. God's house of correction is his school of instruction. His lashes are our lessons, his scourges are our schoolmasters, and his chastisements are our corrections. Hence both the Hebrews and Greeks express chastening and teaching by one and the same word, because teaching is the true end of chastening, according to that in the proverb, "Pain makes wit, and vexation gives understanding." [Isa 26:9; Psa 94:12; Pro 3:12-13; Job 36:8-10]

Afflictions are a Christian's looking-glass, by which he may see how to dress his own soul, and to mend whatever is amiss. They are pills made up by a heavenly hand on purpose to clear our eyesight; 1Ki 17:18, "And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with you, O you man of God? Have you come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" If God had not taken away her son, her sin had not been brought to remembrance. It was the speech of a holy man in his sickness: "In this disease," said he, "I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is. I never knew to purpose what God was before, nor what sin was before." The cross of affliction opens men's eyes, as the tasting of honey did Jonathan's. "Here," as that martyr phrased it, "we are still a-learning our A, B, Cs, and our lesson is never past Christ's cross, and our walking is still home by weeping-cross." But,

[3.] Thirdly, The rod is used to prevent further folly, mischief, and misery. Pro 23:13-14, "Withhold not correction from the child, for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell." It is said of the ape, that she hugs her young ones to death; so many fond parents, by not correcting their children, they come to slay their children. The best way to prevent their being scourged with scorpions in hell, is to chastise them with the rod here. So God takes up the rod; he afflicts and chastises his dearest children—but it is to prevent soul-mischief and misery; it is to prevent pride, self-love, worldliness, etc.

Paul was one of the holiest men who ever lived on earth; he was called by some an earthly angel, and yet he needed the rod, he needed a thorn in the flesh, to prevent pride; witness the doubling of those words in one verse, "lest I should be exalted above measure, lest I should be exalted above measure," 2Co 12:7-9. If Paul had not been buffeted, who knows how highly he might have been exalted in his own pride? Prudent physicians often give their patients medicines to prevent diseases; and so does the physician of souls to his dearest servants, Job 40:4-5; Hos 2:6-7; Job 33:17; Job 33:19; "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man."

Afflictions are the Lord's drawing-plasters, by which he draws out the core of pride, earthliness, self-love, covetousness, etc. Pride was one of man's first sins, and is still the root and source of all other sins. Now, to prevent it, God many times chastens man with pain, yes, with strong pain, upon his bed: Job 34:31-32, "I have endured my punishment; I will no longer act wickedly. Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I won't do it again." The burnt child dreads the fire. Sin is but a bitter sweet; it is an evil worse than hell itself. Look, as salt brine preserves things from putrefying, and as salt marshes keep the sheep from rotting, so sanctified rods, sanctified afflictions, preserves and keeps the people of God from sinning. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The rod is to purge out that vanity and folly that is bound up in the heart of the child. Pro 22:15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child—but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." The rod is an ordinance, as well as the word; and such parents that use it as an ordinance, praying and weeping over it, shall find it effectual for the chasing away of evil out of their children's heart. Eli and David were two very choice men, and yet, by their fondness on one hand, and neglect of this ordinance on the other hand, they ruined their sons; and whether they did not undo their souls, I shall not at this time stand to inquire. When Moses cast away his rod, it became a serpent, Exo 4:3; and so, when parents cast away the rod of correction, it is ten to one but that their children become the brood of the serpent: Pro 13:24, "He who spares his rod hates his son; but he who loves him chastens him betimes." Not only the care—but also the cure of the child, so far as the rod will reach, lies upon the hands of the parent.

Now afflictions are like a rod in this respect also, for, as they are sanctified, they cleanse and purge away the dross, the filth, and the scum of the Christian: Isa 1:25, "And I will turn my hand upon you, and purely purge away your dross, and take away all your tin;" Isa 27:9, "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin;" Dan 11:35, "And some of them of understanding shall fall" (that is, "into great afflictions"), "to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end." All the harm the fire did to the three children, or rather the three champions, was to burn off their cords, Dan 3:23-24. Our lusts are cords of vanity—but the fire of affliction shall burn them up: Zec 13:9, "And I will bring the

third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." Sharp afflictions are a fire—to purge out our dross, and to make our graces shine; they are a potion—to carry away ill humours; they are cold frosts—to destroy the vermin; they are a tempestuous sea—to purge the wine from its dregs; they are like the north wind—which dries up the vapors, that purges the blood, and quickens the spirits; they are a sharp corrosive—to eat out the dead flesh. Afflictions are compared to washing—which takes away the filth of the soul, as water does the filth of the body, Mat 10:38-39. God would not rub so hard, were it not to fetch out the dirt and spots that are in his people's hearts.

[5.] Fifthly, The rod serves to improve that good that is in the child: Pro 29:15, "The rod and reproof gives wisdom—but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame." So afflictions serve to improve our graces: Heb 12:10, "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure—but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness;" that is, that we might more and more be partakers of his holiness. Heb 12:11, "Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous—but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby." Hence it is that the saints glory in tribulation: Rom 5:3-4, "And not only so—but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Grace always thrives most when saints are under the rod. When Christians are under the rod, then their graces do not only bud—but blossom and bring forth fruit, as Aaron's rod did, Num 17:8. The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. God beats and bruises his children, to make them burn the brighter; he bruises his spices, to make them send forth the greater aromatic fragrance.

Bernard compares afflictions to the tease, which, though it be sharp and scratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. The Jews were always best when they were in an afflicted condition. Well-waters arising from deep springs are hotter in the winter than they are in the summer. Stars shine brightest in the darkest nights. Vines grow the better for bleeding, and gold shines the better for scouring. Juniper smells sweetest when in the fire; camomile, the more you tread it, the more you spread it. O sirs! this is a real and a rare truth—but seldom thought on, namely, that God will sometimes more carry on the growth and improvement of grace by a cross, by an affliction, than by an ordinance, Jas 1:3-4; Jas 4:8-9. Afflictions ripen the saint's graces, 2Co 1:5. Sooner or later, God will make every rod, yes, every twig in every rod, to be an ordinance to every afflicted saint. By afflictions, God many times revives, quickens, and recovers the decayed graces of his people. By afflictions, God many times inflames that love which is cold, and he strengthens that faith which is failing, and he puts life into those hopes which are languishing, and new spirits into those joys and comforts which are withering and dying. Musk, say some, when it has lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink among filth, it recovers its sweetness again. So does sharp afflictions recover and revive our decayed graces.

I have read a story of a sexton, who went into the church at night to rob a woman who had been buried the day before with a gold ring upon her finger. Now, when he had opened the grave and coffin, and loosed the sheet, he fell a-rubbing and chafing her finger to get off the gold ring; and with rubbing and chafing of it, her spirits returned, she having been but in a swoon before, and she revived, and lived many years after. Sharp afflictions are but the rubbing and chafing of our graces. The smarting rod abases the loveliness of the world, which entices us; it abates the

lustiness of the flesh within, which incites us to vanity and folly; all which tend much to the recovering and reviving of decayed graces. But,

[6.] The sixth end to which the rod serves, and that is, To try the child, to make a discovery of the spirit of the child. Some parents never see so much of the badness of the hearts of their children, as they do when they bring them under the rod; and other parents never see so much of the goodness of the hearts of their children as they do when they chastise them with the rod. It is so here. When God afflicts some, oh the pride! the stoutness! the crossness! the hardness! the peevishness and stubbornness of spirit, that they discover! Isa 1:5; Jer 5:3; Exo 5:2; Jer 44:15-19. When he afflicts others, oh the murmuring! the roaring! the complaining! the howling! the fretting! the vexing! and the quarreling spirit that they discover! Amo 4:6-13; Num 14:27; Num 14:29; Num 14:36; Deu 1:27; Isa 58:3-4; Isa 59:11; Hos 7:14-15; Jon 4:1-5; Jon 4:8-9.

Sometimes when God afflicts his dearest people, oh what a spirit of faith! what a spirit of prayer! what a spirit of love! what a spirit of patience! what a spirit of meekness! what a spirit of humbleness! what a spirit of submissiveness do they discover! Job 13:15; 2Ch 16:12; Isa 26:16-17; Hos 5:14-15; Job 1:20-22; Lev 10:1-3; 1Sa 3:18; 2Ki 20:16-19. And at other times, when God afflicts his poor people, oh what a spirit of unbelief! what a spirit of slavish fear! what a spirit of impatience! what a spirit of displeasedness, etc., do they discover! Gen 15:2-3; Gen 12:13; Gen 12:19; Gen 20:2; Gen 20:5; Gen 26:7-11; Psa 31:22; Psa 116:11; 1Sa 21:10-15; Job 3:3-13; Jer 20:14-18. By sharp afflictions, God tries the graces of his people, and discovers what is in the hearts of his people, Deu 8:2; Psa 66:10-11; Rev 3:18; 1Pe 1:6-7. The fire tries the gold as well as the touchstone. Diseases try the skill of the physician, and tempests try the skill of the pilot. Every smarting rod is a touchstone, both to try our graces and to discover our spirits. Prudent fathers will sometimes cross their children, to try to discover the dispositions of their children, Heb 12:5-21. And so does the Father of spirits deal sometimes with his children. The manner of the Psylli, which are a kind of people of that temper and constitution that no venom will hurt them, is this—if they suspect any child to be none of their own, they set an adder upon it to sting it; and if the child cries, and the flesh swells, they cast it away as a spurious child; but if it does not nor cry, nor is never the worse for it, then they account it for their own, and make very much of it. The application is easy. But,

[7.] The seventh and last end of the rod, is to prepare and fit the chastised for greater services, favors, and mercies. Many a child and many a servant had never been so fit for eminent services as they are, had they not been under a smarting rod. It is very usual with God to cast them into very great afflictions, and to lay them under grievous smarting rods, that so he may prepare and fit them for some high and eminent services in this world. Joseph would never have been so fit to be governor of Egypt, and to preserve the visible church of God alive in the world—if he had not been sold into Egypt, Gen 41:40-44; if his feet had not been hurt in the stocks, and if the irons had not entered into his soul, Gen 45:7-8. Moses would never have been so fit to be a leader and a deliverer of Israel as he was—if he had not been banished forty years in the wilderness before, Exo 2:15. Nor would David's crown have fit so well, nor so close, nor so long on his head as it did—had he not for some years before been hunted as a partridge in the wilderness, 1Sa 26:20. Nor would the three children, or rather the three champions, have been fit for so high a rule—had they not been first cast into the fiery furnace, Dan 3:29-30. Nor would Daniel have been so fit for that exceeding high honor, and glory, and greatness to which he was exalted—had he not been

first cast among the lions, Dan 6:25, et seq. And so if Esther had never been a poor captive maid, she would never have been a queen, and so would never have been instrumental in the preservation of the church of God in her day. Heman was one of the best and wisest men in the world in his day, 1Ki 4:31; and this God brought him to by training of him up in the school of affliction, as you may evidently see in Psalms 88. That verse of the apostle in 2Co 1:4, deserves to be written in letters of gold, "Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted of God." Mark that word able. Oh, it is one of the hardest and noblest works in all Christianity to be able divinely to comfort others that are in troubles; and yet by sufferings God fits and prepares his people for this noble and difficult service.

Luther was of opinion that to comfort a distressed conscience was a greater work than to raise the dead to life. And yet by inward and outward sufferings, God fits his people for this great work. And thus you see in what respects afflictions are compared to a rod.

02A.03. Twenty special lessons which you are to learn by the rod

Twenty special lessons which you are to learn by the rod

"The Lord's voice cries unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall hear your name: hear the rod, and him who has appointed it." Mic 6:9 The second thing I am to do, is to show you those special lessons that you are to learn by the rod, or if you please, by the raging pestilence which is now in England. Now they are these,

(1.) The first lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is, to know what the particular message or errand is, which the rod has to deliver to you in the day of your distress and trouble. Your first work is to do as David did, in 2Sa 21:1. He humbly inquires of the Lord to know the particular reason why he sent a famine among them. You must do as Job does: Job 10:2, "Show me, O Lord, why you contend with me." Job would sincerely know the reason of the controversy between God and him. One well observes on the text, "that Job was very desirous to know whether God afflicted him for sin or for trial—not to satisfy his curiosity—but his conscience." Elihu's counsel to Job must here take place: Job 34:31-32, "Surely it is fit to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." Job it seems was yet in the dark as to the particular cause or reason why the Lord had so grievously afflicted him; and therefore he is very importunate with God that he would graciously point out the sin for which he had so sorely smitten him. Your proceedings, says Job, to my understanding seem to be very strange and severe. I am more afflicted than others, and yet I do not know wherein I have sinned more than others; why I should be so condemned; why you are so hot against me, and why you have multiplied so many unheard of miseries against me; and why you have so greatly subjected me to the saddest and sourest censures of others—as if I were the worst of sinners and the basest of hypocrites. I know not; and therefore, O Lord! I humbly desire that you would not deal with me according to your absolute power—but let me know the true grounds and causes of all my heavy sorrows and miseries. And so he is at it again, in that Job 13:23, "How many are my iniquities and sins! make me to know my transgression and my sin." My plagues, O Lord! are unparalleled; if my sins are such, let me know it, says Job. My calamities transcend the calamities of all others; if my sins do so, let them not be hidden from my eyes, O Lord! My load, O Lord! is heavier than others; and therefore if my sins are greater than others, let me see them, let me understand them. Infirmities and weaknesses, I confess, do hang upon me; they are inherent in me, and they do too often issue and flow from me. But as for enormities or wickednesses, neither my censorious friends, nor yet my worst enemies, no, nor yet my own conscience, will ever be able to make any just or clear proof against me. O Lord! I have many spots upon me—but if there are any upon me which are not the spots of your people, let me see them, let me know them, that I may abhor myself, and justify you, and that I may say my friends are righteous in their censures, and I have done wickedly before the Lord.

Sometimes afflictions are sent only for trial and instruction, and not at all for sin. This is evident in the case of Job, and in the case of the blind man, whose afflictions, though they were very great

and grievous—yet were they not for sin but for trial, John 9:1, et seq.

Now, though this is true—yet it must be granted that commonly sin is the meritorious cause, the procuring cause, of all afflictions, Mic 1:5-10, Amo 2:4-6. Sin ordinarily is the original foundation of all our troubles and chastisements: "If his sons forsake my law and do not follow my statutes, if they violate my decrees and fail to keep my commands, I will punish their sin with the rod, their iniquity with flogging; but I will not take my love from him, nor will I ever betray my faithfulness." Psa 89:30-33. "Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the Lord your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty." Jer 2:19. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Amo 3:2

Question. But what course must we take? what means must we use, to find out that particular sin, for which God corrects us, or which has brought the rod upon us?

Answer 1. Observe what that sin is—which your conscience does most upbraid you with, and check you for. Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom, Gen 42:21; Gen 50:15-17. Now, observe what that particular sin is, which conscience does most sharply and roundly correct and chastise you for; for it is ten to one—but that is the sin which has brought the rod upon you. The voice of conscience, and the voice of the rod, do usually echo one to another. It is very rare to find a difference between the language of conscience and the language of the rod. Conscience is God's deputy, God's spy, God's secretary, God's viceroy; and therefore do not despise the voice of conscience, do not turn off conscience, as Felix turned off Paul, Acts 24:25. If the secret cry of conscience is, "Oh, this is for your pride, or this is for your lust, or this is for your self-love, or this is for your earthliness, or this is for your carnalness, or this is for your hypocrisy, or this is for your formality, etc.," it will be your wisdom to apply to the secret cry of conscience. But,

Answer 2. Secondly, Seriously observe what that sin is—which your soul would have spared above all, which your soul is most unwilling to leave, and bid an everlasting farewell to. Observe what your right hand sin, your bosom sin, your constitutional sin, your complexion sin, is; for it is a hundred to one but that God has sent the rod for the subduing of that very sin, Mic 6:6-7; Est 5:13. Commonly by the rod God points at the mortifying of that particular sin to which the heart stands most strongly inclined. But,

Answer 3. Thirdly, Observe what that sin is, which does most maim and mar your confidence and boldness in all your addresses and approaches to God. 1Jn 3:20-21; for doubtless that is the sin which God would subdue and bring under by the rod. But,

Answer 4. Fourthly, Observe what the affliction, what the pain, what the disease, what the punishment is—which you are under; for sometimes a person may run and read his sin in his very punishment. Jdg 1:7, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them." Now shall Adonibezek, a heathen prince, run and read his sin in his punishment; and shall not a Christian much more? Shall not grace do as much as blind human nature? Look, as a man may sometimes guess at the disease of the patient, by the prudent observing of the physician's bill; so may he sometimes guess at the particular sin that God would have destroyed, by the punishment which is inflicted. God usually, sooner or later, meets with men, and pays them home in their own coin. Is the

judgment shame? Then the sin was pride, Hos 2:8-9. Is the judgment poverty, famine? Then the sin was abuse of abundance. Is the judgment oppression? Then the sin was unmercifulness. Is the judgment loss of children? Then the sin was inordinate love to them. Eli and David were too indulgent to their children; and therefore they were punished in them and by them. Is the judgment sickness or lack of health? Then the sin was either the abuse of health, or the non-improvement of health. Is the judgment a famine of the word? Then the sin was slighting and loathing of the word. Is the judgment war? Then the sin was abuse of peace. Is the judgment a blind, carnal, profane, formal, selfish, superstitious clergy? Then the sin has been slighting, neglecting, undervaluing, and despising an able, knowing, zealous, spiritual, and powerful ministry. Is the judgment a worshiping of God in a lazy, dry, dull, dead, formal, customary way, according to the inventions and traditions of men? Then the sin has been men's not worshiping of God in spirit and in truth, and with that zeal, spirit, life, warmth, and fervency as he requires, John 4:23-24; Rom 12:11. Is the judgment the breaking of the communion of God's people, and scattering of them into holes and corners, as it was in Ahab's, and Jezebel's, and Gideon's days? Jdg 6:1-5. Then doubtless the sin has been a slighting, undervaluing, neglecting, or forsaking of Christian communion, or else a non-improvement of Christian communion. But,

Answer 5. Fifthly, Observe whether you have not been very faulty towards others, in the very things which you now suffer yourselves. Do others wrong you in your names, estates, relations, callings, dealings, etc.? Lay your hands upon your hearts, and ask them whether you have never wronged others, as others now wrong you, Isa 33:1; Rev 13:10; Jas 2:10; Gen 50:15-17. Do others rashly judge you, and bitterly censure you, and falsely accuse you, and unjustly condemn you? If they do, reflect upon your former behavior towards others. And if you must plead guilty, throw the first stone at yourselves, and say with Adonibezek, "As I have done, so God has requited me." Let every lash of God upon you, put you in mind of your deportment towards others, when God has given them gall and wormwood to drink, Mat 7:1-2. But, Answer 6.

Sixthly, Observe what that sin is—which you cannot endure should be touched, or reproofed, or spoken against. Pro 1:25; Pro 1:30; Pro 12:1; Pro 17:10; Pro 9:8; Pro 15:12. Ah! how proud, how impatient, how passionate, how mad are many—when you come to touch their right-eye sin. When you come to touch them in the tender part, oh! then they fume, and swell, and rage, and carry on like men and women out of their wits; as you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who were so angry and mad with Christ that they sought his death; and all because he was still a-pointing at the toads in their bosoms; namely, pride, vainglory, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness. Oh! they could not endure that the sharp razor of reproof should come near their sorest part.

Certainly that Christian must be under a very high distemper, who cannot but smite a righteous man with reproach for smiting him with a reproof. Though gracious reproofs are choice remedy—yet few stomachs can bear them. Most Christians are for lenitives, few are for corrosives. David was glad of a healing reproof—but there are but few Davids alive, Psa 141:5. Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter medicine? And yet, ah! how angry are many Christians when they come to fall under holy reproofs, especially if there is any of that sharpness and cuttingness in them, which the apostle exhorts to in that Tit 1:13. Now, doubtless, the voice of the rod is this, 'Soul! take heed of that sin which you cannot endure should be touched. Labor mightily with God to get that particular sin mortified, which you cannot endure should be reproofed.' But,

Answer 7. Seventhly, Observe what sin that is—which most hinders you from living upon precious promises, and from improving of precious promises, and from treasuring up of precious promises, and from appropriating of precious promises to your own soul, Psa 50:16-17. And it is very probable that, for the subduing of that particular sin, the Lord has visited you with his fatherly rod. But,

Answer 8. Eighthly, Observe what sin that is—which did most sting and terrify you in an evil day, as when you past been under some loathsome disease or tormenting pain, Gen 42:21; be it stone, gout, or burning fever, or when you have been in some imminent danger, or when you have had a sentence of death upon you, and there has been but a short step between you and eternity. Doubtless that sin, which has lain as a heavy load upon your conscience in the days of your former distress—that is the sin which God would have conquered and brought under by his present rod. But,

Answer 9. Ninthly, Observe what particular sin is—which does most hinder you in holy duties and services, and which does most interrupt you in your communion with God. Inquire what particular sin that is, which your heart is most apt to run after, when you are on the mount of holy duties, Eze 33:31. While the disciples were healing diseases and casting out demons, the proud white devil was a-stirring in their own souls, as is evident by that gentle rebuke which our Savior gives them in Luk 10:20, "Don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you." There is no pious duty which a Christian performs—but one white devil or another—one lust or another—will be still dogging and following of him to that duty. There is no public duty, there is no family duty, there is no private duty which a Christian performs—but either that white devil pride, or that white devil hypocrisy, or that white devil vainglory, or else some one or another white devil will follow the soul, near at heel to it. Now, mark what that particular sin is that most haunts your soul when you are in pious duties and services; and it perhaps that is the very sin which God would have subdued by the rod. But,

Answer 10. Tenthly, Observe what sin that is—which the rest of your corruptions are most serviceable to, and which they most attend upon. Mark what sin that is, which all other sins do most bow the knee to. Mark that sin which has a commanding power over all other sins; which says to one 'Go' and he goes, and to another 'Come' and he comes. Mark what sin that is, which is still uppermost, and which all other sins do most serve. You know when a man has a great wound in his body, all the ill humours will run there. Observe what sin that is, which all the ill humours of the soul do most run after; for it is very likely that that is the very sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Answer 11. Eleventhly, Observe what that sin is—which your hearts are most apt to hide and cloak, and cover over with the most specious and fair pretenses. Saul had a covetous desire, and he covers it over with the fair pretenses that the people would have it so; and that what was spared, was for sacrifice to God, 1Sa 15:20-21. Caesar's favor was the great darling in Pilate's eyes—but he covers all over with washing his hands, Mat 27:24. The scribes and pharisees were exceeding covetous—but their long prayers, as a cloak, must cover all, Mat 23:1-39. Judas also was a man of the same mind and mettle with them: "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and kept the money bag, and stole what was put therein. Mat 26:8-9; John 12:5-6. Judas, as Tertullian thinks, was pretty honest until he carried

the bag; but no sooner was he in office—but he puts conscience out of office—but all must be covered over with a cloak of charity. Observe what sin that is, which you are most apt to cast the silk or the satin mantle over; and it is ten to one but that is the sin that God would have brought under by the rod. But,

Answer 12. Twelfthly and lastly, Observe what that sin is—which you are most easily overcome by. Samson was easily overcome by Delilah; when all the world besides could make no conquest upon him. The apostle bids us "lay aside the sin that does so easily besets us," Heb 12:1. There are some sins that find more easy approaches to us, and more easy acceptance with us, and accordingly they do more easily captivate us. Observe what that sin is, which you do most readily and easily open the door to; and doubtless that is the sin that God would have mortified and subdued by the rod.

(2.) The second lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—deeply to judge yourselves and greatly to humble your souls, for those particular sins which have brought the rod upon you. Thus David did in that 2Sa 24:10; 2Sa 24:17. When you have found out the Achan which has brought the rod upon you, stone him to death! and lie humble and low under the rod, and then the Almighty will be graciously pacified and sweetly reconciled unto you.

(3.) The third lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to view the rod on every side. If there are briars on one side of the rod, there is rosemary on the other side of the rod; if there be wormwood and gall at one end of the rod, there is sweet honey at the other end of the rod—as there was at the top of Jonathan's rod, 1Sa 14:43.

If we should come into a painter's shop, and see a picture half drawn, it might trouble us and startle us, if it did not fright us and amaze us; but yet, when the picture is perfected, completed, and finished—it may prove a very beautiful, lovely, breath-taking piece. The application is easy. Look! as every judgment, every affliction, every rod, has its black, dark side; so every judgment, every affliction, has its bright side too. Now, it is the wisdom of a Christian to look on the bright side of the rod, as well as it is his work to look on the dark side of the rod. When a Christian looks upon the dark side of the cloud, he should be humbled and abased; but when he looks upon the bright side of the cloud, he should be comforted and cheered, Jas 5:11. He who is still a-looking on the briary side of the rod, will be very apt to fret and faint under the rod; but he who looks on the rosemary side of the rod, as well as the briary side of the rod—he will bear up patiently, gallantly, and cheerfully under the rod. The voice of the rod is, "Look on both sides, look on both sides!" But,

(4.) The fourth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to look on the rod in conjunction with the HAND which holds it. Thus Hezekiah did, 2Ki 20:16-19; thus Aaron did, Lev 10:1-3; thus Eli did, 1Sa 3:11-19; thus David did, Psa 39:9; thus Job did, Job 1:20-22; yes, and thus Jesus did, John 18:11, "Shall I not drink the cup that my Father has given me to drink?" Though the cup was a bitter cup, a bloody cup—yet seeing it was put into his hand by his Father, he drinks it off, with a "Father, I thank you." The rod in itself brings nothing but pain to the child; but the rod in the hand of a Father brings nothing but love, kindness, and sweetness. Rev 3:19, "Whom he loves, he chastens." You should never look upon the rod of affliction, but as it is in the hand of your heavenly Father, and then you will kiss it, rather than murmur under it! But,

(5.) The fifth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is to cleave and cling close to God under the rod. Oh how does the child cling and hang upon his father when he takes up the rod. Let such a child-like spirit be found in you, when the Father of spirits takes up the rod. When the rod was upon David's back, oh how does he cleave to God, even as the wife cleaves to her husband; "My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." Psa 63:8. So when Job was under the rod, oh how does he cling about God! Job 13:15, "Though he slays me—yet will I trust in him." Job will hang upon a killing God; so the church in that Psa 80:15-18, etc.; so those hundred forty and four thousand who had their fathers' names written in their foreheads, Rev 14:1-6. O friends! you never show so much child-like love, nor so much child-like sincerity, nor so much child-like integrity—as you show when, under the smarting rod, you are found clinging close to the Lord, and hanging upon the Lord by an exercise of grace. When Antisthenes held up his staff, as if he intended to beat one of his scholars out of his school, the scholar told him "that he might strike him if he pleased—but he would never find a staff of so hard wood as should ever be able to beat him away." When no staff, no rod, no affliction, can drive us from Christ—it is a sure argument that we have profited much in the school of Christ. But,

(6.) The sixth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to PREPARE to meet the Lord while the rod is in his hand: Amo 4:12, "Therefore thus will I do unto you, O Israel: and because I will do this unto you—prepare to meet your God, O Israel." Now there is a TWOFOLD PREPARATION.

[1.] The first is a negative preparation: and this lies in taking heed of sinning against light and conscience; for those sins which are against a clear light and an awakened conscience, are most wounding, devastating, terrifying, and damning.

[2.] Secondly, There is a positive preparation: and that consists in repentance and returning to the Lord, and in abasing and humbling yourselves before the Almighty, 2Ch 7:14. As there is no running from God, so there is no contending with God; for what is the chaff to the whirlwind, or the stubble to a consuming fire? and therefore the voice of the rod is, "Prepare to meet the Lord in a way of faith and repentance; prepare to meet the Lord in an exercise of grace; prepare to meet the Lord with prayers, and tears, and strong cries." But,

(7.) The seventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to acknowledge God's sovereign power and authority over the rod—to break it, or burn it, or take it off, or lay it on—as He pleases., Mic 6:13, Deu 28:58-61. "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand." Deu 32:39. All diseases and sicknesses are under the command of God; they are all his sergeants, his servants, to execute his pleasure.

"When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering." Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him." The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." Mat 8:5-10. But wherein did the greatness of the centurion's faith appear? Why, in this very

acknowledgment, that all diseases were to Christ as servants, and that they were as much under the command of Jesus Christ, as any servant is under the command of his master. When Christ bids diseases—'go and afflict such a man,' they go; 'go and torment such a man,' they go; 'go and kill such a man,' they go. When He calls them off—they come off at His call. Dear friends, it is a very great point of faith to believe these five things.

[1.] First, That God is the author of all the diseases, maladies, and sicknesses that are in the world; and that he sets them on and calls them off at his own good will and pleasure: Amo 3:6, "When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?" He speaks of the evil of punishment, and not of the evil of sin. It was a mad principle among the Manichees, who referred all calamities to the devil for their author, as if there could be evil in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it.

[2.] Secondly, It is a great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God, in respect of PLACES. God sent diseases of all sorts into Egypt—but he forbade them Goshen, Exo 8:20-23; Exo 9:23-26. Ponder seriously upon these scriptures. God's shooting his arrows into one town and not into another, into one city and not into another, into one kingdom and not into another, into one family and not into another—does sufficiently evidence that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by the Holy One of Israel in respect of places.

[3.] Thirdly, It is a very great point of faith to believe that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of PERSONS. That they are so, is evident in that Psa 91:3-8; Isa 65:12. But who lives in the faith of this truth? Sometimes in the same house one is infected, and the other is not; sometimes in the same bed the one is smitten, and the other is not; sometimes at the same table the one is taken away, and the other is left, etc.; and this does soundly evidence and witness that all sicknesses and diseases are limited by God in respect of persons as well as in respect of places. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is a great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God in respect of the DEGREES to which they shall arise. That God that sets bounds to the raging sea, and that says unto it, "Thus far shall you go, and no farther," that God sets bounds to all raging diseases and sicknesses, and says unto them, Thus far you shall go, and no farther. He sets bounds to the fever; he says to it, Go and scorch and burn up such a body so much, and no more; and to the disease, Go and devastate such a body so much, and no more; and to the raging pestilence, Go and weaken such a body so much, and no more; and to the stone, Go and torment such a body so much, and no more. But,

[5.] Fifthly, It is a very great point of faith to believe that all diseases and sicknesses are limited by God as to their CONTINUANCE. God says to one disease, Go, hang upon such a man so many years; to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few years; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a year; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few months; and to another, Go, hang upon such a man but a few weeks; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few days; and to another, go, hang upon such a man but a few hours, etc. And accordingly it comes to pass. But,

(8.) The eighth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to get more weaned and more mortified affections to all worldly comforts, contentments, and enjoyments. [Gal 5:24; 1Co 7:29-40; Ecc 1:2; Pro 23:5; Jer 45:4-5] A man never comes to experience so much of

the emptiness, the nothingness, the uselessness, the vanity, the mutability, the impotency, the insufficiency, and the uncertainty of all worldly comforts and enjoyments—as when he comes to fall under the rod. The constant cry of the rod is, "Be dead to the profits, pleasures, honors, and applauses of the world; be dead to relations, be dead to friends, be dead to everything below a living Jesus!" But,

(9.) The ninth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence is—to get assurance of greater and better things than any this world does afford, Heb 10:33-34. That saying is as true as it is old, namely, that the assurance of an eternal life is the life of this temporal life. But having spoke so much of this particular in my treatise on assurance, which is now in your hands, I shall satisfy myself with this hint at present. But,

(10.) The tenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—not to despise the rod. Heb 12:5, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord." The Greek word which is translated despise, signifies the littling of a thing. Oh! do not little the rod, do not lessen it, do not slight it, do not make a tush at it, do not set light by it, do not say, 'I will not regard it!' He who does, shows himself more of Stoic, than a Christian. Now, because there is such a desperate aptness and proneness in many to make light of the rod, it will be your wisdom seriously to lay to heart these four particulars:

[1.] First, That it is the DIRECT hand of God, Amo 3:6; Deu 28:58-61, and therefore not to be despised. It is a sad and sinful thing to despise the indirect hand of God; but it is more sad and sinful to despise the direct hand of God. But,

[2.] Secondly, It is a MIGHTY hand of God: 1Pe 5:6, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Certainly that heart must be mightily wicked, which dares despise the mighty hand of God, Amo 4:10; Ezra 38:22-23.

[3.] Thirdly, It is an ANGRY hand of God, and therefore do not despise it: Psa 90:7, "For we are consumed by your anger, and by your wrath are we troubled." Psa 90:11, "Who knows the power of your anger? even according to your fear, so is your wrath." Shall devils tremble under his angry hand? yes, shall they roar as the sea under his wrathful hand, (as the Greek word signifies in Jas 2:19,) and will you presume to despise his angry hand? The Lord forbid, Num 16:46; Ezra 33:27-29; Deu 29:22-25. But,

[4.] Fourthly and lastly, Consider that it is a HOLY hand, it is a JUST and RIGHTEOUS hand, it is a FAITHFUL hand of God; and therefore do not despise it; Jer 29:17-19; Lev 26:25; Jer 14:12-16; Psa 119:75, "I know, O Lord, that your judgments are right, or righteousness, and that you in faithfulness have afflicted me." Psa 119:137, "Righteous are you, O Lord, and upright are your judgments." Certainly none but unholy people will be so impudent as to despise God's holy hand. Well,

(11.) The eleventh lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is— not to be discouraged under the rod, Jer 27:13; 2Sa 24:10; 2Sa 24:17; Heb 12:5, "Nor faint when you are rebuked of him."

First, It is a rod in a Father's hand; and therefore do not faint under it.

Secondly, God will do much good by the rod, and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Thirdly, You could not have been without the rod; and therefore do not faint under the rod.

Fourthly, The rod which is now upon you, is not according to the greatness of God's anger, nor according to the greatness of his power, nor according to the strictness of his justice, nor according to the demerits of your sins, nor according to the malicious desires of Satan, nor according to the designs, plots, and contrivances of wicked and unreasonable men, nor according to the extensiveness of your fears—for you have feared worse things than you feel—nor according to that sharp rod which has been upon the primitive saints, nor according to that sharp rod which many thousands of the precious sons and daughters of Zion are under in other parts of the world. Therefore do not faint under the rod, do not be discouraged under the rod.

Fifthly, by fainting under the rod, you will gratify Satan, reproach religion, render yourselves unserviceable, and make work for future repentance; and therefore do not faint under the rod. But,

(12.) The twelfth lesson that you are to learn under the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—humbly to kiss the rod, and patiently and quietly to lie under the rod, until the Lord shall either give you a gracious, or a glorious, deliverance from it. [2Ch 32:25-26; Lev 26:40-42; Mic 7:9; Lam 3:30] What is the rod, and what is the raging pestilence, compared to the horrors of conscience, and to the flames of hell, or to an everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? 2Th 1:8-9. And therefore put your mouths in the dust, and be silent before the Lord. He who has deserved a hanging, if he escapes with a whipping, has no cause to murmur or complain. We who have deserved a damning—have little cause to murmur or complain of a whipping, yes, though it should be with a pestilential rod. But,

(13.) The thirteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—highly, fully, freely, and signally to justify the Lord, and to think well of the Lord, and to speak well of the Lord under the rod. To that purpose, consult these scriptures, Psa 119:75; Psa 119:137; Neh 9:33; Ezr 9:13; Lam 1:3; Lam 1:5; Lam 1:7-8; Lam 1:10; Lam 4:15; Lam 4:18; Dan 9:12; Dan 9:14; 2Ki 20:16-19; Jer 12:1-2; Psa 119:17-22; Psa 22:1-3; Psa 97:2. But,

(14.) The fourteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—personal reformation. When the rod smarts, and the pestilence rages—God expects that every man should smite upon his thigh, and turn from the evil of his doings. 2Ch 7:13-14, "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land;" that is, "I will remove the judgments that are upon the land, and I will confer upon my reforming people all those favors and blessings that they stand in need of." Consult these scriptures, Ezr 10:14; Ezr 10:19; 2Ch 30:8-9; and 2Ch 29:8; 2Ch 29:10; 2Ch 29:15-16. But,

(15.) The fifteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to make God your habitation, your shelter, your refuge. Ponder seriously upon those scriptures, Psa 91:2; Psa 91:9-10; Psa 90:1; Psa 71:3; Psa 57:1. They dwell most safely, most securely, most nobly, who dwell in God, who live under the shadow of the Almighty, and who every day lodge their souls in the bosom of eternal loves. But,

(16.) The sixteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or the raging pestilence, is—to set up God as the great object of your fear: Psa 119:119-120; Isa 8:7-8; Isa 8:13-14, compared. When the judgments of God are either threatened or executed, feared or felt—it highly concerns us to lift up God as the main object of our fear. We should fear that hand which lays on the rod—more than the rod itself! Job 13:11; Jer 36:24. When God takes up the rod, when he draws his sword, and when he shoots his pestilential arrows among us—oh how highly does it concern us to fear before him with a child-like fear, with a reverential fear, with a fear which fortifies the heart against sin, and with a fear which fits the soul for duty, and which draws, yes, drives the soul to duty. But.

(17.) The seventeenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to expect God's singular presence with you, and his admirable protection over you. Consult these scriptures, Isa 43:2; Dan 3:24-25; Gen 39:39-40; Psa 23:4-5; Psa 91:1-16; Isa 63:9; Isa 26:20-21; Eze 9:4; Eze 9:6. God is above his people and beneath them, Deu 33:25-27. He is under them and over them, Song of Solomon 2:6. He is before them and behind them, Isa 52:12, and Isa 58:8. He is on the right hand of his people, and he is on the left hand of his people, Psa 16:8; Psa 121:5; Psa 118:15-16; Exo 14:22; Exo 14:29. God is round about his people, Psa 34:7; Psa 125:2. And God is in the midst of his people, Zec 2:5; Psa 46:5; Psa 12:6. Oh, the safety, the security of the poor people of God—for God is above his people and beneath them, he is under them and over them, he is before them and behind them, he is in the front and in the rear, and he is round about them and in the midst of them. But,

(18.) The eighteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to live every day in a fresh, choice, and frequent exercise of grace. Consult these scriptures, Psa 91:2-4; Jer 39:17-18; Mic 7:7-9; Psa 40:1-2; Hab 2:1-4; Jer 30:21. That man who lives daily in an exercise of grace—that man lives every day in heaven on this side heaven, whatever affliction or judgment he is under.

(19.) The nineteenth lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to quicken up your hearts to seek the

Lord by extraordinary ways and means, namely, by fasting and prayer. Consult these scriptures, Num 16:46, seq.; Psa 106:23; Psa 106:29-30; Isa 22:2-5; Isa 22:12-13; Jon 3:5, seq.; 2Ch 12:2-7; 1Ki 21:21, seq.; Joe 2:12-17. But,

(20.) The twentieth, and so the last, lesson that you are to learn by the rod, or by the raging pestilence, is—to prepare for death; it is to be in actual readiness to die. Ah, friends! every ache, every pain, every disease—is one of death's warning pieces. There is not a headache, not a toothache, not a fever, not a grief, not a fall, not a wrench, not a plague-sore—but is a divine warning to man to prepare to die. It is a solemn work to die; and therefore we had need prepare to die. It is a work that is to be done but once; and therefore we had need prepare to do that work well, which is to be done but once. In this world we hear often, and pray often, and read often, and meditate often, and eat often, and drink often, and that which is worst, we sin often; but we must die but once, Job 14:14; Heb 9:27. Death will try all our graces, and all our experiences, and all our evidences, and all our comforts, and all our attainments, and all our enjoyments; and therefore we had need to prepare to die. Though there is nothing more certain than death—yet there is nothing more uncertain than:

(1.) the time when we shall die;

(2.) the place where we shall die;

(3.) the manner how we shall die. As whether we shall die a sudden death, or a lingering death, or a violent death; or whether we shall fall by the sword abroad, or by famine or pestilence at home; or whether we shall fall by this disease or that illness; and therefore we had need be always in an actual readiness to die. No man shall die the sooner—but much the easier and the better, for preparing to die; and therefore let us always have our loins girt and our lamps burning. As death leaves us—so judgment will find us! Therefore we have very great cause to secure our saving interest in Christ, a changed nature, and a pardon in our bosoms, that so we might have nothing to do but to die. Except we prepare to die, all other preparations will do us no good. In a word—death is a change, a great change; it is the last change until the resurrection; it is lasting, yes, an everlasting change; for it puts a man into an eternal condition of happiness or misery; it is a universal change; all people must pass under this flaming sword. That statute law, "Dust you are—and unto dust you shall return," will sooner or later take hold on all mortals, Gen 3:18; and therefore it highly concerns us to prepare for death. And thus I have shown you these lessons which you are to learn by the rod. The Lord grant that your souls may fall under those fresh, those choice, those full, and those constant influences and communications of his Holy Spirit, as may enable you to take out those twenty lessons that I have laid open before you. I confess the epistle is large—but do but consider your own conditions, and the present dispensations under which we are cast—and then I suppose you will not call it by the name of a tedious epistle

02A.04. Twenty arguments to persuade you to closet prayer

Twenty arguments to persuade you to closet prayer

These words of our Savior are plain, and to be taken literally, and not allegorically, for he speaks of 'shutting the door' of the chamber. In this chapter there is a manifest opposition between the Pharisees praying in the synagogues and corners of the streets, and others praying in secret. In the text you have a positive precept for every Christian to pray alone: "But you, when you pray, enter into your closet," etc., as speaking not so much of a joint duty of many praying together, as of a duty which each person is to do alone. The command in the text sends us as well to the closet as to the church; and he is a pious hypocrite, who chooses the one and neglects the other. He who puts on a religious demeanor abroad to gain himself a great name among men, and at the same time lives like an atheist at home, shall at the last be unmasked by God, and presented before all the world for a most detestable hypocrite.

Bellarmino and some others turn the text into an allegory. They say that in these words there are two allegories. First, the chamber door is the sense, "shut the door," that is, say they, your sense, lest vain imaginations and worldly thoughts distract your mind in praying. Secondly, the door, say they, is our mouth, "shut your door," that is, your lips, say they, and let your prayer be like the prayer of Hannah, conceived in your mind—but not uttered with your mouth. It is usual with papists and other monkish men who lie in wait to deceive, to turn the blessed Scriptures into a nose of wax, under pretense of allegories and mysteries. Origen was a great admirer of allegories. By the strength of his mental abilities and wanton wit, he turned most of the Scriptures into allegories; and by the just judgment of God upon him, he foolishly understood and absurdly applied that Mat 19:12 literally, "Some have made themselves chaste for the kingdom of heaven," and so castrated himself. And indeed he might as well have plucked out one of his eyes upon the same account, because Christ says, "It is better to go to heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire," Mat 18:9. In all ages heretics have commonly defended their heresies by translating of scriptures into allegories. The apostle speaks of such as, denying the resurrection of the body, turn all the testimonies of the resurrection into an allegory, meaning thereby only the spiritual resurrection of the soul from sin, of which sort was Hymenaeus and Philetus, who destroyed the faith of some, saying "the resurrection was past already," 2Ti 2:17-18. And are there not many among us who turn the whole history of the Bible into an allegory, and who turn Christ, and sin, and death, and the soul, and hell, and heaven, and all into an allegory? Many have and many do miserably pervert the Scriptures by turning them into vain and groundless allegories.

Some wanton wits have expounded paradise to be the soul, man to be the mind, the woman to be the sense, the serpent to be delight, the tree of knowledge of good and evil to be wisdom, and the rest of the trees to be the virtues and endowments of the mind. O friends! it is dangerous to bring in allegories where the Scripture does not clearly and plainly warrant them, and to take those words figuratively which should be taken properly. The word which in the text is rendered closet, has only three most usual significations among Greek authors. First, it may be taken for a secret

chamber, or close and locked parlor; secondly, for a safe or cupboard to lay victuals in; thirdly, for a locked chest or cupboard wherein treasure usually is reserved. The best and most judicious interpreters that I have cast my eye upon, both of a former and later date, do all expound my text of private prayer in retired places; and with them I close; and so the main doctrine that I shall gather from the words is this:

Doctrine. That closet prayer or private prayer is an indispensable duty, which Christ himself has laid upon all who are not willing to lie under the woeful brand of being hypocrites.

I beseech you seriously to lay to heart these five things:

First, If any prayer is a duty, then secret prayer must needs be a duty; for secret prayer is as much prayer as any other prayer is prayer; and secret prayer prepares and fits the soul for family prayer, and for public prayer. Secret prayer sweetly inclines and strongly disposes a Christian to all other religious duties and services. But,

Secondly, If secret prayer is not an indispensable duty which lies upon you, by what authority does conscience so upbraid you, and so accuse you, and so condemn you, and so terrify you—as it often does for the neglect of this duty? But,

Thirdly, Was it ever the way or method of God to promise again and again a reward, an open reward for that work or service which himself never commanded? Surely not. Now, to this duty of secret prayer, the Lord has again and again promised an open reward, Mat 6:6; Mat 6:18. And therefore without question, this is a duty incumbent upon all Christians.

Fourthly, Our Savior in the text takes it for granted that every child of God will be frequent in praying to his heavenly Father; and therefore he encourages them so much the more in the work of secret prayer. "When you pray;" as if he had said, I know you can as well hear without ears, and live without food, and fight without hands, and walk without feet, as you are able to live without prayer. And therefore when you go to wait on God, or to give your heavenly Father a visit, "Enter into your closet, and shut your doors," etc.

Fifthly, If closet prayer is not an indispensable duty that Christ has laid upon all his people, why does Satan so much oppose it? why does he so industriously and so unweariedly labor to discourage Christians in it, and to take off Christians from it? Certainly, Satan would never make such a fierce and constant war as he does upon private prayer, were it not a necessary duty, a real duty, and a soul-enriching duty. But more of this you will find in the following discourse; and therefore let this touch suffice for the present, etc.

Now, these five things do very clearly and evidently demonstrate that secretly and solitarily to hold fellowship with God is the undoubted duty of every Christian. But for a more full opening and confirmation of this great and important point, I shall lay down these twenty arguments or considerations to persuade you to closet prayer.

[1.] First, The most eminent saints, both in the Old and New Testament, have applied themselves to private prayer. Moses was alone in the mount with God forty days and forty nights, Exo 34:28. So Abraham fills his mouth with arguments, and reasons the case out alone with God in prayer, to prevent Sodom's desolation and destruction, and never leaves off pleading and praying until he had brought God down from fifty to ten, Gen 18:22-32; and in Gen 21:33, you have Abraham again

at his private prayers:

"And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God." Why did Abraham plant a grove—but that he might have a most private place to pray and pour out his soul before the Lord in? So Isaac: Gen 24:63, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide." The Hebrew word that is here rendered meditate, signifies to pray as well as to meditate, and so it is often used. It is a comprehensive word, that takes in both prayer and meditation. So you shall find Jacob at his private prayer: Gen 32:24-28, "And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and when his joints were out of joint, he so wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles in private prayer, that as a prince at last he prevails with God, Hos 12:3-4. So David, Psa 55:16-17, "As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice." So Daniel was three times a day in private prayer: Dan 6:10, "Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." Daniel had accustomed himself to private prayer; he went to his closet before he went to his public employment and state affairs; and at his return to dinner, he turned first into his chamber to serve his God and refresh his soul before he sat down to feast his body; and at the end of the day, when he had dispatched his business with men, he made it his business to wait upon God in his chamber. So Jonah keeps up private prayer when he was in the fish's belly, yes, when he was in the belly of hell, Jon 2:1-2, etc. So we have Elijah at prayer under the juniper tree, 1Ki 19:4; so Hannah, 1Sa 1:13. Now, Hannah she speaks in her heart; only her lips moved—but her voice was not heard. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, as Hannah did, 1Sa 1:15. Neither was Rebekah a stranger to this duty, who, upon the babe's struggling in her womb, went to inquire of the Lord, Gen 25:22; that is, she went to some secret place to pray, says Calvin, Musculus, Mercerus, and others. So Saul is no sooner converted—but presently he falls upon private prayer: Acts 9:11, "And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus for, behold, he prays." Though he was a strict Pharisee—yet he never prayed to purpose before, nor never prayed in private before. The Pharisees used to pray in the corners of the streets, and not in the corners of their houses. And after his conversion he was frequently in private prayer, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Rom 1:9; Eph 1:15-16; Php 1:3-4; 2Ti 1:3. So Epaphras was a warm man in closet prayer, Php 4:12-13; so Cornelius had devoted himself to private prayer, Acts 10:2; Acts 10:4; and so Peter gets up to the housetop to pray: Acts 10:9, "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew near unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour." Peter got up upon the housetop, not only to avoid distraction—but that he might be the more secret in his private devotion.

Eusebius tells us of James called Justus, that his knees were grown hard and brawny with kneeling so much in private prayer. And Nazianzen reports of his sister Gorgonia, that her knees seemed to cleave to the earth by her often praying in private. And Gregory with of his aunt Trucilla, that her elbows became hard by often leaning upon her desk at private prayer. I have read of a devout person, who, when the set time for his private devotion was come, whatever company he was in, he would break from them with this neat and handsome come off, "I have a friend that

waits for me; farewell." And there was once a great lady of this land, who would frequently withdraw from the company of lords and ladies of great nobility, who came to visit her, rather than she would lose her set times of waiting upon God in her closet; she would, as they called it, rudely take her leave of them, that so she might in private attend the Lord of lords. She would spare what time she could to express her favors, civilities, and courtesies among her relations and friends; but she would never allow them to rob God of his time, nor her soul of that comfort and communion which she used to enjoy when she was with God in her closet.

Indeed, one hour's communion with God in one's closet, is to be preferred before the greatest and best company in the world. And there was a child of a Christian gentlewoman, that was so given to prayer from its infancy, that before it could well speak, it would use to get alone and go to prayer; and as it grew, it was more frequent in prayer and retiring of itself from company; and he would ask his mother very strange questions, far above the capacity of one of his years; but at last, when this child was but five years old, and whipping of his top, on a sudden he flung away his top, and ran to his mother, and with great joy said unto her, "Mother, I must go to God; will you go with me?" She answered, "My dear child, how do you know you shall go to God?" He answered, "God has told me so, for I love God, and God loves me." She answered, "Dear child, I must go when God pleases. But why will you not stay with me?" The child answered, "I will not stay; I must go to God." And the child did not live above a month after—but never cared for play anymore; but falling sick, he would always be saying that he must go to God, he must go to God; and thus sometimes "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise," Mat 21:16. Certainly such people will be ripe for heaven early who begin early to seek God in a closet, in a corner. And Eusebius reports of Constantine the emperor, that every day he used to shut up himself in some secret place in his palace, and there, on bended knees, did make his devout prayers and soliloquies to God. "My God and I are good company," said famous Dr Sibbes. A man whose soul is conversant with God in a closet, in a hole, behind the door, or in a desert, a den, a dungeon, shall find more real pleasure, more choice delight, and more full contentment, than in the palace of a prince. By all these famous instances, you see that the people of God in all ages have addicted themselves to private prayer. O friends these pious examples should be very awakening, very convincing, and very encouraging to you. Certainly it is as much your duty as it is your glory, to follow these pious patterns which are now set before you.

Witness these following scriptures: Pro 2:20, "That you may walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous;" 1Co 11:1, "Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ; Php 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark those who walk so, as you have us for an example;" Php 4:9, "Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you;" 1Th 1:6, "And you became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction;" Heb 6:12, "That you be not slothful—but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." So 2Ti 3:10-12; 2Ti 3:14; Tit 2:7.

It was an excellent law that the Ephesians made, namely, that men should propound to themselves the best patterns, and ever bear in mind some eminent man. Bad men are wonderful in love with bad examples, Jer 44:16-17. The Indian, hearing that his ancestors were gone to hell, said that then he would go there too. Some men have a mind to go to hell for company's sake. Oh that we were as much in love with the examples of good men as others are in love with the

examples of bad men; and then we would be oftener in our closets than now we are! Oh that our eyes were more fixed on the pious examples of all that have in them 'anything of Christ,' as Bucer spoke! Shall we love to look upon the pictures of our friends; and shall we not love to look upon the pious examples of those who are the lively and lovely picture of Christ? The pious examples of others should be the looking-glasses by which we should dress ourselves. He is the best and wisest Christian, who writes after the fairest Scripture copy, that imitates those Christians that are most eminent in grace, and that have been most exercised in closet prayer, and in the most secret duties of religion.

Jerome having read the life and death of Hilarion, one who lived most Christianly, and died most comfortably, folded up the book, saying, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion that I will follow; his good life shall be my example, and his godly death my precedent. It is brave to live and die by the examples of the most eminent saints. But,

[2.] Secondly. Consider, when Christ was on earth, he did much exercise himself in secret prayer; he was often with God alone, as you may see in these famous scriptures: Mat 14:23, "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone." Christ's choosing solitudes for private prayer, does not only hint to us the danger of distraction and deviation of thoughts in prayer—but how necessary it is for us to choose the most convenient places we can for private prayers. Our own fickleness and Satan's restlessness calls upon us to get into such corners, where we may most freely pour out our souls into the bosom of God: Mark 1:35, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." As the morning time is the fittest time for prayer, so solitary places are the fittest places for prayer: Mark 6:46, "And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray." He who would pray to purpose, had need be quiet when he is alone: Luk 5:16, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed." (Greek, He was departing and praying) to give us to understand that he did thus often. When Christ was neither exercised in teaching nor in working of miracles, he was then very intent on private prayer: Luk 6:12, "And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer to save our souls; and shall we think it much to spend an hour or two in the day for the furtherance of the internal and eternal welfare of our souls?

Luk 21:37, "And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives." Christ frequently joins praying and preaching together, and that which Christ has joined together, let no man presume to put asunder: Luk 22:39; Luk 22:41; Luk 22:44-45, "And he came out, and went as he was accustomed to the mount of Olives, and his disciples also followed him. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood" (clotted or congealed blood) "falling down to the ground" (never was garden watered before or since with blood as this was). "And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow." Ah! what sad pieces of vanity are the best of men in an hour of trial and temptation! These very men, who a little before did stoutly profess and promise that they would never leave him nor forsake him, and that they would go to prison for Christ, and die for Christ—yet when the day of trial came, they could not so much as watch with him one hour; they had neither eyes to see, nor hands to wipe off Christ's

bloody sweat; so John 6:15-17. Thus you see, by all these famous instances, that Christ was frequent in private prayer.

Oh that we would daily propound to ourselves this noble pattern for our imitation, and make it our business, our work, our heaven, to write after this blessed copy that Christ has set us, namely, to be much with God alone. Certainly Christianity is nothing else but an imitation of the divine nature, a reducing of a man's self to the image of God, in which he was created "in righteousness and true holiness." A Christian's whole life should be nothing but a visible representation of Christ. The heathens had this notion among them, as Lactantius reports, that the way to honor their gods was to be like them. Sure I am that the highest way of honoring Christ is to be like to Christ: 1Jn 2:6, "He who says he abides in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." 1Pe 2:21, "Leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps." Oh that this blessed Scripture might always lie warm upon our hearts. Christ is the sun, and all the watches of our lives should be set by the dial of his motion. Christ is a pattern of patterns; his example should be to us instead of a thousand examples. It is not only our liberty—but our duty and glory, to follow Christ inviolably in all his moral virtues. Other patterns be imperfect and defective—but Christ is a perfect pattern; and of all his children, they are the happiest, who come nearest to this perfect pattern.

Heliogabalus loved his children the better for resembling him in sin. But Christ loves his children the more for resembling him in sanctity. I have read of some springs that change the color of the cattle that drink of them into the color of their own waters. Certainly, Jesus Christ is such a fountain, in which whoever bathes, and of which whoever drinks, shall be changed into the same likeness, 2Co 3:18.

Question. But why was our Lord Jesus so much in private prayer? Why was he so often with God alone?

Answer 1. First, It was to put a very high honor and value upon private prayer; it was to enhance and raise the price of this duty. Men naturally are very apt and prone to have low and undervaluing thoughts of secret prayer. But Christ, by exercising himself so frequently in it, has put an everlasting honor and an inestimable value upon it. But,

Answer 2. Secondly, He was much in private prayer, he was often with God alone, that he might not be seen of men, and that he might avoid all shows and appearances of ostentation and popular applause. He who has commanded us to abstain from all appearances of evil, 1Th 5:22, would not himself, when he was in this world, venture upon the least appearance of evil. Christ was very shy of everything that did but look like sin; he was very shy of the very show and shadow of pride or vainglory.

Answer 3. Thirdly, To avoid interruptions in the duty. Secrecy is no small advantage to the serious and lively carrying on of a private duty. Interruptions and disturbances from without are oftentimes quenching to private prayer. The best Christians do but bungle when they meet with interruptions in their private devotions.

Answer 4. Fourthly, To set us such a blessed pattern and gracious example, that we should never please nor content ourselves with public prayers only, nor with family prayers only—but that we should also apply ourselves to secret prayer, to closet prayer. Christ was not always in public, nor always in his family—but he was often in private with God alone, that by his own example he might

encourage us to be often with God in secret; and happy are those who tread in his steps, and that write after his copy.

Answer 5. Fifthly, That he might approve himself to our understandings and consciences to be a most just and faithful High Priest, Heb 2:17; John 17:1-26. Christ was wonderful faithful and careful in both parts of his priestly office, namely, redemption and intercession; he was his people's only spokesman. Ah! how earnest, how frequent was he in pouring out prayers, and tears, and sighs, and groans for his people in secret, when he was in this world, Heb 5:7. And now he is in heaven, he is still a-making intercession for them, Heb 7:25.

Answer 6. Sixthly, To convince us that his Father hears and observes our private prayers, and bottles up all our secret tears, and that he is not a stranger to our closet desires, wrestlings, breathings, hungerings, and thirstings.

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that the ordinary exercising of yourselves in secret prayer, is that which will distinguish you from hypocrites, who do all they do to be seen of men: Mat 6:1-2, "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." SELF is the only oil which makes the chariot-wheels of the hypocrite move in all religious concernments. Mat 6:5, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." Mat 6:16, "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." Thus you see that these hypocrites look more at men than at God in all their duties. When they give alms, the trumpet must sound; when they pray, it must be in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets; and when they fasted, they disfigured their faces that they might appear unto men to fast. Hypocrites live upon the praises and applauses of men.

Naturalists report of the Chelydonian stone, that it will retain its virtue no longer than it is enclosed in gold. So hypocrites will keep up their duties no longer than they are fed, and encouraged, and enclosed with the golden praises and applauses of men. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapors, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapors dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear.

Closet duty speaks out most sincerity. He prays with a witness, who prays without a witness. The more sincere the soul is, the more in closet duty the soul will be, Job 31:33. Where do you read in all the Scripture, that Pharaoh, or Saul, or Judas, or Demas, or Simon Magus, or the scribes and pharisees, were accustomed to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret? Secret prayer is not the hypocrite's ordinary walk, his ordinary work or trade. There is great cause to fear that his heart was never right with God, whose whole devotion is spent among men, or among many; or else our Savior, in drawing the hypocrite's picture, would never have made this to be the very cast of his countenance, as he does in Mat 6:5. It is very observable, that Christ commands his disciples, that they should not be as the hypocrites. It is one thing to be hypocrites, and it is another thing to be as the hypocrites. Christ would not have his people to look like hypocrites, nor to be like to hypocrites. It is only sincerity that will enable a man to make a practice of private prayer. In praying

with many, there are many things that may bribe and provoke a carnal heart—as pride, vainglory, love of applause, or to get a name. An hypocrite, in all his duties, trades more for a good name than for a good life, for a good report than for a good conscience; like fiddlers, who are more careful in tuning their instruments, than in composing their lives. But in private prayer there is no such trade to be driven. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that in secret we may more freely, and fully, and safely unbosom our souls to God than we can in the presence of others. Hence the husband is to mourn apart, and the wife apart, Zec 12:12-14, not only to show the soundness of their sorrow—but also to show their sincerity by their secrecy. They must mourn apart, that their sins may not be disclosed nor discovered one to another. Here they are severed to show that they wept not for company's sake—but for their own particular sins, by which they had pierced and crucified the Lord of glory. In secret, a Christian may descend into such particulars, as in public or before others he will not, he may not, he ought not, to mention. Ah! how many Christians are there who would blush and be ashamed to walk in the streets, and to converse with sinners or saints, should but those infirmities, enormities, and wickednesses be written in their foreheads, or known to others, which they freely and fully lay open to God in secret. There are many sins which many men have fallen into before conversion and since conversion, which, should they be known to the world, would make themselves to stench, and religion to stench, and their profession to stench in the nostrils of all who know them. Yes, should those weaknesses and wickednesses be published upon the housetops, which many are guilty of before grace received, or since grace received, how would weak Christians be staggered, young corners on in the ways of God discouraged, and many mouths of blasphemy opened, and many sinners' hearts hardened against the Lord, his ways, reproofs, and the things of their own peace; yes, how would Satan's banner be displayed, and his kingdom strengthened, and himself infinitely pleased and delighted! It is an infinite mercy and condescension in God to lay a law of restraint upon Satan, who else would be the greatest blab in all the world. It would be mirth and music to him to be still a-laying open the follies and weaknesses of the saints.

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own. "He is not yours, Lord Jesus, he is mine: his thoughts beat for me; he eats with you—but is fed by me; he takes bread from you—but money from me; he drinks with you, and sells your blood to me." There is not a sin that a saint commits—but Satan would trumpet it out to all the world, if God would but give him permission. No man who is in his right wits, will lay open to everyone his bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, etc.—but to some near relation, or bosom friend, or able physician. So no man who is in his right wits will lay open to everyone his soul-infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, ailments, griefs, etc.—but to the Lord, or to some particular person who is wise, faithful, and able to contribute something to his soul's relief. Should a Christian but lay open or exposing all his follies and vanities to the world, how sadly would some deride him and scorn him! and how severely and bitterly would others censure him and judge him! etc. When David was alone in the cave, then he poured out his complaint to God, and showed before him his trouble, Psa 142:2. And when Job was all alone, then his eyes poured out tears to God, Job 16:20. There is no hazard, no danger, in exposing of all before God in private—but there may be a great deal of hazard and danger in exposing of all before men.

[5.] Fifthly, Secret duties shall have open rewards. [Ecc 12:14; 2Co 5:10; Rev 22:12; Psa 126:5; Luk 14:14; Mat 25:34; Mat 25:37] Mat 6:6, "And your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you openly." So, Mat 6:18, God will reward his people here in part, and hereafter in all perfection. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him in secret. Those who sow in tears secretly, shall reap in joy openly. Private prayer shall be rewarded before men and angels publicly. How openly did God reward Daniel for his secret prayer! Dan 6:10; Dan 6:23-28. Mordecai privately discovered a plot of treason against the person of king Ahasuerus, and he is rewarded openly, Est 2:21-23, with Esther 6. Darius, before he came to the kingdom, received privately a gift from one Syloson; and when he came to be a king, he rewarded him openly with the command of his country Samus. God, in the great day, will recompense his people before all the world, for every secret prayer, and secret tear, and secret sigh, and secret groan that has come from their heart. God, in the great day, will declare to men and angels, how often his people have been in pouring out their souls before him in such and such holes, corners, and secret places; and accordingly he will reward them.

Ah, Christians! did you really believe this, and seriously dwell on this, you would, (1.) Walk more thankfully.

(2.) Work more cheerfully.

(3.) Suffer more patiently.

(4.) Fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, more courageously.

(5.) Lay out yourselves for God, his interest and glory, more freely.

(6.) Live with whatever providence has cut out for your portion, more quietly and contentedly. And,

(7.) You would be in private prayer more frequently, more abundantly.

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that God has usually manifested himself most to his people when they have been in secret, when they have been alone at the throne of grace. Oh the sweet meltings, the heavenly warmings, the blessed cheerings, the glorious manifestations, and the choice communion with God—that Christians have found when they have been alone with God in a corner, in a closet, behind the door! When did Daniel have that vision and comfortable message, that blessed news, by the angel, that he was "greatly beloved"—but when he was all alone at prayer? Dan 9:20-23, "While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill—while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision." While Daniel was at private prayer, God, by the angel Gabriel, reveals to him the secret of his counsel, concerning the restoration of Jerusalem, and the duration thereof, even to the Messiah; and while Daniel was at private prayer, the Lord appears to him, and in an extraordinary way assures him that he was "a man greatly beloved," or as the Hebrew has it, "a man of desires," that is, a man whom God's desires are towards, a man singularly beloved of God, and highly in favor with God, a man who are very pleasing and delightful to God.

God loves to lade the wings of private prayer with the sweetest, choicest, and chief blessings. Ah! how often has God kissed a poor Christian at the beginning of private prayer, and spoke peace to him in the midst of private prayer, and filled him with light and joy and assurance upon the close of private prayer? And so Cornelius is highly commended and graciously rewarded upon the account of his private prayer: Acts 10:1-4, "At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God."

Acts 10:30-31, "Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.'" Mark, as he was praying in his house, namely, by himself alone, a man in bright clothing—that was an angel in man's shape, Acts 10:3— appeared to him, and said, "Cornelius, your prayer is heard." [Acts 10:31] He does not mean only that prayer which he made when he fasted and humbled himself before the Lord, Acts 10:30-31; but, as Acts 10:2-4 show—his prayers which he made alone. For it seems none else were with him then, for he only saw that man in bright clothing; and to him alone the angel addressed his present speech, saying, "Cornelius, your prayers are heard, Acts 10:4; Acts 10:31. Here you see that Cornelius' private prayers are not only heard—but kindly remembered, and graciously accepted, and gloriously rewarded. Praying Cornelius is not only remembered by God—but he is also visited, sensibly and evidently, by an angel, and assured that his private prayers and good deeds are an odor, a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God. And so when had Peter his vision but when he was praying alone on the housetop? Acts 10:9-13, "About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." When Peter was upon the housetop at prayer alone, then he fell into a trance, and he saw heaven opened; and then he had his spirit raised, his mind elevated, and all the faculties of his soul filled with a divine revelation. And so when Paul was at prayer alone, Acts 9:12, he saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight. Paul had not been long at private prayer before it was revealed to him that he was a chosen vessel, and before he was filled with the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Holy Spirit. And when John was alone in the isle of Patmos, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ"—where he was banished by Domitian, a most cruel emperor—then he had a glorious sight of the Son of man, and then the Lord discovered to him most deep and profound mysteries, both concerning the present and future state of the church, to the end of the world. And when John was weeping, in private prayer doubtless, then the sealed book was opened to him. So when Daniel was at private prayer, God dispatches a heavenly messenger to him, and his errand was to open more clearly and fully the blessed Scripture to him. Some comfortable and encouraging knowledge this holy man of God had attained unto before by his frequent and constant study in the word, and this eggs him on to private prayer, and private prayer sends an angel from heaven to give him a clearer and

fuller light. Private prayer is a golden key to unlock the mysteries of the word unto us. The knowledge of many choice and blessed truths, are but the returns of private prayer. The word most dwells richly in their hearts who are most in pouring out their hearts before God in their closets. When Bonaventura, that seraphic doctor, as some call him, was asked by Aquinas from what books and helps he derived such holy and divine expressions and contemplations, he pointed to a crucifix, and said, "Prostrate in prayer at the feet of this image, my soul receives greater light from heaven than from all study and disputation." Though this be a monkish tradition and superstitious fiction—yet some improvement may be made of it. Certainly that

Christian, who in private prayer lies most at the feet of Jesus Christ, he shall understand most of the mind of Christ in the gospel, and he shall have most of heaven and the things of his own peace brought down into his heart.

There is no service wherein Christians have such a near, familiar, and friendly fellowship with God as in this of private prayer; neither is there any service wherein God does more delight to make known his truth and faithfulness, his grace and goodness, his mercy and bounty, his beauty and glory to poor souls, than this of private prayer. Luther professes, "That he profited more in the knowledge of the Scripture by private prayer in a short space, than he did by study in a longer space," as John by weeping in in seclusion, got the sealed book opened.

Private prayer crowns God with the honor and glory that is due to his name; and God crowns private prayer with a discovery of those blessed weighty truths to his servants, that are a sealed book to others. Certainly the soul usually enjoys most communion with God in secret. When a Christian is in a wilderness, which is a very solitary place, then God delights to speak friendly and comfortably to him: Hos 2:14, "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak friendly or comfortably to her," or as the Hebrew has it, "I will speak to her heart." When I have her alone, says God, in a solitary wilderness, I will speak such things to her heart, as shall exceedingly cheer her, and comfort her, and even make her heart leap and dance within her. A husband imparts his mind most freely and fully to his wife when she is alone; and so does Christ to the believing soul. Oh the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret cheerings, the secret sealings, the secret discoveries, etc., that God gives to his people when alone, when in a hole, when under the stairs, when behind the door, when in a dungeon! When Jeremiah was calling upon God alone in his dark dungeon, he had great and wonderful things showed him that he knew not of, Jer 33:1-3.

Ambrose was accustomed to say, "I am never less alone, than when I am alone; for then I can enjoy the presence of my God most freely, fully, and sweetly, without interruption." And it was a most sweet and divine saying of Bernard, "O saint, know you not," says he, "that your husband Christ is bashful, and will not be intimate in company? Retire yourself therefore by prayer and meditation into your closet or the fields, and there you shall have Christ's embraces." A gentlewoman being at private prayer and meditation in her parlor, had such sweet, choice, and full enjoyments of God, that she cried out, "Oh that I might always enjoy this sweet communion with God!" etc.

Christ loves to embrace his spouse, not so much in the open street, as in secret; and certainly the gracious soul has never sweeter views of glory, than when it is most out of the view of the world. Wise men give their best, their choicest, and their richest gifts in secret; and so does Christ give

his the best of the best, when they are in a corner, when they are all alone. But as for such as cannot spare time to seek God in a closet, to commune with him in secret—they sufficiently manifest that they have little fellowship or friendship with God, whom they so seldom come at.

[7.] Seventhly, Consider the time of this life is the only time for private prayer. Heaven will admit of no secret prayer. In heaven there will be no secret sins to trouble us, nor no secret needs to pinch us, nor no secret temptations to betray us, nor no secret snares to entangle us, nor no secret enemies to supplant us. We had need live much in the practice of that duty here on earth, that we shall never be exercised in after death. Some duties that are incumbent upon us now, as praising of God, admiring of God, exalting and lifting up of God, joying and delighting in God, etc., will be forever incumbent upon us in heaven; but this duty of private prayer, we must take our leave of, when we come to lay our heads in the dust.

[8.] Eighthly, Consider the great prevalency of secret prayer. Private prayer is the gate of heaven, a key to let us into paradise. Oh the great things that private prayer has done with God! Psa 31:22. Oh the great mercies that have been obtained by private prayer! Psa 38:8-9. And oh the great threatenings that have been diverted by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been removed by private prayer! And oh the great judgments that have been prevented by private prayer!

I have read of a malicious woman who gave herself to the devil, provided that he would do harm to such a neighbor, whom she mortally hated: the devil went again and again to do his errand—but at last he returns and tells her, that he could do no devilry to that man, for whenever he came, he found him either reading the Scriptures, or at private prayer.

Private prayers pierces the heavens, and are commonly blessed and loaded with gracious and glorious returns from thence. While Hezekiah was praying and weeping in private, God sent the prophet Isaiah to him, to assure him that his prayer was heard, and that his tears were seen, and that he would add unto his days fifteen years, Isa 38:5. So when Isaac was all alone meditating and praying, and asking God for a good wife in the fields, he meets Rebekah, Gen 24:63-64. So Jacob: Gen 32:24-28, "So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome." In this scripture we have an elegant description of a duel fought between the Almighty and Jacob; and in it there are these things most observable:

(1.) First, We have the combatants or duelists, Jacob and God, who appeared in the shape or appearance of a man. He who is here said to be a man was the Son of God in human shape, as it appears by the whole narration, and by Hos 12:3-5. Now, that this man who wrestled with Jacob was indeed God, and not really man, is most evident by these reasons

[1.] First, Jacob desires a blessing from him, Gen 32:26. Now, it is God's prerogative-royal to bless, and not angels' nor men's. Consequently,

[2.] Secondly, He calls him by the name of God; "you have power with God," Gen 32:28. And says Jacob, "I have seen God face to face," Gen 32:30. Not that he saw the majesty and essence of God: for no man can see the essential glory of God and live, Exo 33:20; Exo 33:23; but he saw God more apparently, more manifestly, more gloriously than ever he had done before. Some created shape, some glimpse of glory, Jacob saw, whereby God was pleased for the present to testify his more immediate presence—but not himself.

[3.] Thirdly, The same person who here Jacob wrestles with is he whom Jacob remembers in his benediction as his deliverer from all evil, Gen 48:16. It was that God that appeared to him at Bethel when he fled from the face of his brother, Gen 35:7. Consequently,

[4.] Fourthly, Jacob is reprov'd for his curious inquiring or asking after the angel's name, Gen 32:29, which is a clear argument or demonstration of his majesty and glory, God being above all notion and name. God is a super-substantial substance—an understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken. One being asked what God was, answered, "That he must be God himself, before he could know God fully." We are as well able to comprehend the sea in a cockle-shell, as we are able to comprehend the Almighty. "In searching after God," says Chrysostom, "I am like a man digging in a deep spring: I stand here, and the water rises upon me; and I stand there, and still the water rises upon me." In this conflict you have not one man wrestling with another, nor one man wrestling with a created angel—but a poor, weak, mortal man wrestling with an immortal God; weakness wrestling with strength, and a finite being with an infinite being. Though Jacob was greatly overmatched—yet he wrestles and keeps his hold, and all in the strength of him, with whom he wrestles.

(2.) Secondly, You have the place where they combated, and that was beside the ford Jabbok, Gen 32:22. This is the name of a brook or river springing by Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites, and flowing into Jordan beneath the Sea of Galilee, Num 21:24; Deu 2:37; Jdg 11:13; Jdg 11:15; Deu 3:16. Jacob did never enjoy so much of the presence of God, as when he had left the company of men. Oh! the sweet communion that Jacob had with God when he was retired from his family, and was all alone with his God by the ford Jabbok! Certainly Jacob was never less alone than at this time, when he was so alone. Saints often meet with the best wine and with the strongest cordials—when they are all alone with God.

(3.) Thirdly, You have the time of the combat, and that was the night. At what time of the night this wrestling, this duel began, we nowhere read; but it lasted until break of day, it lasted until Jacob had the better of the angel. How many hours of the night this conflict lasted, no mortal man can tell. God's design was that none should be spectators nor witnesses of this combat but Jacob only; and therefore Jacob must be wrestling when others were sleeping.

(4.) Fourthly, You have the ground of the quarrel, and that was Jacob's fear of Esau, and his importunate desire for a blessing. Jacob flies to God, that he might not fall before man; he flies to God, that he might not fly before men. In a storm, there is no shelter like to the wing of God. He is safest, and happiest, and wisest, who lays himself under divine protection. This Jacob knew, and therefore he runs to God, as to his only city of refuge. In this conflict God would have given out: "Let me go, for the day breaks," Gen 32:26; but Jacob keeps his hold, and tells him boldly to his very face that he would not let him go unless he would bless him. Oh the power of private prayer! It has a kind of omnipotency in it; it takes God captive; it holds him as a prisoner; it binds the hands

of the Almighty; yes, it will wrench a mercy, a blessing, out of the hand of heaven itself! Oh the power of that prayer which makes a man victorious over the greatest, the highest power! Jacob, though a man, a single man, a traveling man, a tired man, yes, though a worm, which is easily crushed and trodden under foot, and no man, Isa 41:14—yet in private prayer he is so potent, that he overcomes the omnipotent God; he is so mighty, that he overcomes the Almighty!

(5.) Fifthly, You have the nature or manner of the combat, and that was both outward and inward, both physical and spiritual. It was as well by the strength of his body as it was by the force of his faith. He wrestled not only with spiritual strugglings, tears, and prayers, Hos 12:4—but with physical also, wherein God assailed him with one hand, and upheld him with the other. In this, conflict, Jacob and the angel of the covenant did really wrestle arm to arm, and shoulder to shoulder, and foot to foot, and used all other sleights and ways as men do, who wrestle one with another. The Hebrew word which is here rendered wrestled, signifies the raising of the dust; because they cast dust one upon another, that so they might take more sure hold one of another. Some conclude that Jacob and the angel did tug, and strive, and turn each other, until they sweat again; for so much the word imports. Jacob and the angel did not wrestle in jest—but in good earnest; they wrestled with their might, as it were, for the garland; they strove for victory as for life. But as this wrestling was physical, so it was spiritual also. Jacob's soul takes hold of God, and Jacob's faith takes hold of God, and Jacob's prayers takes hold of God, and Jacob's tears takes hold of God, Hos 12:4-5. Certainly Jacob's weapons in this warfare were mainly spiritual, and so "mighty through God." There is no overcoming of God but in his own strength. Jacob did more by his royal faith than he did by his noble hands, and more by weeping than he did by sweating, and more by praying than he did by all his bodily strivings.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, You have the outcome of the combat, and that is, victory over the angel, Gen 32:28. Jacob wrestles in the angel's power, and so overcomes him. As a prince, he overpowers the angel by that very power he had from the angel. The angel was as freely and fully willing to be conquered by Jacob, as Jacob was willing to be conqueror. When lovers wrestle, the strongest is willing enough to take a fall of the weakest; and so it was here. The father, in wrestling with his child, is willing enough, for his child's comfort and encouragement, to take a fall now and then; and so it was between the angel and Jacob in the present case. Now in this blessed story, as in a crystal glass, you may see the great power and prevalency of private prayer; it conquers the great conqueror; it is so omnipotent that it overcomes an omnipotent God.

Now this you may see more fully and sweetly cleared up in Hos 12:4, "He struggled with the angel and overcame him; he wept and begged for his favor. He found him at Bethel and talked with him there." When Jacob was all alone and in a dark night, and but on one leg—yet then he played the prince with God, as the Hebrew has it. Jacob by prayers and tears did so prince it with God as that he carried the blessing. Jacob's wrestling was by weeping, and his prevailing by praying. Prayers and tears are not only very pleasing to God—but also very prevalent with God. And thus you see that this great instance of Jacob speaks out aloud the prevalency of private prayer.

See another instance of this in David: Psa 6:6, "I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears." These are all excessive figurative speeches, to set forth the greatness of his sorrow, and the multitude of his tears. David in his retirement makes the place of his sin, namely, his bed, to be the place of his repentance. David

sins privately upon his bed, and David mourns privately upon his bed. Every place which we have polluted by sin, we should sanctify and water with our tears: Psa 6:8, "Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping." As blood has a voice, and as the rod has a voice, so tears have a voice. Tears have tongues, and tears can speak. There is no prayer compared to those which secret tears make in the ears of God. A prudent and indulgent father can better pick out the wants and necessities of his children by their secret tears than by their loud complaints, by their weeping than by their words; and do you think that God can't do as much? Tears are not always mutes: Lam 2:18, "Cry aloud," says one, "not with your tongue—but with your eyes; not with, your words—but with your tears; for that is the prayer that makes the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven." Penitent tears are undeniable ambassadors that never return from the throne of grace without a gracious answer. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, which, though they say nothing—yet they obtain pardon; and though they plead not a man's cause—yet they obtain mercy at the hands of God. As you see in that great instance of Peter, who, though he said nothing that we read of—yet weeping bitterly, he obtained mercy, Mat 26:75.

I have read of Augustine, who, coming as a visitant to the house of a sick man, he saw the room full of friends and kindred, who were all silent—yet all weeping: the wife sobbing, the children sighing, the kinsfolk lamenting, all mourning; whereupon Augustine uttered this short prayer, "Lord, what prayer do you hear—if not these?"

Psa 6:9, "The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer." God sometimes answers his people before they pray: Isa 65:24, "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer." And sometimes while they are praying; so it follows in the same verse, "And while they are yet speaking I will hear." So Isa 30:19, "He will be very gracious unto you at the voice of your cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer you." And sometimes after they have prayed, as the experiences of all Christians can testify. Sometimes God neither hears nor receives a prayer; and this is the common case and lot of the wicked, Pro 1:28; Job 27:9; Isa 1:15. Sometimes God hears the prayers of his people—but does not presently answer them, as in that case of Paul, 2Co 12:7-9; and sometimes God both hears and receives the prayers of his people, as here he did David's. Now in this instance of David, as in a glass, you may run and read the prevalency of private prayer and of secret tears.

You may take another instance of this in Jonah: "From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. He said: 'In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I called for help, and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my God. "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. Salvation comes from the Lord." And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land." Jon 2:1-10. When Jonah was all alone, and in the midst of many dangers and deaths, when he was in the whale's belly, yes, in the belly of hell—so called because horrid and hideous, deep and dismal —yet then private prayer fetches him from thence. Let a man's dangers be ever so many, nor ever so great—yet secret prayer has

a certain omnipotency in it that will deliver him out of them all. In multiplied afflictions, private prayer is most prevalent with God. In the very midst of drowning, secret prayer will keep both head and heart above water. Upon Jonah's private prayer, God sends forth his mandate, and the fish serves Jonah for a ship to sail safe to shore. When the case is even desperate—yet then private prayer can do much with God. Private prayer is of that power that it can open the doors of leviathan, as you see in this great instance, which yet is reckoned as a thing not feasible, Job 41:14.

Another instance of the prevalency of private prayer you have in that 2Ki 4:32-35, "When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them (Privacy is a good help to fervency in prayer) and prayed to the Lord. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes." Oh the power, the prevalency, the omnipotency of private prayer, that raises the dead to life! And the same effect had the private prayer of Elijah in raising the widow's son of Zarephath to life, 1Ki 17:18, et seq. The great prevalency of Moses his private prayers you may read in the following scriptures: Num 12:1-2, "Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord and the fire died down." Moses by private prayer rules and overrules with God; he was so potent with God in private prayer that he could have what he would from God. So Num 21:7-9; Psa 106:23; Exo 32:9-14; Exo 14:15-17. The same you may see in Nehemiah, Neh 1:11, compared with Neh 2:4-8.

Private prayer, like Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, when duly qualified as to the person and act, never returns empty; it hits the mark, it carries the day with God; it pierces the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, made of brass and iron, Isa 45:2. Oh, who can express the powerful oratory of private prayer! etc.

[9.] Ninthly, Consider, that secret duties are the most soul-enriching duties. Look! as secret meals make fat bodies, so secret duties make fat souls. And as secret trades brings in great earthly riches, so secret prayers makes many rich in spiritual blessings and in heavenly riches. Private prayer is that secret key of heaven that unlocks all the treasures of glory to the soul. The best riches and the sweetest mercies God usually gives to his people when they are in their closets upon their knees. Look! as the warmth the chickens find by close sitting under the hen's wings nourishes them, so are the graces of the saints enlivened, and nourished, and strengthened by the sweet secret influences which their souls fall under when they are in their closet-communion with God. Private prayer conscientiously performed is the secret key of heaven, that has unlocked such treasures and such secrets as has passed the skill of the cunningest devil to find out. Private prayer midwives the choicest mercies and the chief riches in upon us. Certainly there are none so rich in gracious experiences as those who are most exercised in closet duties.

Psa 34:6, "This poor man cried," says David, "and the Lord saved him out of all his troubles." David, pointing to himself, tells us that he "cried," that is, silently and secretly, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia; "and the Lord saved him out

of all his troubles," Exo 14:15; Neh 1:11; and Neh 2:4. And, oh, what additions were these deliverances to his experiences! O my friends, look, as the tender dew that falls in the silent night makes the grass and herbs and flowers to flourish and grow more abundantly than great showers of rain that fall in the day, so secret prayer will more abundantly cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish in the soul, than all those more open, public, and visible duties of religion, which too, too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

Beloved! you know that many times a favorite at court gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to his prince, than a tradesman or a merchant gets in twenty years' labor and pains, etc. So a Christian many times gets more by one secret motion, by one private request to the King of kings, than many others do by trading long in the more public duties of religion. O sirs! remember that in private prayer we have a far greater advantage as to the exercise of our own gifts and graces and parts, than we have in public; for in public we only hear others exercise their parts and gifts, etc.; in public duties we are more passive—but in private duties we are more active. Now, the more our gifts and parts and graces are exercised, the more they are strengthened and increased. All acts strengthen habits. The more sin is acted, the more it is strengthened. And so it is with our gifts and graces; the more they are acted, the more they are strengthened. But,

[10.] Tenthly, Take many things together. All Christians have their secret sins. Psa 19:12, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse me from secret faults." Secret not only from other men—but from himself; even such secret sins as grew from errors which he understood not. It is but natural for every man to err, and then to be ignorant of his errors. 'Many sins I see in myself,' says he, 'and more there are which I cannot spot, which I cannot find out. Nay, I think that every man's sins are beyond his understanding.' There is not the best, the wisest, nor the holiest man in the world, who can give a full and entire list of his sins. "Who can understand his errors?" This interrogation has the force of an affirmation: "Who can?" No man! No, not the most perfect and innocent man in the world. O friends! who can reckon up the secret sinful imaginations, the secret sinful inclinations, or the secret pride, the secret blasphemies, the secret hypocrisies, the secret atheistical risings, the secret murmurings, the secret repinings, the secret discontents, the secret insolencies, the secret filthinesses, the secret unbelievings, etc., that God might every day charge upon his soul? Should the best and holiest man on earth have but his secret sins every day written in his forehead, it would not only put him to a crimson blush—but it would make him pull his hat over his eyes, or cover his face with a double scarf! So 1Ki 8:38, "When a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel--each one aware of the plague of his own heart," etc.

Sin is the greatest plague in the world—but never more dangerous than when it reaches the heart. Now, secret sins commonly lie nearest the heart, the fountain from whence they take a quick, immediate, and continual supply. Secret sins are as near to original sin as the first droppings are to the spring-head. And as every secret sin lies nearest the heart, so every secret sin is the plague of the heart. Now, as secret diseases are not to be laid open to everyone—but only to the prudent physician; so our secret sins, which are the secret plagues, the secret diseases of our souls, are not to be laid open to everyone—but only to the physician of souls, that is only able both to cure them and pardon them. And as all Christians have their secret sins, so all Christians have their secret temptations, 2Co 12:8-9. And as they have their secret temptations, so they have their secret needs; yes, many times they have such particular and personal needs that there is not one

in the congregation, nor one in the family, that has the like. And as they have their secret needs, so they have their secret fears, and secret snares, and secret straits, and secret troubles, and secret doubts, and secret jealousies, etc. And how do all these things call aloud upon every Christian to be frequent and constant in secret prayer!

[11.] Eleventhly, Consider, Christ is very much affected and delighted in the secret prayers of his people. Song of Solomon 2:14, "O my dove who is in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice, and your countenance is lovely." Christ observes his spouse when she is in the clefts of the rock; when she is gotten into a corner a-praying, he looks upon her with singular delight, and with special intimations of his love. Nothing is more sweet, delightful, and welcome to Christ than the secret services of his people. Their secret breathings are like lovely songs to him, Mal 3:4; their secret prayers in the clefts of the rock, or under the stairs, are as sweet incense to Jesus. The spouse retires to the secret places of the stairs not only for security—but also for secrecy, that so she might the more freely, without suspicion of hypocrisy, pour out her soul into the bosom of her beloved. The great delight that parents take in the secret lisplings and whisperings of their children, is no delight to that which Christ takes in the secret prayers of his people. And therefore, as you would be friends and furtherers of Christ's delight, be much in secret prayer.

[12.] Twelfthly, Consider you are the only people in all the world whom God has made choice of to reveal his secrets to. John 15:15, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knows not what his Lord doth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Everything that God the Father had communicated to Christ as mediator to be revealed to his servants, he made known to his disciples as to his bosom-friends. Christ loves his people as friends, and he uses them as friends, and he opens his heart to them as friends. There is nothing in the heart of Christ that concerns the internal and eternal welfare of his friends—but he reveals it to them: he reveals himself, his love, his eternal good will, the mysteries of faith, and the secrets of his covenant—to his friends. [1Co 2:10-11; John 1:9; Rom 16:25; 1Co 2:7; Eph 3:3-4; Eph 3:9] Christ loves not to entertain his friends with things that are commonly and vulgarly known. Christ will reveal the secrets of his mind, the secrets of his love, the secrets of his thoughts, the secrets of his heart, and the secrets of his purposes—to all his bosom-friends. Samson could not hide his mind, his secrets, from Delilah, though it cost him his life, Jdg 16:15-17; and do you think that Christ can hide his mind, his secrets, from them for whom he has laid down his life? Surely no. O sirs! Christ is, (1.) A universal friend.

(2.) An omnipotent friend, an almighty friend. He is no less than thirty times called Almighty in that book of Job; he can do above all expressions and beyond all apprehensions.

(3.) He is an omniscient friend.

(4.) He is an omnipresent friend.

(5.) He is an indeficient friend.

(6.) He is an independent friend.

(7.) He is an unchangeable friend.

(8.) He is a watchful friend.

(9.) He is a tender and compassionate friend.

(10.) He is a close and faithful friend; and therefore he cannot but open and unbosom himself to all his bosom friends. To be reserved and close is against the very law of friendship. Faithful friends are very free in imparting their thoughts, their minds, their secrets, one to another. A real friend accounts nothing worth knowing unless he makes it known to his friends. He opens up his greatest and most inward secrets to his friends. Job calls his friends "inward friends," or the men of his secrets, Job 19:19. All Christ's friends are inward friends; they are the men of his secrets: Pro 3:32, "His secrets are with the righteous," that is, his covenant and fatherly affection, which is hidden and secret from the world. He who is righteous in secret, where no man sees him, he is the righteous man, to whom God will communicate his closest secrets, as to his dearest bosom-friend. It is only a bosom-friend to whom we will unbosom ourselves. So Psa 25:14, The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

Now, there are three sorts of divine secrets:

(1.) First, There are secrets of providence, and these he reveals to the righteous, and to those who fear him, Psa 107:43; Hos 14:9. The prophet Amos speaks of these secrets of providence: Amo 3:7, Surely the Lord God will do nothing—but he reveals his secrets unto his servants and prophets." Micah knew the secret of the Lord concerning Ahab, which neither Zedekiah nor any other of the false prophets knew. So Gen 18:17, "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The destruction of Sodom was a secret that lay in the bosom of God; but Abraham being a bosom-friend, God communicates this secret to him, Gen 18:19-21. Abraham was a friend, a faithful friend, a special friend, Jas 2:23; and therefore God makes him both of his court and counsel. Oh how greatly does God condescend to his people. He speaks to them as a man would speak to his friend; and there is no secrets of providence, which may be for their advantage—but he will reveal them to his faithful servants. As all faithful friends have the same friends and the same enemies, so they are mutual in the communication of their secrets one to another; and so it was between God and Abraham.

(2.) Secondly, There are the secrets of his kingdom; and these he reveals to his people: Mat 13:11, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—but unto them it is not given." So Mat 11:25, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them unto babes." "Let us not think," says Jerome, that the gospel is in the words of Scripture—but in the sense; not in the outside—but in the marrow; not in the leaves of words—but in the root of reason."

There are many choice, secret, hidden, and mysterious truths and doctrines in the gospel, which Christ reveals to his people, that this poor, blind, ignorant world are strangers to. [Joe 2:28; 1Ti 3:9; 1Ti 3:16; Col 1:26-27; 1Co 2:9-12; Eph 4:21] There are many secrets wrapped up in the plainest truths and doctrines of the gospel, which none can effectually open and reveal but the Spirit of the Lord, who searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. There are many secrets and mysteries in the gospel, that all the learning and labor in the world can never give a man insight into. There are many who know the doctrine of the gospel, the history of the gospel—who are utter strangers to the secrets of the gospel. There is a secret power, a secret authority, a secret efficacy, a secret prevalency, a secret goodness, a secret sweetness in the gospel—that

none experience but those to whom the Lord is pleased to impart gospel secrets to: Isa 29:11-12, "Seal my law among my disciples." The law of God to wicked men is a sealed book that they cannot understand, Dan 12:9-10. It is as blotted paper that they cannot read.

Look! as a private letter to a friend contains secret matter that no other man may read because it is sealed; so the law of grace is sealed up under the secret-seal of heaven, so that no man can open it or read it—but Christ's faithful friends to whom it is sent. The whole Scripture, says Gregory, is but one entire letter despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse on earth. The Rabbis say that there are four keys that God has under his belt:

1, the key of the clouds;

2, the key of the womb;

3, the key of the grave;

4, the key of food; and I may add a fifth key that is under his belt, and that is the key of the word, the key of the Scripture; which key none can turn but he who "has the key of David, who opens, and no man shuts; and who shuts, and no man opens," Rev 3:7.

O sirs! God reveals himself, and his mind, and will, and truth—to his people, in a more friendly and familiar way than he does to others: Mark 4:11, "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but unto those who are outside, all these things are done in parables:" Luk 8:10, "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." Though great doctors, and profound teachers, and deep-studied but unsanctified divines, may know much of the doctrines of the gospel, and commend much the doctrines of the gospel, and dispute much for the doctrines of the gospel, and glory much in the doctrines of the gospel, and take a great deal of pains to dress and trim up the doctrines of the gospel, with the flowers of rhetoric or eloquence; though it be much better to present truth in her native plainness, than to hang her ears with counterfeit pearls. The word, without human adornments, is like the stone garnet, that has drops of gold in itself, sufficient to enrich the believing soul. Yet the special, spiritual, powerful, and saving knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, is a secret, a mystery, yes, a hidden mystery to them, Rom 16:25; 1Co 2:7.

Chrysostom compares the mysteries of Christ, in regard of the wicked, to a written book, that the ignorant can neither read nor spell; he sees the cover, the covers, and the letters—but he understands not the meaning of what he sees. He compares the mystery of grace to an indited epistle, which an unschooled man viewing, he cannot read it, he cannot understand it; he knows it is paper and ink—but the sense, the matter, he knows not, he understands not. So unsanctified people, though they are ever so learned, and though they may perceive the letter of the mystery of Christ—yet they perceive not, they understand not, the mystery of grace, the inward sense of the Spirit, in the blessed Scriptures. Though the devil is the greatest scholar in the world, and though he has more learning than all the men in the world have—yet there are many thousand secrets and mysteries in the gospel of grace, that he knows not really, spiritually, feelingly, efficaciously, powerfully, thoroughly, savingly, etc.

Oh—but now Christ makes known himself, his mind, his grace, his truth, to his people, in a more clear, full, familiar, and friendly way: 2Sa 7:27, "For you, O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, have revealed to your servant;" so you read it in your books; but in the Hebrew it is thus: "Lord, you have revealed this to the ear of your servant." Now, the emphasis lies in that word, to the ear, which is left out in your books. When God makes known himself to his people, he reveals things to their ears, as we use to do to a friend who is intimate with us: we speak a thing to his ear. There is many a secret which Jesus Christ speaks in the ears of his servants, which others never come to be acquainted with: 2Co 4:6, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The six several gradations that are in this scripture are worthy of our most serious consideration. Here is, First, Knowledge; and, Secondly, The knowledge of the glory of God; and, Thirdly, The light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and, Fourthly, Shining; and, Fifthly, Shining into our hearts; and, Sixthly, Shining into our hearts in the face of Jesus Christ. And thus you see that the Lord reveals the secrets of himself, his kingdom, his truth, his grace, his glory, to the saints. But,

(3.) Thirdly, There are the secrets of his favor, the secrets of his special love, which he opens to them; the secret purposes of his heart to save them; and these are those great secrets, those "deep things of God," which none can reveal "but the Spirit of God." Now these great secrets, these deep things of God, God does reveal to his people by his Spirit: 1Co 2:9-12, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us." Now what are the things that are freely given to us of God—but our election, effectual calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification? And why has God given us his Spirit—but that we should know "the things that are freely given to us of God."

Some by secret in Psa 25:1-22, understand a particular assurance of God's favors, whereby happiness is secured to us, both for the present and for the future. They understand by secret, the sealing of the Spirit, the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name in it, "which none knows but he who has it." And so much those words, "He will show them his covenant," seems to import: for what greater secret can God impart to his people, than that of opening the covenant of grace to them in its freeness, fullness, sureness, sweetness, suitableness, everlastingness, and in sealing up his good pleasure, and all the spiritual and eternal blessings of the covenant to them?

Such as love and serve the Lord shall be of his cabinet-council, they shall know his soul-secrets, and be admitted into a very gracious familiarity and friendship with himself: John 14:21-23, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." God and Christ will keep house with them, and manifest the secrets of their love to those who are observant of their commands. And thus you see that the saints are the only people to whom God will reveal the secrets of his providence, the secrets of his kingdom, and the secrets of his love unto. Christ came out of the bosom of his Father, and he

opens all the secrets of his Father only to his bosom-friends. Now what an exceeding high honor is it for God to open the secrets of his love, the secrets of his promises, the secrets of his providences, the secrets of his counsels, and the secrets of his covenant—to his people!

Tiberius Caesar thought no man fit to know his secrets. And among the Persians none but noblemen, lords, and dukes, might be made partakers of state secrets; they esteeming secrecy a divine thing. But now such honor God has put upon all his saints, as to make them lords and nobles, and the only privy statesmen in the court of heaven. The highest honor and glory that earthly princes can put upon their subjects is to communicate to them their greatest secrets. Now this high honor and glory the King of kings has put upon his people; "For his secrets are with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant." It was a high honor to Elisha, 2Ki 6:12, that he could tell the secrets that were spoken in the king's bedchamber. Oh! what an honor must it then be for the saints to know the secrets that are spoken in the presence-chamber of the King of kings!

Now I appeal to the very consciences of all who fear the Lord, whether it be not a just, equal, righteous, and necessary thing, that the people of God should freely and fully lay open all the secrets of their hearts before the Lord, who has thus highly honored them, as to reveal the secrets of his providence, kingdom, and favor to them? Yes, I appeal to all serious and sincere Christians, whether it be not against the light and law of nature, and against the law of love, and law of friendship, to be reserved and close, yes, to hide our secrets from him who reveals his greatest and our choicest secrets to us? And if it is, why then do not you in secret lay open all your secret sins, and secret wants, and secret desires, secret fears, etc., to him who sees in secret? You know all secrets are to be communicated only in secret. None but fools will communicate secrets upon a stage, or before many. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly, Consider, that in times of great straits and trials, in times of great afflictions and persecutions, private prayer is the Christian's food and drink; it is his chief city of refuge; it is his shelter and hiding-place in a stormy day. When the saints have been driven by violent persecutions into holes, and caves, and dens, and deserts, and howling wildernesses, private prayer has been their food and drink, and Christ their only refuge. [Heb 11:37-38; Rev 12:6; Psa 102:6-14] When Esau came forth with hostile intentions against Jacob, secret prayer was Jacob's refuge: Gen 32:1-32, "Then Jacob prayed, 'O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O Lord, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper.'" Promises in private must be prayed over. God loves to be pleaded with upon his own word, when he and his people are alone. "Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children;" or upon the children, meaning he will put all to death. Some look upon the words to be a metaphor taken from fowlers, who kill and take away the young and the mothers together, contrary to that old law, Deu 22:6. Others say it is a phrase that does most lively represent the tenderness of a mother, who, seeing her children in distress, spares not her own body nor life, to hazard it for her children's preservation, by interposing herself, even to be massacred together with and upon them, Hos 10:14. When Jacob, and all that was near and dear unto him, were in eminent danger of being cut off by Esau, and those men of blood that were with him, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge against the rage and malice of the mighty. And so when Jeremiah was in a solitary and loathsome dungeon, private prayer was his food and drink, it was his only city of refuge: Jer 33:1-3, "While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the

Lord came to him a second time: "This is what the Lord says, he who made the earth, the Lord who formed it and established it--the Lord is his name: 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.'" When Jeremiah was in a lonesome, loathsome prison, God encourages him by private prayer, to seek for further discoveries and revelations of those choice and singular favors, which in future times he purposed to confer upon his people. So 2Ch 33:11-13, "So the Lord brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God." When Manasseh was in fetters in his enemy's country, when he was stripped of all his princely glory, and led captive into Babylon, he betakes himself to private prayer as his only city of refuge; and by this means he prevails with God for his restoration to his crown and kingdom.

Private prayer is a city of refuge that no power nor policy, no craft nor cruelty, no violence nor force, is ever able to take by surprise. Though the joint prayers of the people of God together were often obstructed and hindered in the times of the ten persecutions—yet they were never able to obstruct or hinder secret prayer, private prayer. When men and devils have done their worst, every Christian will be able to maintain his private prayer with heaven. Private prayer will shelter a Christian against all the national, domestic, and personal storms and tempests that may threaten him. When a man is lying upon a sickbed alone, or when a man is in prison alone, or when a man is with Job left upon the ash-heap alone, or when a man is with John banished for the testimony of Jesus into this or that island alone—oh then private prayer will be his food and drink, his shelter, his hiding-place, his heaven. When all other trades fail, this trade of private prayer will hold good. But,

[14.] Fourteenthly, Consider that God is omnipresent. [Jer 16:17; Job 34:21; Pro 5:21; Jer 32:19; Rev 2:23; Lam 3:66] We cannot get into any blind hole, or dark corner, or secret place—but the Lord has an eye there, the Lord will keep us company there: Mat 6:6, And your Father, who sees in secret, shall reward you openly." So Mat 6:18. There is not the darkest, dirtiest hole in the world into which a saint creeps—but God has a favorable eye there. God never lacks an eye to see our secret tears, nor an ear to hear our secret cries and groans, nor a heart to grant our secret requests; and therefore we ought to pour out our souls to him in secret: Psa 38:9, "Lord! all my desire is before you; and my groaning is not hidden from you." Though our private desires are ever so confused, though our private requests are ever so broken, and though our private groanings are ever so much hidden from men—yet God eyes them all, God records them all, and God puts them all upon the record-file of heaven, and will one day crown them with glorious answers and returns.

We cannot sigh out a prayer in secret—but he sees us; we cannot lift up our eyes to him at midnight—but he observes us. The eye which God has upon his people when they are in secret, is such a special tender eye of love, as opens his ear, his heart, and his hand, for their good: 1Pe 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers;" or, as the Greek has it, "his ears are unto their prayers. If their prayers are so faint, that they cannot reach up as high as heaven, then God will bow the heavens and come down to their

prayers." God's eye is upon every secret sigh, and every secret groan, and every secret tear, and every secret desire, and every secret pant of love, and every secret breathing of soul, and every secret melting and working of heart; all which should encourage us to be much in secret duties, in closet services. As a Christian is never out of the reach of God's hand, so he is never out of the view of God's eye.

If a Christian cannot hide himself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide himself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun? In every private duty, a Christian is still under the eye of God's omniscience. When we are in the darkest hole, God has windows into our bosoms, and observes all the secret actings of our inward man, 1Ti 2:8. The eye of God is not confined to this place or that, to this company or that; God has an eye upon his people as well when they are alone, as when they are among a multitude; as well when they are in a corner, as when they are in a crowd. Diana's temple was burnt down when she was busy at Alexander's birth, and could not be at two places at one time. But God is present both in paradise and in the wilderness, both in the family and in the closet, both in public and in private at the same time. God is an omnipresent God. As he is not confined to one place, so he is excluded from no place: Jer 23:24, "Can any man hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, says the Lord?"

Pro 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," or, "contemplating the evil and the good," as the Hebrew may be read. Now, to contemplate, is more than simply to behold; for contemplation adds to a simple apprehension, a deeper degree of knowledge, entering into the very inside of a matter; and so indeed does God discern the very inward intentions of the heart, and the most secret motions of the spirit. God is an infinite and immense being, whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. Now, if our God is omnipresent, then wherever we are, our God is present with us: if we are in prison alone with Joseph, our God is present with us there; or if we are in exile alone with David, our God is present with us there; or if we are alone in our closets, our God is present with us there. God sees us in secret; and therefore let us seek his face in secret. Though heaven is God's palace—yet it is not his prison. But,

[15.] Fifteenthly, He who willingly neglects private prayer shall certainly be neglected in his public prayer; he who will not call upon God in secret shall find by sad experience that God will neither hear him nor regard him in public. Neglect of private duties is the great reason why the hearts of many are so dead and dull, so formal and carnal, so barren and unfruitful under public ordinances. Oh that Christians would seriously lay this to heart! Certainly, that man or woman's heart is best in public—who is most frequent in private. They make most yearnings in public ordinances—who are most conscientiously exercised in closet duties. No man's graces rise so high, nor any man's experiences rise so high, nor any man's communion with God rises so high, nor any man's divine enjoyments rise so high, nor any man's springs of comfort rise so high, nor any man's hopes rise so high, nor any man's parts and gifts rise so high, etc., as theirs do, who conscientiously wait upon God in their closets before they wait upon him in the assembly of his people; and who when they return from public ordinances retire into their closets and look up to heaven for a blessing upon the public means.

It is certain that private duties fit the soul for public ordinances. He who makes conscience to wait upon God in private, shall find by experience that God will wonderfully bless public ordinances to him, Mic 2:7. My design is not to set up one ordinance of God above another, nor to cause one ordinance of God to clash with another—the public with the private, or the private with the public—but that every ordinance may have its proper place and right, the desires of my soul being to prize every ordinance, and to praise every ordinance, and to practice every ordinance, and to improve every ordinance, and to bless the Lord for every ordinance. But as ever you would see the beauty and glory of God in his sanctuary, as ever you would have public ordinances to be lovely and lively to your souls, as ever you would have your drooping spirits revived, and your languishing souls refreshed, and your weak graces strengthened, and your strong corruptions weakened under public ordinances—be more careful and conscientious in the performance of closet duties, Psa 63:1-3.

Oh how strong in grace! Oh how victorious over sin! Oh how dead to the world! Oh how alive to Christ! Oh how fit to live! Oh how prepared to die! might many a Christian have been, had they been but more frequent, serious, and conscientious in the discharge of closet-duties. Not but that I think there is a truth in that saying of Bede—the word church being rightly understood—namely, That he who comes not willingly to church shall one day go unwillingly to hell. But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, Consider, the times wherein we live call aloud for secret prayer. Hell seems to be broken loose, and men turned into incarnate devils; soul-damning wickednesses walk up and down the streets with a whore's forehead, without the least check or restraint: Jer 3:3, "You have a whore's forehead, you refuse to be ashamed!" Jer 6:15, "Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush!" They had sinned away shame, instead of being ashamed of sin. Continuance in sin had quite banished all sense of sin and all shame for sin, so that they would not allow nature to draw her veil of blushing before their great abominations. They were like to Caligula, a wicked emperor, who used to say of himself, that he loved nothing better about himself—than that he could not be ashamed. The same words are repeated in Jer 8:12. How applicable these scriptures are to the present time I will leave the prudent reader to judge. But what does the prophet do, now that they were as bold in sin and as shameless as so many harlots? That you may see in Jer 13:17 : "But if you will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places," or secrecies, "for your pride; and my eye shall weep sore" (Hebrew, weeping weep, or shedding tears shed tears; the doubling of the verb notes the bitter and grievous lamentation that he should make for them), "and run down with tears." Now that they were grown up to that height of sin and wickedness, that that they were above all shame and blushing; now they were grown so proud, so hardened, so obstinate, so rebellious, so bent on self destruction; that no mercies could melt them or allure them, nor any threatenings nor judgments could in any way terrify them or stop them. The prophet goes into a corner, he retires himself into the most secret places, and there he weeps bitterly, there he weeps as if he were resolved to drown himself in his own tears! When the springs of sorrow rise high, a Christian turns his back upon company, and retires himself into places of greatest privacy, that so he may the more freely and the more fully vent his sorrow and grief before the Lord. Ah, England, England! what pride, luxury, lasciviousness, licentiousness, wantonness, drunkenness, cruelties, injustice, oppressions, fornications, adulteries, falsehoods, hypocrisy, bribery, atheism, horrid blasphemies, and hellish impieties, are now to be found rampant in the midst of you! Ah, England! England! how are the

Lord's pure ordinances despised, Scriptures rejected, the Spirit resisted and derided, the righteous reviled, wickedness tolerated, and Christ many thousand times in a day by these cursed practices, afresh crucified! Ah, England! England! were our forefathers alive, how sadly would they blush to see such a horrid degenerate posterity as is to be found in the midst of you! How is our forefathers' generosity converted into riot and luxury, their frugality into pride and prodigality, their simplicity into subtlety, their sincerity into hypocrisy, their charity into cruelty, their chastity into fornication and wantonness, their sobriety into drunkenness, their plain-dealing into fraud, their works of compassion into works of oppression, and their love to the people of God into an utter enmity against the people of God! etc. And what is the voice of all these crying abominations—but every Christian to his closet, every Christian to his closet, and there weep, with weeping Jeremiah, bitterly, for all these great abominations whereby God is dishonored openly. Oh weep in secret for their sins who openly glory in their sins, which should be their greatest shame. Oh blush in secret for those who are past all blushing for their sins; for who knows but that the whole land may fare the better for the sakes of a few who are mourners in secret? But however it goes with the nation, such as mourn in secret for the abominations of the times, may be confident that when sweeping judgments shall come upon the land, the Lord will hide them in the secret chambers of his providence, he will set a secret mark of deliverance upon their foreheads, who mourn in secret for the crying sins of the present day, as he did upon theirs in Eze 9:4-6.

[17.] Seventeenthly, Consider that the near and dear relations that you stand in to the Lord, calls aloud for secret prayer.

You are his friends. John 15:14-15. Now, a true friend loves to visit his friend when he may find him alone, and enjoy privacy with him. A true friend loves to pour out his heart into the bosom of his friend when he has him in a corner, or in the field, or under a hedge.

You are his favorites; and what favorite is there that hides his secret from his prince? Do not all favorites open their hearts to their princes when they are alone?

You are his children; and what sincere child is there, who does not delight to be much with his father when he is alone, when nobody is by? Oh, how free and open are children when they have their parents alone, beyond what they are when company is present.

You are the spouse of Christ; and what spouse, what wife is there that does not love to be much with her husband when he is alone? True lovers are always best when they are most alone: "I belong to my lover, and his desire is for me. Come, my lover, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom—there I will give you my love." Song of Solomon 7:10-12. The spouse of Christ is very desirous to enjoy his company in the fields, that so, having her beloved alone, she might the more freely and the more secretly open her heart to him. As wives, when they are walking alone with their husbands in the fields, are more free to open their minds and the secrets of their hearts, than they are when in their houses with their children and servants about them—so it was with the spouse.

They have very great cause to question whether they are Christ's real friends, favorites, children, spouse—who seldom or never converse with Christ in their closets, who are shy of Christ when they are alone, who never accustom themselves to give Christ secret visits. What Delilah said to

Samson, Jdg 16:15, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you have not told me wherein your great strength lies" (the discovery of which secret at last cost him his life).

That, Christ may say to very many in our days: "How can you say you love me, when you never acquaint me with your secrets? How can you say you love me—when you never bestow any private visits upon me? How can you say that you are my friends, my faithful friends, my bosom-friends—when you never in private unbosom yourselves to me? How can you say that you are my favorites—when you can spend one week after another, and one month after another, and yet not let me know one of all your secrets; when every day you might have my ear in secret if you pleased? How can you say that you are my children—and yet be so closed and reserved as you are? How can you say you are my spouse—and yet never take any delight to open your hearts, your secrets, to me when I am alone?"

What Alexander said to one who was of his name—but a coward, 'Either lay down the name of Alexander—or fight like Alexander,' that I say to you, Either be frequent in closet duties, as becomes a Christian—or else lay down the name of a Christian; either unbosom yourselves in secret to Christ, as friends, favorites, children, spouses —or else lay down these names, etc. But,

[18.] Eighteenthly, Consider that God has set a special mark of favor, honor, and observation, upon those who have prayed in secret. As you may see in Moses, Exo 34:28; and in Abraham, Gen 21:33; and in Isaac, Gen 24:63; and in Jacob, Gen 32:24-29; and in David, Psa 55:16-17; and in Daniel, Dan 6:10; and in Paul, Acts 9:11; and in Cornelius, Acts 10:2; Acts 10:4; and in Peter, Acts 10:9-12; and in Manasseh, 2Ch 33:18-19. God has put all these worthies who have exercised themselves in secret prayer upon record, to their everlasting fame and honor. The Persians seldom write their king's name but in letters of gold. God has written, as I may say, their names in letters of gold—who have made conscience of exercising themselves in secret prayer. The precious names of those who have addicted themselves to closet-duties are as statues of gold, which the polluted breath of men can no ways stain; they are like so many shining suns which no clouds can darken; they are like so many sparkling diamonds which shine brightest in the darkest night. A Christian can never get into a hole, a corner, a closet, to pour out his soul before the Lord—but the Lord makes an honorable observation of him, and sets a secret mark of favor upon him, Eze 9:4-6. And how should this provoke all Christians to be much with God alone! The Romans were very ambitious of obtaining a great name, a great report, in this world; and why should not Christians be as divinely ambitious of obtaining a good name, a good report, in the eternal world? Heb 11:39. A good name is always better than a great name, and a name in heaven is infinitely better than a thousand names on earth; and the way to both these is to be much with God in secret. But,

[19.] Nineteenthly, Consider that Satan is a very great enemy to secret prayer. Secret prayer is a scourge, a hell to Satan. Every secret prayer adds to the devil's torment, and every secret sigh adds to his torment, and every secret groan adds to his torment, and every secret tear adds to his torment. When a child of God is on his knees in his secret addresses to God, oh the strange thoughts, the earthly thoughts, the wandering thoughts, the distracted thoughts, the hideous thoughts, the blasphemous thoughts—which Satan often injects into his soul! and all to draw him off from secret prayer. Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is in vain to seek God in secret; and at other times he tells the soul it is too late to seek God in secret; for the door of mercy is shut, and

there is no hope, no help for the soul. Sometimes he tells the soul that it is enough to seek God in public; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is futile to seek the Lord in private. Sometimes he tells the soul, that it is not elected, and therefore all his secret prayers shall be rejected; and at other times he tells the soul, that it is sealed up unto the day of wrath, and therefore a secret prayer can never reverse that seal; and all this to dishearten and discourage a poor Christian in his secret retirements.

Sometimes Satan will object to a poor Christian the greatness of his sins; and at other times he will object against a Christian the greatness of his unworthiness. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his lack of grace; and at other times he will object against a Christian his lack of gifts to manage such a duty as it should be managed. Sometimes he will object against a Christian his former straitenedness in secret prayer; and at other times he will object against a Christian the small yearnings that he makes of secret prayer; and all to work the soul out of love with secret prayer; yes, to work the soul to loathe secret prayer! So deadly an enemy is Satan to secret prayer. Oh, the strange fears, fancies, and conceits, that Satan often raises in the spirits of Christians, when they are alone with God in a corner; and all to work them to cast off private prayer. It is none of Satan's least designs to interrupt a Christian in his private communion with God.

Satan watches all a Christian's motions; so that he cannot turn into his closet, nor creep into any hole to converse privately with his God—but he follows him hard at heels, and will be still injecting one thing or another into the soul, or else objecting one thing or another against the soul. A Christian is as well able to count the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea—as he is able to number up the various devices and sleights which Satan uses to obstruct the soul's private addresses to God. Now from that great opposition that Satan makes against private prayer, a Christian may safely conclude these five things:

(1.) First, The excellency of private prayer. Certainly if it were not an excellent thing for a man to be in secret with God, Satan would never make such head against it.

(2.) Secondly, The necessity of private prayer. The more necessary any duty is to the internal and eternal welfare of a Christian, the more Satan will bestir himself to blunt a Christian's spirit in that duty.

(3.) Thirdly, The utility or profit that attends a conscientious discharge of private prayer. Where we are likely to gain most, there Satan loves to oppose most.

(4.) Fourthly, The prevalency of private prayer. If there were not a kind of omnipotency in it, if it were not able to do wonders in heaven, and wonders on earth, and wonders in the hearts and lives and ways of men—Satan would never have such an aching tooth against it as he has.

(5.) Fifthly, That God is highly honored by private prayer, or else Satan would never be so greatly enraged against it. This is certain. The more glory God has from any service we do, the more Satan will strive by all his wiles and sleights to take us, either off from that service, or so to interrupt us in that service—that God may have no honor, nor we no good, nor himself no hurt, by our private retirements. But, in the

[20.] Twentieth and last place, Consider, that you alone are the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore if you do not apply yourselves to private prayer, and to your secret retirements, that you may enjoy God in a corner—none will. It is only God's hidden ones, his secret ones—who are spirited, principled, and prepared to wait on God in secret: Exo 19:5, "Then shall you be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people." The Hebrew word signifies God's special jewels, God's proper ones, or God's secret ones—that he keeps in store for himself, and for his own special service and use. Princes lock up with their own hands in secret their most precious and costly jewels; and so does God his: Psa 135:4, "For the Lord has chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure," or for his secret gem. Psa 83:3, "They have taken crafty counsel against your people, and consulted against your hidden ones," or your secret ones; so called partly because God hides them in the secret of his tabernacle, Psa 31:20, and partly because God sets as high a value upon them as men do upon their hidden treasure, their secret treasure; yes, he makes more reckoning of them than he does of all the world besides! And so the world shall know, when God shall arise to revenge the wrongs and injuries that has been done to his secret ones. Neither are there any on earth who know so much of the secrets of his love, of the secrets of his counsels, of the secrets of his purposes, of the secrets of his heart—as his secret ones do. Neither are there any in all the world, who are under those secret influences, those secret assistances, those secret blessings, those secret anointings of the Spirit—as his secret ones are under. And therefore, no wonder if God calls them again, and again, and again, his secret ones.

Now, what can be more lovely or more desirable than to see their natures and their practices to answer to their names? They are the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and therefore how highly does it concern them to be much with God in secret, and to hide themselves with God in a corner! Shall Nabal's nature and practice answer to his name? 1Sa 25:25, "I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests." Nabal signifies a fool, a sot, a churl; it notes one that is void of wisdom and goodness; it signifies one whose mind, reason, judgment, and understanding is withered and decayed. Now, if you look into the story, you shall find that as face answers to face, so Nabal's nature and practice did echo and answer to his name. And why then, should not our natures and practices answer to our names also? We are called the Lord's secret ones, his hidden ones; and how highly therefore does it concern us to be much with God in secret! Why should there be any jarring or discord between our names and our practices?

It is observable that the practice and conduct of other saints have been answerable to their names. Isaac signifies laughter, and Isaac was a gracious son, a dutiful son, a son who kept clear of those abominations with which many of the patriarchs had defiled themselves, a son who proved matter of joy and laughter to his father and mother all their days. So Josiah signifies "the fire of the Lord;" and his practice did answer to his name. Witness the pulling down of Jeroboam's altar, and his burning of the vessels that were made for Baal, and his pulling down the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had set up, and his burning the grove at the brook Kedron, and his grinding it to powder, and his breaking down the houses of the Sodomites, and his defiling of the high places where the priests had burnt incense, and his breaking in pieces the images, and cutting down the groves, and filling their places with the bones of men, etc., 1Ki 13:2; 2Ki 23:4-21. So Joshua signifies "a Savior;" and his practice was answerable to his name. Though he could not save his people from their sins—yet he often saved them from their sufferings. Great and many were the

deliverances, the salvations, that were instrumentally brought about by Joshua, as all know who have read the book of Joshua. So John signifies "gracious," and his practice was answerable to his name. He was so gracious in his teachings and in his walkings that he gained favor in the very eyes of his enemies. By all these instances, and by many more that might be given, you see that other saints' practices have answered to their names. Therefore, let everyone of us see that our practices do also answer to our names, that as we are called the Lord's secret ones, so we may be much with God in secret, that so there may be a blessed harmony between our names and our practices; and we may never repent another day that we have been called God's secret ones, his "hidden ones," but yet never made conscience of maintaining secret communion with God in our closets. And thus you see that there are no less than twenty arguments to persuade you to closet prayer—and to maintain private communion with God in a corner.

02A.05. To those who are strangers to closet prayer

To those who are strangers to closet prayer Is it so that closet prayer or private prayer is such an indispensable duty, that Christ himself has laid upon all who are not willing to lie under the woeful brand of being hypocrites? Then this doctrine condemns five sorts of people.

(1.) First, It looks sourly and sadly upon all those who put off secret prayer, private prayer, until they are moved to it by the Spirit; for by this sad delusion many have been kept from secret prayer many weeks, many months; oh that I might not say, many years! Though it be a very at season to pray when the Spirit moves us to pray—yet it is not the only season to pray, Isa 62:1; Psa 123:1-2; Gal 4:6. He who makes piety his business, will pray as daily for daily grace as he does pray daily for daily bread: Luk 18:1, "And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." 1Th 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." Eph 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Rom 12:12, "Persistent in prayer." The Greek is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, which never give up the chase until they have got their prey. A Christian must not only pray—but hold on in prayer, until he has got the heavenly prize.

We are always needing; and therefore we had need be praying always. The world is always alluring; and therefore we had need be always a-praying. Satan is always a-tempting; and therefore we had need be always a-praying. We are always a-sinning; and therefore we had need be always a-praying. We are in dangers always; and therefore we had need be praying always. We are dying always, 1Co 15:31; and therefore we had need be praying always. Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live—but he begins to die. When one was asked why he prayed six times a day, he only gave this answer, "I must die, I must die, I must die." Dying Christians had need be praying Christians, and those who are always a-dying had need be always a-praying. Certainly prayerless families are graceless families, and prayerless people are graceless people, Jer 10:25. It were better ten thousand times that we had never been born into the world, than that we should go stillborn out of the world. But,

(2.) Secondly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those who pray not at all, neither in their families nor in their closets. Among all God's children, there is not one possessed with a dumb devil. Prayerless people are forsaken of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and every breath they draw liable to all temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments. Prayer is that part of natural worship due to God, which none will deny but stark atheists, Psa 14:1.

It is observable that among the worst of men, Turks, and the worst of Turks, the Moors, it is usual with them to pray six times a day.

(1.) Before the daybreak they pray for day.

(2.) When it is day, they give thanks for day.

(3.) At noon, they thank God for half the day past.

(4.) After that, they pray for a good sunset.

(5.) And after that, they thank God for the day past. And then, sixthly and lastly, they pray for a good night after their day.

Certainly these very Moors will one day rise in judgment against them who cast off prayer, who live in a total neglect of prayer, who allow so many suns and moons to rise and set upon their heads without any solemn calling upon God. I have read of a man who, being sick, and afraid of death, fell to his prayers; and, to move God to hear him, told him "that he was no common beggar, and that he had never troubled him with his prayers before; and if he would but hear him at that time, he would never trouble him again." This world is full of such profane, blasphemous, atheistical wretches. But,

(3.) Thirdly, This truth looks very sourly and sadly upon such who are all for public prayer—but never regard private prayer; who are all for going up to the temple—but never care for going into their closets. This is most palpable hypocrisy, for a man to be very zealous for public prayer—but very cold and careless as to private prayer. He who pretends conscience in the one, and makes no conscience of the other, is an hypocrite indeed, Mat 23:5, and Mat 6:1-2; Mat 6:5. And the devil knows well enough how to make his markets of all such hypocrites that are all for the prayers of the church—but total Gallios as to private prayer, Acts 18:17. Such as perform all their private devotion in the church—but not in the chamber, do put too great a slight upon the authority of Christ, who says, "When you pray, enter into your chamber." He does not say, "When you pray, go to the church," but, "When you pray, go into your chamber." But,

(4.) Fourthly, This truth looks sadly and sourly upon such who in their closets pray with a loud clamorous voice. A Christian should shut both the door of his closet and the door of his lips so close, that none should hear without what he says within. "Enter into your closet," says Christ, "and when you have shut your door, pray." But what need a man shut his closet door, if he may pray with a clamorous voice, if he makes such a noise as all in the street or all in the house may hear him? The hen, when she lays her eggs, gets into a hole, a corner; but then she makes such a noise with her cackling, that she tells all in the house where she is, and about what she is. Such Christians who in their closets do imitate the hen, do rather pray to be seen, heard, and observed by men, than out of any noble design to glorify God, or to pour out their souls before him who sees in secret.

Sometimes children, when they are vexed, or afraid of the rod, will run behind the door, or get into a dark hole, and there they will lie crying, and sighing, and sobbing, that all the house may know where they are. Oh it is a childish thing so to cry, and sigh, and sob in our closets, as to tell all in the house where we are, and about what work we are. Well! Christians, for an effectual redress of this evil, frequently and seriously consider of these five things.

[1.] First, That God sees in secret.

[2.] Secondly, That God has a quick ear, and is taken more with the voice of the heart, than he is with the clamor of the mouth. God can easily hear the most secret breathings of your soul. God is more curious in observing the messages delivered by the heart, than he is those who are only delivered by the mouth. He who prays aloud in private, seems to tell others, that God does not understand the secret desires, and thoughts, and workings of his people's hearts.

[3.] Thirdly, It is not fit, it is not convenient nor expedient, that any should be acquainted with our secret prayers—but God and our own souls. Now it is as much our duty to look to what is expedient, as it is to look to what is lawful, 2Co 8:10; 1Co 6:12, "All things are lawful unto me—but all things are not expedient." So 1Co 10:23, "All things are lawful for me—but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me—but all things edify not." Now it is so far from being expedient, that it is very high folly for men to lay open their secret infirmities unto others, that will rather deride them, than lift up a prayer for them.

[4.] Fourthly, Loud prayers may be a hindrance and disturbance to others, who may be busied near us.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Hannah prayed and yet spoke never a word. Her heart was full—but her voice was not heard, 1Sa 1:11. Moses prays and cries, and yet lets fall never a word: Exo 14:15, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Why do you cry unto me?" Moses did not cry with any audible voice—but with inward sighs, and secret breathings, and wrestlings of soul; and these inward and secret cries, which made no noise, carried the day with God; for Moses is heard and answered, and his people are delivered. Oh the prevalency of those prayers which make no noise in the ears of others!

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon those who do all they can to hinder and discourage others from this duty of duties, private prayer; and that either by deriding or vilifying of the duty, or else by denying of it to be a duty, or else by their daily neglect of this duty, or else by denying those who are under them, time and opportunity for the discharge of this duty. In Mat 23:13, you have a woe pronounced against those who will neither go to heaven themselves, nor allow others to go, who are willing to enter into an everlasting rest. And so I say—Woe to those parents, and woe to those husbands, and woe to those masters and mistresses—who will neither pray in their closets themselves, nor allow their children, nor their wives, nor their servants, to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner. O sirs! how will you answer this to your consciences, when you shall lie upon a dying bed! And how will you answer it to the Judge of all the world, when you shall stand before a judgment seat? Certainly all their sins, and all their neglects, and all their spiritual losses, that might have been prevented by their secret prayers, by their closet communion with God—will one day be charged upon your account! And oh that you were all so wise as to lay these things so to heart, that you may never hinder any who are under your care or charge, from private prayer any more!

02A.06. Six objections stated and answered

Six objections stated and answered

Objection 1. But many will be ready to object and say, We have much business upon our hands, and we cannot spare time for private prayer; we have so much to do in our shops, and in our warehouses, and abroad with others, that we cannot spare time to wait upon the Lord in our closets.

Now to this objection I shall give these eight answers, that this objection may never have a resurrection more in any of your hearts.

(1.) First, What are all those businesses that are upon your hands, compared to those businesses and weighty affairs, which did lie upon the hands of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Daniel, Elijah, Nehemiah, Peter, Cornelius? and yet you find all these worthies exercising themselves in private prayers. And the king is commanded every day to read some part of God's word, notwithstanding all his great and weighty employments, Deu 17:18-20. Now certainly, sirs, your great businesses are little more than ciphers compared with theirs. And if there were any on earth that might have pleaded an exemption from private prayer, upon the account of business, of much business, of great business, these might have done it; but they were more honest and more noble than to neglect so choice a duty, upon the account of much business. These brave hearts made all their public employments stoop to private prayer; they would never allow their public employments to tread private prayer under foot. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, No men's outward affairs did ever more prosper than theirs did, who devoted themselves to private prayer, notwithstanding their many and great worldly employments. Witness the prosperity and outward flourishing estates of Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Nehemiah, David, Daniel, and Cornelius. These were much with God in their closets, and God blessed their blessings to them, Gen 22:17. How did their cups overflow! What signal favors did God heap upon them and theirs! No families have been so prospered, protected, and graced, as theirs who have maintained secret communion with God in a corner, 1Ch 11:9. Private prayer does best expedite our temporal affairs. He who prays well in his closet, shall be sure to speed well in his shop, or at his plough, or whatever else he turns his hand unto, 1Ti 4:8. It is true, Abimelech was rich as well as Abraham, and so was Laban rich as well as Jacob, and Saul was a king as well as David, and Julian was an emperor as well as Constantine; but it was only Abraham, Jacob, David, and Constantine, who had their blessings blessed unto them; all the rest had their blessings cursed unto them, Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2. They had many good things—but they had not "the good will of him who dwelt in the bush" with what they had; and therefore all their mercies were but bitter sweets unto them.

Though all the sons of Jacob returned laden from Egypt with grain and money in their sacks—yet Benjamin alone had the silver cup in the mouth of his sack. So though the men of the world have their grain and their money, etc.—yet it is only God's Benjamins who have the silver cup, the grace

cup, the cup of blessing, as the apostle calls it, for their portion, 1Co 10:16. O sirs! as ever you would prosper and flourish in the world; as ever you would have your water turned into wine, your temporal mercies into spiritual benefits, be much with God in your closets. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, It is ten to one but that the objector every day fools away, or trifles away, or idles away, or sins away—one hour in each day—and why then should he object the lack of time? There are none that toil and moil and busy themselves most in their worldly employments—but do spend an hour or more in a day to little or no purpose, either in gazing about, or in dallying, or toying, or trifling, or in telling of stories, or in busying themselves in other men's matters, or in idle visits, or in smoking the pipe, etc. And why then should not these men redeem an hour's time in a day for private prayer, out of that time which they usually spend so vainly and idly? Can you, notwithstanding all your great worldly employments, find an hour in the day to catch flies in, as Domitian the emperor did? and to play the fool in? and cannot you find an hour in the day to wait on God in your closets?

There were three special faults whereof Cato professed himself to have seriously repented: one was, traveling by water when he might have gone by land; another was, trusting a secret in a woman's bosom; but the main was, spending an hour unprofitably. This heathen will one day rise up in judgment against them who, notwithstanding their great employments, spend many hours in a week unprofitably, and yet cry out that they have so much to do on earth, that they have no time to look up to heaven.

It was a base and sordid spirit in that King Sardanapalus, who spent much of his time among women in knitting and playing cards, which should have been spent in ruling and governing his kingdom. So it is a base sordid spirit in any, to spend any of their time in toying and trifling, and then to cry out, that they have so much business to do in the world, that they have no time for closet-prayer, they have no time to serve God, nor to save their own precious and immortal souls. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, No man dares plead this objection before the Lord Jesus in the great day of account, Ecc 11:9; Rom 14:10; 2Co 5:10. And why then should any man be so childish and foolish, so ignorant and impudent to plead that before men, which is not pleadable before the judgment-seat of Christ. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy forever, never put off your own consciences nor others' with any pleas, arguments, or objections now, that you dare not own and stand by, when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and when you shall appear before the whole court of heaven, etc. In the great day of account, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest, and God shall call men to a reckoning before angels, men, and devils, for the neglect of private prayer; all guilty people will be found speechless: there will not be a man or woman found, who shall dare to stand up and say, "Lord, I would have waited upon you in my closet—but that I had so much business to do in the world, that I had no time to enjoy secret communion with you in a corner." It is the greatest wisdom in the world, to plead nothing by way of excuse in this our day, that we dare not plead in the great day. But,

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, That it is our duty to redeem time from all our secular businesses for private prayer. All sorts of Christians, whether bond or free, rich or poor, high or low, superiors or inferiors, are expressly charged by God to redeem time for prayer, for private prayer, as well as for other holy exercises: Col 4:2-3, "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for

us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" But here some may object and say, We have so much business to do in the world that we have no time for prayer. The apostle answers this objection in Col 4:5, "Walk in wisdom towards those who are without, redeeming the time." So Eph 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil;" or buying out, or gaining the time. The words are a metaphor taken from merchants, who prefer the least profit that may be gained, before their pleasures or delights, closely following their business while the markets are at best. A merchant when he comes to a mart or fair, takes the first season and opportunity of buying his commodities; he puts it not off to the hazard of an evening, or to the next morning, in hopes to have a better bargain—but he improves the present season, and buys before the market is over.

Others carry the words thus: "Purchase at any rate all occasions and opportunities of doing good, that so you may thereby, in some sort, redeem that precious jewel of time which you have formerly lost." As travelers who have loitered by the way, or stayed long at their inn, when they find night coming upon them, they mend their pace, and go as many miles in an hour as they did before in many. Though time let slip is physically irrecoverable—yet in a moral consideration, it is accounted as regained, when men double their care, diligence, and endeavors to redeem it. The best Christian is he who is the greatest monopolizer of time for private prayer. No Christian can be compared to him who redeems time from his worldly occasions and his lawful comforts and recreations, to be with God in his closet.

David having tasted of the sweetness, goodness, and graciousness of God, cannot keep his bed—but will borrow some time from his sleep, that he might take some turns in paradise, and pour out his soul in prayer and praises, when no eye was open to see him, nor no ear open to hear him—but all were asleep round about him, Psa 63:6. Psa 119:62, "At midnight will I arise to give thanks unto you." Psa 119:147, "I rise before dawn and cry for help. " David was up and at private prayer before daybreak. David was no sluggish Christian, no slothful Christian, no lazy Christian; he was accustomed to be in his closet when others were sleeping in their beds. So Psa 119:148, "My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises." So Psa 130:6, "My soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning." Look! as the weary sentinel in a dark, cold, wet night, waits and peeps, and peeps and waits for the appearance of the morning; so David did wait and peep, and peep and wait for the first and fittest season to pour out his soul before God in a corner. David would never allow his worldly business to jostle out holy exercises; he would often borrow time from the world for private prayer—but he would never borrow time from private prayer to bestow it upon the world.

Mr. Bradford, the martyr, counted that hour lost wherein he did not some good, either with his pen, tongue, or purse.

Ignatius, when he heard a clock strike, would use to say, "Now I have one hour more to answer for." So the primitive Christians would redeem some time from their sleep, that they might be with God in their closets, as Clemens observes. And I have read of Theodosius the emperor, that after the variety of worldly employments relating to his civil affairs in the day time were over, how he was accustomed to consecrate the greatest part of the night to the studying of the Scriptures and private prayer; to which purpose he had a lamp so artificially made, that it supplied itself with oil,

that so he might no way be interrupted in his private retirements. That time ought to be redeemed, is a lesson that has been taught by the very heathens themselves. It was the saying of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, "Know time, lose not a minute." And so Theophrastus used to say, that "Time is of precious cost." And so Seneca: "Time is the only thing," says he, "that we can innocently be covetous of; and yet there is nothing of which many are more lavishly and profusely wasteful." And Chrestus always counted time so precious, that when he had misspent his time all the day, he would redeem it at night. When Titus Vespasian, who revenged Christ's blood on Jerusalem, returned victor to Rome, remembering one night as he sat at supper with his friends, that he had done no good that day, he uttered this memorable and praiseworthy apophthegm, "My friends, I have lost a day."

Chilo, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the hardest thing in the world to be done, answered, "To use and employ a man's time well."

Cato held, that an account must be given, not only of our labor—but also of our leisure. And Elian gives this testimony of the Lacedemonian, "that they were hugely covetous of their time, spending it all about necessary things, and allowing no citizen either to be idle or play." And, says another, "We trifle with that which is most precious, and throw away that which is our greatest interest to redeem."

Certainly, these heathens will rise in judgment, not only against Domitian the Roman emperor, who spent much of his time in killing of flies; nor only against Archimedes, who spent his time in drawing lines on the ground when his country was taken captive; nor against Artaxerxes, who spent his time in carving handles for knives; nor only against Solyman the great Turk, who spent his time in making notches of horn for bows; nor only against Eropas, a Macedonian king, who spent his time in making of lanthorns; nor only against Hyrcanus the king of Parthia who spent his time in catching of moles; but also against many Christian professors who, instead of redeeming of precious time, do trifle and fool away much of their precious time at the mirror, the comb, the lute, the violin, the pipe, or at vain sports, and foolish pastimes, or by idle jestings, immoderate sleeping, and superfluous feasting, etc. O sirs! good hours, and blessed opportunities for closet prayer, are merchandise of the highest rate and price; and therefore, whoever has a mind to be rich in grace, and to be high in glory, should buy up that merchandise, they should be still a-redeeming precious time. O sirs! we should redeem time for private prayer out of our eating time, our drinking time, our sleeping time, our buying time, our selling time, our sinning time, our sporting time, rather than neglect our closet communion with God, etc. But,

(6.) Sixthly, I answer, Closet prayer is either a duty or it is no duty. Now that it is a duty, I have so strongly proved, I suppose, that no man nor devil can fairly or honestly deny it to be a duty. And therefore, why do men cry out of their great business? Alas! duty must be done whatever business is left undone; duty must be done, or the man who neglects it will be undone forever. It is a vain thing to object business, when a required duty is to be performed; and, indeed, if the bare objecting of business, of much business, were enough to excuse men from duty, I am afraid that there are but few duties of the gospel—but men would endeavor to evade under a pretense of business, of much business. He who pretends business to evade private prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade family prayer; and he who pretends business to evade family prayer, will be as ready to pretend business to evade public prayer.

Well, sirs! remember what became of those who excused themselves out of heaven, by their carnal apologies, and secular businesses: Luk 14:16-24. "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'" The true reason why they would not come to the supper that the King of kings had invited them to, was not because they had bought farms and oxen—but because their farms and oxen had bought them. The things of the world and their carnal relations had taken up so much room in their hearts and affections, that they had no stomach to heaven's dainties; and therefore it is observable what Christ adds at the end of the parable, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Luk 14:26-27. By these words, it is evident, that it was not simply the farm nor the oxen, nor the wife— but a foolish, inordinate, carnal love and esteem of these things, above better and greater blessings, that made them refuse the gracious invitation of Christ. They refused the grace and mercy of God offering in the gospel, under a pretense of worldly business; and God peremptorily concludes, that not a man of them should taste of his supper. And indeed what can be more just and righteous, than that they should never so much as taste of spiritual and eternal blessings, who prefer their earthly business before heaven's dainties; who, with the Reubenites, prefer a country commodious for the feeding of their cattle, before an interest in the land of promise.

Private prayer is a work of absolute necessity, both to the bringing of the heart into a good frame, and to the keeping of the heart in a good frame. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of sin, and for the preventing of sin, and for the embittering of sin, and for the weakening of sin, and for the purging away of sin. It is of absolute necessity, both for the discovery of grace, and for a full exercise of grace, and for an eminent increase of grace. It is of absolute necessity to arm us, both against inward and outward temptations, afflictions, and sufferings. It is of absolute necessity to fit us for all other duties and services, etc. For a man to glorify God, to save his own soul, and to further his own everlasting happiness, is a work of the greatest necessity.

Now private prayer is such a work; and therefore why should any man plead business, great business, when a work of such absolute necessity is before him? If a man's child or wife were dangerously sick, or wounded, or near to death, he would never plead, "I have business, I have a great deal of business to do, and therefore I cannot stay with my child, my wife; and I have no time to go or send to the physician," etc. Oh no! but he would rather argue thus: "It is absolutely necessary that I should look after the preservation of the life of my child, my wife, and this I will attend, whatever becomes of my business." O sirs! your souls are of greater concernment to you than the lives of all the wives and children in the world; and therefore these must be attended, these must be saved, whatever business is neglected. But,

(7.) Seventhly, I answer, That God did never appoint or design any man's ordinary, particular calling to thrust private prayer out of door. That it is a great sin for any professor to neglect his particular calling under any religious pretense, is evident enough by these scriptures: Exo 20:9, "Six days shall you labor, and do all your work;" 1Co 7:20, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;" 2Th 3:10-12, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are

some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all—but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread;" 1Th 4:11-12, "And that you study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that you may walk honestly toward those who are outside, and that you may have lack of nothing;" Eph 4:28, "But rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him who needs;" 1Ti 5:8, "But if any provides not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ was a plain downright carpenter, and was laborious in that particular calling until he entered upon the public ministry, as all the ancients do agree, Mark 6:3; Mat 13:55-56. And we read also that all the patriarchs had their particular callings. Abel was a keeper of sheep, Gen 4:2; Noah was a farmer, Gen 5:29; the sons of Jacob were shepherds and keepers of cattle, Gen 46:34, etc.; and all the apostles, before they were called to the work of the ministry, had their particular callings. By the law of Mahomet, the great Turk himself is bound to exercise some manual trade or occupation.

Solon made a law, that the son should not be bound to relieve his father when old, unless he had set himself in his youth to some occupation. And at Athens, every man gave a yearly account to the magistrate by what trade or course of life he maintained himself, which, if he could not do, he was banished. And it is by all writers condemned as a very great vanity in Dionysius, who would needs be the best poet; and Caligula, who would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, who would needs be the best fiddler; and so became the three worst princes, by minding more other men's business than their own particular calling. But for a man to evade or neglect private prayer under pretense of his particular calling, is agreeable to no scripture, yes, it is contrary to very many scriptures, as is evident by the many arguments formerly cited. Certainly no man's calling is a calling away from God or godliness. It never entered into the heart of God that our particular callings should ever drive out of doors our general calling of Christianity. Look! as our general calling must not eat up our particular calling, so our particular calling must not eat up our general calling. Certainly our particular calling must give place to our general calling. Did not the woman of Samaria leave her waterpot, and run into the city, and say, "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" John 4:28-29. Did not the shepherds leave their flocks in the field, and go to Bethlehem, and declare the good tidings of great joy that they had heard of the angel, namely, "That there was born that day, in the city of David, a Savior, who was Christ the Lord"? Luk 2:8-21. And did not Christ commend Mary for that holy neglect of her particular calling, when she sat at his feet, and heard his word? Luk 10:38, et seq. And what do all these instances show—but that our particular callings must give the right hand to the general calling of Christianity? Certainly the works of our general calling are far more great and glorious, more eminent and excellent, more high and noble—than the works of our particular callings are; and therefore it is much more tolerable for our general calling to borrow time from our particular calling, than it is for our particular calling to borrow time from our general calling. Certainly those men are very ignorant or very profane, who either think themselves so closely tied up to follow their particular callings six days in the week, as that they must not intermeddle with any pious services, or who think their particular callings to be a gulf or a grave designed by God to swallow up private prayer in.

God, who is the Lord of time, has reserved some part of our time to himself every day. Though the Jews were commanded to labor six days of the week—yet they were commanded also to offer up morning and evening sacrifice daily, Deu 6:6-8; Exo 29:38-39; Num 28:3. The Jews divided the day into three parts: The first, time for prayer. The second, time for the reading of the Scriptures. And the third, time for the works of their lawful callings. As bad as the Jews were—yet every day they set a part of the day apart for religious exercises. Certainly they are worse than Jews, who spend all their time about their particular callings, and shut closet-prayer quite out of doors. Certainly that man's soul is in a very ill case, who is so entangled with the incumbrances of the world, that he can spare no time for private prayer. If God is the Lord of your mercies, the Lord of your time, and the Lord of your soul, how can you, with any equity or honor, put off his service under a pretense of much business? That man is lost, that man is cursed, who can find time for anything—but none to meet with God in his closet. That man is doubtless upon the brink of ruin, whose worldly business eats up all thoughts of God, of Christ, of heaven, of eternity, of his soul, and of his soul concernments. But,

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, I answer, The more worldly business lies upon your hand, the more need have you to keep close to your closet. Much business lays a man open to many sins, and to many snares, and to many temptations. Now, the more sins, snares, and temptations a man's business lays him open to, the more need that man has to be much in private prayer, that his soul may be kept pure from sin, and that his foot may not be taken in the devil's trap, and that he may stand fast in the hour of temptation. Private prayer is so far from being a hindrance to a man's business, that it is the way of ways to bring down a blessing from heaven upon a man's business, Psa 1:2-3; Psa 127:1-2; Psa 128:1-2; as the first fruits that God's people gave to him brought down a blessing from heaven upon all the rest, Deu 26:10-11. Prayer and provender never hinder a journey.

Private prayer is like to Jacob, which brought down a blessing from heaven upon all that Laban had, Gen 30:27; Gen 30:30. Private prayer gives a man a sanctified use, both of all his earthly comforts, and of all his earthly business; and this David and Daniel found by experience: and therefore it was not their great public employments which could take them off from their private duties. Time spent in heavenly employments, is no time lost from worldly business, Deu 28:1-8. Private prayer makes all we take in hand successful. Closet-prayer has made many rich—but it never made any man poor or beggarly in this world. No man on earth knows what may be the emergencies, or the occurrences of a day: Pro 27:1, "Boast not yourself of tomorrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth." Every day is as it were a great-bellied day; every day is as it were with child of something—but what it will bring forth, whether a cross or a comfort, no man can tell; as while a woman is with child, no man can tell what kind of birth it will be. No man knows what mercies a day may bring forth, no man knows what miseries a day may bring forth; no man knows what good a day may bring forth, no man knows what evil a day may bring forth; no man knows what afflictions a day may bring forth, no man knows what temptations a day may bring forth; no man knows what liberty a day may bring forth, no man knows what bonds a day may bring forth; no man knows what success a day may bring forth, no man knows what failure a day may bring forth; and therefore, a man had need be every day in his closet with God, that he may be prepared and fitted to entertain and improve all the occurrences, successes, and emergencies that may attend him in the course of his life. And let thus much suffice for answer to this first objection. But,

Objection 2. Secondly, Others may object and say, Sir, we grant that private prayer is an indispensable duty which lies upon the people of God; but we are servants, and we have no time that we can call our own, and our master's business is such as will not allow us any time for private prayer, and therefore we hope we may be excused.

Solution (1.) First, The text is all inclusive, and not limited to any sort or rank of people, whether high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, servant or master. "But you, when you pray, enter into your closet; and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret." Here are three yous—you, you, you—which are to be understood as all inclusive. You servant as well as you master, you bondman as well as you freeman, you poor man as well as you rich man, you maid as well as you mistress, you child as well as you father, you wife as well as you husband. Private prayer is an indispensable duty, which lies upon all sorts and ranks of people. A man may as well say that that pronoun you, that runs through the ten commandments—Exo 20:3-18, "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make unto you any engraved image. You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Six days shall you labor. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's," etc.—relates to the rich, and not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to the free and not to those who are in bonds, etc., as he may say, that the three yous in the text relates to the rich and not to the poor, to masters and not to servants, to those who are free but not to those who are bound; but certainly there is no man in his wits that will say so, that will affirm such a thing. Doubtless this pronoun you reaches every man, of whatever rank or place he is in this world. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That the first, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth answers that are given to the first objection, are here very applicable; and oh that all masters and servants were so wise, so serious, and so ingenuous, as to lay all those answers warm on their own hearts! It might be a means to prevent much sin, and to bespeak masters and mistresses to give their pious servants a little more time to lift up their hearts to Christ in a corner. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, If you are a servant that have liberty to choose a new master, you were better remove your station than live under such a master's roof, who is such an enemy to God, to Christ, to true religion, to himself, and to the eternal welfare of your poor soul—as that he will not give you half an hour's time in a day to spend in your chamber, your closet; though the glory of God, the good of his own family, and the everlasting happiness of your own soul, is concerned in it, Psa 84:10; Psa 120:5. It is better for you to shift your master, than to neglect your duty: 1Co 7:21, Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you--although if you can gain your freedom, do so."

Laban's house was full of idols. Great houses are often so. Jacob's tent was little—but the true worship of God was in it. It is infinitely better to live in Jacob's tent, than in Laban's house. It is best being with such masters where we may have least of sin, and most of God; where we may have the most helps, the best examples, and the choicest encouragements to be holy and happy. The pious servant should be as careful in the choice of his master, as the pious master is careful in the

choice of his servant. Gracious servants are great blessings to the families where they live; and that master may well be called the unhappy master, who will rather part with a gracious servant, than spare him a little time in a day to pour out his soul before the Lord in a corner. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, If you are a gracious servant, then you are spirited and principled by God, to this very purpose, that you may cry, 'Abba, Father!' when you are alone, when you are in a corner, and no eye sees you—but his who sees in secret, Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; 1Co 6:19; 2Ti 1:14. If you are a gracious servant, then you have received not the spirit of the world—but the Spirit who is of God, 1Co 2:12. Now, he who has this tree of life, he has also the fruit that grows upon this tree: Gal 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," etc. Now, grace is called, not the works of the Spirit— but the fruits of the Spirit.

(1.) Because all grace is derived from the Spirit as the fruit is derived from the root. And,

(2.) To note the pleasantness and delightfulness of grace, for what is more pleasant and delightful than sweet and wholesome fruits? Song of Solomon 4:16; Song of Solomon 6:2.

(3.) To note the profit and advantage that does redound to those who have the Spirit; for as many grow rich by the fruits of their gardens and orchards, so many grow rich in grace, in holiness, in comfort, in spiritual experiences, by the fruits of the Spirit. Now why has God given you his Spirit, and why has he laid into your soul a stock of supernatural graces—but that you may be every way qualified, disposed, and fitted for private prayer, and to maintain secret communion with God in a corner?

Certainly God never gave any poor servant a talent of gifts, or a talent of grace—but in order to his driving of a secret trade heavenward.

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, Though king Darius had made a decree that none should ask any petition of any God or man, for thirty days, upon the penalty of being cast into the den of lions—yet Daniel, who was both a subject and a servant to king Darius, and one upon whose hands the chief and greatest affairs of the kingdom did lie, kept up his private devotions. In Dan 6:1-2, you will find that Daniel had abundance of great and weighty employments upon his hands; he was set over the whole affairs of the whole empire of Persia, and he with two other presidents, of whom himself was chief, were to receive the accounts of the whole kingdom from all those hundred and twenty princes, which in the Persian monarchy were employed in all public businesses. And yet, notwithstanding such a multiplicity of business as lay upon his hands, and notwithstanding his servile condition—yet he was very careful to redeem time for private prayer; yes, it is very observable that the heart of Daniel, in the midst of all his mighty businesses, was so much set upon private prayer, upon his secret retirements for religious exercises, that he runs the hazard of losing all his honors, profits, pleasures, yes, and life itself, rather than he would be deprived of convenient time and opportunities to wait upon God in his chamber. Certainly Daniel will one day rise in judgment against all those subjects and servants who think to evade private prayer by their pleas of much business, and of their being servants, etc. But,

(6.) Sixthly, I answer, If you who are gracious servants, notwithstanding your masters' businesses, cannot redeem a little time to wrestle with God in a corner, what singular thing do you do, more than others? Do you hear? So do others. Do you read? So do others. Do you follow your masters

to public prayers? So do others. Do you join with your masters in family prayers? So do others. Oh! but now gracious servants should go beyond all other servants in the world, they should do singular things for God: Mat 5:47, What do you do, more than others?" That is, 'What extraordinary thing do you do? What more ordinary than to find servants follow their masters to public prayers and to family prayers? Oh! but now to find poor servants to redeem a little time from their masters' business to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner—this is not ordinary, yes, this is extraordinary, and this does wonderfully well befit gracious servants. Oh! that all men's servants, who are servants to the most high God, would seriously consider,

[1.] How singularly they are privileged by God above all other servants in the world. They are called, adopted, reconciled, pardoned, justified before the throne of God, which other servants are not, etc., 1Co 3:22-23. And why then should not such servants be singular in their services, who are so singular in their privileges?

[2.] Secondly, Gracious servants are made partakers of a more excellent nature than other servants are. 2Pe 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be made partakers of the divine nature." The apostle in this expression does not aim at any essential change and conversion of our substance into the nature of God and Christ—but only at the elevation and dignifying of our nature by Christ. Though that real, that near, that dear, that choice, that mysterious, that peculiar, that singular, union that Christians have with Christ, does raise them up to a higher similitude and likeness of God and Christ; yet it does not introduce any real transmutation, either of our bodies or souls, into the divine nature. It is certain that our union and communion does enjoin our affections, and brings our wills into a league of amity with Christ. To be made partaker of the divine nature notes two things, say some.

First, A fellowship with God in his holiness.

Secondly, A fellowship with God in his blessedness, namely, in the beatifical vision and brightness of glory. To be made "partakers of the divine nature," say others, is to be made partakers of those holy graces, those divine qualities, which sometimes are called, "the image of God, the likeness of God, the life of God," etc., Eph 4:24; Col 3:10, whereby we resemble God, not only as a picture does a man in outward lineaments—but as a child does his father in countenance and nature. Now, take the words which ever way you will, how highly does it concern those servants, who are made partakers of the divine nature, to do singular things for God, to do such things for God, that other servants, who are not partakers of the divine nature, have no mind, no heart, no spirit to do! yes, that they refuse and scorn to do!

[3.] Thirdly, Gracious servants are worthily descended; they have the most illustrious extraction and honorable original, 1Jn 5:19; John 3:8; Jas 2:5.

[4.] Fourthly, Gracious servants are worthily attended, they are nobly guarded; Psa 34:15; Heb 1:14; Deu 33:26-27; Zec 2:5.

[5.] Fifthly, Gracious servants are worthily dignified; they are dignified with the highest and most honorable titles, 1Pe 1:2; 1Pe 1:9; Rev 1:5-6; Rev 5:10.

[6.] Sixthly, Take many things in one: gracious servants have more excellent graces, experiences, comforts, communions, promises, assurances, discoveries, hopes, helps, principles, nourishment,

raiment, portion—than all other servants in the world have; and therefore God may well expect better and greater things from them, than from all other servants in the world. God may very well expect that they should do singular things for his glory, who has done such singular things for their good. Certainly God expects that gracious servants should be a-blessing of him, when other servants are a-blaspheming of him; that they should be a-magnifying of him, when other servants are a-debasing of him; that they should be a-redeeming of precious time, when other servants are a-trifling, fooling, playing or sinning away of precious time; that they should be a-weeping in a corner, when other servants are a-sporting and making themselves merry among their jovial companions; that they should be a-mourning in secret, when other servants are a-sinning in secret; and that they should be at their private devotion, when other servants are sleeping and sporting, etc.

Solomon, who was the wisest prince who ever sat upon a throne, and who was guided by an infallible Spirit, has delivered it for a standing maxim above two thousand years ago, "that the righteous is more excellent than his neighbor," Pro 12:26. When Solomon dropped this aphorism from his royal pen, there was not a man in the world that was legally righteous; Adam and all his posterity being fallen from all their honor, glory, dignity, and excellency, into a most woeful gulf of sin and misery; and therefore Solomon must be understood of him who is evangelically righteous, Psa 14:1-3;

Rom 3:9-12; Lam 5:16. He who is evangelically righteous, be he master or servant, rich or poor, bond or free, high or low, is more excellent than his neighbor. And oh that all masters would seriously consider of this, that they may carry it no more so proudly, so loftily, so scornfully, so forwardly, so strangely, so sourly, so bitterly, so rigorously, towards their pious servants, as not to afford them a little time to pour out their souls before the Lord in a corner!

I have read of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves and Veneds, who, making a stately feast, appointed all his pagan nobles to sit in the hall below; and at the same time commanded certain poor Christians to be brought up into his presence-chamber, to sit with him at his table, that they might eat of his kingly cheer; at which many wondering, he told them, that he accounted Christians, though never so poor, a greater ornament at his table, and more worthy of his company, than the greatest nobles that were not converted to the Christian faith; for says he, when these pagan nobles shall he thrust down to hell, these poor Christians shall be my consorts and fellow-princes in heaven. Certainly, this noble prince will one day rise in judgment against all sour, churlish Labans, who behave so harshly and so severely towards their gracious servants, as that they will not allow them a little time to wait upon God in private devotions, Eph 6:9.

Why should not gracious masters give their gracious servants a little time for closet prayer now, considering that they are sharers with them in all the fundamental good which comes by Christ in this world; and considering that they shall be partakers with them in all the glory of another world? The poorest servant in a family has a soul more precious than heaven and earth; and the greatest work that lies upon his hand in this world, is to look to the eternal safety and security of that: for if his soul is safe, all is safe; if that is well, all is well; but if that is lost, all is lost. Every gracious servant, though he be ever so poor and illiterate—yet has he the image of God, the image of the King of kings stamped upon him; and woe to him who shall wrong, or despise, or trample upon that image! Certainly, God himself is wronged by the injury which is done to his image. The

contempt and despite which is done to the image of a king, is done to the king himself; and accordingly he will revenge it.

If it was a capital crime in Tiberius his days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin into any sordid place; what crime must it be in those masters who despise, revile, reproach, scorn, abuse, and tread under foot, such servants as have the image of the great God stamped upon their souls, and all because they look Godward, Christ-ward, heavenward, holiness-ward, duty-ward? Masters should never ridicule their servants, for their inferiority, poverty, misery, low parentage, or servile condition; but remember that these things are more the Creator's pleasure than the servant's fault, and that that God who has made the master rich and the servant poor, can as quickly make the master poor and the servant rich, Pro 22:2; Pro 17:5. God many times puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts those of low degree, Luk 1:52. Certainly, no master nor mistress should dare to insult or gloat over such servants as have souls as noble as their own; but they should seriously and frequently consider of Solomon's aphorism, "The righteous, though a servant," though the lowest among all the servants, "is more excellent than his neighbor," and accordingly give them a little time and liberty to converse with God in secret. And oh, that all gracious servants would discover themselves to be more excellent than their neighbors, by making more conscience of private prayer than their neighbors do, and by being more in their closets than their neighbors are, and by delighting themselves in their secret retirements more than their neighbors will, and by redeeming some time for God, for their souls, and for eternity, more than their neighbors do. But,

(7.) Seventhly, I answer, That God alone, is the Lord of time. [Hab 2:8; Dan 11:27; Dan 11:29; Dan 11:35; Job 7:1; Psa 102:13; Ecc 3:1; Dan 2:21; Isa 60:22; Job 14:14] Time is more the Lord's than it is your master's; and therefore it is no neglecting of your master's business, to take a little time daily for private prayer. Times do belong to God's providence; and as God is the God of our mercies, so he is the Lord of our times: "My times are in your hands," says David, Psa 31:15. Not only the times of his sorrows—but also the times of his comforts; not only the times of his miseries—but also the times of his mercies; not only the times of his dangers—but also the times of his duties, were in the hands of God.

It is observable the Psalmist does not say time—but times, in the plural, to show that every point and period of time depends upon the hand of God. That servant that borrows a little time every day to seek the face of God in a corner, borrows it rather of God than of his master; and therefore why should his master swell, or rage, or complain, considering that God never made him Lord of time? But,

(8.) Eighthly, I answer, That servants should rather redeem time from their sleep, their recreations, their daily meals—than neglect closet-duty a day. And certainly those servants that, out of conscience towards God, and out of a due regard to the internal and eternal welfare of their own souls, shall every day redeem an hour's time from their sleep, or sports, or meals, to spend with God in secret, they shall find by experience that the Lord will make a few hours' sleep sweeter and better than many hours' sleep to them; and their outward sports shall be made up with inward delights; and for their common bread, God will feed them with that bread which came down from heaven.

Sirs, was not Christ his Father's servant? Isa 42:1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my elect (or choice one), in whom my soul delights" (or is well pleased)! "I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." And did not he redeem time from his natural rest, rather than he would omit private prayer? Mark 1:35, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Christ spent the day in preaching, in healing the sick, in working of miracles; and rather than these noble works should shut out private prayer, he rises a great while before day, that he might have some time to wrestle with his Father in secret. So Luk 6:12, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." O sirs! did Christ spend whole nights in private prayer for the salvation of your souls; and will you think it much to redeem an hour's time from your natural rest to seek and to serve him in a corner, and to make sure the things of your everlasting peace? The redeeming of time for private prayer is the redeeming of a precious treasure, which, if once lost, can never fully be recovered again. If riches should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to Job; or if credit, and honor, and worldly greatness and renown, should fly away, they may return again, as they did to Nebuchadnezzar; if success, and famous victories and conquests, should make themselves wings, and fly away, they may return again, as they did to many of the Roman conquerors and others; but if time, whom the poets paint with wings, to show the volubility and swiftness of it, fly from us, it will never more return unto us!

Queen Elizabeth, on her dying bed cried out, "Call time again, call time again; a world of wealth for an inch of time!" but time past was never, nor could never be recalled. The Egyptians drew the picture of time with three heads. The first was of a greedy wolf gaping for time past, because it has ravenously devoured even the memory of so many things past recalling. The second of a crowned lion roaring for time present, because it has the principality of all action, for which it calls aloud. And the third was of a deceitful dog, fawning for time to come, because it feeds fond men with many flattering hopes, to their eternal undoing. Oh that all this might prevail with servants to redeem time for private prayer! And if my counsel might take place, I should rather advise servants to redeem some time for private prayer from their sleep or lawful recreations, or set meals, etc., than to spend in private prayer that time which their masters call their time, especially if their masters be unconverted, and in "the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;" and that for these five reasons.

[1.] First, Because this may be a means to prevent much sin on the master's side. Masters that are in their unregenerate estate are very apt to storm, and let fly against God, and Christ, and true religion, etc., when they see their servants spend that time in private prayer, or in any other pious exercise, which, according to their understanding, is their time, and ought to be wholly spent in following their businesses. Now gracious servants should have that honorable respect, and that tender affection, and that Christian compassion to their masters' souls—as to do to the utmost all that lies in them to prevent their masters from contracting guilt upon their souls, or from making work for repentance, for hell. The Persians, the Turks, and many Indians are so compassionate, that they erect hospitals not only for lame and diseased men—but also for birds, beasts, and dogs that are either aged, starved, or hurt. Oh then, what tender compassions should gracious servants exercise towards their masters' souls, which are jewels more worth than heaven and earth! But,

[2.] Secondly, Because this may be a means to convince the judgments and consciences of their masters, that there is some worth, some excellency, some sweetness, etc., to be found in private prayer, and in other closet-duties; for when masters shall observe their servants to redeem time for closet duties, from their very sleep, recreations, dinners, suppers, they will be ready to conclude, that certainly there is more worth, more goodness, more sweetness, more excellency, more glory, more gain in closet duties, than ever they have understood, felt, or experienced, etc., and that their very poor servants are better and more righteous than themselves. Sozomen reports, that the devout life of a poor captive Christian woman, made a king and all his family embrace the faith of Jesus Christ. Godly lives convince more than miracles themselves.

I have read of one Pachomius, a soldier under Constantine the emperor, how that his army being almost starved for want of necessary provision, he came to a city of Christians, and they of their own charity relieved them speedily and freely; he wondering at their free and noble charity, inquired what kind of people they were whom he saw so bountiful? It was answered that they were Christians, whose profession it is to hurt no man, and do good to every man. Hereupon Pachomius, convinced of the excellency of this religion, threw away his weapons, and became a Christian, a saint. Look as husbands sometimes are won by the lives of their wives without the word, 1Pe 3:1-2; so masters may sometimes be won by the gracious carriage and lives of their servants, without the word. The servant's redeeming of time for private duties, upon the hardest and severest terms, may be so blessed to the master, that it may issue in his conviction, conversion, and salvation. There is a perhaps for it; and a very perhaps should be a sufficient encouragement for every gracious servant to do all he can to save the soul of his master from going down into the infernal pit. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Because the servant's redeeming of time from his sleep, recreations, meals, for private prayer, will most clearly and abundantly evidence the singular love, the great delight, and the high esteem that he has of private prayer. We say those children love their books well, and delight much in learning, who will be at their books when others are gone to their beds, and who will be at their books before others can get out of their beds. Certainly they love private prayer well, and they delight much in closet communion with God, who will be a-praying when others are a-sleeping, and who will be a-dressing their souls before God in a corner, before their mistress is a-dressing of herself at the mirror, or their fellow servants a-dressing themselves in the shop. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer, from his sleep, set meals, recreations, etc., may be of most use to other fellow servants, both to awaken them, and to convince them that the things of true religion are of the greatest and highest importance, and that there is no trade, or pleasure, or profit, compared to that private trade which is driven between God and a man's own soul; and also to keep them from trifling, or fooling away of that time, which is truly and properly their masters' time, and by the royal law of heaven ought to be spent solely and wholly in their service and business. For what sincere servant is there in the world but will argue thus? I see that such and such of my fellow servants will redeem time for private prayer, and for other closet-services, from their very sleep, meals, recreations, etc.; rather than they will borrow, or steal that time which my master says is his, etc.; and why then should I be so foolish, so brutish, so mad, to trifle, or idle, or play, or toy away that time which should be spent in my master's service, and for my master's advantage? But,

[5.] Fifthly, and lastly, Because the servant's redeeming of time for private prayer from his sleep, his meals, his recreations, etc., cannot but be infinitely pleasing to God; and that which will afford him most comfort when he comes to die. The more any poor heart acts contrary to flesh and blood, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart denies himself, the more he pleases God; the more any poor heart acts against the stream of sinful examples, the more he pleases God; the more difficulties and discouragements a poor heart meets with in the discharge of his duty, the more love he shows to God; and the more love a poor heart shows to God, the more he pleases God: Jer 2:2-3, "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them." God was very highly pleased and greatly delighted with the singular love and choice affections of his people towards him, when they followed after him, and kept close to him, in that tedious and difficult passage through the waste, howling wilderness.

How all these things do weigh with that poor pious servant who redeems time for private prayer upon the hardest terms imaginable, I shall leave the sincere reader to judge. And certainly, upon a dying bed, no tongue can express, nor heart conceive—but he who feels it, the unspeakable comfort that closet-duties will afford to him who has been exercised in them, upon those hard terms that are under present consideration. But,

(9.) Ninthly, I answer, If you are a gracious servant, then the near and dear relationship which is between God and you, and the choice privileges that you are savingly interested in—calls aloud for private prayer, John 8:32-33; John 8:36. As you are your Master's servant, so you are the Lord's freeman: 1Co 7:22-23, "For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men"—either when they command you things forbidden by Christ, or forbid you things commanded by Christ; or when they would exercise a dominion over your faith, or a lordship over your consciences. Do not allow yourselves in spiritual things, to be brought into such bondage by any men or masters in the world, as not to use that freedom and liberty that Christ has purchased for you with his dearest blood, Gal 5:1; Col 2:20; Gal 2:4. No servants are to serve their masters in opposition to Christ; nor are any servants to serve their masters as spiritual masters; nor are any servants to serve their masters as supreme masters—but as subordinate masters, Eph 6:5-7. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's freeman, so every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23; John 15:13-15. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's friend, so every gracious servant is the Lord's son, Gal 4:5-6; Rom 8:16. And as every gracious servant is the Lord's son, so every gracious servant is the Lord's spouse, Hos 2:19-20; 2Co 11:2. And now I appeal to the consciences of all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whether the near and dear relationship which is between the Lord and pious servants does not call aloud upon them to take all opportunities and advantages that possibly they can, to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret, and to acquaint him in a corner with all their secret wants, and weaknesses, and wishes, etc. And as gracious servants are thus nearly and dearly related to God, so gracious servants are very highly privileged by God. Gracious servants are as much freed from the reign of sin, the dominion of sin, and the damnable power of sin, as gracious masters are, Rom 6:14. Gracious servants are as much freed from hell, from the curse of the law, and from the wrath of God, as their gracious masters are, Rom 8:1. Gracious servants are

as much adopted, as much reconciled, as much pardoned, as much justified, and as much redeemed, as their gracious masters are, Gal 3:13. Gracious servants are as much heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, as their gracious masters are. [1Th 1:10; Col 3:11; Gal 5:6; Rom 8:17; Gal 6:14; 1Pe 2:9] Gracious servants are as much a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, called out of darkness into his marvelous light, as their gracious masters are. And therefore they being all alike interested in all these great and glorious privileges which belong to saints as saints, they are, without all question, alike obliged and engaged to all those duties which lies upon saints as saints, among which private prayer is one; and therefore they are to buckle to this duty against all carnal reasons and objections whatever. But,

(10.) Tenthly, and lastly, I answer, that the promised reward in the text lies as fair and as open to the servant as to the master, to the bond as to the free, to the peasant as to the prince. Whoever prays to his heavenly Father in secret, be he high or low, rich or poor, honorable or lowly, servant or master—he shall receive an open reward. The reward in the text is not to be confined or limited to this or that sort or rank of men—but it is to be extended to all ranks and sorts of men that make conscience of private prayer, of closet duties. So Eph 6:5-8, "Servants, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free." Col 3:22-24, "Servants, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Such servants as serve their masters faithfully, cordially, and in singleness of spirit, shall receive the reward of grace and the reward of the inheritance. The lowest servant who is faithful in the service of his master, shall for a recompense receive the eternal inheritance, Rom 8:15-17. The recompense of reward in the scripture last cited is not of merit—but of mere grace, because the inheritance belongs only to children upon the account of their birth or adoption. Faithful servants shall be made sons of God, and so enjoy the heavenly inheritance. Christ is so noble a master, that he will not allow any service which has been performed to men out of conscience to his command, to pass unrewarded. Oh how much more will he recompense pious servants for those spiritual services that they perform for his sake, for his glory? God is so liberal a paymaster, that no man shall so much as shut the door, or kindle a fire upon his altar, or give a cup of cold water—one of the least, readiest, and lowest refreshments that be—but he shall be rewarded, Mal 1:10; Mat 10:42.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin, upon God's rewarding of the Rechabites' obedience, Jer 35:19, "God," says he, "often recompenses the shadows and seeming appearances of virtue, to show that delight which he takes in the ample rewards that he has reserved for true and sincere piety." Nebuchadnezzar, though a tyrant—yet being engaged in God's service against Tyre, he shall have Egypt as his pay, for his pains at Tyre, Eze 29:18-20. It is an ancient slur and slander that has been cast upon God, as if he were an austere master, an illiberal Lord, and as if there were nothing to be gotten in his service but knocks, blows, wounds, crosses, losses, etc.; whereas he is a rewarder, not only of those who diligently seek him—but even of the very worst of men who

do any service for him, Heb 11:6.

How much will the King of kings reward all those poor pious servants of his, who do not only give to him in his members cups of cold water—but do also redeem time from their very rest, meals, and recreations, that they may have some time to seek the face of God in a corner. Certainly, there shall not be a sigh, a groan, a prayer, a tear let fall by a poor servant in a corner, which shall not be at last regarded and rewarded by the great God. Lyra says, that Mordecai waited six years, before his good service was rewarded by king Ahasuerus. It may be God may reward you sooner for all your closet services; but if he does not reward you sooner, he will certainly reward you better, he will reward you with higher honors, with greater dignities, with more glorious robes, and with a more royal crown, even an incorruptible crown, a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, a crown of glory, 1 Cor 9:29; 2Ti 4:8; Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12; 1Pe 5:4. And therefore hold on and hold out in your secret retirements. Though some may deride you, and others revile you, and your carnal masters discourage you—yet God is faithful and will certainly reward you; yes, he will openly reward you for all the secret pourings out of your souls in his bosom. But,

Objection 3. Some may further object and say, Oh but we cannot pray alone; we lack those gifts and endowments which others have; we are shut up and know not how to pour out our souls before God in a corner; we would willingly pray—but we lack ability to pour out our souls before the Lord in secret, etc.

Solution 1. God's dearest children may sometimes be shut up; they may with Zacharias, for a time, be struck dumb, and not able to speak, Luk 1:20; Psa 77:4. "I am so troubled that I cannot speak," Psa 38:9. "Lord, all my desire is before you: and my groaning is not hid from you." God's dearest children have sometimes been so shut up, that they have been able to say nothing, nor to do anything but groan. A child of God may sometimes meet with such a blow from God, from conscience, from Scripture, from Satan, from the world, that may for a time so astonish him, that he may not be able to speak to God, nor speak to others, nor speak to his own heart. Look! as the Holy Spirit is not always a teaching Spirit, nor always a leading Spirit, nor always a comforting Spirit, nor always a sealing Spirit, nor always a witnessing Spirit, nor always an assuring Spirit to any of the saints; so he is not always a supplicating Spirit in any of the saints. When he is grieved, vexed, quenched, provoked—he may suspend his gracious influences, and deny the soul his assistance; and what can a Christian then say or do? But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, You cannot pray; but can you not sigh? can you not groan? There may be the Spirit of adoption in sighs and groans, as well as in vocal prayer, Rom 8:26. The force, the virtue, the efficacy, the excellency of prayer does not consist in the number and flourish of words—but in the supernatural motions of the Spirit, in sighs, and groans, and pangs, and strong affections of heart, which are unspeakable and unutterable. Certainly, the very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul before the Lord, though it be but in sighs, groans, and tears, 1Sa 1:13-19. One sigh and groan from a broken heart, is better pleasing to God, than all human eloquence. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, Beg of God to teach you to pray. Oh beg the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of prayer. God has promised his Holy Spirit to those who ask, Luk 11:13. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Eze 36:26-27. "I will give you a new heart and put a new

spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." Eze 11:19. "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh," Zec 12:10. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication."

Now gracious promises are God's pledges, and he loves to see his people put them to use. God expects that we should be his remembrancers, and that we should pray over his promises, Isa 62:6-7; Isa 42:25-25. When he had promised great things to his people concerning justification, sanctification, and preservation; he subjoins, "Yet, I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it," Eze 36:37. God looks that we should spread his gracious promises before him, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, Isa 37:14. God is never better pleased than when his people importune him in his own words, and urge him with arguments taken from his own promises. Though God is a very affectionate father, and a very liberal father—yet he is not a wasteful father, for he will never throw away his mercies on such as will not stoutly and humbly plead out his promises with him. God loves to be sought unto, both for his giving of mercies, and for his making good of precious promises.

You say you can not pray; why! can you not go into a corner, and spread the promises last cited before the Lord, and tell him how much it concerns his honor and glory, as well as your own internal and eternal good, to make good those gracious promises that he has made concerning his giving of his Spirit to those who ask him, and his putting his Spirit within them, and his pouring out a Spirit of grace and supplication upon them?

We read of Tamar, Gen 38:18; Gen 38:25, that when Judah her father-in-law lay with her, she took as a pledge his signet, bracelets, and staff; and afterwards, when she was in great distress, and ready to be burnt as an harlot, she then brought out her staff, and signet, and bracelets, and said, "By the man whose these are, am I with child," and thereby she saved her life. The promises of God are as so many rich mines, they are as so many choice flowers of paradise, they are the food, life, and strength of the soul. They are as a staff to support the soul, and they are as jewelry to adorn the soul, and nourishment to enrich the soul; and therefore poor sinners should bring them forth, and lay them before the Lord, and urge God with them, there being no way on earth to save a man's soul, and to prevent a burning in hell, like pleading the promises. Concerning precious promises, let me give you these eight hints.

[1.] First, That they are truly propounded and stated by God, Mark 10:30.

[2.] Secondly, That they shall certainly be performed, 2Co 1:20, they being all made in and through Christ. They are made first to Christ, and then to all who have union and communion with him.

Sirtorius, says Plutarch, paid what he promised with mere fair words; but God pays with performance. Men many times say and unsay; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; but God will never eat the words that are gone out of his mouth:

Isa 46:10-11, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: yes, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it."

[3.] Thirdly, That they all issue from free grace, from special love, from divine goodness, Hos 14:4.

[4.] Fourthly, That they are all as unchangeable as he is, who made them, Jer 31:3.

[5.] Fifthly, That they are all bottomed and founded upon the truth, faithfulness, and all-sufficiency of God, Mal 3:6.

[6.] Sixthly, That they are pledges of great things that God will do for his people in time, Heb 13:5.

[7.] Seventhly, That they are most sure and certain evidences of divine favor, and a declaration of the heart and goodwill of God to his poor people, Heb 6:12; Num 23:19.

[8.] Eighthly, That they are the price of Christ's blood.

Now how should all these things encourage poor souls to be still a-pressing of God with his promises. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You say you cannot pray, etc. Oh that you would leave off objecting, and fall upon praying. If you cannot pray as you would, nor as you should, pray as well as you can. Joseph's brethren stood so long dallying, and delaying, and trifling out the time, that, having a journey to go to buy grain, they might have bought and returned twice before they went and bought once. When Elijah called Elisha, he must first go bid his father and mother farewell, before he could follow the prophet, 1Ki 19:20. O friends! take heed of dallying, delaying, trifling, and going about the bush, when you should be a-falling upon the work of prayer. What though with Hannah you can but weep out a prayer, or with Moses stammer out a prayer, or with Hezekiah chatter out a prayer—yet do as well as you can, and you shall find acceptance with God: 2Co 8:12, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man has, and not according to that he has not." The publican's prayer had not much rhetoric or eloquence in it, "God be merciful to me a sinner," Luk 18:13, and yet God accepted it. He prayed much, though he spoke little, and God did not turn a deaf ear upon him. That God who once accepted a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and a grip of goat's hair for an oblation, and the poor widow's two mites—as if they had been two million; will certainly accept of what you are able to do, though you do fall short, yes, much short, of what you ought to do, Lev 2:1-2, and Lev 6:15; Luk 21:3. "Lord," says Luther, "you command me to pray. I cannot pray as I would—yet I will obey; for though my prayer is not acceptable—yet your own commandment is acceptable to you." If weak Christians would but put forth in prayer that little strength they have, God would quickly renew their spiritual strength; he would certainly carry them on from strength to strength; he would still, by secret assistances and secret influences, help them on in their heavenly trade, Isa 49:20-22; Psa 84:7. As a loving and caring father will take his little child in his arms, and carry him on in his way homeward, when his strength begins to fail him, and he can walk no further, and the way proves dirty, slippery, or uneven; so does God by his: Hos 11:3, "I taught Ephraim also to walk" (as a nurse does the infant), "taking them by their arm." When God's poor children come to a foul way, or a rough place, he takes them up in his own arms, and helps them over the quagmire of crosses, and the difficulties of duties, and over all that straitness, and narrowness, and weakness of spirit which attends them in their closet performances.

It is observable, that when the king of Israel was to shoot the arrow, he did put his hand upon the bow, and Elisha did put his hand upon the king's hand, 2Ki 13:16. So when we go into our closets, we are to put up our hand, and then the Spirit of God likewise will put his hand upon our hand, he will put his strength to our strength, or rather to our weakness: Rom 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities." The Greek word properly signifies such a help, as when another man of

strength and ability steps in to sustain the burden which lies upon our shoulders, be it a log, or a piece of timber, setting his shoulders under it, to lift up, and bear part of it with us; or to help us as the nurse helps her little child, upholding it by the sleeve. When a poor Christian sets himself to closet prayer, or to mourn, or to believe, or to obey, etc.; then the Spirit comes in with new help, and new influences, and new assistances, and so carries him on in all these noble services. That child that does but stammer at first, in time will speak plainly and fluently. Oh how many Christians are there, who now can pray with much freedom, liberty, and fluency, who at first could only sigh out a prayer, or stammer out a prayer, or weep out a prayer! You say you cannot pray—but did you but stir up yourself to obey that command, Mat 6:6, as well as you can, you do not know but that a power may go forth with the command, that may enable you to act suitable to the command. In Mat 9:1-9, Christ bid the palsied man rise and walk: "Take up your bed, and go unto your house." The palsy man might have objected, "Alas! I am carried by four men, I am not able to stir a limb, much less to rise—but least of all to take up my bed and walk, etc." Oh but he rouses up himself as well as he could, and a power went forth with the command, which enabled him to do what was commanded. So in Mat 12:10-14, there was a poor man who had a withered hand, and Christ commands him to stretch forth his hand; he might have replied, "My hand is withered, and if I might be given a million worlds to stretch it forth, I could not stretch it forth; yes, if my very life, if my very salvation did lie upon stretching forth my withered arm, I could not stretch it forth." Oh! but he throws by all such pleas, and complies with Christ's command as well as he could, and a power went forth and healed his hand.

O sirs! if you would but pray in your closets as well as you can, you do not know but that such a power and virtue might flow from Christ into your hearts, as might carry you on in your closet-duties, beyond expectation, even to admiration; others have found it so, and why not you, why not you? Well! remember, that God is no curious nor critical observer of the poor expressions which fall from his poor children when they are in their closet-duties; he is such a Father as is very well pleased with the broken expressions and flawed stammerings of his people when they pray. It is not a flood of words, nor studied notions, nor seraphical expressions, nor elegant phrases in prayer—which takes the ear, or which delights the heart of God, or which opens the gates of glory, or which brings down the best of blessings upon the soul; but uprightness, holiness, heavenliness, spiritualness, and brokenness of heart: these are the things that make a conquest upon God, and bring most benefit to the soul. But,

(5.) Fifthly, You say you cannot pray—but if you are a child of God, you have the Spirit of God—and the Spirit of God is a Spirit of prayer and supplication. That all the children of God have the Spirit of God is most evident in the blessed Scriptures. Take these for a taste: Zec 12:10, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication." Rom 8:15, "You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." 1Co 2:12, "We have received, not the spirit of the world—but the Spirit who is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1Th 4:8, "Who has given unto us his Holy Spirit." 1Jn 3:4, "Hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us." 1Jn 4:13, "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit." That all the children of God have the Spirit of God, may be further made evident by an induction of these seven particulars.

[1.] First, They are all SANCTIFIED by the Spirit: 1Co 6:11, "You are sanctified by the Spirit of our God." I do not say, that they are all equally sanctified by the Spirit—but I say they are all really sanctified by the Spirit. Though all the servants of Christ have their talents—yet all have not their ten talents, nor all have not their five talents, nor all have not their two talents; some have only their one talent, Mat 25:15. Though Benjamin's portion was five times as much as his brethren's portion—yet everyone of his brethren had their portion, Gen 43:32-34. So, though some Christians have five times more measure of the Spirit, and greater measures of light, of love, of holiness, of heavenly-mindedness, etc., than others have—yet every Christian has some measure of the Spirit, and some measure of grace and holiness, etc. Though some are babes in Christ, and others are children in Christ, though some are young men in Christ, and others old men in Christ—yet everyone of them is born of the Spirit of Christ, 1Pe 2:2; 1Jn 2:12-14; John 3:8. Though none of the people of God in this life have the Spirit in perfection—yet every one of them have so much of the Spirit as will bring him to salvation. Every Christian has so much of the Spirit as will bring Christ and his soul together; and therefore without any question, every Christian has so much of the Spirit, as will at last bring heaven and his soul together.

[2.] Secondly, They are all LED by the Spirit: Rom 8:14, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." Every child of God has a twofold guide: the word without, and the Spirit within, Isa 30:20-21. How the Spirit leads by the rule of the word, and how he leads to God, and leads to Christ, and leads to truth, and leads to righteousness, and leads to holiness, and leads to happiness, I shall not now undertake to show, Pro 6:22; Eph 5:9.

[3.] Thirdly, They are all UPHELD and STRENGTHENED by the Spirit: Psa 51:12, "Uphold me with your free Spirit;" or underprop me or sustain me, as the Hebrew has it, with your free, voluntary Spirit; or, as the Greek renders it, with your noble, princely Spirit. So Eph 3:16, "To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." By the inner man, some understand the regenerate part of man; others, by the inner man, do understand the soul with all its noble faculties and motions. Take the words which way you will, it is certain that all the spiritual might and strength that a Christian has, he has it from the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit strengthens every Christian in the inner man—yet I do not say that the Spirit strengthens every Christian alike in the inward man. Some have stronger corruptions to subdue than others, and more violent temptations to withstand than others, and greater difficulties to wrestle with than others, and choicer mercies to improve than others, and higher and harder pious duties to manage than others, and accordingly they are more strengthened in the inner man than others.

[4.] Fourthly, They are all PARTAKERS of the first fruits of the Spirit: Rom 8:23, "We ourselves have the first fruits of the Spirit," which are but as a handful of corn in respect of the whole crop. All the grace and all the holiness which we have from the regenerating Spirit at first conversion is but a drop to that sea, a mite to those talents, which we shall receive in the life to come, 2Co 1:22.

[5.] Fifthly, They are all TAUGHT by the Spirit, John 14:26. "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things," Isa 59:21. This promise primarily belongs to the apostles. Secondly, to all believers. Though these words were spoken at first to the apostles only—yet they were not spoken of the apostles only Isa 54:13, "And all your children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of your children." In these words there are three things promised to the apostles:

First, Immediate illumination by the Spirit of God.

Secondly, A full knowledge of all those truths belonging to their apostolical office, and that were necessary for them at that juncture of time.

Thirdly, Absolute infallibility as to matter of doctrine.

There are also three things promised to all believers:

First, Mediate illumination, teaching truths by the Spirit of truth, in the use of the means of grace.

Secondly, Knowledge of all truth necessary to salvation.

Thirdly, Infallibility too, so far forth as they adhere and keep close to the Spirit's teaching in the word.

Philo says that the primitive Christians were called tillers, because, as farmers till their fields and fertilize their grounds, so did they teach their families and nurture their children and servants with good instructions. Oh, what choice teachings of the Spirit were these primitive Christians under, who made it so much their business, their work, to teach those who were under their charge, 1Th 4:9; 2Co 3:8. So 1Jn 2:27, "As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit--just as it has taught you, remain in him." Not that we know all things simply, or that we need not a ministry to teach and instruct us; but he speaks comparatively: you shall not be so helped by any instructions without the Spirit, as with the Spirit. The Spirit shall declare the truth as it is in Jesus more clearly, more freely, more particularly, more certainly, more universally, more effectually, than any other is able to do. [1Co 6:9-11; 1Ti 4:1; John 16:25; Isa 48:17; Ecc 11:5] The Spirit, this holy unction, shall teach the saints all things; not all things knowable, for that is impossible for finite creatures to attain unto. Who knows the motions of the heavens, the influences of the stars, the nature of the creatures, or how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child? Who knows the reason why the river Nilus should overflow in the summer, when waters are at the lowest; or why the loadstone should draw iron to it, or incline to the pole star?

Pliny tells us of one that spent fifty-eight years in learning about the nature of the bee, and yet had not fully attained to it. How is it possible, then, for the wisest naturalist to enter into the deep things of God?

Paul, who learned his divinity among the angels, and who had the Holy Spirit for his immediate teacher, tells us plainly that "he knew but in part," 1Co 13:9-11; and oh then, how little a part of that part do we know! But the Spirit teaches the saints all things; that is,

First, He teaches them all things needful for the salvation of their souls, all things necessary to bring them to heaven, John 17:3.

Secondly, All things needful to life and godliness, 2Pe 1:3.

Thirdly, All things needful to their places, callings, sexes, ages, and conditions.

Fourthly, All things needful for you to know to preserve you in the truth, and to preserve you from being deluded and seduced by those false teachers of whom he speaks, 1Jn 2:10; 1Jn 2:19; 1Jn 2:22-23; 1Jn 2:26. And certainly this is the main thing that John hints at in that expression. The "all things" spoken of in 1Jn 2:27, according to the ordinary Scripture style, must necessarily be interpreted only of all those things which are there spoken of But,

[6.] Sixthly, They are all COMFORTED by the Spirit: [John 14:16; John 14:26; John 15:26, and John 16:7] Acts 9:31, They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit;" Rom 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink—but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." 1Th 1:6, "And you became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." Not that all Christians have always actual comfort, actual joy. Oh no! For as the air is sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy, and as the sea is sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing; so the comforts and joys of the people of God are sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing, sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy.

Hudson the martyr, and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly. So Mr. Glover the martyr, as he was going to the stake he looked back, and cried out to his friend, "He is come, he is come," meaning the Comforter, and so he laid down his life with joy.

Rachel wept, and would not be comforted; she gave so much way to weeping, that she would not give the least way to comfort; and so it is many times with the choicest saints, "My soul refused to be comforted," Psalms 77:2. It is not my purpose at present to insist on the several ways whereby the people of God refuse comfort, and fall short of those strong consolations which God is willing that they should receive. The sun may operate where it does not shine, and a man may be in a state of salvation, and yet lack consolation; a man may fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, and yet walk in darkness and see no light, Isaiah 50:10. There is no Christian but may sometimes have trouble in his conscience, and grief in his heart, and tears in his eyes, and fears and questionings in his soul—whether God is his Father, and whether Christ is his redeemer, and whether mercy belongs to him, yes, whether any promise in the book of God belongs to him, etc.

Joy and comfort are those dainties, those sweets of heaven, which God does not every day feast his people with, Psalms 30:6-7; every day is not a wedding day, nor is every day a harvest day, nor is every day a summer day. The fatted calf is not killed every day, nor are the robe and the ring put on every day; nor is every day a festival day or a dancing day, Luke 15:22-23; Ecclesiastes 3:4; Romans 12:15. As there is a time to sing, so there is a time to sigh; as there is a time to laugh, so there is a time to weep; and as there is a time to dance, so there is a time to mourn. All tears will never be totally wiped from our eyes, until all sin is totally taken out of our hearts. But notwithstanding all this—yet gracious souls have always sure and choice grounds of consolation; they have the promises, they have the "first fruits of the Spirit," they have union with Christ, and they have right to eternal life—though they have not always sensible comforts. The children of God have always cause to exercise faith and hope in God in their darkest condition, though they have not always actual joy and consolation, Job 13:15; Psalms 42:5. The Comforter always abides with the saints—though he does not always actually comfort the saints, John 1:16. The Spirit many times carries on his sanctifying work in the soul—when he does not carry on his comforting work in the soul; the Spirit many times acts in a way of humiliation—when he does not act in a way of consolation; the Spirit many times fills the soul with godly sorrow—when he does not fill the soul with holy joy. The

actings of the Spirit, as to his comforting work, are all of his own sovereign will and pleasure; and therefore he may abide in the soul when he does not actually comfort the soul. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The people of God, first or last, are SEALED by the Spirit: Eph 1:13, "In whom, after you believed, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise." The nature of sealing consists in the imparting of the image or character of the seal, to the thing sealed. To seal a thing is to stamp the character of the seal on it. Now, the Spirit of God does really and effectually communicate the image of God to us, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness. Then are we truly sealed by the Spirit of God when the Holy Spirit stamps the image of grace and holiness so obviously, so evidently upon the soul, as that the soul sees it, feels it, and can run and read it; then the soul is sealed by the Holy Spirit. So Eph 4:30, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." The person of the Holy Spirit is here set forth in the Greek with a very great energy, such as our tongue is not able fully to express.

Here are three words, that have three articles, every word his several article by itself; the Spirit, not a Spirit; and not holy—but the holy; nor of God—but of that God: 2Co 1:22, "Who has also sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts." In these scriptures you see that the Spirit is a seal. Now, a seal among men is, First, For secrecy.

Secondly, For distinction.

Thirdly, For authority.

Fourthly, For certainty. A writing sealed is authentic; and for ensuring. In the three texts last cited, if you compare them together, you may observe these six things:

First, The person sealing, and that is, the Father.

Secondly, In whom, in Christ.

Thirdly, With what seal, the Spirit of promise. Where are all the persons in the Trinity making us sure of our inheritance.

Fourthly, When, after you believed.

Fifthly, The end, which is twofold:

(1.) Subordinate, and that is the certainty of our salvation;

(2.) Ultimate, and that is, the praise of his glory.

Sixthly, The time, how long this seal and earnest shall assure us, and that is, "until we have the complete possession of what it is in pledge." To prevent mistakes and disputes about the sealings of the Spirit on the one hand; and to support, comfort, and encourage the poor people of God on the other hand, let me briefly hint at the Spirit's special sealing times.

[1.] First, CONVERSION times are often the Spirit's sealing times, Luk 15:22-23. Upon the prodigal's return, the fatted calf is killed, and the best robe is put upon his back, and the ring is put upon his hand, and shoes on his feet. Some by the robe understand the righteousness of Christ. And by the ring, some understand the pledges of God's love, rings being given as pledges of love; and by the ring others understand the seal of God's Holy Spirit, men using the seal with their rings.

Among the Romans the ring was a sign of virtue, honor, and nobility, whereby those who wore them were distinguished from the common people.

I think the main thing intended by the robe and the ring is, to show us, that God sometimes upon the sinner's conversion and returning to him, is graciously pleased to give him some choice manifestations of his gracious pleasure and goodwill, and to seal up to him his everlasting love and favor. And hence it comes to pass that some that are but babes in Christ, 1Pe 2:2-3; 1Jn 2:12-14, are so diligent and active in religious duties, and so conscientious and dexterous in the exercise of their graces. At first conversion, God helps some of his people to read their own names written in legible letters in the book of life, Acts 9:3-6. No sooner are some converted—but the Spirit stamps his seal upon them.

[2.] Secondly, BELIEVING times are sealing times, Eph 1:13. When they were in the very exercise of their faith, when they were acting of their faith, for so much the original imports, the Spirit came and sealed them up to the day of redemption, Rom 15:13; 1Pe 1:8. He who honors Christ by frequent actings of faith on him, him will Christ honor, by setting his seal and mark upon him.

[3.] Thirdly, HUMBLING times, mourning times, are sealing times. When a holy man was asked, which were the joyfullest days, the comfortablest days, that ever he enjoyed, he answered—his mourning days. His mourning days were his joyfullest days; and therefore he cried out, "Oh give me my mourning days, give me my mourning days; for they were my joyfullest days." Those were days wherein God sealed up his everlasting love to his soul, Job 22:29; Isa 29:19. When the prodigal had greatly humbled himself before his father, then the best robe and ring were put upon him, Luk 15:17 -

There are none who long for the sealings of the Spirit like humble souls; nor any set so high a price upon the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls; nor any make so choice an improvement of the sealings of the Spirit, as humble souls. And therefore when men's hearts are humble and low, the Spirit comes and sets the secret-seal of heaven upon them.

[4.] Fourthly, SIN-KILLING, sin-mortifying, sin-subduing times, are the Spirit's sealing times; Rev 2:17, "To him who overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows, but he who receives it."

God will give to the victorious Christian a secret love-token, whereby his soul may rest assured of the unspeakable love of God, and of its freedom from condemnation. White stones were of very great use among the Romans, and among the Athenians, and served to acquit the accused in courts of justice. When malefactors were accused, arraigned, and condemned in their courts, they gave them a black stone in token of condemnation; but when they were acquitted, they gave them white stones, in token of absolution; and to this practice the Holy Spirit seems to allude. He who is victorious over his lusts shall have a new name, "which is better than the names of sons and daughters," Isa 56:5; and he shall have the pardon of his sins written in clear letters upon the white stone, so that he may run and read his absolution. The victorious Christian shall have assurance of the full discharge of all his sins, he shall have a clear evidence of his justification, and a blessed assurance of his eternal election; all which are hidden and mysterious things, to all but those who have experienced and tasted what these sweet meats of heaven mean, 1Jn 1:7.

Among the Romans there were solemn feasts held in honor of those who were victorious in their sacred games. Now those who were to be admitted to those feasts were accustomed to have their names written on white shells, and white stones, and by these tickets they were admitted. Now some think the Holy Spirit alludes to this practice, and so would hint to us a secret mark whereby victorious Christians may be known, and admitted as bidden guests to the heavenly banquet of the hidden, manna, according to Rev 19:9. O sirs! when predominate lusts are brought under, when bosom-sins lie slain in the soul—then the Spirit comes and seals up love, and life, and glory to the soul.

[5.] Fifthly, SUFFERING times are sealing times; Acts 7:55-56; Acts 7:59-60; Rev 1:9-10; 2Co 4:15-17. The primitive Christians found them so, and the suffering saints in the Marian days found them so. [Acts 5:40-42; Psa 71:20-21; and Psa 94:19; Rev 1:9-10] When the furnace is seven times hotter than ordinary, the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals up a man's pardon in his bosom, and his peace with God, and his title to heaven. When the world frowns most—then God smiles most; when the world puts their iron chains upon the saints' legs—then God puts his golden chains about the saints' necks; when the world puts a bitter cup into one hand—then the Lord puts a cup of consolation into the other hand; when the world cries out, "Crucify them, crucify them!"—then commonly they hear that sweet voice from heaven, "These are my beloved ones, in whom I am well pleased."

Blessed Bradford looked upon his sufferings as an evidence to him that he was in the right way to heaven. And says Ignatius, "It is better for me to be a martyr than to be a monarch."

[6.] Sixthly, SELF-DENYING times are the Spirit's sealing times, Mat 19:27-29. "If anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." Mark 8:34 He must deny sinful self, which takes in a man's lusts.

He must deny natural self, which takes in a man's arts, parts, gifts, and reason.

He must deny religious self, which takes in all a man's religious duties and services, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

He must deny moral self, which includes a freedom from gross, heinous, enormous wickednesses; and a fair, sweet, harmless behavior towards men.

He must deny relative self, which takes in our nearest and dearest relations in the flesh; as wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters, etc., Psa 45:7-11.

Now when a man comes thus universally to deny himself for Christ's sake, and the gospel's sake, and religion's sake, then the Spirit of the Lord comes and seals him up unto the day of redemption. This is a truth confirmed by the experiences of many martyrs now in heaven, and by the testimony of many Christians still alive.

[7.] Seventhly, SACRAMENT times are sealing times. In that "feast of fat things," God by his Spirit seals up his love to his people, and his covenant to his people, and pardon of sin to his people, and heaven and happiness to his people. There are many precious souls who have found Christ in this ordinance, and when they could not find him in other ordinances, though they have sought him sorrowingly. In this ordinance many a distressed soul has been strengthened, comforted and sealed.

I might give you many instances. Take one for all. There was a gracious woman, who, after God had filled her soul with comfort, and sealed up his everlasting love to her, fell under former fears and trouble of spirit, and being at the Lord's supper, a little before the bread was administered to her, Satan seemed to appear to her, and told her that she should not presume to eat; but at that very nick of time, the Lord was pleased to bring into her mind that passage in the Canticles, "Eat, O my friend," Song of Solomon 5:1. But notwithstanding this, Satan still continued terrifying of her, and when she had eaten, he told her that she should not drink; but then the Lord brought that second clause of the verse to her remembrance, "Drink, yes drink abundantly" (or, "be drunk," as the Hebrew has it) "my beloved" (or, "my loves," as the Hebrew has it;—all faithful souls are Christ's loves), and so she drank also, and presently was filled with such unspeakable joys, that she hardly knew how she got home; which soul-ravishing joys continued for a two weeks after, and filled her mouth with songs of praise, so that she could neither sleep nor eat, more than she forced herself to do out of conscience of duty. At the fortnight's end, when God was pleased to abate her measure of joy, she came to a settled peace of conscience, and assurance of the love of God; so that for twenty years after, she had not so much as a cloud upon her spirit, or the least questioning of her interest in Christ. But,

[8.] Eighthly, When God calls his people to some great and noble WORK, when he puts them upon some high services, some difficult duties, some holy and eminent employments—then his Spirit comes and sets his seal upon them: Jer 1:5, "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you: and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you to be a prophet unto the nations." The Lord sending the prophet Jeremiah to denounce most dreadful judgments against a rebellious people, an impudent brazen-faced nation, he assures him of his eternal election, and of his choice presence, and singular assistance in that work that he set him about, Jer 1:8; Jer 1:17-19. Thus the Lord dealt with Peter, James, and John, Mat 17:1-6, and thus he dealt with Paul, Acts 9:1-23.

[9.] Ninthly, When they are taken up into more than ordinary COMMUNION with God—then is the Spirit's sealing time. When was it that the spouse cried out, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" but when Christ brought her to his banqueting house, and his banner over her was love? Song of Solomon 2:16; Song of Solomon 2:3-6, compared, etc.

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, When Christians give themselves up to PRIVATE PRAYER, when Christians are more than ordinarily exercised in secret prayer, in closet duties—then the Spirit comes and seals up the covenant and the love of the Father to them. When Daniel had been wrestling and weeping, and weeping and wrestling all day long with God in his closet, then the angel tells him, "that he was a man greatly beloved of God." Dan 9:20-23.

There was a gracious woman who, after much frequenting of sermons, and walking in the ways of the Lord, fell into great desersions; but being in secret prayer, God came in with abundance of light and comfort, sealing up to her soul that part of his covenant, namely, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh; that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God," Eze 11:19-20. And thus I have given you a brief account of the Spirit's special sealing times. Now mark, this seal God sets upon all his wares, upon all his adopted children; for sooner or later, all of God's children are sealed with this seal. God sets his seal of regeneration, he stamps his image of holiness upon all

his people, to difference and distinguish them from all profane, immoral, and hypocritical people in the world, John 3:3; 2Th 2:13; Heb 12:14. Doubtless the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, imprinting the likeness and lineaments of God's image of righteousness and holiness upon man, as a seal or signet does leave an impression and stamp of its likeness upon the thing sealed, is the seal of the Spirit spoken of in Scripture: 2Ti 2:19, "The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are his. And let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." But to prevent mistakes, you must remember, that though the Spirit of the Lord, first or last, will set his seal upon every real saint—yet the impression of that seal is not alike visible in all; for some bear this impression as babes, others as men grown up to some maturity. All God's adopted children bear this impression truly—but none of them bear it perfectly in this life. Sometimes this seal of regeneration, this seal of holiness is so plain and obvious that a man may run and read it in himself and others; and at other times it is so obscure and dark, that he can hardly discern it, either in himself or others. This seal is so lively stamped on some of God's people, that it discovers itself very visibly, eminently, gloriously; but on others it is not alike visible. And thus I have made it evident by these seven particulars, that all the children of God have the Spirit of God.

Now mark, the Spirit of God, who is in all the saints, is a Spirit of prayer and supplication: Rom 8:15, "You have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." While the child is in the womb it cannot cry—but as soon as it is born it cries. While Paul did lie in the womb of his natural estate, he could not pray; but no sooner was he born of the Spirit—but the next news is, "Behold he prays!" Acts 9:11. Prayer is nothing but the turning of a man's inside outward before the Lord. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of a man's soul into the bosom of God. Prayer is nothing but the breathing that out before the Lord that was first breathed into us by the Spirit of the Lord. Prayer is nothing but a choice, a free, a sweet, and familiar fellowship of the soul with God. Certainly, it is a great work of the Spirit to help the saints to pray: Gal 4:6, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." God has no stillborn children. The gemination, "Abba, Father," notes fiducial, filial, and vehement affection. Abba is an Hebrew word; Father is a Greek word, whereby is signified the union of the Hebrews and Grecians, or the Jews and Gentiles, in one church, "Abba, Father." In Christ the cornerstone, both Jews and Gentiles are joined. The word Abba, say others, signifies father in the Hebrew tongue, which the apostle here retains, because it is a word full of affection, which young children retain almost in all languages, when they begin to speak. And he adds the word Father, not only to expound the same—but also the better to express the eager movings and the earnest and vehement desires and singular affections of believers, in their crying unto God; even as Christ himself redoubled the word Father, Mark 14:36, to the same purpose, when he was in his greatest distress. This little word Father, says Luther, lisped forth in prayer by a child of God, exceeds the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and all other so famed orators in the world.

It is certain that the Spirit of God helps the saints in all their communions with God, namely, in their meditations of God, in their reading and hearing of the word of God, in the communions one with another, and in all their solemn addresses to God. And as to this the apostle gives us a most special instance in that Rom 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." When we are to pray, there is in us sometimes an infirmity of

ignorance, so that we know not what to pray for, either in regard of the matter or the manner. And there is in us at other times an infirmity of pride and conceitedness, so that we cannot pray with that humility and lowliness of spirit as we should, spiritual pride having puffed up our prayers. Sometimes there is in us an infirmity of deadness, dullness, drowsiness, etc., so that we cannot pray with that warmth, heat, life, spirit, and fervency, as we should, or as we would. And at other times there is in us an infirmity of unbelief and slavish fears, so that we cannot pray with that faith and holy boldness, as befits children who draw near to a throne of grace, to a throne of mercy, etc. But now the Spirit helps these infirmities by way of instruction, prompting and teaching us what to pray for, and how we should spell our lesson; and by telling us as it were within, what we should say, and how we should sigh and groan; and by rousing and quickening, and stirring of us up to prayer, and by his singular influence and choice assistance opening and enlarging our hearts in prayer; and by his tuning the strings of our affections, he prepares us and fits us for the work of supplication.

Now, all the saints having the Spirit, and the Spirit being a Spirit of prayer and supplication, there is no reason in the world why a saint should say, 'I would pray in secret—but I cannot pray, I cannot pour out my soul nor my complaint before the Lord in a corner.'

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, You say you can not pray, you have not the gifts and abilities which others have. But you can manage your callings, your worldly business as well as others; and why then can you not pray as well as others? Ah, friends! did you but love private prayer as well as you love the world, and delight in private prayer as much as you delight in the world, and were your hearts as much set upon closet-prayer as they are set upon the world—you would never say you could not pray, yes, you would as quickly pray as well as others. It is not so much from lack of ability to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret; as it is from lack of desire, and lack of heart to pray in secret, that you don't pray in secret.

Jacob's love to Rachel, and Shechem's love to Dinah, carried them through the greatest difficulties, Gen 29:1-35 and Gen 34:1-31. Were men's affections but strongly set upon private prayer, they would quickly find abilities to pray. He who sets his affections upon a virgin, though he be not learned nor eloquent, will find words enough to let her know how his heart is taken with her. The application is easy. He in Seneca complained of a thorn in his foot, when his lungs was rotten. So many complain of lack of ability to pray in their closets, when their hearts are rotten. Sirs! do but get better hearts, and then you will never say you can't pray. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world, to see men strongly parted and gifted for all worldly businesses, to cry out that they can't pray, that they have no ability to pour out their souls before the Lord in secret. You have sufficient parts and gifts to tell men of your sins, your needs, your dangers, your difficulties, your mercies, your deliverances, your duties, your crosses, your losses, your enjoyments, your friends, your foes; and why then are you not ashamed to complain of your want of parts and gifts, to tell those very things to God in a corner, which you can tell to men even upon the housetops? etc. But,

Objection 4. Fourthly, Some may further object and say, God is very well acquainted with all our needs, necessities, straits, trials; and there is no moving of him to bestow any favors upon us, which he does not intend to bestow upon us, whether we pray in our closets or no; and therefore to what purpose do you press secret prayer so hard upon us? etc. To this objection I shall give these answers.

(1.) First, That this objection lies as strong against family prayer and public prayer, as it does against private prayer. God knows all your needs and necessities, all your straits and trials, etc., and therefore what need you pray in your family, what need you attend public prayers in the communion of saints? There is no wringing of any mercy out of the hands of heaven, which God does not intend to bestow. This objection faces all kind of prayer, and fights against all kinds of prayer. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That private prayer is that piece of divine worship and adoration, it is a part of that homage which we owe to God upon the account of a divine command, as I have already proved. Now, all objections must bow before the face of divine commands; as Joseph's brethren bowed before him, Gen 42:6; or as king Ahasuerus his servants bowed before Haman, Est 3:2. Indeed, every objection that is formed up against a divine command, should fall before it, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David. He who casts off private prayer under any pretense whatever, he casts off the dominion of God, the authority of God, and this may be as much as a man's life and soul is worth. But,

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, Though prayer is not the ground, nor the cause of obtaining favors and mercies from God—yet it is the means, it is the silver channel, it is the golden pipe, through which the Lord is pleased to convey to his people all temporal, spiritual, and eternal favors, [Isa 55:6; Jas 1:5; Isa 62:7; Psa 22:24] Eze 36:26-37. "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Mat 7:7-8.

God promises to give them the cream, the choicest, the sweetest of all spiritual, eternal, and temporal blessings; but mark, Eze 36:37, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." Though God is very prompt and ready to bestow upon his people the best and the greatest of blessings—yet he will by prayer be sought unto for the actual enjoyment of them. He who has no heart to pray for a mercy, he has no ground to believe that ever God will give him the mercy. There is no receiving without asking, no finding without seeking, no opening without knocking. The threefold promise annexed to the threefold precept in Mat 7:7, should encourage all Christians to be instant, fervent, and constant in prayer. The proud beggar gets nothing from men, and the dumb sinner gets nothing of God. As there is no mercy too great for God to give, so there is no mercy too little for us to crave. Certainly that man has little worth in him who thinks any mercy not worth a seeking. But,

(4.) Fourthly and lastly, I answer, Every Christian should labor to enjoy his mercies in mercy; he should labor to have his blessings blessed unto him; he should labor to have "the good will of him who dwelt in the bush," with all he has, Gen 22:17. Now this is an everlasting truth, a maxim to live and die with, that whatever mercy comes not in upon the wing of prayer is not given in mercy. Oh, how sweet is that mercy that comes flying in upon the wing of prayer! How sweet was that water to Samson which streamed to him in the channel of private prayer, Jdg 15:19; he called the name of it En-hakkore, the well of him who prayed. Samson prayed as for life, and that water that was handed to him was as sweet as life. Every mercy which is gathered by the hand of prayer is as sweet as the rose of Sharon, Song of Solomon 2:1. But that mercy which comes not in at the door of prayer, comes not in at the right door; and that mercy that comes not in at the right door will do a man no good: such mercies will make themselves wings and fly from us, Pro 23:5.

Every Christian should narrowly look that all his mercies are sanctified mercies. Now, every mercy is sanctified by the word and prayer, 1Ti 4:4-5. Prayer prepares and fits us for mercy, and mercy for us. It is prayer which gives us a right and holy use of all our mercies. Such mercies are but great miseries, which come not in upon the wing of prayer. Prayerless men's mercies are all given in wrath; yes, their blessings are cursed unto them, Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2. Look! as every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt, so every mercy is to be sanctified by prayer. Look! as gold sometimes is laid not only upon cloth and silks—but also upon silver itself, so prayer is that golden duty that must be laid not only upon all our natural and civil actions, as eating, drinking, buying, selling, etc.—but also upon all our silver duties, upon all our most religious and spiritual performances, as hearing, reading, meditating, conference, church-fellowship, breaking of bread, etc.

Certainly prayer is very necessary to make every providence, and every ordinance, and every mercy—to be a blessing to us. Every mercy that comes in upon the wing of private prayer is a double mercy; it is a great-bellied mercy; it is a mercy that has many mercies in the womb of it. Happy is that Christian who can lay his hand upon every mercy that he enjoys, and say of them all as once Hannah said of her Samuel: 1Sa 1:27, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of him." But,

Objection 5. Fifthly, Some may further object and say, I would drive a private trade with God, I would exercise myself in secret prayer—but I lack a convenient place to retire into; I lack a private corner to unbosom my soul to my Father in, etc. To this objection I shall give these three short answers:

(1.) First, I suppose this objection concerns but a few Christians in our days. That God who has given a Christ to believers does commonly give them a convenient corner to enjoy private communion with himself in, Rom 8:32. Most Christians, I am afraid, do rather lack a heart for private prayer, than a convenient place for private prayer. What men set their hearts upon, they will find time and place to effect it, whether it be good or whether it be evil, whether it concerns temporals or spirituals, whether it concerns this world or another world, this life or eternal life. If most men would but get better hearts, they would quickly find or make convenient places for private prayer. He who has an inflamed love to God will certainly find out a corner to enjoy secret communion with God. True lovers will find out corners to enjoy one another in. How many men are there, who can easily find out private places for their dogs to lie in, and their swine to sleep in, and their horses to stand in, and their oxen to feed in, etc., who can't find out a private place to seek the face of God in! But did these men but love their God, or their souls, or private prayer, or eternity, as well or better than their beasts, they would not be such brutes but that they would quickly find out a hole, a corner, to wait upon the Lord in. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, If a Christian be on the top of a house with Peter, he may pray there; or if he be walking in the field with Isaac, he may pray there; or if he be on the mountain with Christ, he may pray there; or if he be behind the door with Paul, he may pray there; or if he be waiting at table with Nehemiah, he may secretly pray there; or if he be in a forest, he may pray there, as the primitive Christians in times of persecution did; or if he be behind a tree, he may pray there; or if he be by the sea side, he may pray there, as the apostles did. It was a choice saying of Austin, "Every saint is God's temple," says he, "and he who carries his temple about him, may go to prayer when he pleases." Some saints have never had so much of heaven brought down into their hearts, as

when, they have been with God in a corner. Oh the secret manifestations of divine love, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret influences, the secret communion with God, that many a precious Christian has had in the most solitary places: it may be behind the door, or behind the wall, or behind the hedge, or behind the arbor, or behind the tree, or behind the rock, or behind the bush, etc. But,

(3.) Thirdly, and lastly, Did you never in your unregenerate estate make use of all your wits, and parts, and utmost endeavors, to find out convenient seasons, and secret corners, and solitary places—to sin in, and to dishonor your God in, and to undo your own and others' souls in? Yes! I remember with shame and blushing, that it was so with me when I was dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the course of this world, Eph 2:1-3. Oh, how much then does it concern you in your renewed, sanctified, and raised estate, to make use of all your wits, and parts, and utmost endeavors, to find out the fittest seasons, and the most secret corners, and solitary places you can, to honor your God in, and to seek the welfare of your own and others' souls in! Oh that men were but as serious, studious, and industrious, to find out convenient seasons, secret places to please and serve and glorify the Lord in—as they have been serious, studious, and industrious to find out convenient seasons, and secret places to displease and grieve the Spirit of the Lord in. But,

Objection 6. Sixthly, and lastly, others may further object and say, We would be often in private with God, we would give ourselves up to closet-prayer—but that we can no sooner shut our closet doors— but a multitude of infirmities, weaknesses, and vanities do face us, and rise up against us. Our hearts being full of distempers and follies; and our bodies, say some, are under great indispositions; and our souls, say others, are under present indispositions; and how then can we seek the face of God in a corner? how can we wrestle with God in our closets? etc.

Now, to this objection I shall give these six answers.

(1.) If these kinds of reasonings or arguings were sufficient to shut private prayer out of doors, where does that man or woman live, that husband or wife, that father or child, that master or servant—who would ever be found in the practice of that duty? [Psa 40:12; Psa 51:5; Rom 7:15; Rom 7:24; Psa 130:3; 1Co 4:4; 2Ch 6:36; Php 3:12] Where is there a person under heaven whose heart is not full of infirmities, weaknesses, follies, and vanities; and whose body and soul is not too often indisposed to closet duties? 1Ki 8:46, "If they sin against you, for there is no man who sins not, etc." Ecc 7:20, "For there is not a just man upon the earth that does good and sins not." Pro 20:9, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Job 14:4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Job 9:30-31, "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands ever so clean; yet shall you plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me." Job 9:20, "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." Psa 143:2, "And enter not into judgment with your servant: for in your sight shall no man living be justified." Jas 3:2, "For in many things we all offend." 1Jn 1:8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

Such who affirm that men may be fully perfect in this life, or without sin in this life—they do affirm that which is expressly contrary to the Scriptures last cited, and to the universal experience of all saints, who daily feel and lament over that body of sin and death which they bear about with them; yes, they do affirm that which is quite contrary to the very state or constitution of all the saints in

this life. In every saint, "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit lusts against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other, so that they cannot do the things that they would," Gal 5:17. In every Christian man there are two men, the old man and the new; the one must be daily put on, and the other daily put off, Eph 4:22-24. All saints have a law in their members rebelling against the law of their minds; so that the good that they would do, they do not; and the evil that they would not do, that they do, Rom 7:23; Rom 7:25, comp. They have two contrary principles in them, from whence proceeds two manner of actions, motions, and inclinations, continually opposite one to another. Hence it is that there is a continual combat in them, like the struggling of the twins in Rebekah's womb. An absolute perfection is peculiar to the triumphant state of God's elect in heaven: heaven is the only privileged place, where no unclean thing can enter in, Rev 23:21; that is the only place where neither sin nor Satan shall ever get footing. Such as dream of an absolute perfection in this life, do confound and jumble heaven and earth together; the state of the church militant, with the state of the church triumphant, which are certainly distinct both in time and place, and in order, measure, and attendants, Heb 12:22-23. This dangerous opinion of absolute perfection in this life, shakes the very foundation of religion, and overthrows the gospel of grace; it renders the satisfaction of Christ, and all his great transactions, null and void; it tells the world that there is no need of faith, of repentance, of ordinances, of watchfulness. Those who say they have no sin, say they have no need of the blood of Christ to cleanse them from sin, 1Jn 1:7. Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of faith to rest upon Christ for imputed righteousness to justify their persons. Such as say they have no sin, say they have no need of Christ as king to subdue their lusts; nor as priest, to expiate offences; nor as prophet, to teach and instruct them; nor as a Savior, to save them from their sins, or from wrath to come, Mat 1:21; 1Th 1:10. Those who have a perfect righteousness of their own, need not be indebted to Christ for his pure, perfect, spotless, matchless righteousness. Such as are without sin have no cause to repent of sin, nor yet to watch against sin. Such as are perfect cannot say, 'We are unprofitable servants.' But are they indeed just? Then they must live by faith, Heb 2:4. Are they men, and not angels? Then they must repent, Acts 17:30, "For now he commands all men everywhere to repent." Surely the best of men—are but men at the best. Oh how bad those men must be, who make God himself a liar, 1Jn 1:10. But if these men are absolutely perfect, how comes it to pass that they are afflicted and diseased as other men? How comes it to pass that they eat, and drink, and sleep, and buy, and sell, and die as other men? Are these things consistent with an absolute perfection? Surely not! An absolute perfection is not a step short of heaven; it is heaven on this side heaven; and those who would obtain it must step to heaven before they have it. But,

(2.) Secondly, I answer, That this objection lies as strong against family-prayer, and against all other kind of prayer, as it does against closet-prayer. He who shall upon any grounds make this objection a great bugbear to scare his soul from closet-prayer; he may upon the same ground make it a great bugbear to scare his soul not only from all other kind of prayer—but from all other duties of religion also, whether private or public. The spirit of this objection fights against all religion at once; and therefore you should say to it, as Christ said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan!" But.

(3.) Thirdly, I answer, It is not the infirmities and weaknesses of a Christian which are known, lamented, bewailed, and resisted—that can obstruct or hinder the efficacy and success of his prayers. A spiritual infirmity is the indisposition of the soul, which arises from a weakness of grace.

Let me clear up this in a few instances. Jonah, you know, was a man full of sinful passions, and other weaknesses, etc., and yet his prayer was very prevalent with God: Jon 2:1-2; Jon 2:7; Jon 2:10, compared. So Elijah's prayers were exceeding prevalent with God; he could open and shut heaven at his pleasure; and yet subject to like passions as we are, Jas 3:17. Elijah was a man of extraordinary sanctity and holiness, a man who lived in heaven while he dwelt on earth; Enoch-like, he walked with God, and yet subject to like passions as we are, 1Ki 19:8; Rom 11:2-3. God did in an eminent way communicate to him his counsel and secrets; he lay in the bosom of the Father; and yet was a man subject to like passions as we are. He was a very powerful and prevalent prophet; his very name imports as much; Eli-jah signifies my strong God. In that 1Ki 17:1, it is Eli-jahu, that is, the Lord is my strong God; and yet subject to like passions as we are. He was a man much in fasting and prayer; he was an inferior mediator between God and his people; and yet subject to like passions as we are.

Now because some from hence might object and say, No wonder if such a man as he was, could by his prayers open and shut heaven at his pleasure; but I am a poor, weak, low, sinful, and unworthy creature; I am full of infirmities, weaknesses, and passions; and shall my prayers ever find access to God, and acceptance with God, or gracious answers and returns from God? Now to obviate this objection, and to remove this discouragement out of the thoughts and hearts of poor sinners, the Holy Spirit adds this clause, that he was not a God, nor an angel—but a man, and such a man as was not exempted from common infirmities; for he had his passions, frailties, and weaknesses as well as other saints; intimating to us, that infirmities in the lowest saints should no more prejudice the acceptance and success of their prayers with God, than they did in Elijah himself. The word passion sometimes signifies, first, a motion of the sensual appetite, arising from the imagination of good or ill, with some commotion of the body; secondly, sometimes passions signify sinful infirmities, sinful perturbations of the mind; and thirdly, sometimes passion is taken more strictly for the especial affection of sinful anger and wrath, which Chrysostom calls a short devil. It makes a man speak he knows not what, as you may see in Jonah; and to do he knows not what, as you may see in Saul. Now in these two last senses Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and yet a man so potent with God, that by private prayer he could do even what he desired in the court of heaven. In 1Sa 21:1-15, you may read of David's bold lies, and of his other failings, infirmities, and unseemly carriages before Achish, king of Gath, and for which he was turned out of the king's presence, under the notion of a madman; and yet at that very time he prays, and prevails with God for favor, mercy, and deliverance: Psa 34:4, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my fear." But when was this? Read the title of the psalm, and you shall find it: "A psalm of David, who changed his behavior before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed." In Num 20:10-12, Moses' infirmities are pointed out.

First, You have there his immoderate anger.

(2.) His speaking to the people, when he should have spoken to the rock, Num 20:8.

(3.) His smiting of it, when he should only have spoken to it with the rod in his hand; and smiting it twice, as in a pang of passion and impatience.

(4.) His distrusting of the Lord's word, Num 20:12.

(5.) His reviling of the people, when he should have convinced them, "Hear, you rebels."

(6.) He seems to be so offended at his commission, that he can hardly forbear murmuring: "Must we bring water out of the rock?" Mark that word, "must we." Oh how is the meekest man in all the world transported into passion, and anger, and unbelief, and hurried into sad indecencies! Num 12:3. And yet there was not a man on earth whose prayers were so powerful and prevalent with God as Moses' were, Psa 106:23; Exo 32:9-15; Exo 33:11-17; Exo 14:13-16, etc. So king Asa was a man full of infirmities and weaknesses; he relies on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord, 2Ch 16:7-13; he is very impatient, and under a great rage upon the prophet's reproof. He imprisons the prophet; he oppressed some of the people; or, as the Hebrew has it, "he crushed," or he trampled upon some of the people at the same time; and being greatly diseased in his feet, he sought to the physicians and not to the Lord. And yet this man's prayer was wonderfully prevalent with God, 2Ch 14:11-15. The saints' failings and infirmities can never make void those gracious promises by which God stands engaged to hearken to the prayers of his people, Psa 50:15; Isa 30:19, and Isa 65:24. God's hearing of our prayers does not depend upon sanctification—but upon Christ's intercession; not upon what we are in ourselves—but upon what we are in the Lord Jesus; both our persons and our prayers are acceptable in the beloved, Eph 1:6; 1Pe 2:5. When God hears our prayers, it is neither for our own sakes nor yet for our prayers' sake—but it is for his own sake, and his Son's sake, and his glory's sake, and his promise's sake, etc.

Certainly God will never cast off his people for their failings and infirmities.

First, It is the glory of a man to pass by infirmities, Pro 19:11. Oh how much more, then, must it be the glory of God to pass by the infirmities of his people!

Secondly, Saints are children; and what father will cast off his children for their infirmities and weaknesses? Psa 103:13-14; 1Co 12:27.

Thirdly, Saints are members of Christ's body; and what man will cut off a limb because there is a scab or wart upon it? "What man will cut off his nose," says Luther, "because there is some filth in it?"

Fourthly, Saints are Christ's purchase; they are his possession, his inheritance. [Eph 1:22-23; 1Co 6:20; 1Co 7:23; 1Pe 1:18-20] Now what man is there that will cast away, or cast off his purchase, his possession, his inheritance, because of thorns, bushes, or briars that grow upon it?

Fifthly, Saints are in a marriage-covenant with God, Hos 2:19-20. Now what husband is there that will cast off his wife for her failings and infirmities? So long as a man is in covenant with God, his infirmities can't cut him off from God's mercy and grace. Now it is certain a man may have very many infirmities upon him, and yet not break his covenant with God, for no sin breaks a man's covenant with God but such as unties the marriage knot. As in other marriages, every offence or infirmity does not disannul the marriage union; it is only the breach of the marriage vow, namely, adultery, which unties the marriage knot; so here it is only those sins which breaks the covenant, which unties the marriage knot between God and the soul: (1) When men freely subject to any lust as a new master; or, (2.) When men take another husband; and this men do, when they enter into a league with sin or the world, when they make a new covenant with hell and death, Isa 28:15; Isa 28:18. Now from these mischiefs God secures his chosen ones. In a word, if God should cast off his people for their failings and infirmities, then none of the sons or daughters of Adam could be saved: "For there is not a just man upon the earth that does good and sins not," Ecc 7:20. Now if

God will not cast off his people for their infirmities, then certainly he will not cast off the prayers of his people because of those invincible infirmities which hang upon them; and therefore our infirmities should not discourage us, or take us off from closet prayer, or from any other duties of religion. But,

(4.) Fourthly, I answer, The more infirmities and weaknesses hang upon us, the more cause have we to keep close and constant to our closet-duties. If grace is weak, the omission of private prayer will make it weaker. Look! as he who will not eat will certainly grow weaker and weaker; so he who will not pray in his closet will certainly grow weaker and weaker. If corruptions are strong, the neglect of private prayer will make them stronger. The more the remedy is neglected, the more the disease is strengthened. Whatever the distempers of a man's heart be, they will never be abated—but augmented, by the omission of private prayer. The more bodily infirmities hang upon us, the more need we have of the physician; and so the more sinful infirmities hang upon our souls, the more need we have of private prayer. All sinful omissions will make work for repentance, for hell, or for the physician of souls. Sinful omissions lead to sinful commissions, as you may see in the angels that fell from heaven to hell, and in Adam's fall in paradise.

Origen going to comfort and encourage a martyr who was to be tortured, was himself apprehended by the officers, and constrained either to offer to the idols, or to have his body tortured; of which hard choice, to save his life, he bowed unto the idol; but afterwards, making a sad confession of his foul fact, he said, "That he went forth that morning before he had been with God in his closet;" and so peremptorily concludes, "that his neglect of prayer was the cause of his falling into that great sin." The neglect of one day, of one duty, of one hour, would undo us forever, if we had not an advocate with the Father, 1Jn 2:1-2. Those years, those months, those weeks, those days, those hours that are not filled up with God, with Christ, with grace, with duty, will certainly be filled up with vanity and folly. All omissions of duty, will more and more unfit the soul for duty. A key thrown aside, gathers rust; a pump not used, will be hard to work; and armor not used, will not be bright, etc. Look! as sinful commissions will stab the soul; so sinful omissions will starve the soul. Such as live in the neglect of private prayer may well cry out, Isa 24:16; Job 16:8, "Our leanness, our leanness!" And therefore away with all these pleas and reasonings about infirmities, and weaknesses, and indispositions, and address yourselves to closet prayer! But,

(5.) Fifthly, I answer, It may be your distemper and indisposition of body is not so great—but that you can buy, and sell, and get gain. Notwithstanding your aching head, and your shooting back, and your pained sides, and your feeble knees—yet you can, with Martha, cumber yourself about your worldly affairs. In that Song of Solomon 5:3, Christ calls upon his spouse to open the door, and let him in. But sin and shifting coming into the world together, see how poorly and unworthily she labors to shift Christ off: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" Rather than she will make no excuse for herself, she will make a silly excuse, a worthless excuse. She was not a mere child; and what a great business had it been for her to have risen to have let in such a guest, who brings everything with him that heart can wish or need require, Rev 3:17-18. She was not grown so decrepit with old age— but that she was able to make herself ready; at least, she might easily have slipped on her morning-coat and stepped to the door without any danger of taking cold, or of being wet to the skin, and so have let him in, who never comes empty-handed, Rev 22:12; yes, who was now come full of the dew of divine blessings to enrich her; for so some sense those words, "My head is filled with dew, and my locks

with the drops of the night." Oh, the frivolous pretenses, and idle excuses that even gracious people are apt sometimes to take up to over-color their neglect of duty! But some may say, It may be the spouse of Christ was asleep. Oh no! for she says, Song of Solomon 5:2, "I sleep—but my heart wakes." She slept with open eyes, as the lion does; she slept but half-sleep; though her outward man was drowsy—yet her inward man was wakeful; though the flesh took a nap—yet her spirit did not nod.

Oh! but it may be Christ made no noise, he gave no notice that he was at the door! O yes! he knocked and knocked by the hammer of his word, and the hand of his Spirit; he knocked by outward corrections and inward admonitions; he knocked by providences, and he knocked by mercies. His importunity and vehemency for admission was very great.

Oh! but it maybe he did but only knock, he should have called as well as knocked; for none but madmen would open their doors in the night, except they knew the voice of him who knocks. Oh yes! he did not only knock—but called also.

Oh! but it may be she did not know his voice, and therefore she would not open. No chaste wife will at unseasonable hours arise and open her doors unto a stranger, especially in her husband's absence. Oh yes, she knew his voice: Song of Solomon 5:2, "It is the voice of my beloved who knocks." She was not so fast asleep—but that she knew the voice of her beloved from all other voices, and could tell every tittle that he said. The calls of Christ were so strong, so loud, and his pulsations so mighty, that she could not but know and confess, that it was the voice of her beloved, though she was not so respectful and dutiful as to obey that voice.

Oh! but it may be Christ knocked and called, like a friend in his journey, only to inquire how it was with her, or to speak to her at the window. Oh no! he speaks plainly, he speaks with authority, "Open to me!"

Oh! but it may be she had no power to open the door. Oh yes; for when he commands his people to open, he lends them a key to open the door, that he may enter in, Php 1:6; Php 1:13; 1Co 15:10. Infused grace is a living principle that will enable the soul to open to Christ. If a man be not a free agent to work and act by the helps of grace received, to what purpose are counsels, commands, exhortations and directions, given to perform this, and that, and the other work? And certainly it is our greatest honor and happiness in this world to cooperate with God in those things which concern his own glory, and our own internal and eternal good.

Oh! but it may be Christ had given his spouse some distaste, or it may be he had let fall some hard words, or some unkind speeches, which made her a little froward and petulant. Oh no! for he owns her as his beloved, and courts her highly, with the most winning and amicable terms of love: "My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, or my perfect one." He calls her so for her dovelike simplicity, purity, and integrity. All these endearing and honoring titles, are the rhetoric of divine love; and should have been as so many sacred engagements upon her, to open to her beloved.

Oh! but it may be Christ was too quick for her, it may be he gave but a knock and a call, and was gone before she could rise and open the door. O no! Christ stayed until his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night; which most passionate expression notes the tender goodness, patience, and gentleness of our Lord Jesus, who endures far greater and harder things for his spouse's sake, than ever Jacob did for his Rachel's sake.

After Christ had suffered much for her sake, and waited her leisure a long while, she very unkindly, and very unmannerly, and unworthily turns her back upon all his sweet and comfortable compellations, and blessed and bleeding embracements, and turns him off to look for his lodging in some other place; so that he might well have said, Is this your kindness to your friend, your husband, your Lord—to allow him to stand bareheaded, and that in foul weather, yes, in the night time, wooing, entreating, and beseeching admittance; and yet to turn him off as one in whom your soul could take no pleasure?

Now, if you will but seriously weigh all these circumstances in the balance of the sanctuary, you may run and read the fault and folly, the weakness and madness, the slowness and laziness of the spouse; and by her you may make a judgment of those sad and sinful distempers that may seize upon the best of saints, and see how ready the flesh is to frame excuses; and all to keep the soul off from duty, and the doors fast bolted against the Lord Jesus.

It is sad when men are well enough to sit, and chat, and trade in their shops—but are not well enough to pray in their closets. Certainly, that man's heart is not right with God, at least at this time, who, under all his bodily distempers, can maintain and keep up his public trade with men—but is not well enough to maintain his private trade with heaven. Our bodies are but dirt, handsomely fashioned. We derive our pedigree from the dirt, and are akin to clay. One calls the body "the blot of nature;" another calls it the "the soul's beast," "a sack of dung," "worms' food;" another calls it "a prison," "a sepulcher;" and Paul calls it "a body of vileness." "All your life you will sweat to produce food, until your dying day. Then you will return to the ground from which you came. For you were made from dust, and to the dust you will return." Gen 3:19. Now for a man to make so much ado about the distempers of his body to excuse the neglects of his soul, is an evil made up of many evils. But really, sir, I am so ill, and my body is so distempered and indisposed, that I am not able to mind or meddle with the least things of the world! Well! if this be so, then know that God has on purpose knocked you off from the things of this world, that you may look the more effectually after the things of the eternal world. The design of God in all the distempers that are upon your body, is to wind you more off from your worldly trade, and to work you to follow your heavenly trade more close. Many a man had never found the way to his closet, if God by bodily distempers had not turned him out of his shop, his trade, his business, his all, etc.

Well, Christians! remember this once for all, if your indisposition to closet prayer does really arise from bodily distempers, then you may be confident that the Lord will pity you much, and bear with you much, and kindly accept of a little. You know how affectionately parents and kind masters treat their children and servants, when they are under bodily distempers and indisposition; and you may be confident that God will never treat you worse. Ponder often upon that Eze 34:4; Eze 34:16; Eze 34:21-22. But,

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, I shall answer this objection by way of distinction, thus: FIRSTLY, There is a voluntary indisposition to private prayer; and there is an involuntary indisposition to private prayer.

There is a voluntary indisposition, and that is when a man, by his willful sinning against light, knowledge, conviction, etc., contracts that guilt that lies as a load upon his conscience. Now guilt makes the soul shy of God; and the greater the guilt is, the more shy the soul is of drawing near to God in a corner. The child that is sensibly under guilt hides himself; as Adam did, in the day from his father's eye, and at night he slips to bed, to avoid either a chiding or a whipping from his father,

Gen 3:7-8. Guilt makes a man fly from God, and fly from prayer. It is a hard thing to look God in the face, when guilt stares a man in the face, Job 11:14-15. Guilt makes a man a terror to himself, Jer 20:3-4; now when a man is a terror to himself, he is neither fit to live, nor fit to die, nor fit to pray. When poison gets into the body, it works upon the vitals, and it weakens the vitals, and it endangers life, and unfits and indisposes a man to all natural actions. It is so here; when guilt lies heavy upon the conscience, it works upon the soul, it weakens the soul, it endangers the soul, and it does greatly unfit and indispose the soul to all holy actions. Guilt fights against our souls, our consciences, our comforts, our duties, yes, and our very graces also, 1Pe 2:11. There is nothing which wounds and lames our graces like guilt; there is nothing which weakens and wastes our graces like guilt; there is nothing which hinders the activity of our graces like guilt; nor there is nothing which clouds our evidences of grace like guilt. Look! what water is to the fire, that our sinnings are to our graces, evidences, and duties. Guilt is like Prometheus' vulture, which ever lies gnawing. It is better with Evagrius to lie on a bed of straw with a good conscience, than to lie on a bed of down with a guilty conscience.

What the probationer-disciple said to our Savior—Mat 8:19, "Master, I will follow you wherever you go,"—that a guilty conscience says to the sinner, "Wherever you go I will follow you." If you go to a fast, I will follow you, and fill your mind with black and dismal apprehensions of God; if you go to a feast, I will follow you, and show you the handwriting on the wall, Dan 5:5; if you go abroad, I will follow you, and make you afraid of every leaf that shakes; you shall look upon every bush as an armed man, and upon every man as a devil; if you stay at home, I will follow you from room to room, and fill you with horror and terror; if you lie down to rest, I will follow you with fearful dreams and tormenting apparitions; if you go into your closet, I will follow you, and make your very closet a hell to hold you.

It is storied of king Richard the Third, that after he had murdered his two nephews, guilt lay so hard upon his conscience, that his sleeps were very unquiet; for he would often leap out of his bed in the dark, and catching his sword in his hand, which hung by his bedside, he would go distractedly about his chamber seeking for the traitor. So Charles the Ninth of France, after he had made the streets of Paris run down with the blood of the Protestants, he could seldom take any sound sleep, nor could he endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music.

Judge Morgan, who passed the sentence of condemnation upon Jane Grey, a virtuous lady, shortly after fell mad, and in his raving cried out continually, "Take away the Lady Jane from me, take away the Lady Jane from me," and in that horror ended his wretched life.

James Abyes, going to execution for Christ's sake, as he went along, he gave his money and his clothes to one and another, until he had given all away to his shirt, whereupon one of the sheriff's men fell a-scoffing and deriding of him, and told him that he was a madman and a heretic, and not to be believed; but as soon as the good man was executed, this wretch was struck mad, and threw away his clothes, and cried out that "James Abyes was a good man, and gone to heaven—but he himself was a wicked man, and was damned," and thus he continued crying out until his death. Certainly he who derides a man for walking according to the word of the Lord, the Lord will, sooner or later, so smite and wound that man's conscience, that all the physicians in the world shall not heal it.

Now if your indisposition to private prayer springs from contracting guilt upon your conscience, then your best way is speedily to renew your repentance, and greatly to judge and humble your own soul, and so to act faith afresh upon the blood of Christ, both for pardoning mercy and for purging grace. When a man is stung with guilt, it is his highest wisdom in the world to look up to the brazen serpent, and not to spend his time or create torments to his own soul by perpetual poring upon his guilt. When guilt upon the conscience works a man to water the earth with tears, and to make heaven ring with his groans, then it works kindly. When the sense of guilt drives a man to God, to duty, to the throne of grace, then it will not be long night with that man. He who thinks to shift off private prayer under the pretense of guilt, does but in that increase his own guilt. Neglect of duty will never get guilt off the conscience. But there is also an involuntary indisposition to private prayer; as in a sick man, who would work and walk—but cannot, being hindered by his disease; or as it is with a man who has a great chain on his leg, he would very gladly walk or get away—but his chain hinders him. Now if your indisposition to private prayer is an involuntary indisposition, then God will in mercy, in course, both pardon it and remove it.

SECONDLY, There is a total indisposition to private prayer, and there is a partial indisposition to private prayer. A total indisposition to private prayer is, when a man has no mind at all to private prayer, nor any will at all to private prayer, nor any love at all to private prayer, nor any delight, nor any heart at all to private prayer, Jer 4:22, and Jer 44:17-19. Now where this frame of heart is, there all is evil, very evil, stark evil. A partial indisposition to private prayer is, when a man has some will to private prayer, though not such a will as once he had; and some mind to private prayer, though not such a mind as once he had; and some affections to private prayer, though not such warm and burning affections as once he had.

Now if your indisposition to private prayer is total, then you must wait upon the Lord in all his appointments for a changed nature, and for union with Christ; but if your indisposition to private prayer be only partial, then the Lord will certainly pardon it, and in the very use of holy means, in time remove it. But,

THIRDLY, and lastly, There is a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to private prayer; and there is a customary, a constant, or permanent indisposition to private prayer.

Now a transient, accidental, occasional, or fleeting indisposition to that which is good may be found upon the best of saints, as you may see in Moses, Exo 4:10-14; and in Jeremiah, Jer 1:5-8; Jer 1:17-19, and Jer 20:9; and in Jon 1:1-17; and in David, Psa 39:2-3. Now if this be the indisposition that you are under, then you may be confident that it will certainly work off by degrees, as theirs did—which I have cited, Isa 65:2. But then there is a customary, a constant or permanent indisposition to private prayer, and to all other holy duties of religion. Now if this be the indisposition that you are under, then I may safely conclude that you are in the very gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, Acts 8:21-23, and your work lies not in complaining of your indisposition—but in repenting and believing, and in laboring for a change of your heart and state; for until your heart, your state be changed, you will remain forever indisposed both to closet prayer and to all other duties of religion and godliness. To see a sinner sailing hell-ward with wind and tide on his side—to alter his course, and tack about for heaven; to see the earthly man become heavenly; the carnal man become spiritual; the proud man become humble; the vain man become serious; to see a sinner move contrary to himself in the ways of Christ and holiness—is as strange

as to see a fish flying in mid air, contrary to its own nature. And yet a divine power of God upon the soul can effect it; and this must be effected before the sinner will be graciously inclined and sincerely disposed to closet prayer. And let thus much suffice by way of answer to this objection also.

02A.07. Eleven advices and counsels

Eleven advices and counsels

Now, for the better management of this great duty, namely, closet prayer, I beseech you take my advice and counsel in these eleven following particulars.

(1.) First, Be frequent in closet prayer, and not now and then only. He will never make any earnings of closet prayer, who is not frequent in closet prayer. Now, that this counsel may stick, consider,

[1.] First, Other eminent servants of the Lord have been frequent in this blessed work: Neh 1:6, "Let your ear now be attentive, and your eyes open, that you may hear the prayer of your servant, which I pray before you, day and night." So Daniel, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did beforetime, Dan 6:10. So David, "My voice shall you hear in the morning, and in the evening will I direct my prayer unto you, and will look up," Psa 5:3. So Psa 88:13, "But unto you have I cried, O Lord; in the morning my prayer comes before you." So Psa 119:147, "I rise before dawn and cry out for help." So Psa 55:17, "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud." Psa 109:4, "I give myself unto prayer;" or, as the Hebrew may be read, "But I am a man of prayer." Of Carolus Magnus it was said, that he spoke more with God than with men.

[2.] Secondly, Consider the blessed Scripture does not only enjoin this duty—but it requires frequency in it also, Luk 18:1; 1Th 5:17; Col 4:2. In the former part of this discourse, I have given light into these scriptures; and therefore the bare citing of them must now suffice.

[3.] Thirdly, Christ was frequent in private prayer, as you may easily see by comparing of these scriptures together, Mark 1:35; Mat 14:23; Luk 22:39; John 18:2. In my second argument for private prayer you may see these scriptures opened and amplified. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that you have the examples of the very worst of men in this case. Papists are frequent in their private devotions. And the Mahomedans, whatever occasion they have, either by profit or pleasure, to divert them, will yet pray five times every day. Yes, the very heathens sacrificed to Hercules morning and evening upon the great altar at Rome. Now, shall blind nature do more than grace? But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider you cannot have too frequent communion with God, you cannot have too frequent fellowship with Jesus, you cannot have your hearts too frequently filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and with that peace that passes understanding, you cannot have heaven too frequently brought down into your hearts, nor you cannot have your hearts too frequently carried up to heaven; and therefore you cannot be too frequent in closet prayer. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that you are under frequent needs, and frequent sins, and frequent snares, and frequent temptations, and frequent allurements, and frequent trials, and frequent cares, and frequent fears, and frequent favors, 1Pe 5:8, Job 1:7; and therefore you had need be frequent with

God in your closets. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Consider you are the favorites of heaven, you are greatly beloved, you are highly honored, you are exceedingly esteemed and valued in the court of the Most High God. And remember, that the petitions of many weak Christians, and of many benighted Christians, and of many tempted Christians, and of many clouded Christians, and of many staggering Christians, and of many doubting Christians, and of many bewildered Christians, and of many fainting Christians, etc., are put into your hands, for a quick and speedy despatch to the throne of grace; so that you had need be frequent in your closets, and improve your interest in heaven, or else many of these poor hearts may be wronged, betrayed, and prejudiced by your neglect. Such as are favorites in princes' courts, if they are active, diligent, careful, and watchful, they may do much good for others, they may come as often as they please into their prince's presence, and with Queen Esther have for asking what they please, both for themselves and others, Esther 7.

Oh what a world of good may such do for others, if they would be but frequent with God in their closets! O sirs! if you have not that love, that regard, that pity, that compassion to your own souls, as you should have—yet, oh let not others suffer by your neglect of private prayer! Oh, let not Zion suffer! Oh, let not any particular saint suffer by your being found seldom in your closets.

Certainly, it might have gone better with the churches of Christ, and with the concernments of Christ, and with many of the poor people of Christ, if most Christians had been more frequent with God in their closets. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, Consider that this liberty to approach near to God in your closets, cost Christ his dearest blood, Eph 2:13; Heb 10:20. Now, he who is not frequent with God in his closet, tells all about him, that he sets no great value upon that liberty which Christ has purchased with his blood. The incomparable, the unparalleled price which Christ has paid down upon the nail, above sixteen hundred years ago, that we might have liberty and free access to his Father in our closets, argues very strongly, yes, irrefragably, the superlative excellency of that liberty, 1Pe 1:19. Oh therefore let us improve to purpose this blessed purchase of our Lord Jesus, by being frequent with God in our closets.

O sirs! shall Christ shed not only a few drops of blood—but his very heart blood, to purchase you a freedom and liberty to be as often in your closets with his Father as you please; and will you only now and then give God a visit in private? The Lord forbid!

(2.) My second advice and counsel is this, Take the fittest seasons and opportunities that possibly you can for closet prayer. Many take unfit seasons for private prayer, which more obstruct the importunity of the soul in prayer, than all the suggestions and instigations of Satan. As,

First, When the body is drowsy and sleepy; this is a very unfit season for closet prayer, Song of Solomon 3:1. Take heed of laying cushions of sloth under your knees, or pillows of idleness under your elbows, or of mixing nods with your petitions, or of being drowsily devoted when you draw near to God in your closets.

Secondly, When a man's head and heart is filled with worldly cares and distractions; this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer, 1Co 7:35; Eze 33:31.

"Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see some of the young women of the area. When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, a prince of the region, saw her, he took her and raped her." Gen 34:1-2. When Dinah must needs be gadding abroad to see fashions; Shechem meets with her, and rapes her. So when our hearts, Dinah-like, must needs be a-roving and gadding abroad after the things of the world, then Satan, the prince of the air, usually seizes upon us, commits a rape upon our souls, and either leads us off from prayer, or else he does so distract us from prayer, that it were better not to have prayed at all, than to have offered the sacrifice of foolish and distracted prayer.

I have read a story, how that one offered to give his horse to his fellow, upon condition he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God; the offer was accepted, and he began, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be your name." But I must have the bridle too, said he. "No, nor the horse neither," said the other, for you have lost both already. The application is easy.

Certainly, the most free and lively season for closet-prayer is the mornings, before a man's spirit is blunted or cooled, deadened, damped, or flattened by worldly businesses. A man should speak with God in his closet, before he speaks with his worldly affairs and occasions. A man should say to all his worldly business, as Abraham said unto his young men, when he went to offer up his only Isaac, "Abide here, and I will go yonder and worship, and then return to you again." He who will attend closet prayer without distraction or disturbance, must not, first, slip out of the world into his closet—but he must first slip into his closet before he be compassed about with a crowd of worldly employments.

It was a precept of Pythagoras, that when we enter into the temple to worship God, we must not so much as speak or think of any worldly business, lest we make God's service an idle, perfunctory, and lazy recreation. The same I may say of closet-prayer.

Jerome complains very much of his distractions, dullness, and indisposedness to prayer, and chides himself thus, "What! do you think, that Jonah prayed thus when he was in the whale's belly; or Daniel when he was among the lions; or the thief when he was upon the cross?"

Thirdly, When men or women are under rash and passionate distempers, 1Ti 2:8. For when passions are up, holy affections are down, and this is a very unfit season for closet-prayer. Such prayers will never reach God's ear—which do not first warm our own hearts. In the Muscovy churches, if the minister mistakes in reading, or stammers in pronouncing his words, or speaks any word that is not well heard, the hearers do very much blame him, and are ready to take the book from him, as unworthy to read therein. And certainly God is no less offended with the giddy, rash, passionate, precipitate, and inconsiderate prayers of those who, without a deliberate understanding, do send their petitions to heaven in posthaste. Solomon's advice is worthy of all commendation and acceptance: "Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty, to utter anything before God," Ecc 5:2; or as the Hebrew may be read, "Let not your heart through haste be so troubled or disturbed, as to tumble over, and throw out words without wisdom or premeditation." Good men are apt many times to be too hasty, rash, and unadvised in their prayers, complaints, and deprecations. Witness David, Job, Jeremiah, Jonah, and the disciples. [Psa 31:2-3; Psa 116:11; Job 10:1-3; Jer 18:15; Jer 18:18; Jon 4:2-4; Mat 20:20-21] There is no Christian like him, who does wisely and seriously weigh over his prayers and praises before he pours out his soul before the Lord. He never repents of his requests, who first duly deliberates

what to request; but he who blurts out whatever lies uppermost, and who brings into the presence of God his rash, raw, tumultuary, and undigested petitions, confessions, complaints, etc., he does but provoke God, he does but brawl with God; instead of praying to him or wrestling with him. Suitors at court observe their fittest times and seasons of petitioning; they commonly take that very nick of time, when they have the king in a good mood, and so seldom come off but with good success.

Sometimes God strongly inclines the heart to closet-prayer; sometimes he brings the heart beforehand into a praying frame; sometimes both body and soul are more enlivened, quickened, raised, and divinely inflamed than at other times; sometimes conscience is more stirring, working, and tender, etc. Oh, now strike while the iron is hot! Oh now lay hold on all such blessed opportunities, by applying of yourself to private prayer. O sirs! can you take your fittest times, seasons, and opportunities for ploughing, and sowing, and reaping, and buying and selling, and eating, and drinking, and marrying, etc. And cannot you as well take your fittest times and seasons to seek the Lord in your closets? Must the best God be put off with the least and worst of your time? The Lord forbid. Neglect not the seasons of grace; slip not your opportunities for closet-prayer; thousands have lost their seasons and their souls together!

(3.) My third advice and counsel is this, Be very careful that you do not perform closet duties, merely to still your consciences. You must perform them out of conscience—but you must not perform them only to quiet conscience. Some have such a light set up in their understandings, that they cannot omit closet-prayer—but conscience is upon their backs, conscience is still upbraiding and disquieting of them; and therefore they are afraid to neglect closet-prayer, lest conscience should question, arraign, and condemn them for their neglects. Sometimes when men have greatly sinned against the Lord, conscience becomes impatient, and is still accusing, condemning, and terrifying of them; and now in these agonies they will run to their closets, and cry, and pray, and mourn, and confess, and bitterly bewail their transgressions—but all this is only to quiet their consciences. And sometimes they find upon their performance of closet-duties, that their consciences are a little allayed and quieted; and for this very end and purpose do they take up closet-prayer as a charm to allay their consciences. And when the storm is over, and their consciences quieted, then they lay aside closet-prayer—and are ready to transgress again.

O sirs! take heed of this, for this is but open hypocrisy, and will be bitterness in the end. He who performs closet-prayer only to bribe his conscience, that it may not be clamorous, or to stop the mouth of conscience that it may not accuse him for sin—he will at length venture upon such a trade, such a course of sinning against conscience, as will certainly turn his troubled conscience into a seared conscience, 2Ti 4:2. And a seared conscience is like a sleeping lion, when he awakes he roars, and tears his prey in pieces; and so will a seared conscience, when it is awakened, roar and tear the secure sinner in pieces.

All the mercy that a seared, a benumbed conscience does afford the sinner, when it does most befriend him, when it deals most seemingly kind with him, is this—that it will not cut, that it may kill; it will not convince, that it may confound; it will not accuse, that it may condemn; it will spare the sinner a while, that it may torment him forever; it will spare him here, that it may gnaw him hereafter; it will not strike until it is too late for the sinner to ward off the blow. Oh cruel mercy, to observe the sin, and let alone the sinner until the gates of mercy be shut upon him, and hell stands

gaping to devour him: Gen 4:7, "Sin lies at the door." The Hebrew word signifies to lie down, or couch, like some wild beast at the mouth of his cave, as if it were asleep—but indeed watches and wakes, and is ready to fly at all that come near it. O sirs! sin is rather lying down than dormant; it sleeps dog's sleep, that it may take the sinner at the greater advantage, and fly the more furiously in his face! But,

(4.) My fourth advice and counsel is this, Take heed of resting upon closet-duties, take heed of trusting in closet-duties. Noah's dove made use of her wings—but she did not trust in her wings—but in the ark; so you must make use of closet-duties—but you must not trust in your closet-duties—but in Jesus, of whom the ark was but a type. There are many that go a round of duties, as mill horses go their round in a mill, and rest upon them when they are done, using the means as mediators; and so fall short of Christ and heaven at once. Closet-duties rested in, will as eternally undo a man as the greatest and foulest enormities; open wickedness slays her thousands—but a secret resting upon duties slays her ten thousands. Multitudes bleed inwardly of this disease, and die forever. Open profaneness is the broad dirty way which leads to hell—but trusting in religious duties is a sure way, though a cleaner way to hell. Profane people and formal professors shall meet at last in the same hell. Ah, Christians! do not make closet-duties your money, lest you and your money perish together. The phoenix gathers sweet odoriferous sticks in Arabia together, and then blows them with her wings and burns herself with them; so do many shining professors burn themselves by resting in their duties and services. You know, in Noah's flood all that were not in the ark, though they climbed up the tallest trees, and the highest mountains and hills—yet were really drowned; so let men climb up to this duty and that—yet, if they don't get into Christ, they will be really damned. It is not your duties—but your Christ, that must save you. If a man be not interested in Christ, he may perish with "Our Father" in his mouth. It is as natural to a man to rest in his duties as it is for him to rest in his bed. This was Bernard's temptation, who, being a little assisted in duty, could stroke his own head with 'O Bernard, this was gallantly done, now cheer up yourself.' Ah, how apt is man, when he has been a little assisted, heated, melted, enlarged, etc., in a way of duty, to go away and stroke himself, and bless himself, and hug himself, and warm himself with the sparks, with the fire of his own kindling, Isa 50:11. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." Isa 64:6. "I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." Luk 18:12

Adam was to win life and wear it; he was to be saved by his doings: "Do this and live," Gen 2:2. Hence it is that all his posterity are so prone to seek for salvation by doing: Acts 2:37; Acts 16:30, "What shall we do to be saved?" and "good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:17; Mark 10:20. Like father, like son. But if our own duties or doings were sufficient to save us, to what purpose did Christ leave his Father's bosom, and lay down his dearest life? etc. Closet-duties rested in may pacify conscience for a time—but this will not always hold. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb; yet could they not heal him, nor cure him of his wound," Hos 5:13. If we rest on closet-duties, or on anything else on this side Christ, we shall find them as weak as the Assyrian, or as Jareb; we shall find to our cost that they cannot help us nor heal us; they cannot comfort us nor cure us of our wounds. As creatures, so duties, were never true to any who have trusted in them. When the Israelites were in great distress, the Lord bids them go and cry unto the gods

which they had chosen, and let them deliver you, says God, in the time of your tribulation, Jdg 10:14. O sirs! if, when you are under distress of conscience, or lying upon a dying bed, God should say to you, 'Go to your closet prayers and performances, that you have made and rested in, go to your closet tears that you have shed and rested in, and let them save you and deliver you; oh, what miserable saviors and comforters would they be unto you!'

Look! what the ark of God was to the Philistines, 1 Samuel 5, that closet-duties are to Satan; he trembles every time he sees a poor sinner go into his closet and come out of his closet, resting and glorying in Jesus, and not in his duties; but when he sees a poor creature confide in his closet-duties, and rest upon his closet-duties, then he rejoices, then he claps his hands and sings, 'Aha! so would I have it.'

Oh, rest not on anything on this side Jesus Christ! Say to your graces, say to your duties, say to your holiness, 'You are not my Savior, you are not my mediator; and therefore you are not to be trusted to, you are not to be rested in.' It is my duty to perform closet-duties—but it is my sin to rely upon them, or to put confidence in them; do them I must—but glory in them I must not. He who rests in his closet-duties, he makes a Savior of his closet-duties. Let all your closet-duties lead you to Jesus, and leave you more in communion with him, and in dependence upon him; and then thrice happy will you be, Heb 7:25. Let all your closet prayers and tears, your closet fastings and meltings, be a star to guide you to Jesus, a Jacob's ladder by which you may ascend into the bosom of eternal loves; and then you are safe forever.

Ah! it is sad to think, how most men have forgotten their resting-place, as the Lord complains: Jer 50:6, "My people have been like lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray, and have turned them away to the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, and forgotten their resting-place." Ah! how many poor souls are there, that wander from mountain to hill, from one duty to another, and here they will rest, and there they will rest, and all on this side their resting-place! O sirs! it is God himself that is your resting-place; it is his free grace, it is his special mercy, it is his infinite love that is your resting-place; it is the bosom of Christ, the favor of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, and the pure, perfect, spotless, matchless, and glorious righteousness of Christ, that is your resting-place; and therefore say to all your closet duties and performances, Farewell; prayer, farewell; reading, farewell; fasting, farewell; tears, farewell; sighs and groans, farewell; meltings and humblings, I will never trust more to you, I will never rest more on you; but I will now return to my resting place, I will now rest only in God and Christ, I will now rest wholly in God and Christ, I will now rest forever in God and Christ.

It was the saying of a precious saint, that "He was more afraid of his religious duties, than of his sins. For his duties often made him proud; his sins always made him humble." But,

(5.) My fifth advice and counsel is this, Labor to bring your hearts into all your closet prayers and performances. Look that your tongues and your hearts keep time and tune. Psa 17:1, "Give ear to my prayer—it does not rise from deceitful lips." Heart and tongue must go together; word and work, lip and life, prayer and practice, must echo one to another, or else your prayers and your soul will be lost together. The labor of the lips, and the travail of the heart must go together. The Egyptians of all fruits made choice of the peach to consecrate to their goddess, and for no other cause—but that the fruit thereof is like to one's heart, and the leaf to one's tongue. These very heathens in the worship of their gods, thought it necessary that men's hearts and tongues should

go together. Ah, Christians! when in your closet duties your hearts and your tongues go together, then you make that sweet and delightful melody that is most acceptable and pleasing to the King of kings. The very soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, 1Sa 1:15. Psa 42:4, "When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me." So the Israelites poured out their souls like water before the Lord. So the church: "The desire of our soul is to your name, and to the remembrance of you. With my soul have I desired you in the night, yes, with my spirit within me will I seek you early," Isa 26:8-9. So Lam 3:41, "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." So Heb 10:22, "Let us draw near with a true heart," etc. So Rom 1:9, "For God is my witness, whom I serve in the spirit." 1Co 14:15, "I will pray with the spirit, and sing with the spirit." Php 3:3, "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit."

Under the law the inward parts were only to be offered to God in sacrifice; the skin belonged to the priests. Whence we may easily gather, that truth in the inward parts, is that which is most pleasing in a sacrifice. When the Athenians would know from the oracle the cause of their often defeats in battle, seeing they offered the choicest things they could get, in sacrifice to the gods, which their enemies did not; the oracle gave them this answer, that "the gods were better pleased with their inward supplication, than with all their outward pomp in costly sacrifices." Ah, sirs! the reason why so many are so unsuccessful in their closet-duties and services, is because there is no more of their hearts in them. No man can make sure work or happy work in prayer but he who makes heart work on it. When a man's heart is in his prayers, then great and sweet will be his returns from heaven. That is no true prayer in which the heart of the person bears no part. When the soul is separated from the body the man is dead; and so when the heart is separated from the lip in prayer, the prayer is dead. The Jews at this day write upon the walls of their synagogues these words, 'a prayer without the heart, is like a body without a soul.' In the law of Moses the priest was commanded to wash the inwards of the sacrifices in water; and this was done, says Philo, to teach us to keep our hearts and affections clean when we draw near to God. In all your closet-duties God looks first and most to your hearts: "My son, give me your heart," Pro 23:26. It is not a piece, it is not a corner of the heart, which will satisfy the Maker of the heart; the heart is a treasure, a bed of spices, a royal throne wherein he delights. God looks not at the elegance of your prayers, to see how refined they are; nor yet at the geometry of your prayers, to see how long they are; nor yet at the arithmetic of your prayers, to see how many they are; nor yet at the music of your prayers, nor yet at the sweetness of your voice, nor yet at the logic of your prayers; but at the sincerity of your prayers, how hearty they are. There is no prayer acknowledged, approved, accepted, recorded, or rewarded by God— but that wherein the heart is sincere. The true mother would not have the child divided. As God loves a broken and a contrite heart, so he loathes a divided heart, Psa 51:17; Jas 1:8. God neither loves halting nor halving; he will be served truly and totally. The royal law is, "You shall love and serve the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul." Among the heathens, when the beasts were cut up for sacrifice, the first thing the priest looked upon was the heart, and if the heart was bad, the sacrifice was rejected. Verily, God rejects all those services and sacrifices, wherein the heart is bad, as you may see by comparing these Scriptures together. [Pro 21:27; Isa 1:11-12; Isa 29:13; Mat 15:7-9; Eze 33:30-33; Zec 7:4-6; 2Ch 25:1-2; Psa 78:36-37]

Prayer without the heart is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Prayer is only lovely and weighty, as the heart is in it, and no otherwise. It is not the lifting up of the voice, nor the wringing

of the hands, nor the beating of the breasts, nor an affected tone, nor studied motions, nor seraphical expressions—but the stirrings of the heart, which God looks at in prayer. God hears no more than the heart speaks. If the heart be dumb, God will certainly be deaf. No prayer is accepted by God—but that which is the travail of the heart. The same day Julius Caesar came to the imperial dignity, sitting in his golden chair, he offered a beast in sacrifice to the gods; but when the beast was opened, it was without a heart, which the soothsayers looked upon as an ill omen. It is a sad omen, that you will rather provoke the Lord than prevail with him, who are habitually heartless in your closet duties. Of the heart, God seems to say to us, as Joseph did to his brethren, concerning Benjamin, "You shall not see my face without it."

It was the speech of blessed Bradford, that "he would never leave a duty, until he had brought his heart into the frame of the duty. He would not leave confession of sin, until his heart was broken for sin. He would not leave petitioning for grace, until his heart was quickened and enlivened in a hopeful expectation of more grace. He would not leave thanksgiving, until his heart was enlarged with the sense of the mercies he enjoyed, and quickened in the return of praise."

(6.) My sixth advice and counsel is this, Be fervent, be warm, be importunate with God in all your closet duties and performances. Jas 5:16, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much;" or, as the Greek has it "the working prayer;" that is, such working prayer as sets the whole man on work, as sets all the faculties of the soul, and all the graces in the soul, at work. The word signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be. Certainly, all those usual phrases of crying, wrestling, and striving with God, which are scattered up and down in Scripture, do strongly argue that holy importunity and sacred violence that the saints of old have expressed in their addresses to God. [Psa 55:1; Psa 61:1; Psa 64:1; Psa 88:1; Psa 88:13; Psa 119:164; Jon 2:1-2; Joe 2:13; Psa 119:145; Psa 119:147; Psa 119:20] Fervency feathers the wings of prayer, and makes them fly the swifter to heaven. An arrow, if it be drawn up but a little way, flies not far; but if it be drawn up to the head, it will fly far, and pierce deeply: so fervent prayer flies as high as heaven, and will certainly bring down blessings from thence.

Cold prayers call for a denial—but fervent prayers offer a sacred violence both to heaven and earth. Look! as in a painted fire there is no heat; so in a cold prayer there is no heat, no warmth, no omnipotency, no devotion, no blessing. Cold prayers are like arrows without heads, as swords without edges, as birds without wings: they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Such prayers as have no heavenly fire in them, do always freeze before they reach as high as heaven. But fervent prayer is very prevalent with God. Acts 12:5, "Peter, therefore, was kept in prison—but prayer was made without ceasing." The Greek word signifies instant prayer, earnest prayer, stretched out prayer. These gracious souls did in prayer strain and stretch themselves, as men do that are running in a race; they prayed with all the strength of their souls, and with all the fervency of their spirits; and accordingly they carried the day with God, as you may see in the following verses. So Acts 26:7, "They earnestly serve God day and night," or rather as the Greek has it, "in a stretched out manner, serving God day and night." They stretched out their hearts, their affections, their graces, to the utmost in prayer. In all your private retirements, do as these did. Rom 12:11, "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The Greek word signifies seething hot. God loves to see his people zealous and warm in his service. Without fervency of spirit, no service finds acceptance in heaven. God loves that his people should be lively and active in his service. Rom 12:12, "Persistent in prayer;" or "continuing with all your might in prayer." It is a metaphor from

hunting dogs, which will never give over the hunt until they have got their prize. Rom 15:30, "That you strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me;" "strive mightily, strive as champions strive, even to an agony," as the word imports. It is a military word, and notes such fervent wrestling or striving, as is for life and death.

Col 4:12, "Always laboring fervently for you in prayer." The Greek word which is here used, signifies to strive or wrestle, as those do who strive for mastery; it notes the vehemency and fervor of Epaphras' prayers for the Colossians. Look! as the wrestlers do bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of their bodies, that they may be victorious; so Epaphras did bend, and writhe, and stretch, and strain every joint of his soul, if I may so speak—that he might be victorious with God upon the Colossians' account. So, when Jacob was with God alone, ah how earnest and fervent was he in his wrestlings with God, Gen 32:24-27; Hos 12:4-5. He wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles; he tugs hard with God, he holds his hold, and he will not let God go, until as a prince he had prevailed with him. Fervent prayer is the soul's contention, the soul struggling with God; it is a sweating work, it is the sweat and blood of the soul, it is a laying out to the uttermost all the strength and powers of the soul. He who would gain victory over God in private prayer, must strain every string of his heart; he must, in beseeching God, besiege him, and so get the better of him; he must be like importunate beggars, that will not be put off with frowns, or silence, or sad answers. Those who would be masters of their requests, must, like the importunate widow, press God so far as to put him to a holy blush, as I may say with reverence: they must with a holy impudence, as Basil speaks, make God ashamed to look them in the face, if he should deny the importunity of their souls. Had Abraham had a little more of this impudence, says one, when he made suit for Sodom, it might have done well. Abraham brought down the price to ten righteous, and there his modesty stopped him; had he gone lower, God only knows what might have been done, for God went not away, says the text, "until he had left communing with Abraham," that is, until Abraham had no more to say to God. Abraham left over asking, before God left over granting; he left over praying, before God left over conceding; and so Sodom was lost.

Oh the heavenly fire, the holy fervency that was in Daniel's closet prayer! "O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name," Dan 9:19. Look! as there be two kinds of antidotes against poison, namely, hot and cold, so there are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles of this life, namely, fervent prayers and holy patience: the one hot, the other cold; the one quickening, and the other quenching, and holy Daniel made use of them both. Fervency to prayer, is as the fire was to the spices in the censer, or as wings to the bird, or as oil to the wheels; and this Daniel found by experience. God looks not for any James with horny knees, through assiduity of prayer; nor for any Bartholomew with a hundred prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening; but for fervency of spirit in prayer, which alone carries all with God. Feeble prayers, like weak pangs, go over, and never brings a mercy to the birth. Cold prayers are stillborn children, in whom the Father of spirits can take no pleasure. Look! as a painted man is no man, and as painted fire is no fire; so a cold prayer is no prayer. Such prayers never win upon the heart of God, which do not first warm our own hearts. As a body without a soul, much wood without a fire, a bullet in a gun without powder; so are all prayers without fervency of spirit.

Luther terms prayer, the gun or cannon of Christians, or the Christian's gunshot. The hottest springs send forth their waters by ebullitions. Cold prayers make a smoke in the eyes of God. Lazy

prayers never procure noble answers; lazy beggars may starve for all their begging, Isa 1:15, and Isa 65:5.

Such as have a male in their flock, and offer to the Lord a female; such as offer to the Lord the torn, and the lame, and the sick; such as turn off God with their cold, lazy, sleepy, and formal devotions—are condemned, cast out, and cursed by God, Mal 1:13-14. David compares his prayers to incense, and no incense was offered without fire, Psa 141:2; it was the fire, which made the smoke of it to ascend. It is only fervent prayer which hits the mark, and which pierces the walls of heaven, though, like those of Gaza, Isa 45:2, made of brass and iron.

While the child only whimpers and whines in the cradle, the mother lets it alone; but when once it pitches up its note, and cries outright, then she runs and takes it up. So it is with a Christian: Psa 34:6, "This poor man cried." There is his fervency, he cried; but it was silently and secretly, in the presence of King Achish, as Moses did at the Red Sea, and as Nehemiah did in the presence of the king of Persia. "And the Lord heard him, and delivered him out of all his troubles;" here is his prevalency. So Latimer plied the throne of grace with great fervency, crying out, "Once again, Lord, once again restore the gospel to England," and God heard him.

Hudson the martyr, having prayed fervently, he was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.

I have read of one Giles of Bruxels, a Dutch martyr, who was so fervent in his prayer, kneeling by himself in some secret place of the prison where he was, that he seemed to forget himself; and being called to his food, he neither heard nor saw who stood by him, until he was lifted up by the arms, and then he spoke gently to them, as one awaked out of a trance. So Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of his sister Gorgonia, says, that, in the vehemency of her prayer, she came to a religious impudency with God, so as to threaten heaven, and tell God that she would never depart from his altar until she had her petition granted.

Let us make it our business to follow these noble examples, as ever we would so prince it in prayer as to prevail with God. An importunate soul in prayer is like the poor beggar, who prays and knocks, who prays and waits, who prays and works, who knocks and knocks, who begs and pleads—and will not stir from the door until he has an alms. Well, friends, remember this, God respects no more lukewarm prayers than he does lukewarm people, and they are such that he has threatened to spue out of his mouth. Those prayers that are but lip-labor are lost labor; and therefore, in all your closet prayers, look to the fervency of your spirits.

(7.) My seventh advice and counsel is this, Be constant, as well as fervent, in closet-prayer. Look that you hold on and hold out, and that you persevere to the end in private prayer: 1Th 5:17, "Pray without ceasing." A man must always pray habitually, though not actually; he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all states and conditions. Though closet-prayer may have an intermission—yet it must never have a cessation: Luk 18:1, "And he spoke a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint," or, as the Greek has it, not to shrink back, as sluggards in work, or cowards in war.

Closet-prayer is a fire like that on the altar, which was never to go out, day nor night: 1Th 3:10, "Night and day praying exceedingly." Paul speaks like a man made up all of prayer, like a man who minded nothing so much as prayer: so Eph 6:18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance." Calvin makes this

difference between "praying always" in the beginning of this verse, and "praying with perseverance" in the end of this verse: "By praying always," says he, "he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as in adversity, and not to quit the duty of prayer in a prosperous estate, because we are not driven to it by outward pressing necessities and miseries; and by praying with perseverance, he admonishes us that we be not weary of the work—but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for." So that "praying always" is opposed to a neglect of the duty in its proper times and seasons, and "praying with perseverance" is opposed to a fainting in our spirits, in respect of this or that particular suit or request that we put up to God. When God turns a deaf ear to our prayers, we must not fret nor faint, we must not be dismayed nor discouraged—but we must hold up and hold on in the duty of prayer with invincible patience, courage, and constancy, as the church did: Lam 3:8; Lam 3:44; Lam 3:55-57, compared; Col 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." We must be constant and instant in closet prayer; we must wait upon it, and lay all aside for it. He who is only in his closet by fits and starts, will neither glorify God nor advantage his own soul. If we do not make a trade of closet-prayer, we shall never make any earnings of closet-prayer.

Look! as those who get money by their iron mills do keep a continual fire in their iron mills; just so, those who will get any soul-good by closet duties, they must keep close and constant to closet duties. The hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy; he is only in his closet by fits and starts. Now and then, when he is in a good mood, you shall find him step into his closet—but he never holds it: Job 27:10, "Will he always call upon God," or, as the Hebrew has it, "Will he in every time call upon God?" When they are under the smarting rod, or when they are upon the tormenting rack, or when they are under grievous needs, or when they are struck with panic-fears, etc., then you shall have them run to their closets, as Joab ran to the horns of the altar, when he was in danger of death; but they never persevere, they never hold out to the end; and therefore in the end they lose both their closet prayers and their souls together, Isa 26:16; Psa 78:34; Zec 7:5.

It was a most profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, who told God "that he was no common beggar, and that he never troubled him before with prayer, and if God would but hear him that one time, he would never trouble him again."

Closet-prayer is a hard work; and a man must tug hard at it, and stick close to it, as Jacob did, if ever he intends to make any internal or eternal advantages by it, Gen 32:1-32. Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to give over praying in his chamber, Daniel 6. It is not he who begins in the spirit and ends in the flesh, Gal 3:3; it is not he who puts his hand to the plough and looks back, Luk 9:62; but he who perseveres to the end in prayer, who shall be saved and crowned, Mat 24:13. It is he who perseveres in well doing, who shall eat of the hidden manna, and who shall have the white stone, "and in the stone a new name written, which no man knows, but him who receives it," Rev 2:17.

Those precious, praying, mourning souls in Eze 9:4; Eze 9:6, who were marked to be preserved in Jerusalem, were distinguished, say some of the learned, by the character t, tau, which is the last of all the Hebrew letters, to teach them that they must hold out and hold on to the end in well doing. It is constancy in closet-duty which crowns the Christian and commends the duty.

Objection—But would God have his people to cast off their callings, and to cast off all care of their relations, and shut themselves up in their closets, and there spend their whole time in secret

prayer? Oh, no! Every duty must have its time and place; and as one friend must not shut out another, so one duty must not shut out another, Ecc 3:1. The duties of my particular calling as a man, must not shut out the duties of my general calling as a Christian; neither must the duties of my general calling as a Christian, shut out the duties of my particular calling as a man. But that you may be fully satisfied in this case, you must remember that a man may be said to pray always,

[1.] First, When his heart is always in a praying frame. Look! as a man may be truly said to give always, whose heart is always in a giving frame; and to suffer always, whose heart is always in a suffering frame—"For your sake are we killed all the day long," Psa 44:22; and to sin always, whose heart is always in a sinning frame, 2Pe 2:14; Jer 9:3, so a man may be as truly said to pray always, whose heart is always in a praying frame.

[2.] Secondly, A man prays always when he takes hold on every fit season and opportunity for the pouring out of his soul before the Lord in his closet. To pray always is to pray in every opportunity; but this has been addressed before.

If we continue constant in our closet-wrestlings with God, if we hold on in private prayer though God should appear to us in the form or shape of a judge, an enemy, a stranger—we shall certainly triumph at last: "O woman, great is your faith, be it unto you even as you will; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour," Mat 15:28. The philosopher being asked in his old age why he did not give over his practice and take his ease, answered, "When a man is to run a race of forty furlongs, would you have him sit down at the 39th, and so lose the prize, the crown for which he ran?" O sirs! if you hold not out to the end in closet-prayer, you will certainly lose the heavenly prize, the crown of life, the crown of righteousness, the crown of glory. To continue in giving glory to God in this way of duty, is as necessary and requisite as to begin to give glory to God in this way of duty; for though the beginning be more than half—yet the end is more than all. The God of all perfections looks that our ultimate end should be his optimum glory; that our last works should be our best works; and that we should persevere in closet-prayer to the end, Rev 2:10.

(8.) My eighth advice and counsel is this, In all your closet prayers, thirst and long after communion with God. In all your private retirements, rest in nothing below fellowship with God, in nothing below a sweet and spiritual enjoyment of God, Song of Solomon 3:1-3; Psa 73:28. Psa 27:4, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." The temple of the Lord, without communion with the Lord of the temple, will not satisfy David's soul.

Psa 42:1-2, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" The deer, as Aristotle and others observe, is of all creatures most hot and dry of itself; but especially when it is chased and hunted, then it is extreme thirsty. The female is here meant, as the Greek article does manifest. Now, in the females the passions of thirst are more strong, as the naturalists observe. By this David discovers what a vehement and inflamed thirst there was in his soul after communion with God; and as nothing could satisfy the hunted deer but the water brooks, so nothing could satisfy his soul but the enjoyments of God.

Psa 43:4, "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." The altar of God is here put for the worship of God. Now, it is not barely the worship of God—but communion with

God in his worship, that was David's exceeding joy. Psa 63:1-3, "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you." David's soul did not thirst after a crown, a kingdom, or any worldly greatness or glory—but after a choice and sweet enjoyment of God in his wilderness estate. Never did any woman with child long more after this or that, than David's soul did long to enjoy sensible communion with God in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings.

Psa 84:2, "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God." By the "courts of the Lord," we are to understand the ordinances. Now, these without communion with God would never have satisfied David's soul. I commend that speech of Bernard, "I never come from God, without God."

Whenever you go into your closets, press hard after real and sensible communion with God, that so you may come out of your closets with some shines of God upon your spirits, as Moses came down from the mount with his face shining, Exo 34:29-35. Oh, labor and long to enjoy that inward and close fellowship with God in your closets, as may leave such a choice and sweet savor of God, both upon your hearts and lives, as others may be forced to say, "Surely these have been with Jesus," Acts 4:13. It is sad when Christians return from their closets to their shops, their trades, their families, their commerce, etc., without the least visible rays of divine glory upon them.

O sirs! closet-prayer will be found to be but a dry, sapless, lifeless, heartless, comfortless thing, if you do not enjoy communion with God in it. Communion with God is the very life, soul, and crown of all your closet duties; and therefore press after it as for life. When you go into your closets, let everything go which may hinder your fruition of Christ; and let everything be embraced, which makes way for your enjoyment of Christ. Oh let closet-prayer be a golden bridge, a chariot to convey your souls over to God, and to bring you into a more intimate communion with God. Let no closet duty satisfy you or content you, wherein you have not conversed with God, as a child converses with his father, or as a wife converses with her husband, or as a friend converses with his friend, even face to face. Nothing speaks out more unsoundness, falseness, and baseness of heart than this—when men make duty the end of duty; prayer the end of prayer; than when men can begin a duty, and go on in a duty, and close up a duty, and bless and stroke themselves after a duty, and yet never enjoy the least communion with God in the duty!

Question. But how shall a man know when he has a real communion with God in a duty or not? This is a very noble and necessary question, and accordingly it calls for a clear and satisfactory answer; and therefore thus:

Solution [1.] First, A man may have communion with God in sorrow and tears, when he has not communion with God in joy, delight, Psa 51:17. A man may have communion with God in a heart-humbling, a heart-melting, and a heart-abasing way—when he has not communion with God in a heart-reviving, a heart-cheering, and a heart-comforting way. It is a very great mistake among many tender-hearted Christians, to think that they have no communion with God in their closets, except they meet with God embracing and kissing, cheering and comforting up their souls (Song of Solomon 2:4-6). When they find God raising the springs of joy and comfort in their souls; when they find God a-speaking peace unto them; when they find the singular sensible presence of God

cheering, refreshing, and enlarging of them in their closets—oh then they are willing to grant that they have had sweet communion with God in their closets. But if God meets with them in their closets, and only breaks their hearts for sin, and from sin; if he meets with them and only makes his power and his presence manifest—in debasing and casting down of their souls, upon the sight and sense of their strong corruptions and many imperfections, how unwilling are they to believe that they have had any communion with God!

Well, friends, remember this once for all, namely, that a Christian may have as real communion with God in a heart-humbling way, as he can have in a heart-comforting way. A Christian may have as choice communion with God when his eyes are full of tears, as he can have when his heart is full of joy, John 20:11-19. Sometimes God meets with a poor Christian in his closet, and exceedingly breaks him and humbles him; and at other times he meets with the same Christian in his closet, and mightily cheers him, and comforts him. Sometimes God meets with a poor soul in his closet, and there he sweetly quiets him and stills him; and at other times he meets with the same soul in his closet, and then he greatly revives him and quickens him. God does not always come upon the soul one way, he does not always come in at one and the same door, John 3:8. We sometimes look for a friend to come in at the front-door, and then he comes in at the back-door; and at other times, when we look for him at the back-door, then he comes in at the front-door; and just so it is with God's coming into his people's souls. Sometimes they go into their closets, and look that God will come in at the front-door of joy and comfort; and then God comes in at the back-door of sorrow and grief. And at other times, when they look that God should come in at the back-door of humiliation, breaking, and melting their hearts; then God comes in at the front-door of joy and consolation, cheering and rejoicing their souls. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, That all Christians do not enjoy a like communion with God in their closets. Some enjoy much communion with God in their closets, and others enjoy but little communion with God in their closets. Moses had a more clear, glorious, and constant communion with God in his days, than any others had in those times wherein he lived, Exo 33:11; Deu 5:4; Num 12:7-8. God spoke to none "face to face," as he did to Moses. And Abraham, Genesis 18, in his time, had a more close, friendly, and intimate communion with God, than holy Lot, or any others had in that day. And though all the disciples, Judas excepted, had sweet communion with Christ in the days of his flesh—yet Peter, James, and John had a more clear, choice, and full communion with him than the rest had, Mat 17:1-4. Among all the disciples John had most bosom-communion with Christ, he was the greatest favorite in Christ's court, he leaned on Christ's bosom, he could say anything to Christ, and he could know anything of Christ, and he could have anything from Christ, John 13:23; John 20:2, and John 21:20. Now that all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, may be thus made evident:

First, All Christians do not prepare alike to enjoy closet-communion with God; and therefore all Christians do not enjoy communion with God alike in their closets, Ecc 5:1; Psa 10:17. Commonly he who prepares and fits himself most for closet-communion with God, he is the man who enjoys most closet-communion with God, 2Ch 30:17-20.

Secondly, All Christians do not alike prize communion with God in their closets. Some prize communion with God in their closets before all and above all other things; as that noble marquis said, "Cursed be he who prefers all the world, to one hour's communion with God." They look upon

it as that pearl of price, for the enjoyment of which they are ready to sell all and part with all; others prize it at a lower rate, and so enjoy less of it than those who set a higher price and value upon it, Job 23:12; Psa 119:127; Mat 13:45-46.

Thirdly, All Christians do not alike press after communion with God in their closets. Some press after communion with God in their closets, as a condemned man presses after a pardon, or as a prisoner presses after freedom, or as a poor beggar presses after alms, Psa 33:8; Isa 26:8-9. Now, you know these press on with the greatest earnestness, the greatest fervency, and the greatest importunity imaginable. But others press after communion with God in their closets more coldly, more carelessly, more slightly, more lazily: "I have taken off my robe-- must I put it on again? I have washed my feet-- must I soil them again?" Song of Solomon 5:3. Now, those who press hardest after communion with God in their closets, they are usually blessed with the highest degrees of closet-communion with God.

Fourthly, All Christians don't alike improve their communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians don't enjoy communion with God alike in their closets. Some Christians do make a more wise, a more humble, a more holy, a more faithful, a more fruitful, and a more constant improvement of their closet-communion with God than others do; and therefore they are blessed with higher degrees of communion with God than others are. Some Christians do more improve their closet-communion with God against the world, the flesh, and the devil, than others do; and therefore no wonder if they do enjoy more communion with God in their closets than others do.

Fifthly, All Christians do not alike need communion with God in their closets; and therefore all Christians have not a like communion with God in their closets. All Christians have not a like place in the mystical body of Christ, 1Co 12:14, seq.; some rule, and others are ruled. Now, every man stands in more or less need of communion with God, according to the place that he bears in the body of Christ. Again, all Christians have not alike burdens to bear, nor alike difficulties to encounter with, nor alike dangers to escape, nor alike temptations to wrestle with, nor alike passions and corruptions to mortify, nor alike mercies and experiences to improve, etc.; and therefore all Christians don't need alike communion with God in their closets. Now, commonly God lets himself out more or less in ways of communion, according as the various necessities and conditions of his people does require.

Sixthly and lastly, All Christians do not alike meet with outward interruptions, nor inward interruptions; and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets. Some Christians meet with a world of outward and inward interruptions more than others do; some Christians' outward callings, relations, conditions, and stations, etc., do afford more plentiful matter and occasions, to interrupt them in their closet-communion with God, than other Christians' callings, relations, conditions, and stations do, etc.

Besides, Satan is more busy with some Christians than he is with other Christians; and corruptions work more strongly and violently in some Christians than they do in other Christians, etc.; and let me add this to all the rest, that the very natural tempers of some Christians are more averse to closet-duties than the natural tempers of other Christians are; and therefore all Christians have not alike communion with God in their closets—but some have more and some have less, according as God in his infinite wisdom sees best.

Now, let no Christian say, that he has no communion with God in closet-prayer, because he has not such a full, such a choice, such a sweet, such a sensible, and such a constant communion with God in closet-prayer—as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have; for all saints do not alike enjoy communion with God in their closets: some have more, some have less; some have a higher degree, others a lower; some are enrapt up in the third heaven, when others are but enrapt up in the clouds. What man is there so childish and babyish as to argue thus, that he has no wisdom, because he has not the wisdom of Solomon; or, that he has no strength, because he has not the strength of Samson; or, that he has no life, because he has not the swiftness of Ahimaaz; or, that he has no estate, because he has not the riches of Dives? And yet so childish and babyish many weak Christians are, as to argue thus: namely, that they have no communion with God in their closets, because they have not such high, such comfortable, and such constant communion with God in their closets, as such and such saints have had, or as such and such saints now have! Whereas they should seriously consider, that though some saints have a great communion with God—yet other saints have but a small communion with God; and though some Christians have a strong communion with God—yet other Christians have but a weak communion with God; and though some Christians have a very close and near communion with God—yet other Christians have but a more remote communion with God; and though some of God's servants have a daily, constant, and uninterrupted communion with God—yet others of his servants have but a more transient and inconstant communion with God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, When a man acts grace in closet-duties, then certainly he has communion with God in closet-duties, 2Ti 1:17; 1Ti 2:8. When a man in closet-duties acts faith in God, or faith in the promises, or faith in the blood of Christ; or when a man in private duties acts repentance for sin, or love to Jesus Christ, or sets up God as the object of his holy fear, or as the object of his joy, etc., then he has communion with God, then he has fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, 1Jn 1:3. An unregenerate man may act gifts and abilities in a duty—but he cannot act grace in a duty; for no man can act grace in a duty—but he who has grace in his soul; and hence it comes to pass that unsanctified people under the highest activity of their arts, parts, and gifts in religious duties, enjoy no communion with God at all; witness the scribes and pharisees, Demas, Judas, Simon Magus, etc., Isa 1:11-13. As ever you would have an evidence of your communion with God in closet-duties, carefully look to the activity of your graces, carefully stir up the grace of God which is in you, 2Ti 1:6. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, When a man has communion with God in his closet, then he gives God the glory of all his actings and activities, Psa 115:1. Communion with God always helps a man to set the crown of praise and honor upon the head of God. Witness that gracious and grateful doxology of David and his people, in that 1Ch 29:13, "Now therefore, our God, we thank you, and praise your glorious name." Men who enjoy no communion with God in religious duties, are still a-sacrificing unto their own net, and a-burning incense unto their own dragnet, Hab 1:16; they are still a-blessing themselves, and a-stroking of themselves, and applauding themselves; they think the garland of praise, the crown of honor, befits no head but their own, Luk 18:11-12. But now, men that enjoy communion with God in religious duties, they will uncrown themselves to crown God, they will uncrown their duties—to crown the God of their duties; they will uncrown their arts, parts, gifts, and enlargements—to set the crown of praise upon the head of God alone, Acts 3:11-13; Acts 3:16; Rev 4:10-11; Rev 5:11-12.

You think that you have communion with God in closet-duties, yes, you say that you have communion with God in closet-duties; but on whose head do you put the garland of praise? Psa 148:13. If on God's head, you have communion with God; if on your own head, you have no communion with God. As all the rivers run into the sea, and all the lines meet in the center—so, when all our closet-duties terminate and center in the advance of God's glory, then have we communion with God in them.

Constantine used to write the name of Christ over his door. When a man has communion with Christ in a duty, then he will write the name of Christ, the honor of Christ, upon his duty. Some say that the name of Jesus was engraved upon the heart of Ignatius; sure I am, when a man has communion with God in a duty, then you shall find the honor and glory of Jesus engraved upon that duty. But,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, When the performance of closet-duties leaves the soul in a better frame—then a man has communion with God in them. When a man comes off from closet-duties in a more holy frame, or in a more humble frame, or in a more spiritual frame, or in a more watchful frame, or in a more heavenly frame, or in a more broken frame, or in a more quickened and enlivened frame, etc.—then certainly he has had communion with God in those duties. When a man comes out of his closet, and finds the frame of his heart to be more strongly set against sin than ever, and to be more highly resolved to walk with God than ever, and to be more eminently crucified to the world than ever, and to be more divinely fixed against temptations than ever— then without all question, he has had communion with God in his closet.

[6.] Sixthly, I answer, When closet-duties fit a man for those other duties that lie next at hand, then doubtless he has had communion with God in them. When private duties fit a man for public duties, or when private duties fit a man for the duties of his place, calling, and condition, wherein God has set him—then certainly he has had fellowship with God in them, Ecc 9:10. When a man in closet duties finds more spiritual strength and power to perform the duties that are incumbent upon him, then assuredly he has met with God. When private prayer fits me more for family prayer, or public prayer—then I may safely conclude that God has drawn near to my soul in private prayer. When one closet duty fits me for another closet duty, as when praying fits me for Scripture reading, or reading for praying; or when the more external duties in my closet, namely, reading or praying, fits me for those more spiritual and internal duties, namely, self-examination, holy meditation, soul-humiliation, etc., then I may rest satisfied that there has been some choice fellowship between God and my soul. When the more I pray in my closet, the more fit I am to pray in my closet; and the more I read in my closet, the more fit I am to read in my closet; and the more I meditate in my closet, the more fit I am to meditate in my closet; and the more I search and examine my heart in my closet, the more fit I am to search and examine my heart in my closet; and the more I humble and abase my soul in my closet, the more fit I am to humble and abase my soul in my closet: then I may be confident that I have had communion with God in my closet.

[7.] Seventhly, I answer, That all private communion with God is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing. Abraham was a man who had much private communion with God, and a man who was very vile and low in his own eyes: Gen 18:27, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes." In respect of my nature, says Abraham, I am but base dust and ashes; and in respect of my deserts, I deserve to be burnt to ashes. There are

none so humble as those who have nearest communion with God, Gen 28:10-18. Jacob was a man who had much private communion with God—and a man who was very little in his own eyes: Gen 22:10, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which you have showed unto your servant;" or, as the Hebrew has it, "I am less than all your mercies." When Jacob had to deal with Laban, he pleads his merit but when he has to do with God, he debases himself below the least of his mercies, Gen 31:38-41. Moses was a man who had much private communion with God, as I have formerly evidenced, and a man who was the meekest and humblest person in all the world: Num 12:3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." And so, when the glory of God appeared to Moses, he falls upon his face, Num 16:22, in token of humility and self-abasing.

David was a man who had much private communion with God, as is granted on all hands; and how greatly does he debase himself and vilify himself! 1Sa 26:20, "The king of Israel has come out to seek a flea;" and what more weak and contemptible than a flea? So 1Sa 24:14, "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom do you pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea?" As if David had said, "It is not worth the while, the labor; it is below the dignity and honor of the king of Israel to take such pains and to pursue so violently after such a poor nothing as I am, who has no more strength nor power to bite or hurt than a dead dog or a poor flea has." So Psa 22:6, "But I am a worm, and no man." Now, what is more weak, what less regarded, what more despicable, what more trampled under foot than a poor worm? The Hebrew word which is here rendered worm, signifies a very little worm, which are so little that a man can scarcely see them, or perceive them. Thus you see that holy David debases himself below a worm, yes, below the least of worms. No man sets so low a value upon himself, as he does who has most private communion with God. The twenty-four elders cast down their crowns at the feet of Jesus Christ, Rev 4:10-11. Their crowns note all their inward and outward dignities, excellencies, and glories; and the casting down of their crowns notes their great humility and self-debasement. When Christians, in their closets and out of their closets, can cast down their crowns, their duties, their services, their graces, their enlargements, their enjoyments, etc., at the feet of Jesus Christ, and sit down debasing and lessening of themselves, then certainly they have had a very near and sweet communion with God.

Austin being once asked what was the first grace, answered, humility; what the second, humility; what the third, humility.

Chrysostom has a remarkable saying of humility: "Suppose," says he, "that a man were defiled with all manner of sin and enormity—yet humble; and another man enriched with gifts, graces, and duties—yet proud; the humble sinner were in a safer condition than this proud saint." When a man can come off from closet-duties, and say, as Ignatius once said of himself, 'I am not worthy to be called the least,' then certainly he has had fellowship with God in them. All the communion that the creature has with God in his closet is very soul-humbling and soul-abasing. In all a man's communion with God, some beams, some rays of the glory and majesty of God, will shine forth upon his soul. Now all divine manifestations are very humbling and abasing, as you may clearly see in those two great instances of Job and Isaiah: Job 42:5-6 "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear—but now my eye sees you: Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Isa 6:1; Isa 6:5, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a

man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." What sweet communion had Elijah with God in the low cave!

There was a gentlewoman, of no ordinary quality or breeding, who, being much troubled in mind, and sadly deserted by God, could not be drawn by her husband, or any other Christian friends, either to hear or read anything that might work for her spiritual advantage. At last her husband, by much importunity, prevailed so far with her, that she was willing he should read one chapter in the Bible to her; so he read Isa 57:1-21, and when he came to Isa 57:15, "For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." Oh, says she, is it so, that God dwells with a contrite and humble spirit? Then I am sure he dwells with me, for my heart is broken into a thousand pieces. Oh happy text and happy time, that ever I should hear such comfort! and she was thereupon recovered. The more communion any man has with God, the more humble and broken his heart will be.

Holy Bradford was a man who had much private communion with God, and he would many times subscribe himself in his letters, "John the hypocrite, and a very painted sepulcher." Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on the earth in his days, and he condemned himself for being more brutish than any man, and not having the understanding of a man, Pro 30:2. How sweet is the smell of the lowly violet, which hides his head, above all the gaudy tulips that be in your garden. The lowly Christian is the most amiable and the most lovely Christian. When a man can come out of his closet, and cry out with Augustine, "I hate that which I am, and love and desire that which I am not. O wretched man who I am, in whom the cross of Christ has not yet eaten out the poisonous and the bitter taste of the first tree." Or, as another says, "Lord, I see, and yet am blind; I will, and yet rebel; I hate, and yet I love; I follow, and yet I fall; I press forward—yet I faint; I wrestle—yet I halt;" then he may be confident that he has had communion with God in his closet. He who comes off from closet-duties in a self-debasing way, and in laying of himself low at the foot of God, he certainly has had communion with God; but when men come out of their closets with their hearts swelled and lifted up, as the hearts of the pharisees were, Luk 18:11-12, it is evident that they have had no communion with God. God has not been near to their souls, who say, 'stand by yourself, come not near to me, for I am holier than you.' Isa 65:5. But,

[8.] Eighthly, and lastly, When a man finds such a secret virtue and power running through his closet-duties—as wounds and weakens his beloved corruption, as breaks the strength and the power of his special sin, as sets his heart more fully, resolutely, and constantly against his darling lust, as stirs up a greater rage, and a more bitter hatred, and a more fierce indignation against the toad in the bosom—then certainly he has had communion with God in his closet-duties. Consult these scriptures:

Isa 2:20, "In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they have made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats." In the day wherein God should take these poor hearts into communion with himself, their hearts should be filled with such rage and indignation against their most delectable and desirable idols, that they should take not only those made of trees and stones—but even their most precious and costly idols, those who were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats, to note their horrible hatred and indignation against them. Idolatry was the darling-sin of the Jews; their hearts were so

exceedingly affected and delighted with their idols, that they did not care what they spent upon them: Isa 46:6, "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a God: they fall down, yes, they worship it." The word here used for lavish, in the Hebrew, signifies properly to waste, or spend riotously; they set so light by their treasure, that they cared not what they spent upon their idols. God gave them gold and silver as pledges of his favor and bounty, and they lavish it out upon their idols, as if God had hired them to be wicked.

Oh, but when God should come and take these poor wretches into a close and near communion with himself, then you shall find their wrath and rage to rise against their idols, as you may see in that Isa 30:19-21. Their communion with God is more than hinted; but mark, Isa 30:22, "Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" None defile, deface, detest, and disgrace their idols like those who are taken into communion with God. Fellowship with God will make a man cast away, as a menstruous cloth, those very idols, in which he has most delighted, and with which he has been most pleased and enamored.

Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin. Hos 4:17, "Ephraim is joined," or glued, as the Hebrew has it, "to idols; let him alone." Oh! but when you find Ephraim taken into close communion with God, as you do in that Hos 14:4-7, then you shall find another spirit upon him: Hos 14:8, "Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols?" I have had too much to do with them already, I will never have to do with them any more. Oh! how does my soul detest and abhor them, and rise up against them. Oh! how do I now more loathe and abominate them, than ever I have formerly loved them, or delighted in them. After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols, that in the time of the Romans they chose rather to die, than allow the eagle, which was the imperial insignia, to be set up in their temple.

Though closet-duties are weak in themselves—yet when a man has communion with God in them, then they prove exceeding powerful to the casting down of strongholds, and vain imaginations, and every high thing and thought, which exalts itself against the knowledge of God, 2Co 10:4-5. When a man comes out of his closet with a heart more fully and steadfastly set against every known sin—but especially against his bosom-sin, his darling-sin, his Delilah which he played and sported himself most with, and which he has hugged with pleasure and delight in his bosom—then certainly he has had private communion with God.

After Moses had enjoyed forty days' private communion with God in the mount, how did his heart rise, and his anger wax hot against the molten calf that his people had made! Exo 32:19-20, "When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it." Moses had never more intimate fellowship with God than now, and he never discovered so much holy zeal, anger, and indignation against sin as now. When a man comes off from the mount of closet-duties with a greater hatred, anger, wrath, and indignation against bosom-sins, darling-sins, complexion-sins, which were once as dear to him as right hands or right eyes, or as Delilah was to Samson, or Herodias to Herod, or Isaac to Abraham, or Joseph to Jacob, then certainly he has had communion with God in those duties. When a man

finds his beloved sins, his Delilahs, which, like the prince of devils, command all other sins, to fall before his closet-duties, as Dagon fell before the ark, or as Goliath fell before David—then assuredly he has had fellowship with God in them.

Pliny writes of some families which had secret marks on their bodies, peculiar to those of that line. Certainly, there are no people—but have some sin or sins; some secret marks on their souls, that may in a peculiar way be called theirs. Now when in private duties they find the bent of their hearts, and the purposes, resolutions, and inclinations of their souls more raised, inflamed, and set against these, they may safely and comfortably conclude, that they have had communion with God in them.

O sirs! there is no no bosom-sin so sweet or profitable, that is worth burning in hell for, or worth shutting out of heaven for; and therefore, in all your private duties and services, labor after that communion with God in them, that may break the neck and heart of your most bosom-sins. When Darius fled before Alexander, that he might run the faster out of danger, he threw away his massive crown from his head. As ever you would be safe from eternal danger, throw away your golden and your silver idols, throw away your bosom-sins, your darling lusts. And thus I have done with the answers to that noble and necessary question, that was last proposed.

(9.) My ninth advice and counsel is this, In all your closet-duties look that your ends be right, look that the glory of God be your ultimate end, the mark, the bulls-eye, that you have in your eye. There is a great truth in that old saying, that "duties are esteemed, not by their acts—but by their ends." Look! as the shining sun overshadows the light of the fire, so the glory of God must consume all other ends. There may be bad aims in good actions, as in Jehu's zeal. Two things make a good Christian, good actions and good aims. And though a good aim does not make a bad action good, as in Uzzah—yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, as in Jehu, whose justice was approved—but his policy punished. God writes 'worthless' upon all those services, wherein men's ends are not right: Jer 32:23, "They obeyed not your voice, neither walked in your law, they have done nothing of all that you have commanded them to do." So Dan 9:13, "All this evil is come upon us—yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God." The Jews were very much in religious duties and services; witness Isa 1:11-15; Isa 58:1-3; Zec 7:5-6. I might produce a hundred more witnesses to confirm it, were it necessary; but because they did not aim at the glory of God in what they did, therefore the Lord writes a cipher upon all their duties and services. It was Ephraim's folly, that he brought forth fruit unto himself, Hos 10:1.

It was the Pharisees' hypocrisy, that in all their duties and services they looked at the praise of men. Mat 6:1-5, "Verily," says Christ, "you have your reward." A poor, a pitiful reward indeed! Such men shall be sure to fall short of divine acceptance, and of a glorious recompense; who are not able to look above the praises of men. Woe to that man who, with Augustus, is ambitious to go off the stage of duty with a plaudit. Peter was not himself when he denied his Lord, and cursed himself to get credit among a cursed crew. As ever you would ask and have, speak and speed, seek and find—see that the glory of the Lord be engraved upon all your closet-duties. He shall be sure to speed best, whose heart is set most upon glorifying of God in all his secret retirements. When God crowns us, he does but crown his own gifts in us; and when we give God the glory of all we do, we do but give him the glory which is due unto his name; for it is he, and he alone, who works all our works in us and for us.

All closet-duties are good or bad, as the mark is at which the soul aims. He who makes God the object of closet-prayer—but not the end of closet-prayer, does but lose his prayer, and take pains to undo himself. God will be all in all—or he will be nothing at all. Such prayers never reach the ear of God, nor delight the heart of God, nor shall ever be lodged in the bosom of God—which are not directed to the glory of God. The end must be as noble as the means, or else a man may be undone after all his doings. A man's most splendid actions will at last be found to be but splendid sins, if he has made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions.

(10.) My tenth advice and counsel is this, Be sure that you offer all your closet prayers in Christ's name, and in his alone; John 14:13-14, "And whatever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." John 15:16, "Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." John 16:23-24, "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." O sirs! this is your privilege as well as your comfort, that you never deal with God but by a mediator. When you appear before God, Jesus Christ appears with you, and he appears for you; when you invoke—then he advocates; when you put up your petitions—then he does make intercession for you. Christ gives you a commission to put his name upon all your requests; and whatever prayer comes up with this name upon it, he will procure it an answer. In the state of innocency, man might worship God without a mediator; but since sin has made so wide a breach between God and man, God will accept of no worship from man—but what is offered up by the hand of a mediator. Now this mediator is Christ alone; 1Ti 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." One mediator, not of redemption only, as the papists grant—but of intercession also, which they deny. The papists make saints and angels co-mediators with Christ; but in this, as in other things, they fight against clear Scripture light. The apostle plainly tells us, that the office of intercession pertains unto Christ, as part of his mediation, Heb 7:25 : and it is certain, that we need no other master of requests in heaven—but the man Christ Jesus; who being so near to the Father, and so dear to the Father, and so much in with the Father, can doubtless accomplish anything with the Father, which makes for his glory and our good. This was typified in the law. The high-priest alone did enter into the sanctuary, and carry the names of the children of Israel before the Lord, while the people stood all outside; this pointed out Christ's mediation, Exo 28:29. In Lev 16:13-14, you read of two things: first, of the cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat; secondly, of the blood of the bullock, which was sprinkled before the mercy-seat. Now that blood typified Christ's satisfaction, and the cloud of incense his intercession.

Some of the learned think, that Christ intercedes only by virtue of his merits; others, that it is done only with his mouth. I suppose it may be done both ways, the rather because Christ has a tongue, as also a whole body—but glorified, in heaven; and is it likely, that that mouth which pleaded so much for us on earth, should be altogether silent for us in heaven?

There is no coming to the Father—but by the Son, John 14:6. Christ is the true Jacob's ladder, by which we must ascend to heaven. Joseph, you know, commanded his brethren, that as ever they looked for any good from him, or to see his face with joy, that they should be sure to bring their brother Benjamin along with them. O sirs! as ever you would be prevalent with God, as ever you would have sweet, choice, and comfortable returns from heaven to all your closet-prayers, be sure

that you bring your elder brother, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the arms of your faith, be sure that you treat and trade with God only in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you go to closet-prayer, look that you pray not in your own names—but in the name of Christ; and that you believe and hope not in your own names—but in the name of Christ; and that you look not to speed in your own names—but in the name of Christ: Col 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Whatever we do, we are to do it by the authority of Christ, and through the assistance of Christ, and in the name of Christ, and for the sake and glory of Christ. Christ's name is so precious and powerful with the Father, that it will carry any suit, obtain any request at his hands. When a man writes the name of Jesus upon his closet-prayers, then he shall be sure to speed. Though God will not give a man a drop, a sip, a crumb, a crust, for his own sake—yet for Jesus' sake he will give the best, the choicest, and the greatest blessings that heaven affords; that name is still mighty and powerful, prevalent and precious before the Lord. The prayers which were offered up with the incense upon the altar were pleasing, Rev 8:3; and were accepted by God, Rev 8:4. Joseph's brethren were kindly received for Benjamin's sake. O sirs! all our duties and services are accepted by the Father, not for their own sakes, nor for our sakes—but for Christ's sake! There are no prayers that are either heard, owned, accepted, regarded, or rewarded—but such as Christ puts his hand to. If Christ does not mingle his blood with our sacrifices, our services—they will be lost, and never ascend as incense before the Lord. No coin is accepted, which has not Caesar's stamp upon it; nor any prayers are accepted in heaven, which have not the stamp of Christ upon them. There is nothing more pleasing to our heavenly Father, than to use the mediation of his Son. Such shall be sure to find most favor, and to speed best in the court of heaven—who present themselves before the Father with Christ in their arms. But,

(11.) My eleventh and last advice and counsel is this, When you come out of your closets, narrowly watch what becomes of your private prayers. Look at what door, in what way, and by what hand the Lord shall please to give you an answer to the secret desires of your souls. It has been the custom of the people of God, to look after their prayers, to see what success they have had, to observe what answer they have found in heaven: Psa 5:3, "My voice shall you hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto you—and will look up." In the words you may observe two things: first, David's posture in prayer; secondly, his practice after prayer. First, His posture in prayer, "I will direct my prayer unto you." Secondly, His practice after prayer, "And I will look up." The psalmist, in these words, makes use of two military words. First, he would not only pray—but marshal up his prayers, he would put them in battle-array; so much the Hebrew word imports. Secondly, when he had done this, then he would be as a watchman upon his watchtower, to see whether he prevailed, whether he got the answer or not; and so much the Hebrew word imports. When David had set his prayers, his petitions, in rank and file, in good array, then he was resolved he would look abroad, he would look about him, to see at what door God would send in an answer of prayer.

He is either a fool or a madman, he is either very weak or very wicked, who prays and prays—but never looks after his prayers; who shoots many an arrow towards heaven—but never minds where his arrows alight: Psa 85:8, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints." If David would have God to hearken to his prayers, he must then hearken to what God will speak; and upon this point it seems he was fully resolved. David's prayer you have in Psa 85:1-7, and his gracious resolution you have in Psa 85:8, "I will hear what God the

Lord will speak." As if he had said, "Certainly it will not be long before the Lord will give me a gracious answer, a seasonable and a suitable return to my present prayers."

Psa 130:1-2; Psa 130:5-6, "Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice, let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning; I say, more than those who watch for the morning." Those who watch abroad in dangerous times and severe weather look frequently for peep of day. How does the weary sentinel, who is wet with the rain of heaven or with the dew of the night—wait and watch, look and long, for the morning light. Now this was the frame and temper of David's spirit when he came off from praying; he falls a-waiting for a gracious answer. Shall the farmer wait for the precious fruits of the earth, and shall the merchantman wait for the return of his ships, and shall the wife wait for the return of her husband, who is gone a long journey? Jas 5:7-8, and shall not a Christian wait for the return of his prayers?

Noah patiently waited for the return of the dove to the ark with an olive-branch in his mouth, so must you patiently wait for the return of your prayers. When children shoot their arrows, they never mind where they fall; but when prudent archers shoot their arrows, they stand and watch where they fall. You must deal by your prayers as prudent archers do by their arrows. Hab 2:1, "I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower. I will watch to see what He will say to me." The prophet, in the former chapter, having been very earnest in his expostulations, and very fervent in his supplications, he gets now upon his watchtower, to see what becomes of his prayers. He stands as a sentinel, and watches as vigilantly and as carefully as a spy, a scout, earnestly longing to hear and see the event, the outcome, and success of his prayers. That Christian who in prayer has one eye upon a divine precept, and another upon a gracious promise—that Christian will be sure to look after his prayers. He who prays and waits, and waits and prays, shall be sure to speed; he shall never fail of rich returns, Psa 40:1-4. He who can pray as well as wait, and he who can be contented that God is glorified, though he himself is not gratified; he who dares not demand God's promises immediately, but patiently waits for the accomplishment of them—he may be confident that he shall have seasonable and suitable answers to all those prayers that he has posted away to heaven.

Though God seldom comes at our time—yet he never fails to come at his own time: "He who shall come, will come, and will not tarry," Heb 10:37. The mercies of God are not styled the swift—but the "sure mercies of David." He who makes as much conscience to look after his prayers as to pray, he shall shortly clap his hands for joy, and cry out with that blessed martyr, "He has come, he has come, he has come." Certainly there is little worth in that man's heart, or in that man's prayers, who keeps up a trade of prayer—but never looks what becomes of his prayers. When you are in your closets, marshal your prayers; see that every prayer keeps his place and ground; and when you come out of your closets, then look up for an answer; only take heed that you be not too hasty and hot with God. Though mercy in the promise be yours—yet the time of giving it out is the Lord's; and therefore you must wait as well as pray. And thus much by way of counsel and advice, for the better carrying on of closet prayer.

I have now but one thing more to do before I close up this discourse, and that is, to lay down some means, rules, or directions which may be of use to help you on in a faithful and conscientious

discharge of this great duty, namely, closet-prayer.

02A.08. Means, Rules, and Directions

Means, Rules, and Directions

I have now but one thing more to do before I close up this discourse, and that is, to lay down some means, rules, or directions which may be of use to help you on in a faithful and conscientious discharge of this great duty, namely, closet-prayer. And therefore thus,

(1.) First, As ever you would give up yourselves to private prayer, Take heed of an idle and slothful spirit. If Adam, in the state of innocency, must work and dress the garden, and if, after his fall, when he was monarch of all the world, he must yet labor—why should any be idle or slothful? Idleness is a sin against the law of creation. God created man to labor, the idle person violates this law of creation; for by his idleness he casts off the authority of his Creator, who made him for labor. Idleness is a contradiction to the principles of our creation. Man in innocency should have been freed from weariness—but not from employment; he was to dress the garden by divine appointment: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it," Gen 2:15. All weariness in labor, and all vexing, tiring, and tormenting labor, came in by the fall: "In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread," Gen 3:19. The bread of idleness is neither sweet nor sure: "An idle person shall suffer hunger," says Solomon, Pro 19:15. "Warn those who are idle." 1Th 5:14 An idle life and a holy heart are far enough asunder. By doing nothing, says the heathen man, men learn to do evil things. It is easy slipping out of an idle life into an evil and wicked life; yes, an idle life is of itself evil, for man was made to be active, not to be idle. The Cyclops thought man's happiness did consist in doing nothing; but no excellent thing can be the child of idleness. Idleness is a mother-sin, a breeding-sin; it is the devil's cushion, on which he sits, and the devil's anvil, on which he frames very great and very many sins, Eph 4:28; 2Th 3:10; 2Th 3:12. Look! as toads and serpents breed most in standing waters, so sin thrives most in idle people. Idleness is that which provokes the Lord to forsake men's bodies, and the devil to possess their souls. No man has less means to preserve his body, and more temptations to infect his soul, than an idle person. Oh shake off sloth! The sluggish Christian will be sleeping, or idling, or trifling, when he should be in his closet a-praying. Sloth is a fatal sickness of the soul; get it cured, or it will be your eternal bane. Of all devils, it is the idle devil which keeps men most out of their closets. There is nothing that gives the devil so much advantage against us as idleness. It was good counsel that Jerome gave to his friend, that when the devil comes with a temptation, you may answer him you are not at leisure.

It was the speech of Mr. Greenham, once a famous preacher of this nation, that when the devil tempted a poor soul, she came to him for advice how she might resist the temptation, and he gave her this answer: "Never be idle—but be always well employed, for in my own experience I have found it. When the devil came to tempt me, I told him that I was not at leisure to hearken to his temptations, and by this means I resisted all his assaults." Idleness is the time of temptation, and an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.

"He who labors," said the old hermit, "is tempted but by one devil— but he who is idle is assaulted by all." Cupid complained that he could never fasten upon the Muses, because he could never find them idle. The fowler bends his bow and spreads his net for birds when they are set, not when they are upon the wing. So Satan shoots his most fiery darts at men, when they are most idle and slothful. And this the Sodomites found by woeful experience, Eze 16:49, when God rained hell out of heaven upon them, both for their idleness, and for those other sins of theirs, which their idleness did expose them to.

It was said of Rome, that during the time of their wars with Carthage and other enemies in Africa, they knew not what vice meant; but no sooner had they got the conquest—but through idleness they came to ruin. Idleness is a sin, not only against the law of grace—but also against the light of nature. You cannot look any way but every creature checks and upbraids your idleness and sloth; if you look up to the heavens, there you shall find all their glorious lights constant in their motions, "The sun rejoices as a strong man to run a race," Psa 19:5; Psa 104:23; the winds blow, the waters run, the earth brings forth her pleasant and delightful fruits, all the fish in the sea, fowls in the air, and beasts in the fields and on the mountains, have their motions and operations, all which call aloud upon man not to be idle—but active. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant to learn industry, Pro 6:6. The ant is a very little creature—but exceeding laborious. Nature has put an instinct into her to be very busy and active all the summer; she is early and late at it, and will not lose an hour unless the weather hinders. And the prophet Jeremiah sends the Jews to school to learn to wait, and observe of the stork, the turtle-dove, the crane, and the swallow, Jer 8:7. And our Savior sends us to the sparrows and lilies, to learn attendance upon providence, Mat 6:26; Mat 6:28. And let me send you to the busy bee, to learn activity and industry; though the bee is little in bulk—yet it is great in service; she flies far, examines the fields, hedges, trees, orchards, gardens, and loads herself with honey and wax, and then returns to her hive. Now how should the activity of these creatures put the idle person to a blush. O sirs! man is the most noble creature, into whom God has put principles of the greatest activity, as capable of the greatest and highest enjoyments; and therefore idleness is a forgetting man's dignity, and a forsaking of that rank that God has set him in, and a debasing of himself below the least and basest creatures, who constantly in their order obediently serve the law of their creation. Nay, if you look up to the blessed angels above you, you shall still find them active and serviceable; "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb 1:14. And if you look down to the demons of darkness below you, oh how laborious and industrious are they to destroy and damn your precious and immortal souls! 1Pe 5:8. For a close, remember that idleness is so great an evil, that it has been condemned and severely punished by the very worst of men.

Among the Egyptians, idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans, he who lent money to an idle person was to forfeit it. By Solon's law, idle people were to suffer death; and Seneca had rather be sick than idle. The Lacedemonian called men to an account for their idle hours. Antoninus Pius, being emperor, caused the roofs and coverings of all such houses to be taken away, as were known to receive in idle people, affirming that nothing was more unfitting, or absurd to be allowed, than such idle caterpillars and slowworms to have their food and nourishment from that commonwealth, in the maintenance of which there was no supply from their industry and labor. All which should steel us and arm us against sloth and idleness.

I have the longer insisted on this, because there is not a greater hindrance to closet prayer than sloth and idleness. Slothful and idle people commonly lie so long a-bed, and spend so much precious time between the comb and the glass, and in eating, drinking, sporting, and trifling, etc., that they can find no time for private prayer. Certainly such as had rather go sleeping to hell, than sweating to heaven, will never care much for closet-prayer. And therefore shun sloth and idleness, as you would shun a lion in the way, or poison in your food, or coals in your bosom, or else you will never find time to wait upon God in your closets.

(2.) Secondly, Take heed of spending too much of your precious time about circumstantials, about the minor things of religion, as "mint, anise, and cummin," Mat 23:23, or in searching into the circumstances of worship, or in standing stoutly for this or that ceremony, or about inquiring what fruit it was which Adam ate in paradise, or in inquiring after things which God in his infinite wisdom has concealed, or in inquiring what God did before the world was made. When one asked Austin that question, he answered, "that he was preparing hell for such busy questionists as he was." It was a saying of Luther, "From a vain-glorious doctor, from a contentious pastor, and from unprofitable questions, the good Lord deliver his church." It is one of Satan's great designs to hinder men in the great and weighty duties of religion, by busying them most about the lowest and least matters of religion. Satan is never better pleased, than when he sees Christians puzzled and perplexed about those things in religion, which are of no great consequence or importance, Col 2:21. Such as who trade in religion for a good name, more than a good life; for a good report, more than a good conscience; to humor others, more than to honor God, etc., such will take no pleasure in closet-duties. Such as are more busied about ceremonies than substances, about the form of godliness than the power, 2Ti 3:5, such will never make it their business to be much with God in their closets, as is evident in the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat 6:1-6. Such as are more taken up with the outward dress and garb of religion, than they are with the spirit, power, and life of religion. Such will never make a secret trade heavenwards, Luk 11:34-40. There cannot be a surer nor a greater character of a hypocrite, than to make a great deal of stir about little things in religion, and in the mean while neglect the great and main things in religion. Such as these have all along in the Scripture discovered a strangeness, and a perfect carelessness as to closet duties. I never knew any man hot and zealous about circumstantials, about the little things of religion, who was ever famous for closet prayer. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Take heed of curiosity, and of spending too much of your precious time in searching into those dark, abstruse, mysterious, and hidden truths and things of God and religion, which lie most remote from the understanding of the best and wisest of men. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul. Curiosity is a spiritual drunkenness; for look, as the drunkard is never satisfied unless he sees the bottom of the cup, be it ever so deep; so those who are troubled with the itch of curiosity, will say they can never be satisfied until they come to the bottom of the most deep and profound things of God. They love to pry into God's secrets, and to scan the mysteries of religion—by their weak, shallow reason—and to be wise above what is written. Curious searchers into the deep mysterious things of God will make all God's depths to be shallows, rather than they will be thought not able to fathom them by the short line of their own reason.

Oh that men would once learn to be contentedly ignorant, where God would not have them knowing! Oh that men were once so humble, as to account it no disparagement to them, to acknowledge some depths in God, and in the blessed Scripture, which their shallow reason cannot

fathom! They are only a company of fools, who attempt to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's tree of knowledge make him and his posterity mere fools? He who goes to school to his own reason, has a fool for his schoolmaster! The ready way to grow stark blind is to be still prying and gazing upon the body of the sun: so the ready way to spiritual blindness is to be still prying into the most secret and hidden things of God, Deu 29:29. Are there not many who, by prying long into the secrets of nature, are become archenemies to the grace of God? Rom 9:20. Oh that we were wise to admire those deep mysteries which we cannot understand, and to adore those depths and counsels which we cannot reach. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!" Rom 11:33. "There are secret things which belong to the Lord our God." Deu 29:29. "For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isa 55:9

Oh let us check our curiosity in the things of God, and sit down satisfied and contented to resolve many of God's actions into some hidden causes which lie secret in the abyss of his eternal knowledge and infallible will. Christ, when he was on earth, very frequently, severely, and sharply condemned curious inquirers, as is evident by these scriptures: [John 21:22; Acts 1:6-7] and the great reason why our Savior did so frequently check this humor of curiosity, was because the great indulgers of it were too frequent neglecters of the more great, necessary, and important points of religion.

Curiosity is one of Satan's most dangerous weapons, by which he keeps many souls out of their closets, yes, out of heaven. When many a poor soul begins in good earnest to look towards heaven, and to apply himself to closet duties, then Satan begins to bestir himself, and to labor with all his might, so to busy the poor soul with vain inquiries, and curious speculations, and unprofitable curiosities, that the soul has no time for closet prayer. Ah! how well might it have been with many a man, had he but spent one quarter of that time in closet prayer, that he has spent in curious inquiries after things that have not been fundamental to his happiness. The heathenish priests affected curiosity, they had their mythologies, and strange canting expressions of their imaginary inaccessible deities, to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers, and thereby to hold up their popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. Oh that there were none of this heathenish spirit among many in these days, who have their faces toward heaven! Ah! how many are there that busy themselves more in searching after the reasons of the irrecoverableness of man's fall, than they do to recover themselves out of their fallen estate! Ah, how many are there that busy themselves more about the apostasy of the angels, than they do about securing their saving interest in Christ! And what a deal of precious time have some spent in discovering the natures, distinctions, properties, and orders of angels. That high-soaring, imaginative Dionysius describes the hierarchy of angels as exactly as if he had dwelt among them. He says there are nine orders of them, which be grounds upon nine words, which are found partly in the Old Testament, and partly in the New; as seraphims, cherubim, thrones, powers, hosts, dominions, principalities, archangels, and angels; and then he describes their several natures, distinctions, and properties, as that the first three orders are for immediate attendance on the Almighty, and the next three orders for the general government of the creatures, and the last three orders for the particular good of God's elect; that the archangel surpasses the beauty of angels ten times, principalities surpass the archangels twenty times, and that powers surpass the principalities forty

times, etc. How he came by this learning is not known, and yet this hierarchy in these nine several orders has passed for current through many ages of the church. The devil knows he is no loser, and the curious soul but a very little gainer, if he can but persuade him to spend most of his precious time in studying and poring upon the most dark, mysterious, and hidden things of God. He who affects to read the Revelation of John more than his plain epistles; or Daniel's prophecies more than David's Psalms; and is more busy about reconciling difficult scriptures than he is about mortifying of unruly lusts, or who is set more upon vain speculations than upon things that make most for edification—he is not the man who is cut out for closet-prayer. Such as affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, and are men of abstracted conceits, are but a company of wise fools, that will never take any delight to be with God in a corner. Had many men spent but half that time in secret prayer, that they have spent in seeking after the philosopher's stone, how happy might they have been! Oh how holy, how happy, how heavenly, how humble, how wise, how knowing, might many men have been, had they spent but half that time in closet prayer, that they have spent in searching after those things that are hard to be understood! 2Pe 3:16. But,

(4.) Fourthly, Take heed of engaging yourselves in a crowd of worldly businesses. Many have so much to do on earth that they have no time to look up to heaven. As much earth puts out the fire, so much worldly business puts out the fire of heavenly affections. Look! as the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num 22:32; so much worldly business swallows up so much precious time, that many men have no leisure to be with God in their closets. "This business is to be done, and that business cannot be omitted, and the other necessary occasion must be attended—so that I have no leisure to step out of my shop into my closet," says the earthly-minded man, Php 3:19. Thus a crowd of worldly businesses crowds closet-prayer quite out of doors. Many drive so great a trade in their shops, that their private trade to heaven is quite laid by. There is nothing that has kept men more from Christ and closet-prayer, than the shop, the exchange, the farm, and the oxen, etc., Luk 14:16-22. The stars which have least circuit are nearest the pole; and men that are least perplexed with worldly businesses are commonly nearest to God, to Christ, to heaven, and so the fitter for closet-prayer. It is sad when men grasp so much worldly business, that they can have no leisure for communion with God in private prayer. The noise is such in a mill, as hinders all private fellowship between man and man; and so a multitude of worldly businesses make such a noise, as that it hinders all private fellowship between God and the soul. If a man of much business should now and then slide into his closet—yet his head and his heart will be so filled and distracted with the thoughts of his employments, that God shall have little of him but his bodily presence, or, at most—but bodily exercise, which profits little, 1Ti 4:8. If Christ blamed Martha, Luk 10:40-42, for the multitude of her domestic employments, though they were undertaken for the immediate service and entertainment of himself, because they hindered her in her soul-concernments; oh how will he one day blame all those who, by running themselves into a crowd of worldly businesses, do cut themselves off from all opportunities of pouring out their souls before him in secret! But,

(5.) Fifthly, Take heed of secret sins. There is no greater hindrance to secret prayer in all the world than secret sins; and therefore stand upon your watch, and arm yourselves with all your might against them. There is an antipathy between secret sinning and secret praying; partly from guilt, which makes the soul shy of coming under God's secret eye; and partly from those fears, doubts, disputes, and disorders, which secret sins raise in the heart. Light is not more opposite to

darkness, Christ to Belial, nor heaven to hell, than secret prayer is to secret sins; and therefore, whatever you do, look that you keep clear of secret sins. To that purpose consider these four things:

[1.] First, That God is privy to our most secret sins. [Psa 139:1-4; Jer 13:27, and Jer 29:23; Psa 39:1; 1Ki 20:39; Job 10:12] His eye is as much upon secret sins, as it is upon open sins: Psa 90:8, "You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance." God has an eye upon our inmost evils, he sees all that is done in the dark: Jer 23:24, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord." Pro 15:3, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." To say that God does not see the most secret sins of men, is not only derogatory to his omniscience—but also to his mercy; for how can God pardon those sins, which he does not see to be sins?

There is no cloud, nor curtain, nor moment of darkness, that can stand between the eyes of God and the ways of men: Pro 5:21, "The ways of men are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his goings." In this scripture Solomon mainly speaks of the ways of the adulterer, which usually are plotted with the most cunning secrecy; yet God sees all those ways. Look! as no boldness can exempt the adulterer from the justice of God, so no secrecy can hide him from the eye of God. Though men labor to hide their ways from others, and from themselves—yet it is but labor in vain to endeavor to hide them from God. Men who labor to hide God from themselves, can never hide themselves from God.

I have read that Paphnutius turned Thais and Ephron, two infamous strumpets, from immorality, only with this argument, "That God sees all things in the dark, when the doors are closed, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn." Heb 4:13, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened (that is, anatomized) even to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." It is an allusion to the priests under the law, who, when they killed an animal for sacrifice, all things that were within the beast were laid open and naked before the priest, that he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Though evil is done out of the eye of all the world—yet it is naked and manifest in his sight with whom we have to do.

Those sins which lie closest and are most secretly lurking in the heart, are as obvious and odious to God as those which are most fairly written upon a man's forehead. God is all eye; so that He sees all—even the most secret turnings and windings of our hearts. Our most secret sins are as plainly seen by him, as anything can be seen by us at noonday: Psa 139:11-12, "If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,' even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you." It is not the thickest clouds which can bar out his observance, whose eyes fill heaven and earth. What is the curtain, or the darkest night, or the double lock, or the secret chamber—to him who clearly observes all things in a perfect nakedness. God has an eye upon the most inward intentions of the heart, and the most subtle motions of the soul.

Those philosophers were wrong, who held the eye and ear of God descended no lower than the heavens. Certainly there is not a creature, not a thought, not a thing—but lies open to the all-seeing eye of God. The Lord knows our all secret sinnings as exactly as our visible sinnings: Psa 44:21, "He knows the secrets of our hearts." Would not a malefactor speak truly at the trial, did he know, did he believe that the judge had windows which looked into his heart?

Athenodorus, a heathen, could say, that all men ought to be careful in the actions of their life, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done.

Zeno, a wise heathen, affirmed that God beheld even the thoughts.

It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide yourself from him, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun." Though a sinner may baffle his conscience—yet he cannot baffle the eye of God's omniscience! Oh! that poor souls would remember, that as they are never out of the reach of God's hand, so they are never from under the view of his eye. God is 'totus oculus', all eye. Jer 16:17, "My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes." Job 34:21-22, "His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step. There is no dark place, no deep shadow, where evildoers can hide." Jer 32:19, "Your eyes are open to all the ways of men; you reward everyone according to his conduct and as his deeds deserve."

You know what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when coming in he found him cast upon the queen's couch, on which she sat, "What," says he, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" Est 7:8. "What, will he dare to commit such villany, and I stand and look on?" O sirs! to sin in the sight of God, to do wickedly under the eye of God, is a thing that he looks upon as the greatest affront, and as the highest indignity that can possibly be done unto him. What, says God, will you be drunk before me? Will you swear and blaspheme before me? Will you be wanton and unclean before me? Will you be unjust and unrighteous under my eye? Will you pollute my ordinances before my face? Will you despise and persecute my servants in my presence? etc. This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin—that it is done before the face of God, that it is committed in the royal presence of the King of kings! The very consideration of God's omnipresence should bravely arm us against sin and Satan; the consideration of his all-seeing eye should make us shun all occasions of sin, and make us shy of all appearances of sin. Shall the eye of the teacher keep the scholar from blotting his copy? Shall the eye of the judge keep the malefactor from thieving and stealing? Shall the eye of the master keep the servant from idling and trifling? Shall the eye of the father keep the child from wandering and gadding? Shall the eye of the husband keep the wife from extravagancies and indecencies? Shall the sharp eye of a near neighbor, or the quick eye of a bosom-friend—keep you from many enormities and vanities? And shall not the strict, the pure, the jealous eye of an all-seeing God, keep you from sinning in the secret chamber, when all curtains are drawn, doors bolted, and everyone in the house sleeping—but you and your Delilah? Oh! what dreadful atheism is bound up in that man's heart, who is more afraid of the eye of his father, his pastor, his child, his servant, than he is of the eye and presence of the eternal God! Oh! that all whom this concerns, would take such serious notice of it, as to judge themselves severely for it, as to mourn bitterly over it, as to strive mightily in prayer with God both for the pardon of it, and for power against it. The apostle sadly complains of some in his time who wallowed in secret sins. Eph 5:12, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." He speaks of such as had lived in secret fornications and uncleanness. There were many that had put on a form of godliness, who yet did allow themselves in the secret actings of abominable wickedness and filthiness, as if there were no God to behold them, nor conscience to accuse them, nor judgment-day to arraign them, nor justice to condemn them, nor hell to torment them! Oh! how infinitely odious must they be in

the eyes of a holy God, who can highly court and compliment him in public, and yet are so bold as to provoke him to his face in private. These are like those whores, who pretend a great deal of affection and respect to their husbands abroad, and yet at home will play the harlots before their husbands' eyes.

Such as perform religious duties only to cloak and color over their secret filthinesses, their secret wickednesses; such as pretend to pay their vows, and yet wait for the twilight, Pro 7:13-15; Job 24:15; such as commit wickedness in a corner, and yet with the harlot wipe their mouths, and say, 'What wrong have we done?' such shall at last find the chambers, the stones out of the wall, the beam out of the timber, the seats they sit on, and the beds they lie on—to witness against all their wanton dalliances, and lascivious behavior in secret, Hab 2:11. Heb 13:4, "God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." He will sentence them himself; and why? but because such sinners behave so secretly and craftily, that oftentimes none but God can find them out! Magistrates often neglect the punishing of such sinners, when their secret wickedness is made known; and therefore God himself will sit in judgment upon them. Though they may escape the eyes of men—yet they shall never escape the judgment of God!

Heart iniquities fall not under any human sentence. Usually the sexually immoral are very conniving, and secret and subtle to conceal their abominable filthiness; therefore the harlot is said to be 'subtle of heart,' Pro 7:10. The Hebrew is translated by one as "having her heart fenced. For as a city is environed with fortifications, so her heart is fortified round about with subtlety." Or else it may be rendered "fast shut up in the heart, even as close as a besieged city," that is, "most secret in the subtlety of her heart, how open soever she be in the boldness of her outward behavior." So the prophet Agur reckons the way of a man with a maid, and the way of an adulterous woman, among those things which neither himself nor any other man was possibly able to discover and find out; and compares it to the way of three things, which no wit nor industry of man is able to descry. But yet God sees all, and will bring all to the judgement, Pro 30:19-20. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider that secret sins shall be revealed. [In my treatise called "Apples of Gold," I have proved by many arguments that the sins of the saints shall not be brought into the judgment of the great day; and therefore understand this second particular of such people who live and die in their secret sins without repentance and faith in the blood of Christ.] The most hidden works of darkness shall be openly manifested; for though the actings of sin are in the dark—yet the judgments of sin shall be in the light; Luk 8:17, "For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known and come to light." Ecc 12:14, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Mark, he does not say some work—but every work; and not only works—but secrets; and not only secrets—but every secret; and not only secret good things but evil things also. Whether good works or wicked works, whether secret or open—all must be brought to judgment. The books of God's omniscience, and man's conscience, shall then be opened; and then secret sins shall be as legible as if they were written on your forehead; as if they were written with the most glittering sunbeams upon a wall of crystal.

All men's secret sins are printed in heaven, and God will at last read them aloud in the ears of all the world: 1Co 4:5, "Therefore don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts." Look! as

there are a world of particles in the air, which we never see until the sun shines; so there are many thousand thousands of proud thoughts, and unclean thoughts, and worldly thoughts, and malicious thoughts, and envious thoughts, and bloody thoughts, etc., which the world neither sees nor knows! But in the great day, when the intentions of all hearts shall be manifest, then all shall come out; then all shall appear, to the open gaze of all the world. In that great day—all masks, cloaks, and hoods shall be pulled off—and then all shall be made visible! All that ever you have done in the secret chamber, in the dark corner—shall be made known to men and angels, yes, to the whole court of heaven, and to all the world besides! Rom 2:16, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." In this great day, God will judge not only our words but our works, not only our open works—but also our secret works and ways. When Jehoiakim was dead, there was found the superstitious marks, and prints of his sorcery upon his body, 2Ch 36:8; which shows how deeply idolatry was rooted in his heart, seeing he bore the marks in his flesh during his life. He being a king, kept all hidden; but when he was dead, then all came out, then the marks of his abominable idolatry appeared upon his body. Though sinners, though the greatest of sinners, may hide and keep hidden their horrid abominations for a time—yet there will come a time when all shall be manifested; when all their secret marks and secret abominations shall be obvious to all the world. But sinners may be ready to object and say, "Let us but alone in our secret sins until that day, and then we shall do well enough." And therefore in the,

[3.] Third place, consider, That God many times does, even in this life, discover and make known to the world men's secret sins. God loves to act suitably to his own names. Now, to be a revealer of secrets, is one of his names, Dan 2:47; and accordingly, even in this world, he often brings to light the most hidden things of darkness. Of all the glorious attributes of God, there is none which suffers so deeply by secret sins, as the attribute of his omniscience; and therefore in this world God often stands up to vindicate the honor of that attribute, by unmasking of sinners, and by bringing to the light all those secret paths and ways of wickedness, wherein they have long walked undiscovered. It was for the honor of this blessed attribute of God, that the secret-plotted sin of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-42, was so openly discovered; "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." Joseph's brethren for a long time hid their malice, their craft, their cruelty, their envy, their treachery, in selling their brother into Egypt; but at last by amazing providences, all was brought to light, Gen 42:21-22; Gen 50:15-22. Conscience, which for a time may seem to be asleep—yet will in time awake, and make the sinner know, that he is as faithful in recording, as he is fearful in accusing; and this Joseph's brethren found by sad experience.

Likewise with Gehazi, he sins secretly, he lies fearfully; but at last all comes out, and instead of being clothed richly, he and his posterity were clothed with a leprosy forever; and instead of two changes of garments, God hangs them up in chains, as a monument of his wrath to all generations, 2Ki 5:20, seq. So Achan secretly and sacrilegiously steals a beautiful garment imported from Babylon, two hundred silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound; and hides them in the earth in the midst of his tent, and by reason of this, Israel is defeated before their enemies. But at last Achan is found out, and all comes out, and his golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his Babylonish garment a garment to shroud him. Joshua makes a bonfire of all that he had secretly and sinfully stolen, and burns him, and his children, and all that he had, in it. Oh how openly, how severely does God sometimes punish men for their most secret

iniquity! The same you may see in that great instance of David; 2Sa 12:9-12, "Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword (this was done in a secret letter) and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'" 2Sa 16:22. David was very studious and very industrious to hide his sin, and to save his reputation; but the covering made of Uriah's blood was too short, and too narrow to hide his sin with Bathsheba, and therefore when he had done all he could, his sin was tossed like a ball, from man to man, through court, city, and country.

I have read of Parthenius, who, having traitorously slain Ausonius and his wife—when no man suspected or accused him thereof, he detected and accused himself after this strange manner: as he slept in his bed, suddenly he roared out most pitifully; and being asked what ailed him; he, half asleep, answered, "That Ausonius and his wife, whom he had slain long ago, summoned him to judgment before God." Upon which confession he was apprehended; and, after due examination, stoned to death. Thus the terrors and horrors of his own conscience unveiled that secret wickedness, which none could prove against him.

I have read how that Mahomet the great Turk, had with great rewards, procured two Turks to undertake to kill Scanderbeg. These traitors came to Scanderbeg, making such a show of the detestation both of Mahomet's tyrannical government and vain superstition, that they were both by Scanderbeg and others reputed to be indeed the men they desired to be accounted. Soon after, by a providence, it so happened that these two traitors argued between themselves, by which means the plot came to be discovered; and after due examination and confession of the fact, they were presently condemned and executed.

Conscience is God's spy in the heart. 'Conscience,' says Philo, 'is the little tribunal of the soul. Conscience is a thousand witnesses, for or against a man. Conscience is a court of record, and whatever it sees it writes down; and conscience is always as quick in writing as the sinner can be in sinning.' The very heathen could say that conscience was a god to every man. Conscience, as a scribe, a register —sits in the closet of your hearts, with pen in hand, and makes a journal of all your secret ways and secret crimes, which are above the cognizance of others. Conscience sets down the time when, the place where, the manner how, and the people with whom—such and such secret wickednesses have been committed; and that so clear and evident, that, go where you will, and do what you can, the characters of them shall never be cancelled or erased out, until God appears in judgment. Let a man sin in the most hidden seclusion which human policy can contrive, let him take all the ways he can to hide his sins, to cloak and cover his sin, as Adam did—yet conscience will so play the judge, that it will bring in the evidence, produce the law, urge the penalty, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon him.

There is many a man who makes a fair profession, and who has a great name in the world—who yet is self-condemned, for those secret sins which are not obvious to the eyes of man, nor punishable by the hands of men. Yes, many times in this life, God raises such a hell of horror and

terror in many men's consciences, by reason of their secret sins—that they can have no rest nor quiet, neither at bed nor at board, neither lying down nor rising up. Gladly would they conceal their sins, unwilling they are that the world should know how vile they have been in secret; but conscience being upon the rack, and still a-gnawing, accusing, and condemning of them, they can hold no longer. Now all must come out; and now those sins that were most secret and concealed—come to be published upon the housetop.

Some who have been under anguish of conscience, others who have been smitten with a frenzy, and many in their very sleep—have been often the blazers and proclaimers of their own secret filthiness and wickedness. In those cases God has made many a secret sinner cry out with the leper, "Unclean, unclean!" Lev 13:45; and with Judas, before all present, "I have sinned, I have sinned!" Mat 27:4. Many times in this life, God very astonishingly discovers those secret works of darkness, in which people have lived long undiscovered. A Pythagorean bought a pair of shoes upon trust; the shoemaker dies, he is glad, thinks them gained; but a while after his conscience flies upon him, and becomes a continual chider and tormentor of him. He hereupon visits to the house of the dead, casts in his money with these words, "There, take your due; you live to me, though dead to all besides." But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than open sins. Many a man bleeds to death inwardly—while no one perceives it. The more inward and secret the disease is, the more the man is in danger to lose his life. There are no fevers so dangerous as those who prey upon the vitals and inward parts; so there are no sins so dangerous and pernicious to the souls of men as those who are most inward and secret. Secret sins often reign in the souls of men most powerfully, when they are least apparent.

First, Consider that he who sins secretly, deprives himself of those helps and remedies which, by a divine blessing, might arm him against sin, yes, make him victorious over sin; namely, the prayers, counsels, reproofs, examples, and encouragements of friends, relations, etc. A man's house may be on fire—but while it is all inside—no help comes. But when the fire flames out, when it catches the outside of the house, then help runs in, then help on all hands is ready. He who sins in secret debars himself of all public remedy, and takes great pains to damn his soul in secret, and to go to hell in the dark. But,

Secondly, Secret sins will make way for public sins. He who makes no conscience of sinning in the secret chamber, will before long, with Absalom, be ready to spread a tent upon the top of the house, and to go in to his concubines in the sight of all Israel, 2Sa 12:11. Such as have made no conscience of stealing a few pins or pennies in private, have in time come to be so bold as to steal a purse in broad daylight. The cockatrice must be crushed in the egg, else it will soon become a serpent. The very thought of sin, if but continually meditated on, will break forth into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are irrecoverably lost to all eternity!

If Satan can but wound our heel, as the poets feign of Achilles, he will send death from the heel to the heart. If the subtle Serpent can but wriggle in his tail by a sinful thought, he will soon get in his head by a worse action. Hence it is that Christ calls hatred, murder; and a wanton eye, immorality. Secret hatred, does often issue in open murder; and secret wanton glances of the eye, do often issue in open immorality. If Amnon is sick with the sinful imaginations of incestuous lust, how will his soul be in pain and travail until he has brought forth! And how many are there that in secret

have taken now and then but one cup of liquor, who now may be seen at high noon reeling against every post. Look! as secret diseases in the body, if not cured, will in time openly break forth; so secret sins in the soul, if not pardoned and purged, will in time be openly revealed. Covetousness was Judas' secret sin; and no sooner does an occasion or a temptation present itself—but he is very ready and forward to betray and sell his Lord and Master for thirty pieces of silver before all the world! "Lust having conceived, brings forth sin," Jas 1:15. First, sin has its conception—which is its delight; and then sin has its birth—which is its action; and then sin has its growth—which is its custom; and then sin has its end—which is its damnation!

Thirdly, Secret sinning puts far more respect and fear upon men, than upon God. You will be unjust in secret, and wanton in secret, and unclean in secret, and treacherous in secret, etc., and why? Because you are afraid that such or such men should know it, or that such and such friends should know it, or that such and such relations should know it? Ah! poor wretch, are you afraid of the eye of a man, of a man who shall die, like the grass? Isa 51:12, and yet not tremble under God's eye, "whose eyes are as a blazing fire?" Rev 1:14. Ah! how full of atheism is that man's heart, which tacitly says, "If my sins be but hid from the eyes of the world, I do not care though the Lord knows them; though the Lord strictly observes them; though the Lord notes them all down." What is this, O man—but to brave it out with God, and to tempt him, and provoke him to his very face! Ah! sinner, sinner—can man damn you? can man disinherit you? can man fill your conscience with horrors and terrors? can man make your life a very hell? can man bar the gates of glory against you? can man speak you into the grave by a word of his mouth? What is worse—can man cast you into endless, easeless, and remediless torments? Oh no—he cannot! Can God do all this? Oh yes—God can! Why, then, does not your heart stand more in awe of the eye of the great God, than it does of the eye of a poor, weak, mortal man?

I have insisted the longer on this particular, because there is not any one thing in all the world that does more hinder secret communion with God and secret prayer—than secret sins. And oh that you would all make it your great business to watch against secret sins, and to pray against secret sins, and to mourn over secret sins, and deeply to judge and condemn yourselves for secret sins, and carefully and conscientiously to shun and avoid all occasions and provocations that may be as fuel to secret sins!

Certainly there are no men or women that are so sincere and serious in closet-prayer; or that are so frequent, so fervent, so constant in closet-prayer; or that are so delighted, so resolute, so undaunted, or so unwearied in closet-prayer; as those who keep themselves most clear and free from secret sins. For a close, remember this—that though secret sins are in some respects more dangerous than other sins are—yet in three respects they are not so bad nor so dangerous as other sins are.

First, In that they do not so scandalize religion as open sins do.

Secondly, In that they do not shame, grieve, and wound the hearts of the saints as open sins do.

Thirdly, In that they are not so infectious to others, nor such provocations to others to sin against the Lord as open sins are. And thus you may see what those things are that you must carefully take heed of, as ever you would addict yourselves to closet-prayer. And as you must take heed of these five things, so there are several other things that you must carefully and conscientiously

apply yourselves to, as ever you would be found faithful and constant in this great duty, namely, closet-prayer. Now they are these:

[1.] First, Lament greatly and mourn bitterly over the neglect of this choice duty. He who does not make conscience of mourning over the neglect of this duty, will never make conscience of performing this duty. Oh that your heads were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears—that you might weep day and night for the great neglect of closet-prayer, Jer 9:1. He who mourns most for the neglect of this duty, will be found most in the practice of this duty. He who makes most conscience to accuse, arraign, and condemn himself for neglecting closet-prayer; he will make most conscience of giving himself up to closet-prayer. It is said of Adam, that he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, and from his heart bitterly lamented his great fall. Oh that you would turn your faces towards your closets, and bitterly lament your rarely going into them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Habituate yourselves, accustom yourselves, to closet-prayer. Make private prayer your constant trade. Frequency begets familiarity, and familiarity confidence. We can go freely and boldly into that friend's house whom we often visit. What we are habituated to, we do with ease and delight. A man who is habituated or accustomed to write; to read; to ride; to run; or to play on this or that musical instrument, etc., he does it all with delight and ease. And so a man who does habituate himself to closet-prayer, he will manage it with delight and ease. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Keep a diary of all your closet-experiences, Deu 7:18-19; Psa 66:12. Oh, carefully record and book down all your closet mercies! Oh, be often in reading over your closet experiences, and be often in meditating and in pondering upon your closet experiences! There is no way like this, to inflame your love to closet-prayer, and to engage your hearts in this secret trade of private prayer.

Oh remember that at such a time you went into your closets with hard hearts, and dry eyes; but before you came out of your closets, ah, how sweetly, how graciously, how powerfully were you melted, and humbled before the Lord! Psa 6:6; Psa 39:12; Psa 56:8. Oh remember how that at another time you went into your closets clouded and benighted—but came out of your closets with as glorious a shine of God upon your souls, as Moses had upon his face, when he came down from the mount from communing with God! Exo 34:28-29 Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets with cold, frozen spirits—but before you came out of your closets, what a fire has God kindled in your souls, what a spirit of burning have you found in your hearts! Luk 24:31-32; Isa 4:4. Oh remember how often you have gone into your closets straitened and shut up—but before you have come out, how have your souls been aflame! Oh remember what power God has given you against corruptions in your closets, and what strength God has given you against temptations in your closets! Oh remember the sweet discoveries of divine love that you have had when in your closets! Oh remember the secret visits, the secret kisses, the secret embraces, the secret whispers, the secret love-tokens, that Christ has given you in your closets! Oh seriously ponder upon these things, and then closet duties will be sweet unto you!

It was a sweet saying of Bernard, "O saint, know you not that your husband Christ is bashful, and will not be familiar in company; retire yourself by meditation into your closet, or into the fields, and there you shall have Christ's embraces," Song of Solomon 8:11-12. Oh the more any man meditates upon his closet-experiences, the more he shall find his heart engaged to closet duties; the more you ponder upon closet experiences, the sweeter will closet-experiences be to your

souls; and the sweeter closet-experiences are to your souls, the more your souls will delight to be with God in your closets.

Pliny tells us of one Messala Corvinus, whose memory was so bad, that he forgot his own name. And I am afraid that many of your memories are so bad, that you forget your closet-mercies, your closet-experiences.

I have read of such a pestilential disease once at Athens, as took away the memories of those who were infected with it, so that they forgot their own names. Oh that I had not cause to fear that some pestilential disease or other, has so taken away the memories of many, that they have quite forgot their closet-experiences. Well, friends, remember this, though stony hearts are bad—yet iron memories are good; and oh that you would all labor after iron memories, that so you may remember and ponder upon your closet-experiences.

I have read of the ancients, how they made use of white and black stones, for these two ends: first, they gave them to people at their arraignment before the judges; if they were condemned to death, they gave him a black stone—but if absolved and set free, a white stone. To which custom the Holy Spirit seems to allude in that Rev 2:17, "To him who overcomes will I give a white stone." A second use of those stones was this, that by them they might keep an account of all the good days or evil days they had met withal in their lives. Hence Giacopo Senzaro having been long in love, and much thwarted about his match, he filled a pot full of black stones, putting only one white stone among them, and being asked the reason, answered, "There will come one white day," meaning his marriage day, "which will make amends for all my black days."

Ah, friends! how often has God given you the white stone in your closets! Certainly you have had more white stones than black stones: your closet mercies and experiences have been more than your public crosses and miseries. O sirs! did you but reckon your good days according to the white stones you have had in your closets, it would make you more in love with closet-prayer than ever. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Be sure that you do not spend so much of your precious time in public duties and ordinances, as that you can spare none for private duties, for secret services. Though Pharaoh's cows ate up one another—yet our duties must not eat up one another, Gen 41:4. Public duties must not eat up family duties, nor family duties must not eat up public duties, nor neither of them must not eat up closet duties. The wisdom of a Christian does most eminently sparkle and shine, in giving every duty its proper time and place. He cannot be an excellent Christian, who is all eye to read, or all ear to hear, or all tongue to speak, or all knee to bow, to kneel, to pray, Ecc 8:5. Ah! how many are there that spend so much time in hearing of this man and that, and in running up and down from meeting to meeting, that they have no time to meet with God in their closets. O sirs! your duties are never so amiable and lovely, they are never so sweet and beautiful, as when they are seasonably and orderly performed.

Oh how wise are the men of this world, so to order all their civil affairs, that no one business shall interfere with another. They set apart for each business a convenient proportion of time; they allot an hour for one business, two for another, three for another, etc. Oh that we were as wise for our souls, as wise for eternity, as they are for this world. Oh that our hearts would so consult with our heads, that we may never lack a convenient time to seek God in private prayer! That devil that

loves to set one man against another, and one nation against another, and one Christian against another; that devil loves to set one duty against another. Hence it is that on the one hand he works some to cry up public prayers, in opposition to secret prayer; and on the other hand he works others to cry up private duties in opposition to all public duties; whereas all Christians stand obliged by God, so to manage one sort of duties, as not to shut out another sort of duties. Every Christian must find time and room for every duty incumbent upon him. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Love Christ with a more inflamed love. Oh strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-duties. Lovers love much to be alone, to be in a corner together, Song of Solomon 7:10-12. Certainly the more any man loves the Lord Jesus, the more he will delight to be with Christ in a corner. There was a great deal of love between Jonathan and David—and according to their love, so was their private converse, their secret communion one with another; they were always best when in the field together, or when in a corner together, or when behind the door together, or when locked up together. And just so would it be with you, did you but love the Lord Jesus Christ with a more raised and a more inflamed love; you would be always best when you were most with Christ in secret.

Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveler that carries it in his hand so lively and cheerful, that he never faints or grows weary. Ah! friends, did you but love the Lord Jesus with a more strong, with a more raised love, you would never faint in closet-duties, nor you would never grow weary of closet-duties. Look! as the Israelites removed their tents from Mithcah to Hashmonah, from sweetness to swiftness—as the words import, Num 33:29—so the sweetness of divine love will make a man move swiftly on in a way of closet-duties. Divine love will make all closet-duties more easy to the soul, and more pleasant and delightful to the soul; and therefore do all you can to strengthen your love to Christ, and your love to closet-work.

It was observed among the primitive Christians, that they were so full of love one to another, that they could be acquainted one with another as well in half an hour, as in half a year. O sirs! if your hearts were but more full of love to Christ, and closet-duties, you would quickly be better acquainted with them, you would quickly know what secret communion with Christ behind the door means. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Be highly, thoroughly, and fixedly resolved, in the strength of Christ, to keep close to closet-duties, in the face of all difficulties and discouragements which you may meet with, Psa 44:17-20. A man of no resolution, or of weak resolution, will be won with a nut, and lost with an apple. Satan, and the world, and carnal relations, and your own hearts, will cast in many things to discourage you, and take you off from closet prayer; but be nobly and firmly resolved to keep close to your closets, let the world, the flesh, and the devil, do and say what they can.

Daniel was a man of an invincible resolution; he would rather be cast into the den of lions—than he would omit praying in his chamber. Of all the duties of religion, Satan is the most deadly enemy to this duty of secret prayer; partly because secret prayer spoils him in his most secret designs, plots, and contrivances against the soul; and partly because secret prayer is so musical and delightful to God; and partly because secret prayer is of such rare use and advantage to the soul; and partly because it keeps the soul far from pride, vain glory, and worldly applause. Therefore he had rather that a man should pray a thousand times in public in the church, or in the corner of the streets—than that he should pray once in his closet. Therefore you had need to steel your hearts

with holy courage and resolution, that whatever suggestions, temptations, oppositions, or objections you may encounter with, that yet you will keep close to closet prayer.

There is not any better bulwark in the day of battle, than a heroic resolution of heart before the day of battle. Sanctified resolutions do exceedingly weaken and discourage Satan in his assaults, they do greatly daunt and dishearten him in all his undertakings against the soul. That man will never long be quiet in his closet, who is not steadfastly resolved to seek the Lord in secret, though all the powers of darkness should make head against him. O sirs! divine fortitude, holy resolutions, will make you like a wall of brass, which no arrows can pierce; they will make you fully armored, so no shot can hurt; they will either enable you to remove the greatest mountains of oppositions which lie between you and closet-prayer, or else they will enable you to step over them.

Luther was a man of great resolution, and a man who spent much time in closet-prayer. And such another was Nehemiah, who met with so much opposition, that had he not been steeled by a strong and obstinate resolution, he could never have rebuilt the temple—but would have sunk in the midst of his works. Now, he was a man for private prayer, as I have shown in the beginning of this treatise. Who more resolute than David? and who more for secret prayer than David? The same I might say of Paul, Basil, and many others, who have been famous in their generations.

O sirs! sanctified resolutions for closet prayer, will chain you faster to secret prayer, than ever the resolutions Ulysses did chain him to the mast of the ship. It was a noble resolution that kept Ruth close to her mother-in-law, when her sister Orpah only compliments her, kisses her, and takes her leave of her, Ruth 1:10-20. Be but nobly resolved for closet-prayer, and then you will keep close to it, when others only court it, and take their leave of it. In the Salentine country, there is mention made of a lake, that is still brimful: if you put in never so much, it never runs over; if you draw out never so much, it is still full. The resolution of every Christian for closet-prayer, should be like this lake—still brimful. Come life or death, come honor or reproach, come loss or gain, come liberty or bonds, come what can come—the true-bred Christian must be fully and constantly resolved to keep close to his closet. But,

[7.] Seventhly, Labor for a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit; for the greater measure any man has of the Spirit of God, the more that man will delight to be with God in secret: Zec 12:10, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication."

Joe 2:28-29; Isa 44:3; mark, in the last of the last days, when men shall be generally under a greater effusion of the Holy Spirit than ever, then they shall be more given up to secret prayer than ever. There will never be such praying in secret, and such mourning in secret, as there will be when the Lord shall pour out most richly, gloriously, abundantly, of his Spirit upon his poor people. Now, every one shall pour out his tears and his soul before God in secret, to show the soundness of their sorrow, and to show their sincerity by their secrecy.

Certainly, the more any man is now under the blessed pouring out of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man gives himself up to secret communion with Christ. Every man is more or less with Christ in his closet, as he is more or less under the anointings of the Spirit of Christ. The more any man has of the Spirit of Christ, the more he loves Christ, and the more any man loves Christ, the more he delights to be with Christ alone. Lovers love to be alone. The more any man has of the Spirit of

Christ, the more his heart will be set to please Christ.

Now, nothing pleases Christ more than the secret prayers of his people: Song of Solomon 2:14, "O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice, and your countenance is lovely." And therefore such a one will be much in secret prayer. The more any man has of the Spirit of Christ, the more his heart will be set upon glorifying and exalting Christ. Now, nothing glorifies Christ more, nor exalts him more, than secret prayer; and therefore the more any man has of the Spirit of Christ, the more that man will be found in secret prayer.

There are many people who say, they would be more in their closets than they are—but that they meet with many hindrances, many occasions, many diversions, many temptations, many oppositions, many difficulties, many discouragements, which prevent them. Ah, friends! had you a greater measure of the Holy Spirit upon you, none of these things would ever be able to hinder your secret trade heavenward. Had you a more rich anointing of the Spirit upon you, you would never plead, 'there is a lion in the way, a lion in the streets!' Pro 26:13. But were there a thousand lions between you and your closets, you would either step over them, or make your way through them—so that you might enjoy communion with Christ in your closets. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, As ever you would keep close to private prayer, Be frequent in the serious consideration of eternity. Oh see eternity standing at the end of every closet-prayer, and this will make you pray to purpose in your closets.

O sirs! every work you do, is a step to a blessed, or to a cursed, eternity. Every motion, every action in this life, is a step toward eternity. As every step that a traveler takes brings him forward to his journey's end, so every step that a man takes in the secret ways of righteousness and holiness, such as closet duties are, they bring him nearer to his journey's end, they bring him nearer to a blessed eternity. Look! as every step the sinner takes in a way of wickedness, brings him nearer to hell; so every step which a saint takes in a way of holiness, brings him nearer to heaven. Look! as every step that a wicked man takes in the ways of unrighteousness brings him nearer to a cursed eternity, so every step that a godly man takes in a way of righteousness, brings him nearer to a blessed eternity.

Zeuxis, the famous painter, was so exceeding careful and cautious in drawing all his lines, that he would let no piece of his go abroad into the world, until he had turned it over and over, and viewed it on this side and that side, again and again, to see if he could spy any fault in it; and being asked the reason why he was so curious; and so long in drawing his lines, answered, 'I paint for eternity.' O sirs! we all pray for eternity, we fast for eternity, we read for eternity, we hear for eternity, we wait for eternity, we weep for eternity; and therefore oh, how exactly, how wisely, how faithfully, how carefully, how diligently, how unweariedly, should we be in all our closet duties and services; seeing that all we do is in order to eternity! Friends! you must all before long be eternally blessed, or eternally cursed; eternally happy, or eternally miserable; eternally saved, or eternally damned; eternally accepted, or eternally rejected. And therefore what infinite cause have you frequently to shut to your closet-doors, and to plead mightily with God in a corner, for the lives of your poor, precious, and immortal souls, that they may be eternally saved in the great day of our Lord Jesus. O sirs! when any hindrances to closet-prayer present themselves to you, seriously remember eternity—and that will remove them.

It is related of one Pachomius, that whensoever he felt any unlawful desires to arise in his mind, he was accustomed to drive them away with the remembrance of eternity.

One relates a story of an ungodly fellow, who on a certain night could not sleep, who, upon the serious consideration of death and eternity, and the damned lying in hell, could not be at rest—but eternity did still run in his mind; gladly would he have shaken off the thoughts thereof, as gnawing worms. Therefore he followed sports, and hobbies, and merry-meetings, and sought out companions like himself, and sat oftentimes so long at his drunken cups, that he laid his conscience asleep, and so seemed to take some rest; but when he was awakened, his conscience flew in his face, and would still be a-suggesting sad thoughts of eternity to him. Of all things in the world he could not bear it, to be kept awake in the night; but so it happened that being sick, he was kept awake one night, and could not sleep at all, whereupon these thoughts rise in him: "What! is it so tedious then to be kept from sleep one night, and to lie a few hours in the dark? Oh what is it then to be kept in torments and everlasting darkness! I am here in my own house upon a soft bed in the dark, kept from sleep but one night; but to lie in flames and endless misery, how dreadful must that be!" These and such like meditations were the happy means of this young man's conversion.

I have read a notable story of one Theodorus, a Christian young man in Egypt, who, when there was a great deal of feasting, mirth, and music in his father's house, withdrew himself from all the company, and being got alone, he thus thought with himself, "Here is contentment and delight enough for the flesh, I may have what I desire—but how long will this last? This will not hold out long." Then falling down upon his knees before the Lord in secret, he said, "O Lord, my heart is open unto you, I indeed know not what to ask—but only this: Lord, let me not die eternally; O Lord, you know I love you, O let me live eternally to praise you."

If there be any way or means on earth to bring us upon our knees before God in secret, it is the serious and solemn thoughts of eternity. Oh that the fear of eternity might fall upon all your souls! Oh that you would all seriously consider, that after a short time is expired, you must all enter upon an eternal estate! Oh consider that eternity is an infinite, endless, bottomless gulf, which no line can fathom, no time can reach, no age can extend to, no tongue can express. It is a duration always present, a being always in being; it is one perpetual day, which shall never see light. O sins! this is, and must be for a lamentation, namely, that eternity is a thing that most men never think of, or else very slenderly. But as ever you would have your hearts chained to your closets and to closet duties, as the men of Tyrus chained their God Apollo to a post, that they might be sure of him; then seriously and frequently ponder upon eternity, and with those forty valiant martyrs, be still a crying out, "O eternity, eternity!"

Mr. Wood, after some holy discourse, fell a-musing, and cried out before all present, for near half a quarter of an hour together, "Forever, forever, forever!" Austin's prayer was, "Rack me, hew me, burn me here—but spare me hereafter, spare me in eternity." Certainly, if Christians would but spare one quarter of an hour every day in the solemn thoughts of eternity, it would make them more in love with closet-prayer than ever, yes, it would make them more fearful of omitting closet-prayer than ever, and more careful and conscientious in the discharge of all closet-duties than ever. And thus, according to my weak measure, I have given out all that at present the Lord has graciously given in to my poor soul, concerning this most necessary, most glorious, and most

useful point of points, namely, closet-prayer. I shall, by assisting grace, follow this poor piece with my prayers, that it may be so blessed from on high, as that it may work mightily to the internal and eternal welfare—both of reader, hearer, and writer.

03.00. The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion above all Earthy Portions

The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's Portion above all Earthy Portions

By Thomas Brooks This is a seven chapter work by Puritan author Thomas Brooks, which explains how a Believer's "portion" or lot in life is above and better than anything the world can offer him. This is actually a sermon, so he explains, looks at Scripture, answers objections, etc.

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Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24. This module was created by wluw 777.

Introduction What a portion God is Grounds of title unto God as a portion Practical application How shall we know whether God is our portion?

Incitements to see that God is our portion

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"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man who would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul, I cried unto you, O Lord, I said you are my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living" Psa 142:4-5.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY To all the merchants and tradesmen of England, especially these of the city of London, with all other sorts and ranks of people that either have or would have God for their portion; may grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied.

Gentlemen—The wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne has told us, that "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," that is, rightly ordered, placed, and circumstanced. Such a word is, of all words, the most excellent, the most prevalent, most precious, most sweet, most desirable, and most delectable, and the most pleasant word that can be spoken. O sirs! to time a word, to speak a word to purpose, is the project of this book. Though all truths are glorious, yet there is a double glory upon seasonable truths; and, therefore, I have made it my great business in this treatise to hold forth as seasonable a truth, and as weighty a truth, and as comfortable and

encouraging a truth, as any I know in all the book of God. The mother of King Cyrus willed, that the words of those who spoke unto her son should be in silk, but certainly seasonable words are always better than silken words.

Every prudent farmer observes his fittest season to sow his seeds, and therefore some he sows in the autumn and fall of the leaf; and some in the spring and renewing of the year; some he sows in a dry season, and some he sows in a wet; some he sows in a moist clay, and some he sows in a sandy dry ground. And so all spiritual farmers must wisely observe their fittest seasons for the sowing of that immortal seed that God has put into their hands; and such a thing as this is I have had in my eye—but whether I have hit the mark or missed it, let the Christian reader judge.

Augustine, speaking of the glory of heaven says, "That the good things of eternal life are so many that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation," etc. The same may I say concerning the saint's present portion, for certainly the good things that are in their portion—in their God—are so many, that they exceed number, so great that they exceed measure, and so precious that they are above all estimation. The same author in one of his epistles has this remarkable relation, namely, that the same day wherein Jerome died, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink, and paper to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome, and suddenly Augustine saw a light breaking into his study, and smelled also a very sweet smell, and this voice he thought he heard—"O Augustine, what are you doing? do think to put the sea into a little vessel? When the heavens shall cease from their continual motion—only then shall you be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before!" Certainly, the glory of heaven is beyond all conception and all expression, and so is that portion that is a little hinted at in the following discourse. And, indeed, a full description of that God, who is the believer's portion, is a work too high for an Aaron when standing upon mount Hor; or for a Moses, when standing on the top of Nebo after a Pisgah prospect. Yes, it is a work too high and too hard for all those blessed seraphim that are still a-crying before the throne of God, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty." [Num 20:28; Deu 32:49; Deu 34:1; Isa 6:3] No finite being, though ever so glorious, can ever be able fully to comprehend an infinite being. In Isa 6:2; we read that each seraphim had six wings, and that with two he covered the face of God, with two his feet, and with two he flew; intimating, as one well observes upon the place, that with two they covered his face, the face of God, not their own face; and with two they covered his feet, not their own feet. They covered his face, his beginning being unknown; they covered his feet, his end being incomprehensible; only the middle are to be seen, the things which are, whereby there may be some glimmering knowledge made out what God is. The wise man hit it, when he said, "That which is afar off and exceeding deep—who can find it out?" Ecc 7:24. Who can find out what God is? The knowledge of him is so far off, that he whose arm is able to break even a bow of steel is not able to reach it; so far off, that he who is able to make his nest with the eagle is not able to fly unto it; and so exceeding deep, that he who could follow the leviathan could not fathom it; that he who could venture to the center of the earth, is not able to find it out! Who then is able to reach it? In a word, so far off and so deep too, that "the depth says, It is not in me; and the sea says, It is not in me." It is such a deep to men and angels as far exceeds the capacity of both. Augustine speaking to that question, 'What God is?' gives this answer—"Surely such a one as he, who, when he is spoken of, cannot be spoken of; who, when he is considered, cannot be considered of; who, when he is compared to anything, cannot be compared; and when he is defined, grows greater by

defining of him. If that great apostle—who learned his divinity among the angels, yes, to whom the Holy Spirit was an immediate tutor, did know but "in part," then certainly those who are most acute and judicious in divine knowledge may very well conclude—that they know but part of that part that was known to him." As for my own part, I dare pretend but to a spark of that knowledge that others have attained to, and yet who can tell but that God may turn this spark into such a flame as may warm the hearts of many of his dear and precious ones. Much is done many times by a spark.

O sirs! catch not at the present profits, pleasures, preferments, and honors of this world—but "lay up a good foundation for the time to come," provide for eternity, make sure your interest and propriety in God. It was an excellent saying of Lewis, emperor of Germany—"Such goods," said he, "are worth getting and owning, as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happens." How many of you have lost your all by shipwrecks! and how has divine providence by your multiplied crosses and losses taught you—that the good things and the great things of this world cannot be made sure! How many of you have had rich inheritances left you by your fathers, besides the great portions that you have had with your wives, and the vast estates that you have gained by trading; but what is become of all? Is not all buried in the deep, or in the grave of oblivion? Oh the fickleness and the grand imposture of this world! Oh the flux and reflux of riches, greatness, honors, and preferments! How many men have we seen shining in their worldly pomp and glory like stars in the skies—who are now vanished into smoke or comets! How has the moon of many great men's riches and honors been eclipsed at the full, and the sun of their pomp gone down at noon!

"It was," says the historian Justinian, "a wonderful precedent of vanity, and variety of human condition to see mighty Xerxes to flee away in a small vessel, who but a little before needed sea-room for his navy." The Dutch, to express the world's vanity and uncertainty, have very wittily pictured a man with a full blown balloon on his shoulders, and another standing by pricking the balloon with a pin, with this motto—How soon is all blown away! I am not willing to make the porch too wide, else I might have given you famous instances of the vanity and uncertainty of all worldly wealth, pomp, and glory, from the Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms, whose glory now lies all in the dust. By all this, it is most evident that earthly portions cannot be made sure, they "make themselves wings, and they fly away," Pro 23:5.

Oh! but God is a portion that may be made sure. In the time of the Marian persecution, there was a woman, who, being convened before bloody Bonner, then bishop of London, upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her—says she, 'Christ is my husband!' I will take away your child; 'Christ,' says she, 'is better to me than ten sons!' I will strip you, says he, of all your outward comforts; 'but Christ is mine,' says she, 'and you cannot strip me of him.' A Christian may be stripped of anything but his God; he may be stripped of his estate, his friends, his relations, his liberty, his life—but he can never be stripped of his God. As God is a portion that none can give to a Christian but God himself; so God is a portion that none can take from a Christian but God himself; and, therefore, as ever you would have a sure portion, an abiding portion, a lasting portion, yes, an everlasting portion, make sure of God for your portion.

O Sirs! that you would judge that only worth much now, which will be found of much worth at last—when you shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment-seat. Oh that men would prize and value all earthly portions now, as they will value them when they come to die, and when

their souls shall sit upon their trembling lips, and when there shall be but a short step between them and eternity. Oh, at what a poor rate, at what a low rate do men then value their earthly portions! Certainly, it will be their very great wisdom to value their earthly portions now—as they would value them then. And oh that men would value this glorious, this matchless portion that is held forth in this treatise now, as they will value it and prize it when they come to die, and when they come to launch out into the ocean of eternity!

I have read of a stationer, who, being at a fair, hung out several pictures of famous men, among which he had also the picture of Christ. Upon which divers men bought according to their several likings—the soldier buys his Caesar, the lawyer his Justinian, the physician his Galen, the philosopher his Aristotle, the poet his Virgil, the orator his Cicero, and the divine his Augustine. But all this while the picture of Christ hung by as a thing of no value, until a poor man, who had no more money than would purchase that, bought it, saying, Now every man has taken away his God, let me have mine too! O Sirs! it would make any gracious, any serious, any ingenious, any conscientious heart to bleed, to see at what a high rate all sorts and ranks of men do value earthly portions, which at best are but counterfeit pictures, when this glorious portion which is here treated of, hangs by as a thing of no value, of no price!

Most men are mad upon the world, and so they may have much of that for their portion, they care not whether ever they have God for their portion or not. Give them but a palace in Paris, and then with that French duke, they care not for a place in paradise; give them but a mess of pottage, and let who will take the birthright; give them but manna in a wilderness, and let who will take the land of Canaan; give them but ground which is pleasant and rich, and then with the Reubenites they will gladly take up their rest on this side the Holy Land; give them but their bags full, and their barns full, and then with the rich fool in the Gospel, they can think of nothing but of taking their ease, and of eating and drinking, and making merry, Luk 12:16-22. So brutish and foolish are they in their understandings, as if their precious and immortal souls were good for nothing but as salt to keep their bodies from rotting and stinking.

Oh that these men would seriously consider, that as a cup of pleasant wine, offered to a condemned man in the way to his execution, and as the feast of him who sat under a naked sword, hanging perpendicularly over his head by a slender thread, and as Adam's forbidden fruit, seconded by a flaming sword, and as Belshazzar's dainties, overlooked by an handwriting against the wall; such and only such are all earthly portions to those who have not God for their portion.

Well, gentlemen, remember this, there is no true happiness to be found in any earthly portions. Solomon, having made a critical inquiry after the excellency of all creature comforts, gives this in as the ultimate extraction from them all, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." if you should go to all the creatures round, they will tell you that happiness is not in them. If you should go to the earth, the earth will tell you that happiness grows not in the furrows of the field. If you go to the sea, the sea will tell you that happiness is not in the treasures of the deep. If you go to the beasts of the field, or to the birds of the air, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found on them. If you go to your bags, or heaps of gold and silver, they will tell you that happiness is not to be found in them. If you go to crowns and scepters, they will tell you that happiness is too precious and too glorious a gem to be found in them. As it is not the great cage which makes the bird sing, so it is not the great estate which makes the happy life, nor the great earthly portion which makes the happy soul.

There is no true comfort nor no true happiness to be drawn out of the standing pools of outward sufficiencies. All true comfort and happiness is only to be found in having of an all-sufficient God for your portion. Psa 144:15, "Happy is that people that is in such a case, yes, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." And therefore, as ever you would be happy in both worlds, it very highly concerns you to get a saving interest in God, and to be restless in your own souls until you come to enjoy God for your portion. A man who has God for his portion is a paragon; he is the rarest and the happiest man in the world; he is like the morning star in the midst of the clouds; he is like the moon when it is full; he is like the flower of the roses in the spring of the year; he is like the lilies by the springs of waters; he is like the branches of frankincense in the time of summer; he is like a vessel of gold that is set about with all manner of precious stones.

Nothing can make that man miserable, who has God for his portion; nor nothing can make that man happy, who lacks God for his portion. The more rich—the more wretched; the more great—the more graceless; the more honorable—the more miserable that man will be, who has not God for his portion. The Sodomites were very wealthy, and who more vile and wicked than they? The Egyptians and Babylonians were very rich, great, and potent in the world, and what greater oppressors and persecutors of the people of God than these? Oh the slavery, the captivity, and the woeful misery of the people of God, under those cruel tyrants! Have not the Nimrods, the Nebuchadnezzars, the Belshazzars, the Alexanders, and the Caesars, etc., been commonly the lords of the world; and who so abominably wicked as these? No men for wickedness have been able to match them or come near them.

It has been long since observed, that Daniel sets forth the several monarchies of the world by sundry sorts of cruel beasts, to show that as they were gotten by beastly cruelty, so they were supported and maintained by brutish sensuality, craft, and tyranny.

Well, Sirs! you may be the lords of this world, and yet you will certainly be miserable in another world, except you get God for your portion. The top of man's happiness in this world lies in his having of God for his portion. He who has God for his portion enjoys all; and he who lacks a saving interest and propriety in God enjoys nothing at all.

Gentlemen, I have read of an heathen who, seeing a sudden shipwreck of all his wealth, said, Well, fortune, I see now that you would have me to be a philosopher. Oh that you would say under all your heavy losses and crosses, Well! we now see that God would have us "lay up treasure in heaven," Mat 6:19-20; we now see that God would have us look after a better portion than any this world affords; we now see that it highly concerns us to secure our interest and property in God; we now see that to enjoy God for our portion is the one thing necessary. Have not many of you said, nay sworn, that if you might but see and enjoy the delight of your eyes—that then you would have a sweeping trade, and abound in all plenty and prosperity, and grow rich and great and glorious in the world, and be eased of everything that did but look like a burden, etc. If it be indeed thus with you, why do you so complain, murmur, and repine? and why do many of you walk up and down the Exchange and streets with tears in your eyes, and with heaviness in your hearts, and with cracked credits, and threadbare coats, and empty purses? and why are so many of you broke, and so many prisoners, and so many hide, and so many fled? But if it be otherwise, and that you are sensible that you have put a cheat upon yourselves, I say not upon others, and that as you have been self-flatterers, so you have been self-deceivers, the more highly it concerns you to do

yourselves, your souls that right, as to make sure of God for your portion. For what else can make up those woeful disappointments under which you are fallen?

It is a sad sight to see all the arrows that men shoot to fall upon their own heads; or to see them twist a rope to hang themselves; or to see men dig a pit for others and to fall into it themselves. And it is but justice that men should bake as they brew, and that those who brew mischief should have the first and largest draught of it themselves. Now the best way to prevent so sad a sight and so great a mischief, is to get God for your portion—for when once God comes to be a man's portion, then "all things shall work together for his good," Rom 8:28; and then God will preserve him from such hurtful and mischievous actings. The whole world is a great bedlam, and multitudes there are that think madly, and that design madly, and that talk madly, and that act madly, and that walk madly. Now as you would not be found in the number of those bedlams, it highly concerns you to get God for your portion, so that you may be filled with that wisdom that may preserve you from the folly and madness of this mad world.

Gentlemen, the following sermons I preached in 1660, and God blessed them then to those Christians that attended on my ministry, and I hope he will bless them also to the internal and eternal welfare of your souls, to whom they are now dedicated. They are much enlarged; the profit will be yours, the labor has been mine. I judge them very seasonable and suitable to present dispensations, else they had not seen the light at this time. Curiosity is the spiritual adultery of the soul; curiosity is that green-sickness of the soul, whereby it longs for novelties, and loathes sound and wholesome truths; it is the epidemic distemper of this age and hour. And therefore, if any of you are troubled with this itch of curiosity, and love to be wise above what is written, and delight to scan the choice mysteries of religion by carnal reason, and affect elegant expressions and seraphic notions, and the flowers of rhetoric, more than sound and wholesome truths, then you may ease yourselves, if you please, of the trouble of reading this following treatise. Only remember this, that the prudent farmer looks more and delights more in the ripeness and soundness and goodness of the corn that is in his field, than he does at the beauty of the cockle; and remember, that no man can live more miserably than he who lives altogether upon sweets; and he who looks more at the handsomeness than he does at the wholesomeness of the dishes of food which are set before him, may well pass for a fool.

Well, gentlemen, for a close, remember this, that as Noah was drunk with his own wine, and as Goliath was beheaded by his own sword, and as the rose is destroyed by the canker that it breeds in itself, and as Agrippina was killed by Nero, to whom she gave breath; so if ever you are eternally destroyed, you will be destroyed by yourselves; if ever you are undone, you will be undone by yourselves; if ever you are scourged to death, it will be by rods of your own making; and if ever the bitter cup of damnation be put into your hands, it will be found to be of your own preparing, mingling, and embittering.

Behold, I have set life and death, heaven and hell, glory and misery, before you in this treatise; and therefore, if you will needs choose death rather than life, hell rather than heaven, misery rather than glory, what can be more just—than that you should perish to all eternity? If you will not have God for your portion, you shall be sure to have His wrath for your portion, and hell for your portion!

Well, sirs! remember this at last—Every man shall only thank his own folly for his own bane, his own sin for his own everlasting shame, his own iniquity for his own endless misery!

I have now no more to do but to improve all the interest that I have in heaven, that this treatise may be blessed to all your souls, and that you all experience what it is to have God for your portion; for that will be my joy as well as yours, and my crown as well as yours, and my glorying as well as yours, in the great day of our Lord Jesus; and so "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified," Acts 20:32; and rest, gentlemen, your souls' servant,

Thomas Brooks. A MATCHLESS PORTION "The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

Certainly if Ennius could pick out gold out of a dunghill, I may, by divine assistance, much better pick out golden matter out of such a golden mine as my text is—to enrich the souls of men. The best of painters Apelles, to draw an exquisite Venus, had set before him an hundred choice and selected beauties, to take from one an eye, another a lip, a third a smile, a fourth an hand, and from each of them that special lineament in which the most excelled; but I have no need of any other scripture to be set before me to draw forth the excellency of the saints' portion, than that which I have now pitched upon; for the beauty, excellency, and glory of a hundred choice scriptures are epitomized in this one! The Jewish doctors and other writers differ about the time of Jeremiah's penning this book of the Lamentations; but to be ignorant of the circumstance of time when this book was made, is such a crime as I suppose will not be charged upon any man's account in the great day of our Lord Jesus.

Doubtless this book of the Lamentations was composed by Jeremiah in the time of the Babylonian captivity. In this book the prophet sadly laments and bewails the grievous calamities and miseries that had befallen the Jews, namely—the ruin of their state, the devastation of their land, the destruction of their glorious city and temple, which was the great wonder of the world, the profanation of all his holy things, the contemptible and deplorable condition of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men. And then he complains of their sins as the procuring causes of all those calamities that God in his righteousness had inflicted upon them. He exhorts them also to patience under the mighty hand of God, and stirs them up to repent and reform, as they would have their sins pardoned, judgments removed, divine wrath pacified, their insulting enemies suppressed, and former acts and grants of favor and grace restored to them. But to come to the words of my text, "The LORD is my portion, says my soul; therefore I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24. The LORD Jehovah, from havah, he was. This name Jehovah is the most proper name of God, and it is never attributed to any but to God.

1. First, Jehovah sets out God's eternity, in that it contains all times, future, present, and past.
2. Secondly, It sets out also God's self-existence, coming from havah, to be.
3. Thirdly, When either some special mercy is promised, or some extraordinary judgment is threatened, then the name of Jehovah is commonly annexed; to show that that God whose being is from himself, and who gives a being to all his creatures both on heaven and on earth—will certainly give a being to his promises and threatenings, and not fail to accomplish the words that

are gone out of his mouth.

4. Fourthly, This name Jehovah consists only of quiescent letters, that is letters of rest, as the Hebrews call them, to show that there is no rest until we come to Jehovah, and that in him we may safely and securely rest, as the dove did in Noah's ark.

"Is my portion." the Hebrew word signifies to divide. He alludes, as I take it, to the dividing of the land of Canaan among the Israelites by lot. "The Lord," says he, "is my portion," my part, my lot; and with this portion I rest fully satisfied, as the Israelites were to do with their parts and portions in that pleasant land. It is true, says Jeremiah, in the name of the church, I am thus and thus afflicted, and sorely distressed on all hands; but yet "the Lord is my portion," and that supports and bears up my spirits from fainting and sinking in this evil day.

"Says my soul." The Hebrew word has nine various senses or significations in the Scripture. But let this suffice, that by soul here in the text we are to understand the heart, the mind, the spirit, and the understanding of a man. Well, says the prophet, though I am in a sea of sorrow, and in a gulf of misery, yet my heart tells me that "the Lord is my portion;" my mind tells me that "the Lord is my portion;" my spirit tells me that "the Lord is my portion;" and my understanding tells me that "the Lord is my portion;" and therefore I will bear up bravely in the face of all calamities and miseries.

"Therefore will I hope in him." The Hebrew word that is here rendered hope, signifies both hoping, expecting, and trusting; also it signifies a patient waiting upon the Lord. [Gen 8:10; Isa 42:4; Psa 31:24] The prophet Jeremiah had not only a witness above him—but also a witness within him, that the Lord was his portion; and therefore he resolves firmly to hope in the Lord, and sweetly to trust on the Lord, and quietly and patiently to wait upon the Lord, until God should turn his storm into a calm, and his sad winter into a blessed summer. In my text there are three things observable:

First, An assertion or proposition in those words, "The Lord is my portion."

Secondly, A proof of it in those words, "says my soul."

Thirdly, The use or inference from the premises in those words, "Therefore will I hope in him." The words being thus opened, the proposition that I intend to insist upon is this, namely:

Doctrine. That the Lord is the saints' portion.

I shall call in a few scriptures to witness to the truth of this proposition, and then I shall further open it to you. Psa 16:5, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup—you maintain my lot." Psa 73:26, "My flesh and my heart may fail—but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." Psa 119:57, "You are my portion, O Lord—I have said that I would keep your words." Jer 10:16, "He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the tribe of his inheritance—the Lord Almighty is his name."

Now for the further opening and clearing up of this great and glorious, this sweet and blessed truth, I shall endeavor to show you, First, What a portion the Lord is to his saints, to his gracious ones.

Secondly, The reasons or grounds whereupon the saints have laid claim to God as their portion.

03.01. Chapter 1

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

WHAT A PORTION GOD IS

Now the excellency of this portion I shall show you by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) God is a PRESENT portion. He is a portion in hand, he is a portion in possession. All the scriptures that are cited to prove the doctrine, evidence this to be a truth, Psa 48:14; Isa 25:9. And so does that Psa 46:1, "God is a very present help in trouble." The Hebrew word is in the plural number troubles, that is, God is a present help in many troubles, in great troubles, and in continued troubles. It signifies the extremity of affliction and trouble. When the people of God are in their greatest extremity, then God will be a present help, a present portion to them. "But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says—Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Isa 43:1-3.

God will be a present help, a present relief, a present support, a present comfort, a present portion to his people—in all those great and various trials that they may be exercised under. Psa 142:5, "I cried unto you, O Lord—I said, You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living." God is a portion in present possession, and not a portion only in reversion. The psalmist does not say, You may be my portion in another world—but "You are my portion in the land of the living;" nor he does not say, You will be my portion in another world—but "You are my portion in the land of the living." Look, as Elkanah gave Hannah a worthy portion in hand 1Sa 1:5; so God gives himself to his saints as a worthy portion in hand. Many men wait, and wait long, for their earthly portions before they enjoy them; yes, their patience is oftentimes wore so threadbare in waiting, that they wish their parents in Abraham's bosom; yes, and sometimes in a worse place, that so they may inherit their honors, lordships, lands, treasures, etc. Look, as a bird in the hand is worth two, yes, ten, in the bush—so a portion in possession is worth two, yes, ten, in reversion. Now, God is a portion in present possession, and that speaks out the excellency of the saints' portion. As he in Plutarch said of the Scythians, that although they had no music nor vines among them, yet, as a better thing, they had gods; so I may say, though the saints have not this, nor that, nor the other earthly portion among them, yet, as a better thing—they have God for their present portion; and what can they desire more? But,

(2.) As God is a present portion, so God is an IMMENSE portion, he is a vast large portion, he is the greatest portion of all portions. 1Ti 6:15, "The blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." These words are a stately and lofty description of the greatness of God. The apostle heaps up many words together, to show that in greatness God excels all. Isa 40:15-17, "Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing." Not only one nation—but many nations; yes, not only many nations—but all nations, in comparison of God, are but as the drop of a bucket; and what is lesser than a drop? and as the small dust of a balance; and what is of lighter weight and lesser worth than the small dust or powder of the balance that hangs on the scale, and yet never alters the weight? yes, they are nothing, they are less than nothing. And though Lebanon was a very great spacious forest, and had abundance of animals in it, yet God was a God of that infinite greatness, that though all the animals harboring in that stately forest should be slain, and all the wood growing on it cut down to burn them with it—all would not make up a sacrifice any ways answerable or proportionable to his greatness with whom they had to do. And so in that Psa 147:5, "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite," or as the Hebrew has it, "of his understanding there is no number." Such is his greatness, that he knows not only all kinds and sorts of things—but even all particulars, though they exceed all number. Psa 145:3, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable," or as the Hebrew has it, "of his greatness there is no search." God is infinitely above all names, all notions, all conceptions, all expressions, and all parallels! Psa 150:2, "Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness," or greatness of greatness, or abundance of greatness, or according to the multitude of his greatness, as the Hebrew and Greek carries it; and so in that Deu 10:17, "For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and awesome, who regards not people, nor takes reward." God is the original cause of all greatness. All that greatness that is in any created beings, whether they are angels or men, is from God; all their greatness is but a beam of his sun, a drop out of his sea, a mite out of his treasury. God is a God of that infinite greatness, that he fills heaven and earth with his presence; he is everywhere, and yet circumscribed to no place; he is in all things, and outside all things, and above all things, and this speaks out his immensity, Psa 139:1-24.

Job had a very large portion, before God made a breach upon him—"He had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred donkeys, and a very great household," Job 1:3; but at last God gives him twice as much as he had at first, "for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand donkeys," Job 42:12. Cattle are only instanced, because the wealth of that country consisted especially in cattle; but yet, doubtless, Job had a great many other good things, as goods, lands, possessions, and stately habitations; but what is all this to a saint's portion? Certainly, had not Job had God for his portion, he had been but a rich fool, a golden beast, notwithstanding all the great things that God had heaped upon him. And so Ahasuerus had a very large portion, "he reigned from India unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces," Est 1:1-2; but what were all his provinces but as so many handfuls of dust, in comparison of the saints' portion? The whole Turkish empire, says Luther, is but a crust that God throws to a dog. Had a man all the world for his portion, it would be but a poor pittance.

Nebuchadnezzar had a very great portion. Dan 5:18-19, "O king, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. Because of the high position he gave him, all the peoples and nations and men of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. " And so in that Jer 27:5-8, "With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him." The portion that here God gives to Nebuchadnezzar is an amazingly large portion; and yet all these nations that God gave to him were but as so many molehills, or as so many birds' nests, compared with a saint's portion!

All nations are but as a drop of a bucket, that may in a moment be wiped off with a finger, in comparison of God, nay, they are all nothing; but that word is too high, for they are less than nothing. Had a man as many worlds at his command as there be men on earth, or angels in heaven, yet they would be but as so many drops, or as so many atoms—compared to a saint's portion! When Alcibiades was proudly boasting of his spacious lands, Socrates wittily rebukes his pride by bringing him a map of the world, and wishing him to show him where his lands did lie; his lands would hardly amount to more than the prick of a pin. England, Scotland, and Ireland are but three little spots compared to the vast continents which are in other parts of the world; and what then is your palace, your lordships, your manors, your farm, your house, your cottage—but a little speck—but a prick of a pin—compared to God, who is so great, so vast a portion!

Oh, sirs! had you the understanding of all the angels in heaven, and the tongues of all the men on earth, yet you would not be able to conceive, express, or set forth the greatness and largeness of a saint's portion. Can you count the stars of heaven, or number the sands of the sea, or stop the sun in his course, or raise the dead, or make a new world? Then, and not until then, will you be able to declare what a great, what an immense portion God is. If "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the great things that God has laid up in the gospel" (for so that 1Co 2:9 is to be understood), oh how much less, then, are they able to declare the great things that God has laid up for his people in another world! But,

(3.) Thirdly, As God is an immense portion, a large portion, so God is an ALL-SUFFICIENT portion. Gen 17:1, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God—walk before me, and be perfect. I am God Almighty," or as some carry the words, "I am God all-sufficient, or self-sufficient." God has self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency in himself. Some derive the word Shaddai, that is here rendered almighty or all-sufficient, because God feeds his children with sufficiency of all good things, as the tender mother does the sucking child.

Gen 15:1, "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram—I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward;" I will be your shield to defend you from all kind of mischief and miseries, and I will be your exceeding great reward to supply you with all necessary and desirable mercies; and what can a saint desire more?

Psa 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory—and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." The sun, which among all inanimate creatures is the most excellent, notes all manner of excellency, provision, and prosperity; and the shield, which among all artificial creatures is the chief, notes all manner of protection whatever. Under the name of grace, all spiritual good is wrapped up; and under the name of glory, all eternal good is wrapped up; and under the last clause, "no good thing will he withhold," is wrapped up all temporal good—all put together speaks out God to be an all-sufficient portion.

Before the world was made, before angels or men had a being, God was as blessed and as glorious in himself as now he is. God is such an all-sufficient and such an excellent being, that nothing can be added to him to make him more excellent. Man in his best estate is so great a piece of vanity, Psa 39:5; that he stands in need of a thousand thousand things; he needs the air to breathe in, the earth to bear him, and fire to warm him, and clothes to cover him, and a house to shelter him, and food to nourish him, and a bed to ease him, and friends to comfort him, etc. But this is the excellency of God, that he has all excellencies in himself, and stands in need of nothing. Were there as many worlds as there are men in the world, and were all those worlds full of blessed saints, yes, were there as many heavens as there are stars in heaven, and were all those heavens full of glorious angels, yet all these saints and angels together could not add the least to God; for what can drops taken out of the sea add unto the sea? what can finite creatures add to an infinite being?

Though all the men in the world should praise the sun, and say, The sun is a glorious creature, yet all this would add nothing to the light and glory of the sun; so, though all the saints and angels shall be blessing, and praising, and admiring, and worshiping of God to all eternity, yet they shall never be able to add anything to God, who is blessed forever.

O Christians! God is an all-sufficient portion—his power is all-sufficient to protect you; his wisdom is all-sufficient to direct you; his mercy is all-sufficient to pardon you; his goodness is all-sufficient to provide for you; his word is all-sufficient to support you and strengthen you; and his grace is all-sufficient to adorn you and enrich you; and his Spirit is all-sufficient to lead you and comfort you! What can you desire more? O sirs! God has within himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he has all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all delights, all comforts, all contentments, all joys, all beatitudes in himself. All the scattered excellencies and perfections that are in the creatures—are eminently, transcendently, and perfectly in him.

Look, as the worth and value of many pieces of silver are contracted in one piece of gold, so all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth are epitomized in God, according to that old saying, all good is in the chief good. God is one infinite perfection in himself—which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures. All the good, the excellency, the beauty and glory, that is in all created beings, are but parts of that whole that is in God; and all the good that is in them is borrowed and derived from God, who is the first cause, and the universal cause, of all that good that is in angels or men. God is a sufficient portion to secure your souls, and to supply all your wants, and to satisfy all your desires, and to answer all your expectations, and to suppress all your enemies, and, after all, to bring you to glory! What can you desire more? But now all earthly portions are insufficient portions; they can neither prevent afflictions, nor support the soul under afflictions, nor mitigate afflictions, nor yet deliver a man from

afflictions; they can neither arm the soul against temptations, nor comfort the soul under temptations, nor lead the soul out of temptations. All the creatures in the world are but as so many ciphers without God; when God frowns, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to cheer the soul; when God withdraws, all the creatures in the world are not sufficient to sustain the soul; when God clouds his face, all the creature in the world are not sufficient to make it sunshine with the soul, etc. There is not enough in the whole creation to content, quiet, or satisfy one immortal soul. He who has most of the world would have more, and he who has least of the world has enough, if his soul can but groundedly say—"The Lord is my portion." But,

(4.) Fourthly, As the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, so the Lord is a most ABSOLUTE, NEEDFUL, and NECESSARY portion. The lack of an earthly portion may trouble me—but the lack of God for my portion will damn me. It is not absolutely necessary that I should have a portion in gold, or silver, or jewels, or goods, or lands; but it is absolutely necessary that I should have God for my portion, I may have union and communion with God, though, with the apostles, I have neither gold nor silver in my purse, Acts 3:6; I may be holy and happy, though, with Lazarus, Luk 16:20-21; I have never a rag to hang on my back, nor never a dry crust to put into my belly; I may go to heaven at last, and I may be glorious in another world, though, with Job, I should be stripped of all my worldly glory, and set upon a ash-heap in this world, Job 1:1-22, etc. But I can never be happy here, nor blessed hereafter, except God is my portion. Though I could truly say that all the world were mine, yet if I could not truly say that the Lord is my portion, I should be but miserable under all my worldly enjoyments. To have God for my portion is absolutely necessary, for without it I am forever and ever undone.

"At that time you were without Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world." Eph 2:12. In this verse you have several withouts, and it is very observable that they that were without God in the world, they were without Christ, without the church, without the covenant, without the promise, and without hope in the world; and therefore, such people must needs be in a most sad and deplorable condition!

[1.] First, In relation to the soul, and in relation to salvation, God is the most absolute necessary portion. If God is not my portion, my soul can never enjoy communion with him in this world; if God is not my portion, my soul can never be saved by him in the other world. But,

[2.] Secondly, When sinners are under terrors and horrors of conscience, when their consciences are awakened and convinced of the vileness of their natures, of the unspeakable evil that is in sin, yes, in the least sin, and of their lost, undone, and miserable estate out of Christ, Oh then! what would they not give to have God for their portion? Oh, then they would give all the gold and silver they have in the world to have God for their portion; oh, then they would give, Mic 6:6-7, "thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil; yes, they would give their firstborn, they would give the very fruit of their bodies," that they might have God to be the portion of their souls! Oh, then they would say, as Mephibosheth said unto the king, "Let Ziba take all, forasmuch as my Lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." 2Sa 19:29-30. Under distress of conscience, poor sinners will cry out, Oh! let who will—take all our honors, and all our manors, and all our treasures, and all our stores, and all our lands, and all our lordships, and all our bags—so we may have God for our portion. Oh! let us but have God for our portion, and we care not a straw

who takes all. Now, what does this speak out—but that, of all portions, God is the most absolute necessary portion? But,

[3.] Thirdly, Upon a dying bed, an awakened sinner sets the highest price, value, and esteem upon such as have God for their portion. Now he esteems a saint in rags, who has God for his portion, above a wicked emperor in his royal robes, who has only the world for his portion. What though wicked men, when they are in the height of their worldly prosperity, felicity, and glory, do slight the saints, and revile and scorn the saints, and despise and undervalue the saints, Lam 2:14-15; Zep 2:8-10, etc.; yet, when death knocks at their doors, and when their consciences are startled, and when hell fire flashes in their faces, and when the worm within begins to gnaw, oh now, if all the world were a lump of gold, and in their hands to dispose of, they would give it all, so they might have that honor and happiness to change conditions with those who have God for their portion! Num 23:10, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Though men who have their portion in this life do not love to live the life of the righteous, yet, when they come to die, they are often desirous that they might die the death of the righteous. And this many hundred ministers and Christians can witness from their own experience. Lazarus having God for his portion, when he died he went to heaven without a rag on his back, or a penny in his purse; whereas Dives, who did not have God for his portion when he died, went tumbling down to hell in all his riches, bravery, and glory. Oh! it is infinitely better to go to heaven a beggar, than to go to hell an emperor! This the sinner understands when his conscience comes to be enlightened upon a dying bed, and therefore he cries out, Oh send for such a minister, and send for such and such a Christian, and let them pray with me, and counsel me, and, if it be possible, give out some drops of comfort to me. Oh that I had never derided nor reviled them! Oh that I had never opposed and persecuted them! Oh that I had lived at such a rate of holiness and exactness as they have done! Oh that I had walked with God as they have walked! Oh that I had laid out my time, my strength, my treasure, my parts, my all for God, as they have done! Oh that my estate was as good, as safe, and as happy as theirs is! Oh that I could as truly say that the Lord is my portion, as they can say that the Lord is their portion! And what does all this speak out—but that high esteem and value that they set upon those who have God for their portion? So that upon this threefold account, we may safely conclude that God is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion. But,

(5.) Fifthly, As the Lord is a most absolute, needful, and necessary portion, so the Lord is a PURE and UNMIXED portion. God is an unmixed good, he has nothing in him but goodness; he is an ocean of sweetness, without one drop of bitterness; he is a perfect beauty, without the least spot or shadow of deformity, Deu 32:4; Hab 1:13. All other portions are a bitter-sweet; but God is a rose without prickles. He is a good, in which there is not the least evil. 1Jn 1:5, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright, shining light, yes, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is all light and all love, all sweetness and all goodness, all kindness and all graciousness, and there is no impurity, no unloveliness, no bitterness, nor any darkness at all in God. The moon when it shines brightest has her dark spots and specks; but God is a light that shines most gloriously without the least spot or speck; God is a most pure, clear, splendid light.

It is very observable, that the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, "in him is no darkness at all;" that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck of vanity or folly, can cleave to him. God is a pure, a most pure being, without the least potentiality, defectibility, or mutability; and therefore in the highest sense he "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." By this metaphorical description of God the apostle would not have us think that the nature of God is changed into the nature of light; but by this similitude the apostle merely represents something of the purity and excellency of God to us. The sun is light, the moon is light, and the stars are light; but it would be blasphemy for us to imagine that the essence of God is the same with this of the creatures; but this, sirs! you must remember, that there are many excellent properties of LIGHT, for which God is often in the Scripture resembled to light. As

[1.] First, Light is PURE, and so is God. Hab 1:13, "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." There are four things which God cannot do:

(1.) He cannot lie.

(2.) He cannot die.

(3.) He cannot deny himself,

(4.) He cannot look with a favorable eye upon iniquity. He is a God of such infinite purity, that he cannot look upon iniquity but with an hateful eye, an angry eye, a revengeful eye, and with a vindictive eye.

[2.] Secondly, All things are CONSPICUOUS to the light, and so they are to God. [Psa 41:12; 1Sa 2:1, 1Sa 2:3; Psa 16:8; Psa 119:168] Heb 4:13, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." The Greek word is a metaphor, say some, that is taken from the priests under the law, who when they killed the beasts for sacrifice, all things that were within the beasts were laid naked and bare before the priest, that so he might see what was sound and what was corrupted. Others say, the apostle alludes to the anatomizing of such creatures, wherein men are very cautious and curious to search out every little vein or muscle, though they lie never so close. All agree in this, that all men's insides and outsides are anatomized, dissected, quartered, and laid naked to the eye of God! Job 34:21-22, "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he sees all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide yourself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!" says Ambrose. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Without light nothing can be SEEN; so without the beams of heavenly light no heavenly things can be seen. A man cannot see God—but in that light which comes down from above; a man cannot see Christ without first being enlightened by Christ; a man cannot see heaven—but in that light which comes from heaven, Jas 1:17; 1Co 2:10, 1Co 2:12; 1Co 2:14-16. Were it not for the sun, it would be perpetual night in the world, notwithstanding all the torches that could be lighted, yes, notwithstanding all the light of the moon and stars. So it would be perpetual night with poor souls, notwithstanding all the torchlight of natural parts, and creature comforts, and notwithstanding all the starlight of civil honesty and common gifts, and notwithstanding all the moonlight of temporary faith and formal profession, did not the Sun of righteousness arise and shine upon them! But,

[4.] Fourthly, There is nothing more PLEASANT than the light. Ecc 11:7, "Truly the light is sweet, and it is a very pleasant thing to behold the sun." A philosopher being asked whether it were not a pleasant thing to behold the sun? answered, that that was a blind man's question, because life without light is but a lifeless life. Now, as there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the eye than light, so there is nothing more pleasant and delightful to the soul than God. The poor northern nations, in Strabo, that lack the light of the sun for some months together, when the term of his return approaches, they climb up into the highest mountains to spy it; and he who spies it first was accounted the best and most beloved of God, and they chose him king. Now the return of the sun is not more pleasant and delightful to those poor northern nations, than God is pleasant and delightful to all gracious souls. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The light shines and scatters its rays over all the world, over east, west, north, and south, and so does the presence and goodness of God, Psa 139:1-24. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The light is a creature of a most resplendent BEAUTY, LUSTER, AND GLORY. It dazzles the eyes of the beholders; and so God is a God of that transcendent beauty, majesty, and glory, that the very eyes of the angels are dazzled, as not being able to behold the brightness of his glory. Isa 6:2, "God dwells in that light which no man can approach unto." But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, Light is the most UNMIXED substance; it will never mix with darkness; no more will God. 2Co 6:14, "What communion has light with darkness?" The nature of God is void of all composition. Light expels darkness, it never mixes nor mingles with it. By what has been said, you see that God is a pure and an unmixed light, and that in him there is no darkness at all. But now all worldly portions are mixed with many troubles, sorrows, cares, fears, hazards, dangers, vexations, oppositions, crosses, losses, and oftentimes with many gripes of conscience too. All earthly portions are mixed portions; the goodness of all creatures is a mixed goodness; our wine is mixed with water, our silver with tin, our gold with dross, our wheat with chaff, and our honey with gall, etc. Every bee has his sting, and every rose has his prickles. And this mixture speaks out all earthly portions to be "vanity and vexation of spirit," Ecc 1:13. That great king Xerxes was accustomed to say—You look upon my crown and my purple robes—but did you know how they were lined with thorns, you would not stoop to pick them up! And who is there in this our English Israel that cannot with both hands subscribe to this? The emblem of King Henry the Seventh, in all his buildings, in the windows, was still a crown in a bush of thorns; why, or with what historical allusion he did so, is uncertain; but surely it was to imply thus much—that great places are not free from great cares, that no man knows the weight of a scepter but he who sways it. This made Saul to hide himself among the stuff, when he should have been made king. Many a sleepless night, many a restless day, many a sad temptation, and many a busy shift, will their ambition cost them—who aspire to such places of eminency. Besides, high places are commonly very slippery; he who stands in them may suddenly fall, and wound his conscience, or easily fall and break his neck. But,

(6.) Sixthly, As God is a pure and unmixed portion, so he is a GLORIOUS, a HAPPY, and a BLESSED portion. Psa 16:5-6. He is so in himself, and he makes them so also—who enjoy him for their portion. Psa 33:12, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance." All the happiness and blessedness of the people of God consists in this—that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they are his

inheritance! The Hebrew word which is here rendered blessed, is, 'Oh the blessedness!' or 'Oh the heaped up happiness of those whose God is the Lord!' The happiness of such is so great and so glorious, as cannot be conceived, as cannot be uttered! The words are a joyful acclamation for their felicity—who have God for their portion.

Psa 144:15, "Happy is that people that is in such a case; yes, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." David having prayed for many temporal blessings in the behalf of the people, Psa 144:12-15, at last concludes, "Blessed are the people that are in such a case;" but presently he checks and corrects himself, and eats, as it were, his own words—but rather, "happy is that people whose God is the Lord." The Syriac renders it question-wise, "Are not the people happy, who are in such a case?" The answer is, "No," except they have God to boot, Psa 146:5. Nothing can make that man truly miserable, who has God for his portion; nor can anything make that man truly happy, who lacks God for his portion. God is the author of all true happiness; he is the donor of all true happiness; he is the maintainer of all true happiness, and he is the center of all true happiness and blessedness; and, therefore, he who has him for his God, for his portion, is the only happy man in the world! But now all earthly portions cannot make a man truly happy and blessed. A crown, a kingdom cannot; for Saul and other princes have found it so. Honors cannot; for Haman and others have found it so. A high and noble birth cannot; for Absalom, Amnon, and others have found it so. Riches cannot; for the rich fool in the Gospel, and many thousand others, have found it so. Large dominions and great commands cannot; for Ahasuerus, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and others, have found it so. Human wisdom cannot; for Ahithophel and other great counselors have found it so. Splendid apparel and delectable food cannot; for Dives and others have found it so. Applause and credit among the people cannot; for Herod and others have found it so. Learning and great gifts cannot; for the scribes and pharisees, and many others, have found it so. No earthly thing, nor earthly creature, can give happiness or blessedness to man. Nothing can give what it has not. If the conduit has no water, it can give no water; if the sun has no light, it can give no light; if the physician has no remedy, he can give no remedy, etc. But now it is a very true observation, though it be a very sad observation, namely, That every wicked man's portion is cursed unto him. Do but compare these scriptures together, [Deu 28:17-20; Job 20:22-29; Job 24:18; Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2; etc.] and then let conscience judge. All a wicked man's relations are cursed to him, and all a wicked man's contentments and enjoyments are cursed to him, and all his mercies within doors are cursed to him, etc. What though a man should have as many as a thousand bags of gold for his portion, yet if the plague would be in every bag, would you count him happy? Surely not! Verily this is the case of every man who has not God for his portion. But

(7.) Seventhly, As God is a glorious portion, so he is a SPECIAL portion, he is a portion particular to his people, Psa 142:5-6; Jer 10:16. This is evident in the text, and in all the scriptures cited to prove the point, Psa 16:5; and so in that Psa 67:6, "Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us." And so Psa 68:20, "He who is our God is the God of salvation," or "God of salvations," as it is in the Hebrew. God is a God of all manner of salvations; he has all sorts and ways of salvations; he is not only powerful—but also skillful, to save his people from ten thousand deaths and dangers.

Faith is an appropriating grace, it is much in appropriating of God to itself—"My Lord and my God," and my Redeemer and my Savior and my portion; [John 20:28; Job 19:25; Luk 1:47] Psa 73:26, "My flesh and my heart fails—but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." In

Gideon's camp every soldier had his own pitcher, Jdg 7:16; among Solomon's men of valor, every man wore his own sword 1Ch 26:30; and the five wise virgins each had oil in her own lamp, Mat 25:4. Luther was accustomed to say, that there lay a great deal of divinity couched up in the personal pronouns, as in mine, yours, his—and so faith's appropriating of God to the soul, as its own portion, is all in all.

God is a portion particular to the saints; he is the hidden manna, the new name, the white stone, the bread to eat, which others know not of. There is never a hardened Pharaoh in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a murdering Saul in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a painted bloody Jezebel in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a cunning Ahithophel in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a proud Haman in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a tyrannical Nebuchadnezzar in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a crafty Herod in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a rich Dives in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a treacherous Judas in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a hypocritical Simon Magus in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever an apostatizing Demas in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion;" nor is there ever a persecuting scribe or pharisee in the world who can truly say, "The Lord is my portion." It is only the saint that can truly say, "The Lord is his portion," for God is particularly and specially his—he is only his. But now all earthly portions are common portions; they are all common to good and bad, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the clean and to the unclean, to him that sacrifices and to him that sacrifices not; to him that swears and to him that fears an oath, Ecc 9:1-3. Was Abraham rich? so was Dives too; was David a king? so was Saul too; was Daniel a great favorite at court? so was Haman too, etc. And indeed usually the basest and the worst of men have the largest share in earthly portions; which made Luther say, that the whole Turkish empire was but a crust that God cast to a dog. Abraham gave unto his sons of the concubines gifts, and sent them away—but unto Isaac he gave all that he had, Gen 25:5-6. So all earthly portions, which are giftless gifts—God gives them to the worst and vilest of men; Dan 4:17, "This word is by decree of the observers; the matter is a command from the holy ones. This is so the living will know that the Most High is ruler over the kingdom of men. He gives it to anyone He wants and sets over it the lowliest of men." And so in that Dan 11:31, "The next to come to power will be a despicable man who is not directly in line for royal succession. But he will slip in when least expected and take over the kingdom by flattery and intrigue." Interpreters do generally agree, that by this vile person in the text is meant Antiochus Epiphanes, who was so great and mighty a prince, that when the Samaritans did write to him, they wrote—'to Antiochus the great God.' And indeed his very name speaks him out to be some great and glorious person, for Antiochus Epiphanes is Antiochus the illustrious, the famous; and yet you see that the Holy Spirit, speaking of him, calls him a despicable man.

Ah! how vile in the eyes of God are the greatest men in the world who have not God for their portion! Augustus in his solemn feasts gave trifles to some—but gold to others. God gives the trifling portions of this world to the vilest and worst of men—but his gold, his Christ, himself—he gives only to his saints. Gal 2:20, "And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Though many have counterfeit jewels, yet

there are but a few who have the true diamond; though many have their earthly portions, yet there are but a few who have God for their portion. But,

(8.) Eighthly, As God is a particular and special portion, so he is a UNIVERSAL portion. God is a portion that includes all other portions. God has himself the good, the sweet, the profit, the pleasure, the delight, the comfort, etc.—of all portions. There is no good in wife, child, father, friend, husband, health, wealth, wit, wisdom, learning, honor, etc.—but is all found in God. Rev 21:7, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son;" or as the Greek has it—he who is overcoming, though he has not yet overcome, yet if he be striving for the conquest, and will rather die than he will give up the battle—"he shall inherit all things;" that is, he shall inherit God in all and all in God.

Gen 33:9, "And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep what you have unto yourself;" as the Hebrew has it—"I have much, my brother." And indeed it was very much that an Esau should say he had much; it is more than many of the Esaus of these times will say. But Jacob speaks at a far higher rate in Gen 33:11—"Please take my gifts, for God has been very generous to me. I have more than enough." or rather, as the Hebrew has it—"I have all." Esau had much—but Jacob had all, because he had all in God, and God in all. He has all—who has the possessor of all. 2Co 6:10, "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

There is in God an immense fullness, an ocean of goodness, and an overplus of all that graciousness, sweetness, and kindness that is to be found in all other things or creatures. As Noah had a copy of every kind of creature in that famous library of the ark, out of which all were reprinted to the world; so he who has God for his portion, has the original copy of all blessings, out of which all may easily be renewed. All the goodlinesses and all the glories of all the creatures are eminently and perfectly to be enjoyed in God.

God is a universal excellency. All the particular excellencies that are scattered up and down among angels, men, and all other creatures, are virtually and transcendentally in him; he has them all in his own being, Eph 1:3. All creatures in heaven and earth have but their particular excellencies; but God has in himself the very quintessence of all excellencies. The creatures have but drops of that sea, that ocean, that is in God. They have but their parts of that power, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, loveliness, desirableness, sweetness, graciousness, beauty, and glory—which is in God. One has this part, and another has that; one has this particular excellency, and another has that; but the whole of all these parts and excellencies are to be found in God alone. There is none but that God, who is the universal good, who can truly say, "All power, all wisdom, all strength, all knowledge, all goodness, all sweetness, all beauty, all glory, all excellency, etc., dwells in me!" He who can truly say this, is a God; and he who cannot, is no God.

There is no angel in heaven, nor saint on earth, that has the whole of any one of those excellencies that are in God. Nay, all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, have not among them the whole of any one of those glorious excellencies and perfections that are in God. All the excellencies that are scattered up and down in the creatures, are united into one excellency in God; but there is not one excellency in God that is fully scattered up and down among all the creatures. There is a glorious union of all excellencies in God, and only in God.

Now this God, who is such a universal good, and who has all excellencies dwelling in himself; he says to the believer, as the king of Israel said to the king of Assyria, "I am yours, and all that I have is yours!" 1Ki 20:4. Our property reaches to all that God is, and to all that God has, Jer 32:38, Jer 32:42. God is not parted, nor divided, nor distributed among his people, as earthly portions are divided among children in the family; so that one believer has one part of God, and another believer has another part of God, and a third another part of God; oh no! Every believer has the whole God wholly, he has all of God for his portion. God is not a believer's portion in a limited sense, nor in a comparative sense—but in an absolute sense. God himself is theirs, he is wholly theirs, he is only theirs, he is always theirs. As Christ looks upon the Father, and says, "All that is yours is mine; and all that is mine is yours," John 17:10; that may a saint say, looking upon God as his portion. He may truly say, 'O Lord, you are mine, and all that you have! And I am yours, and all that I have.' A saint may look upon God and say, 'O Lord, not only your gifts but your graces are mine, to adorn me and enrich me; and not only your mercies and your good things are mine to comfort me, and encourage me—but also you yourself are mine! And this is my joy and crown of rejoicing.' To be able to say, 'God is mine!' is more than if I were able to say that ten thousand worlds, yes, and as many heavens, are mine! For it is God alone, who is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory!

Heaven would be but a low thing without God, says Augustine; and Bernard had rather enjoy Christ in a chimney-corner, than to be in heaven without him; and Luther had rather be in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. It is God alone that makes heaven to be heaven.

Now God is so every particular believer's portion, as that he is every believer's portion. 1Co 1:1-2 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours." As the sun is every man's sun to see by, to walk by, to work by; and as the sea is every man's sea to trade by, etc.; so God is every believer's portion. He is a poor saint's portion as well as a rich saint's portion; he is the despised believer's portion, as well as the exalted believer's portion; he is the weak believer's portion, as well as the strong believer's portion; he was as much his portion who mis-called his faith, and who in the behalf of his son cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief," Mark 11:24; as he was Abraham's portion, who, in the strength of his faith, offered up his only son, Gen 22:1-24. He was as much Job's portion sitting on a ash-heap, as he was David's portion sitting on a royal throne; he was as much Lazarus' portion, who never had a penny in his purse, as he was Solomon's portion, who made gold and silver as plenteous in Jerusalem as the stones of the streets 2Ch 1:15.

God is not my portion alone—but he is every saint's portion in heaven, and he is every saint's portion on earth. The father is every child's portion, and though they may wrangle and quarrel with one another, yet he is all their portions. And so it is here; and Oh what a spring of joy and comfort should this be to all the saints! Riches are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Advancement in the world is not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Liberty and freedom are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Honor and applause in the world is not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion. Prosperity and success are not every believer's portion—but God is every believer's portion, etc.

God is a universal portion, all things receive their being, essence, and existence from him, for the fullness of all things is in him, really and eminently. The heathen philosophers of old called God—'that which is all or everything.' God is the Lord of all, and contains all things in himself. Exo 33:19, "I will make all my goodness pass before you," that is, because in God are all good things, God is all things, God is everything. The cream, the good, the sweet, the beauty, and the glory of every creature, and of every thing, centers in God. But,

(9.) Ninthly, As God is a universal portion, so God is a SAFE portion, a SECURE portion. He is a portion that none can rob or wrong you of; he is a portion that none can touch or take from you—he is a portion that none can cheat or spoil you of. God is such a portion, that no friend, no foe, no man, no enemy, no devil—can ever rob a Christian of. O Christians, God is so yours in Christ, and so yours by covenant, and so yours by promise, and so yours by purchase, and so yours by conquest, and so yours by donation, and so yours by marriage union and communion, and so yours by the gift of the Spirit, and so yours by the feelings and witnessings of the Spirit—that no power or policy on earth can ever lay a finger on your portion; or cheat, or rob you of your portion.

Psa 48:14, "For this God is our God forever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death." He is not only our God for the present, nor he will be only our God for a short time. Oh no! He will be our God forever and ever! If God is once your portion, he will be forever your portion. It must be a power that must overmatch the power of God, and a strength that must be above the strength of God—which could rob or spoil a Christian of his portion; but who is there that is stronger than God? Is the clay stronger than the potter, or the stubble than the flame, or weakness than strength? Yes, is not the very weakness of God stronger than man? and who then shall ever be able to take away a Christian's portion from him? Rom 9:1-33; 1Co 1:25; and 1Co 10:22. But now a man may be easily deprived of his earthly portion. How many have been deprived of their earthly portions by storms at sea, and others by force and violence, and others by fraud and deceit, and others by hideous lying and hellish swearing? Many have lost their earthly portions by treachery, knavery, perjury, subtilty, robbery, etc. Some play away their earthly portions; and others with Esau fool away their earthly portions; and not a few, with the prodigal, sin away their earthly portions. Ahab's fingers itched to be a-fingering of Naboth's vineyard. 1Ki 21:1-5. A man can no sooner come to enjoy an earthly portion—but other men's fingers itch to be a-fingering of his portion—as daily experience does sufficiently evidence. But God is a portion that the fire cannot burn, nor the floods cannot drown, nor the thief cannot steal, nor the enemy cannot seize, nor the soldier cannot plunder a Christian of. A man may take away my gold from me—but he cannot take away my God from me! The Chaldeans and the Sabeans could take away Job's estate from him—but they could not take away Job's God from him, Job 1:1-22. And the Amalekites burnt Ziklag, and robbed David of his substance, and of his wives—but they could not rob him of his God 1Sa 30:1-31. And those persecutors in Heb 10:34; plundered the saints of their goods—but they could not plunder them of their God. Until weakness can make a breach upon strength, impotency upon omnipotency, the pitcher upon the potter, and the crawling worm upon the Lord Almighty—a saint's portion is safe and secure.

It is true, sickness and disease may take away my health and my strength from me, and death may take away my friends and my relations from me, and enemies may take away my estate, my liberty, my life from me; but none of all these can take away my God from me! I have read of the

men of Tyrus, how that they chained and nailed their god Apollo to a post, that so they might be sure of him, supposing that all their safety lay in the enjoyment of him. Certainly God is so chained, and so linked, and so nailed to his people by his everlasting love, and by his everlasting covenant, and by the blood of his Son, and by his oath, and by that law of relation that is between him and them—that no created power shall ever be able to deprive them of him. But,

(10.) Tenthly, As God is a safe portion, a secure portion, so he is a SUITABLE portion. "Many are asking, 'Who can show us any good?' Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psa 4:6-8. No object is so suitable and adequate to the heart, as he is. He is a portion that punctually, exactly, and directly suits the condition of the soul. He suits the desires of the soul, the necessities of the soul, the wants of the soul, the longings of the soul, and the prayers of the soul. The soul can crave nothing, nor wish for nothing—but what is to be found in this portion. Here is light to enlighten the soul, and wisdom to counsel the soul, and power to support the soul, and goodness to supply the soul, and mercy to pardon the soul, and beauty to delight the soul, and glory to ravish the soul, and fullness to fill the soul, etc. Health is not more suitable to the sick man, nor wealth to the poor man, nor bread to the hungry man, nor drink to the thirsty man, nor clothes to the naked man, nor balm to the wounded man, nor ease to the tormented man, nor health to the diseased man, nor a pardon to the condemned man, nor a guide to the blind man, etc. than this portion is suitable to all the necessities of man; and this speaks out the excellency of this portion above all other portions.

Now there is no earthly portion which can suit an immortal soul; he is a fool upon record who said, "Soul, you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry," Luk 12:18-20. If the man, says Ambrose upon the words, had the soul of a swine, what could he have said more? for those things were more suitable to swine than they were to an immortal soul.

Man's soul is a spiritual and immortal substance, it is capable of union and communion with God; it is capable of a choice enjoyment of God here, and of an eternal fruition of God hereafter. A great shoe will not fit a little foot, nor a great sail a little ship, nor a great ring a little finger; no more will any earthly portion suit an immortal soul. The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils. It is of an angelical nature; it is an heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. So that nothing can suit the soul below God, nor nothing can satisfy the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that all the riches of the east and west Indies, nor rocks of diamonds, nor mountains of gold, can fill it, or satisfy it, or suit it. When a man is in prison, and condemned to die, if one should come to him, and tell him, that there is such a friend or such a relation that has left him a very large estate, a noble seat, etc., yet all this would not please him, nor content him, because it does not suit his present condition; oh—but now let a man bring him his pardon, sealed under his prince's hand, oh how will this delight him and joy him! And so tell a man who is ready to starve, that such and such loves him, and that such and such intends well towards him, etc., yet all this does not content him, it does not satisfy him, and all because it does not suit him; oh but now do but bring him food to eat, and this will joy him and delight him, and all because it suits him. That is the highest good—which is the most suitable good to the soul, and such a good is God; that is the most excellent portion—which is the most suitable portion to the soul, and such a portion is God. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, As God is a suitable portion, so he is an INCOMPREHENSIBLE portion. No created mind can comprehend what a portion God is, Psa 147:5; Job 26:14. It is true, that God is not incomprehensible, in regard of his own understanding, for he perfectly understands himself, else he could not be God; but God is incomprehensible in regard of us, and the angels, who are no ways able to comprehend infiniteness. 1Ki 8:27, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!" God is an infinite being, and therefore he cannot be contained in any place, nor comprehended by any created being. Such multiplied phrases and Hebraisms as are here, as heaven, and the heaven of heavens, do very emphatically set out the immensity and incomprehensibleness of God.

Job 37:23, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." We are as well able to fit the sea in a sea-shell, as we are able to comprehend God. God is above all name, all notion, and all comprehension. God is so incomprehensible, that you shall as soon count the stars of heaven, and number the sand of the sea, and stop the sun in his course, and raise the dead, and make a world, as you shall be able to comprehend the infiniteness of God's essence. Psa 145:3, "His greatness is unsearchable." The most perfect knowledge that we can have of God is, that we cannot perfectly know him, because we do know him to be infinitely and incomprehensibly perfect. Rom 11:33, "Oh the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" When men and angels do search farthest into God's perfection, they do then most of all discover their own imperfection; for it is utterly impossible for angels or men, by their most accurate disquisition, to find out the Almighty to perfection 1Ti 6:16, "who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen." Here is a denial both of the fact and the possibility. Observe the diligence of Paul, he does not say a light incomprehensible—but a light inaccessible, which is much more; for that which, being sought and searched for, cannot be comprehended, we say is incomprehensible; but that which allows not by any means the labor of searching after, and which no one can come near, that is unapproachable.

There is infinitely more in God than the tongues of men or angels can express. There is much in God beyond the apprehension and comprehension of all created beings. The sum of all that philosophers and schoolmen have attained to concerning this great principle, amounts to no more than this, namely, that men and angels can never comprehend that perfection which dwells in God; for the perfection of God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. When one was asked what God was, he answered, that he must be God himself, before he could know God fully. When the tyrant Hiero asked the poet Simonides what God was, he asked for a day to study an answer; but the more he sought into the nature of God, the more difficult he found it to express; the next day, after being questioned, he asked two days, and the third time he asked for four, and so went on, doubling the number; and being asked why he did so, he answered, that the more he studied the nature of God, the less he was able to define what God was! He being so incomprehensible in his nature, the more this poor heathen inquired—the more he admired, and the less he understood.

It was a notable observation of Chrysostom, who being very busy and studious in searching into the nature of God, says, I am like a man digging in a deep spring; I stand here, and the water rises upon me; and I stand there, and still the water rises upon me. Indeed, this is a knowledge that

passes knowledge, Eph 3:19. The Turks build their mosques without any roof, because they hold as we do, that God is incomprehensible. God is a circle whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere—all which speaks out his infiniteness and incomprehensibleness. But now all earthly portions are easily apprehended and comprehended. A portion in money, or plate, or goods, or lands, or jewels—is easily counted up. There are few, except it be children or fools—but can readily give an account of all earthly portions. The child's portion, and the wife's portion, and the servant's portion, and the soldier's portion, and the poor man's portion, and the rich man's portion, are talked on all the city over, and all the town over, and all the country over; but God is such an incomprehensible portion, that there is not a man in town, city, or country—who is able to comprehend him, Pro 3:15. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, As God is an incomprehensible portion, so God is an INEXHAUSTIBLE portion; a portion which can never be spent, which can never be exhausted; a fountain which still overflows; a rich mine which has no bottom; a spring which can never be drawn dry—but continues always full, without augmentation or diminution. John 4:14, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." If grace in the soul be such a perpetual flowing fountain, that it shall never be exhausted until grace be swallowed up in glory—then certainly the God of grace is much more an inexhaustible fountain that can never be drawn dry. Angels, saints, and sinners have lived upon this portion almost this six thousand years, and it is not in the least diminished, Col 1:16-17.

God has his city-house, and his country-house, where millions have been kept at his table, and lived upon his purse, for days without number; and yet God is not one penny the poorer for all this. This portion is like the flour in the jar, and the oil in the jug—which never failed. 1Ki 17:14-16, "For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land.' She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah." God is such a portion as cannot be lessened nor diminished; he is such a portion as can never fail. Should all Christians now live to the age of the patriarchs, who lived many hundred years, and should they all live freely, and keep open house every day in the year, yet at the end, not a penny, no not a farthing of this portion will be expended or diminished.

Though men have ever so great a fortune, yet if they still spend upon it they will certainly consume it; oh—but God is such a fortune as can never be spent, as can never be consumed. If a sparrow should but fetch a drop of water out of the sea once a day, yes, once in a thousand years, yet in time it would be exhausted. Oh but God is such a sea, such an ocean, that if every angel in heaven, and every saint and sinner on earth, should drink whole rivers at a draught, yet not one drop could be diminished! If a child should take but a sea-shell of water out of the sea every day, the sea would be really the less, though not visibly the less, and in time it would be exhausted, and drawn dry. But let all created beings be every day a-drawing from God, yet they shall never lessen him, they shall never draw him dry. The mother's breasts are often drawn dry—but the more you draw at the breasts of God, the more milk of grace and comfort will flow in upon you. Isa 66:10-11, "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice greatly with her, all you who mourn over her. For you will nurse and be satisfied at her comforting breasts; you will drink deeply and delight in her overflowing abundance." God keeps open house for all comers and

goers, for all created creatures both in heaven and earth; and though they are perpetually sucking at his breasts, yet the more they draw, the more the heavenly milk of divine joy, contentment, and satisfaction flows in abundantly upon them, Psa 104:24.

All creatures, both high and low, rich and poor, honorable and base, noble and ignoble, bond and free, Jews and Gentiles—are all maintained upon God's own cost and charge; they are all fed at his table, and maintained by what comes out of his treasury, his purse; and yet God is not a pin the poorer for all this! It would break and beggar all the princes on earth, to keep but one day the least part of that innumerable company which God feeds, and clothes, and nourishes, and maintains every day upon the account of his own revenue, which is never the poorer for all the vast expenses that he is daily at. There is still in God a fullness of abundance, and a fullness of redundance, notwithstanding the vast sums that he has spent, and does daily expend. It were blasphemy to think that God should be a penny the poorer by all that he has laid out for the maintenance of those millions of angels and men, who have had their dependence upon him, from their first creation to this very day. Look—as the sun has never the less light for filling the skies with light; and as the fountain has never the less water for filling the lesser vessels with water that are about it; so though God fills all the vessels, both of grace and glory, with his own fullness, yet he is never the less full himself; there is still in God the fullness of a fountain. Look—as the overflowing fountain pours out water abundantly, and yet after all it remains full; so though the Lord be such an overflowing fountain as that he fills all, yet still he retains all fullness in himself.

I have read of a Spanish ambassador, who, coming to see the treasury of Saint Mark in Venice, that is so much cried up in the world, he fell a-groping at the bottom of the chests and trunks, to see whether they had any bottom; and being asked the reason why he did so, answered in this among other things—'My master's treasure differs from yours, and excels yours, in that his has no bottom as yours have'—alluding to the mines in Mexico, Peru, and other parts of the western India. All men's mints, bags, purses, and coffers may be quickly exhausted and drawn dry—but God is such an inexhaustible portion, that he can never be drawn dry; all God's treasures are bottomless, and all his mints are bottomless, and all his bags are bottomless. Millions of thousands in heaven and earth feed every day upon him—and yet he feels it not; he is still a-giving, and yet his purse is never empty! He is still a-filling all the court of heaven, and all the creatures on earth—and yet he is a fountain that still overflows. There be those who say, that it is most certainly true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the inauguration of their kings of France, yet it never diminishes. But whatever truth is in this story, of this I am most sure—that though all the creatures in all worlds live and spend continually on Christ's treasury, yet it never diminishes! But all earthly portions are frequently exhausted and drawn dry. The prodigal quickly spent his patrimony upon his harlots, Luk 15:1-32; and how many drunkards, and gluttons, and wantons, and gamesters, and lovers of pleasure—d But all earthly portions are frequently exhausted and drawn dry. The prodigal quickly spent his patrimony upon his harlots, Luk 15:1-32; and how many drunkards, and gluttons, and wantons, and gamesters, and lovers of pleasure—do continually waste their savings! Pro 23:20-21. "Have you entered into the treasures of the snow?" says God to Job, Job 38:22; etc. Now, says Gregory, the treasures of the snow are worldly riches, which men rake together, even as children do snow, which the next shower washes away, and leaves nothing in the place of it but dirt. And ah! how many merchants, and shopkeepers, and others in these breaking times, have found all their riches and earthly portions to melt away—like

snow before the sun! how many of late have been very rich one week, and stripped of all the next, and set with Job upon the ash-heap! All earthly portions are like water in a cistern, which may easily and quickly be drawn dry; but God is an inexhaustible portion, which can never be drawn dry; and this discovers the excellency of this portion above all other portions. But

(13.) Thirteenthly, As God is an inexhaustible portion, so God is a SOUL-SATISFYING portion, Psa 17:15. He is a portion that gives the soul full satisfaction and contentment. Psa 16:5-6, "Lord, You are my portion and my cup of blessing; You hold my future. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance." It was well with him as his heart could wish. And so in that Psa 73:25, "Whom have I in heaven but you? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides you;" or as some render it, "I wish I were in heaven with you;" or as others read the words, "I have sought none in heaven or earth besides you;" or as others, "I desire none in heaven or earth besides you," or "I want none in heaven, nor none on earth like you; I love none in heaven, nor none on earth, in comparison of you; I esteem you instead of all other treasure, and above all other treasures which are in heaven, or which are on earth." The holy prophet had spiritual and sweet communion with Christ to comfort and strengthen him; he had a guard of glorious angels to protect him and secure him, and he had assurance of heaven in his bosom to gladden and rejoice him; and yet it was none of these, nay, it was not all these together—which could satisfy him; it was only an infinite good, an infinite God—who could satisfy him. He very well knew that the substantials of all true happiness and blessedness lay in God, and his enjoyment of God. It was not his high dignities nor honors—which could satisfy him; it was not the strength, riches, security, prosperity, and outward glory of his kingdom—which could satisfy him; it was not his delightful music, nor his noble attendance, nor his well furnished tables, nor his great victories, nor his stately palaces, nor his pleasant gardens, nor his beautiful wife, nor his lovely children—which could satisfy him. All these without God could never satisfy him; but God without all these was enough to quiet him, and satisfy him.

John 14:8, "Philip said unto him—Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied." A sight of God will satisfy a gracious soul more than all worldly contentments and enjoyments! Yes, one sight of God will satisfy a saint more than all the glory of heaven will do. God is the glory of heaven. Heaven alone is not sufficient to content a gracious soul—but God alone is sufficient to content and satisfy a gracious soul. God only is that satisfying good, who is able to fill, quiet, content, and satisfy an immortal soul. Certainly, if there be enough in God to satisfy the spirits of just men made perfect, whose capacities are far greater than ours, Heb 12:23-25; and if there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, whose capacities are far above theirs; if there be enough in God to satisfy Jesus Christ, whose capacity is inconceivable and unexpressible; yes, if there be enough in God to satisfy himself—then certainly there must needs be in God enough to satisfy the souls of his people. If all fullness, and all goodness and infiniteness will satisfy the soul—then God will.

There is nothing beyond God imaginable, nor nothing beyond God desirable, nor nothing beyond God delectable; and therefore the soul who enjoys him, cannot but be satisfied with him. God is a portion beyond all imagination, all expectation, all apprehension, and all comparison; and therefore he who has him cannot but sit down and say—I have enough! Gen 33:11. Psa 63:5-6, "You satisfy me more than the richest of foods. I will praise you with songs of joy. I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night." The richest of foods cannot so satisfy the appetite—as God can satisfy a gracious soul! Yes, one smile from God, one glance of his countenance, one good

word from heaven, one report of love and grace—will infinitely more satisfy an immortal soul, than all the richest of foods, and all the dainties and delicacies of this world can satisfy the appetite of any mortal man! The Hebrew has it—my soul shall be topful of comfort, it shall be filled up to the brim with pleasure and delight, in the remembrance and enjoyment of God upon my bed, or upon my beds, in the plural, as the Hebrew has it. David had many a hard bed and many a hard lodging, while he was in his wilderness condition. It oftentimes so happened, that he had nothing but the bare ground for his bed, and the stones for his pillows, and the hedges for his curtains, and the heavens for his canopy; yet in this condition God was sweeter than the richest of foods to him. Though his bed was ever so hard, yet in God he had full satisfaction and contentment.

Jer 31:14, "I will satisfy my people with my bounty," says the Lord. "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus," Php 4:19; says Paul, that great apostle of the Gentiles. The Greek word signifies to fill up, even as he did the widow's vessels 2Ki 4:4; until they did overflow. God will fill up all, he will make up all, he will supply all the wants and necessities of his people. That water which can fill the sea, can much more fill a cup; and that sun which can fill the world with light, can much more fill my house with light. So that God who fills heaven and earth with his glory, can much more fill my soul with his glory! To show what a satisfying portion God is—he is set forth by all those things which may satisfy the heart of man, as by bread, water, wine, milk, honors, riches, clothing, houses, lands, friends, father, mother, sister, brother, health, wealth, light, life, etc. And if these things will not satisfy, what will? It is enough, says old Jacob, that Joseph is alive, Gen 45:28; so says a gracious soul—It is enough that God is my portion. A pardon cannot more satisfy a condemned man, nor bread a hungry man, nor drink a thirsty man, nor clothes a naked man, nor health a sick man, etc.—than God does satisfy a gracious man. But,

Worldly portions can never satisfy the souls of men, Ecc 5:10. "The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, and whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile." All the world cannot fill the soul; nor can all the creatures in the world fill up the soul with complete satisfaction. As nothing can be the perfection of the soul—but he who made it, so nothing can be the satisfaction of the soul—but he who made it. If a man is hungry, gold cannot feed him; if naked, it cannot clothe him; if cold, it cannot warm him; if sick, it cannot recover him; if wounded, it cannot heal him; if weak, it cannot strengthen him; if fallen, it cannot raise him; if wandering, it cannot guide him; oh how much less able is it then to satisfy him! He who, out of love to gold, seeks after gold, shall love still to seek it—but shall never be satisfied with it. A man shall as soon satisfy the grave, and satisfy hell, and satisfy the stomach with wind—as he shall be able to satisfy his soul with any earthly portion! All earthly portions are dissatisfying portions, they do but vex and fret, gall and grieve, tear and torment—the souls of men. The world is a circle, and the heart of man is a triangle—and no triangle can fill a circle. Some good or other will be always lacking to that man who has only outward good to live upon.

Absalom's beauty could not satisfy him; Haman's honor could not satisfy him; Ahab's kingdom could not satisfy him; Balaam's gold could not satisfy him; Ahithophel's wisdom could not satisfy him; the scribes' and pharisees' learning could not satisfy them; Dives's riches could not satisfy him. Alexander's conquests could not satisfy him; for when, as he thought, he had conquered one world, he sits down and wishes for another world to conquer; and Cyrus the Persian king was accustomed to say, did men but know the cares which he sustained under his imperial crown, he

thought no man would stoop to take it up. Gilimex, king of the Vandals, when he was led in triumph by Belisarius, cried out, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity!" Charles the fifth, emperor of Germany, whom of all men the world judged most happy, cried out with detestation at all his honors, riches, pleasures, trophies, 'get you hence, let me hear no more of you!' And it has been long since said of our King Henry the second, "He whom, alive, the world could scarce suffice, When dead, in eight-foot earth contented lies." By all these instances, it is most evident that no earthly portions can satisfy the souls of men. Can a man fill up his stomach with air? or can he fill up the huge ocean with a drop of water? or can a few drops of beer quench the thirst of a man in a burning fever? or can the smell of food, or dreaming of a banquet, satisfy a hungry stomach? No! no more can any earthly portions fill or satisfy the heart of man. If emptiness can fill the soul, if vanity can satisfy the soul, or if vexation can give contentment to the soul—then may earthly portions satisfy the soul—but not until then. When a man can gather grapes from thorns, and figs of thistles, and turn day into night, and winter into summer—then shall he find satisfaction in the creatures; but not before. All earthly portions are weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and they are found to be lighter than the dust of the balance; and this will rather inflame the thirst—than quench it. A man who has only the world for his portion, is like to Noah's dove out of the ark, which was in continual motion—but could find no resting place; but a man who has God for his portion is like the dove, returning and resting in the ark. The soul can never be at rest, until it comes to rest and center in God. God himself is the soul's only home. No good but the chief good, can suffice an immortal soul. Look, as God never rested until he had made man, so man can never rest until he comes to enjoy God; the soul of man is of a very vast capacity, and nothing can fill it to the brim but he who is fullness itself. It is the breast—and not the doll nor the rattle—which will satisfy the hungry babe. And it is God, and not this or that creature—who can satisfy the soul of man. But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, As God is a soul-satisfying portion, so God is a permanent portion, a sure portion, a never-failing portion, a lasting, yes, an everlasting portion. Psa 73:26, "My flesh and my heart fails—but God is the strength, (or the rock,) of my heart, and my portion forever." God is a fountain which the hottest summer cannot dry; he is a bottomless treasure which can never be expended. God ever was, and ever will be. He cannot borrow his being from anything—who gives being and sustenance to all things. "God is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, he is yesterday and today, and the same forever," Rev 1:8. God is the Almighty, who is, and who was, and who is to come.

Exo 3:14, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM." Some translate this text, according to the full scope of the tense among the Hebrews, "I am that I am, that I was, and that I will be;" for the tense among the Hebrews points at all differences of time, past, present, and to come; but others, observing the strict and proper signification of the future, translate it thus, "I will be that I will be." This name of God imports two of God's incommunicable attributes, First, His eternity, when he says, "I will be."

Secondly, His immutability, when he says, "That I will be." The Rabbies, upon this text, express themselves after this manner—"I that have been, and 1The same now, and 1The same for time to come," etc. But others, more agreeable to the Chaldee paraphrase, express themselves thus—"he who is, and was, and hereafter will be." But it is observable, that the angel unites all differences of time in that great and glorious acknowledgment, Rev 16:5, "You are righteous, O Lord, who is, and were, and shall be."

God is a God of that infinite excellency and glory—that it is utterly impossible for him to be better, or other than he is. If God should in the least be alterable or mutable, he would presently cease to be God. God is a God of that transcendent excellency, that there can be nothing added to him, nor nothing subtracted from him. If you add anything to him, you deny him to be God; and if you take anything from him, you destroy his being, Jas 1:17; Psa 90:2, "From everlasting to everlasting you are God." God is eternal—he is neither capable of a beginning nor ending; and therefore the Egyptians used to signify God by a circle, and the Persians thought that they honored God most, when, going up to the top of the highest tower, they called him the circle of heaven. Now you know a circle has no end. And it was a custom among the Turks to go up every morning to a high tower, and to cry out, God always was, and always will be.

Some things have a beginning—but no ending, as angels and the souls of men; and some things have no beginning, and yet have an end, as the decrees of God in their final accomplishment; and some things have both a beginning and an ending, as all sublunary things; but God has neither beginning nor ending! All creatures have a lasting, angels have an outlasting—but God has an everlasting being. 1Ti 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen." God is without beginning and end, first and last, past and to come.

Psa 102:25-27, "Long ago You established the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing. You will change them like a garment, and they will pass away. But You are the same, and Your years will never end." Were there no other scripture to prove the eternity and immutability of God, this were enough. Whatever changes may pass upon the heavens and the earth—yet God will always remain unchangeable and unalterable. By what has been said, it is most evident that God is an everlasting portion, that he is a never-failing portion. But all earthly portions are very uncertain; now they are, and shortly they are not. Pro 23:4-5, "Don't weary yourself trying to get rich. Why waste your time? For riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!" Though the foolish world calls riches substance, yet they have no solid subsistence. All earthly portions are as transitory as a shadow, a ship, a bubble, a bird, a dream, an arrow, a runner who passes swiftly away. Riches were never true to any that have trusted in them. In this text, riches are said not to be, because they do not continue to be; they will not abide by a man, they will not long continue with a man, and therefore they are as if they were not. All earthly things are vain and transitory, they are rather phantoms and shadows—than real things themselves. 1Co 7:31, "For the fashion of this world passes away." The Greek word signifies a mathematical figure, which is a mere notion, and nothing in substance. All the glory of this world is rather a matter of shadow, than of substance; it is a body without a soul; it is a golden shell without a kernel; it is a shadow without a substance. There is no firmness, there is no solidness, there is no consistency, there is no constancy in any of the creatures. All the pomp, and state, and glory of the world is but a mere painted pageantry, a mask, a comedy, a fantasy!

Acts 25:23, "So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp." The original words, signifies great fantasy, or vain show. The greatest glory and pomp of this world, in the eye of God, in the account of God—is but as a fantasy or a shadow. It was a custom in Rome, that when the emperor passed by upon some great day in all his imperial pomp, there was an officer appointed to burn flax before him, and to cry out, 'so the glory of this world passes away!'

And this was purposely done to put him in mind that all his honor, pomp, glory, and grandeur should soon pass and vanish away, as the flax did, which he saw burnt before his eyes. That great conqueror of the world, Alexander, caused a sword in a wheel to be painted upon a table, to show that what he had gotten by the sword was subject to be turned about by the wheel of fortune. Many great conquerors, besides him, have found it so, and many now alive have seen it so.

Look! As the rainbow shows itself in all its dainty colors, and then vanishes away—so does all worldly honors, riches, and preferments show themselves and then vanish away! And how many in our days have found it so! When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants; the other person said, 'I do not love that wealth which hangs upon ropes, for if they break, the ship and all her wealth miscarries.' Certainly within these few months the miscarrying of several ships has caused several merchants sadly to miscarry. A storm at sea, a spark of fire, an unfaithful employee, a false oath, or a treacherous friend, may quickly bring a man to sit with Job upon an ash-heap! Look, as the bird flies from tree to tree, and as the beggar goes from door to door, and as the pilgrim travels from place to place, and as the physician walks from patient to patient; so all the riches, honors, and glory of this world do either fly from man to man, or else walk from man to man. Who knows not, that many times one is made honorable by another's disgrace? another is made full by another man's emptiness? and a third is made rich by another's poverty? How soon is the courtier's glory eclipsed, if the prince does but frown upon him! and how soon does the prince become a peasant, if God does but frown upon him! Now one is exalted—and shortly he is debased; now one is full—and at another time he is hungry; now one is clothed splendidly—and before long he is clothed with rags; now one is at liberty—and in a moment he is under captivity; now a man has many friends—and shortly he has not a friend. There is nothing but vanity and uncertainty in all earthly portions! But,

Fifteenthy, and lastly, As God is a permanent and never failing portion, so God is an INCOMPARABLE portion; and this follows clearly and soundly upon what has been said; for, (1.) If God is a present portion, a portion in hand, a portion in possession; and, (2.) If God is an immense portion, if he be the vastest, the largest, and the greatest portion; and, (3.) If God is an all-sufficient portion; and, (4.) If God is the most absolute, needful, and necessary portion; and (5.) If God is a pure and unmixed portion; and, (6.) If God is a glorious, a happy, and a blessed portion; and, (7.) If God is a special and particular portion; and, (8.) If God is a universal portion; and, (9.) If God is a safe portion, a secure portion, a portion that none can rob or wrong us of; and, (10.) If God is a suitable portion; and, (11.) If God is an incomprehensible portion; and,

(12.) If God is an inexhaustible portion, a portion that can never be spent, that can never be exhausted or drawn dry; and, (13.) If God be a soul-satisfying portion; and, (14.) If God is a permanent and an everlasting portion—then it must very necessarily follow, that,

(15.) God is an INCOMPARABLE portion. But such a portion God is, as I have proved at large; and, therefore, beyond all dispute, God must needs be an incomparable portion. Pro 3:13-15, "Happy is the man who finds wisdom," (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ), "and the man who gets understanding—for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her." All the gold of Ophir, and all the silver of the Indies, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth, are nothing, yes, less than nothing, compared with God. God is a portion more precious than all those things which are

esteemed most precious. A man may desire just about anything. He may desire that all the mountains in the world may be turned into mountains of gold for his use; he may desire that all the rocks in the world may be turned into the richest pearls for his use; he may desire that all the treasure that is buried in the sea may be brought into his treasures; he may desire that all the crowns and scepters of all the princes and emperors of the world, may be piled up at his gate, as they were once said to be at Alexander's; yet all these things are not comparable to a saint's portion, yes, they are not to be named in that day, wherein the excellency of a saint's portion is set forth.

Horace writes of a precious stone that was more worth than twenty thousand shekels, and Pliny valued the two precious pearls of Cleopatra at twelve hundred thousand shekels. But what were these, and what were all other precious stones in the world—but dung and dross, in comparison of a saint's portion? Php 3:7; Php 3:9. Did any man enjoy all that he could desire—it would be but a very small portion compared with God. We may truly say of all the honors, riches, greatness, grandeur, and glory of this world, compared with God, as Gideon once said of the vintage of Abiezer, "The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer," Jdg 8:2. So the very gleanings, yes, the smallest gatherings of God, are far better, and more excellent and transcendent; and more satisfying, more delighting, more ravishing, more quieting, and more contenting—than all earthly portions are—or can be. What comparison is there between a drop of a bucket—and the vast ocean? Or what comparison is there between a speck of dust—and the whole earth? Why, you will say, there is no comparison between these things; and I will say, there is less comparison between all finite portions, and such an infinite portion as God is. For this is most certain, that there must needs be always an infinite distance between what is finite and what is infinite; and such a portion God is. By all that has been said, it is most evident that God is an incomparable portion. But now all earthly portions are comparable portions. You may easily and safely compare one earthly portion with another—one prince's revenues may be comparable to another's; and one great man's lordships may be comparable to another's; and one merchant's estate may be comparable to another's; and one gentleman's lands may be comparable to another's; and one wife's portion may be comparable to another's; and one child's portion may be comparable to another's, etc. But God is an incomparable portion! There is no comparison to be made between God and other portions. And thus I have in these fifteen particulars fully discovered the excellency of the saints' portion above all other portions.

And, therefore, I shall now come to the second thing, and that is, to show you, II. Upon what GROUNDS their title unto God as their portion is founded and bottomed; and they are these that follow:

03.02. Chapter 2

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

II. Upon what GROUNDS their title unto God as their portion is founded and bottomed; and they are these that follow:

(1.) First, The free favor and love of God, the good will and pleasure of God, is the true ground and bottom of God's bestowing of himself as a portion upon his people, Deu 7:6-9; Eze 16:1-15. There was no loveliness nor desirableness in them that should move him to bestow himself upon them. They had neither portion nor proportion, and therefore there was no cause in them why God should bestow himself as a portion upon them. God, for the glory of his own free grace and love, has bestowed himself as a portion upon those who have deserved to have their portion among devils and damned spirits, in those torments that are endless, ceaseless, and remediless. The heathens thought that their gods and goddesses loved some certain trees, for some lovely good that was in them; for Jupiter loved the oak for durance, and Neptune the cedar for stature, and Apollo the laurel for greenness, and Venus the poplar for whiteness, and Pallas the vine for fruitfulness. But what should move the God of gods to love us, who were so unworthy, so filthy, so empty, so beggarly, that were trees indeed—but such as Jude mentions, "corrupt, fruitless, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots"? Jude 1:12. The question may be resolved in these words--he loves us because he loves us. The root of all divine love to us lies only in the bosom of God. But,

(2.) Secondly, Their title to God as their portion is founded upon God's free and voluntary donation of himself to them in the covenant of grace, Eze 11:19; Heb 8:10-13. In the covenant of grace, God has freely bestowed himself upon his people. Jer 32:38, Jer 32:40, "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God—and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." The covenant of grace is the great charter, it is the Magna Charta of all a saint's spiritual privileges and immunities. Now in this great charter, the Lord has proclaimed himself to be his people's God. Jer 10:16, "The portion of Jacob is the former of all things; the Lord Almighty is his name." He who is the former of all things, even the Lord Almighty, is the portion of Jacob; and he is Jacob's portion, by virtue of that covenant of grace--which is a free, a full, a rich, and an everlasting covenant—a covenant that he will never break, nor alter, nor falsify; a covenant that he has sworn to make good, as you may see by comparing the scriptures in the margin together. [Psa 89:34-35; Isa 54:9-10; Psa 111:5; Psa 105:99; Mic 7:20; Heb 6:13-19; Luk 1:73] That covenant of grace, whereby God gives himself to be his people's God and portion, he is bound to make good by his oath; and, therefore, certainly God will never commit perjury. The Egyptians, though

heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear "By the life of the king," and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no gold was to redeem his life. To think that God will not make good that covenant that he has bound himself by oath to make good, is blasphemy, yes, it is to debase him below the very heathen. All laws, both divine and human, have left no such bond of assurance to tie and fasten one to another, as that of an oath or covenant; which, as they are to be taken in sincerity, so they are to be kept inviolably. Certainly, the covenant and oath of the great God, is not like a gypsy's knot, that is fast or loose at pleasure. He will be sure, faithfully and inviolably to keep his covenant and his oath with his people. But,

(3.) Thirdly, Their title to God as their God and portion, is founded and bottomed upon that marriage union that is between God and his people, Jer 3:13-14. Hos 2:19-20, Hos 2:23, "And I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord. I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.' I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'" This threefold repetition, "I will betroth you," "I will betroth you," "I will betroth you," notes three things, [1.] First, the certainty of their marriage union and communion with God.

[2.] Secondly, The excellency and dignity of their marriage union and communion with God. And,

[3.] Thirdly, The difficulty of believing their "marriage union and communion with God. There is nothing that Satan does so much envy and oppose, as he does the soul's marriage union and communion with God; and therefore God fetches it over again and again and again, "I will betroth you unto me," etc. And so in that Isa 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." And so, Isa 62:5, "As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so your God will rejoice over you."

I have read of five sisters, of the same birth, pedigree and race, whereof one was married to a knight, another to an earl, a third to a gentleman, a fourth to a mean man, and the fifth to a filthy beggar. Though they were all alike by birth and descent, yet their difference did lie in their marriage. We are all alike by creation, by the fall, by nature, and by the first birth; it is only our marriage union and communion with God that differences us from others, and that exalts and lifts us up above others. Look, as the husband is the wife's by marriage union and communion, so God is the believer's God and portion, lay virtue of that marriage union and communion that is between God and the believer. And let thus much suffice for the second thing.

III. I shall come now to the third thing, and that is, to make some PRACTICAL APPLICATION of this blessed and glorious truth to ourselves.

03.03. Chapter 3

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

I shall come now to the third thing, and that is, to make some PRACTICAL APPLICATION of this blessed and glorious truth to ourselves; and, therefore, Is it so, that God is the saint's portion, and that he is such an excellent, and such a transcendent portion above all other portions, as has been fully evidenced? Then,

[1.] First, Let not the saints who have God for their portion fret and vex themselves, because of those earthly portions which God commonly bestows upon the worst of men. There is a great aptness in the best of men to envy those earthly portions which God often bestows upon the worst of men. The lights of the sanctuary have burnt dim, stars of no small magnitude have twinkled, men of eminent parts, famous in their generations for religion and piety, have staggered in their judgments, to see the flourishing estate of the wicked. It made Job to complain, Job 21:7-16, and Job 24:12; and Jeremiah to expostulate with God, Jer 12:1-2; and David even to faint and sink, Psa 73:1-28. To see the prosperity of the ungodly; to see the wicked in wealth and the saints in want; the wicked in their robes and the saints in their rags; the wicked honored and the saints despised; the wicked exalted and the saints debased; the wicked upon thrones and saints upon dunghills—is a sight that has sadly put the best of men sometimes to fretting. But this is a temper of spirit that does in no way befit those who have God for their portion. Therefore the psalmist, in Psa 37:1-40, cautions the saints against it no less than three times, as you may see in Psa 37:1, Psa 37:7-8. There is nothing that does so ill become a saint who has God for his portion, as to be sick of the frets. And to prevent this mischief, this sickness, the precept is doubled, and redoubled, "fret not, fret not, fret not." Those who have God for their portion should never fret or fume, storm or rage, because some are greater than they, or richer than they, or higher than they, or more honorable than they—because all their prosperity is nothing but an unhappy happiness; it is nothing but a banquet, like Haman's, before execution; and what man is there, that is in his wits, who would envy a malefactor who meets with an amusement as he is going along to execution?

All a wicked man's delicate meats, his fine sweets, and his murdering morsels, are sauced; and all his pleasant and delightful drinks are spiced—with the wrath and displeasure of an angry God! Why then should you fret and vex at their prosperity? What madness and folly would it be in a man who is heir to many millions, to envy a stage player that is clothed like a king—but yet not heir to one foot of land, no, nor worth one penny in all the world, and who at night must put off his royal

apparel, and the next day put on his beggarly habit? Oh, sirs! it will be but a little, little while—before the great God will disrobe the wicked of all their prosperity, felicity, and worldly glory, and clothe them with the rags of shame, scorn, and contempt forever. Therefore, oh what folly and madness would it be for those who are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of all the glory of heaven, to envy the prosperity of the wicked, Rom 8:17. The prosperity of the wicked lays them open to the worst and greatest SINS.

[1.] First, It lays them open to all uncleanness and filthiness, Jer 5:7-8.

[2.] Secondly, It lays them open to pride and contempt of God, Psalms 73:3-13; Deuteronomy 32:15.

[3.] Thirdly, It lays them open to vex, oppress, tyrannize, persecute, insult, and triumph over the poor people of God, as you may see in Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Jezebel, Haman, and the scribes and pharisees.

[4.] Fourthly, It lays them open to a neglect and slighting of the ways of God, and of the ordinances of God, Job 21:5-16; Malachi 3:13-15; Jer 22:21. When the protestants in France were in their prosperity, they slighted powerful preachings, etc., and began to relish a vain frothy way of preaching and living, which ushered in the massacre upon them. Moulin hit it, when, speaking of the French protestants, he said, "when the papists hurt us and persecute us for reading the scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs."

[5.] Fifthly, It lays them open to a stupidity, unmindfulness, and forgetfulness of the afflictions of the people of God, Amos 6:1-8. Pharaoh's chief butler was no sooner set down in the seat of prosperity—but quite contrary to his promise, he easily forgets Joseph in misery.

[6.] Sixthly, It lays them open to dreadful apostasy from the ways and worship of God, Deuteronomy 32:15-18. No sooner was Israel possessed of the good land which flowed with milk and honey, etc.—but they forsook the true worship of God, and fell to the worshipping of idols, for which at last the good land spewed them out as a generation cursed and abhorred by God.

[7.] Seventhly, It lays them open to all carnal security, as you may see in the old world—their prosperity cast them into a bed of security, and their security ushered in a flood of sin, and that flood of sin ushered in a flood of wrath, Matthew 24:37-39.

[8.] Eighthly, It lays them open to idolatry, which is a God-provoking and a land-destroying sin, Hosea 2:6-8; and Hosea 4:6-7; etc. Ah, sirs! who can seriously consider of the dreadful sins that the prosperity of the wicked lays them open to, and yet fret and vex at their prosperity?

Again, as their prosperity lays them open to the greatest sins, so their prosperity lays them open to the greatest TEMPTATIONS. Witness their tempting of themselves, and their own lusts; and witness their temptings of others to the worst of wickedness and villainies; and witness their frequent tempting and provoking of the great God to his own face; and witness their daily, yes, their hourly tempting of Satan to tempt their own souls. O sirs! as there is no condition that lays people open to such great transgressions as prosperity does, so there is no condition that lays people open to such horrid temptations as prosperity does; and why then should God's holy ones envy wicked men's prosperity, and worldly glory, etc.

Again, Their prosperity, and worldly felicity and glory, is all the portion—and all the heaven and happiness that ever they are likely to have. Psa 17:14, "From men of the world, who have their portion in this life." Certainly, men whose hearts are worldly, whose minds are worldly, whose spirits are worldly, whose desires are worldly, whose hopes are worldly, and whose main ends are worldly—have only the world for their portion; and what a pitiful perishing portion is that! Men that choose the world as their portion, and that delight in the world as their portion, and that trust to the world as their portion, and that in straits run to the world as their portion, and that take content and satisfaction in the world as their portion; doubtless these have never known what it is to have God for their portion. That is a very heart-cutting and soul-killing word that you have in that Mat 6:2, "Verily I say unto you, that they have their reward." The scribes and pharisees desired the eyes of men, the praise of men, and the applause of men, for a reward of their alms, etc., and Christ tells them, that they have their reward; not God's reward—but theirs; that is, that reward that they had propounded to themselves, as the prime and ultimate end of their actions. And doubtless that word was a thunderbolt to Dives, "Remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony." Luk 16:25. Wicked men have their best here, their worst is to come. They have their comforts here, their torments are to come. They have their joys here, their sorrows are to come. They have their heaven here, their hell is to come.

Gregory being advanced to great preferment, professed that there was no scripture that struck so much terror and trembling into his heart, as that scripture did, "Here you have your reward." [Mat 6:2, Mat 6:5, Mat 6:16] Had wicked men but their eyes in their heads, and a little understanding in their hearts, and life in their consciences, they would quickly conclude that it is hell on this side hell, for a man to have all his portion in this world; and why then should you envy the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, All their prosperity is cursed unto them; as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [Deu 28:15-68; Lev 26:14-46; Pro 3:33; Mal 2:2] All their comforts are cursed. There are snares on all their tables, and poison in all their cups, and the plague in all their fine clothes, etc. Dionysius the tyrant, to show Damocles, one of his flatterers, the felicity, or rather the infelicity, of a king, attired him as a king, and set him at the table, served as a king; and while he was in his imperial robes, he caused a naked sword, with the point downward, to be hung just over his head by a horse hair, which made Damocles to tremble, and to refrain from both food and mirth. Though the feast was a royal feast, and the attendance royal attendance, and the music royal music—yet Damocles, for his life, could not taste of any of those rich varieties that were before him, nor take any comfort or contentment in any other part of his royal entertainment, because of the sword, the sword—which hung but by a single hair over his head. O sirs! a sword, a sharp sword, a two-edged sword, a sword of displeasure, a sword of wrath, a sword of vengeance—hangs over the head of every wicked person when he is in his most prosperous and flourishing condition! And had sinners but eyes to see this sword, it would be as the handwriting upon the wall; it would cause their thoughts to be troubled, and their countenances to be changed, and their joints to be loosed, and their knees to be dashed one against another! Why, then, should Christians fret and vex at the prosperity of the wicked?

Again, When wicked men are at the highest, then are they nearest their fall; as you may see in Psa 37:1-40, and Psa 73:1-28, and in those great instances of Pharaoh, Adonibezek, Benhadad, Ahab,

Sennacherib, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Herod, etc. [Exo 14:1-31; Jdg 1:6-7; 1Ki 20:1-43; 1Ki 22:1-53; 2Ki 19:1-37; Est 6:4; Dan 5:1-31] Look! as the ship is soonest cast away when she is full sail, so when wicked men are at the top—when they are at the height of all their pomp, bravery, and worldly glory—then God usually tumbles them down into the very gulf of misery! The great ones of the world have suddenly fallen from their highest honors and dignities, and have been sorely and sadly exercised with the greatest scorns and calamities. Let me give you this in a few remarkable instances.

Valerian, the Roman emperor, fell from being an emperor to be a footstool to Sapor, the king of Persia, as often as he took horse.

Valens the emperor, being wounded in a fight with the Goths, in his flight he betook himself to a poor cottage, wherein he was burnt by the Goths.

Aurelianus, the Roman emperor, brought king Tetricus, and the noble queen Zenobia of Palmyra, in triumph to Rome in golden chains.

Bajazet, a proud emperor of the Turks, being taken prisoner by Tamerlane, was bound in chains of gold, and used him for a footstool when he mounted his horse. And when he ate meals, he made him gather crumbs under his table and eat them for his food.

Caesar, having bathed his sword in the blood of the senate and his own countrymen, is, after a while, miserably murdered in the senate by his own friends, Cassius and Brutus, to show that they are but the scourges and rods of the Almighty, which he will cast into the fire as soon as he has done with them. The victorious emperor, Henry the Fourth, who in sixty-two battles was victorious, fell to that poverty and misery before he died, that he was forced to beg in his old age, whereupon he broke forth into that speech of Job, "Have pity upon me, O my friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me," Job 19:21. He died of grief and poverty.

King Guideric, who was once a potent king of the Vandals—was brought so low as to entreat his friend to send him a sponge, a loaf of bread, and a harp—a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace himself in his misery.

Dionysius, king of Sicily, was such a cruel tyrant that his people banished him. After his banishment he went to Corinth, where he lived a base and contemptible life. At last he became a schoolmaster, that so, when he could no longer tyrannize over men, he might over boys.

Great Pompey, who used to boast that he could raise all Italy in arms with a stamp of his foot, had not so much as room to be buried in.

William the Conqueror's corpse lay three days unburied, his interment being hindered by one that claimed the ground to be his.

Pythias pined to death for lack of bread, who once was able to entertain and maintain Xerxes's mighty army.

Philip de Comines reports of a Duke of Exeter, who though he had married Edward the Fourth's sister—yet he saw him in the low countries begging barefoot. And so Belisarius, a most famous general, and the only man living in his time for glorious victories, riches, and renown—yet in his old

age he had his eyes put out by the empress Theodora; and being led at last in a string, he was forced to cry out, 'Give a crust to old blind Belisarius!' By all these royal instances, you see the truth of that which once a royal slave hinted to Sesostris. The story runs thus: Sesostris having taken many of his neighbor kings prisoners, he made them to pull his chariot by turns. Now, it so happened that one of these royal slaves, as he was drawing in the chariot, had his eye almost continually fixed on the wheels, which Sesostris observing, asked him why he looked so seriously upon the wheels. He answered, that the moving of that spoke lowest which was even now highest, put him in mind of the instability of fortune. Sesostris, duly weighing the parable, would never after be drawn by his royal slaves any more. By what has been said, it is more evident that when wicked men are highest they are nearest their fall; and that none fall so certainly and so suddenly, and under such dreadful calamities and miseries, as those who have been the most highly advanced in all worldly dignities and glories. And why, then, should any fret or vex at their outward prosperity or worldly felicity?

Again, God will bring them to an account for all those talents of power, of honor, of riches, of trust, of time, of interest that God has given them in the world; and the more they have employed the liberality and bounty of God against God or his glory, or interest, or people—the shorter shall be their felicity, and the more endless shall be their misery, Mat 25:14-31. The greatest account and the greatest damnation commonly attends the great ones of the world. I have read of Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professing that he would rather lose all his kingdoms than offend God willingly; yet being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of that account he was to give to God, fear struck him, and these words broke from him, "Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh that those years I have spent in my kingdom, I had lived a private life in the wilderness! Oh that I had lived a solitary life with God, how much more confidently would I have gone to the throne of God! What does all my glory profit me now—but that I have so much the more torment in my death, and the greater account to give up to God!"

I have read of a soldier, who, about to die for taking a bunch of grapes contrary to his general's command, as he was going along to execution, he went eating of his grapes, whereupon one of his fellow-soldiers rebuked him, saying, What! are you eating your grapes now you are going to execution? The poor fellow replied, 'O, friend, do not envy me my grapes; for I shall pay a dear price for them, I shall lose my life for them;' and so accordingly he did. So I say, Oh you who have God for your portion, do not envy, do not fret and vex, at the prosperity of the wicked; for what though they have more than their heart can wish, what though they live in pleasure and wallow in all carnal and sensual delights, etc.—yet they have a sad account to give up to God, and they shall pay dear at last for all their worldly enjoyments. For without sound repentance on their part, and pardoning grace on God's part, they shall not only lose their lives—but they shall also forever lose their immortal souls. Therefore never fret at their prosperity!

O sirs, remember that Lazarus did not fret nor fume because Dives had robes for his rags; and delicacies for his scraps. Lazarus very well knew that though he was without any earthly good—yet he was not without God. He had a guard of glorious angels to transport his holy, precious, heaven-born soul into Abraham's bosom. He knew that it was better to beg on earth, than to beg in hell. O sirs, what is darkness compared to light, earth compared to heaven, chaff compared to wheat, tin compared to silver, dross compared to gold, or pebbles compared to

pearls? No more are all earthly portions compared to that God, who is the saints' portion; and, therefore, let not the saints, who have such a matchless portion, envy the prosperity and felicity of wicked men.

It is the justice of envy to torment the envious; and, therefore, shun it as you would poison in your food, or a serpent in the way. A man were better have a serpent tumbling up and down in his bowels, than to have envy a-gnawing in his soul. Envy is as pernicious a wickedness, as it is a foolish and a groundless wickedness. Envy is a scourge to scourge the soul; it is a serpent to sting the soul; it is a poison to swell the soul; it is a saw to saw the soul; it is a moth that corrupts the soul, and it is a canker that eats up the soul. Therefore fly from it, as you would fly from the most cruel and destroying adversary!

O sirs, to be angry, because God is bountiful to others! To frown, because God smiles upon others; to be bitter, because God is sweet in his dealings with others; and to sigh, because God multiplies favors and blessings upon others; what is this but to turn others' good into our own hurt, others' glory and mercy into our own punishment and torment? And if this be not to create a hell in our own hearts, I am much mistaken.

I shall conclude this first inference with the counsel of the prophet in that Psa 49:16-17, "Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases; for he will take nothing with him when he dies, his splendor will not descend with him." When the bodies of the wicked are rotting in their graves, and their souls are roaring in hell, none of their worldly greatness, pomp, state, glory, gallantry, riches, houses, or revenues, shall descend after them to administer one drop of comfort to them. Therefore never envy their outward prosperity or worldly glory. "This is what the wicked are like—always carefree, they increase in wealth. When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me—until I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!" Psa 73:1-28.

(2) Secondly, If the saints have such an excellent, such a transcendent, and such a matchless portion, oh then, let them be content with their present condition, let them sit down satisfied and contented, though they have but a handful of meal in their barrel, and a little oil in a cruse 1Ki 17:12. O sirs, in having of God you have much, in having of God you have enough, in having of God you have all! Why then should you not sit down quiet with your present concition? Certainly, if much will not satisfy you, if enough will not satisfy you, if all will not satisfy you—then nothing will satisfy you.

Heb 13:5, "Let your lives be without covetousness (or love of silver, as the Greek word signifies); and be content with such things as you have (or as the Greek has it, be content with present things)—for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." There are five negatives in the Greek, "I will not, not, not, not, not leave you nor forsake you;" fully to assure and fully to satisfy the people of God that he will never forsake them, and that he will everlastingly stick close to them. What does this unparalleled repetition—"I will never, never, never, never, never," import but this, "I will ever, ever, ever, yes and forever and ever take care of you, and look after you, and be mindful of you." Though they had changed their glory for contempt, Heb 11:36-38, their fine raiment for sheepskins and goatskins, their silver for brass, their plenty for scarcity, their fullness for emptiness, their stately houses for holes and caves, and dens of the earth—yet they are to be

contented and satisfied with present things, upon this very ground—that God will always cleave to them, and that he will never turn his back upon them. The Hebrew Christians had been stripped and plundered of all their goods that were good for anything, and yet they must be contented, they must sit down satisfied, with their hands upon their mouths, though all were gone, Heb 10:34. Though men cannot bring their means to their minds—yet they must bring their minds to their means, and then they will sit down in silence, though they have but a rag on their backs, a penny in their purse, and a crust in their cupboards, etc.

O Christians! a little will satisfy nature; less will satisfy grace; though nothing will satisfy men's lusts; and why then should not Christians be contented with a little? O friends! you have but a short journey to go, you have but a little way home, and a little will serve to bear you UP, until you come to heaven. Therefore be contented with a little. To have more than will serve to bring a man to his journey's end is but a burden. One staff is helpful to a man in his journey—but a bundle is hurtful; and this, doubtless, Jacob well understood when he made that proposal in Gen 28:20-21, "If God will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God." Jacob does not say, If God will give me delicacies and sweets to eat—he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me but bread to eat, though it be ever so coarse, and ever so black, and ever so dry—he shall be my God. He does not say, If God will give me so many hundreds, or so many thousands a year—he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat—he shall be my God. Nor he does not say, If God will give me so many thousands in my purse, a comfortable home, and a thriving trade—he shall be my God! Oh no! But if he will give me bread to eat—he shall be my God. Nor he does not say, If God will give me costly apparel, or rich and royal raiment to put on—he shall be my God! Oh no! But if God will give me raiment to put on, though it be ever so mean and poor—he shall be my God. If Jacob may but have a little bread to feed him, and a few clothes to cover him—it is as much as he looks for.

Look! as a wicked man in the fullness of his sufficiency is in straits, as Job speaks, Job 20:22; so a holy man, in the fullness of his straits, enjoys an all-sufficiency in God, as you may see in Jacob. O Christians! though you have but little—yet you have the highest and the noblest title that can be to that little that you do enjoy; for you have all in God, as the apostle shows in that large charter of a Christian 1Co 3:21-23, which the wicked do not. Now, a hundred a year upon a good title is a better estate than a thousand a year upon a cracked, flawed title. Saints have the best title under heaven for all they enjoy, be it little or be it much. But all the titles that sinners have to their earthly enjoyments are but defective titles, yes, in comparison of the saints' titles, they are no titles.

Again, That little that a saint has, he has it from the special love and favor of God; he has it from a reconciled God, Pro 15:17. Now, a little from special love is better than a great deal from a general providence. A penny from a reconciled God—is better than a pound from a bountiful God; a shilling from God as a father—is a better estate than a hundred from God as a creator. The kiss that a king gave to one in the story, was a greater gift than the golden cup that he gave to another; a little, with the kisses of God's mouth, is better than all the gold of Ophir, Song of Solomon 1:2. A drop of mercy from God's special love is better than a sea of mercy from God's common bounty. Look! as one draught of clear, sweet spring water is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to the palate—than a sea of brackish salt water; so one draught out of the fountain of special grace is more pleasing, satisfying, and delightful to a gracious soul—than a whole sea of mercy from a spring of common grace! Therefore do not wonder when you see a Christian sit down contented

with a little.

Again, That little that a Christian has shall be certainly blessed and sanctified to him 1Ti 4:3-5; Tit 1:15; Jer 32:41; etc. Though your mercies, O Christian, are ever so few, and ever so base—yet they shall assuredly be blessed unto you. The Lord has not only promised that he will bless your blessings to you—but he has also sworn by himself that in blessing, he will bless you; and how dare you then, O Christian, to think that the great and faithful God will be guilty of a lie, or that which is worse, of perjury? Gen 22:16-17.

Now, a little blessed by God—is better than a great deal cursed by God! A little blessed—is better than a world enjoyed; a pound blessed—is better than a thousand cursed; a black crust blessed—is better than a feast cursed; the gleanings blessed—are better than the whole harvest cursed; a drop of mercy blessed—is better than a sea of mercy cursed; Lazarus's crumbs blessed—was better than Dives' delicacies cursed; Jacob's little blessed unto him—was better than Esau's great estate which was cursed unto him. It is always better to have scraps with God's blessing—than to have manna and quails with God's curse; a thin table with God's blessing—is always better than a full table with a snare, Psa 78:18, Psa 78:32; a threadbare coat with God's blessing—is better than a purple robe cursed; a hole, a cave, a den, a barn, a chimney-corner, with God's blessing—is better than stately palaces with a curse; a woolen cap blessed—is better than a golden crown cursed; and it may be that emperor understood as much, that said of his crown, when he looked on it with tears, 'If you knew the cares that are under this crown, you would never stoop to take it up!'

And, therefore, why should not a Christian be contented with a little, seeing his little shall be blessed unto him? Isaac tills the ground, and sows his seed, and God blesses him with a hundred fold, Gen 26:12; and Cain tills the ground, and sows his seed—but the earth is cursed to him, and commanded not to yield its produce, Gen 4:12. Oh, therefore, never let a Christian murmur because he has but a little—but rather let him be still a-blessing of that God, who has blessed his little, and who does bless his little, and who will bless his little to him!

Again, That little estate that a righteous man has, is most commonly a more lasting, a more abiding, a more permanent, and a more enduring estate—than the great and large estates of the wicked are, Pro 15:16; and Pro 16:8. Psa 37:16, "A little that a righteous man has—is better than the riches of many wicked." One old piece of gold—is worth more than a thousand new pennies; and one box of pearls—is more worth than many loads of pebbles; and one hundred pounds a year forever—is better than many hundreds in hand.

It is very observable the psalmist does not simply say, the estate—but the rich estate; the riches not of one, or a few—but of many wicked, are not comparable to that little that a righteous man has. The Hebrew word that is here rendered riches, signifies also a multitude, or an abundance, or store of riches. A little that a righteous man has is better than the multitude of riches, or the abundance of riches, or the store of riches that many wicked men have; and he gives you the reason of this in Psa 37:17. "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken—but he upholds (or under-props) the righteous." By the arms of the wicked," you are to understand their strength, their valor, their power, their wit, their wealth, their abundance, which is all the arms they have to support and bear up themselves in the world with. Now, these arms shall be broken, and when they are broken, then, even then, will God uphold the righteous, that is, God will be a continual

overflowing fountain of good to his righteous ones, so that they shall never lack, though all the springs of the wicked are dried up round about them.

O Sirs! there are so many moths, and so many dangers, and so many crosses, and so many losses, and so many curses—which daily attend the great estates of wicked men, that they are very rarely long-lived. Ah! how many in this great city are there who have built their nests on high, and who have thought that they had laid up riches for many years, and that have said in their hearts, that their lands, and stocks, and trades, and houses, and pompous estates should abide forever—who are now broken in pieces like a potter's vessel! Ah! how often does the pride, the oppression, the lying, the cheating, the overreaching, the swearing, the cursing, the whoring, the covetousness, the drunkenness, and the wantonness of the wicked—cut the throat of all their mercies! These are the wicked nesses, which, like a fire—burns up all their outward enjoyments; and which turns their earthly paradise into a hell. It is the wickedness of the wicked which causes their prosperity to wither, and which provokes God to turn their plenty into scarcity, their glory into contempt, and their honor into shame.

It is very observable, that in the holy Scriptures the prosperous estates of the wicked are frequently compared to things of a fleeting existence, [Job 14:2; Job 21:17-18; Isa 29:5; 2Ki 19:26; Job 24:24; Job 15:33; Job 20:8] to a shadow which soon passes away; to chaff, which a puff, a blast of wind easily disperses and scatters; to grass, which quickly withers before the sun; to tops of corn, which in an instant are cut off; to the unripe grape, which suddenly drops down; yes, to a dream in the night; and what is a dream—but a quick fancy, and a momentary vanity? All the riches that the wicked gain—either by their trades, or by their friends, or by their great places, or by their high offices, or by their subtle contrivances, or by their sinful compliances; and all the honor they gain in the court, or in the camp, or in the school—is but light and fleeting; it is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot. They are fading vanities—which commonly die before those who enjoy them are laid in the dust.

Oh, therefore, let all Christians be contented with their little, seeing that their little shall outlast the large estates of wicked and ungodly men! A man who has God for his portion can truly say that which no wicked man in the world can say, namely, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever," Psa 23:6. The psalmist does not say that goodness and mercy should follow him a day, or a few days, or many days—but that "goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life." The Hebrew word which is here rendered to follow, signifies to persecute; says the psalmist, "Goodness and mercy shall follow me, as the persecutor follows him he persecutes;" that is, it shall follow me frequently, it shall follow me constantly, it shall follow me swiftly, it shall follow me earnestly, it shall follow me unweariedly. The word signifies a studious, anxious, careful, diligent following; it is a metaphor that is taken from beasts and birds of prey, which follow and fly after their prey with the greatest eagerness, closeness, and unweariedness imaginable. Thus shall mercy and loving-kindness follow David all the days of his life. And if in a temptation, he should prove so weak and so foolish as to run away from goodness and mercy—yet goodness and mercy would follow him, like as the sun going down follows with his warm beams—the traveler who walks eastward.

O—but now the mercies of the wicked are short-lived! Though the wicked flourish and spread themselves like a green tree one day; yet they are cut down the next, and there is neither root nor

branch to be found, tale nor tidings to be heard of them. For in a moment, they, with all their greatness, state, pomp, and glory—are utterly vanished and banished out of the world, Psa 37:35-37. And so, Psa 34:10, "The young lions lack and suffer hunger—but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing." Young lions are lusty, strong, fierce, and active to seek their prey, and yet for all that, they shall lack and suffer hunger. By young lions, understand:

[1.] First, All wicked rulers; men who are in the highest places and authority, as the lion is the king of beasts, Pro 28:15; Eze 32:2.

[2.] Secondly, By lions they understand all cruel oppressors, who are still oppressing and grinding of the faces of the poor. Pro 30:30; "rich oppressors," as the Septuagint renders it, "who live on the spoil of the poor, and are never satisfied."

[3.] Thirdly, By lions, they understand the tyrants and the mighty Nimrods of the world, who are sometimes called lions, Jer 2:15; 1Ch 11:22; Nah 2:13.

[4.] And lastly, By lions, they understand all the crafty and subtle politicians of the earth. Eze 38:13, "The lion lurks very craftily and secretly for his prey." The sum of all is this—That wicked men who are in the highest authority, and that great oppressors, cruel tyrants, and crafty politicians—shall be impoverished, and brought to poverty, beggary, and misery. And this we have often seen verified before our eyes.

O Christian! what though you have but a little of this world—yet the God of all mercies, and all the mercies of God; the God of all comforts, and all the comforts of God—are yours! What more would you have? In God is fullness—all fullness, infinite fullness; and if this, with a little of the world, will not satisfy you—I know not what will. If a God for your portion will not content you, all the world will never content you. Shall Diogenes, a heathen, be more content with his tub to shelter him, and with his dish to drink in, than Alexander was with all his conquests? And shall not a Christian sit down contented and satisfied in the enjoyment of God for his portion, though he has but a tub to shelter him, bread to feed him, and a dish of water to refresh him?

(3.) Thirdly, If God is the saint's portion—those sinners are much mistaken, who judge the saints to be the most unhappy men in the world. There are no men under heaven in such a blessed and happy estate as the saints are, Balaam himself being judge, Num 23:5-11. A man who has God for his portion, is honorable even in rags, Psa 16:3. He has some beams, some rays, of the majesty and glory of God stamped upon his soul, and shining upon his face, and glittering in his life; and he who is so blind as not to behold this, is worse than Balaam the witch. Though the blind Jews could see no form, nor loveliness, nor beauty in Christ that they should desire him, Isa 53:2; yet the wise men who came from the east could see his divinity sparkling in the midst of the straw; they could see a heavenly majesty and glory upon him when he lay among the beasts, when he lay in a manger, Luk 2:7. Witness their tedious journey to find him, and witness their worshiping of him, and witness those rich and royal presents which they brought unto him, Mat 2:11. So though the blind sots of the world can see no beauty, nor loveliness, nor glory, in the saints, or upon the saints—which should render them amiable and desirable in their eyes; yet God, and Christ, and angels, and those who are wise in heart and wise to salvation, can see a great deal of divine beauty, majesty, and glory upon all those who have God for their portion. There is no happiness compared to that of having God for a man's portion. Psa 144:15, "Happy is that people who are in

such a case" (but give me that word again), "yes, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." He who does not have God for his portion, can never be happy; and he who enjoys God for his portion can never be miserable.

Augustine, speaking of one who, passing by a stately house which had fair lands about it, and asking another whom he met to whom that house and lands belonged, he answered, 'to such an one.' Oh, says he, that is a happy man indeed. No, says the other, not so happy as you think; for it is no such happiness to have that house and land—but he is happy indeed, who has the Lord for his God—for that is a privilege which exceeds all things put together. For, says he, he who has honor and riches may go to hell for all them—but he who has God to be his God, is sure to be everlastingly happy.

According as a man's portion is, so is he. Now, if God is a man's portion, who is the spring, the fountain, the top of all excellency and glory—then certainly that man must needs be an excellent man who has God for his portion; and upon this score it is that the righteous man is more excellent than his neighbor. Let the righteous man's neighbor be ever so great, and ever so rich, and ever so mighty, and ever so noble—yet if he has not God for his portion, the righteous man is more excellent than he. And the reason is evident, because he has that God for his portion—which is the most eminent and excellent portion. O sirs! if God is most excellent, if God is alone excellent, then they must needs be most excellent, who have God for their portion.

It is very observable that, according to the excellency of God, the excellency of the saints is in some proportion hinted at in Scripture; as in that Deu 33:26, Deu 33:29; "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun;" and presently it follows, "Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you?" or, Oh the happinesses of you, O Israel! Oh the multiplied happiness, the heaped-up happiness—which attends Israel! The saints who have God for their portion, are the world's paragons; they are worthies "of whom this world is not worthy;" they are such great, such noble, such worthy worthies—that this world is not worthy to think on them, to look on them, to wait on them, or to enjoy their company. One saint who has God for his portion—is more worth than all the millions of sinners in the world that have not God for their portion. God delights to reflect his glory upon his saints; for as there are none like to God, so there are none like to the people of God. Look! as God is great, so his people are great; and so in that 2Sa 7:22-23, "Therefore you are great, O Lord God; for there is none like you, neither is there any God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears; and what one nation in the earth is like your people?" Look! as the excellency of God rises—so in a proportion the excellency of the saints rises; and Look! as there are no gods in all the world which are so excellent as God is—so there are no people in all the world who are so excellent as the people of God are.

Everyone who has God for his portion resembles the child of a king, as Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon of his brethren, Jdg 8:18. If you look upon their divine and heavenly origin, you shall find that they are born of the blood-royal, and that they are the sons of the King of kings, and Lord of lords! Yes, all the saints who have God for their portion, are kings. Rev 1:6, "And has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." [Rev 17:14; Rev 5:10; Dan 7:27; 1Co 3:22-23; Psalms 34:14; Heb 1:14; Psalm 45:13; 1Co 1:30] They have the power, sovereignty, and authority of kings, they are privileged as kings, they are guarded as kings, they are adorned as kings, they are entertained as kings, they feed as kings—they feed high, they live upon God and Christ, and all

the glory of heaven; and they are clothed as kings—they are clothed with Christ's righteousness, and with the garments of joy and gladness.

Kings have great alliance, and so have the saints who have God for their portion. Kings have a very great influence, and so have those who have God for their portion. A man in rags who has God for his portion—is a more honorable person than the greatest monarch on earth, who has only the world for his portion. I have read of Alexander the Great, and of Pompey the Great, and of Charles the Great, and of Abner the Great, and of Herod the Great; but what were all these great men but grasshoppers, compared to the saints who have God for their portion? Men who have had God for their portion have been very famous, illustrious, and glorious—when they have been friendless, and houseless, and penniless; yes, when they have been under the swords, and saws, and harrows of persecution. When Maximian, the tyrant, had plucked out one of Paphnutius the Confessor's eyes, that good emperor Constantine saw such a luster, beauty, and glory upon Paphnutius, that he fell upon him and kissed him; and he kissed that very hole most, wherein one of the Confessor's eyes had been, as being most ravished and delighted with that hole. The name of him who has God for his portion shall live, when the name of the wicked shall rot, Pro 10:7; Psa 112:9. His name shall be written in golden characters upon marble, when the name of the wicked shall be written in the dust. The blind besotted world are sadly mistaken, who are ready to set the crown of honor and happiness upon any heads, rather than upon theirs who have God for their portion. Look! as Samuel, beholding the beauty and stature of Eliab, would needs have him anointed, and the crown set upon his head; when the crown was designed for David at the sheepfold 1Sa 16:6, 1Sa 16:12. So vain men are very apt to set the crown of happiness upon their heads who have the greatest share in this world; whereas the crown of happiness and blessedness is only to be set on the heads of those who have God for their portion. What the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon's servants, "Happy are your men, happy are these your servants—who stand continually before you, and who hear your wisdom," 1Ki 10:8; is here very applicable to the saints—"Happy, happy, yes, thrice happy are those precious sons and daughters of Zion, who have God for their portion." A man who has God for his portion shall live happily and die happily, and after death he shall remain happy to all eternity. Therefore we may well cry out, "Oh, the happiness and blessedness of that man who has God for his portion!" But,

(4.) Fourthly, If the saints have such an excellent, such a matchless, portion, oh, then, let them never set their hearts and affections upon any earthly portions, Pro 23:5. It is true, O Christian, you may lay your hand upon an earthly portion—but you must never set your heart upon an earthly portion. Psa 62:10, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." The Hebrews put the heart for the thoughts, affections, love, desire, joy, hope, confidence, etc. If riches increase, oh, set not your thoughts upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not your affections upon them; if riches increase, oh, set not your love upon them, set not your desires upon them, set not your joy and delight upon them; nor ever place your hope or confidence in them.

Oh! what a shame and dishonor would it be, to see men of great estates to rake in dunghills, and to sweep filthy streets! And is it not a greater shame, a greater dishonor, to see those who have the great God for their portion, to set their hearts and affections upon earthly trifles? It was a noble speech of that heathen, Themistocles, who, seeing something glisten like a pearl in the dark, scorned to stoop for it himself—but bid another stoop, saying, 'Stoop you, for you are not Themistocles.' Oh! it is below a holy Christian, a gracious Christian, a noble Christian—who has

God for his portion, to stoop to the trifles of this world. A holy Christian will set his feet upon those very things, which the men of the world set their hearts.

Rev 12:1, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head was a crown of twelve stars." The church is compared to a woman for her weakness, for her lovingness, for her loveliness, and for her fruitfulness; and being clothed with the Sun of righteousness, she has the moon, that is, the world, under her feet. The church treads under her feet all temporary and transitory things, which are as changeable as the moon. She treads upon all worldly and carnal enjoyments and contentments, as things below her, as things not worthy of her. What vanity is it for a great man to set his heart on bird's nests, and paper kites which boys make fly in the air? And as great, yes, a greater vanity it is for the saints who have God for their portion, to set their hearts upon the poor little low things of this world.

"It is not for you to be a-fishing for minnows—but for towns, forts, and castles," said Cleopatra to Mark Antony. So say I, it is not for you who have God for your portion, to be a-fishing for the honors, riches, and preferments of the world; but for more grace, more holiness, more communion with God, more power against corruptions, more strength to withstand temptations, more abilities to bear afflictions, more sense of divine love, and more assurance of interest in Christ, and in all that glory and happiness which comes by Christ. When Alexander heard of the riches of India, he regarded not the kingdom of Macedonia—but gave away his gold; and when he was asked, what he kept for himself? he answered, 'the hope of better and greater things.' O Christians! when you look upon those riches of grace, those riches of glory, those riches of justification, those riches of sanctification, and those riches of consolation—which are in that God who is your portion—how should you disregard, how should you despise, how should you scorn the great things, and the mirthful things of the world! It was a notable speech of one, 'I desire neither wealth nor honor—any more than a feeble horse does an heavy saddle.'

O Christians! you have many thousand excellencies in God to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in Christ to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the Spirit to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the covenant to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the gospel to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the ordinances to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in promises to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in prophecies to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in choice providences to set your affections upon, and you have many thousand excellencies in the saints to set your affections upon. Therefore, for shame—set not your affections upon things below, set not your hearts upon things which perish, Col 3:1. A man can never come to set his heart upon any earthly portion—but that God will either embitter it, or lessen it, or cloud it, or wholly strip him of it. Therefore sit loose, I say again, sit loose in your affections to all worldly enjoyments. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If the saints have such a glorious, such an incomparable portion; then let them be cheerful and comfortable under all worldly crosses, losses, and troubles, Acts 5:17-42; Rom 5:2-4. With what a Roman spirit do many vain men of great estates bear up under great losses and crosses; and shall not grace do more than nature? Shall not the Spirit of God do more than a

Roman spirit? O sirs, how can you look upon God as your portion, and not bear up bravely under any worldly loss? Heb 10:34. "You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions." They had God for their portion, and the joy of the Lord was their strength, and therefore they could rejoice in whatever damage came upon them by the hand of violence. And so David could comfort himself in his God, and encourage himself in his God—when Ziklag was burned, his wives and children carried captive, and the people were ready to stone him 1Sa 30:6. Now all was gone, he looks up to God as his portion, and so he bears up bravely and cheerfully in the midst of all extremity of misery. And so Habakkuk was a man of the same noble temper, as you may see in that Hab 3:17-18. "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior."

"Though the fig tree does not bud—yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Ay—but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord as long as there is fruit on the vines; ay—but says he, "Though are no grapes on the vines—yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Ay—but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the labor of the olive crop does not fail; ay—but says he, "Though the olive crop fails—yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Ay—but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord so long as the fields yield their produce; ay—but says he, "Though the fields produce no food—yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Ay—but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord, so long as there are sheep in the pen; ay—but says he, "Though there are no sheep in the pen—yet I will rejoice in the Lord." Ay—but that is nothing, to rejoice in the Lord, so long as there are cattle in the stalls; yes—but says he, "Though there are no cattle in the stalls—yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation."

Habakkuk could rejoice in the Lord, and joy in that God who was his portion, not only when all delightful comforts and contentments should fail—but also when all necessary comforts and contentments should fail. Habakkuk was a man of raised spirit; he knew that he had that God for his portion—who contained in himself all comforts and contentments, and who could easily make up the lack of any comfort or contentment; and who would certainly be himself in the place of every comfort and contentment; and in the power of this faith he rejoices and triumphs in a day of thick darkness and gloominess.

1Sa 1:5, 1Sa 1:18, "But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved Hannah, and her countenance was no more sad." O my brethren, it does never befit those who have God for their portion, to walk up and down the world with clouded countenances, with saddened countenances, or with dejected countenances, etc., and therefore, under all your crosses and losses—wipe your eyes, and walk up and down with pleasant countenances, with cheerful countenances, and with smiling countenances, and this will be an honor to God, and an honor to religion, and an honor to your profession, and an honor to that saintship which is too much slighted and scorned in the world.

Indeed, when wicked men are exercised with crosses and losses, it is no wonder to see them behave like madmen, and see them act bitterly, like Micah, when he cried out, "They have taken away my gods—what more do I have?" Wicked men's bags and goods are their gods; they are their portion, they are their all; and when these are gone—all is gone with them; when these are taken away—all is taken away with them. Therefore it is no wonder to hear them cry out, "Undone,

undone!" and to see them sit down and weep, as if they were resolved to drown themselves in their own tears. But you who have God for your portion—you have such a portion which shall never be taken from you. As Christ told Mary, "You have chosen the better part which shall never be taken from you," Luk 10:42. Therefore it highly concerns you to bear up bravely, as well when you have but little—as when you have much; and as well when you have nothing—as when you have everything. You shall be sure to enjoy all in God, and God in all; and what more would you have?

Seneca once told a courtier who had lost his son, that he had no cause to mourn either for that or anything else—because Caesar was his friend! O then, what little cause have the saints to mourn for this or that loss—considering that God is their friend; yes, which is more, that God is their portion! I have read of a company of poor Christians, who, being banished to some remote parts, and one seeing them pass along, said, that it was a very sad condition that those poor people were in, to be thus banished from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field. True, said another, it would be a sad condition indeed—if they were carried to a place where they could not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, for God goes along with them, and will follow them with the comforts of his grace wherever they go. Would it not make a man either sigh or laugh to see a man lament and carry on bitterly for the loss of his shoestrings, when his purse is safe; or for the loss of a little stick, when all his goods are safe; or for the burning of a pig-stye, when his dwelling-house is safe; or for the loss of his scabbard, when his life is safe? And why, then, should a Christian lament and take on for the loss of this or that—so long as his God is safe, and his portion is safe? But,

(6.) Sixthly, If the saints have such an excellent and such a transcendent portion, as has been shown—then away with all sinful shifts, ways, courses, and compliances to gain an earthly portion. Was it not horrid, yes, hellish baseness in Ahab, who had a whole kingdom at his command, to steal poor Naboth's vineyard, by false swearing, hypocrisy, treachery, cruelty, and murder? 1Ki 21:1-29. But, certainly, it is a far greater baseness and wickedness in those who have God for their portion, or at least pretend to have God for their portion—to be a-swindling, and a-shifting, and a-complying with the lusts of men, and with the abominations of the times; and all to keep what they have, or else to raise themselves, and greaten themselves, and enrich themselves, by others' ruin. These men might do well to make Jer 17:11 their daily companion—"Like a bird that hatches eggs she has not laid, so are those who get their wealth by unjust means. Sooner or later they will lose their riches and, at the end of their lives, will become poor old fools." The crafty fox in the fable congratulated himself to think how he had tricked the crow out of his breakfast; but when he had eaten it, and found himself poisoned with it—he wished that he had never meddled with it. O sirs! there is a day a-coming, wherein men shall wish that they had never labored to sin themselves into honors, riches, preferments, high offices, and high places—when God shall let some scalding drops of his wrath to fall upon their spirits—who have sold all their concernments, and their own consciences—to gain riches and high offices! How will they curse the day wherein they were born, and be ready, by the knife or the noose, to put an end to their most wretched days! Oh what a sad and lamentable thing would it be to see men worth many thousands a-year a-purloining from others! But it is a far more sad and lamentable thing to see men who pretend to have God for their portion, to act all this, and more than this—and all to lay up an earthly portion for themselves.

How many be there in these days who pretend very high towards God, and yet "sell the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes," Amo 2:6; yes, who pollute the name of God, the worship of God; and that slay the souls of men for handfuls of barley, and pieces of bread; and who will say anything, or swear anything, or bow, or crouch to anything—for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, or to be put into one of the priest's offices, Eze 13:19; 1Sa 2:36. O Christian, you have all honors and riches and preferments in that God who is your portion; and why then should you go about to sin yourself into the enjoyment of those things which you have already in your God? Have you forgot that Solomon got more hurt by his wealth, than ever he got good by his wisdom? and that David was best in a wilderness, and that our stomachs are usually worse in summer, and that the moon is furthest from the sun when it is fullest of light; and that all that a man gets by breaking with God and his conscience, he may put in his eye; and that the coal that the eagle carried from the sacrifice to her nest, set all on fire. Have you forgotten what is said of Abraham in that Gen 13:2; namely, "That he was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold?" The Hebrew word which is here rendered rich, signifies heavy, to show that riches are a very heavy burden, and oftentimes a hindrance in the way to heaven. Oh! how vain, how uncertain, how vexing, and how fleeting are the great things of the world! How unfit do they make many men to live; and how unwilling do they make many men to die! Oh what is gold in the purse—when there is guilt upon the conscience! What are full bags—when sin and wrath are at the bottom of them! O Christians! you have an infinite fullness in that God who is your portion, and that fills all in all. Why then should you break the hedge—to gain the world? But,

(7.) Seventhly. If the saints have such an excellent, glorious, and incomparable portion 1Co 1:31; oh then let them glory in their portion; let them rejoice and delight themselves in their portion. Man is a creature very apt and prone to glory in earthly portions, when he should be a-glorying in the Lord. Jer 9:23-24, "Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches—but let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord." Isa 41:16, "You shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall glory in the Holy One of Israel." Isa 45:25, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

Oh how should the saints, who have God for their portion, make their boast of their God, and rejoice in their God, and glory in their God! Shall the men of the world glory in an earthly portion—and shall not a saint glory in his heavenly portion? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in hope—and shall not a Christian glory in that portion that he has already in hand? Shall they glory in a portion that they have only in reversion—and shall not a saint glory in that portion that he has in present possession? Shall they glory in their hundreds and thousands a year—and shall not a Christian glory in that God that fills heaven and earth with his glory? In all the scriptures there is no one duty more pressed than this—of rejoicing in God; and indeed, if you consider God as a saint's portion, there is everything in God that may encourage the soul to rejoice in him, and there is nothing in God that may in the least discourage the soul from rejoicing and glorying in him.

O Christians, the "joy of the Lord is your strength," Neh 8:10; it is your doing strength, and your bearing strength, and your suffering strength, and your prevailing strength; it is your strength to work for God, and it is your strength to wait on God, and it is your strength to exalt and lift up God,

and it is your strength to walk with God; it is your strength to live, and your strength to die. Therefore be sure to keep up your joy in God. It is one of the saddest sights in all the world to see a man who has God for his portion, with Cain to walk up and down this world with a dejected countenance. It was holy joy and cheerfulness that made the faces of several martyrs to shine as if they had been the faces of angels. One observes of Crispina, that she was cheerful when she was arrested, and joyful when she was led to the judge, and merry when she was sent to prison, and so she was when bound, and when lift up in a cage, and when examined, and when condemned.

O Christians! how can you number up the several souls that you deject, the foul mouths that you open, and the bad reports that you bring upon the Lord and his ways—by your sad, dejected, and anxious walking! It is very observable that the Lord takes it so very unkindly at his people's hands—when they go sighing, lamenting, and mourning up and down; whereas they should be a-rejoicing and a-delighting of themselves in him and his goodness—that he threatens to pursue them to the death with all manner of calamities and miseries upon that very score. Deu 28:47-48, "Because you have not served the Lord your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received, you will serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you. You will be left hungry, thirsty, naked, and lacking in everything. They will oppress you harshly until you are destroyed." But,

(8.) Eighthly. If the saints have such a great, such a large, and such an all-sufficient portion as has been showed they have, then certainly they shall never lack anything that is good for them. David tells you that his cup run over, Psa 23:5-6. The words are an allusion to the Hebrew feasts. David's table was richly and nobly spread, both in sight and spite of all his enemies. In one God—is every good; and what can he lack, who enjoys that God? God is a bundle of all goodness and sweetness. And Look! as God is the best God, so he is the greatest and the fullest good. He can as easily fill the most capacious souls up to the very brim with all inward and outward excellencies and mercies—as Christ did once fill those waterpots of Galilee up to the very brim with wine, John 2:1-11. If God has enough in himself for himself—then certainly he has enough in himself for us. That water which can fill the sea—can much more easily fill my cup or my pot. "My people shall be satisfied with goodness, says the Lord," Jer 31:14; "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul," Jer 32:40-41; "My God shall supply all your need," Php 4:19; or, "My God shall fill up all your need," as he did the widow's vessels in that 2Ki 4:3-6. Godliness has the promise both of this life and that which is to come 1Ti 4:8.

He who has God for his portion, shall have all other things cast into his store, as paper and packing thread is cast into the bargain; or as an handful of corn is cast into the corn you buy; or as hucksters cast in an extra among the fruit you buy; or as an inch of measure is given into a yard of cloth, Mat 6:25, Mat 6:31-33. O sirs, how can that man be poor, how can that man lack—who has the Lord of heaven and earth for his portion? Surely he cannot lack light—who enjoys the sun; nor he cannot lack bread—who has all sorts of grain in his barns, nor can he lack water—who has the fountain at his door; no more can he lack anything—who has God for his portion—who is everything, and who will be everything to every gracious soul.

O Christians! the thought, the tongue, the desire, the wish, the conception—all fall short of God, and of that great goodness which he has laid up for those who fear him, Psa 31:19; and why then should they be afraid of any real lack? Psa 104:10-31. How does that pretty bird, the robin-redbreast, cheerfully sit and sing in the chamber window, and yet knows not where he shall get the next meal, and at night must take up his lodging in a bush. Oh what a shame is it that men who have God for their portion should act below this little bird.

I have read of famous Mr. Dod, who is doubtless now high in heaven, who intended to marry, was much troubled with fears and cares how he would live in that condition, his incomes being so small that they would but maintain him in a single condition; and looking out at a window, and seeing a hen scraping for food for her numerous chicks about her, thought thus with himself—'This hen did but live before it had these chickens, and now she lives with all her little ones;' upon which he added this thought also, 'I see the fowls of the air neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet my heavenly Father feeds them,' Mat 6:25; and thus he overcame his fears of lacking any necessity. O Christians! you have such a Father for your portion—as will as soon cease to be—as he will cease to supply you with all things necessary for your good. It was a good saying of one, 'I would desire neither more nor less than enough; for I may as well die of a surfeit as of hunger, and he is rich enough who lacks not bread, and high enough in dignity who is not forced to serve.

Rather than Israel should lack—did not God feed them with manna in the wilderness? and rather than Elijah and the widow should not have their needs supplied—did not God work a miracle, by causing the handful of meal in the barrel, and the little oil in the cruse, to last and hold out until he supplied them in another way? Rather than Elijah shall lack, God will feed him by a raven, and by that miraculous operation save him from a perishing condition. O Christians! all the attributes of God are so engaged for you, that you cannot lack; and all the promises of God are so engaged to you that you cannot lack; and all the affections of God are so set upon you that you cannot lack; and why then should you fear for your necessities?

O Christians! has God given you his Son, his Spirit, his grace, his glory, yes, himself—and will he deny you lesser things, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" Rom 8:32. Has he given you those things which are more worth than ten thousand worlds—and will he not give you bread to eat, and clothing to put on? Has he given you those spiritual riches that infinitely exceed and excel all the riches, rubies, and pearls in the world—and will he deny you a little money in your purses to afford your necessities until you come to heaven? Has he given you a crown—and will he deny you a crust? Has he given you his royal robes—and will he deny you a few rags? Has he given you a royal palace—and will he deny you a poor cottage to shelter you from the stormy winter and from the scorching summer? Does he feed his enemies, and clothe his enemies, and protect his enemies, and provide for his enemies—who are under his wrath and curse—and will he not do as much for you, O you of little faith? Will he do so much for those who hate him—and will he not do as much for those who love him? Doubtless he will. Will he feed the ravens, and provide for the ox and the donkey, and clothe the grass of the field; and will he allow you, who are his love, his joy, his delight, to starve at his feet, for lack of necessities? Surely not! But suppose you were under many real needs—yet certainly this very consideration, that the Lord is your portion, should quiet your hearts, and bear up your spirits bravely under them all. Jerome tells us of one Didymus, a godly preacher, who was blind; Alexander, a godly man, coming to see him, asked him whether he

was not sorely troubled and afflicted for lack of his sight. Oh yes, said Dydimus, it is a very great affliction and grief to me. Whereupon Alexander chide him, saying, Has God given you the excellency of an angel, of a Christian, and are you troubled for that which rats and mice, and brute beasts enjoy? O Christians! if God has given you himself for a portion, then certainly it is a sinful thing, a shameful thing, an unworthy thing for you to be so troubled, afflicted, and grieved—because you lack this and that worldly contentment and enjoyment, which God bestows upon such whose wickedness has debased them below the ox and the donkey, I mean, men of beastly spirits, and beastly principles, and beastly practices, Isa 1:2-3. Look! as Benjamin's portion was five times greater than his brethren's, Gen 43:34; so those who have God for their portion have five thousand times a greater portion than the wicked of the world, whose portion only lies in perishing trifles, and in foolish vanities. Therefore there is no just reason, no Scripture reason, why they should be afraid of wants. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If the saints have such a great, such a large, such an all-sufficient, such an infinite, and such an incomparable portion, as has been made evident they have, oh then, away with all inordinate cares for the things of this life. Oh say to all vexing, wasting, distracting, and disturbing cares, as Ephraim once said to his idols, "Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?" Hos 14:8. Christ's counsel should lie warm upon every man's heart, who has God for his portion, "So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'" For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them." Mat 6:31-32; and so should the apostle's, "Cast all your care on him; for he cares for you," 1Pe 5:7; and so should the psalmist's also, "Cast your burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain you—he shall never allow the righteous to be moved," Psa 55:22.

Some write that lions sleep with their eyes open and shining; but the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the keeper of Israel, never slumbers nor sleeps; his eyes are always open upon the upright; he still stands sentinel for his people's good, and therefore why should inordinate cares eat up the hearts of Christians? O Christians! of all burdens, the burden of carking cares will sit the heaviest upon your spirits. There is no burden that will bow you and break you like this. Inordinate cares and worries—vex the heart, they divide the heart, they scratch and tear the heart, they pierce and wound the heart through and through with many sorrows 1Ti 6:10. Inordinate cares will either crowd out duties, as in Martha, Luk 10:40; or else they will crowd into duties and spoil duties, as in that Luk 8:14, "the cares of the world choke the word."

Look! as Pharaoh's ill-favored lean cows ate up the fat cows, Gen 41:4; so all inordinate ill-favored cares will eat up all those fat and noble cares for God, for his glory, for heaven, for holiness, for grace, for glory, for power against corruptions, for strength to resist temptations, and for support and comfort under afflictions, etc., with which the soul should be filled and delighted. Oh that you would forever remember these few things, to prevent all inordinate, distrustful, and distracting cares.

[1.] First, That they are a dishonor and a reproach to the all-sufficiency of God; as if he were not able to supply all your needs, and to answer all your desires, and to support you in all your distresses, and to deliver you out of all your calamities and miseries, etc.

[2.] Secondly, Inordinate cares are a dishonor and a reproach to the omniscience of God. [Psa 139:11; Psa 40:5; Job 31:4; 2Ch 16:9; etc.] As if your needs were not as well known to him as his

own works, and as if he had not a fixed eye upon all the straits and trials that lies upon you, and as if he did not know every burden that makes you to groan, and did not behold every affliction that makes you to sigh, and did not observe every tear that drops from your eyes, etc.; whereas his eye is still upon you. Deu 11:11-12, "But the land, where you go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinks water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord your God cares for—the eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, unto the end of the year." And do you think that he will not have as great a care, and as tender a regard for you who are his jewels, his treasure, his joy; yes, who are the delight of his soul, and the price of his Son's blood?

[3.] Thirdly, Inordinate cares are a dishonor and a reproach to the authority of God. As if the earth were not the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and as if all creatures were not at his command and at his dispose, whereas he is the great proprietary, and all is his by primitive right, and all the creatures are at his service, and are ready at a word of command to serve where he pleases, and when he pleases, and as he pleases, and whom he pleases, Psa 24:1; Psa 50:10.

[4.] Fourthly, Inordinate cares are a dishonor and a reproach to the mercy, bounty, and liberality of God. They proclaim God to be a hard master, and not to be of so free, so noble, and so generous a spirit, as Scripture and the experiences of many thousands speaks him to be. I have read of a duke of Milan, that marrying his daughter to a son of England, he made a dinner of thirty courses, and at every course he gave so many gifts to every guest at the table, as there were dishes in the course. Here was a rich and royal entertainment, here was noble bounty indeed; but this bounty is not to be named in comparison with the bounty and liberality of God to his people.

Princes' treasures have been often exhausted and drawn dry—but the treasures of God's bounty and liberality were never, nor never shall be, exhausted or drawn dry. O Christians! you are as well able to count the stars of heaven, and to number the sands of the sea, as you are able to number up the mercies and favors of God which attend his people in one day, yes, which attend them in one hour of the day, or in one minute of an hour; such is his liberality and bounty towards them. God is always best, when he is most in the exercise of his bounty and liberality towards his people. His favors and mercies seldom come single. There is a series, a chain of them, and every former draws on a future. Yes, such is the bounty and liberality of God, that he never takes away one mercy—but he has another ready to give in the place of it; as Joshua began to shine before Moses' candle was put out; and before Joshua died, Othniel the son of Kenaz was risen up to judge. Eli was not gathered to his fathers, before Samuel appeared hopeful; nor Sarah was not taken away until Rebekah was ready to come in her place. The Jews have a saying, that never does there die any illustrious man—but there is another born as bright on the same day.

[5.] Fifthly, Inordinate cares are a reproach and a dishonor to the fidelity of God. As if he were not the faithful witness, the faithful God, who has bound himself by promise, by covenant, and by oath, to take care of his people, and to provide for his people, and to look after the welfare of his people. [Rev 1:5; Rev 3:14; Isa 49:7; 1Co 1:9; 1Co 10:13; 2Th 3:3; Heb 10:23; Rev 19:11; Heb 6:18-19] God is that ocean and fountain from whence all that faithfulness that is in angels and men do issue and flow; and his faithfulness is the rule and measure of all that faithfulness which is in all created beings; and his faithfulness is unchangeable and perfect. Though the angels fell from their faithfulness, and Adam fell from his—yet it is impossible that ever God should fall from his. God's

faithfulness is a foundation-faithfulness; it is that foundation upon which all our faith, hope, prayers, praises, and obedience stands. Therefore, whoever is unfaithful, God will be sure to show himself a faithful God, in making good all that he has spoken concerning them that fear him.

I had rather, said Plutarch, that men should say there was never any such person in the world as Plutarch, rather than say that Plutarch is unfaithful. Men were better say that there is no God, than to say that God is an unfaithful God—and yet this is the constant language of inordinate cares. O Christians! God's goodness inclines him to make good promises, precious promises; and his faithfulness engages him to make good those promises 2Pe 1:4. If the word be once gone out of his mouth, heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot of that word shall fail, Mat 5:18. Men say, and then unsay, what they have said; they often eat their words as soon as they have spoke them; but so will not God. This faithfulness of God Joshua stoutly asserts to the height; he throws down the gauntlet, and does, as it were, challenge all Israel to show but that one thing that God had failed them in of all the good things that he had promised, Jos 23:14-15. If God in very faithfulness, afflicts his people—to make good his threatenings; oh, how much more in faithfulness will he preserve and provide for his people—to make good his promises! Psa 119:75. God has never broke his word nor cracked his credit by deceiving, or by giving one penny less than what he has promised to give. God stands upon nothing more than his faithfulness, and glories in nothing more than his faithfulness; and yet all inordinate cares leaves a blot upon his faithfulness. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Inordinate cares are a reproach to the pity and compassion of God, Mat 6:32. They speak out God to be a God of no pity, of no compassion, of no tenderness; whereas God is all pities, all affections, all compassions, all tendernesses. Psa 103:13, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them those who fear him." There is an ocean of love and pity in a father's heart to his children, Gen 33:13-14; and there is much more in God's to his. Hence he is called the Father by way of eminency; and indeed, originally and properly, there is no Father compared to him, there is no Father like him, there is no Father besides him. He is called the Father of all mercies, because all the mercies, all the pities, all the affections, all the compassions which are in all the fathers on earth, are but a drop of his ocean, a spark of his flame, a mite out of his treasury. That father who sees his child in need, and pities him not; or pitying, if able, relieves him not—forfeits the very name of father, and may better write himself monster than man. I have read of a young man who, being at sea in a mighty storm, was very merry when all the passengers were at their wit's end for fear, etc.; and when he was asked the reason of his mirth, he answered, that the pilot of the ship was his father, and he knew that such was his father's pity and compassion, that he would take care of him. O Christians! whatever storms the people of God may be in—yet such is his pity and compassion towards them, that he will be sure to take care of them. While God has a breast, there is no reason why his children should fear the want of milk. That golden promise, Heb 13:5; were there no more, has enough in it to steel and arm the soul against all inordinate cares. The Greek has five negatives, and may thus be rendered—"I will not, not leave you, neither will I not, not ever forsake you." Five times, as one well observes, is this precious promise renewed, that we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of its consolations, that we may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its glory. O Christians! shall the word, the promise, of a king, arm us and cheer us up against all inordinate cares; and shall not the word, the promise, of the King of kings, so often repeated, much more arm us against all base, distrustful, and distracting cares?

O Christians! the remembrance of this blessed truth, that God is your portion, should make you sing care away, as that famous martyr said, "My soul is turned to her rest; I have taken a sweet nap in Christ's lap. Therefore I will now sing away care." If the sense of God's being a man's portion will not burn up all those inordinate cares which commonly fill his head, and which disturb, and distract, and rack his heart—I profess I cannot tell what will. It was a strange speech of Socrates, a heathen—Since God is so mindful for you, says he, what need you be worried for anything yourselves? But,

(10.) Tenthly, If God is the saints' portion, then all is theirs. As one said, 'Christ is mine—so all is mine!' So may a Christian say, 'God is mine—so all is mine.' If God is your portion, then heaven and earth are yours; then all the good and all the glory of both worlds are yours; then all the upper and the nether springs are yours. 1Co 3:21, "All things are yours! Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours!" The scope of the apostle is not to show that such as are saints, and have God for their portion, have a common interest in all men's earthly possessions; but it is to show that all things are prepared, ordered, and ordained by God to serve the interest of his people, to work for the good of his people, and to help on the happiness and blessedness of his people.

All the gifts, and all the graces, and all the experiences, and all the excellencies, and all the mercies of the ministers of the gospel—are all for the information, edification, confirmation, consolation, and salvation of the church; and all the good and all the sweet of the creatures are to be let out for the good of the people of God, and for the comfort of the people of God, and for the encouragement of the people of God; all changes, all conditions, all occurrences, shall be sure "to work together for their good," who have God for their portion. Whatever the present posture of things are, or whatever the future state of things shall be—yet they shall all issue in their good, in their profit, in their advantage, to those who who have God for their portion.

Look! as the wife shares in her husband's honor and wealth; and as the branches partake of the fatness and sweetness of the root; and as the members derive sense and motion from the head—so the saints share in all that good which is in God. God is giving—as the fig-tree, the vine, and the olive tree are giving. O Christians! if God is your portion, then every promise in the book of God is yours, and every attribute in the book of God is yours, and every privilege in the book of God is yours, and every comfort in the book of God is yours, and every blessing in the book of God is yours, and every treasure in the book of God is yours, and every mercy in the book of God is yours, and every ordinance in the book of God is yours, and every sweet in the book of God is yours. If God is yours—all is yours! When Alexander asked king Porus, who was then his prisoner, how he would be treated; he answered—'like a king.' Alexander again replying, Do you desire nothing else? No, says he, all things are in this one word, 'like a king.' So all things are in this one word—"The Lord is my portion." He who has God for his portion, has all things, because God is all things! God is a good who contains all good in himself. All the good that is to be found in honors, in riches, in pleasures, in preferments, in husband, in wife, in children, in friends, etc., is to be found only and eminently in God. You have all—in that great God that is the saints' great all, Col 3:11. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, If God is the saint's portion, and such a portion as I have at large discovered him to be, then certainly God is no injurious portion, no mischievous portion, no hurtful portion, no

harmful portion. Surely there can be no danger, no hazard, no hurt in having God for a man's portion. Oh! but oftentimes earthly portions do a great deal of hurt, a great deal of mischief; they ruin men's bodies, they blast and blot men's names, and they lay men open to such sins, and snares, and temptations, which forever undoes their immortal souls. Oh what a snare are worldly portions to most men! yes, what fuel are they to corruption! and how often do they lay people open to destruction! Ecc 5:13, "There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." Though riches in themselves are God's blessings—yet through the corruptions that are in men's hearts, they prove weapons of wickedness and engines to evil. "There is a sore evil," the Septuagint reads it—a sore disease. Others read it—an evil disease; others read it—a sore weakness. The Hebrew word signifies such a sore evil as sticks close and is not easily removed; and may be a thousand thousand ways for their hurt.

Latimer says, that if he had an enemy to whom it was lawful to wish evil, he would chiefly wish him great store of riches, for then he should never enjoy any quiet. As I have read of one Pheraulas, a poor man, on whom king Cyrus bestowed so much that he knew not what to do with his riches. Being wearied out with care in keeping of them, he desired to live quietly, though poor, as he had done before, than to possess all those riches with discontent. Therefore he gave away all his wealth, desiring only to enjoy so much as might relieve his necessities, and give him a quiet possession of himself.

Queen Mary said, when she was dying, that if they should open her when she was dead, they should find gold lying at the bottom of her heart, implying that the loss of it broke her heart. The historian observes that the riches of Cyprus invited the Romans to hazard many dangerous fights for the conquering of it. When the Indians had taken some of the Spaniards, who made gold their God, they filled their mouths with it, and so choked them; they melted their gold, and poured it down their throats, resolving that they should have their fill of gold, who preferred gold before the lives and souls of men. How many millions of bodies and souls have the Spaniards destroyed, to possess the riches of the West Indies! But let me a little further show you how hurtful, how dangerous and pernicious earthly riches, earthly portions, are oftentimes to their owners; and this I shall do by a brief induction of these particulars.

[1.] First, Riches encourage and advantage people to make the strongest and the stoutest opposition against the godly. Rich people usually are the greatest opposers of Christian people. Jas 2:6-7, "Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?" And this you may see also in the rich citizens of Jerusalem, and in king Herod; and the very same spirit you may run and read in the scribes and pharisees, who were the rich and the great men of the times, and the very same opposing spirit lives and works strongly in the hearts of many great ones this day. But,

[2.] Secondly, Earthly portions estrange the heart from God; as you see in the prodigal, Luk 1:5; and in those wealthy monsters who say unto God, "Leave us alone! We have no desire to know your ways. Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?" Job 21:13-15. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As earthly portions estrange the soul from God; so they do often swell the soul, and puff up the soul with pride, Psa 10:1-7; etc. Salvian counts pride the rich man's inheritance. Men's

minds ebb and flow with their means, their arrogance commonly rises with their outward good. Pride, says Bernard, is the rich man's cousin, it blows him up like a balloon; it makes him grow secure, and so prepares him for sudden ruin—so that he may well sing his part with those sad souls, "What has pride profited us? or what profit has the pomp of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like as a shadow, and as a dream in the night." But,

[4.] Fourthly, Earthly riches commonly cast men into a deep sleep of carnal security. Thus they served David in that Psa 30:6-7; and thus they served the fool in the Gospel, Luk 12:16-22, and thus they served the old world; and so they did Sodom and Gomorrah afterwards, and so they did the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and their armies, Jdg 8:11-12, and so did the people of Laish, in Jdg 18:6-28. And so the peace, plenty, and prosperity of the Bohemians cast them into so great a security, that they began to grow very loose and base in their lives, and very cold and careless in the things of God, and in all their soul-concernments; insomuch that many of their most pious and prudent men did predict that certainly some horrible storm would suddenly arise, and that some dreadful tempest perhaps would beat upon them—as accordingly it came to pass. Alexander slew him whom he found asleep on the watch; and God finding the Bohemians in a deep sleep of sin and security, he brought the devouring sword upon them. Mercury could not kill Argus, until he had cast him into a sleep, and with an enchanted rod closed his eyes. No more can the devil or the world hurt any man, until by dandling of him on the knee of prosperity, he comes to lull him asleep in the bed of security. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Earthly riches do frequently divert the souls of men from embracing and closing with the golden seasons and opportunities of grace. Riches are the thorns which choke the word, and which make men barren and unfruitful under the word, Mat 13:22. Rich Felix had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, and made him happy in both worlds, Acts 24:24-27. The rich fool in the Gospel was so taken up in pulling down his barns, and in building of greater ones, that he had no time to prevent the ruin of his soul, Luk 12:15-22. Dives was so taken up with his riches, pomp, state, and with his royal apparel, royal attendance, and royal fare—that he never minded heaven, nor ever dreaded hell—until he awoke with everlasting flames about his ears! Luk 16:19-31.

Sicily is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there; and what do all the sweet profits, pleasures, and preferments of this world—but make men lose the scent of grace, the scent of glory, the scent of holiness, and the scent of happiness. It is true, rich men will have their eating times, and their drinking times, and their trading times, and their sporting times, and their sleeping times, and that which is worse—their sinning times, etc. But ah, how rare is it to see rich men covet after hearing times and praying times, and reading times, and meditating times, and mourning times, and repenting times, and reforming times. Rich men will have time for everything—but to honor God, exalt Christ, obey the Spirit, love the saints, attend ordinances, and save their own immortal souls. Oh the time, the thoughts, the strength, the energy—which rich men spend and consume upon their riches, while their precious souls lie a-bleeding to death, and an eternity of misery is hastening upon them. Some say, that where gold grows—no plant will thrive. Certainly, where riches thrive most—no grace will thrive. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Earthly riches commonly load the soul with a multitude of cares, fears, griefs, and vexations—which mightily disturb the soul, distract the soul; yes, often rack, torture, and torment

the soul. What if such a friend should be unfaithful to his trust? what if such a ship should miscarry? what if such a one should go bankrupt—who owes me so much? what if my title to such a land should not prove good? what if flaws are found in my title for such and such lands? what if fire should consume my habitation? what if thieves should rob me of my treasure? etc., and what do all these whats tend to—but to break a man's heart in a thousand pieces? But,

[7.] Seventhly, Earthly riches are many times fuel for the greatest and the grossest sins; as pride, oppression, revenge, cruelty, tyranny, gluttony, drunkenness, wantonness, and all manner of uncleanness and filthiness. But,

[8.] Eighthly, Earthly riches are many times reserved as witnesses against the rich in the great day of their account. Jas 5:1-3, "Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days." The rust of the rich man's cankered gold and his moth-eaten apparel shall be brought in as dreadful witnesses against him in the great day. The poet reasoned Pluto to be the god of riches and of hell too—as if they were inseparable. By all these particulars you see how hurtful, how harmful earthly portions often prove to their owners.

Oh—but now God is a portion which will never hurt a man, which will never harm a man, which will never in the least injure a man. Among all "the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb 12:22-23, there is not one to be found, who will give in his witness against this sweet and blessed truth that I have asserted; and among all the saints on earth you shall not find one—but will with both hands readily subscribe to this glorious maxim, namely—That God is such a portion, which has never hurt them, which has never harmed them; yes, that he is such a portion which has done them good all their days, and one upon whom they have lived, and by whom they have been maintained ever since they trusted in him. Holy Polycarp hit it, when he said, "This sixty-eight years have I served the Lord, and he never did me any hurt; and shall I now forsake him? Surely not!" But now earthly riches, for the most part, do a world of mischief and hurt to their owners. Oh the souls which earthly riches have pierced through and through with many sorrows! Oh the minds which earthly riches have blinded! Oh the hearts which earthly riches have hardened! Oh the consciences which earthly riches have benumbed! Oh the wills which earthly riches have perverted! Oh the affections which earthly riches have disordered! Oh the lives which earthly riches have corrupted! And Oh the souls which earthly riches have destroyed! But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, Earthly riches, for the most part, make men unwilling to die. Oh how terrible is the king of terrors to the rich and the great ones of the world 1Sa 28:20; Dan 5:1-7. And so Henry Beaufort, that rich and wretched cardinal, perceiving death at hand, spoke thus—'How can I die, being so rich? If the whole realm could save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Why will not death be hired? Will money do nothing?' It is reported that Queen Elizabeth could not endure so much as to hear death named; and Sigismund the emperor, and Louis the Eleventh, king of France, straitly charged all their servants, that when they saw them sick, they should never dare to name that bitter word death in their ears. Vitellius, an emperor of Rome—a notorious glutton, as you may easily judge, by his having at one supper two thousand fishes, and seven thousand birds—when he could not flee death, he made himself drunk that he might not be sensible of the pangs of death.

It was a very prudent and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the duke of Venice, who when he had showed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it—he only returned him this grave and serious memento, "these are the things which make us unwilling to die!" And by daily experience we find that of all men wealthy men are most unwilling to die. Oh—but now God is such a portion as fits and disposes the soul to die, yes, as makes the soul look and long for death, and that makes death more desirable than life itself. A man who has God for his portion, who has God in his arms—may well sing it out with old Simeon, "Lord, let your servant depart in peace, according to your word—for my eyes have seen your salvation," Luk 2:25, Luk 2:29-30; and with Paul, "I desire to depart—and to be with Christ," Php 1:23; and with the church, "Make haste, my beloved, and be like a roe, or to a young deer upon the mountain of spices," Song of Solomon 8:14; and, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," Rev 22:20.

"Did Christ die for me that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long away from him. All men go willingly to see him whom they love; and shall I be unwilling to die that I may see him whom my soul loves? Surely not!" Augustine longed to die that he might see that head which was once crowned with thorns. The dying words of my young Lord Harrington were these—"O my God, when shall I be with you?" Cyprian could receive the cruelest sentence of death with a 'thanks be to God!' Holy Andrew saluted the cross on which he was to be crucified, saying, "Take me from men, and restore me to my master!" And so Laurence Saunders, when he was come to the stake at which he was to be burnt, he kissed it, saying, "Welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, If God is the saints' portion, oh then let the saints still think of God, and look upon God their best portion. A man who has God for his portion should always have very high, noble, sweet, and precious thoughts of God. It does not befit those who have God for their portion—to be always looking upon God as an angry God, or as a displeased Father, or as an incensed judge, or as an enraged enemy, or as a bitter friend. When God would make known his name, his nature, his glory to Moses, he proclaims himself to be, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercies for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin," Exo 34:6-7. And certainly to keep up such precious thoughts and notions as these are of God, is that work of works which lies upon every man's hand, who has God for his portion.

O Christians! there is a very great aptness and proneness, even in those who have God for their portion, to have black, dark, hard, dismal, and dreadful thoughts and apprehensions of God—as you may see in Asaph, Heman, Job, David, etc. [Psa 77:1-20; Psa 88:1-18; Job 3:1-26; Psa 73:11-14] By nature we are as full of hard thoughts of God—as hell is full of sin. When the heart is not mightily overawed by the Spirit of God and overpowered by the grace of God—there all manner of dark and dismal apprehensions of God abounds. Besides, Satan knows very well that our corrupt natures are made up of sad and hard thoughts of God. Therefore he will use all his power and craft to blow up every spark, every hard thought of God, into a flame; especially when outward troubles and inward distresses are upon us.

What says Satan? "Do you think that God loves you? O Christian, when he deals thus sharply and severely with you, does he pretend kindness to you, and yet hide his face from you, and set you up

as a mark to shoot at? How can he be your friend—who has cast you down at your enemies' feet, and given you up into their paws and jaws? How can you think that he has any pity and compassion towards you—who makes no better provision for you? What vanity is it to believe that he will give you a crown—who denies you a crust? And that he will give you a house not made with hands—and yet allow you to be turned out of house and home? He will do so much for you in another world—who does so little for you in this world!" And thus Satan takes his opportunities to provoke corrupt nature and to kill the soul with hard thoughts of God. And certainly that Christian is a very great stranger to his own heart, who is not able to say from experience that it is one of the highest and hardest works—to keep up good and gracious thoughts of God, to keep up honorable and noble thoughts of God—in a suffering condition or under dark and dismal dispensations. Oh, but those who have God for their portion—they should abandon and abhor all hard thoughts of God, yes, however severe the dealings of God are towards them—yet it is their duty and their glory to keep up very sweet and precious thoughts of God, Psa 73:1.

O Christians! the more choice and honorable thoughts you keep up of God in your own souls, the more you will love the Lord, and the more you will delight in the Lord, and the more content and satisfaction you will take in the Lord. Such Christians who take a pleasure to be representing God to themselves in the most hideous, terrible, and amazing shapes—they kill their love and their joy, and they create a hell of torments in their own souls. Well, Christians! let me put a cluster of the grapes of Canaan into your hands at once, by telling you that the more glorious and blessed thoughts you keep up in your souls of God, the more spiritual, the more frequent, the more fervent, the more abundant, the more constant, and the more unwearied you will be in the work of the Lord, and the more all your graces will be acted, exercised, strengthened, and increased; yes, and the more your evidences for heaven will be cleared, your gracious experiences multiplied, your communion with God raised, your way to glory facilitated, and all your sufferings sweetened.

Therefore never let noble and precious thoughts of God die in your souls. Though he frowns upon you, O Christian, yet say that he is your portion; and though he chides you, yet say that he is your portion; and though he corrects you, yet say that he is your portion; and though he deserts you and carries it strangely towards you, yet say that he is your portion; and though he snatches many a mercy from you, yet say that he is your portion; and though he multiplies your burdens upon you, yet say that he is your portion; and though he writes bitter things against you, yet say that he is your portion; yes, though he should pass a sentence of death upon you, yet still say that he is your portion. O Christians, this would still raise a heaven in your hearts—if under all dispensations you would still look upon God as your portion, and live upon God as your portion. But,

(13.) Thirteenthly, If God is a believer's portion, then never let a believer be afraid to die, or unwilling to die. Let those be afraid to die—who have only this world for their portion here, and hell for their portion hereafter; but let not a saint be afraid of death—who has the Lord of life for his portion. A man who has God for his portion should rather invite death than tremble at it; he should rather sweetly welcome it, than turn his back upon it; for death to such a one is but the way to paradise, the way to all heavenly delights, the way to those everlasting springs of pleasure which are at God's right hand, the way to life, immortality, and glory, and the way to a clear, full, constant, and eternal enjoyment of God, Psa 16:11. Augustine upon those words, Exo 33:20-21, "You can not see my face and live," makes this short but sweet reply, "Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see your face." Death is the bridge which leads to the paradise of God. All the hurt that it can do is to

bring a believer to a full enjoyment of God, his everlasting portion. When Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, 'If that be all, I fear not; yes, your master cannot more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten.' Old Alderman Jordan used to say that death would be the best friend he had in the world, and that he would willingly go forth to meet it; or rather say with holy Paul, "O death, where is your sting?" triumphing over it. What is a drop of vinegar put into an ocean of wine? what is it for one to have a rainy day, who is going to take possession of a kingdom? A Dutch martyr feeling the flame to come to his beard, "Ah, said he, what a small pain is this, to be compared to the glory to come!" Lactantius boasts of the braveness of that spirit which was upon the martyrs in his time. Our children and women, not to speak of men, says he, do in silence overcome their tormentors, and the fire cannot so much as fetch a sigh from them. John Noyes took up a faggot at the fire and kissed it, saying, "Blessed be the time that ever I was born, to come to this preferment." Never did a neckerchief fit me so well as this chain, said Alice Driver, when they fastened her to the stake to be burnt. Mr. Bradford took off his cap, and thanked God, when the keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burnt on the morrow. Mr. Rogers, the first who was burnt in Queen Mary's days, sang in the flames. 'Be of good cheer,' said the woman-martyr to her husband that was to suffer with her, 'for though we have but an ill dinner on earth, we shall sup with Christ in heaven.' And what said Justin Martyr to his murderers, in behalf of himself and his fellow-martyrs? "You may kill us—but you can never hurt us."

Ah, Christians! how can you read over these choice instances and not blush, and not be ashamed to consider what a readiness, what a forwardness, and what a noble willingness there was in these brave worthies to die and go to heaven, and to be fully possessed of their God, of their portion, while you shrug at the very thoughts of death, and frequently put that day far from you, and had rather, with Peter, fall upon "building of tabernacles," Mat 17:4; than, with Paul, "desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ," Php 1:23. O Christians! how justly may that father be angry with his child that is unwilling to come home! and how justly may that husband be displeased with his wife who is unwilling to ride to him in a rainy day, or to cross the sea to enjoy his company! And is not this your case? is not this just your case, who have God for your portion, and yet are unwilling to die, that you may come to a full enjoyment of your portion? But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, and lastly, If God is the saint's portion, then let all the saints give all diligence to make this clearly and fully out to their own souls—that God is their portion 2Pe 1:5-8. Next to a man's having God for his portion, it is the greatest mercy in this world for a man to know that God is his portion, and to be able groundedly to say with the church, "The Lord is my portion!" Now this is a work that may be done. I suppose there is never a believer on earth but may attain unto this personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that God is his portion. Express promises speaks out such a thing as this is— Zec 13:9, "They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'" Eze 34:30, "Thus shall they know that I The Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, says the Lord." God will as soon put the faith of reliance and the faith of assurance to a blush, as he will put the faith of expectance to a blush: Psa 22:26, "The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the Lord will praise him—may your hearts live forever!" Sooner or later, such as seek him shall have such an answer of their prayers as shall turn their prayers into praises, and their petitions into thanksgivings.

Psa 84:11, "The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." God will be an universal, all-sufficient, and satisfactory good to those who walk uprightly. The Lord is as full of goodness as the sun is full of light, and he will as freely, and as fully, and as impartially communicate his goodness to those who walk uprightly, as the sun does her light both to the just and the unjust, Mat 5:45. As under the name of no good thing will he withhold, all temporal good things are to be understood, so under the name of grace all spiritual good things are to be understood, and under the name of glory all eternal good things are to be understood. And now, if God will give all spiritual and all eternal good things to his people, how can he then but sooner or later give a clear and satisfactory evidence into his people's bosoms that he is their portion? And not only express promises—but also the graces of the Spirit and the testimony of the Spirit confirms the same thing. The language of every saving grace is this—"The Lord is your portion, O believing soul." And the language and testimony of the Spirit is the same. Rom 8:15, "You have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom 8:16, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God." Shall an instinct in nature teach young ones to know their mothers, and shall not the Spirit of God, by a divine instinct, teach the saints to know God to be their God, and to be their portion also? Surely yes! Though this or that particular Christian may go to his grave without a satisfactory evidence in his own bosom that God is his portion—yet in an ordinary course, at first or last, God does give his people some assurance that he is their portion, yes, rather than they shall always live or die without assurance of their salvation; and that he is their portion, he will work a miracle to assure them of his love.

I have both heard and read of a rare story of Mrs. Honynwood, a famous professor of the gospel, and one that for many years together lay under the burden of a wounded spirit, and was much troubled in mind for lack of assurance that God was her portion, and that she would be saved from wrath to come. At length there came a godly minister to her, who endeavored to settle her faith and hope in Christ; and pressing many gospel promises upon her, she took it with a kind of indignation and anger that he should offer to present any promises to her, to whom, as she thought, they did not belong; and having a delicate Venice-glass in her hand, she held it up, and said, Speak no more to me of salvation, for I shall as surely be damned as this poor brittle glass shall be broke against the wall, throwing it with all her force to break it. But it so pleased God that, by a miraculous providence, the glass was preserved whole. The minister, beholding the miracle, took up the glass, and said unto her, "Behold, God must work a miracle before you, before you will believe." And forever after that day she had very strong assurance of her salvation, and that God was her portion; and so lived and died in a sweet and comfortable sense of the love and favor of God.

Now, to provoke you to labor with all your might to attain to a clear, personal, satisfactory evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, do but seriously consider and lay to heart the rare and singular advantages that will redound to your souls by this means. I shall only touch upon some, by which yourselves may guess at others.

[1.] First, By this means your hearts will come to be fixed, settled, and established. A man's soul never comes to be fixed and settled by knowing in the general that God is the saint's portion—but by a personal evidence and certainty of knowledge that he is his particular portion. While a man's particular property is unsettled, all is unsettled in his soul; but when a man's particular property is

settled, when he can say, 'This God is my God, and the Lord is my portion,' then all is settled, then all is at peace in the soul, Psa 57:7; Psa 108:1; Psa 112:7. A man who has God for his portion, if he does not know it, will still be like a ship at sea in the midst of a storm, tossed here and there, and now rolling on one side and then on the other, and never quiet, never lying still; but a man who has God for his portion, and knows it, he is like a ship in a good harbor, that lies quiet and still; yes, he is like mount Zion, which cannot be moved. But,

[2.] Secondly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will rid his soul of all sinful doubts. O Christians! now your hearts are as full of doubts as hell is full of darkness. One day you doubt whether your graces are true, and another day you doubt whether your comforts are true. Now, you doubt of your saintship, and then of your sonship, and then of your heirship. Sometimes you doubt of your communion with God, sometimes you doubt of your acquaintance with God, and sometimes you doubt of your acceptance with God. One hour you doubt of the favor of God, and the next hour you doubt of your access to God. And as it is thus with you, so it will be thus with you until you come to have some clear satisfaction in your own spirits that God is your portion.

O Christians! had you but once a personal evidence in your own bosoms that God is your portion, all those doubts which are bred and fed by ignorance and unbelief, and which rob the soul of all joy, comfort, and content, and which render men babes in Christianity, and which cast reproach upon God, Christ, and the promises, etc., and which most gratify and advantage Satan to tempt and try your souls—would vanish and disperse as the clouds do before the sun when it shines in its brightness! Until a Christian's eyes are opened to see God to be his portion, his heart will be full of doubts and perplexities. Though Mary Magdalene was very near to Christ—yet she stands sighing, mourning, and complaining, that "they had stolen away her Lord," John 20:13-16. A Christian may have God for his portion—yet until he comes to see God to be his portion, he will spend his days in sighing, mourning, and complaining.

O Christians! until you come to see God to be your portion, your doubts will lie down with you and rise with you, they will talk with you and walk with you, until they make your lives a very hell. It was an excellent speech of Luther, "The whole Scripture," says he, "does principally aim at this thing, that we should not doubt—but that we should hope, trust, and believe that God is a merciful, bountiful, and gracious God to his people." And what will bring a man's heart over to answer to this blessed aim of the Scripture? Certainly nothing below an assurance that God is his portion.

It was a noble resolution of blessed Bradford, who, in one of his epistles, says thus—"O Lord, sometimes methinks I feel it so with me, as if there were no difference between my heart and the hearts of the wicked. My mind is as blind as theirs, and my will as stout, stubborn, and rebellious as theirs; and my affections are as much disordered as theirs, and my conscience as much benumbed and stupefied as theirs, and my heart as hard and flinty as theirs, etc.; shall I therefore conclude that you are not my Father? Nay, I will reason otherwise," says he; "I do believe you are my Father; I will come unto you, that you may enlighten this blind mind of mine, and bend and bow this stout and stubborn will of mine; and that you may put order into these disordered affections of mine, and that you may put life and quickness into this stupefied and benumbed conscience of mine, and that you may put softness and tenderness into this hard and flinty heart of mine." And thus he nobly reasoned himself, and believed himself, out of all his fears and doubts. There is no such way for a man to be rid of all his fears and doubts, as to live in the sight and faith of this

truth—that God is his portion.

Plutarch reports of one, who would not be resolved of his doubts, because he would not lose the pleasure in seeking for resolution, like to him who would not have his physician to quench the thirst he felt in his illness, because he would not lose the pleasure of drinking; and like those who would not be freed from their sins, because they would not lose the pleasure of sinning. But I hope better things of all those who have God for their portion, than to find them in love with their doubts, or to be unwilling to be rid of their doubts. Next to a man's going to hell, it is one of the greatest afflictions in the world for a man always to live in doubts about his going to heaven. Next to damnation, it is one of the greatest troubles that can attend a Christian, to be always exercised and perplexed with doubts about his salvation. Next to being damned, it is the hell of hells to live in continual fears of damnation. Now the only way to prevent all this, is to know that God is your portion. But,

[3.] Thirdly, A clear, personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will exceedingly sweeten all the crosses, losses, and changes that shall attend him in this world. Habakkuk knew that God was the God of his salvation; and that he was his portion. Therefore he rejoices—"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation." Hab 3:17-18. And the same noble temper was upon those worthies in Heb 10:34, "When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity." They took joyfully the confiscation of their earthly portions, being well assured in their own souls that they should enjoy a heavenly portion, an everlasting portion. And so the apostles knew that they had "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2Co 5:1; and this carried them bravely through honor and dishonor, through evil report and good report, and through all weaknesses, sicknesses, distresses, needs, dangers, and death; and this made their heavy afflictions light, and their long afflictions short, and their bitter afflictions sweet 2Co 4:16-18. This was that tree which, being cast in the waters of Marah, made them sweet, Exo 15:23-25; and this was that that did unsting all their crosses, losses, and reproaches, and that made them rejoice and sing under those very burdens and trials that would have broke the necks, backs, and hearts of others, Acts 5:1-42 and Acts 16:1-40. When a man has a clear personal evidence that God is his portion, then no outward changes will make any considerable change in him. Though Laban had changed Jacob's wages ten times—yet Jacob was Jacob still, Gen 31:7. Let times change, and men change, and powers change, and nations change—yet a man who has God for his portion, and knows it, will never change his countenance, nor change his Master, nor change his service, nor change his works, nor change his ways. Under all changes he will still be 'always the same'. Many great and dreadful changes passed upon Joseph—but yet under all Joseph's bow "abode in strength," Gen 49:23-24. When a man knows that God is his portion, whatever changes may pass upon him—yet his bow will still abide in strength.

How many are there in these days, who have changed their names, their notes, their coats, their principles, their practices—and all for worldly advantages. These changelings, who change from better to worse, and from naught to be very naught, yes, stark naught, are the worst and the naughtiest of men, and deserve to be hanged in chains; and certainly, when the wrath of God breaks forth, these changelings shall be as stubble before it, Mal 4:1; Heb 10:38. God abhors none

as he does those who run from him to serve other lords, and who gad about to change their way. Jer 2:36-37, "Why do you gad about so much, changing your ways? You will be disappointed by Egypt as you were by Assyria. You will also leave that place with your hands on your head, for the Lord has rejected those you trust; you will not be helped by them." There is nothing that will keep a man from apostasy, and from making a defection from God, his ways, his worship, his glory, etc., like a blessed persuasion that God is his portion 2Pe 1:5-11. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, will exceedingly raise and advance the comfort and joy of a man's heart. It is not merely my having of God for my portion—but it is my seeing, it is my knowing, it is my fruition of God as my portion—which is the true spring of all delight, comfort, and consolation. When a man's interest in God is clear, then all the precious promises will be full wells of salvation, and full breasts of consolation to him—but until then they will be but as dry breasts, as barren heaths, as a desolate wilderness, and as empty wells. While a man is doubtful whether God is his God, it is certain that the spring of joy and comfort will run low in his soul; while a man lives in fear that his title and interest is not good, how can he rejoice? When a man's interest in God is clear—then his heaven of joy begins. A man who has God for his portion, and knows it, cannot but live in a paradise of joy, and walk in a paradise of joy, and work in a paradise of joy, and eat in a paradise of joy, and recreate himself in a paradise of joy, and rest in a paradise of joy. He cannot but have a heaven of joy within him, and an heaven of joy about him, and an heaven of joy over him. All his looks will speak out joy within, and all his words will speak out joy within, and all his works will speak out joy within, and all his ways will speak out joy within.

I remember a notable saying of one, 'How sweet was it to me, to be suddenly without those sweet vanities! Those things which I was afraid to lose—with joy I let go; for you, who are the true and only sweetness, did cast out those from me, and instead of them did enter in yourself, who is more delightful than all pleasure, and more clear than all light.' When a man's interest in God is clear, his joy will be full, John 16:24; when a man is happy, and knows it, he cannot but rejoice; when a man has God for his portion, and knows it, all the world cannot hinder the strong consolations of God from rising high in his soul.

Why have the saints in heaven more joy and delight than the saints on earth? Because they have a clearer and a fuller knowledge of their interest and property in God, than the others have! The knowledge of a man's property in God is the comfort of comforts. Property makes every comfort, a pleasurable comfort, a delightful comfort. When a man walks in a fair meadow, and can write mine upon it, and into a pleasant garden, and can write mine upon it, and into a fruitful field, and can write mine upon it, and into a stately habitation, and can write mine upon it, and into a rich treasury, and can write mine upon it, oh how does it please him! how does it delight him! how does it joy and rejoice him! Of all words, this word mine is the sweetest and the most comforting word. Ah! when a man can look upon God, and write mine; when he can look upon God, and say, 'This God is my God forever and ever!' when he can look upon God, and say, 'This God is my portion!' when he can look upon God, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"—how will all the springs of joy rise in his soul! Oh who can but joy to be owner of that God who fills heaven and earth with his fullness? Who can but rejoice to have him for his portion, in having of whom he has all things, in having of whom he can lack nothing? The serious thoughts of our property in God will add much sweet to all our sweets; yes, it will make every bitter, sweet. When a man seriously

thinks, 'It is my God who cheers me with his presence, it is my God who supports me with his power, it is my God who guides me by his counsel, it is my God who supplies me with his goodness, and it is my God who blesses all my blessings to me; it is my God who afflicts me in love, it is my God who has broken me in my estate and in my credit, it is my God who has sorely visited such a child, it is my God who has passed a sentence of death upon such a friend, it is my God who has thus straitened me in my liberty, and it is my God who has thus cast me down at my enemies' feet, etc.—how do these thoughts cheer up the spirit of a man, and make every bitter, sweet; and every burden, light unto him. A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye—but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful to be exceeding beautiful; it puts a luster upon beauty. And so does holy joy put a divine beauty and luster upon all the ways of God, and upon all the people of God. And therefore, it highly concerns all Christians, as they would have a heavenly beauty, luster, and glory upon them, to rejoice; and that they may rejoice, it does as highly concern them to know their interest and property in God. But,

[5.] Fifthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will very much raise him in his communion with God, and exceedingly sweeten his fellowship with God. There are no Christians on earth that have such high, such choice, such free, such full, such sweet, and such uninterrupted communion with God—as those who have a clear sight of their interest and property in God. The spouse, in that book of Solomon's Song, again, and again, and again—sings and sounds out her property and interest in Christ. Song of Solomon 2:16, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Song of Solomon 6:3, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Song of Solomon 7:10, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me." Now, mark—how does the sense of her property in Christ work? Why, it works very highly, very strongly, very inflamingly, very affectionately. Song of Solomon 1:2-4, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the maidens love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers!" Song of Solomon 1:13, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me; he shall lie all night between my breasts." Song of Solomon 2:3-6, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to the banquet hall, and his banner over me is love. Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me." The spouse had a clear sight and a deep sense of her interest and property in Christ; and oh, how high, how close, how full, how sweet, is she in her communion and fellowship with Christ! It is the sight and sense of property and interest, which heightens and sweetens that communion which is between husband and wife, father and child, brother and sister, and friend and friend. So it is the sight and sense of a man's property and interest in God—which heightens and sweetens his communion and fellowship with God. A clear sight of a man's interest and property in God will exceedingly sweeten every thought of God, and every appearance of God, and every taste of God, and every smile of God, and every communication of God, and every ordinance of God, and every work of God, and every way of God! Yes, it will sweeten every rod which is in the hand of God, and every wrinkle which is in face of God, Psa 139:17-18. A man who sees his interest in God, will hang upon him, and trust in him—though he should write ever such bitter things against him; and though he should deal ever so severely with him; yes, though he should slay him, as you may see in Job 13:15. He hit it who

said, A man whose soul is conversant with God shall find more pleasure in the desert and in death, than in the palace of a prince.

Urbanus Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, said that it was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life. But if one day's communion with Luther was so sweet, oh how sweet must one day's communion with God is. And therefore, as ever you would have high, and full, and sweet communion with God—keep up a clear sight, a blessed sense of your interest and property in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion, is a man's all in all. O Christians! this is the life of your lives, and the life of your prayers, and the life of your praises, and the life of your confidences, and the life of your mercies, and the life of your comforts, and the life of your hopes, etc. A clear sight of your property in God is the very life of promises, the life of ordinances, the life of providences, the life of experiences, and the life of your gracious evidences. It is a pearl of great price; it is your paradise; it is manna in a wilderness; it is water out of a rock; it is a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; it is Jacob's ladder; it is a salve for every sore; it is a cure for every disease; it is a remedy against every malady; it is an anchor at sea, and a shield on shore; it is a star to guide you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a pavilion to hide you, a fire to warm you, a banquet to refresh you, a city of refuge to secure you, and a cordial to cheer you! What more could you desire? But,

[7.] Seventhly, and lastly, A clear personal evidence that God is a man's portion will exceedingly sweeten the thoughts of death, and all the approaches of death, and all the warnings and forerunners of death unto him. It will make a man look upon his last day as his best day, Ecc 7:1; it will make a man look upon the king of terrors as the king of desires, Job 18:14; it will make a man laugh at the shaking of the spear, at the sounding of the trumpet, at the confused noise of the battle, at garments rolled in blood, at the sighs and groans of the wounded, and at the heaps of the slain.

It was the martyrs' clear sight of their interest and property in God, which made them welcome the lions, and dare their persecutors, and to kiss the stake, and to sing and clap their hands in the midst of the flames, and to tread upon hot burning coals as upon beds of roses, and divinely to triumph over their tormentors. It was this which made the primitive Christians fearless of martyrdom, and which made them willingly and cheerfully lay down their lives, that they might, Elijah-like, mount to heaven in fiery chariots. A man who sees his property in God, knows that death shall be the funeral of all his sins, sorrows, afflictions, temptations, desertions, oppositions, vexations, oppressions, and persecutions. He knows that death shall be the resurrection of his hopes, joys, delights, comforts, and contentments; and that it shall bring him to a more clear, full, perfect, and constant enjoyment of God! This makes him sweetly and triumphantly to sing it out, "O death! where is your sting? O grave! where is your victory?" 1Co 15:35-37. And oh that these seven considerations might prevail with all your souls to be restless, until you have in your own bosoms clear and full satisfaction that God is your portion. Now this last inference leads me by the hand to an use of trial and examination. O Christians! if God is the saint's portion, the believer's portion, how highly does it concern everyone who looks upon himself as a saint or as a believer, to search, try, and examine whether God is his portion or not!

03.04. Chapter 4

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

How shall we know whether God is our portion?

But you will say, How shall we know whether God is our portion? Oh! were all the world a lump of gold, and in our hands to dispose of—we would give it to know that God is our portion! Oh! the knowledge of this would be as life from the dead; it would create a heaven in our hearts on this side heaven; it would presently put us into a paradise of pleasure and delight. But still the question is, How shall we know it? It is an easy thing to say that God is our portion; but how shall we come infallibly to know that God is truly our portion?

Now, to give clear and full satisfaction to this great and weighty question, I shall give in these following answers, by which you may certainly and undoubtedly know, whether God is your portion or no:

[1.] First, If God is your portion—then you have very sweet, precious, high, and honorable thoughts of God—then your thoughts will still be running out after God, and your meditations of him will be sweet. A man who has God for his portion, is always best when his thoughts and meditations are running out most after God. Psa 104:34, "My meditations of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." Psa 63:5-6, "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise you with joyful lips; when I remember you upon my bed (or beds, as the Hebrew has it; David bedded at many places—but still his thoughts were always running out to God), and meditate on you in the night watches." Psa 139:17-18, "How precious also are your thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand—when I awake, I am still with you." The psalmist had very frequent, high, precious, and honorable thoughts of God; he valued nothing at so high a rate as sweet and noble thoughts of God, and of his power, wisdom, goodness, faithfulness, and graciousness, etc.

David had such precious thoughts of God, and such great and glorious thoughts of God, and such infinite and innumerable thoughts of God—that he was as able to number the sands of the sea, as he was able to number them up—"And when I awake I was still with you." He was still a-contemplating upon God; he fell asleep with precious thoughts of God, and he awoke with precious thoughts of God; he rose up with precious thoughts of God, and he lay down with precious thoughts of God; he went forth with precious thoughts of God, and he returned home with precious thoughts of God. Take a Christian when he is himself—when he is neither under sad desertsions, nor under black temptations, nor under great afflictions—and he can as soon forget his

own house, the wife of his bosom, his own children—yes, he can as soon forget to eat his bread—as he can forget his God. When Alexander the Great had overthrown Darius, king of Persia, he took among the spoils a most rich cabinet, full of the choicest jewels that were in all the world; upon which there rose a dispute before him, to what use he should put the cabinet; and everyone having spent his judgment according to his fancy, the king himself concluded, that he would keep that cabinet, to be a treasury to lay up the books of Homer in, which were his greatest joy and delight. A sanctified memory is a rich cabinet full of the choicest thoughts of God; it is that rich treasury wherein a Christian is still a-laying up more and more precious thoughts of God, and more and more high and holy thoughts of God, and more and more honorable and noble thoughts of God, and more and more solemn and reverent thoughts of God, and more and more sweet and comfortable thoughts of God, and more and more tender and compassionate thoughts of God, etc. Take a Christian in his ordinary course, and you shall find that wherever he is, his thoughts are running out after God; and about whatever he is, his thoughts are still a-running out after God; and into what company soever he is cast, whether they are good or bad—yet still his thoughts are running out after God, etc.

Look! as an earthly-minded man has his thoughts and meditations still exercised and taken up with the world, as you may see in Haman, whose heart and thoughts were taken up with his honors, preferments, riches, wife, children, and friends, etc. Est 5:10-12, "Then he gathered together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, and boasted to them about his great wealth and his many children. He bragged about the honors the king had given him and how he had been promoted over all the other officials and leaders. Then Haman added—And that's not all! Queen Esther invited only me and the king himself to the banquet she prepared for us. And she has invited me to dine with her and the king again tomorrow!" And the same spirit you may see working in those who had made gold their God, in that Psa 49:10-11, "Those who are wise must finally die, just like the foolish and senseless, leaving all their wealth behind. The grave is their eternal home, where they will stay forever. They may name their estates after themselves, but they leave their wealth to others. They will not last long despite their riches—they will die like the animals." The Hebrew runs thus—"Their inwards are their houses forever," as if their houses were got within them. Not only the thoughts—but the very inmost thoughts, the most retired thoughts and recesses of worldlings' souls, are taken up about earthly things; and though they care not whether their names are written in heaven or not—yet they do all they can to propagate and immortalize their names on earth. And the rich fool was one in spirit with these the psalmist speaks of, as you may see in that Luk 12:1-59 "And he told them this parable—The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself (the Greek word signifies to talk with a man's self, or to reason with a man's self. This foolish worldling was much in talking to himself, and in reasoning with himself about his goods and barns, etc., as the usual manner of men is, who are of a worldly spirit), 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" Among all his worldly thoughts, there is not one thought of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, of holiness, of eternity, to be found. His thoughts were so taken up with his bags, and his barns, and his buildings, and his ease, and his belly, that he had no time to think of providing for another world. Therefore God quickly dispatches him out of this world, and throws him down from the highest pinnacle of prosperity and worldly glory—into the greatest gulf of wrath and misery, Luk 12:20. And

this foolish worldling puts me in mind of another, who, being offered a horse by his fellow upon condition that he would but say the Lord's prayer, and think upon nothing but God, which offer being accepted, he began—"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be your name." But I must have the bridle too, said he. No, nor the horse neither, said the other; for you have lost both already. When worldlings should most think of God, and be most struck with the dread and majesty of God, and be most afflicted and taken up with the glory of God—yet then their thoughts and hearts will be a-gadding and a-running after the world, as you may see in Ezekiel's hearers; Eze 33:30-32, and in Paul's, Php 3:18-19. When queen Mary was dying, she said that if they did but open her when she was dead, they should find Calais lying at her heart. Ah! how often does stinking lusts and rotten towns, and moth-eaten bags, and other trifling vanities, lie near those hearts—where God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and grace, and ordinances, and saints, and heaven should lie! Look! as the thoughts of the men of the world do mainly run out after the world, after their earthly portions, so the thoughts of those who have God for their portion do mainly run out after God, and they are never so well as when they are most a-thinking and a-musing on God. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God is your portion—then in all your straits, trials, troubles, and needs, you will run to your God, you will fly to the Lord, as to your only city of refuge. [Psa 28:1; Psa 31:2-3; Psa 61:2; Psa 62:2, Psa 62:6-7; Psa 92:15; Psa 94:22; Psa 32:1-2] 1Sa 30:6, "David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God." When a shower of stones were coming about David's ears, he runs and shelters himself under the wings of his God. Though David was an exile in an heathenish country; though Ziklag, the place of his habitation, was burnt; though he had neither house nor home to flee to; though his wives were in his enemies' hands; and though his friends and followers were desperately incensed, enraged, exasperated, and provoked against him, and took counsel together about stoning of him, looking upon him as the author of all their crosses, losses, calamities, and miseries—yet now he comforts and encourages himself in the Lord his God. Psa 142:4, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld—but there was no man who would know me—refuge failed me; but no man cared for my soul." But what does the psalmist do in this case? Does he despair or despond? No! Does he cast away his hope and confidence in God? No! Why, what does he do then? Why, when all outward comforts fail him, he runs to God as to his last refuge. Psa 142:5-6, "I cry to you, O Lord; I say—You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me!"

He does not run in his straits from God to the creatures, for that had been to run from the fountain of living waters—to broken cisterns; Jer 2:12-13; John 6:68; Isa 33:16; from the light of the sun—to the light of a candle; and from the Rock of ages—to a leaf driven about with the wind; and from paradise—into an howling wilderness, etc. But where does he run then? Why, he runs to God! He knew that God was his light, his life, his love, his peace, his joy, his strength, his shelter, his safety, his security, his crown, his glory—and therefore he runs to his God!

And, indeed, in times of danger, where should the child run to shelter himself but to his father? and where should the wife run but to her husband? and the servant but to his master? and the soldier but to his stronghold? and a Christian but to his God? Pro 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is safe." Sometimes by the name of the Lord we are to understand God himself—but most commonly God's attributes are called his name, because by

them he is known, as a man is by his name; and here by the name of the Lord we are to understand the power of the Lord, for by that God is known, as men are known by their names. Now God himself is a strong tower, and the power of God is a strong tower, yes, it is a tower as high as heaven, and as strong as strength itself; it is a tower so deep nothing can undermine it, so thick no cannon can pierce it, so high no ladder can scale it, so strong that no enemy can assault it or ever be able to stand before it, and so well furnished and provided for all purposes and intents, that all the powers of darkness can never distress it, or in the least straiten it.

Now into this impregnable and indomitable tower, the righteous in all their distresses and dangers run. All creatures run to their refuges when they are hunted and pursued, and so do righteous souls to theirs. But what does the righteous man gain by running to his strong tower? Why, he gains safety; he is safe, says the text, or rather according to the Hebrew—he is exalted, he is set aloft, he is a soul out of the range of gunshot, he is a soul out of all hazard and danger, he is safe in everlasting arms, he is safe in his strong tower of defense; he can easily overlook all hazards, yes, he can look upon the greatest dangers with an holy neglect. When the burning fiery furnace was heated seven times hotter than at first—where do Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego run? Why, they run to God. Dan 3:16-18, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king—O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." And so Moses in that Psa 90:1, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations;" or as the Hebrew has it, you have been our refuge-place in generation after generation. By this Hebraism, generation after generation, the prophet sets forth all generations, to show that there has been no generation wherein God has not been the refuge of his people. God was a refuge to his people before the flood, and he has been a refuge since the flood, and he will be a refuge to his people, while he has a people in the world. All the time that Moses and the people of Israel were a-traveling up and down in that terrible howling wilderness, wherein they were compassed about with dreadful dangers on all hands, God was a refuge and a dwelling place unto them. In all their troubles and travels for four hundred years together, God was a shelter, a refuge, and an house of defense unto them. Every man's house is his strong castle, and there he retreats when dangers come; and thus did the people of God in the text. When dangers threatened them, they still run to their God, they still made their retreat to the Holy One of Israel. A man who has God for his portion, when he is in his worst condition—can never be houseless nor harborless. As long as God lives, he can never lack a house—a mansion-house to hide his head in. All the powers on earth and all the powers of hell can never unhouse, nor never unharbor, nor never unshelter that man who has God for his portion!

It was a witty saying of that learned man Picus Mirandula, "God created the earth for beasts to inhabit, the sea for fish, the air for birds, and heaven for angels and stars; so that man has no place to dwell and abide in, but God alone." And certainly he who by faith dwells in God, dwells in the best, the noblest, the safest, and the strongest house that ever was dwelt in. And so Psa 91:1-2, "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress—my God; in him will I trust." In this whole psalm the safety of a saint is set forth to the life; to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, notes the defense and protection of God. Those words, "shall abide under the shadow of

the Almighty," are a metaphor taken from a bird or a hen, who hides her young ones under her wings, and so secures them from birds of prey. God never lacks a wing to hide his children under. Look! as little chicks run under the wings of the hen when danger is near, so the people of God do commonly run under the wings of God when danger is near. And certainly, that Christian may well bid defiance to all dangers, and easily and sweetly sing away all cares and fears, who can by faith shelter himself and lodge himself under the shadow of Shaddai.

Look! as the worldling in all his straits, troubles, trials, dangers, and needs, still runs to his bags, to his earthly portion for support, for comfort, for support, for relief, for shelter, for protection, Pro 18:11; Mat 19:24; 1Ti 6:17. So a Christian in all his troubles, trials, and distresses, still runs to his God for shelter, comfort, and support.

Psa 31:1-3, "In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness. Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me." Psa 61:2-4, "From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings." Psa 94:21-22, "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent. But the Lord is my defense; and my God is the rock of my refuge." Psa 57:2, "I will cry unto God most High; unto God who performs all things for me." Isa 25:9, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us—this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." Mic 7:7, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation—my God will hear."

Thus you see that the saints in all their straits and trials do still run to God. They know that that God that is their portion is an all-sufficient God, and that he is a sun and a shield to those who walk uprightly. Therefore they delight to be still a running under his shadow. A man who has God for his portion, may truly say in his greatest distresses and troubles, "Well, though I have no riches to fly to, nor any friends to shelter me, nor any relations to stand by me, nor any visible power on earth to protect me—yet I have a God for my portion, who is always willing to supply me, and able to secure me."

Psa 18:1-2, "I will love you, O Lord, my strength," or as the Hebrew has it, "I will dearly love the Lord," or "I will love him with inmost feelings of affections," as a tenderhearted mother loves her dearest babe with the inmost affections of affections. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." In this verse you have nine different expressions to discover what an all-sufficient refuge, God is to his people in their greatest distresses. When a Christian in his worst condition—yet he has celestial bread to eat, which the world knows nothing of. The grand policy of a Christian to secure himself against all dangers is to run to God. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If God is your portion—then you will hold fast your portion, and rather part with anything, than part with your portion. Naboth would not upon any terms part with his inheritance; he would rather let all go, yes, his very life go, than let his inheritance go, his portion go. 1Ki 21:3, "And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto you;" or, as the Hebrew has it, 'The Lord keep me from this as from an abominable thing.' To

alter or alienate the property of inheritances was expressly forbidden by God in his law, Lev 25:23; Num 36:7; Eze 46:18. Therefore Naboth looks upon Ahab's offer and motion as a detestable and an abominable thing, and resolves to hold fast his inheritance, whatever it cost him. So a Christian will hold fast his God, whatever comes on it; he will let anything go, rather than let his God go or his Christ go.

Song of Solomon 3:4, "I found him whom my soul loves; I held him, and would not let him go." The Hebrew word that is here rendered held signifies to hold, as a man would hold his possession, his inheritance. The word signifies to hold with both hands, to hold with all one's might and with all one's strength; and thus the spouse held the Lord Jesus; she held him with both hands; she held him with all her might and with all her strength; she held him with a holy violence, with a holy force; she held him as a man would hold his prisoner who had a mind to escape; or as a man would hold his sword or shield, when his life is in danger. So Jacob, Gen 32:26, "And he said, Let me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let you go, except you bless me." When Jacob was all alone, and in a dark night, and upon one leg, and when his joints were out of joint, and he very much overmatched—yet then he holds God fast, he wrestles and weeps, and weeps and wrestles, he tugs and sweats, and sweats and tugs, and will not let go his hold, until, like a prince, he had prevailed with God, Hos 12:4.

Ruth, you know, was so glued to her mother Naomi, that no arguments could prevail with her to leave her mother. She was fully resolved in this, that where her mother went, she would go; and where her mother lodged, she would lodge; and that her mother's people would be her people; and her mother's God her God; and that where her mother died there she would die; and there would she be buried, Ruth 1:14-19. So a man who has God for his portion is so glued to his God, that nothing can take him off from following of God and from cleaving to God. When David was in his wilderness condition—yet then his soul followed hard after God, then his soul stuck close to God. Psa 63:1-2, "O God, you are my God; early will I seek you—my soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water." Psa 63:8, "My soul follows hard after you;" or, as the words may be read, "My soul cleaves after you." David's enemies did not follow harder after him than he followed hard after God. The wife in a man's bosom could not cleave so close to him as David's soul did cleave close to God when he was in a wilderness estate, when he was in an afflicted condition.

It is nothing to follow God in a paradise—but it is rare to follow God in a wilderness; it is nothing to follow God when the way is strewn with rosebuds—but it is the glory of a Christian to follow God when the way is strewn with thorns and briars; it is nothing to follow God in a crowd, or with the crowd. But it is the excellency of a Christian to follow God in a wilderness, where few or none follows after him. It is nothing to follow God in the midst of all encouragements—but it is wonderful to follow God in the midst of all discouragements. Oh the integrity! oh the ingenuity! oh the strong intention! oh the deep affection! oh the noble resolution—of that Christian who hangs upon God in a wilderness, and who cleaves to God in a wilderness, and who follows hard after God in a wilderness!

Look! as Shechem's soul did cleave to Dinah, and as Jacob's soul did cleave to Rachel, and as Jonathan's soul did cleave to David in the very face of all hazards, dangers, difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses—so the very soul of a man who has God for his portion will cleave to God in

the very face of all hazards, dangers, difficulties, troubles, trials, and distresses that he meets withal, Psa 44:8-23. It is neither the frowns of men, nor the reproaches of men, nor the scorns of men, nor the contempts of men, nor the oppositions of men, nor the treacheries of men, nor the multitudes of men—which will work him to let go his hold of God. A man who has God for his portion knows that, while he holds his God, he holds his life; and that, while he holds his God, he holds his comfort, his crown, his heaven, his all. Therefore he will rather let all go—than let his God go. And so much the several leave us nots which are scattered up and down in the blessed Scripture, do clearly evidence; as that in 1Ki 8:57, "The Lord our God is with us, as he was with our fathers—let him not leave us, nor forsake us;" and that Psa 27:9, "Hide not your face far from me; put not your servant away in anger; you have been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." And so Psa 119:121, "I have done judgment and justice; leave me not to my oppressors." And so Psa 141:8, "But my eyes are unto you, O God the Lord—in you is my trust; leave not my soul destitute," or leave not my soul naked, as the Hebrew word signifies. And so in that Jer 14:9, "O Lord, are in the midst of us, and we are called by your name; leave us not." Now in these five scriptures you have five leave us nots, and what do they import? Certainly nothing less than a marvelous unwillingness in the people of God to part with God, or to let go their hold of God. A man who has God for his portion will rather die at the foot of God, than he will let go his hold of God. Job 13:15, "Though he slay me—yet will I trust in him." But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God is your portion, then you live upon God as upon your portion. Look! as the men of the world live upon their earthly portions, so a man who has God for his portion lives upon his God, as you may plainly see by comparing these scriptures. [1Sa 30:6; Hab 3:17-18; Psa 73:26; Rom 14:7-8; Gal 2:20; Php 1:21] Look! how the poor man lives upon his labors, the covetous man upon his bags, the ambitious man upon his honors, the voluptuous man upon his pleasures, etc., so does a Christian live upon his God. In all his duties he lives upon God, and in all his mercies he lives upon God, and in all his needs he lives upon God, and in all his straits and trials he lives upon God, and in all his contentments and enjoyments he still lives upon God. He lives upon God for his justification. Rom 8:33, "It is God who justifies." And he still lives upon God for the perfecting of his sanctification; Php 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And he lives upon God for the maintaining and increasing of his consolation 2Co 1:3-5. When he is under the frowns of the world, then he lives upon the smiles of God; when he is under the hatred of the world, then he lives upon the loves of God; and when he is under the reproaches of the world, then he lives upon his acceptance with God; when he is under the threatenings of the world, then he lives upon the protection of God; and when he is under the evil designs and plottings of the world, then he lives upon the wisdom and counsel of God; when he is under the slights and neglects of the world, then he lives upon the care of God; and when he is under the crosses and losses of the world, then he lives upon the fullness and goodness of God, etc.

Alexander told his soldiers, 'I keep awake—that you may sleep.' Most sure I am, that he who is the saint's portion never slumbers nor sleeps, Psa 121:3-4. God is always watchful and wakeful to do his people good; he never lacks skill or will to help them, he never lacks a purse, a hand, or a heart to supply them, etc.

O Christians! Every man singles out something to live upon. Some single out one thing, some another. Says the wife—I must live upon my husband; says the child—I must live upon my father;

says the servant—I must live upon my master; says the old—We must live upon the labors of the young; says the poor—We must live upon the charity of the rich. Why then shall not a Christian live upon his God? A Christian who has God for his portion may say, when he is in his worst condition, 'Well, though I have not this, nor that, nor the other outward comfort to live upon—yet I have the power of a God to live on, and I have the providence of a God to live on, and I have the promise of a God to live on, and I have the oath of a God to live on, and I have the love of a God to live on, and I have the bounty of a God to live on, and I have the fullness of a God to live on, and I have the care of a God to live on—and what more can I desire?

John of Alexandria, nicknamed the Almoner, when he had distributed all to the poor, he thanked God that he had now nothing left him to live upon but his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. When all is gone—yet a Christian has his God to live upon as his portion, and that is enough to answer to all other things, and to make up the lack of all other things. Look! as he has nothing which is truly good—who has not God for his portion; so he lacks nothing which is truly good—who has God for his portion. It was a weighty saying of Cajetan, "The spiritual good of a man consists in this—that a man has friendship with God, and consequently that he lives for him, to him, with him, in him." Old godly Similes said, that he had been in the world sixty years—but had lived but seven, counting his life not from his first birth—but from his new birth. A man lives no longer than he lives upon God as his portion—when a man begins to live upon God as his portion, then he begins to live indeed, and not until then. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If God is your portion—then he carries your heart away from all other things, Psa. 42:12. The portion always carries the heart with it. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Mat 6:19-21.

Psa 63:1, "O God, you are my God, early will I seek you" (or, I will diligently seek you, as merchants seek precious stones which are of greatest value), "my soul thirsts for you." He does not say, my soul thirsts for water—but my soul thirsts for God; nor he does not say, my soul thirsts for the blood of my enemies—but my soul thirsts for God; nor he does not say, my soul thirsts for deliverance out of this dry and barren wilderness—but my soul thirsts for God in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water; nor he does not say, my soul thirsts for a crown, a kingdom—but my soul thirsts for God, "my flesh longs for God." These words note his earnest, ardent, and strong affections towards God. And so Psa 84:2, "My heart and my flesh cries out for the living God." The word that is here rendered cries, signifies to shout, shrill, or cry out, as soldiers do at the beginning of a battle; or when they cry out after a victory, 'Victory, victory, victory!' The Hebrew word notes a strong cry, or to cry as a child cries when it is very hungry, for now every whit of the child cries—hands cry, and face cries, and feet cry. And so Psa 119:20, "My soul breaks for the longings it has unto your judgments at all times." Look! a soul who has God for his portion cannot rest until he comes to God, until he comes to his center. It is very observable, that when the God of glory appeared to Abraham, he made nothing of leaving his father's house, his kindred, and his country, Acts 7:1-5; Gen 12:1. A glimpse of that glory works him to give up all easily, readily, and quietly. A man who can look upon the God of glory to be his portion—he cannot but look upon the greatest, the nearest, and the dearest enjoyments of the world, as nothing. He cannot but look upon honor as a bubble; and worldly pomp as emptiness; and great men as a lie; and poor men as

vanity. He cannot but look upon his nearest and his dearest relations, his highest and his noblest friends, his choicest and his sweetest comforts—but as a dream and a shadow that soon vanishes away.

It is observable in the courts of kings and princes, that children and the cruder sort of people are much taken with pictures and their rich shows, and feed their fancies with the sight of rich hangings and fine mirthful things; whereas such as are great favorites at court, pass by all those things as things that are below them, and as things that are not worthy of their notice, who have business with the king, and who have the eye, the ear, the hand, and the heart of the king to take pleasure and delight in. Just so, most men admire the poor low things of the world, and are much taken with them as things that have a great deal of worth and excellency in them. But a man who has God for his portion, the King of kings for his portion, and all that he has—he passes by all the mirthful and great things of the world, as things below him, as things not worthy of him. His business is with his God, and his thoughts, his heart, and affections are taken up with his God.

Naturalists tell us that the magnet will not attract, in the presence of the diamond. O Christians! while a man can eye God as his portion, all the pride, pomp, bravery, glory, and gallantry in the world will never be able to attract him from God, Heb 11:24-27, Heb 11:35. It is reported that when the tyrant Trajan commanded Ignatius to be torn open, they found Jesus Christ written upon his heart in characters of gold. Here was an heart worth gold indeed; Christ carried away his heart from all other things. So if God is your portion, he will certainly carry your heart away from all earthly things.

Look! as earthly portions carry away worldly hearts from God, Eze 33:31-32; Luk 12:16-21; so when God once comes to be a man's portion, he carries his heart away from the world, the flesh, and the devil. All the world cannot keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. If a man make sin his interest, all the world cannot keep sin and his heart asunder. If a man make the world his interest, all the power on earth cannot keep the world and his heart asunder. And so if a man make God his interest, all the world cannot keep God and his heart asunder—no sword, no prison, no tortures, no flames can keep a man's interest and his heart asunder. A man's heart will be working towards his interest, even through the very fire, as you may see in the three children, Dan 3:17-18. Look! as the needle's point in the seaman's compass never stands still—but quivers and shakes until it come right against the north pole; and as the wise men of the east never stood still until they were right under the star which appeared to them; and as the star itself never stood still until it came right over that other star, which shined more brightly in the manger than the sun did in the firmament; and as Noah's dove could find no rest for the sole of her foot all the while she was fluttering over the flood, until she returned to the ark with an olive branch in her mouth—so the heart of a Christian that has God for his portion can never rest, can never be at quiet—but in God. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If God is your portion, then you will own your God, and stand up courageously and resolutely for your God. Every man will defend his portion, and stand up stoutly and resolutely for his portion; and so will every Christian do for his God. Psa 119:46, "I will speak of your testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed." David was resolved upon a noble and resolute owning of God and his testimonies before the greatest and the highest of men; and this he would do and not blush, this he would do and not be ashamed, this he would do and not be daunted. It was neither

the majesty or authority of princes, it was neither the power or dread of princes, which could hinder David from giving in his testimony on God's side, or on truth's side. Jos 24:18, "We will serve the Lord, for he is our God." Jos 24:21-24, "But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the Lord." Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the Lord." "Yes, we are witnesses," they replied. "Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey him."

They had chosen God to be their God, as God had chosen them to be his peculiar people above all the nations of the earth. Therefore, notwithstanding all that Joshua had objected, they were fully resolved to own the Lord, and to cleave to the Lord, and to obey the Lord, and wholly to devote themselves to the service of the Lord. Having taken the Lord to be their God, they were firmly resolved to own the Lord really, and to own him fully, and to own him primarily, and to own him only, and to own him everlastingly.

"You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in his ways, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws, and that you will obey him. And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands." Deu 26:17-18. They had declared God to be their God, and therefore they were resolved upon all those holy ways and means whereby they might evidence to the world their owning of God to be their God. And so in that 2Ch 30:8, "They yield themselves unto the Lord," or, as the Hebrew has it, "They give the hand unto the Lord." You know when men make covenants or agreements to own one another, or to stand by one another, they commonly shake hands, or take one another by the hand. Certainly all those who have the Lord for their portion, have given their hands to the Lord—that they will own him, and stand by him, and cleave to him, as Jonathan did to David, or as Ruth did to Naomi.

How stoutly and courageously did the three children own the Lord, and stand by the Lord in the face of the fiery furnace, Dan 3:17-18. And Daniel will choose to be rather cast into the den of lions, than that the honor of God should in the least be clouded, or his glory darkened by any neglects or omissions of his, Dan 6:1-28. And so did all those worthies, "of whom this world was not worthy," Heb 11:34. Oh, how did they own God, and stand up for God, notwithstanding the edge of the sword, the violence of fire, the cruel mockings and scourgings, the bonds and imprisonments, the stoning and sawing asunder, the temptings and wanderings about in sheepskins and goatskins, and all other trials and torments that did attend them.

Basil affirms that the primitive Christians did so courageously and resolutely own God, and stand up for God in the face of the most dreadful sufferings; that many of the heathens, seeing their heroic zeal, courage, magnanimity, and steadfastness, turned Christians. Domitian raised the second persecution against the Christians because they would not give the title of Lord to any but Christ, nor worship any but God alone. Among the many thousand instances that might be given, let me only give you a few of a later date, whereby you may see how courageously and resolutely the saints have stood up for God, and owned God, in the face of the greatest dangers that has attended them.

Luther owned God and stood up resolutely for God against the world. And when the emperor sent for him to Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, as sometimes Paul's did him, 'Go,'

said he, 'I will surely go since I am sent for in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yes, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me as there be tiles to cover the houses—yet I would go!' And when he and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech, 'Come, let us sing the Psa 46:1-11, and then let them do their worst!'

William Flower, the martyr, said that the heavens should as soon fall as he would forsake his profession, or budge in the least degree from it.

Apollonius, being asked if he did not tremble at the sight of the tyrant, made this answer, 'God, who has given him a terrible visage, has given also unto me an undaunted heart.' When the persecutors by their dreadful threatenings labored to terrify one of the martyrs, he replied, that 'there was nothing of things visible, nor nothing of things invisible, that he was afraid of. I will,' says he, 'stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.' When Bishop Gardiner asked Rowland Taylor if he did not know him, etc., he answered, "Yes, I know you, and all your greatness—yet you are but a mortal man; and if I should be afraid of your lordly looks, why do you not fear God, the Lord of us all?" The executioner kindling the fire behind Jerome of Prague, he bade him kindle it before his face, for, said he, if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities offered me to escape it. And at the giving up of the Spirit, he said, "This soul of mine in flames of fire, O Christ, I offer you!" When Dionysius was given up to the executioner to be beheaded, he remained resolute, courageous, and constant, saying, "Come life, come death, I will worship none but the God of heaven and earth."

Thus you see by these instances that men that have God for their portion will courageously own God, and bravely and resolutely stand up for God, whatever comes on it. The blood that has been shed in most nations under heaven does clearly evidence this—that men will own their earthly portions, and that they will stand up stoutly, resolutely, and courageously in the defense of them. And so certainly will all those own God, and stand up in the defense of God, his glory, and truth—who have God for their portion. Take a true bred Christian, when he is himself, take a Christian in his ordinary course, and he cannot but own his God, and stand up stoutly and courageously for his God in the face of all difficulties and dangers. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If God is your portion—then you will look upon all things below your God as poor, low, mean, and contemptible things. Psa 73:24-25. "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." A worldly man looks upon all things below his earthly portion as contemptible; and so does a Christian look upon all things below his God as contemptible. Php 3:7-8, "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish" (The Greek word properly signifies such sordid, coarse, and contemptible things, which are either cast away by dogs, or cast unto dogs), "that I may win Christ." And it is very observable, that after this great apostle had been in the third heaven, and had been blessed with a glorious sight of God, he looked upon the world as a poor, base, low, contemptible thing 2Co 12:1-3; Gal 6:14, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the

world." Paul scorned, despised, and rejected the world—and the world scorned, despised, and rejected him. Paul cast off the world—and the world cast off him. He disregarded the world—and the world disregarded him. He was dead to the world—and the world was dead to him. The world and Paul were well agreed: the world cared not a pin for Paul—and Paul cared not a straw for the world. And so, when Moses had seen him who was invisible, when he had taken a full prospect of the eternal world, and when he had beheld God as his portion—oh, how does he slight, scorn, and trample upon all the honors, preferments, profits, pleasures, delights, and contentments of Egypt, as things below him, and as things that in no respects were worthy of him, Heb 11:24-27. It is a Rabbinical fable, that as a child, Moses had Pharaoh's crown given him to play with; and he made a football of it, and cast it down to the ground, and kicked it about, as if it were a sign of his future vilifying and despising of temporal things. I shall not much trouble my head about what Moses did when he was a child; but of this I am sure, having the word of God for it, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter" that is, he did little less than make a football of Pharaoh's crown! Witness his refusing with an holy scorn and disdain to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so to succeed Pharaoh in the throne. And so in that Rev 12:1-2, "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven—a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." The church here is compared to a woman for her weakness, fruitfulness, and loveliness; and it is observable, that she is clothed with the sun, that is, with Christ's own loveliness and righteousness, which resembles the sun in its several properties and effects. Now this woman, the church, is said to have the moon under her feet. By the moon we are to understand all temporary and transitory things. Now the church treads upon all these things as trash and trumpery that were much below her, and despised by her. Look! as the great men of the world do commonly look upon all portions that are below their own, with an eye of scorn, disdain, and contempt—as Haman did, Est 5:9-14; and as those bold daring sinners did—Psa 73:4-14. So do those who have God for their portion look upon all things below their God, with an eye of scorn and disdain.

I have read of Lazarus, that after his resurrection from the dead, he was never seen to laugh; his thoughts, his heart, his affections were so fixed upon God, and so taken up with God, with his portion, that he was as a dead man to all the mirthful and great things of the world—he saw nothing in them worthy of a smile. And so when once Galeacius, that famous Italian marquis, came to understand that God was his portion, in the face of the highest offers imaginable—of honor, favor, profit, and advancement—he cried out, 'Cursed be he who prefers all the glory of the world, to one day's communion with God!' The old Grecians, who had altogether fed on acorns before—when bread came into use among them, they threw all their acorns to the swine. And the Lacedæmonians despised their iron and leather money—when gold and silver came into use among them. So when a man comes once to experience God to be his portion, ah, at what a low rate will he value the swelling honors, the deceitful riches, and the vanishing pleasures of this beggarly world! John 4:14. Christians are compared to eagles. Now the eagle is a kingly, a princely bird; it is a bird of a sharp piercing sight, and of a swift and lofty flight; it flies high and sets light by things below, except it be when necessity compels her—and so it is with those who have God for their portion; they fly high and they live high, in God, and therefore they cannot but set light by the toys and trifles of the world. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If God is your portion—then your God is most precious to you—then you set the highest price and value imaginable upon your God. Every man sets the highest price upon his portion. Though a man may set a good price upon his delightful gardens, his pleasant walks, his delicate fishponds, his fruitful trees, his sweet flowers, etc.—yet it is no price to that which he sets upon his chief portion. 'Well,' says a man, 'though here are an hundred things to delight my eye, and to please my fancy, and to satiate my appetite—yet I infinitely value my portion above them all.' Who but a fool would cast away a fortune—for a momentary pleasure? So though a Christian may set a considerable value upon all his outward comforts and contentments—yet it is no value to that he sets upon his God—upon his portion. 'This and that are precious to me,' says a Christian—'but my God is infinitely more precious than all,' Psa 18:24-25; Psa 4:6-7. A Christian sets up God above his goods, Heb 10:34; and above his lusts, Gal 5:24; and above his relations 1Sa 30:1-7; yes, and above his very life. Rev 12:11, "And they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death. Psa 63:3, "Your loving-kindness is better than life." The Hebrew is lives. Put many lives together—yet there is more excellency and glory in the least beam, in the least discovery of divine love—than there is in all earth's vanities. A man may be weary of life—but never of divine love. Histories tell us of many who have been weary of their lives—but no histories can furnish us with an instance of any one that was ever weary of divine love.

Look! as the people prized David above themselves, saying, "You are worth ten thousand of us," 2Sa 18:3; so those who indeed have God for their portion—oh how do they prize God above themselves, and above everything below themselves! And doubtless, those who do not lift up God above all—they have no saving interest in God at all. Whatever a man eyes as his greatest interest, that he sets up above all, and before all other things in the world. Now if a man eyes God as his greatest interest, he cannot but set God atop of all. I have not credulity enough to think that ever such did truly love God—who love anything more than God, or who set up anything above God, Luk 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple."

Look! as Darius set up Daniel over all, and as Pharaoh set up Joseph above all; so a man who has God for his portion, he sets up God over all, and he sets up God above all. Augustine set so high a price upon Christ, that he has long since told us that he would willingly go through hell to Christ! Bernard said, 'I had rather be in my chimney-corner with Christ, than in heaven without him.' When one of the martyrs was offered riches and honors if he would recant, he made this excellent answer, 'Do but offer me something which is better than my Lord Jesus Christ—and I shall recant.' And I have read of another, that set so high a price upon the Lord Jesus, that whenever he did but mention the name of Jesus, his eyes dropped tears. Were every star in the skies a sun—yet a man who has God for his portion would prize him above them all.

'Do you ask me where be my jewels? My jewels are my husband,' said Phocion's wife. 'Do you ask me where be my ornaments? My ornaments are my two sons, brought up in virtue and learning,' said the mother of the Gracchi. 'Do you ask me where be my treasures? My treasures are my friends,' said Constantius,. So if you ask a Christian where his jewels, his ornaments, his treasures, his comforts, and the delights of his soul are—he will answer you that they are all in God! He will tell you that God is his portion, and that God is his great all, and that he enjoys all in God, and God in all, and therefore he cannot but prize God above all. But to prevent mistakes in

this weighty case, let me give you a few brief hints; as,

[1.] First, If God is truly precious to you—then ALL of God is precious to you; his name is precious to you, his honor is precious to you, his ordinances are precious to you, his promises are precious to you, his precepts are precious to you, his threatenings are precious to you, his rebukes are precious to you, his people are precious to you, and all his concerns are precious to you.

Look! as every sparkling stone that is set round about a rich diamond is precious in the eyes of the jeweler, so is every sparkling excellency in God precious in his eyes, who sets a high value upon God. Look! as all of the newborn babe is precious in the eyes of the tender mother—as head, face, hands, arms, body, feet—so all of God is very precious in his eyes, who has any tender regard of God. Look! as all of a husband is precious in the eyes of a loving wife, namely, his person, name, credit, honor, estate, liberty, life, etc., so all of God is very precious in his eyes that loves God with a real love, with a superlative love. But,

[2.] Secondly, If God is most precious to you—then all the dishonors which are done to God, his truth, his worship, his ways, his ordinances, his institutions, his government, his people—are most grievous and burdensome to you. "The reproaches of those who reproached you have fallen upon me," Psa 69:9; "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not your word," Psa 119:158. The word that is here translated grieved signifies to loathe, abhor, and contend—I beheld the transgressors, and I loathed them; I beheld the transgressors, and I abhorred them; I beheld the transgressors, and I contended with them—but not so much because they were mine enemies, as because they were yours.

It is just between God and all those who have a precious esteem of him, as it is between two lute-strings that are tuned one to another; no sooner one is struck but the other trembles. A saint cannot see God struck but his heart will tremble, Jer 9:1-4. A father, lying upon his deathbed, called three children to him which he kept, and told them that only one of them was his natural son, and that the other two were only brought up by him; therefore unto his son alone, he gave all his goods; but which of those three was his own son he would not declare. When he was dead, each of the three pleaded his birthright, and the matter being brought to trial, the judge, for the making, if possible, a true discovery, took this course. He caused the dead corpse of the father to be set up against a tree, and commanded the three sons to take bows and arrows to shoot at their father, to see who could come nearest to his heart. The first and second did shoot and hit him—but the third was very much angry and displeased with them both, and through the natural affection of a child to a father, threw away his bow and arrows, and would not shoot at all. This being done, the judge gave this sentence, namely, that the two who shot at their supposed father's heart were no sons—but that the third son, that would not shoot at all, and that was very much displeased with those who did shoot, was the true son, and that he should have the goods.

O Christians! every bitter word is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every bloody oath is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every heavy curse is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every superstitious custom is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every snare that is laid for the righteous is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every yoke that is laid upon the people of God is an arrow shot at the heart of God; and every affront that by debauched people is given to God is an arrow shot at the heart of God, etc. And what true bred sons, what sincere sons, can see such arrows every hour in the day shot at the heart of God, and hear of such arrows that are shot a

thousand thousand times in a day at the heart of God—and not grieve and mourn, and not be afflicted, troubled, displeased, and astonished to see men and to hear of men who were once made in the image of God—to be turned into such incarnate devils, as thus to deal with God, yes, with such a God as can speak them into hell at his pleasure! But,

[3.] Thirdly, If God is most precious to you—then you will part with anything for God, then you will let go of anything, that you may hold your God, and enjoy your God. Php 3:7-8; Mat 13:46. Then your Isaac shall be made a sacrifice, if God will have it so, Gen 22:1-24, and your Benjamin shall be sent into Egypt, if God will have it so, Gen 43:1-34; then your Jonah shall be cast overboard, if God will have it so, Jon 1:1-17; then out goes the right eye, and off goes the right hand, upon a divine command; then you will never cry out—Oh! this mercy is too near to me to part with for God, and that comfort is too dear to me to part with for God, etc. Oh no! But then you will say, as the king of Sodom said to Abraham, "Give me the people, and take the goods to yourself," Gen 14:21. So you will say, "Give us God, oh give us God, and let who will, take the goods; let who will, take the honors, and the profits, and the pleasures of this world. It is enough that Joseph is alive; it is enough if we may but enjoy our God." A prince will part with anything—rather than he will part with his crown-jewels; and so will a Christian rather part with anything—rather than to part with his God, whom he values above all the crown jewels in the world. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If God is most precious to you—then you can never have enough of God. You can never have enough of communion with God; you can never have enough of the presence of God; you can never have enough of the Spirit of God; you can never have enough of the discoveries of God; you can never have enough of the assistance of God; you can never have enough of the secret influences of God; you can never have enough of the comforts and strong consolations of God, etc. [Psa 27:4; Psa 84:1-12; Psa 42:1-2; Psa 63:1-8; Song of Solomon 8:14; Rev 22:20] The grave, the barren womb, the mammonist, the pope, the Turk, the devil, and hell—will be as soon satisfied—as you can be satisfied without clearer, further, and fuller enjoyments of God. "No man," says God to Moses, "can see my face, and live," Exo 33:20; upon which words Austin makes this short but sweet reply, "Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see your face!" It is impossible that ever a man's heart should rest satisfied until he comes to a full and perfect enjoyment of that which he has set up as his grand interest—as his great all. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, If God is most precious to you—then you will give up yourself wholly to God without any reservation. Whatever a man sets up as his great interest—to that he devotes himself—to the service of that he wholly gives up himself. So when a man eyes God as his most precious interest, and sets up God as his most precious interest—he cannot but devote himself wholly to God—he cannot but give up himself wholly to God. [Song of Solomon 2:16; Acts 7:2-4; Acts 13:22; Luk 5:6-7] Psa 119:94, "I am yours, save me." I am not my own, nor sin's, nor Satan's, nor the world's, nor friends', nor relations'—but I am yours! I am really yours, I am wholly yours, I am only yours, I am always yours! I am your to be sanctified, and I am your to be saved; I am your to be commanded, and I am your to be ruled. Lord, I am your own, and therefore do with your own as you please; and dispose of your own as you please. I am at your foot, willing in some measure to be anything or nothing—as shall seem best in your own eyes. When the keys of the whole house, and of every room in the house, are given up to the king to be at his disposal, at his service—then he is entertained as a king, and honored as a king, and valued and prized as a king. And so when all the keys of the soul, and every room in the soul, and every faculty of the soul, are

given up to God to be at his disposal, at his service—then God is entertained as a God, and honored as a God, and valued and prized as a God—but not until then. By these five hints, if you will not put a cheat upon your own souls, you may know whether God sits in the uppermost room of your hearts or not; and whether God is set up in your hearts above all; and whether he be indeed your great all, and your all in all. But,

(9.) Ninthly, If God is your portion—then there is no loss in all the world that lies so hard and so heavy upon you as the loss of your God. There is no loss under heaven that does so affect and afflict a man who has God for his portion—as the loss of his God. David met with many a loss—but no loss made so sad and so great a breach upon his spirit as the loss of the face of God, the loss of the favor of God. Psa 30:6-7, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved. Lord, by your favor you have made my mountain to stand strong—you hid your face, and I was troubled." The Hebrew word signifies to be greatly troubled, to be sorely terrified, as you may see in that 1Sa 28:21, "And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled." Here is the same Hebrew word. Saul was so terrified with that dreadful news, which the devil in Samuel's likeness told him—that he fell into a swoon. And it was even so with David upon God's hiding of his face. David was like a withered flower that had lost all its sap, life, and vigor, when God had wrapped up himself in a cloud. The life of some creatures lies in the light and warmth of the sun; and so does the life of the saints lie in the light and warmth of God's countenance. And as in an eclipse of the sun there is a drooping in the whole frame of nature, so when God hides his face, gracious souls cannot but droop and languish, and bow down themselves before him. Many flowers, some by opening and shutting, as marigolds and tulips; others by bowing and inclining the head, as the sun-flower and mallow-flowers—are so sensible of the presence and absence of the sun, that there seems to be such a sympathy between the sun and them, that if the sun is gone or clouded, they wrap up themselves, or hang down their heads, as being unwilling to be seen by any eye but his that fills them. And just thus it was with David when God had hid his face in a cloud.

It is very observable that Job did bear up very sweetly, bravely, patiently, and nobly under all his great losses of children, estate, etc.; but when the arrows of the Almighty were got within him, then he complains that his grief was heavier than the sands of the sea, Job 6:1-5; and when the face of God was hidden from him, how sadly does he lament and bewail the withdrawals of God—"I go east, but he is not there. I go west, but I cannot find him. I do not see him in the north, for he is hidden. I turn to the south, but I cannot find him," Job 23:8-9.

There is no pain more grievous and tormenting than that of breaking the bones. Now David again and again pitches upon this, to hint unto you that dreadful smart and pain that his soul was under when he had lost his communion with God, and when his God was withdrawn from him, and had hid his face from him, Psa 38:8; Psa 51:8. The church sadly laments the loss of her beloved in that Solomon's Song of Solomon 5:6, "I opened for my lover, but my lover had left; he was gone! (or, he was gone, he was gone) My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer." Now this passionate duplication speaks out her very great grief and trouble. Like a sad widow, she sits down and wrings her hands, and cries out, "He is gone, he is gone!" "My heart sank" or, as the Hebrew has it, "my soul went out of me." I was even as an astonished creature, I was even as a dead creature, to note how greatly and how deeply she was troubled and perplexed upon the account of his withdrawing from her. Oh! the fear, the terror, the horror, the dread, the grief, the sorrow that fell upon the spouse's heart when her beloved had

turned his back upon her. And so it was with Mary. John 20:11-13, "but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' 'They have taken my Lord away,'" she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.'" Of all losses, Mary was least able to bear the loss of her Lord. The loss was so great, and so heavy the loss, that she was not able to stand under it with dry eyes. Mary's mourning for the loss of her Lord was like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, Zec 12:11. There is no loss that comes so near to a Christian's heart as the loss of his Lord. A Christian can a thousand times better bear the loss of his name—which next to his soul and his grace is the best jewel that he has in all the world, the loss of his estate, the loss of his liberty, the loss of his nearest and dearest relations, yes, the very loss of his life—than he can bear the loss of his God.

You see how sadly Micah takes on for the loss of his wooden gods, in that Jdg 18:23-24, "As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, 'What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?' He replied, 'You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?'" Now if Micah was so affected and afflicted upon the loss of his idol gods, his wooden gods; what cause then have Christians to be deeply affected and afflicted when they come to lose their God, who is the true God, the living God, the Only God, and the God of gods!

You know that when Samson's locks were cut off, his strength was gone, Jdg 16:19-21. Therefore, though he thought to go out, and do as great things as he had formerly done—yet he found by woeful experience that he could not; for now he had become as weak as other men. And it is just so with the choicest saints—when their God is gone, their locks are cut, and their strength is gone, their doing strength, and their suffering strength, and their bearing strength, and their wrestling strength, and their prevailing strength, etc., is gone when their God is gone. Yes, when God goes, all goes! When the king leaves, all his train follows; when God goes, comforts go; when God goes, joys go; when God goes, peace goes; when God goes, prosperity goes; when God goes, friends go; when God goes, all contentment and satisfaction goes. Therefore it is no wonder to see a Christian better bear any loss than the loss of his God; for in losing of him he loses all. A Christian counts it his only happiness to enjoy his God, and his only unhappiness to be deprived of him. The constant language of a Christian is, "None but God, none but God!" as it was once the language of the martyr, "None but Christ, none but Christ!"

Outward losses to some men have been unsufferably afflictive. One being turned out of his estate runs out of his wits; another hangs himself with the same hands with which he had formerly counted his portion. Menippus of Phoenicia having lost his goods, strangled himself. Dinarcus Phidon, at a certain great loss, cut his own throat. When Henry the Second heard that his city Mentz was taken, he let fall this blasphemous speech—'I shall never love God any more, now that has allowed a city so dear to me to be taken away from me.' And Augustus Caesar, in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the loss and overthrow that Varus gave him, that for months together he let the hair of his head and beard grow without cutting, and sometimes he would run his head against the very doors, and cry out, 'Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again; Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again!' I might give you many sad instances nearer home—but that I prefer not to harp upon so sad a string. But certainly no outward losses can lie so

heavy upon the spirit of a worldling, as the loss of God lies upon the spirit of a saint. I have read of a pious woman, that having brought forth nine children, professed that she had rather endure all the pains of those nine travails at once, than endure the misery of the loss of God's presence. A man can better bear any loss than the loss of his box of jewels, and than the loss of his documents and evidences that he has to show for his estate. Therefore, when his house is on fire, he does not cry out, 'Oh save that bed, or that chest, or that dish, or that stool, etc.' But he cries out, 'Oh save my box of jewels! oh save my writings! I care not though all be consumed, so my box of jewels and my documents are but saved!'

Now God is a Christian's box of jewels, he is a Christian's grand evidence that he has to show for another world. Therefore his greatest fear is of losing his God, and his greatest care is of keeping his God. If his box of jewels is safe—then all is safe. But if they are lost—all is lost! How then is it possible for a Christian to bear up bravely under the loss of all? A man may bear up bravely under the loss of his lumber, and under the loss of his household goods, so long as his jewels are safe and his documents are safe; but if his box of jewels should be lost, and his documents should be burnt, why, then, he wrings his hands, and cries out, 'Oh, I am undone! I am undone! I am undone!'

Just so, a Christian can bear up bravely under this worldly loss, and that worldly loss, and the other worldly loss—so long as he enjoys his God; but when he has lost his God, oh then, he cannot but wring his hands, and cry out, 'I am undone! I am undone! I am undone! I have lost my God, and in losing of him, I have lost my life, I have lost my love, I have lost my joy, I have lost my crown, I have lost my heaven, I have lost my happiness, I have lost my all.' O Christians! if God is your portion—it will be thus with you upon the loss of your God. But,

(10.) Tenthly, If God is your portion—then you will set the highest price, value, and esteem—upon those who have God for their portion, Psa 16:3; Pro 12:26; Pro 28:6. A man who has God for his portion, never values men for their arts, parts, gifts, mirthful clothes, gold chains. No, neither by their birth, breeding, high offices, or great places. No, neither by their outward dignities, honors, or riches, etc.—but by their interest and property in God. A man who has God for his portion, prizes a poor ragged Lazarus who has God for his portion, before a rich Dives that has only gold for his portion. If you have God for your portion, then there is no man in court, city, or country—compared to that man who has God for his portion. Then there is no man in a parish, a country, a kingdom—compared to him who has God for his portion. A man who has God for his portion, has a higher esteem and a greater respect for a Job, though stripped of all, and sitting upon a ash-heap, than he has for a wicked Ahab, though sitting on his royal throne.

Paul set a higher price upon Onesimus, though but a servant, a slave, because he had God for his portion—than he did upon Nero, though he was a great and mighty emperor, Phm 1:10, Phm 1:12, Phm 1:17; 2Ti 4:17. And king Ingo valued poor ragged Christians who had God for their portion—above all his glittering pagan nobles who had only the world for their portion, saying, that when all his pagan nobles should, in all their pomp and glory, be turned into hell; those poor Christians, who had God for their portion, should be his consorts and fellow-princes in heaven.

Look! as men who have their portion in this world do value men according to their worldly portions, so that those who have most gold and silver, and rr have most lordships and lands—they are the best men, the happiest men, the only men in their eyes. Just so, a Christian who has God for his

portion, sets the highest value upon those who have God for their portion; and there are no men in all the world who are so high in his books as they are. A man who has a saving interest in God loves none, nor likes none, nor honors none, nor delights in none, nor exalts none, nor values none—compared to those who have God for their portion. Though the men, the great men of this world may sit in the uppermost seats at his table—yet those who have God for their portion, sit in the uppermost rooms of his heart. The Jews say that those seventy souls that went with Jacob into Egypt, were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. And I may say, that one soul who has God for his portion, is more worth than all the souls in the world, who have only the world for their portion. A man who has God for his portion, cannot but set a very high value upon all those who have God for their portion, though in minor disputable things they may differ from him. A man who has God for his portion, had rather live with those who have God for their portion in a prison, in a dungeon—than live with those who have only the world for their portion in a royal palace. As Algerius, an Italian martyr, was accustomed to say, that he had rather live in prison with Cato—than with Caesar in the palace. And Doctor Taylor, the martyr, rejoiced exceedingly that ever he came into prison, because he came there to have acquaintance with that angel of God, John Bradford, as he calls him. A man who has God for his portion, does as it were, tie those who have God for their portion, around his heart. Oh, he is always best when they are most in his eye, and nearest to his heart. It is his happiness on this side happiness to enjoy communion with them; and it is the greatest unhappiness in this world to be separated from them, Psa 120:5-7. A man who has God for his portion, values the company of those who have God for their portion—above all other company in the world; and he values the favor of such—above all other men's favor in the world; and he values the prayers of such—above all other men's prayers in the world; and he values the counsels of such—above all other men's counsel in the world; and he values the experiences of such—above all other men's experiences in the world; and he values the interest of such—above all other men's interest in the world; and he values the hopes and expectations of such—above all other men's hopes and expectations in the world; and he values the examples of such—above the examples of all other men in the world; and he values the displeasure and anger of such—above all other men's displeasure and anger in the world. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, If God is your portion—then you are his portion. If you have a saving interest in God—then God has a saving interest in you; if you have a property in God—then God has a property in you; if God is truly yours—then you are really his. Song of Solomon 2:16, "My beloved is mine—and I am his." Psa 119:94, "I am yours—save me!" I am not mine own, I am not sin's, I am not Satan's, I am not the world's, I am not friends', I am not relations'—but I am yours, save me! I am really yours, I am totally yours, I am solely yours, I am everlastingly yours, save me! Eze 16:8, "I entered into covenant with you—and you became mine!"

Deu 32:9, "For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." Though God's people are despised of the world—yet they are dear to God, for they are his portion. In these words, "Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," he alludes to the division of the land of Canaan, as if the sons of Jacob had fallen to him by lot. The Lord's people are as dear to God, and as near to God, and in as great account with God; as earthly portions and inheritances are or can be among the sons of men. Jer 12:10, "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion (or as the Hebrew has it, 'my portion of desire or of delight') a desolate wilderness." God's people are not only his portion—but they are

his pleasant portion, yes, they are his desirable portion, his delightful portion. If the Lord is your portion, then you are his inheritance, Isa 19:25; and his peculiar treasure, Exo 19:5; and his glory, Isa 46:13; and his ornament, Eze 7:20; and his throne, Jer 17:12; and his diadem, Isa 62:3; and his jewels, Mal 3:17. These scriptures speak out plainly and clearly that great property and interest that God has in all those who have a property and interest in him.

O Christians! Look! that as in all God has—you have an interest; so in all your concerns—God has an interest. And look! as what God is—he is for you; so what you are—you are for God. And look! as God is sincerely for you—so you are sincerely for God; and as God is wholly for you—so you are wholly for God; and as God is only for you—so you are only for God; and as God is in all things for you—so in all things you are for God; and as God is at all times for you—so you are at all times for God.

O Christians! There are none under heaven who have that interest in you—as God has—if indeed he is your portion. Look what interest the head has in the members, the husband in the wife, the father in the child, the Lord in his servant, the general in his soldier, and the prince in his subject—that, all that, and more than that—has God in all those who have a saving interest in him. There is no man in the world who has such an interest in himself, as God has in him—if indeed God is his portion. Sin cannot say to a man who has God for his portion, 'You are mine!' Nor Satan cannot say to a man who has God for his portion, 'You are mine!' Nor the world cannot say to a man who has God for his portion, 'You are mine!' Nor the creature cannot say to a man who has God for his portion, 'You are mine!' It is only God who can say to such a man, 'You are mine!' As in marriage, none can say, 'This woman is mine'—but the husband; so none can say to a man who has God for his portion, 'You are mine'—but God alone. Look! as no man can truly say, that 'God is my Lord, and my God, and my father, and my friend, and my wisdom, and my counsel, and my righteousness, and my consolation, and my salvation, and my portion, and my light, and my life, and my love, and my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, and my strength, and my shield, and my high tower, and my help, and my happiness, and my blessedness, and my all in all'—but he who has God for his portion; so none but God can look upon a gracious person, and say, 'This gracious person is mine; he is my bride, my child, my friend, my favorite, my beloved, my darling, my joy, my crown! His heart is set upon me, and his love is inflamed towards me, and his trust and confidence is fixed on me, and his desires and longings are running out after me, and all his joys and delights are terminated in me!' But,

[12.] Twelfthly, If God is your portion—then certainly the least of God is very dear and precious to you. Oh then the least truth of God will be very precious to you, and the least command of God will be very precious to you, and the least child of God will be very precious to you, and the least concern of God will be very precious to you. Look! as the least beam of light is precious, and as the least drop of honey is precious, and as the least dust of gold is precious, and as the least degree of health and strength is precious, and as the least measure of liberty is precious; so the very least of God is very precious to that man who has God for his portion. Look! as every little piece and parcel of a worldly man's portion is very dear and precious to him, so every little piece and parcel of God—if I may so speak—is very dear and precious to him who has God for his portion. The least glimpse and manifestations of the love and favor of God, the least taste of the mercies of God, the least anointings of the Spirit of God, the least communications of the grace of God, and the least drops of the consolations of God—are exceedingly sweet and precious to him

who has God for his portion. The least good look that a man has from God, and the least good word that a man hears from God, and the least love letter and love token that a man receives from God, is exceedingly precious to that man who has God for his portion. "One day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere," Psa 84:10. He does not say, One year in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere—but "One day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;" nor does he not say, One quarter of a year in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere—but "One day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;" nor he does not say, One month in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere—but "One day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere;" to show that the very least of God is exceeding precious to a gracious soul who has God for his portion.

Now by these twelve particulars you may all know whether God is your portion or not, except you are resolved beforehand to put a cheat upon your own immortal souls, and so to make yourselves miserable in both worlds. And let thus much suffice for this use of trial and examination.

Now if, upon trial and examination, any of you shall come to some comfortable satisfaction in your own spirits, that God is your portion, and that you have an undoubted interest and property in God, oh then I would upon the knee of my soul entreat and beseech you, I might say, charge and command you, to evidence and declare to all the world your interest and property in God. But you will say, How should we evidence and declare to the world our interest and property in God? we are willing to do it, if we did but know how we should do it. Why then, thus:

[1.] First, Evidence and declare your interest and property in God—by your laboring and endeavoring with all your might to draw on others to get a saving interest and property in God. [Num 10:29; John 1:39-49; John 4:28-30; Acts 10:24-27] O Christians! have you been convinced of the necessity and excellency of interest and property in God? have you experienced the profit, the sweet, the comfort, and the happiness of property and interest in God? How then can you but strive, as for life, to persuade others to look after their interest and property in Christ, as the one thing necessary? When Samson had tasted honey, he gave his father and mother some with him, Jdg 14:8-9. O my brethren, property and interest in God is so sweet a morsel, that I cannot see how it is possible for a man to taste of it and not to commend it to others. Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot but cry out with the psalmist, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good!" Psa 34:8.

Property and interest in God will never make a man a churl; it will never work a man to make a monopoly of so rare a jewel as that is. Oh the fervent prayers! Oh the burning desires! Oh the vehement wishes! Oh the strong endeavors of such who have a saving interest and property in God, to draw on others to seek after a saving interest and property in God! All true property and interest in God is of a diffusive nature; it is like light—which will spread itself over all; it is like leaven—which will permeate through all; it is like Mary's box of sweet ointment—which filled all the house with the sweet scent thereof. If you are a minister, evidence your property in God in doing all you can to provoke those who are under your charge to secure their property in God; other things cannot be secured—but property in God may be secured, Acts 26:29. If you are a magistrate who has a property in God, evidence it by doing all you can, by your commands, and by your counsel, and by your example, and by your prayers, to persuade and win others over to be restless until they have secured their interest and property in God, Jos 24:15. If you are a father

who has interest and property in God, oh, then, let your soul be still in travail for your children, until Christ is formed in them, until they are new born, and until they have experienced the power and sweet of property and interest in God. But,

[2.] Secondly, Evidence your property and interest in God—by keeping far off from all such sinful courses, practices, and compliances, that may any ways put yourselves or others to question the truth of your property and interest in God. Thus did those worthies, "of whom this world was not worthy," in Heb 11:1-40. It is very observable that when the holy things belonging to the sanctuary were to be removed, God commanded Aaron and his sons that there should be a special care had to cover them all over, lest in journeying dust should any ways soil them, Num 4:5-13. O beloved! it highly concerns you who have a saving interest and property in God, to look narrowly to your hearts, words, works, and ways, and to see that there be such a covering of grace and holiness, such a covering of care, fear, wisdom, watchfulness, and circumspection over your whole man, that no scandalous sins, pollutions, or defilements be found upon you; according to that exhortation of the apostle, in Php 2:15, "so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe." Rev 14:3-5; Rev 3:4.

I have read of the dove, that there is such a native dread of the hawk implanted in her, that she is afraid of every feather that has grown upon a hawk, and that she so detests and abhors the very sight of any such feather that she will fly from it, and keep at the greatest distance imaginable from it. And shall not that divine fear, O Christians! that is planted by the hand of the Spirit in your hearts, be of as great force and prevalence to keep your souls from all those enormities and wicked compliances that may in the least occasion you or others to question your property and interest? You know a copyist may by one great blot at last spoil all that he has done for many days before upon a large patent or lease; so a man may by one foul blot, by one enormous crime, by one wretched act of compliance—dash and obliterate the fairest copy of a virtuous life, and blot out all the visible golden characters of divine graces that once seemed to be printed upon the soul.

Look! as one drop of ink colors a whole glass of water, so one gross sin, one shameful action, one hour's compliance with anything of antichrist—will color and stain all the great things that ever you have suffered, and all the good things that ever you have performed; it will stain and color all the good prayers that you have made, and all the good sermons that ever you have heard, and all the good books that ever you have read, and all the good words that ever you have spoke, and all the good works that ever you have done. And therefore, whatever you do, keep off from sin, and keep off from all sinful compliances—as you would keep off from hell itself! But,

[3.] Thirdly, Declare and evidence your property and interest in God—by maintaining and keeping up the sense of your interest and property in God, in opposition to all other interest whatever. Maintain your interest in God in opposition to sin's interest, and in opposition to Satan's interest, and in opposition to the world's interest, and in opposition to antichrist's interest, and in opposition to all carnal and superstitious interests, Psal 63:1; Rev 14:1-4—as Moses did, and as Joshua and Caleb did, and as Mordecai and Nehemiah did, and as Daniel and the three children did, and as the apostles and the primitive Christians did. Certainly the heart of a gracious man cannot but rise, and his anger and indignation cannot but swell, against every thing and every interest that threatens to make a breach upon his interest and property in God, Psal 69:9. A man who has a

saving interest and property in God, in the midst of all oppositions, is like a man made up all of fire, walking in stubble and straw—he overcomes and consumes all oppositions, and all difficulties do but increase his fortitude. He encourages his soul in the face of all oppositions and dangers, as Hezekiah once did his soldiers in that 2Ch 32:7-8, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said."

He is a fool, we say, that will be laughed out of his coat; but certainly he is a fool in folio that will be laughed out of his skin, nay, out of his soul, out of his profession, out of his eternal salvation; but doubtless such fools as these have never experienced the sweet of property and interest in God. Perhaps there were many broad jests and many bitter scoffs broken upon Noah, while he was a-building of his ark. The people laughed at him, and derided him, and thought the poor old man only dreamed; but yet Noah's property and interest in God being clear, Noah begins his work, and goes on his work, and never ceases until he had finished that work that God had set him about.

Dogs bark most when the moon is at fullest; but let the dogs bark ever so much, the moon will run her course. She will walk her station securely through the heavens, though all the dogs in the town bark ever so fiercely at her. Just so, a man who has a saving interest and property in God, and knows it—he is like the moon, he will hold on his course heavenwards and holiness-wards, though all the lewd and debauched wicked wretches in city and country should bark at him, and deride him, and oppose him, and speak all manner of evil against him. Property and interest in God will make a man set light by all such paper-shot, yes, it will carry him through the shots, not only of evil tongues—but it will also carry him through the most fierce and eager opposition that either Satan himself, or any of his instruments, can possibly raise against him. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Declare and evidence your property and interest in God—by your sweet and noble behavior and deportment towards Christians. Look! as a child behaves it in a different way towards his father, that to what he does towards others, so you must behave a different way towards Christians, to what you do towards those who have no interest nor property at all in God. Though a wife be very kind and courteous to all comers and goers—yet she behaves in a very different way to her husband from what she does to all others; she behaves with a great deal more kindness, and sweetness, and tenderness, and familiarness, and nobleness, etc., towards her husband, than she does towards others, whether they be friends or strangers; and just thus should you behave towards Christians.

I have not faith enough to believe that such men have any interest and property in God, who behave very harshly, and proudly, and churlishly, and scornfully, and deridingly, and tyrannically, and disdainfully, and enviously, and maliciously, and rigorously, and sourly, and bitterly, etc., towards Christians; and yet behave at the same time very fairly, and sweetly, and courteously, etc., towards such wretches that have no interest or property in God at all, yes, to such who blaspheme his name, and who pollute his ordinances, and who trample upon his mercies, and who despise his warnings, and who are given up to their own hearts' lusts, and who live as if there were neither God, nor heaven, nor hell But,

[5.] Fifthly, Evidence your interest and property in God—by doing such things for God, which such as have no interest in God cannot do, nor will not do, nor have no heart nor mind to do. Evidence your interest in God, by doing singular things for God, Mat 5:44-48; by doing such things for God that are above their reach that have no interest nor property in God at all; as by denying yourselves—your sinful selves, your natural selves, and your religious selves; and by keeping a singular guard upon your own hearts, words, and ways; and by stepping over the world's crown to take up Christ's cross, as Moses did, Heb 11:24; and by lessening yourselves to greater Christ, as John did, John 3:30-32; and by lifting up of Christ above your lusts, above yourselves, above the world, above outward privileges, above your performances, above your arts, parts, and gifts, as Paul did, Php 3:7-9; and by blessing a taking God as well as a giving God, as Job did, Job 1:1-22; and by rejoicing and glorying in all the afflictions and sufferings that befall you for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake, as the apostles and primitive Christians did; and by choosing to suffer rather than to sin, as those worthies did "of whom this world was not worthy;" and by keeping of yourselves from the defilements, pollutions, and abominations of the times, as some in Sardis did, Rev 3:4; and by following of the Lamb wherever he goes, as those hundred and forty-four thousand did, who had their Father's name written in their foreheads, Rev 14:1-5.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Evidence your interest and property in God—by falling roundly in with the interest of God, in opposition to all carnal interests in the world. O Christians! the interest of God will by degrees eat out and swallow up all other interests in the world. Look! as Pharaoh's lean cow ate up the fat cows, Gen 41:4; and as Aaron's rod swallowed up the Egyptians' rods, Exo 7:11-12, so the interest of God will in time eat up and swallow up all that superstitious, carnal, worldly, anti-christian, and Satanic interest that men labor now to uphold, with all their might, Isa 8:9-10.

Dan 2:35, "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth." Dan 2:44, "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever." And so Dan 7:27, "Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him." Rev 17:12-14, "The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers." If these scriptures do not clearly evidence, that the interest of Christ shall swallow up all other interests, I understand nothing.

Now mark, the people of God are the interest of God, and the gospel of God is the interest of God, and the ordinances of God are the interest of God, and the institutions and pure worship of God are the interest of God, etc. And therefore, all you who have a saving interest and property in God, evidence it by your ready and resolute falling in with the interest of God. Believe it, those who fall in with the interest of God, shall fall in with the strongest side, and will be sure to carry it against ten thousand worlds. What is the stubble to the flames? what is weakness to strength? what is

impotency to omnipotency? what is folly to wisdom? what is emptiness to fullness? No more are all the carnal interests in the world to the interest of God. Therefore thrice happy is that man who falls timely and cordially in with the interest of God. But now, if upon trial and examination any of you shall find that yet the Lord is not your portion, and this I believe will be the case of many of you, I would exhort all such people to labor with all their might, yes, to labor as for life, to get the Lord to be their portion. O this is the one thing necessary, this is the sun among the stars, this is the work of works that lies upon your hands; when this is done—all is done; until this be done—there is nothing done which will do you good in another world. O Christians! your lives lie upon it, your souls lie upon it, eternity lies upon it—your all lies upon it. Therefore you had need be restless until you have gained the Lord to be your portion

03.05. Chapter 5

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

Incitements to see that God is our portion

Now, that I may the more effectually provoke you, and stir you up to this great and glorious, this necessary and weighty work; give me permission to propose these following considerations.

[1.] First, Consider that your present portion, your present condition—is but miserable and cursed, Lev 26:14-39; Deu 28:15-68. All the earth was cursed upon man's fall, and until fallen man comes to be savingly interested in God, all his earthly enjoyments are cursed unto him; his honors are cursed, and his riches are cursed, and his preferments are cursed, and his pleasures are cursed; the whole portion of his cup is nothing but a little cursed vanity. Job 20:22-29, "In the midst of his plenty, distress will overtake him; the full force of misery will come upon him. When he has filled his belly, God will vent his burning anger against him and rain down his blows upon him. Though he flees from an iron weapon, a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him. He pulls it out of his back, the gleaming point out of his liver. Terrors will come over him; total darkness lies in wait for his treasures. A fire unfanned will consume him and devour what is left in his tent. The heavens will expose his guilt; the earth will rise up against him. A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God's wrath. Such is the fate God allots the wicked, the heritage appointed for them by God."

Pro 3:33, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." Mal 2:2, "If you do not listen, and if you do not set your heart to honor my name," says the Lord Almighty, "I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not set your heart to honor me." There is a real curse and a secret curse, an invisible curse and an insensible curse, that lies upon all their souls, who have not God for their portion. Gal 3:10, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." And as there is a curse upon all their souls, so there is a curse upon all their comforts, contentments, and enjoyments, who do not enjoy God for their portion. Until a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, all his earthly portions are cursed unto him; but when a man comes to enjoy God for his portion, then all his earthly portions are blessed unto him.

O sirs! there is no mitigating of the curse, there is no reversing of the curse, there is no altering of the curse, nor there is no taking of the curse from off your souls, nor from off your earthly portions—but by gaining God to be your portion. O sirs! you will live accursed, and you will die accursed, and you will appear before God accursed, and you will be judged and sentenced by God

accursed, and you will be sent to hell accursed, and you will remain to all eternity accursed—if God is not your portion! Therefore oh how should this consideration awaken every sinner to give God no rest until he has given himself as a portion to him. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider this, that there is yet a possibility of attaining God to be your portion, Luk 18:27. God may be your portion, even yours! If you are but heartily willing to be divorced from that wicked trinity—the world, the flesh, and the devil, there is no doubt but that God will be your portion. O sirs! why has God laid open so clearly and so fully the nature and incomparable excellency of this portion above all other portions before you—but to persuade your hearts, and to draw out your souls to look after this portion, and to make sure of this portion—as that wherein all your happiness and blessedness lies? Oh that you were wise to consider, that now an opportunity is put into your hands, that may make you blessed forever! You have all the ways, and all the means, and all the helps, and all the advantages imaginable for the obtaining of God to be your portion; so that, if God is not your portion, I shall be so bold to tell you that your destruction is from yourselves, Hos 13:9.

O sirs! though God is a golden mine—yet he is such a mine that may be gained, if you will but dig, and sweat, and take pains to purpose, Pro 2:2-7; though he is a pearl of infinite price—yet Christ can purchase this pearl for you; though he is a matchless and incomparable portion—yet he is such a portion as may be yours, as will be yours, if you are not lacking to your own souls. Why has God sent his ambassadors early and late? 2Co 5:18-20; and why has he continued them among you to this very day—but that they should acquaint you with his wonderful readiness and willingness to bestow himself as a portion upon you? O sirs! God is said to be a God of great mercy, and to be rich and plenteous in mercy, and to be abundant in mercy, and to be transcendent and incomparable in mercy; yes, all the mercies of God are sure mercies, they are royal mercies, they are innumerable mercies, they are bottomless mercies, they are unchangeable mercies, and they are everlasting mercies. Therefore there is no reason for any man to despair of obtaining of God for his portion. [Psa 105:8; Eph 2:4; Psa 86:15; 1Pe 1:1, 1Pe 1:3; Psa 103:11] But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that God is a portion-sweetening portion. God is such a portion as will sweeten all other portions; he is a portion that will make every pleasant portion, more pleasant; and that will make every bitter portion, sweet. Poverty is one man's portion, and sorrow is another man's portion, and crosses and losses are a third man's portion, and reproaches and sufferings are a fourth man's portion, and sickness and diseases are a fifth man's portion, etc. But God is a portion that will sweeten all these portions! You know the tree that Moses cast into the bitter waters of Marah made them sweet, Exo 15:23-25. Now this tree was a type of Christ, who will certainly sweeten all our bitterest potions. The church complained in Lam 3:15, "that God had filled her with bitterness" (or, as the Hebrew has it, "with bitteresses"), "and that he had made her drunken with wormwood." And yet this very consideration, that "the Lord was her portion," Lam 3:24; sweetened all.

If God is your portion—there is no condition that can make you miserable; if God is not your portion—there is no condition that can make you happy. If God is not your portion—in the midst of your sufficiency you will be in straits; if God is your portion—in the midst of all your straits you shall enjoy an all-sufficiency in an all-sufficient God, Job 20:22. Until God is your portion, O sinner, you

will never taste anything but death and bitterness in all your comforts, and in all your contentments, and in all your enjoyments. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that all earthly portions are not of that infinite consequence and concernment to you, as this portion is. All earthly portions are but the food which perishes, John 6:27; they are but moth-eaten and canker-eaten treasures, Mat 6:19; Jas 5:3; they are full of uncertainty, yes, they are all over vanity, Ecc 1:2; they reach not beyond the line of this mortal life; they can neither suit the soul, nor fill the soul, nor satisfy the soul, nor save the soul; they can neither change the heart, nor reform the heart, nor in the least better the heart; they can neither arm a man against temptations, nor lead a man out of temptations, nor make a man victorious over temptations; they can neither direct the conscience when it is in straits, nor relieve the conscience when it is under distress, nor support the conscience when it is under guilt, nor heal the conscience when it is under wounds; they can neither make our peace with God, nor keep our peace with God, nor augment our peace with God; they can neither bring us to Christ, nor unite us to Christ, nor keep us with Christ, nor transform us into the similitude or likeness of Christ; they can neither bring us to heaven, nor fit us for heaven, nor assure us of heaven. In a word, no earthly portion can free us from death, nor in the least avail us in the day of wrath. By all which it is most evident that all earthly portions are of very little consequence and concernment to the souls of men.

Oh—but now God is a portion of infinite consequence and concernment to all the sons and souls of men. No man can hear as he should, nor pray as he should, nor live as he should, nor die as he should—until God is his portion. No man is secure from temporal, spiritual, or eternal judgments—until God is his portion. No man can be happy in this world, or blessed in another world—until God is his portion. O sirs! it is not absolutely necessary that you should have this or that earthly portion—but it is absolutely necessary that you should have God for your portion; for if God is not your portion, all the angels in heaven, nor all the men on earth, cannot prevent your being miserable to all eternity!

[5.] Fifthly, Consider that until a man comes to have God for his portion, he never comes to be temptation proof. A man who has God for his portion is temptation-proof; he will say when tempted, as Themistocles did, 'Give those trinkets to slaves.' And as Basil did, who, when he was offered honor, glory, and wealth, etc., answered, 'Give me that glory which abides forever, and give me those riches which will endure forever.' And as he was being tempted with offers of money to desert his religion, gave this excellent answer, 'Let not any think that he will embrace other men's goods to forsake Christ—who has forsaken his own proper goods to follow Christ!' Do as that martyr did, who, when he had riches and honors offered him, if he would recant, answered, 'Do but offer me something that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and I shall recant.' Do as Hormisdas, a nobleman in the king of Persia's court, did, who, because he would not deny Christ, he was put into ragged clothes, deprived of his honors, and set to keep the camels; after a long time, the king seeing him in that base condition, and remembering his former fortunes, he pitied him, and caused him to be brought into the palace, and to be clothed again like a nobleman; and then tempts him afresh to deny Christ, whereupon this noble spirit presently tore his silken clothes, saying, 'If for these you think you can cause me deny my faith—take them back!' And so he was cast out with scorn a second time. And what was it which made the apostles temptation-proof, and that made those worthies temptation-proof, Heb 11:1-40, and which made the primitive Christians

temptation-proof, and which made the martyrs in queen Mary's days temptation-proof? Certainly, nothing more than this very consideration—that God was their portion. Ah sinners, sinners, you will certainly fall, you will readily fall, you will easily fall, you will frequently fall, you will dreadfully fall before temptations, until you come to enjoy God for your portion. Every blast and every wind of temptation will upset and overturn that man who has not God for his portion. Such a man may pray a thousand times over and over, "Lord, lead me not into temptation," and yet every day fall before the least temptation, as common experience does abundantly evidence. Whereas a man who has God for his portion will stand fast like a rock in all storms, yes, in the face of all temptations he will be like mount Zion, that cannot be removed.

Luther counsels every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, "I am a Christian!" And I would counsel every Christian to answer all temptations with this short saying, "The Lord is my portion!" O Christian, when Satan or the world shall tempt you with honors, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall tempt you with riches, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall tempt you with preferments, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall tempt you with the favors of great ones, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When this persecuting world shall threaten you with the loss of your estate, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall threaten you with the loss of your liberty, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall threaten you with the loss of friends, answer, "The Lord is my portion!" When they shall threaten you with the loss of life, answer, "The Lord is my portion."

O Christians! If Satan should come to you with an apple, as once he did to Eve, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" If Satan should come to you with a grape, as once he did to Noah, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" If Satan should come to you with a change of clothing, as once he did to Gehazi, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" If Satan should come to you with a wedge of gold, as once he did to Achan, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" If Satan should come to you with a bag of money, as once he did to Judas, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" If Satan should come to you with a crown, a kingdom, as once he did to Moses, tell him that "The Lord is my portion!" But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, If God is not your portion, you will be miserable to all eternity. If God is not your portion, wrath must be your portion, hell must be your portion, everlasting burnings must be your portion, a devouring fire must be your portion, and a separation forever from the glorious presence of God, must be your portion; as you may clearly see by comparing these Scriptures. [Psa 11:6; Psa 9:17; Isa 33:14; Mat 24:51; 2Th 1:7-10; Heb 12:22-24]

If God is not your portion in this life—you shall never have him for your portion in another life; if God is not your portion here—he will never be your portion hereafter. O sirs! if death should surprise you before God is your portion—you will as certainly go to hell, as God is in heaven. Therefore it infinitely concerns you to get God for your portion. There is no way in the world to make the king of terrors to be a king of desires to your soul, O man—but by gaining God for your portion. Of all terribles, death will be most terrible and formidable to that man who has not God for his portion. If you should live and die, O man, without having God for your portion—it had been good for you that you had never been born. If the day of your birth had been the day of your death—your hell would not have been so hot as now you will certainly find it. But now, methinks, I hear some crying out, O! what shall we do, that we may have God for our portion? Oh, had we as

many worlds at our disposal as there are stars in heaven—we would give them all that we might have God for our portion. Oh we now see that we can never be happy except God is our portion; yes, we now see that we shall be miserable to all eternity, except God is our portion. Therefore what shall we do, that we may have God for our portion?

Well then, if you would indeed have God for your portion, let me thus advise you—

[1.] First, Labor to be very sensible, that by nature you are without God; yes, at enmity with God, and alienated from the life and love of God, and that by nature you are children of wrath and disobedience, and in actual war and rebellion against the great God. [Eph 2:12; Rom 8:7; Eph 2:1-2; Eph 4:18] O sirs, never talk of having of God for your portion, until you come to see yourselves without God, and until you come to judge yourselves unworthy of God. Every man in his natural estate is afar off from God. Until a man comes to be sensible of this, he will never desire God to be his portion. But,

[2.] Secondly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must trample upon all other portions in comparison of God. Luther protested that God should not put him off with the poor things of this world. Oh, go to God, and say, "Lord, you have given me a portion in money—but this money is not yourself; you have given me a portion in lands—but these lands are not yourself; you have given me a portion in goods—but these goods are not yourself; you have given me a portion in jewels—but these jewels are not yourself. Therefore give me yourself, and I shall say I have enough. Lord, had I all the world for my portion—yet I would be miserable forever in that other world, except you bestow yourself as a portion upon my soul. O Lord, give me but yourself, and take away whatever you please. Oh give me but yourself—and take away all, strip me of all—and I shall with Job sit down and bless a taking God as well as a giving God!"

Oh go to God, and tell him, with an humble boldness, that though he has given you many good things—yet all those good things will do you no good except he bestows himself upon you as the only good. Oh tell him that he is the first good; tell him that he is the original of all good; tell him that he is the greatest good, the noblest good; tell him that he is a superlative good; tell him that he is an universal good; tell him that he is an unchangeable good; tell him that he is an eternal good; and tell him that he is the most soul-suitable and soul-satisfying good. And therefore tell him that you cannot tell how to live one day without him; yes, that you know not how to be happy one hour without him. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If you would have God for your portion, then of all precious promises, of all golden promises, plead that most, Zec 13:9, "They shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." O sirs! as ever you would have the great and glorious God for your portion, plead out this noble promise cordially with God; plead it out affectionately, plead it out fervently, plead it out frequently, plead it out believingly, plead it out resolutely, plead it out incessantly. O sirs! this choice promise is a hive full of heavenly honey, it is a paradise full of sweet flowers, it is a breast which is full of the milk of consolation. Therefore be still a-sucking at this breast, be still a-pleading of this promise. Follow God with this promise early and late, follow him with this promise day and night, follow him with this promise as the importunate widow followed the unjust judge, Luk 18:1; and give him no rest until he has made it good to your souls that he is your God, and that he is your portion, and that he is your salvation, and that he is your all in all.

Oh tell him that above all things in this world your hearts are set on this—to have God to be your God, to have God to be your portion. Oh tell him that you cannot, tell him that you dare not, tell him that you may not, and tell him that you shall not—be satisfied with anything without God, with anything below God, with anything on this side God, with anything but God. Therefore humbly entreat him, and earnestly beseech him, to be your God, and to be your portion. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must be willing to be his portion. [Deu 32:9; Jer 12:10; Zec 2:12] God is resolved upon this, that he will be no man's portion, who is not willing to be his. You must make a resignation of yourselves to God—if ever you would enjoy a saving interest in God. You must be as willing to be his people—as you are willing to have him to be your God. You must be as much at God's disposal—as earthly portions are at your dispose—or else there will be no enjoying of God to be your God. God will engage himself to none who are not willing to engage themselves to him. He who will not give his hand and his heart to God—shall never have any part or portion in God. O sirs! as ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to give up yourselves to God with highest estimations, and with most vigorous affections, and with utmost endeavors, according to that precious promise, Isa 44:5, "One will say, 'I belong to the Lord'; another will call himself by the name of Jacob; still another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and will take the name Israel." God stands upon nothing so much as the giving up of yourselves to him, nor is he taken with anything so much as the giving up of yourselves to him.

I have read of Aeschines, who, seeing his fellow-scholars give great gifts, namely, gold, silver, and jewels, to his master Socrates, and he being poor, and having nothing else to bestow, he gave himself, which the philosopher most kindly accepted, esteeming this present above all those rich and costly presents that his scholars had presented to him, and accordingly in love and sweetness he behaved toward him. So there is nothing that God accepts, loves, likes, and esteems—like the giving up of a man's self unto him. This is a present that God prefers above all the gold, silver, and sparkling jewels in the world. Well, sirs, remember this, such as are not as willing to say, 'Lord, we are yours', as they are to say, 'Lord, you are ours.' Such shall never have God for their portion. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If you would have God for your portions, then you must take up Christ in your arms, and deal with God upon the righteousness of Christ. There is no acquaintance with God, there is no reconciliation to God, there is no union nor communion with God, there is no readmission into the presence and favor of God, without a mediator. [Eph 2:16; Heb 2:17; Col 1:20; Eph 1:6-7] God outside of Christ, is incomprehensible, God outside of Christ, is exceeding dreadful. An absolute God is a consuming fire, Heb 12:9. Therefore says Luther, 'let me have nothing to do with God himself.' The blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, is that, and only that, which can cement, reunite, and knit God and man together.

Themistocles, understanding that king Admetus was highly displeased with him, took up his young son into his arms, and dealt with the father, holding that his darling in his bosom, and thereby appeased the king's wrath. O sirs! the King of kings is offended with you, and upon the account of your sins he has a very great controversy with you. Now, there is no way under heaven to pacify his wrath, and turn away his displeasure from you—but by taking up Christ in your arms, and by presenting all your suits in his name. There is no angel in heaven, nor any saint on earth, who can,

or who dares, to interpose between an angry God and poor sinners. It is only Christ, the prince of peace, who can make up a sinner's peace with God, Isa 9:6.

John 14:6, "Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me." There is no way to the Father but by the meritorious blood of the Son; there are none who can stand between everlasting burnings and us but Christ, Isa 33:14. "You shall not see my face except you bring your brother Benjamin with you," said Joseph to his brethren, Gen 43:3, Gen 43:5. So says God, Sinners, sinners, you shall not see my face except you bring Jesus with you, except you bring Christ in your arms; you shall never see my face with joy, you shall never see my face and live. There is a writ of vengeance that is issued out of the court of heaven against all sinners, and except Christ steps in, they will certainly fall under an eternal arrest, and be thrown into everlasting perdition and destruction. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must break your league with sin. You must fall out with sin—if ever you fall in with God. Sin and you must be two—or God and you can never be one. There is no property to be had in God, except your hearts rise against that which first disunited and disjointed you from God. Sin and you must part—or God and you can never meet. You shall as soon make a marriage between light and darkness, heaven and hell, noon and midnight—as ever you shall be able to make a marriage between God and sin. So long as sin remains ours—God will be none of ours. No prince will be one with that subject who lives in the practice of treason and rebellion against him. No prince will be one with him who has killed his only son and heir, and who daringly continues to hold up those bloody weapons in his hands with which he has committed the horrid murders. There is no adulteress that can be so shamelessly impudent, or so vainly confident, as to desire pardon of her jealous husband, or to expect a oneness and a sweetness with him—while she continues to hold her wanton lovers still in her arms, and is fully resolved to hold on in her wanton dalliances as in times past.

O sirs! God is that prince who will never admit of peace or union with you—until you cease practicing of treason against him, and until you come to lay down your weapons of rebellion at his feet; he is that jealous husband who will never take you into a oneness, into a nearness and dearness with himself—until you come to abandon all your wanton lovers, and thoroughly to resolve against all wanton dalliances for time to come. If ever you would have God for your portion, you must say to all your wanton lovers, and to all those idols of jealousy that you have set up in your souls, as Ephraim once said to his, "Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with you?" Hos 14:8. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, If you would have God for your portion, then you must wait upon him in the use of all holy means. In the use of holy means, God makes the clearest, the fullest, and the choicest discoveries of himself; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to be acquainted with the excellency of God, and with the necessity of having God for their portion; in the use of holy means, poor sinners come to understand the fullness of God, the goodness of God, the graciousness of God, the sweetness of God, and the wonderful freeness, readiness, and willingness of God to give himself as a portion to all such as see their need of him, and who are heartily willing to receive him as their God and portion; and in the use of holy means God works in poor sinners a readiness, a forwardness, and a blessed willingness to choose God for their portion, to close with God for their portion, to embrace God for their portion, to accept of God for

their portion, and to own God for their portion.

If this question should be put to all the saints in heaven, namely, How did God come to be their portion? they would all answer, By waiting upon him in the use of all those holy ways and means that he had appointed for that purpose. And if the same question were put to all the saints on earth who have God for their portion, they would all give the same answer. O sirs! as ever you would have God for your portion, it highly concerns you to wait patiently upon him in the use of all holy means. He who is in the use of holy means is in the way of obtaining God for his portion. But he who casts off the use of the means, he says in effect, "I will not have God for my portion, I care not to have God for my portion; let me but have the world for my portion, and let who will, take God for their portion." To prevent mistakes, before I close up this direction, remember that by the use of holy means, I only mean such means that God himself has appointed, commanded, instituted, and ordained. As for those means that are of men's inventing, devising, prescribing, commanding, and ordaining; a man may wait until doomsday in the use of them, before ever he will gain God for his portion. Therefore they are rather to be declined, yes, detested and abhorred, than any way to be owned, minded, or used by any who would have God for their portion. Look! as all the worshipers of Baal got nothing by all their wailing and crying out from morning to night, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!" 1Ki 18:1-46, so those who wait upon God in humanly invented and devised worship, will never get anything by all their waiting. No, though they should wait from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, and cut and lance themselves until the blood gushes out, as those foolish worshipers of Baal did. And therefore, as ever you would have God for your portion, be sure that you wait upon him only in his own ways, and in the use of his own means. And thus I am done with the use and application of the point. So that I have now nothing to do but these two things:

First, To answer a few objections which poor sinners are apt to make against their own souls, and against their enjoying of God for their portion; and,

Secondly, To lay down a few principles which may be of singular use to all such that have God for their portion. I shall begin with the objections.

03.06. Chapter 6

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

OBJECTIONS

I wish to answer a few objections that poor sinners are apt to make against their own souls, and against their enjoying of God for their portion.

Objection 1. Methinks I hear some poor sinners ready to object and say, O sir! you have pressed us by many motives to get God for our portion, and we stand convinced in some measure by what you have said, that God is a most excellent, transcendent, glorious portion; but we very much question whether ever God will bestow himself as a portion—upon such great, such grievous, such notorious, and such wicked sinners as we are.

Now to this objection, I shall return these answers:

[1.] First, God is a free agent, and therefore he may give himself as a portion to whom he pleases. Men may do with their own as they please, and so may God do with himself as he pleases. Look! as men may give earthly portions to whom they please, so God may give himself as a portion to what sinners he pleases. God is as free to bestow himself upon the greatest of sinners, as he is to bestow himself upon the least of sinners. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, That the Lord has bestowed himself as a portion upon as great and as grievous sinners as you are, Psa 68:18. Adam, you know, fell from the highest pinnacle of glory into the greatest gulf of misery, and yet God bestowed himself as a portion upon him, Gen 3:15. And Manasseh was a sinner of the greatest magnitude 2Ki 21:1-26, his sins were of a scarlet dye, they reached as high as heaven, and they made his soul as black as hell; for witchcraft, sorcery, cruelty, idolatry, and murder, he was a beast 2Ch 33:1-25; he sold himself to work all kinds of wickedness with greediness; he did more wickedly than the very heathen, whom the Lord abhorred; in all his actings he seemed to be the firstborn of Satan's strength; and yet the Lord freely bestowed himself as a portion upon him. And so, Eze 16:5-6, Eze 16:8, "No one looked on you with pity or had compassion enough to do any of these things for you. Rather, you were thrown out into the open field, for on the day you were born you were despised. Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, "Live!" Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign Lord, and you became mine." And so,

Isa 46:12-13, "Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness. I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel." Solomon, Mary Magdalene, Matthew, Zaccheus, the jailor, and the murderers of Christ, were all very great and grievous sinners—and yet the Lord bestowed himself as a portion upon them. And so God bestowed himself as a portion upon those monstrous and prodigious sinners that are mentioned in 1Co 6:9-11, whose souls were red with guilt, and as black as hell with filth. God has been very good to those who have been very bad. Therefore do not despair, O sinner, though your sins are very great.

I have read a story concerning a great rebel, who had made a great revolt against one of the Roman emperors, and proclamation being sent abroad, that whoever could bring in the rebel, dead or alive, he should have a great sum of money for his reward; the rebel hearing of it, comes, and presenting himself before the emperor, demands the sum of money proposed—the emperor, bethinking himself, concludes, that if he should put him to death, all the world would be ready to say that he did it to save his money; and so he freely pardoned the rebel, and gave him the money. Here now was light in a dark lantern, here was rare mercy and pity in a very heathen. And shall an heathen do thus, and shall not the great God, who is made up of all loves, of all mercies, of all compassions, of all goodnesses, and of all sweetnesses, do much more? Certainly he will.

If the greatest rebels, if the greatest sinners will but come in while the white flag of grace and mercy is held forth, they shall find a marvelous readiness and forwardness in God, not only to pardon them—but also to bestow, not merely money—but himself as a portion upon them. The greatest sinners should do well to make that great Scripture their greatest companion. Psa 68:18, "You have ascended on high," speaking of Christ, "you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts for men; yes, for the rebellious also." But to what purpose has Christ received gifts, spiritual gifts, gracious gifts, glorious gifts for men, for the rebellious? Why, it is "that the Lord God may dwell among them." But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That God has given out an express promise, that he will make such to be his people, who were not his people. Hos 2:23, "I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to those who were not my people, You are my people; and they shall say, You are my God." In this precious promise God has engaged himself to have a most sweet harmony, and a most intimate union and communion with such a people as were not his people. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, That God gains the greatest glory by bestowing of himself as a portion upon the greatest sinners. There is nothing that makes so much for the glory of free grace, and for the exaltation of rich mercy, and for the praise of divine goodness, and for the honor of infinite fullness—as God's bestowing himself upon the greatest of sinners! O sirs! grace never appears so rich, nor ever so excellent, nor ever so glorious—as when it triumphs over the greatest sins, and when it falls upon the greatest sinners. Grace never shines, nor ever sparkles, nor ever becomes so exceeding glorious—as it does when it lights upon the hearts of the greatest sinners. The greatest sins do most and best set off the freeness and the riches of God's grace. There is nothing which makes heaven and earth to ring and to sound out his praises, so much as the fixing of his love upon those who are most unlovely and ungodly! And it is further observable, that the greatest sinners, when once they are converted, do commonly prove the choicest saints, and the rarest

instruments of promoting the honor and glory of God in the world. The Canaanites were a wicked and a cursed generation; they were of the race of cursed Ham; they were given over to all whoredom, witchcraft, and cruelty; they offered their sons and daughters to devils; they were the very worst of sinners; they were without God and without the covenant, and counted dogs among the Israelites; and such an one was the Canaanite woman, that you read of in that Mat 15:21-29, until the Lord made it the day of his power upon her soul. But when the Lord had brought her in to himself, ah, what a rare Christian did she prove, for wisdom, zeal, humility, self-denial, love, courage, patience, faith, etc. And so Mary Magdalene was a notorious strumpet, a common whore, among all the harlots none to Mary Magdalene, and she was one out of whom Christ cast seven devils, Mark 16:9; and yet when she was changed and converted, oh, with what an inflamed love did she love the Lord Jesus Christ! and with what a burning zeal did she follow after the Lord Jesus! and how abundant was she in her lamenting and mourning after the Lord Jesus Christ! Some report, that after our Savior's resurrection, she spent thirty years in weeping for her sins. And Paul, you know, was a very grievous sinner—but after his conversion, oh what a rare, what an eminent, what a glorious instrument was he in bringing of souls to Christ, and of building up of souls in Christ! Oh what a noble drudge was he for Christ! Oh how frequent! Oh how fervent! Oh how abundant was he in the work of the Lord, etc. And indeed, in all ages, the greatest sinners, when once they have been converted, they have commonly proved the choicest saints, and the rarest instruments in the hand of God for the advancement of his glory, and the carrying on of his work in the world. I might instance in Luther, and divers others—but that I hasten to a close. And therefore,

[5.] Fifthly, I answer, that of all sinners the greatest sinners do undoubtedly stand in the greatest need of having of God for their portion.

Look! as those who are most wounded stand in most need of a surgeon, and as those who are most sick stand in most need of a physician, and as those who are in most danger of robbing stand in most need of assistance, and as those who are in most peril of drowning stand in most need of a boat, and as those who are most impoverished stand in most need of relief, so those who are the greatest sinners stand in most need of having God for their portion. For no tongue can express, nor any heart can conceive the greatness of that wrath, of that indignation, of that desolation, of that destruction, and of that damnation which attends and waits upon those great sinners who have not God for their portion 2Th 2:7-9. Therefore the greater sinner you are, the greater obligation lies upon you to get God to be your God and portion; for until that be done, all your sins, in their full number, weight, guilt, and aggravating circumstances—will abide upon your soul. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, I answer, that God is a great God, and he loves to do like himself. Now, there are no works, no actions that are so suitable to God, and so pleasing to God, and so delightful to God—as those who are great; and what greater work, what greater action can the great God do, than to bestow himself as a portion upon the greatest of sinners? It was a great work for God to create the world, and it is a great work for God to govern the world, and it will be a great work for God to dissolve the world, and to raise the dead; and yet doubtless it is a greater work for the great God freely to bestow himself upon the greatest sinners. The love of God is a great love, and the mercies of God are great mercies, and the compassions of God are great compassions, and accordingly God loves to act. Therefore there is ground for the greatest sinners

to hope that the Lord may bestow himself as a portion upon them. But,

Objection 2. Secondly, Others may object and say, Hereafter we will look after this portion; for the present we are for living in the world, We are for a portion in hand, we are for laying up portions for ourselves, and providing portions for our posterity. We are first for laying up of earthly treasures, and when we have done that work to purpose, then we will do what we can to obtain this excellent and glorious portion that you have been so long a-discoursing on, etc. Now, to this objection I shall thus answer,

[1.] First, Thus to act is to run counter-cross to Christ's express commands. Mat 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." And so Mat 6:19-20, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." And so in that John 6:27, "Labor not for the food which perishes—but for the food which endures for everlasting life." O sirs! to act or run cross to God's express commands, though under pretense of revelation from God, will cost you your life—as you may see in that sad story 1Ki 13:24.

O sirs! it is a dangerous thing to neglect one of his commands, who by another command is able to command your bodies into the grave, and your souls into hell at his pleasure. Shall the wife make conscience of obeying the commands of her husband? and shall a child make conscience of obeying the commands of his father? and shall the servant make conscience of obeying the commands of his master? and shall the soldier make conscience of obeying the commands of his general? and shall the subject make conscience of obeying the commands of his prince? And will not you make conscience of obeying his commands that is the prince of the kings of the earth? Rev 1:5. But,

[2.] Secondly, Who but children, madmen, and fools—will pitch upon a less good, when a greater good is offered to them? What madness and folly is it for men to pitch upon bags of pennies—when bags of gold are laid before them! or for men to choose a pittance—when rich inheritances and great lordships are freely offered to be made over to them forever? What were this but, Esau-like, to prefer a mess of pottage before the birthright? and yet this is the present case of these objectors. God is that rich, that great, that glorious, and that matchless portion that is held out, and freely offered and tendered in the gospel to poor sinners; and they neglect, slight, and reject this blessed offer—and fix their choice, their love, their hearts, their affections, upon the perishing vanities of this world. Oh the folly of such, that at a feast feed upon a crust, and never taste of those substantial dishes that are for nourishment! Oh the madness of such that prefer the fleshpots of Egypt before the dainties of Canaan! Would not such a merchant, such a tradesman be pointed at, as he goes along the streets, for a fool or a madman—who should neglect such a season, such an opportunity, such an advantage, wherein he may be made rich forever—and all because he is resolved first to secure such a bargain of rags, or such a bargain of old shoes, which will turn out but little to his advantage when he has bought them? Surely yes!

Now this is the very case of the objectors, for they neglect the present seasons, the present opportunities of grace and mercy, and of being made happy forever, by enjoying of God for their portion; and all because they are resolved first to secure the treasures, the rags of this world. Certainly, in the great day of account, those will be found the greatest fools that have fooled away

such golden opportunities, that were more worth than all the world, and all to secure the rags of the world. But,

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, How many thousands are now in, hell! How many thousands have now their part and their portion in that burning lake, which burns with fire and brimstone forever and ever! Who thought when they were on earth, that after they had laid up goods for many years, like the fool in the Gospel, that then they would look after heavenly treasures, and secure God for their portion; but before they could find time or hearts to set about so noble a work, divine vengeance has overtaken them, and justice has cut the thread of their lives, and given them their portion among hypocrites, Mat 7:22, Mat 7:26-27; Rev 21:8. Ah! how many are there who have died in the time of their earthly projects and designs, before ever they have set about that great work of securing God for their portion, Luk 12:15, Luk 12:22; and how many thousands be there, that God in his just judgment has given up to insatiable desires of earthly things, Php 3:18-19, and to a cursed endless covetousness all their days!

Some write of the crocodile, that it always grows, that it has never done growing; and just so it is with the desires of worldly men, they always grow, they have never done growing. Now they are for one thousand, then for ten, then for twenty, then for forty, then for a hundred thousand; now they are for this lordship, and then they are for that; now they are for this good bargain, and then they are for that; their hearts grow every day fuller and fuller with new desires of further and greater measures of earthly things. They please themselves with golden dreams, until they awake with everlasting flames about their ears, and then they fall a-cursing themselves that they have made gold their confidence, and that they have neglected those golden seasons and opportunities wherein they might have secured God for their portion. But,

Objection 3. Thirdly, Others may object and say, We would gladly have God for our portion, and we would willingly apply ourselves to all those ways and means whereby we might obtain the Lord to be our portion; but we are poor unworthy wretches. Surely the Lord will never bestow himself as a portion upon such miserable unworthy ones as we are! We are worthy of death, we are worthy of wrath, we are worthy of hell, we are worthy of damnation—but we are in no way worthy of having God for our portion. Did ever the Lord cast an eye of love upon such unlovely and such unworthy sinners, lepers as we are? etc.

Now to this objection I shall return these answers:

[1.] First, Though you have no merits—yet God is rich and abundant in mercy. [2Co 4:15; 1Ti 1:14; 1Pe 1:3] Your sins, your unworthiness can but reach as high as heaven—but the mercies of God reach above the heavens. Psa 103:11, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward those who fear him." Psa 108:4, "For your mercy is great above the heavens, and your truth reaches unto the clouds." The highest comparisons which the world will afford, are not sufficient to express the greatness of God's mercy to poor sinners. Though the heavens are exceeding high above the earth—yet the mercies of God to his poor people are above the heavens. But,

[2.] Secondly, I answer, that the Lord has never bestowed himself as a portion upon any yet but unworthy ones. David was as unworthy as Saul, and Job as Joab, and Peter as Judas, and Paul as Simon Magus; and the publicans and harlots who entered into the kingdom of heaven, were as

unworthy as the publicans and harlots who were shut out of the kingdom of heaven, Mat 21:31-32; and the thief who went to paradise, was as unworthy as the thief who went to hell. All the saints in heaven, and all the saints on earth, are ready with one joint consent to declare that they were as unworthy as the most unworthiest, when God first bestowed himself as a portion upon them. This objection, 'I am unworthy,' is a very unworthy objection, and therefore away with it. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That God has nowhere in all the Scripture required any personal worthiness to be in the creature, before he will bestow himself upon the creature. O sirs! it never came into the thoughts of God, it never entered into the heart of God, to require of men that they should be first worthy of his love before they should enjoy his love; and that they should be first worthy of his mercy before they should taste of his mercy; and that they should be first worthy of his goodness before they should be partakers of his goodness; and that they should be first worthy of himself, before he would bestow himself as a portion upon them. If we should never enjoy God for our portion until we are worthy to enjoy him for our portion—we would never enjoy him. If a man had as many eyes as Argus to search into the Scripture, and as many hands as Briareus to turn over the leaves of Scripture—yet he would never be able to find out one text, one line, yes, one word, wherein God requires a personal worthiness in the creature before he gives away himself to the creature. Should God stand upon a personal worthiness to be in the creature before he would look upon the creature, or before he would let out his love to the creature, or before he would extend mercy or pity to the creature, or before he would, in a covenant of free grace, give himself to the creature—no sinner could ever be saved; man would be forever undone, and it would have been good for him that he had never been born. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, it is not men's unworthiness—but men's unwillingness, which hinders them from having God to be their portion. Though most men pretend their unworthiness—yet there is in them a secret unwillingness to have God for their God. When they look upon God as a gracious God, then they are willing to have him to be their God; but when they look upon God as a holy God, then their hearts fly back. When they look upon God as a merciful God, and as a bountiful God, oh then they wish that he were their God; but when they look upon God as a commanding God, and as a ruling and an overruling God, oh then their hearts do secretly rise against God. There is a real unwillingness in the hearts of sinners in all respects to close with God, and to have God to be their God. "Who has believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isa 53:1. "I spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people who walk in the wrong path, following their own thoughts. These people continually provoke Me to My face." Isa 65:2-3. "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you—when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you." Pro 1:22-27.

"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it." Isa 30:15. O sirs! men shall be damned at last, not for cannots—but for will nots! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children

together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." Mat 23:37. No man shall be damned because he could not do better—but because he would not do better, Luk 13:34. If there were no will, there would be no hell. At last sinners will find this to be their greatest hell—that they have wilfully destroyed themselves. This is that which will damn with a witness, and this will be that never-dying worm—I might have had Christ and grace—but I would not; I might have been sanctified and saved—but I would not; I might have been holy and happy—but I would not; life and death has been often set before me, and I have chosen death rather than life, Deu 30:15, Deu 30:19; heaven and hell has been often set before me, and I have chosen hell rather than heaven; glory and misery has been often set before me, and I have chosen misery rather than glory. Therefore it is but just that I should be miserable to all eternity. No man, no devil, can undo you, O sinner, without yourself; no man can be undone in both worlds but by himself; no man shall be damned for his unworthiness—but for his unwillingness. Therefore never more plead this objection.

But, [5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, that if you will not seek after the Lord to be your portion until you are worthy to enjoy him as your portion—then you will never seek after him, then you will never enjoy him for your God and portion. Personal worthiness is no flower that grows in nature's garden. No man is born with a worthiness in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. It is not the full—but the empty; it is not the rich—but the poor in spirit; it is not the righteous—but the sinner; it is not the worthy—but the unworthy soul—who is the proper object of God's mercy and pity. The poor publican that cried out, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," Luk 18:10-15, went home justified; when the self-righteous pharisee returned as proud as he came. The centurion, when he came to Christ, fared well, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness, Mat 8:5-13. And the prodigal son fared well when he returned to his father, notwithstanding his personal unworthiness; for he was readily accepted, greatly pitied, sweetly embraced, courteously received, and very joyfully and nobly entertained. Witness the best robe which was put upon his back, and the gold ring which was put on his finger, and the shoes which were put on his feet, and the fatted calf which was killed to make the company merry, Luk 15:11-32.

O sirs! if in the face of all your unworthiness you will go to God, and tell him that you are sinners, that you are vile sinners, that you are wretched sinners, that you are very great sinners, yes, that you are the greatest of sinners, and that you have deserved a thousand deaths, a thousand hells, a thousand destructions, and a thousand damnations, and earnestly beseech him to look upon you, and to bestow himself upon you, though not for your worthiness's sake—yet for his name's sake, for his mercy's sake, for his promise's sake, for his covenant's sake, for his oath's sake, and for his Son's sake. Certainly if you shall thus plead with God, all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary—but that you may speed as well as ever the centurion or the prodigal did. I have taken the more pains to answer this objection, that so it may never more have a resurrection in any of your hearts, into whose hands this treatise may fall.

I know other objections might be raised—but because I have spoken largely so much in my former writings, I shall pass on to the last thing proposed, and that is, to lay down some PRINCIPLES which may, by the blessing of God, be of singular use to the Christian reader.

03.07. Chapter 7

An Ark for All God's Noahs in a Gloomy Stormy Day or, The Best Wine Reserved Until Last or, The Transcendent Excellency of a Believer's

Portion above All Earthly Portions by Thomas Brooks 1662.

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul; therefore

I will hope in Him." Lam 3:24.

CONCLUDING PRINCIPLES

I shall pass on to the last thing proposed, and that is, to lay down some PRINCIPLES that may, by the blessing of God, be of singular use to the Christian reader.

First principle. As, first, That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and it is another thing for a man to have an assurance in his own soul that God is his portion. There are many who have God for their portion, who yet are full of fears and doubts whether God is their portion. Thus it was with Asaph in Psa 77:1-20, and thus it was with Heman in Psa 88:1-18, and thus it is with very many Christians in these days. Sometimes God exercises his children with such changeable and such terrible dispensations, as raises many fears and doubts in them about their interest and property in God. And sometimes their secret indulging of some bosom idol, their entertainment of some predominant lust, raises strange fears and jealousies in their souls about their interest in God. And sometimes their not closing with the Lord so closely, so fully, so faithfully, so universally, and so sincerely as they should, without any secret reservation, raises many doubts and questions in them whether God is their portion or not. The graces of many Christians are so weak, and their corruptions are so strong; and Satan is so busy with them; and their duties and performances are so weak, so flat, so dull, so sapless, so lifeless, so fruitless, and so inconstant—that they are ready at every turn to say, "If God is our God, why is it thus with us? If God is our portion, why are our hearts in no better a frame? Why have our duties no more spirit, life, and fire in them?" Look! as the sun may shine, and yet I not see it; and as the husband may be in the house, and yet the wife not know it; and as the child may have a very great portion, a very fair estate settled upon him, and yet he not understand it; so a Christian may have God for his portion, and yet for the present he may not see it, nor know it, nor understand it.

1Jn 5:13, "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God." These precious souls had God and Christ for their portion, and they did believe, and they had eternal life in the seeds and beginnings of it, and in the promise, and in Christ their head, who, as a public person, had taken possession of it in their steads—and yet they had not the assurance of these things in their own souls, Eph 2:6. Look! as the babe that has passed the pangs of the first birth does not presently cry out, 'My father, my father,' so the babe of grace, the newborn Christian, does not presently cry out, 'My God, my God.'

It is one mercy for God to be my God, and it is another mercy for God to tell me that he is my God; it is one act of grace for God to be my portion, and it is another act of grace for God to tell me that he is my portion. Look! as fire may be hidden under ashes for a time, and as bits of gold may be hidden in an heap of dust for a time, and as stars may be hidden in a dark night for a time, and as a pearl may be hidden in a puddle for a time—so God may be a man's portion, and yet this may be hidden from him for a time.

Second principle. The second principle is this, That it is one thing for a man to have God for his portion, and another thing for a man clearly and convincingly to make it out to himself or others, that God is his portion. Doubtless there are many thousands who have God for their portion, who yet, if you would give them a thousand worlds—are not able to make it out to their own or others' satisfaction, that God is their portion.

Most Christians attain to but small measures of grace. Now small things, little things are hardly discerned, they are hardly made out. A little faith is next to no faith, and a little love is next to no love, and a little repentance is next to no repentance, and a little zeal is next to no zeal, and a little hope is next to no hope, and a little holiness is next to no holiness, and a little communion with God is next to no communion with God, and a little conformity to God is next to no conformity to God. Now where there is but a little grace, there it is very difficult for a man to make out the truth of his grace, and so by consequence to make out the truth of his interest and property in the God of grace. It is not grace in truth—but grace in strength, which will enable a man to make it out to himself, and to make it out to others, that God is his portion. It is not grace in its sincerity—but grace in its thriving—in its high and eminent actings—which will enable a man to make it out to himself and others, that God is indeed his God.

Besides, many precious hearts have such weak heads, and such bad logic, and such shallow natural parts, that they are not able rationally nor divinely to argue the case with their own souls, nor to make an improvement of those rules, helps, ways, and means, whereby they might be enabled to make it out to themselves and others, that God is their portion. Look! as many people have often a good title to such and such lands, and to such and such estates and inheritances, though they are not able for the present to clear up their title either to themselves or others; so many of the dear children of God have a good title to God, and a real interest and property in God, and yet for the present they are not able to clear up their title to God, nor to clear up their interest and property in God, either to themselves or others. And this is so great a truth, that all the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ who deal with poor souls, and who are conversant about souls—are ready from their daily experience to affirm it before all the world. He who shall say, that such have not God for their portion, will certainly condemn the generation of the just.

Third principle. The third principle is this, That where there is a hearty willingness in any man to accept of God to be his God, to own God for his God, and to close with God as his God—there God is certainly that man's God, Isa 55:1-2; John 7:37-38. If there is a cordial willingness in you to take God to be your God, then without all question, God is your God. A sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God is accepted of God, and is sufficient to enter into a gracious covenant with God. O sirs! a sincere willingness to accept of God to be your God, flows from nothing below the good will and pleasure of God. No power below that glorious power which made the world, and which raised Christ from the grave—is able to raise a sincere, an hearty willingness

in man to accept of God to be his God, and to take God for his God. Psa 110:3, "Your people shall be willing, in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness." There is no power below the power of the Lord Almighty, which can raise up a willingness in the hearts of sinners. It is not in the power of all the angels in heaven, nor of all the men on earth, to beget a sincere willingness in the heart of man to accept of God to be his God. This is work that can only be effected by an omnipotent hand.

Though an emperor may force a woman who is his slave, to marry him because she is his purchase—yet he cannot by all his power force her will; he may force her body to the action—but he cannot force her will to the action. The will is always free, and cannot be forced. But God is that great emperor that has not only a power to marry the soul, which he has redeemed from being Satan's bonds slave—but also a power to make the soul that is unready ready, and that is unwilling willing—to marry him, and to bestow itself freely upon him. If there be in you, O man, O woman, a sincere willingness to take God upon his own terms to be your God, that is, to take him as a holy God, and as a ruling God, and as a commanding God, in one thing as well as another; then he is certainly your God. Rev 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him who hears say, Come; and let him who is athirst, come; and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Fourth principle. The fourth principle is this, That it may so happen, that such a Christian who has God for his portion, who has a saving interest and a property in God—may lose the sight, the sense, the feeling and the evidence of his interest and property in God; and this is evident by comparing these scriptures. [Psa 30:6-7; Psa 51:13; Job 16:9; Job 19:10; and 2Ch 30:20; Psa 77:6; Psa 88:6; Isa 8:17; Lam 3:18] Doubtless it is very rare to find a Christian who has had the knowledge, and experience, and evidence of his interest and property in God—but that Christian also has experienced what it is to have his interest and property in God clouded and darkened. Such Christians that have experienced what the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness means, have likewise experienced what it is to have their sun set in a cloud; and this truth I might make good, by producing of a cloud of witnesses, both from among the martyrs and from among the saints of all ages. But what do I talk of a cloud of witnesses, when the tears which daily drop from many of your eyes, and the sad complaints, and sighs, and groans of many of your souls, do sufficiently evidence this sad truth.

Therefore let no man conclude that God is not his God, because he has lost the sight and sense of his interest and property in God; let no man say, that God is not his portion, because he has lost those evidences, at the present, by which he has formerly proved God to be his portion. Though a man should lose his documents and evidences that he has to show for such or such an estate—yet his documents and evidences being enrolled in a court of record—his estate remains good, and his title is still good in law. Therefore there is no reason why such a man should sit down, and wring his hands, and cry out, 'I am undone, I am undone!' Though a Christian should lose his documents, his evidences that once he had to show, that once he had to prove God to be his God and portion, and that he had a real interest and property in God—yet his documents, his evidences being enrolled in the court of heaven—his title to God, his interest in God remains good. Therefore there is no reason why such a person should sit down dejected, and wring his hands, and cry out, 'Oh I am undone, I am forever undone!'

Fifth principle. The fifth principle is this, That such who have not, for the present, God for their portion, ought not decidedly to conclude that they shall never have God for their portion. Such a person who cannot yet truly say that the Lord is his portion, ought not to despair of ever having of God for his portion. The time of a man's life is but a day, and God may bestow himself as a portion upon man in whatever hour of that day he pleases. In the parable, he bestowed himself as a portion upon some at the first hour, upon others at the third hour, upon others at the sixth hour, upon others at the ninth hour, and upon others at the eleventh hour, Mat 20:1-17. God is a free agent, and may bestow himself upon whom he pleases, and as he pleases, and when he pleases. There is no sinner, no, not the greatest sinner living under the gospel, who can infallibly determine that God will never be his God. No sinner can conclude that God has decidedly and absolutely excluded him from mercy, and shut him out among those who he is resolved never to bestow himself upon. For, 1. God never took any sinner one of his secret council.

2. In the gospel of grace, God has revealed no such thing.

3. Secret things belong only to the Lord, Deu 29:29.

4. God has bestowed himself as a portion upon as great sinners as any of those, who yet do not have God for their portion.

5. All the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, cannot tell to the contrary—but that God may have thoughts of mercy towards you, and that your lot may fall within the purpose of his grace, and that he may bestow himself as a portion upon you before you are cut off from the land of the living. Although a sinner may certainly know at the present that God is not his God, that God is not his portion—yet he does not certainly know that God will never be his God, that God will never be his portion. Therefore no sinner may decidedly conclude that God will never be his God, because for the present he cannot, he dares not say he is his God.

God gave himself as a portion to Abraham when he was old, when he was a white-headed sinner, Gen 12:4. And Manasseh was old when he was converted and changed, and when God bestowed himself upon him 2Ch 33:1, 2Ch 33:12-14. And Zaccheus and Nicodemus were called and converted in their old age. When there were but a few steps between them and the grave, between them and eternity, between them and everlasting burnings—then the Lord graciously revealed himself, and bestowed himself as a portion upon them.

Dionysius tells us that Mary Magdalene, who was so loose and dissolute in her youth, being converted in her old age, she sequestered herself from all worldly pleasures, and lived a most solitary life in the mountains of Gallia, where she spent full thirty years in meditation, fasting, and prayer. And old godly Similes said that he had been in the world sixty years—but had lived but seven, counting his life, not from his first birth—but from his new birth. And Augustine repented that he had begun to seek, serve, and love God no sooner. By all these instances it is most evident that God may bestow himself as a portion upon sinners, upon very great sinners, yes, upon the greatest of sinners, and that at very last—when they are stricken in years, and when they are even ready to go out of this world. Therefore let no man despair of having of God for his portion, even though for the present his soul cannot say, 'The Lord is my portion.'

O sirs! despair is a sin, a very heinous sin, yes, it is that sin that damns with a witness. Despairing Judas perished and was damned, whereas the very murderers of Christ, believing on Christ, were

saved. Acts 2:1-47. Despair thrusts God from his mercy-seat; it throws disgrace upon the throne of grace; it gives the lie to all the precious promises; it casts reproach upon the nature of God; it tramples under feet the blood of the covenant; it cuts the throat of faith, hope, and repentance; it renders all the means of grace useless and fruitless; it embitters all a man's comforts; it gives a sting to all a man's troubles; it proclaims Satan a conqueror; it raises a hell in the conscience; it makes a man a terror to himself and an astonishment to others. In Dan 7:1-28 there is mention made of four beasts—the first a lion, the second a bear, the third a leopard—but the fourth, without distinction either of kind, or gender, or name, is said to be very fearful, and terrible, and strong; and such a thing as this fourth beast was, is desperation, as all have found that ever have been under it. Desperation is a complicated sin; it is a mother sin; it is a breeding sin; it is the combination of all sins. Therefore above all take heed of this sin. O sirs! as you love your souls, and as you would be happy to all eternity, do not despair, nor do not be peremptory in your conclusions, that God will never be your portion, because for the present he is not your portion. Remember the gracious invitations of God, and remember the glorious riches of mercy, and remember the overflowings of infinite grace—and then despond and despair if you can.

Sixth principle. The sixth and last principle is this, That such is the love, care, goodness, and kindness of God to his people, that few or none of them die without some assurance that God is their portion, and that they have a saving interest and property in him. That here and there a particular Christian, in cases not ordinary, may die doubting, and ascend to heaven in a cloud, as Christ did, Acts 1:9; will, I suppose, be readily granted. And that the generality of Christians shall, first or last, more or less, mediately or immediately, have some comfortable assurance, that God is their God, and that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and property in him, may I suppose be thus evinced.

[1.] First, Several precious promises that are scattered up and down the Scripture seems to speak out such a thing as this is. Take these for a taste. Psa 9:18, "For the needy shall not always be forgotten—the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Psa 22:26, "The humble will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will praise Him." Psa 84:11, "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly." Hos 2:23, "And I will have mercy upon her that has not obtained mercy; and I will say to them who were not my people, You are my people; and they shall say, You are my God." Psa 5:12, "For you, Lord, will bless the righteous; with favor will you compass him as with a shield." John 14:21; John 14:23, "He who has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me; and he who loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. If any man loves me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

[2.] Secondly, The common experiences of the saints, both in the Old and New Testaments, does evidence as much. Solomon's Song of Solomon 2:16, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Song of Solomon 6:3, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." Song of Solomon 7:10, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is towards me." Isa 63:16, "But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name." Isa 64:8-9, "But now, O Lord, you are our Father—behold, see, we beseech you, we are all your people." Jer 3:22-23, "Behold, we come unto you—for you are the Lord our God. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Isa 25:9, "And it shall be said in that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." I might produce a cloud of witnesses from among the patriarchs and prophets, further to evince this truth; but thus much is as good as a feast. And as the church of God in the Old Testament, so the church of God in the New Testament attained to the same assurance. The believers in Corinth were sealed, and had the pledge of the Spirit in their hearts. 2Co 1:22, "Who has also sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts." And 2Co 5:1, 2Co 5:5, "Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." And so the believing Ephesians had the like. Eph 1:13-14, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory." And so Eph 4:30, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." And the believing Thessalonians had the same. 1Th 1:4-5, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only—but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance." I might give you many particular instances out of the New Testament to confirm this truth—but these general instances are more convincing and satisfying.

[3.] Thirdly, If God should not, first or last, sooner or later, mediately or immediately, give his people some comfortable assurance that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and property in him, the spirits, the souls of his people would certainly faint and fail. But this God will never allow, this God by promise has engaged himself to prevent, as you may see in that Isa 57:16, Isa 57:18-19, "I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry, for then the spirit of man would grow faint before me-- the breath of man that I have created. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will guide him and restore comfort to him, creating praise on the lips of the mourners in Israel. Peace, peace, to those far and near," says the Lord. "And I will heal them."

Now, seeing that God has so graciously undertaken for his people, that their spirits shall not faint nor fail, there is no doubt but that, sooner or later, more or less, God will assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have a real interest and property in him.

[4.] Fourthly, The Lord's supper is a sealing ordinance, and was ordained, instituted, and appointed for that very purpose and to that very end, namely, to seal up the believer's property in God, and to assure him of his interest in God, in Christ, in the everlasting covenant, and in all the benefits of Christ's death, namely—the favor of God, reconciliation, redemption, and the remission of sins. [Mat 26:26-28; 1Co 11:23-24; Rom 4:11] Now, how can it possibly be imagined, that so glorious an ordinance should be instituted to so great and so glorious an end as to assure believers of their interest and property in God, and yet this end should never be effected in them all their days, for whose sake the ordinance was instituted and appointed? Certainly God never appointed any ordinance to accomplish any end—but sooner or later, that ordinance did accomplish that end for which it was appointed and instituted, Isa 55:10-11, and Isa 45:23.

Cyprian shows how the martyrs in the primitive church, when they were to appear before the cruel persecuting tyrants, were accustomed to receive the Lord's supper, and thereby they were so assured of their interest and property in God, and so fired with zeal and fervor, and filled with faith

and fortitude, etc., that they made nothing of the greatest torments that those bloody tyrants could inflict upon them. And says Chrysostom, by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are so armed against Satan's temptations, that he flees from us—as if we were so many lions that spat fire. The Jews in the celebration of the Passover did sing Psa 113:1-9, with the five following Psalms, which they called the great Hallelujah, and it was always after that cup of wine, which they called the cup of praise; and thus it should be with the saints. At all times, upon all occasions, in all places, they should sing Hallelujahs to God. Oh, but when they are at the Lord's supper, then they should sing the great Hallelujah; but how they will be ever able to sing this great Hallelujah, except sooner or later, more or less, God gives them some assurance of their interest and property in himself, I cannot for my life discern. But, [5.] Fifthly, There is in all believers the choice and precious springs of assurance, as

(1.) Union and communion with the Father and Son. 1Jn 1:3, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us—and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Now, that union which is between the foundation and the building, the head and the members, the husband and the wife, the father and the child, the subject and the prince, the body and the soul—are not so close a union as that which is between a believer and God. Besides, that union that a Christian has with God is an honorable union, and it is an inseparable union, it is an invincible union, and it is an everlasting union 1Co 6:16-17. Now, how is it possible for a man to have such a near and such a glorious union and fellowship with God from the day of his conversion to the day of his death—and yet never come to any assurance of his interest and property in God—is a thing not easily imaginable.

(2.) Precious faith is another spring of assurance. 1Pe 1:8, "Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see him not—yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Now, this spring is in all the saints 2Pe 1:1. The faith of expectance will in time rise up into a faith of reliance, and the faith of reliance will in time advance itself into a faith of assurance.

(3.) Hope is another spring of assurance. Col 1:27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" Heb 6:19, "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain."

(4.) A good conscience is another spring of assurance 2Co 1:12.

(5.) Real love to the saints is another spring of assurance 1Jn 3:14.

(6.) And lastly, the Spirit of God is another spring of assurance, Rom 8:1-39. Now, that a Christian should have all these choice springs of assurance in his soul, from his new birth to the day of his death, and yet in all that time never come to assurance of his interest and property in God, is a thing, I had almost said, beyond all belief. But,

[6.] Sixthly, There is nothing in all the world that the hearts of the saints are more frequently, more fervently, and more abundantly desire, in all their prayers and supplications, than this—that God would tell them that he is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and property in himself, Psa 4:6-7. The constant language of their souls is this—'Lord, do but tell us that you are our portion, and then bestow earthly portions upon whom you please; do but clear up our interest and property in yourself; and then we shall say—Our lot is fallen in a pleasant place, and verily we have a goodly heritage.' Psa 16:5-6. Believers who know that God is their portion, and that they

have a saving interest and property in him—will be eased them of all their sinful cares, fears, terrors, horrors, jealousies, suspicions, and sad apprehensions, which makes living a very hell. They know that assurance of their interest and property in God will make ever bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet; it will turn a wilderness into a paradise, an Egypt into a Canaan. They know that assurance that God is theirs, will raise the truest comforts, the purest comforts, the greatest comforts, the surest comforts, the strongest comforts, the rarest comforts, the sweetest comforts, and the most lasting comforts in their souls, Isa 40:1-2. They know that assurance of their interest in God will fit them for the highest duties in Christianity, and for the hardest duties in Christianity, and for the costliest duties in Christianity, and for the most neglected, scorned, and despised duties in Christianity. They know that assurance of their property in God will most quicken their graces, and act their graces, and raise their graces, and strengthen their graces, and brighten their graces, and put a luster and a beauty upon their graces. They know that assurance of their interest in God will wonderfully weaken sin, and effectually crucify their hearts to the world, and sweetly moderate their affections to their nearest and dearest relations, and powerfully arm them both against the world's oppositions and Satan's temptations. To conclude—they know that assurance of their property in God will make death more desirable than terrible, yes, it will make the thoughts of death sweet, and the approaches of death easy, and all the warnings of death pleasant to their souls; and therefore they follow God hard day and night, with strong cries, prayers, tears, sighs, and groans, that he would make it evident to them that he is their portion, and that he would clear up their interest and property in him. Now, how can any man who is in his wits imagine that God should always turn a deaf ear to the prayers of his people in this thing especially, considering that their prayers, cries, tears, sighs, and groans are but the products of his own Spirit in them, Rom 8:26-27; and considering likewise the several promises, whereby he has engaged himself to answer to the prayers of his people?

I might tire both you and myself in turning to those particular promises—but that I am resolved against, and therefore take that for all. John 16:23-24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give you. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full." This double asseveration, "Verily, verily," is never used but in matters of greatest weight and importance; and this "Verily, verily," is a vehement confirmation of the truth of what Christ speaks. Now, from this gracious promise I may safely and clearly infer, that if God the Father will give to believers whatever they ask in the name of Christ, then certainly, at first or last, sooner or later—he will give them assurance that he is their portion, and that they have an undoubted interest and property in him; for this is one of the great requests that they are still a-putting up in the name of Christ, and upon the grant of this request depends the fullness of a Christian's joy. But,

[7.] Seventhly and lastly, If God should not sooner or later, more or less, assure his people that he is their portion, and that they have a saving interest and a property in him; then he would be a very great loser, if I may so speak. He would lose many praises, and many thanksgivings; he would lose much of that love, of that honor, and of that delight, and of that admiration, which otherwise he might have from among his children. And it is very observable, that of all the duties of piety, there are none that are pressed so closely, so frequently, and so strongly upon Christians, as those of praising of God, and rejoicing in God, etc., as all know, who know anything of the Scriptures. Now, how it will stand with the holiness of God, and with the wisdom of God, and with

the care of God, to be so great a loser in the very things which he has so roundly and earnestly pressed upon his people; whereas by one sweet word of his mouth he might so easily and so happily prevent it, I cannot easily discern.

All believers know that there is no such ready, no such effectual way under heaven to draw out their love, their joy, their delight, their praises, and their thanksgiving to God—as God's assuring of them that he is their portion, and that they have an unquestionable interest and property in him. Certainly that God who loves the praises of his people, and who delights in the rejoicings of his people, and who is so infinitely pleased with the thanksgivings of his people—that God will not always hide himself from his people, that God will sooner or later so manifest himself to his people, that they shall be able to see their interest and property in God, and rejoicing to say, "The Lord is our portion!"

Now, oh you who are the people of the Lord, and that to this very day lie under many fears and doubts about your interest and property in God—be not discouraged, do not hang down the head, do not despond, do not despair—for certainly sooner or later God will assure you that he is your portion, and that you have a saving interest and a property in him.

S. Christ is the Life of Believers

Christ is the Life of Believers by Thomas Brooks When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.—Col 3:4. The apostle, in the verse before, tells them that their 'life is hid with Christ in God.' These saints might object: but when shall that hidden life be revealed? When shall that life of glory be manifested? He answers in the text: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.' The words do speak out the time when the glorious life of believers shall be manifested, and that is, when Christ shall appear in glory. I have in some other place observed from these words this point—namely, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the life of believers.

'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear.' Life here is, by a metonymy, put for the author of life.

We have shewed that Jesus Christ, he is first the author of a believer's spiritual life. In John 14:1-31, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' (Col 3:6.)

Secondly, Jesus Christ, he is the matter of a believer's spiritual life in John 6:48, 'I am the bread of life.' The original hath it more elegantly, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς, 'I am the bread of that life,' that is, of that spiritual life of which before the Lord Jesus Christ had spoken.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is the exerciser and actor of the spiritual life of believers: John 15:5, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' The original is, χωρὶς ἐμοῦ, seorsim a me; [Calvin, Cameron, &c.] separate from me, or apart from me, ye can do nothing, &c.

Fourthly, The Lord Jesus Christ, he is the strengthener and the cherisher of a believer's spiritual life, Psa 138:3, 'In the day when I cried, thou didst answer me, and strengthen me with strength in my soul.'

Lastly, The Lord Jesus Christ, he is the completer, he is the finisher of the spiritual life of a saint, Heb 12:2; Php 1:6. We have opened this point, and have made several uses of it. There were one or two things that we could not reach nor speak to when we treated upon this subject; I will only mention them, and so I pass to that special point that I intend to speak to at this time. Is the Lord Jesus Christ a believer's life? To pass by what we have further spoken upon this point—this same, by way of use, doth serve to bespeak all believers not to repent of anything they have done, or suffered, or lost, for the Lord Jesus. Oh, is the Lord Jesus Christ a believer's life? Why, then, let no believer be disquieted, nor overwhelmed and dejected, for any loss or for any sorrow or suffering that he meets with for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. What a base and unworthy spirit is it for a man to be troubled and disquieted in e himself for anything that he shall do or suffer for his own natural life! Oh, Jesus Christ is thy life; do not say this mercy is too dear for Christ, nor that comfort is too great for Christ. Christ is the life of a believer: what wilt thou not do for thy life? The devil hit right when he said, 'Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.' Oh, what should a man then do for Jesus Christ, who is his life! You noble hearts whose particular God hath come near in this sad loss, remember this, that Christ is a believer's life; Christ is that glorious champion's life. Therefore be not over-whelmed, for doubtless he is now triumphing in the love, in the light, in the

goodness, and in the glory of him who is his life. Let the sense of this sad loss kindly affect you, but let it not discourage you.

But, secondly, If the Lord Jesus Christ be a believer's life, then this serves to bespeak all believers highly to prize the Lord Jesus. Oh, it is this Christ that is thy life; it is not thy husband, it is not thy child, it not this or that thing; neither is it this ordinance or that, that is a believer's life. No; it is the Lord Jesus Christ that is the author, that is the matter, that is the exerciser, that is the strengthener, that is the completer, of a believer's life. You prize great ones; the Lord Jesus Christ is great—he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. You prize others for their wisdom and knowledge: the Lord Jesus hath in himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col 2:3. You prize others for their beauty: the Lord Jesus Christ is the beautifullest of ten thousand, Song of Solomon 5:10. You prize others for their usefulness: the Lord Jesus Christ is the right hand of a believer, without which he can do nothing. The believer may say of Christ as the philosopher .said of the heavens, Tolle coelum, nullus ero—Take away the heavens, and I shall be nobody; so take away Jesus Christ, and a believer is nobody—nobody to perform any action, nobody to bear any affliction, nobody to conquer corruption, nobody to withstand temptation, nobody to improve mercies, nor nobody to joy in others' grace. Oh, prize Jesus Christ!

Again, Consider the Lord Jesus Christ doth highly prize you; you are as the apple of his eye; he accounts you his fulness; you are his jewels; therefore prize him who sets such a high price on you. But I hasten to what I intend— In the last place, Remember a Christ highly prized will be Christ gloriously obeyed. As men prize the Lord Jesus Christ, so they will obey him. The great reason why Jesus Christ is no more obeyed, is s because he is no more prized. Men look upon him as a person of no worth, no dignity, no glory; they make slight of him, and that is the reason they are so poor in their obedience to him. Oh, if the sons of men did but more divinely prize Christ, they would more purely, and more fully, and more constantly obey him. Let this bespeak all your hearts highly to prize the Lord Jesus, who is your life. But I shall pass from this, to that point that in order to this occasion I shall now speak to: 'When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye appear also with him in glory.' The observation that I shall speak to at this time is, that believers shall at last appear glorious.

It is a very choice point, and a useful point, in order to the present providence. I shall not be long in the doctrinal part, because the application is that that I have my eye most upon. The scriptures that speak of this truth I will but name them; at your leisure you may read them: Jdg 15:14; 1Co 15:43-44, 1Co 15:51-55; 1Th 4:13, seq.; Mat 19:26-28. These scriptures clearly speak out this truth, that the people of God shall at last appear glorious. The reasons of this point, why they shall appear glorious, are these as follow. They shall appear glorious:—

1. First of all, because that day is a day of solemnity; it is the marriage-day of the Lamb. I may allude to that passage, Rev 19:6-8. It is true, believers in this life, they are spiritually married to the Lord Jesus; but this marriage is not celebrated till this day, when the saints shall appear in their glory. God the Father hath put off the celebration of this glorious marriage to this last day, when believers' mourning garments shall be taken off, and their glorious robes shall be put on; when God himself shall, as a Father, be more fully and gloriously present among all his children; whenas he shall have all his attendants visible, I mean his angels, which now are not visible, in that spiritual marriage between his Son and believers.

2. A second reason that believers at last shall appear glorious, is this, because they shall all appear at the last as kings crowned. Here believers are kings elected, but at that last day they shall all appear as kings crowned. Here believers have a crown in reversion, but at the last they shall have a crown in possession; the Lord will set it upon their heads: 2Ti 4:7-8, 'I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me'—the Greek word αποκειται, is 'safely laid up'—'a crown of glory which he shall give me at that day.' I have now, saith he, a crown in reversion; but at that day I shall have it in possession; then it shall be set upon my head, and then angels and devils and murderers shall say, 'Lo! here is the man that God is pleased to honour.'

3. Then a third reason why believers at the last shall appear glorious, is for the terror and the horror of all ungodly wretches that have opposed, persecuted, and murdered them. They shall appear glorious for the greater torment of such ungodly souls. Oh, there is nothing that will make sinners in that great day more to tear their hair, to beat their breasts, to wring their hands, and to gnaw their own hearts, than this, when they shall behold those advanced and those appearing in their glory, whom they have slighted, and despised, and most treacherously murdered, here below. I doubt not but there are some base, unworthy spirits here; but let them know that there is a day coming when the saints shall appear in glory, and then the mangled ones and this thrice-worthy champion shall appear among the rest, to the terror, horror, and confusion of these murderous wretches that have brought the guilt of his blood upon them. It will be with you and with all ungodly wretches as it was with Haman: he, like an ungodly wretch, had plotted and contrived the destruction of the Jews; he had sold them, as it were, to bondage, tyranny, and slavery; but the Lord wheels things gloriously about, and Haman comes to the sting, (Est 6:1-14): saith the king to him, 'What shall be done to the man whom the king is pleased to honour?' Saith he, 'Let the king's horse be brought, and glorious robes put on him, and let the chief nobles of the kingdom lead him and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king is pleased to honour.' 'Go,' saith the king, 'and do thus to Mordecai.' But mark, (Est 6:11), 'Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the streets of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour; but Haman hasted to his house, mourning and having his head covered.' This is but an emblem of the carriage of wicked men, when they shall behold the saints of God, his glorious worthy ones, in their glory at this great day. Then shall they, with Haman, have their heads covered, which was a sign of shame and confusion of face. And it will be with all such ungodly wretches as it was with Belshazzar: Dan 5:5-6, 'In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.' Just thus shall it be with ungodly wretches, that oppose and murder and destroy the righteous ones. Oh! when they shall see them in glory—as when he saw the handwriting, his countenance was changed, his thoughts were troubled, his loins were loosed, and his knees dashed against one another—thus shall it be when the saints shall appear in glory: therefore they at last shall appear glorious, to the terror, horror, and inexpressible confusion of all ungodly, bloody wretches.

4. A fourth reason why they shall appear glorious at last, is, because their glorious appearance at the last will make much for the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus. The more glorious the body is, the more it makes for the glory of the head: the more glorious the bride is, the more it makes for the glory of the bridegroom: for the glory of his power, wisdom, fulness, and goodness; and therefore they shall appear glorious.

5. Then, again, they shall appear glorious at the last day, that there may be some suitableness between the head and the members. Oh, what an uncomely thing would it be to see the head to be all of fine gold, and the hands of iron, and the feet of clay! What an uncomely thing would it be to see the bridegroom in all his glorious apparel, and the bride in her rags, or her mourning clothes! The Lord will have it so, that his people at last shall appear glorious, that they may be suitable to their glorious head, unto their precious bridegroom.

It is true, when Christ came first, he came clothed with flesh, and was looked upon as one that had no form nor comeliness nor beauty, that men should desire him, Isa 53:2, Isa 53:3. And such a state was the church in to whom he came. Oh! But now when he shall appear 'the second time, without sin, to salvation,' then he shall appear glorious; and so shall all his saints, that there may be a suitableness between the members and the head, between the bride and bride-groom.

6. And then, again, another reason why believers shall appear glorious, is, because that is the very time wherein the most wicked shall justify the goodness and mercy of God in his dealings towards his own people. Oh, here many say with those in Job 21:15, 'What profit is there in serving of God?' Who would be as those men are, to carry their lives in their hands? Who would run through so many miseries; and all for others? 'What profit is there in honouring of God?' Mal 3:14. It is a strong affirmation that there is no profit. They are ready to say, when they look upon the sorrows, miseries, and evils that attend the saints in this wilderness, that it is madness and folly to walk holily as they walk, and to do righteously as they do. Isa 59:15, 'Truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey,' or a proverb, as the original hath it. Oh, the world accounts them a company of mad, foolish people that refrain from evil. But God will have his people at last appear glorious, that the mouths of ungodly wretches may be stopped, that they may justify God in his goodness and mercy towards his own people. When they shall see those that they accounted monsters and wonders of the world, men not worthy to live in the world, when they shall see crowns set on their heads, and glorious robes put on their backs, oh how will ungodly men gnash teeth, and say, Oh! we thought them fools and madmen, that thus waited on God, and walked with God; but now we see ourselves the only fools, the only mad ones, that have turned our backs on God, and kicked at God, and that have said, 'There is no profit in serving of God.' Therefore the saints shall appear glorious at the last.

7. Then, the last reason why they shall appear glorious, is, because they shall be employed about glorious work: 1Co 6:2-3, 'Know ye not that the saints, shall judge the world?' Nay, he goes higher, 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the angels?' There is a day coming when the saints shall judge the world. They shall be employed in a glorious work. Therefore they shall appear glorious; for the work in which they shall be employed shall be glorious. They shall sit as so many fellow judges with the Lord Jesus Christ, to say Amen to the righteous sentence that Christ shall pass upon all treacherous and bloody murderers. O ungodly souls, the day is coming when those that now you have persecuted, murdered, and destroyed, they shall sit upon thrones and shall judge

you; they shall say Amen to that glorious sentence that Christ at the last day shall pass upon you. There is a day coming when all those that have rejoiced in the fall of this worthy, and those treacherous wretches that had a hand in this unparalleled butchery, when they shall hold up their hands at the bar of God's tribunal. There is a day a-coming when the saints shall appear glorious, and this worthy among the rest, to pass a righteous sentence upon such unrighteous, bloody wretches. That is another reason why they shall appear in glory, because they shall be employed in a glorious service, in judging the wicked world, however they have been scoffed at and despised here. The use of the point is the main thing I shall speak to. Is it so that the saints at last shall appear glorious?

1. First, This serves to bespeak the people of God to be glorious. Oh that you would strive to be glorious now, who at last shall appear so glorious! Oh that your words might be more glorious, that your thoughts of God might be more glorious, that your conversations might be more glorious, that your actings towards God and man might be more glorious! The day is coming, O blessed souls, whenas you shall appear glorious! Oh that you would labour now to shine in glory, who at the last shall transcend the sun in glory! But I shall hasten to that which I chiefly intend, and that is this: Is it so that believers at last shall appear glorious? Then,

2. Second, This serves to bespeak all believers to do gloriously whiles you are here, for you shall appear glorious. In this I shall endeavour these three things:—

First, To lay down some motives to move you to do gloriously here, who shall appear glorious in heaven.

Secondly, We shall shew when a man may be said to do gloriously.

Thirdly, I shall lay down some directions and helps to enable you while you are here to do gloriously; and so proceed to other things that remain.

1. For the first, to move you to do gloriously, methinks here is a motive, that at last you shall be glorious. But to engage you a little, consider these four or five things to move you to do gloriously:—

First, Consider the Lord hath done already very gloriously for you; therefore do you gloriously for God. God hath done very gloriously for you. He hath made your ugly inside glorious, and he hath made your ugly outside glorious: Psa 45:13, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her raiment is of embroidered gold.' God hath pardoned you gloriously, God hath justified you gloriously, God hath fenced you against corruption gloriously, God hath strengthened you against temptations gloriously, God hath supported you under afflictions gloriously, God hath delivered you from the designs and plots of treacherous, murderous wretches, gloriously and frequently. Oh, how should this engage all Christians to do gloriously for God, that hath already done gloriously for them!

[2] But then, in the second place, To move you to do gloriously, consider that the greatest part of the world doth basely and wickedly against God; therefore you have the more cause to do gloriously for God: 1Jn 5:19, 'The whole world,' saith he, 'lies in wickedness,' in malignity. The world lies in troublesomeness. The word *πονηρω* signifies a desire, a study and endeavour to work wickedness, a working wickedness; and in such a wickedness the world lies, and the greatest part

of the great ones of this world do basely and wickedly against God. Oh the treachery and apostasy, oh the neutrality and impiety, oh the facing about of the great ones of this age! O believers, you had need to do gloriously, for great and small, honourable and base, do treacherously; and therefore this should engage you to do more gloriously. Oh, the more base and vile any are, the more glorious should the saints be!

[3.] Then, in the third place, Consider this, the more gloriously you do for God here, the more glorious you shall be hereafter. Suffering saints for Christ shall have weighty crowns set upon their heads. Murdered saints for Christ shall have double crowns set upon their heads. The more gloriously any man doth for Christ here, the more glorious that man shall be hereafter: 2Co 9:6, 'As a man soweth, so shall he reap. He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth liberally shall reap liberally;' 2Jn 1:8, 'Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward.' There is a reward in Scripture, and a full reward. The more glorious any soul is in doing for God here, the more glorious that soul shall be hereafter: Mat 19:27-28, 'We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have? Verily,' saith Christ, 'you that have done this, shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Look, Christians, the more gloriously any man doth for God here, the more comfort and peace and joy that man hath on this side heaven, which is but an earnest of that happiness, of that glorious good and sweetness that the soul shall have when he shall appear in his glory. It is not the slight Christian, the light, loose, talking Christian, that hath much joy and peace, and the most full discoveries of God here, but the most glorious-doing Christian, the most acting soul; and the more gloriously any man doth for God here, the more joy and peace and comfort he shall have, which is but a pawn of that glorious joy and goodness which at last he shall receive.

[4.] And then, fourthly, To move you to do gloriously for God, you that shall be glorious at the last, consider this, the greatest part of your time you have spent foolishly and in ways of vanity against God. Oh, that time that is behind to spend gloriously, it is very, very little; which should bespeak you to do gloriously for God that little, little time that is allotted you. The apostle hath one argument, 1Pe 4:3, 1Pe 4:6-7 compared, 'For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,' &c. 'For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.' He tells them that the greatest part of their time was spent vainly; and in ver. 7 he tells them that the time behind was short. Upon this consideration he presseth them to do glorious things in the latter part of ver. 6. But 'live according to God in the spirit,' oh what is that but to live gloriously, to do gloriously?

[5] Then, lastly, Consider this to move you to do gloriously for God: if you do not gloriously for God, none in the world can do gloriously for God; if you do not, none in the world will. Consider this, you that are believers. Of all persons in the world, you have the greatest cause to do gloriously for God; for God hath done more for you than for all the world besides. You have not only the greatest cause to do gloriously for God, but you have the choicest principles to enable you to do gloriously for God—as knowledge, and wisdom, and power, and faith, and zeal. And as you have the choicest principles, so you have the sweetest experience to engage you to do gloriously for God. How hath God knocked at your doors when he hath passed by the doors of thousands! How hath

free grace saluted you, when wrath hath broken forth upon thousands! How hath God dandled you on his knee, when he hath trampled others under his feet! What is this but to engage you to do gloriously for God? If you do not, none in the world will do gloriously. And what a sad thing it is that God should make a world, and not a soul in the world to do gloriously for God, that hath made such a glorious world! So much by way of motive to move you to do gloriously.

2. The second thing I am to speak of is, When a man may be said to do gloriously. Haply some soul may say, We are satisfied that we shall appear glorious at last, and we would do gloriously; but when may a soul be said to do gloriously?

I answer: A soul may be said to do gloriously, first, when their doing lies level with the glorious rule; when men do suitable to a glorious rule. Those thoughts are glorious thoughts that are suitable to a glorious rule, and those words are glorious words that are suitable to a glorious rule, and those actions towards God and man are glorious actions that are suitable to a glorious rule. But this is too general. Therefore, secondly, and more particularly, men do gloriously whenas they do such things that others refuse to do, that others have no heart to do, that others are afraid to do for God. Oh, to do this is to do gloriously. As David, when he engaged with Goliath, he did gloriously; others were afraid to do it, others had no heart to do it. So when men engage for God when others are afraid to engage, when others dare not engage, they shall lose the smiles of this man, and procure the frowns of that; there is a lion in the way. So men turn off the work. It is too hard, saith one; it is too high, it is too rough, it is too dangerous, say others. Now to do gloriously is to do that that others refuse to do, and that others have not hearts to do. And in this respect this thrice-honoured champion hath done gloriously. The mountains that he hath gone over, the difficulties that he was engaged in, were known to thousands in this kingdom. Many worthies have done worthily for this unworthy kingdom, and this worthy hath excelled many of them. And then, in the third place, men do gloriously when they hold on in the way of God, and in the work of God, notwithstanding all discouragements that befall them. When men serve their generation, notwithstanding the discouragements that do or may befall them, blow high or blow low, rain or shine, let men smile or frown, do what they will against their persons or actions, yet for a soul to hold on and to serve his generation, against all and notwithstanding all the reproaches and dirt and scorn and contempt that is thrown on them, is to hold on in the way of God; this is to do gloriously. Thus God enabled this worthy, and many other worthies in the kingdom, in the House [of Parliament], and in the army, to do gloriously against all discouragements and storms and projects of ungodly wretches. It was the glory of the church: Psa 44:17-19, 'Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, yet we have not dealt falsely with thee; our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy ways.' Oh, you have a generation that pretend much for God while they may gain by the bargain honour and riches and great places and the like; but when God brings them through the valley of darkness, that they meet with discouragements and difficulties, they throw away the bucklers, and will be no more for God, but fire about, and prove treacherous to church and kingdom. It was the glory of David, and it was a glorious speech of his in Psa 57:1-11 :Saith David, Psa 57:4, 'My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have digged a pit before me.' Mark, what was the courage of this worthy one? He met with discouragements. Doth he grow treacherous, and give back? No: 'My heart is fixed, O God, my

heart is fixed.' Macon, that is here rendered 'fixed,' is a Hebrew participle that signifies firm, constant, and established; and he geminates it, 'my heart is firm, constant, and established,' even then when his soul was among lions. He doth not now play the apostate and shake hands with the ways of God. No. But 'my heart is fixed.' Now a man doth gloriously when he keeps to God and his truth, and serves his generation, notwithstanding all discouragements that are thrown upon him.

I need not tell you what discouragements this noble champion met with from malignant pens, spirits, and tongues; but through all God carried out his spirit that he was able to do his master's work and to serve his generation, till he had finished that work that God had for him to do.

It is nothing for a man to serve his generation when he hath wind and tide on his side, and all the encouragements that the heart of man can desire; but it is the glory of a Christian, and then he doth gloriously, to be faithful in his generation against all discouragements. Therefore, honoured commanders and worthy members of the House of Commons, for you to do gloriously is to hold out against discouragements and to serve your generation. Though your soul may be amongst lions, and you live among them that are set on fire, as the psalmist speaks, yet say as he saith in that psalm, 'Our heart is fixed, our heart is fixed in God, we will sing and give praise.' Fixed stars are most useful, and so are fixed souls to church and state.

Then in the fourth place, Men may be said to do gloriously, when the end of their doings is the glory of God and the general good. O Christians, now you do gloriously. Those spirits will never do gloriously that make themselves the end of their actions, that make the advancing of any particular interest the end of their actions. This is not to do gloriously. Parliament-men, and soldiers, and Christians, then do gloriously, when the glory of God and the general good is the end of all their doings. But if it be yourselves, to save your own necks, and to advance your own designs, and to bring in this and that, these are base, unworthy actions, and God will so demonstrate them before angels and men. To do gloriously is to make the glory of God and the general good the end of all your doings. Then you do gloriously indeed, when you can centre and rest in the glory of God and the general good. It is a base and unworthy spirit when men make themselves the end of their actions, and the advancing of such or such a particular interest the end of their actions, and not the glory of God and the general good of his people. And then again, fifthly, Men do gloriously when they rejoice under sufferings that befall them for Christ: not only to bear sufferings but to joy under sufferings, to rejoice under all afflictions and troubles that may befall them for Jesus Christ. So the apostle, 2Co 7:10, saith he there, 'I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, necessities, in afflictions, for Christ.' The original word, *διο εὐδοκῶ*, that is rendered 'I take pleasure,' is an emphatical word. It signifies the infinite delight and contentment he did take in the afflictions and persecutions that befell him. It is the same word that God the Father useth to express his unexpressible delight in his Son, Mat 3:17, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—or rather, as the original has it more elegantly, 'This is that, my Son, that my beloved, in whom I am infinitely delighted and contented.' The same word the apostle useth to express his delight in afflictions and persecutions for Christ. So those in Acts 5:41, 'They went way rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for Christ.' O Christians, this is to do gloriously, for a man to rejoice that he hath an estate to lay out for Christ, that he hath a life to lay down for Christ, that he hath a tongue to speak for Christ, that he hath a hand to fight for Christ. This is to do gloriously, to rejoice in anything: we suffer for Christ, and in all sorts of sufferings and doings for Christ.

Then again, Men do gloriously, mark this, when they appear for the people of God, and side with the people of God, notwithstanding any evil and danger that may befall. Come what come can, yet they will appear for the people of God, and side with the people of God. This is to do gloriously, when come what come can, I will fall in with the the saints, and be one with them that are one with God. As Esther, when they were in a sad condition, and Haman had sold them to be butchered and mangled by ungodly wretches: 'Well, I will go to the king,' saith she, though there was a command that none should, 'I will venture my life; if I perish, I perish.' Now she did gloriously. So Nehemiah: 'Shall such a man as I flee?' Shall I desert the saints, and turn my back on the saints? No; I will appear for them, and side with them, I will not desert them. So David's father and his brethren: 1Sa 22:1, 'David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and his father's house heard it, they went thither to him.' They did not stand disputing: we have estates to lose, and if Saul know that we join with David, and have taken part with him, we shall lose our heads, and lose our estates. The politicians of our times are wise: they will say they wish the saints well, but they dare not, they will not side with them. Ah, wretches! God will save his glory and the honour of his name, and will deliver the righteous, and leave such to deliver themselves.

God can shift well enough for his honour and for his people, and leave such wretches in a shiftless condition. So good Onesiphorus: Paul speaks of some, 2Ti 1:13-14, &c., that played the apostates; 2Ti 1:15, 'This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia are turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.' They played the apostates, and when he was to answer, left him to shift for himself. They would own him when all was clear overhead; but when he was in trouble they fall off. But Onesiphorus, he stands by him, and the apostle commends it for a glorious cause, and commends him in a particular manner to God: 'Oh that God would double his mercy on him; the Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me thou knowest; and he was not ashamed of my chain.' There were base spirits that were ashamed of his chain, that were ashamed to side with and to own Paul; and this world is full of such base spirits. Now this is to do gloriously—for a man to appear and side with the saints, let what will come of it. Thus Moses did very gloriously: Heb 11:25, 'He chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.' But ah! Lord, in how few hearts does this brave spirit of Moses breathe!

O noble hearts, would you do gloriously? To do gloriously is to appear for the saints, and to side with the saints, let the issue be what it will. Oh, it is a sad and a base thing in those that have appeared for and sided with the saints, but now face about and prove treacherous, and leave the poor saints to shift for themselves! But it is their comfort that they have a God that will shift for his people and his own glory. And as Mordecai said to Esther, Est 4:14, 'If thou wilt not stir, the Lord will bring deliverance to his people some other way.' So if parliament-men, and those that have power, do not appear and side with the saints, deliverance will come another way; but they and their father's house may perish. And therefore remember to do gloriously is to appear for them; and not to appear for the saints is to betray them, and so it shall be brought in on the day of account.

Then again, in the next place, To. do gloriously is to do justice, and that impartially. Then men do gloriously when they do justice impartially upon high and low, honourable and base, father and son, kinsman and brother; and not to dispute, this is a near kinsman, and that is my father, and the

other is my brother, and that the one is too great and the other is too mean for justice, this is inglorious. The basest and unworthiest spirits on earth cannot do more basely; there is nothing of the power of the Spirit or heavenly gallantry in such. It is said, Psa 106:30-31, 'Then stood Phinehas, and executed judgment: so the plague was stayed. And that was accounted to him for righteousness to all generations for ever.' Oh this executing of justice impartially, how it makes the names of persons to live from generation to generation! If so be that the powers of this world would have their names immortal, so graven that they should never be wiped out, let them do justice. This is that Phinehas was admired for; it was 'accounted to him for righteousness, to all generations for evermore.' And then, lastly, Men do gloriously when they believe the promise and rest on the promise, notwithstanding that providence seems to cross the promise. It is nothing, it is not to do gloriously, for a man to believe, and to love, and the like, when the promise is made good, when God is a-smiling and in a giving way; but to do gloriously is to believe the promise, to stay upon the promise, when providence in our apprehension crosseth the promise. In this respect, Abraham did very gloriously; he believed the promise though providence seemed to cross the promise. 'I will give thee a son,' saith God. Abraham was old, and Sarah was stricken in years; and yet Abraham believed, and this was such a glorious piety as God hath put it upon record. This faith of Abraham so takes God that he swears with joy, Gen 13:16-17, 'That in blessing I will bless thee.' So it was with Moses: Num 10:29, 'And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.' Mark, what could he promise in the wilderness, where the Lord exercised those poor wretches with judgment upon judgment, with misery upon misery, and one calamity upon the neck of another? Moses was confident in the promise of God, that God would do Israel good, and he adventured to engage Hobab on that consideration; 'Come, go along with us; the Lord hath spoken good, and we will do thee good.' I am confident, though providence cross the promise, and God seems to be angry, and to chide, and frown, and strike, and destroy, yet he will make good his promise, and he will do thee good. Oh, this is to do gloriously, to believe the promise when providence crosseth it. Do you see heaven frown, and things to work cross to those promises that respects the joy, glory, liberty, and the exaltation of the saints? Doth providence work cross to the promise? Now do gloriously, believe the promise, rest in the promise; let heaven and earth meet, devils and men combine; let men play the apostates, and turn neuters, and prove treacherous, I will rest on the promise, suck sweetness from the promise. Though all providences seem to cross it, and heaven seem to work contrary to it, I will say, I will stay upon the promise; this is to do gloriously. So much for the second thing.

Ay, but some souls will say, we see we shall be glorious, and we are willing to do gloriously; and we see reasons why we should do gloriously; but what directions and helps are there that we may do gloriously?

First, If you will do gloriously, there are some things that you must be careful to take heed of.

Secondly, There are others which .you must labour to practise.

[1.] If you will do gloriously, seeing hereafter you shall be glorious, in the first place, whatever you do, take heed of unbelief. There is nothing in the world that more hinders men from doing gloriously, than unbelief. All other miscarriages and weaknesses have not such an influence upon

the heart, to hinder it from doing gloriously, as unbelief. As it is said of Christ concerning them in Mat 13:58, 'He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.'

Unbelief, as it were, tied the hands of Christ—'He could not do many mighty works because of their unbelief.' If men would do glorious things, take heed of that: unbelief ties the tongue; it causeth a damp to fall upon the heart, and binds the hands, that a man hath no tongue to speak for Christ, nor heart to act for Christ, nor hand to strike for Christ. Unbelief spoils all the strength and power by which we should be serviceable to God. What water is to fire, that unbelief is to the soul; therefore as you would do gloriously, take heed of unbelief.

[2.] Secondly, As you must take heed of unbelief, so, if you would do gloriously, consult neither with the tempting nor with the persecuting world. What hinders many men from doing gloriously, but consulting with the tempting or the persecuting world? This hath overthrown many. Nay, what hinders men in our age from doing gloriously? They are consulting with flesh and blood, with the tempting world and the frowning world. This hinders men from doing gloriously. I cannot believe but if parliament-men, and others in power and authority, did not look too much upon the tempting world when it smiles and holds forth her beautiful breasts, upon the ugly face of the world when it frowns and threatens, but that they would act more gloriously for God, and for the general good, and for the advancing of the name of the Most High in these days we live in.

[3.] If you would do gloriously, look off from the tempting world it is a plague and a snare; and look off from the frowning world, it will discourage you; consult not with flesh and blood, with carnal reason. Looking upon the tempting or the frowning world will damp the most gallant spirits in the world, and hinder them from doing any noble service for God or his saints. And therefore, as ever you would do gloriously, look not on the tempting or on the persecuting world; look not upon it when it smiles or when it frowns; but remember you have a God to look at, a Christ to look at, and a crown to look at; that is better than all, that is more than all other things to your souls.

[4] Then, again, If you would do gloriously, whatever you do, take heed of base, selfish ends, take heed of self-love. There is nothing under heaven that will disable a man more from doing gloriously, than a base spirit of self-love; such a man will never do gloriously. It may be, when he hath the wind and tide on his side, he may do something that vain men may account glorious; but this man will never do that which God and the saints call glorious, and count glorious. That base, selfish spirit, that looks no higher nor no further than self, it will never do gloriously. It may be fit for treachery, neutrality, and apostasy, but never to do gloriously.

Now as you must avoid these things so that you may do gloriously, in the next place,

[1.] First, Labour for internal spiritual knowledge of God. Oh, there is a great deal of notional light in the world! But if men did know God internally, if they did know God more in the mystery and light of the Spirit, if they did know God more from union and communion with God, it were impossible but they should do more gloriously. That is a brave text: Dan 11:32, 'And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall be corrupted by flatteries.' Mark the latter words, 'but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.' Oh I take one that knows God internally, mystically, and spiritually, from union, and from being taken into heavenly communion with God, and he will act bravely and strongly for God. Alas I take a Christian that hath merely sucked in notions, and is only able for discourse, but hath no internal experimental knowledge of God, you

shall never find him guilty of doing exploits, of doing glorious things for God and his saints. No! 'the people that know God,'—he speaks of the internal, spiritual knowledge of God, of knowledge in the mystery;—and thus to know him will enable a man to do exploits, to do glorious things. Oh, if God would raise up parliament-men, and men in the army, and in the city, and round the kingdom, to more internal knowledge, to more spiritual acquaintance with himself, we should find that they would do abundantly more gloriously. But it is for lack of an internal, spiritual knowledge of God that men are treacherous, and base, and unfaithful, and prove apostates, and neuters, and anything. As you would do glorious and honourable things, look to this, that you have an internal knowledge and spiritual acquaintance with God, and this will enable you to do exploits.

And, then, If you would be enabled to do gloriously, in the second place, you should look upon those examples and worthies that have gone before you, and have done gloriously. So the apostle, Heb 12:1, when he would press them to do gloriously, he presseth them into this consideration of those glorious worthies that had gone before 'Having therefore such a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us,' Heb 12:1. Look to the cloud of witnesses, in Heb 11:1-40; that is another means to help us to do gloriously.

Another is this, If you would do gloriously, then keep your evidences for glory always bright and shining; do not soil your evidences for glory. What made them take joyfully the 'spoiling of their goods,' Heb 10:34, but this, that they knew in themselves that they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance? When a man's evidence is bright, that he can run and read his title to heaven, his interest in God, and the glory above, then will he be strong to do exploits; this will enable a man to do gloriously.

Then, again, If you would do gloriously, look to faith; give faith scope, give it elbow-room to work. Faith is a noble grace, and will ennoble the soul to do gloriously for God. Faith is that that will carry a man over all difficulties; faith will untie all knots; it will carry a man through the valley of darkness, though it be never so long; and over mountains of difficulties, though they be never so high. Faith will not plead 'there is a lion in the way,' and that such and such men will frown if I do this or that for God and the general good. Faith will carry a man bravely over all. You know that story in Heb 11:1-40; you have several instances of the saints doing gloriously. But what enabled them? It is all along attributed to faith. By the power of faith they did gloriously: they stopped the mouths of lions; they turned to flight the armies of the aliens; they waxed valiant in fight; they refused to be delivered,—and all by the power of faith. Oh! faith will enable men to do gloriously. If parliament-men, and men in the army, and in the city, and round the kingdom, did believe more gloriously, they would do more gloriously for God, in their relations and places, than now they do. It springs from want of faith that things work thus basely. Did men believe more gloriously, things would work more gloriously. Therefore, when things work crossly, blame not so much this or that instrument, but blame thy own unbelieving heart; for glorious faith will see a smiling Father beyond a dark cloud. Though men are at a loss, yet God is not at a loss, says faith; and though the arm of man be weak, His arm is strong, says faith; and though the work be too hard for the arm of flesh, too hard for an army or parliament, it is not too hard for God, says faith. Faith carries a man gloriously through all. If you would do gloriously, abound in faith, let faith have elbow-room. I shall say no more of this. Though there be other directions, I will rather leave them. Is it so, that the saints shall be glorious? Then this serves, in the next place, by way of use, for singular comfort and consolation. Shall the saints at last appear glorious? It speaks singular comfort to all believers,

against all the reproaches, and contempt, and scorn that they may meet with in this world. What though you be scorned, and one saith this, and another saith that? Here is your comfort: you shall appear glorious. What though this worthy's body be mangled here and there by bloody butchers? Yet this body shall appear glorious at the last. What a singular comfort is it! The apostle makes the same use from the same consideration: 1Th 4:15, 'We that are alive and remain shall not prevent them that sleep: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.' Let the wife comfort herself with these, the brother, the kinsman, the friends of this worthy that now lies in the dust mangled. Oh, comfort yourselves with this consideration, that he shall appear glorious at last, with the rest of the glorious renowned saints! And so this may comfort us against all reproaches, and scorns, and contempts that men throw upon us: and what though the glory of the saints is now hid by prevailing distempers, and afflictions, and poverty? Yet here is your comfort, the day is coming when your glory will break out, when your rags shall be taken off, and your glorious robes put on, when God will wipe away all the dirt and filth that hath been thrown on you by vain spirits. Therefore bear up, brave hearts! There is a day coming when you shall appear glorious, and it will be but as a day before that day overtake you.

Then, again, If the saints at the last shall appear glorious, then it bespeaks all, in the last place, to long for that day. You shall at the last appear in glory. Oh then long for that day; cry out with the church, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;' cry out again with the church in Solomon's Song, 8:14, 'Make haste, my beloved;' or as the original has it, berach dovdi, 'Flee away speedily, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' Will you remember these two things, to engage you to be much in longing for this day, wherein the saints shall appear in glory. Divers things might be said, but I shall reduce all to two things.

Till this day your happiness will not be complete, therefore long for it. Till the saints shall appear glorious, all will be incomplete; your comforts, your graces, your enjoyment of God, and of that glory that he hath provided. Till this glorious day your glory will be incomplete; therefore long for the day wherein all shall be complete.

Secondly, Till then the innocency of the saints shall not be fully cleared: that is another thing. Oh! Long for that day wherein the saints shall appear in glory, for till then the innocency of the saints shall not be fully cleared. Now I say, the devil and wicked men throw much dirt on them, and reproach and revile them, and what not, and something of that will stick; but let this bespeak all such to long for that day wherein all dirt, scorn, and filth shall be wiped off, wherein God will clear the righteousness, integrity, and innocency of his saints. Therefore seeing the saints shall appear glorious, be not discouraged, however you appear in the world to the eye of men. Now you are strangers, far from your Father's house; but it will be but as a day before the trumpet sound and the angels shall gather you, before the robes of glory shall be put on, and your mourning clothes shall be taken off, and the glorious crowns put on your heads, and your happiness shall be complete. Long for this day; for this will be a day indeed of refreshing from the Lord. I shall say no more to this point, but earnestly desire that God would please to make it take impression on your spirits. The saints shall appear glorious. Oh let it be our glory, while we are here, so to walk as they that expect to appear glorious another day! As for this thrice-honoured champion now in the

dust: for his enjoyment of God, from my own experience, being with him both at sea and land, I have abundance of sweetness and satisfaction in my own spirit, which to me exceedingly sweetens so great a loss. I shall not speak of the wife's loss, nor the brother's loss, nor the army's loss; for the loss of this worthy is a loss to the kingdom, and if they are not in a sad, sinful sleep, they will say so. And, indeed, it is with me, I ingenuously confess, as it was with him who, when he was demanded what God was; he desired three days' consideration to give an answer, and when those days were expired, three more; and then he gives this answer, 'That the more he thought of him, the further he was from discovering of him.' The more I think of the gallantry and worth of this champion, the further off I am from discovering his worth. I think he was one of whom this sinful nation was not worthy; he was one of whom this declining parliament was not worthy; he was one of whom those divided, formal, carnal, gospellers was not worthy. He served his generation faithfully, though he died by the hand of treachery. I am fully satisfied, with many more, that he is now triumphing in glory; and it will be but as a day before he shall see his enemies stand at the bar. For my own part, I can truly say that, to the best of my memory and understanding, I have not observed that the hearts of the people of God have been so generally and eminently affected with the loss of any worthy, as with the loss of this worthy; no, not for any worthy that hath fallen since the sword was drawn, though many precious worthies have fallen upon the ground; which strongly speaks out the love of the people of God to him, and their honourable esteem of him. They honoured him in his life, and they shewed no small respect to him in death. He was a joy to the best, and a terror to the worst of men. But for my part I should rather choose, I ingenuously confess, if it were possible, to weep over him with tears of blood, than to trouble you further with relating his gallant service for the good of this sinful kingdom.

We will cease from saying anything more of him, and sit down satisfied and joying in this, that the day is coming when the saints shall appear glorious; and with that we will refresh and cheer our spirits as with a cordial, that there is a day coming when we with this deceased worthy shall appear glorious. And it will be but as a day before our robes shall be put on our backs, and crowns set on our heads. I have now done; and so shall commend you 'to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified,' [Acts 20:32.]

S. Christ's Love to Poor Sinners

Christ's Love to Poor Sinners by Thomas Brooks

Let us stand still, and admire and wonder at the love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners; that Christ should rather die for us, than for the angels. They were creatures of a more noble extract, and in all probability might have brought greater revenues of glory to God: yet that Christ should pass by those golden vessels, and make us vessels of glory, -oh, what amazing and astonishing love is this! This is the envy of devils. and the admiration of angels and saints. The angels were more honourable and excellent creatures than we. They were celestial spirits; we earthly bodies, dust and ashes: they were immediate attendants upon God, they were, as I may say, of his privy chamber; we servants of his in the lower house of this world, farther remote from his glorious presence: their office was to sing hallelujahs, songs of praise to God in the heavenly paradise; ours to dress the garden of Eden, which was but an earthly paradise: they sinned but once, and but in thought, as is commonly thought; but Adam sinned in thought by lusting, in deed by tasting, and in word by excusing. Why did not Christ suffer for their sins, as well as for ours? or if for any, why not for theirs rather than ours? 'Even so, O Father, for so it pleased thee,' Mat 11:26. We move this question, not as being curious to search thy secret counsels, O Lord, but that we may be the more swallowed up in the admiration of the 'breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.' The apostle, being in a holy admiration of Christ's love, affirms it to pass knowledge, Eph 3:18-19; that God, who is the eternal Being, should love man when he had scarce a being, Pro 8:30-31, that he should be enamoured with deformity, that he should love us when in our blood, Eze 16:1-63, that he should pity us when no eye pitied us, no, not our own. Oh, such was Christ's transcendent love, that man's extreme misery could not abate it. The deploredness of man's condition did but heighten the holy flame of Christ's love. It is as high as heaven, who can reach it? It is as low as hell, who can understand it? Heaven, through its glory, could not contain him, man being miserable, nor hell's torments make him refrain, such was his perfect matchless love to fallen man. That Christ's love should extend to the ungodly, to sinners, to enemies that were in arms of rebellion against him, Rom 5:6, Rom 5:8, Rom 5:10; yea, not only so, but that he should hug them in his arms, lodge them in his bosom, dandle them upon his knees, and lay them to his breasts, that they may suck and be satisfied, is the highest improvement of love, Isa 66:11 - 1 Chronicles That Christ should come from the eternal bosom of his Father, to a region of sorrow and death, John 1:18; that God should be manifested in the flesh, the Creator made a creature, Isa 53:4; that he that was clothed with glory, should be wrapped with rags of flesh, 1Ti 3:16; that he that filled heaven, should be cradled in a manger, John 17:5; that the God of Israel should fly into Egypt, Mat 2:14; that the God of strength should be weary; that the judge of all flesh should be condemned; that the God of life should be put to death, John 19:41; that he that is one with his Father, should cry out of misery, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!' Mat 26:39: that he that had the keys of hell and death, Rev 1:18, should lie imprisoned in the sepulchre of another, having, in his lifetime, nowhere to lay his head; nor after death, to lay his body, John 19:41-42; and all this for man, for fallen man, for miserable man, for

worthless man, is beyond the thoughts of created natures. The sharp, the universal and continual sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the cradle to the cross, does above all other things speak out the transcendent love of Jesus Christ to poor sinners. That wrath, that great wrath, that fierce wrath, that pure wrath, that infinite wrath, that matchless wrath of an angry God, that was so terribly impressed upon the soul of Christ, quickly spent his natural strength, and turned his moisture into the drought of summer, Psa 32:4; and yet all this wrath he patiently underwent, that sinners might be saved, and that 'he might bring many sons unto glory,' Heb 2:10.

Oh wonder of love! Love is submissive, it enables to suffer. The Curtii laid down their lives for the Romans, because they loved them; so it was love that made our dear Lord Jesus lay down his life, to save us from hell and to bring us to heaven. As the pelican, out of her love to her young ones, when they are bitten with serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them again; so when we were bitten by the old serpent, and our wound incurable, and we in danger of eternal death, then did our dear Lord Jesus, that he might recover us and heal us, feed us with his own blood, Gen 3:15; John 6:53 - Titus Oh love unspeakable! This made [Bernard] cry out, 'Lord, thou hast loved me more than thyself; for thou hast laid down thy life for me.'

It was only the golden link of love that fastened Christ to the cross, John 10:17, and that made him die freely for us, and that made him willing 'to be numbered among transgressors,' Isa 53:12, that we might be numbered among [the] 'general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,' Heb 12:23. If Jonathan's love to David was wonderful, 2Sa 1:26, how wonderful must the love of Christ be to us, which led him by the hand to make himself an offering for us, Heb 10:10, which Jonathan never did for David: for though Jonathan loved David's life and safety well, yet he loved his own better; for when his father cast a javelin at him to smite him, he flies for it, and would not abide his father's fury, being very willing to sleep in a whole skin, notwithstanding his wonderful love to David, 1Sa 20:33-35; making good the philosopher's notion, that man is a life-lover.

Christ's love is like his name, and that is Wonderful, Isa 9:6; yea, it is so wonderful, that it is supra omnem creaturam, ultra omnem measuram, contra omnem naturam, above all creatures, beyond all measure, contrary to all nature. It is above all creatures, for it is above the angels, and therefore above all others. It is beyond all measure, for time did not begin it, and time shall never end it; place doth not bound it, sin doth not exceed it, no estate, no age, no sex is denied it, tongues cannot express it, understandings cannot conceive it: and it is contrary to all nature; for what nature can love where it is hated? What nature can forgive where it is provoked? What nature can offer reconciliation where it receiveth wrong? What nature can heap up kindness upon contempt, favour upon ingratitude, mercy upon sin? And yet Christ's love hath led him to all this; so that well may we spend all our days in admiring and adoring of this wonderful love, and be always ravished with the thoughts of it.

S. Legacies of Thomas Brooks

Legacies of Thomas Brooks

Thomas Brooks farewell address to his people is peculiarly adapted for usefulness. Brooks ends with giving his people some hints of advice, which he calls legacies, hoping they might be of use to them in the perusal when he had not the advantage of speaking to them in public.

1. Secure your saving interest in Christ. This is not a time for a man to be between hopes and fears. Take not up with an outward form, crying, "The Temple of the Lord."
2. Make Christ and Scripture the only foundation for your souls, and for faith to build upon.
3. In all places and companies, be sure to carry your soul-preservatives with you, (a holy care and wisdom), as men carry outward preservatives with them in infectious times.
4. See that all your graces, your faith, love, courage, zeal, resolution, magnanimity — rise higher by opposition, threatenings, and sufferings. Say as David, "If this be vile, I will be more vile!"
5. Take more pains to keep yourselves from sin than from suffering.
6. Be always doing or receiving good. This will make your lives comfortable, your deaths happy, and your account glorious in the great day of the Lord.
7. Set the highest examples of grace and godliness before you for imitation. Next to that of Christ, the pattern of the choicest saints. For faith, Abraham; for courage, Joshua; for uprightness, Job; for meekness, Moses, etc.
8. Hold fast your integrity. Let all go rather than let that go. (Job 27:5-6.)
9. Let not a day pass without calling the whole man to an exact account. Hands — What have you done for God to day? Tongue — What have you spoke? etc,
10. Labor for a healing spirit. Away with all discriminating names that may hinder the applying of balm to heal our wounds. Discord and division befit no Christian. For wolves to worry the lambs is no wonder — but for one lamb to worry another is unnatural and monstrous.
11. Be most in the spiritual exercises of religion, meditation, self-examination, etc. Bodily exercises without these will profit nothing.
12. Take no truths upon trust, but all upon trial. Bring all to the balance of the sanctuary. (1Th 5:21; Acts 17:11.) It was the glory of that church that they would not trust Paul himself.
13. The fewer opportunities and the lesser advantages you have in public, the more abundantly address yourselves to God in private. (Mal 3:16-17.)
14. Walk in those ways that are directly contrary to the vain, sinful, superstitious ways — which men of a formal, carnal, lukewarm spirit walk in.

15. Look upon all the things of this world as you will when you come to die. Men may now put a lovely mask upon them, but then they will appear in their own colors.

16. Never put off conscience with any plea that you dare not stand by in the great day of your account.

17. Eye more the internal workings of God in your souls, than the external providences of God. If God should carry on ever so glorious a work in the world as the conquest of nations to Christ, what would it advantage you if sin, Satan, and the world triumph in your soul?

18. Look as well on the bright, as well as on the dark side of Providence.

19. Keep up precious thoughts of God, under his sharpest and severest dispensations to you.

20. Hold on and hold out in the ways of well-doing, in the lack of all outward discouragements. Follow the Lamb, though all others follow the beast and the false prophet.

21. In all your natural, civil, and religious actions, let divine glory rest upon your souls; let the glory of Christ lie nearest your hearts.

22. Record all special favors, mercies, providences, and experiences. Little do you know the advantages that will redound to your souls upon this.

23. Never enter upon the trial of your spiritual estate, but when your hearts are in the fittest temper.

24. Always make the Scripture, and not your carnal reason, or your bare opinion (or that of others) the rule by which to judge of your spiritual condition.

25. Make conscience of making good the terms on which you closed with Christ, namely, that you would deny yourselves, take up the cross, and follow Him.

26. Walk by no rule but such as you dare die by, and stand by in the day of Jesus Christ. Do not walk with the multitude. Make not the example of great men your rule, which stands in opposition to Jesus Christ. Who dare stand by either of these before him at the great day?

27. Lastly. Sit down and rejoice with fear. Rejoice in what God has done for your souls by the everlasting gospel. Weep that you have done no more to improve it, and that you have so neglected the opportunities of enriching your souls.

Here are your LEGACIES. May the Lord make them of singular use to you, that you may give up your account to the great and glorious God with joy. Make conscience of putting these things into practice until you shall be brought to the fruition of God, where you shall need ordinances, preaching, and praying no more.

S. Letter to a bereaved woman

Letter to a bereaved woman, by Thomas Brooks

Beloved in our dearest Lord,

I confess the loss of your dear husband is very very great; yet to prevent the breaking in of an irresistible torrent of sorrow and sadness upon your drooping spirits, be pleased to consider these four things:

1. Though your loss is great, yet there are six greater losses than yours.

(1.) First, The loss of the SOUL is a greater loss than the loss of a husband, a child, a kinsman, etc. The loss of the soul is an incomparable loss, it is an irreparable loss, it is an eternal loss. Francis Xaverius, counseled John the Third, King of Portugal, to meditate every day a quarter of an hour upon that text, What shall it profit a man to gain the world, and lose his soul? Mat 16:26. Of the sadness and greatness of this loss, you may read more in the following discourse.

(2.) Secondly, The loss of CHRIST is a loss infinitely beyond the loss of the nearest and dearest relations. This made Luther say that he had rather live in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. Jesus is the greatest good, and therefore the loss of him must needs be the greatest evil. He who has not Christ--he has lost all; for Christ is all in all, Col 3:11. John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, that if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire, before he would lose his Christ.

(3.) Thirdly, The loss of the GOSPEL is a greater loss than all worldly comforts. Eli bore up sweetly until the ark was taken--and that news broke both his heart and neck.

Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible; nay, a gracious heart who has experienced the sweetness of the word, will not take all the world for one line of the Bible. We must defend the truth even to the effusion of blood, and rather lose our lives than lose the truth. When the gospel is lost, the glory of a nation is lost; yes, the glory of souls is lost.

(4.) Fourthly, The loss of GOD'S FAVOR is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If his loving-kindness be better than life, yes, than lives, as the Hebrew has it; then the loss of it is worse than death, yes, than deaths. Augustine, upon that answer of God to Moses, You cannot see my face and live, Exo 33:20, makes this quick and sweet reply, "Then, Lord! let me die, that I may see your face." It is divine favor which makes heaven to be heaven, and it is the lack of that which makes hell to be hell. A Christian that has been under the shining's of God's face, had rather suffer death--yes, any death, yes, all deaths--than to have the face of God clouded and covered.

(5.) Fifthly, The loss of PEACE of CONSCIENCE is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If you ask those who have experienced the sweetness of peace of conscience—but are now under terrors and horrors, what is the greatest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience. If you ask them again what is the saddest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience. There is no

loss which can be compared to this loss. Said Luther, One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, The loss of ETERNITY is a greater loss than any--than all worldly losses. No worldly loss is to be mentioned in the day wherein the loss of eternity is named. The loss of eternity comprises all varieties of privative miseries--the loss of whatever we have enjoyed, and the loss of whatever we might have enjoyed; as God, Christ, the Comforter, the society of saints, angels, the treasures and pleasures that are at God's right hand. It was a notable saying of Ambrose, Why will you make that which cannot be eternal for use, be eternal for punishment? The loss of eternity is a comprehensive loss, a loss that takes in all losses; and therefore no loss can be compared to the loss of a happy eternity. And thus you see, beloved, that though your loss is very great, yet there are far greater losses than yours; and this should bear up your spirits from fainting and sinking under this sad dispensation. Though I have a will, yet I have not skill to express your loss and your sorrows. Sorrows for near and dear relations are oftentimes so great, that they cannot be expressed.

Psammeticus, king of Egypt, being prisoner to Cambyses, king of Persia, seeing his own daughter passing before him in poor array, being sent to draw water, at which sight his friends about him wept—but himself wept not; presently after his son was carried to execution before his face, neither did this move him to show any passion; but afterwards, when a friend of his was to suffer, then he wept, and tore his hair, and showed great sorrow. Being demanded the reason of this his strange behavior, he answered that the loss of a friend might be expressed—but not the grief for the loss of a child.

I have read of a certain painter, who attempting to express the sorrow of a bereaved father, thought it best to present him with his face covered, that so he might have that grief to be imagined by them, which he found himself unable to set out to the full. I know I am not able to paint out your grief and sorrow for your sad loss, yet having proved that your loss is no loss compared with the fore-mentioned sad losses, I cannot but hope that you will labor to bear up like those whose hopes, whose hearts, whose treasures are in heaven, etc.

2. Consider all outward losses may be made up; nay, God does usually one way or another make up to his people all their outward losses. He did so to David, to Job, and many others; nay, they were great gainers by their losses. And so were the disciples, who, for the loss of Christ's personal presence, had abundance of the Spirit's influence. If he takes away a husband, and he himself comes in his place, and fills up that relation--is not the loss made up? Will not the light and heat of the sun make up the loss of the light and heat of a twinkling star? If he take away a son, and gives out more of himself, will you not say he is better than ten thousand sons? 1Sa 1:8. If he take away your only son, and gives out to you more of his only Son, will you not say, that though your loss be very great, yet the great God has made it up, by giving out more of the light, life, love, and glory of his only Son unto you? If, in the room of an only son, God shall give you a name which is better than sons and daughters, Isa 56:5, will you not say, your loss is made up with advantage?

It was an apt saying of Tertullian, that is right and good trading, when something is parted with to gain more. He applies it to the martyrs' sufferings, wherein though the flesh lost something, yet the spirit got much more. Ah! dear friends, if your fleshly losses shall be made up in spiritual advantages, have you any cause to say, No loss to our loss, no sorrow to our sorrow? Surely not!

When that noble Zedislaus had lost his hand in the wars of the King of Poland, the king sent him a golden hand for it.

Ah, friends! if God gives you silver for brass, and gold for iron; if he give you spirituals for temporals, have you not more cause of rejoicing than of mourning? When Paulinus Nolanus' city was taken by the barbarians, he prayed thus to God: Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honor, etc., for you are all, and much more than all, these unto me.

There is nothing beyond remedy--but the tears of the damned! Those who are in the way to paradise should not place themselves in the condition of a little hell; and those who may or can hope for that great all, ought not to be dejected for anything.

3. Thirdly, Consider that though your loss be great, yet his gain is greater. "For him to live was Christ--and to die was gain," Php 1:21. He has exchanged mortality for immortality; the society of sinful men--for the society of holy angels; the sight of friends--for the sight of God; a house made with hands--for one eternal in the heavens; the streams--for the fountain; an earthly father--for a heavenly Father; a careful, loving, sweet, suitable, tender-hearted, wise, spouse--to lie in the arms, for the bosom, of a loving, gracious, tender-hearted Savior. If you would but eye more his crown--than your own cross; his gain--than your own loss; you would divinely quench the burning flame of your sorrowful affections. It was a good saying of Francisco Soyit to his adversaries: You deprive me of this life--and promote me to a better life; which is as if you should rob me of pennies--and furnish me with gold. Your deceased husband has exchanged his pennies--for gold; his imperfection--for perfection; and his earthly possession--for a heavenly possession.

4. Fourthly and lastly, Consider how sweetly, how wisely, how bravely others have born up, when the Lord has passed the sentence of death upon their nearest and dearest relations. Never leave pressing those golden examples upon your own hearts, until they are brought over sweetly and quietly to lie down in the will of God, and to say so be it to God's amen. When it was told Anaxagoras that his only two sons were dead, he being nothing terrified therewith, answered, I knew I begat mortal creatures. Ah, friends! shall a heathen bear it out thus bravely, and shall not you much more? Pulvillus, another heathen, when he was about to consecrate a temple to Jupiter, and news was brought to him of the death of his son, desisted not from his enterprise; but with a composed mind gave order for decent burial. Shall mere human nature do this, and shall not grace do as much, nay, more? What a shame is it, says Jerome, that faith should not be able to do that which infidelity has done! What! not better fruit in the vineyard, in the garden of the Lord--than in the wilderness? What! not better fruit grown upon the tree of life--than upon the root of nature? Your servant in the work of Christ,

Thomas Brooks

S. Love the Lord Jesus Christ!

Love the Lord Jesus Christ! by Thomas Brooks

Look that ye love the Lord Jesus Christ with a superlative love, with an overtopping love. There are none have suffered so much for you as Christ; there are none that can suffer so much for you as Christ. The least measure of that wrath that Christ hath sustained for you, would have broke the hearts, necks, and backs of all created beings.

O my friends! There is no love but a superlative love that is any ways suitable to the transcendent sufferings of dear Jesus. Oh, love him above your lusts, love him above your relations, love him above the world, love him above all your outward contentments and enjoyments; yea, love him above your very lives; for thus the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, primitive Christians, and the martyrs of old, have loved our Lord Jesus Christ with an overtopping love: Rev 12:11, 'They loved not their lives unto the death;' that is, they slighted, contemned, yea, despised their lives, exposing them to hazard and loss, out of love to the Lamb, 'who had washed them in his blood.' I have read of one Kilian, a Dutch schoolmaster, who being asked whether he did not love his wife and children, answered, Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hands to dispose of, I would leave it at my enemies' feet to live with them in a prison; but my soul and my Saviour are dearer to me than all. If my father, saith Jerome, should stand before me, and my mother hang upon, and my brethren should press about me, I would break through my brethren, throw down my father, and tread underfoot my mother, to cleave to Jesus Christ. Had I ten heads, said Henry Voes, they should all off for Christ. If every hair of my head, said John Ardley, martyr, were a man, they should all suffer for the faith of Christ. Let fire, racks, pulleys, said Ignatius, and all the torments of hell come upon me, so I may win Christ. Love made Jerome to say, O my Saviour, didst thou die for love of me?-a love sadder than death; but to me a death more lovely than love itself. I cannot live, love thee, and be longer from thee. George Carpenter, being asked whether he did not love his wife and children, which stood weeping before him, answered, My wife and children!- my wife and children! are dearer to me than all Bavaria; yet, for the love of Christ, I know them not. That blessed virgin in Basil being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her if she would worship idols, cried out, 'Let money perish, and life vanish, Christ is better than all.' Sufferings for Christ are the saints' greatest glory; they are those things wherein they have most gloried: *Crudelitas vestra, gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory, saith Tertullian. It is reported of Babylas, that when he was to die for Christ, he desired this favour, that his chains might be buried with him, as the ensigns of his honour. Thus you see with what a superlative love, with what an overtopping love, former saints have loved our Lord Jesus; and can you, Christians, who are cold and low in your love to Christ, read over these instances, and not blush?

Certainly the more Christ hath suffered for us, the more dear Christ should be unto us; the more bitter his sufferings have been for us, the more sweet his love should be to us, and the more eminent should be our love to him. Oh, let a suffering Christ lie nearest your hearts; let him be your manna, your tree of life, your morning star. It is better to part with all than with this pearl of price.

Christ is that golden pipe through which the golden oil of salvation runs; and oh. how should this inflame our love to Christ! Oh that our hearts were more affected with the sufferings of Christ! Who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to Christ, and cry out with Ignatius, Christ my love is crucified? Song of Solomon 8:7-8. If a friend should die for us, how would our hearts be affected with his kindness! and shall the God of glory lay down his life for us, and shall we not be affected with his goodness John 10:17-18. Shall Saul be affected with David's kindness in sparing his life, 1Sa 24:16, and shall not we be affected with Christ's kindness, who, to save our life, lost his own? Oh, the infinite love of Christ, that he should leave his Father's bosom, John 1:18, and come down from heaven, that he might carry you up to heaven, John 14:1-4; that he that was a Son should take upon him the form of a servant, Php 2:5-8; that you of slaves should be made sons, of enemies should be made friends, of heirs of wrath should be made heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom 8:17; that to save us from everlasting ruin, Christ should stick at nothing, but be willing to be made flesh, to lie in a manger, to be tempted, deserted, persecuted, and to die upon a cross!

Oh what flames of love should these things kindle in all our hearts to Christ! Love is compared to fire; in heaping love upon our enemy, we heap coals of fire upon his head, Rom 12:19-20; Pro 26:21. Now the property of fire is to turn all it meets with into its own nature: fire maketh all things fire; the coal maketh burning coals; and is it not a wonder then that Christ, having heaped abundance of the fiery coals of his love upon our heads, we should yet be as cold as corpses in our love to him. Ah! what sad metal are we made of, that Christ's fiery love cannot inflame our love to Christ! Moses wondered why the bush consumed not, when he sees it all on fire, Exo 3:3; but if you please but to look into your own hearts, you shall see a greater wonder; for you shall see that, though you walk like those three children in the fiery furnace, Dan. iii., even in the midst of Christ's fiery love flaming round about you; yet there is but little, very little, true smell of that sweet fire of love to be felt or found upon you or in you. Oh, when shall the sufferings of a dear and tender-hearted Saviour kindle such a flame of love in all our hearts, as shall still be a-breaking forth in our lips and lives, in our words and ways, to the praise and glory of free grace? Oh that the sufferings of a loving Jesus might at last make us all sick of love! Song of Solomon 2:5. Oh let him for ever lie betwixt our breasts, Song of Solomon 1:13, who hath left his Father's bosom for a time, that he might be embosomed by us for ever.

S. Short Pithy Gems

Short pithy gems from the Puritan Thomas Brooks!

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Christian! Consider that the trials and troubles, the calamities and miseries, the crosses and losses that you meet with in this world — are all the Hell that ever you shall have!

~ ~ ~ ~

There is the seed of all sins — the vilest and worst of sins — are in the best of men!

~ ~ ~ ~

He who will play with Satan's bait — will quickly be taken with Satan's hook!

~ ~ ~ ~

Deliver me, O Lord, from that evil man — Myself!

~ ~ ~ ~

There is more evil in the least sin — than in the greatest affliction.

~ ~ ~ ~

God has in Himself . . .

all power to defend you,

all wisdom to direct you,

all mercy to pardon you,

all grace to enrich you,

all righteousness to clothe you,

all goodness to supply you, and

all happiness to crown you!

~ ~ ~ ~

The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth are but ice — in comparison to the fire of Hell!

~ ~ ~ ~

Worldly pleasures seem solid in their pursuit — but are mere clouds in the enjoyment.

~ ~ ~ ~

A preacher's life should be a commentary upon his doctrine.

Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.

~ ~ ~ ~

The two poles could sooner meet — than the love of Christ and the love of the world.

~ ~ ~ ~

It is not the bee's touching of the flower that gathers honey — but her abiding for a time upon the flower that draws out the sweet. It is not he who reads most — but he who meditates most — who will prove to be the choicest, sweetest, wisest and strongest Christian!

~ ~ ~ ~

The first step toward Heaven — is to see ourselves near Hell!

~ ~ ~ ~

What labor and pains worldlings take to obtain the vain things of this life — to obtain the poor things of this world, which are but shadows and dreams, and mere nothings!

~ ~ ~ ~

Christ is lovely, Christ is very lovely, Christ is most lovely, Christ is always lovely, Christ is altogether lovely! "Yes, He is altogether lovely! This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend!" Song of Songs 5:16

~ ~ ~ ~

There is no little sin — because there is no little God to sin against.

~ ~ ~ ~

Grace and glory differ very little.

The one is the seed — the other is the flower.

Grace is glory militant — glory is grace triumphant.

~ ~ ~ ~

The world and you must part — or Christ and you will never meet.

~ ~ ~ ~

Afflictions are but as a dark entry into our Father's house!

~ ~ ~ ~

Prayer is nothing but the breathing that out before the Lord — what was first breathed into us by the Spirit of the Lord.

~ ~ ~ ~

God looks not . . .

at the oratory of your prayers — how elegant they may be;
nor at the geometry of your prayers — how long they may be;
nor at the arithmetic of your prayers — how many they may be;
not at logic of your prayers — how methodical they may be;
but He looks at the sincerity of them.

~ ~ ~ ~

Satan promises the best — but pays with the worst!
He promises honor — and pays with disgrace.
He promises pleasure — and pays with pain.
He promises profit — and pays with loss.
He promises life — and pays with death.
But God pays as He promises — all His payments are made in pure gold!

~ ~ ~ ~

Sin in a wicked man is like poison in a serpent — it is in its natural place.

~ ~ ~ ~

Those sins that seem most sweet in life — will prove most bitter in death!

~ ~ ~ ~

Every man obeys Christ as he prizes Christ, not otherwise.

~ ~ ~ ~

He is the best preacher — not who tickles the ear, but who breaks the heart!

~ ~ ~ ~

Repentance is the vomit of the soul.

~ ~ ~ ~

Though true repentance is never too late — yet late repentance is seldom true.

~ ~ ~ ~

Saints thrive most internally — when they are most externally afflicted. Afflictions are the mother of virtue.

~ ~ ~ ~

How many threadbare souls, are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns!

~ ~ ~ ~

Sin is bad in the eye, worse in the tongue, worse still in the heart — but worst of all in the life!

~ ~ ~ ~

Until men have faith in Christ — their best services are but glorious sins.

~ ~ ~ ~

The best and sweetest flowers of paradise, God gives to His people when they are upon their knees. Prayer is the gate of Heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~

Everything that a man leans upon but God — will be a dart that will certainly pierce his heart through and through. He who leans only upon Christ — lives the highest, choicest, safest, and sweetest life.

~ ~ ~ ~

An idle life and a holy heart is a contradiction.

~ ~ ~ ~

There are three things that earthly riches can never do:

they can never satisfy divine justice,

they can never pacify divine wrath, nor

can they every quiet a guilty conscience.

And until these things are done — man is undone.

~ ~ ~ ~

In a storm there is no shelter like the wings of God.

~ ~ ~ ~

Secret sins commonly lie nearest the heart.

~ ~ ~ ~

The giving way to a less sin, makes way for the committing of a greater sin.

~ ~ ~ ~

Cold prayers always freeze before they reach Heaven.

~ ~ ~ ~

Get Christ — and get all!

Miss Christ — and miss all!

~ ~ ~ ~

Faith is the champion of grace.

Love is the nurse of grace.

Humility is the beauty of Grace.

~ ~ ~ ~

Solomon got more hurt by his wealth — than he got good by his wisdom.

~ ~ ~ ~

Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward.

~ ~ ~ ~

A well-grounded assurance is always attended with three fair handmaids: love, humility and holy joy.

~ ~ ~ ~

Ah, believer, it is only Heaven which is above all winds, storms, and tempests. God did not cast man out of Paradise, that he might find another paradise in this world.

~ ~ ~ ~

Satan paints sin with virtue's colors.

~ ~ ~ ~

The sovereignty of God is that golden scepter in His hand by which He will make all bow — either by His mercies or by His judgments.

~ ~ ~ ~

When God's hand is on your back — let your hand be on your mouth; for though the affliction is sharp, it shall be but short. "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for You are the one who has done this!" Psalm 39:9

~ ~ ~ ~

The least sin should humble the soul — but certainly the greatest sin should never discourage the soul, much less should it work the soul to despair. Despairing Judas perished — whereas the murderers of Christ, believing on Him, were saved!

~ ~ ~ ~

All a believer's present happiness, and all his future happiness — springs from the eternal purpose of God.

~ ~ ~ ~

There is great danger, yes, many times most danger, in the smallest sins. Greater sins sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and indiscernibly in the soul — until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul and to cut the throat of the soul.

~ ~ ~ ~

Your life is short,
your duties are many,
your assistance is great,
and your reward is sure.

Therefore faint not!

Hold on in ways of holiness — and Heaven shall make amends for all!

~ ~ ~ ~

Selfish ambition is a gilded misery, a secret poison, a hidden plague, the engineer of deceit, the mother of hypocrisy, the parent of envy, the original of vices, the moth of holiness, the blinder of hearts — turning medicines into maladies, and remedies into diseases!

~ ~ ~ ~

Look! As a painted man is no man, and as painted fire is no fire — so a cold prayer is no prayer.

~ ~ ~ ~

The lazy Christian has his mouth full of complaints — when the active Christian has his heart full of comforts.

S. TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY

TOUCHSTONE OF SINCERITY by Thomas Brooks

The first great work which men are to attend to in this world—is the eternal safety and security of their souls. Their next great work is to know, to be assured—that it shall go well with their souls forever. A man may have grace—and yet, for a time, not know it; he may have a saving work of God upon his soul—and yet not discern it; he may have the root of the matter in him—and yet not be able to evidence it.

Many, whose graces are weak and much buried under fears, doubts, strong passions, prevailing corruptions, or diabolic suggestions—are inclined to suspect their weak grace, fearing that on account of the deceitfulness of their hearts they will be found to be insincere before God; but the weakest Christian may turn to the clear and well-bottomed evidences in this treatise, and throw the gauntlet to Satan and bid him prove if he can, that ever any profane person, any self-flatterer, any cunning hypocrite had such evidences, or such fair certificates to show for heaven as he has to show.

Several have observed how far a hypocrite may go; but my design in this treatise is to show how far a hypocrite can NOT go. Some have showed what a hypocrite is, and I shall now show what he is NOT. Some have showed the several rounds in Jacob's ladder that a hypocrite may climb up to—but my business and work in this treatise is to show you the several rounds in Jacob's ladder that no hypocrite under heaven can climb up to.

1. A hypocrite's inside is never answerable to his outside. A hypocrite's inside is one thing, and his outside another thing; a hypocrite is outwardly clean—but inwardly unclean; he is outwardly glorious—but inwardly inglorious. Hypocrites are like apothecaries' gally-pots, having without the title of some excellent preservative—but within they are full of some deadly poison. They are like the Egyptian temples, which were beautiful without—but within there was nothing to be found but serpents and crocodiles, and other venomous creatures.

Hypocrites trade more for a good name, than for a good heart; for a good report, than for a good conscience; they are like fiddlers, more careful in tuning their instruments than in watching their spirits. Hypocrites are like white silver—but they draw black lines; they have a seeming sanctified outside—but stuffed within with malice, worldliness, pride, envy, etc. Like window cushions, made up of velvet and richly embroidered—but stuffed within with hay. A hypocrite may offer sacrifice with Cain, and fast with Jezebel, and humble himself with Ahab, and lament with the tears of Esau, and kiss Christ with Judas, and follow Christ with Demas, and appear committed with Simon Magus; and yet for all this his inside is as bad as any of theirs. A hypocrite is a Jacob without and an Esau within; a David without and a Saul within; a Peter without and a Judas within; a saint without and a Satan within; an angel without and a devil within. A hypocrite is a Jew outwardly—but an atheist, a pagan, a Turk inwardly. I have read of certain images, which on the outside were covered with gold and pearl, resembling Jupiter and Neptune—but within were

nothing but spiders and cobwebs; a fit resemblance of hypocrites. That monk hit it, who said, 'To be a monk in outward show was easy—but to be a monk in inward reality was hard.' To be a Christian in outward show is easy—but to be a Christian inwardly and really is very hard. A hypocrite's inside never echoes or answers to his outside; his inside is wicked, and his outside is religious. But let all such hypocrites know, that pretend sanctity is double iniquity, and accordingly at last they shall be dealt with.

2. No hypocrite is totally divorced from the love and liking of every known sin. There is still some secret lust or other, which as a sweet morsel he rolls under his tongue, and will not spit it out. Every hypocrite tolerates some evil or other in himself, and takes liberty to transgress. A hypocrite will do hard work to daub up his conscience, and to secure himself from the checks thereof. After once the bag was committed to Judas' custody, after once he was chosen into that sweet office, he quickly put conscience out of office, and never left stealing and licking his fingers, while there was any money in his bag to finger.

Herod knew much, and heard John the Baptist, and had some temporary affections, and did many good things. But yet he kept Herodias his brother's wife, he took away the life of John the Baptist, he sets Jesus Christ at naught, and rejected him. As fair as Herod seemed to behave, yet he lived in a known notorious sin, and unjustly murdered the messenger of God, and mocked and rejected Jesus Christ as a vile person. Some sin or other always reigns without control in a hypocritical heart. A hypocrite always reserves one nest-egg or another in his heart or life, for Satan to sit and brood on. Jehu did many brave things—but yet he kept up the worship of his golden calves. Naaman promises high—but yet he is for bowing in the house of Rimmon. The pharisees were very devout—but yet they loved the praises of men, and the uppermost seats in the synagogues. There is never a hypocrite in the world—but will do what he can to save the life of his sin, though it be with the loss of his soul.

O sirs! Satan is contented that hypocrites should yield to God in many things, provided they will be but true to him in some one thing; for he very well knows that one sin lived in and allowed, gives him as much advantage against the soul as more. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one claw. Satan knows that one sin lived in and allowed, will mar all a man's sweetest duties and services; as one dead fly will mar the whole box of precious ointment, and as one jarring string will bring the sweetest music out of tune.

It is said of Naaman the Syrian, that he was a valiant man, and a victorious man, and an honorable man, and a great favorite with his prince—but a leper. So it may be said of many hypocrites, they have such and such excellencies, and they perform such and such glorious duties—but they live and allow themselves in this or that sin, and that mars the beauty of all their services. Satan knows that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly damn a man as many sins; as one disease, one ulcerous part, may as certainly kill a man as many diseases. Satan knows that one sin lived in and allowed, will render a man as unclean in the eye of God, as many sins. If the leper in the law had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body, he was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole. So he who has the spot of the leprosy of sin allowed in any one part of his soul, he is a spiritual leper in the eye of God; he is unclean, though in other parts he may not be unclean.

Satan knows that one sin lived in and allowed, will as effectually keep Christ and the soul asunder as many, as one stone in the pipe will as effectually keep out the water as many. Satan knows that one sin lived in and allowed, will make way for many, as one thief can open the door to let in many more. Satan knows, that one sin lived in and allowed, will as certainly shut the soul out of heaven as many. One enemy may shut the door upon a man as well as many; and what difference is there between that man that is shut out of heaven for living in many sins, and he who is shut out of heaven for living but in one sin? One sin lived in and allowed, will arm conscience against a man, as well as many. If there be but one crack in the honey glass, there the wasps will be buzzing. One sin allowed and countenanced, will spoil the music of conscience. One sin lived in and allowed, will make death as terrible and as formidable to the soul as many.

Now, all this Satan knows, and therefore he labors mightily to engage hypocrites to live in the allowance of some one sin. O sirs! remember that as one hole in a ship will sink it, and as one stab at the heart will kill a man, and as one glass of poison will poison a man, and as one act of treason will make a man a traitor—so one sin lived in and allowed will damn a man forever. One wound strikes Goliath dead, as well as twenty-three did Caesar; one Delilah will do Samson as much mischief as all the Philistines; one vein's bleeding will let out all the vitals as well as more; one bitter herb will spoil all the pottage. One Achan was a trouble to all Israel; one Jonah was too heavy for a whole ship; so one sin lived in and allowed, is enough to make a man miserable forever. One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea as well as a hundred; so one sin lived in and indulged will sink a man to the bottom of hell as well as a hundred.

I have read of a great Roman captain, who, as he was riding in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eyes never off a beautiful woman who walked along the street, which made one say, 'Behold how this great captain, who has conquered such and such armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman!' There is never a hypocrite in the world—but lies under the conquest of one base lust or another—but lives under the reign and dominion of one sin or another. That soul that can in sincerity of heart appeal to a heart-searching God, that it is otherwise with him, namely, that he does not live nor allow himself in any one sinful way or practice, that soul, I dare assure in the Lord's name, is no hypocrite.

3. As a hypocrite's heart is never thoroughly subdued to a willingness to part with every lust, so neither is his heart thoroughly subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties. Sometimes he is all for public duties—but makes no conscience of closet-duties, or of family-duties; sometimes he is all for the duties of the first table—but makes no conscience of the duties of the second table; and sometimes he is all for the duties of the second table—but makes no conscience of the duties of the first table. If he obeys one command, he willingly lives in the neglect of another; if he does one duty, he will be sure to cast off another; as he is not willing to fall out with every sin, so he is not willing to fall in with every duty. A hypocrite's obedience is always partial, it is never universal; he still baulks or boggles with those commands which cross his lusts. The pharisees fasted, prayed, gave alms, and paid tithes—but they omitted "the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith," Mat 6:1-34; and they were unnatural to parents; and under a pretense of praying, they made a prey of widows' houses; under a pretense of piety, they exercised the greatest covetousness; unrighteousness, and cruelty, and that upon widows, who are usually the greatest objects of pity and charity; they made no bones of robbing the widow, under a pretense of honoring God. So Judas, under a pretense of laying up for the poor, robbed the poor; he

pretended to lay up for the poor—but he intended only to lay up for himself, and to provide against a rainy day. It is probable that he had no great mind to stay long with his Lord, and therefore he was resolved to make the best market he could for himself. Judas being willing to set up for himself, under a cloak of holiness, he practices the greatest unfaithfulness. Though the eagle soars high, yet still her eye is upon her prey; so though Judas did soar high in profession; yet his eye was still upon his prey, upon his bags; and so that he might have it, he cared not who went without it; so that he might be rich, he did not care though his Lord and his retinue grew ever so poor. Judas under all his shows and sanctity, had not so much as common honesty in him.

Counterfeit holiness is often made a stalking-horse to much righteousness; but certainly it were better to have honesty without religion, than to have religion without honesty. A hypocrite may exercise himself in some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion; but when shall you see a hypocrite laying the axe to the root of the tree, or searching and trying his own heart, or severely judging his bosom sins, or humbly mourning and lamenting over secret corruptions, or doubling his guards about his own soul, or rejoicing in the graces, services, or excellencies of others, or striving or pressing after the highest pitches of grace, holiness, and communion with God, or endeavoring more to cast out the beam out of his own eye, than the mote out of his brother's eye, or to be more severe against his own sins than against the sins of others? Alas! a hypocrite is so far from practicing these duties, that he thinks them either superfluous or impossible. A hypocrite's obedience is always a limited and stinted obedience. It is either limited to such commands which are most suitable to his ease, safety, honor, profit, pleasure, etc., or else it is limited to the outward part of the command, and never extends itself to the inward and spiritual part of the command; as you may see in the scribes and pharisees. Their obedience was all outward; they had no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command. They did not murder, they did not commit adultery, they had an eye to the outward part of the command; but Christ charges them with unjust and adulterous thoughts, unchaste glances, contemplative wickedness, speculative uncleanness, etc., they having no regard at all to the inward and spiritual part of any command.

Common grace looks only to some particular duties—but saving grace looks to all. Renewing grace comes off to positives as well as negatives; it teaches us to cease to do evil, and it teaches us also to do good. It "teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and also to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty. To live soberly toward ourselves, righteously toward our neighbors, and godly toward God, is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man.

There is never a hypocrite in the world that can sincerely appeal to God, and say, "Lord! you know that my heart is subdued to a willingness to perform all known duties; I would willingly do the best I can to observe all your royal laws; Lord! I sincerely desire, and really endeavor to have an eye upon every command of yours, and to live up to every command of yours; and it is the real grief of my heart, and the daily burden of my soul when I violate any of your blessed laws." He who can sincerely thus appeal to God, shall never miscarry in the eternal world.

4. There is never a hypocrite in the world, who makes God, or Christ, or holiness, or his doing or receiving good in his station, relation, or generation—his grand end, his highest end, his ultimate end of living in the world. Pleasures, profits and prestige, are the hypocrite's trinity, which he adores and serves, and sacrifices himself to. They are all that he aims at in this world. A

hypocrite's ends are corrupt and selfish. Self is his highest end; for he who was never truly cast out of himself, can have no higher end than himself. A hypocrite is all for his own glory; he acts for himself, and from himself. That he may have the profit, the credit, the glory, the applause—is the desire of an unsound heart. A hypocrite will seem to be very godly when he can make a gain of godliness; he will seem to be very holy when holiness is the way to outward greatness and happiness; but his religious wickedness will double-damn the hypocrite at last.

Selfish ends are the operative ingredients in all a hypocrite does; self is the chief engine, self is the great wheel which sets all a hypocrite's wheels going. When hypocrites take up religion, it is only to serve their own interests, to bring about their own carnal ends; they serve not the Lord, but their own bellies. They use religion only as a stream to turn about their own mill, and the more neatly to effect their own carnal projects. Simon Magus will needs be baptized, and he is very desirous to have power to give the Holy Spirit to others; but his aim being only to get a name, and to get money, Peter tells him to his face that his heart was not right in the sight of God. No man can go higher than his principles, and therefore a hypocrite having no higher principles than himself, all he does must needs be terminated in himself. As all the rivers which come from the sea do return back again to the sea from whence they come, so all those duties which arise from a man's self, must needs center in a man's self. A hypocrite always makes himself the end of all his service; but let such hypocrites know, that though their profession be ever so glorious, and their duties ever so abundant, yet their ends being selfish and carnal, all their pious pretensions and performances are but splendid abominations in the sight of God. A hypocrite has always a squint eye, and squint-eyed aims and squint-eyed ends in all he does. Balaam spoke very piously, and he multiplied altars and sacrifices; but the thing he had in his eye was the wages of unrighteousness. Jehu destroyed bloody Ahab's house, he executed the vengeance of God upon that wicked family; he readily, resolutely, and effectually destroyed all the worshipers of Baal—but his ends were to secure the kingdom to himself. Ahab and the Ninevites fasted in sackcloth—but it was merely that they might not feel the heavy judgments that they feared would overtake them. The Jews in Babylon fasted and mourned, and mourned and fasted seventy years—but it was more to get off their chains than their sins, it was more to be rid of their captivity than it was to be rid of their iniquity. As the eagle has an eye upon her prey when she flies highest, so these Jews in all their fasting, praying, mourning; they had only an eye to their own ease, deliverance, freedom, etc.; in all their religious duties they were acted from evil principles, and carried on by self-respects; and therefore Daniel denies that in all that seventy years' captivity they had prayed to any purpose. "All this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth," Dan 9:13.

It is the end which dignifies or debases the action, which rectifies it or adulterates it, which sets a crown of honor or a crown of shame upon the head of it. He who commonly, habitually, in all his duties and services, proposes to himself no higher ends than the praises of men, or rewards of men, or the stopping the mouth of natural conscience, or only to avoid a smarting rod, or merely to secure himself from wrath to come—he is a hypocrite. The ends of a man's actions are always a great discovery either of sincerity or hypocrisy. A hypocrite's ends are always below God; they are always below glorifying of God, exalting of God, walking with God, and enjoying communion with God. A hypocrite, in all he does, still proposes to himself some poor, ignoble, selfish end or other. But now mark, a sincere Christian, if he prays or hears, or gives or fasts, or repents or obeys, etc.,

God's glory is the main end of all. The glory of God is his highest end, his ultimate end. A sincere Christian can be content to be trampled upon and vilified, so that God's name is glorified. The bent of such a heart is for God and his glory, nothing but sincerity can carry a soul so high, as in all acts natural, civil and religious, to intend God's glory. A sincere Christian ascribes the praise of all to God; he sets the crown on Christ's head alone; he will set God upon the throne, and make all things else his servants, or his footstool. All must bow the knee to God, or be trodden in the dirt. He will love nothing, he will embrace nothing but what sets God higher, or brings God nearer to his heart. The glory of God is the mark, the target, which the sincere Christian has in his eye. The sincere Christian lives not to himself—but to him who lives forever; he lives not to his own will, or lusts, or greatness, or glory in this world—but he lives to his glory, whose glory is dearer to him than his own life. As bright shining golden vessels do not retain the beams of the sun which they receive—but reflect them back again upon the sun; so the sincere Christian returns and reflects back again upon the Sun of righteousness, the praise and glory of all the gifts, graces, and virtues which he has received from God. The daily language of sincere souls is this: 'Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord—but to your name be all the glory.' A sincere Christian makes conscience of giving men their dues; how much more, then, does he make conscience of giving God his due. Now glory is God's due, and God desires nothing more than that we give him the glory due unto his name, as you may see in Psa 29:1-2. There are three gives in those two verses: "Give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord, give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name." Glory is God's right, and he stands upon his right; and this the sincere Christian knows, and therefore he gives him his right, he gives him the honor and the glory that is due unto his name. But please do not mistake me: I do not say that such as are really sincere do actually eye the glory of Christ in all their actions. Oh no! That is a happiness desirable on earth—but shall never be attained until we come to heaven. Selfish and base ends and aims will be still ready to creep into the best hearts—but all sincere hearts sigh and groan under them. They complain to God of them, and they cry out for justice, justice upon them; and it is the earnest desires and daily endeavors of their souls to be rid of them; and therefore they shall not be imputed to them, nor keep good things from them. But take a sincere Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course—and you shall find that his aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings are to glorify God, to exalt God, and to lift up God in the world. If the hypocrite did in good earnest aim at the glory of God in what he does, then the glory of God would swallow up his selfish aims and carnal ends, as Aaron's rod swallowed up the magicians' rods.

He who sets up the glory of God as his chief end, will find that his chief end will by degrees eat out all low and selfish ends. As Pharaoh's lean cows ate up the fat, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends which crowd in upon the soul in pious work. Where the glory of God is kept up as a man's greatest end, there all selfish and base ends will be kept under. By what has been said, it is most evident that a hypocrite in all his transactions looks at himself, and designs the advance and advantage of himself. A hypocrite is as well able to make a world—as he is able to make the glory of God, the exaltation of God, his highest end, his utmost aim, in what he does.

5. No hypocrite can live wholly and only upon the righteousness of Christ, the satisfaction of Christ, the merits of Christ, for justification and salvation. The hypocritical scribes and pharisees prayed and fasted, and kept the Sabbath, and gave alms, etc., and in this legal righteousness they rested and trusted. Upon the performance of these and such like duties they laid the weight of their

souls and the stress of their salvation, and so perished forever. A hypocrite rests upon what he does, and never looks so high as the righteousness of Christ. He looks upon his duties as so much good money laid out for heaven; he weaves a web of righteousness to clothe himself with; he never looks out for a more glorious righteousness to be justified by than his own, and so puts a slight upon the righteousness of Christ: Rom 10:3, "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." The first step to salvation is to renounce our own righteousness; the next step is to embrace the righteousness of Christ, which is freely offered to sinners in the gospel; but these things the hypocrite minds not, regards not. The righteousness of a hypocrite is not only imperfect—but impure, a rag, a filthy rag, and therefore he who rests upon such a righteousness must needs miscarry to all eternity. O sirs who will say that that man needs a savior, who can fly to heaven upon the wings of his own duties and services? If a man's duties can pacify an infinite wrath, and satisfy an infinite justice, then farewell Christ, and welcome duties. He who will rest upon his own righteousness for life and justification, must sit down short of salvation; he who rests upon his duties, and who rests upon a gift of knowledge, a gift of utterance, a gift of memory, or a gift of prayer, though he may come near to heaven, and bid fair for heaven, yet he will never be able to get into heaven. Now, how sad it is for a man to lose himself and his soul in a wilderness of duties, when he is upon the borders, yes, the very brink of the holy land. He who rests upon anything in himself, or done by himself, as a means to procure the favor of God, or the salvation of his soul, will put such a cheat upon himself as will undo him forever.

Non-submission to the righteousness of Christ, keeps Christ and the hypocrite asunder. Christ will never love nor like to put the fine, clean, white linen of his own righteousness upon the old filthy garment, the old rags of a hypocrite's duties; neither will Christ ever delight to put his new wine into such old bottles. A hypocrite's confidence in his own righteousness, turns his righteousness into filthiness! But a sincere Christian renounces his own righteousness, he renounces all confidence in the flesh; he looks upon his own righteousness as dung, yes, as dogs' meat, as some interpret the word in Php 3:8. He will no more say to his duties, to the works of his hands, "You are my gods," Hos 14:3. When they look upon the holiness of God's nature, the righteousness of his government, the severity of his law, the terror of his wrath—they see an absolute and indispensable necessity of a more glorious righteousness than their own to appear before God in. A sincere Christian sets the highest price and value upon the righteousness of Christ; Psa 71:16, "I will make mention of your righteousness, even of yours alone." Mark the emphasis doubled, "of yours," and "yours alone." A sincere Christian is convinced of the nature, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ, and therefore he cries out, "I will make mention of your righteousness, of yours alone." A sincere Christian rejoices in the righteousness of Christ above all: Isa 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." A sincere Christian rests on the righteousness of Christ as on a sure foundation: Isa 45:24, "Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." It was a very sweet and golden expression of one, when he thought himself to be at the point of death: "I confess," said he, "I am not worthy; I have no merits of my own to obtain heaven by; but my Lord had a double right thereunto; a hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice; he was contented with the one right himself, the other right he has given unto me, by the virtue of which

gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded." A sincere Christian looks upon the righteousness of Christ as that which renders him most splendid and glorious in the eyes of God: Php 3:9, "And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law—but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." A sincere Christian looks upon the righteousness of Christ as his only security against wrath to come. Wrath to come is the greatest wrath, wrath to come is the purest wrath, wrath to come is infinite wrath, wrath to come is everlasting wrath. Now the sincere Christian knows no way under heaven to secure himself from wrath to come—but by putting on the robe of Christ's righteousness. For a close remember this, there is never a hypocrite who is more pleased, satisfied, delighted and contented with the righteousness of Christ, than with his own. Though a hypocrite may be much in duties, yet he never lives above his duties; he works for life, and he rests in his work, and this proves his mortal wound.

6. A hypocrite never embraces a whole Christ; he can never take up his full and everlasting rest, satisfaction, and contentment in the person of Christ, in the merits of Christ, in the enjoyment of Christ alone. No hypocrite did ever long and mourn after the enjoyment of Christ, as the best thing in all the world. No hypocrite did ever prize Christ for a Sanctifier as well as a Savior. No hypocrite did ever look upon Christ, or long for Christ to deliver him from the power of his sins, as much or as well as to deliver him from wrath to come. No hypocrite can really love the person of Christ, or take the satisfaction in the person of Christ. The rays and beams of Christ's glory have never warmed his heart; he never knew what bosom communion with Christ meant. A hypocrite may love to be healed by Christ and to be pardoned by Christ, and to be saved by Christ, etc.—but he can never take any delight in the person of Christ; his heart never seriously works after communion with Christ. The love of a sincere Christian runs much out to the person of Christ. Heaven itself without Christ would be to such a soul but a poor thing, a low thing, a little thing, an uncomfortable thing, an empty thing. It is the person of Christ, which is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory. No hypocrite in the world is sincerely willing to receive Christ in all his offices, and to close with him upon gospel terms. The terms upon which God offers Christ in the gospel are these, namely, that we shall accept of a whole Christ with a whole heart. Now, mark, a whole Christ includes all his offices, and a whole heart includes all our faculties. Christ as mediator is prophet, priest, and king; and so God the Father in the gospel offers him. Salvation was too great and too glorious a work to be perfected and completed by any one office of Christ.

Christ as a prophet instructs us, and as a priest redeems us and intercedes for us, and as king sanctifies and rules us. The apostle hit it when he said, "He is made to us—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1Co 1:30. Consider Christ as our prophet, and so he is made wisdom to us; consider him as our priest, and so he is made righteousness and redemption to us; consider him as our king, and so he is made sanctification and holiness to us. A hypocrite may be willing to embrace Christ as a priest to save him from wrath, from the curse, from hell, from everlasting burning—but he is never sincerely willing to embrace Christ as a prophet to teach and instruct him, and as a king to rule and reign over him. Many hypocrites are willing to embrace a saving Christ—but they are not willing to embrace a ruling Christ, a commanding Christ. "But those enemies of Mine who did not want Me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of Me!" Luk 19:27. A hypocrite is willing to receive Christ in one office—but not in every office; and this is that stumbling stone at which hypocrites stumble and fall, and are

broken in pieces. Certainly Christ is as precious and as lovely, as desirable and delightful, as eminent and excellent in one office as he is in another; and therefore it is a just and righteous thing with God, that hypocrites who won't receive him in every office, should have no benefit by any one of his offices.

Christ and his offices may be distinguished—but Christ and his offices can never be divided. While many have been laboring to divide one office of Christ from another, they have wholly stripped themselves of any advantage or benefit by Christ. Hypocrites love to share with Christ in his happiness—but they don't love to share with Christ in his holiness. They are willing to be redeemed by Christ—but they, are not cordially willing to submit to the laws and government of Christ. They are willing to be saved by his blood—but they are not willing to submit to his scepter. Hypocrites love the privileges of the gospel—but they don't love the services of the gospel, especially those that are most inward and spiritual. But a sincere Christian owns Christ in all his offices, he receives Christ in all his offices, and he closes with Christ in all his offices. He accepts of him, not only as a Christ Jesus—but also as a Lord Jesus; he embraces him, not only as a saving Christ—but also as a ruling Christ. The Colossians received him as Christ Jesus the Lord; they received a Lord Christ as well as a saving Christ; they received Christ as a king upon his throne, as well as a sin-atoning sacrifice upon his cross.

God the Father in the gospel offers a whole Christ. We preach Christ Jesus the Lord, and accordingly a sincere Christian receives a whole Christ, he receives Christ Jesus the Lord; he says with Thomas, "My Lord and my God," John 20:28; he takes Christ for his wisdom as well as for his righteousness, and he takes him for his sanctification as well as for his redemption. A hypocrite is all for a saving Christ, for a sin-pardoning Christ, for a soul-saving Christ—but regards not a ruling Christ, a reigning Christ, a commanding Christ, a sanctifying Christ, and this at last will prove his damning sin.

7. A hypocrite cannot mourn for sin as SIN, nor grieve for sin as sin, nor hate sin as sin, nor make head against sin as sin. Mark—to hate sin is not merely to refrain from sin, for so Balaam did. To hate sin is not merely to confess sin, for so Pharaoh and Judas did. To hate sin is not merely to be afraid to sin, for this may be where there is no hatred of sin. To hate sin is not merely to mourn because of the dreadful effects and fruits that sin may produce, for so Ahab did, and the Ninevites did, etc. He who fears sin for hell, fears not to sin—but to burn.

He hates sin indeed—who hates sin as hell itself. It was a saying of one of the ancients, that if hell and sin were before him, he would rather fall into hell than fall into sin. Here was a true hatred of sin indeed. A hypocrite may be troubled for sin, as it blots his reputation, and wounds his conscience, and brings a scourge, and destroys his soul, and shuts him out of heaven, and throws him to hell; but he is never troubled for sin, he never mourns for sin, he never hates sin because it is contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the law of God, the glory of God, the design of God, or because of the evil which is in the nature of sin, or because of the defiling and polluting power of sin.

True hatred of sin is universal; it extends to all sins. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; and he who hates a man because he is holy, hates every holy man; and so he who hates sin because it is sin, hates every sin: Psa 119:128, "I hate every false way." True hatred is ever against the whole kind of a thing.

Every sincere Christian has in him a general hatred of every false way, and dares not allow himself in the least sin. "What I do I allow not," Rom 7:15 : Rom 12:9, "Abhor that which is evil." The Greek word for abhor is very significant. The simple verb imports extreme detestation. The word signifies to hate evil as hell itself. Though a hypocrite may hate some sins—"You abhor idols," Rom 2:22—yet that is out of some peculiar and particular indisposition to a particular sin; but this hatred of this or that particular sin, arises not from an inward nature or gracious principle, as it does in him who is a sincere Christian; and the reason is this, because that contrariety to sin which is in a real Christian arising from this inward gracious nature, is to the whole species of sin, and is irreconcilable to any sin whatever. As contrarieties of nature are to the whole kind, as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water; so this contrariety to sin arising from the inward man, is universal to all sin. Though a sincere Christian has not a universal victory over all sin, yet there is in him a universal contrariety to all sin. Victory argues strength, contrariety argues nature. Hence it is that a hypocrite may hate one sin and love another, because there is not a gracious nature in him which would be contrary to all sin. The inward nature of a Christian is to be judged by the universal contrariety of his inward man to all sin. Now this universal contrariety to all sin will beget a universal conflict with all sin. O sirs! remember this: Universal contrariety to sin can be found in no man but he who is sincere; and this universal contrariety to sin argues an inward nature of grace, and this is that which differences a real Christian from a hypocrite, who may oppose some sins out of other principles and reasons. A hypocrite may be angry with this sin and that, which brings the smarting rod, and wounds his conscience, and disturbs his peace, and embitters his mercies and strangles his comforts and which lays him open to wrath, and which brings him even to the gates of hell—but he can never hate sin as sin. A hypocrite hates some sins but likes others, he loathes some but loves others, he opposes some but practices others, like the angel of the church of Ephesus, that hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans—but loved lukewarmness. Many men detest theft—who love covetousness, abhor whoredom—who like impiety, etc. There is no hypocrite under heaven who can truly say, I hate every false way; but a sincere Christian hates all sinful ways—but his own first and most. An upright heart leaves no nest-egg for Satan to sit on—but the hypocrite always does. Mark, in true hatred for sin, there are five things observable: a. True hatred for sin, includes an extreme detestation. Every dislike is not hatred—but true hatred is an extreme loathing: "You will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" Isa 30:22; "On that day people will throw their silver and gold idols, which they made to worship, to the moles and the bats," Isa 2:20. Their detestation should be so great that they should cast their most costly idols of silver and gold to the most dark, nasty, dusty corners. To testify the sincerity of their conversion to God, they should hate and abhor, abandon and abolish their gold and silver idols which they valued above all others. b. True hatred for sin, includes earnest separation. He who hates his sin would gladly be separated from his sin; "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened," 2Co 5:4. A sincere Christian finds no burden to lie so heavy and weighty upon his spirit as sin, and therefore he groans to be delivered from it. In the law, he who hated his wife gave her a bill of divorce. He who truly hates sin, puts in many a request into the court of heaven, that he may be forever divorced from his sin. c. True hatred for sin, includes an irreconcilable alienation. He who hates sin has his heart forever alienated from sin; he who hates sin can never be at peace with sin. Two angry men may be made friends; but if two men hate each other, all friendship is everlastingly broken between them. A man may be angry with sin, and yet made friends with sin again; but if once he comes to hate his sin, then all friendship with

sin is everlastingly broken. When Christ and the soul come to be really one, then sin and the soul come to be everlastingly two, etc. d. True hatred for sin, includes a constant and perpetual conflict. "The flesh will be still warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet while a believer lives in this world, they must live together; and while sin and grace do cohabit together, they will still be opposing and conflicting one with another. That man who truly hates sin, will everlastingly conflict with sin. He will die fighting against his sins, as one of the dukes of Venice died fighting against his enemies with his weapons in his hand. Well, Christians, remember this, though to be kept from sin brings most peace and comfort to us, yet for us to oppose sin, and for God to pardon sin—that brings most glory to God. e. True hatred for sin, includes a deadly intention and destruction, for nothing satisfies hatred but death and ruin. Saul hated David, and sought his life; he hunted him up and down as a partridge in the mountains; he left no stone unturned, nor any means unattempted, whereby he might revenge himself upon David. Haman hated Mordecai, and nothing would satisfy him but to bring him to a shameful death, to see him hanged on the high gallows, which was designed, says Lyra, to put Mordecai to the greater shame, for he hanging high, everyone might see him and point to him. Now when there was but one night between Mordecai and a shameful death, divine providence opportunely intervened, and saved him from Haman's malice, and caused the mischief which he had plotted against Mordecai suddenly to fall upon his own head; for he who highly feasted with the king one day, was made a feast for the crows the next day.

Absalom hated Amnon and killed him. Julian the apostate hated the Christians with a deadly hatred. He put many thousands of them to death and threatened and vowed that at his return from fighting against the Persians, he would put all the Christians in his empire to the sword; but God prevented him by cutting him off in that expedition. A Christian who hates sin, can't be satisfied but in the death and destruction of it. In all his duties the language of his soul is, "Lord, let my sins be destroyed; whoever escapes, let not my sins escape the hand of your revenging justice!" And in all ordinances the language of his soul is, "O Lord! when shall my sins be subdued and mortified? when shall my cursed corruptions be fully destroyed? yes, when shall they all be drowned in the Red Sea of my Savior's blood?" etc. To wind up all, ask your heart what it is—that you abhor as the superlative evil? What is that—which you would have separated as far from you as heaven is from hell? What is that—against which your soul rises, and with which, as Israel with Amalek, you will have war forever? What is that—which you will be avenged of, and daily endeavor the mortifying and crucifying of? What is that—which you set your heart against in the comprehensive latitude thereof, whether great or little, open or secret? If it is sin, if it is your sins, if it is all your sins—then assuredly here is a true hatred of sin, and assuredly here is a most distinguishing character of a child of God, of a sound conversion, and of a saving change. It was not always so with you, nor is this true hatred of sin ever found in any hypocrite, or in any unconverted person upon the face of the earth.

Sin was once to you as Delilah to Samson; but now it is to you as Tamar to Amnon. Once it was a sweet morsel which you held fast and would not let it go; but now it is the menstruous cloth which you cast away, saying, "Away with you!" Now with Ephraim you cry out, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Hos 14:8. Oh, if it be indeed so with you, then you have cause forever to be much in blessing and in admiring of the Lord for his distinguishing grace and favor towards you. O

sirs! the world is full of baits, snares, and temptations; but while the hatred of sin burns in your breasts, you may throw the gauntlet to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Remember this forever, there are three things a hypocrite can never do:

1. He can never mourn for sin as sin.

2. He can never mourn for the sins of others as well as his own. Moses, Lot, David, Jeremiah, Paul, and those in Eze 9:4; Eze 9:6, mourned for others' sins as well as their own; but Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas, Demas; Simon Magus never did.

3. He can never hate sin as sin.

8. No hypocrite is habitually low or little in his own eyes. No hypocrite regularly has humble thoughts of himself, or a poor esteem of himself. No hypocrite loves to lessen himself to greatness Christ, to debase himself to exalt Christ. No hypocrite loves to be outshined; all hypocrites love to write an "I" upon what they do. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: "God, I thank you that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican; I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess," Luk 18:11-12. All hypocrites stand much upon their negative righteousness and their comparative goodness. There is no hypocrite in the world but sets down his penny for a pound, and always prizes himself above the market: 2Ki 10:16, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." Jehu's words were for the Lord—but his project was for the kingdom. Jehu made a great blaze—but he was but a comet. A hypocrite always loves the praise of men more than the praise of God. He loves more to be honored by men than to be honored by God: "How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?" John 5:44. Nothing below that power which raised Christ from the grave can make a hypocrite purely nothing in his own eyes. A hypocrite is always a great thing in his own eyes; and when he is nothing, a great nothing in others' eyes; he cannot bear it. A hypocrite cannot endure to be outshined in gifts, in graces, in experiences, in duties, in communion with God, in spiritual enjoyments. A hypocrite's heart is full of pride—when his deportment is most humble. He always thinks best of himself, and worst of others; he looks upon his own vices as graces, and he looks upon other men's graces as vices, or at least as no true current coin. A proud spirit will cast disgrace upon that excellency which he himself lacks. The emptiest barrels make the loudest sound, the worst metal the greatest noise, and the lightest ears of corn hold their heads highest. But sincere Christians are men of another spirit, of another temper, of another metal, of another mind; their hearts lie low when their gifts and graces and spiritual enjoyments are high. Abraham is but "dust and ashes" in his own eyes. The higher any man is in his communion with God, the lower that man will be in his own eyes. Dust and ashes are poor, base, vile, worthless things—and such things as these was Abraham in his own eyes. So Jacob was a plain man, an upright man, and lo! what a low esteem had he of himself: "I am not worthy of all the faithfulness and unfailing love you have shown to me, your servant," Gen 32:10. In the Hebrew it is, "I am little before your mercies." When Jacob had to do with Laban, he pleads his merits; but when he has to do with God, he pleads nothing but grace, setting a very low esteem upon himself. He looks upon himself as worthy of less than the least of mercies, and as worse than the worst of creatures. "The least of my mercies are greater than I deserve, and the greatest of my troubles are less than I deserve," says Jacob. The language of a plain-hearted Jacob is this: "O Lord, I might with Job have been stripped of all my comforts and enjoyments at once, and set

upon an ash-heap; I might with Lazarus have been begging my bread from door to door; or I might have been getting my bread with the peril of my life, because of the sword of the wilderness, or I might have been with Dives in hell a-crying out for a drop of water to cool my tongue!" A sincere Christian cannot tell how to speak good enough of God, nor bad enough of himself. Agur was one of the wisest and holiest men on earth, and see how greatly he debases himself, "Surely, I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man," Pro 30:1-2. Agur had seen Ithiel, God with me, and Ucal, God Almighty, and this made him so vile and base in his own eyes; this made him vilify, yes, revile himself to the utmost.

You know no man ever received a fairer or a more valuable certificate under the hand of God, or the broad seal of heaven, for his being a soul famous in uprightness and holiness, than Job, as you may see, Job 1:8, "And the Lord said unto Satan—Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and will have nothing to do with evil." Job was high in worth and humble in heart: Job 42:5-6, "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear—but now my eye sees you, I abhor myself in dust and ashes." This expression is the deepest act of abhorrency. Abhorrency strictly taken is hatred wound up to the height: "I abhor myself." The Hebrew word that is rendered abhor signifies to reject, to disdain, to condemn, to cast off. "Ah!" says Job, "I abhor myself, I reject myself, I disdain myself, I cast off myself, I have a very vile and base esteem of myself!"

David was a man of great integrity, a man after God's own heart, and yet he looks upon himself as a flea; and what is more contemptible than a flea? And as he looks upon himself as a flea, so he looks upon himself as a worm: "I am a worm, and no man," Psa 22:6. The Hebrew word that is here rendered a worm, signifies a very little worm—a worm that is so little that a man can hardly perceive it. A worm is the most despicable creature in the world, trampled under foot by man and beasts. He who was in God's eye a man after his own heart, is in his own eye but a despicable worm. A sincere Christian is a little nothing in his own eyes. So Paul, who had been caught up into the third heaven, and learned his divinity among the angels, as one speaks, and had such glorious revelations as could not be uttered, yet he accounts himself less than the least of all saints: Eph 3:8, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints." The Greek signifies lesser than the least, if lesser might be; not that anything can be less than the least. The original word being a double diminutive, his meaning is that he was as little as could be; therefore he put himself down so little as to be less than the least. Here you have the greatest apostle descending down to the lowest step of humility. Great Paul sees himself as least of saints, and greatest of sinners. So Peter, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Luk 5:8, or as the Greek runs, "a man, a sinner," a mixture and compound of dirt and sin; a mere bundle of vice and vanity, of folly and iniquity. So Luther, "I have no other name than sinner; sinner is my name, sinner is my surname; this is the name by which I shall be always known." "I have sinned, I do sin, I shall sin," says Luther, speaking vilely and basely of himself. "Lord, I am hell and you are heaven," said blessed Hooper. "I am a most hypocritical wretch, not worthy that the earth should bear me," said blessed Bradford. Thus you see by these several instances that sincere Christians do as it were, take a holy pleasure and delight to debase, humble, and vilify themselves. But this is a work which hypocrites are mere strangers to. There is not a hypocrite under heaven, who loves to debase himself, or who makes it his duty conscientiously to vilify and lessen himself that Christ may be set up above all. Humility is a grace rarely attained unto. "Many," says Augustine, "can more easily give all they

have to the poor, than themselves become poor in spirit."

9. No hypocrite will long hold out in the work and ways of the Lord, in the absence of outward encouragements, and in the face of outward discouragements. A hypocrite is a veiled apostate; and an apostate is a unveiled hypocrite. Job 27:8. "For what hope does the godless man have when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?" Job 27:10, "Will he delight in the Almighty? Will he call on God at all times?" Or, as the Hebrew runs, "Will he in every time call upon God?"

Sometimes when the rod is upon them, then they will pour out a prayer to God, "In their affliction they will seek me early," Isa 26:16; Hos 5:15. "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired after God," Psa 78:34. But this was not the habitual frame of their hearts: Psa 78:36, "Nevertheless, they flattered him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." Psa 78:37, "For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." When Pharaoh was upon the rack, he could roar a confession, and earnestly cry out for a prayer—but when the judgment was removed, Pharaoh was as proud, and hard, and blind as ever. When Adonijah was in danger of death, then he could hang on the horns of the altar. When Ahab was threatened with utter desolation, then he could fast and lie in sackcloth; and so did the Ninevites. But all this was but like Ephraim and Judah's goodness, which as a morning cloud and as the early dew—shortly passes away. Will the hypocrite always, or in every time, call upon God? Will the hypocrite call upon God as often as providence calls him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as judgments call him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as conscience calls him to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as it is his duty to call upon God? Will he call upon God as often as others call upon him to call upon God? Oh no! The hypocrite will not always call upon God; he will not persevere in prayer; he will not hold on nor hold out in prayer; he is short-spirited; he cannot always pray and not faint. He shrinks back as sluggards do in work, or cowards in war. A hypocrite, for lack of an inward principle of grace, can neither delight in God, nor always call upon God. If God comes not at his call, if he opens not as soon as he knocks—he is out of patience, and ready to say with that proud profane prince, "Why should I wait for him any longer?" 2Ki 6:33. If a hypocrite obtains the mercy he desires, then he will throw off prayer, as he said, "Take away the net, the fish is caught." If he obtains not the mercy, then he will grow weary of his duty. "You have been weary of me, O Israel," Isa 43:22.

Prayer is too hard and too high a work for an unsound heart to hold on in. Prayer is heart-work, and that proves heavy work to him. The soul of prayer lies in the pouring out of the soul before God, and this is a work that a hypocrite has no skill in. It was a profane and blasphemous speech of that atheistical wretch, who told God he was no common beggar, he never troubled him before with prayer, and if he would but hear him that one time, he would never trouble God again. Even such a spirit and such principle lie lurking in every hypocrite's bosom. Doubtless he hit it on the head, who said, "How can you expect that God should hear you, when you will not hear yourself? or that God should give you a return in prayer, when you are not mindful what you ask in prayer?" A sincere Christian will go on in prayer, whether he succeeds or not. If he prevails, he will love prayer the better all his days; if he does not for the present prevail, he will be so much the more importunate with God in prayer. It is as natural for a bird to live without air, and for a fish to live without water, and for a man to live without food—as it is for a sincere Christian to live without prayer. "Oh," says Chrysostom, "It is more bitter than death to be robbed of prayer." And hereupon, as he observes, Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to lose or give

over his private prayers.

Prayer is the key of heaven, and a sincere Christian loves much to be handling that key, though he should die for it. A hypocrite will never hold out to the end. Let but outward encouragements fail him, and his heart will quickly fail him in a way of duty. Hypocrites are like blazing comets, which, as long as they are fed with vapors, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapors dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear. Let but the eye, the ear, the applause of men, fail the hypocrite, and he will be ready to give up all. If a hypocrite cannot make some gain of his godliness, some profit of his profession, some advantage of his religion—he will be ready with Demas to turn his back upon all religious duties and services. As a lame horse will go well enough for a short time—but eventually will come to a halt; even so a hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in his way, yet in the end he will halt downright, and bid farewell, if not defiance, to all religious duties and services. Profit and applause are usually the baits that hypocrites bite at, and if they miss these baits—then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all! John 6:66, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Many hypocrites who had given up their names to Christ, and who for a time had been followers of Christ, at last deserted him and turned their backs forever upon him.

Mat 13:5-6 "Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil;" (not much care to receive, not much understanding to apprehend, not much faith to believe, not much will to obey, or not much love to retain it), "and they sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root." This second ground goes beyond the former: for it receives the seed immediately; with joy it brings up the seed sown. It sprung up to mixed degrees: to external obedience and reformation in many things; to an outward profession; to a kind of faith; but when the sun of persecution beat hot upon them, they withered and fell away; not all at once; but little by little, as a leaf loses its flourish and greenness, and withers by degrees. In the Palatinate, when the sun of persecution began to scorch them, scarcely one professor of twenty persevered in the truth—but most fell to popery as fast as leaves in autumn. The crystal looks like diamond until it comes to the hammering; so a hypocrite looks like a Christian, and in many things acts like a Christian, until he comes to be hammered by sufferings, by persecutions, and then he discovers himself in his true colors; and with Hymenaeus and Alexander, he makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. In suffering times, hypocrites labor mightily to put out that light which shines in their bosoms, and when they have quenched that light, then farewell profession, farewell a good conscience, farewell all! The wolf, though he often sneaks in, and closely disguises his nature, yet cannot always do so; for at one time or other he will show himself to be a wolf; so though a hypocrite may disguise himself for a time, yet he will one time or other discover himself to be a hypocrite. A sincere Christian will hold on and hold out in the ways of the Lord, in the absence of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all multiplied discouragements. When the eye of men, the favor of men, the bounty of men, and all other encouragement from men fails, yet then a sincere Christian will hold up, and hold on in his work and way. "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger," Job 17:9. The righteous man shall go on in a way of righteousness to the end; no multiplied calamities or miseries shall ever work him to decline the way of righteousness. From this way a sincere Christian will never be withdrawn, either by any hopes or advantages on the one hand, or by any fears or dangers on the other. Sincere Christians have not taken up

religion on such slight grounds—as either to be flattered or frightened out of it.

Sincere Christians reckon upon afflictions, temptations, crosses, losses, reproaches on the one hand; and they reckon upon a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory on the other hand; and hereupon they set up their staff, fully resolving never to depart from the good old way wherein they have found rest to their souls. Sincere Christians take Christ and his ways for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in prosperity and adversity; they resolve to stand or fall, to suffer and reign, to live and die with him. When all outward encouragements from God shall fail, yet a sincere Christian will keep close to his God, and close to his duty. "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation." Hab 3:17-18. When all necessary and delightful mercies fail, yet he will not fail in his duty. Though God withholds his blessings, yet the sincere Christian will not withhold his service; in the absence of a livelihood, he will be lively in his duty; when he has nothing to subsist on, yet then he will live upon his God, and joy in his God, and keep close to his God. Though war and want come, yet he will not be wanting in his duty. Mark, there are three things in a sincere Christian which will strongly incline him to keep close to the Lord, and close to his ways in the lack of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements. The first is a forcible principle—divine love; the second is a mighty aid—the Spirit of God; and the third is a high aim—the glory of God. As Ruth kept close to her mother-in-law in the absence of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements, saying, "Where you go I will go; and where you lodge I will lodge, and nothing but death shall part you and me," so says a sincere Christian, "I will take my lot with Christ wherever it falls; I will keep close to the Lord, and close to my duty, in the absence of all outward encouragements, and in the face of all outward discouragements." Though outward encouragements are sometimes as a favorable wind, or as oil, or as chariot wheels—means to move a Christian to go on more sweetly, easily, and comfortably in the ways of God; yet when this wind shall fail, and these chariot wheels shall be knocked off—a sincere Christian will keep close to the Lord and his ways. "All this has come upon us; yet have we not forgotten you, neither have we dealt falsely in your covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from your ways," Psa 44:17-18. That is a great word of the prophet Micah: "All the nations may walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Mic 4:5. This absolute and decided resolution to be really the Lord's, and forever the Lord's, is of the essence of true conversion. It is not the world's flatteries which can bribe off a sincere Christian from the ways of God; nor it is the world's frowns which can beat off a sincere Christian from the ways of God! But a hypocrite will never, a hypocrite can never persevere to the end. His ground tackle will never hold when the storm beats strong upon him. A hypocrite may start well—but soon tires and gives in.

10. No hypocrite ever makes it his business, his work—to bring his heart into religious duties and services. He never makes conscience of bringing his heart into his work. A hypocrite is heartless in all he does. "Whenever God slew them, they would seek him; they eagerly turned to him again. But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant." Psa 78:34; Psa 78:36-37. All lip-labor is but lost labor. When men's hearts are not in their devotion, their devotion is mere deception. These

hypocrites sought God, and inquired early after God—but it was still with old hearts, which are no hearts in the account of God. They made lip work of it, and head work of it—but their hearts not being in their work—all was lost: their seeking lost, their inquiring lost, their God lost, their souls lost, and eternity lost!

Hos 7:14, "And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds." When men's hearts are not in their prayers, all their praying is but as a hideous howling in the account of God. The cry of the heart is the only cry which God likes, loves, and looks for. He accepts of no cry, he delights in no cry, he rewards no cry—but the cry of the heart. Hypocrites are heartless in their cries, and therefore they cry and howl, and howl and cry—and all to no purpose with God. They cry and murmur, and they howl and repine; they cry and blaspheme, and they howl and rebel; and therefore they meet with nothing from heaven but frowns, and blows, and disappointments: Isa 29:13, "Therefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me—but have removed their heart far from me."

Eze 33:31, "And they come unto you as the people come, and they sit before you as my people, and they hear your words—but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love—but their heart goes after their covetousness." Though this people flocked to the prophet in troops, as men and women do to places of pleasure; and though they behaved before the prophet as if they were saints, as if they were the people of God, as if they were sincerely affected with what they heard, as if they were resolved to live out what the prophet should speak out to them—yet their hearts ran after their covetousness! Though these hypocrites professed much love and kindness to the prophet, and paid him homage with smooth words, and seemed to be much affected, delighted, ravished, and pleased with his person, voice, and doctrine—yet they made no conscience of bringing their hearts into their duties. A hypocrite may look at some outward, easy, ordinary duties of religion—but he never makes conscience of bringing his heart into any duties of religion. When did you ever see a hypocrite searching his heart, or sitting in judgment upon the corruptions of his soul, or lamenting and mourning over the vileness and wickedness of his spirit? It is only the sincere Christian who is affected, afflicted, and wounded with the corruptions of his heart! When one told blessed Bradford that he did all out of hypocrisy, because he would have the people applaud him, he answered, "It is true, the seeds of hypocrisy and vainglory are in you and me too, and will be in us long as we live in this world; but I thank God that I mourn under and strive against it." How seriously and deeply did good Hezekiah humble himself for the pride of his heart! "Out of the eater came meat," out of his pride he got humility, 2Ch 32:25.

O sirs! a sincere Christian makes it his great business to get his heart into all his religious duties and services, to get his heart into every way and work of God. Rom 1:9, "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son." Paul's very spirit, his very soul, was in his service. Php 3:3, "For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Rom 7:22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Rom 7:25, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God." A sincere Christian is always best when his heart is in his work. And when he cannot get his heart into his duties, Oh! how does he sigh, and groan, and complain, and mourn at the foot of God—"Lord, my tongue has been at work, and my head has been at work, and my parts have been at work, and my eyes and hands have been at work—but where has my heart been this day? Oh! it is and must be a sore and sad lamentation, that I have had so little of my heart in that service that I have offered to you!" This is

the daily language of an upright heart. But all the work of a hypocrite is to get his golden parts into his duties, and his silver tongue into his duties, and his nimble head into his duties; but he never makes conscience of getting his heart into his duties. Hypocrites are always heartless in all the sacrifices they offer to God, and this will one day prove appalling and damnatory to them.

11. A hypocrite never performs religious duties from spiritual principles, nor in a spiritual manner. A hypocrite is never inclined, moved, and carried to God, to Christ, to holy duties—by the power of a new and inward principle of grace working a suitableness between his heart and the things of God. A hypocrite rests satisfied in the mere external acts of religion, though he never feels anything of the power of religion in his own soul. A hypocrite looks to his words in prayer, and to his voice in prayer, and to his gestures in prayer—but he never looks to the frame of his heart in prayer. A hypocrite's heart is never touched with the words his tongue utters; a hypocrite's soul is never divinely affected, delighted, or graciously warmed with any duty he performs. A hypocrite's spiritual performances never flow from spiritual principles, nor from a sanctified heart. Though his works may be new, yet his heart remains old; his new practices always spring from old principles; and this will prove the hypocrite's bane, as you may see in Isa 1:15, "When you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood." These were unsanctified ones; their practices were new—but their hearts were old still. The same you may see in the scribes and pharisees, who fasted, prayed and gave alms—but their hearts were not changed, renewed, sanctified, nor principled from above; and this proved their eternal bane. Nicodemus was a man of great note, name, and fame among the pharisees, and he fasted, and prayed, and gave alms, and paid tithes, etc., and yet was a total stranger to the new birth; regeneration was a paradox to him. "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" John 3:4. This great doctor was so great a dunce, that he understood no more of the doctrine of regeneration, than a mere child does the darkest precepts of astronomy. As water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it came, so the natural man can rise no higher than nature. A hypocrite may know much, and pray much, and hear much, and fast much, and give much, and obey much—and all to no purpose, because he never manages anything he does in a right manner; he never carries on his work from inward principles of faith, fervency, life, love, delight, etc. Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Answer: No! He cannot delight himself in the Almighty. To delight in God is one of the highest acts of grace; and how can a hypocrite put forth one of the highest acts of grace—who has no grace? A hypocrite may know much of God, and talk much of God, and make a great profession of God, and be verbally thankful to God; but he can never love God, nor trust in God, nor delight in God, nor take up his rest in God, etc. A hypocrite knows not God; and how then can he delight in that God whom he does not know? A hypocrite has no inward, saving, transforming, experimental, affectionate, practical knowledge of God; and therefore he can never take any pleasure or delight in God.

There is no suitableness between a hypocrite and God; and how then can a hypocrite delight himself in God? There is the greatest contrariety imaginable between God and a hypocrite. God is light, and the hypocrite is darkness; God is holiness, and he filthiness; God is righteousness and he unrighteousness; God is fullness, and he emptiness. Now what delight can there be where there is such an utter contrariety?

Every hypocrite's heart is full of enmity against God; and how then can he delight himself in God? "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can

be," Rom 8:7. The best part of a hypocrite is not only averse to God—but utterly hostile to God and all goodness. The eagle has a continual enmity with the serpent. Just so, a hypocrite's heart is still full of enmity against the Lord; and therefore he can never delight himself in the Lord. The stream, cream, and strength of a hypocrite's delight—runs out to himself, and to this lust or that, or this relation or that, to this creature-comfort or that, to this worldly enjoyment or that; or else to arts, parts, gifts, privileges, etc. And therefore, how can he delight himself in the Almighty? A hypocrite always terminates his delight in something short of God, Christ, and heaven. As the apricot tree, though it leans against the wall, yet is fast rooted in the earth—so though a hypocrite may lean towards God, and towards Christ, and towards heaven; yet his delight is still rooted fast in one creature-comfort or another. Neither God nor Christ is ever the complete object of a hypocrite's delight. A hypocrite is never principled to delight himself in a holy God, neither can he cordially, divinely, habitually delight himself in holy duties. A hypocrite may reform many evil things, and he may do many good duties, and yet all this while it is only in his practices—for his heart and principles are not changed and altered.

Though a hypocrite has nothing in himself which is essential to a Christian; yet he may resemble a Christian in all those things which are not essential to a Christian. A hypocrite, in all the externals of religion, may be the complete picture of a Christian; but if you look to his principles, and the manner of his managing of holy duties, there you will find him lame and defective, and as much unlike a sincere Christian as ever Michal's idol was unlike to the living David; and this will prove the great flaw, the great breakneck of hypocrites at last.

O sirs! Consider that outward motives and natural principles have carried many heathens to do many great and glorious things in the world. Did not Sisera do as great things as Gideon? The difference only lies here—that the great things which Gideon did, he did from more spiritual principles and lofty considerations, than any principles which Sisera acted by. And did not Diogenes trample under his feet the great and glorious things of this world, as well as Moses? The difference only lies in this—that Moses trampled under his feet the mirthful and gallant things of this world, from inward gracious principles, namely, faith, love, etc., whereas Diogenes only trampled upon them from poor, selfish principles, and from mere outward, carnal, external considerations. The favor of men, the eye of men, the commendations of men, the applause of men, and a great name among men—are golden apples, great things among mere moralists. The application is easy. A sincere Christian looks to the manner as well as to the matter of his duties. He acts and performs duties, not only from strength of nature and acquired abilities—but from strength of grace and infused principles; he acts from God and for God; he acts from a new heart; he acts from the law written in his heart; he acts from the love of God shed abroad in his heart; he acts from the divine nature communicated to him; he acts from the Spirit's indwelling in his heart; he acts from the fear of God established in his heart. These are the springs and principles of a sincere Christian's spiritual life and actions; and where they act and bear rule, it is no wonder if there are such motions and performances as the world may admire, but not imitate.

Paul's life, after his conversion, was a kind of constant miracle. So much he did, and so much he suffered, and so much he denied himself—that if he lived in these days, his life would be a miracle! But yet if we consider the new infused principles by which he acted, the great wonder will be, not that he did so much—but that he did no more. "For," says he, "Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," Gal

2:20.

It was a great saying of blessed Bradford, that he could not leave a duty until he had found communion with Christ in the duty, until he had brought his heart into a duty-frame. He could not leave confession until he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin; nor petition until he had found his heart pleased with the beauties of the things desired; nor could he leave thanksgiving until he had found his spirit enlarged and his soul quickened in the return of praises. And it was a great saying of another, that he could never be quiet until he found God in every duty, and enjoyed communion with God in every prayer. "O Lord," said he, "I never come to you but by you; I never go from you without you." A sincere Christian is enamored with Christ above all. He cannot be satisfied nor contented with duties or ordinances, without enjoying Christ in them, who is the life, soul, and substance of them. But when hypocrites do duties—all they do is from common principles, from natural principles, and from an unsanctified heart—and that mars all. Hypocrites make a great profession and are much in the outward actions of religion; they make a very fair show, they hear, they read, they pray, they fast, they sing psalms, and they give alms; but these duties being not performed from a principle of divine love, nor from a principle of spiritual life, nor from a sanctified frame of heart—are all lost, and the authors of them are undone forever and ever. "If anyone does not love the Lord, that person is cursed!" 1Co 16:22.

12. No hypocrite in the world loves the WORD, or delights in the word, or prizes the word—as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a beautiful word, a pure word, a clean word. Psalms 119:140, "Your word is very pure—therefore your servant loves it." Only those men whose hearts are after God's own heart—can love the word and delight in the word and embrace the word—for its holiness, purity, and spirituality. Witness Paul: Romans 7:12, "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Well, and what then? "Why," says he, Romans 7:22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." But is this all? "No!" says he, Romans 7:25, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God." Holy Paul delights in the law as holy, and serves the law as holy, just, and good. A sincere heart is the only heart which is interested in the word for its spirituality, purity, and heavenly beauty. None can joy in the word as it is a holy word, nor can any taste the sweetness in the word as it is a pure word—but sincere Christians: Psalms 19:8-10, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean" (that is, the doctrine of the word which teaches the true fear of God), "enduring forever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb;" or, as the Hebrew has it, "sweeter than the droppings of honeycombs." The word of God, as it is a pure word, a spiritual word, a clean word, a holy word; so it rejoices a sincere heart, and so it is sweeter than the very droppings of honeycombs. The word, as it is a pure word, a holy word—is more sweet to a sincere Christian than those drops which drop immediately and naturally without any force or manipulation—which is counted the purest and sweetest honey. There is no profit, nor pleasure, nor joy comparable to that which the purity of the word yields to a sincere heart: Psalms 119:48, "I will lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love, and will meditate on Your statutes." Sometimes the lifting up of hands betokens admiration. When men are astonished and ravished, they lift up their hands. "I will lift up my hands to your commandments;" that is, I will admire the goodness, spiritualness, holiness, righteousness, purity, and excellency of your commandments.

Luther took such sweet pleasure and excellent delight in Scripture, that he would not take all the world, for one leaf of it. King Edward the Sixth was trying to lay hold on something which was just above his reach; one who stood by, seeing a Bible lying on the table, offered to lay it under the king's feet to heighten him; but the good young king disliked the notion, and instead of treading it under his feet, he laid it to his heart, to express the joy and delight that he took in the holy word.

Never did any hypocrites, since there was one in the world, ever love God as a holy God, or love his people as a holy people, or love his ways as holy ways, or love his word as a holy word. There is no hypocrite in the world who can truly say with David, "Your word is very pure—therefore your servant loves it." Saul could never say so; nor could Ahab ever say so; nor could Simon Magus ever say so; nor could the scribes and pharisees ever say so; nor could the stony ground hearers ever say so; nor could Isaiah's hypocrites ever say so. It is true, some of these did rejoice in the word, and delight in the word—but not as it was a holy word a pure word; for the whole word of God, every part of God's word is pure and holy.

Hypocrites are sometimes affected and delighted with the word, as it is dressed up with fine learned notions, which are but mysterious nothings; they are pleased with the word, as it is clothed with arts, parts, and elegance of fine language; they are pleased with the word, as it is appareled with silken expressions, or with some smooth elocution: Eze 33:32, "You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument." These hypocrites looked upon the solemnity and majesty of the word but as a dry jest. The prophet being eloquent, and having a pleasing delivery, they were much pleased with it, and it was as sweet and delightful to them as sweet music; but they were not at all pleased or delighted with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, as is evident in Eze 33:31, "So they come pretending to be sincere and sit before you listening. But they have no intention of doing what I tell them. They express love with their mouths, but their hearts seek only after money."

It was a very sharp reproof of Chrysostom to his hearers, "This is that which is likely to undo your souls; you hear your ministers as so many minstrels—to please the ear, not to pierce the conscience." Augustine confesses that the delight which he took before his conversion in Ambrose's sermons was more for the eloquence of the words than the substance of the matter.

Hypocrites are pleased more with the wit, eloquence of speech, action, sharpness of imagination, smoothness of style, neatness of expression, and rareness of learned notion—than they are with the spirituality, purity, and holiness of the word, which they either hear or read. These hypocrites are like those children who are more pleased with the fine flowers which are strewn about the dish, than they are with the meat which is on the dish; and who are more pleased with the pretty weeds which grow in the field, than they are with the good corn which grows there. But as the prudent farmer is pleased more with a few handfuls of good corn than he is with all the pretty weeds which are in the field, so a sincere Christian is more pleased with a few sound truths in a sermon—than he is pleased with all the lofty lines, and high strains, and flourishes of wit; or than he is pleased with some new-coined phrases, or some quaint expressions, or some seraphical notions—with which a sermon may be decked or dressed up.

Some are pleased with the word, because the profession of it brings in customers into their shops, and keeps up their credit in the world. Others are pleased with the word as it seems to tickle their ears and please their fancies. Some are pleased with sermons because of the elegance of the

style, delicacy of the words, smoothness of the language, and gracefulness of the delivery. And these deal with sermons as many do with their bouquets, which are made up of many sweet flowers, who, after they have enjoyed them for a while, cast them into a corner, and never mind them any more. So these, after they have commended a sermon, after they have highly applauded a sermon—they say, "It is sweet, it is sweet!" and shortly they throw it aside, as a withered flower, and of no further use. But a sincere heart savors the word, and relishes the word and is affected and pleased with the word as it is a holy word, a spiritual word, a pure word—which the most refined hypocrite under heaven never was affected or pleased with, nor can be, while hypocrisy keeps the throne in his soul.

13. A hypocrite cannot endure to be tried and searched and laid open to examination. A hypocrite hates the light, and would rather go to hell in the dark—than come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary. A soul-searching ministry is to a hypocrite, a tormenting ministry. That is no preacher for him—who will never let his conscience alone. He knows that he looks good on the outside—but is rotten within. He knows he is like a whited sepulcher, glorious on the outside—but dead bones within; and therefore his heart rises and swells against such a man and such a ministry—which is all for the anatomizing and laying him open—to himself and to the world. But as pure gold fears neither fire nor furnace, neither test nor touchstone, neither one balance nor another—so a sincere heart dares venture itself upon trial, yes, upon the very trial of God himself: Psa 139:23, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts." A sincere Christian begs his friends to search him, and he prays for soul-searching ministers to search him; but above all, he begs hard for God to search him: "Search me, O God." The Hebrew word is in the imperative mood; he commands God to search him. The original word signifies a strict, thorough, diligent search. A sincere Christian is very willing and desirous that God should thoroughly search him, that God should search into every corner and cranny of his heart: Psa 26:2, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my thoughts and my heart." Every word here has its weight: "Examine me, O Lord." The Hebrew word signifies to melt, and so to make the most intrinsic and exact discovery. O Lord, let my heart and thoughts be melted, that it may be known what metal they are made of, whether gold or tin. "Prove me." The Hebrew word signifies to view, as when a man gets upon some high tower or hill to see all from thence. "Mount aloft, O Lord, take the high tower, take the hill, that you may see what is in me." "Try me, and know my thoughts." The Hebrew word properly signifies to take away. "Lord," says the psalmist, "if, upon searching and examining of me, you shall find any sin, any creature, any comfort, any enjoyment which lies in your room—take it away that you may be all in all to me!" A sincere Christian knows that God never brings a pair of scales to weigh his graces—but only a touchstone to try the reality of his graces. He knows if his gold, his grace, is real, though it be ever so little, it will pass for current with God, and therefore he is free to venture upon the closest search by God. As bankrupts care not for casting up their accounts, because they know all is bad, very bad, yes, stark bankruptcy with them; just so hypocrites—they care not to come to the trial, to the test, because they know all is bad, yes, worse than bad with them. They have no desire to cast up their spiritual estates, because at the bottom of the account they must be forced to read the summary—"Undone, undone!" And therefore, as old deformed women cannot endure to look into the looking-glass, lest they should see wrinkles and deformity; so hypocrites cannot endure to look into the looking-glass of the gospel, lest their deformities, impieties, and wickednesses should be discovered and detected!

I have read of the elephant, how when he is forced to go into the water—he purposely muddies it, lest by the clearness of the stream he should discern his own deformity; so hypocrites are very unwilling to look into their own hearts, or into the clear streams of the Scriptures, lest their soul's deformity and ugliness should appear—to their own terror and bewilderment.

O sirs! as it is a hopeful evidence that the client's cause is good when he is ready and willing to enter upon a trial; and as it is a hopeful sign that a man's gold is true gold, when he is willing to bring it to the touchstone; and that a man is thriving when he is willing to cast up his account books; so it is a hopeful evidence that a man is sincere with God when he is ready and willing to venture upon the trial of God, when he is willing to cast up his books, his accounts—that he may see what he is worth for the eternal world.

Augustine speaks of a wise person, who said that he prized that little time which he constantly set apart every day for the examination of his conscience, far more than all the other part of the day. Of all the duties of religion, a hypocrite dreads most, that duty of self-examination, and that of venturing himself upon the search and trial of God.

Though a hypocrite may deceive all the world, yet the great God will not be deceived; for his eyes are sharp and piercing into all things, persons, and places. As the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened on you whatever way you turn—so are the eyes of the Lord fastened on you, O hypocrite, whatever way you turn! It was a worthy saying of one, "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide yourself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!" The eye of God many times is very terrible to a hypocrite, which makes him very shy of venturing upon the trial of God. No hypocrite since the world stood, did ever love or delight to be searched and tried by God. And thus I have showed you the several rounds or steps in Jacob's ladder, which no hypocrite under heaven can, while he remains a hypocrite, climb up to.

S. True and False Assurance

True and False Assurance

Thomas Brooks Shewing the difference between a true and a counterfeit assurance, between sound assurance and presumption.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? [It is] God that justifieth. Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” (Rom 8:32-34)

(1.) The first difference. A sound and well-grounded assurance is attended with a deep admiration of God's transcendent love and favour to the soul in the Lord Jesus. The assured soul is often a-breathing it out thus: Ah, Lord! who am I, what am I, that thou shouldst give into my bosom, the white stone of absolution, when the world hath given into their bosoms only the black stone of condemnation? Lord! what mercy is this, that thou shouldst give me assurance, give me water out of the rock, and feed me with manna from heaven, when many of thy dearest ones spend their days in sighing, mourning and complaining for want of assurance. Lord! what manner of love is this, that thou shouldst set me upon thy knee, embrace me in thy arms, lodge me in thy bosom, and kiss me with the sweet kisses of thy blessed mouth, with those kisses that are ‘better than wine,’ Song of Solomon 1:2, yea, better than life, when many ate even weary of their lives because they want what I enjoy? Psa 63:3. Ah, Lord! by what name shall I call this mercy, this assurance that thou hast given me? It being a mercy that fits me to do duties, to bear crosses and to improve mercies; that fits me to speak sweetly, to judge righteously, to give liberally, to act seriously, to suffer cheerfully, and to walk humbly. I cannot, says the assured soul, but sing it out with Moses, ‘Who is like unto thee; O Lord, amongst the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?’ Exo 15:2. And with the apostle, ‘Oh, the height, the depths, the length and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,’ Eph 3:18-19. If the queen of Sheba, says the assured soul, was so swallowed up in a deep admiration of Solomon's wisdom, greatness, goodness, excellency and glory, that she could not but admiringly breathe it thus out, ‘Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom,’ 1Ki 10:8, Oh then, how should that blessed assurance that I have of the love of God, of my interest in God, of my union and communion with God, of my blessedness here and my happiness hereafter, work me to a deep and serious, to a real and perpetual, admiration of God.

[2.] The second difference. Secondly, A well-grounded assurance doth always beget in the soul an earnest and an impatient longing after a further, a clearer, and fuller enjoyment of God and Christ. Psa 63:1, ‘O God, thou art my God’ — here is assurance; well, what follows? — ‘early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.’ The assured soul cries out, ‘I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,’ Php 1:23; and, ‘Make haste, my beloved,’ Song of Solomon 8:14; and, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,’ Rev

22:17. O Lord Jesus, says the assured soul, thou art my light, thou art my life, thou art my love, thou art my joy, thou art my crown, thou art my heaven, thou art my all. I cannot but long to see that beautiful face that was spit upon for my sins, and that glorious head that was crowned with thorns for my transgressions. I long to take some turns with thee in paradise, to see the glory of thy Jerusalem above, to drink of those rivers of pleasures that be at thy right hand, to taste of all the delicacies of thy kingdom, and to be acquainted with those secrets and mysteries that have been hid from all ages, and to be swallowed up in the full enjoyment of thy blessed self; Eph 3:5, Col 1:26.

[3.] The third difference. Thirdly, A well-grounded assurance is usually strongly assaulted by Satan on all sides. Satan is such a grand enemy to joy and peace, to the salvation and consolation, of the saints, that he cannot but make use of all his devices and stratagems to amaze and amuse, to disturb and disquiet, the peace and rest of their souls. No sooner had Jesus Christ heard that lovely voice from heaven, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat 3:17 and Mat 4:1-2, &c., but he is desperately assaulted by Satan in the wilderness. No sooner was Paul dropped out of heaven, after he had seen such visions of glory that was unutterable, but he was presently assaulted and buffeted by Satan, 2Co 2:12. Stand up, stand up, assured Christians, and tell me whether you have not found the blast of the terrible one to be as a storm against the wall, Isa. xxv. Since the Lord said unto you, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you, have not you found Satan to play the part both of the lion and the wolf, of the serpent and the fox? And all to weaken your assurance, and to work you to question the truths of your assurance, and to cast water upon your assurance, and to take off the freshness and sweetness, the beauty and glory, of your assurance; I know you have. His malice, envy, and enmity is such against God's honour and glory, and your comfort and felicity, that he cannot but be very studious and industrious to make use of all traps, snares, methods, and ways whereby he may shake the pillars of your faith, and weaken and overthrow your assurance. Pirates, you know, do most fiercely assault those ships and vessels that are most richly laden; so doth Satan those precious souls that have attained to the riches of full assurance.

Assurance makes a paradise in believers' souls, and this makes Satan to roar and rage. Assurance fits a man to do God the greatest service and Satan the greatest disservice, and this makes him mad against the soul. Assurance makes a saint to be too hard for Satan at all weapons, yea, to lead that 'son of the morning' captive, to spoil him of all his hurting power, to bind him in chains, and to triumph over him; and this makes his hell a great deal hotter, Rom 8:32 - Malachi And therefore never wonder at Satan's assaulting your assurance, but expect it and look for it. The jailor is quiet when his prisoner is in bolts, but if he be escaped then he pursues him with hue and cry. So long as the soul is in bolts and bondage under Satan, Satan is quiet and is not so apt to molest and vex it; but when once a soul is made free, and assured of his freedom by Christ, John viii. 36, then says Satan, as once Pharaoh did, 'I will arise, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them,' Exodus xv. 9. The experience of all assured saints doth abundantly confirm this. Israel going into Egypt had no enemies, no opposition, but travelling into Canaan they were never free.

[4.] The fourth difference. Fourthly, A well grounded-assurance makes a man as bold as a lion; it makes him valiant and gallant for Christ and his cause, in the face of all dangers and deaths.⁶ After the Holy Ghost was fallen upon the apostles, and had assured them of their internal and

eternal happiness, oh! how bold, how undaunted, how resolute were they in the face of all oppositions, afflictions, and persecutions! as you may see from the second of the Acts of the Apostles to the end of the Acts. So assurance had this operation upon David's heart : Psa 23:4, Psa 23:6 compared, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' Well, David, but how doth this assurance of yours operate? Why, saith he 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' So Moses having an assurance of the 'recompence of reward,' he fears not the wrath of the king, 'for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible,' Heb 11:26-27. So in Heb 10:34, 'And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' Oh, that knowledge, that assurance that they had in their own hearts of enjoying in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, made them bear cheerfully and gallantly the spoiling of their worldly goods. Though the archers — the world, the flesh, and the devil — do shoot sore at a soul under assurance, yet his bow will still abide in strength. Assurance will make a man to break a bow of steel, to trample down strength, and to triumph over all oppositions and afflictions.

Colonus the Dutch martyr called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and asked him whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's. Assurance will make a man do this, and much more for Christ and his cause.

[5.] The fifth difference. Fifthly, A well-grounded assurance of a man's own eternal happiness and blessedness will make him very studious and laborious to make others happy: Psa 66:16, 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.' I will acquaint you with the soul blessings, with the soul favours, that God hath crowned me with. I was darkness, but he hath made me light; I was unrighteousness, but he hath made me righteous; I was deformed, but he hath made me complete; I was full of sores, and spots, and blemishes, but he hath washed me, and made me all fair, without spot or wrinkle. I have found the want of assurance, I now see the worth of assurance; I have long sought assurance, and now I find the sweetness of assurance. Ah ! it is such a pearl of price, it is such a beam of God, it is such a spark of glory, that makes my soul a rich amends for all its waiting, weeping, and wrestling.

So, when it pleased God to call Paul by his grace, and to reveal Christ in him and to him, ah! how doth he labour, as for life, to bring others to an acquaintance with Christ, and to an acceptance of Christ, and to an assurance of everlasting happiness and blessedness by Christ! After Paul had been in paradise, he makes it his all to bring others to paradise, 2Co 12:1-21. So the spouse in the Canticles, having assurance of her interest in Christ, how doth she labour, by all holy and heavenly rhetoric and logic, by all the strains of love and sweetness, to draw the daughters of Jerusalem to a sight of Christ Song of Solomon 5:10-16, and Song of Solomon 6:1, &c. When a beam of divine light and love had shined upon Andrew, he labours to draw his brother Simon to the fountain of all light and love, John 1:1-51 - Luke And when Philip had but a cast of Christ's countenance, his pulse beats, and his heart calls upon Nathanael to come and share with him in that lovingkindness that was better than life, John 1:43 - 2 Corinthians The constant cry of souls under the power of assurance is, 'Come, taste and see how good the Lord is,' Psa 34:8. Ah, sinners, sinners! 'his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace,' Pro 3:17; Ins 'commands are not grievous,' 1Jn 5:3, but joyous; 'his yoke is easy, and his burden is light,' Mat 11:30; not only for keeping, but also 'in keeping of his commands there is great reward,' Psa 19:11. Assurance will strongly put men upon winning of others by counsel, by example, by prayer, and by

communicating their spiritual experiences to them. Assurance will furnish a man with will, skill, and experience to confute all those false reports that vain men frequently cast upon the Lord and his ways. It will make a man proclaim to the world 'that one day in the Lord's courts is better than a thousand years elsewhere,' Psa 84:10; that there are more glorious joys, more pure comforts, more abiding peace, more royal contents, more celestial delights, in one day's walking with God, in one hour's communion with God, &c., than is to be found in all things below God. And by these and such like ways, souls under the power of a well-grounded assurance do endeavour to make others happy with themselves. A soul under assurance is unwilling to go to heaven without company. He is often a-crying out, Father, bless this soul too, and crown that soul too let us to heaven together, let us be made happy together.

[6.] The sixth difference. Sixthly, A well-grounded assurance of God's love, and of a man's everlasting happiness and blessedness, will exceedingly arm and strengthen him against all wickedness and baseness, Eze 16:60 - 2 John No man loathes sin, and himself for sin, as such a man; no man wars and watches against sin more than such a man; no man sighs and mourns, bleeds and complains, under the sense of sinful motions and sinful operations more than such a man, Luk 7:44, Luk 7:50. Every stirring of sin makes a man that is under the power of assurance to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom 7:22-25; Psa 85:8, 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: and let them not turn again to folly,' or, as the Hebrew will bear, 'And they shall not return to folly.' God's speaking peace to his people fences .and fortifies them against folly and vanity. The assurance that Joseph had of his master's love armed him against the lascivious assaults of his lustful mistress; and will not divine love, that is stronger than death, do this and more? Song of Solomon 8:6-7. Assurance makes a man say to his sins, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I any more to do with idols?' So says the assured soul, Away pride, away passion, away worldly-mindedness, away uncleanness, away uncharitableness, &c., for what have I any more to do with you? Assurance makes the soul speak to sin as David speaks to sinners: Psa 119:115, 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; for I will keep the commandments of my God:' so says the assured soul, Depart from me, O my lusts, for I have tasted of the love of God, and I have given up myself wholly and only to God, and I cannot but keep the commandments of my God. The Jewish Rabbins report, that the same night that Israel departed out of Egypt towards Canaan, all the idols and idolatrous temples in Egypt, by lightning and earthquakes, were broken down. So when Christ and assurance comes to be set up in the soul, all, the idols of Satan and a man's own heart are cast down, and cast out as an abomination. Sound assurance puts a man upon purifying himself, even as Christ is pure, 1Jn 3:2-3. The assured Christian knows, that it is dangerous to sin against light, that it is more dangerous to sin against love, that it is most dangerous to sin against love revealed and manifested. God may well say to such a Christian, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? To sin under assurance, is to sin against the bowels of mercy, it is to sin against the highest hopes of glory; and this will certainly provoke God to be angry. 1Ki 11:9, 'And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, that had appeared to him twice.' To sin under assurance, is to sin in paradise; it is to sin under the flaming sword, it is to sin in the suburbs of heaven, it is to run the hazard of losing that favour 'that is better than life,' of that 'joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,' and of that 'peace that passes understanding.' To sin under assurance, is to cast reproach upon Christ, to grieve the Spirit, to wound conscience, to weaken your graces, to blur your evidences, to usher in calamities, to

embitter your mercies, and to provoke the tempter to triumph over your Saviour. Verily, that assurance is but presumption that works men to play with sin, to be bold with sin, to make light of sin, to walk on in ways of sin. Such assurance will never bring a man to heaven, it will never keep him from dropping, into hell, yea, it will double his damnation, and make him the most miserable among all damned, miserable, forlorn spirits. Ah, Lord! from such an assurance deliver my soul; and give me more and more of that divine assurance that makes sin to be more hateful than hell, and that makes the soul to be more careful to avoid the one, than it is fearful of falling into the other.

[7.] The seventh difference. Seventhly, A well-grounded assurance is always attended with three fair handmaids, or with three sweet companions,

(1.) The first handmaid. The first is love. Oh ! the assurance of divine favour doth mightily inflame a man's love to Christ. Mary Magdalene loved much ; Christ's love to her drew out her, love very much to Christ, Luke vii. Assurance makes the soul sing it out with that sweet singer of Israel, 'I will dearly love thee, O Lord, my strength,' Psa 18:2. Lovers know not how to keep silence; lovers of Christ are full of gracious expressions. *Magnes amoris est amor*; love is the attractive loadstone of love. It is impossible for a soul not to love Chnst, that knows he is beloved of Christ. Christ's love constrains the soul to love, not by forcible but loving necessity. Praxiteles exquisitely drew love, taking the pattern from that passion which he felt in his own heart. A believer cannot find the heart of Christ to be beating towards him, but his heart will strongly beat towards Christ. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand, that he shall never be faint, weary of walking, or loving. Love alone overpowereth all power. Love is the diadem; none but the queen must wear it. Love is the wedding garment ; none but the spouse can fit it. Love is a loadstone to draw, as well as a fire to warm. He that doth not love Christ, was never assured of the love of Christ.

(2.) The second handmaid, or companion that attends a well-grounded assurance, is humility. David, under assurance, cries out, 'I am a worm and no man,' Psa 22:6; Abraham, under assurance, cries out, that he is but 'dust and ashes;' Jacob, under assurance, cries out, that he was 'less than the least of all mercies;' Job, under assurance, 'abhors himself in dust and ashes;' Moses had the honour and the happiness to speak with God 'face to face;' he was very much in God's books, in God's favour; and yet a more humble soul the earth did never bear. The great apostle Paul, under all the revelations and glorious manifestations of God to him, counts himself 'less than the least of all saints,' Eph 3:8. That is presumption, that is a delusion of the devil, and no sound assurance, that puffs and swells the souls of men, that makes men prize themselves above the market, above the value that God hath put upon them.

(3.) The third handmaid or companion that attends assurance, is holy joy. Ah! this assurance causes the strong waters of consolation to overflow the soul. Assurance raises the strongest joy in the soul: Luk 1:46-47, and Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' When a man comes to be assured that God is his Saviour, presently his spirit rejoices in God. This truth is held forth by three parables in that of Luke xv., so in that of 1Pe 1:8-9, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.' Oh the joy, the joy, the inexpressible joy that attends a well-grounded assurance!

Assurance raises a paradise of delight in the soul. In quibus operamur, in illis et gaudemus, saith Tertullian: in what things or persons we act, in those things we rejoice. A Christian, under the power of assurance, works all his works in Christ; in him, therefore, and in him alone, he rejoiceth.

[8.] The eighth, difference. Eighthly, and lastly, A well-grounded assurance sometimes springs from the testimony and witness of the Spirit of God. The Spirit sometimes witnesses to a believer's spirit that he is born of God, that he is beloved of God, that he hath union and communion with God, and that he shall reign for ever with God: Rom 8:26, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.' The Spirit itself witnesseth not only the gifts and graces of the Spirit, but the Spirit itself witnesseth together with our own spirit, that we are the children of God. Sometimes the saints have two witnesses joining their testimonies together to confirm and establish them in these blessed and glorious truths, that they are the sons of God and heirs of glory; and this is their honour as well as their comfort, that the blessed Spirit should bear witness at the bar of their consciences that they are the sons of God: 1Co 2:12, 'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God;' that is, that we may know our election, vocation, justification, sanctification, and glorification. A man may receive many things that are freely given of God, and yet not know them till the Spirit comes and makes them known to the soul.

Quest. But you may say to me, How shall we know the whispering of the Holy Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent? How shall we know the report, the witness, and testimony of the Spirit of Christ, from that report, witness, and testimony that the old serpent deludes and deceives many by, in these days wherein he mostly appears in his angelical robes?

Ans. I answer, you may know the whispering of the Spirit from the hissing of the old serpent, &c., by these following things, which I desire that you would seriously consider, as you tender the peace and settlement, the satisfaction, consolation, and salvation of your own souls.

(1.) The first difference. First, The Spirit of Christ doth not witness by any outward voice, as God did from heaven of Christ, Mat 3:17; nor by an angel, as to the Virgin Mary, Luk 1:30-34; but by an inward, secret, glorious, and unspeakable way he bids believers be of good cheer, their sins are forgiven them, as Christ said to the palsied man in the Gospel, Mat 9:2. And this truth is to be solemnly minded against those poor deceived and deluded souls in these days, that would make the world believe that they have had such and such glorious things made known by an outward, audible voice from heaven. It is much to be feared that they never found the inward, the sweet, the secret, the powerful testimony and report of the Spirit of Christ, that boast, and brag, and rest so much upon an outward testimony. In 1Ki 19:11-13, you read of 'a great strong wind that rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks: but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind there was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire there was a still small voice, and the Lord spake to Elijah in that still small voice. Ah, Christians! the Spirit of the Lord makes not a noise, but he comes in a still small voice, as I may say, and makes a soft and secret report to the soul, that it is beloved, that it is pardoned, and that it shall be for ever glorified.

(2.) The second difference. Secondly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ is only gained and enjoyed in holy and heavenly ways, as you may clearly see by comparing the Scriptures in the margin together. The Spirit of the Lord is a Holy Spirit, and he cannot, he will not

make any report of the love of the Father to the soul out of a way of holiness. Verily, all those glorious reports that many boast they have met with in sinful ways, in wretched and ungodly ways, are from the hissing of the old serpent, and not from the whisperings of the Spirit of grace. I think it is little less than blasphemy for any to affirm, that the blessed Spirit of Christ doth make reports of the love and favour of God to persons walking in ways of wickedness and baseness.

(3.) The third difference. Thirdly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit of Christ, is a clear, a full, a satisfying testimony and witness, John 14:17, 1Jn 3:24. The soul sits down under the home-reports of the Spirit, and saith, Lord, it is enough ; the soul being full, sits down and sweetly sings it out: 'My beloved is mine, and I am his. I am my well-beloved's, and his desire is towards me,' Song of Solomon 2:16, and Song of Solomon 7:10. 'The Lord is my portion and the lot of mine inheritance,' Psa 16:5. 'I have none in heaven but thee, neither is there any on earth that I desire in comparison of thee,' Psa 73:25. 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,' 2Ti 4:8. 'Make haste, my beloved,' &c., Song of Solomon 8:14. Such power, majesty, and glory, attends the glorious testimony of the Spirit of Christ, as scatters all clouds, as resolves all doubts, as answers all objections, as silences the wrangling soul, &c. If the testimony of the Spirit of Christ were not a full, satisfying testimony, it could never fill the soul with such joy as is 'unspeakable and full of glory,' and with 'such peace as passes understanding;' if the testimony were not satisfactory, the soul would still be under fears and doubts, the heart would still be a-wrangling and quarrelling, I may perish, and I may be undone, I may have the door of mercy shut against me, &c. If you bring news to a condemned person that the king hath pardoned him, and that he will receive him to favour, and confer such and such dignity upon him, yet this doth not quiet him nor satisfy him, till he knows it is the king's act, till he is satisfied in that, he cannot say it is enough, he cannot be cheerful, he cannot be delightful, &c. But when he is satisfied that it is the king's act, that the king hath certainly done this and that for him, then he is satisfied, and then sighing and mourning flies away, and then he rejoices with joy unspeakable. So it is with a believing soul under the testimony and witness of the spirit of Christ.

(4.) The fourth difference. Fourthly, Though the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit, yet he doth not always witness to believers their adoption, their interest in Christ, &c. There is a mighty difference between the working of the Spirit and the witness of the Spirit. There are oftentimes many glorious and efficacious works of the Spirit, as faith, love, repentance, holiness, &c., where there is not the witness of the Spirit, Isa 1:10. David at that very time had the Spirit, and many sweet workings of the Spirit in him and upon him, when he had by sin lost the witness and testimony of the Spirit, Psa 2:10 - 2 Kings Though the Spirit of the Lord be a witnessing and a sealing Spirit, yet he doth not always witness and seal up the love and favour of the Father to believers' souls, as you may see by the scriptures in the margin, and as the experience of many precious Christians can abundantly evidence. All believers do not see alike need of this testimony, they do not all alike prize this testimony, they do not all alike observe it and improve it; and therefore, it is no wonder if the Spirit be a witnessing Spirit to some and not to others. You do but gratify Satan and wrong your own souls, when you argue that certainly you have not the Spirit, because he is not a witnessing and a sealing Spirit to your souls. Though it be the office of the Spirit to witness, yet it is not his office always to witness to believers their happiness and blessedness. The Spirit may act one way and in one room of the soul, when he doth not act in another. Sometimes the Spirit works upon the understanding, sometimes upon the will, sometimes upon the affections, sometimes upon faith,

sometimes upon fear, sometimes upon love, sometimes upon humility, &c. Our hearts are the Spirit's harps. If a man should always touch one string in an instrument, he should never play various tunes, he should never make pleasant music; no more would the Spirit, if he should be always a-doing one thing in the soul. Therefore he acts variously. Sometimes he will shew himself a quickening Spirit, sometimes an enlightening Spirit, sometimes a rejoicing Spirit, sometimes a sealing Spirit, and always a supporting Spirit, &c.

(5.) The fifth difference. Fifthly, The testimony and witness of the Spirit is a sure testimony, a sure witness. The Spirit is truth itself; he is the great searcher of the deep things of God. The Spirit of the Lord is the discoverer, the confuter, and destroyer of all false spirits. The Spirit is above all possibility of being deceived, he is omnipotent, he is omniscient, he is omnipresent, he is one of the cabinet.council of heaven; he lies and lives in the bosom of the Father, and can call them all by name upon whom the Father hath set his heart, and therefore his testimony must needs be true. It is a surer testimony than if a man should hear a voice from heaven pronouncing him to be happy and blessed. You may safely and securely lay the weight of your souls upon this testimony; it never bath, it never will deceive any that hath leaned upon it. This testimony will be a rock that will bear up a soul, when other false testimonies will be but 'a reed of Egypt,' that will deceive the soul, that will undo the soul; as I am afraid many in this deluding age have found by sad experience.

(6.) The sixth difference. Sixthly, The testimony of God's Spirit is always accompanied with the testimony of our own. These may be distinguished, but they can never be separated. When the Spirit of God gives in witness for a man, his own spirit doth not give in witness against him. Look, as face answers to face, so doth the witness of a believer's spirit answer to the witness of the Spirit of Christ. Rom 8:16, 'The Spirit witnesseth together with our spirits that we be the sons of God.' Now, if our own consciences do not testify first, that we are sons and heirs, the Spirit doth not testify; for the Spirit bears witness together with our spirits. St John is very express in 1Jn 3:21, 'But if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. But if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.' 1Jn 5:8-12, and 'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.' The Spirit doth witness eminently and efficiently, but water and blood materially, and our spirits and reason instrumentally. By the Spirit we may understand the Holy Ghost, by whose strength we lay hold on Christ and all his benefits. By water we may understand our regeneration, our sanctification; and by blood we may understand the blood and righteousness of Christ, that is imputed and applied by faith to us. 'And these three agree in one,' that is, they do all three of one accord testify the same thing.

(7.) The seventh difference. Seventhly, The witness of the Spirit is ever according to the word. There is a sweet harmony between the inward and the outward testimony, between the Spirit of God and the word of God. The scriptures were all indited by the Spirit, 2Pe 1:20-21; and therefore the Spirit cannot contradict himself, which he should do, if he should give in any testimony contrary to the testimony of the word. It is blasphemy to make the testimony of the Spirit to contradict the testimony of the word. The Spirit hath revealed his whole mind in the word, and he will not give a contrary testimony to what he hath given in the word. The word saith, They that are born again, that are new creatures, that believe and repent, shall be saved. But thou art born again, thou art a new creature, thou believest and repentest; therefore thou shalt be saved, saith the Spirit The Spirit never looseth where the word bindeth, the Spirit never justifies where the word condemns,

the Spirit never approves where the word disapproves, the Spirit never blesses where the word curses. In the Old Testament all revelations were to be examined by the word, Deu 13:1 - Numbers Isa 8:20, 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light (or no morning) in them.' So in that of John 16:13, 'The Spirit shall lead you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but what he shall hear, that shall he speak.' Here the Holy Ghost is brought in as some messenger or ambassador who only relates things faithfully according to that he hath in charge. Such as look and lean upon the hissing of the old serpent, may have a testimony that they are happy, against the testimony of the word; but wherever the Spirit of Christ gives in his testimony, it is still according to the word. Look, as indenture answers to indenture, or as the counterpain exactly answers to the principal conveyance; there is article for article, clause for clause, covenant for covenant, word for word; so doth the testimony of the Spirit exactly answer to the testimony of the word.

(8.) The eighth difference Eighthly, It is a holy witness, a holy testimony. It is formally, it is originally holy, it is effectually holy. Nothing makes the heart more in the love, study, practice, and growth of holiness, than the glorious testimony of the Holy Spirit; and the more clear and full the testimony is, the more holy and gracious it will make the soul. Nothing puts such golden engagements upon the soul to holiness, as the Spirit sealing a man up to the day of redemption, as the Spirit speaking and sealing peace, love, and pardon to the soul, Psa 85:8; 1Co 15:31; 2Co 5:14. Nothing makes a man more careful to please Christ, more fearful to offend Christ, more studious to exalt Christ, and more circumspect to walk with Christ, than this testimony of the Spirit of Christ. Verily, that is not the blessed whispering of Christ's Spirit, but the hissing of the old serpent, that makes men bold with sin, that makes men daily with sin, that makes man a servant to sin, that breeds a contempt of ordinances, a neglect of holy duties, a carelessness in walking with God. And from those hissings of the old serpent, O Lord, deliver my soul, and the souls of all thy servants that put their trust in thee.

(9.) The ninth difference. Ninthly and lastly, Assurance is a jewel, a pearl of that price, that God only bestows it upon renewed hearts. The Spirit never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first printed his image upon. God gives to none the white stone, Rev 2:17, but to those from whom he hath taken the heart of stone; Eze 36:25-27 compared. Christ never tells a man that his name is written in the book of life, till he hath breathed into him spiritual life, Luk 10:20. Christ never says, Son, be of good cheer, thy sin is pardoned, till he hath first said, Be thou healed, be thou cleansed, Luk 5:18 - Proverbs Christ never gives a man a new name, that is better than the names of sons and daughters, till he hath made them new creatures, Isa. Lev 5:1-19 ; 2Co 5:17. Of slaves Christ first makes us sons, before we cry Abba, Father, Rom 8:15. Of enemies, he first makes us friends, before he will make us of his court or counsel, Eph 2:13 - Proverbs Christ will never hang a pearl in a swine's snout, nor put new wine into old bottles, nor his royal robes upon a leprous back, nor his golden chain about a dead man's neck, nor his glistering crown upon a traitor's head. The Spirit never sets his seal upon any, but upon those that Christ hath first set as a seal upon his heart, Eph 1:13; Song of Solomon 8:6. The Spirit only bears witness to such as hate sin as Christ hates it, and that love righteousness as Christ loves it, that hate sin more than hell, and that love truth more than life, Psa 45:7. A soul sealed by the Spirit will pull out right eyes, and cut off right hands, for Christ such souls will part with a Benjamin, and offer up an Isaac, for Christ. And this is to be seriously minded against those deceived and deluded souls, that remain yet in

their blood, and that wallow in their sins, and yet boast and brag of the seal and of the witness and testimony of the Spirit. And thus I have shewed you the difference between the whisperings of the Spirit and the hissing of the old serpent, between a true testimony and a false.

Author

THOMAS BROOKS [1608-1680] Singularly little is known about Thomas Brooks as a man, other than can be ascertained from his many writings. Born, probably of well-to-do parents, in 1608, Brooks entered Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1625, where he was preceded by such men as Thomas Hooker, John Cotton and Thomas Shepard. He was licensed as a preacher of the Gospel by 1640 at the latest. Before that date he seems to have spent a number of years at sea, probably as a chaplain with the fleet. He is thus able to speak of his numerous friends abroad, and of the scenes and happenings he had 'observed in other nations and countries'. Mention, too, is made of 'some terrible storms'. 'I have been some years at sea', he tells us, 'and through grace I can say that I would not exchange my sea experiences for England's riches'. 'Troubles, trials, temptations, dangers and deaths' were all encountered during his experiences on board ship. The Civil War over, Brooks became minister of the Word at Thomas Apostles, London, and was sufficiently renowned to be chosen as preacher before the House of Commons on the 26th December, 1648. Three or four years later he moved to St. Margaret's Fish-street Hill, London, but encountered considerable opposition as he refused baptism and the Lord's Supper to those clearly 'unworthy' of such privileges. The following years were filled with written as well as spoken ministry. In 1662 he fell victim to the notorious Act of Uniformity, but he appears to have remained in his parish and to have preached the Word as opportunity offered. Treatises continued to flow from his agile pen. In 1677-8 he married for the second time, 'she spring-young, he winter-old'. Two years later he went home to his Lord. No portrait of him survives.

S. Words of counsel to a dear dying friend

Words of counsel to a dear dying friend by Thomas Brooks, London, 1675 Dear sister in the Lord,

I know you have for many years been the Lord's prisoner. Great have been your trials, and many have been your trials, and long have been your trials; but to all these I have spoken at large in my treatise called "The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod," which you have in your hand, which you have read, and which God has greatly blessed to the support, comfort, quiet, and refreshment of your soul under all your trials; and therefore I shall say no more as to those particulars. But knowing that the many weaknesses which hang upon you, and the decays of nature which daily attend you, seem to point out your approaching death, I shall at this time give you this one word of counsel, namely, that every day you would look upon death in a scripture glass, in a scripture dress, or under a scripture notion; that is,

1. First, Look upon death as that which is BEST for a believer. Php 1:23, "I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far." The Greek is very significant, "far, far the better," or far much better, or much more better. It is a most transcendent expression. Ecc 7:1, "Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth." A saint's dying day is the daybreak of eternal glory! In respect of pleasure, peace, safety, company and glory—a believer's dying day is his best day. It was an excellent saying of one of the ancients, "That is not a death—but life, which joins the dying man to Christ; and that is not a life—but death, which separates a living man from Christ." But,

2. Secondly, Look upon death as a remedy, as a CURE. Death will perfectly cure you of all bodily and spiritual diseases at once: the infirm body and the defiled soul, the aching head and the unbelieving heart. Death will cure you of all your ailments, aches, diseases, and distempers. At Stratford-Bow, in Queen Mary's days, there was a lame Christian, and a blind Christian, burned at one stake. The lame man, after he was chained, casting away his crutch, bade the blind man be of good cheer; "For death," says he, "will cure us both; you of your blindness, and me of my lameness!" And as death will cure all your bodily diseases, so it will cure all your soul distempers also. Death is not the death of the man—but the death of his sin. Death will work such a cure—as all your duties, graces, experiences, ordinances, assurances, could never do; for it will at once free you fully, perfectly, and perpetually from all sin; yes, from all possibility of ever sinning more. Sin was the midwife which brought death into the world, and death shall be the grave to bury sin. And why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die, unwilling to die, seeing death gives him an eternal separation from infirmities and weaknesses, from all aches and pains, griefs and gripings, distempers and diseases, both of body and soul? When Samson died, the Philistines died together with him; just so, when a saint dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goes out by death; as the worm kills the worm which bred it, so death kills sin which bred it. But,

3. Thirdly, Look upon death as a REST, a full rest. A believer's dying day is his resting day. It is a resting day from sin, sorrow, afflictions, temptations, desertions, dissensions, vexations, oppositions, and persecutions. [Rev 14:13; Job 3:13-17; 2Th 1:7; Mic 2:10; Jer 50:6.] This world

was never made to be the saints' rest. Arise and depart, for this is not your resting place—it is polluted. They are like Noah's dove, they can rest nowhere but in the ark and in the grave. "In the grave," says Job, "the weary are at rest." Upon this very ground some of the most refined heathens have accounted mortality to be a mercy, for they brought their friends into the world with mournful obsequies—but carried them out of the world with all joyful sports and pastimes, because then they conceived they were at rest, and out of gunshot. Death brings the saints to a full rest, to a pleasant rest, to a matchless rest, to an eternal rest. But,

4. Fourthly, Look upon your dying day as your REAPING day. 2Co 9:2; Gal 6:7-9; Isa 38:3; Mat 25:31, Mat 25:41. Now you shall reap the fruit of all the prayers that ever you have made, and of all the tears that ever you have shed, and of all the sighs and groans that ever you have fetched, and of all the good words that ever you have spoken, and of all the good works that ever you have done, and of all the great things that ever you have suffered. When mortality shall put on immortality, you shall then reap a plentiful crop, a glorious crop, as the fruit of that good seed that for a time has seemed to be buried and lost, Ecc 11:1, Ecc 11:6. As Christ has a tender heart and a soft hand, so he has an iron memory. He precisely remembers all the sorrows, and all the services, and all the sufferings of his people, to reward them and crown them. "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." Rev 22:12. But,

5. Fifthly, Look upon your dying day as a GAINFUL day. There is no gain compared to that which comes in by death. Php 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." A Christian gets more by death, than he does by life, Ecc 7:1. To be in Christ is very good—but to be with Christ is best of all, Php 1:23. It was a mighty blessing for Christ to be with Paul on earth—but it was the top of blessings for Paul to be with Christ in heaven. Seriously consider of a few things—

[1.] First, That by death you shall gain incomparable crowns!

(1.) A crown of life, Rev 2:10; Jas 1:12;

(2.) A crown of righteousness, 2Ti 4:8;

(3.) An incorruptible crown, 1Co 9:24-25;

(4.) A crown of glory, 1Pe 5:4. Now there are no crowns compared to these crowns, as I have fully shown in my discourse on "The Divine Presence," to which I refer you. But,

[2.] Secondly, You shall gain a glorious kingdom! Luk 12:32, "It is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom." But death is the young prophet that anoints them to it, and gives them actual possession of it. We must put off their rags of mortality, that we may put on our robes of glory. Israel must first die in Egypt before he can be carried into Canaan. There is no entering into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel death, who stands at the gate. Death is the dirty lane through which the saint passes to a kingdom, to a great kingdom, to a glorious kingdom, to a quiet kingdom, to an unshaken kingdom, to a durable kingdom, to a lasting kingdom, yes, to an everlasting kingdom. Death is a dark, short way, through which the saints pass to the marriage-supper of the Lamb! Heb 12:28; Dan 2:44, and Dan 4:3; Rev 19:7. But,

[3.] Thirdly, You shall gain a safe and honorable convoy into the heavenly world! Luk 16:22. Oh, in what pomp and triumph did Lazarus ride to heaven on the wings of angels! The angels conduct

the saints at death through the air, the devil's region; every gracious soul is carried into Christ's presence by these heavenly courtiers. Oh, what a sudden change does death make! Behold, he who even now was scorned by men, is all on a sudden, carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You shall gain a glorious welcome, a joyful welcome, a wonderful welcome into heaven! By general consent of all antiquity, the holy angels and blessed Trinity rejoice at the sinner's conversion; but oh, what inexpressible, what transcendent joy is there, when a saint is landed upon the shore of eternity! Rev 4:8-11; Luk 15:7, Luk 15:10; Heb 12:23. God and Christ, angels and archangels, all stand ready to welcome the believer as soon as his feet are upon the threshold of glory! God the Father welcomes the saints as his elect and chosen ones, Jesus Christ welcomes them as his redeemed and purchased ones, and the Holy Spirit welcomes them as his sanctified and renewed ones, and the blessed angels welcome them as those they have guarded and attended on, Heb 1:14. When the saints enter upon the suburbs of glory, the glorious angels welcome them with harps in their hands, and songs in their mouths. But,

[5.] Fifthly, You shall gain full freedom and liberty from all your enemies within and without—namely, sin, Satan, and the world! Luk 1:70-71, Luk 1:74-75.

(1.) Death will free you from the indwelling power of sin. Rom 7:23. In heaven there is no complaints. As in hell there is nothing but wickedness, so in heaven there is nothing but holiness.

(2.) Death will free you from the power and prevalency of sin. In this present world, sin plays the tyrant—but in heaven there is no tyranny—but perfect felicity.

(3.) Death will free you from all provocations, temptations, and suggestions to sin. Now you shall be above all Satan's assaults. Now God will make good the promise of treading Satan under your feet, Rom 16:20. Some say serpents will not live in Ireland. The old serpent is cast out, and shall be forever kept out of the new Jerusalem above, Rev 12:8-9, and Rev 21:27.

(4.) Death will free you from all the effects and consequences of sin—namely, losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, disgraces, sufferings, etc. When the cause is taken away, the effect ceases; when the fountain of sin is dried up, the streams of afflictions, of sufferings, must be dried up. The fuel being taken away, the fire will go out of itself. Sin and sorrow were born together, live together, and shall die together. To open this fourth particular a little more fully to you, consider these four things:

First, Death will free you from all reproach and ignominy on your names. Now Elijah is accounted the troubler of Israel, Nehemiah a rebel against his king, and David the song of the drunkards, and Jeremiah a man of contention, and Paul a pestilent fellow. [1Ki 18:17; Neh 6:6; Psa 69:12; Jer 15:10; Acts 24:10.] Heaven wipes away all blots, as well as all tears; as no sins, so no blots are to be found in that upper world. The names of all the saints in a state of glory are written, as I may say, in characters of gold. But,

Secondly, Death will free you from all bodily infirmities and diseases. We carry about in our bodies the matter of a thousand deaths, and may die a thousand different ways each hour. As many senses, as many members, nay, as many pores as there are in the body, so many windows there are for death to enter at. Death needs not spend all its arrows upon us; a worm, a gnat, a fly, a

hair, the seed of a raisin, the skin of a grape, the fall of a horse, the stumbling of a foot, the prick of a pin, the trimming of a nail, the cutting of a corn; all these have been to others, and any one of them may be to us, the means of our death, within the space of a few days, nay, of a few hours. Here Job had his blotches, and Hezekiah had his boil, and David his wounds, and Lazarus his sores, and the poor widow her issue of blood, Job 2:6-7; Isa 37:21; Psa 38:5; Luk 16:20; Mat 9:20. Now the fever burns up some, and the dropsy drowns others, and the vapors stifle others; one dies of a stroke in the head, a third of a tumor in the throat, and a fourth of a cough and consumption of the lungs; others of obstructions, inflammations, pleurisies, gout, etc. We are commonly full of sicknesses; one complains of this distemper, and another of that; one of this disease, and another of that; but death will cure us of all diseases and distempers at once. But,

Thirdly, Death will free you from all your sorrows, whether inward or outward, whether for your own sins or the sins of others, whether for your own sufferings or the sufferings of others, Psa 38:18; 2Co 7:11; Psa 119:136; Neh 1:3-4. Now, it may be, one shall seldom find you but with tears in your eyes, or sorrow in your heart; Oh—but now death will be the funeral of all your sorrows, death will wipe all tears from your eyes, "and sorrow and mourning shall flee away," Isa 51:11. But,

Fourthly, Death will free you from all those troubles, calamities, miseries, mischiefs, and desolations, that are a-coming upon the earth, or upon this place or that, Isa 57:1; Mic 7:1-7. A year after Methuselah's death, the flood came and carried away the old world. Augustine died a little before the sacking of Hippo. Luther observes that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem; and Luther himself died a little before the wars broke forth in Germany.

Dear lady, death shall do that for you, which all your physicians could never do for you, which all your relations could never do for you, which all ordinances could never do for you, nor which all your faithful ministers could never do for you. It shall both instantly and perfectly cure you of all sorts of maladies and weaknesses, both inward and outward, of both your body and your soul. O my dear friend, is it not better to die, and be rid of all sin; to die, and be rid of all temptations and desertions; to die, and be rid of all sorts of miseries; than to live, and still carry about with us our sins, our burdens, and such constant ailments, as takes away all the pleasure and comfort of life? Here both our outward and inward conditions are very various; sometimes heaven is open, and sometimes heaven is shut; sometimes we see the face of God, and rejoice, and at other times he hides his face, and we are troubled, Lam 3:8, Lam 3:44, Lam 3:54-57; Psa 30:7; 1Th 4:17-18; Isa 35:10. Oh—but now death will bring us to an invariable eternity. It is always day in heaven, and joy in heaven.

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, You shall gain a clear, distinct, and full knowledge of all great and deep mysteries! 1Co 13:10, 1Co 13:12. The mystery of the Trinity, the mystery of Christ's incarnation, the mystery of man's redemption, the mysteries of providences, the mysteries of prophecies, and all those mysteries which relate to the nature, substances, offices, orders, and excellencies of the angels. If you please to consult my "String of Pearls, or the Best Things Reserved until Last," with my sermon on Ecc 7:1, "Better is the day of death than the day of one's birth;" which is at the end of my "Treatise on Assurance"—both which treatises you have by you—there you will find many more great and glorious things laid open that we gain by death; and to them I refer you. But,

6. Sixthly, Look upon death as a SLEEP. The Holy Spirit has phrased it so, above twenty times in Scripture, to show that this is the true, proper, and genuine notion of death. [1Co 11:30, and 1Co

15:51; John 11:12; Mark 5:39. The Greeks call their churchyards dormitories, sleeping-places; and the Hebrews Beth-chaiim, the house of the living.] When the saints die, they do but sleep: Mat. 9:24, "The girl is not dead but sleeps." The same phrase he also used to his disciples concerning Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps," John 11:11. The death of the godly is as a sleep; Stephen fell asleep, Acts 7:60; and "David fell asleep," Acts 13:36; and "Christ is the first fruits of those who sleep," 1Co 15:20; "Those who sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him," 1Th 4:14. The saints of God do but sleep when they lie down in the grave. That which we call death in such, is not death indeed; it is but the image of death, the shadow and metaphor of death, death's younger brother, a mere sleep, and no more. I may not follow the analogy that is between death and sleep in the latitude of it, the printer calling upon me to conclude. Sleep is the nurse of nature, the sweet parenthesis of all a man's griefs and cares. But,

7. Seventhly, Look upon death as a DEPARTURE. 2Ti 4:6, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Paul makes nothing of death. It was no more between God and Moses—but go up and die, Deu 32:49-50; and so between Christ and Paul—but launch out, and land immediately at the fair haven of heaven: Php 1:23, "For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Paul longed for that hour wherein he should loose anchor, and sail to Christ, as the Greek word imports. It is a metaphor from a ship at anchor, importing a sailing from this present life to another port. Paul had a desire to loose from the shore of life, and to launch out into the ocean of immortality. The apostle, in this phrase, has a reference both to his bonds and to his death; and his meaning is, I desire to be discharged and released, as out of a common jail, so also out of the prison of my body, that I may presently be with Christ my Savior in heaven, in rest and bliss. [Or it may be rendered, to return home, or to change rooms. It is a similitude taken from those who depart out of an inn to take their journey towards their own country.] After Paul had been in the third heaven, his constant song was, "I desire to be with Christ." Nature teaches that death is the end of misery. But grace will teach us that death is the beginning of our felicity. But,

8. Eighthly and lastly, Look upon death as a going to bed. The grave is a bed wherein the body is laid to rest, with its curtains close drawn about it, that it may not be disturbed in its repose. So the Holy Spirit is pleased to phrase it, "He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, everyone walking in their uprightness," Isa 57:2. As the souls of the saints pass to a place of rest and bliss, so their bodies are laid down to rest in the grave, as in a bed or bedchamber, there to sleep quietly until the morning of the resurrection. Death is nothing else but a rest to the weary saints; it is a total cessation from all their labor, sin, and affliction, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors," Rev 14:13, etc. While the souls of the saints do rest in Abraham's bosom, their bodies do sweetly sleep in their beds of dust, as in a safe and consecrated dormitory. Every sincere Christian may, like the weary child, call and cry to be laid to bed, knowing that death would send him to his everlasting rest.

Now you should always look upon death under scripture notions, and this will take off the terror of death. Yes, it will make the king of terrors to be the king of desires. It will make you not only willing to die—but even long to die, and to cry out, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, to fly away, and be at rest!" At death you shall have an eternal jubilee, and be freed from all incumbrances. Sin shall be no more, and trouble shall be no more, and pain nor ailments shall be no more. Now you shall have your eternal rest. Now "the wicked shall cease from troubling, and now the weary shall be at

rest," Job 3:17. Now "all tears shall be wiped from your eyes," Rev 7:17. Death shall be the way to bliss, the gate to eternal life, and the portal to paradise.

It was well said of one, "so far as we tremble at death, so far we lack love." It is sad, when the contract is made between Christ and a Christian, to see a Christian afraid of the making up the marriage. "Lord," says Austin, "I will die that I may enjoy you. I desire to die—that I may see Christ; and refuse to live—that I may live with Christ." Mere marriage engagements and espousals, do not content the true lover—but he longs for the marriage day. It is no credit to your heavenly Father, for you to be averse to go home. The Turks tell us that surely Christians do not believe heaven to be such a glorious place as they talk of; for if they did, they would not be so unwilling to go there. The world may well think that the child has but cold welcome at his father's house, that he lingers so much along the way, and that he does not look and long to be at home. Such children bring an ill report upon their father's house, upon the holy land. But I know you have not so learned Christ, I know you long with Paul, "to depart, and to be with Christ," Php 1:23; and with old Simeon, to cry out, "Lord, let your servant depart in peace," Luk 2:29. That God whom you have long sought and served, will make your passage into the eternal world safe, sweet, and easy.

Now to the everlasting arms of divine protection, and to the constant guidance and leadings of the Spirit, and to the rich influences of Christ's sovereign grace, and to the lively hopes of the inheritance of the saints in light, I commend you, who am, dear sister—yours in the strongest bonds,

Thomas Brooks, London, 1675

S. Young Men Exhorted to Come to Christ

Young Men Exhorted to Come to Christ by Thomas Brooks I shall now hasten to the main use that I intend to stand upon, and that is an use of exhortation to all young persons.

Ah, sirs! As you tender the glory of God, the good of your bodies, the joy of your Christian friends, and the salvation of your own souls, be exhorted and persuaded to be really good betimes. It was the praise and honour of Abijah, that 'there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord' in the primrose of his childhood.

Oh! That it might be your honour and happiness to be really good betimes, that it might be to you a praise and a name, that in the morning of your youth you have begun to seek the Lord, and to know and love the Lord, and to get an interest and propriety in the Lord. Now that this exhortation may stick and take, I beseech you seriously to weigh and ponder these following motives or considerations:

Motive (1). First consider, It is an honour to be good betimes. A young saint is like the morning star; he is like a pearl in a gold ring. It is mentioned as a singular honour to the believing Jews, that they first trusted in Christ; 'that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ,' Eph 1:12. This was their praise, their crown, that they were first converted and turned to Christ and Christianity. So Paul, mentioning Andronicus and Junia, doth not omit this circumstance of praise and honour, that they were in Christ 'before him,' Rom 16:7. 'Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.' And so it was the honour of the house of Stephanas, that they were the first-fruits of Achaia, 1Co 16:15. It was their glory that they were the first that received and welcomed the gospel in Achaia. It is a greater honour for a young man to outwrestle sin, Satan, temptation the world, and lust, than ever Alexander the Great could attain unto. It was Judah his praise and honour, that they were first in fetching home David their king, 2Sa 19:15.

Ah, sirs! It is no small honour to you, who are in the spring and morning of your days, that the Lord hath left upon record several instances of his love and delight in young men. He chose David, a younger brother, and passes by his elder brothers, 1Sa 16:11-13; he frowns upon Esau, and passes by his door, and sets his love and delight upon Jacob the younger brother, Rom 9:12-13; he kindly and lovingly accepts of Abel's person and sacrifice, and rejects both Cain's person and sacrifice, though he was the elder brother, Gen 4:3 - Joshua Among all the disciples, John was the youngest and the most and best beloved, John 13:23. There was but one 'young man' that came to Christ, and he came not aright, Mark 10:19-21; and all the good that was in him was but some moral good, and yet Christ loved him with a love of pity and compassion. The Greek word (agapan) signifies, to speak friendly and deal gently with one; and so did Christ with him, all which should exceedingly encourage young men to be good betimes, to be gracious in the morning of their youth. No way to true honour like this, but,

Motive (2). Secondly, consider, Christ loved poor sinners and gave himself for them, when he was in the prime of his age (being supposed to be about thirty and three), and will you put him off with the worst of your time?

Ah! Young men, young men, Christ gave himself up to death, he made himself an offering for your sins, for your sakes, when he was in the prime and flower of his age: and why then should you put off Christ to an old age? Did he die for sin in the prime of his age? And will not you die to sin in the prime of your age? Did he offer himself for you in the spring and morning of his years? and will not you offer up yourselves to him in the spring and morning of your years? Oh give not Christ cause to say, I died for you betimes, but you have not lived to me betimes; I was early in my suffering for you, but you have not been early in your returning to me; I made haste to complete your redemption, but you have made no haste to make sure your vocation and election, 2Pe 1:10; I stayed not, I lingered not, but soon suffered what I was to suffer, and quickly did what was to be done for your eternal welfare; but you have stayed and lingered, like Lot in Sodom, Gen 19:16, and have not done what you might have done in order to your everlasting good. In the primrose of my days, I sweat for you, I wept for you, I bled for you, I hung on the cross for you, I bore the wrath of my Father for you; but you have not in the primrose of your days sweat under the sense of divine displeasure, nor wept over your sins, nor mourned over me, whom you have so often grieved and pierced, Zec 12:10. I could not be quiet nor satisfied till I had put you into a capacity, into a possibility of salvation, and yet you are well enough quieted and satisfied, though you do not know whether ever you shall be saved.

Ah, sirs! How sad would it be with you, if Jesus Christ should secretly thus expostulate with your consciences in this your day.

Oh! How terrible would it be with you, if Christ should thus visibly plead against you in his great day. Ah! young men, young men and women, who but souls much left of God, blinded by Satan, and hardened in sin, 2Co 3:4, can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus to them: I suffered for sinners betimes, I laid down a ransom for souls betimes, I pacified my Father's wrath betimes, I satisfied my Father's justice betimes, I merited grace and mercy for sinners betimes, I brought in an everlasting righteousness upon the world betimes, &c.; I say, who can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus, and his heart not fall in love and league with Christ, and his soul not unite to Christ and resign to Christ, and cleave to Christ, and for ever be one with Christ, except it be such that are for ever left by Christ? Well, remember this, the more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be unto us.

Ah! young men, remember this, when Christ was young, he was tempted and tried; when he was in the morning of his days, his wounds were deep, his burden weighty, his cup bitter, his sweat painful, his agony and torment above conception, beyond expression; when he was young, that blessed head of his was crowned with thorns; and those eyes of his, that were purer than the sun, were put out by the darkness of death; and those ears of his which now hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, were filled with the blasphemies of the multitude; and that blessed beautiful face of his, which was fairer than the sons of men, was spit on by beastly filthy wretches; and that gracious mouth and tongue, that spake as never man spake, was slandered and accused of blasphemy; and those hands of his, which healed the sick, which gave out pardons, which swayed a sceptre in heaven and another on earth, were nailed to the cross; and those feet, that

were beautiful upon the mountains, that brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation into the world, and that were diked unto fine brass, were also nailed to the cross: all these great and sad things did Jesus Christ suffer for you in the prime and flower of his days. and oh! what an unspeakable provocation should this be to all young ones, to give up themselves betimes to Christ, to serve, love, honour, and obey him betimes, even in the spring and morning of their youth.

Motive (3). The third motive or consideration to provoke you to begin to be good betimes, is this, viz., That it is the best and choicest way in the world, to be rich in gracious experiences betimes, which are the best riches in all the world. As he that sets up for himself betimes is in the most hopeful way to be rich betimes, so he that is good in good earnest betimes, he is in the ready way, the highway of being rich in grace and rich in goodness. They usually prove men of great observation and great experience. God loves to shew these his 'beauty and his glory in his sanctuary.' He delights to cause 'his glory and his goodness to pass before' such. These shall find all his 'paths drop marrow and fatness.' For these 'the Lord of hosts will make a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' These shall have all manner of 'pleasant fruits' laid up 'at their gates for their well-beloved,' None have so many choice pledges of Christ's love, nor so many sweet kisses of Christ's mouth, nor so many embraces in Christ's arms, as those souls that are good betimes. Oh the grace, the goodness, the sweetness, the fatness that Christ is still a-dropping into their hearts! Christ will make their hearts his largest treasury, he will lay up most of his heavenly treasure in their souls. There he will store up mercies new and old; there he will treasure up all plenty, rarity, and variety; there he will lay up all that heart can wish or need require. Oh the many drops of myrrh that falls from Christ's fingers upon their hearts! Oh the many secrets that Christ reveals in their ears! Oh the many love-letters that Christ sends to these! Oh the many visits that he gives to these! Oh the turns, the walks, that he hath in paradise with these! There are none in the world for experience and intelligence to these. Ah! young men, young men, as you would be rich in the best riches, begin to be good betimes; as there is no riches to spiritual riches so there is no way to be rich in these riches, but by beginning to be good, in good earnest, betimes. As for worldly riches, philosophers have condemned them, and preferred a contemplative life above them, and shall not Christians much more? The prophet calls them 'thick clay,' which will sooner break the back than lighten the heart; they cannot better the soul, they cannot enrich the soul, Hab 2:6. Ah! how many threadbare souls are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns! How often are worldly riches like hangmen, they hide men's faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them. And if they do not hang you, they will shortly leave you, they 'make themselves wings and fly away,' Pro 23:5. When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants, I do not love that wealth, said a heathen, that hangs upon ropes; if they break, the ship miscarrieth, and all is lost. He is rich enough, saith Jerome, that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity that is not forced to serve. This world's wealth, that men so much desire May well be likened to a burning fire, Whereof a little can do little harm But profit much our bodies well to warm; But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn; So 'too much wealth to too much woe does turn.'

Motive (4). The fourth motive to provoke young ones to be really good betimes is, to consider that The present time, the present day, is the only season that you are sure of.

Time past cannot be recalled, and time to come cannot be ascertained: 'To-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts,' Heb 3:15; 'Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation,' 2Co 6:2. Some there be that trifle away their time, and fool away their souls and their salvation. To prevent this, the apostle beats upon the to nun, the present opportunity, because if that be once past, there is no recovering of it. Therefore, as the mariner takes the first fair wind to sail, and as the merchant takes his first opportunity of buying and selling, and as the husbandman takes the first opportunity of sowing and reaping, so should young men take the present season, the present day, which is their day, to be good towards the Lord, to seek him and serve him, and not to post off the present season, for they know not what another day, another hour, another moment, may bring forth. That door of grace that is open to-day may be shut to-morrow; that golden sceptre of mercy that is held forth in the gospel this day may be taken in the next day: hat love that this hour is upon the bare knee entreating and beseeching young men to break off their sins by repentance, 'to return to the Lord, to lay hold on his strength, and be at peace with him,' may the next hour be turned into wrath, Isa 27:4-5.

Ah! Young men, young men, do not put off the present season, do not neglect the present day. There is no time yours but the present time, no day yours but the present day; and therefore do not please yourselves and feed yourselves with hopes of time to come, and that you will repent, but not yet, and lay hold on mercy, but not yet, and give up yourselves to the Lord next week, next month; or next year, for that God that hath promised you mercy and favour upon the day of your return, he hath not promised to prolong your lives till that day comes.

Motive (6). Sixthly, consider, That the sooner you are good on earth, the greater will be your reward in heaven. The sooner you are gracious, the more at last you will be glorious. You read in the Scripture of a reward, of a great reward, and of a full reward. Now those that are good betimes, that know, seek, serve, and love the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, they are in the fairest way of gaining the greatest and the fullest reward.' No man can commend good works magnificently enough, saith Luther, for one work of a Christian is more precious than heaven and earth; and therefore all the world cannot sufficiently reward one good work. And in another place, saith the same author, 'If I might have my desire, I would rather choose the meanest work of a country Christian or poor maid, than all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great, and of Julius Caesar.'

And, again, whatsoever the saints do, though never so small and mean, it is great and glorious; because they do all in faith and by the word, saith the same author. To prevent mistakes, you must remember, that the works that Jesus Christ will reward at last are supernatural works: they are, 1, works of God; 2, wrought from God; 3, for God; 4, in God; 5, according to God. They are works that flow from supernatural principles, and they are directed to supernatural ends, and performed in a supernatural way. Now the sooner a man begins to be good, the more he will abound in these good works; and the more doubtless any man abounds in such good works on earth, the greater reward he shall have in heaven.

Yet it must not be forgotten that the best actions, the best works of hypocrites, and all men out of Christ, are but splendida peccata, fair and shining sins, beautiful abominations.

Motive (7). The seventh motive or consideration to provoke and incite you to be good betimes, is to consider, That the Lord is very much affected, and taken with your seeking of him, and following

after him, in the spring and morning of your youth. As many young women and sickly children cannot stay till the fruit be ripe, but must have it while it is green; even so, saith God, my heart, my desires, are so vehemently set upon the first-fruits, the first things that I cannot stay, I cannot satisfy myself without them; and what would God teach us by all this, but to serve him with the first-fruits of our age, the primrose of our childhood, the morning of your youth. God hath given you of the best, do not put him off with the worst, with the worst of your time, the worst of your days, the worst of your strength, lest he swear in his wrath that 'you shall never enter into his rest,' Heb 3:18.

Motive (8). The eighth motive or consideration to provoke you to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, is to consider, that this may be a special means to prevent many black temptations, and an encouragement to withstand all temptations that you may meet with from a tempting devil and a tempting world. An early turning to the Lord will prevent many temptations to despair, many temptations to neglect the means openly, to despise the means secretly; many temptations about the being of God, the goodness, faithfulness, truth and justice of God; temptations to despair, temptations to lay violent hands on a man's self. Temptations to question all that God hath said, and that Christ hath suffered, arises many times from men's delaying and putting off of God to the last; all which, with many others, are prevented by a man's seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of his youth.

It is reported of the harts of Scythia, that they teach their young ones to leap from bank to bank, from rock to rock, from one turf to another, by leaping before them, by which means, when they are hunted, no beast of prey can ever take them; so when persons exercise themselves in godliness when they are young, when they leap from one measure of holiness to another, when they are in the morning of their days, Satan, that mighty hunter after souls, may pursue them with his temptations, but he shall not overtake them, he shall not prevail over them. As you see in Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and the three children, these knew the Lord, and gave up themselves to the Lord in the prime and primrose of their youth, and these were all temptation-proof, Heb 11:1-40., Gen 39:1-23., Dan 3:1-30. Satan and the world pursued them, but could not overtake them. When the devil and the world had done their worst, the young men's bows abode in strength, and their hands to resist were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, Gen 49:23-24. Ego non sum ego, said that young convert when tempted, I am not the man that I was.

Motive (9). The ninth motive or consideration to stir up young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, is, To consider the worth and excellency of souls. A soul is a spiritual, immortal substance, it is capable of the knowledge of God, it is capable of union with God, of communion with God and of a blessed and happy fruition of God, Mat 19:28; Acts 7:59-60; Php 1:23.

Christ left his Father's bosom for the good of souls; he assumed man's nature for the salvation of man's soul. Christ prayed for souls, he sweat for souls, he wept for souls, he bled for souls, he hung on the cross for souls, he bode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls he died for souls, he rose again from death for souls, he ascended for souls, he intercedes for souls, and all the glorious preparations that he hath been a-making in heaven these sixteen hundred years is for souls, Heb 2:13-16; Isa 63:3; John 14:1 - Leviticus

Ah! Young men, young men, do not play the courtier with your precious souls. The courtier doth all things late; he rises late, dines late, sups late, goes to bed late, repents late.

Ah! Sirs, the good of your souls is before all, and above all other things in the world; to be first regarded and provided for, and that partly because it is the best and more noble part of man, and partly because therein mostly and properly is the image of God stamped, and partly because it is the first converted, and partly because it shall be the first and most glorified.

Ah! Young men, young men, if they be worse than infidels, that make no provision for their families, 1Ti 5:8; what monsters are they that make not provision for their own souls! This will be bitterness in the end.

Ah! Young men, young men, do not pawn your souls, do not sell your souls, do not exchange away your souls, do not trifle and fool away your precious souls; they are jewels, more worth than a thousand worlds, yea, than heaven and earth. If they are safe, all is safe; but if they are lost, all is lost: God lost, and Christ lost, and the society of glorious angels and blessed saints lost, and heaven lost, and that for ever.

Ah! that all young persons were so affected with the worth and excellency of their souls, and so alarmed with the hazard and danger of losing their souls, as that they may in the spring and morning of their days inquire after the Lord, and seek him, and serve him with all their might, that so their precious and immortal souls may be safe and happy for ever. But if all this will not do, then in the last place,

Motive (10). Consider, young men, That God will at last bring you to a reckoning. He will at last bring you to judgment. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of shine heart, and in the sight of shine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee unto judgment,' Ecc 11:9. In these words you have two things: (1.) An ironical concession; he bids him rejoice, &c.; he yields him what he would have, by an irony, by way of mockage and bitter scoff. Now thou art young and strong, lively and lusty, and thy bones are full of marrow; thou art resolved to be proud and scornful to indulge the flesh, and to follow thy delights and pleasures. Well! take thy course if thou darest, or if thou hast a mind to it, if thy heart be so set upon it. 'Rejoice in thy youth,' &c. (2.) The second is a commination, or a sad and severe premonition: 'But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment. 'Will bring thee;' these words import two things: first, the unwillingness of youth to come to judgment; secondly, the unavoidableness that youth must come to judgment; but how soon you shall be brought to judgment, is only known to God. (...) Augustine confesses in one of his books, that as long as his conscience was gnawed with the guilt of some youthful lust he was once ensnared with, the very hearing of a day of judgment, was even a hell to him.

Ah! young men, young men, that the serious thoughts of this great day, may put you upon breaking off the sins of your youth; and the dedicating of yourselves to the knowledge, love, and service of the Lord, in the spring and flower of your days. Ah! Young men, consider the errors of your lives, the wickedness of your hearts, the sinfulness of your ways, and that strict account that ere long you must be brought to before the judge of all the world.

Now if, for all that hath been said, you are resolved to spend the flower of your days, and the prime of your strength, in the service of sin and the world, then know that no tongue can express, no

heart can conceive that trouble of mind, that terror of soul, that horror of conscience, that fear and amazement, that weeping and wailing, that crying and roaring, that sighing and groaning, that cursing and banning, that stamping and tearing, that wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, that shall certainly attend you, when God shall bring you into judgment for all your looseness and lightness, for all your wickedness and wantonness, for all your profaneness and baseness, for all your neglect of God, your grieving the Comforter, your trampling under foot the blood of a Saviour, for your despising of the means, for your prizing earth above heaven, and the pleasures of this world above the pleasures that be at God's right hand--

Oh! How will you wish in that day when your sins shall be charged on you, when justice shall be armed against you, when conscience shall be gnawing within you, when the world shall be a flaming fire about you, when the gates of heaven shall be shut against you, and the flame of hell ready to take hold of you, when angels and saints shall sit in judgment upon you, and for ever turn their faces from you, when evil spirits shall be terrifying of you, and Jesus Christ for ever disowning of you; how will you, I say, wish in that day that you had never been born, or that you might now be unborn, or that your mothers' wombs had proved your tombs! Oh, how will you then wish to be turned into a bird, a beast, a stock, a stone, a toad, a tree! Oh that our immortal souls were mortal! Oh that we were nothing! Oh that we were anything but what we are! But now to those young men and women who begin to seek, serve, and love the Lord in the primrose of their days, the day of judgment will be to them *melodia in aure*, *jubilum in corde*, like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. This day will be to them 'a day of refreshing,' a 'day of redemption,' a day of vindication, a day of coronation, a day of consolation, a day of salvation; it will be to them a marriage-day, a harvest-day, a pay-day. Now the Lord will pay them for all the prayers they have made, for all the sermons they have heard, for all the tears they have shed. In this great day Christ will remember all the individual offices of love and friendship shewed to any of his. Now he will mention many things for their honour and comfort that they never minded, now the least and lowest acts of love and pity towards his shall be interpreted as a special kindness shewed to himself. Now the crown shall be set upon their heads, and the royal robes put upon their backs; now all the world shall see that they have not served the Lord for nought! Now Christ will pass over all their weaknesses, and make honourable mention of all the services they have performed, of all the mercies they have improved, and of all the great things that for his name and glory they have suffered.

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